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State runoff election possible 'wild card' Candidates' Senate chances depend on voter turnout, area chairmen say

By STEPHANIE PATTILLO

The Battalion

The June 5 runoff election between interim U.S. Sen. Bob Krueger and State Treasurer Kay Bailey Hutchison has been described as a "wild card" because no one knows who will win a runoff election, which depends so heavily on voter turnout.

"It is real crucial," said Jim James, Brazos County Democratic chairman. "It is like a wild card; no one knows what the turnout will be. There is room for surprise."

Rodger Lewis, Brazos County Republican chairman, said voter turnout in this election comes down to which group can get more of its friends out to the polls to vote.

Dr. Nikki Van Hightower, A&M political scientist, said the challenge for the candidates will be winning over the uncommitted people who don't identify with either party.

But she said party affiliation is not a benefit to either candidate in this election. "It is a toss up between Democrats and Republicans," Van Hightower said.

"Both fare equally in representation in districts throughout the state."

Dr. James Dyer, associate professor of political science and director of the Texas Poll, said party affiliations in the state are split equally among Republicans, Democrats and independents.

Although there is no great party advantage for either candidate, currently the polls show Hutchison has a lead of as much as 22 percent over Krueger, Dyer said.

Van Hightower attributes Hutchison's popularity in part to her gender.

"Hutchison definitely has an advantage over Krueger with female voters," she said. "This includes women who voted for Ann Richards and moderate to liberal Republicans," Van Hightower said.

Dyer said gender issues are significant in Texas elections because people voted for a woman for governor.

"I'm not sure whether this is an advantage or a disadvantage," he said.

In terms of political style, Van Hightower said Hutchison has the advantage over Krueger as well.

"She is flamboyant and flashy," she said. "Because she is a woman in the race she can wear bright clothing to stand out."

Krueger, on the other hand, has a "stodgy" political style and doesn't have much charisma, Van Hightower said.

The campaign in general has been standard and not terribly exciting, she said.

Dyer said the campaign has gotten nasty in the last week because both candidates have made personal attacks on each other.

"The candidates have made personal attacks to some extent because they are floundering around to get a foothold," he said.

Although people are fairly unaware of this election and have paid little attention to the candidates, Rodgers said the outcome of the race is crucial in Washington.

"Changing one vote in the Senate makes a whole lot of difference," he said.

James said, "If Texas has two Republican senators, then our influence in Washington is nil. It is important to have both sides represented."

Van Hightower agreed this is a race over who has control in the Senate.

"This is important to the president," she said. "This is a contest between Republicans and Democrats, more so than we've seen in a long time."

Graham escapes execution again

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HUNTSVILLE — Texas death row inmate Gary Graham avoided the death chamber a second time Wednesday when the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals granted him a reprieve about 12 hours before he was to be executed by injection.

Graham and his supporters, who have included a number of Hollywood celebrities, have insisted he is innocent and have produced what they say are witnesses who can back up the claims.

"This is great news, wonderful news," Anthony Haughton, one of Graham's attorneys, said. "Obviously, we're pleased. We were hopeful the Court of Criminal Appeals would do this, especially when they were taking so long to come back with the case, that they would give us some kind of relief."

Haughton had filed his appeal with the state court, Texas' highest criminal appeals court, some three weeks ago.

Bill Zapalac, an assistant Texas attorney general who handles capital cases, said the court issued the 30-day reprieve to await a U.S. Supreme Court decision, likely by the end of the month, in another Texas capital punishment case.

In the case being considered by the justices, inmate Dorsey is challenging a now-defunct Texas death penalty law that he contends unfairly limited a jury's consideration of his young age — 19 at the time of his crime.

Graham was convicted under the same law and was 17 at the time of his arrest for the May 13, 1981 robbery and killing of Bobby Lambert, of Tucson, Ariz., outside a Houston supermarket. Less than \$100 was taken in the holdup.

Graham also pleaded guilty to 10 similar robberies where a victim was approached in

the parking lot of a supermarket. In two of the robberies, the victims were shot. In a third, a woman was raped.

Graham was in the midst of a 90-minute meeting with his family Wednesday when a prison sergeant told him of the reprieve.

"Praise the Lord, Hallelujah!" his stepmother, Elnora Graham, exclaimed.

Graham's response was more low key. "OK," he said.

Graham insisted he was with friends miles away at the time of the Lambert shooting and complained he was the victim of racism since he is black and Lambert white. His attorneys also produced witnesses who said Graham was not the gunman.

Texas law, however, bars presentation of new evidence longer than 30 days after a conviction.

Prosecutors termed the new witnesses' statements inconsistent and not credible.

Baseball team leaves for Omaha



STACY RYAN/The Battalion

Members of the Texas A&M Baseball Team join in the excitement at yell practice Wednesday morning at Olsen Field. After yell practice, the team left for Omaha, Neb. where they will play Kansas in the first round of the College World Series.

Guatemala V.P. assumes power

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GUATEMALA CITY — Guatemala's vice president proclaimed himself president Wednesday, disrupting an effort by political leaders to pick a replacement for ousted President Jorge Serrano.

Gustavo Espina Salguero's announcement came a day after the military forced out Serrano by imposing one-man rule.

The army named Espina Salguero as acting president while allowing political leaders to begin discussing a permanent successor. Espina Salguero was not among those named as a likely new permanent president.

Espina Salguero made the announcement from his home, surrounded by his security guards.

"I am informing you that, obeying constitutional dictate, the successor to the president is solely and exclusively the vice president of the republic," he said.

"From this moment on I am speaking to you as the president of the Republic of Guatemala," Espina Salguero said.

Presidency Secretary Antulio Castillo Barajas said Wednesday in a radio interview that Espina Salguero would "serve until the end of Serrano's term" in January of 1996.

The Congress went into emergency session on hearing the news.

Before Espina Salguero's announcement, Defense Minister Gen. Jose Domingo Garcia Samayoa appeared to be the de facto leader of Guatemala. He pledged a swift restoration of democratic rule when he ousted Serrano on Tuesday.

The president of Congress, Jose Fernando Lobo Dubon, said party leaders met Wednesday to discuss the choice of a new president. It was not clear what would happen if Congress chose someone other than Espina Salguero to finish Serrano's term.

Serrano flew to neighboring El Salvador where he ensconced himself in a luxury hotel, according to authorities in that neighboring Central American country. Serrano planned to go later to San Antonio, Texas, to visit his ailing mother, the State Department said.

Rigoberta Menchu, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, declared Tuesday that the change of command was nothing more than a "military coup hiding behind a civilian face."

Guatemala's Roman Catholic archbishop, Prospero Penados del Barrio, said he supported the army actions.

"All has been carried out within the bounds of the law and without bloodshed," he said in comments published Wednesday.

Hydrochloric acid spews into Austin pool, injures 30

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — Three girls remained hospitalized Wednesday following an acid leak in a city pool that injured more than 30 people, mostly children on their first week of vacation from school.

Two girls aged 13, and one 9-year-old, were in fair condition at Brackenridge Hospital, spokesman Larry BeSaw said.

They and 21 others, aged 4 to 43, were treated at local hospitals for burning sensation to the eyes and throat and nausea and vomiting, officials said. Nine others received treatment at the scene.

The pool has been closed. City officials say a mechanical malfunction caused a pipe to begin spewing hydrochloric acid, but they didn't know why.

"We have the mechanical

system under investigation," said Carolyn Nelson, deputy director of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department.

The water treatment system in the pool, along with 10 other city pools, has recently been changed to one similar to most home pools, in which liquid chlorine, hydrochloric acid and water are mixed and then released in the pool.

Previously, the pools used gas chlorine, which Parks and Recreation officials said was more dangerous.

Carmen Ortiz said she was sitting at the side of the pool when she saw a yellow liquid shoot out of the side of the pool.

"It hit my daughter right in the face," she said. "Then there was this awful smell. My daughter started coughing and I said, 'Get out,' and pulled her out of the pool."

Medicine men attempt to solve Navajo illness

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — For weeks, scientists have been analyzing blood and tissue samples and testing bacteria to try to find out what's causing a flu-like illness that has killed 13 people, most with ties to the Navajo Reservation.

Now the tribe will ask its medicine men to try to solve the mystery.

"Western medicine has its limitations," Navajo Nation President Peterson Zah said at a news conference Wednesday.

"We're going to call on some Navajo medicine people to help us analyze the situation and to see if there are other avenues that are available to us as a nation so that we can define what it is that is causing these deaths," Zah said.

The roughly three to four dozen shamans who live on the reservation in New Mexico, Arizona and Utah will get involved later this week, Zah said.

He gave no specifics on what they will do; it is taboo in Navajo culture to discuss their work. Traditionally medicine men are tribal elders who perform ceremonies, such as making sand paintings, to cleanse and heal the spirit. Navajos believe that leads to physical recovery.

Zah also said families of Navajo victims will break another taboo — not speaking of the dead — to assist investigators and try to help other residents of the reservation.

About 175,000 people live on the 17-million-acre Navajo reservation, which surrounds a 631,000-acre Hopi reservation where about 12,000 people live.

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Federal aid arrives for low income residents

By JAMES BERNSEN

The Battalion

Both Bryan and College Station will receive \$500,000 from a federal program that provides low income housing to poor families in the community.

The Investment Partnership Program (HOME) provides funding to both cities and states for a variety of relief programs in the areas that the city deems most needy.

Bryan and College Station both received the maximum amount an individual city can receive under the program.

Robert Thielemann, Bryan community development program technician, said the grant will allow the construction of twice as many homes as previous years for low and very low income residents.

"We can stop spending the block grant money we normally use on such housing and use it for other projects," he said.

Bryan will also double its rehabilitation of some existing houses, Thielemann said.

Many houses that are beyond repair will be demolished and new ones will be built for the families, he said.

"Normally we are able to help

eight families through rehabilitation and eight through relocation," Thielemann said. "Now we will be able to help about 13 to 16 families through each program."

Jo Carroll, College Station administrator of community development, said College Station will also be able to double its low-income housing.

"We proposed to build 95 housing units," he said. "But it's really based on how far the funds will go."

People receiving aid will be taken off existing waiting lists of families that earn below \$28,000, Carroll said.

The HOME program was creat-

ed in 1990 by the National Affordable Housing Act.

A press release from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs said the program has awarded \$18.7 million to 63 applicants in Texas.

Henry Flores, executive director of the TDHCA, said the program allows local governments, public housing authorities and non-profit agencies throughout Texas to provide assistance to low income and elderly people in their communities.

"More than 2,000 decent, safe and affordable housing units will be created," he said.