



INSERT
Local Christmas Gift Buying Guide

YOUR FORECAST

Rain Chances Increase

Chance of rain today about 40%.
Highs today in the lower 70s.
Lows tonight in the lower 60s.
Clear and cold beginning Sunday.



See Page 6

Ruston Daily Leader

Friday, December 10, 2021 Follow us: www.rustonleader.com 75¢

Downtown parking tickets to return Jan. 1

By Nancy Bergeron
nancy@rustonleader.com

Tickets for parking infractions in downtown Ruston will make a comeback Jan. 1, with a new fine for general violations.

An initial \$20 penalty will be imposed for violations including parking over the three-hour limit, parking in a no-parking zone or a fire lane, as well as improper parking in either parallel or angular parking spaces.

If the citation isn't paid within 15 days, the fine jumps to \$40.

The new fine for overparking is lower than the current \$25 per violation that was set in 2014.

The new regulations come as a

result of an ordinance approved Monday by the Board of Aldermen that makes two major changes in existing parking regulations:

— Making the parking control officer a non-classified employee hired through the city's human resources department rather than a civil service employee attached to the police department.

— Giving the mayor and police chief the authority to set fees for parking violations, rather than being set by the Board of Aldermen.

The new officer, who will have no police authority, is expected to be hired within the next 10 days, Mayor

See PARKING TICKETS, page 5



Leader photo by NANCY BERGERON

Visitors and business employees in downtown Ruston will have to pay attention to parking restrictions beginning Jan. 1, 2022, when the city begins issuing parking tickets once again.

Aspire Dedication

Louisiana Tech lauds symbol of diverse future

Leader Staff Report

Louisiana Tech University dedicated its newest addition to the campus landscape, Aspire, on Wednesday afternoon.

"It is most fitting that Aspire reflects the historic and the new, the arts and technology, innovation and collaboration," said Les Guice, Louisiana Tech president. "I have already seen Aspire plaza function as a gathering space for our students and campus community — a place where we can create new traditions and renew old friendships."

The 45-foot-tall steel and acrylic sculpture is a creation of Portland, Oregon, artist Curtis Pittman. Aspire was commissioned in 2019 through the Percent for Art Program in the state Office of Cultural Development — Division of the Arts, which requires that buildings constructed with more than \$2 million in public funds in the state of Louisiana must reserve 1% of the construction cost

See ASPIRE, page 12



Photo courtesy of Louisiana Tech

The 45-foot Aspire sculpture was officially dedicated during a ceremony held on campus Wednesday afternoon. The steel and acrylic structure is located between the College of Business and Keeny Hall.

JACKSON PARISH

Hodge considers change to village fireworks rules

By Jessieca Carr
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The Village of Hodge held its regular meeting Tuesday night and discussed two hot-button issues.

One of those topics setting off sparks focused on the village's fireworks ordinance.

An amendment to the current ordinance was proposed in the November meeting. The original ordinance states there are no fireworks allowed within village limits. Mayor Gerald Palmer said this meeting was purely a discussion about changing the ordinance with introduction, vote and adoption being pushed to the beginning of 2022.

He said there are going to be stipulations village residents will have to abide by such as an age restriction and type of fireworks to be ignited.

"We are going to get the ordinance

written by our town attorney and will be introducing the ordinance at our Jan. 4 meeting," Palmer said. "We want to adopt it at the Feb. 1 meeting."

The stipulations set forth by the village council include no aerial fireworks (rockets, Roman Candles, etc.), firework use will be limited to the front of a resident's property and all debris must be cleared. The council also sets forth timeframes for fireworks use in village limits.

The only holidays fireworks are allowed are Independence Day (until 10 p.m.), Christmas Eve (until 10 p.m.), and New Year's Eve (until 12:30 a.m.). Anyone under the age of 18 who wants to use fireworks must do so under adult supervision. Palmer said if the ordinance is adopted, it will be under a one-year trial

See FIREWORKS, page 5



Leader photo by CATHI COX-BONIOI

Though both blind, Daniel Belding and wife Tabea make sure their sighted son, Little Daniel, doesn't miss a beat as he "rides" his favorite Bulldog in Railroad Park.

Pushing Life's Boundaries

Belding's tenacity in overcoming obstacles inspires family's move to Lincoln Parish

By Cathi Cox-Boniol
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Daniel Belding likes to push boundaries.

One of the three strongest members of his high school football team, he parlayed that strength into wrestling, throwing the shot put and discus, and playing hockey when his coach nicknamed him "Bulldozer." In his off time,

he was a competitive bull rider.

Oh, and one more thing. Belding is blind.

"Yes, I was born legally blind," Belding, now 33 years old, said. "However, my parents didn't figure it out until I was about six years old. The doctor said I had to stop playing ice hockey and my mom asked why. I'd been blind the years before

so why should now be any different."

Belding cited his parents as being tremendous blessings in his life, never once allowing his visual impairment to become a hindrance for doing just about anything he wanted to do. Such empowerment has allowed his physical prowess to take a back seat to his inner strength as he had tack-

led the world head-on.

"I'm independent and bull-headed," Belding quipped. "And I like to take risks. Always have. But it's served me well."

See BOUNDARIES, page 5



Fête for Louisiana

ALEX

Winter

FÊTE

Ice Skating

Live Music

Gumbo Cookoff

Holiday Shopping

Santa

Christmas Parade

Fireworks

Food Trucks

Ugly Sweater 5K

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GETTING LOST AT THE LIBRARY

Blast Christmas music with Hoopla Digital

Rock around the Christmas tree this year while you stream free holiday music and DVDs from the Lincoln Parish Library. LPL offers two leading streaming platforms in library services, Hoopla Digital and Libby, the Overdrive support app.

These amazing applications allow patrons to access ebooks and cookbooks, audiobooks, movies and music and more without even leaving the house.

Hoopla Digital puts together special occasion collections to enhance our users' experience and education. Are you interested in learning more about Hanukkah or Kwanzaa this year?

Head to the Hoopla app and look at this year's curated holiday collections.

Who doesn't love a great holiday cookbook? Did you know Hoopla has plenty of cookbooks to try before you buy?

One of the most anticipated holiday traditions at the Lincoln Parish Library has popped up. The Holiday DVD tree is up in the lobby and full of your favorite holiday films, new and old. Stop by the library and check out seven DVDs per library card in your household for weeks of binge-watching your favorites by the fire.

We know it can be hard to keep the kiddos occupied during the holidays, and we have a fix for that. Each week, the Children's Dept. has new take-and-make craft kits and monthly reading challenges to engage developing minds.

While you are at the library, take a moment to view the traveling exhibition, "Celebrating Louisiane." Sponsored by Louisiana Art and Folk Festival in cooperation with the Northeast Louisiana Arts Council, this exhibit embodies the culture, life and lagniappe of Louisiana. The show will be available for the public to enjoy in the library lobby from Dec. 9 to Jan. 9, 2022.

Saul Zalesch has returned to the library with one of his thought-provoking displays of United States war stamps.

This collection covers the little-known fact that during the 1930s, the United States and Japanese navies sometimes trained together and used each other's ports. Illustrations included in this collection were used for navy recruitment and to show off the newly built ships in Pearl Harbor.

Don't forget to join the Lincoln Parish Library at the Ruston-Lincoln Christmas Parade at 6 p.m. on Saturday. The Christmas parade will leave Thomas Assembly Center and circle the downtown area via Park Ave.

We look forward to seeing you there. The library serves the community seven days a week and over 250 hours a month. That is over 3,000 hours a year. Popular Holidays DVDs to check out LPL:

- Little Women, 1994 and 2019
- Die Hard, 1988
- Disney's A Christmas Carol, 2009
- The Nightmare Before Christmas, 1993
- The Muppet Christmas Carol, 1992
- Home Alone, 1990
- Love Actually, 2003
- March of the Wooden Soldiers, 1934
- How the Grinch Stole Christmas, 1967 and 2000
- Holiday Inn, 1942



Grambling State University will be holding its fall graduation ceremonies Dec. 15-17 at the Fredrick C. Hobdy Assembly Center on campus. The ceremonies will be livestreamed on GSU's YouTube channel.

Grambling State to hold fall commencement Dec. 15-17

Grambling State News

GRAMBLING — Grambling State University will celebrate its Fall 2021 graduating class with commencement ceremonies Dec. 15-17.

Scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. each day, the events will be held in the Fredrick C. Hobdy Assembly Center and streamed live on Grambling State's YouTube channel.

On Dec. 15, degrees will be conferred from Graduate Studies (Doctor of Education, Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Arts in Social Sciences, Master of Education in Special Education, Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, Master of Public Administration, Master of Science in Criminal Justice, Master of Science in Developmental Education, Master of Science in Sports Administration, Master of Science in Nursing, Master of Social Work, Post Master's Certificate).

The Dec. 16 ceremony will confer degrees upon graduates from the College of Education (Kinesiology, Leisure Studies, Teacher Education degree programs) and the College of Professional Studies (Criminal Justice, Mass Communications, Nursing, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology).

The Dec. 17 ceremony will confer degrees upon graduates from the College of Business (Accounting, Computer Information Systems, Economics, Management, Marketing) and College of Arts & Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Child Development & Early Literacy, Computer Science, Cybersecurity, Engineering Technology, English, General Studies, History, Mathematics & Physics, Music, Political Science, Visual & Performing Arts).

Graduates are asked to limit guests to 12 for attendance at each ceremony.

Social distancing will be practiced with seating and masks must be worn during the event.

The clear bag policy will also be enforced at the assembly center. Guests are asked to leave gifts, balloons, and large purses in their vehicles. For more information, please visit www.gram.edu/graduation.

Pfizer COVID boosters expanded

(AP) — U.S. health authorities said Thursday that 16- and 17-year-olds should get a booster dose of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine once they're six months past their last shot.

The U.S. and many other nations already were urging adults to get booster shots to pump up immunity that can wane months after vaccination, calls that intensified with the discovery of the worrisome new omicron variant.

On Thursday, the Food and Drug Administration gave emergency authorization for 16- and 17-year-olds to get a third dose of the vaccine made by Pfizer and its partner BioNTech. And hours later, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lifted the last barrier — saying those teens should get their booster as soon as it's time.

CDC Director Rochelle Walensky told The Associated Press the boosters are important considering that protection against infection wanes over time and "we're facing a variant that has the potential to require more immunity to be protected."

OBITUARY (Paid Announcement)



Shawn E. Kaffka

Services celebrating the life of Shawn E. Kaffka will be held Saturday, December 11, 2021, at 11 a.m. at Ruston First Baptist Church in Ruston with Bro. Chris Craig officiating. Interment will follow at Craig Cemetery in El Dorado, Arkansas, under the direction of

Rose-Neath Funeral Home in Minden. The family will receive friends at 9:30 a.m. Saturday at the church prior time of service.

Shawn was born March 4, 1977, in Shreveport, and entered into rest December 8, 2021, in Minden. He served as the director of Camp Harris in Minden.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Lucille James, Marie and Walter Kaffka and uncle, Kenny James.

He is survived by his wife Laurie Kaffka; sons, Joshua and Noah Kaffka, all of Minden; parents, Kenneth and Shirley Kaffka of Stonewall; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Thomas and Vicky Ham of

Spearsville; sister, Keena Ogle and husband Robert of Stonewall; brother-in-law Tommy Ham and wife Angie of Springfield, Tennessee, and nephews, Bryan Ham of Springfield, Tennessee and Trace Allen and Trent Ogle of Stonewall.

Pallbearers will be Luke Hockenjos, Brandon Digilormo, Robert Ogle, Todd Free, Tommy Ham, Brad Wolfe, Garrett Allison, and Josh Sanderson. Honorary pallbearer will be Bryan Ham.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Camp Harris or American Cancer Society. Rose-Neath Funeral Home is located at 211 Murrell Street in Minden.

PET OF THE WEEK

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The Fauci who cried wolf

Wow, the press isn't what it used to be. In a Sunday interview with Anthony Fauci, CNN's Jake Tapper played a clip of Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., criticizing Fauci for keeping the public in a state of raw panic over COVID.

Johnson: "Fauci did the exact same thing with AIDS. He overhyped it. He created all kinds of fear, saying it could affect the entire population, when it couldn't. And he's doing—he's using the exact same playbook for COVID."

At that point, the anchor is supposed to say something like, "Dr. Fauci?" and let him respond. But CNN apparently thinks Fauci is too delicate a flower to answer an attack all by his lonesome. So, before turning it over to the interviewee, Tapper said: "Obviously, that's a bizarre and false assertion. President George W. Bush gave you the Presidential Medal of Freedom because of your leadership in the AIDS crisis. But I did want to give you an opportunity to respond."

At that point, Fauci merely had to join Tapper in sneering at the senator: "Jake, how do you respond to something as preposterous as that?"

Thank you, Dr. Fauci for that penetrating response. Next up on CNN ...

Actually, Fauci then went on to use the Hillary Benghazi defense: How dare you question me when people died.

He said: "Overhyped AIDS? It's killed over 750,000 Americans and 36 million people worldwide. How do you overhype that? Overhyped COVID? It's already killed 780,000 Americans and over 5 million people worldwide. So, I don't have any clue of what he's talking about."

That would have been a fantastic answer if Sen. Johnson had questioned whether anyone had ever died from AIDS or COVID. Unfortunately, he didn't do that. Rather, he accused Fauci of overhyped the risk of COVID, terrifying everyone — as he did with AIDS — instead of concentrating protections on high-risk groups.

Overhyped car accidents? Cars have killed over 3.6 million Americans and multiple millions of people worldwide. How do you overhype that?

Yes, but you recommended that people drive blindfolded.

Long after it was clear that COVID was dangerous nearly exclusively for older people and the obese, Fauci lied, just as he once lied about AIDS being a risk for heterosexuals long after it became clear that it was almost entirely a problem for gay men and intravenous drug users.

It seems that Fauci believes in "science" — except when he needs to terrify heterosexuals in the cause of destigmatizing gays, or frighten the entire population so as not to stigmatize the elderly and obese.

Fauci is doing the exact same thing with COVID as he did with AIDS.

Ann Coulter is a New York Times best-selling author and syndicated columnist.



By Ann Coulter



WEEKLY MUDDLE

Christmas from the straw beneath the manger

Inevitably, there comes a Christmas when "holly, jolly" just doesn't seem to capture the mood.

This is particularly difficult for me to acknowledge because I've always been a big advocate of Christmas—the sacred observance and the secular one, too. I like them both.

I grew up believing Christmas really was the most wonderful time of the year — that those words were not just lyrics to a song — and I have spent my life trying to convince others of the joys of roasting chestnuts on an open fire or dashing through the snow in a one-horse open sleigh.

For years, I've mailed enough season's greetings to keep the postal service afloat, whipped up too much fudge and divinity while decking the halls with boughs of holly and wrapping presents with pretty ribbons of blue.

This year, like always, "The Carpenters" will sing us through the season, encouraging us to have ourselves a merry little Christmas; long-suffering, tolerant friends will gather to make sure we're okay; but Life As We Know It will never be the same. Somebody we loved is missing from the table and, no matter how many lights we string up, it doesn't make my heart any brighter.

I can hear you now, scratching my name off the party invitation list.

Make no apologies; I agree, find somebody else. For us, it seems this Christmas will be stripped down to the straw underneath the manger.

And I hope, oh I hope, the donkeys and camels sit down-wind from me as I ponder that star in the East, those wisest of men who traveled to see the brilliance, and that infamous innkeeper who shouted mercilessly "No room, no room." (although the Bible doesn't say that, dear friends).

Like some front yards, where Frosty the Snowman takes up residence near the Christ Child, I will think a little bit about Rudolph, too, and those other reindeer who wouldn't let him play reindeer games. That always bothered me ...

I will also consider those Christmases when empty places at the table were filled again ... when my cousin returned home from Viet Nam and we who loved him most let out a collective sigh that he was back for ambrosia and figgy pudding.

I will remember those years when my dear Aunt Velma said in a shaky voice, "This could be my last Christmas." It annoyed my Mother endlessly because my aunt lived longer than anyone else in her family. It was if her "doom and gloom" propelled her through the ages.

She finally claimed her eternal reward and we may not miss her annual, somber predictions but we'll never have a five-layer coconut cake quite like hers again.

I remember being a newlywed and trying to juggle the expectations of two families, each wanting to center the holiday around us. The worst year of all was that first one when

the mother-in-law's feast was late because of a power outage and her lunch was not served until 3 p.m. We were expected to arrive perky and hungry in another city at my own mother's table at 6 p.m.

"Eat like you haven't had a morsel of food in two years," I said to the new husband, and it was clear: the honeymoon was over. Fa-la-la-la-la.

In this season of great joy, I am reminding myself: every Christmas is different. Some are holly, jolly; others are logistical nightmares. Some years the gifts all fit; other years you wonder if you shouldn't suggest, "How about you spend \$50 on yourself, and I'll spend \$50 on myself?"

Some Christmases are occasions of profound gratitude that every place at the table is occupied; others leave you bereft and breathless, longing for Dec. 26 or almost any other day of the year.

But deep in the background of each Christmas is the very first one — the most important Christmas in human history. The manger was anything but empty.

The star was the brightest on earth. Even the donkeys and camels were well-behaved.

Other Christmases will come and go; they will dazzle or disappoint, satisfy or sadden.

But somewhere in the swirl of this madness and mayhem we call "The Holidays," I hope you find Peace on your patch of Earth ... and keep it for all the days of our lives in 2022.

Contact Susan Lincoln at mud-dle5513@gmail.com.

ARE YOU SERIOUS?

Creepy little elf doesn't celebrate my holiday

Lately, I've started seeing all the usual Christmas decorations, books, gift suggestions, articles, foods and complaints about all the usual Christmas decorations, books, gift suggestions, articles, and foods.

Some say they're too over the top, some say it's too early, and some say it's not enough. I'm familiar with all of it, including the promises of "A Charlie Brown Christmas" with its haunting Vince Guaraldi score, the proliferation of Dickensian memorabilia and the magical, incandescent beauty of the late autumn, early winter daylight. It really is the most wonderful time of the year.

But the one thing I can't snuggle up to is that Elf on the Shelf. As a child of the 1960s and 1970s, I had no idea that it was actually a "thing," until I started seeing that grinning little imp showing up in all of my Facebook feeds.

The thing that bothered me the most is this elf looked "aware." He had an expression that reminded me of the doll in that "Twilight Zone" episode with Telly Savalas, the one where she gets her revenge by "accidentally" showing up on the staircase and sending him hurtling to his death.

I did a little research and found out that the whole thing stems from

a book that was published in 2004, authored by a mother-daughter team. Apparently, this elf is supposed to be Santa's eyes. It moves around the house around Christmas time, reminding little kids that they need to be good, otherwise Santa's secret Stasi doll is going to take names and convey them to the central authorities.

I know that you might be saying, well, what about that song "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," where the most chilling passage is "He sees you when you're sleeping/He knows when you're awake/He knows if you've been bad or good/So be good for goodness sake."

The difference is that in the song, it's Santa who's watching, not some pointy-toed little henchman. Santa is benign, and he's the one making the toys and delivering the gifts so you kind of understand why he'd want to make sure that he's not being overly generous to brats.

Having grown up during the Cold War and spending the first 30 years of my life with the shadow of the Iron Curtain just a continent away (particularly since we had relatives in Italy who literally were next door to Yugoslavia which was the most western of the Soviet Bloc countries but still a communist state), I got the whole principle of

surveillance. It was a fact of life, and this was well before the Patriot Act became a homemade reality.

But we didn't allow those things into our homes. Santa, if he was engaged in some covert operation, could be forgiven because he was a benign fellow who would probably still give you some toys even if you (as I) screwed around with your younger siblings because they really deserved it.

That elf is different. That elf is not bringing you toys. That elf is not someone with whom you could have a lifelong relationship.

That elf is a poorly-dressed, miniature spy who came in from the cold and is going back there, along with any intel that he gathered about you biting the plastic heads off of your brothers' green plastic army men (not that I know anyone who actually did that, mind you).

In short, that elf has no place in any home where children are considered beloved creatures and not comrades living under the yoke of parental oppression.

Christmas is a time of cheer, not a time to peer, and I'm personally offended that this thing is now considered a beloved tradition by generations that didn't think Charlie Brown, Rudolph or even that melting snowman were enough.

Christine Flowers is an attorney and a columnist. She can be reached at cflowers1961@gmail.com.



By Christine Flowers

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Learning from the ghosts of Christmas past, present, future

Q: I've made a big mess of my financial life and I wonder if I'll ever get over it. This is the first Christmas I've had since falling on hard times and it's not exactly merry. Do people as deep in the hole as I am ever get out?

A: Yes they do. But only if they learn.

Since it's the Christmas season, let me borrow from Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol and say that in order to move beyond your past failures and present difficulties into a bright future, you're going to have to learn... from the ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Yet to Come.

Learning from the Ghost of Christmas Past. Your past may be full of failure and disappointment. Perhaps the failure was all of your own doing. Perhaps it came from circumstances beyond your control. Maybe there was some of both.

No matter. Don't be defined or chained to your past. If you want to be different, you can be different. It will not be easy, and for that reason most won't try. But if you want badly enough for your life to be different,

you've got to start with you.

Not being chained to your past means there are some things that belong in your past...and not in your present. That may mean people that bring out the worst in you. Or self-destructive habits. Or toxic attitudes. What are those things that need to be left in your past?

Learning from the Ghost of Christmas Present. Today is all we have.

The past is a memory, for better or for worse. We can do nothing to change it, though we can learn from it.

The future is notoriously difficult to predict and even harder (impossible!) to control. The only thing we can do for the future is influence it, also for better or worse.

All we have is today. But...we have today! And we can act today to influence whatever future is coming our way.

Do you want better relationships in the future? Then determine what you can do today to influence that

future outcome. Do you want a better financial life in the future? Then determine today what you can do to influence that future outcome.

Don't burden yourself with trying to fix 20 years' worth of mistakes in a day. Do what you can do today: Make a phone call. Save money this month. Pay an extra debt payment. Sign up

for that course that will help advance your career.

Learning from the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. The future will come at the end of a long string of todays. And that future will be heavily influenced by what we did (or didn't) do during each of those todays.

You cannot be tomorrow what you will not be today.

If you want a future full of love, health and financial stability, it will be because you lived a long string of todays that were full of decisions that would lead to love, health and financial stability. You may not BE there today, but you must BEGIN heading in that direction today.



By
Byron Moore

Christians celebrate Christmas because of their hope in a very special baby born in a manger. C. S. Lewis said, "The Son of God became man to enable men to become the sons of God."

Whether or not that is your belief, you can at least appreciate the immense hope this faith brings into the life of one who embraces it.

May this be the Christmas that marks the beginning of a new hope in your own life...one marked by learning from your past, embracing the opportunities of your present and influencing the quality of your future.

Merry Christmas.

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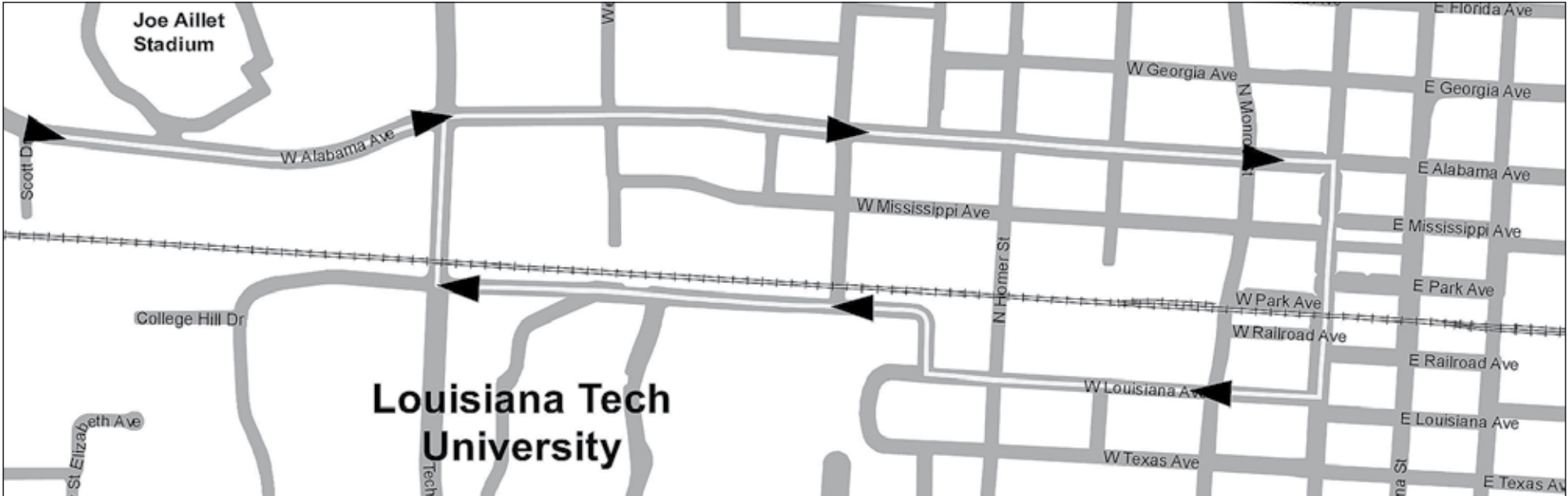
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Route for the 2021 Ruston Christmas Parade Saturday evening



BOUNDARIES continued from page 1

Maybe that's what enabled Belding to climb on the back of a bull, something he describes as 2,000 pounds of pure chaos ready to explode. Perhaps it started with sports within the public schools he attended in Colorado, where coaches spotted him working out in the weight room and set out to recruit him. Wherever he landed, he never once let victimization creep into his robust world.

"The only barrier I had to deal with was figuring out how to do things blind," Belding continued. "I never had to deal with adults telling

what I couldn't do. I just tackled life and figured it out. I'd rather do it all own my own instead of depending on other things to do what I knew I could do myself."

After earning a General Studies degree in Indiana, Belding attended the Colorado Center for the Blind. It was his first time to be immersed in an environment comprised primarily of the blind. He found the experience to be awesome and began working with cane travel, something that ignited a passion within him. But that wasn't the only passion to surface.

Belding met his future

wife Tabea while at the center. He said the first time he heard her laugh, it was over.

"We became friends despite the fact I liked to push those boundaries," Belding said. "I kept buying her coffee just so I could call it a coffee date. But it paid off."

Married since 2018, Belding and his wife soon welcomed a son, Daniel Jr., born with no visual impairment. Before long, they were looking to relocate their new family.

"I began researching what was needed to teach cane travel," Belding explained. "Louisiana

Tech University was the only place that offered the program with the philosophy I believed in. I wanted to go with the idea of providing the most autonomy to the person undergoing instruction. Tech had that so we moved from Indianapolis to Ruston this past summer. It's been a great experience for us."

Pointing out how much he has enjoyed the shift from a big, busy city to one that's more slow-paced and personal, Belding shared how inviting the community has been for his family.

"This has been such a

welcoming community," Belding said. "People here are so nice and we've loved that. They are used to blind people being around so it's not awkward at all. We really enjoy all the regular conversations we get into."

That sense of familiarity comes from having the Louisiana Center for the Blind located in the heart of downtown Ruston. Belding is taking advantage of the local center, utilizing it while working on his master's degree at Tech. The symbiotic relationship has already reaped rich rewards for the talented student.

"The master's program in cane travel is just excellent," Belding said. "We take counseling courses alongside the blindness classes. I've also been through immersion training at

the Louisiana Center for the Blind which has provided an extensive menu of learning opportunities. Being able to see it done in real time rather than just as a theory in a textbook has been so beneficial."

After graduation next fall, Belding plans to take his well-earned certifications and head to where there are opportunities. However, don't be surprised if a new athletic venture pops up when he gets there.

"We started the Indiana Checkers Blind Hockey program and I'm one of the team captains for the United States National Blind Hockey Team," Belding said. "So the interest is still there. Just don't expect any bull riding. My wife has cured me of some of that boundary pushing."

FIREWORKS continued from page 1

run starting on July 4, 2022.

After a public hearing, the village council unanimously approved Mercy Medical Health Center's bid of \$40,000 to purchase the old ball field located at 1211 S. Elm Street. The bid was debated during last month's meeting as some citizens felt the field was being given away after the minimum bid was lowered from \$70,000 to \$40,000.

The field has been out of use since the early 1970s after the semi-professional baseball league, the Jonesboro Big Eight, dissolved.

The village discussed the back flow prevention mechanism needed for the Hodge Shopping Center. Village Clerk Zip Schmidt said the village must place a new system because of new businesses in the shopping center. The mechanism

prevents contaminated water from flowing back into water lines.

"There was a three-year survey from the state about the back flow prevention and they are really strict," Schmidt said. "A new one has to be put in to accommodate the three businesses there, Pretty Nails, Jalisco Mexican Restaurant and Mercy Medical Health Center."

The council also reported sewer lines on the east side of the village were good. Schmidt said the village has dressed up the area after lines were cut. Trees were also planted. Palmer had researched about having windows at the village hall replaced. All the current windows are original to the structure and need repair, according to Schmidt. The proposed

project has a price tag of \$9,130 for 15 windows but would not be used at one time and there are no labor costs attached.

"Since getting supplies is hard right now, the business said they would hold the windows for us," Palmer said. "If I ask about three windows then I'll be able to go pick up the windows. So, it won't be paid for at one time. Our employees will be putting them in so there's no labor cost there."

Fire Chief Michael Heard gave the fire department's update and spoke about volunteer fire fighters' reimbursement.

The village has a policy of paying volunteer fire fighters \$10 per fire. Those monies are held until November and paid out in December. This year's payout for the group amounts to \$3,080.

PARKING TICKETS continued from page 1

Ronny Walker said.

The officer will be responsible only for writing tickets in the central business district.

Ruston stopped giving tickets when the COVID-19 pandemic began more than a year ago partially to encourage people to continue shopping downtown. Then the RPD parking control officer retired. The job wasn't filled, pending City Hall's decision on how it wanted to proceed.

Walker asked the city civil board to declassify the position, which it did.

Downtown parking has been contentious for years, with business owners complaining that too many employees park near their workplace all day, thus leaving customers without storefront parking.

Supporting Sexual Assault Victims

Ruston High volleyball, baseball teams band together to make an impact

By Cathi Cox-Boniol
community@rustonleader.com

When the opportunity for a community service project with big impact came along, Ruston High School athletes showed up.

Members of both the Lady Bearcats volleyball team and the Bearcats baseball squad joined forces to engage the RHS campus in an effort to support The Wellspring Sexual Assault Program.

While for some it might seem like a big leap for high school students, senior volleyball player Kaylyn Brazzel says it was a natural fit.

“Bringing awareness to sexual assault victims was good for our teams because we were able to show support toward a very serious subject,” Brazzel said. “Sexual assault is a huge issue in the world today and giving to this cause shows how important it is to reach out to and inform our community, whether you’re a high school athlete or a day to day citizen.”

The project began with the student athletes distributing paper bags to every classroom on the RHS campus. They encouraged students, teachers and



Leader photo by CATHI COX-BONIOL

The Ruston High baseball team gathers before practice to assemble kits filled with items collected for The Wellspring Sexual Assault Volunteer Advocates to use when assisting survivors.

other supporters to bring items needed for the kits volunteers take when they counsel survivors of sexual assault. This included disposable toothbrushes, travel-size toothpastes, travel-size soap, washcloths and socks. Other items provided by community stakeholders were T-shirts, sweatpants, and underwear.

For both teams, the collaborative piece was essential.

“Doing this with the baseball team allowed our team to develop a relationship with another athletic program here at Ruston High,” senior Mariah Hintze said. “We had been working out in the weight room with them, forming those bonds outside

our volleyball family, and this project allowed us to further that bond outside the weight room. This project really let us be more than just athletes. We were impactful members of society.”

Certainly at the heart of the effort was the connection outside the school, especially when it comes to a subject like

sexual assault. Brazzel adds the importance of the team being involved in a type of community service that ultimately shines a light on a serious societal issue.

“I feel it’s really necessary to help bring awareness to sexual assault victims and the needs that each individual may have,” Brazzel continued. “By helping

in the community, our program is seen as a role model that can bring others in to help as well. We can then become a strong influence to those we see every day and even people who never thought of these actions being such a strong impact to our community.”

See ASSAULT VICTIMS, page 7



Photo by Lucie Hunt

Members of the RHS Lady Bearcats volleyball team sort items donated for the project in support of The Wellspring Sexual Assault Volunteer Advocates.

Cumbie adds Parr to staff as co-offensive coordinator

Louisiana Tech Sports

Louisiana Tech head coach Sonny Cumbie announced today that Scott Parr will join the Bulldogs staff as co-offensive coordinator and tight ends coach.

Parr is coming to Ruston after spending the past three seasons as the head coach at Navarro College where he led the program to a conference title while earning the Conference Coach of the Year award.

“Scott Parr has orchestrated high-powered offenses his entire career,” Cumbie said. “His passion for kids and offensive football is unmatched. The son of a legendary high school coach, football is in his blood. We look forward to having Scott and his family at Louisiana Tech for many successful seasons.”

Parr has more than 20 years coaching on the collegiate level, including 10 as offensive coordinator developing offenses that routinely averaged more than 40 points, 500 yards, and 345 passing yards per game.

Parr will join Jake Brown, who was announced as the other co-offensive coordinator this week. Brown will coach wide receivers. In addition to his time as head coach



Scott Parr

at Navarro, Parr has also coached at Eastern Illinois (offensive coordinator in 2018), Navarro (offensive coordinator from 2015-17), and stints at Texas Tech, West Texas A&M, Tarleton State, Baylor, Abilene Christian and Sam Houston.

“I am grateful to have the opportunity to work for Louisiana Tech and Sonny Cumbie,” Parr said. “The sky is the limit at Louisiana Tech. Sonny Cumbie is passionate, a players’ coach, and has high integrity. I look forward to striving to become the best Group of 5 football program in the nation.”

“Tech and Sonny Cumbie provide those ingredients,” he added.

During the past three years at Navarro, the Plainview, Texas, native led the program to the 2019 Southwest Junior College Conference Championship while earning the SWJCFC Coach of the Year award. The

team finished among the nation’s top eight teams statistically in 11 categories, including first in total offense (5,415), passing yardage (4,037), per-game yardage (492.3) and touchdown passes (34).

While serving as the OC at Navarro, the program’s offensive units ranked among the NJCAA’s Top 10 in yardage and scoring (2015-17). Navarro quarterbacks led the NJCAA in passing and per game average four years.

In 2018 at EIU, Parr’s offense ranked 22nd in FCS total and ninth in passing as the Panthers had five 500-yard-plus total offense performances and six 40-plus point efforts. Parr’s influence resulted in the fifth-best passing yardage season in EIU history.

Impressive offensive numbers aren’t new to Parr whose family has deep Texas Panhandle high school football coaching roots. His father, Steve, was a head coach for a combined 31 years at Slaton, Plainview and Amarillo Palo Duro High Schools. His brother, Seth, has been a head coach 12 years – first, at Amarillo Caprock, and, most recently, at Lubbock Coronado. Scott and his wife, Kyla, have three children: Berkeley (12), Nash (9) and Knox (9).

Ruston Daily Leader

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ATHLETE

OF THE WEEK

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Photo by Darrell James

Carter Hill Cedar Creek Basketball

Hill is leading the Cougars in scoring in the early going this basketball season. Last week, he scored 19 points in a close loss to Class 2A Jonesboro-Hodge, while also leading the team with 14 points in a victory over Glenbrook Academy. He's a big reason Creek is 5-2 and is ranked No. 4 in the power ratings.

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Former Cleveland Browns coach Hue Jackson is expected to be named the new head football coach at Grambling State this morning at a press conference.

Grambling expected to name Jackson as next head football coach this morning

Leader Staff Report

Grambling State officials have called a press conference for 10 a.m. today at the university to announce the seventh head football coach in program history.

Widespread reports, including from the plugged-in website, footballscoop.com, have alluded to former Cleveland Browns head coach Hue Jackson as the man who will take over the program.

Last month, the university parted ways with former head coach Broderick Fobbs and began a national search.

Among the other names linked to the search have been Eric Dooley, Ray Lewis and Kevin Sumlin.

Dooley was named the head coach at Grambling rival Southern University last week. Lewis has no coaching experience after his Hall of Fame NFL career and Sumlin had recent head coaching stops at Texas A&M and Arizona.

Jackson coached the Browns from 2016-18 during his 17 years as a coach in the league. He was named the NFL Assistant Coach of the Year by the Pro Football Writers of America in 2015. He also spent one season as the head coach of the Oakland Raiders in 2011.

Jackson also has college experience, with stops at Arizona State and USC in the Pac-12.

The G-Men finished off their 2021 season with a 29-26 win over Southern in the Bayou Classic. That was a high point during a season in which the Tigers struggled to a 4-7 record, 3-5 in the SWAC.

Fobbs was let go prior to the Bayou Classic. He coached at GSU from 2014-21, winning 54 games and losing 32. He led the Tigers to conference championships in 2016 and 2017 and won the Black College Football National Championship in 2016 with a team that went 12-1.

What Finger Injury?

Saints' Hill seizing starting role, damaged digit and all

METAIRIE (AP) — After a plastic water bottle slipped from Taysom Hill's hands and bounced at his feet, the Saints quarterback possessed the good humor to laugh when asked if the injured middle finger on his throwing hand had anything to do with it.

The versatile Hill has endured disappointments and injuries this season, but enters this week's game against the New York Jets with a hopeful outlook.

He's slated to start at QB for the second time this season on Sunday in East Rutherford, New Jersey, and has a chance to keep that role for all five of New Orleans' remaining regular season games.

"As a football player in general, you have these moments where you realize that you can't take things for granted," Hill said. "I would say this year I've had a lot of moments like that."

Hill lost a preseason competition with Jameis Winston for the starting QB job and began the season in a role he'd played during the last few seasons of the Drew Brees era — that of a change-of-pace, read-option threat who also takes snaps at tight end, receiver and on special teams.

In Week 5, Hill was running a pass route when he took a heavy hit at Washington and left with a concussion that sidelined him for the next two games.

When Winston was lost for the season to a knee injury on Oct. 31, Payton elected to make Trevor Siemian his primary QB so Hill could continue to serve in multiple roles.

But during Siemian's first start, Hill injured his foot catching a pass at Tennessee. That essentially sidelined him an additional three games, preventing him from taking over at QB even as the Saints lost all four games Siemian started.

Last week, Hill finally was deemed healthy enough to start at QB for the first time this season, only to hurt his finger early in the game. He played through it and the results were mixed.

"This year's been a little bit of a roller coaster for me physi-

cally, mentally and all that stuff," Hill said.

Hill was intercepted four times — with one pick returned for a TD — in a 27-17 loss. But he also accounted for 365 yards from scrimmage, passing for 264 yards and two TDs and rushing for 101 yards.

As a runner, he embraced contact, plowing through some tacklers along the way and even hurdling a Dallas defender.

"He's a warrior for sure and it's great to have guys like that on the team," offensive tackle James Hurst said. "You know he's going to leave everything he has out on the field and he expects you to do the same."

The Saints had more total yards than the Cowboys (405-377), more time of possession (31:54-28:06) and the same number of first downs (17).

Hill said he intends to continue playing through his injury and has told coaches he can accept if they deem his finger injury too much of a liability in the passing game and change his role.

FANTASY PLAYS

Players to start or sit for NFL week 14

(AP) — The start-or-sit dilemma is part of managing a fantasy football team.

Having the foresight to start the wide receiver who goes for 100 yards and a touchdown in a matchup while sitting a receiver against a shutdown cornerback is one of the keys to victory.

For this version of a start-or-sit, I'm going to be listing all relevant fantasy football players each week and placing them into tiers.

And to take some of the guesswork out of it, I'll be leveraging thousands of slate simulations that are based in numberFire's player projections with dynamic measures for variance, such as quarterback rushing, running back receiving, and receiver target depth.

The results will boil down to three tiers: players we should be confident about starting, players we can consider starting whenever we don't have better alternatives, but who aren't must-plays and players we should try to bench whenever we do have better alternatives.

These players are listed in order of frequency of hitting the stated threshold (i.e. QB12, RB24, WR24, and TE12 performances and higher on the list means more start-able).

The groupings reflect a 12-team, single-quarterback league with the following hypothetical in mind: if I had other viable options on my bench or the waiver-wire, should I start this player this week?

Players not listed should be presumed sit-worthy in a shallow or standard-sized league, and all fantasy points references and rankings reflect half-PPR scoring.

QUARTERBACKS

Start with confidence: These players are at least 50% likely to finish the week as a top-12 quarterback, according to the slate simulations.

— Patrick Mahomes vs. LV (65%)

— Josh Allen at TB (63%)

— Kyler Murray vs. LA (62%)

— Lamar Jackson at CLE (60%)

— Aaron Rodgers vs.

CHI (59%)

— Tom Brady vs. BUF (59%)

— Justin Herbert vs. NYG (58%)

— Matthew Stafford at ARI (52%)

— Dak Prescott at WSH (52%)

Consider if needed: This tier has odds between 35% and 49% to post a top-12 week.

— Cam Newton vs. ATL (49%)

— Russell Wilson at HOU (49%)

— Ryan Tannehill vs. JAC (48%)

— Joe Burrow vs. SF (45%)

RUNNING BACKS

Start with confidence: These running backs are at least 60% likely to finish the week inside the top 24, according to the slate simulations. You're starting them.

— Austin Ekeler vs. NYG (80%)

— Eli Mitchell at CIN (80%)

— Alvin Kamara at NYJ (78%)

— Najee Harris at MIN (77%)

— Javonte Williams vs. DET (76%) (asterisk)

— Joe Mixon vs. SF (75%)

— Cordarrelle Patterson at CAR (73%)

— Leonard Fournette vs. BUF (72%)

— Antonio Gibson vs. DAL (72%)

— Josh Jacobs at KC (70%)

WIDE RECEIVERS

Start with confidence: You're starting these guys in a 12-team league.

— Cooper Kupp at ARI (85%)

— Davante Adams vs. CHI (78%)

— Justin Jefferson vs. PIT (75%)

— Tyreek Hill vs. LV (71%)

— Chris Godwin vs. BUF (69%)

— Ja'Marr Chase vs. SF (62%)

— Diontae Johnson at MIN (61%)

TIGHT END

Start with confidence: These guys are the Big Six this week.

— George Kittle at CIN (81%)

— Travis Kelce vs. LV (80%)

— Mark Andrews at CLE (69%)

— Rob Gronkowski vs. BUF (62%)

— Kyle Pitts at CAR (61%)

ASSAULT VICTIMS continued from 6

Melanie Clark, The Wellspring's Sexual Assault Program Coordinator and therapist at the Counseling & Family Development Center, noted how critical it is that the community as a whole understands that each sexual assault survivor has the right to a respectful and trauma-informed response to their experience.

"Sexual Assault Volunteer Advocates (SAVAs) provide this supportive response to adolescent and adult survivors seeking care at hospitals 24 hours per day," Clark said. "SAVAs provide emotional support, information

about medical care, reporting options, evidence collection, and the criminal justice process as well as referrals for continued support and resources available to survivors."

Another vital part of this response is having care items available for survivors at the ER so that they may attend to personal needs and have clothing items to wear home when their own are kept for evidence. The dozens of kits will now help stock the shelves the SAVAs depend on. While Clark expressed immense gratitude for the youth in our community cham-

pioning this effort, head baseball coach Zack Smith is proud.

"The Ruston High School baseball program is committed to giving back to the community who supports them," Smith said. "We want our players to experience the selflessness and generosity of giving back. Doing for others is not about money but using your gifts, talents and time. We are trying to play a small part in the lives of young men developing them into not only great baseball players but great young men and we believe being part of our community and giving back are essential."

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ARRESTS

GSU Homecoming shooting suspect tops arrests

Name: Zyheim Tygwon Butcher
Age: 19
Address: 317 Northwood Drive, Bastrop
Arrested for: First Degree Murder, Attempted First Degree Murder
Date of arrest: December 6
Time of arrest: 1:30 p.m.
Place of arrest: Tarrant County Jail, Fort Worth, Texas
Arresting agency: LSP
Bond amount: \$2,500,000, \$500,000



Butcher

Time of arrest: 8:46 p.m.
Place of arrest: Neal Street at East Georgia Avenue, Ruston
Arresting agency: LP SO
Bond amount: \$500, TBS, ROR

Name: Stephen Robert Jenkins
Age: 41
Address: 825 Camp Road, Lot 7, Farmerville
Arrested for: Driving Under Suspension, Union Parish Warrant – Fugitive from Another Jurisdiction
Date of arrest: December 4
Time of arrest: 12:51 p.m.
Place of arrest: Highway 80 at Highway
Arresting agency: LP SO
Bond amount: ROR, No Bond, No Bond



Jenkins

Intoxicated (1st Offense), Improper Lane Usage
Date of arrest: December 5
Time of arrest: 2:03 a.m.
Place of arrest: Cooktown Road at Interstate 20, Ruston
Arresting agency: LSP
Bond amount: \$1,500, ROR

Name: Jason Fowler Walker
Age: 29
Address: 512 Revis Fowler Road, Dubach
Arrested for: Jackson Parish Warrant – Execution of Sentence
Date of arrest: December 5
Time of arrest: 10:06 p.m.
Place of arrest: Interstate 20, Eastbound (Mile Marker 91)
Arresting agency: LP SO
Bond amount: No Bond



LeBlanc



Walker

Arresting agency: GPD
Bond amount: TBS, TBS, TBS, TBS

Name: Jerrell Allen McKnight
Age: 33
Address: 1951 North Service Road East, #134, Ruston
Arrested for: Simple Criminal Damage to Property (two counts), Simple Battery, Resisting an Officer, Battery on a Police Officer
Date of arrest: December 6
Time of arrest: 11:15 a.m.
Place of arrest: 1951 North Service Road East, #134, Ruston
Arresting agency: RPD
Bond amount: ROR, ROR, TBS, TBS, TBS



McKnight

Name: Brandie Nicole Keith
Age: 34
Address: 102 Patrick Cove, Calhoun
Arrested for: RPD Warrant – Fugitive from Another Jurisdiction, No Liability Insurance, No Driver's License, Possession of a Schedule II Controlled, Dangerous Substance, Failure to Signal Turn
Date of arrest: December 6
Time of arrest: 1:44 a.m.
Place of arrest: Highway 80 at North Depot Street, Choudrant
Arresting agency: LP SO
Bond amount: \$3,000, ROR, ROR, TBS, ROR



Keith

Name: Daveion Ladarus Bassett

Age: 18
Address: 1309 Matin Loop, Ruston
Arrested for: First Degree Rape
Date of arrest: December 6
Time of arrest: 3:04 p.m.
Place of arrest: 100 West Texas Street, Ruston
Arresting agency: RPD
Bond amount: No Bond



Bassett

Name: Demario K. Williams
Age: 34
Address: 1516 Marsalis Drive, #25, Arcadia
Arrested for: Third Judicial District Court Warrant (three)
Date of arrest: December 7
Time of arrest: 12:30 p.m.
Place of arrest: 100 Vienna Street, Ruston
Arresting agency: LP SO
Bond amount: No Bond, No Bond, No Bond



Williams

Name: Sherri Snipe Solley
Age: 35

Address: 504 Kennon Lane, Ruston
Arrested for: Drug Court Sanctions
Date of arrest: December 8
Time of arrest: 7:50 a.m.
Place of arrest: 170 Road Camp Road, Ruston
Arresting agency: LP SO
Bond amount: No Bond



Solley

This listing reflects a record of those persons booked into the Lincoln Parish Detention Center. An arrest is one of the initial steps in the legal process and does not indicate guilt or innocence.



To make a report, call Crime Stoppers 255-1111

Name: Marlon Deneir Cadet
Age: 36
Address: 604 Hickory Street, Ruston
Arrested for: Bench Warrant – Failure to Appear, Bench Warrant – Failure to Appear
Date of arrest: December 4
Time of arrest: 3:05 a.m.
Place of arrest: Vista Springs Lane and Highway 80, Ruston
Arresting agency: LP SO
Bond amount: \$3,000, \$5,000



Cadet

Name: Davin Franz Deason
Age: 28
Address: 609 Washington Street, Lot 9, West Monroe
Arrested for: LP SO Warrant – Possession of Marijuana, Possession of a Schedule I Drug (Ecstasy), Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
Date of arrest: December 4



Deason

Name: Martha Ann Jackson
Age: 33
Address: 140 Kay Road, Dubach
Arrested for: Obstruction of Roadway, Indecent Exposure, Resisting Officer, Littering
Date of arrest: December 5
Time of arrest: 6:39 p.m.
Place of arrest: Highway 80 at Quitman Street, Ruston
Arresting agency: LP SO
Bond amount: ROR, TBS, TBS, ROR



Jackson

Name: Cameron Michael LeBlanc
Age: 19
Address: 22845 Highway 124, Jonesville
Arrested for: Driving While

Name: LaDaryeon Dwayne White
Age: 24
Address: 686 East Antioch Road, Quitman
Arrested for: Possession of a Firearm or Carrying Concealed Weapon by Convicted Felony (three counts), Possession of a Firearm in Possession of a Controlled, Dangerous Substance
Date of arrest: December 6
Time of arrest: 2:18 p.m.
Place of arrest: Greene Lane, Grambling



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This Week’s TV Best Bets

Sunday, Dec. 12
College Basketball: Villanova at Baylor ABC, 3pm Live
Two elite teams clash today at the Ferrell Center in Waco, Texas, as the Villanova Wildcats visit the 2021 NCAA champion Baylor Bears.

White House Christmas 2021 HGTV, 6pm
HGTV will go behind the scenes at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue to showcase the home’s magnificent holiday transformation in its popular annual special, White House Christmas. During the one-hour special hosted by Genevieve Gorder, fans will get a glimpse of the massive, three-day undertaking that spotlights spectacular trees, breathtaking decor, incredible gingerbread creations and much more.

America’s Funniest Home Videos ABC, 7pm
Don’t miss this special holiday episode, featuring kids having funny reactions to gifts, kids who don’t have the “Christmas spirit,” and a child who tries not to tell Dad what Mom got him for Christmas.

70th Miss Universe Competition FOX, 7pm Live
Steve Harvey hosts the Miss Universe Competition live from Eilat, Israel, where Mexico’s Andrea Meza will crown her successor.

Fixing Up Christmas UPTV, 7pm
Original Film!
Known as a “fixer” for difficult clients, a talented party planner (Natalie Dreyfuss) must help a young CEO (Marshall Williams) plan the Christmas party of the year to dazzle the mayor and save his company. Will the “fixer” end up fixing something more than just the company?

A Christmas Star GAC Family, 8pm
Original Film!
An astronomer, Madeline Baggett (Sarah Canning), believes she’s found life beyond Earth, and travels to a small hamlet in upstate New York where she meets widowed National Park ranger Ryan Sparks (Daniel Lissing) and his young daughter. With Ryan’s help, Madeline begins to chart the celestial event, which brings the pair closer to finding love under the stars.

Sister Swap: Christmas in the City Hallmark Channel, 8pm
Original Film!
Meg Swift (Ashley Williams) comes to Salt Lake City from her hometown in Hazelwood to see her sister Jennifer (Kimberly Williams-Paisley), who runs a local restaurant in town. Meg offers to help Jennifer’s staff prepare for a competition among local restaurants. As Meg works alongside Joe (Keith Robinson), the restaurant’s manager, the two find their differences are what make them a great team.

A New Lease on Christmas ION, 8pm
Original Film!
A single real estate agent (Claire Coffee) falls for a handsome coffee shop owner (George Stults) — only to discover that the job she just took requires her to evict him from his shop.

People Presents: Blending Christmas Lifetime, 8pm
Original Film!
The Hacienda de la Sierra is Emma’s (Haylie Duff) favorite place to spend the holiday season, and her boyfriend Liam (Aaron O’Connell) has been secretly planning to propose to her there, surrounded by both their families. Emma is delighted when she arrives to find the whole family bunch there. Of course, no holiday gathering is complete without drama, and soon the families are bickering over every detail! The added stress from trying to blend the two families eventually takes a toll on Emma and Liam, who start questioning their own relationship. Now, just days before Christmas, the two families realize that they’re going to have to work together in order to reunite Emma and Liam. Also stars Beth Broderick, Christopher Knight, Greg Evigan, Mike Lookinland, Barry Williams, Susan Olsen, Robbie Rist, Telma Hopkins and Jennifer Elise Cox.

Secrets of the Celtic Grave Science Channel, 8pm
This two-hour special tells the epic story of a search to unearth the truth behind the remarkable discovery of a 2,000-year-old Celtic grave that was found by metal detectorist Mike Smith in an ordinary field in the wild west of Wales in 2018. The special follows the archaeological dig from start to finish as the site slowly revealed its secrets, with evidence painting a picture of the potentially great warrior buried there.

90 Day Fiancé: Before the 90 Days TLC, 8pm
Season Premiere!
Season 5 follows seven new couples who think they are ready to take a relationship to the next level, but drama and culture clashes are sure to ensue.

A Christmas Proposal CBS, 8:30pm
Original Film!
Chef Maria Winters (Jessica Camacho) dreams of starting her own line of food trucks, but doesn’t have the means to do so. Things look up when Maria agrees to pose as the girlfriend of hotshot attorney Julian Diaz (Adam Rodriguez) while he’s visiting his family for Christmas. But their business arrangement is complicated by the magic of the season as real sparks begin to fly.

Monday, Dec. 13
The Larkins Acorn TV
New Series!
This British period drama set in the late 1950s is based on H.E. Bates’ classic novel *The Darling Buds of May*. It follows the Larkin family — golden-hearted wheeler dealer Pop (Bradley Walsh), his wife, Ma (Joanna Scanlan), and their six children — as they bask in their idyllic and beautiful patch of paradise in Kent. Each episode contains a story of the week concerning their personal family sagas, as well as the politics of their village life, alongside overall story arcs in the series. The first two episodes are available today; subsequent new episodes drop on Mondays.

The Madame Blanc Mysteries Acorn TV
Season Finale!
As Season 1 concludes, just as it seems Jean (Sally Lindsay) and Dom’s (Steve Edge) relationship may be moving toward romance, his estranged wife reappears in town after a long absence and wants to make amends with her family. Meanwhile, Jean finally has the ring back from the police, but she’s not the only one who was eager to get her hands on it. And, will Rory’s (Peter Gaynor) femme fatale make Jean her next victim?

The Rise and Fall of LuLaRoe discovery+
This investigative documentary pulls the curtain back on multilevel marketing company LuLaRoe and features interviews with retailers, warehouse workers, designers and others whose lives were profoundly impacted by the organization. The film uncovers parts of the story that haven’t been heard before, including recent developments and firsthand accounts from sources who are speaking out for the first time including authorities such as cult expert Rick Ross, cultish author Amanda Montell and blogger Christina Hinks, who was one of the first to expose LuLaRoe’s inner workings.

All American: “Prom Night” The CW, 8pm
The gang is ready to celebrate prom together, but Spencer (Daniel Ezra) finds himself fixing a mistake made by his teammates that could have some major consequences. Olivia (Samantha Logan) struggles with how to connect with her spouse, and make her take her sobriety seriously. Coop (Bre-Z) bails on prom prep with Patience (Chelsea Tavares) to help Amina (guest star Ella Simone Tabu) once again. Meanwhile, Asher (Cody Christian) finds himself spending his prom night a little differently than expected, and Layla (Greta Onieogou) gets some sage advice from Jordan (Michael Evans Behling).

NFL Football: L.A. Rams at Arizona ESPN, 8pm Live
This Week 14 Monday Night Football matchup features two playoff-bound teams from the NFC West as Matthew Stafford and the L.A. Rams visit State Farm Stadium to battle Kyler Murray and the Arizona Cardinals.

Gordon Ramsay’s Road Trip: European Vacation FOX, 8pm
Chef Gordon Ramsay takes friends Gino D’Acampo and Fred Sirieix on an epic journey through Italy, France and Scotland to discover the best food and fun in each other’s home countries.

Maps and Mistletoe Lifetime, 8pm
Original Film!
Emilia Martin (Humberly Gonzales), a cartographer of school maps, has plans for a cozy Christmas at home until her boss has a last-minute project for her, designing a novelty treasure map of the North Pole. Emilia decides to seek out the expertise of North Pole explorer Drew Campbell (Ronnie Rowe), who reluctantly agrees to help her. As the two work closely, they discover more than either of them ever expected.

MeTV’s Super Colossal Cartoon Christmas MeTV, 8pm
Here’s what’s up, doc: Some absolute legends of the animation industry — like Tex Avery, Chuck Jones, Max Fleischer, William Hanna and Joseph Barbera — have gifted us these classic holiday-themed cartoon shorts, which date from 1933 all the way up to 1979. Bill the Cartoon Curator (Bill Leff) and puppet sidekick Toony the Talking Tuna (Kevin Fleming) host tonight’s lineup, but the biggest reasons you’ll want to tune in are hilarious and heart-warming gems like 1941’s Oscar-nominated *The Night Before Christmas* (it’s the third Tom and Jerry short ever!), 1979’s *Fright Before Christmas* (with Bugs Bunny and the Tasmanian Devil), 1933’s *Seasin’s Greetings!* (starring Popeye, Olive Oyl and Bluto), 1952’s *Gift Wrapped* (featuring Sylvester, Tweety and a sprig of mistletoe) and more.

Tuesday, Dec. 14
Russell Howard: Lubricant Netflix
This two-part special features comic Russell Howard’s delayed-yet-delighted return to the stage and a look at his life during an unexpected lockdown.

The Future Diary Netflix
New Series!
The concept of this legendary reality series about people looking for love was born on Japanese television over 20 years ago and is updated and rebooted on Netflix. Two people who have never met before are cast to live out a romantic storyline by following a rough “script” in a diary that is handed to them containing only a basic outline of a story. Their semi-fictional exchange, based on the casts’ own words, takes them through an experience that could ultimately influence how they view one another. Will the casts’ scripted adventures lead to real romance?

StarBeam: Beaming in the New Year Netflix
In this special based on the animated kids superhero series, when all of StarBeam’s (aka Zoey, voiced by Nahanni Mitchell) greatest enemies team up on New Year’s Eve, Zoey trains her cousin Zane to be the next superhero in the family.

The Flash: “Armageddon, Part 5” The CW, 8pm
The conclusion to Armageddon presents an opportunity for the Flash (Grant Gustin) to end his lifelong battle with Reverse Flash (guest star Tom Cavanagh) for good, but the payoff could be too much for Barry and team to handle. Meanwhile, Mia Queen (guest star Katherine McNamara) drops in from the future looking to save a lost loved one, and she won’t let anything stand in her way.

The Murders at Starved Rock HBO, 8pm
New Series!
The February 2020 parole of now-82-year-old convicted triple murderer Chester Weger helped send photographer David Raccuglia — son of the original prosecutor in the grisly case — on an odyssey to find the truth about the 1960 murders of three women in an Illinois state park.

Grand Crew NBC, 8pm
Special Preview!
The first two episodes of this new comedy coming to NBC next year preview tonight. *Grand Crew* comes from Brooklyn Nine-Nine’s Phil Augusta Jackson and Dan Goor, and it follows a group of young professionals trying to navigate the ups and downs of love and life in Los Angeles who always find time to gather at their favorite bar to “wine down” and unpack it all.

Ghosts of Christmas Past Lifetime, 8pm
Original Film!
Ellie (Annie Clark), a serial “ghoster” on dating apps, is told by a fortune teller that she must resolve her past and make amends with all of those she ghosted before Christmas, or she is destined to never find true love! Over the course of one week, she takes it upon herself to track down all the men she ghosted before the stroke of midnight on Christmas Eve, and discovers love in the process.

Wednesday, Dec. 15
The Repair Shop discovery+
New Series!
Nestled deep in the British countryside is a workshop where broken, battered and beloved artifacts, antiques and curios are brought back to life. This series follows the ensemble of skilled and passionate craftspersons at the shop who put the beauty back into precious objects.

Foodtastic Disney+ New Series!
Emmy-winning actress Keke Palmer hosts this immersive, 11-episode global competition series in which highly skilled artists create extravagant scenes and larger-than-life sculptures made entirely out of food. From vegetables and butter to fruit and cheese, these everyday items are transformed into works of art. Each episode is rooted in a Disney intellectual property — including *Star Wars*, *Toy Story*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Muppets*, *The Avengers* and others — and the food-based builds are an extension of that world. All episodes are available today.

The Hand of God Netflix
Feature Film Exclusive!
This Italian drama comes from Oscar-winning writer/director Paolo Sorrentino (*The Great Beauty*) and had its world premiere at this year’s Venice International Film Festival, where the production was awarded the Grand

Jury Prize and star Filippo Scotti received the Marcello Mastroianni Award, which recognizes emerging acting talent. For this film, Sorrentino returns to his hometown to tell his most personal story, a tale of fate and family, sports and cinema, love and loss, told through the eyes of a boy named Fabietto Schisa (Scotti).

Rumble Paramount+ Original Film!
Based on Rob Harrell’s graphic novel *Monster* on the Hill, this animated family film is produced by Paramount Animation in association with WWE Studios and other production companies. The story is set in a world where monster wrestling is a global sport and monsters are superstar athletes, with teenage Winnie (voice of Geraldine Viswanathan) seeking to follow in her father’s footsteps by coaching a lovable, underdog monster into a champion. The voice cast also includes Will Arnett, Terry Crews, Stephen A. Smith, Jimmy Katt, Tony Danza, Susan Leitch Watson, Charles Barkley, Tony Shalhoub, Becky Lynch and Roman Reigns.

Survivor CBS, 8pm
Season Finale!
Season 41’s let’s-reinvent-the-game approach has had its hits (the convoluted but super entertaining “beware advantage”) and misses (the unfair “turnbacktime” twist). In the competition’s three-hour finale, we see the last five players duke it out for that \$1 million prize. Oh, and there will be fire-making.

iHeartRadio Jingle Ball 2021 The CW, 8pm
This star-studded concert event celebrates the season with performances by the year’s biggest recording artists and today’s hottest musical stars.

The Masked Singer FOX, 8pm
Season Finale!
A two-hour holiday-themed finale unmasks the winner, while panelist Jenny McCarthy tries to nab her third consecutive Golden Ear.

The Enchanted Christmas Cake Lifetime, 8pm
Original Film!
After recently losing her grandmother, Gwen (Erica Durance) is struggling to run their bakery, regain the Christmas spirit and figure out her grandmother’s magical recipe for the town’s legendary Enchanted Christmas Cake. So, when a high-end chef comes to town to film a Christmas special, Gwen reluctantly agrees to help the producer, Gavin (Robin Dunne), prepare for the shoot to help support the bakery. As sparks fly, will she discover that Gavin is the secret ingredient she was missing all along?

Young Rock: “A Christmas Peril” NBC, 8pm
Ahead of its second-season return early next year, Dwayne Johnson’s semi-autobiographical sitcom airs this special holiday episode. On Christmas Eve 1982, an unexpected guest shows Dewey (Adrian Groulx) that this is the first in a long line of terrible Christmases. In 1987, Rocky (Joseph Lee Anderson) and Dwayne (Bradley Constant) take jobs as a mall Santa and elf. In 1993, Dwayne (Uli Latukefu) reluctantly spends a disastrous Christmas with Coach O (Emmett Skilton).

Thursday, Dec. 16
Ragdoll AMC+ Season Finale!
The internationally produced serial killer thriller set in England concludes Season 1. Lucy Hale, Henry Lloyd-Hughes and Thalissa Teixeira lead the cast.

Prince Philip: The Royal Family Remembers discovery+
For the first time on television, more than a dozen members of Britain’s royal family offer their personal thoughts and reflections as they pay tribute to the life of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Filmed throughout his 100th year — before and after his death in April 2021 — this landmark portrait features only those who knew him best: his family and closest staff.

Finding Magic Mike Magic Max
New Series!
Magic Mike director Steven Soderbergh and star Channing Tatum are among the executive producers of this unscripted competition series inspired by that comedy/drama film set in the world of male strippers. Here, 10 regular guys who have “lost their magic” are put through the paces of a Magic Mike Live bootcamp, baring their souls — and more — as they learn to perform sexy and daring dance routines, with one being crowned the real Magic Mike and pocketing a cash prize. All seven episodes are available today.

Station Eleven HBO Max
New Series!
This limited saga spanning multiple timelines tells the stories of survivors of a devastating flu as they attempt to rebuild and reimagine the world anew while holding on to the best of what’s been lost. The series is based on the international bestseller of the same name, and stars Mackenzie Davis, Himesh Patel, Danielle Deadwyler, Daniel Zovatto, David Wilmot and more.

Dead Asleep Hulu
This true-crime documentary film flips the traditional thriller narrative to explore a deeper and more troubling mystery: Did a remorseful Randy Herman Jr. really commit a brutal murder in his sleep, or was it a convenient cover story? *Dead Asleep*’s producers secured exclusive access to Herman and his family, the defense and prosecution attorneys, journalists who covered the case, forensic psychiatrists, and world experts in violent parasomnia (sleepwalking) to give viewers an inside look at the shocking twists and turns of the controversial crime.

A California Christmas: City Lights Netflix
Original Film!
It’s been a year since Callie (Lauren Swickard, who also wrote the film) and Joseph (Josh Swickard) fell in love, and they’re happier than ever running their dairy farm and winery, until business and family obligations call Joseph back to the city — and threaten to derail their romance.

Days of Our Lives: A Very Salem Christmas Peacock
Original Film!
Alison Sweeney reprises her 25-year-plus *Days of Our Lives* role as Sami Brady in this holiday spinoff of the popular soap opera that brings the fan-favorite troublemaker back to Salem, joining other series cast members. The movie follows Will Horton (Chandler Massey) as he writes a screenplay before his Christmas Eve deadline. Using everyone’s feel-good holiday movie tropes, he creates a festive story based on his family and friends in Salem, but with a number of twists and turns. Deirdre Hall, Eileen Davidson, Jacki ‘e Harry and Drake Hogestyn are also among the cast.

Friday, Dec. 17
Arendelle Castle Yule Log: Cut Paper Edition Disney+
Hand-crafted from paper art by Brittney Lee, Walt Disney Animation Studios’ acclaimed visual development artist on *Frozen* and *Frozen II*, this warm and inviting heartside scene sets a festive holiday mood. Stylized cut-out paper flames combine with imaginative visual effects (including

a touch of snow provided by Elsa) and silhouetted images of Anna, Elsa, Olaf, Kristoff and Sven to add to your holiday fun and enjoyment.

UNINTERRUPTED’S Top Class: The Life and Times of the Sierra Canyon Trailblazers IMDB TV
Season Premiere!
This docuseries that showcases Southern California’s elite Sierra Canyon Trailblazers high school basketball team returns for Season 2. The six-part season picks up after a quiet 12 months without prep sports, with the Trailblazers emerging to resume their quest for victory after the abrupt end of their 2020 campaign to repeat as California state champions.

Fast & Furious Spy Racers Netflix
Season Premiere!
The sixth and final season of this animated kids series based on the *Fast & Furious* feature film franchise is dubbed “Homecoming” and follows the *Spy Racers* around the world — from the Alps to the Arctic and back home to L.A. — as they battle their toughest enemy ever.

The Witcher Netflix
Season Premiere!
In Season 2 of the incredibly popular fantasy drama, Geralt (Henry Cavill), convinced Yennefer’s (Anya Chalotra) life was lost at the Battle of Sodden, brings Princess Cirilla (Freya Allan) to the safest place he knows — his childhood home of Kaer Morhen. While the Continent’s kings, elves, humans and demons strive for supremacy outside its walls, Geralt must protect the girl from something far more dangerous: the mysterious power she possesses inside. *The Witcher* has already been renewed for a third season.

With Love Prime Video
New Series!
This five-episode, hourlong romantic comedy series follows the Diaz siblings, Lily (Emeraude Toubia) and Jorge (Mark Indelicato), who are both on a mission to find love and purpose. Each of the episodes is set during a different holiday throughout the year and follows Lily, Jorge and their family over the course of 12 months as they experience the highs and lows of life during some of the most heightened days of the year.

College Football ESPN & ESPN2, beginning at 12pm Live
The college football bowl season kicks off today with the Bahamas Bowl in Nassau (ESPN) and the Cure Bowl in Orlando, Florida (ESPN2).

The 89th Annual Hollywood Christmas Parade The CW, 8pm
Hosts include Erik Estrada, Laura McKenzie, Dean Cain, Montel Williams and special cohost Elizabeth Stanton. The parade will feature Hollywood celebrities and movie cars, award-winning bands from across the country, dazzling equestrians, larger-than-life character balloons, colorful floats, humorous specialty acts and high-profile performers. The parade culminates with the appearance of the Jolly Old Elf himself, Santa Claus, and his reindeer, ushering in the holiday season!

Mistletoe in Montana Lifetime, 8pm
Original Film!
Welcome to Paradise Ranch, where city slickers get to be cowboys and cowgirls. Merry (Melissa Joan Hart), who owns the ranch, has been unlucky in love, but that’s about to change when a single father, Mark (Duane Henry), and his two kids book the ranch for Christmas week. Adventure is on the menu, the holiday spirit is everywhere and love is in the air.

Saturday, Dec. 18
My Dream Kitchen: Giada De Laurentiis discovery+
Professional chef Giada De Laurentiis has spent more than 20 years cooking in kitchens all over the world. Now, for the first time, the Food Network star, cookbook author and restaurateur has the opportunity to build her own kitchen from the ground up as she renovates the mid-century house in Los Angeles that she purchased for her forever home. But bringing this vision to reality is filled with unexpected twists and turns as bold design choices come to life, and construction delays and supply chain issues conspire to delay the culmination of this dream.

College Football ABC & ESPN, beginning at 11am Live
Seven bowl games are on the schedule for Saturday with the RoofClaim.com Boca Raton Bowl (ESPN), the Cricket Celebration Bowl (ABC), the New Mexico Bowl (ESPN), the Radiance Technologies Independence Bowl (ABC),

the LendingTree Bowl (ESPN), the Jimmy Kimmel LA Bowl (ABC) and the R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl (ESPN).

College Basketball: CBS Sports Classic CBS, beginning at 3pm Live
The CBS Sports Classic event at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas features four of the nation’s top teams with UCLA vs. North Carolina and Ohio State vs. Kentucky.

When Hope Calls: “A Country Christmas, Parts 1 and 2” GAC Family, 8pm
The cast of *When Hope Calls* returns for this two-part holiday film that finds Abigail Stanton from *When Calls the Heart* (Lori Loughlin) and her son Cody (Carter Ryan) visiting Lillian’s (Morgan Kohan) orphanage, and the town of Brookfield scurrying to be named America’s No. 1 Country Christmas town by a national magazine.

The Christmas House 2: Deck Those Halls Hallmark Channel, 8pm
Original Film!
The Mitchell brothers compete to see who can create the best Christmas House. Stars Robert Buckley, Ana Ayora, Jonathan Bennett, Sharon Lawrence, Treat Williams and Brad Harder.

Holmes for the Holidays HGTV, 8pm
The stars of *Holmes Family Rescue* — contractor Mike Holmes, his daughter Sherry and son Michael — each believe their home is the best-dressed for the holidays. During this one-hour special, they battle it out in a friendly family Christmas competition to see who can create the most over-the-top light displays, ice sculptures and gingerbread houses — with Mike’s uncle, Billy Bell, deciding the ultimate winner. Mike and his wife, Anna, will trim their home in a modern Christmas theme, complete with a dazzling animated show with thousands of twinkling lights. It’ll be a holiday all about the kids for Sherry and her husband, Blake, who recently welcomed their second child, as they turn their backyard into a North Pole winter wonderland. And Michael will wow with a cozy, rustic holiday theme inspired by his wife Lisa Marie’s love of animals. The Holmes family also will share holiday safety tips and give back to the community in meaningful ways throughout the special.

Toying With the Holidays Lifetime, 8pm
Original Film!
Workaholic designer Danielle (Cindy Busby) returns to her hometown of Holly Pines for the holidays with her young son, Paul, and hopes to introduce him to some beloved holiday traditions — in particular, the town’s North Pole Express train. Once home, she discovers that the North Pole Express has been sidelined. Determined to help, Danielle reconnects with her former high school classmate Kevin (Chad Michael Murray), now a hobbyist and model train enthusiast himself. Together, Danielle and Kevin attempt to pull off a Christmas miracle that would get the old North Pole Express running — and quite possibly give Danielle many reasons, one of them romantic, to consider staying in Holly Pines for good & hellip;

Deadly Girls’ Night Out LMN, 8pm
Original Film!
Willa heads to her hometown for the holidays for the first time in years. She and her high school friends Naomi and Tia decide to hit the town for a girls’ night out. The fun is cut short when Naomi meets an untimely death. All signs point to an apparent suicide, but Willa doesn’t believe this. Desperate to avenge their friend, Willa and Tia try to dig up any piece of evidence they can find. But with no real leads, they are left hopeless, and worse, it appears someone doesn’t want Willa to keep searching. Gina Vitori, Ren ‘o Ashton, James Hyde, Emma Jessop and Josh Murray star.

Destination Fear: “Loftus Hall” Travel Channel, 9pm
The team jumps out of their comfort zone and across the pond to the rugged and stormy coast of Ireland — and their first ever international investigation together. They’re prepared to come face-to-face with poltergeists, ghostly nuns and maybe the devil himself inside Loftus Hall, a cursed 14th century mansion. It’s a location that will test Dakota’s theory that the older and more ancient the entity, the more active and frightening it becomes.

Christmas for Keeps Hallmark Movies & Mysteries, 10pm
Original Film!
At Christmastime, a close-knit group of childhood friends returns home after 10 years to take part in the celebration of the life of their beloved high school teacher. Stars Christa B. Allen, Ryan Rottman, Ashley Newbrough and Marielle Scott.

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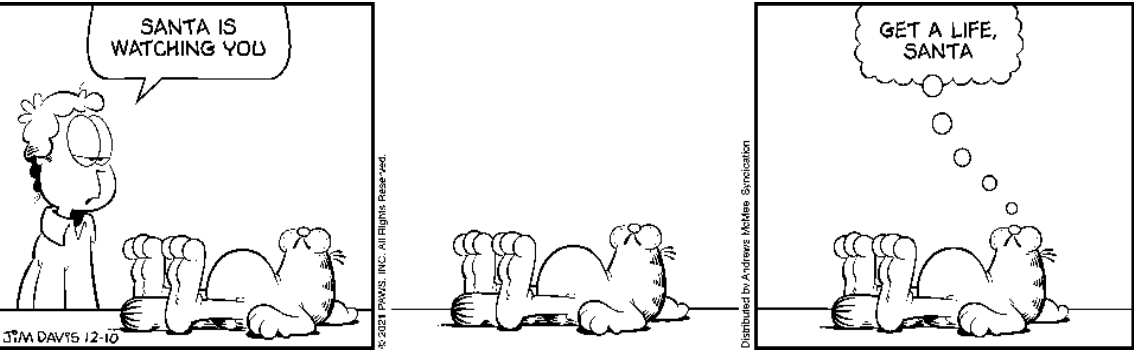
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Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1 Erupt

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8 Hole-making tool

11 Vapors

13 Grande or Bravo

14 Hawaii's Mauna —

15 Gridiron deal

16 Target sport

18 Mild expletives

20 Cabbies

21 Tall grasses

23 Adherent

24 Mongrel

25 Athletics channel

27 Moon ring

31 Cable network

32 Hard of hearing

33 Help a thief

34 "Betsy's Wedding" star

36 Long river

38 Fiber-rich grain

39 Flake off

40 Wearing something

41 ET craft

42 Driver's peg

44 Like after-dinner candies

46 UPS competitor

49 Alpha follower

50 Lawlessness

52 Moves inch by inch

56 Vitality

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59 Lime cooler

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TODAY'S ANSWERS

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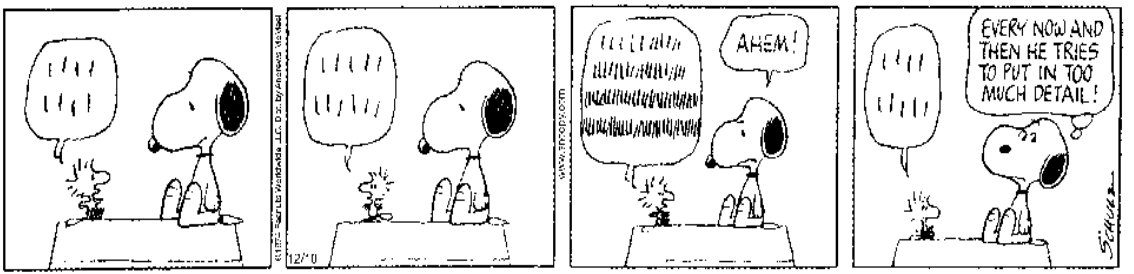
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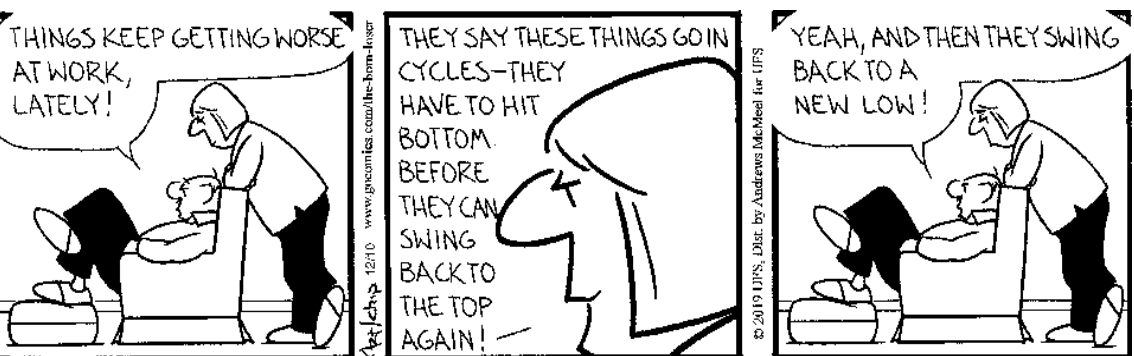
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Alley Oop



The Born Loser



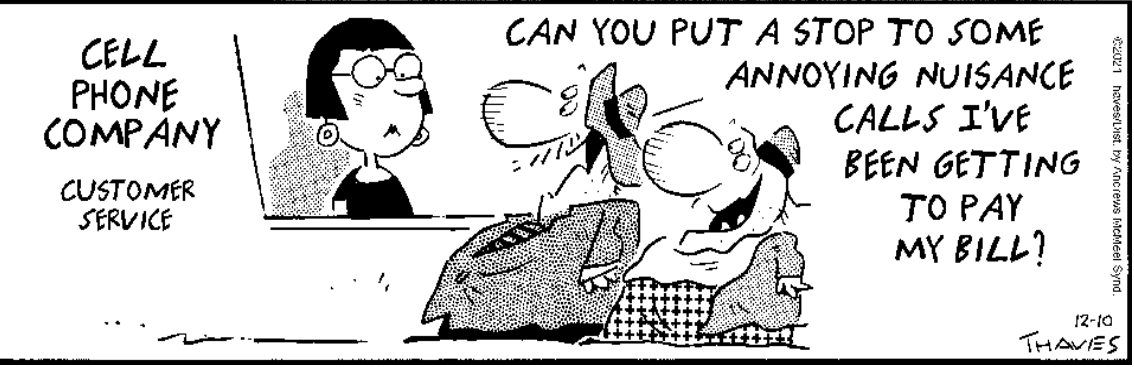
Big Nate



Cul De Sac



Frank n Ernest



Grizzwells



HOROSCOPES

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2021

Be realistic about what's possible, and you'll drum up interest in an idea you want to pursue. Communicate with people who can offer insight, and you'll gain confidence and inside information that will help you prepare for the future. Distance yourself from manipulative people. Be true to yourself and your beliefs.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) -- A problem with a friend, relative or loved one will surface if someone isn't honest. Don't exaggerate or overreact. Be a good listener, assess the situation and offer a straightforward opinion.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- Look at the possibilities and choose the people you want to work alongside. Make a difference at home or in your community. Pay attention to a loved one.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) -- An emotional matter will escalate. Put a positive spin on whatever you do or say. Change is upon you; it's up to you to take the path that adds to your happiness.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) -- Your imagination will run wild. Don't get caught up in something that isn't realistic. Focus on what's doable and helpful. You can make a difference if you use your skills, not your cash, to help others.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- Take nothing for granted. Live up to your promises and take rules and regulations seriously. Channel your energy wisely and keep your life and relationships simple. Find someone who can help you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- Confusion will set in if someone withholds information or you have too many options. Take a step back and do something physical. An energetic activity will help you gain needed perspective.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- Broaden your scope, pay attention and put in the work required to get what you want. Share your vision and consider how to improve your relationships. Take a short trip or attend a seminar.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- Keep your emotions in check. Be a good listener, and you will avoid saying something you'll regret. A creative outlet will ease stress and broaden your interest in a potentially lucrative hobby.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Gather information before you share your thoughts and feelings. It's up to you to be responsible and to allocate your time to suit your needs. Set a good example to attract valuable support.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- You'll encounter trouble if you aren't up-front. Be diplomatic, but not misleading. It's time to make a change that will take care of a problem that's been weighing you down.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) -- Keep the peace and focus on domestic matters. Take the time to hear grievances and to make adjustments that will accommodate loved ones. Compromise will pay off down the line.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) -- Look at the big picture. Baby steps will get you further ahead than making unrealistic promises and falling short. Be up-front about your feelings, and you'll find out where you stand.

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NIKI LYNN AUTHMENT MONROE VERSUS NO. 61529 JONATHAN DENARD MONROE THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT- PARISH OF LINCOLN I have been appointed to represent Jonathan Denard Monroe in the above proceeding. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Jonathan Denard Monroe, please contact the Law Office of Adam J. Ross at 318-654-7397 or 601 Mill Street, West Monroe, LA 71291 3td: December 10, 12 & 15, 2021

HUEY DONALD RUSSELL, ET AL VERSUS NO. 61967 CURTIS "CENO" DAVIS, ET AL THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT- PARISH OF LINCOLN I have been appointed to represent the unopened succession of Noda Lee Elmore in the above proceeding. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Ms. Elmore's heirs, please contact the Law Office of Adam J. Ross at 318-654-7397 or 601 Mill Street, West Monroe, LA 71291 3td: December 10, 12 & 15, 2021

December 6, 2021 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING The following application will be considered at a meeting of the Board of Adjustment of the City of Ruston, Monday, December 20 th at 3:00 P.M. in the Old City Court Room, 2 nd Floor Ruston City Hall, 401 North Trenton Street. Case No. 1515: Request for Variance (Variance to Drive-through & Parking Requirements) Owner: 6-K Development Applicant: Ballard and Broughton Engineering, P.L.L.C. Location: Northwest corner of Louisiana Highway 33 and Timberline Court; Lincoln Parish Assessor's Parcel 18182C012278 Any person interested in these matters may attend these public hearings and voice that interest. Accommodations will be made for the hearing impaired and non-English speaking individuals provided that notice is received by the City no later than noon on Friday, December 17 th. Requests for accommodations should be made to Angie Robinson, Ruston, Louisiana (251-8654).

The applicant has submitted an application requesting a variance to the transparency requirements for the front facing façade of their proposed new restaurant building. The property is located at 102 N. Homer Street, just north of the railroad tracks and is zoned Core Village (CV).

The Core Zoning Districts are intended to be pedestrian oriented. With the exception of Core Residential, they all require a certain percentage of the front facing façades to be transparent to attract pedestrian activity. The Core Downtown (CD) District which is the center of pedestrian activity has a transparency requirement with a minimum of 70%. As you move further away from downtown the transparency relaxes to 25% in the Core Mixed (CM), Core Edge (CE) and Core Highway (CH). Core Village (CV) is intended to be a vibrant and lively extension between Louisiana Tech and downtown Ruston and uses the same Development Standards by building type as the Core Downtown District (CD). The Development Standards by building type which govern this property are found in section 3.1.14.E.2 of the Zoning Code are included in your packet. The applicant is requesting to reduce the front facade transparency requirement from 70% to 54%. A reduction of 16%. VARIANCE PROCEDURES AND PROCESS: The Code of Ordinances of the City provides a process, through the Board of Adjustment, to consider variances or modifications to Ordinances applicable to buildings or land in the City. This process is set forth in Sec. 7.2(2) of the Code and summarized as follows:

The Board of Adjustment has the power, subject to all of the findings provided below, to vary or modify the application of any of the regulations or provisions of any Ordinance relating to the use, construction, or alteration of buildings or structures or the use of land, so that the spirit of the ordinance shall be observed, public safety and welfare secured,

and substantial justice done. In granting any variance, the Board of Adjustment shall prescribe any conditions that it deems to be necessary or desirable. However, no variance in the strict application of any provisions of this chapter shall be granted by the Board of Adjustment unless it finds all of the following: i. There are special conditions peculiar to the land or structure, which are not generally applicable to other properties in the zoning district, and these conditions are such that the strict application of the Zoning Code would deprive the applicant of the reasonable use of the land or structure. ii. The special circumstances upon which the variance request is based have not been caused by the applicant or any other person with an interest in the property. iii. The requested variance is not based on economic hardship alone. iv. The Ruston Comprehensive Plan is protected by limiting the variance to the minimum required relief necessary. v. The granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Code and the Ruston Comprehensive Plan. vi. Granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the neighborhood or alter the general character of the neighborhood. vii. Granting of the variance will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, or substantially increase the congestion in the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or endanger the public safety. SUMMARY: If the Board of Adjustment finds that this variance request meets all the listed factors listed above so that the spirit of the ordinance which otherwise would apply is observed, public safety and welfare are secured, and substantial justice done, a variance to the strict application of the ordinance may be granted with any conditions that the Board shall deem necessary or desirable. 3td: December 10, 14 & 16, 2021

I, Kulwinder Lally, am applying to the City of Ruston for a permit to sell beverages of high and low alcoholic content at retail in the city of Ruston at the following address: 1601 S. Vienna St, Ruston, LA 71270. Aleena of Ruston, d/b/a Big Bucks. Kulwinder Lally, Owner. 2td: December 10 & 12, 2021

I, Melvin Thornton, DO# 351810, have applied for clemency for my conviction of Second Degree Murder. If you have any comments, contact the Board of Pardons (225)342-5421 3td: December 10, 12, & 15, 2021

MINUTES VILLAGE OF CHOUDRANT COUNCIL REGULAR November 1, 2021 The Village of Choudrant Town Council met in regular session at Village Hall. Present were Mayor Bill Sanderson, Alderman John Crosswell, Alderman Ricky Maier, Police Chief Bobby Milner, Clerk Michelle Emanuel, and assistant clerk Neelie Wilson. Alderman Thomas Pääton was absent. Mayor Bill Sanderson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and offered prayer. Motion to approve the agenda was made by Alderman Crosswell, and was seconded by Alderman Maier. Approved. No public comment. The minutes for the October 4 meeting were presented. Alderman Crosswell made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Seconded by Alderman Maier. All approved. No public comment. Police report. Police Chief Bobby Milner presented the police report with 15 tickets, 26 assaults, and no accidents. Old Business - None New Business- Adopt the resolution for the State of Louisiana Dept.

of Transportation and Development (DOTD). Motion was made by Alderman Maier to adopt the resolution as written. Seconded by Alderman Crosswell. Approved. No public comment. Financial Report-None. Motion was made by Alderman Crosswell to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Alderman John Maier. Adjourned at 7:09 PM. Bill Sanderson, Mayor 1td: December 10, 2021

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Sudoku

		4			1	5	6		
							2		
					9			3	8
1					8	7	9	4	
	4				5			2	
	9	5	1	4					3
7	1			2					
		2							
		8	9	3			1		

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TODAY'S ANSWERS

Z	L	L	9	E	6	8	S	T
9	8	T	L	Z	S	Z	E	6
6	S	E	8	Z	T	9	L	Z
E	9	Z	Z	T	L	9	6	8
L	Z	8	6	S	E	Z	T	9
S	T	6	Z	8	9	E	Z	L
8	E	S	T	6	Z	L	9	Z
T	L	Z	E	9	8	6	Z	S
Z	6	9	S	L	Z	T	8	E

HOW TO PLAY:
Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

CELEBRITY CIPHER
by Luis Campos
Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.
"RBNKTVHINL NH CTK CR WIK OCHW WJTSNAPK WINTSH NT J ECBPV EINUI CRRKBH RKEKB JTV RKEKB HZLLCBWH." — GKTTKWI ABJTJSI
"Friendship is one of the most tangible things in a world which offers fewer and fewer supports." — Kenneth Branagh
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ASPIRE continued from 1

“to acquire, conserve, or restore and install works of art for display in, on, or on the grounds of the state building.”

Tech reserved a portion of the costs from the construction at the College of Business building, Tech Pointe, and the Integrated Engineering and Science Building (IESB) as well as the renovation of University Hall to fund the creation of Aspire. The statue sits between the College of Business building and Keeny Hall, near a new allée of oak trees.

“Aspire represents what each one of you means to Louisiana Tech,” Guice continued. “The sculpture’s design reflects our history, our traditions, our connections to the historic campus, and our beloved Lady of the Mist while including materials, design elements, and a prism of colors that reflect the more inclusive and diverse future for which we all aspire.

“Aspire stands as a symbol and reminder of our promise — our responsibility — to work harder than ever to create opportunities for all,” Guice continued.

The dedication ceremony

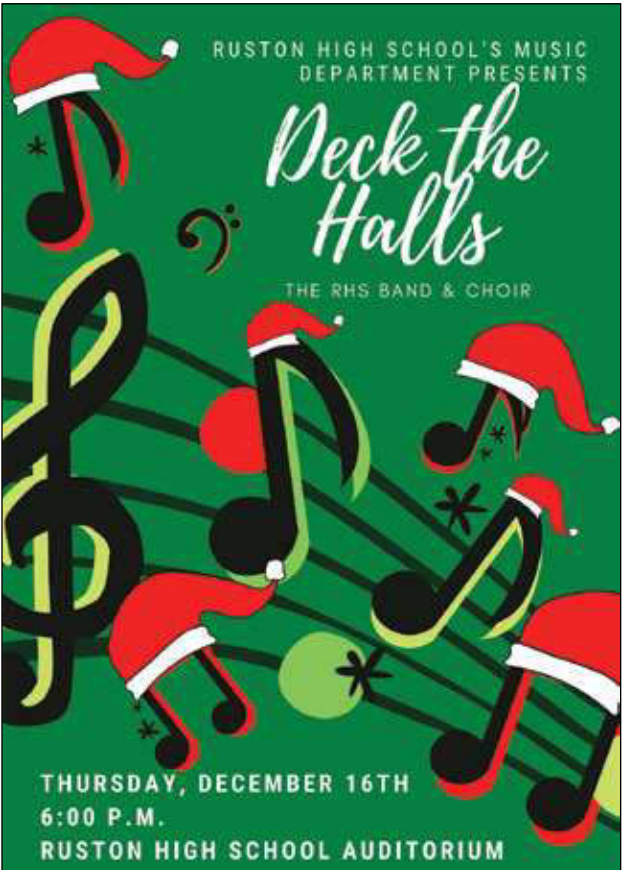
featured a performance by Shayla Blake, songwriting and flute instructor in the Louisiana Tech School of Music, and an alumni ensemble of her original work “To Aspire,” and an original poem by biology major and Poetry Society president Avery Miller.

“I aspire to unite a community so strong, build a stable foundation where everyone belongs,” Miller said as she read from her work that was inspired by both the statue and regular messages from Guice during the past year.

“It was important to the university that Aspire be both an aspirational totem and a symbol of celebration toward increased inclusivity in higher education,” Pittman said in his artist’s statement. “The art will serve to invigorate the urban experience, while bringing diverse parts of the campus and surrounding City of Ruston together. A harmonious relationship is created between the art, the landscape, and the people. Not only will the artwork improve the urban condition, but it will also serve as a permanent symbol for humanity.”



Photo courtesy of Louisiana Tech
Louisiana Tech president Les Guice (foreground) joins in the singing of the school alma mater at the dedication of Aspire Wednesday on campus.



Submitted graphic

Ruston High School’s Deck the Halls

Ruston High School’s music department is presenting Deck the Halls Thursday at the RHS Auditorium at 6 p.m. The holiday music program will feature the Ruston High band and the Ruston High choir. The special holiday event, directed by Walter Moss and Nathan Trahan, is free to the public.

Biology students prepare for magical learning experience

Louisiana Tech News

Stephanie Glynn and Cailyn Branton, sophomores in Biology at Louisiana Tech University, will be able to explore a new work environment while gaining valuable insights into working for the Fortune 500 company, the Walt Disney Company, through the Disney College Program.

Glynn and Branton will participate in the program after Winter Quarter, and their time with Disney will end in August.

The Disney College Program is an exciting internship that gives college students the opportunity to work for a world-renowned company while gaining valuable insights into their professional development. This is a competitive program with a 20 percent acceptance rate from the 15,000 applicants per year.

Both students are excited for this new opportunity that will allow them to reach outside of their comfort zones and spend some time in the Walt Disney World Parks

while doing so.

“I have always loved Disney and if I was going to step outside of my comfort zone for anything, it would be this program,” Glynn said.

The application process for potential participants can be a long and stressful part of the experience. Applicants complete a standard application that covers education, work experience and different question about the applicant’s background. After this first step, some applicants are sent straight to a web-based interview.

“The web-based interview was probably the most stressful part of the application process,” Branton said. “I was so worried that my answers were not what Disney wanted. I definitely had to trust the process.”

College program participants work in a wide variety of roles including attractions, merchandising and character attendant. The skills learned in these roles can provide a new perspective on hospitality and customer service.

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Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

- 1 Erupt
- 5 Hoedown honey
- 8 Hole-making tool
- 11 Vapors
- 13 Grande or Bravo
- 14 Hawaii's Mauna —
- 15 Gridiron deal
- 16 Target sport
- 18 Mild expletives
- 20 Cabbies
- 21 Tall grasses
- 23 Adherent
- 24 Mongrel
- 25 Athletics channel
- 27 Moon ring
- 31 Cable network
- 32 Hard of hearing
- 33 Help a thief
- 34 "Betsy's Wedding" star
- 36 Long river
- 38 Fiber-rich grain
- 39 Flake off
- 40 Wearing something
- 41 ET craft
- 42 Driver's peg
- 44 Like after-dinner candies
- 46 UPS competitor
- 49 Alpha follower
- 50 Lawlessness
- 52 Moves inch by inch
- 56 Vitality
- 57 Hearing aid?
- 58 Profundity
- 59 Lime cooler
- 60 Maximum
- 61 Risque

DOWN

- 1 Noncom
- 2 Standard
- 3 That, to
- 4 Pack tightly

TODAY'S ANSWERS

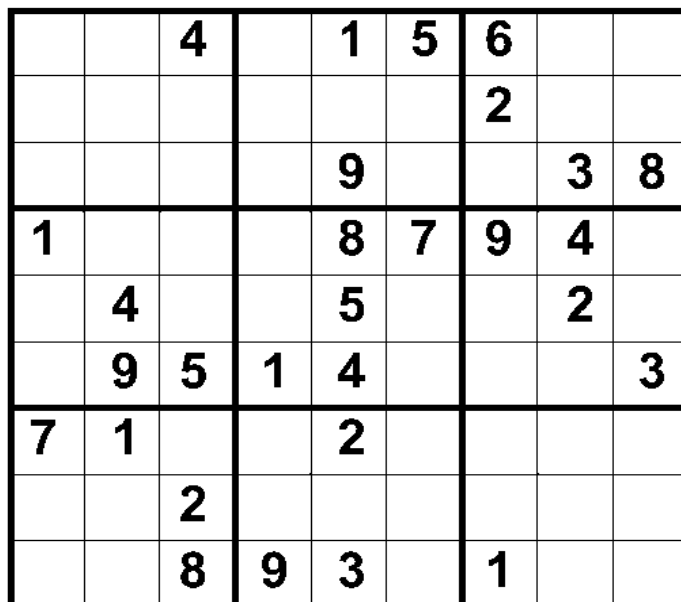


- 5 Pate de foie —
- 6 Melody
- 7 Highland lakes
- 8 Knighted Guinness
- 9 Hold down a job
- 10 Puts
- 12 Ranked in tennis
- 17 — yoga
- 19 Flower oil
- 21 100 kopecks
- 22 Wash out
- 23 Arouse passionate feeling
- 24 Guy
- 26 Mop companion
- 28 More or less
- 29 Like romaine
- 30 Director
- 35 Let out, maybe
- 37 Polished, as text
- 43 Do well
- 45 Consumer advocate
- 46 Bean used in falafel
- 47 Wife of Geraint
- 48 Woman of rank
- 49 Polar explorer
- 51 Osaka yes
- 53 College stat
- 54 List shortener
- 55 Reserved

12 10

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Sudoku



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TODAY'S ANSWERS

2	7	1	9	3	6	8	5	4
9	8	4	1	7	5	2	3	6
6	5	3	8	2	4	9	1	7
3	9	7	2	4	1	5	6	8
1	2	8	6	5	3	7	4	9
5	4	6	7	8	9	3	2	1
8	3	5	4	6	7	1	9	2
4	1	2	3	9	8	6	7	5
7	6	9	1	5	2	4	8	3

HOW TO PLAY:

Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

Celebrity Cipher

by Luis Campos

Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

"RBNKTVHINL NH CTK CR WIK OCHW

WJTSNAPK WINTSH NT J ECBPV

EINUI CRRKBH RKEKB JTV RKEKB

HZLLCBWH." — GKTTKWI ABJTJSI

"Friendship is one of the most tangible things in a world which offers fewer and fewer supports." — Kenneth Branagh

TODAY'S CLUE: C equals U

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Meeting the needs of our readers!

We have reformatted our comics page to allow our readers to easily print the crossword puzzle.

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A supplement of the *Ruston Daily Leader* | December 2021

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THE MOST POPULAR GIFT 25 YEARS AGO

It's easy for adults to experience a little nostalgia when holiday shopping for their children. The holiday season has long been considered a special time of year, and much of that magic can be traced to the joy kids feel when unwrapping gifts from mom, dad and, of course, Santa Claus.

Many parents who now have youngsters at home grew up in the 1990s. When such moms and dads are shopping for holiday gifts this season, they might wonder what was the must-have item for them back when they anxiously awaited the arrival of Christmas morning?

According to Insider.com, which worked in conjunction with the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, 1996 was the year of "Tickle Me Elmo." This ticklish toy was the most sought-after

item of the 1996 holiday season, and it was so popular that retailers experienced shortages.

Those shortages led to some surprising sales on the secondary market, with figures that will undoubtedly drop some jaws even now, a quarter century after the Tickle Me Elmo craze erupted. Though the

Tickle Me Elmo doll retailed for around \$30 in 1996, some parents intent on getting their youngsters the most in-demand gift that year reportedly spent more than \$1,000 on a single doll.

To put that latter figure into perspective, data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis indicates that the average price of a new car in 1996 was \$18,525. And according to Yahoo! Finance, drivers in the market for a used car in 1996 could have purchased a 1986 four-door Oldsmobile for just over \$2,600.






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TIPS: Gifting for your little ones

Shopping for gifts for kids makes many shoppers nostalgic for their own childhoods. Few adults can forget the joy of finding the perfect gift under the tree on Christmas morning.

Recreating that magic for a youngster can be as joyous for gift givers as it is for kids. That's especially so when shoppers make it a point to give safe, age-appropriate gifts.

Whether shopping for their own children or their grandkids, nieces or nephews, shoppers can keep these tips in mind to ensure they give toys that are as safe as they are fun.

• SPEAK TO MOM AND DAD FIRST.

When buying for a grandchild, niece or nephew, shoppers should first ask Mom or Dad for suggestions. Parents will know which types of toys their children like, and they'll also know the child's level of maturity. Some kids may not be mature enough to play with otherwise age-appropriate toys, while others may be mature beyond their years and enjoy more complex toys than their age would suggest. Parents will know what makes a good toy and what doesn't.

• LEARN WHAT TO LOOK FOR ON LABELS.

Toy labels are great sources of information, but shoppers must know what to look for. The American Academy of Pediatrics notes that toy labels include information about age-appropriateness (i.e., "Ages 3 & Up") as well as directions regarding how to use the toy. If the instructions seem a bit complex for the child the item will be for, look for something else.

Children's toy labels also include additional information that consumers may not be familiar with. For example, toys labeled "ASTM F963" meet the latest safety standards from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. An "ASTM D4236" label indicates the materials associated with the art toy have been reviewed and deemed safe by a toxicologist.

More information about toy label requirements can be found at cpsc.gov. The AAP advises that electric toys should only be given to kids if they include the UL label. That means the toy has been certified by the global safety certification company UL, LLC.

• AVOID CERTAIN FEATURES.

The AAP notes that toys that are loud, shoot objects into the air or contain small pieces pose a threat to children. Especially loud toys can damage children's hearing, while projectiles can increase the risk of eye injuries or choking. Toys with small pieces also pose a choking risk to young children who may try to put the pieces into their mouths.

• ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION.

Consumers who are uncertain about the safety of a given toy, even after reading its label, should err on the side of caution and only give toys they're confident won't pose a safety risk. Even toys that may seem safe could be dangerous to kids who might otherwise seem old enough. For example, the AAP advises against giving kids under 12 hobby kits and chemistry sets. That's because such kits may contain dangerous chemicals that even pre-adolescents are not old enough to handle safely.

Shoppers must consider a host of factors when looking for safe toys for kids this holiday season.

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**See ad on page 3*



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**See ad on page 14*



To cover all your holiday gift giving, SHOP LOCAL in beautiful downtown Ruston. We can't wait to see you!

**See ad on page 15*



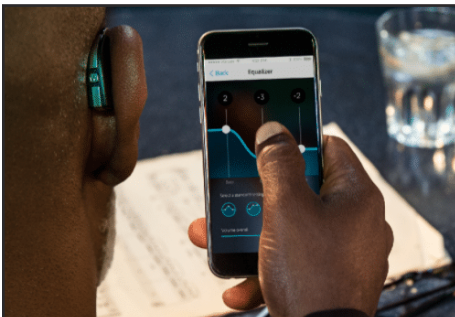
When you stop by Cotton Top for your new Christmas shirt, bring your list! We have "Gifts-to-Go!" ready to put under the tree.

**See ad on page 6*



The Children's Shoppe is your one stop shop for gifts for all ages. We offer free gift wrapping and so much more!

**See ad on page 6*



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**See ad on page 10*



Got a BUCK? Call us at Dowling's Processing where you can pick up Pineapple and Pepper Jack Sausages among other flavors.

**See ad on page 11*



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**See ad on page 6*



Cute puppies alert! Call Fluffin' Right, now open 7 days a week, to get your best friend PAW-FECT for this holiday season.

**See ad on page 14*



Call me, Kim Dupree, your State Farm local agent to make sure you're insured this holiday season and beyond!

**See ad on page 11*



Pick up a German Fuentes Purse from Boutique Barr. Made with genuine Italian leather and can be customized with additional straps.

**See ad on page 13*



For TREE-mendous Christmas goodies, visit The Fashion of Ruston and Goldie Boutique for stocking stuffers or gifts for yourself!

*See ad on page 15



Common Goods' winter drink menu is here! Cozy up with our candy cane mocha, gingerbread hot cocoa, holiday spritzer and more!

*See ad on page 5



For a wide assortment of gifts for everyone on your list... Shop the Alley in Downtown West Monroe. You're sure to find something unique!

*See ad on page 15



Let Hart Designs light up your front porch this Christmas season with these beautiful handcrafted lanterns.

*See ad on page 2



Don't waste time searching the internet. Surprise that special someone with 1620 Essentials unique, handmade gifts.

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PEACE OF MIND: Call Brooks Insurance Brokers, LLC to learn more and have peace of mind this holiday season.

*See ad on page 12



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Discover Supermovers and be in your home by the holidays! Call us today for a seamless move for you and your family.

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Custom engravings for that perfect one of a kind gift. Visit K&M Coffee, Corks & Camo to place your order today.

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Trim the tree, deck the halls and set the table for a delightful celebration of the Christmas season! (Photo: Old St. Nick by Vietri)

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We have an extensive line of vintage eyeglass frames, as well as prescription sunglasses and eyewear. Visit Jan's Optical today!

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Lights on a Christmas tree may seem like a relatively recent phenomenon, but people who can't wait to deck the halls each December may be surprised to learn that this beloved tradition dates all the way back to the late 19th century.

Edward Johnson, a friend and colleague of Thomas Edison, introduced holiday light bulbs in 1882. Prior to that, candles were lit on trees and families would briefly gaze at this awe-inspiring bit of holiday decor before the candles were quickly extinguished.

Johnson is credited with being the first to suggest light bulbs, which were invented by his friend Edison, be used to light trees in place of candles. While many were impressed by Johnson's eight-bulb holiday display, it remained a novelty until the 1920s, when preassembled lights became more accessible.

Since then, Christmas tree lights have taken hold as a must-have piece of holiday decor in households across the globe.

Remember to keep the holiday season safe by watering your live trees!

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An army veteran previously serving as ROTC Instructor/Administrator at Alcorn State University, Troy brought that same commitment to more than 25 years in the banking and insurance business. However, a desire to provide more assistance with long-term financial security burned. He left banking, teamed

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Providing the best products on the market for healthcare and insurance needs, Troy and Patricia Brooks believe "service is the rent we pay for living on this earth." It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time. Standing on that dedication, they see it as an honor to do what they love—serving others. They invite you to join them in that journey.



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Christmas morning is an exciting and joyous time for families. Children are anxious to rush downstairs and see what Santa has left under the tree, and parents are eager to see the looks on youngsters' happy faces.

Having a fast and easy breakfast at the ready on Christmas morning allows families to jump right into the festivities rather than spending too much time in the kitchen.

This recipe for "Spiced Yogurt Muffins," courtesy of the

National Dairy Council, Dannon and McCormick, can be made in advance and then enjoyed while peeking into Christmas stockings or watching holiday parades on television. This big-batch recipe is ideal for feeding a houseful of overnight holiday guests. Or it can be prepared in advance and doled out as needed throughout the week. The muffins also can be made as a treat for holiday office luncheons. Cut the recipe in half for smaller yields.

INGREDIENTS

Makes 50 muffins

- 6 1/2 cups plain fat free greek yogurt
- 4 cups water, room temp.
- 1 box (5 lbs) Gold Medal® Muffin Mix, Whole Grain Variety
- 3 tbsp pumpkin pie spice
- 2 tbsp chipotle cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine yogurt and water in mixing bowl. Whisk until blended. Set aside.
2. Add spices to dry muffin mix in a large bowl. Add yogurt and water mixture to muffin mixture. Mix until just blended. Don't overmix.
3. Using a scoop, portion into greased or lined muffin pans. Bake at 350 F for 24 minutes, or 17 to 20 minutes in a convection oven, until tops are golden brown.

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TIPS: Protect your holiday budget

It may be the season of cheer, but for many, the holidays are rife with anxiety about expenses. A recent survey shows that staying on budget is Americans' top concern this holiday season, followed by incurring long-term debt, shipping costs and being charged late or hidden fees.

However, there are ways to ensure you are able to stick to a reasonable budget. Get with your loved ones to make sure they know what you are able to spend this holiday season. Here are five tips to protect your budget during a time when every penny counts:

• SET A SPENDING CAP.

Americans plan to spend \$998 on gifts this holiday season, according to the National Retail Federation. 'Tis the season for giving, but make sure you don't overspend. Know your budget up front and communicate that with loved ones. Another idea to limit spending is to put everyone's name into a hat. Each person draws one name and buys a gift

for just the person they've selected. You can add a bit of intrigue by keeping the identity of your recipient a secret until you open gifts. This is a great way to turn a budget into a game that can become a tradition for years to come. This is especially helpful for very large families.

• SHOP YOUR LOCAL MERCHANTS.

Business owners in Ruston and around Lincoln Parish appreciate local shoppers keeping their dollars in the market, which helps everyone in the community. You may also find better deals in local shops than you could find in national chains.

• TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DEAL DAYS.

Timing is everything for getting the best prices. Do your homework in advance to pay significantly less. You will come across various sales from now until Christmas Eve, including those mentioned in this publication regarding local merchants. Super Saturday is also a great time to catch last-minute sales.

• PURCHASE GIFT CARDS WITH PEACE OF MIND.

Gift cards are a popular, convenient gift, perfect stocking stuffers. Most children and young adults would prefer a gift card so they are able to pick out exactly what they have their eye on. Some buyers may hesitate to purchase them out of fear that the business may end up closing, especially those still struggling during the ongoing pandemic. Be sure to do some research beforehand and speak with the retailer about your concerns. They might have some insight to offer.

• USE CREDIT CARD REWARDS.

You've earned those points throughout the year and now is a great time to cash them in. The simplest way to use points is for gift cards, as it's one of the top requested gifts and there are many categories to choose from, including restaurants, clothing and grocery stores. Another option is to take advantage of the money saved from a statement credit to cover the expense of holiday gifts.

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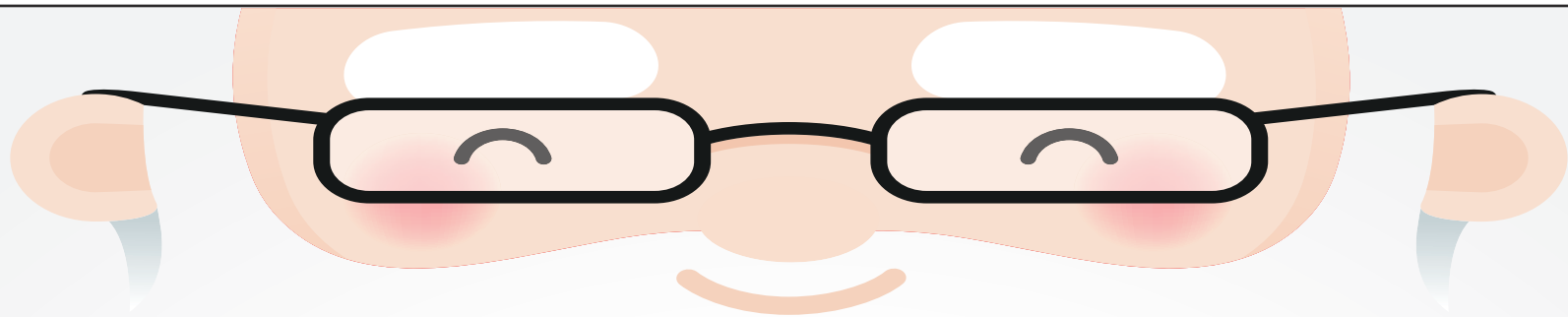
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