

Amtrak train jumps bridge into bayou; death toll at 43

The Associated Press

SARALAND, Ala. — Amtrak's cross-country Sunset Limited hurtled off a bridge into an inky bayou early Wednesday, plunging its sleeping passengers into a nightmare of fire, water and death.

Forty-three people were killed, some of them trapped in a submerged, silver passenger car and others in a burned engine, and 10 were missing in the deadliest wreck in Amtrak's 23-year history, railroad spokesman Howard Robertson said.

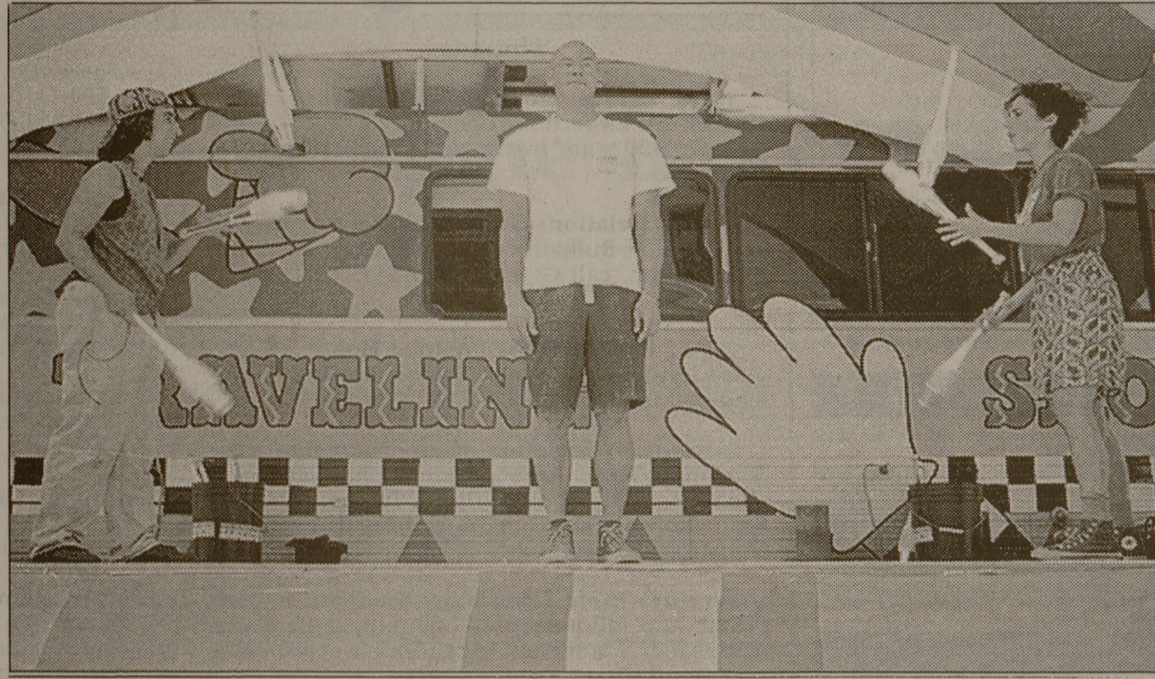
More than 150 people survived, some to help other passengers who clung to wreckage from a collapsed section of the bridge in a swamp populated by alligators, snakes and bears.

The cause of the wreck wasn't immediately known. One possibility officials were investigating was that a barge may have hit the bridge before the crash.

Brian Logan of Fife, Scotland, was awakened when the train began banking steeply to one side. "It kind of threw a lot of people off their seats. I figured the train was going to tumble over. ... That was accompanied by a screeching sound followed by a pretty much lot of screaming."

All three engines and four of the eight cars on the Los Angeles-to-Miami train went off the bridge, which was about 7 feet above the water. Two of the cars were passenger cars, and one of them was completely submerged in water about 16 feet deep in Bayou Canot.

Tossing more than salad



Lauren Donohue/The Battalion

Two jugglers at the Ben & Jerry's Traveling Show toss pins around Edgar Nunnally, a junior anthropology major, in front of Sbis Wednesday afternoon.

Trip to romantic Venice soaks taxpayers

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When in Venice, the duties of the men and women assigned to protect a U.S. defense secretary do not stop at the water's edge.

Les Aspin's security detail demonstrated as much by spending more than \$1,000 for "water taxis" to patrol the famous canals of the romantic Italian city while Aspin and a female friend vacationed there for five days last May.

Aspin paid his own way, but U.S. taxpayers picked up a \$42,000 tab not only for the security crew's exotic water transportation but also the hotel and meal costs for them and the rest of the Aspin party, including staff members and a physician.

Travel vouchers released by the Defense Department on Tuesday indicated that Aspin's security agents billed the government as much as \$2,002 each for their rooms at the Danieli, the posh hotel where Aspin and his friend

stayed five nights.

The voucher of John Khin, of Aspin's personal security detail, also reflected other costs: \$1,706 for a "security control room" in Venice for five days, \$66 for control room expenses ("maps and portage"), and \$1,411 to rent two cellular telephones there for six days.

Khin billed \$836 for the cost of water taxis and barges used to maintain security for Aspin in Venice. Other water taxi fares billed exceeded \$200.

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REAL FREEDOM!

Among the freedoms that you as a student will be exercising this year is the "right to choose". You will be deciding what to study, how to spend your time, where to channel your energies, with whom to associate, and what set of values you will follow in life. All of these choices will have consequences, for bad or good. So choose carefully!

As this school year begins, the Texas A&M University faculty listed below urge you to consider another type of freedom—one that we have found to be more precious than any other. It is offered by Jesus Christ, who said:

If you abide by My word... you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

We have found these promises are true and based on rational reasoning. If you would like to know more about Christ and the freedom He gives, we would be happy to talk with you. Have a great year at Texas A&M.

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We are a group of faculty who are United by their common experience that Jesus Christ provides intellectually and spiritually satisfying answers to life's most important questions. We are available to students and faculty who might like to discuss such questions with us. Any faculty member interested in joining FACULTY FRIENDS please contact Murphy Smith 5-3108, Bob Gillette 5-7384, or Lee Lowery 5-4395.