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Mountain Home
scientist honored

Story below

River quality
improved

Outdoors, Page 11

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March 10, 2016

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VOL. XIII NO. 34

USPS 022498

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St. Clair new mayor pro tem, Brown on council

By Clint Schroeder
West Kerr Current

Ingram City Council last Tuesday appointed Hunter St. Clair mayor pro tem and Twanda Brown to fill the vacant seat on council.

Mayor Brandon Rowan, the former mayor pro-tem, was appointed mayor at the previous meeting, which created the open seat on the council.

Rowan suggested a mayor pro-tem be appointed to preside over meetings in the event he is absent.

Council Member Nelda Mitchell nominated St. Clair, and council members approved unanimously. He will hold the position until the May 7 election.

Appointment of a council member came after some deliberation.

At the beginning of the meeting, during the citizens forum, Bill Warren said he is one of the council candidates.

"If we're going to fill that vacancy, I'd like to be consid-

ered for that vacancy," Warren said. "If not, we're so close to the election — we're eight weeks away — just go ahead and wait until voters vote."

Also running for the two council seats being contested are Brown and incumbent Jimmy Lopez. Rowan and Michael Burns are running for mayor.

When the matter of filling the vacant council seat came up, City Attorney Patrick O'Fiel said council could fill the post or wait until the election.

"I think we should vote," said Council Member Claud Jordan. "We need all the help we can get."

Burns, in the audience, suggested council appoint Brown temporarily until the election.

"She's already run twice. She's very active in city government anyway," Burns said. "She probably knows more about it than almost anybody here and she's just really up-

See Council, Page 3



Photo by Irene Van Winkle

The four-footed patient is Dually Rae, 14, owned by Katie Henderson of Hunt, holding bridle. They rely on the team of veterinarians at Town and Country Animal Hospital, who are, from left, Drs. Scott Chapman, Bill Symm and, at right, Cuatro Patterson. The hospital has expanded recently to enable the team to do surgery on equines and other important treatments.

Veterinarians expand horse practice

ITM grad returns as horse surgeon

By Irene Van Winkle
West Kerr Current

A new equine barn near West Kerr County will mean horses are receiving better medical care.

A trio of veterinarians — Bill Symm, Cuatro Patterson

and Scott Chapman — the partners at Town and Country Animal Hospital, 2710 Junction Hwy., said they are excited about how their recent expansion will improve equine treatment markedly.

"We are a full-service hospital," Patterson said. "We are

the only local veterinary hospital with a horse surgeon — that's Dr. Symm — and a place to do surgery on horses."

The new barn has a separate entrance, on the west side of the building, so that getting in and out keeps the traffic away from the front entry. Stalls were repaired, expanded and can now hold more animals.

Among the other amenities, Patterson said, are digital X-rays and a pharmacy.

Taking X-rays involves some pretty high-tech, sophisticated equipment.

"The images are sent digitally instantly into the computer," Patterson said.

See Equine, Page 14

Ingram author's book-signing March 19



Teeca Yarbrough

Ingram author Teeca Yarbrough will be holding a book-signing for her book, "The Inheritance," at Hastings Book Store on Saturday, March 19, 2-4 p.m.

Yarbrough, who was raised near Lubbock, Texas has lived in Kerrville (and now Ingram) for the past 35 years.

She pastored with her late husband, Norman, who grew up here, for most of that time. She is a renowned speaker, who has spoken at women's conferences, Christian schools and many churches, including

Innpact Christian Fellowship. Yarbrough said she was inspired to write this story about a strong woman who thought her wilder dreams had come true when she was willed a billion dollars by her deceased aunt.

"Then her life begins to fall apart," Yarbrough said. "She is betrayed, kidnapped and divorced. Finding her future through her faith and perseverance, she wonders if she can ever trust people again. Can she ever be happy again?"

Mountain Home resident honored as Distinguished Scientist

By Irene Van Winkle
West Kerr Current

Dr. Gary Garrett, Ph.D. of Mountain Home, the Llano River Watershed Alliance vice-president, received the 2016 Texas Distinguished Scientist Award at the 119th Annual Meeting of the Texas Academy of Science held at Texas Tech University Field Station in Junction last weekend.

About 500 persons attended, including TTU Chancellor Senator Robert Duncan and Provost Dr. Lawrence Shovance.

While honored by the award, after his speech about his work in watershed conser-

vation, fish and the people with whom he worked, Garrett said he was equally pleased about the response from the younger attendees.

"Several college students — there were undergraduate and graduate students — came up to me and said, 'After hearing this, I'm really inspired by your passion for it and I want to look at working in some form of natural resource conservation for my career,'" Garrett told the West Kerr Current. "My speech was a success. ... My point was all the people I worked with, my mentors and colleagues, that was an important message to the kids, especially."

Garrett did not hesitate



Dr. Gary Garrett of Mountain Home was awarded the 2016 Texas Distinguished Scientist Award at the 119th Annual Meeting of the Texas Academy of Science held in Junction last weekend. He is shown here, at left, with his wife, Linda.

when asked about his mentor, the key individual who set him on the path to his future.

"That's easy," he said. "Dr. Clark Hubbs, who was my

major professor at UT where I got my Ph.D. Clark was the expert on all fishes of Texas,

"That's easy," he said. "Dr. Clark Hubbs, who was my

See Garrett, Page 14

Rock stacking key part of Llano festival this weekend

By Irene Van Winkle
West Kerr Current



This rock-stacking creation was a highlight at last year's Llano Earth Art Fest, which returns this weekend and will also feature music, workshops and plenty more for the family to enjoy.

Competition.

For kids, there are plenty of activities, including a climbing wall, face painting and more. Adults can enjoy a cold beer while taking part in work-

shops, viewing the art, listening to the music or just relaxing in the sun.

LEAF is open 10 a.m.-11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Sunday.

LEAF is the home of the World Rockstacking Championship. For 2016, there will be four categories of rockstacking competition: Height, Balance, Arches and Artistic. Anyone can enter and compete for the title in any and all categories but all competitors must sign a waiver. Competitors under the age of 18 must have a parent or guardian sign one before they are allowed to com-

pete. Organizers have a philosophy about the competition:

"Rockstacking is at the heart of the Llano Earth Art Fest. Rock Stack is one of the most ancient of human activities. It's also one of man's newest sports. Rock stacking and balancing are a fun and natural way to engage with nature while exercising your body and your mind. As the home of Enchanted Rock, the single best rock in the world, Llano, Texas is proud to claim and host the World

See Festival, Page 13

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Photo by Irene Van Winkle

Dr. Bill Symm, right, aims the X-ray machine at the patient's leg, which is standing on a specially made plate that will transmit digital images directly into the computer at the hospital. At his left is Vet Tech Lori Sanders.

Equine

Continued from Page 1

In the new surgical room, which is quite large, there is a surgical table that rises from the floor after an anesthetized equine patient is placed there laying down.

"It is very handy," Patterson said. "Nobody gets hurt and we can operate right in here."

"Digital endoscopy is also available for large and small animals," Symm noted.

"One time a dog had swallowed a pin, and we were able to grab it and get it out with the endoscope," he added.

While 85 percent of the practice is small animals, all

three partners work on larger animals, including horses. Symm's job is to grow the equine side of the practice.

"There are only a handful of board-certified equine surgeons in Texas. Boerne is the closest place with one," Patterson added. "Dr. Symm is highly trained and highly skilled."

The horse stocks in the examining area are designed to allow the doctors to work on the horses' teeth, do examinations, and even standing surgeries.

Horses are different not only in size from dogs and cats, but, Symm said, they can develop more pressing problems and seem to have more

emergencies.

Working together as a team offers each doctor a true sense of satisfaction, because they are able to pool a wide scope of understanding under one roof.

Patterson, who graduated in 1994, said he began working at Town and Country with Dr. Jerry Tomerson and bought the practice two years later. Chapman came on board in 2001, and Symm became a partner in 2015.

Chapman said he had wanted to be a veterinarian from the time he was in the first grade.

Not surprisingly, and perhaps by coincidence, all three partners are graduates of Texas A&M University.

While he was still in high

school, Patterson, said, he actually worked at Town & Country and Symm did, too, in 1985. In fact, Symm was a graduate of Ingram Tom Moore High School and now lives in Kerrville with his wife, Bridget.

"I had already wanted to come back here, after I graduated in 2002," Symm said, but through a series of other choices, had wound up working elsewhere including Littleton, Colo., California, San Antonio and then Bryan, where he worked at a high-volume equine hospital. Finally, there was an opening.

"The timing just wasn't right until now," Symm added. "But the stars finally aligned."

Garrett

Continued from Page 1

he's acknowledged as the world expert. His passion for the resource taught us as students just how important it was. He was the inspiration throughout my career."

Hubbs had been at UT since the 1950s, and Garrett said he had published hundreds of papers.

"He discovered new species," Garrett added. "In fact, the Guadalupe bass was one of the ones he was responsible for. His work was very comprehensive. And, he was a very honorable man."

Picking up the work, Garrett has pursued his career along similar lines, and gone forward.

"It's what my career's been about, natural resource conservation," Garrett said. "I'm a fish specialist, so it's been in terms of fish, and everything to do with fish. Water is necessary for everything."

"The last probably 10 years my concentration has been beyond fish to watershed conservation, the whole approach. From the whole ecosystem in each of these watersheds—a more comprehensive way to do things to take care of our natural resources to make them available to our future generations and study what it's all about."

On the very complex subject of water, its availability, sources and resources, Garrett said many people "do not really understand much about where water comes from. A lot of people in cities like Austin, San Antonio, Dallas, Houston, they just think their water comes out of the faucet. ...

(yet), they all love the natural resources of the state, but a lot of them don't get the connection that water is essential for those systems to be alive and available to them. One of the goals of conservation is to make the connection with the urban people, who are the vast majority of people."

Conservation in the Hill Country, keeping the springs and rivers flowing, is essential not only to the system but to the water coming out of their faucet as well.

"And if the water runs out," Garrett said, "We're screwed. Water—we're all dead without it. It's not just for the fish, it's the people, too."

He imagined that living in a desolate ecosystem would not be desirable.

Much of what Garrett has been doing includes working on a watershed scale to save endangered species, to keep them from going extinct, and keeping their habitats healthy.

"Before I retired from TPW, I was state director of watershed conservation. I worked to bring awareness to people, and on projects to keep these things healthy," Garrett said.

"The Guadalupe bass initiative was one of our big ones. If we keep the fish healthy, then we keep everything else that depends on that system healthy, too."

He and his colleagues have worked with private landowners, helping them understand how to take care of their land, "because that ultimately affects the whole system," Garrett said. "Giving them grants and guidance to take care of their brush, care for their property, and do proper grazing, all the aspects."

As for a message to the

public, Garrett noted, to take action, "Be aware, care, and understand the value of our natural resources, and don't take them for granted. Do your part. Whether it's just educating your self. Become a master naturalist, or read articles. Figure out what you can do to help even if it's in a small way. It adds up."

Today, two years after leaving TPWD, Garrett said he is working with them from the UT side, developing native fish conservation areas, recognizing portions of the watershed across the state, discrete areas that have a lot of species and habitats that need focus, that need help and conservation.

"And to get NGOs (non-governmental agencies) like Nature Conservancy and Hill Country Alliance working with us," he said, "and other federal agencies, the public, county and city government, pulling together to realize we can make sure this area continues to be healthy and function properly. It's very exciting."

He is also working with UT on the Fishes of Texas, an online resource database of all the knowledge of fishes of the state going back to 1851, including naturalists and others whose observations were documented long ago.

"That early work is important to us today," Garrett said. "They documented the landscape and the grasslands, and we can see all the changes."

There is a lot of information not only for scientists, but for the public and school kids. Any one can access the website by looking up www.fishesoftexas.org.

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