

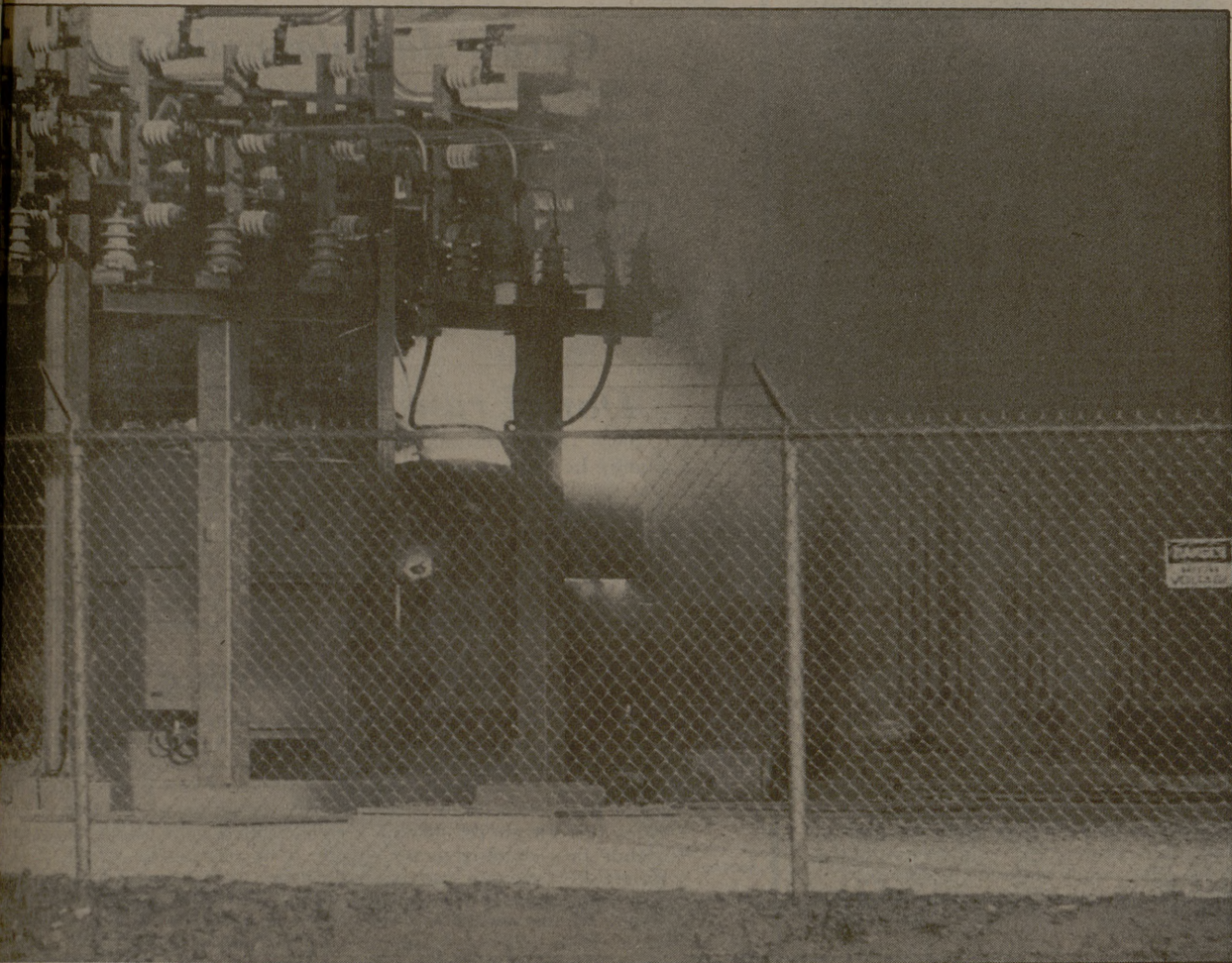
The Battalion

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Transformer blowout shuts down power



Battalion photo by Pat O'Malley

Last night's College Station power failure occurred after this transformer blew out at the sub-station

south of Highway 30, across from Sausalito Apts. The blow-out occurred at approximately 6:20 p.m.

By JULIE SPEIGHTS
and
LEE ROY LESCHPER JR.
Battalion Staff

Forty per cent of College Station's residents were without electricity for at least three hours last night when a main city power substation shorted out.

City officials didn't know last night why two of the station's three regulator-recloser units shorted out, causing the failure.

The area bounded by Dominik St. on the north, the East Bypass on the east, Anderson St. on the west and the south city limits on the south was without power during the failure.

City Manager North Bardell said the affected area contains about 40 per cent of the city's residents.

The city began restoring power at 9 p.m. by drawing power from Bryan electricity lines, Bardell said. He said last night that all power should have been restored by midnight.

Bryan's city council agreed last night to allow College Station to again take electricity from lines that were de-energized when College Station converted part of its electrical service to Gulf States Utilities.

The 137,000-volt station, on Hwy. 30, shut down at 6:18 p.m. yesterday after the two units shorted out in a burst of electrical sparks and flames.

The two station units were completely burned out, with arcing electricity and sparks hot enough to partially melt their heavy metal cases. The fire extinguished itself as soon as the station's automatic shut-off device cut off its power.

The station handles the portion of College Station's electricity which the city is purchasing from Gulf States Utilities. The station had been switched from Bryan Utilities power during the summer when College Station switched part of its electricity supply to Gulf States.

A Gulf States representative told city engineers after the failure that Gulf States had had some "high power line problems" about the same time the station shorted out. Whether this related in any way to the damage to the station was not clear.

George Ford, director of public works for College Station, said some of the station's power could have been switched back on immediately, through the one remaining regulator-recloser unit, but city officials were reluctant to do so without making repairs.

No one was certain last night why the regulator shorted out.

"Right now we're not concerned with what happened," Bardell said. "We're just interested in getting it back on."

Bardell said there is an apparent fault in the transformer connected to the two units which shorted out, although the fault may not have caused the failure. It will be checked out before the transformer is put back on full power, he said.

A city employee is determining what parts will be necessary to repair the damaged units. If the needed parts are immediately available, the station could be back in service within 48 hours, Bardell said.

At dusk many students had their apartment doors open and had retreated to balconies to get relief from the heat.

Others were throwing frisbees and participating in other outdoor activities and

seemed unaffected by the lack of electricity.

Two Plantation Oaks Apartment residents were eating in 3-C-3, restaurant which was also without power.

They said they would be very inconvenienced by the outage, but planned to manage with one candle and hoped the power would be restored before long.

One of the girls commented that she would be extremely distraught if she couldn't use her blow dryer in the morning.

Mike Vrana, manager of 3-C-3, said his customers had been very nice about the problem. He served customers by candlelight who were in the restaurant at the time of the blackout. He said his refrigerated perishables would not be affected for about 5-6 hours.

A spokesman for the Safeway store in Culpepper Plaza said the store closed about 15 minutes after the outage. Cashiers checked out the remaining customers by using manual levers on the cash registers.

He was dismissing employees for the evening, but hoped to reopen the store whenever power returned.

Some 20 compressors for refrigeration units were shut off at the store, but the spokesman said being without power for about two hours would not hurt the merchandise.



Battalion photo by Pat O'Malley

A policeman directs motorists on Highway 6 yesterday evening after the transformer blowout cut off traffic lights.

Organization may help to lower rates

Cable costs some students more

By KIM TYSON
Battalion Staff

Students in the Commons dormitories pay more than \$7 a semester more for cable than other dorms at Texas A&M University.

These residents may not have to pay if they organize, said Howard Vestal, president for business affairs.

Four Commons dorms, Krueger-Mosher-Aston, pay \$6.50 for FM cable, \$13.00 for television cable, or

\$18.00 for both per semester, approximately equal to the \$4 per month city rates.

Other residence halls, however, pay a rate of approximately \$5.50 for either television or FM cable, \$10.50 for both per semester. Some dorms vary this charge by about 50 cents to go into dorm funds.

These rates have been consistent since the two local cable companies, Midwest Video Corp. and Community Cablevision, began serving the dormitories in 1972.

The different rates are a result of the way

the cables were put in, Vestal said.

Vestal worked with the two companies to have cables installed when the Commons dormitories were built.

"We wanted to give the students a choice of cable companies," he said.

This choice is the reason for the higher rates, said Dr. Charles Powell, director of student affairs.

Powell explained that in these dorms the students are given the individual's rate - not the discounted group rate.

Ron Blatchley, associate director of student affairs, said in the other dorms the dorm councils decide on one company to provide cable service for the entire dorm, then arrange to sell the cables, collect the money and have them installed.

In these dormitories the companies had to wire around existing buildings, Blatchley said, but the Commons area had their installed during construction.

Vestal said there was never any agreement between the cable companies and A&M for specific rates to be charged.

He said that if a dorm or group of dorms want to organize to negotiate with the companies there would be no restrictions to keep them from it.

"Technically, everyone in Krueger could get together and go with one company. Students would initiate it. I wouldn't," Vestal said.

"I would have to intervene if one company came in and tried to take over the business in one of those dormitories," Vestal added. "But if all the students go together I wouldn't object to that."

He said this would not violate the original agreement with the companies that each company would be treated equally by the university.

Glenn Ferris, Commons area coordinator, said he would approve of organizing to lower the rates.

"I would think that if the dorm councils

take on the responsibility to negotiate with both companies and the job involved, it would seem the way to go," Ferris said.

Ferris said working for a group rate would probably be more feasible on a trial basis, possibly in the spring when the dorm councils have time to organize. He also said he would like the residents of the dorms to vote, to approve giving up cable company choice for lower rates.

Gordon Gregg, vice president and manager of Community Cablevision, said his company would be willing to negotiate with a dorm for cheaper rates if it wanted to buy as a group.

Leroy Jakubik, general manager of Midwest Video Corp., also said that his company would be willing to negotiate, but said he would have to look into the original agreement when the dorms were wired to serve both companies.

Ron Blatchley said the one problem he could foresee with organizing is the size of the Commons dorms. The number of rooms in each dorm ranges from 237 in Dunn Hall to 342 in Mosher Hall. Other dorms on campus average about 130 rooms.

Of the four dorm presidents in the Commons, only one knew there was a rate difference.

"What a rip-off," exclaimed Carolyn Brothers, Krueger Hall president. She said she was planning to meet with her executive council to consider organizing to get the group rates.

Lisa Howe, Mosher Hall president, echoed the other presidents: "We thought the rates were set and that's just the way the cables came."

Some of the administrators interviewed knew there was a rate difference, but none knew how much.

Powell also said that if representatives in the Residence Hall Association decide they'd like a group rate, the Department of Student Affairs would negotiate for them.

No one hurt in bomb blasts

Explosions near White House, Soviet Embassy laid to Cubans

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Two bombs were set off early today, one just 90 feet from the White House grounds, rattling the security-conscious nation's capital where dozens of foreign dignitaries were gathered for the signing of the Panama Canal treaties.

No injuries were reported. An anonymous caller told United Press International the bombs were planted by a commando group to protest Russian support of Cuba and human rights violations in Cuba.

Police said one of the bombs went off at about 3 a.m. in a cluster of eight large cement flower pots at an intersection along the Elipse, a grassy area connecting the White House grounds with the Washington Monument.

The other bomb was set off about 20

minutes next to a Russian airline office building — adjacent to the Soviet Embassy.

The flowerpots where the one bomb went off are located about 90 feet from an iron fence surrounding the White House grounds. The fence itself is about 150 yards from the White House.

"It just blew one of them (a flower pot) apart," Police Lt. Albert Johnson said.

The bomb at the airline office shattered windows in the building and in nearby structures, including the Capital Hilton Hotel located across the street.

Shortly before the second explosion the anonymous caller told UPI that bombs had been placed in the city, including near the airline office.

William Edwards, manager of the Hilton, said the blast knocked out about 60

windows in the hotel, but there were no injuries. Glass from the office building littered the street.

Edwards, who was asleep at the time of the explosion, said the blast sounded "just like a huge clap of thunder."

Police units were sent to the National Press Building as a precaution because the official Russian news agency, Tass, is located in the building. No threats or explosions were reported there.

Police Inspector Raymond Remick, in charge of the investigation at the first blast site, said only that an "explosive device" had been used, but the type was not known. "We're going to sift the area" to determine what explosive was used, he said.

Fragments of a device were found at the White House location.

Engineers predict solar air-cooling

United Press International

Solar powered air-conditioning based on current evaporative cooling systems will be the cooling method of the future, according to a team of researchers at Texas A&M University.

Solar powered hot water and space heating currently cost the same, or more, than other forms of energy. But a team of computer scientists and mechanical and electrical engineers at A&M's College of Engineering are working on a solar-powered cooling system they hope will be economically superior.

"This is an outgrowth of the old evaporative cooler which has been used for decades in West Texas," said Dr. Jeff Morehouse, one of the principal investigators on the project. "The concept is simple: produce desert-like air and then cool it by using an evaporative cooler."

Morehouse said a desiccant (moisture absorbing substance) is used to remove humidity from the air prior to evaporative

cooling. The solar energy is used to drive off the moisture in the desiccant so that it can be used again to absorb more moisture. Natural gas also could be burned for additional drying if not enough solar energy is available, said Morehouse.

"The components of the system are available," he said. "We just have to work out a continuous system for residential-sized units."

"We think two or three tons of air-conditioning could be produced with \$2,000 to \$3,000 of raw equipment," he said. "Spread out over several years, this cost would be competitive with current air-conditioning."

Morehouse said an analysis of desiccant cooling systems will be computer simulated while a simple working system is built for both verification of the simulation model as well as gaining actual operating experience with the equipment.

Daniel to announce for attorney general

AUSTIN — Former Speaker Price Daniel Jr. yesterday called news conferences for today to announce he will be a candidate for Texas attorney general.

Daniel, 36, was speaker of the House from 1973 to 1975 when the legislature passed a series of reform bills as a result of the Sharpstown scandal which forced the resignation of the previous speaker and implicated a number of other high ranking state officials.

Attorney General John Hill has said he will not be a candidate for re-election, and is expected to challenge Gov. Dolph Briscoe for the party's nomination.

Daniel scheduled news conferences Wednesday in Austin, Dallas and Houston. His announcement said the conferences would concern his political plans for the 1978 elections, but there is little doubt he will be a candidate for attorney general.

Secretary of State Mark White also is considering entering the campaign to succeed Hill, but has made no formal announcement.

Battalion photo by Jim Crawley

Standing as a memorial to our fallen students, the Academic Building flag is lowered to half-mast. Last night, A&M students paid tribute to eight students who died during the summer vacation.