

**NEWS**

**Rusk 1st Baptist hosts Shiloh quartet**

Rusk First Baptist Church will host an evening of inspiring Christian music when they open their doors for Shiloh in concert beginning at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 25. Celebrating 10 years of ministry and considered by many as the premier male quartet from the State of Texas, Shiloh is a group who is definitely "on the rise" in Christian music today. For more information regarding this concert, contact First Baptist Church at (903) 683-5494.

**Free GPS class offered in Nacogdoches**

A growing number of hunters and fishermen are using global positioning systems (GPS) for everything from finding their way out of the woods to pinpointing that great crappie hole. The Columbia Center will host two one-day GPS workshops from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Feb. 17, 24, at the Columbia Center, 106 S. Pecan in downtown Nacogdoches. Call (936) 468-6100 for more information.

**Karen Lavergne**

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"In the African American community, our kids are consistently not doing well in the Math portion of the TAKS test," she said.

In 2006, Rusk High School was given an academically unacceptable rating, which school officials said was the result of poor math scores in the African American sub-group.

"Our reading skills have to improve," Ms. Lavergne said. "Once we have a grasp of reading, we will do better in mathematics."

Ms. Lavergne said the goal of the center was to bridge the gap between school and home. They wanted to help parents help their children with schoolwork and assist parents in the education process of their children.

"I would like to see a stronger educational base for our youth," Ms. Lavergne said. "In the African American Community, the socioeconomic need is sometimes greater."

Ideas such as the learning center often have to overcome hurdles to finding funding and volunteers. Such was not the case with the Inez Reeder Conley Learning Center.

"We had the volunteers, but we couldn't get

**City of Alto**

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Mrs. Walker also recommended sending adoptable pets which the city animal shelter can not find homes for to the Klein Animal Shelter in Jacksonville, at a cost of \$35 per pet.

The Council voted to send excess adoptable pets to Jacksonville. The council then asked Mr. Luse to get an estimate on the cost of expanding the current animal shelter in Alto by 15 kennel spaces.

A public hearing for the pet ordinance has been set for 6 p.m., Monday, March 12 at City Hall in Alto.

In other action, the council instructed Mr. Luse to get an estimate on the cost of razing the old city hall building, to get estimates on street repairs and heard a report from Municipal Judge R.C.

**Pet ordinance hearing is 6 p.m. March 12**

Christiansen about the new collection company the city has hired to collect outstanding traffic tickets.

The lawfirm of McCreary, Veselka, Bragg and Allen will soon be contacting those who owe the city outstanding traffic citations via telephone.

The second step is a certified letter, said Judge Christiansen. If the agency does not collect the funds then legal action is taken.

The next regular meeting of the Alto City Council will be held at 6:30 p.m., Monday, March 12 at City Hall.

the children to come," Ms. Lavergne said.

Ms. Lavergne said despite the fact that things have appeared dormant at the center lately, she has not given up.

"We never cut the lights and services to the center," she said. "It's still on and we still desire to go back. Right now we are back to step one, how to meet the need."

Ms. Lavergne said the center is still looking for ways to bridge the gap between school and home.

"I would like to thank Dr. Largent and Rusk ISD for their support," she said. "I think we all need to go back to the table and try again."

Currently, Ms. Lavergne is volunteering her time with the Band Boosters and the Senior Finale project. She says her ultimate goal is to work with the community and the school.

Ms. Lavergne grew up in Rusk, graduating from Rusk High School in 1973. From there, she attended Texas Southern University, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication. She now works as the facility automation director at Rusk State Hospital.

**County**

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re-appointed to the Regional Mobility Authority.

Commissioners approved a request from Cherokee Family and Consumer Sciences Committee to use the courthouse lawn March 20 for the county health fair.

County Judge Chris Davis was approved to sign all documents with Bancorp South to finance a new pickup truck for the license and weight office.

Patsy Lassiter was approved to remain the POOL Coordinator for the county health employee benefits pool.

Commissioners approved the sale of two foreclosed lots in the Lakewood subdivision at Lake Palestine. The lots will be sold for \$600 each. A representative of Linebarger, Goggan, Blair & Sampson LLP made the presentation concerning the request to sell the property.

Commissioners approved the Cherokee County Child and Family Service Board certificates on completion of open government training as required by SB 286.

Mrs. Lassiter was approved to attend the treasurers' continuing education seminar April 2-5 in Austin. County Attorney Craig Caldwell will attend the 20th annual Robert O. Dawson Juvenile Law Conference Feb. 22-24 in Houston. The monthly report of the license and weight officer was approved.

Judge Davis reported that John Mark Parsons has been employed as a county computer person and Ken Hannah will replace Jack White as Emergency Management Officer.

The next meeting of the commissioners court will be at 10 a.m. Feb. 26 in the county courtroom.

Attending the meeting were Judge Davis; Commissioners Mary Gregg, Kevin Pierce, Glass and Underwood; County Clerk Laverne Lusk and County Auditor L.H. Crockett.

CHEROKEE COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT			
James Campbell, Sheriff January 2007			
<b>Communication</b>			
Month	Yr/Date	748	748
		392	392
		358	358
			911 calls received
<b>Correctional</b>			
229	229	Prisoner intake	
224	224	Prisoner release	
129.4	129.4	Average daily inmate population	
7.38	7.38	Average daily inmate book-in	
1	1	Prisoners awaiting TDCJ transfer	
5	5	Prisoners sent to TDCJ	
0	0	TDCJ inmates paroled out of facility	
0	0	TDCJ inmates transferred	
<b>Civil</b>			
56	56	Citations processed	
6	6	Protective orders processed	
1	1	Executions processed	
92	92	Notice of hearings processed	
77	77	Subpoenas and summons served	
270	270	Total number of civil process	
\$12,416	\$12,416	Total fees collected	
<b>Vehicles</b>			
48,906	48,906	Miles Driven	
801	801	Miles driven transporting juveniles	
12	12	Total juveniles transported	
<b>Case load</b>			
151	151	Total cases worked	



-graphic: Cherokeean Herald

**El Camino Real**

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catch, the pigs were off to Billy Ray's for processing. I talked to daddy and he seems to think that what they need is some magnifying glasses for the hogs. That is the only way they will be able to find that little sprinkling of corn that Billy Ray is throwing out.

Billy Ray and daddy are planning to feed the Campers for Christ hog meat when they go on their camping trip in a few months. With no more hogs than those two are catching they are going to need a "fishes and loaves miracle." I look for this pork

production venture to be out of business in a very short time. If they put a bounty on feral hogs, don't expect to see this pair on the cover of Fortune Magazine.

The news has been a little slow around here the past few weeks. I'm hoping that warmer weather will get folks stirring and making news before too long.

I'll see ya next week! And remember, **The footsteps of a child are most likely to be the ones his parents thought they covered up.**

**City of Rusk**

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using 60 percent of the new numbers," Councilman Sam Florian said.

Rusk businessman, Austin Young, appeared before the council concerning the address at his new State Farm office on North Main Street. "In September I was assigned an address of 400 N. Main. I questioned this and was assured that this would be my address. I ordered everything for the new office, all of my marketing materials and the policy holders have changed addresses. This has cost several thousands of dollars and if I have to re-issue everyone's policy it will cost more," he said.

"I want the council to understand this is a high dollar expense and will cost me substantial money," he continued. Councilman Kris Morgan said, "I have spoken to Austin and other businesses and I do not know what the answer should be. Some said they did not want to change."

Councilman Donald Woodard said he had talked with one bank that had ordered new stationery with their new address. "What is the law?" he asked.

Mayor Suzann McCarty said there is no law.

"When we were presented the 911 address three years ago, we were led to believe this was a state requirement. Also, we were told it would take a year and a little over. When we sent out the mailings for the Rusk High School Alumni Association, a lot of them were returned because we had used a route and box number. And this has taken three years and we aren't through yet," Mr. Woodard said.

"When we first took over we contracted with the county for those areas outside the municipalities. They couldn't get service without 911 addresses. We sent letters offering our service to all cities including Jacksonville. We did not come to you saying you must change. There was no impression that addresses would stay the same," Mr. Flowers said.

"Gallatin's addresses would not match up when we took them over. There was never a mind-set that everything would stay the same," Mr. Flowers continued.

"Probably there are close to 1,180 addresses in the system and I am estimating that there

are 200-400 addresses left to go. Thirteen streets in Rusk have not been touched with 32 residences on those 13 streets. Our problem is that the post office sends notices to those with new addresses asking them to call the CCAD. However, some of them do not call CCAD and their address is not changed," Mr. Flowers said.

"We have been shut down with Rusk since November. Hopefully if we start back we can be finished in a month's time," Mr. Flowers said.

Mr. Florian reported at the meeting that a couple put in a business in the 1200 block of N. Main Street and was told their address would be 555. Their child fell. They called 911 with the 555 N. Main address and the ambulance could not find them. The ambulance crew went to J&J Jewelry and never found the child. Luckily the child was fine."

"You are trying to do this piece mill. Let's get it all renumbered and then change," Mr. Woodard said.

Police Chief Ronnie Miller said, "City Hall is 408 N. Main with the old system. Now there is another 400 N. Main. This can cause problems. On the mayor's street, one side has 300 numbers and the other side has 700 numbers. I liked the old numbering system."

Fire Chief Wayne Morgan said, "You need to make a decision and tell us."

The council voted to table the matter until the next meeting.

Following the meeting Mr. Flowers told the Cherokeean Herald, "Several points were brought up for discussion at the meeting. One of those points, the scattered numbering evident in the city, was of paramount concern to me.

"In retrospect, I can see the confusion generated by not implementing the posting of addresses at one time. However, I do know that we have been under constant pressure from the state and the East Texas Council of Governments to address all of Cherokee County, outside the City of Jacksonville. We have tackled the task with limited resources and persevered through staff turnover.

"Absolutely at no time did anyone from the city communicate a concern about emergency response to addresses being

partly implemented on the street. If someone had communicated this problem to me, we would have taken steps to try and remediate the problem.

"In late 2003, the city took action to have the appraisal district take over their 911 addressing effective Jan. 1, 2004. At no time did the city direct or suggest to my office that addressing should be done in any set manner, nor did I ever insinuate to the city that addresses would remain the same.

"After a long three years, we have addressed more than 1,150 locations and are now within 200-400 addresses of completing the city, all while continuing the addressing of every citizen who has called in for a number and also while continuing to address each postal route in the county. Several citizens in Rusk have already switched their address as have several businesses. Even thought the new 911 addresses do not follow the traditional city block method, they are logical and sequential and will easily allow persons to locate property."

In another matter, Penny Reynolds, president of the Rusk Chamber of Commerce, asked and secured permission for the chamber to apply for a Texas Yes Program grant through the Texas Department of Agriculture to help with expenses of the Rusk Fair on the Square.

A city election was called for May 12 for the selection of a mayor and two council members for districts 1 and 2.

Approved were salary adjustments of \$550 increase annually for each of two firemen and \$2,250 for the utility clerk.

The council approved the expenditure of \$4,900 for the purchase of equipment for new police cars and use of force training. Also, the council approved the expenditure of \$3,861 for the purchase of two computers, a laptop and new wiring for the police station and municipal court office.

The next regular council meeting will be 5 p.m. Thursday, March 8 at city hall.

Attending the meeting were Mayor McCarty; Council members Morgan, Walter Session, Don Jones, Woodard and Florian; City Manager Murray and City Secretary Fran Wendeborn.

**Iraq War**

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now guilty of throwing more at something that should not have been attempted to begin with," said Jim Harper of Gallatin. "I will be accused of being unpatriotic and anti-military, neither is true. I love our country and the brave soldiers who have and continue to sacrifice for our freedom. I am saying, 'the emperor has no clothes,' so to speak."

Debbie Miller, a teacher at Rusk Junior High, said that America has been in Iraq too long to accomplish anything or to be considered victorious.

"Our service personnel have done all they should have to do," she said.

Faye Monzingo of Tyler said America can be victorious if the President holds the Iraqis responsible for playing their part.

"The key to his success will be if he stands firm on what he said would happen if Iraqi officials didn't do their part," Ms. Monzingo said. "We aren't responsible for their future, they are."

Ms. Monzingo said, "I really want our troops to come home as soon as they can."

Cpl. Jeremiah Benjamin, a Marine from Nacogdoches, said America can and is being victorious in Iraq.

Cpl. Benjamin, who returned from a tour of duty in Iraq in 2006, said victory is contingent on having the support of the Iraqi people and being able to turn the country over to the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). He said the battle in Najaf on Jan. 28 proves that America is on its way to accomplishing these objectives.

"An Iraqi civilian contacted the Iraqi Police to report the insurgents north of the city," Cpl. Benjamin said. "The ISF responded and repelled the attack for hours before calling in for American support, which they only did because they were facing a force of 600 insurgents. As much as we would like the insurgents to go away, the reaction by the Iraqis is proof that we can still come out victorious."

Cpl. Benjamin said America's purpose in Iraq is to provide the Iraqi people with a democratic society and bring stability to the region.

Congressman Jeb Hensarling said victory in Iraq is America's best option.

"As costly as fighting this war is, the cost of defeat is even greater," he said. "Failure in Iraq would send that nation spiraling into a state of chaos, becoming what Afghanistan once was, a breeding ground for terrorists bent upon harming our families and our country. We must commit ourselves to empowering the Iraqi government so that we can leave them in charge of their own fate."

**The surge**

President Bush has proposed sending as many as 20,000 additional troops to facilitate victory in Iraq. This plan has drawn even more debate.

"I personally feel Bush's deployment of more troops to Iraq is about as ill-conceived and misplanned as his original decision to invade Iraq in the first place," said Emily Kosted of Rusk. "Whatever will happen will happen in Iraq with or without U.S. interference."

Anita Woodlee of Rusk said, "I think we have lost too many lives already in Iraq, and I do not think we need to be sending more young people there."

Still other East Texans support the troop surge.

"I am for sending more troops," said Josie Schoolcraft of Bullard. "It's better to have war over there than here like we had 9-11-01."

Sissy Crysop of Rusk said the U.S. should have sent more troops to Iraq from the beginning of the war.

Gil Kalinec of Gladewater said the U.S. should finish what it started.

"If more troops are needed to accomplish this end, then we need to support President Bush's plan. Yes, we can be victorious in Iraq."

U.S. Sen. John Cornyn of Texas said, "The one thing we should all agree on is that our military men and women serving in Iraq, and their leaders, should be given a reasonable chance to execute the President's plan."

Cpl. Benjamin said while he would like to see more troops coming back instead of being deployed to Iraq, he sees the potential mathematical equation in the President's plan.

"If we send 21,000 troops for one year and this leads to us being able to cut back 40,000 troops a year sooner than currently planned, then the net

outcome is a reduction in forces by 19,000," he said. "I do believe that a small step-up in troop strength now can lead to an earlier, successful conclusion to this conflict."

Cpl. Benjamin expressed his gratitude to those who supported the U.S. finishing its job in Iraq. "They know that the Iraqi people need us to stay the course and the world needs to see us stick it through as well."

He described the lack of public support for the war as "unfortunate."

"We are doing great things for the Iraqi people and, hopefully, soon they will be able to take full control of their country. As nice as it is having people say they support the troops, having the constant negative media coverage of the war has a negative effect on troop moral. It is hard fighting a war that, even if you believe in it, you know the American public won't truly appreciate the sacrifice you make."

Cpl. Benjamin said his experience in Iraq introduced him to three different groups of Iraqis. There are those who think that it is good the Americans are there. He said those are usually the ones who have lived in America and tend to be very secular.

Cpl. Benjamin said another group are those who are glad for what America is doing for their country, but still want U.S. forces out of Iraq as soon as possible. Then there are those who want the U.S. troops dead.

"From what I have experienced in Iraq, the opposition is a very small but tremendously active group," he said. "These insurgents condone the targeted killing of women and children for no greater reason than ideological differences.

"In the face of insurgents burning homes and businesses, kidnapping and killing family members, Iraqi citizens are increasingly cooperating with U.S. forces."

Cpl. Benjamin said the average Iraqi wants clean water, electricity and safety. He said the insurgents are trying to prevent U.S. forces from providing those.

Cpl. Benjamin is in his third year as a U.S. Marine, and is the son of a 22-year veteran of the Marine Corps.