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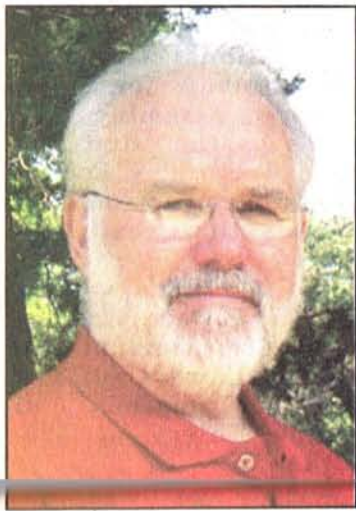
Schoolcraft wins

By Newton E. Renfro
Editor

Mayor Tom Schoolcraft retained his position, beating challenger Myfe Moore in a landslide.

Moore, who did not campaign actively, got 239 votes to Schoolcraft's 601, giving the mayor a margin of 71.6 percent to 28.4 percent.

Election officials last week reported 5,116 registered voters in the city, so the total of 840 ballots cast



Tom Schoolcraft

in the only contested race in Helotes represented a turnout of less than 16.5 percent. While this is a low mark for the last five years, it is about average for city elections before 2005.

Councilmen Rich Whitehead and Jeff Ellis were also on the ballot but were unopposed and are, therefore, re-elected. The officials are scheduled to be sworn in for

their new two-year terms at the regular City Council meeting Thursday. Ellis' status on the council was unknown at The Echo's deadline Monday due to his arrest on a charge of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl. See a related story below.

Councilman accused of sexual assault

Helotes Councilman Jeff Ellis was arrested in New Mexico last week by U.S. Marshals and the Albuquerque Police Department and transported to San Antonio where he was questioned in connection with an accusation that he had sexually molested a 14-year-old girl at his home on April 23.

The Helotes Police Department issued a press release saying that they had received an allegation, and the department started a criminal investigation and then requested the assistance of the Texas Rangers.

Ellis' family lives in Albuquerque, and the police say he was arrested there on May 7.

Assistant District Attorney Adriana Biggs, chief of white collar crime, said Monday that no charge had been filed, with the case still under investigation by the



Jeff Ellis

to seek an indictment.

Mayor Tom Schoolcraft said he had asked legal authorities to keep him out of the matter. However, he said that Ellis is innocent until proven guilty and that the City Council did not have authority to remove him

History of Leon Springs proof that it's never too late

By Newton E. Renfro
Editor

Marlene Richardson and Jeanne Dixon didn't know what they were starting when they began collecting oral histories of Leon Springs families back in 1983, and they had no idea it would take a quarter of a century to complete the project.

Nor were they exactly young – Richardson was 48 and Dixon 64 – although they didn't think of themselves as old.

Now, 25 years later, they are well aware of the passing of time, and that was why Dixon said to Richardson a couple of years ago, "I want to see this in print while I still can. We've got to stop researching and start writing."

So they did, although to Richardson, research was the fun part and writing was work. The result is "Passing Memories," a history of the families of Leon Springs, self-published this year. The ladies are now 73 and 89, and Richardson said with typical Hill Country understatement, "This is our first."

She added that the two did not work steadily for 25 years but "pecked away at it."

One might think that a history of an unincorporated non-town that started as little more than a stagecoach stop between San Antonio and Boerne (hence the name Boerne Stage Road) could produce much history, but the book is packed with familiar family names connected to Helotes, Camp Bullis, Boerne, Comfort, Kerrville and Fredericksburg. Most of the families were German or Polish, but many Hispanic families also helped settle and build the area.

"Many families described as German," said Richardson, "were actually Prussian."

In the back of the book is a list of 50 people who submitted their memories and family tales going back to the times when Apache and Comanche war parties roamed the hills. Of these 50 named contributors, only 20 are still alive.

This was one reason Dixon believed the book should be published as soon as possible. She wanted some of those who contributed to read it. Also, she mentioned the honor of recording the stories of people nobody had ever interviewed.

"It's a good thing we started when we



Marlene Richardson and Jeanne Dixon researched their history of Leon Springs for 25 years.

Photo by Newton E. Renfro

did," she said, "or most of these stories would have been lost forever."

There were even Persian and Arab families in Leon Springs. At one time, an Islamic sect settled on a hilltop right behind the present location of H-E-B. One of them was an Iranian Prince.

One intriguing clue nagged at the authors for years. There was a published tale about John Meusebach of Fredericksburg fame having built his first Texas home at "Comanche Springs."

Yet they could find no such place on maps or in records. This bedeviled them.

"It drove us crazy," said Richardson. "Where was Comanche Springs?"

Finally, they came across an old reference to Comanche Springs in what is now Camp Bullis.

Later, Meusebach became well known for affecting the only treaty with an Indian nation that was never broken. About this time every year representatives of the Comanche Nation travel to Fredericksburg to commemorate the accomplishment and honor the descendants of Meusebach.

See Book on page 3

Book is in local stores

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One of the problems in researching Leon Springs, said Richardson, was that people thought they meant Leon Valley.

"Our children went to the three-room schoolhouse in Leon Springs," said Richardson (She has five and Dixon six). "There were no frills. Any time we went to the school district to get help, they always thought we were doing just fine. That's because they thought we were Leon Valley!"

This sort of thing was repeated when they sought historical information about Leon Springs.

"No," Dixon would say. "We're in Leon Springs, not Leon Valley."

The identity confusion notwithstanding, the two friends pressed on and accumulated a massive collection of documents and stories.

Such as: the stage stop in Leon Springs was built by Max Aue, and when the horse transportation was replaced by the iron horse, the train station was named for Aue. No, this was not in Leon Valley. A photo of the train station adorns the cover of the book.

The book is full of such stories and many ancient

photographs. Dixon said that some people who thought they knew their family histories have read the book and exclaimed over some fact or anecdote: "I didn't know that!"

The book, published by Passing Memories (Richardson and Dixon, of course), is available for \$35 at stores around the area, including Read All About It in Boerne, the Twig Bookstore on Broadway in San Antonio Rickati's Espresso and Gelato Shop in the Fairview Shopping Center and Stellar Books in Old Town Helotes.

Stellar Books plans a book signing for the ladies later this summer.

Dixon (did we mention she is 89?) said she is looking forward to the next book.