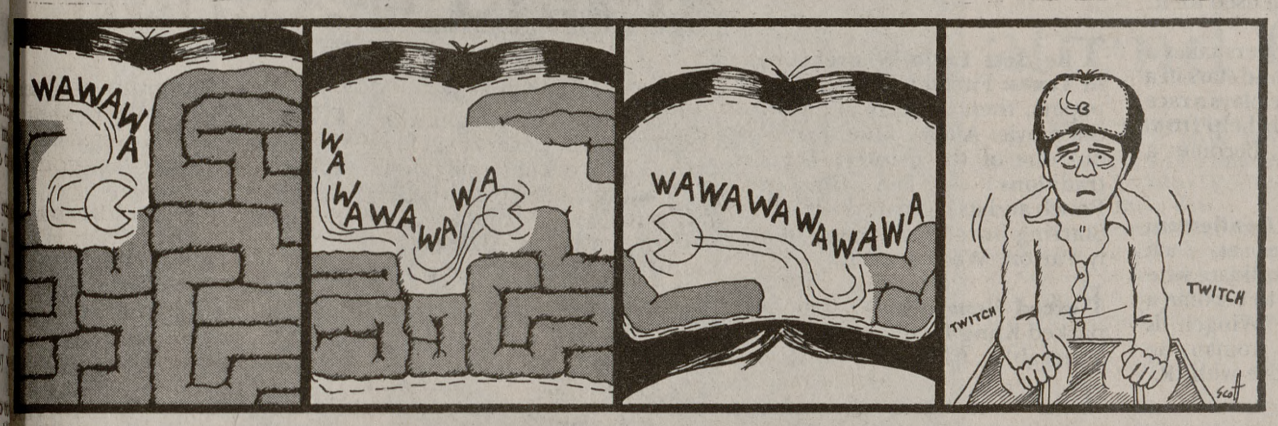
Warped — *By Scott McCullar*



Mechanical crane crashes, injures two workers at Dallas building site

United Press International

DALLAS — A huge mechanical crane perched on the second floor of a high-rise construction site plummeted to the ground Wednesday and injured at least two workers.

A Baylor Medical Center spokesman identified one of the victims as Robert McMiller, 26, and said he may have fractures.

The other victim, identified as Joseph Smith, 34, was listed in fair condition at Parkland Hospital.

"There is no further threat to the public," said police spokesman Ed Spencer shortly after the 10:10 a.m. accident.

Several blocks near Jackson and Akard streets near downtown were closed, police said.

Lowell Jones, an architect whose office looks onto the construction site from where the crane fell, said he was sitting at his desk when he heard a crash.

The crane was being used to erect a steel skeleton for Southwestern Bell's administrative headquarters, which will eventually rise 37 stories, company officials said.

"It looks like one of the cranes just evidently gave way or the load it was picking up was too heavy and caused it to topple over," he said.

"That whole assembly has fallen down to the level below and is laying at an angle."

Joe McNamara, spokesman for Southwestern Bell, said the crane fell about 25 feet.

Housing starts in Houston increase despite national building downturn

United Press International

HOUSTON — The number of housing starts in Houston is on the rise with more than 8,200 new homes under construction, a stark contrast to the national figures, officials said Wednesday.

The Greater Houston Builders Association reported the number of new homes under construction during the second quarter of this year has surpassed the record of 7,800 starts for the first quarter of 1982. Officials expect more than 35,000 houses to be built this year in the city.

"Because of the brisk demand out there," said home builder Doyle Stuckey, "our business has been quite good for the second quarter."

Sales of new homes also increased during the second quarter of the year, with more than 7,300 units sold.

Trapeze acrobat hurt in fall

United Press International

DALLAS — A member of a Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus family trapeze act was hospitalized in stable condition Wednesday with injuries he suffered in an aerial collision with his father.

A spokeswoman for Baylor Medical Center said she could release no other information on Gino Farfan, 18, pending a statement by the circus later today.

And true to circus tradition, the accident did not stop the show Tuesday night, a circus spokesman said.

Farfan lost his grip on the bar attempting a triple and a half somersault and smashed headlong into his father, Armando Farfan, 36, who was catching on the other trapeze.

Armando Farfan, who performs with his son and wife, Anna, as the Flying Farfan Trapeze Act, did not appear to be injured and climbed down to assist his son.

Witnesses among the 16,000 people attending the opening night of the circus at Reunion Arena said the young Farfan fell bleeding and unconscious onto the protective net. He was carried from Reunion Arena by stretcher and rushed to Baylor Medical Center.

After the accident, the lights above the trapeze were dimmed and the next act continued on the other side of the arena as paramedics helped the fallen acrobat.

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