

Death statistics save lives

By Kip Fry
Staff Reporter

Rollin Schnieder deals with death every day. But his work may help save lives in the future.

Schnieder, a UNL extension safety specialist, has kept track of farm-related deaths in Nebraska on a computer since 1969. His information comes in handy for many people.

Schnieder said he receives calls from all over the country because he is one of the few people who collect information on farm deaths. At one time as many as eight people recorded the information, but because of budget cuts in various programs over the years, Schnieder is the only one remaining.

"No other state saves statistics like Nebraska," he said. "Other states just never have taken the time to collect them."

Numerous people and companies use his statistics of the type of accident, age, sex and name of the victim, he said.

"We can go back and tell manufacturers they've got a problem," Schnieder said. His information has helped solve a problem with tractor hydraulic brakes. He also was influential in getting rollover protection developed for tractors, he said.

Recently, a teenage girl from Platte County writing a paper on deaths of

people aged 15 and younger called Schnieder. Within minutes, Schnieder told her that approximately 20 percent of all farm-related deaths since 1969 involved people in that age range.

Since 1969, Schnieder has recorded 741 deaths. In 1986, 36 died.

Schnieder said he is able to find "problem areas" that need farm-safety programs. One area in need of help is Hamilton County, which led the state last year with five such deaths, he said.

The most common causes of farm-related deaths, Schnieder said, are tractor overturns, falling or being thrown from tractors, crushings and electrocutions. Accidents also can involve animals, compickers, motor vehicles, balers, falling objections and suffocation.

"The majority of tractor-overturn deaths involve older, male operators driving older-model tractors not equipped with rollover protective structures," Schnieder said. "To date, there have been no fatalities in overturns where the protective structure is in place."

Deaths from crushing have become more common in the past seven or eight years, due in large part to the increased size of machinery and equipment. They can be caused by things like cattle gates or wagons falling on them. Crushings are now almost as common as deaths by tractor overturns, he said.

While Schnieder does not work specifically with farm suicide statistics, he says that some accidents are suspicious. It is evident that some people have committed suicide, he said, and made it look like an accident to collect insurance money.

The number of deaths per year have gone down dramatically since Schnieder started and there were often 60 deaths per year. During the 1980s, Schnieder said, usually about 30 people a year have died in farm accidents, although one year it dipped as low as 23.

Schnieder also helped put together a slide show called "Safe Storage and Handling of Grain," which is available from the Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service.

Short

●Noted chemist Charles Overberger, professor and director of the Macromolecular Research Center at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, will be guest lecturer at the UNL Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa scholastic honorary society at 7:30 p.m. tonight at the Nebraska Center.

●Sara Bentley, publisher of the Fremont Tribune, will be guest lecturer at the College of Journalism at 9:30 a.m. today. Bentley will speak in the Avery Hall reading room.

Ballet and vodka — or Vanna White?

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towelheaded nations of Iran and Saudi Arabia. And most of all, my green-faced friend, make American successfully invade the Russkies."

The space alien had granted all of Ed's wishes. Now I was in Red Square in Moscow with Ed. He stood up on a platform, telling all the Russkies he was their new leader.

"We shall call this country the United Russkie States of Ed Anger's America," he told the mob of fans in their cute little furry caps. "That's Amerika with a 'k,' just so it'll separate this country from the real America. And from this day on, I hereby outlaw vodka. From now on, you'll all drink beer, an American drink. And I'm going to outlaw any loud, obnoxious rock music. You'll listen to real music only, country music. And you'll tear down all those onion-domed buildings because you need to learn about real American architecture — condos."

"But comrade Anger..." one Russkie protested.

"That's another thing," he replied. "You will not call your fellow man, 'comrade.' It sounds like something a sissy would say." He adopted the tone of his wife's hairdresser, Mr. Tim. "Oh, comrade, would you paint my toenails, comrade? No. You will call your fellow man anything but comrade."

Ed gazed at all the heads adorned with furry little caps and suddenly became madder than a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs.

"And from now on I hereby outlaw little furry caps," he cried. "You'll only wear seed caps and cowboy hats, real American headgear."

His face turned Russkie red as he saw a woman slurping down some beet soup out in the crowd.

"No more beet soup," he screamed. "In my Amerika, you'll only eat real food. Like McDonalds hamburgers, frozen chicken pot pies and other real American food. None of that sissy gourmet stuff like the French and the

Japs chow down on."

"No sushi bars?" one Russkie asked. "Sushi bars are part of the real Amerika, aren't they?"

"No sushi in my Amerika," he replied. "Until Tupperware comes out with a container for sushi, you won't be eating any. I like Tupperware, a real American product."

And so all the Russkies went home and poured all their vodka and cans of beet soup down the drain in their Russkie sinks. They exchanged their furry little caps for seed caps and cowboy hats. They started listening to Hank Williams and began watching "Wheel of Fortune" on TV because President Anger made all the networks stop showing famous Russkie ballet.

"No more ballet," he told TV stations. "In my Amerika, we shall not be subjected to watching sissies prance around in tights."

Ed Anger also brought religion to the godless Russkies. "PTL Club" became the top-rated show, and Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker built Heritage URSEAA on the outskirts of Moscow.

"Say nyet, nyet, nyet to Satan, honeys," Tammy Faye told the born-again Russkie Christians the day President Anger cut the red, white and blue ribbon at Heritage URSEAA's opening ceremony.

"I'm so glad all this has happened," President Anger said to Tammy Faye. "Why, if it weren't for that wonderful ABC miniseries, real godfearing, apple-loving Americans would have never known that it was important for us to build up our power, load up our arsenals and conquer those Kremlin kingpins."

"I'm happy, too, Mr. President," Tammy Faye cooed, batting her mascara-caked eyelashes. "These Russkie girls have seen what a difference Jesus and real Amerikan freedom has made for them. Now they're wearing my cosmetics and looking good for their husbands."

Tammy Faye gazed out at the Russkie masses and started to cry. "Yes, see

what freedom and your friend Jesus has done. Come on up here and tell us about it, comrades. Er, I mean, Amerikans."

An old woman walked up to Tammy Faye. "I have seen the light," she said. "I was almost skin and bones, subsisting on beet soup. And my little Ivan was becoming a sissy watching all that ballet on TV. Then President Anger took over our country, and now I'm happy to say that I listen to Willie Nelson, eat hamburgers, use Tupperware and read my Bible every night."

"And what about Ivan?" Tammy Faye asked.

"Now he watches baseball on WTBS and wants to marry a girl just like Vanna White," she said, fighting back tears of joy. "And I've discovered how Tupperware locks in freshness when I made extra potato pancakes and need to freeze some for later."

"And honey, don't you look lovely with eye-lashes by Cover Girl," Tammy Faye squealed.

Tammy Faye smoothed out the wrinkles in her sequined American flag dress as a chorus, all sporting matching Stars and Stripes outfits, gathered behind her.

"I'm gonna sing a little song," Tammy Faye announced. "It's called 'I Crucified Sin with My Hammer and Sickle, Comrade Jesus.'"

"That's the name of the minushka-series Ted Turner's doing about our new country, isn't it?" said the old Russkie woman.

"Yes, and it will be in color, too," Tammy Faye answered.

"Starring Vanna White and Bruce Springsteen," added President Anger.

Vanna entered the scene and flashed her cheesy grin at the prez. "Oh, President Anger, I'm so glad you made English the official language of the Russkies. I wasn't at all thrilled by the idea of having to learn a new alphabet. How would I know which letters to turn?"

Harrah is a senior English and speech major and the Daily Nebraskan arts and entertainment editor.

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