

The Brackett News

The Brackett News named top newspaper in Texas
See story below

15 year, No. 20

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

1 Section, 8 Pages

State investigators seize city records

By J.J. GUIDRY
Editor

Documents and records from City Hall were seized by investigators from the Texas Department of Public Safety's Special Crimes Unit last week as officials continue to explore the city's dwindling financial situation.

Total cash assets of the city have decreased \$572,583 or 97 percent over the last five years, according to Mayor Carmen Berlanga.

Berlanga said recently that the city has only \$5,348.67 in

cash assets, while it has \$204,766.44 in outstanding debts.

District Attorney Fred Hernandez, who is monitoring the situation, told the San Antonio Express-News that it is too early to tell if the probe will end up before a grand jury.

"The DPS will put together a report for me to review to determine if any criminal activity has occurred. There is no timeframe," Hernandez said.

The City Council met in executive session during a special meeting Tuesday to discuss personnel, but no action was taken.

"The DPS will put together a report for me to review to determine if any criminal activity has occurred. There is no timeframe."

District Attorney Fred Hernandez

"We discussed the various suggestions made by the citizens to cut our expenditures," Berlanga said.

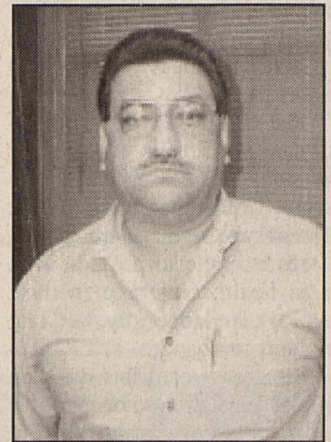
The personnel policy was discussed, as well as the option of closing City Hall on Fridays. Members of the City Council

blame former city manager David Luna on the financial crisis, but Luna has said that he made the mayor aware of the situation as early as last year. Berlanga denies any previous knowledge and claims that the city manager kept her in the

dark.

"David used to tell me that he would tell me what he thought I should know," the mayor said. "There is a lot of things I don't know, folks."

Luna reportedly paid himself more than \$30,000 in salary advances while the city was plunging into debt. He made \$89,699 during the last fiscal year, but the mayor said his salary should have been \$53,879. Berlanga said the increased amount of salary was due to cash advances, but Luna argued that the figure included salary paid in lieu of vacation time.



David Luna



Award winners

The Brackett News was named the top small weekly newspaper in the state Saturday at the Texas Press Association's Better Newspaper Contest. Displaying the awards are staff members Dimple Henry (from left), Jewel Robinson, J.J. Guidry and Kathy Wilson. Not pictured: Javier Cervantez and Shanae Simmons.

Photo Special to The Brackett News

The Brackett News named top weekly newspaper in the state

LEAGUE CITY — The Brackett News was named the top small weekly newspaper in the state Saturday at the 2003 Better Newspaper Contest.

The contest, sponsored by the Texas Press Association, drew 1,497 entries from 202 newspapers across the state.

Kansas Press Association members judged the contest May 2 in Topeka. First-place winners received a plaque and second-through fourth-place finishers earned certificates.

"The real award for our staff is the opportunity to keep the citizens of Kinney County aware

of what is happening in our community," said J.J. Guidry, editor of The Brackett News. "Of course, anytime you are recognized by your professional peers, it's a wonderful feeling. We are very humbled to receive such a prestigious honor."

The Brackett News won the sweepstakes award for Division 10, small weekly newspapers, after racking up 300 points in the contest. The Princeton Herald and Benbrook Star both finished with 250 points, while The International of Presidio was fourth with 225 points.

"Wow!" exclaimed Jewel

Robinson, publisher of The Brackett News. "Who would have ever thought we could have accomplished this?"

The local newspaper received a first-place award for sports coverage. The judge said The Brackett News had "good coverage of several sports."

Shanae Simmons garnered second place honors in column writing. The judge said that her "Are there other forms of life" entry had "simple, clear writing style. You allowed your reader to enter your fantasies about the origins of human life, but you also documented your suspi-

cions. You are a talented writer."

The judge said Simmons' second entry, "A good life lesson," was "amazing."

"Out of all the entries, your's was one of the few that turned a professional experience to a universal morality story. Not preachy. Not overly cute. Amazing for a writer so young to be able to reflect critically upon her own misbehavior."

Guidry won a second-place award in the page-design category. The judge said the design of the newspaper had "excellent" **See NEWSPAPER/Page 3**

Pastor now serving two congregations

By CAROLYN CONOLY
Special to The Brackett News

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America Pastor Nathan Lafrenz has been formally appointed vicar of Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church of Brackettville by the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas.

Lafrenz, whose new appointment is effective Tuesday, will continue his ministry to Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, where he has served for nine years.

Lafrenz was ordained out of the Iowa Synod of the Lutheran Church of America in 1987.

According to Rev. James E. Folts, bishop of the Diocese of West Texas, Lafrenz's appointment is a "first venture at a joint Lutheran/Episcopal pastorate and holds great promise not only for Brackettville, but for the Southwest Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas."

Lafrenz's new call to the Brackettville Episcopal parish, one of the oldest in the Diocese, means that Episcopalians will have a clergy-led worship service each and every Sunday for the first time since 1996. Lafrenz will be available for morning worship and Eucharist, pastoral care, Bible study, hospital visitations, evangelism, baptisms, weddings and funerals.

The appointment, which has also been approved by the Lutheran Synod, is the culmination of a "call to common mission" agreement, something Lutheran and Episcopalians across the country have been exploring for nearly 10 years.

Local Lutherans and Episcopalians began work on a joint covenant agreement two years ago. It's the first arrangement of its kind in Kinney County.

"I feel privileged to be called to serve the people of Saint Andrew's Episcopal and Our Redeemer Lutheran in our common mission to the community of Brackettville and Fort Clark Springs," Lafrenz said. "I am planning to move to Fort Clark Springs by July 1."

In Brackettville, the late Rev. Bill Koons planted the first local seeds of a "call to common mission" agreement nearly 10 years ago. At that time, Lutherans had no church building and were holding their worship services in a rented bingo hall. Koons knew this, and offered, on behalf of his congregation, the Saint Andrew's sanctuary and parish hall.

The two church families began sharing the building, working together on improvements, shared expenses and enjoyed occasional joint worship services together.

Rev. Koons was the last full-time vicar to serve Saint Andrew's, almost up until his death in 1996. Since then, the Episcopal Diocese has provided a traveling supply priest to Saint Andrew's twice a month.

Rev. Lynn Coggi served briefly in the mid-1990s. Rev. Michael Davis of San Antonio served Saint Andrew's most recently for seven years, and encouraged the parish to move forward with the joint pastorate.

The "call to common mission" agreement does not mean the two churches families will merge into one. While the worship liturgies are similar, both Lutheran and Episcopalians in Brackettville will maintain their respective church affiliations and service times.

Lutherans meet at Saint Andrew's at 9 a.m. and the Episcopalians meet at Saint Andrew's at 10:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings.

List of local Korean War veterans on Honor Roll continues to grow

The response to last week's appeal for names of Korean War veterans in Kinney County has swelled the "Honor Roll" to 34.

The recognition ceremony for these and other Kinney County Korean War Veterans yet to join the honor roll will take place at the main flagpole at Fort Clark as a fitting conclusion to the Community Fourth of July parade. A coalition of community organizations and clubs will be honoring and paying tribute to all its veterans, men and women, who fought 50 years ago in a country they had never heard of and for a people they did not know.

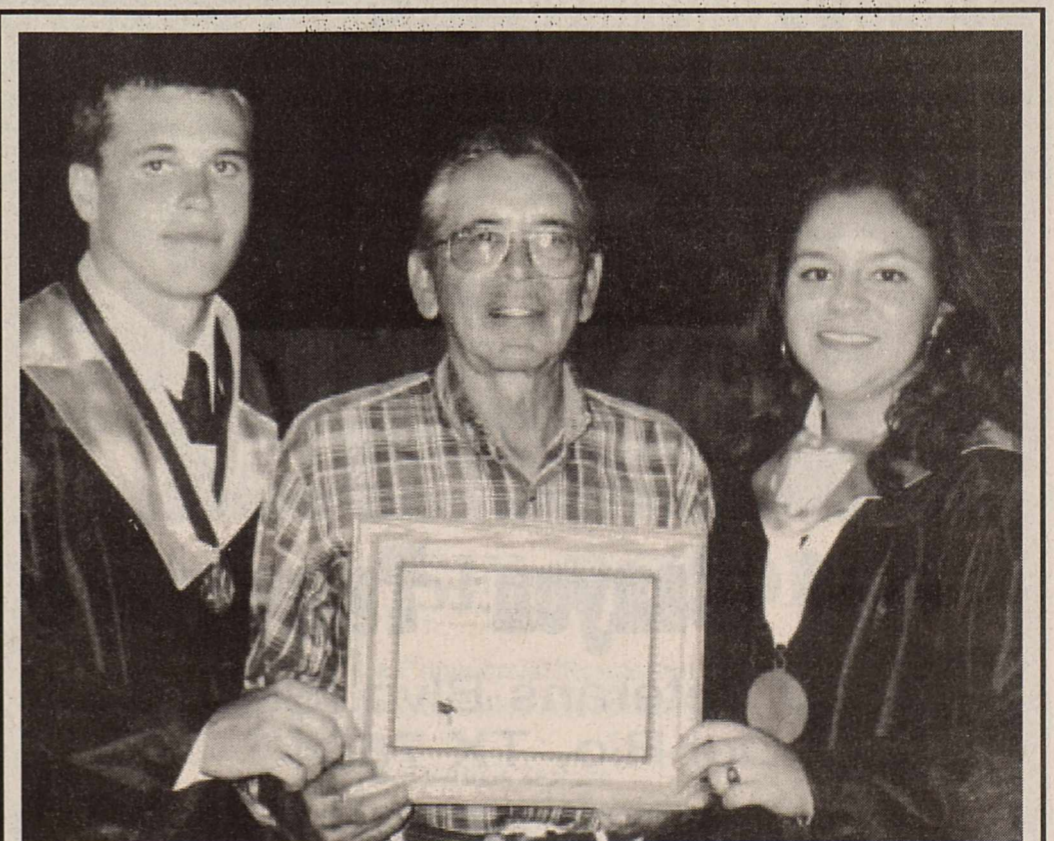
"Now their fellow citizens are beginning to understand that the purpose for which they fought was achieved," said Bill Haenn, ceremony coordinator. "They went to prevent the subjugation of a free people by armed aggression. And in that they succeeded. They are no longer forgotten! By your service and sacrifice you made us aware that freedom is not free!"

The honor roll includes Jerry Adams, Alfredo Alcalá, Gerald L. Anderson, Arnold G. Baldwin, Louis D. Bell, Pedro

Benites, Tellis Boutwell, Alfredo M. Castro, Jose N. Castro, Frank H. Cheaney Jr., B.B. Cox, Jose J. Cruz, Richard E. Dana, George Espinola, Ben Fuentes, Henry Fuentes, Alfred C. Garcia, Albert Garcia, Felix Gonzales, Gilberto R. Hernandez, Paul Jones, Alex Longoria, Martin T. Luna Jr., Gordon F. Lundquist, Simon Marion, Alfred Martinez, David Martinez Sr., Tim Meridith, Robert W. Nelson, Richard Olvera, Alfred T. Pena, Pedro Richard Pena, Juan H. San Miguel, Emil Schafer, Richard W. Schafer, Charles B. Shipman, Leroy Slubar, Cecil Smith, Robert L. South, Ruben Talamantez, Marcus E. Tidwell, Ralph Vestenz, Howard Wakefield, Robert L. Windle, Harlan R. Wright and Robert Yastic.

If your name does not appear on the "Honor Roll" and you served your country in the Korean War, contact Haenn at 563-2323 or 563-2010 to have your name added to the roll.

All Korean War veterans will be notified of the plans for the parade as soon as those plans are finalized.



Men's Golf club presents scholarships

Photo Special to The Brackett News

The Fort Clark Men's Golf Club awarded two \$300 scholarships to two outstanding BHS graduates, Jared Hobbs (left) and Maria Martinez (right) during recent commencement exercises. The scholarships were presented by Ruben Martinez, club president. Martinez will be majoring in engineering at Rice University. Hobbs will be attending Texas A&M and will be majoring in agricultural development.

INSIDE

Henry Bonilla

When discussing the needs of small businesses with my colleagues in Washington, I often compare small business with the human body.

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Taylor Stephenson

This is the last edition of Making a Difference that I will write. Bobby Templeton will begin to write for you next week.

Community/Page 3

Chuck Hall

I need to word this very carefully. I hope I get it right. This is about my grandkids, and my daughters read this stuff and quote me often.

Lifestyles/Page 4

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Addressing the rising cost of health insurance

When discussing the needs of small businesses with my colleagues in Washington, I often compare small business with the human body.

For small businesses to remain healthy and happy, they must be able to provide health care to their employees. Without this option, like the body, the small business weakens and grows ill.

The rising cost of health insurance is a major concern for the small businesses that I represent. Unfortunately, under the current system, many small businesses struggle to provide even basic health coverage to their employees. Hopefully, all that is about to change.

Congress voted this week on crucial legislation to bring down the surging costs of health care for America's 25 million small business owners and their employees. This Congress is committed to helping small business men and women and is pursuing an aggressive agenda designed to foster and grow their companies.

I believe the passage of the Small Business Health Fairness



Weekly Report

Henry Bonilla

Act is a great step in the direction of achieving this commitment.

The Small Business Health Fairness Act would create national Association Health Plans (AHPs). These plans would allow small businesses to band together through associations and purchase quality health care at a lower cost.

Under the bill, groups such as the National Federal of Independent Business, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Restaurant Association could offer group health insurance to their member companies, allowing the small businesses to enjoy the same economies of scale as large corporations.

Of the 41 million Americans without health insurance, 60 percent work for small business employers who can't afford to

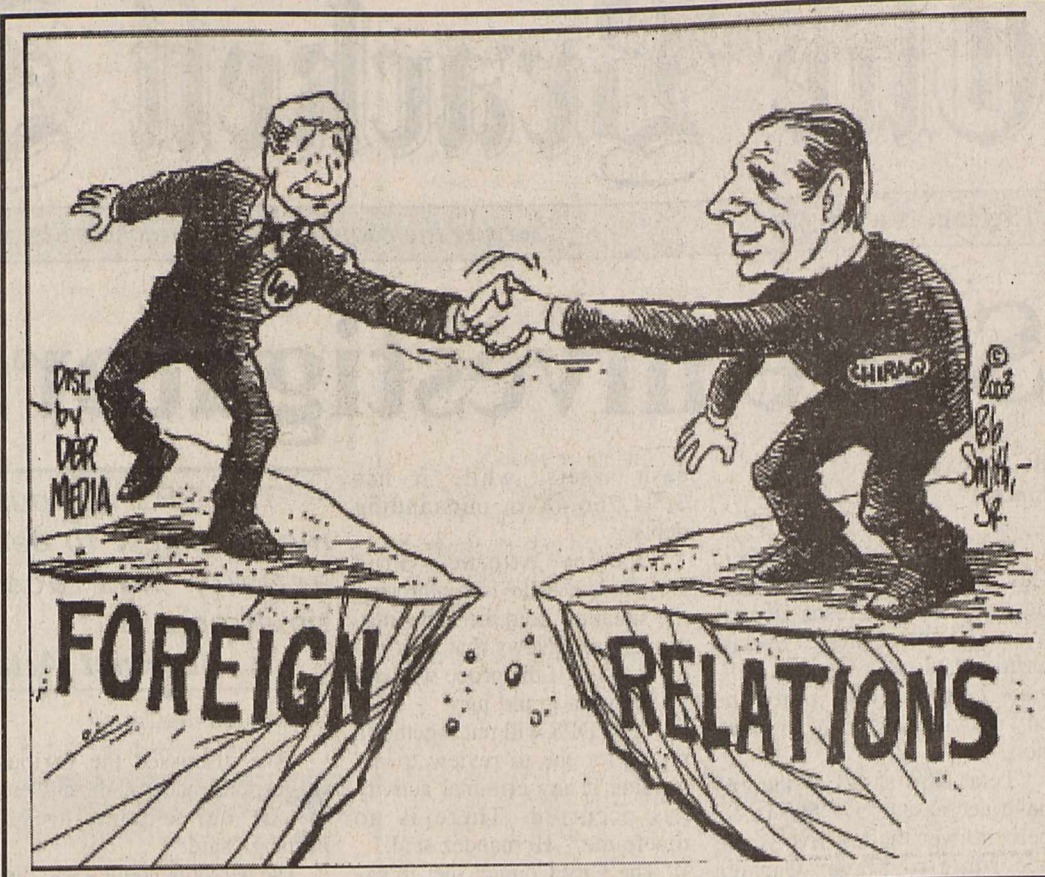
provide them or their families with health care coverage. It is a crisis in this country that threatens to leave millions more Americans without health insurance.

By passing legislation expanding the use of AHPs, this Congress can go a long way towards providing health insurance to millions of uninsured Americans.

The fact is, with more than two-thirds of all Americans relying on their employer for health insurance, we can't afford to continue this disturbing trend.

The result of all this isn't hard to predict. Businesses can and clearly are dropping health benefits. Others struggle onward in providing coverage, but only at the cost of the growth of the business, or offering packages with higher premiums, or a combination of both.

Small business is the backbone of our communities, the brain of our nation's economy and the heart of American culture. I am committed to keeping small business healthy and strong for many years to come.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Support your hometown heroes on July 4

Today we are engaged in a war and several of our hometown servicemen and women are on the other side of the world, risking their lives.

Regardless of whether or not we agree to engage in this war, we must support our troops!

What better way to do this than to participate in our Community Fourth of July Parade and to wave our flags!

Let's stand together to respect and honor our veterans who have risked their lives and our troops who are currently fighting to continue to preserve the freedoms we enjoy. Let us remind ourselves that we must not take our freedom for granted.

It's important to our soldiers who are fighting for our freedom to know that Brackettville stands united in support of them.

Thank You!
Martha Pena Padron
I Got Your Back

I am a small and precious child, my Dad's been sent to fight. The only place I'll see his face, is in my dreams at night.

He will be gone too many days for my young mind to keep track. I may be sad, but I am proud. My Daddy's got your back.

I am a caring mother. My son has gone to war. My mind is filled with worries that I have never known before. Everyday

I try to keep my thoughts from turning black. I may be scared, but I am proud. My son has got your back.

I am a strong and loving wife, with a husband soon to go. There are times I'm terrified in a way most never know. I bite my lip, and force a smile as I watch my husband pack. My heart may break, but I am proud. My husband's got your back.

I am a soldier. Serving proudly, standing tall. I fight for freedom, your's and mine, by answering this call. I do my job while knowing the thanks it sometimes lacks. Say a prayer that I'll come home. It's me whose got your back.

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OBITUARIES

Jose T. Bravo

Jose T. Bravo, 50, went to be with the Lord on Friday, June 20, 2003. He was born in Del Rio on March 30, 1953.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Encarnacion and Juanita Bravo, and brother, Ramon Bravo.

Survivors include his son: Jose Bravo Jr. of Indianapolis; stepson: Sr. Airman Jose Avila and wife Danielle from Altus Air Force Base, Okla.; stepdaughter: Donda Zimmer and husband James of Laughlin Air Force Base; brother: Chano Bravo and wife Rebecca of San Angelo; sisters: Alicia Rosas and husband Manolo of Fort Clark Springs, Gloria Soto and husband Greg of Killeen, and Rosario Martinez and husband Salvador of Del Rio; five nieces and eight nephews; and two step-grandchildren.



Bravo

was recited.

Funeral mass was on Monday at St. Joseph's Church. Final resting followed at the Del Rio Memorial Park Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Manolo Rosas Jr., Mario Rosas, Jesus S. Martinez Jr., Everardo Bravo Jr., Jose Avila and Robert Bravo.

Funeral arrangements were under the direction of Don's Funeral Chapels.

Hortencia R. Castro

Hortencia R. Castro of Brackettville passed away at her residence on Thursday, June 19, 2003, at the age of 81. She was born in Eagle Pass on Dec. 29, 1921.

Castro was preceded in death by her husband of 25 years, Adolf Paul Castro.

Survivors include her son Norman Paul Castro and wife Linda of Simi Valley, Calif.; Nancy Rodriguez of Brackettville; Aurora Davalos of Port Arthur; and Maggie San Miguel of Moore Park, Calif.

Visitation was held Tuesday



Castro

at Don's Funeral Chapels, and a Rosary was recited.

Funeral mass was held on Wednesday morning at St. Mary Magdalene's Catholic Church with Father Cornelius Scanlan, O.M.I., officiating. Final resting followed at St. Mary Magdalene's Catholic Cemetery.

Funeral arrangements were under the direction of Don's Funeral Chapels.

Dorothy Carr Wood

Mrs. Dorothy Carr Wood of Fredericksburg passed away on Thursday, June 19, in a San Antonio Hospital at the age of 84.

Wood is survived by her husband: Jack L. Wood of Fredericksburg; sons: Michael Carr Barron of California, Philip L. Barron and wife Deborah of Canyon, and Greg Wood of Bandera; daughter: Susan Stemberge of McKinney; sisters: Jessie Burke and husband Ray of Lubbock, and Katherine Robinett of Denver City; brother: Jerry Carr and wife Lucille

of Mesquite; and six grandchildren.

Graveside services and interment will be held on Monday afternoon at 2:30 with the Rev. D.G. McCoury officiating at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio.

For those who so desire, you may make memorial contributions in her memory to the First Baptist Church or to the charity of your choice. Funeral arrangements were under the direction of Schaeffer Funeral Home of Fredericksburg.

Retiring superintendent pens last column

This is the last edition of Making a Difference that I will write. Bobby Templeton will begin to write for you next week.

This week, my column signifies the end of an 11 year run of weekly articles about school and community. I tried to stay positive in each article.

Without fine educators and a fine support staff, we could not achieve the results that our students need. We have had many fine teachers and support staff who loved children, got along with their colleagues, were team players and produced results that were notable.

In September of 1992, Bob McCall, then BISD's superintendent, directed me to write something positive about the school system. That's the way it began.

I had not written for a news-

paper before. I had a weekly radio program in Artesia, and my career had been filled with many TV and newspaper interviews in Clayton and Artesia, N.M.

I enjoyed writing articles about BISD's children. When our kids achieved, I tried to let you know with the hope that you would praise these students.

I didn't write about many adults. There are many fine ones who have made our community and school system a better place to live. It was fun to talk about the wonderful children in this community for 11 years.

I enjoyed writing about the school system and its mission. We have made so many improvements in these 11 years. I hope that my column helped you share the pride in the accomplishment of our students, fac-



Making A Difference

Taylor Stephenson

ulty, administrators, school board and support staff that included maintenance, custodial, technology, transportation, business management, secretarial, teacher aides, library, nurse and school cafeteria.

My articles focused on community. We live together and are bonded by churches, Kinney County, Fort Clark Springs, Brackettville, Brackett ISD and the myriad of organizations that make life better for all of us.

Fighting, arguing and ver-

bally destroying each other does not build community. We have had more than our share of the battles at every governmental level since 1992. Even with our propensity toward addressing issues in divisive ways, we still have a wonderful community. It's a superb place to live and a wonderful place for children to grow up. The school system has been a pinnacle of success.

In the future, we will continue to live in Brackettville, and will travel for part time jobs, family visits and for the sheer enjoyment of getting away. Thanks for the opportunity to serve this community. I have many pleasant memories.

I wish Bobby Templeton and Brackett ISD the best in the future endeavors.

Have a great week!

Newspaper claims five awards at contest

Continued from Page 1

"The Brackett News served its reader well through its extensive coverage of the far-reaching water rights issue," the judge wrote. "Because of the good news coverage, readers can/did take action to protect their community."

"The Brackett News served its reader well through its extensive coverage of the far-reaching water rights issue," the judge wrote. "Because of the good news coverage, readers can/did take action to protect their community."

Thank You

I want to say a special thanks to Bill Haean, Mr. & Mrs. Tom Saylor, Lions Club and Ft. Clark for all the help you did for the Seminoles on June 14th. That really meant a lot to me (Sunny Girl). You really know who your friends are when it comes to things like this. Sorry I, Carol Dimery, was not there. I had too many irons in the fire. Even though Miss Wilson was not there I think her heart was. Miss Wilson means the world to a lot of people so I want to say thank you again.

Miss Charles Wilson, The Seminole Assoc. & Members



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BRIEFS

Fourth of July Parade is on Friday

The Community Fourth of July Parade is set for next Friday. The parade will form on Fulton Street in front of the new High School beginning at 8 a.m. and begin at 9.

The parade will move south on Ann Street to Highway 90, turn east to the entrance of Fort Clark Springs and proceed on Fort Clark Road to the Post Theater. It will then turn right and finish at the main flagpole, concluding with a ceremony honoring the community's Korean War veterans.

The dual themes for this year's parade are: "Remembering the Forgotten Victory — No Longer the Forgotten War: Honoring Kinney County's 'Honor Roll' of Korean War Veterans" and "School Spirit: Reunion of BISD From 1970-79."

"A coalition of community organizations, clubs and BISD classes of the 1970s are putting this event together and they need your support to make it a success," Bill Haenn said.

"So decorate your favorite mode of transportation — car, truck, trailer, golf cart, horse, buggy, wagon, mule, bicycle, shoe leather, whatever — in good ol' red, white and blue or black and gold, and join in a tradition which can get better every year with your participation," he added.

For additional information or to volunteer to help, call Martha Pena Padron, parade coordinator, at 563-2688 or 563-2728. Korean War vets can call Haenn, ceremony coordinator, at 563-2323 or 563-2010 for more information.

Crumley receives degree from Tech

LUBBOCK — Caleb Crumley was one of more than 1,900 students awarded degrees during spring commencement at Texas Tech University May 17 in the United Spirit Arena on campus.

Crumley, a chemical engineering major, was named to the Dean's List. He is a graduate of Brackett High School.

About 5,000 Texas Tech students made either the President's List or the Dean's List. A student must have taken 12 quality hours during the semester and maintained either a 4.0 or a 3.5 to 3.9 grade point average, respectively, to qualify.

Scholarship golf tourney is Saturday

The Second Annual Kinney County Livestock Show Scholarship Golf Tournament is slated for Saturday at Fort Clark Springs. Entry fees are \$30 per person. For more information, contact Candy Hobbs at 563-2591, 563-5236 or at candyh@brackett.k12.tx.us.

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Gaddis wins RGEC essay contest

Carmen Gaddis, 17, of Big Bend High School in Terlingua was the winner of the Rio Grande Electric Cooperative's "Why Co-ops Are Special" Essay Contest.

Gaddis received her prize, a new Dell computer system, from Ken Buscher, RGEC's Marfa area operations manager, during a recent awards ceremony at Big Bend High School.

In addition to the processor, monitor, and keyboard, the prize package included a scanner, CD burner, speakers, printer, Palm Pilot and surge suppressor.

Gaddis said she plans to put the computer to good use. She recently graduated as valedictorian of her class and will be attending the University of Texas at Austin in the fall.

Gaddis was enrolled in a concurrent credit program while she was in high school, and has already earned multiple college credits.

The second place winner was Julia Pappas, 15, of Salt Flat, who also received a computer

system. "It was great learning about co-ops, and I had fun writing the essay," said Pappas, who attends Pine Springs Homeschool. "I'm so excited!"

Entries were received from students throughout Rio Grande's vast service territory.

Without knowledge of name or address of entrant, essays were reviewed and judged by the Rio Grande's Board of Directors during the May board meeting, which was held in Fort Stockton.

Entries were judged on principles presented, general knowledge of cooperatives and overall writing ability.

RGEC, headquartered in Brackettville, is a non-profit organization, wholly-owned by the members it serves in 18 Texas counties and two counties in New Mexico.

RGEC is also the recipient of a Department of Defense contract to provide electrical maintenance to the 1.1 million-acre Fort Bliss, located in El Paso County.



Contest winner
Ken Buscher (left), Rio Grande Electric Cooperative's Marfa area operations manager, congratulates Carmen Gaddis of Terlingua on her winning essay.

With additional offices in Carrizo Springs, Dell City, El Paso, Fort Stockton, Marfa and Uvalde, RGEC is a major presence throughout South and West Texas, and supports a wide variety of educational and community service projects.

Guzman: Chess is a challenging sport

By FRANCES McMASTER
Contributing Writer

Tino Guzman described chess as a challenging, individually-played sport and a game during his talk with the Brackettville Rotary Club on Thursday.

"This means you must sink or swim on your own merits," he said. "You can't blame a teammate for a loss."

Guzman lives in Del Rio, but is a long-standing member of the local Rotary Club. He has been an avid Chess player for years.

Like checkers, a chess board consists of 64 spaces and 32 upright pieces; 16 are white and 16 black. In checkers, only 32 spaces are used while chess uses all of the spaces.

In checkers, you jump over your opponent's pieces, but in chess you replace them. The ob-

ject of the game is to capture your opponent's king.

Guzman divided chess players into two types: the tactical player is aggressive and the game is fast. This type is an amateur. In contrast, professionals are positional players. They play to control squares and the game moves slowly.

Chess is thought to be a game requiring high intelligence, but Guzman says he doesn't think that is true since you can be taught to play in 15 minutes. He thinks a good memory is probably more important than a high IQ. However, to be really good at it, one must start playing as a child and practice every day.

One thing is sure, he says, luck has nothing to do with the game. No racial, language or social barriers exist in chess. Six-year-old children play who

can beat adults.

The game is thousands of years old. Only backgammon is older. Where it began is not conclusive. India and Persia each claim that it began there around 600 A.D. One story about its origin is that tyrannical kings ruled in those days, and the game was meant to send a "message" to the king that the king needs those around him for survival. This may be true since among the chess pieces are the king, a queen and knight.

Chess is played competitively one on one, but professionals may give exhibitions by playing many people at one time. Games are played by mail, telephone, telegraph, ham radio and over the Internet.

The governing body is the International Federation of Chess and it represents 153 na-

tions. The United States Chess Federation consisted of almost 89,000 paid members in 2002, and 25 percent were under 19 years of age. Over 58,000 of the registered members participated in tournaments.

Guzman ranks himself as an amateur, but his standing places him a little above average.

The first world champion was named in 1886, but prior to that, Paul Morphy was an unofficial American champion. The first to come from America was Bobby Fischer in 1972.

Students' grades improve when they learn chess, and teachers credit chess with enhancing patience, observation, concentration, calculation and analysis skills. Warning: Don't rush out to buy an onyx chess set — the pieces break easily. An inexpensive one will do.

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What four grandkids are for

I need to word this very carefully. I hope I get it right. This is about my grandkids, and my daughters read this stuff and they quote me quite often. Why is that? They only remember what I write. I don't think anything in this column is quote-worthy.

Anyway, back to the grandkids. There are many things I want to do with my grandkids. There are lots of special moments I want to share with them.

One of them has already happened. I wanted my grandchildren to pick and eat fruit from trees in my yard. This last spring it happened. They were all together and each picked and ate a loquat from the tree.

Strange how such a seemingly insignificant event could cause my eyes to water. It was important to me. I planted those trees for just that moment in time. It was worth the wait.

I also want all of the grandkids to go to the ranch and open gates for me. Here's where I need to be careful — I don't want any child labor advocates after me.

But I want them to get out and open the gates. I also want

But I Could Be Wrong

Chuck Hall

them to drive my Jeep. I want them to want to drive it. It already has dents so I figure a few more will just add to its character. I didn't feel that way when my own kids were driving.

I eagerly await the day when I can dance with little Sarah. Connie wants to dance with Tillman and Tanner just as much.

Oh, and just in case the headline didn't catch your eye, yes, there are four grandkids. The fourth isn't here just yet, but he or she is coming.

Charlie, aka Karla, is expecting her second this January. She and Terry are just as excited about the second as they were about the first. So am I.

They are still toying around with names. I think "Chuck" has a nice ring to it.

But I could be wrong.

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Ask for forgiveness

"Jimmy, come here," Joe said as he spoke to his 9-year-old son in a serious and commanding voice.

Jimmy responded with a groan, knowing that his dad's tone of voice meant trouble. He took the long way through the kitchen and dining room, putting off for as long as possible what he knew to be inevitable. It was with a grave sense of dread that he faced his father.

"Sit here son," Joe said, motioning to the chair in front of him. "It seems that Katie's doll was broken and can't be fixed. It looks like you must be the one who broke it. Want to talk about it, son?"

Jimmy looked into his dad's eyes and then at the paddle in his lap. He knew where the conversation was going.

"Please forgive me, Dad," Jimmy pleaded. "I was playing with Katie and things just got too rough. It won't happen again."

Jimmy's eyes were beginning to show the tears that expressed the lump in his throat.

Lifting Jimmy's chin so that their eyes met, Joe spoke comfort to his son: "I forgive you, son. Because you've confessed and asked for forgiveness, there'll be no punishment. But you must make this right with



Empowering Families
Dr. Donald Smith

Katie. What will you do?"
"I'll have to buy her a new doll and ask her forgiveness," he said.

"When will you do it?" Joe asked.

"If you'll take me to the store, I'll get the money from my bank," Jimmy answered.

"Jimmy, I'm very proud of you because you're learning honesty and integrity and you're learning to be responsible for your actions. Now we can enjoy finding a new doll for Katie together."

No lasting relationship can ever be sustained unless we learn along the way to take responsibility for our actions and to ask others for forgiveness. This is especially true in the family. An important part of the prayer that Jesus taught us involves our forgiveness of others and the forgiveness of our heavenly Father.

Editor's note: This column is brought to you by the St. Henry deOsso Family Project, working in Brackettville to strengthen family, faith and education.

The Lord is always with you

I once read a joke about a man who owned an axe he claimed had belonged to Abraham Lincoln. Said he, "Except for two new heads and three new handles, it's the very same one."

I laughed over that story, but later I got to thinking about it and found that I could accept that axe as Lincoln's. Because there would be a mystique about it, some kind of intangible sense of Lincoln's presence passing from the original parts, a relic that would make the owner feel he was still somehow in touch with Lincoln's greatness.

I think it was a wish to keep in contact with Jesus that led early Christians to seek relics — the Holy Grail, bits of the Crucifixion robe, pieces of the "True Cross," something they could hold and say, "This was His, I am touching something He touched." Many of the objects they found were probably fake, but that doesn't matter. What counted was the faith of those who held the objects, their desire for the power of Jesus' presence in their lives.

God is above and beyond all things

My Dear Brothers and Sisters of Brackettville,

The great St. Augustine said, "Too late did I love Thee, O Fairness, so ancient, and yet so new! Too late did I love Thee for behold, Thou wert within, and I without, and there I did seek Thee; I unlovely, rushed heedlessly among the things of beauty; Thou madest. Thou wert with me, but, but I was not with Thee."

"Those things kept me far from Thee, which, unless they were in Thee, were not. Thou callest, and criest aloud, and forcedst open my deafness. Thou didst gleam and shine, and chase away my blindness. Thou didst exhale odours, and I drew in my breath and do pant after Thee. I tasted, and do hunger and thirst. Thou didst touch me, and I burned for Thy peace."

Late also have I loved Thee, O Lord, and later yet it grows. In my youth, I looked this way



St. Mary Magdalene Church
Lynn McNev

The beautiful thing, of course, is that we don't need an object Jesus touched to keep in contact with Him. When I go to Him each day in prayer, I feel His presence with me so strongly that it's as though His hand is on my shoulder. His last words to us, as reported by Matthew, are: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20)

He's with me this very moment. And with you.

Let me manifest Your presence, Lord, to those who don't yet know Your touch.

You are welcome to worship with us anytime at St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church. God bless you!



Postcard Home
Brother Henry Clay Hunt III

and that, tasting the fruit from every tree, but failing to see the source of light and life from which it came. I have smeltst Thy sweet fragrance and heardst the whisper of Thy love. I knowst that Thou are above and beyond all things, for Thou are the Good from which all goodness comes.

Breath Thou life into me once again, for I fear that when I have spun my last thread, I will have loved Thee too late or too little. My one consolation, O love, is that Thou doest love me.

From the Mountains overlooking the Valley of the Saints, Br. Henry Clay Hunt III, S.O.L.T.

May the Lord have mercy on us

Praise the Lord! Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their Master, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her Mistress: So our eyes wait upon the Lord Our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.



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Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud. (Psalm 123)

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We should all be accountable

About 35 years ago, the U.S. almost went to war with North Korea. Cmdr. Lloyd Bucher's intelligence ship, USS Pueblo, was captured by the North Korean Navy.

Bucher attempted to fight his command, but after watching his sailors bleed on the deck and realizing that they had only small arms to hold off a small flotilla from the Navy of the People's Republic of Korea, he surrendered. Bucher and his men survived brutal months of captivity before returning to the U.S.

When they returned, they weren't welcomed as heroes. Bucher himself was investigated — and eventually exonerated — by a Naval commission to see if he had acted improperly by surrendering his command.

Trying to save the lives of his crew, Bucher effectively ended his Naval career. One critic called for Bucher's court martial in a book entitled "A Matter of Accountability."

Someone is always accountable. Sometimes in the heat of the moment, this turns into

"someone is always to blame." Bucher was publicly shamed and shunned. Critics castigated him as either a war monger or a coward. Yet today, most would acknowledge — as the Navy eventually did — that Bucher did the right thing.

Given overwhelming forces, and no possibility of inflicting any real damage on the enemy (we were not at war with North Korea), Bucher did the only thing he could.

When he returned, he faced charges bravely and honestly despite the fact his loyal crew would have backed any story he might have concocted. Bucher did the right thing, despite a high personal cost.

In Brackettville, we have neighbors who offered themselves for rather unglamorous service in the city government.

Some, by their own admission, have taken advances against their future earnings.

As the city faces an overwhelming financial crisis, the concerns are raised. "Where did the money go" and "who got



First United Methodist Church
Rev. Roger Baker

how much?" These are reasonable questions any good citizen should ask. But I think Christians have two greater duties than asking questions.

For those Christians who have received city funds, I would ask them to proclaim publicly how much they received, when and how they received it, and when they returned the money or performed the services they were paid for. It might cost them their jobs, or their offices, or their public respect. But it is the right thing to do.

The Bible tells us that only evil-doers fear the light. For those who have acted properly or at least in good faith, there is no crime in telling the truth. It's a matter of accountability.

The rest of us have an even

more difficult duty. We must pray for our brothers and sisters who have agreed to serve us in city government.

Some might be caught in a moral dilemma between what is good for themselves or their family and what is good for the community. For those who have crossed a line between right and wrong, we must be ready and truly willing to forgive, just as Jesus Christ has forgiven each of us.

Despite our anger, we must offer the good news of the forgiveness of Christ. We serve a God of mercy. Most of us don't really want the justice we truly deserve. Each of us falls far short of the glory of God.

Ultimately, accountability rests with each one of us — as citizens, as voters, as members of the community and as Christians. As we strive to hold our public servants accountable, I think we should also remember who holds every soul accountable in the end. And I think we should offer mercy, even as we have received it.

Shut the door in the devil's face

Are you opening someone else's mail? Just as opening someone else's mail is a federal offense, you pay a penalty for opening someone else's mail "spiritually."

You might say that the Landlord who used to own your home and sent you bills requiring payment (causing penalty if you don't) is like the devil who used to own your soul until Jesus became your new "Land-Lord."

(Note: We are only using this as a picture. We thank God for people who have places to rent to others. God bless 'em.)

That "someone else's mail" belongs to your "old man" (or "old woman" as the case may be). Opening this mail penalizes you spiritually with regret, anger, condemnation, doubt, confusion, temptation, self-indulgence, self-pity, compromise,



Gateway Ministries
Bob & Charolette Corey

judgment, etc.

Your past mistakes, your past sins, anything from your past which has already been paid for by the blood of Jesus is part of that "old man," which has been buried. When you were baptized, it was symbolic of your "old man" being buried, and then when you were raised up out of the water, it was symbolic of your new birth as a "new creature" in Christ.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold,

all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

Now that you are a "new creation" through your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, when the devil comes knocking on your door to deliver your mail addressed to the "old man" or the person you used to be, simply refuse it as "return to sender."

You start as an ambassador of Christ in reconciling yourself to yourself. Forgiving yourself of your past, letting it go, and getting on with your new life is part of that reconciliation.

"Old things" will try to work themselves back into your life, but it is not your mail. Don't accept it. Shut the door in the

devil's face. In other words, "return to sender."

God is your Loving Heavenly Father. His plans for you are for good and not for evil. He delights in giving good gifts to his children. You are now more than a conqueror. You are an overcomer through Jesus Christ who strengthens you to do all things which glorify the Father.

When you fall short or make a mistake, don't accept the mail the devil sends you for condemnation. Reject it, ask God to strengthen and guide you and he will raise you up to be stronger the next time. Most depression and falling away from God comes from forgetting that your "old man" no longer lives there. So, from now on, "return to sender" and live the life of an overcomer. Stand in faith, rest in hope, walk in love.

A true friend will love and care for you

How many friends do you have? How many would you like to have? What do you do — what would you do — to have more friends? Do you really understand the difference between a tried and true friend and an acquaintance friend?

My Father once told me that if you live to be an old man, you can still count your true friends on one hand. A friend is one who is personally well known and for whom one has warm feelings, regard and affection. A friend is one who knows your faults, and loves you anyway.

In John 15:13-15, Jesus has opened the way for a new kind of relationship among his disciples. Jesus calls them friends, "not servants."

The love of Jesus has broken down the walls which separated the master from the slave, and the rich from the poor. But also

a love that later was expressed even more, when Jesus laid down his life for his friends, and those friends include you and I.

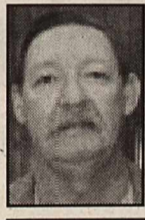
How many people would you give up your life for? How many people do you know that would gladly die for you?

A true friend is someone compassionate and humble enough to offer help and accept help in return.

Proverbs 18:24 says, "A man who has friends must show himself friendly, and there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother."

Both our families and our friendships involve loyalty. As we go through life, we learn that friendships can bring about challenging difficulties. Conflicts can test the bonds and depth of our friendships. It can also strengthen those ties.

True friendship, like true love, is long suffering. By en-



Frontier Baptist Church
Rev. Dave Crowe

during each others pain, sorrow and anger we are exhibiting God's unconditional love. True friendship possesses patience and knows just how to speak the truth with a love that accomplishes God's purposes.

When you are someone's true friend, you are only because you love and care for them.

I ask you, "How great is your love?" Remember that love is a commitment, an unconditional pledge of loyalty, devotion and an allegiance to be faithful and true.

Here is the beautiful thing

about this kind of love. It reduces frustration because the one who truly possesses this kind of love tends to be tranquil, peaceful and serene. They remain confident in the face of overwhelming odds. They rest assured in the power of God's love to overcome any difficulty.

This confidence allows us to speak to one another as friends in a calm tone of voice that communicates power under control.

Again, this kind of love reduces frustration because the one who loves has the serenity to accept the things he cannot change, the courage to change the things he can and the wisdom to know the difference.

This kind of love increases our gratitude to God for everything we have and are.

This kind of love appreciates the terrible problems that we have escaped through his grace.

God Created the Church to be a Family for ALL His Children.

Sunday Schedule:
Bible School at 9:30 a.m.
Choir Practice at 10:15 a.m.
Worship at 10:45 a.m.

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808 N. Ann 563-2616
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Sunday PM 1:30
Wednesday PM 6:30 Classes
Minister: Ray Melton

First Baptist Church (SBC)

Corner of Ann and Veltman Phone: 563-2245
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Worship Service - 11 a.m.
Adult/Youth/Children Discipleship Training 6 p.m.
Evening Service 7 p.m.
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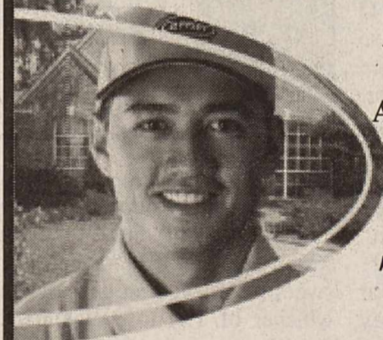
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