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This lovely 3BR/2BA home was affected by the area’s 2016 flood and has been completely renovated, ready for its new owners! Features: new wood-look vinyl strip flooring throughout except for new carpet in all bedrooms, new stainless steel appliances in the kitchen with laminate countertops, new light fixtures throughout, new bathroom fixtures, and a wood-burning fireplace in the living room. Property backs up to the woods for additional privacy in this well-established neighborhood.

The large front porch invites you to come, sit and enjoy the Autumn! Yes! This beautiful home at 204 Oakwood Drive, can be yours! Walk inside the French doors and onto Southern Pine floors, relax in front of a gas-burning fireplace, or do some work, if you must, in your comfortable office. Step into the brick-paved keeping room and kitchen, where your eyes are drawn to the white mantle fireplace, then to gorgeous granite countertops on sleek, new cabinetry with subtle backsplash. A laundry room and full bath adjoin the mezzanine bedroom, with entrance to a private balcony overlooking the backyard and lush woods. The second floor, complete with bath and closet, provides a great space for a bedroom/sitting room or game/media room. A back deck is perfect for lounging or grilling!

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30942 MEADOW WOOD BLVD
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22534 DOVER CT
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23314 FAIRWAY GARDEN CT
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7402 ROBINSON DR
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20961 WALKER SOUTH RD
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35420 GRAVESBRIAR DR
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25583 WINGED FOOT CT
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1058 TRACY AVE
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9232 GREYSTONE DR
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ON THE COVER:
A steady rain didn’t dampen the spirit of the crowd when Patricia Riddle, the longest actively serving employee of the hospital, had the honor of cutting the ribbon at the August 28 grand opening ceremony of the new West Feliciana Hospital in St. Francisville. An open house for dignitaries and the community followed, with tours of the hospital, food and refreshments.
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I disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it

The quote in this headline is the basic tenet of the first amendment to our constitution which guarantees freedom of speech. Anyone who decides to state an opinion or protest something— even an athlete who does not stand for the national anthem— has every right to do so under the protection of the first amendment. We may not like it, and we have every right to exercise our freedom of speech by saying so, but we cannot deny his constitutional rights.

In fact, I do say so right here; I disagree with anyone disrespecting our country, whether it's not standing for the Star Spangled banner or not pledging allegiance to the flag, or disrespecting the office of the president, but I fully defend their right to do so as long it is done peaceably and does not intrude on the rights of others to state an opposite point of few.

Now, since ordinary citizens don't have a national platform like an NFL game, how can they make their opinion known? Change the channel and don't watch the NFL, and don't buy NFL merchandise. Use socia media. Games’ ratings have already dropped, and if they see a few more weeks of shrinking audiences, I suspect the NFL and team owners would find a way to convince the players to stand at attention (although I could argue the gesture is meaningless if forced).

Further, I don't believe the NFL can fire an athlete for kneeling unless a requirement to stand is written into their contract - and maybe not even then.

There is another tenet, one I would suggest to President Trump: pick your battles. There are so many problems in our country and so much division that I have been hoping he would tone down his rhetoric across the board and find ways to make his point yet bring people together – not drive them further apart.

Trump was certainly within his rights to express his disappointment or even outrage, but he was wrong to say players should be fired, and he was wrong on so many levels to publicly call a peaceful protestor an S.O.B.

Yes, the president also has freedom of speech, but he, as too often happens, went too far. His actions succeeded only in calling more attention to the protestors, creating more sympathizers. The media has largely been using the situation for ratings and to bash Trump, and his remarks played into their hands.

I think Drew Brees responded almost perfectly to the situation. He disagreed with the protestors and also disagreed with President Trump in a statement before the September 24 Saints game in which he spoke his opinion while being respectful to both sides.

Brees’ statement, in part, said, “I disagree with what the president said and how he said it. I think it’s very unbecoming of the office of the President of the United States to talk like that, to degrade people like that, and obviously, he’s disappointed a lot of people… There will always be issues with our country... and we should all be striving to make those things better. But if the protest becomes that we’re going to sometimes kneel or not show respect to the flag of the United States of America, and everything that it symbolizes, I do not agree with that. Standing for the national anthem with your hand over your heart is a unifying thing; it should bring us all together and say, ’You know what, things are not what they should be, but we will continue to work and strive to make things better, to bring equality to all people, no matter your race, creed, or religion.’ ... I will always believe that we should be standing and showing respect to our flag with our hand over our heart.”

And then Brees went out on the field and did just that. It’s a shame most news reports showed the Saints who sat in protest, but not Brees and others who were standing - but that wouldn’t have suited their agenda.

Why couldn’t Trump have been as diplomatic as Brees?

Further, the protesting players and owners are getting attention, but what are they accomplishing? No one knows for sure what their cause is. I suggest that they could have more impact outside the stadium by speaking out for peaceful, constructive changes and especially by going into troubled neighborhoods and using some of their millions to build more Girls’ and Boys’ Clubs, fund scholarships, build parks, provide recreation opportunities and jobs, etc.

P.S. I notice the national media does not give the same amount of attention to all cases involving protests and freedom of speech. In past months, numerous speakers across the country have had their freedom of speech suppressed through the use of threats, vandalism, violence or being shouted down. Where were the sympathizers and protests over the denial of free speech then?

Helen Wale Turner

I invite you to email your questions, comments, suggestions for stories, constructive criticism, etc. to me, Helen Turner, at helen@inspiredmedia-la.com. I'd love to hear from you.
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This community always supported me when I played football at Denham High, and I’m grateful for the opportunity to give back. I have learned a lot in the past few months working with Double Click and I’m excited to see what the future holds.

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JENSEN HENDERSON, Office Manager/Technician
I’ve been interested in computers since high school, and I’ve been so excited for the opportunity to learn and gain experience from working with the company for the past year. I love working with my brothers and providing honest, reliable computer services to the people in the city where I grew up.

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Looking Forward with President Ricks

We stand together and overcome upheavals from violence and nature

More and more, I hear people trying to make sense of the volatile world we live in today. It’s not just mankind’s crimes against one another, it’s also nature’s wrath that seems to compound the ferocity that we must deal with on a daily basis.

It’s hard to believe that 16 years has passed since al-Qaeda took the lives of nearly 3,000 people on our home soil and injured thousands upon thousands more. I think that single event shook the complacency of Americans extremely hard. We learned that we are, indeed, vulnerable to attack from outside forces right here in our own homes and places of business.

Since then, our sense of security seems to be tested again and again. There have been unprovoked, unexpected attacks in movie theaters, shopping malls, night clubs, schools and work places. People have experienced random violence on the streets and in their homes. The vastness of the internet exposes us to the horrendous crimes committed daily as family rises up against family, neighbor against neighbor, stranger against stranger. For many of us, it becomes too much to handle.

As if these atrocities aren’t enough to deal with, nature itself seems to have turned on us: floods, earthquakes, massive hurricanes and storms, wildfires, drought, disease.

Recently, I participated in the annual Cry Out America service that Carolyn Hatcher and others so vigilantly organize in remembrance of those who lost their lives as a result of the September 11, 2001, attack. Participants recalled the fortification of America as we all stood together under the red, white and blue to proclaim our determination to face those who would seek to jeopardize our freedoms. In every neighborhood, on every street, in businesses and homes, the American flag waved proudly.

I have witnessed that same determination in every trial since. No one stands alone in the face of terror and disaster. The hearts of Americans are filled with the love of the Creator because we are still one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all, with an unshakable allegiance to our flag.

Many things have changed since our forefathers came to this country and established autonomy for the people of the United States. I am confident, however, that they would stand and fight with us against adversity and lend a helping hand in the face of disaster.

If there is any comfort to be had in the face of so much upheaval, it is the assurance that whatever we face, we face together. My personal belief is that we have the added strength and might of an all-powerful God who unfailingly stands with us. We don’t have the promise of a perfect life on this earth, but we do have the promise that we are never alone.

As we continue to rebuild our own homes, many of us have also reached outside our borders to lend assistance to Texas, Florida and other states struggling against nature’s fury.

Our televisions and computers constantly transmit news into our daily lives. We listen apprehensively to news of yet another tropical depression, another act of violence and we hear of increasing threats from North Korea targeted directly at America and other nations.

At times, I find it necessary to take a break from the news and the internet and seek peace in the quiet. Of course, as an elected official, those times are few and far between. However, we sometimes need to actively look for beauty, peace and hope in this world because bad news seems to dominate the airwaves and spread so much faster than good news. That can cause us to lose hope and can lead to despair.

There is so much good and so much reason to hope, even in the midst of disaster and violence. My hope is that we can all take the time to recognize and meditate on that fact so we don’t lose hope, faith and love, because we still live in the greatest nation on earth.

I pray that God will continue to wrap us in his love and care and protect us from harm. I pray that we will remain steadfast and diligent as we strive to keep God first in our lives and call upon his name for guidance and mercy. I pray for harmony and peace. I pray that the love of God will be displayed in each of us and be brightly reflected in our lives and in our dealings with one another. I pray God’s blessings on you all.

This column by Parish President Layton Ricks is a regular feature in the Journal. Contact the president’s office at 225-686-4400 or email comments or questions to him at info@livingstonparishla.gov.

See the official parish government website, www.livingstonparishla.gov, for information on all parish officials and departments.
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Regina Walker is named first Woman’s Leadership Award recipient

Denham Springs, LA – Regina Allen Walker, co-founder of Livingston Parish Children’s Choirs and well-known community leader, was awarded the inaugural Woman’s Leadership Award at the Sept. 13 inaugural Livingston Parish Chamber of Commerce Women’s Leadership Event at Forrest Grove Plantation.

Speakers included Kristen Maddox, founder of A Door of Hope women’s ministry; Michele Sutton, President/CEO of North Oaks Health System; and keynote speaker Sara “D-D” Breaux, Head Coach of LSU Women’s Gymnastics for 40 years.

When Regina Walker was announced as the recipient of the Women’s Leadership Award, she expressed surprise at being chosen and noted that although she had been recognized in the music and art industry for her contributions, this was the first time she was presented a community award.

Walker received her Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Piano degrees from LSU. She has been acknowledged as the Governor’s Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Award recipient, Baton Rouge Music Teachers Association Educator of the Year, and Arts Council of Denham Springs Hall of Fame member.

When asked if she would like to say a few words, she stated, “Well, you know I do!” She graciously accepted the award and acknowledged the collaborations to bring the current success of the choirs she has led.

In 1959, Walker started teaching piano plus formed a girls’ choir. When she started a boys’ choir, her charter choir had forty boys, including former Denham Springs Mayor Jimmy Durbin and current Louisiana Supreme Court Judge Jeff Hughes.

At the prompting of her daughter, Barbara, the Livingston Parish Children’s Choirs were later formed. The choirs performed in Washington, D.C., Austria and England to name just a few locations. She said one of the most memorable performances was for a group of veterans in Washington who stood with tears during patriotic ensembles.

Although her daughter Barbara is the primary choir instructor today, Walker faithfully attends performances and assists in ticket sales and sponsorships. Her passion for the choir has not waned, and she made a point of reminding the audience of upcoming performances.

LPCC board president, Shannon Bernard, said, “We are thrilled to see Mrs. Regina recognized for her leadership. She has had an impact on many in our parish and is deserving of this honor.”

April Wehrs, president of the Livingston Parish Chamber, stated, “The work and positive recognition that has been brought to the area by Mrs. Regina Walker made her an excellent choice for the award. We were proud to announce her as the winner and to acknowledge her life’s love of music, Denham Springs, Livingston Parish and the state.”
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LIVINGSTON PARISH CHAMBER

LIVE2LEAD in Livingston Parish

Join the Chamber for Live2Lead Oct. 6, 8am-12 noon for this leader development experience designed to equip you with new perspectives, practical tools and key takeaways. Learn from world-class leadership experts and return to your office ready to implement your new action plan and lead with renewed passion and commitment. Teleconference presenters are John C. Maxwell, Dave Ramsey, Warrick Dunn and Cheryl Bachelder. Sponsor is Blount General Contractors. RSVP required. $39 members/$49 future members.

22nd Annual Golf Outing will have Halloween theme

Come out for an afternoon of fun Monday, Oct. 30, at Greystone Country Club. Sponsorship and team entry forms are available online at the Chamber website. Lunch is at noon, and the event tees off with a shotgun start at 1pm. Businesses can sponsor and set up a tent at a hole on the course and be eligible for prizes for best “vibe” at their tent - costumes are a must – as well as Best Food at the hole and best “Witches Brew.” Costumes are encouraged for everyone. Players, get your game on or just enjoy the fun stuff at each hole. Register online.

Save the Date

Oct. 25 - Leads & Learn for Lunch, 11:30 am-1pm @ Big Mike’s. October is “Invite a Guest” month at this networking event for Chamber members. RSVP required.

New Members

Accounting Services Unlimited, Americas Choice Insurance Agency, Captain D’s, Furniture City, Jon Fine Productions, Kent’s Companies Plumbing & Electrical, Optimal Wireless, Porky’s Boudin & Cajun Meats, Prime Lending, Realty Investment & Development, Vantage Health Plans. See Chamber website for more information.

BAKER CHAMBER

Baker announces annual banquet

The Baker 2017 Chamber of Commerce banquet will be Oct. 19 at the Baker Municipal Auditorium, 3325 Groom Rd., Baker. The event will honor Chamber members with business awards. It will also include a guest speaker, a silent auction, door prizes, music and food. Master of Ceremonies is Clarence Buggs and guest speaker is East Baton Rouge Sheriff Sid Gautreaux. Doors open at 6 pm for networking, silent auction and raffle, and the program begins at 7 pm. To purchase tickets or for more information, contact the Baker Chamber of Commerce at 225-706-0670 or email paula@bakercoc.com.

CENTRAL CHAMBER

Golf event at Greystone

The Central Chamber’s Golf Scramble is scheduled for Oct. 9, 11am-5pm at Greystone Country Club, 9461 St. Andrews Ct. in Denham Springs. Lunch
Central Health & Business Expo 2017

The Chamber’s Health & Business Expo 2017 is Oct. 28, 9am-2pm, at Central Intermediate School, 12636 Sullivan Rd. The public is invited to visit with local businesses and get information about their services. Free admission, door prizes, food & beverages, drawing for Saints tickets, kids entertainment by BREC, free dress pass for students who attend (participating schools only). Vendors, see Chamber website for details.

Next membership meeting

The Central Chamber will meet Oct. 11, 11:30-1:00, at Sammy’s Grill, 14800 Wax Rd., Central

ZACHARY CHAMBER

Annual banquet

Zachary Chamber of Commerce annual banquet
The Zachary Chamber of Commerce annual banquet is October 19. Contact the Chamber office for ticket and sponsorship information.

Lights, camera, action!

Do you want fifteen minutes of fame - or at least five minutes? The Zachary Chamber has started a new video series that will highlight a new Chamber business each month, “A Day in the Life.” Do you want to be next? Contact Taylor Watts, taylor@zacharychamber.com.

Christmas parade theme announced

The theme for the annual Christmas parade which will march down Main Street on Saturday, December 9, is “Songs of Christmas.” Cost for entry is $125 for non-chamber members and $100 for Chamber members. Deadline for entry is November 20. For more information and entry forms, call 501-428-1166 or email taylor@zacharychamber.com.
Taylor Watts was fully engaged with her community in Conway, Arkansas, 30 minutes north of Little Rock, when life took a turn south—literally. “I was born and raised there; my whole life was there,” she said. Watts worked in marketing and real estate, but her true passion was the work she did for the Conway Area Chamber of Commerce and the Women’s Shelter of Central Arkansas. She brought awareness to important needs in the community by leading successful fundraising events, networking with area businesses and connecting with the community.

A whirlwind relocation in her husband’s job brought the couple and their children to Zachary, and the Zachary Chamber of Commerce quickly seized the opportunity to make use of her wide range of skills and experience. Watts officially joined the Chamber in March 2017 as their events manager. She spent the first few months reaching out to members to better understand their needs and planning around those needs, and when the executive director position came open, Watts was the obvious choice.

After attending the Association Chamber of Commerce Executives Convention in July, Watts understood the Chamber needed to refocus and rebrand. With the support of the Chamber’s 14-member board of directors, the new vision of the Chamber is to stimulate a vibrant Zachary economy by promoting the quality of life through families, education, and business advocacy while being the voice of the business community.

The Chamber wants to advocate for businesses by going before the government, using resources to fight for or against bills that impact business, and representing community business owners. That advocacy can only happen if more businesses get involved.

This year the Chamber has focused on programs that bring value to its members, and Watts believes it’s paying off. “We have increased membership by over 40 new businesses in the last month.” She said the organization is working toward a young professional program (34 and under) to develop leadership and business skills. They also have worked with LSU and the Louisiana Economic Development Council to offer Leadership NORTH, a development program for the north Baton Rouge region. The program is designed to engage emerging leaders in our region and prepare them to meet the future needs of our communities.

The Chamber’s updated mission is to promote and enhance the community and business economy in efforts to advance the Zachary area to its highest potential. While economic development is important, Watts believes a small town like Zachary needs a Chamber that is community-based. “The town is going to grow,” she said, “but you’re going to have to let the community adapt to the growth...and make sure the businesses that are here can grow their business and thrive.”

Watts said the Chamber’s longstanding Ambassador Program has been given a much-needed overhaul. Ambassadors serve as mentors for other business owners and communicate with businesses on behalf of the Chamber to see if they have questions, complaints or suggestions. One change is that program candidates now complete an application and interview to be considered for the position. Ambassadors use an online point system to document their fulfillment of duties.

In turn, Watts has restructured the program to better benefit the ambassadors who are helping the Chamber. For example, a loan officer may be ass-
Details: Zachary Chamber of Commerce, 4633 Main St., Zachary, LA 70791; 225-654-6777; www.zacharychamber.com; taylor@zacharychamber.com; Facebook: Zachary Chamber of Commerce; Hours: M-F 9-4.

of upcoming events, ribbon cuttings, and new members. The event is open to business owners, Chamber members and Zachary residents as well. Watts invites anyone in the community to drop in and ask questions or get to know more about the Chamber.

If a daytime meeting isn’t feasible, quarterly Off-the-Clock events are an evening opportunity to network and mingle with other business owners. A different business hosts each quarter at various locations. In August, eXp Realty teamed up with Luxe Emporium Bath and Body to host the event that included music, refreshments and a pop-up shop.

Upcoming events include the 2017 Zachary Chamber Awards Banquet October 19, from 6-8pm. The Chamber is introducing new categories for this year’s awards which will include Emerging Business, Young Professional, Small Business, Minority Enterprise, Women in Business, Business Lifetime Achievement, and Business of the Year. Nominated businesses will complete an interview form that will be sent to a chamber in a different city for judging. The Rotary Club will also present their Citizen of the Year Award at the banquet.

In December, the Chamber will host the Gleaux Run, which helps fund parks and recreation in the city. The Zachary Christmas parade will close out the Chamber’s calendar year. The Chamber fully funds the insurance and officials required for the parade and hopes businesses will help keep this highly-anticipated community event by joining the Chamber as members and/or sponsoring a float in the parade.

The theme for the annual Christmas parade which will march down Main Street on Saturday, December 9, is “Songs of Christmas.” Cost for entry is $125 for non-chamber members and $100 for Chamber members. Deadline for entry is November 20. For more information and entry forms, contact the Chamber office.

Chamber Notes
• The Zachary Chamber newsletter will now be coming out on Mondays, and the website is under construction and will be revealed very soon.
• Membership renewals will be going out in October and are due by January 1, 2018.
• A City of Zachary Annual Golf Tournament is in the works for 2018. Other events being planned include a fishing tournament, Bowling for Business, business workshops, and more.
Cajun Army evolves from Cajun Navy to help flood victims salvage homes and lives

By Helen Wale Turner

Everyone’s heard of the Cajun Navy – a group of people who were nicknamed that while they were spontaneously and individually using their own boats to travel to areas flooded by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 and subsequent floods. But many of us are just learning about the Cajun Army which came together last summer.

Chris King, from Baton Rouge, and brothers Nick and Josh Loupe, from Morgan City, are three men who were part of the Cajun Navy which helped rescue people in southeast Louisiana during the flood of 2016. The three men made the precarious trip by boat up the Amite River as the floodwaters raged, with their destination Denham Springs. When they arrived, their mission to help people stranded by the flood became an 11-hour ordeal with countless rescues made.

“There was a tremendous current with many obstacles in the water, and several occasions where we should have lost the boat. I don’t know how we made it,” Nick Loupe admitted.

Even as they were pulling people from the flood and navigating the troubled waters, they couldn’t help but wonder what was going to happen to all these people who had just lost their homes and had their lives turned upside-down. They knew there would be a great need for cleaning up the destruction, and they also knew they had to do something to help. Thus, one afternoon on a boat in the chaos of the flood, the idea for the Cajun Army was born.

As the floodwaters receded, the guys at first had no clear answer of what to do, only a desire to help their fellow Louisianans rebuild their lives. The men started calling friends and posting on Facebook looking for people willing to muck out and gut homes in the affected areas. People responded in droves – so many that it was quickly evident that a way was needed to organize them and get “boots on the ground” as quickly as possible.

They organized under the name of the

“..."We gutted around 1,000 homes,” Nick Loupe said. “We’re still working this area more than a year after the flood, and now we’re also dealing with the aftermath of the beast of Hurricane Harvey in Texas."
The Road to Recovery
LIVINGSTON PARISH | CENTRAL | ZACHARY | BAKER | FELICIANAS | POINTE COUPEE

Cajun Army and applied for and, in record time, received 501(c)(3) non-profit status and soon got to work in the Baton Rouge area.

“We gutted around 1,000 homes,” Nick Loupe said. “We’re still working this area more than a year after the flood, and now we’re also dealing with the aftermath of the beast of Hurricane Harvey in Texas.”

Hurricane Irma quickly followed Harvey and devastated much of Florida while the Cajun Army was busy cleaning up homes in the Houston Beau- mont areas. The group decided it was more practical to stay where they were since the damage in southeast Texas is so great, and their resources could be better utilized closer to home.

It is notable that the Cajun Army relies on volunteers for their workforce and does not ask for money. Instead, if anyone offers to help, they ask for dona-tions of supplies, referring them to go to their website www.thecajunarmy.com and click on “Texas Wish List” which takes them to a special Amazon site where they can select items from their wish list of needed supplies. The purchased items will be shipped directly to their warehouses in Texas.

They’re also looking for more helpers. Anyone interested in being part of healing in some shape or form after a disaster can volunteer as an onsite worker or even just share a Facebook post or help with administrative chores.

“But I really don’t like to say ‘just’ send a Facebook post, because every effort is important. Every post someone sends about the Cajun Army will get forwarded to others, and each post has the potential to find someone who will volunteer as a worker or to buy supplies,” said Loupe, “or will reach someone who needs help and doesn’t know where to turn.”

They need skilled workers such as electricians, plumbers, carpenters,
etc., as well as laborers to demo and clear out the interior of houses. Also, cooks, food servers, people who know how to use computers and spreadsheets are needed, as well as helpers in many other capacities.

Loupe tells volunteers no matter how little time they have or how limited their skills, there is always something they can do.

“If you don’t have time now but may in a few weeks, or few months, we can still use you,” he said. “I feel we will still be here in Texas maybe even next year because the flooding was so widespread, and there are so many homes that were damaged.

Anyone who would like to volunteer should go to the Cajun Army website and click on “Volunteer” to register. Someone checks the website each night and contacts people within one or two days. They discuss exactly what the volunteers will be doing so there will be no surprises.”

Each work site has an experienced coordinator to oversee the work crews. Tools and protective clothing and masks are provided to all workers, although if a volunteer has their own tools, they are encouraged to bring them along.

People can also volunteer to provide housing and feed the workers; just click the “Offer Housing” button on the website.

The Cajun Army currently has three command posts in Texas: at Pasadena south of Houston; Magnolia, northwest of Houston; and at Port Neches near Port Arthur. They are also in the Lake Charles area to help fellow Louisianians who were also hit by Hurricane Harvey. The command posts coordinate volunteers and work crews and also house and feed volunteers. Most often these locations are churches who offer their facilities.

The group gets word on who needs help through their website. If you or anyone you know lives in a flooded area and needs a house gutted, the owner needs to go to the website and click “Request Help.” Loupe always tells people, “Don’t register with just us, though; register with all aid groups and see who can get to you first.”

Anyone can see what they are doing by following them on Facebook; it’s updated every day.

Loupe noted that the Cajun Army name is copyrighted and trademarked, and they do not tolerate any misuses of their name.

“We don’t want our reputation ruined by imposters,” said Loupe. “There are legitimate organizations that solicit cash donations, but we do not. If you hear from anyone that’s trying to raise money in the name of the Cajun Army, you know it’s fraud because we never ask for money.”

Contact the Cajun Army via email or through their website or Facebook page, and an administrator will respond quickly. “All we are here for is to love our neighbors and serve them in their time of need. We just need a little help to be able to help more people.”

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**Details:**

Cajun Army email: info@thecajunarmy.com; visit website: www.thecajunarmy.com to register to volunteer or request help; Facebook: The Cajun Army.
Flood insurance can be purchased from private companies

By Helen Turner

As part of the notification procedure in making a loan, lenders must inform prospective borrowers of the availability of flood insurance coverage from private insurers as well as through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). In particular, owners whose properties are worth more than the maximum limits insured by the NFIP often turn to private insurers if they want additional coverage. (NFIP limits are $250,000 for home dwellings and $500,000 for businesses).

But if a person purchases a property without taking out a mortgage or chooses, after their mortgage is paid off, to insure their property against flood for the first time, or are not in a flood zone, they may not be aware that private flood insurance is available.

The quotes from these private surplus lines companies are often less than pre-quote positions of NFIP policies, but the coverage, deductibles, exclusions, conditions, may also be different. Consumers are cautioned to compare not only premiums of policies but also the amount of coverage, deductibles, exclusions, and all policy conditions.

Sometimes the difference in premiums is substantial and sometimes only $100 to $200 difference, so the homeowner or business owner should seriously consider whether the savings are worth any coverage differences and any risk assumed by being insured by a surplus lines company. Ask your insurance agent for their guidance.

The Journal asked both FEMA and a local independent insurance agency, Integrity Insurance, for information on private flood insurance. Their answers follow.

FEMA position on private flood insurance

Provided by FEMA representative Kathy Graf, Hazard Mitigation/NDRS, FP&KINS Specialist; Additional information was obtained from a National Flood Insurance position statement referenced by Ms. Graf.

“Flood insurance coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) may be purchased through an insurance agent who will obtain the policy either directly through the NFIP or through an insurance company that participates in the NFIP. Flood insurance that provides the same level of coverage as a standard flood insurance policy under the NFIP may be available from private insurers that do not participate in the NFIP. Individuals should compare the flood insurance coverage, deductibles, exclusions, conditions, and premiums associated with flood insurance policies issued on behalf of the NFIP and policies issued on behalf of private insurance companies and contact an insurance agent as to the availability, cost, and comparisons of flood insurance coverage.

“Some private companies write flood polices that insure amounts in excess of the primary NFIP policy. Additional flood coverage protects beyond the policy limits offered through NFIP policies. (The NFIP limit is capped at $250,000 for home dwellings and $500,000 for businesses). Some of those companies have written private flood insurance in Louisiana in the past.

“The private flood insurance companies are regulated by State Departments of Insurance and not by FEMA. It should be noted that as a non-user of private flood insurance, FEMA has no relationship or experience with any of the private flood insurance companies or their products, while lending institutions and states do. Therefore, FEMA is not in a position to offer advice regarding the private flood insurance industry.

“FEMA recognizes the necessity for an increasingly viable private flood insurance market to coexist with the NFIP. In fact, the NFIP would not exist today if a private flood insurance market had been consistently available to meet the needs of consumers and the regulated mortgage lending industry. It is in the interest of all stakeholders for private flood insurance availability to increase (in order to) provide consumers with choices, excess coverage above NFIP limits, and flood insurance where NFIP coverage is not available.”

Statement by local insurance agency, Integrity Insurance

“Flood insurance in the US is mostly offered by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for buildings in over 2,200 participating communities, with some private flood companies joining the flood marketplace in selected states.

Generally private flood insurance is sold as a surplus lines product underwritten by private insurance companies or by syndicates backed by Lloyd’s of London. Private flood insurance coverage currently must meet the standard of NFIP flood coverage to be accepted by federal lenders. Federal lending regulations require properties identified in the high risk flood zone be covered by flood insurance for a federally-backed mortgage to be extended. Private flood insurance policies may offer extended coverage beyond that offered by the NFIP flood policy.

“Property owners now may have a choice to shop for a flood insurance policy that meets their needs—more coverage and deductible options mean better solutions for the customer.

“NFIP has been one size fits all since 1968…but now private flood policies offer higher coverage limits, expanded coverage beyond the building and contents (such as additional living expenses or loss or rents, or other structures) and various deductibles for an improved policy with premiums that match the coverage.”

“It is important to note that the NFIP is available to all structures in a participating community while private flood policies are underwritten individually and offered to selected risks only as determined by the carrier.

“At the end of the day, the NFIP flood policy may be the best available option for those properties evaluated to be at highest risk for flooding and not insurable by the private flood insurance products.”

Editor’s note: FEMA’s “Mandatory Purchase of Flood Insurance Guidelines” booklet previously provided to lenders and consumers has been rescinded. FEMA’s states, “This document will no longer be offered and will not be updated in the future. Lenders should consult their respective regulatory agency for information regarding compliance with the mandatory (flood insurance) purchase requirements.”
The Zachary High School Drama Department recently announced its 2017-2018 season, which will kick off in October. ZHS Drama has set the bar high with past performances, and this year plans to deliver more of the exceptional productions the community has come to anticipate.

“Our program is successful because we run it like a theater company,” said drama teacher Jen Masterson. “The projects we do are our curriculum, and students are constantly moving from one project to the next--getting ready for a project, participating in a project, or helping the program prepare for a project.”

Masterson humbly refers to herself as the program administrator, but her work includes directing some of the shows and making sure the program delivers its productions legally, on time, and within the budget.

“I have my roles just as these students have their assignments. They take on a lot of responsibility, and the program is centered around individual student growth,” said Masterson. “That growth happens through the work in the projects—it’s how the leadership skills develop.”

One example is senior drama student Aidan Hill, who Masterson describes as a “gifted teacher and communicator.” Accidentally transferred to theater in 7th grade, Hill said the program has positively impacted his life.

“I used to be very quiet and had trouble communicating with people,” he confided. “Being in theater has not only forced me to be around other people and learn how to communicate, it’s taught me how to speak properly, communicate my thoughts better, and has given me more confidence in myself.”

Hill said he will likely pursue a computer science degree when he graduates, but the communication skills he’s learned will be helpful. He said he has developed a sense of professionalism because of the quality of the drama program.

“I feel much more confident interacting in a professional manner. For example, last year I had the opportunity to work on the Manship Student Advisory Board with the Manship Theatre. I worked with my peers to put together a charity show, so I got to work with different businesses,” he said.

Another student leader, Lauren Smith, also believes the program has helped her. “In middle school I was shy and quiet, and I didn’t really know where I fit in at school,” the senior said. “When I got involved in theater in high school, I found that I was actually good at something. I’ve been able to channel everything I want to do into theater. Because the [school’s core] curriculum comes easier to me, theater gives me something to work on that I’m passionate about. It’s helped me talk to other people, learn how to work with others, and create friendships.”

“[Smith] is an example of one of our students who plays many roles for us. She directs, peer coaches, and does a lot in the community,” said Masterson.

Each year ZHS Drama teams up with the Zachary Charity League to bring fun characters, such
as last year’s Grinch and residents of Whoville, to their Christmas break-ast. Service work is one way that students can earn portfolio points for the year, which is documentation at the end of the year of how the students have grown.

“There’s a lot of stress,” Masterson admitted, “but at the end of the year you really feel accomplished.”

One way Masterson keeps the students motivated each year is by bringing in guest artists to train them. “The guest artists come in fresh…with high energy for workshops,” she explained. “Our improv artist this year trained at Second City in Chicago. He came in with nothing to worry about except working with the kids doing improv with them, and that was huge.”

Masterson noted that such extras like guest artist workshops, are only possible because of the contributions ZHS Drama receives from businesses in the community. “Most of the shows pay for themselves, but it’s the business support that allows us to go above and beyond and bring in artists to train the students. That takes it to a new level.”

The students and instructors will show off that high level of artistry in their 2017-2018 performance season beginning in October in the Visual and Performing Arts Center at Zachary High.

Their performance schedule is below.

**2017-2018 ZHS Drama Productions**

**October 3, 5 & 7 @7 pm** – The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940 (John Bishop)

**November 7, 9 & 11 @7 pm** – A Few Good Men (Aaron Sorkin)

**February 2, 3, 6, 8, & 9 @7 pm**, February 4 @2 pm - Mary Poppins

**March 22 & 23 @7 pm** – Fools (Neil Simon) *limited seating*

Tickets for their productions are $12 for adults and $7 for students. Some shows will feature an intermission raffle; tickets are $15, and winners must be present. E-mail Jen Masterson to receive show announcements and ticket information.

Performances are at the Visual and Performing Arts Center at Zachary High School, 4100 Bronco Lane, Zachary, LA 70791; www.zacharyhigh.org; 225-654-2776; jen.masterson@zacharyschools.org.
Teachers see students benefit from flexible classroom design

DENHAM SPRINGS, LA – Students at Juban Parc Elementary School are learning from a new perspective this school year – and it comes from where they are sitting . . . as well as how they are sitting.

Several of their classrooms have been redesigned to incorporate more flexibility in their daily routine, so you’ll find kids sitting and working on bouncy balls, wobbly stools, floor cushions and a futon.

Students are allowed to choose the type of seating and area in the classroom that’s most comfortable for them. In some cases, the teachers have found that giving the students these options help them manage their restlessness.

“The flexibility is helping our students focus better on what we’re trying to do in our classes, and that’s boosting learning,” Juban Parc Elementary Principal Shanna Steed said.

Steed, who was a finalist last year for the Louisiana Principal of the Year, said she discussed implementing flexible seating with Sarah McCrary, a fourth-grade teacher at Juban Parc Elementary, who was excited to start a pilot program with a few pieces of furniture last year.

Studies suggest that children who participate in short bouts of physical activity within the classroom have more on-task behavior, with the best improvement seen in students who are least on-task initially.

Steed said many of her teachers quickly saw positive results and bought into the concept, and this year she’s expanded the program to students in first grade and up.

Asked if all the teachers like the alternative seating and adopt it, Bridget Castille, instructional coach at the school said, “Every teacher who has tried it has liked it because the students are more engaged, but the way they each implement it is different ... adapting ideas for their own classrooms.”

Castille said, “The teachers don’t do whole-group teaching as much. The classroom is student-centered, with the kids learning at their own pace. The teacher is a facilitator more than a lecturer. There is only a small amount of whole-class lecturing, usually at the beginning when something new is introduced or when instructions are given.”

“IT’s about making our classrooms student-centered, not teacher-centered,” McCrary said. “In a flexible classroom, every area can become a learning space for students.”

Kelli Lowery, a fifth grade English-Language Arts teacher at Juban Parc Elementary, said, “I admit, at first I was a bit nervous about incorporating flexible seating into our fifth grade classroom. Our classroom is still organized and student expectations are clear. My fifth graders are better focused, more involved in discussions, and they have a stronger sense of belonging.”

Everyone wants to know, what do you do when it’s time for the kids to take a test and there are no desks, and children are side by side on a sofa?

Castille explained, “The students have testing folders and clipboards, and they put up partitions between each of them at a table or on the futon, or wherever they are close together, and it works.”

Assistant Superintendent Joe Murphy said the district is supporting flexible seating at several campuses across the parish who are experimenting with the new setups this school year.

“The flexible classroom design is really just an outward display of a greater effort in our schools, and that’s to move teaching and learning into the 21st century. We know so much more today about how the brain works and how individuals have different learning styles,” Murphy said.

Changing the seating is somewhat expensive, so Principal Steed went out and found sources to help. She reached out to the local Assess the Need school supply program to help fund part of the classroom redesign, and she was able to add a few dollars her school had saved up to pay the rest.

An indication of the teachers’ support for this new idea is the fact that some teachers helped pay for the new seating out of their own pockets, according to Castille.

“We are creating an atmosphere and a teaching culture that supports greater flexibility and greater creativity so our students can begin to explore more of the concepts and ideas around them. We don’t want just good students. We want thinkers in our classrooms,” Steed added.
The Pointe Coupee Parish Police Jury recently approved a drawdown schedule for False River that will call for the oxbow lake’s water level to be significantly reduced by as much as 5.5 feet for the next four months. The drawdown began Sept. 5 and will be maintained through Jan. 15, 2018.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) recommended the lake’s water level be lowered this year to reduce turbidity (cloudiness or haziness which is an indicator of water quality) and expose more of the lakebed to sunlight, helping to dissolve the heavy build-up of sediment beneath the water.

Drawdowns are commonly used in many lakes across the state to increase sports fish reproduction and aquatic vegetation growth.

State Rep. Major Thibaut noted that the drawdown is part of a far-reaching restoration effort for False River that began in 2012, under the direction of the False River Watershed Council.

“The issues affecting False River are multifaceted and have developed over many years. We know that an effective plan must factor in all of these issues, and it must be structured to manage the ecosystem over the long term,” Thibaut said. “I am excited about our progress and the spirit of cooperation we are getting at all levels. We all have a common goal to restore False River to its glory so future generations can continue to enjoy and benefit from it.”

This year’s drawdown is the third time the lake’s water level has been lowered over the past five years as part of the restoration efforts. The LDWF has recommended to the Pointe Coupee Parish Police Jury to repeat the drawdowns around this same time in 2020, 2023 and 2026.

Positive results have already been reported with the first two drawdowns. Vast amounts of aquatic vegetation growth and solidification of parts of the lakebed have occurred, and those improvements make it better for sports fish to lay eggs and replenish their populations, according to a LDWF study.

Other recent improvements to the lake include dredging in parts of the south end of the lake and the creation of a 16.5-acre containment dike island with the dredged material. A similar project to move sediment in the North Flats area is currently underway. At the same time, modifications and weirs have been proposed for the M-1 canal, and the council is awaiting the completion of a hydrology study and permits for similar action in the M-2 canal.

The LDWF has carried out several fish stockings, improved fish spawning areas, and re-established commercial fishing seasons in False River to remove rough fish that act as competition for sport fish.

Thibaut notes that approximately $4 million in state capital outlay funds and grants have paid for the much-needed improvements to the lake.
Karen Rainey takes the stress off the bride and groom and their families, as well as organizers of any event

By Helen Wale Turner

Karen Rainey feels like she has always been helping organize events, and it was something she was meant to do.

“I love to get involved in things, and it really does seem like I am always helping someone plan something,” Rainey said.

After helping plan weddings, showers, parties, craft shows, fundraisers and other events for years, Rainey went through training to further hone her organization and planning skills and officially became a professional wedding and event planner early this year.

“I’ve done it for so long for free; now I’m going to make a living doing what I love,” she smiled. Her business is Karing Occasions.

She has worked several events since turning professional and has been working with wedding venue Agape Ranch.

“I plan personal and corporate events, whether big or small, and I can do as much or as little as you want, for both large and small occasions. Some people want me to just make arrangements with a venue, but other want me to recommend or help choose the venue, wedding/event theme and colors, caterer, cake, food, and the band or DJ – just about everything for an event, including, for a wedding, the rehearsal, ceremony and reception.”

She also can help plan bridal showers, and as a Pampered Chef dealer can personally produce a Pampered Chef shower if they desire.

Rainey provides couples with list of vendors, if requested, as well as business cards of other businesses that can help the new couple get established in their new life, new home, etc. but the couple is always free to choose any vendor they wish.

Rainey has three levels of wedding packages available. Call or email her, and she will email you her list of services. However, clients are not limited to the packages as she can custom design a package with add-ons that the client chooses.

“Most of the work of a wedding planner occurs on the day of the wedding,” Rainey said. “For the big day, I prepare an itinerary for everyone, including vendors, so everyone knows when and where they are expected to be doing what.

“I have someone at the venue early to greet vendors and oversee the set-up. I coordinate when the candles are lit, make sure the guest book is set out, when bride and groom have their first dance, when the cake is cut and so on. I don’t do the decorations but I have assisted when needed. I have even
She added, “I don’t want my clients to have to worry about forgetting something. My main job is to make sure it is their most memorable and happy day by taking the stress off the bride and groom and their families.”

The same goes for taking stress off the organizers of parties, galas, charity and other events.

She reminds brides that for a formal wedding they should call a planner and start booking a venue 9-12 months in advance because of the demand for weekend dates at the larger venues. A simple wedding at a smaller venue can possibly be booked in 3 or 4 months.

Rainey accepts jobs within a few hours of the Denham Springs/Baton Rouge area. She can go further if requested, for a reasonable fee for travel expenses.

Details: Karing Occasions by Karen Rainey. Call 225-933-4634 or email karingoccasions@gmail.com. Facebook: Karing Occasions.
Agape Ranch in Livingston Parish has acres of woodlands, fishing ponds, native wildlife, horses, barn, pastures, and an 18-stable barn – and the McGrew home. It is a peaceful place where, over the years, children have grown up and people have boarded horses and taken riding lessons and field trips. There’s also a softball field and a covered pavilion.

“I raised my kids here, but they’re grown now, and, last year, I had been giving some thought to adding a venue, but had not yet taken the steps to do it,” Sandi McGrew confided. Then came the flood came last summer that raged across the property. From the second story of her home, Sandi watched the water encroaching and turn the pastures into lakes, and the barn and her house were inundated with more than five feet of murky brown water, and she and her horses had to be rescued.

After the water receded and the house gutted and she was able to get over the shock, she knew she would rebuild.

“What seems to destroy us, can also give us a new vision,” said Sandi. “I had to rebuild from scratch, so I figured, if I’m going to add a venue for weddings and other events, this is the time to do it, and I started planning how I could remodel to make it happen. I knew I wanted to do a venue that would be a little different.”

What’s different about this venue is that she makes the entire working ranch available for almost any occasion.

Sandi said, “We have almost 20 acres, and there a lot of things we can do.”

The serene, picturesque setting is an ideal location for an intimate barn wedding and is also available to rent by the hour. In addition to weddings, hosted events include bridal and baby showers, birthday and anniversary parties, reunions, dance parties, day camps, and various meetings. She plans to add paint parties in the future.

Sandi hosted the first Agape Ranch wedding in July and started sched-
Livingston Business Journal  •  livingstonbusiness.com  |  The Business Journal-La  •  thebusinessjournal-la.com

Living more. It is a unique facility with room for 150 guests. She offers various options: 1/2 day rental, noon to midnight; one day rental on Saturdays, 6am – midnight; and a three-day rental Fridays from 2 pm through Sunday 2 pm, which allows the couple ample time to decorate, have the wedding rehearsal and dinner, ceremony and reception without being rushed.

The venue is a rustic setting, one that Sandi believes is the only authentic horse ranch venue in the area. It’s great for couples who enjoy the outdoors, with the ceremony held outside by the ponds, in one of the pastures, in the barn, or under the all-weather 2,000-square-foot covered pavilion which has a stage. Receptions are held in the main house.

One feature that is particularly unique and appreciated is her attention to the comfort of the bride and groom and their attendants in the hours before the wedding.

The bride’s suite is spacious with plenty of room for the bride and bridesmaids to dress, with a large dress rack for keeping their dresses in perfect shape, a makeup counter, comfortable seating, a restroom and other amenities. This suite has is also popular with high school girls for pre-prom preparations and dressing.

Sandi was determined that the groom and groomsmen’s accommodations would be more than an afterthought. With three grown sons who have been in numerous weddings, she knew the men would like something more than a few chairs and a TV while waiting for the ceremony. She built what she calls the groom’s cantina, complete with a pool table, big screen television with video games, bar and a restroom.

Two attendants are available to serve the bride and groom as needed.

The cantina has also become a popular meeting room for book clubs and other groups to gather, and is used by a line-dancing group on Wednesday nights; they dance in the pavilion, take breaks in the cantina, and then dance some more.

Sandi teaches line dancing at PARDS to the YaYa group which performs at local nursing homes, and she is considering adding dance lessons at the ranch.

Sandi says her prices are competitive, and she is happy to talk with anyone about the various accommodations and options Agape Ranch offers for all sorts of occasions. She makes referrals to her preferred vendors, including wedding planning service Karing Occasions, and Photography by Harley for her guests’ consideration.
ST. FRANCISVILLE – A new era in health care arrived in West Feliciana Parish on Aug. 28 with the grand opening of the new West Feliciana Hospital.

A steady rain didn’t dampen the spirit of the crowd when Patricia Riddle, the longest actively serving employee of the hospital, had the honor of cutting the ribbon at a grand opening ceremony. An open house for dignitaries and the community followed, with tours of the hospital, food and refreshments.

“This hospital represents a migration from the old building and the way health care used to be in the 1970s to the new building and what health care
“What we do now, in the most basic form is to provide support for our community’s physicians and health care professionals.”

Lee Chastant, CEO

is in the 21st century,” said CEO Lee Chastant, who oversaw the ambitious construction project. “Health care has evolved 180 degrees, from keeping patients overnight or for short periods of time in the hospital to diagnosing them and treating them and getting them home as quickly as possible.”

The 53,000-square-foot facility, almost three times the size of the old hospital that was built in the 1970s, took just over a year and a half to construct with a budget of just under $28 million. It is built on 12 acres behind the existing hospital on the 19-acre medical campus. It can be accessed either from Commerce Street or Burnett Road.

Not only is the new hospital more spacious, it offers 12 modern in-patient rooms, allowing for more space for the Emergency Department and Outpatient Services.

“What we do now, in the most basic form is to provide support for our community’s physicians and health care professionals,” Chastant said. “We do this by diagnosing and treating their patients, so we play a support role.”

He said technology has played a central role in that evolution, with diagnosis and treatment using state-of-the-art equipment.

“It’s a new level of care, a much higher quality of health care with services and programs equal to or superior to what they can get anywhere else,” said Chastant. “It’s conveniently located close to home so they don’t have to travel a long way. It’s now available to them here in St. Francisville.”

One of the most dramatic improvements is the Imaging Department. Before, trailers with imaging equipment would come to the hospital’s campus only a few days per month. Now those services are available whenever needed.

As another example, the new hospital will offer 3-D mammography through an innovative partnership with Woman’s Hospital. The 3-D mammograms produce clearer, more precise images that allow doctors to diagnose abnormalities at the earliest stages. After mammograms are taken locally, the results are sent electronically to Woman’s where they’re read by two radiologists. Any follow-up care will be available through Woman’s.

“Woman’s Hospital brings a lot to the table with their expertise that allows us to leapfrog where we were in terms of services for our patients,” Chastant said.

A new Hitachi 128-slice CT scanner, one of only two in the entire Baton Rouge region, as well as an MRI machine designed to help alleviate claustrophobia, are available. Also available is digital radiology, ultrasound and echocardiograms. Radiation exposure is reduced by up to 75 percent with the new equipment and it’s monitored in the patient’s chart over time.

Nearly one third of the hospital’s space is devoted to the emergency department. It includes a private triage area, six exam rooms and two trauma rooms utilizing the most advanced equipment. It also has a separate check-in area and waiting room.

The hospital continues to offer telestroke capability, meaning local ER doctors can consult with specialists anywhere when seconds count.

In addition, The American College of Cardiology has recognized West Feliciana Hospital for its demonstrated expertise and commitment in treating patients with chest pain, recently awarding full Chest Pain Center accreditation. This recognition was based on rigorous onsite evaluation of the staff’s ability to evaluate, diagnose and treat patients who may be experiencing a heart attack.

West Feliciana is the first critical access hospital in Louisiana to receive this accreditation. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 730,000 Americans suffer a heart attack each year. The most common symptom of a heart attack for both men and women is chest pain or discomfort.

Besides upgrades to its imaging capabilities, a wide spectrum of laboratory services are also available with quicker wait times. Other amenities include conference rooms and classrooms for community education, private family consulting areas, a non-denominational chapel and an upgraded cafeteria.

The new facility was designed by Curtis Group Architects of Dallas and Grace and Hebert Architects of Baton Rouge. It was financed with
According to the National Rural Health Association, critical access hospitals are vulnerable nationwide due to federal and state budget cuts to healthcare. Since 2010, 79 have closed and another 673 facilities -- nearly a third of the nation’s CAH hospitals -- are vulnerable and could close in the near future.

“We have to be cognizant of that trend and be good stewards with the services we provide,” said Chastant, who manages an annual $22 million operating budget. He said after the new hospital is open, he’ll look to add specialties that are convenient for area citizens. Repurposing the old hospital is also on his to-do list.

“We want to develop our medical campus to meet the health care needs of our community for another 40 years into the future,” Chastant said. “We will continue to do our best to provide the programs, services and facilities that will make West Feliciana a premier health care destination.”

West Felician Hospital entered into a new partnership with Woman’s Hospital to provide 3-D mammography, using the most advanced technology.

West Feliciana Hospital has entered into a new partnership with Woman's Hospital to provide 3-D mammography, using the most advanced technology.

The emergency department offers two state-of-the-art trauma rooms, a private triage area and six exam rooms.

West Feliciana Hospital has entered into a new partnership with Woman's Hospital to provide 3-D mammography, using the most advanced technology.

The 12 in-patient rooms are more spacious and provide for family comfort while the nurse’s station can monitor the patient’s vital signs.

There are many ways you can participate:

- Businesses and individuals are asked to decorate and enter a competition to be judged on Oct. 13.
- Our local schools, sports teams or clubs are encouraged to wear pink on October 13 and collect $1 to go towards our fund raising efforts.
- West Feliciana Hospital will hold some special “Paint the Town Pink” events including a “Pink” bake sale and a painting party.

For more information, contact Nancy Metz Arceneaux at 225-635-3811, ext. 2115 or ArceneauxN@wfph.org. Mail registration fees to: West Feliciana Hospital, Attn.: Nancy Metz Arceneaux, P.O. Box 368, St. Francisville, LA, 70775.
LIVINGSTON PARISH

Here is a sampling of the many activities available for children and adults. Check the calendar at the website, mylpl.info, or call your for more events and details.

Free small business consulting
Do you own a small business or are you interested in starting one? Take advantage of free business consulting at the Main Branch of the Livingston Parish Library on Oct. 11, with an appointment between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Receive a private, one-hour consulting session in areas including business plans, advertising plans, inventory control, financial projections, cost analysis, and much more. This program is sponsored by the Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC) at Southeastern Louisiana University. For an appointment, call the LSBDC at 225-664-6638.

Pumpkin decorating for all ages
Enjoy family-friendly pumpkin decorating at the Albany-Springfield Branch of the Livingston Parish Library, no carving required! Bring your own medium-sized pumpkin and use our craft supplies. For all ages. Alb-Spf – Oct. 3, 5:30pm; Main Branch – Oct. 7, 10am; South – Oct 17, 6 pm; DS-Wlkr – Oct. 19, 6pm. Registration opens two weeks before the event. Call your favored branch or visit our online event calendar to register.

Teen Monster Mash Bash
It’s a Monster Mash! A Halloween bash! Spooky fun, ghastly horrors and creepy creations await ages 12-18 who dare enter this eerie place. Watson – Oct. 10 at 5:30 pm; DS-Walker – Oct. 12 at 6 pm; Main – Oct. 17 at 6 pm; South Branch – Oct. 24 at 5:30 pm. Registration opens two weeks before the event. Call your favored branch or visit the online event calendar to register.

Cookbook Challenge Club for adults
Calling all home cooks, amateur bakers and wannabe chefs! Ages 18 and up can learn to cook, improve your skills, or show off your kitchen talent with the new culinary book club. New members are always welcome. Each month, a recipe is chosen based on a theme, and the following month, participants bring their cooked dish back for everyone to sample. If you are interested in becoming a member, come eat and socialize with us. Registration opens two weeks before the event. Main Branch, Oct. 12 at 6 pm. Call or visit our online event calendar to register.

Authors and others can participate in the Livingston Parish Book Festival
Livingston Parish Library is excited to present their annual book festival on Saturday, Nov. 4, 11am-4pm at the Main Branch in Livingston. The library staff is currently looking for talented individuals to contribute in the following areas: authors are invited to the Book Festival to showcase their works; makers, inventors, and craftpeople are invited to showcase their goods; community organizations are invited to reach out to Livingston Parish. Details and registration at www.mylpl.info/bookfestivalcall

Are you a writer who is looking for some feedback?
Then come to the Denham Springs-Walker Branch of the Livingston Parish Library’s Writers’ Circle Oct. 5 at 6:30 pm. Published and unpublished writers of fiction or nonfiction for adults, young adults, or children are welcome. The group provides a forum for sharing writing, a venue for learning more about the writing craft, and more.

BREC’s Halloween Events

- **BREC-A-BOO**
  - Greenwood Community Park Oct. 12-13
  - Forest Community Park Oct. 27-28
  - Gus Young Park Oct. 31

- **Swamp Haunted Hikes**
  - Bluebonnet Swamp Oct. 13 + Oct. 20 + Oct. 27

- **Make it a Halloween Movie Night**
  - Independence Park Theatre Oct. 13

- **Trick + Treat Howl-o-ween Pawty**
  - Forest Community Park Oct. 20

- **Sunshine Social: Monster Mash Ball**
  - Womack Park Oct. 20

- **Spooky Spectrum**
  - Highland Road Park Observatory Oct. 21

- **Boo at the Zoo**
  - Baton Rouge Zoo Oct. 21-22 + Oct. 28-29

- **Pumpkin Paddle Parade**
  - Milford Wampold Park Oct. 26

- **Zombie 5K Fun Run**
  - Forest Community Park Oct. 28

- **Halloween Hullaboo**
  - Central Sports Park Oct. 31

Happy Halloween from BREC!
H.O.P.E. Grief Support Group
Open mic night at Movie Tavern

Every Thursday from 8-11 p.m., singers and songwriters perform in the Juban Crossing Movie Tavern bar area while attendees enjoy food and drink specials. No movie ticket required. For more information, visit www.movietavern.com/thetavern/ or call 960-4529.

Hungarian Museum now open at Albany

The Hungarian Settlement Historical Society held a grand opening Sept. 27 for the Hungarian Settlement Museum, 27455 Hwy. 43 in Albany, which is now open for visitors.

Fall Fest returns to the DS Antiques Village

The annual Fall Festival Oct. 7 from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. celebrates the ongoing recovery of the city and parish after the 2016 flood. More than 150 local and regional artists and craftsmen and more than 30 downtown shops will offer a wide range of unique items including antique furniture, collectibles, folk art, rugs, jewelry, glass, textiles, pottery, garden, clothing, gifts, books and much more. Also enjoy two stages of live music, food, kid’s bouncing activities, pet fashion show, and military re-enactments, artist demonstrations, artisans and craftsmen and much more. Admission and parking are free.

Enjoy Girls’ Night Out in the Antiques Village

Visit the Denham Springs Antiques Village Nov. 10, 6-10 pm for Girls Night Out, an evening for girls and women who love to shop. It is a fun night to share with your mom, sister, daughter, best friend, and grandmother. Tickets are $30 and include dinner-on-the-go, gifts, door prizes, gift certificate drawings and special sales all night. Tickets are available for purchase at Mothers and Daughters, 215 N. Range Ave. 225-791-1116.

Bridge-to-Bridge Yard Sale coming to French Settlement

The annual Bridge-to-Bridge Yard Sale in French Settlement will be held Oct. 14. The yard sale is all throughout town at residents’ homes. Check with local businesses or residents if you would like a spot to set up. Food, drinks and sweets will be available from St. Joseph Youth Fundraiser. 225-933-9339 or 225-572-6038.

Creole Festival offers food, entertainment, demonstrations, museum

The French Settlement Historical Society presents the annual Creole Festival Sunday, Oct. 15, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. at the pavilion located behind French Settlement Town Hall, 16015 Hwy. 16. All proceeds help maintain the Creole House Museum. There will be entertainment throughout the day, craft booths, food, a kids’ area, and various demonstrations, and the museum will be open all day. Anyone interested in helping, e-mail aydellk@phelps.com or call 225-975-0530.

V. Watts Trade Days drawing crowds

V. Watts presents Trade Day, an outdoor flea market-type event with vendors, and food, on the second Saturday of each month, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. The next Trade Day is Oct. 14. The outdoor market is in the parking lot of the V. Watts Trade Mart which is open each week on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The Trade Day and Trade Mart are adjacent to the V. Watts Furniture store on the west side of the town of Livingston, near the fairgrounds. Parking and admission are free.

VFW patriotic contests

VFW Post and Auxiliary 7017 of Denham Springs sponsor several patriotic contests for grades kindergarten to 12th including home-schooled students:

Voice of Democracy: 9th -12th grade students are to type and record a 3-5 minute essay on the theme “American History: Our Hope For the Future.” One winner will go to national competition and could win up to $30,000 in scholarships.

Patriotic Pen: 6th, 7th and 8th grade students write or type a 300-400 word essay on “America’s Gift to My Generation.”

Americanism contests for kindergarden-5th grade: Category 1- Kindergarten - Color the
American flag on 8.5x11-inch paper; Category 2 - 1st and 2nd grade - Draw and color the American flag on 8.5x11-inch paper; Category 3 - 3rd and 4th grade - Draw and color a historical event on 8.5x11-inch paper; Category 4 - 5th grade - Write or type a 300 or less word essay with the title “How I Honor Veterans.”

Deadline for all is Oct. 31. Download entry form, brochure, rules and eligibility by logging onto the VFW website: www.vfw.org, or call 225-665-2930, 225-610-9855 or 225-665-1201.

Help build ADA-compliant Challenger Field
The Pilot Club of Denham Springs is seeking help to make Challenger Field a reality. A new ADA-compliant baseball field would be used by mentally and physically disabled children throughout Southeast Louisiana. Learn how you can help by calling 225-304-6225.

WEST FelICIANA
Halloween-themed tours are offered during October at The Myrtles
The Myrtles Plantation in St. Francisville – is touted as “one of America's most haunted homes” already offers evening mystery tours every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, but those days during October, plus Halloween night – the mystery tours will have a Halloween theme. There will be a guide in each room dressed in period clothing telling stories of the home and all the legends and mysteries that go with it, and the house will be decorated in the Halloween theme with the main house staged to look like an 1800s funeral. 225-635-6277; www.stfrancisvillefestivals.com

Angola Fall Prison Rodeo & Craft Show

Audubon State Historic Site has new events every month
This site includes a museum, picnic areas, pavilion and nature trail. 200-year old Oakley House is currently closed for renovation. The park is open daily Wed.-Sun., 9 am-5 pm, 11788 Hwy 965, St. Francisville. 888.677.2838 toll free or 225.635.3739
locally. Upcoming events:

**Oct. 6-8 – Fury in the Streets: The Battle of Baton Rouge** - Journey back into history to 1862, to the sights and sounds of the Civil War battle for Baton Rouge in 1862.

Living history demonstrations and soldier camps can be seen all weekend long, highlighted by a reenactment of the August 1862 battle on Saturday and Sunday. Friday: 9 a.m.–noon; Saturday: 10 a.m.–3 p.m.; Sunday: 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

**Oct. 6 - A Civil War School Day 9 a.m. - noon.** Students learn about the Civil War as it impacted the Felicianas, with black powder weapons and cannon demonstrations, drilling, the life of a soldier, medical and food demonstrations.

The program is open to home-schooled, public and private schools students; preregistration required.

**Visit the Yellow Leaf Arts Festival in St. Francisville** for arts, crafts, music and food

Artists and craftspeople will be showing and selling their creations such as paintings, jewelry, pottery, and more, plus live music and great food. Oct. 28 & 29 in Parker Park, Commerce St. in St. Francisville. 225-635-3665; www.stfrancisvillefestivals.com; email Birdmancoffee@bellsouth.net.

**Central Virtual Academy**

The Central Community School System’s Virtual Academy is an online school dedicated to personalized learning. Students can access more than 125 courses - from algebra to world history and everything in between! Public, private, and homeschooled students from 6th - 12th grades use our courses to succeed on their own time and schedules.

Do you think the Virtual Academy sounds like a good fit? Are you ready to start or want more information? Explore options and print an application at www.virtualacademy.centralcss.org or call 225-262-1919.

**Halloween Hullabaloo is back in Central**

Last year’s first Halloween Hullabaloo was a big success, so BREC is bringing back this Trick or Treat alternative to Central Sports Park. Wear a costume and prepare for fun as the Central Fire Dept. and Police Dept. provide Halloween themed activities for children. 10501 Lovett Rd, Central. Oct. 31, 5-8pm. 225-261-5988.

**Zachary**

**Code Red Chili Cook-off returns to Zachary Oct. 21**

The Pointe at Americana in Zachary is once again the site of the popular Code Red Chili Cook-off, with its chili and salsa competitions, live music, games, craft beer tasting, cake walk, face painting, kids’ zone and fun for the entire family! Enjoy chili and salsa competitions prepared by teams from all across the region. 10am-5pm., off Hwy. 64 near the Zachary Community Park.

Refreshments, cold beverages, hot dogs and baked goods will be available. No entry or parking fees. Your $10 donation to taste the chili and vote for Peoples’ choice Award helps Lane Regional Medical Center continue to provide health care for the community.

**Arts & Crafts vendors needed for Zachary Christmas in the Village celebration**

Applications for arts and crafts vendors for Zachary’s annual “Christmas In The Village” are now being accepted. The celebration is Dec. 1, 2017, in the Zachary Historical Village, 6-9pm. This event is a unique shopping opportunity for those looking for Christmas gifts. Applications and details are available at The City of Zachary Utility Office, 4650 Main Street and on-line at www.zachary.org located under News and Events – Vendor Application. All applicants must be the creators of the displayed art or craft. For questions regarding vendors participation, contact Jill McGraw at mcgrawljill@aol.com or 225 978-3694 or Sharon Phillips, City of Zachary, 225 654-0287 or email Sharon.phillips@cityofzachary.org.

**POINTE COUPEE**

**Alma Plantation Harvest Festival**

This three-day event in beautiful downtown New Roads will include live music, over 100 arts/crafts vendors, food, carnival rides for the entire family, kids’ zone, beer garden with televised sports, and so much more. Oct. 20, 21, & 22. See music lineup at www.harvestfestivalnewroads.com. 225-638-5360.
**LIVINGSTON PARISH | CENTRAL | ZACHARY | BAKER | FELICIANAS | POINTE COUPEE**

**HAVE YOU Heard**

**Bonjari Band and Family Day at The Park**
Festivities include live music, great food, and family fun at the park, Oct. 14, 10am-5pm. Free admission and open to the public. Pointe Coupee Parish Scott Civic Center Park, 1400 Major Parkway, New Roads. 225-240-2216.

**Relay for Life & Carnival for A Cure**
Relay for Life is Oct. 6, 5-10 pm, and Carnival For A Cure will be held 5:30-9pm. This annual event features music & entertainment, children carnival rides, great foods, beverages, and so much more. Scott Civic, New Roads. 225-718-0063 or 337-412-9441.

**Regional News**

**BREC’s Boo at the Zoo is a howling good time**
Come in costume to Boo at the Zoo, Oct. 21-22 and 28-29, and visit treat stations throughout the zoo. Explore the Enchanted Swamp and ride the spooky train ride, then wander through the merry-not-scary hay maze for $1. Open 9:30am-4pm. Regular zoo admission applies.

**You can help Americans affected by hurricanes**
The SBA is hiring to fill temporary positions to provide aid to those affected by these hurricanes. Check out the list of positions open at this time at www.sba.gov/disaster-assistance; scroll down to Hurricane response jobs.

**Register for 7th annual Entrepreneurship Week**
Baton Rouge Entrepreneurship Week (BREW) celebrates entrepreneurship, ingenuity, and creativity in the Capital Region. BREW plays host to educational and networking events November 14-16 in downtown Baton Rouge. It is held in conjunction with Global Entrepreneurship Week. This intensive week of speakers, seminars, and social events also features a business pitch competition. Schedule, speakers, etc., at www.celebratebrew.com

**Interested in starting a food business?**
The LSU AgCenter Food Incubator Food Business Basics seminar is for those thinking of or planning to start a food business. Learn all the food business, get information about joining the LSU AgCenter Food Incubator, hear testimonials from successful companies and get business tips from the Louisiana Business and Technology Center. Also covered: food product pricing, labeling, and marketing. The seminar is Oct. 6, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. at 212 Efferson Hall on the LSU campus. A limit of two people per company may attend; cost is $200. Details and registration at www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/our offices/departments/foodscience/extension_outreach/ incubator/seminars.

**Audubon Library asking for renewal of library tax**
Michele Jones, director of the Audubon Regional Library points out that the library tax on the Oct. 14 ballot is not a new tax, it’s a renewal. Because it’s a regional library serving East and West Feliciana parishes, the renewal is on the ballot in both parishes. “Some people think the library gets funding from state or federal sources, but they do not. Jones said, “This is the only funding we have for the library. It pays for the utilities, staffing, services, programs and books – everything to keep the library open.”
Bass Pro expects to keep some operations in Sidney, stores will remain open or how the 2,000-plus jobs at versa.
customer service counters at Bass Pro Shops and vice versa, at the customer service counter in for a Bass Pro Shops gift card for an equal amount,
the merger; the remaining company will be privately
3 8   •  TBJ | LBJ | September | October 2017
Bass Pro Bass Pro Shops
Cabela's sold to rival outdoors retailer Bass Pro Bass Pro Shops

Bass Pro Shops announced they have acquired rival outdoors retailer Cabela's for roughly $4 billion. Cabela's shareholders are receiving $61.50 per share in the merger; the remaining company will be privately held.

Both the Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's brands will be continued. A Cabela's gift card can be exchanged for a Bass Pro Shops gift card for an equal amount, and vice versa, at the customer service counter in either store. Cabela's purchases can be returned to our customer service counters at Bass Pro Shops and vice versa.

The announcement didn't specify if all Cabela's stores will remain open or how the 2,000-plus jobs at Cabela's Sidney, Neb., headquarters will be affected. Bass Pro expects to keep some operations in Sidney, but headquarters jobs will likely be consolidated in Bass Pro's hometown of Springfield, Mo.

Bass Pro said, “This is an opportunity to create a ‘best of the best’ shopping experience for all outdoor enthusiasts. It means more selection as we are bringing together the best in fishing with Bass Pro Shops, the best in Hunting with Cabela’s and the best in boating with Tracker Boats and other boating brands. Increased buying power will also help us deliver greater value to our customers.”

Contemporary fiber artists exhibit at Arts Council of Livingston Parish

The Arts Council of Livingston Parish will host the “The Art of Fiber III - Hidden Dreams” exhibit by the Contemporary Fiber Artists of Louisiana through Oct. 28. The gallery is open Wednesday - Friday 10 am - 12 pm and Saturday 10 am - 2 pm. There will be another Second Saturday Receptions for this exhibit Oct. 14, 10 am - 2 pm at the gallery at 133 Hummell St., Denham Springs. 225-664-1168, www.artslivingston.org ; artscountcilofliv@bellsouth.net.

Financial Peace University coming to Denham Springs

Immaculate Conception Church in Denham Springs will host Financial Peace University, a class to help families learn to manage their money and have the resources for emergencies. Everyone is welcome. For more information, email Melinda.mayeux@att.net, call 225-665-5539, or register at www.fpu.com/1045660.

Lucases open Juban Road Pumpkin Patch

Donna and Johnny Lucas, a retired Livingston Parish Sheriff’s deputy, have a pumpkin patch with pumpkins and apples for sale on their property at the corner of Juban Rd and Buddy Ellis Rd, just south of I-12. They also have a photography area set up for anyone who wants to take pictures. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the American Diabetes Foundation. The pumpkin patch is seven days a week, 10-6.

Denham Springs eligible for flood costs reimbursement by HUD

At the Denham Springs City council Sept. 25 meeting, the Council authorized the hiring of Thompson Consulting Services to oversee a HUD program which would reimburse the 10% share the city paid on various for flood recovery work such as repairs to City Hall and the animal shelter and debris removal as well as expenditures for public outreach and other costs.
The services of a disaster recovery consulting and management team is needed because of the requirements which Mayor Gerard Landry described as “very laborious.” FEMA will pay 80% of Thompson’s fee.
The Council also: accepted a grant which will pay the entire cost of building a sidewalk on the west side of Hatchell Lane from Cockerham Rd. to Centerville St.; approved the overly of a section of River road and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive; and approved application for a $20,000 State Farm full safety grant for an emergency alert system and a new website to facilitate better public notification of emergency situations.

Have You Heard, 39
Baton Rouge, LA – The Baton Rouge River Center Theatre and Jam Theatricals are proud to announce the Broadway in Baton Rouge 2017-18 season subscriptions are on sale now. Subscriber benefits include guaranteed same great seats to all season shows, as well as the chance to renew those seats from year to year. Offered this season is a 3-show subscription series which includes the Buddy Holly Story, The Wizard of Oz, and The Illusionists. Prices range from $125-$200, based on seating choice.

BUDDY THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY - Dec. 7, 2017 at 7:30 PM. Now in its 27th amazing year, the “World’s Most Successful Rock ‘n’ Roll Musical” tells the story of Buddy Holly through his short yet spectacular career, and features the classic songs, That'll Be The Day, Not Fade Away, Oh Boy, Ritchie Valens’ La Bamba, The Big Bopper’s Chantilly Lace and many more. This show is just Peggy Sue-perb.

THE WIZARD OF OZ – Feb. 8, 2018 at 7:30 PM. Travel down the Yellow Brick Road and beyond with Dorothy, Toto and their friends the Cowardly Lion, Tin Man and Scarecrow in this lavish production, featuring breathtaking special effects, dazzling choreography and classic songs as you are transported to a dazzling Oz, complete with munchkins and flying monkeys.

THE ILLUSIONISTS – LIVE FROM BROADWAY – Feb. 27, 2018 at 7:30 PM. This spectacular showcases the jaw dropping talents of the most incredible Illusionists on earth in a show that dazzles audiences of all ages with a powerful mix of the most outrageous and astonishing acts ever to be seen on stage.

This season is presented by Jam Theatricals and The Raising Cane’s Baton Rouge River Center. Twitter: @BwayBatonRouge, and Facebook: facebook.com/BroadwayBatonRouge. Tickets are available online or at the box office.

Have You Heard from, 38

Livingston Parish Ranks in state’s top 10 for students earning AP credits for college

The Livingston Parish Public School System is among the state’s Top 10 highest performing school districts for student performance on the 2017 Advanced Placement (AP®) exams, according to the latest data released by the Louisiana Department of Education. More than 38 percent of all students in Livingston Parish who took college-level AP® exams at the end of the 2016-2017 school year earned a score of 3 or better on the exam.

Students who earn a score of 3, 4, or 5 are eligible for college credit at all Louisiana higher education institutions. The district’s passing rate of 38.6 percent is up from last year’s 36.9 percent passage rate. The average passage rate statewide for the 2017 exams is 34 percent. Livingston Parish schools had 1,056 students take AP® exams this past year, giving it the greatest level of participation among other top-ranking school districts.
‘Twas a Candlelight Night

Off-Broadway production coming to Denham Springs

‘Twas a Candlelight Night holiday dinner theater is coming to Denham Springs for 10 performances at Forrest Grove Plantation between Nov. 25 and Dec. 22. The family evening includes a full course dinner and the interactive off-Broadway play starring Kendall Claire of Baton Rouge.

An encore presentation by different music icons, reality television finalists, Grammy award winners, and award-winning authors appear for an intimate performance and is followed by a meet & greet when the audience can get up-close and meet the production talent.

‘Twas a Candlelight Night tells of a family’s imagination of Christmas and a writer who is anxious to finish writing a story before attending a family event. Writer’s block causes some self-doubt and leads to a heartfelt search for the inspiration needed to finish - a pure spark of inspiration for something new for the community.

Encore performers include Melissa Manchester, American Idol finalist Kimberly Locke, Mary Wilson, Tiffany, Ronnie Spector and others.

A schedule of the encore performers, more information and tickets are available online at www.calinewyorklive.com/candlelight-nights. Early limited discount tickets are offered at $44 plus fees if purchased by Oct. 8.

The sponsors of the show are Joan Landry/State Farm, Parish President Layton Ricks and Livingston Parish Tourism.
LIGO at Livingston collaborates in another major gravitational wave discovery

The National Science Foundation (NSF) announced Sept. 27 that detectors on two continents recorded gravitational wave signals from a pair of black holes colliding. The collision was observed Aug. 14 using the two NSF-funded Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) detectors located in Livingston, LA, and Hanford, WA, and the Virgo detector near Pisa, Italy.

The detection by this collaboration is the first confirmed gravitational wave signal recorded by the Virgo detector. This discovery is the first observation of gravitational waves by three different detectors, marking a new era of greater insights and improved localization of cosmic events now available through globally networked gravitational-wave observatories.

Options being weighed for Comite Diversion Canal project

Gov. John Bel Edwards’ returned from his Sept. 18 trip to Washington D.C. where he met with Lt. Gen. Todd T. Semonite, Commanding General and Chief of Engineers for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps did not commit to additional funding for the Comite Diversion Canal at this time, so Gov. Edwards met with state senators Bodi White and Dale Erdey, State Rep. Rogers Pope and other area lawmakers and officials at the governor’s office Sept 20 to discussed other options. One option being considered is to use parish mitigation funds to jumpstart the construction. If the parishes agree to that, work on the canal could resume while further funding sources are investigated. Rep. Valerie Hodges, who heads the Comite River Diversion Canal Task Force, and U.S. Congressman Garret Graves have said they favor this option. Taxpayers in Livingston, East Baton Rouge and Ascension parishes approved and have been paying a 2.65 mill property tax for the project for almost two decades.

Lane RMC names new Director of Physician Practices

Patrick Murphy has been named Director of Physician Practices at Lane Regional Medical Center. He will manage the day-to-day functions of specific practices including Bayou Regional Women’s Clinic, Zachary Family Practice, Lane Surgery Group, Lane ENT Clinic and FastLane After Hours Clinic. Murphy joins Lane with an extensive and varied background in health care, most recently as the Practice Operations Manager at Tulane University Health System in New Orleans.

Murphy joins Lane with an extensive and varied background in health care, most recently as the Practice Operations Manager at Tulane University Health System in New Orleans.
Popular Code Red Chili Cook-off returns to Zachary Oct. 21

This is Lane RMC Foundation’s 4th year hosting this community event…and the competition gets hotter each year! All the fun takes place at The Pointe at Americana in Zachary.

Once again, the Code Red Chili Cook-off is set to be a day full of music, chili competition, games, craft beer tasting, cake walk, face painting – a good time for the entire family! Enjoy chili and salsa competitions prepared by teams from all across the region.

Kidz Zone activities are free and offer the younger chili lovers lots of fun with an art station, duck pond game and more! Lawn chairs and blankets are welcome to enjoy live the music.

Refreshments, cold beverages, hot dogs and baked goods will be sold throughout the day. No entry or parking fees.

How Does the Chili Tasting Work? Each team prepares a chili that is unique to their combinations of ingredients and seasonings. Tasting Bands allow you to taste all chili prepared for the People’s Choice award. After you purchase your tasting band you can visit each team and ask to taste their People’s Choice chili. You will receive a 2 oz. cup and spoon. Some teams may provide condiments such as cheese, sour cream, crackers, etc. Tasting bands are $10 and come with two People’s Choice voting tickets.

What is the People’s Choice Award? This award is chosen by YOU! The cooks have gone through a lot of trouble to entice you to vote for their chili! After you have tasted all of the chili, you vote for your favorite by placing your voting ticket in the ballot box each team has on their table. The team with the most tickets wins the People’s Choice award! Additional voting tickets/bands can be purchased. Everyone wishing to taste chili MUST purchase a tasting band.

Craft Beer Tasting: Tasting Bands are $15 each. Must be 21 to taste craft beer.

It’s not too late to enter a team! Both amateur cooks and professional chefs are welcome. Categories are Red Competition Chili, People’s Choice Chili and Salsa. Adults and youth divisions (for cooks 17 and under). Registration packets, rules and sponsorship packets are available online at www.lanermcfoundation.org

This unique event offers companies, organizations and individuals from across the REGION the opportunity to compete in the cook-off or simply enjoy the fun—all for a worthy cause. The Code Red Chili Cook-off is an annual fundraiser for the Lane Regional Medical Center Foundation. As a nonprofit, the Foundation relies upon events such as this to raise funds to supports Lane’s mission of investing in the future by providing access to the very best healthcare services, technologies and programs available to the community. It is presented by Americana, Level Homes and Lane Regional Medical Center Foundation.

Details: Code Red Chili Cook-off at The Pointe at Americana, 1250 Meeting Street, Zachary. For more information, contact event chair Theresa Payment at 225-658-6699 or email tpayment@lanermc.org.
NEW ROADS, La. – New Roads Mayor Robert Myer has announced this year’s 7th Annual Alma Plantation Harvest Festival, which will be held Oct. 20-22, will feature three stages of music performers.

In addition to the two stages on Morrison Parkway, featuring rhythm and blues, country, rock-n-roll and popular music performers, a third stage located outside the Pointe Coupee Parish Courthouse will feature some of the area’s best local Gospel music performers.

“We have something for everyone at the Harvest Festival,” Myer said. He noted that the three-day event will also feature more than 100 arts and crafts vendors, an amusement and carnival area, a wide selection of delicious foods from all around the region, and a beer garden.

Festival times are Friday, Oct. 20, from 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.; Saturday, Oct. 21, from 10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.; and Sunday, Oct. 22, from noon to 6 p.m. Adult admission is $5 per person, per day, while children and youth 17 years and younger will be admitted for free. Wrist bands for unlimited carnival rides can be purchased for $25 per day for Friday, 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 6 p.m.

The full music line-up for the festival is

Gospel Stage at Courthouse:
Saturday –
• 1 p.m. – Rising Star Gospel Band
• 2 p.m. – Iberville Male Chorus
• 3 p.m. – St. Jude Spirit and Truth Worship Team
• 4 p.m. – Community Spiritual Male Chorus
• 5 p.m. – Majestic Ensemble

Sunday –
• 1 p.m. – Church of God and Christ Worship Team
• 2 p.m. – Pastor Kevin Morris and the United Voices of Praise
• 3 p.m. – St. Paul Catholic Church Male Chorus

Denham Springs Antiques Village will host its annual one-day Fall Festival with events spanning the entire antiques district. The public is invited to enjoy numerous festival activities including two stages of live music, kid’s bouncing activities, military re-enactments, artist demonstrations, and much more.

“This year’s Fall Festival is a celebration of Livingston Parish’s fantastic recovery from the floods of 2016,” said Al Bye, festival organizer. “Our city has worked hard and come a long way from October of 2016, when we had to cancel the festival due to unprecedented flooding.”

Indeed the Antique District has returned better than ever with shops in the city’s historic downtown area exhibiting fresh interiors and welcoming streetscapes. More than 30 stores fill the nationally-recognized award-winning shopping district, including antiques stores, a book store, art shops, a children’s clothing store, gift shops, a jewelry store, a café, a coffee shop and others. Many of the stores will have special offers for customers that day.

Over 150 local and regional artists and craftsmen will fill the streets with their booths, showcasing the best of the best, offering a wide range of unique items, including everything from furniture to collectibles, country items, folk art, rugs, jewelry, glass, textiles, pottery, garden, architectural antiques and much more.

Plus there is an assortment of other popular and trendy items such as children’s handcrafted clothes, purses, hats, as well as collegiate-wear featuring the Saints, LSU and Southern University. Food vendors provide a variety of food choices, from funnel cakes to BBQ to gelato to hamburgers and much more.

Booths will fill Range Ave., Mattie St. and Railroad Ave. which are closed within the entire antiques district to vehicular traffic for the day.

Details: Denham Springs Antiques Village Fall Festival, Oct. 7, 9am-5pm, Range Ave. between Centerville St. and Railroad Ave.; Mattie St. from Range to Benton St.; and Railroad Ave. between Hummel and Benton streets. A map is available at www.denhamspringsantiquedistrict.com.

Entertainment
Entertainment at the festival will be ongoing at two stages: Train Station Park on Railroad Ave. and Old City Hall on Mattie St. Scheduled to appear include: Woodcreek Boyz (classic rock, country and Christian), Hoppin’ John, Westbound Train, Surrender All (Christian rock), Soul Salvage Project (blues, Southern rock, country), and Will Wesley (country, classic rock, oldies). The entertainment venues are within easy walking distance of Range Ave. and provide an excellent place to sit and relax or tap your toes and dance. Visitors are welcome to bring chairs or use provided seating.

Other festival attractions include FREE children’s activities, courtesy of Healing Place Church. Children’s games and activities at the festival are always a family favorite. At noon there will be a fun fashion show for pets at the Train Station Park stage presented by the Livingston Parish SPCA. The Denham Springs Fire Department and Livingston Parish Sheriff’s Department will also have interactive safety demonstrations throughout the day.

Produced by the Denham Springs Antique Village Merchants Association and their partner, Pelican State Credit Union, the Fall Festival is one of Livingston Parish’s premier events.

As always, admission and parking are FREE. Come spend the day and find out why it is so popular!
FREE ADMISSION to all events and displays
LIVE MUSIC and PET FASHION Show
150+ artisans, craftsmen and vendors
FREE kids activities and entertainment
Visit us on facebook for up-to-date info
RAIN OR SHINE we will see you there!

LIVE MUSIC:
- Woodcreek Boyz
- Hoppin’ John
- Westbound Train
- Surrender All
- Soul Salvage Project
- Will Wesley

presented by:
DENHAM SPRINGS MERCHANTS ASSN. & PELICAN STATE CREDIT UNION

DenhamSpringsAntiqueDistrict.com
Livingston Parish fair returns after one year absence

The Livingston Parish Fair will be held during the week of Oct. 7 - 15 at the Fairgrounds in the town of Livingston after a one-year suspension due to the flood of 2016.

In addition to midway rides, rodeos and fair food, there will also be various exhibits, academic and fun bowls, talent contests, beauty pageants, spelling bees, and a day for children with special needs and much more.

Highlights of the fair include:

Sat., Oct. 7- 10:00 a.m.: Parade
Sun., Oct. 8 - Pre-School Pageant for boys and girls ages 0-4 years (Green Barn)
Mon., Oct. 9 - 7 p.m.: Seventh Grade Spelling Bee
Tuesday, Oct. 10 - Family Night: From 4-11 p.m., pay one price of $15 for all rides
8 a.m.-5 p.m.: Agriculture, Homemaking, & Floral Exhibits (all in school exhibit building)
7 p.m.: Sixth Grade Spelling Bee, sponsored by Livingston Parish News (Green Barn)
Wednesday, Oct. 11 – 4-11 p.m. two for one Pay One Price of $25 for all rides
10 a.m.-noon: Host Special Needs Students
4-11 p.m.: $25 two for one Pay One Price bracelets
6 p.m.: Rodeo Queen Contest (Rodeo Arena)
7 p.m.: Kids Rodeo in Rodeo Arena, sponsored by The Church
Thursday, Oct. 12 - Pay One Price of $25 for all rides
9 a.m.-2 p.m.: Field Trip Day for grades K-12 (must be prearranged; closed to general public during this time)
5 p.m.: Academic Fun Bowl (Rodeo Arena for students in grades 6-8)
6:30 p.m.: Fun Bowl (for students in grades K-5)
6 p.m.: Talent Show (all ages); (Green Barn)
8:30 p.m.: Live Music (mystery guest appearance by two rising stars)
4-11 p.m.: Pay One Price of $25 to ride all rides
Friday, Oct. 13 - 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Pay One Price of $15; 4-11 p.m. Pay One Price of $25
School Day: From 11 a.m.–3 p.m., pay one price of $15 for all rides
9 a.m.: Judging Livestock (Livestock Pavilion)
10 a.m.-noon: Older Folks Day, honoring Livingston Parish Residents 75 yrs. & older (Green Barn). Registration 9 a.m.; program at 10 a.m.
4-11 p.m.: Pay One Price of $25 to ride all rides
8 p.m.: PCA RODEO, sponsored by Ram Rodeo
Saturday, Oct. 14 - 11 a.m. until close Pay One Price of $25
From 11 a.m. until close: Pay One Price of $25 to ride all rides
9-11 a.m.: Pet Show, Dog Show & Horse Show (Livestock Pavilion)
3 - 6 p.m.: Pageants: Petite & Tiny Miss; Little & Deb Miss; Teen & Jr. Miss
6 p.m.: Senior Pageant Competition
8 p.m.: PCA Rodeo, sponsored by Ram Rodeo
Sunday, Oct. 15 - Pay One Price of $25
Noon-6 p.m.: Carnival Midway open - Pay One Price of $25 to ride all rides
6 p.m. Fair closes

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in the heart of Livingston Parish

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Call or email info@piercecms.com today and let’s get started doing it right!
Laura Schmitt Smith seeking seat on DS City Council

City Council. I am a fourth-generation resident of Denham Springs, a school guidance counselor with the Livingston Parish Public School System, and I am the very proud mother of three beautiful young ladies who are all very active within their schools.

As Denham Springs continues to rebuild and move forward after the devastating floods of 2016, my deep-rooted commitment and my pride to my beloved hometown is stronger than ever. I would be honored to represent Denham Springs and to serve you, the greatest people on earth. I will work hard for you and with you. The decisions made now are critical to our city’s future and the future of our children. As your councilwoman, I will always put first the best interests of the common good.

I look forward to working with all city officials and to continue the development and implementation of the long-term strategic plan which includes but is not limited to the immediate upgrade of the drainage system, identifying abandoned properties for redevelopment, revitalization of Florida Boulevard, and enhancement of the Antiques Village/Main Street. I will work hard to promote new growth while still preserving our rich history and small-town qualities, values, and integrity.

I have the vision, determination, and experience to help achieve our goals. With more than 22 years of teaching and counseling experience, being active and holding leadership positions in both civic and religious organizations, and having a unique historical knowledge and passion for Denham Springs, I know I will be an asset to the Denham Springs City Council.

I ask for your vote on Saturday, October 14. (Early voting, Sept. 30 - Oct. 7) You may contact me for questions, ideas or meetings at LauraSchmittSmith@gmail.com.
Amber Dugas announces candidacy for DS City Council

A mber Dugas, owner and operator of Taste of Louisiana (TOLA) Café has announced her candidacy for councilwoman on the Denham Springs City Council.

“As a businesswoman, I am known for my work ethic, dependability, integrity, and empathy. We are all connected; our city, our neighbors, our businesses, our future. The August 2016 flood has further enhanced our need for competent leadership at all levels of Louisiana government. “My husband and I, like so many Denham Springs’ residents, have fought to rebuild our home and business, and are continuing to invest in our city’s future.

“I graduated from LSU with a B.A. in political science and a minor in psychology, with focus on law and public policy. My husband and I were blessed with the opportunity to pursue our mutual passion for traditional Louisiana cooking, and TOLA Café became our future when we opened the café in the historic Antiques Village.

“Successful small business owners implement practical policies, are humble managers of employees, are trustworthy bankers, multitask on a dime, and enjoy working hard to enhance a few moments in their customers’ day. These are my strengths.

“I am the secretary of the Denham Springs Antiques & Merchants Association which organizes the annual Spring & Fall Festivals in the Antiques Village.

“I am also a board member of Denham Springs Main Street, a non-profit volunteer organization that preserves and enhances historic downtown Denham Springs.

“I will use my education, proven track record as a successful business owner, and experience as a community volunteer to hit the ground running. I am committed to furthering the advancement of the city’s drainage, addressing flooded schools, homes, and properties, responsible growth, promoting local businesses, and efficient management of Federal grant monies.

“I respectfully ask for your vote on, Oct. 14. (Early voting Sept. 30 – Oct. 7). I am focused on our future, and with your support we will continue to rebuild and succeed. If you have any ideas, questions, or would like to talk, contact Amber at www.facebook.com/AmberDugasForCityCouncil.”

Livingston Parish School System asks voters to renew funding for operations

O ct. 14 Ballot Proposition is NOT a new tax

T he Livingston Parish School Board is asking voters to renew a 10-year, 7.18-mill property tax that is dedicated to operational costs for every school in the parish. They emphasize that the proposition on the Oct. 14 election ballot is not a new tax, and it will not increase the amount of taxes currently being paid each year by parish property owners.

“This renewal proposition is for the continuation of a dedicated funding source that has been in effect in Livingston Parish since 1979,” Superintendent Rick Wentzel said. “The monies generated by this millage make up one of the district’s largest revenue sources and is critical to our day-to-day operations.”

Wentzel said the 7.18 mills are projected to generate more than $3.5 million of the school system’s annual budget.

Theses dedicated monies pay for the salaries and worker benefits of essential staff and employees, including school secretaries, bus drivers, custodians and paraprofessionals. These funds also pay for instructional supplies and equipment for classrooms, administrative supply needs, classroom furniture, day-to-day cleaning supplies and general maintenance needs.

“The voters of Livingston Parish have long supported this millage, maintaining a stable funding source for our school operations, which in turn, have allowed us to maintain strong learning environments for our children,” Wentzel said.

Wentzel noted that Livingston Parish Schools ranks No. 3 in the state for overall student academic performance. The district has maintained a top-tier “A” rating and recently earned the No. 1 ranking in the state for increased student participation and passage on national AP exams. Livingston Parish also maintains one of the state’s top high school graduation rates and best overall ACT scores.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is ramping up its fight against the opioid epidemic in the United States.

The opioid epidemic is the rapid increase in the use of prescription and non-prescription opioid drugs. According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, “overdose deaths, particularly from prescription drugs and heroin, have reached epidemic levels.”

Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, morphone, and many others.

These drugs are chemically related and interact with opioid receptors on nerve cells in the body and brain. Opioid pain relievers are generally safe when taken for a short time and as prescribed by a doctor, but because they produce euphoria in addition to pain relief, they can be misused (taken in a different way or in a larger quantity than prescribed, or taken without a doctor’s prescription). Regular use—even as prescribed by a doctor—can lead to dependence and, when misused, opioid pain relievers can lead to overdose incidents and deaths.

Improvements have been seen in some regions of the country in the form of decreasing availability of prescription opioid pain relievers and decreasing misuse among the Nation's teens. However, since 2007, overdose deaths related to heroin have been increasing.

Fortunately, effective medications exist to treat opioid use disorders: methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone. These medications could help many people recover from opioid addiction. An opioid overdose can be reversed with the drug naloxone when given right away.

Every day, 91 Americans die after overdosing on opioids. The misuse of and addiction to opioids—including prescription pain relievers, heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl—is a serious national crisis that affects public health as well as social and economic welfare. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the total “economic burden” of prescription opioid misuse alone in the United States is $78.5 billion a year, including the costs of healthcare, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement.

How did this happen?

In the late 1990s, pharmaceutical companies reassured the medical community that patients would not become addicted to prescription opioid pain relievers, and healthcare providers began to prescribe them at greater rates. This subsequently led to widespread diversion and misuse of these medications, and it became clear that these medications could indeed be highly addictive.

Opioid overdose rates began to increase. In 2015, more than 33,000 Americans died as a result of an opioid overdose, including prescription opioids, heroin, and illicitly manufactured fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid. That same year, an estimated 2 million people in the United States suffered from substance use disorders related to prescription opioid pain relievers, and 591,000 suffered from a heroin use disorder (not mutually exclusive).

Here is what we know about the opioid crisis:

- Roughly 21 to 29 percent of patients prescribed opioids for chronic pain misuse them.
- Between 8 and 12 percent develop an opioid use disorder.
- An estimated 4 to 6 percent who misuse prescription opioids transition to heroin.
- About 80 percent of people who use heroin first misused prescription opioids.

This issue has become a public health crisis with devastating consequences including increases in opioid misuse and related overdoses, as well as the rising incidence of neonatal abstinence syndrome due to opioid use and misuse during pregnancy. The increase
injection drug use has also contributed to the spread of infectious diseases including HIV and hepatitis C. As seen throughout the history of medicine, science can be an important part of the solution in resolving such a public health crisis.

What are HHS and NIH doing about it?

In response to the opioid crisis, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is focusing its efforts on five major priorities:

1. Improving access to treatment and recovery services.
2. Promoting use of overdose-reversing drugs.
3. Strengthening our understanding of the epidemic through better public health surveillance.
4. Providing support for cutting-edge research on pain and addiction.
5. Advancing better practices for pain management.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), a component of HHS, is the nation’s leading medical research agency helping solve the opioid crisis via discovering new and better ways to prevent opioid misuse, treat opioid use disorders, and manage pain. To accelerate progress, NIH is exploring formal partnerships with pharmaceutical companies and academic research centers to develop:

1. Safe, effective, non-addictive strategies to manage chronic pain.
2. New, innovative medications and technologies to treat opioid use disorders.
3. Improved overdose prevention and reversal interventions to save lives and support recovery.

Rx Awareness Campaign

On Sept. 27, 2017, the CDC launched Rx Awareness, a powerful communication campaign featuring real-life accounts of people recovering from opioid use disorder and people who have lost loved ones to prescription opioid overdose. The goal of the campaign is to increase awareness that prescription opioids can be addictive and dangerous. The campaign also strives to decrease the number of individuals who use opioids recreationally or overuse them.

The CDC is awarding more than $28.6 million in additional funding to 44 states and the District of Columbia to support their responses to the opioid overdose epidemic. The funds will be used to strengthen prevention efforts and better track opioid-related overdoses. This builds upon the July 2017 announcement that CDC was providing $12 million to states to support overdose prevention activities.

What YOU Can Do: Take Action and Help

Whether you are a healthcare provider, first responder, law enforcement officer, public health official, or community member, the opioid epidemic is likely affecting you and your community. We all have a role to play on the frontlines of this fight—it starts with addressing prescription opioid misuse, abuse, and overdose.

No matter who you are, you can take action to end the opioid overdose epidemic ravaging the United States:

- Learn more about prescription opioids so you can help those at risk for opioid use disorder and overdose in your community.
- Help those struggling with addiction find the right care and treatment. Anyone who takes prescription opioids can become addicted and help is available if you or someone you know is battling opioid use disorder.
- Spread the word and increase awareness in your community about the risk and dangers of prescription opioids.
- State and local health departments and community organizations can also take part in the Rx Awareness campaign and use the tested campaign materials and resources to launch campaigns, support local prevention activities, and raise awareness about the risks of prescription opioids.

This information was provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the leading national public health institute of the United States. The CDC is a United States federal agency under the Department of Health and Human Services, whose main goal is to protect public health and safety through the control and prevention of disease, injury, and disability.
SPIRITUAL Outlook

Are you confident in the security of your eternal soul?

Keith A. Zachary is pastor of New Covenant Church, 215 Florida Ave., Denham Springs. You may contact Rev. Zachary at 225-664-0858.

Operations Funding Renewal

Livingston Parish Public Schools

October 14

This is NOT a new tax!

Keith A. Zachary is pastor of New Covenant Church, 215 Florida Ave., Denham Springs. You may contact Rev. Zachary at 225-664-0858.

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Are you a woman considering “setting up shop” on your own?

Women are an integral part of the workforce, but they have had to overcome many obstacles along the way. Of course, challenges still remain, but women’s success in the working world is worth commemorating—which happened on American Business Women’s Day two weeks ago.

Are you a woman considering “setting up shop” on your own? If so, here are five tips to consider:

• Balance your goals. It’s possible—perhaps even likely—that your business goals will conflict with your personal financial goals. After all, if you’re purchasing new equipment or services for your business, you’ve got less money—at least for the time being—to put away for your own retirement or your children’s education. Hopefully, your investment in your business will pay off in greater income, but, in any case, you will need to balance your personal and professional goals.

• Create a retirement plan. As mentioned above, your ability to contribute to a retirement plan may be affected by the amount you put into your business—but that certainly doesn’t mean you shouldn’t have a retirement plan. In fact, for your future financial security, it’s essential that you launch such a plan. Fortunately, small-business owners have a choice of plans, including an “owner-only” 401(k), SEP-IRA and SIMPLE IRA. Although the various plans have different requirements and contribution limits, they all offer tax-deferred earnings, which means your money has the opportunity to grow faster than if it were placed in a vehicle on which you paid taxes every year. (Taxes are due upon withdrawal, and withdrawals prior to age 59 ½ may be subject to a 10% IRS penalty.) Plus, your contributions to a retirement plan may be tax deductible.

• Arrange for “backup.” Virtually all working women are familiar with the conflict between their careers and their roles as caregivers. Women are still more likely than men to drop out of the workforce for an extended period of time to care for young children or elderly parents. And your caregiving responsibilities won’t end just because you are now a business owner. Consequently, you need to have someone you trust available to step in for you when your family obligations call you away from work.

• Design a succession plan. When you want to retire, would you like to keep the business in your family? If so, you’ll need to create a succession plan that works for you and whomever you’d like to take control. Such a plan can be complex, so you will need to work with your legal and tax advisors—and you’ll want to give yourself plenty of time to work out the details.

• Build an emergency fund. Maintaining an adequate cash flow will always be a key task—one that involves your sales, billing cycles, inventory and other elements of your business. One way you can help yourself avoid troubles is to maintain an emergency fund consisting of a few months’ worth of your business expenses. You’ll want to keep this fund in a liquid, low-risk account.

Running your own business can be extremely rewarding, but it’s never going to be an easy road. However, with perseverance and careful planning, you can smooth out some of the bumps along the way—and give yourself reason to celebrate American Business Women’s Day.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

For information on investment strategies at every age, contact Scott Landry, an investment representative and branch manager administrator with Edward Jones: 225-664-9798 or toll-free at 800-256-6664; 179 Del Orleans, Denham Springs, LA 70726. www.edwardjones.com.

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Your shoes can be the source of health issues

Modern shoes have a narrow toebox and medial arch supports, leading to decreased natural function of the foot. Your toes cannot spread as they do when barefoot, so the muscles of your feet don’t get the relaxation they need on a regular basis.

The human foot is a highly developed, biomechanically complex structure that serves to bear the weight of the body as well as forces many times the weight of the human body during walking, running, or jumping. The human foot is a strong and complex mechanical structure containing 26 bones providing structural support, 33 joints (20 of which are actively articulated), and more than a hundred muscles, tendons, and ligaments.

Shoes - function or fashion? You may not think about this until your feet, legs, knees, or hips start hurting, but shoes change how you walk, and poorly chosen and incorrectly fitting footwear can impact negatively on our feet.

Everyone is different. Some prefer barefoot, and others can’t put their feet on the ground without something under their feet for support. So, once foot fatigue or pain sets in either in the foot or up the chain, it’s time to assess what is on your feet.

Shoes with a narrow toe box can lead to decreased natural function of the foot. Your toes cannot spread as they do when barefoot, so the muscles of your feet don’t get the relaxation they need on a regular basis. That’s why a foot massage feels so good.

For better foot health, avoid shoes that are too tight, too stiff, too flat, and too high. Both flip flops and ultra-high heels especially can lead to broken and sprained ankles and permanent foot deformities with accompanying chronic foot, knee, or hip pain.

You need shoes with good heel control, mid foot support and adequate toe room and length. For those people who tend to wear their shoes out, either on the inside or outside of the heel, you may need a shoe that gives good heel control. For those who tend to have lower arches or flat feet, a shoe or boot with mid-foot support will be very helpful. Once you have chosen a sensible shoe, make sure you have a proper fit.

First, a good foot measurement must be made to start the process. Many folks may remember going to the old shoe stores and getting measured with a Brannick Device - a big metal foot plate allowing for measurement of the length of the foot from heel to toe, heel to ball, and the width of the forefoot. Those measurements are baseline measures for a good shoe fit.

However, most shoe manufacturers do not size their shoes according to the Brannick device. So, that means one shoe brand may be a half-size to one-and-a-half sizes different from another brand. This makes it a little challenging to get a good shoe fit going from one shoe brand to another. Ordering shoes online presents problems unless you have previously ordered from that particular shoe company.

It is recommended to have at least a thumbs width from the end of the toe to the end of the shoe in standing position. The most important measure is not necessarily the “heel to toe” or full length of the foot, but the “heel to ball” (of foot). If people have short toes – toe length compared to the length from the heel to the ball of the foot, there are challenges with fitting the shoe to the foot. In this case, you would fit to the widest part of the foot.

The most important single point for a good fit is the widest part of foot should fit the same area as widest part of shoe. So, in the case of a foot with short toes the shoe may need to be little longer in length so the ball of the foot fits in right place. A good test may be to remove the manufacturer’s insole and place your foot on it. You can get an eyeball view of how the foot fits in the shoe. Another aspect to consider is the shape of the end of the foot.

There can be many variations in the shape of the toes. Some toes may form more of a point with the second toe even being longer than the great toe while others have more of a square toe or boxy shape to the end of the foot. So, determine the shape of the distal, or tip, end of the foot and then match that to the shape of the distal, or tip, end of the shoe.

Having happy feet is important. The older you get, the more important it is to do all you can to help keep your feet pain free and injury free. As you lose sensation, you can easily get sores which can lead to much bigger medical problems.

Many foot problems can be prevented by being careful with what you put on your feet.

Dr. Cheryl Jeane is a physical therapist with 21 years of experience and treats patients at Triton Health Care on Florida Blvd. in Denham Springs.

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Having happy feet is important.

“Vital part of Kinesics is our state of the art, intuitive software that maps the body and identifies your specific imbalances, asymmetries and hidden sources of functional limitations.”

- Gerald Drefahl
Try these travel tips to make your vacation go smoother

A journey is like marriage. The certain way to be wrong is to think you control it. – John Steinbeck

With over 30 years of consistent travel, I’ve definitely learned my share of lessons, some of them the hard way. But I have managed to learn a few tricks to make my life easier. No matter how hard I try, though, I still make trips where I’m unprepared, forget things, pack the wrong clothes, or go off generally half-cocked. So one of the most important things I’ve learned is that while you can plan, you simply cannot plan for everything.

Years ago a small book was published called “Smart Traveler’s Passport” that contained 399 tips from seasoned travelers. I absolutely loved it! Typically when my clients are preparing for a big trip I send them a travel checklist with useful tips, and although it’s rather abbreviated, I feel like I could go on ad nauseam and still not cover everything. But here is a list of my top tips for a smoother trip.

- Make sure you have proper documentation. Check your passport to see that it is valid, and is good for at least 6 months past your return date since many destinations require it.
- Make a copy of your passport and keep it somewhere separate from your original. In the event your passport is lost or stolen, your copy will help expedite a replacement.
- Make a detailed itinerary prior to leaving.
- Contact your bank to alert them of your travel plans. Nothing can spoil a trip more than not having a working credit card. On that note, be smart and use a card that doesn’t charge a fee for converting foreign currency into USD.
- If you’re traveling to a foreign country, exchange USD for their currency. This can be done at most major banks. Also take an ATM card.
- Defensively guard your money! Ladies, wear a cross body bag and make sure all compartments are zipped. Men, don’t put your wallet in your back pocket. Thieves are looking for an easy target. Don’t be one.
- Travel with small bills.
- A few weeks before you leave, reconfirm your plans. Airline schedules frequently change. The day before you leave, go to the airline’s website and check in for your flight and print boarding passes. Then plan on getting to the airport at least 2 hours in advance.
- Arrange things at home before you leave.
- Electrical currents vary from country to country. If you plan on using an electric socket, you will need to buy a converter kit.
- In your carry-on, you’ll want to take your medications, camera, jewelry, and anything else of value.
- Don’t forget the rule of no liquids over 3.3 ounces in carry-ons. PLUS all bottles, creams, pastes, gels, aerosols, etc., must fit in ONE 1-qt. clear plastic zip-top bag and placed in the checkpoint screening bin. Containers larger than 3.4 oz. must be in checked baggage.
- Check the weather before you go and pack accordingly, but plan for any eventuality, however.
- Pack a portable pharmacy (in addition to prescribed meds, pack other meds for upset stomach, diarrhea, headache, sinus/allergy, band aids, etc.)
- Pack for comfort, not a fashion show. I always lay my clothes out before putting them in my suitcase, and then I remove about 25%.
- Apply for Global Entry and TSA Pre-Check.
- Drink only bottled water and stay hydrated.
- Check with your cellphone carrier before you leave so that you are able to use your phone if you’d like, and to insure that you don’t return home to a huge bill with roaming charges.
- Learn a few common phrases of the local language. “Hello” and “thank you” in someone’s native tongue go a long way.
- Buy travel insurance.
- Talk to the locals. They know the best places to eat and the best sights to see.
- And most important, take your sense of humor, your patience, and your common sense!

Travel savviness isn’t something you’re born with. It’s obtained from mistakes, being unprepared, and countless errors. It’s full of pitfalls, but there are things you can mitigate them by remembering these tips and tricks.

Kathy Rainey Pickerell is the owner of World Travels, 225-279-0135, has been a travel consultant for 21 years, and is a native of Denham Springs. Besides being an avid traveler who has been to 6 continents, 46 states and 59 countries, she’s a mother and grandmother, a voracious reader, scuba diver, gardener, cook, and she keeps a bucket list for the places she has yet to see.

This and all other columns and articles, including archives of past issues, are available online at: thebusinessjournal-LA.com and livingstonbusiness.com.
Many women operate out of a small jewelry box that has been handed down for generations. This is very common, I would suppose, to a fault for many.

The fact is, many have a very disorganized mess that they have to dig through to find an untangled chain or the right earrings back. Due to time constraints one might throw on something that is not their first choice because of the time it might take to dig around to find what they are looking for.

Point in case is many women have no real clue to what could be hiding in their boxes, organized or not. So allow me to highly suggest that the more organized your box is the better chance you may have to really know what you have. This is important for many reasons.

1. To know your current inventory for insurance purposes.
2. To always be able to put your hands on what you want to wear without digging around and potentially causing knotted chains and damaging delicate prongs on sensitive pieces.
3. To recognize current or future pieces slated for repair or re-creation and design.

Most women have several pieces of jewelry that they would wear except that ring now is too small or the stone fell out, or a bracelet is broken, or a necklace has a knot they can’t get out etc. They also have pieces that are out of style or downright ugly and wouldn’t wear, fixed or not.

From just knowing this, and having worked with hundreds of women customers, I try to educate women on the idea of cleaning out their boxes, organizing it and taking the unwanted items and items that they might sell to their local jeweler, along with pieces that need repair.

Chances are, you could get your repairs done for nothing and possibly do some trading to acquire pieces they will wear and redesign some of it to possibly create a super unique piece that potentially appraises for way more than it was worth just sitting in the box, and, more important, something they will love to wear because they helped design and create it.

This is a win-win for the ladies. Many times we can turn an unthought-of piece into a new treasure – with little or no out-of-pocket expense or even a sizable check if the jewelry isn’t sentimental such as, items from a past relationships etc.

So do yourself a favor and:

1. Re-organize your jewelry box or buy a new one.
2. Separate your needing-repair and unwanted jewelry and bring them to your local jeweler and negotiate repairs.
3. Make your wish list and bring jewelry that you want updated or redesigned and start planning a strategy with your jeweler.
4. Bring your valuables to have appraised and cleaned for insurance purposes.
5. Have your ring prongs checked every 3-6 months.

Stuart Salassi is owner and certified jeweler of Salassi Jewelry & Fine Gifts, 111 N. Range Ave., Denham Springs, La 70726; 225-271-8641; email any questions to salassijewelry@gmail.com

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Managed IT services has benefits, even for small businesses

From small-medium entrepreneurs to corporate colossals, business owners will tell you that running a business takes much more than a product and a person to sell that product to.

Every business is comprised of multiple departments and task forces, each essential in maintaining the organization’s structure. Human resources, accounting and finance, marketing, and customer service support are all staple departments of organization for a business.

While there are many more examples of functional areas, one that is often overlooked is Information Technology service.

On a literal level, Information Technology (or IT) support is an incredibly broad term that refers to any assistance given with technology-related products and services.

In a business setting however, the role of an IT technical support officer is primarily to help monitor and maintain computer systems and networks across an organization. They are responsible for everything from the installation and configuration of computer systems, to the diagnostics of hardware and software, and trying to solve any problems that may arise.

Benefits of a managed IT service include:

1) Reduced Operating Cost. When you choose to outsource to a managed IT service, you eliminate any direct costs associated with hiring an employee (recruitment, oversight, training, benefits, taxes, etc.). This keeps your in-house staff costs lower and allows you to allocate those expenses to another functional department.

2) Reduce Risk. A quality outsourced IT service provides access to its professional services and exceptional capabilities. When passing off an essential task to a team of highly trained professionals, you gain a collective skill set based solely around IT experience. You not only bypass the tedious training process of hiring a new employee, but you reduce the risk of mistakes and failure from inexperienced service workers.

3) Focus on Core Business. As mentioned before, there’s a lot that goes into maintaining a business. Businesses have limited resources, and every manager has limited time and attention. IT is a functional department that can be vital in how a business runs, yet it is often one of the trickiest to operate. Managed service providers can help you stay focused on your core business and not get distracted by complex IT decisions.

Enlisting the aid of a managed service provider does not require you to surrender complete control of your IT assets. Instead, you get to pick what elements of your IT infrastructure are taken care of externally versus what you still want to handle within your business. By simply monitoring and maintaining your systems, this service can help you avoid countless technology problems and address existing ones even faster.

At Client Technology Services, we want our clients and their employees to have the best technology to increase productivity and security. Let us know if we can provide any assistance upgrading and maintaining your workstations. Contact us today www.client-tech.com/contact.html

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Seller's obligation to disclose, and what that means for your flooded house

As a real estate attorney, I've seen my share of the bizarre. Just recently, I received this exact email from a fellow attorney:

“Does anyone know off the top of their head - Are sellers required by law to disclose to buyers that the prior owners were bludgeoned to death inside the home? I just finished an abstract on this property and googled the address and stumbled across this article…”

What followed was an article describing a gruesome murder that had occurred in a home that is currently under contract. Turns out in Louisiana, sellers are not required to disclose that this murder, or any death for that matter, occurred in their home. Sellers are also not required to state if they believe their house is haunted - an issue that, not surprisingly, comes up occasionally in New Orleans.

So what DOES a seller have to disclose and what does that mean for your flooded house? Seller Disclosure is governed by Revised Statute 9:3198 which requires the following:

1. The seller must complete a property disclosure document in a form prescribed by the Louisiana Real Estate Commission.
2. The seller must detail any material facts they are aware of that negatively affect the property.

This is a broad statement, and could cover a wide variety of defects in a home, ranging from the condition of the roof to the condition of the gas tank.

Question 4 on the Standard Louisiana Property Disclosure form asks the following: “Has any flooding, water intrusion, accumulation, or drainage problem been experienced with respect to the land? If yes, indicate the nature and frequency of the defect…”

Based on this, sellers ARE required to disclose that the house they are selling has flooded. Any attempt to disguise this matter is fraud in Louisiana.

In addition to normal defects the following defects must be disclosed if the seller has knowledge of any of the following:

- Whether the buyer is obligated to be a member of a homeowners’ association as a homeowner in the community in which the buyer is purchasing property.
- Whether an illegal laboratory for the production or manufacturing of methamphetamine was in operation on the purchasing property.
- Whether a cavity created within a salt stock by dissolution with water lies underneath the property.
- Whether the purchasing property is within two thousand 640 feet of a solution mining injection well.
- Whether the property has been zoned commercial or industrial.

Honesty is always the best policy, and that is especially true here. Concealing defects is fraud and carries some pretty harsh penalties.

Olivia Keen Byers, Attorney for Title Stream, 225.590.3323; www.titlestream.com. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact her at obyers@titlestream.com.

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Finding ‘balance’ in life is all the rage right now. That healthy ratio of activities to work to home life to worship to stress to, well, everything going on in your life. For whatever reason, people seem to have lost the ability to intuitively find that healthy ratio, and now we need all manner of self-help guides. Mental, emotional, spiritual balance is very important, but physical balance is as well.

When I mention balance, what may come to your mind is balance of physical activities, eating a balanced diet, or finding balance of service to others and self-care. And then, there’s your actual balance, the ability to stabilize oneself in space. How’s your balance? Do you feel unsteady without support? Diminished ability to balance and the resulting risk of falls is a major concern for the active aging population. Improving balance is often cited as a goal for many active agers. So how did we lose the ability to balance, and what can we do about it?

Balance was easy when you were 4. From 9 months or so, you began to discover how to balance, stand unsteadily, begin to move independently, walk, run, and stand on 1 foot. It’s all so natural and easy for a kid; for us, injuries, illness, surgery, lack of activity take a toll on our ability to balance. Even walking becomes a challenge when we are unsteady in the whole standing process.

A couple of years ago I broke my wrist and ankle; at the time I had been teaching SilverSneakers, a class designed for active agers and the deconditioned. When I began teaching again (about 2 months later), I found that my ability to stand on 1 foot was severely compromised. That quick – balance is one of the first things affected by injury and/or lack of movement. So what can we do about it?

Practice. Practice. Practice. What was easy and natural at 4 is something you’ll need to work on at 54, or 64, or 74, or 84, and on and on. Some group fitness classes, such as SilverSneakers, yoga, and aquatics, specifically address improving balance; look into participating! Classes like these also help build strength, which is important if the ‘F’ word (fall) happens to you. One of my participants came to class all scraped up and said she fell in her driveway, “But I got up”. Strength and balance. How is yours?

Until next time……………….

Judy Troth has been the program coordinator at Spectrum Fitness Zachary for 8 years and teaches a variety of classes including: Group Power, Group Active, Silver Sneakers and Silver Sneakers Yoga. Contact her at 1326 Church Street, 225-654-3800.

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In December 2016, Congress passed a bi-partisan bill, the 21st Century Cures Act, to fix a few flaws in the Affordable Care Act, and included in it was the Qualified Small Employer Health Reimbursement Arrangement (QSEHRA) option.

QSEHRA is beneficial to employers who have less than 50 full time equivalent employees and do not currently have a group health insurance plan.

When the Affordable Care Act was implemented, part of the strategy to make the Act work was to incentivize employers through imposing large penalties to stop paying reimbursement of medical expenses to their employees. This was to help move everyone into an individual plan or a group plan under the Affordable Care Act.

As a Qualified Small Employer myself, I find great benefit in being able to offer additional benefits to my employees for their health care without having a group policy that would be a financial burden to our small business. Part of that financial burden is struggling to give benefits to employees without having to increase employees’ costs substantially every year to offset the health care premium increases, and not knowing how much those annual health care premium increases are going to be.

These new plans provide an additional option for small employers who may not be looking to offer a group health insurance plan, but still would like to assist their employees with their out-of-pocket medical expenses. Offering such assistance to employees may also help make small business more competitive with bigger companies in their industries.

There are several requirements employers must meet to participate in QSEHRA, but to start the conversation of whether or not you are a small employer who can offer these benefits to your employees, there are two basic qualifications: (1) your business must have fewer than 50 full time equivalents, and (2) your business must not currently have a group health plan available to employees.

If you would like the full details of this plan, please email me at shelby@shelbycpa.com and I will be happy to email you the guidelines for qualifying for this health reimbursement benefit. There is no obligation.

Shelby Carnahan Andrews is a CPA and has worked in the accounting/finance field for 25 years. Her bookkeeping services include complete payroll services, tax returns for individuals and businesses, and tax-planning advice. She is also an officially-designated forensic accountant expert witness with experience assisting with high asset divorce and fraud cases. For a free one-hour, no obligation consultation to individuals and business owners to discuss their accounting needs, contact her at shelby@shelbycpa.com, or call 225-243-4980 for an appointment. Carnahan Andrews CPA is a member of the Livingston Parish Chamber of Commerce and is a certified QuickBooks ProAdvisor.
After a wet year, we finally got a break in the weather and what a scurry of activity I have seen on the weekends. Lots of early morning traffic, with trucks pulling tractors and equipment to clip and plow wildlife food plots.

Every deer hunter has his own ideas about what to plant. A lot of that is based on personal experiences, preferences and marketing, but the fundamentals of planting cool season crops are the same for everyone.

Oats have the earliest recommended planting dates starting September 15 in South Louisiana. Cereal rye, wheat and ryegrass can be planted after September 20.

Let’s start with what to plant.

There are lots of wildlife mixes on the market and my only recommendation would be to read the tag and make sure the forages listed will grow here. Your other option is to start with small grain species like oats, wheat or cereal rye.

Oats are a great choice for early plantings. They take the heat better than other cool season small grains but they tend to play out earlier also, but not until after hunting season. Oats are planted at 100 pounds of seed per acre when planted alone or 60 pounds in a mixture. Recommended varieties of oats for Louisiana are RAM LA 99016, TAMO 411 and TAMO 606.

Forage wheat is popular, and you will find a lot of the wildlife mixes are heavy on wheat. Unfortunately, LSU has not had any varieties submitted for testing recently so I cannot give you a good variety recommendation. Wheat is very cold tolerant, and once you get into mid-October it makes more sense agriculturally than oats. It will last longer, usually heading out in May of next year. Wheat is planted at 90 pounds per acre when planted alone or 50 pounds in a mix.

Your other small grain option is cereal rye, which is not ryegrass. Cereal rye is planted at 90 pounds per acre alone or 50 pounds in a mixture. The recommended varieties to plant are Elbon, Maton, Maton II, Oklon and Wintergrazer 70.

I would add clover to your food plot mixture. Deer are browsers and like a variety of forages, but they really like clover. In preference tests that we conducted at one of our research stations we found that deer were as apt to go into wheat and clover or oats and clover as any of the mixes on the market at that time. I would use white or red clover as they perform well in our soil and those soils around us.

White clover is seeded at 5 pounds per acre when planted alone but use it in a mix at the rate of 3 pounds per acre. Recommended varieties include Osceola, Durana, Regalgraze, Pinnacle, Meches and LA S-1. White clover has good reseeding value and comes back easily.

Red clover is planted at the rate of 8 pounds when planted in a mix. Recommended red clover varieties include Cherokee, AU Red Ace, Southern Belle, Kenstar and Kenland.

The biggest mistake I see hunters make is not using the correct fertilizers. The only way to know what is needed is to take a soil test. At the LSU AgCenter we can get results within a week of the sample entering the lab. That analysis will tell us the soil pH and if lime is needed, which is what makes all the other fertilizers that we apply effective. It will also tell us the amount of phosphorous, potassium and sulfur that are required for the crop to grow.

I like to put out all of the phosphorous and potassium at planting. In addition, I like to use at least 50 pounds of nitrogen. If urea is your source of nitrogen it takes roughly 2 pounds of urea (46-0-0) per pound of nitrogen, so use 100 pounds of urea at planting. If you use the urea/ammonium sulfate blend (many places call it the “new ammonium nitrate” with an analysis of 33-0-0-12) then you use 3 pounds to get 1 pound of nitrogen or 150 pounds at planting.

That initial nitrogen application will last approximately 50 days from planting. If you need more growth after that, and most of the plots will, add 150 pounds of urea or 200 pounds of 33-0-0-12 as a top dress. I usually do this right after Thanksgiving and that will last another 65-70 days and should take you through the end of January.

Deer have a preference for well-fertilized forages, whether it is oats, wheat or briars.

Kenny Sharpe is the LSU AgCenter county agent for Livingston Parish. For more information on these or related topics contact Kenny at 225-686-3020 or visit our website at www.lsuagcenter.com/livingston.
The Equifax breach and what you should do now

Equifax, one of the nation’s three major credit reporting agencies, was the most recent victim of possibly the largest data breach to date, exposing 143 million U.S. consumers to potential data misuse. Equifax says it will offer free credit monitoring to all U.S. consumers for one year and will notify consumers through the mail whose credit card numbers or dispute documents were exposed. However, is this enough to protect consumers from identity theft?

The Bank of Zachary along with community banks all over the country worry about our customers who have questions about the likelihood of their information being stolen and if their credit cards issued on behalf of the bank are part of the breach.

Cam Fine, Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA) President and CEO sent a letter to Equifax Chairman and CEO Richard Smith urging the company’s leadership to do more. “On behalf of the nation’s community banks and their customers, I strongly urge Equifax to immediately notify each of the 143 million American customers and the issuers of the more than 200,000 credit cards of the extent of this breach. Consumers who have their identities stolen will face years of difficult identity rebuilding and credit repair. These consumers deserve to know if their information has fallen into the wrong hands so they can take appropriate steps to protect their identities and finances from fraud and theft.”

To protect yourself, you should first find out if your personal information was part of the breach. Visit Equifax’s website, www.equifaxsecurity2017.com. Click on the “Potential Impact” tab and enter your last name and the last six digits of your Social Security number. Equifax is also offering everyone whether affected or not the option to enroll for free in its credit monitoring at all three major credit bureaus, copies of Equifax credit reports, the ability to lock and unlock Equifax credit reports, identity theft insurance and internet scanning for Social Security numbers.

Consumers need to investigate these options further and decide if this is what best protects their personal information. There are other options than what Equifax offers for you to consider when seeking to prevent future breaches from affecting your data. (See box below)

In this everchanging environment of cyber-attacks, security breaches, and identity theft it has become increasingly important to monitor and protect your personal information and financial data on a regular basis.

For more information about this or any Bank of Zachary service, contact a helpful staff members at any location. Main Office: 4743 Main Street, Zachary, 225.654.2701. Plaza Office: 2110 Church Street, Zachary, 225.654.2788. Central Office: 13444 Hooper Road, Central, LA; 225.654.2788. Website: www.bankofzachary.com and Facebook: Bank of Zachary.

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Other steps to protect yourself after a data breach - Federal Trade Commission Website

• Check your credit reports – Equifax, Experian, TransUnion -for free – at annualcreditreport.com. Accounts or activity that you don’t recognize could indicate identity theft. Visit IdentityTheft.gov to find out what to do.
• Consider placing a credit freeze on your files – A credit freeze makes it harder for someone to open a new account in your name. Keep in mind that a credit freeze won’t prevent a thief from making charges to your existing accounts.
• Monitor your existing credit card and bank accounts closely for charges you don’t recognize.
• Consider placing a fraud alert on your files (if you don’t place a freeze) – An alert warns creditors that you may be an identity theft victim and that they should verify that anyone seeking credit in your name really is you.
• File your taxes early – before a scammer can. Tax identity theft happens when someone uses your SSN to get a tax refund or a job. Respond right away to letters from the IRS. Visit Identitytheft.gov/databreach to learn more about protecting yourself after a data breach.
Composition, aka, don’t get stuck in the middle

Do you know that feeling you have when you see an image for the first time, and think, “Wow, I love that shot”?! In addition to the subject matter, colors and setting, the composition likely made a big contribution to the end result. How we compose the scene in our viewfinders can help change our efforts from just taking pictures, to making photographs.

There are many ideas and practices concerning composition; however, let’s focus (rim-shot) on one I like to call, “Don’t get stuck in the middle.” And although this mainly applies to photographing moving objects, it can also apply to almost any setting. One of the best pieces of advice I received from my photography mentor, Luke Ducote (New Orleans photographer extraordinaire), was that when shooting someone walking, running or moving, “Give them some room to move! You don’t want them hitting the side of the picture, do you?!”

Take for instance the image of the racing horses. With the horses rounding the bend, the first instinct may be to have the action center-stage, with the horses placed in the middle of the frame. Besides, that’s where the action is, right? Well, by setting the focal point on the left side of the frame and leaving some room for the horses to run, the image better portrays the action taking place, which helps put the viewer right into the scene.

Which horse makes the turn first? Which horse in gaining on the others? Does the lead horse hold on? (As a side-note, I shot this image standing outside of the racetrack at the Fair Grounds Race Course in New Orleans, with the lens positioned through a chain-link fence. I don’t think this could be done at Churchill Downs…)

In the next image, we find a lady meandering down a cobblestone street on a rainy day. In this vertical shot, room has been left for the subject to explore the shops on the left side of the street, as well as leaving room to further explore what may be just up the street around the corner. Has she reached her destination? Does she walk over to the shops on the left side of the street? Is that gelato shop farther down the street?

Next time you’re shooting, try not to get “stuck in the middle,” and give your subjects some room to run. You may just like the results - and the compliments!

John Crifasi is with the Louisiana Photographic Society which meets on the third Thursday of each month at the Goodwood Library, Baton Rouge, in the large conference room on the 1st floor. Visit our website at www.LaPhotoSociety.com for more info. More of John’s photographic work can be found at www.JohnCrifasiPhotography.com.

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