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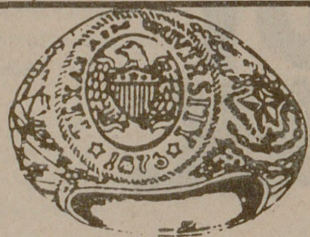
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# Git along, li'l ostrich

## Midland-area entrepreneurs expand into exotic bird ranching

MIDLAND (AP) — Before oil was discovered in the Permian Basin, the area was filled with herds of cows and horses and flocks of sheep raised by local ranchers.

Now a new breed of local ranchers are hoping to replace the sound of hoofbeats with the sound of flapping ostrich wings.

U.S. sanctions against South Africa — supplier of most ostrich products to this country — in 1986 have sent ostrich products such as feathers, hide and meat into short supply and their prices skyrocketing. As a result, Americans across the country are jumping into ostrich breeding.

People in the Southwest in particular have flocked to the industry in the last two years, with Texans and Oklahomans taking a particularly strong interest in the bird. While the exact number of breeders is difficult to determine, it is known Texas has the largest number, followed by Oklahoma.

Angelo Picerello, financial marketing analyst with the Texas Department of Agriculture in Austin, estimates the ostrich-breeding industry in Texas is a \$7 to \$15 million industry right now.

"Within four to five years, though, it could be a \$100 million industry," he adds.

The TDA feels the industry has

great potential and is assisting in the preparation of information on breeding problems, and other needs such as pen size and diet recommendations and marketing strategies for ostrich breeders.

A number of Midlanders have plunged into the industry, which they see as a chance to diversify the local economy — by introducing a new product — and because they see a chance at getting an excellent return on an investment.

One of the first, and largest, ostrich-breeding farms in the area is the Yellow Rose Ranch south of Odessa, owned by Dr. John Sheets and his wife, Rachel. The ranch currently houses 70 birds and has incubating facilities to handle 600 to 700 chicks.

Cooper Campbell, manager of the ranch, says that when Sheets decided to get out of the horse-breeding business a couple of years ago, he did some research into exotic animals, and found that the ostrich was the only exotic with a viable market.

"South Africa had an established market in ostrich products such as meat and hide for 100 years," Campbell points out. "Due to our sanctions against the country, it gave U.S. breeders a chance to get our foot in the door and develop an industry in the U.S."

He notes a three-month-old chick will bring \$3,000 while a three-year-old pair of breeding ostriches can fetch \$45,000. The eggs themselves can bring as much as \$500.

The average hen begins laying at about three years, and lays an average of 60 eggs a year until the age of 40 or 45 years. The only redmeated, two-toed bird in the world, an ostrich will grow to stand an average eight feet tall and weigh as much as 345 pounds.

The ultimate goal of U.S. breeders is to increase the herd enough to support a U.S. products industry, processing U.S.-grown ostrich hide, feathers and meat, which is a delicacy in Europe but in short supply in the United States.

Currently South Africa slaughters 85,000 birds annually, while estimates put the number of birds in the

United States at around 8,000. Campbell figures it will be another five to six years before this country has the number of ostriches needed to make a processing industry viable.

He offers this example of what kind of production ostriches are capable of: 14-month-old chicks (the age most South African ostriches are sent to market) would average 80 pounds when slaughtered. If one pair produced at least 30 chicks a year, Campbell says that would equal 2,400 pounds of meat annually from that one pair.

For Midlander Roy Kinsey, one pair of birds will outdo a typical West Texas oilwell. "If a hen lays 50 eggs a year for 40 years, that's 2,000 eggs. If current prices hold, those chicks would sell for \$3,000 a piece.

See Ostrich/Page 10

## Prosecutor shows relief over rejection of new trial

AUSTIN (AP) — A federal prosecutor says he is relieved a judge has ruled that convicted psychologist Lucy Marrero isn't entitled to a new trial despite allegations of jury misconduct in a fraud and embezzlement trial.

Marrero, 35, is scheduled to be sentenced next week for her February conviction on 37 charges of fraud and theft of money from U.S. military medical insurance funds. She faces a sentence of up to \$850,000 in fines and 285 years in prison.

U.S. District Judge James Nowlin, who earlier this month interviewed four of the 12 jurors who convicted the Austin psychologist, wrote in an opinion released Tuesday, "The court is firmly convinced that there has been nothing raised requiring a new trial or a judgment of acquittal in this case."

During the three-week trial, the jury heard evidence that Marrero's Psychotherapy Institute in Austin falsified insurance claims and "doubled billed" military insurance funds between 1983 and 1985.

Lawyers for Marrero had filed a request for a new trial charging jury impropriety. They filed affidavits from two jurors who alleged they

were pressured by other jurors to vote guilty despite believing Marrero was innocent.

In his six-page ruling, Nowlin noted that when he polled each juror after the verdict was read, all said they agreed with the conviction.

Nowlin also ruled that the allegations of jury misconduct raised in the case were without merit under the federal rules of evidence.

Dan Mills, the assistant U.S. attorney who prosecuted the psychologist, said the government "is relieved that (Nowlin) ruled the way he did."

Mills said he agreed with Nowlin's judgment that the allegations of jury misconduct had no merit under federal court rules.

Mills accused Marrero's lawyers of "badgering the jurors" by telephoning them after the trial and questioning them about the deliberations.

Frank Maloney, one of Marrero's lawyers, said he could not comment on Nowlin's ruling. But he said Marrero plans to appeal her conviction after sentencing.

Since her conviction, Marrero has transferred ownership of the clinic to her husband, Bernie, who also is a psychologist. Marrero continues to treat patients, Maloney said.

## What's Up

Thursday

- WOMEN'S STUDIES/CLASSICAL STUDIES:** will present "Sappho and Her Companions" at 7:30 p.m. in 203 Blocker.
- FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY:** Davis Scholarships and the Longevity Awards Ceremony will be at 2:30 p.m. in 204C Sterling C. Evans Library.
- SUGARLAND/MISSOURI CITY/STAFFORD HOMETOWN CLUB:** will meet and elect officers at 7 p.m. in 105 Heldenfels.
- MEXICAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** will meet and those seeking election must present a work plan at 8:30 p.m. in 308 Rudder.
- INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM:** will elect officers at 7 p.m. in 502 Rudder.
- STUDENTS OVER THE TRADITIONAL AGE:** will meet at 5 p.m. at Duddley's Draw.
- VIETNAMESE STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** will elect officers at 8:30 p.m. in 226 Rudder.
- R.E.A.C.H.:** will have a panel discussion about world hunger at 12:30 p.m. in the MSC flagroom. There will also be a canned-food drive from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Rudder fountain.
- NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS:** will meet at 8:30 p.m. Call the C.D.P.E. at 845-0280 for more information.
- ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS:** will meet at 6 p.m. Call the C.D.P.E. for more information.
- ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS:** will meet at noon. Call the C.D.P.E. at 845-0280 for more information.
- LATIN AMERICAN CATHOLIC STUDENTS:** will meet to discuss current issues in Spanish at 8:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Student Center.
- TAMU ATARI USERS GROUP:** will meet at 7 p.m. in 027 MSC.

Friday

- AGGIE SPACE SOCIETY:** Valentin Lebedev, a Soviet cosmonaut, will autograph his books and answer questions from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. in 601 Rudder.
- DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS:** will have statistical science awareness day from 2-5 p.m. in 701 Rudder.
- MANAGEMENT SOCIETY:** Joe B. Foster, president of Newfield Exploration Inc., will speak at 10 a.m. in 114 Blocker.
- STERLING C. EVANS:** will have a used book sale from 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. on the south side of the library.
- RECREATIONAL SPORTS:** will have registration from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. in 159 Read for a fun run and frisbee golf.
- MELTING POT:** will meet at 7 p.m. at St. Mary's Student Center.
- HILLEL JEWISH STUDENT CENTER:** will have Shabbat services at 8 p.m. at Hillel.


Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no later than three business days before the desired run date. We only publish the name and phone number of the contact if you ask us to do so. What's Up is a Battalion service that lists non-profit events and activities. Submissions are run on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no guarantee an entry will run. If you have questions, call the newsroom at 845-3315.

of MSC Political Forum

# SARAH WEDDINGTON

featured speaker  
on

## ROE v. WADE



Where It's Been  
Where It's Going

Monday, April 24  
MSC 201  
8:30 p.m.

Reception to follow

This program is presented for educational purposes, and does not necessarily reflect the views of MSC Political Forum.

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**The Battalion**  
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By Juliette Riz  
STAFF WRITER

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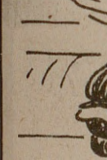
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