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**TARRANT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT**

# Precinct 3 commissioner is in intensive care at hospital

Star-Telegram

Precinct 3 Tarrant County Commissioner Gary Fickes is in a Dallas hospital for an undisclosed health problem, family and colleagues said Friday.

Fickes' wife, Cathey, said the family is requesting privacy and will provide information about his illness in

the future. She said her husband is in the intensive care unit of the hospital, which she declined to identify.

Fickes' precinct administrator, Carolyn Sims, said Fickes entered the hospital Wednesday. Precinct 2 Commissioner Marti VanRaven-swaay said Fickes was there for an "ongoing medical condition."

In an e-mail, state Rep. Vicki Truitt, R-Keller, said Fickes was "awake and alert and feeling better."

Fickes, 58, has filed to run in the March 4 Republican primary for another term representing Place 3, which covers Northeast Tarrant County.

— John Kirsch and Aman Batheja



Gary Fickes has filed for the March 4 primary to represent Place 3 again.

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YOUNG McDONALD COLLINS C. BARKER GETCHELL LIBRARY ADMIN LIBRARY REF ANIMAL CNTRDATE DISTRIBUTED 1/25/08 DATE OF ARTICLE 1/19/08 NEWSPAPER DMN**REGIONAL ROUNDUP****EULESS****Santeria priest loses  
key battle in court**

A Santeria priest who sued Euleless for the right to sacrifice goats in his home lost a key round in court Thursday when a judge ruled that one of the laws he sued under doesn't apply. Jose Merced filed the federal discrimination lawsuit in December 2006 after city officials told him he couldn't kill goats for a ceremony. Followers of the African-Caribbean religion consider animal sacrifice as essential to Santeria as Communion is to Catholics. Mr. Merced argued that the ritual was protected under the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, which says governments must show a compelling public interest before enforcing laws that could interfere with religious practices. But U.S. District Judge John McBryde ruled that the city's slaughtering ban regulated only conduct, not the use of land. A trial is set for March on the other claims.

*Michael Grabell*

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# City-run restaurant gets better, but still in the red

**Arlington, which expects Ventana Grille to turn a profit by next year, plans to expand its patio.**

By **SUSAN SCHROCK**  
sschrock@star-telegram.com

ARLINGTON — Although business has been improving, the city-run Ventana Grille at Tierra Verde Golf Club lost \$140,000 in its first year and is projected to lose \$70,000 to \$80,000 this year, city officials said.

The city expects the restaurant to turn a profit by 2009 and is considering ways to increase visibility and attract more customers to the remote location in far southwest Arlington, Golf Director Evonne Sandas said. Ventana Grille opened in October 2006 at Tierra Verde, off U.S. 287 and Eden Road.

"We've done well, but not as well as we would like to have done," said Sandas, who oversees the restaurant with executive chef Luigi Cinelli. "It was by no means a failure. We've got a lot of room for growth."

Any profit or loss from the restaurant affects a city fund designated for parks and recreation facilities improvements, such as buying fitness equipment, Park Director Pete Jamieson said. The restaurant's financial well-being does not directly affect the city's general fund.

Mayor Robert Cluck said he is bothered by the restaurant's financial troubles "but

## Ventana Grille

Tierra Verde Golf Club  
7005 Golf Club Drive, Arlington

**Restaurant hours:** 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday, 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday

**Menu:** Includes tapas and Mediterranean and Spanish-influenced dishes such as paella

**Average prices:** breakfast, \$5; lunch, \$7; dinner, \$12

**Good to know:** Reservations are typically not needed except for special events. Reservations are being taken for Valentine's Day, where diners can expect a specially prepared five-course meal. Executive Chef Luigi Cinelli also plans to unveil his new White Chocolate Godiva Mousse, which features chocolate, raspberry and white chocolate mousse topped with a truffle.

**Information:** 817-548-5047, [www.arlingtongolf.com](http://www.arlingtongolf.com)

thinks business will pick up once word of mouth spreads about Ventana's food and atmosphere.

"We can't continue to sustain losses," Cluck said.

"It's kind of out there by itself and people don't think about it, but they should. It's a real treat," Cluck said, adding that he enjoys the baked tuna and the roast beef. "The prices

are reasonable."

Councilwoman Sheri Capehart, who represents southwest Arlington, agreed.

"I don't think it's unreasonable to expect that the first two or three years is not going to be as profitable long term as we expect it to be," she said. "I'm not willing to say right now that this is not working."

Sandas said she expects that the restaurant will become profitable as the land around the golf course is developed. The Arlington City Council set tough design standards in 2006 for the largely undeveloped Tierra Verde area in an effort to attract high-value homes that would bolster property tax rolls.

Eules opened a restaurant, Raven's Grille, at the Texas Star Golf Course in 1997.

"The first couple years, like every restaurant, we were barely breaking even," said Glenda Hartsell, the restaurant's general manager. "We are now doing much better."

Hartsell said the restaurant, which also caters for the city's convention center, typically breaks even or makes a small profit.

## Expansion plans

Arlington is offering more menu items and special events at Ventana Grille and is considering adding meeting spaces and a reception hall to bring in more revenue.

Sandas and Cinelli said the

restaurant has been inundated with requests to host weddings and parties but doesn't have the space for large events.

The restaurant can accommodate 70 people inside and up to 150 with the patio. It would cost an estimated \$3 million to build a banquet hall that could hold up to 350 people, expand the kitchen and add meeting rooms, Sandas said.

The restaurant plans to build a 12,000-square-foot covered patio later this year. Sandas is also working with an interior designer to reduce the echo effect caused by the 20-foot ceilings. Customers often complain about the acoustics, she said.

## City took charge in '05

The city took over food sales from a concessionaire in 2005 and renovated the clubhouse last year to create a restaurant with an Old World theme. The restaurant, whose name means *window* in Spanish, has large windows that allow diners to look out over the greens.

The restaurant's Party on the Patio, which features live music on the fourth Friday of every month, continues to be popular, Cinelli said. Ventana also offers "Nine and Wine," a package in which golfers can taste wine after playing nine holes. It recently began offering a Sunday brunch with dishes such as omelets and gingerbread pancakes. Prices start at \$7.50 for brunch entrees.

Cinelli is adding dishes with broader appeal to the menu. The tenderloin is still the most popular entree, along with paella and the lavender crème brûlée made with fresh herbs from the restaurant's garden.

"We are now a full-service golf club. This gives us an opportunity to attract a different clientele," Sandas said.

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## THE PASSIONATE PALATE

# IN SUPER BOWL OF PIES, THESE STALWARTS DUKE IT OUT

It's Paris Coffee Shop vs. Dixie House Cafe in the battle for our tastebuds.

With the Cowboys derailed from the playoffs, we figured everyone might be in need of a little alternative excitement. Then it came to us: If there's one thing our readers are only slightly less passionate about than the Cowboys, it's pie.

And, hey, today just happens to be National Pie Day (not to be confused with Pi Day, which is March 14).

Perfect. We decided to stage the Super Bowl of Tarrant County Pies.

### Game on

Choosing the contestants was easy. When great pies are discussed hereabouts, two restaurants are most frequently mentioned: Paris Coffee Shop, in Fort Worth's hospital district, and the Dixie House Cafe, with outposts on Belknap, East Lancaster and Hulen in Fort Worth and in Euless (where all the pies are made) and Saginaw.

To arrive at a winner, we wanted to test pies that you can get at the restaurants every day they're open (which knocked out Paris Coffee Shop's legendary lemon meringue, sold only on Fridays). The three daily pies both restaurants have in common turned out to be coconut meringue, chocolate meringue and apple.

So we bought one of each from both restaurants, gathered four pie-passionate judges and a stack of napkins and sat down to rate the pies. The judges rated each pie on a scale of one to five; then we totaled the scores for each restaurant.

### No upset here

By no means were the results definitive. Though tasters slightly preferred Paris Coffee Shop's apple pie and chocolate meringue pie to their counterparts from Dixie House, Dixie House emerged as the overall winner by a mere 3.5-point margin, scoring 40 points to Paris' 36.5.

It was Dixie House's classic coconut meringue pie — bursting with coconut flavor, loaded with chewy shreds of coconut and crowned with a high, swirly, browned meringue — that put Dixie House over the top. Hands down, this was our favorite pie of the bunch, earning a

perfect score of 20 points, double the Paris coconut meringue's total score of 10.

Judging each type of pie head to head was interesting. Both restaurants turn out flaky, crisp piecrust to be proud of, though we gave Dixie House a slight edge in the apple and coconut pies; the oozy filling in the Dixie House's chocolate meringue had made the bottom crust a little soggy.

We weren't thrilled with either restaurant's chocolate meringue pie, because of a dearth of deep chocolate flavor in the fillings. Paris Coffee Shop's version scored a 10.5 and Dixie House's a total of 8. (We'd recommend hitting Carshon's Deli on a Wednesday or Saturday for your chocolate-meringue fix.)

With the apple pies, we agreed that the best pie would be a hybrid: Paris Coffee Shop's filling of tart, firm apples in the crust from Dixie House (though we were split over the intensely sweet icing glazing the top crust of the Dixie House pie). The apple pie scores: Paris Coffee Shop, 16; Dixie House, 12.

### Get in the game

We know the question of whether Paris Coffee Shop or Dixie House Cafe makes the best pies in Tarrant County is a partisan one, so we'd like to get your opinion, too. To vote in our online pie poll, go to [www.star-telegram.com](http://www.star-telegram.com).

And we'd like to hear about other Tarrant County restaurants besides these two where great pies can be had: If you have another favorite pie source, send an e-mail to [aculbertson@star-telegram.com](mailto:aculbertson@star-telegram.com), with "pie" in the subject line.

Meanwhile, do your patriotic duty by eating some pie today.

AMY CULBERTSON IS THE  
 STAR-TELEGRAM FOOD EDITOR,  
 817-390-7421.

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# FROM THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP



Mayor Saleh  
Euless

THE CITY OF  
EULESS

Tarrant County has issued a burn ban effective until April 14 to limit the hazards caused by carelessness in the community during periods of high fire hazard.

To stay in compliance with this ban, please observe the following rules:

Do not operate outdoor cooking appliances other than electric, gas or charcoal grills.

When using a grill, it should be moved at least five feet away from any type a combustible surface or over vegetation unless the vegetation is adequately watered down prior to the cooking operation and a charged water hose is within 15'

Do not use grills, cooking pits, outdoor fireplaces, fire rings or anything that uses an open flame and could release sparks or embers.

Do not perform any outdoor burning.

The use of grills at city park facilities is prohibited.

Do not perform any cutting or welding outside of specific guidelines as may be imposed by the fire marshal. A special permit program is in effect for cutting and

welding operations during periods of burn bans.

Be aware that discarding of cigarettes or other burning or heated materials in a manner that could cause a fire is prohibited. Cigarettes should be disposed of properly to prevent fires.

Grass and trees outdoors are very dry and fire can spread very quickly to homes or businesses.

Thank you for your compliance with this burn ban. For more information, please call 817-685-1600.

Looking for a new hobby that can be applied to either personal enjoyment or public service? Curious about amateur radio or already licensed to operate? Come and join us at Amateur Radio Euless (ARE).

Amateur radio, also known as "ham radio" operators use their hobby for personal enjoyment in communicating with people across town or around the world. Other operators use their hobby to assist Emergency Management programs for communication situations such as severe storm reporting. Operators around the country have provided emergency

communications in disaster situations. Amateur Radio Euless has participated in numerous local events such as Arbor Daze where members have assisted in locating lost children or filling other communication needs.

A license to operate amateur radio is easy to obtain. It can be obtained through classes sponsored by various radio clubs or it can be obtained through self-study. It does NOT require Morse code. The Amateur Radio Euless club can assist you in studying for your license and has members who can administer the examination when you are ready.

Amateur Radio Euless meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Emergency Operations Center at the Euless Police Department. Whether you are already a licensed operator looking for a local club or someone just interested in becoming involved in the hobby, please join us. To attend a club meeting or for additional information, you can contact Joe Kraft with the Euless Office of Emergency Management at [jkraft@ci.euless.tx.us](mailto:jkraft@ci.euless.tx.us) or 817-685-3144.

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Time to Recycle!

### Recyclable Materials

The City recommends labels be removed and containers be rinsed of food and drink before placing in recycling containers. Crushing plastics containers and cans saves space and money, but broken glass is not recyclable.

### Paper Products

Newspapers, flattened box board, catalogs, junk mail, magazines, phone books, and office paper can either be put into PAPER sacks, or tied in bundles weighing 50 pounds or less. Paper bags are available at check-out in most grocery stores. Place the paper products to be recycled in the PAPER BAGS and/or bundles at the curb next to any blue recycling bags by 7 a.m. on your scheduled day.

### Plastic Bottles

Numbers 1,2,3,4,5 and 7 (on the bottom of plastics, there is a triangle with the number inside). Number 6 is not accepted at this time. Please flatten bottles and plastic containers to conserve space.

### Unbroken Glass Bottles and Jars

Clear, brown, green bottles and jars only. Blue is not recyclable.

### Steel/Tin Food and Drink Cans

Examples include soup cans, pet food cans, and tuna fish cans. Please place the top inside the can and squeeze the open end of the can closed.

### Aluminum Cans

An example is a soda can. Please note that aluminum foil and pie plates are not acceptable.

Corrugated cardboard Boxes must be broken down and flattened into pieces no larger than 2 ft. x 4 ft. If there are several

pieces, please tie together into a bundle. Bundles must weigh less than 50 lbs.

### Box board

Lightweight containers such as cereal boxes, tissue boxes and other packages should be broken down, flattened and placed into paper sacks or tied into bundles with your other paper items.

### Back to Top

### Single Family Curb Side Program

Eules single-family recycling program provides once a week curbside pickup service. Residents receive initial service/billing information from the Water Office @ 817-685-1471, in the Eules Municipal Complex at 201 N. Ector Drive. Senior Citizens (65 & over) may request a discounted rate at the Water Office.

The City is divided into zones and depending on location, service is provided once a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays, or Fridays. Place the bags and/or bundles at your curb by 7:00 A.M. on your specified pick-up day.

Eules has a BLUE RECYCLING BAG program for recycling plastic containers, glass bottles, and cans (aluminum, steel, and tin). Blue recycling bags are made of a special plastic that is also recyclable. They are available for purchase at Home Depot, Eules grocery stores, and Target.

### Back to Top Multi-Family Complex Recycling Program

Eules residents who live in multi-family complexes that participate in the recycling program, can recycle materials including: paper goods, corrugated cardboard, and glass, plastic bottles, and metal cans in receptacles on the complex property site.

The only fee is a monthly fee per unit that each multifamily complex pays to the City whether or not it participates in the program. Participating multi-family complexes may have a slotted container for paper goods and cardboard, and a container "booted" for glass and plastic bottles, and aluminum, steel and tin cans. When a recycling container is full, property management calls Community Waste Disposal at 817-795-9300 to exchange out an empty container. There is no charge for the exchange. Multi-family residents can dispose of Hazardous Household Materials at the City's spring or fall collections or at the Environmental Collection Center (ECC) on 6400 Bridge Street in Fort Worth. The City is assessed a fee for each participating household, but there is no drop-off fee, but proof of Eules residency is required. (Current utility bill is preferred.)

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JESSE



- Animal: Dog
- Breed: Shar Pei [Mix]
- Sex: Male
- Age: Adult
- Size: Medium

Eules Animal Services  
1517 Westpark Way  
Eules, TX 76040  
(817)685-1594

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**Eules councilman won't run again**

**EULESS** — Eules City Councilman Charlie Miller, whose term is up in May, announced that he will not run for re-election at Tuesday's council meeting. Miller, a council member since 1993, was one of three councilmen who in 2006 voted against the city budget and employee benefits in hopes of leveraging a lower tax rate, angering city employees and residents. Miller later apologized for the vote and then voted for the benefits package during the second reading. One of the other two councilmen, Carl Tyson, was defeated last year. The other councilman, Glenn Porterfield, is up for election next year. Miller serves as president of the Southwest Assurance Group.

— Jessica DeLeon