

Guidance counselors outline goals to school board

RISD expresses gratitude to Warden Foxworth for 1,400 man hours to clean grounds

By GLORIA JENNINGS
STAFF WRITER

A PowerPoint presentation on school counselors was shown at the Monday evening meeting of the Rusk school board. Counselors attending the meeting were Sheila Hicks, elementary school counselor, who made the presentation; Lisa Cockrum, high school counselor and Debbie Welch, intermediate school counselor.

Mrs. Hicks' presentation was titled "Sail Into Success,

Let Guidance Help Light the Way."

The guidance umbrella includes guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services and system support, she said.

"Goals of the school counselors include lighting the way for all students to become the best they can. This is done through counseling, consulting, curriculum, coordinating and most of all caring," Mrs. Hicks said.

Student needs are responded

to through consultation, personal counseling, individually, small groups, crisis counseling, outside referrals, mental health, social service, juvenile service and medical resources.

Mrs. Hicks told the board that recommendations may be made to the counselor through a teacher, the student, a parent, the administrators or school staff or any concerned person.

Persons are encouraged to make a referral to the counselor if a child is suspected of being abused or neglected, if there is a severe change in the child's behavior, the child is struggling with family changes, the child's self-concept is low, an illness or

death in the family is upsetting the child and there are financial hardships affecting the child.

Other reasons to make a referral are that the child is living in a home where there is substance abuse or recovery from such, the child daydreams a lot or is preoccupied a major portion of the day, grades are declining, excessive absences, home situation interferes with school performance or something seems to be bothering the child.

In closing Mrs. Hicks said counselors show caring with staff support, crisis intervention, child abuse prevention education, listening and giving

lots of hugs.

In other matters TDCJ Warden Todd Foxworth was thanked for the 1,400 man hours given the district by TDCJ Hodge offenders. During the Christmas holidays and spring break inmates cleared brush at the intermediate, high school and junior high campuses making them more attractive and safer for students. A plaque was presented to Warden Foxworth.

Students and staff will be dismissed on April 5 for Good Friday. Monday, April 9, originally scheduled as a teacher work day, will be a bad weather make-up day. The board will

meet at 6 p.m. on April 9.

Following an executive session, resignations were accepted by Andrea Avila, diagnostician effective at the end of the school year; and Bryan Basse, teacher, effective Feb. 21.

Employed were Billy Harrell, teacher, for the remainder of the school year; and Christie Hubbard, diagnostician for the school year 2007-08.

Attending the meeting were Mike Ross, president, who presided; David Fulton, vice-chairman; Frances Long, secretary; Roy Cavazos, Rodney Huggins, Britt Patterson and Dr. Anthony Holcomb.

Ballots finalized for city, school elections

May 12 elections cancelled in Alto, Wells, New Summerfield, Gallatin and Reklaw because races are uncontested

May 12 elections will be cancelled for the City of Alto, both Wells city and school, City of Gallatin, City of Reklaw and City of New Summerfield. When there is no opposition for a position, the city or school can cancel the election.

Filing for places on the ballots include:

Rusk

Rusk Mayor Suzann McCarty has filed for re-election. She is being challenged by Angela Raiborn.

Other candidates filing are Councilmembers Kris Morgan, District 1 and Walter Session, District 2. Mr. Morgan was appointed several months ago to fill the unexpired term of the late Ruth Ross. Mr. Session is a long-time councilmember.

Candidates for three Rusk ISD trustee positions are incumbents Mike Ross, Roy Cavazos and David Futon and challengers Oliver Sturns and Karen LaVergne.

Alto

The Alto City Election will be cancelled. Carey Palmer has filed as a candidate for Alto mayor and Bob Pearman and Michael Sanders as councilmembers. Terms of Mayor Debbie White and Councilmembers Glen Willhite and Kenneth Brethouwer expire with the election.

Six candidates are vying for two seats on the Alto ISD board of trustees. They are Robert Hicks, Lee Pearman, Jay Jones, Richard Bertrand, Bob Grammer and Linda Brooks. Terms of Teddy Pearman and Randy Sturrock expire with the election.

Jacksonville

Jacksonville Mayor Dr. Robert Haberle and challenger Jon Hargett have filed for the mayor's position on the city council. Asking for re-election are Hubert Robinson, District 1, and Kenneth Melvin, District 3.

Jim Tarrant Jr., Robert Douglas and James (Jimmy

Lee) Huggins have filed as candidates for Place 1, now held by Sean McRight, who is not seeking re-election, on the Jacksonville ISD board of trustees and Ken Smith, Pat McCown, Sarah Jane Robinson and Don B. Gateley have filed as candidates for Place 2, now held by Roy Darby.

Wells

Both the Wells city and school elections have no contested races and the elections will be cancelled.

Three incumbents have filed for re-election to the Wells City Council. They are David Bussey, Rex Aycock and Eva Brown.

Three incumbents, Larry Bailey, Susie Edge and Danny Colbert are asking for re-election to the Wells ISD board of trustees. No one filed for the unexpired term of Jason Hopper, who resigned in January. That position is expected to be filled by appointment.

Gallatin

The Gallatin city election will be cancelled. Mayor Juanita Cotton and Councilmembers Dorothy Scurlock and Mickie Gunter have all filed for re-

election.

Reklaw

Reklaw's city election will be cancelled as there is no opposition to the three position on the council. Randy Tappen and incumbents John Irwin and Jenelle Laughlin are asking for re-election to the Reklaw City Council.

New Summerfield

Mayor Dan Stallings and councilmember Maria Armas are asking for re-election to the New Summerfield City Council. Also candidates for council are Don Cooke and Gerald Anderson. Terms of Mayor Stallings and councilmembers Billy Hall, Gary Brazier and Ms. Armas expire with the election. This election will be cancelled as there are no contested races.

Incumbent Jason Wilcox and challengers Glenna Weaver and Scott Bragg are asking for election to the New Summerfield School Board. Two places on the school board expire with the election. The other incumbent James Greenwood did not file for re-election.

Deadline to register to vote is April 12. Early voting is scheduled for April 30-May 8.



Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp No. 2009 and United Daughters of the Confederacy Chapter 2292 gathered at the Statute of John H. Reagan in Palestine to dedicate a new Texas Historical Commission marker.

40 attend dedication

By KEN MCCLURE
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

Sons of Confederate Veterans Cross of Saint Andrew Camp # 2009 of Cherokee County was invited Saturday, March 10, by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Davis-Reagan Chapter No. 2292 of Palestine, to assist them and the Anderson County Historical Commission in dedicating a new Texas Historical Marker. The marker honors John H. Reagan of Palestine, postmaster general

of the Confederacy.

The ceremony began with a prayer and the posting of the colors, the first national, Texas and Battle flags led by color sergeant Ronnie Blackstock.

The UDC president Dolly Jeffus introduced guests and dignitaries. Commander Kenneth McClure read the charge to the SCV and Carl Avera, manager and curator of the Reagan Museum, read a history on John H. Reagan.

More than 40 persons attended the event.

Alto ISD

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Mrs. West also told of how proud she was of student Gerald Salzarulo and how he conducted himself in the finals of the county spelling bee.

"He has suffered hardships, but he is always smiling," she said. "When he got second place, he immediately hugged the girl from Rusk who won. I believe it was a genuine congratulatory hug. I was impressed."

Middle school posts 90% passing rate on TAKS

Mrs. West told the trustees that Alto Middle School had a 90 percent pass rate on the TAKS test.

"The few that didn't pass only missed it by a question or two," she said.

Alto High School Principal Donald Patton discussed the extra-curricular activities which will be taking

place with the high school students. The one-act play team, under the direction of Emily Chidester, will compete in district March 28-29. He listed numerous students who competed in agriculture competitions at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and reminded the trustees that the Cherokee County Junior Livestock Show will be held March 29-31.

"Our students will enter 47 animals and 35 shop projects," he said.

Superintendent Dr. Ray DeSpain said Alto High School was down to eight seniors who still have not passed the exit-level TAKS test.

"That's down from the 18 to 19 we started out with," he said.

Dr. DeSpain commented on other extra-curricular activities, including base-

ball, softball, agriculture, track and field and the high school student council.

"Mrs. (Rosezene) Moorman has taken that group and they are doing a fine job with community service and fundraisers," Dr. DeSpain said, noting how they began the year by painting the entire high school.

The only action the board undertook during Monday's meeting was the ratification of new mathematics textbooks and approving the accounts payable.

The board also renewed the district's employees' contracts for 2007-2008. Sherry Dover was named administrative assistant.

The Alto ISD Board of Trustees will meet again at 7 p.m. Monday, April 16, at the Alto ISD Administration Building.

Play ball

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national religion and the players are often referred to as the boys of summer.

As fans watch the Rusk Eagle baseball team steamroll through district 20-AAA, sign-ups take place for city league teams and the major leagues begin spring training.

Baseball was a fundamental part of the popular Peanuts comic, the subject of many movies and novels and was one of the earliest frontiers for racial integration.

Jackie Robinson broke the race barrier of modern-era Major League Baseball on April 15, 1947, when he joined the Brooklyn Dodgers.

According to the Web site Wikipedia.org, baseball is widely popular in North, Central and South America.

Yogi Berra once said that baseball was 90 percent mental and 10 percent physical. Rusk Eagle coach George Banda said his favorite part of baseball was seeing it played the way it was supposed to be played, "hard

and fundamentally sound."

Baseball was dropped from the Olympics by the International Olympic Committee in 2005.

Alongside baseball is softball, primarily played by women and girls of all ages. Softball features a smaller field, a larger ball and requires great hitting and pitching skills.

Softball, like baseball, is becoming a year-round sport due to the emergence of "select ball." "Select ball" is similar to city league baseball or softball, but different in that a player has to try out for the team, said Lynn Littlejohn, whose daughter plays for the Sneaky Cleats softball team out of Tyler.

"In city league ball, you can be good, but you don't have to live the softball lifestyle in order to play," Mrs. Littlejohn said. "In select ball, you try out for the team, and if you are good enough, they pick you up as a player on their team."

Mrs. Littlejohn said select teams play year round, though

many take the month of December off.

"We usually play two tournaments a month," Mrs. Littlejohn said.

There is debate as to whether select ball produces better softball players. Mrs. Littlejohn pointed out that several Rusk Lady Eagle players have played select ball.

"Pitcher Callie Collins plays for Texas Sting, Sierra Smith plays for a team out of Mesquite, Jerri Hill, Cami Griffin and others have played for Texas Pride for several years."

Rusk is 12-6-2 on the season, 3-1 and ranked #2 in district.

Mrs. Littlejohn said the allure of select ball was the specialized coaching from pitching and hitting instructors and the opportunity to compete on a national level. She said her daughter's team was trying to qualify for the national tournament.

So, as the weather warms up for spring, the ball fields come alive with the cracks of bats and the call to "play ball."

TSR

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approved, then the \$7.6 million rider will be used to transition the steam locomotive to a private operator.

"This keeps all our options open," Sen. Nichols told the Cherokeean Herald Monday morning from his office in the State Capitol. "This is what I said I would do from the beginning."

As a member of the House Appropriations committee, where all state budget bills originate, Rep. Hopson made his "article 11" request for the \$7.6 million appropriation to keep the train under TPWD management.

"What this does is keep the train running for the next two years," he said.

Both Rep. Hopson and Sen. Nichols told the Cherokeean Herald that the mood is positive

in the Legislature to restore some or all of the sporting goods tax to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

However, Rep. Hopson called the funding request for the tourist train an "uphill battle." "Parks (TPWD) doesn't even have the Texas State Railroad listed in their top 100 priorities," he said.

Sen. Nichols predicted that the senate side "will probably accept both of these requests." When a conference committee is appointed to work out differences between the Senate Finance bill and the House Appropriation bill, they will match them and see how much money is available.

The mood of Legislators in Austin appears to be one that will provide additional funding to the overall parks system.

"My gut feeling is that there will be a substantial amount of new money for TPWD," said Sen. Nichols. "They realize there hasn't been enough funding in the past."

But Rep. Hopson is afraid that the Texas State Railroad is not on the legislative radar screen. "There's not a lot of traction for either running it or privatizing it."

Timelines are difficult to predict, but he said that the Appropriations Committee will likely send the budget bill to the House floor today.

"Appropriations is running fast, faster than in the past," he said. "It feels like the second week of May instead of March."

Rep. Hopson said that the House will likely send the omnibus bill to the conference

committee in mid-April.

Local reaction

News of the bill riders was greeted with optimism by many in East Texas.

Steve Presley, who serves as chairman of the Texas State Railroad Operating Agency, spoke with Sen. Nichols' office Tuesday morning about the bill riders and expressed pleasure with the options available for the continuation of the train.

"I'm very pleased that Sen. Nichols introduced a bill rider to provide funding for the Texas State Railroad Authority. I'm pleased that he recognized the economic benefit of a local public-private partnership.

"I'm also pleased that he has given an option if the local public-private partnership does

not pass, that the funding can be used for continued state operation," Mr. Presley said. "No one in our group is against the state operating it. We just think it is a better opportunity for the local communities (if the railroad is privatized)."

Save Texas Parks, a non-profit organization which supports state operation and is opposed to privatization, also expressed optimism over the bill riders.

"We are very excited that legislation has been introduced by Sen. Nichols to the Senate Finance Committee and by Rep. Hopson to the House Appropriations Committee which would continue state funding and operation of the Texas State Railroad," said Dr. Michael Banks, president of Save Texas Parks. "We have said all along we have been following the lead-

ership of these elected officials and this is a strong indication that the Texas State Railroad will continue to run as it has for the past 30 years. Our move against privatization of the railroad is becoming better understood. Privatization of the Texas State Railroad would not be a good option."

He applauded the dedication of the Texas State Railroad employees, who have clung to hope that their jobs would continue with TPWD.

"The battle to keep the Texas State Railroad is not over. We must exert our legislative pressure to have the proposed state funding for the railroad approved.

"At least it is out there now before the legislature and we can visualize it being passed to fund and save the railroad."