

State and Local

Halter won't run for re-election

Filing for CS elections opens

By CRAIG RENFRO
Staff Writer

Filing for city council elections in College Station opened Monday with a city council member and a former council member seeking the mayor's job.

Larry Ringer, a statistics professor at Texas A&M, has filed as a candidate to succeed outgoing mayor Gary Halter.

Ringer, who served as a College Station City Council member from 1976-83, now serves as a member of the A&M Faculty Senate.

"When I was a council member, I hope people felt I was someone they

could talk to and someone who was willing to listen to other people's ideas," Ringer said.

Ringer said he considered filing in 1984, but did not feel like running against Halter.

"When Gary (Halter) indicated he wouldn't run again, I listened to people and felt support in the community and decided to run," he said.

If elected, Ringer said he hopes to see many community development programs continued.

"I would like to see College Station continue to plan for the future," Ringer said. "I have no big crusades planned, I just want to continue some current programs and encour-

age innovative ideas."

Also filing for the mayoral race is Place 6 Councilwoman Lynn McIlhane, whose term expires this spring.

McIlhane, who has served on the College Station City Council for four years, said she understands how the city council works and, if elected, will tackle issues pressing the city.

McIlhane said if elected, she will be able to put more time into the position because she does not have a full-time job.

"The mayor's position is one of working with the council to address problems facing the city," she said. "We have a public relations aspect in

that we are also responsible for keeping the citizens informed."

Halter, a political science professor at A&M who has served three terms as mayor said he will not run for re-election, but pursue other interests.

"You begin to lose enthusiasm for it (the mayor position), and I need to do other things with my academic career," Halter said.

Halter said College Station is very efficient from the standpoint of management and provides good service to the people of the community.

The deadline for filing is Feb. 19 and the election is April 5.

Former principal gave alibi without being asked for it

Associated Press

LIVINGSTON — A former junior high school principal accused of killing a football coach over the affections of a school secretary gave authorities an unsolicited alibi before he was charged, prosecutors said Monday.

"I wonder why would somebody produce an alibi when he hadn't been charged," prosecutor Peter Speers asked the jury of 10 women and two men during opening arguments.

Hurley Fontenot, 48, former principal of Hull-Daisetta Woodson Junior High School, is charged with murder in the shooting death of Billy Mac Fleming, who had coached and taught math and science at the school.

Speers contends there was "bad blood" between two men over the relationships with Laura Nugent, 36, a teacher's aide and school secretary.

"I wonder why would somebody produce an alibi when he hadn't been charged."

— Peter Speers, Polk County district attorney.

"The motive (for the murder) is jealousy and hatred, but love is not all there is to it," Speers told about 200 spectators who packed the courtroom in this tiny East Texas town.

According to Fontenot's statement, he gave Fleming a ride from the school to his pickup truck and then got gas at a filling station. After stopping at the post office, he drove to Houston's Hobby Airport, where he was to meet his daughter, Vanessa, and help her move furniture to Austin, Speers said.

But his daughter never arrived, and Fontenot drove across the city to Houston's Intercontinental Airport, Speers said. When he found his daughter wasn't there, he made a long-distance call and then left, Speers said.

Speers said, however, that Fontenot's daughter never planned to visit Houston to get any furniture and that he never called her from the airport as he had told authorities. Ms. Fontenot will testify as a prosecution witness, he said.

Fontenot's fingerprint was found on the original bill at a Houston-area motel where Nugent and Fleming had spent the night, the prosecutor said.

Copies of the bill, along with "very derogatory" anonymous letters, were mailed in March to Fleming's estranged wife and members of the school board, Speers said.

Ex-hostage now willing to discuss ordeal

Associated Press

FORT WORTH — Navy Cmdr. Robert Engemann says he turned down most interview requests when he and 51 other Americans were released from captivity in Iran so he could return to a normal life and resume his career.

But now, on the fifth anniversary of freedom from the 444-day ordeal at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, it's easier to talk, he said.

"If you wanted to," Engemann said, "you could relive the experience every time you accept one of these offers to speak, write, or conduct an interview. As you do that, it's more and more difficult to place it behind you. You have to get on with your life."

His parents, Ardo and Mariam

Engemann of the Fort Worth suburb of Hurst, steadfastly refused any comment while their son was being held hostage, as well as after his release. They also discouraged any local celebrations after he was freed.

His parents refused again this week to talk about the situation, but Engemann granted a telephone interview with the Fort Worth Star-Telegram from his home near the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, where he works as a supply officer.

Engemann said the thing he remembers most about the first days after the Jan. 20, 1981 release was media coverage that followed the hostages from one parade or ceremony to another.

"I don't think any of the hostages were prepared for the magnitude of

the welcome home or the impact the whole Iranian situation had made on the United States," Engemann said.

He said he returned to a normal life more quickly than he had expected after his release.

"I was kind of surprised at how easy it was to get back to your job and your life as you left it," he said. "When you're experiencing something like that in Iran, you think about high moralistic standards and tend to put the material world behind you."

Upon his return to the United States in 1981, he described the days in captivity as "long hours of tedium occasionally punctuated by moments of sheer terror."

Engemann said he hasn't suffered any harmful psychological effects because of the experience.

Developer using safaris to lure tenants

Associated Press

AUSTIN — An office-retail project has a new twist that its developer hopes will get the attention of brokers and potential tenants — gifts of a safari in Africa, a trip on a French barge canal and a Caribbean cruise.

The marketing promotion started by developer Jim Ray has been offering such added incentives to sign leases of 5,000 square feet or more at his North Austin project, The Exchange.

Jan Estlow, a broker with Henry S. Miller Co., said Ray came up with the idea because he wanted to stay ahead as others increasingly turned to such gimmicks to distinguish projects in a crowded real estate market.

"I think it's an added enticement because there's so much space available," Estlow said. "Everyone's very competitive. And as you know, there's lots of free rent going on."

The Exchange has 27,000 square feet of office space and 40,000 square feet of retail space. Half the retail space is leased, but Ray still hasn't signed leases for the office section of the building, which was finished in November.

Ray said he thinks the trips are a way to stir interest in his project. His promotion started late in October, but no prizes have been awarded. He said he will continue until April.

Estlow said she has noticed the increased spending by other developers who have held fancy open houses with money given away each hour and one with a \$1,000 door prize. She said some have started offering 6 percent commission for brokers instead of the regular 4 percent, or other incentives.



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