

The Oakland Sail

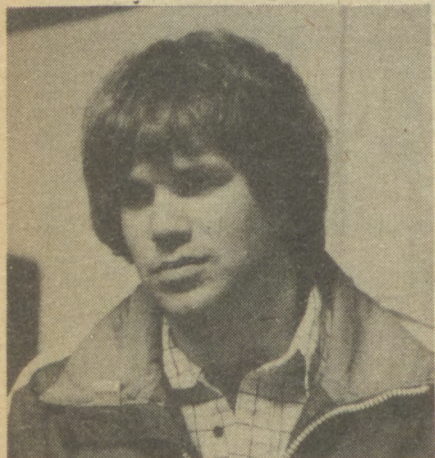
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Ski Club bus accident -- the long trip

Less seriously injured students find the ride home a 43 hour ordeal

by Mark Clausen

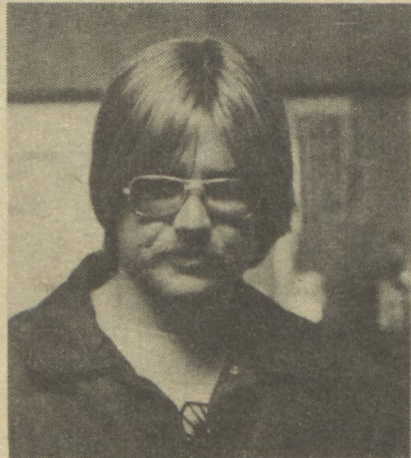
The sun was rising on a cold, foggy Sunday morning, and a Continental Trailways bus chartered by the OU Ski Club rolled along Interstate 80 headed east toward Omaha. Most of the riders, returning from a Colorado ski trip were either sleeping or just awakening.



Tom Balames--"I looked out the window and saw the bus getting closer and closer to the gravel on the side of the road."

Tom Balames, Utica, OU senior and president of the Ski Club, noticed the thick fog and frosted trees, and thought the bus seemed to be going awfully fast, but figured the driver knew what he was doing.

At about 7 am the bus attempted to change lanes, hit a patch of ice and began to



Bob Mick--"Just about everybody who got hurt (badly) got hurt in the fall (from the passenger side)." (Photos by Chris Swartwout)



Kathy Galloway--"We were all tired and wanted to go home. If it hadn't been for a couple of the guys, we wouldn't have made it home." (Photo by Phil Foley)

sway from side to side. The swaying woke everyone up. "I looked out the window (on the driver's side)," Balames said, "and I saw the bus getting closer and closer to the gravel along the side of the road."

The bus was now out of control; it continued swaying and ran into and across the median and across the westbound lane, causing oncoming cars to "ditch it" on the shoulder of the median.

The bus finally tipped over on the driver's side to rest in the ditch along the westbound lane. Windows broke, luggage and other loose objects went flying, and people were thrown against each other.

According to all the students interviewed, as a rule, those on the driver's side were less seriously injured than those on the other side. "Just about everybody who got hurt (badly) got hurt in the fall," said Robert Mick, Fraser, a student who received only a few scratches.

"Everybody couldn't believe it was happening. It all seemed so senseless, like a dream." -- Susan Flattery

Balames and Ken Rybinski were also relatively unhurt in the accident. They took charge of getting the other people out of the bus, and made trips back into the bus to get purses, blankets and other necessary articles.

Not all the passengers on the driver's side were as fortunate as Mick, Balames

and Rybinski. Sue Flattery, Farmington Hills, sat next to a window on the driver's side and when the bus tipped she received a cut on the head from "a tool box or something," and a concussion from the metal window bar next to her seat.

The blows knocked Flattery unconscious "for one or two minutes," and when she came to she saw that she was surrounded by broken glass. "I saw blood, but at first I didn't realize I was bleeding," she said.

According to Kathy Galloway, Rochester, Balames and Rybinski were instrumental in getting the others out.

"It all happened so fast," Galloway said, "everyone was kind of dazed...Ken and Tom really helped out a lot."

Flattery said that all the passengers were quiet and orderly; that there was some soft crying, but no hyster-



John Harris--"I'm a senior with 20 credits this semester so I can graduate... I may have to drop this semester because of this." (Photo by Chris Swartwout)

ia. "Everybody couldn't believe it was happening," she said. "It all seemed so senseless, like a dream."

Although the students were outwardly calm, they were not unaffected. "Everyone was really mentally messed up," Balames said.

Others who helped the victims were truckers who radioed for ambulances, police, and motorists who stopped and let students get in their cars to keep warm.

Not all the passer-bys were helpful, though. "Some people would stop, hop out, (continued on page eleven)



After a two and a half hour wait Harry Chapin gave OU a little of what he does best, tunes like Taxi, Dance Band On The Titanic, and Flowers Are Red. For details see story and review on Page 8. (Photo by Dave Ross)

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OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

Report calls for expansion in Health Sciences

(The following story is the first of a series of articles about the University Planning Committee's reports on the future of OU. The reading of the documents and the resulting stories are the work of reporters Gail De George and Diane Kowalski.--Ed.)

Students at OU will witness many changes in curriculum during the next 15 years, ranging from implementation of new programs to restructuring of old ones, based upon the curriculum section of an eight-

part report concerning the future of the university.

These plans "set out a pattern of goals for fifteen years that would make Oakland University a remarkable, high-quality, medium size, public university. The plans appear to be attainable given a lot of dedicated effort and a bit of good luck," said OU President Donald O'Dowd.

Several new master's degrees and doctoral programs should be developed over the next 15 years, according to

the report, including consideration for a doctoral program for the employed, part-time student.

Several specialties in the health sciences fields will be added. An industrial health and safety program will begin soon and a physical therapy program is in the final approving stage.

There has been some discussion about the need for a medical school in the Oakland County area. A careful survey will be made as to this need and whether and how a medical school could be established at OU. If approval were granted it would be "the most elaborate effort the university has ever attempted," according to the report, and planning and construction would take place over a ten-year period.

Along the same lines, a Medical Science Research Institute would be formed to sponsor such research. An experimental surgery center would be

(continued on page twelve)



The bus accident in Nebraska March 12 may have caused physical and psychological damage beyond what is evident now. The loss of a semester because of lost school time is another possible repercussion of the crash. For these reasons, some students are considering lawsuits. (Photo by Jim Burnett, Omaha World-Herald.)

Skiers consider suit against bus line

No concrete legal plans at this time

by Stu Alderman

and Phillip T.A. Foley

OU Ski Club members, their parents and three attorneys met Thursday night in the Fireside Lounge of the OC for a question and answer session regarding the March 12 bus crash.

Most of the Ski Club members present were still shaken from the accident. While no concrete plans for legal action were made, the lawyers presented the pros and cons of various types of action.

Some students were unable to attend classes March 13 and 14, missing exams, and additional classtime may be lost by students suffering mental trauma stemming from the accident. In addition some students who are still in Nebraska may be unable to finish the current term. How

will these students be compensated for their lost time?

According to Jim Pipp, "Each claim will be considered on its own merits." Pipp is the Adjuster-in-charge for Crawford and Company, the insurance investigators for Continental Trailways. Pipp did say though that all medical expenses, travel expenses and personal belongings would be paid for by Continental Trailways, which is self-insured.

It is unclear at this point how many, if any, suits will be filed. Paul Bricker, an attorney representing Susan Flattery, said he doubts, "...if many suits will be filed for a year." He said that this is because that it may take that long for the full extent of some

of the victims injuries to be assessed.

Even though no definite plans have been made from the meeting, called by Ski Club President Tom Balames, it seemed to have a relaxing effect on most of those present. "It's great they did this," said George Dael whose daughter Nancy was on the bus. "I'm not a lawyer, I just don't know which way to go." Bricker said he felt the meeting had been good for both the students and the parents, "They now know what they can and can't do."

Bricker said that if any suits are eventually brought against Continental Trailways that there is a "very strong possibility," that they will be heard in Michigan. This is because while the accident occurred in Nebraska, the company does business in Michigan.

Senate discusses Linguistics MA

Several topics and documents were discussed, but no new legislation was passed at the University Senate's sixth meeting Thursday.

A motion to recommend to the President and the Board of Trustees the development of a Master of Arts degree in Linguistics, was discussed briefly, but was not up for final vote.

The degree, according to the proposal, "is intended to accommodate the needs of students who have done

previous work in linguistics as well as those who have had no formal training in the subject.

"It is designed to serve the needs of elementary and secondary school teachers living within commuting distance from Oakland University as well as undergraduate majors in linguistics and the language arts who wish to continue their studies at the graduate level."

Under 'special business', President Donald O'Dowd presented The Role and Mission of Oakland University

statement to the Senate for discussion and suggestion; it was "not being presented as a motion of endorsement at this time, for it is still in draft form subject to modification," according to the agenda.

The statement contains six general principles "that hopefully the Senate will agree on," said O'Dowd.

(continued on page sixteen)