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Texas A&M The Battalion



WEATHER
TOMORROW'S FORECAST:
Cloudy with a high chance of rain
HIGH: 56 LOW: 38

Vol. 89 No. 98 USPS 045360 12 Pages College Station, Texas Tuesday, February 20, 1990

Czech leader plans to meet, visit with Bush

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vaclav Havel, the dissident playwright who went from prison to the presidency of Czechoslovakia inside of eight months, will meet with President Bush on Tuesday, the first of Eastern Europe's new democratic leaders to visit the White House.

Havel was arriving here Monday evening after stops in Iceland and Canada on a Western trip that comes conspicuously a week before his first trip to Moscow.

The Czech Parliament elected Havel president Dec. 29, a few weeks after a peaceful revolution led to the ouster of Communist Party chief Milos Jakes and his hard-line government.

Now the country, under Havel's caretaker government, is preparing for June 8 parliamentary elections that will be its first free balloting in more than 40 years.

Havel has said he is coming West not to look for charity but investment in a country that already maintains a standard of living well above that of Poland, its neighbor to the north.

"Czechoslovakia is not looking for U.S. aid. They are not in the same economic dire straits that ... Poland has been in," a senior Bush administration official said.

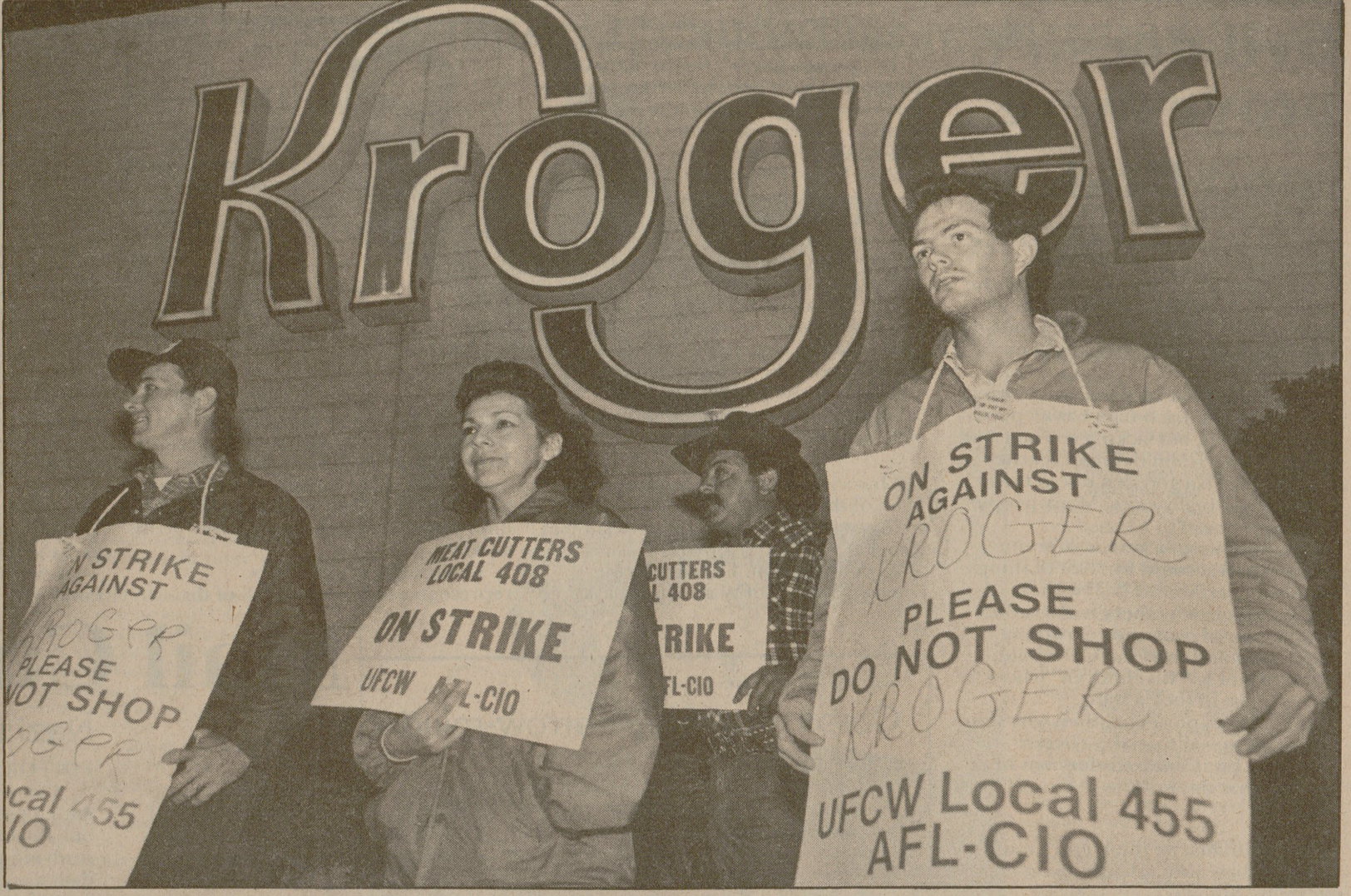
Secretary of State James A. Baker III, in a brief visit to Prague Feb. 6, already signaled support for giving Czechoslovakia most-favored-nation trade status and allowing it to rejoin the International Monetary Fund. It was a founding member of the IMF, but was evicted after the 1948 communist takeover.

And, if Congress approves, Czechoslovakia would share in a pool of \$300 million in new aid the Bush administration has requested for the emerging democracies in Eastern Europe.

The United States has already announced plans to reopen its consulate shuttered for more than four decades in Bratislava in the Slovak region of Czechoslovakia.

The administration also expects to expand exchanges and possibly dispatch Peace Corps volunteers to Czechoslovakia, the official who briefed White House reporters on the Havel visit said.

The new Czech government is prodding the Soviets to remove their 73,500 troops as quickly as possible.



Striking Kroger employees stand outside the College Station store Monday night. The strike began Sunday. Photo by Fredrick D. Joe

Rains urges reform of education, prisons

By BILL HETHCOCK
Of The Battalion Staff

A crisis in education and a need for reform in the criminal justice system are the two biggest problems Texas faces today, Republican gubernatorial candidate Jack Rains said Monday in a speech sponsored by Aggies for Rains.

Rains proposed raising teachers' salaries, putting more state money into core curriculum and allowing school districts and teachers more flexibility to try new programs that encourage students to stay in school.

He also called for an end to state mandated educational programs paid for by local funds, and a cut-back in funds spent on administrative overhead.

"We must allocate growth in state revenues to education," Rains said. "We've increased educational funding by 50 percent in the last five years, but we haven't seen a good return on our investment in education yet. We need to make sure the money that goes into education is used properly."

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Kroger employees at local stores strike for more benefits in contract

By STACY E. ALLEN
Of The Battalion Staff

Strikers wearing signs and encouraging customers not to shop at Kroger stores were at both Kroger locations in Bryan and College Station Monday.

Kroger employees are striking in hopes of obtaining a more lucrative employment contract.

Seventy-three Kroger stores from Beaumont to Nacogdoches are involved in the strike, which officially started Sunday at 1:30 p.m. in Houston.

Members of Local 455 of the AFL-CIO Retail Clerks Association and Local 408 of the Meat Cutters Union have been striking in Bryan-College Station since 9:30 p.m. Sunday.

A three-year contract for Kroger workers expired Saturday at midnight after a week of negotiations. According to the Houston Chronicle, a 12 percent wage increase is being asked for by Kroger employees.

College Station Kroger strikers said Kroger employees took a wage reduction of \$2.30 per hour over the past three years due to what Kroger management referred to as economic circumstances of the time.

According to a flier given out by strikers, Kroger employees made more money in June 1983 than they make today.

By STACY E. ALLEN
Of The Battalion Staff

HOUSTON (AP) — Kroger Food Store managers manned cash registers and stocked shelves Monday, the first full day of a strike over wages and benefits at 73 Southeast Texas Kroger stores.

"All the stores are open," Carmen Pate, consumer affairs manager for Kroger in Houston, said. "We're using our own employees and many non-union workers, managers, hiring temporary help and bringing in employees from other areas to keep our stores open for the customers."

The walkout affects about 7,000 clerks, meat cutters, cashiers and other employees at stores in the Houston metropolitan area, and in stores from Orange west to Bryan and from Nacogdoches south to Freeport.

Workers began the strike Sunday when talks between the company and Local 455 of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union broke down. The union contract expired at midnight Saturday. Meat cutters are represented by UFCW Local 408.

Talks resumed Monday afternoon in Houston. "They are talking at this time and we are willing to continue negotiating," Pate said.

Albert Morales, frozen food manager and striker in College Station, said the strikers are asking for what Kroger took from them in the past three years.

"We can't make a decent living on what they pay us today," Morales said.

Alvin Burch, fellow striker and grocery clerk, said he estimates that almost 100 percent of the full-time workers and 50 percent of the part-

time workers have walked out of the College Station Kroger.

College Station Kroger Manager Larry Medearis said he did not know how many employees were striking.

Burch said most of the employees still working are Texas A&M students.

"The people left are mainly students, because they don't realize what Kroger is doing to them," Burch said. "Their salaries will always stay at \$3.50 per hour with no benefits unless we do something."

Vann Fernandez, a sophomore industrial engineering major at A&M, is one of the few students striking.

"The reason I'm going on strike is to help future students," Fernandez said. "I may not be here in a few years, but I want the student that takes my job to make enough money to go to school."

John Humphreys, a junior technical design major at A&M, agreed.

"Not all students can have their parents pay for their education," Humphreys said. "We are trying to help ourselves as well as future students."

Although the strike has not resulted in a decrease in customers, Medearis said, the hours at the two locations in Bryan-College Station have been shortened until the strike is settled. Kroger stores are normally open 24 hours a day, but new hours are from 7 a.m. to midnight.

Strikers said a meeting is scheduled Tuesday in Houston between the union and Kroger management, and they expect an agreement to be reached.

Burch said he doesn't think the strike will last long because Kroger's sales are hurting.

"The president of Kroger made \$4 million last year," Burch said. "What we are asking for would amount to \$3 million per year. We don't think that is unfair."

Universities launch balloons in memory of youth fatalities

By DAPHNE MILLER
Of The Battalion Staff

As part of Texas Designated Driver Day, the Texas A&M Designated Driver Program will launch 503 balloons in front of the Lawrence Sullivan Ross statue Wednesday at noon.

The balloons will represent the 503 people between the ages of 17 and 24 who were killed in alcohol-related accidents in 1988 in Texas.

Ten other Texas colleges and universities will host simultaneous balloon launches. They are Amarillo College, Austin College, East Texas State University, St. Mary's University, Southern Methodist University, Tarleton State University, Texas Christian University, Texas Tech University, University of Dallas and University of North Texas.

A&M President William H. Mobley has been invited to speak during the event.

Lynda Sorrell, A&M program coordinator, said the balloon launch

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Killing time



Howard Fisher, a University employee, waits every day at 2:30 p.m. in front of the College of Veterinary Medicine for his ride. He carools with eight others from Hearne. Photo by Fredrick D. Joe

Rep. gubernatorial candidate speaks out at political forum

By JULIE MYERS
Of The Battalion Staff

Being rich isn't necessary to be governor of Texas but it sure would help in getting elected, a Republican gubernatorial candidate said Monday.

Royce X. Owens, a former personnel director at Texas A&M,

"This drug war is gonna take a licking and keep on ticking."

— Royce X. Owens, gubernatorial candidate

spoke at the Gubernatorial Candidates' Forum sponsored by the MSC Political Forum.

Owens said 119 agencies are fighting drugs and \$8 billion is being sunk into the drug war. He said there should be an alternative to the present policy.

"This drug war is gonna take a

Candidates for governor miss forum at A&M

By JULIE MYERS
Of The Battalion Staff

Six candidates were scheduled to speak at the Gubernatorial Candidates' Forum sponsored by Political Forum Monday, but only one arrived to participate in the debate.

Democratic gubernatorial candidates Theresa Hearn-Haynes, Earl Holmes and Ray Rachel were con-

tracted to speak at 5 p.m. Hearn-Haynes and Rachel cancelled their appearances over the weekend.

Republican gubernatorial candidates Edward Cude, W.N. Otwell and Royce X. Owens were scheduled to speak at 8 p.m. Only Owens came on time.

David Karr, Political Forum program director and sophomore radi-

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licking and keep on ticking," Owens said.

In addition, Owens said he would not rule out any type of new tax as a source of new revenue.

"If the need for new revenues proves absolutely inescapable, raise levies on the money people spend, rather than from taxes on money earned," Owens said.

Owens said he would lower the drop-out rate by mandating that employers who hire high school drop-outs pay them less than minimum wage.

He also supports a woman's right to abortion, lower insurance rates, a state bonus for Vietnam Vets, campaign reform, rural hospitals, and garbage recycling.

"My definition of patriotism is shown by striving constantly to make one's own country the best, where true freedom and justice exist," he said.

Owens is currently a janitor at Tye Elementary School in Merkel, Texas.