

News Briefs:

LCRA checks dam

By GEORGE HATT
HIGHLAND LAKES
NEWSPAPERS

Lower Colorado River Authority crews are dewatering one of Buchanan Dam's 37 floodgates to conduct a deep inspection of its workings.

Crews began construction of a dewatering box, which will hold the lake water back from the floodgate.

"As part of our operations, we do a regular inspection of the dams to make sure they operate reliably and efficiently," said LCRA spokesman John Williams. "This is more of a closer inspection of the floodgate system."

Williams said that once the dewatering box is complete in four months, the floodgate will be opened to let the water out.

After the ground dries at the bottom of the box, LCRA crews will inspect the working mechanisms of the floodgate, and then sandblast and paint.

"Part of the reason we haven't had a major problem at Buchanan Dam is because we take these inspections seriously," Williams said.

He said that the results of this inspection will determine what action is taken on the rest of the floodgates.

"The results of this one gate will tell us what, if anything, needs to be done to the rest."

Judge Mills in the Llano County Courthouse, beginning Monday.

Instead, the judge accepted a plea of *nolo contendere* - no contest - entered on behalf of the homeless man by his attorney, Richard Davis.

edly wearing during the assault, and because of his strong body odor and his "piercing blue eyes."

Vance has served 915 days of jail time and the judge noted that would count toward the 12-year prison sentence.

Supreme Court rules in favor of Llano man

By GEORGE HATT
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NEWSPAPERS

A Llano man went to the United States Supreme Court—and won—to get his day in court.

On Monday, the Supreme Court ruled 8-1 in favor of Walter Rothgery, who sued Gillespie County in 2004 for violating his Sixth Amendment right to counsel.

The decision flatly rejects the notion widely held in Texas courts that a defendant's right to counsel doesn't attach until after he or she is indicted, said Andrea Marsh, who represented Rothgery in the civil case.

"A criminal defendant's

initial appearance before a judicial officer, where he learns the charge against him and his liberty is subject to restriction, marks the start of adversary judicial proceedings that trigger the attachment of the Sixth Amendment right to counsel," Justice David Souter wrote for the majority.

Justice Clarence Thomas dissented.

Rothgery was arrested in July of 2002 on charges of unlawfully carrying a firearm while under a California felony conviction.

However, unknown to Gillespie County, the California conviction had been dropped years before.

Rothgery could not afford
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Llano County learned from floods

By GEORGE HATT
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NEWSPAPERS

A year after devastating floods wracked Llano and Burnet counties, the repairs are winding down but the preparations for the next disaster are not.

While not hit as hard as Burnet County, Llano County sustained \$4 million in damage and received \$100,000 in aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency as a result of damages from the heavy rains of June 2007.

"We've completed all of the (FEMA-funded) projects," said Llano County Judge Wayne Brascom. "As a result, we've also changed some standards

for low-water crossings and culverts. We continue to try to upgrade roads and bridges, culverts, and low-water crossings to alleviate some of those dangers" posed by high-water events.

All four precincts in Llano County received damage to roads and culverts, but the heaviest damage was in Kingsland and Sunrise Beach.

Judge Brascom said that the county's emergency responders, many of whom are volunteers, acted quickly and effectively during the emergency.

He said that the county is working on an emergency notification system, which will automatically notify responders and civilians in areas facing

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Llano County ratifies 'Scofflaw'

By GEORGE HATT
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NEWSPAPERS

Llano County residents will no longer be able to renew their vehicle registration if they owe the county money for outstanding fines or fees.

The Llano County Commissioners Court passed a resolution Monday to enact the "Scofflaw," which was passed by the Texas

legislature 10 years ago and gives counties the authority to deny vehicle registration until all fines and fees are paid.

If a Llano County resident is late in paying a fine or fee, the County will notify the Texas Department of Transportation. TxDOT, in turn, will print a notification on the renewal reminder, letting the tax assessor-collector know not

to renew the registration unless the person shows a receipt that the fine has been paid.

According to Precinct 3 Commissioner Duane Stueven there are \$156,000 in outstanding fines and fees owed to Llano County.

"With gas and road oil prices going up 94 percent

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Llano ISD Superintendent Dennis Hill, left, welcomes new high school principal Dan Vera at Monday's school board meeting.

STAFF PHOTO BY GEORGE HATT

Bender resigns from Llano school board

By GEORGE HATT
HIGHLAND LAKES
NEWSPAPERS

The Llano ISD board of trustees accepted the resignation of Place 2 Trustee Bob Bender Monday.

"Due to some hard business and personal decisions that will keep me from giving you and the board my full commitment, I feel it is the right thing to do," Bender, who owns the M.B. Bender Construction Co., told the trustees in his letter of resignation.

LISD Superintendent Dennis Hill said that

Bender brought valuable experience to the board.

"We're very appreciative of the contributions Bob has made—especially his construction background," Hill said. "Bob has lent valuable insight" pertaining to the ongoing construction projects at Llano Elementary, Pack-saddle Elementary, and Llano Junior High.

The board will nominate a replacement to fill in for Bender until an election can be held in May.

The board also formally
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Supreme: Court rules in favor

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ford to hire a lawyer to prove his case, and he wasn't provided a court-appointed attorney until after a grand jury indicted him on the Gillespie County firearm charge six months later.

The attorney quickly

proved that Rothgery's felony conviction had been dismissed, and Gillespie County promptly dropped their charges.

Rothgery then sued Gillespie County for violating his right to counsel, asking for attorney's fees and damages to be awarded by a jury.

The suit was thrown out by a federal judge, and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the decision.

Marsh anticipates that the Supreme Court will order the lawsuit go back to court, where it will be heard by a jury.

"I feel they owe me some damages for lost wages—lots of things," Rothgery said.

Marsh represented Rothgery throughout the civil process, from filing the suit to arguing Rothgery's case before the Supreme Court.

Marsh said that the decision could have a major impact on how criminal cases proceed in Texas.

"Gillespie County isn't the only county that denied defendants the right to counsel until they are indicted. The Supreme Court flatly rejected that," she said. "The right to counsel attaches pretty soon after a defendant is brought before a magistrate for initial appearance."

The case isn't just her first to go before the highest court in the land and win; it's also the first lawsuit she's ever filed.

"She's my lawyer for life," Rothgery said laughingly.

The Good News!

Joy is the by-product of obedience.

Many years ago I read of a man that walked down the streets of a city and concluded that the vast majority of people were unhappy, based on their facial expressions.

I don't know if that is true or not, but I do know that a lot of folks spend their entire lives searching for real joy... and never find it.

Why? Because joy, real joy is found in Christ Jesus!

The Apostle Paul wrote: *Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit,*

if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. (Philippians 2:1-2 NASB)

Real encouragement is found in Christ, in His love and in sharing His love. And that makes for real joy for ourselves and for all who become united in the Spirit of Christ.

If that joy, that purpose, that love is lacking in your life, perhaps it is time to learn of and obey Him who loved you so much that he gave His own life for you!

Llano church of Christ

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• Everyone Welcome •