

BATON ROUGE/REGION

Fire damages house, leaves 8 homeless

A fire on North 23rd Street caused \$10,000 in damage to a house and left eight people homeless Sunday, but no one was hurt in the 8:03 p.m. blaze.

A stack of clothes left near an electric heater apparently ignited, causing the fire at 1500 N. 23rd St., fire officials said.

"We were sitting in the front room, watching TV, and one of my daughters said the back room was on fire," George Collins said as several family members and friends gathered around him and his wife, Annie Mae, as firefighters worked to contain the blaze.

Capt. C.A. Cooper of the Baton Rouge Fire Department said a stack of clothes next to a space heater apparently started the fire in a back bedroom. Cooper said the fire quickly spread through the attic, spewing smoke through the roof and all the windows and doors of the wood-frame home.

All our clothes and everything is gone," Collins said. "All we've got is what we're wearing."

The fire started at 8:03 p.m., and firefighters brought it under control at 8:38 p.m., a fire department dispatcher said.

Collins, who has lived in the house since 1968, said he shared the house with his wife, a daughter and five grandchildren.

Collins said he ran to the back room after his daughter reported the fire, "but I couldn't get in there. I went around back and got a water hose."

Collins, 60, said he is living on disability payments, because of two back operations. An on-the-job back injury forced him to quit working at a construction company in 1980, he said.

Anyone wishing to help the family can call Leola Collins at 344-9017.



Ammie Mae Collins is comforted by family and friends after a Sunday night fire gutted the Collins' home on N. 23rd Street.

12 children with disorders need homes

Child placement workers with the Volunteers of America's Parker House are seeking homes for 12 Baton Rouge area children with emotional and physical disorders, said Loraine Dunkley, house director.

Parker House is an emergency shelter for children removed from their homes usually because of neglect or abuse.

Four-year-old Amber is developmentally delayed and in special education. She is taking medication for hyperactivity and displays anxiety-related behavior, Dunkley said. She likes music, singing and playing with dolls, and she enjoys one-on-one attention.

Nathan, 10, has the potential to develop an above-average intelligence and is in regular education. His favorite subject is science, and he likes dinosaurs. He is in therapy and on behavior-control medication, Dunkley said, and he occasionally expresses anger through destructive or mildly aggressive behavior.

The VOA's Residential Family Care treatment program works with Louisiana child protection and foster care system offices. The program was established in July 1987 specifically for children with handicapping conditions that prohibit them from successfully staying or being placed in regular foster care homes, Dunkley said.

The program now has 12 children, most of them between 5 and 12 years old, but hopes to expand to 16 to 20 children once specialized foster care homes can be integrated into the program, she said.

Because of the demands of the children, Dunkley said families enrolling in the RFC program undergo an intensive, 30-hour training session. During the series of sessions, the missions of VOA and its RFC program are explained, existing and potential problems with the children are discussed and behavior management suggestions are provided.

Because of the special needs of the children in the program, Dunkley said RFC foster parent requirements differ from those for regular foster parents. One RFC parent cannot be employed outside the home, and a parent is required to transport the foster child to medical, counseling and therapy appointments, to visitation sessions with parents and to school appointments.

RFC foster parents also are reimbursed for mileage and are paid higher room and board reimbursements than regular foster parents. Dunkley said payments generally begin at \$15 a day per child, and increase up to \$25 a day, averaging from \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year.

The state pays for the medical and counseling needs of the RFC children, Dunkley said.

Six-year-old John is developmentally delayed with a mild mental handicap, Dunkley said. He is in special education, has poor social skills and can be aggressive with other children, but he has made significant gains in the past year and has the capacity and potential for further development, she said.

Laura, 9, is a bright child in regular education classes. She is prone to tantrums, and she needs help in learning how to vent her anger, Dunkley said.

Nine-year-old Jan likes music, singing and playing with her dolls. She is in special education and has difficulty separating fantasy from reality, Dunkley said.

Insurance—First meeting set with expert on consent decree

Roemer has said he rejected the proposal after learning the company had ties to Edwards and Shareport businessman Gus Mijalis.

Dallas attorney J. Albert Kroemer, who represents the insurance company and its parent company, Anglo-American Group Inc., has described Green's examination of Anglo-American as "a routine audit" being conducted on all companies less than three years old.

Maximilian E. Zimmer III, who is in charge of the company's Louisiana office, said Sunday he had not yet received the court order.

Attorneys for the state, the U.S. Department of Justice and various state universities will meet for the first time Friday with the expert appointed by the U.S. court to draft an integration plan for Louisiana's colleges.

John Kennedy, attorney for Gov. Buddy Roemer, said discussion at the meeting is likely to center on the procedures that will be used for January hearings on various integration plans and for a February trial on the final proposal.

Earlier this month, a three-judge federal court with jurisdiction over the state's college integration efforts named Paul Verkuijl, president of the College of William and Mary in Virginia, as the special master in the case.

The court directed Verkuijl to review the integration proposals submitted by the various parties in the case, including ones by Gov. Buddy Roemer, the Southern University Board of Supervisors and the Grambling State University Alumni Association.

The court said Verkuijl should conduct hearings between Jan. 3 and Jan. 27 on what kind of plan should be imposed on the state.

Verkuijl is to submit his report and recommendations to the court by Feb. 1.

The court also noted that it can "reject, or modify, any recommendation filed by Verkuijl."

Kennedy said he has talked with attorneys for the various parties since the court appointed the special master to try to reach a settlement before the case goes to trial.

"We have not settled the case at this point," Kennedy said today. "It looks like the state will be going to trial over the integration issue. However, he added he is still hopeful that a settlement can be reached before the Feb. 15 trial date."

Thomas Todd, attorney for Grambling's alumni association, said he has several observations on the situation he wants to give the special master at Friday's status conference.

In any plan that is finally fashioned, the alumni association wants a monetary commitment made to Grambling, Todd said today from his Chicago law office.

"It has to have money," Todd said. "... Louisiana is going to have to come up with the dollars for quality programs and facilities at Grambling."

Todd said he is tired of Roemer and others saying that the state no longer has any obligations under a 1981 state/federal desegregation agreement, known as the consent decree.

While the court has ruled the consent

Christmas Fund contributions

- The following is a list of contributions to the Christmas Fund:
- In memory of Frank d'Autremont III by Luke and Chancy Joseph 200.00
 - In memory of Dr. Cheney C. Joseph by Luke and Chancy Joseph 200.00
 - Bishop Stanley Joseph Ott James C. Freyhan 100.00
 - Anonymous MMH 50.00
 - Thomas and Frances Beckers 25.00
 - Mrs. Santa Claus Eleanor and John Earle 100.00
 - Anonymous OC 25.00
 - In memory of Wendy 50.00
 - In memory of Stephen Paul Lobell 25.00
 - Mr. and Mrs. William W. Hansman 25.00
 - Lea Anne, Kelly, Chad, Shane and Brett 25.00
 - In memory of Mrs. Sidney Dupuy, Sr., Sis. Sam, Maj. Robert Belcher, Edwin Dupuy, Sonny and Greg York, Marsha Dupuy by Inez D. Richard 50.00
 - In memory of our son, Russell "Butch" Saia from parents, Russell and Carrie Saia 50.00
 - Andrew and Anne Maverick 30.00
 - Concert our messages, Hillary E. Ryland and Seth A. Burby 25.00
 - In loving memory of Harry W. Thompson Jr. and Julia T. Felps 25.00
 - In memory of Grammy from Rebecca and Melissa 30.00
 - In memory of Tara Quaid A Friend JCH 25.00
 - In memory of "Mama" Langford 25.00
 - STATE NATIONAL Mortgage Corp. Employees 35.00
 - In memory of William J. Stiles 25.00
 - Accent Furniture Rentals Inc. 100.00
 - In memory of John Wilson Williams by The Leon Hebert family 25.00
 - In memory of Our Dear Wife and Mother, Leta The Richards family 25.00
 - Robin W. Porter 100.00
 - In memory of Rosalie Creaghan and Keener Smith 100.00
 - Total Received Today 11,745.00
 - Previously Received 11,622.00
 - TOTAL RECEIVED 23,367.00

Pickets stage protest as Rollins applies for permits

By Laurie Smith/
State-Times Staff

About a dozen Alton residents braved the cold early this morning to picket and protest Rollins' Environmental Service's permit application now before the state Department of Environmental Quality.

Arguments on motions to remove Rollins' attorney Warren Byrd and his law firm, Adams and Brown, from the case were being heard this morning. Both John Sheppard of the state Justice Department and Oussie Brown, representing Christians for Good Government, were seeking the removal because Byrd represented the state in two previous cases against Rollins.

"We (Alton residents) come out every three days there is anything to do with the Rollins permit application," said Vincent Watkins, speaking for the small protest group.

"We want to keep the issue before the public and we want DEQ to know that this is a real people's problem. We have a lot of faith in (DEQ Secretary Paul) Templest — that he will make his final decision based on the merits of the case."

But, we are concerned about how long the process is taking," Watkins said.

The Alton residents carried picket signs outside the Department of Natural Resources. They remained outside for more than an hour before the meeting and then carried their pickets into the hearing.

Rollins is applying for permanent authority to operate five landfills currently authorized under an interim permit and for a permit to build landfills in two new tracts of land at its site on Acute Highway. The company also wants to build two jaw incinerators at its plant.

In the issue before hearing officer Skip Mills today, Byrd maintains that he received clearance to represent Rollins from the state Ethics Commission.

"We simply do not believe there is a conflict," Byrd has said. The attorney in question said he intended to continue representing Rollins in its permit application hearing until and unless he is ruled out by Mills.

The motions to have Byrd removed put the brakes on the hearing process, which Mills repeatedly has said he wants to keep rolling.

Gifted

From Page 1-B

Neal Kestner of the Association for Gifted and Talented Children, a parents' organization, said today that East Baton Rouge has one of the most extensive programs in the country, which accounts for its growth.

"We have been growing steadily until about a year or two ago, when we started leveling off," he said. "We are about at our maximum or close to it."

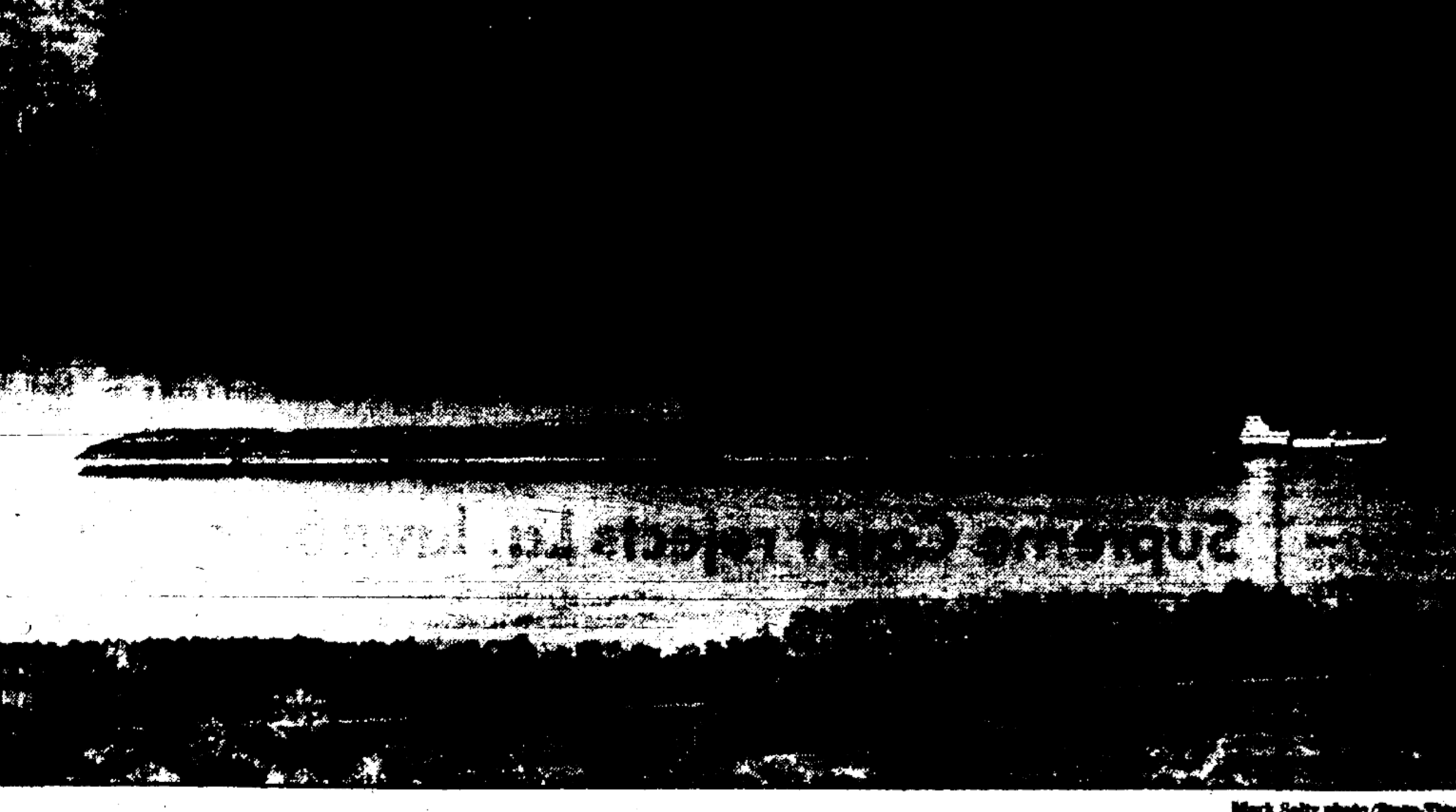
Kestner said black participation is currently about 15 percent, which "is not as high as it could be."

"We've been working hard to get that up to 20 percent," he said. "We're working with DEQ to get that up to 20 percent."

Kestner said the organization's black students should begin as early as third grade, before the students get into academic trouble. But he said the program faces other problems, particularly involving funding.

"We have been out severely in terms of help from the state in the last three years. At one time, it (funding) was adequate. Now, it is distinctly inadequate," he said. "We're very concerned about funding."

Rolling on the river



A solitary tugboat pushes a long line of barges up the Mississippi River just north of Plaquemine. The captain has yet to test his skills on "deadman's curve" — a U-shaped bend further north in the river that has caused many a riverman to have to back up and try again lest he hit the bank.

BR TOMORROW

JOE APPLICATIONS AND RESUME WRITING — 9 a.m. to 12 noon, Center For Displaced Homemakers, 7323 Florida Blvd., Bon Marche Mall.

CONCERT — 8 p.m., Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church. The Camerata Singers of Baton Rouge will present a Christmas concert. Free.