

Dwarf receives 50-year term

HOUSTON (AP) — A Harris County jury on Thursday sentenced Jeffrey Scott Leibengood, a dwarf, to 50 years in prison for the June shooting death of his grandfather.

Leibengood, 25, who is 4-feet-5-inches tall, had asked that his jury include short people he believed would have empathy for him, but State District Judge Carl Walker denied the request.

Jurors on Wednesday took only 90 minutes to convict Leibengood in the fatal shooting of Robert Earl Shoffner, 74. On Thursday, they deliberated two hours before determining the sentence.

Defense attorney John Carrigan had asked that Leibengood be given probation.

But prosecutor Pat Patillo called Leibengood's mother to the stand, who said she did not believe her son should be given a probated sentence and said the family feared him.

Carrigan said he felt the woman's testimony hurt Leibengood's chances for a light sentence. Patillo had asked that Leibengood be sentenced to life in prison.

Shoffner was shot four times last June after Leibengood had invited his maternal grandfather to his townhouse to help fix an air conditioner.

Leibengood told jurors he feared his grandfather and that he shot him when Shoffner became verbally abusive during an argument.

Yeltsin terminates chief economic advisor

Continued from Page 1

est industrial countries that was announced on Wednesday. In Washington, the White House reaction to Gaidar's firing was low-key.

"It is a matter for President Yeltsin and the Russians to decide," said the deputy press secretary, Gary Foster. "It will not affect our plans."

Gaidar, 36, will retain his post of first deputy premier, an aide said. He will be replaced as finance minister by Vasily Barchuk, a 51-year-old Gaidar deputy and

former department head in the old Soviet Finance Ministry.

"It should not be viewed as a weakening of Gaidar's team, just as a normal process of the government's work," said Andrei Silantiev, head of the Russian government's press bureau.

"My personal guess is that it may be related to the forthcoming congress, certainly not displeasure with Gaidar's work," said Alexei Novikov, a Yeltsin spokesman.

Gaidar increasingly had been the focus of public anger over "Yeltsin's reforms, in which the government freed prices on most

goods in a desperate attempt to stimulate production and rescue the failing ruble.

"We don't need these professor economists," said economist Alla Yakoven, who was standing in line Thursday to buy hard-line literature in front of the Lenin Museum. "They don't know anything. Everybody was taken care of under the old system."

Many Russian shoppers were outraged by Gaidar's strategy because it sent prices skyrocketing on goods that for years had been kept artificially low.

Registration system faces reform

Continued from Page 1

the early registration period. When the open add/drop time begins, students can add additional hours.

Other changes include: *student workers who want to register early must now have an employee registration form turned in at the Pavilion before registration begins. Forms can be picked up at the Pavilion, and are due by noon on Friday, April 10.

*student worker registration is now by telephone, and will begin the first day of senior registration, which is April 13. Student workers can access the system from 9 a.m. until 8 p.m.

*student workers employed by A&M for more than one month are now required to submit a photocopy of the last two paycheck stubs they received as verification of their employment. The employer of students who have worked at A&M for less than one month will be contacted to verify employment.

David Hamilton, the off-campus senator who sponsored the bill in the Student Senate, said the student body believed student workers had an unfair advantage when registering.

"There was a growing sentiment from senators that there was some hostility toward pre-registration," he said. "If we didn't

tackle the problem, this would have been the last semester for student worker pre-registration."

Hamilton then contacted Assistant Registrar Willis Ritchey to come up with a new policy.

The AOC had already canceled student worker registration before it was presented with the Student Government bill.

"We passed the bill in Student Senate, and it was supposed to go to the AOC, but it didn't go through in time, and they decided to do away with pre-registration," Hamilton said.

Members of Student Government then met with some of the deans in charge of the AOC, who submitted the student worker bill to the full committee. After the committee heard the proposal, it was endorsed.

"It (the bill) really does make registration easier for student workers," Hamilton said. "The paperwork actually facilitates the process, because everything has already been turned in."

Hamilton said the new policy's effectiveness will be seen during summer registration, but it will probably be used during the fall also.

David Brooks, speaker of the Senate, said these new policies are to get data about how to make pre-registration more effective.

"It's an experiment to get data," he said. "It's to try to deter-

mine if it makes registration more equitable for students."

"We hope it will make registration more efficient, and help cut down on complaints," he said.

Brooks said the administration has been cooperative working with student government to implement the changes. Whether the new policy will be used in the fall depends on how well it works this summer, Brooks said.

Willis Ritchey, assistant registrar, said members of Student Government did most of the work on the new policy.

"They had two concerns," he said. "Students that work and students that don't work."

Ritchey said his office was not involved in the primary decision-making, but in how the phone registration system would lend itself to the changes.

"What we put into it was whether the system could handle it, and whether the machines would allow it," he said.

Ritchey commended the work of Student Government members in identifying ways to improve the system for students who need to register early.

"They came up with the guidelines on the form, with additional steps that will do a better job than we were doing of truly identifying students who have this particular need," he said.

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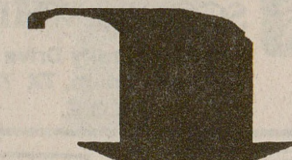
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