



Arlington police official announces run for sheriff

BY JENNIFER AUTREY
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

ARLINGTON — Longtime Arlington police spokesman Dee Anderson officially announced yesterday that he plans to run in the Republican primary against Tarrant County Sheriff David Williams.

Anderson, 43, filed campaign committee documents at the Tarrant County Courthouse, allowing him to raise and spend money for a campaign. Candidates cannot formally file for the 2000 elections until December.

Anderson said the decision to run came after encouragement from Republican friends who said the Sheriff's Department needs someone with an ability to communicate and a successful management plan.

"We'll have a top-flight team of executives that will be able to make an extreme difference in terms of working with the county commissioners and opening up the department to the public and the media," he said.

Anderson has been the Arlington Police Department's media-relations expert for nearly 13 years. He was born in Fort Worth, has

been married 14 years and has a 5-year-old son, an 8-year-old daughter and a 21-year-old stepdaughter.

For the past two years, Williams has continually clashed with Tarrant County commissioners over the operation of his department, particularly its budget.

At least two other Republicans and three Democrats have formed campaign committees for the race for sheriff in 2000. Jerry McGlasson, former North Richland Hills police chief, and Brad Patterson, former president of the Fort Worth Police Officers Association, have said they will challenge Williams for the GOP nomination.

Luther Perry, an assistant to Fort Worth Police Chief Thomas Windham; Haltom City Detective Shane Harrison; and Darrell Clements, a lieutenant with the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department have announced plans to run as Democrats.

The position of sheriff pays \$101,400.

Anderson said being Tarrant County Sheriff is something he has thought about since he became involved in law enforcement.

Harold Elliott, Arlington Police



Dee Anderson: says he will seek the Republican nomination.

Department chaplain, will be Anderson's campaign treasurer. Elliott said he has never been involved with a campaign and described himself as someone "who ran from politics as fast as I could go."

Yet when Anderson asked him to join, Elliott said he agreed immediately out of respect for Anderson's judgment and management abilities.

"I just felt I couldn't say no," Elliott said.

Jennifer Autrey, (817) 548-5476
jautrey@star-telegram.com

OBITUARIES

Wednesday, April 28, 1999

Frances M. Cannon

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS — Frances M. Cannon, 68, a retired deputy sherrif with Tarrant County Sheriff's Office, died Monday, April 26, 1999, at a local hospital.

Graveside service: 11 a.m. Thursday in Laurel Land Memorial Park of Fort Worth. Visitation: 9 to 10:30 a.m. Thursday only at the funeral home.

Frances M. Cannon was born Oct. 9, 1930, in Gainesville.

Survivors: Wife, Lewis Cannon of North Richland Hills; son, David Hamilton of North Richland Hills; daughter, Patricia Minor of Grapevine; five step-children; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and two cousins.

Laurel Land Funeral Home-Fort Worth Fort Worth, (817) 293-1350

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 1999

County approves purchase of horse for estray program

FORT WORTH — Every Texas sheriff needs a horse, and Sheriff David Williams got his yesterday.

Tarrant County commissioners, who in 1997 refused to buy Williams 30 \$30,000 Chevrolet Tahoes, agreed yesterday to spend \$1,500 on an unbudgeted horse for Tarrant County's Livestock Estray Enforcement Program.

The quarter horse will help deputies round up horses, cows, pigs, goats, sheep and the stray emu — but not household pets — that wander out of pastures or onto busy city streets or highways.

In 1998 the program had two horses, but one of them lacks training to do the roundup work and the other became sick and had to be euthanized, Deputy Ralph Clemons told the commissioners.

"Now we are chasing them on foot," Clemons said.

THURSDAY, MAY 6, 1999

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Open up department

I read the recent editorial on Tarrant County Sheriff David William's department, and I firmly believe that something should be done. There should be audits; records should be kept on what the department is doing; and they should be open to the Fort Worth Police Department and the City Council.

Let's see how money is being used. Let's see the conditions (especially restroom conditions). Let's see the problems involved in trying to send a letter to someone in jail.

Williams is just another public employee and should be made to see how he is handling his task. I hope there will be outcry enough to make a change. It is desperately needed.

JIMMIE GARDNER
Fort Worth

Sunday, May 9, 1999

the
INSIDER
report

When Tarrant County Sheriff **David Williams** discovered that one of his top aides was planning to run against him, he suggested that the aide just go ahead and hit the road — er, campaign trail.

Chief Deputy **Dave Dunaway** told Williams that he planned to resign on July 16 to put together his campaign. Williams told him to make this past Friday his last day.

Dunaway's job was an executive position and not covered by civil service rules.

"That goes back to when I agreed to go to work there. I said then I'd rather be in an exempt position so if we decided to part ways, we could do it as gentlemen," he said.

Another of Williams' potential Republican primary foes — former Fort Worth Police Association President **Brad Patterson** — has gotten the cold shoulder from some GOP activists. But from others, Patterson got cold, hard cash.

After holding several fund-raisers, including a golf tournament, Patterson said he's received \$15,000 in contributions, including money from GOP stalwarts **Charlie** and **Tom Moncrief**. Patterson also has thrown in \$5,000 of his own money.

This week's contributors: **MAX B. BAKER** in Fort Worth, and **MARIA RECIO** and **RON HUTCHESON** in Washington.

Sheriff's Department captain quits to run against Williams

Dave Dunaway, a Republican, promises to work with the county's other elected officials.

BY NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A top member of the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department command staff has resigned to run against Sheriff David Williams next year.

Capt. Dave Dunaway, a retired Texas Ranger and former Sheriff's Department chief deputy, threw his hat in the ring yesterday, promising to work cooperatively with the county's other

elected officials.

"Our only adversary is the criminal, not other elected officials," said Dunaway, hours after filing papers to appoint a campaign treasurer. "Elected officials are public servants who are supposed to work together. They must look beyond personality differences to give the best service to the citizens and county employees."

Dunaway has pledged that, if elected sheriff, he will resign if the Commissioners Court and the district attorney unanimously say they have no confidence in him.

Williams, on the other hand, has battled with the Commission-

ers Court for nearly two years. In November he sued over the 1999 budget, saying his department was underfunded, but he dropped the lawsuit three months later.

The commissioners said Williams ran up a huge overtime tab manipulating jail staffing levels and using jailers to serve warrants and to do investigative and administrative work. They opposed his helicopter program and attempt to buy expensive sport utility vehicles, finally seeking a bill in the Legislature to allow them to appoint a jail administrator and strip Williams of his authority over the jail.

"I believe more in simplicity,"

Dunaway said. "Don't try to get fancy, just perform the necessary functions."

The top priority in the Sheriff's Department is getting the best command staff, Dunaway said. There needs to be a fair and equitable promotion policy throughout the department and a reasonable career path for employees to keep good people from leaving for other jobs, he said.

Dunaway, 53, joined the Texas Department of Public Safety in 1972, working as a trooper in the Port Aransas area. In 1979, he worked for DPS' Criminal Intelligence Service, and in 1986, he

was promoted into the Texas Rangers. He retired in June 1996 after nearly 10 years as one of two Rangers working the Tarrant County region.

At least three other Republicans and three Democrats have formed campaign committees for the race for sheriff in 2000.

Dee Anderson, the Arlington police spokesman; Jerry McGlasson, former North Richland Hills police chief; and Brad Patterson, former president of the Fort Worth Police Officers Association, are challenging Williams for the GOP nomination.

Luther Perry, an assistant to Fort Worth Police Chief Thomas

Windham; Haltom City Detective Shane Harrison; and sheriff's Lt. Darrell Clements have announced plans to run as Democrats.

Candidates cannot formally file for the 2000 elections until December. The position of sheriff pays \$101,400.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657



For today's Star-Telegram and more news and features, go to www.star-telegram.com

To search the Metroplex, go to www.dfw.com

Texas memorial to slain officers unveiled

By ROBERT THARP
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

AUSTIN — In a stand of live oak trees just outside the Capitol, a simple crescent wall is a silent reminder of the ultimate price that law officers too often pay.

The power of the Texas Peace Officers' Memorial is in its austere, understated design, with 586 names carved into the polished stone wall around a 38-foot obelisk. Each name represents a story of public service and loss.

A decade and more than \$1.6 million in the making, the wall was unveiled yesterday by Gov. George W. Bush and other state leaders in a ceremony honoring officers who have fallen in the line of duty.

Fort Worth police officer David Manning, his parents and family were among hundreds who endured a persistent downpour during the hourlong service. Manning found the name of his younger brother, Donald Manning, also a Fort Worth officer, who was killed during a botched robbery in June 1993.

The 18-year veteran officer said he frequently travels to Austin as a member of the state Commission on Human Rights but waited until yesterday's dedication of the black granite memorial before setting eyes on it. The afternoon was more difficult than he expected.

"It was really tough," he said. "I thought I was over these emotions until now. Donnie was a real good person."

Donald Manning is one of 30 Fort Worth officers represented on the wall. There are 65 from Dallas, five from Arlington and one each from Euless, Mansfield, Grand Prairie and Haltom City. The wall includes the names of seven Tarrant County-area officers killed during 18 months in 1992-93.



Star-Telegram/PAUL MOSELEY

Honoring slain law officers, Tarrant County College Southeast Campus police Cpl. F.L. McGowen salutes the flag yesterday morning during a ceremony as National Police Week began.

Two of the most recent deaths were those of Tarrant County sheriff's Lt. George Maurice Hendrix and a sheriff's investigator, Deputy Thomas Jay Smith, who died in September 1997 in a helicopter crash near Eagle Mountain Lake. Their names have not yet been added to the memorial, which has room for 1,500 names.

Some names have been overshadowed by the notoriousness of their killers, such as Dallas police officer J.D. Tippit, who was killed by Lee Harvey Oswald on Nov. 22, 1963, just after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. On the same square panel is the name of Billy Paul Speed, the Austin officer killed by sniper Charles Whitman during a shooting spree from the top of the observation tower at the University of Texas in August 1966.

Also on the wall are the names of state troopers E.B. Wheeler and H.D. Murphy, who died on Easter Sunday 1934 after pulling their motorcycles over on a stretch of Texas 114 to

FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1999

Richland Hills questions sheriff's inquiry in city

RICHLAND HILLS — In what some area police officials are calling a "highly unusual" procedure, the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department investigated a report of child molestation in Richland Hills without notifying the city Police Department.

The investigation resulted in the indictment last week of an 85-year-old man in connection with the fondling of an 8-year-old girl at his home Dec. 1, authorities said.

Travis Austin Hinson was indicted May 4 on a charge of aggravated sexual assault of a child. He was free yesterday on \$10,000 bail.

A Sheriff's Department employee who is a relative of the girl asked a sheriff's investigator this year to conduct the inquiry. Richland Hills police officials said they did not know about the investigation until the Tarrant County district attorney's office notified them in March as the charge was being prepared.

Richland Hills police should have been told of the allegations immediately to ensure public safety, Police Chief Barbara Childress said yesterday. Police and Sheriff's Department officials have discussed the issue, she said.

"In the future, we would expect that we would be notified at the time of the offense. Not after," she said.

Sheriff's Lt. Leon Flowers said he is uncertain how many times a year the Sheriff's Department investigates cases in communities where police departments have jurisdiction. "The complaint came to the department, and we investigated it," he said. "I don't know why police weren't alerted."

FORT WORTH

Constables request added warrant duty

BY NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — If constables served civil warrants instead of having sheriff's deputies deliver the papers, Tarrant County could save \$270,000 a year, constables told county commissioners yesterday.

At a briefing on next year's county budget, the constables proposed that commissioners transfer the warrant responsibility to the constables' offices in October when the budget year begins.

All of the county's eight constables support the proposal, which says the warrants can be served for an annual cost of \$400,000 instead of the \$670,000 it costs the Sheriff's Department.

But sheriff's officials dismissed the proposal, saying it would drain resources from the Sheriff's Department and that no matter who serves warrants it is Sheriff David Williams who is ultimately responsible for making sure the papers are delivered.

"Statutorily, the sheriff has responsibility to serve civil warrants," said Executive Chief Deputy Hank Pope. "It doesn't take the liability away from the sheriff just because the papers are served by constables."

There are 64 deputies in the

sheriff's warrant division. Ten deputies serve civil warrants, and the others serve criminal and mental warrants or are involved in the transportation or extradition of prisoners or fugitives, Pope said. Often the civil warrant deputies help out the others, he said.

"This would deplete our ability to do our work," Pope said.

Both deputies and constables now serve civil warrants, such as divorce papers, restraining orders and other court documents.

"There is a needless duplication of effort," Constable Jim Palmer said. In at least six Texas counties, constables serve the warrants and that allows the sheriff to concentrate on his jail responsibilities, he said.

In 1998, the Sheriff's Department served nearly 15,000 civil warrants. Each of the constable's offices serves between 300 and 600 civil warrants monthly, Constable Zane Hilger said.

"It's more advantageous to have the constable offices in the subcourthouses serve people locally," he said. The commissioners said the proposal is "worth further study."

"The idea has a lot of merit," said Commissioner J.D. Johnson, adding that he wants to hear more on the proposal from the Sheriff's Department.

E D I T O R I A L

Dismaying

WE FIND OURSELVES upset with the operations of the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department quite often — so much so, in fact, that we had come to believe that we couldn't really be surprised by something new. But we never expected to see wanton disregard for justice and public safety.

We saw exactly that last week with news that the department had investigated a report of a child molestation in Richland Hills without notifying the city's police. The investigation resulted in the indictment this month of an 85-year-old man in connection with the fondling of an 8-year-old girl at his home on Dec. 1.

Richland Hills police said they did not know about the investigation until the Tarrant County district attorney's office notified them in March as the charge was being prepared.

It just baffles us that any law enforcement agency — or at least one that is worthy of that description — would step into such a case without prompt and thorough communication with the police department that has primary responsibility for protecting local residents.

We were even more shocked when we learned that the investigation was carried out at the request of a Sheriff's Department employee who is a relative of the girl in the case. That is a clear internal conflict of interest.

The Sheriff's Department should have seen that, given the internal conflict, its participation in the case would jeopardize the rights of the accused and the possibility of a conviction. Those dangers could have been avoided by promptly referring the case to the Richland Hills police.

That didn't happen. We are surprised and dismayed.

Errors called result of jail understaffing

Official asks county for 24 more positions

By JACK DOUGLAS JR.
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A month after Sheriff David Williams wrote that the Tarrant County Jail was operating smoothly, his top jail commander said yesterday that mistakes are being made, including the accidental release of three prisoners.

Savala Swanson, chief deputy over the county's confinement bureau, said in a presentation that the "thousands" of prisoners being moved in and out of jail have overwhelmed the staff in the booking office.

"We're seeing mistakes being made that shouldn't be made," Swanson told members of the Commissioners Court, adding, "We're seeing the release of people who shouldn't be released."

The commander's comments were made during a hearing yesterday morning in which he asked members of the Commissioners Court to approve 24 additional job positions in the jail's booking office. Those additions, if approved, would cost the county \$716,880 next fiscal year,

which begins in October, according to records submitted to the court.

The current booking office staff totals 212 people.

In one of the commissioners' first hearings for budget requests, Swanson told them that his booking officers are overworked and need help. From January through April, 17,438 prisoners were released from the county jail, the chief deputy said.

"How long can we operate under this type of stress?" Swanson said in an interview after the hearing. "Not long."

Williams could not be reached yesterday to comment.

In a letter sent to the commissioners and to County Judge Tom Vandergriff on April 19, the sheriff said that the jail "is efficiently operated and well managed," and that booking procedures have "improved since I took office."

Williams also wrote that the jail is "clean and well maintained" and "Tarrant County citizens can be proud." The sheriff wrote the letter in response to a proposal to rate the jail's efficiency — a study that he said is unnecessary and would "waste taxpayers' dollars."

"Of course," Williams added in the letter, "any operation has areas that can develop problems."

Those problems, Swanson said yesterday, included three cases "that I know of" in which a prisoner was released from jail accidentally.

One man, charged with misdemeanor assault, was mistakenly released from the jail May because of "wrong information on the booking card," Swanson said. The man remains at large, he said.

On Feb. 16, a prisoner being held on a fugitive warrant slipped out of the jail undetected, but he turned himself in three days later.

Another man, jailed on a drunken driving charge, was accidentally released Dec. 8 because of inaccurate booking information, Swanson said. Deputies met the man at his home two days later and told him that he had not completed his jail term.

With too much work and not enough time to do it, booking officers have also misread important court documents sent to the jail and have either deleted or put the wrong information into prisoner files, Swanson said.

Nevertheless, he said he is proud of the jail's booking staff. "Our plan is to run a good, efficient department [but] it makes it difficult without adequate staffing," Swanson said. "What's difficult here is the officers are being taxed to their limits."

Larry Hester, assistant chief deputy of the Sheriff's Department, said inadequate staffing and work overload are due to the Commissioners Court's decision last year to cut 35 job positions from the jail. That move, Hester said, had "to do with politics."

At the time, members of the court said they made the cuts to force Williams to work his employees in their assigned jobs, rather than moving them out of the jail to other areas of the department, such as in the warrants and investigative divisions.

Yesterday, Pct. 3 Commissioner Glen Whitley said he was confused by Williams' letter saying the jail is in good shape, and Swanson's assertion yesterday that the booking office is in dire need of help.

Whitley said he will not support any staff increase unless he hears from Williams personally.

The sheriff did not attend the preliminary budget hearing yesterday. Asked if he should have, Pct. 4 Commissioner J.D. Johnson said, "Absolutely."

"His people can say all they want to. But until he comes here and requests something, it will be difficult to get anything done," Johnson said.

COMMENTARY

How much study does the Tarrant jail need?

BY DAVID WILLIAMS

Recent coverage and the April 26 editorial in this newspaper concerning the efficiency of the Tarrant County Jail and a proposed study costing the taxpayers more than half a million dollars has prompted me to respond.

I decided to review the outcome of previous studies of this agency requested by the Commissioners Court. I've limited my review of their "studies" to the 1990s.

An audit/study similar to the one now being proposed was performed in 1992. That study was requested by the commissioners and was conducted by the National Sheriff's Association at a cost to the taxpayers of \$11,900. This study produced recommendations to increase efficiency and service delivery throughout the Tarrant County sheriff's office, with special focus on the county jail.

For that study, the association utilized the NSA Jail Audit System for a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of all components of the Tarrant County sheriff's jail management. The audit process evaluates the local jail system's policies and practices against nationally recognized standards and guidelines by the NSA audit management team.

The process contains 407 specific guidelines that are classified as being essential in proper jail management. According to the 1992 audit/study, a guideline was either marked "in compliance" or "not in compliance"; where necessary, a recommendation was made as to specifics.

The NSA study gave Tarrant County jail operations high marks. An article in the June 12, 1992, *Star-Telegram* reported:

"Jail operations, from inmate meals to overall cleanliness, drew high praise. 'The people of Tarrant County should be very proud of what they have done there in the way of a confinement team,' said Dean Mozer, one of the Association auditors who reviewed the Department. 'The facilities are in full compliance with the Texas Jail Standards, are clean and well maintained. There were no major

glitches there, or anywhere else in the department,' he said."

Today, the jail continues to be in compliance with Texas jail standards. We have a good confinement team, and the jail is still clean and well-maintained.

Since I took office in 1993, I have taken measures to make the Tarrant County Jail even more efficient. For instance, in 1994, by capitalizing on underutilized jailhouse space in the new Corrections Center, I increased the number of jail beds in that unit by 648. This raised our design capacity in the main jail unit from 1,440 beds to 2,088 beds, providing our staff with much-needed relief from dangerous jail overcrowding.

Simultaneously, this decision allowed the law enforcement agencies in Tarrant County to continue the relentless offensive against crime initiated the previous year. As I have said time and time again, "You cannot wage a battle or war against crime if you cannot take and hold prisoners."

That 1994 jail expansion project was funded by a \$1.6 million grant from the state of Texas. That money was originally offered to us for the design and construction of only 350 temporary jail beds.

My plan nearly doubled that to 648 permanent jail beds for only \$600,000, spending less than half the allocated amount! This gave the taxpayers a \$1 million windfall. Plus, the common-sense design of my plan allowed us to supervise the additional prisoners without adding more jail housing officers. This is clearly efficient and very cost-effective.

Of course, any large government operation with this many moving parts will experience snags. One area that received recent media attention — prisoner booking procedures — has improved since I took office.

What is commonly referred to as the

booking process is actually a complex, state-regulated prisoner diagnostic procedure. Our prisoner diagnostic process is currently under internal review and study by select members of our staff. Plans are in the works to find ways to streamline the procedure.

The county commissioners have indicated that one purpose of their latest study proposal would be to make the jail more cost-efficient.

The Tarrant County sheriff's office, which includes the county jail system, operates on a budget that is less than half the national average for a county with a population of 1 million or more. We are already very cost-efficient!

According to U.S. Justice Department statistics, the average annual budget for a sheriff's department serving a population of 1 million or more is \$132 million. Our annual sheriff's budget is \$55 million.

National Sheriff's Association figures indicate that the average sheriff's department with a county population of 1.3 million would employ 2,200 deputies and officers. Tarrant County, with a population of 1.3 million, employs less than 1,300 such personnel.

In August 1998, the Texas Commission on Jail Standards conducted a staffing analysis study of the Tarrant County Jail. The state commission said that the 35 jail officer positions subsequently eliminated by the county commissioners in September were essential to maintain recommended minimum staffing levels.

The 1992 NSA audit/study also reported that adequate staffing was essential and was one of its primary recommendations for achieving increased efficiency. That study also reported that pay equity was another means to increase efficiency.

More recently, in May 1998, Tarrant County commissioners paid thousands

of our tax dollars to an independent consultant firm to conduct yet another study for a comparative analysis of the salary and pay levels for this sheriff's department. Once again, an outside group of analysts found that pay equity is still a large problem. That study reported that Tarrant County sheriff's employees' salaries lag as much as 31 percent below the market level.

Since 1990, the Tarrant County commissioners have spent tens of thousands of dollars in taxpayer money on studies to analyze the department. So far, these "study" results have supported the very things I've said since I took office.

Some county employees tell me that the Tarrant County commissioners will keep paying for studies until they get the one that tells them what they want to hear.

I doubt that there is a more cost-efficient metropolitan county jail system in Texas. Tarrant County residents can be proud of the well-managed jail system and the dedicated confinement staff. Certainly the \$100,000 to \$600,000 proposed for the latest study would be better spent on the vital recommendations that were cited in previous studies but never funded and approved by the commissioners.

Tarrant County voters have made it clear that they want the jail managed by the elected sheriff. My accountability is to the voters of Tarrant County.

Is the Tarrant County Jail system perfect? No. There are none perfect — no, not one. Is there room for improvement? Always.

If the commissioners think that another study/audit would help them understand the inner workings of this agency, the National Sheriff's Association analysts are welcome to come back, under two conditions: The county commissioners would have to guarantee funding the recommendations of the study/audit, and the NSA would need to conduct a study/audit of the entire department in addition to jail operations.

DAVID WILLIAMS is sheriff of Tarrant County.

Sheriff in the shadows: Williams is a mystery with a badge

Public servant keeps out of the spotlight

BY PETE ALFANO
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

Standing in the driveway of his unassuming house in Watauga, David Williams was all spit and polish in his black uniform, with black shoes gleaming and the late-morning sun reflecting off his badge.

The sheriff of Tarrant County said he had pulled an all-nighter, but there wasn't a wrinkle in his shirt or circle under his eyes to betray any weariness.

As he chatted, he fidgeted and often stared at the ground. Making small talk doesn't come easily for a man who is more comfortable reading from a script or the Scriptures.

Williams looked relieved when the unplanned encounter finally ended. He quickly disappeared into the privacy of his home, back into the welcoming shadows.

In the long and colorful history of Texas law enforcement, David Williams may be the first sheriff who can be described as a recluse.

He is the antithesis of the folksy, good ol' boy that many associate with Southern sheriffs, an image projected by Hollywood and television, as well as by some of his predecessors. The 44-year-old Williams is withdrawn instead, and he often retreats into prolonged self-imposed exile.

Richard Williams, who is not related, was impressed with David Williams' integrity and modesty when they were partners on the Perry police force.

"Cops often cuss a blue streak, but Dave never did," Richard Williams said. "That's one thing I always admired about him."

The curtains on Williams' life are almost always drawn and he guards his family zealously.

He and Ruth have three children, who are home-schooled.

Williams also has an adult son from his first marriage who was permanently disabled after an automobile accident. His son does not live with him.

Williams moved to Fort Worth in 1980 and went to work as chief of security for the Kenneth Copeland Ministry. He would leave that job and become an officer with the Haltom City Police Department.

He attended Dallas Baptist University as a criminal justice major in 1984 while a patrol officer in Haltom City. But Williams said he was forced to put aside his studies when he had to face a series of personal tragedies, according to a two-page handwritten letter he faxed to the *Star-Telegram* during his 1996 re-election campaign.

First, his paternal grandmother died. He wrote that he had been close to his grandmother, who was a bookkeeper for a paint and wallpaper store in Tulsa, Okla., and introduced her grandson to "the Republican principles of government."

Shortly after his grandmother's death, Williams' mother was found to have cancer. She died in 1986 at age 56.

He wrote that soon after his mother's death, his wife, Ruth, suffered a miscarriage. When she became seriously ill during a subsequent pregnancy, Williams wrote, "finishing my college career would have to wait."

He worked a midnight shift on patrol in Haltom City and looked after his children, ages 5 and 3, while his wife was confined to bed during the final trimester of her pregnancy. She gave birth to a healthy girl, Williams wrote, but almost died in the process.

"I've lost a great amount of people that I loved, and time," Williams wrote. "I can't change the past, but we should learn from it."

Williams had always been interested in politics, but it wasn't until 1992 that he decided to run for office. Tarrant County Sheriff Don Carpenter had stepped down

after being indicted on a charge of giving away a gun that was part of a criminal investigation, and the race for his successor was considered wide-open.

Williams was one of six candidates in the Republican primary. He finished second to Jim Hunter, a former drug enforcement agent, but won the runoff handily.

He then defeated Democrat Dub Branson by 3,616 votes in the general election.

"I was just happy being a cop," Williams said. "But I couldn't find anyone with a vision to back; there were only the perennial candidates. So I thought that maybe I could do the job."

Wilder, now Tarrant County district clerk, who was Williams' campaign manager in 1992 and 1996, said his backers were concerned that Williams didn't have "the normal politician's personality."

"He never mixed well with people in a campaign mode, although he has improved a little," Wilder said. "But he seemed like an honest guy who was motivated to do the job."

Wilder called Williams' recent show-down with the Commissioners Court a "high-risk strategy" and attributed the sheriff's problems to a lack of people skills.

"He doesn't collaborate or keep in touch with other elected officials," he said. "He needs to get back to doing some of that."

Even when meeting with a friendly crowd, such as a group of Republican women at a pancake house in Arlington, Williams reads from handwritten notes scribbled on loose-leaf paper and index cards. During an appearance with supporters at Calvary Cathedral in Fort Worth late last year, questions were requested in writing before he would answer them.

It has been suggested that Williams was carefully manipulated when Wilder and Max helped elevate him to sheriff from his job in Haltom City and his position as executive director of Metro D.A.R.E.

Wilder said he did not have as much influence on Williams as people believe.

"The programs that David espoused are of his own making," Wilder said. "I believed in those programs and tried to sell them."

"Our concern was that David had no name recognition and money, and was a greenhorn, as he would say himself. But at the time, he was the right choice."

Wilder said he last spoke to the sheriff in August; Max said he hasn't spoken to

Williams in more than a year.

Gene Williams, the sheriff's father, who is retired and lives in Norman, Okla., is understandably proud of a son who has risen to a level few might have predicted.

He said that his son, who liked to hang around police headquarters when he was a boy, is above reproach.

"I know that it's hard to believe that someone could be squeaky-clean, but David is about as close as one gets," said Williams.

"He's a good boy, a good man. He's a good Christian."

'A passion to serve God'

Despite his low public profile, Williams has become a standard-bearer for local religious conservatives, who admire his strong religious convictions. They see him as a role model for candidates at every level of government.

"I think David Williams has a passion to serve God and do what God wants us to do, and sometimes that supersedes what man wants to do," said the Rev. Jim Norwood, pastor of the Oakcrest Family Church in Mansfield and a volunteer chaplain at the Tarrant County Jail.

"I really believe that David Williams believes that God is the one who places people in authority."

Williams said religion influences the way he views the world.

"There are so many uncertainties in life, and religion is a comfort and a blessing," Williams said. "It is something I turn to daily."

"There is a perception that people are uncomfortable with that, and I'm kind of mystified. I'm not ashamed of my beliefs and views."

of Green Bay. This is his hide-out, and it enables Williams to avoid the politicians and backslappers who lurk downtown.

The sheriff considers himself a hands-on law officer. He said he enjoys spending time in the field, occasionally riding night patrol.

He takes credit for helping reduce crime in Tarrant County during the 1990s. One of his campaign promises was to keep the Tarrant County Jail open. The jail had been temporarily closed to new inmates a few times in 1991 because of overcrowding.

Williams remembered how, early in his first term, there was a move to close the jail again. He said his response was "What planet were you living on in the past election?"

Williams told how he better utilized jail space by adding bunk beds to accommodate the growing prison population.

"My belief was that if we could take and hold prisoners, we could change the environment," he said. "We would have safe streets, and that would help the economy of Tarrant County."

Atwell, the jail ministry administrator who once was a police officer in Arlington, said Williams has modernized the Sheriff's Department. He has upgraded technology, ranging from computers to radio equipment. He has reorganized the warrant division and made it run more efficiently.

"I know a little about where we should be in technology, and we were three generations behind," Atwell said. "Sheriff Williams has made things efficient. He reorganized the warrant division. He has brought positive change."

There was a time when he also admitted his mistakes.

In late March 1993, Williams dispatched his drug-sniffing dogs

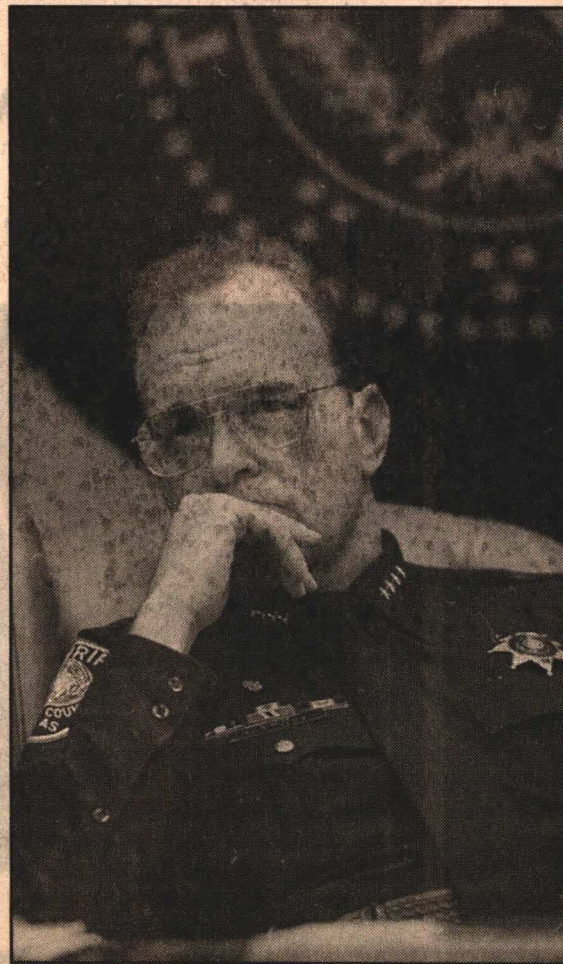
to the Tarrant County Courthouse when African-Americans held a peaceful march on Main Street in Fort Worth in protest of the probation given to a white man in a racially motivated murder case.

Williams was roundly criticized by African-American leaders. He wrote a letter to the editor of the *Star-Telegram*, saying that he made a mistake and that it would never happen again.

Political observers say his chances of being elected to a third term may depend on his ability to recapture some of the support that characterized his first term. Williams will probably never be regarded as outgoing and approachable, but it may be difficult to win a third term as a shadow sheriff.

"I don't know whether the bridges are burned," Wilder said. "But we work for the people, not for each other. If he can satisfy the people, they'll decide whether to retain him or not."

Staff writers Jack Douglas and Neil Strassman contributed to this report.



Star-Telegram Archives/PAUL MOSELEY

"Religion is a comfort and a blessing. It is something I turn to daily."

— Sheriff Williams

Sheriff David Williams, shown in November 1994, has been a lightning rod for controversy despite his shyness.

In fact, Williams is more of an enigma today than when he was first elected sheriff in November 1992.

The top cop of a department with 1,300 employees, Williams is more at ease patrolling country roads at night than negotiating with the county commissioners who control the Sheriff's Department budget.

He prefers his office in a north Fort Worth substation to the Sheriff's Department headquarters downtown. Many sheriff's employees, county officials and even some police chiefs say they almost never see him.

From the moment he took the oath of office in a secret ceremony just after midnight Jan. 1, 1993, Williams has been inclined toward offbeat behavior.

In his first official act, he purged his three top deputies, only to rehire them a week later for lower pay at a lower rank.

He has focused on building up the resources of the Sheriff's Department, adding helicopters, drug-sniffing dogs, SWAT teams, souped-up patrol cars and sport utility vehicles. His spending put him at odds with county commissioners.

He was shaken by a helicopter crash that took the lives of two trusted deputies in September 1997 but waited four hours before going to the crash site, saying that he did not want to be a distraction and that he was busy trying to contact the deputies' families.

He sued the Commissioners Court, which controls the Sheriff's Department budget, saying they underfunded his department, and then asked the court to pay his legal fees.

He so alienated the Commissioners Court that it asked the Legislature this year for authority to hire an administrator to oversee the Tarrant County Jail. Running the jail is the primary responsibility of the Sheriff's Department.

Even Williams has said he could not anticipate the scope of the job when local Republican power brokers Tom Wilder and Ed Max threw their support to the little-known Haltom City detective in 1992 and helped elect him sheriff.

During his second term, Williams has parted ways with his political mentors and now relies on an inner circle of trusted deputies and religious conservatives.

So perhaps it is not surprising that with less than two years remaining in his second term, a line is forming on both sides of the political aisle to challenge Williams. At least four Republicans are thinking of entering the party primary in March; three Democrats have also set their sights on the job, which pays \$101,400.

Max, the successful auto parts business owner who was the money man behind Williams in 1992 and '96, said he no longer supports the sheriff.

"He either needs to come out of his shell or get out of Dodge," Max said. "David's not the same person we met years ago. I certainly thought we were going to get somebody who cared and who worked hard. He did in the beginning, but I don't really know whether he cares now."

'The thin blue line'

The 1960s and early '70s were turbulent years in the United States. David Williams was a teen-ager, watching the student protests and social unrest unfold on television as the Vietnam War dragged on.

Williams saw the police violence in Chicago during the Democratic National Convention in 1968; he saw the footage of National Guardsmen shooting protesting students at Kent State University. Williams said he saw a country spinning out of control, and it bothered him.

"Instead of changing the country the way people in my generation wanted to change it, I wanted to work within the system," Williams said. "I was impressed with the way the police were the thin blue line."

"I saw some terrible examples of police abuse, but also saw the police act with discretion and dignity," he said. "I know that one cop, one person, can't turn things around, but he can make a difference."

Williams dropped out of high school and eventually enlisted in the Army, serving four years as a military policeman. His first marriage ended in divorce.

He earned a high school equivalency certificate after leaving the service in 1977 and became a police officer, patrolling in small Oklahoma towns such as Washington, Purcell and Perry. Williams met his second wife, Ruth, in Purcell in 1978.

Former fellow police officers describe him as a regular guy, conscientious and soft-spoken.

Williams' supporters say critics dwell on his religious beliefs and overlook what his backers say is the solid job he has done as sheriff.

"He is devout and a strong Christian, but also an administrator who expects excellence in the product that comes forth from our efforts here," said Hugh Atwell, who administered the chaplain's program at the Tarrant County Jail.

The program, popularly known as the God Pod, started before Williams was first elected, but he quickly embraced it. He says religion can play a major role in rehabilitating criminals.

When the Commissioners Court eliminated the chaplain's position in the Sheriff's Department in September, Williams' supporters saw the move as vindictive.

"He felt under attack spiritually," Norwood said. "A lot of his programs were already under attack, and then something meaningful to him was cut."

In response, Williams found another opening on his staff so that Atwell could continue to oversee the program for inmates and Sheriff's Department employees.

The commissioners said they were not terminating the chaplain's program, but expanding it for all county employees and transferring oversight to the county.

Their action exacerbated the feud between Williams and the Commissioners Court. Williams stopped attending weekly commissioners' meetings; he sued the Commissioners Court over control of the budget in November, a suit he later dropped.

At the root of Williams' discontent is his belief that the "sheriff's office," as he calls it, is sovereign and answers only to the people, not the commissioners.

Williams says the Sheriff's Department should still function as the primary law enforcement agency of the county. Because most of Tarrant County is now incorporated and under the jurisdiction of local police departments, the role of the Sheriff's Department has changed over the years.

This has resulted in occasional friction with other law enforcement agencies. In May, the sheriff and a posse of deputies arrived at Hurricane Harbor water park after Arlington police had already quelled a disturbance. No one had requested their assistance.

The commissioners say their oversight of the Sheriff's Department budget is part of the checks and balances of county government.

It is still not absolutely clear why the helicopter was flying that day, especially over a runway on the property of the Kenneth Copeland Ministry.

In a prepared statement to the Commissioners Court days after the crash, Williams said the helicopter was on a surveillance mission related to an auto theft ring.

Williams has never talked about how the crash affected him, although supporters and opponents agree he was devastated.

Max said that when Williams heard about the crash, "he was shaking so hard, he couldn't sit still."

"I think it still may be affecting him today, emotionally," Max said. "I think it took a deep, deep toll on the sheriff."

"I think the tragedy of the helicopter crash hurt him and had a major affect on David," said County Commissioner J.D. Johnson, once a staunch Williams supporter and now a critic.

The crash hardened Williams and set him on an even more confrontational path with commissioners.

In November 1997, at a weekly staff meeting of top deputies, Williams drew his line in the sand. In minutes from the meeting obtained by the *Star-Telegram*, Williams said he was changing tactics in his relationship with the Commissioners Court.

There was no mention of the helicopter crash or whether the crash influenced the decision. The Commissioners Court, however, had grounded the helicopters and later terminated the program.

During the staff meeting, Williams asked whether any of his staff members had read *Developing Leaders Around You*, by Wess Roberts. "The book was really about the leadership secrets of Attila the Hun," the minutes say. Williams said he would get copies for the staff to read.

"There are controls in place to oversee all elected officials," said Glen Whitley, a county commissioner who was once among Williams' supporters.

"We're there to watch over taxpayers' dollars. I think David is doing what he thinks is right, but unfortunately, he stays away. It is seen as suspicious and meaning he has something to hide."

Commissioner Marti Van Ravenswaay said she cannot understand "his bunker mentality."

"My impression in the past is that I think he is a person with a good heart," she said. "Now my impression is that perhaps he is a person who has found himself in a position more demanding than he's comfortable with."

Shaken by tragedy

Of all the events that have occurred during his two terms in office, the one that has had the biggest effect on Williams occurred Sept. 17, 1997.

That was when a Sheriff's Department helicopter crashed at Eagle Mountain Lake, in good weather, killing Deputy T.J. Smith and Lt. Maurice Hendrix, the pilot. The National Transportation Safety Board has attributed the accident to pilot error.

The helicopter program was a cornerstone of Williams' crime-fighting initiatives. He implemented it primarily to combat drug trafficking in Tarrant County. He acquired three surplus military helicopters, but with their airworthiness in question, he traded them for two more up-to-date Bell helicopters.

Williams said the helicopter program would pay for itself through forfeiture money that sheriffs typically receive from vehicles and other property seized in drug busts. Still, there were continuing questions about the cost of maintaining the helicopters, their safety and a return on the investment.

"Let it be known that he [Williams] will no longer tolerate cunning of any nature," the minutes say. "Sheriff Williams stated he was not a cruel person, but from this point until the end of his current term, he will be different from the previous four years."

According to the minutes, Williams told his father about his new strategy.

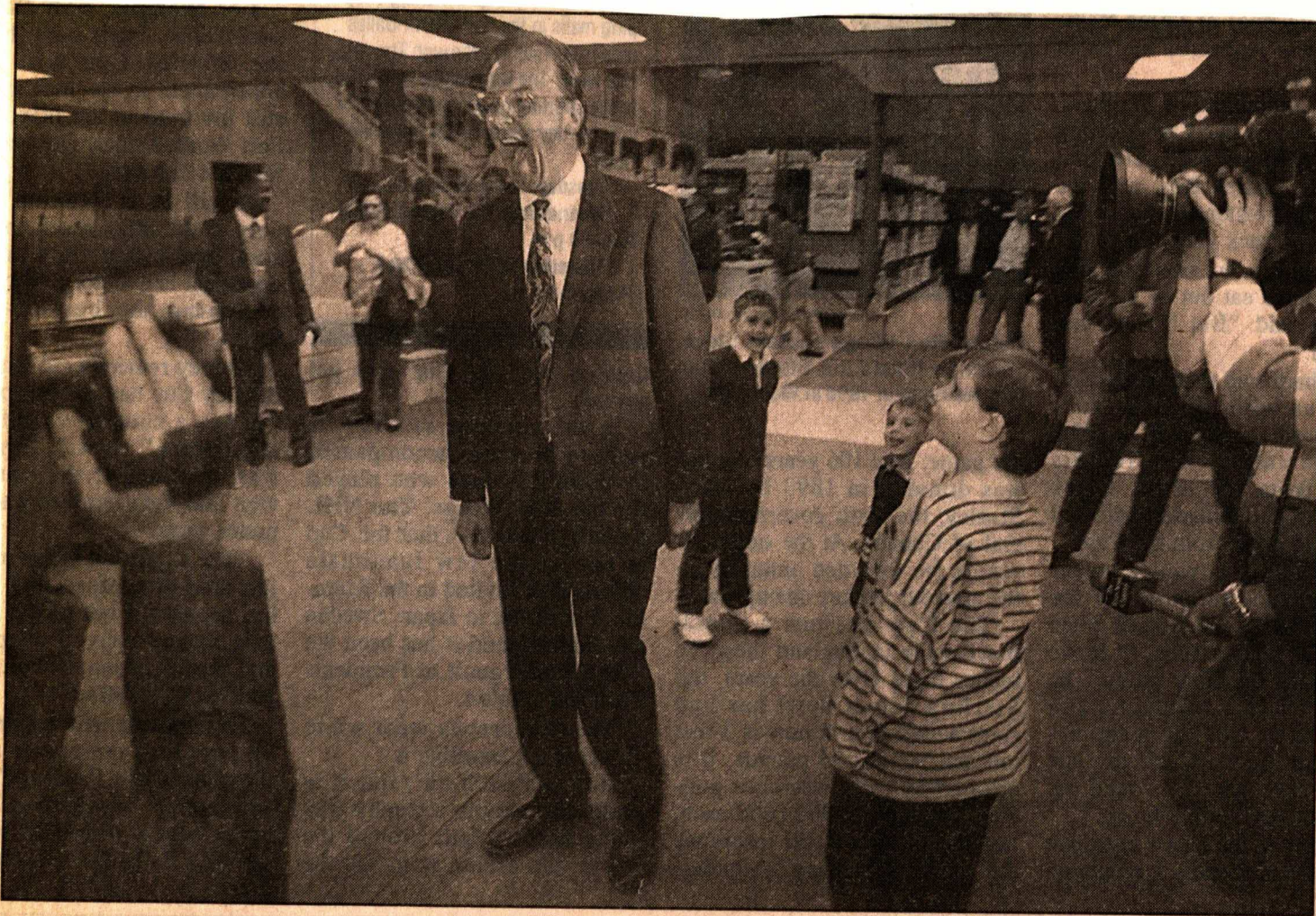
"Son, sounds like you've realized people take kindness and niceness for weakness. Sounds like there is no more Mr. Nice Guy," Gene Williams is quoted in the minutes as saying.

A sheriff's hide-out

On a cold, windy morning late last fall, Williams sat behind a desk in his rather plain-looking office in Green Bay, a jail facility in a converted warehouse. It is situated off Loop 820 and Interstate 35W, and does not stand out as a sheriff's office among the other warehouses.

The only item on his desk was a pocket version of the Bible. The wood-paneled walls were bare; there were a TV set, a VCR and a computer on a table at one end of the room. The heat was turned off, so there was a chill in the air.

The sheriff often avoids downtown Fort Worth for the solitude



Star-Telegram Archives/MILTON ADAMS

A playful David Williams mugs for kids at his election night party in November 1992, as results showed him in the lead.

Running for sheriff

Several Republicans and Democrats are lining up to seek Sheriff David Williams' job in next year's election.

At least four Republicans and three Democrats have formed campaign committees for the upcoming race. Williams has not said whether he will run again.

GOP contenders are:

Dave Dunaway, a top member of the sheriff's command and a retired Texas Ranger.

Dee Anderson, spokesman for the Arlington Police Department.

Jerry McGlasson, former North Richland Hills police chief.

Brad Patterson, former president of the Fort Worth Police Officers Association.

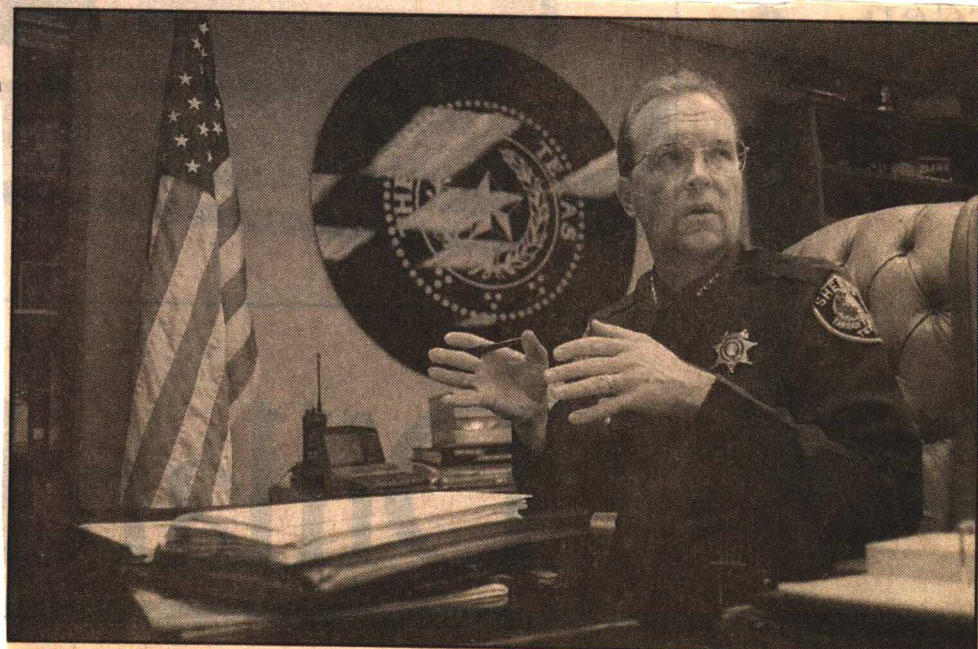
Democratic contenders are:

Luther Perry, an assistant to Fort Worth Police Chief Thomas Windham.

Haltom City Detective **Shane Harrison**. Sheriff's Lt. **Darrell Clements**.

James Stokes and Delton Kelly are also candidates for sheriff. Stokes has voted in past Republican primaries and Kelly in Democratic primaries, but neither could be reached to determine their party affiliation for the campaign.

Candidates cannot formally file for the 2000 elections until December. The position of sheriff pays \$101,400 a year. Primary elections will be held in March.



Star-Telegram Archives
Sheriff David Williams, shown in his office in November 1994, is now in his seventh year as the county's top cop.

Renovated Cold Springs jail to be mothballed

BY NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County's recently remodeled Cold Springs jail will be mothballed because there are fewer prisoners in the county jail than anticipated.

County officials expected the county's jail system — which includes the Tarrant County Corrections Center with 2,090 beds, the old Belknap jail with 1,040 beds, and the Green Bay facility with 1,065 beds — to reach 90 percent capacity in March 1998.

Accordingly, the Commissioners Court ordered the Cold Springs facility, closed since 1995, to be refurbished at a cost of \$1.6 million. The commissioners also included a \$14 million expansion of Green Bay in a \$94.3 million bond package that county voters approved last year.

"We remodeled to be prepared for rising jail populations, which the sheriff assured us was going to happen," Commissioner Glen Whitley said yesterday. At the time, state prisons were also filling up and it appeared that the county might have to hold some of the state's prisoners, Whitley said.

In late 1997, when the jail held 3,547 inmates, county officials believed that the jail population would grow by about 50 prisoners a month. But county officials said yesterday that the jail population is averaging about 3,450 inmates, including 150 beds reserved for work-release prisoners.

A new roof was put on Cold Springs and security at the converted schoolhouse just north of downtown was enhanced, said Dave Phillips, the county's assistant facilities director.

Yesterday, the commissioners assigned control of the Cold Springs jail to the facilities management department.

"There is no necessity to open it now, but it is ready to be used if we need it," Whitley said.

The Green Bay expansion is also on hold. Bonds for that jail expansion project will be sold when the jail space is needed, county officials said.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

Tuesday, May 25, 1999

Jail Standards

I doubt that there is a more cost-efficient metropolitan county jail system in Texas. Tarrant County residents can be proud of the well-managed jail system and the dedicated confinement staff.

— Sheriff David Williams

We're seeing mistakes being made that shouldn't be made. We're seeing the release of people who shouldn't be released.

— Chief Deputy Savala Swanson

SO WHOM should Tarrant County residents believe about the state of affairs at the county jail? A missing-in-action sheriff who communicates via month-old letters, or a flesh-and-blood chief deputy who works in the trenches every day and delivers his information in person before the Commissioners Court?

Williams said in a letter last month to the court (reprinted Sunday as a *Star-Telegram* guest column) that even though the jail's prisoner booking procedures have improved since he took office, the department's "prisoner diagnostic process is currently under internal review and study by select members of our staff."

One hopes that Swanson, chief deputy over the county's confinement bureau, is included in the study group. He appears to know what's really happening in the jail, and judging from his report to the commissioners last week about prisoners released by mistake, it appears to be neither efficient nor well-managed.

Williams will no doubt point the finger of blame for overworked jailers at the commissioners, who cut 35 job positions from the jail in last year's budget allocations. Commissioners said they made those cuts to force the sheriff to work his employees in their assigned jobs rather than moving them out of the jail to other areas, such as warrants and investigations.

This ongoing nonsense has moved from the ridiculous to the serious if the safety of county residents is being compromised by prisoners being released accidentally or mistakenly.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 1999

Throw 'em out!

I thought that the Republican Party's philosophy was: "The government that governs least governs best." At least that is what our state congressional candidates tell Tarrant County voters when they ask us to replace the Democrats in the Texas Legislature.

The cheap Republican Party tricks that you reported in your May 19 story on House Bill 2846 — which would require the Tarrant County sheriff to provide copies of all jail commissary contracts to the Commissioners Court — proves that state Rep. Kim Brimer and Sen. Chris Harris are not doing the job that we elected them to do.

I have always voted Republican in the past to prevent too much political power from being vested in too few people. From what I have learned now, there are four Tarrant County Commissioners, a state representative and a state senator who stood on the Republican Party platform to get elected who need to be replaced during our very next election.

Party platforms should mean something to candidates. They should not stand on the platform just to get elected. When this is allowed to happen, other elected officials suffer, as will all future occupants of the office of sheriff of Tarrant County.

DOYLE JONES
Arlington

Sheriff hires manager

BY NEIL STRASSMAN
AND JACK DOUGLAS JR.
Star-Telegram Staff Writers

FORT WORTH — Sheriff David Williams has hired a retired National Rifle Association employee, who is not licensed as a Texas peace officer, as director of administration for the Sheriff's Department.

Herb Chambers, 59, an NRA field representative and an employee of the association for 22 years, is

NRA retiree isn't Texas peace officer

replacing Capt. Dave Dunaway, who has resigned to run against Williams in next year's sheriff's race.

Chambers' NRA job was as liaison between the national organization and local chapters, supporting local NRA clubs and state associations, he said.

With the Sheriff's Department, Chambers supervises recruiting, training, accounting and information systems, administrative functions for which a peace officer's license is not required, sheriff's officials say. But county commissioners say that without the license they can't pay Chambers a captain's salary.

"I am here to help modernize the

(More on SHERIFF on Page 4B)

sheriff's office. My function will be mainly administrative, working to improve communication and find ways to better support the deputies in the field," Chambers said. "I hope my involvement with David Williams and the county will be productive. I'm well-trained in every aspect of law enforcement."

Because he doesn't have a state peace officer's certificate, Chambers will draw about as much money as a jailer with two year's experience, roughly \$24,400 a year, instead of a captain's salary of about \$41,600. His annual salary when he left the NRA this year was \$55,000.

"Without the certificate, he doesn't qualify for the position," Commissioner Glen Whitley said. The county can only pay him at the highest level for which he qualifies, Whitley said.

County commissioners also puzzled over when Chambers should start collecting pay, because he went to work before he was processed by the county's personnel department.

"It's another situation where I guess he [Williams] doesn't feel he has to follow the county's rules," Whitley said.

"Procedure wasn't followed here," said Commissioner Marti VanRavenswaay.

County officials finally decided to pay Chambers from his starting date of May 14.

"We had an opportunity to get a qualified person and took it," said Chief Deputy Larry Hester, noting the region's tight job market. "He has a lot of administrative experience and law enforcement skills."

Chambers said he is going through the Texas law enforcement certification process now. Until he is certified, he can't carry a gun or

wear a badge, said Don Perry, chief of field operations for the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Education.

"All that's necessary to be done has been done or is being done," Chambers said. "I'd be surprised if there is a problem with me being energetic. This is not my first rodeo and I don't want to do things incorrectly."

Williams, in a May 18 internal memo, gave Chambers a huge buildup.

He described Chambers as having been an "active duty police officer, deputy sheriff, state law enforcement academy instructor, university criminal justice educator, jailer, patrol officer, motor officer, undercover detective and firearms/defensive tactics instructor."

In an interview, Chambers said he worked as an officer for the Scottsdale, Ariz., police department in the late 1960s and as a Pima County sheriff's deputy in Tucson. He also said he is a "life certified" peace officer in Nebraska.

He also has been a criminal justice consultant, was a law enforcement instructor in Nebraska and from 1971 to 1974 was chairman of the police administration program at Sul Ross State University in Alpine. He holds a bachelor's degree in police administration from the University of Arizona and a master's degree in education from the University of Nebraska.

Williams said in the memo that Chambers was instrumental in the formation of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education, the state agency that licenses peace officers.

Chambers said he was not personally responsible for the creation of the state's law-enforcement standards, but attended meetings in the early 1970s where the standards were discussed.

"I think I can give a different cast to some of the problems the department faces," Chambers said.



Sheriff David Williams gave the administrator a huge buildup in a May 18 internal memo, listing his law enforcement background.

Nonprofit group will run jailhouse ministry

By NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

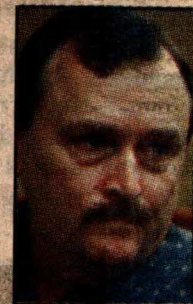
FORT WORTH — Sheriff David Williams' jail chaplain's program has a new lease on life under a nonprofit organization that will run the Tarrant County jail-house ministry with five full-time chaplains.

The Sheriff's Department will pay \$327,873 from inmate commissary funds to Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy, a

nonprofit ministry the sheriff created with the Rev. Hugh Atwell, a deputy and former major who served as minister and chaplain of the jail for five years. The two parties signed a one-year contract June 1.

"We must continue to deliver the services," said Atwell, who resigned from the Sheriff's Department on Tuesday. "We will work with inmates and their

(More on MINISTRY on Page 7B)



Atwell

MINISTRY

From Page 1B

families, deputies and jailers and their families."

County officials acknowledge the sheriff's authority to manage the commissary fund, which by law can be used only for the inmates' benefit. But they have refused to approve chaplain purchases, and yesterday they questioned Williams' nonprofit ministry.

"I would really like to see him operate the jail correctly, for which he is responsible, before he jumps into new ventures," Commissioner J.D. Johnson said.

"I certainly question his judgment in this," County Judge Tom Vandergriff said. "We have a volunteer program going at quite a pace with people from various

churches donating time and effort. I question the need for five or more full-time employees. It sounds like a drain on the commissary funds."

The commissioners eliminated Atwell's post nine months ago, over objections of the volunteer chaplains who work with him. They replaced his position with a broader employee-assistance program for all inmates and county employees.

The commissioners made "a wise decision" when they hired the Rev. David Barrett as county support services manager, Vandergriff said.

Barrett "will be a source of strength and comfort for all county personnel. We had in mind a broader program than the sheriff's, and we gathered that whatever we offered the sheriff would be refused," he said.

Williams could not be reached to comment yesterday.

But Atwell said the new non-profit ministry will allow chaplains to do "more work outside the walls" of the jail. "We would jump at the chance to extend our services wherever possible," he said.

The first priority is to hire staff members and an administrative assistant, he said. As executive director, Atwell expects to earn about 10 percent more than his county salary of \$56,760. The other chaplains would be paid between \$22,000 and \$31,000, he said.

Other counties, including Dallas and Bexar, use their commissary accounts to pay for chaplain services, Atwell said.

The money in the commissary account comes from a \$2 fee the commissary operator pays the county for each inmate, based on the average monthly jail census. The money must be used for the benefit of inmates, and it is com-

monly used to purchase such items as computers, typewriters, basketballs, law books and Bibles.

As of March 19, the commissary account had a balance of \$354,676, according to the county auditor. Williams took possession of the fund in March, but not before it became controversial. In November, he sued the commissioners over the county budget and the commissary fund. He later dropped the lawsuit.

However, Commissioner Glen Whitley said he doesn't know how Williams and Atwell will fund the ministry next year, because the commissary fund's annual revenue amounts to only about \$100,000.

Atwell said Williams intends to "get more cash flow coming" out of the commissary. The sheriff will be looking for a contractor who can do better than \$2 per inmate, he said.

There will still be money to buy basketballs for Tarrant inmates, he said.

The contract with the non-profit ministry, which was not competitively bid, also calls for the Sheriff's Department to provide it with office space.

But, Whitley said, the Sheriff's Department doesn't control the leasing of space in county buildings. Whitley is also concerned about auditing the non-profit's expenditures.

"He's found a way to make expenditures without any public scrutiny and review," Whitley said of Williams. "Under the contract, I would question our ability to go in and audit these expenses without their permission."

The monies in the commissary account are public funds, though they are not taxpayer dollars. Even though they are under the exclusive control of the sheriff,

their use may be subject to public scrutiny, and the district attorney has asked the Texas attorney general whether contracts for commissary fund expenditures must be competitively bid or whether purchases must go through the county purchasing agent.

Two weeks ago, the county purchasing office refused to pay invoices for materials such as Bibles, printed material, and videos, bought by the chaplain's office.

"We need to know what the rules are," said Jack Beacham, county purchaser. "They would be better suited to wait until the AG opinion is in."

Yesterday, Barrett met with Atwell for the first time.

"It was very cordial," Barrett said. "We pledged to try to work together in the future."

Faith healer Hinn, Tarrant's sheriff could merge forces

Two headlines on unrelated stories jumped out at me from Friday's newspaper.

One heralded "Faith healer moving headquarters to area." The other proclaimed, "Nonprofit group will run jailhouse ministry."

The first story was about evangelist Benny



**BOB RAY
SANDERS**

Hinn's plans to relocate his worldwide TV ministry from Orlando, Fla., to North Texas.

The second article concerned Sheriff David Williams, one of Tarrant County's best-known "evangelists," doing an end-run around commissioners court again and setting up a full-time jailhouse ministry with public money.

Come to think of it, maybe

these two stories *are* related.

Although I wonder if the county is big enough for both of these evangelists, it might not be a bad idea if they simply joined forces.

Hinn could put cameras in the jail so the sheriff could co-host the TV show, providing live cut-ins with inmate testimonials.

While Hinn's followers throw away crutches and push aside wheelchairs as they confess faith in God, Williams could show prisoners tossing away cell keys and confessing to the crimes they committed, saving the county millions in court costs each year.

If we could get Williams involved in a little laying on of hands, we might be able to get him to lay off the department's commissary fund, which was set up for the benefit of inmates.

Unfortunately, what's going on at the county jail is not a laughing matter, and not even a faith healer can cure this sheriff's problems.

This latest action by Williams — who seems to want to be a missionary more than he wants to be the county's highest-ranking peace officer — is appalling.

In partnership with former jail chaplain Hugh Atwell, Williams is using inmate commissary funds to finance a nonprofit ministry called Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy, which will have five full-time chaplains.

Just last year, the commissioners eliminated Atwell's position and

created instead an employee assistance program to serve all inmates and county employees. And the volunteer chaplains program already in place is doing quite well.

That, of course, is not good enough for Williams, who wants to proselytize his captive audience.

So he's going to take \$327,873 — most of what is currently in the commissary fund — and pay it to his newly created organization. Atwell will get a large chunk of it as the new executive director.

There won't be much money left to spend on anything else for the prisoners.

Although these dollars don't come directly from taxpayers, they still belong to the public.

I know that Williams has the authority to manage the fund, but it shouldn't be too much to ask that it not be mismanaged.

We have a right to expect — indeed, demand — that the person who's elected sheriff attends to the real business of the office, that he is a good steward of our jail, its inmates and the department's budget. Williams has proved time and again that he is either unwilling or unable to do this job.

It looks like his real calling was to the ministry. If so, let him heed that call.

Perhaps Hinn *could* use a little more help when he arrives in the Metroplex.

Williams would make a great apostle, for I'm sure he already knows how to raise his hand and say, "Heal."

Bob Ray Sanders' column appears
Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
(817) 390-7775

bobray@star-telegram.com

E D I T O R I A L S

Jail Ministry

SHERIFF DAVID WILLIAMS made a value judgment last week when he decided that the department's commissary fund, which comes from a \$2 fee the commissary operator pays the county for each inmate, would be used best to form a nonprofit chaplain program for the jail.

Once again, Williams' actions raise questions about his ability to manage his department.

Although Williams himself touted the success of the former chaplain program, which ran with one full-time chaplain and a host of volunteers, the new program will employ five full-time chaplains and an administrative assistant, with salaries ranging from \$22,00 to \$31,000. Even if most of the employees are paid the minimum amount — as program director, the Rev. Hugh Atwell will earn \$62,400 — salaries alone will run \$172,400 annually.

The commissary fund's annual revenue totals about \$100,000 annually.

Where will the additional money come from? Is Williams going into the fund-raising business? How soon before solicitation letters signed by Williams on behalf of the Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy land on the desks of churches throughout the county?

Atwell has announced that the ministry would do "more work outside the walls" of the jail than the previous chaplain's program. "We would jump at the chance to extend our services wherever possible," Atwell said.

Is this really appropriate use of public money that is specifically collected for the benefit of inmates? And how is Williams going to purchase the items the commissary fund was designed to supply — library books, law books, computers and recreational equipment — that all inmates can use?

If Williams intends to look to the Commissioners Court for assistance, he should be sorely disappointed.

Demoted sheriff's deputy gets divided decision

Panel didn't answer all issues, attorney says

By NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A sheriff's deputy who says he was demoted from major to sergeant in retaliation for his friendship with a political opponent of Sheriff David Williams received a split decision yesterday from the Sheriff's Civil Service Commission.

Williams acted within his authority when he demoted John Smedley to the rank of sergeant on Oct. 1 after Tarrant County commissioners eliminated certain positions in the department, commissioners ruled.

But they also said that the Sheriff's Department must pro-

mote Smedley to the rank of lieutenant within eight days.

Attorney Jim Minter, who represented Smedley, said he does not know whether Smedley will appeal.

"All of the issues presented to the commissioners weren't answered. They did not come back with a finding that there was political discrimination," Minter said. "We can always appeal to district court."

Minter, a former acting Tarrant County sheriff, has had his own dispute with Williams. Williams fired Minter when Williams took

office in 1993. Minter ran for sheriff in 1996.

Smedley's friendship with Minter led to Smedley's demotion, the deputy says.

"I had two choices: termination or accept demotion to sergeant," Smedley said at a hearing yesterday. Deputies with less seniority maintained higher ranks, he said.

Smedley initially said that his demotion was retaliation and the result of discrimination based on political affiliation and religion.

In a February report, Wendy Williams, the county's Equal Employment Opportunity officer,

determined that there was not enough information to substantiate the claim that Smedley was discriminated against because he was not religiously aligned with Williams.

But her report said there was probable cause to support Smedley's allegation of political discrimination for supporting Minter.

Sheriff's Civil Service Commissioner Bob Hampton and Chairman Richard DeOtte conducted the hearing. Commissioner Pat Dohoney recused himself because of his previous job as an assistant district attorney.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

El Paso police may test-fly Tarrant helicopter

County commissioners voted to lift a ban on flying the sheriff's Bell OH-58A so El Paso officials can check it.

By NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — All of the equipment in Sheriff David Williams' 5-year-old helicopter program — one flying helicopter, one inoperable helicopter, a spare engine and assorted parts — might be headed to El Paso.

Tarrant County commissioners voted yesterday to lift a ban on flying the sheriff's Bell OH-58A military-surplus helicopter so that officials of the El Paso Police Department, which is interested in obtaining the equipment, can test-fly it next week.

The El Paso City Council yesterday authorized one pilot and a mechanic to travel to Tarrant County on Monday to look at the helicopter equipment, said El Paso Assistant Police Chief George DeAngelis.

"It's an upgrade for us. We

get a better helicopter and we can get parts for this helicopter much easier," DeAngelis said. El Paso has three helicopters, one fixed-wing aircraft, four pilots and several mechanics, he said.

Tarrant County commissioners voted unanimously on Sept. 30 to end all county helicopter operations "until further formal action" by the court. The following day a federal air safety report concluded that the September 1997 helicopter crash that killed two deputies was caused by pilot error.

After the vote yesterday, County Judge Tom Vandergriff said the county was "anxious to transfer the title of the helicopters" to someone else.

"In a sense, we now have a prospective buyer, and of course they want to test the aircraft before putting up the money," he said.

The helicopter equipment is donated military surplus that the Sheriff's Department obtained at no cost. The city of El Paso, like Tarrant County, participates in a state-administered program to get federal military surplus equipment.

The Tarrant program began in July 1994 with three 1960s-era OH-6s. Williams said they would be used for drug investigations and to augment the department's crime-fighting

power.

Several commissioners objected to the helicopter program and instead of using taxpayer money to fund the operation, Williams used his department's criminal forfeiture fund — drug money and funds from the sale of items seized because they were used in crimes.

In 1995, Williams traded the three OH-6 copters to a Southern California law-enforcement agency for the two Bell OH-58As. It was one of those that crashed in 1997, and the widow of one deputy has sued Williams and his department, saying that her husband's death was caused by gross negligence.

The other helicopter is outfitted with commercial skids, searchlights, high-tech avionics and other improvements, said Executive Chief Deputy Hank Pope. El Paso is expected to pay the Sheriff's Department about \$50,000 for the upgrades. The money would go back into the forfeiture fund, he said.

Williams initially tried to keep the helicopter program after the crash near Eagle Mountain Lake killed the deputies, but the Sheriff's Department later agreed to give the equipment to another Texas law enforcement agency.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

FRIDAY, JUNE 11, 1999

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

My words

A May 25 editorial used a statement that I made about jail booking operations while addressing the Tarrant County Commissioners Court in our pre-budget meeting. I believe that good journalism requires using facts as they are intended.

To insinuate that Sheriff David Williams and I oppose one another on jail issues was not correct, and to take two different statements out of context and attempt to pit them against each other to beef up your editorial was certainly off base.

The many years I have devoted to the confinement operations have always been a challenge, and this year is not different. The record will show that Tarrant County Jail operations have been certified for the past three years and are expected to be certified again this year.

Regardless of the high standards and performance of the jail staff, there will be some problems. The fact that this staff has been working with less-than-adequate personnel is the problem I was addressing before the commissioners, and at no time did I intend for my personnel request to be used in a conflicting manner.

CHIEF SAVALA SWANSON
Tarrant County Sheriff's Office

Officials to discuss jail chaplain contract

Commissioners wonder about legal ramifications

BY NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Basketballs or Bibles: Has the battle between Sheriff David Williams and Tarrant County commissioners come to that?

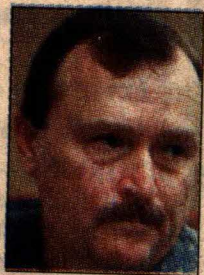
Williams has signed a \$328,000 contract with a new nonprofit agency to "provide religious assistance and support" to inmates and their jailers. The money is from the jail's commissary fund and can only be used for the benefit of inmates.

But county commissioners say they have more questions about the faith-based agency than faith in Sheriff David Williams' evangelical project.

"Basically, we have to give him the benefit of the doubt," Commissioner Glen Whitley said. "I hope he doesn't do anything that causes the county to be sued."

The Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy, created by the Rev. Hugh Atwell, who is a deputy and former Sheriff's Department major who served as minister and chaplain of the jail for five years, is a dramatic expansion of a long-established volunteer chaplain program.

The nonprofit organization is Williams' response to commissioners, who cut Atwell's position from the budget last year, replacing him with a broader employee-assistance program for all county employees and inmates. With five paid chaplains, the nonprofit is a



"Give us a chance. We will be serving everyone."

— the Rev. Hugh Atwell

redoubling of Williams' effort to bring God and salvation to the jail's 3,450 inmates.

"We want to provide for the material, emotional and spiritual needs of the inmates and provide counseling for sheriff's employees," Chief Deputy Larry Hester said. Sheriff's employees will be more comfortable counseled by people with law enforcement experience, he said.

Williams could not be reached for comment. Commissioners are expected to discuss the contract at Tuesday's Commissioners Court meeting.

The commissioners are concerned that if the commissary fund — it is used for recreation programs and to buy items ranging from computers and basketballs to law books and Bibles — is run by a religious organization, not all inmates may be served equally.

"If you turn the entire jail into a place of worship, then there may be a First Amendment question of the separation of church and state," said David B. Brooks, an Austin lawyer and expert on Texas county law. "You have to draw the line at some point."

As the nonprofit's executive director, Atwell would be paid an annual salary of about \$62,000. The other chaplains would be paid between \$22,000 and \$31,000 annually, he said.

"Give us a chance. We will be serving everyone," Atwell said.

Commissioners also question whether

Williams can provide office space, telephone, utilities, furniture and office equipment to the nonprofit, as he has agreed to do in a one-year contract with Atwell.

"I'm not sure an outside corporate entity, nonprofit though it may be, can be given office space in a county building," County Judge Tom Vandergriff said. There are legal questions, he said.

"I do think we have to look to the district attorney, and it has to be done right away," Vandergriff said.

The authority over county buildings, except for the jail, rests with county commissioners. Although the commissioners are the contracting authority for the county, the sheriff is, by statute, given the authority to contract for operating the commissary. State law also gives the sheriff "exclusive control" of the commissary fund.

In Tarrant County, the fund comes from the \$2 the commissary operator pays to the county for each inmate, based on the average monthly jail census.

"Williams can spend the money anyway he wants, as long as it fits statutory purposes," Assistant District Attorney Marvin Collins said.

Chaplain services are paid for in a variety of ways in other Texas counties.

In Dallas County, the commissary is operated by Mid-States Inc., the company that runs the Tarrant County commissary. Commissary funds pay the salary of three employees, including the chaplain coordinator, and all are county employees.

In San Antonio, the nonprofit Bexar County Detention Ministries runs the commissary, but

community churches pick up the chaplains' salaries.

The Harris County sheriff runs the commissary in Houston. A nonprofit runs the chaplain program, which is separate from the Sheriff's Department. It has a staff of 16 and five paid chaplains, Capt. Don McWilliams said. The program is paid for with grants, community contributions and \$100,000 from the commissary fund.

In El Paso County, the commissary is run by a private company, and the chaplain program is all volunteer, except for one part-time secretary, Lt. Jesse Anchando said.

"We provide office space but volunteer carpenters make furniture, and Bibles are donated," he said.

The commissioners are also concerned about how the Sheriff's Department will fund the nonprofit next year, because the commissary fund has an annual revenue of about \$100,000. Atwell has said Williams intends to "get more cash flow coming" from the commissary and may seek another contractor willing to pay more to the commissary fund.

The county purchasing office is withholding payment for Bibles, printed material and videos, bought by the chaplain's office, pending a Texas attorney general decision on whether contracts for commissary fund expenditures must be competitively bid and if purchases must go through the county purchasing agent.

"The chaplains program doesn't deserve this much attention," said Rev. Roger Hollar of Glenview Baptist Church, a longtime volunteer chaplain. "It ought to be seen as a support service without the politics involved."

TRIBAL TRIUMPH

East side park named for last great
Comanche chief, Quanah Parker



Special to the Star-Telegram/JENNIFER LONG

Quanah Parker's great-great-grandson Ben Tahmahkera told the history of the famed Indian chief and participated in other festivities at the dedication of the 88-acre Quanah Parker Park in east Fort Worth.

SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 1999

By KRISTIN N. SULLIVAN

Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Waving curls of red cedar smoke, medicine man Thomas Blackstar blessed an 88-acre park yesterday that east Fort Worth residents dedicated to Quanah Parker, the last great Comanche chief.

A fierce sun baked residents from the nearby White Lake Hills and Woodhaven neighborhoods as Blackstar, president of the Comanche Tribe Native American Church, prayed to the east, west, north and south in the park at 4900 Randol Mill Road.

Some onlookers had advocated naming the site Quanah Parker Park for almost two years.

"We're just appreciating what went before us — the contributions of the pioneers and the Indians," said Margaret Borbolla, a White Lake Hills resident.

Native Americans will join Fort Worth's sesquicentennial celebration during this morning's downtown debut of the Fort Worth Herd, and today and

tomorrow during the Quanah Parker Comanche Pow Wow, a traditional dance competition inside the Stockyards' Cowtown Coliseum.

The pow wow is part of Chisholm Trail Round-Up, which stages music and festival events in the Stockyards through tomorrow. Admission is \$5 after 5 p.m. both days.

Folks who want to see the herd of 15 longhorns — including Carrot Top, Curley, Ned and Saw — should gather by 9

a.m. at the Chisholm Trail Mural in Sundance Square. Or pedestrians can line up around Paddock Park, on the north side of the Tarrant County Courthouse. The steers will stop there for a 10 a.m. ceremony between Quanah Parker's Comanche descendants and rancher Anne Windfohr Marion.

Marion is the great-granddaughter of rancher-oilman Samuel Burk Burnett, with whom Quanah Parker forged a deal in the 1880s that allowed Burnett's cattle to graze on reservation land.

The herd is expected to arrive in the Stockyards about noon.

Yesterday's dedication of Quanah Parker Park came more than three years after the Amon G. Carter Foundation donated land for public recreational space. White Lake Hills and Woodhaven asked the city to name the park to honor Native Americans.

They said they were enthralled with the story of how Quanah Parker's Anglo mother, Cynthia Ann Parker, was abducted as a young girl by Comanches but came to love Indian ways. She was later "rescued" by Texas

Rangers and returned to her Parker relatives, though the Comanches say she then died of sadness.

The Anglo Parker family farmed a few miles north of the park site on land that now crosses Haltom City, Richland Hills and Hurst. Quanah Parker frequently visited Fort Worth before he died in 1911.

"This is one thing here that will help keep the culture alive," said Quanah Parker's descendant Monroe Tahmahkera, 72, who wore a 100-year-old warrior headdress and fanned himself with the wing of a bald eagle.

Park plans call for a wildflower meadow, an amphitheater and a trail with markers highlighting botany and natural history, City Forester Harold Pitchford said. Charcoal burned yesterday in a ceremonial fire pit near a multiuse concrete court.

City Councilwoman Becky Haskin, who at first shied from naming the park for the Comanche hero, said the site is the city's first to be named for a Native American.

The recognition was "a long time overdue," she said. "There are so many, and often we don't by tribute to those we should."

Kristin N. Sullivan, (817) 390-7610

kristinsul@star-telegram.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Whack! Whack! Whack!

The people at the *Star-Telegram* have indeed reached a new low in Christian-bashing. I'm sure you have huddled in corners giggling and congratulating each other for your latest fun time. I speak of Bob Ray Sanders and his cutesy little June 6 column concerning Benny Hinn and Tarrant County Sheriff David Williams.

Perhaps my reaction is not typical. Perhaps those of us who believe in more than a "higher power," in more than a "man upstairs," are too touchy. But perhaps we see a publicly supported (remember, no taxes on advertising) special-interest group like the Fourth Estate — which has freedoms guaranteed by the same constitutional amendment that guarantees religious freedoms — blasting and ridiculing and belittling the faith of people as well as people of faith.

Sure, criticize them if it's warranted. I know, as does every other believer in the Metroplex, that you would love to bring down Williams and his faith activities at the Tarrant County Jail. But please don't cutesy me to death with poor writers like Sanders.

TOM POLLARD
Fort Worth

Rehabilitation

Obviously, columnist Bob Ray Sanders has never been in jail or in a desperate situation in which the only thing he had to keep him going was his faith in God's forgiving grace. If he had, he would not be so quick to criticize Sheriff David Williams for trying to bring a little faith and hope to our brothers and sisters behind bars in the Tarrant County Jail.

I guess that Sanders would have the inmates study to be better criminals rather than study the Bible.

The state of Texas spends hundreds of millions of dollars to incarcerate people and basically nothing to rehabilitate them. Sanders needs to do some research before he tosses around terms like "restorative justice." This term was not coined by Williams. Gov. George W. Bush has tried to put a system in place to restore some of these people to useful citizenship instead of locking them up forever at the taxpayers' expense.

The commissary fund comes indirectly from the inmates. They buy reading material, sandwiches, candy, cigarettes and toothpaste with money sent by their families. Why not spend some of this money to give inmates some hope of returning to society as productive citizens when their sentence is completed?

Do your homework before you run off at the mouth about things you don't understand, Bob Ray.

DONALD R. SAMPSON
Hurst

TUESDAY, JUNE 15, 1999

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tarrant County tarnish

I have never read anything as pointless and self-praising as the recent commentary by Sheriff David Williams regarding the fulfillment of his mandate from the voters of Tarrant County.

From all appearances, some of his initial backers now find themselves completely embarrassed and disenchanted with the antics of their once-prized puppet.

Williams has continued to establish himself as an individual caught up in his

own charm, who likes to drop names and take total control. Yet as sheriff, he fails to recognize the accountability of his office.

Even the actions of Don Carpenter, who was criticized for administrative infractions, couldn't hold a candle to the tarnish that Williams has imposed upon a department so respected and revered under the leadership of the since-deceased Lon Evans.

Perhaps Williams should team up with TV's Judge Judy, who also likes to interpret law enforcement with a comedic flavor. But that wouldn't work either, for Williams has little respect for the media.

FLOYD F. CLARK
Fort Worth

Sheriff exceeded authority, panel says

County did not approve office for nonprofit group

BY NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Sheriff David Williams overstepped his authority in giving county office space to a nonprofit group that provides religious assistance and support for Tarrant County inmates and their jailers, county commissioners said yesterday.

Any public official must get prior approval from the Commissioners Court before giving "county space, utilities, office equipment and supplies to any person or corporation," the commissioners said in a motion that they unanimously adopted.

Williams signed a contract June 1 with Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy giving the nonprofit — created by Rev. Hugh Atwell, a deputy and former major who served as minister and chaplain of the jail for five years — \$327,873 from the inmate commissary fund.

The contract also gave the nonprofit, which plans to have five paid chaplains, access to the

offices Atwell now occupies on the first floor of the county's criminal courts-jail building at 300 W. Belknap St., and to all the office equipment.

The commissioners stopped short of evicting Atwell in the motion, but after the meeting, they said the former deputy will have to give up his office.

"I didn't hear anyone tell me to move out," Atwell said. "I want to know why this organization has been singled out for open, hostile treatment from the Commissioners Court."

Williams declined to comment yesterday

on the commissioners' decision.

"At this point he is seeking advice from counsel on the meaning of the commissioners' motion," said Herb Chambers, Sheriff's Department director of administrative operations.

The commissioners said they had to "disapprove" the contract because taking no action would be the same as giving tacit approval to the agreement between the nonprofit and Williams.

"We just don't think any county employee can give away space without the court's approval," County Judge Tom Vandergriff said. Atwell "cannot occupy that space."

The sheriff has exclusive control of the commissary fund, Vandergriff said, but all expenditures must be used for the benefit of inmates. The fund comes from \$2 the

commissary operator pays to the county for each inmate, based on the average monthly jail census.

Authority over county buildings, except for the jail, rests with county commissioners. Although the commissioners are the contracting authority for the county, the sheriff has, by statute, the authority to contract for operation of the commissary.

Commissioner J.D. Johnson said he has "grave concerns" about the contract Williams signed with Atwell.

"I don't think that it is a qualified use of taxpayer dollars," Johnson said. "If the county opens up office space to one nonprofit, what about 4-H or the Rotary?" Johnson said.

The nonprofit is Williams' response to the commissioners, who cut Atwell's posi-

tion from the budget last year, replacing him with a broader employee-assistance program for all county employees and the inmates.

"I question whether an elected official can be involved in developing a nonprofit and then contract with it," Commissioner Dionne Bagsby said.

The commissioners have said they are concerned that if the commissary fund, which is used to pay for recreation programs and to buy items ranging from computers to law books and Bibles, is run by a religious organization, not all inmates may be served equally.

Atwell has said repeatedly that his organization will serve all inmates.

As the nonprofit's executive director, Atwell would earn about \$62,000. The other chaplains would be paid \$22,000 to

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

\$31,000, he said.

The commissioners also said they don't know how the Sheriff's Department will fund the nonprofit next year, because the commissary fund has an annual revenue of about \$100,000.

Both sides said the matter may have to be resolved before a judge or through an opinion on the law issued by the Texas attorney general.

The county purchasing office is withholding payment for Bibles, printed material and videos, bought by the chaplain's office, awaiting an attorney general opinion on whether contracts for commissary fund expenditures must be competitively bid and whether purchases must go through the county purchasing agent.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

THE FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM
SATURDAY, JUNE 19, 1999

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Subject of disdain

On Monday, we had two letter writers with the same perspective: how awful the *Star-Telegram* is to pick on poor David Williams. I must heartily disagree with both writers.

The Tarrant County sheriff has not been the subject of scorn for his faith, but rather for the incompetence and general disarray he has put the office of sheriff through.

The city of Fort Worth and the Commissioners Court asked for an audit to determine costs per prisoner. The sheriff refused amid a variety of objections and then sent one of his minions to demand more staffing in the jail because of the high cost of running it. Williams sued the county and then refused to mediate the dispute.

Who should really be ashamed? Not the Sheriff's Department, the commissioners or the media, but rather the voters who put this man back in office for a second time.

I know that many will scream and cry about the persecution of the "poor sheriff." We should remove him and install a professional law officer instead of a paranoid who refuses to deal with the other duly elected and appointed leaders of the city and county governments.

No matter what is done, we will have to deal with this man until the next election, when I hope that the voters will pick an experienced and worthy sheriff.

JOHN OLTHOFF
River Oaks

OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

■ EDITORIALS

'Singled Out'?

Tarrant County commissioners aren't picking on the jail ministry; they're following procedure.

I want to know why this organization has been singled out for open, hostile treatment from the Commissioners Court.

— the Rev. Hugh Atwell, executive director, Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy

The problem with the Rev. Hugh Atwell's interpretation of the Tarrant County commissioners' actions last week is that his new nonprofit jail ministry *hasn't* been singled out. Commissioners would have responded in the same manner had Sheriff David Williams signed a contract to provide office space to the Boy Scouts or the Banana Republic.

The point of the commissioners' vote Tuesday to disapprove the contract that provides Atwell's agency with office space in a county facility is that only the Commissioners Court has the authority to make such binding agreements.

Not Williams. Not any other county department head. Commissioners must

approve contracts with any group that involves county facilities.

Why does Williams think he has privileges that extend beyond other department heads? Because he's an elected official? Sorry, but it doesn't work that way.

The district clerk, county clerk, tax assessor/collector and all the men and women who don judicial robes and rely on voters to keep their jobs would receive the same treatment from the Commissioners Court should they get the wild notion to allow an outside agency to take up residence within their domains.

The "ministering" that's going on now with the jail chaplaincy program is aimed directly at the next election. Williams and his supporters will probably use the rift with the county commissioners for purely political purposes come campaign time.

Make no mistake: Atwell's statement about "singling out" the jail ministry for "open, hostile treatment" will echo throughout some of the county's churches as a rallying cry for religious conservatives to head to the polls in 2000. It is hoped that voters won't allow themselves to be used in such a manipulative way.

the
INSIDER
report

At last week's Tarrant County Commissioners Court meeting, Chief Deputy **Larry Hester** told members that the Sheriff's Department needs to spend nearly \$12,000 to buy and train two new drug-sniffing dogs. The old dogs, are ... well, old dogs, Hester said, and they need to be replaced.

The old dogs were a gift to the department from longtime David Williams supporter **Ed Max**, who no longer backs the sheriff.

Officers discover drug lab, stolen vehicles

Star-Telegram

A methamphetamine lab and an automobile chop shop were shut down early yesterday by Tarrant County sheriff's officials who raided a house and barn in the southern part of the county.

One man at the house, Gregory Stephens, was arrested on parole violation warrants alleging delivery of a controlled substance. A woman there was not arrested and her 11-year-old daughter and 5-year-old son were taken from the scene by

friends, Capt. John Dalton said.

Investigators from the sheriff's narcotics division and tactical unit spent most of the day dismantling the so-called Nazi methamphetamine lab, which describes a noncooking method of making the drug, Dalton said. The method was developed during World War II using chemicals to manufacture the drug for German troops, he said.

Tipsters also had told investigators that stolen vehicles would be at the house in the 5200 block

of Oak Street in an unincorporated area south of Everman.

Agents with the Tarrant County Auto Theft Task Force found two stolen Fort Worth trucks, one of which had already been cut into pieces, Dalton said. Two other vehicles with vehicle identification numbers removed also were seized.



For more news, go to
www.star-telegram.com

Why the opposition to Tarrant County chaplaincy program?

BY HUGH ATWELL

On June 1, Tarrant County Sheriff David Williams signed a contract with Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy Inc. to provide chaplaincy services to the Tarrant County Jail and the Tarrant County sheriff's office.

This organization will be paid with proceeds from the jail commissary. According to state law, Williams has exclusive control over commissary funds.

The contract prompted criticism from the Tarrant County Commissioners Court. Perhaps it would be helpful to examine what happened and why the sheriff had to act.

I have been serving as chaplain for the Tarrant County sheriff's office since Feb. 22, 1993. Effective Oct. 1, 1998, the Commissioners Court eliminated the position of chaplain, along with numerous other positions, from the sheriff's budget. There were never any articulated thoughts or testimony offered indicating a need for this drastic action.

The chaplaincy program was available to any county employee, as evidenced by the number of weddings, funerals, clinical and pastoral counseling, and other chaplaincy services performed for members of other county departments.

I am licensed, ordained and endorsed by the North American Mission Board as a chaplain with a master's degree in religious education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition, I am a state-licensed marriage and family therapist with a master's degree in counseling and further training in critical incident stress management.

My professional services were provided when a county precinct worker was tragically killed on the job and a critical incident stress management debriefing was conducted for other county employees.

The Commissioners Court fired me effective Oct. 1, 1998. Seven months later, the replacement, the Rev. David Barrett, was hired with the title "Support Services Manager." Meanwhile, Williams had to designate an unfilled supervisor position as chaplain within his department so I could continue to coordinate and deliver uninterrupted chaplaincy services.

The Texas Commission on Jail Standards (the governing body that

inspects county jails for compliance to rules and laws governing jails) and the First Amendment require the provision of religious programming for inmates. Without full-time administration and leadership, this program would have foundered and died, exposing the county taxpayers to litigation by prisoners claiming First Amendment religious access violations and costly federal court intervention.

I initiated a meeting with Barrett on June 3 and was shocked when he informed me that he did not have the education or licensing credentials to provide clinical therapeutic counseling. Additionally, he has had no experience with correctional chaplaincy programs.

However, he did admit a close working relationship with the campaign treasurer of one of Williams' declared political opponents. He was asked to provide Williams with a resume of his qualifications, which had not been accomplished at the time of this writing. The sheriff and his employees have not received any communication from Barrett regarding the services provided by the county's new support services manager.

Many volunteers, employees and community leaders were deceived and misled last fall in Commissioners Court hearings when they were told that the present program level would be continued and even "expanded."

County Judge Tom Vandergriff was quoted in the *Star-Telegram* as saying: "We have a volunteer program going at quite a pace with people from various churches donating time and effort."

Perhaps Vandergriff does not understand that sustaining a program involving 300 volunteers serving the 52,000 inmates who were booked through the jail during the last 12 months, and the nearly 1,300 employees and their families, requires direction and leadership to "make it happen." It would not have happened had Williams not responded with dramatic countermeasures to provide for chaplaincy during this crucial long interval.

We believe that during the past seven years, we have saved Tarrant County taxpayers an untold amount of money because there have been no U.S. federal court judgments against the county over a First Amendment religious issue. This is significant, considering the ease and simplicity afforded inmates in the filing of nuisance suits in federal court.

On April 9, at a statewide conference in Dallas, our program was recognized by Gov. George W. Bush, who awarded us the annual "Hope in Our Hearts Award" for excellence.

Through contracting with Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy Inc., the taxpayers are assured of continuity of past quality service.

In another *Star-Telegram* article, Vandergriff said: "I'm not sure an outside corporate entity, nonprofit though it may be, can be given office space in a county building."

Surely he knows that the county provides space and equipment to other vendors and service providers that require this in-kind exchange to carry out their duties. According to news articles, we have to vacate our office without due process of law even though we have a legal, binding contract.

Obstructionist tactics, such as refusing to approve requisitions under the County Purchasing Act, and deactivating the chaplain's pager (in violation of the contract), may have been deemed clever at the time, but they could raise other legal issues that Vandergriff should consider.

This pattern of obstruction and hostility is not evident with other county vendors and service providers. Could it be interpreted that this overtly hostile environment exists because this provider is faith-based?

Criticism from the Commissioners Court has also been leveled at Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy's plan to

+

This pattern of obstruction and hostility is not evident with other county vendors and service providers. Could it be interpreted that this overtly hostile environment exists because this provider is faith-based?

— Chaplain Hugh Atwell

pay full-time chaplains.

Having four chaplains, in addition to me, is not a new concept — we have had them all along. However, they were not being paid. These men and women were required to raise their own support. Paying them for their work is not only the right thing to do — it also ensures a higher quality of service to the constituents and accountability to the program.

With just under 3,500 inmates, the Tarrant County Jail is equal in population to any three Texas penitentiary units. Each of those 1,100-bed state prison units has two taxpayer-supported chaplains allocated.

Ideally, any jail or prison chaplaincy program should reflect the diversity of the inmate population. In our three-unit jail system, we house male and female inmates ranging from first offenders to violent career criminals, low-risk offenders to capital murderers. Four chaplains divided among three distinct geographic locations is not a luxury — it is as necessity. We must also have a female chaplain to meet female inmates' spiritual needs.

I ask that Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy Inc. be allowed to execute the terms of its contract with the Tarrant County sheriff's office without interference or hostility from other elected officials.

Allow us to be a blessing to the community of Tarrant County. Utilizing funds not generated through taxes to carry out these programs should be interpreted as a win-win situation for all concerned about "separation of church and state."

As executive director of Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy Inc., I pledge good stewardship over these funds. I further pledge to continue a program of excellence and to persist in seeking ways for restorative justice to be implemented with other groups affected by crime, such as victims, families of the incarcerated, and criminal justice professionals.

Internal revenue laws and rules pertaining to nonprofit designated entities will ensure that the funds are properly and legally utilized.

Chaplain HUGH ATWELL heads Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy Inc.

Sheriff's chaplain program expected to be told to vacate county offices

BY NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County Sheriff David Williams' nonprofit chaplain's agency is expected to be told at Commissioners Court today that it must leave its county offices at 300 W. Belknap St. in downtown Fort Worth.

Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy, a nonprofit agency created by the Rev. Hugh Atwell to provide religious assis-

tance and support for Tarrant County inmates and jailers, has had the use of county office space and county equipment since June 1, when Atwell signed a contract with the sheriff.

County commissioners disapproved the contract two weeks ago, saying that only Commissioners Court has the authority to allocate space in county buildings. Commissioner J.D. Johnson said he will ask his fellow commissioners to join in send-

ing a letter to Williams telling the sheriff that the nonprofit must go.

"I'm going to ask him [Atwell] to vacate the offices," Johnson said. "I wrote Williams a letter because we can't communicate at court because he doesn't come over."

Johnson declined to disclose the letter's contents before today's meeting or to say when Atwell must be out of the office.

Neither Williams nor Atwell could be reached to comment.

Both are out of town, said Herb Chambers, the sheriff's administrative director.

"I do not know who will address this, if anyone," Chambers said.

Atwell, a deputy and former major who served as minister and jail chaplain for five years, has said the nonprofit is being persecuted and unfairly singled out.

"We do not intend to interfere with the

volunteer chaplain's program whatsoever," Johnson said. "But we don't furnish office space or equipment unless a request is made of Commissioners Court, and no one has asked us to give Atwell offices, fax machines, copiers or parking spaces."

Under the terms of the contract, Williams turned over \$327,873 from the inmate commissary fund to Atwell's agency. That money can only be used to benefit inmates.

Chaplains group evicted from downtown offices

By NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County commissioners yesterday ordered Sheriff David Williams' nonprofit chaplains agency to move out of its county offices in downtown Fort Worth, but promised to preserve the jail's long-standing volunteer chaplains program.

Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy, created by the Rev. Hugh Atwell to provide religious assistance

and support for Tarrant County inmates and jailers, must move immediately, the commissioners said.

The agency has used county office space and equipment since June 1 when Atwell signed a contract with Williams.

"The nonprofit will have to provide space for itself," County Judge Tom Vandergriff said.

In a strongly worded letter to Williams, Vandergriff said the offices

(More on SHERIFF on Page 4B)

SHERIFF

From Page 1B

on the first floor of the county building at 300 W. Belknap St., now occupied by the nonprofit, are "no longer assigned to the Sheriff's Office or any of its attempted designees. Please insure that the space is vacated in an orderly, prompt manner."

Neither Williams nor Atwell could be reached to comment and no one from the Sheriff's Department responded to the nonprofit's eviction at yesterday's meeting.

"It's up to the sheriff to make the decision" on moving, said Herb Chambers, the sheriff's administrative director.

The Rev. Jim Norwood, a leader among volunteer chaplains the past six years, told the court that the commissioners' action "jeopardized" the volunteer chaplains program, and said the constant fighting between the commissioners and Williams is causing volunteers to quit.

"It's necessary for volunteers to have a place to meet within the jail," Norwood said. The

volunteers need a central location where they can get Bibles and other supplies before they visit the inmates, he said.

"I don't know what the answers are with regard to the conflict, but it is taking its toll on volunteers," he said.

Atwell, a deputy and former major who served as jail chaplain for six years, says his agency is being treated differently from other nonprofits that work with the county.

Williams' contract gives the agency, which plans to have five paid chaplains, \$327,873 from the inmate commissary fund. The money in the commissary account comes from \$2 the commissary operator pays the county for each inmate, based on the average monthly jail census. That money can only be spent for the benefit of inmates.

The commissioners say that they support the volunteer chaplains and want the program to continue, but that they won't relinquish their authority over county buildings. The other groups that have office space in county buildings asked the commissioners for it, officials said.

"We will find space for the

volunteer program," said Commissioner J.D. Johnson.

"We're very committed to the volunteer program, that's not the question," said Commissioner Dionne Bagsby. "It's the sheriff's contract that is the problem."

County facilities director Gary Kirby said the county usually uses the Sheriff's Department to enforce an eviction.

"I don't think that will happen this time," he said. "The county could send in constables. Constables do a lot of evictions."

In yesterday's letter, two weeks after the commissioners disapproved the contract between Atwell and the sheriff, they warned Williams not to exceed his authority again.

"In the future, please do not attempt to allocate space, or other county resources for that matter. That is a legal responsibility of the Commissioners Court," Vandergriff's letter said.

Requests for office space in county buildings must first be submitted to the county administrator's office and only then will they be considered by the commissioners, the letter said.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 1999

Commissioners eye forfeiture money

By NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County commissioners asked Sheriff David Williams yesterday to contribute 10 percent of his department's state drug forfeiture funds to the Adolescent Recovery Project, a new county drug treatment center.

The project is a public-private partnership to integrate the treatment and services for adolescents under one roof for a smooth transition between the various phases of care. The 16-bed live-in facility has been open for several months.

A Texas Alcohol and Substance Abuse Commission grant initially funded the project, which provides counseling, case man-

agement and outpatient care. But the facility needs money for next year, Commissioner Glen Whitley said yesterday.

"This is an opportunity for the Sheriff's Department and the Commissioners Court to do something positive together," Whitley said.

Williams, who was out of town yesterday, could not be reached to comment.

Authority over the department's state criminal forfeiture fund — drug money and funds from the sale of items seized because they were used in crimes — rests with the sheriff. The money is supposed to be used for nonprofit drug prevention or treatment programs.

State law allows the commissioners to use up to 10 percent of the funds, but the sheriff must agree to the proposal.

"I don't know what the sheriff would say," said Herb Chambers, the sheriff's director of administration.

As of June 1999 the state forfeiture fund had a total of \$65,967, according to the county auditor's office.

Anyone interested in making donations to the drug-treatment program can call Challenge Inc., the agency overseeing the project, at (817) 882-8820. The address is Adolescent Recovery Project, 3001 Sanguinet St., Fort Worth 76107.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

Sheriff's deputy sues Williams, alleging his demotion was political

By **BOB MAHLBURG**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A Tarrant County sheriff's deputy who says he was demoted in retaliation for his political ties has sued Sheriff David Williams.

John Smedley alleges in the suit that he was demoted because of his ties to Jim Minter, a former sheriff's official who ran for sheriff in 1996.

The suit says Smedley's demotion from major to sergeant has cost him salary and has meant "a change in work schedule that has impacted upon his family's well being and social environment."

Assistant District Attorney Steve Sparks, a legal adviser to the sheriff, declined to comment on the suit.

The suit, filed by attorney Minter, asks that Smedley be returned to his former post and salary, requests a legal finding that Smedley was a

victim of "discrimination and retaliation," and asks for back pay, monetary damages and attorney fees.

Smedley raised the same issues to the Sheriff's Civil Service Commission last month. The commission found that Williams acted within his authority when he demoted Smedley in October but that Smedley should be promoted to lieutenant within eight days.

The suit says that two lieutenant positions were open when Smedley was demoted to sergeant and that he should have gotten one of those spots under county rules.

Wendy Williams, the county's equal employment opportunity officer, ruled in February that there is evidence to support Smedley's allegation of political discrimination for supporting Minter.

Bob Mahlborg, 390-7675
burg1@star-telegram.com

Tarrant seeks bigger slice of law enforcement grant

Fort Worth and Arlington get most of the \$2.5 million in federal funds, leaving the county \$55,000.

By **NEIL STRASSMAN**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County wants a greater share of federal money that comes to the county for law enforcement purposes, but Fort Worth and Arlington aren't too eager to share the wealth.

The county is seeking more of the \$2,515,603 federal Local Law

Enforcement Block Grant than it now gets, because of the high cost the county incurs in running the courts and the jail.

Federal law, county officials say, entitles Tarrant County to more of the money. City officials say the money already goes to good use funding police programs that are needed to fight crime and that some

of the money is given to the county to fund programs for juveniles.

Representatives of Fort Worth, Arlington and Tarrant County have met several times during the last month to work on redividing the pie. City and county officials in Dallas are doing the same. In fact, the Texas attorney general has iden-

at meet criteria established by Congress intended to avoid an unequal distribution of the federal funds.

"We want it studied. Absolutely," Tarrant County Judge Tom Vandergriff said. "It is a complex issue and we need more information."

The money is allocated to cities
(More on TARRANT on Page 7B)

TARRANT

From Page 1B

and counties based upon reported violent crimes. Last year, Fort Worth received about \$1.39 million, Arlington about \$640,000 and Tarrant County about \$55,000. The rest of the money goes to the other municipalities in the county.

Fort Worth Mayor Kenneth Barr said he did not want to comment while the parties are negotiating. However, he did say that several hundred thousand dollars is passed back to the county by the city to fund programs for which the city has paid a matching fund.

"Although it looks like an enormous amount of the money is coming to Fort Worth, some very good programs could lose funding if changes are made," Barr said.

County officials, however, said the amount of money that returns to the county amounts to no more than 13 percent of

"Although it looks like an enormous amount of the money is coming to Fort Worth, some very good programs could lose funding if changes are made."

- Kenneth Barr
Fort Worth mayor

the county's total allocation of federal funds.

It may not seem like a lot of money to quibble over, but those funds are often used to pay for innovative police and community crime prevention programs.

"We're still talking about what's in the best interests of Arlington, Fort Worth and the county," said Arlington Deputy Police Chief A.J. Key. "I think we have an opportunity to collaborate and work together, keeping in mind that city gov-

ernment has responsibilities for direct services, crime prevention, code enforcement and creating an environment in neighborhoods that reduce the likelihood of crime."

Dallas County, overall, gets \$5.3 million in funding, but the county itself receives \$41,000.

"We're currently in negotiation with our cities," Dallas County Commissioner Mike Cantrell said. "We're not talking a flat percentage increase of money to the county, we're looking at projects that are beneficial to the cities and that county."

Congress, in establishing the grants, said that if a county pays more than half the cost of prosecution or incarceration and if a city gets more than twice the money a county gets, then the funding must be shared.

Tarrant County spends roughly one-third of its general fund budget on law enforcement, court administration and confinement.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

Thursday, July 8, 1999

Man dies after jailers strap him to chair

BY KATHY SANDERS

Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A 30-year-old Fort Worth man, arrested early yesterday on a criminal trespass warrant from Arlington, died later in the morning after being strapped in a chair at the Tarrant County Jail, officials said.

James Livingston was waiting to be booked into jail when "he did get violent and was strapped to a chair," sheriff's Capt. John Dalton said.

Livingston had what appeared to be a seizure, Dalton said, and was taken to John Peter Smith Hospital about 6 a.m.

A routine investigation is under way, and the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office will determine the cause of Livingston's death, he said.

Livingston's mother said last night that her son had no history of seizures, and she was shocked to learn that he had been arrested.

"What happened? I don't know. I just want to know what happened," Maxine Jackson said. "He

did not suffer from seizures. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia several years ago, but he was on medication for that."

Jackson said she wasn't told that her son had been hospitalized until about 11 a.m. When she arrived at the hospital, Livingston was on life support and was brain-dead, she said. He was pronounced dead at 12:03 p.m.

"The doctor said he was dead when they brought him," Jackson said.

"She said police said they were trying to arrest him and he was fighting."

No law enforcement official had contacted her by last night, Jackson said.

Family members last saw Livingston when he left his grandmother's house Tuesday morning to see his doctor, Jackson said. He went to his appointment, stayed an hour, but the family does not know what happened afterward, she said.

Kathy Sanders, (817) 390-7705

OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

■ LETTERS, FAXES AND E-MAILS TO THE EDITOR

Man of the people

Sheriff David Williams doesn't fit the good ol' boy image of the past — just weigh the evidence.

Before his election in November 1992, Fort Worth and Tarrant County experienced a horrible crime wave. Since Williams took office, crime rates in Tarrant County have dropped to the lowest levels since the mid-1970s.

The jail has not closed its doors to receiving more inmates, as was the common practice of the good ol' boys of the past. We can thank Williams for keeping his campaign promise of 1992 for nearly seven years running.

In 1995, Williams instituted truth-in-sentencing rules for county prisoners by abolishing automatic good time credits. I only wish our prison systems would do the same. After Williams re-engineered the Criminal Warrants Division, sheriff's deputies experienced tremendous success in tracking down and arresting fugitives from 1995 to the present. They are not only catching the criminals faster but keeping them longer as well.

In the area of technology, the Sheriff's Department has come forward 30 years! With the exception of a modern-day program — use of helicopters — shot down by the county commissioners, we're finally up to speed, technically speaking.

The above and more has been accomplished on a budget 60 percent less than the national average for sheriff's departments serving a county this size (more than 1.3 million people), according to the U.S. Department of Justice statistics reported in 1993.

We can be certain of one thing as long as we keep Williams in public office: He's working for the people, not the politicians.

Kim Townsend

Watauga

Juno e-mail printed Thu, 15 Jul 1999 02:07:27 , page 1

From: ffc.104
To: letters@star-telegram.com
Fcc: Sent
Date: Thu, 8 Jul 1999 15:55:00
Subject: Letter To The Editor
Message-ID: <19990708.155411.7007.1.ffc.104@juno.com>
X-Status: Sent
X-Mailer: Juno 1.49

Kim Townsend's letter crediting Sheriff David Williams as a "man of the people." and giving him carte blanche credit for crime reduction in Fort Worth and Tarrant County is certainly questionable.

It is true the sheriff moved employees from the jail into the warrant division (completely out of their classification and training), leaving the confinement division grossly under-staffed. This procedure was swiftly corrected by the Commissioner's Court.

I'm sure his religious followers picture Williams as the crime fighting avenger in his "Hi-Ho Silver Round-up," but, the marked decrease in criminal offenses in our area must be equally and justifiably credited to Police Chief Windham and his well organized Department....demonstrating administrative skills for which Williams is grossly deficient.

The writer's notation the jail had not closed its doors since Williams took office based solely on the sheriff's law enforcement expertise indicates again an inaccurate "weight of evidence." The jail was

housing both Federal and State sentenced prisoners which comprised the majority of the incarcerated inmates prior to Williams election....that swelled the jail's population at times to over 5,000.....a situation that, now, no longer exists.

The writer's praise of Williams advancement in crime fighting technology is also suspect. Many of his programs, like his attack dogs, have been aimed in the wrong direction. And, it is too bad the Commissioners didn't eradicate his ill-managed helicopter program prior to its devastating conclusion.

Seemingly, the writer's knowledge for the decrease in crime coincides with that of Williams. And, if our sheriff's seven year period of turmoil is a just interpretation, it appears they both need an ample serving of beans.

FLOYD F. CLARK, Retired
Tarrant County Sheriff's Department
Fort Worth, Tx
923-6167

Struggle preceded death of prisoner

The man was put in restraints and isolated in a holding cell.

BY DEANNA BOYD
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A man who died in custody of sheriff's deputies Wednesday had struggled violently with officers twice, forcing them to restrain and isolate him in a holding cell, a Tarrant County official said yesterday.

James Arthur Livingston, 30, was strapped into a chair after the violent outbursts for the officers' protection and his, said Herb Chambers, the sheriff's administrative director.

"No unnecessary force was used against this man," Chambers said.

An ambulance was summoned to the jail about 6 a.m. when officers noticed that Livingston had become unresponsive, Chambers said. He was taken to John Peter Smith Hospital, where he later died.

The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office listed a preliminary cause of death as cardiopulmonary arrest, pending further studies.

Tarrant County Sheriff David Williams said last night that he has ordered the installation of a video camera to monitor people strapped into the restraining chair. He expects the camera to be installed today, he said.

"We do have a full investigation looking into this matter, and we will be making whatever changes are necessary to see what we can do to avoid such situations," Williams said. "The camera is a step in that direction."

The jail is operated in compliance with

(More on DEATH on Page 4B)



Livingston

Officials dismayed by man's jail death

Tarrant commissioners
seek details on restraints

BY MAX B. BAKER
AND DEANNA BOYD
Star-Telegram Staff Writers

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County commissioners expressed dismay yesterday about the treatment of a mentally ill man who died this week after county jailers strapped him into a restraining chair.

But law enforcement officials said devices similar to the one used by the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department can be effective in dealing with combative inmates.

"Once an individual gets excitable, and it takes a number of individuals to deal with that person, this seems to be a reasonable way of restraining an individual for short periods of time," said Jack Crump, executive director of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards.

The question that remained unanswered yesterday, three days after James Arthur Livingston, 30, was first strapped into restraints, is how long he was kept there.

Livingston was first put into the chair about 7 p.m. Tuesday and again the next morning after two violent outbursts, sheriff's officials have said. He was taken to John

(More on DEATH on Page 10B)

DEATH

From Page 1B

Peter Smith Hospital about 6:30 a.m. Wednesday, where he was pronounced dead about noon. The Tarrant County medical examiner's early report lists cardiopulmonary arrest as the cause of death.

"I am concerned about the procedure and definitely would like to have further information about the policy they follow in the use of equipment" such as the restraining chair, Tarrant County Judge Tom Vandergriff said yesterday. "It does disturb me."

Commissioner J.D. Johnson said he was "horrified by all that I've heard." And Commissioner Marti VanRavenswaay described Livingston's treatment as "inhumane" if he was strapped into the chair for a long time. She said she, too, would like more information on the jail procedure.

Sheriff David Williams could not be reached to comment yesterday. But he said Thursday night that an internal investigation is under way and that a video camera trained on the chair will be installed.

The chair used by Tarrant County has hook-and-loop straps that secure a person's arms, legs, abdomen, chest and head.

Crump said the state commission, which sets and enforces standards for jails, has no criteria on the use of such restraints. But "it's fair to say that it is a recognized means of restraining individuals," he said.

White Settlement and Arlington police say they have similar restraining devices, which they use when a prisoner is unruly and likely to hurt himself or someone else.

Arlington jailer Tanya Gerst said the department has no limit on how long an inmate can be strapped in, but typically prisoners are released after about 45 minutes.

"It depends on their attitude," Gerst said. "If they're still being hostile, they're not going to be taken out."



Special to the Star-Telegram/BOBBY ORNELAS

The restraint chair used by the Arlington Police Department is similar but not identical to the device used at the Tarrant County Jail.

Inmates in the chair are often handcuffed and kept in a glass room in view of the jail's control room, she said.

White Settlement Lt. Scott Monier said police departments must handle unruly people who often may be under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. The chair is probably the best way to restrict movement, he said.

Crump said the effect of extended time in a restraint chair could depend on the individual.

"Obviously each agency needs to have some procedure to check that individual fairly frequently to make sure he's breathing well and not asphyxiating," Crump said.

Livingston's mother, Maxine Jackson, said her son was schizophrenic but took medication and saw a doctor once a month. Family members last saw Livingston as he left in a cab Tuesday morning to go to his doctor's appointment, she said.

Herb Chambers, the sheriff's administrative director, said officers did not know that Livingston was mentally ill until reading it in the newspaper.

Livingston was arrested on a criminal trespassing warrant from Arlington but came to deputies' attention when he ran into the jail

lobby, saying a relative was trying to kill him, jail officials said.

He was first strapped into the chair about 7 p.m. after fighting with deputies, Chambers said, and was placed in the chair again about 5 a.m. after he became violent when taken for a medical checkup. About an hour later and under the watch of a deputy, Livingston became unresponsive and an ambulance was called, Chambers said.

If Livingston was tied down for close to 12 hours, VanRavenswaay said: "Oh my gosh. I don't know how to react to that. That sounds inhumane."

Chambers said yesterday that he did not know how long Livingston was restrained.

"He was out of the chair off and on, but he was very combative," Chambers said. "They had him walking, then he'd come unglued again and they'd put him back in the chair."

The commissioners' reaction to the use of the chair "is understandable," Chambers said. "They probably don't know anything about it.

"It's designed not to hurt somebody but to calm them down just to sit in it," he said. "We're talking about safeguarding the prisoner, and that's the bottom line on this whole thing."

The FBI began an inquiry yesterday, in addition to the sheriff's investigation.

"With the volume of activity that is coming through there, obviously there's something that didn't work," Williams said. "Ninety-nine-point-nine percent of the time, this doesn't happen. We know, though, that we've got to go in and do a critique on everything."

But Commissioner Glen Whitley expressed doubt yesterday that Williams' department can honestly investigate itself.

"I'm depending on the FBI doing an investigation, and they won't be influenced or tainted by an internal type of deal," Whitley said. "I want to understand what he had done to necessitate that."

OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

Monday, July 12, 1999

New and improved?

The Tarrant County commissioners last year eliminated the Chaplain's Office for a new and improved county service. They misled every citizen and employee of the county.

Several weeks ago I was rushed by ambulance from the Corrections Center to the hospital. I was in the hospital for several days. For the first few hours I did not know if I was going to live or die. Chaplain Hugh Atwell and Father Raul Garcia were by my side and with my family the whole time. I have yet to see the "county family service director."

I have worked for the Sheriff's Department for 16 years and the gang across the street in Human Resources has always treated sheriff's employees as second-class employees.

Capt. Dan R. West
Tarrant County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff has eye on civil service commission

By NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — The Commissioners Court would lose much of its oversight responsibility and authority over the county's largest work force — the 1,300-member Sheriff's Department — under radical changes to Sheriff's Civil Service Commission rules proposed yesterday by Sheriff David Williams.

Williams proposed putting personnel decision-making authority in the hands of the three-member commission and its secretary, who would no longer be the county's director of human resources. He made the comments at the monthly civil service commission meeting.

Williams has repeatedly said that his deputies and jailers are underpaid, and yesterday he said his concerns about the civil service system are rooted in salary grievances that Sheriff's Department

employees filed last year.

"It is my hope and belief this will provide the necessary corrective action to be taken so that we might have a better civil service system for the benefit of the employees and a long-term benefit for Tar-

rant County," Williams said.

County commissioners quickly dismissed Williams' proposal as another attempt to sever his department from county oversight.

"It appears he's trying to separate the Sheriff's Department from Tarrant County completely," Commissioner J.D. Johnson said. "State statutes don't allow it. He's part of the county, like it or not."

The proposal does not "appear to be in the best interests of the taxpayers," County Judge Tom Vandergiff said.

Under Williams' proposal, the civil service commission secretary would be a sheriff's employee.

The secretary would be responsible for recommending rules and regulations to the

commission, which is separate from the county Civil Service Commission.

Changes to existing jobs and the organization of the department would be reported to the commission's secretary, rather than the county's personnel director.

The official Sheriff's Department employee roster would be held by the commission.

Current rules that call for the county's Department of Human Resources to have a complete record of Sheriff's Department employees would be deleted.

Numerous references to the commissioners' authority over job descriptions, a responsibility that under state law rests with the Commissioners Court, would be deleted.

Williams is also proposing an eight-member Sheriff's Department Civil Service Job Evaluation Committee to replace the county's job evaluation committee that makes rec-

ommendations on the classification of jobs and the wages, and changes to the grievance procedure.

Commissioner Glen Whitley said it is unlikely that the commissioners will support changes to the Civil Service rules given Williams' relationship with the Commissioners Court.

"He's bound and determined to not come and talk with us, but he does battle with us at every turn," Whitley said. "He just doesn't want anybody looking over his shoulder."

The civil service commissioners began discussing Williams' proposal, but Assistant District Attorney Dave Hudson stopped them because the proposal was not listed on the agenda.

"I made sure the commission followed the Open Meetings Act," he said, adding that the proposed changes will probably be discussed at next month's meeting.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

Sheriff revives idea of crime district tax

Williams and county commissioners have opposing views about such a plan, which voters rejected nine years ago.

BY MAX B. BAKER
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Despite voters' resounding rejection of a county crime district tax nine years ago, Tarrant County Sheriff David Williams is willing to reconsider the idea as a way to raise crime-fighting funds.

Williams broached the crime district idea last week after a presentation to the National Hispanic Assembly of Tarrant County. During his speech, Williams lamented his budget fights with Tarrant County commissioners.

"If somebody put something together that was the right package, it would be something we would need to look at," he said. "I'd be interested in seeing a revised version of what something like that would look like."

Predicting that county voters would trounce any notion of a county crime tax, county commissioners said Williams' idea of a crime control district may be wrapped up in his notion of being the local top cop and not keeper-of-the-keys at the county jail.

"I'm not interested in him becoming the chief police officer of the county," commissioner Glen Whitley said. "He needs to run the jail."

Once an avid Williams' supporter but now a critic, commissioner J.D. Johnson said Williams needs to do a better job of running the jail.

"This 'top cop' idea is beginning to make me ill," Johnson said.

In 1990, Tarrant County voters overwhelmingly rejected a half-cent sales tax to pay for a range of countywide law enforcement, crime prevention and educational programs.

Since 1995, when Fort Worth

created the county's first city crime district, several other Tarrant communities such as Colleyville, Euless, Haltom City, Hurst, North Richland Hills, Southlake, Watauga and White Settlement followed suit, raising money to fight crime in their towns by levying a sales tax.

Tarrant County Judge Tom Vandergriff said Williams may want direct access to crime district monies because of his frustration in getting his funding requests through commissioners court.

"I feel that the sheriff is trying to be more than the facts of life warrant his being in a highly urbanized county," Vandergriff said.

Since making a budget request to buy a fleet of expensive Tahoes as patrol vehicles, and the crash of one of the department's helicopters in 1997, Williams' relationship with the county commission has deteriorated.

After fighting with commissioners over his budget, Williams sued the commissioners court, saying they underfunded his department. He even asked the court to pay his legal fees. But Williams subsequently dropped the suit.

In his speech to the Hispanic Republicans last week, Williams mentioned his ongoing battle with commissioners and his contention that he isn't getting enough money from the county to pay his employees adequately.

Williams mentioned that the county didn't have a crime district in which the special taxes could be used to boost officers' pay. Williams said creating one is something he is "really not prepared to discuss right now."

The turnover rate in the Sheriff's Department can be directly attributed to its low pay, said David Mann, a spokesman for the Tarrant County Deputy Sheriff's Association.

"There is no incentive to stay here," he said.

Deputy accused of beating horse

Animal flogged with a hose, witnesses say

BY NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A sheriff's deputy is facing arrest on an allegation of cruelty to animals after he was accused of whipping a horse with a rubber hose in front of children learning to ride at the Stockyards Station outdoor arena.

Deputy Ralph Clemons Jr., who is assigned to the sheriff's program that rounds up stray animals, has been reassigned to other duties and ordered to stay away from the Stockyards after the June 29 incident, said Herb Chambers, the sheriff's director of administration.

Clemons, 28, a six-year employee of the Sheriff's Department, has denied the charges. He told investigators that he was trying to control his horse, an adult gray Arabian named Cody, after dogs upset it. Clemons could not be reached to comment.

"The sheriff's office is doing what it should do by law," Chambers said.

"There definitely will not be a cover-up," Deputy Chief Larry Hester said.

Witnesses to the midmorning incident said they saw Clemons beating the horse on the head and neck with a length of rubber hose, in front of a class of six children learning to ride in the outdoor arena, said Dee Stephens, a Humane Society of North Texas cruelty investigator aiding the investigation.

"His [Clemons'] story is not what is being told by every witness out there," she said.

The teacher, who asked Clemons to quit hitting the horse, stopped the class and took the children into a classroom.

Jane Pritchett, director of equestrian services at the Stockyards Station livery stable, said she was told of the incident.

"When I went out the back door to stop it, he [Clemons] was leading the horse back," she said.

The county leases a stable near the livery stable to keep stray animals, Commissioner J.D. Johnson said. One of the people who boards horses at the livery stable filed a complaint with the Sheriff's Department.

"This is especially upsetting considering Fort Worth's and the Stockyards' heritage and the important role that horses have played in our history," Johnson said. "Good folks in the Stockyard love their horses, past and present, and they should be thanked for coming forward."

The horse, which was examined by a veterinarian, suffered lacerations on an eyelid and its face, welts on the neck and a laceration on the leg, Stephens said.

"The horse was very traumatized," she said.

Stephens also said she was told

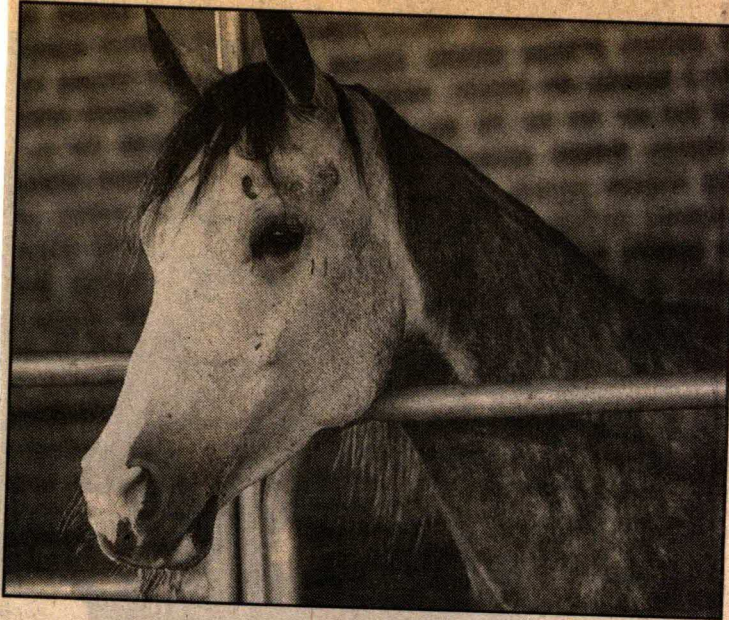
that Clemons kicked over the horse's water bucket and said he didn't want the horse watered for 48 hours.

"From what I was told, he didn't give the horses much water because he said it made a mess and that he was punishing the horse," Stephens said, adding that people from the livery stable would water the horse on their own after Clemons had left.

Chambers, of the Sheriff's Department, said there is no doubt that the horse was injured.

"He may have banged into a fence," he said. He also said that the horse may have been abused before it was taken by the Sheriff's Department.

Respected horseman Lanham Riley, 80, a retired professional roper and a horse trainer from Ale-



Star-Telegram/ALISON WOODWORTH

Cody still shows evidence of abrasions near his left eye. Sheriff's Deputy Ralph Clemons Jr. is accused of whipping the horse with a rubber hose.

do, said whipping horses is far too common and should not be done.

"That's a no-no if you're a real good horseman," Riley said. "It's like correcting a child: You need to use common sense. When you hit them, most likely you create another problem. Nobody should do it."

If charged and convicted of the misdemeanor, Clemons could face a penalty of up to a \$4,000 fine and a year in jail, or both. Chambers said that Clemons will be arrested and that the case will be filed with the Tarrant County district attorney's office.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657



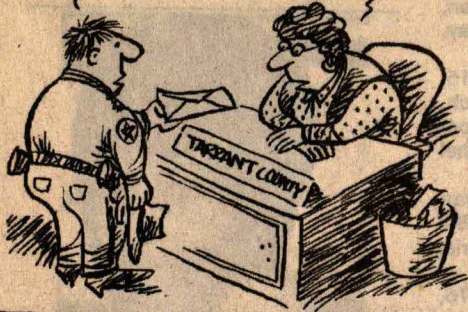
For today's Star-Telegram and more news and features, go to www.star-telegram.com

To search the Metroplex, go to www.dfw.com

■ **ETTA HULME**

HERE'S ANOTHER
PROPOSAL FROM
THE SHERIFF.

DON'T TELL
ME. LET
ME GUESS.

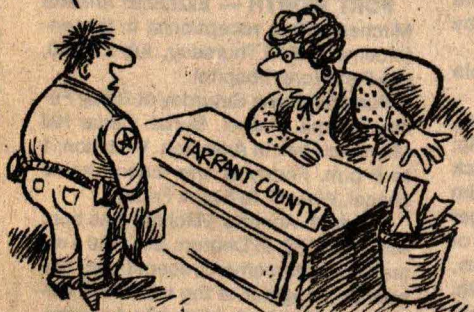


THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
IS SECEDING FROM
THE COUNTY?



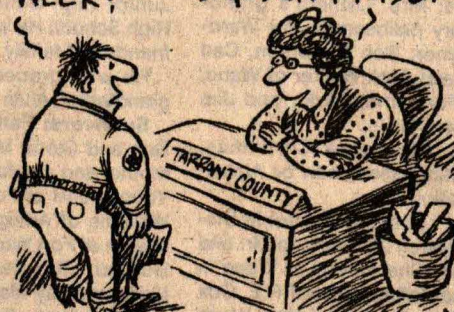
RIGHT.

DON'T COUNT
ON IT,



SAME TIME
NEXT WEEK?

IF THE GOOD LORD'S
WILLING AND THE
I. Q. DON'T RISE.



©1999 FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM. **ETTA HULME**

ETTA HULME is the *Star-Telegram's* editorial cartoonist. You can reach her at 390-7665.

Thursday, July 15, 1999 /

Star-Telegram

OPINIONS

Sheriff's deputy facing animal cruelty charge denies beating horse with hose

By NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A Tarrant County Sheriff's deputy who was arrested after being accused of whipping a horse with a rubber hose said yesterday that he is innocent.

Deputy Ralph Clemons Jr., who is assigned to the sheriff's program that rounds up stray animals, was jailed on a misdemeanor charge of cruelty to animals about 7:30 p.m. Tuesday and released on \$500 bail, said Herb Chambers, the sher-

iff's director of administration.

Assistant District Attorney Richard Alpert said yesterday that he plans to continue the investigation into the allegations against Clemons, a six-year Sheriff's Department employee.

Clemons yesterday denied hitting his horse, an adult gray Arabian named Cody, the morning of June 29 on the head and neck with a length of rubber hose, as witnesses have said. The whipping is alleged to have occurred in front a group of children learning to ride at the Stock-

yards Station outdoor arena.

"I did not do this thing. I'll stand on that till the day I die," Clemons told the *Star-Telegram*. "I don't know what they think they saw."

Clemons, 28, has told investigators that he was trying to control his horse after dogs upset it.

"We try to do a good job, and our horses are our main concern. We have done nothing but try to take care of these animals," he said.

But a number of witnesses to the mid-

morning incident said they saw Clemons hitting the horse with a piece of hose. Others told an investigator with the Humane Society of North Texas that Clemons tried to deny the horse water as punishment, which he also denies.

Clemons has been reassigned to other duties and has been ordered to stay away from the Stockyards. The county leases a stable near the Stockyards Station livery stable to keep the stray animals it rounds up. One of the people who board horses at the livery stable filed the cruelty to ani-

mals complaint with the Sheriff's Department.

The horse, which was examined by a veterinarian after the incident, suffered lacerations on an eyelid and its face, welts on its neck and a laceration on its leg, but did not require stitches. Sheriff's officials have said the horse may have injured itself banging into a fence.

If convicted of the misdemeanor, Clemons could face a fine of up to a \$4,000 fine and/or a year in jail.

Dee
AndersonBrad
Patterson

Sheriff's top 2 GOP political foes raise almost \$100,000

By **MAX B. BAKER**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County Sheriff David Williams' two top Republican political opponents reported raising nearly \$100,000 for their campaigns while the two-term incumbent listed only \$100 in contributions.

Arlington Police Department spokesman Dee Anderson raised nearly \$52,000 and Brad Patterson, former president of the Fort Worth Police Officers Association, raised

\$48,000 for their Republican primary bids against Williams.

In contrast, Williams — who has been engaged in a high-profile battle with county commissioners for two years — had \$250 in his accounts in January. In April, Williams said he was pulling together a campaign organization for a race he said may cost up to \$180,000.

Calling the outpouring of support overwhelming, Anderson and Patterson said the nearly \$119,000 they and other challengers pulled in for a

race that's still eight months away shows Williams' political future is shaky.

"I think this shows there is a strong desire for change," Anderson said.

Patterson, a crime scene investigator for the Fort Worth Police Department, said Williams' lack of leadership is apparent and the public is tired of reading about his daily mishaps.

"It says David Williams has got problems and people will vote for

(More on MONEY on Page 6B)

anybody but him," Patterson said. "I've only run into one guy who admitted he voted for him, and he was hanging his head when he said that."

"If Dee Anderson has that much money, he'll be a player," said Tarrant County District Clerk Tom Wilder, once a Williams political confidante. "That puts [Williams] at a greater risk."

"If David turns in a page of zeros, he needs to find some real money if he thinks he has a chance to win," Wilder said.

The other GOP candidates exploring the sheriff's race are Jerry McGlasson, former North Richland Hills police chief; Dave Dunaway, a former top deputy to Williams; James Stokes, a Sheriff's Department deputy, and

James Cummins, a former deputy.

McGlasson raised \$4,000, and Dunaway, a former Texas Ranger, raised about \$7,300, according to campaign finance reports for Jan. 15 to July 15. Stokes and Cummins did not receive any contributions.

Democrats in the race are Luther Perry, an assistant to Fort Worth Police Chief Thomas Windham; Haltom City Detective Shane Harrison; and Darrell Clements, a Sheriff's Department lieutenant.

Perry was the top Democratic fund-raiser with about \$6,700. Harrison pulled in \$950 and Clements, \$600.

Delton L. Kelly is also considering running for sheriff. Kelly reported having \$100. He couldn't be contacted about his political affiliations.

Candidates cannot formally file for the 2000 elections until December. The sheriff's post

pays \$101,400 a year.

In making his first bid for public office, Anderson has had a lot of support from his friends and family. He lent his campaign \$5,000, and his brother-in-law advanced him \$25,000. Family friend Donald Roach lent him \$10,000 more.

The nearly \$12,000 in cash contributions to Anderson includes \$1,000 each from his mother and sister-in-law. Arlington restaurateur Chris Carroll gave \$500, and family friends Stan and Linda Harper of Mansfield gave \$4,000.

"We started out with family and friends and some important people in Arlington, and to do this well is encouraging to us," Anderson said.

Family ties also boosted Patterson's campaign. Besides lending his own campaign \$30,000, he also received \$2,000 from his brother and \$1,000 from his mother.

But Patterson's nearly \$18,000 in cash contributions includes \$500 contributions each from Charlie and Tom Moncrief, \$200 from state Sen. Mike Moncrief, D-Fort Worth, and \$100 from Tarrant County Commissioner J.D. Johnson, a former Williams ally.

"I've just had one little fundraiser," Patterson said. "I've been walking and talking more than raising money."

Williams is perceived as vulnerable because of his fights with county commissioners over his budget and personnel during most of his second term.

Williams' two top political lieutenants in his previous campaigns — Wilder and Fort Worth businessman Ed Max — say they don't plan to be involved in his re-election bid. Max contributed about \$42,000 to Williams' 1992 campaign.

OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

Friday, July 16, 1999 /

Lack of faith

In the commentary on June 27, Chaplain Hugh Atwell alluded that the Commissioners Court was subjecting his newly founded agency to a "pattern of obstruction and hostility" because it is faith based. The problem, Chaplain Atwell, is not that your agency is faith based. The problem is a lack of faith in Sheriff David Williams' willingness to deal with other elected officials in good faith.

Mark Neal
Fort Worth

Friday, July 16, 1999 / v

Children find man's body in creek near city lines

EDGECLIFF VILLAGE — Children playing near a creek along Woodmont Trail, near the Fort Worth and Edgecliff Village city lines, spotted a body floating in the water yesterday.

At 10 p.m., investigators with the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department were collecting evidence at the scene as neighbors stood by.

The man's body, clad only in blue jeans, was found floating face down in 3 feet of murky creek water about 7 p.m., said Lt. Leon Flowers, a Sheriff's Department spokesman.

"At this point, we do not know whether this is a suicide or a homicide," Flowers said. "We are trying to determine that at this time."

The creek in Woodmont Park sits along railroad tracks and is a place where children frequently play, residents said.

OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

SUNDAY, JULY 18, 1999

Questionable logic

Kim Townsend's July 8 letter crediting Sheriff David Williams as a "man of the people" and giving him carte-blanche credit for crime reduction in Fort Worth and Tarrant County was questionable.

It is true that the sheriff moved employees from the jail into the warrant division (completely out of their classification and training), leaving the confinement division grossly understaffed. This procedure was swiftly corrected by the Commissioners Court.

I'm sure his religious followers picture Williams as the crime-fighting avenger in his "Hi-Ho Silver Round-up," but the marked decrease in criminal offenses in our area must be equally and justifiably credited to Fort Worth Police Chief Thomas Windham and his well organized department ... demonstrating administrative skills for which Williams is grossly deficient.

The writer's notation that the jail had not closed its doors since Williams took office based solely on the sheriff's law enforcement expertise indicates, again, an inaccurate "weight of evidence." The jail was housing federal and state sentenced prisoners which comprised the majority of the incarcerated inmates prior to Williams' election — that swelled the jail's population at times to more than 5,000 — a situation that no longer exists.

The writer's praise of Williams' advancement in crime fighting technology is also suspect. Many of his programs, like his attack dogs, have been aimed in the wrong direction. And, it is too bad the commissioners didn't eradicate his ill-managed helicopter program prior to its devastating conclusion.

Seemingly, the writer's knowledge for the decrease in crime coincides with that of Williams'. And, if our sheriff's seven-year period of turmoil is a just interpretation, it appears they both need an ample serving of beans.

Floyd F. Clark, retired
Tarrant County Sheriff's Department

OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

Monday, July 19, 1999

■ EDITORIALS

Flawed Concept

The sheriff's idea for a county crime district to beef up his budget deserves to go nowhere.

Tarrant County Sheriff David Williams recently mused about the possibility of creating a county crime district as a means of raising new crime-fighting funds.

It's a lousy idea.

The county's current funding sources are adequate to provide for its law enforcement needs. A county crime district would be financed by a sales tax that would be an added financial burden on the county's nearly 1.38 million residents.

More than 97 percent of county residents live in incorporated cities that have their own police agencies. If any of these cities feel the need for beefed-up law enforcement, they can increase the annual budgets of their police departments through conventional means or vote to create a municipal crime district of their own. That's what Fort Worth voters did in 1995, when they voted for a half-cent sales tax increase to provide added funding for police.

Here's another huge flaw in attempt-

ing to create a county crime district: Fort Worth, the largest city in the county with approximately 500,000 people, apparently could not legally contribute any sales tax revenues to the district.

Fort Worth already collects 2 cents on the dollar in local sales tax revenues (with one penny going to the city general fund, a half cent to the crime district and a half cent to the Fort Worth Transportation Authority). That's the maximum allowed by state law, according to the state comptroller's office. Any other Tarrant County cities that already levy a local sales tax of 2 cents also could not contribute to a county crime district.

Thankfully, county commissioners apparently have little enthusiasm for initiating a proposal to create a county crime district. At least some of them feel the idea is rooted in Williams' desire to be the local "top cop" in Tarrant County law enforcement, rather than focusing on his No. 1 duty — overseeing operation of the county jail.

Nine years ago, voters overwhelmingly rejected a proposal to create a county crime district. A new proposal for a county district likely would meet the same fate, and justifiably so.

Jurors deliberate fate of convicted murderer

BY GABRIELLE CRIST
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Jurors deliberated late into the night yesterday as they tried to decide what sentence to give a Fort Worth man who fatally stabbed another man after accepting a ride from him.

Damon Earl Bacy, 23, was convicted of murder last week in state District Judge Scott Wisch's court.

Jury deliberations resume this morning.

Defense attorney Paul Conner argued that his client didn't mean to kill 41-year-old Harry Ford but had to defend himself after Ford offered him a ride but then made advances toward him and refused to let him out of the car.

Bacy had a year since the Sept. 6, 1998, slaying to concoct a defense, and that's exactly what he did, prosecutors Michele Hartmann and Michele

Audet contended at the trial.

Ford was a janitor at the Tarrant County Jail who supported his aging father and mother, prosecutors said. He was not someone who would suddenly become aggressive.

Bacy could not have been in fear for his life while driving around with Ford, prosecutors maintained. Had Ford really been attacking him, Bacy would not have had time to reach into his pocket for a knife, put the gear shift into park and then stab Ford, they said.

It was Ford who tried to escape, prosecutors said, but he couldn't unlatch his seat belt.

After stabbing Ford, Bacy turned the car lights off and lifted Ford's leg back into the car, which was parked at Fitzhugh Avenue and Lena Street, a witness testified. Bacy then shut the car door and walked away, according to court testimony.

Office set aside in jail for chaplains

Volunteers caught in sheriff-county dispute

By NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County's volunteer jail chaplains have ended up squarely in the middle of the power struggle between Tarrant County commissioners and Sheriff David Williams.

Although the commissioners agreed yesterday to allow the volunteer chaplains to continue using an office in a county building at 300 W. Belknap St., sheriff's officials said later in the day that the volunteers will instead work out of an office in the jail.

"The volunteer chaplain's program will be moved to the central administration area of the jail," said Herb Chambers, the Sheriff's Department director of administration.

Williams could not be reached to comment.

This latest dispute between the county's top elected officials has been brewing since June 1 when Williams signed a contract to

(More on SHERIFF on Page 9B)

provide office space and equipment to the Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy, a nonprofit organization created by Hugh Atwell, a former major in the sheriff's department who has directed the jail chaplains program for the past six years.

Commissioners responded by saying that Williams overstepped his authority when he doled out the office space — which is within commissioners' purview, they said — and they disapproved the contract with Atwell.

On Friday, county officials told Atwell and his staff to move out of the county building by the end of work yesterday but reaffirmed that the volunteers could use the same offices.

The county is "absolutely committed" to continuing the volunteer chaplains program,

County Commissioner Glen Whitley said yesterday.

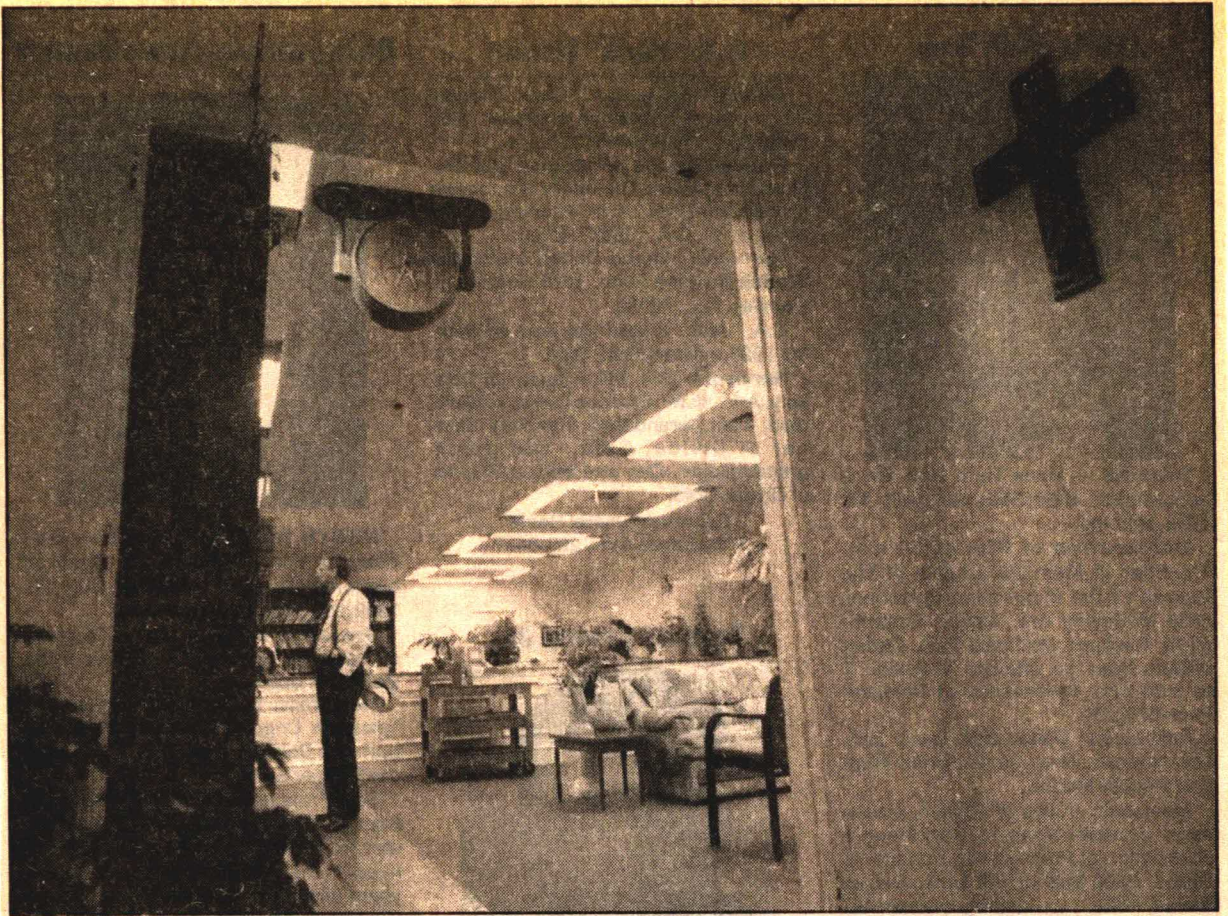
"The county will continue to make available a storage area for supplies and materials and the meeting space where the volunteers traditionally have met," Whitley said. "If there has been any change, it has been at the direction of the Sheriff's Department."

Atwell, who is on vacation, could not be reached yesterday to comment, but in an interview two weeks ago he said that the sheriff should run the jail chaplaincy.

"The sheriff determines what the volunteer program in his jail will be, and he has designated this organization to run it," he said.

Yesterday, Chambers could not say where Atwell's new office would be. "He possibly could be working from his home," he said. Atwell will probably continue to work with the volunteers, Chambers said.

The Rev. Roger Hollar of Glenview Baptist Church, a



Star-Telegram/HILLERY SMITH GARRISON

The volunteer chaplain's program, whose reading room is shown, will be moved to an office in the county jail.

volunteer chaplain, said volunteers have been concerned about where they would gather and where they would pick up their materials.

"The fact the commissioners are willing to leave the volunteer chaplains' office in place is a good thing, but they should defer to the sheriff on how he wants to run the chaplaincy program in the jail," Hollar said.

In the jail or in a county building, the volunteers need a place to meet, get their materials and to receive notification when inmates want a visit, he said.

Chambers said the Sheriff's Department would like to see the vacated offices at 300 W. Belknap St. used to house the sheriff's judicial services division, which provides security for 61 county courts.

But once again, that decision will be up to county commissioners.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

Inmate was restrained for 4 hours

31-year-old died in custody

By DEANNA BOYD
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A 31-year-old mentally ill man who died this month while in custody of the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department was restrained in a chair for more than four hours, according to reports released by the department yesterday.

The reports, obtained through an open records request, state that James Livingston was placed in the restraining chair after fighting with officers, for four hours and 14 minutes the first time and 23 minutes the second.

"Four hours is not a long time," Herb Chambers, the sheriff's administrative director, said last night.

Since Livingston's death July

7, sheriff's officials have said they did not know how long he was restrained in the chair, stating only that it had been "off and on."

A deputy found Livingston, who family members say was schizophrenic, slumped in the chair and not breathing about 6:13 a.m. July 7. Livingston was taken to John Peter Smith Hospital where he was later pronounced dead.

Livingston's death and the initial uncertainty about how long he'd been restrained in the chair had sparked dismay among some Tarrant County commissioners.

Chambers said although an internal investigation is not complete, officers appeared to have followed proper policy.

(More on CHAIR on Page 4B)

"There was a long period of time that we didn't know anything," said Derick Bolden, Livingston's cousin. "We don't understand why they're hiding if they haven't done anything wrong."

Bolden said he was in the hospital room along with Maxine Jackson, Livingston's mother, when Livingston was taken off life-support.

"The thing that we want everybody to know about James is that although he had this condition, he wasn't a violent person," Bolden said.

Jackson has said previously that officers should have recognized her son's illness and taken him to a psychiatric hospital.

"Procedures were followed as they should have been," Chambers said. "That man was not mishandled. He wasn't maltreated. They tried to help him."

The FBI is also investigating.

Chambers said at least two video cameras have been installed and trained on the restraining chairs at Sheriff David Williams' order.

The chairs have hook-and-loop straps that secure a person's arms, legs, abdomen, chest and head. It is used to prevent inmates from harming themselves or others, sheriff's officials said.

Tony Guinn, director of Specialized Services for Tarrant County Mental Health and Mental Retardation, said a person's combativeness could stem from factors outside of mental illness.

"It's not always perfectly clear in the moment when someone is being combative that the cause of the combativeness is they're mentally ill," Guinn said.

Earlier, Chambers had said that officers did not know that Livingston was mentally ill until they read it in the newspaper. But the reports released yesterday indicate

that Livingston told officers that he was a MHMR client.

Livingston approached an officer outside the jail about 6:50 p.m. July 6 and said that his brother-in-law was trying to kill him. Officers saw no sign that anyone was trying to harm Livingston, officials said.

Livingston was taken into the jail's reception area, where he told the officer that he was an MHMR client and was "just walking the streets expecting to be picked up," according to the officer's statement.

Livingston was arrested after a background check revealed that he was wanted in Arlington on a criminal trespass warrant.

Officer found medication in Livingston's possession and an "MHMR referral" was made, according to another officer's report. Last night, Chambers said he did not know when MHMR was contacted.

Livingston was strapped into the chair at 7:25 p.m. after fighting with deputies. He was removed from the restraint chair about 11:39 p.m., but kept in a holding cell throughout the night and early morning, according to reports.

Throughout his time in custody, Livingston acted paranoid, repeatedly screaming not to be beaten, killed or raped, and appeared at times to speak in gibberish, officers said.

At 5:50 a.m., Livingston was restrained in the chair again after once again struggling with officers after being taken for a medical check-up. Livingston bit one officer on the right thumb and was pepper-sprayed so that officers could restrain him, the report said.

About 23 minutes later, an officer noticed that Livingston slumped in the chair and was not breathing. He was removed from the chair and cardiopulmonary resuscitation efforts began until an ambulance arrived, the reports said.

Rebeca Rodriguez contributed to this report.

Deanna Boyd, (817) 390-7655
dboyd@star-telegram.com

Ex-jailer indicted on charge of assault against store clerk

BY NEIL STRASSMAN

Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A Tarrant County grand jury has indicted a former sheriff's jailer on a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon after he was accused of threatening a clerk at a Crowley convenience store.

Craig A. Wheeler, 31, of Burleson, who worked as a confinement officer in the Tarrant County Jail, was indicted on the felony charge Tuesday. He is accused of making an early morning threat against Muqarrab Khan, a clerk whom he accused of flirting with his girlfriend, Assistant District Attorney James Cook said.

Wheeler, in uniform and wearing a badge, entered the gas station store at Crowley Road and Renfro Street about 5 a.m. April 14, drew his gun and slammed it on the counter facing the clerk, according to witness statements

given to Crowley police.

Wheeler told Muqarrab to stop making threats against him and to stop making passes at his girlfriend, and then left the store, the statements say.

He was booked into jail April 26 and released on \$7,500 bail. He could not be reached to comment.

Herb Chambers, the Sheriff's Department director of administration, said Wheeler was terminated from the Sheriff's Department on July 14.

"It's a situation the sheriff's office cannot tolerate," he said.

But Jim Lane, a Fort Worth attorney representing Wheeler, said his client resigned from the department before he was fired. Lane said an arraignment date has not been set.

If convicted, Wheeler faces two to 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

SATURDAY, JULY 24, 1999

OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

Alarming reports

I am concerned to hear of people in law-enforcement custody being restrained in hog-ties and strapped to chairs and somehow these people end up dead.

I would be the first to admit that these people are prisoners because they are suspected of having violated some law. But I just read of three American prisoners detained recently in Zimbabwe, and I wonder how much public outcry would come from the American public if one of these prisoners in a foreign land were hog-tied or restrained in a chair and then died.

Every person, prisoner or not, should be afforded equal protection under the law to be free from personal and bodily harm.

None of us really knows the details of the recent death of James Arthur Livingston while in the custody of Tarrant County sheriff deputies. But the news accounts leave me with questions. I pray that we will ultimately get the answers.

If this man ran into the county jail asking for help and then it was discovered he had to be placed under arrest, why did the situation get to the out-of-control state that the deputies say it did? Was any consideration given to the possibility that they were dealing with a mentally unbalanced person to begin with? Was the prisoner under constant supervision to ascertain his general wellbeing?

I am one American who is alarmed and mystified by the recent reports of the death of prisoners in the custody of local law enforcement officials.

Anthony Bond
Irving

**HOW "THE REVEREND" HUGH ATWELL
SCAMMED THE SHERIFF AND TAXPAYERS**

By P.A. Humphrey

Hugh Atwell was not a happy man. In fact, he was pissed. The Tarrant County Commissioners Court had just recessed to one of its ubiquitous closed-door sessions and, outside in the foyer beyond the big, blonde oak double doors, the man who would be the savior to Tarrant County's junkies, killers, crooks and con men was pacing angrily. He paused only occasionally to cock an ear toward the door or mutter a few sharp words into a small, white cell phone.

In his too-short khakis and red polo-style shirt, Atwell looked more like a county road crewman on holiday than a preacher of the gospel. His beefy face, however, was cast in the same sort of petulant pout that is familiar to the parents of 13-year olds.

The normally uncommunicative Atwell this time welcomed any reporter who approached, showering any and all with complaints about the way he had been mistreated. The commissioners, he whined, didn't even ask for an explanation about Sheriff David Williams' latest scheme to bring the men and women incarcerated in the Tarrant County jail to Jesus.

"I don't know if I'll speak or not. I was not asked to be here," Atwell sniped.

It's a reaction he seems to have whenever he's in close proximity to the county commissioners these days. They're out to get him, and he knows it.

Time after time, after months of dueling with Williams over vehicles, machine guns, budgets and Atwell, the commissioners have begun to smell victory. Williams, a self-proclaimed born-again Christian with a fanatic bent, had announced that he and Atwell, his former department chaplain, were

starting an independent, non-profit jail ministry to be known as the Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy.

The ministry would be funded by \$327,873 from the jail commissary fund--money that is being spent at the discretion of the sheriff; but, is supposed to be used to benefit all inmates. Despite state law, which says the commissioners court has sole authority over county property, Williams also signed a contract allowing the ministry to use county office space, county computers, county telephones, county furniture, and stationery and office supplies, as well as county employees. Hugh Atwell's take as director would be \$68,000 a year, plus perks, not to mention continued control over the mysterious Tarrant County Sheriff's Department Benevolence Fund, the TCSD's Awards Fund and numerous other pots of money from private donations solicited by Atwell. as department chaplain.

The Fabulous Five were about to throw a kink into Williams' plans, however. They tabled discussion on the contract and went into executive session ostensibly to discuss other things.

The duplicity of it all wasn't lost on the good Reverend Atwell. After all, the tabled contract was the only item on the meeting's agenda that was preceded by the words "Approval/Disapproval of," rather than the usual "Approval of." It certainly could be argued that the commissioners knew which way they would vote before any public discussion.

"I think its interesting that they're doing this," Atwell growled, thumping his copy of the agenda angrily. "The Texas Constitution very clearly states that the sheriff has the exclusive right to contract with whoever he wants to." He trailed off and resumed his pacing.

It was a surprise to no one that when the commissioners returned to open session, they unanimously and without discussion voted to kill the contract. Then, a week later, with

Atwell absent, they voted to evict the ministry from its digs in the old criminal courts building at 300 W. Belknap.

Now all they have to do is figure out a way to make it happen.

By now, most of Texas and a good portion of the United States public that reads a newspaper or watches TV news has heard of Tarrant County's sanctimonious screwball sheriff, David Williams. Stories about his attempts to turn the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department into a major crime-fighting force and the Tarrant County Jail into an evangelical, soul-saving church have made him famous.

In Tarrant County, suing the county's top elected body for refusing to give him everything in his proposed budget last year, has ensured him immortality among a long line of oddball and downright crooked Tarrant County sheriffs.

Mostly, the saga of David Williams has been reported as a power struggle between elected officials, usually over money. There hasn't been much mention of the greater struggle--the one, in David Williams' mind at least, between good and evil. Forget the budgets; forget the sheriff's longing for \$30,000 Tahoes and machine guns; forget the deadly helicopter crash and the coverup that followed; forget the staff shortages and the pseudo-crisis over jailer's pay. There is only one thing motivating Sheriff David Williams these days, besides the need to spread the word about Jesus Christ, and that is an all-encompassing, single-minded devotion to the preservation of High Atwell.

As of Monday, it was still business as usual in the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department "Chaplain's Office" on the ground floor of the old Criminal Courts Building. The sign over the door is the same, but the old courtroom is now the home of the officially evicted Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy. For the time being, the independent, non-profit ministry is occupying Atwell's old digs and it doesn't appear

that moving day is coming any time soon.

When FW Weekly dropped by for a visit the week after the eviction order was issued, several county employees were observed working in the chaplain's office. Inter-office mail arrived often, as did Sheriff's Department employees just dropping in to say, "hello."

What was once a majestic old hall of justice was rimmed with fiberboard bookshelves full of prayer books, Christian-themed novels, pamphlets and back issues of Guidepost magazine.

A tacky mauve indoor-outdoor carpet covered the floor. Plants, happily green in all that fluorescent light, covered nearly every available surface. The middle of the room, where trial watchers used to sit, was occupied by a cushy couch and love seat, next to a hard-backed chair holding a somber-looking homespun angel.

A requiem blared from a boom box on top of a display case full of sheriff's souvenirs--black T-shirts with the imprint of a deputy's badge on one breast, official volunteer chaplain shirts, logo-emblazoned mugs, and strangely enough, a statuette of an American bald eagle priced at \$125.

Atwell's long-time secretary, Pam Smith, sat behind a long desk fronted by the white wainscoting that once separated trial principals from spectators. The phones she answered, the computer running on top of a nearby desk, the paper and pens and paper clips were all paid for by the taxpayers. County officials estimate it would cost the county more than \$300,000 a year to provide space, supplies, phones, computers, utilities and employees for the private ministry. "I'm still county," Smith said when asked her employment status, "been here something like seven years. The idea of justice that we have been working under for years in this country is retributive justice--if someone does something wrong or against the law and they get caught, you punish them for it. Restorative justice,

on the other hand, comes from the idea that we are restoring that person to society."

The commissioners were still in the interminable executive session, most of the press, except for FW Weekly had left and Hugh Atwell was expounding on what has become one of his favorite subjects-- the idea that is behind his new ministry and the one that stands to make him a lot of dough in the years ahead, if only David Williams can hold onto his own job. "We in law enforcement have come to realize that we are not going to be keeping these people in jail forever," he says. "They're going to be out there living next door to you. We want to turn out good citizens instead of ex-inmates." Saving the Tarrant County jail inmates--whether they want to be saved or not--has become a crusade. Like many fundamentalist, conservative Christians, Sheriff David Williams seems to have a fascination with changing the lives of the down and out. It's a philosophy that's been espoused in Republican Party circles in the past few years, too. Usually, however as in the case of presidential candidate George W. Bush, the goal has been to remove expensive social programs from the purview of the state and dump them on religion-based charities and churches.

"Can you imagine a more dramatic achievement than turning around the life of someone who has lived a life of crime and addiction, or both?" one Republican critic of the Religious Right says. "If you can bring someone who's been the dregs of society to Jesus, you have really accomplished something impressive. It seems like a much greater accomplishment than just saving someone ordinary like you or me."

Ironically, today's brand of restorative justice grew out of the traditions of leftwing liberalism and the Roman Catholic church that date from the Civil Rights era of the 1960s. Victim advocates, restitution, creative sentencing, even the practice of

allowing victim's families to confront the person who murdered or injured their loved one all grew out of the Restorative Justice Movement.

It has been co-opted by politicians and taken one step further by evangelical Christians who seem to take pride in the number of ex-cons and former druggies in their congregations.

Several evil doers--band by extension, society itself--by bringing them to Jesus is the idea behind the infamous "God Pod," the volunteer chaplain's program and the Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy. The "God Pod," otherwise known as the jail's Christian education unit, is a self-contained cell block where inmates who profess their faith in Jesus are housed together and submit to Bible study and counseling. It's constitutionality has been questioned in a suit that is currently pending before the Texas Supreme Court.

"It's an unconstitutional application of a good idea," says Texas Observer founder Ronnie Dugger, a leftist icon and member of the board of Restorative Justice Foundation, of the sheriff's plan. "Why turn them to Jesus Christ? Couldn't they just as easily be turned to Allah, or Buddah, or secular humanism? That's the point. Government cannot establish religion."

Atwell doesn't see anything wrong with county officials evangelizing, however, and says it is fair to use the commissary fund and other public money to pay for it as long as the prisoners who don't want to take part are not forced to do so. "It's a faith-based program," he says. "We don't ask anybody to renounce their religious beliefs. I would never to that. No one is forced to go into this program."

After more questions about the appropriateness of using what is in effect public money to pay for a Christian-based religious program, however, Atwell began to get a little hostile. You're from that FW Weekly, aren't you? That's nothing but a bunch of trash. You print trash and lies.

"I'm no longer a public official. I'm a public citizen now," he warned. "Maybe you'll want to keep that in mind."

The crusade to keep a place for Hugh Atwell at the public trough started last year when Tarrant County Commissioners decided to increase the sheriff's budget; but, cut back on positions in the department. The idea was to force Williams to quit naming his cronies to jobs in the jail and then loaning them to administration, thus leaving jail facilities short-handed and overtime hours high. In the process, the commissioners decided to eliminate the chaplain's position. To show fairness, they even re-wrote the job requirements so that Atwell would be eligible for the job.

To the devine duo, however, it was a direct attack. They started a campaign to convince the public that they were under fire for being Christians, and to some extent, it worked. On September 16, the sheriff's supporters filled the commissioners courtroom to warn of the consequences they face for "taking Jesus out of the jail."

Williams made one of his rare appearances before the court and pleaded for Atwell's job. "That position is essential and vital to the sheriff's office," he told them.

Instead of letting Atwell go, Williams assigned him a jail captain's position. Smith, Atwell's long-time secretary, was reassigned to jail administration. Neither completed a week's work at the jail, however. Instead, Smith has continued answering the chaplain's office phone and Atwell has carried on with his chaplain's duties--in other words, comforting and advising an ever-more-paranoid Sheriff Williams. When the commissioners court issued an order forbidding the county from paying employees for doing jobs they are not specifically authorized to do, Williams announced the creation of the Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy.

To understand Atwell's influence

over David Williams, some of the people who have worked closest with him say, it is necessary to understand three things about the sheriff; his sincerely held faith in Jesus Christ, his desire to spread the word, and his ever-growing persecution complex.

"It would be hard for anyone to say exactly what that relationship is," says Dave Dunaway, a former sheriff's department chief lieutenant who quit his job to run against his old boss in the upcoming Republican primary. "You can only know by his overt actions. Paranoia is the word I keep hearing out there. It's like he's circling the wagons."

It wouldn't be an over-statement to say that Hugh Atwell has had the world by the ass since he met David Williams. He has a job where can come and go as he pleases, he's seen as a hero in the conservative Christian circles in which he travels, and he doesn't have to report to anyone except, maybe, Williams.

On top of that, his income has almost doubled and if Williams is successful in convincing the Texas Attorney General that the commissary funds--raised by \$2 per inmate fee paid by the vendor who operates the jail commissary--are his to spend as he sees fit, Atwell stands to get another 10 percent raise. He also, county officials say, still has the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department Chaplaincy Benevolency Fund, a pot o' change that some department employees estimate could add up to \$30,000-50,000. Since the Attorney General ruled last year that the fund was private money, under the control of the chaplain, and not subject to Open Records laws or county spending procedures, no one seems to know what has happened to it.

"We don't have a clue," says Commissioner J. D. Johnson, a former supporter who has become one of Williams' and Atwell's most vocal critics.

A former military police officer, who worked for 23 years as a cop with

the Arlington Police Department, Atwell found his "true" calling late in life and entered Southwestern Baptist Seminary. He graduated in 1992 with master's degrees in religious education and marriage and family counseling. He has never had a church, never taught religious studies and had never professionally counseled anyone, however, until he was hired by David Williams.

When the commissioners approved the idea of hiring a full-time chaplain for the jail, several candidates applied, sources say. But Atwell was a buddy to then-Chief Hank Pope from his Arlington Police Department days, and he had been ingratiating himself with the sheriff for weeks.

"Atwell sucked up to the sheriff, consoling him whenever he hit a snag," one former sheriff's department informer says. He hit a whole lot of snags when he first went in there."

Williams talked with his then-buddy, J. D. Johnson, who pulled strings to get the votes for Atwell. Dionne Bagsby, who backed a more qualified candidate, voted no, and County Judge Tom Vandergriff didn't vote.

"Atwell was not qualified for the position in the first place," Johnson says now. "Williams hired him anyway." Sheriff Department employees say Atwell's main job since then has been to be Williams' personal spiritual advisor. "Atwell is a strange duck," says one former deputy who was once close to the chaplain. "He's not as charitable as your average missionary. He's very cold; he has a darker side. He plays Williams like a violin, though, and he's doing a pretty good job of it."

Atwell might be a champ at providing aid and comfort to David Williams, but as for his work as chaplain--ministering and counseling prisoners and employees--the results must speak for themselves.

To newly appointed Jail Administrator Herb Chambers, here is no doubt. Atwell is a godsend, and

the concept of turning criminals to Jesus is like an inoculation for the community, he says. "Jails are not a pretty place," Chambers says. "They're not happy. But this is healthy. When you have ministers listening to prisoners' problems, counseling with them and helping them to change, that's not an ordinary jail scenario. It's healthy for our society."

In practice, however, the results of Atwell's chaplaincy could fairly be described as disastrous. The volunteer program, which has been in the jail for more than 20 years, is in disarray. Angry about being used as pawns in the battle between Williams and county commissioners, the faithful are leaving in droves.

"David Williams has put on a very good public campaign," one volunteer says. "Nobody knows the truth about Atwell. They have not been told the truth."

For instance, take the story (recounted by half a dozen volunteers and Sheriff's Department employees) of Rev. Don Anderson, a full-time volunteer chaplain at the jail who was one of the original leaders of the "God Pod." Anderson, who was paid by an outside ministry to work at the jail, seemed to be one of Atwell's people. That was before the warm September evening, however, when he and almost 100 other volunteers, pastors, and lay preachers arrived at the Tarrant County jail for their usual Tuesday night prisoner Bible study only to find themselves herded out of the jail and into white Sheriff's Department buses and trucked to nearby Calvary Cathedral for a pro-sheriff, pro-Atwell rally. Incensed, Anderson complained to the chaplain.

"Atwell got it into his head that Don (Anderson) wanted his job," says one volunteer. "He took away all his duties, took his office away and put him in one the size of a broom closet, without a telephone. He started making Don write papers on loyalty to him and the sheriff. Don finally had

enough, "I'm not a second grader," he said. "Atwell gave him the option to leave or be fired. He left."

Anderson, like most of the other volunteers contacted, refused to comment for this story, preferring instead to "turn the other cheek." Several did speak on the condition of anonymity, though.

Jail employees report other problems with the volunteer program. Atwell, they say, is too eager to believe the stories of former inmates and others with past criminal histories who claim they are "born again."

At least three volunteer chaplains who carried credentials personally issued by him, they say, have been arrested at the jail on outstanding warrants, after guards became suspicious. One wanted to "counsel" a woman who turned out to be his common-law wife. Another "volunteer chaplain" tried to bring a prisoner a Bible that turned out to have been soaked in LSD, they say. "Since it didn't say 'Tarrant County Jail' on the side, the jailer who let it pass was punished," one says. "If he had confiscated a Bible, though, he would have been in trouble for that, too."

Like Atwell, Williams is so naive when it comes to prisoners, he cannot tell when he is being scammed. said a former member of the sheriff's elite crime fighting team. "He has no experience with the caliber of inmates who are in the county jail," the deputy says. "He has no concept of what kind of advantage an inmate can take of an environment like that. All they have to do to circumvent the rules is to say, 'I'm born again. Get me out of here,' and they're off to the God Pod, where they get extra TV privileges, extra treats, pick the choice work details, and come and go pretty much as they please."

While inmates who experience "religious conversions" might find themselves doing softer time, intolerance for any religion other than the fundamentalist branch of Christianity is rampant inside the

jail, current and former employees say. "Even if you're Catholic or Mormon or something like that, you can't get into the God Pod anymore," says one jailer. "Even Methodists are frowned on."

"Religious supplies such as rosary beads, prayer rugs, and sacred books are sometimes confiscated. I've even seen them order the Koran to be taken away on the trumped-up grounds that it was so heavy it could be used as a weapon," says one deputy who worked in the jail's property room. "The Koran and the Bible are about the same size, but Bibles are encouraged"

With the growing emphasis on saving souls inside the jail rather than improving the lot of jailers, morale is down and turnover is high, many employees say.

"The department is looking for leadership," says Dunaway, who spent 24 years with the Texas Department of Public Safety including a seven-year stint as a Texas Ranger, before his three years in Williams' administration. Witnessing the stress on his fellow officers is what prompted him to run for sheriff," he says.

"The employees feel like they are pawns in a giant game."

It's clear that Hugh Atwell needs David Williams if he's going to keep his job. The question of why Williams needs Atwell is, at first glance, a little less obvious. "The only ones who know the answer to that are Atwell, the sheriff and Jesus Christ," Commissioner J. D. Johnson says.

Maybe, however, any Tarrant County political junkie knows that, with many Republican Party honchos distancing themselves from Williams, and the Republican majority Commissioners Court growing more and more frustrated with him, the Religious Right is just about the only political constituency Williams has left. What better than a holy crusade to keep Jesus in the jail and Hugh Atwell in the chaplaincy to attract the ardor of that crowd?

"Within the Republican Party,

the conservative wing is very strong in Tarrant County," says Steve Hollern, the party's former county chair. "Williams is sincere, but misguided," he believes. "The impact they are going to have on David's race is going to depend on how closely they examine what's really happening down there, instead of what his intentions are."

The man who orchestrated Williams' first campaign, County Clerk Tom Wilder, has already gone on the radio and disavowed any interest in the sheriff. His former big-money man, Ed Max, has told party officials that he will not donate a penny to Williams' next campaign. And, J. D. Johnson has lived to regret the days when he was a newly turned Republican and an avid Williams supporter.

What really angers him Johnson says, is that Williams and Atwell have rallied their Christian conservative supporters by outright lying about the court's actions "They want to make it out to be a persecution of David Williams because he's a Christian," he says.

His "Christian Conservative" supporters are as committed as ever, says Reverend Jim Bochert, a member of the State Republican Executive Committee. "He's in a weaker position than he was last time, for certain," Bochert says. "I think the general consensus is still in favor of him, though."

"It's the number of people who are going to come out and vote that counts," he says. "That's our strength. We are grassroots people and we do vote."

With four opponents already announced or on the verge of announcing their candidacies, a crowded field in the Republican primary is assured. With a not-so-large core group of supporters, that means Williams could make it into a run-off. Since the party's Christian Conservative wing is well known to vote in bigger numbers in primary run-offs than any other group they could just put Williams over the hump, party insiders say.

"Most of the people who come to vote for president aren't going to come back and vote in the run-off," one says. "Ninety percent of the Religious Right faction that votes in the primary come back to vote in the run-off, but only about a third of the others do. They could be the deciding vote on who the nominee is. And, whoever the Republican nominee is will be our next sheriff."

If that candidate is Williams, then Atwell will likely be able to present himself as the good Lord's jail-keeper for a long time. Pass the plate.

(A REPRINT OF THE FORT WORTH WEEKLY AS
FOUND ON THE INTERNET, JULY 25, 1999)

OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

MONDAY, JULY 26, 1999

Oughta be a law

It is often frustrating that there are no laws against stupidity. I refer to the case recently reported in the *Star-Telegram* of a deputy sheriff severely beating a horse under his care over the head with a rubber hose, and in front of children. His defense was that he was trying to "control" the horse after dogs upset it. This is like spanking a baby to make it stop crying, or calming an angry bull with an electric cattle prod.

What kind of cockamamie logic can be found in the use of such tactics to control an animal? The man obviously knows little about horses and should be restrained from any further contact with them.

I sincerely hope that our sheriff does not recruit his deputies using matching I.Q. and hat size as qualifying criterion.

George A. Lewis
Fort Worth

Sheriff drops rules proposal

The Civil Service Commission is asked instead to adopt procedures used in Harris County.

BY NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Sheriff David Williams dropped his proposed changes to Sheriff's Civil Service Commission rules yesterday, instead suggesting that the commission adopt rules used in Harris County.

The new rules would "lay the groundwork and establish career development procedures and policies for both sworn and non-sworn Sheriff's employees," Williams said in prepared remarks that he read to commissioners.

Commissioners postponed discussion of the Harris County rules for one month, until their next meeting, so that it could be properly placed on the agenda.

They did, however, adopt some changes to the rules proposed by Commission Secretary Gerald Wright, who is also the county's director of human resources.

Wright said he was asked by the Sheriff's Department to clarify some issues and "remove some ambiguities" in the county's current work rules.

Some of the changes approved yesterday concerned layoffs when there are too many workers for a specific job classification, and the rights of employees to regain their old jobs if they accepted voluntary demotions to avoid a layoff.

Williams, who called Wright's changes "encouraging," said more must be done to make sure that Sheriff's Department



Star-Telegram/DALE BLACKWELL

Tarrant County Sheriff Department Capt. Ray Bell, left, and Sheriff David Williams address the Sheriff's Civil Service Commission.

employees "receive equitable market compensation and a solid career path development system."

He has repeatedly said that his deputies and jailers are underpaid.

Last month, Williams proposed radical changes to the rules that would have stripped the Commissioners Court of much of its oversight responsibility and authority over the county's largest work force — the 1,300-member Sheriff's Department.

He proposed putting personnel decision-making authority in the hands of the commission and replacing Wright with a Sheriff's Department employee, who as commission secretary would be responsible for recommending rules and regulations. He also

wanted the commission, instead of the county's Department of Human Resources, to keep the Sheriff's Department employee roster.

Williams also wanted to delete numerous references to the commissioners' authority over job descriptions, a responsibility that under state law rests with the Commissioners Court.

County commissioners dismissed Williams' original proposal as another attempt by him to sever the Sheriff's Department from the county. Yesterday, they said they wanted to review the Harris County rules before commenting on how they might work in Tarrant County.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

Williams seeks pay raise for employee

Sheriff makes rare visit to commissioners

BY NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — In a rare and unexpected appearance at Commissioners Court, Tarrant County Sheriff David Williams met with county commissioners yesterday to seek higher pay for his administrative director.

The director, Herbert Chambers, should be paid the equivalent of a captain's salary, Williams said as he left the half-hour closed-door meeting.

Chambers, 59, who is not licensed as a Texas peace officer, draws about as much money as a jailer with two year's experience, roughly \$24,400 a year. Captains are paid about \$41,600 annually.

"We want to bring his salary in line with his responsibilities," Williams said.

Yesterday's meeting marked the first time that Williams met with all the county commissioners in at least six months. But Williams was noncommittal when asked if he would meet more often with commissioners, which he has been reluctant to do in the past two years.

"We'll have to see what happens," he said, adding that he has a competent staff who often attend Commissioners Court meetings.

Chambers, as administrative director, supervises recruiting, training, accounting and information systems. The county's job description calls for the employee to have a peace officer's license.

A field representative for the National Rifle Association and an association employee for 22 years, Chambers replaced Capt.

Dave Dunaway in June. Dunaway resigned to run against Williams in the 2000 sheriff's race.

"He is supporting me personally and I am thankful for that," Chambers said of Williams. "I personally enjoy law enforcement activities. It's my chosen field."

The commissioners told Williams that Chambers can either get his peace officer's license or the department can have the job evaluation board change the job requirements.

Commissioner Glen Whitley said he is concerned about changing a job description after someone has been hired to that job.

"There needs to be consistency with how the county hires people."

Williams said he is considering the substitution of a bachelor's degree in a police-related field for the license requirement. Chambers holds a bachelor's degree in police administration from the University of Arizona and a master's degree in education from the University of Nebraska. Chambers said he is working on getting a peace officer's license.

Chambers worked as an officer for the Scottsdale, Ariz., police department in the late 1960s and as a Pima County sheriff's deputy in Tucson. He said he is a "life-certified" peace officer in Nebraska. He has been a criminal justice consultant, a law enforcement instructor in Nebraska and, from 1971 to 1974, was chairman of the police administration program at Sul Ross State University in Alpine.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

Saturday, August 7, 1999

Guard accused of assault of inmate released on bail

MANSFIELD — A former probation facility guard accused of sexually assaulting a female inmate was released from jail yesterday on \$8,000 bail.

Michael Zahn, 28, who worked at the 320-bed Tarrant County Community Correctional Facility run by Florida-based Correctional Services Corp., was arrested Wednesday. He was arraigned on a charge of sexual assault and two counts of official oppression.

A 30-year-old inmate told Mansfield police July 23 that she was assaulted on June 22. The Tarrant County Sheriff's Department took over the investigation at the request of Mansfield police because the Sheriff's Department has jurisdiction over the facility.

A Sheriff's Department spokesman said Zahn resigned two days before his arrest.

"We reacted as fast as we could and coordinated the case with the Mansfield Police Department," said Herb Chambers, director of administrative operations for the Sheriff's Department.

The Mansfield facility provides substance-abuse treatment and boot camp activities for probationers in Tarrant County.

Tarrant budget cutbacks sought

Commissioners avoid considering rise in tax

By NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Despite a projected \$11 million shortfall in Tarrant County's 2000 budget, county commissioners said yesterday that they are reluctant to consider raising the property tax rate.

County departments have proposed a \$236 million operating budget, but only \$225 million in revenue is expected. The commissioners' first response was to look for expenses to trim.

"I would hate to see us accept this overall budget, because I don't want to reconcile myself to a tax increase," County Judge Tom Vandergriff said. "We must delve more deeply into the various department budgets and make cuts."

To get everyone into the budget-cutting spirit, Vandergriff offered cuts to his own \$397,000 county judge's budget, paring away \$3,700. Commissioners cut an additional \$500,000 in printing and telephone expenses and new positions throughout the day.

"I'm not ready to even consider raising taxes," Commissioner J.D. Johnson said.

The property tax rate — 26.48 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation — has decreased or stayed the same for the past six years.

The county is anticipating a one-year increase of nearly \$4.3 billion in the net taxable value of properties, which translates to \$11 million in new revenue at the current tax rate.

Property tax provides most of the money used to run the county. About \$124.5 million of the county's \$188.5 million general fund will come from property taxes; the remainder comes from fees, licenses, fines, investments and intergovernmental payments.

Most of the budget mismatch is in personnel and health care costs, Budget Director Debbie Schneider said. There is \$5.3 million proposed for raises, \$3.3 million for health care costs and \$1.5 million for 46 new positions. Data processing is seeking nearly \$1 million in software and computer upgrades, and a new felony court is expected to cost \$481,000.

The Sheriff's Department, the largest component of the county budget, originally asked for 40 new positions — 24 jailers, five people to work in court security, four in patrol, four to help serve warrants, two investigators and a crime prevention deputy — for a total cost of \$63 million, or a 12 percent increase over this year's \$56 million department budget.

The county budget department is recommending adding one clerk in the jail and another in the courts

and boosting the Sheriff's Department budget by only \$3.7 million.

Commissioners agreed that they are interested in increasing the county constables' role in serving civil warrants, a move unpopular with the sheriff's top command because it would decrease the role of their department.

"We have a problem with that. We don't believe the cost savings will be as much as the constables have said it would be," Chief Deputy Larry Hester said. State law makes the sheriff responsible for serving such papers, he said.

Assistant District Attorney Marvin Collins said that the Commissioners Court must provide at least "some base-line funding" to a county department if state law says the department must perform a certain function. When more than one department performs the same function, he said, "the Commis-

sioners Court is free to allocate the total budgeted funds for that function in a manner it deems most efficient."

Overall, commissioners say, they expect to stick to the fiscally conservative approach that has guided their decision-making in recent years, but there is deep concern over staffing and salary levels in some departments.

"We have had to pour more and more money into salaries to retain a quality work force," Commissioner Marti VanRavenswaay said. The county is still having difficulty finding entry-level and highly specialized workers, she said.

The county, for the most part, will have to hold the line on creating positions, the commissioners said. But some new positions, such as those that accompany new courts, must be funded.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

IMPACT
on taxpayers

Sheriff's use of commissary fund questioned

No money used for jail hygiene items in 10 months

BY NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — County commissioners weren't looking for bright smiles and sweet-smelling breath on Tarrant County inmates when they bought 18 cases of toothpaste for the jail.

Last month, the jail was running short of toothpaste, and state law requires every Texas county to provide personal hygiene supplies to indigent inmates.

"We were just about out," said Chief Deputy Savala Swanson, who oversees jail operations.

But that is hardly surprising, because the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department had not bought toothpaste or other personal hygiene items for jailed prisoners in the past 10 months, according to county records.

Disposable razors, soap, sanitary napkins and other hygiene supplies have in the past been paid for with general fund money and prisoner dollars from the commissary fund. The commissary money comes from \$2 the commissary operator pays the county for each inmate, based on the average monthly jail census, and it can only be spent for the inmates' benefit.

County commissioners say Sheriff David Williams should be buying the sundries from the commissary fund, instead of forcing the county to use tax dollars.

Since the beginning of October, only \$15,803 has been spent on inmate sundries, all of it from the county's general fund.

In 1998, \$84,717 was spent on sundries, \$55,458 from the commissary fund and

\$29,259 from the general fund. In 1997, \$44,924 was spent, and in 1996 \$62,652, all of it tax dollars from the general fund.

"We're not going to shirk our duties by denying the prisoners necessities," Commissioner J.D. Johnson said. "He [Williams] is just looking for other ways to spend taxpayer dollars."

Williams could not be reached to comment on the expenditures. But Herb Chambers, director of administration for the Sheriff's Department, said that under Texas law the sheriff does not have to

spend the commissary fund money on inmate supplies.

"He [Williams] has exclusive authority over the fund," Chambers said.

Executive Chief Deputy Hank Pope said that in years past there have been different demands on the commissary fund. Sometimes the money is used to buy computers or books for the law library.

"It's a tradeoff on where the money is going," he said.

As for this year, Pope said the department was told "to hold off on making purchases" until the county received an attorney general's opinion on whether commissary fund purchases must be made through the county purchasing office. Last winter, the commissary fund was part of

Williams' lawsuit against the commissioners over the 1999 Sheriff's Department budget.

On June 1, Williams signed a contract with Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy, a nonprofit created by Hugh Atwell to provide religious assistance and support for Tarrant County inmates and jailers. Williams gave the entire \$327,873 commissary fund to the nonprofit.

SHERIFF

That contract says that the nonprofit will supply hygiene items to the prisoners, but Atwell, a deputy and former major who has served as jail chaplain for six years, said he has not received any requests.

Williams has given all the money to the nonprofit, so there's nothing left in the

commissary fund, said Commissioner Glen Whitley, who with the rest of the Commissioners Court said they believe that the Atwell contract is invalid.

"If Williams thinks it's a valid contract, then he should spend money on hygiene supplies," Whitley said. "Williams has built up the commissary fund by not using it and forcing the county to use tax dollars."

Toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap and a comb are provided to prisoners in a small hygiene kit when they enter the jail. When the kit's supplies are exhausted, inmates with money can buy soap or anything they need from the jail commissary. The state requires the county to supply the sundries to indigent inmates, who com-

prise about one-quarter of the jail's 3,500-inmate population.

Debbie Fillmore, deputy director of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, said that although state law doesn't require sheriffs to spend commissary fund money on hygiene supplies, most counties that have enough commissary sales to generate a fund use that money instead of tax dollars to pay for the supplies.

Jail standards officials finished a week-long inspection of all the county's jails and found no deficiencies, according to an inspection report issued yesterday. Commission officials said they are prepared to recertify the Tarrant County Jail.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

Tuesday, August 17, 1999

■ EDITORIALS

Something Smells

It's come to this: Tarrant County commissioners and the sheriff are arguing about toothpaste.

Cleanliness may be next to godliness, but it's a distant second for some inmates in the Tarrant County Jail. The condition of prisoners' souls are taking precedent over the state of their soles — and their armpits and their teeth.

Basic personal hygiene supplies like soap, disposable razors, toothpaste and sanitary napkins have been in short supply at the jail for the past 10 months because Sheriff David Williams has decided not to use any of the commissary funds to buy them. Instead, the entire fund — \$327,873 — is going to the contract with an outside nonprofit to provide the inmates' chaplaincy program.

State law mandates that every Texas county provide personal hygiene supplies to indigent inmates. About one-quarter of the jail's 3,500 prisoners qualify as such.

Historically, part of the commissary money, which comes from \$2 that the commissary operator pays the county for each inmate, has been used to buy those

sundries. Tax dollars from the county's general fund made up a minor portion of the total. The commissary fund can only be spent for the inmates' benefit.

Since October, only \$15,803 has been spent on hygiene items, all of that from county tax dollars. As a comparison, \$84,717 was spent during 1998, with \$55,458 coming from the commissary fund.

Herb Chambers, the latest mouthpiece for the perpetually inaccessible Williams, said that under Texas law the sheriff does not have to spend the commissary fund money on inmate supplies.

Considering that Williams has dedicated the entire fund to the contract with Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy, there isn't any money left over for things like recreation equipment, computers, library books — or soap.

The chaplaincy contract calls for the nonprofit to supply hygiene items to the inmates, but Chaplain Hugh Atwell, director of the program, contends that he has not received any requests for such items. Commissioners must fill in the gap or face violation of a state law.

We remind you that the Republican primary will be held on a Tuesday next March.

Restrained prisoner's death was natural, examiner rules

BY REBECA RODRIGUEZ
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — The death of a mentally ill man who was restrained for more than four hours at the Tarrant County Jail was due to natural causes, the Tarrant County Medical Examiner ruled yesterday.

James Arthur Livingston, 30, was arrested July 6 on an Arlington warrant for criminal trespassing and was

booked into the jail. According to sheriff's deputies, Livingston, who was schizophrenic, became combative. To restrain him, he was strapped into a chair that limited movement of his arms and legs.

Early the next morning, he was found slumped in the chair and taken to John Peter Smith Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

(More on AUTOPSY on Page 4B)

Livingston died of "natural causes" compounded by "significant pneumonia and pre-existing cardiac and pulmonary pathology compounded by a state of excited delirium," Medical Examiner Nizam Peerwani ruled.

"We did not violate the law. We did not do anything wrong," Herb Chambers, the sheriff's administrative director, said last night.

"When he was put into the booking area, he became very hostile and aggressive. It had been insinuated we did something wrong, that we didn't check on him. We did check on him when we could," Chambers said.

But Livingston's mother, Maxine Jackson, said she has questions about the ruling.

"I'm not buying that," she said last night. "He did not have a heart condition, and he did not have pneumonia. I don't know where they're getting that from."

It is possible that Livingston could have had a heart problem for years and not known about it, said Dr. John Osborne, a Grapevine cardiologist.

"Heart problems can take years and years to develop," Osborne

said. "For the vast majority of that time, it's like an iceberg: You feel fine and have no symptoms."

If Livingston did have a heart condition, Osborne said, being restrained in a chair for more than four hours might have contributed

"Heart problems can take years and years to develop. For the vast majority of that time, it's like an iceberg: You feel fine and have no symptoms."

— Dr. John Osborne
Grapevine cardiologist

to a "surge of adrenaline or other excitatory substances produced in the body."

Being in the chair "certainly didn't help," he said.

Peerwani's report said that Jackson had been prescribed the anti-psychotic drug Seroquel but that toxicology tests found no drugs — prescription or illegal — in Livingston's system.

Jackson said that her son normally took Seroquel right before bed to help him sleep and that as far as she knew, he was taking the medication as prescribed.

Jackson, whose 52nd birthday was yesterday, said she did not know about the ruling until she saw the 5 o'clock news.

"When you hear something on the news about your child before you hear about it, that's hard," she said.

The medical examiner's office could not be reached to comment last night.

Staff writer Neil Strassman contributed to this report.

Rebeca Rodriguez, (817) 390-7754
rrodriguez@star-telegram.com

Officials discuss sheriff's vehicles

Williams may lose take-home Tahoe

By NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Cuts to the Sheriff's Department budget started at the top yesterday when Tarrant County Commissioners took aim at one of Sheriff David Williams' two vehicles: his personal Chevrolet Tahoe.

Near the end of the Sheriff's Department four-hour defense of next year's proposed \$63 million budget, Commissioner J.D. Johnson asked why Williams has two county vehicles.

"The abuse of sheriff's vehicles in the Sheriff's Department has run rampant too long," Johnson said, as he and Commissioner Glen Whitley began carving up the department's list of 150 vehicles, looking for take-home cars.

"We don't need to be driving 80 or 90 cars home every night," Johnson said, sending a message to Williams that he must do a better job of cutting his budget.

But Williams was not there to respond. He had left the meeting early, two hours after urging commissioners to give the 1,300 Sheriff's Department employees "competi-

(More on SHERIFF on Page 7B)

IMPACT
on taxpayers

tive salaries and job assurance."

"He's not driving it [the Tahoe] now. He's driving a Chevrolet Caprice," Herb Chambers, the sheriff's director of administration, said after the meeting. "I understand it is in for repairs or due to be worked on."

Williams told the commissioners yesterday that he had pared down his budget request, though it is still 12 percent over last year's budget and the county has recommended that the department get by on \$60 million.

In their presentation, Sheriff's Department top officials asked for new radios, at least 18 new cars to replace worn-out ones, 19 more jailers and four more deputies to patrol unincorporated areas of the county.

But the commissioners, who are trying to close an \$11 million budget gap, said the Sheriff's Department must do more to cut its own budget.

They proposed cutting positions from the department instead of adding them, and cutting some of the 38 unfilled positions from the jail. They also indicated their interest in transferring the responsibility of serving civil court papers from the Sheriff's Department to the county constables. In addition, the

commissioners proposed cutting the take-home fleet by two-thirds or more.

"It's very difficult to think of adding people to the department when there are so many vacancies," Commissioner Dionne Bagsby said. "We have not addressed the issues concerning delays in booking people in and out of the jail or the budget shortfall."

Williams and Chief Deputy Larry Hester said during a short recess that it is difficult to fill the department's entry level positions in the jail because of salaries in the low \$20,000 range. The department is recruiting across the South, but so are other law enforcement agencies that pay nearly 50 percent more than Tarrant County.

Williams is particularly opposed to a proposal to have the constables serve civil court papers such as those involving child support matters, real estate, abandoned autos, judgments against property or money and witness subpoenas.

"These are responsibilities that reside with the sheriff's office, statutory impositions and obligations placed [by the state] on the sheriff," he said.

The civil warrant division brings \$200,000 more in revenue into the county than it costs to run it, he said.

Large urban Texas counties serve civil papers in a variety of ways. In Harris County, constables deliver summons. In Bexar County,

the Sheriff's Department serves the papers, and in Dallas the responsibilities are split between constables and sheriff's deputies.

Constable Jim Palmer said shifting the service of civil papers to constables, which could eliminate about eight positions from the Sheriff's Department, is long overdue.

"He's got the jail, court security and criminal warrants to worry about," Palmer said. "They can do it, or we can do it."

Yesterday the commissioners said they were aggravated by Williams' early departure from the meeting and his department's apparent lack of effort to cut its budget — the department proposed only a \$22,000 trim.

"We're \$11 million in the hole, and I appreciate him [Williams] being here earlier, but this is the largest department in the county," Whitley said.

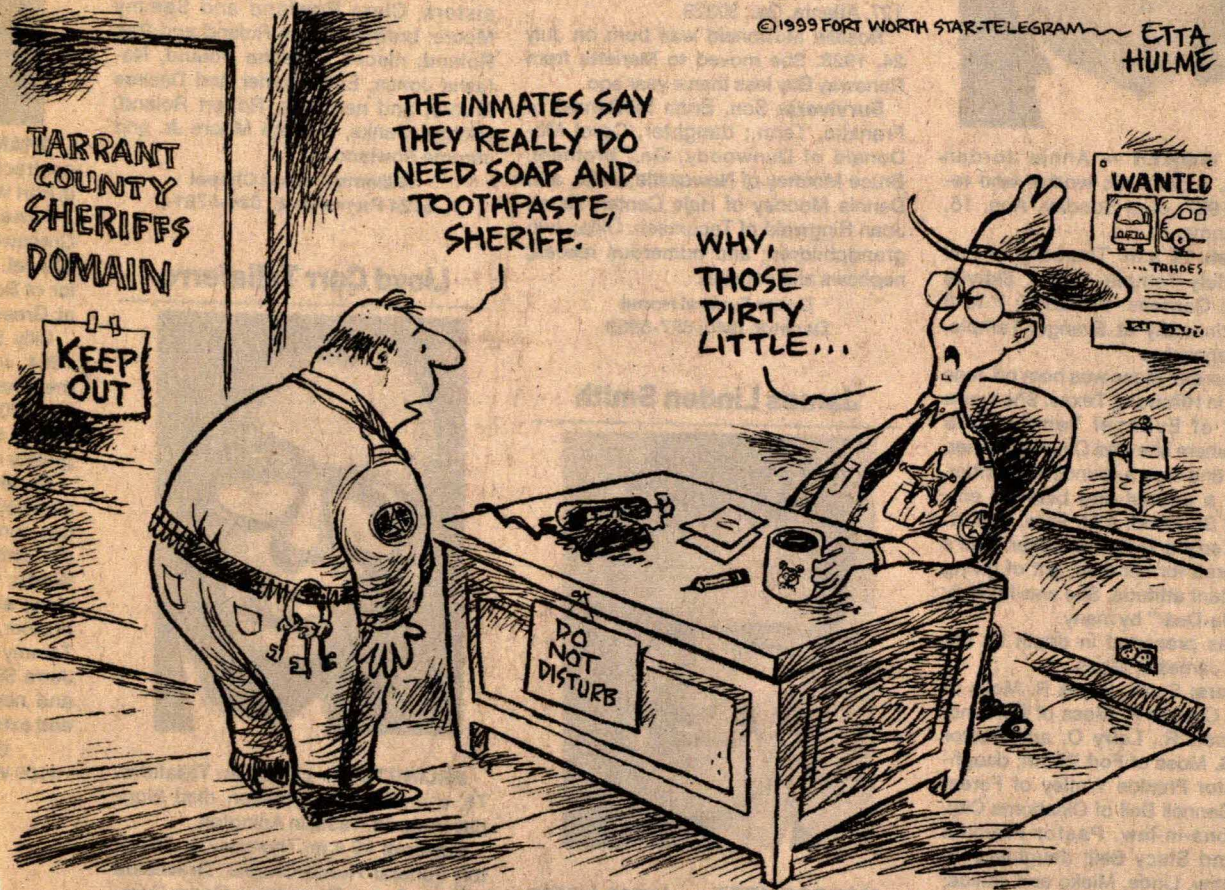
Johnson just sharpened his budget ax.

"There's a lot of positions to look at and some to cut," he said. "We have truly not made all our cuts and need to talk about it with the sheriff himself, in person, here at Commissioners Court."

At Johnson's request, the commissioners have decided to hold another budget session with Williams and the Sheriff's Department on Tuesday, after the Commissioners Court meeting.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

■ ETTA HULME



ETTA HULME is the *Star-Telegram's* editorial cartoonist. You can reach her at 390-7665.

"It's a management job. I have been involved in handling a \$500 million budget for nine years and I've had my own company for 15 years."

Silcox considers running for sheriff

The Fort Worth City Council's longest-serving member will decide within months.

BY MAX B. BAKER
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — City Councilman Chuck Silcox, the council's self-described taxpayer watchdog and its longest-serving member, may join the ranks of Republicans making a bid for Tarrant County sheriff.

After being approached by more than a dozen local Republican activists in recent months, Silcox said he will decide within 60 days about running for the \$101,400-a-year job.

Silcox, 55, who was first elected to the council in 1991, would have to resign his council post to run for sheriff. The owner of a building maintenance company, Silcox recently began serving his fifth term. He ran unopposed last year.

"At this point, I've been asked by 14 or 15 people to look at it. I'm flattered people have that much confidence in me," Silcox said. "I'm thinking about it. I've got to make darn sure that is what I want to do."

The councilman has been a vocal critic of Fort Worth Police Chief Thomas Windham and the city's crime district tax. Silcox doesn't like the idea of spending tax dollars on initiatives such as after-school programs and graffiti abatement.

If he runs, Silcox would join at least five other Republicans campaigning to replace Tarrant County Sheriff David Williams. Three Democrats say they will vie for the sheriff's post.

So far, none of the candidates seeking the GOP nomination appears to be the favorite of the Republican heavy hitters. In the past, they've supported Williams but appear to be willing to consider other candidates.



"I'm thinking about it. I've got to make darn sure that is what I want to do."

— Chuck Silcox
Fort Worth
city councilman

Although he lacks a law enforcement background, Silcox said his management experience as a private business owner and as a council member has led others in the Republican Party to consider him qualified.

"It's a management job. I have been involved in handling a \$500 million budget for nine years and I've had my own company for 15 years," he said.

"David Williams is a very nice person, but I think his handling of the Sheriff's Department is all wrong. ... His major thrust is to manage the jail," Silcox said.

Since Williams was elected in 1992, the former Haltom City DARE officer has been under fire as incapable of running an operation as big as the Sheriff's Department — which has a budget of nearly \$60 million.

Williams' clashes with Tarrant County commissioners over helicopters, vehicles and personnel have infuriated some Republicans. Earlier this year, the sheriff sued the county over control of his budget.

"Because of the void of good

administrative skills by David Williams, he is being strongly recruited," said Bryan Eppstein, a Fort Worth political consultant who represents Silcox.

Council colleagues were surprised to hear that Silcox may run for sheriff. During his years on the council, he has earned a reputation as a budget hawk with a primary goal of lowering the city's debt and slashing its tax rate.

"He'd run a damn tight ship," Councilman Jim Lane said. "The sheriff's job should be more of an administrator of the jail, and I think Chuck could handle the job. He is hard-working and he tells it like it is."

When told about Silcox's possible candidacy, Tarrant County Republican Party Chairman Tom Davis laughed and said: "That's interesting." Silcox has criticized Davis' operation of the county party.

The other GOP candidates exploring the sheriff's race are Dee Anderson, the Arlington Police Department spokesman; Brad Patterson, former Fort Worth Police Officers Association president; and Terry McGlasson, former North Richland Hills police chief.

Two other Republican candidates are Dave Dunaway, a former top deputy to Williams, and James Cummins, a former deputy.

Democratic candidates include Luther Perry, an assistant to Windham; Haltom City Detective Shane Harrison; and Darrell Clements, a lieutenant with the Sheriff's Department.

Two other candidates — James Stokes and Delton Kelly — are also considering running for sheriff but have not listed any party affiliation.

Candidates can't formally file for the 2000 elections until December.

Sunday, August 22, 1999

the
INSIDER
report

■
Add to the list of probable GOP sheriff candidates a familiar face: former drug enforcement agent **Jim Hunter**.

Hunter has run for sheriff before — in 1984 and 1988 as a Democrat, and against Tarrant County Sheriff **David Williams** in 1992 as a Republican.

“There’s a 99 percent chance I’ll run for sheriff,” said Hunter, who now works as a private investigator and rancher.

■

TUESDAY, AUGUST 24, 1999

■ **LETTERS, FAXES AND E-MAILS TO THE EDITOR**

Equipped for lifesaving

What better way to save lives than to use money from the tobacco industry to do so?

Tarrant County leaders have a chance to take a portion of the tobacco money that we are to receive and equip our Sheriff’s Department patrol cars with devices that are crucial to saving the life of someone who has a sudden cardiac arrest.

All too often we wait until we lose loved ones or friends before we realize that they did not have to die. It takes a sad loss to get us interested in an issue like this. Here is your chance to get involved.

Let our county leaders know that you support the purchase of AEDs (automated external defibrillators) for the Sheriff’s Department. Let’s save the life of someone we care about before it’s too late.

Cindi Azuma
American Heart Association
Fort Worth

Sheriff's take-home cars may be cut

BY NEIL STRASSMAN
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County commissioners moved forward yesterday with plans to have constables

serve civil court papers and proposed severe cuts to the Sheriff's Department vehicle fleet.

The 147 county vehicles now

assigned to the Sheriff's Department would be cut to 109 vehicles, and the number of take-home cars would be slashed from 85 to just 18.

Sheriff David Williams would lose his take-home Chevrolet Tahoe. Chief Deputy Larry Hester and the sheriff's director of administration, Herb Chambers, would lose their take-home cars,

as would many investigators and other deputies.

"Cutting these vehicles will adversely affect our operation and service," Hester said. Many other large urban Texas counties allow deputies to take cars home, he said.

But the commissioners appear determined to close an \$8.7 million budget gap in next year's county budget without raising the property tax rate, and the \$60 million Sheriff's Department budget is an inviting target.

"The Sheriff's Department budget is completely out of hand," Commissioner J.D. Johnson said. "I don't know what David Williams' problem is but he needs to settle down and start working with this Commissioners Court."

Commissioners push reductions in fleet, shifting work to constables

The Sheriff's Department offered little in the way of cuts at its first budget hearing one week ago, and the commissioners showed little patience yesterday for the department's explanations of why it should serve civil papers or why further budget cuts should not be made.

Sheriff's deputies now serve court papers such as those involving child support matters, real estate, abandoned autos, judgments against property or witness subpoenas.

Having constables do that work could save the county as much as \$360,000, county officials said. Constables serve court papers, provide security at subcourthouses, act as bailiffs for justices of the peace and perform other law enforcement duties.

Williams, for his part, has repeatedly urged the commissioners to give the 1,300 Sheriff's Department employees "competitive salaries and job assurance," a move he says will boost morale and improve the department.

Wednesday, August 25, 1999



Star-Telegram/HILLERY SMITH GARRISON

Sheriff David Williams pauses while defending his budget.

Most of the cuts offered by the Sheriff's Department yesterday involved several thousand dollars to supplies or other administrative items in each division. The largest offered, worth about \$500,000, involved cutting 19 jailers from the confinement division, which currently has about 40 open positions.

Williams attended the first two hours of yesterday's budget hearing and then left. He said that Johnson was exacting "revenge and retaliation" against the Sheriff's Department by switching to the constables. He called Johnson "unreasonable and obsessed" in a written statement.

"It appears one commissioner has mounted this effort," Williams said outside the Commissioners Court.

When asked if he would sue the county over its budget as he did last year, when he claimed that the commissioners underfunded the department, Williams said he is not yet to that point.

"I do hope we could find ways to work it out," he said.

But the Commissioners Court appears united in its effort to give the work to the constables.

Assistant District Attorney Marvin Collins said that the constables and the Sheriff's Department both have the statutory authority to serve the court papers. It is up to the Commissioners Court, he said, to allocate the county's money in the manner it determines is most efficient.

Neil Strassman, (817) 390-7657

Republicans plan straw poll in Tarrant sheriff's race

**Pony up \$15 and
you can vote Nov.
20 in the parking
lot of The Ballpark
in Arlington.**

BY MAX B. BAKER
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Although it won't attract the national spotlight like Iowa's presidential version, the Republican Party unveiled plans yesterday for a straw poll on the Tarrant County sheriff's race.

Tarrant County Republican Chairman Tom Davis said he

picked the sheriff's race for the straw poll, modeled after this month's Iowa presidential poll, because "we know this will be the top race in Tarrant County" next year.

At least six candidates are considering running against Sheriff David Williams in the March GOP primary. Williams' tenure as

the county's top cop has been stormy since he was elected in 1992.

"Williams has been in the press a lot, and there is a lot of energized feeling about this office," Davis said. "We want to use the media attention to benefit the candidates and the party."

The Tarrant County straw poll will be held Nov. 20 in the parking lot of The Ballpark in Arlington. People must pay \$15 to cast their ballots, and Davis said the party could raise about \$30,000.

Like the Iowa straw poll, the poll on the sheriff's race is nonbinding. Candidates can't even file for office until a month after the straw poll.

But to counteract criticism that candidates were allowed to "buy"

votes in Iowa, ballots cast in the Tarrant County straw poll will be weighted to make them more representative of those who work in the GOP, Davis said.

Although each vote cast in Iowa had the same value, Tarrant County's 400 GOP precinct leaders will each have three votes and delegates to local state senatorial conventions will get two, Davis said. Everyone else will have only one vote.

Sheriff candidate Jerry McGlasson said giving extra value to the votes by party activists will make the Tarrant County poll more meaningful. McGlasson is the former

North Richland Hills police chief.

"These are people who have been working and making a difference" in the party, he said. "This will tell you if they are buying your message, if this is what they want to hear. It's going to be the best \$15 I ever spent."

Expressing some concern about well-funded campaigns buying blocs of votes, candidate Dave Dunaway said he hopes the poll will be a "fair and impartial event."

Although Williams would be seeking his third term as a Republican, Davis isn't so sure that the sheriff's connections with party

activists will give him an upper hand in the poll.

A loss could also prove embarrassing for Williams. But Tarrant County District Clerk Tom Wilder, who helped get the sheriff elected in 1992, said, "The incumbent's job doesn't belong to him, it belongs to the people."

Williams, a former Haltom City drug education officer, has been under fire as being incapable of running an operation as big as the Sheriff's Department — which has a budget of nearly \$60 million.

Last week, Fort Worth City Councilman Chuck Silcox said he

was considering joining McGlasson, Dunaway and three other prospective candidates thinking about challenging Williams for the \$101,400-a-year job.

The other prospective GOP candidates exploring the sheriff's race are Dee Anderson, the Arlington Police Department spokesman; Brad Patterson, former Fort Worth Police Officers Association president; and James Cummins, a former deputy.

Possible Democratic candidates include Luther Perry, an assistant to Fort Worth Police Chief Thomas Windham; Haltom City Detective Shane Harrison; and Darrell Clements, a lieutenant with the Sheriff's Department.

Two other candidates, James Stokes and Delton Kelly, are also considering running for sheriff but have not listed any party affiliation.

Max B. Baker, (817) 390-7714
maxbbaker@star-telegram.com

Sheriff's captain stalks out of hearing

By JACK DOUGLAS JR.
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tempers flared yesterday during a Tarrant County budget hearing when a sheriff's captain abruptly walked out to call his attorney, saying he was being forced to work under "hostile" conditions.

Pct. 3 Commissioner Glen Whitley was questioning the worthiness of a Sheriff's Department plan to cut the duties of constables when he suddenly turned his attention to sheriff's patrol Capt. Ray Bell, who was seated in the audience. Whitley asked Bell why he was shaking his head and talking to the person next to him.

"I was talking about the weather!" Bell responded, as he bolted from the commissioners' courtroom and headed for a telephone.

"I need to call my lawyer," the red-faced Bell said, adding, "I'm working in a hostile working environment. There

was no reason for [Whitley] to single me out like that."

The clash was characteristic of the ongoing tension between the Commissioners Court and the Sheriff's Department over proposed cuts in the department's budget for the 1999-2000 fiscal year.

Last week, officials suggested that as much as \$360,000 could be lopped off next year's budget if Sheriff's Department duties serving civil court papers were turned completely over to constables.

But sheriff's Lt. Dan Cauble told the Commissioners Court yesterday that it would be better to do just the opposite, taking those obligations away from the constables and turning them over

to sheriff's officers. That, Cauble said, would save the county about \$1.5 million a year.

Currently, about 70 percent of the county's civil papers are delivered by deputy constables, with the remaining 30 percent being served by sheriff's deputies, officials said.

A Tarrant County law officer abruptly leaves a Commissioners Court budget session, complaining of "hostile" treatment.



Whitley

Whitley and Pct. 4 Commissioner J.D. Johnson said they were skeptical of Cauble's proposal, while the remaining three members of the

Commissioners Court expressed no opinion.

"I'm not sure I'm ready to turn the whole thing over to the Sheriff's Department," Whitley said.

In another budget debate, Sheriff David Williams offered an alternative to a cost-cutting idea

of slashing the number of Sheriff's Department "take-home" cars from 85 to 18.

Williams said the size of the designated fleet should remain the same, or be increased, because it would eliminate wear on individual vehicles and help persuade officers to stay on the force.

"A take-home car is considered a perk, and it helps in the retention" of valuable employees, the sheriff said.

Commissioners Whitley and Johnson were not impressed.

"We are here trying to find ways to cut the budget," Johnson told Williams, adding cynically: "How much could we cut out of the budget if we let everyone [in the Sheriff's Department] take home a car?"

Jack Douglas Jr., (817) 390-7700
jld@star-telegram.com

gn
it J
ay, police s

OBITUARIES

Fred W. McCown



FORT WORTH — Fred W. McCown, 86, a retired deputy sheriff of Tarrant County for 15 years and a car dealer, died Wednesday, Aug. 25, 1999, in Fort Worth.

Funeral: 2 p.m. Saturday in the Drawing Room of Thompson's Harveson & Cole Funeral Home. The Rev. Robert Thompson will officiate. Burial: Laurel Land Memorial Park.

Active pallbearers: Allison Gardiner, Eric Gardiner, Keith McCown, Michael McCown and Scott McCown. Honorary pallbearers: Mary Anne Gardiner, Down McCown, Fred McCown and Jim McCown.

Fred W. McCown was born on Aug. 14, 1913, in Whitney, Texas, and was a resident of Fort Worth for 60 years.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 60 years, Eunice Cleo McCown.

Survivors: Children, Fred E. McCown and his wife, Donna, of St. Louis, Mo., Don F. McCown and his wife, Marilyn, of Mansfield, Mary Anne Gardiner and her husband, Frank, of Grays Lake, Ill., and Jim McCown of Dallas; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild; brother, Frank Dean McCown and his wife, Ruth, of Arlington; sister, Frances Leady of Woodbridge, Va.; sisters-in-law, Mary McCown of St. Louis, Mo., and Mary Foster of Fort Worth; and nieces and nephews.

Thompson's Harveson & Cole
702 Eighth Ave., 336-0345



