

# At forum in Teague . . . SBOE candidates visit

Two candidates for the State Board of Education, District 9, made a joint campaign stop Friday afternoon in Teague to answer questions posed by area educators.

Making the stop were incumbent SBOE member Dr. Don McLeroy and challenger Thomas Ratliff.

Both are seeking the Republican nomination in the March 2 primary election—there is no Democratic candidate for the post.

McLeroy, 63, is a dentist in Bryan and has served on the board since 1999, including two years as chairman. Recently, he failed to get confirmation for another term as chairman.

Ratliff, 42, of Mt. Pleasant is a businessman and lobbyist.

Although the two candidates share the same political party, they embrace differing ideas of the role of the state board, and of its performance the past few years.

McLeroy believes the past two years when he served as chairman at a time of accomplishment, and Ratliff views those years as divisive.

The board approved curriculum standards for English, science and social studies which were hotly contested, and changed management of the Permanent School Fund investments.

"We have a huge responsibility over education standards and I take that responsibility really seriously," McLeroy says. "Some people think I'm a very controversial person."

He states a goal of helping teachers to raise academic achievement by concentrating on traditional subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic, but not on critical thinking



**CANDIDATES FOR THE State Board of Education in District 9, l-r, incumbent Dr. Don McLeroy and Thomas Ratliff, spent Friday afternoon in Teague answering questions posed by area educators.**

skills. Ratliff believes that the SBOE should set guidelines for educators, but should not immerse itself in details that can best be worked out by school boards and administrators.

The challenger thinks that teaching needs to evolve with the times—methods used in the past are not always the best to reach today's students.

"I'm a big believer in electronic content," Ratliff says. "We've got to teach these kids differently than we were taught."

Both candidates are fans of e-textbooks, but differ in that McLeroy believes the state board should control all content and Ratliff believes that school district boards should be involved in approving appropriate content.

But, the biggest difference in the candidates is the process under which the board operates, one that has become contentious over the past few years.

Under McLeroy, the SBOE has adopted English, mathematics and science curriculums, revising all three.

It took two and one-half years to draw new English standards, and although it was messy the incumbent is proud of the board's work.

Ratliff, on the other hand, points out that teachers involved in the process and with whom he has visited say they feel they were marginalized by the SBOE.

"Teachers worked two and one-half years and feel their product was largely ignored and devalued," Ratliff says.

How the state board selects experts to testify on matters also is a bone of contention. If two members of the board agree a person is an expert, that person is deemed an expert.

"We get people on those panels that are more political than expert," Ratliff

says, likening the board's experts to political appointees.

The challenger also believes the SBOE would be better served if candidates did not run for seats as part of the political party process, but all ran independently from political parties.

"I do not think partisan politics should be part of the State Board of Education," the challenger declares.

"I like the idea of Democrats and Republicans running for this office," McLeroy says.

Because there are no Democrats seeking the District 9 post this year, the candidate that takes the post will be picked in the Republican Primary.

In response to a question from Teague Independent School District superintendent

# On the Edge of Common Sense

By Baxter Black, D.V.M.



## PIONEERS

One of the qualities that characterize dedicated ranchers and farmers is a joyous commitment to hard work. It's sort of an odd combination of curiosity, independence and bravado. They actually crave the struggle like long-distance runners crave the race. They love their job!

Ranching is not a sport. It pits man against all that nature can throw at them year after year. It takes a hard-headed person to keep pushing back. That's how frontiers were conquered and the west was won. Today's ranchers possess the same qualities exemplified by the 18th and 19th century pioneers. The origin of the word Pioneer comes from the native Indian language Pi, as in "pie in the sky", and Near, meaning "it's just over the next hill, Mother!"

They battle the same obstacles encountered by the early settlers; drought, blizzard, disease, despair, and predators both wild and packing guns or toting regulations. It is simply nature trying to take back

Ned Burns, Ratliff declares that he is against providing vouchers from public funds to pay private school costs of students.

His opposition is because private schools tend to allow only the best and brightest to attend, but he would consider supporting vouchers if all students could enroll.

Burns points out that allowing all students into private schools would turn them into public schools.

McLeroy favors vouchers for students in low performing schools.

Primary elections are March 2 throughout the state.

its own balance.

When we received our Christmas newsletter from long time friends in Wyoming, calmly listing all the highs and lows of the past year, I was inspired. Their mettle is strong as individuals but as a pair they seem invincible. Their union began when he put an ad in the livestock paper for a ranch hand who could cook and keep house. She was, in essence, a mail order bride! One who grew up in suburban California!

With a tip of my hat to Wyoming, it can still be as formidable to settlers today, as it was 150 years ago. It's one of those places where you always keep coveralls, a bedroll, moon boots and a shovel in the trunk of your car. Where you never take four-wheel drive for granted, keep a generator handy during a snow storm, check the antifreeze in your tractor in September and snow plow the road to the pasture. Not to mention the spring breeze that can turn a hard hat inside out!

But she came, this California maiden, they wed and went to raising corries, mules and blue heelers, animals they could relate to! Everything they have gotten out of that tough country they have worked for. He's a heavy equipment operator, welder, farmer, mule skinner and carries the burden of his daily labor like Atlas. She has that same toughness, nerves of steel, generous heart and can make lemonade out of lemons or jerky out of old reins!

I hear about NASA postulating what will be needed to establish a base on the moon or Mars. They debate the technology required, the clothing, diet, sanity and the structured-monitored work and rest schedule. Then consider intensely the qualifications

necessary for the astronauts selected to make the arduous journey.

My first thought was, call Louie and Ann! Give him a backhoe and fencing pliers, her a saddle mule and sourdough starter and come back in five years. You'd have a place good enough to build Wyoming a new community college!

## Buffalo Livestock

**On Saturday, February 13, 2010, Buffalo Livestock Commission sold 507 head. There were 54 sellers and 46 buyers.**

**Slaughter Cows:**  
Cutter cows 52-62  
Fat cows 52-62  
Canner cows 48-60

**Slaughter Bulls:**  
Heavy Bulls 66-71.50  
Light Bulls 63-64

**Cow/Calf Pairs and Bred Cows:**  
Choice Pairs None  
Good Pairs 800-880  
Plain Pairs 550-700  
Bred Cows 3-6 yr. 540-820

**Steer/Bull Calves and Yearlings:** Some plainer, hard to place calves below these figures.

150-200 lb. 110-140  
200-300 lb. 110-135  
300-400 lb. 113-135  
400-500 lb. 105-125  
500-600 lb. 95-113  
600-700 lb. 93-103  
700-800 lb. 85-98

**Heifer Calves and Yearlings:** Some plainer, hard to place calves below these figures.

150-200 lb. 105-135  
200-300 lb. 105-130  
300-400 lb. 100-114  
400-500 lb. 97-108  
500-600 lb. 90-102  
600-700 lb. 90-96  
700-800 lb. 75-90

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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### The Fairfield Recorder

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22

► VFW Bingo, 7:30 pm, VFW Post 5872

► AA, 6:30 pm, FUMC Fairfield

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23

► Rotary Club, noon, Big Cedar Country Club

► AA & NA, 8:00 pm, Trinity Lutheran Church Fairfield

► AA, 7:00-8:00 pm, Lakeside United Methodist Church Annex, 515 FM 416

► Wortham Chamber of Commerce Board, 6:00 pm, Chamber Office

► Free Blood Pressure & Blood Sugar Check, 10am-12pm, Fairview Healthcare

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

► Weight Watchers, 5:00 pm, Calvary Baptist Church

► VFW Bingo, 7:30 pm, VFW Post 587

► Free Blood Pressure Check, 11:00 am, Fairfield Senior Center

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25

► Children's Story Time, 10:30 am-11:00 am, Mary Moody Northern Library

► Out & About Christian Singles, 6:30 pm, First Baptist Church of Wortham

► AA & NA, 8:00 pm, Trinity Lutheran Church Fairfield

► AA, 6:30 pm, FUMC Fairfield

► Women's Book Club, 6:30 pm, FUMC Fairfield

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26

► AA, 7:00-8:00 pm, Lakeside United Methodist Church Annex, 515 FM 416

► Alzheimers Association Family Support Group, 10:30 am, Mary Moody Northern Library, Call 254-753-7722 for more info

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27

► Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, 8pm, Trinity Lutheran Church, Fairfield

► Barn Stompers, 7:30 pm, FJHS Cafeteria

To list calendar items, call 903-389-3334 or e-mail advertising@thefairfieldrecorder.com.

## Political Calendar

### DEMOCRATIC PARTY

**DISTRICT CLERK**  
Janet Chappell-Inc.

**STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 8**  
Charles Morgan

**COUNTY CLERK**  
Sharon Gibson  
Dianne Manning

**JUSTICE OF THE PEACE PCT. 3**  
Beth Ireland  
Gibson-Inc.

### REPUBLICAN PARTY

**COUNTY CLERK**  
Linda Jarvis

## Fairfield Baseball Association Coaches & Umpires

• Attendance required due to draft and bylaw changes. •

Thursday  
February 25 • 7:00 pm  
Fairfield High School Cafeteria

Call  
**Clint Fryer**  
903.388.6923  
or  
**Joey Bailey**  
903.641.3250  
for more info

*The public is invited to a*

# RETIREMENT RECEPTION

*for*

# BILLY CHANCELLOR

*for 18 years of dedicated service*

**WED., FEBRUARY 24, 2010**

**2:00PM – 4:00PM**

**AT CITY HALL**