

Black residents claim buyout discrimination

MONT BELVIEU, Texas (AP) — The residents that used to make up Mont Belvieu's black community say they were driven out of town by the city and chemical companies during a buyout program that resulted from chemical accidents.

A group of 32 residents of what used to be Pablo Street have joined a larger civil suit filed against petrochemical companies in the area, the Mont Belvieu Program and the city of Mont Belvieu, about 30 miles east of Houston.

They contend they were discriminated against when the city and chemical companies began buying property as a result of the 1985 accidents at the Warren Petroleum storage site.

They allege the city and industry officials conspired to keep them out of Mont Belvieu and the offers for their property did not equal those made to white property owners.

After the 1985 accidents, petrochemical companies agreed to buy properties on the Mont Belvieu salt dome that were dangerously close to company operations.

But Claude Hamilton said residents of Pablo Street were never considered in the Mont Belvieu Program because of a 1957 agreement between Warren Petroleum and the property owners.

The owners then agreed to a land swap with Warren and relocated to Pablo Street. When the buyout proposal surfaced, the other companies said Pablo Street residents were Warren's concern, said Hamilton, a former resident who now lives in Baytown.

"It looked like we were going to be bought out before anyone else," Hamilton said. However, Hamilton said members of the City Council met privately with him and other black residents before any buyout was announced.

He said the city officials believed the residents were going to be offered \$1 per square foot for their property and advised the residents not to accept it because they did not think it was fair and that it would set a precedent.

However, two days later, on April 30, 1986, the Mont Belvieu Program was announced, setting a price of \$1 per square foot on the land. The Pablo Street residents were not included.

The residents also contend that when they tried to relocate in Mont Belvieu, the city refused to provide services, such as access to a road.

Art Spencer, Pablo Street project manager, said Pablo residents were made "exactly the same offer for their property" as the Mont Belvieu Project participants. He said in addition to the price for the land, the homes were appraised according to what it would cost to rebuild them with top-quality materials at 1986 prices.

Moreover, the offer included a moving fee that was 10 percent of the total appraised value of the property, Spencer said.

"I think they got a better deal than the people in Mont Belvieu," Spencer said. "They got some really good valuations of their property. When you take a frame house and rebuild it to include some of the energy-saving features it didn't have, you see they got a pretty good deal."

Poll: Voters undecided in 12th District election

FORT WORTH (AP) — As recently as one week ago, almost two-thirds of the voters in the 12th District remained undecided on their choice to fill the vacated House seat of Jim Wright, a Fort Worth Star-Telegram poll revealed.

Saturday's special election has the looks of a two-man race with party leaders lining up behind Republican Bob Lanier and Democrat Pete Geren.

But 64 percent of the 401 registered voters surveyed said they are not sure or have no opinion when asked which of the eight candidates they support in Saturday's election.

And while the poll reflects that Lanier and Geren are the most recognizable of the eight candidates, their opponents say voters have focused on the issues since that data was gathered. The survey was conducted from 6 p.m. July 28 to 9 p.m. July 30—and has a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percent.

Former House speaker Wright resigned June 30 amid an ethics investigation after representing the district for 34 years.

Lanier was favored by 16 percent of the respondents; Geren by 15 percent; and Democrat Jim Lane by 3.2 percent. None of the other five candidates received more than 1 percent.

And 63 percent of those surveyed said they are likely to vote in the election.

Lane said news reports of what he termed Geren's indecisiveness on the abortion issue, an endorsement of his own campaign from famed pro-choice attorney Sarah Weddington and increased voter awareness that Geren lives outside the 12th District energized his own campaign in the last week.

Eighty-six percent of those sur-

veyed said they consider abortion to be an important campaign issue, and 83 percent said a candidate's residency is significant.

The poll showed that voters know little about the eight candidates.

When asked to name the eight people who will appear on the ballot, 47 percent of those surveyed named Lanier, 31 percent named Geren and 22 percent Lane.

Fifty-one percent did not name Lanier; 62 percent did not name Geren and 76 percent did not name Lane.

Democrats Bill Turner and George Petrovich were unknown to 91 and 95 percent of those surveyed; Republicans Jim Hunter and Laraine Bethke were unknown to 86 and 91 percent; and Libertarian Robert Buckingham Jr. was unknown to 93 percent.

Among those who said they had previously voted for Wright, Geren was the choice of 19 percent, Lanier 12 percent and Lane, who has sought to portray himself as the most Wright-like candidate in the race, 4 percent. Sixty-three percent said they are undecided.

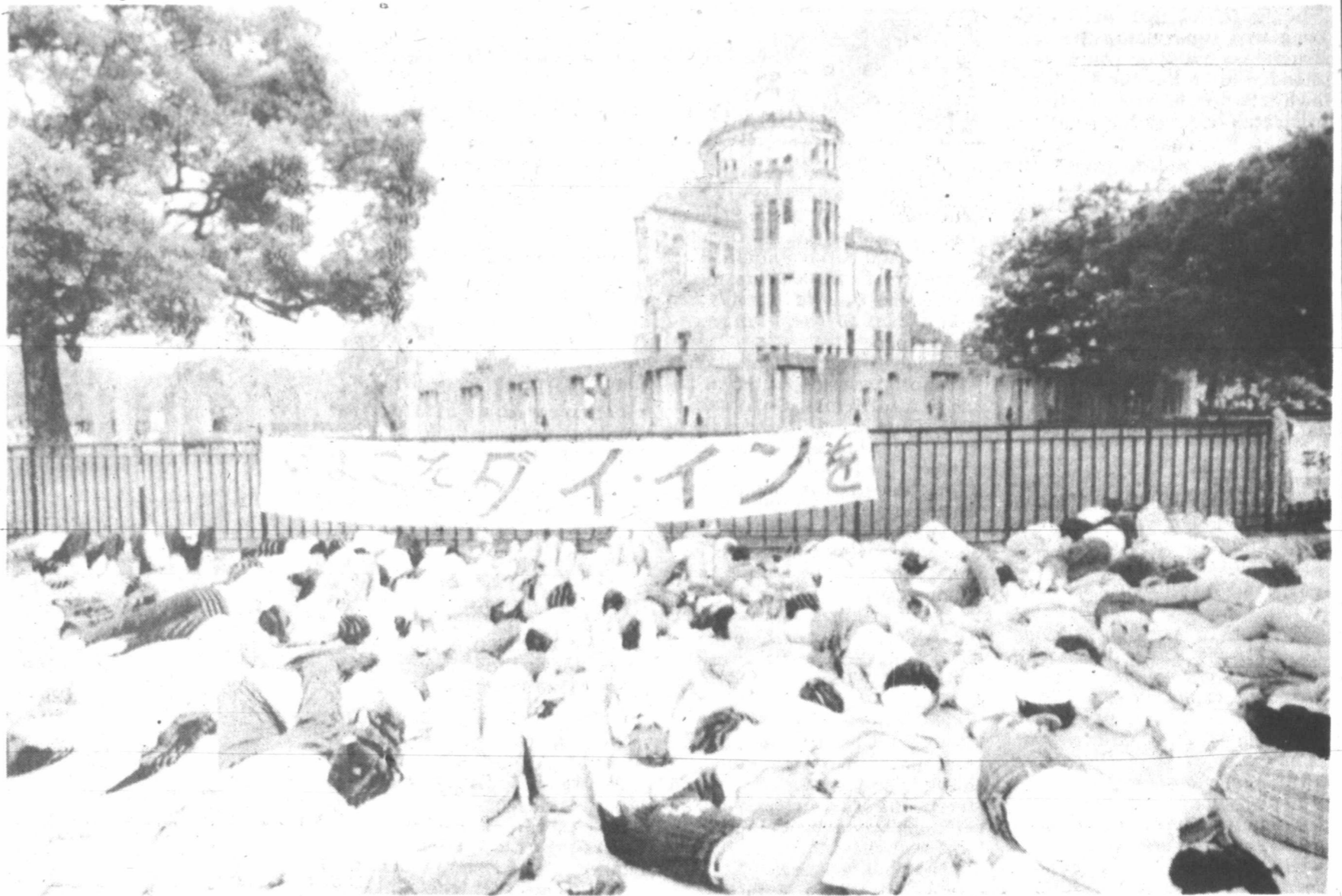
Thirty-two percent of the respondents were Republicans, 41 percent Democrats and 21 percent independent. Six percent said they were unsure of their political affiliation or refused to answer.

Thirty-five percent of the Republicans said they support Lanier and 54 percent said they are undecided.

Twenty-seven percent of the Democrats said they support Geren; 7 percent said they support Lane and 62 percent said they are undecided.

Eighty-three percent were white, 12 percent black and 4 percent Hispanic.

Die-in protest



Protesters lie on the ground in front of the gutted Atomic Bomb Dome in a symbolic die-in protest Sunday in Hiroshima as the nation observed the 44th anniversary of the atomic bombing of the city by the United States. The banner in Japanese reads: "Die-in Now."

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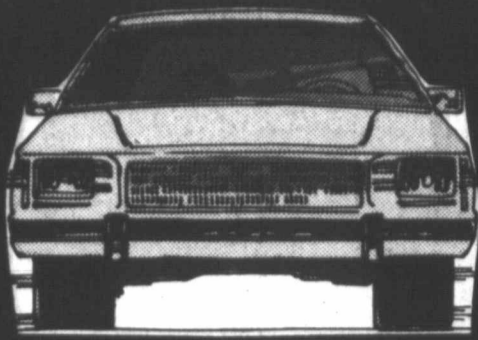
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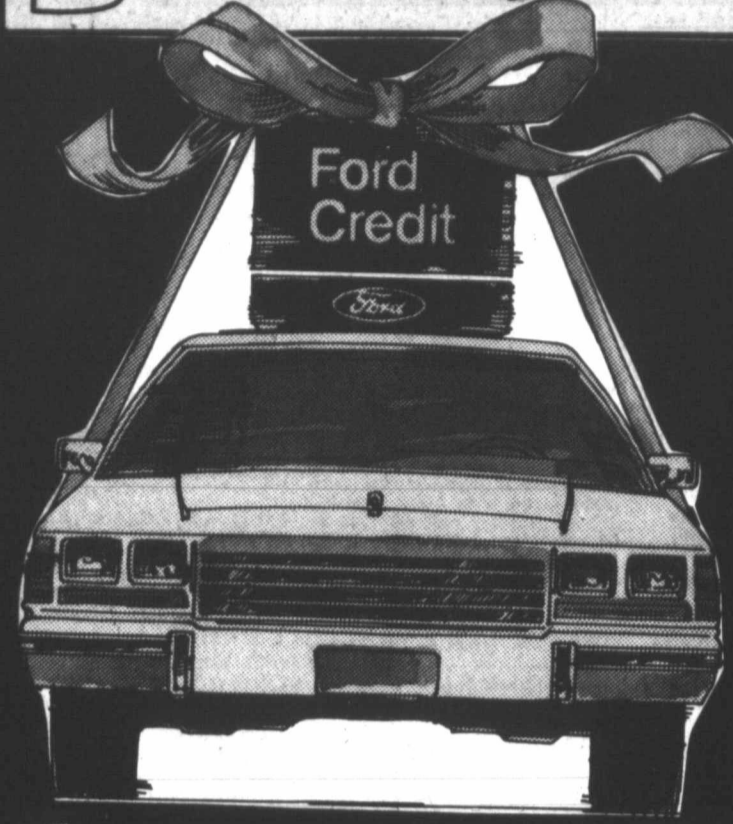
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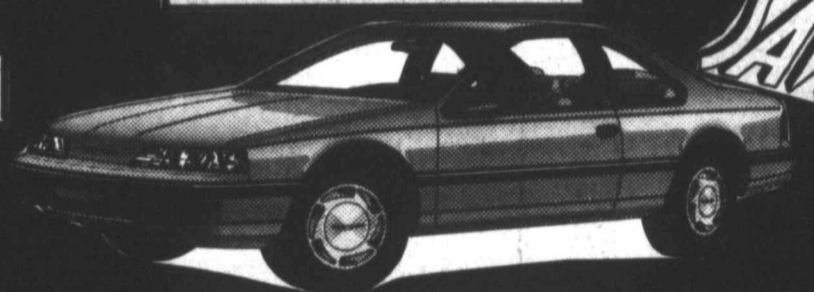
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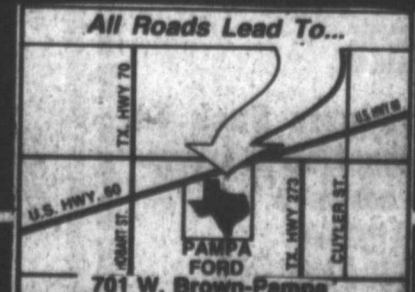
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