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Produced By:
Carol Cardenas • Lynda Appelt
Jeannine Fearing
Shirley Luedecke • Betty Drymalla

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A few corrections on pump donation to Museum

To the Editor:

Elbert and I appreciate the kind remarks in the recent *Headlight* article about the donation of the old Lakeside Cemetery pump and well parts. However, we feel obliged to make a few corrections.

First of all, as volunteers for the Lakeside Cemetery Association and working with Chairman Joe Lee McCreary, we engaged the Neuendorf Water Well Service last Aug. to examine the existing water well to evaluate the plausibility of obtaining water again. We personally have felt a real need for water at the cemetery and

believe that citizens have wanted a re-activated water supply. Upon inspection, the well was found to be beyond resurrection. The casing, rusted from age, was barely intact. The pump had been damaged or vandalized and had been in disrepair for years because it was missing several required parts.

Some other choice had to be made. The Lakeside Cemetery Association had to drill a new well and find a heavy duty replacement hand pump to lift the water from the well for users. (At this time, the decision was made not to contract for an electrical pump installation or a water pipe distribution sup-

ply. However, for a more efficient, readily available water supply such a contract might be an alternative option in the future after security measures and other details are worked out.)

This past winter, a new water well was drilled. Water was reached at 51 feet, and outfitted with new casing and water pipe, awaiting the availability of a new hand pump for which we and the well company have searched for many months. The A. McDonald Company, established in 1856, built the original hand pump at its plant in Dubuque, Iowa, but is no longer in business. It is probable that there are existing

McDonald pumps stored in a warehouse somewhere, but we could not find one in the time frame needed for our project goal of supplying water by the heat of summer.

Finally in May, Mr. Neuendorf found an iron pump built by Aermotor which is virtually identical to the old McDonald equipment. Its age is not yet determined, but the pump probably dates from the 1920's and has never been used. Mr. Neuendorf disengaged the heavy old pump, pulled 30-plus feet of well pipe and recovered the fine old sand point. According to him, these sand points are often

incorrectly installed yet the original Eagle Lake Cemetery sand point was properly placed. Mr. Neuendorf also dismantled the Ferris brick well box and capped the former well. From his work, there is evidence that the well dates from at least the 1870's, perhaps earlier; therefore, we decided that this original Lakeside Cemetery well and accoutrements should be a part of the collection at the Prairie Edge Museum, rather than going to the dump heap.

The well, its parts and the McDonald hand pump were in our opinion historically valuable and deserved to be saved for Eagle Lake in the long legacy of the well's use. As another consideration, the Aermotor pump should serve Lakeside Cemetery for years to come as a visual and physical reminder of the old well that my former high school friend Grace Dell Sinclair Cooper remembers pumping for her father.

Elbert and I, though we appreciate the accolades, just wanted the public to know that we did not personally

finance digging the new well, nor did we finance the purchase of the pump. The Lakeside Cemetery Association did all that. We can only take credit for a little volunteer work: researching, overseeing the bidding and drilling, discovering a suitable new pump, and finally saving the old pump and well parts.

May we say that we are very pleased that now Lakeside Cemetery again has fresh, cold water for sustaining plants and watering flowers at the gravesites of loved one. With its beautiful native stand of Live Oak trees (which also desperately need attention and professional tree surgeon maintenance), our community is fortunate to have such a lovely and splendidly-sited cemetery in Eagle Lake. Also, we are happy to have been a part of the rehabilitation of the well. We strongly encourage you to join actively in the continuing efforts by the Association to make Lakeside Cemetery one of the most beautiful in the county.

Evangeline Loessin Whorton

Gov. Bush reveals wildfire prevention plan

Gov. George Bush doesn't have a knee-jerk attitude when it comes to wildfires threatening Texas: He has a prevention plan.

Last week, Bush asked President Clinton for aid to prepare the state to fight wildfires and issued an emergency proclamation for 207 of Texas' 254 counties. The governor is seeking federal aid to put firefighters and equipment in high-risk areas before fires break out.

"Texas is already dry and we face a long, hot summer," Bush said. "Already in early June we are seeing August-like conditions with the bulk of the summer still ahead."

"It is threatening crops and could pose major fire and water problems unless we act now."

Bush called on county officials to consider implementing outdoor burning bans, fireworks restrictions and water conservation measures.

Bush stopped short, however, of recommending a ban on fireworks as the July 4 holiday approaches. "My advice would be to be cautious," he said. "I would urge county commissioners to take extreme caution because we're dry and the winds are high."

Auto Insurer Cuts Rates

State Farm is cutting its rates an average of 3% this summer and returning to policyholders \$178.6 million in premiums already paid.

The rate-cut decision, which stems from recent decreases in claims, was State Farm's third this year.

State Farm's rate cut may entice other insurers to follow suit. Jerry Johns, president of Southwestern Insurance Information Service, told the *Austin American-Statesman* a price war is being fought in Texas' auto insurance market.

"This is just a further example of a competitive auto insurance market," Johns said. "There are so many good prices in the Texas market that it is just unbelievable."

Rob Schneider, a policy analyst with the Texas Consumers Union, agreed State Farm's rate cut could improve overall auto insurance rates.

If drivers and the Texas Department of Insurance put more pressure on insurance companies, more cuts could come, Schneider said. "[Insurance customers] have got to look

State Capitol Highlights

By Lyndell Williams and Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

around and see who is offering the best rate."

Donations Linked to Dirty Air

A group that monitors money in politics says it would take a limit on campaign contributions to clean up air pollution in Texas.

Texans for Public Justice issued a report last week claiming \$2.5 million was contributed to Texas politicians from "grandfathered" producers of smog-forming nitrogen oxides between Dec. 1995 and March 1998.

Those facilities, which were operating or were under construction when Texas' Clean Air Act was passed in 1971, are waived from compliance with some of the rules newer facilities must obey.

"If we don't get campaign finance reform, we're going to be breathing dirty air for a long time," said Craig McDonald, director of Texans for Public Justice.

The group's report shows Gov. Bush received \$193,500 in contributions from the political action committees of 27 grandfathered polluters from 1995 through 1997.

According to the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, more than 40 pollution-emitting companies have volunteered to reduce emissions through a future program. Bush supports that program.

Schools Face Teachers Shortage

Qualified math and science teachers are leaving the profession to take higher-paying jobs in the private sector, leaving classes to teachers less-qualified in those fields.

That trend is dragging down test scores, state education officials say.

State Sen. Teel Bivins, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, has decided to tackle the teacher-shortage issue next legislative session. Bivins, R-Amarillo, said he will propose bonuses to attract more, better-qualified teachers to public (See Highlights, Page 8)

Let's Look Back...

24 & 48 YEARS AGO

June 1, 1973

Nancy Juul Seaholm (Mrs. Gardner A. Seaholm) of the Universal Motor Co.'s bookkeeping department, was the recipient of the coveted Ford Business Management Award in recognition of excellent performance as a Ford Dealer Accountant in the preparing, interpretation and submission of accurate financial data and for contributing valuable assistance to the successful management of a Ford Dealership...

Brice Stephens, a recent Rice High School graduate, was honored with a reception at his home on Willow Lane Thursday, May 24, after graduation exercises...

The St. Mary's Catholic Church in

El Campo was the setting for the formal wedding uniting in marriage Miss Patricia Ann Dettling and Billy Briscoe at two thirty in the afternoon of Sunday, May 27...

Miss Kathy Ruether, a 1973 graduate of Rice High School, was honored with a swimming party Sunday, May 20, at the homeside pool of the Larry Austins...

Mr. & Mrs. George B. Andel entertained a number of relatives and friends with a delightful after-graduation supper honoring their son, George B. Andel, a graduate of Rice High School on Thursday evening of last week...

For the second time in as many (See 24 & 48, Page 3)

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