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To The Editor & You

Class of 1999 says 'thanks'

Friends of the Class of '99

The Class of 1999 would like to thank all the parents and friends that worked at Rice Project Graduation held at Rice High School after graduation.

Thanks also to those who helped

before, during and after this project.

We would like to thank all of you who contributed prizes and put a lot of hard work into this project, because without your help it would not have been a huge success or fun.

It was really great to see the sen-

iors together as a whole class before each left to go their separate ways.

We are really grateful to have such loving parents and friends.
Thanks to all.

1999 Rice Project Graduation

Legislature adjourns after passing teacher pay raise, tax cuts

With the exception of school vouchers, the 76th Texas Legislature adjourned May 31 with Gov. George W. Bush getting the major items on his wish list: teacher pay raises and school property tax cuts.

Among other legislation that passed both houses was a \$98 billion



State Capitol Highlights

By Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

state budget and a bill deregulating the residential and commercial electricity markets.

Authorized by Sen. David Sibley, R-Waco, Senate Bill 7 will allow customers to choose their electric service provider. The legislation, which awaits the signature of Gov. Bush, will take effect Jan. 1, 2002.

Sibley said passage of the legislation signals "the era for the captive consumer is over in Texas."

Home-Building Program Passes

The 76th Texas legislature unanimously passed legislation to help low-income Texans build their own homes with their own labor.

Senate Bill 1287, or the "Texas Bootstrap Home Builder Loan Program," was authored by Sen. Eddie Lucio, D-Brownsville, and sponsored in the House by Rep. Rene Oliveira, D-Brownsville.

The new law provides \$5.6 million for loans of up to \$25,000 per family. Recipients will be families that agree to help build their own home.

"The bootstrap program is a radical departure from traditional government housing programs and is a program based on opportunity and individual initiative," said John Henneberger, co-director of the non-profit Texas Low Income Housing Information Service, which helped draft the legislation.

House Urban Affairs Chairman, Rep. Bill Carter of Fort Worth, said the program will "encourage very low income families to help solve their housing needs and get back into the economic mainstream of our state."

Higher VA Loans Approved

A new law passed by the Texas Legislature more than triples maximum housing loans for Texas veterans to \$150,000.

Texas Land Commissioner David Dewhurst, chairman of Land Board, who announced the increase, said the higher cap, combined with 5.75% interest rates on 15-year loans, makes the program user-friendly for Texas veterans.

Dewhurst proposed the larger loan limits to the Legislature, and his proposal became law under Senate Bill 1509 by Sen. Carlos Truan, D-Corpus Christi.

Eligible veterans now can get a

single, low-interest loan to buy a home, Dewhurst said. "Previously, we could only loan our Texas veterans \$45,000, which won't buy many homes on today's market. And this program is self-funding, so it won't cost taxpayers a dime," Dewhurst said.

"We can never repay them for all their sacrifices, but with a little ingenuity, we can help them buy good homes and keep their monthly payments affordable."

Loan details and eligibility requirements are available toll-free at 1-800-252-8387.

Lobby Reports Questioned

In 1999, 117 people who filed as lobbyists with the Texas Ethics Commission reported a maximum of "\$0" for one or more lobby contracts.

"While it is noble of hired guns to engage in charitable acts, the vast majority of these purportedly free services benefit well-heeled corporate clients that do not appear to require *pro bono* services," stated a May 26 report by the government watchdog group Texans For Public Justice.

Other Highlights

Texas students posted a record passing rate on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) exam this spring with 78% of the approximately 1.8 million students tested passing all parts of the exam. That passing rate, which reflects students in both regular and special education programs, is up from 73% passing in 1998 and 53% in 1994, Texas Education Commissioner Mike Moses said.

After seven years as Texas Banking Commissioner, Catherine Ghiglieri last week resigned from office to go into private business. She played a major role in bringing about banking reform.

University of Texas employees will get bigger paychecks if voters approve a constitutional amendment to let the University of Texas system spend earnings from a more than \$7 billion endowment.

Houston attorney Marc Murr has dropped a \$520 million claim for his role in the state's \$17.3 billion settlement with the tobacco industry. Federal prosecutors are investigating Murr's role.

Let's Look Back...

24 & 48 YEARS AGO

Nov. 30, 1973

The home of Mr. & Mrs. M.E. Isenhower, on the county line between Eagle Lake and Lissie, was named the winner of the "Yard of the Month". The award is sponsored by Andersons of Eagle Lake and Chesterville. The R.F. Spaniel home won the award in Oct.; the Howard Wiese, home which is near the Isenhower home on the county line road, won the award for Nov. ...

Eagle Lake's newest business, Lake Lumber Company, will hold (See 24 & 48, Page 4)

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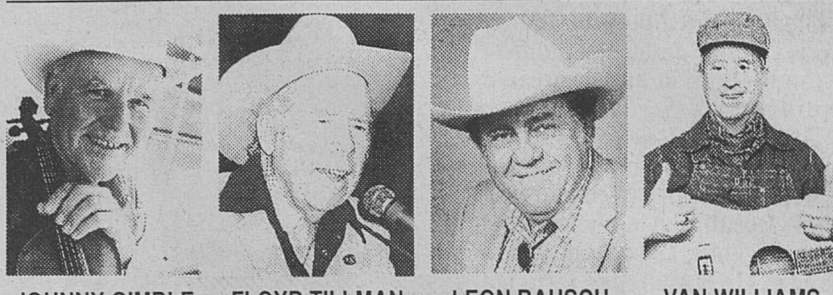
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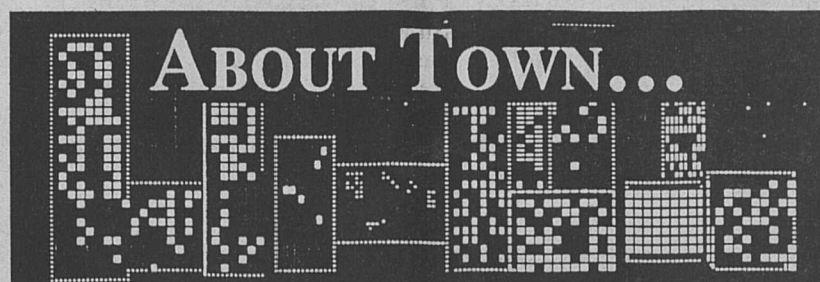
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•Wharton County Junior College presented the following students with department awards or scholarships at the college's annual Achievement Awards ceremony: LeShon Dromgoole of Eagle Lake who received a Phi Theta Kappa Award; and William Henry of Eagle Lake who received the College's Criminal Justice Award.

•Jill Satsky, daughter of Edward and Judy Satsky of Eagle Lake, made the Dean's Honor Roll for the College of Science at Texas A&M University, College Station.

Jill completed the spring 1999 semester with a 4.9 grade point average. She is currently a senior at Texas

A&M majoring in biology and minor-ing in chemistry.

•Glenn Dromgoole, son of Fulton and Frances Dromgoole of Eagle Lake, attended the State Solo & Ensemble Contest in San Marcos Saturday, May 29.

He received a Division II rating and a silver medal for his performance of Haydn's Sonata in G, the Presto Movement. Glenn is a member of the Rice High School Band and will be a graduate in the year 2000. He participated in the 1999 Piano Guild at Wharton County Junior College and received a certificate and pin for the local division. He performed three pieces by Haydn, Bach and Kabalevsky from memory. Glenn is the student of Vickie Brooks of El Campo.

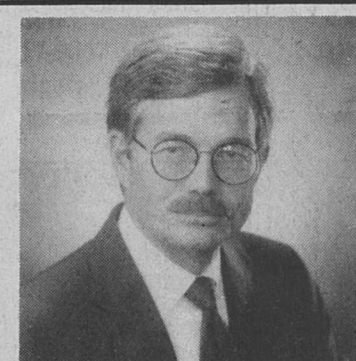
•Congratulations to the following Rice Lady Raiders for being chosen to the Second Team All-District Softball team: Shelley Boenisch and Amy Moore. Receiving Honorable Mention were Stacy Schneider, Amalie Kucherka and Augustina Ortiz.

•Leon D. Taylor-Davis, son of Lillie Taylor of Eagle Lake, received an associate degree from Marion Military Institute. Following graduation, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. Leon earned the commission in two years.

•Wharton County Junior College recognized a number of area students who were named to the Dean's List for earning at least a 3.5 grade point average, out of a possible perfect 4.0, in all work completed during at least 12 semester hours: LeShon Dromgoole, Shara L. Glasier, William J. Henry, Jaclyn L. Schmitt, Connie R. Webb and Tiffany L. Wilkerson of Eagle Lake; Andrea R. Machac of Sheridan; and Valerie E. Drlik, Valerie A. Korenek and Delana R. Smith of Garwood.

•How long is too long to wait to put siding on his home?

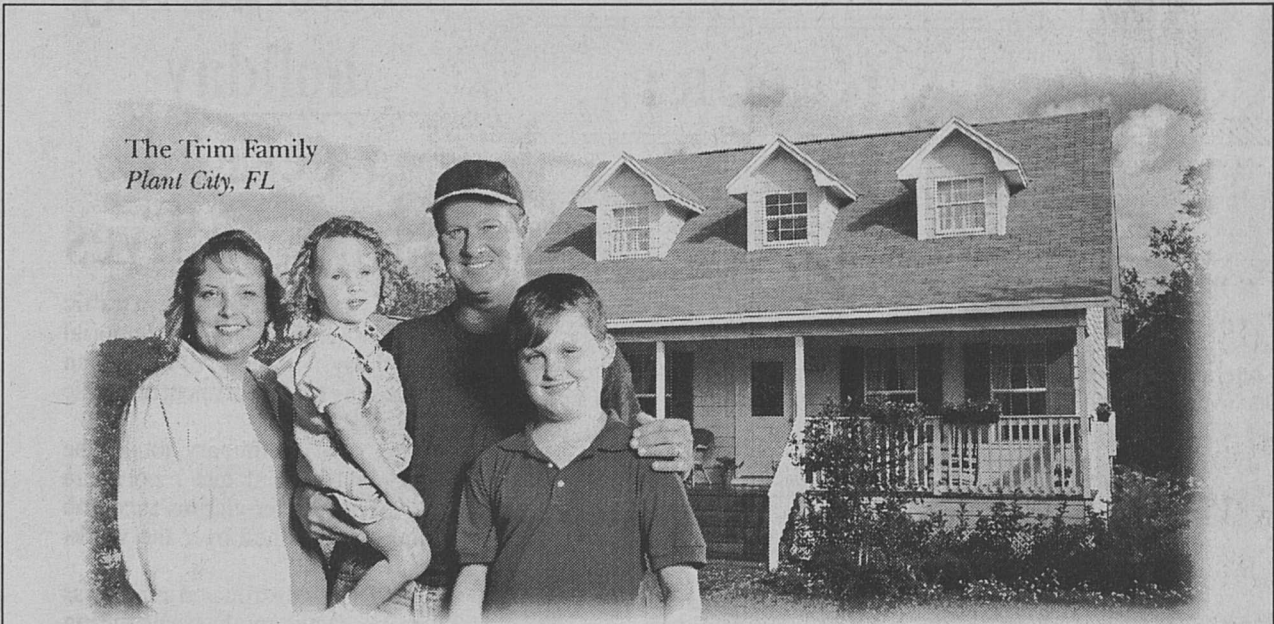
Well, Larry Contreras found out (See Town, Page 3)



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