

A BAD DAY AT BADGER CREEK

by Sandy Rangila
For over two hours, 46 year-old Bob Mercer was pinned in the wreckage of a loaded log

truck after it overturned on a reservation logging road Monday, July 31.
Shortly past noon, he was all

loaded up and ready to head on in to the mill, his cargo of white fir securely bound. With him was his 14 year-old son Dwayne.

He was rolling down B-180 near Badger Creek when the shock of realization hit him. No brakes. His speed was picking

up at an alarming rate. Engine screaming, the log truck careened around two bends before heading into the final turn.



It was almost unbelievable that the driver, Bob Mercer, could have survived this accident. The loaded log truck overturned after the brakes went out on a logging road near Badger Creek about 12:30 p.m. July 31, pinning him in the wreckage for two hours. Fire department volunteers, police, EMT's, and forestry crews worked to

free Mercer who stayed conscious throughout the ordeal. Mercer and his son who was riding with him were not seriously hurt. Mercer was in the process of buying the truck from George Picard.

Sandy Rangila Photo

"I knew I wasn't going to make it," said Mercer. "But I sure was going to try it." He geared up so he wouldn't blow the engine which would have left him in just as bad a position as having no brakes.

"It was touch and go and I sure didn't want to hit no trees head-on." But after lurching through 86 feet of the right-hand ditch, the truck barked a tree which sent the truck sailing out of control.

"I felt the truck tip and told my son to hang on. But I wasn't scared." His son Dwayne said, "I just sat there. If I'd have hung on I probably wouldn't have a right hand."

Neither remembers the crash too clearly except that it seemed like slow-motion. "I'm sure it was pretty fast though," said Mercer. The first thing I did was I told my son to get the hell outta there."

Mercer didn't realize he was pinned at first. "I was only scared of burning to death." Dwayne crawled out of the cab's rear window after wrenching himself free. But at that point he wasn't aware that he was injured.

"After I got out and saw that mirror sticking out of my chest, I felt kinda sick," Dwayne recalled. But he kept calling to his dad asking if he was okay.

"My head was pinned in the cab roof - it was folded right around my head and my face was down," said Mercer. "Blood was running into my eyes and nose, and after a bit I couldn't see. I could only hear and it was darned hard to breathe."

In describing his position, Mercer said his left leg was pinned between the seat and the dashboard, his right arm was under his chest and stuck through the steering wheel, and both shoulders were pinned.

The accident happened about 12:30 p.m., and by 1:15 the ambulance, fire truck, police as well as loggers and forestry crews were out there assisting. "They did a very fine job out there," stressed Mercer. "I remember Dean's voice and Jeff's, and every now and then Snuffy Smith asked, 'Hey Horse Fly, how you doin?'"

"I was just trying to keep cool and calm. I tried to keep myself from going into shock by staying awake. You just think about something else very important to you."

Meanwhile, his wife Sally and Wilma Picard heard about the accident at 12:45 on the scanner. But it wasn't until 1:30 when Wilma inquired at the police station that Sally found out it was her husband. "And the feeling is scared," she said. She didn't find out that he was all right until she met the ambulance at the clinic.

What surprised Mercer the most was that it seemed like it took only 15 minutes to get him out instead of the actual two hours. And what most of the observers experienced was disbelief that anyone could come out of that wreck alive.

Escaping with only slight shoulder fractures, cuts, bruises and bad lacerations, both agree that they were very, very lucky.

Six Earn Certification In Reality Therapy

Six of the nine certified reality therapists in Oregon are from Warm Springs, the number having swelled dramatically after a recent training session in Santa Monica, California.

Completing the last of three weeklong sessions offered by the Reality Therapy Institute were: Delson Suppah, Bob Parker, Caroline Cruz, Maria Calica, Dale Cochran, and Sal Sahme.

With their certification the six individuals have the sanction of the Institute to practice reality therapy, a treatment style becoming increasingly popular in the Tribal social service programs.

The certified therapists plan

not only to use their treatment technique in their various health-related jobs, but will also train others in the theory and practice of reality therapy.

Reality therapy, which can be practiced on an individual, or group basis, goes beyond being a treatment tool and enters the realm of lifestyle, said new Tribal Health Planner Sal Sahme. As a therapist, "you can't help but incorporate it into your own life," he noted. In fact, successful practice of reality therapy depends on the personal involvement of the clinician with the client in a special treatment relationship.

Central to reality therapy is

the recognition of two basic human needs: to love and be loved and to feel worthwhile. These needs can be met with the acceptance of reality (the facts and circumstances surrounding the individual), responsibility (fulfilling one's needs without depriving others of their needs fulfillment), and right and wrong (standards of behavior applied in a consistent but flexible manner).

Dr. William Glasser, who is credited with the development of reality therapy, believes the treatment technique to be applicable to people of all backgrounds. Sal Sahme feels it is particularly consistent with the

"natural care system that has existed in the Indian community."

Although the Tribal Health and Social Services Branch has not adopted reality therapy as its official treatment modality, interest has grown in the past two years to the point where training has been made available to tribal employees.

The six local certified therapists were invited to the July - August training session after successfully completing two prior weeks of training last September and May. Each student was required to give an oral presentation on a topic relating to reality therapy.

Spilyay Tymoo

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Fisherman's Body Found In Columbia

The body of Eli Culp, who was one of three fishermen who disappeared March 25, 1978, was discovered by Keith Livesay of Walla Walla, Washington August 7, 1978. He found the body in the middle of the Columbia River near Mountain Fir Lumber Company Chip Mill which is located close to The Dalles.

Members of the Yakima and Warm Springs tribes spent many days searching for Culp, 35 and Donald Isadore, 29, both Yakima Nation members and Leonard Polk, 34, a Warm Springs member. The bodies of Isadore and Polk have not yet been found.

The men were last seen in a 17-foot fiberglass boat around 4 a.m. March 25 at The Dalles Boat Basin. Their badly damaged craft was found a short distance down river about an hour later. At that time, State Police in The Dalles said that all indications were that the boat struck a tug and barge outfit. Part of the bow of the boat was found on the front of the barge which had been towed through the locks shortly after the accident that same day.

Funeral services for Culp were held August 9 at the Celilo Longhouse.