

Letter to Editor

IN Response to Does the Police Jury want its own police force?

Mr. Leo Chappelle I read your opinion published in the Catahoula news and would like to ask you why you're so eager to damage someone's character like that? After reading your article, I called the Catahoula police jury about Mr. McKee's involvement in the creation of the \$12/mo. garbage tax. This was a complete untruth you published about him. I was told who drafted that plan when I called, and it was not him. Now, Mr. Chappelle it looks to me, as if you have some type of vendetta against him and the police jury. Or maybe you just like running your mouth for attention IDK. However, I hope to address every issue you have brought up in the Catahoula News Booster, beginning with Mr. McKee.

The only time Mr. McKee spoke to me, as a resident of Catahoula Parish, at the time, about garbage pick-up were the damages being made to the duty ferry gravel road by the garbage truck. Therefore, we called the police jury to move the garbage pickup back up to the ferry. But of course, you would call that policing I'm sure. I don't feel as a land owner and a tax payer, who has NO parish representation, that you all have been truthful about Mr. McKee and his intentions as a land owner and a tax payer. Without him, we would have no one looking out for us past that ferry. The parish has wanted to abandon the entire road for years and Mr. McKee has not agreed to the abandonment.

May I add, at one time while I was living down that road, my neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. David Torrey, were both very ill during a storm. The next morning when I drove down to check on them, the road had caved off during the night between my house and theirs. We couldn't even get to them to tend their medical needs, help provide a generator, fuel, and extension cords. When I called the police jury, I was told they couldn't come out at that time due to other damages in the parish that needed tending to; like they were more important than the Duty-ferry taxpayers who are once again put on the back burner and not important enough to be represented. Both of them, let me remind you, were very ill and in need of oxygen. Mr. McKee, the Bergerons and others at different times helped to clear out a small path as a way for all of us to attend the needs of our neighbors. But I feel sure you would call that policing as well.

Next, in 2019 when the road caved off between our house place and our daughter's residents, just 1 mile from the ferry, it wasn't the police jury who helped, no; it was **Mr. Glenn McCormick**, (using his own equipment) and Mr. McKee (donating the **\$5,000 in limestone rock**) who made a passage way around the cave-off. But of course, you'd call that policing. Well, I am sick and tired of your non tax paying self, crying "policing"!

Mr. McKee and I have always been conscientious of the road condition and have been considerate of people's rights to travel it; however, most of you as non-land owners, non-tax payers, non-policing benefactors, non-mail deliverers, non-fire servicers, non-school bus pickups, non-land lines services, non-electrical services, non-water providers, and non-mechanics {can't keep a vehicle and or an ATV without having work to be done on it due to road conditions} have no idea what it is like to live 1 mile from the ferry or 4 miles from it. Apparently, some who used to live down from the ferry there; 'OH my', how quickly you forget our grips and groans and complaints together of the road's conditions and the hunters who came barreling down it and tearing it up, now want to open it up? I just don't understand this. Especially, when you had a key to the gate the whole time you were at the meeting saying you've been locked out of your 1 acre property. I would like to remind you that Mr. McKee or as some call him 'the police force' came and checked on you as a resident on that road, and either helped you or offered to help you several times, and if I am lying it's because you told it to me. I heard this from you several times. . No, Mr. Chappelle I wasn't at the meeting, but I was informed by a reliable, not an unreliable, source as to who was complaining about the road closure: which was used to ambush the Catahoula Parish Police Jury. Today, and for a while, I have been very thankful for our citizens voting on and placing the members we have to service us today as members of our board across the whole parish. As a once resident and teacher of Catahoula Parish, this has not always been the case. I feel that we have had some very good members whose hands seemed to always be tied when trying to do something for the Duty Ferry residents or tax payers who were allotted Fema Funds for repairs.

People who grip about the rights to travel that road say there are no residents, and therefore there is no reason to block the road. To you I say, "Put yourself in my shoes. How would you like to pay between **\$2,000-\$3,000/year IN TAXES** for NONE of the above NON-services FROM WHICH YOU GIVE TO THE FOLLOWING: ASSESSOR OFFICE, ENTERPRISE REC. DISTRICT, FIRE DISTRICT, LAW ENFORCEMENT [ORIGINAL AND VOTED AF],

LEVEE DISTRICT (LOL), P.W.POLICE JURY SUPPLEMENT, P.W. HEALTH MAINTAINANCE, P.W. LIBRARY, P.W. POLICE JURY TX OP10, P.W. SC. BLDG. REPR., SCH CONSTIT SP, SCH SP OPER., P.W. SCH SPEC LW AF, **AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, SCHOOL DISTRICT 12 (A SCHOOL BUS HAS REFUSED TO PICK UP KIDS DOWN THAT ROAD FOR 10 YEARS DUE TO THE CONDITIONS AND HAZARDS OF THAT ROAD)** .! How do I know this? Because, I lived down that road and tried to get these services and they kept cutting them out by one until there were none or hardly any. **As a jury member**, it would be hard for me not to want to **close that road AT THE FERRY**, due to my own grandchildren being refused school bus rights JUST 1 MILE FROM THE FERRY! I went to the police jury meetings begging, along with Mr. D. Torrey, to get FEMA FUNDS that had been allotted us for that road due to flooding and road-cavings to no-avail. I was told at that time by Mrs. L. Ford, "All FEMA funds go into one pile and we put them where we think they are needed the most and if it is to pay for equipment for the jury, then that's where it goes"! It was at this time I brought Mr. McKee along with Mr. G. L. Cruse into a conversation about the miss-appropriation of funds. But of course, when Mr. McKee does something about it or anything else, HE is the one doing the policing. WELL since no one else give a care about the tax payers or their representation for their tax money spent [at about nearly \$50,000.00/land owner over the last 20 years], I want you to know Mr. Chappelle, **YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH MR. MCKEE IS APPRECIATED FOR HIS EFFORTS, EQUIPMENT, TIME, AND OR UP-KEEP ON THE ROAD AND FOR THE ROCKS!!** If this is policing then so be it!!!

NOW FOR YOUR TRESPASSERS SECTION! I have had trespassers, their guns, family, friends, deer, and other animals claimed by the trespassers, more than once, on my property; however, when I called the LDWF and alerted them to the problem, especially due to safety issues like shots being fired into my direction while hunting on my own property, the LDWF directed me to contact my Catahoula Sheriff's department. THEN, after contacting the sheriff's office they would tell me it's not their problem for me to just go back and contact LDWF. So in 2018 after being fed-up with my directed and redirected to who I should contact, **I went to the sheriff's department** with my photos, names, and address of the trespasser s, which trespassed while having guns, dogs, and shooting animals on my land with my grandchildren very near their criminal activity taking place. I was told by the sheriff's office that the sheriff was too, busy for me and that they would send down a deputy for me to talk to. I was then told that The department couldn't do anything about the situation due to the trespasser living in Franklin Parish. I was also told, "Lady, the next time you catch your trespassers, take possession of their guns, call us here at the sheriff's office and detain them until we get there". I simply looked at the deputy and said, "Sir do you realize what you are asking me to do?", "it will take you 20 minutes or more for you or any deputy to get to that land below the ferry, and on the eastside of the Ouachita River; furthermore, what if the ferry boat is out of commission? Am I, a female, supposed to disarm, and hold at gun point, one or more male person/s for over an hour until you get there"? His reply was, "yes mam". I later talked to Mr. McKee, the Duty Ferry Policing of Catahoula Police jury and sheriff's office as you call him, and asked him what I should do? He simply said, "You'd be better off calling me". I tend to agree since there seems to be only thieves of the taxpayer's money without representation. **[OH wait, unless your last name is of someone who is in the click of Catahoula Parish and you've just recently become a land owner; then, you could get your trespasser arrested like my ex-son-in-law, who received 5 years, at first and rightfully so may I add, for trespassing and night hunting on your property.] But, Mr. Chappelle, I guess you've never has that problem, and that you've always been taken care of due to the criticism you clearly condemned on others. YOU have no idea what it's like to have no representation!!**

NOW, back to the road and its closing and the public of other parish tax payers: that road is only taken care of by the local parish tax-payers and no one else! Yes, that's right no one else. The LDWF have been asked repeatedly to help out with the road conditions by the citizens as well as by the jury, since it is mostly their customers that don't care how bad it gets. However they too refused. **Apparently**, it is ok for them, **LDWF**, to put up a **locked gate and stop any and all traffic just about 1/2 to 1 mile below the main entrance of the reserve by vehicle, and at times, no atvs; except the school board leases who have a right to get to their hunting lease from the Catahoula School Board by any means such as vehicles, atvs, and or tractors.** This blocked off access was the only access to the boat ramp with- in about 15 miles of duty ferry by vehicle. But where are all the voices in an 'outcry' for their public tax paying rights there?

It just seems like; the worse the conditions are on duty ferry road the better the hunters and young people like

it. They play in the ditches with their 4-wheel drives, and they play in the middle of it with their advs; but, you'll never hear a one of them offer to help pay for the repairs or damages made. Yes you read right, in the middle of it. BUT WHO cares certainly NOT the hunters! Just this last hunting season my husband and I caught two 4-wheelers about 2 miles from the "Turkey Road" sign which is about 5 miles from the ferry, spinning out, going across the road from side to side slinging mud, sand, and what little rock was there completely off the road. "And if the duty ferry road is left open, we absolutely will NOT be able to keep our vehicles in shape without having mechanical problems due to this type of activity. Unless, "SOMEONE CARES", which is a much better title for your police jury and sheriff's office than "Does the Police Jury want its own police force?". Ask everyone who drives down that road below the WLMA main road if they would be willing to pay at least \$20.00 for usufruct of that road each time they traveled it and I bet you the answer will be, 'NOT NO BUT Heck NO'. Do you know why? BECAUSE NO ONE CARES! Except, the very man you are condoning for trying to better our road conditions and safety hazards by name calling him the jury's police force. I feel like you are so very wrong in doing this. It's more like: helping others when the sheriff's office wouldn't.

The illegal police jury meeting held on the night of Monday, 11/8//21 was dominated by "Private Property/Line/fence- hunters and/or road hunters", who are mostly from outside Catahoula Parish, **and** who also have access, for sure, during hunting season to ALL 51,000 acres of the LDWMA know as the 'Boeuf River Reserve' They **all have this access** without traveling 5-7 mile further down the river-winding hazardous gravel road to hunt; if it were not hazardous, we'd probably have families and people still living down there along with mail and Catahoula school bus access. But NO, hunters want the easiest access to the private land owners fence line to endanger them and or their families, at the tax payer's OWN EXPENSE!

How do I know this? Because the ones (or their family) causing the most uproar are the ones I've received phone calls from, after dark, to cross over my property to track a deer they shot.; which, by the way, was just a mile or so from the ferry: not 5-7 miles from it. This has happened more than once by different property-line hunters. (at least they did call, but the second time I said no due to hunter ethics). It is also dangerous for the private land owner and their family. Just for an example: two years ago I was going to one of my favorite hunting spots, and while arriving at my destination, I found myself face to face with a 'private-property-line-hunter'. He was sitting in a lawn chair, facing directly into my property, and I assume using my fence as gun-rest. When I asked for his name, his reply was, "My name is none of your business". Today's hunter seems to express a huge lack of ethics or respect for others. I told this particular line-hunter that he was pointing his rifle in the direction I had just left my 11 year old grandson off to hunt. Upon my very strong request, he did turn his gun in another direction away from him but still pointed into my property. I left for my safety as well as his. You want to talk about policing, "I say we the private land owners from highway 559 to the duty ferry road and below should have an ordinance/law/policing, enforced that would honor the lives of the private land owner with a 100 yard/300 ft. buffer-zone for protection for both us and them due to a great lack of hunter ethics from these fence/line hunters. That's what policing is all about for the safety of all.

Finally, Mr. McKee did not write the garbage tax. He had no part in it. If you don't believe it Mr. Leo Chappelle, why don't or better yet, why didn't you ask about it. You should have asked about it first instead of lying about Mr. McKee's involvement in writing the garbage tax. Most people don't like taxes so I think you, Mr. Chappelle, purposefully slandered Mr. McKee and then you started misrepresenting Mr. McKee's **assistance in drafting a parish wide ordinance to protect everyone** in Catahoula. There are other parish roads other than Duty Ferry Road that have needs from the tax payers as well. I understand and realize that, but do you? Without Mr. McKee's assistance with the ordinance, other roads, not just gravel roads, which experience road damage & sign damages, such as the following: School Bus Signs, stop signs, 911 signs, special road signs, yield signs... are all paid for by the taxpayers and most are needed to be replaced. Therefore, it is my understanding that Mr. McKee's assistance in the ordinance would help to relieve the tax payer's burden of replacing these very important signs for the residences in Catahoula. Think about this, how is an ambulance is going to find you or the road you live on with your 911 road sign missing or stolen. I know this may seem trivial to you, but I think Mr. McKee is not policing, but he is thinking of the safety of others. Just like this Duty Ferry Gravel Road and its continuous cave-ins, it is all truly a safety issue. NOW, Thanks to all of you who are in the today's police Jury seat representing your section of the parish.

MY Opinion: By Pam Ruddell

Dear Editor:

At the August school board meeting, the board voted unanimously to ask the voters of school district #10 for approval of a new tax millage (21 mils estimated), 3,000,000 dollars for improvements to the Harrisonburg facility. I have tried unsuccessfully to find out what state retirement system a portion of this money will be going to. Also, what is a portion?

Harrisonburg has the newest facility in the parish, unoccupied other than for basketball games. What else is this building used for? What is the future of this building? Enterprise, Rosefield, Aimwell, and Manifest make up a large portion of the Harrisonburg school district. Should the school board consider a new name for the new facility?

Chester Cooper

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fect 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 letters are provided on an as-is basis and have not been edited in any way.

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