

Local man survives multiple gunshots

by Vanessa Goodwyn

A shooting in Walker County on Friday night has left a local man in ICU with critical injuries. Kevin Kelly, who lives near Centerville and works as a day shift truck driver for R Construc-

tion, was shot three times in the left abdomen and chest at about 10:07 the evening of August 7, during an apparent argument at a private residence in Trinity, Texas. Kelly was taken by private vehicle to the small hospital

in Trinity, where the Sheriff's Department was notified of a victim with apparent gunshot wounds. Kelly was then transported to a Tyler hospital where he was treated in ICU, and the Sheriff's Office personnel went to the scene to

investigate. The shooting occurred at a residence on Plantation in the Deep River Subdivision in Trinity. Law enforcement officers arrested William Joseph Comley (26) of Walker County, charging him with

Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. The incident occurred at Comley's home. Walker County Sheriff's Office personnel reported Kelly's condition, as of Saturday morning, to be critical

but stabilized. A co-worker who visited him on Sunday confirmed that Kevin was conversant and promised to be back at work, "...but not Monday".



Serving Buffalo, Oakwood, Centerville, Jewett, Marquez, Normangee - All of Leon and surrounding counties

Volume 77 Number 32

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

Established 1931

50 Cents

Congressman Barton considering Senate run

By Mac Shadix

During a stop at the Buffalo Press on Wednesday, August 5, Congressman Joe Barton said that he was seriously considering seeking the Senate seat of Kay Bailey Hutchinson if she vacates it to seek the Texas Governorship.

Q- The Press interviewer asked Barton if he was going to seek Senator Hutchinson's seat if she runs for Governor.

A- "It's possible. That's the straight answer. If David Dewhurst decides to run then I almost certainly will not do it. But if he doesn't, there isn't anyone out there that I couldn't beat, and I would be better, in my opinion in being a senator," Congressman Barton said.

Congressman Barton and his aides Dub Maines, Jr. Deputy District Director and Press Secretary Sean Brown visited Buffalo on Wednesday August 5 and stopped by the Buffalo Press office for a

visit and an interview. Barton visits Buffalo more often than many more local officials to listen to the views of his constituents and to stay in touch with their issues and problems. He has a Town Hall meeting set for Marquez on August 17 at noon at the Baptist Church.

Q- The next question for Barton was; What did you work at before you were a politician?

A- Barton replied. "I worked for Arco Oil and Gas. Before that I was a White House Fellow for President Reagan, but primarily what I did was be a plant manager and assistant for Ennis Business Forms Printing Co. I was in the printing business from '73 to '80. Then I was a White House Fellow, and then I worked for Arco from '82 to '84. I ran the plant in Crockett and I had a little old weekly paper there in Crockett for a while."

Q- The Congressman was

then asked; Did you trade in a clunker in the trade-in program?

A- "I have a car that would qualify, but I didn't. Since I voted for it I thought it would be a little self-serving for me to vote for it." Congressman Barton said.

Q- Tongue in cheek, Barton was next asked if he thought the Beer Party pulled Obama's chestnuts out of the fire after his gaffe about the police?

A- "I doubt it."

Q- Is there any chance of congress revisiting FutureGen while the Democratic party holds sway?

A- "Unlikely. But there is a chance to use some of the

funds to get a project at the FutureGen site here. We are exploring some ways to do something similar to FutureGen at this site."

Q- Did you vote for this drought?

A- "No. I like for it to rain in Texas. A lot."

Q- What are your thoughts on the economic displacement that will likely be caused by the administration's climate control policies?

A- "It is the worst economic bill in my tenure in the congress. I think it would de-industrialize America in fifty years, and do it unnecessarily."



Congressman Joe Barton

All county campuses rate "Academically Acceptable" or above

By Sherry Matney

In 1999 the 76th Session of the Texas Legislature enacted Senate Bill 103, mandating implementation of a new statewide testing program. The testing requirements, subsequently named the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, were implemented in spring 2003. By law, all eligible Texas public school students are assessed in mathematics in grades 3-10 and exit level; reading in grades 3-9; writing in grade 4 and 7; English language arts in grades 10 and exit level; science in grades 5,8,10 and exit level; and social studies in grades 8, 10, and exit level.

The TAKS test is designed to measure the extent to which a student has learned and is able to apply the knowledge and skills at each grade level. To be eligible to receive a diploma from a Texas public high school, a student is required to pass a total of four subject-area tests: English language arts, mathematics, science, and so-

cial studies.

School campuses are rated: Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable, or Academically Unacceptable.

Understandably, these tests and their results are of prime significance to teachers and administration in all Texas schools and no less so in Leon County. When the scores came out there were many sighs of relief and possibly some of disappointment, but overall the county

showed improvement.

Normangee led the county with a rating of "Exemplary" at the elementary campus, up from "Recognized" in 2008. This is the only "Exemplary" given for Leon County. Both high school and middle school campuses rated "Recognized" giving an overall district rating of "Recognized".

Superintendent Jerry Burger said "I am really pleased with the performance

of the students and faculty and hope that people who move to this area will realize that their children will have an opportunity to receive an excellent education at Normangee."

This was Burger's first year at Normangee and he says his experience was excellent. According to him "last year was a year of change and the upcoming year will be one of self-improvement."

SEE TAKS, page 4A

Sexual Assault suspect in custody

By Sherry Matney

On July 21 a 77-year-old woman was sexually assaulted in her home during the pre-dawn hours. According to Deputy Victor Smith with the Leon County Sheriff's Department, a suspect in that case is in custody. Smith did not give the name of the suspect saying, "We want to treat every suspect as though he is innocent until proven guilty. The last thing we want is to prejudice the community against anyone."

DNA has been gath-

ered and is currently at the lab for evaluation.

Two days before the assault in Marquez, another woman was attacked in Normangee while working in her yard on July 19. There has been no arrest in this case and Deputy Smith said investigators do not believe it was the same perpetrator.

Smith said that these two cases have been the first two "stranger" sexual assaults in Leon County in a very long time.

Oliver resigns

Winn appointed to Buffalo City Council

by Vanessa Goodwyn

The regular meeting of the Buffalo City Council was held on Monday evening, August 10, with a quorum present. Absent were Tim Ezell and Steve Oliver.

Mr. Oliver's absence was explained early in the meeting when Mayor Royce Dawkins read Oliver's letter of resignation from the Council, effective immediately. After

accepting Oliver's resignation, Mayor Dawkins and the remaining councilmembers appointed Bob Winn to fill the vacancy for a term expiring in May, 2010. Mr. Winn was present, accepted the appointment, took the Oath of Office and took a seat at the table. (Both Oliver and Winn had run in the at-large council election last May, won by Diane Ryder. Oliver had been

appointed to fill Dawkins' council seat, vacated when Dawkins became Mayor.)

In public comments at the beginning of the meeting: - Mike Glick asked for an update on the progress of the city's 2007-08 external audit by Staples & Associates. The question was deferred to Debbie Waters, who predicted it

SEE Winn, page 8A

BISD proposes new tax rate

by Vanessa Goodwyn

The BISD school board met in special session on August 2 and August 9, toiling over the 2009-10 budget and working to set the 2009 tax rate.

At the first meeting, the trustees learned that the district's property valuation has dropped considerably from

last year. Based upon the significant decrease in local oil and gas values, (now established on the January 1 evaluation), property values have fallen more than \$123 Million and the district stands to lose \$1,234,695 in revenue over last year. What sounds like bad news may actually have a positive twist. The

rising tax base in the past few years had put BISD in danger of crossing the line between being a Chapter 42 school -- one which receives money from the State -- and moving up to a Chapter 41 classification, meaning that the district which would have to pay into the State's education coffers, under the "Robin Hood" plan.

The decline in the district's tax base has eliminated that possibility, for the time being.

Monday night's meeting focused on proposing the new tax rate. The M&O (maintenance and operations) tax rate is based on a compressed tax

SEE BISD, page 8A

Commissioners in support of regional fiber optic network

by Vanessa Goodwyn

Monday's meeting of the Commissioners Court opened with a presentation by the BVCOG to get Leon County on board to support a resolution for a regional fiber optic network. Representative Michael Parks explained that the COG is applying for \$35M of the \$4.2 Billion in stimulus funds earmarked for such projects. Parks offered a concept map showing locations which would be provided with the service, with the goal of bringing broadband internet to rural areas with a

combination of fiberoptic and wireless technology. The network could save area school districts and other entities in the COG considerable money off of the costs of T-1 lines. Parks was optimistic about BVCOG's changes of getting the funds, claiming "only a handful of regions are applying, and we are about eight months ahead of most others." The money, if awarded, would be available as early as November. Commissioner Dean Player suggested that Hilltop Lakes be added to the locations to be serviced. The

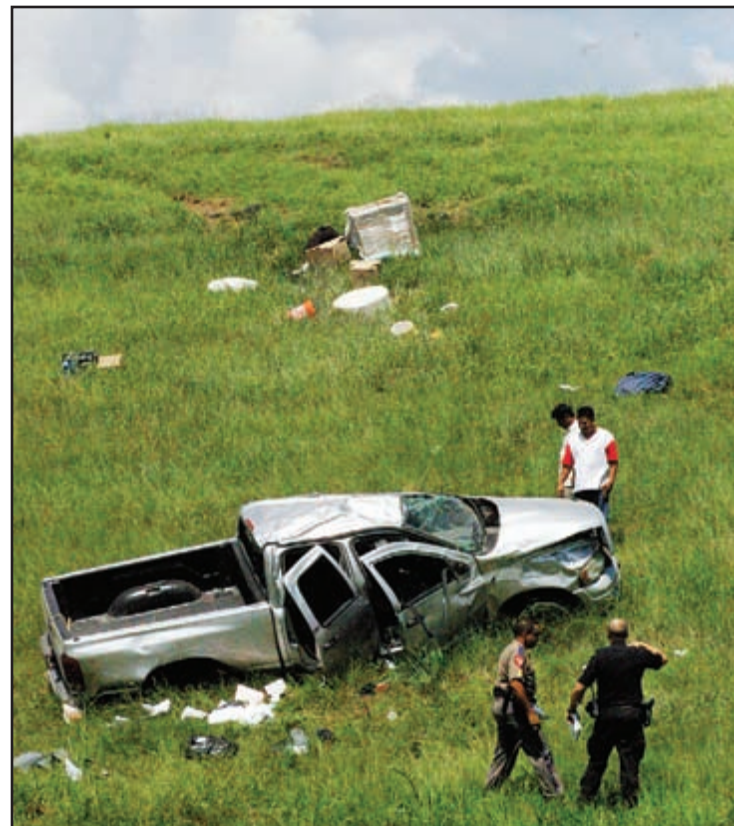
commissioners signed the resolution to show support of the concept, and were not asked to commit any county money.

LHRC Executive Director James Wallace offered an update of the health center. He reported that clinic operations are going well, but stressed the need to fill the position of grant coordinator, a position paid by grant funds and necessary to ensure that HRSA funding continues. In an executive session later in the meeting, the commissioners offered the position to

one of the six applicants for the job, but were awaiting a return call before announcing the name. The position, titled Grant Coordinator/Assistant to the Executive Director, will pay an annual salary of \$27,500 and benefits, but is only guaranteed until April 2010, dependent upon continuing grant funds.

Good news for the LHRC was the announcement that the health center's Financial Status Report and Carryover Report were approved by

SEE Commissioners, page 8A



Three men escaped serious injury when the pickup they were travelling in left the freeway and rolled down the embankment toward the service road. The accident occurred late Monday afternoon, in the southbound lane of I-45 just north of the Hwy 79 exit in Buffalo. One man was transported by ambulance for treatment at an area hospital, and the other two reportedly refused treatment. Emergency personnel from Buffalo PD, BVFD, Legacy Ambulance Svc and the DPS responded to the scene. Van 'Go' photo