

Carbide faces charge leak contained suspected cancer-causing agent

INSTITUTE, W. Va. (AP) — Union Carbide Chairman Warren Anderson, on a trip to the "chemical valley" aimed at boosting the company's image, faces a report that a solvent suspected of causing cancer in animals made up most of a leak that injured 135 people.

Union Carbide had said a gas cloud that escaped Sunday from its institute plant was a mix of aldicarb oxime, a pesticide ingredient, and dichloromethane, a synonym for methylene chloride.

Although the company's news releases focused on the effects of aldicarb oxime, federal investigators believe the gas was two-thirds methylene chloride, a suspected carcinogen, and one-third aldicarb oxime, The Los Angeles Times reported today.

The newspaper said methylene chloride

can also cause nervous system and brain disorders when inhaled in large doses. It could also cause eye, skin and respiratory irritation.

Thad Epps, a Carbide spokesman in Institute, said early today he could not comment on the Times report.

Anderson was scheduled for talks today with Gov. Arch Moore and a meeting with a group called the National Institute for Chemical Studies.

The group was organized by area businessmen after methyl isocyanate wafted from a Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, in December, killing more than 2,000 people and injuring thousands more.

Anderson's trip was scheduled well in advance of Sunday's leak and a second leak of a less toxic chemical Tuesday.

Officials and residents exposed to the

toxic fumes Sunday said Thursday they want to hear more than the familiar assurances that the plants are safe.

Anderson "has to address the issues. He has to say these leaks will be detected. He has to say there will be an effort to put in more fail-safe systems," said Thomas Cole, president of West Virginia State College, next to the Institute plant.

W.O. Brown, who lives four blocks from the plant, said, "I want them to stop production of toxic chemicals. As long as people like that are operating, we'll not be able to get a good night's rest."

But others rallied behind Carbide, stressing its economic importance to the Kanawha Valley, nicknamed "chemical valley" because at least nine chemical plants line the Kanawha River near Charleston.

"I feel that the people who are screaming about this latest leak are the kind of people who don't stop to look beyond their noses," said Betty Ray, one of three women who have organized a parade this weekend supporting Carbide.

The Times quoted Rick Horner, a chemical engineer with the Environmental Protection Agency, as saying the gaseous mixture that burst from the Institute reactor tank was 65 percent methylene chloride and 35 percent aldicarb oxime.

Horner said the chances of lasting effects from the single release of gas at Institute are probably low.

"I've been exposed to it myself in laboratory situations and I don't think they have anything to worry about unless it keeps happening," he said.

Scientists at Allied Corp., which manu-

factures aldicarb oxime for Union Carbide, said the chemical would not generate a cloud of gas that would travel as far as the cloud that hit Institute, the Times reported.

James A. Hathaway, medical services director for Allied's chemical division, said, "When it hit the atmosphere, it would condense out and drop like rain."

Methylene chloride, which boils into a gas easily, was put under special review by the EPA after laboratory tests linked it to unusual numbers of malignant lung and liver tumors in mice. The review will establish whether the substance poses a significant health risk to humans.

Chemical industry officials say no link to cancer has been proved and other tests have shown no cause for concern.

Hurricane Danny loses strength

'We were tremendously lucky — nothing serious and no injuries'

LAFAYETTE, La. (AP) — Flash-in-the-pan Hurricane Danny left power failures, downed trees and minor flooding in its wake today, and emergency centers were quickly abandoned by people who one official said "have been through this so many times before that they've got it down to a science."

There was one death. No serious injuries were reported Thursday and none of the immense property damage left by such killer storms as Audrey in 1957, Betsy in 1965, Camille in 1969 or Hilda in 1964.

Still, Gov. Edwin Edwards declared a state of emergency in 13 parishes and said he would try to get federal aid to cover damages.

After building in intensity for three days, Danny finally stormed ashore at Pecan Island at mid-morning Thursday with 85 mph winds gusting to more than 100 mph.

Danny was downgraded to a tropical storm by 8 p.m. At 2 a.m. today, the National Hurricane Center downgraded Danny to a tropical depression with a "poorly defined center" just south of Monroe in northeast Louisiana, heading north-northeast toward Arkansas and Mississippi with 30 mph winds.

Tom Creaghan, director of state emergency operations in Baton Rouge, said damage assessment teams would fan out today through Calcasieu, Cameron, Jeff Davis, Vermilion, Iberia and Evangeline parishes.

"We were tremendously lucky — nothing serious and no injuries," said Pete Picou, Civil Defense director at Cameron, about 35 miles west of Pecan Island.

"We had 300 people here less than an hour ago," said Timothy Hooper, manager of the Red Cross shelter at Lake Charles-Boston High School. "Just about all of them were from Cameron and when the Civil Defense gave the OK, 99 percent of them left within a half hour."

"They started cheering and then started packing. I tried to stop them but they heard it on TV and then there was no stopping them."

"Some of these people have been through this so many times before that they've got it down to a science."

The worst peril occurred 40 miles out in the Gulf of Mexico, where a Coast Guard helicopter

rescued seven Texans who, oblivious to hurricane warnings because of radio trouble, sailed a 41-foot yacht into the storm.

Another 60 or so people were stranded for a while on a bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway, near Louisa in St. Mary Parish.

In the town of Kaplan, a man was injured when a mobile home for an oil drilling crew was rolled about 60 yards. He was hospitalized in stable condition, authorities said.

Robert Henry Johnson, 24, of Houston, died Wednesday evening after being electrocuted when the boat he was pulling out of the water to avoid the storm hit a power line, said Galveston Medical Examiner Ray Leace.

"This was no hurricane," complained Gloria Padilla, who spent Wednesday night with her six children at a Red Cross shelter at Lake Charles. "I didn't sleep right. I didn't eat right. And the pizza tasted like rubber. But I guess you have to take precautions or you'll walk into the mouth of a tiger."

In the Acadiana section of southwestern Louisiana, unofficial estimates were that Danny knocked out power to 300,000 homes and businesses, leaving them without electricity Thursday night.

Spokesmen for Louisiana Power & Light Co., Gulf States Utilities, Central Louisiana Electric Co. and other utilities said the failures were so widespread it was impossible to estimate how many customers were without power.

"We were very fortunate," said Lafayette police Capt. Cade Joseph. "There were no major problems. Our streets are rather clear. We were prepared for something more severe and, luckily for us, it didn't come in as severely as we anticipated."

Four harmless tornadoes were spawned Thursday by Danny — two at Grand Isle and others in St. Bernard Parish, east of New Orleans, and Hackberry, north of Cameron.

And while forecasters said up to 10 inches of rain might accompany Danny through the state, the most — about five inches — was measured unofficially at Sildell, east of New Orleans.

Although National Guardsmen were on alert across the state, only three dozen were actually called to duty in Iberia and Vermilion parishes.

Seven rescued from capsizing yacht

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Seven people who sailed across the Gulf of Mexico straight into the path of Hurricane Danny were plucked from the sea by the Coast Guard when their 41-foot yacht foundered in 20-foot seas and wind gusts up to 70 miles an hour.

"We didn't know where the hurricane was. We thought it was near Alabama," musician Charlie Brown Sanders said Thursday from a New Orleans hospital where the two women and five men were taken for treatment of injuries ranging from a broken leg to cuts.

Sanders, of Woodlands, Texas, said the yacht's crew realized they were in danger only when the boat, the "Fine Wine," struck something in the night and capsized. He said the boat, owned by his mother, Jeff Fort Meyers, Fla., Sunday for Galveston, Texas, where it was to be sold.

The crew's early morning distress call set off a daring two-hour rescue by Coast Guardsmen who plucked them from the rolling vessel before it sank about 40 miles from the mouth of the Mississippi River.

Sanders said he suffered only a few minor scrapes.

He said the boat had a non-working electronic navigation system and was equipped only with a low-powered, short-range radio.

"The first we heard about the hurricane was Tuesday when we heard somebody talking about it over the radio," he said. "But the signal was weak and we couldn't hear where it was."

Weather started getting rough as the boat approached the Louisiana coast Wednesday night

"Then when we were all asleep we hit something and the boat rolled completely over. People were lying on top of each other and everything."

— Charlie Brown Sanders

when the hurricane's leading winds began brushing the shore, he said. "Then when we were all asleep we hit something and the boat rolled completely over. People were lying on top of each other and everything."

Coast Guard officials said the vessel apparently hit an offshore oil platform and began taking on water. A twin-turbine helicopter from the Coast Guard Air Station at Mobile, Ala., responded to the distress call.

Lt. Dan Rigney, one of the pilots, said one of the four chopper crewmen was hurt slightly and one rescue basket was lost.



FIREFIGHTER INJURED. A Worcester, Mass., firefighter dangles from a ladder while fellow firefighters try to rescue him. He was one of 10 injured battling a three-alarm blaze. The ladder gave way when several firefighters fled the intense heat inside the building, officials said.

Promise kept by killing

Alzheimer's disease sparks slaying, suicide

EL TORO, Calif. (AP) — Reid Logan made a promise to the woman he loved, and he had to kill her to keep it.

Years ago, Logan, 78, promised his wife, Edith, also 78, that he would never send her to a rest home.

Then Alzheimer's disease crippled her mind and he found himself unable to care for her because his own health was failing due to a heart condition.

Investigators say he kept his promise by killing her and taking his own life. They had been married 48 years.

"It appears to be a murder-suicide situation," Lt. Richard Olson of the Orange County Sheriff's Department said Thursday. "His wife had Alzheimer's, the gentleman had heart problems. There's nothing to indicate to us that it was anything other than that."

Logan, a retired aerospace executive, called the Orange County Sheriff's Department on Tuesday and said he had killed his wife and was going to kill himself.

When deputies arrived at the trailer park in El Toro, 45 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles, where the couple had lived for 11 years, they found the bodies in the bathroom.

Results of a coroner's autopsy, released Thursday, showed Logan died of a gunshot wound to the head and his wife of a skull fracture, Olson said.

Dorothy Fenton, a neighbor, said Mrs. Logan "was probably one of the most brilliant women we knew until the disease struck and she began drifting."

Logan's daughter, Arlene Nicoley, said her stepmother suffered from Alzheimer's, a degenerative brain disorder. "My father had a heart condition and was killing himself trying to take care of her."

She told the Orange County Register the "disease had progressed so fast that it was shocking. There was so much deterioration that I couldn't believe it. He suffered because he couldn't do anything to help her, except to protect her from herself."

"I'm sure he thought about what he was going to do and agonized over it, but came to the conclusion that there was no other way out, that what he did was best for both of them."

Logan slept for brief periods only when his wife slept, Nicoley said. He never left the house for fear she would harm herself and he spoon-fed her meals he prepared with care. When he was hospitalized by heart attacks, he called his daughter to take care of his wife.

George Tohler, Nicoley's fiancé, said, "The last time I saw them, he was holding her on his lap like a baby and rocking her to sleep."

After 10 law-abiding years, he begins prison sentence

PHOENIX (UPI) — Ten years ago, Baron Sumter was convicted of marijuana possession and sentenced to two years in prison. But the judge never told him when to surrender, so he got married, had a couple of kids and moved to California.

Today, Sumter is behind bars.

Sumter, a brick mason, was hauled off to jail Wednesday to begin serving the sentence.

"We were stunned," said Sumter's wife, Alice. "I sat with my kids and watched as they took him away. The kids were absolutely hysterical."

"I can't believe this is happening in the United States. He's been a model citizen all this time. He made a mistake when he was 25 or 26 and hasn't done a thing since. After not hearing from them for six or seven years, we figured it was over."

Reached Thursday night in San Francisco where he was attending a meeting, Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt was apparently moved by the case.

"I would think there's a strong case for commutation or other adjustment of the sentence," he said. "It would take about 30 days for

the Arizona Department of Pardons and Paroles to make a recommendation in the case, he said, and "At that point I would have the power to commute the sentence. The facts, as they are presented, are very appealing."

Told of the governor's words, Sumter's wife screamed with delight. "Oh my goodness, I'm overwhelmed. This is absolutely wonderful."

Sumter, 38, had been free on \$1,500 bail pending the outcome of his appeal for his 1975 conviction in Yuma County Superior Court for possession of 125 pounds of marijuana. While awaiting results of the appeal, Sumter was given permission to move to Prunedale, Calif.

The Arizona Supreme Court rejected his appeal Dec. 29, 1975, but the sentencing judge never told Sumter when to show up to begin serving his term.

The judge and the prosecutor left office shortly after the court decision and apparently no one familiar with the case was around to follow up on it.

A clerk discovered the snafu a few weeks ago.

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Boy sold into slavery, fraud suspect says

WEST DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — A man accused of fraudulently taking money for the return of a newspaper carrier said the boy, missing for three years, had been sold into Mexican slavery by a motorcycle gang.

Robert Herman Meier II, 19, of Saginaw, Mich., also known as Samuel Forbes Dakota, surrendered to federal authorities at the U.S. border at Niagara Falls, N.Y., Thursday. He was being held at the Erie County Jail in Buffalo pending a bail hearing today, the FBI said.

Investigators accuse him of fraudulently taking \$11,000 from John and Noreen Gosch, whose son, Johnny, then aged 12, disappeared Sept. 5, 1982, while delivering newspapers.

A letter the investigators say Meier wrote to Johnny's parents said the boy was taken as part of a large child-slavery ring operated by a motorcycle club to which Meier belonged. The July 23 letter was signed Samuel Forbes Dakota.

It said that since April, 1979, when Meier would have been 13, "I functioned as a guard in the operations of the sale of children as slaves."

"I personally stood guard over no less than 200 children in the time specified and delivered no less

than 30 children to the auction block. One of these children is known to me as Johnny Gosch."

The letter said the boy was sold to a man whom Dakota identified as a "highlevel drug dealer residing in Mexico City."

Mrs. Gosch released the letter Thursday, saying she wanted to put pressure on the FBI to track down leads in it.

Since their son disappeared, she and her husband have kept a high-profile search for him, appearing on nationally televised talk shows and testifying before Congress on the plight of missing children.

They collected \$400,000 from private contributors as a reward fund for Johnny's return, and have made public appeals for information.

Thursday, Mrs. Gosch criticized the FBI, saying it issued a news release Tuesday saying it was looking for Meier, destroying the couple's credibility with anyone who would take the couple's offer to pay ransom for their son.

"We expected confidence with this letter, and they (the FBI) blew it," Mrs. Gosch said. "The FBI has ruined chances for getting our son back from information from the public. Why would anyone talk to us now?"

The FBI alleged that Meier took \$11,000 from the Gosechs, asked

for \$100,000 more and promised to return their son.

Mrs. Gosch said she got the man's letter Aug. 9, several weeks after she met him in Kansas City and sent him checks totalling \$11,000. She said he promised her a written explanation of what happened to Johnny, who disappeared from his paper route.

Meier told the Gosechs that a rescue attempt failed and that three would-be rescuers died in a shootout. The FBI said there was no evidence of such a shootout in Mexico City.

An FBI agent in Omaha said the bureau was checking Meier's story, but he would not comment on whether investigators had contacted Mexican authorities, or on the plausibility of Meier's claims.

"We are looking into the matter, and that's all I can say right now," the spokesman said. "We have no comment on any specific part of the investigation."

Philip D. Smith, special agent in charge of the Buffalo FBI office, said Meier telephoned the Buffalo office Thursday and said he wanted to turn himself over to its custody. Agents arrested him when he crossed into the United States from Canada at Niagara Falls, Smith said.