

2009 Buffalo Stampede: A galloping success



Novalene Thurston from Oakwood rides in the Master Gardeners lawnmower brigade. Photos by Mac Shadix



92 year old Evan Moore waves at the crowd. James Coker seated beside him won 1st place in the Horse/Rider division.



Jordon Millar and Haylee Brewer throw candy to the crowd watching the parade along Commerce St.

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DNA results links Marquez assaults with similar attack in Lavaca County

By Sherry Matney

Leon County Sheriff's Department Chief Investigator Victor Smith said DNA left at the scene of the assault of a 77-year-old Marquez woman, on July 21, matches DNA gathered at the attack of a 90-year-old woman in Yoakum, in Lavaca County.

Additionally, deputies believe the same man committed two unsolved sexual assaults in Bell County. Although the Sheriff's Department has not received the DNA data on the Bell County attacks, there is evidence which strongly suggests the same man is behind the attacks. The Bell County attacks occurred in the area of Zabikville. Phone lines have been disabled in most of the attacks, which also disables

the alarm system.

Investigators are saying that the man could possibly be responsible for eight sexual assaults statewide and there is a likelihood of other victims. All eight victims have been over 60 and live alone.

Smith explained that DNA evidence was put into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) data base. Several days after a second Marquez woman was attacked, on September 5, the Department received information which linked the first assault to the one in Yoakum. Although the second Marquez woman was not sexually assaulted, DNA was left at the scene and the Department is awaiting results on that case.

A 55-year-old Norman-

gee woman was assaulted on July 19, but authorities do not believe this to be the same offender.

Women all over the area are frightened and are not sure what to do. Smith said it is very important that neighbors watch out for neighbors. He also advised that a security check should be made of every residence. Be sure windows and doors are locked. Smith and other investigators believe that in at least one of the cases, the perpetrator came into the house before the assault and unlocked a window.

Be sure security and outside lights are working. Take notice of any outside security devices. Smith showed a picture of a woman's window where a set of burglar bars

had been removed.

Don't tell anyone whom you do not know that you are alone. One woman in Bell County received a phone call from someone who asked "Are you alone?" The woman answered "Yes." Then realizing what she had done, called one of her family members and went to stay with them.

Report anything which seems out of the ordinary: A car in the wrong place; a stranger where he should not be; evidence of someone breaking in, even if nothing is taken.

Smith also suggested planting thorny shrubs under windows where someone might climb in, concluding, "Make it as difficult as possible for someone to come into your house."



Victor Smith is an eleven-year veteran with the Leon County Sheriff's Department and has been chief investigator for four years. Sherry's Shots

A black day in Buffalo's history: Braniff Crash revisited



Flo's Evan Moore shared first-hand recollections.

by Vanessa Goodwyn

This week marks the fiftieth anniversary of a tragedy which put Buffalo, Texas in the national headlines. Late in the evening of September 29, 1959, a commercial Braniff airline, Flight 542, was 23 minutes into a brief hop from Houston to Dallas, then scheduled to go to New York. The pilot made a routine radio report as the plane cruised through the warm and humid east Texas sky and a minute later, at 11:08 p.m., the aircraft -- a Lockheed L-188 Electra turboprop -- exploded and crashed about four miles south of Buffalo on the R.E. White farm, leaving no survivors.

According to the report in the Buffalo Press dated Thursday, October 1, the explosion was seen and the crash heard by several local residents. Mr. H. H. Pickens witnessed the explosion and immediately notified the

Connally Air Force Base in Waco.

Flo rancher Evan Moore shared some first-hand memories of the incident, although he qualified his remarks: "If I make any mistakes, I'll lay it to the fact that I'll soon be 92. Not as clear as it was a year or two ago..." He described the location of the debris as starting out about 1/2 mile from 75 on 831 ("the Ruben Long place") and winding up on Star Route where the plane hit the ground. "It was beyond Maurice Hester's place, toward Flo, 'bout a mile past the first creek. Lawrence Hester lives there now -- CR 212."

Bodies of the 28 passengers and the six crew members were strewn over a large area of land. Moore recalls that local men went out there that night, then the Federal Aviation Agency came and

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Microfiche copy of The Buffalo Press, 10-1-1959

Committee from Flo visits Oakwood School

By Sherry Matney

Oakwood Independent School District is proposing a \$4,000,000 Bond which will be on the November 3rd ballot. If passed the Bond will result in a tax rate increase of approximately .19, taking the school taxes in the Oakwood School District from \$1.04 to \$1.23. Superintendent Richard Scoggin estimates the increase on a \$100,000 home, with a homestead exemption, will be approximately \$150.00 per year.

On Tuesday, September 15, a group of citizens met at the Lone Star Community Center to discuss and evaluate the upcoming Bond election. During the process of the meeting a suggestion was made to visit the school to de-

termine if there is a need for a new facility as the Oakwood ISD Board has determined. A committee was formed whose task it was to visit the school, make a first-hand evaluation and report back to the group on the following Tuesday, September 22.

On Friday, September 18 the committee visited with Superintendent Scoggin and took a tour of the current facility. When the group arrived Scoggin explained that the children in Pre-K to 6th grade are in three portable buildings which were purchased approximately ten years ago when the old elementary school was abandoned. According to those who were

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Palestine toddlers drown in stock pond

By Sherry Matney

On Friday afternoon, September 18, Dustin and LeAnn Frazier and their two sons, Michael and Cobin, were visiting friends in Cherokee County just south of Rusk on CR 2404. According to friends of the family there were several families with children and somehow the two Frazier brothers slipped away from the group. Around 5:00 p.m. the boys' parents realized they were missing and begin frantically searching for the two.

A parents' nightmare was realized when the children were found in a stock pond about 50 yards from the house they were visiting.

According to the Cherokee County Sheriff's Captain Chris White, the boys were removed from about 6 feet of water and transported to East Texas Medical Center in Rusk where they were pronounced dead by Cherokee County Justice of the Peace Brenda Dominy. An autopsy was ordered to be performed at the Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences in Dallas.

Services for the boys will be at 3 p.m. Wednesday, September 23, at Westwood Baptist Church. Friends of the family have set up the Frazier Memorial Fund at the Anderson County Federal Credit Union on W. Oak Street.

Buffalo Council lowers tax rate

by Vanessa Goodwyn

In a special called meeting on Monday evening, September 21, the Buffalo City Council approved their proposed budget and passed an ordinance establishing the ad valorem taxes for 2009. The effective tax rate (maintenance and operations plus interest and sinking) will be \$0.559977 on each \$100 valuation of property. The figure represents a decrease of approximately 2 cents per \$100, but will still result in increased revenue for the city since the property values within the city limits went up

during the year. The new rate will levy \$374,600.53 for the city.

Other business during the brief meeting included the appointment of Dianne Ryder and Martin Housler to the board of the Buffalo Economic Development Corporation, replacing Tim Ezell and Linda Amos.

The city's 2007 audit from Staples & Associates has still not been submitted but a preliminary audit has been promised by next week. Mayor Royce Dawkins was authorized by the council to pay the outstanding bill when the audit is in hand.