

Civic involvement essential for students, Caperton says

By JENS B. KOEPKE
Staff Writer

Texas A&M Students should get actively involved and interested in issues that affect their University, community or state, said Sen. Kent Caperton to a group of Young Democrats Tuesday night.

Students should participate at the level of government that interests them most, Caperton said. Activity can range from Student Government or MSC Council to work on local or statewide campaigns, he said.

State representatives benefit greatly from the ideas they get from students who have gained new perspectives through their participation in different governmental bodies and processes, Caperton said.

"I think it's important that we, as officeholders, listen to you (students) for new perspectives," he said.

He cited the fall 1984 amendment to restructure the Permanent University Fund and establish the Higher Education Fund as an example of successful student involvement. Students in the Legislative Study Group did research which



Sen. Kent Caperton

proved helpful to the resolution of the issue, he said.

Caperton outlined and described several recent issues that have sparked a great deal of interest among students.

Foremost was the recent university tuition hike. Caperton said that although he has strongly opposed any tuition hike in his five years in the Senate, the present revenue pinch forced the legislature to make cuts.

An across-the-board budget cut

was unwise, Caperton said, but conversely the Legislative Budget Board's original plan to cut higher education by 25 or 30 percent was equally unfeasible.

A cut of that magnitude would have forced the university to make drastic cuts in their budget, possibly resulting in the cancellation of summer school or in a severe decrease in faculty salaries, he said.

After discussing it with all Texas university administrations, the legislature felt that a tuition hike would be the most acceptable solution to the fiscal crisis, Caperton said. Texas still ranks 48th in the country in tuition costs, he added.

Caperton also discussed the education reform bill and the highway funding bill that arose out of the 1984 special session.

Democratic students can point with pride to the way the predominantly Democratic legislature has handled these issues and state government in general, he said. The Republican's label of Democrats as free-spending liberals is groundless and not backed up by the historically balanced budget.

Group joins hands for world peace

By KATHERINE GOLLEY
Reporter

Aggie students and staff, and community members all "Joined Hands for Peace" Tuesday evening in the Memorial Student Center lounge.

The Baha'i College Club of Texas A&M sponsored the program as part of a world-wide effort on behalf of all Baha'is to promote world peace. At the end of the program, the master of ceremonies asked for audience participation in joining hands to form a human chain, and passing the phrase "Peace be with you" around the circle.

The celebration coincided with the United Nations International Day of Peace and the opening day of the U.N.'s General Sessions.

Although the Baha'is have observed a World Peace Day since 1959, the National Spiritual Assembly, the Baha'i ruling body, chose to observe the United Nations' celebration date instead.

"The Baha'is have decided to support the United Nations International Day of Peace because it is better established and can better express the great urgency the Baha'is feel about achieving world peace," Mary Greenblack, a local Baha'i said. "This is the first year they have changed it to coincide with the United Nations International Day of Peace."

The National Spiritual Assembly will present a proposal for world peace to the leaders of all world governments in late October in the hope of achieving world peace.

The Baha'is most basic teaching concerns the concept of peace. "No issue is more important than peace," Tom Fisher, the master of ceremonies, said. "Unity of mankind and elimination of prejudice must first be accomplished before world peace is possible."

Baha'is, who have no clergy, follow the teachings of Baha'u'llah, the founder of the faith. He began his teachings in Iran in 1844, and pre-

ached that all religions are progressive steps in a continuing pattern of divine revelation.

Although the Baha'is are the largest religious minority in Iran, this theory, which is considered heretical to Muslims, has caused the Baha'is to be the most persecuted religious minority in Iran.

Since 1979, 192 Baha'is have been executed. Thousands are homeless and even more have fled Iran. They are not allowed to hold jobs or attend school.

Through world-wide exposure from such mediums as People magazine, the TV show 20/20 and a soon to be released rock video depicting the life of a young Baha'i executed in Iran, they hope to draw attention to their plight and recognition of their goal for world peace.

Wednesday's program included two entertainment groups and Lynne Miller, from the League of Women Voters, who spoke about the League's support of the U.N. and its function as both a peace keeping and peace building entity.

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