

# Desormeaux guilty of son's murder

By **SHERRI WHITE**  
Special to The Bee

The last thing the jury in the Leo Desormeaux IV murder trial saw before they began deliberation was a picture of the victim.

The photograph, from autopsy records, was of 20-month old Triston Dobbins. The picture, held up by District Attorney Steve Hollis as he finished his closing arguments, showed lacerations under the child's chin as well as bruising.

## TOP OF THE NEWS

It was with this final image lingering in their minds that jurors left the courtroom, deliberated and returned this past Thursday afternoon with their decision.

Desormeaux was found guilty in the capital murder case of his son, Triston. Because the state was not seeking the death penalty in the capital murder case Desormeaux's punishment was automatic life in prison without parole.

The toddler had been found in a bed at his father's home in Evadale in December 2007. Originally, Leo Desormeaux said the child had suffered a seizure while taking a bath and died. Autopsy reports later proved that on Dec. 9, 2007, the night of his death, Triston had suffered a severe blow to the head, had been shaken violently and also had abrasions on his chin, a busted lip and numerous

bruises on his body.

During the week-long trial, the jury of nine men and three women listened to testimony from investigators involved in the case, watched videotape interviews of Desormeaux just days after Triston's death, and heard testimony from Dr. Tom Brown, the pathologist who handled the autopsy.

Three factors became evident during



DESORMEAUX

Desormeaux's trial. The first would be the actions before and after Dobbins death by Desormeaux's wife, Crystal, the stepmother, and who the defense attorney pinpointed as the real murderer, not his client. The second factor would be how Desormeaux cared for his son and if the father caused the toddler's death. The final factor would be Dr. Brown's testimony, who was the first to be on the witness stand for the state. It would be Brown's testimony that would become a focal point on determining Des-

See **DESORMEAUX** on PG. 6, SEC. 1

Covering Silsbee, Evadale, Kountze and Lumberton

# SILSBEE BEE

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## Inside The Bee

• Don't dump and run ... you might be on camera!

## SPORTS

**SHS's Jeremy Johnson signs to play football for West Virginia**

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**Tigers top Hardin-Jeff to take district lead**

## Kountze honors man at business crossroads

**Chamber also names 2010 Citizen of Year, KISD Teacher of Year**

By **GERRY L. DICKERT**  
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Ron Croft found himself at a crossroads in his life and when he looked up, he was standing in the middle of Kountze.

Croft had been a longtime employee in regional sales for a window manufacturer. His job took him all across the Southeast, from Florida to Texas and to Oklahoma.

But when he was laid off, Croft said he began looking for something new. Instead, he found something that was really not new to him at all.

"I had done some concessionaire work with festivals around the area," he said. "We went around Southeast Texas and Southwest Louisiana to festivals and we were doing that to add to our retirement."

Once he was out of work, he decided to open his own restaurant, utilizing the skills he had attained on the festival circuit.

He visited several small towns before he found the perfect spot.

"I was driving through Kountze when this building just sort of jumped out in the road at me," he said. "The price was right and we picked this spot to start our new business."

This May, Captain Ron's Seafood will celebrate its first year anniversary. It took just eight months for his success in the community to catch the eye of Chamber of Commerce representatives who named the restaurant as its 2010 Business of the Year.

Croft and his business will be honored at Thursday night's annual Chamber of Commerce Banquet, which will take place at Kountze High School. The meet-and-greet will begin at 6 p.m. with dinner served at 7. The theme of the banquet is "History from the Heart of Hardin County."

Croft took the idea of festival concessions and parlayed that into a business that is open six days a week. Though

See **CAPTAIN RON'S** on PG. 7, SEC. 1

## Accident at The Colony

Despite condition of mangled truck, Lumberton woman escapes serious injury



Silsbee Bee photo by David Lisenby

This 2008 Chevy Silverado was traveling northbound on Hwy. 69 this past Monday when, according to witnesses, the driver crossed over onto the shoulder and struck an ice delivery truck that was sitting on the shoulder of the road while waiting to enter the parking lot of a business to make a delivery. Although the airbag did not deploy on impact, the driver of the truck, Jamie Crocker of Lumberton, sustained a head injury that did not appear to be life-threatening and was transported by ambulance to Christus St. Elizabeth hospital.

## FACT OR FICTION?



**David Bellow**  
Candidate for  
Pct. 2 Commissioner

"If we are not receiving county services, then taxes inside the city should be lowered."

### Lumberton forum stokes debate over county taxes

By **GERRY L. DICKERT**  
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When the Lumberton Women's Civic League decided to host a forum for state and county candidates in the March 2 primary, little did they realize the keg of political powder to which they were setting fire.

In the culmination of nearly four hours of statements and debate among nearly 20 different candidates, Pct. 4 Commissioner Bobby Franklin and his Primary challenger, David Bellow, went head to head over the county's tax rate and its impact on the citizens of Lumberton.

Bellow, likely best known for his involvement in the anti-alcohol petitions in Lumberton, has established his agenda on the basis of dropping tax rates in Lumberton, saying that the city is unfairly represented in spite of its large contribution of county taxes.

"All the county taxes that Lumberton pays, which is a major part of Hardin County's budget, they don't receive any services back from roads and drainage

See **DEBATE** on PG. 9, SEC. 1



**Bobby Franklin**  
Incumbent for  
Pct. 2 Commissioner

"Since I've been on the court, we've never had to go up on the tax rate."

## Floyd in jail after doubling of bonds

By **GERRY L. DICKERT**  
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Nikita Floyd is back in jail after a judge ordered her bail to be restored to its original amount this past week.

After a December 2009 agreement between the District Attorney's office and the defense attorney for Floyd, the bond for the woman being held on a capital murder charge was dropped from \$500,000 to \$250,000.

After a hearing in District Judge Britt Plunk's courtroom on Dec. 21 enabling the drop in the bond amount, Floyd posted the money to ensure her freedom prior to the Christmas holidays.

But, according to county officials, Floyd's attorney has since alerted court personnel that he would not be able to attend a February trial date that had been

See **FLOYD** on PG. 6, SEC. 1

## Can you spare a quarter?

### Intersection collections concern cops

By **DAVID LISENBY**  
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You pull up to the intersection and have to stop for a red light. Suddenly a well dressed man with a yellow traffic vest approaches your vehicle holding a bucket. He is asking for money to help homeless families and battered women. Do you donate?

For the past few weeks there has been a group of individuals at intersections in Hardin County soliciting money. They have been seen in Silsbee at Hwy. 327 and Bus. 96 and in Lumberton at Chance Cutoff and Hwy. 96.

Silsbee Police Chief Dennis Allen said that the police department had received complaints from citizens regarding how

See **DONATIONS** on PG. 8, SEC. 1

## Time for Prayer

Dear Lord,

Create in me a holy readiness to give of that which you have given me, never as a duty, but as a willing gift, out of the love I feel for you, and for others, because of your love for me.

In the name of Jesus, I pray.

Amen

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