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-VOLUME 16, NO. 150, MONDAY, JULY 31, 2000-

****

According to Cleveland Police Officer Greg Bogany, a Romayor man is dead after a single-vehicle crash on FM 787 Friday night. Joseph Jones of Riverside Dr. in Romayor was pronounced dead on the scene after a wreck on FM 787 just inside the city limits of Cleveland after he lost control of his motorcycle, hit a culvert, and was thrown an estimated 120-150 feet. Joseph Jones of Romayor, believed to be his late 30s or early 40s, was pronounced dead on the scene by Justice of the Peace, Pct. 5, Burl Thomas. No autopsy was ordered, but a blood sample was drawn. High speed was thought have contributed to the wreck.

****

One of the best known "retired" men in Liberty County is about to open a new business. Bobby Joe Lunceford, a longtime supporter of the Liberty Opry House, will be opening The Opry House Café two nights a week. Located next door to the Liberty Opry House, the café will be open on Friday and Saturday nights, surviving a variety of food. After each show, breakfast will be offered in addition to other items such as hamburgers and homemade vanilla ice cream. Mr. Lunceford's restaurant will open for the first time this Friday and Saturday.

****

A 36-year-old Dayton man suffered minor injuries in a two-vehicle collision on FM 1960, about six miles west of the Dayton city limits, just after noon Friday. Louie Franklin Asher of Dayton told DPS Trooper Stephen Hebert he was attempting to pass an 18-wheeler on the right when it made a right turn into a driveway leading into Southern Sandblasting. Asher was taken by Liberty County EMS to Liberty-Dayton Hospital with minor injuries after his car struck the side of the rig. Trooper Hebert says Asher will be issued a citation for attempting an illegal pass.

****

Both the Dayton City Pool and the Liberty City Pool will be closing soon. The Dayton City Pool, located in Daniel Park off FM 1008 in Dayton, will close Friday. The pool there is open tomorrow through Saturday from noon to 5 p.m.. The Dayton pool will remain available for private party rentals. The final day of operation for the Liberty City pool will be Sunday, Aug. 6th. The Liberty Pool is open Wednesday through Sunday from 1-5 p.m. with additional hours of operation Thursday and Saturday from 6-8 p.m..

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 149, FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2000-

****

The Republican Candidate for Liberty County Sheriff Will Cox said yesterday that he has obtained statements from current and former employees of the *Liberty Vindicator* that indicate the newspaper's former Advertising Manager, Wanda Faulkner was the person responsible for a bogus ad which appeared in the paper on March 22nd. In a news release, Cox said he has information it was Faulkner's responsibility to correct the ad that said it was paid for by the KKK Grand Dragon. Cox said *Vindicator* management fired a reporter who admitted to tampering with the ad, Emily House, as a "scapegoat". In April, Cox filed a libel suit against the *Vindicator*, which has publicly apologized to Cox for the bogus ad.

****

Consulting Engineer Rick Nowlin told the Sam Rayburn Municipal Power Agency's Board of Directors at their Tuesday meeting that progress is being made on the more than $2 million electrical substation being built near the old National Pipe and Tube Building in Liberty. Nowlin said the project's lead contractor, Electrical Power Specialists of Houston, has been made to re-do work and add qualified staff. The first phase of the project is scheduled for completion Aug. 15th and the substation should be fully operational in October.

****

Officials in Liberty and Dayton say the water supplies in both cities are in good shape. Water Superintendent Mike Van Dyke said Liberty is currently using about 1.3 million gallons of water per day, but with two deep wells, the system is not stressed as easily as many cities in the area. City Manager Robert Ewart said Dayton water consumption for June was 37 million gallons. Water tables show no cause for concern there either.

****

Gatorfest 2000 is set for Sept. 15-17 at Ft. Anahuac Park and applications are being accepted for the Gatorfest Queen, Gatorfest Princess, and Little Gator King Pageants. Application deadline is Aug. 25. For information, call 267-4190.

****

FUNERALS: Edd Winston Collins, 88, of Hull, Services at 10 a.m. tomorrow at 1st Baptist Church in Hull. ** **Annore Janise Jr.**, 79, of Raywood, Services at 2 p.m. tomorrow at Allison Funeral Service in Liberty. **

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 148, THURSDAY, JULY 27, 2000-

****

Liberty County Sheriff's Captain Leroy Hanel said 38-year-old Richard Parker of the Romayor area is dead, after suffering stab wounds during an altercation with three men at Larry's Tavern on FM 2610 just after 9 p.m. Tuesday. Justice of the Peace Phil Fitzgerald ordered an autopsy performed. The three men, identified so far only as white males, were seen fleeing the tavern in a 1995 white Ford pickup registered to a man from Humble. At last report, they remain at large.

****

After an hour-long discussion, the Liberty City Council voted 5-2 to once again reject the preliminary plat for developer Lonnie Shivers' proposed Clayton Bayou Manufactured Home Subdivision on FM 563. Shivers presented council with a slightly modified plat since council's last rejection on April 11th. The rejection came after yet another emotional debate between Shivers and members of the Wallisville Road Homeowners Association who oppose the proposed subdivision.

****

Outdoor water use restrictions by the Trinity Bay Conservation District that serves portions of Chambers County have been relaxed slightly since being imposed last week. District customers may now water their lawns or fill home swimming pools once a week between 9 p.m. and 9 a.m. on either even or odd-numbered days depending on if the 2nd and 3rd digits of their billing account numbers are even or odd numbers. All other outdoor water use is prohibited unless a bucket is used.

****

Houston entrepreneur Henry Vo has purchased 2.5 acres of land in Liberty where Commerce Street meets Hwy 90 and plans to remodel the old Walker building which, until recently housed Hunan Garden Chinese Restaurant, in order to open a new restaurant there. Vo also plans to build a convenience store and gas station, some storage buildings and possibly a small strip center. Henry Vo hopes to begin construction by year's end.

****

FUNERALS: Georgiann Guyder Jackson, 68, of Double Bayou, Services at 10 a.m. today at Our Lady of Light Catholic Church in Anahauc. ** **Ronald B. Payne**, 72, of Dayton, Services at 2 p.m. tomorrow at Sterling Funeral Home in Dayton. **

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 147, WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2000-

****

The Sam Rayburn Municipal Power Agency Board met yesterday and tabled a request for a preferred electric rate by East Texas Asphalt of Livingston due to ongoing issues with the power agency's audit. SRMPA President Bruce Halstead said the auditing firm of KPMG is under the misconception that extending the preferred or economic development rate weakens the SRMPA's core revenue fund. Halstead said he hopes to have the audit concerns resolved through a conference call on Friday. The SRMPA was supposed to get the audit on Dec. 31st, 1999. Halstead said the agency has sufficient revenue to cover its debt.

****

In about seven weeks, residents of the Cleveland ISD will be voting on whether or not to approve $20.8 million in bonds to fund construction of a new elementary school and renovation of other campuses in the district. Cleveland School Trustees voted 6-1 at a meeting last week to set the bond election for Saturday, Sept. 16th. Cleveland ISD Superintendent Terry Myers said the district is seeking state funding in order to minimize the impact on district taxpayers, who, could see a tax rate increase of 30 cents, without state funds if the bonds are approved. Most of the bond money would be used to tear down the roughly 50-year-old Southside Elementary School and build a new facility for students in kindergarten through the 2nd grade on that site.

****

The Dayton City Council met in workshop session Monday night to discuss a preliminary budget. As part of that budget, Dayton City Manager Robert Ewart is proposing a three- percent across-the-board pay raise for all city employees, with some larger salary adjustments for key personnel. Ewart said council has not yet reached the point of setting the tax rate for the new fiscal year, but said the effective tax rate has been calculated at $.6582, a decrease compared to the current tax rate of $.6922.

****

Pre-K, kindergarten and 1st grade registration for students new to the Liberty ISD begins on Tuesday, Aug. 1st and continues through Friday Aug. 4th from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at San Jacinto Elementary on Grand Avenue in Liberty. Parents and legal guardians need to bring the student's original birth certificate, current shot record, social security card and proof of residence in the Liberty ISD. For more information, call 336-3161.

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 146, TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2000-

****

Almost two weeks after a traffic accident that sent her in critical condition to Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston by Lifeflight Helicopter, 74-year-old Dixie Donelson has died. DPS reports indicate the Silsbee woman lost control of the SUV she was driving on Hwy 105, west of Moss Hill on the morning of July 11th. Her vehicle, which was towing a camper, was destroyed by collision with two 18-wheelers. Donelson's condition showed some improvement last week, but had worsened by Friday. She died Saturday. Dixie Donelson is the 8th traffic fatality of the year in Liberty County.

****

Pavement repair work on Hwy 90 in Liberty began yesterday and is expected to continue until August 14th. Crews will be tearing out sections of pavement, starting near the river bottom area and making needed repairs to East Lane, which is west of the Hwy 146 Bypass. TxDot officials said the work on Hwy 90 is just the first phase of a much larger project that includes repairs to Hwy 105 and Hwy 321, covering a little over 27 miles, at an estimated total cost just over $738,000. Motorists are asked to exercise extra caution while the work is ongoing.

****

Dayton Police Officer Frank McCown said Ray Anthony Craven, 32, of Highlands and his family were westbound on Hwy 90 in the Dayton area Saturday around 8 p.m., when Craven's 15-year-old daughter became upset because the family refused to stop and visit the girl's grandmother. She reportedly pulled a paring knife from a shopping bag and stabbed her father in the arm. The injury was not believed life threatening. The girl is now being held in the Juvenile Detention Center of the Liberty County Jail, facing a charge of aggravated assault.

****

U.S. Congressman Jim Turner will be in Liberty County on Thursday, August 10th as part of a tour of the 19 counties in his 2nd Congressional District to hear growing concerns about the rising cost of prescription drugs. Turner will talk with constituents about the recent cancellation of prescription drug coverage for more than 5,000 East Texas seniors by several health management organizations. On Aug. 10th, Congressman Turner will be at the Bounds Pharmacy in Cleveland at 2 p.m. and at the Liberty County Courthouse in Liberty at 3:30 p.m.

****

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-VOLUME 16, NO. 145, MONDAY, JULY 24, 2000-

****

Although south Liberty County received more than an inch of rain yesterday, the burn ban remains in effect in Liberty County. County Judge Lloyd Kirkham signed the burn curtailment order, which prohibits outdoor burning unless it is done in a container that holds all combustible materials and sparks, into effect last Wednesday. Yesterday afternoon's storms caused spotted power outages throughout the area, but did not provide sufficient rain to relieve drought-like conditions. Unlike previous burn curtailment orders, burning is not being allowed with written permission from commissioners.

****

Liberty County has become the 121st county in the state of Texas to be quarantined because of the presence of Africanized honey bees. The Africanized bees were found in a trap on Highway 105, east of Cleveland. The particularly aggressive species of bee was first spotted in the United States in 1990. None of the bordering counties have detected Africanized honey bees yet.

****

New student registration begins today at Hardin High School and continues through Aug. 4th. The first day of school in the Hardin Independent School District will be Aug. 9th. Returning students will be pick up their schedules next week and Freshmen Orientation will be Thursday, Aug. 3rd. For questions, call the Hardin Independent School District at 298-2118.

****

Some familiar issues will be on the agenda when the Liberty City Council meets tomorrow night. Council members will be updated on the Sam Rayburn Municipal Power Agency. The Agency is in the process of seeking a Private Letter Ruling from the Internal Revenue Service regarding the possible tax-exempt status of the bonds it might issue. Another ongoing issue will be dealt with when the Liberty City Council considers a preliminary plat of the Clayton Bayou Subdivision. The proposed subdivision on FM 563 has been opposed by many who live in that area. The Liberty City Council will meet at 7 p.m. tomorrow at Liberty City Hall.

****

FUNERALS: James Marshall Copeland, of Raywood, 89, Services at 1 p.m. today at First Baptist Church in Devers.** **Raymond Vance Phillips,** of Fannett, 65. Services today at 2 p.m. today at New Life Assembly of God Church in Batson.**

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 144, FRIDAY, JULY 21, 2000-

****

DPS Emergency Management Officer Clay Kennelly said it is not known precisely what caused the gasoline leak at the Dayton Brookshire Brothers Store Wednesday afternoon, but an enormous amount of the fuel was released underground from the store's gas pump storage tanks. Due to the high vapor concentration, traffic on Hwy 90 in Dayton was shut down completely from Hwy 321 all the way to FM 563 in Liberty from about 9 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. The Dayton Fire Department flushed the underground area with water, which was then pumped out. Hwy 90 was re-opened around 1:30 a.m. yesterday.

****

After more than 11 years as a fugitive, James Randall Foster was returned to Liberty County on Friday, July 14th to stand trial for murder. Sheriff's Captain Leroy Hanel said Foster, now in his mid-sixties, was arrested earlier this year in Tampa, Fla. when police there, investigating him on burglary and domestic abuse charges, discovered the former Cleveland resident had been living under an assumed name for over a decade. Foster had been arrested the day after his wife, Myra Lowery Foster, was discovered shot to death in a burning car outside Cleveland, but he disappeared after posting a $100,000 bond. Foster is now back in the Liberty County Jail awaiting trial.

****

Players from across Texas, including teams from Liberty and Dayton, will be competing this weekend to advance to the Dixie League World Series as Liberty hosts the Dixie League Triple A State Tournament for boys ages 9-10. Play begins tomorrow in the double elimination event at 4 p.m. at the Liberty City Park. The Dayton National Team faces Huntsville Central at 6 p.m. while Liberty plays Hemphill at 8 p.m. tomorrow.

****

Monday, July 31st is the deadline for those who suffered flood damage in May to apply for low-interest loans from the Small Business Administration. To date, loans to Southeast Texas residents total $1,065,000. Call 1-800-366-6303 to apply.

****

FUNERAL: Perry Wayne Myers, Sr., of Dayton, Services at 10 a.m. today at Pace-Stancil Funeral Home in Dayton. ** **Sara Katherine Jackson**, of Dayton, Services 10 a.m. Saturday at Sterling Funeral Home in Dayton. **

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 143, THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2000-

****

Due to the hot, dry conditions Liberty County Judge Lloyd Kirkham signed an order yesterday which bans all outdoor burning in unincorporated areas of the county unless it is done inside a screened container which allows no sparks to escape. At this time, commissioners are not granting permission to burn.

****

Liberty School Trustees met Tuesday night and approved a $1,200 across-the-board salary increase for all LISD teachers. The new salary structure calls for a minimum starting salary of $29,000 annually for teachers with an available maximum salary of just over $50,000 a year. Teachers at the maximum salary level would have to be at Career Ladder III, have 39 years experience and a Master's degree. The increase will not be official until school trustees approve next fiscal year's budget.

****

The second year of the State of Texas' Annual Sales Tax Holiday is set for Friday, August 4th through Sunday, August 6th, when all clothing and footwear priced less than $100 will be sales tax exempt. The Sales Tax Holiday was put in place to give parents and students a break on their back-to-school clothes shopping. Sheila Clancy of the Texas State Comptroller's Office said one change this year is that items placed on lay-away during the holiday will also be tax exempt. The Comptroller's Office estimates that Texas shoppers saved about $32 million during last year's Sales Tax Holiday. For more information on what items are and are not exempt, call 1-800-252-5555.

****

Dayton School Trustees Tuesday night approved a number of administrative personnel changes. Science Coordinator Grazelda Ligons will replace Rebecca Harris as Woodrow Wilson Jr. High Assistant Principal since Mrs. Harris had decided to return to teaching. Mary Gassiott will divide her time between teaching and her duties as Assistant Principal at Nottingham Elementary and two long-time Curriculum Coordinators will have their jobs expanded. Language Arts Coordinator Joyce Neel was appointed Elementary Curriculum Coordinator and Math Coordinator Jessica Johnson is now Secondary Education Coordinator.

****

FUNERAL: Edgar Thompson, 88, of Dayton, Services at 10 a.m. tomorrow at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Dayton. **

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 142, WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2000-

****

Officials at Memorial Hermann Hospital say the conditions of two accident victims transported there from Liberty County have not improved in over a week. Daniel Lee Burch, 18 of Liberty, remains critical after a two-vehicle collision on the South Liberty Oil Field Road on Sunday, July 9th. Also still critical is Dixie Donaldson of Silsbee after an accident involving two 18-wheelers in the Moss Hill area on Tuesday, July 11th. A third, more recent accident victim, 21-year-old Norman Coleman of Dayton also remains critical at the Houston hospital after a single-vehicle rollover wreck on Hwy 146 south Sunday.

****

Liberty County Commissioners met in workshop session yesterday and discussed a salary increase of 6% for county employees and an 8% increase for Sheriff's Department employees in the coming fiscal year. County Judge Lloyd Kirkham said he was tired of the county losing good employees because those employees can make more money elsewhere. Commissioners have several more budget workshops ahead before the county's budget for the next fiscal year is completed.

****

The Dayton City Council met Monday night and discussed a proposed ordinance that would keep large trucks off of city streets and limit those vehicles to roadways maintained by the state and to Waco street, which is often used to divert large trucks from Hwy 321. Councilman John Otto said he doesn't want the proposed ordinance to affect city residents who need to park a large truck at their homes, but he also does not want to see those same trucks pulling fully loaded trailers down city streets. Council voted to table the proposal for future action.

****

The 11th Annual Burnham Classic Golf Tournament is scheduled for August 4th through August 6th at Magnolia Ridge Country Club in Liberty. The top cash prize will be $800, if a full field signs up. The field is limited to 75 teams. Proceeds from the event benefit the South Liberty County Center Child and Adolescent Program. Entry fee is a tax-deductible $350 and forms are available at BJ Ford-Mercury or by calling 336-2215.

****

FUNERAL: Doris Jean "Pearl" Brock, 53, of Hull, Services at 10 a.m. tomorrow at Allison Funeral Service in Liberty. **

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 141, TUESDAY, JULY 18, 2000-

****

DPS Trooper Leon Wilson said witnesses report Norman Coleman, 21, of Dayton fell asleep at the wheel of his pickup truck on Hwy 146 south of Dayton around 2 p.m. Sunday. Coleman veered onto the shoulder, steered back on to the roadway, overcorrected and lost control. The truck rolled over approximately three times and slid some distance into the ditch beside the road. Norman Coleman was air lifted by Lifeflight to Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston, where he remains listed in critical condition with head and chest injuries.

****

According to Liberty County Chief Appraiser Alan D. Conner, final certified appraised value for Liberty County totals just under $2.175 billion, an increase of 10.75% over last year and a decrease of .06% compared to preliminary values previously reported. Almost $2 million in properties on the 2000 Central Appraisal District Summary are still under protest. An estimated 29 entities in the county use the values to set tax rates.

****

With water in short supply, the Trinity Bay Conservation District, which provides water to most of Chambers and part of Jefferson Counties, is prohibiting all outdoor water usage. General Manager David Paulissen said water plants in the western part of district are now operating at 95% of safe capacity and some customers there are experiencing low water pressure. Paulissen said all outdoor water use such as lawn and athletic field watering, swimming pools, car and window washing is prohibited until significant rainfall occurs. Officials are encouraging voluntary compliance, but violators eventually could be fined or have their water service cut off.

****

According to company officials for Family Dollar, the grand opening of their new store in the HEB Shopping Center in Liberty is set for Thursday, July 27th. The North Carolina-based variety store chain currently has about 3,650 stores nation-wide.

****

FUNERALS: E.L. "Doodle" Payne, 80, of Hull, Services at 10 a.m. today at Allison Funeral Service in Liberty. ** **Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael D. Bearden**, 27, of Chula Vista, California, Services at 9 a.m. tomorrow at 1st Baptist Church of Justin, with burial at 4 p.m. tomorrow at Moss Hill Cemetery. **

****

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-VOLUME 16, NO. 140, MONDAY, JULY 17, 2000-

****

A 26-year-old man with local connections died in a sky-diving accident while training with the U.S. Navy Seals last week. Petty Officer Michael Bearden, Jr., who is the son of Hardin Junior High School Principal Michael Bearden, Sr. and Peggy Bearden, died when his first parachute and then his back-up parachute became tangled. A coroner says Bearden died instantly upon landing in a swampy area near Lake Elsinore in Riverside County, Calif. Bearden was a three-year veteran of the elite force and had some of highest performance scores in Seal history.

****

The well-known Harris family of Dayton has suffered a tragic loss. Pat Harris, 52, the brother of current Dayton Mayor Larry Harris and son of former Dayton Mayor Bob Harris, was killed in a plane crash in west Harris County on Thursday. The crash also claimed the life of another man. Investigators are still trying to learn more about the crash, but the plane had apparently lost electrical power before crashing Thursday evening.

****

According to one of the members of the Magnolia Ridge Country Club Board of Directors, Horace Calvert, indications are the roughly 50- year-old club will be rebuilt after Thursday's devastating fire. The dining area was gutted by a fire that broke out when an air conditioning contractor was sweating in copper Thursday afternoon. The fire required several hours and at least 65,000 gallons of water to be extinguished. In the meantime, the golf course and pro shop remain open and phone service has been restored to Magnolia Ridge Country Club.

****

The Civic Center Organization in Kenefick is building a helipad for landings of Life-Flight and other emergency services helicopters. The pad will be built near the Kenefick Civic Center on CR 2797, off FM 1008, in Kenefick. According to one of the project organizers, Paula Brown, construction of the pad will require a couple of months and much volunteer labor.

****

FUNERALS: Patrick R. "Pat" Harris, of Dayton, 52, Services at 2 p.m. Tuesday at St. Joesph's Catholic Church in Dayton.** **Walter Hugh Jackson, Sr.,** of Anahuac, 82, Services today at 11 a.m. today at Wells Mortuary of Liberty.** **Kirby William Barrett**, of Hardin, 77, Services today at 10 a.m. at Allison Funeral Service in Liberty.**

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 139, FRIDAY, JULY 14, 2000-

****

It took almost two hours and firefighters from seven local departments to bring a fire that gutted the Magnolia Ridge Country Club in Liberty completely under control yesterday afternoon. The fire reportedly started around 3:45 p.m. in an air conditioning unit in the roughly 50-year-old building and firefighters from Liberty, Dayton, Hardin, Ames, Kenefick, Tarkington and the 321 VFD fought the blaze in afternoon temperatures over 100 degrees. Though some portions of the country club remained standing, smoke damage rendered even those a total loss. No injuries were reported and the country club's nearby pro shop was undamaged by the fire.

****

As of yesterday, construction is underway on the $12,570 American Flagpole Project for Liberty. City council has pledged to pay half of the cost from hotel/motel tax monies. Private donations will cover the other half and were collected or pledged within just a few days, according to Councilman Mike McCarty and Liberty County Court-At-Law Judge Don Taylor, who proposed the project. U.S. Flag and Flagpole Company of Beaumont began work yesterday at the site where Commerce St. joins Hwy 90 drilling a hole to erect the 120-foot flagpole from which a 50 by 30-foot American Flag will fly.

****

Liberty County has not yet instituted a ban against outdoor burning like neighboring Chambers and Harris Counties, but that could change soon. County Fire Marshall Jim Wilson said the burn index in the county is currently near 600 and a burn-ban will be needed if it reaches 700. Last year's order restricting outdoor burning proved unpopular with both residents and developers alike. Wilson said he feels such an order will not be implemented this year, unless absolutely necessary.

****

According to J. Rice of Public Management Incorporated, work is now underway to improve and extend water service in the Raywood area, as a result of a $350,000 Texas Community Development Grant which Liberty County Commissioners applied for last year and which was recently approved. A Beaumont firm, Schaumberger and Polk has been contracted to help with design and engineering aspects of the water system improvements, which are scheduled for completion in October.

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 138, THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2000-

****

The Liberty City Council Tuesday night approved an ordinance recommended by City Manager Kerry Lacy to reduce the number of regular council meetings per month from two to one, effective in October. Lacy said the change would save city staff an enormous amount of preparation time. Council also approved by a unanimous vote, the preliminary plat of Jean Daniel Murph's Raven Hill Ranch Subdivision, which is to be constructed on land adjacent to the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center on FM 1011.

****

According to Liberty Police, a 13-year-old boy is in custody after an alleged attack on a 20-year-old female jogger in Liberty Monday evening. The woman told police she was jogging in the area near the Travis Park Subdivision when the boy grabbed her and attempted to pull off her clothes. She escaped and police apprehended the boy who is now in custody at the Liberty County Juvenile Detention Center on a charge of Unlawful Restraint. The juvenile will undergo a psychological evaluation and could be sentenced to a Texas Youth Center if convicted.

****

After a 45-minute workshop session Tuesday between County Commissioners and representatives from the Texas Department of Health, the status of a local public health unit for Liberty County remains unclear. In answer to commissioners' concerns over state funding for the unit being cut off after the first year, the TDH's Dr. Mark Guidry said that was a legislative issue. Commissioners are still undecided on whether or not to accept a $135, 000 grant for the health unit, which was $15,000 less than anticipated. Dr. Guidry said that, in any event, the TDH would still like to work with commissioners to improve health standards in Liberty County, which is statistically below the state average in areas such as birth weight and life expectancy.

****

The Edmund E. and Nida Smith Jones Public Library in Dayton will receive a Gates grant for more than $18,000 to fund new computers at the library. According to Librarian Rose Klimitchek, the news about the grant money provided by Microsoft's Bill, and wife Melinda Gates, was received Monday. The grant will eventually result in the Jones Library being equipped with four computers with Internet- access.

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 137, WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2000-

****

DPS Trooper Donnie Smith said Dixie Donaldson of Silsbee was westbound on Hwy 105 between Moss Hill and FM 2518 around 7:45 a.m. yesterday when she lost control of her vehicle and crossed into the eastbound lane. The Ford Expedition struck one 18-wheeler, skidded and was struck by a second eastbound 18-wheeler. The vehicle then burst into flames. A passerby managed to pull the woman from her burning vehicle and get her to safety. Dixie Donaldson was transported by Lifeflight Helicopter to Hermann Hospital in Houston in critical condition with multiple fractures. The wreck closed that portion of Hwy 105 to traffic for approximately seven hours yesterday.

****

88-year-old Martha Kelley of Daisetta died Monday at Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston of injuries sustained in a two-vehicle accident in Liberty on July 3rd. Liberty Police said Mrs. Kelley drove her small pick-up into the path of a vehicle driven by a Sour Lake man at Beaumont Ave. and the Hwy 146 Bypass. Mrs. Kelley's passenger, Sadie Nadine Blanchard, died on July 6th of injuries she received in that wreck.

****

Liberty County Commissioners met yesterday and approved a budget amendment transferring $60,000 from the county's indigent health care fund to cover fire department runs. The county has already been accountable for more than $138,000 in fire department runs through 8 months of the fiscal year, with only $75,000 budgeted for that purpose for the entire year. County Auditor Harold Seay said dry conditions and too many overlapping runs are the major factors in the increased cost.

****

The Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center will have a blood drive tomorrow from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. at 1st Liberty National Bank. Eligible donors are urged to take part in the drive. For more information, call 936-298-2689.

****

FUNERALS: **William "Cecil" Wakefield**, 84, of Dallas, Graveside Services at 1 p.m. today County Line Cemetery in Nashville, Arkansas. ** **Martha Alaine Kelley**, 88, of Daisetta, Services at 2 p.m. tomorrow at 1st United Methodist Church in Daisetta. ** **Bryce Mathew Spencer Byars**, infant, Services at 11 a.m. Friday at Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Dayton. **

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 136, TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2000-

****

According to Liberty Police, evidence indicates a pickup driven by Daniel Burch, 18, was northbound on the South Liberty Oilfield Road, just south of Hwy 90 around 8 p.m. Sunday when a southbound Mazda driven by Trey Pike, also 18, crossed the center stripe and the two vehicles collided head-on. Trey Pike and his passenger, 22-year-old Terry Hollingsworth, were trapped inside the wreckage of the Mazda for some time, until extricated by Liberty Fire Department Rescue Personnel. Daniel Burch, Terry Hollingsworth and a second passenger, April Smith, 17, were transported in two Lifeflight helicopters to Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston, where Daniel Burch is listed in critical condition. Hollingsworth and Smith are in serious and good condition, respectively, at the hospital. Trey Pike was treated and released from Liberty-Dayton Hospital.

****

According to information from the Department of Public Safety, 29-year-old Eliseo Cardenas of Beaumont was killed when the truck in which he was a passenger overturned in the eastbound lanes of traffic on I-10 in Chambers County early Sunday morning. Mr. Cardenas was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident, which remains under investigation. The driver of the truck, Luis Topete, 19, and a second passenger, Juan Luis Aguilar, 22, both also Beaumont residents, were listed in good condition at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Beaumont.

****

County Judge Jimmy Sylvia signed an order yesterday prohibiting outdoor burning in unincorporated areas of Chambers County, unless done in an enclosed container, due to dry conditions in that area. Such an order was put into effect several times last summer in both Chambers and Liberty Counties. Currently, Liberty County has no such order in effect.

****

Dee Hayes of Liberty started at the meat counter as she set out on the three-minute shopping spree she won playing the "Millenium Madness" Scratch-Off Game promotion at the Liberty Brookshire Brothers Store. Ms. Hayes said she had never won anything before and managed to grab a total $215.01 in groceries yesterday afternoon before her three minutes were up. Late last year, Art Riley of Hardin won $100,000 playing "Millenium Madness" at the Liberty Brookshire Brothers.

****

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-VOLUME 16, NO. 135, MONDAY, JULY 10, 2000-

****

A City of Liberty Police Officer was among those injured in a collision at the intersection of Milam Street and Commerce Street in Liberty early Saturday afternoon. According to Texas Department of Public Safety Trooper Donnie Smith, witnesses told him a car failed to stop at the Milam Street stop sign and drove into a westbound Liberty Police Car. Officer Gary Martin, age 26, was injured in the wreck, which he reported by radio around 1:30 p.m. Saturday. Liberty Police Officer Martin and three Dayton residents were treated and released at Liberty Dayton Hospital hours after the wreck. The driver of the car that is alleged to have hit the police car, which was heavily damaged, is Ervin Gardner, age 42, of Dayton.

****

The Liberty City Council is expected to approve a vision statement at its meeting at 7 p.m. tomorrow. The number one goal of the vision statement is to get electric rates in the city to at, or below, the state average by January 1st, 2002. Council and the city's top administrators have already spent six hours working on the ten-goal Vision Statement and will have another brief work session on it at 6:15 p.m. prior to tomorrow's regular meeting. Council will also consider an ordinance to have regular meetings only on the second Tuesday of each of month.

****

A Memorial Hermann Hospital spokesperson says an 11-year-old Daisetta boy has been treated and released after being taken to the Houston hospital by Life-Flight Helicopter Friday afternoon. Chester E. Caskey of Daisetta sustained a closed head injury in a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of Beaumont Avenue and Independence Street Friday afternoon. According to Liberty Police Officer Cedric McDuffie, the accident happened when Ricky Anderson, age 17, of Anahuac allegedly failed to yield right of way at a stop sign. Anderson was issued a citation.

****

Two successful summer reading programs will be wrapping up this week. At the Jones Public Library in Dayton, the summer reading program ends with its final program starting at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday. At the Liberty Municipal Library, the summer reading program will have an awards ceremony and prize drawing on Thursday. Liberty County Assistant District Attorney and a former member of the summer reading program, Michael Mark, will emcee the program at 10:15 a.m. Thursday.

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 134, FRIDAY, JULY 07, 2000-

****

According to an official at Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston, 17-year-old Kenny Pritchett is now listed in good condition at the hospital. The Liberty teen was one of four youths injured in a single vehicle wreck on CR# 133 North in southern Liberty County on Thursday, June 29th. Pritchett was still critical last weekend, but Hermann officials say he will likely be entered into a rehabilitation hospital soon. The other three accident victims: Kenny's brother Wesley Pritchett, 14, Josh Wineman, 10, also of Liberty and Kevin King, 13, of Splendora were all treated at area hospitals and released.

****

While it remains unclear if the Sam Rayburn Municipal Power Agency withdrawal and recreation plan being advanced by recently re-elected SRMPA President Bruce Halstead will ever become reality, it has taken considerable expense to develop the plan. According to SRMPA records, between August of last year and April of this year, more than $377,000 has been spent on consulting fees and other services. Almost 60% of that amount went to two law firms for legal services. The cost is split between the power agency's member cities: Liberty, Jasper, Livingston and, to a lesser degree, Vinton, Louisiana, which is not a full-member. The SRMPA continues to await a ruling from the IRS on possible tax-exempt status of bonds to be re-issued under the proposed withdrawal plan.

****

Tickets remain on sale for the Liberty-Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce's Liberty-Dayton 500 Ticket Drawing on the night of the Chamber's Annual Barbecue and Auction on Thursday July 13th at the Liberty VFW Hall. Top prize in the drawing is a 55-inch color TV with home theatre capabilities. Eleven other great prizes are also featured. Tickets are $20 each at the Chamber offices on Trinity Street or call 336-5736.

****

Liberty Panther Volleyball Camp begins Monday July 24th and continues through Wednesday July 26th at Liberty High School. Cost is just $25 per player and all money raised will be funneled back into the LHS volleyball program. Call 258-4825 to sign up.

****

FUNERAL: Charles Stafford Brown, 96, of Devers, Services at 2 p.m. tomorrow at 1st Baptist Church in Devers. **

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 133, THURSDAY, JULY 06, 2000-

****

A two-vehicle wreck on Beaumont Ave. and the Hwy 146 Bypass in Liberty around noon Monday became a fatality accident with the death of 87-year-old Sadie Blanchard of Daisetta early Wednesday morning at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Beaumont. Liberty Police said Martha Kelley, 88, also of Daisetta apparently failed to see a stop sign and drove her small pickup into the path of a vehicle driven by Randy Glaze, 42, of Sour Lake. Glaze was not injured. Martha Kelley was transported to Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston, where she remains listed in critical condition. It was first thought her passenger, Sadie Blanchard's injuries were less severe, but internal injuries detected later caused her death.

****

DPS Trooper Leon Wilson said it appears as if Brett Swope, 37, of Baytown was piloting his crop duster around 10:30 a.m. yesterday, when he flew too close to, and clipped, an Entergy power line. The out-of-control plane crashed in a rice field owned by Ray Stoesser on the south side of Hwy 90, just east of Devers. Swope suffered only minor bruises in the crash, but his Ayres Turbo Flush single engine aircraft was demolished.

****

Two supervisors of the Empowerment Options Program of Tri-County MH-MR Services were transporting four passengers around 9 a.m. yesterday on Texas Ave. in Liberty, when a fire started on the hydraulic wheelchair lift of their van. Ramona McElhaney and Barbara Jones of Tri-County MH-MR quickly evacuated the burning van, which was fully involved when Liberty Fire Fighters arrived. No one was injured in the incident.

****

The Liberty McDonald's Restaurant and the March of Dimes will join forces to sponsor an Information and Application Assistance Day for the Children's Health Insurance Program on Thursday, July 13th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at McDonald's on Hwy 90 in Liberty. The state-funded CHIP program helps provide Texas children with low-cost health insurance.

****

FUNERALS: Julie Anne Korocy, 44, of Baytown, Services at 2 p.m. today at Pace-Stancil Funeral Home in Dayton. ** **Sadie Nadine Blanchard**, 87, of Daisetta, Services at 2 p.m. tomorrow at Allison Funeral Service in Liberty. **

****

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-VOLUME 16 NO. 132, WEDNESDAY, JULY 05, 2000-

****

Dayton Police Officer Doug Quinn said Tiffany Rose, age 23, was southbound on FM 1960 in Dayton around 10:45 a.m. yesterday when her car struck a van that was turning left onto FM 1960 from Hwy 321. There were no serious injuries, but Tiffany Rose and six passengers in the van were transported by Liberty County and Westlake EMS to Liberty-Dayton Hospital with minor injuries. Officer Quinn said there are conflicting reports regarding which driver failed to yield right-of-way, but a citation will likely be issued when the investigation is complete.

****

According to Liberty Police Officer Cedric McDuffie, 88-year-old Claudia Andress of Liberty was leaving the Liberty Post Office shortly before noon yesterday when she put her car in reverse and mistakenly depressed the accelerator instead of the brake. The large sedan lurched backwards into the driveway of Geneva Smith at 1615 Sam Houston where it slammed into a parked car with enough force for the sedan to drive on top of the smaller car. The small car was forced back into the garage, through the house wall and into Mrs. Smith's living room. Mrs. Andress was shaken but unhurt. The small car was demolished and part the wall suffered extensive damage.

****

The Dayton City Council Monday night held a public hearing on two Texas Community Development Program grant applications the city will be going after this summer. One grant application will seek disaster funds in the amount of $350,000 to assist residents and business who suffered damages during the May flood and have been turned down for an SBA loan. The second will seek funds to replace existing sewer lines in low-to-moderate income areas of Dayton.

****

An 11-9 victory over Liberty Friday night earned the Dayton Belles Softball Team a District Championship and a spot in the 13-and-14 year-olds Division Dixie League State Tournament in Crosby on Saturday, July 22nd. Five other district champs from across Texas will face off for the state title. The Dayton Belles will play host team Crosby in the first round.

****

FUNERAL: Cecil Albritton, 60, of Orange, Services at 10 a.m. today at Sterling Funeral Home in Anahuac. **

****

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-VOLUME 16, NO. 131, MONDAY, JULY 3, 2000-

****

The TVE Fairgrounds will be hosting a Fourth of July Rodeo and Dance tomorrow, starting at 8 p.m. Events at the TVE-sponsored rodeo include bull riding, junior bull riding, calf-roping, and barrel racing. The first 10 kids who sign up will take part in mutton busting. The rodeo will be followed by a dance with music by Ty Phillips and the Gold Rush Band of Beaumont. Tickets are $5 in advance at Brick's Cleaners in Liberty, Dayton, and Anahuac and will be $6 at the gate.

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A 32-year-old Kingwood woman was killed in a single-vehicle car wreck on Highway 90 near the rice dryers in Raywood on Friday morning. According to Department of Public Safety Trooper Donnie Smith, Lisa Jo Stammey Ray of Kingwood was eastbound when she left the highway, over-corrected her steering, crossed into the westbound lanes, hit a ditch and flipped her car. Trooper Smith says there is evidence that alcohol and excessive speed contributed to the accident.

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According to Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge Manager Stuart Marcus, the Lower Trinity River Floodplain Ownership Report, which was created primarily so property owners may find out if their property is in an area the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service might like to acquire, is now on display at three area libraries. The lengthy report is available for viewing at the Liberty Municipal Library, the Austin Memorial Library in Cleveland, the Sam Houston Regional Library and at the Trinity River National Wildlife offices on Main Street in Liberty.

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The deadline for golfers to enter the DARE Golf Tournament on July 14th at the Chambers County Golf Course is Friday. Teams of four that enter the four-man scramble event at a cost of $200 can also win great door prizes. Call 936-336-4650.

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FUNERALS: Emma "Ruth" Rhodes, 64, of Hardin, Services at 10 a.m. today at Allison Funeral Service Chapel in Liberty.** **Lois Gaye Taylor,** 46, of Dayton, Services 3 p.m. today at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Dayton.** **Shanna Ranae Berryman Schmidt,** 41, of Houston, Services at 2 p.m. Wednesday at San Jacinto Memorial Park.** **Michon Danielle Nix,** of Dayton, Services at 2 p-m Wednesday at Pace-Stancil Funeral Home in Dayton.**

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