



Drivers beware!

Texas A&M University Printing Center employees Jeana Allen (front) and Bessie Hunter are dwarfed by stacks of University police tickets they are busy putting together. 100,000 of the three-part forms are being printed for the upcoming fall and spring semesters. According to University police, over 8,000 tickets were issued each month from September 1980 to June 1981.

Staff photo by Greg Gammom

Design change possible cause of walkway collapse

United Press International
KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A structural engineer hired to investigate the Hyatt Regency Hotel disaster in which 111 people were killed said a design change in the moorings of an elevated walkway doubled the stress on six critical beam supports.

Wayne Lischka, hired by the Kansas City Star, said he could not determine whether the design alteration was a primary cause of two 32-ton "sky bridges" plummeting to a crowded dance floor Friday or just a minor part of a chain reaction. But, he said, the change was significant and demanded further investigation.

Early Tuesday, the city buried 39 more victims and Pope John Paul II sent word that the 111 victims of the tragedy had received his prayers and personal blessing.

Mourners of the disaster victims Tuesday crowded a downtown cathedral a few blocks from the 40-story Hyatt Regency tower for a memorial mass.

"The Son of Man will come when you least expect him. How true that was last Friday night," said Archbishop John L. May of the St. Louis Diocese. "In a twinkling of an eye came death."

May read a message from the pope, relayed by apostolic delegate Pio Laghi in Washington, assuring the people of Kansas City of his "fervent prayers for those who perished."

Five lawsuits totaling \$2 million in damages have been filed against the Hyatt's parent firm and the hotel's owner, Crown Center Redevelopment Corp.

Lischka, quoted in a copyrighted Star story, determined from the original design and photographs after the collapse that altering the attachment of suspension rods doubled the stress on 1/4-inch nuts supporting the upper skywalk.

Hotel officials would not allow outside investigators inside the lobby and the hotel's architects would make no comment about the Star's story.

Almost 2,000 people were in the atrium lobby of Kansas City's newest hotel when the tons of concrete and steel rained from the collapsing walkways.

A senior staff psychiatrist at the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kan., said the 1,200 survivors may suffer mental problems. The psychological aftermath of witnessing the disaster may last weeks, months or longer, said Walt Menninger, a descendant of the founders.

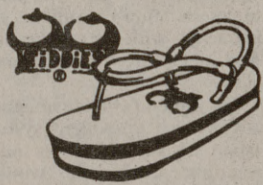
"It's the kind of thing that leaves a mark, maybe like a bad nightmare, but you know it was real," he said.

By late Tuesday five lawsuits had been filed, two in federal court and three in Jackson County Circuit Court.

Two of the people injured sought \$100 million in punitive damages and \$1 million in actual damages. The three remaining suits were wrongful death suits filed by survivors, each seeking \$2 million.

The suits generally alleged there were "serious defects" in the skywalks, and claimed the \$50 million luxury hotel did not provide for the public's safety.

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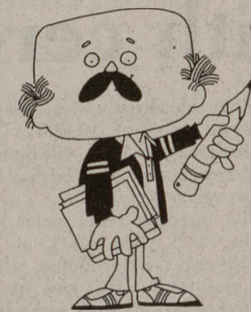


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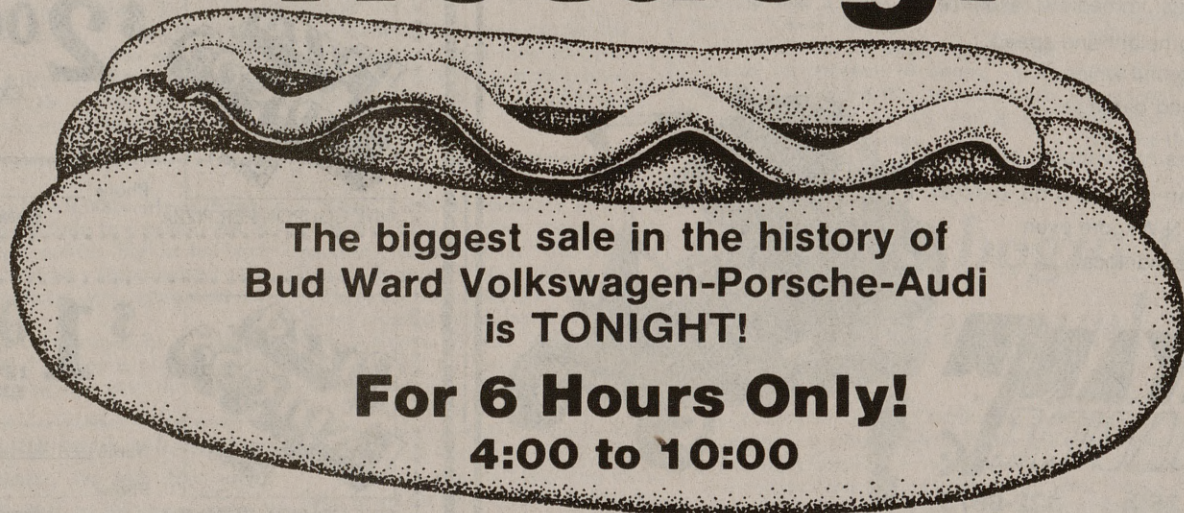
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