

# Reading old constitution 'cruel, unusual punishment'

By STEVE REIS  
Battalion Staff Writer

Many of the people involved in government haven't read the old Texas Constitution because to read it is "cruel and unusual punishment," said Attorney General John Hill. Hill was one of the speakers addressing representatives from Texas universities in Austin yesterday.

The meeting, which was held in the Lieutenant Governor's apartment in the Capitol Building, was brought to order by Bonnie Earle. Earle is the campaign coordinator for Citizens for the Texas Constitution.

He introduced Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby. Hobby took off his shoes and stood on one of the chairs to address the group of students.

He explained that "this campaign will be won on the campuses of this state." But that could not be won without concentrated

political activity by student governments between now and Nov. 4, the election day.

Hobby said that the constitution, as it is now, is not relevant to the last part of the 20th century. He explained that the state needs a constitution that will address the needs of a state that is larger and more complicated than it was a hundred years ago.

"But the real thrust of this new constitution," said Hobby, "is to give the voters of this state a greater direct say in the form of government. That has never been the case before."

Hobby said the voters will have more voice in government if the constitution passes. They will have the authority to abolish unnecessary county offices and take power away from those offices.

"And it is no accident," he continued, "that many of the most vociferous opponents of this constitution are county officials. They feel threatened by the new document."

Speaker Bill Clayton voiced his shock at "the audacity of the opponents of the new constitution. They cast reflections on the very intelligence of the Texas citizenry."

Clayton explained to the students that they could sell the idea of a new constitution to the campuses by getting out and explaining it to them.

He said that they would meet little opposition that could not be overcome.

"Challenge your opponents to debates," he said, "they won't be able to speak to the issue of the old versus the new constitution because there is no good comparison."

"Encourage voters to go to the polls and vote," he stressed, "because the majority of them will vote for the new constitution."

Clayton said he believed strongly in the new constitution and in the ability of the voter to see the value of it. "We're running this campaign on just guts," he said, "without any money."

(see constitution, page 4)

# The Battalion

Remember to turn clocks back one hour Sunday as the United States goes off Daylight Savings Time.

Copyright © 1975, The Battalion  
College Station, Texas

Vol. 69 No. 32

Friday, Oct. 24, 1975

# New approach allows better care of victims

**Ambulance service in Brazos County**  
A four-part series by Rod Speer, Alan Killingsworth and Steve Goble.

The style of ambulance service in Brazos County is outdated. The tried-and-true method of speeding to the scene of a tragedy, picking up the victims and rushing back to a hospital is becoming outdated.

## Part IV

A new approach involves bring the mountain to Mohammed.

A truck carrying a portable emergency room rushes to the scene where the victim's condition is stabilized. No one's life is endangered by a high-speed trip to the hospital.

This new technique, used in many large and some small cities throughout Texas, is called the Emergency Medical System (EMS) approach.

Mainly because of the high cost involved, this service is currently not available in Brazos County. Most of the cost involved salaries for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) who have at least 120 hours of training in handling medical emergencies.

EMS is a high-technology answer to the problems of emergency medical service. The EMTs who attend the ambulance use two-way radios to communicate with doctors at a hospital base station.

Under the radio supervision of a doctor, an advanced EMT (400 hours of training) can administer pain-killers, plasma and other drugs to the victims while en route to the hospital.

The addition of modern communications equipment to the ambulance also aids drivers in finding the scene of the emergency. The ambulance itself has changed from a simple van-and-stretcher to a portable emergency room with oxygen equipment, heart monitor and fibrillator (to shock a heart back to life) and other basic emergency medical equipment.

## Madison County

For the last six months, nearby Madison County has been using EMS. Operating

out of the Madison County Hospital, the system can respond to any call in Madison and Leon Counties within 20 minutes.

Walt Johnston, director of ambulances, heads the four-man team of EMTs employed by the hospital. When not on call, the men work as hospital orderlies.

Ed Clark, director of the hospital, called it the "only way to run an ambulance service."

"It's wonderful to have people, who are qualified to handle emergencies, being utilized in the hospital when not on call," he said.

The men work in seven-day shifts. During this time they are on call 24 hours a day to answer all emergencies and transfers of patients between hospitals.

The system had its problems when it first started. Sometimes the transfers would interfere with emergency calls and there would not be enough personnel to handle both.

The solution was to take other EMTs, doctors and nurses off hospital duty to handle calls, Johnston said.

The hospital has three ambulances in operation. Two were paid for by the hospital aided by private donations; the other, a "Modulance," was purchased through a federal grant.

When the county received its modulance, along with it came certain guidelines the county had to follow. A complete communication system was installed and the ambulance is manned by two EMTs at all times.

Each ambulance is equipped with a two-way radio with the base station located in the hospital. They also have mobile telephones for calling other hospitals and for rechecking on the location of an emergency. Police radios allow ambulance drivers to listen for information concerning accidents.

Madison County has established an EMT training course to insure it has enough personnel to man the ambulances. Ellen Nelson of the Brazos Valley Development Council (BVDC) has asked Johnston if he will help in instituting a similar program in Brazos County.

"Eventually I hope to set up a paramedic program so that when the EMTs are off call they can work in the (Madison Hospital) emergency room," Johnston said. (Paramedics are advanced EMTs and have 400 to 500 hours of training.)

With the new program, Johnston said they can have an ambulance on the road as quickly as 60 seconds. At night, it would take six minutes.

Ed Clark recounted five cases in the past six months when EMTs saved a life simply by knowing what to do at the scene. He said that people who have suffered internal injuries often tell the ambulance attendant that they can breathe better while sitting up. Sitting up restricts the flow of blood to the brain and the people often die within 20 minutes of reaching the hospital.

## Corpus Christi

Two years ago the Corpus Christi Fire Department took over the city's ambulance service, which had previously been operated by a private firm subsidized by the city at \$10 per call.

Two EMTs go to the scene of all emergencies and keep in constant communication with a doctor. With on-the-scene care, only 20 per cent of emergencies need to be raced to the hospital under "Code Three," with sirens and flashing lights, said Ralph Rogers, assistant chief of the city's fire department.

A doctor at the county hospital is on duty all hours to communicate with EMTs and aid emergency victims immediately after they enter the hospital.

The city charges a minimum of \$40 for an emergency call, \$30 for a transfer and \$10 if the person is treated at the scene but does not need to be taken in an ambulance to the hospital. Rogers said the average cost to the city of each call is \$55.48.

## San Antonio

San Antonio took over its ambulance service a year and a half ago when it also began the EMS program. Two paramedics with 550 hours of medical training apiece ride each ambulance. Since the program began, auto fatalities in San Antonio have dropped 30 per cent and pedestrian fatalities are down 40 per cent, however, an ambulance service spokesman said the decrease cannot be directly attributed to the use of EMS (speed limits were reduced during the same period).

The San Antonio spokesman said only five per cent of the emergency calls require a race back to the hospital.

"If you're doing anything less than that (an EMS service) the people are being cheated," Corpus Christi's Rogers said.

## No Concern

Bryan and College Station have been able to get some EMS hardware through

matching grants from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). College Station acquired a \$16,000 "modulance," an emergency room on wheels. The city has loaned the modulance for no charge to Sherrill Ambulance Co. under a contract approved last night by the City Council.

Radio equipment for Sherrill's ambulances is also being acquired with HEW assistance.

Currently, Ed Sherrill is the only EMT in his ambulance crew, because, according to Bryan City Manager Lou Odle, EMTs have enough training to earn higher wages in other cities. (By June, federal guidelines will require all modulances purchased under HEW grants to be operated by two EMTs at all times.)

The cities of Bryan and College Station are unwilling to attempt to run the ambulance service, much less develop an EMS on their own. The two city managers have said it is too costly. County Judge Bill Vance said it is the responsibility of the cities, although County Commissioner Bill Coley disagrees.

Under the local governmental bodies feel the benefits of an emergency medical system exceed the costs involved to the taxpayer, improvements in the ambulance service in Brazos County will depend upon piecemeal federal grants and Sherrill's good will.

## City Council's Action

Thursday night, the College Station City Council again considered the use of the modulance by Sherrill's Ambulance Co. They agreed to pay for the collision insurance for its operation.

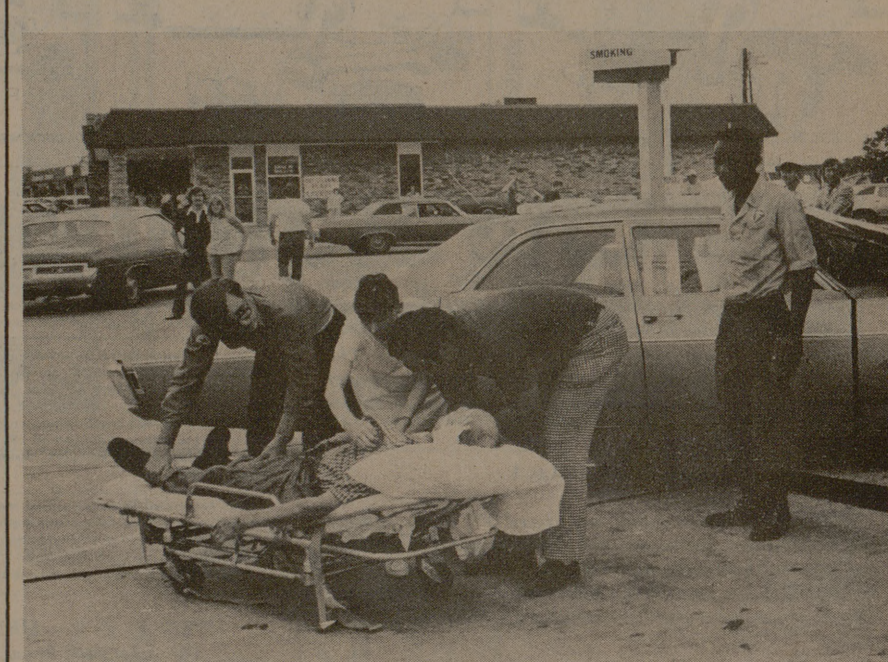
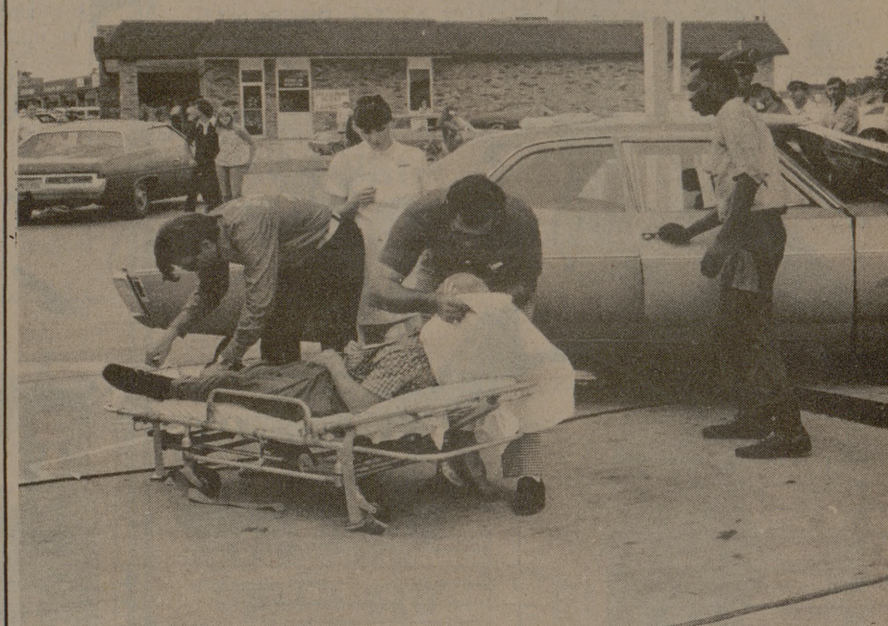
Gerry Creager, spokesman for a group of local licensed EMTs, offered to run the modulance if the city would supply a base station and maintenance. He said that they would maintain two EMTs on duty at all times. The city council seemed interested and asked for a formal proposal at its next meeting.

## Commentary

The cities of Bryan, College Station and Brazos County will receive only the service that they pay for. Ed Sherrill is now offering the service of picking up the victims and transferring them to another location.

If the taxpayers are willing to pay for the services now being offered in other cities, the local governments should take the initiative to study the problem and arrive at a solution that will best suit the community.

## Sherrill in action



Victim of E. 29th Street accident handled at the scene.

## Collision insurance funded

# Ambulance contract approved

By JERRY NEEDHAM  
Battalion Staff Writer

The College Station City Council Thursday night approved a contract with Sherrill Ambulance Co. of Bryan for Sherrill's operation of the city's new modular ambulance.

The council also agreed to add collision insurance for the ambulance to the city's existing insurance policy. The \$100 deductible policy will cost the city \$469 a year.

There was also talk among the councilmen to require Sherrill to reimburse the city for the cost of the policy, but it was decided that this would eventually lead to the city partially subsidizing Sherrill for the amount of the policy or more.

Gerry Creager, spokesman for a local group of state-licensed emergency medical technicians (EMTs), presented an alternate proposal for use of the modular ambulance.

Creager said the group proposes to voluntarily staff the "modulance" on a year-round 24-hour basis with two licensed EMTs. He said that if the city will supply a base of operation and maintenance for the

modulance, the group of EMTs will supply the time and personnel for its operation.

The council expressed an interest in the proposal and Mayor O. M. Holt asked Creager to make a formal presentation at a later council meeting.

After the council's unanimous approval of the contract with Sherrill, Councilman Gary Halter said he didn't have a great deal of confidence in Sherrill.

"I think the council shares this view and I hope he does something to improve the service or I do not intend to vote for renewal of his contract again," he said.

Sherrill's contract with College Station comes up for renewal around the middle of next year.

## PARKS

The proposed park land dedication amendment was discussed, but a vote was delayed until the next council meeting to allow the park land dedication committee to make final revisions.

The main provision of the proposed amendment would change the required dedication by developers from one acre per

200 dwelling units constructed to one acre per 133 dwelling units constructed.

## COMMITTEE

A citizens committee on capital improvements was discussed and appointments are scheduled to be made at the next council meeting.

Councilman Halter expressed his desire to see the committee established. "Many bond issues go down in defeat because the people do not understand what the money is being used for," he said. "I think the planning of capital improvements should come from a broad section of the community."

In other business City Manager Bardell was authorized to let contracts for sidewalk construction on Caudill Street. The College Station Safety Committee had unanimously recommended the project to the council after many residents on the street petitioned the city for the sidewalks.

The council authorized an \$8,500 contribution to the Brazos Valley Mental Health-Mental Retardation Center.

Mrs. Vi Burke was appointed to fill the term of Fredda Austin on the Planning and Zoning Commission.

# Baptize Baylor — 1:30 pm