

Deaths

Mrs. Luce

Cathy D. Harriman Luce, 62, passed away Sept. 6, 2010, in a Corpus Christi hospital. Funeral services were conducted Sept. 9 at the Holmgreen Mortuary Chapel in Alice. Graveside services will be Sept. 10 at 2 p.m. in the Angleton Cemetery in Angleton. Mrs. Luce was born April 14, 1948, in Coffeetown, Kansas, to Lester and Margie Mills Harriman. She worked 26 years in school education and was preceded in death by her mother.

She is survived by her husband, Earl Hoyt Luce of Orange Grove, a former Lampasas High School principal; her father, Lester Harriman and wife Phyllis of Bartlesville, Okla.; one daughter, Amanda L. Ardoin and husband Josh of Orange Grove; one son, Travis Luce of Karnes City; one brother, Karl Harriman and wife Susie of Angleton; two grandchildren, Beaux and Joli; and numerous nieces and nephews. Arrangements by Holmgreen Mortuary Inc.

daughter Sherry Bonds and husband Paul of Heath; grandchildren J.L. McDonald III, David Lee McDonald and Austin Bonds; two brothers, his twin John McDonald of Leroy and Harold McDonald of Irving; and numerous other relatives. Memorial donations may be made to Gambrell Street Baptist Church, 1616 W. Gambrell St., Fort Worth, TX 76115, or to a favorite charity.

Mr. Vansau

Charles L. Vansau, 71, a former co-owner and funeral director of Briggs-Gamel Funeral Home in Lampasas, died Wednesday at his Austin residence. Services will be Saturday at 10 a.m. at Sneed Funeral Chapel.

Other details were pending at press time Thursday.

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Mr. Williamson

Funeral services for George Wesley Williamson Jr. will be Sept. 11, 2010, at 2 p.m. at Sneed Funeral Chapel. Burial will follow at Hines Chapel Cemetery near Adamsville with military honors. Visitation will be Sept. 10 from 6-8 p.m. at Sneed Funeral Chapel.

Mr. Williamson, age 86, died Sept. 6 at his daughter's home in Palestine.

He was born April 6, 1924, in Conroe, and was adopted by George W. Williamson and Ruby May Pursnell Williamson. He married Mary Frances Johnson on Jan. 8, 1947.

Mr. Williamson was a chemical engineer for Monsanto. He had lived in Lampasas County for 37 years and was a member of Pearl Church of Christ.

He also served during World War II as an Army paratrooper.

Survivors include three daughters, Charlene Williamson of Lampasas, Yanie Brewer of Austin and Sunshine Capps of Bradford; one grandson, William Shane Haire of Buda; and one great-grandson, William Rette Haire, also of Buda.

Mr. Williamson's wife preceded him in death in 2004.

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Author adjusts to market changes

Continued from page 1 produced title and cover design. Each member of the program receives a copy of the book before summer vacation begins.

The project teaches not only creativity and adaptability, but also the more quotidian responsibilities of a writer — like meeting deadlines — Kearby said.

"So if they want to be writers they have a leg up," the author said of Collaborative Novella Project entrants, "because they understand the process of how a book comes to market."

As reading habits change and book-buying populations age, that marketing process continues to evolve dramatically, Kearby said. As part of efforts to cut costs and attract readers, mass-market publishers and the writers whose works they publish are tinkering with everything from the size of paper

used for books to the types of sentences that fill the novels' pages.

The days of successful authors who write page-long, adjective-filled descriptions of stories' settings likely have ended, Kearby believes. People still love compelling stories, though, the writer said, and he thinks authors can succeed if they catch readers' attention immediately and keep them turning the pages of their books.

With its gunfights, rugged characters and vivid contrasts of heroes and villains, the Western genre provides Kearby plenty of fodder for crafting adventurous plot lines. Inspired in part by a family background in ranch work and rodeos, he draws his fiction material from true historical accounts more than anywhere else.

A novel that focuses on Western blood feuds, for example, was inspired by the experiences of the Olive family, who ranched in frontier-

era Williamson County.

"It's pretty easy to write when these things actually happened," Kearby said.

The author devotes about half of his six-month-per-book writing time to historical research. By familiarizing himself with the people — white, Mexican-American and American Indian — who populated the frontier, Kearby learns the issues they faced and develops strategies for communicating to his readers' those 19th-century Westerners' struggles, failures and triumphs.

"To be a good writer you have to be a voracious reader," Kearby said. "If you don't read, you'll never be a good writer. It's just that simple."

A historical perspective helps the Texas author develop his favorite themes: hypocrisy in society, cultural misunderstandings and the problems that result from trying to impose one's way of life on others.

Kearby tries to ensure that his works reflect multiple — often conflicting — perspectives fairly, and he enjoys reflecting on concepts of fate and free will.

"Can a man escape his own time, or is he doomed to live within his cultural confines?" is a key question Kearby's works raise, the author said. "That's a huge theme, and it's one that kids really relate to."

Although the United States continues to urbanize and to adopt a faster pace of life, the conflicts and characters central to Western action novels remain relevant for young book fans, Kearby said.

"Kids still like to read about Indians," he said. "Kids still like to read about cowboys. Kids still like to read about horses."

Actually, as long as they enjoy completing books about anything, Kearby knows he has succeeded.

Voters to decide school tax rate

Continued from page 1

Lampasas ISD will generate about \$1.7 million more revenue — including a state contribution of about \$500,000 — in 2010-2011 than it otherwise would have, and the district will assess a property tax of \$1.46 per \$100 valuation.

That tax total would consist of a maintenance and operations rate of \$1.17 — 13 cents higher than the 2009-2010 M&O rate — and an interest and sinking tax rate of \$0.29 — 17 cents lower than the 2009-2010 I&S rate.

Passage of the TRE would lower LISD's total tax rate four cents from the 2009-2010 rate of \$1.50. The election cannot remove the district's self-imposed tax cap of \$1.50 per \$100 valuation.

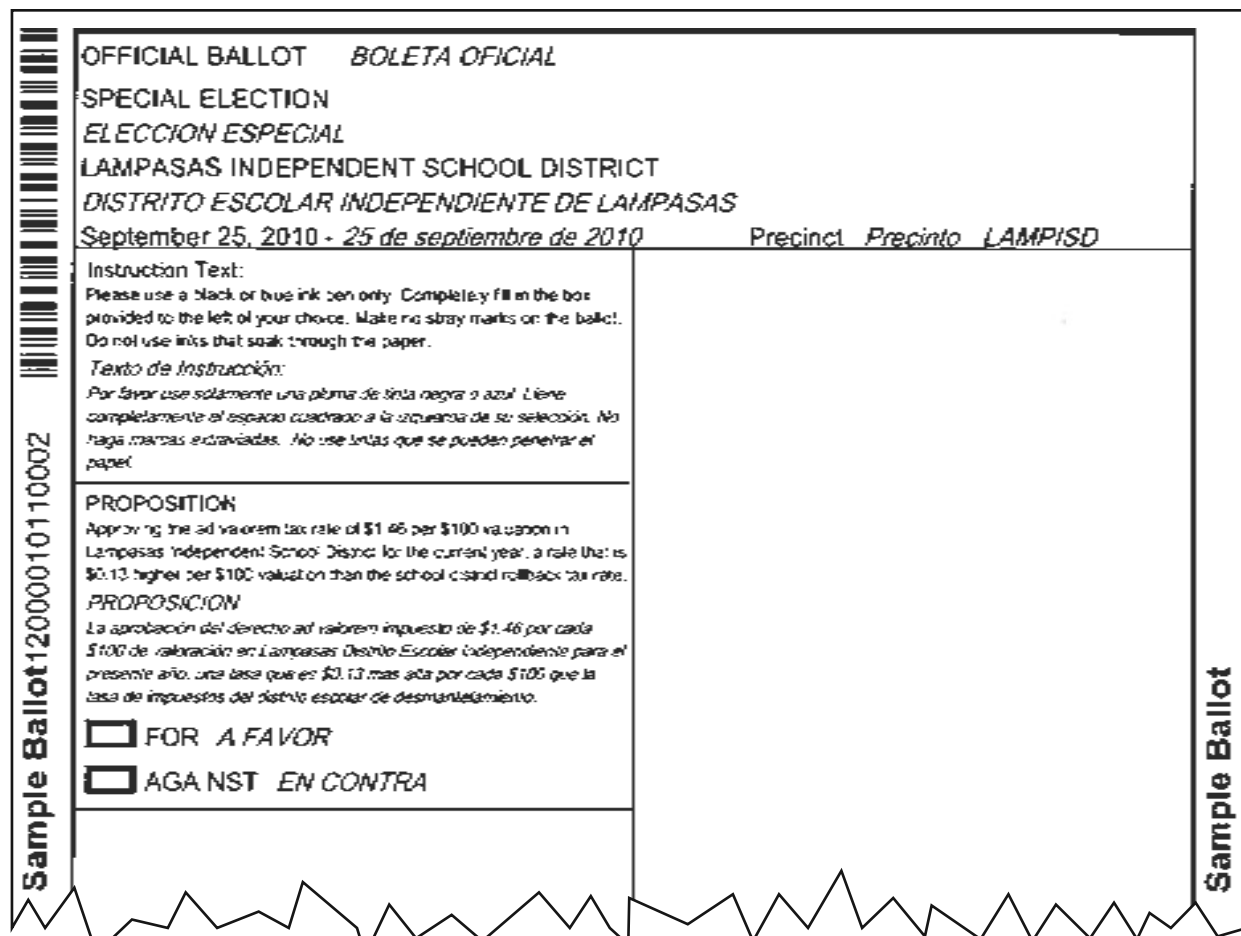
Because property values have increased since fiscal year 2009-2010, however, a four-cent drop in the tax rate would not decrease the overall tax bill for an LISD resident with a property of average value.

If the TRE passes, taxes will increase \$78.13 for property valued at the district average of \$120,676.

If voters reject the TRE, the Lampasas ISD's overall tax rate will drop from \$1.50 to \$1.33. A tax rate of \$1.33 will save the average taxpayer about \$75 a year in school taxes compared to 2010.

In voting against a \$1.46 tax rate, and against the LISD Board of Trustees' call for a TRE, board member Ron Farr said using some of the district's approximately \$5 million discretionary fund balance and accelerating cuts of excess personnel can balance the LISD budget without a TRE.

A Texas Association of School Boards staffing survey, Farr said in an interview with the Dispatch Record, showed that LISD has about 35 positions it can cut, which Farr said will save the district about \$925,000 per year once the cuts



A sample ballot for the Lampasas Independent School District's tax ratification election shows the wording that will face voters who participate in the election. Early voting continues weekdays through Sept. 21 at the LISD Administration Building, 207 W. Eighth St, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. -- with voting extended to 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 17. Election Day is Sept. 25.

Personnel cuts, Superintendent Randy Hoyer said, are part of a broad plan to balance the school district's budget for the next several years. By approving the TRE, voters can help LISD maximize its revenue and state funding for as long as the current state funding formulas remain in effect, Hoyer said.

Hoyer also expressed concern about using reserves to balance the district's budget. LISD has built up its level of reserves for several years, the superintendent said, adding that the district needs three months of emergency operating funds.

The TRE ballot will read "Tax Rate Rollback Election" and will instruct voters to vote either for or against "approving the ad valorem tax rate of \$1.46 per \$100 valuation in LISD for the current year, a rate that is \$0.13 higher per \$100 valuation than the school district rollback tax rate."

The ballot must read that way, said Hoyer, who added that despite the wording, the TRE will not raise the LISD tax rate.

"Though the ballot reads like there will be a tax increase if voters cast ballots 'for' the TRE, that is not the case," Hoyer said in an interview with the Dispatch Record. "The 13 cents refers to an increase in the M&O portion of the budget, but the I&S rate would drop 17 cents, for an overall tax reduction of 4 cents."

Meeting slated for work group

The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Hill Country Soil and Water Conservation District invite the public and any agencies with interest in conservation issues to participate in a Local Work Group meeting Sept. 16 at 9 a.m. in the Lampasas County Office Building meeting room.

The purpose of the meeting is to receive input from a broad range of agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals that have an interest in natural resource conditions in Burnet and Lampasas counties.

Input received will allow the Local Work Group to make recommendations about resource concerns to be addressed for county-based

funding. The recommendations will be used while implementing the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and other conservation programs offered by NRCS.

For more information, phone the USDA Service Center office in Lampasas at 556-5572, extension 3, or call the Burnet office at (512) 756-4651. Service center locations and conservation program information can be found on the NRCS Texas Web site, tx.nrcs.usda.gov.

Key Avenue work to begin

The Texas Department of Transportation will begin work soon on Key Avenue/U.S. Highway 183, TxDOT Brownwood District spokeswoman Sandra Parker announced Wednesday.

A change in statewide priorities has delayed the project for several years, Mrs. Parker said, but last month the Texas Transportation Commission awarded the \$6.6 million contract to Prater Equipment Co. Inc. of Comanche County.

Project limits will be from Avenue E to Ninth Street. Work will include utility upgrades, and a total rehabilitation of the existing pavement, storm sewer, sidewalks, and

curb and gutter. Although some preliminary off-site work on storm sewer and utilities will begin this fall, pavement work on Key Avenue will be delayed until the beginning of 2011 to minimize negative economic effects on Lampasas businesses and holiday travelers.

Because Key Avenue is Lampasas' main thoroughfare, the project will significantly affect the town, Mrs. Parker said. Information and communication are essential to completing the project successfully, the spokeswoman said.

Before any work begins, Prater Equipment, the city of Lampasas and TxDOT will hold an open meeting with business owners and members of the public to discuss the project work schedule. A date, location and time for the meeting will be announced as plans are finalized.

Ban ends

Because of recent heavy rains, the countywide ban on outdoor burning in unincorporated areas has been lifted until Sunday at 6 p.m.

For more news about the burn ban status, please check www.lampasasdispatchrecord.com or the Lampasas Dispatch Record Facebook page.

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