

In and about

Washington

February 2018

FREE—TAKE ONE

Superintendent: 'Repurpose' Washington Elementary

A consensus appears to be building among parish school authorities for closing Washington Elementary, although Superintendent Patrick Jenkins has said the campus might be “repurposed.” Meanwhile, citizens continue to await answers to concerns that the school has been unfairly dealt with over the past several years.

Questions have also been raised about the future of North Central High School.

School board members met Jan. 22 with representatives of Volkert Associates, a facilities management team hired to make recommendations about the futures of St. Landry's 33 public schools. Board members appeared to be in unanimous agreement over closing the Washington campus as an elementary school, but Jenkins said it could possibly be used to expand the Washington Career and Technical Education Center, which does not appear to be in jeopardy.

Under one proposal, a new high school will be built at Port Barre, and North Central students would be moved there. The North Central campus would then become an elementary school replacing Palmetto Elementary and possibly Washington. Another idea is to move Washington Elementary students to Plaisance.

The Washington Town Council on Dec. 18 officially asked that Jenkins meet “as soon as possible” to answer concerns that Washington students “have been willfully neglected ..., through the allocation of faculty, funding, and other resources.” A meeting was planned Jan. 18, but was cancelled and had not been rescheduled at month's end.



Mayor Joseph Pitre has since asked Jenkins for information “to include a list of all resources provided to all elementary schools in St. Landry Parish for the last two years ... to include computers, paint, supplies, staff and personnel.”

There was no immediate response to that letter.

Twice in a season

Washington saw its second snowfall of the season Jan. 16 as wet weather ushered in a cold snap that dropped overnight temperatures into the teens. (Story, pictures, on page 4).

Of Note

WASHINGTON BAPTIST

members will make a mission trip to Guatemala Feb, 12-16.

Clayton Dyess will bring "Music with a Message" to the church at 10:30 a.m. on Feb. 25.

THE WASHINGTON Senior Citizen Bingo Group meets at 6 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at the Washington Recreation Center on Martin Luther King Drive. All seniors are invited.

FREE HEALTH SCREENING for blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol will be Feb. 16, 8 to 11 a.m., in the "Health Buggy" in the Immaculate Conception parking lot.

SENIOR FOOD distribution will be Feb. 22, noon to 1:30 p.m., at the Community Center.



**Take pride in your town.
Keep your trash
to yourself**



Gallery closing

The Historic Washington Art Gallery on Veterans Memorial is closing. The gallery has been operated by a consortium of local artisans for nearly three years in an old Methodist church that was brought here from Lettsworth in Pointe Coupee Parish and renovated by attorney Tommy Dejean.

Garden Club Tea Set for March 11

The Washington Garden Club will host its annual high tea beginning at 2 p.m., March 11, at the Wolff Building. The theme is Wonderful World of Tea.

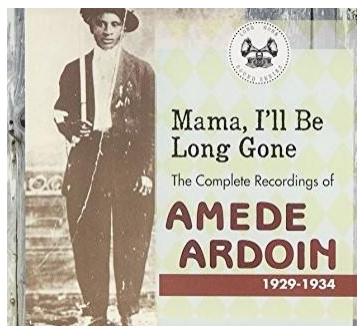
The soiree will feature foods and teas selected and prepared by garden club members and volunteers. Pianist Steve Smith will provide music.

Attendance is limited to 150. Tickets are \$35 each. They are available at Ardoin's Grocery in Washington and Sebastien's Jewelers in Opelousas; by calling Ethel Landreneau (826-7337, 945-0948), Ginger Fontenot (543-7432, 831-1055), or Catherine St. Cyr (412-5042); or from garden club members. Funds are used to continue the restoration and preservation of the old St. John's Episcopal Church.



Washington students on chancellor's list

Four students from Washington, Caroline Brignac, Yakita Cane, Laura Melancon, and Justin Stafford were named to the fall semester 2017 Chancellor's List at LSU-Eunice in recognition of their academic achievement. The list includes full-time students who maintain at least a 3.5 grade-point average on a 4.0 scale during the semester.



Ardoin statue dedication March 11

A statue of legendary musician Amédé Ardoin will be unveiled at 4 p.m. March 11 at the St. Landry Parish Visitors Center at the Nuba exit of I-49.

A committee raised \$15,000 for the statue of the musician whose music, a biographer said, "could make women weep and men stop fighting."



Now open

The Savannah Sports Grill is now open on weekends at the intersection of Main Street and Martin Luther King.

Parish opposing wastewater well

The St. Landry Parish Council has joined area citizens in opposing an injection well that would bring oilfield waste from neighboring states for underground storage near Washington.

The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources has not scheduled a public hearing on the well, but it is expected to do so in the first quarter of this year. The council plans to introduce a statement in opposition to the well at that hearing.



Eagle Oil Co. has applied for a permit to build the oilfield wastewater disposal well near Beggs, just north of Washington. Wastewater generated through fracking would be trucked from Texas, Mississippi, and other Louisiana parishes to the site on Hwy. 182.

The well will be a quarter of a mile from other known wells, as required under state regulation, but opponents say the stored wastewater will contain known carcinogens and that it will be within two miles of wells that could be impacted.

Environmentalists worry also that the well could contaminate the Chicot Aquifer, the principal source of drinking water in south Louisiana. They note too that it is near a federally regulated wetlands area.

Parish council members are also concerned that up to 100 trucks per day would travel to the well, affecting already deteriorating state highways and recently rebuilt parish roads.



Tree to be removed

The Town Council approved removal of a water oak on the grounds of the old water tower, Hill at Washington streets, because it is pushing on the fence and threatening electric lines.

From Town Hall

MAYOR'S COURT was cancelled in both December and February because of the weather. Anyone who had a court date in those months needs to appear at 5 p.m. on Feb. 20 at Town Hall.

2017 SALES TAX collections in Washington were better than in the past three years. Collections in 2017 totaled \$139,146. Collections in 2016 totaled \$116,241; in 2015 they were \$138,174; and they were \$127,067 in 2014.

THE TOWN COUNCIL

approved installation of speed bumps on Church Street near the Old Schoolhouse Antique Mall.

THE TOWN will not sponsor a Mardi Gras parade this year. Competition for good marching bands and their compensation have been a problem for the past several years.

THE TOWN COUNCIL meets at 7 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at Town Hall. Meeting agendas are posted on the Town Hall

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Bitter cold brings in the new year



The First Freeze

Day	High	Low
1	31	21
2	32	19
3	39	24
4	45	21
5	51	25
6	59	29

The Second Freeze

12	51	31
13	42	27
14	47	23
15	58	27
16	43	22
17	29	13
18	40	15
19	53	31

When Washington awoke to a 21-degree chill on New Year's Day and to hard freezes for the next four days, people said, "Well, at least it's dry. There's no ice." They spoke too soon.

That changed a week later, with the second freeze of the month and the second snowfall of the season. (The first was Dec. 8.)

It was 43 degrees at daybreak on Tuesday, Jan. 16, but that was as warm as the day would get. The temperature fell below freezing before 9 a.m. and into the 20s before noon. Frozen rain, sleet, and a few snowflakes began to come down at about 10 a.m. The rain and sleet gave way to powdery snow by mid-afternoon. A blanket of snow covered the town by sundown.

The actual temperature was 19 degrees at daybreak on Wednesday, Jan. 17; the wind chill was a frigid 2 degrees. Freezing weather continued into the late morning Friday, Jan. 19. Bits of snow lingered in the shadiest places until late morning Saturday, when the temperature climbed to a balmy 65.



The weather

Jan. 1 -Jan. 28
(Opelousas airport)

High: 72, Jan. 21

Avg. High: 53.3

Low: 13, Jan. 17

Avg. Low: 33.7

Rain: 4.48 inches

Rain in 2017: 56.50

