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MAGAZINE

JULY 2025, VOL. 23 ISSUE 7

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ON THE COVER Trish Freeman, The Insurance Lady

Saluting Our Independence!

Saluting Our Customers!

Tags & Titles hopes that the 4th of July treated our family, friends and customers well.

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Highlighting Two Summer Programs That Make a Difference!!!

Each summer, the Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office hosts programs that give local youth a chance to learn, grow, and have fun in a safe and supportive environment. Two of those programs—the Junior Deputy Program and the Best Summer Camp Ever—wrapped up recently, and both left a lasting impression on everyone involved.

Junior Deputy Program

The Junior Deputy Program took place every Wednesday in June and gave youth a chance to work directly with deputies in a hands-on, team-focused setting. From fingerprinting and crime scene demos to obstacle courses and visits with the K9 and SWAT teams, each week brought something new.

More than that, it gave kids a better understanding of what law enforcement does—and how it connects to respect, leadership, and making good choices. The program continues to grow each year and remains one of APSO's most requested summer events.





Best Summer Camp Ever

Over in Donaldsonville, the Sheriff's WAG Center and Study Commons was home to this year's Best Summer Camp Ever. The program kept youth active and engaged all summer long with a mix of games, sports, crafts, reading, and dance.

Deputies and staff dropped in regularly to spend time with the kids and be part of the fun.

It was a chance to build positive relationships in a relaxed, welcoming environment.

The camp is designed to give kids something to look forward to and provide parents with a local, trusted option for summer activities.





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Gathered at City Hall for National Garden Week are (LtoR) GGC Members Paola DiNatale, Janis D'Benedetto, Gwen Heck, Conchita Richey, Phyllis Charrier, Jamie Trisler, Dale Bowman, Dana Teepell, Zanna Brewer, Marilyn Rice, Flo Hernandez and Mayor Tim Riley.

Gonzales Garden Club Kicks Off National Garden Week with Community Floral Tribute

By GGC Member Dana Teepell

The Gonzales Garden Club marked the start of National Garden Week with a vibrant celebration at City Hall bringing together club members, city officials and Mayor Tim Riley in a shared mission to beautify the community through flowers and fellowship.

At 10:00 a.m., the courtyard of City Hall came to life with the colorful bustle of blooming bouquets and the cheerful camaraderie of garden enthusiasts. Floral arrangements were created and distributed to local businesses included a mix of both ornamental and native flowers, many of which were sourced from the personal garden

collections of the club members. This gave the arrangements a unique, local touch that truly represented the heart and soul of Gonzales. Gonzales Garden Club President Flo Hernandez stated, "We appreciate the opportunity to celebrate National Garden Week with our community. It is a terrific way to share our love of plants and flowers."

A Day of Collaboration and Community Spirit

The morning event was a delightful mix of creativity and community engagement. With baskets, vases, and floral clippers in hand, members of the Gonzales Garden Club carefully arranged colorful blooms, adding their own

personal flair to each creation. Local businesses and offices were the lucky recipients of the beautiful arrangements. Each bouquet was delivered with a personal touch, a reminder that National Garden Week is about more than just flowers—it's about fostering a sense of connection and pride in the community.

Mayor Tim Riley was present at the celebration and expressed his appreciation for the garden club's efforts. "I'm excited about the Gonzales Garden Club because it works to beautify the city, enhance the quality of life and brighten so many citizens' lives. Not everyone has a green thumb so when you find people who do, you want to cherish that," said Mayor Riley in his brief

remarks to the gathering.

A Legacy of Giving and Growing

This celebration was just one of many occasions where the Gonzales Garden Club has given back to the community. Throughout the year, the club is actively involved in various gardening projects, including planting flowers and shrubs in public spaces, organizing educational workshops on sustainable gardening practices, and hosting plant sales to fund local charitable efforts.

For club member Dale Bowman, whose garden is known for its stunning collection of native Louisiana plants, the event was a chance



June Residential Yard of the Month

The beds flanking the front porch of Dwayne and Kathy Achee on Claremont Ave in Gonzales include foundation plantings of Indian hawthorne, azaleas, and a Little Gym Magnolia which help the garden look attractive all year long. Seasonal color with amaryllis, ferns, daylilies, potted plants, and large dark pink impatiens draw the eye to the house. This display presents a nice show for a small front yard.



June Commercial Landscape of the month. Ourso Funeral Home at 13533 Airline Hwy has large beds on each side of the entrance, as well as a bed surrounding the sign. Color is presented with pink drift roses, agapanthus, daylilies, and dianella plantings. Pink crepe myrtle trees border the parking lot. The presentation offers a sense of comfort.

to share not just flowers, but the knowledge that comes with them. “Native plants are not only beautiful, but they are also crucial to our local ecosystem,” she said. “We hope that by

showcasing them in these arrangements, we inspire others to plant with purpose and to consider the importance of native species in their own gardens.”



April Residential Yard of the Month

This beautiful yard of Michael and Laurene LeCoq on Old Hickory Ave in Gonzales is designed and maintained by Laurene, an avid gardener. There are multiple rose beds in bloom, some being family heirlooms! Plants include white snapdragons, La iris, St Joseph Coat, amaryllis, swamp hibiscus, dianthus, agapanthus, lemon ball sedum, pink yarrow, multiple colors of sage, hostas, petunias, and camellias.



July Residential Yard of the Month

The garden at the home of Bill and Rebecca Mitchell on Germany Road is an oasis for pollinators offering rose mallow, sunflowers, sweet olive, dahlia, Mexican heather, and trailing daisy among many others. Bill challenged himself this year, saying “my goal was full color in July” across the front of his property.



July Commercial Landscape of the Month

The flower beds at Cane's Chicken Fingers at 625 N. Airline Hwy boast a beautiful fuchsia border of vincas with a bright pop of coleus surrounding several boxwoods. A stand of rush grass forms a lush backdrop for this lovely bed.

Sowing Seeds of a Shared Future

As the floral deliveries continued throughout the morning, the smiles and gratitude of the business owners were evident. The event left an indelible mark on the community, not only brightening the local storefronts but also reinforcing the sense of pride and togetherness that defines Gonzales.

Looking ahead, the Gonzales Garden Club plans to expand its initiatives during National Garden Week. Rooted in a shared love of nature, the club looks forward to continuing its work in the community, cultivating relationships, and inspiring others to appreciate



GGC Member Dana Teepell donated this arrangement to Ochsner Medical Clinic on Hwy 74.

the beauty of gardening and develop a sense of stewardship for the environment. It continues to be a shining example of how a shared love for nature can grow into something even greater—a community.

The Gonzales Garden Club
is federated by
National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Get Growing, Ascension!

Don't Guess. Soil Test!

Soil testing is an easy way to determine what your soil may be lacking. A soil test is a chemical analysis that estimates concentrations of essential nutrients available for plant growth. Based on these analyses, it can be determined if supplemental nutrients in the form of fertilizers are needed.

Soil samples can be submitted any time of year, but it is preferable to submit them a few months before planting. This will provide a sufficient period to develop a fertility plan



Mariah Simoneaux

for the next growing season and allow certain amendments, such as elemental sulfur used to lower soil pH, to be applied during less stressful environmental conditions.

Taking a soil sample is easy. Gather the following materials and follow the next steps. You'll need a plastic container or bucket (not smaller than 1 quart), a soil probe or small shovel, soil sample bags, and a marking pen. In Ascension Parish soil sample bags can be



picked up free of charge at Louisiana Nursery, Sac's Western Store, and the Ascension Parish LSU AgCenter Office.

Step 6: Label the bag, for example front lawn, vegetable garden, etc., and fill out any forms to ensure the analysis and recommendations are for the desired plant species.

Step 1: Evaluate the area to determine the number of soil samples that will be required. Large areas or areas with different soil types will require more than one soil sample.

Step 7: Submit samples, forms and fee by mail to the laboratory for analysis.

Step 2: Do not collect soil samples from areas that have been recently fertilized or treated with amendments.

Soil testing results are returned by hard copy or email within one to two weeks. The results will include recommendations on how to improve your soil to create the best growing conditions for your plants.

Step 3: Collect soil to a depth of 4 to 6 inches randomly throughout the garden or lawn.

Step 4: Remove the turfgrass and other organic material before placing the soil into the plastic container.

Mariah Simoneaux is the Horticulture Extension Agent serving Ascension Parish. For more information visit www.LSUAgCenter.com or contact Mariah at (225) 621-5799 or MJSimoneaux@agcenter.LSU.edu.

Step 5: Mix the soil within the container and place at least one-half pint of soil into the sample bag.





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Owner



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YOUR ESTATE MATTERS



By Linda Melancon

Why Aunt Nita's House Took Two Years to Sell

When my client Rochelle first walked into my office, she was holding a worn folder labeled “Aunt Nita’s Will.” Rochelle was like so many clients I see: the person holding everyone together and making sure everyone is taken care of.

“My aunt passed away almost two years ago, and we still can’t sell her house,” Rochelle told me, throwing her hands up in frustration.

Rochelle’s story is incredibly common. Aunt Nita, a proud and independent woman, told everyone she had a will. She named Rochelle as executor (the person the will-writer wants to handle things after they pass) and left everything to her nieces and nephews that she adored. Like many people, Aunt Nita assumed having a will meant everything would take care of itself. What she didn’t know was that her estate would still have to go through a legal process called a succession in Louisiana, which is what most of the country refers to as probate.

A succession is how the

court transfers ownership of a person’s property after they pass away. While it can be a quick and simple process, it can also become complicated quickly. In Rochelle’s case, she had to file a detailed list of all Aunt Nita’s assets and debts with the court. That meant rounding up records for the house, the car, the bank accounts, and even the furniture. All of this became part of the public record, which was unsettling for a family that valued privacy.

Things were delayed further because Aunt Nita’s will didn’t include a provision for something called Independent Administration. That meant Rochelle had to go back to court for approval every time she needed to do something on behalf of the estate — even for things as routine as selling the house or paying bills. Each step involved paperwork, court delays, and waiting for a judge’s signature.

When people tell me they want to avoid probate, I understand why. In some states, it’s easier to do by creating a revocable living trust. In Louisiana, though, our laws make that harder. One reason is the concept of forced heirship. If someone has a child under 24 or a child with a permanent disability, that child may be entitled to part of the estate, even if they’re left out of the will. Because of this, the court often has to get involved just to confirm whether any forced heirs exist.

That doesn’t mean all hope is lost. While avoiding succession entirely may not be realistic, there are ways to make the process smoother. A revocable living trust can still be useful,

especially for people who own property in other states. But the trust has to be properly funded. That means actually transferring the assets into the trust during your lifetime — a step many people forget to take.

In Louisiana, one of the most helpful tools is the concept of Independent Administration I mentioned earlier. If it’s written into your will, or if all heirs agree, it lets your executor handle most matters without needing court approval. That can significantly reduce the time and cost involved in settling your estate. Without it, even simple tasks can become slow and expensive.

Rochelle eventually did get everything settled, but it took far longer and cost far more than she expected. She told me, “If Nita knew how much running around I’d still have to do to get her

affairs settled, I know she would’ve done things differently.”

That’s the real lesson. Estate planning isn’t just about distributing property, it’s about easing the burden on the people you leave behind. In Louisiana, where the rules are unique, a good plan can make a world of difference.

If you want to spare your family unnecessary stress, don’t wait. Sit down with an experienced estate planning attorney who knows how to navigate these waters. Your loved ones will thank you for it, even if they never know how much harder things could have been.

The information provided is not intended to be legal or tax advice and does not constitute any attorney/client relationship. You should consult with an attorney for individual advice regarding your own situation.

Ms. Melancon is an attorney with Legacy Estate & Elder Law of Louisiana, LLC with offices in Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Lake Charles, LA. The primary focus of her practice is estate planning, probate, special needs planning, and elder law. For more information or to attend an upcoming estate planning seminar, call her office at (225) 744-0027.



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Embrace this Season of your life.

Abraham Lincoln said, "In the end, it's not number of years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."

I'll be 46 this month, and with everything going on in the world, that quote by Abraham Lincoln, is even more important remember. Each passing year brings forth new heartaches and challenges, but also births new opportunities and successes.

As I reflect on years and seasons that have passed, I can't help but consider some advice to offer, knowing this advice is for myself as well.

I must admit, I fight getting older every day. Yes, I get a Botox at least once a year now, I take collagen, and I always try to get at least eight hours of sleep now. The point is gravity is working us over, every single year, but I wouldn't trade losing life experiences and the wisdom I've gained through those experiences, to gain an ounce of more bouncy skin or

more supple hair.

It's easy to compare yourself to 20 somethings and wish you had a smaller figure or more energy, but comparison often brings death to your current state or situation.

Don't forget that those days of tanning outside (with baby oil!) brought all those sunspots. Remember those 20 something nights where you went out and spent too much money? How about going out with that guy that wasn't God's choice for you...yep, I did that. One of my all-time favorite

motivational speakers is Les Brown. He said, "Decide to use all of your knowledge, skills, experiences, and your life lessons from your mistakes, defeats and setbacks, to start over again. Life changes. You may not have the same life as before, but you can still enjoy your life!"

No ladies and gentlemen, we can't have the vibrancy of youth and the wisdom gained through life experiences; however, remember that "... knowing tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope..." (Romans 5:3-4).

So, remember...don't compare your life and your season to anyone else, celebrate the hope you have because of life's trials and challenges, and embrace this season of your life.

Wishing you a Blessed Summer's End.
XOXO,

Sweet Eyes



Embrace This Season of Your Life



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Jambalaya Festival

2025

The 58th Annual Jambalaya Festival at Lamar Dixon Set the Future

By Mike Strong

Ascension Magazine is extremely proud to be associated with the Jambalaya Festival. I have been a member for 15 years. I attend the meetings. I hear the discussions. Complaints and successes and most of all, the dedicated support the Board of Directors, the members and the volunteers who show up



and they make a difference.

This years festival was a big step for one of the premier festivals in Louisiana. You



can't have a festival unless you have a location. Sure everyone hears stories of the beginning in 1969 on Burnside when the success was gaged by how many beer cans were in the street and the gutters.

That was 58 years ago. How many events can you name that are 58 years old. How has it been a success for so long. I'll tell you. It is because of community minded people who live in the real world. It's not because of people who sit on their butts and complain about

something others do on social media. It's like my Mom taught me. If you don't have any thing good to say don't say anything at all.

I realize this is 2025 and discussions these days are a lot more blunt. So here's what I say to social media critics. Put up or shut. Your miserable phone life will get you no where and makes you a nobody.

With that said I have great confidence the festival will adjust and make the modern



venue of Lamar Dixon into a location that will last for decades.

To all the members and friends of this great organization that puts Gonzales on the map as the Jambalaya Capital of the World. I love ya.



Jambalaya Festival

**Congratulations to All the
Mini Pot Champions
Cooking in the 2025 Contest.**



**Koby Thacker Wins the 2025 Jambalaya Festival
Mini Pot Champ of Champs**



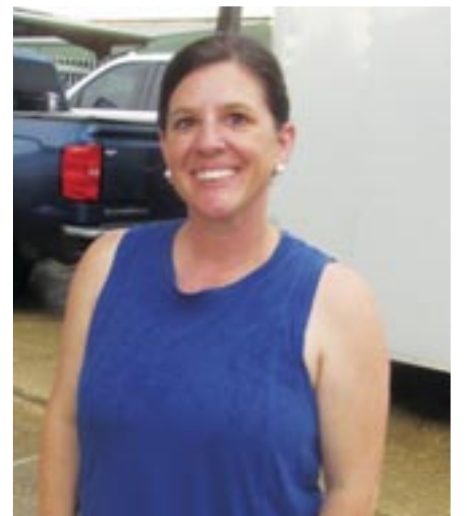
Greg Gaudin



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Amy Melancon



Brock Melancon



Adam Gautreau



Matt Gautreau



Tanil Thacker



Kade Thacker



Logan Russo



Carlos Braud



Austin Courville

Jambalaya

TOP 32 Festival

2025

This years Jambalaya Festival hosted 94 plus cooks and after careful judging the Top 32 teams positioned themselves to cook in the Semi-Finals. This year when the names were called out they were called in the ranking position on the judging card.

This year the Top 32 was made up of seasoned veterans and many new comers. If you had a chance to see the scoring you'd be amazed

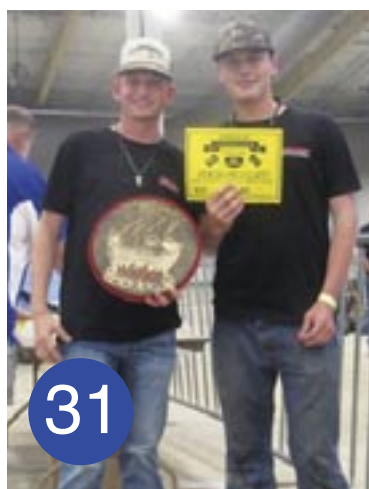
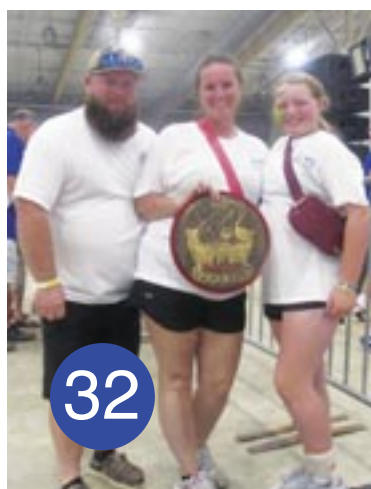
Semi-Final Heat 1

32 - Laci Murphy

31 - Connor Gibbons

30 - Shawn Sheets

29 - Nakia White

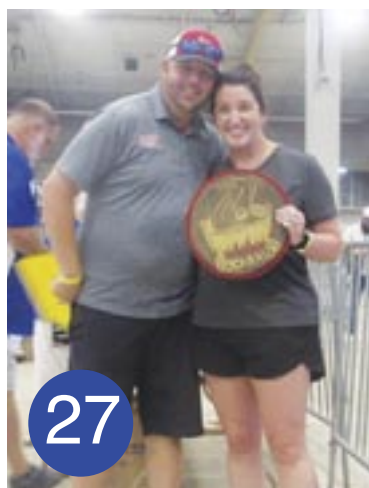


28 - Pastor Paul Ernewein

27 - Clint Broussard

26 - Kade Lanoux

25 - Brad Dupont

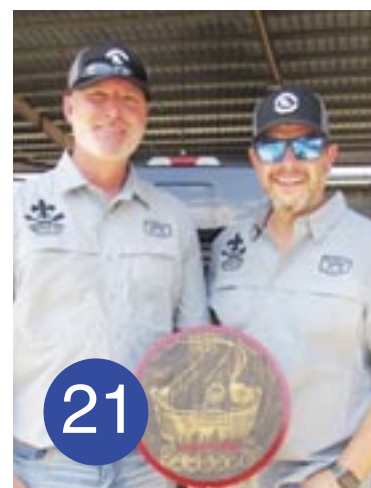


24 - Austin King

23 - Brock Melancon

22 - Brian Babin

21 - Ken Cornett

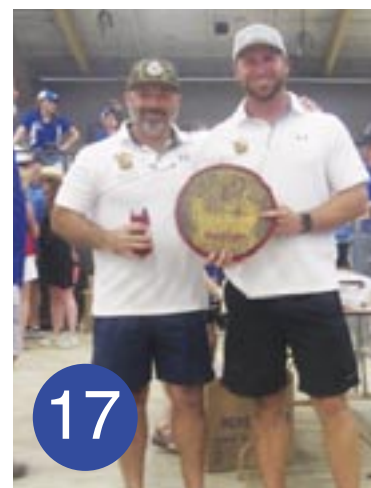


20 - Damon Blue

19 - Dustin Gautreau

18 - Lane Blue

17 - Brandon Elisar



how close the scores were for all of the jambalaya's.

Making the Top 32 is a milestone of achievement and makes the teams one step closer to the Final 12 and a chance to cook for the Championship.

Ascension Magazine was present when the teams began cooking on Sunday morning. It was hot with no rain in sight

just the hard work of cooking a jambalaya on wood fires and open flames. After hours of preparing the moment of truth happens when the lids are lifted. At that point the hopes are high for the correct color, puffed rice and the chicken flavor. Congratulations to the Top 32 cooking teams that survived the morning.

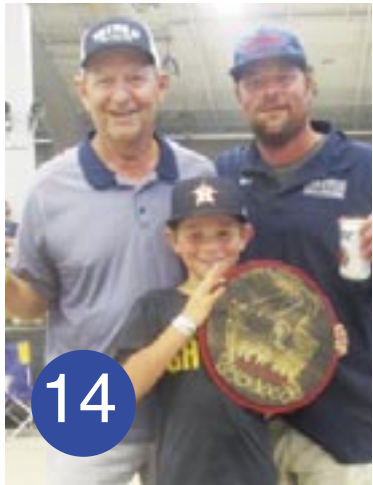
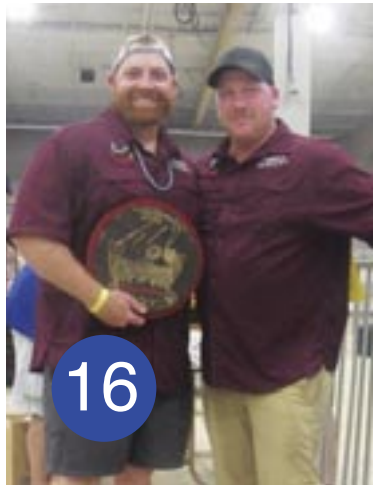
This years judges were:
Layne Gautreau
Freddie Hurst
Marty Haydel
Rodney Gremillion
Shelby "Doty" Gautreau (alternate)
Mike Gonzales Jr. (alternate)

Contest Chairman -
Mike Gonzales

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Members @ Large:
Koby Thacker
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Brad Robinson
Shelby "Doty" Gautreau



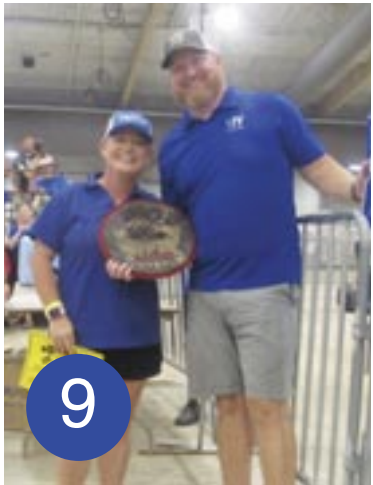
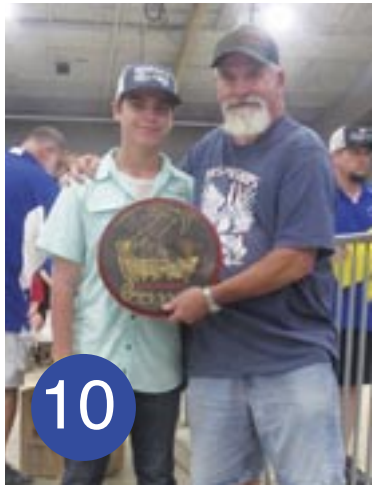
Semi-Final Heat 2

16 - Eric Guitreau

15 - Dale Guidry

14 - Tyler Bourque

13 - Daren Braud

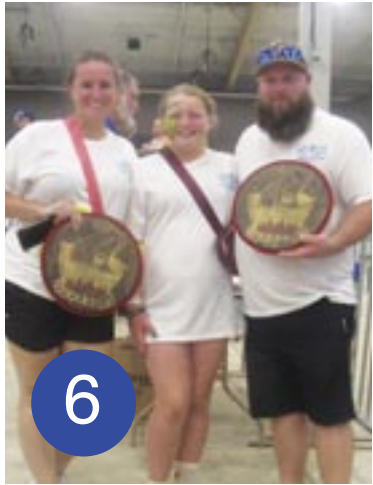


12 - Bart Himel

11 - Brandon Henry

10 - Justin Courville
(not in photo)

9 - Jared White

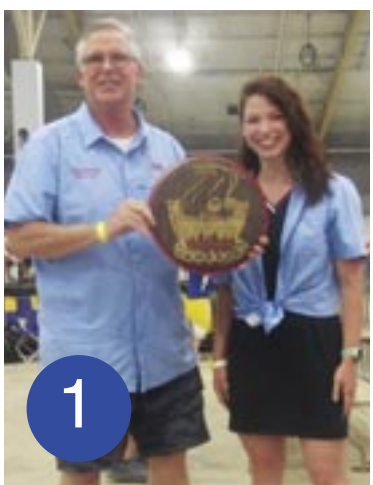


8 - Benjamin Parker

7 - Jason White

6 - Chad Murphy

5 - Jarrett Marchand



4 - Toby Luquette

3 - Tyler Billingsley

2 - Taner Bourque


1 - Jay Alexis



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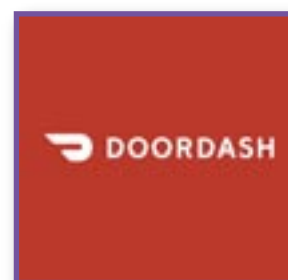


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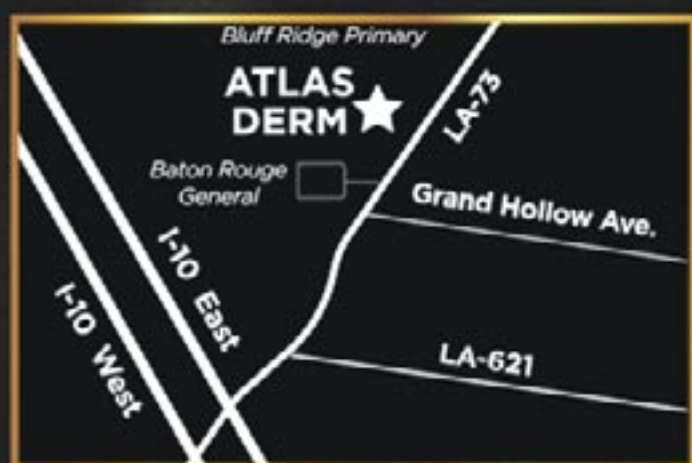
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FINANCIAL FOCUS

how to help find a good fit.

Investing With Heart: Find a Financial Advisor Who Shares Your Values

When it comes to managing your money, there's more to consider than just the bottom line. For many people, investing isn't only about building wealth or reaching goals — it's about making sure their dollars support charitable causes and principles that are in line with their closely held values.

Whether your focus is on protecting the planet, aligning with your faith or giving back to your community, a financial advisor who understands your values can help you build a portfolio that reflects what matters to you. Here's

Know What You Stand For

Before you start searching for a financial advisor, take a moment to reflect on your own values. Are you passionate about sustainability? Do you want your investments to avoid companies that conflict with your faith? Is charitable giving a big part of your life and something you want to incorporate into your financial strategy?

Make a list of your top priorities. Understanding what drives you can help make it easier to find a financial advisor who shares and respects your vision.

Do Your Homework

Once you've clarified your goals, start looking for financial advisors who focus on values-based

investing. Terms like "socially responsible investing" (SRI), "faith-based investing," "impact investing" or "ESG" (which stands for environmental, social, and governance) are good keywords to use during your search.

Browse financial advisor websites and check their credentials. Some may highlight their experience with sustainable funds or philanthropic planning. Look for signs that they're comfortable helping clients invest with a conscience.

Ask the Right Questions

After narrowing your list, schedule a few introductory discussions, which can be done in person or remotely, depending on your preference. These chats are your chance to learn more about how the financial advisor works and whether they'll be a good fit.

Ask about their investment approach:

- Do they offer portfolios with a focus on ESG or faith-based filters?
- Have they worked with clients who have similar values to yours?
- How do they assess charitable giving strategies or donor-advised funds?
- Do they know the complex tax rules associated with charitable giving?

Listen closely to the questions they ask of you.

Are they truly interested in what matters to you? Do they understand your values and priorities? Also, consider their communication style. Will they keep you updated regularly? Are they open to collaboration when you want to adjust your plan?

Trust Your Instincts

Choosing a financial advisor is a personal decision. Beyond their professional qualifications, you want someone who listens well and respects your goals. Don't hesitate to meet with several financial advisors before making your choice. The right person will make you feel understood and supported, both financially and personally.

Ideally, you and your financial advisor will forge a long-term relationship that spans the changes and milestones in your life. As the details of your financial strategy may change, you'll still want to hold onto your values in your investments.

Investing With Purpose

Whether you're hoping to reduce your carbon footprint, stay true to your faith or make the world a better place through giving, you don't have to choose between your values and your financial future. Many good financial advisors can help you do both.

Taking the time to find someone who shares your vision can help you feel confident that your investment strategy can align with your personal beliefs.

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Trish Freeman

Big ACA Changes Coming in 2026:

What You Need to Know

If you or your family rely on the Health Insurance Marketplace for coverage, it's time to pay close attention. Major changes are coming in 2026 that could significantly impact your monthly premiums, your total out-of-pocket exposure, and your ability to enroll on time.

Here's what you need to know now—before the window closes and your options shrink.

ACA Changes for 2026

1. Enhanced Premium Tax Credits Are Going Away

During the pandemic, the American Rescue Plan Act temporarily boosted subsidies that helped millions of Americans—including many Louisianans—afford Marketplace coverage. These extra subsidies end December 31, 2025.

What does that mean for you?

- Monthly premiums are likely to spike, especially if your income disqualifies you from standard tax credits.
- Some families may go from “barely manageable” premiums to completely unaffordable.
- Add in annual rate increases from insurance carriers, and traditional ACA coverage might

start to lose its appeal for many middle-class families. As a result, more people are now exploring alternatives—catastrophic coverage and cost-sharing models—to gain more control over their healthcare budget.

2. The Subsidy 'Cliff' Is Coming Back

One of the biggest setbacks for 2026? The return of the subsidy cliff.

Thanks to temporary COVID-era legislation, families earning just above the income threshold for tax credits were protected. But that protection expires in 2026.

If your income is even \$1 over 400% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), you could lose all access to premium tax credits—instantly making your ACA plan unaffordable.

Here's what that 400% income limit looks like:

Household Size	400% FPL
1	\$62,600
2	\$84,600
3	\$106,600
4	\$128,600
5	\$150,600
6	\$172,600
7	\$194,600
8	\$216,600

If your income lands in this range or just above it, now is the time to talk. We'll help you explore other options—like private plans, health sharing, or hybrid models—to keep you protected without relying on ACA subsidies.

3. Out-of-Pocket Maximums Are Rising

Even if your monthly premium stays manageable, your out-of-pocket maximum is going up. The federal government is increasing the maximum out-of-pocket limits again for 2026.

Tip: When evaluating your plan, stop thinking only in terms of monthly premiums. Instead, add up your:

- Monthly premium × 12
- Max out-of-pocket limit = Your real financial exposure for the year

For families who don't use much healthcare but want a safety net for the big stuff, catastrophic or sharing plans may offer better value.



4. The Open Enrollment Window Is Getting Shorter

One of the most important changes for 2026: Open Enrollment ends December 15—no extensions.

- If you don't have your plan selected and submitted by December 15th, you'll have no coverage starting January 1.
- You cannot wait until January to enroll and backdate coverage anymore.
- Special enrollment periods (SEPs) are also tightening, which means fewer second chances if you miss the deadline.

And let's face it—January is one of the busiest months for illness, ER visits, and hospitalizations. Missing the deadline could leave you uninsured at the worst possible time.

What You Should Do Right Now

1. Mark your calendar: Open Enrollment runs from November 1 to December 15. That's your window. Don't miss it.
2. Think beyond the monthly premium. Consider the total cost of risk. What's the most you could be on the hook for if something goes wrong? That number matters.

3. Compare your options. If you're losing subsidies or seeing a major rate hike, it might be time to explore:

- a. Catastrophic plans
- b. Cost-sharing alternatives

These plans often feature lower premiums, simplified benefits, and a clear safety net for unexpected expenses.

You Don't Have to Figure This Out Alone

We get it—the Affordable Care Act isn't exactly easy to understand. That's why we're here.

At Trish Freeman Insurance Services, we help Louisiana families like yours evaluate their options, run the numbers, and make confident decisions. We're not a massive call center. We're not some online chatbot. We're local, independent, and family-run right here in Gonzales.

We do this every day, and we're here to help you cut through the confusion and find the plan that truly fits your life.

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Big Medicare



Changes Coming in 2026:

What You Need to Know

If you're on Medicare—or will be soon—2026 is shaping up to be a year of major changes that could affect your coverage, your costs, and even your peace of mind. From rising prescription drug prices to rural hospital funding cuts and shifting vaccine policies, there's a lot in motion. Here's a clear breakdown of what's ahead—and how to prepare.

What's Changing in Medicare for 2026

1. Prescription Drug Plans Are in Flux

The Part D Premium Stabilization program may be going away—meaning:

- Premiums could rise significantly
- Low-cost drug plans may vanish
- Coverage for brand-name medications may shrink

In some areas, you could go from 20+ plan options to just 5 or 6, and unfortunately, it's the most affordable plans that are likely to disappear.

2. Free Vaccines

Could Be in Jeopardy

Since 2023, Medicare Part D has covered adult vaccines at no cost, but that's now in question. In June 2025, HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. dismissed the entire vaccine advisory panel (ACIP). The replacements have a track record of skepticism—so we may see fewer recommended vaccines, and less coverage as a result.

3. Your Drug Cost Cap Is Going Up

There's still a cap on your out-of-pocket drug costs, thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act—but it's creeping up. The \$2,000 cap in 2025 will increase slightly to \$2,100 in 2026. Not huge, but worth noting in your annual review.

Medicare Advantage: More Popular, More Complex

Over half of Medicare beneficiaries now have Medicare Advantage (MA) plans, and that number is expected to hit two-thirds by 2034. The government seems to be encouraging this shift:

- Looser marketing rules (translation: your phone will ring even more)
- Making MA plans the default option (goodbye, freedom of choice?)
- Boosting payments to private insurance companies (hold on, don't they mak enough?)

Every year, the “extras” in these plans—dental, vision, gym memberships—are at risk of being cut. Some \$0 premium plans are now charging monthly premiums. And between the red tape for providers and the coverage restrictions for patients, many find these plans aren't what they used to be.

You Don't Have to Figure This Out Alone

Let's be honest: Medicare is confusing, and 2026 isn't making it any simpler. But you don't have to go it alone.

At Trish Freeman Insurance Services, we help people across Louisiana make sense of the mess. We're not a call center. We're not an algorithm. We're a local, family-run business right here in Gonzales, and we've been helping folks like you for decades.

If you're overwhelmed, you're not alone. If you're frustrated, that's normal. But if you wait too long, the health insurance companies will use these new rules against you, not for you.

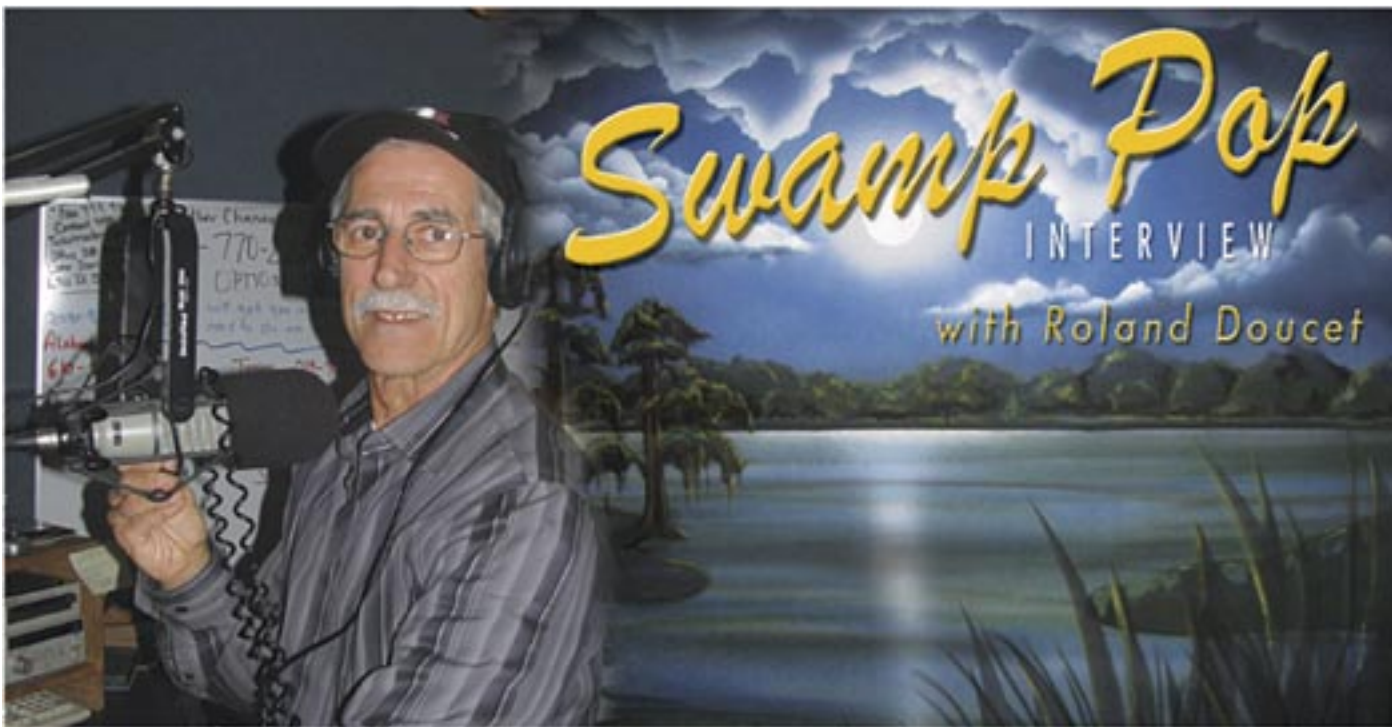
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The Insurance Lady



Benny Stanley Singing the Swamp Pop Blues Away

By Roland Doucet

While at Hidden Oaks Campground to MC the “13th Annual Swamp Pop Festival” I got the time to chat with Benny Stanley. Benny and his wife Beverly Bourque Stanley are perms at Hidden Oaks. It is their little “get away” from the rat race. Most of you likely know Benny but I found out some stuff you may not already know about Benny.

Born in Akron, Ohio, Benny moved to St. Amant with his mom, Antoinette, at an early age. They lived with his grandmother, Francis Molea, and Benny attended St. Amant School until graduation. We aren’t telling Benny’s age but this is now St Amant Middle School. Benny did enjoy school and thought he got a well-rounded education in St Amant.

Antoinette Stanley was a very talented singer herself and sang mainstream music with bands across our region. She taught Benny at an early age that being able to sing harmony was the key to being a solo artist. (So now I know



what my problem is!)

At the age of twelve, Benny’s Uncle Benton Fredric taught him the basics of playing the guitar. He played around with the guitar for a while then went on to teach himself how to play

the drums. With a couple years of practicing his music under his belt he formed his first band-Benny Stanley and the Ascensions, consisting of: Benny-drums, Mike Hebert-sax, Pouchie Bourgeois-

trumpet and Henry Broussard-guitar. The players changed a bit over the next few years, hence the different faces in the picture.*

After graduation Benny decided he needed a different type of education with a little discipline thrown in so he enlisted in the Marine Corps at the tender age of 19 1/2 . While serving his country in Vietnam Benny was wounded during the Tete Offensive at Qua-Sand and received a Purple Heart. He is a life member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and served as Finance Officer for 4 years. During his service to the MOPH he developed a system of bookkeeping that was subsequently adopted by the State MOPH.

After being discharged as an E-4 Corporal Benny came home to St Amant and started a new band teaming up with: Sydney Babin-Bass guitar, Whitney Babin-lead guitar and Benny on drums.

One year later Benny was transferred to New Orleans for his job with Head & Enguist as a parts manager. For five years Benny played guitar and sang with various bands around the New Orleans area soaking up all the musical knowledge and experience he



could. Upon transferring back to Baton Rouge for his job he formed the Bayou Boys Band, a three piece group that played together for 5 years. The band grew to become six pieces with players coming and going throughout the 15 year run of the Bayou Boys.

After the Bayou Boys Benny went on to play with a number of different bands, 14 Karat Gold, Making Memories, Mitch & Henry, and Grace Broussard, just to name a few. Benny even went to Branson, Missouri with Billy Joe Royal.

Benny and Beverly have been friends since childhood and have been together for 28 years. Beverly has Beverly's Bookkeeping & Tax Service on South Mire St in Gonzales and Benny lends her a hand during tax season.

As an aside, you know all couples have their ways of getting each other to get things done but Benny is quite the thinker when it comes to getting out of something. He tells the story of the ride home from camping one weekend (before they were perms): Riding home he knew he wasn't going to want to help clean the motor home once they got home so he purposefully made Beverly mad because when she is mad she cleans. There she was in the back of the motor home holding on to the counter mopping the floor just a fussing at Benny the whole way home. By the time they pulled into their driveway the motor home was clean! Sneaky but effective and funny.

Unfortunately, Benny has

had some health issues lately. He has fought prostate cancer, heart bypass, and diabetes for some time now but he keeps fighting. We can all look to Benny for a lesson in "keeping on going" even when the going gets tough. We wish the best for Benny and Beverly and hope to see Benny back on the bandstand soon.

I greatly enjoyed my visit with Benny and Beverly and am proud to call both of them my friends.

*I would like to thank Mrs. Beverly Smiley for the pictures that hung in her restaurant of various bands from our area. I'll be using more of them for these articles. Thanks so much Mrs. Beverly!

Roland

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gracious
to write articles
about our
local musical family
a few years back.***

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**East Ascension High School
CLASS OF 1975
50 YEAR REUNION**

ONCE A SPARTAN ALWAYS A SPARTAN


**Saturday
August 2, 2025
6:00 – 10:00 p.m.**

**Clarion Inn
1500 Hwy 30
Gonzales, LA**

\$75.00 per person/\$150.00 per couple
Make check payable to EAHS Class of 1975
Mail to Vickie Manuel Boyce
12347 Casey Babin Road
Gonzales, LA 70737
Send payment by June 1, 2025

6:00 – 7:30 SOCIAL/BUFFET 7:30 – 8:00 AWARDS/CLASS PICTURE
8:00 – 10:00 MUSIC BY BACKSTREET with Ruckle Gautreaux
CASH BAR CASUAL DRESS

Contacts
Ralph Rebowe 817-692-9840 Debbie Hancock Cambre 225-405-1421
Amy Rossi 225-715-2400 Vickie Manuel Boyce 225-936-5159



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East Ascension Sportsmans League

Letter from president -
Greg Cedotal

Help a child make some fishing memories of their own by bringing them to the 63rd Annual Kids Fishing Rodeo, see details below. July 26th, 2025

7:00am-9:00am
(6:30am Registration)

TWIN LAKES Mobile Estates
37313 Hwy 74, Geismar, La 70734

What You Need To Know

- FREE Event for children ages 2-14yrs old
- Registration begins at 6:30am.
- Fishing is from 7:00am to 9:00am.

• Children compete by age groups.

• Trophies and prizes are given out after a tally of results.

Rules

- Parents must never leave their child unattended!
- Participants need to bring their own rod/reel or cane pole to use.

It's Fishing Rodeo time!

Saturday, July 26th

- Crickets will be available (first come, first serve).
- Bring your own live bait. No artificial bait allowed!
- Keep every fish caught for weigh in.
- Bring your own buckets to hold fish and seating (folding/lawn chairs).
- Parents can help bait the hook, but a child MUST land the fish.
- Parents DO NOT need to be members of the EASL for their child to fish.

For Additional Information, Donations, and/or Sponsorships please contact:
Fishing Rodeo Chairman -
Bettye Lambert 225-571-4588 or
email bmworks2011@hotmail.com

I am doing research on offering meetings online through a program like Zoom, if you are interested in this option, let me know.

Now for a little bit about EASL's events. You must be a member to participate in these events. EASL Bass Club will hold a tournament on July 19th. If you are interested in fishing with the bass club, contact Jim Hebert at 225-717-6037. The July 22 Rifle Silhouette Match will be July 26th at the Sheriff Shooting Range starting at 8:30 AM. Don't forget to



weigh your bass for the Monthly Big Bass contest and weigh your specs for the Monthly Big Speckled Trout contest. See EASLONLINE.org, Annual & Monthly Contest.

If you decide you would like to serve on the board of directors and help move the organization forward, let us know. You do not have to wait until December to get on the board.

Time to go outdoors with family and or friends and enjoy nature.

Remember to be safe and conserve our resources for future use. Questions or comments you can email me at gdced1@gmail.com.

EASL's next regular meeting is September 15th in the second-floor meeting room at Cabela's, starting at 7:00 PM.





EASL Bass Club News

The EASL Bass Club fished their recent Tournament on the on June 21st. The Tournament was held out of the Amelia Landing.

There were 16 boats fishing the tournament with a 2:00 PM weigh in. It was a very hot day to fish and there was no breeze to help cool us or move the water around.

Fishing was sketchy with only 6 boats weighing in a limit of fish. There were 6 boats that did not have a keeper fish to weigh in. It was an overall tough day of fishing.

First place was Wilson Mulina & Gary Christian with a limit weighing 11.14 lbs.

Second place was won by Bubba Rossi & Tim

Guillaume with 5 fish weighing 9.04 lbs.

Third place was Jessie Argrave & Dirk Anderson with a limit that weighed 8.70 lbs.

Big Bass winner was Gary Christian with his lunker that weighed in at 4.48 lbs.

Congratulations to the June Tournament winners.

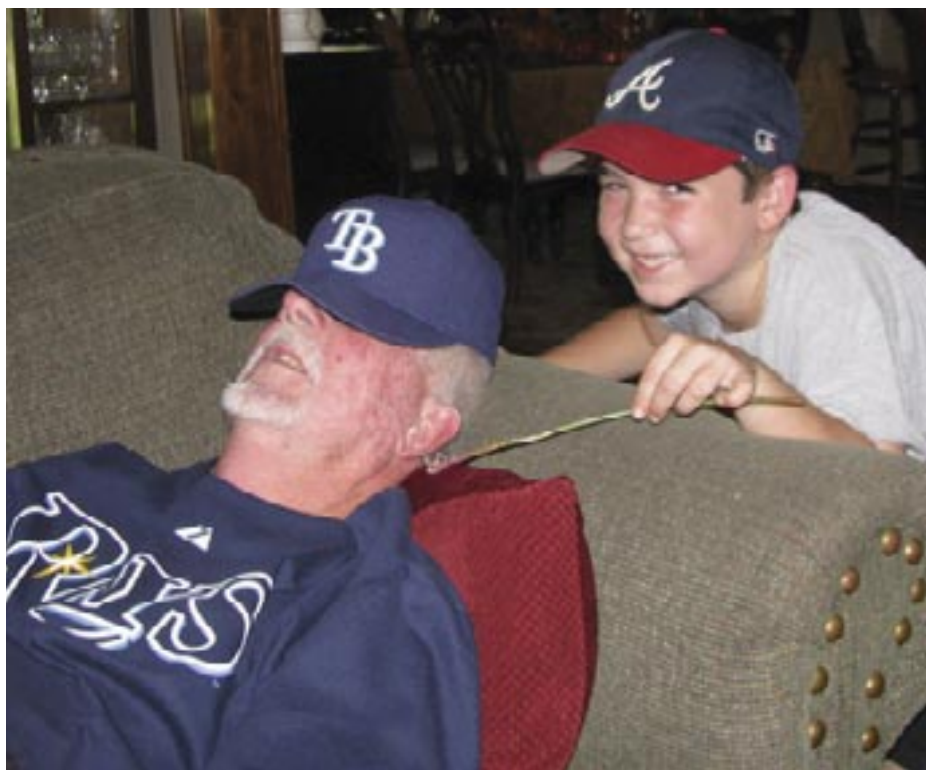
The next Tournament is scheduled for July 19th. The meeting to sign up will be on July 10th at Dirk Anderson's home on Babin Road.



L-R. Jessie Argrave and Dirk Anderson. Tim Guillaume and Bubba Rossi. Wilson Mulina and Gary Christian.

A Midsummer's Daydream or The Great Escape

by Bill Delaune



William Todd Delaune age 8. William P. Delaune-age Mesozoic.

*"What a day for a daydream-
What a day for a daydreaming
boy..."*

The Lovin' Spoonful 1966.

This one is dedicated to all my fellow disillusioned dreamers who sometimes escape the realities of this cosmic joke of a planet that we inhabit by drifting off into our own made-up worlds.

The format is borrowed-okay, stolen-from James Thurber's classic short story "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" which was so popular it was made into a movie a couple of times. The hero is an aging socially-awkward man who uses his vivid imagination to liven up his dull, lonely life and tune out his overbearing wife.

So drift away, my dreaming cohorts, with our midsummer adventures of an everyday guy who could have been a contender. You astute readers won't have any trouble separating the dreams from reality. Heck, you do it all the time. Oh, and don't worry-these daydreams are all rated

suitable for all ages. This is a family magazine...

William Sweet sipped his morning tea and read the bad news in the paper as he did each day of his humdrum existence when the silence was broken by a piercing scream he knew too well.

"Why are you still in your pajamas and not dressed ready to go? You know you have a doctor's appointment at 9 o'clock this morning. We should be on the road because you never know what the traffic's going to be. Did you remember to take your meds? And I hope that's decaf tea you're drinking. You know how caffeine makes your hands shake."

"Good morning to you too, dear," replied William to his wife of over 40 years. "The doctor's office called and said he was at the beach and cancelled my appointment."

Unfazed, Ms. Sweet continued in the same shrill tone, "Well, in that case, why don't you do something like cut the grass since you got lucky



and your doctor took a holiday..."

Doc Holliday finished off a bottle of rotgut whiskey and threw his cards in.

"You sure are lucky at the poker table, Wild Bill," Doc conceded. "I hope your luck holds out when that outlaw Ringo Ratfink comes gunning for you this afternoon."

Wild Bill tapped his special Snapper spring holster that allowed his Colt .45 to practically jump out at his beck and call and grinned. "As long as I go with my boots on. But tell me, Doc, is he really faster than me?"

"I'm afraid so, my talented young friend," admitted Holliday, "but make certain your back is to the sun when you draw. The glare may lessen that scoundrel's advantage."

Just then the doors of the saloon flew open and the stable owner Gabby burst in. "Ringo's waiting for you, Wild Bill. He's out there by the corral telling everybody you better say your prayers."

Wild Bill got up slowly and

smiled at his old friend Holliday. "At least we got to smell the roses, didn't we, Doc?" Then he turned and walked out into the deserted street of Lone Prairie. The entire town watched from the windows and held their collective breath afraid this handsome cowboy was about to meet his death.

Ringo met him in the middle of town, his silver pistol shining against his all black outfit and sneered, "Well, Billy Boy, I really didn't think you'd show. That drunk Holliday must have given you a fifth of courage to face me."

"I wouldn't have missed this for the world," shot back Wild Bill, "and I love your outfit. Some ladies do look good in black. You look like a star, Ringo."

Filled with rage, Ringo went for his gun and two shots rang out-one after another-as the outlaw collapsed in a cloud of smoke..."

"I told you to get that lawn mower serviced," chastised Ms. Sweet most severely. "Now it's backfiring and

belching out smoke and who knows what else.”

William Sweet climbed off his antiquated Snapper that was now sputtering its last breath and risked an opinion of his own.

“Maybe it’s time we get a new mower.”

“Sure, sure a new mower,” laughed Ms. Sweet. “On your meager teacher’s salary? That’s a good one. We’ll just go without groceries and electricity this month and run down and buy a big John Deere. In the meantime the yard will get so high that maybe we can bail hay or sell it for roughage...”

“Well, Jim, this U.S. Open rough is like a hay patch out here and Wild Bill is right in the middle of it,” lamented the on-course announcer covering the country’s biggest golf tournament. “It appears that the clock has struck midnight for this Cinderella golfer from the Baton Rouge Recreation League who gave these seasoned pros quite a fight for 71 holes.”

“Well, Gary, he’s not known as Wild Bill for nothing because he’s made miracle recoveries all week from some crazy lies,” said Jim in the booth. “But that snapper hook he hit into the high grass on 18 has left him behind a tree and a lake and he has no shot.”

“He’s certainly in jail here,” Gary added, “but remember-he can still chip back in the fairway and try to make par to force a playoff. That’s what his caddy thinks too because he’s handing him a pitching wedge. But there seems to be some dissension on the team here. Let’s see if I can listen in.”

“It’s the only play we have, Wild Bill,” pleaded his caddy. “You’re throwing away the U.S. Open. You can still tie for the lead.”

“Give me a 5-wood-I’m going over the tree and the water,” replied Wild Bill flipping away

the remains of a Marlboro Light. “The match was tied when we started.”

Wild Bill stepped up to his ball-barely visible in the thick rough, took one practice swing and launched a high arching shot toward the 18th green.

“I’m not believing this, Jim,” the course reporter said incredulously as the ball bounced on to the green, ten feet below the pin. A beautiful blonde grabbed at Wild Bill’s arm as he muscled his way through the crowd and another woman screamed as he lined up his winning birdie putt...

“What are you doing squatting down in the front yard?” yelled Ms. Sweet. “Have you lost your mind?”

The longshot about to win the U.S. Open replied, “I was thinking-did it ever occur to you that I might be thinking.”

“I’m going to take your temperature when we get inside,” said Ms. Sweet. “You are sweating and shaking all over...”

Wild Bill and his Six Shooter band finished their set and walked off the stage of the Louisiana Hayride to thunderous applause. Their manager met them offstage with a big grin and a bigger check. “But why didn’t you play that new one-‘All Shook Up’-that’s going to be a hit for sure.”

Wild Bill pointed to a dark-haired boy in the wings waiting to go on and admitted, “I gave that song to that poor truck driver from Tupelo. We’ve made our millions and I thought that hip-shaking kid could use a break.”

At that moment the young man approached-guitar in hand. “Knock ‘em dead, Elvis. I hope you like the song.

It’s made for you,” assured Wild Bill.

Elvis slicked back his hair, flashed that little-boy smile and replied, “Thank you, thank you very much.”

Then he walked out on the

Hayride state and began gyrating to the words of his new song, “Well, bless my soul, what’s wrong with me...”

“I think I know what’s wrong with you,” diagnosed Ms. Sweet, “you need a change of scenery. Maybe we should go visit my relatives who live on Diversion Canal. A little sun and water may do you some good.”

“Your relatives can’t stand me, I can’t stand them and my skin cancer can’t stand the sun,” pleaded William.

“Nonsense,” said Ms. Sweet, “My cousin Tom would be more than happy to take you on a nice relaxing cruise on his pontoon boat. Tom’s cruises are always a hit...”

The Top Gun instructor Maverick tried once more to talk his star pilot out of this suicide mission. “It’s certain death, Wild Bill, no one can get in and out of that Russian nuclear compound alive.”

“We only live twice, Maverick,” smiled Wild Bill

flipping away the remains of a Cuban cigar, “once when we are born and once when we look death in the face.”

“But it’s 100 miles through hell once you get past the Ural Mountains,” begged the flight instructor.

“In this life, what isn’t?” cracked the most daring pilot in the history of Navy flying. “Now where’s my F-18?” “Bon voyage, Wild Bill,” waved Maverick. “You’re the bravest man I’ve ever known.” “Catch you on the flip side,” laughed Wild Bill as he roared off into the wild, blue yonder, undefeated, indestructible til the end...





Benefit For Paul Liotto

Saturday, August 30, 2025

VFW Post 3693
42430 Churchpoint Rd
Gonzales, LA 70737
11:00 am to 9:00 pm



Jambalaya Cook Off Car Show

**Bake Sale * Silent Auction * Live Auction 7:00pm * Plant Sale
Shirts/Hats/Koozies * 50/50 Raffle * Food & Beer**

LIVE MUSIC ALL DAY

Paul Liotto has been blessed with 33 years of marriage to his loving wife, Jamie. Together, they have three children and five grandchildren. However, their lives took a dramatic turn in December 2024 when Paul was diagnosed with stage 3 throat cancer. Paul has bravely endured extensive chemotherapy and radiation treatment. His journey has been complicated by hospital stays for pneumonia and blood clots in his lungs. As a result, Jamie has had to leave her job to care for him full-time. Paul still faces a lengthy recovery process, and the medical costs are increasing. To help alleviate some of the financial burden, we are organizing a benefit to support Paul and his family during this difficult time. Your Help Matters Any contribution, big or small, would be greatly appreciated by the Liotto family. Your generosity will help ensure that Paul receives the care he needs to overcome this challenging period. Thank you for all your support.

Find us on Facebook for more details at:

<https://www.facebook.com/LifeIVLouis>

Email - jld0222@gmail.com

Donations can be made via Venmo:

[@LouisWhiteIV-Foundation](#)

9:00 - 12:00 - Car Show

11am - 12pm - Dustin Lee Guidry

12:00 - 12:30 - Award Presentation

12:30 - 1:30 - Bob Browning

1:30 - 2:30 - Stone Wall

2:30 - 3:30 - Chris Pryor & The Main Event

3:30 - 5:00 - Party @ Joes

5:00 - 7:00 - Live Auction

7:00 - 9:00 - Lauren Lee

Production by the



Paid for by Friends of Paul.

Jammin' with Goosie

Pier Pressure

Retirement for some of us isn't all about sitting in a recliner all day long. I find myself at times having more things to do than I have time available to do it. It was a rare day for me a couple of years ago to find space in which all of my chores and events were kinda caught up so to say. As I walked around the yard wondering what I was going to cook for supper that day the taste of fresh fried fish entered my thoughts. It was then mid May and our locality had been drenched with rainfall a few days earlier. I did not feel like going through the trouble of taking my



boat out for the effort of catching a few fish. The Amite River's water level had been at a normal stage for a couple of weeks but now had a small rise occurring. From my prior experiences of a lifetime of fishing I knew that the catfish bite in that basin would probably be on for sure. I soon decided to get a couple of casting rods along with my lawn chair and go sit on the small pier at the Port Vincent boat launch to try my luck. I purchased a box of night crawlers and my first fish of the morning, a beautiful blue cat, was put in my ice chest after about five minutes of tightlining. A couple of hours later the number of fish needed for supper as well as more to put in the freezer for a later date had been completed. While sitting on the small pier that morning I thought of what requirements it would take for our parish or state to add onto the length of the existing structure.

Later on that summer after the word of the fish bite got out I noticed several anglers using the wooden platform. Some were there in the day and some were there at night. At some point of time in the following month or so I had a conversation about the possibility of adding on to the small structure for increased public use with a close friend of mine Ronnie "Trash" Braud who is a member of the Ascension Waterway Commision. During our talk he told me that he had once asked one of our public officials about that subject but had not heard any response to the issue from anyone since. He then suggested that along with his group that we get the East Ascension Sportsman League involved and test the waters of this issue actually becoming a reality. Soon after contacting the Waterway Commission president, John Templet, a gathering of several members from each organization attended a short meeting to discuss the issue. Each group agreed to go forward with the project's possibility and a decision was made that each of us would contact all necessary public officials of the task at hand. Gregg Cedatol, president of the EASL, with approval of its board of directors constructed and sent an excellent letter explaining our intent and use of this public facility to all necessary parties of the parish and state as well. For months I continually asked some members of our group from time to time if any progress was being made knowing all along that this venture would take time and effort to make happen. Some road blocks naturally came about. Some questions were being answered and others were not.

This past May I decided to go to the little pier and once again catch my supper of fresh cats. The river had been at normal stage for some time but a heavy rain event prior had created a perfect tightlining current. After dropping my grandson off for driver education class in Baton Rouge I was Port Vincent bound. My bait was a half box of cold worms that had been in my fridge for a couple of months. It did not take long for me to use up the worms that I had brought from home. Those baits provided my supper for the evening but I was not ready to quit yet. With a friend of mine's birthday coming about in the next couple of days and a steady fish bite occuring I decided to purchase some more bait and catch a few more fish to cook for that event. A couple of hours later my mission was complete with enough filets for



supper and the birthday party as well. With a steady bite that morning I was also able to set up my camera and record a fishing film for Ascension Outdoors T.V. even though I was alone. That was a great morning for sure but the best of this story is yet to come.

While sitting there at the launch that morning I had conversations with a few other fishermen. Several of those fishers were attending hoop nets. Each of those fishermen returned to landing with large quantities of catfish. All of those individuals offered me a mess of catfish but I told them that I had caught all that I really wanted to clean. There was one exception to the offerings. One personal friend of mine and his wife who were running unbaited nets presented a couple of flatheads to me that I couldn't turn down. As this young man and I talked about our past and present being I mentioned to him our quest in trying to get a new and longer



pier established for the public's use. After hearing my spiel he then asked me how that situation was unfolding. I replied "Hadn't heard anything lately. You know how that goes. They probably put us on the back burner. Need to aggravate them some more." We then shook hands and as his wife and he drove off I noticed a woman and man approach the structure with a camera in hand. They began to take pictures of the shoreline and the pier. I thought "You gotta be joking". I asked them what was up. The lady replied that they were from an engineering firm and had been contacted by the director of Program Management to take

necessary photos of the proposed project so that a cost estimate could be given to concerned authorities involving the cost of extending the pier another one hundred feet or so. She also shared other improvements to the site such as bumpers, lighting, etc to the new and existing platform. I told her of my involvement with the project from its very beginning and she asked me several questions of interest for the needs of our proposal to be identified correctly. I thanked them, wished them well, and drove home with a great appreciation for the fact that our efforts had not been pushed aside by our public officials.

With the price of food at this day and time it is a great opportunity for the public with or without boats to have places in which you can go catch your supper or just enjoy time on the water or in the woods. Surely there is a need for more public hunting and fishing spots in every area of our state. With that being said I am also fairly sure that there are plenty of opportunities for such projects to become a reality in other regions. You folks from other localities know who your governmental leaders are. Don't be afraid to ask. You may be surprised by the outcome.

I truly applaud all of our leaders that have helped us along with our effort in pursuing the fishing pier at Port Vincent. Senator Eddie Lambert along with many others has been very helpful with the proposal. But the problem is the fact that the thing ain't built yet. I urge each and everyone of you from our parish to please contact or maybe just in a casual conversation ask all of our parish government, as well as state representatives and senators to support this endeavor. Like I mentioned earlier it ain't done yet and it might just take a little pier pressure to get it to the finish line.

*Till next time
Hope to see you there*

James "Goosie" Guice

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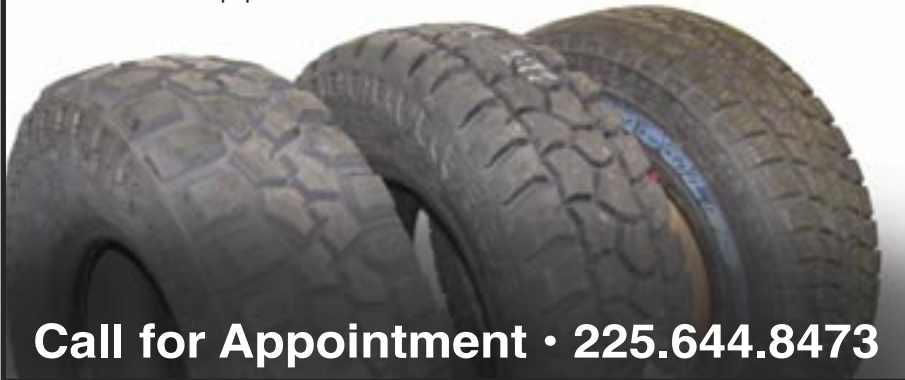


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Useless Random Facts with Kellie

•
One tree can filter up to 60 pounds of pollutants from the air each year.

•
There is a theater in Russia where all the actors are cats.

•
Pelicans have the largest bill of all birds. It can reach 18 inches in length. Underneath the bill, pelicans have a throat pouch that can hold three gallons of water. This pouch, contrary to popular belief, does not hold food.

•
Crickets hear from their knees and chirp from their wings.

•
Early designs for Toy Story's Buzz Lightyear revealed the action figure was originally going to be called Lunar Larry.

•
There are over 60,000 acres of shopping malls in the U. S.

•
After mating, male octopuses wander off to die. As for the females, they can lay up to 400,000 eggs, which they obsessively guard and tend to.

•
The U.S.-Canada border is the longest border in the world without a military defense.

•
The longest English word, at letters, is Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis.

•
The average American eats about 200 sandwiches per year.

Thoughts from Bully

Paying Attention to Details

"Pay attention young man!" my Mom used to say. "Sometimes I swear. I don't think you know if you are coming or going, get the lead out!" my coaches used to say. We get pushed along through life and I believe that hustle and bustle helped me turn out alright.

Imagine if we had cell phones when we were 15. Hell we found the parties by word of mouth and actually talking to each other. But today social media is bothering me and may be my demise.

This past year I have been in two car wrecks while I was sitting still at the light or a STOP sign. I can give you one guess as to the reason for the crashes, but your not going to need it. You know that they were looking at their cell phones. It's a wonder young folks make it past 20 years old.

I went to the drive through teller at the bank a couple of weeks back. I sat in line behind a small compact car. I watched the driver put her deposit in the opened drawer. After a few minutes the drawer opened and she retrieved the contents. The drawer closes and I prepare to move up. I sit and sit for about 4 minutes because I thought she had another transaction. Finally I gave a small honk on the horn. She pressed the gas and drove off. When I got to the window the teller rolled her eyes at me. She told me the girl finished and just started texting. She then thanked me for honking because she couldn't get her attention from inside the bank. She wasn't paying attention.

One night I went to turn into Sno's Seafood and there was a car with no lights sitting and looking abandoned in the



middle of the entrance. Half on the entrance side and half on the exit side. Upon a closer look I did see a dim light in the drivers seat. After squeezing through I turn around and pulled up behind her and got out to see if she needed help. When I approached I realized she was just sitting there texting. What has the world come too? I went back to my car and layed on the horn. She jumped and then took off. My Lord, Pay attention.

Last week I had the need to go by Walmart. It took me a while to find a parking place without walking a mile. Finally one became available. As I got out I noticed the call of nature had come upon me and I scooted toward the restroom in the store. I don't know about you but my bladder becomes impatient the closer I get to the facility. By the time I arrived at the restrooms I dashed in. The stalls were closed and I noticed there were no urinals. Whoops? I'm in the ladies room. Fortunately there were no ladies or at least I thought. As I walked out I looked back to see high heels under the stall wall which confirmed it was the ladies room. Unless Bruce Jenner was visiting Prairieville.

You may say to me pay attention but I want to take issue with the restroom door signs. If you notice there is very little difference from the Men's symbol as to the Women's symbol. Sure I see the little dress wing thing for



the Women's but I wear my shirt tails out and have a few pounds on me. If you look and I think the Women's symbol could be considered a portly man with his shirt out. I know it's a stretch but why don't we put one sign in red and the other in blue. No mistaking that. I know I'm making excuses. In reality I'm trying to cover my embarrassment. Maybe I should pay attention.

Well it's summer time and I am playing all the golf my body will allow. Two or three times a week I am chasing that little white ball around. It's a great hobbie and sport but it has its draw backs. It can get hot out there. I spray sun screen every time I play. My arms, my face, ears and neck but not my legs. I noticed a couple of weeks back that I was two toned from my legs and feet. It is a little embarrassing when I wear my flip flops. I've even had people comment on the white feet at BBQ's and such. Short of playing golf barefoot, which protocol will not allow, I don't know the solution. One thing for sure is I'm going to play golf. I did start wearing a shorter sock to tan more of my leg but that created a new problem. I still have a sock foot tan but the shorter socks have created a striped effect. Now I look like candy striped gum.

I don't know what I was



thinking but at least I was thinking. Maybe I should pay a little more attention but know this, I ain't sitting in a dark car parked in the middle of the road or crashing into vehicles sitting still. And yes, my bladder sometimes has mind of its own. He who has not ever hurried and made a mistake cast the first stone. I'm sure there are lots of folks not paying attention to the signs and have made similar decisions.

These days I have learned to pay attention and avoid foolish mistakes however if this sign

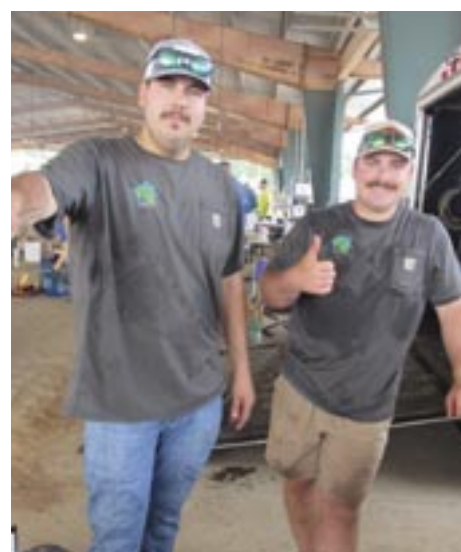


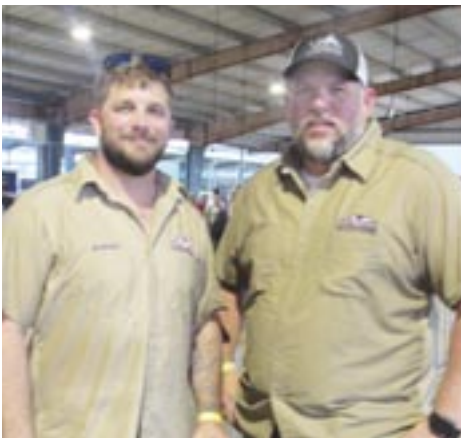
pops up by the restrooms I'm turning around and heading to my truck hoping I don't wet my pants.



Jambalaya 2025 Festival

The festival cooking jambalaya contest is the high light of the event. This year we had 94 cooking teams to start. Here are photos of a random few. They are all great chefs.





Joie de Vie

SALON

Angie Decoteau

The owner of Joie De Vie Salon who has been a stylist for 39 years and started on her adventure as a business owner 19 years ago. Angie is from a small town near Lake Charles and eventually moved to Ascension Parish where her career flourished.

Angie is very passionate about her work, clients and employee's. She specializes in coloring and unique cuts.

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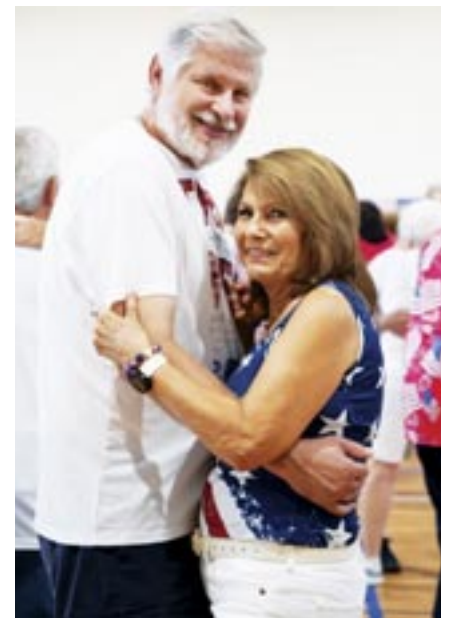
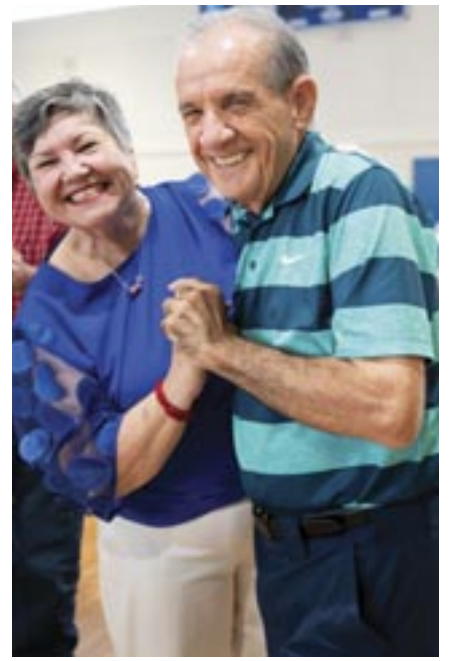
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Étouffée



Executive Chef, John Donaldson

Prep: 25 minutes

Cook: 20 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

130g Celery (about 1 stalk)

75g Green Bell Pepper (1 medium pepper)

75g Red Bell Pepper (1 medium pepper)

250g Yellow onion (1 large onion)

1 Tbsp Minced Garlic

½ lb Butter (1 cup)

1/2 c. Oil

2 c. Flour

10 c. Stock (I use half chicken and half shrimp, but you can use just 1 if preferred)

1 lb Crawfish tails

2 Tbsp Liquid Crab Boil

Salt and Pepper to taste

2 Bay leaf

Directions:

In large pot, add your butter and oil, turn on medium high heat. After butter melts, add your flour. Whisk in very well. Lower burner to medium-low heat, whisk occasionally until your roux is a little darker than peanut butter.

After proper color is achieved, add bell pepper, celery, onion. Let simmer for 30 minutes, with lid on, stirring every 5 minutes. Add garlic and bay leaves. Stir well. Add stock, whisk vigorously. Turn to high heat. Whisk on high heat until thick consistency is reached. Lower back to medium heat. Add liquid boil, green onion, salt, and pepper. Add 1 lb crawfish tails. Let simmer for 10 minutes. Serve over rice, garnish with green onion.

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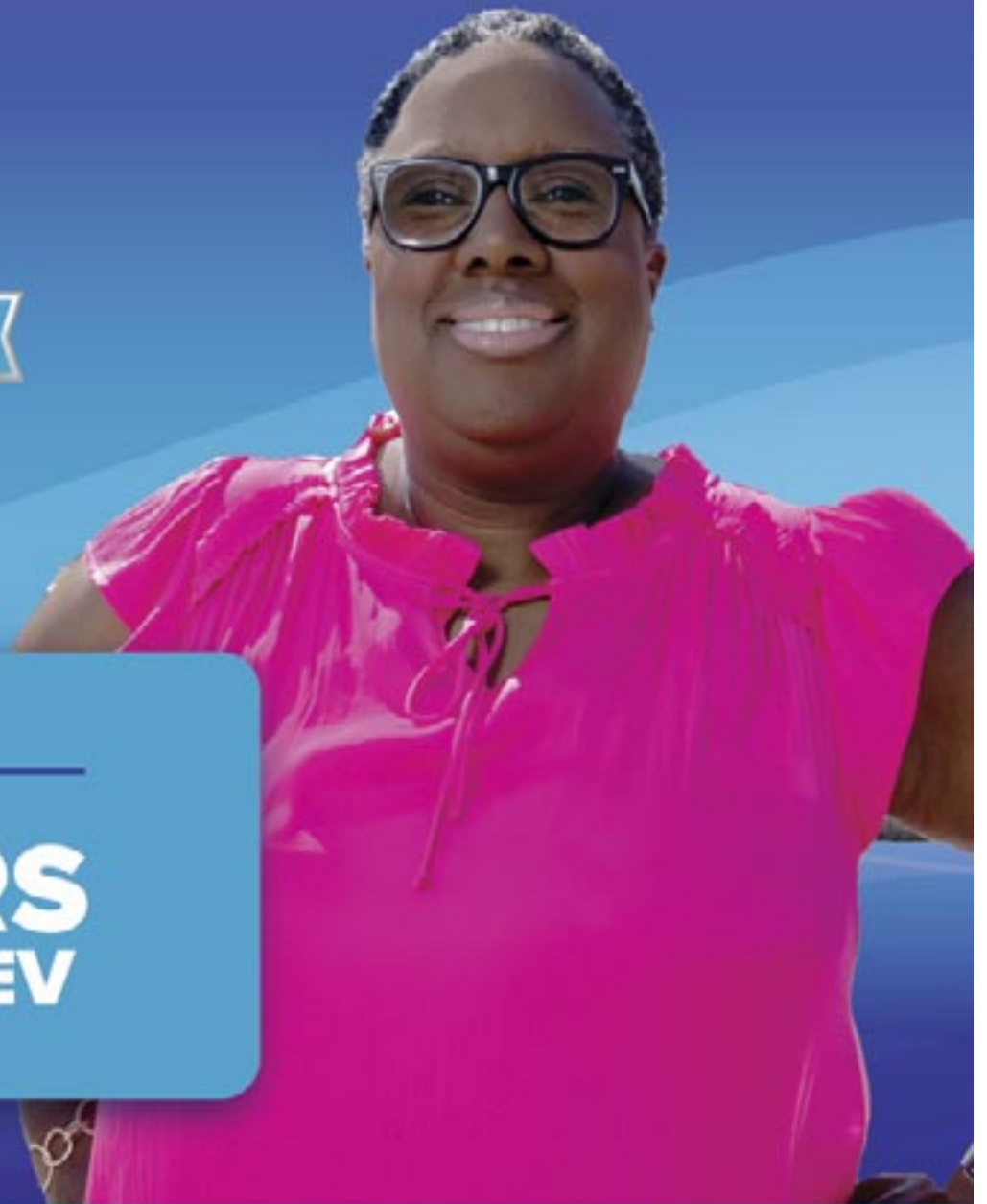
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