

Opinions

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Out checking on the neighbors

Catahoula Parish looks pretty good sometimes, especially lately when compared to Calcasieu Parish and the city of Lake Charles in particular. They've had a spell of trouble down there that was the reason for my missing the first Police Jury meeting that I haven't attended in about five years. That is so unusual in fact that, for the first time in over a year, Debra Jones-Hawkins was at a meeting and I wasn't.

Starting last year with two category four storms, Hurricanes Laura in late August and Delta in early October, the city of Lake Charles was mercilessly pounded in a record-breaking year of storms. But that hasn't been the end of it.

About a week ago, the city saw, according to one fireman evacuating my wife's 92 years old aunt in a boat, 15" of rain in approximately 12 hours. That so over loaded the city's sewer system that some homeowners (my wife's aunt included) had almost a foot of water in their living room before anyone could react.

Consequently, we found it necessary to go

over to Lake Charles and try to help sort out the poor woman's life with her house and furniture virtually destroyed even before anybody could fix her roof and get the blue tarps off of it from last October. Lumber prices and demand for laborers have raced ahead of almost everyone's ability to find help and pay for materials. The streets are stilled piled with debris and ruined furniture.

This last freakish storm was a twist of the knife blade from which many will not recover. Adding the national panic over COVID 19 on top of it all has predictably made everything much worse.

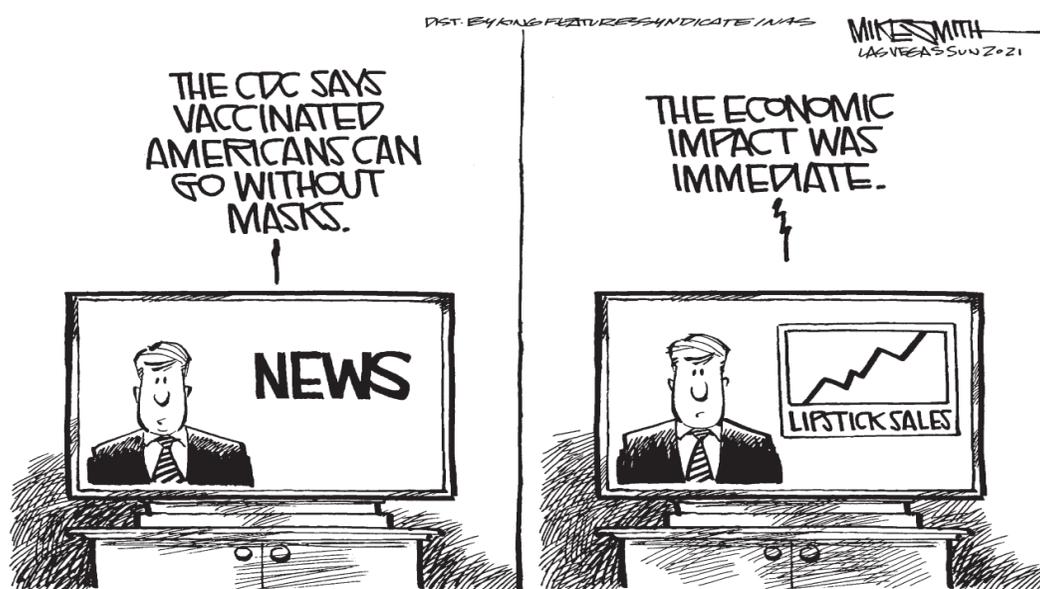
Catahoula was hit with three "moderate" floods and one relatively minor one over a four-year period recently. I take the word "moderate" in this context to mean that I will be having to use a canoe to take out my garbage only for no more than two to six weeks depending on whether the oversized tires and lift kit on my suspension will keep my truck high enough to make it a mile through the backwater. No one needs to be reminded of any of this, I'm sure.

By: Leo Chappelle

Still, except for the occasional ice storm that can put more timber on the ground than a saw mill, we have done better than some of our Gulf Coast neighbors.

And by the way, I did watch the Police Jury meeting on the Catahoula News Booster Facebook page. It was more interesting than usual for the sake of the visitors even if I could understand only half of what they said. (You, too?) We'll have to look into all that in more detail another time.

Unfortunately, I wasn't the only thing missing from the meeting. There is nothing more important in a participatory democracy than the people's participation. It was good to see that several hundred others were looking on with me. That's impressive. But it's always more fun when the public shows up in person. You're really the reason for the entire show. In the end, it's the public, the voters who make it work. You're the bosses, and nothing makes politicians more nervous than when they see the voters actually looking back at them.



JEB Tales

Happy Days Cafes and Music of the Fifties Part I

The other day while looking for a good western that I had not seen multiple times, I came across "Happy Days" an old TV show about the fifties. The show's starts were Ron Howard and some dude named Fonzie. The more I watched the more I remembered Miss Ivy Owens' Fort Grill Café in Harrisonburg. It was definitely a Happy Days place for teenagers to hang out.

Another cool Happy Day's place to hang out was the Snack Shack in Sicily Island. It was built by Mr. Bruce Edwards, Sr. It was not a drive in, it was a drive up where you walked up to the window and ordered. It has since been owned by members of the Krause family. Walter "Pot" Krause now owns the Snack Shack the mayor of Sicily Island.

Some of the cool teens I remember seeing at the Snack Shack were Margaret and Judy Wells, Betty Peck, Ann Ashley, Little Al Krause, Talmage Ashley, Lefty Johnny Young, Joe Raymond Peace, John Dennis, and Grady Weeks.

The Snack Shack is still open, but in a new modern building. I will not go through Sicily Island without getting a Snack Shack hamburger or a milkshake.

The Happy Days places in Jonesville were the Catahoula Courts Café which had pretty waitresses, good fast food, and a Rock-Ola jukebox that you could play from your booth. My favorite song at the Courts was "Rebel Rouser" by Duane Eddy.

Edward's Restaurant was always a lively place with the Peppermint Lounge for teenagers. Good food, good looking waitresses and a Seaburg jukebox. My favorite record on their jukebox was "Party Doll" by Buddy Knox. It cost five cents to play a record.

In 1955 I was in the seventh grade and made the elementary boys basketball team. The Catahoula Parish basketball tournament was coming up soon so Coach Cater Aplin wanted us to practice after school. The high school teams had an away game that night so most of the high school players were in Miss Ivy's Café waiting

to ride to Wisner on Mr. Chick Stutson's school bus. Coach Aplin did not have time to go home so he asked me to go across the street and get him a cup of coffee.

Wow! When I walked inside the café the jukebox was blasting "Rock Around the Clock" by Bill Haley and his Comets. I almost let the coffee get too cold while reading the names of the songs on that beautiful, almost new Rock Ola. "Sixteen Tons" by Tennessee Ernie Ford. Three songs by Webb Pierce, "Cattle Call" by Eddie Arnold, "Tutti Frutti" by Little Richard and one by a new group called The Platters. There were no Pat Boone or Elvis Presley songs on that jukebox. However, I do remember that Pat and Elvis both later recorded "Tutti Frutti" and one of them took it to number one.

So much for the music. While I was standing there listening to music and admiring all those fine girl basketball players, the most beautiful older girl I had ever seen came up to me and handed me a nickel and said, "Save this nickel and call me when you turn sixteen." I saved that nickel like it was gold. But she did not wait for me. She broke my heart when she came back to our little Happy Days Café with a big old college football player. I did not look at another girl for over a week.

The Cool Cats and Dungaree Dolls in this Happy Days type café waiting to go to a basketball game were J.D. Alexander, Mamie Sargent, Author Ray Laing, Patsy Evans, Sidney Lanier, Byron McCarver, Emmilee Johnson, Daryl Boothe, JoAnn Haygood, Otis Randall, Dorothy Johnson, Charles Wesley Boothe, Henry Taliaferro, Harold White, Iris Rainey, Virginia Netherland, Wayne McGuffee, Rosie Gibson, Wayne Kirkland, Lee Breithaupt, Larry Evans, Joy Owens, Glendon Hutchins, Cleo Tullios, Carole Taliaferro, Mildred Breithaupt, Norma Jackson, Charles Pittman, Wayne Kirkland, Mildred Morehead, Julia Evans and Pegg King.

The next year, 1956, saw the music world in an uproar. Elvis Presley had the number one, number two, number four, number ten, number

By John Ed Bartmess, Jr.

eleven, and number fifteen songs. Fats Domino had the number three song, "Blueberry Hill". Pop music had become rock and roll. My favorite song of 1956 was Green Door by Jim Lowe.

In 1957 a new star hit the big time. Ferriday's own Jerry Lee Lewis had the number one song of the year, "Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On". Jerry Lee also had the number seven song with "Great Balls of Fire". That'll Be the Day by the Crickets was number three. "Jailhouse Rock" at number four; "Peggy Sue" by Buddy Holly was number five; number six was "Little Darlin'" by The Diamonds. Number eight was "You Saved Me" by Sam Cook, Little Richard had number nine, "Keep A Knockin'", and number ten was "Searching" by The Coasters.

There you have the top ten nationwide, but the most played at Miss Ivy's Fort Grill Café was "Boney Maronie" by Larry Williams.

To be continued.

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