

Armed Forces Day at TSR features Huey chopper

By JOHN GARBUETT
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

The Texas State Railroad will host its annual "Armed Forces Day" event May 18-20 on the grounds of the Palestine Depot. May 18 is set aside as "Education Day" to allow area schools to make field trips to the depot so students can visit the railroad and learn about America's military history by way of exhibits and interaction with living history impression-

ists and veterans. This event is free to the public and offers an opportunity to honor our veterans and show support for America's men and women currently serving in the armed forces. This year's event is entitled "In the Shadow of the Blade" based on the award-winning military documentary of the same name. The documentary follows the healing journey of a Vietnam War Huey helicopter

and as one veteran stated, it is "the most important thing to happen for Vietnam veterans since the dedication of the Wall." A special ceremony will precede the showing of the film. Vietnam veterans are encouraged to attend this year's event as the Texas State Railroad celebrates Armed Forces Day. Additional information is available at (903) 683-2561 or (800) 442-8951.



◀ Visitors get up close and personal with an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter, commonly called a "Huey" at last year's "Armed Forces Day" event at the Texas State Railroad. The Huey will be on display at the Palestine Depot during the state railroad's "Armed Forces Day" event on May 18-20.

Uncertain future is taking toll on railroad employees

Denzel Washington visits Rusk for 2nd time, negotiations still underway to film 'The Great Debaters' at the Texas State Railroad

By LELAND ACKER
STAFF WRITER

The instability of the future of the Texas State Railroad is taking its toll on the employees and friends of the train. Recent legislation in the Texas Senate was discussed during Thursday's meeting of the Friends of the Texas State Railroad. "The employees are affected and their future is in limbo," said Dolores Bryson, a board member of the Friends group. "Their jobs are totally insecure right now."

Robert Crossman, Texas State Railroad superintendent, said last week's senate vote of 31-0 to approve SB

1659 was a clear message of privatization. "The deal is not done," said Mr. Crossman said. "Nobody knows what the funding will be. We just have to sit here and wait." If the train becomes a static display, there will only be two jobs in the "new" park. Those jobs would pay substantially less than what current employees are making. However, Mr. Crossman stated that the future is unclear, even if the legislature privatizes the train. "Nobody knows what American Heritage (the company who is the front runner of

private operators to take over the train) will offer," he said. "They have stated they want the current staff to work for them." When asked whether current state railroad employees would work for a private operator or leave to maintain state employment, Mr. Crossman said he had no idea. "We have every potential situation," he said. "We have employees who could pick up the phone today and say 'I'm retiring today.' We have others who have just started working for us, and we have every situation in between those." Mr. Crossman said currently,

the railroad is having trouble getting people to apply for the open positions due to the insecurity over the train's future. He added that having American Heritage as a private operator could help in that situation. "American Heritage would have more of a marketing budget. They will be able to get new employees," Mr. Crossman said. Friends President Al Holmes said representatives from American Heritage were already in East Texas preparing to operate the train. "They're serious about coming in here," Mr. Holmes said.

Charles Hassell added that America Heritage has already begun negotiations to bring in Thomas the Tank Engine. "(Either) Thomas the Tank Engine or a Grateful Dead concert would fill every hotel room in town," Mr. Crossman said. Mr. Crossman also told the Friends that while production personnel from the movie, "The Great Debaters," have visited the state railroad, no contract has been signed. He added that another movie company was also looking at the train for a possible filming location. In other business, the Friends heard a presentation

from Sheilah O'Heaney, of the Cherokee Civic Theatre. Mrs. O'Heaney presented the theatre's plans to have an outdoor performance of "Dirty Work at the Crossroads" on May 12 at the Rusk depot. She asked the Friends to co-sponsor that event and help with the civic theatre's summer reading program. The Friends agreed to the proposal. The Friends of the Texas State Railroad also voted to schedule the Murder Mystery Train on July 14. The Friends of the Texas State Railroad meet at 10 a.m. the first Thursday of every month at the Rusk Depot.

Elections

continued from pg. 1A

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

Jacksonville

Jacksonville Mayor Dr. Robert Haberle and challenger Jon Hargett are candidates for mayor. Asking for re-election to the city council 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 on the Jacksonville School Board. Ken Smith, Pat McCown, Sarah Jane Robinson and Don B. Gateley have filed as candidates for Place 2 on the school board.

Alto

The Alto City election will be cancelled as there is no opposition to positions for election. Carey Palmer is the only

candidate for mayor and Bob Pearman and Michael Sanders for two council seats.

Six candidates are vying for two seats on the Alto school board. They are Robert Hicks, Lee Pearman, Jay Jones, Richard Bertrand, Bob Grammer and Linda Brooks.

Wells

Both the Wells city and school elections will be cancelled.

Three incumbents are candidates for 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 positions on the council. Randy Tappen and incumbents John Irwin and Jenelle Laughlin are unopposed in their bid for election.

New Summerfield

The New Summerfield city election has been cancelled. Mayor Dan Stallings and councilmember Maria Armas, candidates Don Cooke and Gerald Anderson are unopposed.

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.

On the flip side...



Crews work to remove a bucket truck from the southbound lanes of U.S. 69, one mile north of Rusk, after the driver lost control due to hydroplaning. Texas Department of Public Safety Trooper Justin Stanley said the truck was traveling northbound on U.S. 69 when it hydroplaned and slid passenger-side first into the median. Upon sliding into the median, the truck fell over on its side. Trooper Stanley said the driver was not seriously injured, but was transported to ETMC Jacksonville.

Playoffs

continued from pg. 1A

2-0. Rusk lost the second bout 7-0.

Coach Frauenberger said the Regional quarterfinal series with the Devilettes may be different.

"I believe that either team can win on any given day, and we are very comparable (to Huntington)," he said. "The team that does the elementary things in a professional manner will have a good chance of advancing in the playoffs."

"If we will be patient and make them throw the ball over the plate, we will have the opportunity to score runs. We also have to cut down on the strikeouts and make them make plays."

The three game series with Huntington begins at 7:30 p.m. Thursday in Rusk. Game two will be at 6 p.m. Friday in Huntington, with game three to follow if necessary. Game one will be broadcast on KWRW 97.7 FM.

Alto defeats La Poynor

The Alto Yellowjacket baseball team advances to the Area championship series after beating La Poynor 2-1 in the Bi-District series. In game one, Alto lost to the Flyers 5-2, with Clint Dover, the losing pitcher.

Alto won game two 5-0 with Colton Crisp as the winning pitcher. The Jackets won game

three 9-4 with Tarlandus Mitchell being the winning pitcher.

"They all played well," said Alto Head Coach John Paul Dixon. "They rose to the occasion."

Alto will play a three game Area championship series with the Lovelady Lions.

"They have a pretty solid team," Coach Dixon said, adding that Alto and Lovelady played to a tie in a tournament earlier this year.

Game one of the series will be played at 7 p.m. Friday in Rusk and will be aired on KWRW 97.7 FM. Games two and three will be played on Saturday in Rusk, with game two beginning at 5 p.m. Game three will follow, if necessary.

Lady Jackets upset Grapeland

The Alto Lady Jackets advance to the Regional quarterfinals after a big 5-3 win over the 3rd ranked Grapeland Sandiettes.

Grapeland got off to a quick 1-0 lead after lead-off hitter Julie Goolsby was hit by a pitch from Alto's Heaven Liles. Goolsby was able to work her way around the bases and score.

The game was deadlocked through the 2nd and 3rd innings. In the 4th inning, Alto's offense broke

open with three runs.

Lacey Huddleston hit a single and stole a base. Amber Morrison got on base with an error and also stole a base. Sherenza Green then hit a double, scoring Huddleston and Morrison. Green then scored when Erika Blakemore hit a single.

Alto, ahead 3-1, gave up a run in the top of the 5th, but the Lady Jackets responded when Margo Kahla scored in the bottom of the 5th on an error. Green scored again in the bottom of the 6th to extend the lead to 5-2. Grapeland added a run in the top of the 7th, but was unable to catch up with Alto.

Alto's Liles threw 11 strikeouts. Green was the lead hitter, going 2-3 with two doubles and two runs scored.

Blakemore also went 2-3. Other hitters for Alto were Molly Pearman (1-3), Huddleston (1-3) and Liles (1-4).

Alto will play Dallardsville Big Sandy in the Regional quarterfinal series. Game one will be played at 7 p.m. tonight at Morris Frank Park in Lufkin. The game will be broadcast on KWRW 97.7 FM.

Game two will be played at 6 p.m. Saturday at Morris Frank Park in Lufkin, with game three to follow if necessary.

Rusk has a very important election for Mayor May 12, 2007. This could be a difficult decision for many because of the two candidates. Both are good people wanting to help Rusk move forward. However, for the many problems Rusk is facing, in our opinion, Mayor Suzann McCarty is the best choice for this important position for the following reasons:

- Mayor McCarty is very much involved with helping keep the Texas State Railroad**
- Mayor McCarty helped uncover the problem with the missing money at city hall**
- Mayor McCarty helped find the true cost of the KOA Park and helped find a buyer for the KOA Park**
- Mayor McCarty wants to get rid of the "RV" park on Main Street. It is in the lawyers' hands now.**
- Mayor McCarty is working with the Rusk EDC to try to get the money to help drill new water wells without raising water rates or taxes**

These are just a few of the problems the mayor is working with and is very familiar with and working on. It would be very hard for a new mayor to properly step in and be immediately effective as the present mayor. Mayor McCarty has proven she has the time and will take the time to help Rusk. She also has the accounting knowledge the city needs. Mayor McCarty deserves two more years.

My wife and I cannot vote because we live just outside the city limits but we pay a lot of taxes in Rusk. Paying taxes without the right to vote, was this not what the "Boston Tea Party" was all about?

Pd. Pol. Adv. By Bobby & Hazel Tosh, 757 CR 2202, Rusk, Texas 75785