

# CenLA FOCUS

The Community Lifestyle/Business Profile Journal of CenLA

Volume 28 • Issue 7  
July 2025

PRICELESS  
TAKE ONE

**NATCHITOCHES NSU 45TH ANNUAL  
FOLK FESTIVAL**  
CRAFTING LOUISIANA

**LOUISIANA STATE  
FIDDLE CHAMPIONSHIP**

The poster features a collage of images: a green fiddle with a sunburst, a woman in a cowboy hat playing an acoustic guitar, a man in a purple shirt working on pottery, a man in a black shirt playing a white guitar, and a man in a blue shirt playing an electric guitar. Musical notes and a treble clef are also visible.

in this  
**ISSUE**

Louisiana  
Blueberries:  
A Sweet  
Summer Harvest  
Made Simple



LSHOF  
Inducts  
2025  
Class



25¢ Gas at  
Griffin's Grand Opening!

**GRIFFIN'S**  
SERVICE STATION

*Come Check Out*

*Homemade  
Pies* baked daily

Apple ~ Pecan- Cherry  
Lemon Meringue - Coconut Meringue  
Chocolate Meringue - Strawberry

**GRIPPIN'S ANTIQUES**

**& MAIN STREET MARKET**

Monday - Saturday 9:00am-5:30pm

**Featuring a wide variety of all things old and new!**

**Over 70 Vendors  
Under One Roof!**

**Antiques, Clothing, Art,  
Handmade Crafts and More!**



**Homemade Pastries • Homemade Sandwiches & Burgers**

**318-346-5005**

*Scoops & Milkshake  
featuring...*



**228 SW Main Street Bunkie, LA 71332**

**GIBKO**  
**POOLS &  
SPAS**

[www.gibko.com](http://www.gibko.com)

**Alexandria**

**318-442-1144**

**Bunkie**

**318-346-8733**

# The Buz In Bunkie



**THIS SEASON'S  
FRESH PICKED, VACUUM SEALED  
FROZEN SWEET CORN**



Fresh Produce, Fresh Meats,  
Fresh Seafood, Homemade Jelly,  
Fresh Yard Eggs



**318 346-8950**



Open  
9:00am - 5:30pm  
Monday - Saturday



110 SW Main Street Bunkie, LA

## OLD FASHIONED DEPARTMENT STORE

**Housewares • Toys • Candy • Dry Goods • Gifts • Much More!**



*"Welcome Back to the Good Ole Days"*

**318-346-3883**

Open  
Monday - Saturday 9-5

**202 SW Main Street Bunkie, LA**



**Your  
SUB-ZERO  
WOLF  
Dealer**



**Service After the Sale by  
Central Louisiana's Largest & Most  
Complete Service Center Since 1946!**



**Interior Design Specialist  
Rebecca Smith**

**TROTTER'S**  
electronics • appliances  
furniture

**KINCAID** Vaughan-Bassett **Serta**

**American Made by Brands You Trust & Love**

**318.487.8978**

**Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM - 5:30 PM  
Saturday 10:00 AM - 3:00PM**

**5003 Masonic Drive  
Alexandria, LA**

**Find Us On...**



**www.TrotterCompanies.com**

JENN-AIR KINCAID KitchenAid MAYTAG Whirlpool JENN-AIR KINCAID KitchenAid

JENN-AIR KINCAID KitchenAid MAYTAG Whirlpool JENN-AIR KINCAID KitchenAid

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** Will Harp, Jr.

**GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:** Vickie R. Cofer,

Micah Touchet, Deidre McNamara

**ADVERTISING CONSULTANT:** Mark Hoosier

**EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT:** Lorie Robinson

**WEB PRESS:** Baton Rouge Press

**DISTRIBUTION:** Steve Piercy, Paul Manemann

**COPYRIGHT:** Cenla Focus, LLC

## CONTRIBUTORS

Gray Easterling, Michael Wynne, Rt. Rev. Jacob W. Owensby, Wilbert Carmouche, Dr. Jerry Sanson, Dr. David J. Holcombe, Dr. Phillip L. Carney, Jr., Dr. Cornell D. LeBlanc, Christy Pennison, Debbie Guy, Dr. Michael Polozola II, Molly Lyles, Jennifer Duhon, Wesley Watkins, Annie Lemoine Newton, Robert Smith, Jason Pugh, Chris Reich

Cenla Focus is published in the first week of each month. © 2025 by Cenla Focus, LLC. All rights reserved. Any reproduction without prior express written consent of the publisher is prohibited. Cenla Focus eagerly invites ad inquiries, photographs and written contributions. Return postage must accompany all materials submitted if return is requested; however, neither Cenla Focus nor its staff can assume responsibility for unsolicited materials. We can be reached via the following:

Phone: (318) 442-8277 • Fax: (318) 484-3745

E-mal: [contact@cenlafocus.com](mailto:contact@cenlafocus.com)

Website: [www.cenlafocus.com](http://www.cenlafocus.com)

Media Kit: [www.cenlafocus.com/media-kit/](http://www.cenlafocus.com/media-kit/)

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 12774, Alexandria, LA 71315

Shipping Address:

3911 Parliament Drive, Alexandria, LA 71303

FOUNDED IN 1998 BY WILLARD A. HARP, SR.

# Contents



## cover story

Crafting Louisiana at the 45th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival .....page 6-8

## history focus

Einstein's Sister ..... page 10-11

## home & garden focus

Kitterlin Creek Land Auction..... page 13

## faith focus

When It's Hard to Know What's True ..... page 18-19

## sports focus

Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Inducts 2025 Class ..... page 20-21

## medical focus

The Latest from Cenla's Medical Community ..... page 24-29

## financial focus

Easy Money .....page 34

## avoyelles focus

It's a Sizzling Summer in Avoyelles ..... page 36-37

## education focus

LSUA Receives 10-Year Reaffirmation of SACSCOC Accreditation ..... page 40-41

## entertainment focus

What's Happening in Cenla ..... page 42-44

## who's cooking

Your July Blueprint for Sun Safety, Hydration, and Seasonal Nutrition ..... page 46-47

# Ruff Ride?

## Aggie says come to...

GEORGE  
**HAUK'S**  
AUTOMOTIVE

(318) 443-2345 3204 Industrial Dr, Alexandria, LA



# NATCHITOCHEES NSU 45TH ANNUAL FOLK FESTIVAL CRAFTING LOUISIANA

The 45th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival will be held on Saturday July 19th in air-conditioned Prather Coliseum, located at 220 South Jefferson Street at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches. The all-day festival's curated showcase of Louisiana folk musicians, food vendors, and traditional crafts persons will open at 9:00am, with live entertainment scheduled for 9:30am to 9:30pm. The family-oriented festival is fully wheelchair accessible. Children 12 and under are admitted free. Tickets are \$10.00 at the door for all events, or \$6.00 for an evening pass to all events after 5:00pm.



The festival features three stages of music. Music headliners include Cajun band Amis du Teche, zydeco band Chubby Carrier and the Bayou Swamp Band, blues artist D.K. Harrell, western swing artist the Kristyn Harris Band, roots band Smithfield Fair, gospel group the Amazing! Rhythm Disciples, and swamp pop dance band the Has Beans. The festival also includes numerous food vendors offering traditional Louisiana cuisine. Outdoor activities feature

demonstrations of traditional blacksmithing, Dutch oven cooking, and a child-friendly hands-on demonstration of a 19th century wash day.

In honor of this year's theme, "Crafting Louisiana", more than 80 crafts vendors have been invited to display and discuss their traditional work with festival patrons.





"Cookin'" by Clementine Hunter From the collection of Tommy Whitehead

Craftspeople are expected to display beadwork, baskets, cowhide chair covers, alligator jewelry, Pysanky eggs, Native American crafts, and pottery. Other expected craftspeople will display needlework, wood carvings, handmade toys and dolls, paintings, sculpture, homemade soap, spinning & weaving, handcrafted knives, handmade brooms, walking sticks, folk art quilts, and more.

The festival will include a Red Beans & Rice Cookoff, in which professionals and hobbyists alike can compete in one of multiple categories and demonstrate their



cooking skills. Registration and the Cooks' Meeting will take place at 8:00am. Tasting and judging will begin at 12:30pm, with winners be announced at 3:30pm. Winners will be awarded in three categories: Pork Sausage, Other Protein Sausage (chicken, duck, turkey, wild game, etc.), and People's Choice. There is no fee to compete in the Cookoff. Red beans and rice must be cooked on-site outside of Prather Coliseum, but beans may be pre-soaked. Two gallons (minimum) red beans must be prepared for competition and tasting. All cooking must be done

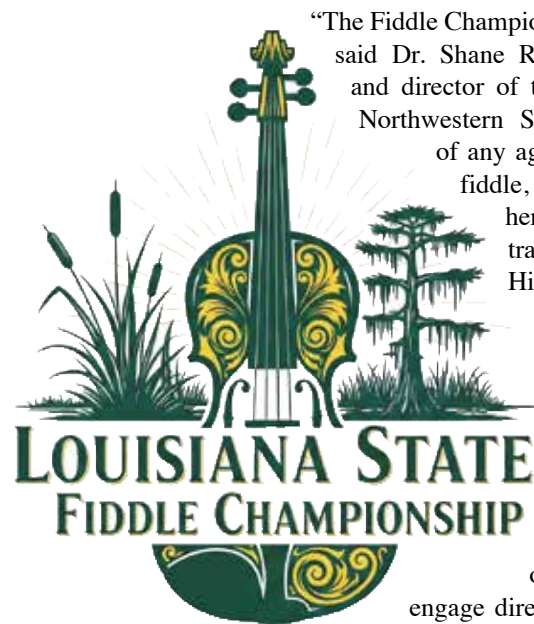
with fuel (propane gas) or by contained cooking fire. The use of charcoal is allowed.

The Annual Louisiana State Fiddle Championship will be held at 1:00pm in the Magale Recital Hall. The purpose of the Louisiana State Fiddlers' Championship (LSFC) is to perpetuate the traditional music and styles of fiddling integral to many kinds of Louisiana music, to help develop an appreciation and understanding of traditional music, to encourage young fiddlers to pursue musical endeavors, and to encourage

jam sessions and contests as a way to promote creativity and the continuation of the fiddle tradition. There will be a non-championship class and a championship class. A twin fiddle category will also be held. Registration is at noon in the first-floor foyer outside Magale Recital Hall. Americana folk music band Smithfield Fair will perform live music on the Magale stage during day-of registration. The Fiddle Championship winner will perform on the main stage in Prather Coliseum at 5:00pm.



In addition to cash prizes, young Championship entrants (18 years or younger) have the opportunity to be gifted a free handmade fiddle. The fiddle was donated by its maker, Hilton "Hil" Lytle, a master fiddle maker, who intended that it be given to a young player in order to encourage younger people to take up the craft.



"The Fiddle Championship is the heart of the festival," said Dr. Shane Rasmussen, professor of English and director of the Louisiana Folklife Center at Northwestern State University. "When players of any age take up an instrument like the fiddle, they become part of a living heritage that keeps our shared traditional culture vital and alive. Hilton Lytle believed in the deep importance of folk culture, and it would be our honor to gift a young player with one of his fiddles. They are beautiful instruments which would be prized by any fiddler."

The festival includes several opportunities for patrons to engage directly with Louisiana folk culture. Free dance lessons include line dancing taught by the Classy Steppers, Celtic dance taught by the Thistle Dancers and Pipers, and Cajun and zydeco dancing taught by the Cajun French Music Association Dance Troupe. Interactive activities include a yodeling demonstration by Kristyn Harris, dancing with the Louisiana Czech Heritage Dancers, a son jarocho fandango dance by the Armadillos Tejanos, and a musical spoons workshop taught by folk musician Clancey Stewart, with 50 free musical spoons given to workshop attendees.





“The festival bridges the distance between artists and the festival patrons, thus breaking the artificial barriers between artists and audience,” said Dr. Shane Rasmussen, director of the festival and NSU’s Louisiana Folklife Center. “Rather than watching from the sidelines, everyone who takes part in these activities will share and engage in Louisiana’s rich culture.”

Kidfest is an area dedicated to child-friendly activities and is a fun way for children to examine their own cultural and family traditions as well as those from around the state. KidFest will be available from 9:00am to 4:00pm and admission is free for children attending the festival.

Narrative sessions will be held in the festival N-Club Room from 10:00am to 6:00pm and feature presentations on traditional dolls and dollmaking, Creole architecture, Mexican fiddle styles, and folk artist Clementine Hunter, with music “informances” on the blues with D.K. Harrell and roots music with Smithfield Fair. ASL interpretation, assistive listening devices, and audio description for these cultural discussions will be made available upon prior request. The festival is fully wheelchair accessible.



This year also featured several pre-Festival events which were free and open to the general public. Fiddlin’ the Finest was held at the Many Depot Museum on June 14th and included several Louisiana State Fiddle Champions discussing and performing traditional fiddling. Attendees were invited to bring their own acoustic instruments for a folk music jam session. A second free pre-festival event, “A Life of Zydeco”, a Musical Informance with Chubby Carrier, was held on June 21st at the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum in Natchitoches with Grammy winner Carrier discussing the cultural significance of zydeco to Louisiana with Dr. Shane Rasmussen, director of the Louisiana Folklife Center. A third pre-festival event will be an interactive crafts workshop, with Creole and Native American tradition bearers sharing their cultural knowledge held at the Sports Hall of Fame on Saturday, July 12th. Free crafting materials will be provided for attendees.

For a full schedule of events, as well as registration forms to participate in the Louisiana State Fiddle Championship and the Red Beans & Rice Cookoff contact the Louisiana Folklife Center at (318) 357-4332 or email [folklife@nsula.edu](mailto:folklife@nsula.edu) or go to [louisianafolklife.nsula.edu](http://louisianafolklife.nsula.edu).

Support for the festival is provided by grants from the Cane River National Heritage Area, Inc., the City of Natchitoches, the Louisiana Division of the Arts Decentralized Arts Fund Program, the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, the Louisiana Office of Tourism, the Natchitoches Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Natchitoches Historic District Development Commission, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation, the Shreveport Regional Arts Council, and the State of Louisiana. The festival is sponsored by C&H Precision Machining, City Bank, Cleco, Evans Family, LLC, Exchange Bank, the Family Doctors of Natchitoches, the Harrington Law Firm, Natchitoches Wood Preserving Company, and Young Estate, LLC.

# NATCHITOCHEES NSU 45TH ANNUAL FOLK FESTIVAL

## CRAFTING LOUISIANA



“Cookin’ in the Yard” by Clementine Hunter. From the collection of Tommy Whitehead.

# July 19, 2025

## in Air-conditioned Prather Coliseum

### NSU Campus, Natchitoches



Wheelchair Access

## Crafts

### 9-5!

Louisiana State Fiddle Championship

1-4 pm

Magale Recital Hall



Ticket Booth will accept CASH ONLY.  
Admission Prices include sales tax:  
FREE for children 12 and under  
All day, \$10.00 per person  
After 5 pm only, \$6.00 per person

























Contact Info: [folklife@nsula.edu](mailto:folklife@nsula.edu) (318) 357- 4332 [www.LouisianaFolklife.nsula.edu](http://www.LouisianaFolklife.nsula.edu)

# Charles Ammen and His Famous Antiseptic Powder

By Michael Wynne



Central Louisiana has been home to some of the most amazing people of our state and of the South. They are not just of the living. Our Cenla heritage of great women and men, past and present, continue to make contributions to our nation, even today.

Charles Varner Ammen (1862-1928), of Swiss heritage and a native of Virginia, had a drugstore at the corner of Jackson and Prytania Streets in New Orleans in the 1890s. He began tinkering with creating medicinal products in the age of patent medicine usage. This was to better serve his customers' needs in the hot, humid climate of New Orleans. In August of 1901, Charles, a self-described chemist, first introduced "Prickly Heat Powder" which he said was "the scourge of hot weather." This powder, which he sold for 15 cents a box, was created to prevent heat rash.

Ammen grew in prominence in the drug field and received a patent in July of 1905 for a "drug dispensing apparatus." By December of 1906, Ammen was receiving national attention for his leadership in encouraging the creation of pure food and drug laws. His statements were featured in a Detroit newspaper speaking then about the extent of the adulteration of foods and drugs. By June of 1907, Ammen had created his own company, The Charles Ammen Company Limited, which sold stock and had a board of directors. In July of 1907, Ammen became ahead of his time in speaking publicly about grocers short-weighting their products—in essence, committing fraud.



Ammen continued to be outspoken throughout 1907 and in February of 1908, entered into a public fight with New Orleans Mayor Behrman in the national publication, Collier's Weekly, over the conduct of pure food and drugs in New Orleans. This led Ammen to his unsuccessful run for City Treasurer of New Orleans in late 1908. In 1909, Ammen, along with others, sued Hartford Insurance Company and won regarding their safety issues. Along with all of Ammen's public leadership work in holding society accountable, in April of 1926, Ammen also started the "Radio Shoppe" corporation in New Orleans.

Ammen's fight for pure food and drugs in New Orleans cost his pharmacy business dearly, forcing him to move his business from the city. In December of 1913, he moved his corporation and his family to the city of Alexandria. By then, his Charles Ammen Corp. Limited was known throughout the United States for his popular "Prickly Heat and Baby Powders and other specialties." The Ammen family, wife Theresa Mullen (1871-1937), whom he married in 1891, and sons Charles Edward and Arthur Koiner, first lived at 420 St. James Street in Alexandria. Son Arthur (1904-1990) would later build his home on Claiborne Street in Pineville, where he lived for the rest of his life.

Charles V. Ammen and family lived and worked in Alexandria for five years with the family becoming a major part of the Alexandria community. It was here in Alexandria that Ammen's most important product was developed and would take

off—"Ammen's Antiseptic Powder," a product that is still sold today all over the United States. This, and the other products, were produced at the Ammen's plant, located at 1028 Front Street, now the site of the downtown levee. According to Ammen's great-granddaughter, Janet Butler of Mangham, the powder was distributed to every soldier in our military during World War II "to keep their feet dry, particularly in the Pacific theatre." Butler added, "I just remember that when I was young that so many people used the powder and just loved it."

Ammen later moved his family to Greenwood, Mississippi in 1918, but continued to manufacture his powder here in Alexandria for many years. In a 1921 advertisement, the powder is described as "...a carefully blended preparation of skin-healing and skin-satisfying ingredients created for the benefit of the skin-suffering humanity."

According to the family, Ammen's son would later sell the business to a major drug manufacturer. This internationally-known foot powder that first started in Alexandria is still available on many big box and drugstore shelves today.





## Cunningham

### PURE WATER

PURIFIED • WELLNESS • WATER

- Ice/Cold/Ambient/Hot Water
- Touchless and Bottle-less
- Reverse Osmosis office drinking water
- Barrel or Nugget Style Ice (w/ ice system Option)

Are you ready to try the purest water in town? If so, **Cunningham Pure Water, LLC** is the perfect option for you. Our units use the process of reverse osmosis to give you safe, clean drinking water. All units are tankless, so no more worrying with wasteful, expensive water bottles.

Do you love hot tea? We can help you with instant pure hot water.  
What about "Sonic" style ice?  
We have units with that, too!

**All-Inclusive Rental includes all Maintenance, Filter Changes, Parts, Labor, Unlimited Purified Water!**

# 318-727-7873

**No Bottles About It! Best Water In Town!**

# Einstein's Sister

By Jerry Sanson, PhD



How would you like to have a brother who made your shared last name a synonym for super-intelligence known all over the world? That's what happened to Maria "Maja" Einstein Winteler, the younger sister and only sibling of Albert Einstein. As is the case with many people who achieve fame and public status, Albert is the member of the family whose name we know, but even though she, too, earned a doctorate, most people do not even know of her existence. Some of you might have thought "Einstein had a sister?" when you read the title of this month's column.

Maria, "Maja" to her family, was born to Pauline Koch Einstein and Hermann Einstein in Munich, Germany, on November 18, 1881, a bit more than two years after her brother Albert (he was born March 14, 1879) and about a year after their father moved the family from Ulm to Munich. They were the only two children born to their parents.

Hermann pursued economic success with his move to Munich. He and his brother Jakob established an electrical engineering company, Einstein & Cie, in the city that manufactured electrical devices such as arc lamps and dynamos, and was involved in the installation of lighting systems throughout southern Germany and parts of northern Italy. The business moved to Pavia, Italy, in 1894.



Hermann, Pauline, and Maria moved first to Milan in 1894 and then on to Pavia in 1895, while Albert remained behind in Munich to continue his education. Business prospects were not better in Italy and the Einstein brothers had to close their business because it was too small to compete effectively with larger companies. Hermann established another electrical engineering firm without Jakob which achieved some measure of success. His health had deteriorated during his financial troubles, and he died in 1902.

Despite the fact that women were not always educated as they should have been during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Maria received a good education. She attended elementary school in Munich until the family move to Italy in 1894 and attended the German International School in Milan. She then attended an institute for training teachers in Aarau, Switzerland, and received her certification in 1905. She moved on to study Romance languages at universities in Berlin, Paris, and Bern, Switzerland, and she earned her doctorate in Romance Languages and Literature from the University of Bern in 1909.

Maria became socially close to the family of Professor Jost Winterler while studying in Aarau and met his youngest son, Paul. The couple married in 1910. Typical for the time, she lost her teaching certificate when she married, a regulation that existed in many countries at the time, including parts of the United States.



## Welcome! Mika Johnson

**BOM Bank is pleased to welcome Mika Johnson to the BOM family. Mika will be joining our Woodworth branch as a Head Teller. She was born and raised in Oakdale, LA and attended Pine Prairie High School. Mika is an avid hunter and loves fishing, and also does European skull mounts and hydrographic work in her spare time. Her favorite place to be is outdoors. Mika has ten years of banking experience and after a short break from the banking world, is excited to be back.**

Welcome, Mika!

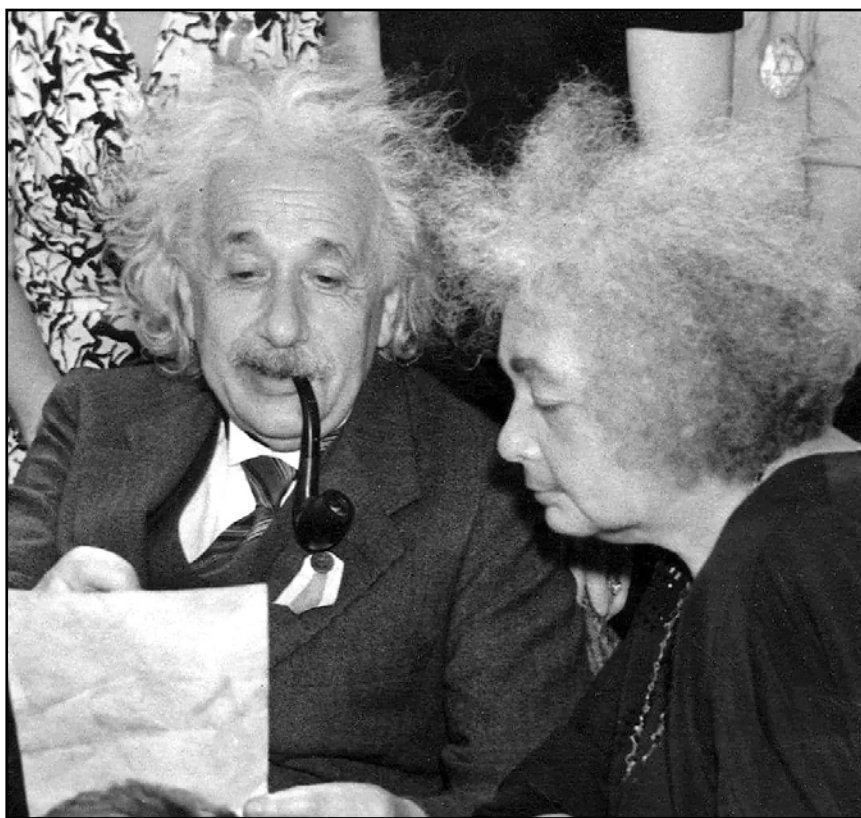


# BOM

Maria and Paul lived first in Aarau and moved to Lucerne because Paul had found employment there and then on to Italy in 1920, where they acquired an estate near Florence. Albert lived with the couple for about a year when studying at Aarau. Maria and Paul suffered financial difficulties caused by lack of work after their move to Italy, and Albert gave them money to pay outstanding debts and save their estate from foreclosure in 1924. Albert visited them occasionally in Italy and enjoyed his time at their home where he could relax from the intricacies of theoretical physics.

His gift was a symbol of the close relationship between Albert and Maria. Perhaps because they were the only siblings of the family and of the nearness of their ages, they always had a close relationship. Even though Albert was a quintessential scientist while her interests lay in the study of language and literature, they maintained their closeness throughout adulthood. This month's portraits of Maria Einstein Winterler reveal the physical resemblance between the brother and sister.

Their closeness continued to the end of her life. The Einsteins were Jewish, and the rise of Nazism, Fascism, and the attendant anti-Semitism led many Jewish families to



flee from the new political climate in Europe. Albert renounced his German citizenship, lost his position as a professor at the Berlin Academy of Sciences, and immigrated to the United States in 1933 following Adolf Hitler's appointment as chancellor. He subsequently received an appointment at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton in New Jersey, where he remained until his death in 1955.

His concern for his sister's safety led him to invite her to join him in the United States in 1939 to escape the anti-Semitic laws imposed in Italy by Benito Mussolini's government. His invitation to Maria and Paul included an offer to live in his house on Mercer Street in Princeton, but Paul was denied entry into the country because of health issues. Albert had room in his house because his second wife had died in 1936. Maria joined her brother and lived in his Princeton house even after suffering a stroke in 1946 that left her bedridden. Albert, always the caring brother, personally helped provide her care. Maria developed arteriosclerosis and her physical condition continued to deteriorate. She had intended to return to Paul after World War II

ended, but that plan was not to be. She died in Princeton of pneumonia on June 25, 1951 after suffering a fracture of her upper arm. Paul died in Geneva, Switzerland, in July 1952, and Albert died of an abdominal aortic aneurism in Princeton on April 18, 1955.



## Now Enrolling 2025–26 Louisiana Master Gardener Class

By Molly Lyles



Do you love gardening and want to deepen your knowledge while making a difference in your community? The Louisiana Master Gardener Program is now accepting applications for the 2025-2026 class, offering a rewarding opportunity for gardeners of all experience levels across Central Louisiana to grow their skills and give back through community service.

This year’s program runs from August 2025 through March 2026, with classes meeting on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 9:00am. Sessions will be held at Camp Grant

Walker in Pollock, along with field trips to various locations throughout the region. You’ll have plenty of opportunities to get your hands dirty and explore the wonderful world of horticulture that we have in Central Louisiana.

The 2025–2026 class will follow a hybrid format, combining video-based lessons, quizzes, and hands-on activities designed to make learning both practical and enjoyable. Whether you’re just getting started or looking to sharpen your gardening skills, this program welcomes all adults who are curious, committed, and ready to grow.



The program fee is \$175, which includes the comprehensive Louisiana Master Gardener Handbook and additional educational materials. After completing the course, participants earn the title of Apprentice Master Gardener. Upon completing 40 volunteer service hours, you’ll be a Certified Louisiana Master Gardener, supporting LSU AgCenter

efforts to educate the public on best management practices in gardening and horticulture education.

If this sounds like something you or someone you know would enjoy, don’t wait to get involved. To learn more or request an application, contact Molly Lyles at [mlyles@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:mlyles@agcenter.lsu.edu).



**CREST LAND**  
COMPANY, LLC.

**Is your agent maximizing your property’s value when listing?**

At Crest Land Company, our team has been in the land business for decades. Our full service brokerage utilizes on-staff resources like foresters, wildlife biologist, drone pilots, mapping specialists and beyond to ensure your property is priced *accurately* and your sale is *seamless*.

**Ask us about the advantages of IRS 1031 Exchanges!**

Call us at 318-448-8794 or Visit [crestlandcompany.com](http://crestlandcompany.com)

Crest Land Company, LLC. 4725 Highway 28 East Pineville, LA 71360	Luke Lazarone, Broker Licensed by the LA Real Estate Commission
---	---

## WARD HARDWARE

Serving Cenla for Over 100 Years!

The Right Tools and Supplies for Every Project

High Quality

Benjamin Moore®  
Paints

Big Green Egg  
The Ultimate Cooking Experience

BLAZE  
OUTDOOR PRODUCTS

Dealership Quality  
Automotive Keys

and Much More!

ACE  
The helpful place.

Monday - Friday  
7:30 AM - 5:30 PM  
Saturday : 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM  
Closed Sunday

318  
**442-9777**

**1415 Metro Dr, Alexandria, LA 71301**

## Kitterlin Creek Land Auction

3,915.78± acres in Lasalle Parish, near Jena, will sell at auction with all owned attached improvements on August 28th at 11:00am. The main property entrance is located at 234 Kitterlin Bay Road, Jena, LA 71342.

This fine property is primarily encompassed of timberlands, lakes, and creek bottoms with great recreational fishing and hunting for ducks, deer, turkey, and squirrel. Fishing in Kitterlin Bay is outstanding and complimented by three other lakes on the property. There is also 12 miles of river frontage on Little River with great fishing and a good natural boundary. Little River is noted as a "Louisiana Scenic River". Kitterlin Bay is studded with large cypress trees. The woodlands with their large oak landscapes have numerous trails and roads throughout the property as well as good road access to most areas. There are private boat ramps to Little River and Kitterlin Bay. 2,973± acres of the property are enrolled in a conservation easement. This protects the natural scenic and aesthetic value of the property that it will remain in its natural state. There is approximately 1,000± acres in lakes, consisting of Kitterlin Bay, Lehman & Walker Lake, and Fools River Lake.



The property is income producing with great potential for income expansion. The property has a 29±acre in plant container nurseries that has a lot of infrastructure in place which could easily convert to more campsite rentals or a sunflower field for dove hunting. The nursery stock will not

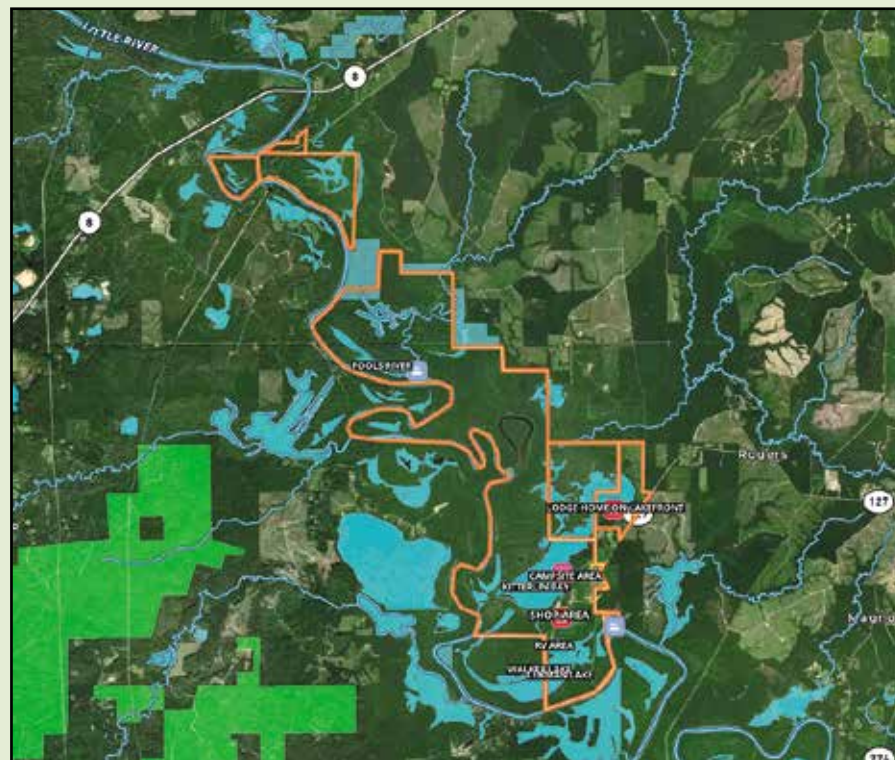
convey. There is an RV Park, 2 tenant homes, and a custom built 2016 model lodge style brick home on the water at 902 Osage Drive, Jena, LA. It features 2,498 square feet, 3 bedrooms, 3 1/2 baths, open floor space, kitchen and den with glass to the rear overlooking the lake. There is also a large metal shop with living quarters, and offices. There are RV campsite rentals on Lehman Lake. Hunting memberships and fishing memberships are available.



The beauty and potential of this place should not be overlooked! It's central location, north of Alexandria, is a huge plus for short weekend getaways. This property could be structured as an equity share ownerships, or as a legacy property tract or a generational land holding.

Bidding will be offered live and online. The Live Auction will be held at Bonnette Auction Company, located at 3804 McKeithen Drive in Alexandria. Pre-Auction Offers will be considered. Equipment to be sold separately.

For more information or to schedule a showing, contact Bonnette Auctions Louisiana Outdoor Properties at (318) 443-6614.





**KITTERLIN CREEK**

# LAND AUCTION

*Estate of Homer E. Galin Jr.*

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 28TH | 11AM CST**

Live with Online Bidding Available






**Bonnette Auctions**  
Louisiana Outdoor Properties  
Auction & Real Estate Group



Jena, LA

## 3,915.78±

ACRES

318.443.6614 | BONNETTEAUCTIONS.COM  
Louisiana Auction License No. - LA#818 & LA#1765

## Built Better to Last Longer

We've all said it: "They just don't make things like they used to." Well, the truth is, most appliance companies don't, but Speed Queen isn't most companies. Their commercial quality pedigree has been built over more than 110 years right here in the U.S. While you might buy on that pedigree alone, true peace of mind comes in performance and reliability. We believe that when you spend hard-earned dollars on a major appliance it should reward you with decades of even harder work. Rest assured; Speed Queen will deliver nothing short of that.



Speed Queen washers and dryers are built at commercial quality specifically for home use. These are the same grade machines in use at top laundromats, hotels, and universities. They are manufactured and tested to stand up to years of the most demanding applications in commercial settings, and built to last up to 25 years in your home.

The reason Speed Queen is the leader in laundry is no mystery--stronger parts make for longer performance. While other manufacturers may choose to build using plastic parts, Speed Queen is dedicated to using commercial-quality metal components throughout. Speed Queen electronic controls are designed for reliable operation and engineered to endure high work loads, power surges, and vibrations for years of trouble-free use. The controls use a multi-layered circuit board with

heavy-duty connectors for durability; and every circuit board features a moisture barrier backing for added protection.



The proof is in the performance...and the warranty! Speed Queen products come with an industry-leading three-, five-, and seven-year warranties that include all parts and in-home labor. You buy Speed Queen for peace of mind and performance. After all, the longest lasting washers should have the longest lasting warranty.



Bargain Box, a Trotter Company, is the Cenla's only Platinum Speed Queen Sales and Service Center. With two convenient locations at 1604 Military Highway in Pineville and 238 Keyser Avenue in Natchitoches, Bargain Box has a full selection of Speed Queen washers and dryers in stock and ready for pick-up or same day delivery.

Call (318) 704-0020 in the Alexandria/Pineville area, (318) 581-9058 in Natchitoches, or stop by today to see the Speed Queen difference for yourself!



➤➤➤ TWO LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU <<<<

# BARGAIN BOX



TROTTER'S

HELPING YOUR HOUSE FEEL LIKE HOME.

Your

TEMPUR-PEDIC &



Headquarters!



New & Pre-Owned,  
Scratch/Dented Appliances  
Backed by Cenla's Oldest,  
Largest and  
Most  
Complete  
Service  
Center  
at Trotter's.



Military Hwy. in Pineville



Keyser Ave. in Natchitoches



**Cenla's ONLY  
Platinum**

**Speed Queen®**

**Sales & Service Center!**



**318.704.0020**

Find us on  
Facebook!

**318.581.9058**

1604 Military Highway  
Pineville, LA 71360

[www.TrotterCompanies.com](http://www.TrotterCompanies.com)

238 Keyser Avenue  
Natchitoches, LA 71457

## Rabbiteye Blueberries in Louisiana: A Sweet Summer Harvest Made Simple

By Michael Polozola II, PhD



Growing your own blueberries in Louisiana is easier than you might think—especially with rabbiteye varieties that are well adapted to our soils and seasons. These hardy, long-lived plants are a great choice for home gardeners, offering years of sweet harvests with the right care and conditions.

Rabbiteye blueberries get their name from the pinkish hue of the unripe fruit, which resembles the eye of a white rabbit. These blueberries (*Vaccinium ashei*) are native to the southeastern U.S. and thrive in the heat and

humidity of Louisiana. Unlike their more finicky cousins, the southern highbush varieties, rabbiteyes are more tolerant of imperfect soil, less prone to disease, and more forgiving for beginners. They also tend to ripen later in the season, which helps avoid damage from late spring

freezes—a common issue in our region.

A demonstration planting at the Hammond Research Station has



helped identify which rabbiteye varieties perform best in our climate. Here are a few standouts:

- Tifblue—A consistent top producer, ripening into early July.
- Brightwell—Known for its resilience, even in years with late freezes.
- Ochlockonee—Great for extending the harvest into

### Come See Our Newly Renovated Showroom!



**Tile Flooring • Mosaic  
Custom Drapery & Window Coverings  
Paint/Color Selection • Shutters  
Accessories**

**SHOWROOM  
318.445.6204**

Monday - Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm

**PAINT STORE  
318.445.8685**

Monday - Friday 7:30am - 5:00pm  
Saturday 8:00am - 12:00pm

Like Us On



**26 MacArthur Drive Alexandria, LA 71303**

**www.KinderPaintCo.com**

- mid-summer.
- Premier and Austin—Early to mid-season varieties with solid yields.
  - Alapaha—A reliable early-season option.

Planting two or more varieties is recommended to ensure good cross-pollination and maximize fruit production. Just be sure to choose varieties that are compatible bloom-time pollinators, as not all rabbiteyes flower at the same time.

Rabbiteye blueberries thrive in full sun, and they do best in well-drained, acidic soil with a pH between 4.5 and 5.5. Across Louisiana, soil types vary widely—from sandy loam to heavy clay—so it’s important to test your soil and amend it if needed. Mixing in aged pine bark can help lower pH and improve drainage. Raised beds are another good option for challenging sites.

If your soil just won’t cooperate, container gardening is a great alternative. Choose a 15-gallon or larger pot and fill it with aged pine bark or a mix designed for acid-loving plants. Rabbiteyes are adaptable and can thrive in containers with the right care. Place the container in a sunny spot, and water regularly—especially during dry spells. With a little attention, container-grown blueberries can be just as productive as those planted in the ground.

Rabbiteye blueberries don’t need heavy feeding, but timely, light applications of fertilizer can support healthy growth and fruit production. Apply fertilizer in late winter (around February) as new growth begins, and again in early summer (May or June) if needed. Use a product formulated for acid-loving plants, such as those labeled for azaleas or camellias. Ammonium sulfate is another good option, especially for lowering soil pH.



For young plants, apply about 1 tablespoon of ammonium sulfate per plant for each year of age, up to a maximum of 1 cup per mature plant per year, split between the two applications. Always water after applying fertilizer, and avoid placing it directly against the base of the plant. Start with a light hand and follow label directions—over-fertilizing can damage the shallow root system and reduce plant vigor.

Pruning keeps your plants productive, healthy, and easy to harvest. The best time to prune is late winter—typically January through February—before new growth begins. Here’s how:

- First two years: Focus on establishing the plant. Remove weak or crossing branches, but avoid heavy pruning.
- After year 3: Each winter, remove 1 to 3 of the oldest canes at ground level to encourage new growth.
- Maintain shape and airflow: Keep the plant open in the center to allow sunlight and air to reach all parts.
- Control height: Rabbiteyes can grow up to 10 to 12 feet tall, but fruit that’s out of reach isn’t very useful. Prune to keep the plant at a manageable height—typically 6 to 8 feet for home gardens.

Regular pruning improves fruit quality, reduces disease risk, and makes harvesting much easier.

With the right varieties, proper soil preparation, and a little seasonal care, rabbiteye blueberries can be one of the most rewarding fruits to grow in Louisiana. Whether you’re planting in the ground or in containers, these resilient plants offer years of sweet harvests and a beautiful addition to your garden. Start planning now, and by next summer, you could be picking your own homegrown berries right from the backyard.

WE’VE SAVED YOU A SEAT AT THE TABLE. WHERE BIG MOVES AND DREAM HOMES HAPPEN!

RUSTY WILDER  
318-308-8080

DICKIE JOHNSON  
318-794-6060

TOM BOUCHIE  
318-792-6755

BRANDON MELDER  
318-308-3087

CANDACE KING  
337-522-8700

DANA MALCOLM  
318-542-1863

JARRD RAYNES  
979-240-5690

CHARLIE BEAUFORD  
318-277-3141

JULIE THOMPSON  
318-780-4636

KIMBERLY DRYDEN  
318-623-4549

CHANEL BOLTON  
318-201-8777

SAVANNA SETLIFF  
318-451-6396

BRETT BOLTON  
318-880-4740

3516 PARLIAMENT CT  
ALEXANDRIA, LA 71303

THE WILDER GROUP  
Your Friends in REAL ESTATE

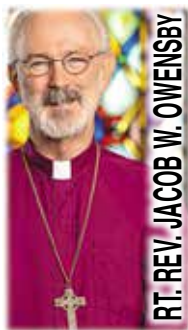
THEWILDERGROUP.NET  
318-625-7475

@CenlaFocus – JULY 2025

PAGE 17

# When It's Hard to Know What's True

By Rt. Rev. Jacob W. Owensby, PhD, DD



We were a small, tight-knit group. Most afternoons found us together in the sixth-floor conference room of Woodruff Library at Emory University. Following our three-hour-long philosophy seminars, we would often drift across the street and continue our friendly arguments in a now defunct bar called “Jaggers”. In an important way, I grew into a philosopher through those friendships.

During the first few class sessions, I felt intimidated by the other grad students. They were already in their second or third year of the program, and they were four or five years my senior. Having completed my undergraduate studies in three years, I was sort of a kid. Besides, nobody in my family had even graduated from college, much less enrolled in a PhD program.

Noticing that I had said nothing at all in class for the first three weeks, one of my classmates from the group reached out to me during a break. She said, “So, what are you working on?” At the time, I wasn’t at all sure. So, I mumbled something about studying free will to avoid looking even dumber than I felt. She said, “Hmmm. That’s interesting. You know, it seems to me that we put our heart into studying the thing that we long for. Want to join the rest us at Jagger’s and talk about it?”

What my classmate said that day resonated with me. It still does. Whether it’s a field of study or a career goal, a relationship, an artistic expression or a social cause, the thing we desire is what focuses our life’s energies. We pursue this, that, or the other object of desire because it holds for us the promise of a meaningful life.

Plenty of us will spend time on the technical questions about how to get the thing we long for. What steps and which strategies will get us there most efficiently and most effectively. But there is a more fundamental existential question. We can pose it in different ways. Are we devoting ourselves to the right thing? Will the path we’re on actually lead to the full-hearted life we imagine? Should I stay on this path or take another? This is a question about truth—existential truth. And it’s an especially difficult question to answer these days, because we live in an era of “truth decay.”

You might have heard the phrase “truth decay” before. It’s generally used to talk about how suspicious we’ve become of news reports and political statements. Truth decay has resulted from the partisanship of the mainstream media, the spin coming from politicians and their spokespersons, and the blurring of fact, opinion, and downright falsehood in social media feeds. The impact of truth decay is that we’re always wondering: what should I believe?

I’m borrowing and reframing the phrase truth decay to talk about a pervasive



## A PLACE FOR



## THE PENTECOSTALS OF ALEXANDRIA

### POA.CHURCH • 2817 RAPIDES AVE

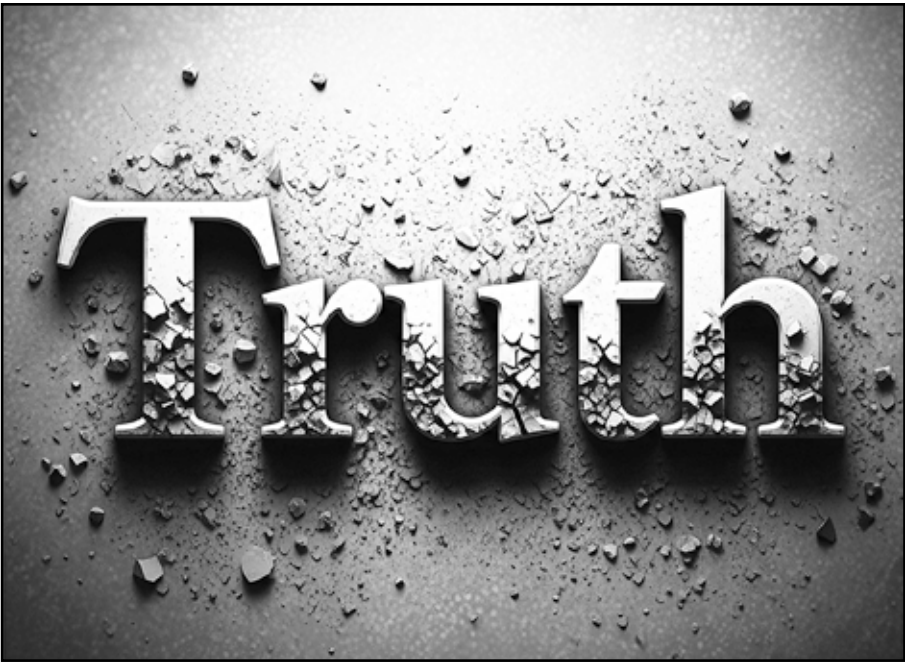
SERVICE TIMES

Sunday School - 9AM • Sunday Morning Worship Service - 10AM • POA Wednesday - 7PM

spiritual phenomenon. Here's what I mean. Each of us is on a spiritual pathway. As Ronald Rolheiser put it, we're all spiritual. Spirituality is "what we do with our longings" (The Holy Longing). We humans are, by nature, desiring creatures. Our challenge is that there is more than one pathway for seeking the full-hearted life we all desire. In fact, there are so many pathways we can scarcely keep track of them.

Each of these pathways offers the promise of a full-hearted life. And because there is no consensus about which of these pathways is best or genuinely reliable, we're faced with choosing a path for ourselves. But even when we've chosen a pathway, we cannot escape the gravitational pull of the others. That pull—what Charles Taylor calls the cross pressure—weakens our confidence in the very path we're walking. We experience truth decay (Taylor calls that fragilization).

None of us can keep walking a pathway relying upon our own sense of unassailable certainty. Alone, we may grow weary and abandon the path. We need walking companions. The Spirit of Truth is that companion. The Spirit of Truth doesn't provide us with undeniable facts or irrefutable doctrines. Instead, when we open ourselves to the inbreaking of the Spirit into our lives, the Spirit braids us together with the risen Christ. Jesus abides in us.



Simultaneously, the Spirit weaves the friends of Jesus together as companions on the way of Christ, into the Church. Jesus used the image of the True Vine: "Abide in me as I abide in you...I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:4, 5). The way of Jesus is wildly countercultural and paradoxical. He taught us that power is found in weakness. The first will be last and the last will be first. God takes up residence with those on the margins. Submission is freedom. Surrender is victory. Glory is found in humble service.

In a world that rewards success, achievement, and self-promotion, the way of compassion and sacrifice can sometimes feel like the loser's path. We can grow weary and doubtful. It can be easy to quit. That's why the Spirit of Truth

walks along with us. And that's why, perhaps now more than ever, we need each other to fight the effects of truth decay.

*Bishop Jake is the 4th Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Western Louisiana, the 26th chancellor of the University of the South, husband, father, noted speaker, teacher, and author. His newest book is entitled, "A Full-Hearted Life: Following Jesus in a Secular Age" and is available now from your favorite bookseller. Find Bishop Jake online at [jakeowensby.com](http://jakeowensby.com).*

\$25.00

off any session

with discount code:

INFOCUS25

expires

February 28<sup>th</sup>





## Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Inducts 2025 Class

The 2025 LSHOF Class was headlined by two LSU Tiger football legends, Head Coach Nick Saban and standout linemen Andrew Whitworth. The 12-person class was inducted into the Hall on Saturday, June 28th at the Natchitoches Events Center following a full weekend of festivities across the state.

Head Football Coach Nick Saban is in the conversation as the best collegiate football coach of all time. He won the first of his 7 National Titles at LSU in 2003, the Tigers' first since 1958. Beyond bringing the championship to Baton Rouge, Saban is proud of the legacy he established at LSU. "A lot of people look at this



state through the athletic programs at LSU," the legendary coach recalled. "When we were there, we raised the bar and the standard. I'm proud of the fact that we contributed to the iconic brand LSU has and the state of Louisiana has." Whitworth, a cornerstone member of Saban's 2003 title-winning team, went on to have one of a distinguished 16-year NFL career, having achieved success at every level along the way. He was a three-time Louisiana state football champion at West Monroe, National Champion at LSU, and Super Bowl Champion with the Los Angeles Rams. A 4x Pro Bowl selection and 2021 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year, Whitworth is a lock for NFL Hall of Fame honors when he becomes eligible in 2027.

Not to be outshined by the two Tiger men inducted this year, Gymnast April Burkholder, a three-time Junior Olympic All-Around Champion, 14-time LSU All-American, and 2006 NCAA balance beam champion, was also honored. Burkholder graduated as the most decorated gymnast in LSU history, and nearly two decades later remains one of the all-time LSU greats. She recorded eight perfect 10.0 scores in her LSU career and was named the SEC Gymnast of the Year in both 2004 and 2005.

Joining the LSU legends were NBA All-Star and USA World Champion Danny Granger, a New Orleans native. Granger had a 10-year career in the NBA, including an All Star selection in 2009. He also represented the USA as part of the 2010 FIBA World Championship team. Vickie Johnson is a WNBA inaugural player and former two-time WNBA All-Star from Coushatta who was also a hardcourt standout at Louisiana Tech. Johnson was the first player in WNBA league history to tally career totals of 4,000 points, 1,000 rebounds, and 1,000 assists.

**There's still plenty of time to enjoy a 2025 Veranda before the summer sets sights on the fall!**

~All-Aluminum All-Welded Interlocking Deck System

~Powered by Yamaha

~Wood-Free Seat Bases



Scan to see our selection!  
Call today 318-487-9495 or stop by at 5909 Coliseum Blvd.  
2025 Veranda VF22F2 St. #15673A Yamaha F150LC (pictured above).



Boxer Bobby Soileau of Sacred Heart-Ville Platte earned multiple LHSAA and NCAA titles with LSU. Soileau went 96-2-1 and was inducted into the inaugural Louisiana High School Boxing Hall of Fame in 2013. Longtime St. Thomas More basketball coach Danny Broussard, the seventh winningest in U.S. prep history, was inducted along with Joe Scheuermann, who tops Louisiana's college baseball coaching wins at Delgado Community College. Dale Weiner, a championship-winning coach in football and weightlifting at Baton Rouge Catholic, was recognized, as were influential figures Herb Vincent, SEC associate commissioner and LSU alum, and nationally respected sportswriter Glenn Guilbeau of Baton Rouge. Ed Daniels, a beloved WGNO-TV sportscaster of 40 years, was honored posthumously, and represented by his wife, Robin, and daughter, Erin.

For full bios of all the 2025 LSHOF inductees and to plan your visit to the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Museum, visit LaSportsHall.com.

*This article includes contributions by LSHOF's Jason Pugh, and NSU Photographer, Chris Reich.*



# YOU GOT THE RING

*give him the green.*

Alexandria

THE HEART OF CENTRAL LOUISIANA

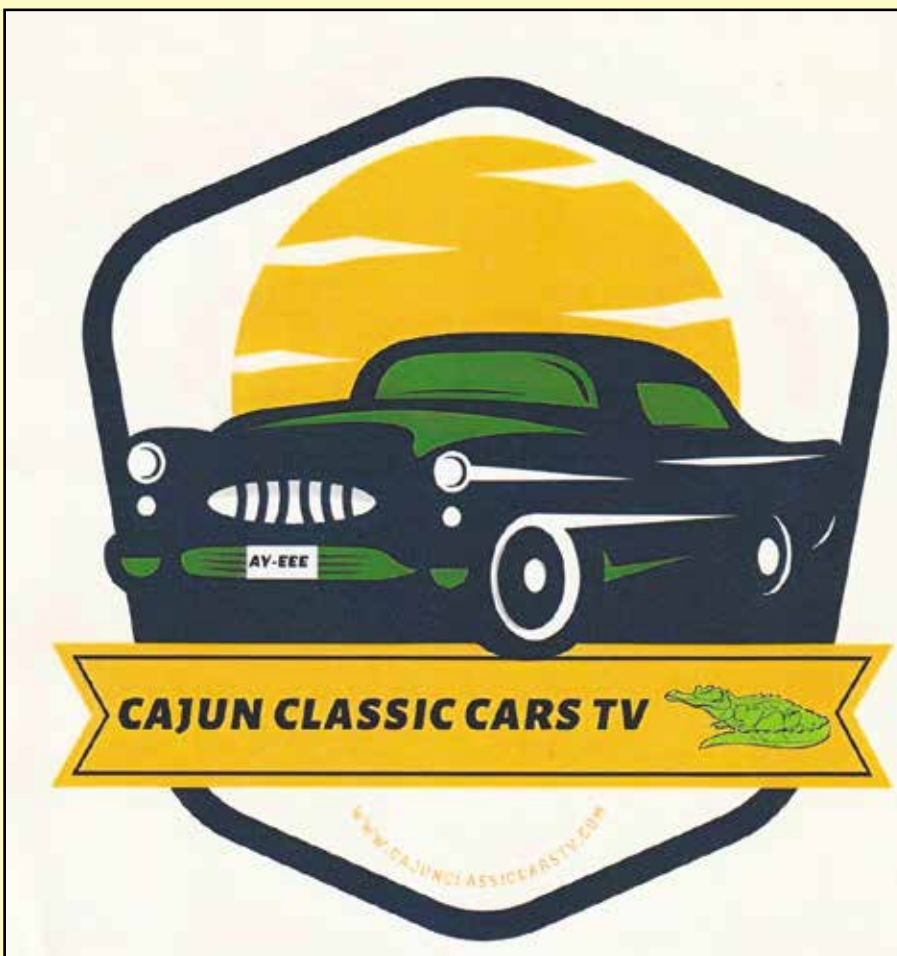
[WWW.OAKWINGGOLF.COM](http://WWW.OAKWINGGOLF.COM)

## Cenla's Mr. Classic Car Podcaster Brian Landrum

By Michael Wynne

As many of my long-time readers know, I have mostly devoted this column to honoring the great historians, history-makers and the history of Cenla as well as focusing on the preservation of our local, but largely ignored history. Well, the celebration and joy of our history comes in many forms. One of the most important is the sharing of the knowledge of our history with others. One of the best local purveyors in the sharing the knowledge of our history is Brian Landrum of Alexandria, better-known as the "Mr. Classic Car Podcaster of Louisiana."

The son of an oilfield products operation manager, Brian was raised in Thibodaux. "We had a barn on our property," Brian shared, "and every year, my brother and I would have a combined birthday. My dad would have someone come and sing at our party, along with a barbecue and swimming, with 200 plus people in attendance.



This was one of the great memories of my youth." That barn was also where Brian's love for classic and antique cars first started. "That is where dad and I first started



5913 OLD BOYCE ROAD, ALEXANDRIA, LA 71303

**Brian & Erica Carmouche**  
**TerminatorPPM@gmail.com**



working on cars, including a ‘70s Chevy pick-up and a ‘68 Mustang.”

Around the same time, Brian got into radio broadcasting. He started a radio broadcasting business at age 12 by building a radio station in the barn with parts from Radio Shack and putting up an antenna on the barn roof. He broadcasted in a 2-mile range “whatever me and my friends could find to put on a record player.” This led to a job at age 14 working at a local country western station.

I asked Brian why he was interested in radio broadcasting. He answered, “I have always been fascinated with how sound and video can travel from one place to another and can be heard and seen there.”

All of this, not surprisingly, lead to a lifetime career in the broadcasting business, with most of his life either on the air or in radio station management. He’s worked all over the country, from Alaska to Tennessee, but is best known for his work at the legendary station, WSM, home of the Grand Old Opry.

Initially, he didn’t consider combining his two loves— classic cars and radio broadcasting. “I was sitting on the sofa one day binge-watching a car show of people washing and cleaning their cars and I thought, ‘This is crazy that anyone would watch this.’ So, I decided to



Louisiana original and we are all proud that he is here creating history in our community.

do something about it. I created ‘Cajun Classic Cars TV’ in the spring of 2024.”

Cajun Classic Cars TV was created for car lovers around the Gulf South. On the website, [www.cajunclassiccarstv.com](http://www.cajunclassiccarstv.com), you can check out car show events, information about car clubs, interviews with the car community leaders, including specials about popular shows in the state, as well as celebrities like Jay Leno, former Tonight show host and an avid car collector. Plus, each week, “Flyin’ Brian” debuts a new episode of the program featuring some of the coolest cars in Louisiana, and their owners share the love and stories behind their rides. Brian is at no less than 20 car shows and events each year. Fans can find the network online via the website, Facebook page, YouTube channel, TikTok, and a radio stream.

One of Brian’s recent interviews was with legendary classic car owner, Pete Vicari. Pete has five 1963 pre-production Corvettes. What makes these cars so special is that each car was hand-made and different in order to provide GM management a choice of what car to put out to the public. Astounding!

Brian is another fascinating and enterprising Central

# RIDE RED

## SUMMER SALES EVENT

# BONUS BUCKS

On select models

Use towards

- Accessories
- HondaCare® Protection Plan
- Down payment
- Your choice









## 5909 Coliseum Blvd.

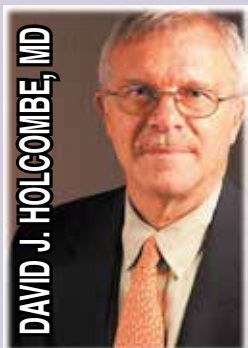
## 318-487-9495



powersports.honda.com BE A RESPONSIBLE RIDER. Always wear a helmet, eye protection and protective clothing whenever you ride. Respect the environment when riding. Never ride after consuming drugs or alcohol. Inspect your vehicle before riding and read your owner's manual. Obey the law, use common sense, keep your riding area clean, respect the rights of others when you ride, and make sure you have a proper license when riding on public roads. Operating your motorcycle with a modified engine, emissions-control system or noise-control system may be illegal. Honda CRF-R models are designed exclusively for off-road operator-only use in organized, closed-course racing events. Utility ATVs are recommended for riders 16 years of age and older. Honda recommends that all ATV riders take a training course. For more information, visit powersports.honda.com. Fourtrax Rancher® and CRF® are registered trademark of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. ©2025 American Honda Motor Co., Inc (8/25).

# Messenger RNA: What Is It?

By David J. Holcombe, MD



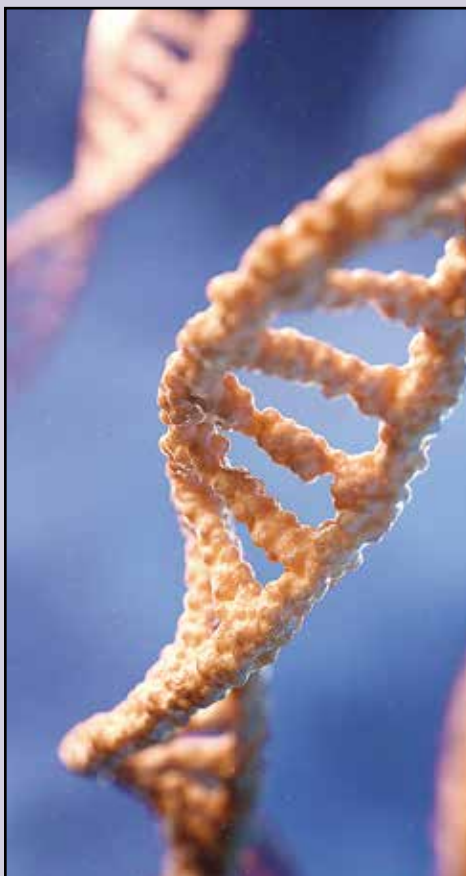
DAVID J. HOLCOMBE, MD

Messenger RNA (more commonly referred to as mRNA) is one of the elaborate cellular components responsible for the production of proteins. If proteins are the building blocks of life, then DNA and RNA are the blueprints for their creation. DNA (or deoxyribonucleic acid) makes up your genes—your unique genetic composition. DNA is used as a template to make RNA (ribonucleic acid) which, in turn, will produce mRNA. It is the latter that interacts with ribosomes in the cytoplasm of cells to manufacture individual proteins.

The famous team of James Watson and Francis Crick unlocked the secret of DNA in 1953. Since then, there has been tremendous progress in untangling the inner workings of the cell. Most people did not even know the term “mRNA” until it was used in vaccines against COVID. This was only possible because of technological advances, notably the use of CRISPR gene editing. CRISPR stands for clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic

repeats. Quite a mouthful, but it allows identification and extraction of specific pieces of genetic material that code for individual proteins.

Scientists creating vaccines identify clusters of genetic material from viruses, notably those pieces that code for the production of spike proteins (responsible for attaching to human cells). That segment of genetic material is used to create an mRNA segment that is specific for making that protein. It is the mRNA in the




 **ALEXANDRIA**  
EMERGENCY HOSPITAL

**WHEN YOU'RE HERE  
YOU'RE FAMILY**

 **AlexandriaER.com**  **318-386-8110**

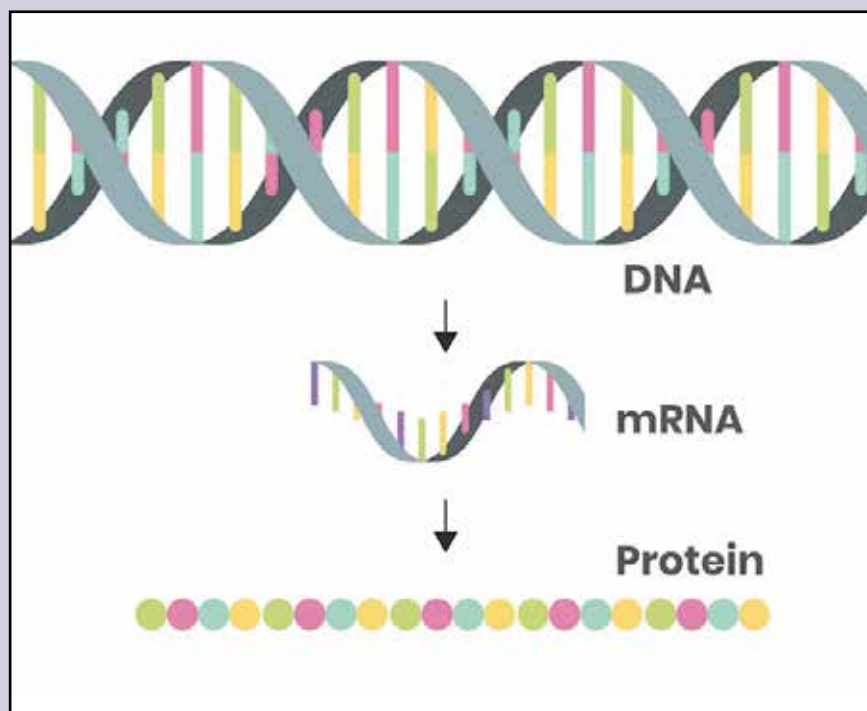
**5900 COLISEUM BLVD • ALEXANDRIA, LA 71303**

vaccine that enters the cells and reacts with the ribosomes in the cytoplasm to produce the spike protein. After production, the mRNA is degraded, so it does not remain permanently in the cell. The spike proteins are expelled and the body's immune system reacts to them to create antibodies that can attack the virus, if and when it enters the body.

This elegant technology allowed the rapid development of mRNA COVID vaccines, which could be quickly altered to keep up with new genetic mutations of the virus. This has proven to be safe and effective all over the world. It has also generated widespread anxiety. Some segments of society, often with an incomplete or no knowledge of the technology, became convinced that the mRNA was permanently

incorporated into the DNA. In fact, it does not interact with the DNA at all and, as mentioned, is degraded shortly after helping to create spike proteins.

This irrational fear has been translated at the highest levels to policies that restrict the use of this amazing technology. The HHS Secretary spearheaded a drive to require time-consuming and costly placebo studies to once again establish the safety and efficacy of mRNA vaccines, notably in children. This requirement will



virtually eliminate the development and use of these vaccines in children since no pharmaceutical company has the time or resources to undergo such studies for new viral variants (such as influenza or COVID) that occur annually.

Contracts through the National Institutes of Health which funded mRNA research for vaccines the world (notably for HIV and malaria), have also been cancelled. There have been no coherent explanations for these changes except the omnipresent fear and mistrust by segments of the public and leadership toward this new, life-saving technology. In addition, all members of the current Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices, which supported mRNA vaccines, were fired and replaced, a tremendous loss of expertise and talent.

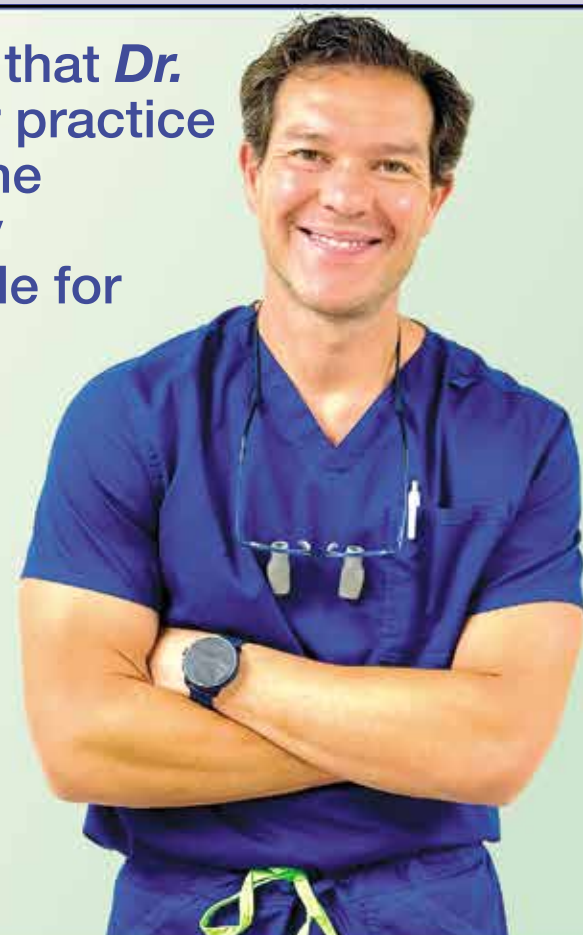
The brilliant and intrepid French scientist, Marie Curie, summed it up beautifully, “Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.” Many feared the “new” smallpox vaccine developed by Dr. Edward Jenner in 1796, yet it saved millions of lives and eventually resulted in the eradication of that deadly disease. Let’s not forget the lessons of the past or succumb to the hysteria of the present.

**Alexandria Oral Surgery is excited to announce that *Dr. Matthew Kennedy, DDS, MD* will be joining our practice July 2025. Dr. Kennedy comes to us following the completion of his Oral and Maxillofacial surgery residency at LSU Shreveport. He will be available for appointments beginning in late July.**



**318 443-7208**

**1403 Peterman Drive Alexandria, LA • alexandriaos.com**



# Disease of the Retina: Significant Vision Loss Possible

By Dr. Phillip L. Carney, Jr.



DR. PHILLIP L. CARNEY, JR.

The retina is the delicate thin tissue that lines the inner surface of the back part of the eye. This tissue is directly connected to the brain and transfers light signals to provide vision. Disease of the retina is often serious and can lead to partial or total blindness. All human retinas have a certain look, and should look healthy and normal, regardless of needing glasses or not. Retinopathy (disease of the retina) can be a complication of diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and a host of other systemic illness.

The only way retinal disease can be detected is by a thorough retinal exam. This is performed either by dilating the eyes or using digital cameras that can view the retina without dilation. The key for correcting many retinal problems such as retinal detachments, tears, or holes in the retina is having treatment performed as soon as possible for the best visual outcome. Some diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure are initially detected through retinal examination.

Dr. Carney is available for all your eye care needs by appointment at Wallace Eye Associates by calling (318) 448-0221.



Nicholas Braud, MD, Phillip L. Carney, Jr., OD, R. Bruce Wallace, III, MD, Robert T. Crotty, OD, Thomas C. Stuckey, III, MD

## Central Louisiana's Cataract Dream Team!

Having your vision restored this summer by our team of cataract doctors at Wallace Eye Associates will not only improve the way you see...it will change the way you live. For an additional fee, Medicare now allows you to upgrade and customize your vision to better fit your unique lifestyle and hobbies. That's why more and more people across Central Louisiana are having cataract surgery at a younger age. If you're not seeing as well as you used to, call us today to schedule your cataract evaluation this month.



**318-448-4488 | 4110 Parliament Drive, Alexandria, LA | WallaceEye.com**



# HAVE PAIN?

## HERE'S THE GAME CHANGER.

Hardtner is pleased to welcome Dr. Lawrence Drerup to our elite care team. Dr. Drerup is trained to treat individuals who are experiencing acute or chronic pain conditions. As a highly-skilled neurological specialist, Dr. Drerup performs various interventional procedures including injections. Under his expert guidance, treatment can target the underlying source of pain – restoring a better quality of life.

Dr. Drerup is now seeing patients at the Hardtner Family Clinic in Olla. Schedule an appointment and start your path to wellness.

- Nerve Blocks
- Epidurals
- Steroid Injections
- Chronic Back Pain Relief

Dr. Drerup **(318) 495-4046**

**Lawrence Drerup, MD**  
**Interventional Pain Management**

*M. Lawrence Drerup, M.D.*



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## PAIN MANAGEMENT

[hardtnermedical.com](http://hardtnermedical.com)

1102 North Pine Rd. | Olla, LA

**Hardtner**  
FAMILY CLINIC

# Summer Peak Performance

By Cornell D. LeBlanc, D.C.



Summer is officially in fully swing right now and a lot of families are planning their trips, but it can be challenging with long car rides, standing in long lines at theme parks, and even waiting at airports. The stress of traveling can make you feel worn out once you actually get to your vacation spot. That is why chiropractic care can be the answer to having a symptom-free vacation this year.

Getting adjusted prior to leaving for your vacation will help decrease discomfort, keep your spine aligned, and help your body perform at its best for whatever activity you have planned for your family. Regardless if you are hiking in the mountains, riding jet-skis at the lake, or just spending time with your family at your favorite beach, adjustments will help optimize your joints and muscle function, allowing for smoother and productive movements while traveling.

When your body falls out of alignment, it can lead to muscle stiffness and body aches that are often triggered by the stress of traveling. Making an appointment to get adjusted before and after your vacation will decrease the possibility of misalignments, increase range of motion, decrease stress, and help your recovery.

Now, if you are suffering with neck and low back pain with radiating symptoms, we at Alexandria Spine & Rehab Center offer the state-of-the-art in Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression which our patients have just loved because it has restored the quality of life for them. We have firsthand testimonies of patients having amazing results with our table. One is a father that can now play soccer with his kids without pain, and another father that is no longer taking any medication since he has been on our Non-Surgical Decompression table. There is another story of a retired nurse that



is now able to walk without her walker, and another woman that is now able to go shopping again without pain and walk the store.

If you have big plans for the summer, and want to make it pain-free, then make an appointment today at Alexandria Spine & Rehab Center by calling (318) 561-6250 and have the most comfortable vacation you have ever had or have ever dreamed of.



Bradley F. Kirzner, D.C.

Cornel David Leblanc, D.C.

Nicolle Rivera, D.C.

Brian Peters, D.C.

## PEAK PERFORMANCE, OPTIMAL HEALTH



- Improved Lifestyle & Well-Being
- From Infants to Seniors
- Resolve Health from Injuries or Discomfort



Se habla Español

# 318.561.6250

1133 MacArthur Drive, Alexandria, LA (Next to the Water Tower)

[www.AlexandriaSpineandRehab.com](http://www.AlexandriaSpineandRehab.com)

# Fight the Bite: Protect Against West Nile Virus

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) reminds residents to protect themselves against mosquito bites that could lead to vector-borne diseases, including West Nile virus. Louisiana's first human case of West Nile virus of the 2025 mosquito season was recently confirmed in Livingston Parish. LDH urges all Louisianans to protect themselves from mosquito bites.

Mosquito activity increases during the warmer summer months, which raises the risk of mosquito-borne diseases, such as West Nile virus. The virus is spread to people by mosquitoes and can cause mild to severe illnesses. While most people infected with West Nile virus develop no symptoms, about 20% of infected people develop West Nile fever. West Nile fever is a flu-like illness with symptoms that can include fever, headaches, body aches, nausea, and rashes.

A small percentage of infected people develop West Nile neuroinvasive disease, a severe illness that affects the central nervous system and can result in hospitalization or even death. Symptoms can include high fever, stiff neck, disorientation, muscle weakness, numbness, coma, and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks and carry the risk of death or permanent damage.

It is important to protect yourself from mosquito bites to prevent illness. People 55 years of age and older and people with certain medical conditions are at a greater risk for severe disease if they are infected.

Tips to protect yourself against mosquitoes:


- Wear EPA-registered mosquito repellent outdoors and always follow label instructions.



- Apply repellent on exposed skin only. Do not apply under clothing or on broken skin.
- Carry a travel-size repellent if you will be outdoors for an extended period.
- Apply sunscreen first, insect repellent second, if you are also wearing sunscreen.
- Make sure windows are tight-fitting and screens are free of holes to keep mosquitoes out.


Visit the CDC's Fight the Bite website at [www.cdc.gov/fight-the-bite/](http://www.cdc.gov/fight-the-bite/) for more tips on preventing mosquito-borne diseases.

**WE ARE COMMITTED TO**  
*improving*  
**QUALITY of LIFE**



*"The staff is great! They are always willing to talk to you and help you. The aides are also very dedicated. The entire building is very clean, and well taken care of."*

Linda C.



**Hilltop**  
NURSING & REHABILITATION CENTER, LLC  
336 Edgewood Drive P.O. BOX 3067  
Pineville, Louisiana 71361  
318-442-9552  
[hilltopnursingandrehabilitation.com](http://hilltopnursingandrehabilitation.com)  
**Central Management Company**

**Lawrence P. Menache M.D.**  
**Radiation Oncologist**


Over 35 Years of Experience  
Using the Latest Techniques  
Cenla's Most Experienced  
Radiation Oncologist  
Continues to See  
New Patients at...

**CHRISTUS Cabrini  
Cancer Center**  
**318.448.6917**

**Rapides Cancer Center**  
**318.769.7200**

**Savoy Cancer Center**  
**337.468.3099**

**AlexandriaRadiationOncology.com**



# River Oaks Summer Arts Studio Soars Into Summer

With two successful sessions already completed, River Oaks Square Arts Center's Summer Arts Studio (SAS) is once again proving to be Central Louisiana's most vibrant hub for young creatives. This year, under the inspiring theme "HeART Takes Flight," campers have explored cultures from Asia, Oceania, and North America, diving into traditional and contemporary art forms that reflect the richness of each region. From Aboriginal-inspired paintings and Hindu sculptures to Native American drawings and Aruban cooking, the creativity on display has been nothing short of remarkable.



where creativity thrives."

Many campers return year after year, building friendships and strengthening their artistic skills with each session. It's not uncommon for former campers to come back as instructors or counselors, bringing with them a sense of tradition and continuity that makes SAS truly special. These returning leaders serve as role models for new students, passing on the same encouragement and inspiration they once received.

The Summer Arts Studio Student Show will be held on August 16th

from 4:00pm to 5:00pm, featuring work from every student across all four sessions. With over 100 pieces selected by instructors based on artistic merit, the exhibition is both a celebration of student achievement and a testament to the program's impact.

Each summer, River Oaks is amazed by the extraordinary talent that emerges from SAS. "Every year, our students continue to surprise us with their imagination, their courage to try new things, and their natural creative instincts," says Rachael Dauzat, Executive Director at River Oaks. "This program is about so much more than just learning to paint or sculpt. It's about developing confidence, exploring new cultures, and understanding the power of creative expression. Watching these young artists grow over the course of the summer is one of the most rewarding parts of what we do."

With two sessions still to come, students will soon explore the vibrant artistic traditions of South America, Antarctica, Africa, and Europe. Whether it's inspired by Aztec and Incan motifs or the tribal masks and pottery of Africa, each project is designed to teach not only technique but also cultural appreciation and historical context. Returning campers are thrilled to see what new lessons await, and first-timers are already finding their place in the SAS family.

"It's incredible to see how these young artists rise to every challenge we throw at them," says Aubrey Bolen, River Oaks' Artistic Director and longtime Camp Director. "The level of thought and heart they bring to each project is inspiring. And it's not just the students—our team of instructors and counselors are what truly make SAS special. Their passion, energy, and mentorship help create an atmosphere

Summer Arts Studio is made possible by the generous support of our sponsors: Explore Alexandria/Pineville CVB, GAEDA, Louisiana Restaurant Association, Louisiana Feed Your Soul, River Oaks Board of Directors, Hotel Bentley, Diamond Grill Restaurant, Cleco, Freedman Clinic, Raising Cane's Alexandria, Alexandria Pediatric Dentistry, Jackson Orthodontics, Doug Young Nursery, City of Alexandria, Martha & Will Crenshaw, Noelle & Michael Crowell, Dr. & Mrs. James Parrish, Michelle & Chris Karam, Tammi & Bryon Salazar, and Kate & Mike Nichols.

One of the best perks of being a River Oaks member is early bird registration for Summer Arts Studio. Many of our sessions fill up quickly, so members get a valuable head start to ensure their child secures a spot. If you missed out this year, now is a great time to join and take advantage of early registration and other exclusive benefits next summer.

For more information on the Summer Arts Studio or upcoming programs and exhibitions, call River Oaks at (318) 473-2670, visit [RiverOaksArtsCenter.com](http://RiverOaksArtsCenter.com), or find River Oaks on Facebook at [@riveroaksartscenter](https://www.facebook.com/riveroaksartscenter).

## MINI-MAX

OPEN 7 DAYS

# SELF-STORAGE

(318) 449-8988

3700 Lee Street @ Industrial

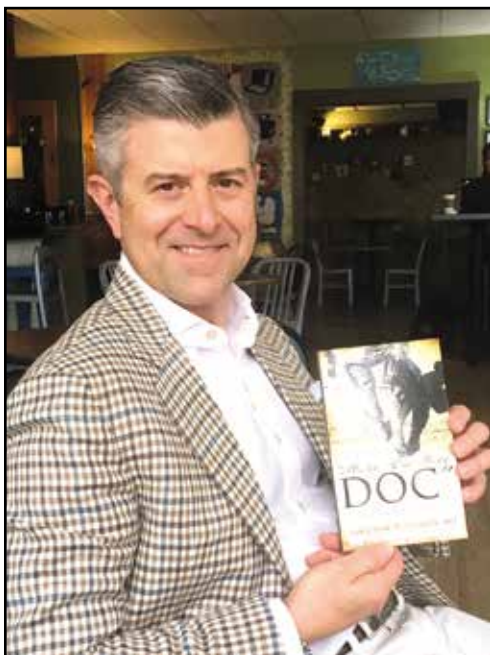
[minimaxstorage.com](http://minimaxstorage.com)

- Climate Control & Non-Climate
- Commercial & Residential
- Individual Door Alarms
- Fenced & Lighted
- Coded Gate Access
- No Deposit

# Author Jonathan Hunter, MD

By Michael Wynne

When I first saw Dr. Hunter walk into the Tamp and Grind (where I met him to interview) and saw his deliberate step and stylish, but business-type dress, I knew that this man was a man of distinction, a man of intelligence, and a man who was not randomly confused with life and with life's obstacles as so many others are. It was a delight to meet and talk with so straight-forward of a person, a man who did not mince words or hide thoughts and who has truly fought the gauntlet of life, and won. I knew that, at the end of the interview, I would admire him greatly, as do I already of his first outing of an important book, "Make 'Em Well, Doc."



The son of parents who have both made major contributions to bettering education in three different states over the past half century, Dr. Hunter took a strong cue from them, wanting to live his life fully and to make positive contributions to his community and country.

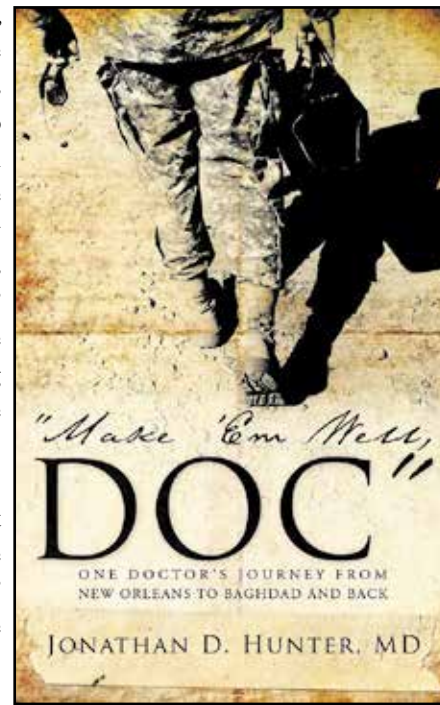
Although born in Alexandria, much of Jonathan's early life took place elsewhere. After graduating high school in Ohio, he considered going to Ohio State University. "I was fixed on being a doctor and wanted to go to the best school that I could go to," says Jonathan. With encouragement from his father, he attended LC (now LCU) on scholarship. Why medicine? Jonathan had a natural

penchant for science, including dinosaurs in his youth, and was an excellent student. But what cinched his future career in medicine was when his parents gave him a Fisher-Price medical kit, the best gift he may have ever received. It started him on a path from which has never deviated.

Jonathan's dad had a notable career in the Air Force, serving in Vietnam, which Jonathan wanted to emulate to some degree. So, Jonathan joined the Louisiana National Guard in February 2001, expecting his duties remaining stateside. Seven months later, on 9/11, his life changed entirely. "When you raise your right hand to swear allegiance in the Guard, you know there is always a possibility of going overseas," Jonathan told me, somewhat half-smiling. So, overseas he went, with 3,000 other Louisiana Guard personnel. He started in Kuwait, but spent most of his time in "beautiful" downtown Bagdad. He had then only been in the medical practice for one year in the Brian Clinic on 4th Street, and was very nervous. "I was in God's hands and with a group of highly trained professionals over there. It was always tense. It was no 'cushy' assignment." Of what he best remembers of his experience over there, he remembers well "the comradery for my fellow soldiers and the affection for them." But he also remembers well the monumental loss; Jonathan was there when the first Louisiana soldier was killed and sadly, there for many more after that.

Jonathan was only in Iraq for four months—very long months—due to the rules of the military. He was re-deployed in 2005, but this time to the Red Stone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. With a desk job, he had some free time on his hands. He thought then to write of his experiences overseas as a testament to his two daughters while the experiences were still fresh on his mind. "I was under the false assumption that the words would just flow out of me; I had no idea how long it was going to take to write an autobiography." It took Jonathan over a year to complete his wonderful book. But his fascinating book, "Make 'Em Well, Doc," available on Amazon, is well worth reading.

"With all of my life experiences, what matters to me most now, besides the love of my family, is my love of my patients." I am sure that all who know Jonathan have the same love and respect for him also.



**Advanced  
Cosmetic  
Techniques**

Eyebrows ♥ Eyeliner ♥ Lipcolor ♥ Eyeshadow ♥ Blush ♥ Repigmentation

**Natural Looking Make-Up That Won't  
Smear, Smudge or Wash Off**

**Applying Permanent Make-Up for 34 Years!**

Call for Free Brochure 318-352-4983

110 University Parkway • Natchitoches, LA

**\$50.00 Off Any New Procedure**

**www.permanentmakeupstudio.com**

# What Matters Most When You Talk Health Insurance?

By Wesley Watkins



I began my health insurance career 26 years ago in 1999 and have written articles in the Cenla Focus for 17 years while experiencing many changes in the health insurance industry. Through recessions and the passing of Obamacare, to Supreme Court rulings, and a world-wide pandemic, one item has ranked top of mind with consumers, Americans, all-size companies, and insurance companies alike and that is cost.

There are two types of cost for a consumer of health insurance—premiums and costs at the time of service (copays, deductible, coinsurance, out-of-pocket). Both the premium and the cost of health care have increased significantly since I entered the industry almost three decades ago. My data shows that a person could buy health insurance in 2008 for \$200 per month. That same age person had a \$400 per month premium in 2015 and \$800 per month premium in 2025. Deductibles averaged \$500 in 2008, \$1,500 in 2015, and \$3,000 in 2025.

Cost matters most, no matter what year we review. Everyone is stressed and dollars are stretched too far in health care. When does it end? When does the government simply take over the health care industry and would that even help? I'm sure family doctors get fed-up with advising patients to "eat better and exercise more" when many patients ignore the advice and opt for easier and more expensive ways to lower A1C levels, yet I know many physicians are delivering hard advice daily.

Likewise, I have stated the same advice/recommendations since I started my tenure; "take control of your own health care" and "understand your costs/options for your health care." Sometimes I feel like my advice falls on deaf ears, but I'm always encouraged when someone "gets it" and changes the way she/he views health care. It's kind of like catching one big fish and letting that excitement carry you through the next four hours without catching another fish (in 90+ degree heat!).

If you never read or see an article written by me again, please remember this: You can control your health care costs by making wise decisions:

1. Always price check your care. The same prescription at one pharmacy can cost a fraction across the street. The same concept goes with surgeries and procedures. Be sure you shop your health care unless it's a true emergency.
2. The ER is the most expensive way to receive care; don't go unless you have to. Your family doctor, or even a virtual visit can be the most convenient, easiest, and cheapest way to receive care.
3. As legendary Cenla newscaster, Ethma Odum, wisely said many times for many years, "Don't neglect your health, get your cancer checkup!" Always put your health and your wellness as a priority. Some people spend way more money on their vehicle or home than their own body. You only get one body. Catch issues early and prevent them by getting a wellness exam.

Finally, quality benefits brokers are great advisors and can help you in many ways. If you need a quality benefits broker, or if you need to meet with an expert in alternatives to health insurance and employee benefits, feel free to call me at (318) 445-9464.

KNOWLEDGEABLE | REPUTABLE | RELIABLE  
318.445.9464 | WESLEY\_WATKINS@AJG.COM

LET'S CHAT ABOUT  
**WHAT  
MATTERS  
MOST**



**G. Gallagher**

**FORMER SOCIAL SECURITY JUDGE  
PETER J. LEMOINE**  
Social Security Disability Law

Recipient of Social Security Disability Leadership Award:  
National Top 100 Social Security Disability Law Firms

MEMBER: Louisiana State Bar Association, Lafayette Bar Association,  
Avoyelles Parish Bar Association, National Organization of Social Security  
Claimants' Representatives

PUBLISHED ARTICLES: "The Worn-Out Worker Rule Revisited", "Significant  
Work-Related Limitations of Function under SS 12.05C", "Questionable  
Retirement and the Small Business Owner", "Crisis of Confidence: The  
Inadequacies of Vocational Evidence Presented at Social Security Hearings",  
"An Unsolved Mess: Analyzing the Social Security Administration's  
Methodology for Identifying Occupations and Job Numbers".

**(318) 717-1995**

# Perseverance Pays off for Cenla Teen

By Annie Lemoine Newton



ANNIE NEWTON

Imagine graduating high school with plans to start your adult life like all of your classmates, only to discover you are not even a documented person. Breana Davis was born in February of 1997. Her mother delivered her on the way to the hospital; thankfully, paramedics were able to reach her and deliver Breana safely on the side of the road. Afterward, both were taken to Huey P. Long Medical Center, but for whatever reason, no birth was officially recorded, and Breana was never issued a birth certificate.

When it was time for Breana to start kindergarten, her mother was told she could not register her without a birth certificate or a Social Security card. She was advised that these documents were required before enrollment. At the time, Breana's mother was a single mother of five kids and lacked the resources to navigate the complicated and costly process of obtaining these essential documents.

When Breana was 9 years old, the principal of her local elementary school did what she needed to do to enroll her. She may have bent some rules, but she did what she knew was right for this innocent, eager-to-learn 9-year-old girl. From that moment on, Breana was able to attend school and, through hard work and perseverance, graduated high school in 2015.

After graduation, Breana attempted to enroll in LPN classes. Her dream was to become a nurse after watching her mother pass away from cancer when she was just 12 years old. However, those dreams were quickly dashed. She was told that, without an ID, birth certificate, and a Social Security number, she could not attend any type of college.

Fortunately, Breana's second-grade teacher, Mrs. Lauren Ducote, who knew of her situation, helped her find a job caring for an elderly woman, Mrs. Roseanne Juneau. Breana faithfully cared for Mrs. Juneau for seven years. During that time, Mrs. Lauren initiated the process of obtaining Breana's birth certificate. She quickly encountered numerous roadblocks and eventually realized this was beyond her expertise. She

passed the case on to Mrs. Juneau's two daughters, Barbara and Leila, who tried for three more years—again, hitting wall after wall with the vital records department.

In 2018, I was handed a stack of papers and even a newspaper

article about Breana's roadside birth. I thought, "How hard can this be?" I underestimated the journey ahead. Over the next eight years, I quit three times out of frustration from making no headway.



Then, in January 2024, a long-time friend and a mother figure to Breana, Sharon Smoot, contacted me to say she had taken over the process and was finally making progress. She just needed help obtaining a few key documents. We reached out to our local senators and representatives. Through State Senator Heather Cloud, we connected with U.S. Representative Julia Letlow's office, where Gavin Guidry finally made contact with the right people.

On March 22, 2024, Breana was finally issued a birth certificate. We thought the journey was over. But when we visited the DMV to get her an ID, we were told she still needed a Social Security number.

Again, I thought, "How hard could this be?" I've been a Social Security representative for 10 years and know people in the local office. I was wrong. The process of getting a Social Security number proved equally, if not more, difficult. We faced rejection after rejection. In early 2025, a local Social Security employee told Breana, after her 10th visit, "There is nothing we can do to help you."

When she called me crying, I promised her I would not stop until she had what she needed, even if I had to go all the way to the White House. I began emailing every senator, representative, our governor, even President Trump and any public official I could find. Once again, Representative Letlow's office came through. This time, we were connected with Cherie Smith. After hearing Breana's story, she was nearly in tears. Though we were no longer in her district, she chose to help us anyway. She didn't have to—but she did.

Cherie quickly put us in touch with Mr. Brandon at the Monroe Social Security Office, who told us exactly what documentation was needed. Thanks to the help of Jessica Gauthier and Sarah Venable at the Avoyelles Parish School Board, and Jamie Garrett, NP, and Melissa Mose at Peter Lemoine's office, we gathered and sent in everything required. At last, Breana was issued a Social Security number.

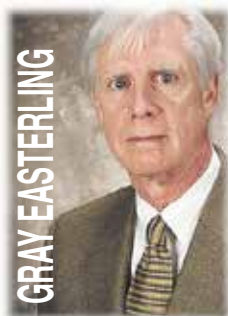
Now, she is finally able to register for LPN classes. She plans to begin school in August 2025 at Central Louisiana Technical Community College (CLTCC). Her journey may have taken longer than expected, but Breana is more motivated than ever to go out into the world and help others in need.

After 10 years of working on this case, I've learned one simple but powerful lesson: Just help someone when you can. You never know how one small act of effort can alter someone's entire life.



## Easy Money

By Gray Easterling



The May 28th online version of Kiplinger included an article on making money selling items in your storage shed, attic, hidden away in a desk, trunk, or maybe just rolled under your bed. With summer vacations underway or being planned, a little extra spending money could come in handy. Here are some examples of the more common profit centers. Start with your kitchen. Vintage Pyrex pieces can attract hundreds of dollars. A four-piece set of vintage Pyrex bowls recently sold on eBay for \$900.

For those of us who remember VHS, unopened packaged videotapes can bring from \$25.00 to several thousand dollars. Some of the more valuable tapes include “Star Wars”, “The Goonies”, “Superman”, and “Rambo”. Look for blockbuster films from the late 1970s and 1980s, released on VHS prior to the 1990s. 1980s horror movies, like “Halloween”, and early Disney movies released in the early to mid-1980s. Also, any sealed tapes with a studio watermark could produce cash.



Dust off your old video game console and check out the games you might have saved. Some of the best fundraisers include “Little Samson”, “Mario Cart 64”, “Super Mario 64”, “Futurama 2003”, and “Chrono Trigger 1995”. Don’t forget to include your old vinyl LPs in your treasure box. If in good condition, you might be surprised at what you might sell them for. Two examples are The Beatles’ “Please Please Me” and Led Zeppelin’s “Led Zeppelin”. Something you maybe haven’t thought of—Boy Scout memorabilia. Boy Scout medals—especially Eagle Scout medals—patches, and rings have all hit the marketplace. Have trouble throwing away clothes? Check your closet for old vintage band T-shirts like a Beach Boys Chicago tour shirt, an 80s Grateful Dead T-shirt, and maybe an old Rolling Stones shirt from one of their New Orleans shows. Designer brands sell. Consider a 1978 Gunne Sax dress, OshKosh B’Gosh denim chore coats, and Betsey Johnson cardigan tops were eBay hits.

Don’t forget old coins. Examples include 2004 D Wisconsin quarters, Extra Leaf Low variety; 2008-W Silver Eagle, reverse of 2007; 1972 Doubled Die Obverse Lincoln Memorial Cent; 1955 Double Die Lincoln penny; 2005 Kansas “In God We Rust” State quarter. One final thought: if you use credit cards for purchases and have built up reward points, don’t let them stagnate or expire. Use them to pay

card balances or help buy your airline tickets. You have earned them, so put them to work.

Hopefully, some of these suggestions will generate some extra cash in your pocket. If so, don’t forget to give your wonderful, all-knowing, all-powerful God his fair share. You receive so many gifts, known and unknown, from Him. He lays out possibilities and opportunities each day for you to absorb into your life that are designed to make your future better for you and your loved ones, if only you take advantage of them. I found this prayer in “The Desert of Compassion”, by Rachal Srubas. I think it provides a fitting end to this chapter: “Reach out your hand, O God, to the beings reaching out to you for help and answers. Reach out your hands through the hands of helpers wise enough to understand what they can and cannot do. Reach me, I pray and find me ready to do the work that’s mine, to put the time and gifts you have given me to needed use.” Walk in peace to love and serve the Lord.

*The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual. Please discuss your specific situation with your financial advisor. All investing involves risk including loss of principal. No strategy assures success or protects against loss. Financial Solutions Group is located at 128 Versailles Blvd, Alexandria, LA 71303. We can be reached at (318) 448-3201. Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a registered investment advisor, Member FINRA/SIPC.*

### A Cool Building with a Warm Heart

We believe that our office building provides a fantastic work environment. As “cool” as the structure might be, it only supports the friendly and helpful team that you have become familiar with over the last four decades. We believe that providing financial advice is important, but no more important than helping guide our clients in life changing decisions. If you have questions regarding your future financial independence, life insurance or long term care options, please come by for a visit. There’s no obligation, no pressure, and no charge.

**Your Friends at Financial Solutions Group**



**128 Versailles Blvd.  
Alexandria, LA 71303  
(318) 448-3201**

Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, Member FINRA/SIPC. Financial Solutions Group is a marketing name and separate entity from LPL Financial.

# Happy Fourth of July from the Bunkie Buz District!

By Robert Smith

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, simians and simianettes, our beautiful city of Bunkie, as far as the Official Bunkie Buz Department of Snarkeology has been able to confirm, is the one and only city in the whole USA and even the whole world honored with the name, Bunkie!

Now, that's not only good news, but internationally good news! No wonder our Bunkie Buz District pulsates as "The Tourism Place to Be!" This year alone we have had an appreciable increase in tourist traffic, along with a wide variety of new faces and family adoptees perusing the environs of the Buz.

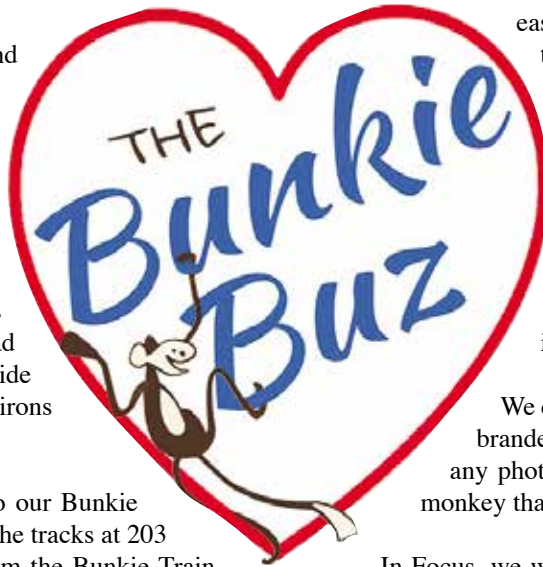
Speaking of the Buz, say hello to the newest addition to our Bunkie Buz biz family, Cherry's Pick'ns! Treasures await across the tracks at 203 North Main & Frazier, just across the railroad tracks from the Bunkie Train Depot. Cherry loves unique collectables and is chock full of antiques, primitives, and eclectic finds! Catch the Buz and the spirit of adventure at Chrerry's Pick'ns!



In culinary news, Bernice's Sandwich Shop, after 50 glorious and delicious years of lip-smacking delights, will be changing ownership, but keeping the same wonderful magical menu that they are so loved for! Dwayne Juneau and family will be retiring to pursue other directions with Tyler Williams commanding the kitchen to maintain Bernice's fame following his tenure working alongside Dwayne to master the secrets of the Bernice's legendary burger and beyond bounty. Thank you from your Bunkie Buz family, Dwayne and Co., and may God richly bless you in your future endeavors! Congratulations, Tyler! Welcome to Bunkie with our best wishes and prayers for your success with Bernice's Sandwich Shop—a true jewel in the Buz of Bunkie!

In the customer quote department, noticing the vacant 1907 (34 room) Bailey Hotel and it's being on National Register of Historic Places, they proffered an idea worth consideration—that the Hotel would be a perfect jewel if it were rescued and made into a bistro hotel with café and perhaps an event center. What a capital idea for investment! What a jewel for tourism! A shining a downtown accommodation with history! We think so, too! Interested parties, please consider! What a Buz and a boon to Bunkie! Dreams can come true.

Bunkie Buz Live Radio News Alert! For those outside, nearside, or far side, of the tide of radio waves, we have breaking news to know! You can now live stream the



Bunkie Buz Live at Five radio show on KVPI 92.5 FM! It now is so easy to catch the thrills and chills of B Buz Live by navigating to the KVPI website and simply clicking the live stream app/icon. It's so easy that even dino-simian wrecks like Bob and Joel can do it! Join us every Tuesday for the Areo Stereo Buz on KVPI 29.5 FM!

In our center of the universe, we tip our collective cap to our friends in Marksville for the always popular 4th of July Avoyelles Arts & Music Festival featuring parade, family-friendly fun and fireworks to celebrate our country's independence!

We continue our search for items of Bunkie history, like "Bunkie" branded bricks, "Evergreen" bricks, images of early Bunkie, and any photos of young Bunkie with her "bunkie", her beloved stuffed monkey that is!

In Focus, we were utterly delighted to have selfies of our own L'il Bunkie included in the previous Buz News! We never know when L'il will turn up next! We, your humble blue simian brothers, remain steadfast in our gratitude to Will and Co. at Cenla Focus, Wilbert and Co at Travel Avoyelles, and to you and Co., our friends and family members of the Bunkie Buz! Be sure to come and get your Buz on and often. It's contagious!

## TSS SECURITY

Over 50 Years Combined  
Experience  
Here in Central Louisiana



Serving the security needs in our area with Burglar & Fire Alarms, Surveillance Cameras, Access Door Control Systems, as well as Customized Security Solutions. We provide state-of-the-art Monitoring WITHOUT requiring long-term contracts!



DARYL TERRY  
Owner



MIKE SHELTON  
Sales Manager

Call Us At  
448-7272



# It's a Sizzling Summer in Avoyelles

By Wilbert Carmouche



As we bravely step into the heat of a Louisiana July, we remind ourselves—this is where we choose to live, work, and play. That means we prioritize, adjust, and adapt to the season. So, what’s on the calendar this month? Plenty! And yes—every event is comfortably indoors, thanks to the sweet relief of air conditioning.

Fun fact: modern air conditioning was invented in 1902 by Willis Carrier. He created a system to regulate temperature and humidity at a printing plant in Brooklyn, New York. While earlier cooling methods existed, Carrier’s innovation laid the groundwork for the modern systems we rely on today. And for those of us in Central Louisiana, the Carrier brand continues to bring cool comfort into our homes and businesses. Thank you, Mr. Carrier!



In the cool confines of the Mari Center at Paragon Casino Resort, the Commodores will take the stage on Saturday, July 19th at 8:00pm, venue doors will open at 7:00pm.

The Commodores were formed from two former student groups: the Mystics and the Jays. The new six-man band featured Lionel Richie, Thomas McClary, and William King from the Mystics, and Andre Callahan, Michael Gilbert, and Milan Williams from the Jays. They chose their present name when King flipped open a dictionary and ran his finger down the page. “We lucked out,” he remarked with a laugh when telling this story to People magazine. “We almost became ‘The Commodes.’”

For five decades, the Commodores have remained a force in the music industry. The Commodores aren’t just any group. They have staying power. Just like their hit song “Brick House,” the Commodores have created a foundation that just won’t budge. They continue to perform, playing at arenas, theaters, and festivals around the world. For ticket information and inquiries, visit [www.paragoncasinoresort.com](http://www.paragoncasinoresort.com).

Saturday, July 26th brings us three events to select from:

Come to Paragon’s Hotel Atrium on July 26th to enjoy the Gator Show at 4:00pm. Join everyone in the hotel lobby on the last Saturday of each month for the free

EXPLORE AVOYELLES

AVOYELLES

CENTRE DE LA LOUISIANE

CALENDAR of EVENTS

**Wine Down Wednesdays**  
 Bailey's On The Square  
 Wednesdays in July @ 5:00pm  
 FB: Bailey's On The Square

**Avoyelles Arts & Music Festival**  
 Paragon Casino Resort  
 July 4, 2025  
 FB: Avoyelles Arts & Music Festival

**John Foster**  
 Paragon Casino Resort  
 July 5, 2025  
[www.paragoncasinoresort.com](http://www.paragoncasinoresort.com)

**Commodores**  
 Paragon Casino Resort  
 July 19, 2025 @ 8:00pm  
[www.paragoncasinoresort.com](http://www.paragoncasinoresort.com)

**Alligator Feeding Show**  
 Paragon Hotel Atrium  
 July 26, 2025 @ 4:00pm  
[www.paragoncasinoresort.com](http://www.paragoncasinoresort.com)

**Allons Souper, Jr.**  
 Our Lady of Lourdes Church  
 July 26, 2025 @ 5:00pm  
 318.729.2851

**Gospel Show**  
 D's Place – Cottonport  
 July 26, 2025 @ 6:00pm  
 318.717.4526

LOUISIANA

Feed Your Soul.

ExploreLouisiana.com

TravelAvoyelles.com | 800.833.4195

8592 Hwy 1, Mansura, LA

live alligator feeding show. Bring the children for photos with a baby gator and “holding snake” after the show. You will also hear traditional songs and stories of south Louisiana’s flora and fauna performed by Tunica Biloxi tribal members Donna Pierite and family. Visit [www.paragoncasinoresort.com](http://www.paragoncasinoresort.com) for more information.

But wait, there’s more: From 5:00pm to 7:00pm, just eight minutes away from the Gator Show, there is a fun food tasting event Allons Souper, Jr. at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Fifth Ward, located at 1315 Eggbend Road in Marksville. Our Lady of Lourdes Church is hosting a mini version of their Allons Souper, a “Lourdes” food tasting event with a unique twist. Allons Souper, Jr. will showcase the cooking talents of our young chefs. Why not make it a fun family occasion. How much fun would it be to pass around and sample favorite dishes created and presented by our Junior Chefs and the person who has taught them the art of cooking?

Tickets are \$10.00 per person for food tasting; beverages will be available and onsite raffle all to benefit OLL’s Youth Ministry. Call (318) 729-2851 for tickets or



information on how to register to be a Junior Chef for the event.

Take it down the road to D’s Place in Cottonport at 659 Indian Bayou Road for The Gospel Show, beginning at 6:00pm. The show will feature spiritual performances by The Spiritual Five from Beaumont, Texas, Melodies of Praise of Crowley, The Sensational Soul Searchers of Baton Rouge, Larry Brooks & The New Zion Travelers of Dallas, TJ and Trinity of Alexandria, Clarence Gatlin of Beaumont, and Three-Fold Dancers of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Doors open at 5:00pm and the show begins at 6:00pm. Pre-Sale tickets are available for \$15.00, \$20.00 if purchased at the door. Children 12 and under \$5.00 at the door only. To purchase tickets or additional details, call Lawrence Allen at (318) 717-4526

Contact Mary, Murial, Nelda, or Wilbert for all your questions in reference to Avoyelles Parish Tourism and your ExploreLouisiana Travels. Email [tourism@kriket.net](mailto:tourism@kriket.net), Facebook @TravelAvoyelles, or give us a call at (318) 964-2025 or check us out at [www.travelavoyelles.com](http://www.travelavoyelles.com).



**PREDICTABILITY  
IS WATT MATTERS**

Maximize your monthly budgeting power with Cleco’s Budget Billing Program. Budget Billing spreads the billing for energy usage over a 12-month period, so you can pay about the same amount each month.

To learn more about managing your monthly bills with Budget Billing, visit [cleco.com/wattmatters](http://cleco.com/wattmatters).

# Learning to Manage Stress Before It Manages You

By Christy Pennison, LPC-S



Stress. We all experience it, and as a therapist, I can tell you it doesn't discriminate. It shows up in every walk of life—at work, at home, in relationships, and in moments when we least expect it. Feeling stressed is completely normal, and in small doses, it can motivate and focus us. But when it becomes chronic, it can quietly build until it's managing you.

I've watched this happen so many times—and felt it myself. You're getting through the days, putting out one fire after another. You tell yourself it's just a "busy season" or that "things will slow down soon," and you keep going. Meanwhile, your body forgets how to relax. You're always a little on edge, always looking for the next shoe to drop. You don't notice how drained you've become until your body forces you to slow down.

Why is this happening more often? Today's world doesn't reward rest. We're plugged in 24/7, responding to alerts, requests, and demands, trying to balance family responsibilities, financial pressures, and the weight of global events. It's no wonder chronic stress has become an epidemic. Left unmanaged, it doesn't just affect your mood—it impacts your relationships, your health, and your overall quality of life.



The good news is that you can learn to shift from surviving to thriving. The first step is noticing it. Check in with yourself throughout the day. What are you feeling? Where are you holding tension? What thoughts are looping in your mind? Awareness gives you the space to respond intentionally.

Once you notice it, give yourself permission to slow down and recover. You're not a machine, and recovery doesn't have to be a long vacation. Sometimes, it's as simple

as a ten-minute walk, a quiet cup of tea, or choosing to shut down work emails after 5:00pm. Even tiny moments of rest can teach your body and brain how to step out of "fight or flight" mode and settle back into a state of balance.

Movement can also be a powerful tool. You don't have to run a marathon or spend hours at the gym—a walk around the block, some stretches in your living room, or a yoga class can help shift the tension that builds in your body when you're stressed.

Finally, don't be afraid to get support. Chronic stress can make you feel isolated, but you don't have to walk this path alone. Talking openly with a therapist, joining a support group, or sharing with a trusted friend can help you find new ways to manage and overcome the pressures you're carrying.

Life will always have its seasons of stress, but with awareness, intention, and a willingness to slow down, you can shift from feeling like life is happening to you, to feeling like an active participant in creating balance, resilience, and a sense of well-being. Chronic stress doesn't have to win—and with the right tools and support, you can learn to manage it before it manages you.

**UP'N ADAMS**

**Adams Pest Control**

**THE ONE IN CENLA**

**Alexandria • Natchitoches  
Marksville • DeRidder**

**318.443.7311 [www.upnadam.com](http://www.upnadam.com)**

# Christmas in July? Yes!

By Debbie Guy, LCSW



Yep, Christmas in July. I'm a newbie and it all started with a career move. After forty years in the school system, where I experienced the luxury of one week off for Thanksgiving and two weeks off for Christmas, that shrunk to two and a half days off at my new job! Yikes! Weekdays, week nights, and weekends were crammed! Exhaustion invited the Grinch.

Christmas in July is not a new idea. It was first reported in July 1933 when Keystone Camp co-founder injected some whimsy into their routine. Later, in 1942, a church

held a "Christmas Presents in July" service to collect presents in time to send to missionaries. During World War II, officials promoted Christmas cards in July for our soldiers. And lastly, in the hot, non-air-conditioned vaudeville days, theaters closed. Performers congregated in summer colonies and celebrated Christmas on July 4th because they were all together which was unattainable during their busy winter season.

So, ponder those concepts not bound to a date—thoughtfulness, kindness, togetherness, with some magic sprinkled in! Let's ignore the "It's too early!" clamor and focus on planning and prepping for an upcoming beautiful, less stressful, joyful Christmas season. You know, the "Jesus is the Reason" one.

First, the elephant in the room—finances. Christmas shopping is fun! Therefore, Black Friday, the traditional kick off day, is not the time to surprise your spouse with "we're maxed out", especially after

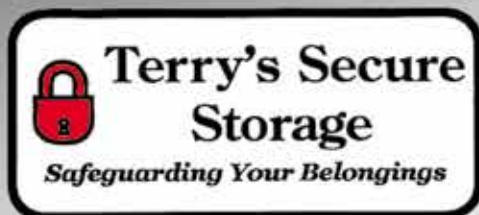
you signed a second deer lease, replaced your nine iron, or purchased a third carbon fishing rod. They assumed that, surely, when you did that, you remembered that Christmas was around the corner. Trust me, it will not end well. So, discuss the budget with thoughtfulness in mind, today!

On to acts of kindness—those small, just because it's Christmas, I appreciate you, gifts quickly absorb our energy and budget. A little something for the teacher, the aide caring for an aunt, the Angel Tree, or the infamous Dirty Santa Game. Tackle those first. If you prefer food gifts, bake and freeze your signature cookies. They'll last three to six months. Don't bake? No worries, 'tis the season for our local farmer's market with fresh traditional or with a twist, jams, syrups, salsas. Shop

local specialty stores or flea markets with booths of soaps, lotions, or handmade, can-be-personalized choices. A few items every now and then doesn't break the bank and supports our neighbors. Lastly, local gift cards or lottery tickets are always a hit. Ta-da! You have simple, thoughtful gifts on hand.

Finally, togetherness. Some families are the Walton's, while others are just, well, not. Our wonderful lives are fraught with logistics. Pull out the calendar and be creative. One of my friends gathers their extended families at a state park every July 4th. They decorate their campers, wear their Christmas garb and have a full-blown Christmas. For us, knock-on-wood, it's New Years. It's okay to pick a random day. The purpose is being together.

So, blessings on us newbies, get started now, scare away the Grinch, early preppers. We can do this! Yes, we can!



**Residential and  
Commercial Storage**

- Climate Control and Standard Units
- Computerized Entry & Exit
- Personalized Access Code
- State-of-the-Art Surveillance
- Perimeter Fence

- Well-Lit Premises
- On-Site Manager
- Internet Access
- Boxes and Packing Supplies Available



**3620 Cottonwood Drive • Alexandria, LA • 318-484-9989**

# EDUCATION FOCUS

## LSUA Receives 10-Year Reaffirmation of SACSCOC Accreditation



Louisiana State University of Alexandria (LSUA) proudly announces it has received reaffirmation of its accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the accrediting body responsible for ensuring educational quality across 750 institutions, including 42 in Louisiana. The reaffirmation, effective for the next decade, confirms LSUA's ongoing commitment to academic excellence, strategic resource management, and student success.



# LSUA

## JOIN THE BIG DOGS!

Big opportunities start with the Generals. Join the fastest-growing, most affordable university in Louisiana. **Apply Today!**

**EXPLORE.LSUA.EDU**





The reaffirmation process, which began three years ago, required LSUA to demonstrate compliance with more than 70 rigorous quality standards, providing extensive evidence across all aspects of the university’s operations and educational programs. Central to the process was the successful implementation of LSUA’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), “Command Your Career,” a comprehensive initiative designed to enhance student career readiness and professional success through integrated academic programming, dedicated mentorship, and expanded student-support resources. Following a thorough off-site evaluation and an on-campus review, LSUA achieved reaffirmation without the need for additional reports or follow-up actions. The university will provide an interim progress report in 2030 detailing the effectiveness of the Command Your Career initiative.



Eamon Halpin, LSUA’s Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and SACSCOC Liaison, highlighted the significance of this achievement, saying, “The reaffirmation process was extensive, encompassing nearly every facet of campus operations and involving faculty, staff, and administrators. Successfully reaffirming accreditation with no required additional reports is a major milestone, reflecting our collective efforts to maintain high academic standards and continuously enhance student outcomes.” LSUA Chancellor Paul Coreil emphasized the broader impact of this accomplishment when he stated, “Receiving 10-year reaffirmation of our accreditation without additional actions required is an exceptional achievement, underscoring the quality of our degree programs and the dedication of our entire university community. This accomplishment not only strengthens LSUA’s academic reputation but also supports our strategic workforce-development mission as Louisiana’s fastest-growing four-year university.”

For more information about LSUA’s accreditation and academic programs, visit [explore.lsua.edu](http://explore.lsua.edu).



**HSM**  
HOLY SAVIOR MENARD

**ENROLL NOW  
FOR FALL**  
WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE




GRADES 7-12

📞 318.445.8233
📍 4603 COLISEUM BLVD, ALEXANDRIA, LA 71303
🌐 [WWW.HOLYSAVIORMENARD.COM](http://WWW.HOLYSAVIORMENARD.COM)

# Entertainment Focus

## Art

**July 11: 38th September Competition Opening Reception,** Alexandria Museum of Art (933 Second St, Alexandria), 6:00pm. Enjoy the opening reception for AMoA's annual juried exhibition, selected by a guest juror from national and international submissions. The exhibition highlights contemporary art practices in all media. Additionally, the September Competition connects the museum with artists that are excelling in their field and media. Call: 318-443-3458. themuseum.org

**July 12 & August 9: Second Saturday at the Museum,** Alexandria Museum of Art (933 Second St, Alexandria). Enjoy the Alexandria Museum of Art without admission charge on the second Saturday of the month. Cost: Free. Call: 318-443-3458. themuseum.org

**July 14-18: Gallery Groove Art Camp,** Alexandria Museum of Art (933 Second St, Alexandria). Campers will participate in fanciful, imagination-stretching art activities inspired by the art in AMoA's galleries. Campers will spend the week working in the gallery to create a variety of works with the guidance of AMoA Educator Cindy Cooper Blair. Ages 6-9 will meet daily from 9:00am-12:00pm; ages 10-12 will meet daily from 1:30pm-4:30pm. Pre-registration is required. Cost: \$100 AMoA members; \$150 non-members. Call: 318-443-3458. themuseum.org

## Music

**July 19: The Commodores,** Paragon Casino Resort Ballrooms (711 Paragon Place, Marksville), 8:00pm. Just like their hit song "Brick House," the Commodores have created a foundation that just won't budge. Don't miss your chance to see one of the greatest Motown and R&B / funk groups of all time live on the Mari Center stage. Cost: \$50.00+. paragoncasinoresort.com

## Theatre

**July 7, 14, 21, 28 & August 4: Military Monday at the Movies,** Grand Theatre Alexandria (2039 North Mall Drive, Alexandria). All military personnel and first responders can enjoy the ultimate movie experience at Santikos Entertainment for just \$5.00. Along with \$5.00 movie tickets, they'll also have access to a \$5.00 large drink and a \$5.00 large popcorn, making their cinema experience even more enjoyable and unforgettable. Valid ID required. Cost: \$5.00.

**August 1-3: Seussical Kids,** Lagniappe Theatre Company (7521 Coliseum Blvd, Alexandria). Transporting audiences from the Jungle of Nool to the Circus McGurkus, the Cat in the Hat, our narrator, tells the story of Horton, an elephant who discovers a speck of dust containing tiny people called the Whos, including Jojo, a Who child, who gets in trouble for thinking too many "thinks." Although Horton faces ridicule, danger, kidnapping and a trial, the intrepid Gertrude McFuzz never

loses faith in him. Ultimately, the powers of friendship, loyalty, family and community are challenged and emerge triumphant! Friday and Saturday evening performances begin at 7:00pm; Sunday matinee begins at 2:30pm. Cost: \$12.25. Call: 318-487-8243. lagniappetheatre.com

## Events

**Ongoing-July: New Hope Al-Anon Group,** Horseshoe Drive Methodist Church (1600 Horseshoe Drive, Alexandria), 7:00pm. The New Hope Al-Anon Group meets each Tuesday and Thursday evening. Al-Anon is a mutual support group for anyone having experienced a problem with someone else's drinking or addiction. You are free to ask questions or to talk about your situation or just listen. Every meeting is different. Each meeting has the autonomy to be run as its members choose, within guidelines designed to promote Al-Anon unity. Cost: Free.

**Ongoing-August 15: Summer Meals for Kids,** Rapides Parish Library. The Food Bank of Central Louisiana, Inc. is participating in the Summer Food Service Program. Meals will be provided to all eligible children without charge at the Main Library, Martin, Robertson, and McDonald branches and are only available during posted times. Meals must be eaten at the Library. This institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider. For location specific dates and times, visit the Rapides Parish Library calendar online at [www.rpl.org](http://www.rpl.org). Cost: Free.

**Ongoing-August 29: Paragon Indoor Pool Party,** Paragon Casino Resort (711 Paragon Place, Marksville), 2:00pm-5:00pm. Make a splash at Paragon Casino Resort with new weekly pool parties every Saturday this summer! Open to all ages, the party will feature swimming, DJ, and the pool bar open for refreshments. Cost: \$25.00 (Ages 13+); \$10.00 (Ages 2-12); Registered Hotel Guests Free. Call: 800-946-1946. paragoncasinoresort.com

**July 8, 15, 22, 29 & August 5: Alexandria Farmer's Market,** First United Methodist Church (2727 Jackson Street, Alexandria), 3:00pm-6:00pm. The Alexandria Farmers Market is a weekly gathering that connects the community of Alexandria with the farmers, ranchers, and agricultural artisans of Central Louisiana. This connection strives to improve the physical, social, and economic well-being of the region by providing access to fresh, healthy, local food for residents, fostering community relationships, and serving as a business incubator for growers and producers. Cost: Free. Call: 318-441-3407.

**July 9: Child Safety Seat Check,** Rapides Regional Medical Center Main Entrance (211 4th Street, Alexandria), 2:00pm-5:00pm. A trained child passenger safety educator will take a look at your car seats, make sure they are not under recall, make sure the seat is installed properly and show you how to install the car seat. The car seat check process takes between 15-25 minutes, depending on how many car seats are in the vehicle. The seat checks normally are held the second Wednesday of each month. Cost: Free.

**July 10: Outreach Storytime with Forts Randolph and Buhlow,** Libuse Branch Library (6375 Highway 28 East, Pineville), 10:30am-11:30am. Join us for this interactive and fun storytime as Forts Randolph and Buhlow Outreach invites children to come to the Libuse Branch to listen to a civil war themed story. There will also be demonstrations of Civil War materials and uniforms. Cost: Free. [rpl.org](http://rpl.org)

**July 10: Book Signing with Berchman Richard,** Westside Regional Library (5416 Provine Place, Alexandria), 11:00am-1:00pm. Local author, Berchman Richard, will be signing and selling his new book, "Death on the Atchafalaya" at the Westside Regional Library. This story weaves together three plotlines: 1. The quest for an ancient treasure chest filled with stolen gold, hidden in the Louisiana swamps, and the men who search and die for it. 2. Two older men embarking on a final



Scan for a full listing of events at



# Entertainment Focus

adventure aboard a small cabin cruiser, traveling through Texas and Louisiana's waterways, heading toward the Atchafalaya swamp. 3. The convergence of these two stories as men in the swamp fiercely guard the secret of the buried gold from those who seek to steal it. Cost: Free. rpl.org

**July 12 & August 9: AMoA Knitting & Crochet Circle**, Alexandria Museum of Art (933 Second St, Alexandria), 11:00am-3:00pm. Anyone can come and knit in the galleries. Open to all ages. Just getting started? AMoA has limited materials to get you started. Cost: Free. Call: 318-443-3458. themuseum.org

**July 16: Cenla Women's Connection Luncheon**, Alexandria Convention Center (2225 North MacArthur Drive, Alexandria), 12:00pm. July's program features are Laine Berry Miller and Denise LaBorde Durbin who will present "How Our Decisions Today Affect All Our Tomorrows," and includes salad, entrée, dessert and coffee/tea. Please RSVP by Thursday, July 11th. Cost: \$25.00. Call: 318-447-4673.

**July 16: STEM @ the Library Zoo Visit**, Martin Branch Library (801 West Shamrock, Pineville), 2:00pm-3:00pm. Join us for a unique and educational experience as the Alexandria Zoo brings the wild to the library! Meet some amazing animal ambassadors and learn fascinating facts about their habitats, behaviors, and conservation efforts. This engaging program offers a rare opportunity to see and learn about exotic animals up close, right here in the library. Perfect for all ages, this event is designed to spark curiosity and deepen our understanding of the natural world. Cost: Free. rpl.org

**July 18 & 25: Author of the Month: Artist & Author Morris Taft Thomas**, 5:00pm-6:00pm. Artist and author Morris Taft Thomas offers two opportunities to attend a presentation and signing for his latest book, *Art and Vision: A Family Tradition*. Mr. Thomas has won numerous awards and recognitions for his many talents. His work is in many public and private collections. There

will be a door prize giveaway from author. July 18th: King Branch Library (1115 Broadway Avenue, Alexandria); July 25th: Rapides Main Library (411 Washington Street, Alexandria). Cost: Free. rpl.org

**July 19: 45th Annual Natchitoches NSU Folk Festival**, NSU Prather Coliseum (220 South Jefferson Street, Natchitoches), 9:00am-9:30pm. The 45th Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival will be held inside air-conditioned Prather Coliseum on Northwestern State University's campus. This year's festival theme is "Crafting Louisiana" will feature more than 80 crafts vendors, red beans and rice cookoff, Louisiana State Fiddle Championship, line dancing, storytelling, and three stages for live music! Kids Fest will be open from 9:00am to 4:00pm. Cost: \$10.00 Adults; \$6.00 After 5pm; Children 12 and Under Free. Call: 318-357-4332. louisianafolklife.nsula.edu

**July 20: Central Louisiana Orchid Society Meeting**, St. James Episcopal Church EYC Building (1546 Albert Street, Alexandria), 2:30pm. Learn everything you need to know about orchids and how to grow them. Get hands on help with your plants! There is a monthly plant raffle, blooming orchid entry for Show and Tell plus refreshments. In addition, there are opportunities to attend American Orchid Society shows/sales throughout the year.

**July 21: Cenla Diabetes Support Group**, New Horizons Living Center (3717 Government Street, Suite 1, Alexandria), 10:00am-11:30am. New Horizons Independent Living Center and the Alexandria Lions Club have partnered to create a support group where you can share your experiences living with diabetes. The meeting will offer a sample tasting of a diabetic-friendly dish. All Cenla residents living with Type I, Type II, or Gestational Diabetes are invited to attend. Cost: Free. Call: 318-484-3596.

**July 21: Junk Journaling**, Robertson Branch Library (809 Tioga High School Road, Ball), 2:00pm-3:30pm. Join us for

a hands-on workshop where creativity meets storytelling! Junk journaling is a fun and expressive way to turn everyday materials—like old book pages, ticket stubs, postcards, and scrap paper—into beautiful, personalized journals. Open to ages 13 and up; all experience levels welcome. All materials will be provided, but feel free to bring your own paper treasures to add a personal touch. Space is limited; please pre-register online. Cost: Free. rpl.org

**July 21-25: Lady Chops Summer Reading Entertainment**, Rapides Parish Libraries. Elizabeth Vidos, also known as Lady Chops, brings her one-woman drumming show to Louisiana Libraries this summer! She is a talented percussionist whose program titled "Drum Roll Please" is energetic, interactive, and fun as she incorporates over 15 different instruments including buckets, body percussion, and the Cajun rubboard. You don't want to miss this interactive show for all ages! Visit the Rapides Parish Library website or scan

the QR code in this month's calendar for specific dates, times, and locations. Cost: Free. rpl.org

**July 22 & 24: Safe Sitter Class**, RRM Education Department (211 Fourth Street, Alexandria), 8:30am-4:00pm. Each offering of this one-day class is designed to teach boys and girls, aged 11-14 years old, how to be safe babysitters. It is a fun way for babysitters to learn important topics such as how to handle emergencies, how to entertain kids, CPR/choking rescue for children and infants, basic child care skills, babysitting business skills, and how to keep themselves safe while babysitting. Space is limited for each session. Cost: \$45.00. Call: 318-769-4440.

**July 23: Back to School Supply Giveaway**, Rapides Mail Library (411 Washington Street, Alexandria), 9:00am-11:00am. Annual School Supply Giveaway sponsored by Healthy Blue! Limited to the first 500 children. Supplies are appropriate for elementary

## Two Convenient Locations to Serve You!



49 Pinecrest Drive  
Pineville, LA  
(Near Outlaw's BBQ)

5803 Jackson Street Ext  
Alexandria, LA  
(Next to Red River Music)

## Taste the thrill of the chill!

- Full Event Beverage Catering Available
- A Menu of Over 100 Daiquiris
- Convenient Drive-Thru

Monday - Thursday: 11:00am - 9:00pm  
Friday - Saturday: 10:00am - 11:00pm  
Sunday: Noon - 8:00pm



# 318-487-0007

# Entertainment Focus

and junior high grades. Child must be present. This will be a drive-thru event. Cost: Free. [rpl.org](http://rpl.org)

**July 24: Cenla Author's Club Meeting,** Westside Regional Library (5416 Provine Place, Alexandria), 6:00pm-8:00pm. The Cenla Authors' Club is open to authors and writers of all levels and genres, and anyone interested in learning more about the book-writing process, even if you haven't written your first word (yet!). This month's speaker will be John H. Lawrence, former program director at the Historic New Orleans Collection. John will speak on his acclaimed book, "Louisiana Lens: Photographs from the Historic New Orleans Collection." Cost: Free.

**July 26: Live Gator Feeding Show,** Paragon Casino Resort Hotel Atrium (711 Paragon Place, Marksville), 4:00pm. Join the crowd in the hotel lobby on the last Saturday of each month for a live alligator feeding show. Bring

the children for photos with a baby gator after the show. You will also hear traditional songs and stories of south Louisiana's flora and fauna performed by Tunica-Biloxi tribal members Donna Pierite and family. Cost: Free.

**July 29: 1920s Summer's End Soirée,** Martin Branch Library (801 West Shamrock, Pineville), 3:30pm-5:30pm. Step back in time and celebrate the end of summer in style at our 1920s-themed Summer Soirée! Join us for an evening of vintage glamour, jazzy vibes, and literary charm as we toast to a season well-read. Dress to impress in your finest flapper or dapper attire, sip on mocktails, enjoy light refreshments, and revel in the golden age of books and bootleg fun. Open to adults 18+. No password required—just a love of reading and a flair for the fabulous. Cost: Free. [rpl.org](http://rpl.org)

**July 30: Back-to-School Supply Giveaway & Storytelling Celebration,** King Branch Library (1115 Broadway

Avenue, Alexandria), 3:00pm-4:30pm. Let's kick off the school year together with stories, smiles, and support! The Back-to-School Supply Giveaway is a special event filled with fun, inspiration, and free school essentials for students along with a story time done by Poncinella the Storyteller! Whether you're preparing for kindergarten or heading into high school, we're here to help students start the school year with confidence and excitement! Come early as supplies are limited! Cost: Free. [rpl.org](http://rpl.org)

**July 31: The Summer's End Soirée,** Martin Branch Library (801 West Shamrock, Pineville), 4:00pm-5:00pm. The summer's over, but we're going out with a bang! Join us for the ultimate End-of-Summer Reading Party to celebrate all the amazing books you've devoured this season. We'll have sundaes, games, and a ton of fun as we wrap up summer with friends and good vibes. Whether you've read one book or ten, this is your chance to share your favorites, chat about what you've been reading, and enjoy a sweet treat. The perfect way to celebrate your summer reading achievements before school starts! Don't miss out on the sundaes, laughs, and the chance to say goodbye to summer in style. Let's make it a party to remember! Cost: Free. [rpl.org](http://rpl.org)

**August 2: Experimental Aircraft Association 1st Saturday Breakfast,** Buhlow Lake Airport (200 Lake Buhlow Road, Pineville), 7:30am-10:00am. Come enjoy a hearty breakfast of eggs, sausage, pancakes, grits, potatoes, milk, orange juice, and more! Anyone interested in aviation and general cordial chatter with lakeside ambience is welcome and invited to come to enjoy breakfast with us! Cost: \$10.00 Donation.

**August 2: Central Louisiana Dutch Oven Cookers First Saturday Gathering,** Indian Creek Recreation Area (100 Camp Ground Road, Woodworth), 9:00am-12:30pm. A delicious day with Dutch oven cooking enthusiasts. There is no charge for food, however, donations are accepted.

Regular park admission applies. Call: 318-625-1762.

**August 2: Alexandria Mall Summer Mode,** Alexandria Mall Food Court (3437 Masonic Drive, Alexandria), 1:00pm-3:00pm. Summer Mode is all about creating a fun and festive atmosphere for families to come together and enjoy the season. Gather your little ones for an afternoon featuring a screening of "The Dog Who Saved Summer", games, and crafts that celebrate our four-legged friends! Cost: Free.

## Sports

**July 8, 15, 22, 29 & August 5: Yoga in the Gallery,** Alexandria Museum of Art (933 2nd Street, Alexandria), 5:45pm. Chill out every Tuesday with yoga classes taught by Learn with Laci. Registration is not required. Cost: Free. Call: 318-443-3458. [themuseum.org](http://themuseum.org)

**July 26: MicroMania Wrestling,** Laborde Earles Coliseum (5600 Coliseum Boulevard, Alexandria), 7:00pm. MicroMania Wrestling is a high powered, explosive, athletic Pro Wrestling show with just the right touch of comedy thrown in to make for a unforgettable big event--just not necessarily big people! The night will feature two MicroMania singles matches and a Main Event Battle Royale featuring all the stars of MicroMania! Finishing off the show will be a performance by the hottest little band in the world, Mini KISS! This group of talented little people is known for their electrifying KISS-inspired performances that have rocked audiences at venues worldwide. Cost: \$31.00+ Call: 318-442-9581. [rpclive.org](http://rpclive.org)

**August 2: Bulls, Bands, and Barrels,** Laborde Earles Coliseum (5600 Coliseum Boulevard, Alexandria), 6:30pm. This ain't your grandpappy's rodeo! Your 2025 Bulls, Bands, & Barrels lineup is here! Treaty Oak Revival will headline with special guest, Kolby Cooper after an adrenaline packed night of bull riding and barrel racing. Cost: \$35.00-\$165. [rpclive.org](http://rpclive.org)

*\*All events subject to change.*



**REMEMBER THE FUN**  
JOIN OR RENEW TODAY  
[THEALEXANDRIAZOO.COM](http://THEALEXANDRIAZOO.COM)



# Lucky Wok Brings Asian Dining to Marksville



Paragon Casino Resort is excited to welcome guests to Lucky Wok, a fast-casual Asian restaurant serving a selection of traditional and modern dishes. It is Marksville's newest culinary destination and now open to the public.

Lucky Wok offers a curated selection of Asian-inspired dishes that emphasize bold flavor and convenience. Entrée choices include orange chicken, kung pao chicken, beef and broccoli, teriyaki chicken thighs, and sweet and tangy pork ribs. Sides feature options like roast pork fried rice, stir-fried green beans, and vegetable lo mein. Guests can choose from meal sizes including a bowl, medium plate, or large plate. To complement the meal, appetizers such as chicken egg rolls and potstickers are also available.

With this opening, Lucky Wok joins Paragon Casino Resort's diverse lineup of dining options, which include Legends Steakhouse, Roxy's Diner, Market Place Buffet, The Draft Room, Tamahka Grill, and Gator Coffee Co. Lucky Wok is located across from Legends Steakhouse, positioned between the Paragon's atrium and the casino floor, offering convenient access for both hotel guests and casino visitors.

"Lucky Wok brings something completely new to the table for our guests," said Marshall Ray Sampson, Sr., General Manager of Paragon Casino Resort. "With bold flavors, quick service and a central location in the resort, it's designed to meet the needs of both casual diners and those on the go. We know our returning guests will also love the new variety being added to our culinary lineup."



Lucky Wok is the newest addition to Paragon Casino Resort as the property closes out its 30th year of operation. In addition to Lucky Wok, Paragon has completed an extensive renovation of 531 rooms, upscale suites, hotel corridors and its lobby along with installing a beautiful eagle statue representing its tribal roots with the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana. Most recently, the casino resort added to its 64,000-square-foot gaming floor with the construction of the Dragon Link Den—which distinguishes Paragon as having the most fan-favorite Dragon Link slot machines of any casino in Louisiana.

To learn more or plan your visit, head to [paragoncasinoresort.com](http://paragoncasinoresort.com).

**Convenient Banking**  
Manage your  
finances  
online.

Online Banking ~ Bill Pay ~ eStatements

[www.sabinebank.com](http://www.sabinebank.com)

**SABINE STATE  
BANK**  
& Trust Company



**OUR GOAL,  
YOUR FUTURE SUCCESS.**

Member  
**FDIC**



# Your July Blueprint for Sun Safety, Hydration, and Seasonal Nutrition

By Jennifer Duhon, MS, RDN, LDN



Ah, July—the month of fireworks, flip-flops, and full-on sunshine! While we're all about soaking up those golden rays, it's also the perfect time to give your health a little summer sparkle. This month, we're diving into three sunny essentials: UV awareness, staying hydrated, and how the power of fruits and veggies can keep you healthy. Let's keep it light, bright, and bite-sized!

We love a good beach day, but those ultraviolet (UV) rays can be dangerous. Overexposure to UV radiation can lead to sunburn, premature aging, and increased skin cancer risk. But don't worry—you don't have to hide indoors; just be smart about soaking up the sun!

Sun-smart tips include:

- Seek shade between 12:00pm and 2:00pm. UV rate of 0-5 means low risk of harm.
- Splatter on broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher).
- Slip on a lightweight, long-sleeved shirt.
- Slap on a wide-brimmed hat.
- Slide on those UV-blocking sunglasses.
- Bonus: Sunscreen isn't just for beach days—make it part of your daily routine, like brushing your teeth or checking your phone 20 times before breakfast.



Sweating buckets in the summer heat? That's your body's way of saying, "Hey, I need a refill!" Dehydration can sneak up on you, causing fatigue, dizziness, and crankiness (aka "heat hangry").

Helpful hydration hacks include:

- Carry a reusable water bottle like it's your summer sidekick.
- Infuse your water with slices of citrus, cucumber, or mint for a spa-day vibe.
- Snack on water-rich foods like watermelon, strawberries, and cucumbers.
- Pro tip: A good hydration check? Your urine should be pale yellow, like lemonade.



If it's darker—closer to the color of apple juice—it's time to increase your fluid intake.

July is peak season for produce, and your body will thank you for loading up on nature's summer superstars—colorful, crunchy goodness. Fruits and veggies aren't just tasty—they're packed with vitamins, antioxidants, and hydration.

Top picks for July:

- Watermelon – 92% water and 100% delicious.
- Tomatoes – Rich in lycopene, a natural sun protector.
- Blueberries and Blackberries – Tiny but mighty antioxidants.
- Zucchini – Great grilled, spiralized, or hidden in brownies (yes, really).
- Peaches – Juicy, sweet, and perfect for a picnic.





**Daily Lunch Buffet • Full Service Catering • Banquet Room**

208 Main Street, Pineville, LA 71360 • 318.445.2655  
[www.southerncreationscatering.com](http://www.southerncreationscatering.com)



Try making a rainbow salad, blending a smoothie, or freezing fruit for DIY popsicles. Your taste buds (and your skin) will glow with gratitude.

This July, let's celebrate summer by being sun-smart, sipping often, and savoring the season's freshest flavors. Whether you're poolside, park-bound, or just chilling in the AC, a little awareness goes a long way toward a healthier, happier you.

Now go forth and shine—safely, sweetly, and with a slice of watermelon in hand!

# Watermelon Feta Salad

By Jennifer Duhon

This easy summer salad is packed with hydration and highlights two of Louisiana's super fruits. Our Rapides Parish 4-H students recently made this recipe from thefeedfeed.com for a Blackberry workshop day and it was a huge hit!

4 Cups Cubed Watermelon  
 1 Cup Fresh Blackberries  
 1/2 Cup Crumbled Feta  
 Juice of One Lime  
 1/4 Basil, Torn by Hand  
 Salt and Pepper, to taste

Add all ingredients to a bowl and gently toss until combined. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve cold.



**Snow Crab & Boiled Shrimp**

**Every Thursday Night**

**ROCKY'S**

**TUESDAY - SATURDAY  
11:00AM TO 9:00PM**

**VIDEO POKER!**

- Steaks
- Seafood
- Craft Cocktails
- Daily/Nightly Specials

FOLLOW US ON

**124 Lyle Avenue Bunkie, LA**

**318 346-1922**



# GRILL LIKE A PRO

## ENJOY RESPONSIBLY.

A message from MOCKLER BEVERAGE

BATON ROUGE • HOUMA • LAKE CHARLES  
ALEXANDRIA • LEESVILLE

# Eggplant Dressing, Smothered Fresh Corn, and Stuffed Bell Peppers

By Wilbert Carmouche

With sadness, I announce the passing of Avoyelles Commission of Tourism Board Member Clyde M. Neck representing attractions and Marksville. Mr. Neck was the president of the Hypolite Bordelon Home Society for many years and dedicated his talents to the ancestry home. One of the fundraisers he initiated was the printing of the cookbook, "Historic and Authentic French Recipes of the Marksville Area". This month, I found it most appropriate to dedicate this editorial to him utilizing fresh vegetable (plentiful now) recipes from "His Cookbook".

## Eggplant Dressing "Farre de Bre'me"

1 1/2 Pounds Ground Meat  
1 Large Onion, Chopped  
1/2 Bell Pepper, Chopped  
Salt and Pepper  
1 Large or 2 Medium Eggplants, Peeled and Diced  
1 Tablespoon Oil  
Cooked Rice

Brown meat in heavy pot. Add onion and bell pepper. Cook until limp. Salt and

pepper to taste. Add eggplant. Mix well. Add 2 cups water and simmer slowly in a pot that is partially covered. Eggplant would be tender. Mash large pieces with spoon. Mix with just enough cooked rice to make a moist, meaty dressing. This dressing can be stuffed into eggplant halves which have been hollowed out and par-boiled (bell peppers could be used as well). Top with breadcrumbs and bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for about 1 hour until browned on top and the shell is tender. Keep a small amount of water in the baking pan during cooking process.

## Smothered Fresh Corn "Mais Etouffee"

2 Quarts Corn, Cut from Cobb  
1 Medium Onion, Chopped  
2 Tablespoon Oil  
1 Tomato, Chopped  
1/2 Bell Pepper, Chopped  
Salt and Pepper to Taste

Warm oil in a heavy pot. Add corn and seasonings. Cook slowly, stirring often for about 30 to 45 minutes. Serve hot.

## Stuffed Bell Peppers "Pimentes Doux Farcis"

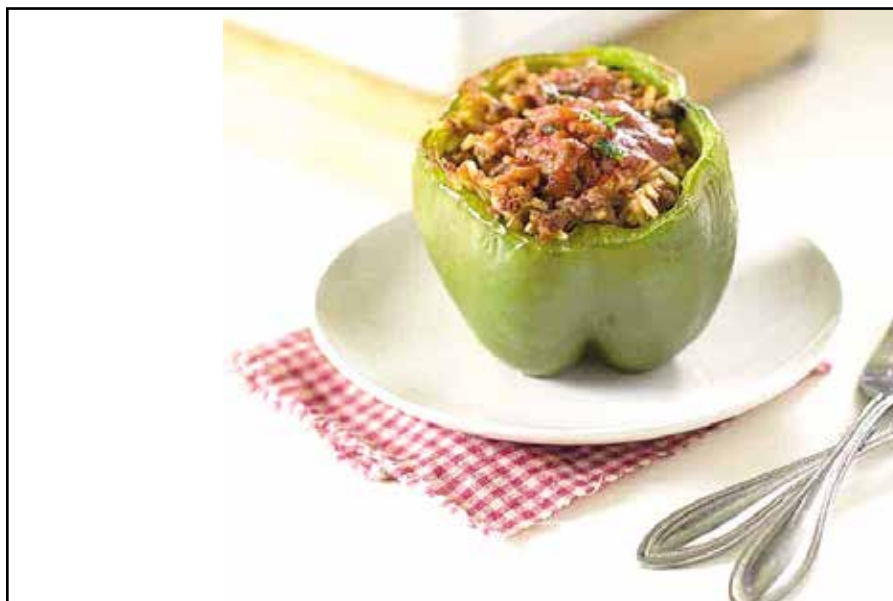
3/4 Pound Ground Meat (Beef)  
3/4 Pound Ground Pork  
1 Large Onion  
Salt and Pepper  
1 Large Bell Pepper, Cut Up  
Pinch of Sugar  
6 to 8 Bell Pepper Shells  
Bread Crumbs

Combine meats, onion, bell pepper, and all seasonings. Add 1/3 cup oil, pint water and cook until mixture is thick. You use bread or cooked rice combined with meat mixture for stuffing. Stuff peppers. Top with breadcrumbs. This will stuff 6 to 8 peppers. Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for about 20

to 25 minutes.

Farewell to a brilliant cook and an even better human being, historic preservationist, and most of all friends. May you rest in peace, Mr. Neck.

Avoyelles Parish cookbooks are available for sale in the gift shop located at ACT Office, 8592 Hwy. 1 Ste. 3, Mansura, LA 71350. These recipes were selected from "Historic and Authentic French Recipes of the Marksville Area, a collection of recipes from The Hypolite Bordelon Home Society of Marksville". Historic and Authentic French Recipes of the Marksville Area cookbook cost is \$6.00 plus \$5.00 for postage and handling. Call (800) 833-4195 for details or email us at [tourism@krocket.net](mailto:tourism@krocket.net).




Serving Cenla Since 1981  
**OLD FASHIONED**  
**Town & Country**  
**MEAT MARKET**  
The BEST Meat You'll Ever Eat!

*Tailgate Season is Coming!*  
**5801 Masonic Drive**  
**Alexandria, LA (318) 445-2791**

# 25¢ per Gallon Gas Featured in Nostalgic Celebration

Traveling down historic Louisiana Highway 71 or I-49 just off Exit 53, you'll find Bunkie—a small town full of history and charm. For travelers looking to stretch their legs or anyone looking for a unique experience, the all-new Griffin's Service Station is the perfect place to begin.

Located at 302 SW Main Street, it's an ultra-modern station with head-turning retro-style featuring a real '57 Chevy mounted high above the neon-trimmed canopy, making it impossible to miss. Griffin's is open 24/7, but what sets it apart is the full-service experience, available Monday through Saturday from 7:00am to 5:00pm, when an attendant offers to pump your fuel, wash your windshield, and check your tires at no extra charge.



Steps away from the service station, Griffin's Antiques and Main Street Market is a two-story treasure trove housed in a historic building. Inside, visitors enjoy house-made sandwiches, gourmet shakes, baked sweets, and specialty coffees in a nostalgic café. Orders can even be placed at the pump.

Mark your calendar for a spectacular event, Griffin's Service Station's Grand Opening Celebration on Saturday, August 2nd. Festivities begin at 8:00am with an unbelievable 25¢ per gallon gas promotion\* for anyone born in 1959 or earlier. The deal runs until 2:00pm or while supplies last. The promotion is the brainchild of owner Greg Kojis, who takes tremendous pride in his hometown and is dedicated to its revitalization while maintaining its nostalgic charm. "This is more than a gas station," says Kojis, "It's a throwback to when service meant something—and this celebration is our way of sharing that with the community."

The celebration, which is free and open to the public, has something for everyone. Visitors of all ages can enjoy live music, free hot dogs, sodas, ice cream, and the first-ever "Cruisin' Back in Time" Classic Car Show, featuring vehicles from 1985 or earlier.

Make time to explore other unique venues on Main Street such as Palace Farmer's Market and Hoover's 5 & 10 vintage novelty store. Whether you're stopping for gas or planning a day trip, Bunkie is more than a detour—it's a destination!

\*25¢ per gallon promotion valid for one time purchase of regular unleaded gas only on August 2, 2025, beginning at 8:00am and ending at 2:00pm, while supply lasts. Max of 15 gallons per customer born 1959 or earlier. Must present valid driver's license.



## SERVICE STATION

302 SW Main, Bunkie, LA  
Self Service 24/7  
Full Service 7AM-5PM, Mon.-Sat.







# NEW!

## Order from Griffin's Market right at the pump!

7AM-5PM, MON-SAT

Ask the attendant for details.



# DON'T MISS THIS CAR SHOW!

**Saturday  
August 2, 2025  
Bunkie, LA**

**FAMILY FUN - LIVE MUSIC - FREE HOT DOGS, ICE CREAM, SODAS**

Car show participants will be entered into drawings for

**\$5,000 in CASH PRIZES**

**20 winners of \$250 CASH each!**

**REGISTRATION  
IS FREE!  
SCAN CODE TO  
REGISTER NOW!**

**HURRY! Deadline to register, July 27, 2025.**



To be eligible to win, you must be preregistered AND sign in when you arrive at the car show. Only 1985 or older vehicles eligible. Lineup starts at 6:30am. Drawings from 8am-1pm. ID REQUIRED.

**GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION! SAT, AUG 2<sup>ND</sup> FAMILY FUN!**

**GRIFFIN'S**

**SERVICE STATION**

302 SW MAIN ST, BUNKIE, LA

**UNBELIEVABLE!  
GRAND  
OPENING  
PROMOTION!**

If your date of birth is 1959 or earlier,

GET UP TO  
15 GALLONS  
FOR

**25¢** PER  
GALLON!

OFFER VALID 8AM-2PM, 8-2-25  
REGULAR UNLEADED GAS ONLY.  
WHILE SUPPLY LASTS.

- Free Hot Dogs
- Free Ice Cream
- Free Cokes
- Free Admission
- **CAR SHOW**
- **LIVE MUSIC**

All offers valid while supply lasts. Event subject to change or cancellation without notice.

WHILE SUPPLY LASTS. RESTRICTIONS APPLY. ID REQUIRED. MAXIMUM PER PERSON, 15 GALLONS.

# Grand Opening and 40<sup>th</sup> Year Celebration

Wednesday, August 6<sup>th</sup>  
1016 Calais Circle (Off Versailles Boulevard)



Offering Auto, Homeowners, Condo, Renters, Personal Articles, Business, Life, Health, Pet

1016 Calais Circle Alexandria, LA 71303 | (318) 445-7133 | [GaryClarkAgent.com](http://GaryClarkAgent.com)





Anna Lee, Charlie Mercer



Rebecca Lemoine, Van Roy, Allison Ferguson



Ron &amp; Shawnee Parker



Shoriterika Payton, Mayor Ronnie Williams, Jr.



Lisa King, Kim Wilkerson



Cheyenne &amp; Brandon Myers



Marcus Sandoval, Michael Jones



Matthew &amp; Erin Mallette



H.B. &amp; Glenda Smith



Casey &amp; Rachel Cummings



Kim &amp; Kenny Brady



Sherri Critcher, Gary Burnaman



Leslie &amp; Greg Kojis



Paul Corell, Ed Caplan



Jason McManus, Steve Piercy



Brooke &amp; Wes Smart



Erin Anderson, Blake Graves



Patrick Cunningham



Judy &amp; Dave Curry



Chris Barbry



Jim Smilie, Landon Proctor



Roy Rosenthal, Dan Cohn



Eric Herrington



Mayor Joe Bishop



Kelvin Williams, Mary Bertrand



Angela Pitts, Lisa Ferguson



Derike Pierite, Tony Pierite



Wilbert Camouche



Fredrick Evans



Alton Lucas



THE HOTEL BENTLEY



"THE HOTEL BENTLEY — IT MAKES A STATEMENT ON ITS OWN."  
200 DESOTO STREET - DOWNTOWN ALEXANDRIA - 318-442-2226

THE HOTEL BENTLEY IS AVAILABLE TO HOST YOUR NEXT WEDDING RECEPTION OR EVENT.  
EVENT VENUE SPACES ARE AVAILABLE THAT RANGE FROM 10 TO AS MANY AS 300 GUESTS.  
CONTACT US TO SCHEDULE YOUR NEXT MEMORABLE EVENT.

[www.VisitHotelBentley.com](http://www.VisitHotelBentley.com)

# The Most Dragon Link Games in Louisiana!

## LET'S HAVE A BLAST! PROMOTIONS & EVENTS



**INSANE  
ROOM  
PACKAGE!**

**\$145\***

With Paragon Card

**SUN-THURS • NOW THRU AUG 28**

Includes room, meals, movie tickets, child care, arcade tokens, Topgolf.

**CALL TO BOOK TODAY! 800-946-1946**

\*\$165 without Paragon Card. Restrictions apply to offer. Visit ParagonCasinoResort.com for details.



**SAT, JULY 19 DOORS: 7PM • SHOWTIME: 8PM • TICKETS FROM \$50**

Visit [ParagonCasinoResort.com](http://ParagonCasinoResort.com) to purchase tickets.

Events or performers subject to change or cancellation without notice.



**SAT JULY 19 • 6PM**

**\$150 PER COUPLE | \$75 PER PERSON**  
Includes Dining Packages

PRE-PAID RESERVATION REQUIRED • Call 318-253-2040 from 3PM-9PM

**21+ PM POOL PARTY!**  
**SAT JULY 5 9PM-1AM**

Win a share of **\$500 FREE PLAY!** Patriotic Swimwear Contest, Wet T-Shirt Contest and more!

Includes One Free Drink

**\$25** Hotel Guests  
**\$30** Non-Hotel Guests

RENT A CABANA!  
\$50 for 10 guests  
Includes 10 free drinks!

**EARN 1 PT = \$9.99 MEAL CREDIT!**

Select restaurants, not on specials, 1/person/day.

**MON-THUR  
8AM-8PM**

**LUCKY  
WOK**

**NOW  
OPEN DAILY  
11AM**



**CHICKEN FRIED  
STEAK  
TUESDAYS  
11:30AM-10PM**

Dine-in only. No take-outs.  
\*\$9.99 without card.



**\$6.99\***

**WEDNESDAYS • 5-10PM**



**PRIME RIB \$9.99\***  
Dine-In Only

Includes Baked Potato  
& Vegetable

\*\$12.99 no players card; 14oz available  
\$13.99 w/ card, \$16.99 without. Print  
voucher at kiosk & bring to restaurant.  
Tax & tip not included in these prices.



**LUGGAGE COTTON CANVAS SET**

**SUN - TUES, JULY 6-29 • 12-10PM**

**\$400,000 HOT SUMMER NIGHTS**

**FRIDAYS IN JULY • 6-10PM**

**CÎROC FRIDAYS**

**FRIDAYS IN JULY • 5-9PM**

**FUN IN THE SUN GIFTS**

**SATURDAYS IN JULY • 2-6PM**

**YETI AND FREE PLAY**

**SATURDAYS IN JULY  
7:15PM, 8:15PM & 9:15PM**

**BIG BAD BINGO**

**SATURDAY, JULY 26 • 8PM**

### DON'T MISS OUT ON UPCOMING EVENTS!

- **TUESDAYS** • Senior Days
- **WEDNESDAYS** • Bingo 6PM
- **THURSDAYS** • Bingo 6PM, Senior Days
- **FRIDAYS** • 2-for-1 Seafood Buffet
- **SATURDAYS** • 2-for-1 Steak & Seafood Buffet
- **SUNDAYS** • Buffet Breakfast, 8-10:30AM; Buffet Brunch, 11AM-3PM
- **SUPER BINGO** • JULY 2 (limited to first 100 guests) & JULY 31
- **POOL PARTY** • Every Saturday thru August 30

For all gift giveaways, actual items may differ from photo. While supplies last. Visit Club Paragon for complete promotional details. Game responsibly. Need help? Call 877-770-STOP (7867).

*Paragon*

**CASINO | RESORT**



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT  
[PARAGONCASINORESORT.COM](http://PARAGONCASINORESORT.COM)