

# The Buffalo Press



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## Multiple sexual assaults alarm Leon County

by Vanessa Goodwyn

A disturbing trend has surfaced recently as our county has been rocked by an unprecedented number of sexual assaults. Perpetrators in at least two recent attacks remain at large as of press time.

- On June 24th, Buffalo Police responded to a call by a woman who reported that two of her children had told her of a sexual assault, with the suspect being a white male. The incident is under investigation.

- The Sheriff's office took a report of another sexual assault in Buffalo on July 18th.

- A 55-year-old Normangee woman was attacked while working in her yard on Saturday evening July 19. The attacker pulled the woman into her home and raped her.

- A man broke into a Marquez home in the pre-dawn hours of Monday, July 21, sexually assaulted a 77-year-

old woman, and robbed the home. The suspect is described as "a 20-25 year old white male with short hair and injuries to his face."

In the Normangee and Marquez incidents, neither victim knew her attacker. Investigators do not, however, believe those attacks to be related. No arrests have made. Any persons with information on the attacks are encouraged to call the Leon County Sheriff's Office at 903-536-2749. Texas Rangers are also participating in the investigation.

These attacks have certainly put nerves on edge in our rural communities. Internet blogs posted by female residents reflect concern and frustration that authorities did not release information to the public so that women could be put on the alert.

The number of sexual assault incidents reported this summer is unusually high. One law enforcement officer

suggested one possible explanation that, with school out, area children are visiting grandparents and in that setting feel secure enough to report something which has been happening.

Tanya Foster, director of the Leon County Domestic Violence Victims Advocate program, confirmed that incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault -- especially those including assault of children -- have been on the rise. Foster offered a safety tip that many people are unaware of: In an emergency situation you can dial 9-1-1 from any charged phone. Even a cell phone without a service contract, or a house phone with a lapsed service will STILL dial 9-1-1.



On July 26, strong winds from a storm did much across the area, including to Los Panchitos Restaurant. photo courtesy of Madisonville Meteor

## Freak winds hit Madison County

Emergency Management Coordinator Shelly Butts reported a serious weather event classified as a downdraft/downdraft occurred in Madison County at approximately 5:25 pm on Sunday, July 26,

2009. Much of Madisonville was affected, as well as most of the center of the county with severe damage to homes and businesses. Numerous roofs were ripped off, damaged trees were uprooted and

limbs severed, power lines were downed and debris was strewn across pastures and roadways.

The downdraft ripped the roof from Lakeside Restaurant, near the I-45 feeder, as several customers were eating. Seven to nine customers reportedly retreated into a center location of the building after hearing and feeling the loud clamor and shaking in the structures roof and ceiling. After the noise and wind subsided the nervous group returned to the main dining area to find that much of the roof had blown away. Other major businesses near the interstate that were damaged include Madison County Tire, Budget Motel, Zip/N Subway, McDonald's, Los Panchitos, Sonic, Western Lodge and Texas Pride Trailers. Other businesses further from the intersection includ-

ing buildings in the Industrial Park were also damaged. Reports from downtown Madisonville include power pole damage, roof damage, and fallen trees and debris.

Meanwhile, an unidentified man driving a pickup reported that his truck was struck and spun around side ways by part of the restaurant's roof as he drove near the restaurant and I-45. He didn't realize what had struck his vehicle until he stopped and got out of the truck. That was when he saw another part of the roof "flying" through the air in his direction. Two major accidents with overturned vehicles were caused by damaging winds and a commercial vehicle was overturned due to the storm; however, no fatalities were reported. Only three storm-related injuries were reported immediately following the storm.



Seven-year-old Samantha Pate, a Buffalo Elementary student, raised over \$1000 last week for the Texas Children's Hospital by selling cookies and lemonade at the end of her driveway. (See Page 12A for the full story.)

Contributed photo

## Dew traffic stop leads to drug charges

On July 25 at approximately 1:45 AM, Freestone Deputies Robert Willis and Cory House had occasion to stop a Dodge pickup on Hwy-179 in the Dew area which led to the arrest of two men on narcotics charges.

The Deputies recognized the driver of the pickup as being as being Joe A. Perkins, who was currently not legally licensed to drive. A traffic stop was initiated and a search of the vehicle was conducted, making use of TPD's K-9, handled by TPD Solly. The K-9 alerted, indicating the

presence of narcotics odors, multiple times.

Close examination of the vehicle interior, revealed a baggie, carefully concealed inside the right door area. The contents of the baggie was approximately 5.9 grams of what is believed to be Methamphetamine. Both the driver and passenger, Felipe A. Gaitan were arrested and transported to the Freestone County Jail. Both individuals were charged with Manufacture/Deliver Controlled substance, > 4 grams<200 grams.

## Oakwood ISD considers bond election

By Melissa Missildine

The Oakwood School Board held its regular monthly meeting on Monday. Board members Nathan Smith, Chris Agapiou, Kim Hardin, Larry Lipsey, Winnie Hodges, and President, Mack Botard were all present. Also in attendance was O.I.S.D. superintendent Richard Scoggin and Debbie Stanford, O.I.S.D. business manager, and husband Larry.

Brian Grubbs of Southwest Finance presented the board with bond election

projections for the upcoming election dates. According to Mr. Grubbs, the board must make a decision before Sept. 2 on whether or not it will take the idea of a bond election to the voters. If the board agrees to present the voters with the bond election, early voting will be Oct. 17-30 before voting day on Nov. 3. If the board chooses not to go forward with the bond election at that time, there will not be another chance until May of next year. Mr.

Grubbs suggested that the board assemble a committee consisting of teachers, school employees, parents, and voters before making a final decision. Mr. Scoggin relayed that a committee had already been chosen.

The superintendent's report included the preliminary report of Taks testing scores. According to this report,

Oakwood Elementary received "Recognized" scores in Science and Math and "Exemplary" scores in Reading and Writing. According to Mr. Scoggin, the 2 lower scores will be used to rate the school. Official scores will not be in until this Friday but, Mr. Scoggin expressed his ex-

SEE Oakwood, page 12A

## Oakwood hires new Police Chief

By Melissa Missildine

The Oakwood City Council was busy during this month's regular meeting.

The Council has been searching for a permanent Chief of Police since June. Lewis Miller has been acting as interim Chief during this time. After mulling over several applications, the decision was made to officially place Miller in the position. Chief

On the agenda for the month of July was a discussion on the need for vendor permits inside the city limits. With this new city ordinance, anyone intending on selling merchandise from anywhere other than their own property

will need to obtain a vendor permit.

These permits can be purchased at City Hall.

The Council discussed the need for city street repairs and the decision was made to assist County Precinct #2 with the repairs and to purchase the rock for this project.

Also discussed was the current location of the Oakwood Municipal Court and the possibility of the future need of a separate courtroom location and/or a changing of court hours. Currently, the City Hall is adequate for use as a courtroom but, is also used as the City Water Office.



Brian Grubbs (center), of Southwest Financial, pitches his bond election proposal to the O.I.S.D. school board. Board members Larry Lipsey and Winnie Hodges are seen taking notes. photo by Melissa Missildine



Van 'Go' photo

Daniel Gentry of Buffalo and Rachel Wendt (of Humble) participate in praise worship at Saturday evening's conclusion of the Arts In Ministry camp held at Celebration Church. For the full story and more photos, see page 12A