

The Brackett News

Mayor, county attorney
debate executive session
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16th year, No. 19

Serving the communities of Brackettville, Fort Clark Springs, Spofford and Kinney County

1 Section, 8 Pages

City begins search for replacement

Council accepts Wardlaw's resignation as city secretary

The Brackettville City Council accepted the resignation of Bonnie Wardlaw Tuesday night and agreed to begin its search for a new city secretary.

"We've been without a city secretary going on the second week," said Mayor Joe Garza Jr. "The budget process is quickly approaching. I think that comes around in July. We're certainly going to need some people out there that have some experience in finance, accounting and record-keeping.

"To say that things are chaotic is an understatement. We definitely need some help. We're not blaming anybody. We're going to correct what needs to be corrected, we're going to go forward and we're going to make decisions for the citizens."

Garza presented a written proposal for the hiring process, and it was adopted with changes suggested by Alderman Tully Welch. He voted for the proposal, along with council members Matt Bland, Francisca Garza, Tomas Gomez Jr. and Lydia Tipps.

The mayor's proposal had a 60-day hiring process, but Welch suggested reducing it to 45 days. The city will accept applications for a 20-day period and then spend 15 days to interview applicants and hire a new city secretary.

"Mayor, I like your proposal," Welch said. "Personally, I would like to expedite this. I think we can get somebody hired in 45 days."

Under the mayor's proposal, the council would be responsible

"To say that things are chaotic is an understatement. We definitely need some help."

Joe Garza Jr.

for determining "the qualifications and specific criteria that it will employ in the selection of the city secretary," and would be charged with creating a specific job description.

The proposal also dictates that the city will advertise the vacancy in the *Del Rio News-Herald*, *Houston Chronicle* and *San Antonio Express-News*.

Tipps asked why the job would not be advertised locally in *The Brackett News* and *Uvalde Leader-News*.

"It's just a proposal — it's subject to modification like anything else," the mayor said.

Bland asked how much the council was going to budget for the position, and the mayor explained that the budget already included a salary of \$22,500.

"We simply could not go beyond what is already budgeted unless we were to proceed with hiring somebody who would go beyond that salary range, at which time we would have to amend the budget. That would have to have council approval," Garza explained.

The mayor suggested that the council could employ an interim city secretary to run the day-to-

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A packed house

It was standing-room only Tuesday night as over 50 citizens crammed into the Brackettville City Annex for the first meeting of the recently elected mayor and aldermen. The council accepted the resignation of Bonnie Wardlaw during the meeting and will now begin its search for a new city secretary.

Photo by J.J. Guidry

Brackett hosts Juneteenth celebration

By J.J. GUIDRY
Editor

Brackettville will celebrate Emancipation Day this weekend as the Seminole Indian Scouts Association host its annual Juneteenth celebration.

The event kicks off with a parade Saturday morning at 10. The parade will begin at the Brackett Alternative School on N. Ann Street and conclude at the Carver School grounds.

Parade awards and a special program will begin at 11 a.m. and a barbecue is planned for noon. Barbecue plates and a drink will be sold for \$6, while a sandwich, salad and drink will be sold for \$3.

There will be a Little Mr. and Miss Juneteenth contest Saturday afternoon at 2.

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States.

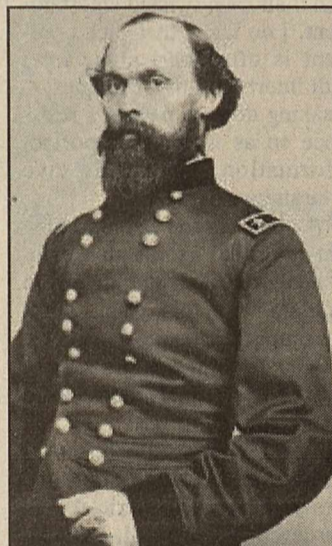
Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19 that the Union soldiers, led by Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free. This was two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which had become official Jan. 1, 1863.

The Emancipation Proclamation had little impact on the Texans due to the minimal number of Union troops to enforce the new executive order. However, with the surrender of Gen. Robert E. Lee in April of 1865 and the arrival of Gen. Granger's regiment, the forces were finally

strong enough to influence and overcome the resistance.

One of Granger's first orders of business was to read to the people of Texas General Order Number 3, which began most significantly with: "The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a proclamation from the executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and free laborer."

The celebration of June 19 was coined "Juneteenth" and has become a significant holiday in Texas. State officials declared June 19, "Emancipation Day in Texas," a legal state holiday in



Gordon Granger

1980.

For more information about the parade and celebration, call Augusta Pines at 563-9779 or Beverly Wright at 275-2395.

Shahan expected to resign from water board today

By J.J. GUIDRY
Editor

Darlene Shahan is expected to resign today from the Kinney County Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors.

The district is holding its regular monthly meeting this afternoon at 4 in the district courtroom at the Courthouse.

Water board officials said Shahan would resign from the board when she was hired as general manager in April. She had previously served as the interim general manager while serving as a director.

All seven positions on the board are up for election in November.

County Judge Herb Senne said the Commissioners Court may appoint a replacement for Shahan "if the groundwater board wants to fill it between now and the election."

The agenda for today's meeting simply says "board member resignation."

The agenda for today's meeting also includes:

- Public comment.
- Approve minutes.
- Presentation by Water Texas.
- Review and possible action on proposal from Randolph Company.
- Report from Election Committee.
- General manager's report.

Trustees consider changing the name of alternative school

By J.J. GUIDRY
Editor

Brackett ISD officials are considering changing the name of the district's alternative school.

The Board of Trustees gave Superintendent Bobby Templeton preliminary approval last week to move forward with plans to change the name of the school.

"I think it would be a good idea," school board member Sondra Meil said.

An official name change would have to be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Templeton said most districts do not call their alternative school "alternative school." He presented the board a list of alternative schools around the state that carry different names, such as "academy" or "learning center."

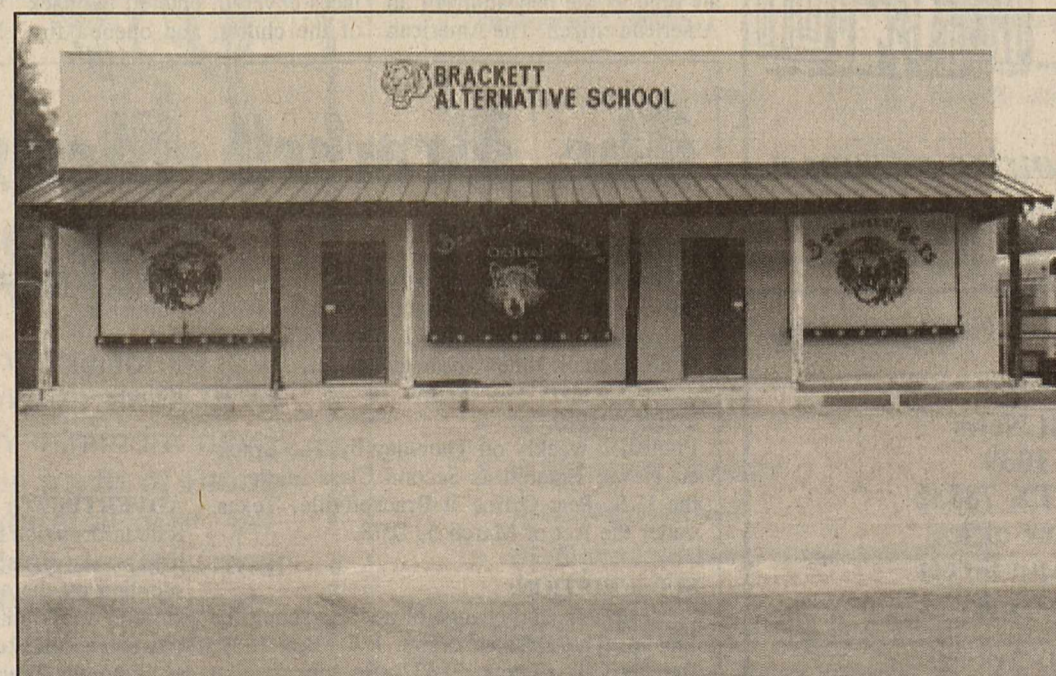
"This is something that's going on throughout the state of Texas and I think it's a good

thing," he said. "Many students who graduate from alternative school are not college-bound and rely on their high school diploma to get a job. The name 'alternative school' places students at a disadvantage."

"Employers may look at that title and assume, sometimes incorrectly, that the student is a severe discipline problem or is the product of a lesser or 'watered-down' learning environment. This is not the case. Alternative school is a differentiated education, but is still a viable training environment."

Students attend alternative school for academic, discipline and other reasons.

"A good portion of the kids out there are not discipline problems, they just need something a little bit different," Templeton said. "I've even seen kids that have been in auto accidents, and in order to graduate with their class, they had to go to an alternative school. There is no dis-



The Brackett Alternative School may soon have a new name.

honor or no shame in it — and they need to know that."

Stoney Burks, principal of Jones Elementary School, said there was still a stigma associated with the alternative school.

"Many people automatically associate discipline problems with students in the alternative school and that's not the case," he said. "It has kept a lot of students from dropping out of

school, but there's still a negative stigma. I think a name change would be very positive."

The superintendent said the name change would be a local change, and the facility would still be known as "Brackett Alternative School" by the Texas Education Agency.

"There's a lot of hoops you have to go through to get the name changed at the state," he

said. "We wouldn't have to do that. It would just be a local decision. It would be called something different. And most importantly, it would be different on their diplomas. It's a real simple thing to do. I've already checked with the state legal services, and all it takes is your decision."

Templeton said he did not have a specific name in mind for the alternative school.

INSIDE

■ Holiday parade

Sign-up sheets to compete for awards in six different categories in the annual Fourth of July parade are now available.

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■ Kenning to sing

Airstar recording artist Kelly Kenning is set to perform at KidFest on June 26 at Warhorse Stadium in Devine from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Community/Page 4

■ Roberts on rise

Julie Roberts is great at keeping secrets. The country singer kept her musical aspirations quiet for more than a year.

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Our forefathers could have domesticated other animals

I read somewhere once that most anthropologists think that the dog was probably the second animal that man domesticated. Surprised? I was too. I would have guessed the dog to have been the first. You know, "man's best friend" and all that.

A dog is good for lots of things. He's a great companion. His loyalty is beyond question. He comes when you call him. He retrieves what you throw. He barks at intruders. He heals your hurts. He licks your wounds. He basically adores ya.

The question that immediately comes to my mind is: Why did mankind ever domesticate the cat?

What did our ancestors know that I don't know? A cat? What were they thinking? What could they possibly have seen as a use for a cat around the cave? It did nothing for them. It does nothing for us. Nothing!

Oh, before I forget, the studiers of ages gone by usually agree that the goat was the first animal to be domesticated. Makes sense, doesn't it? A goat provided milk, meat, skin for clothing and an offering to deity.

Or, should the occasion arise, an offering to a large, hungry, over-fanged predator in search of carnage to satisfy his immediate craving for food. Here you go, try this tasty caprine. Yep, just give the goat to the saber-toothed tiger and maybe he'll leave you alone. For one more day anyway.



But I Could Be Wrong

Chuck Hall

To my way of thinking, the goat was a very useful domestication.

But I'm wondering if there were some creatures that our forefathers overlooked. Tell me you didn't see this one coming.

What other living things would have been useful to the cave man? What about the ant? No, think about it. They are the most industrious of all of the living beings on earth.

They could have crawled out of the cave, totally undetected, searched for food, brought it back, and, if one or two somehow met with their demise, they would not have been missed. They reproduce in great numbers. They are very hearty and can go long distances without water.

An ant may have been hard to train, but once in our power, the list of their uses is endless. You have your watchdog, and a good one he may be, but when my attack ants bite him, he'll howl and run for cover.

Ants don't bark, but they do protect their territory. I see a just give the goat to the saber-toothed tiger and maybe he'll let's domesticate the ant.

But I could be wrong.



American media is biased

I sometimes think that there is nothing that can surprise me anymore. Anytime there is a scandal or incident or news story, you can bet that the liberal elements of the press and media will get it wrong, ignore it altogether, or overplay it until I want to puke.

The story of the poor mistreated Iraqis in the prison who were so tortured by having women's underwear put on their heads and pictures taken of them naked is a good example.

These people were not tortured! True, they were humiliated, and I certainly don't condone anyone doing such things to prisoners for no reason other than their own twisted entertainment. I do know that such treatment is often part and parcel with interrogation techniques — breaking down a person's resistance so as to learn important information that might save thousands of lives.

As long as the person being "interrogated" is not physically or mentally damaged, I see no problem with this. War is not pleasant and people don't give up valuable information simply because the interrogators asked them politely!

Now here is what really makes me boil. During this same time period, a young American was murdered — beheaded. Did you hear a larger hue and cry from our media about the senseless, savage, animalistic murder of this young noncombatant American, or about the poor Iraqi soldiers with underwear on their heads?

That's right, the story about the underwear got 10 times the air time as the beheading of an American citizen. The American



The Way I See It

Steven R. LaMascus

soldiers who "mistreated" the Iraqis were demonized much, much more than the murdering sons of pigs Moslems who killed the young man for no reason other than he was American.

Why, I need to know, is the American media so hate-filled and biased that they would rather condone the brutal murder of an American than the embarrassment of foreign military personnel?

And let me fill you in on something: If you agree with what I have just said, the American media hates you just as much as it does me, or the U.S. military, or President Bush. As long as the evil, nasty stuff happens to conservative Americans or to Christians, it's OK with them!

Here is a story that you won't see on TV or in the papers. On April 10, 2004, on Sulawesi Island, Indonesia, a young woman named Deviani and her 4-year-old daughter, Selah, were walking to church to practice for the Easter service the following morning. Deviani had to carry Selah because she had hurt her foot riding her bicycle.

As Deviani and Selah sat in the front pew, the group began to sing the hymn, "If That Isn't Love." Then suddenly, as the Christians sang of Christ's love and sacrifice, two men, their faces covered, entered the back of the church and opened fire

on the congregation and choir with automatic weapons. Among the dead were Deviani and Selah. The killers were Moslems. They killed six people for no reason, but that they were Christians.

If the American media did for some reason decide to run this story, it wouldn't be because of the unspeakable evil of the act of two hate-filled men attacking a group of love-filled Christians. Oh, no! It would be to espouse the need for stricter gun control.

The senseless murder of six totally innocent Christians wouldn't mean a blessed thing to the liberal press. Good riddance, and give the Moslems some more ammo. But let's get rid of all those evil guns in the hands of those nasty, dangerous conservatives!

All I can say is, if the liberals hate us for who we are and what we stand for, and if the Moslems hate us for who we are and what we stand for, then we must be doing something right.

So if you are a conservative, a Christian, or both, be prepared to be hated by the rest of the world. I don't understand it, but I know it to be true. And only our faith in Jesus the Christ and Jehovah God will see us through. They can kill our bodies, but they can't take our souls! So, pray hard and stand up for what is right.

Jeremiah 10:23-25, "I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps. Correct me, Lord, but only with justice — not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing. Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the peoples who do not call on your name." NIV



Weekly Report

Henry Bonilla

Hurrah to the Army!

In 1962, Gen. Douglas MacArthur made his farewell address to the cadets of the United States Military Academy.

He told the future Army officers: "Yours is the profession of arms, the will to win, the sure knowledge that in war there is no substitute for victory and that if we fail, the Nation will be destroyed."

This week Congress joined America in wishing the United States Army a happy 229th birthday. I was proud to vote for a resolution that commemorates the Army's courage, valor and commitment to the protection of our great nation and its citizens.

The Army was born on June 14, 1775, a year before the Declaration of Independence was signed.

Why is it older than America? Because before our Founding Fathers could agree on the Declaration of Independence, it knew that a professional army was needed to defend our rights.

Since 1775 our Army has been the protector of our independence. The men and women of the U.S. Army have fought bravely in every war America has ever found herself engaged in.

For over two centuries, the U.S. Army has seen the recruitment of over 30 million men and women. Sadly, it has also had to bear the loss of almost 1 million soldiers who died protecting our freedom.

The United States Army is not the largest army in the world, but without a doubt, it is the best army this world has ever known.

Our Army has a proud history. It won America's independence in an eight-year struggle with Great Britain. It then preserved our Union through a four-year battle that saw brother fight brother. It has repeatedly defended the United States against enemies abroad. Our Army defeated Nazi totalitarianism, Japanese imperialism and world communism — and it did not stop there.

The United States Army can draw great satisfaction from knowing that when the nation was in need, it answered the call.

Recently, the United States House of Representatives named the American soldier Person of the Century. This is an honor that is unequivocally deserved. Had it not been for the courageous brave souls who fought and died, we may not enjoy the freedom and independence so many take for granted.

I join you all in thanking those brave men and women for their service and commitment to our freedom. Happy Birthday to our United States Army!

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USPS 003987 Published weekly on Thursday by The Brackett News. Entered as Second Class Matter at the U.S. Post Office at Brackettville, Texas, under the Act of March 3, 1878.

SUBSCRIPTION: Subscriptions and change of address should be sent to: The Brackett News, P.O. Box 1039, Brackettville, Texas, 78832. Be sure to give both old and new address when requesting change.

Annual subscription rates are \$20 in Kinney County, \$25 outside of county but in Texas, and \$27.50 outside of Texas.

DEADLINES: Display advertising deadline is noon Tuesday for advertising to be composed for the current publication. Classified and Legal Notice advertising deadline is noon Tuesday. Deadline for news releases is noon Tuesday.

PERSONNEL: JEWEL ROBINSON Publisher

J.J. GUIDRY Editor

DIMPLE HENRY Office Manager

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President Reagan changed the world

This week Americans said their goodbyes to an American legend, President Ronald Reagan.

Like all Americans, I was saddened to learn of his passing, but even in a moment of great loss, the memories of his good humor, contagious optimism and historic accomplishment comforted me.

At a time of great despair in our nation, Ronald Reagan came into office and restored hope. He was an unequalled champion of freedom, smaller government and market-oriented principles. His philosophies guided our nation to become the economic and military superpower it is today.

But beyond his optimism, his confidence and his graceful charm, was a man of action who implemented great change in the United States of America.

Under his leadership, our nation sowed seeds of prosperity and reduced regulatory burdens on business. He lowered taxes for all Americans, including reducing the top marginal rate from an oppressive 70 percent to a low of 28 percent, of-

fering new incentives to create wealth and jobs, and to rebuild America.

He encouraged Americans to embrace their own destiny and realize that government was not the answer to social ills — people were. Good people working in concert to better their communities and their fellow man could accomplish far more than bureaucracy.

Perhaps most importantly, President Reagan took the steps to ultimately win the Cold War. He pursued peace through strength and achieved an overwhelming victory that was inconceivable to a generation raised with fallout drills and backyard bunkers.

Who can forget the famous challenge he laid down when he cried, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" They were indeed dramatic words, but more importantly, words of action.

Two and a half years later, what once seemed a permanent divider through the heart of Berlin was torn down piece by piece, section by section until it was reduced to a pile of rubble.



Capitol Comment
Kay Bailey Hutchison

Visitors to the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C. can view a section of the wall, donated by the people of Berlin in honor of the president and in recognition of his leadership. It stands as a stark reminder of the great shift in global politics that spread freedom in Europe, and encouraged new generations to pursue democracy.

Today, we again find ourselves in a fight for freedom. This generation, like their World War II grandparents and Cold War parents, has been called to stand and fight for freedom.

Today we're grappling with a new threat: global terrorism. An enemy with no borders, no uniforms, no respect for the traditional rules of war, and more

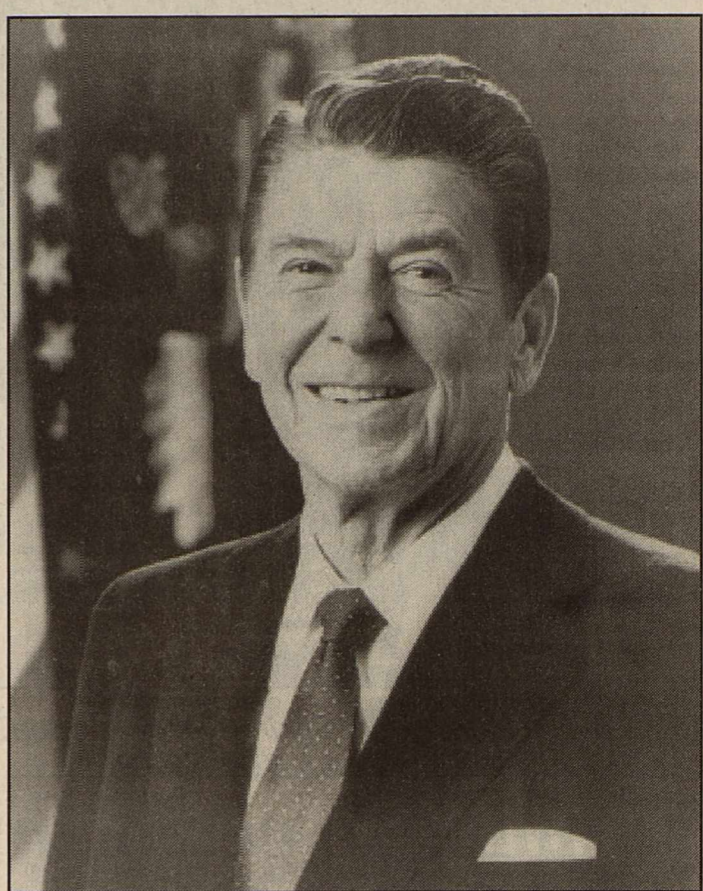
importantly, no respect for human life.

World War II took years of bitter fighting and sacrifice. The Cold War took decades of dedication and patience. This battle against terrorism requires all that and more. The question is: Will our generation meet the test — will we have what it takes to win? I believe we do. And I believe the strength, perseverance and patriotism that President Reagan embodied will help us see this through.

In 1987, he addressed a joint session of Congress saying, "Let it never be said of this generation of Americans that we became so obsessed with failure that we refused to take risks that could further the cause of peace and freedom in the world."

Ronald Reagan's lasting place in the hearts of all Americans has been evidenced by the outpouring of love and admiration we have seen across the nation and around the world.

Ronald Reagan was a leader who touched people with his words, inspired them with his actions and led by his example.



President Ronald Reagan

Stem cell research: A great promise and a fitting tribute for President Ronald Reagan

The death of former President Ronald W. Reagan this past week has given the country a moment to reflect on his presidency, his personal life, and his slow and lengthy bout with Alzheimer's disease.

As president, Mr. Reagan moved to change the face of the federal government, often adopting controversial economic and military strategies.

Some believe he was one of America's greatest presidents, citing his steadfast opposition to the Soviet Union, helping end the Cold War peacefully. Others disagree, citing the budget deficits and social service cutbacks his policies caused.

Either way, Mr. Reagan was a man of strong convictions, admired by those who supported him and respected by those who disagreed.

Without doubt one of the most endearing personal qualities about the Reagan Presidency was the evident love he and former First Lady Nancy Reagan had for one another. Throughout their 52 years of marriage, eight of which were spent in the White House, their relationship seemed to transcend time.

More than 10 years ago, when it was confirmed that President Reagan was suffering from Alzheimer's, a brain disorder that seriously affects a person's ability to carry out daily activities, it came as no surprise when the former First Lady became an



Washington Report
Ciró D. Rodriguez

advocate in the fight against this terrible disease.

Nancy Reagan brought worldwide attention to Alzheimer's and the importance that stem cell research could play in finding a cure for a wide range of illnesses such as diabetes, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and other nervous system disorders.

Scientists believe that stem cells, which have the ability to develop into just about any cell in the body, could provide treatment for a wide range of deadly and disabling illnesses that affect more than 100 million Americans.

These individuals could have a second chance for a better quality of life — one free from hospitals and pills, pain and suffering, or even premature death.

For the first time, many families would have hope that their loved ones could recover from the most debilitating of conditions.

It would be fitting to honor the legacy of President Ronald Reagan by opening the door to innovative and promising embryonic stem cell research.

In April of this year, I joined 200 of my colleagues in a letter

to President Bush urging him to expand current federal policy concerning embryonic stem cell research. In August 2001, President Bush issued an executive order that limits federal funding only to embryonic stem cells that were already in existence as of Aug. 9, 2001.

While it was originally thought scientists would have access to 78 stem cell lines, in reality, only 19 lines have been available for the past two years, and scientists have questioned the usefulness of some of those.

Embryonic stem cells come from excess in vitro fertilized (IVF) embryos that infertile couples use to have children. The IVF process produces far more embryos than a couple will ever use. It is estimated there are up to 400,000 IVF embryos and some couples have expressed interest in donating their excess embryos for research rather than destroying them.

President Reagan's death has brought renewed attention to stem cell research and the great promises it can bring to millions of Americans. By expanding the ability to perform research, we expand our opportunity for scientific discovery and the potential to find a cure for many diseases.

It is up to this generation of leaders, however, to pave the way for discovery and profoundly change the lives of individuals and families battling time in hope of a cure.

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Discussions tabled after legality of executive session questioned

Members of the Brackettville City Council tabled action to be discussed in executive session Tuesday night after being told by County Attorney Tully Shahan that a closed meeting would be illegal.

The agenda for the monthly meeting included executive session to discuss the appointments to the Board of Commissioners of the Brackettville Housing Authority.

Shahan, who said he was representing the Brackettville Housing Authority, said the council could not discuss the appointments in closed session as a personnel issue because the commissioners were not officers or employees of the city.

"I don't see any legal correctness to have a closed session for the appointments of the Board of Commissioners," Shahan told the council during the public forum at the beginning of the meeting.

"We all know the Brackettville Housing Authority is an independent organization of the city. It's an independent entity, a political subdivision," he continued.

"The mayor does have the au-

thority to make those appointments when they're due. I think it's worthy to discuss those with the council. But to be able to discuss that in closed session, I really don't think you can do that."

Mayor Joe Garza Jr. said the agenda was approved by the city's attorney, Ralph Brown of San Antonio.

"The wording and everything you see on this agenda is under his advice," Garza said.

Shahan advised the mayor that city officials could be charged with a Class B misdemeanor, "if you enter into a closed meeting that you've been advised that you're not to have a closed meeting. I just want you to know that."

"I understand the law, Mr. Shahan," the mayor replied.

Shahan invited the mayor and the council to discuss the issue further with June Kaminski, director of the Brackettville Housing Authority.

"You're going to go into closed session and talk about the appointment of members that you don't employ and they're not officers of your governmental agency. And you can't do it.

It's illegal. That's what I'm saying.

"I'm here to try to help. I'm not here to try to hurt. I want you to know that," Shahan said.

Later in the meeting, after Garza announced that the council would go into closed session, Shahan asked that the item be tabled.

"This is not an item that has to be done, in my opinion, immediately," Shahan said. "As county attorney, I can see there may be an illegality here. The last thing that anyone would want to try to do is to get started off on the wrong foot."

The mayor reiterated that the agenda had been approved by the city's legal counsel.

"I received a letter from him stating that it was perfectly legal to do this," Garza said.

Shahan asked that he have the opportunity to review the legality of the issue with Brown and Garza.

"I sincerely respect your opinion Mr. Shahan. However, our attorney has given us the go-ahead on this issue," the mayor said. "Council willing, we will proceed."

Shahan responded: "Well, if

you proceed, let me tell you that each one of you can be charged with a criminal offense for proceeding into a meeting that you're not authorized to close."

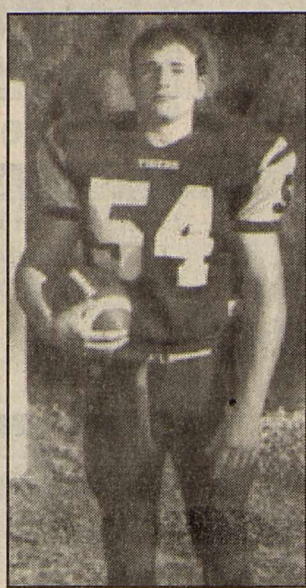
Shahan cited Section 551.144 of the Local Government Code, which states: "A member of a governmental body commits an offense if a closed meeting is not permitted under this chapter and the member knowingly calls or aids in calling or organizing the closed meeting, whether it is a special or called closed meeting."

Garza continued to proceed to go into executive session until Alderwoman Lydia Tipps interrupted.

"I think in view of what Mr. Shahan just said that we should table this matter. We can get this ironed out, and perhaps our attorney can be present," she said.

Tipps, Matt Bland, Francisca Garza, Tomas Gomez and Tully Welch all voted to table the issue.

Tuesday night was the first meeting of the new administration. In its first action as a City Council, the aldermen voted to re-appoint Francisca Garza as mayor pro-tem.



IRONMAN
Whitney Mas-singill, a senior at Brackett High School, was the recipient of the Ironman Award last week during the Texas State football camp in San Marcos.



The new City Council of Tomas Gomez Jr. (from left), Lydia Tipps, Mayor Joe Garza Jr., Francisca Garza, Tully Welch and Matt Bland met Tuesday for the first time.

Council tables discussion of payment to Wardlaw for unused vacation time

Continued from Page 1
day operations of the city over the next 45 days.

Neil Simmons, who applied for the job when Wardlaw was hired last October, offered to serve in an interim capacity.

"I applied for this job when Bonnie Wardlaw was selected. I think I was at least considered for this job," he told the council. "I was willing to take on this job then, and I am now."

"My application is at the city. I have a pretty extensive resume for this kind of work, and I'm definitely interested in seeing the city of Brackett grow. Everything is in order here, considering where we are and where we're coming from. I'd be willing to take this on, on an interim (basis), or I'd be willing to take it if you want to hire me today."

The mayor asked if the council had any recommendations for an interim city secretary.

"I personally don't think we're going to gain a whole lot by hiring an interim city secretary," Welch said. "I think we could probably do without for a month and half, and get somebody full-time that's going to tackle the problems, that's willing to take it as a full-time job. I just don't see that we're going to gain a whole lot by hiring somebody for one or two months."

The mayor said he would help run the day-to-day operations of the city in the absence of a city secretary.

Wardlaw was hired as city secretary on Oct. 14. She was elected to the City Council in May of last year and served four

months before resigning to apply for the city secretary's position.

In her letter of resignation, Wardlaw said she had accumulated 120 hours of vacation and 40 hours of sick leave.

Since the city employee policy does not allow compensation for sick leave, Wardlaw decided to take her sick leave last week.

Wardlaw was paid for her unused vacation time, which has been questioned by the new administration.

The council was set to discuss the issue in executive session. Wardlaw, who now resides in Laredo, asked to be present for the discussion. She was unable to attend Tuesday's meeting, so the council tabled the issue.



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Thank you once again, Ponce Padron

PA Pol. Adv. By P. Padron, Box 925, Brackettville, TX 78832

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PROSCOPES by Charles Cooper ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You're apt to meet some very interesting new people this week. In fact, someone you encounter is completely different from anyone you've ever known. Enjoy this new, fun relationship. LIBRA (September 23 to October 21) It's not like you to be judgmental. However, this week, you have a tendency to do just that. Tap into your understanding inside instead. TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Steer clear of bigwigs who are obviously in a bad mood this week. It's nothing you've done, so you needn't worry. Later in the week, watch out for people who break promises. SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Try not to pay too much attention to a cranky loved one. This person will have a tendency to dredge up old hurts. It's not worth your time and effort to rehash it. SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Avoid making any hasty decisions this week. Jumping into something without thinking first will cause you to rue the day. This weekend, domestic interests are accented. CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You're not in a very motivated mood as the week begins. Try to conquer this. There's much to be done, and you're the one to accomplish it. CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) For the most part, this is a positive week for business and financial interests. However, that doesn't mean you get everything done you'd set out to do. Leaving some unfinished tasks for later isn't a bad thing, though. LEO (July 23 to August 22) You could have an inspired idea this week. Don't waste it. Be sure to write it down or flesh it out on your computer, since it will come in handy in the near future. AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Once again, travel is on your agenda. Be sure, though, to safeguard your valuables. The latter part of the week is best for mulling over life-changing decisions. VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) While you feel secure for the most part about finances, this isn't the week to be extravagant. In fact, look for ways to save money in the household budget. Later in the week, you reach a new agreement with a co-worker. PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Things are looking up for you on the job. Bigwigs are smiling at your ingenious approaches to problems. This weekend, avoid a tendency to overspend. (c) 2001 DBR Media, Inc.



Lamar Medal recipients

Brackett High School seniors Eli Woolsey and Ashley Thourot were recently presented the Lamar Medals and accompanying scholarships by the Las Moras Masonic Lodge. The Lamar Medal, named after Mirabeau B. Lamar, a Mason who was the second president of the Republic of Texas, is awarded annually for outstanding achievements. Pictured at the ceremony are Wes Robinson (from left), Woolsey, Thourot, Chuck Hall and Tully Welch.

Photo by J.J. Guidry

Country newcomer Julie Roberts goes from label secretary to label darling

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Julie Roberts is great at keeping secrets.

The country singer, whose debut single, "Break Down Here," is rising on the charts, kept her musical aspirations quiet for more than a year — even while she worked as a secretary for Luke Lewis, the chairman of Universal Music Group Nashville.

By day, she answered telephones. By night, she sang in clubs and recorded demos with producer Brent Rowan.

"When I went through an internship, someone said that if you're a singer and you intern at a label, you're not supposed to tell because it's a conflict of interest," Roberts told The Associated Press.

"I was scared. I had bills to pay, and I needed the money," added Roberts, who broke into the business as an intern at Mercury Records.

This dual existence went on until Rowan, a veteran session guitarist, played Lewis some demo tapes featuring Roberts and two other singers.

"I played him a couple of songs by each artist, and Julie was last. I was in the middle of her first song and he said, 'Who is that?'" Rowan recalled.

"By the end he was pounding on the desk saying, 'You've got to tell me who that is.'"

When Rowan told him, Lewis was stunned.

"I thought he was kidding," Lewis said. "It kind of makes you

feel foolish when you're the boss and you don't know as much about your employees as you think you do."

Roberts' self-titled album, released earlier this month, is a collection of blues-tinged country with hints of Bonnie Raitt and Dolly Parton. The sound is polished but uncluttered, with Roberts' sultry vocals carrying the songs rather than glitzy production.

She sings of relationships old and new and of taking risks. In "Just 'Cause We Can," a song about longing to take off on a whim for the Gulf Coast, she sings, "I bet you could get a gig sellin' hot dogs on the boardwalk. And I could make a buck or two playin' Buffett tunes."

Vince Gill and Delbert McClinton make guest appearances as backup singers, and Rowan handles the electric guitar work.

A native of Lancaster, S.C., Roberts began singing as a child and by junior high was performing at festivals in the Carolinas and Georgia.

One recent morning at a Nashville diner, over oatmeal and scrambled egg whites, the 25-year-old blonde told The Associated Press that she developed her soulful style while singing with a group of older men at nursing homes.

"One guy in the band, his name was Oscar, he sang with a real bluesy sound and every time he sang I would study it and I would leave the nursing home

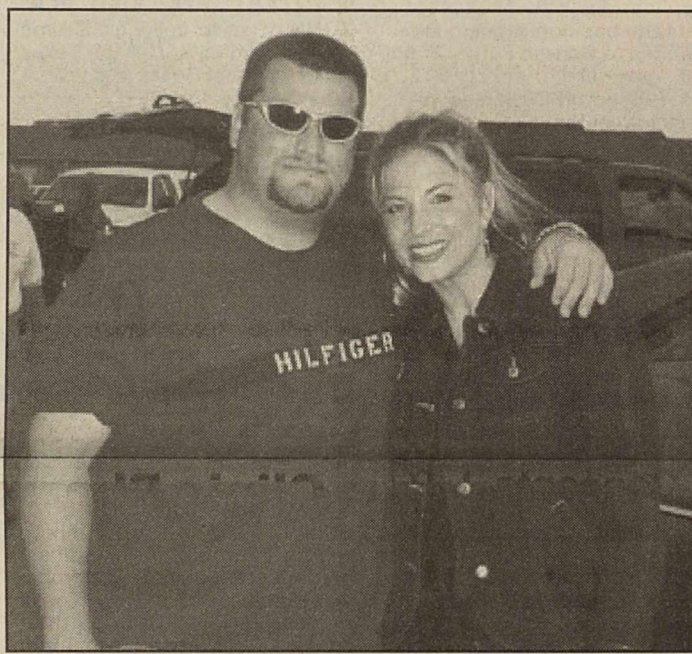


Photo by Kelly Kenning

On her way to the top

Mercury Records artist Julie Roberts (right) visits with Wild Bird bass player J.J. Guidry at the recent 31st Annual Windfest Celebration in Portland. Roberts' debut single, "Break Down Here," is currently climbing the charts.

and try to sing just like him," Roberts said. "That's really the first time I heard that sound."

She moved to Nashville in 1999, graduated from Belmont University and got the job at Mercury.

Roberts' Cinderella story was the subject of a Country Music Television special, in which cameras followed her around for months as she made the transformation from secretary to country star.

Lewis, the label chief, says the story reveals a lot about Roberts.

"It's refreshing because a person in my position can get hit on by everyone," Lewis said. "She was really respectful about it, and I thought that was classy."

And what happened after Roberts landed her big record deal? "She stayed on two or three more months," Lewis said, "and helped train her replacement."

Real-life pet project: 56-year-old student seeks DVM degree

COLLEGE STATION — Future veterinarian Pat Ryan looks at it this way: If she were a dog, she'd be 392 years old.

The 56-year-old Ryan is in her third year of studies at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine, a highly rigorous academic program for 20-somethings, much less a senior adult. When she graduates next year, she'll be the oldest person ever to receive a DVM degree at the school, Texas' only veterinary college.

While it's not uncommon for older adults to go back to college to earn their bachelor's degree, it's extremely rare for professional schools, such as law, medicine or dentistry, to have someone begin his or her practice at age 57.

Ryan thinks it's great. "I'm living a dream just being here and that's the truth," the Houston resident laughs. "I wanted to be a veterinarian 25 years ago, but a thing called 'life' had different plans for me."

Ryan has had a life of almost Forrest Gump-like scale.

At various times, she's been a highly paid fashion model who walked runways from New York to Houston, a writer and editor for *Mademoiselle* magazine, a flight attendant for Pan American Airways, a former Junior

Miss of Connecticut, a theatrical producer, a public relations specialist for Neiman Marcus, an award-winning charity organizer who raised \$200,000 for the Houston Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and her most important role — a wife of 32 years and mother of two grown daughters.

In between all of that, she battled cervical cancer and was hospitalized for weeks following surgery, which rid her of the disease that struck in her mid-30s.

Like one of the felines she will probably be treating in a year, Ryan has seemingly had nine lives — or at least lived nine different ones.

All students seeking admission to the College of Veterinary Medicine are required to fill out a "personal statement" form, which is more or less an essay on why they should be selected. Ryan's began, "I've waited 25 years to write this essay. Like that of the tortoise in Aesop's fable, the path leading to this moment has been slow but steady, deliberate and determined. I bring a half-century of life experience to the table, a background as varied as a patchwork quilt and a resume described by a friend as a 'Renaissance woman gone mad.'" Admissions counselors were



Pat Ryan

hooked — she got in, but not before taking three years worth of prerequisite courses, such as advanced chemistry, physics, etc.

Ryan graduated in 1970 from all-women's Smith College in Massachusetts, but her degree was in theater, which is a tad different than doing emergency canine surgery.

She enrolled at Houston Baptist University and the University of St. Thomas to get the required courses behind her, then three years ago headed for Texas A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine, which has an international reputation and the long hours of hard study that go with it. While her architect husband Jeff, who has degrees from Rice and Harvard and whose firm designed the Owl's state-of-the-art baseball stadium Reckling Park, stayed home in Houston, Ryan rented a house in College Station and settled in with three dogs she adopted — sort of.

"The first year was very, very difficult for me," Ryan admits. "Besides the course work, which is very demanding, I found out that I just didn't have the stamina that these 22-year-olds have. I

found myself stressing a lot, but I was determined to get through it."

One big adjustment: computers.

"These kids grew up working and doing research on computers. I didn't, and I had a lot of catching up to do," she recalls.

Fellow veterinary medical students, she admits, have been highly supportive of her.

"At first, I had a few 'hey grandma' jokes thrown at me, but overall, the students and faculty have been wonderful," Ryan says. "I've come here to learn. I'm certainly not shy about asking questions."

When she graduates next year, she hopes to work in a small animal practice for a long time.

"I'm not about to go through all of this and practice just a few years and retire," Ryan says.

"I'm living a dream I've had for decades. When I get that diploma, it's the start of my new career. To be a veterinarian is the deepest desire of my heart, so early retirement for me is just not an option."

Ryan, who proudly says that her silver-colored hair goes well with her white lab coat, is proof that you can teach an old — better make that middle-aged — dog new tricks.

Columnist shares latest discoveries

If you haven't figured it out by now, I'm a talker. When I discover something new, I can't wait to share. My latest discoveries I feel will be worth your time to read and remember. Well, maybe one or two.



Goodies From G.G.

Vada Baldree

First let me get this out of the way. I had some barbecue chicken left over. It was not enough to save, but too much to trash. This recipe worked well.

Put the leftovers, plus the bones and juices, in a small amount of water (about 5 or 6 cups) with chopped onion, celery seed or chopped celery, and one bay leaf.

Boil slowly for one hour. Debone the chicken and chop it into small pieces. Add a half cup of rice and cook until it's done. You can add salt and pepper as needed.

The broth had a slight spicy flavor, but I added picante for a more robust taste.

Now more about cooking with Splenda. When baking with sugar substitutes, we get less volume.

Try adding a half cup of non-fat dry milk powder and a half

teaspoon of baking soda for every one cup of Splenda to maintain volume.

To achieve that golden brown color when baking, try one of the following:

1. Add 1 to 2 tablespoons of molasses to your recipe.

2. Remove your baked goods four to five minutes before the end of the baking time and brush the crust or tops with 1 to 2 tablespoons of beaten egg white, milk, honey or maple syrup, or you can spray lightly with non-stick cooking spray. Return to the oven for four to five minutes, or until the top browns lightly.

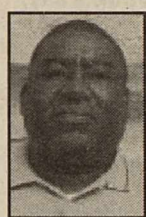
Remember, when baking with Splenda, baked goods will stay fresh for 24 hours in an airtight container at room temperature. To keep longer, refrigerator or freeze.

Do not let your heart be troubled

Praise the Lord!
"These things have I spoken unto you, being present with you."

"But the Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost (Spirit), whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you."

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you Let not your heart be



St. John's Missionary Church

Rev. Bill Adams Sr.

troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14: 25-27)

Glory!
Praise God!

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