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Blaze destroys trailer, kills nine women, children

SILVERTON (AP) — Two women and six children died early Tuesday when a faulty propane heater ignited a fire that engulfed their mobile home and trapped them inside, officials said.

The women's husbands escaped and were able to pull a boy and a girl to safety by breaking out a window, James R. Edwards, chief of the Briscoe County Volunteer Fire Department, said. The four were hospitalized in stable condition.

Edwards said firefighters found the trailer in flames when they arrived shortly after midnight at the remote wheat and cattle ranch about 60 miles southeast of Amarillo in the Texas Panhandle.

"By the time we arrived, there was nothing we could do but extinguish the fire and recover the bodies," Edwards said.

Edwards said the two men, who are brothers-in-law, do not speak English and did not have a telephone in the trailer. He said they broke into another trailer to call someone who then contacted firefighters.

"They indicated the thing just blew and that was it," Briscoe County Sheriff Dick Roehr said. "They didn't know what was going on. It just happened and it was all in flames before they realized what was going on."

Roehr said, "We're convinced it was purely an accident. I suppose we'll make more inquiries to be absolutely certain."

The victims included a 25-year-old mother and her five children, her sister-in-law, also 25, and her daughter. The children ranged in age from 5 months to 7 years, and Roehr said some of the bodies were burned beyond recognition.

He said the women and children never had a chance to escape.

Edwards said firefighters thought all of the victims' bodies had been removed by 2 a.m., when seven were recovered. But after speaking with the survivors, they realized the 5-month-old baby's body was still inside the charred trailer, and removed it at 5:40 a.m.

Roehr said Francisco Palacio, 28, and Samuel Davila, 28, escaped with two of Davila's children.

Palacio is a hired hand who lives at the farm, owned by Teddy Dale Hancock, Edwards said. Davila and his family had been visiting Palacio for the past two weeks while Davila looked for a job.

The four adults were legal aliens from Mexico and the children had all been born in the United States, Edwards said.

Hancock's daughter, Rhonda Hancock, described the Palacio family as people who were "just trying to make it in Texas" and said they were close-knit and religious, driving a 100-mile roundtrip to attend church in Fairview almost every Sunday.

Palacio had worked for Hancock for eight years and had lived on the 3,000-acre ranch since December 1986.

"He had access to everything I had," Hancock said. "When I wasn't home, he could use my home, pickups and farm equipment. He hadn't worked for me for eight years for nothing."

The two men and the rescued children, Samuel Davila Jr., 6, and Edna Davila, 4, were hospitalized for smoke inhalation at Swisher Memorial Hospital in Tulsa. They were scheduled to be released Wednesday, Edith Gillham, a hospital nurse, said.

What's up

Wednesday

INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERS: Marvin Kuers Jr. of Michael's will speak at 7 p.m. in 203 Zachry.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF CHEMICAL ENGINEERS: Representatives from Conoco will speak at 6:30 p.m. in 103 Zachry. Job information will be available.

PUBLIC RELATIONS STUDENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA: will meet at 6:30 p.m. in 215 Reed McDonald.

STUDENT "Y" YOUTH FUN DAY: will have a mandatory organizational meeting for staff and counselors at 7 p.m. in 206 MSC.

HILLEL JEWISH STUDENT FOUNDATION: will meet at 11:45 a.m. in the MSC dining hall to have lunch with the rabbi.

FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES: will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the Leland man's lounge.

OFF-CAMPUS AGGIES: General and executive members will have their pictures taken at 8 p.m. in the Zachry lobby.

CO-OP STUDENT'S ASSOCIATION: will have an organizational meeting at 7 p.m. in 352 MSC.

TAMU AMATEUR RADIO CLUB: will have an informal meeting and have ice classes at 7 p.m. in 350 MSC. New members are always welcome.

STUDENTS AGAINST APARTHEID: will hold elections and discuss plans for the semester at 8:30 p.m. in 507 A-B Rudder.

UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRIES: will have an Aggie supper at 6 p.m. at All Presbyterian Church.

GREAT COMMISSION STUDENTS: will have a monthly rally at 7:30 p.m. in 102 Zachry for Christian fun, fellowship and food.

TAMU RUSSIAN CLUB: will meet at 6:30 p.m. in 123 Academic and then will go to the Flying Tomato.

ECONOMICS SOCIETY: will meet at 7 p.m. in 230 MSC. New members are welcome.

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION: will have its general meeting of the semester at 7 p.m. in 105 Blocker.

BAPTIST STUDENT UNION: will have a revival at 10 p.m. in Rudder Theater.

MSC LITERARY ARTS: is accepting submissions of poetry, prose and graphic art through Feb. 20 for the 1988 Litmus.

STUDY ABROAD OFFICE: will meet at 3 p.m. in 501 Rudder to discuss receiving loans for study abroad.

HONORS STUDENT COUNCIL: will take pictures for *The Aggie* at 7:30 p.m. in the Zachry lobby.

AGGIES FOR BARTON: will have an organizational meeting at 8:30 p.m. in 352 MSC.

EUROPE CLUB: will meet at 10 p.m. upstairs at the Flying Tomato.

BAPTIST STUDENT UNION: will have a revival at 7 p.m. in Rudder Theater.

OUTDOOR RECREATION CLUB: will meet to plan upcoming trips at 7 p.m. in 404 Rudder.

Thursday

PARENTS WEEKEND COMMITTEE: Remember to nominate your parents to Parents of the Year. Applications are available in the MSC Student Publications Office and in Sterling C. Evans Library through Friday.

SOCIETY OF WOMEN ENGINEERS: will have its first meeting of the semester at 6 p.m. in 105C Zachry.

WILEY LECTURE SERIES: will have an information session at 7:30 p.m. in 501 Rudder. Membership applications are available in 216 MSC.

DATA PROCESSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION: Coca-Cola Foods will present information on careers in data processing at 7 p.m. in the Ramada penthouse suite.

CLASS OF '89 AND CLASS OF '90: will meet to discuss class ball preparation at 7 p.m. in 404 Rudder.

LEBANESE STUDENT ASSOCIATION: will meet to discuss International Week at 8:30 p.m. in 404 Rudder.

SPEECH COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION: will have a happy hour social at 5 p.m. at the Flying Tomato.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION: will meet at 6 p.m. at the Flying Tomato.

INTRAMURALS: will have a team bowling captain's meeting at 5 p.m. in 501 Rudder.

PARAMANIAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION: will meet at 8:30 p.m. in 402 Rudder.

Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald no later than three business days before the desired run date. We only publish the name and phone number of the contact if you ask us to do so. What's Up is a Battalion service that lists non-profit events and activities. Submissions are on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no guarantee an entry will run. If you have questions, call the newsroom at 845-3315.

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Black leaders try to take down flag from Capitol dome

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Law officers arrested Alabama NAACP President Thomas Reed and 10 other black leaders on Tuesday when they tried to climb a fence around the Capitol to take down the Confederate battle flag flying over the dome.

Reed, a state representative from Tuskegee, led a group of several dozen blacks to a driveway gate where Reed talked to state troopers for almost 20 minutes before attempting to climb the 8-foot high fence.

"I consider myself not violating the law of this state," Reed said.

After officers grabbed Reed by the collar and pulled him down from the fence, other members of his group, among them National NAACP board member Emmett Burns, attempted to climb over but also were restrained.

"We are under arrest," state Rep. John Rogers of Birmingham said as he entered the bus. The charges were not immediately known.

Earlier, as crowds had gathered for the march sponsored by the

NAACP, local and state law enforcement officers set up barricades and confiscated an ax handle.

Reed contends the flag represents racism and oppression and said that if it was not taken down voluntarily he planned to "enter the Capitol grounds and climb to the top of the state Capitol dome and remove the Confederate battle flag."

He said the banner is resented by blacks and "better-thinking white people."

The NAACP also is campaigning to bring down Confederate battle flags at statehouses in Alabama and South Carolina, as well as remove Confederate flags from the designs of the Georgia and Mississippi state flags.

State officers said they confiscated an ax handle from three youths in a pickup truck during a search, but made no arrests.

Capitol security police were under orders from Gov. Guy Hunt not to allow anyone to reach the Capitol, which is undergoing renovation and is surrounded by a locked, chain-link fence.

Police patrol pairs may become permanent

DALLAS (AP) — Dallas police will patrol in pairs for at least three more weeks and the arrangement may be made permanent for many officers if the response time stays low, officials said.

Police Chief Billy Prince ordered police to pair up a week ago after the shooting of officer John Chase, who was alone on patrol Jan. 23 when a homeless man wrestled his service revolver away and shot him in the face three times.

Statistics indicate the average response time to emergency and high-priority calls for assistance was just less than 11 minutes during the first two weeks of January, before Prince ordered the two-officer squads.

Under the experimental program, the response average was exceeded only on Saturday, when it took patrol officers an average of 13 minutes to answer to high-priority calls, such as open buildings, suspicious persons and burglar alarms.

Assistant Chief John Driscoll said response times have not increased significantly under the experimental program because, in the past, two officers were sent to most serious calls.

"If the figures stay like this, then the review will be favorable," Driscoll said. "But it's too early to get a decent reading on response times."

Driscoll, head of the Patrol Division, said the department eventually may assign 80 percent of its patrol officers to two-person squads, a move that would cut by 20 percent the number of cars

Bond set for youth charged in murder of grandparents

BONHAM (AP) — Bond has been set at \$1 million for a 17-year-old high school student charged with killing his grandparents.

Thomas James Slusher was arraigned Monday in Bonham by Justice of the Peace Don Jones and charged with two counts of murder. He was being held in the Fannin County Jail.

The Rev. Charles Slusher and his wife Sudie were found by a church member Wednesday in the Bonham First Church of the Nazarene.

Preliminary autopsy results indicate that Mrs. Slusher was shot in the head, chest and shoulder with a

.357-caliber Magnum pistol. Her husband appears to have been at least twice with the same gun.

The teen-ager was arrested Thursday by U.S. Customs officers at the Mexican border in Del Rio. Jailer Jim Robinson said the teen-ager had taken his grandmother's car.

The teen-ager has lived with his couple since his parent's death about three years ago. He was a graduate from Bonham High School in May.

Investigators still have no suspects for the crimes, but Sheriff Sutton said "the teen-ager was motivated by authority figures."

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