

# THE TIMES

Indiana

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A TIMES SPECIAL REPORT:

# The bridge

## Today Friday

April 16, 1982

### The rest of the world

Secretary of State Alexander Haig impressing "new ideas" in Argentina for resolve of the Falkland Islands crisis. In the U.S., President Reagan sought to calm tensions by talking with Argentine President Leopoldo Galtieri.

A Bloomington, Ind. couple who let their severely retarded son die want to be alone "to live with their decision," one of their lawyers said Thursday.

President Reagan's promised tax break for parents of private school children is drawing heavy criticism from public school supporters. Details of these and other stories on A-12.

### Team report

The extensive special report on the East Chicago bridge collapse in today's Times is the result of team reporting by the newspaper's writers, photographers and editors. Writers and editors contributing to the report include Nancy Banks, Ellen Heine, Lori Olaszewski, Timothy Sapon, Ruth Ann Krause, Cindy Richards, Carol Leigh Huffman, Fred Ohi, Olga Sitewski, Richard Parratt, John T. Adams III, Doris La Fauci, Pete Kitzbach and Don Baraglia.

Pictures are by George Ross, James Bix, John Smerciak, Jeff Kachis, Greg Meyon and The Associated Press.

### Weather - Rain

More thundershowers and cooler temperatures are forecast for tonight.

The National Weather Service says the low tonight will be in the mid-40s. Saturday's high will be in the upper 50s. It will be partly sunny and windy. There's a 30 percent chance of rain.

Sunday and Monday are expected to be fair.

For 24-hour weather information, call Weatherline at 895-3600. More temperatures and national weather map on Page A-12.

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### Losers' corner

... welcomes the Marys and Catherine. The Johns, too. No longer are the names as popular as they were around the turn of the century. For the first time, at least in New York City, most newborn girls last year were named in order of popularity. Jennifer, Jessica, Melissa, Nicole, Michelle, Elizabeth, Lisa and Tiffany (fied), Christina and Danielle. Jennifer has been the favorite since 1972. In 1896, Mary and Catherine were the top most popular names for girls. John and William for boys. Now it's Michael and Christopher.



Construction worker comforts an injured colleague at the site of the Cline disaster.

By FRED OTT  
Times Staff Writer

**EAST CHICAGO** — Twelve workers were killed and 17 injured Thursday as two sections of the unfinished Cline Avenue extension ramp collapsed.

Dead are Harold Carlson, 1928 Roy St., Lansing; Gerry Wedding, 909 Kane St., Hammond; John Chester, 5700 Springfield St., Portage; Harold Etkin, 3843 W. 1490 St., Hanna, Ind.; Robert Auer, 5645 1st St., Merrillville; Michael Horn, 1st 212 Woodland Villa, Portage; Roy Gourley, 3803 S. 1180 W., Westville; Billy Bricker, RR 1, Dumont; Calvin Whitehead, of Hammond; Fred Krueg, of Hebron; Michael Beird, address unknown; and Roberto Rubio, of Whiting.

Rubio's body was embedded in the concrete he had been helping to pour. John Kouris, attorney for the Lake County coroner's office, said his office, East Chicago police and construction company representatives were trying today to determine how the body can be safely removed.

Lake County Coroner Albert Willard, who coordinated rescue operations, emphasized that the body would have to be cut free in a manner that would not cause more of the ramp to fall.

The danger exists, he said, because of the still-hanging portion of the ramp in which the body is encased, and the fact structural supports have been torn loose from the still-standing section of the ramp to the west.

"There's no point in risking further serious injury to rescue a dead body," Willard said.

Workers and others at the scene pieced together this story: About 75 men were working at the Riley Road construction site at 10:40 a.m. An undetermined number of them were 50 feet above ground on the ramp.

Workers stop the ramp were pouring cement on the section just south of the Jones and Laughlin steel plant on Riley Road when they heard a cracking sound.

Continued on Page A-4

## 'All you can do is pray'

By CINDY RICHARDS  
Times Business-Labor Writer

**HAMMOND** — Robert Farkas lit another cigarette with trembling hands.

Then he had to answer the phone. "Yes, we had four carpenters dead. I can't... I can't say their names again."

But the business agent for the Northwest Indiana District Council of Carpenters had to say their names again — John Chester, Bob Kiser, Junior Carlson and Fred Krueg.

He had to keep talking about it. "It looked like a bad dream. When you see a guy you've known all your life and he doesn't have a face anymore, it's tough to take," Farkas said, recalling the horror at the ramp collapse.

He had gone to the site as soon as he heard.

"It looked like a war movie — you know, when they bomb the bridges? That's what it looked like — like someone had bombed the bridge."

Remembering the teamwork of the rescue squads lightened his mood a little.

"It was just great the way everyone pitched in to help," he said, toying with his lighter.

Then his face darkened again, and his voice cracked. "Some guy asked if I could give him a hand, I said, 'Sure, anything you need.' Then he said it was a body removal. Physically, I could do anything any man can do, but I just couldn't do that," Farkas said.

His red eyes spilled another tear. The phone at district headquarters in Hammond intruded again. "No, there's nothing you can do. Well, all you can do is pray for the poor bastards."

### How the bridge fell

- Here is a chronology of Thursday's disaster:
- 10:40 a.m. — First sections of Cline Avenue extension bridge collapse without warning.
  - 10:42 — East Chicago Emergency Ambulance Services arrive on scene.
  - 10:45 — Last span collapses as rescue efforts begin. St. Catherine's Hospital in East Chicago receives word of accident.
  - 10:55 — St. Catherine's activates disaster plan after hearing injury estimate.
  - 11:00 — St. Catherine's dispatches two doctors and six nurses to site.
  - 11:15 — First five patients arrive at the hospital.
  - 11:30 a.m. — Bulk of patients arrive at St. Catherine's.

Times graphics by John T. Adams III, photos by James Bix