

Opinions

The people get it right when they know the facts

The people of Louisiana did the right thing by rejecting proposed constitutional amendments 1, 3, and 4. The people of Catahoula Parish did even better by rejecting them all.

Proposed Amendment No. 2 that only barely passed statewide does not provide to most people what the summary of its language implies. That summary you may recall reading at the polls says, "Do you support an amendment to lower the maximum allowable rate of individual income tax and to authorize the legislature to provide by law for a deduction for federal income taxes paid?"

Sounds good, right? It lowers the top rate from 6% to 4.75% and that's a good thing. However, it does not affect the lower rates a great many lower income people pay. It lowers your taxes only if you earn over \$100,000 per year (married filing jointly). Under that your tax rate is the same.

Furthermore, (and this is the part that really irritates me) the summary you read at the polls says "to authorize the legislature to provide by law for a deduction for federal income taxes paid". The manner in which the new law "provides for a deduction" is to change

the law to say that "Federal income taxes MAY be allowed as a deductible item in computing state income taxes" rather than saying "Federal income taxes SHALL be allowed". You just lost your deduction for federal income taxes on your state of Louisiana income tax filing.

So, thanks to deceptive language, Proposed Amendment No. 2 passed even though (thankfully) all the rest failed.

I am proud to say that the people of Catahoula Parish voted against all four proposed amendments.

What is even more concerning in all this is that our local state congressional delegates were all lined up in support of these amendments. But they got the spanking at the polls that they deserve.

Indulge me while I repeat yet again, a constitution is for the principles and structure of government. It's not where we authorize parishes to buy surplus asphalt from the state or set tax rates that are subject to change with changing political administrations. The citizens are not to be deceived at the polls by incomplete or misleading characterizations of amendments such as was the case with Proposed Amendment

By: Leo Chappelle

No. 2.

And speaking of voter referenda, coming up for some of us is the bond referendum affecting those in the Harrisonburg, Manifest, and Aimwell area of the parish. Proposed for the recently created School District #10, the purpose of the vote is to authorize borrowing three million dollars for the district to replace entirely the old Harrisonburg gymnasium-cafeteria-classroom building. The structure still has a cornerstone laid by the Masonic Grand Lodge of Louisiana on April 30, 1924. If you go up to the cemetery, you'll see that's not the oldest rock in town, but it's a good start.

The proposition would authorize a 21-mill property tax (\$21 tax per \$1,000 of assessed value). It would probably work out to net only 2.1 mills (\$2.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value) if I correctly understand how the rates are actually applied to us.

Of course, the proposal to accomplish new construction in Harrisonburg is essentially a local initiative. By that I mean Jonesville won't be taxed; Larto won't be taxed, and so forth. But it does have important implications for the entire parish and I plan to say more on it later.

EDITOR'S NOTE

JEB Tales will continue to be featured in the Catahoula News Booster. But due to illness JEB will take a short break.

The good news is the introduction of LeRoy McMillin Jr.'s column. He has deep roots in Catahoula Parish and a love for writing.

He is the son of Leroy and Dot Mcmillin Sr. Paternal grandparents were Tolbert Roy and Hazel Terry McMillin.

His maternal grandfather was Joseph Edward Sargent, owner and publisher of Catahoula News from the 1920's to 1931, and his maternal grandmother was Nellie Irene Huff Sargent .

My first time to see a television

Television was slow to come to Harrisonburg, Louisiana for a lot of reasons. Just like those new-fangled radios from only a few years back. Some folks thought the TV contraption would be looking at them while they were looking at it. They sure didn't want that kind of intrusion in their lives, especially right there in their home watching them eat dinner or getting dressed for the day.

Some even thought Satan somehow had a hand in it and would use it to introduce sin to young and old minds alike. I know there were preachers who were against it for that very reason.

Of course, back then there were not many people who had actually seen a television because the only TV station at the time was in Jackson, Mississippi, 165 miles away as the crow flies.

I saw my first one back around 1950 and I'll never forget it because it was a life-changing event. The only person in town who could get reception from the station in Jackson was the Jailer, Mr. Horace Patten. He and his wife actually lived in the jailer's quarters on the top floor of the courthouse. His new TV had an antenna that was on the roof along with the Sheriff's Department radio antenna. Both needed to be high up to work. Mr. and Mrs. Patten often bought their groceries for the jail at my dad's store and it was no secret that they had a TV. In fact, it was a hot topic for a few weeks. I was naturally curious so I paid close attention to what was said about it, but to tell the truth, it remained a mystery. I just could not imagine a live picture being seen on a television set over a hundred miles away from where it was happening.

One day Mr. Patten asked me if I wanted to see the TV, and of course I said yes. He said come on up to the courthouse after dark. Reception was better then. I didn't know what that meant.

Having delivered groceries to the jail many times, and even played there a lot, it was not a new experience visiting them, but the TV was something I just had to see after reading about it in Popular Science, my favorite magazine. And televisions were starting to be advertised in the Catahoula News. Mrs. Patten had dinner cooked for the prisoners when I arrived and I helped her take some to their cells, but just to those that the cell doors were locked. Most of the prisoners could move about freely, some even helping in the kitchen. We all pretty much knew each other, so introductions weren't needed. Anyway, it was late, about 7:00 PM I guess when Mr. Patten turned the TV on. I was sitting on the floor in front of it. There were a couple of prisoners there too. The tiny screen gradually lit up. It was real white

with little specks flickering about on it, and there was a crackling sound. I couldn't even blink for fear I was going to miss something. This went on for a long time, maybe five or ten minutes, then all of a sudden I could see an image starting to form. And I could hear voices. The image gradually came into a blurry focus about the time I heard the voice say 'Kraft Cheese Whiz.' Then I could make out a very dull image of a jar of Kraft Cheese Whiz.

They were advertising Kraft Cheese Whiz! That's something I knew a lot about. In fact there was some on the table.

The picture and sound faded in and out for a while and I never did see anything else recognizable, so Mr. Patten turned it off saying it wasn't a good night for reception. Even so, I was hooked.

It seemed like a year or so later my dad took us to Jonesville, the closest town that had an appliance store. It was right next to the old theater. Mr. Boyd owned the store and he had a TV in the window. He would leave it on for an hour or so at night so folks could watch it through the window. Pretty smart, I thought. Some sat in their cars but most came up and looked at it up close. I sure did, and like most other kids, I sat on the sidewalk. The picture quality was better so we could actually see the characters.

The shows were short, maybe 30 minutes long. Most were comedy shows at that time of night. Everybody laughed a lot. I had never heard so much laughing, some of it from people I knew who never laughed, or even smiled. It made for a better night.

The station shut down about 8:00 for the night. A 'Test Pattern' showed up right after the National Anthem was played signaling that was it for the day. It promised to be back on the air at 6:00 am with the farm report.

That was all we could talk about on the way home. I think Mama and Daddy were hooked too. We finally got our own TV. It was a really big Sylvania with 'Halo Screen.' But Daddy had to have a really tall antenna installed to get good reception from two new TV stations that had set up in Monroe and Alexandria.

Daddy was proud that all we had to do was press and hold a button on a controller to change the direction of the antenna from Monroe to Alexandria, or even Jackson if the reception was good that night. On a good night, we could get all three channels. So Daddy did good by adding the remote control antenna.

As good as it was, the images were, of course, all in black and white. And they were constantly disrupted by a passing airplane somewhere between us and the station, or a rain shower, or a weather inversion, or even a car going by

By: Leroy McMillin, Jr.

that had a faulty coil on the ignition. Birds also disrupted the signal, especially if there were more than one or two hanging on the antenna spokes. I always thought they could somehow feel the electrical signal in the antenna and they were experiencing their own version of watching TV.

Daddy and I liked watching boxing on Wednesday and Friday nights. I didn't even like fighting but it was exciting to see famous boxers fight it out for the "World Championship."

Ed Sullivan, of course, introduced us to a lot of new talent, while any shows with humor, although sometimes hokey, were always fun to watch.

I liked watching major league baseball games being played live in different cities. Otis and I wasted lots of hours watching games at his house. We could tell by the sound of the bat hitting the ball that it was going to be a hit or even a home run, and watch it fly through the air until it got there. Dizzy Dean gave it his own version of 'color' by the way he called the game. One day soon we would actually be watching it in 'living color.'

What a wonderful world it is when seen in living color from your own living room.

I can't tell you what I last watched on TV, but I can sure remember what I watched first. And it makes me want some Kraft Cheese Whiz.

So maybe there was some truth in how TV might influence our lives. For me, it has all been good.

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