

# DAV Plays Good Samaritan To Aid Critically Injured Man

(Editor's Note: The following article of local interest came from the Southwest Minnesota Chapter of the Disabled American Veterans.)

By Marty Kohlmeier  
Staff Writer

**MARSHALL** — Some people just can't sit back and hope that someone else will take care of things. Melvin Zimmerman is like that.

Zimmerman, a maintenance foreman at the Minnesota Department of Transportation in Marshall, had worked with Donald Holley for three days while Holley's supervisor was on vacation this summer.

Holley was injured when a DOT pickup in which he was a passenger rolled over August 17 near Minnesota. He was taken to Wiener Memorial Medical Center, and later transferred to Sioux Valley Hospital in Sioux Falls, S.D. where he was reported in critical condition with a bruised lung and a skull fracture. "I knew Don was in the intensive care unit and was in a 'coma,'" Zimmerman said. "His family was notified but because of financial and medical reasons, they could not come to him."

Holley attended Southwest State University the past two years on a basketball scholarship. He had not been home to see his Edenton family since he came to SSU.

"He is the son of Ishom

Holley of Chowan County. "I thought about Don lying there with no family to be with him and the friends he had from school home for the summer," Zimmerman said. "I got progress reports from the hospital daily, but there was no change."

Last Friday afternoon when he came through the back screen door, Zimmerman's wife Darlene, knew there was something on his mind. "What would you think about seeing if we could get someone from North Carolina to be with Don?" he asked.

"I didn't know what to think," said Mrs. Zimmerman, who had never met Holley. "We sure didn't have the money. You don't know if you've got rocks in your head or when you start something like this."

The Zimmermans, who helped to raise 19 children besides their own son, called a number of organizations to try and rouse support for their idea but no sponsor was found. However, three individuals did pledge about half the cost of a plane ticket.

A phone call to Jerard Vlaminc of the Disabled American Veterans proved to be the stroke of luck the Zimmermans needed. With half of the money promised, Vlaminc said the DAV would sponsor a fund.

Through John Hintz, coordinator of Housing and Student Activities at SSU, the Zimmermans reached the Holley family in North

Carolina. Neither of the parents could make the long trip because of poor health, but Holley's 23-year-old sister, Gloria, said she would come, although she had never left Edenton, and certainly had never flown on



Technician Frank Lanning Jr. carried home \$12,410 recently — the result of making a suggestion at work one day.

## Idea nets him \$12,410

A suggestion for a new test procedure for cigarette quality has netted an R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. technician a sizable reward.

Frank Lanning Jr. was told recently that the company liked his suggestion and had decided to reward him for the innovation. He looked forward to a citation, or maybe a couple of hundred dollars.

What he got was \$12,410 — all in crisp, wrapped \$1 bills.

"My knees knocked a little bit," Lanning said following the presentation at one of the company's Winston-Salem, N.C. factories.

Before the novelty of the cold, hard — and heavy — cash wore off, Lanning traded it in for a more sensible check for the full \$12,410.

Lanning's was the largest award paid by the company since it began the practice of rewarding innovations in 1954.

a plane.

"About now the wife and I were wondering if we were getting into something that wasn't any of our business," Zimmerman said. "We were tired and worried: what did we expect? What would the sister expect? Where was the money going to come from? Could the sister get along in a large town after bringing her halfway across the country and leaving her in a strange town?" These thoughts churned inside the Zimmermans' minds as they drove to Sioux Falls to meet the plane on which Gloria would arrive.

The Zimmermans explained the accident and Holley's condition to his

sister over lunch, and tried to relax her.

The hospital visit was dramatic. Holley had been in a coma since the accident. The first response that he showed was at the sight of his sister, Zimmerman said.

Apparently, Holley at first thought he was dreaming. After blinking several times, his eyes filled with tears, Zimmerman said. Holley brought his hand out from under the covers to motion to Zimmerman to come closer.

Because Holley was unable to speak, Zimmerman could only guess at what Holley was trying to express. After hearing that Dean Nelson of Windom, the

driver of the truck, was going to be all right, Holley relaxed. Holley took Zimmerman's hand, pulled Zimmerman's face close to his own and kissed Zimmerman's cheek.

Holley later took Mrs. Zimmerman's hand and kissed it, too, although they hadn't met before.

Room and board were secured at the hospital for Gloria.

The best speaker is even better when he is brief.

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