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A view from the Texas Legislature

By TOM REED

By midnight Monday, May 27th, the 69th Texas Legislature will have ambled and sputtered to its final hour. Almost 4,000 bills intent on changing the shape of Texas society will have been introduced, but this session will be lucky to see even a third of those bills signed. As late as two weeks ago the Governor had signed only seventy-five. Things have been moving slow here in Austin.

Indeed, the session has been so dull that one Senator quipped: "The Governor went to Honduras, the Speaker went to Paris, a senator quit to become a justice of the peace, the most controversial bill is one to license interior decorators, and the Senate can't find a preacher for the morning prayer."

Old-timers tell me they can't remember a more sluggish session. There have been no eloquent, searing debates in the Senate as in years past. There have been no passionate floor fights in the House. The only "fight" has been between two Houston legislators near Mark White's office, and with that exception, the Texas Legislature has been just plain boring.

Even the normally spicy graft and corruption element, the hallmark of the Texas Legislature, is largely missing this session. Only two members were under criminal indictment. One was dismissed, and the other was found innocent. It seems there's just no excitement this year in Austin.

For someone new to the legislature like myself, it is hard to put this session into perspective. Not being able to compare it with past sessions, I cannot give a personal estimate on how dull the session really is, or why. Many think the lack of state money for the first time in history has forced all legislators to keep low profiles. Not wanting to be tagged as big spenders, budget slashers, legislators seem not only to be running from publicity but also from the spotlight.

I can however make a personal estimation of the work up here. At times I can say it has honestly been thrilling. For instance, one was enlightened lawmakers (yet, there are a few of them) voted down a bad bill backed by

powerful interests. At other times it has been downright depressing, like when a good bill is not scheduled for debate, or when unlighted lawmakers (yes, there are many of those) muscle through a bad bill and the good guys run scared. But at all times it has been interesting. For sheer political savvy, displays of unbridled power, degrading acts of cowardice and the salt and pepper of off-colored humor, the Texas Legislature, even despite its current dullness, is still a hard broth to beat.

I do not want to give the impression that every bill is a power play, or that all are controversial. Most of the legislation, I was proud to discover, is not only noncontroversial, it also is very good stuff. Many law changes have been presented through several legislatures, each time coming back a little better, until finally all parties reach agreement and support the measure. This is the case in one bill that provides for the humane care and treatment of dogs in boarding kennels, for example.

Many other bills are "local" bills, pertaining only to a single city or county. Many of these would create new law courts or hospital districts for example, and usually are noncontroversial. Many bills pertain to a single person, sometimes allowing that person a salary adjustment or, in many cases, allowing him to press a grievance against the state. In all, most of these bills are good for the state of Texas and its citizens.

And this is what the Legislature does best: it takes care of the little things that

we do not always hear about, but are things that do in fact improve the quality of life for us Texans. However, its members generally do not face up to controversial issues well, and this is why we are expected to think less well of them. Whether it's horse racing, school prayer, education reform, seat belts or budget cuts, the inability to please both sides makes the members run scared. And I can understand this.

For the first time I can see the humanness, and frailty, of people just like you and me who find it hard to make a good decision when it's a tough one to make. And at times I empathize with them. But on the other hand, making laws and serving as guardians of the public trust is the job they sought to do, and because of this we expect them to do it well. Even though they are paid just \$7,200 a year plus expenses, there is no excuse for them not to do it well.

Regardless, politicians are the ones who make our laws, and I suppose we must get used to their shortcomings. We cannot have dentists or accountants debate our laws, although sometimes that might seem preferable. No, we must use politicians, and the only way we can control whether they are good or not is to vote.

And after observing the caliber of the many members of the legislature, I am becoming more convinced that voting is not just a right, it's a duty. We may not be able to control the way our representatives vote on each issue, but we can control the quality and character of the ones we send to Austin. After observing the members and their votes throughout this five month legislative ordeal, I am more convinced that our votes last November were the most important ones cast.

Two from area to compete Saturday in farm bureau contest in Columbus

Girls from Eagle Lake and Garwood will be participating Saturday in festivities of the Colorado County Farm Bureau. The annual queen and talent find contests, and the Little Miss Parade will be held June 1 at the Columbus High School Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.

The public is invited. Contestants will be judged on poise, personality, interview and beauty. Those participating include: from Garwood, Melissa Engstrom, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Engstrom, and Linda Korenek, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Lee Korenek; from Eagle Lake, Leslie Heard, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Rick Holden, and Sherry Anderson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Everett Anderson.

From Columbus, Rachelle Beane, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Guy Beane Jr., Jill Rufeno, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mac Rufeno, and Kari Barten, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Barten; from Freelsburg, Judy Weishun, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Weishun; from Weimar, Lisa Michalke, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Michalke, and Valerie and Melissa Dunn, daughters of Willy Dunn.

The talent find participants are: Michael Kuehl, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Kuehl of Columbus, Miss Barten, Miss Heard and Miss Engstrom.

Little Miss participants are: from Columbus, Amy Marauk, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Marauk; Kaysey Christoph, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R.W. Christoph; Christine Dowell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Buddy Dowell, and Sarah and Katy Heffley, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Er-

vin Heffley; from Weimar, Codi Friedrich, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ewald Friedrich Jr.; from Rock Island, Christine Scott, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Scott; from Garwood, Christie Cranek, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gary Cranek.

Miss Engstrom will be a junior this fall at Rice High School, where she is head cheerleader, and a member of the Spanish Club and FFA. She recently won a Hugh O'Brien scholarship.

Miss Heard is the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Thornton of Eagle Lake. She will be a senior this fall at Rice High School, and is very active in vocational agriculture. This past school year she was president of the Rice FFA chapter, as well as the FFA District IV Association. Next school year she will serve as Area III first vice president. She also is active in drama and modeling, and attends the Mayo Hill School of Modeling in Houston; it is affiliated with Actors and Models of Houston. After graduation she plans to attend college for two years in Tyler, Texas, and obtain a double major in Ag Education and Drama. She then plans to attend four years of school in New York.

Judge and Mrs. Lester J. Cranek of Garwood were in Austin recently where they attended a brunch given by Governor and Mrs. Mark White. The brunch was held at the Governor's Mansion, honoring campaign county coordinators. They also visited briefly with the Governor and Mrs. White after the brunch.

Mrs. Madelyn Rosenthal of New Jersey visited Mrs. R.B. Shaw last Friday. Mrs. Rosenthal grew up in Garwood and has relatives and friends here.

Mrs. James Berger and children visited Mrs. Bertha Rees last Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. Max Westerholm of Fort Worth visited Mrs. R.B. Shaw and other friends in Garwood last Friday.

Miss Wisheit, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Wisheit returned home May 21 from Polly Ryan Hospital in Richmond where she spent two days and was treated for a fractured elbow.

Mrs. Ruby Richardson of Fort of Columbus passed away May 10. Mrs. Coffert was for-

Fredrickson's have reunion

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Fredrickson Jr. were host and hostess to the first Fredrickson Reunion held at their Needville Farm honoring visiting cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Preben Mogensen and son, Henrik, of Skanderborg, Denmark.

A total of 95 attended including second, third and fourth generations. The families at this reunion are relatives of Louis Fredrickson Sr., Knud C. Fredrickson and Chris R. Schiurring (Mrs. Nora Fredrickson). Many traveled from Garwood, Columbus, El Campo, Eagle Lake, Houston, Katy, Rosenberg, Austin, Como, San Antonio and Bryan, Texas, and Baltimore, Maryland.

A delicious Texas-style barbecue with all the trimmings was served, making it a wonderful day for all.



More than 500 tickets were sold for Monday's barbecue held at the Recreation Center by the Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce. Many people took advantage of the drive-up service while others enjoyed the shade in the picnic area. The meal was prepared by chamber members who volunteered their services.

Garwood & Nada Community News

By Mrs. J.F. Strussa

Call 758-3352

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The Lavaca Medical Center is pleased to have been able to secure the services of Ms. Meiske who is a graduate of The University of Texas Medical Branch and recently associated with the Gonzales Warm Springs Rehabilitation Hospital.

For further information concerning scheduling of appointments, please contact, Lavaca Medical Center — 512/798-3671.

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Plaque is the sticky, practically colorless film that builds continuously on the teeth. The main ingredients of plaque are bacteria - one milligram of plaque can contain a half-billion bacteria. Bacteria ferment sugars in the mouth (why not to eat sweets, changing them to acids which then eat away at tooth enamel. "Look, Ma, cavities!")

As the plaque creeps below the gum line, it mineralizes and becomes razor-sharp deposits - by far, the major cause of tooth loss in adults.

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