



Girl Scout Cookies for sale

staff photo by John Ryan

Gayle Collins, a senior Applied Math major from Odessa sells Girl Scout Cookies to Heston Thomas, a junior finance major from Houston. The cookies, sold by the Aggie Scouts will be available until March 3.

Kansas City hotel tragedy caused by faulty design

United Press International
GAITHERSBURG, Md. — Two 32-ton skywalks that collapsed at the Kansas City Hyatt Regency Hotel last July, killing 113 people, barely were built to support their own weight, government researchers said today.

The National Bureau of Standards said its lengthy investigation of the Hyatt Regency tragedy found that the design of the walkways provided for a load tolerance less than that required by city building codes. A change during construction compounded the problem — doubling the load on the rods suspending the walkways. This left the connection able to support just 27 percent of the load standard set by the city, the 349-page NBS report said.

"The resultant connection had barely enough capacity to resist the walkway dead load (the weight of the walkway itself) and very little additional capacity to resist the loads imposed by people," said Edward Pfrang, who headed the NBS probe.

The NBS investigation did not assess responsibility for the

insufficient load capacity that it determined led to structural failure as patrons swayed to the strains of "Satin Doll" during a dance in the hotel lobby last July 17.

The report said "neither the quality of workmanship nor the materials used in the walkway system played a significant role in initiating the collapse."

In looking for a probable cause, NBS researchers simulated collapses with skywalk mock-ups and subjected thousands of pounds of steel and concrete debris from the actual walkways to hundreds of tests.

Pfrang said it was the NBS' most extensive investigation ever of a building failure.

The original design called for the two walkways to be suspended from the hotel's roof by a common set of connection rods.

However, the NBS report said a change in construction had the fourth-floor walkway suspended by one set of rods, and the second-floor walkway suspended from the one above it

by a second set of rods.

"The change in hanger rod arrangement from a continuous rod to interrupted rods essentially doubled the load to be transferred by the fourth-floor box-beam hanger rod connections," the report said.

Pfrang said, "The connections as initially detailed and approved for construction provided a capacity far below the capacity that would have been required to satisfy the Kansas City Building Code."

The failure to build the skywalks as designed further aggravated "an already critical situation," he said.

Tons of concrete and steel came crashing down in the hotel lobby when the connection rods running to the roof pulled through the fourth-floor walkway under the excess strain, the NBS report said.

The NBS investigation was requested by Kansas City Mayor Richard Berkley, and at last accounting had cost taxpayers \$400,000.

Difficulties in obtaining samples of the stored debris caused

months of delay in the which test center Dr. Richard Wright has only a determination of the technical cause of the collapse will not attempt to assign was to blame.

The skywalk collapsed during a popular evening tea dance at the Big Band social orchestra. A fourth-floor walk loaded with reportedly swaying and cracked and fell atop a second-floor skywalk below. Both fell to the

At least 212 people were injured, and the accident cost billions of dollars in lost forced engineers and across the nation to the safety of similar designs.

Even though the state no judgments about liability to the failure, many plaintiffs and more than 100 defendants expect to be of the report in arguing liability for the collapse. The report will be deposited in a court during a walk case.

Pilot from Dallas commits suicide in Cuban prison

United Press International
MIAMI — A 36-year-old Dallas pilot imprisoned in Havana's Combinado del Este prison died last week, apparently electrocuting himself, the State Department revealed Wednesday.

Daerl Gandy, serving a three-year sentence for illegal entry into Cuban territory and one of 13 Americans in the prison, reportedly electrocuted himself in his cell, said Joyce Nichols, the mother of another American prisoner who accompanied Gandy's wife to Havana the day he died.

Gandy's wife left Havana Sunday, not knowing about her husband's death. The State Department notified her Monday.

The Miami Herald reported Thursday that the State Department confirmed the death Wednesday but would not say whether the death was a suicide. Gandy's body will be flown to the United States for burial.

Nichols said that Mrs. Gandy, who lives in Dallas, "said she was informed the method of death was self-inflicted electrical shock." Nichols' son Neal was jailed with Gandy. He is serving a six-year sentence for illegal en-

try and marijuana charges.

"She told me her husband killed himself over despondancy and depression of having been in jail so long," said Nichols, who lives in El Paso.

Gandy was jailed March 7, 1981 after the Aztec plane he was flying to Mexico from New Orleans ran out of fuel and landed in Cuba. Neal Nichols was co-piloting the plane.

"They ran out of fuel and they thought they were in Mexico, but they were in Cuba," Nichols said.

Psychiatric attendant jailed in patient 'hostage' incident

United Press International
DAYTON, Ohio — A female mental hospital staff member, allegedly held hostage at gunpoint by a male patient, was in jail Thursday on charges of sexual battery and gun smuggling.

For nine hours Wednesday, authorities thought Karen Webb, 26, a psychiatric attendant, was being held hostage by mental patient Donald Bartley, 21, of West Carrollton.

But when Bartley, armed with a .25-caliber pistol, surrendered to police negotiators, au-

thorities began questioning the two and came to a different conclusion.

Mendenhall, the facility's superintendent, said it appeared that Webb was involved in bringing the weapon to Bartley.

Webb's husband, also a psychiatric attendant at the hospital, was "quite upset," Mendenhall said.

He said escape or a suicide pact may have been the reason for the incident.

While Webb was jailed, Bart-

ley remained under heavy security at the hospital. He has been a patient since November, 1980, when he was charged with voluntary manslaughter in the shooting death of Frank Abbey of Miamisburg.

Bartley, previously ruled incompetent to stand trial, recently was judged fit for trial, which is scheduled March 8.

Mendenhall said Bartley has attempted suicide four times at the hospital and again threatened suicide during Wednesday's ordeal.

Non-credit Physical Conditioning class open to all Texas A&M students. Class to be held Monday through Friday beginning February 24th. Class will start promptly at 5:15 p.m. at Kyle Field. You will be required to supply your own equipment. All interested students contact Dave Williams at 845-3193 for more details.



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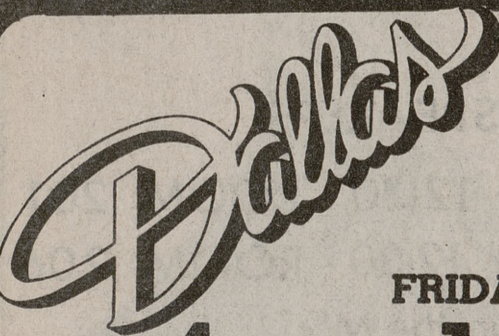
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