Steve Caraway announces candidacy for Kenner Chief of Police

Following a 28 year career with the Kenner Police Department, recently retired KPD Captain, Steve Caraway, has announced his plans to run for chief of police in the upcoming April 2006 election. The position will be left vacant with the departure of incumbent police chief, Nick Congemi, who is prevented by term limits from seeking re-election.

As he addressed a crowd of supporters at the Lion’s Club Hall on Florida Avenue, Caraway recounted his career in law enforcement, which he said had always been a lifelong ambition for him. “I never once questioned in my mind or heart what career I would continue on page 22

“Big Frank” Macaluso named city’s “Unsung Hero”

By ALLAN KATZ

Long before he was named Kenner’s “Unsung Hero,” Frank Macaluso had a special status among his fellow workers at City Hall and Kenner citizens who knew how hard he worked and how much he cares about his community. Among Macaluso’s admirers is Kenner Mayor Phil Capitano, who says that during Hurricane Katrina— when many city workers put their lives at risk and went beyond the call of duty— “Big Frank” showed great initiative and led by example.

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New emergency preparedness plan to be implemented for Jefferson Parish essential personnel in time for hurricane season

In anticipation of the 2006 hurricane season, Jefferson Parish officials recently announced the implementation of a new emergency preparedness plan for essential parish personnel that will replace the 1998 “Doomsday Plan” activated during Hurricane Katrina.

“The 1998 ‘Doomsday Plan’ is no more, and will never again be used in Jefferson Parish,” Parish President Aaron Broussard said, adding that it was time to put “lessons learned” from Katrina into action.

In stark contrast to the Doomsday Plan, which called for the evacuation of essential personnel to a distant location above the flood plain, Broussard explained that a key difference in the new 2006 plan is, instead, a focus on creating a “system of sheltering” for essential personnel within Jefferson Parish, in close proximity to their operation stations.

“This ‘system of sheltering’ will include safe houses that will be built at the sites of our manned drainage pump stations and our water works plants by the start of next hurricane season,” Broussard said.

In addition, the parish is also in the process of identifying other shelters that could be used to house essential personnel, which will include structures that have been “fortified” to withstand various categories of hurricanes.

Broussard said that the ‘06 draft plan, once completed by his administration, will solicit parish council input, and input from appropriate federal and state agencies, before being submitted to parish business and civic groups for review and comment.

“The final version will then be announced to the general public and will be a focus of education during every hurricane season thereafter,” Broussard said.★

Howland announces campaign for District 3 City Council seat

Kenner businesswoman Mary-Sharon Howland, owner of the Rivertown Candy Basket and Protect-A-Home, Inc., recently announced the kickoff of her campaign for Kenner’s District 3 council seat. Incumbent District 3 Councilwoman, Jeannie Black, is prevented by term limits from seeking the same office in next April’s election.

Howland is currently serving her 11th year on the Board of Directors of the Kenner Professional Women’s Association (KPWA), where she has held several positions including a four-term presidency. An

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Fire Department awarded $1.6 million grant to hire more firefighters

By ALLAN KATZ

Kenner Mayor Phil Capitano and Kenner Fire Chief Mike Zito recently announced Kenner will receive a $1.6 million U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant that will enable the Kenner Fire Department to hire up to 21 more firefighters. The number of firefighters in the department will increase by almost 25 percent to 107 people with the newly hired personnel. Hiring will begin in January 2006.

Capitano and Zito pursued and obtained the grant with the assistance of U.S. Representative Bobby Jindal, R-Kenner, with hopes that additional firefighters will enable the KFD to have better 24-hour coverage for the city and come closer to meeting the staffing levels recommended by the National Fire Protection Association.

The grant will pay a portion of salaries and benefits for newly hired Kenner firefighters with the amount decreasing each year over a five-year period. Then Kenner will assume complete responsibility for the pay and benefits of the firefighters.

Congressman Jindal said he was glad to assist the Capitano administration and the city to expand the ranks of the KFD.

“I am very pleased to announce this grant for the Kenner fire department,” Jindal said. “I would also like to extend a personal thank you to the brave men and women of the fire department who continued on page 31

St. Jerome Catholic Church serves as an outlet for Kenner recovery efforts

By TROY BROUSSARD

As a part of its mission statement, St. Jerome Catholic Church, located at 2400 33rd Street, professes a desire “to assist all persons” while sustaining a commitment to grow in faith as a community. In the months following Katrina, this Kenner cornerstone has been called upon to do those things and more, serving as both a physical and spiritual resource for people in the process of recovering from the storm.

When it became apparent to church officials that the buildings of St. Jerome’s physical plant sustained relatively minor damage and had been spared from flooding, Religious Education Director, Gail Howland announced the kickoff of her campaign for Kenner’s District 3 council seat. Incumbent District 3 Councilwoman, Jeannie Black, is prevented by term limits from seeking the same office in next April’s election.

Howland is currently serving her 11th year on the Board of Directors of the Kenner Professional Women’s Association (KPWA), where she has held several positions including a four-term presidency. An

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Imagine running a mile in 37 seconds.

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Congressional aid package to assist Jefferson Parish in future storm defense

A more secure levee system, shoring up potential problems on the Jefferson side of the 17th Street Canal, and pumping station upgrades are only a few of the benefits that Jefferson Parish plans to obtain in light of the passage of a $29 billion hurricane package by Congress this past December.

“Congress has taken a very necessary action in order to create momentum for rebuilding in Jefferson Parish,” said Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard. “First and foremost, we will be beefing up the protection for our area against hurricane storm surges and hurricane flood waters. That’s going to be very critical for Jefferson Parish as well as our region.”

The legislation, which allocates $2.9 billion to repair and upgrade the levee system in South Louisiana, also provides for $6.2 billion in block grants that can be used to reimburse home owners in Louisiana who experienced uninsured losses.

According to Broussard, some of the federal funding provided by the package to area flood control projects came with a welcome provision that was also unexpected.

“Traditionally, federal money that is allocated to the Southeast Louisiana Flood Control Project (SELA) is subject to a 75-25 match,” Broussard explained. “But it is my understanding that this money from Congress will come through the SELA program without the necessity of a local match. It will all be purely federal funds.”

Among the projects that will receive a boost in funding are upgrades to pumping station capacity and infrastructure, including those located in Kenner.

“We are continually upgrading the pump capacities at our pump stations throughout the parish, and certainly we have earmarked new protections for pumping capacity within the city of Kenner. The safe houses to be built at the pump station sites will allow pump operators and grate cleaners to ride out the hurricane on site and therefore be immediately available to begin pump operations as soon as the hurricane winds have passed,” Broussard said.

Broussard lauded Jefferson Parish’s Congressional delegation for working with local officials to help fund the necessary improvements.

“Jefferson Parish has been lobbying Congress since the hurricane on a number of different occasions, trying to make sure that monies would be earmarked for these types of improvements that would focus on our local needs as well as our regional needs. This lobbying certainly has paid off. We think that this package is a good start to what we are expecting from Congress in the way of immediate financial help to better protect and fortify our area against future hurricanes.”

Gazebos repaired in Laketown

Katrina-damaged gazebos in Laketown are now ready for use after being repaired by Kenner’s Public Works Department.

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Recovery from Katrina will be a slogging, slow marathon, not a sprint

By ALLAN KATZ

I am so sorry to have to tell you this, but the recovery of our region from Hurricane Katrina is going to be longer, slower and more difficult than most people realize. It will take years to fully recover, even for Kenner, which escaped the worst of the storm.

While I was pleased that President Bush announced a $3.1 billion levee improvement program, it seems to me that the response of the Bush administration in particular, and Congress in general, has been slow, disinterested, and often hypocritical. It is especially disappointing in the President’s case, because Bush has many personal friends in Louisiana and many ties to this state which twice overwhelmingly gave him its electoral votes in very close national elections.

But appreciation is the most short-lived of all human emotions. Don’t look for the cavalry to come riding over the hill anytime soon, because they’re still a long way off. I don’t doubt that eventually, over a period of years, federal aid will come to Louisiana. I don’t doubt that the insurance companies, over a period of years, will settle all or almost all of their claims here. But it won’t be soon.

U.S. Senator David Vitter had it right recently when he said, “Our recovery will not be a sprint. It will be a marathon.” I think it will be similar to running a marathon in Army boots through the same kind of thick mud that filled the homes of those of us that were flood victims.

This is not to disparage the efforts of our Congressional delegation. I think that U.S. Senators Mary Landrieu and Vitter, Congressman Bobby Jindal, a Kenner resident, and Congressman Bill Jefferson are working 18 and 20-hour days to try to convince their colleagues to treat Louisiana fairly. It isn’t their fault that Katrina came calling at a time in their careers when they are relatively junior in terms of their power in Washington.

So here we are. My theory is that it is on us to rebuild Louisiana. We’ll need lots of help from our banks and homesteads. Let’s hope all the bank and homestead executives are as committed to rebuilding as Guy Williams, the CEO of Gulf Coast Bank, who is aggressively working to help homeowners and business owners get back on their feet.

My guess is that the rebuilding of New Orleans will be a 10 to 15 year proposition. It won’t take that long for Jefferson Parish and Kenner to rebuild and be reinvigorated, but I suspect that it will be at least five to seven years before we feel that our rebuilding is complete.

Implicit in this is a changing of the guard in terms of the economy of the region. Jefferson is going to be the largest parish in Louisiana for decades to come, followed by Baton Rouge. The Jefferson economy will be second to none in the Gulf South and Kenner will continue to be Jefferson’s municipal gem. So, there is a lot of opportunity for Kenner in the post-Katrina recovery. Mayor Phil Capitano and his staff have developed an excellent plan that has put Kenner in a good position to eventually get some federal help. But getting the deal done will require incredible tenacity and patience.

In the recovery, I think the advantage will go to government officials, business leaders, and homeowners who launch their own initiatives to achieve their goals. The sad ones will be those who wait for the government to bail them out. As most of us already have learned, dealing with government bureaucracy is even more painful than having your teeth pulled without the benefit of anesthesia.

Those I feel worst for are the senior citizens who have lost everything. We, who are younger, can see ourselves rebuilding over a period of years. But, if you’re in your 80s or 90s, mourning the loss of your prized memorabilia, it’s difficult to imagine yourself slogging along for a decade toward a complete rebuilding of your life.

For the generation of South Louisiana residents who will bear the load of the rebuilding, this needs to be our finest hour. We’re going to have to do the heavy lifting ourselves. It would be a wonderful thing to one day tell our grandchildren, “We didn’t get the help we needed and deserved, but, despite everything, we rebuilt our cities, our neighborhoods and our economy. And we did it ourselves, for ourselves and our children.”

Jan 2006

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It is time for real leadership to emerge in Louisiana

By JEFF CROUERE

Ladies and gentlemen of Louisiana, what does it take to spur action in Baton Rouge? I guess it takes more than the greatest natural disaster in history. Most observers thought that Katrina’s destruction would cause legislators and the Blanco administration to offer sweeping changes in our political system, our government, our tax code, and our business climate. Well, most observers were wrong because they didn’t realize the power of “politics as usual.” In Louisiana, old habits die hard, especially when you consider that we have been operating this way for 80 plus years.

Why is the state so gripped by this type of political mentality? For decades, many voters made rather careless decisions about elections and, in some cases, were downright lackadaisical. In fact, our state elected a known con man, Edwin Edwards, as governor four times. We entrusted a crook to the highest office in the state, but we didn’t stop there. Louisiana has placed into office more politicians who have been investigated, indicted, and convicted than any state in the union. Why? Well, it didn’t seem to matter whether the politicians were honest or offered a compelling platform, voters just wanted good entertainment. We wanted our politicians to crack jokes, be smooth, and have plenty of charisma. In effect, politics became another form of entertainment in Louisiana; however, the joke has always been on us.

Politically: a entertainment industry is still alive because, despite Katrina, not enough has changed and “politics as usual” still reigns. In recent weeks, there have been some disturbing examples of typical Louisiana politics that are enough to make responsible voters sick. After a legislative session that accomplished some modest goals, but didn’t offer the type of reform that Louisiana truly needs, the floor leaders for Governor Blanco claim that a special session is not needed in January. They mistakenly believe that the state can proceed as normal with the regularly scheduled session beginning in late March. Blanco floor leaders, State Senator Mike Blackwell (D-Pascagoula) and State Senator Donald Hines (D-Bunkie) both think that any state action needed in response to Katrina can wait until the regular session. According to Salter, “I can’t think of anything that can’t wait. I don’t see the need for that unless there is some issue I am not aware of.” According to Hines, “What is so pressing that can’t wait until March?”

Don’t see the need? What is so pressing? Folks, what planet are these “leaders” living on? Did they just arrive in Louisiana from “La La Land” or do they just not know what reality is anymore? Give me a break, maybe in Bunkie and Florien there are no pressing needs, but in New Orleans, Lake Charles, Slidell, parts of Jefferson Parish and St. Bernard, to name only a few of many areas, we are dealing with a crisis unlike any other Louisiana has ever faced.

People who are living in hotel rooms, or with friends and relatives in other states, are looking for good reasons why they should move back to Louisiana. These “leaders” are giving them none. Hey, Hines and Salter, we have a crisis here! New Orleans has lost 400,000 people and the state has lost 81,000 businesses. We need to make radical changes and we need to get moving because time is wasting. Unfortunately, we don’t have the luxury of either waiting for a regular session in March or of operating as normal in the interim. Louisiana politicians require uncommon leadership, but, tragically, Louisiana citizens are getting weak leadership on all levels: local, state, and federal.

Here is what should happen. Legislators should exercise the right to call themselves into session and forget about the Governor and her “leaders.”
Kenner continues to progress

By PHIL CAPITANO
Kenner Mayor

“The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.” Dolly Parton’s oft-quoted outlook on life is a fitting mantra for those of us living in Kenner. Heaven knows we’ve put up with our share of rain, and now it’s time to look forward to the rainbow.

We have been put to the test in the most extreme way over the past three months, and I’d say we passed with flying colors. Mind you, this is due to the resilience and determination of the people of Kenner who refused to let the devastation from a hurricane destroy our city forever. Our citizens banded together to rebuild, and the sight of neighbor helping neighbor was and remains quite a sight to behold.

Residents and city employees endured seemingly endless traffic, hour-long waits at restaurants, lengthy lines just to get into a grocery store and the innumerable inconveniences of life after a major hurricane. Never though did I see or even suspect that the spirit and character of Kenner’s own were slowly dying. We’ve grown stronger this past year, and we’ve grown wiser. A new year is anxiously awaiting us, and I for one can’t wait to put a close on 2005. I anticipate using the knowledge we’ve acquired in the tumultuous times to guide us in the peaceful times.

Kenner has begun a rebirth in 2006. Businesses and restaurants are open, residents are rebuilding, and life is slowly but surely returning to the “new normal.” Our recreation department is up and running, city projects such as roadways and drainage improvements are continuing, and our government is fully operational.

Many changes are on the horizon, with a major election in Kenner on April 1, with qualifying in February. My administration will certainly be the target of numerous rhetoric missiles, but like a horse with blinders on, our goal remains the same – to continue leading the way in rebuilding greater Louisiana.

We’ve made a commitment to the entire country, the city, and ourselves not to let Kenner fall by the wayside. Negativity from naysayers may surround us, but my administration is dedicated to ensure that Kenner progresses like never before. We will stay the course, and we will be better than ever before.

I ask you to remain strong in the upcoming year. The road in 2006 will be filled with challenges, but together we’ll make it through. The rainbow may be hidden behind the clouds, but when it finally appears, it’ll be a sight to behold.

I wish you all the best in 2006. If there is anything I can do for you, please contact me at 468-7240 or kennermayor@kenner.la.us.
Kenner Food Bank is a busy place during holiday season

By ALLAN KATZ

In the weeks following the onslaught of Hurricane Katrina, and with Christmas drawing nearer, hundreds of Kenner families who lost homes and jobs came to the Kenner Food Bank for sustenance and encouragement.

“We’ve been a busy place,” said Diane Plauche, coordinator of the Kenner Food Bank, located on Third Street. “On an average day, we’ve been serving as many as 500 people. Many of them either lost their homes or saw their homes severely damaged. Some had jobs at companies that haven’t reopened their doors, and are scrambling to land new jobs. It’s been a tough time and we definitely didn’t want to see anyone doing without during the Christmas holidays.”

The Kenner Food Bank is open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Applicants must provide proof that they reside in the city of Kenner. Acceptable credentials include a Kenner driver’s license, a Kenner rent receipt with current address, a current utility bill, or current food stamp printout sheet.

Social Security cards are required for families of five or more. Reginald Holmes, assistant coordinator at the Kenner Food Bank, says each family whose application is approved is provided enough food to feed the family for three days.

“We get wonderful support from people throughout Kenner. One of the ways families teach their children about the importance of giving back to your community is by the entire family donating to the Food Bank. The folks who benefit from the services of the Food Bank really appreciate the fact that it is a community-supported non-profit facility that helps people in their time of need,” Plauche said.

Anyone wishing to make a contribution to the Food Bank can call Plauche at 468-7204.

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The Kenner “Katrina saints” are remembered for their gifts

By ALLAN KATZ

At Kenner City Hall, they are spoken of as the “Katrina saints.” They are the scores of companies, communities and individuals that, immediately after Hurricane Katrina hit, came by City Hall with gifts that ranged from food, water and clothing to Christmas presents to be given to Kenner children who might otherwise have been left without something to open underneath their trees.

“It was one of the most remarkable aspects of the unknown story of Hurricane Katrina,” says Mayor Phil Capitano. “We kept no list. They asked no thanks. Some were Kenner residents. Others were residents of near-by communities. Some gifts came by huge truckloads from big companies or cities that heard of our needs, like LaSalle, Canada. Others brought single gifts, whatever they could spare for someone needier than they. But the most remarkable gifts were those who, thinking ahead, realized there would be children in Kenner whose families would not have the means to give them Christmas gifts.”

The following list of Katrina’s saints is incomplete, reflecting only those givers who were remembered by City Hall workers.

Among Katrina’s saints were Steven Lin, Great & Best Produce; Ronny Hayes, Debbie Hoover, Neal Guidry, Trent Ward and many others at Wal-Mart; Giovanni LaBarbera, Realty Express; the city of Hoboken, New Jersey; Jeff Sprint, Louisiana Purchase Kitchen; The Home Depot, Kenner; Mayor Tony Petelos, Hoover, Alabama; Mayor Manon Barbe, LaSalle, Canada; Ronnie Mains, CRC Trucking; Todd Schumert, Southwest Bakery; Renata Falk, Palo Alto, California; Mike Gaffney Sr. and Mike Gaffney Jr.; Subway Restaurants; Denny’s Restaurants; Bayou Food; Chuck Cusimano; and Don Cousins.

New citizens group seeks to guide post-Katrina planning in Jefferson

By ALLAN KATZ

A group of Jefferson Parish residents calling themselves Citizens For A Safer Jefferson have come together for the purpose of providing input to those government entities currently engaged in the post-Hurricane Katrina planning process.

Tony Ligi, an attorney who is secretary of the non-profit organization, indicated that an important facet of the work performed by the group will be to channel the negative emotions of those who have suffered loss as a result of the hurricane into an outlet for those same individuals to positively impact the way that decisions regarding future preparation are made.

“People have every right to be angry, especially those who have lost everything. But we think that anger should be directed toward getting a levee protection system that works,” Ligi said.

Debbie Settoon is president of the group. If you would like more information about Citizens For A Safer Jefferson or would like to sign up as a member, call Tony Ligi at 455-7974.

Barbre Gym proves to be vital distribution center during darkest post-Katrina days

By ALLAN KATZ

During the worst days after Hurricane Katrina struck, the Barbre Gymnasium, located at 1610 Third Street, became a key distribution center that provided food, clothing, water and other essentials to families whose homes had flooded.

“Barbre turned out to be our key distribution point,” said Edgar Bernard, Director of Community Services for the city of Kenner. “Many families were in desperate need. The only clothing they had was what was on their backs and that was often wet. They had no food or water. At its peak, Barbre was helping more than 150 people a day. We had workers from Community Relations, the Department of Recreation and volunteers helping people.”

Bernard said the most amazing aspect of the assistance provided to the community was the contribution of food, clothing, water, toiletries, towels, and other necessities donated by Kenner residents who were often themselves struggling with the aftermath of the storm.

“It really says something about the spirit of Kenner that so many of our residents put aside their own concerns for a moment to provide help to those Kenner citizens who were in even more dire straits,” said Bernard.

“As many as 30 people a day are still coming in to get water and MRE meals, and we will remain open as long as we have supplies. When the story of Hurricane Katrina in Kenner is fully told, at least one chapter should be devoted to the role of Barbre Gymnasium as a center of emergency supplies for people who needed lots of help, and the team of workers who helped them.”

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Police

Hurricane Katrina and the Kenner Police Department
A behind the scenes look at what really happened

By NICK CONGEMI
Kenner Police Chief

Part two of a two part series

Once Katrina had passed, the KPD did not know what the rest of the world was seeing because there was only sporadic contact being made with the outside. All telephone communications, cell phones, police radios, and television communications had been severed. The Jefferson Parish Sheriff’s Department tower had been blown over and the KPD tower was severely damaged by winds. Officers went out on rescue missions with absolutely no communications with anyone.

At 1:09 p.m. on August 29, 2005, the KPD was contacted by the Jefferson Parish Emergency Operating Center to help with pump station operations in Kenner, since all drainage engineers had been evacuated and were unable to return. KPD officers and national guardsmen accompanied Sidney Gonzales and Edwin Yeager through four feet of water to the St. Charles Parish line pump station. They were unsuccessful in starting these pumps and continued on to the Duncan Street pump station, where they started pumps at 9:13 p.m. The St. Charles Parish line pumps were finally operational on August 30, 2005, at 5:32 p.m.

Medical issues became another priority to the KPD in the days following Katrina. Since no other agencies were responding to medical calls after dark, an out-of-town ambulance company from South Carolina began responding to incoming medical calls. KPD officers escorted the contracted ambulances out to each and every call, which saved numerous lives.

With the help of the deuce-and-a-half trucks, KPD boats, and volunteer boats, officers were able to navigate through flooded waters and rescue residents. However, there were many deadly obstacles to navigate around, including fallen trees and power lines, which were difficult to see with a flashlight.

Our entire force was dedicated to rescuing people stranded at their homes. I saw this first hand when I went out with two of our officers to help rescue victims the night after the storm.

With flooding at its worst, a group of KPD officers saved a citizen who had gone into diabetic shock. These officers waded through flood water and climbed over trees to get to his front door. They removed the man and carried him over the trees to the deuce-and-a-half and had him transported to Kenner Regional Hospital. This is just one of the many heroic acts performed by the brave officers of the Kenner Police Department after the storm.

When Kenner Regional Hospital ordered a complete evacuation of patients and staff, the KPD transported those in need to a temporary triage at Louis Armstrong Airport.

Once flooding receded, KPD officers obtained chainsaws and cleared roadways of fallen trees and debris. This task allowed repair crews and relief workers into areas that would have otherwise been inaccessible. Road clearings were imperative to relief workers traveling through Kenner into the hardest hit areas of New Orleans.

When roads were cleared, the KPD became responsible for directing traffic in and around the airport. The scene at the airport was comparable to something out of Vietnam, with hundreds of choppers flying in and out. As evacuees were dropped off at the airport, it became imperative for KPD officers to direct these people to safety out of the city.

Food and water were critical in keeping officers fit for duty during the days following Hurricane Katrina. The KPD kitchen was staffed by officers and volunteers who operated 24 hours a day to prepare meals. Local businesses without electricity gladly donated ice and food to the KPD.

For years we have prepared for a host of catastrophic emergencies by investing in the right people, the right training, and the right equipment. When disaster struck, we were ready and took control of the situation. The people of Kenner can be proud of what our officers did to protect our city.
Health

Community acquired infections:
Lessons from the 2005 MLB Winter Baseball Meetings

By LUIS M. ESPINOZA, M.D.

On Sunday, December 4, 2005, over a hundred team physicians and trainers met in Dallas, Texas for the annual Major League Winter Baseball meeting. Among the topics discussed was the disturbing number of MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) infections that have been recognized in the community, and the alarming rates in which they have been detected in clubhouses and gyms. No longer seen in only sick individuals, MRSA infections are being witnessed in professional and high school athletes alike. The focus of this discussion was to understand this disease and outline methods to keep infection rates down in schools and locker rooms.

Staphylococcus Aureus is a bacteria commonly present on skin and mucous membranes. In susceptible people, this bacterium is responsible for causing boils and abscesses. Other serious infections it can cause include pneumonia, sepsis (blood infection), and osteomyelitis (bone infections). Until the chance discovery of penicillin in 1928 by Alexander Fleming and the subsequent mass production of this antibiotic in the 1940s, many people died from complications resulting from uncontrollable bacterial infections. Penicillin’s phenomenonal life-saving ability was proved in the later stages of World War II, when it was credited with saving tens of thousands of wounded that would otherwise have succumbed to bacterial infections.

Unfortunately, the misuse and overuse of this once extremely effective drug has spurred the recent worldwide emergence of penicillin-resistant strains of staph aureus. The result has been an increasing number of dangerous infections in both hospital and community settings that are not responding to treatment from traditional penicillin derived antibiotics such as methicillin. Some of the risk factors for acquiring this type of infection include recent antimalarial therapy, recent healthcare contact, and high rates of MRSA in the community.

MRSA infections are of particular concern because mortality is approximately twice as high in patients with MRSA sepsis compared to infections with methicillin-sensitive bacteria. Prompt recognition is extremely important to aid in the proper treatment and management of this problem. Infections often begin as innocent looking pimplies on the skin. They then become larger, painful and form abscesses that are red and warm. Treatment consists of incising and draining the lesions, obtaining cultures to determine proper antibiotic susceptibility, and keeping the wounds clean, dry and covered.

Prevention is particularly important in avoiding these infections. Keeping equipment and spa surfaces disinfected and clean can minimize the spread of MRSA that might exist in the gym. Overall team hygiene should also be stressed, such as the avoidance of sharing towels and razors among teammates. For example, towels used to dry off sweat during a baseball game should not be used by other players on the bench. Training room personnel should also make a conscious effort to keep ultrasound gel and ointments clean if used on more than one athlete.

It has been noted that the incidence of MRSA infections is higher in turf burns from artificial turf than from grass fields. Weight lifters have a higher risk of abscesses in the axillary (arm pit) region from excessive friction and sweat, where as wrestlers may contaminate cuts or burns from unclean mats. Regardless of how it is obtained, if a player has a confirmed MRSA infection, activities by that individual need to be limited to allow for proper treatment and to avoid promoting transmission to others. Finally, the single most effective way of preventing the spread of MRSA is the simple act of hand washing.

Katrina fitness

By CRAIG GOODWIN

It is the start of a new year, one that many of us are welcoming for a renewal of better fortune, health, and protection. The past four months have been trying, to say the least, with many of us exhausted from the endless work of putting our homes back together and trying to get our lives in order. As we all were, and still are, being affected by the aftermath of Katrina, we are feeling the stress of the demands that face us daily. We have been through many changes, and one of our big changes is what our bodies have been through at a physical level.

Now is a great time to start a new routine that I call Katrina Fitness, a program to help reduce the stress of our daily work and help us shed some of those pounds that, because of the change in our daily routine, many of us have seen add up. Beginning a cardiovascular fitness program that includes walking, running, biking, or swimming is a great way to reverse the physical, and most of all, the mental affects that Katrina brought upon us. We need to find a way to fit 30 minutes into our daily routines to begin a healthier lifestyle.

Evening walks around the neighborhood with friends is a great way to stay committed to an exercise program. Taking bike rides with family is another way to get your children involved and committed to fitness for lifelong benefits. We all need an out to be able to mentally get away from the stresses of putting our lives back together, and there is no better way than to get involved in a fitness program. All of the aches and pains we feel from our hard work will begin to dissipate and we will begin to not only feel better, but we will also find ourselves with more energy to continue our hard work ahead. As we are committed in rebuilding our community, we must also commit to maintaining a healthier lifestyle for ourselves and our children. This is the time of the year we can and need to make that commitment.

Additional fitness tips would be to add a daily stretching program to your routine as well as a strengthening program that can be done at home. A stretching program for your low back and hamstrings will help maintain good health in both your back and knees. Simple strengthening exercises at home that include sit-ups, standing wall push-ups, toe-ups, and wall squats will help improve both upper and lower body strength and will also improve your daily stamina. Katrina has hit us all hard in one way or another, and exercising is the best way to cope with our stresses and commit to a healthier lifestyle in 2006.

Craig Goodwin, Physical Therapist, is president of Kenner Orthopedic and Sports Therapy, located at 3921 Williams Boulevard and two other locations in Metairie and on the West Bank. Goodwin graduated from LSU Medical School Department of Allied Health, Department of Physical Therapy, in 1987. The professionals at Kenner Orthopedic & Sports Therapy can be contacted via email at Kennerorthopedic@aol.com.
Kenner Regional Medical Center joins national campaign to save 100,000 lives through quality initiatives

By JON T. MOSES

Kenner Regional Medical Center joined the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's (IHI) "100,000 Lives Campaign" as part of the hospital's overall Commitment to Quality initiative. The goals of this unprecedented campaign are to save 100,000 patients' lives through the implementation of health care processes proven to prevent avoidable deaths, and to save lives.

Kenner Regional is one of more than 2,200 hospitals that have committed to trying to reach the program goal to save 100,000 lives by June 2006, and every year thereafter.

Our CEO, Paolo Zambito says that this campaign goes hand-in-hand with our commitment to providing safe, quality care to every patient that comes through our doors. We are proud to join with other leading health care organizations to improve health care and, more importantly, save lives.

Kenner Regional Medical Center, and all of the hospitals participating in the 100,000 Lives Campaign, pledge to implement some or all of the following six quality improvement measures:

- **Deploying rapid response teams** – Allowing any staff member, regardless of position in the chain of command, to call upon a specialty team to examine a patient at the first sign of decline.
- **Delivering reliable evidence-based care for acute myocardial infarction** – Consistently delivering key measures, including early administration of aspirin and beta-blockers, ACE/ARB, lipid lowering, and smoking cessation counseling that prevent patient deaths from heart attack.
- **Preventing adverse drug events** – Implementing medication reconciliation, which requires compiling a list of all of the patient’s medications and reconciling them to ensure that the patient is given or prescribed the right medications at the correct dosages. This is to occur at admission, discharge and before transferring a patient to another care unit.
- **Preventing central line infections** – Consistently delivering five interdependent, scientifically grounded steps, collectively called the “Central Line Bundle.”
- **Preventing surgical site infections** – Reliable delivery of the correct perioperative antibiotics, maintaining proper glucose levels, and avoiding shaving hair at the surgical site.
- **Preventing ventilator-associated pneumonia** – Implementing five interdependent, scientifically grounded steps collectively called the “Ventilator Bundle.” This includes elevating the head of the hospital bed by 30 degrees, which dramatically reduces mortality and length of stay in the Intensive Care Unit.

All hospitals participating in the 100,000 Lives Campaign will share best practices and success stories with each other, and submit data to the IHI to help monitor the campaign’s progress.

The 100,000 Lives Campaign was formally launched on December 14, 2004, and has been endorsed by the American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement is a not-for-profit organization leading the improvement of health care throughout the world. Founded in 1991 and based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, IHI is a catalyst for change, cultivating innovative concepts for improving patient care and implementing programs for putting those ideas into action. Thousands of health care providers, including many of the finest hospitals in the world, participate in IHI’s groundbreaking work. To learn more about the 100,000 Lives Campaign, go to www.ihi.org/ihi/programs/campaign.

Our hospital, Kenner Regional Medical Center, part of the NOLA Healthcare Network, is a 203-bed acute care community hospital. We have been serving the medical and health care needs of the Kenner and the River parishes for nearly 20 years. Kenner Regional Medical Center’s services include a full-service emergency department, surgery department, hyperbaric medicine and wound care, and advanced orthopedic services. A 16-bed intensive care unit supports the hospital’s cardiology program, including a catheterization laboratory and open-heart surgery program. Kenner Regional Medical Center is accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, the nation’s oldest and largest hospital accreditation agency. To learn more about Kenner Regional Medical Center, visit www.kennerregional.com.

Jon T. Moses is a Marketing Liaison with Kenner Regional Medical Center located at 200 West Esplanade Avenue in Kenner. Moses can be reached at 464-8699 or at Jonathan.Moses@tenethealth.com. Kenner Regional Medical Center is a Tenet-owned hospital with a full service emergency room, outpatient diagnostics and impatent services providing care to Kenner and the surrounding areas. KRMC accepts a majority of insurance plans.

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**Dental Relief for Katrina survivors**

If you’ve lost your dentist, we’d like to help keep you healthy until they return. For a limited time, we are offering a complete series of x-rays, comprehensive exam, diagnostic photos, AND professional teeth cleaning for $99. When your dentist returns, we’ll be happy to forward a copy of any x-rays taken over to your dentist. Unfortunately, we must limit this offer to the first 50 patients. No one wants any health problems, so don’t wait, call today! 456-0964

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Health

New 3-T MRI offers speed to doctors, comfort for patients

By KEITH M. DARCEY

Diagnosing any illness or injury requires an accurate assessment before any treatment options can be determined. In general, the earlier the diagnosis takes place, the higher the success rate in treating it.

To ensure the most accurate diagnosis possible, East Jefferson General Hospital’s team of physicians and experts use the most technologically advanced imaging systems in our region. The speed, accuracy, and clarity of the images produced provide our radiologists with unmatched views into the patient. Our CT Scanners, ultrasound equipment, PET/CT and other state-of-the-art imaging tools allow physicians to choose which exam is best in making complicated assessments.

Now, with the introduction of our new 3-T MRI Imaging System with Total Imaging Matrix, EJGH offers our community a device previously available only in research centers. 3-T MRI is a remarkable breakthrough in terms of power, image quality, and speed. This combination leads to more comfort for the patient during testing and to greater detailed images, compared to conventional MRI units.

“3-T only enhances our position as the leading center in the region in terms of diagnostic technologies and capabilities,” said Dr. Mary Beth Lobrano, East Jefferson’s Director of Radiology.

The 3-T MRI scans the entire body and is eight times faster than an open or stand-up MRI. It is because of the greater speed that patients are able to handle the procedure with much less difficulty and stress on the body. With most MRIs, a patient needs to maintain uncomfortable positions and hold their breath for long periods of time. 3-T dramatically cuts down on the amount of time needed and still delivers a superior look at the suspect areas.

“Some patients simply can’t hold their breath for very long,” said Dr. Susan Fuzzard of East Jefferson’s Radiology Department. “Because of the speed at which this scanner captures images, the physician gets better images and the patient can spend considerably less time in discomfort.”

3-T and other cutting-edge technologies are an extremely important tool, but it is only half of the process in treating the patient. The other half is having the experts in the field to examine the captured image so that a correct diagnosis can be determined. Treatments for the patient are determined and implemented based on their recommendations. Lives depend on the accuracy of those interpretations.

“You can have the most advanced technology in world, but it’s not effective if you don’t have the trained physicians to interpret the results and act on them appropriately,” said Dr. Lobrano. “The members of our staff are the best in their respective fields and truly make a difference in the long-term success of the patient.”

Dental bonding, porcelain laminates, crowns, and bridges make beautiful smiles.

By M. SUSAN M. FELDER, D.D.S.

As a result of modern dental technology, beautiful smiles are possible for anyone. Some of the procedures involved in creating a beautiful smile are bonding, veneers, crowns, and bridges. All of these processes must be done by your dentist. Furthermore, to keep your beautiful smile, all of these procedures require good oral hygiene.

What is bonding? Composite resins or white fillings are bonded to tooth structure that has been pre-treated with etching and bonding solutions. These resins can be made to look just like the tooth. However, excessive colas, tea, coffee, red wine and smoking may discolor these fillings. With care, however, they may remain beautiful for several years.

What are porcelain laminates? Also known as veneers, these are tooth-colored shells made of porcelain that cover the front of the tooth. Laminates may correct teeth that are unattractive due to spaces between teeth, or teeth that are stained, badly shaped or crooked.

The dentist makes models of teeth, chooses the correct shade, and then has a lab technician make the veneer. The dentist then removes a small amount of enamel, and cements the veneer to the tooth, much like false fingernails are cemented to the natural fingernail. This procedure takes a minimum of two dental visits, and is more expensive than bonding.

As in bonding, excessive use of colas, tea, coffee and red wine is to be avoided. Since these laminates are made of porcelain, they are less likely to stain than teeth that are bonded.

With good care, these veneers can be expected to last several years, even longer than bonding.

What are crowns? Sometimes referred to as caps, crowns cover the part of the tooth seen in the mouth. The outer surface of the crown is coated with tooth-colored porcelain. The inside may or may not have metal to strengthen the tooth. When fillings are larger than the tooth, a crown may be indicated. Crowns are needed to cover implants. A crown may be indicated to improve the tooth’s shape and appearance. Also, after a root canal is done, the tooth should have a crown to prevent a fracture.

Much like porcelain laminates, crowns involve two or more dental office visits because a lab technician makes the crown. Crowns are more expensive than bonding.

Unlike bonding and porcelain laminates, staining and discoloration are not problems with crowns. And, with good care, crowns can be very long-lasting.

What is a bridge? A bridge is a series of porcelain crowns that replaces missing teeth. In addition to beauty, bridges can aid function and facial shape.

With good oral hygiene, bridges can remain beautiful for over 20 years.

The preceding article was based on information obtained from the American Dental Association’s website at.

Susan M. Felder D.D.S. is a general dentist who has practiced continuously in north Kenner for over 26 years. Dr. Felder’s office is located at 4134 Florida Avenue, Suite 101.

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Gulf Coast Bank president promises “aggressive” effort to help Kenner, metro New Orleans rebuild

By ALLAN KATZ

Guy Williams, president of Gulf Coast Bank and Trust, said that the bank is committed to aggressively helping homeowners and businesses rebuild in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Williams said he is pleased by President Bush’s commitment to a $3.1 billion rebuilding of South Louisiana levees. But, he also said that he is disap-

Tulane-Lakeside Hospital presents pediatric care workshop series at East Bank Regional Library

Tulane-Lakeside Hospital has announced a series of pediatric care workshops in partnership with the Jefferson Parish Library. Workshops for parents and educational crafts for kids will take place on the first Saturday of each month, beginning Saturday, January 7, from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. at the Children’s Department of the East Bank Regional Library, located at 4747 West Napoleon Avenue in Metairie.

The first workshop, “Pediatrics 101,” will be presented by Tulane-Lakeside pediatrician Dr. Katherine Knight. The presentation will include an overview of how parents can get their children the medical care that they need, common childhood diseases and what to look for, when to take your child to the Emergency Room, getting the right medicine for your child, and how to make taking medicine enjoyable for your child.

The Tulane-Lakeside Child Life team will host simultaneous activities for children in a room adjacent to the presentations. Crafts and games will relate to the monthly workshop topics and will provide an opportunity for parents and children to share what they have learned by discussing the topics together.

To accompany the “Pediatrics 101” workshop on Saturday, January 7, kids will create “Medical Mania Collages” using band-aids, cotton balls, tongue depressors, syringes, and common medical supplies, and will learn how these medical supplies are used to keep their bodies healthy.

“The Tulane-Lakeside parenting workshops are a fun way for parents and their children to learn about and discuss pediatric medical care questions in a comfortable setting,” says Karen Troyer-Caraway, vice president of Tulane-Lakeside Hospital. “Our experienced physicians and child development specialists are thrilled to make this program available to the community.”

Future topics and kids’ crafts, scheduled for the first Saturday of the month, from 10:00 until 11:00 a.m., include the following:

Saturday, February 4, 2006
Topic: Media, and It’s Impact on Children, presented by Michael Kiernan, M.D.
Kids’ Craft: Ratings Games and TV Dinners
Kids will make a TV dinner of current shows/movies and play a game show, which teaches them how to make good viewing choices.

Saturday, March 4, 2006
Topic: Attention Disorders and Kids, presented by Steven Weimer, M.D.
Kids’ Craft: Sticker Charts
Kids will design/create their own schedules/daily planners and learn the benefits of positive reinforcement.

Saturday, April 1, 2006
Topic: Children with Allergies, presented by Jane El-Daher, M.D.
Kids Craft: Dust Mites and Masks
Kids will make their own dust mites, decorate a mask, discuss common allergies that kids have, and learn what to do if someone they know has an allergic reaction.

The programs are free and open to the public; registration is not required.

Further information about this and other library programs, activities, and exhibits is available on the library’s website at www.jefferson.lib.la.us or by calling Jim Davis, Information Specialist, at 838-1100.

“BIG FRANK” MACALUSO

(continued from page 1)

“This was a drawback to my plan; however, I eventually overcame it. Frank is a likable guy that you can’t help wanting to be around, which is certainly beneficial during trying times.”

“Several days after the hurricane,” Mayor Capitano recalled, “we were driving back after a 2:00 a.m. meeting and we came upon ‘Big Frank’ on his front end loader, clearing debris. It occurred to me then that the city of Kenner is very fortunate to have dedicated workers like Frank who care about the city and their jobs.”

Macaluso is a foreman in the Public Works Department who has been a city employee for 21 years. His nickname, “Big Frank,” is spoken with great affection, say his fellow workers. They say that, even as a foreman, Macaluso is known as one of the hardest workers in Public Works and is a perfectionist who wants every job done to the highest standards.

Coworkers of Macaluso say that despite his personal losses, he was able to stay focused and committed for 18 to 20 hours a day for several weeks.
By RAFAEL E. SADDY

First things first—the basics of human kindness are needed in our community now more than ever, and as we move forward from the sentiments of the holidays we should continue to extend our help, love, and prayers to those who are less fortunate. At the same time, I hope that this new year finds you with a renewed spirit of resolution to move forward.

In the case of residents and business owners alike, going back to the basics can help ensure success, no matter what the goal may be. By stepping back, taking a mental inventory, analyzing your direction and formulating a plan, one can avoid the feelings of confusion that are so easy to fall victim to in a post-Katrina world.

Basic business questions: Businesses may need to go back to the basics of being small, fast, and flexible in adapting to changes along with strong customer service. Any future plans of growth, expansion, or relocation of businesses needs to include New Orleans as this city is the key to the future of all of our surrounding parishes. Without a strong New Orleans, long-term survival is going to be hard. The Latin American community has a huge opportunity ahead and can become strong by planning new business that will fit in the new New Orleans.

Sixteen weeks after Hurricane Katrina, both Kenner and Jefferson Parish keep getting stronger, with vast opportunities for employment. As I drive through the city, I stop to ask merchants why their businesses are open for limited hours or why they are not open for business at all. The response is the same. They cannot find workers due to lack of housing and those few individuals available in the area are working for companies paying high hourly rates. I see business owners asking the right questions: Does it make sense to build to pre-Katrina? Should I relocate my business where the community has been displaced? Should I increase, decrease, or offer a different service based on current needs of the consumer? These are some of the tough issues that need seriously evaluated answers in order to survive in the world of tomorrow.

**Basic information for home rebuilding:** In our own back yard, the rebuilding of our homes is a major task for all. As a basic first step in this process, remember that permits are necessary before starting any construction or repairs on a residence to ensure you are protected that work is in compliance with current codes, flood ordinance and construction requirements.

In an effort to assist the Latin American community, the following organizations offer bilingual services: Kenner’s Code Enforcement at 468-4070, Jefferson Economic Development Commission at www.jedco.org, Small Business Administration (SBA) at 800-659-2955, FEMA at 800-462-7585, American Red Cross at 866-432-4630, Latin American Civic Association at 464-4619 or 466-1483, Hispanic Apostle at 464-6187, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce at 885-4262, and the Hispanic Resource Center at 469-2571. The Kenner Food Bank is open for all residents and is available for assistance. It is located at 1610 Third Street. You can call 468-7220 for information.

I leave you with the thought for the month: “In total darkness we are all the same, only our knowledge separates us. Don’t let your eyes deceive you!”

God Bless. ★

Rafael E. Saddy is an assistant to the mayor for Hispanic affairs in Kenner and president of the Latin American Civic Association of Louisiana (LACAL). Email Sadd3143@bellsouth.net. Correspondence for LACAL can be sent to P. O. Box 640604, Kenner, LA, 70064-0604.

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**Relief legislation will aid in all areas of local recovery**

By BOBBY JINDAL

United States Congressman

Louisiana’s 1st Congressional District

We have worked hard this year to provide relief to victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The following are a few examples of legislation that may benefit you and your family as we work together to rebuild our lives, our communities, and our state.

**Levees**

Louisiana’s levees must be rebuilt higher, stronger, and more secure, so that families can have the security and confidence to move back and rebuild. This will be expensive, but the House has approved $2.9 billion to start the work immediately.

The money is enough to start building the strongest, most secure levees ever constructed in Southeast Louisiana. This is still not enough, however. I will continue to push for Category 5 protection and coastal restoration. On three separate occasions I have worked to pass legislation in the House and its committees that would let Louisiana keep a portion of the revenue generated from drilling off its shore, only to have those efforts blocked before they could be enacted.

Under my revenue sharing proposals, Louisiana would keep some of the $5 billion to $8 billion the federal government makes from offshore drilling in Louisiana, creating a steady stream of funding that can be used to create true Category 5 flood protection.

I have been assured that my proposal will receive a vote after Christmas. However, in the meantime, the House has voted to allow Louisiana to receive up to another $7 billion to be used on levees, the initial stages of coastal restoration, and evacuation routes.

But to make sure this money is spent wisely, I am also working to streamline the current inefficient system of multiple levee boards. The state will get an extra $12 million to study and design Category 5 levee protection if it consolidates the levee boards in Southeast Louisiana into one unified levee board.

**Red Tape**

For years, Louisianians have received Disaster Mitigation Grants from FEMA to rebuild and improve their homes so they are not victimized by Mother Nature again. Thousands more will receive money from FEMA for that purpose in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Now you will not have to pay taxes on these grants, thanks to a law I forced through Congress earlier this year making those grants tax-free. Before this legislation, many Louisiana families were in danger of having to sell their homes to cover the new tax bills; one family that I met was going to lose their disabled

continued on page 17
By ROY A. WILLIAMS
Director of Aviation
Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport

A new year – a new beginning

The year 2005 held great promise for the airport. Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport was on track to set an all-time record in passenger traffic. Unfortunately, Hurricane Katrina dashed that goal. Like many of our friends and neighbors, many employees at our airport lost belongings, homes, family, and even jobs due to the storm and its devastating effect.

As we begin 2006, we gladly bid farewell to a year that has brought sorrow and uncertainty to many lives in the Greater New Orleans Metro Area.

The year 2005 held great promise for the airport. Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport was on track to set an all-time record in passenger traffic. Unfortunately, Hurricane Katrina dashed that goal. Like many of our friends and neighbors, many employees at our airport lost belongings, homes, family, and even jobs due to the storm and its devastating effect.

As we begin 2006, we gladly bid farewell to a year that has brought sorrow and uncertainty to many lives in the Greater New Orleans Metro Area.

Finally, what will be the effect of this storm on our vision for the future? Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport embarked on a strategic planning process in the spring of 2005 to identify the best way to modernize and expand our airport facilities. It was scheduled to take 18 months to complete, and though set back by Katrina, it must continue. A project of this scope may seem irrelevant at this point, but actually it is very relevant. As the plan for a bigger and better metro area evolves, the airport is a key component. For example, Lakefront Airport sustained major damage from the hurricane and, since the storm, Armstrong International Airport has seen a substantial increase in general aviation traffic. Existing air traffic trends in the area means one airport might be able to handle all passenger and cargo operations, instead of two. One of the alternate sites for study in the planning process was New Orleans East. Depending on the direction redevelopment planners recommend for the New Orleans area, a new airport might play an integral part in the plan. In addition to providing total air service in a single location, it would free up 1,200 acres of valuable real estate inside the levee system in Kenner and St. Charles Parish. Should the airport move? A responsible study will answer the question.

Regardless of our location, Armstrong International Airport is the gateway to greater New Orleans and the Gulf South. It is the catalyst for the rebirth of New Orleans and the Gulf South. Return of tourism to our region will be the key to reaching our pre-Katrina 10 million per year passenger load, and is the catalyst for the rebirth of New Orleans and the Gulf South.

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As we begin 2006, we gladly bid farewell to a year that has brought sorrow and uncertainty to many lives in the Greater New Orleans Metro Area.
Lake Pontchartrain suffered setbacks during Katrina, but is now rebounding

By ALLAN KATZ

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation (LPBF) says Lake Pontchartrain suffered severe setbacks during and immediately after Hurricane Katrina, but that it is now restoring itself to the point where fishing and swimming are again safe.

Carlton Dufrechou, Executive Director of the LPBF, says out-of-town “experts” who pronounced the lake a “toxic soup” immediately after Katrina were simply wrong. In fact, says Dufrechou, what saved the lake was a 16-year effort by the LPBF and many others to clean up Lake Pontchartrain prior to Katrina.

Dufrechou said the lake suffered when contaminated floodwaters from New Orleans were pumped into Pontchartrain to drain the city. Bacteria counts went up, for instance, and there were also several fish kills. But, in the weeks that have passed since that occurred, the lake has begun to heal itself once more.

But, says Dufrechou, a more serious problem is that in the wake of Katrina, Lake Pontchartrain lost 40 square miles of wetlands – 10 times the usual annual loss.

“Like water quality, coastal preservation has to be a major focus for the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation in the months ahead, as well as for all the ‘Save Our Lake’ people in the towns, cities and parishes that border this incredible and wonderful asset that is our lake,” Dufrechou said.

Another problem for the LPBF, said Event and Outreach Director Sheila Ehren, is that in the wake of Katrina, fundraising has dried up. “We know that many of our supporters are no longer in a position to contribute,” said Ehren. “But we hope that those who can still help us will think about the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation and the vital work we have to do on coastal restoration and conservation. Please help us if you can.”

The LPBF is located at Suite 2070 at 3838 North Causeway Boulevard in Metairie. The phone number is 836-2215.

POLITICAL REVIEW

(continued from page 5)

first order of business should be a levee board reform bill that truly consolidates the corrupt, crony filled and disastrously ineffective system of local boards which contributed to the Katrina disaster. State Senator Walter Boasso (R-Arabi) should offer his legislation again, but this time it should be real reform that eliminates all boards and does not protect any sacred cows.

If a statewide amendment is required, legislators should place it on the ballot as soon as possible. Blanco administration officials are now advising that any real levee board reform will take a full year to be accomplished. This is ludicrous. Not only doesn’t it take that long, but, more importantly, we don’t have that long. The only thing we need to accomplish real levee board reform is leadership, but, alas, that is the commodity that is the rarest in the state. When the state finds true leaders, we will find a way out of this crisis, not a moment earlier.

Jeff Crouere is a native of New Orleans and his Louisiana based television program, “Ringside Politics,” airs at 8:30 p.m. on Friday and at 10:30 p.m. Sunday on WLAE-TV, Channel 32. Visit his website at www.ringsidepolitics.com and e-mail him at jeff@ringside-politics.com.
RELIEF LEGISLATION
(continued from page 14)

son’s Pell grant, as a result of the grants moving them into a higher tax bracket. Now, Louisianans who receive grants can rebuild without fear of the tax collector threatening them with massive bills.

Faith-based organizations are a pivotal part of our communities, providing support and relief to countless victims after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Legislation that I introduced, even before the hurricanes struck, makes sure that faith-based organizations were able to receive federal support for rebuilding. Disasters do not discriminate based on faith, neither should the federal government.

More than 144,000 pages of federal regulations hampered relief work and now they threaten to strangle the rebuilding effort. I think we should quickly eliminate any regulation that impedes the region’s recovery. That is why I have introduced legislation to create a Presidential Commission that would quickly examine all regulations impacting the recovery and temporarily suspend unnecessary red tape. Paperwork should not be more important than people.

Many in Louisiana have experienced firsthand the difficulty in shifting through bureaucracy and red tape as they work to rebuild following these storms. In particular, the constantly changing rules regarding the federal government’s role in paying for debris removal continued to frustrate parish- es and cities, making it difficult for local governments to effectively clean up and start the rebuilding process. I worked with the White House to have the federal government pay for all clean up through June 30, 2006, freeing local communities to spend their resources on helping their citizens.

Education
More than 300,000 school children have been uprooted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Schools across the country have generously opened their doors and taken in these children. In order to help, I authored legislation that provides more than $1.6 billion to assist kids displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the schools that opened their doors to students from hurricane devastated areas. Local schools will receive $750 million to help rebuild and reopen. In addition, public, private, and charter schools across the country that take in students will receive $6,000 per student to help pay the additional costs.

College students across Louisiana, and the schools they attend, have been devastated by the storms of the past year. I worked with Congress to provide $200 million in operational assistance for colleges and universities affected by the hurricanes. As a former head of the University of Louisiana System, I know that a quality education is of the greatest importance in order for our kids to find good jobs. I also know it would be unfair for students to lose their financial aid or otherwise be penalized due to their studies being interrupted by the hurricanes. I fought to pass two bills to help college students, either directly or through their universities, to make sure they still have the support to continue their studies. Both bills have now been signed into law.

Tax Relief
Rebuilding the economy and ensuring that individuals have enough money to cover the new expenses and burdens the storms have caused have been one of my primary concerns. I worked to help pass $9 billion in tax support and incentives to help families and create jobs in the Gulf Coast region by creating the “GO Zone.” Also, disaster victims can now re-file their 2004 tax returns to receive an immediate refund for casualty losses suffered in the hurricane. Disaster victims can withdraw $100,000 from their IRAs and pensions without paying the 10 percent penalty. Businesses in the disaster area can receive an additional tax credit by hiring individuals who lived in the disaster area prior to the hurricane, which helps businesses re-staff and puts people back to work. Also, disaster victims whose homes were damaged by the hurricane can qualify for low interest rate mortgages through 2007.

As Louisiana rebuilds, it cannot simply rely on a government-run effort. The private sector is going to have to be an active partner. I have worked to help businesses to recover by expanding equipment expensing and bringing increased community investment in the form of New Markets Tax Credits. With the passage of the Gulf Opportunity Zone Act, the tax deduction for business purchases doubles to $200,000. The Act also provides $1 billion in New Markets Tax Credits to help businesses invest in new infrastructure throughout the surrounding community.

In addition to these provisions, 50 percent bonus depreciation will help businesses rebuild, expanded operating loss carrybacks will supply businesses with immediate cash on hand for reconstruction, and municipality debt refinancing and expanded bond authority will help communities and small businesses get back on their feet.

Thousands have lost their jobs as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, leaving them without income. Knowing that the state would have to raise taxes in order to help these individuals, Congress passed $500 million in emergency unemployment insurance funds. This money will extend the length of benefits that hurricane victims, who have been left either temporarily or permanently without jobs, can receive as they get back on their feet.

Health Care
As people have been forced to leave their homes and scatter across the country, one of the first things that gets lost is access to quality, affordable health care. To help ease the burden on the health care system, Congress has provided more than $2 billion for health care in the region. This money will help to pay doctors, nurses, hospitals, and pharmacies so they can continue to provide care to victims of these hurricanes.

Along with the loss of jobs and income, many people are faced with the loss of their private health insurance coverage, further reducing their access to quality health care. I
KRMC outpatient diagnostic facility is enjoying a boom, but still has room for growth

By ALLAN KATZ

The Outpatient Diagnostic Center has grown into a major strength of Kenner Regional Medical Center, drawing patients from throughout the metro New Orleans area. A collaboration of the LSU Medical Center Department of Radiology and Kenner Regional Medical Center, the Outpatient Diagnostic facility offers all of the latest technologies, including CAT scans, MRIs, mammography, ultrasound, x-rays, nuclear medicine, and pulmonary testing.

“We’ve really combined the best of LSU’s academic excellence and Kenner Regional’s proven medical management skills,” said Dr. Michael D’Antonio, coordinator of the partnership. “The result is a spacious facility with an outstanding staff of technicians, nurses, and doctors who all have advanced training in their specialties.”

Dr. D’Antonio says that prior to its boom, the Outpatient Diagnostic Center mostly treated patients from the Kenner area. But, as the word spread about the center’s excellence and facilities, referrals and patients began to come from the North Shore, the River Parishes, New Orleans, St. Bernard Parish and throughout Jefferson Parish.

“We’ve grown, we haven’t been overwhelmed,” says Dr. D’Antonio. “It isn’t a problem to get an appointment and we have developed real expertise at handling emergency cases where every minute counts.”

Dr. D’Antonio is a graduate of Jesuit High School, Duke University and the LSU Medical Center. He completed his residency at Ochsner Foundation Hospital and was awarded two fellowships at the University of Alabama Medical Center in Birmingham.

“Like many members of my generation, I had opportunities in other places but the pull of the New Orleans area had a special attraction for me. I really love the Kenner area and the people who live and work here,” said Dr. D’Antonio. “I’ve also been very pleased that the Outpatient Diagnostic Center is becoming a real anchor for KRMC and the Kenner economy. We’re creating excellent career opportunities for skilled doctors, nurses, and technicians here. They don’t have to go somewhere else to find a good job. There are good jobs right here in Kenner, at the Outpatient Diagnostic Center.”

“We welcome the opportunity to provide superior patient services for any outpatient testing that is required. Our excellent staff will ensure that you receive the personal attention you deserve,” continued Dr. D’Antonio.

The Outpatient Diagnostic Center accepts most insurance plans and provides pre-authorization services. To schedule an appointment or for information call 712-2800.

RELIEF LEGISLATION

(continued from page 17)

am pushing for the passage of legislation that will help disaster victims keep their private health insurance coverage by giving them a tax refund for their premium payments. Helping people keep their own health care coverage will give them better access to preventive care and, ultimately, reduce the burden on our emergency rooms and public hospitals.

Housing

The damage from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita has left thousands of homeowners trying to pay repair costs beyond what their insurance covered. I am glad to say I succeeded in my effort to increase the National Flood Insurance Program’s borrowing authority to pay claims arising from the hurricanes. In addition, my efforts to provide relief for those homeowners have resulted in the inclusion of as much as $6.2 billion in block grant funds that Louisiana can use for homeowners in the latest supplemental appropriation passed by the House of Representatives.

Thousands have lost their jobs and are facing increased financial pressure following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Many do not know how they will be able to make their mortgage payments in the coming months. Thankfully, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced that it will assist homeowners with federally-insured mortgages, by making their mortgage payments for a year. Working with HUD to take this a step further, I have introduced legislation that would give disaster victims who have lost their homes excess single family houses owned by the federal government. This would let families that have lost everything begin to build a home again.

Transportation

The wind, rain, and floods generated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita decimated our roads, highways, and transportation infrastructure. As we repair the damage to our homes and businesses, it is important that we rebuild our roads and bridges at the same time. Congress has included $2.7 billion for the Gulf Coast region for just that purpose in the latest appropriations bill. There is specifically $627 million to repair the Twin Span Bridge, rebuilding this vital link between New Orleans and Slidell. This Christmas Day, my family and I were thankful for the many blessings that cannot be damaged or destroyed, the Love that inspires strangers to sacrifice to help those in need, the Joy of family and friends, and the Peace born by faith and hope.

Nursing home spend-down, the final retirement land mine

By RON HAMPTON

The numbers are staggering... almost half of us will spend some time in a nursing home before the end of life. The average period of confinement is nearly three years, and almost seven years for an Alzheimer’s patient. Yet, barely six percent of people over the age of 65 own a long term care insurance policy of any kind, and many of those are sub-standard. Nursing home care in Louisiana currently costs from $30,000 to $50,000 per year, and this is only for room and board.

Ideally, we would all be insured against this personal disaster coming in the so-called “Golden Years.” Yet, annually, tens of thousands of spouses, widows, widowers, and single people are placed into poverty because they failed to recognize the risk. Many of us are in denial or believe our children will care for us. But for most, the high cost of Long Term Care premiums is the major factor.

Many of us know of a friend or family member who lost their entire life’s savings while paying for a spouse’s care in the nursing home. Maybe they contacted an attorney, CPA or financial advisor for help and were told “there is nothing you can do but pay.” There are very few specialists in this field because the Medicaid laws, like the tax laws, are very complicated and there is little potential for profit.

Ronald Hampton is the principal of Retirement Planning Associates located at 3500 North Causeway Boulevard in Metairie. Hampton is a Certified Retirement Financial Advisor™ and author of “Retirement Land Mines and How to Avoid Them”. He can be reached at 1-800-569-2902 or ronaldghampton@cox.net. The website is www.RetirementPlanningAssociates.net. Hampton’s firm is a participant in the Better Business Bureau CARE program and is an authorized representative of S.A.F.E. Planning, a Medicaid planning practice.
Extraordinary Session of 2005, the rights of the landlords were expanded in regards to: (a) their right to enter leased properties to make necessary repairs; (b) to remove and dispose of personal property of renters; (c) giving notice to the renter; (d) the presumption of abandonment of the leased property, and; (d) termination of the lease.

This act applies only to leased properties in the areas directly affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and this act terminates on June 30, 2006. Under this act, the owner of the property may enter the leased premises without the permission of the renter to inspect the property and to make necessary repairs.

The owner may remove the renter's property from the premises. However, the owner is required to preserve any salvageable property of the renters at the renters' expense. The owner may dispose of any property that is unsalvageable. "Unsalvable" property is defined as that which has been damaged as a result of Hurricanes Katrina/Rita and can no longer be used for its intended purposes. It is also considered unsalvageable if the cost of cleaning, repairing, or preserving the property is greater than its fair market value.

This act does not apply to any renter who continues to occupy the rented premises. It applies to those who are not occupying a property they rented before the storms. An owner must make a reasonable effort to notify the renter at least ten days before preserving or disposing of the renter's property. If the owner cannot locate the renter, the owner can presume abandonment if the owner has provided emergency contact information to the renter prior to the storms and if the renter has failed to remain current on his rent and has failed to inform the owner of his intentions to remain in the leased premises.

This presumption of abandonment also applies to personal property located on the leased premises from August 26, 2005 to June 30, 2006.

In conclusion, this law greatly expands owners' rights to meet the needs caused by these horrible storms, but these rights end on June 30, 2006.

James L. Melchers is the senior attorney at Melchers Law Firm, located at 909 West Esplanade Avenue in Kenner and the firm's primary areas of practice are estate planning, wills, trusts, successions, real estate, corporate law, and personal injury. 

Melchers can be reached at 467-1092 or visit the website at www.melcherslawfirm.com.
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Museums:
- Planetarium: Saturday 10am-10pm
- Cafferey Native American Village
- Science Center
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- Heritage Park

Plac:
- Unique gift and candy stores
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Live Theatre:
- Children's Castle (performances every Saturday at 11:00 am and 3:00 pm)
- Rivertown Repertory Theatre (Box Office 468-7221)

Kenner Planetarium and MegaDome Cinema:
- LASER HER: SAVI (Laser Show)
- MAR'S QUEST (Planetarium Sky Show)
- DOLPHINS (MegaDome Cinema)

For more information and show schedules, call 468-7231.
By GLENN DOTTOLO

As we begin the year, it is good to clean out our financial closets and our regular closets as well. Of course for some of us this is easy, as Katrina gave us no choice but to start fresh. Even so, documents and stuff have a way of accumulating fast, especially in a FEMA trailer.

What to save:

- Tax returns – these should be saved for at least five years.
- Credit card statements – save these for a year and throw them away when you receive the year end summary.
- Bank Statements – save for one year.

You don’t need to save the checks or the check images anymore, since the bank does this for you electronically.

- Utility Statements – save the last month. Once the next bill comes in and it shows your payment, you can throw away the old statement. By the way, since Congress did not give us the same help with utilities that New York received after 9/11, our utility bills will be much higher next year. Ratepayers in South Louisiana will have to pay to rebuild the system with no outside help.
- Investment Statements – save the monthly statements until the year end summary arrives, then throw away the monthly statements and keep the year end summary as long you own any of those investments.

What to use:

- Gift certificates – companies love to sell gift certificates since they get cash immediately and deliver the goods over time. Use your gift certificates within three months. If you wait longer, the odds increase that they will be lost, forgotten, or expire.
- Frequent Flyer Miles – as soon as you earn a trip, schedule it and go. The airlines are constantly amending their programs, and the changes are almost always worse for the consumer.
- Specialty foods, soaps, candles, etc. – if you have a lot of these things, set up a schedule to use them up over the next year. Give away what you can not use. These items tend to fall into the “too good to use” category. The result is that they will be sold one day at a moving or estate sale. Your friends and relatives wanted you to enjoy these items, so go ahead.

What to give away:

- Clothing you don’t use – you know it when you open the package–“I will never wear that.” Be gracious, say “thank you.” Don’t put it in the closet or drawer. Exchange it or give it away this month.
- Other accumulated stuff – if you don’t use it, pass it on or give it away. Among the tragedies of Katrina was the sight of so many things that were thrown away, having been saved for years and never really used. Life is uncertain, so let’s all pass things on so that they can be used and enjoyed.

Glenn Dotolo, manager of Gulf Coast Bank & Trust’s Kenner Branch Office on Williams Boulevard, offers twenty-two years of full service banking to his customers. Dotolo can be contacted at 565-3656. Visit Gulf Coast Bank & Trust’s website at www.gulfbank.com.

CARAWAY

(continued from page 1)

pursue,” Caraway said. “Just out of Rummel High School, I joined the United States Marine Corps and immediately served in the Military Police. In 1977, I joined the Kenner Police Department as a patrolman. Seven years later, I made detective. Seven years after that, I was Sergeant. Another six years to Lieutenant and five years later, in 2002, I was promoted to Captain. Read between those years and there’s a strong story of commitment, dedication and determination.”

Caraway, a Republican, feels that he would bring a wealth of practical experience to the job of being Kenner’s top law enforcement official.

“I’ve managed every aspect of law enforcement in our city,” Caraway said. “I led the Criminal Investigations Unit, taught crime prevention to citizens, and law enforcement to fellow officers. I am a graduate of the elite FBI National Academy, where only one percent of applying law officers are accepted. I offer extensive training in counter terrorism, community policing, crime scene investigation and analysis, problem solving, and ethical leadership. I’ve seen it all: defending Kenner against gangs, drug dealers, murderers, thieves, and even looters. I’ve worked in every neighborhood, treating citizens with respect while treating criminals to time in jail. Now, I am prepared to use my knowledge and experience to keep Kenner safe. From patrolman, to detective, sergeant, lieutenant and captain, I am ready for the next challenge, the next logical step …to continue as Kenner Chief of Police to protect and to serve.”

Caraway’s immediate family includes his wife, Karen, and three children.

Another candidate who has formally announced his intention to run for Kenner Chief of Police is P.J. Hahn, who was previously employed by the Jefferson Parish Sheriff’s Office.
By DAN DORMADY

The recovery efforts from Hurricane Katrina mean that many homeowners will need to be aware of potential health hazards, including those posed by asbestos-containing materials. Roof and flood damage to many homes will require significant repairs, starting with cleaning up debris and demolition of the damaged elements, and, in older homes, asbestos containing materials, or ACM, may be found. This column will provide you with some basic information about what asbestos containing material is, where it can be found, and what the potential health risks are.

Asbestos is a mineral fiber found in rocks. There are several kinds of asbestos fibers, all of which are fire resistant and not easily destroyed or degraded by natural processes. Uncontrolled, crumbling asbestos is a hazard. It has been well established that asbestos fiber can become embedded in the lung tissue, causing an irritation that often develops into lung cancer. If the material develops into lung cancer ten to twenty years, or more, after the initial contact occurs. What, then, should we be concerned about with regard to asbestos in our homes?

Today, asbestos containing materials can be found in approximately 20 percent of all homes in the United States. Throughout the seventies, the Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) and Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) banned or prohibited the use of several asbestos containing products in the construction industry. Approximately 50 percent of homes more than 50 years old, however, are likely to contain some asbestos.

Asbestos is contained in many different building materials. Technically, there are very few examples of pure asbestos. Typically, it is contained in what is referred to as an ACM or Asbestos Containing Material. Insulation on heating equipment and heating pipes is one of the more common asbestos containing materials.

The fiber content of this material has much to do with its degree of hazard. Some types of asbestos insulation (which appears similar to corrugated cardboard) has relatively low fiber content, while that which appears more like a solid paper mache material has higher fiber content, often in excess of 50 percent. Furnace cement and other insulations used on old heating equipment also often contain asbestos fiber. Asbestos also occurs in wall plaster, certain types of floor tile, wall shingles, wall and ceiling insulation in some homes constructed between 1930 and 1950, certain types of sprayed or troweled-on ceiling treatments, roof shingles and others.

What is the health risk? The most hazardous asbestos fiber is very tiny, very sharp and very hard. However, different types of asbestos have different characteristics. Some are less hazardous than others. Only lab tests can determine the type and quantity of asbestos present.

The degree of risk represented by the presence of asbestos is largely a function of its “fibrilability.” Basically, fibrilability is an indication of how easily the asbestos fiber can become dislodged from the ACM. Softer insulation materials and aging wall plaster are quite friable while asbestos shingles, asbestos floor tile, and other similar materials are normally considered to be essentially non-friable and therefore minimally hazardous. However, damaged material or demolished material should be treated with precaution regardless.

Asbestos can be controlled by encapsulation or removal. While removal is ideal, it should be approached with great caution since careless removal can lead to more extensive contamination of a building than if the material had been left alone.

Encapsulation simply means wrapping the material with a durable enclosure resistant to mechanical damage. Duct tape or a plaster impregnated cloth are among the preferred materials for encapsulation. Asbestos containing plaster can be encapsulated using good quality paint if the plaster itself is reasonably sound.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has enacted many regulations with regard to the removal and disposal of asbestos. At this time, however, there are no regulations that require this material to be removed from homes. What you do with it in your own home (at this point in time) is up to you. The existing regulations only affect how you remove it and where you dispose of it.

Many contractors represent themselves as experts in asbestos removal. Since not all states have enacted certification or licensing procedures for asbestos contractors, one should exercise great care in selecting a contractor to deal with asbestos in any home. Otherwise, the environment of the home could become contaminated as a result of careless removal procedures.

If you have questions regarding the handling and disposal of asbestos containing material, you can contact the EPA at www.epa.gov or by calling 1-800-368-5889.

Dan Dormady, P.E. is a licensed professional engineer and licensed home inspector (LSBH #10273), and the president of Criterium-Dormady Engineers, a locally owned consulting engineering firm specializing in residential and commercial building inspection services. Dormady can be reached at 456-6999. P.O. Box 113563 Metairie, LA 70011-3565; or at criteriumdormady@cox.net. Criterium-Dormady Engineers’ website is www.criterium-dormady.com.
**Real Estate**

Get your offer accepted with these strategies

By LINDA R. MARTIN

When you’re in a hot market or vying for a hot property, the competition can be fierce. You need to make your offer stand out from your competitors’ offers. To increase the likelihood that a seller accepts your offer, consider adopting one or more of these strategies:

**Price.** Obviously, price tends to be the primary consideration for sellers. In a hot market, when buyers outnumber inventory, offers often come in at full price or above. When you’re competing for a home, cash offers can be more attractive to sellers as well. Although sellers will receive their money at closing whether buyers pay with cash or take out a loan, cash offers don’t require lender approval. And loan approval is never a certainty – it may delay closing.

**Financing.** It’s not enough to be pre-qualified. Pre-qualification only tells how much you can afford. Pre-approval goes a step further. Your lender will thoroughly evaluate your application – including verifying employment information and financial disposition – then clear you for a loan of a determined amount. Having your loan pre-approved gives you a sizeable advantage by putting you on equal footing with cash buyers.

**Good Faith Deposit.** Buyers offering a larger-than-customary amount of “earnest money,” a deposit that accompanies an offer, may get a seller’s attention. By committing more money up front, buyers demonstrate greater sincerity and motivation to close the transaction. Your real estate professional can guide you as to the appropriate sum for your specific transaction.

**Contingencies.** Consider minimizing contingencies; those clauses that allow buyers to back out of a contract if certain conditions are not met. For example, it’s common for buyers to make the purchase contingent upon their securing satisfactory financing. Obviously, offers with the fewest conditions tend to be more attractive to sellers.

From a contingency standpoint, first-time buyers are often better prospects for a seller’s home than move-up buyers. Here’s why: Very often, buyers’ offers are contingent upon the sale of their present home. Even if a move-up buyer has an offer in hand, that buyer’s offer may be contingent on another contingency, and so on down the line. If one transaction derails, they all might.

**Relationship.** Help the seller get to know and identify with you by looking for ways to connect. For instance, it may be through a shared appreciation of a certain style of architecture. Let’s say that you’re fortunate enough to find yourself competing for an original Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home. After hearing about your visit to Taliesin West, Wright’s desert home, and your collection of Wright-inspired furniture, the seller might be persuaded that you should be the next custodian of this national treasure. Of course, the connection could be something more conventional, such as a shared love of gardening. You’ll want to persuade the seller that his prize roses will be well tended.

Naturally, sellers would like to receive top dollar for their home, but remember that they also want an easy, trouble-free transaction. Thus, as a rule, the fewer the contingencies and the greater the commitment, the more attractive your offer may look.

Linda R. Martin is the branch manager of the Prudential Gardner Realtors’ Williams Boulevard branch and can be reached at 443-6664 or lmartin@prudentialgardner.com. Prudential Gardner’s website is www.prudentialgardner.com.

Kenner Police Department receives aid from New Jersey law enforcement community

Kenner Police Chief Nick Congemi and the Kenner Police Department have been adopted as part of a fund raising effort by the Union County, New Jersey law enforcement community. Officers with the Union County Sheriff’s Office and the Union County Division of Corrections have begun the drive by raising $17,000 in donations to aid Kenner police officers.

The Union County Corrections officers donated a month’s worth of union dues from Police Benevolent Association Local 199 totaling $12,000 to the relief effort spearheaded by the Union County Conference, a group comprised of delegates from each of the county’s 24 law enforcement agencies. The Union County Sheriff’s officers also donated a month of dues in the amount of $5,000. Contributions have also come from various P.B.A. and Fraternal Order of Police organizations in New Jersey.

“The Kenner Police Department is extremely thankful to our friends in New Jersey,” said Congemi. “Their kindness and generosity will provide relief to our officers, especially those who lost their homes due to Hurricane Katrina.”

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Louisiana State Police requested assistance and the response from Union County was immediate. Under the direction of the New Jersey State Police, officers from around the county responded and set up bases in Kenner, where they patrolled the community, responded to 9-1-1 calls, enforced curfews, apprehended looters and conducted search and rescue missions. In their off-duty hours, they worked rescuing animals.

Upon returning to New Jersey after several weeks of working in Louisiana, officers assigned to Kenner reported that Kenner police officers were in need of assistance to help restore their professional and personal lives.

“We hope to collect contributions from law enforcement agencies throughout the county in order to help our brother officers in Kenner,” said Union County Corrections Officer Ken Burkert, who is also the co-chair of the Union County Conference.

The Union County officers also paid for two Kenner police officers to travel to New Jersey to pick up the first check, which was in the amount of $20,000.

The state of New Jersey’s Union County Corrections Officer Ken Burkert, Westfield Police Detective John Cuzzo and Union County Sheriff Ralph Froehlich give a $20,000 check to Kenner Police Sgt. Michael Glaser and Kenner Police Sgt. George Ansardi. The money was collected from their fellow law enforcement officers and agencies.
Preventative maintenance protects your investment and saves money

By SCOTT ZIMMERMAN

The owner’s manuals in most vehicles suggest replacing the timing belt every 60,000 miles even if the car is running fine and does not seem to have any problems. For many, this raises the question: “Why should I pay for a new belt and pay for someone to install it if it’s OK?”

The whole idea behind preventive maintenance is to avert major problems with your vehicle. Following the maintenance schedule in your owner’s manual is the “safest” way to go. Over time and mileage, timing belts tend to wear and stretch. When a belt breaks, the damage to the engine can be substantial. By replacing the belt before it gets too worn, you can prevent costly damage. In addition, if you have an extended warranty on your engine, not following the suggested maintenance schedule may void the warranty.

It would not be wise to choose to leave the old belt on the car to save money. The belt can break and destroy the engine to the point where it needs to be replaced with a new one. And the warranty could be void at that point because you did not replace the belt as listed on the maintenance schedule. The result is that you would be stuck with a huge bill. All of that can be avoided, however, by following the maintenance schedule.

Your owner’s manual also suggests replacing all filters at a specific time. If there are not many miles on your vehicle, you may wonder if these replacements are necessary. You may want to have a trusted technician check over the car to see what it really needs, as filters tend to last different lengths of time depending on driving patterns and the area weather.

Another suggestion is to visit an automotive shop that offers an inspection which covers all major points of your vehicle, so that you can have a good feel for what needs to be done. This type of inspection can give you a heads up on preventive maintenance items and repairs.

Compare preventive maintenance to the habit of filling your fuel tank. You have two choices- you can put fuel in the tank while there is still fuel left, or you run the engine until the tank empties and leaves you stranded and searching for gas. Which scenario would you choose?

People now pay an average of $24,000 for a new car, yet, some motorists absolutely refuse to take good care of them and they will continue to have more automotive problems than are necessary. The best way for you to protect your investment is to maintain it, inside and out, from oil changes to filters, belts to hoses, car washes to interior cleaning. Taking care of your car is the best way to make sure that your car will take care of you.

Scott Zimmerman is the owner of Scotty’s Tire and Automotive, Inc., a family-owned and operated full-service tire and automotive shop, located at 4200 Williams Boulevard in Kenner. Store hours are 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. on Saturday. Scotty’s website is www.scottystireauto.com.

Storm and fire victims given aid by Kenner Police Department

On December 22, 2005, the Kenner Police Department hosted a party for the Buffington family from St. Bernard Parish and gave them gifts paid for by KPD members and the Kenner Police Benevolent Association. Santa Claus entertained the kids, who received several toys, including bicycles. The family was also given a new refrigerator. The Kenner home they had moved to on Roosevelt Boulevard after Hurricane Katrina was destroyed in a fire.

KENNER PROPERTY TAX NEWS
Due to delays caused by Hurricane Katrina, Kenner residents should receive their 2005 property tax bills by the end of February.

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Archbishop Chapelle High School will hold its ninth annual gala on Saturday, March 18, 2006 celebrating with the theme “Naturally New Orleans.” The event will be held in the Chapelle ballroom gymnasium located at 8800 Veterans Boulevard in Metairie.

A patron party will be held from 6:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. in the lobby of the new Fine Arts Building. Doors will open at 7:30 p.m. for all other guests.

The evening includes a dinner buffet provided by several local restaurants and an open bar. Silent and verbal auctions will be held from 7:30 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. Dancing to the “The Topcats” band from 10:30 until 1:00 a.m. will conclude the festivities.

WWL-TV “Morning Show” traffic reporter Jill Hezeau, a ’96 Chapelle alumna, will be the celebrity emcee. Chair of the event is Janel Quitzea with assists from co-chairs, David and Lori Speed.

Tickets to the gala are $50 each and may be obtained by calling Dottie Schule, ACHS Special Events Director, at 468-9090.

“Naturally New Orleans” theme of Chapelle gala

Archbishop Chapelle High School
Celebrates
“Naturally New Orleans”
Saturday, March 18
6:00 - 7:00 PM - Patron Party
7:00 Doors Open
7:00 - Silent and Oral Auctions followed by Dancing to “The Topcats”
Buffet Dinner and Open Bar
Archbishop Chapelle’s elegant Gymnasium Ballroom
8800 Veterans Blvd., Metairie
Ticket prices: $50.00 per Reveler
Contact Erin Vezina Caruso, 831-9391 or Dottie Schule, Special Events Director, 468-9090 to purchase tickets

Auditions for RRT’s The Odd Couple set

The Rivertown Repertory Theatre will hold auditions for Neil Simon’s renowned comedy, The Odd Couple, on Sunday, January 15, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. at the theatre. Director Gary Rucker is seeking six men ages 30 to 40 and two women ages 30 and 40 capable of speaking with a strong British accent.

The Odd Couple will open on Friday, March 10 and run for three consecutive weeks, Friday through Sunday. The play will close on March 26. Call the theatre at 468-7221 for further information.

The Rivertown Repertory Theatre is located at 325 in Kenner’s Rivertown District.

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A good start for the new year

By CARL CLEVELAND

During the holidays, there were several memorable programs on TV that brought a welcome relief from the usual "stuff." My favorite was the Barbara Walters Special on "Heaven and Hell." This two-hour program featured every viewpoint from every major religion in the world.

To my surprise, the interviews showed that 90 percent of the people in the world believe in an afterlife. With few exceptions, everyone thinks they are headed to Heaven, even if they aren’t so sure about others. All agree that Heaven is a wonderful place free from pain and death, but the details vary wildly. Most agree that we get small glimpses of heaven in our daily lives if we are alert. To avoid the risk of being offensive, I won’t let myself giggle at some of the more bizarre ideas expressed to Barbara. It’s fun to speculate on what might await us in the afterlife, and I think we can do this without here’s if we aren’t too silly.

I pointed out to a recent class of parochial high school senior girls I was substitute teaching, that the Hubble telescope has proven that the universe contains billions of galaxies, each with billions of stars, and with about a third of the stars having planets. Since there are demonstrably more galaxies than there are people who have ever lived, I asked the girls to assume that they would go to heaven, and their reward would be their own galaxy to shape as they pleased. I got the expected answers: a planet of cute boys and only one girl; a planet of wonderful food, and no weight gain; a planet of designer clothes; etc., etc. Once the silliness died down, the answers became more profound. One suggestion was that there would be a planet where everyone they had ever helped would show them the consequences of their compassion. Another foresaw a reunion with family and friends. Another predicted the ability to understand God’s goodness and mercy.

My second unexpected joy was to finally watch an old Jimmy Stewart Christmas movie from start to finish titled “It’s a Wonderful Life.” In this story, the hero becomes desperate because of financial problems and decides to commit suicide to recover on his life insurance for his family. At the last minute, his guardian angel comes to the rescue and shows the suicidal man what a tremendous influence for the good he had unwittingly exercised over a period of years on the lives of the entire town. It was clear that if this man had not lived, the town would have been a far different place than it was. Though we may not see this, it is true about each of our lives, probably to a much greater extent than we think.

My dad believed that a very real and understandable form of immortality was the impact we had, for good or for evil, on the lives of others. As I thought about all of these diverse ideas, it occurred to me that a truly unique way to start the new year with a meaningful bang would be to deliberately influence someone for the good who might not be expecting to hear from us. I have in mind a note, a visit, or a phone call to express our love and best wishes for the new year, especially to someone from whom we might have become estranged, maybe for reasons long forgotten. By doing this we can experience a tiny speck of the peace and joy of heaven, while we brighten up the life of someone we catch by surprise.

Carl Cleveland can be reached via email at kenstarwcr@aol.com.
Saints – a hard sell

By KEN TRAHAN

To survive throughout my 28 year career in broadcasting, diversification has been an invaluable component. Along the way, I have programmed, served as a general manager, public relations director, community relations director, marketing director, and sales manager. Without a doubt, I could not have the former titles without the last one. That is like putting the cart before the horse. You must sell a product to suitable suitors to attain the position you are looking for.

Of course, you must have a product to sell. Consider the plight of the New Orleans Saints. They have not been to the playoffs since the magical 2002 season. They have not had a winning season since 2001. They have graduated, but most certainly, gotten worse over that period of time. They have cultivated a terrible public relations image in Louisiana. Former front office executives Arnold Fielkow, Connie Kowal, and Mike Feder did a terrific job of selling a diminishing product for as long as possible. The Saints had 38 consecutive sellouts, a streak that lasted into the 2005-06 season. The Saints had at achieving success.

The Saints finished their 2005 season in ignominious fashion, with an embarrassing 3-13 record. In the laughable history of the franchise, only three teams compiled worse marks over a long period of time. They have cultivated an overall psyche of the Saints in immeasurable fashion. The biggest damage was inflicted by team owner Tom Benson, who did not seem to care about the players or coaches in his end-game of relocating the franchise permanently to San Antonio. From working out of temporary offices to being run out of those offices, from working out of an old water plant to practicing in paved parking lots, from temporary tent cities to refusing to return to a superior training facility in Metairie, Benson did his level best to sabotage any chance the 2005 New Orleans Saints had at achieving success.

Of course, the flip-side is that in the midst of ineptitude lies the treasure of accruing the second overall draft pick in the upcoming NFL draft.

There are many questions that abound. 1) Will the Saints utilize the selection to choose Matt Leinart? 2) Will Aaron Brooks return as a New Orleans Saint in 2006? 3) Who will be the head coach of the Saints in 2006? 4) Did Tom Benson truly want to move the Saints back to the New Orleans-area? 5) Will the Saints remain in New Orleans on a long-term basis?

With regard to Leinart, the option is to trade down to get more than one player or to risk taking the USC quarterback. My use of the word risk is due to the possibility of Leinart pulling an Eli Manning and opting not to play for the Saints if they draft him. Would you blame him? Then, there is the issue of whether or not Benson is willing to pony up the $20 million signing bonus to obtain Leinart. In the final analysis, I believe that the Saints will make the safe choice and choose Leinart, a tall, calm customer who has football intelligence and leadership skills. Credentials that Aaron Brooks has failed to exhibit over a long period of time.

As a result, the Saints will finally cut the cord with the talented but erratic Brooks. The feeling among most observers is that there will be takers due to Aaron's obvious skills – great size, mobility, and a big arm. Perhaps a change of scenery will benefit him. Of course, he did have toys to play with in New Orleans. From Ricky Williams to Deuce McAllister. From Joe Horn to Donte Stallworth. From William Roaf to Kyle Turley. From LeCharles Bentley to Jamaal Brown. The talent was here. Consistent production was not. Look for the Saints to trade Brooks to the highest bidder. Of course, should the Saints opt out of picking Leinart and trading down, they could trade Brooks for a Patrick Ramsey or Phillip Rivers. With Rivers, you would have to enhance the package.

Head coach Jim Haslett was fired the day after the season ended with a year remaining on his contract worth $3.2 million dollars. Benson had to buy it out just as he did the deals of Bill Kuhlariic, Mike Ditka and Randy Mueller in the not-too-distant-past and is still smarting from those financial hits. He is, as we know, a very prudent man, and is not very willing to part with dollars. Haslett would likely have been allowed to finish out his final year but he asked Benson and General Manager Mickey Loomis for an extension here by a signed document and a solid force in the franchise. Benson was coerced, forced into returning here by a signed document and a solid force in the franchise. Benson felt that Haslett wanted out, freeing him from the debacle that Benson created. His confidence in being able to land another head coaching job remains high.

As far as who will replace Haslett, if the organization is committed to drafting Leinart, hiring a creative offensive mind is imperative. To that end, Mike Martz and Gary Kubiak are intriguing possibilities. Martz is considered a mad genius. His gambling style would be pleasing to New Orleans fans. He made a terrific NFL quarterback out of Arena Football League refugee Kurt Warner, who became a league MVP in St. Louis. He developed Marc Bulger, a Saints castoff, into a solid starter. Kubiak was a finalist when Haslett was hired to replace Ditka in 2000. He has done a marvelous job of making Jake Plummer a complete quarterback in Denver while fostering the best running attack in the league.

It will be difficult enough to attract free agents to storm-torn New Orleans but so much more difficult because of the uncertainty of where the team would be in two years. The lure of a lame duck coach would have even hurt more. The obvious thing to do was to dismiss Haslett and move on. Drafting Haslett and firing Haslett would sell tickets in New Orleans. The Saints are a sinking ship. Haslett cast his lot with Brooks. He had lost credibility with some players. His teams were among the most penalized in the league and led the NFL in turnovers this past season. Despite his shortcomings, Haslett was far from being the primary problem with the Saints and he is respected by other NFL people and members of the national media.

If you want to believe that Mr. Benson had a change of heart, saw the light, and decided to move his team back home, you must also believe in the tooth fairy. Clearly, Benson was coerced, forced into returning here by a signed document and a solid force in the franchise. Benson felt that Haslett wanted out, freeing him from the debacle that Benson created. His confidence in being able to land another head coaching job remains high.

Finally, the big question remains. Benson has to be here for one season. His intentions have not changed but the NFL will do everything possible to prevent him from moving the team to San Antonio in 2007. In the meantime, it is incumbent upon the New Orleans area to prove that it is viable as an NFL market in the post-Katrina world. I have considered the numbers for a few weeks now. What would be an impressive number of fans in 2006? All things considered (a bad team, terrible publicity, reduced population, lingering threat of relocation), if the Saints can average over 50,000 per game in Louisiana in 2006, that should be ample evidence that we are capable of supporting NFL football on a long-term basis, just as we have for 38 years. A refurbished Superdome will help, but make no mistake about it – the ultimate determination of keeping the Saints in New Orleans will be a new stadium. Construct a plan. Study site viability. Obtain financial help from the NFL in building it. Without it, the Saints are quite likely to end up in the city of Angels, far from a Heavenly ascension.
Local church hosts 52-hour “Rebuilding Through The Eucharist” event

Beginning at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 31, 2006, St. Benilde Church, located at 1901 Division Street in Metairie, will host a 52 hour perpetual adoration of the Eucharist.

“Within these 52 hours of adoration, we will offer Holy Mass at 7:00 a.m., noon and 7:00 p.m., Chaplet of Divine Mercy at the 3 o’clock hour with readings from the Eucharistic writings of St. Faustina, Rosary with Eucharistic Meditations, Charismatic praise and worship, Medjugorje Holy Hour, special talks on the Eucharistic, and an outdoor candle-light procession for the Feast of Candlemas,” said event coordinator Mimi Kelly. “On February 2, there will be many prayer groups and a special opportunity for youth participation.”

The event, called “Rebuilding Through The Eucharist,” is open to all who wish to participate.

“Won’t you please plan to schedule an hour with Our Lord and pray for the rebuilding of our lives and also for the rebuilding of the Greater New Orleans area to be done in a way that is pleasing to God?” Kelly asked, adding that those who wish to sign up for an hour of adoration can call 849-2570.

Prayer groups or banners wishing to participate should also call 849-2570 or send an email to themirgroup@aol.com.

For more details visit http://www.themirgroup.org/calendar.

JPAS holding auditions for Buddy Holly Story

The Jefferson Performing Arts Society will be producing the musical Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story. This production stars Billy McGuigan of Des Moines, Iowa as Buddy and John “Spud” McConnell as “The Big Bopper.” Various roles for versatile actors, singers and dancers are available. All roles are paid. The show opens March 10 and runs Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays until March 26, 2006. There are nine performances. Actors for the following specific roles are sought.

Apollo Theatre in Harlem Scene: Three black female singers/actors who can dance. Age range 16-35. One black male actor/singer who can play a wind or brass instrument. These characters also play other roles throughout the show.

Maria Elena: Buddy Holly’s wife. Hispanic looking female age range 18-25. Must sing/act dance This actor will play three other roles as well.

Ritchie Valens: Hispanic looking actor age 18-30 to sing “La Bamba” and play three other roles.

Hipockets Duncan: Famous DJ in Lubbock Texas who helped launch Buddy’s career. Principally acting role but sings in Buddy’s “final concert” in Clear Lake, Iowa at end of show.

Norman Petty: Buddy’s first record producer and manager. Also plays other roles. Must sing and move.

Contact Dennis G. Assaf, Executive and Artistic Director for the Jefferson Performing Arts Society located at 1118 Clearview Parkway in Metairie at 885-2000 or visit the JPAS website at www.jpas.org for more information.

Georgy’s and Chateau Café will move to new locations

Pam Georgy, owner of Georgy’s Salon and Spa has announced she will move her business in the spring to a different location on West Esplanade Avenue. The new building will be located between Starbucks and Dr. Charles Murphy’s Orthopedic Center for Sports Medicine. Chateau Coffee Cafe will open up an additional location with drive-up service at the corner of the same building.
Happy New Year to all of my gardeners. This is the time to assess your garden and get rid of any damaged or undesirable plants. Winter presents a prime opportunity to landscape your yard, as a plant put in the ground from November through February will establish a good root system because it is not growing on top. Therefore, transplants have a chance to get well established before spring growth pushes up new life from the roots.

I found a new variety of azalea that blooms three times yearly. After the spring bloom, you will get an encore summer performance and another fall bloom. They are called Encore Azaleas, and are available in twenty-three choices that need little maintenance but give big color. The following Encore Azaleas are my favorites: Autumn Angel has pure white flowers that appear iridescent in the morning light and grow to three feet high and three feet wide. Autumn Empress has a deep orange-red bloom. It grows four feet wide and three feet tall. Autumn Empress has a medium pink flower and grows four feet tall and three feet wide. Autumn Rouge displays deep red pink blooms with dark green upright foliage and is good for backgrounds or hedges. Autumn Royalty offers single large rich purple blooms and grows four feet wide and tall. Autumn Sundance grows into deep pink single blooms. Autumn Twist offers a unique white and purple striped flower, with an occasional completely purple flower, and grows four feet by four feet. Try a few of these new azaleas in sunny to semi-sunny spots for a real treat.

Another plant that is proving popular now is the Knock Out Rose. It has been around for years but is enjoying a rebirth recently. This tough and hard landscape shrub has set a new standard of excellence in disease resistance. It blooms in the early spring and all year, until the first hard frost, and requires no special care to grow. It is Blackspot resistant, mildew tolerant, self-cleaning and drought tolerant. This trouble free shrub suits any garden and lifestyle. It is considered a landscape rose, so it does not make good cut roses, but it does make a great color splash in gardens. These rose bushes grow to a height of four to five feet, are round-shaped with dark green glossy foliage, and grow well in our climate.

There is a great demand for pansies now since the fall planting season was spoiled by the storm. It is not too late to brighten up your house or your trailer. Try working in the garden, as it lifts the spirit. Do it now.

Happy new year to all!
At-Large member of the Driftwood Park Civic Association, Howland also actively participates in the Jefferson Convention and Visitors Bureau, Jefferson Beautification, Inc., Kenner Italian Heritage Festival Board, the Metro Club, the Kenner Republican Women’s Club, Pelican Pachyderm Club where she is a board member, Jefferson Alliance for Good Government, and the Greater New Orleans Chapter of BNI. Howland is a volunteer with the Crimestoppers organization and has served on the Board of the Metropolitan Battered Women’s Program and the Kenner Twilight on Twelfth Night Committee.

“My involvement in the community has always been motivated by a desire to serve,” Howland said. “If elected, I will be accessible to the residents and businesses of District 3, I will be accountable to the residents and businesses of District 3, and I will be an advocate for all that live and do business in the District.”

A Republican, Howland states her goals for District 3 include assisting the residents and business owners of the district in restoring their homes and revitalizing their businesses, addressing and improving drainage problems, easing traffic congestion, enforcing zoning codes to keep the district beautiful, and working with law enforcement to ensure the safety and security of the district.

“The achievement of these goals will make District 3 an attractive mecca for new businesses bringing economic expansion to District 3,” Howland said.

As of press time, the only other announced candidate for Kenner Council District 3 is Ben Zahn. ★

FIRE DEPARTMENT GRANT (continued from page 1)

protect us everyday.”

Kenner Fire Chief Mike Zito said that the grant could ultimately become a benefit for every Kenner resident and business.

“Obtaining this grant was a huge step for the Kenner Fire Department. By enhancing our manpower, the city may be eligible for a Class 1 Fire Rating, which may ultimately result in lower insurance premiums for home and business owners in Kenner,” Zito said. The Property Insurance Association of Louisiana rates fire departments on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the best. Currently Kenner is rated as a Class 2 but will apply for the Class 1 status after adding the new personnel. ★
Toy story

By ED CLANCY

It was one of the strangest things I had ever seen. I was driving Lake bound on Power Boulevard in Kenner last month, and coming toward me on the other side of the middle ground were two large trucks – apparently oversized dump trucks – carrying dirt or Katrina debris. I made a Louisiana left, and at the stop light these two trucks passed in front of me. My eyes opened a little wider as I noticed, on the grille of the lead truck, a huge stuffed animal. It looked like a huge homeless plush rabbit. It was dangling right in the center of the grille of the lead truck, a huge stuffed animal. It was one of the strangest things I had ever seen. I was driving Lake bound on Power Boulevard in Kenner last month, and coming toward me on the other side of the middle ground were two large trucks – apparently oversized dump trucks – carrying dirt or Katrina debris. I made a Louisiana left, and at the stop light these two trucks passed in front of me. My eyes opened a little wider as I noticed, on the grille of the lead truck, a huge stuffed animal. It looked like a huge homeless plush rabbit. It was dangling right in the center of the grille of the lead truck, a huge stuffed animal. It was one of the strangest things I had ever seen. I was driving Lake bound on Power Boulevard in Kenner last month, and coming toward me on the other side of the middle ground were two large trucks – apparently oversized dump trucks – carrying dirt or Katrina debris. I made a Louisiana left, and at the stop light these two trucks passed in front of me. My eyes opened a little wider as I noticed, on the grille of the lead truck, a huge stuffed animal. It looked like a huge homeless plush rabbit. It was dangling right in the center of the grille of the lead truck, a huge stuffed animal.

I thought, “What’s going on here?” It became obvious to me that these toys had been plucked either from houses that had been devastated by Katrina, or from landfill where these trucks hang out. So many questions filled my head: Why do these drivers have stuffed toys hanging from their trucks? Are they trying to make a statement? Are these toys going to be refurbished and given to homeless children? It was a total mystery, the solution to which I had to find out. So, the next day I got on the phone and called some trash hauling services. All of the people I talked to had seen these trucks, but did not admit to doing the “bunny-thing” themselves. One lady however, called me back with a theory she said was her brother-in-law’s: the drivers feel it’s good luck to display the animals they “saved.” She also said the drivers engage in a competition to see who can put the most plushies on their trucks.

My exploration took me to the Internet, where I found several references to this phenomenon. Chief among the citations is a column from just last November in the New York Times by Andy Newman: Why use beat-up stuffed animals? One prevalent theory among truckers is that chicks dig them.

Robert Marbury, an artist who photographed dozens of Manhattan bumper stickers in 2000 said he had once asked a trash hauler why he had a family of three mismatched bears strapped to his rig. “He said: ‘Yo, man, I drive a garbage truck. How am I going to get the ladies to look at me?’” Marbury recalled.

According to the article, most of the drivers whose trucks were photographed in New York were Hispanic, which dovetails with news reports that many of the workers who have poured into greater New Orleans since Katrina is Hispanic. It might also signal that the practice is linked to Latin American tradition.

Whatever its origins, the grille-mounted cuddle-object embellishment is found across the country. It has been spotted in Baltimore, Miami, Chicago, and other cities. And now, New Orleans. Is it possible that Katrina has caused the importation of this strange practice of putting Snoopy, Mickey, Bugs, and Stewie (from “Family Guy”) on the grilles and the boxes of dump trucks? Is this truly new to our area?

Well, if it is, it’s got a new wrinkle; something not seen in the Bronx, or Baltimore, Miami or Chicago. The wrinkle is that nestled among the soft, cuddly, greasy, dilapidated toy animals one can see the definitive glitter of Mardi Gras beads.

Ed Clancy can be reached via email at Edclancy2@aol.com.

KENNER KALENDAR

For more information call Leisure Service - 468-7269 or 468-7284 or visit City of Kenner Website: www.kenner.la.us

Kenny Parks & Recreation - 2006 Leisure Service Program Registration

Registration for all Leisure Programs will begin Saturday, January 7, 2006

10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. for Kenner Residents
12:00 Noon - 2:00 p.m. for Non Kenner Residents

Leisure Service Office-2508 20th Street

After January 7, 2006, registration is taken Mon.-Fri. from 10:15 a.m.-5:45 p.m.

(For Information 468-7268)

Is Your TARGET MARKET KENNER CITIZENS?

THE KENNER ST★R

REACHES
20,600 HOUSEHOLDS IN KENNER

CALL 468-9125 FOR AD RATES

January 2006

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Animals built and donated to Kenner children by 90-year-old California resident

With the help of Palo Alto Mayor, Jim Burch, 90-year-old California resident Vivian Yeatman has created by hand 50 stuffed teddy bears and elephants for the children of Kenner. The homemade bears and elephants were distributed in December at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Resource Center on 31st Street to children participating in the Kenner BINGO every Monday and Thursday Night - Doors Open 6 pm, Progressive BLACKOUT $10,000.00 - 50 Balls or Less as of 12/20/05.

To make a donation to St. Jerome’s fund for needy families, call 443-3174. Information about the parish can also be found at their website www.stjerome-catholic.org. ★

For more information on services, call 443-3174.

The generosity of St. Jerome Parish did not stop with a single act, however. Within six weeks of Katrina, the church had also started to house out-of-town groups and individuals who came to help New Orleans rebuild. Among those included a family of 12 from Michigan and a group of college students from Marquette University in Wisconsin. Other temporary residents, who will rely on the generosity of St. Jerome Parish to sustain them while they are here, are expected to include members of Catholic Charities’ new “Helping Hands” group. Helping Hands consists of volunteers from across the nation, who will perform services such as cleaning, rebuilding, and repairs across the region.

“The outpouring of generosity from around the country has been amazing,” Bordelon said, speaking of those who have found a temporary home at St. Jerome Parish.

Bordelon said, speaking of those who have found a temporary home at St. Jerome Parish, “We wanted to do something, so when we heard that Catholic Charities was looking for a place to set up, we went to the Pastoral Council and pointed out that we had room here.” Bordelon said. “We’re committed to housing them here for as long as they have resources to provide.”

The decision to donate space to the Catholic Charities organization was an important one for the city, as a range of vital services could then flow to the area residents who needed them most.

“We have a food bank where people can come once a week,” Bordelon said. “We also have doctors and nurses one day a week, and people can come in for no charge and with no appointment.”

The hours of operation for the Catholic Charities office at St. Jerome are currently Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., and on Tuesdays from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Services provided by Catholic Charities, among a network of eight centers across metro New Orleans, include help with food, rent, utilities, clothing, furniture, crisis counseling, and case management to assist those with urgent needs. For more information on services, call 443-3174.

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The hours of operation for the Catholic Charities office at St. Jerome are currently Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., and on Tuesdays from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Services provided by Catholic Charities, among a network of eight centers across metro New Orleans, include help with food, rent, utilities, clothing, furniture, crisis counseling, and case management to assist those with urgent needs. For more information on services, call 443-3174.
Gifts from area students and city of Hoboken given to Kenner children

On December 21, Kenner Mayor Phil Capitano and Kenner Councilwoman Michele Branigan distributed hundreds of toys to children at Kenner City Park. The gifts were collected by the All Saints Episcopal School in Hoboken, New Jersey, the Hoboken Civic Association and students from St. Matthew the Apostle in River Ridge. Miss Teen USA Amanda Mason donated "Home" CDs. Several large gift items, including four bicycles, were given away in a raffle. Pontchatoula native Lindsay Cardinale, a former "American Idol" contestant, performed for the children. The event, featuring the Coca-Cola Holiday Caravan, also offered live musical performances from local organizations and choirs for the children's entertainment.

Cannes Brulee Native American Village January schedule of events

The Cannes Brulee Native American Village is a unique outdoor exhibit enhanced with live animals. Each Saturday Native American artisans from tribes throughout the Gulf South and elsewhere share their culture and traditions with the public.

Saturday, January 21, 2006
Yellow Moon Singers
This community drum group sings Ponca language songs given to them by the late Harry Buffalohead.

Saturday, January 28, 2006
Native Cooking
Rose Behan continues her incredible cooking with her famous Cherokee Camp Stew.

Admission to the Cannes Brulee Native American Village is $5 for adults and $3 for seniors and children. Tickets may be purchased at the Rivertown Exhibition Hall located at 415 Williams Boulevard in Rivertown. For more information call 468-7231.

Yellow Moon Singers to appear at Cannes Brulee Native American Village.
Now Playing in the Planetarium and MegaDome Cinema

DOLPHINS

Some experiences just blow you out of the water.

2020 4th Street in Kenner’s Historic Rivertown • 468-7231
Showtimes: Tuesday - Saturday at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.
Even though the dedication of our employees leaves us speechless, We’re still able to manage two words.

For the third consecutive year, Kenner Regional Medical Center has been rated as one of the top twenty places to work in the New Orleans area. For us, this recognition is something special as it is voted on by our employees and speaks volumes of the leadership that persists within our facility. We are so proud of every one of our employees for not only their extreme dedication during the hurricane, but for all the effort they give day in and day out that gives us the ability to provide quality healthcare to the community we have the privilege to serve. Thank you all so very much.

Kenner Regional Medical Center
Part of the NOLA Regional Health Network