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Lawyer Says Settlement Reached On House Plan

AUSTIN (AP) — A civil rights lawyer said today that House leaders and plaintiffs who challenged a House redistricting plan in state court have reached a settlement.

"Everything's done," said lawyer Jim Harrington of the Texas Civil Rights Project. The group represents some plaintiffs in the case before State District Judge Mario Ramirez of Edinburg.

A spokesman for House Speaker Gib Lewis did not immediately return a telephone call from The Associated Press.

Harrington said that House leaders had obtained the signatures of 76 of the 150 House members to the compromise plan.

A spokeswoman for Rep. Parker McCullough, D-Georgetown, Missy Warren, said 77 House members had committed to support the new plan and leaders were trying to obtain all their signatures.

That plan would be submitted to Ramirez and to the U.S. Department of Justice, Harrington said. The Justice Department last month rejected a House plan that was approved by the Legislature, saying it discriminated against Hispanics.

The agreed upon House plan creates 25 Hispanic districts, five more than the plan invalidated by the Justice Department, Harrington said.

Mandela Lauds Houston Civil Liberties Efforts

HOUSTON (AP) — South African anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela has wrapped up his U.S. tour by praising Central and South Americans working for peace and justice.

Mandela on Sunday also lauded Houstonians who have supported such causes.

"I'm very happy and humbled that I should be in the midst of a community which has produced men and women who are committed to making human beings to be human. These are men and women who will continue to live long after they have left this world," Mandela said after helping present awards from a human rights foundation headed by former President Jimmy Carter and Houston philanthropist Dominique de Menil.

Mandela later received an honorary doctorate of letters from Texas Southern University, where he was cheered by some 8,000 people.

"We accept it with humility and on behalf of the countless number of South Africans who have learned from the University of Life to value freedom and liberty," Mandela said of the degree.

The ceremony, which was delayed a half-hour as throngs of people filed through metal detectors for the event, was interrupted early on by a group dressed in African tribal regalia which sang a South African freedom song. Mandela stood up quietly with a fist of solidarity and quickly was joined by the mostly black audience.

"We all know the story of Nelson Mandela and we know of the work you are doing for a post-apartheid South Africa," said Houston Mayor Kathy Whitmire. "We know now why you symbolize freedom and hope. You have come as a real life hero to Houston to demonstrate all of these things."

The African National Congress president arrived in Houston Saturday, after visiting the United Nations in New York, President Bush in Washington and business leaders in Pittsburgh, Pa.

He asked business leaders in Pennsylvania and Texas to begin preparations for renewed trade with South Africa. But he urged the United States to wait until an interim government is installed before lifting economic sanctions against the country.

"We want to re-establish South Africa as a country with which you will have pride," Mandela said.

"The victory is in sight. We will make sure that you are not disappointed in your expectations," he said at TSU.

Mrs. De Menil surprised Mandela with a $100,000 contribution for ANC from the Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation after the organization had distributed its annual prizes.

The foundation presented a $100,000 award to the University of Central America in El Salvador on behalf of six Jesuit priests slain while they worked there. The priests, who had spoken out against the right-wing death squads, were assassinated Nov. 16, 1989, along with their two housekeepers.

Nine of 10 members of the Salvadoran military charged with the murders were tried in El Salvador in September. A colonel was convicted of ordering eight of the murders, while a lieutenant was convicted of committing one of the murders. Seven others were acquitted.

The Rev. Miguel Francisco Estrada, the rector at UCA, said the award would be used to establish a human rights studies chair at the school in the name of one of the slain priests — the Rev. Segundo Montes Mozo.

Times Herald History Includes Pulitzers, Lawsuits

DALLAS (AP) — The 112-year history of the *Dallas Times Herald* included three Pulitzer Prizes for photography as well as lawsuits over circulation and syndicated features against its now victorious rival, *The Dallas Morning News*.

The *Times Herald's* sometimes cordial, sometimes cranky relationship with its larger competitor ended Sunday with the sale of its assets to the A.H. Belo Corp., publishers of *The Morning News*, for $55 million.

On May 8, 1979, *The Morning News* had wished the *Times Herald* well on its 100th anniversary in an editorial: "Happy centennial *Dallas Times Herald*. And may the years continue to be kind to you."

But cordiality soon gave way to lawsuits, circulation wars and staff defections.

At the height of the two papers' circulation war, in early 1982, the *Times Herald* hired sports columnist Skip Bayless away from *The Dallas Morning News*. Then, in late 1984, widely read sports columnist Blackie Sherrod announced he was leaving the *Times Herald* after 25 years to join *The Morning News*.

The *Herald* won three Pulitzer Prizes for photography. The 1964 award was for photographs of Jack Ruby shooting Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused killer of President Kennedy. A 1980 award was for a series of feature photos on cowboys, and the paper was honored again 1983 for photos of war in El Salvador.

The paper, which published its last edition for Monday morning, dates back to 1879, when two papers merged to create the *Dallas Daily Times*. In subsequent mergers the paper's name changed several times.

When the Times Mirror Co. bought the *Times Herald* in 1969 in a $48.5 million stock swap, the paper grew rapidly, adding 100 staffers in three years. On Sept. 12, 1977, the afternoon paper launched a morning edition to compete head-to-head with *The Morning News*. That led to the circulation war.

By 1985, *The Morning News* led the *Times Herald* in circulation by 127,628 daily and 130,072 on Sundays.

Times Mirror sold the paper in 1986 for $110 million to an investor group led by William Dean Singleton. Four days later, the paper cut 109 employees and closed four bureaus.

That year, the *Times Herald* filed suit against *The Morning News* and the Audit Bureau of Circulation, alleging fraud and conspiracy in circulation figures. In 1987, the two papers reached an agreement with the agency on circulation figures.

In June 1988, Singleton sold the *Times Herald* to DTH Media Inc. and publisher John Buzzetta.

The two newspapers' last battle was over an antitrust lawsuit in August 1989. It challenged a joint venture between Universal Press Syndicate Inc. and *The Morning News'* publisher that stripped the *Times Herald* of 26 features, including "Doonesbury," "Dear Abby" and "The Far Side," and added them to *The Morning News*.

In the spring of 1990, a Houston jury ruled in favor of *The Morning News*, and the decision had been upheld by one appeals court. The *Times Herald* agreed to drop its appeal as part of the sale.

Police Shocked After Four Teens Shot, Burned In Store

AUSTIN (AP) — A veteran police officer says he was stunned by the senseless slaying of four teen-age girls, all of whom were shot twice in the back of the head in a yogurt shop that was then set afire.

"I've been on the force 10 years and lived in Austin 20 years and this is the worst I remember," said Sgt. Scott Cary.

Sgt. John Jones, who is in charge of the investigation, echoed the view.

"This is four girls that are now dead. For what reason? Surely they did not have that much money in there. The price of life seems to be getting cheaper and cheaper these days," Jones said.

A police officer on patrol late Friday night noticed the flames at the store. About 50 firefighters responded to the blaze, and the girls' bodies were discovered shortly after midnight near the back door of an I Can't Believe It's Yogurt store.

The victims, all from Austin, were identified as Jennifer Harbison, 14; her sister, Sarah Harbison, 15; Eliza Thomas, 17; and Amy Ayres, 13. Officials said Jennifer Harbison and Eliza Thomas were store employees and that Miss Ayres was a friend.

The Tarrant County medical examiner's office said three bodies were burned beyond recognition, but there was little doubt about the identities. An official said dental records would be used to confirm the identifications.

Lt. Andrew Waters said Austin police are sifting through available leads, hoping to come up with something that will produce an arrest.

"Unfortunately, we haven't developed any real strong suspects. We are getting a lot of names, but nothing that appears like it's going to break the case," Waters said Sunday.

> *"I've been on the force 10 years and lived in Austin 20 years and this is the worst I remember."*
>
> **Sgt. Scott Cary, Austin Police**

"We are still going on the theory that robbery was the motive. We don't have any reason at this point to believe anything else," Waters said.

Police were asking any customers who were in the store around closing time Friday to come forward.

I Can't Believe It's Yogurt has stores in 45 states and about 700 locations in 10 countries, company officials said. There are three stores in the Austin area and about 100 in Texas.

Patty Reupke, the company's director of marketing, said the killings "shocked, saddened and outraged" her.

The three older girls went to Austin Lanier High School. The youngest went to Burnett Middle School.

Katherine Miller, a classmate at Lanier, said: "What went through their minds? How would that feel? I can't put myself in that position. It's really frightening."

Lanier High principal Paul Turner said counselors will be on hand Monday to help students deal with the killings.

"They will be grieving, they will be angry. There will be different feelings that they have and we want to be ready to work with them in a compassionate and understanding way," he said.

NASA: Chance Low Of Space Collision Despite Close Calls

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Statistically, it was bound to happen — astronauts forced to take last-minute detours to avoid space junk.

"On my first flight into space, I considered space to be such a big place that it was almost impossible I could ever run into anything up there," said astronaut Vance Brand, a member of the 1975 Apollo-Soyuz crew. "Now I have a slightly different view of it."

Astronauts have encountered debris twice in the past three months, and they're not fazed.

Shuttle commander Frederick Gregory, who dodged 3,200 pounds of rocket debris 1½ weeks ago, said "I'm sure at one time soon, someone will have a collision with something in space, but I don't think it's going to be a major problem."

Experts say the odds of the shuttle colliding with something on Earth's busy orbital beltway are low despite Atlantis' close encounter on Nov. 29 and one by Discovery in mid-September. Each time, the crews changed course to avoid coming too close to old chunks of Soviet rockets.

There wasn't enough time for astronauts aboard Atlantis to move away from a Soviet satellite during a secret military mission in December 1988; they had only 15 minutes' warning. NASA records show Atlantis and the satellite passed an unnerving 1.2 miles from one another.

Objects also came uncomfortably close during at least two shuttle missions in the mid-1980s. No maneuvers were made because NASA hadn't yet adopted its steer-clear policy.

These five instances — the only known near-misses in 30 years of U.S. manned space flight — highlight what many believe could be a grave problem for 21st-century explorers and renew concern about all the undetectable scrap whizzing around.

In the giant junkyard of space, a pound of metal can demolish a shuttle as easily as a 3,200-pound rocket hulk. Every pound in orbit, upon impact, is equivalent to 25 pounds of TNT.

"The small stuff you can't see is what I consider the big issue as far as orbital debris is concerned," said Don Kessler, senior scientist for orbital debris research at Johnson Space Center in Houston.

The U.S. Space Command was tracking 6,964 manmade objects as of Friday. Fewer than 7 percent of the orbiting articles were active satellites. The rest was debris — spent rocket bodies, dead satellites and, mostly, fragments from exploded rockets.

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