

Opinions

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Page 3A

Doing good, doing dumb

Doing good just before Thanksgiving (November 23, 2020) Dorothy Oliver visited the Police Jury to bring them up to speed with her annual report on public housing in the area. Since 26% of the population in Catahoula Parish is below the Federal poverty level, it seems there ought to be a big demand for such assistance. However, the program is in a double bind. It's not just difficult to find enough landlords willing to participate, but it's difficult to find financially responsible renters. The program offers assistance but it's not free. Many believe that it's important for several reasons that residents share in the responsibility.

Ms. Oliver was careful to explain that participating landlords have a choice of the clients to whom they rent. Furthermore, if a tenant is destructive of the property or doesn't pay his portion (about \$125) of the monthly rent, then he can be evicted with 30 days' notice. The Federal government, of course, pays the overwhelming majority of the expense. The big drag is that it's difficult to find

landlords willing to undergo the required pre-inspection of the rental units. Health and safety considerations are the major issues. Providing adequate bedroom space or constructing ramps for handicapped people are the sort of needs that can turn off prospective landlords.

Apparently, though, the housing authority also finds it difficult to get enough financially responsible tenants to fill the 66 units authorized. For those with questions who wish to participate, Ms. Oliver can be reached at (318)758-2905.

Doing dumb lately we have heard a lot of noise about defunding the police. I almost want to laugh when I hear such talk. The reason is that if you listen to BLM or Antifa, you might think that we're overrun by racist shock troops with badges. Well, consider this:

America has fewer police officers per hundred thousand residents now than at almost anytime in the last ten years except for 2017. The country has nearly 100,000 fewer cops than ten years ago. These numbers come from the Federal Bureau of Investigation Crime Data Explorer.

By Leo Chappelle

And here's one more thing to remember when the Left starts to demand a ban on "assault rifles" (and they will). In Louisiana, in only 43 out of 3,079 cases were rifles of any type used in a violent crime. No, we're not talking about that time you shot a deer from the highway. Either a "blunt object" or a knife was used almost ten times as often. Louisiana's violent criminals used a rifle of any type in violent crime only .013% of the time that they used any weapon at all.

The nation's violent criminals as a whole used a rifle of some sort in their crime even less by selecting a long gun a mere .008% of the time. I bring up this sort of thing now because, as most of us are well aware, that despite having a presidency that includes a record stock market after facilitating development of a vaccine in a global pandemic and even achieving the holy grail of international diplomacy, Peace in the Middle East, we elected a guy who promised to make Beto O'Rourke his point man on gun control. Great. Merry Christmas.



JEB Tales

Alligator Farmers

After we built Jim Bowie's Relay Station, Mr. Eck Bozeman, an expert on tourism, told me that to keep people coming back to our restaurant we needed to keep adding attractions. He was right. Soon after we built the "Sweetheart Covered Bridge" I decided to put alligators under the bridge.

I called my brother George who had over a thousand alligators on his farm. When I asked him if I could have three or four alligators, he said sure. The following November he called me one night and said, "be at my gator barn at six in the morning and bring your truck, a hammer, crowbar and a flashlight."

The next day when I got there, I saw several trucks and trailers. For the next several hours we loaded those trucks and trailers with gators. Finally, at 8:00 p.m. George said, "get your hammer, crowbar and flashlight and follow me." He led me to a plywood door which opened to a concrete floor under the top floor that he had raised alligators on. It was pitch black under that top floor. He then handed me a contraption that we had been grabbing the gators on the top floor with. Over the years some of the smaller gators had fallen through to the concrete floor and had grown faster than those on the top floor.

When I crawled in, I was in mud about eight inches deep. I complained to George about the mud and he informed me that it was not mud. From the smell, I should have known what it was.

After capturing about fifty alligators four to six feet long, I crawled out, washed myself off with a water hose and asked, "where are my six alligators?" George told me he had loaded them in the gator transport box he had put in my truck. He then said, "By the way you now have forty-six gators!" What? I do not have a place for that many alligators! George calmly replied, "Well you better have a place by next spring before they come out of hibernation and you really need to get your alligator farming license pretty soon."

When it came time to remove the gators from their hibernation boxes, my daughter Jackie and two of my granddaughters, Diana and Danielle came to help. Everything went very well until one of the gators came alive and began to move. Diana jumped to the top of the cab on the pick-up.

By spring I had built a pond with an alligator fence which passed inspection by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Also, I had gotten my license and found out alligator feed is the most expensive feed you can buy, and alligators eat more than hogs.

One of the gators George had given me was white! What a tourist attraction I thought, a white gator! When George came to see my operation he said, "you really need to take care of that white gator, they are rare." My reply was "How in the world do you doctor an alligator in the pond with forty other hungry alligators?" I decided to put the white alligator in a small pond close to the restaurant. That did not work out and the white gator died.

When it came time to move four of the gators to under the Sweetheart Bridge, Brian Wade, Daniel Griffin, and a few other young men who were regulars at Jim Bowie's volunteered to help. We had a lot of boys and young men who came to Jim Bowie's. Once when I mentioned how many we had, Shirley explained to me that they were not coming to see us or for the good food and entertainment. They were coming because of our three beautiful granddaughters, Diana, Danielle, and Casey. We also had other beautiful waitresses. Shirley always was a smart businesswoman.

Henry Lee Townsend, a good friend and one of the best outdoorsmen I ever knew loaned me an alligator catcher thing and we went alligator catching. The very first one I caught was the "Boss Gator" the biggest, baddest one in the pond. When we pulled him close to the bank he started rolling over and over pulling my hand up into the pipe which the cable went through. I hollered to Brian, get on him, get on him! Brian said, how do I do that? "I said, "I don't give a darn get the heck on him!" Brian says I did not say darn or heck.

We caught four nice gators and put them into the pond under the covered bridge. Boy were they a draw! We even had an old candy machine filled with alligator feed which kids loved to use to feed the gators. We also fed them scrapes from the restaurant. Did you know alligators love hushuppies?

Then the game warden knocked on our back door and told Shirley we were going to be arrested and they were going to seize our gators. I was off building fence when the homeowner handed me his phone and said, "your wife wants to speak to you."

I told Shirley where the alligator farming license were in my office. She showed them to the warden, and he wanted to take them with him. She refused. Later that day he called and said he had looked on the computer and found we were legal.

Then came August 2005 and Hurricane Katrina. Katrina not only caused 1833 fatalities and 125 billion dollars in damage but flooded South Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. All this

By John Ed Bartmess, Jr.

rainfall came just days before the alligator season was to open.

I had gotten the price of alligators a few weeks before and the price was not good at all. However, since alligator feed was still extremely high, I decided to drain my pond and sell my gators.

Earl Isonhood and James Bratton agreed to help me catch the gators. We put a large fishhook on the end of a joint of top rail. James and I would drag the gator out of the hole in the side of the bank and Earl would shoot the gator with his thirty-eight police revolver.

The gators had grown so much that I could only haul a few at a time on my pick-up. Shirley went with me and as we were driving through Monroe to West Monroe, my truck was so overloaded that my headlights were reflecting off the overhead road signs.

We finally got to the hide buyer and when he pulled the first gator out, he jumped back and said, "there's no tag on this gator!" I said, well the tags are in the truck. Would you believe he made me tag every single gator before he would touch it?

When he handed me the check, I was shocked. It was three times more than what he had told me before. He saw the look on my face and explained that all the rain from Katrina had flooded the lakes, bayous, rivers and creeks and the alligators were so scattered that no one could fill their orders. Shirley said, "we will have another load tomorrow!"

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