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House Education Committee Chair Grusendorf Loses Primary

AUSTIN — Statewide voter turnout in the March 7 primaries was only 9 percent — the lowest primary turnout in more than 15 years, according to the secretary of state's elections division.

Nevertheless, one race for a Texas House district seat in the Republican primary packed an immediate statewide wallop.

In that race, state Rep. Kent Grusendorf, R-Arlington, lost by a wide margin to Diane Patrick, a former member of the State Board of Education and former Arlington school board trustee.

Grusendorf is current chair of the House Public Education Committee. (He had not resigned as of press time.)

He also is a member of the powerful, tax-writing Ways and Means Committee and is the 12th most senior member of the 150-seat Texas House.

An interpretation of the loss: Grusendorf's district opted for a new,

education-oriented state representative, given his failure to lead fellow lawmakers to solve school finance or the closely linked issue of property tax reform.

Since the late 1980s, the Legislature has been subject to intensifying and often competing pressures from anti-tax and pro-education groups to change the state's tax system. After all, taxes can't be cut, hiked or reshaped without hurting some important constituent.

The tax system, fashioned over the past 170 years by a maze of laws and court decisions, depends increasingly on local ad valorem taxes for revenue. This dependence pits local taxing entities against each other and property owners against the many taxing entities individually and/or collectively.

Taxes and education turned Grusendorf's work into a juggling act. Now, Patrick will occupy Grusendorf's place — but not his high-profile committee assignments — in a legislature on which the Texas Supreme Court

has placed a June 1 deadline to reshape the state's property tax system. Lawmakers must reform the system until it is fair enough to satisfy the Texas Constitution's mandate that local taxing authorities have the power to set their own tax rates.

Two decades ago, state revenue paid 70 percent of a school district's budget while local ad valorem tax revenue made up the other 30 percent. Now, the state pitches in about 30 percent, leaving school districts to make up the other 70 percent. That leaves poorer school districts no choice but to set property tax rates at the maximum of \$1.50 per \$100 valuation.

Friedman, Strayhorn take names

Texas' two independent candidates for governor, state comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn and writer-entertainer Richard S. "Kinky" Friedman wasted no time in launching efforts to

gather enough signatures to get on the November ballot.

Both are using grassroots groups across the state to collect the needed 45,540 signatures to qualify for a spot on the ballot. They have until May 11 to complete the job. The secretary of state's elections divisions must verify signatures. To count, a signature must belong to a registered voter who did not vote in either of the party primaries or ensuing runoffs.

Party voters pick Perry and Bell

Incumbent Republican Gov. Rick Perry and former U.S. Congressman Chris Bell of Houston, a Democrat, won their party primaries and will face off in the November election.

It could be a four-way race if the Strayhorn and Friedman petitions pass muster.

Governor asks for promised aid

An estimated 400,000 people, including 38,000 public school students, restarted their lives in Texas after hurricanes Katrina and Rita last year, and Texas has not received the bulk of the federal aid promised in the aftermath of those disasters.

Gov. Perry appealed to the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee for a promised but undelivered \$2 billion.

Richards diagnosed with cancer

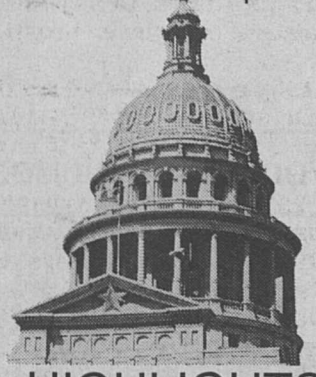
Former Gov. Ann Richards announced that she has been diagnosed with esophageal cancer and will undergo treatment at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. Richards, 72, served as governor from 1991 to 1995.

Huge wildfire hits Panhandle

Wind gusts up to 60 mph exacted

TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION

State Capital



HIGHLIGHTS

By Ed Sterling

erbad wildfires that tore through parched grasslands near the Texas Panhandle city of Borger March 12. Texas Forest Service officials estimated the burned areas at more than 660,000 acres and the number of fire-related fatalities at seven.

Let's Look Back...

24 & 48 YEARS AGO

March 11, 1982
Miss Leslie Harrison, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Harrison Jr., successfully auditioned for the Texas Baptist All-State Choir...

Lettering for the first time at Texas A&I was Jane Dostal, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dostal of Eagle Lake...

Rice High School cagers Gloria Amos and Mablean Bluntson were named to the All-District girl's basketball team...

Alex Ramirez turned in another fine pitching performance over Yoakum...

Funeral services were held Feb. 29 for Robert H. (Bob) Jones a former resident of this community...

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Lujan of Eagle Lake announced the arrival of a son born Feb. 19 at Eagle Lake Community Hospital...

George Ernest Hausler, 72, passed away on March 5 in Rosenberg. Funeral services were held March 7...

Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. McInteer announced the marriage of their daughter, Marcy Ann to Harvey W. Popp...

John Fella, 96, father of Mrs. Clyde Farthing, passed away March 8...

Jack and Margie Hlavinka of Lissie announced the birth of a son, Matthew Dean, born Feb. 22 at Gulf Coast Medical Center in Wharton...

Taking part in the OEA Area contest were Rice High School OEA members Carmen Schneider, Elva Ann Romo, Alicia Gonzales, Eve Thomas, France Cortez, Chrisy Mayes, Sharla Popp, Gloria Amos,

Patty Stiles, Barbara Ross, Denise Hyek, Arie Hewitt and Pam Cranek...

Mr. and Mrs. Billy Lee became the happy parents of a baby boy, Christopher William Denn Lee on March 3...

Winners of trophies in the Boling Tennis Tourney were Cindy Rodriguez, Jerri Clipson, Ricky Miller and Jeffrey Berger...

March 13, 1958

Eight Girl Scout members of Troop 4 received the coveted Curved Bar Award. They were Annette Hurley, Barbara Foster, Vivian Priest, Barbara Boggess, Frances Sunderman,

Jo Ann Gause, Dianne Dowdy and Mary Ann Reese...

Rev. Parke Smith was elected president of the Eagle Lake Little Theatre with Mary Yeager as secretary, Harold Thomas, treasurer, and Hargrove Smith, publicity director...

Miss Rachel Anne Terrell and Kenneth Lynn Powell were united in marriage at the bride's parents' home on Feb. 28...

Funeral services for George Andrias, father of Mrs. Anton Duyka, were held last week from the Triska Funeral Home in El Campo...

Miss Mary Carolyn Nash married Delbert Gene Sanders in the

First Baptist Church in Eagle Lake on March 1...

Bennie Blair has been appointed the instructor for the National Rifle Association. To become an instructor a person has to have very extensive training and handling with rifles, and safety of the firearms...

Miss Janet Frnka, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Frnka, celebrated her sixth birthday with a wiener roast March 10...

Funeral services were held for John Jack Waddell Sr., 66, March 12. Interment was in the Myrtle Cemetery in Rock Island.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Friends and Family,
This year I will be participating in the FUN and EXCITING community activity — the American Cancer Society (ACS) Relay for Life.

This is my second year now, only last year I was unable to do the walk...I was very, very sick at the time of the walk. However, I did help raise money!

The relay is a unique way to raise money and awareness for the ACS. I'm writing this letter in hopes of your support for my efforts. Because cancer has affected us all in one way or another, I have decided to participate in the Relay for Life, sponsored by several area businesses and the ACS. I'm asking you to support me in the effort by making a donating to the ACS.

The Relay for Life is an all night walk/run event involving teams of 8-10 members who will keep at least one member on the track for a scheduled period of time. The event will take place at the Columbus High School track on Friday, April 21 from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Saturday, April 22. Hundreds of people will be joining in the fight against cancer.

Our team's goal is to raise money for research. By making a check payable to the ACS and returning it to me, together we can make a difference! There is no finish line until we find a cure! Relay is about being a community that takes up the fight!

Thank you in advance for your support! I you have any questions or would like to take part in this exciting event call 979-732-6635 (day), 979-732-9212 (evening) or 979-942-0678 (cell).

Your donations may be mailed to 1725 FM 949, Alleyton, TX 78935. (Luminaries can also be purchased for \$5 each).

Sincerely,
Stacy Cardenas

Texas Czechs To Hold Concert In LaGrange

Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 25 to attend an outstanding performance by the Dallas Czech Concert Orchestra. The orchestra will play from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the beautiful Texas Czech HCC Sanford Schmid Amphitheater.

The Dallas Czech Concert Orchestra is a volunteer band comprised of around 30 semi-professional and accomplished musicians who enjoy playing the music of Central Europe. The repertoire consists primarily of Czech and some German music, which includes polkas, waltzes, marches, lancers, and Volksmusik.

The instrumentation of the band is European in style. This includes tenor horns and flugelhorn, which produce a distinctive, mellow sound. The band also includes several violins played by original members of the band.

The Dallas Czech Concert Orchestra plays each year at the State Fair of Texas for Heritage Day, previously known as Czech Day.

The band performs for Czech functions and dances at the Czech Halls in Dallas which include the SPJST, SOKOL and Czech Club (KJT/KJZT). The Czech Band performs at Senior Centers and Nursing home facilities in Dallas.

Ennis and Ft Worth where many of the attendees are of Czech ancestry. The band plays at most of the SOKOL SLET Annual Athletic Competitions and Exhibitions held throughout Texas.

The band has played for special Czech events in Houston, Corpus Christi, Ft. Worth, West, Caldwell, Belton, Bryan and other towns in Texas.

In 1999 the orchestra performed in the Morton H. Myerson Symphony Center in Dallas for the Dallas International Festival. The orchestra has also performed in San Antonio at the Folk Life Festival.

The hand was formed in 1964 by Sid Pokladnik who was asked to provide some Czech Music for Czech Day at the State Fair of Texas. The Czech Day Orchestra was formed and it has played at the Texas State Fair each year for over forty years.

The band included some musicians from a dance band that Sid once had.

In about 1970 the name was changed to The Dallas Czech Concert Orchestra because by then the band was performing for many different events.

In 1997 Sid Pokladnik went back to playing the trumpet in the band, and Larry Johnson, tuba player and former school band director, became the musical director for the Czech Orchestra. Sid passed away in 1999.

Larry Johnson, with his extensive background in music, is an excellent director who also scores and writes parts for some lost music.

He is adding to the musical quality and heritage started by Sid Pokladnik many years ago.

The Dallas Czech Concert Orchestra continues to promote the Czech music that is an important part of Czech culture.

The musicians' aim is to share their love for this music with appreciative audiences.

To reserve seating for the performance, call TCHCC at 1-888-785-4500, 979-968-9399 or send an Email to czechcvtv.net.

Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center is located next to the Fayette County Fairgrounds at 250 West Fairgrounds Road, La Grange, TX 78945.

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