



Dancin' The Day Away

Photo by Tracy Staton

Junior Colleen Cummings counts money from balloon sales while freshman Jason Porter dances to music being played near Rudder Tower to promote Alpha Phi Omega's "Dance-A-Thon '87."

Texas prisons shut down after topping 95% limit

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — The Texas prison system, open just two days after slipping beneath a population cap, shut down again Wednesday after admitting some 700 inmates from county jails that were jammed from earlier state closings.

It marked the second time in a week and the third time in a month that the nation's second-largest corrections system was forced to close its doors because a 95-percent legal capacity was topped.

The Tuesday midnight headcount, announced Wednesday, showed 38,504 prisoners — 95.38 percent of capacity or 153 inmates over the limit.

The latest closing came after a one-day record 455 inmates were admitted to the state system Tuesday. Although business began Tuesday with a 215-inmate cushion and the release of another 124 inmates, the record intake put the system over the top.

At least another 260 inmates were added to the prison rolls Wednesday before the system closed at 5 p.m., while only 74 were released. Those numbers, however, would not be reflected in the total system count until the Wednesday midnight prisoner tally was announced at midday today.

"I feel sure we'll be closed Friday," spokesman Charles Brown said. "And I don't know if we'll have any (parole) certificates over the weekend."

Brown said another concern of the crowding crisis was that if the system remained over 95 percent capacity for five consecutive days, state law requires the governor to declare a prison emergency.

Under that emergency, inmates classified as trustys and some other non-violent inmates would be advanced 30 days "good time" toward their parole.

He estimated, however, that only about 50 inmates would become eligible for release under that provision, and it might be necessary to go to the next step in the process — a 60-day good-time advance — to increase an inmate pool and enable the system to get under the 95-percent capacity and reopen.

Those provisions are spelled out in the Prison Management Act of

1983. Passed in response to a federal judge's prison reform mandate, the act is responsible for setting the 95 percent cap on population.

Also Wednesday, the state lawyers filed a 79-page brief with the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, asking the court to overturn U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice's recent contempt citation.

Justice has ordered the state to carry out prison reforms by April or face fines totaling \$24 million a month.

Attorney General Jim Mattox said the legal brief points out that Texas has increased spending on prisons by 100 percent over the past years.

Baptist group says lottery could turn state into bookie

AUSTIN (AP) — Proposals for a state-run lottery would turn the state government into a bookmaker that encourages citizens to gamble away their money, officials of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission said Wednesday.

Phil Strickland, commission director, said the organization would oppose bills before the Legislature this year which would enable Texas to join the list of states operating a lottery.

He said lotteries are highly regressive taxes on people who can't afford it and are an inefficient way for government to raise revenues.

With a lottery, Strickland said, "You are committed as a matter of public policy to going out and getting as many people to lose their money as possible. The more folks that go out and lose their money, the better off the state's going to be in terms of taxes."

Although several public opinion polls have indicated substantial pop-

ular support among Texans for a lottery, commission official Warren Ware said he believes many people haven't thought through all the ramifications.

"People in Texas might be willing to let people gamble," Ware said. "But if they really think about it, they're not interested in having the state be the big bookie."

While some lawmakers have labeled a lottery as a "painless" Strickland said the social costs are enormous.

"It is not painless," he said.

Ware said a study after the first days of the recently enacted California lottery indicated that 25 percent of the heavy bettors were making less than \$15,000 annually.

Ware also noted that estimates indicate a lottery would generate \$1 million in revenue for the state first year and \$300 million the second. This wouldn't help the state with its projected \$5.8 billion deficit, he said.

Victim died of heart attack, not 'Mickey Finn'

HOUSTON (AP) — A 40-year-old executive believed to be the victim of a "Mickey Finn" robbery did not die from a drug slipped into his drink the night of his death, the Harris County medical examiner said.

Jimmy Charles Soladay of Palos Verdes, Calif., died of a heart attack that was not connected to a tiny amount of a sleep-inducing drug found in his stomach, said Dr. Joseph Jachimczyk.

The prescription drug, Lorezepam, had not had time to enter his blood stream when Soladay died, Jachimczyk said Tuesday.

"We do know he was an ideal candidate for a heart attack," he said.

Autopsy results showed up to 70 percent

blockage in some major blood vessels near Soladay's heart.

Soladay was found Jan. 27 in a condominium owned by Houston-based Great Western Resource.

Evidence indicated Soladay was the target of a "Mickey Finn" robbery.

Such robberies, police say, usually involve prostitutes who pick up affluent men in bars, slip them a sleep-inducing drug and then rob them.

Witnesses said Soladay was last seen alive late Jan. 26, entering the condo with three women.

The women left without him less than an hour later.

Houston Police Sgt. Doug Osterberg said one

woman has told officers that she and two others picked up Soladay at a bar, then later took his Rolex watch and a large amount of cash from his wallet.

She has been charged with the thefts, but police said they do not expect to file further charges in the Soladay's death.

Another woman believed to have been with Soladay at the time of his death is being held on a theft charge in another alleged "Mickey Finn" case, police said.

Vice division records indicate there were 130 similar type cases in 1986, and officers said there probably were other victims who were too embarrassed to report the thefts.

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