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## Driver faces reckless homicide charge

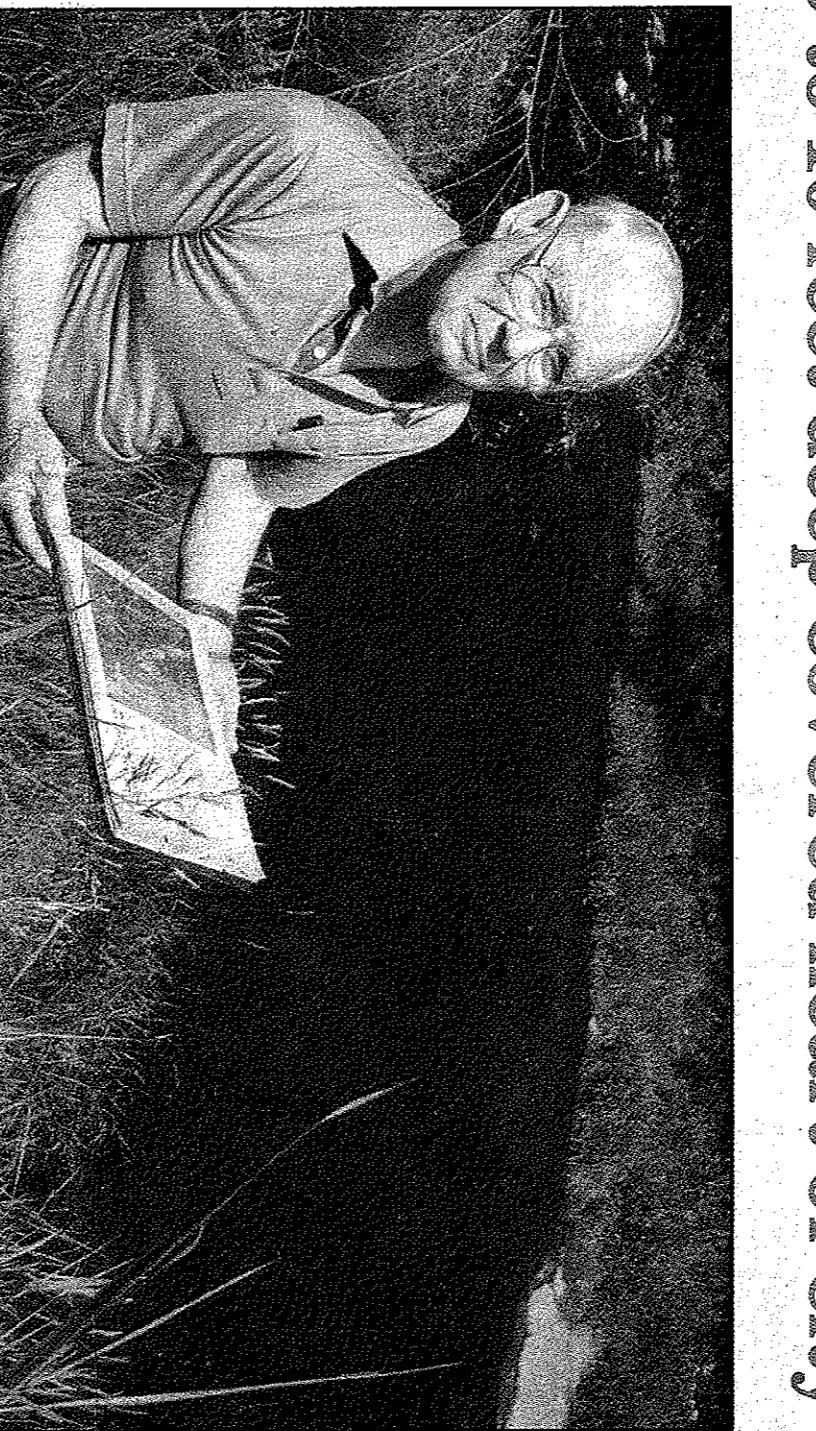
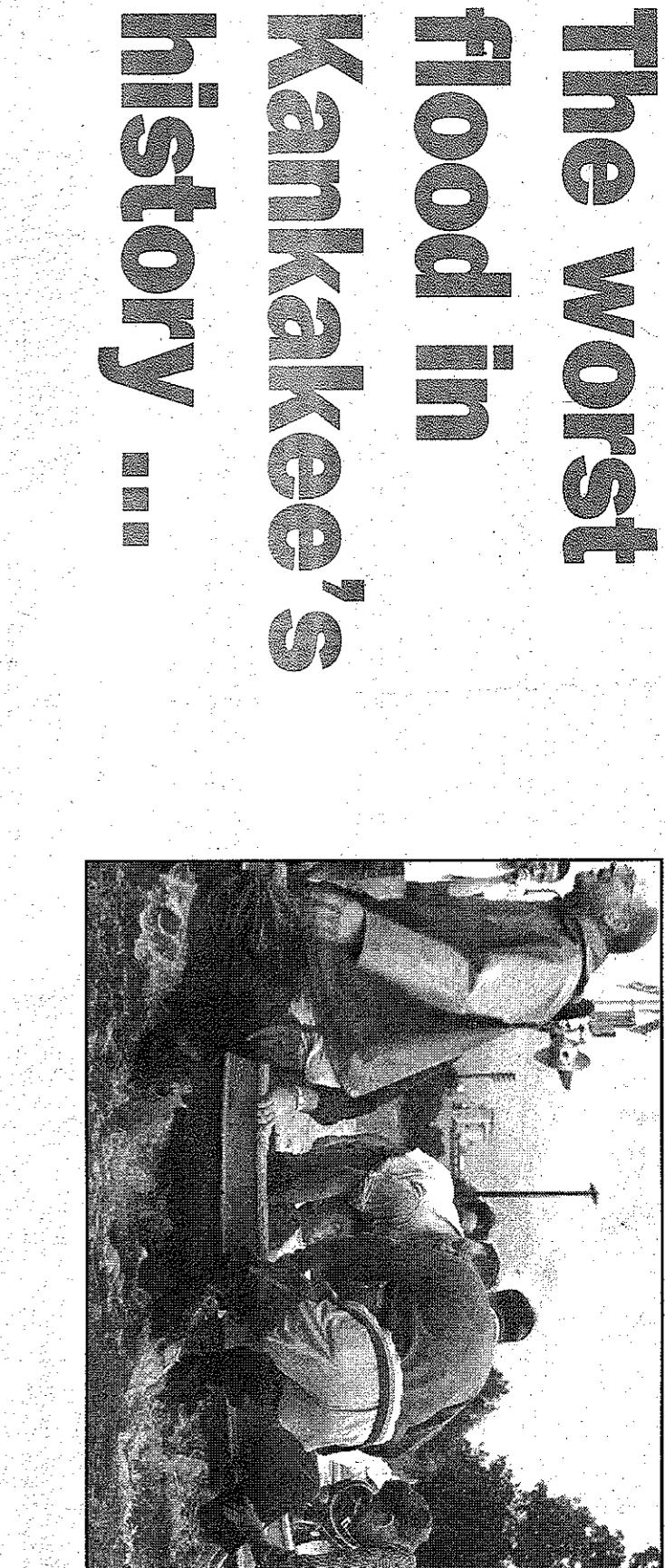
Wife testifies to drinking, says she tried to take control of car

WEDNESDAY

1977

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See FLOOD next page



Journal/Wayne Baranowski

By Michael Linneman, Journal writer

that contained many of the family's most important belongings and documents. Clark said her parents stayed the night of the flood in her south Kankakee home because they knew they would not be able to get into their house during the deluge. But when some men in a boat offered to bring Mr. Purcell to his house the day after the rain, he accepted.

Purcell, who at the time was employed as a shift supervisor at A.O Smith, was wearing hip boots to enable him to walk in regions where the water was not so high, but upon returning to the boat after retrieving the safe, the boat capsized. "He fell in the water and he fell right to the bottom," Clark

**FLOOD ROUTS 350 FAMILIES** read the banner headline on Page 1 of the July 14, 1957, *Sunday Journal*, referring to the tragedy that struck the area only two days before. In just a 12-hour period on that fateful Friday, 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches of rain engulfed a square-mile area in Kankakee, forcing many out of their homes in rescue boats. Saturday marks the 40-year anniversary of the worst flood in Kankakee's history, but some area residents remember it like it was yesterday.

Gerry Clark remembers it as the day she almost lost her father. "It was a real nightmare," Clark said, explaining how her father, Charles Purcell, then a resident of 225 E. Birch St. in Kankakee, left his house in a rescue boat after trying to recover a small safe

**Lake up to 10 feet deep covered heart of city**

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