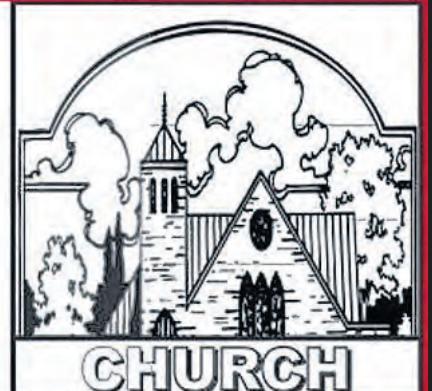


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COMMUNITY

The Real Views



CHURCH

April 28, 2023

Natchitoches Parish

Volume 21 Issue 3

Crabs-In-A-Bucket Mentality

By: Latorria Freeman,
Publisher

Crabs in a bucket mentality is a phenomenon where individuals in a group try to prevent others from succeeding to keep themselves from being left behind. This mentality is often seen in competitive environments like the workplace or social circles. The crab mentality can also refer to a person wanting others to not have good things in life because said person did not have those good things for themselves.

The crabs in a bucket mentality can be toxic and lead to resentment and envy within a group. It may cause others to feel

that they cannot do better and can limit their progress and success in life. However, there are graceful and polite ways to handle people who inflict such a mentality on you or someone you know. Here are some ways you can detect and rise above the crabs in a bucket mentality:

Watch For Negative Comments About Other People's Success

One of the biggest signs that someone has a crab mentality is when they say negative things about the success of others. If someone seems upset or angry when someone else has good news, it's a red flag that they may be jealous and trying to bring that person down.

Look For Passive-Aggressive Behavior

Another common behavior associated with the crab mentality is passive aggression. This behavior might come from someone making sarcastic comments or belittling someone else's achievements. This behavior can be a sign that they are trying to make someone else feel bad without being direct about it.

Pay Attention to Their Reaction to Criticism

Good listeners take criticism as a way to improve themselves, especially when it is



constructive criticism. Unfortunately, a person with the crab mentality will often react negatively when criticized, even when the criticism is meant to be helpful. They may become defensive, angry, or vindictive.

Avoid Feeding into The Drama

The best way to avoid getting sucked into the crab mentality is to refuse to participate in the drama. Avoiding feeding into the drama means not engaging in gossip, not getting caught up in arguments, and not responding to negative comments or behavior. Instead, stay focused on your goals, and don't let anyone else's negativity bring you down.

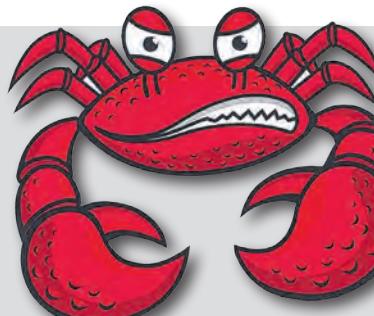
In conclusion, having a crab mentality doesn't make a person inherently evil. Once you recognize the crab mentality in someone, it is important to understand that there may be underlying causes to their behavior. Be it insecurity or past trauma; there are many deeply personal reasons causing one to be stuck in the crab mentality. Leading with kindness and compassion can set an example for people that good things can be accomplished without bringing others down. And most importantly, it is necessary to put yourself first, empower yourself, and not let other people's negativity influence your choices!

INSIDE

- Candidacy for Tax Assessor Page 2
- Retirement Announcement Page 3
- Kickin Eggs Event Page 8-9
- Power of Pride Page 12
- Voting and Tax Information Page 15
- Start an LLC Page 16
- Interview with Victor Jones...Page 10, 19
- Tribute to WD "Dub" Braxton ... Page 20
- Village of Natchez Residents....Page 24
- Mayor Village of Natchez Responds
.....Page 25
- See it Yourself Natchez Park/CityHall
.....Page 26
- And much more.....

Crab Mentality

**"If I can't have it,
neither can you!"**



SCAN
ME!

Yolanda Chevalier-Reed Announces Candidacy for Natchitoches Parish Tax Assessor

To the Citizens of Natchitoches Parish, it is my passion to better serve the taxpayers and property owners of Natchitoches Parish as well as the general public within our parish borders that has led me to run for the office of Natchitoches Parish Tax Assessor. My having been an integral part of this staff for nearly two decades has broadened my desire to continue the high quality of service maintained under the leadership of retiring Timothy K. Page. Since 2021 when Tim became the Natchitoches Parish Assessor, I have been functioning as his Chief Deputy.

I pledge to always have an open door policy and to provide the most accurate information available, all while exhibiting courteous customer service with professionalism to those who inquire within the office. I am pleased with the important service that our office provides and feel as if my being elected as the Natchitoches Parish Assessor would be a great help to the public at large.

My formal education includes becoming a graduate of Natchitoches Central High School, attending NSU for two years and Word Processing certification



Chevalier-Reed

at Computech Vocational School in Dallas, Texas. Formal preparation to enhance my capability in this office was accomplished to my having become a Certified Louisiana Deputy Assessor (CLDA) in 2010. This credential was the result of my having successfully taken education classes with the International Association of Assessing Offers (IAAO) and having been compliant with completing Continuing Education hours and becoming re-certified every five years to maintain this certification.

I am well known as Yolanda "Tootie" Chevalier-Reed. My immediate family includes my husband, Carey Reed, one daughter, Alecia Chevalier and a dear granddaughter, Ava Chevalier. My church affiliation is with the St. Anthony Catholic Church; however, I frequently worship at the Gilgal Baptist Church near Clarence, LA where my husband is a member. I am committed, concerned, and caring about the extremely important services rendered by your Assessor's Office. I humbly solicit your vote and support and look forward to meeting many of you in the months to come.

The Real Views

Latoria Freeman, Publisher

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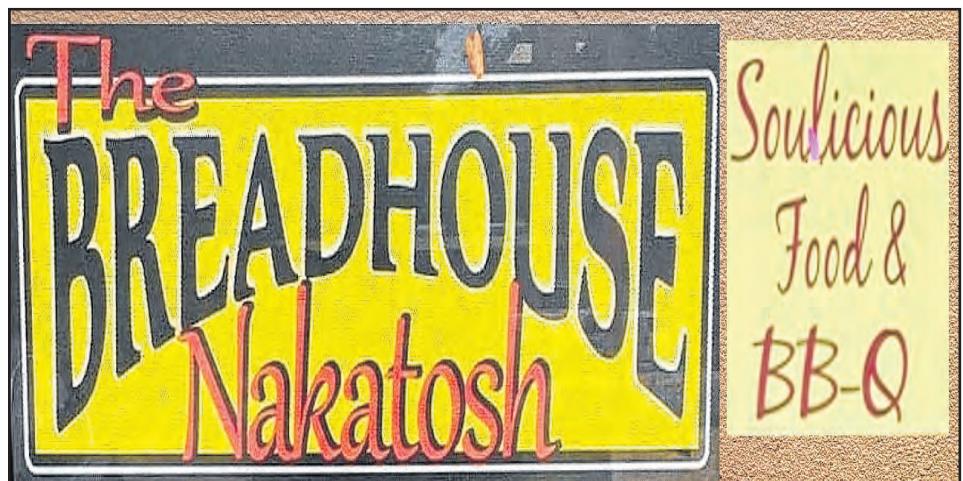


Founder: J.R. "Randy" Stelly Original Publication 1996

The Ben D. Johnson Educational Center Employee Partner Spotlight



Pictured: Denise Bradley, Breadhouse Nakatosh, and Travis Turner, recent graduate of the Legacy Workforce Development Program



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RETIREMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

I would like to announce to the citizens of Natchitoches that I will not be running for re-election.

After the completion of my term in 2024, I will have worked as a public servant in the Assessor's Office for 36 years. I would like to thank Assessor Rick Hargis for hiring me, Assessor Dollie Mahoney for making me her Chief Deputy, and the Citizens of Natchitoches for having the confidence in me to be their Assessor.

I also thank my staff for making the office run smoothly. All my staff is certified, with exception of one employee, and she is well on her way to obtaining that goal. Certification requires taking and passing five International Association of Assessing Officers courses. Those mandated requirements are Fundamentals of Real Property Appraisal which is the Cost Approach and the Market Approach, the Income Approach to Valuation, and the Uniform Standards of



**Timothy K.
Page, CLA
Natchitoches
Parish
Assessor**

Professional Appraisal Practices. To reach this level of education is quite an accomplishment.

I want to thank my Chief Deputy, Yolanda C. Reed, for being second in command, working personal property and running the office whenever I am absent. Also, my other deputies, Kim LaCaze for daily working the transfer of property, Jimmy Farmer for constantly fine tuning and updating the maps, Lacrecia Johnson for working the public

service property and helping with the personal property, Michelle Blade for working Change Orders and Gerald Besant II, for the field work.

Rick hired me in 1989 to create digital maps; however, I needed to gain computer experience. So, I studied the computer-aided design and drafting program manual along with weekly advice and instruction from George Minturn. I am now proud to say the maps and the tax roll are on the internet for

free at www.natchitochesassessor.org.

After Dollie made me her Chief Deputy, I worked the daily transfers and public service property, which helped me gain an overall knowledge of the office. I would also be remiss if I did not mention former coworkers Richard Wester and Shirley Delphin, who shared their knowledge with me. But the best part has been making friends with coworkers, other courthouse coworkers and the general public.

I have genuinely tried to listen to the public and serve them fairly in every way possible, but I also draw the line when going beyond my authority. I have written on my calendar - Luke 6:31 which says: And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

In my retirement, I wish to be available to help my 84-year-old mother with her doctor appointments, assist when needed with my granddaughter and work more for the church.

The Lord truly had a plan for me that I could have never envisioned, and what a blessing it has been.



The Ben D. Johnson Educational Center announced the appointment of Dr. Ross Williams Jr. as Executive Director, reporting on May 1, 2023.

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Natchitoches Central High School Graduate Jamar Dewanye Benjamin

My Name is Jamar Dewanye Benjamin. I am a Natchitoches Central High School senior. During my four years of high school, I participated in many activities within the community and was a part of several groups within the community.

American Sign Language (ASL)
Living Healthy Club
American History Club
4-H
Fellowship Christian Athletes (FCA)
Band
Southern University Upward Bound Natchitoches
Positive Behaviors in Students
Dare Division Natchitoches Parish Sheriff Department
Natchitoches Central Bas-

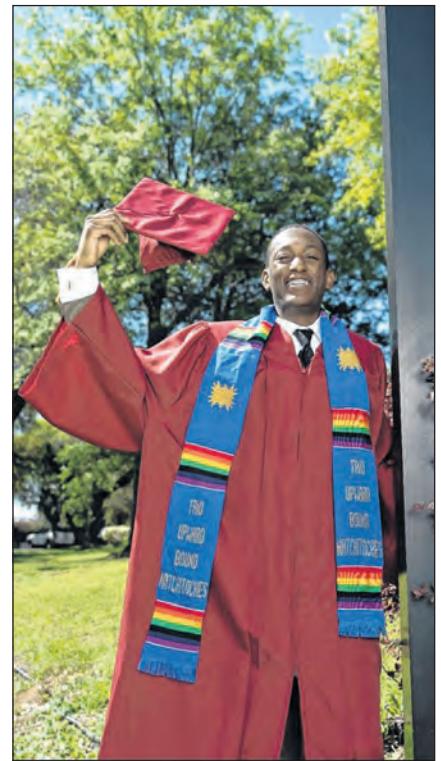
ketball Manager/Trainer
Track Trainer
Activate
Desktop Publishers
Southern University Upward Bound Ambassadors
Concerned Citizens Association
Mayor Youth Council
Natchitoches Junior High School-Frankie Ray Jackson Football Trainer
Math Tutor

During my free time, I love to be out in the community, motivating kids and being an example that you can do anything if you put your mind to it.

I plan on attending Northwestern State University to obtain my associate degree in criminal justice while getting a minor in Military Leadership while concentrating on

Pre Law. After that, I plan on attending Thurgood Marshall Law School to obtain my Juris Doctorate and become an Attorney.

My Greatest accomplishment is reaching out to over 300 Kids and encouraging them to get closer to the Lord. I tell them to keep the Lord first and actively do positive things. It helps you stay out of trouble. Always remember that you are unique. Be yourself! That's why the Lord made you.



Colorism

By: Angelique Valdez

Colorism is very common today. Yes, society does treat people differently because of their skin and ethnic background, but one should feel accepted in their own culture. As a child, I was bullied for being light-skinned. That was difficult to understand as a small kid because I wasn't doing anything wrong. I've gotten spit on, water was thrown in my face, and called all sorts of names just because I didn't fit in with the typical melanin crowd. Even close family members taunted me. We were raised in our household not to see color, but I would be dishonest if I said

that a part of me disliked certain people when I was growing up because of how they treated me. I was afraid to express my feelings on topics that talked about issues that were happening in the ethnic community. It was not until I became an adult that I truly embraced my culture. Trying to engage in adult conversations where ethnic lives were being discussed and for the people to say that you don't understand because you are too light-skinned or if you were born back in the day, you would have been in the house because you would have been the master's child is the most disrespectful and ignorant comment to make to a person of color. We were all created uniquely, and I am proud to say that I am a woman of color. I love the skin that I am in, and I embrace my black girl magic to the fullest. Never feel like you don't belong; never let anyone tell you who you should be based on your skin tone. We are all beautiful regardless of color. Let's stop tearing each other down as a culture and start embracing one another. How do we expect different cultures to respect us when we continually disrespect one another?

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Regional Universities | South

NSU's Center for Inclusion and Diversity named after Gail Metoyer Jones

NATCHITOCHES — Northwestern State University's Center for Inclusion and Diversity, was named for an individual whose life and career has focused on support and advocacy for minority and marginalized populations. A dedication ceremony took place April 19 honoring Gail Metoyer Jones, with a capacity crowd that included many former students, family, friends, faculty, staff and administrators from NSU and the Natchitoches community.

"Here at NSU, we understand the value of inclusion and equity work," said NSU President Dr. Marcus Jones, who Gail Jones recruited to attend NSU. "Mrs. Jones has an exemplary record of community involvement, including years of service to NSU and the greater Natchitoches community. She is a true role model for all of us."

Mrs. Jones, whose name was selected by students for NSU's Center for Inclusion and Diversity, thanked the NSU presidents she served with, Dr. Robert Alost, Dr. Randall Webb, and Dr. Chris Maggio.

"I didn't get here all by myself. I have my family, students, trusted faculty and staff, and presidents who believed in me and saw something in Gail Jones," she said.

The Gail Metoyer Jones Center for Inclusion and Diversity is located on the second floor of the Friedman Student Union. Brittany Broussard has served as the center's director since 2016, when former NSU President Dr. Jim Henderson tasked a committee of students, faculty, and staff to create a diversity center on campus.

"Dr. Henderson's desire was to advance an inclusive campus culture at Northwestern," Broussard said.

"Through this committee, the Center for Inclusion and Diversity was established with the following mission: to promote a welcoming environment for all Demons. We are committed to combating prejudice and advocating for all minority and marginalized populations. We exist to give space and voice to everyone, including but not limited to all races, all religions, to the LGBTQ community, and to the disabled community."

Broussard added that the CID is not just for NSU students and faculty. Much of the Center's programming is open to the community.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Greg Handel said NSU embraces diversity and the important work of the Center's mission.

"I'm thrilled we are continuing this important work and assure all of you that diversity is embraced in our classrooms," Handel said. "We utilize it in our conversations and our dialogue with our students."

"Today, we pay homage to Gail Jones, a trailblazer who has dedicated her life's work to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion at NSU. Her tireless efforts have paved the way for many underrepresented communities on our campus, creating a safe space where everyone feels welcome and valued," said Student Government Association President Bailey Willis of Opelousas. "The center will continue her legacy by providing resources supporting diversity awareness programs while offering services encouraging cross-cultural exchange."

NSU Vice President for Inclusion and Diversity Dr. Michael Snowden presented Mrs. Jones with a plaque



that reads "Presented to Gail Metoyer Jones to symbolize the culmination of your presence on this campus by serving as an advocate for students at Northwestern State University. The Gail Metoyer Jones Center for Inclusion and Diversity will forever stand as a lasting safe haven with students, a place they can readily identify with and call their own."

A key imprinted on the plaque symbolizes the numerous doors opened by Mrs. Jones throughout her career and providing access and opportunities to countless students, helping them unlock their full potential, Snowden said.

Last October, Mrs. Jones was inducted into the NSU Alumni Hall of Distinction, the Long Purple Line. She earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's in student personnel services from Northwestern State. Jones worked for 15 years at NSU as an admission counselor and recruiter and served as a counselor with the first Louisiana Scholars College class. She became director of TRIO: Student Support Services and Retention Coordinator, Freshman Connection, and

New Student Programs.

In 1998, Jones became chief professional officer of the Boys and Girls Club of Natchitoches, obtaining more than \$1 million in funding from local, state, and regional agencies and foundations to establish and enhance programming for local youth and families. In 2000, she was named J. Richard Ullom Rookie of the Year for Professional Excellence by the Boys and Girls of America at the Regional Conference. She served on local, state, and regional boards and committees.

In 2005, she accepted a position with Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Office as a grant writer and community outreach coordinator. That evolved into the establishment of a Community Services Division, and Jones served as division chief. Over eight years, the Division successfully targeted the needs of youth and families through programs that helped the people of Natchitoches Parish.

Jones is a member of the NSU Alumni Association, board member, and emeritus, and has served on the Chamber of Commerce Education Committee, chaired the Children and Youth Planning Board,



Organizing Member-Vice Regent for Daughters of the American Revolution, member of the St. Augustine

Historical Society, and vice president of the Association for Preservation of Historic Natchitoches.

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In God's Eyes, We Are One

By: Shelia R. Pierre



What does it mean to be a Christian? We believe in One God, who sent his son Jesus to die on the cross for our past, present, and future sins. He died, and He rose and lives among us. We follow Christianity based on the life and the teaching of Jesus Christ. We know Him to be a loving, merciful, forgiving, faithful, compassionate, and gracious God. His love is unfailing and unconditional. We are imperfect beings who fall short, but we strive daily to be more like Him.

Christianity

Projection from 2020 (Pew Research Center, based on 2010 baseline estimates), there are more than 45,000 Christian denominations globally and more than 200 in the United States. According to the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Christianity is the biggest religion in the world (2.382

billion, 31.11%). As with other denominations, many people are mistreated within their own "religion" or treated differently because of their culture, race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, and other areas. Many times, those of us who say we are Christians are the ones who make others feel inferior.

God Is Judge

The question "Who made you judge and jury?" has been asked many times. Mainly this question has been asked when people have doomed someone to some negative end. But honestly, we have all judged somebody. Whether it was about their race, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, workplace, or gender roles, we are guilty of this. But we know God is the judge, and his decision is final. He won't ask us about anyone else's shortcomings and sins. Of the numerous sins committed, sexual orientation is always the

most popular topic. The Word does call it a sin, but so is adultery, lying, murder, stealing, racism, discrimination, and so many other acts that are displeasing to God. Also, different people's places of worship may not look like ours. Some Christians may not believe you and me. We will always have opinions and may not agree with them. But God will always be the judge.

Diversity

Diversity is necessary within our places of worship—the inclusion, appreciation, and valuing of various races and cultures without any single race or culture losing its individuality. (Servehq. church) If our communities are a mixture of different races, churches should be diverse. When we interact with others, we should show compassion and kindness. This compassion and kindness bring a sense of unity. We can't force anyone to believe as we do or become members of our places of worship, but as Christians, we should

share the Good News of Jesus Christ with everyone who will listen. We should approach them with a spirit of humility. All neighborhoods may not have different races and ethnic backgrounds, but we can always extend invitations outside our communities to those we may work with or know through others. They will feel accepted. Including everyone to hear the Word is what God expects of us.

Be Open-Minded

We must be open when living in areas with people from different backgrounds. We must keep an open mind. Being receptive to new ideas and information can be beneficial when we listen to other people's viewpoints. We will eventually find out that we don't know everything. We can learn a lot just by listening and allowing ourselves to be open to research

how someone else's life, practices, and beliefs are different from ours. We don't have to agree with their way or adopt their way of doing things, but while learning, we may understand the "why" and respect them for who they are. This open-mindedness will help bridge the gap to getting along with others of different backgrounds. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 says, "For as the body is one, and hasty many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body: so also, is Christ. For by one Spirit, we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." In the full scripture (1 Corinthians 12:12-27), Apostle Paul is comparing Christ's spiritual body, the church, to the human body. Just as the human body

consists of many different parts, so does Christ's body consist of many diverse members (coming from different backgrounds, possessing different spiritual gifts, etc. (Bible study courses.org)

In Conclusion, we are not the same. We are all God's children. He has no favorites. His love for us is unconditional regardless of our backgrounds, sinful ways, or skin color. We will progress in unity as a society when we focus more on loving, helping, and understanding our differences rather than judging. We will mess up occasionally, but the more we pray and ask for forgiveness, the more we move in the direction of becoming more like our Father. In a world where we can choose to be whatever we want to be—let us try hard to be more compassionate, realizing that despite our differences, we are one.

Did You Know?

LAWRENCE PHELO (LP) VAUGHN

11/22/1915-2/11/2005

- Professional education experiences began as an Elementary School Principal in Tangipahoa Parish
- Principalship at 4 elementary schools in Natchitoches Parish over a period of 37 years.
- Administration and Instruction at Louella Elementary School, Natchez Elementary School, Grand Encore Elementary School, and North Natchitoches Elementary/Junior High School.



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SCENES FROM KICKIN EGGS EVENT

Hosted By: MIKE D



Interview with The People's Sheriff Victor Jones

What was your background in law enforcement?

He started his career in 1977. Terrill Delphin Jr. and Bobby Breda, one of the first black sheriff deputies, came to his home and said the sheriff wanted to see him. He jokingly said he didn't know if he should run for the border or what because he didn't know why the sheriff would want to see him. He knew he couldn't run because it wouldn't be the sheriff but his dad that would get him. He worked as a dispatcher for about a year, and this piqued his interest in learning more. He attended the police academy, and this is where it all began. He quickly transitioned out of patrol into the investigation department.

In 1979, there was a sheriff's election, and their chief Deputy Boyd Durr campaigned. Sam James had announced his retirement, and Boyd Durr would run for Chief Deputy. Then Norm Fletcher came in and won the

election. Sheriff Fletcher posted a list of those who would be staying with the sheriff's office and those he wouldn't recommission. Sheriff Victor Jones made both lists. Then, after a week or so, there was another list put out by Sheriff Fletcher that he had decided against keeping him.

Were most of the blacks let go?

Almost all of the blacks had to go. The guys that got him into law enforcement Terrill Delfin and Bobby Breda, were let go. Lloyd Benjamin and Lonnie Shields were let go. The only one left there at the time was Walter Dewitt Braxton, but he was unsure if he was left there or not. Back then, there were only 19 deputies in total.

Walter Delphin and Siggie Sylvie wanted him to come to work with the city police department. He didn't know much about the city police



department. Sheriff Victor Jones liked the parish because it was wide open. He did not like the confinement. Sheriff Norm Fletcher wanted him back at the sheriff's office, and although cautious, he decided to return and continued working as an investigator. After

Fletcher left, he went to FBI Academy, and then Boyd Durr became sheriff in 1989. He was promoted to Chief of Investigations and worked in that capacity until he retired from that position.

Tell us about your decision to campaign for sheriff.

Boyd Durr told the people in the community to give him one more term, and he would retire. When a sheriff leaves office, the chief deputy usually runs. At the time, this was Chief Deputy Luther Lee. Some of the guys at the office and even Boyd Durr encouraged Sheriff Victor Jones to run. His dad played a big

part in his final decision to proceed with the campaign. Once he decided yes, things changed, and Boyd Durr chose not to retire; instead, he would campaign against him. He called his dad to let him know there was a problem and that the current sheriff had changed his mind and would run for sheriff. And his dad's response was, "So! Didn't you say you were going to run?" He knew then that he didn't need to waste more time calling anyone else. It was time to get ready for a campaign!

Sheriff Victor Jones remembers he wasn't prepared to run financially or any other way, but after he said he would run for sheriff, he knocked on as many doors in the parish as he could knock. No one thought he had a chance to win as the sheriff, even some of the black leaders in the town. They wanted to discourage him from doing so, and this encouraged him more than ever to push forward despite their doubt.

He got busy. He worked multiple

side jobs. He had excellent family support, and he thanked God for his wife, Delores, who helped support the family while he campaigned for sheriff.

He shares that he will never forget that first election night. He didn't know if he had a chance, so when the absentee votes came in and he was leading, he ended up outright winning without having to runoff. He has learned you have to be careful what you say to people. It needs to be good next week if you say something to people. When you tell people something, they do not forget. He remembers going around campaigning, and wherever they had his opponents sign, he stopped there and talked to them. He remembers those people saying we have his sign in our yard, but Boyd Durr told them that he wouldn't run again. They would only ask him not to be a stranger to them once he is elected into office.

Continued Page 19...

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The African Who Helped Jesus Carry the Cross

By: Minister Richard Davis

Uncovering the Story of Simon of Cyrene: The African Who Helped Jesus Carry the Cross

The story of Simon of Cyrene is a significant part of the biblical narrative of Jesus' crucifixion, yet it is often overlooked. Simon, an African man from Cyrene, was called upon by Roman soldiers to help carry Jesus' cross to the site of his crucifixion. While Simon's role in this event was brief, his story is one that deserves to be uncovered and celebrated. Through historical research and biblical analysis, we can piece together the life of Simon and gain a deeper understanding of his significance in the Christian faith. Join me on this journey as we delve into the life of Simon of Cyrene, the African who helped Jesus carry the cross.

The Biblical account of Simon of Cyrene

The story of Simon of Cyrene is found in all four Gospels of the New Testament. In Matthew 27:32, it is written, "As they went

out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross." Mark 15:21 similarly states, "And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross." Luke 23:26 reads, "And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus." Lastly, John 19:17 simply states, "So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha."

While the accounts vary in detail, let's focus on this simple act of kindness by Simon and how it has a profound impact on Christianity for centuries to come.

Who was Simon of Cyrene?

Cyrene was a Greek colony in Libya, located in North Africa. Simon was likely a Jew living in Cyrene, as the city had a sizable Jewish population. It is unclear whether Simon was in Jerusalem for the Passover festival or if he was simply

passing through the city. What we do know is that Simon was a bystander who was called upon by Roman soldiers to carry Jesus' cross. Simon's name appears in the Bible only once, but his brief appearance has had a lasting impact on the Christian faith.

Simon of Cyrene in popular culture

Simon of Cyrene's story has been depicted in many works of art and literature. In the Middle Ages, Simon was a popular subject for religious art, and his image can be found in many churches and cathedrals throughout Europe.

In more recent times, Simon's story has been depicted in movies and television shows. In the 1959 film "Ben-Hur," Simon of Cyrene is portrayed as a black man played by actor Sidney Poitier. More recently, Simon's story was featured in the History Channel miniseries "The Bible," where he was played by actor Paul Marc Davis.



The significance of Simon of Cyrene's story

God makes no mistakes, and it is critical that we ask ourselves, why did God include Simon in holy scripture? What exactly is God wanting us to see in this story?

I'll conclude with this. There are four things I would like to draw your attention to. One, we as a people should be proud of God's divine wisdom in revealing His eternal plans that are inclusive of all races. Two, we should be able to lean on each other in times of difficulty. Three, even if the people you thought you could count on desserts you in your darkest moments, God always will have a ram in the bush. And lastly, it's ok to receive help when we are facing difficult times. If Jesus leaned on this brave African, we shouldn't be embarrassed to receive help when we genuinely need it. (I'm still working on that last one.)

Madison Raymond inducted into NSU's Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society



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Power of Pride

By: Derrick Howard



I dare you to be someone. So many questions remain unanswered; therefore, the eye of the beholder learns from its environment, like an animal that knows its environment from experience and natural elements. My male peers' traditional belief was masculinity, toughness, self-reliance, bravery, and being emotionally restrained. "You faggot!" He insulted me one day as soon as I began to realize that it was apparent how different I was. So, I constructed this fragment, an ideology, piece by piece, of who I wanted "Derrick Howard" to be. I envisioned it, and it became the reality I prospected. As a young black boy, I became obsessed with the truth. "What does it mean?" "Faggot" ... "Why am I that?" Those words hurt me, causing me emotional distress due to someone else's actions. Those

words caused a significant impact that would later drag me through seven stages of grief: Shock. Denial. Anger. Depression. Release. Honor, and finally, Self-Love.

One thing we all have in common is that we don't get to see the future. Therefore, we can't always see all of the brilliant things God is doing in our lives or may do in our future. As a result, too many people question him, believing he has deceived us and broken our trust. However, I could not attack his character. Neither was he angry nor offended by my questions. "Why me?" Yearning for a sister and brother's love and protection. Anticipating the day that my mother would accept me without feeling shameful." My mother had an amazing sense of humor and told me, "Just don't come to my house asking to wear any of my dresses!" That was her way of saying without saying she accepted me.

I often pondered, was I alone? Are there others like me? The experience of hiding felt as if I was disconnected. I felt as if I was disappearing from existence. That frightened me. Being gay is not safe to hide. It will add more stress to an overbearing life, and one cannot learn to love if you are not genuine with yourself. I dared to be someone different. It wasn't about impressing my male friends and their desire for a female partner. My desire was deeply integrated within me. The importance of who Derrick was consumed me like a disease. I radiated positivity and exuded compassion and optimism in life. My warm personality and confidence attract everyone who comes to my presence. Life is a paradox of doing the uncomfortable and facing potential risks to achieve satisfaction and liberate my sexuality as a black man. To stop living a fantasy and turn it into a reality.

My great-grandmother would brighten every occasion with baked cupcakes. My friends and I would read bible scriptures



as she would teach us the Ten Commandments. As a young black boy confused about my sexuality. I was made to believe I was going to hell. And I believed it. Being gay is like an unsolved puzzle that science cannot explain. We don't fully understand it, so we continue to have fun and live with the unknown explanation. There were times I would ask, "Why me?" I understand now. Because no one can be me. My battles were not created for others. My battles and tribulations are a result of my hardships. "That is why... It had to be me." I won Advocate of the Year as an HIV

Prevention Specialist and mentor. From my talent and success, I captured the attention of my mentor Amber David that provided my career and development with new opportunities. I became eager on the hunt for greatness. Fearless, with tough skin. My skin became so thick predators could not pierce through it with their callous words. Reality began to set in. I am strong! I am powerful! I was able to eliminate

these barriers of stigma through consciousness and education. I am a "Gay Black Man!" I am resistant to denial. I have the power and strength to overcome adversities. Truth is the only gateway to happiness. I cannot show you what it means to be human. I can, however, spread the love for the abundance of hope and faith you will find in reflecting on who you want to be. I am a living witness that there is POWER of PRIDE!

Natchitoches Community Improvement Foundation

Meeting held April 11, 2023



NCIF Board Meeting: July 11, 2023
Time: 7pm
Location: First Baptist Amulet
1116 Amulet Street
Natchitoches, La 71457

*** open to the public ***

LAKEVIEW HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2023 GRADUATE

Jennifer Williams

Our correspondent had the opportunity to interview an upcoming graduate of Lakeview High School, Jennifer Williams.

What was your favorite subject in school?

-My favorite subject in school was ELA because I enjoyed writing and reading.

What hobbies, interests, or extracurricular activities do you enjoy outside school?

-Outside of school, I enjoyed dance because it kept me occupied, and I was good at it.

What are your plans after graduation? Career Goals?

-After graduation, I plan to attend NSU to major in nurs-



ing and become a travel nurse.

Who or What motivates you?

-My future motivates me because I know that all the downs and setbacks will be worth it in the long run.

What's your greatest accomplishment?

-My greatest accomplishment so far is completing 12 years of school without giving up, no matter what I went through.

What advice would you give to other students to encourage them to finish school?

-Don't give up no matter what because, in the end, everything you've worked so hard for will fall into place.



LAKEVIEW GATORS



Classic Chicken Salad

Ingredients

3 Boneless Chicken Breast
1/2 Onion
1 Celery Stick
2 Cups Mayonnaise
4 Teaspoons of Sweet Pickle Relish
1/2 Green Bell Pepper
1/2 Cup of Green Onions
4 Boiled Eggs
Salt and Pepper



Recipe from Betty Queen's Kitchen

Shred cooked chicken and place into a bowl
Blend all vegetables in a food processor
Mix mayonnaise, relish, eggs, and all vegetables with chicken
Add salt and pepper and season to your taste

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Email: bestplanb@yahoo.com | William T. Allen-RTRP | Member NATP

WHO WE ARE:

We work collaboratively with program partners & the Ready Start Natchitoches coalition to support the growth & development of children birth to age 5.

MISSION:

Ensure our community understands & supports a system of high-quality & sustainable early childhood education to develop a foundation for life-long learning.

VISION:

By working together as a community, our children will grow, learn, and reach their full potential.

OUR NETWORK:

5 Head Start Programs
6 Public School Pre-K Programs
9 Early Care & Education Programs

STC Head Start Programs:

Save the Children (STC) Red River Region Head Starts & Early Head Start are federally funded programs that serve children 1-4 years old. They provide early learning opportunities to children in poverty, to support learning during their most critical stages of development.

5 Early Educational Programs:

Fairview Alpha STC HS, Natchez STC HS, L.P. Vaughn STC HS & EHS, Breda Town STC HS, & Gold Street HS.

NPSB Public School Pre-K Programs:

Our network works collaboratively with families & the community to provide high-quality, developmentally appropriate, early childhood education to meet the diverse needs of all participating children & prepare them for a positive & successful educational experience.

*Applications are accepted year-round. There is no cost to enroll in public school Pre-K programs & transportation is provided based on zoned schools.

6 Public PreK Programs:

Fairview Alpha Elementary, Natchitoches Magnet, Goldonna Elementary, L.P. Vaughn Elementary, Marthaville Elementary, & Provencal Elementary.

Early Care & Education Programs:

Every family seeks a clean, safe, loving environment for their child. Our nine local Early Care and Education Programs, each with its own unique touch, provide the stable & nurturing environment in which children can flourish while their parents are away at work or school.

9 Daycares & Child Development Centers:

A To Z 123, Bright Beginnings, Cobblestones, Fay's, Juz Us, Lil Rascals, FunTime Palace, NSU Marie Shaw Dunn, & Tiny Tots.

NATCHITOCHES PARISH EARLY CHILDHOOD NETWORK



We offer excellent educational opportunities for our earliest learners. With the support of Early Childhood grants & the collaborative efforts of the Natchitoches Early Childhood Network & the Ready Start Natchitoches Coalition, tuition assistance is available for eligible families in Natchitoches Parish.

The Early Childhood grants provide tuition-free care for children if families are at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, working, attending school, or actively seeking employment.

Natchitoches Parish strives to give each child every possible advantage, so they enter kindergarten healthy & ready to learn.

For more information, to enroll your child, or to apply for tuition assistance, visit:



www.TeachingTomorrowNow.com



On April 29, 2023, Elections will be held in the State of Louisiana. Natchitoches Parish will hold local elections that same day. Here is an overview of what will be on the ballot on April 29, 2023.

Parishwide Proposition — 8 Mills In-Lieu — PC — 10 Yrs.

In lieu of and to replace an ad valorem tax of eight (8) mills authorized at an election held on March 25, 2017, to be levied in the Parish of Natchitoches, State of Louisiana (the "Parish"), shall the Parish be authorized to levy and collect special taxes on all property subject to taxation in the Parish, beginning with the year 2023 and ending with the year 2032, as follows: (i) 4 mills for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, improving, renovating, maintaining and/or operating public libraries in the Parish, including automation and other equipment, library materials and furnishings therefor, and (ii) 4 mills for the purpose of constructing, improving, maintaining and keeping in repair Parish roads and bridges and related drainage facilities, an estimated \$1,615,000 reasonably expected at this time to be collected from the levy of each tax for an entire year?

Purpose: *To split the current Library Mills in two with 1/2 (4 mills) to remain with the Library and 1/2 (4 mills) going to the Natchitoches Parish Government with the cost of*

the Parish roads, bridges and related drainage facilities.

PARISH WIDE PARTICIPATION: All 50 precincts

PW School District — 7 Mills Renewal — SB — 10 Yrs.

Shall Parishwide School District of the Parish of Natchitoches, State of Louisiana (the "District"), continue to levy a seven (7) mills tax on all property subject to taxation in the District for a period of ten (10) years, beginning with the year 2024 and ending with the year 2033 (an estimated \$2,832,400 reasonably expected at this time to be collected from the levy of the tax for an entire year), for the purpose of giving additional support to public elementary and secondary schools in the District by providing funds for construction, repairs, purchase of equipment and/or supplies and additional improvements?

Purpose: *continue providing funds for construction, repairs, purchase of equipment and/or supplies and additional improvements.*

PARISH WIDE PARTICIPATION: All 50 precincts

PW Hospital Service District — 5.31 Mills

Continuation — BOC — 10 Yrs.
Shall Natchitoches Parish Hospital Service District for the Parish of Natchitoches, State of Louisiana (the "District"), con-

tinue to levy a five and thirty-one hundredths (5.31) mills tax on all property subject to taxation in said District (an estimated \$2,078,000 reasonably expected at this time to be collected from the levy of the tax for an entire year), for a period of ten (10) years, beginning with the year 2023 and ending with the year 2032, for the purpose of constructing, operating and maintaining the District's hospital facilities that provide ambulance services?

Purpose: *constructing, operating and maintaining the District's hospital facilities that provide ambulance services.*

PARISH WIDE PARTICIPATION: All 50 precincts

Consolidated School District No. 8 — 7 Mills Renewal — SB — 10 Yrs.

Shall Consolidated School District No. 8 of the Parish of Natchitoches, State of Louisiana (the "District"), continue to levy a special tax of seven (7) mills on all property subject to taxation within the District (an estimated \$60,300 reasonably expected at this time to be collected from the levy of the tax for an entire year), for a period of ten (10) years, beginning with the year 2025 and ending with the year 2034, the purpose of giving additional support to public elementary and secondary schools by funding the improvement, maintenance and operation of public school buildings in said District?

Purpose: *continue giving additional support to public elementary and secondary schools by funding the improvement, maintenance and operation of public school buildings in said District*

TAX DISTRICT PARTICIPATION ONLY. LIMITED PRECINCTS AND ONLY THE VOTERS WITHIN THOSE PRECINCTS THAT ARE ENCOMPASSED BY THE TAX DISTRICT. (P) denotes partial pre-

cinct participation. (W) denotes all voters in the precinct participating. **Precincts:** 1/9A(P), 3/5(P), 3/6(W), 3/8(W), 3/9(P), 3/10(W), 4/1(P), 4/6(P), 4/8(W)

School District No. 9 — 7 Mills Renewal — SB — 10 Yrs.

Shall School District No. 9 of Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana (the "District"), continue to levy a seven (7) mills tax on all property subject to taxation in the District for a period of ten (10) years, beginning with the year 2024 and ending with the year 2033 (an estimated \$1,567,400 reasonably expected at this time to be collected from the levy of the tax for an entire year), for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, improving, maintaining or

operating public elementary and secondary schools in the District?

Purpose: *continue acquiring, constructing, improving, maintaining or operating public elementary and secondary schools in the District operation of public school buildings in said District*

TAX DISTRICT PARTICIPATION ONLY. LIMITED PRECINCTS AND ONLY THE VOTERS WITHIN THOSE PRECINCTS THAT ARE ENCOMPASSED BY THE TAX DISTRICT. (P) denotes partial precinct participation.

Precincts: ALL of the City Precincts and some voters in the following precincts: 1/9A(P), 1/10A(P), 2/4(P), 2/6(P), 2/7(P), 3/2(P), 3/4(P), 3/5(P), 3/8(P), 4/1(P), 4/3(P) & 4/4(P)

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Steps to Start an L.L.C. in Louisiana

What is a limited liability company?

A limited liability company is a business structure that gives you extra legal protection. It combines the benefits of the corporation and partnership business structures in that your personal properties and assets are not at liability risk. These assets may include your house, vehicles, and saving accounts.

• Name your L.L.C. (Limited Liability Company)

- L.L.C., L.L.C., or Limited Liability Company must be included in the registered name.
- Select a name that is different from any other company in the state (Secretary of State Business Search) www.sos.la.gov

• Choose a Registered Agent

- This person is responsible for receiving important legal documents and notices on behalf of the L.L.C.
- Note that this person can be yourself.

• Obtain an Employer Identification Number (E.I.N.)

- DO NOT PAY for an E.I.N.!

Visit www.irs.gov to obtain your nine-digit E.I.N. for tax, banking purposes, etc.

• Prepare and File Your Articles of Incorporation to the Secretary of State of Louisiana

- For paper filing, complete "Form 973" from the Secretary of State's website, www.sos.la.gov (Pay a \$100 Filing Fee)
- Include L.L.C.'s name, purpose, and duration (can be perpetual, meaning never-ending)
- Add Signatures of organizers and the initial report, and get documents notarized.

• Receive a Certificate from the State of Louisiana.



Human Care Products

FOR THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE



By: Septembria Martin

Human Care Products, LLC was founded on June 22, 2020, during the height of the Pandemic. We have been growing hair consistently since that date. God has blessed us with a product that, when used daily, each customer will see hair growth. (Results may vary)

This awesome product is called More Hair Liquid Gold. As the name says, it will give you more hair, and it is definitely liquid gold.

Made with all-natural ingredients, over 16, aimed to grow and add nutrients to your hair and scalp. Liquid Gold works for all people, hair textures, and ethnicities between the ages of 4 months and older.

Ingredients include, but are not

limited to, Lavender, Ginger, Eucalyptus, Peppermint, Olive Oil, Coconut Oil, Niaouli, May Chang, etc.

We also offer other products aimed to grow, cleanse, and promote even more hair growth along your hair growth journey.

When used daily, all customers have claimed to see hair growth within 14 days of daily use.

To order, find locations and updates: www.HumanCareProductsLLC.com
To call: 318-453-7173

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Founder & Owner
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

By: William T Allen Sr.,
Parish Council Chairman

Greetings, Natchitoches Parish Voters. The day it was announced that I had been appointed by the governor's office to fill a vacant seat on the parish council. My phone began to ring off the hook with congratulations, and are you crazy. But I could not say no to my friend John Bell because I am always ready to help.

So two days later, when I returned to Louisiana and sworn in, I went to work. I began to listen to as many of the tax payers as I possibly could for about a week. I heard three things, and that was congratulations. When are you going to fix my road and don't raise my taxes. Well, it seemed that everyone, including myself, had the same number one concern, **FIX MY ROAD**. But I also found out very quickly that the first thing you don't do is share your thoughts because they can be and will get blown out of proportion in a heart beat. The council meeting day came and to my surprise,

I was attacked for mentioning we need to find money to repair our roads, and the library was there on the defense. I was totally surprise, so I took the common sense approach to the situation and came up with a solution. I looked at the audit numbers that had been sent to the state for approval in the past 3 years, and wow, was I surprised. Not one but several places could use some adjusting, but some were totally out of hand. Well, the library came forward first, so I figured they wanted to be looked at first. Going forward, I knew that at least two members of the council team had already said NO before listening to anything I had to say. So I went to New Orleans (on my own time) and asked for the correct process to do what I had in mind. But before I did, I had had some one on ones with key players that make up the Home Rule Charter membership. Got their input and proceeded with the task at hand. With that being said, the decision was to take this back to the tax payers and let them decide by voting because I have 1 vote and so do each of you. Natchitoches Parish Library fund dated

December 31 2021 had **SEVEN MILLION, EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWO THOUSAND, FOUR HUNDRED AND NINETEEN DOLLARS** sitting in the bank as surplus. That's your tax dollars just growing bigger and bigger in its' bank account. The upcoming date to vote on a millage to reallocate the number of mills going to the library, from 8 to 4. Then re allocate 4 of the mills to fixing parish roads will be left up to you on April 28. Sadly I have been labeled as the villain for even suggesting this and spearheading it going back onto the ballot for the voters to decide. If you think that there will be library branches closing and services eliminated. Well they don't have to and those scare tactics don't work with me because I looked at and understand the numbers. I have 1 vote and so do you. There are plans in place to use the funds to improve and not just continue to patch the roads. You will not have to search for the results because the information will be shared separately. If you are somewhat satisfied with your road / street. You must live in the city. If your child visits the library often in person rather than go on line for

access. They must not have a cell phone or computer. But if not, you must live in the rural areas of the parish. Open up your eyes and your heart and **VOTE Yes** for change. No matter what, vote your way. But not just because somebody else tells you how to. You elected each council person because I ran unopposed this last year. Nevertheless, if you think that we are holding money somewhere and not trying to spend it wisely, then you are wrong. As the new councilman elect the money is not there and the state does not have it to give. But just remember, God helps those who help themselves, so let's make it happen together. Remember the State can see every penny we have and how we use it. So vote for change and eliminate those negative thoughts because there is a **PLAN**. Lastly, it took me a while and probably some of you to figure out what message Senator Kennedy was trying to send when he said on the campaign trail. "If you want to defund the police department. Then when you get in trouble again call a crack head." Well guess what he would say about this situation!

Thanks for your attention. Mr. Bill

Congratulations to
Northwestern State University
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10 Signs of Child Abuse:

1. Unexplained injuries.

Visible signs of physical abuse may include unexplained burns or bruises in the shape of objects. You may also hear unconvincing explanations of a child's injuries.

2. Changes in behavior.

Abuse can lead to many changes in a child's behavior. Abused children often appear scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn, or more aggressive.

3. Returning to earlier behaviors.

Abused children may display behaviors shown at earlier ages, such as thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, and fear of the dark or strangers. Even loss of acquired language or memory problems may be an issue for some children.

4. Fear of going home.

Abused children may express apprehension or anxiety

Prevent Child Abuse



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about leaving school or going places with the person abusing them.

5. Changes in sleeping.

Abused children may have frequent nightmares or difficulty falling asleep and, as a result, may appear tired or fatigued.

6. Changes in eating. The stress, fear, and anxiety caused by abuse can lead to changes in a child's eating behaviors, which may result in weight gain or weight loss.

7. Changes in school performance and attendance.

Abused children may have difficulty concentrating in school or have excessive absences, sometimes due to adults trying to hide the children's injuries from authorities.

8. Lack of personal care or hygiene. Abused and

neglected children may appear uncared for. They may present themselves as consistently dirty and have severe body odor or lack sufficient clothing for the weather.

9. Risk-taking behaviors. Young people who are being abused may engage in high-risk activities such as using drugs or alcohol or carrying a weapon.

10. Inappropriate sexual behavior. Children who have been sexually abused may exhibit overly sexualized behavior or use explicit sexual language.

Some signs that a child is experiencing violence or abuse are more obvious than others. Trust your instincts. Suspected abuse is enough of a reason to contact the authorities. You do not need proof. Abuse Hotline: 1-855-4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437)

April 2023 Recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month

CASA of Central LA would like to say thank you to Mayor Ronnie Williams Jr. and the City Council for recognizing April 2023 as child abuse prevention month. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) serve the abused and neglected children of Natchitoches, Sabine, and Red River Parish. Our volunteers come from every walk of life! They range in age, represent various educational and ethnic backgrounds, and are

students, business professionals, retirees, and many other diverse members of our community. They all share a commitment to improving children's lives, a willingness to learn, and an open mind toward different life experiences. If you are interested in advocating on behalf of the abused and neglected children of Natchitoches, Red River, and Sabine parishes, please call (318)-238-2446 or visit www.casanat.org.



Pictured: Councilwoman-at-Large, Betty Sawyer-Smith, CASA Executive Director Jack Duty, and Mayor Ronnie Williams Jr.



Interview with Victor Jones continued from page 10

What was your biggest accomplishment as a Sheriff?

His biggest accomplishment was getting the people to trust him and his department and then passing a sales tax. It wouldn't even be a sheriff's department without the help of the people. They did it! The people, along with a solid staff, were able to make things happen.

Were there any programs started?

Sam James told him always to remember one thing, "it is not how many people that you put in jail that matters; it's how many people you keep out of jail."

Throughout the years, he learned what that statement meant.

He started a program called Are you okay? For seniors to ensure they were safe and comfortable with law enforcement.

Gail Jones helped start many programs with the assistance of Mary Byers and a few other ladies.

We had a community service program that offered many services, including helping troubled youth.

Long Distance Dads program was started to help incarcerated dads stay in contact with their children.

We started education programs, work release programs, and many other programs.

What are your thoughts on Michael Wilson running for sheriff?

He encourages Mike to run and believes that's something that he should do. Mike is a good guy. Sheriff Victor Jones is in a situation where he cannot help him because of his endorsements to the present sheriff. He thinks people wouldn't understand, so he promised Mike one thing he would never hear him say anything bad about him.

Have you experienced any outright acts of racism?

If there was, he did not want to see it. He was not going to give them the opportunity to show him that. He was the sheriff of all people, not just blacks or whites. So, he just asked that they respected him as their sheriff.

Do you have any life lessons you would like to share?

June 3, 1972, he married Delores, and they have been together for 50 years.

To have the success that he has, he could not have done it without his wife. He did not have to come home and talk about what was done at the office or department and gave her the same courtesy. He did not want to go home and live through those things twice. God had something to do with it, and he's grateful.

Did he make some mistakes? Sure, but he had such a great staff, and they had his back. They were a family, and they looked out for him.

Who was your right-hand man?

Kenny Kaufman, but he relied on all of his people, not one or two people. He had a great staff!

Does it help to be more involved in the community versus just being an overseer?

Things have changed a lot, and he can't say it is all for the better. Some of the dark cloud hanging over law enforcement has been brought on by law enforcement. This needs to be worked on and work their way out of it. He believes it can be done, but it will be challenging. It's being challenged quite often with all of the cameras and alternative weapons and all of that. He is not sure if this was good or bad. He wants to understand it but does not quite understand it yet. Back then, they only had a five-shot pistol, a nightstick, and a flashlight.

Sometimes he believes they have too much stuff, and they only have a split second to decide if they will use their gun or their taser, and that's too much. If you know that for yourself when you go into a situation, all you have is you, that pistol, and that light, then guess what? You better be able to talk to people.



How can the community help the cops?

Communication is important! Sheriff Victor Jones thinks law enforcement has to do a better job getting out there with the people and earning their trust.

Law enforcement is different from when he was in office. They are bringing on many young officers who think differently. They have different mindsets. Reform has got to happen.

What advice would you give to a black male or female that is stopped by police?

Be smart. Show respect. Respect goes both ways. Know that if you think whatever this officer is stopping you for is not right. You will not win that battle sitting on the side of the road. Wait until tomorrow and deal with that somewhere else, not on the side of the road.

Any future in law enforcement or politics?

No. Right now, I am just out here enjoying my tractor.

Can I put a big NO down for this?

He said NO, don't put a big no. He won't

ever say never. He is getting old, 71, and doesn't like to say never, but today if he can do anything to help law enforcement that is dear to him, he would.

What does life look like now after retirement?

Now that Sheriff Victor Jones is retired, he is spending a lot of time with his grandchildren and riding his tractor. He now has a great-grandson who is three years old. He enjoys helping his son, Brian Jones, who has a successful construction company. He shares that it's not every day an old man gets a chance to get out there and help his son. In addition, he's proud of his daughter Marla Jones who works at City Bank and has moved up in the bank and is doing a great job there.

He hopes that he has helped the people in the Natchitoches community. He heard the people during his election for sheriff. They wanted to ensure they did not just see him during election time. He listened to that and made sure he was there for the people, and he suggested this to the candidates running for sheriff. It's about the people in the community. Let the people see you! Let the people learn to trust you and get to know you.

Education Provided By John Winston at The April Voters and Civic League Meeting



"No person shall be held to answer for a capital or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation."

The Fifth Amendment breaks down into five rights or protections.

- The right to a jury trial when you're charged with a crime.
- Protection against double jeopardy (meaning a person cannot be prosecuted more than once for the same offense once a verdict is rendered)
- Protection against self-incrimination. (Self-incrimination is the intentional or unintentional act of providing information that will suggest your involvement in a crime or expose you to criminal prosecution)
- The right to a fair trial. (Due process)
- Protection against the taking of property by the government without compensation. (The Takings Clause)

Inclusion Despite Our Differences

By: Evangelist Nissa Fulton

Different!!! Rejected!!! Not included!!! Not accepted!!!

As a white woman, it's been part of my life! I believe being different was what I grew up feeling and thinking! I never saw anyone as being different from me, so I never treated people differently; however, due to me not treating people differently, I was treated differently! Due to me having my own character, differences in opinions, and just embracing my different self, I was always treated differently!

I remember my first crush at five years old was a 5-year-old boy of the opposite race. Yes, he was black! We got caught kissing under the table at recess. I never got in trouble because my grandparents never raised us to dislike people because of their skin color! However, living in Natchitoches and growing up in the 80s, it was very frowned on, and that's when I began experiencing a lot of being treated dif-



ferently!!! I didn't date outside my race because of being molested or raped because men and women of both races hurt me. But I was attracted to the opposite race, and seeing my grandparents approve of it, it was okay to me, and I didn't care who thought it was not okay!!! I lived my entire life being asked, "What made you date outside your race" and that has been a question from both races!!!

I have been called white trash and trailer park trash and never felt accepted by the white race, ALL because I chose to be myself and liked who I liked, hung around with who I chose to hang around, and accepted who I accepted!!! Some people in the black race have accused me of being a "wanna-be"!!! Although I have been more accepted in the black race, I am still not entirely accepted, but I've learned to accept myself, and I live free being who I am, and I love it!!!

The older I get, the less I care! Having biracial children was another beast.

But that's a whole different story. I pray I get to tell one day because the treatment I received and the way both races have treated my children is surreal!!! I have always been left out, not accepted, and rejected, and today I love it! I love tattoos! I love two-toned hair! I love being rough around the edges, and I love how today I go around the same groups, multi races and cultures, and even churches of both races (Yes, I said churches because I am an evangelist). Sometimes, I am still not accepted because of an external judgment, or a hateful heart filled with racism, biased opinions, or discrimination. Still, it doesn't matter because I was created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27), and from before the womb (Jeremiah 29:11), I was known and uniquely designed to walk in the only image that matters, which is the image of Christ! It is time for us in 2023 to lay hate aside, get freedom from the bondage of hate, and appreciate differences because there's so much beauty amongst our differences!!!

Tribute to Walter (Dub) Dewitt Braxton, Sr.

Mr. Walter Dewitt Braxton, Sr., also known as W.D. or Dub, wore many hats. He served as Alderman in the Village of Clarence for many years. In addition, he worked as a bus driver for the Natchitoches Parish School Board and a security guard for Natchitoches Central high school for four decades. Mr. Braxton was a member of the Board of Directors of the Natchitoches Parish Council on Aging, Natchitoches Parish Voters and Civic League, and the Board of Directors of the Natchitoches Association for Retarded Citizens. Mr. Braxton was a pillar of the Village of Clarence and Natchitoches. He was active in the community and passionate about paving the way for future generations. We honor Mr. Braxton for his hard work and dedication. He is truly missed.



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Black Leaders Who Are Shaping History Today



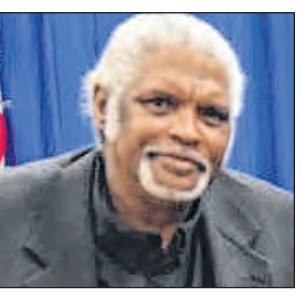
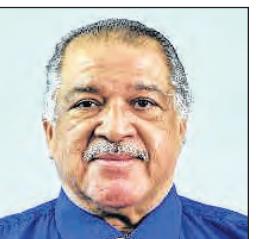
Mayor Ronnie Williams Jr.

Councilwoman at Large
Betty Sawyer-SmithCloyd Benjamin Jr., First
Assistant District Attorney

Alex Washington, City Attorney

Marcus Jones, President of
Northwestern State UniversityRegistrar of Voters
Kathrin HoldenShontrell Roque, Planning
and Zoning DirectorChristopher Petite, City
Councilman District 3Rosemarie Elie, City
Councilwoman District 4Katrice Below, BOM Vice
President and Commercial LenderBlaise Lacour, BOM Community
Development Director

Nikeo Collins, Chief of Police

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Public Works DirectorClarissa Brown-Smith,
City Finance DirectorNicole Gray, Founder of NSU's
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District 2 Parish CouncilSheryl Frederick,
Parish Council ClerkChris Paige,
Parish Council District 1Sharon Harris, Executive Director
Office of Community ServicesGary Jackson, Solid Waste
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Crime Stoppers of NatchitochesClaire Prymus, President/Founder
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Natchitoches Regional
Medical CenterSarah Rachal, NPSB
Director of Federal
ProgramsTan'Keia Palmer, NPSB
Board Member District 2Dorothy McGaskey, NPSB
Board Member District 3Lela Harvey, NPSB Board
Member District 5Steven Harris, NPSB Board
Member District 8Emile Metoyer, NPSB
Board Member District 11



**Elites Youth
Golden
Explosion**

**East Natchitoches
Fresh Steppers
Coach- Mr. Archie**



**Weaver Elites
Coach Mr.
Beaudion**

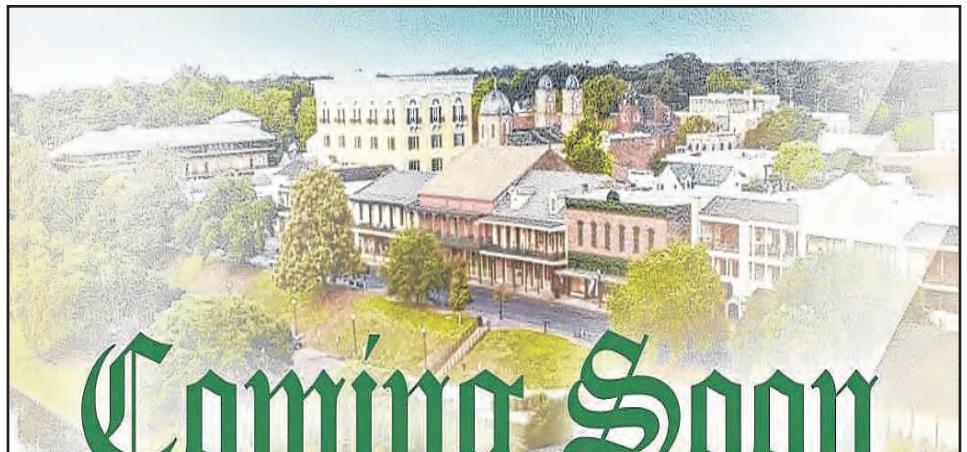
Legendary Steppers Coach Ms. Mitchell Coordinator- Ms. Morrow



**Natchitoches Parish Voters
& Civic League Inc.**

Location: Winnfield Funeral Home
318 North St, Natchitoches, LA 71457

Meetings are held every second Thursday of the month
Time: 6:00 pm



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My Racist and Sexist Tendencies

By Francis M. Day

I have discovered that there are racist and sexist tendencies inside me. This information is helpful because I can now recognize some of these thoughts and perceptions when they appear.

This knowledge does not erase those racist and sexist tendencies. They are buried deep inside me. But now I can see them when they come up. It is like weeds. We cannot see the seeds buried in the ground. But we learn to recognize them when they start growing.

Let me start by saying that I am a white male from south Louisiana. Right after high school, I entered the local state university. My family was not wealthy, but I was able to get a grant, and I also got a job on campus.

In the building in which I worked, I became friends with one of the janitors, a black woman about my grandmother's age. We were both school employees. In those days, janitors and others were school employees and thus received state employee benefits. Nowadays, many state and city jobs are outsourced, and thus the employees are deprived of those benefits.

The black woman janitor reached retirement age, and we had a small party with a cake to celebrate. Suddenly I was aware of some confusion in my mind, some cognitive dissonance. I was thinking that I was going to miss my friend. But then, as she stood next to the others, I noticed how black she was. My mind had trouble holding these two thoughts simultaneously: that she was black and my friend.

Some of these prejudices must come from deep inside. We unconsciously identify with our own group and family. We make distinctions between us versus them. But now, when some

of these unconscious thoughts arise, I am able to tell myself that my thoughts are in error.

Another example happened a few years ago. At a friend's house, I met a woman auto mechanic who was working on their old pickup truck. At one point, she asked me to turn the ignition key to crank the motor while she was making adjustments under the hood. She very obviously knew what she was doing. She was able to adjust parts where you had to go by feel because you could not see behind another part. But my mind struggled to combine two concepts: a woman and an auto mechanic. And she was obviously both.

And I have had many similar moments of cognitive dissonance, where I realize how I have stereotyped others or failed to recognize their human capabilities and qualities.

Racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, and other forms of stereotyping and prejudice are widespread worldwide. These problems have been around for thousands of years. In the time of Jesus, Jews were prejudiced against Samaritans.

My Cajun ancestors were expelled from Canada by the English, who hated the French and Catholics. As a boy, I remember some of the old folks describing being punished for speaking French on the school grounds. Children grew up being unable to converse with their grandparents or great-grandparents. The great-grandparents spoke only French, and the children spoke only English.

I was young during the days of the Civil Rights Movement and Dr. King. With the passage of Civil Rights legislation, we had hoped that the bad times of racism were of the past. But the events of the past few years, in our own country and around the world, show us that it must be worked on again and again in each generation.

It seems that we backslide. We easily lapse

into selfishness and self-centeredness. We begin to divide into us versus them. We distrust others with different skin colors, speaking foreign languages, immigrants from different countries, or people with different sexual orientations. We look down on people with low incomes and people experiencing homelessness. We often do not even notice they are there. We even distrust those from different political parties. We can also consider the treatment of Native Americans in the past.

It seems that racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice are inside many of us. We judge ourselves and our group by our good intentions, excusing occasional bad actions or behavior. But we judge others as having bad intentions when some of their actions are not what we approve of. It is easy to stereotype others.

One solution is to get to know others by working together or being involved in various ways in church, school, or community activities. However, it often takes a significant amount of time. As they say, "It takes a long time to grow an old friend." And some churches and other groups may not have a mixture of people from different races or ethnic backgrounds.

In centuries past in our country, there was prejudice against Italian and Irish immigrants. Even today, women often earn less than men. There are genocides and persecutions in

various parts of the world. There have been religious wars. There are socioeconomic disparities.

The challenge is for each of us to begin to see it in ourselves. If we start to recognize how we tend to stereotype others or look down on others, then there is hope for change.

We can try to get to know that homeless person, immigrant, or someone of another skin color. We can try to know them as a person, to understand them, and to be able to see into their hearts. We can talk to them and learn their names. We can learn of their longings and desires, their dreams. Then our prejudices can begin to melt. Our frozen hearts can begin to soften.

Part of the problem is that many associate primarily with our own groups. We often have friends who are mainly of the same economic bracket, occupation, skin color, religion, and political beliefs. This is not unusual, but it makes it more likely that our understanding of others is limited. And we do not even realize how much we do not know. We are unaware of how our lack of deep knowledge of others can lead us to rash judgments, prejudice, and stereotypes. Get to know your fellow humans. Expand your knowledge and circles. We can all become better by understanding and being accepting of all.

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Recall Petition Filed in the Village of Natchez

Interview with Former Mayor and Joe Walker Jr.

The Real Views correspondent spoke with the former Mayor of Natchez and Joe Walker Jr., chairman of the recall petition filed on March 22, 2023, to remove current Mayor Pasty Ward-Hoover for violating the lawrason act and dictatorship.

The former mayor states that Mayor Pasty Ward-Hoover needs help understanding the people in their community because she is not from the Village of Natchez.

People who are raised in the city are different from those who are raised in the country. People in Natchez are a proud community that has worked hard for what they have, and most own their homes. They are a community that shares with their neighbors and treats each other as a big family. They are not bad people. You do not hear of people killing and murdering there.

Natchez is a community that has had nurses, teachers, engineers, lawyers, and doctors that were raised there, but they moved away because there are no jobs available.

Natchez is home to her; she loves it and would not live anywhere else. She shares that Mayor Pasty-Ward Hoover should be honest with the community. Every mayor who came into the Village before her can take credit for making it what it is now.

My main issue with her as mayor is her wanting all the credit. It is not about her. It is about the people in the community. She wants to control people and have the people always come to her. That is not the way it should be. She should be for the people.

That's who voted her in. It is about getting along with

people. You must know what you are doing and cannot treat people in any way.

The residents received notification by mail that they had to remove old cars and all junk from their yards and porches and that she would tow any junk cars that were not removed. How can you tow stuff that people have paid money for? They have junk cars like that in Natchitoches, so how will you come to Natchez and change things?

First, you do an ordinance with your aldermen. Not just do things. She is not sure why they allow her to do that. Second, Mayor Pasty Ward-Hoover is making rules without including the aldermen. She has never seen a mayor do that before. When she was mayor, she would make sure the aldermen knew about things before the meeting and did not surprise them at the meetings.

An example of Mayor Pasty Ward-Hoover just doing things is with the commodity. The community has had this for years; suddenly, the mayor takes everything back. She brings commodities to the

community, gives them to whoever she wants, and does not play fair. She only gives it to those who can or will vote for her. So now some people must go to town to pick up their commodities. One thing about Natchez is that everyone in the community will know when you do something for someone.

The former mayor said they have a beautiful park with a sign that says closed. She had guys plant flowers, and the park was beautiful. If a few limbs were down, she would have guys pick them up. But Mayor Pasty Ward-Hoover cleans select areas rather than the park. What about the park? That's our park!

Question: Did the previous mayor allow her family members not to pay their water bills/sewage while she was in office?

That is a big problem. How can you stop the sewage from going through? The Village had a program with the alderman before she was elected. We can turn your water off if you don't pay your sewage bill. She thought it was two separate entities. Some people refused to pay for it, and there was a \$75 fee to get the water turned back on, plus the bill. She had to do that with some people, but it wasn't family. Well, she further added that she believes everybody in Natchez is kin. They have the same bloodline. Everybody is related, in one way or another, married in the family or cousins. Most of her close family paid their bills every month. When she was mayor, they had outstanding bills. She would call Baton Rouge to ask about it but was told she could not take them off the books. She inherited this issue, and now the current mayor inherited this same problem. Some bills go back to deceased people. So, what do you do?

The former mayor states that Mayor Pasty Ward-Hoover won with absentee votes, which needs to be examined. They need to find out if that was legit. She says that one of the main reasons they have that petition is because Joe Walker Jr. was highly upset for degrading him as a man by calling him ignorant. That was wrong, and she shouldn't have done that.

Question: Why do you think the current mayor called you ignorant?

Joe Walker Jr. responded that during the council meeting, the mayor said that all residents with nonrunning vehicles must get rid of them. He raised his hand, and the mayor said Yes, Mr. Walker and he told her



**Joe Walker Jr.,
Chairman of
Recall Petition**

he had one old truck in his yard that was running. The truck has a flat tire with no tags or insurance, but he is trying to fix it. Mayor Pasty Ward-Hoover responded that he would have to move it, or else she would get it moved. She said it's an eyesore, and now she even wants the residents to mow their yards every two weeks.

Joe Walker Jr. states she did not ask the aldermen about bringing this to the community. Instead, she does a whole lot of things on her own.

That's not right. He served 12 years as an alderman with the previous mayor.

He asks how she can just come to the Village of Natchez and make all these changes. Mayor Pasty Ward-Hoover is from the city and knows nothing about country living.

She cut out the heritage festival, that's important to the community. She wants people to apply now to be a part of it. She took the festival away from us. She closed our park because of limbs to the back that are hung up in trees. He suggests they use the tractor to move the limbs so people can continue using the walking track. He said the previous mayor had a big, nice sign

and beautiful flowers at the city hall that was removed by the current mayor. So now there is just tall grass.

The former mayor interjects and states that Mayor Pasty Ward-Hoover has gone too far. Her house and yard belong to her, not the current mayor and she will mow her yard when she gets a chance.

Joe Walker Jr. states current mayor does not know anything about Natchez. She married a man from Natchez and is only going by what someone told her about the community. He states he is going around to get signatures for the recall petition, and some residents don't want to sign. Some residents in the community do not know where to pay their sewage bills, and the current mayor has instructed people to bring a money order to her home or buy a stamp and mail it in. Some people barely pay their bills, and she should not set rules and regulations without the aldermen and cause people to pay extra money by buying stamps and money orders. He states she has been in Natchez for five to six years from Natchitoches, and they ran her away from there because she is messy and a church-going crook!

RECALL PETITION (FOR ALL OFFICES EXCEPT STATEWIDE OFFICES)	
TO THE HONORABLE <u>John Bel Edwards</u> , GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA	
In accordance with La. Revised Statutes, Title 18, Section 1300.1, et seq., the undersigned request that an election be called and held in the appropriate voting area for the purpose of recalling:	
<u>Patsy Ward-Hoover</u> (name of official) <u>Mayor, Village of Natchez</u> (title of official, include municipality, if municipal office)	
Parish(es) of <u>Natchitoches</u> (list all parishes in voting area)	
Reason(s) for Recall <u>Violating lawrason act, dictatorship</u> (list all parishes in voting area)(continued)	
We designate <u>Joe Walker Jr.</u> 192 Morning Star Loop, (PoBox 256) as chairman (full name) <u>Natchez, LA 71456</u> (residence address)	
to act for the signers of this petition in all matters, and	
we designate <u>Cetina Morris</u> , 180 Hwy 19, Apt. 14, Natchez, LA 71456 as vice-chairman (full name) <u>Natchez, LA 71456</u> (residence address)	
to act on order of the chairman or in case of the death, disability, absence or resignation of the chairman. (The chairman and vice-chairman SHALL be qualified voters in the voting area from which the public official is subject to this recall pursuant to La. R.S. 18:1300.5.)	
Joe Walker Jr. (signature of chairman) Cetina Morris (signature of vice-chairman)	
♦ The chairman and vice-chairman must file the petition with the Secretary of State along with copies of a picture identification that contain the name and signature of the chairman and vice chairman, respectively, or copies of current utility bills, bank statements, government checks, paychecks, or other government documents that show the name and address of the chairman and vice chairman, respectively.	
♦ Upon the signature of the first elector this recall petition is a public record, and the chairman or vice-chairman SHALL be the custodian of this public record until it is filed with the registrar of voters.	
♦ No signatures SHALL be collected until the chairman receives notice of the endorsement date from the Louisiana Secretary of State.	
Louisiana Secretary of State endorsement date: <u>22nd</u> day of <u>MAY</u> , 2023 (day) (month) (year)	
Secretary of State received and endorses this filing on the <u>22nd</u> day of <u>MAY</u> , 2023 (day) (month) (year)	
Hand Delivered <input type="checkbox"/> Mailed <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> 1:30 pm	
Prepared and Furnished by Secretary of State Approved by Attorney General pursuant to La. R.S. 18:1300.2(A)	
Recall Petition (Non-Statewide) (Rev. 5/18)	
Page <u>1</u> of <u>1</u>	

Mayor Patsy Ward-Hoover Responds to the Recall

She has been in government for years. She started as an activist at 19 years old. She understands the democratic way, which is what the petitioners are doing. Remove someone from office by way of voting, or you recall them. They chose to do it the democratic way, and she has no problem with it. She is good. She is like a Michelle Obama. She does not entertain the negative side because it's too much energy to burn on that side. Instead, she uses her energy toward positive things. She is a hype person with plenty of energy.

The park is temporarily closed because there are many snags in the trees and limbs falling from old pecan trees. With the limbs falling, this hazard causes a liability for the Village.

The ground is not level. There is a water leak and holes in the park. They are in the process of getting 131 thousand dollars to revitalize the park.

Current Mayor Patsy Ward-Hoover has only been in office for nine months, and the park conditions are something that she inherited when she took office. They are at least trying to get some of the trees cut so the residents can continue using the walking track. It will be closed until the pruning can be done.

The building is 64 years of age. It was an old Natchez school in the 1960s. She has had four clerks. Two of the clerks had breathing issues.



They thought maybe it was mold. So the doctor removed two of them. They have black mold, asbestos, and lead in the building.

When she first came in, the roof leaked with water, and there was a can placed to catch it. The carpet on the

floor, you could take your feet and splash in it from the rain. Thanks to a grant, they received 12 thousand dollars to secure the money to replace the roof.

The building is damaged where the water had gotten into the walls. Once the rainwater gets into the walls, the mold sets up. So they asked Martco Plywood to donate lumber to them and spent the rest of the money they had from the grant to improve the building.

Mayor Patsy Ward-Hoover speaks for the mayor and council (Aldermen). The mayor is responsible for the day-to-day operations. The Aldermen are the legislators. Whatever she brings to them, they vote on. They are not the ones that say do this and do that. She is in charge of day-to-day operations. Anything that she does, she tries to inform them of some of the things that have happened. She may be unable to inform them about some things before it's done, but even after, she does inform them. She keeps mayor notes and shares with them what has occurred within a month's time. She gives them a report every month.

Correspondent: Some residents in the community feel you are not informing the aldermen before the decisions are made.

The day-to-day operations belong to the mayor.

If you look at parish government, the President is involved in the day-to-day, and the council members are the legislators. The lawarson act will explain how this is done.

If something happens right now, she cannot wait to go and speak with the aldermen. She must be ready to act. Safety is her responsibility, not the aldermen. If something is wrong, she must take care of that. She suggests that the community reads this act for a better understanding.

City Attorney Alex Washington calls in and explains who the day-to-day operations belong to, which is the mayor. Legislation belongs to the aldermen.

Where do the aldermen come in, prior to or after a decision?

If the aldermen want to pass an ordinance or new legislation, it's passed through the aldermen.

Any rules that control them, if there is something that they want to change, they can make some adjustments, but all of that is operated and done through the mayor. Operation of the municipalities is done through the mayor.

The Village of Natchez is an African American community, and most own land from their forefathers or bought the land. It is a rich community. They cannot grow if they don't clean up be-

A.10. The mayor has the following powers, duties, and responsibilities:

- To supervise and direct the administration and operation of all departments, offices, and agencies, other than a police department with an elected chief of police, in conformity with ordinances and law; no ordinance, however, may limit the authority granted to the mayor by this provision. All administrative staff members are subordinate to the mayor;
- To delegate performance of administrative duties to municipal officers or employees as he or she deems necessary and advisable;
- Subject to applicable state law, ordinances, and civil service rules and regulations, to appoint and remove employees, other than the employees of a police department with an elected chief of police. Appointment or removal of a nonelected chief of police, the clerk, the attorney, or any department head is, however, subject to board approval, except that in the case of a tie vote, the mayor's recommendation prevails.
- To sign all contracts on behalf of the municipality;
 - The mayor has statutory authority to sign all contracts contingent on the monies being appropriated by the Council. Once monies are appropriated (i.e. in the budget under the Local Government Budget Act), the Mayor is not required to return to the Council for authority to sign the contract document.
- To prepare and submit an annual operations budget and a capital improvements budget for the municipality to the board in accordance with the Local Government Budget Act (R.S. 39:1301, *et seq.*) and any other supplementary laws or ordinances.

cause the property's value will never go anywhere the way it is. So, it is not taking anything from the community by stating that. If you want your community to grow and attract businesses, you must make bringing them there attractive. That is what she is trying to do. She cleans her property, and if she can keep her property up, what trifling person next door does not want to clean their property? You work hard to put all your retirement

and money into your community and your place to improve it, so why would you let next door not take care of theirs? That is unfair.

It is all over the state of Louisiana. They care about cleaning up. You must abide by their rules when signing up for federal funds. Now that we were granted funding, we must comply with the rules, or they won't give the village the funding.

Continued on page 26

Wheel of Fortune Contestant



Natchitoches Parish resident "Henry Braxton" appeared as a contestant on the *Wheel of Fortune*.

Mayor Patsy Ward-Hoover Responds to the Recall

Continued from Page 25
Did you call Joe Walker Jr.
ignorant?

She stated that she is a minister and that before the meeting ended is when this encounter occurred. These people will make you get out of character. She has never told anyone that she was perfect. People may rub her the wrong way. She said that Joe Walker Jr. was jumping up and down in the meeting and screaming, so she said, "Joe, stop acting ignorant." She did say that, and the tape will reflect that. She said that she could not close the meeting without apologizing to him for responding that way. She said you must be very careful with your words with some people because some will take the word ignorant as derogatory, but she tells herself that sometimes. She understands what it means, the lack of knowledge. If you do not know something, you are ignorant of it. It is not a derogatory word. It's

just how he perceived it. She tried to apologize and said she knew she was out of character. She could see the expression on his face that he took it in a derogatory manner and did not understand the context and definition of what was said.

What about commodities? Do you show favoritism by giving it to certain people, and everyone cannot access it?

The previous administration used to place the commodity in a trailer, and it would rain on it for days before the people would get it. Now they go out into the community and make sure the seniors and those who are disabled are taken care of. A community senior called in during the interview. The resident spoke highly of the current mayor and thanked her for taking care of the senior citizens.

Mayor Patsy Ward-Hoover states that God has blessed her and allowed her to live 71 years. She cannot take any of this material

stuff with her. She wants to reach back to the community and have programs where young ladies know how to cross their legs and conduct themselves. She wants to implement things in the community where previously there has not been anything for the kids to do in the past. People are reaching out to help, and she wants the community to get that help. She had never had problems in the nine months of being in the office as mayor until she said clean up and that they had to pay their sewage bills.

The governor of Louisiana sent two people there to see what was needed and the conditions of the building in Natchez. She said one of the government officials said, "The building is not fit for a rat to live in."

There was not much for her to work with when she took office. She must start from scratch and create things there. She is behind now and needs a clerk. But she is doing what she can to make things function.

LAWRASON ACT
REVISED 09/08/2022

- Pursuant to Section 406 of the **LAWRASON ACT** the budget submitted by the Mayor to the Council is approved by the Council in the form of a budget ordinance and returned to the Mayor for his/her approval or disapproval;
- To represent the municipality on all occasions required by state law or ordinance;
- To be the keeper of the municipal seal and affix it as required by law;
- To sign warrants drawn on the treasury for money, to require that the clerk attest to such warrants, to affix the municipal seal thereto, and to keep an accurate and complete record of all such warrants;
- To have any other power or perform any other duty that may be necessary or proper for the administration of municipal affairs and that is not denied by law.
- **To preside over meetings of the board of aldermen and in cases of ties (except as to ordinances) shall give the deciding vote.**

\$375 a month is how much a mayor is paid for the Village of Natchez. She is not doing this for the money. She cares about her community growing. She has nothing negative to say about the petition; the negative ones are the ones signing the petition.

That is a democratic play, and she understands what they are doing.

She believes at least ninety percent of the community is behind her, and she will continue striving to make the Village of Natchez a great place for residents and businesses.

Condition of the Village of Natchez's Park and City Hall - See it for yourself!



Fence at the Park



Dripping water in the City Hall



Public Restroom at the Park



Condition of Trees/Limbs



Exposed Insulation



Exposed Wires at the City Hall



Broken Windows



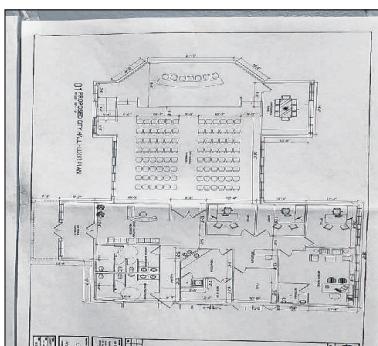
Mold on and in the Walls



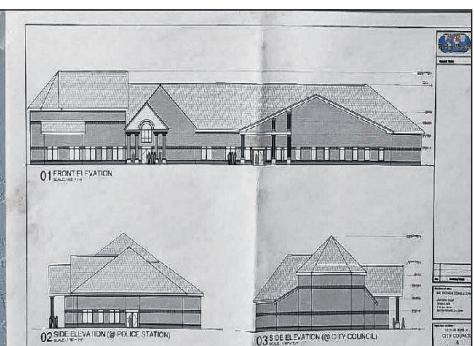
Water Damage in the Ceiling/Black Mold



Drop Box for Payments



Proposed City Hall and Police Station Floor Plan



01 FRONT ELEVATION
 02 SIDE ELEVATION (POLICE STATION)
 03 SIDE ELEVATION (CITY COUNCIL)

Scenes From Restoration Apostolic Ministries Spring Pop-Up Shop



Scenes From Asbury United Methodist Church Community Event



PreK at Fairview Alpha Elementary



Ms. Therisa Sesvold



Kaylei Lewis



What I love most about PreK at Fairview Alpha Elementary?
Kaylei's Response:

I love pre-k because we get to go to centers and we get to eat amazing food.

I love the beautiful sky when we get to go outside and play.

I love every day at school because I love learning new things and you get to go to centers.

I love going and drawing you and Ms. Heather pictures at centers.

I love when I get to hold Biscuit! (Ms. Heathers rabbit)

I love doing new things at school.

I love, love, love to see everybody at school!

What I love most about teaching PreK at Fairview Alpha Elementary?
Ms. Sesvold's Response:

Teaching Pre-K at Fairview Alpha Elementary is an amazing opportunity. I love the family environment displayed throughout the school. I look forward to the warm hugs and big smiles as the children arrive every morning. Watching the children grow and become more independent brings me such joy and happiness. My favorite thing to see is that look of excitement they have when "they" realize their accomplishment. I look forward to watching them grow more and more in the future years here at Fairview Alpha Elementary.

ENROLL IN PUBLIC PRE K

If your child turns 4 on or before 09/30/2023, please enroll in PreK!



Teacher: Janna Maggio



Student: Levi Conday



Teacher: Lita LeMelle

NATCHITOCHES MAGNET

Student Levi Conday

What I love most about preschool at Natchitoches Magnet?

"I like it because I am learning to read. I love school!"

Teacher Janna Maggio

What I love most about teaching preschool at Natchitoches Magnet?

I love watching and nurturing students as they achieve their goals. Working at Magnet allows me to make school fun and challenging to encourage lifelong curiosity and learning."

Teacher Lita LeMelle

What do I love most about teaching PreK at Natchitoches Magnet?

"I love being able to have an open dialogue with the parents of my students, working with parents who are consistently supportive and who want to be actively engaged in the education of their children, both at home and in the classroom."

ENROLL IN PRE-K- ENROLL IN PRE-K- ENROLL IN PRE-K



Donna Penrod

L.P. VAUGHN
We're Rocking Into PRESCHOOL

Cynthia Harmon

Rose Roberson

Michelle Hall

Kya Taylor

Millicint Houffpaur

Kim Hayward

Marthaville Elementary School



Jo Rains Mrs. Melissa Manasco's Pre-K Classroom

Melissa Manasco Pre-K Teacher

"What I love most about teaching Pre-K at Marthaville Elementary is it's a fun and creative work environment. We have strong community involvement. We are a family at Marthaville."

"What I love most about Pre-K at Marthaville Elementary is center time, all the fun stuff my teachers do with us, eating breakfast with my teachers, and I love playing with my friends. And I really love Mrs. Melissa and Mrs. Courtney."

WHY DO YOU LOVE PRE-K? Responses from Students and Teachers

Kya Taylor (Mrs. Hall's class) - "I love pre-k because I like learning letters and going to learning centers with my friends."

Teacher Michelle Hall - I love teaching pre-K because each day is a new adventure! By far, one of my greatest rewards to teaching is witnessing children exploring and discovering new skills and abilities on a daily basis."

Teacher Cynthia Harmon - "Being able to experience all those "aha" moments with a student is priceless, and witnessing the independence and academic growth of a child unfolding right before your eyes. Teaching Preschool can be challenging but hilarious. We are never short of stories to share throughout the years. You can't forget the no filters, honesty at its best! Preschool is my love."

Teacher Rose Roberson - "I love teaching Preschool because the sound of genuine giggles makes my heart happy. I love to hear a child's honest conversation during teachable moments and the look on their faces when they actually get a concept. (When the light comes on). It's always refreshing to start a new day with them."

Teacher Donna Penrod - "I love teaching PreK because I enjoy teaching and working with small children."

Teacher Kim Hayward - "I love teaching PreK, the excitement on their faces as they enter into education and discover the fun of learning."

Teacher Millicint Houffpaur - "I love the way they process information. You never really know what they are going to say. They are so curious about how everything works. It's rewarding to know that you are the person who gave them the foundation they need to succeed in their academic careers."



It's Financial Checkup Time!

Are you conducting a regular financial checkup? Here are a few areas to consider as you periodically reflect and review:

What is your credit score? Do you have a stellar credit score? With the average variable APR for credit cards at 20 percent – an all-time high – it could pay to inquire about a lower Annual Percentage Rate (APR) with your good credit.¹ If you're among the elite holders of a high credit score – and aren't happy with your current rate or terms – try contacting customer service. You could negoti-

ate your way to a better rate or persuade them to waive the annual charge.

What's your get-out-of-debt plan? Are you worried about your debt? If you've ever thought about making a dent in your debt (or changing your spending habits), now's the time! With more than 60 percent of survey takers reporting they cannot overcome their financial difficulties, and at least 40 percent saying they are currently taking no steps to secure their financial futures, it's no surprise that most people say money has a direct impact on their stress level.²



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Review your life insurance coverage. If you have had a change in your life – such as the birth of a new baby – this is crucial. How much life insurance you need depends on the individual, but financial experts generally recommend having a policy that covers 10 times your annual salary.⁵ In spite of this, the number of Americans who say they don't have enough life insurance has more than doubled since 2010.⁶ Don't let a troubled economy keep you from planning for your family's financial future!



DID YOU KNOW?

The average cost to build a home is about \$300,000 – not counting the cost of land to build it on.

Forbes.com, "How Much Does It Cost to Build a House in 2023?" July 25, 2022.



DID YOU KNOW?

Millions of Americans either don't have life insurance or are underinsured.

CBSNews.com, "Reasons You Shouldn't Wait to Get Life Insurance," Nov. 21, 2022



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Rick Cabrera posing solo with jersey symbolizing his position as NSU's 11th head men's basketball coach
Credit: Chris Reich/NSU Photographic Services



Northwestern State announced the signings of (from left) Chase Forte, JC Riley and Jimel Lane on Wednesday. Credit: Emily Zering/Northwestern State Athletics

NSU working on men's roster

NATCHITOCHES — The construction of the 2023-24 Northwestern State men's basketball roster is under way.

Head coach Rick Cabrera announced the addition of three transfers Wednesday, all of whom have ties to Florida.

Guard Chase Forte, forward Jimel Lane and center JC Riley signed to play for Northwestern State, becoming the first roster additions for Cabrera, who was hired in March as Northwestern State's 11th head men's basketball coach.

"I'm excited to announce the signing of these young men as new members of the Demon family," Cabrera said. "They exemplify every trait that I look for in a student athlete. They are high character young men added with a wealth of talent and toughness."

Forte, a 6-foot-4 product of Raleigh, North Carolina, tied for the Region 8 scoring lead at 20.1 points per game while leading the region with 2.8 steals per game. His 5.8 assists per game ranked second in the region, making him the only player in the region to rank in the top five in three separate categories. His efforts earned Forte a spot on the All-NJCAA Region 8 team and on the All-Florida College System Activities Association Team.

Forte began his career at UNC Asheville before playing two seasons at Gulf Coast State. In his two seasons with the Commodores, Forte averaged 16.7 points per game across 53 games while chipping in 308 career assists and 129 career steals.

At Word of God Christian Academy, Forte averaged 12 points, eight assists and six rebounds per game as a senior, earning a spot on the John Wall Invitational All-Tournament team and the team's Luke Sasser Award for the top GPA on the team. A versatile athlete, Forte also played football and ran track at Word of God.

"Signing a young man of Chase Forte's talent was a top priority for me the moment I was offered the job," Cabrera said. "He was one arguably the best two-way player in the toughest juco league in the country. He displayed a great ability to score the basketball in many ways as well as always defended the opponent's team's best player. I'm looking forward to Chase translating his talents to the Southland Conference."

Lane enjoyed a high-scoring freshman season at Division II Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida.

A Miami native who played at Palmetto High School, Lane averaged 17.9 points per game, highlighted by three games of at least 30 points. He dropped 30 on Johnson University in his collegiate debut and matched that at Florida Southern. He set a career high with 24 points on 14-for-21 shooting, including a 4-for-8 performance from 3-point range, against Saint Leo on Jan. 7.

Lane, a 6-foot-7, 190-pound forward, ranked second on the team in scoring and in rebounding (6.6 per game) while blocking 1.1 shots per game and adding 0.9 steals per contest.

"Jimel was very high on our recruiting list out of high school when we were at Tallahassee Community College," Cabrera said. "He checks all the boxes that I look for in a wing with his length, size and most importantly, talent. His versatility has all-conference potential in the Southland Conference. I'm excited to see his growth for the next three years."

Riley, a 6-foot-9, 225-pound center from Atlanta, played for Cabrera at Tallahassee Community College. Because of an injury, Riley appeared in just two games with the Eagles, who reached the NJCAA Final Four.

In his brief Tallahassee career, Riley averaged 3.5 points and five rebounds per game while playing an average of 11 minutes per game.

Prior to Tallahassee, Riley averaged nearly a double-double at Lowndes High School, scoring 11.3 points per game and grabbing nine rebounds per contest. He tallied nine double-doubles as a senior and blocked 1.7 shots per game while adding a steal per game.

"JC Riley's path to NSU has been unique," Cabrera said. "From the time he stepped foot on the TCC campus in June, I knew this kid was a special talent. He's by far the most skilled player with his back to the basket that I've coached in a long time. Unfortunately, he had an injury that limited him to two games which resulted in him redshirting. During our preseason games and practices, JC displayed to me that he was a Division I talent. I'm excited for to be able to coach him and watch him grow as a player."





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A photograph of a family of three— a man, a woman, and a young girl—sitting on the hood of a light-colored car. The man is holding up a set of car keys. They are all smiling. The background shows a parking lot with other cars.