Happy St. Patrick’s Day
- March 17 -
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MARCH 2020:

3/2 Chamber Development Committee Meeting
Chamber office | 12:00 Noon

3/3 Joint Chamber Membership Luncheon
The Cypress Columns | 11:00 a.m.

3/11 Chamber Finance Committee Meeting
Chamber office | 7:30 a.m.

3/11 Chamber Executive Committee Meeting
Chamber office | 8:00 a.m.

3/11 Government Activities & Economic Development/Infrastructure Committees Meeting
Chamber office | 12:00 Noon

3/17 Chamber Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber office | 8:00 a.m.

3/17 Happy St. Patrick’s Day!

3/19 Lunch & Learn
Chamber office | 11:30 a.m.

3/24 General Membership Luncheon
Courtyard by Marriott | 11:30 a.m.

For more information about Chamber Events call (985) 876-5600 or Email: info@houmachamber.com

Events in red denotes Chamber events

Member Milestones

15 Years
La Captiol Federal Credit Union

10 Years
Piranha Rentals, LLC
Wingate By Wyndham- K & S Hotels, LLC

5 Years
Cox Media
With the start of the new year and another successful Annual Banquet, I reflect on the generosity of our members. I am so thankful to all our banquet sponsors especially, Garnet & Opal Sponsors: Garnet Level: Academy Medical Associates, and Hancock Whitney as Sapphire level sponsor. All sponsorship levels are truly appreciated. Below are the following Garnet & Opal Sponsors: Garnet Level: Aca
crack Attorneys at Law.

Without these sponsors and supportive members, we would not have been able to host our Annual Banquet. The Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce is so thankful for all their support.

There are lots of reasons why it’s important to be thankful and show gratitude for the people and things we have in our lives, but did you know that being thankful is also good for your health? Here’s a list of why it’s great to be grateful not only at Thanksgiving but all year long:

1. Showing thanks to others makes them feel good - You make other people feel good when you show them you appreciate the things they do for you. This can turn good friends into best friends. A simple “thank you” goes a long way and helps you to have better friendships, and you will get along even better with your family. When you make others feel good, it makes you feel good and then everyone feels good!

2. Being thankful gives you confidence - When you’re grateful for the things in your life, even if it’s something as simple as a beautiful sunset, it gives you more self-esteem. This means that you will be more confident and less worried about comparing yourself to others. Being grateful is contagious and others will want to be grateful just like you!

3. Thankfulness makes you a more positive person - People who are thankful are more positive instead of negative. When they see a glass with water in it, they say the glass is half full. Negative people will see that same glass of water and say it’s half empty. We want to be thankful for the water that is there, not worry about the water that isn’t.

4. Writing a gratitude journal can help you sleep better - If you keep a journal beside your bed and at the end of every day you write a list of all the things, you’re thankful for that day, you will sleep much better. This helps you to remember all the good things from your day, like the delicious meal you had for dinner, or that friend who helped you through a tough time. You’ll fall fast asleep with a big smile!

5. Being thankful helps you to think more about other people’s feelings — Feeling empathy (being able to see things from another person’s view). Being thankful also helps you get through life’s tough times, because you can easily call to mind all the good things in your life.

Being grateful just makes you happy and being happy can help keep your mind and body healthy!

Notes from the CEO

NICOL BLANCHARD
CEO

Join Us!

Lunch and Learn
Thursday, March 19 • 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Chamber Office, 6133 Highway 311
Speaker: Jimmy Nguyen
Senior Business Consultant, with Louisiana Small Business Development Center
Event registration fee is $10 for members and $20 for non-members. Lunch is provided.
Call the Chamber Office at 876-5600 to register to attend. Space is limited.
Deadline to register is Noon on Wednesday, March 18.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON
Tuesday, March 24 • 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Courtyard by Marriott, 142 Library Drive
Speaker: Sheriff Elect Tim Soignet
Admission is $25 per person with payment required in advance.
The deadline for pre-reservations and cancellations is 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18.
You will need your company’s login and password to register online at www.houmachamber.com. You may call the Chamber office at 876-5600 to request your login and password or to register by phone.
What a great start to the New Year! The Chamber’s 91st Annual Banquet was a huge success. I sincerely appreciate our sponsors and members who supported and participated in the banquet making the event a night to remember.

I would like to recognize several individuals for making this event special. Thanks to Mr. Colin Seibert with Seibert Lewis Wealth Group for being our Master of Ceremonies. As MC, he led the ceremony with style and charm and keep the program going. Thanks to Monsignor Cletus Frank Egbi with St. Lucy Catholic Church for his inspiration and blessings and to Honorable Jerome “Zee” Zeringue, Louisiana State Representative District 52 for the installation of our 2020 Board of Directors. Thank you for being a part of the ceremony. A special thanks to Head Coach Tim Rebowe with Nicholls State University for being our guest speaker and a true inspiration to our community and Nicholls. Wishing you and Nicholls continued success.

The Annual Banquet is always a good time to recognize those Chamber members who go above and beyond his/her civic duty and this year we had some awesome award recipients.

I would like to recognize and congratulate our 2019 Distinguished Ambassador award recipient, Mrs. Jami Bennett with Terrebonne Parish Assessor Office. She truly demonstrates a distinguished Chamber member who goes above and beyond the call of duty in her contributions to the Chamber and our community. She has lent a helping hand whenever possible and has repeatedly and generously demonstrated what it means to be an outstanding Chamber member. Our Distinguished Ambassador has attended countless Chamber events and has volunteered on numerous event committees during the past year. Jami always has a smile on her face and constantly asks: “What can I do to help?” She is an inspiration to the Chamber.

Our 2019 Chamber Star Award was awarded to Mrs. Katie Portier, Executive Director of Terrebonne Foundation for Academic Excellence. Mrs. Portier’s contribution to the Chamber and to the community exceeded expectations regarding customer service, leadership and/or volunteer community involvement. She has made a significant difference in our community. Mrs. Portier is active in our community and strives to make this community a better place not only now but also for our future. Here are a few of her endeavors. Co-chaired the Junior Auxiliary KREWE OF YOU, a Mardi Gras event for special needs children. She is an active member of the Houma Rotary Club and founded and chairs the Cast Iron Cookoff. She is a member of the Women’s Business Alliance and she has played a huge role in the Best of the Bayou Festival as well as the Christmas Festival.

As Executive Director of Terrebonne Foundation for Academic Excellence, she has continued their mission by raising funds for the education of the children of Terrebonne Parish through several endeavors such as: Purses and Promises, which raises money to help fund over 3,000 books a month for the children of Terrebonne Parish. She directs the funding of grants for our public-school teachers as well as partnered with Chevron to fund, plan, and host Girls Who Code in order to encourage and empower girls to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

She loves her community and always goes above and beyond to help fulfill her vision for what Terrebonne Parish can be and does so very much to help it get there—for now and for generations to come.

Finally, our 2019 Chamber Community Champion Award was awarded to Hancock Whitney Bank, Market President – Josh Jones. This award recognizes a Chamber Business for their contribution to the community. This year’s recipient has been a member of the Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce since 2008. With a large footprint throughout the Gulf South, Hancock Whitney has four locations in Terrebonne Parish. They continue to create opportunities for small businesses and give back to the community they serve. Terrebonne Parish is no exception.

Hancock Whitney has contributed to and assisted more than 17 local non-profit organizations over the years with financial support, volunteer hours, and more. We thank Hancock Whitney - Josh Jones and his staff for their important work and for giving back in so many ways to our community.

With another Annual Banquet concluded, I am so thankful to all who have participated and contributed to the event. Thanks to our staff - Nicol, Angie, Cyndi, Madison, Heidi and Tara for all your hard work and efforts in planning, organizing, and coordination such a “Red Carpet” affair. Thanks for participating in our special night. See you next year for our 92nd Annual Banquet.
Duckin’ Out for the Arts, March 21, 2020

Art show, auction, entertainment, and more to benefit the Bayou Regional Arts Council

The Bayou Regional Arts Council has scheduled Duckin’ Out for the Arts to be at the Terrebonne Waterlife Museum on March 21, 2020 from 6:00 – 9:00 PM. Presented by Peoples Drug Store, this is the main annual fundraiser for the arts council.

The Cajun Music Preservation Society will be starting off the night by playing traditional Cajun music on the porch. Inside, the featured music guest will be Matthew Chauvin, who will be playing a mixture of original music and covers throughout the night.

For fans of Blazing Saddles comes the man who brought us the first fart joke in movie history, Burton Gilliam! Burton is best known for his role as Lyle in the classic movie Blazing Saddles directed by Mel Brooks. From a boxer in the Coast Guard to a four-decade career as an actor, Burton has now been part of over 50 movies, hundreds of TV shows, and countless commercials. Now he’s coming down to Houma to help support the industry that brought his amazing talents to the big screen for us to enjoy.

The auction will feature 6 uniquely decorated ducks created by local artists Hans Geist, Amanda Percle, Mike Slage, Rachel Woodham, Elrin “Peanut” Fanguy, and Blaine Parfait. This annual tradition of the event has become the prize of the night and will be featured next to various artworks donated by other artists. You’ll be able to meet many of the artists at the event to discuss their work and learn how art impacts each and every one of us.

The fundraiser helps the Bayou Regional Arts Council to continue supporting arts-based nonprofits and arts programs in the Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. John, Assumption, and St James parishes. The support comes from redistributing state grants, consulting, and workshops provided by the arts council and volunteers.

For more information about the Bayou Regional Arts Council, or to learn more about Duckin’ Out for the Arts, visit www.bayouarts.org

Nicholls Announces Changes to Student Affairs

Nicholls State University is separating the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Academic Affairs. Dr. Michele Caruso will be interim vice president of student affairs, pending approval by the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors.

Dr. Caruso has served as the associate vice president of student affairs since Jan. 2019. Since then, she has helped bring Mom’s Pantry to campus and create Tillou’s Table as a way to combat food insecurity for students. She founded the Colonel Acts of Kindness program to recognize members of the Nicholls community who go above and beyond.

“Nicholls State University is devoted to the student experience and how it impacts our students’ futures,” she said. “Being a part of this team is inspiring. This role allows me to continue to do what I love while collaborating with others to bring innovative solutions to new challenges.”

A licensed professional counselor, Dr. Caruso joined the Nicholls campus in 1996. She served as the dean of student services for 16 years before being promoted to dean of students in January 2018.

Dr. Caruso has played an influential role across campus and Louisiana in the areas of diversity and inclusion. She has served as the Title IX Coordinator on campus, and she serves on the University of Louisiana System Workplace Inclusion Task Force. She was on the team that created the Colonels Retention of Winners Network, which aims to increase retention and graduation rates of black males.

“Dr. Caruso is a champion for our students,” said Dr. Jay Clune, Nicholls president. “Her commitment to our students and their success in and out of the classroom is shown in the passion that she brings to this campus every day. I am confident in her ability to handle the challenges of this position and have no doubt that she has our students’ best interest at heart.”

Dr. Caruso will retain her title of dean of students.

A national search for vice president for student affairs will take place at a later date.

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Synergy Bancshares Appoints New Board Member

Synergy Bancshares, Inc., the holding company of Synergy Bank announced today that the Company’s Board of Directors has appointed Mr. David L. Duplantis, PE to the Board of Directors of Synergy Bank. The announcement was made by Jerry P. Ledet, Jr., Synergy Bank President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Mr. Duplantis is the Chief Executive Officer of Duplantis Design Group, PC (DDG), a Thibodaux based architectural and engineering firm with locations in Louisiana (5) and Texas (1) and licenses to practice in 13 states across the southeastern United States. Mr. Duplantis graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. He has served on the ED White Catholic High School Advisory Board and the Bayou Country Children’s Museum. He is currently serving on the boards of Restore or Retreat, CASA of Lafourche and the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux Advisory School Board. He is a proud member of the Thibodaux Volunteer Fire Department and was the 2016 Grand Marshal.

“On behalf of Synergy’s Board of Directors, I am pleased to welcome Mr. Duplantis as our new board member,” said Morris P. Hebert, Synergy Bank Board Chair. “David brings a wealth of industry knowledge and a strong commitment to our community that aligns with the core values of our bank.”

Nicholls Named Top Small College for Students with Autism

Nicholls State University has been named one of the 30 best small colleges for students with autism spectrum disorder by Applied Behavior Analysis Programs Guide.

To qualify, schools must have enrollments below 10,000 and a program specific to the needs of students on the autism spectrum. Schools must also exhibit friendliness toward those students and provide financial support.

What separates Nicholls from other small colleges is the Bridge to Independence Program. Housed in the College of Education and Behavioral Analysis, the program assists students with intellectual disabilities or autism spectrum disorder with academic, job and social skills. Nicholls’ program is one of over 50 programs in the United States certified by the U.S. Department of Education and the first in Louisiana.

“We appreciate this prestigious recognition, and it makes us proud of the work Nicholls State University is doing to assist our students in fulfilling their academic and social goals,” said Dr. Mary Breaud, associate professor of education and Bridge coordinator. “Nicholls is doing great things for its students.”

The College of Education and Behavioral Analysis also offers a Masters of Education in Curriculum and Instruction with a High Incidence Disabilities Concentration with an ABA option. The program aims to prepare educators to implement intervention strategies to reach students with learning challenges. The ABA option prepares students to become licensed behavior analysts in Louisiana as well as achieve national certification.

There are an estimated 1.8-2.6 million college students with autism nationwide. Prevalence of autism in U.S. children skyrocketed by 119 percent from 2000 to 2010. It became the fastest-growing developmental disability.

Applied Behavior Analysis Programs Guide is the top resource for students looking to pursue a career in the field. They provide reports on special education, social work, counseling, rehabilitation and other related professions.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Supports State’s Girls on the Run Councils

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana announced its $20,000 sponsorship of the state’s Girls on the Run programs, which includes Girls on the Run Bayou Region, Central Louisiana, New Orleans, Shreveport and South Louisiana councils. Girls on the Run is a physical activity-based, positive youth development (PA-PYD) program that inspires girls in 3rd through 8th grade to be healthy, joyful and confident. Throughout the year-long partnership, Blue Cross will sponsor eight Girls on the Run 5K events in Louisiana while supporting over 2,700 girls in the 10-week Girls on the Run program. The partnership will promote safe, engaging spaces for healthy and active lifestyles, teamwork, and positive youth development that encourages social and emotional learning.

Blue Cross is dedicated to improving the health and lives of Louisianians. By supporting Girls on the Run councils in Louisiana, Blue Cross will help directly affect over 2,700 girls in the state and their families.

“We are thrilled that Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana is a dedicated partner of Girls on the Run,” said Jody Braunig, executive director of Girls on the Run New Orleans. “This sponsorship will help further the mission of the organization and make an impact on the lives of girls and families we will serve throughout this next year.”

“Programs like Girls on the Run help Louisiana’s children develop good exercise habits early on, which positions them to lead healthy lives,” said Michael Tipton, Head of Community Relations and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation President. “Through this sponsorship, we’re proud to offer more girls from different areas of the state the opportunity to participate in running events and other activities that support a healthy lifestyle. Girls on the Run uses running to inspire and motivate girls, encourage a lifelong appreciation of health and fitness and help them build confidence through accomplishment. The organization envisions a world where every girl knows and activates her limitless potential and is free to boldly pursue her dreams.”

Submitting Your Articles for Member News

Our Member News section of the Focus is a great way for Chamber members to promote your event or project, and to announce special awards or certifications. Word Document articles of 250 words or less may be submitted to info@houmachamber.com by the 1st of each month for publication in the following month’s newsletter, space permitting.
Thank you to Nicholls Head Football Coach, Tim Rebowe for being the guest speaker at Our Annual Banquet.

Congratulations to recipient of the Chamber Champion Award – Hancock Whitney Bank!

Congratulations to Our 2020 Leadership Board!

Congratulations to the recipient of the HTV Eugen Folse Outstanding Veteran Award- Mr. Norman Mornvant!!

Congratulations to recipient of the Courier Useful Citizen Award- Mr. Chuck Weaver, Sr.!!

Congratulations to recipient of the Chamber Star Award – Katie Portier!
Thank you to Terrebonne Community band for performing during the social hour at the banquet!!

Congratulations to recipient of the Chamber Ambassador Award – Jami Bennett!

Mr. Chuck Weaver, Sr. and family at the 2020 Annual Banquet!

Michael Ordogne and Monique Crochet enjoying themselves at our 2020 Annual Banquet in January.

Thank you to everyone who came out to our Annual Banquet in January! Don’t miss out on next years.

Our Annual Banquet was a success! Thank you to everyone who came out!!
Congratulations to Finding Our Roots A.A. Museum on their Ribbon Cutting ceremony on Saturday, February 8th!

February’s General Membership Luncheon with speaker Terrebonne Parish President, Gordon Dove! Thanks to all that came out!

Congratulations to Pedro J. Cuartas, DDS, APDC on their Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on February 5th!

Congratulations to Shell Pipeline on their Ribbon Cutting and Grand opening on February 20th!

Thank you to Grifols Biomat USA for sponsoring our February General Membership Luncheon with guest speaker, Terrebonne Parish President Gordon Dove.

Congratulations to Mechanicville Gym on their Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening on February 20th!
Peoples Health was established in 1994 and serves more than 80,000 Louisiana residents through a variety of Medicare Advantage plans. Its plans are accredited by NCQA and rated 4.5 out of 5 stars by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for 2018, 2019 and 2020. Peoples Health plans are the only Medicare Advantage plans in Louisiana to achieve the highest rating in the state for three years running. The ratings are a measure of how well they perform in several categories, including quality of care and customer service.

Founded by physicians and part of UnitedHealthcare, Peoples Health administers and provides a unique approach to wellness, care coordination and support services for Louisiana seniors and other beneficiaries.

“Our primary focus is providing coverage to people with Medicare,” said Dr. Kyle Magee, Peoples Health regional medical director for the Houma-Terrebonne area. “Our goal is to offer high quality, cost-effective health care services to our plan members to help them have the best health possible.”

The company actively supports the community, too, sponsoring many social, cultural, athletic and health organizations, including the Nicholls State University Athletics program.

“A few other organizations we support include the American Heart Association, Terrebonne Council on Aging, Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana, and, of course, the Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce,” said Dr. Magee. “We also sponsor various hospitals and other area agencies on aging.”

Dr. Magee joined Peoples Health in 2018 with more than 20 years of experience in clinical and hospital environments. He collaborates with the company’s executives to optimize organization and management of its health care delivery, as well as provides support as a clinical resource for internal staff, network physicians and provider office staff. Dr. Magee holds a Bachelor of Science in microbiology from Louisiana State University, a medical degree from Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, and a Master of Business Administration in health care management from University of Texas at Tyler. He is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Pediatrics.

“Peoples Health prides itself on being an innovator in the local health care industry. Our approach is to combine well-established ways of administering care with new ways that foster better health solutions...and better health,” said Dr. Magee. “The Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce is invested in the economic development, growth and well-being of this community. And so is Peoples Health.”

Visit http://www.peopleshealth.com for more information about Peoples Health.
Fletcher’s Phi Theta Kappa Student Organization Recognized for Outstanding Growth

Fletcher Technical Community College’s Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK) is one of 609 chapters across the nation being recognized for their efforts to bring the life-changing benefits and opportunities of PTK membership to even more students on their campuses in 2019.

The recognition is part of PTK’s REACH Rewards program, which celebrates and rewards Phi Theta Kappa chapters excelling in membership development. More than 121,600 students across the world became PTK members in 2019.

“Congratulations to our fine Theta Kappa honor Society on this milestone,” commented Fletcher Chancellor, Dr. Kristine Strickland. “I am so very pleased that more students will have the opportunity to experience the fellowship of academic excellence with their community college peers.”

A full 91 percent of Phi Theta Kappa members will complete an associate degree or transfer to a four-year college, compared to just 38 percent of students nationally. Members have access to $46 million in scholarships — $2 million in competitive scholarships through the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation and more than $44 million in transfer scholarships to over 800 four-year colleges. They can search for these scholarships and others, as well as transfer-friendly institutions and career pathways, on PTK Connect™.

Through exclusive PTK EDGE™ curriculum, members learn how to navigate the often-tricky transfer process, build essential soft skills, and develop expertise to help them find employment. Members also have free access to PTK’s custom leadership program, which uses open sources to guide the development of personal leadership philosophies.

Jacqueline Richard became the Advisor of Fletcher’s PTK chapter last fall. Under her leadership, the club raised funds to pay for the one-time membership fee of $68 to students not able to pay it by holding monthly bake sales, and monthly pizza sales at Fletcher’s Thibodaux facility. The club also participated in Fletcher’s Fall Fest and completed the PTK Five-Star Advisor Plan. These activities have enabled the club to move from a One Star Level, to a Two Star Level.

As a 2020 REACH Chapter, Fletcher will be rewarded with free graduation stoles for their members. More than 5,300 stoles will be awarded. Graduation at Fletcher as a PTK member is extremely rewarding, as students are recognized as a member at the graduation ceremony, they receive a PTK seal on their diploma, and have the option to wear the PTK tassel and stole.

Thibodaux Regional Health System Acquires Innovative Robotic-Assisted Surgery Technology for Knee Replacements

Thibodaux Regional Health System continues to be at the forefront of bringing leading edge technology and treatment options to our region. Most recently, Thibodaux Regional acquired the ROSA Knee System, the world’s most advanced robotic-assisted surgery system for total knee replacement.

Total joint replacement is one of the most commonly performed elective surgical procedures in the United States. The ROSA Knee System enables the surgeon to use computer and software technology to control and move surgical instruments, allowing for greater precision and flexibility during total joint replacement procedures. The System brings together robotic technology with industry-leading knee implants to help the surgeon personalize surgical procedures for patients.

“We are excited to be able to bring this innovative technology to our region,” says Greg Stock, CEO, Thibodaux Regional. “This new robotic-assisted technology will benefit patients and enhance patient safety and improve the overall quality of orthopaedic patient care.”

Thibodaux Regional’s first robotic-assisted total knee replacement was performed by Eric Greber, MD, the only fellowship trained orthopaedic joint replacement and reconstruction specialist in the region.

“The patient is our main focus,” says Dr. Greber. “For everyone involved, including the surgeon but most importantly the patient, the robotic-assisted knee replacement offers a number of key benefits and advantages. We know the decision to have a joint replacement is often a difficult one for patients but we believe that robotic-assisted technologies have the potential to make it an easier decision going forward.”

Thibodaux Regional is the only hospital in the Bayou Region to offer the ROSA Knee System for individuals undergoing knee replacement. For more information call 985.493.4326.

CASA of Terrebonne Spotlight

The mission of a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) of Terrebonne is to be an independent and objective presence in the courts to speak for the best interest of abused and neglected children of Terrebonne Parish. CASAs are trained volunteers who are appointed by a judge to provide one-on-one advocacy for a child who has been placed in State’s custody because of neglect and/or abuse.

Our ‘Spotlight’ for February is Kathi Murphy. She was sworn in as a CASA on November 15, 2018. Kathi played a vital role in ensuring the child’s needs were being met. She formed a positive relationship with both the foster and biological parents. CASA is grateful to have such an amazing advocate serving the community. Thank you Kathi. If you are interested in advocating for an abused child from Terrebonne Parish, fill out the online application at www.casaofterrebonne.org. Just like Kathi, you can “Change a Child’s Story”.

Since 1972, locally owned Terminix Pest Control of Houma has proudly served Bayou Region businesses and residents. Put our power to work fighting all pests—from termites and mice to roaches and crazy ants. Call the Bayou Team, Dan and Billy Foster, today for a FREE inspection and a FREE quote to make your business or home pest-free!

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Notary Exam Prep Course Starting on Weekends at SLCC

Registration is open at South Louisiana Community College for a Notary Exam Prep course for the 2020 exam. SLCC moved the Lafayette course to the weekend in response to working adults wanting the opportunity to enroll in the course. The Notary Exam Prep course will be held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. – noon, February through May. This course will prepare students for the exams that will be administered by the State in June.

“Enrolling in a prep course greatly increases your chances of passing this exam, which historically has a low pass rate,” stated Nancy Roy, Outreach and Engagement coordinator for SLCC’s Corporate College. “Our Notary instructors are licensed Louisiana attorneys who are able to explain complex legal scenarios so students better understand the questions posed in the test.”

In addition to the weekend course in Lafayette, SLCC will offer the Notary Exam Prep course on Wednesday evenings in Crowley. The Louisiana Notary Association states on their website that commissioned Louisiana Notary Publics can prepare acts of sale, wills, trusts, real estate transfers, matrimonial agreements, acts of adoptions, and other instruments in writing.

For more information about SLCC’s Notary Public Exam Prep course, contact Roy at 337-521-6639 or visit solacc.edu/continuing-education/leisure-learning.

Mary Bird Perkins TGMC Cancer Center Welcomes New Dietician

Mary Bird Perkins TGMC Cancer Center is excited to welcome Allison Cazenave as its newest dietician, thanks to funding from Roux for a Reason. The organization’s clinical dieticians help patients maintain their nutrition in order to maximize their strength and enhance outcomes during and after treatment. A Louisiana native, Allison graduated from Nicholls State University and interned at Southern University and A&M College. In her new role, Cazenave will work with cancer patients to help them follow an appropriate diet throughout their journey, tailoring a nutrition plan for their unique needs.

“We are thrilled to welcome Allison to our team,” said Melanie Guilbeaux, Director of Oncology, Mary Bird Perkins TGMC Cancer Center. “Malnutrition during cancer treatment can be a challenge for many patients, but we have the resources in place to manage this through a proactive dietary approach. With Allison’s vast knowledge of nutrition and her support, we’ll be able to improve survivorship and lessen the burden of cancer more than ever before.”

The Cancer Center offers comprehensive, patient-focused cancer treatment and support services. With a combination of exceptional resources and highly-experienced and compassionate physicians and staff, patients receive the highest quality care available right here at home.

For more information about nutritional services offered at Mary Bird Perkins TGMC, visit our website.

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The Notary Exam Prep course will be held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. – noon, February through May. This course will prepare students for the exams that will be administered by the State in June.

“Enrolling in a prep course greatly increases your chances of passing this exam, which historically has a low pass rate,” stated Nancy Roy, Outreach and Engagement coordinator for SLCC’s Corporate College. “Our Notary instructors are licensed Louisiana attorneys who are able to explain complex legal scenarios so students better understand the questions posed in the test.”

In addition to the weekend course in Lafayette, SLCC will offer the Notary Exam Prep course on Wednesday evenings in Crowley. The Louisiana Notary Association states on their website that commissioned Louisiana Notary Publics can prepare acts of sale, wills, trusts, real estate transfers, matrimonial agreements, acts of adoptions, and other instruments in writing.

For more information about SLCC’s Notary Public Exam Prep course, contact Roy at 337-521-6639 or visit solacc.edu/continuing-education/leisure-learning.
Vandebilt Catholic High School announces retirement of Athletic Director

Margaret Johnson will be retiring from her position as Athletic Director at the conclusion of the 2019-2020 school year.

Johnson has had a lifelong affiliation with Catholic education in Houma; over thirty of those years have been spent at Vandebilt Catholic (VCHS). After receiving her educational foundation at St.Francis de Sales Cathedral School, Margaret attended VCHS and graduated in 1983. She then earned a Bachelor of Science in 1988 from McNeese State University, where she was also a four-year letterman in both volleyball and softball. There, she earned collegiate awards for Best Defensive Player in softball and volleyball and also earned the Coaches Award in 1987. Johnson joined the Vandebilt Catholic faculty in 1989 and has since served in the capacities of head volleyball and softball coach, Physical Education Department chairperson, assistant athletic director, classroom teacher, and for the past six and a half years as Athletic Director. Margaret has enjoyed tremendous success during her career at VCHS. She has been recognized as Coach of the Year numerous times on the district, regional, and state levels. Margaret served as head coach of Louisiana’s high school all-star teams in 1996 and 2010, and she was inducted into the Louisiana Softball Coaches Association’s Hall of Fame in 2004. Margaret was honored by VCHS in 2009 as a nominee for the Brother Alfred Kolb Teacher of the Year Award and inducted into the Vandebilt Catholic Hall of Fame in 2013. In her twenty-four years as a head coach at VCHS, Margaret led her softball teams to the state tournament twenty times, resulting in seven state championships and six state runner-up titles. In 2019, she was the first woman inducted into the Bayou Region Hall of Fame, and most recently, she was named to the National High School Athletic Coaches’ Association’s (NHSACA) National Hall of Fame. Johnson’s success is supported by her husband, Ricky, and their sons Joshua (VCHS 2010) and Hayden (VCHS 2013).

Johnson will also be taking on the assistant softball coach position this season, coaching alongside her husband and softball head coach, Ricky Johnson. She is excited to be back on the field coaching young athletes.

Johnson was most recently quoted when she was honored by the NHSACA and stated: “I want to thank Vandebilt Catholic for allowing me the privilege to mentor and coach the most amazing young women I’ve ever met. This honor is dedicated to all of my inspiring athletes, their amazing parents, my dedicated assistant coaches, my unconditionally loving family, and most of all, our loving God, for carrying me through all of my most trying times in life. Each of these individuals has helped shape me into the person I am today. I am grateful for my journey thus far.”

The Vandebilt Catholic community is blessed to have worked alongside Margaret Johnson for over thirty years, and she epitomizes the qualities that a Catholic educational institution strives to instill in its students. The faculty and students want to thank Coach Johnson for her dedication and support of Vandebilt Catholic throughout the years and wish her nothing but the best in her next chapter.

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, current assistant athletic director and head football coach, Lance Ledet will assume the role of Athletic Director, and continue his role as head football coach. Doug Hamilton will move into the assistant athletic director role.

**More Than 250,000 Books Funded for Terrebonne Parish Children**

An amazing 250,000 books and counting! Terrebonne Foundation for Academic Excellence (TFAE) has reached a new milestone. As of February 2020, TFAE has funded more than 250,000 books to Terrebonne Parish children through the Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. Through this program, all registered children in Terrebonne Parish ages newborn to five years old receive one new, age-appropriate book every month delivered to their home at no cost to their family. Currently, more than 3,300 local children are enrolled in the program while another 6,096 children have already “graduated.”

As Funding Champion, TFAE funds the cost of these books so that families can enjoy them at no cost. Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library was first brought to Terrebonne Parish by TFAE in 2012. Since then, many local businesses, organizations, and individuals have donated and contributed to its success. With their help, TFAE has funded 251,535 books in our community.

“These books continue to have a tremendous impact on our community by increasing our children’s literacy skills, social skills, and comprehension,” Katie Portier, TFAE Executive Director, said. “By putting books in the hands of our young readers, we can help prepare them for their next journey into school.”

The program was first launched in 1995 by Dolly Parton in Sevier County, Tennessee where she grew up. It became such a success that in 2000, a national replication effort was underway by The Dollywood Foundation. Under her program, one million books a month are now mailed to children in the United States, Australia, Canada, Republic of Ireland, and the United Kingdom.

To register a Terrebonne Parish child aged newborn to five in the Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, visit www.tfae.org/imagina­tion-library. If you’d like to support our local Imagination Library with a donation, please visit www.tfae.org or contact Katie Portier at katie@tfae.org or 985-868-5881.
The Friends of the Terrebonne Public Library and the Terrebonne Parish Library System proudly announce the 17th annual Jambalaya Writers’ Conference, slated for Saturday, March 14 at the Main Library.

New York Times bestselling thriller novelist Lisa Gardner will give the 2020 keynote address. With over 22 million books in print in 30 countries, Gardner’s compelling suspense novels captivate audiences all over the world. Gardner began her career as a research analyst, and her novels combine her passion for investigation as well as her fascination for police procedure and forensic analysis. Titles include The Neighbor, Right Behind You, Find Her, Never Tell, and When You See Me, among others. She has appeared on TruTV and CNN, and four of her books have been adapted for the small screen—At the Midnight Hour, The Perfect Husband, The Survivors Club, and Hide.

Author Caroline Kepnes will also be in attendance. Kepnes is best known for her Joe Goldberg novels, “You” and “Hidden Bodies,” which have recently been adapted into a popular series on Netflix. Kepnes graduated from Brown University and has written for Tiger Beat, Entertainment Weekly, 7th Heaven, and The Secret Life of the American Teenager.

Other writers scheduled to appear are New York Times and USA Today romance writers Carolyn Brown, Laura Drake, and Sable Hunter, thriller author Samantha Downing, novelist Maurice Carlos Ruffin, poets David Middleton, John Doucet, and J. Bruce Fuller, memoirist Margaret McMullan, urban fantasy author Diana Rowland, and many others.

Those aspiring to write in children’s and young adult fiction can mark their schedules for sessions with Marti Dumas, author of Jupiter Storm and the Jaden Toussaint series, author and illustrator Alexis Braud, middle grade fantasy novelist Lindsey Duga, Alyx Arden of The Casquette Girls series, and Darcy Patterson, author of Nerfettiti the Spindernaut and The Nantucket Sea Monster.

Gwen Hawkes, editor at St. Martin’s Press, and Melissa Carrige of Brother Mockingbird will offer insight into the current state of publishing. Both Hawkes and Carrige will take pitch appointments throughout the day for writers with a completed manuscript. Attendees can sign up for pitch sessions during registration. Sessions are first come, first served. For those interested in self-publishing, authors FJ Roberts and Madison Granger will host a panel.

Kathy Murphy, founder of the Pulpwood Queens book club, will make a special appearance alongside several members of the club, including Johnnie Bernhard, Melissa Carrige, and Susan Cushman. JWC will include a panel featuring the Pulpwood Queens as they discuss the book club and offer insight into helping others find their own reading and/or writing communities. The Southern Writers’ Workshop, an adult creative writing group at the Main Library, will also host a panel on how to find and/or develop a writing community.

First Page American Idol is once again to wrap up the conference. Those interested in having their work critiqued by a panel of judges may submit the first page of a piece of writing during registration the day of the conference. The pages are read aloud during the session and subsequently critiqued by the panel. The author’s name is always kept anonymous. The session goes through as many pages as time allows.

For those interested in the fiction and poetry contests, submissions must be turned in by Friday, February 21. Fiction submissions are an extra $10, poetry an extra $5 (per piece of writing). Fiction submissions must be no longer than 1500 words. Poems must be no longer than 100 lines. Contest participants must be registered for the conference. Winners will receive a monetary prize, and the fiction recipient a guaranteed slot with an editor.

Doors open at 7:30 a.m. for registration with sessions starting at 8:30 a.m. The conference ends at 6 p.m. Pre-registration is $35 and $40 at the door the day of the conference. Students may register for $10 with ID. Conference attendees must register to attend the keynote presentation and to be provided a lunch ticket. Registration forms can be found at mytpl.org/jwc.

The Jambalaya Writers’ Conference is made possible by the Friends of the Terrebonne Public Library and the Bayou Regional Arts Council. Contact Jessi Suire at 985-850-5301 or jwc@mytpl.org for more information.
YOU DESERVE THE BEST CANCER CARE, 
SO WE ARE BUILDING IT.

Continuing our leadership role in the fight against cancer,
we are elevating cancer services to unprecedented heights with the building of Thibodaux Regional’s Cancer Institute. The 80,000 square foot facility will be the new home for the region’s latest diagnostic and treatment technology and multiple oncology physicians. Additionally, the four story building will house expanded research and visiting specialists capabilities as well as integrated wellness services all in a spacious, well-lit healing environment.

THIBODAUX REGIONAL CANCER CENTER

To learn more about the future of cancer care for our region, go to: Thibodaux.com/cancer-institute