

Opinions

Editorial Economic warriors soldier on

There are people in Catahoula Parish who make us proud. But I'm not talking this time about military veterans. I'm talking about the folks who are fighting to pull Catahoula Parish out of its economic crash dive. I hesitate to mention names only for fear of omitting someone, but that's my ignorance and no fault of theirs.

You've no doubt read about Betty Gaither, Susan Huff Gilley, and Miles Milan McMillin who with help from Ginger and Jack Breithaupt from LaSalle Parish have worked and are working so hard on behalf of the Harrisonburg community.

My hat is off to Sondra Redmon, Lisa Anderson, Calvin Holley, Laura King, Rodney Sones, Hiram Evans, Robert Cook, and my better half, Dot Chappelle for participating on the Catahoula Economic and Industrial Development District (CEIDD), or so-called "economic development board". The participation in any capacity of local business woman Alicia Bettis should be welcome. She's educated, motivated, and smart.

Despite whatever other troubles he may have, the Mayor of Jonesville, Milton Ceasar, continues to seek outside resources to advance the economic survival and growth of Jonesville.

It doesn't take a genius to see that success there (or Larto or Harrisonburg or anywhere) would impact the entire parish.

At the last meeting of the Jonesville Town Council, the Mayor once again displayed his gift for seeking out the kind of good people who have the skills and knowledge to help. Having previously called on Southern University to offer business development advice, on November 10, 2020 the Town Council entertained a brief talk by Paul Holmes, acquisition consultant to LaMATS.

LaMATS is the acronym for Louisiana Municipal Advisory and Technical Services Bureau. They're a "wholly owned subsidiary of the Louisiana Municipal Association. In addition to advice about buying things, they also consult on "revenue capture" (tax collecting), and how to save money on municipal operations.

Thinking that Catahoula Parish could benefit from a little expert advice, I asked and, yes, they also consult with parish governments, i.e., police juries.

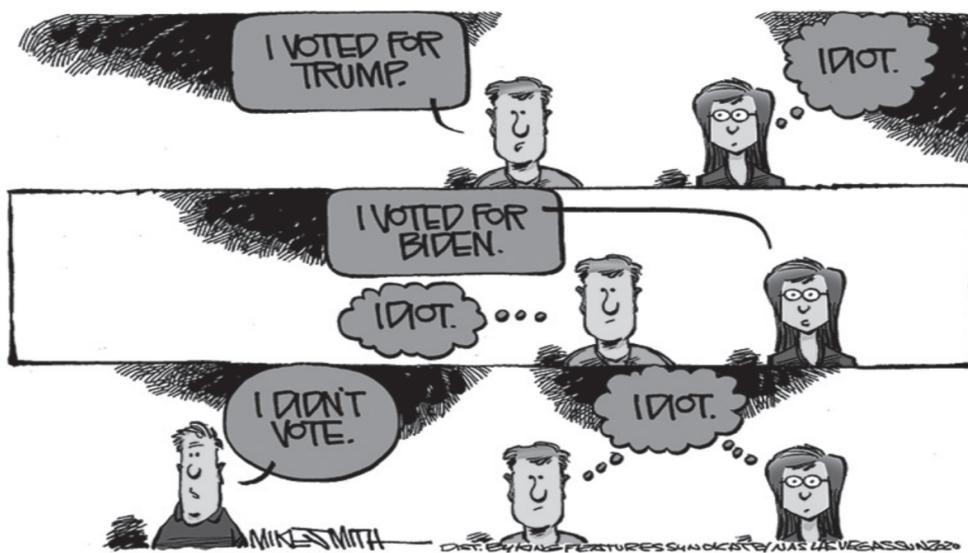
We may have some rude shocks ahead. It is far from clear what difficulties may arise from

By Leo Chappelle

alleged irregularities in the finances of Fire District #4 which had a cooperative agreement with Fire District #2. The Town of Jonesville is stepping up to assist after some as yet undefined problems are said to have impacted the readiness of FD#4. We'll have to see how all that turns out but it will probably be a couple of months or more before we know what to expect. At this point, it appears we may still be able to dodge an economic bullet from all that, but as I said, it isn't obvious how things will turn out.

No matter what happens, we cannot afford a local government at any level that is comfortable operating as we have for the last 15 or 20 years. Times have changed and our margin of error is gone.

What this last means is that the Police Jury as well as our town and village governments will have to respond with all hands on deck for the duration. An economically failing parish will impact our schools and children. This isn't mere pessimism; it's the truth. We need people in our local government who are committed to do something about it.



JEB Tales

First, I would like to say how much better the road sites look thanks to Mr. Shelby Trisler and his crew. Also, Jonesville really looks better with the new flags on the old bridge and where they trimmed under the trees at the end of the bridge.

Basketball Memories

Last Thursday I went to Clayton to bid a fence job close to the old Clayton School. I arrived early so I sat in the shade while waiting for Mr. Josh Conner. Sitting there brought memories of my first organized basketball game which happened to be in the Clayton school gym.

Since I was taller than anyone on the team Coach Cater Aplin had me to jump center. I tipped the ball to my best friend Otto Davis, who took off and dribbled the ball to the wrong goal and made a beautiful shot for the other team.

Otto more than made up for his mistake by scoring twelve points which was over more than half of our twenty-two points the whole team scored. For the rest of his life Otto said he had fourteen points in that game.

Our little elementary school team got better and better and won the Catahoula Parish tournament. Otto was our best player. Two years later when school started our freshman year, Otto could not play because he had to work after school to help his mother make ends meet. Even though Otto could not play basketball he remained one of my friends and grew up to be an outstanding, hardworking citizen, husband, and father. I sure miss Otto.

When it came time to pick the varsity team of course Darrell Boothe, Charles Wesley Boothe, George Bartmess, Leo Boothe, Otis Earl Randall, Wayne Kirkland, Author Ray Laing, Larry Wayne Evans, Lee Breithaupt and Daniel Mayo made the team and got the ten new varsity uniforms. Coach Aplin said, "John Ed, you made the team, but you will have to wear this old uniform and I will order you a new one next year. When I got home and checked the shorts part of my uniform it had elastic sewn inside the pants legs. George, Leo, and Darrell were happy to inform me that I had a girl's uniform!

I was afraid that if I complained, Coach Aplin would just drop me from the team. However, he found another pair of boy's shorts for me. I didn't get to play much, but when I did it was made clear to me to get the ball to Darrell, George, or one of the other boys, set a screen for one of them and then go try to get a rebound. We had a rather good year and came in second to Block

in the Tri-Parish league.

My sophomore year I got to play more and more, and the other players got better and better. Especially Darrell, Leo, George, and Daniel.

After mid-term some of the boys left the team and Coach Aplin informed me that I would be starting in the Block game. Block had recently finished a successful football season and were not at their best basketball yet. George had seventeen points in the first half, so Coach Otis Jackson put two men guarding him in the second half. This left me open many times and I finished with seventeen points and we won! So, for the first time my name was in the Catahoula News sports section. "Bartmess brothers Lead Bulldogs to Victory!"

The next week we were brought down to earth by one of the best teams I ever played against, the Enterprise Indians, led by Mike McGuffee, Arkie Crawford, Pete Ainsworth, T-Bob Cassels, and Murphy Ray Cassels. By the way that team won fifty games that year.

My junior year the bulldogs still had Darrell, Leo, George, Daniel Mayo, and several young players my job was still to guard the best player on the other team when we were not playing a zone defense. Later I realized it was not because I was so good on defense but that it did not hurt the team much if I fouled out.

I remember the Ferriday team had a giant of a man named Dumpy Graves who had forty points against us after three quarters. Coach Aplin put us in a two-two zone with me guarding Dumpy, man to man. He finished with fifty points. George always loved telling people that I had held Dumpy to fifty points.

We won several tournaments and were in the championship game of the Tri-Parish league. Leo and I have different memories of why we lost that game.

My senior year at Harrisonburg was full of change. First, we got a new coach, Joe L. Green. Coach Green was fresh out of the army and drill sergeant tough. I was the only senior on the team, but we had all those good young players back. All of them did not last until our first game, but we were in the best condition of any team I ever played on. Some of those good young players were Shelby Ray Boothe, Turman Boothe, Berry Chapman, Joe Townsend, and Jackie Owens. Shelby Ray was a demon on defense, a good ball handler who could get the down court against a press and was determined

By John Ed Bartmess, Jr.

to get the ball inside to Barry or me. Turman was a very good shooter. Joe was not a starter but could go in and play any position. I remember Joe making an impossible shot while being knocked down, which won the game. Jackie Owens was the best left-handed shooter I ever played with and could get the ball inside if Barry or I were open. Jackie should have shot more which he did the next two years. Berry Chapman was a very unselfish player who loved defense, setting screens, and getting rebounds.

Under Coach Green we played all corners. In addition to the usual tournaments we entered the Newellton, Jena, Gilbert, and Atlanta tournaments.

EPILOG: Coaches Joe L. Green and Cater Aplin had a great influence on my life. Coach Green got me a job as the girls' basketball coach at Saint Matthews High School while I was still in college. He also coached most of my sisters, most of whom made All-State. Mr. Cater Aplin is one of my heroes who served in WWII. He also drew the plans for Jim Bowies and gave me some very good advice from time to time.

Catahoula News Booster

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