

Teen dies following pursuit (7/18/03)

A Portland man was killed and a Portland teenager is in critical condition following a motorcycle accident which occurred during a high-speed pursuit by police early this morning in eastern Jay County.

The driver, Brandon S. Hilbert, 20, 940 N. Meridian St., was pronounced dead at the scene by Jay County coroner Brad Myers. He died from internal and head injuries caused by the impact of being thrown from the motorcycle, Myers said.

Robyn Philebaum, 19, 997 Boundary Pike, who was a passenger on the motorcycle, was transported to Jay County Hospital by Jay Emergency Medical Service. She then was transferred to Parkview Hospital in Fort Wayne by Samaritan Helicopter.

According to the police report, Philebaum suffered internal injuries.

Neither Hilbert or Philebaum were wearing helmets.

According to Portland Police Chief Bart Darby, Portland police officer Rob Myers saw Hilbert at the intersection of Meridian and Main streets at about 1:30 a.m. today.

Myers recognized Hilbert and ran a check on his driver's license and the license plate on the motorcycle while following them, Darby said. The check revealed that Hilbert had a suspended driver's license. Myers attempted to pull Hilbert over on East Water Street, near the intersection of Hayes Street. Hilbert did not pull over and sped up as he continued east on Ind. 26. Myers pursued Hilbert and reached speeds in excess of 130 mph.

When Hilbert approached the intersection of Ind. 26 and county road 800 East, he failed to negotiate the curve. Hilbert's motorcycle went off the north side of the road. Both Hilbert and Philebaum were thrown from the motorcycle, which came to rest in grass between Ind. 26 and county road 800 East. Hilbert and Philebaum were found nearby.

This morning, Darby said that "as far as I'm concerned," Myers followed department policy for pursuits and acted accordingly.

The department's "pursuit driving policy" states, "It is important that officers recognize that their focus during a pursuit remains on the safe conclusion of the pursuit and not on the concept of 'winning.' If, when an officer attempts to stop a violator in accordance with the department procedures and the violator or suspicious person attempts to

escape apprehension or elude the officer by accelerating his vehicle or otherwise driving erratically, the officer is obligated to make a reasonable attempt to pursue the suspect or vehicle.

"However, the pursuing officer must terminate any pursuit when the risk of injury or damage to any person or property resulting from continuation of the pursuit becomes greater than the risk of injury to any person or damage to any property that would result from complete escape of the suspect."

Hilbert was driving a 1990 Kawasaki, registered to Matthew S. Miller, 3154 East 400 South, Portland. Damage to the motorcycle was estimated between \$1,000 and \$2,500.

Arrangements for Hilbert are pending at Baird-Freeman Funeral Home in Portland.

Commercial Review, The (Portland, IN) - Monday, July 21, 2003

Brandon S. Hilbert, 20, 621 N. Ship St., Portland, died early Friday morning from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident.

He was born in Muncie on June 24, 1983, the son of Larry Hilbert and Sheri McGalliard. He was employed at Pizza King in Portland and attended Yorktown High School.

Survivors include: his father, Larry Hilbert, Portland; mother, Sheri McGalliard, Portland; maternal grandparents, Richard and Sharon McGalliard, Portland; maternal great-grandparents, Bernard and Loretta White, Sebring, Fla.; paternal grandfather, Harold Hilbert, Hagerstown; maternal grandmother, Mrs. Mo (Helen) Steen, Portland; and several aunts, uncles and cousins.

Funeral services will be held Monday at 2 p.m. in the Baird-Freeman Funeral Home, Portland, with Pastor John Tyner presiding.

Burial will follow in the Green Park Cemetery.

Visitation will be held Sunday from 1 to 6 p.m.

Memorials can be made to American Heart Association.

Contributed by Jane Edson