

SPORTS

Lady Pios win battle of top-ranked teams: Page 6



LIFESTYLES

Louisiana iris selected as state's Super Plant: Page 5

THE CROWLEY POST-SIGNAL



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LABI head urges, 'Fill the cup'

Waguespack: State can no longer rely only on culture and joie de vivre



LABI President and CEO Stephen Waguespack talks politics at Thursday's Legislative Breakfast.

BY STEVE BANDY
MANAGING EDITOR

CROWLEY - Culture and joie de vivre are not enough to sell Louisiana any more and the next 18 months will determine if the state continues its trend of losing citizens and businesses, according to Stephen Waguespack, president and CEO of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry. Waguespack spoke to a full house in the Rice Palace Banquet Room

Thursday morning for the annual Legislative Breakfast hosted by the Acadia Parish Chamber of Commerce. "People, businesses and wealth are moving and the South currently has a growth movement going on," Waguespack said. "However, Louisiana has the eighth-highest percentage of people leaving the state in the country, second in the south only to Mississippi." Those two states, he said, are projected to see

the largest loss of labor force in the country in the next 10 years. Statistics show that Texas has the largest gain in population while New York had the largest exodus of resident. "We sell our culture and our joie de vivre and back in the day that sold. But that's not going to cut it any more," Waguespack said. "We have to add stuff to the boot." He compared the state to a cup half filled with the cultural amenities — festi-

vals, food, "good times," etc. — that Louisiana is known for. "We have got to fill the cup," he said. Waguespack said citizens should decide their priorities and tell their elected officials those priorities. "We have a tremendous amount of opportunity right now," he said. "We're going to have an open governor's seat next year and with practically every

SEE LABI, PAGE 2

From a dream to reality

Crowley native turns rêver into novel set in Acadia Parish

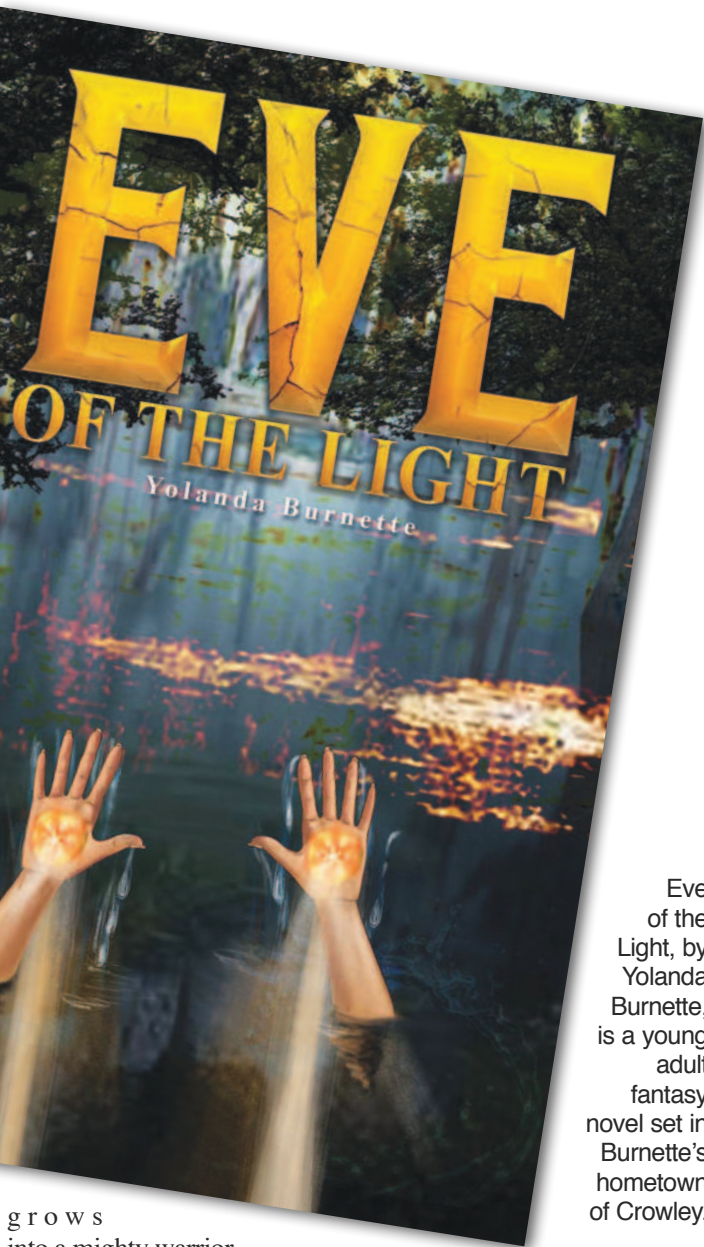
BY CLAUDETTE OLIVIER
NEWS EDITOR

Dreams — either forgotten as soon as the eyes open or so real, every detail recalled. For Crowley native Yolanda Burnette, one of her rêves (French for dream) was so evocative that she continued to build on it until it became reality in the form of a recently published novel. "I have always loved writing things, writing poetry, and I would write little stories, but I never showed them to anyone," Burnette said. "This story started developing in my mind. It actually started as a dream, and the dream was so vivid, when I woke up, I was like 'I should write that down.' "I wrote down everything I could remember and then I just kept thinking about it. I would add more and add more, and I was like, 'Well, I may as well try to write a whole book.' "I always had really vivid dreams ever since I was a child. Usually I would end up scared and run to my parents room," she said, laughing. Born and raised in Crowley, Burnette's family moved to Baton Rouge when she was 12 when her father changed jobs, and she has spent the last 20 years as an educator in Louisi-



Yolanda Burnette

ana's capital city. Her novel, "Eve of the Light," was recently published by international publishing house Austin Macaulay Publishers of London, England. The young adult fantasy novel, Burnette's first, is based in Acadia Parish. A description from the publisher reads, "The novel, Eve of the Light, celebrates and highlights South Louisiana, particularly Crowley culture, food, and places. Eve is as spicy as Louisiana crawfish, strong as the mighty live oak trees that sway in the South Louisiana wind, and magical as the heartbeat of Acadia. Readers will come along for the journey of a girl who



Eve of the Light, by Yolanda Burnette, is a young adult fantasy novel set in Burnette's hometown of Crowley.

grows into a mighty warrior queen, charged with safeguarding the light of hope for both the magical and human realms. "The audience will fall in love with the story of Eve, who finds her father, finds love and, through the guidance and counsel of the women in her ancestral line, finds her inner warrior queen."

"I just had this dream, and there was this sequence and ... there were so many components and that's why I woke up, and wrote it down," Burnette said. "It just kept coming to my mind, so I just kept kind of real-

SEE DREAM, PAGE 8

Crowley man arrested in Texas for 2020 Rayne shooting

TYLER, Texas — A Crowley man was arrested in Texas on a warrant stemming from a shooting that happened in Rayne in September of 2020.

Nathaniel Thomas, 22, was arrested on a warrant for attempted second-degree murder.



On September 20, 2020, Rayne Police responded to a shooting incident in the 1500 block of Edith Street.

As a result of the investigation, an arrest warrant was issued for Thomas. On March 30, 2022, detectives with the Rayne Police Department took custody of Thomas after he was arrested in Tyler, Texas, on the attempted second-degree murder warrant. Thomas was transported back to Acadia Parish where he was booked into the Acadia Parish Jail without incident.

Special council meeting set Wednesday at 4 p.m.

CROWLEY - A special meeting of the mayor and city council will be held at 4 p.m. Wednesday, April 6, prior to the regular committee meetings. Agenda for the meeting includes:

SEE COUNCIL, PAGE 2

Index

Classified.....	8
Editorial.....	4
Horoscopes.....	7
Lifestyles.....	5
Obituaries.....	2
Sports.....	6
Weather.....	6



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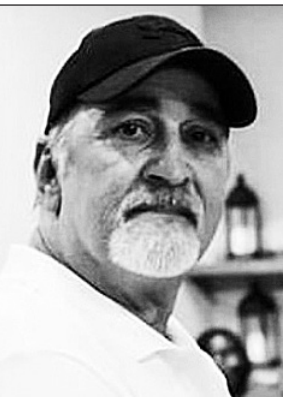
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Obituaries



Thomas John
“TJ” Roy

IOTA - Graveside services will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, April 6,

at St. Joseph Mausoleum in Iota for Thomas John “TJ” Roy, 57, who passed away Wednesday, March 30, 2022, at his home in Iota.
Fr. Jude Thierry will be officiating for the services.
Inurnment will be in St. Joseph Mausoleum.
He is survived by his wife, Brandy Dunnehoo Roy of Iota; three children, Rachael Nicole Fuselier and husband Alex of Lake Charles, Jessie Danae Roy of Reeves, and Ethan John Roy of Iota; his

mother, Anita Miller Roy of Iota; two siblings, Andrea Roy “Angie” Ewing and husband Kirk of Iota, and Scott Roy and wife Stephanie of Iota; and two grandchildren, Averie and Alivia Fuselier.
TJ is preceded in death by his father, Rodney Roy; and one brother, Anthony “Tony” Roy.
Condolences may be sent to the family by www.geesey-ferguson.com
Arrangements have been entrusted to Geesey-Ferguson Funeral Home of Iota.



Blaise
Leonard Thevis

MOWATA - A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11 a.m., Monday, April 4, at St. Lawrence Catholic Church in Mowata for Blaise Leonard Thevis, 53, who passed away March 30, 2022, surrounded by his loving family in Mowata.
Father Brent Smith, pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Rayne, will be officiating for the services.

The family is requesting visiting hours to be held Sunday from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Monday from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at Geesey-Ferguson Funeral Home in Crowley.
Interment will be in St. Lawrence Cemetery in Mowata.
Blaise was born March 13, 1969, in Crowley and resided in Iota. He was a graduate of Iota High School and worked for Zachry Construction as a crane supervisor for the past 20 years.
His favorite past times were joy riding in a Jeep, cooking, and spending time with family and friends.
Blaise’s most unique trait was going above and beyond for his daughter-in-law, and his two special grandchildren. He will be extremely missed by all who he touched.
He is survived by his daughter-in-law, Keren

Thevis Hebert and husband Bubba of Crowley; two grandchildren, Haleigh and Wesley Thevis; one sister, Lynette Thevis LaCombe and husband Doug of Iota; six brothers, James Thevis Jr. and wife Ella of Mowata, Daniel Thevis of Rayne, Steven Thevis and wife Kathy of Iota, Wayne Thevis and wife Rosie of Iota, Kelly Thevis of Crowley, and Bruno Thevis of Roberts Cove; and several nieces and nephews who loved their Uncle Blaise
Blaise is preceded in death by his son, Joshua Paul Thevis; his parents James and Norma Blanchard Thevis Sr.; and one brother, Gene Thevis.
Condolences may be sent to the family by www.geesey-ferguson.com.
Arrangements have been entrusted to Geesey-Ferguson Funeral Home of Crowley.

As expected, lawsuits challenge redistricting maps after override

BY VICTOR SKINNER
THE CENTER SQUARE

BATON ROUGE – Civil rights groups and voting activists have filed lawsuits challenging Louisiana’s new congressional redistricting map hours after lawmakers voted to override Gov. John Bel Edwards’ veto of the maps.
The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Louisiana and the law firm Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court on behalf of the Louisiana NAACP, Power Coalition for Equity and Justice and individual voters, claiming the map violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
“The Congressional map passed by the Louisiana legislature in February rejected basic principles of fairness and equity,” NAACP Louisiana State Conference President Michael McClanahan said. “The legislature knew that they could pass a map that complied with the Voting Rights Act and honored the will of community members who stood up and spoke out for fair maps during the redistricting process.
“When they failed to, the governor rightfully vetoed their unlawful and unfair map. We are going to federal court to demand a map that honors the rights and representation of Black Louisianans. We will be tireless in this fight.”
The Louisiana House voted, 72-31, and the Senate voted, 27-11, to override Edwards’ veto of House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 5, identical measures that establish new congressional districts for the next decade.
The vote was the first time since 1993 the Legislature successfully mustered the two-thirds majority in both chambers to overrule a gubernatorial veto.

Edwards vetoed the map March 9 “because it does not add a second majority minority district and runs afoul of federal law,” he wrote.
Democrats and voting rights activists argued throughout a special redistricting session in February the state’s growing Black population — now at about one-third of the total population — deserves the opportunity to elect a representative of their choice in two of Louisiana’s six congressional districts.
Republicans countered that diluting the existing minority majority district to create another could result in no opportunity and repeatedly cited competing priorities in the process, including state and federal laws and criteria set by the Legislature last year.
None of the redistricting maps approved by lawmakers — for the Legislature, Congress, state board of education or Civil Service Commission — expanded minority representation, despite growth in the Black population and a shrinking white population over the past decade.
“We are challenging these maps because they illegally undermine the political strength of Black voters in Louisiana,” ACLU attorney Alora Thomas-Lundborg said. “These maps run contrary to the principle of a representative democracy and clearly violate the Voting Rights Act.”
The NAACP-backed lawsuit came just hours before Baton Rouge attorney Darrel J. Papillion filed a separate U.S. District Court lawsuit, which also claims violations of the Voting Rights Act, The Tulane Hullabaloo reported.
Both lawsuits, filed against Louisiana Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin, ask the court to issue an injunction preventing the state from implementing the new congressional map, and to order a new redistricting plan that includes two minority majority districts.

APSO Daily Bookings: March 28 - 29

March 28	• Ti’Jhae Byers, Rayne: Arrested by Rayne P.D. for possession with intent to distribute marijuana; misdemeanor possession of drug paraphernalia; felony possession of a firearm in the presence of a controlled dangerous substance (no bond).	Sheriff’s Office for misdemeanor domestic abuse battery (\$2,500 bond).
• James Beard, Dry Creek: Arrested by Iota Police Department for felony alteration or removal of vehicle identification; misdemeanor possession of drug paraphernalia; felony possession of methamphetamine - less than 28 grams; misdemeanor possession of marijuana - first offense (\$1,500 bond).		• Todd Tweedel, Church Point: Arrested by APSO of a fugitive warrant from St. Landry Parish; two counts of simple burglary (no bond).
March 29	• Alan Miller, Crowley: Arrested by Acadia Parish	• Jaquantay Williams, Rayne: Arrested by Rayne P.D. on two counts of attempted first-degree murder (no bond).

LABI: Education reform touted

FROM PAGE 1

other state official running for governor, those seats will also be open.
“Tell the candidates what you want. Candidates are ready to be bold.”
LABI, the state’s Chamber of Commerce, this year is focusing on education reform and workforce development, along with redistricting this year. Waguespack took aim at education reform.
“Less than one-half of the children in Louisiana read at grade level in kindergarten through third grade,” he said. “There’s been a 5% drop in scoring among state students in the last two years” on the standardized tests.
Waguespack touted the proposed Education Savings Account he said would give families more freedom in choosing an educational plan for their children.
If adopted, parents would be able to use the state portion of funding

that would have been allocated for the child’s education at a public school and give them the ability to use it to enroll the child in a state-approved private school or to use the funds to purchase educational services through authorized providers.
The ESA program should be budget neutral as state funds currently allocated to school districts for the cost of funding a student’s education through the Minimum Foundation Program would instead be placed into an ESA for each student, which would be around \$5,500 per student.
The public schools would continue to receive the same local and federal funding.
“It prioritizes those people that don’t have the means to take their kids out of a public school they don’t like and put them into a private school setting,” Waguespack explained. “I think ESA will one day be the law of the land.”
In addition to education reform, other issues Waguespack said citizens should press candidates on

include infrastructure, the economy, tax reform, the legal system, equity concerns, parks and recreation, crime and violence and healthcare.
“Which one or more of these fills your cup?” he asked. “The next year and a half will be the most important year and a half Louisiana has had in along, long time,” he said.
A centralized sales tax collection system and a constitutional convention “that would channel power back to the parishes instead of to Baton Rouge” were also cited as necessary for the state’s survival
“Everyone knows how Louisianans respond to hurricanes ... we pull together, we persevere. The problem is that when we’re not attacked by a storm we tend to let our guard down.”
He compared the coronavirus pandemic to a Category 5 storm “that devastated the state’s economy.”
“We all need to get out there and fill the cup!”
(To sign up for LABI session alerts, text LABI to 66866).

COUNCIL: Sewerage collection

FROM PAGE 1

- consider approval of increasing the construction budget by \$201,130;
- authorized a program

amendment to be prepared, executed and submitted to the Office of Community Development (LCDBG) Public Facilities Program; and

- award the contract for the LCDBG-funded rehabilitation of the sewerage collection system, contingent upon approval and concurrence by CDBG.
- The meeting, as well as the subsequent committee meetings, will be open to the public and streamed live on the city’s YouTube page.

School Lunch Menus - Apr. 4-Apr. 8

Acadia Parish Public Schools and 5th Ward Schools:
Monday: Sausage & Tomato Gravy, (5th Ward Schools Meatball Stew), Steamed Rice, Cornbread Poppers, Green Beans, Steamed Corn, Mixed Fruit, HS Only Fruit Cup/Juice, Choice of Milk.
Tuesday: Cheesy Chicken Pasta, Sweet Peas, (5th Ward Schools Peas & Carrots), Side Salad w/Ranch, Orange Smiles, WG Garlic Knot, Marinara Dipping Cup, HS Only Fresh Fruit Cup/Juice, Choice of Milk.
Wednesday: Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, Broccoli w/Cheese, Baby Carrots w/Ranch, Pineapple Tidbits, WG Roll, HS Only Fruit Cup/Juice, Choice of Milk.
Thursday: Easter Meal: Baked Ham, Rice Dressing, Sweet Potatoes, Apple Wedges, Cucumber Sticks w/Ranch, Cinnamon Roll, HS Only Fresh Fruit Cup/Juice, Choice of Milk.
Friday: No School: Closed for Easter Break.

Acadia Parish Catholic Schools:
Monday: Creole Sausage, Steamed Rice, Sweet Potato Crunch, Buttered Sweet Peas, Wheat Roll, Bagged Cranberries, HS Only Asst. Fresh Fruit, Choice of Milk.
Tuesday: Fajita Chicken on Hard Shell Taco, Salsa Cup, Bush's Taco Fiesta Black Beans, Chopped Lettuce & Tomato Cup, Chilled Applesauce Cup, HS Only Asst. Fresh Fruit, Choice of Milk.
Wednesday: Meat Sauce & Spaghetti, Whole Kernel Corn, Green Bean Casserole, Garlic Wheat Roll, Chilled Diced Peas, HS Only Asst. Fresh Fruit, Choice of Milk.
Thursday: Easter Meal: Turkey Roast, Rice Dressing, Steamed Broccoli w/Cheese Sauce, Black-eyed Peas, Wheat Roll, Chilled Fruit Cup, HS Only Asst. Fresh Fruit, Choice of Milk.
Friday: Shrimp Fettucine, Vegetable Medley, Spring Salad, Wheat Roll, Chilled Sliced Peaches, HS Only Asst. Fresh Fruit, Choice of Milk.

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Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR PUBLIC HEARING

VILLAGE OF MERMENTAU, LOUISIANA

The Village of Mermentau will hold a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, April 11, 2022, at the Mermentau Village Hall. The purpose of the meeting is to obtain views on the housing and community development needs of the Village and to discuss a Program Amendment under the Village's State of Louisiana FY 2021 Community Development Block Grant (LCDBG) Program. The following items will be discussed at the hearing:

A. The amount of funds available for the proposed community development Water System Improvements project.

B. The range of activities available that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount of funds proposed to be used for activities that will benefit persons of low and moderate incomes;

C. The plans of the Village of Mermentau for minimizing displaced persons as a result of activities assisted with such funds and the benefits to be provided by the Village of Mermentau to persons actually displaced as a result of such activities; and,

D. The Village's past performance on LCDBG projects funded by the State of Louisiana.

All residents, particularly low and moderate income persons, and residents of slum and blighted areas of the Village of Mermentau are encouraged to attend this meeting.

Accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities and non-English speaking individuals provided that a three day notice is received by the Village of Mermentau.

Those citizens unable to attend this hearing may submit their views and proposals until April 21, 2022 in writing to:

Village of Mermentau

Post Office Box 280

Mermentau, Louisiana 70556

Daria Istre

Mayor

Published in The Crowley Post Signal on Sunday, April 3, 2022.

Composite Academic Honor students at Notre Dame



Notre Dame High School of Acadia Parish students earning Composite All-Academic State honors (4.0) include, seated from left: Brayden Broussard, baseball; Kelsey Broussard, track; Michael Goss, tennis; Hayden Miller, tennis; Landon Miller, tennis; Lillian Miller, tennis; and Abigail Savoy, softball. Receiving Academic All-State honors (3.5-3.9), are, standing from left: Maci Bergeron, softball; Matt Bernard, baseball; Karson Broussard, baseball; Caleb Comeaux, baseball; Claire Cormier, tennis; Thomas Gattle, golf; Joseph Landry, golf; Collin Miller, tennis; Madison Murrell, softball; Russ Nugier, tennis; and Molly Webb, tennis.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

La. Medicaid launches phone campaign

BATON ROUGE - Louisiana Medicaid has launched a phone campaign to encourage its members to update their contact information. Automated calls will go out to members between the hours of 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday to remind members to update their phone number, mailing address and email address.

“When the federal COVID-19 public health emergency ends, we will be reaching out to our members through the mail to complete renewals and to verify eligibility. We don’t know when the public health emergency will end so we are preparing now. It’s critical that we have accurate information to be sure that members receive important notices related to their healthcare coverage,” said Patrick Gillies, Medicaid Executive Director.

“These are recorded messages only. There will not be a Medicaid representative on the phone and we will not be asking for any personal information. The calls will be spread out over the next four to eight weeks.”

If you receive a call, the caller ID will show Louisiana Department of Health.

Members can update their contact information anytime by visiting mymedicaid.la.gov or by emailing mymedicaid@la.gov. It is very important for Medicaid beneficiaries to read and respond to all correspondence received from the Louisiana Department of Health during this critical time

Pubic Forum

How about some real tax reform?

Editor:
On Tuesday, March 22, House Speaker Clay Schexnayder, R-Gonzales, began his quest to push HB 681 through the House Ways and Means Committee. This would be the second time Speaker Schexnayder tries to pass what is being labeled and supported by LABI as tax reform.

As a fiscal conservative and chair of the Acadia Parish Republican Executive Committee, I applaud the efforts and fully support what it is he is trying to do.

Businesses that are domiciled in one parish and conduct business in several other parishes throughout the state now must file

their sales tax returns independently for each parish. HB 681 consolidates this method into one filing along with the filing of the state sales taxes.

This is a procedure that most other states already have in place, and frankly, as a person who is responsible for doing this each quarter, this is a huge time savings and benefit to businesses.

In discussing taxes, so often we compare ourselves to our neighbors to the west, in Texas, and understandably so. Once one crosses the state line from Louisiana into Texas, the transformation to many resembles that of Dorothy witnessing the Land of Oz for the first time.

Texas roads appear to be better-maintained, their visitor centers are clean and well-staffed, fantastic public schools with foot-

ball stadiums of which some Louisiana colleges are envious, the local municipalities appear to have better services for those in the community, and then the attraction that Texas has to businesses seems to be obvious.

Is it simply a case of the grass is greener on the other side or are there reasons for such advancements in Texas over Louisiana?

While I fully support HB 681 and it’s streamlining the sales tax process, I hardly feel it even scratches the surface of what should be referred to as “tax reform.”

In comparing the tax burden on the taxpayer of each state, one will find that it is relatively even, hovering in the area of 7.6%. The difference lies in where each state applies taxes to the average taxpaying citizen.

Louisiana relies on Income Tax, Sales Tax, and Property Tax. Texas, on the other hand, relies on Sales and Property tax and has zero Income Tax.

It is not necessarily a matter of the average citizen being taxed less with equal burdens; it comes down to how each is taxed, making the huge difference between the two states.

This is not the only difference between Louisiana and Texas in relation to taxes. The major difference between the two states is who and at what level of government these taxes are distributed.

Where Louisiana uses a costly, inefficient centralized system of collec-

tion and distribution of funds to various departments, parish and local municipalities, Texas’ system is quite efficient and is decentralized.

This is the reason local governments in Texas appear to have more with which to work. Eliminating a middle person should always result in less cost, and, therefore, more for the end-user. The end-user in this case are the Parish and Local Municipal Governments.

Tax reform comes in many forms, and my overview is just a modest attempt to show how one significant change in our code would have a huge positive impact. And although the passage of HB



681 would be welcoming, I await the day a legislator — a true statesman — will stand before the House Ways and Means Committee and present a bill that attacks significant problems with the tax code much like I have just presented.

We all know control means money and money means control. It is time for Republican and Democrat, Conservative and Liberal alike in Baton Rouge to take the steps towards real tax reform and allow Parish and Municipal Governments to keep local what they collect.

May God bless you all!

Jeff Cavell

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Guest Editorial

States adopting transgender bills

The movement to ban transgender play-ers from girls’ sports is growing, and the issue is going to surface for the second time at the current regular session of the Louisiana Leg-islature. Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards vetoed the first bill last year, and legislators were unable to get the 70 state House votes they needed to override the veto.

State Sen. Beth Mizell, R-Franklinton, is sponsor of both bills called the Fairness in Women’s Sports Act. They would require K-12 schools and higher education institutions to base members of male and female athletic teams on their biological sex.

The legislation last year passed the Senate 29-6 and the House 78-19. The Senate at a veto session voted 26-12 to override Edwards’ veto, which met the two-thirds vote required. How-ever, the 68-30 House vote was two votes short of the 70 required.

Edwards in his veto message said the bill unfairly targeted children, was not a real solution nor was there a real problem and passage would have had a major effect on the state’s economy because of convention cancellations.

Republican governors in Utah and Indiana vetoed similar bills in their states, but legisla-tors in both states say they have whipped up the votes to override those vetoes. The governors say the bans address a problem that is virtually non-existent.

Four transgender student-athletes were play-ing in Utah, and there were none in Indiana. However, lawmakers still argue that transgen-der girls can have a physical advantage.

Utah Rep. Kera Birkeland, a Republican high school basketball coach who sponsored the original ban, said, “This is not about the number of children. This is not about a number at all. This is about a fundamental belief — that you either have or you don’t — that women’s sports need to be preserved for those who are biologically born as and identify as female.”

The Associated Press said many support-ers of transgender bills point to transgender collegiate swimmer Lia Thomas, who won an individual title at an NCAA swimming and div-ing championship. Florida’s Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis issued a proclamation declaring the runner-up was the “real winner.”

Mizell’s legislation this year is Senate Bill 44. It says a males’, boys’, or men’s team or event is only for students who are biological males. A females’, girls’, or women’s team or event is only for students who are biological females. The legislation is pending in the Sen-ate Education Committee.

Edwards in last year’s veto message said, “When presented to the legislative commit-tees, there was universal agreement that this issue is not, nor has it ever been, experienced in Louisiana.” He said the Louisiana High School Athletic Association already has policies in place that prevent any unfair advantage in athletic competition.

The Legislature succeeded in overriding Edwards’ veto of a congressional redistricting bill this week. That has obviously increased speculation about whether Mizell’s transgender bill, which is expected to be approved, might enjoy the same fate.

American Press

Ukraine war could cause food shortages, but high fuel prices could make it difficult to increase production

“With regard to food shortage, yes, we did talk about food shortages. And — and it’s going to be real. The price of these sanctions is not just imposed upon Russia, it’s imposed upon an awful lot of countries as well, including European countries and our country as well. And — because both Russia and Ukraine have been the breadbasket of Europe in terms of wheat...”

That was President Joe Biden on March 24 at the NATO summit in Brussels, Belgium, noting that because of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, as Ukraine and Russia combined account for about one-third of global wheat exports, disruptions to distributing that food would cause food shortages all over the world.

In 2021, global wheat production was about 772 million tons, 75 million of that came from Russia and another 33 million tons came from Ukraine. Any disruption of agriculture on that level could impact millions of people.

According to Oleg Nivievskiy, vice president of economic education at Kyiv School of Economics, speaking to LancasterFarming.com, wheat and corn production in Ukraine to decrease by 35 million pounds this year in Ukraine, and exports of wheat in Ukraine and Russia combined will decrease by 60 million pounds in 2022, adding, “low income countries in Africa that depend on the grain will be severely impacted.”

Making matters worse, a lot of



Robert Romano

damaged because of the war, getting the exports out to sea could be problematic.

So far, the winter wheat crop is okay, but that could change. According to LancasterFarming.com: “The current crop looks good, Nivievskiy said, but that’s where the optimism ends. Right now, he said, is the time of year when farmers are usually in their fields applying fertilizer and getting the land ready to plant. It’s a crucial step for every spring crop — not just wheat — yet in much of the country it may not be possible.”

Besides the risk of mines and other dangers on the roads and the fields, there are also massive fuel shortages that could make operating the tractors necessary for the harvest impossible.

High fuel costs, particularly of diesel, could make ramping up production in the U.S. and elsewhere more difficult. According to a report by the Associated Press’ Aya Batrawy, Steve Karnowski, and Rob Gillies: “Any increased production is running up against surging costs for supplies. The price of fuel has skyrocketed, and the cost of

the farms are in eastern Ukraine where some of the fighting has been the heaviest, while the situation at Ukraine’s Black Sea ports in the south could mean even if the crops are not

fertilizer was already high because of a crunch in natural gas acutely felt in Europe.”

But it gets worse. About half of the wheat the World Food Program (WFP) purchases to help feed about 125 million people around the world comes from Ukraine, with WFP Executive Director David Beasley told the Associated Press: “It will impact millions and millions of people, particularly in the poorest countries of the world.”

Meaning, if inflation remains high and the war in Ukraine continues, global food production could take such a hit that millions of people end of starving. So, what to do?

One area that could help farmers speed up production would be to lower artificial fuel costs. For example, the federal diesel tax is \$0.2440 per gallon and states charge on average \$0.3266 per gallon, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. If those were temporarily suspended, it could speed along production.

It’s one of those things where time is essential. The winter wheat was planted last year. The spring wheat gets planted in March, April and May in the northern hemisphere. If not enough seeds are planted this year to offset the war in Ukraine then President Biden is right, there are going to be food shortages.

Robert Romano is the Vice President of Public Policy at Americans for Limited Government Foundation.

Is President Biden still with us?

Senator John Kennedy’s (R-LA) recent op-ed “No More IMF Subs-idies for Dictators” shines the light on a very dark subject, the Inter-national Monetary Funds “Special Drawing Rights” (SDR’s) that are backed by the U.S. Treasury —and with the help of the Biden Admin-istration (who could have vetoed it) allowed Russia, China, and Iran to draw down \$62 billion last August in a manner that by-passed Con-gress. The Biden Administration was very busy last August as they were also withdrawing from Af-ghanistan and abandoning Bagram Air Base to the Taliban — while watching Russia mobilizing against Ukraine and starting up negotiations with Iran on the Nuclear deal.

SDR’s are the brainchild of global political leaders and their crony central bankers who realized the ball game was almost over for their money printing to fund deficit spending on welfare benefits neces-sary to buy votes and power — and that they therefore needed access to a new type of currency that wasn’t subject to U.S. control or the control of their country’s legisla-ture. Once awarded to a country,



Steve Gardes

SDR’s can then be exchanged for hard currency like dollars and euros on demand without having to repay the princi-pal. Why would America do this? Yet Presi-dent Biden and Treasury Secre-tary Yellen fully supported the new SDR’s; did they think this through fully?

Unfortunately, SDR’s could also be used to replace the Dollar as the Global Reserve Currency. In fact, with the Sanctions that Biden has put on Russia recently, he has unwittingly pushed Russia toward China on several trade issues like buying Russian oil and gas with SDR’s rather than with dollars as is now required. With Federal Reserve policies resulting in significant in-flation that depreciates the value of the dollar (and the value of its \$30 trillion national debt), SDR’s are looking good.

Biden also has Russia negotiat-ing the Iran Nuclear Deal for us,

which he plans to again by-pass Congress on in violation of the Constitution (he says it’s not a Treaty) because he will apparently provide \$90 billion of sanctions relief to Iran--give Russia the right to construct a nuclear facility in Iran — and approve lax restrictions that will allow Iran to become a nuclear threshold state by 2024 or 2025. Israel is furious.

Meanwhile, back at the home front Mr. Biden tells Europe that they can buy American gas to avoid Putin’s chokehold—but his U.S. energy policies use financial regulation to restrict capital to oil companies and environmental laws to drown energy expansion and pipeline construction in a sea of litigation.

Holy Scripture tells us that “who-ever is not with us is against us.” Is it time for Congress to ask President Biden if he is still with us?

Steve Gardes is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and Certi-fied Valuation Analyst (CVA) with over 40 years of public accounting experience.

Government Information

Governor John Bel Edwards, P.O. Box 94004, Baton Rouge, LA 70804; Phone: (225) 342.7015 https://gov.louisiana.gov

U.S. Senator John Kennedy, SR383 Russell Senate Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; Phone: (202) 224.4623 or (504) 589.2753 https://www.kennedy.senate.gov/public

U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy, 520 Hart SOB, Washington, D.C. 20510; Phone: (202) 224.5824 https://www.cassidy.senate.gov

U.S. Congressman 3rd District Clay Higgins, 424 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; Phone: (202) 225.2031 https://clayhiggins.house.gov

State Senator - District 26 Bob Hensgens, 407 Charity Street, Abbeville, La. 70510; Phone: (337) 740-6425; (800) 259-5035 E-mail - sen26@legis.la.gov

State Senator - District 25 Mark Abraham, 130 Jamestown Road, Lake Charles, LA 70605; Phone: (337) 475-3016 E-mail - abrahamm@legis.la.gov

State Representative - District 41 Phillip DeVillier, P.O. Box 986, Eunice, LA 70535; Phone: (337) 457.0194 or 1.800.660.6819 E-mail - devillierp@legis.la.gov

State Representative - District 42 John Stefanski, P.O. Box 2720, Crowley, LA 70527; Phone: (337) 384.8999. Email - stefanskij@legis.la.gov

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The Crowley Post-Signal invites its readers to write letters to the editor to appear in our public fo-rum editions.

If you have an opinion about an item of local interest, a response to any of our articles or a message to our readers, please write to us.

We will print letters that are to the point and which contain opin-ions supported by sound judg-ment and/or documentation.

Letters must be typed and should not be excessively long.

Defamatory or libelous material will not be published upon the de-cision of the editor.

No political endorsements for candidates or election issues will

be printed as letters to the edi-tor prior to or during an election campaign. The Crowley Post-Sig-nal does not print letters without names.

All letters printed will have to have a signature and the name will be printed along with the let-ter.

All letters to the editor must also include address and telephone number for verification purposes. No anonymous letters will be pub-lished under any circumstances.

Please send your letters to: Letters to the Editor, c/o Crow-ley Post-Signal, P.O. Box 1589, Crowley, LA 70526 or e-mail us at editor@CrowleyToday.com

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Publisher Harold Gonzales
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Steve Bandy
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Kathy Duncan
Production Manager
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La. iris named Spring 2022 Louisiana Super Plant

The Louisiana iris (Iris spp.) has been named the spring 2022 Louisiana Super Plant selection by the LSU AgCenter.

It comes as no surprise to Louisianians that this native beauty is worthy of this title. No other flower conjures thoughts of Louisiana more than the iris, except maybe the southern magnolia.

This herbaceous, semi-evergreen perennial grows best in full sun but will perform well in partial shade. Blooming begins in late March and continues through May, and flowers come in a wide range of colors including burgundy, blue, lavender, pink, purple, red, white and yellow.

Plants actively grow beginning in the fall in October through early summer.

The Louisiana iris has a dormant period at the end of summer in August through October. This is the best time to divide clumps of iris. Overcrowded areas will not be as healthy and can diminish flower production.

This iris spreads by rhizomes — continuously growing, horizontal, underground stems that put out shoots and adventitious roots at growing points. These can be cut into individual portions so long as the section has at least one growing point.

Division of clumps should be done during the

dormant period in late summer. Divided clumps can be shared with friends and neighbors, relocated to a new location in the garden or planted in containers.

Louisiana irises also can be planted successfully in the spring from containers purchased at retail garden centers.

There are five main species of Louisiana iris: Iris fulva, I. brevecaulis, I. hexagonal, I. nelsonii and I. giganticaerulea. Hundreds of cultivars and hybrid crosses have occurred both naturally and as a result of breeders seeking unique flower colors.

Irises are an excellent selection for low areas that

hold water because they are so water tolerant. Additionally, they make a good selection for rain gardens and can be planted along the banks of ponds or lakes to help stabilize the soil.

Plants do well also in containers and in raised garden beds.

There are few pest and disease issues associated with the Louisiana iris. The plant disease rust can affect it and typically shows up as tiny red or dark brown spots with yellow margins on the leaves and stems of the plants.

Rust often appears in early summer after flowering has stopped. The disease does not typically kill plants and because it shows up after flowering has completed, it is not necessary to treat. Fungicides such as an organic copper can be used to help control it in heavily affected plants.

Caterpillars, iris borers, leaf miners, snails and slugs can sometimes be a problem. Most do not cause severe damage, and plants typically bounce back with no issues.

In severe infestations, you can use a systemic pesticide but follow the label directions strictly. You also can try organic options. Remember, insecticides not only control



The Boiled Crawfish Louisiana iris is a gorgeous burgundy and yellow selection. (Photo by Ashley Edwards/LSU AgCenter)



The Creole Can Can Louisiana iris has a deep purple, almost blue, flower. (Photo by Ashley Edwards/LSU AgCenter)



The Southdowns Louisiana iris is a gorgeous yellow selection. (Photo by Ashley Edwards/LSU AgCenter)

the pest problems, but they may also harm pollinators.

Irises can be fertilized in the fall in late October or early November when they begin actively growing again. They can also be fertilized in the springtime just before flowers emerge to give them a boost for flower production.

Use slow-release granular or liquid fertilizers. You can also try organic options such as compost or worm castings to help improve the soil.

Cut faded flower blooms off where the stalk emerges from the foliage to prevent seedpod formation and to conserve energy for future flowers.

Louisiana Super Plants is the AgCenter's educational program that promotes university-tested, industry-approved plants. For more information on the initiative and a list of previously announced Super Plants, visit www.lsuagcenter.com/super-plants.

Boyfriend's bizarre stupor comes with torrent of abuse

DEAR ABBY: I am a divorced single mother who has finally met someone. His name is "Greg," and we've been dating for two months.

Greg is also divorced and financially stable. The one thing I really like is that he gets along well with my teenage son.

The problem is, every two or three weeks, Greg falls into a deep sleep that lasts three days.

He'll get up for a glass of water or to run to the store, but goes right back to sleep.

It causes him to miss work, and oftentimes he becomes verbally abusive during these episodes.

Over Christmas, I saw him coherent for only 10 minutes the entire weekend. When he wasn't half-asleep, he was calling me names, belittling my self-worth and telling me nobody but he would ever love me so I had "better stay."

On Christmas Eve, I was left alone and crying in a dark living room.

When these episodes aren't happening, he's



Dear Abby

By Abigail Van Buren

happens to his personality during these extended periods when he's "asleep."

Tell him his rants are hurtful and verbally abusive. Ask what he thinks causes these episodes.

Could he be having an adverse reaction to a medication or some other substance he's taking, because the person you're encountering isn't the Greg you love.

Greg may need to be examined physically and neurologically to ensure he doesn't have a medical issue.

However, if he refuses, draw the line NOW

and end the relationship because it won't improve without intervention.

As lonely as you may be, PLEASE consider how lonely your future will be if you stay with him, and how damaging it will be to your impressionable son.

DEAR ABBY: How do I deal with a difficult co-worker?

I'm kind, polite and courteous to this person, and they are short, rude and condescending in response.

They are the type of person who wouldn't care

if I approached them and told them my feelings are hurt, and probably would make fun of me behind my back.

How do I deal with this person? It makes me want to leave my job. -- PEEVED IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR PEEVED: Does this co-worker treat everyone the way they treat you? If the answer is yes, then as a group document these incidents and inform your supervisor or employer the person is creating a hostile work environment.

If you are the only employee getting the brunt of your co-worker's hostility, you will have to speak to your employer yourself.

And if nothing can be done to remedy the situation, you may have to seek employment elsewhere.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Birthdays & Anniversaries			
April 3	Vanessa L. Cormier	Carl Broussard	Paul J. Brasino
Betty Miller	Glen and Pandora Myers	Cassandra Grant	Randy Leonards
Butch Abshire	Mary and Roy Cormier	David E. Ogleshorpe	Ryan McFarlain
Charles Jacks	Shannon and Tiffany Menard	Denise Monroe	Sharon Marks Francis
China Guillory		Donald Ray LeBlanc	Taylor Roy
Crystal Richard		Fr. Ed Cosgrove	Thomas Barousse
David Schexnider		Heather Taylor	Daniel and Sandra
Dr. Chad Millet		Keenon Michel Leger	Bellard
Maranda Ewing		Marc Riche	Doc and Charlotte
Maria Martin		Mary Elizabeth Signorelli	Zaubrecher
Mildred Leonards		Mindi Thibodeaux	Mary and Albert Gray
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Acadia Parish School Board

Early Childhood and Pre-Kindergarten
Registration 2022-2023

All Acadia Parish Early Childhood Network participants, including public schools, Head Start programs, and child care centers, are beginning to accept applications for all early childhood programs for the 2022-2023 school year. In addition to on-site registration at each site, the district office has launched an initial, online application to begin the application process. Once completed, the initial information will be sent to the school/site of interest. If you have questions, please feel free to contact your school or program of interest or email prek.support@acadia.k12.la.us.

To complete the initial, online application, please go to the Acadia Parish School Board Website at acadia.k12.la.us and click **Acadia Parish Pre-K Application 2022-2023**. We look forward to working with you and your child!

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NCS senior Jaggar Thibodeaux
Thibodeaux earns All-State honorable mention status

CROWLEY – The honors continue to roll in for Northside Christian basketball standout Jaggar Thibodeaux.

After earning MVP honors on the 7-C All-District team, Thibodeaux was recently awarded a spot on the Louisiana Sports Writers Association Class C All-State team as an honorable mention.

Thibodeaux, a senior guard, helped lead the Warriors to a 25-win season and the No. 5 seed in the Division V playoffs where they lost to No. 4 St. Joseph's - Plaquemine in the quarterfinal round, 59-55.

The Warriors' floor general averaged a double-double on the season with just over 19 points and 12 assists per game. He also collected eight rebounds and logged seven steals per outing.

John-Paul Ricks of Jehovah Jireh headlined this year's All-State team by claiming the Outstanding Player honor. The senior averaged 28 points, eight rebounds, seven assists and five steals in leading his team to the Division V state title game for the sixth straight year.

Family Christian's Isaac Fontenot-Amedee was tabbed as the Coach of the year after guiding his squad to their first title since 2002.

Family Christian's Bryson Martin, Gibsland-Coleman's Terrance James, Calvin's Joseph Adams and Phoenix's Derwin Ancar round out the first team selections.

Members of the second team include Family Christian's Chance Martin, Simpson's Braxton Basco, Hornbeck's Brady Alexander, Gibsland-Coleman's Dontarías Coleman and Calvin's Wayne Curtis.

Joining Thibodeaux on the honorable mention list are St. Joseph's Quay Seaberry, Plainview's Tyren Johnson, Pleasant Hill's C.J. Scott, Phoenix's Rondell Battle and Hornbeck's Jaren Mitcham.

Lady Pios blow out No. 1 Port Barre

CROWLEY – The showdown that was supposed to be a huge test for the Notre Dame Lady Pios Thursday wound up being just another pop quiz.

In a battle of Class 2A's top two teams - select and non-select - it was the Lady Pios who came up with all the answers in the two teams' District 6-2A showdown.

The Lady Pios, Division III's top-ranked team, belted out 17 hits, including three home runs and three doubles, in cruising to a surprisingly easy 16-4 victory over the Lady Red Devils.

The victory sent the Lady Pios to 23-2 overall and 3-0 in league play heading into Monday's road trip to Moss Bluff where they will take on Class 5A's eight-ranked Sam Houston at 5 p.m.

Port Barre fell to 19-3 overall and 3-1 in league play with the loss.



THE POST-SIGNAL / Jason Faul
Notre Dame's Maddie Murrell crushes a home run Thursday during the Lady Pios' 16-4 victory over Class 2A's top-ranked Port Barre. Murrell had four hits and drove in five runs in the victory.

"This was No. 1 versus No. 1 and we just wanted to punch them in the mouth first and see how they responded," said ND coach Dale Serie. "And if they get back up, just keep swinging."

That's exactly what Serie's squad did.

The Lady Pios erupted for 11 hits and 10 runs over the first two frames to take total control.

"We wanted to play fast and try to put some pressure on them," said Serie. "We had a lot of things working. I don't think they (Port Barre) played bad, we just swung the bat really well."

Leadoff hitter Keleigh Spell gave the guests a spark with a leadoff double to start the game and Corine Poncho followed

with an RBI single to give Notre Dame a quick lead.

Maddie Murrell added a two-run double later in the frame and Macey Freed logged a two-out RBI single to put the Lady Pios up 5-0.

The hits just kept coming for Notre Dame in the second frame.

The Lady Pios logged six more hits and pushed across five more runs to up the lead to 10-0.

Poncho started the barrage with her 25th home run of the

in the top of third on RBI singles from Henry and Murrell.

The Lady Devils scored three runs in the bottom of the frame on just two hits and three walks.

Abigail Savoy then belted her 21st home run of the year in the top of the fourth inning, a two-run bomb. Poncho followed with a single and Callie Maitre tacked on another run with an RBI single to left field.

Murrell put the finishing touches on the game with a lead-off home run in the top of the fifth inning to push the lead to 16-4.

The Lady Devils got one runner on base in the bottom of the fifth on a walk, but they failed to push a run across.

The Lady Pios had six players log multiple hits in the victory.

Murrell led the charge with four hits, including a home run and five RBI, and Poncho was 3-for-3 with a home run and three RBI.

Maitre added three hits, including a double, and one RBI. Freed had a single, a double and two RBI and Henry had a pair of singles and two RBI.

In addition, Spell logged a single and a double and Savoy had a two-run home run.

"We're getting contributions across the board offensively," said Serie. "Our Big Three (Poncho, Savoy and Maci Bergeron) are swinging it extremely well but they have girls around them that can hit as well."

Poncho picked up the victory in the circle after surrendering just four runs on four hits and five walks. She struck out two.

Lady Warriors cruise past Hackberry in District 6-C play

HACKBERRY – The Northside Christian Lady Warriors exploded for 18 hits and took advantage of nine walks and four Hackberry errors to cruise past the Mustangs, 23-3, Thursday in a District 6-C contest.

The victory sent the Lady Warriors to 10-2 overall and 2-0 in league play.

The Lady Warriors jumped out to an 11-3 lead after two innings and scored 12 unanswered over the final two frames to end the game by virtue of the mercy rule.

Madelynn Hebert picked up the victory in the circle after allowing three runs on three hits and one walk. She struck out six in four innings.

Karlee Abshire, Mackenzie Credeur and Kinsley Foreman paced the Lady Warriors' offensive attack with three hits each.

Abshire had a double and a triple and drove in four runs; Credeur added a double and three RBI and Foreman had a double, a home run and two RBI.

Kali Helton followed with two hits, including a double, and four RBI. Abby Cart added two singles and two RBI and Rory Thibodeaux logged two singles and one RBI.

In addition, Sei Guidry and Avery Quibodeaux each had a single and an RBI, Abigail Richard logged a double and Karmie Breaux finished with two RBI.

The Lady Warriors return to action on Monday with a 5:30 p.m. road contest at Welsh.

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DREAM: Author wants to build on the foundation of Eve’s story

FROM PAGE 1

ly building the entire novel around that dream.”

Burnette said she started working on the book in 2009, writing it in pieces, researching and editing, and finally completed it about six years later.

“It was important to me to show my culture and show what is important to me [in the book],” she said.

Burnette said that in addition to the main character, Eve — originally Evangeline — nearly every character in the book has a traditional Cajun or Creole name. Eve’s mother’s name is Serafine Labasilier, while her father’s is Cheval. Perrine is her paternal grandmother.

Burnette said she also used names of women in her family for some of the characters, and some of those characters are loosely based on people in her life.

“I put the names of those women from my family because they are a part of my foundation, a part of what molded me into the woman that I am today,” she said.

“The character Eve is very connected to all of the females in her family line. There are parts where she actually talks with them, communicates with them, and I just wanted to show how important it is, especially for women. We need a source of strength because its not easy being a woman in this world.

“We are often discounted and looked at as weaker, so I wanted my character to be strong and I wanted her to have a strong foundation and draw strength from the women that came before her in her family line.

“I placed those names of women that came before

me in the book because I draw strength from them — my grandmothers, my mother, my great grandmother. The characters are named after them — although what they do in the book is not particularly real — but their function is to ground Eve and to remind her of who she is and why she has to be strong and do the things that she does.”

Burnette said her book’s main character starts off living in Crowley but has always dreamed of going to a bigger city.

“When she has to leave there, she realizes that it’s home, and she misses it and how important it is for her and that’s kind of how I felt when had to leave and move to Baton Rouge,” Burnette said.

“That little piece of that character was really me when I was a teenage girl when we moved to Baton Rouge.”

Burnette said one of the most important chapters in her book is set in the Crowley library, a place Burnette said she spent many Saturdays when she was growing up.

“I had a favorite spot, and it was just, like, my comfort zone, so you see that in the book — that character goes to that library, and a huge scene unfolds there,” she said.

Before being principal at Istrouma Middle Magnet School in Baton Rouge, Burnette taught high school English in Baton Rouge. She said teaching English will always be her first love, a love that also inspired her to write.

“I often had to pull teeth to get my students to read,” she said. “My students never liked the books that I chose. It was always a bat-

tle, so I kind of developed a sense of what those teenagers and those young people like to read.”

Burnette said she often gave her students excerpts from her book as she worked on it, not telling them where the material was from, in order to get their opinions on the work.

“They really helped me keep going and moving forward with the story because they were teenagers, and they were definitely vocal over their opinion about what they were reading,” Burnette said.

“Being an educator definitely helped me and motivated me to move forward and finish the book.”

Burnette started to send query letters to publishers and literary agents in 2015. She was eventually contacted by Austin Macauley Publishers. The publishing house requested to see pages from the novel, and

Burnette sent them the information.

A month later, Austin Macauley Publishers told her they liked the book and wanted to publish it.

From there, the publishing process moved into the contract phase, and in 2020, Burnette found out the book would be published.

Now that her book has hit the shelves, Burnette said readers are asking when her next book will be out.

“[Readers asked] ‘I want to know what is going to happen with Eve. You kind of left us on a cliffhanger at the end,’” she said.

As she moves forward with more writing, Burnette said she plans to build upon the foundation of Eve’s story.

“I think the characters can definitely be explored more. I think we can go

deeper with those characters,” she said. “I definitely want to continue with that theme of female empowerment and strong women, definitely how important it is to have a strong foundation, and also, there are so many touches of Cajun and Creole culture there.

“There are mentions of food and places in the book and their names are names of places around Acadia Parish, like Crowley, Iota, Mermentau, Rayne. Those places are real places in my book. That’s important to me, that part of who I am as an individual, as a woman.”

Burnette said she would like to go on a book tour, and she is currently working with the publisher and the marketing department at Austin Macauley. She said she would really like to stop at the Crowley Library for a reading and signing since it is where her love of books and reading began.

Burnette said she hopes to inspire other women with her writings.

“If you have a goal, you can do it, you can stick to it,” she said. “It’s not like a mountain that you will never climb, that you just kind of look at and admire but can never climb.

“I want to encourage everyone, really, regardless if they are male or female, to go after their goals, but especially women because we oftentimes become defined by ‘We are such-and-such’s mom or such-and-such’s wife’ or by a career.

“Those things define us, and we sometimes get lost in that and put our own dreams and goals on the back burner because we are so busy taking care of everyone else and being everything for everyone.

“We have to remember that our goals and our dreams are important as well, and we can do it.”

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