

Atlanta death toll rises

By NANCY KENNEY
Associated Press Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — The body of a slightly built 23-year-old black man was found yesterday in the Chattahoochee River, but authorities had not decided whether to turn the case over to the special police task force investigating the slayings of 24 other young blacks.

The bodies of two of the victims killed since July 1979 were pulled from the muddy waters of the Chattahoochee last month. Only two young adults were among the two dozen victims — both were retarded and described as child-like.

Assistant Fulton County Police Chief Louis Graham said the identity of the victim would be released after his relatives were notified. He said the man had a criminal record and that identification was made through fingerprints.

The man, who lived in Atlanta, had not been reported missing, Graham said, adding that he weighed 120 pounds in November, the last time he was arrested by authorities here.

Details of his criminal record were not immediately available, although Graham said it included felony arrests.

Graham had said earlier the case had not been assigned to the special task force investigating the slayings and the disappearance of one other youth in the past 21 months.

Graham said a decision on whether to turn the case over to the task force would be made after the cause of death is determined.

Fulton County Medical Examiner Dr. Robert Stivers said officials decided quickly that the body was not that of 10-year-old Darron Glass,

the only missing person on the task force list. He was last seen Sept. 14.

The body pulled from the river was described by Stivers as 5-foot-5, 80 to 90 pounds with an 11-inch scar and an eight-inch scar in the stomach area.

Authorities meanwhile found a 15-year-old black youth missing since April 6 alive and unharmed. James Ralph Johnson had not been reported missing until one and a half hours after the body was found yesterday. His grandfather had believed the youth was at his sister's house.

The Johnson boy's case had not been assigned to the task force.

Fulton County Police Chief Clinton Chafin said the body was found naked on a sand bed at the river bank. He estimated the victim had been dead for at least two weeks.

The 24th victim, 15-year-old Joseph Bell, was found Easter Sunday. His decomposed body was discovered floating face-down in the South River in DeKalb County.

Fulton County Police Capt. Robert L. Baltimore said the body found yesterday also was "badly decomposed."

The body was spotted by Jimmy Brown, an area resident who saw it while clearing a field near the river bank with his son. Brown said he "thought it was an adult, but they (police) said it wasn't. They said it looked like a kid."

Chafin, asked if he believed the discovery of the body was related to the missing and slain children cases, said: "You always worry. But at this point it would be pure speculation."

The discovery yesterday marks the seventh

time since last November that the body of a young black has been found in or near an area river. It is the fourth body found in the Chattahoochee during that period.

On March 30, the body of 13-year-old Timothy Hill was pulled from the Chattahoochee. The following day, the body of 21-year-old Eddie "Bubba" Duncan, was pulled from the same river less than two miles downstream. Chafin said the body found yesterday was between the sites where the bodies of Hill and Duncan were found.

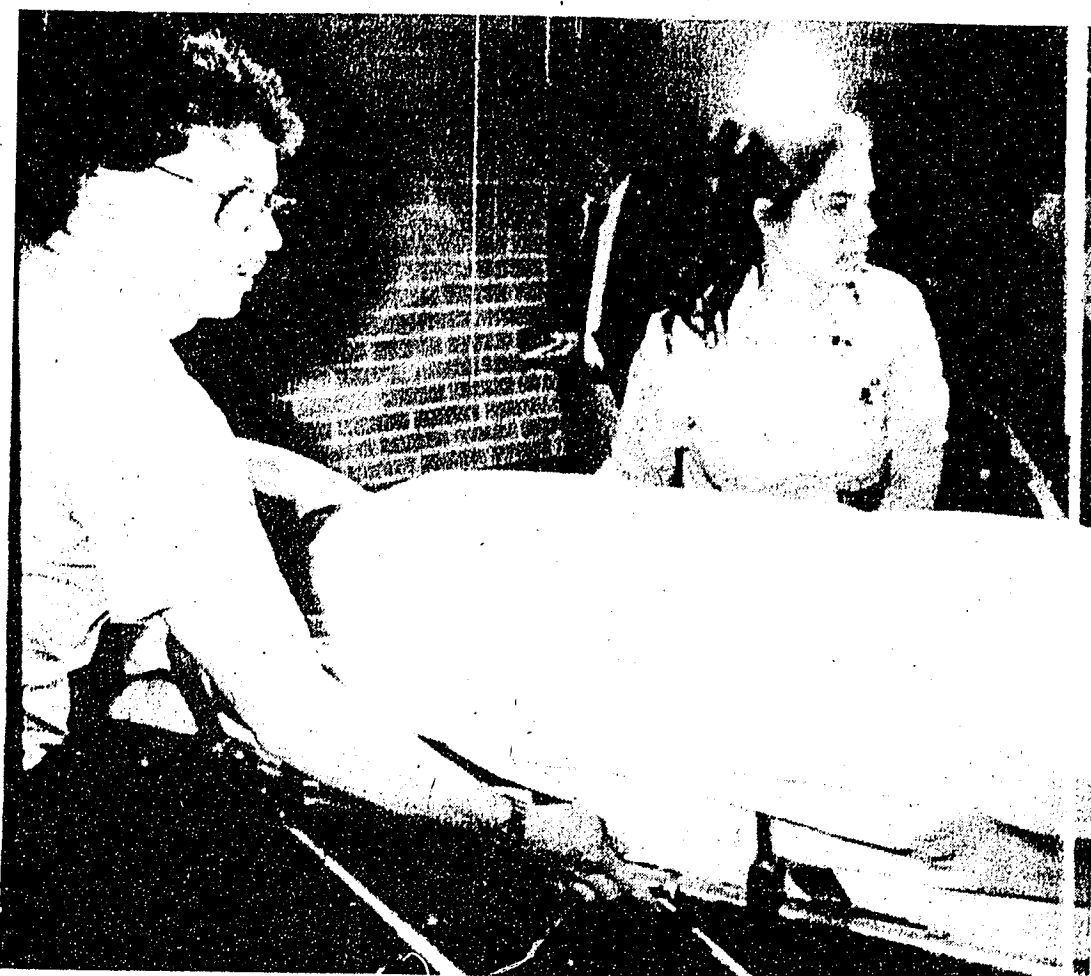
Medical examiners meanwhile said yesterday that Bell probably died of asphyxiation, as did 12 other victims.

Bell was last seen March 2, when he stopped to look for work at a restaurant where he occasionally did odd jobs.

The manager of the restaurant, Richard Harp, told police he received a telephone call on March 3 from someone claiming to be Bell who said, "I'm almost dead." Police spokeswoman Beverly Harvard said police were investigating the incident.

DeKalb County Medical Examiner Joseph Burton announced after an autopsy yesterday that Bell did not appear to have been strangled, but that smothering was a "possible" cause of death. Burton said Bell could have been in the river since the day he disappeared.

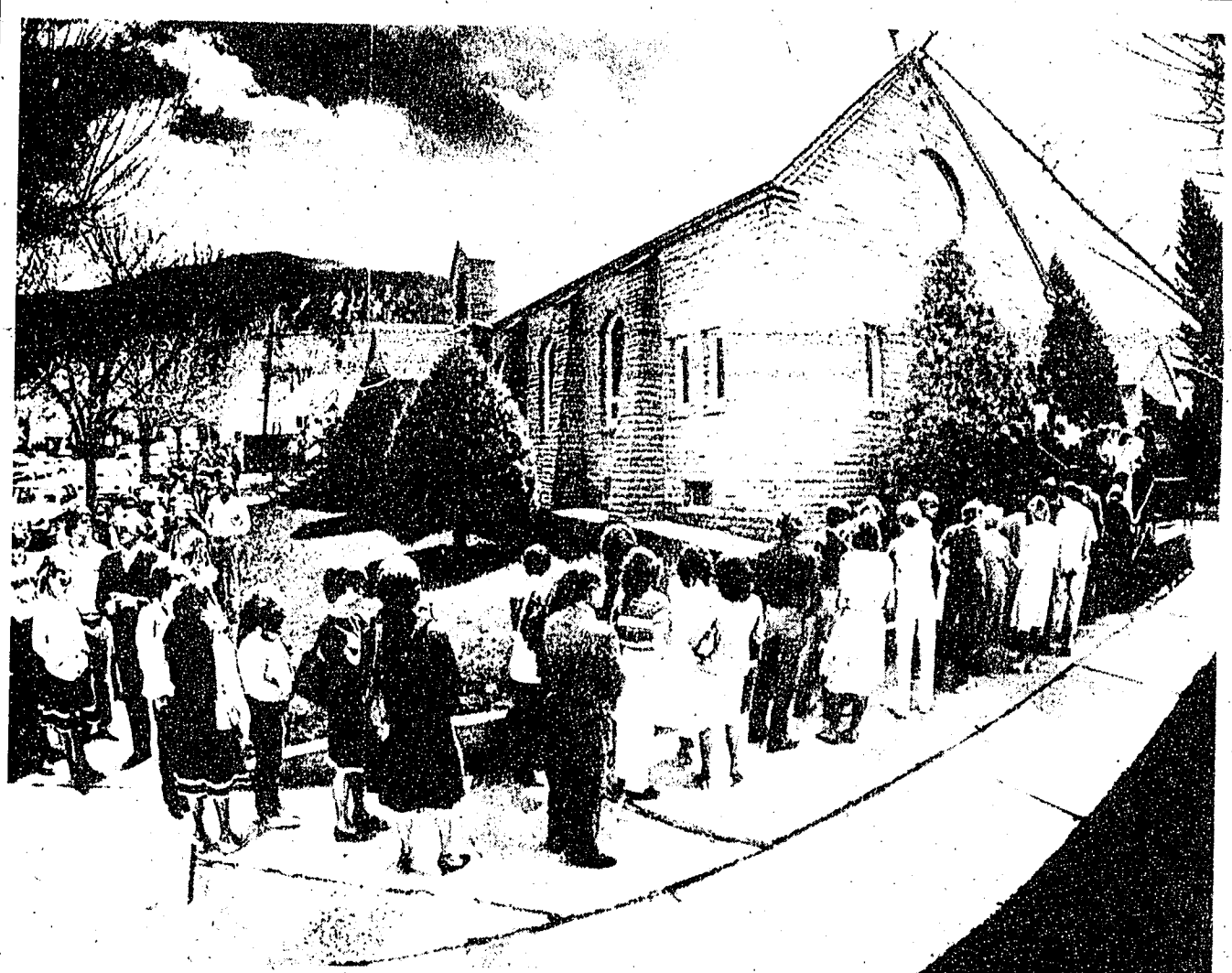
In addition to the asphyxiations, one of the victims was shot, one bludgeoned, one stabbed and one killed by a blow to the head. The bodies of seven victims were so badly decomposed that the cause of death could not be determined.



The death count in Atlanta rose to 25 yesterday when the body of a 23-year old black man was pulled from the Chattahoochee River. The body is being unloaded at the Fulton County Medical Examiners. Authorities are undecided as whether to turn the body over to the special police task force searching for the killer or killers of 24 Atlanta children.

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For whom the bell tolls

A massive crowd formed a circle around St. Stevens Catholic Church in Glenwood Springs, Colo. yesterday for the funeral service for Hugh W. Pierce Jr. Pierce, one of the 15 miners killed in an explosion last Wednesday at the Mid Continent Resources Inc. Dutch Creek mine.

Gentle Thursday? Spirit of spring event may be revived

By ELLYN HARLEY
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

In most students' minds, Gentle Thursday has met its demise after a 10-year lifespan. But for Bill Eichenser (12th-industrial engineering), Gentle Thursday still has a breath of life, and he will try to rescue it this Thursday on the HUB lawn in an event called "Gentle Thursday Lives."

Eichenser said Gentle Thursday is too good an idea to "let it die," and he wants to instill the original idea of the event as a day to forget about political and social issues.

"The Horizons thing seems to be the opposite kind of thing, to hype political things," Eichenser said. "It (Gentle Thursday) is a good idea. What everyone's hassle was is that it was becoming a big party on the HUB lawn."

Eichenser said he was not alone in having the "Gentle Thursday Lives" idea but he put the idea to work.

"I have a silk screening machine so I can make T-shirts," he said. "The Lazy J downtown has from 100 to 150 T-shirts." He said the money from T-shirt sales has allowed him and a few close friends on his floor in Mifflin Hall who are helping him to put up posters publicizing the event.

Eichenser stressed that the event will be informal and unstructured. He said this "Gentle Thursday" cannot become the giant party it has been in the past because there will be no bands or structured events. He said the only thing that might be a problem is trash thrown on

the ground.

"We're just telling people to bring a friend and a trash bag. I tell everyone who calls 'We're trying to avoid hassles — bring a trash bag.'"

"Any money left over from T-shirt sales will be spent on trash bags for next year," he said.

The blue "Gentle Thursday Lives" flyers posted around campus have included a phone number for T-shirt sales information, which is Eichenser's phone number.

Harmon said he didn't know what Constantino had done, and that he had no information concerning what type of event is to be held on the HUB lawn on Thursday.

However, Constantino said the flyer and T-shirt sales are not a problem and are not in violation of the solicitation policy.

"They were making other students aware that they could buy the T-shirts at The Lazy J," Constantino said. "If they were selling T-shirts out of their rooms

'We're just telling people to bring a friend and a trash bag. . . any money left over from T-shirt sales will be spent on trash bags for next year.'

—Bill Eichenser
(12th-industrialengineering)

Space contacts

Two alumni pioneer final frontier with NASA

By CINDY COX
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Space was the final frontier when George Page and Paul Weitz graduated from the University in the 1950s. Neither man then anticipated a career with space travel.

But last week, Page, director of shuttle operations for Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral, Fla., acted as the launch director for the Space Shuttle.

"When I graduated from Penn State, I didn't even know what a NASA was," Page said. "In those days, we didn't think much about space programs."

Shuttle operations was responsible for the processing of flight hardware, assembly, check out and finally the launch, he said. After computer problems caused the mission to be delayed, Page said the main concern was to start a recovery program.

"We get used to some of these things in this business," Page said. "But it was quite a letdown because we had built up to it for such a long time."

Fortunately, space personnel recovered well and two days later had a better operation, Page said.

Work has already begun on preparing an orbiter for a second launch this fall, he said. Last week, Page was at Edwards

Air Force Base in California getting the orbiter ready to load on a 747 shuttle carrier to bring it back to Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

After graduating in '52, Page worked at General Dynamics on the Atlas Missile Program and the Mercury Program, the first United States manned orbital launch. Since 1963, Page has worked for the National Aeronautics and Space Association on all the manned launches.

Another University graduate involved with the space program is Paul Weitz, a NASA astronaut. Weitz participated in the first Skylab mission in space, conducting medical experiments and working with solar telescopes.

When not up in space, Weitz is based in Houston at Johnson Space Center. His main concern in Houston is working on the design and operation of space vehicles.

"This gives the astronauts an insight into the operation of vehicles," Weitz said. "We try to make sure they are as good as can be from the user's point of view."

After graduation in 1953, Weitz was commissioned as an officer in the Navy until he had the opportunity to apply for the astronaut program.



Dirty Duds

Super Chick (bottom) doesn't look so super here as she seems to be getting pinned to the grime by Honey Girl. As the mud squished between their toes, the two women battled on as part of the mud-wrestling event held at Gatsby's, 118 W. College Ave., last night.

inside

• A former El Salvadoran government official told a Penn State audience he believes the Reagan administration policy could turn the situation in El Salvador into another Vietnam. . . . Page 6

• Japan's Toshihiko Seko and New Zealand's Allison Roe were the big winners yesterday in the 85th annual Boston Marathon. . . . Page 8

• Tony Jacoby announced his plans to resign his position as president of the West Halls Residence Association at the end of the term because of a misunderstanding that led to his not getting a dorm contract. . . . Page 14

weather

Mostly sunny, breezy and chilly today with an unseasonably cool high of only 48. Clear, calm and quite cold tonight with frost likely as the low temperature reaches 27. Mainly sunny tomorrow with temperatures remaining on the cool side reaching a high of 55. A good deal of cloudiness Thursday with milder temperatures near 60 and a few showers possible.