

Opinions

July 21, 2021, Catahoula News Booster

Page 3A

Repeal the \$12.00 garbage tax

Rodney Sones moved to table the question of whether to adopt an amendment that would have placed a lien on the property of those who don't pay the new \$12 garbage tax. Soon after Jeffery Estes' second of that motion, the Police Jury voted on July 12th, 2021 to table the question, meaning it could still be brought back for a vote on a later date.

That was a good move for the moment, but the best move would be to repeal the ordinance that the Police Jury passed on its own authority and submit the question to a referendum at the polls next spring so the people can decide for themselves.

To do otherwise would set a very bad precedent. And it would alienate a lot of people. These things tend to be remembered again at the next regular election. Taking the question to the polls might not give the result everyone wants, but it will still remove a great deal of doubt about the legitimacy – and perhaps necessity - of the tax. It won't have just been crammed down our throats.

Looking at the latest available records provided by the company hired to collect the

tax, JCP, Inc., it appears that in the most recent period from June 1 – June 30, 2021, that "874 active customers owe 2 or more bills." What's interesting here (aside from the exceptionally large number of people who aren't paying the tax, is that there must be even more people who haven't paid at least one invoice.

Numbers can be confusing and boring, but these are important:

JCP mailed 2,357 bills for June but got only 1,354 payments. Unless it's an error in the report, that's a whopping 400 payments less than what we paid the previous month. The total amount past due increased from \$19,895 to \$32,802, almost 65% from last month. (Remember, JCP is paid for the number of invoices they create and mail, not the number of people who pay.) That's 1,003 who didn't pay their latest invoice, 15% over those that owe two bills or more. It appears that the number of people who are not paying is actually increasing.

These records are clear evidence of the unpopularity of this tax. That still doesn't mean that Catahoula Parish doesn't want someone to pick up the garbage and help

keep the parish clean. It has always been my contention that what people want is to be in control (as much as possible) of their own money.

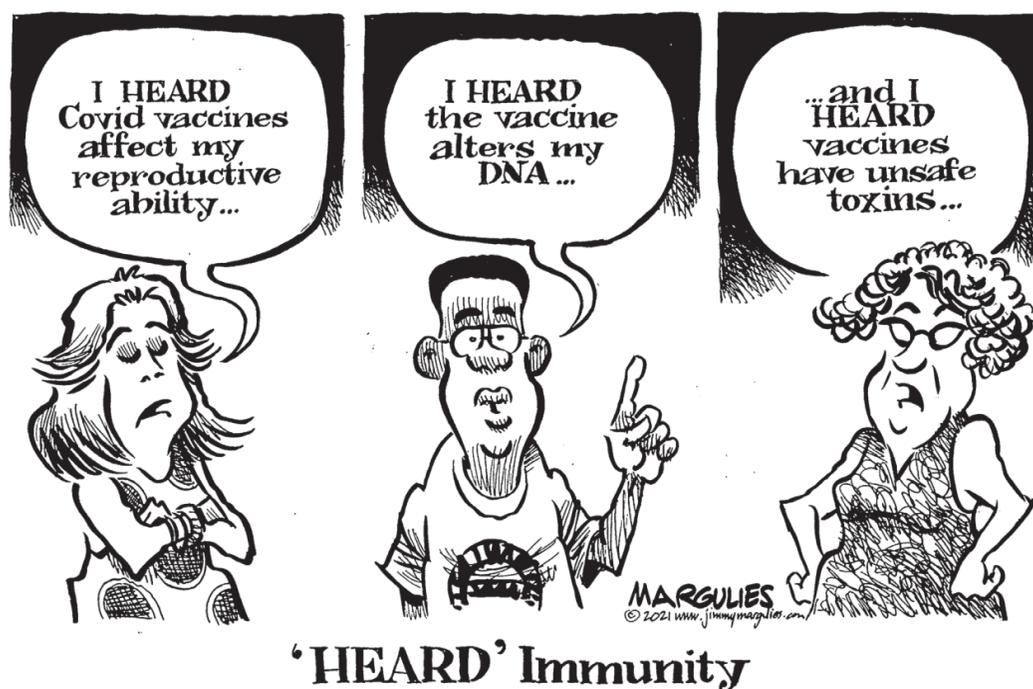
The best way for us to exercise that control in this case would be for the Police Jury to repeal Ordinance 2975 and take the question to the polls. And details will matter.

One very important detail will be to make the tax temporary the same way almost all of our other local taxes are. Their renewal by the voters is virtually automatic every five years or so, but at least we have an opportunity to think about why we pay them.

Also important: The tax should not be subject to an increase without the consent of the voters as Ordinance 2975 is now. That is a particularly bad provision in the law. This could be an opportunity to fix it if it goes to the polls.

Unfortunately, you won't get your money back if the tax is repealed and you have been paying it. Of course, in the unlikely event that any tax is repealed, the government doesn't give refunds on them either.

By: Leo Chappelle



JEB Tales

Moving to Louisiana

My mother, Marcella Victory Altman Bartmess was the bravest and strongest person I have ever known. Five days after I was born in Morgan City, Louisiana Mom was on a Greyhound bus with my two-year-old brother George and Me. We were bound for Export, Pennsylvania. Mom's hometown. My father, John E. Bartmess, Sr. was on his way to basic training somewhere in Texas. He had been deferred until the flood control structure on the Atchafalaya River was completed. We spent the next three years in Export, Pennsylvania.

I do remember the first time I ever saw my father "Big John" as he was getting off a Continental Trailways bus. He was in a uniform and on crutches. I was three years old.

A few months later we were bound for Harrisonburg, Louisiana. We lived in Harrisonburg a little over a year. I remember looking in the window off Doctor Callahan's Clinic and seeing my first sister, Sherry. A short time later we moved to Jug Bend into an old barn on the Disch place. I also remember dad buying mom a gasoline washing machine because we had no electricity.

The first time I ever saw my second sister, Roberta was in my mother's arms who was riding a paint horse named Lucky through the back water. Mom had ridden all the way from Harrisonburg-Enterprise Road, about five miles to our barn house.

One of the good things about living in Pennsylvania was that I was Christened in the Lutheran Church, therefore I had God Parents. My God Parents were Aunt Emina and Uncle Louis Bopp. That really paid off over the years. I always got a very nice gift on my birthday and Christmas. When my brother George graduated from high school, he got a shirt. When I graduated from high school, I got a Benrus wristwatch. Also, over the years when Aunt Emina and Uncle Lou came to Louisiana they always stayed with Shirley and Me. It is no doubt John Ed was their favorite.

In 2018 my daughters, Jackie and Jodie took me to Pennsylvania to see Uncle Lou on his on hundredth birthday. He passed away a short time later.

Now back to Jug Bend. Dad was still on crutches most of the time. However, he could still lean the crutches against the wall and tear your butt up. One cold winter day I learned this the hard way. It was George's job to split the wood and my job to carry it in. As usual, George did his job. I thought, "Daddy is on crutches he can't whip me." Boy was I wrong. When he asked why I had not brought the wood in, I said, "Because I didn't want to." He calmly leaned his crutches against the wall and got a switch and tore my butt up.

Another lesson I learned was about cutting switches. George and I had been fighting. When Dad got in that evening Mom told him and we were ordered to go cut a switch. Again, the good son George cut a big old switch off the peach tree. I said, "George are you crazy? He'll beat you to death with that thing!" I proceeded to cut a very small persimmon sprout for my switch. Would you believe when I gave Big John the persimmon switch, he beat George with my switch. You guessed it; he tore my butt up with George's big old switch. I was determined not to make that mistake again. The next time I cut a big old switch. That's right, Big John used my switch on me that time. I could not win for loosing.

Occasionally, my luck was better. One January morning when I got up to go to the Out House, ice was everywhere. I looked down toward Sargent Lake and saw that it was frozen over. I went to the barn and found the old toboggan sled we had brought from Pennsylvania. I pulled it down to the lake and proceeded to slide down off the levee out on the ice-covered lake. Boy was that fun and I had it all to myself! Uh-oh, here came George at a run! "Bring that thing to me!" I was ordered. I even had to bring it up to the levee to him. But justice prevailed. On George's first trip down the levee, he went not on the ice but

By John Ed Bartmess, Jr.

through the ice and got soaking wet. I said, "I guess now you will give me the sled."

Bull riding, well actually calf riding was another past time when our parents were gone. We had a loading chute which we would put the yearling in to get on and then let it go with one of us on it's back. This time I went first. The yearling instead of jumping forwards went backwards. Off I fell, face first. Big brother George laughed almost hysterically.

"Let me show you how to ride a darn little yearling!" About three jumps later George went flying over the yearling's head into a fence post. I thought it was the funniest thing I had ever seen. Then I saw his arm all bent out of shape. He had broken two bones in his arm. I could not help myself, I said, "Well, you sure showed me how not to do it." Our rodeo days were over. Well, at least until George's arm healed.

Editors Note: The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by various authors do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the Catahoula News Booster or any employee thereof. The Catahoula News Booster is not responsible for accuracy or completeness, and will not be liable for any errors, or omissions. All opinions are provided on an as-is basis and have not been edited in any way.

Catahoula News Booster

The Catahoula News Booster is the Official Journal of the Town of Jonesville, Village of Harrisonburg, Village of Sicily Island, Catahoula Parish School Board, Catahoula Parish Police Jury, and Tensas Basin Levee Board. POSTMASTER: Send form 3579 to Box 188, Jonesville, Louisiana, 71343. Periodical class postage paid at Jonesville, Louisiana. Kim Cloessner, Publisher Identification Number is SECDUSPS556-720. Published every Wednesday. Subscription rates: By mail in Catahoula Parish-\$25.00 annually, elsewhere in Louisiana-\$30.00 annually, out-of-state-\$35.00 annually Catahoula News-Booster, 103 3rd Street, P.O. BOX 188, Jonesville, LA 71343. 318-339-7242