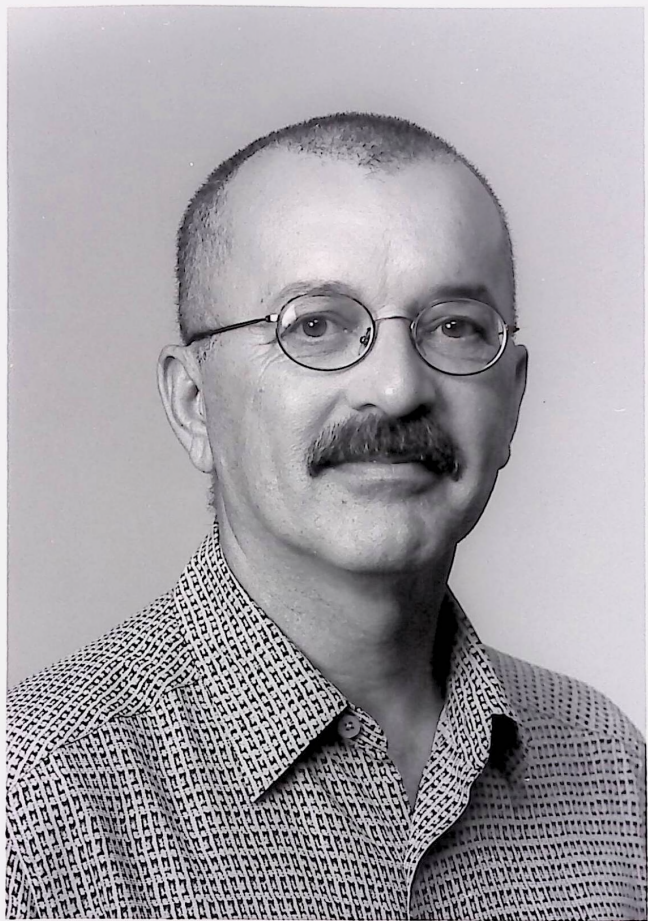




CRASH

TL 7-18-03

Vendors from W-B market concerned, but not fearful

By ALAN K. STOUT
alanks@leader.net

WILKES-BARRE — When vendors working the weekly Farmers Market on Public Square heard that a disoriented elderly man ran his car into a similar market Wednesday in Santa Monica, Calif., killing 10, they had one thought:

Could it happen in Wilkes-Barre on any given Thursday?

"I heard about it on the news, and that could happen anywhere," said Ron Mattern, 51, working the Zimmerman Farms stand. "These places you go to, it could happen quick."

See MARKET, Page 14A

MARKET

Continued from Page 1A

Mattern recalled a similar incident two years ago at a Mount Carmel farmers market he worked. There, vendors set up booths on the sides of a blocked-off street. One Saturday afternoon, an elderly driver plowed right through.

"The car went straight down the middle," said Mattern, who added that no one was injured. "It was an older person, and I don't know if she got disoriented, but she went straight through."

Wednesday's incident in California left 10 dead and scores injured. The driver was

86 years old.

Larry Rosenquist, an assistant professor of nursing at Wilkes University, believes driving tests should be in place for all people over 70. "Normal physical changes that occur as part of the aging process may change one's ability to operate a motor vehicle."

Such tests should not be viewed as a way to remove elderly drivers from the road but simply a way to ensure their safety and that of other drivers and pedestrians, he said.

Audrey Golomb, 63, has worked Golomb's produce stand for more than 30 years at the Wilkes-Barre Farmers Market.

She said the tragedy in California was on her mind

Thursday morning when she prepared for work, but she wasn't too concerned.

"You don't think about it, but I guess anything is possible," Golomb said. "The cars here are going in a circle, so it's not like they're coming our way. I think we're pretty safe on the square."

Kelly Tedesco, 21, was working a Commission on Economic Opportunity marketing stand Thursday. She, too, said she feels safe on the square, but added anything is possible.

"It was horrible what happened, but I feel pretty contained in this area, as far as safety goes. But when you have a lot of people together, there's always a chance something bad can happen."



News Release

MARKETINGCOMMUNICATIONS

Wilkes University Nursing Professor Available for Comment on Tragedy at Santa Monica Farmers Market

Yesterday's tragic event at the Farmers Market in Santa Monica, California where eight people were killed by an elderly driver may prompt an examination into testing and re-certification for elderly individuals looking to retain their driving privileges.

Larry Rosenquist, assistant professor of nursing at Wilkes University, believes tests should be in place for all individuals past 70 years of age. Tests should mirror those given to our teenage population.

"Normal physical changes that occur as part of the aging process may alter one's ability to operate a motor vehicle," said Rosenquist. "Physical and emergency response decreases and reaction time is slowed. Add that to chronic diseases that are more prevalent in the aging population and a strong argument is made for a standard set of tests for elderly drivers."

While testing may result in the revoking of licenses, an improved and structured mass transportation system must be in place as a valid option for the elderly who can no longer drive.

"We have to find ways to meet their needs because many elderly have limited abilities to accomplish daily tasks such as shopping or making a doctor's appointment," said Rosenquist.

Larry Rosenquist is available for further comment. He can be reached at 570-474-4744 or by email larry615us@yahoo.com

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From: Laura Snyder <laura@dickjonescomm.com>
Reply-To: "Laura Snyder" <laura@dickjonescomm.com>
Organization: Dick Jones Communications
To: Christine Tondrick <tondrick@wilkes.edu>
Cc: <larry615us@yahoo.com>
Date: Thursday, July 17, 2003 11:28 AM
Subject: Re: Pitch Letter - Santa Monica Tragedy

Thanks! I've sent it out to these reporters covering the story: Jason Kandel, Long Beach Press Telegram; Gordon Smith, Copley News Service; Alex Veiga, Associated Press; Charlie LeDuff, The New York Times; James Sterngold, San Francisco Chronicle; and Matt Lait, The Los Angeles Times.

I'm also sending it to a few elderly/aging reporters I know of: Ken Collins, Senior Forum column, Tribune Media Services; Marilyn Gardner, Christian Science Monitor; Jane Glen Haas, Age Beat reporter, Orange County Register; Pam Kelley, Charlotte Observer; Jim Killackey, senior issues reporter, Daily Oklahoman; Donna Koehn, aging/senior issues reporter, Tampa Tribune; and Warren Wolfe, senior affairs reporter, Star Tribune.

Keep me posted on whether y'all hear from anyone.

Best,
Laura

----- Original Message -----

From: Christine Tondrick <mailto:tondrick@wilkes.edu>
To: laura@dickjonescomm.com
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2003 11:12 AM
Subject: Pitch Letter - Santa Monica Tragedy

Laura,
I'm sending this out locally. Please let me know if you get any bites.

**Wilkes University Nursing Professor Available for Comment on
Tragedy at Santa Monica Farmers Market**

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Wilkes-Barre, Pa., believes tests should be in place for all individuals past 70 years of age. Tests should mirror those given to our teenage population.

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