

Opinions

Maybe we should look up

By Leo Chappelle

Last week *The Jena Times* ran a story about the Main Street Recovery Grant (MSRG) program that apparently is the state of Louisiana's name for the scheme to dole out money from the Federal CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act). I love the way government contorts the name of legislation into an acronym resembling actual language, don't you?) The purpose of the legislation was to authorize "emergency loans to distressed businesses".

Going over to latreasurer.opengov.com you will be able to see exactly who borrowed the money and how much. For a wonder (I'm such a cynic), Catahoula Parish actually did fairly well, at least compared to our neighbor LaSalle Parish. LaSalle businesses were able to borrow \$760,681.51. Despite being a much smaller parish, Catahoula businesses borrowed \$843,026.67. Well, maybe we were just worse off, but the cash was there anyway.

Naturally, the wisdom of our nation's handling of the COVID-19 epidemic will remain open to question for years to come. There are already cynics who find it remarkable that the

economically oppressive measures taken to deal with the pandemic appear to be easing as their political usefulness recedes into the rapidly deepening shadows of the past. It all seems so convenient. Or maybe it really is just the vaccine.

The question for Catahoula Parish, though, is "What now?" Will we continue to sit like birds in a nest, mouth open, waiting to be fed? Or will our already organized (and paid) leadership take creative measures to accomplish development plans that lead to real economic growth?

As I have hinted previously, the best route for those who want their government to work harder for them may not be merely to keep beating the dead horse of the Catahoula Parish Police Jury, but to think about reaching higher up. Citizens who write letters to their Congressman and Senators are the most influential people other than the big dollar campaign donors. You can't sit around waiting for someone to call you for a telephone poll to ask your opinion. They're probably really just asking for your money anyway, not your advice.

The members of the Police Jury have no incentive to rethink their approach to governance because the voters barely notice them unless the culvert needs replacing or the road has to be graded. But if we are to have an economically dynamic parish, we have to expect much more. I think the last Police Jury meeting was 12 minutes long. Was there really nothing we needed to discuss concerning our parish's growth and development?

So, what about it, Catahoula? Maybe it's time to call that state senator or representative. State Senator Glen Womack's local office is at 119 Pine St., Suite B, Harrisonburg, LA 71340. His phone is (318) 744-0005. He's not trying to hide from anyone.

The same can be said for State Representative Neil Riser. You can write to him at P.O. Box 117, Columbia, LA 71418 or call his office at (318) 649-0977.

None of this is meant to give the Police Jury a pass, just casting a wider and higher net. At least locally, voters are still the real power in America. Use that power. What happens could be interesting.

The Catahoula News Booster

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JEB Tales

**CLASS C 1966 GIRLS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP
(Part Four)**

THE REST OF THE STORY

Following our loss in the Regional II finals, we moved on to the quarterfinal game as a second place team. We were matched with Negreet, a strong team from the western part of the state near Toledo Bend area. We began the game strong outscoring their team 15-9 in the first quarter. They gained on us in the second quarter and the score at half-time was Enterprise 29 and Negreet 25. The third quarter ended with us ahead by ten points, 42-32. During the final quarter Negreet outscored our team 19-16, a gain of three points for them. Luckily our ten point lead at the end of the third quarter was enough to give us the win with a final score of 58-51. Enterprise had won by seven points. Scoring for the Negreet team was as follows: A. Lovelady-22, H. Lovelady-20, and Cummings-9. Scoring for Enterprise was as follows: Lois Wyant-34, Elaine Poole-13, and Judy Prudhomme-11. That win allowed us to move into the state tournament or "Sweet Sixteen" as it was referred to then.

Our first game in the Sweet Sixteen Tournament was against Holden High School. We were considered the home team and wore our white uniforms that day. The game was close all four quarters but we lead as the buzzer sounded to end each quarter. Holden had one forward named Evelyn Hutchinson that scored 31 points to lead her team. Her teammate, Dorothy Addison, turned in 16 points, while the third forward (Fayard) chipped in an additional 6 points to end the game with a score of 53 points. The scoring on our team was similar with Lois Wyant 30, Judy Prudhomme 16, and Elaine Poole 9 points. Pam Clark, one of our substitutes added another five points for our total score of 60 points. That was a win by seven points. Wins by seven points in both the quarter-final and semi-final games led us to the final game. The winner of the next game would be the Class C State Champions.

As we were walking out of the gym and around the corner of the H.O. West Building on Louisiana College Campus we were followed by some of the French Settlement team. It was obvious they had stayed long enough to watch our game against Holden. I suppose they were scouting both teams since they would match up in the finals with the winning team. Comments said loud enough to reach our or at least my ears was like throwing down a gauntlet. Or perhaps it was meant to put fear into our hearts but unfortunately it did not have that effect. One of the players boasted to her teammates "She won't make thirty points tomorrow. I can guarantee you that". I did not know how the scoring had gone in the game and I was so overjoyed that we were going to be playing in the finals that I didn't realize she was referring to me.

My aunt, Alice Hedrick, coached a team in Rapides Parish during these years. Boyce High School was where she worked. As it so happened, Alice and a former player from Enterprise, Flo Casels Wyles, had volunteered to house some of our players overnight. We would not have to make the long drive back and forth between Enterprise and Alexandria. The idea was that we would be more rested for the final game the next day. All I

can remember is that we were our usual laughing fun-loving group, having to be told several times to go to bed and rest up for the next game. I don't remember why or who decided that a window needed to be open to allow cooler air into the room, but we forgot to close it. The result was that I woke up with laryngitis the next morning. My aunt blamed herself for not taking better care of us. She felt guilty that I might not feel well and be unable to play to my best ability. She moved from coach to nurse immediately. I was instructed to gargle salt water several times that morning and given two aspirin to take. Aunt Alice had a commanding nature about her and I did not object and followed her instructions to the letter.

My aunt always read the newspaper each day. That morning she read the "Town Talk" as usual but hid the paper so that none of us would have a chance to see it. She didn't have anything to worry about. None of us were interested in doing anything but our usual, having fun on a game day. This was not just any game day. We would be playing in the finals of the state tournament. We tried to act causal about it but I think if anyone had asked we would probably have admitted we were a little more keyed up than usual. She did not want us, more specifically me, to see the newspaper article about our semi-final game. It had included a picture of me and one of the Holden players. I think she wanted me to keep my head clear and play my usual game that day. I loved and respected my aunt and in less than five years we would be matching up as opposing coaches. My first coaching position was in Rapides parish at Poland High School. Poland was the team that had beaten Enterprise the year before in the semi-finals of the state tournament. Their lead scorer was Kathy Stewart and she had scored over fifty points in that game. Kathy and I would also meet as opponents on several occasions in my three years as coach at Poland. Her younger sister, Jackie Stewart, was a senior player and great leader on my team the first year I worked at Poland High School. It is a small world isn't it?

Our final game was set for 2:00 on Saturday afternoon. Thinking ahead to when teams would be asked to pose for pictures to be used by the newspaper, the French Settlement team must have spent their morning in a hair salon. As they walked into the gym that day, many of their main players sported very chic beehive hair styles. Most of our team used headbands or in my case, a shoestring, to hold our hair back from our eyes. I forgot my headband that day and had to improvise.

The Town Talk's sports writer in those years was a very capable writer by the name of Al Nassif. I think using his article would give a better description of that final game. So borrowing from the Town Talk and Mr. Nassif's article, here is his words.

"This game was a nip and tuck affair for the first quarter and a half, but Enterprise used little Lois Wyant's hot hand to a great advantage. French Settlement posted an 8-7 first quarter lead, but after going ahead 12-9 early in the second period, couldn't keep pace as Wyant lead a comeback that netted a 22-14 lead. French Settlement narrowed the gap to six points (30-24) by the end of the third period. Enterprise led 40-28 with 1:09 left in the

game. Wyant had 30 points to lead all scorers. Pat Aydele, despite her 16 points, had a miserable afternoon, missing numerous open layups and easy shots. Kathleen Murphy added 10 points for the losers."

Elaine Poole had 6 points, Judy Prudhomme scored 3 and Pam Clark added 3 more. The final score in the game was 42-34. That was a difference of eight points, not our previous seven. When you read the description in a newspaper article, there is little mention of the guards other than names. Our guards Mary Lou Boothe, Kathy Torrey, and Nell Boothe rose to the occasion and held their forwards to a low scoring game. We were the "little un's" that could! WE WON BECAUSE WE HAD THE COACH, THE TEAM, AND THE ROAD TAKEN WAS THE RIGHT ROAD!

After winning, my first thought was that every school should have the opportunity to bring home a state trophy at least once. Not wanting to end the celebration after pictures were made, Mr. Lewis asked how we would like to celebrate. I think someone suggested a movie and another suggested watching some of the other final games. I can't remember if we went to a movie or not but we did watch Opelousas win against Jena later that day. I marveled at Fran Martin and Pat Tauzin as they played so well together. They were remarkable players and Nell and I would have a chance to meet them at a camp in Bunkie about a month or so later. We would reminisce about those state championship games during our weekend at the camp.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that both Catahoula and Caldwell Parish boy's teams would bring home state titles and trophies that same year. Three state championships were brought home to local schools in 1966. All three schools were located within 50 miles of each other in neighboring parishes.

Writing these articles served to bring back some wonderful memories for me and I would like to thank JEB's Tales for asking me to be a guest writer.

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