

Opinions

July 28, 2021, Catahoula News Booster

Page 3A

Three cheers for open meetings

The public was not through talking about the garbage tax this past Monday, July 26, 2021. Everette Mayo brought numbers from the Police Jury's own general ledger to demonstrate that the extra \$12.00 "fee" being charged to residents for sanitation service in the unincorporated areas of the parish wasn't even necessary.

Once again, Harold Sones denied that there would be any penalty for those who did not pay the "fee". I repeat, however, my own assertion that no tax scheme that is entirely voluntary will work. The language of the ordinance as presently written makes a vague threat to the effect that "...liens may be filed against those properties failing to pay such garbage collection fees..."

It appears that at this point the "fee" has generated enough voluntary payments so as to adequately address the anticipated revenue shortfall this year. If Mayo is correct, it wasn't necessary in the first place.

In any case, the ordinance should be repealed,

rewritten, and sent to the voters in the spring of 2022. However, what I seem to be hearing in the remarks of the members of the Police Jury is that, strictly on their own initiative and authority as they see fit, they still plan to modulate the amount of this "fee" that they have created to fill out the Sanitation Fund. If I am hearing correctly and that is the plan, then I hope the people will shout a very loud "NO!" to their Police Juror. That is not how taxation in Catahoula should be done.

Government does not create for itself a blank check for the taxpayers to sign. The rate of the tax must be set at a specified amount and must expire at a specified time when it must be resubmitted to the voters at the polls for renewal or else allowed to die. Frankly, I don't know what is so difficult about this concept. It is the way we have been taxing ourselves forever.

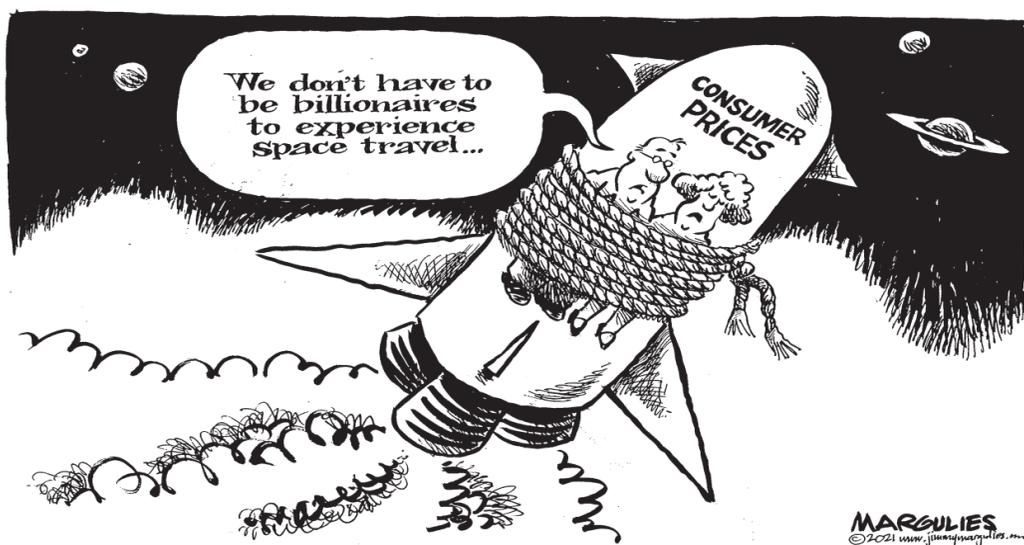
A few of the Police Jurors may not have been comfortable with the give and take of politics in the sunshine, but that is what Louisiana law

requires and we need to get used to it. We are not enemies merely because we are in conflict. We actually need people who do not agree with us because it is the test that proves the value of our own ideas. It's how families grow stronger when they help each other to the truth.

It did seem, however, from some remarks about plans for the sanitation "fee" that there had been illegal private discussions of the issue outside of the public's view and not in a formally scheduled and properly publicized public meeting. If this has or is happening, it absolutely must stop. The public's business is required by law to be discussed in public.

Furthermore, public discussions that allow everyone to see the rough and tumble ugly truth about our politics and common life as citizens of the parish are healthy for our representative form of government. Such open public discussions inspire confidence in the honesty and motivations of the representatives that the people have chosen to serve them.

By: Leo Chappelle



JEB Tales

People I wish I had Thanked

My parents, Marcella Altman Bartmess and John E. Bartmess, Sr. My mother Marcella for teaching me to never quit and Big John for teaching me to tackle almost anything.

My grandmother Mary Storm Altman who taught me that it is better to give than to receive.

Mr. Earnest Ogden for teaching me to use a piece of red handkerchief on a bream hook when I ran out of worms.

I wish I could thank Mr. Roy and Mrs. Dorothy Sargent who taught me to appreciate reading. Especially the book "Silent Spring" by Rachel Carson which deals with the balance of nature. "Silent Spring" also led to the banning of DDT. It's a wonder that my brother George and I did not die at a very young age because we would poison cotton, in our bathing suits, with 3-5-40 cotton poison. We would then jump into Sargent Lake to wash the poison off.

Shirley and I still have flowers in our yard that Mr. Roy and Mrs. Dorothy gave to us when we married over sixty years ago. Some of those flowers are blooming this month.

I wish I could thank the Ogden Brothers. Richard, for serving in World War II in a B-17 Flying Fortress and for welding many pieces of my old junk fencing equipment. As a matter of fact, Richard Ogden helped build "Jim Bowie's Relay Station". Albert Ogden who helped my father saw trees down that were sawed up to build our house. They used an old-timey crosscut saw. Another Ogden brother was Coy Lee Ogden who gave me my first good nickname that I liked "Sefus". I never was crazy about "Honey" which my mom's sister had hung on me. Coy Lee later changed that to "Sefus Two Acres" when I told him that I could chop two acres of cotton a day.

Frank was the youngest of the Ogden brothers and the one who gave me a burning desire to join the U.S. Air Force when I first saw him when he came home in that beautiful blue air force uniform. One of the biggest disappointments of my life was when I failed the air force physical because of color blindness.

I also wish I could thank Mrs. Marie Guinn who got me to join the Royal Ambassadors also called the R.A.'s in 1952. I only joined because we could go to the gym and play basketball after R.A.'s. Mrs. Guinn taught us how to use the backboard on a lay-up. After that I was always the first one chosen at school recess. I fell in love with basketball. I actually made my living coaching basketball for several years. However, the best thing to ever happen to me in R.A.'s was when Mrs. Guinn called on me to pray for our new president, Dwight D. Eisenhower. I had

never prayed in public before, but I stumbled my way through. I still stumble, but I still pray.

I'm sorry that I never got to thank Mr. Earnest Lanier, my principal at Harrisonburg High School, who taught me that I was not always in the right and that I had a lot of potential. I also learned a lot from Mr. Lanier when I taught school at HHS one year. It was also really a joy when Mr. Lanier taught for me at Enterprise High School for one year.

I am very thankful that Doctor Gene Boyd was my business teacher at Harrisonburg High School. She not only taught me very much but gave me much needed guidance and encouragement at a time I was trying to take the wrong path. Dr. Boyd and I actually took a graduate class together at NLU where she knew much more than the professor. I actually made an "A" in the class because Dr. Gene Boyd would read her notes to me on the way to class before each exam.

I wish I could thank Mrs. Doris Meyers the best English teacher I ever had, who also encouraged me to take English IV in which I then made a "D". I then made all "B's" in college English. One of my fondest memories was when Mrs. Meyers intercepted a note, I was trying to sneak to Shirley Faye telling her I would see her that night around 7:00 P.M. Mrs. Meyers looked at the note and said, "John Ed, you need to learn how to spell sweetheart." About forty years later when I built a covered bridge at Jim Bowie's Relay Station, I spelled it "Sweetheart Bridge".

I'm really thankful to Mr. Cater Aplin also a teacher and coach who put me on the basketball team's first string when I was in the tenth grade. Mr. Aplin also gave me wise advice during some tough times. He also drew the plans for Jim Bowie's Relay Station.

I wish I could talk to Coach Joe L. Green one more time. He is still one of my heroes. Coach Green was the toughest and best basketball Coach I ever had. We won many games in the fourth quarter. Coach Green is the reason I went to college and became a schoolteacher and coach.

Thank you, Mr. Coy and Mrs. Ida McGuffee who raised, Shirley Faye McGuffee, the girl I married. Mr. Coy and Mrs. Ida were the best Christian examples of my life.

At this time, I would like to thank Brother C.B. Renfrow for leading me to Jesus. And Brother Hardy Bingham for leading me back.

Another person I am thankful to is Mr. Black who worked at Earnest Guinn's Service Station. I sincerely apologize that I never knew Mr. Black's real name. He was an African American who

when he saw me struggling with a big truck tire at Johnny Nugent's Service Station across the street from Guinn's Service Station came and gave me a hand. Now that was a real man!

Mr. Bernell Dixon, I hope I have spelled his name correctly, is another real man and one of the best Christian men I have ever known. Very strong in more ways than one, I once saw Mr. Dixon lean forward with a five-hundred-pound bale of cotton against his back and move it several feet! One time I asked Brother Dixon if he was a preacher? He said no, but if the preacher did not show up, he could fill the pulpit.

I wish I could thank again Mr. Emmitt and Mrs. Inez Haygood for signing a note for me to go to college. Also, Mr. Son and Mrs. Doretta Boothe for helping Shirley and me while we were in college.

Lastly, I want to belatedly thank Glen and Ida McGuffee. Glen is gone but Miss Ida is still with us. Glen and Ida had the "Old Place Restaurant" which was the inspiration for Shirley and me building "Jim Bowie's Relay Station". Once Glen and Ida invited us to go to Carthage Texas to Jim Reeve's induction into the Texas County Music Hall of Fame. John Rex Reeves, Jim's nephew, had played at "Old Place" several times and had invited Glen and Ida. We were excited to go. We met several country music stars and the governor of Texas, Mr. George Bush. What a trip!

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