

The Battalion

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Flood causes dam break in Georgia

United Press International
TOCCOA, Ga. — Rescuers kept a vigil for a leaking 200-gallon propane gas tank through Sunday night and said the search will be renewed today for more possible victims of a ruptured earthen dam that this morning caused at least 37 persons in tons of cascading water.

Gov. George Busbee awaited a damage estimate so he could request federal disaster aid from President Carter, who received a first-hand report from his wife, Sally, on her personal inspection of the scene.

Swelled by five days of steady rain, the waters of 80-acre Kelly Barnes Lake burst through the dam between 1:30 a.m. and 2 a.m. EST Sunday, sending tons of red, muddy water cascading down Toccoa Creek onto the sleeping campus town of Toccoa Falls College.

The swirling water, estimated by some to be 30 feet high, washed into houses and dormitories and swept away others occupied by married students and their families.

"I just stood there and watched the waters being washed away," said Tom Hickey, 24, a student. "They were banging on each other and being crushed. You

could hear people trapped inside screaming."

Nineteen of the victims were children, in many instances swept from the grasping hands of their parents.

"I tell you what got me was the kids," said Busbee, who inspected the area Sunday. "I saw them bring out three little kids and a daddy, and I knew the mother was back up under the debris somewhere."

The pounding water damaged the emergency valve of a 200-gallon propane gas tank that served the trailer homes and gas began leaking from the four-foot high tank.

A crew of firemen was assigned a continuous vigil over the tank.

"There's no danger as long as people stay away and nobody lights any matches or smokes," a spokesman for the Toccoa Fire Department said early this morning. "We're just going to let it escape."

Rescuers gave up the search for more possible victims at dusk Sunday but said it would resume today. Two persons were known to be missing and were presumed drowned.

Mrs. Carter left church services in Washington and took a presidential jet to Georgia after she heard the news Sunday morning.

"It's an indescribable sight and a terrible tragedy," she said after touring the area in a National Guard helicopter. Greg Schneiders, the president's projects director, accompanied Mrs. Carter and remained at the scene to work with officials on recovery efforts.

The first lady returned to Washington Sunday afternoon to give the President a personal report on the disaster.

It was the worst U.S. dam disaster since 118 persons died in the 1972 Buffalo Creek flood in West Virginia.

Col. Frank Walter of the Army Corps of Engineers said there were two possible causes for the flooding — a break in the dam or erosion of the earth at its top. He said "overtopping" of rising waters could cause the dam to break after the flooding started.

Thurman Kemp, 40, a student, said the water "was 30 feet high. It was enormous."

Kemp and his family were swept from their trailer home and he was separated from his wife and mother and one of his two sons. He grabbed the hand of his oldest son, Morgan, 9, and they eventually scrambled to safety. His wife was rescued a quarter-mile away and his mother stayed in the trailer and floated down to a bridge. His youngest son, Chris, 4, drowned.

Fighting flares again on Mideast borders

United Press International
Israel and Palestinian guerrillas in northern Lebanon fought artillery battles Sunday. It was the first major flare-up of fighting since a U.S.-mediated cease-fire took effect in the volatile border region six weeks ago.

The fighting was accompanied by hard-line statements from both Palestinian and Israeli leaders on Middle East peace efforts. PLO chief Yasser Arafat vowed "fighting until victory."

The fighting began with a rocket attack early Sunday on the northern Israeli town

of Nahariya, located on the Mediterranean a few miles from the Lebanese border. Two men were killed.

Israeli military sources said the attack apparently was launched by Palestinian guerrillas of the so-called rejection front, which opposes any accommodation with the Jewish state.

In retaliation, Israeli gunners pounded guerrilla positions across the Lebanese border in a cannonade ordered by Defense Minister Ezer Weizman, who visited the families of Shmuel Mintz, 33, and Louis Levi, 45, who were killed by shrapnel.

"Israel will settle the accounts with those who did this deed," he said. "But there is no guarantee it will not happen again."

A Lebanese reporter in southern Lebanon said fighting escalated around the Palestinian-held town of Nabatiyah as guerrillas traded fire with Lebanese rightists backed by the Israeli gunners across the border. Three persons, including a 12-year-old girl, were reported killed.

Police searching for purse snatcher

By LARRY PARKER

A female, approximately 5 feet 7, medium build with blonde or red hair has been acquiring purses via "five-finger discount" from Texas A&M University restaurants.

"We have had eight purse thefts reported in the last 12 days," said Buford Thornton, assistant special investigator for the University police.

Most of the purse snatchings have occurred in the ladies restroom on the first floor of the Memorial Student Center (MSC), Thornton said. The investigation has been kept quiet until now, he said, because the police had stake-outs and decries around the restroom.

"We decided to let the story out so people could start protecting their property," Thornton said.

Three investigative officers working full-time have failed to catch the girl. The general description has surfaced on two separate incidents, Thornton said, adding that the suspect either dyes her hair or wears a wig.

According to statements from victims, the average time for the thefts to occur has

been three minutes. All thefts have occurred between 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

The suspect is not only stealing purses, Thornton said, but also forging checks and taking credit cards. Six of the stolen purses have been turned in at various locations, one of which was J.C. Penney Co. in Bryan.

Thornton said one Texas A&M coed had \$175 worth of checks (total of 5 checks) forged in her name alone. He said a total of \$220 cash has been taken thus far.

Another coed, he said, had a book of checks from the Bank of A&M in College Station and Citizen State Bank of Corpus Christi stolen.

Another victim recovered her own purse from a table in the MSC snack bar minutes after it had been stolen. Nothing had been taken from the purse.

"The thief seem to go in for the latest fashion in shoulder bags and clutch purses," said Thornton. Three of the stolen purses had monograms on them.

"A&M will have to suffer the loss on the checks cashed on campus," Thornton said, "however, students will have to pay the first \$50 worth of any purchases made by the thief for each credit card stolen."

By DEBBY KRENEK
By JEANNE GRAHAM

The Better Business Bureau of the Brazos Valley, without question, promotes better business—for the businesses. The question is: What can it do for the consumer, and more specifically, for the college student?

Leroy Balmain, head of the department, says the bureau is set up to take complaints and solve disputes concerning consumers and businesses in the area. Two disputing parties are brought together to



A splash and sparkle

It's not something from under the microscope in biology lab, although it might pass in a pinch. Actually, photographer Ken Herrera has caught the sun in the spray of Rudder Fountain.

BBB: avenue of complaints

"fairly and satisfactorily" find a solution to the particular problem, with no legal action involved.

"As long as there is a marketplace, there will be disputes," Balmain says. The largest number of disputes concern off-campus students with apartment management problems; most specifically, problems with getting their security deposits back, he says.

Before filing a complaint with the bureau, a consumer must first try to settle his problem with the business in question,

Balmain says. For instance, a tenant must take his complaint to the apartment manager before he takes it to the bureau. If the consumer fails to get action that way, he can submit a written, signed complaint to the bureau explaining the facts of the case, how he has been mistreated, and what he thinks a satisfactory solution to the problem would be.

"We receive at least 1,000 phone calls per month from people with complaints, however only about 400 of those ever reach us in written form," says Lynn Botkin, BBB secretary. This averages about 50 calls a day.

The consumer is then asked to fill out a form about the problem and what he thinks would be a fair solution.

The business in question can either comply with the firm letter and set up a time to meet and discuss the problem with the dissatisfied consumer and bureau, or simply throw the letter away and forget all about it.

"If the business doesn't reply," Balmain says, "we continue to send letters. If there is still no response, we record that there have been complaints filed against that business." And so the case is ended. The BBB can suggest, however, that the consumer go through small claims court.

"We can only inform consumers about delinquent businesses when they call in before they shop," says Botkin. "We only give out the facts, then we leave it up to the consumer to decide. We do not endorse any companies or products, nor do we guarantee that the customer will be satisfied with any business."

If the business in question chooses to comply, the two parties are brought together under the supervision of the bureau to settle the dispute, either peacefully or by arbitration.

If arbitration is chosen, the decision on the case is out of the hands of the bureau, Balmain says. The two parties can either take the case before a panel of citizens, select a single arbitrator from a pool of volunteers, or each select a person of his choice. The two so chosen pick a third arbitrator from the pool to serve as panel chairman.

Informal proceedings are held before the arbitrators, with witnesses present if the parties desire. The decision may re-

solve all issues in favor of one party or it may be split between the parties.

Decisions, whether in favor of the consumer or the business, are unbiased, Balmain says. "When I make a decision, it's like refereeing a ball game. I don't take sides."

Businesses are the lifeblood of the BBB and Balmain explains that the bureau is financed and supported by area companies, stores and apartment complexes.

Although the Brazos County BBB encompasses 18 counties from as far west as Milam County to Sabine County on the Louisiana border, only two of its members are from outside Bryan-College Station.

"The Better Business Bureau is just getting established in Bryan so we haven't been able to serve outlying areas as well as we should," Balmain says. When Balmain came to the organization in February 1972, there were 110 businesses in the BBB. Now there are 400, an increase of about 60 businesses per year.

An annual dues of \$75 is paid to the Brazos Valley bureau by each member business.

Sam Collins, manager of Pelican's Wharf, joined the BBB this summer. He says that Balmain called on him with a list of benefits the BBB could provide his business. These included the use of the BBB sticker that is supposed to signify an honest business and the monthly newsletter in which the BBB warns against fraudulent business.

"He came to me with the idea of what he could do for us," Collins says. "He was trying to sell me on the BBB. I thought it would be good for my business, so I joined."

Jim Darby of Darby's Garage has never joined the BBB. He says he didn't join because of the dues and because his competitors aren't members. Darby had an unanswered complaint with the BBB in April.

"I own and run my garage myself so I don't always have time to sit down and answer the complaints," Darby says. "There is always going to be someone complaining that I didn't fix his car. I always do what they ask me to do and no more. Then they complain when their car doesn't act brand new."

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They're Off!!!

It's the start of the Southwestern Association Intercollegiate Athletics for Women regional cross-country meet held at the A&M golf course Saturday. The Aggies won the 5,000 meter race with

42 points to finish their season undefeated. They travel to Georgetown for the National AIAW meet Nov. 19.

Battalion photo by Michael Fred