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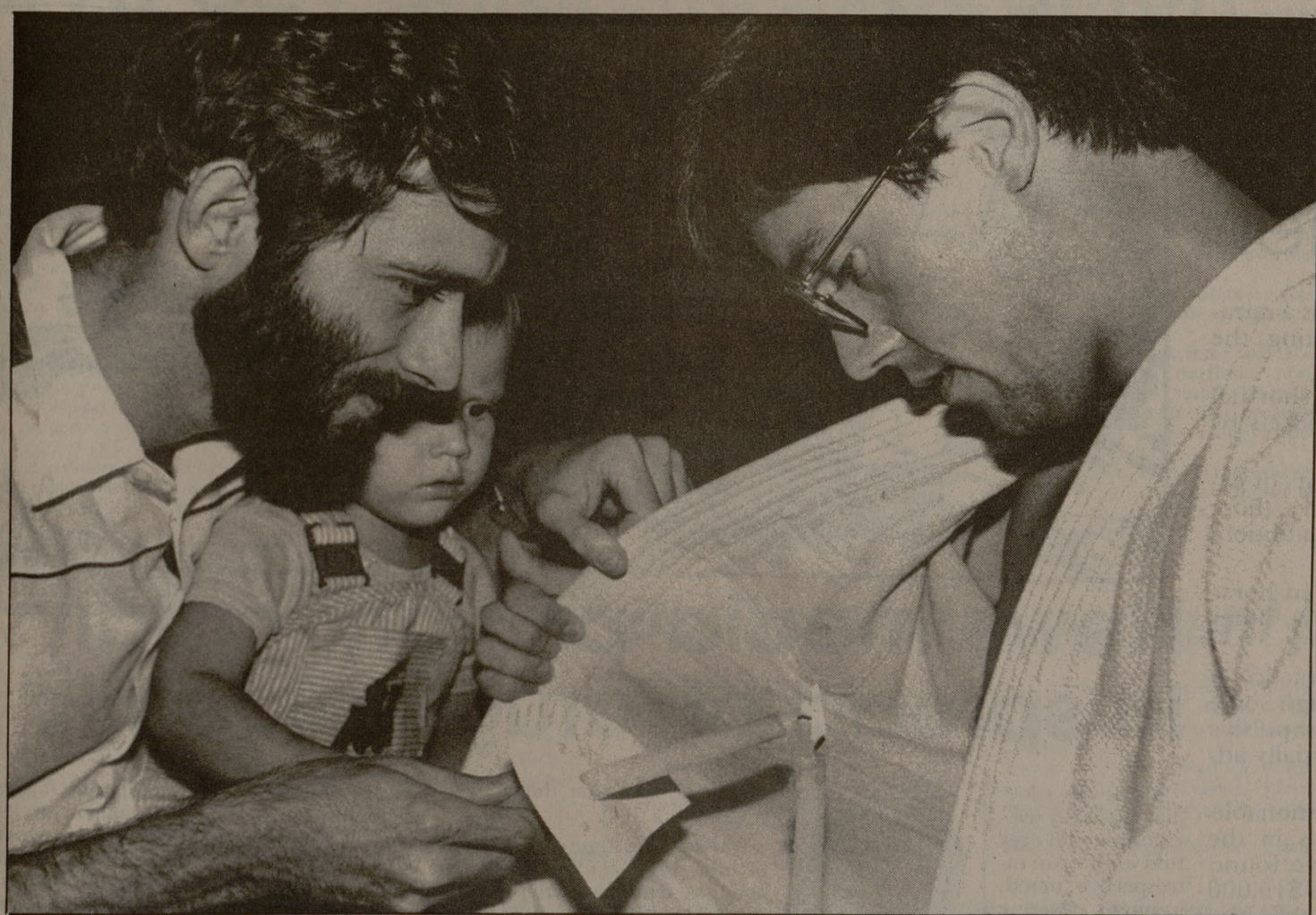


Photo by Tom Ownbey

Three demonstrators shield their candles from the wind during a celebration of the United Nations International Day of Peace. About

35 people turned out at Rudder Tower Tuesday night for the demonstration, which was sponsored by the Texas A&M Baha'i Club.

Lewis agrees tax increase is necessary

AUSTIN (AP) — House Speaker Gib Lewis, the longtime key opponent to a tax bill, conceded Tuesday that it will take a tax increase during the current special session to keep the state from writing hot checks.

Lewis, D-Fort Worth, said he would push for a temporary increase in the sales tax. He predicted a tax bill would win House approval, although opponents say they have the votes to kill it.

"It's not a question of whether we will have one," Lewis said. "I think it's a question of how much."

The House Ways and Means Committee will begin hearings on taxes today. Chairman Stan Schlueter has said the committee would consider tax "concepts," not specific bills.

"I still say the vote in Ways and Means is still 10-3 (against a tax bill)," Schlueter, D-Killeen, said. "The speaker is going to have to be very persuasive..." he said. "I think it's going to be an uphill battle."

Schlueter said if a tax bill proves necessary, he would favor removing exemptions to the sales tax, rather than increasing the rate.

Lewis said the amount of increase depends on the spending cuts being negotiated by a House-Senate conference committee. Gov. Mark White wants the state sales tax raised from the current 4 1/2 percent to 5 1/2 percent, with the increase expiring next September.

The Senate has been ready to approve a tax hike for several weeks, but Lewis has pushed a plan he said could solve the state cash-flow problem without higher taxes.

But the speaker acknowledged Tuesday that not enough of his plan will win legislative approval to avoid a tax hike.

"I think at this point you'll see us fall short," Lewis said.

Despite strong opposition now in place, the House will approve a tax hike, Lewis predicted.

"I don't think anyone on this House floor wants to see Texas write a hot check," he said. "We're not going to do that. We will pass some budget enhancement proposals that we feel will get us through the current biennium and prohibit any checks to be written that will not be good."

Comptroller Bob Bullock, who has projected a \$2.8 billion state deficit, said Tuesday that he is preparing steps to avoid hot checks that could be issued if lawmakers don't resolve the budget crunch.

"I'm not talking about 'no pay,' but I am talking about 'slow pay' to make sure the state has enough money to pay its bills," Bullock said.

The "slow-pay policy" could delay city and MTA tax rebates, payments to state retirement funds and local school districts, he said.

A&M may lose 4.6% of funding Agreement near on state cuts

AUSTIN (AP) — House and Senate negotiators said Tuesday after a surprisingly amicable session they were near agreement on 1987 spending cuts of "something over" \$505 million that would include a 9 percent cut in higher education funding.

"I think we are almost there," said Sen. Grant Jones, D-Temple, chief Senate negotiator on the 10-member conference committee.

Rep. James Rudd, D-Brownfield, House chairman, said the 9 percent average cut in higher education would mean only a 3.6 percent reduction in total operating funds for the University of Texas at Austin and 4.2 percent overall for Texas A&M. Both schools have additional sources of income besides the state's general revenue spending.

Rudd agreed that House and Senate differences over 1987 spending were the only major roadblock remaining.

He estimated it would take about two more days of discussion on the higher education cuts.

Rudd said that House and Senate differences over 1987 spending were the only major roadblock remaining.

Both Jones and Rudd agreed that \$505 million in cuts from 1987 appropriations was the "middleground" for a possible compromise.

Originally the House made \$739 million in cuts and the Senate \$413 million.

The House conferees made a compromise proposal Tuesday morning that Rudd said was 9 percent lower than the money originally appropriated for state colleges and universities.

Originally the House proposed 1987 budget cuts of 15 percent for higher education.

The Senate made 2.5 percent cuts in higher education funds.

Jones said, "We are looking at that (the House compromise offer) and at the next meeting will probably make our proposal, something more than \$505 million."

Commenting on the new House offer, Rudd said, "These cuts average 4 percent (down) from our original positions and we think this is a fair and reasonable cut to take over the biennium."

Overall spending reductions for other schools would be similar.

The House compromise offer would make a \$123 million reduction in general revenue funds in 1987 appropriations for general academic purposes, compared to \$168.3 million in the original House bill and \$103.8 in the Senate bill.

A special \$15 million fund would be set up to cover expected shortages resulting from increased tuition rates.

University of Texas System medical schools would be reduced \$88.3 million. The Senate wanted a \$33.7 million reduction.

The House offer also would make a \$35.7 million or 8 percent reduction in funds for public junior colleges, compared to the Senate's 6 percent or \$26.8 million.

The House offer was the first time the 10-member conference committee has discussed their differences on higher education since this special session began Sept. 8.

Baha'i Club holds candlelight gathering

Vigil commemorates Peace Day

By Lisa Maduro
Reporter

About 35 people formed a human chain around Rudder Fountain Tuesday night, culminating a candlelight vigil conducted by the Texas A&M Baha'i Club in observance of the United Nations International Day of Peace.

Roozbeh Taed, a junior biology major and member of the Baha'i Club, said the event was intended to bring attention to the U.N.'s declarations of 1986 as the International Year of Peace and Sept. 16 as the International Day of Peace.

Taed added that the group wanted to draw attention to the idea that without world peace, civilization cannot endure.

The event is conducted annually by the Baha'i Club. It included the

reading of religious and secular passages, and the playing of both taped and live music supporting the peace movement.

Three participants read quotations from a variety of sources, including Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Erasmus, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Albert Einstein, Victor Hugo and Pope Paul VI.

Corrie Bergeson, a graduate student in educational technology, and David Rhodes, a musician originally from Houston, provided the live music.

Bergeson said he wanted to participate in the vigil because he is a strong believer in world peace.

A similar event held last year at the Memorial Student Center was co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters and the Brazos Val-

ley Peace Action. Some members of the latter group also were present Tuesday night.

Nan El Sayet, a member of Brazos Valley Peace Action, said the Baha'i Club wanted to organize the event this year by itself.

The United Nations International Day of Peace and Year of Peace were established to increase world awareness of the need for peace.

The governing body for the Baha'i faith, called Universal House of Justice, is headquartered in Haifa, Israel. Last year it issued a peace statement to 200 heads of state, including President Reagan and U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

The A&M Baha'i Club consists of seven student and faculty members. Saman Ahmadi, a junior electrical

engineering major, is the chairman of the club.

Saman attended the Baha'i International Peace Conference held in San Francisco in August. Ahmadi, who was born in Iran but moved to the United States eight years ago, said that the intention of the vigil was to promote the teachings of the Baha'i faith and to discuss peace-related issues.

Mary Greenblatt, a member of the Baha'i governing assembly, said there are about 40 Baha'i followers in the College Station area.

The governing body of the Baha'i faith, the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'i, is elected annually by representatives of each area with a Baha'i community.

Shiites urge U.S. to increase effort to free hostages

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Islamic Jihad urged the United States Tuesday to negotiate for the release of three American hostages in Lebanon as it did with the Soviet Union for American newsman Nicholas Daniloff.

The Shiite Moslem group also

Jacobsen is one of six Americans now missing in Lebanon. Islamic Jihad says it holds three American hostages and killed a fourth. It is uncertain who carried out the kidnappings last week of two other Americans.

Islamic Jihad's latest communication and the handwritten letter were in a packet left outside a Western news agency in Moslem west Beirut. The packet also contained a Polaroid photograph of Jacobsen in pajamas, almost identical to one of him released with an Islamic Jihad statement in Beirut last week.

"Why was Reagan interested minute by minute with spy journalist Daneloff but he is not interested one minute in our story?" asked the letter said to have been handwritten by Jacobsen. Daniloff's name was misspelled.

In a separate, typewritten, Arabic-language statement, Islamic Jihad, or Islamic Holy War, said the Reagan administration had made "concessions in the Daniloff case which provoked many question marks in the hostages' minds."

The three captives were "comparing what the (U.S.) government did in the 'Daniloff' case with what it is doing for them," the statement said.

Judge rejects proposal to transfer 300 inmates

TYLER (AP) — A federal judge Tuesday rejected a move by state prison officials to transfer 300 low-risk inmates to a National Guard armory at Mineral Wells in order to avoid early paroles.

Following a two-day hearing, U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice extended for 10 days a temporary order barring the Texas Department of Corrections from transferring the inmates to Fort Wolters.

After Justice issued his decision, TDC Director Lane McCotter said prison officials had no other choice than to pursue the transfer and that their chief concern was public safety.

"The options we came up with we thought were outstanding options," McCotter said. "Fort Wolters houses soldiers in Texas every weekend, 400 as a matter of fact. The facilities are very adequate. It's amazing to me that they are not adequate for prisoners, but they are plenty adequate for our soldiers."

Last week, Gov. Mark White announced the transfer in order to keep the prison population within 95 percent of capacity. According to the Prison Management Act of 1983, prisoners must be released when the Texas prison system reaches 95 percent capacity — 38,825 inmates.

On Tuesday, the Texas prison population stood at 38,259 inmates, putting the system at 93.6 percent of capacity, counting beds at Fort Wolters and a Galveston prison hospital and some planned beds at TDC's Wynne Unit.

"I think the judge is sending a message... they are going to have to provide for permanent housing for all these prisoners."

— Attorney General Jim Mattox.

The latest figure represents the first time the TDC system has been below 94 percent capacity since April 8, said prison spokesman Charles Brown.

Carl Jeffries, TDC assistant director of classification, said Tuesday that if the law had been implemented Monday, 244 inmates would have been released.

Officials said Attorney General Jim Mattox will have to decide whether early releases will be necessary following Justice's order.

"We are hopeful we can avoid triggering early release," Mattox said. "He's not letting us take the easiest road to resolving this particular problem. There are ways to resolve it other than letting these people out early."

"I think the judge is sending a message to the Legislature they are going to have to provide for permanent housing for all these prisoners."

William Bennett Turner, an attorney for the inmates, had contended

Fort Wolters is unsuitable for use as a prison because prisoners would be denied educational and vocational opportunities mandated by the prison reform order, which was issued by Justice in 1981.

Turner challenged state officials' contentions that the crowding problem constitutes an emergency.

"The only emergency is a political emergency relating to Mark White's campaign," Turner said. "There's no evidence that anybody will be hurt by those releases."

Justice's decision also was greeted warmly by a representative of Mineral Wells. L.J. Barnell, an attorney for the Wolters Industry Association, said area residents were generally opposed to the idea of using the armory for a prison.

"That is a chance that may have to come, but the Legislature created that, not the people of Mineral Wells," Barnell said. "And if they were going to be dangers, I don't want them transported to Mineral Wells."

McCotter also said Tuesday that an electronics plant located about a mile from the camp had expressed concern about security, especially for women employees who leave work at midnight.

Prison officials had agreed to send a roving guard at the end of the firm's evening shift for additional security, McCotter said.

Fort Wolters, about 50 miles west of Fort Worth, was a training site for U.S. Army helicopter crews during the Vietnam War.