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Commons area has few fire defenses

By LINDA SULLIVAN

As it stands, half of the residents of the Commons area dormitory complex at Texas A&M University have but two defenses in case of fire: evacuate or make a phone call.

A campus-wide effort by physical plant officials to change the locks on all equipment rooms has left Krueger and Dunn dormitories without access to fire extinguishers. All four of the five-pound carbon dioxide fire extinguishers have been kept in air handler rooms. But starting a month ago, plant officials have been changing the locks — and no one nearby has the keys.

The only person around with the keys is area coordinator Glenn Ferris. However, Ferris' office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. — and he's not always there.

Fire extinguishers were placed by the University Health and Safety office to specifically combat the hazard of electrical fires in the facilities rooms. Some Commons resident advisers, however, said they were under the impression the extinguishers were available for use throughout the dorms.

Ferris estimated this year's total fire damage for the Commons to be less than \$100, but admits he will feel "more com-

fortable" with accessory fire prevention equipment available. Thirty-eight ten-pound fire extinguishers have been requested from the Office of Student Affairs at a total cost of \$750. Each resident adviser is supposed to have an extinguisher in their room soon, Ferris said. He couldn't estimate the time. The dry chemical fire extinguishers will handle assorted types of fires, including electrical fires.

Resident advisers may or may not receive formal procedure instructions in case of a dorm fire.

"Normally, at the first of the year our office is asked to hold meetings with resident advisers to go through the steps of fire prevention, but some of the dorms have not done this," said Harry Stiteler, safety coordinator for the department of facilities.

Standard procedure for a dorm fire dictates the resident adviser telephone the campus emergency switchboard (5-1111), resident advisers have been told. The switchboard is located in the radio room of the physical plant and manned 24 hours by operators.

Calls are monitored by the University police who are usually dispatched to determine the credibility of the call, Stiteler said. After receiving an emergency call,

the operator decides whether to call the fire or police department, he said.

After the emergency phone call is placed, evacuation begins. No formal escape plan exists, but resident advisers have been told to warn as many residents as possible without endangering their own lives.

The Commons dorm complex was constructed with a built-in fire detection and alarm system. Panels in each of the four head resident advisers' offices and one at the front reception desk flash lights pinpointing the fire location. This allows for early detection and prevents an uncontrollable blaze. But the system isn't fail-safe.

An over-heated clothes dryer in Krueger Hall burned during the summer of 1977, causing an estimated \$500 in fire damage. Smoke was seen billowing out of the dorm, but the panels did not show the fire's source.

The light panels have been most accurate in determining trash bin fires, the most frequent type of dorm fire. Ferris said the problem is most prevalent in Dunn Hall, where six trash fires have occurred this year.

"I don't want to call it arson," he said, "but many times I believe the fires were set intentionally."

Last week, there were two trash chute fires, one in Dunn Hall, and one in Hughes Hall (a north area dorm). If resident advisers are sure the fire is confined to a trash bin, they are able to put it out themselves via a water hose located in each trash chute room.

Stiteler said improvements to the fire protection equipment at the University are now being planned.

A 1977 summer fire of undetermined cause in the basement of the Memorial Student Center prompted University officials to appropriate \$400,000 to improve the campus fire precaution system. Currently, there are more than 5,500 fire extinguishers across the campus which are inspected and tagged monthly by the Fire Protection Division of the physical plant.

"The money will go for detection systems similar to the Commons equipment," Stiteler said, "to shorten the time it takes for evacuation."

Elderly couple, dog escape burning house

An elderly couple watched their house burn to the ground Thursday night. Mr. and Mrs. Walter Clay, and a pet dog, escaped without injury from their burning wood frame house three-fourths mile from Wellborn Road, according to fire reports.

A neighbor, Ray Waley, alerted the College Station Fire Department at 9:08. Two trucks and eight firemen were dispatched to the blaze.

Bon Garrison, College Station Fire Department inspector, declined to give the cause of the fire although he said an investigation would follow.

According to reports the fire was ignited

in a bathroom closet. Gary Faulkner, a neighbor, said, "I heard a noise that sounded like shooting a gun. When I walked up I saw flames shooting from the front of the house."

A propane gas tank, approximately 8 feet from the house, was the major cause of concern to the firemen, said Garrison. The tank had to be cooled by a water spray to prevent a possible explosion, he said.

Property loss was valued at \$30,000, and \$4,000 in cash was lost in the fire, said reports.

Firemen remained at the scene until 11:30 p.m. while the charred remains of the house smoldered.

The Duke hospitalized; heart surgery rumored

United Press International

BOSTON — A spokesman for Massachusetts General Hospital today would neither confirm nor deny reports that actor John Wayne will undergo heart surgery for replacement of an aorta valve.

A Boston television station, WNAC-TV, says the actor will undergo the operation Saturday morning.

The station says Dr. Mortimer Buckley, a heart specialist at MGH, will do the operation.

"I cannot tell you anything except that he is in the hospital and it is not cancer

related," hospital spokesman Martin Bander said today.

"If I were to confirm that it was heart surgery then it would no longer be a rumor," Bander said.

Dr. Buckley, who resides in Boston, could not be immediately reached for comment today.

Wayne lost a lung to cancer in 1964, and recently had a bout with pneumonia.

Wayne, who will turn 71 next May, was admitted late Wednesday. Bander said the actor, who has appeared in more than 200 films in 50 years, has requested total privacy.

Trial continues Girlfriend testifies that Coleman had Baugh's credit cards

By TERESA HUDDLESTON

Walter Joe Coleman's girlfriend told the court Thursday that Coleman gave her several credit cards that belonged to Lawrence Baugh.

Coleman, 19, is on trial in the 85th District Court for the Jan. 12, 1977 shooting death of Baugh. His girlfriend told the court that Coleman had come to her house the night of Jan. 13th and told her he was afraid for Baugh because he thought a man named Richard might have killed him.

Coleman, for the first time, avoided any

eye contact with the witness. Instead he kept his head down with his face hidden behind his hand.

His girlfriend testified that she had given the credit cards to her mother a couple of days later and that her mother had given them to Detective Bobby Yeager.

Thomas Whitlock told the court that Coleman had purchased gas with Baugh's credit card on Jan. 12 at a station where Whitlock was employed. He said he had known Coleman before but had never

known his name.

The defense objected to Whitlock's testimony saying it was evidence relating to extraneous matters. Judge Barron overruled the motion.

Also giving testimony Thursday was Coleman's roommate at the time of Baugh's death, Ahmed Cherrak. Cherrak said he had lived with Baugh for eight months before he began living with Coleman, and had introduced Coleman to Baugh.

Cherrak said that on the night of Jan. 12 about 10:30, Coleman came home and told him he had killed Baugh. He said Coleman told him he had gone to Baugh's to pay back some money. Coleman told him Baugh had made sexual advances towards him and he had kicked Baugh in the neck and broken it.

Cherrak said Coleman then told him he had wrapped Baugh in a blanket and taken him to the Navasota River. He said Coleman wanted him to help burn Baugh's car. Cherrak said he refused and urged Coleman to go to the police.

Cherrak said that he and Coleman went to talk to some friends of Cherrak. Coleman told them the same story, he said.

Cherrak said he talked to his friends about Coleman and they decided to tell the police.

"I was worried about Larry (Baugh). I thought he might still be alive," Cherrak said.

Cherrak said one of his friends went to tell the police and he and his other friend waited with Coleman.

Mike Mansfield was working next door to Baugh's house on Jan. 12, 1977. He told the court that on that day Coleman arrived at Baugh's house about ten minutes before Baugh came home from work.

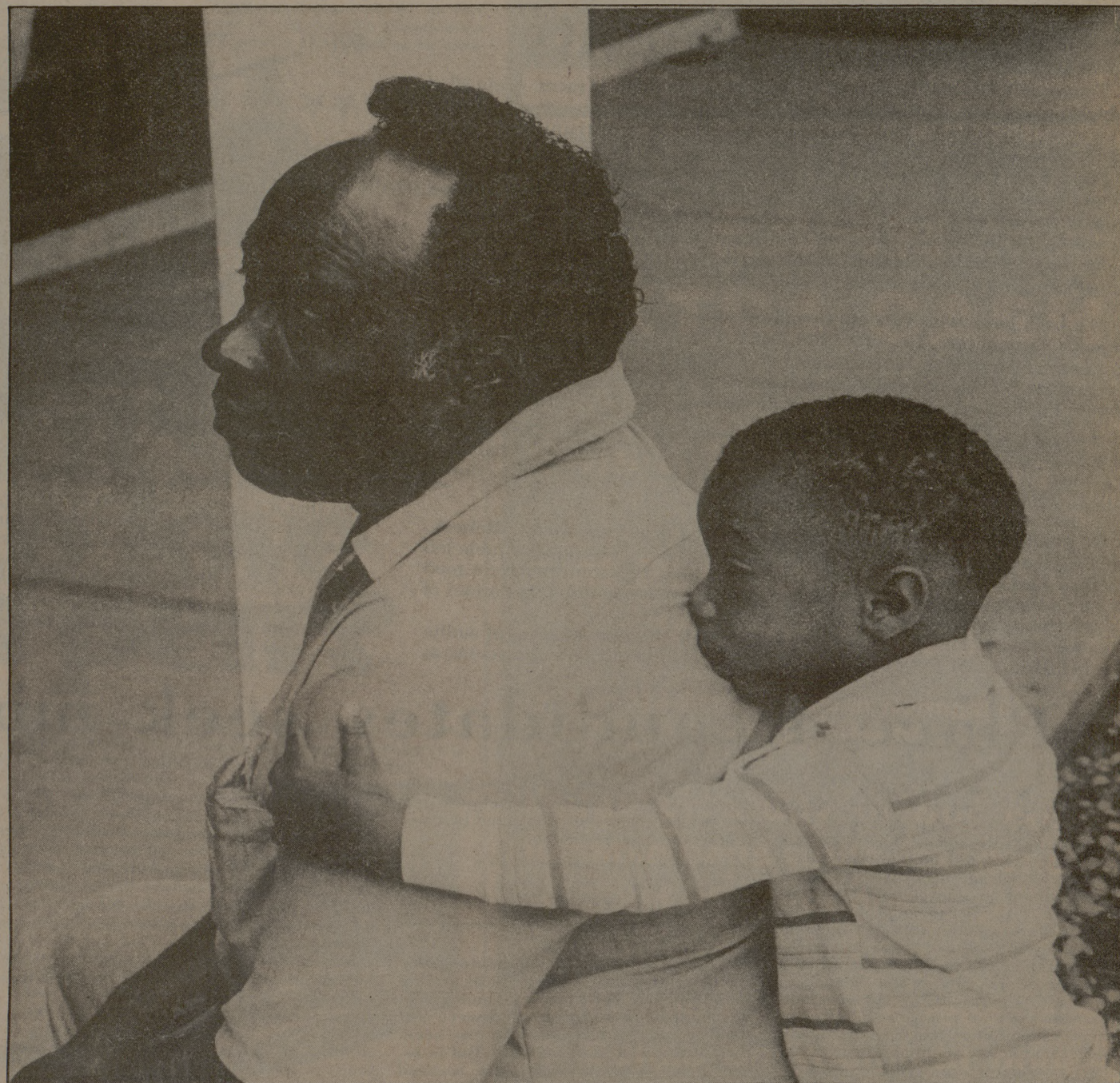
He said Coleman went to the back yard of Baugh's house. A few minutes later he heard an explosion, Mansfield said. He said he recognized the sound as that of a small caliber gun.

Mansfield said Coleman came around the side of the house and told Mansfield he had shot off a firecracker. Mansfield testified that the sound he heard was definitely that of a small caliber gun. He said he knew because he had been handling guns since he was nine years old.

On cross-examination, Defense Attorney Fred Davis pointed out that in the statement Mansfield gave on Jan. 20, 1977, he said the sound could have been from a firearm or firecracker.

Dr. J. C. Lee testified there was no way to determine the actual time of death through the Jan. 15, 1977 autopsy because the water in the river was so cold the body was preserved. Lee said Baugh died of the gunshot wound to the back of the head and there were no signs that drowning had assisted in the death.

Testimony will continue at 9 a.m. today.



Is it worth it?

This father-son team seems to ponder the need for license plate stickers as they take part in the annual courthouse waiting game. April 1 is the last day to replace the stickers, but most tax assessor-

collectors won't be open Saturday. So Brazos County residents are waiting in line up to four hours to buy the stickers.

Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.



Denise Nankivell waits for her mother to put one more cherry on her plate at Wednesday's

March of Dimes luncheon at the Ramada Inn. Denise is the 1978 National Poster Child.

Poster child likes publicity, travel, cherries

By MARY ALICE WOODHAM

Battalion Staff

Five-year-old Denise Nankivell likes...Shaun Cassidy and Mickey Mouse and marischino cherries on her fruit salad.

She also likes traveling with her mother on behalf of the March of Dimes, and all the attention that goes with being 1978 National Poster Child.

Denise's trip to College Station Wednesday was just one of 26 stops in Texas this week. She says she sometimes gets tired, but to see her running around the dining room of the Ramada Inn, you'd never know it.

Denise has vitamin D-resistant rickets, and until recently she walked with the help of leg braces. Treatment, however, has improved her condition and the braces have been removed for a trial period. The March of Dimes pays for the medicine she needs — about \$50 worth a day.

Usually, Denise meets the likes of Arnold Palmer, Shaun Cassidy, and the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders (Cowgirls, as she puts it).

But in College Station, she met members of the Corps of Cadets, who are trying to raise \$10,000 Saturday by marching to the Brazos River. The money will be donated to the March of Dimes.

The organization's local chapter held a luncheon for Denise and her party, at which she wore an Aggie t-shirt and learned a new trick...the gig-em sign.

Battalion photo by Mary Alice Woodham