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The Battalion

WORLD & NATION

Wednesday, September 20, 1989

Hurricane wreaks havoc

Hugo leaves trail of devastation in Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — National Guardsmen with automatic rifles patrolled San Juan Tuesday to prevent looting after Hurricane Hugo devastated the island, leaving 27,000 people homeless and causing food shortages.

Two people were killed Sunday, but no other storm-related deaths were reported in Puerto Rico since Hugo's 125 mph winds hit Monday, said Maria Dolores Oronoz, spokesman for Gov. Rafael Hernandez Colon.

Civil Defense spokesman Cizante Rivera said Hugo killed 25 people in the eastern Caribbean, but she had no island-by-island breakdown. Previous reports said six people were killed on the British island of Montserrat, five perished on the French territory of Guadeloupe and two were killed in Antigua.

In San Juan, Juan Manuel Morales sent his wife and three children from their apartment to a rescue shelter before the storm hit.

He said 35 of the island's 78 mu-

nicipalities had no electricity Tuesday and power was partially restored to three municipalities, including San Juan.

Del Valle said the company expected to have service completely restored to San Juan by Wednesday and to 80 percent of the island by the weekend.

Gov. Colon's wife, Lela Mayoral, in a radio announcement, said the government was organizing a relief effort for devastated offshore islands. She appealed to Puerto Ricans to bring food and supplies, especially baby food and disposable diapers, to La Fortaleza, the governor's mansion, for distribution to the needy.

Oronoz said the government called out 2,500 National Guardsmen to help police with rescue and security. Guardsmen with automatic rifles were riding with police in their cruisers. Much of the looting occurred at the height of the storm, which pounded the island for several hours.

Police spokesman Tony Santiago said 40 businesses had reported looting. Police had arrested 30 people on looting charge, he said.

A woman who called in to a talk-show program on WOSO, San Juan's English-language radio station, said looters burst into her home and started removing her possessions after some windows blew out.

French DC-10 carrying 154 disappears

PARIS (AP) — A DC-10 passenger jet carrying 154 people from the Congo to Paris disappeared shortly after taking off from a stopover in Chad, the French airline UTA said.

The flight originated in Brazzaville, Congo, and had made a stop in N'Djamena, Chad, the airline said. Contact was lost with the aircraft shortly after taking off Tuesday and there was no indication of the plane's fate more than five hours later, UTA said.

UTA Flight 772 was carrying 140 passengers and 14 crew, the airline said.

The last radio contact between the plane and air traffic controllers, about 20 minutes after leaving the airport at N'Djamena, indicated everything was normal, the airline said.

The aircraft, purchased from UTA in 1973, has logged 60,000 hours.

Northern Chad was long the scene of battles between government forces and Libyan-backed rebels, but has been calm for the past two years. Chad and Libya have restored diplomatic relations and agreed to settle their territorial dispute at the border by peaceful means.

Nursing home aide says killings were fictitious

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) — A former nursing home aide charged with smothering five patients testified Tuesday that the alleged murder plot was nothing more than a fictitious game that got out of hand.

The defense rested after the testimony of Gwendolyn Graham, who is charged with five counts of first-degree murder and one count of conspiracy to murder for allegedly suffocating severely incapacitated patients at Alpine Manor Nursing Home in Walker between January and April 1987.

Defense and prosecution attorneys later finished their closing arguments and the case went to the jury Tuesday afternoon. If convicted, Graham faces life in prison without parole.

Graham, 26, denied killing any patients or knowing of any murders at the home.

She testified that her former lesbian lover, nurse's aide Catherine Wood, often concocted stories and spread rumors, and that she usually went along to humor her. The alleged murder plot was one of those "head games," Graham said. "At first it was a joke."

But when Graham began seeing another woman, she said Wood threatened to "make someone believe the story that we had been killing patients."

When police began investigating the deaths after Graham left for her hometown of Tyler with the other woman, she said she realized that a jealous Wood "was going to get even, just like she said she was."

Graham's testimony disputed that of several of her friends and former lovers, who testified earlier that Graham, on separate occasions, had admitted suffocating patients at the home.

Graham said she did not admit killing patients, but related the story as one Wood had made up. Graham said she only once admitted suffocating patients in an effort to scare another woman, she said.

"If you were alone with two people who said they killed patients at a nursing home, wouldn't you be scared?" Graham asked Assistant Kent County Prosecutor David Schieber during cross-examination.

Brooks disputes charges of obstructing drug bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ninety days and more than 5,000 violent murders after Republicans introduced legislation cracking down on drugs and crime, Democratic Rep. Jack Brooks continues to hold the president's bill hostage, the GOP charged Tuesday.

House Minority Leader Robert H. Michel, R-Ill., introduced President Bush's crime package on June 21. Yet Brooks, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, has yet to schedule a hearing on the legislation, said Edward J. Rollins, co-chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee.

"Jack Brooks has been talking about getting tough on crime and legal drugs, yet he is letting President Bush's plan sit in the back of his desk drawer collecting dust while thousands of violent crimes are committed each day," Rollins said.

Brooks, a Beaumont Democrat, countered that Rollins doesn't know what he is talking about in a one-sentence statement issued by his office.

"This statement (Rollins' news release) is consistent with Ed Rollins' well-established practice of spouting off without knowing what he is talking about and without any regard for the truth," Brooks said.

Gorbachev calls for early party congress

MOSCOW (AP) — President Mikhail S. Gorbachev on Tuesday won an opportunity to revamp the Communist Party by scheduling a party congress next year that could hasten the pace of economic reforms and change the Kremlin leadership.

Gorbachev also made an emotional plea for calm among ethnic groups in the increasingly restive Caucasus and Baltic republics. "We cannot allow anarchy, much less bloodshed," he said on state television.

He also condemned secessionist movements in the Baltics and Georgia, saying people demanding independence are "demagogues."

"Currently, the work of party bodies and organizations is in many ways fettered by old structures and outdated rules and instructions," Gorbachev told the party's 251-member Central Committee, in obtaining its approval for moving up the date of the party meeting to October 1990.

The congress, with 5,000 delegates, theoretically is the party's most powerful body. It can set broad policy guidelines, and it is the only body that can promote Communists to the Central Committee, which makes major decisions in the five years between congresses.

Historically, the congress also sets the five-year plan for the economy. By party rules, the next congress — the 28th in the party's history — must be held by early 1991. Moving up the date will allow Gorbachev to make economic reforms sooner and to increase the number of supporters on the Central Committee.

The move came at a closed meeting of the Central Committee dedicated to solving the nation's ethnic disputes, which have led to more than 200 deaths in the past 19 months and threaten Soviet stability and unity.

In remarks later shown on state television, Gorbachev said nationalist disputes must be resolved peacefully. He rejected demands for boundary changes between the country's 15 republics. He said such changes cannot solve con-

licts when 60 million people, or almost one-fifth of the Soviet population of 285 million, live outside their native territories.

Gorbachev also used the speech to denounce critics on both the right and left who assail his reform campaign, known as "perestroika" or restructuring.


"They are telling us that we can't solve the country's problems without moving to capitalism," he said. "Another theme, coming from the right, is that everything we suggest, the policy of perestroika, is an action the West succeeded in planting, in forcing on us. That's rubbish!"

The agenda congress approved Tuesday includes a report on the progress of Gorbachev's economic, social and political reforms, a review of party rules and the election of new governing bodies — presumably including the Central Committee itself and the 12-member Politburo.

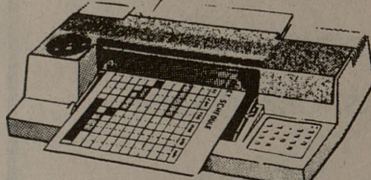
Gorbachev, 58, expressed concern that the party is lagging behind the political reforms he has set in motion.

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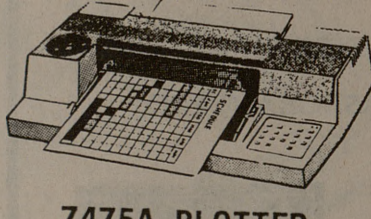
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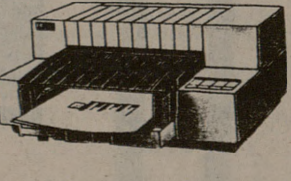
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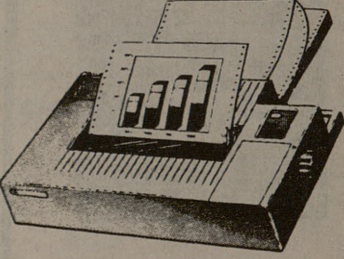
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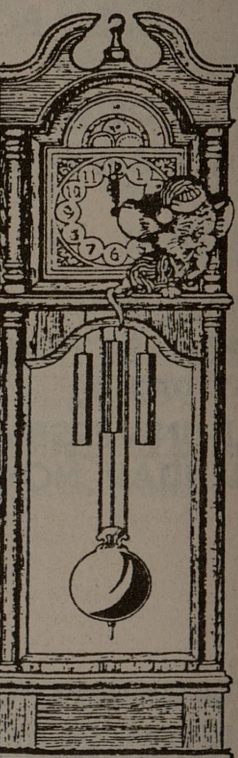
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