

Opinions

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Trash or treasure

After the Police Jury meeting on Monday, November 23, 2020, Harold Sones shared with me some of his thinking about one of our biggest problems in Catahoula Parish: trash disposal. The fact is that without a sanitation service there will be no economic growth in Catahoula. Furthermore, that service also will have to go house to house.

Trash hoppers scattered around the parish won't get the job done. If even a few residents decide to skip the trip to the trash dumpster and throw their garbage in a ditch or the woods that defeats the entire project of keeping Catahoula as a clean and attractive place to live and work.

Mr. Sones is thinking ahead to the expiration of both the current sanitation contract and the exhaustion of the backup plan for which the people voted a couple of years ago. That plan was to allow the use of the almost half of a million dollars in excess tax collections for the Health Unit Fund to plug the funding gap in our sanitation service. It allowed us to avoid another tax increase while there was

still money lying around doing nothing. Now that cash is running out.

There are issues with Sones' plan to rescue our garbage service. While Mr. Sones tossed out a very modest number of \$12 per month per 911 address, he also said that people who had a 911 address that was not an actual residence, such as a camp for example, could appeal for an exemption from the tax. However, it's still unresolved as to what would happen if the resident didn't pay his legitimate garbage bill.

If you don't pay your water bill, then your water is cut off. But if you don't pay your garbage bill, it only hurts the parish when you start throwing your household waste in the woods. Would someone who is too irresponsible to pay a \$12 monthly garbage bill be responsible enough to burn all of his trash instead? Seems unlikely. Besides, burning garbage is still a bad look. We need to find out more about what other communities do about this.

Mr. Sones is right to be considering this issue now. We all need to do that.

By Leo Chappelle

There is something about government, especially small local government that we all probably need to keep in mind: these people are part-time workers and they aren't experts at anything except maybe getting re-elected. The point is that self-government is just that: SELF-government. You, the citizen, have to do a lot of the work. And failing to pay attention to what is happening will cost you. It will cost in bad laws, higher taxes, unnecessary taxes, and a lot of just plain foolishness.

The people on the Police Jury and the school board who run things in Catahoula Parish are, so far as I can tell, very decent folks. But as I said, they're not experts in government, law, civil engineering, or anything remotely connected to public administration. They're just as you and I are, trying to do the best they can with what they have.

Now this isn't an excuse for them. But it's a warning to us. We have to pay attention. Our elected officials don't really know very much, if any, more about it than we do.

So, stay involved.



JEB Tales

The night Nathan Roark brought the house down

In the early 1990's one of our favorite places to go was Branson, MO. However, Earl Coker, one of the musicians with the Old Place band told us of a place called Mountain View, Arkansas which had good blue grass and country music.

Since we always tried to take our family with us on vacation, we rented a cabin on the White River for our bunch. It was small and the walls were thin. When it was time to go, I heard Nathan tell Jackie, "I don't want to go and hear a bunch of hillbillies blow on a jug and strum on a banjo!" Jackie said, "Shut up we are going!"

After we got there, I bought tickets so I could sit in an aisle seat. If you're a man over fifty you know why. Nathan wanted a seat on the back row and in a darkened area. When the show started the comedian, Aunt Minnie, stopped at my seat, ran her fingers through my hair and said, "Sir you have enough hair to be a T.V. evangelist, what channel are you on? I could hear Nathan laughing from the back row.

The hillbillies turned out to be professional musicians from Nashville, Tennessee and the two girl singers were exceptionally good.

However, the best was yet to come, Brick-Shy who was a few bricks shy of a load and Aunt Minnie, two of the best comedians I have ever heard were fantastic. Nathan laughed so hard you could hear him all over the theater.

Fast forward to the year 2000. We had built a little restaurant near the Duty Ferry called Jim Bowie's Relay Station. Nathan would not sing for the crowd, but after we closed each night, he would entertain all the cooks, wait staff and other workers with some of the best Merle Haggard and Gene Watson you ever heard.

One Saturday night the scheduled singer called about thirty minutes before we were to open and said he was sick and could not make it. I begged and pleaded, and Nathan very reluctantly agreed

to sing that night. But that led to a problem, he was a hit, and the people would not leave. I had to get him to take a break so we could serve our other guests.

Our family kept going to Mountain View and going to the White River Hoe-Down. I usually bought about fifteen tickets so when I asked the owner, Aunt Minnie, if Nathan could sing on Saturday night? She said have him come to rehearsal tomorrow morning and we will try to work him in for one song. She emphasized ONE song.

Saturday afternoon something unusual happened, three tour bus loads of former military folks and their spouses made it to Mt. View and bought two hundred and twenty-five tickets to that night's show. It was a sell out!

The show started with a bang! They loved Aunt Minnie and they loved the band. Towards the end of the show the emcee announced, our next guest from Enterprise, Louisiana is going to do a song. I believe you military folks will like. Please make welcome Nathan Roark! There was some polite applause. But when Nathan sang the first words of Merle Haggard's "Fighting Side of Me" they came alive. They got to their feet; some were dancing in the aisles. When Nathan got through and started leaving the stage, the band started playing again and Nathan had to sing some more of the same song again.

Military people are not shy! Some of them started shouting encore! Encore! Finally, Aunt Minnie brought Nathan back and told him, you must do one more song or these people will not sit down. Nathan looked at Shirley and Shirley nodded yes and moved to the dark back of the theater. When Nathan asked the band leader if they knew "Marie Laveau" they started playing it at once and played it very well. When it came time for Shirley to do Marie Laveau's part it scared the light man so bad he turned the lights on at the back of the theater. So, the next time

By John Ed Bartmess, Jr.

it was time for Shirley's part the crowd gave a great big applause.

That night after the show, as we walked around the town square, you would have thought Merle and Dolly were in town.

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