

THE BATTALION

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Death penalty not a capital idea?

Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark told a group at Texas A&M University Tuesday night that the death penalty is chiefly imposed by authoritarian governments, and that they do it unfairly. See page 9.



Regents' house fire Damage, cause undetermined

By ANDY WILLIAMS
Battalion Staff

The extent of damage nor the cause of Tuesday morning's fire in the old Regents Quarters had been determined Tuesday afternoon.

"I will probably be Wednesday before we talk to some of the people we need to," said Harry Davis, fire marshal at College Station.

The building contained the two-room apartment of former Chancellor Jack K. Williams and his wife, Marjorie. Both escaped uninjured.

It also housed the Texas A&M University Press.

Robert H. Stiteler, safety and health officer for Texas A&M, said Tuesday afternoon he wasn't sure whether the house was a total loss. "Right now it's purely speculation, but we think the fire possibly started in the attic and was of an electrical nature," Stiteler said.

Howard Vestal, University vice president for student affairs, said Tuesday morning, "That building is a total loss as far as I can see."

Davis said the fire started on the second

floor in a room that was being repainted. An \$80,000 renovation of the house was under way.

"It looked like an Aggie Bonfire while it was going up," Williams said.

"I have no idea at all how much the loss was. I do know that it could have been a lot worse. The fire department and University Police and all kinds of volunteers helped move the furniture out. These people went into the house while it was still smoldering, and we are deeply in their debt."

Williams said he was particularly grateful to Michael Janeczek, the University policeman who woke him and his wife.

Janeczek said he was patrolling with Doug Rowe, his partner, about 2:45 a.m. when he saw the flame coming from the roof of the building. He and Bill Hall, a College Station police officer, both called the College Station Fire Department.

Janeczek said he didn't know if anyone lived in the house, but he ran onto the porch and banged on the door. No one answered.

"So I took the liberty of busting out the glass in the west door and opening the dead bolt," Janeczek said. He woke the Williamses and took them outside.

Lt. Tim Fickey of the College Station Fire Department said the attic and much of the second floor had burned when his crew arrived. He said the fire burned until about 5 a.m., but the department still had a unit at the scene Tuesday afternoon, "making sure there are no hot spots."

Three units were dispatched from College Station and two from the Bryan Fire Department. Fickey guessed it had taken about 15,000 gallons to extinguish the blaze, but said, "that may be way low."

Lloyd Lyman, director of the Texas A&M University press, could offer no estimate of his operation's loss.

"Most of the stuff that was really valuable was in a vault in that building over there," he said Tuesday afternoon as he stood in the mud lawn of the house. The building he indicated was a garage adjacent to the main house.

"We didn't lose any manuscripts at all. Our big worry today was that we wouldn't get the rest of the stuff out before it rained."

Lyman was among the people who carried objects out of the burning house.

Workmen spent Tuesday afternoon loading furniture and other objects into a moving van.

Bill Hill, head resident adviser of Hotard Hall, said he was awakened about 3 a.m. by some of the men who live on his floor. He said a good bit of smoke was blowing in the windows of the dormitory.

"I walked out of the dorm onto the sidewalk and saw the flames starting to come up." He said he went inside and called the University emergency number.

When he got back outside the firemen had arrived.

Williamses show humor, sadness

By LEE ROY LESCHPER JR.
Battalion Staff

"At least I don't have to worry about my housekeeping."

Surveying her charred and water-soaked home Tuesday morning, Mrs. Marjorie Williams couldn't resist a little ironic humor. Former Chancellor Jack Williams and his wife had narrowly escaped the fire that left their apartment on campus in ruins early Tuesday.

Salvaging small items from the soggy apartment, the Williamses still had room for moments of wry humor.

"You know they say people always take some of the strangest things with them during a fire," Mrs. Williams said. "I had to consciously stop myself from taking a pillow with me."

They had time to take almost nothing with them. The historic old building that once housed quarters for the University's Board of Directors was already burning fiercely when University patrolman Michael Janeczek kicked in their apartment door to awaken them.

"We sat outside in the car watching it burn and just told ourselves 'they're just material things,'" Mrs. Williams reflected.

Dr. Williams said, "We didn't expect to salvage anything. About 3:30 it was burning like the Aggie Bonfire."

"But we've still got each other," he added quietly.

The downstairs apartment where he and his wife had lived since October received heavy water and smoke damage, but was almost untouched by flames.

The second floor of the building was completely gutted by flames. Carrying out a box overflowing with rescued cosmetics, Mrs. Williams pointed to a waterlogged embroidered pillow lying in the corner of their empty living room.

"I made that myself," she said with a mixture of humor and sadness. University personnel who rushed to help move everything out of the apartment saved most of their possessions, she said.

"People from all over campus were carrying things out," Dr. Williams said. Tom Parsons (University director of security and traffic) was here all night.

Their possessions covered the sidewalk across the street from the burned-out home, but Dr. Williams seemed to be taking it all with a marked degree of grace.

"He went to bed after the fire was out," Mrs. Williams said. Watching her husband walk outside to look through his displaced desk for a speech he'll deliver tonight, she maintained an air of dignity all her own.

Earlier in the morning her husband had told her she was ruining her clothes, pointing to the water-soaked sweater in which she had been working.

"I know," she replied. "I decided that whatever I put on this morning would be ruined, but there's no use worrying about that now."

"We'll just let the insurance take care of it."

Then she turned and went back into her soggy kitchen for another rescue mission.

State budget hearing focuses on raising Prairie View funds

By LIZ NEULIN
Battalion Staff

AUSTIN — Prairie View A&M University had a starring role in the chambers of the House of Representatives Tuesday. Subcommittee members seemed especially concerned with the predominantly

black institution, and state representatives not on the committee testified in favor of giving the school more funds. So did two students and one businessman.

Prairie View dominated the hearings on the Texas A&M System's budget requests Tuesday afternoon.

The state's two largest university systems — Texas A&M and The University of Texas — appeared before a subcommittee of the Texas House of Representatives committee on higher education.

Subcommittee members discussed Prairie View for about 1 of the 2½ hours that Texas A&M was before them.

The hearings Tuesday afternoon, which detailed the systems' pleas for more funds than are currently recommended, lasted about 3½ hours.

The first indication that the hearing would spotlight Prairie View was during opening remarks by H.C. Bell, vice chairman of the Texas A&M Board of Regents. After explaining System requests for higher appropriations for salaries, renovations and other items, Bell was questioned about Prairie View's library.

Rep. Ron Wilson, D-Houston and chairman of the subcommittee, asked about its funding and general lack of adequate facilities.

Then Rep. Wilhelmina Delco, D-Austin, questioned the regents' method in presenting the budget — letting each institution "fend for itself" by allowing each institution's executive speak. The chancellor of The University of Texas System had presented requests for his whole system in an hour earlier that afternoon.

Delco said it was unclear who made budget decisions at Texas A&M, the institution or the regents.

Regents should present one priority, she said.

Rep. Wilson suggested:

"It seems the board would be interested in presenting Prairie View as a priority this session."

Bell did not act on his suggestion, noting that comparison would show that the institution has fared better since it joined the System in 1958.

Bell was not planning to speak for the System. By custom, board Chairman and acting Chancellor Clyde Wells would have

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Former Texas A&M Chancellor Jack Williams and his wife stand inside the door of the apartment struck by fire Tuesday (above). The Williamses are looking for a new home today. As soon as the fire

was under control, University personnel began carrying furniture and belongings out of the house and stacking them across the street from the smoldering house (below).
Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.



Carter asks for ration coupons in anticipation of energy crisis

United Press International
WASHINGTON — President Carter has asked Congress for authority to order coupon-type gasoline rationing and three other mandatory conservation measures for use in severe energy emergencies, the Energy Department said Tuesday.

In addition to rationing of the kind last used during World War II, Carter's proposed standby measures to force fuel savings include weekend service station closings, temperature limits for public buildings and a ban on non-essential advertising lights and lighted store window displays.

Imposing all the steps short of rationing would save more than 500,000 barrels of oil a day, department analysts said.

Carter sent copies of his request to key members of Congress Monday but delayed public announcement of details until Tuesday to assure that lawmakers got the first word. Formal transmission of the requests was scheduled for March 1, the first day both the House and Senate will be in session.

Energy Secretary James Schlesinger

told the nation's governors Tuesday the Iranian oil shortage is not serious enough to force the imposition of rationing but may, by this summer, require some of the less severe mandatory conservation proposals to be put into effect.

"These (mandatory) contingency plans will be important elements of our capability to respond to serious petroleum supply interruptions (such as a new oil embargo)," an Energy Department statement said.

The Iranian cutoff is costing the United States 500,000 barrels a day, producing shortages that Monday caused Atlantic Richfield to join Phillips, Shell and several other oil companies in curtailing gasoline deliveries to service stations. Some airlines have canceled flights for lack of fuel.

Administration and congressional sources said Carter approved four of the five standby mandatory conservation measures sent to him this weekend by the Energy Department. Those four were:

—Coupon-type gasoline rationing, to be used only as a last resort. The same number of coupons, worth one gallon

each, would be issued monthly for each vehicle registered in the United States. The degree of rationing would depend on the severity of the fuel shortage.

—Weekend gasoline station closings, probably starting with closings on Sundays. The purpose would be to discourage pleasure driving on weekends, producing estimated savings of about 250,000 barrels of oil a day.

—Temperature limits for heating, cooling and hot water in public buildings. This would produce the greatest fuel saving — estimated at about 460,000 barrels a day. Enforcement would be handled by local police and building inspectors.

—A ban on unnecessary commercial advertising lighting. Estimated savings from this largely symbolic move would be about 40,000 barrels of oil a day.

The president vetoed a fifth proposed stand-by measure — restrictions on the number of parking spaces offered in downtown commercial lots and by employers including the government — largely because of difficulties enforcing it, sources said.

Parking permission granted, they say

Car towing angers apartment dwellers

By ROY BRAGG
Battalion Staff

Several residents of the Scandia apartments, claiming they received permission to park their cars in the office parking lot, are complaining because their cars were towed away last weekend at a cost of \$45 apiece.

Dave Cunningham, one of several Scandia residents who met with reporters Monday, said his car was parked in the lot for 15 minutes when it was towed away at 2 p.m. Sunday. He went inside his apartment to change clothes, and when he returned, he saw his car being taken away by a wrecker.

The manager of the apartments, Cunningham said, had told him at the beginning of the fall semester it was all right to park in the office lot on weekends and after business hours.

But the manager, Maura Casey, denies

having given tenants permission to use the lot.

In addition, Casey said "no parking" signs have been in the lot since last fall.

The signs, also stating that unauthorized vehicles would be towed away, were torn down sometime Saturday night, she said.

The curbs, painted yellow last year, also have "no parking" stenciled on them in black paint, Casey added.

"Anyone who drives ought to know a yellow curb means no parking," Casey said.

Another reason for the apparent crackdown on residents was that Scandia recently changed towing companies, Casey said.

A-1 Wrecker Service, the company that does the towing for Texas A&M University, had been towing for Scandia, Casey said. She said D&H Towing Company had been asked to take over because the situation had gotten "out of hand."

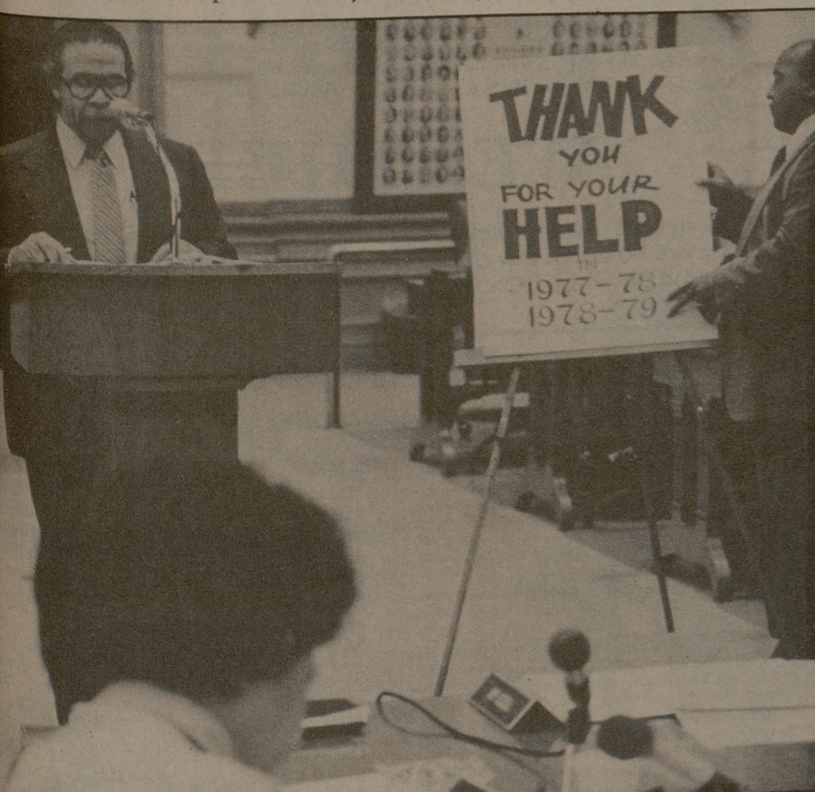
She said the reason for the change was that D&H makes daily rounds of parking lots they serve in addition to answering calls to remove cars. Previously, Casey had to call the wreckers for a car to be towed away.

Casey said that tenants parked in the unauthorized areas in the past because the office was usually empty on the weekends and no one was there to report violators. D&H, co-owned and operated by Sparkey Hardee, was contacted by Casey about the situation three weeks ago and began towing cars at Scandia Friday.

"We decided to hit 'em hard for a few days or so to show them that we mean business," Hardee said.

When towing a car without the owner's permission, Hardee said, D&H radios the license plate number of the car and its description to police to avoid any confusion

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On the floor of the Texas House, Prairie View President A.I. Thomas tells members that his campus needs at least \$13 million in the next two years for repair and renovation. Rep. Wilhelmina Delco, D-Austin and chairman of the House Higher Education Committee, is in the foreground. The budget hearings Tuesday were before her committee's Subcommittee on Appropriative Matters.
Battalion photo by Liz Neulin