

Carroll College
Alumnus

For our alumni, friends and supporters, our students and their parents

Carroll College Helena, Montana 59625



Shattered windows in Guadalupe Hall, sub-zero temperatures, loss of power across the city, and the threat of poisonous vapors forced evacuation before dawn

February 1989

Vol. 27, No. 1

SPECIAL EDITION

4:48 a.m. train explosion blasts the Carroll campus



A chunk of rail car weighing hundreds of pounds, was just one of many pieces of debris scattered over the Carroll campus. This piece landed near Guad.

(Photo by Gene Fischer, Independent Record)

The twisted and shattered train which exploded at 4:48 a.m. on February 2, 1989, burned with clouds of dark smoke. The explosions caused by the runaway railroad cars rocked the capital city, cutting off electricity and forcing the evacuation of thousands as wind chills dipped to 70 degrees below zero.

(Photo by Gene Fischer, Independent Record)

Blasts from derailment rock frigid Montana city

The Orange County Register, and other papers across the country carried this Associated Press story:

HELENA, Mont. —Two explosions caused by runaway railroad cars rocked Montana's capital city Thursday, cutting off electricity and forcing the evacuation of thousands as wind chills dipped to 70 degrees below zero.

The runaway cars derailed and hit a propane tank near the railroad tracks, setting off an explosion. Minutes later, the fire from the blast caused one of the derailed cars containing a highly flammable chemical to blow up, authorities said. A second car containing plastic also burned, producing a cloud of black smoke that prompted the evacuations.

The force of the 4:48 a.m. blasts overturned automobiles, shattered windows at a nearby college and homes and

hurled wreckage from railroad cars through buildings a quarter-mile away. Two minor injuries were reported.

"It's a miracle no one was killed or injured," said Ed Schild, Lewis and Clark County undersheriff.

Authorities evacuated 4,000 to 7,000 people from a square-mile area around the burning railroad cars, said Col. Gary Blair, adjutant general for Montana's National Guard. City Manager Bill Verwolf put the figure at about 2,000.

Evacuees fled to churches, the Helena Civic Center, the National Guard armory and schools, which were already closed by the severe 30 degrees below zero that combined with winds to produce wind chills of 70 degrees below zero, the National Weather Service said. Snow fell intermittently.



Officials take a close look at the twisted rail wreckage. The explosion from the chemicals in the rail cars blacked out

power for the 37,000 residents living in the area. (Photo by Gene Fischer, Independent Record)

YOU CAN HELP THE 4:48 SPECIAL FUND!

by Janet Brooke
Associate Director of Development

The attached special 4:48 FUND envelope is enclosed for YOUR convenience in making a special gift to Carroll College to help with the renovation and reconstruction of the campus. Money will be received from insurance companies, but the College still needs YOUR help in getting campus life back to normal, and improving the living and dining facilities, classrooms, teaching materials, student recreation and activity center, and providing scholarships for prospective and returning students.

Your tax-deductible contribution will be appreciated and used to continue Carroll's tradition of educational excellence. Please make your check payable to **CARROLL COLLEGE FOUNDATION 4:48 FUND**.

As the new Associate Director of Development, I look forward to working with you to build the many scholarship endowments and other funds that are so necessary in keeping the Fighting Saints No. 1.



Many thanks to the families, faculty, staff, alumni, other students, and our Helena neighbors who helped the women move their belongings out of Guad. It was a bone-chilling task in the sub-zero cold, and we appreciate your warm-hearted actions! And thank you again, to all of the wonderful people who gave our students homes for the three days when the campus was closed.

Academic schedule for the remainder of the Spring Semester:

Monday, February 13	Classes resume
Monday, February 20	Classes will meet-Monday schedule of classes
Friday, March 17	Spring recess after last class
Monday, March 27	Classes will meet-Monday schedule of classes
Tuesday, March 28	Classes will meet-Tuesday schedule of classes
Mon-Thur, May 8-11	Final Examinations
Saturday, May 13	Commencement-Civic Center

Some people slip into retirement quietly...

Dr. Kerins retires with quite a blast

Carroll College president Dr. FRANCIS J. KERINS has been dealt the severest test of his college administration at the end of his career. But what has come out of the disaster is a clear picture of the strong and caring and vital institution that the college continues to be as it enters its 80th year. A lot of the credit for the wonderful relationship that exists with the community and for the fine organization that runs the school rests with Kerins.

Embodying the Carroll spirit, he and his staff proved indomitable throughout the ordeal. Because he is still busy with meetings with engineers and insurance people and his staff, and is directing the many phases of clean-up and repair work and communications, he has given the ALUMNUS permission to reprint portions of the messages he sent out to the Board of Trustees and to the parents during the past week.

1989 marks Carroll's 80th Anniversary

Carroll alumna sends the first 4:48 gift

ELINOR BOWMAN KARNES, from Scranton, Pennsylvania, responded the day after the disaster with a check and this most gracious note to the college president:

Dear Sir:

Enclosed is a small gift, a personal check, to go into the disaster fund for the damage Carroll College suffered from yesterday's accident. I was an older student and was enrolled from September 1979 through the fall semester of 1981. The education I received from Carroll has been of greater value to those whom I served professionally once I finally graduated from school number three than what I learned from (she named the other two schools) post Carroll. Margaret Stuart and Fr. Jeremiah T. Sullivan have been quoted innumerable times to clients, patients and fellow professionals. Nancy Hotchkiss' class in Soc/Anthro Families in Different Cultures was of inestimable value. After graduation, cum laude, I worked with the mentally ill until reaching age 65 in May 1988. You are often in my thoughts and will be in my prayers.

A publication of Carroll College, the ALUMNUS is produced four times a year. All correspondence should be addressed as follows:

ALUMNUS NEWS
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Elinor Bowman Karnes

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FEBRUARY 6, 1989
from Francis J. Kerins, President
Introduction

This will describe to you events at the college beginning with the explosion on Thursday morning, February 2, the steps we have taken to deal with the problems, and our plans for the immediate future. I regret having been unable to communicate with you sooner. Urgent needs to care for students and preserve facilities have made our days and nights hectic.

Incident

You are all aware of what occurred. Runaway railroad cars, a collision and a subsequent fire all culminated in a massive explosion in rail cars on the track just north of the Carroll campus. This was at 4:48 a.m. Thursday, 2 February 1989. Damage to Carroll's buildings was severe. Hazard of injury or death to our students and staff was great. Through God's providence, no one was killed or injured. Given the circumstances and degree of destruction, this outcome was miraculous.

Carroll students boarding the buses in the pre-dawn darkness to go to the evacuation centers. (Photo by Gene Fischer, Independent Record)



Students

The students resident on campus were evacuated in minutes. For this, **FRANCEE O'REILLY** and **ED NOONAN**, our hall directors, cannot be sufficiently praised. Their work did much to save lives and avoid injury.

All were immediately taken to emergency shelters such as the Armory. By later in the day, all of the students had been taken into private homes generously offered. They remained in those locations Thursday and Friday nights.

We held a meeting with five or six hundred students at 7 p.m. Friday in St. Mary's Church. We described the damage to them, tried to reassure them, and answered their many questions as best we could. By that time we were able to announce that the campus would reopen at noon on Saturday. However, the most severely damaged areas, the Physical Education Center, Guadalupe Hall, the Fine Arts area (the old gym) and the library were still off limits and closed.

At noon on Saturday, most of the resident students checked in at St. Charles Hall and were assigned or reassigned rooms. Women from Guad were placed in Borromeo and St. Charles. Some movement was necessary; for example, sections of St. Charles which had been occupied by men were transferred to women, and the men there were asked to move to other male areas.

Some students went home because we had announced that classes would be cancelled until Monday, February 13. A few have moved into off-campus houses or apartments. Shodair Hospital and the YWCA have offered facilities, and some of these will have to be used. When class resumes, we will need shuttle service from these locations to campus.

All students are accounted for and their locations known. Father Shea and his people did an outstanding job with these complex logistics. The students were incredibly cooperative and patient.

"The students resident on campus were evacuated in minutes. For this, **FRANCEE O'REILLY** and **ED NOONAN**, our hall directors, cannot be sufficiently praised. Their work did much to save lives and avoid injury."



Most of the Guadalupe Hall windows on the north side of the building were shattered in the blast. (Photo by Bill Sallaz)

"Our Lady of Guadalupe was obviously on duty for her charges."

Saturday afternoon, and again on Sunday, we were able to bring the Guad women to their rooms in escorted groups to retrieve some clothing and personal possessions. When they were evacuated, the students got out with only what they were wearing; this was a very trying and distressing experience for them.

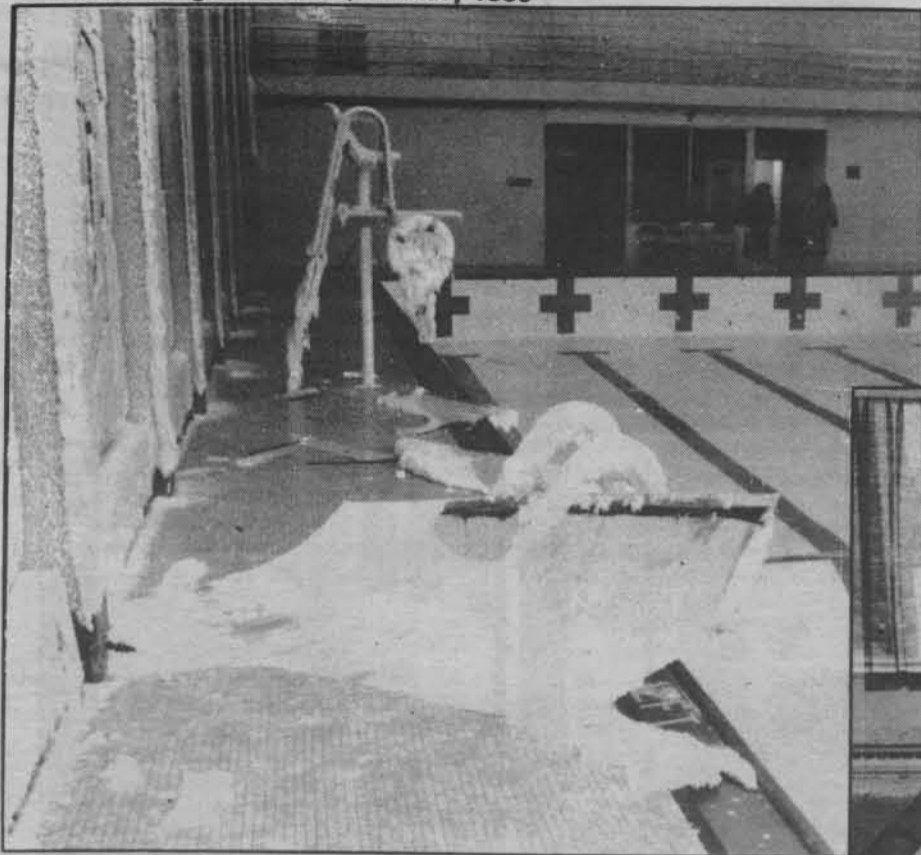
Food service was resumed on Saturday evening, and has since been provided on a regular basis. This is most difficult with constant problems in the Commons of heat loss, water breakdowns, freezing and leaks, but Saga-Marriott is managing remarkably well.

For the coming week, when there will be no classes but many students are on campus, Jeff Baker is planning programs of faculty presentation, and Father Shea is working to line up activities and sports facilities.

We are concerned with psychological impacts, depression, and post-traumatic repercussions. Especially for the Guad women, who were literally blown out of their beds in the middle of the night, had their rooms showered with shredded glass, their living space and possessions violated violently and their lives in great hazard, these concerns are most weighty. It is truly incredible that not one of them was killed or seriously injured. Our Lady of Guadalupe was obviously on duty for her charges.



On the third day after the disaster the authorities gave permission for the women to remove some of their belongings from Guadalupe Hall.

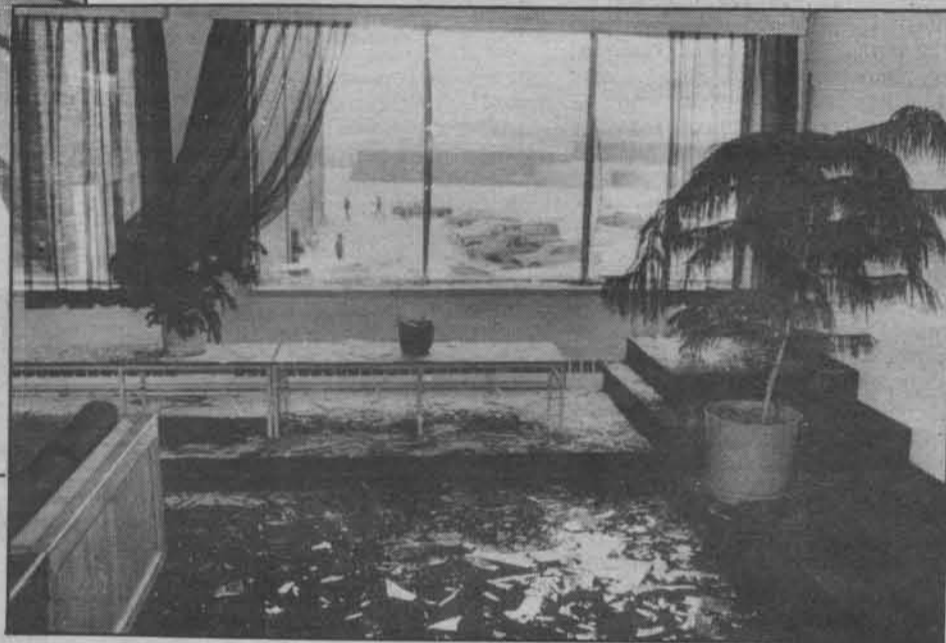


Report to the Board of Trustees (Continued from page 3)

The pool was saved from cracking because the maintenance people drained it.

(Photo by Bill Sallaz)

Shattered glass covers the Guadalupe Hall lobby.



(Photo by Bill Sallaz)

"...our maintenance staff have been truly heroic. They have worked night and day under the most miserable conditions."



Faculty and Staff

All of the Carroll people have responded magnificently to this crisis. We had a meeting for faculty and staff at St. Mary's at 5:30 p.m. Friday; very many attended. We gave them all the information we had on damage and plans, and received many extremely helpful suggestions from them. Their spirit of cooperation and willingness to help in any way possible was wonderful. Faculty volunteers started scores of frozen cars for students (and even for the president) Saturday and Sunday, for example.

Academics

All classes will be resumed on February 13. Adjustments will be required, because office and classroom space in the P.E. Center and Guadalupe Hall is out of commission. We will try to hold all classes on campus, and to stay as close as possible to the regular schedule and academic calendar. We will also make up lost instructional time later on as is feasible. Our truly fine faculty will deliver full measure of educational opportunity to students. There will, of course, be many difficulties involved.

Buildings

I will not attempt a detailed description here; Leo Walchuck (who has been tireless and a tower of strength throughout all of this) will be able to give you more information later. Damage is severe; you cannot imagine it without seeing it. Flying railroad debris—some of it huge—a great deal of shattered glass, ceilings mangled, projectiles on or through roofs, all wreaked havoc. A power outage consequent to the explosion and in sub-zero temperatures caused all kinds of heat and water problems, leaks and freezes. These continue and will plague us for some time.

Maintenance efforts have concentrated on saving boilers, boarding up broken windows, controlling water problems and maintaining heat. Every building on campus suffered. The most severe damage is in the P.E. Center, Guadalupe Hall, the Library and the Fine Arts Area (the old gym). The Commons also suffered.

You should be aware that our maintenance staff have been truly heroic. They have worked night and day under the most miserable conditions. We owe them the greatest gratitude and must find a way, when this is over, to express appreciation to them.

We do not have enough information yet to make cost estimates or predict when buildings will be usable. Experts will have to tell us whether structural damage has occurred. Overall costs will certainly be in the millions; how far into the millions we do not yet know. The P.E. Center is obviously out of commission for this semester, if not longer. Guadalupe Hall will take quite a few weeks.

Carroll Spirit

In speaking with the students at St. Mary's Friday, I cited a song title from the musical THE UNSINKABLE MOLLY BROWN: "I Ain't Down Yet." Well, Carroll ain't down yet. Despite the severe difficulties we face, we will be up and running and keep doing the job well. We can be immensely proud of our students, faculty and staff. They are truly magnificent. We have more genuine Christian community on campus than ever before. So be assured that the college will survive and thrive. Carroll is not buildings or things, but persons. Though buildings are damaged and things destroyed, through God's grace the persons have been saved.

LET US GIVE PRAISE AND THANKS TO GOD.

Frank Kerins
President

DEAR CARROLL PARENTS:

(Excerpts from the President's letter to Carroll parents dated February 9, 1989)

Beyond the basic descriptive information, I would like to emphasize the need of our students for continuing support, reassurance and every kind of help which we can all give. We need and request your assistance in supporting your sons and daughters through your own love for them and your encouragement and concern.

All of Carroll's students are safe and well. We escaped death and injury, and for that we are deeply grateful to God. But they have suffered a terrifying experience and severe physical and mental discomfort. For those of your daughters who were resident in Guadalupe Hall especially, this incident involved far more than mere inconvenience. We must be very sensitive to the shock they endured. While we are justly proud of their courage and generous coping with many adjustments, we must also be aware of the difficulties which they now face. For all of the students at Carroll, resident or not and in whatever location housed, this has been a distressing experience. The students have responded splendidly.

Each day brings progress. St. Albert's Hall has reopened to student use; the library will begin service this weekend. The Fine Arts Center will be ready as soon as the ceilings can be repaired and cleanup completed. By next week, we hope to have most buildings on campus

in operation. All have been examined by architects and structural engineers and found safe for occupancy.

The remaining exceptions are the P. E. Center and Guadalupe Hall. These will take longer. We are now in the process of boarding up windows in Guad and thawing the building. Ordering and installing windows throughout Guad will take some time. We still need a good bit of information about the condition of the P. E. Center and Guad, what will be needed there, and how long it will take.

With good progress now underway in meeting student and class needs, we are addressing some of the financial implications. The January 31 financial statements, ordinarily mailed by now, will be delayed. Adjustments will have to be made. For instance, no student will be billed for room and board from February 2 through February 12. Charges starting on February 13 will reflect the living accommodations now being made. Specific details concerning appropriate credits will be forthcoming. Further, we are working with Montana Rail Link to process all claims for personal property that has been lost or damaged. Again, details should be finalized in the near future.

Thank you for your help and support in this difficult time.

Cordially,
Frank Kerins
President

(Photo by Gene Fischer, Independent Record)



Shards of glass frame a Guad window. (Photo by Bill Sallaz)



Glass rains down on Carroll students

by Bill Lombardi
Lee Newspapers State Bureau

Helena --Karen Gross, a Carroll college junior living on the second floor of Guadalupe Hall, was sleeping in her bed early Thursday morning when she woke up to shattered glass raining on top of her.

"It's so weird," she said. "I don't have any cuts or anything. I didn't know what to think when it hit me. I just ran and got out of there. It really scared me."

Gross said her bed sits directly beneath her dorm window.

"I didn't hear the loud boom," she said. "I was just laying in my bed."

Luckily for Debra Dacar, the night before she and her roommate had an impulse to rearrange their room on the second floor, moving her bed away from the window.

If she hadn't, she said, she surely would have been cut by sharp shards of splintered glass as all the windows on the north side of the building shattered in the explosion.

But a heavy street sign she had hung from the ceiling narrowly missed the two students when it crashed to the floor between their beds.

"All of a sudden the lights started flashing and the windows blew in and then tiles started falling off the roof," Dacar said.

One student suffered a slight cut on the arm, but officials said injuries were likely prevented because students were in bed and had their draperies drawn against the intense cold.

Lisa Downs, a 21-year-old junior living in the dorm, said she woke up when she heard the explosion.

Then, through her drapes, she said she saw --in succession --a series of white, yellow and blue flashes of light.

"The whole building just shook," Downs said. "Everyone was pretty much screaming."

"It was so frightening not knowing what it was," she added. "I didn't know if it was a bomb. It was the most frightening moment of my life. Everyone pretty much panicked."

Female students ran out into the dorm's hallway, where resident assistant Kathi Wells gathered the coeds together and calmed them down, Downs said.

Wells made sure everyone was all right, took a head count and told dorm residents to unplug electrical appliances, Downs said.

Wielding flashlights, male students from another dorm also ran to Guadalupe Hall and helped lead female students out through the darkness, Downs said.

Outside, Downs said she could see a cloud of white smoke hovering in the air.

"The smell was awful," she said.



Evacuated area residents and Carroll students huddled in an emergency shelter. (Photo by Gene Fischer, Independent Record)

“Thanks, Helena, for taking us in!”



Carroll students seemed to enjoy their stay at the Armory even though the heat was off there, too, because of the blast. (Photo by Gene Fischer, Independent Record)

Evacuees cheerful in armory gym

by the Independent Record and Montana Standard Wire Services

Transformed from a ballroom last weekend, the Helena National Guard Armory gym served as a temporary disaster relief center for Carroll College students and residents evacuated after a rail car explosion Thursday. Despite the lack of heat—power was not restored until mid-morning—the mood among the 350 evacuees was upbeat, although some complained about the lack of food, which was late arriving.

Mayor Russ Ritter, a Carroll official, said 700-800 students were evacuated from the campus. . . Many of the students were taken to the armory by the National Guard in vans and buses, and by evening all had been placed in private homes around the city, Ritter said.

Disaster officials had no firm estimates of the number of other residents who were evacuated, because most apparently went to stay with friends, rather than to Red Cross centers.

“You know Montana,” said Red Cross Disaster Coordinator Ken Rohyans. “Everybody knows somebody.”

“It was funny to see what people brought with them,” said Alex Lobdell, editor of the campus newspaper. “There was a lot of makeup. One girl had her fishtank.”

The girl with the fishtank, Melanie Parenteau of Priest River, Idaho, was interviewed by the **Great Falls Tribune** and said she decided to evacuate her four-month-old pet fish—called “Hey Dewey Are You Floating Yet?”—because he survived when the blast blew out her dorm room window.

“He was right next to the window and when it blew in he lived,” she said, “so I said I better bring him along.”

Elizabeth Pratt, a junior from Klamath Falls, Ore., said some girls in Guadalupe Hall . . . were frightened by the blast, but mainly because of the glass blown into their rooms from the dorm’s oversized windows.

Lobdell said the early hour and the intense cold may have helped avert injuries because students were in bed and had their curtains or draperies drawn.

Most students evacuated their dorms dressed for warmth rather than style. They did not have time to take much with them. For several days they were “campers” in the homes of parents, friends, faculty, staff, older-than-average students, alumni and other citizens of Helena. By 1 p.m. on the day of the explosion, all the students were in homes, and still the switchboard rang with calls from people willing to take in a Fighting Saint or two.



GOOD NEWS . . .

If you have to be evacuated in sub-zero weather in the dark under scary circumstances, hopefully you’ll have Fr. Leo Proxell with you. Alex Lobdell, editor of the **PROSPECTOR**, overheard him exclaim as he burst into O’Connell Hall among the shivering students, “I have an announcement to make. Your P.E. fees are going WAY up!”

BAD NEWS . . .

An axle and rod from an exploding rail car landed in the living room of 79 year old Catherine DeBree, a neighbor of the college on Ralph Street. The machinery soared over the entire Carroll College campus to narrowly miss the sleeping woman.

A similar huge chunk of metal crashed through the roof of the library and flattened a study table where just a few hours later as many as six students might have been studying.

Through the eyes of the Mayor...

An interview with Russell J. Ritter
Vice President for College Relations

First his emergency beeper went off, and then he received a call from Patricia Zanto of the Development Office, and quickly Mayor Russ Ritter, Vice-President for College Relations, was on his way to the campus in the pre-dawn hours:

I'd heard the blast at my house, and couldn't identify what it was, except it was a loud bang. It got our attention at home. I saw where it came from, because our bedroom blinds were open.

Then Pat Zanto called me and said, "They're looking for an official at the college. There was an explosion down there."

I immediately dressed and called Jeff Baker. He had received the message, too, and he was leaving for the college. I probably arrived by 5:15 a.m. It didn't take long.

The lights and heat were out all over the campus due to the power outage. I soon discovered that my outside line was the only phone working in O'Connell Hall. I called Leo Walchuk, but he was already on his way to the campus.

Although Dr. Kerins was snowed in at Salt Lake City, stuck in the airport, he can be complimented on his network that covers the "What If" situations. He had the whole thing set up. The administrative staff had such good communications, that within ten minutes the three of us knew about the disaster and were on the campus. And when Frank did arrive, he was tireless in his efforts to serve the Carroll students.

In the dim morning light of O'Connell Hall I ran into Bob Robinson, one of our alums, chairman of this year's IMPACT Scholarship Drive, who had planned to come for a breakfast meeting in the Commons. Instead he came to help.

The lower level of O'Connell was full of students. Francee O'Reilly and Ed Noonan had done an outstanding job. Everyone was out of Guad, St. Charles and Borromeo, and Francee and Ed and their staff had swept all three buildings. I think the thing we have to keep emphasizing was that no one was hurt. That in itself was a miracle.

I radioed to the city manager and chief of police to find out where we could put the students. My first concern was their safety. We couldn't leave them on

campus, because we didn't know whether or not there would be another blast.

We arranged for the Civic Center to open. Someone had already contacted the Armory. Then the bus people started showing up. I think Francee and Ed had called them.

We were severely hampered by having no power. So we tried to use the radio to communicate. I made sure the radio stations were informed that there had been no casualties, but two stations were temporarily off the air. KMTX was on emergency power, so I did a live broadcast.

Then the police chief said they had to evacuate the area immediately around the college. I went on the radio again, directing people to go to the Civic Center, Helena High, and the Armory.

Then Paul Spengler, the county disaster and emergency coordinator, contacted me to activate the emergency operating center (EOC). At our request, US WEST immediately call forwarded all calls for the College to the EOC, so we could continue to answer parents' questions and take messages.

In the EOC we had city, county, law enforcement, Montana Power, U.S. West, everybody in one place. That was really crucial. If any one thing made this run as smoothly as it did, it was when we finally had everybody in one room, and all the decision-makers were working in concert with each other.

The police were brought in to sweep the campus and evacuate everyone else between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. when it was discovered that a second tank containing the same product as the first tank that had exploded was at the site, creating the possibility of another blast.

Once we felt that the campus was secured, Jeff Baker and I moved Felice Fechter, Debbie Michalson and Pat Zanto, the skeleton crew of volunteer staff members who had come in to try to answer calls from worried parents, down to the EOC.

The last person, a Guad supervisor, road out in my Bronco after we had driven two loads of students to the Armory. Bob Robinson hauled students away in his pickup, and later kept 21 Carroll students and 20 relatives at his home for several days.

By 1 p.m. on the day of the blast, everyone was housed some place in Helena.



Helena Fire Marshal Bob Knudson stands beside the huge ice formation which covered a fire department pickup truck at the site of the train wreck. The ice formed from mist from fire hoses spraying water on the burning rail cars. The bed of the truck can be made out on the right.

(Photo by Gene Fischer, Independent Record)

At 9:30 a.m. as the on-site command post discovered other potentially hazardous materials at the wreck site, the evacuation was expanded west, north, east and south. As they got more information, they shrank the zone back, but the college was always in a state of evacuation. As late as Sunday they still had fire danger.

At approximately 8:30 p.m. on Thursday I declared the city a disaster area which officially then gave us access to other elements of government for help, vis a vis, Malmstrom AFB with their pumper trucks, Fort Harrison and the National Guard.

Our story made every major network -- ABC, CBS, CNN, and NBC.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) sent about nine investigators to Helena. One had just come back from investigating the 747 disaster in Scotland. The NTSB began an immediate investigation of the incident, attempting to check all the debris which was scattered over a five mile radius.

The explosion and evacuation was an experience which brought out the best in everybody, especially in the Carroll family.

EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION

The Montana Rail Link hydrogen peroxide tank car explosion at 4:48 a.m., combined with the power outage, loss of telephones, the 70 degrees below zero wind chill, the evacuation of approximately 3500 people from Carroll College and Sunhaven Subdivision and the surrounding area, and the depletion of city resources, compels me to declare a State of Emergency in the City of Helena on February 2, 1989, in accordance with 10-2-402, MCA. Russell J. Ritter
Mayor of Helena

Boarding the bus for the trip to an evacuation center.

(Photo by Gene Fischer, Independent Record)





It was so cold in Guadalupe Hall, that the floor tiles began to come unglued and pop off, creating an additional mess to clean up beyond the glass which was frozen to the floor.

(Photo by Bill Sallaz)

The bitter cold made picking up one's belongings a difficult task. In some rooms clothes were frozen into drawers.

Celebrating 80 years and we're...

BETTER THAN EVER!



"We
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cent."



Cars were frozen up all over campus, but once the ev
lifted, faculty and staff came and helped the students
going.

It must have been almost 100 degrees warmer when all this was moved in last August! (Photo by Bill Sallaz)



With high spirits Guad women and their helpers trek down the hillside with boxes and bags to pick up their possessions.

(Photo by Bill Sallaz)



One of Carroll's foreign students gazes forlornly at her home away from home while she waits for a ride to her new room assignment. She is surrounded by her belongings, hurriedly gathered into plastic sacks the more than twenty degrees below zero cold.

(Photo by Bill Sallaz)



Windows on both sides of the Guad lobby had been blasted out.

(Photo by Bill Sallaz)

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been almost 100 degrees warmer when all this was moved in

Everything we say about Carroll College is real!

An interview with Father Dan Shea

Vice President for Student Affairs
February 10, 1989

"This disaster has proved all the things we say about Carroll College," said Fr. Dan Shea at the end of an incredible week of activity for his office of Student Affairs. "The community of Carroll College is not just a public relations phrase, it's a reality."

Father Shea saw a lot of good things come out of this incident. "The community responded so quickly and so thoroughly to the needs of those people impacted by the disaster. I've never seen faculty and students and staff work so closely together; whether that was to provide housing and meals for twenty students like one staff member did for three days; or whether it was faculty members driving trucks and cars helping people evacuate their rooms and carry their belongings; or whether it was the counseling that went on and the support and the understanding that students gave to other students or the faculty and staff."

"I guess what I saw is what we always talk about—the community of Carroll College. I see students welcoming in new roommates. I see students and the administration being flexible with policies and being adaptable to the new reality. It has allowed and forced all of us to get out of the stereotypes we build for one another."

"I saw President Frank Kerins walking up and down the halls of St. Charles distributing pizza. I saw Fr. Dan Hillen and Fr. Bob Butko moving students' belongings. I saw people like Guido Bugni and John Downs and Jon Krutar starting cars for their students. I saw the maintenance staff working 24 and 30 hours straight. Then you have the people who worked at Guad helping the students get into their rooms."

"This incident allows us to see beyond the stereotypes. We see people coming through honoring each person's whole experience because there was a difference in all the experiences. The Guad experience was different from the St. Charles experience or the off-campus experience."

"It proves we are a caring community."

Fr. Shea commented that the shuttle bus running now from the YWCA and Shodair and the motel accommodations would remind some of the alumni of the days of Immaculata, Dean and Siena Halls.

As of the 13th the students would be out of the motel housing, said Shea. The college is allowing people to break housing contracts and live off campus.

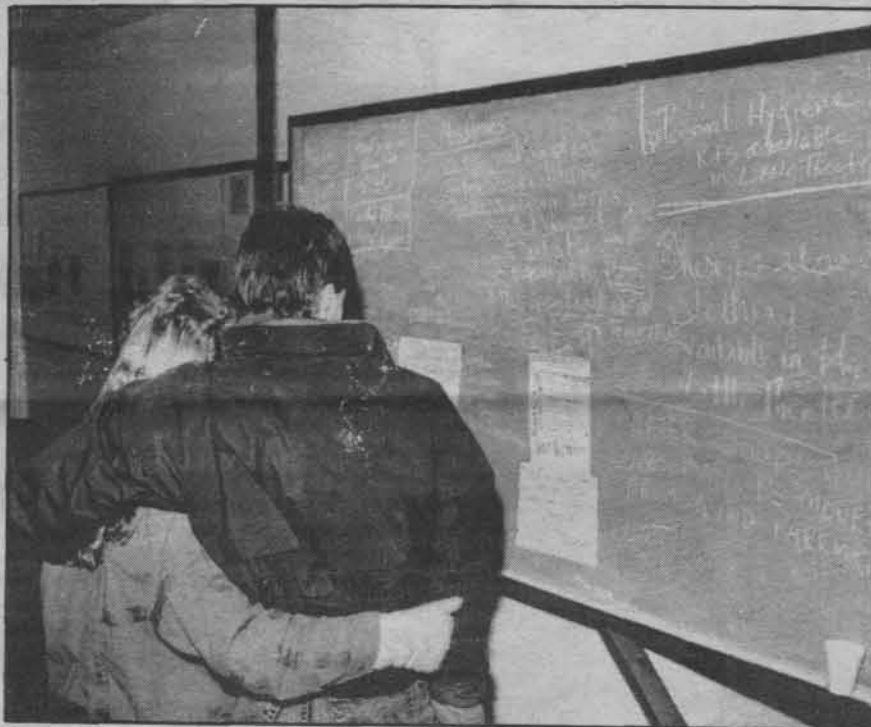
"I think it's interesting that Father Kirchen relates this as much more serious and much more traumatic than the earthquake of 1935," commented Shea.

There have been many changes on campus. Women are living in Borromeo for the first time, and 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Main are now women's residences, along with the second floor of Borromeo. Men's residences are now Submain and 2nd, 3rd, and 4th South and the basement and first floor of Borromeo. The



Father Dan Shea

(Photos by Bill Sallaz)



A huge blackboard in the St. Charles Lobby served as a message center for the returning evacuees.



Local stores provided clothes and supplies for the Guadalupe women to use until they could be allowed back into their rooms. For several days they had been living with just what they had worn on their backs the morning of the blast.

Student Health center has been moved to Borromeo, and Francee O'Reilly, Guad's resident director is now living in Borromeo.

"I'm really thankful for the way the Helena community and the Carroll community responded to the physical needs, and the shelter needs, and the safety needs, and the psychological needs of the students," said Shea.

He said he and his staff found housing for the student body in two or three days, a job they normally would have had all summer to do, as well as finding accommodations for the athletic department and other displaced personnel. And they mastered some new skills like running a shuttle service, in addition to caring for the students and organizing activities during the week's break in classes.

"With movie tickets, donuts, dances and pizza parties," quipped Shea, "Some students may say they've never been treated so well."

Shea has taken the opportunity offered by the disaster to start something new.

"One thing I like is the daily chat with the students at 5:45 p.m. I go to the dining hall and talk to them and answer their questions, give them a progress report on what's happening, fill them in on the news."

"As of Friday, February 10 at 3 p.m., not one person has dropped out," said Shea. "The college has a liberal credit policy due to changes in living conditions."

"Why hasn't there been all the post trauma stress that the arm-chair psychologists talk about?" Shea asked. "Because the students were allowed to grieve and people were there to offer support," he answered, praising his counseling staff and caring faculty members.

"It does require a tremendous amount of adjustment, but we're not seeing aberrations of behavior," he continued.

"People are respecting one another. Yes, there are continued adjustments to be made, but people are really respecting one another. That's why we don't have people acting crazy. These people were honored and respected and validated in their stories. As opposed to the post-Vietnam War experience. Those people were not validated or honored or accepted. Post traumatic experience does come out of the Vietnam experience. That's where I see the big difference—the Helena community and the Carroll community validated and welcomed our kids."

"Not that we haven't had a few adjustments or a few temporary rubbed elbows or tempers," Shea confessed. "We've seen our way through those, and we continue to see our way through those."

One interesting sidelight was the comment Father Shea made to a CNN reporter covering the explosion:

"We're not a wimpy school. We were going to stay open to 35 below. But we couldn't sustain both 35 below and a train explosion."

Father Shea commended his staff for responding so well, especially Francee O'Reilly, Patty McAllister and Ed Noonan and all the R.A.s.

"I see our kids and faculty coming out of this better than ever," he said. "And the Carroll opportunity becoming better than ever."

Even the pieces of shrapnel littering the campus may be turned into something good, says Shea, as Fr. Dan Hillen and others are discussing making a free-form sculpture out of the hundreds of fragments.

A Report from Ed Noonan

Resident Director of St. Charles and Borromeo Halls

The Carroll College resident students have been in steady motion since 4:48 a.m. on February 2, first from Carroll to evacuation sites and then to private homes. By noon on the day of the explosion, all students were out of the centers revealing the close ties of Carroll to the community. Relatives, friends, off campus students, alumni, and baby-sitting friends arrived and picked up students.

On Saturday the 4th, students still in town came back to campus for a day of re-registration in the residence halls. From noon -1:00 p.m. students discovered where they could now locate their belongings and find a bed. In some cases, temporary cots and linens from the National Guard were distributed until beds and rooms could be cleared. Two floors of men were moved to make way for the women. The second floor of Borromeo, Shodair, the YWCA, and the Coach House downtown also became sites for residences. Shuttles have been set up to pick up and deliver students to these places. R.A.s and Student Life staff have been reassigned to all locations.

All week students have been returning and making decisions about housing. About 30 students have decided to move off campus. No one has withdrawn since the disaster. The Students Activities Director, with help from the ASCC and faculty, has provided a steady stream of activities all week and morale seems high.

New phones have been set up at all locations. After a meeting with the Rail Link President, recreation equipment - VCRs and TVs, video and film passes - were ordered. Quarters for laundry and phones were made available at each desk.

By Friday, February 10, students and staff were waiting to see what St. Charles and Borromeo would be like when everyone got back. Most students are already moved in and most of the women have retrieved their goods from Guad, but many went home or to friend's homes and wouldn't be back until Sunday.

On Monday the 13th there was a special Mass of Thanksgiving in the Lower Commons and a dinner afterwards hosted by the Bishop.



The men of St. Charles gallantly moved to other quarters in the building to give the Guad women a place to live.

(Photos by Bill Sallaz)

Jeannie Downs and the St. Charles staff manned the desk making new room assignments on Saturday, February 4.



Guad ladies in the St. Charles lobby awaiting new room assignments.



Ed Noonan
and others are discussing making a free
town for the hundreds of the students



until they could be allowed back into their
best living with just what they had on their
now bar yst tsrw jstj gnivil need
first.



The Carroll Community helped celebrate the Mass. Afterwards the Bishop hosted a dinner.

Mass of Thanksgiving For Our Deliverance

Carroll College Commons
February 13, 1989
Bishop Elden F. Curtiss

It is good for us to come together this afternoon to celebrate God's obvious providence in our lives, and God's special care for our college.

We have gradually become aware of the tragedy that could have been a few days ago. I am so grateful that God kept His arms around you who live on this campus and in the area. We are grateful that we are able to begin again today as a college.

My predecessor, Bishop John Carroll who founded this college, wrote to a friend that Mt. St. Charles was built on a great solid mountain and on the providence of Almighty God. We have survived a devastating earthquake in the 30's and epidemics and crises of various kinds these past 80 years (Father Paul Kirchen has lived through most of them). But God has spared our lives over the years and He has helped us rebuild and grow stronger through each crisis. Carroll surely stands in the providence of God, and for this we are grateful and we praise him today.

Our lives have been disrupted these past days since the explosion—the dislocation and relocation and temporary loss of major facilities; and all the damage. Many people in the Helena community are suffering through these hardships with you. I had many pipe breaks in the hot water heating system in my home and a flooded basement because of the power outage caused by the explosion.

But it is in the midst of this dislocation and inconvenience and irritation that the underlying spirit of Carroll has been manifest with renewed vitality—the selfless generosity of staff and faculty and administration and students; the concern

and care for people above every other consideration; the marvelous humor in the midst of chaos (someone told me they expected Fr. Dan Hillen to be busily sculpturing ice in his devastated studio).

We who are the disciples of Jesus, even when we are weak ones, know that we live within the pale of the paschal mysteries. We are learning to accept the burdens and disappointments and setbacks of life in a spirit of peace, and even joy, because we walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We are learning to measure ourselves, not by our successes or achievements or self-determined goals, but by the way we are able to live with our vulnerability and our weaknesses and our losses and our failures. And we are becoming more human in the process.

We have begun lent this year with a vivid reminder of our mortality and the fleeting security we have in material things. And we have been powerfully reminded of the reality of God's providence and the special spirit that permeates this college and all of us who are this college. And just as the lenten season gradually gives way to Easter and its promise of new life, so this time of disruption and inconvenience which assails us now will gradually give way to a new spring of vitality and growth for Carroll and all of us.

This then, is a celebration of God's providence in our lives, and we rejoice with the Lord in these paschal mysteries which we celebrate in this eucharist, perhaps a bit more poignantly now because of the events of these past days. We cannot begin to celebrate the eucharist well until we have learned to live the eucharist. The lessons sometimes are difficult, but they are worth it. . . .

May God be praised now and forever.
AMEN.

A Meditation At Liturgy of Thanksgiving

Monday, February 13, 1989
Dr. Francis J. Kerins

On behalf of our whole Carroll community, thank you for your generosity, your labor and dedication, your courage and help over the extraordinary last twelve days in our lives. I do not want to start listing; everyone has been magnificent, and I would miss some. But I do have to mention Ed and Francee and Mike, and our maintenance people: Butch, Wayne, Larry and Vickie and Leo and all of those who did so much.

We have much to be thankful for. God was good to us. And we have some powerful intercessors: Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Charles Borromeo, Bill Racicot.

I had a fantasy, an imagining of a conversation in heaven. God asks: Bill, what do you love most back there on earth?

My building.

And what do you love more than your building?

My Carroll students. . . (a pause) . .

Hey, wait a minute. What kind of deal is this? Well, all right. Gee.

However it happened by divine providence, we are all here, alive and well. We give thanks to God. But what more? Our prayers must flow into our lives. Jesus told us: Not everyone who says to me "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father.

We are deeply in debt for our deliverance. And what we have to do to repay Christ told us; that you love one another, as I have loved you.

As we return gradually to routine, this can be hard. The person who was, on February 1st, a kind of pain in the neck, at least for you, did not suddenly become a St. Francis Assisi type by February 3. She is still kind of a pain, at least for you. Only now she's your roommate.

The months ahead will be difficult in some ways. We must bear with one another, be patient with one another, help and support one another.

We are speaking about "Carroll — better than ever." This is our theme, and it is a good one. In time, all of the buildings will be repaired, the campus will be lovely again, students and faculty will continue their work in full numbers. Spring will come once more.

But suppose we were to make Carroll profoundly better than ever, with the love Christ told us to show? We could set as a goal really to try every day to be kind, to be friendly, to be helpful —to be such a place and to be such persons that the world can speak of us as the world spoke of Christ's early followers: Behold those Carroll people; see how they love one another.



The Most Reverend Elden F. Curtiss, Bishop of Helena and Chancellor of Carroll College, officiated at a Mass of Thanksgiving in the Lower Commons on February 13, the first day of classes after the disaster.

A Message from the Campus Chaplain

by Father Leo Proxell

At the first meeting of the students, staff, faculty and administration following the blast of February 2, 1989, I prayed this prayer. It is a prayer from Fr. Ed Hayes' book **PRAYERS FOR THE DOMESTIC CHURCH**. I did a little revision to fit the situation . . .

"Lord and Divine Protector, when your trustful servant Noah came forth from the ark after a long and difficult time, he built an altar where he and his family gave praise to you, their God, for saving them. Your holy rainbow was both a sign and a shrine for that prayer of gratitude."

"We, like Noah, come now to thank you for protecting us in a time of danger. That danger is now passed and we prayerfully give you thanks that you, Our Lord, have kept us safe within your holy hands."

"We thank you not only for safety from harm, but also for the opportunity to place all our trust in you. This peril has been for us (and continues to be) a source of renewed devotion and of dedication to each other and to You...."

We all continue to rejoice that the whole Carroll family, especially our extended family in the alumni, continue to pray with us. It is a source of true redemption that we all rose to the occasion and gave one another courage, love, and strength in a time of crisis. The pain and hurt is not over, but we have come to know that we care for one another and will continue to do so.

"Blessed are you, Lord our God, who saves those who trust in You."

TV COMMERCIAL TELLS EVERYONE CARROLL IS BETTER THAN EVER!

It was cold, but Carroll students gladly participated in the filming of a television commercial that will begin airing on February 17 in the Northwest. The message is that although we had a crisis, the college is functioning again, and in fact, Carroll College is **BETTER THAN EVER!**

WAS THE RAILWAY EXPLOSION WORSE THAN THE EARTHQUAKE?

During Carroll's eighty year history, its students have survived other major crises, perhaps the most devastating being the earthquake of 1935.

Father Paul Kirchen has said, however, that the February 2 train explosion was much more serious and much more traumatic for our students than even that big shake-up.

What are **your** recollections of the earthquake or other hard times at Carroll? How did you survive and what effect did the event have on your life? Share with us and we'll print your memories in a future **ALUMNUS**.

Send your comments to Molly McHugh or Nancy Robbins, Carroll College, Room 258 O'Connell Hall, Helena, MT 59625.



VIDEO TAPE AVAILABLE:

The Carroll Administration has prepared a special video taped walk-through of the recent explosion damages to the campus. This tape has been sent out already to members of the college Board of Trustees. Extra copies of the building by building tour narrated by Leo Walchuk are available from the college Development Office for \$20 per tape. (That includes postage and handling.)

For safety reasons, most people were not allowed anywhere near some of the scenes that Walchuk and cameraman Barry Wall were able to film. If you want a sense of the devastation and the extreme cold, this is the tape to have. Make a mug of steaming hot chocolate to sip while you watch, because you'll shiver for several reasons. The thoughts of what could have been if this had happened at any other hour are chilling indeed!

Valentine's Day headlines in the Independent Record...

Carroll back on its feet: Classes begin on Monday

by Andy Bird
IR Staff Writer

Carpenters, glassmen and plumbers add a peculiar element to the academic population at Carroll College, but other than a few displaced classes, it's business as usual on the patched-up campus.

All classes resumed Monday --"with some adjustments" --when the campus opened for academic instruction after a 10-day unscheduled vacation, said Francis Kerins, college president.

The adjustments include moving physical education activities to YMCA and local health club facilities, and dental hygiene instruction to the V.A. Hospital at Fort Harrison and several local clinics.

"To the extent possible we're keeping everything on campus," Kerins said this morning. "But you can't hold a swimming class anywhere but in a swimming pool."

New places:

- PE classes being held at local health clubs.
- Dental hygiene classes at VA center.
- Quad Women living at the YWCA and Shodair.

Carroll's P.E. complex is out of commission until at least this summer, after taking the brunt of the flying debris from the rail car explosion on Feb. 2.

Meanwhile, workers are busily boarding windows, repairing roofs and thawing and replacing pipes in several buildings --including Guadalupe Hall, the women's dormitory that will be uninhabitable for some time, Kerins said.

Undergoing extensive roof-tile reconstruction, the Fine Arts Center will be out of commission until late next week, its music and art classes temporarily housed in other facilities.

Despite a huge chunk of railroad car that crashed through the roof and smashed a study table, the library is operating at full capacity, said Kerins, relieved the "heart of the academic func-

tion" was not forced to move off campus.

Structural engineers provided Kerins more reason to breathe easier, finding that St. Alberts, the Fine Arts Center and the library are structurally sound after examinations last week.

The crew, consisting of city and private architects, are now examining the P.E. complex and Guadalupe Hall.

With a sink in every room, Guadalupe was frozen solid after almost every window was blown out by the explosion, Kerins said.

Carpenters just finished boarding up gaping window frames and the building is "thawing out" after more than a week of exposure to below freezing temperatures, added Kerins, who said he expects workers to find a maze of broken pipes.

More than 200 Guadalupe residents are crowded into already full rooms in St. Charles and Borromeo Halls and YWCA and Shodair Hospital facilities.

While he couldn't pinpoint a date Guadalupe residents can move back in, Kerins said they will be out longer than originally expected.

Special ordering and replacing Guadalupe's oversize windows will cause much of the additional delay.

Despite the upheaval and 10-day lay-off, the academic semester will finish on schedule, but students and faculty will lose a couple of three-day weekends, Kerins said.

"The students are glad to get back into class," said Kerins, who described the mood at Carroll "upbeat."

Meanwhile, Carroll's lawyers are scanning the college's insurance policies to determine what type of damages are covered, Kerins said.

With total damages expected to be several million dollars, Kerins said the college doesn't carry enough insurance to cover it all.

What isn't covered, such as fees for student use at local health clubs to compensate for the loss of the P.E. center, will be included in a claim with Montana Rail Link, he said.



A huge piece of railway car smashed into the doors on the east side of the P.E. building.

"...be assured that the college will survive and thrive."

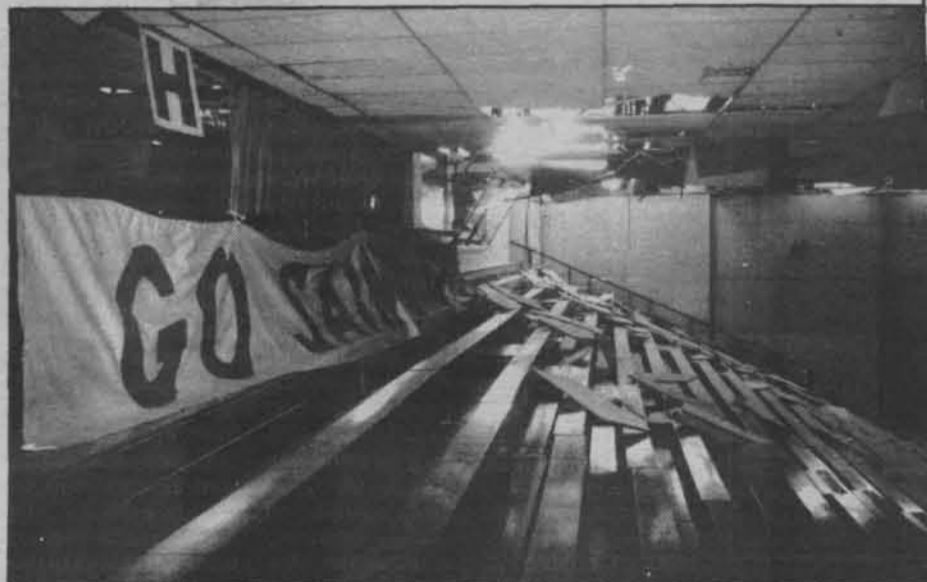
(Photos by Bill Sallaz)



Hundreds of holes in the ceiling yawn open to the cold grey sky. Pieces of rail car and ceiling tiles litter the gym floor.

The roof panels rained down on the bleachers in the P.E. Center.

One chunk of debris gouged a hole in the floor.



"GO, SAINTS, GO" reads the banner in the frigid air of the abandoned P.E. Center. The basketball players it was intended to cheer are playing their games at local high schools.



I GOT BLASTED



at Carroll College

February 2nd, 1989



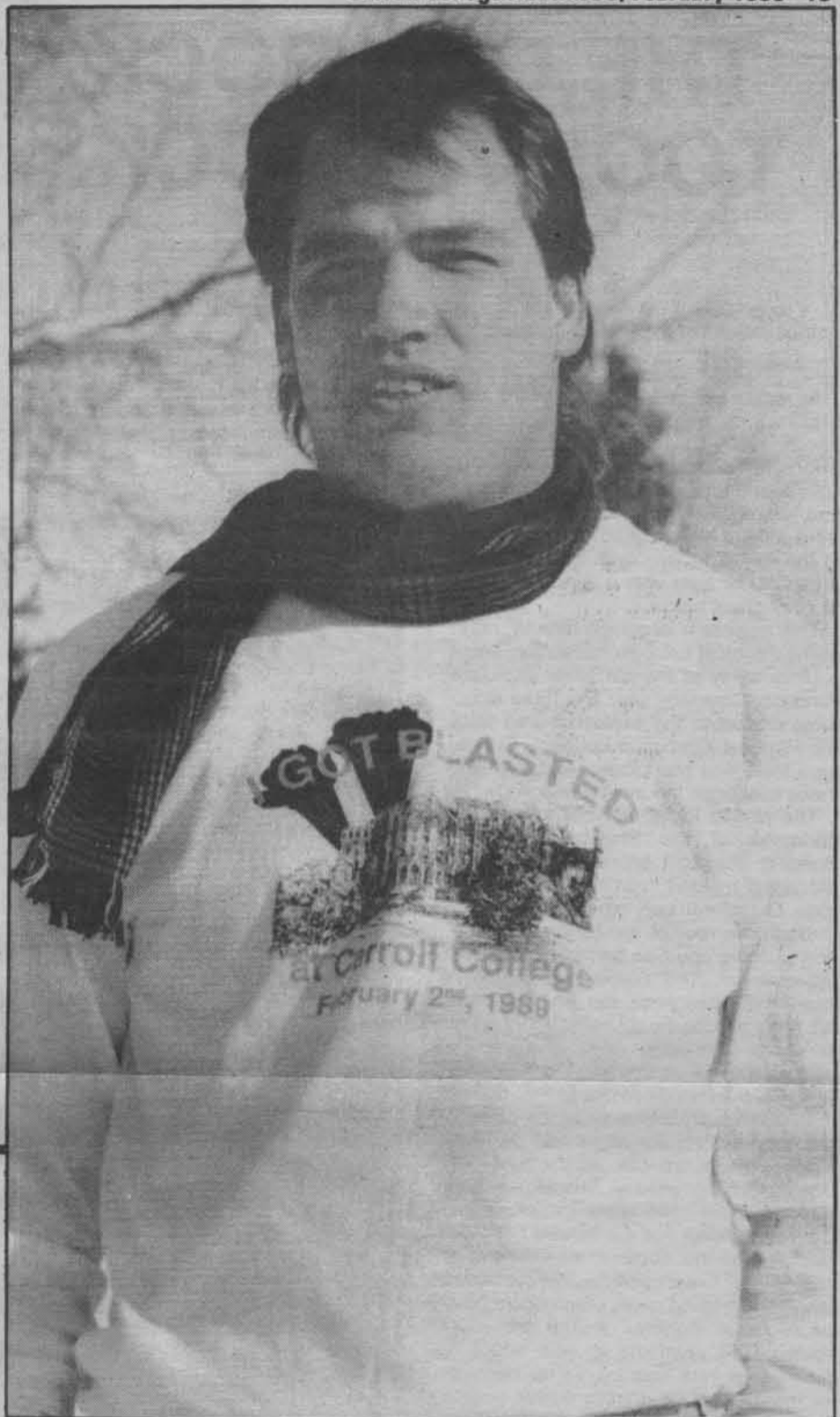
To the Carroll Faculty and Staff:

Your cooperation, generosity and dedication to Carroll, as manifested in so many ways during the past difficult week, is an inspiration I will remember with joy and gratitude for all of my life.

Frank Kerins

Barbara Thomas, Student Activities Director, and the ASCC organized all kinds of special activities, including games tournaments to entertain the students during the 10 day break.

The souvenir shirt takes a lighter look at the incident



On a lighter note, it was just over a week after the train explosion when the first "I GOT BLASTED AT CARROLL COLLEGE" shirts showed up in the Carroll Bookstore.

Soon both students, faculty and staff were sporting the upbeat message of survival.

If you would like to order either a short or long sleeved white cotton tee shirt or

a purple sweatshirt with the special commemorative logo for yourself or your son or daughter, the sizes and the prices are as follows:

Short sleeved white cotton, S, M, L, XL

...\$8.50

Long sleeved white tee shirt, S, M, L, X,

XL...\$10.50

Purple long sleeved sweatshirt, S, M, L,

X, XL...\$16.00

Item	Quantity	Size	Color	Unit Price	Total

Mail this form to:
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 Helena, MT 59625
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THE OLD ROCK TOOK A SHOCK!

a report from **LEO G. WALCHUK**
Vice President for Financial Affairs

As a result of the explosion of the railroad tank car on Groundhog Day, February 2, 1989, Carroll College sustained extensive damages to buildings and equipment directly from the explosion and indirectly from freeze-ups since we were without electrical power a good part of the day. The temperature was 28 degrees below zero with a windchill factor of 70 degrees below.

The explosion occurred directly north of the Physical Education Building about a block away at the Elk River Concrete Products Company site. The three structures closest to the explosion area were the Physical Education Building, Guadalupe Hall, and the Library Building, and these sustained the most damages.

The plastic facial material around the perimeter of the Physical Education Building is almost entirely blown out or damaged beyond repair. Part of a railroad car wheel and other debris came through the roof of the Physical Education Building and also damaged the flooring material. The suspended ceiling is scattered throughout the building, and we have a considerable amount of glass breakage. We were able to save the swimming pool by draining the water before it had a chance to freeze.

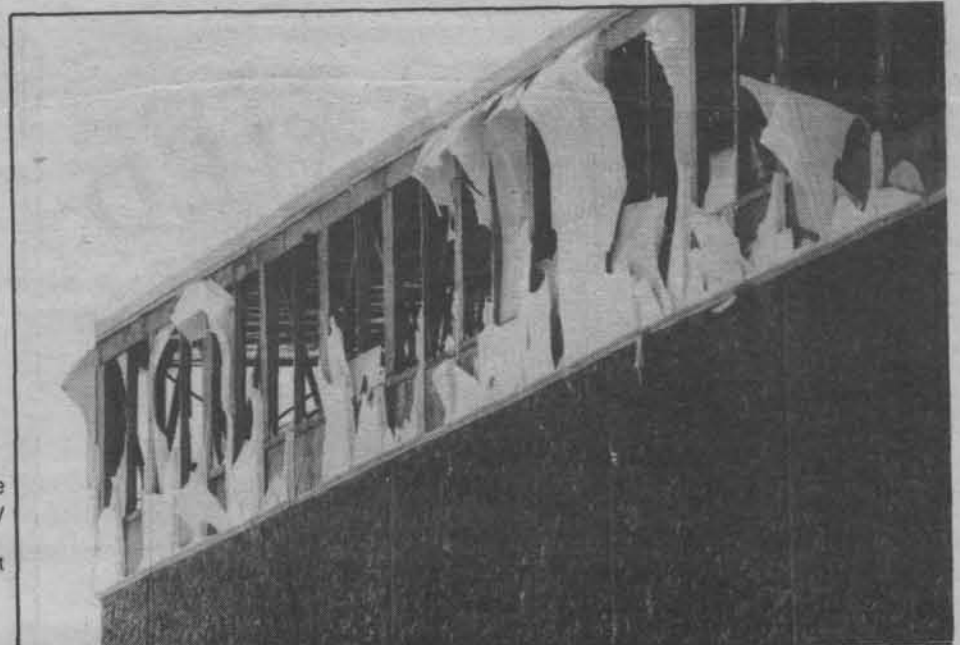
In Guadalupe Hall most of the glass in the windows on the north and the east sides were blown out, and a high percentage of the window frames are bent beyond repair. We were fortunate that the new drapes that we installed in Guadalupe Hall this summer were closed at the time of the explosion and contained most of the flying glass which could have injured our students in the individual rooms. The plumbing in both wings of Guadalupe Hall was frozen up because of the lack of heat from power outage and will have to be thawed out and repaired.

There is a gaping hole in the ceiling right outside the door to the late Coach Bill Racicot's office in the P.E. Center.

(Photo by Bill Sallaz)

The plastic facing material around the roof of the P.E. Center was shattered by the blast.

(Photo by Gene Fischer, Independent Record)



Damages to the Library Building were primarily confined to the suspended ceiling and glass breakage. We lost heating in the building due to the power outage, and freeze-up of a heating coil. Since the Library Building is relatively new and well-insulated, we had little damage to the heating system.

The other buildings on campus being further back from the explosion site had fewer damages. These were primarily confined to broken windows, freeze-ups of heating systems, as well as some holes in the various roofs.

Current assessment of damages is confined to visual inspections of buildings as a result of several walk-throughs. Our maintenance personnel worked around the clock to keep all boilers in operation and repairing leaks wherever they occurred without which our damages would have been much more extensive.

We have engaged the services of architects, structural engineers, mechanical and electrical engineers to do a detailed inspection of all buildings to determine the extent of structural and other damages, and a detailed report will be prepared.

We are in the process of making temporary repairs to prevent further damage and maintain heat within the buildings. We are proceeding as rapidly as possible as conditions permit with the highest priority for safety of all personnel.

At this time we do not have an estimate of the damage costs to the Carroll College Campus as a result of the explosion. We will need to receive reports from the structural and engineering people as to the extent of building damages before any accurate estimate of damages can be compiled.

Alumnus

Volume 27, Number 1

CARROLL COLLEGE
Helena, Montana 59625
Address Correction Requested

February 1989

**"Carroll College is not buildings or things,
but persons. Though buildings are damaged
and destroyed, through God's grace the persons
have been saved."**

(Dr. Frank Kerins)

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