Part 1
AH City Government: 1922-72
T. R. Fehrenbach

Ted and Lillian Fehrenbach have resided in Alamo Heights since 1954. He is the most respected historian in Texas today having served three terms (1983–2001) as a commissioner on the Texas Historical Commission and Chairman 1987–1991. In 2001, Gov. Rick Perry named Ted as THC Commissioner Emeritus. Ted has published 18 hardback non-fiction books, including numerous best sellers. His Lone Star: A History of Texas is the definitive Texas history and is the most widely read history of the state. It was the basis for the popular television miniseries of the same name. Among his other notable works are Fire and Blood: a History of Mexico and This Kind of War, the definitive book on the Korean War (although his own service as a combat officer is never mentioned). Ted’s works have been translated into 10 languages. Born in San Benito, Texas and a graduate of Princeton, he writes about current events and is a keen political contributor to many publications, including Esquire, The Atlantic, New Republic, San Antonio Express-News and The AHNA ADVOCATE.

The following is excerpted with the author’s permission from his 1972 work Golden Anniversary-Alamo Heights. This is the first in a series of three articles that will run through the January AHNA ADVOCATE.

Political drama surrounded Alamo Heights’ birth as a self-governing municipality in 1922.

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AH City Government - (Continued from Cover Page)

Begun as a series of residential developments, the area around the Head of the River formed a suburban village in the early 1920s, still widely separated from San Antonio. An area of many fine homes, the Heights still lacked modern municipal conveniences and services, such as sewers and fire protection, and most of its streets were still dust and gravel. Despite petitions by the residents, San Antonio had refused annexation. Finally, spurred by rumors that the city government, faced with constructing a $1,600 dam across Olmos Basin in the aftermath of the terrible 1921 flood, was planning an annexation primarily to increase tax revenue - a group of prominent residents, including Dick Prassel, John B. Carrington, Robert E. O'Grady, William B. Tobin, Ben M. Hammond, J. C. Talcott, Jr., and W. H. Hume, agreed that Alamo Heights should incorporate. Hastily printed handbills were stuffed into mailboxes, calling a citizens' meeting at the Alamo Heights School for June 4, 1922. Here the residents petitioned Bexar County Judge McCloskey for a city government under the general laws of Texas. Believing that San Antonio annexation was imminent, and would triple property taxes without any immediate benefit of services, the residents ratified the move 289 to 8 in an election held at the Argyle.

Thus Alamo Heights became a municipality on June 20, 1922. There was no city charter, and the first city election in September, 1922 installed Argyle proprietor Bob O'Grady as mayor. Bill Tobin as marshal, and aldermen from various districts: builder W. H. Hume, at large; Dr. W. S. Hamilton, Madeleine Terrace; J. C. Talcott, Jr., Argo; jeweler Ben Hammond, the Loop; and banker Paul G. Villa ret, Montclair. Government consisted of a mayor, five aldermen, and a town marshal. The city limits ran from Burr Road on the south, New Braunfels Avenue on the east, Olmos Creek on the west, to Tuxedo Ave. on the north. The town did not then include Bluebonnet Hills and Sylvan Hills, subdivisions between Broadway and New Braunfels Avenue, running from Bluebonnet to the intersection of Nacogdoches Road and Tuxedo. These sections, on petition, were annexed in later years. The population was estimated at about 3,250.

The first city election in September, 1922 installed Argyle proprietor Bob O'Grady as mayor, Bill Tobin as marshal, and aldermen from various districts: builder W. H. Hume, at large; Dr. W. S. Hamilton, Madeleine Terrace; J. C. Talcott, Jr., Argo; jeweler Ben Hammond, the Loop; and banker Paul G. Villaret, Montclair. The inauguration festivities included games, barbecues and speeches, marred by a bad fright when L. K. Berry's car accidentally injured three-year old Fred Jersig slightly.

The City Council elected every two years, met at the Argyle. New posts were added: a city attorney, clerk, tax assessor and collector. While most residents, after incorporation, showed little interest in civic affairs, the new “City of Homes” fortunately was filled with talent - a number of men willing and able to assume responsibility and work, many of whom wore several hats. Outstanding among these was Paul G. Villaret, who served as alderman, city clerk, town marshal, fire marshal, tax assessor-collector, manager of the waterworks, and also supervisor of garbage collection—many of these jobs at the same time. Most of these people worked for no reward beyond the satisfaction of providing service.
Anyone who has lived here for very long has memories of the Alamo Heights Optimist Club's Christmas tree lot on Austin Highway, just off Broadway. The lot has been an Alamo Heights tradition since it began in 1954. Optimist members and their friends and families volunteer to staff the lot during the holiday season.

What you may not know is how much the project has raised for charity. In the last five years the Christmas tree lot has netted $116,800 in donations to the youth of San Antonio and Alamo Heights. The Optimists put 100% of the proceeds from the Christmas tree lot into local charitable causes, such as:

- $50,000 Coats for Kids (last year 863 elementary school kids got new coats)
- $20,000 College scholarships
- $10,000 Assistance League of SA (school clothing/supplies)
- $10,000 Slam Dunk for Life (disadvantaged basketball program)
- $5,000 Sunshine Cottage for Hearing Impaired
- $5,000 Santa Rosa's Children's Cancer Program
- $4,800 Alamo Heights Little League
- $4,000 Potential (children with disabilities)
- $3,000 Rainbow Room at Child Protective Services
- $3,000 Project Mend (medical equipment for disabled)
- $1,000 (organ) Transplants for Children
- $1,000 Eastside Boys Club

In addition to the above, the Optimists have spent $5,500 to maintain the lot itself just since 2004. They lease the property from the City of Alamo Heights (CoAH) for $1,000 a year and the Optimists assume all responsibilities and costs for maintaining it year-around. The CoAH in turn puts that $1,000 into its Police Department's D.A.R.E. program and Police Explorers troop.

There are some additional background details you may not know. Many people think it is called Alamo Heights Memorial Park, but its official name is Albert Earl Plaza, in honor of Alamo Heights’ long-time, popular Chief of Police.

Although not widely known, the park is also home to several memorial markers, including one for Chief Earl and another for Officer Starkey. It has been frequently suggested recently that other memorials be added. In March, 2009 for example, Alamo Heights Police Officer Angel Acuna passed away from stomach cancer. Many feel that would be an appropriate way to honor this very well respected young bicycle officer.

Another possibility might be Paula Loyd, a 36-year old who died in January, 2009 from a brutal gasoline attack in Afghanistan. She grew up in Alamo Heights and attended Cambridge Elementary, the junior school and AHHS before graduating from Wellesley College. Paula then earned a Masters from Georgetown University. She was serving as a Field Program Officer for USAID at the time of the attack.
Mr. Rogers on the Firehouse

Both my wife and I enjoy reading The AHNA ADVOCATE. I graduated in 1946 and my wife in 1950; we live in the same house that she grew up in!

I have long thought that the Fire Department could operate from the corner of Broadway and Inslee. The fire trucks and EMS units could exit onto Broadway or even onto Inslee. The crew could be housed on the lower level to save construction costs, or the building could be built up one level.

Of course, a traffic light would have to be installed. I hope our fellow citizens will have defeated Proposition 1 by the time this letter is printed, and some more progressive, cost-saving projects could be discussed.

Charles Rogers, Oct. 19, 2009

Please e-mail Letters to the Editor to AHNAadvocate@gmail.com (put “Letter to the Editor” in the subject field). Alternatively, fax them to (210)828-6588 or mail to Editor, AHNA, PO Box 91192, Alamo Heights TX 78209. The AHNA ADVOCATE reserves the right to edit or not publish any submissions it receives. Letters received after the 19th will be held till the following month's edition. Letters must be single spaced in Word format and not over 500 words.
Walk-ins welcome.

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AH Animal Control Becomes Animal Care

Carol Duganne

An Alamo Heights resident for ten years, Alexis De Sela, the city’s new Animal Care Services coordinator, believes passionately in her job. She is responsible for the Trap, Neuter and Release program (TNR) for feral and stray cats in Alamo Heights, which was approved by City Council in late 2007.

Alexis has set a number of goals in her new position. She hopes to interface and develop a coalition with other TNR groups in the area, build a strong infrastructure for the TNR program, encourage responsible pet ownership, build a volunteer cat foster care group and educate residents about the program.

She encourages residents who see feral or stray cats in their neighborhood to call her at (210) 832-2214. Alexis will go out to make an evaluation and trap the feral/stray cats as needed. These cats will be spayed or neutered, given a rabies shot and released back to the area in which they were trapped. It is important, she emphasizes, that the cats be returned to their area as a way of stabilization and eventual decline of feral and stray cat populations.

Stray or feral kittens that are trapped can be placed in foster homes to help socialize them and prepare them to be adopted. Animal Care Services supplies food, litter, boxes and bowls for the kittens. More Alamo Heights residents who are willing to provide permanent or foster homes are needed and donations to the foster care program are always welcome. Call Alexis if you can foster a kitty.

Alexis reminds everyone that having pets microchipped is a vital part of being a responsible pet owner. Animal Care Services has a scanning device, which is used when trapped cats look more domesticated. If a cat has a microchip, the owner will be contacted or notices put up to notify neighbors in the area in which the cat was trapped.

Caring for cats is dear to her heart. Alexis brings to this new job her training and experience as an active member of the Cat Alliance at Trinity University. Currently she is working to provide more information about Alamo Heights Animal Care Services on the city’s website.

A helpful article about feral cats and Trap, Neuter and Return can be found at www.alleycat.org.
THE AHNA POLICE BLOTTER:

No Police Blotter was received by this month’s press deadline.

That could mean the City of Alamo Heights enjoyed a totally crime-free month. It could also mean our city is going to use part of the $50,000 that City Council recently approved to “enhance communications” with the citizens to pay for a service that The AHNA ADVOCATE has provided here at no expense to the city.

Either way we hope that by December’s newsletter the Christmas spirit will have worked its way into City Hall.

Regardless of what you think about AHNA, it is interesting to note that the Police Blotter has not been widely publicized, if ever, in a very long time to the general public until The AHNA ADVOCATE began doing so in July, 2009.
With November, of course, comes Thanksgiving. And what’s Thanksgiving without some appetizers? Ms. Sharon Bader, who has lived in Alamo Heights since 1975, is now in her twelfth year of teaching at Alamo Heights High School. She is quick to point out that one of the many reasons she loves teaching Family and Consumer Science at AHHS so much is the students. “They are so sophisticated in many ways and they nearly always exceed expectations on any given assignment! The AHNA ADVOCATE offered my class an opportunity for a ‘teachable moment’ that was really fun. Some kids brought in samples (yum) and we actually made some appetizers of our own in class.”

Here are four amazing appetizers for your Thanksgiving dinner thanks to Ms. Bader’s students. Prepare to enjoy. They are really easy yet delicious.

**PHYLLO-WRAPPED ASPARAGUS**

- 8 or 9 asparagus spears, depending on size
- ½ (16-ounce) packaged frozen phyllo dough sheets, thawed
- ¼ cup of butter, melted
- ¼ cup of finely grated Parmesan

Snap off the tough ends of the asparagus. Unwrap the phyllo and cut the stack in half lengthwise. (Reserve 1 stack for later use.)

Cover the phyllo with a damp towel to keep it from drying out.

Take 1 sheet of phyllo and brush lightly with some melted butter.

Place 2 to 3 asparagus spears on the short end of the sheet.

Roll up, jelly-roll style. Place each piece, seam side down, on a baking sheet.

Brush with more melted butter and sprinkle with Parmesan.

Repeat until all the asparagus spears are used up. Place baking sheet in oven and bake for 15 to 18 minutes or until golden brown and crispy.

*Dee Cantu (11th Grade Nutrition Student)*

(Continued on Page 9)
What's Cooking - (Continued from Page 8)

CHICKEN POPPERS
• 3 lbs. of boneless, skinless chicken breast
• 1 cup of ground fully cooked ham
• 25 to 30 cubes of Cheddar cheese (1/2” cubes)
• 1 lb. of sliced bacon
• 2 to 3 tbsp. of olive oil
• 1 cup of chicken broth
• ½ tsp. of salt & ½ tsp. of pepper

Flatten chicken to ¼” thickness; cut into 1 ½”-wide strips. Spread each with 1 tsp. of ham. Then place a cheese cube on the end of each strip; roll up. Cut each slice of bacon in half with a toothpick.

In a large skillet, cook roll-ups in oil until the bacon is crispy, about 10 minutes. Add broth, salt and pepper; bring to boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes or until chicken juices run clear. Serve warm.
Whitney Jones (12th Grade Nutrition Student)

SPINACH BALLS
• 1 cup of grated Parmesan
• 6 eggs, lightly beaten
• ¾ cups of melted butter
• Add salt & pepper to taste
• 10 oz. of frozen spinach; cook till moisture is low
• 6 oz. of stuffing mix

Mix all ingredients together, and then form into balls. Place them on a cookie sheet and freeze them. Bake for 10-15 min. at 350 F. Serve hot.
Charlie Baker (12th Grade Nutrition Student)

STUFFED JALAPEÑOS
• 10 fresh jalapeños
• 1 lb. of lean grounded beef
• 1 cup of cheddar cheese
• Cut off the stem end of the jalapeños & seed.

• Brown and season ground meat; drain. Mix in cheese.
• Stuff jalapeños with meat mixture.
• Bread stuffed jalapeños by dipping in egg and dredging in flour.
• Deep fry until golden.
Jonathan Garcia (12th Grade Nutrition Student)

Send us your favorite Holiday recipes for soups, salads, main dishes, side dishes and, of course, desserts. E-mail them to valorie227@hotmail.com (please put “Recipes” in the subject). Recipes can also be faxed to (210) 828-6588 or mailed to Recipes, AHNA, PO Box 91192, Alamo Heights, TX 78209. Regardless of how you submit your recipes, kindly indicate whether we can use your name or not. We will try to publish as many as possible.

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Caring for Your Pet
Age-Related Changes in Dogs & Cats
Dan R. Kirby

If you are the owner of an aging pet, you may see an increase in body fat with a decrease in lean muscle. Both dogs and cats will usually show an increase in weight around their chest and more thin area over their hips. Both dogs and cats also will show a grayish change to their lenses after 8-10 years of age.

Some owners will also notice a slow progression toward cognitive dysfunction, such as barking or meowing for no reason, walking in circles or being “trapped” in a corner even though nothing is preventing the animal from turning around or backing out.

A few other changes include a depressed immune system, increase in gastrointestinal pathogens and degenerative joint disease.

Some of these changes can be managed with nutrition:

1. lower fat and caloric intake
2. moderately high protein levels
3. l-carnitine supplement
4. chromium
5. vitamin A

Depressed immune responses:

1. consider antioxidants
2. vitamin A
3. lutein
4. beta carotene

Increase in gastro-intestinal pathogens:

1. probiotics

Degenerative Joint Disease:

1. chondroitin and glucosamine supplements
2. nutrients to help maintain weight (enzymes)
3. stem cell therapy
4. cold laser therapy
5. hyaluronidase therapy

These are just a few things that may help your aging dogs and cats.
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