

LESSON 8 – CASE STUDIES

8.1 'The day my son couldn't talk'

Gearing Up Daily News

Erie - Randy Brown won't soon forget the late spring morning when he found his son, Brandon, a college student, on the couch with a strange look in his eyes.

"I wasn't sure what was going on until I heard him moan," Randy recalls. "His feet were kicking and he was sweating all over. He couldn't talk."

Brown's wife, Janet, called for emergency help. The Erie, Kentucky farm couple would later learn that their son had just had a serious seizure. He suffered a second seizure later that same day. No one could come up with the cause.

One month later, Randy was still perplexed. "The only thing he had done out of the ordinary was help me plant corn," he recalled. It was windy, and we didn't wear masks. We were rained out a few days before he got sick."

Was there a connection? Brown found an emergency data sheet for the seed treatment, and Janet called the emergency number provided. "Yes," a physician told them, exposure to the chemical could have produced those symptoms. A blood test could have confirmed it, but it was too late to test.

"We'll probably never know for sure," Randy says. "Brandon still takes medication. Otherwise, he's fine. But we're sure more aware about chemicals these days.

"The Browns did a smart thing when they called the manufacturer," says Fred Billings, coordinator of the University Pesticide Program.

If your dealer doesn't give you a material safety data sheet (MSDS), ask for it, Billings says. "When you call the emergency number, you will usually talk to a qualified doctor."

Avoiding pesticide-related illnesses starts with understanding safety directions on labels, Billings stresses. "A skull and crossbones means you should always wear the protective equipment noted on the label. That usually consists of gloves, goggles, a long-sleeved shirt, and a respirator." You are also required to have a certificate for handling or applying pesticides of this type.

If you won't wear safety clothing, look for products bearing the "caution" label instead. "Select products that won't require wearing a respirator, and try not to use restricted-use products," he suggests. "Consider using more 'goof-proof' systems that limit exposure. Another option is to contract with a commercial applicator to apply the chemicals.

"The bottom line to protecting yourself is to either wear the recommended safety equipment, or choose products that are less toxic," Billings concludes. "It's that simple."

8.2 The smell of danger

Gearing Up Daily News

Rochester - Billy Bowman, 15, escaped an extremely dangerous situation on Wednesday by using one of his five senses and some common sense. While working on the family farm, Billy realized that something wasn't right with the tractor that he was operating.

He quickly dismounted the tractor and began to look but was unable to locate the problem.

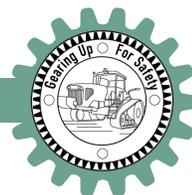
While Billy was inspecting the tractor, he noticed that there was a strong smell of gasoline coming from the machine. Instead of continuing his chores, Billy opted to find his father Charles to help with the situation.

"I realized that there was something not right with my tractor, so I went to grab my dad in the work shop," stated Billy.

When Charles and Billy returned to the tractor they found it engulfed in flames. They quickly called the Rochester Fire Department to help extinguish the blaze. Tom Taylor, chief of the Rochester Fire Department, said that most likely there was a leak in the fuel line that ignited with the heat generated from the tractor's exhaust system.

"We are lucky that our son thought this situation out," said Charles Bowman. "Most boys his age would be in a rush to finish their chores, putting them in a dangerous situation."

"I just figured that my dad would get mad at me if I damaged the tractor, so I just thought that it would be best to just find him," stated Billy. "I didn't realize that there was any danger being imposed upon my life."



“I will have this in mind next time I have Billy go out on the tractor,” Charles Bowman said. “We will make sure to inspect our tractors before taking them to the field, and I plan to install a fire extinguisher on each. I was lucky this time. I only lost a tractor, next time I could lose a loved one.”

8.3 Loss of sight nearly missed

Gearing Up Daily News

Delta – According to a report from the sheriff's office, Larry Jefferson of rural Delta was transported to the Jackson County hospital last Tuesday as a result of a farm accident. Jefferson was working in the shop on his rural Delta farm when he sustained an injury to his left eye.

Sheriff's deputy Josh Kendall reported that Jefferson had been in the field planting corn when a piece broke on the planter. Jefferson pulled the planter into his shop where he could weld the damaged piece. After welding the piece, Jefferson was chipping away the metallic slag on the hot weld joint when a very hot piece of metal flew into his eye. The hot metal burned into the pupil, where it lodged.

According to his wife, Jefferson came running into the house complaining of a severe injury to his eye. She immediately called 911. Jefferson was transported by local ambulance to the Jackson County hospital. Local physicians determined that the injury was so severe that Jefferson would need a specialist.

Following surgery, Jefferson is recovering at Deacon's Hospital in St. Louis. Surgeons expect that he will regain complete vision in the affected eye.

8.4 Star basketball player out due to injury

Gearing Up Daily News

Andrews – John David McElroy, age 17, will not be participating in this week's Region 1-4A basketball tournament due to an injured back.

McElroy was assisting his father unload hay bales Wednesday evening at their ranch just south of town. “I was lifting and tossing hay bales to my father when I suddenly had a sharp pain in my lower back,” stated McElroy.

According to high school trainer Patty Loving, McElroy probably strained his back by twisting and lifting bales at the same time. “When lifting weights at the school, we stress proper lifting procedures to reduce the chances of injury. We hoped that these procedures would have been taken home,” stated Loving.

McElroy led the Mustangs in assists, rebounds, and scoring for the past two years. He helped the Mustangs reach last year's state semifinals and had planned on helping the team reach their goal of a state championship here in his senior season.

“Hopefully, the team can get out of the Region. I think that I will be able to play in the state tournament,” stated McElroy. “I just wish I could help them now.”

The Mustangs face a tenth-ranked Lubbock team in the first round of the regional tournament.

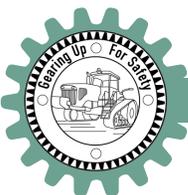
8.5 Local retired businessman dies in farm accident

Gearing Up Daily News

Davis - A retired Davis businessman, remembered as “a great friend, a life-long resident and citizen of the community,” by his friend Sam Smith, died Tuesday. “He always had a smile on his face.”

David Morris, 65, Davis, died Tuesday afternoon in a farm accident.

Morris enjoyed regularly mowing his 10-11 acres near the family's Tannersville farm pond, approximately 5 miles from Davis. He was working on the tractor when it fell off a jack and killed him, his son, William said. He was working alone at the time of the accident.



Morris opened Morris' Automotive in 1957 after farming for six years with his father-in-law. In 1969, Morris and his wife, Misty, bought the Commerce Building located at the corner of Washington and Market streets.

His first memory of the Commerce Building was the dance hall with its curved bandstand, he said last year.

"Practically every Friday and Saturday night you could come up and dance to records," he said. "Once in a while they had a band, too. That's where the kids went on the weekends."

He also remembered obtaining his first farm loan from the Federal Land Bank. The land bank's offices were on the second floor of the Commerce Building.

The couple sold Morris' Automotive in 1991 and eight years later they sold the Commerce Building. It was demolished to make room for a new drug store.

"Few people have been bigger supporters of softball, in particular, and sports in general than David Morris," softball association president Jeff Jamison said. "His leadership and friendship was valued greatly by everyone. He will be missed."

8.6 Local catcher suffers hand injury

Gearing Up Daily News

Winters – Lindsey Gonzales was on her way to becoming the first player in the history of the Lady Blizzards Softball team to be on the All-Conference squad but her chances might be slim after an accident last Tuesday that will keep her out of the last six games of the season. Gonzales was helping her father in his workshop when the accident occurred.

Gonzales was prying open the lid of a paint can when the screwdriver she was using slipped, stabbing her hand. Upon seeing the accident, Richard Gonzales rushed his daughter to the Runnels County Medical Center for treatment on her injured hand.

"It happened so quickly. I didn't look right away but I knew it was bad by the intensity of the pain," said Lindsey. "Now I have to go to a specialist in Dallas to see if there will be any permanent damage."

Jenny Cannon, a representative from the Runnels County Medical Center, said that Lindsey might have serious nerve damage in her hand. "The specialist that she will see in Dallas will determine if the injury is permanent."

The Lady Blizzards' season has been the most successful in the program's short existence. Coach Harry Wallace wishes the best for Lindsey and hopes that she will be able to return next year during her senior season.

8.7 Local man hospitalized due to farm accident

Gearing Up Daily News

Goliad - Guillermo Martinez, age 17, was injured Wednesday afternoon when the tractor he was working on jumped into gear and ran over him. Martinez was working in the field just south of his home when he hit something. The item that he struck was a large cooler that other hired help had left in the field.

Martinez jumped off his tractor to attempt to dislodge the cooler from under his tractor when the tractor slipped into gear, running over him and breaking his leg in three places.

"I don't know how the tractor moved into gear; I was sure that I placed it in neutral before I jumped off to move the cooler," said Martinez. "It was just one of those freak accidents that I am use to reading about in the paper. Luckily, I lived to tell the tale."

Martinez will have to undergo surgery to repair his injured leg according to Guadalupe County Medical Representative, Rachel Sosa. "Martinez is lucky. It could have been a lot worse. I sure hope he remembers to turn off his tractor when he dismounts it in the future."

