

## What Happened to Jim Wolcott? Lingering Questions Span Four Decades



James Gordon Wolcott, age 15, in custody at the old Georgetown Courthouse, August 5, 1967 for allegedly killing his parents and sister.

Ann Marie Gardner •

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*Editor's Note: To protect their privacy, names of some witnesses and other relevant persons have been changed or omitted, indicated by (\*).*

Additional photos in the WilcoOnline photo Gallery

Even though he said he had long since given up hope of ever being hip, the 60-something man across from me was every bit the picture of a classic hippie; casual air, long pony tail, and a Grateful Dead sticker on his aging pickup truck. I had come a long way through the cornfields of Illinois to meet this doctor of Psychology whom I hoped would lead, maybe not to the end, but at least to the truth of this story. I had spent months doing extensive research, following leads, making phone calls to people in a half dozen states, role-playing and brushing up on the basics of clinical psychology to prepare for this conversation.

Why? Because the murder of an entire family is a ghastly thing. In 1967 it was beyond belief, and for Georgetown, Texas, then a small town with fewer than 5,000 people, it changed things forever. This horrific crime and subsequent trial received a great deal of media coverage for that era, making national headlines. Newspapers all over Texas and as far as New Jersey focused on the case for months. When it was all over, things were just not the same for a lot of folks in our community who described this event as the line of demarcation between before and after in Georgetown. Surprisingly, after the initial shock faded and life returned to a new normal, the lone survivor of that dreadful night seemed to disappear into obscurity, leaving many wondering in hushed tones at high school reunions, "What ever happened to Jim Wolcott?"

The man with the answer to that question now sat in front of me - not in a concrete room across a metal table - but in a crowded bar, talking between bites of chicken pot pie.

### **The Murders**

In 1967, fifteen-year old James Wolcott lived with his family near Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. By all accounts, he was brilliant; he was an accomplished musician and had a voracious appetite for reading. His father, Dr. Gordon Wolcott came from a prominent New Jersey family and was the respected head of the Biology department at Southwestern. His mother Elizabeth was a vivacious woman from South Carolina, known for her participation in church circles around town. The fourth member of the Wolcott family was seventeen-year old Libby, a Georgetown High School class officer with a bright mind and a love of music. They were exceptional people living what seemed to be a typical suburban life.

On the evening of Thursday, August 4, 1967, James joined Libby and some friends on a trip to Austin to see a show. They returned home about 10 pm and life in the Wolcott house appeared to be normal. By midnight Libby and Elizabeth had retired to their respective bedrooms, while Gordon read in the living room. Inexplicably, just after midnight, James, by his own account, sniffed some airplane glue "to give him a boost," loaded a .22 long-barrel rifle, walked to the living room and shot his father twice in the chest. He then walked to Libby's bedroom and shot her once in the chest, and when she fell he shot her in the face.

Awakened by the blasts from the rifle, his mother Elizabeth called out from her bedroom. James then shot her twice in the head and once in the chest. He later admitted that he had decided to kill them a week prior and had made a plan the night before. Next, he hid the rifle in the attic crawlspace above the closet in his bedroom and ran out of the house toward University Avenue. Three college students traveling from Houston to Eden, Texas saw him there at about 1 am. James flagged down their car, crying that he needed help because someone had just shot and killed his entire family. Reluctantly, the three returned with James to the house to assess the situation. While James waited outside, the college students entered the grisly scene to find Gordon and Libby dead where they lay and Elizabeth barely breathing on her bed. According to police interviews, the students repositioned Elizabeth on the bed to make her more comfortable, called for an ambulance and the police, then waited outside with James. Later, in court, one of the students described James' demeanor as "hysterical, pounding on the porch and wondering how this could happen." None of the college students were entirely comfortable with the situation and they were hesitant to commit to any kind of empathy or reaction. Oddly enough, when they realized there might still be someone in the house with a weapon, they "high-tailed it out of there." James, however, did not hesitate to go into the house with them.

At approximately 3 am, Williamson County Sheriff Henry Matysak arrived on the scene, and was joined shortly thereafter by Texas Ranger Jim Riddles from Austin, and Williamson County Attorney Timothy Maresh. A family friend took a very distraught James to the hospital where his mother was fighting for her life. They were soon joined by another family friend, Reverend Wallace Chappell, pastor of First Methodist Church of Georgetown. Witness reports indicate that James was very anxious at the hospital and the Reverend asked the doctor to provide him with a tranquilizer, believing him to have been traumatized by the event. Upon receiving the news that his mother had died from her wounds, James simply said, "Thank you." Reverend Chappell, a neighbor of the Wolcott family, took James back to the parsonage while the authorities processed the crime scene. Ranger Riddles and Reverend Chappell began reviewing the evening's events with James who still maintained that "someone" had shot his family. According to his report, Ranger Riddles idly chatted with James about his activities with his father. Then he asked James directly, "Did you kill your parents, son?" With only a brief hesitation and a sigh, James replied "Yes, sir," and went on to describe each of the shootings in detail. Although there are variations of the subsequent exchange, court and police reports agree that James indicated that he hated his parents, giving motive to his actions. After he was informed of his Miranda Rights, James stated he did not want a lawyer and was willing to show the investigators where he hid the rifle.

James Wolcott was held in the Williamson County Jail in Georgetown until his trial.

His relatives from South Carolina arrived fairly quickly and remained in town for a few days. During that time they made seemingly opposing statements to the court. His aunt Dorothy, Elizabeth's sister, said that despite everything, the family wanted what was best for Jim and if he were to be hospitalized they wanted him to be located close to family so they could visit. Her husband simply said, "Jim has always been on the brilliant side, and he has gone berserk."

### ***The Trial***

The hearings and trial of James Wolcott for the murder of his father, Gordon Wolcott, began in October 1967. After reviewing the facts of the case, the court determined that now sixteen-year old James was competent to stand trial as an adult. The adult certification statute was brand new and Wolcott was the first-ever case in Williamson County. He was represented by prominent Georgetown attorney Will Kelly McClain. According to McClain's son, Dr. Martin McClain, his father came to the case reluctantly, after the wife of close friend who was also a colleague of Gordon's at Southwestern University, encouraged him to consider it. Now well into her nineties, this friend recalls W.K. McClain as "an exceptional and honorable lawyer." Still, 46 years later, people still question why McClain agreed to defend a seemingly indefensible client.

Martin recalls his father "felt like folks wanted to lynch the kid" and he needed a good defense. One of McClain's law partners remembers that he once commented, "It was what Gordon would have wanted me to do." Still, it is said that the trial took an enormous toll on McClain, who, according to friends, seemed to age ten years in the six months he spent on the defense in hearings

and the trial.

James' own defense was that he had known for some time he was mentally ill. During pre-trial medical evaluations, he claimed to have considered suicide the previous winter, stating that he was "just bored with it all." According to court transcripts, James began sniffing airplane glue several months prior to the crime, contributing to a condition his doctors diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenia. Other depositions and reports indicate James said he believed his father, mother and sister were trying to drive him insane, or destroy him. He "did it" in self-defense before they got him first, although his reasons were as unseemly as they were shocking. During his assessment with Dr. H.R. Gaddy, Jr. James stated that, among other things, his mother chewed her food so loudly that he would have to leave the room, and his sister had a really bad accent. He did not mention his father in Gaddy's interview, but a classmate indicated in a deposition that his father wouldn't allow him to go to a peace rally, insisted that he cut his hair, and wouldn't let him wear his anti-Vietnam buttons. Martin says Will Kelly knew an insanity defense was risky, but after a fairly short and relatively unremarkable trial, an all-male jury found James not guilty by reason of insanity. He was sentenced February 2, 1968 to Rusk State Hospital in Nacogdoches, Texas for an unspecified length of time; until he "became sane."

### ***After The Trial***

Martin McClain said his father told him at the time that James did not actually live at Rusk full time during his detention. Purportedly, one of James' psychiatrists felt he didn't deserve to be incarcerated and invited James to live in his own home. According to Martin McClain's account, the doctor and his wife became "sort of surrogate parents," apparently trusting James around their family. Medical records have since been destroyed, but in 1974, the hospital administrator sent a letter to the Williamson County District Attorney stating that James was no longer suffering from paranoid schizophrenia and requested a competency hearing. Just six years after shooting his entire family, a jury declared James Wolcott sane after only ten minutes of deliberation, making him a free man.

The district attorney at the time subsequently filed a motion to dismiss the indictments for Elizabeth and Libby's murders, conceding if James had been insane when he killed his father, a new jury would certainly find him insane for the other two.

Because he had been found not-guilty of the murders, James, the only surviving heir, was entitled to his parents' estate. He also received a monthly stipend from his father's pension fund, and was ultimately awarded the balance of the estate, minus his attorney's fees and those paid to Mrs. Wolcott's sister, the estate executor. As unbelievable as it may seem in today's "Google society," what happened to James Wolcott after that was mostly unknown. As far as anyone knew, he left Georgetown and never contacted his family or anyone who knew him. He took nothing from his family home and left no forwarding information outside of court records. But he and his story remain a part of the city and those who lived here in the 1960s. Like many small towns that suffer a similar event, people tend to think of their home in terms of before-and-after the crime. It changes things because people just never imagine someone could do such a thing.

### ***Life After Rusk***

Rusk State Hospital began a student practicum program with Stephen F. Austin University in 1970. Previous testing showed James to have an IQ of at least 134, and he received a Bachelor's Degree from the university in 1976, just two years after his release from Rusk. It is conceivable that while in detention at the Rusk Hospital, James received the equivalent of a GED and likely completed some college coursework. James applied to the Nacogdoches Municipal Court to affect a legal name change. His filing did not include a lawyer's name, but it stated "it would be in his best interest" to change his name from James Gordon Wolcott to James David St. James, and the judge agreed. After receiving his Masters' Degree in Psychology in 1980, James St. James began his doctoral work at the University of Illinois, and received his Ph.D. in 1988. Dr. St. James began teaching at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois in the Behavioral Sciences Department and received a leadership award in 1997. He is currently an Associate Professor of Psychology and the department chair.

### ***Professor St. James Today***

Millikin University has arguably benefitted greatly from Dr. St. James' understanding of and devotion to psychology. He says, "There is no job title in the world containing the word psychologist that does not require a Master's degree." And he believes research is essential to success in any case. His mission at Millikin, therefore, is to vet, educate, and prepare his students for graduate school.

Although he is a tenured professor, Dr. St. James continues to do his own research. He doesn't like computers but he has been designing and writing his

own programs since the 1980s “simply because no one else writes effective programs” he can use to analyze his data. As a scientist, Dr. St. James seems to have an objective approach to religion as well and is very artful in his delivery. He is an atheist but he has been practicing his delivery for many years, on hundreds of students—with varying belief systems—without offending them. To paraphrase: *Although some religious revelations may indeed be the word of God, they still contradict each other and therefore none of them can be true, so just get over it.*

A source close to him says he enjoys (or used to) reading Freud in the original German, he is an excellent guitar player, and never seemed to be a fan of driving. He watches golf occasionally on television but really doesn't have much use for TV. He prefers to read and continue learning all the time. As a youth, his room was full of books by Ian Fleming, anti-establishment poets, and a lot of science fiction and fantasy. He says now he prefers to read mysteries, and he never wants to retire. People who know him today greet him fondly. His students call him “cool” and his courses get high marks in social media and in reviews. He can entertain and talk expertly about almost any topic, except perhaps pop culture, which he seems to find odious. I had the distinct impression he would weep if you even mentioned the words “American Idol” or Lady Gaga.

His carefully crafted universe enables him to do the one thing he has been primarily committed to for all of his adult life, his academics. In conversation, he is extremely private about himself, although it's not immediately noticeable because he is well-read and he dodges questions. But if you mention “attention response time” or other psychology terms, his voice goes up, as does his posture, and he shows you again how smart he is.

### ***Afterword***

It is difficult to say if fifteen-year old James Wolcott is still in there somewhere, or if he truly picked up where he left off and continued his life's path, as outward appearances indicate. Having studied his photos dozens of times, I could see the face of the young boy with bloody hands mingled with that of the older man across the table. I had to remind myself about the tragic events of 1967 and picture sweet Libby in her blood-stained Adam & Eve pajamas those times when I wondered if it was wrong to potentially throw a wrench into this man's life. He may never share the real “why” with anyone and really doesn't care if we are curious. Although many have wondered what happened to him, he stated emphatically that he is “profoundly uninterested in what people in Georgetown think of him.” Rest assured, it is not likely James Wolcott (or St. James) will ever attend a reunion.

Dr. St. James has spent decades sharing his vast knowledge of and affection for his studies and hasn't had so much as a parking ticket as far as anyone knows. While there are students who may be better off that he went to Rusk instead of prison, the world would also have been a better place if his father's wisdom and mother's generosity had not died with them, and if his sister's brilliance hadn't been snuffed out before it had a chance to blossom. In the end, there remain things that continue to confound. One is the irony of a person who hated his father enough to pull the trigger, yet his adult life and occupation are an uncanny mirror of his father's. Second, although the murders of Gordon, Elizabeth and Libby Wolcott had a profound and lasting effect on the people of Georgetown, they don't appear to have altered James' path, and it doesn't seem to bother him any more now than it did in 1967 -- which is the most unsettling part of all. I think most people want to believe that the man responsible, or at least the son left behind, would be the most affected – maybe there's a good psychologist out there who can help.

— *Georgetown Advocate*

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### **Reader Opinions**

**ryan • ryc0002@yahoo.com**

AUG 02 • ^Get that stick out of your ass. I thought it was a pleasant read and an interesting article. I saw a cover on him on CNN news and wanted to know more. Thanks for sharing.

**Kat • countrykat@me.com**

AUG 01 • I enjoyed this article and the curiosity of the fact that such a heinous act can be committed by someone who then can lead what appears to be a fairly normal and non-threatening life. My personal and clinical opinion is that anyone who commits such an act, insane or not, be monitored for the rest of their lives as psychotic breaks can occur more than once. This article throws a wrench in much of my experience and I enjoy such wrenches as it reminds me that all is not so simple. While it seems that his family may have been "normal", my mind wonders what terrors may have occurred behind closed doors. Or was this due to a psychotic break coupled with sniffing glue? It's all fascinating. Very tragic, yet psychologically fascinating.

**Sheller • Shellertorres@gmail.com**

AUG 01 • Do you really feel its your duty to 'seek justice' for this family or

are you just the smarmy reporter you appear to be who found a juicy tidbit to further your career from fluff articles? By the way, the guns and ammo ads on the page are a tasteful touch.

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## Longhorn Junction Anticipates Appeal Of Case Against Garver

Ann Marie Gardner •

In late 2012, Georgetown Mayor Garver sent a letter to the Georgetown City Council that was released by the news media regarding the developers of a property known as Longhorn Junction. In it he accused the company of possible bribery and threatening the city staff. The Williamson County Attorney later adjudicated the accusations as unfounded.

The development company filed a slander suit in response to Garver's letter but visiting Judge Phillip Vick agreed with the defendant's attorneys and dismissed the lawsuit. Under a new law, the defendant may file a motion to dismiss, thereby halting any other action regarding discovery such as depositions or other evidence gathering.

Garver's attorneys argued that he is protected by his position as Mayor; i.e., state law shields an elected official performing legislative action even if what he or she says is not true or accurate. In this case, the Judge ruled Garver was acting in his capacity as an elected official and so was exempt from the laws typically related to slander.

The plaintiffs' suit stated that Garver was not acting in legislative action since the letter was given first to the news media. Plaintiffs believe it was an attempt to slander their good name and nothing more. As evidence of this, one council member provided an affidavit stating that he read the letter in the paper before he received a copy from the Mayor.

The developers' attorneys argued this sequence of events demonstrates Garver was not acting in the interest of the City but in a deliberate fashion to harm their client.

The meeting in question was regarding an EB5 (employment-based) effort in the southern part of Georgetown. Developer Bruce Barton was sharing information with Economic Development Director Mark Thomas about the project. Witnesses to the conversation stated in their affidavits that Thomas' statement was untrue and the comments that allegedly constituted a "threat" were never spoken. Additionally, the City-supplied attorneys gave the court two different versions of Barton's purported statements.

Barton asserts that he was reviewing a historical event related to a previous HEB distribution center project in the 1980s, which had caused upheaval in Georgetown. He says there was no threat and Mark Thomas does not have any involvement in the current project at Longhorn Junction. Barton also pointed out that he believes Thomas does an excellent job for the community and we are lucky to have him here; "I have always and continue to be a big supporter of his efforts."

The Longhorn Junction developers anticipate being able to take advantage of their right to appeal the judgment to the Travis County Court of Appeals. To summarize his position, Barton says, "This is very serious. I believe the citizens of Georgetown deserve to know if their elected officials are misusing their offices to attempt to have innocent citizens arrested and indicted."

*More...*

— *Georgetown Advocate*

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## "People Don't Want To Do Business In Georgetown" – Terry Irión, Austin Attorney

Mike Payne •

If development in Georgetown is booming, it would appear that the planning and zoning commission has not gotten the notice. They have skipped at least three meetings since December 2012 because there have not been any new projects to discuss.

Although the headline is from a respected development attorney in Williamson and Travis Counties, at a meeting earlier this year concerning branding for the area south of town, Mark Thomas, Economic Development director for the City

of Georgetown, also commented that Austin real estate commercial brokers will not bring projects to Georgetown. Bruce Barton, Georgetown developer explains that the real problem is that the public is not really aware of this and “many don’t realize that commercial projects are the very backbone to shore up the local tax base, keeping higher taxes off homes.

”It’s no secret that building a new business in the City of Georgetown is often rife with complexities and delays due to the fact that every governmental department has its own set of priorities. Getting these departments to coordinate and focus on the end result, enabling greater investment in the City, is the job of the City Manager as the de facto COO. The Planning Department are the keepers of the process but have no control over other departmental decisions but are held responsible to deliver those verdicts to builders and developers. The difficulty, according to several business owners we have spoken to, arises when you realize you don’t know when or how other departments are going to hold up the process or change the requirements. Barton says his company faced enormous unnecessary costs and obstacles during the recent sale of property to HEB, noting that this problem is not just attached to his projects, but that “everyone who must interact with the city is aware there is ‘intense dysfunction.’”

“When we figure our costs, we take into account all compliance costs of a project. When the rules are changed in the middle of the project arbitrarily, it obviously affects cost and bottom line,” contends Barton.

Barton says he has on his desk a prime example of this type of “but wait, there’s one more thing” management. The detail has to do with a skilled nursing facility that had property under contract in front of Sun City, who decided to pull out of the project; Barton believes the project went south largely due to the fact that the city’s original engineering plans estimated cost of electricity was \$65,000 and then a few months later, somehow the number exploded to approximately \$360,000 to serve the site with electricity.

In addition, Barton’s development attorney Terry Irion points out an apartment complex project that was proposed on property now known as Rivery Place. Although the zoning was C-3, compliant with multi-family homes and clearly marked as such on zoning maps, when the project was brought before city staff it was denied. When Irion inquired about this discrepancy, he says he was further told, “You’re not from around here. You don’t know how things work.” A comment that has left Barton wondering, “how can we expect people to invest in a place where we’re all running around like we’re playing football with ever-moving goal posts?”

Barton, a developer with a 30 year history of doing business is concerned by the number of projects that are slipping through Georgetown’s hands. “Business works in cycles and when you miss an opportunity, you have missed it forever and someone else will grab the brass ring you wanted. All we want is a level playing field, where the rules are known ahead of time and do not change.”

*Editor’s Note: This is the first in a series of reports concerning the issue of development in the city of Georgetown. Many people have contacted us to voice extreme discontent with their dealings with the city, but were reluctant to do so publicly for fear of possible retribution against new or ongoing projects. We anticipate and hope that the city will share what it has done, and is doing, as City Manager Paul Brandenburg stated, “to make the planning and development process more efficient and customer friendly.” We look forward to dialog and solutions which will implement better relationships between developers and the city.*

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— Georgetown Advocate

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**Wolcott - Will Kelly McClain, A Lifetime Legacy**



Ann Marie Gardner •

Will Kelly McClain's life was about much more than being a lawyer. And certainly about more than one case in 1967.

## Early Life

His youth was shaped by a number of influences. He was born in Lebanon, Tennessee and lost his father when he was still a boy. Will Kelly, his brother George, and mother Rita went to live with her mother's family on a farm in Lebanon. He grew up after that as a country boy in the Cook family with many cousins to whom he became a brother. His older brother George had fallen ill with a high fever as a child and experienced some mental challenges as he grew up, but he was capable and had his own special talents. As an adult, George sold men's clothing at a shop on the Square called the Toggery. He was well known in Georgetown for his sense of style as well as his kindness. Everyone called him "Uncle George."

After her husband died, Rita McClain got a job as dietician and dining room director at Cumberland University in Tennessee where her cooking and etiquette were quickly recognized and appreciated. During her tenure there, she played hostess for a large conference of university presidents and "put on the dog" for them. Her grandson Martin says she was a disciple of Fanny Farmer and her own mother's cooking, and had learned to cook well for a great many people while on the farm with a number of laborers to feed. As it turned out, the President of Southwestern University was so impressed with her style that he offered her a job. He promised her that as a bonus, they had just finished the first hall for women and had the best kitchen in the Southwest! She would have a large staff and even a very nice apartment as the housemother in Laura Kuykendall Hall. Granddaughter Meredith says as soon as she got the offer, she put her hat and gloves on and got on a train to Texas, which is how they ended up in Georgetown.

## Living in Texas

When the Depression hit, Will Kelly had recently graduated from law school and took a job with the Federal Reserve Bank in Dallas. He didn't like it much; he wanted to be a lawyer and be out on his own. He came back to Georgetown because Rita was receiving a good salary, plus he had dining privileges at the college so he could keep body and soul together while working to become a lawyer.

George and Will Kelly were able to live for a short time in her apartment but even back then, living with mom sometimes had its disadvantages. Rita's goal was to choose the richest girl at SWU for Will Kelly. She even held regular card games in her drawing room and invited all the richest and prettiest girls to meet her handsome son. But Will Kelly had already fallen in love with a beautiful poetry writer at Cumberland named Rosamond to whom he was eventually engaged. She was the oldest of ten children and grew up "poor as a church mouse" so she was also practical and they waited out the terrors of the Depression before getting married. They were finally wed in 1936 and went all the way to Round Rock for their honeymoon.

## Political Dreams

Will Kelly decided when he came to Georgetown he needed to make some friends in the Courthouse. He did and there were several in particular who gave him sage advice to help him succeed in politics: Judge Sam Stone; County Surveyor Dor Brown, County Clerk Stiles Byrum, and possibly most important, District Court Judge W.H. Nunn. They said he needed to go out to the country communities, where people spoke German or Czech, and join an insurance lodge. He learned one important phrase in German, which translates to "I thank you for your vote." Will Kelly had always been well-liked in town and he went one Sunday each month to the meetings so when the votes came in, he won by viele votes. In Taylor he was in charge of WPA projects and established a sawmill where workers cut walnut and other hardwood from Williamson County,

sawed them into lumber and made furniture. He provided many jobs for people in Taylor and success for the sawmill and furniture factory. The craftsmen presented him a handmade walnut desk when the WPA project was complete, which he kept for the rest of his life.

Because he was creating and supporting jobs in Taylor and had a good rapport with the outlying communities, he was easily elected DA when he ran. He held office for ten years.

Judge Tim Wright, who was McClain's law partner in later days says Will Kelly made friends all over. There was a man who sold cold drinks and newspapers on the south side of the city square and Kelly always let him know when he would be doing a closing argument. On hot days, the courtroom windows were open to keep the air moving and the newspaper man stopped work just to listen to Mr. McClain's booming voice coming over the breeze. He smiled to picture him waving his bible and thundering at the jury to make his case.

## Hangin' A Shingle

McClain remained in the DA's office during WWII. But when the troops returned, he went into private practice and became a defense attorney with great success. He continued to do political work and helped several prominent figures in their elections, including Lyndon Johnson, for whom he served as County campaign manager. He was a great Roosevelt Democrat. There was a big political fracas in Texas in 1948 about the wellhead tax on gas and oil. The oil companies were against it, of course, and fought tooth and nail but McClain was an advocate of the wellhead tax. This is important because Will Kelly ran for Johnson's vacated congressional seat in 1948 against ten other candidates in the enormous 10th district. He covered it by car with his young son Martin along to nail placards in every dusty store and on every dirt road. McClain was second place in the primary and was honored to participate in a runoff. At that point he was offered support from an influential Austin group but they insisted that he give up the wellhead tax. He said he would not, tossed them out of his office, and his opponent won the seat. Still, Martin says, it was an exciting boyhood summer driving all over with a speaker on the roof, and enjoying good Texas barbecue. He said the barbecues were an essential part of Texas politics and fortunately they still echo around the state today from time to time. Will Kelly was also a part of the Committee for Better Schools; the initial effort to integrate the GISD in the early 1960s.

## Mrs. McClain

Rosamond McClain was a very competent, smart, and pretty woman who got along with a lot of people. She would always hold her ground and discipline children who weren't doing right but she was beloved by everyone. She and Will Kelly loved to square dance and frequently did that as their evening out. Former SWU teacher and Georgetown legend Esther Weir agrees that they were great dancers and Will Kelly was a good caller. Meredith says, "Mother loved plants and flowers and went to arranging classes. She entered competitions and did weird things with vases to make them stylish." She loves the fact that she grew up with a mother who was an accomplished gardener. Rosamond was the President of gardening club and in recognition of her efforts and her kindness, the club planted a tree in her honor in San Gabriel Park.

## Family Legacy

There is still a lot of the McClain family in San Gabriel park, even literally. The most visible contribution was completed when Will Kelly was president of the Georgetown country club. In the 60s it was "a big old funky house with a swimming pool with a good barbecue guy and eight-hole golf course." Under his presidency, the first low-level causeway was built over the river so members would not have to drive their cars through the water to get there. Will Kelly was also instrumental in pouring the slab that was then used for square dancing in the park.

Finally, as a tribute when Will Kelly and Rosamond passed, their children spread their ashes into the river at the country club. But while they thrived in Georgetown, their house was a fitting gathering place for the many people who loved and admired them. They had a dining room with doors that opened in all directions, and the lower floor was basically one big room.

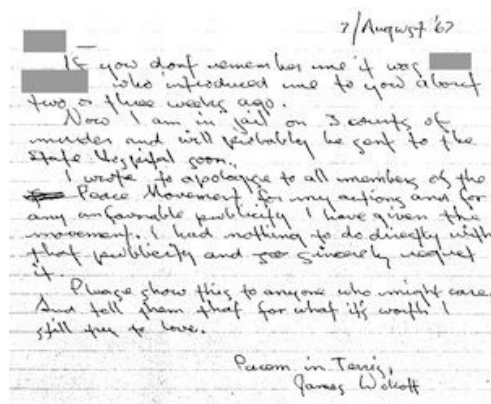
Both McClain children have many fond memories of Georgetown and it was all the better for their family having been so much a part in building it through the mid 20th century

— *Georgetown Advocate*

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## Wolcott - "I write to apologize..."



7/August 67

If you don't remember me it was [redacted] who introduced me to you about two or three weeks ago.

Now I am in jail on 3 counts of murder and will probably be sent to the State Hospital soon.

I write to apologize to all members of the Peace Movement for any unfavorable publicity I have given the movement. I had nothing to do directly with that publicity and am sincerely regretful of it.

Please show this to anyone who might care. And tell them that for what it's worth I still try to love.

Pacem in Terris,  
James Wolcott

Scanned copy of Wolcott's letter on the day of his family's funeral.

Ann Marie Gardner •

James Wolcott was arrested in the very early hours of Saturday, August 5th. On Monday, August 7 the funerals for his family members were held at the First Methodist Church. He did not attend. Instead, he wrote this letter from the Williamson County jail to an associate in the Vietnam Peace Movement in Austin. District Attorney Jana Duty pointed out several thought-provoking parts of the letter.

First, as an allegedly delusional person who just lost his whole family, he had the presence of mind to write a letter from jail to someone he had met only once. He did not express any sadness or sorrow for killing his parents and sister during his confinement, psychoanalysis, or trial. However, he apologized for bad publicity he may have brought on the peace cause, but did not take responsibility for it. His desire to join a peace movement, and the Latin *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth) conflict with the fact that he used a firearm to kill his family.

Also, it seems premature to express to the recipient (or assume) that he would soon be in a State Hospital since he confessed to having planned the crime and had been in jail barely 48 hours.

Finally, he says he will still try to love, which mirrors quotes and poetry on the walls in his bedroom but not his actions toward the people who already loved him. One could surmise he loved only what made sense to him and was disappointed when anything—parents or jail—got in the way of that.

— *Georgetown Advocate*

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## Wolcott - Paranoid Schizophrenia?

Ann Marie Gardner •

Paranoid schizophrenia is a chronic mental illness in which a person loses touch with reality (psychosis). The classic features of paranoid schizophrenia are having delusions and hearing things that aren't real. Signs and symptoms may include Auditory hallucinations, such as hearing voices; delusions, such as believing a co-worker wants to poison you; anxiety, emotional distance, violence, argumentativeness, self-important or condescending manner, and suicidal thoughts and behavior. In paranoid schizophrenia, a common delusion is that you're being singled out for harm. You may also have delusions of grandeur. You hold on to these false beliefs despite evidence to the contrary. Delusions can result in aggression or violence if you believe you must act in self-defense against those who want to harm you. An auditory hallucination is the perception of sound—usually voices— that no one else hears. The sounds may be a single voice or many voices. These voices may talk either to you or to each other. The voices are usually unpleasant. They may make ongoing criticisms of what you're thinking or doing, or make cruel comments about your real or imagined faults. Voices may also command you to do things that can be harmful to yourself or to others. When you have paranoid schizophrenia, these voices seem real. at the voices. Paranoid schizophrenia and other forms of schizophrenia are brain disorders. Signs and symptoms typically develop between the teenage years and the mid 30s. It is a chronic condition that requires lifelong treatment. Source: MayoClinic.com — *Georgetown Advocate*

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## Wolcott - Elizabeth "Libby" Wolcott 1950-1967



Elizabeth "Libby" Wolcott

Ann Marie Gardner •

Causes often have a focus or an inspiration to guide and motivate participants to more and greater action. Vicki Vickers, the Williamson County District Attorney Office Manager, steadfastly stood up for Libby Wolcott, making her the touchstone for why this story continues to be important. Sadly, victims of a murder are often the forgotten part of the story. No matter the outstanding life a person led, when death is by homicide, generally that is all people focus on afterward. Because of Libby, there remains a real sadness about an event nearly half a century ago, and a reason to continue working for justice for victims in general. For all Libby could have been...

**LIBBY WOLCOTT** was brilliant; an honor student and likely to be the valedictorian of her class. She was an all-A student as early as the seventh grade but was not really a book-worm. She was a very popular! She played the mandolin, and was her class treasurer in her final school year. She was known to be a wonderful actress, although she could also be shy. She loved the outdoors, was active in the Methodist Youth Fellowship and worked at the Weir Ranch at the Methodist Day Camp in the summer of 1967.

— *Georgetown Advocate*

[submit your opinion](#)

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## Wolcott - Justice

Cathy Payne •

As Americans we like to think we know what justice means and we have faith that our system will provide it. As a general rule, I personally have great faith that, although it's not perfect, no better system exists in the world today.

While James Wolcott did go through our system, and was even tried as an adult at sixteen years old, the lingering question in this case remains, "was six years in a state hospital— for a cold-blooded triple murder with no apparent motive —appropriate?" Indeed, this once "paranoid schizophrenic" appears to have lived a model, if not exceptional, life since; he has become a doctor of psychology and a well-liked university professor. I just can't forget the other wellliked university professor, his father, whose life and similarly great work was cut tragically short.

Not that there is anything that can be, or should be done from a legal perspective today. In fact, Williamson County District Attorney Jana Duty, who has built a reputation for taking on the toughest cases, concedes that this one is over. As much as she would love to see James stand trial for his mother and sister's deaths, there are just too many hurdles that would be impossible to overcome," says Duty. "This crime occurred 46 years ago—most of the witnesses have long since passed away, the meaningful physical evidence is gone, but most significantly, since he was found to be insane when he killed his father, the same evidence would require a jury to find him insane when he killed his mother and sister," she says, explaining why the remaining indictments were dropped in 1974.

Although Dr. St. James asserts that he is "profoundly uninterested" in what the people of Georgetown think about him, maybe there is a small measure of justice for Gordon, Elizabeth, Libby and the people of Georgetown just in knowing that he knows that we know who he is..

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— *Georgetown Advocate*

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## Wolcott - The Black Mask?



Ann Marie Gardner •

James' bedroom (see Photo Gallery for more photos) had characteristics of a typical 60s teenager; art and pictures on the wall, peace icons, clothes on the bed, etc. But, his room also contained a television, several hundred books, tubes of airplane glue, wax bags for "huffing" and one very unsettling piece of art.

After his arrest, James was interviewed and tested by law enforcement and medical professionals. His probation officer said he mentioned "The Black Mass" in conversation but no one was familiar with the term.

The name was also mentioned during an interview with a classmate who said James liked to talk about the lack Mass. The student did not know what the term meant but said it was something James "got from up East... and he was always talking about freedom and wished he could live so no one could bother him."

One theory is that James actually meant The Black Mask, which was a radical anarchist group formed in the mid-60s who wore black masks and staged protests and disruptions (up East) among and around New York City art and cultural events. They represented freedom and rebellion, likely very attractive to a young man who felt held back.

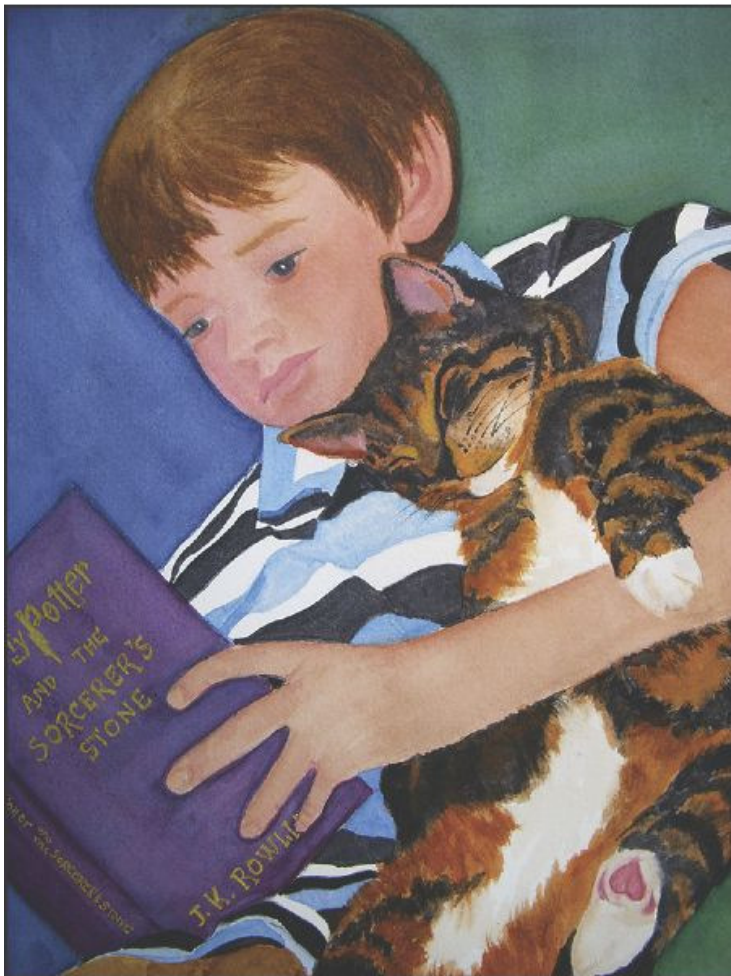
There is also a possibility, although less likely, that he meant the Black Mass radio program that was played at night from September 1963 to the fall of '65. It featured tales of the supernatural narrated with creepy voices and sound effects. ([www.kpfahistory.info](http://www.kpfahistory.info))

Although James himself would probably smirk at our curiosity, the third possibility is that the Black Mask was a character from a horror story or comic. The large black velvet wall covering in his room was "painted" with a skeletal face that seemed to stare at the viewer from the depths behind the wall. One witness said it was particularly horrifying and looked like a face with the flesh peeling off. One can only speculate about the thoughts inspired by this "face" while in a drug-induced state.

— *Georgetown Advocate*

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## For The Love Of Books Art Exhibit Coming To The Georgetown Library



This painting titled "Charlie and Peeves and Harry" by artist Courtney Brown will be the poster subject for the exhibit.

The Georgetown Public Library and Waterloo Watercolor Group will hold the opening of "For the Love of Books" an exhibit of art on Sunday, August 4, from 2 to 4:00 in the afternoon. With artworks available for purchase, the show will be on display throughout the month of August. Using books as inspiration, the artists have chosen subjects ranging from childhood memories of poetry and fairy tales to contemporary best-sellers. Quotes, authors, words, even book portraits inspire these beautiful watercolors, collages and acrylic paintings. Each painting is accompanied by the artist's description of the inspiration that led to its creation. Library patrons will decide the "People's Choice Award" by casting their votes at the opening and throughout the month of August.

Visit [library.georgetown.org](http://library.georgetown.org) for library hours.

## Still Going Strong At 100! Governor Perry Helps Schwertner State Bank Celebrate 100 Years



Governor Rick Perry poses with the staff of Schwertner Bank

In the fall of 1912, a new business was about to open in the fast-growing farming and ranching town of Schwertner, Texas. On October 21, Adolf Schwertner, for whom the town was named the year before, threw open the doors of a new bank. Over the decades, the bank passed from Adolf's hands down through the Schwertner family, until in 1977 it was purchased by now Chairman of the Board and Adolph's grandson, Jim Schwertner. Today, a century later, Schwertner State Bank still operates on the same three core principles that Adolf himself used to build a strong business foundation for his venture – “to serve the community that supports us; to loan the money that is deposited to the local community first; and to know our customers.”

Schwertner State Bank and the Schwertner family's dedication to this philosophy was evident on July 19, 2013 when over six hundred people, many of them long-time customers, turned out to celebrate the bank's historic anniversary. The event described by Schwertner State Bank President Dale Hand as “our show of appreciation for [our customers'] support, loyalty and confidence,” was also attended by Texas State Banking Commissioner, Charles Cooper, Executive Vice-President of the Independent Bankers Association of Texas, Steve Scurlock, Executive Vice-President of the Texas Bankers Association, Donnie Palmer, former Chairman of the FDIC, Don Powell, Texas State Senator Charles Schwertner and Governor Rick Perry.

Describing the historic events that a bank had to have endured to survive for a hundred years including two world wars and the Great Depression, Jim recounts a story passed down about his grandfather, Adolph. “In the 1930s, bank examiners came in to look at the books in a year that had been especially tough for farming. The examiners were decidedly unhappy about the potential for repayment by some of the farmers. They queried my grandfather as to what he planned to do about it. He studied for a bit, got in his old Buick and drove down to his cotton gin, where he retrieved a stash of gold and cash; he returned to the bank and placed it before the examiners, exclaiming, ‘I know these people. I knew their families in Europe. I trust them. I will settle their accounts.’ And he did.” As the story goes, Adolph did not lose one cent as a result of his actions. Former Chairman of the FDIC, Don Powell further illustrates Schwertner State Bank's longevity and reliability, noting, “In 1930, four-thousand banks failed; in 1988 five-hundred eighty banks failed and 80% of them were in Texas. One bank that could always be counted on was Schwertner State Bank.”

In the years since Jim Schwertner has owned the bank, he has maintained Adolph's core philosophy of true community banking. Schwertner defines a community bank as, “one where our customers are our friends and neighbors; we know them and their families. When the drought comes and they hurt, we hurt; when the rains come and they're happy, we're happy. Our decisions are made on what is called ‘relationship banking’, not transactional banking as the large multi-state national banks do today. Banking is as much about character as it is about laws and regulations.”

Exactly 100 years after its conception, under the leadership of Jim Schwertner, Schwertner State Bank was ranked among the 359 safest banks in America. When Jim bought control, the bank had assets of \$1,200,000. Today, it boasts approximately \$42,000,000 in deposits, and has never had a losing year. Schwertner is proud of the fact that his bank has always had a good relationship with bank examiners and doesn't apologize for what has been described as his conservative approach to the banking business. “We've been conservative for the right reasons. It's important to be a good steward of other people's money.” Texas State Senator Charles Schwertner also applauds this approach, pointing out that throughout a century of national economic and banking crisis, “Schwertner State Bank adhered to the conservative values of fiscal responsibility, responsible leadership and service to the community, never taking a bail-out from the federal government or passing the buck to someone else.”

When it comes to stewardship and people serving people, Jim points to Dale Hand, current President of Schwertner State Bank as a prime example. Hand has been with the bank since 1988 when there were nine family-owned banks in the area; today, Schwertner State Bank is one of only two. While having a century-old bank still owned and operated by its founding family is a rarity, Hand laughs that having the Chairman of the Board two miles down the road running one of the largest cattle operations in the United States hasn't hindered his ability to make decisions for the bank. “Jim told me early on that if I promised not to sell cows, he promised not to make loans. He's kept his promise and I've kept mine.” Schwertner agrees, noting that he's privileged to have one of the best presidents of any community bank in the state of Texas as part of the

***"If more communities had the stability and predictability of Schwertner State Bank, the country would be stronger. These were people who understood the value of a dollar; they wanted to make sure the loans they made were stable, and the businesses they were loaning to, were stable. This is something Adolph, Eugene and Jim Schwertner have learned over a lifetime of taking care of people. If there was a motto for this bank, it would be "neighbor taking care of neighbor." Governor Rick Perry***

[submit your opinion](#)

## Lower Development Costs Mean Savings For Buyers On Dale Cannon Homes

Mike Payne •

Chatting with Dale and Beth Cannon, home builders in the new HomePlace At Jarrell sub-division, would immediately put anyone at ease. Both members of this husband and wife team are gregarious, talkative and easy to relate to; and both know their business inside and out. The Cannons, who hail from the Killeen area of Bell County, smile as they talk about their latest project in Jarrell. Less than three months ago they started construction on the first house in the HomePlace, and today that home is the first occupied in this new development. Dale's business philosophy is simple; "I have a passion for building homes, doing the absolute very best I can on each one, and then doing it again," he explains. Beth agrees, nodding affirmatively, "Dale is not satisfied until he's sure every home we build has been constructed in the very best way possible, with no shortcuts in material or construction, and until every detail has been attended to." "We build every home just as if we were going to live in it. And, even saying that, we take even more precautions to do the best we can because we know someone else will live in it and it has our name on it," she continues. Cannon confirms his wife's statement with a litany of quality features including the quality of the concrete slab through framing, heating and air conditioning, and the quality of appliances. Cannon even notes that their standards are much higher than most builders, noting, "The kitchens in our homes have granite. The appliances are stainless, and far above standard builder quality. We spend up to twice as much on appliances alone. We want our homeowners to have appliances that are state-of-the-art, energy efficient – really, a cut above." "Why did the Cannons decide to build in The HomePlace at Jarrell? Although he has high praises for the community overall, one man literally sealed the deal. "After meeting Troy Bradshaw, it was obvious that we were dealing with a man who thinks like we do," says Cannon. "Troy has invested heavily in the infrastructure of the development. Every home has good size lots, sidewalks, wide streets, street lights, and is immaculately clean. Where you find that type of developer it's much easier to build and maintain a quality desirable environment." Cannon, who has built hundreds of homes in his career, offers an explanation as to why people who visit a Dale Cannon home come away with a different feel. "For much of my career I had the privilege of building custom homes, so in most ways, every home we build today is custom. I'm used to working with great plans, using high-end materials; so when we build, we are looking from a top-down approach. We've never 'slapped together' cheap tract housing as quickly as possible. It isn't in us to do that. We don't now and we never will." Beth manages many aspects of the business, and Dale says having her around adds "a woman's touch" to decisions that are frequently made by men. Cannon cites the fact that his entire construction program is centered around livability; each room must have a fully recognizable function, and the home must maintain a comfortable yet subdued flow that offers maximum comfort for homeowners and guests alike. Cannon adds one more certainty: He's hooked on The HomePlace at Jarrell, anticipating building as many as fifteen homes this year. If traffic is any indication, he's likely to reach that goal. Homes in The HomePlace At Jarrell are selling for \$160,000 to \$250,000 plus, and the homes Dale Cannon has built all start at slightly over \$200,000. Because of the rural consideration of Jarrell, USDA No Money Down Loans are available locally at Schwertner State Bank, and other loan sources are available as well at Eagle State Bank. Cannon encourages everyone who wants to save up to 20% on a new home to check out these homes in Jarrell. "Jarrell has a great quality of life, excellent schools, virtually no crime and land prices haven't shot through the roof. It's a great place to live, work, and raise a family, and I hope everyone in the market will just come out and take a look around. The rest will take care of itself," closes Cannon. — *Georgetown Advocate*

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## Once A Marine, Always A Marine Williamson County Marine Corps League Finds Creative Ways To Support Local Servicemen

Tyler Agnew •

Honor. Courage. Commitment. The Williamson County Marine Corps League is dedicated to maintaining the core values of the Marine Corps and to serving the community. "The Marine Corps motto is improvise, adapt and overcome," League Commandant Joe Pondrom said. "That's the way we look at it. We go out there and take a look at what needs to be done." The League is entirely made up of volunteers. It raises money through events like an all-you-can-eat spaghetti fundraiser. The dinner is held from 5 to 7 p.m. on the second Friday of every month at the VFW Hall at 1000 North College Street in Georgetown. League Chaplain Chuck Patillo said, "The more people, the better. In the fall, we get a lot of people on Friday nights that'll come by and have spaghetti dinner with us on the way to the football games." Meals cost \$8 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under. Profits from the dinner are used to provide \$500 scholarships for outstanding college-bound Marine Corps Junior ROTC (MCJROTC) Cadets at Round Rock and Hendrickson High Schools. One student from each school is awarded the Distinguished Leadership Scholarship. "At the present time, we have two of our cadets using this scholarship," Round Rock High MCJROTC instructor Maj. Tedd Shimp said. He said he is honored to be associated with the League—"with Marines who continue to uphold our core values." The Marine Corps League's Congressional Charter was approved by the 75th U.S. Congress and signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on August 4, 1937. The Williamson County Detachment was certified in 1999. "We're non-political. We're a 501 (c)(4) corporation, which means our (League) is toward education. It's not just a charity," Patillo said. When invited, members of the League speak to students at local high schools. "(We) tell them about things that various guys did when they were in the Corps," Pondrom said. Most recently, the Williamson County Detachment visited the US Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment at Fort Sam Houston's Military Medical Center in San Antonio. The Marines there are still on active duty despite their injuries. Patillo said that the League helped them by providing materials that aren't given to them by the military— specifically books. "The Commandant of the Marine Corps has what he calls a reading list," he said. "These are the books that you need to read before you get promoted." Without them, a Marine cannot pass the written and oral exams that are required to move up in rank. There are about 65 books on the list. In all, they cost around \$1,000. League members were determined to improvise, adapt and overcome despite little funding for the books. They solicited donations and raised enough to buy one complete set of books, and plan to buy more for the wounded troops. Apart from the books, League members were able to provide encouragement. "There's nothing that young Marines enjoy more than meeting with old Marines that have been there and done that," Pondrom said. There are currently three World War II veterans, two Korean War veterans, "and a bunch of guys that were in Vietnam," serving on the Williamson County League Detachment he said. "We just go down and visit with them. We let them know that there is someone they can talk to and that can relate to some of what they're going through." Each November, the League sponsors the Marine Corps Birthday Ball in celebration of the Marine Corps birthday on November 10. "All Marines are welcome," Patillo said. Advertising is sold in the ball's program. The League also supports local Eagle Scouts, Toys for Tots, and any military veterans needing assistance as well as sending care packages to troops overseas. To donate to their work, mail checks made payable to Marine Corps League to: C/o Paymaster Gil Newfield 1507 Greenfield Drive Round Rock, TX 78664-3106 The League meets at the VFW Hall on the last Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. All Marines are invited. Patillo said, "Once a Marine, always a Marine." — *Georgetown Advocate*

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## Hellmann Steps Down From Dist. 2 Place On Council

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Troy Hellmann, city council member representing District 2, has resigned from the council. Hellmann is moving outside the District 2 boundaries in the coming weeks. The city council accepted Hellmann's resignation at their regular meeting July 23 where he served at his last meeting. The City's charter requires that council members reside in the districts they represent and that a special election is held within 120 days of a council vacancy. The City plans to hold a special election to fill the vacant seat for District 2 on November 5, 2013. The District 2 place on the council will again be on the ballot for the May 2014 election. — *Georgetown Advocate*

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## City To Hold Budget and Tax Rate Hearings in August

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City Manager Paul Brandenburg presented his proposed City budget for the 2013/2014 fiscal year at budget workshops with the city council on July 22 and 23. The proposed property tax rate is \$0.4395 per \$100 valuation, which is a \$0.0295 increase from the current rate of \$0.41. The increase is due to debt payments related to voter-approved bonds, primarily the \$29.5 million

approved by voters in 2011 to fund the Public Safety Operations and Training Center. The maintenance and operations (non-debt) portion of the property tax rate that funds general governmental departments such as public safety, the library, and parks is actually \$0.02 or 8.6 percent less than last year. The offset in funding for those departments is increased sales tax and other development-related revenues. The total proposed budget is \$220.7 million, including \$48 million for the general fund (e.g., police, fire, parks, library, and management services), \$44.8 million for utilities, \$42.2 million for capital improvements such as roads and infrastructure, and \$36.8 million for purchased electrical power. The City of Georgetown will be holding public hearings on the proposed property tax rate and budget for the 2013/2014 fiscal year, which starts on October 1. These hearings and public meetings are planned:

- August 6 at 4 p.m. First public hearing on the tax rate
- August 13 at 6 p.m. Second public hearing on the tax rate
- August 27 at 6 p.m. Public hearing and first reading of budget ordinances
- September 10 at 6 p.m. Second reading of budget ordinances

These hearings and public meetings will be held in the Council Chamber and Courts Building at 101 E. Seventh Street and will be broadcast on GTV channel 10 and streamed at [gtv.georgetown.org](http://gtv.georgetown.org). The public is invited to attend and participate. A summary presentation and executive summary of the proposed budget are available at [files.georgetown.org/annual-budget](http://files.georgetown.org/annual-budget). Copies of the complete proposed budget binder are available at the Georgetown Public Library, 402 W. Eighth Street, or at City Hall, 113 E. Eighth Street. — *Georgetown Advocate*

[submit your opinion](#)

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## Jury Verdict Shines Spotlight On Problem Of Domestic Violence

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On Thursday, June 27, 2013 a Williamson County jury sentenced Shawn Lynn Parker to eighteen years in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for the 2012 assault of his fiancée Melanie Gayton. During the four-day trial, jurors heard from witnesses who described how during an argument at their home, Parker pushed Gayton into a table and threw her to the ground, causing her severe pain. Witnesses stated that the assault occurred in front of the Gayton's young children. In the punishment phase of the trial, the jury learned of Parker's twenty-year history of criminal activities, including numerous assaults against family members. Mr. Parker had been previously sentenced to five years in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for the offense of Injury to a Child for breaking the arm of his ten month old daughter in 1993. Lytza Rojas, Williamson County Assistant District Attorney and lead trial prosecutor, stated that "domestic violence is a prevalent and ongoing threat in our community. Through their verdict the jury sent a clear message that domestic violence will not be tolerated in Williamson County." "The effects of domestic violence are far reaching," explained Assistant District Attorney Stacey Mathews, "affecting not only the direct victims of physical or emotional abuse, but also the children who all too often bear witness to the cycle of violence." Any further questions about this case may be directed to First Assistant District Attorney Mark Brunner. — *Georgetown Advocate*

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## WilCo Truancy Program Expanding

Ann Marie Gardner •

The Jarrell and Florence Independent School Districts recently voted to join the Georgetown ISD in partnering with the Williamson County Court and Juvenile Services Department to help assess and prevent school truancy. Precinct 3 Judge Bill Gravel handles truancy in the Williamson County Court for Jarrell, Florence and Georgetown and will fund a part-time employee for the Neighborhood Conference Committee (NCC) for Jarrell and Florence for the coming school year. The program is a collaborative effort that receives funding from the court; Scott Matthew of Juvenile Services provides training, and the school district provides office space and human resources. Gravel is very pleased with the development given the 90 percent success rate in GISD last school year, and says he "would rather spend all of his county resources on prevention if it would divert people entirely from the court system." Gravel says truancy is not to be taken lightly; first because ten truancy reports constitutes a crime in the state of Texas and students will be invited to his courtroom on the Class C misdemeanor charge. It is also possible for parents, grandparents or guardians to find themselves under arrest if they are negligent in compliance with the law. The second problem with truancy is that, statistically, there is a high correlation between Class C and future criminal activity. "The goal of the court," he says, "is not to punish kids or their parents but to ensure compliance with the law and the goal of the NCC is to nip it in the bud." When a student reaches a threshold of two or three absences, he or she is referred to the NCC program for assessment and action. For example, fictitious student "Barney Smith" has missed three days



of school in two weeks. Barney and his guardian will meet with the NCC coordinator, and one other member of the team, perhaps a school administrator, to get to the root of the problem. Many times Barney misses school simply because his mom leaves for work early and he can't get himself up on time so he decides not to go. This problem calls for an alarm clock that the NCC will provide. But, if it turns out the problem is that Barney is being bullied on the school bus, the meeting would include additional school personnel to deal with the problem, and Barney can be referred to Juvenile Services' trainer Marla Burns for some boot camp activities to build self-esteem. The beauty of the program is no matter the problem, there are a dozen experts at any given time who are willing and prepared to assess and customize a solution to keep Barney out of the courtroom and in the classroom. Judge Gravell applauds all of the districts for their vision and having volunteered to implement the program to solve problems ahead of time. NCC represents another example of the value that Williamson County places on its youth. Jarrell has the fastest growing school district in Williamson County and having compassionate and practical programs in place will push kids toward compliance because not only do they become aware of consequences, they have tools available to avoid them. — *Georgetown Advocate*

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## Condolences for Lakeway Police Officer



Press Release •

The City of Jarrell and the Jarrell Police Department would like to express our condolences to the family of Sergeant Chris Doles and to our brothers and sisters of the Lakeway Police Department over the unexpected passing of Sergeant Chris Doles earlier today, July 25th, 2013. Prior to being employed with the Lakeway Police Department, Sgt. Doles faithfully served the Jarrell community with integrity and professionalism. We will miss him, but he will never be forgotten. We pray that his family finds comfort in knowing that he was and always will be loved by the members of the Jarrell Police Department.

## In The Wake Of Burn Ban, Preparedness Is The Key To Fire Safety



A small grass fire caused by a carelessly tossed cigarette can spark major problems in dry conditions.

Cathy Payne •

Ready, Set, GO! The regularly occurring burn ban restrictions are an ongoing reminder that central Texas's extended drought conditions carry a high risk of wildfires throughout the state according to the Texas Forest Service. Wildfires were historically a part of the eco-system, managed by nature to rejuvenate and recharge eco-systems. During what was known as the "Big Blowup" in 1910, a wildfire consumed approximately three million acres in Washington, Montana, and Idaho. Until that time there had been a great debate about

whether defend against them; after that catastrophic event that killed 87 people (and was ultimately extinguished by hard rain), the National Forest Service declared as part of its mission "to prevent and battle against every wildfire." Since that time, man has encroached upon nature, and now has turned that natural habitat into housing developments, vacation resorts, and hunting lodges, making the need to be able to defend against fires that much more essential. Today the Texas Forest Service has designed twenty-first century, state of the art, protection methods that, in some measure, still seem inadequate against the untamed forces of nature. Between 2008 and 2011 there were 54,400 wildfires in Texas destroying 4.2 million acres, 1286 homes, and killing twenty-two people, including three civilians and nineteen firefighters. Texas has twenty-four million residents and the land mass that comprises the state is 97% privately owned. Only three percent of land is publicly owned, and of that, only 1.5% is managed by state, city, and local governments, giving Texas a minimal presence of state and federal land management resources due to the low percentage of publicly managed land. As a result, the Texas Forest Service has initiated a program entitled, "Ready, Set, Go!" which offers residents a personal wildfire action plan. This booklet details how to save lives and property through advance planning. The "Ready" part includes creating a Family Disaster Plan with meeting locations and communication plans that should be rehearsed regularly. "Ready" also includes nine recommendations to offer you and your family the best chance of survival. The "Set" section lists what to do as a fire approaches, including an inside checklist for your home, an outside checklist, and what to do if you suddenly find yourself trapped. "Go" tells when to leave, where to go, how to get there and what to take, along with a list of emergency supplies. The information contained in the booklet will be essential to saving many lives. This informational booklet is available from the Texas Forest Service, a part of the Texas A&M University System. Coincidentally, the photo shows how a major catastrophe could develop quickly. Apparently a cigarette was thrown out of a moving car along FM 972 just east of Walburg and started a grass fire in front of a plowed field. Passing motorists stopped and called authorities. Doug Hogan, Assistant Chief of the Weir Fire Department and first on the scene, said that local residents were very fortunate because "had this fire been just 200 feet to the east, it would have easily consumed a 500-acre wheat field before we stopped it." Hogan reminds residents that the recent rains can be misleading because there is a small amount of green on the ground, but by far, conditions are ripe for fires, and that mandates the necessity of the current burn ban. He recommends using extreme caution in every aspect of your personal life to help prevent the massive and ongoing wildfires. — *Georgetown Advocate*

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## Caring Place to Offer New Life Skills Program



Former headquarters and future education center for The Caring Place at 2001 Railroad Street. Renovations are due for completion in Fall 2013

Ann Marie Gardner •

If you have lived in or near Georgetown for any length of time, you have likely heard of "The Caring Place," the charitable organization located at 2000 Railroad Street near Route 29. It was founded in 1985 by Yolanda Branson, a volunteer at St. Vincent De Paul Society, and Marty Maxwell, an outreach worker. Its current success is as much a product of the benevolence of the citizens of Georgetown and Northern Williamson County, as for the management and program evolution that would make many Fortune 500 companies jealous. On its first day in 1985, The Caring Place was a renovated slaughterhouse with \$17 cash. In 1990 it moved to a small building at 2001 Railroad Street. In 2004 they built their current facility; 22,000 square feet housing administration, retail, services and a sizable grocery stockpile, and they are a \$1.7 million dollar business. This summer TCP is expanding back into the second building across the street. After renovations it will be used to provide programs and services to help people improve life skills and grow their independence. Selena Munoz is in charge of program development and the goal is to enlist local subject matter experts and counselors to help progress students back to self-sustenance. Classes are set to begin in the Fall and will potentially include everything from child care to job skills and fiscal management. If you are interested in teaching or taking a class, please contact Ms. Munoz at 512-943-0706. Executive Director John Stock hopes the new programs will boost the visibility and breadth of the organization. He is

passionate about the city, the people in it, and getting the word out that he and his 400 volunteers are there for every single person who needs them. All are welcome; even someone with a job and a house can fall on desperate times and need a bridge until things improve. The backbone of The Caring Place is what sets it apart from most charities. It is built on local donations and is for local families. Unlike long-term sustenance programs, TCP exists for people who are in crisis, which could be anyone, given the right circumstance (or the wrong one). The first thing you see when you walk into their office is "Our Daily Bread" station; a long shelf that is restocked every day with bread and rolls from H-E-B. The next station is the food pantry, stocked with food donations from local programs and funded by grants. It receives supplemental food from the Austin Food Bank and products range from canned goods to frozen meats. Those who qualify receive vouchers for a set amount of food per person for one week and people shop with a cart just as they would at a grocery store. There are shelves for diapers, soap, and all manner of household items. Food gifts also include fresh produce that is distributed on first, 3rd and 5th Mondays to the community. It is not uncommon to see a line of cars out to Route 29 waiting for their veggies. The most visible feature of TCP is the thrift store known as "The Shops." This enormous and artfully appointed retail space is broken down into departments; antiques, clothing, outdoors and more, and it is also what sets this charity apart from so many others. The thrift department receives goods from an average of 90 cars per day. Volunteers carefully select and prepare the best of the gently-used articles for sale and the revenue covers 60 percent of the expenses for operations and administration. TCP also receives grants and corporate donations, which cover the rest. This means 100 percent of every citizen donation goes to services for families in need; something very few non-profits are able to achieve. Don't just take our word for it. The Caring Place offers tours on the second and fourth Thursdays of every month. There is a complimentary lunch, a presentation, and a very interesting walk around the building. They will impress you with the scope and efficiency of their operations and you will enjoy perusing The Shops, plus the opportunity to meet some of the happiest and most fulfilled volunteers in Williamson County! If you have a group, call 512-943-0700 and TCP will schedule a tour for you on a day of your choosing. — *Georgetown Advocate*

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## Sculptures Come to Georgetown Library



Asiko-Moments by Olaniyi Rsheed Akindiya

• For the fifth year, the Texas Society of Sculptors' big summer show is at the Georgetown Public Library. This is a major event in which more than 100 pieces by forty-two artists are being shown. The show will remain in place until September 28. The opening reception will take place on Sunday, July 21, from 1-3 pm, on the library's second floor bridge. At this event the winners of the cash prizes and honorary recognitions will be announced. The Georgetown Arts and Culture Board has donated \$1800 for prizes, which makes the show an attractive event for the sculptors to enter. The show is juried, which means that each piece being shown has met the standards of professional sculptors. A wide range of media are represented, from traditional bronze and marble to Styrofoam and peanut shells to wood and clay and even bike parts. This year there are some very untraditional pieces that are sure to intrigue and amuse. — *Georgetown Advocate*

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## Repair, Replace, Remove...Receive



Mrs. Garcia took the day off to help work on her house and volunteer Mac Bineham was onsite to help with repairs.

Ann Marie Gardner •

It's summer and there's no school. It's over 100 degrees outside, so where do you expect to find teenagers? Generally not outside painting houses from 6:30 am to dinner time. But that's exactly what the Community Restore Georgetown Project volunteers are doing. Since 2009, for one week in June, 60-95 members of several Georgetown churches get together to work on the exteriors of homes belonging to citizens who need help to maintain or repair them. Volunteers are supervised by Mike Pickel of Main Street Baptist to fix windows, replace roofs, repair porches, clear away brush and do a lot of painting for people who have qualified for assistance from the Georgetown Housing & Neighborhood Development Department. The City pays for the materials for those who qualify, Community Restore pays for those outside the city limits, and the volunteers provide the effort. This year there are eight projects; a combined four roofs and exterior paint for three homes, a church, and two outbuildings. I visited with Ms. Hillery Pickel, who was overseeing a project on E 8th Street on the first day of work. She has been with the program for two years, and has been in construction (helping her dad, Mike Pickel) all her life. She has a degree in Construction Management and is working toward an engineering stamp as well. The Restore Project is her "vacation" from her full time job but she feels thankful that the people in the community allow her to help them every year. She appreciates the ability to work hard and really enjoy the results of improving a person or a family's quality of life. Hillery was working with a diverse crew; including this year's youngest members at 13 years old, to her 87-year-old grandfather Jim Pickel. The group was prepping, painting and very proud of the makeover for the home of Ms. Rosa Garcia. Mrs. Garcia's back porch had already been rebuilt, the stairs leveled, screens repaired and painted, and the youngsters were in the process of filling gaps in the siding before painting. Volunteers begin the week with a worship service Sunday evening where they meet the homeowners they will be helping throughout the week. Some camp out at their churches for the whole week but everyone meets at 6:30 am for breakfast and then work all day on their respective projects. They are supported by several local organizations, including American Business Women's Association and HEB who provide enough funds and food for up to 100 volunteers to have three meals a day (the volunteers insist that the meal and snack crews are the most important part of the team). McCoy's Building Supply teamed up with other business partners and collected \$8000 worth of tools and building materials for this year's efforts, and even paid for the shingles to finish a house that was outside Georgetown City limits. Information and a link to applications are available at [CommunityRestore.net](http://CommunityRestore.net) or any of the participating churches: San Gabriel Presbyterian, Wellspring United, Main Street Baptist, First Presbyterian, Hope United, Terra Nova, Grace Bible, and Georgetown Church of the Nazarene. — *Georgetown Advocate*

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**Solana Ranch Ready For 2013 Season**



#### Contributing Writer •

Solana Ranch began its journey in 1950 ago when Frank Michaux bought a very rough looking ranch, which immediately went into a seven-year drought. The Ranch was primarily a cedar break and took years of clearing and planning to improve the grasses and substantial water sources that exist on the ranch. Today, they have the same goals once again; to operate and maintain one of the finest working ranches in Central Texas. Kirk Michaux took the reins in 1995 and has spent much of his time continuing to improve the property. Removing vines, brush and other vegetation from streambeds provides better opportunities for rotational grazing on the 8,200 acre spread in the scenic Texas Hill Country, near the quaint, picturesque Village of Salado. Kirk has spent a lot of these years cleaning out cedar and cactus, improving pastures and restoring stream flow by working with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) to direct controlled burns and other programs. Kirk says "Our mission statement and overall goal is to make a profit but to conserve the land and improve it every year. We want to leave the Solana Ranch better than we found it." Getting rid of prickly pear cactus and cedar also improves the grazing for the two registered cattle herds he runs on contract for absentee cattlemen, and for the abundant wildlife that attracts hunters to Texas. These include trophy deer, wild turkey, doves, hogs and few exotic species. Their Wildlife Division provides several seasonal hunt packages beginning in September with dove season, continuing October through December for Whitetail Deer bow and rifle, then Whitetail Doe management in January, and hog and turkey seasons from February to April. In 2011, Kirk's son Mike became a part of the family business, learning the ins and outs of the day-to-day operation. Mike is the third generation Michaux to continue the tradition of land conservation and improvement. His mastery in hunting and fishing has benefited the progression of the Solana's hunting and future fishing programs through media and hard work. He is actively managing and participating in the multiple cattle and wildlife programs available, land improvement, conservation issues and even mapping out the routines of the employees and implementing guidelines. Today the Solana Ranch continues to provide, through ongoing conservation efforts, an environment where cattle and wildlife peacefully and successfully coexist. The Ranch is currently preparing for dove hunting season, which opens September 1. The sunflower is in bloom and looking great and only 200 spots are available for this program. Tours are available upon request for prospective hunters. Call the ranch at 243-947-8331 and/or visit [www.solanaranch.com](http://www.solanaranch.com). — *Georgetown Advocate*

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## Changes To Balcones Canyonlands Wildlife Refuge Hunt Program

#### Press Release •

Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge has made changes to its public hunt program to enhance opportunities for hunters. Current rules require hunters to take one antler-less deer or feral hog per hunt before taking a buck. This year, during the final weekend only—December 13-15—hunters may take a buck (three or more points) as their first animal. The refuge will also begin weekend hunts on Friday at 12:00 noon instead of 2pm. Orientations were added to the first and second days of the scouting week between 8am and 5pm to give hunters more opportunities to attend the mandatory sessions. This is an addition to the standard orientations held on Friday and Saturday of hunt weekends. The refuge offers firearms hunting

opportunities in November and December for white-tailed deer, either sex turkey, and feral hogs. One Youth Hunt is available, November 15-17, and three General Hunts; November 22-24, December 6-8 and December 13-15, 2013, are available all hunters. During the same weekends, a Persons with Disabilities Hunt is also offered to youth and adult hunters possessing a pertinent and valid proof of disability. September 15 is the last day to apply. All hunters are selected by lottery. Applications for the refuge's Big Game Hunt are processed through the Kinsail Corporation at [balconespermits.com](http://balconespermits.com). Questions regarding the online applications and/or payment information should be directed to Kinsail at 703-994-4194. Hunters with disabilities may pick up an application at the Refuge Headquarters. Regarding the Persons with Disabilities Hunt contact [rob\\_iski@fws.gov](mailto:rob_iski@fws.gov) or call 512-339-9432 ext.70. If hunters are unable to apply online, applications can be picked up at the refuge's headquarters, five miles west of Lago Vista on FM 1431; open between 8am and 4:30pm, Monday-Friday. Hunters can also receive applications by mail by sending a postcard with a current mailing address and the number of applications needed. Paper hunt applications must be postmarked by Sept 7. To apply for the Youth Hunt or General Hunt, a \$10 application fee per person is required. If successfully drawn for the General Hunt, a \$50 permit fee and a \$5 processing fee is charged. To learn more about the refuge's hunt program, visit: [fws.gov/refuge/Balcones\\_Canyonlands/visit/visitor\\_activities/hunting.html](http://fws.gov/refuge/Balcones_Canyonlands/visit/visitor_activities/hunting.html). — *Georgetown Advocate*

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## Downtown Low-Down July 17

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What projects and events are happening in Downtown Georgetown? Find out at the next quarterly Downtown Low-Down meeting by the City of Georgetown on Wednesday, July 17. The meeting at Roots Bistro, 118 W. Eighth Street starts at 8:30 a.m. and is free and open to the public. Coffee and light refreshments will be provided. City of Georgetown staff will provide information and updates on projects and events: • Main Street website update and mural call for art: Main Street Manager Shelly Hargrove • Cultural District application to the Texas Commission on the Arts and Georgetown Art Center update: Library Director Eric Lashley • Upcoming event update: Tourism and CVB Manager Cari Miller • Downtown Master Plan update: Historic Planner Matt Synatsch • Street paving projects this fall: Transportation Services Manager Mark Miller • Feasibility of downtown civic center/festival areas and parking update: Assistant City Manager Laurie Brewer • Southwestern University fall pep rallies and football season: Southwestern Associate Vice President for University Relations Megan Frisque Also find out about new businesses in the downtown district that have opened or are under construction. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Jack Daly in the assistant city manager's office by 5 p.m. on Monday, July 15. Contact Jack Daly to RSVP at (512) 931-7679 or at [Jackson.Daly@georgetown.org](mailto:Jackson.Daly@georgetown.org). — *Georgetown Advocate*

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- [Juvenile Justice In Williamson County](#)
- [Texas Senate Passes Two-Year State Budget](#)
- [HB 710 Improves Water Outlook For Central Texas](#)
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- [Right On Target! Williamson County's Domestic Assault Response Team Hits A Bulls-Eye With Conference on Domestic Violence](#)
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