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Rewritten constitution submitted to State Legislature

Texas' 122-year-old constitution has been rewritten by Sen. Bill Ratliff, R-Mount Pleasant, and Rep. Rob Junell, D-San Angelo.

The two lawmakers have filed their draft as House Joint Resolution 1, for consideration by the 75th Texas Legislature.

If adopted, the constitution would change how public officials are selected and would create a cabinet form of government giving the governor power to appoint the land commissioner, agriculture commissioner and railroad commissioners.

It also would give the governor



State Capitol Highlights

By Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

power to appoint all district and court of appeals judges and make their retention subject to approval by a vote of the people.

A new state constitution would have to win a two-thirds vote in the Legislature, and then election by Texas voters.

As good or bad as those changes sound, there's one thing upon which Texas Republican Party chief Susan Weddington and Texas Democratic Party chairwoman Molly Beth Malcolm agree, *The Dallas Morning News* reported last week: It's not time to rewrite the 1876 Texas Constitution.

Departing Sharp Offers Advice

Texas Comptroller John Sharp last week made his final plug for fiscal responsibility in the new Legislature convening Jan. 12.

Sharp, who will leave elected of-

fice next month after losing his bid for lieutenant governor, has estimated that the state could have about a \$4 billion surplus when the biennial budget ends Aug. 31.

"They're not going to be thinking about paring back and storing their nuts for winter. Somebody's got to be the bad guy," he told the *Austin American-Statesman*.

The last installment of Sharp's ongoing audit of state government recommends changes that could save the state \$1.7 billion over five years.

After leaving office, Sharp will join the Dallas-based tax consultant

firm of Ryan & Co. He will represent the company to businesses in Texas and nationally.

Bush Names Williams to RRC

Gov. George W. Bush last week named former federal prosecutor Michael Williams to the three-member Texas Railroad Commission.

Williams, a 45-year-old Arlington lawyer, will be the first African-American to serve on the 107-year-old board.

Next month, when Williams begins to fill the two years remaining on the term of comptroller-elect Carole Keeton Rylander, he will be the only African-American to hold a statewide office.

Williams said he intends to run for a full term in 2000.

DPS Predicts 60 Traffic Deaths

The Texas Department of Public Safety has predicted that as many as 60 people could die in traffic accidents during reporting periods between Christmas Eve and Jan. 3.

Eighty-eight traffic deaths were recorded during the holiday period last year.

This year's prediction of fewer deaths was made because Christmas and New Year's fall on Fridays, making for shorter holiday weekends. Last year, the holidays fell on Thursdays.

Other Capital Highlights

•Texas Attorney General Dan Morales last week questioned the fairness of the state's system of administering the death penalty, particularly in regards to racial bias and clemency procedures. Morales, who did not seek re-election, will leave office in January after eight years as the state's top lawyer.

•The Swiss firm of Herzog & de Mueron has been hired by the University of Austin to design the \$40 million Blanton Museum Art, to open in 2002.

•The Texas Transportation Commission is requesting \$220 million in new federal funding to be used in projects including the widening of Interstate 35 south of Austin and construction of Texas 130, a north-south loop that would allow traffic to bypass Austin.

•State Reps. Warren Chisum, R-Pampa, and Robert Talton, R-Pasadena, have filed legislation that would ban homosexuals and bisexuals from serving as foster parents.

•The Texas Department of Public Safety's Missing Persons Clearinghouse, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is asking for help locating missing Texans. Runaways are being asked to call 1-800-346-3243.

Let's Look Back...

24 & 48 YEARS AGO

Sept. 7, 1973

Eagle Lake citizens can rightfully be proud of one of their local citizens, Clyde Brown, who had the distinct honor of winning the club championship at the Panarama Gold Club in Conroe. Clyde won the title on the fourth hole of the playoffs...

Miss Martha Lou Derrick has begun the study of nursing at Baylor University School of Nursing in Dallas. She is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. William H. Derrick who reside at 417 Alamo Avenue in Eagle Lake...

Mr. & Mrs. Gus Loessin of Eagle Lake announced the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Darlene, to Ricky Holden, son of Mr. & Mrs. B.C. Holden of Hico, Texas. The couple plan an Oct. 13 wedding in Grace Lutheran Church in Eagle Lake...

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Korenek of Nada announced the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Beatrice Ann, to Anthony Gary Rachunek, son of Mr. & Mrs. Anton Rachunek of Wharton. The wedding will be Oct. 6 at 2 p.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Nada...

Enjoying the Labor Day weekend in Mexico were the Mike Coopers, Kenneth Craigs and the Victor Scotts...

After completing the requirements for their respective degrees, Robert Hemphill Jr. and Calvin James Sommer graduated from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville. Both with a Bachelor of Arts in Teaching...

Eagle Lake firemen Edward Harborth received an injury while fighting the fire at the abandoned service station on FM 102 Tuesday evening. Ed jabbed a large nail into the calf of his leg and the wound bled profusely. He was taken to the local clinic

for treatment. The wound is not believed to be serious...

Mrs. Q.M. Peterson of Sheridan had a recent successful fishing trip to Port Aransas. Mrs. Peterson brought in a nice 17-1/2 pound King Mackerel that gave her quite a battle...

Mrs. Robert A. Merrifield of Wharton and Charles O. Black of Houston announced the approaching marriage of their daughter, Donna Lee, to Charles Martin Stephens, son of Mr. & Mrs. Charles D. Stephens Jr. of Eagle Lake. The wedding is scheduled for Sept. 22 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Eagle Lake.

Dec. 14, 1950

Mrs. Robert Cole, manager of the Cole Theatre, has announced that the theatre will change ownership sometime in Jan. The theatre is being bought by Mr. & Mrs. H.C. Johnson, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Brocaw and Mr. & Mrs. R.B. Brocaw, all of Sedan, Kansas. Mrs. Johnson and Robert Brocaw are children of Mr. & Mrs. R.B. Brocaw...

The Eagle Lake Elementary School will present "The Legend of the Snow Man" for the Parent-Teachers Association at their Christmas meeting. The cast includes: the Snowman (who comes to life if a child does a good deed on the day before Christmas), Tommy Moore; John Carroll (a very selfish boy who cannot be told anything), Alan Causey; Mary Carroll (John's sister), Bernice Kocich; news boy (a very poor boy), Gus Mienke; Mother, Vivian Herman; The Wooden Soldiers, Miss Wozencraft's pupils; the Snowball Dance, Mrs. Epps' pupils; Christmas clowns and snowflake sprites, Mrs. Lange's pupils; Dance of the Imps, Mrs. Mun-

(See 24 & 48, Page 4)

To THE EDITOR & YOU

To all FFA supporters

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to the 1999 Rice FFA Show and Sale which will be held on Saturday, Jan. 16, at Rice High School Ag facilities located at the school.

The show will begin promptly at 8 a.m. with the swine entries followed by lambs, heifers and steers, respectively.

Lunch will be available between 11 a.m. and 12:50 p.m. Catered barbecue plates will be \$5 each.

The FFA's sale will begin at 1 p.m. The show and sale will take place in the covered and heated barn, so we

don't anticipate weather being a factor. If you are unable to attend the sale and would rather make a donation, please send it to: United Buyers, Mr. Fred Grahmann, Drawer 338, Altair, Texas 77412.

I would like to encourage you to come out to the show and sale and see the FFA members and their projects. They have been caring and working with these animals since the beginning of school and would like to exhibit them to the public.

Scott Bittner
Chapter President

'Thanks to Helping Hands'

I would like to take this opportunity to say "thanks so much" to the Helping Hands Program and Lynn Ellis.

I'm very grateful and thankful this Christmas because my grandma's still

here, and it's good to know that there are still caring people out there willing to help.

Thanks again,
Muriel Fuller and Family

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