

Long-shots run for president

Two Texans join 211 other hopefuls in race for top office

DALLAS (AP) — Rufus Higginbotham could not get elected to Congress or even the Dallas mayor's office, so he is doing the prudent thing — running for president.

Higginbotham, a Democrat, has joined Dallas Republican George Zimmerman and 60 other candidates who paid the \$1,000 filing fee for Tuesday's New Hampshire presidential primary. The Federal Elections Commission says 211 presidential candidates have registered for the 1992 election in November.

"I think I'm finally in the right race," Higginbotham said. "It makes a lot more sense than the other ones."

The two long-shot candidates say they've taken campaign trips to New Hampshire, but their visits were a stark contrast to those of the major candidates, who toured with scores of advisors and reporters.

"The lesser-known or minor candidates get almost no coverage," Zimmerman said. "They (the media) like to treat us as a pack."

Higginbotham, a devout Southern Baptist, is using the same platform as he did in his previous political campaigns. He proposes a worldwide program of space exploration and colonization that will "subdue the universe" in accordance with God's command.

"It's so far above and beyond anything you hear coming out of the mouths of the other Democratic candidates," he said. "I'm talking to people about that next star out there."

Although his name identification is low in New Hampshire, Higginbotham is convinced his message will eventually win massive support.

"When they hear what I have to say . . . I'll be the front-runner," he said.

Zimmerman, a management consultant and computer expert, is calling for a "non-politician" type of government. He said he is eager to debate Republican rivals President Bush and Pat Buchanan.

"I can do well because I think Bush is in trouble (and) Buchanan is an enigma," Zimmerman said. "I really don't think the Republican Party can win with Bush, much less Buchanan — he's off the wall."

Zimmerman said the fact that he has never held an elected office — he lost a bid for the Texas Legislature in the 1960s — shouldn't stop him from taking the Oval Office.

"First of all, I don't have time to work my way up — I'm 66," he said. "Second, we have to change the type of government we have from a politician-type government to a people-oriented type of government."

Year-round schools

Concept grows nationwide despite opposition

HOUSTON (AP) — An estimated 1.4 million American students are involved this year in year-round schooling, a concept growing in Texas and nationwide, despite opposition from some parents and students.

Proponents of year-round education contend that critics will come around when they see the financial and educational benefits from the program.

Two years ago, Conroe Independent School District was the state's only school district using a year-round schedule.

Today, state officials say more than 30 districts are now using year-round schools.

"It makes business sense, it makes educational sense and it makes family sense," Jack Christie, a Texas Board of Education member from Houston, told The Houston Post in Monday's editions. "You'll see year-round

options in a lot of large and growing school districts."

Houston-area schools that participate in year-round schedules include Pasadena, Spring Branch and Alief districts. Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District decided during a tumultuous board meeting last week to try the schedule this summer at two elementary schools this summer. Other districts, including Spring, Humble and La Porte, are studying the issue.

Year-round school supporters say more classroom time is spent learning new material unlike the traditional year, where after a three-month vacation break between grade levels, teachers must review the basics from the previous year.

Financially, districts benefit because school buildings are always in use, a savings in operation costs. By using a multi-track sys-

tem with the student body split into four groups, schools can handle up to 50 percent more students, delaying the need for new

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- Jack Christie, Texas Board of Education

buildings.

Because each group has a different vacation schedule, per-pupil operational costs are also reduced by nearly 25 percent, said Charles Ballinger, executive director of the National Association for Year-Round Education.

Advocates believe the name of the concept sparks some of the opposition.

Year-round schooling does not last all year. Students, in fact,

spend the same amount of time in classes whether they are in year-round or traditional programs. It's their vacation schedules that are different.

Many school districts with year-round calendars hold classes three months and have a month of vacation. Others send students to school for nine weeks and give them three weeks of vacation.

But some parents aren't in favor of year-round schooling because they come to expect the three-month summer break to plan family vacations or to take on part-time jobs.

"Summer is the best time to do some things as a family," said Connie Anglin, parent of a student at Pasadena's May Smythe Elementary School who decided not to participate in the year-round school there.

Birthday party ends with gang violence

14-year-old girl dies at private celebration

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A grieving mother is pleading for an end to gang violence in the wake of a birthday party shooting that left her 14-year-old daughter dead and seven others injured.

"All I want is for this to stop, for us to overpower this gang thing. This has gone too far," said Stella Medellin, 54, mother of the slain teen-ager.

Blanca E. Garcia, an eighth-grader at Rogers Middle School, died of a gunshot wound to the head when gunfire erupted about 12:50 a.m. Sunday at the chaperoned birthday party of another girl.

Mrs. Medellin said her daughter wanted to join the U.S. Marines and learn oceanography. "Her life was just beginning. She had so many dreams, so many hopes," Mrs. Medellin said. "I lost my little girl to a person who probably didn't even know who he killed."

Police said gang members opened fire with shotguns and pistols because they apparently thought members of a rival gang were at the party.

Police Sgt. Mike Akeroyd said the party was supervised by adults, and there was no alcohol being consumed.

"They were just trying to have a quiet little party for their little girl," he said.

Three people were arrested, and police were seeking others, Akeroyd said.

Alan Ray Crook, 17, Michael Orozco, 18, and a juvenile were charged with one count of murder and six counts of attempted murder each, police said. Both men were held in the Bexar County Jail early Monday in lieu of \$250,000 in bonds.

Heather Trevino, who was celebrating her 14th birthday at the party, was treated and released from Medical Center Hospital.

Alfred Trevino, 34, her father, was treated and released from Medical Center after he was hit by shotgun pellets in his right forearm.

A 16-year-old, who is believed to have been accidentally shot during the incident, was treated and turned over to authorities.

Lanier decides to nominate veteran officer for police chief

HOUSTON (AP) — Mayor Bob Lanier, citing the need to make a clean break from past problems, said Monday he will nominate a federal prosecutor and veteran police officer to replace Houston Police Chief Elizabeth Watson.

"After some 25 days deliberations, it's my point of view, my conviction, opinion, that the new administration would be best served with a new police chief," Lanier said at a press conference.

Watson, 41, was sworn in two years ago as the nation's first female chief of a major metropolitan area, but her professional future had been the subject of speculation since Lanier took office Jan. 2. She was nominated by then-Mayor Kathy Whitmire, who failed to make the runoff mayoral election last year that Lanier won.

Lanier said after considering several candidates he settled on Sam Nuchia. The mayor, who will present the nomination to city council for approval, said he didn't have any specific complaints about Watson.

"I think she performed well under difficult circumstances, plus I liked her," he said.

"It was a fairly difficult choice to make," he said. "But I just de-

cidated after some reflection that the new administration would be better off with a new police chief, and break rather clean with whatever may have been the problems of the past, whether they were of Chief Watson's making or not."

Lanier said he thought Watson-

"It's my point of view, my conviction, opinion, that the new administration would be best served with a new police chief"

- Mayor Bob Lanier

posed several problems during her tenure, including the hostile relationship between the police unions and Whitmire, personnel shortages, increases in crime and low wages.

Watson said she had mixed feelings about the mayor's decision.

"In some respects it's difficult not to be able to continue some of the programs that I care a lot about and are under way," she said. "On the other hand, I have sacrificed a lot personally to this job, and being able to get my life

back into some semblance of normalcy has all kinds of appeal to it."

She said she has asked to stay on as an assistant police chief. Lanier said earlier he thought she would remain on the force, but he did not say in what capacity.

Meanwhile, she will remain as police chief until Nuchia's nomination is approved.

In a separate new conference, Watson even offered a bit of humor as she discussed her departure.

"My feelings are captured best by Mark Twain, who once said, 'I am glad that I have done this, partly because it was well worth doing, and chiefly because I will never have to do it again.'"

Nuchia, a 46-year-old Beaumont native, has been an assistant U.S. attorney since 1987. A graduate of South Texas College of Law, he currently works as a prosecutor with the U.S. attorney's Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force.

He served 21 years in the Houston Police Department, rising through the ranks from patrol officer up to his final position as deputy chief of police.

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