

Millionaire hosts benefit to support murder defendant

United Press International
FORT WORTH — It had all the trappings of a Texas-style millionaire's reception — about 50 people in their best finery motoring up the curving driveway to the front door of a posh mansion — called in the name of raising funds for a worthy cause.

The difference is the money raised at the \$100-a-person benefit will help pay the legal fees of a murder defendant.

Karen and Cullen Davis sponsored the event Wednesday night on behalf of their new friend, Pamela Fielder, 36, who faces trial April 19 on charges of shooting her husband five times last July.

Davis, a multimillionaire businessman, is acquainted with the cost of defense lawyers. He was cleared of charges in trials in 1977 and 1979 stemming from the shooting deaths of his 12-year-old stepdaughter and estranged wife's boyfriend, and

an alleged conspiracy to kill a judge.

The Davises met Fielder through their church affiliation in October. The Davises and other church members have rallied to Fielder's side, said the Rev. Ron Davis of Bethel Temple.

Although Fielder was one of the city's pre-eminent gynecologists, Fielder's attorney, Don Gandy, said his client is as good as broke. Her assets were frozen in a lawsuit filed by Fielder's relatives, he said.

The Davis' hoped to raise \$20,000 to pay the legal fees of attorney Richard "Racehorse" Haynes, inviting old friends and business associates of Fielder to the reception. Haynes led the defense for Davis in his two trials.

Neither Fielder nor Davis could be reached today for comment on the fund raiser.

Customers outraged by payments

Utilities having to repay bonds

United Press International
SEATTLE — People don't expect something for nothing, but they get downright angry at getting nothing for something.

Thousands of residents of the Pacific Northwest are angry. They have been advised they will have to pay plenty for two partly built nuclear power plants that likely will never produce a kilowatt. The bill could run as high as \$7 billion.

The Washington Public Power Supply System, which uses the acronym WPPSS, is now derisively termed "Whoops" by the angry ratepayers.

WPPSS, a consortium of utilities, had the two plants barely 20 percent complete when cost overruns and soaring interest rates brought construction to a halt last June.

With \$2.25 billion already invested in the plants, the 88 owners — public utilities from Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana — decided in

January to terminate the projects.

As a result, average utility rates in Washington are expected to increase \$16 a month by next January and triple by 1985.

When the first increases hit, Washington customers were

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outraged. Meetings of public utilities commissioners, usually sparsely attended, have become

crowded with chanting ratepayers.

"I am a human being and I have helped make this country as much as anyone else has. I do not deserve to go hungry or eat dog food because of utility policies," said 86-year-old Zora Minnich, who lives on \$181 a month.

"It's anger and frustration that's bringing us out," said Gary Lintz, organizer of the protests in one county.

The ratepayers' wrath is not directed so much at the plants — WPPSS No. 4 at Hanford in eastern Washington and WPPSS No. 5 at Satsop on the west side of the state — as at the WPPSS.

WPPSS' ambitious program to build five nuclear power plants was put together in 1968. The system estimated the five plants would cost \$4 billion. By 1981 the estimate had swollen to \$24 billion, making it the largest public works project in history.

The Bonneville Power Administration, a federal power dis-

tribution agency, backed the first three nuclear plants. BPA was sure the power from those three reactors would be needed and agreed to buy all of it for resale to regional power customers.

But BPA refused to back projects 4 and 5, essentially leaving the 88 sponsoring utilities on their own to make good on the bonds sold to finance them.

The angry customers want the termination costs eliminated from their bills. Some want their commissioners to resign. Some want their PUDs to withhold any payments on bonds issued for plants 4 and 5. Others favor defaulting altogether on their multi-million dollar bond indebtedness.

WPPSS wants a controlled termination that systematically will meet all obligations. Uncontrolled termination — including the possibility of default on 4 and 5 bonds — is greatly feared

by most utilities and public officials throughout the Northwest.

Failure to meet all debts on the 4 and 5 projects will damage bond ratings for plants 1 and 3 and may bring all construction to a halt.

WPPSS must start paying interest on the 4 and 5 bonds in January. If termination occurs, the total cost of pay-off all bills and all bonds interest is calculated at nearly a billion over three decades.

Richard Baxendale, who represents the participating PUDs, said if a utility defaults on its share of 4 and 5, it will automatically open itself to lawsuits by WPPSS as well as the 87 participating PUDs.

"The ultimate underwriter of those nuclear plants are ratepayers," said Jeffrey Whorn, bond analyst with Drexel Corp. "If the widow named Jones says, 'Hell no, I won't pay you have the possibility of a fault.'"

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