

PALYA — James J. "Zeb," 42, Cairnbrook R. D., died June 10, 1983, in Windber. Born March 6, 1941, on Cairnbrook R. D., son of Michael G. Sr. and Mary H. (Luszczek) Palya. Survived by parents, and these brothers and sister: Michael Jr., married to former Patricia Gomulka, Maryland; Thomas, married to former Dixie Wechtenhiser, Ohio; and Mary Ann, wife of Theodore Deneen, Central City. Friends received after 7 p.m. Saturday and after 2 p.m. Sunday at Mulcahy Funeral Home, Central City, where service will be held at 10 a.m. Monday, the Rev. Sylvester Bendzella. Burial, St. John the Baptist's Cemetery, Central City. Military rite by Central City American Legion and VFW posts.

Rig-van crash kills 1

By James W. Siehl
The Tribune-Democrat

Windber

A crash involving a van and a tractor-trailer early Friday on Route 160 near here claimed the life of a passenger in the van and resulted in multiple injuries to another man.

Killed was James Joseph Palya, 42, of Cairnbrook.

Admitted to Windber Hospital was Charles Peter Kaniuk, 31, also of Cairnbrook, identified as the driver of the van.

Critical condition

Mr. Kaniuk was reported in critical condition in the intensive-care unit with brush burns and cuts and a broken right leg.

Wilbur Miller, Somerset County coroner, pronounced Mr. Palya dead at the scene at 4:05. The coroner said death had been caused by head injuries.

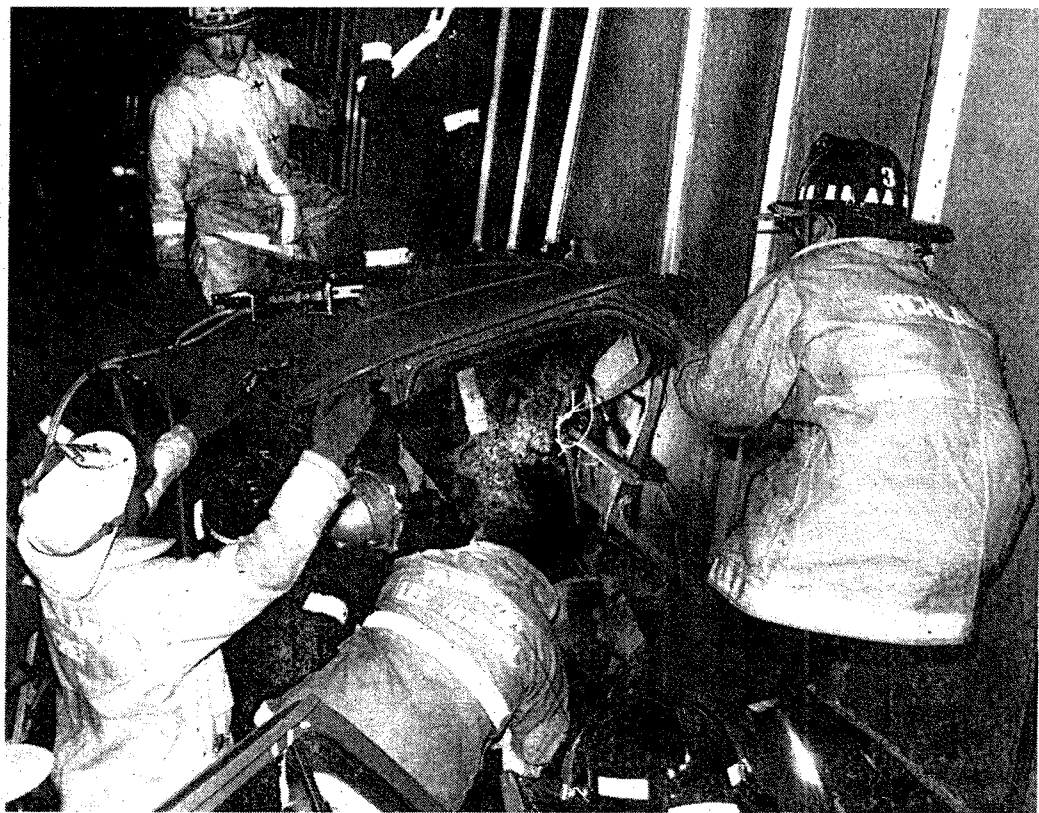
It took emergency personnel more than an hour and a half to remove Mr. Kaniuk. The accident happened at 3:05 about a half-mile south of Route 56 on the road to Pomroy's Corner.

Lee Hospital's Medic 1, along with emergency medical units from Windber, Scalp Level, Richland and Belmont volunteer fire companies, combined efforts to stabilize and eventually free the injured man, who was pinned under the dashboard.

Trucker from Virginia

The authorities listed the rig driver as George Alarode, 53, of Ruther Glen, Va. The vehicle is registered to Fitzgerald Transport Co. of Richmond, Va.

According to authorities, Mr.



Roger Kerekes/The Tribune-Democrat

Emergency personnel work to remove injured driver from van.

Alarode was transporting paper bags to a Gee Bee warehouse a short distance from where the crash took place.

Edward Stopko, Windber police chief, said that Mr. Alarode, traveling south on Route 160, had missed a road leading to the warehouse and drove into a dumping area used by the state highway department to turn around.

At that point in the road, Chief Stopko said, visibility is about 700 feet in both directions. He said the trucker, seeing no traffic, began pulling across the southbound lane when he saw a vehicle approaching from the direction of Windber.

Blinked lights

Mr. Alarode told the police that he had blinked his lights to warn

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the oncoming motorist. However, according to Chief Stopko, the trucker noticed no response from the driver.

The truck nearly had cleared the southbound lane when the van

slammed into the rear side of the rig at a high rate of speed, coming to a stop partially under the trailer.

Near site of another fatality

The fatality happened within a mile of where Leonard Paul LaPorta, 18, of Seanor was killed over the Memorial Day weekend when the car he was driving crashed into a tractor-trailer that was making a U-turn on Route 56.

A Georgia truck driver faces criminal charges in that death.

Noting that circumstances were different in Friday's accident, Chief Stopko said Mr. Alarode had not been making a U-turn.

The coroner's office and the Windber police are continuing the investigation.