

Opinions

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The more things change...

Harold Sones' unopposed re-election January 11, 2021, to the presidency of the Police Jury coupled with the appointment of someone to fill the vacant seat in Ward Three has shored up Sones' power base on the Jury. As a consequence, we can safely expect the Police Jury to remain the dynamic growth engine they have always been. We anticipate that those two hours long meetings of the Jury featuring intense but respectful debate over how best to serve the economic interests of the people of Catahoula Parish will continue without interruption.

Somehow the State of Louisiana has managed to arrange an election for a United States Congressman to take place on March 20 this year but we can't vote to fill a Police Jury seat in a parish with less than ten thousand people until October.

In the meantime, the Town of Jonesville met January 12, 2021, and heard from two women with genuine economic street cred, Alicia Bettis and Trish Hill. Bettis is the entrepreneur developing a retail service center in town and Hill has created her own Youtube feature, "The

Trish Hill Show" in Dallas, Texas. The show featured local personalities such as Judge Lynn Toler. She wants to do something similar in media here. Her intention would be, as she put it, "to spotlight people in town". The theme she has in mind is "Your story, our view".

Currently, volunteers have been working to develop an internet presence for Catahoula Parish, but lack of support from the Police Jury has kept that project on life support. So far, the Police Jury has been indifferent and the less than \$2300 per year it would cost to bring Catahoula Parish into the 21st century can't be found in the budget.

Despite being able to afford nine Police Jurors in a parish with less than ten thousand people, we can't find the money or personnel to do what almost every other parish in Louisiana does, which is simply pay for and pass along vital public information to the people via the internet.

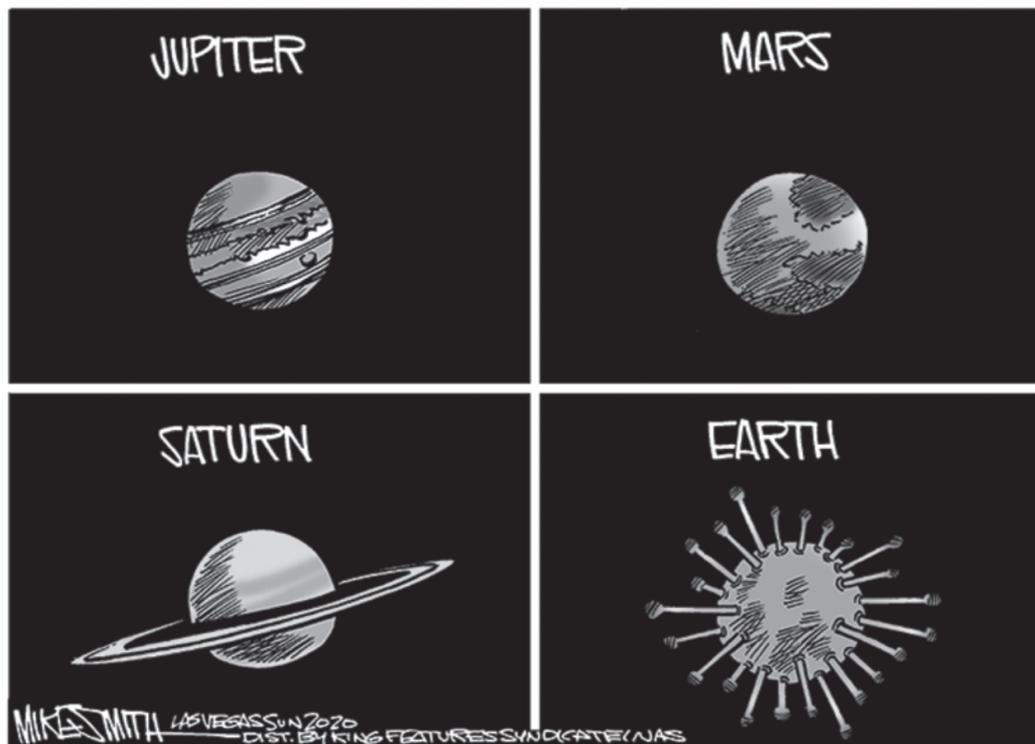
Frankly I suspect we have too many people regarding the Police Jury as an income stream more than an office of service to the people.

By Leo Chappelle

That's common enough in government one supposes, but it's a luxury that the people, especially in Catahoula, cannot afford.

Some of that exploitation of the public funds could be forgiven perhaps were there a different spirit evident on the Jury. But there isn't. Whatever administrative work is actually done, I've pointed out repeatedly, is handled by Secretary-Treasurer Patti Mizell and assistant Frankie Jean Toler. The Jury tries to hire people actually to maintain roads and culverts, but the pay is uncompetitive. Yet, we still have nine Police Jurors. That's how it's been. That's how it is.

What we are dealing with has been with us long before COVID-19 and it seems it will be long after as well unless we as a parish recognize the truth of the situation here and resolve to change it. It can be done. But it must begin with someone. Perhaps it will be people like Betty Gaither, Mary Edwards, Alicia Bettis, Trish Hill, and the Catahoula Economic and Industrial Development District that do it. But whoever it is, they won't do it alone.



JEB Tales

First, I would like to thank Dr. Thomas Estis for writing the most inspirational article to ever appear in JEB Tales last week.

Secondly, I want to apologize to Tommy and Katherine for not writing an introduction for them last week. My excuse is that between my heart doctor visits, Shirley and my eye doctor visits and our trip to the hospital, I just did not have time.

Thirdly, I would recommend that Tommy and Catherine write a book. It could be called "True Grit" or "Love Story". Well, since those titles are taken it could be called "It's amazing what two people working together can accomplish".

Information on Dr. Thomas Estis and Dr. Catherine Brooks Jones Estis. Dr. Thomas Estis went to Block High School and is the founder and clinical director of Aimwell Recovery Center, LLC. Dr. Catherine Jones is a department head at ULM which helps poor kids go to college.

Now this week's story. A short time ago when I went to get a COVID-19 shot at the courthouse, I arrived about two hours early around 7:00 A.M. The first person I saw was Jerry Price who found a chair for me in the hallway. The next person I saw was Sheriff Toney Edwards at work before 7:10 A.M. About two minutes later Ellis Boothe, Homeland Security Director, was there to get things ready.

What I am getting as is this. Things do not just happen; someone is always working behind the scenes to make good things happen for the rest of us. So, thank you Director Ellis Boothe and

Sheriff Toney Edwards.

I would also like to thank Deputy Shelby Trisler and the trustees who brought tables and chairs from all over the courthouse and set them up so two groups of people could be vaccinated at the same time.

While waiting to get the shot I got to visit with Deputy Shelby Trisler and talk over the old times. Did you know he served in the U.S. Army for two years and then the National Guard for several years? He also drove a school bus for many years and would haul students to ballgames and other school activities in his bus. The school only paid for his gas on these trips. When Mr. Shelby retired, the school board bought a brand-new activities bus and paid someone extra to drive it on school trips.

I was going to mention the over 1300 funerals and over 300 graves that Mr. Shelby had directed traffic at, and he and his trustees had dug graves for, but Sheriff Edwards beat me to it last week. When I had gotten the call that COVID-19 shots were to be given to the elderly of 70 years and older and essential workers, I knew I was not essential but being 78, I went down to check it out.

Several people showed up and the first person to be vaccinated was a really young 90 year plus Raymond Rouse. Still very active and a joy to be around.

As 85-year-old Shelby Trisler was being vaccinated I looked around and saw that several deputies were back in the line and probably

By John Ed Bartmess, Jr.

not be able to get the shot, knowing they were essential workers, I attempted to get out of line. Suddenly Homeland Security Director Ellis Boothe and Sheriff Toney Edwards confronted me and one of them said, "John Ed, get your old butt back in that line!" I did.

I did not even know when the nurse gave me the shot and I had no side effects. So please get vaccinated.

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