Ramelli Waste replacing old Waste Management trash cans

By ALLAN KATZ

Ramelli Waste is replacing the old Waste Management trash cans previously given to Kenner residents.

“We’re going on a block-by-block basis on the same days as garbage pickup,” said Robert Ramelli, president and CEO of Ramelli Waste LLC. “We have a truck loaded with new trash cans with the Ramelli name on them. We give each resident one trash can and remove the old Waste Management can.”

Ramelli said the replacement program continued on page 26

Almost 10 tons of food collected, but more needed on a regular basis

In November, Ochsner Medical Center-Kenner (OMC-K) joined with Kenner’s letter carriers from Branch 4342 to help stock the Kenner Food Bank. The letter carriers picked up over nine and one-half tons of non-perishable food items during their routes in bags provided by OMC-K in the November edition of the Kenner Star. Kenner resident donations greatly exceeded last year’s collection of seven tons.

“We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for the additional work the mail carriers did, and also a sincere thank you to all the residents of Kenner for a successful food bank drive and for supporting their community,” said Paolo Zambito, chief executive officer of OMC-K.

“I would like to sincerely thank Ochsner for providing the bags,” said Diane Plauche, supervisor of Kenner’s Food Bank. “I want to heartily thank the postal carriers, as picking up food at mailboxes for five days and carrying it back to the station takes a lot of hard work and effort. Our residents came through and donated in abundance so that many, many people could benefit from this drive. They have all helped a lot of needy people.”

“The employees of the Kenner Post Office are happy that they could be of service to the community. They are grateful for continued on page 26

Laketown pier open

A new Laketown fishing pier has been built and is now open to the public, said Kenner District 3 Councilman Ben Zahn. This pier was built after a previous wooden pier was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina — the second time a hurricane had damaged it beyond use.

“I know it has taken a while for a fishing pier to be available to our residents, but the city has been, and is, trying to catch up with work in the aftermath of Katrina,” said Zahn. “This new pier is smaller but is only a temporary solution for now. My main goal is to have a larger, stronger, more permanent concrete structure built. When that happens, this wooden pier will remain available to the public as well.”

The city is in the process of getting approval for FEMA funds to pay for a new concrete structure, Zahn said. “As I understand it, FEMA has guidelines in place that security in key areas of City Hall, the Public Works fuel and equipment depot, as well as other city-owned property.

However, public access to City Hall will not be affected by the new security program. “All the public has to do to gain access to City Hall during working hours is to open the door,” said Chief Administrative Officer Mike Yenni. “This security program is aimed at providing an added level of security in areas of City Hall and other facilities, but it will not affect John Q. Public coming to City Hall to see public officials or take care of any business administrations he or his family might have with the city.” continued on page 10

Security to tighten at city buildings, but public access won’t be affected

By ALLAN KATZ

The administration of Mayor Ed Muniz and the Kenner City Council are working cooperatively on a new plan to increase security in key areas of City Hall, the Public Works fuel and equipment depot, as well as other city-owned property.

However, public access to City Hall will not be affected by the new security program. “All the public has to do to gain access to City Hall during working hours is to open the door,” said Chief Administrative Officer Mike Yenni. “This security program is aimed at providing an added level of security in areas of City Hall and other facilities, but it will not affect John Q. Public coming to City Hall to see public officials or take care of any business administrations he or his family might have with the city.” continued on page 10

Willmott wins state representative runoff

In the runoff held on November 17, Republican Tom Willmott defeated fellow Republican Michael McMyne to become the next state representative for the 92nd District. Willmott will take over the seat held by Glenn Ansardi which encompasses South Kenner, a small part of North Kenner and a sliver of west Metairie. Willmott amassed 3,563 votes, 65 percent of all votes cast. McMyne obtained a total of 1,192 votes, or 35 percent of the total vote. Willmott will be sworn in and take office on Monday, January 14, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. ★

Willmott will fund the replacement of not-as-durable structures, such as this wooden pier, with more permanent, long lasting structures, such as the proposed concrete pier we want to build,” explained Zahn. “At least for now the public will be able to have access to fishing on the lake.” ★
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SPECIALTY CLASSES

Tai Chi
Level I: Mondays, Jan 7 – Mar 3, 7:45 – 8:45 pm & Tuesdays, Jan 8 – Mar 4, 12:30 – 1:30 pm.
Level II: Tues, Jan 8 – Mar 4, 12:30 – 2 pm & 7:30 – 8:30 pm
Level III: Tues, Jan 8 – Mar 4, 7:30 – 9 pm
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TUESDAY ST ❇A S M
The new Kenner legislative delegation appears to be in capable hands

By ALLAN KATZ

For the last eight years, one of the most-often told jokes at the Louisiana Legislature centered on “the powerful Kenner delegation,” and their ability to get things done.

The point of the joke, of course, was that the “powerful” Kenner delegation numbered three – State Senator Art Lentini, State Representative Glenn Ansardi and State Representative Danny Martiny. The three, when combined, were indeed powerful. They cooperated with one another, worked together like a team and always remembered that their priorities in Baton Rouge included bringing home the bacon to Kenner and to Jefferson Parish.

They were very adept at landing major grants for capital projects in Kenner, especially in terms of improvements to roadways.

Now, Senator Lentini and Representative Ansardi have been term limited out of office and Martiny has been elected to Lentini’s Senate seat.

Senator-elect Martiny will be joined by two freshmen legislators, State Representative-elect Tony Ligi and State Representative-elect Tom Willmott.

How powerful now will the Kenner delegation be, especially in view of the presence of two freshmen representatives who will be learning about the maze of legislative politics.

“We’re going to be just fine,” says Martiny. “Tony and Tom are two very smart, mature and able individuals who I am sure will take a very serious, studious approach to being good, effective legislators. I’m very impressed by both of them.”

Ligi, an attorney, says he learned first hand just how tough and demanding the business of politics can be when he ran for the Kenner City Council in 1994 and lost.

“That was my graduate school education in politics,” he said. “I learned just how demanding politics is in terms of community involvement, campaign planning and fundraising. I vowed that if I ever ran again, I would be well prepared to win and I would be the leading authority on the wishes of my community.”

Many had predicted the Ligi victory but the Wilmott triumph came as an almost complete surprise. Wilmott, who has degrees in law and nursing, is a complete political novice who had never run before. He was up against an experienced opponent who had served in an interim position on the Kenner Council and had several political endorsements.

“I probably would never have run were it not for term limits that created an open seat,” said Wilmott. “I got into this with just my wife, my daughter, my dad and a few friends. We probably broke all the rules of political campaigning, because we didn’t know what the rules were. All we did was work hard and ask the people for their support and, to the surprise of many, the voters responded.”

Mayor Ed Muniz also likes the looks of the new Kenner delegation. Of course, typical of Muniz, he has a long wish list. The mayor is hoping the Kenner legislative delegation can get some state funds for the development of Rivertown and Laketown.

Senator-elect Martiny, the legislative veteran, thinks it’s possible provided the Kenner delegation is reasonable in its request and doesn’t cross that invisible line where they are perceived by other legislators as being greedy.

“The mistake that Lentini, Ansardi and I never made is that we never took the view that we had to get all the funds Kenner needed in one week, one month or one session,” says Martiny. “You have to take a long-term view of your goals, win allies and help others who in turn have the power to assist you. If we are patient and judicious, we may very well be able to help the mayor and the city.”

Martiny and Ligi are also hopeful of getting state funds to attack the seemingly eternal drainage problems of Lake Trail Drive in North Kenner, while Martiny and Wilmott are mapping an approach to get state help for the drainage problems in South Kenner.

“Let’s hope that we three work together so well that in a couple of years, folks will again be talking about the powerful Kenner legislative delegation whose successes are far in excess of their numbers,” says Martiny.
Making strides for Kenner’s economic future

By ED MUNIZ
Kenner Mayor

In my last column, I addressed some of the recommendations made by an administrative economic development advisory committee to improve Kenner’s economic future. We discussed development of the airport buyout properties, teaming with the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission to possibly hire a professional to focus solely on Kenner’s needs, and emulating successful economic development programs in other cities.

This time we’ll look at creating a marketing campaign to tout Kenner’s assets; establishing city tax incentives to attract new businesses and keep existing businesses that want to expand; and initiating more aggressive enforcement of city building and zoning codes. Companion efforts could also include conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis; a marketing campaign to attract quality of life businesses to the city; a beautification pilot program, broad-based improvements to public education and transforming Aberdeen Street into a vibrant commercial artery from the airport to Veterans Boulevard and Interstate-10 and, along the way, revitalize the Veterans Heights area as a commercial/industrial hub.

Economic development is a broad ongoing and evolving process, and while the committee’s recommendations deal with focused issues and provide a deep insight to the kinds of issues that most business leaders and residents consider important for a thriving and progressive city, not all can be implemented immediately.

Here are some of them:

- Create a marketing campaign to promote Kenner’s assets. The most recognizable assets include Rivertown, Laketown, Pontchartrain Center, Louis Armstrong International Airport and The Esplanade mall. However, within the city limits are numerous locations for quality shopping, entertainment, safe neighborhoods, manufacturing and high-end jobs. People who live here can probably name a half dozen such “hidden treasures” at the drop of a hat. But our neighbors and potential new residents need to know that these quality-of-life entities exist in Kenner.

- To improve on this, the city could consolidate its tourism and promotion activities and work with area tourism and convention groups to get the word out. In cases where there has been aggressive promotion, convention and sports production groups have taken notice, with Kenner as the beneficiary. Establish city tax incentives to attract new homeowners and restructure the distribution of sales and property taxes to dedicated initiatives similar to what exists in unincorporated Jefferson Parish. For example, rededicating existing tax revenues for things like seweage, roads or recurring city services could result in more stable budgeting from year to year. Rededication would best be accomplished by a vote of the people. Other incentive plans could include using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and special enterprise zones. Under a TIF, taxes raised by a new development could be earmarked for infrastructure improvements and other enhancements in the area of the development.

- More aggressive code enforcement of city building and zoning laws is seen by most civic and business leaders as a key to improved quality of life in Kenner. They feel that fair, consistent, across-the-board code enforcement will signal that Kenner is serious about maintaining high standards for the development and maintenance of neighborhoods and commercial areas, something that is attractive for home buyers, business investors and new residents looking for a quality community.

Aberdeen Street Improvements – As the airport’s general aviation activities have shifted to the northern end of its campus, Aberdeen is poised to become a premier major new link between the airport and Veterans Boulevard and Interstate-10. This natural extension of Loyola Drive to the south of Veterans Boulevard offers enormous opportunity for well-planned redevelopment of the Veterans Heights area into a major economic development engine for the city. The important transportation links in or adjacent to the area are obvious.

A proper analysis of the city’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is essential to any economic development program. The city must be on top of all the possibilities for success and failure as development projects are considered. Without this important analysis would be like starting a new business without a proper business plan to map out startup, first years of operation, financing and marketing that will support sustained operation. Elements of SWOT analysis would have to change, as part of the economic development evolution, along with the city’s financed and other enhancements in the area of the development.

The bottom line here is developing a plan that will provide Kenner with a healthy and growing economic future powered by faith in the city’s economic health and its role as a safe place to live and work. Our administration is committed to making Kenner a much better place than it was when we came on board.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you and your families a Blessed and Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.

Mayor Muniz can be reached at 468-7240.
Staying safe during the holiday shopping season

By STEVE CARAWAY
Kenner Police Chief

The holiday season is an extremely busy time spent with family and friends and filled with numerous parties and events. It is also the season for shopping in crowded stores and malls, which is prime opportunity for theft and/or injury. Here are a few tips for staying safe while out and about shopping during the holiday season.

Instead of shopping alone, try to shop with friends or family members; this reduces the risk of being targeted by thieves. As you shop, be alert and aware of your surroundings as well as your belongings. Pickpockets tend to look for opportunities in elevators, crowded aisles, revolving doors, and public transportation vehicles and stops. It is also a good idea to carry your most expensive purchases closest to your body, making it harder for someone to snatch your items.

While shopping, periodically return to your vehicle to unload your purchases. Carrying too much at one time hinders your ability to react quickly to a situation. Make sure you put your purchases in the trunk of your vehicle and out of sight so thieves aren’t tempted to break into your vehicle.

If possible, leave your children with a babysitter, family or friends while out shopping for the holidays. When out shopping with children, keep in mind that it’s best to keep children under four in a stroller. If your child is in a shopping cart, make sure they are properly seated and belted and never let them stand in or push the cart. In the event your child gets separated from you, teach them to go to a store clerk, security guard or police officer and make sure they know their first and last name so they can properly identify themselves.

Try to use debit or credit cards rather than carrying large amounts of cash while out shopping. If certain stores don’t accept debit or credit cards, consider using traveler’s checks which can be replaced if lost or stolen. When making withdrawals or purchases with a debit card, make sure no one can see your pin number as you enter it. Also, your pin number should never be carried with your ATM card. Try to visit ATMs during the day, but if you must visit one at night, only use those in well-lit and populated areas. Instead of using the walk-up ATM or going into your bank, it’s usually safer to use the drive up.

Keeping these tips in mind while you’re out shopping during the holidays will help keep you and your little ones safe. I, along with the Kenner Police Department, wish you and your family a safe and happy holiday season.

Chief Caraway can be reached by email at kpd@kenner.la.us. Visit the Kenner Police Department website at www.knperpd.com.

KPD’s third P.O.S.T. Academy class graduates

The Kenner Police Department’s third P.O.S.T. Basic Training Academy class graduated on November 16, 2007 at the Kenner Police Complex, 500 Veterans Boulevard. The academy began August 13, 2007.

The graduates were Judy Bonicard, Keith Chaney, August Foret, Cynthia Gioe, Hilmer Hermann, Mickael Humphrey, Paul Lalla, Kevin MacAdams, Christina Norris, Timothy Ragas, Jessica Schirber, Matthew Songy and Jacob Tolpi.

Kenner police officers who reach the academy have successfully completed a complex and stringent hiring process, which includes an extensive background investigation, physical fitness assessment, psychological exam and final selection through an oral administrative review board process.

Students in the academy must abide by strict codes of discipline while they receive over 500 hours of training in various aspects of police work, such as legal issues, first aid, firearms, investigations, traffic services, patrol practices, report writing, community relations, self-defense tactics, physical training and defensive driving. P.O.S.T. requires a minimum of 320 hours of instruction.

Upon graduation, officers will be P.O.S.T. certified, meaning that they have taken and passed the P.O.S.T. exam and have sufficiently completed the basic training requirements. Louisiana law requires all police officers to be P.O.S.T. certified within one year of being hired. Upon completing the basic academy, new Kenner police officers must also successfully complete an 18-week field training program working with a veteran patrol officer until they are ready to assume routine patrol duties.
The Christmas spirit is alive in Kenner

By MARY-SHARON HOWLAND
Kenner Community Services Director

The spirit of Christmas is alive and well in the city of Kenner. Thank you to everyone who attended the opening of Kenner’s Magical Christmas Village. Santa was greeted by cheering fans, who in turn were treated to holiday music as Mayor Ed Muniz ceremoniously turned on the holiday lights. The village is located in Veterans Park, next to City Hall on Williams Boulevard, and it will be open on Friday and Saturday nights from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. through December 15. Food will be served by non-profit groups, so come hungry. You can enjoy gumbo, hamburgers, jambalaya, popcorn, hot chocolate and much more. Santa will be there each night for picture taking, and local school groups will perform for your enjoyment.

Kenner residents offer views on city planning

By ALLAN KATZ

Some 45 Kenner residents accepted an open invitation to express their views on the city’s land use plan pattern that will look like in future years as well as on what aspects city planners should concentrate.

“We held two public citizen participation forums, one at the Council on Aging and one at the Pavilion in City Park,” said Jay Hebert, director of planning for the city. “A total of about 45 Kenner residents attended the events and expressed their opinions. In general, they thought the city should put a lot more emphasis on developing green space and finding a way to reutilize airport buyout property. They thought there should be greater uniformity in the development of green space on public property in North and South Kenner, with the view that North and South Kenner are part of the same city, rather than having the appearance of two different cities. It was very interesting, dynamic and free-wheeling. The people who got involved obviously had strong feelings about what the Kenner of the future should look like.”

This information was collected by the University of New Orleans planning and research division, which is going to come up with some plans and proposals for future land use planning in Kenner. Hebert said the UNO proposals will be made available to the administration of Mayor Ed Muniz, the members of the Kenner City Council and the city Planning Commission.

The administration, Council, and Planning Commission members, in turn, will be asked to express their opinions on the UNO proposals as well as their views on the future of the city.

“I’m sure it’s going to be a very productive process,” said Hebert. “We’re especially grateful to those Kenner citizens who came out and shared their views on the future of the city with us. They’ve made a valuable contribution and we’ll see where this process takes us.”

Muhleisen to hold annual Christmas remembrance service

The eighth annual Christmas Service of Remembrance will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 13, 2007 in the Pontchartrain Center’s Belle Grove Plantation ballroom, Williams Boulevard at the lake. This is a free event sponsored by family and staff of L.A. Muhleisen and Son Funeral Homes.

“We know that the holidays are not festive for everyone, especially those families who have experienced a recent death. Those in attendance will find this to be a very comforting and meaningful program that will provide them with a source of strength and inspiration throughout the holiday season,” said Louis A. Muhleisen, Jr., a fourth generation funeral director and owner of L.A. Muhleisen and Son Funeral Homes.

“We will honor, by remembering by name, the deceased loved ones of those families present. This program, interlaced with a delightful array of music, will serve as a wellspring of comfort, consolation and encouragement,” said Muhleisen.

At the conclusion of the program, participants will be presented with an angel of remembrance, taken from a Christmas tree, in memory of their loved one.

To register the name or names of those you would like to remember, or to learn more about this holiday program, call L. A. Muhleisen and Son at 466-8577 by Monday, December 10, 2007.

“Come and enjoy this special program, as well as the warmth of people who care,” said Muhleisen. “L.A. Muhleisen and Son is a family owned, independent funeral home with locations in Kenner and Metairie. “Our funeral home is dedicated to providing personal service and offering programs beyond what would be expected” said Muhleisen.
By JOEY CLEVELAND

Most of our family gets together at Thanksgiving and Christmas; however, since Carl’s death, the holidays have become difficult for us. Some of you may be experiencing the loss of someone dear to you as well, and I’m hoping the following recent email from my daughter Beth will offer you consolation as it did me.

After putting my four young children to bed recently, I started feeling very gloomy but wasn’t sure why. Eventually, I identified the reason. It’s Thanksgiving week which is my favorite holiday as well as the kickoff of the Christmas season. But this would be the second year since my dad died, and grief was unexpectedly creeping up on me. I had heard how the holidays could be difficult for those who have lost someone close to them. Instead of the ‘warm and fuzzy’ holiday cheer, they feel sadness and loneliness. This was my first experience with feeling gloomy as a direct response to the holidays.

It was late at night, and I was watching TV with my husband, but crying silently. I thought I needed to attend Fr. Joe Benson’s Mass the next morning at Blessed Seelos Church in Bywater. No other Mass was available; however, I was already in the church. I settled into my seat near the front and immediately started crying. As I listened to the Mass, I focused my thoughts on the one question that I needed answered: How do I deal with my grief during the holidays?

I turned to him to let him see my tears, and he reached beyond doom and gloom. For Jesus, it was not about the end, but about what you did with your life before the end. “What did you do today?” Fr. Joe asked. Fr. Joe explained this further, and then he shifted the subject and said, “Some of you are dealing with grief and the pain of having lost a loved one. You now have the choice to use that pain to turn toward your remaining family where you love each other and where you can share the pain; or the pain can push you away from each other where you fight over inheritances, withdraw into yourself and keep you from being able to open up and love again. Jesus would say, ‘Aw, here we go again. What will you choose?’

Fr. Joe’s point was that we either use grief to bring us closer to each other, or we let grief drive us away from the family we love. The former path requires a lot of hard work because the raw emotions can be ugly, but the end result can be beautiful. The latter path is harder, much harder, at the end after you’ve wasted your life alienating yourself and your heart from others. I’ve seen first-hand families who have lost a family member and who fight and bicker and nit-pick. Their holidays are filled with anger and disappointment. They’re in such inner pain that the only way to express it is to find something totally unrelated and insignificant to focus on, but it’s misguided and never gets to the source of the pain.

If we could concentrate on “But what did you do today” and forget about keeping score with others, we’d all be a lot happier. Even if the other person is totally wrong and you are right, you can still say you’re sorry. Tell them you love them, no strings attached, because in the end nothing else really matters. The past is over. Let it go! Then when you’re asked, ‘But what did you do today?’ you can say you were a loving person. It’s really quite simple, but it has profound implications.

Family is the most important thing in my life, and I can’t let my grief push me away from them. What a tragedy it would be if the grief you feel for the one you have lost led you away from those who remain. Instead, I will choose to reach out and to continue to love, even when it hurts.

I’m proud of Beth for choosing to reach out to the family instead of hiding from us in her distress. After all, we need each other and certainly understand her grief and pain better than anyone else. If you have experienced the loss of a loved one or are feeling sad and depressed this holiday season, I hope that you will reach out to someone you trust to share your pain, or you can write to me at the email address below if you’d like. This Christmas I pray that you will experience Christ’s peace in your heart and in your home, and may God fill you with abundant joy.

This Christmas my wish for you is that you experience Christ’s peace in your heart and in your home. Merry Christmas from my family to yours. ★

Joey Cleveland is the widow of Carl Cleveland, the Kenner Star Faithwalk columnist from 1998 until his death July 2006. Joey Cleveland can be reached via email at kenstarwc@aol.com.
Airport rating improves

By SEAN C. HUNTER

First, the bad news. The past two-plus years since Hurricane Katrina struck have presented the airport with major financial challenges. The drastic loss of revenue due to a dramatic decrease in flight operations after Katrina, combined with greatly reduced concession revenues and huge expenses from hurricane and tornado-related damages, prompted some very creative financial strategies.

The airport’s operating budget is normally funded by two categories of sources – rates and charges to the airlines, and non-airline revenues such as parking, food and beverage and news and gift concessions. The airport is basically a not-for-profit business, which means the airlines are charged enough to cover the operating budget after all non-airline revenues are accounted for. With virtually no non-airline revenue in the early days after the storm, the New Orleans Aviation Board had to act quickly to determine a realistic rate structure for the airlines. The first strategy was to slash expenses to the degree possible. There is only so far a major facility can go and still remain operational. In addition, debt service payments remain, no matter what. While on one hand, expenses needed to be covered, on the other hand, charging the few flights that flew enough to cover the expenses would have resulted in exorbitant per-passenger average charges to the airlines. This would have certainly discouraged the return of additional flights.

Fortunately, Armstrong International had strong cash reserves. Therefore, the board decided to keep rates and charges to the airlines at pre-Katrina levels, knowing full well that a deficit would result. We quickly applied for Community Disaster Loans and Go-Zone loans. These have allowed us to continue to keep rates at pre-Katrina levels while we worked tirelessly with all airlines to increase the level of air service. However, because of the great uncertainty in our market and our deficit position, the major bond rating agencies downgraded our bond ratings to “junk” level shortly after the storm struck.

Now for the good news! Air service has continued to grow at a steady pace. We now have 132 daily departures – nearly 82 percent of pre-Katrina levels. In addition, parking revenues have been strong and all concessions have returned and continue to grow back toward pre-Katrina sales levels. By the second half of 2008 we will reach a break-even point and can begin to truly move forward. We estimate that our total deficit by that time will be less than $23 million. This is significant, but much lower than originally thought.

I am happy to report that last month we received word that due to our rapid recovery, our position in bond-rating status has been significantly upgraded and our ability to sell bonds to finance our needs has taken a giant step forward. At the November New Orleans Aviation Board meeting, the board approved the sale of $88 million in bonds to pay back borrowed monies from the banks, refinance outstanding debt and purchase 17 replacement passenger loading bridges at the airport. Proceeds from the sale of these bonds will finance a significant step in recovery from the weather calami-

city hall

The new security program is being funded by a $200,000 grant from the discretionary funds of Councilwoman-at-Large Michele Branigan who agreed with the administration and consultants that a modern security program is imperative for a city of Kenner’s size and importance – especially including Mississippi River access, the Armstrong International Airport and major railroads with facilities in Kenner.

“The city has documents and equipment that, if stolen, could seriously alter city services,” Branigan said. “We also have a responsibility to protect our employees from any danger while still providing safe access to City Hall for citizens who need to do business with the city.”

The city has entered into a contract with Securitas Security Systems USA Inc. to provide security equipment and maintenance. First to be linked to the new security system, said Yenii, will be the City Hall complex, the

continued on page 20
Knee meniscus cartilage tears

By CHARLES P. MURPHY, M.D.

The knee meniscus has several important functions in the knee including shock absorption, load transmission and joint stability. Small tears in the meniscus are often asymptomatic (no symptoms). Larger tears often become painful and produce mechanical symptoms of catching or locking in the knee joint, and the knee may swell. Unfortunately as we age, the meniscus undergoes degeneration that increases the risk for tears.

Meniscus tears in children and young adults are usually the result of a major traumatic injury to the knee. After the age of 40 (“over the hill”) meniscus tears are often degenerative type tears and patients may not recall any specific injury. Many patients first report symptoms after getting in and out of a bed or car. They often report a catching type pain with twisting or bending the knee.

In addition to the history and physical examination, the orthopedic surgeon will often obtain an MRI to evaluate the knee for torn meniscus cartilage. The orthopedic surgeon will use the patient’s symptoms, exam, age, health status and MRI findings to determine if arthroscopic surgery is warranted. Arthroscopic surgery on the knee is an outpatient procedure using a scope and arthroscopic instruments to perform the surgery through small puncture wounds in the skin.

The ability of meniscus tears to heal is primarily dependent on the vascular supply of the meniscus. Degenerative tears with poor vascularity do not heal and often require arthroscopic shaving of the torn meniscal fragments (partial meniscectomy). The surgeon attempts to preserve all remaining meniscal tissue. In younger patients with traumatic meniscus tears, the surgeon will repair most meniscus tears; however the location of the tear ultimately dictates the rate of healing. Because the vascular supply of the meniscus is from the periphery inward, peripheral tears in the vascular zone heal the best. Tears on the inner rim of the meniscus with no blood supply will not heal and require shaving of the torn fragments.

Surgical techniques have continued to improve and thus the results have improved. Efforts to replace or regenerate the meniscus through methods such as tissue engineering show promise, but the results are limited thus far. The orthopedic surgeon will always consider the best long-term options to benefit the patient. The post-op rehabilitation needs to factor in the type, location and stability of the repair. Rehabilitation after a meniscus repair is purposely slower to allow biologic healing of the slow healing tissue. An experienced orthopedic surgeon along with a cooperative patient is the key to success.

Charles P. Murphy, M.D. is a board certified orthopedic surgeon with over 20 years experience. Dr. Murphy is the founding partner of the Orthopedic Center for Sports Medicine. The Orthopedic Center is a multi-specialty center dedicated to complete musculoskeletal care with focused expertise in shoulder and knee injuries. Offices are located in Kenner and Metairie. For additional information call 467-5900.

POLITICAL REVIEW

(continued from page 5)

an overwhelming re-election victory in 2006. Morris is the former police chief of Slidell and has been known for his sharp tongue. For example, he labeled the ACLU the “American Taliban” when the group filed a lawsuit regarding the picture of Jesus hanging in the lobby of the Slidell City Court.

The big question is whether Republican St. Tammany Parish President Kevin Davis will run. Davis was just elected to another presidential term with close to 80 percent of the vote. Davis has not made a final decision on his candidacy, but has formed an exploratory committee. If he enters the race, he will certainly be considered one of the favorites.

Other potential Republican candidates include Jefferson Parish Councilman At-Large Thomas Capella and John Young and outgoing State Senators Art Lentini (R-Kenner) and Tom Schedler (R-Mandeville).

The Democrats are the underdogs in the race, but that has not stopped them from trying to recruit former gubernatorial candidate State Senator Walter Boasso (D- Arabi) to run. Boasso ran second in the race for governor with 17 percent of the vote. Another Democrat, UNO Professor Dr. Gilda Reed, was the first candidate to announce for this seat. She did not even wait until Jindal was elected governor. In fact, Reed has been running for this seat for many months.

With a short timeframe, a coveted seat, plenty of interested candidates and a new party primary system in place, the race for Congress should be a very interesting one to watch over the course of the next few months.

Jeff Crouere is a native of New Orleans and his Louisiana based television program, “Ringside Politics,” airs at 8:30 p.m. on Fridays and at 10:00 p.m. Sundays on PBS television station WLAE-TV, Channel 32, and from 5:00 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. on radio station WSGO 990 AM in New Orleans and the north shore. Visit Crouere’s website at www.ringsidepolitics.com or email Crouere at jeff@ringsidepolitics.com.
The “Stretch IRA,” part II

By RONALD HAMPTON

Last month we pointed out that it is now OK with the IRS for you to pass your IRA on, not only to a spouse, but also to your children and grandchildren through what is commonly called a “Stretch IRA” or multi-generational IRA. This allows several generations to benefit from your savings and can result in huge returns. We also pointed out that most of these plans will fail for one of two reasons. First, heirs may take the money and spend it, thus losing the tax deferred savings feature, and second, mistakes will be made in passing the money on. It is this second reason we will address.

Let’s say you have two sons, Jack and Tom. You name them as primary beneficiaries for your IRA by completing an “IRA Beneficiary Designation” form. Jack and Tom each have a son so you designate your grandchildren as “secondary beneficiaries.”

If your son, Jack, dies before you do, you probably think that when you die his grandson, but you would be wrong. It will go to your other son, Tom, because the beneficiary form has no place to specify how the primary and secondary beneficiaries were related. Those forms you filled out with the bank or brokerage firm were not sufficiently detailed to carry out your wishes. And to add to the problem, many custodians simply will not take your custom instructions.

What’s the solution? Give your IRA custodian your own form with complete instructions. This is known as a “Retirement Asset Will,” and if your custodian will not accept, this will you may want to consider another custodian who is more cooperative.

Your special IRA will must have complete instructions and they should be drawn by a knowledgeable attorney. But you should be aware that there are other common mistakes made in passing on an IRA. When most people select beneficiaries for their IRA they choose their spouse or children but, as simple as it seems, this can create problems. Here are a couple of examples. When you leave your IRA account to your spouse it inflates his or her assets and can result in huge returns. We also pointed out that most of these plans will fail for one of two reasons. First, heirs may take the money and spend it, thus losing the tax deferred savings feature, and second, mistakes will be made in passing the money on. It is this second reason we will address.

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If instead, you leave your IRA to your son, he may decide to withdraw the funds and buy a mansion with his money. Now his wife becomes joint owner. Let’s say she files for divorce and gets to keep the house. You have now given your ex-daughter-in-law a new mansion.

To avoid either of these scenarios you decide to leave your IRA to your estate. But, the IRS says that an estate cannot be designated as a beneficiary. Additionally, the IRA will now be a probate asset and subject to legal fees and claims of creditors.

One way to avoid these problems is to leave your IRA to a trust rather than to a person. If you leave it to a person, it’s their decision how to use it but if you select a qualified attorney to write your trust you can accomplish all the goals we have outlined.

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 ronaldhampton@cox.net. Hampton’s firm is a participant in the Better Business Bureau CARE program.

East Jefferson General Hospital welcomes Mackie Shilstone to its team

By KEITH DARCEY

Mackie Shilstone, one of the nation’s leading fitness, performance and lifestyle consultants, has joined the staff at East Jefferson General Hospital. "The Fitness Principle" will open a state-of-the-art and stand-alone facility designed with the premier athlete in mind. It places the most advanced training equipment in an environment built to accommodate individuals of any fitness level.

The overall goal of “The Fitness Principle” is to go beyond nutrition, fitness and disease management. The programs will additionally take into account an individual’s work schedule, family history, personality traits, disease risk factors and injury pre-disposition to complete a plan ideal for each client. This results in the long-term success for the individual that can offer a lifetime worth of positive benefits.

“I am truly excited to partner with East Jefferson on “The Fitness Principle,” says Shilstone. “I am here to hit the ground running, motivate people to change their lives, and to make a difference in this community. When people come to our program, they can expect clinically-supported, world-class programs.”

Beginning in early 2008, “The Fitness Principle” will open a state-of-the-art and stand-alone facility designed with the premier athlete in mind. It places the most advanced training equipment in an environment built to accommodate individuals of any fitness level.

Registration for the programs at “The Fitness Principle” with Mackie Shilstone at East Jefferson General Hospital is now available. Programs will begin in February of 2008. For more information please visit www.ejgh.org.

Keith M. Darcey is a communications specialist with East Jefferson General Hospital located at 4200 Houma Boulevard in Metairie. Darcey can be reached at 899-7110 or at kdarcey@ejgh.org. East Jefferson General Hospital, Louisiana’s first Nurse Magnet hospital, is a publicly owned, not-for-profit community hospital, providing care to the residents of the East Bank of Jefferson Parish and surrounding communities.
This is the time of year when we all count our blessings. The city of Kenner is blessed to have a visionary mayor, learned council members and dedicated employees to keep our city running smoothly. We at the Kenner Convention and Visitors Bureau have also been blessed to work alongside such individuals and many other interesting people in our search to bring more events to Kenner.

One major upcoming event to be held here is the AAU girls basketball annual hosts meeting. This seminar will be attended by members of 13 different cities around the country who were chosen to host a 2008 AAU girls basketball national championship tournament. AAU girls basketball officials meet once a year with representatives from host cities to inform them of what AAU expects when hosting a national championship tournament. The subjects discussed at this meeting range from what paperwork is required to details such as the size of the trophies needed. The meeting is usually held at AAU headquarters in Orlando, Florida, but this year AAU chose to have the session in Kenner.

From February 8 through February 10, 2008 the New Orleans Airport Hilton and Conference Center in Kenner will be the base hotel for AAU tournament representatives from Ft. Meyers, FL; Coco Beach, FL; Monroe, LA; Kingsport, TN; Kings Island, OH; Rochester, MN; New Haven, CN; Salem, VA; Hampton, VA; Indianapolis, IN; Clarksville, TN, and Norman, OK. We look forward to showing off Kenner to all these different cities at the same time.

Have a wonderful holiday and a happy new year!

Sharon Solomon is the marketing director for the Kenner Convention and Visitors Bureau, located at 2100 Third Street in Rivertown. Sharon Solomon can be reached at 464-9494, via email at kennercvb@aol.com or at www.kenner-cvb.com.
Is life good? If it isn’t, it should be. All seniors should ask themselves this question in regard to their health.

As Americans age they begin to get everyday aches and pains that slow down their daily routines. Lack of exercise and activity is a major reason that seniors are more prone to injury. Exercise will help lower the risk or prevent many different medical conditions that seniors are more susceptible to such as Alzheimer’s and dementia, heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, high blood pressure and obesity. Exercise can also help maintain mobility and independence. Regular exercise helps keep bones and muscles strong, promotes good balance and combats frailty.

Senior fitness programs should consist of four types of exercises that include strengthening, balance, stretching and endurance exercises. Strengthening exercises will help build older adult muscles and increase their metabolism, which will help keep weight and blood sugar in check. Balance exercises build leg muscles and will help prevent falls, which will help seniors stay more independent later in life. Stretching exercises allow for more freedom of movement and will allow seniors to be more active. Endurance exercises help increase heart rate and breathing for a healthier lifestyle as you age. Some examples of endurance exercise include walking, swimming, biking, and daily activities around the house, such as raking leaves or mowing the grass. Seniors need to start endurance exercises slowly and progress gradually. An inactive lifestyle can cause seniors to lose ground in all four important areas that allow a more healthy and independent lifestyle.

Staying physically active and exercising on a regular basis can help prevent or delay many diseases and disabilities. Always remember that seniors need to check with their physician before starting any type of exercise program. Growing older doesn’t mean you have to lose strength or your ability to live a healthy lifestyle in your older years. Exercise can help seniors feel better and enjoy life more.

Craig Goodwin, physical therapist, is president of Kenner Orthopedic and Sports Therapy, located at 921 Williams Boulevard with 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. Anyone who has experienced an injury and would like to find out why it happened and what can be done to help restore normal function in that area, can email the professionals at Kennerorthopedic@aol.com.
Bah humbug! Controlling holiday cholesterol

Health

By PAOLO ZAMBITO

If you are one of 100 million Americans who have high cholesterol, the holidays can be a difficult time to keep your health in check. Parties and family get-togethers usually mean a ton of fat-laden treats and little time for exercise, but you can keep your cholesterol in check during the holiday season.

Cholesterol is a soft, waxy substance found among the lipids (fats) in the bloodstream and in all of your body’s cells. A certain amount of cholesterol is important to maintaining a healthy body because it is used to form cell membranes, some hormones and other needed tissues. “Normally, your liver makes all the cholesterol your body needs, but you also get cholesterol from your diet: poultry, fish, eggs, butter, cheese and whole milk,” explains Eloise Keene, RD, LDN at Ochsner Medical Center-Kenner. When your body has too much cholesterol, fat deposits (plaque) line blood vessel walls causing them to thicken and become narrower. These narrowed blood vessels reduce blood flow which can possibly lead to a heart attack or stroke.

Total cholesterol levels are measured with a single number measured in mg/dL: 200 or below is good, 200 to 239 is borderline, and 240 or above is high.

A high cholesterol measurement will result in additional testing to measure the “bad cholesterol” LDL (low-density lipoproteins) and “good cholesterol” HDL (high-density lipoproteins) in your blood. LDLs carry a lot of cholesterol, which can leave behind fatty deposits on your artery walls and contribute to heart disease. HDLs do the exact opposite; they clean the artery walls and remove extra cholesterol from the body, thus lowering the risk of heart disease. “The best situation is to have low levels of LDL and high levels of HDL,” says Keene. The recommended level of HDL is 60 mg/dL or higher. The recommended level of LDL is 100 mg/dL or lower.

Keene says that good dietary and exercise habits throughout the holiday season can help keep your cholesterol consistently at a healthy level. Following dietary guidelines during the holidays may be difficult, but the American Heart Association recommends eating no more than 250 to 300 milligrams (mg) of cholesterol a day. The easiest way to control the amount of fat and cholesterol you consume is to:

- Limit butter and margarine
- Use sunflower, safflower, soybean, canola, or olive oil rather than tropical oils such as palm or coconut.
- Use salad dressings and margarine made with polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats.
- Use egg whites or egg substitutes rather than whole eggs.
- Replace whole-milk dairy products with nonfat or low-fat milk, cheese, spreads and yogurt.
- Eat skinless chicken, turkey, fish and meatless entrees more often than red meat.
- Choose lean cuts of meat.
- Avoid fatty desserts such as ice cream, cream-filled cakes and cheesecakes.
- Limit nuts high in saturated fat.
- Eat fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains daily.
- Exercise goes hand-in-hand with a healthy diet for controlling cholesterol. Because regular exercise helps keep your weight down it also decreases your total cholesterol level. A good exercise program includes plenty of aerobic exercise such as swimming, jogging, walking, and bicycling.

Also, if you smoke, quit! Smoking lowers HDL “good cholesterol” levels, therefore increasing your risk of heart disease. And finally, if high cholesterol runs in your family discuss possible precautions with your health care provider.

Paolo Zambito, R.N., is chief executive officer at Ochsner Medical Center-Kenner and has served in this role for three years. Zambito has been at the Kenner facility for over 16 years. For more information, contact OMC-Kenner at the corner of West Esplanade and Loyola Avenue in Kenner, call 468-8600 or visit www.ochsner.org.

Community

Candle lighting ceremony to honor children who have died

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) will hold the eleventh annual anniversary of its worldwide candle lighting ceremony on Sunday, December 9, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. The event, held at the TCF Children’s Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park located at 3000 Downs Boulevard in Metairie, is sponsored by the Lakeview-New Orleans chapter of TCF.

Bereaved parents, families, friends and the community are invited to join in lighting a candle to honor the memory of children who have died. There will be a procession through a trail of light formed by luminaries along the pathway to The Compassionate Friends Children’s Memorial Garden. The main candle lighting is at 7:00 p.m.

There will be a program of musical selections and readings, followed by the individual lighting of candles in memory of children, grandchildren, siblings and relatives.

Candles will be provided and participants are invited to bring a picture or other memento of their loved one to hold during the procession and candle lighting.

Annually, tens of thousands of families, united in loss, light candles for one hour during The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting, an event believed to be the largest mass candle lighting in the world. Candles are first lit at 7:00 p.m., local time, just west of the International Date Line. As candles burn down in one time zone, they are lit in the next, creating a 24-hour wave of light as the observance continues around the world.

TCF advises that anyone not able to join them at Lafreniere Park can still take part by lighting a candle at 7:00 p.m. wherever they are.

For further information visit the TCF website at www.tcfneworleans.org or call Alice or Arthur Buuck at 834-3465.

The national TCF website is www.compassionatefriends.org and will feature a remembrance book on December 9 for families to post tributes.

Byline: By PAOLO ZAMBITO
Banking

Local Christmas

By GLEN DOTTOLO

What if we had to shop the way that our ancestors did? Almost everything was made here or sent downriver from neighboring states. Would it be possible to buy everything you want for Christmas from local merchants? What if you only bought things made in Louisiana?

Why would you want to do this? First, it would help our economy and, second, it might cause us to actually think about what we are buying rather than heading straight to the mall in a zombie-like haze to purchase whatever has been advertised the most by national retailers. Finally, if some extra thought is involved in the buying process, perhaps the dollars spent can really translate into genuine pleasure for the giver and the recipient.

Purchasing your holiday gift cards, gift certificates, products or services from local merchants will help our economy and help local business owners, especially now.

Bankers are concerned about the amount of money customers spend for gifts people really don’t want or need. It is very common for people to have large credit card bills and debt consolidation loans in January because of excess Christmas spending in December. Shopping for gifts locally might make people slow down and think about what they are spending, which could be a really good thing.

Another way to reduce Christmas excess spending is to utilize an old-time product, the Christmas savings account. During the entire year, money is saved into this account on a regular basis, and then in early December a check is issued totaling the year-long Christmas savings. Budgeting the amount of that expected check to cover all expenses for the family Christmas is the wise thing to do, and the neat thing is no bills will arrive in January, preventing a bad financial beginning of the new year.

Even if you haven’t set up Christmas savings for this year, you still can set up a Christmas budget. Decide on a reasonable amount of money to spend and then manage your expenses so that your spending does not exceed that amount. Next year, set up a Christmas savings account and end the year smiling having no bills to pay after the holiday.

We all know that Christmas is not about spending money, but somehow we get caught up in the hype and forget what the season is really about.

Buy local, buy less and spend time with your family. When you really think about it, your children, older relatives and your spouse all want the same thing — your undivided attention. And that really is the best way to tell them that you love them at Christmas.

Glenn Dotolo, manager of Gulf Coast Bank & Trust’s Kenner Branch Office on Williams Boulevard, offers twenty-five years of full service banking to his customers. Dotolo can be contacted at 565-3655. Visit Gulf Coast Bank & Trust’s website at www.gulfbank.com.

Gardening

Horticulture hints for December

By LYNNE DIMM

It is not too late to plant some winter color in your garden. Experiment by planting dwarf snaps and alyssum tiny petunias in the first row. Plant pansies, petunias, medium snaps, calendulas or kale in the second row. Winter plants do better on the dry side so do not over water.

Since we have had less rain than usual, trees should be watered deeply, as they are still in shock from storm wind. Fertilize trees, shrubs and lawns with winterizer, a food that feeds the roots of plants all winter, for added spring vigor.

Add new mulch to spruce up your garden for the holidays and also to keep the roots warm. Use pine needles, pine needle mulch, cypress mulch or rocks as cover. Use plastic or ground cloth under the mulch.

It’s the time of the year to enjoy poinsettias both indoors and out. Christmas cactus is an orchid-like flower that is very pretty this time of year, too.

* A minimum deposit of $25.00 is required. Offer valid only on a Gulf Coast Bank and Trust Gold Savings account with an active Gold Checking account. The monthly service fee is $12.00 if the average collected balance is less than $10,000. As of 10/31/07 the Gulf Coast Bank and Trust Savings APYs are .50% for balances from $1 to $4,999; .50% for balances $5,000 to $24,999; 2.78% for balances $25,000 to $49,999; 3.30% for balances $50,000 to $99,999; 4.50% for balances of $100,000 to $249,999; and 4.85% for balances $250,000 and greater. Rates are variable and subject to change. Fees may reduce earnings, other restrictions may apply.
Don’t stack the odds against yourself if you are in an automobile accident

By PAMELA B. LOLAN

Recovering for damages in some automobile accident cases can become very complicated. You may feel that no one is compensating you for your injuries. However, many things can limit your recovery, such as: what you’re doing at the time of the accident, what state you are in, the policy limits, the policy language, as well as case law and state law which may limit your recovery. It is best to know all available avenues of recovery.

A 27 year old woman from Metairie, Louisiana, Christine, was traveling in Maryland for her employer. She rented a vehicle in her name using a company credit card. The credit card, however, was in her name.

On the interstate near Baltimore City, traffic slowed dramatically and her vehicle was rear ended. The driver of the negligent vehicle was not the owner, but a friend who had borrowed the car to pick up her children from school. She accepted immediate responsibility for the accident. The police were called to the scene, the necessary information was exchanged, but no police report was made. Evidently in this area of Maryland, unless someone is taken to the hospital, the police do not file an official report.

Christine experienced immediate pain, but was not taken to the hospital. She returned home to Louisiana and saw her orthopedist the next day. Her injuries included a right shoulder grade I to II AC separation and contusion, cervical strain, lumbar strain, right knee pain and posterior hip pain. After extensive physical therapy, Christine had a series of two facet joint injections in her low back. She had eight more sessions of physical therapy after the injections and was finally released from medical care. She received medical treatment for one year and nine months. Her medical bills were approximately $25,000.

Since she was in the scope of her employment, workers’ compensation was obligated to pay her medical bills, but issued a lien against any recovery Christine would receive. The owner of the “at fault” vehicle had only a $20,000 policy. With the medical bills over $25,000, the insurance company offered its limits. However, this was not enough to cover the medical expenses and attorney fees, much less give Christine something for her pain and suffering. Fortunately, Christine had uninsured/underinsured coverage (UM). However, according to most UM policies, all other coverages must be exhausted before Christine’s policy could be triggered.

So what is the next move? One must look to excess insurers. When the primary or first policy is not enough to cover the value of a case, an excess policy is triggered. In Louisiana, be aware that there is an “anti-stacking” provision when one looks to recover under multiple UM policies in a car which is owned by the injured party. You can only recover under one UM policy, and the vehicle in which the injured party was traveling is primary.

Depending on your policy, the negligent vehicle’s policy is primary and then the negligent driver’s policy. In this case, the negligent driver was nowhere to be found. All the information she gave at the time of the accident was no longer valid. All attempts by the attorney and the primary insurer to locate her were to no avail.

The next policy in line would look to be the one covering the rental vehicle. Remember Christine was in a vehicle rented in her name. Her company had told her it was unnecessary to obtain the rental coverage offered when one rents a vehicle because they had a company policy that covered rentals. However, like most rental policies, that policy only covers property damage to a vehicle rented in the name of the company.

Therefore, after obtaining certifications from both the “at fault” vehicle’s insurance company and from the rental vehicle as to coverage, Christine’s uninsured/underinsured kicked in.

In summary, the attorney looked to four insurance policies to recover Christine’s damages – the one covering the vehicle that hit her, the one covering the driver of that vehicle, the policy on the rental vehicle in which she was riding, and finally her own policy.

Whenever you’re in an accident, be sure to get qualified legal representation quickly to protect your rights and get you the maximum amount possible. It is also very wise to carry “Med Pay” and uninsured/underinsured coverage on your own policy. Sadly, most drivers in Louisiana are underinsured. ★

Pamela Lolan is an 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, succession, real estate, corporate law, and personal injury. Lolan can be reached at 467-1092 or visit the website at www.melcherslawfirm.com.
Needs. Those looking to enhance their health and improve their functional strength (the kind of strength needed to carry out daily tasks, such as picking up kids, walking up stairs, etc.) need much less than those training for triathlons.

Sometimes it seems as if walking your way to health just isn’t enough these days. With all the interesting twists to exercise in today’s world, you have the right to be a little confused. Just how much exercise does a body need to get fit anyway?

First, let’s define “overall fitness.” Most fitness professionals agree that cardiovascular endurance, muscle strength and endurance, flexibility and body composition (the amount of fat compared to lean or muscle tissue you have) are the essential components to health-related fitness. Your exercise program should impact each of these areas.

What does it take to rid your body of unnecessary fat, improve your flexibility, and enhance the strength of your heart and muscles? The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has set forth the following minimum exercise recommendations for achieving overall fitness. The degree to which you follow the guidelines will depend on three things. First, your current level of fitness; second, your fitness needs; and third, your fitness goals.

American College of Sports Medicine guidelines:
Any activity that uses large muscle groups, can be maintained continuously, and is rhythmic and aerobic in nature. Three to five days per week.

Intensity of aerobic activity: 60 to 90 percent of maximum heart rate.

Flexion of aerobic activity: 20 to 60 minutes of continuous or discontinuous activity.

Resistance training: A minimum of eight to 10 separate exercises that train the major muscle groups, a minimum of two days per week, to a position of mild discomfort.

Flexibility exercises: At least three days per week, to a position of mild discomfort, 10 to 30 seconds for each stretch, three to five repetitions.

Does your exercise activity fulfill the ACSM’s recommendations for achieving overall fitness?
Let’s see how your program measures up to their guidelines. You be the judge.

17 graduate from Kenner Citizen’s Police Academy

Kenner Police Chief Steve Caraway recently announced the graduation of 17 students, Class 18, of the Kenner Citizen’s Police Academy which took place on November 13, 2007 at the Kenner Police Complex, 500 Veterans Boulevard.

Those recognized for completing the program are Dawn Bowers, Robert Bowers, Randy Cassagne, Peggy Childers, Barbara Cory, Elaine Dick, Astrid Ewing, Ann Juneau, John Kochera, Kel Kopecky, Mary Ann LeBlanc, Toni Marrone, Patricia Miller, Connie Patterson, Traci Rittinger, Erin Tallon and Christopher Wanko. Students attended free classes one night per week for 13 weeks and were taught by trained police officers certified in their fields. The academy provides detailed coverage about how the police department works in areas of responsibilities of the command staff, rescue equipment and weapons, crime scene processing, criminal investigations, drug enforcement, patrol division, crime prevention programs, K-9 Unit, physical fitness, use of police force and self-defense, S.W.A.T., criminal laws and court procedures, traffic enforcement and D.W.I. issues.

Students also receive a tour of headquarters and the Kenner jail, and participate in a ride along with a police officer. Through the Citizen’s Academy, the Kenner Police Department encourages alumni to lead the community in improving safety and promoting confidence in and support for the department in reducing crime.

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We would like to take a moment to thank all of our valued customers for your business and for allowing us to serve you each and every day. Without each and every customer we would not be successful. From the Ricca family and everyone here at the Ice House, we wish you a Happy Holiday and New Year.

We will be open Christmas Day until 12 noon

[Image]
Ochsner opens neighborhood clinic in Kenner

On December 3, 2007, Ochsner Clinic opened their newest neighborhood clinic, Ochsner Clinic at Ochsner Medical Center-Kenner, located at 200 W. Esplanade Avenue, Suite 210.

The clinic will be staffed by three current Ochsner primary care physicians. Dr. James Tebbe, a family practice doctor, will be transferring from the health center in Lake Vista to assume the lead physician role. Dr. Carlos Ramirez of internal medicine will also be transferring from the health center in Lake Vista, and Dr. David Larson, a family medicine physician, will be transferring from the health center in Destrehan.

The neighborhood clinic will have immediate access to Ochsner Health System’s state-of-the-art Outpatient Lab and Diagnostics Center and a multitude of other services available at Ochsner Medical Center-Kenner’s hospital.

The clinic will be open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 464-8588.

Linda R. Martin can be reached at 443-6464.

Tires...More than just full of hot air

By SCOTT ZIMMERMAN

According to recent studies, approximately 29 million drivers think a vehicle’s tire requires no maintenance. Amazingly, nearly 25 million drivers believe if a tire doesn’t look under inflated, there’s no need to check it. Also, two out of three drivers have never even heard of the penny test. These statistics are staggering, especially given the widespread publicity about under inflated tires and the problems they can cause – namely reduced tire wear, impaired handling response and diminished fuel economy. And, when a tire has extremely low pressure, catastrophic failures are serious possibilities.

Did you know that air pressure in a tire goes up (warm weather) or down (in cold) one to two pounds for every 10 degrees of temperature change? Tires can lose a pound of air pressure each month. So, when did you last check your tire pressure? Six months ago? Eight? Tires can appear properly inflated, yet have only half the recommended air pressure in them. Since it takes only a few minutes to check tire pressure (including the spare), what are you waiting for?

Vehicle manufacturers put inflation/pressure information in different locations, such as the vehicle’s door edge, door jam, glove box, console or fuel-filler door. The data also may be listed in the owner’s manual. The number on the tire sidewall indicates the maximum inflation pressure – the highest tire pressure your tires should ever receive—and not the recommended pressure, so that number is misleading.

Over inflated tires wear prematurely at the center of the tread whereby tires with too little pressure will prematurely erode the tire’s outer edges. Only 11 percent of drivers properly check tire pressure on a monthly basis—but are they also checking the tire’s tread wear and depth? Tire-wear bars are located about every quarter of the way around the tire to indicate when the tread is getting low. If tread depth is equal to the raised bar, that means it’s time to replace the tire. Use the penny test by putting an upside-down penny into one of the tread’s grooves. If part of Abe Lincoln’s head is covered by the tread, the tire is fine. If you can see all of his head, it’s time to replace the tire.

If you spend just a few minutes a month checking the tire pressure it will help minimize unnecessary tire wear, maximize fuel economy and improve performance. It also brings the peace of mind that goes with knowing that your tires are full of hot air.

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. on Monday through Friday. Scotty’s website is www.scottystireauto.com.

The Esplanade announces new club for kids

Simon Property Group, the new owner and manager of The Esplanade shopping mall, is bringing its popular Simon Kidgits Club to the mall. Simon Kidgits Club, first introduced in 2003 for children age three through 8, is currently offered at 82 Simon malls nationwide. Children in the Kenner area can look forward to a year-long calendar of health and wellness, education, safety and entertainment activities designed just for them.

More than 750,000 kids and parents have joined the Simon Kidgits Club since its inception. They have played games, listened to story books, collected children’s books for charities, learned about ways to stay healthy and safe, greeted popular costumed characters and even tried their tiny hands at the culinary arts at a whole array of Kidgits Club events.

To celebrate the start of the Simon Kidgits Club at The Esplanade, the mall hosted a kick-off extravaganza in early November 10.

“We are extremely excited to offer this program designed to bring wholesome fun to young children and their parents,” said Desiree Dubroc, director of mall marketing. “The Simon Kidgits Club delivers important messages to kids in a creative and interactive way in a family-friendly setting.”

The Simon Kidgits Club will host several in-mall programs and events throughout the year including: Book Blast!, a program designed to help instill a love of books in children and to encourage them to share the joy of reading with others; Simon Kidgits Super Duper Mini Chefs, a fun and interactive experience for young chefs to foster a healthy appreciation of food and the fun of cooking; Safe Summer, Halloween festivities and more!

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The registration cost for each child is $5. Each Simon Kidgits Club member receives his or her own official Simon Kidgits Club membership card and a T-shirt at the time of enrollment. Other Simon Kidgits Club membership benefits include: special invitations to live mall events; exclusive premiums for members at each event they attend; retailer offers and rewards for kids and moms; a birthday club (including birthday card and gift redemption certificate); and a quarterly newsletter with games, educational features and special news.

For more information about the Simon Kidgits Club, visit www.simonkidgitsclub.com.

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The number on the tire sidewall indicates the maximum inflation pressure – the highest tire pressure your tires should ever receive—and not the recommended pressure, so that number is misleading.

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CITY HALL
(continued from page 10)

Yenni said that at these key buildings, outside access would change from keys to card readers. Access card readers would be used inside buildings instead of numbered keypads used to gain admittance to secured rooms, elevators and areas where confidential information is kept. At the fuel depot and vehicle maintenance facility, access card readers would control admittance. Another facet of the security program will be surveillance cameras located at City Hall, in the Kenner judicial courts and at facilities like the fuel depot.

“We are extremely grateful to Councilwoman Branigan,” said Yenni. “She has done a great service for many years and assistance of Councilwoman Branigan.”

Yenni said the work on the new security systems is expected to kick off in late December and continue into 2008.

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Dental implants may offer solutions for patients who cannot function adequately with conventional dentures. However, not every patient is a candidate for implants. The decision can be made only after a careful examination by your dentist and discussion of the relative benefits and risks and what the procedure involves. Ask your dentist if implants may be an option for you.

I’ve heard of some new cosmetic techniques that can improve smiles. Are they appropriate for older adults?

Older adults can benefit from many of the options available today for improving the look of a smile. Your dentist can describe and discuss with you the range of treatments that would be right for you. Part of older adulthood is the acceptance of aging and the development of realistic expectations for appearance. In that context, dental treatment for older adults can be a healthy and adaptive way of maintaining dental health and emotional well-being. Our teeth and mouth play a critical role in psychological development and well-being throughout our lives. Modern dentistry has expanded esthetic options for people of all ages. Coupled with good oral hygiene and regular dental visits, cosmetic techniques can help improve the appearance of your smile.

Why do my teeth seem darker?

One of the changes you may notice as you grow older is that it’s harder to keep your teeth clean and white. This is because the sticky, colorless layer of bacteria, called plaque, can build up faster and in greater amounts as we age. Changes in dentin, the bone-like tissue that is under your enamel, may also cause your teeth to appear slightly darker.

Why does my mouth feel dry?

Reduced saliva flow that results in a dry mouth is a common problem among older adults. It is caused by certain medical disorders and is often a side effect of medications such as antihistamines, decongestants, painkillers and diuretics. Some of the common problems associated with dry mouth include a constant sore throat, burning sensation, problems speaking, difficulty swallowing, hoarseness or dry nasal passages. Left untreated, dry mouth can damage your teeth. Without adequate saliva to lubricate your mouth, wash away food, and neutralize the acids produced by plaque, extensive cavities can form.

Your dentist can recommend various methods to restore moisture. Sugar-free candy or gum stimulates saliva flow, and moisture can be replaced by using artificial saliva and oral rinses.

Why am I losing my sense of taste?

You may find that you are losing your appetite due to a change in your sense of taste. Several factors can cause this change. Besides an age-related decrease in the sense of taste and smell, certain diseases, medications and dentures can contribute to a decrease in your sense of taste.

The preceding article was based on information obtained from the American Dental Association website at www.ada.org/public/topics/oral_changes_faq.asp.

Susan M. Felder D.D.S. is a general dentist who has practiced continuously in north Kenner for over 30 years. Dr. Felder’s office is located at 4334 Florida Avenue, Suite 101 and she can be reached at 469-6333.
Also watch for these timely programs in December!!

“Game On”
KPRD Director Ken Marroccoli breaks down the recent Recreation Department football championship games, gives us a glimpse into the Pavilion at Kenner City Park and talks to Leisure Services employees about the martial arts and gymnastics programs.

“Beyond the Badge”
Police Chief Steve Caraway discusses shopping safety and bicycle patrols with KPD police officers.

“Kenner Revealed”
Janet Gross gets the details on Kenner’s Christmas Village and other programs and events from Community Services Director Mary-Sharon Howland.

“Town Talk”
Ken Trahan gives us the latest on the Saints Hall of Fame’s temporary move to the Superdome.

For the most current program schedule, go to www.ktv76.com.
Our website also includes information on how you can obtain copies of any K-TV produced program.
We appreciate and encourage all comments and feedback about K-TV programs.
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Your opinion counts, Kenner...It’s your channel

#### Business picking up at Armstrong International

**By ALLAN KATZ**

The all-important tourism business is receiving a major boost at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport with more conventioners, leisure travelers and tens of thousands of football fans arriving in December.

“The airport has recovered more than 82 percent of our pre-Katrina business,” said Airport spokesperson Michelle Wilcut. “This is vital for the regional tourism industry that employed more than 150,000 persons prior to Katrina and is now regaining much of its strength. It’s also very important to Kenner because the city receives sales tax revenues from the airport as well as the impact of visitors who stay in Kenner-based hotels, dine in Kenner restaurants and shop in Kenner.”

She said the airport also experienced a strong Thanksgiving holiday flow of passengers, topping 14,000 a day during the four-day peak. Major conventions like Diversified Business Communications with attendance of 11,000 from November 27 to December 1, and the PowerGen convention that will draw 17,000 from December 10-14 also helped, said Wilcut.

But the biggest boost is coming from football games like the Bayou Classic, the Sugar Bowl (January 1) and the BCS National Championship Game (January 7), she said.

“For the first time since Katrina, we’re seeing events that are packing the airport, filling up the hotels and restoring the jobs that disappeared from our economy after the hurricane,” said Wilcut. “Our hope is that 2008 will see another major gain toward achieving or bettering our pre-Katrina figures for visitors and air traffic.”

#### All I want for Christmas

(A full tank of gas)

**By ED CLANCY**

As I write this, the price of regular gasoline is somewhere around $2.90 to $3.00 a gallon in the greater New Orleans area. The cheapest I have seen this week is $2.86.

The price of a barrel of U.S. crude oil is around $93. It could be up to $100 a barrel by the time you read this. But, very frankly, it’s not the price of a gallon of gasoline that bothers me.

What bothers me is when the news people report the price of self-serve regular gas. They tell us it could go up to $4.00 a gallon before it goes down. Hellooooo! There are a good many of us who don’t have the luxury of buying regular gas. The little sign on the gas cap says use only premium gasoline. That means the average for regular gasoline is useless. If regular gas goes up to $4.00 a gallon, that means my gas will be over five dollars, maybe even six. Why don’t they put that on the news?

When coffee goes up to four dollars a pound, we all pay four dollars a pound. My stomach doesn’t have a sign on it that says premium coffee only. If I want to put cheap coffee in there, I will. Same thing for food. If I want to put chopped beef in my tank instead of a filet mignon I can do it but I can’t put cheap gas in my car if I want the warranty to stay in force.

So, news people, when you report the average price of gasoline at least give those of us who have to buy premium an idea of what we’re in for. What I don’t know is whether my body will last a little longer if I buy Maxwell House instead of Wal-Mart coffee.

And another thing; they still haven’t done anything about that extra nine-tenths they put on the price. $2.86 and nine-tenths is $2.87?

I’ll tell you why. A long time ago the oil companies took a cue from retailers who were selling items for “something and 99 cents.” A pound of coffee was not $4.00, it was $3.99. Men’s slacks were not $30.00, they were $29.99. “29” sounds cheaper than “30.” They must think we are idiots. I will tell you now – straight out – that Americans have never thought something was cheaper because it was priced at $1.99 rather than $2.00.

What’s more, that kind of pricing wastes money. Here is a quote from a website in England (channelregister.co.uk) which reported a couple of years ago that Brits are on to the 99 cent scam: (It’s in the British language so you need to know that the pound sign looks like an “L,” and a “p” stands for “pence” which is equivalent to our “cents.”)

“We’d never really considered this, but a third of Brits want a 99p coin to tackle the menace of the £XX.99 pricing strategy, which a Virgin Money poll says wastes £11 a month in discarded 1p pieces. Of course, the real solution to the problem is to make the pricing of goods at £XX.99 illegal and punishable by death while raising the value of the 1p coin to £1 to encourage people not to throw them away.”

continued on page 27
Christmas light safety tips

By DAN DORMADY

When you prepare your home for the holidays this year with a Christmas tree, lights and other decorations, you need to think about doing it safely.

It seems every year we hear about a tragedy at Christmas time due to Christmas lights or extension cords overheating.

First, here are some basics about Christmas lights. There are different kinds of lighting systems that you can purchase. The majority of Christmas lights today use a parallel wiring system, which means that there is more than one path of electricity for each light bulb to follow. After electricity or current leaves the light bulb, it follows two or more paths before returning to the electrical source. The parallel lights have two wires and each light bulb has its own positive and negative wire connection so if one light bulb burns out, the rest of the light set remains illuminated.

To reduce the risk of overheating the lights, you should replace any burned out light bulbs promptly. Use the same wattage replacement bulbs as the original strand of lights. The voltage of the lights does not change when another set of lights is added. What does change when adding additional sets of lights is the number of watts. This increase in wattage increases the amount of heat. Do not puncture the insulation of the light sets with staples or nails.

If your Christmas lights are equipped with push-in type light bulbs, do not twist the light bulbs. Pull the light bulbs straight out of the socket. If your lights are equipped with threaded screw in holiday light bulbs, make sure that you do not over tighten the light bulbs causing the protective glass covering to break or crack.

To reduce the risk of overheating, replace any burned out light bulbs promptly. Use the proper light bulbs with like volt and wattage replacement light bulbs. Always unplug your lights before installing or replacing the light bulbs.

Do not overload the electrical wiring by adding additional light sets together. Connect the recommended amount of light sets (usually three sets if not stated in instructions) on one continuous light string.

When using Christmas tree lights, basic precautions should always be followed. Do not use the tree lights outdoors unless the lights are marked suitable for outdoor use. When outdoor lights are used in outdoor applications, connect the outdoor lights to a ground fault circuit interrupting [GFCI] electrical outlet. If one is not provided, contact a qualified electrician for proper outdoor lights installation.

Most Christmas lights today have small fuses to limit the amount of current that will pass through the lights. When using Christmas tree lights, basic precautions should always be followed. Do not use the tree lights outdoors unless the lights are marked suitable for outdoor use. When outdoor lights are used in outdoor applications, connect the outdoor lights to a ground fault circuit interrupting [GFCI] electrical outlet. If one is not provided, contact a qualified electrician for proper outdoor lights installation.

Holiday lights are not intended for permanent installation or use. Do not mount or place the lights near gas or electric heaters, fireplaces, candles or other similar sources of heat. Do not puncture the insulation of the light sets with staples or nails.

When hanging the lights do not place the insulated wire on sharp hooks or sharp objects. Do not let the light bulbs rest on the light string supply cord or other electrical wires. Unplug the light bulbs when leaving the house, when retiring for the night or if the Christmas tree lights are left unattended.

To avoid risk of fire, burns, personal injury and electric shock the lights should not be played with or placed where small children can reach the light bulbs. To reduce the risk of fire or electrical shock do not mount or support the Christmas tree lights in a manner that can cut or damage the light sets.

Do not close your doors or windows on the lights or extension cords, as this may damage the wire insulation. Do not cover the light bulbs with cloth, paper or any material that is not part of the light set when in use.

Dan Dormady, P.E., is a licensed professional engineer and licensed home inspector (LSBHI #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 113565 Metairie, LA 70011-3565, or at criterium-dormady@cox.net. Criterium-Dormady Engineers’ website is www.criterium-dormady.com.
Legitimate IDPs, which are issued pursuant to the United Nations Road Traffic Convention of 1949, assist a person with a valid driver’s license to drive in foreign countries that have also signed the Convention. Notably, an IDP is not a substitute for a government-issued driver’s license; rather it is simply a brochure that translates that government-issued driver’s license into a number of different languages. Therefore, IDPs merely serve as a translation document for a government-issued driver’s license, and they have no value independent of such government-issued licenses. IDPs do not protect their holders from traffic enforcement or from “points,” and cannot be used in place of a suspended or revoked license, or as identification in lieu of a government-issued document.

The Administration’s Office of Citizens Services and Communications further advises: An international driver’s license must be obtained from your home country. This permit only verifies that you hold a valid license in your home country. It is your foreign driver’s license that allows you to drive in the United States. Contact the authorities in your home country to get an international driving permit, as the United States does not issue international driver’s licenses to foreign visitors. When it comes to the marketing of the IDPs, many businesses, not all, are somewhat misleading on the use of this document. One thing is for sure, it is not a valid driver’s license. If you get stopped by a law enforcement officer and present and IDP or IDL as proof of your identity and authorization to drive, you could be arrested.

Community announcements and events

Association Nicaragüense de Louisiana (ANDELA): December 7, Queen Cosa Tanta Alegría “La Virgen Maria” (Who causes so much happiness – “The Virgin Mary”) at St. Jerome Catholic Church, from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. For information call 466-1483 or 466-4619.

City of Kenner Hispanic Resource Center (COKHRC): December 8, Pro-Bono Clinic. The numerous events offered at the COKHRC will resume in January 2008. For more information please call 469-2571.

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce: December 1-30, numerous events are offered. Call 885-4262.

Latin American Civic Association of Louisiana (LACAL): December 20, Medicare Part D open enrollment from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging, 2575 Canal St., Annex Bldg. First Floor, New Orleans. LACAL has teamed up with AARP of Louisiana, several community resources agencies, state agencies like SHIPP (Louisiana Department of Insurance), Medicare and local volunteers. The purpose of the coalition is to educate, council, and enroll eligible beneficiaries, specifically low income individuals. For information call 464-4619 or email lacl234@bellsouth.net.

The Hispanic Forum: December 14, general meeting. For information call 310-6880.

Unidad Hispanoamericana: December 20, general meeting. For information call 975-0949.

I leave you with this thought, “Our visions begin with our desires.”

God Bless and have a safe holiday season.

Rafael E. Saddy is president of the Latin American Civic Association of Louisiana (LACAL). Email Saddy at lacl234@bellsouth.net. Correspondence for LACAL can be sent to PO Box 840284, Kenner, LA 70064-0284.
College basketball teams show promise
By KEN TRAHAN

Awash in the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat is LSU football, Tulane football and the magnificent season of Matt Forte has largely been ignored and overshadowed. The New Orleans Saints' streaky season of euphoric highs and despondent lows has played second fiddle to LSU Prep football has been typically exciting and the king of Friday nights with the State Farm Superdome Classic set for December 7 and 8 in the Superdome. The New Orleans Hornets got off to a fast start before slumping a bit but have still been a good story despite sub par attendance. The fact of the matter is that until the football season ends, everything else takes a back seat.

Such is the case with college basketball. The women's teams at Xavier and Tulane are very good. LSU is a top 10 women's program with perhaps the nation's top center in Sylvia Fowles. Loyola is nationally ranked in their class under Dobie Plaisance. UNO is improved under Amy Champion. On the men's side, lost in the pigskin craze is the tremendous start at UNO under first year head coach Joe Pasternack. The Privateers opened their season with three consecutive road wins — beating Northwestern State, 21st ranked North Carolina State and Tulane.

LSU faithful. This would appear to be a year of three in Hawaii certainly did not inspire LSU's fans. LSU was not impressive. Winning just one out of three in Hawaii certainly did not inspire LSU faithful. This would appear to be a year of transition after a disappointing season a year ago. Just two seasons removed from a Final Four, Brady has had coaching staff changes and the crowds aren't what LSU would like. The Brady critics will be howling once again though he is a good coach who can and will win if he gets good players. That is the key in the tough SEC.

At Tulane, John Brady is coaching a vastly different team. In recent years, LSU has been an inside-oriented attack with the likes of Glen Davis and Tyrus Thomas. This LSU team is perimeter oriented with many guards. How LSU shoots will largely determine their fate this year. Narrow wins over Louisiana schools SLU and McNeese State were not impressive. Winning just one out of three in Hawaii certainly did not inspire LSU faithful. This would appear to be a year of transition after a disappointing season a year ago. Just two seasons removed from a Final Four, Brady has had coaching staff changes and the crowds aren't what LSU would like. The Brady critics will be howling once again though he is a good coach who can and will win if he gets good players. That is the key in the tough SEC.

The Xavier men are nationally ranked while GCAC rival Loyola is much improved. Dillard and SUNO will be formidable as well in the GCAC.

Basketball is an exciting sport with many area teams worthy of your support. Give them a look. My guess is that you will enjoy seeing these teams play. While football doesn't end until the Super Bowl, by then, basketball will be later in the college season and nearing the midway point of the NBA season. There is no need to wait to check out the bouncing ball. See what is happening now. I promise that you will find good value for the dollar and an exciting product.

Ken Trahan serves as sports director at Biz Radio 990, WGSO-AM. Trahan is the general manager and chairman of the board of the Saints Hall of Fame in Kenner's Rivertown and serves as an information specialist for the Jefferson Parish Recreation Department.
is going well but has been a little slower than anticipated, and he asks residents to be patient as they will eventually get to everyone.

There has been, however, some confusion at homes that feel they need a second trash can. He said the charge for a second trash can is $100. But at residences where the resident had two Waste Management cans, and kept their Waste Management receipt to prove they already paid for a second can, there is no additional charge.

“Part of the problem we’re working through is that Waste Management did not keep good records so we don’t know from our data base who had two Waste Management cans or who already paid for a second trash container,” said Ramelli. “But we’re determined to try to make everyone happy. We really value our contract with Kenner and we’re trying to work equitably with everyone.”

Last year, after Mayor Ed Muniz took office, his administration and Waste Management ran into a stalemate over the costs to the city for garbage and trash pickups. So, in a compromise, Waste Management stepped aside and agreed to a Ramelli takeover of the Kenner contract.

“Since we now have the contract and the responsibilities that go with it, we want to have trash cans with our company name on the streets of Kenner,” said Ramelli.

“Under our contract with the city, it is required that each residence has one 96 gallon can. If anyone has any questions about this, we would ask them to call us at 482-2040. We welcome all inquiries.”

Food Drive (continued from page 1)

the blessings that they have received and hope that the contributions made by all who participated helped to bring joyous holidays to the needy in our community. Thanks to everyone who participated and Merry Christmas to all,” said Steven Montetug, Kenner Postmaster.

Plauche said all of the nine and one-half tons of food were distributed in less than two weeks to qualifying families.

“Since the storm there has been an increased need from families throughout the entire year, not just during the holiday season,” said Plauche. “In October, we provided food to 886 families and 3,184 individuals. On the Monday before Thanksgiving, in just one day, food was dispersed to 162 families.”

Plauche continued, “Donated food items are welcome anytime at the food bank. We need canned foods, tuna, vegetables, rice, pasta, beans, baby formula and fruit all the time. We also accept donated diapers.”

Anyone who would like to make donations can bring them to the food bank, located at 1610 Third Street, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. on weekdays, excluding holidays. The phone number is 468-7204.

Kenner has been a Tree City USA community by the Arbor Day Foundation to honor its commitment to community forestry. It is the first year Kenner has received this national recognition.

The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service.

By establishing a tree board or department, enacting a tree care ordinance, creating a comprehensive community forestry program and observing Arbor Day, Kenner has met the four standards to become a Tree City USA community.

“Trees in our cities and towns help clean the air, conserve soil and water, moderate temperature and bring nature into our daily lives,” said John Rosenow, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. “Tree City USA designation recognizes the work of elected officials, staff and citizens who plant and care for the community forest. Trees are a vital component of the infrastructure in our cities and towns and provide environmental and economical benefits. A community, and its citizens, that recognize these benefits and provide needed care for its trees deserved recognition and thanks.”

Kenner, along with other communities in the state, has been named a “Tree City USA” community. Kenner was selected as one of 251 cities in the nation to receive a Tree City USA award at the December 6 city council meeting. Kenner will sponsor an Arbor Day celebration at 10:30 on Friday, January 18, 2008 at the historic live oak tree located on Pollack Street near the levee. For more information contact landscape architect Hailey Bowen or Scott Broussard in the Kenner Planning Department at 468-7280.

Happy Holidays from the Kenner Star Staff
Dianne Stamps, Cynthia Bradford, Rebecca Shepler, Cindy Rousset, Syria Mougrabi and Donna Schedler. Michel is assistant to Councilwoman-at-Large Michele Branigan, while Stamps works for Council President Jeannie Black. Bradford works for District 1 Councilman Marc Johnson while Shepler is assistant to District 2 Councilman Joe Stagni. Rousset works for District 3 Councilman Ben Zahn and Mougrabi is assistant to District 4 Councilwoman Maria DeFrancesch. Schedler is assistant to District 5 Councilman Kent Denapolis.

“We have a great team,” says Sheeren. “City Hall wouldn’t work nearly as well if it were not for the efficiency of these capable women.”

As a City Hall veteran of more than 27 years, Sheeren is also impressed by the positive working relationship between the administration of Mayor Ed Muniz and the City Council. “When you have a lot of tension between the Council and the Mayor or within the Council, life can be very unpleasant at City Hall,” says Sheeren. “But this administration and this Council really work well together. Everyone is very pleasant and respectful of others. When there are disagreements, it’s about business issues, not personal.”

Nothing that has happened at City Hall can equal the sheer horror of the 1986 Pan Am plane crash in Kenner for Sheeren. “What a terrible time,” she remembers. “The only good thing I remember from the plane crash are the calls that poured in from around the country, as people tried to find out what we needed and how they could help. I think most Americans are very compassionate people.”

Sheeren has enough years at City Hall that she can retire at any time. Her original plan was to retire in 2005 but Hurricane Katrina blew up her intentions, as it did for so many others. Now, she’s thinking that she might take her retirement sometime in the next four or five years.

A Kenner native who grew up on Illinois Avenue, Sheeren feels extremely fortunate in the way that things worked out. “Kenner is a wonderful place to grow up and live,” she says. “I think that the people who live here still remember and carry out the little courtesies and polite gestures that have been forgotten in bigger cities. I know that people who have dealt with City Hall in New Orleans, and also done business at our City Hall in Kenner, will tell me that there is just a world of difference. They say that people in Kenner still care that things get done correctly and practice courtesies that have apparently been forgotten in other places. I think that’s true.”

Sheeren was recently named by Parish President Aaron Broussard, an old friend dating back to his days as Kenner’s mayor, to the Jefferson Parish Animal Shelter Presidential Committee formed by Broussard to address issues related to animal welfare and control. Sheeren, who calls herself “an animal person,” has worked closely with parish leaders in an effort to improve Jefferson’s animal shelter and address animal overpopulation, animal cruelty and other animal welfare issues.

Sheeren, whose pets include three dogs named Skye, Merlot, and Mimosa and Margarita, a “Katrina cat,” — says her retirement years are likely to include volunteer work to protect animals.

“While it’s a lot of work, I really appreciate Aaron giving me a chance to be involved in this,” says Sheeren. “It’s a very good cause, one that I’m proud to be involved in.”

Ed Clancy hosts a radio show, “The Ed Clancy Show,” weekdays from 9:00 a.m. until noon on WGSO-AM 990 and can be reached via email at Edclancy2@aol.com.
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