

State and Local

Three newcomers seek Bryan City Council's Place 2

By Jill A. Bumby and Mary Keough
Reporters

The winner of the Place 2 Bryan City Council election will be a newcomer to Bryan politics because the election lacks an incumbent. Candidates include Randy Sims, John R. Powell and Lena Thomas. After a 16-year leave of absence from the political arena, former Brazos County Commissioner Sims, 46, is returning to Bryan. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Texas A&M. With 21 years of business experience, he says he knows the ups and downs and how to tighten the reins. "Governmental agencies are no different than businesses," he says. "They've got to stay within their budgets." Sims says Bryan is facing hard times because oil prices are down and the city budget depends on revenues. New taxes are one way of increasing revenues, he says, but probably no one in the community can stand too much of a tax increase. Projects which already have been approved by the Council, such as bond issues for street improvement, park improvements and sewer treatment facilities, will be continued, but any new projects would have to be looked at carefully and hard, Sims says. Whoever is elected, he says, is going to have to hold the line on expenditures. Powell, 48, moved to Bryan six years ago from Houston. He previously lived in Virginia. In Covington, Va., he was city engineer for nine years and city manager for one before moving to Texas. Powell was Bryan's city engineer in 1983, so he says he knows what makes this particular council work. Powell is also the president of

J.P. Powell Enterprises, a project management company. Powell says he is qualified for the council because he keeps up with the city. "Once you get involved with the city government," he says, "it kind of gets in your blood and you feel you have to participate." He said a council position involves a lot of research as well as a lot of listening and it's important for those holding positions to do their homework. Powell says his campaign goals will better Bryan. He says he wants to make some improvements to downtown Bryan and work on the beautification of all of Bryan. He says Bryan has come a long way in its street programs and parks and recreation programs, but he wants to see more done in less time. Powell also says he would like work on improvements to Bryan's irregular busing schedule. Thomas, the third candidate, was born in Bryan but spent most of her life on the West Coast. She recently returned to Bryan with her family. Thomas says her difficulty in getting involved with the community is one of the reasons for her decision to run for the position. Thomas is a homemaker and also spends a lot of time writing. She was the managing editor and a columnist for a central Texas bi-monthly news magazine. Thomas says her ability to meet people will help her clinch Place 2. "I want to represent the people because I am the people too," she says. She says community concerns include the Bryan school system, land and community development, drug education, the care of senior citizens and programs to keep young people off the streets. Thomas says she is running as a concerned citizen and her being a woman and being black is not the issue. She says she could bring a new perspective into the Council by listening to the people of the community.

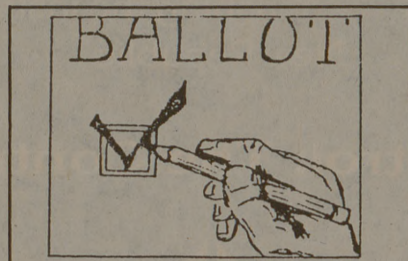
Candidates see a brighter future

3 vie for council Place 4 spot

By Katherine Cooper, Kristi Gill, Nancy Neukirchner
Reporters

Whichever candidate's campaign trail voters choose to follow, all roads in the race for the Place 4 seat on the Bryan City Council are said to lead to a better, brighter Bryan. The candidates are incumbent C.P. "Peck" Vass and challengers Larry Catlin and Mike Kennedy. Mike Kennedy, account executive for KTAM-KORA radio, says his main objective as a council member would be to bring Bryan into the '80s. Kennedy, 25, says he has lived in the Bryan-College Station area since he entered Texas A&M in 1978. "In my opinion, Bryan is still living in the '50s and '60s," he says. "I think, being a young councilman, I can add a little bit of young, new blood to the Bryan City Council." He says the main complaint he hears is that people do not think Bryan is keeping up with College Station. "Most of the nice clubs, restaur-

ants and new businesses are locating in College Station," he says. "I want to try to attract some of those businesses back to Bryan and make it a fun place to live." If he wins a seat on the council, Kennedy says he wants to start a program for revitalizing Bryan and see it through to the end. Another Place 4 candidate is Larry Catlin. Catlin, 38, co-founded a Bryan law firm five years ago after serving as Bryan city attorney and assistant district attorney. Catlin says that because he advises people on a daily basis about their businesses and operations, citizens have approached him in past years about running for city council. Because Bryan is experiencing an economic low, the city needs someone who has a vision and a sense of the future to try to get Bryan back on its feet again, he says. He says he views the council position as a civic duty, not a political aspiration. If he is elected, he plans to remain on the council until he feels he can no longer contribute. "I believe it is a job that ought to



Bryan Independent School District as a teacher, coach and principal.

Retiring from the school system at the age of 64, he went to work at the First Bank & Trust of Bryan.

He describes his past term as a stimulating and different learning experience.

"But sometimes the position is a nuisance because you have to be here all of the time for the meetings and it is a person's responsibility to be here if they're elected," he says.

During his term on the city council, Vass says he has supported the construction of a new municipal building and a man-made body of water to provide surface water for future residents.

The community has been good to him, he says, so he does his job for the citizens, not for personal gain.

"It's not a thank-you job, it's a thankless job," he says.

Newcomer, incumbent have equal record

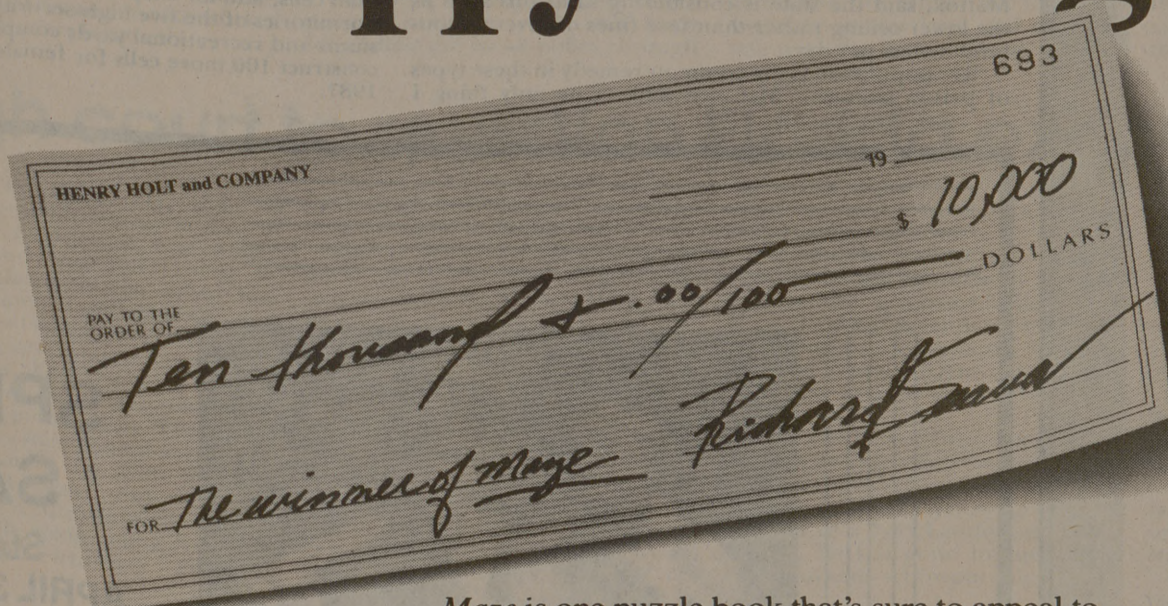
By Melissa Spann and Shelley Simmonds
Reporters

Though one candidate for Place 6 on the Bryan City Council has eight years of council experience and the other has none, both candidates have a history of serving the Bryan public. The candidates are John Mobley, Place 6 Bryan City Council incumbent, who is running for his fifth term in office and Dan Bragg, a 1954 Texas A&M graduate. Mobley, 61, was first elected to the council in 1978. He said he has always liked history and government, which is why he enjoys serving on the council. "It's certainly not the pay in it," he said. "People will very seldom come up to you and say, 'Hey, boy, you're doing a good job. I appreciate it.' They'll come up to you if you've done something that they don't like, and they fuss about that." Mobley said he is proud of the work he has done on the council. "I will defend any vote that I've ever taken, proudly," he said. "I've never voted on an issue that I was ashamed of. I've never been ashamed

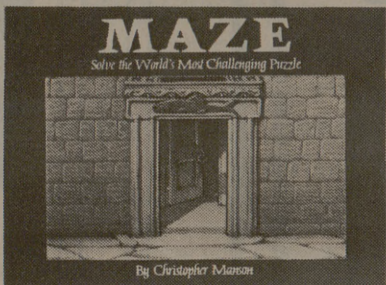
to take the stand that I did, and I'll give my reasons for doing it." The incumbent said he doesn't yet know the extent of his campaign, but said he plans to run advertisements in the newspaper and some spots on television. Mobley believes most people know who he is and know his record, he said. "I don't think it would be right for me to go out and try to beg someone to vote for me," he said, "and if they don't want me, well then, I'd just go on. But it would hurt to get beat. Nobody wants to be a loser." Mobley has lived in Bryan for 30 years, but is not a native Texan. Dan Bragg, Mobley's opponent, said he considers himself a "babe in the wilderness" when it comes to running for councilman. "But I'm learning fast," Bragg said. Bragg said he was asked to run for city council by a number of people who had heard about his work with volunteer clubs related to handicapped or poor people. He became involved with charity work through his church, First United Methodist, he said, and also through the Society of St. Stephen, a program which does charity work. As a result of this work, he said, he has been on

the Twin City Mission Board and also on the boards of the Brazos Valley Rehabilitation Center and the Prenatal Clinic. He became interested in the city council because of his involvement and volunteer work with the church, Bragg said. But when he decided to run his first consideration was his wife and children, he said. "It's basically a sacrifice," Bragg said. "It's a non-paying job, and you still have to take care of your job and your family." Because of this, many people say it's a thankless job, Bragg said. "But that's not true," he said. "Since I've announced for this office, I've been overwhelmed with people calling on the phone, stopping me at places, shaking my hand and telling me how much they appreciate the fact that I'm here." "The biggest reward is the fact that people thank you for serving." Bragg said he thinks he is probably the best candidate because he has no vested interests. "I feel like I have the concerns of the community at heart," Bragg said. If elected, he will take a general approach to make Bryan a better place to live, he said. "Put some common sense and good judgment into the things we do," Bragg said.

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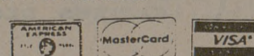
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