



TUESDAY

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Murder trial, annexation issues dominate second half of year

Many news events graced the front pages of the Lamparasas Dispatch Record during 2008.

A sampling of the major happenings for the second half of the year follows.

JULY

Jeremiah John Ellison, 25, of Copperas Cove was indicted by the Lamparasas County grand jury for capital murder, making him the fourth person to be charged with the crime that resulted in the death of 31-year-old Hidi Gower of Copperas Cove.

Dr. Trampus Isom, his wife Dr. Kelli Isom and Dr. Kim Langford opened Isom Veterinary Clinic on U.S. Highway 190 for the care of big and small animals.

Lamparasas County lost three prominent citizens with the deaths of former Commissioner Edd Barefoot, former Lometa Independent School District Board member Tommy Kendrick and former Lamparasas City Councilman John Kyle Oliver.

Clementine Walker rode at the head of the Spring Ho Grand Parade after her selection as grand marshal for the annual festival.

Dentist Dr. Jay Elder opened his newly built Sulphur Springs Dental office on Central Texas Expressway.

The Lamparasas City Council unanimously selected Evan Stubbs, a local attorney, to fill the council seat left vacant by the resignation of Debbie Fuller.

Seton Highland Lakes opened Seton Lamparasas Healthcare Center, which offers family practice and weekly care from a variety of specialists.

Taylor Creek Elementary School became more of a reality after the Board of Trustees of the Lamparasas Independent School District accepted a guaranteed maximum price from Blair Williams, president of Baird/Williams Construction of Temple, the builder hired for the Kempner elementary and the new Lamparasas High School. His firm offered trustees a bid of \$9,204,173.

AUGUST

The Lometa Independent School District looked at two options after a fire gutted its alternative campus. The options considered were not reopening the campus and melding the remaining students and staff

into the main campus population, or continuing with operations. After deliberations, the board decided to close the alternative campus and move the remaining students and staff to the main campus.

Officials with First Texas Bank of Lamparasas have referred a matter to police having to do with the possible misappropriation of funds. Lamparasas Police Department officials confirmed that local authorities were asked to review the matter.

The matter was then referred to the FBI for review.

The Lamparasas City Council set a proposed tax rate of 39 cents per \$100 valuation for the 2008-09 fiscal year. The proposed rate was lower than the rollback figure of 39.0773 cents, but it exceeds the current city tax rate of 37.72 cents per \$100.

Kempner City Council approved the city's proposed 2008-09 fiscal-year budget which represents a 27 percent increase over the current budget. Funding will be included for a new parks department, with about \$47,000 designated for initial parkland development.

Lamparasas Police Department officials have warned consumers that mail scams are on the increase. Several residents received notices in the mail that they had won large sums of money. "If you think it's too good to be true, then it probably is," said a local official.

Lometa Mayor David Ivey resigned his post to accept a job that he said would conflict with his city responsibilities. Ivey served as mayor for about nine months.

The capital murder trial of Donald Gower ended with a guilty verdict in 27th District Court. Gower was charged in the death of his wife, Hidi, stemming from a murder-for-hire plot on July 4, 2007. He received a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole.

A fire of undetermined origin, accompanied by what were described as explosions, sent an area man to Rollins Brook Community Hospital. Firemen were dispatched to U.S. Highway 190 East, where they battled a blaze that destroyed two mobile homes.

Enrollment numbers for the beginning of the school year for the Lamparasas Independent School District and a number of other rural

school districts across the state were down from the previous year. Much of that was attributed to high gasoline prices driving folks back to bigger cities.

Bill Haisler, 67, a board member for the Lamparasas ISD, died. He was elected to his first term in 2002.

SEPTEMBER

After more than four decades in the pharmacy business, Max Berry retired. Most recently, Berry worked at the Wal-Mart Pharmacy where he had been since he closed his own business, The Pill Box, in 1993.

Lamparasas resident, community volunteer and a former Jarrell ISD board member Linda Floerke was named to fill the seat of Bill Haisler on the Lamparasas Independent School District Board of Trustees after Haisler's death in August.

In an effort to reduce utility costs at the courthouse and the Lamparasas County Office Building, the county considered -- and eventually nixed -- a four-day-a-week work schedule after appointing a committee to look into the matter.

Texas Department of Transportation officials met with members of the Spring Ho Committee to discuss the possible modification of the route the grand parade takes each year due to planned street renovations.

Kempner City Council took the first step to annex additional land into the city after approving a resolution accepting a request for annexation of 14.45 acres and adopting an annexation schedule. Owners of Kempner Iron and Metal submitted a request to be annexed voluntarily.

With 73 percent of the student body voting not to change the nearly 70-year-old alma mater, Lamparasas High School students vetoed the substitution of one word for another, and the school song will remain as it was written.

The Lamparasas City Council approved a resolution to initiate the annexation of 411 acres of land, including property on County Roads 1025, 1024 and part of 1020, and the new city sports park to be built along Farm-to-Market Road 580 West. The resolution directed city staff to prepare a municipal service plan and scheduled several public hearings on the matter.



The historic Brooks Supermarket building on Courtyard Square was demolished to make way for an addition to the new Lamparasas County Office Building.

The Board of Trustees of the Lamparasas Independent School District approved a tax rate and budget for the 2008-09 school year at the same \$1.50 per \$100 valuation as the previous year.

Lamparasas emergency officials encouraged residents to prepare for Hurricane Ike in the event that it passed over Central Texas.

OCTOBER

John Robert Martinez, one of four men charged with capital murder in the July 2007 death of 31-year-old Hidi Ann Gower of Copperas Cove, had his indictment for capital murder amended, and he pleaded guilty to criminal conspiracy to commit capital murder. He was sentenced to 30 years in the

Texas Department of Criminal Justice Institutional Division.

Without additional funding, officials of the Boys & Girls Club of Lamparasas said the future looks bleak for the center that serves up to 100 youths each day during the summer and near that number throughout the school year.

Lamparasas Mission volunteers worked to ready their new facility on East Fourth Street for occupancy to house the organization that assists needy residents.

Lamparasas Independent School District Trustee Linda Floerke volunteered to sit on the Lamparasas Economic Development Foundation board. She is in favor of a multi-instructional college campus

in Lamparasas.

During a recent Lometa City Council, a letter of resignation was accepted from Chief of Police Gary Farley, and his position was declared vacant.

Several residents of County Roads 1020 and 1025 shared with the Lamparasas City Council their opposition to the proposed annexation of about 410 acres west of the city limits.

For the second time in about two months, the city of Lometa found itself without a mayor, as acting mayor Doug Brister vacated the position. As mayor pro tem, Brister was appointed to the mayor's post during a called meeting.

Please see MURDER, page 11

Longtime restaurateur, IraDell Storm, dies at 97

Robbie IraDell Storm, co-founder of Storm's Restaurants, died Jan. 1, 2009, following a short illness. She was 97.

Funeral services were Jan. 4 at First Street Church of Christ, with burial at Oak Hill Cemetery. In Mrs. Storm's honor, Storm's Drive-in of Lamparasas closed for the service.

Mrs. Storm was born in 1911 on a ranch near Pidcoke in Coryell County, the daughter of pioneer Central Texans Ira and Odella Upton.

At age 8, she helped drive a herd of cattle from Gatesville to Izora, walking barefoot for some 25 miles.

After graduating from Gatesville High School in 1928, she earned her teaching certificate at Abilene Christian College. In 1930, Mrs. Storm began a career as a public schoolteacher, working at various schools in Coryell and Lamparasas counties, including Evant, Plainview, Slater, Peabody, Harmon and Adamsville.

During her summers off, she worked on her bachelor's degree at Tarleton State, and later at Southwest Texas State Teacher's College, where one of her classmates was future President Lyndon Johnson. In 1940, she married Jim Storm.

The couple built the first Storm's restaurant in Lamparasas in 1950. Then known as Dairy Cue, the old-fashioned drive-in became a popular hangout.

Several times, Mrs. Storm waited on Elvis Presley, who in 1959 was a soldier stationed at Fort Hood.

Storm's now has locations in Burnet, Hamilton, Kingsland and Marble Falls, as well as the original Storm's in Lamparasas, where Mrs. Storm continued to work keeping the books until she was 93.

She gained national recognition in 2004 when Scripps Howard News Service carried a story about her annual birthday ritual at Enchanted Rock. Mrs. Storm first climbed the 425-foot-high granite boulder on her 80th birthday in 1991, and continued each year until she was 96.

A lifelong member of the Church of Christ, she taught Sunday School many years. As a Meals on Wheels volunteer for the Lamparasas Senior Center, Mrs. Storm volunteered into her early 90s.

She loved to travel and visited all 50 states as well as Mexico, Canada and Panama, where she steered a boat through the Panama Canal.

She is survived by two sons, Robbis and John Doyne; five grandchildren, Kim Vorndran,



IraDell Storm

David Storm, Laura Storm, Josh Storm and Ginny Storm; five great-grandchildren, Becky and Noah Storm, Emma and Sarah Vorndran, and Zachary Gfeller; four siblings, Loraine Murrah, Bonnie Davis, Janese Lancaster and Conrad Upton; two brothers-in-law, O.L. Frazer and Ted Davis; two sisters-in-law, Iberia and Pat Upton; two daughters-in-law, Miriam and Dolores Storm; a granddaughter-in-law, Amanda Storm; two grandsons-in-law, Ronnie Vorndran and Marc Gfeller; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Mrs. Storm was preceded in death by her husband in 1985. Arrangements by Sneed Funeral Chapel of Lamparasas.



Lamparasas County Relay for Life raised thousands of dollars as well as an awareness of the disease in the community.

WEATHER
Date High Low Rain
Jan. 1 74 49
Jan. 2 80 46
Jan. 3 82 39
Jan. 4 60 35
2008 rainfall to date: 0 inches. Same date last year: 0 inches. Courtesy of KCYL Radio, a National Weather Service observer station.

Museum
Lamparasas County Museum Foundation Inc. will hold its annual meeting on Monday at 6 p.m. at 303 S. Western St. for its general membership and board of directors. Agenda items include a review of 2008 accomplishments and goal-setting for 2009. Presentations will be made to participants of the 2008 Christmas Tour of Homes.

LEDC study
The Lamparasas Economic Development Corp. will offer a retail trade study, "Are you maximizing your sales potential?" to help local businesses find new sales avenues. The event is free for local merchants and is set Jan. 15 at 6 p.m. at the Lamparasas High School cafeteria. For information, contact Cherry Hargrove at 734-0899.

Project Grad
The committee for Project Graduation for the Lamparasas High School Class of 2009 will meet Monday at 6 p.m. at the Hanna Springs Intermediate School library. Parents interested in working to raise funds and plan for the all-night, drug-free, alcohol-free party for seniors are encouraged to attend.

Tour, meeting
The public is invited to take a tour Monday of the new Lamparasas High School campus under construction. Anyone interested should be at the Lamparasas Independent School District parking lot at 4:30 p.m. A bus will provide transportation. The tour will be followed by a meeting of the Lamparasas ISD Board of Trustees at 6 p.m.

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