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## It's time to pay the piper for water leak

They said there might be a leak.

I thought: That's all right, there's a large crawl space that starts off in the basement and is open and clean enough.

Lots of pipes are in the basement and the crawl space, and were relatively easy to reach.

I shut off all the faucets and put an ear to a pipe here and there, having heard that even the smallest leak might produce the sound of moving water.

There was no sound. When dampness in a section of the basement continued, I went to the water meter out front, lifted the heavy lid and shined a flashlight down there.

With no water turned on anywhere in or around the house, the needle on the meter moved nevertheless.

The needle moved rather quickly, as though a faucet was turned on about halfway.

It looked more and more like a leak.

"Maybe it's only that the meter is broken," I said.

People with big wrenches seemed to doubt it.

**Hunting for H2O:** No standing or gathering water was evident anywhere around the house or yard.

So somebody went into the crawl space and slithered forward and discovered dampness, then wetness, then signs of the leak itself: fresh water.

The leak had to do with the main water line leading in from near the curb.

This water line appeared to pass near or under some gigantic hedges and a fancy brick sidewalk.

The leak in an ancient pipe was probably coming from near the front porch.

Old pipe was usually entirely replaced.

People with colored spray paint came out and marked where the gas moved very near the brick, toward the living room.

It sounded like it was time for me to go somewhere far, far, far, away — overseas, even.

**Simple solution:** Then something of a miracle transpired.

Nobody dug up the old pipe.

A small hole to the side of the water meter was dug.

Then somebody sat with a boring or drilling or rooting machine and ran a line under the front yard, under the house around and through roots; to, and then into, the basement.

An on-off handle was put on the end of the new pipe.

Sod was replaced.

And that was pretty much that.

Somebody said that drilling new water lines was an urban art form whereby certain pipe drivers could put a cup of coffee in the backyard and go under the house and come up and hit the saucer squarely in the middle.

Amen.

# Simonson still has county job

With a new county commissioner, he's no longer chief deputy. His new duties are yet to be decided.

BY KEVIN CANFIELD  
World Staff Writer

Former County Commissioner Randi Miller's chief deputy no longer has his job title, but he has kept his \$93,000 salary.

"Terry (Simonson) is still an employee of the board and his duties and responsibilities are still being considered," said County Commission Chairman John Smaligo.

Simonson, 57, was hired by the com-

mission in June 2007 and designated as Miller's chief deputy. But that job vanished on Monday, when Commissioner Karen Keith was sworn in to succeed Miller.

Keith said she does not plan to hire Simonson as her chief deputy.

"But there's a lot he can do for us," she said.

Commissioners failed to reach an agreement on Simonson's new responsibilities last week after meeting in executive session.

"We are going to try to address this as soon as possible," Smaligo said after the meeting.



Simonson

Simonson also has served as the county's public information officer but receives no extra compensation for those duties. He was hired for that job by the county Budget Board, which is made up of the county's eight elected officials.

"The Budget Board has been looking at the fact that the county needed

a PIO for some time," Smaligo said. "And we're looking at what other duties and responsibilities that we may be in need of in addition to that."

Terry Tallent, the county's personnel director, said it has been the commissioners' policy to pay their chief deputies a salary equal to 90 percent of what county elected officials are paid.

Smaligo said Simonson's compensation is also up for review.

"As we do determine his responsibilities and duties, his salary for those responsibilities and duties will also be

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## GREENWOOD CENTER: MARKING HISTORY



Princtta Newman (front), Gail Crum (back row, left), Leon Rollerson, Marcene Mackey and artist Bruce Benjamin are part of an upcoming Barack Obama inauguration celebration on Jan. 20.

Photos by CORY YOUNG/  
Tulsa World

## Local bash set for inaugural

BY DAVID HARPER  
World Staff Writer

The inauguration of Barack Obama will be taking place in Washington, D.C., but there will be a big celebration in Tulsa.

While various observances are planned in the area, the Greenwood Cultural Center, 322 N. Greenwood Ave., will be the epicenter of the local festivities for those who want to make Jan. 20 a social event as well as a historic one.

Tulsa Princtta Newman said she thought it would be ideal for local residents to have a gathering place to mark the swearing-in of Obama.

"I wanted to share that joy and give our children a place to celebrate," said the 65-year-old Newman.

To make that vision a reality, Newman contacted two of her friends, North Tulsa Heritage



An Obama rendering by artist Bruce Benjamin that will be unveiled during a Jan. 20 inauguration celebration.

Foundation President Marcene Mackey and Gail Crum, chief executive officer of Tagteam Marketing.

Mackey said it was "such a

beautiful idea to have an inauguration bash."

Crum said a lot of people want-

SEE **OBAMA** A14

## Inaugural tickets get snapped up

Hundreds of Oklahomans will gather at reception.

BY JIM MYERS  
World Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Hundreds of Oklahomans will join a potentially unprecedented number of Americans next week to watch the historic inauguration of Barack Obama as their first black president.

According to the state's congressional delegation, requests for tickets to the event quickly outstripped the supply.

U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe's office said it was flooded with requests from Oklahoma constituents immediately after the election.

"Compared to years past, the number of requests for this year's inauguration is significantly higher," an aide said, adding the office had 393 tickets to distribute for the event.

Each of the House members received 198 tickets.

Rep. Frank Lucas' office, which has been involved with the last three inaugurations, said requests were three times the number of tickets it received and outpaced those from the past.

Ryan Jackson, an aide to Inhofe and current president of the Oklahoma State Society, said about 400 replies have been received so far for a pre-inaugural reception the organization is co-hosting Sunday.

"We are making it widely available to Oklahomans that are in the area and Oklahomans who are coming up for the inaugura-

SEE **TICKETS** A14

## Hall trying to influence trial, prosecutors say

BY OMER GILLHAM  
World Staff Writer

Federal prosecutors are asking the court to determine if cigarette-trafficking defendant Gary L. Hall is using his money and influence to affect the outcome of his pending case on allegations of money laundering, mail fraud and other various federal charges.

Hall, 66, is a self-made millionaire who owns a sprawling mansion near Joplin, Mo. Hall also owns several companies, including Sunflower Supply Co., a wholesale operation in Galena, Kan., selling tobacco products in Oklahoma. In about 2002, Hall reportedly made \$110 million on the sale of the Medallion company, a



**CIGARETTE CASE**

Gary L. Hall: The prosecution says he's paying the lawyers for other defendants and even witnesses. Defense lawyers say there's no conflict proven.

discount cigarette company.

Hall and seven other defendants have been accused of an alleged \$25 million, tax-diversion scheme to defraud Oklahoma and Indian tribes out of tobacco taxes. The alleged tax-diversion scheme includes ciga-

SEE **HALL** A14

### The defendants in the 43-count federal indictment:

- Gary L. Hall, 66, owner of Sunflower Supply Co. in Galena, Kan.
- Jeremy Wayne Hooker, 33. Hooker operates Pipestone Smoke Shop, a low-tax Cherokee store in Vinita;
- Thomas Anthony Grantham, 50, of Joplin, who manages operations for Hall at Sunflower and Rebel Industries, a trucking company used to transport cigarettes;
- Keith Dion Noe, 42, of Joplin, who is the accountant for Sunflower, Discount Tobacco Warehouse, Rebel Industries and Shawnee Tobacco;
- Justin Boyes, 32, of Galena, who worked for Hall at Sunflower and now works for Hall at Discount Tobacco Warehouse;
- Danny Ray Davis, 62, of Galena, who worked for Hall at Sunflower and now works for him at Rebel;
- James William Coble, 35, of Galena, who worked for Hall at Sunflower and now works for him at Rebel;
- Justice Michael Berry, 36, of Joplin, who worked for Hall as an accountant.
- Additionally, three business entities — Sunflower Supply Co., Discount Tobacco Warehouse Inc. and Rebel Industries Inc. — also are named as defendants.



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