

third quarter twenty-ten · baton rouge area foundation

CURRENTS

Promise Road

Will Nicholson Drive become a model for invigorating neglected parts of the city?

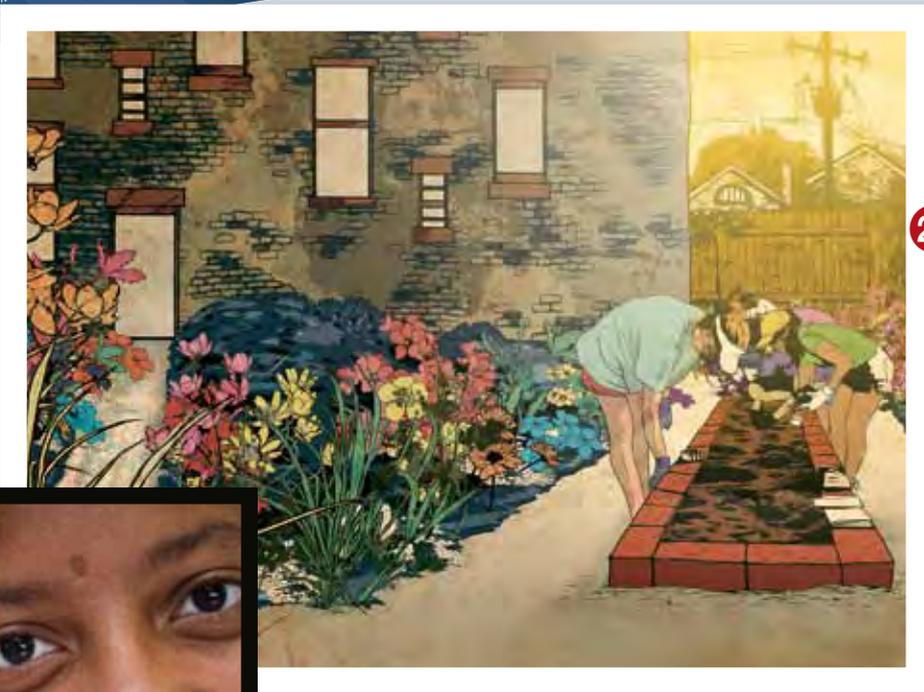
Why people kill | Legacy of learning | Garden of hope in OSBR



8

CONTENTS

- 14.... *Extreme makeover*
- 16.... *Super kid, super adult*
- 20.... *Think like a business*
- 24.... *The grass is greener*
- 28.... *Transit troubles*
- 30.... *Oil disaster: Foundation responds*
- 34.... *Promise Road*
- 40 ... *Why people kill*
- 44 ... *Learning spirit*
- 48 ... *Glow from flow*
- 50.... *Dig that data*



24



16

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*



34



44

DEPARTMENTS

- 4.....*From the chair*
- 7.....*About us*
- 8.....*Lead in*
- 16.... *On the ground*
- 24.... *OnSite*
- 28.... *CityStats 2010*
- 34.... *Cover story*
- 40 ...*Special report*
- 44 ...*Legacy*
- 48 ...*Monitor*
- 52....*Monitor briefs*
- 58....*Coda*



30

From the chair

What makes a community a desirable place to live? Why do people choose to live in one city over another? Gallup and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation surveyed nearly 28,000 people in 26 communities to find the answers.

They found three main qualities bind people to a place: social offerings, such as public meeting places and entertainment venues; openness or how welcoming a place is; and aesthetics, including how a city looks and the quality of its green and public spaces.

Baton Rouge does well in some of these areas. Visitors and transplants say that our residents are friendly and that our area is hospitable for raising a family.

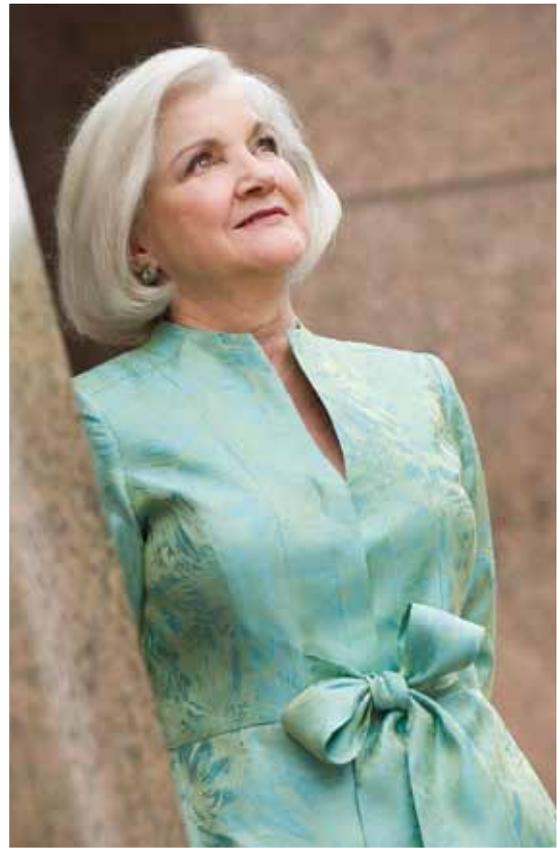
Though they enjoy our social offerings, they want more. They also wish Baton Rouge would be more beautiful and functional.

East Baton Rouge has started delivering on those desires.

Just five years ago, for instance, the Shaw Center for the Arts provided a new venue for social gatherings. At the Shaw Center, you can hear music, view art, dine at restaurants and gaze at the river from a public terrace. Children can play in the cooling fountains at the arts center, which anchors the Arts Block in downtown.

In the Shaw Center and around the parish, restaurants, music venues and other gathering places are packed with people and their welcome conversations.

BREC, meanwhile, has led the transformation of its green spaces, improving parks and looking for more recreational opportunities for the future. Once,



City Park had broken tennis courts and playground equipment. With renovations, hundreds of people are drawn to the park's tennis courts, playground, paths, dog park, fountains, labyrinth and more. BREC has dozens of parks projects under way across the parish.

In the next two years, Baton Rouge will get more welcoming public spaces. The city-parish is ready to spend more than \$12 million to reinvent the amenities around North Boulevard from River Road to Fifth Street. In June, the library system budgeted \$19 million for a new library on the future town

Because of these projects, the parish is on its way to becoming a better place to live. That's crucial, for the Gallup study showed the most attached communities also had the highest local GDP growth.

square on North Boulevard. Next year, the library system will break ground for branches at Rouzan and in Fairwood, as well as a replacement for the library on Goodwood Boulevard.

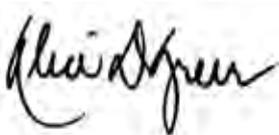
The parish is getting more beautiful as well. Money from the Green Light fund for road improvements has provided a new gateway entrance with benches and trees at Southern University. The same fund was used for plants on Corporate Boulevard.

Moreover, Mayor Kip Holden and Metro Council members recently funded a number of sidewalk projects for Baton Rouge. They understand that walking around town is important for building communities. Sidewalks give children and grownups a safe place to walk, and they let strangers meet each other and become friends.

The parish is spending several million dollars on these sidewalks. One will be built on State Street, where new shops are under construction on Highland Road. Another will run along Acadian Thruway from North Street to Choctaw Drive. Several sidewalks will be rebuilt in Old South Baton Rouge. And a sidewalk will connect Perkins Road from Acadian Thruway all the way to City Park.

Because of these projects, the parish is on its way to becoming a better place to live. That's crucial, for the Gallup study showed the most attached communities also had the highest local GDP growth.

Sincerely,



Alice D. Greer

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alice D. Greer, *Chair*
John G. Davies, *President & CEO*
Matthew G. McKay, *Vice Chair*
Leonard C. Wyatt, *Secretary*
Candace E. Wright, *Treasurer*
Christel C. Slaughter PhD, *Past Chair*
John W. Barton Sr., *Chair Emeritus*
Lee Michael Berg
Warren O. Birkett Jr.
S. Dennis Blunt
Donald H. Daigle
Yolanda J. Dixon
G. Lee Griffin
C. Kris Kirkpatrick
Carl S. Luikart MD
C. Brent McCoy
Albert D. Sam II MD
John M. Steitz
Suzanne L. Turner

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is a community foundation that takes advantage of opportunities to improve the quality of life in South Louisiana. We do so by providing two essential functions. One, the Foundation connects philanthropists with capable nonprofits to make sure the needs of our communities are met. For example, our donors support the Shaw Center for the Arts and buy eyeglasses for needy children. Two, the Foundation invests in and manages pivotal projects to improve the region. Our Plan Baton Rouge initiative spearheaded the downtown revitalization plan and now is working to revive Old South Baton Rouge. For more information, contact Mukul Verma at mverma@braf.org.

Currents is published four times a year by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, 402 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. If you would like to be added to our distribution list, please contact us at 225.387.6126 or email the Foundation at mverma@braf.org.



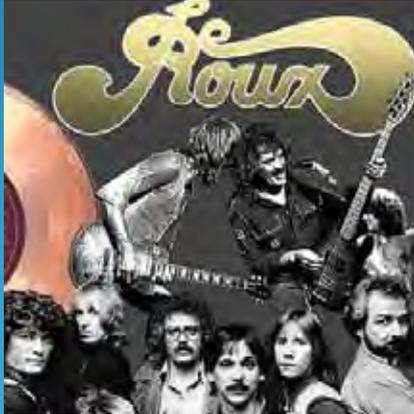
BlueCross BlueShield
of Louisiana
An independent licensee of the Blue Cross
and Blue Shield Association.



MANSHIP THEATRE
AT THE SHAW CENTER FOR THE ARTS



presents...



Louisiana's
LeROUX
S U N D A Y
AUG. 22



DR. JOHN
and the Lower 911
W E D N E S D A Y
AUG. 25



HANK
a n d h i s
**HONKEY TONK
HEROES**
T H U R S D A Y
SEPT. 16



**LOST
FINGERS**
T H U R S D A Y
SEPT. 23



**SUZANNE
VEGA**
S U N D A Y
OCT. 3



**EMILY
WEST**
F R I D A Y
OCT. 29

also coming up...

*Bombay Bellywood Oct. 11-12, Frontier Ruckus Oct. 21,
Ed Asner as FDR Nov. 15-16, Justin Townes Earl Dec. 1*

TICKETS: WWW.MANSHIPTHEATRE.ORG OR 225-344-0334



Baton Rouge Area Foundation

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is among more than 700 community foundations across the country. We work to improve the quality of life for all people in the region. We do so in two ways.

First, we connect philanthropists with exceptional nonprofits to make sure the needs of our neighbors are met. Our donors, for instance, fund safe havens for abused women and children, provide vaccinations to prevent cancer and pay for teacher supplies. Last year, we provided thousands of grants worth \$12 million.

Second, the Foundation invests in and manages pivotal projects. Working with partners, we have revitalized downtown Baton Rouge, are rebuilding neighborhoods between downtown and LSU, supporting the improvement of public education through experimental schools and much more.

Who we serve: We conduct projects and provide grants across South Louisiana. The Foundation works in St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington and St. Helena parishes through the Northshore Community Foundation, a support organization that operates independently from a home base in Mandeville. The Foundation also supports the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana. Based in Lake Charles, that foundation serves Calcasieu, Beauregard, Allen, Cameron and Jefferson Davis parishes.

How we work: The Foundation is funded in several ways. One key way is through generous people who choose to start donor-advised funds to provide grants to nonprofit groups and community projects. Philanthropists can start a tax-deductible charitable fund for \$10,000. To learn more about charitable funds, call Stewart Jones at 225.387.6126.

The Foundation also is funded through earnings on unrestricted assets, which were donated by philanthropists and grow over time.

Among Foundation assets is the Wilbur Marvin Foundation, which is comprised of real estate left by the late Wilbur Marvin. Those real estate assets include the Hilton Capitol Center Hotel in Baton Rouge, as well as shopping centers in Louisiana, Florida, Texas and Puerto Rico. The real estate assets are managed by Commercial Properties Realty Trust.

What's our size: At year-end 2009, the Foundation had estimated assets of \$533 million, making it among the top-20 largest community foundations in the country. Donors of the Foundation have provided the assets over 45 years. Since 1964, the Foundation has issued \$232 million in grants to support our community. Also, the Foundation has contracted with for-profit organizations to provide social benefits to the region, such as guidance on health care reform and direction on whether to build a new airport or invest in our existing ones.

More information is available at BRAAF.org or by calling Mukul Verma at 225.387.6126.



companion animal alliance OF BATON ROUGE

Animal groups advance

Cats, dogs and other companion animals officially have their own advocacy nonprofit in Baton Rouge.

Born from the No Kill Baton Rouge effort, the Companion Animal Alliance has been created to dramatically reduce euthanasia of adoptable pets. The alliance is chaired by Walter Monsour, who leads the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority and was the chief administrative officer of the city-parish under Mayor Kip Holden. Monsour was a successful bond attorney before enlisting for government work.

Upon learning that 9,000 or so animals are put down each year by EBR Animal Control, the

Foundation and people who care about the welfare of animals created the No Kill movement last year. A steering committee conducted research for a strategy to nearly eliminate the killing of healthy dogs and cats by the shelter. The alliance has begun to implement the strategy.

The alliance will collaborate with existing animal groups to increase animal adoption and boost sterilization to reduce the animal population. A low-cost spay-neuter clinic already has opened in EBR since the No Kill movement got under way, and Yelp BR and Project Purr have formed to spur adoptions of dogs and cats.

Where the sidewalks begin

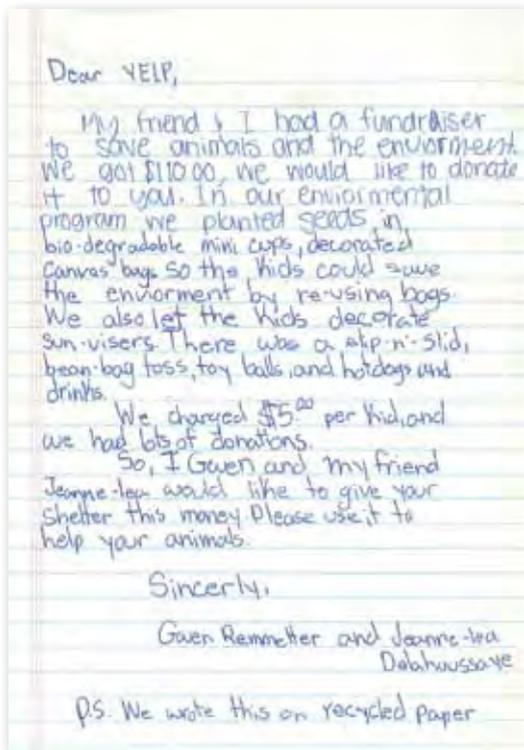
Where do the sidewalks end? In Baton Rouge, here and there, depending on when neighborhoods were built and whether the Planning and Zoning Commission allowed developers to put up neighborhoods without them.

The times seem to be changing. Mayor Kip Holden's administration is building new sidewalks and rehabbing some existing ones. The projects are included in an \$18 million mid-year budget supplement approved by the Metro Council in late June.

The parish will build sidewalks at East Brookstown Drive, Cain Street, Stuart Avenue, Constitution Avenue, Progress Road, North Foster Drive, West State Street and Perkins Road.

Sidewalks on Constitution Avenue will be in front of hotels and restaurants there, allowing guests to move about without danger of getting run over. Sidewalks on West State Street from Highland Road to Lake Street will provide pedestrian connections among new retailers and apartments in the area. On Perkins Road, a sidewalk on one side of the street will connect from the entrance of the interstate all the way to City Park, creating a pedestrian corridor in one of the few mixed-use areas of town. The biggest sidewalk project, at \$720,456, is Acadian Thruway from North Street to Choctaw Drive.

The supplemental budget also has money for road building, downtown improvements and signal synchronization.



In spring, Gwendolyn Ozols-Remmeter, 12, and Jeanne-Lea Delahoussaye, 13, raised money for Yelp Baton Rouge, a dog adoption organization. Since then, Yelp BR has hired a director to focus more on the effort.

\$40 million

Estimated cost of removing litter in Louisiana. In a first such study, Keep Louisiana Beautiful didn't include indirect costs, such as lower property values.

Manship Theatre season set

The world's greatest party band and a New Orleans man with the sweetest of voices are among headliners for the upcoming season of the Manship Theatre.

Known for hits "Roam" and "Love Shack," The B-52s will officially open the 2010 season at the theatre on Sept. 17. Aaron Neville and his quintet featuring Charles Neville will sing with his band in a Dec. 12 Christmas concert at the venue located inside the Shaw Center for the Arts. The Neville show is already sold out.

Other headliners are Grammy-award winner Mavis Staples, once lead singer of the legendary Staples Singers, and Suzanne Vega, whose hits include "Luka" and "Tom's Diner."

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation provides financial support to the Manship, which is preparing for improvements after a half decade as the leading performing arts venue in the region.

New partners for the season are Junior League of Baton Rouge as sponsor of the family series and Guaranty Broadcasting as sponsor of country music. Family programming this season is Pinkalicious, Dr. Kaboom, Imago ZOO ZOO and Strega Nona. Country music includes rising star Emily West, Marty Stuart and Jason Petty in Hank and his Honky Tonk Heroes.

You can view the full season at ManshipTheatre.

org and join the Facebook page for updates on performances added during the season.

Major sponsors are Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana, Covalent Logic, Cox

Communications, Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center, 225 magazine and the Foundation.

Also sponsoring the theatre are *The Advocate*, WBRZ-TV, Louisiana Division of the Arts, Louisiana Lottery, the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, Long Law Firm, Barnes and Noble, National Endowment for the Arts, Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation, Southern Arts Federation, Southern Circuit, Target, Gallery Bohemia, Event Rental, Union Pacific, X 104.5 104.9, Noelic Harmon, WRKF 89.3, Country Legends 107.3, Eagle 98.1 and New Country 100.7.

For 50 years, welcoming foreigners

A half century ago, an LSU professor from Scotland realized that foreign students were devoted to their studies but weren't learning enough about the culture of Louisiana. As a possible remedy, he gathered like-minded people to create the International Hospitality Foundation.

Fifty years on, the IHF has served thousands of foreign students, says Virginia Grenier, who has worked with the nonprofit for 25 years and is executive director.

When they first arrive, the students get a bus tour of Baton Rouge that includes a visit to a big box store. They can borrow appliances and other necessities from the IHF loan closet. At IHF parties, they learn how to dine like locals, including peeling and eating crawfish. Each week, a couple of students attend Rotary. Perhaps most important, they are adopted by a host family.

With a hand from hosts, foreign students learn about negotiating the U.S., giving them better odds at excelling back home or if they remain in America.



With a hand from hosts, foreign students learn about negotiating the U.S., giving them better odds at excelling back home or if they remain in America.

Sanjay Varshney is among them. Grenier considers him among her own. He earned a doctorate in finance from LSU and now is dean of the business school at University of California-Sacramento.

Corps lakes plan

People who enjoy the lakes should brace for that awful stench. Warm weather feeds nutrient blooms, which steal precious oxygen from the fish, causing them to go belly up in numbers.

With the lakes expected to continue deteriorating, the fish kills will become more frequent in coming years. A small lake on the LSU campus has already shrunk in size because of nutrient takeover. Predictions are that the other water bodies, all vital recreation areas lined with expensive homes, will revert over decades to swamp.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a solution, and Project Manager Nick Sims is hopeful that the initiative can be federally funded in coming years. Local government—BREC, LSU, the city-parish—would have to pay a share of the project cost.

Sims is optimistic about the Corps strategy. “The overall health of the lakes would increase ten-fold,” he says.

Dug out from swamp after the Great Depression,

the lakes were deepened in the 1980s to improve water quality and fish habitats. But nutrients washing into the water have made them shallow again. In some spots, even a flat-footed toddler could stand tall in the lakes.

What the Corps wants to do is predicted to cost \$21 million, dredging included. The lakes would be deepened to an average of five feet, up from just two feet in some areas. Dredging would relocate 650,000 cubic yards of material from University Lake and 175,000 cubic yards from City Park Lake, an amount that would include ripping out 130 acres of hidden stumps.

The material would become the foundation for an 8- to 10-foot path around the lakes, providing a continuous loop and enhancing safety for runners, joggers and bicyclists. Some of the material would create an unseen “aquatic bench”—a vegetative ledge—extending about 20 feet from the shore to foster marine life.

Some lakes residents wanted the dredged material to be removed, but Sims says that option would triple the cost of dredging alone to \$20 million from \$7 million. The Corps has assured lakeside residents that the paths would not obstruct views.

The key for sustainability, says Sims, is a proposed trickle-tube system. Phosphorus runoff, which causes the blooms, would be funneled via tubes to Bayou Duplantier. “We are hopeful that we will not have to dredge it again.”

The two-year project would require draining the lakes.

The Corps’ original estimate was \$12 million.



TIM MUELLER



Building of the Howell Place YMCA is partly underwritten by New Markets Tax Credits.

Out of caution, a second review produced an estimate of \$21 million. The project would require a 35% local match, or about \$7.5 million.

The Corps wants to shift the project into the General Investigative Program, where funds are available for creating recreation areas as well. The dredging could begin in 2013 but only if the Corps gets quick federal approval for funding. Otherwise, it likely would go in as a low priority item in the 2013 budget cycle for water projects.

Call it a comeback

It's time for a renaissance in a place where the city once was alive.

The East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority is set to put some abandoned properties in blighted areas back into commerce. Created by the city-parish and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, the authority also has \$60 million in federal tax credits to provide bridge financing for projects that otherwise might not be built in those areas.

In June, the city-parish turned over 188 adjudicated properties to the authority, which is becoming the main reclamation arm of local government. To clear titles on the properties, the city-parish authorized \$603,000 in federal grant money to the authority.

The properties are in Capital City South (east of the North Boulevard overpass near 17th and 18th streets), Choctaw Corridor, Melrose East, Scotlandville and Zion City, and around the Lincoln Theater in Old South Baton Rouge.

The authority does not expect to take control of all 188 parcels. Some owners will pay back taxes and liens to reclaim the real estate. But what remains will be maintained, packaged with other parcels and re-

turned to commerce.

For instance, 14 parcels have been targeted for homes built by Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge. Other properties will be redeveloped according to input from the communities.

A considerable boost for the inner-city areas is \$60 million in New Markets Tax Credits, which the authority received from the federal government last year. The first project partly funded by the credits is a YMCA at Howell Place, which is off Harding Boulevard near the airport. The YMCA will open in fall.

By selling the credits to people who want to reduce their taxes, the authority receives a stream of money for bridge financing of endeavors in blighted communities.

At least nine other projects are seeking tax credit financing from the authority. They are the Helix Mentorship Academy, a downtown charter school opened in July at the corner of Florida and Fourth streets; new city-parish garages in downtown near the River Center; Knock Knock Children's Museum at City Park, which also has a \$3 million commitment from the parks system; and BREC's renovation of Memorial Stadium that includes a sports academy and a track.

Also, the rehabilitation of the Lincoln Theater in Old South Baton Rouge; Hooper Point mixed-use development; Scotland Avenue mixed-use development; and River House, which is the mixed-use redevelopment of the former Prince Murat hotel. •



Housing for homeless

The former Scott Elementary School on North 19th Street will become an affordable housing development with a space to provide services that will help people get back on their feet.

The Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless and the Gulf Coast Housing Partnership began rebuilding the shuttered school in May. The \$8.4 million construction costs will produce 60 affordable units. The apartments are scheduled to open in spring 2011. Funding is from tax credits and public and private sources.

Green for green

Spurred by Councilman Chandler Loupe, the Metro Council in June created the Sustainable Energy Financing District to lend money to homeowners and businesses for all types of energy improvements with the loans paid back over years through a tax levy.

A law passed last year allowed the creation of such districts across the state. People borrowing from the district would pay for improvements over 20 years as a tack-on to their property taxes. Lower energy costs would cover the higher property tax assessments in many cases.

Loans could be used for solar, insulated windows, insulation and even white roofs that reflect sunlight, says Fred Chevalier of Jones Walker. He's working to create the program, which will be offered by the

Louisiana Community Development Authority to financing districts in each parish.

Because bonds issued by the LCDA would be tax-exempt and the cost of issuance would be shared across the state, the financing costs will be lower, says Chevalier.

New Orleans has created an energy financing district and there are movements to do the same in other cities as well.

Experts tell Chevalier there should be considerable demand because energy improvements produce a return. He expects the program to begin early next year.





RAMSEY LEWIS

**THURS. OCT. 28, 2010
7 & 9pm**

With three Grammys and seven gold records to his credit, Lewis has earned his nickname "the great performer." His style mixes early gospel and classical training with his love of jazz and other musical forms.



**STEFON HARRIS
& BLACKOUT**

**THURS. NOV. 18, 2010
7 & 9pm**

The vibraphonist is heralded as "one of the most important young artists in jazz" (*LA Times*). A three-time Grammy nominee, his passionate artistry and energetic stage presence have propelled him to the forefront of the Jazz scene.

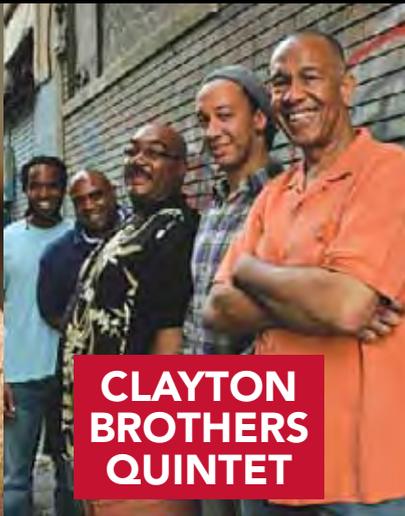
**RIVER CITY
JAZZ MASTERS
2010-2011 SEASON**



DIANNE REEVES

**THURS. MARCH 31, 2011
7 & 9pm**

Reeves has won the Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal Performance for three consecutive recordings—a first in any vocal category. *When You Know* is her first recording since 2006's award-winning soundtrack to George Clooney's film *Good Night and Good Luck*.



**CLAYTON
BROTHERS
QUINTET**

**THURS. FEB. 10, 2011
7 & 9pm**

Led by bassist John Clayton and alto saxophonist Jeff Clayton, the group is among the hardest swinging ensembles in Jazz. They are joined by trumpeter Terell Stafford, pianist Gerald Clayton and drummer Obed Calvaire.



ELIANE ELIAS

**THURS. MAY 5, 2011
7 & 9pm**

Pianist, singer and songwriter Eliane Elias is known for her distinctive and immediately recognizable musical style which blends her Brazilian roots and her sensuous voice with her impressive instrumental jazz, classical and composition skills.

MANSHIP THEATRE | DOWNTOWN BATON ROUGE | 225.344.0334 | MANSHIPTHEATRE.ORG

Special thanks to the River City Jazz Masters Series sponsors:



providing support for the series and its educational initiatives.



www.artsbr.org
225.344.8558

The River City Jazz Coalition thanks: Verge and Cheri Ausberry, C.J. Blache and Sherri McConnell, Gary and Joyce Dennis, Maria and Brian Despinasse II, Leo and Gwendolyn Hamilton, Tim and Stacia Hardy, Cornelius and Karen Lewis, The John and Virginia Noland Fund, Albert and Roberta Sam and The Josef Sternberg Memorial Fund.

Before the bowlers arrive for a national competition in 2012, the downtown area around North Boulevard and the River Center will be transformed. North Boulevard already was getting a \$4.5 million town square. More downtown projects were funded in a mid-year budget supplement for the entire parish. A glimpse of the future is below.

Extreme makeover

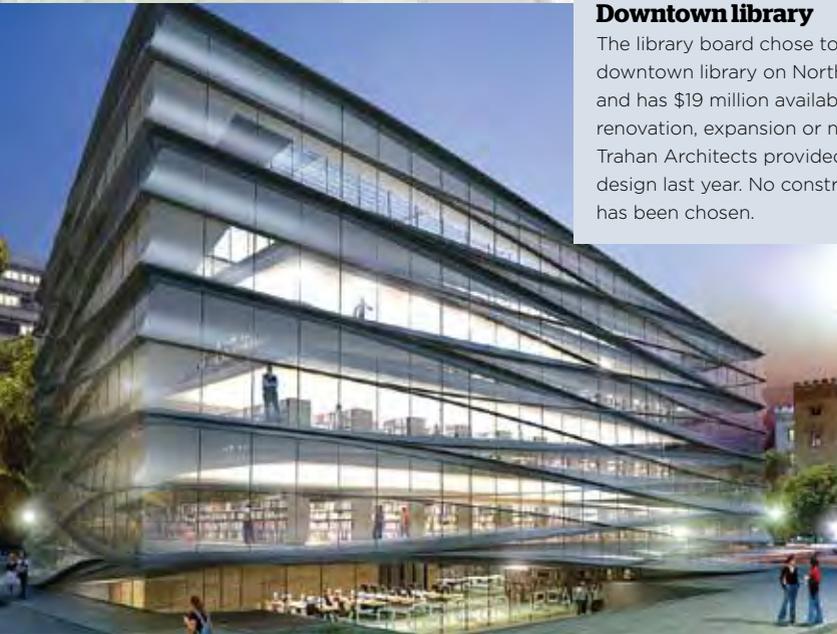


New courthouse

The new District Courthouse will open in August. When the courts relocate across the street, the city-parish will have space in the governmental building to consolidate operations, adding more workers to downtown.

Downtown library

The library board chose to keep the downtown library on North Boulevard and has \$19 million available for a renovation, expansion or new library. Trahan Architects provided a working design last year. No construction date has been chosen.



Manship Theatre

Among proposed upgrades to the theater is a welcoming entrance on North Boulevard for a flexible space that can be used for drama, music and more.



Parking garage

The court system wants to build a parking garage with first-floor retail in the former Pelican Homestead building, which once was a charter school on North Boulevard. The garage would be across from the courthouse at the corner of St. Ferdinand Street.



Town Square

(left) The parish has added \$2 million to the town square's \$4.5 million budget. From the river to Fifth Street along North Boulevard, the space will include fountains, seating areas, lawns, a media area, wider walkways and improved pedestrian circulation. Construction to begin within 60 days.

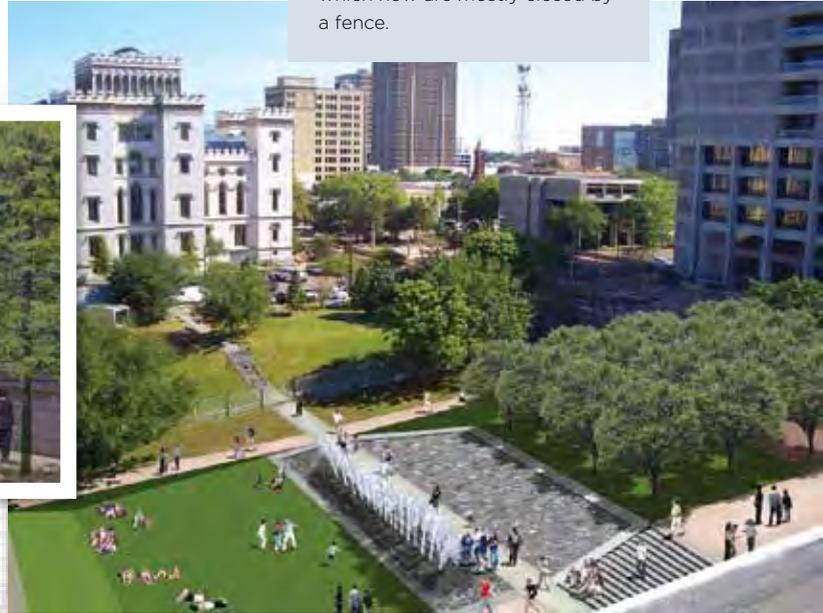
Repentance Park

(below) The city-parish approved \$3 million to renovate the space between the River Center and Old State Capitol. No final designs yet, but Davis Rhorer, DDD executive director, wants the renovations to include a pedestrian connection from the North Boulevard area through the Old State Capitol grounds, which now are mostly closed by a fence.



Florida Street and North Boulevard improvements at River Road

With \$1.2 million in federal funds, Florida and North at River Road will become pedestrian gateways to the Mississippi. The improvements call for brick pavers and steps to the riverfront at Florida, and slowing down the traffic at North and River Road, which includes shade trees and pedestrian zones.



Galvez Plaza stage

The plaza is a gathering place year-round for concerts, such as Live After Five, festivals and holiday gatherings. Two million dollars is available to build a stage at the plaza.



Street alignments

St. Ferdinand and St. Louis streets, which run in front of the governmental building and behind the city courthouse, will become two-way streets from North Boulevard to South Boulevard, and get synchronized traffic signals. The changes are expected to improve traffic flow and are in line with revived beliefs that two-way streets are preferred to one-way streets.



Briana Augustus, overcoming difficult circumstances, became the class president, homecoming queen and winner of the Boys and Girls Club Louisiana Youth of the Year award.

On the ground

Super kid, super adult

For Briana Augustus, a journey of good deeds

By Sara Bongiorno | Photos by Tim Mueller

Wanting to improve the prospects for her children, Shana Augustus leaned on her eldest, Briana.

The divorced mother entered Southern University to earn an accounting degree, hoping the long-term return would offset the short-term burden on her daughter. Eight-year-old Briana Augustus responded, cooking meals for her four younger siblings, washing and drying mountains of their laundry, helping them with their homework and making certain they were tucked in by 9 p.m.

“It was hard,” says Briana, a decade later. “My mother guided me through it and helped me so much, but I had a lot of responsibilities other kids my age didn’t have. I grew up faster than a lot of my friends.”

Briana’s first instinct remains nurturing others, and her quest for excellence touches individual pursuits, from schoolwork to dance to mentoring younger children. “She’s dedicated and highly motivated in everything she does,” said Katrice Terrance, program director for the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Baton Rouge.

That determination is creating opportunities and honors for the 2010 Belaire High School graduate, a four-year member of the local Boys & Girls Club who was recently named Louisiana Youth of the Year by the Boys & Girls Club of America.

The honor places Briana among an elite group of winners selected from across the U.S. for their school achievements, leadership skills and work in support of the nonprofit organization. The title also recognizes high moral character, commitment to family, school and community, and the ability to overcome personal adversity.

Augustus’ honors and activities run long, as do her ties to the Boys & Girls Club. She was senior class president at Belaire. Additional activities included church, choir and the step team. The teen’s whirlwind life did not undermine her academic standing: She achieved a 3.4 GPA that allowed her to graduate in the top 10% of her class.

Augustus’ Boys & Girls Club title includes a \$1,000 scholarship from the Reader’s Digest Foundation and a \$1,000 scholarship from Tupperware Brands Corp.



She will receive another scholarship from the Boys & Girls Club after completing 900 hours of volunteer service with the local affiliate.

Meanwhile, she remains in contention for additional Boys & Girls Club honors, including a possible National Youth of the Year title that would include more scholarship money and a Washington, D.C., appearance with President Barack Obama.

Augustus will put her scholarship funds to use this fall as a freshman at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, where she plans to study broadcast journalism with the goal of working for news giant CNN. "I love to talk and I love to write; since I was very young, people would tell me I should do some-

kid was often a challenge because of her many early responsibilities.

"The kid side of her comes out, and it's wonderful to see, because when she goes home she gets back into her 'mom mode' where she's looking out for others," Terrance said.

The Boys & Girls Club helped Augustus develop concrete skills that she said have been critical for her success in school, including time management. "I learned to focus on one task at a time and then move on to the next one," she said.

Other kinds of support have been equally important but are harder to quantify. The club has long provided a place for Augustus and other youngsters



thing that involved talking and writing," she said.

Her story is a tribute to personal determination, as well as the power of giving back to the community, even at a young age. When she began at Belaire as a freshman, there was no Boys & Girls Club program at the school. (It now hosts the city's only high-school level program.) The lack of a program for her age group did not deter her. She volunteered to teach dance to younger students in the organization's middle-school program as a way to get involved, Terrance recalled.

She was also part of its first wave of high school members the following year, when it began a high school program at Belaire. She has remained involved ever since, both as a volunteer mentor assisting younger children with after-school homework and enrichment activities and as a member herself. (Her four siblings are also avid club members.)

"She's really grown up with the club," Terrance said.

And allowing Augustus to "just be a kid" has been a core function of the club's role in her life, both Terrance and Augustus observed. Simply being a

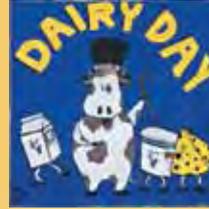
to share their fears and concerns in a supportive environment—a role that is a central function of the organization's purpose.

It was an essential purpose in Augustus' young life after the trauma of discovering the body of an elderly neighbor whom she had befriended. The teen later struggled with new stresses at home after her family took in a local youngster whose own home had burned down.

After-school "real talk" sessions with the Boys & Girls Club gave her a place to share her problems and insights into how to handle them, she said.

The rapid-fire pace of her commitments continued this summer, when Augustus was working three part-time jobs in the months leading up to her new life chapter as a college student.

"I had hoped to get some sleep this summer," she said, with a laugh. "That hasn't really happened." •



Own a piece of Main Street Market!

Bid Today on a Main Street Market table!

For more information go to www.tabletopsBR.org.

Bid online or at the market on Saturday, July 24, July 31 and August 7.

Auction ends 10pm August 11. Bid today!

www.tabletopsBR.org

Join us for a
Community Celebration and Jazz Parade
Saturday, August 14, 9am
5th and Main | Downtown Baton Rouge



MAIN STREET MARKET

Farm to table tops

Main Street Market 7am – 4pm M-F, 8am – 1pm Saturday

Funds will support BREADA's work to create a healthy local food system and provide educational outreach in the community.

Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/breada | www.breada.org | market@breada.org



TIM MUELLER

Think like a business

Nonprofits aim for the double bottom line

By Maggie Heyn Richardson

During the school year, the workday starts bright and early for John R. Davis. By 6:30 a.m. on a Monday, the self-taught chef is entering the final stages of preparation for a classic Louisiana lunch: tender red beans with spicy smoked sausage, fluffy white rice, a fresh salad and soft, homey cornbread.

Made from scratch on site at First United Methodist Church of Baker's Community Café, more than 60 gallons of finished red beans and their trimmings will leave in insulated containers for delivery to schools in East Baton Rouge Parish. As children feast on Davis' handiwork at lunch, he's back in the kitchen

preparing Tuesday's menu: old-fashioned smothered chicken.

"I take a lot of pride in this work," says Davis. "I understand that I'm cooking for growing kids and my mission is to cook something that's good for them and that they enjoy."

Schoolchildren aren't his only clients. Davis and the Community Café team also cater weddings and events. Each Wednesday, following a 15-minute church service led by Pastor Gene Rives, they hold a complimentary lunch for congregants and visitors. From Baker Mayor Harold Rideau to families for whom the plate is the sole hot meal of the week,

Left: Charlie Tolar sets out plates of food at the Community Café at the First United Methodist Church in Baker. Besides serving lunch every Wednesday, the church serves meals at seven area schools year-round.

*“It’s incredibly hard work.
But the possibilities are endless.”*

the crowd sits down to enjoy jambalaya, chicken etouffee, baked ham or other signature dishes.

The Community Café is at once altruistic and entrepreneurial, a progressive blending of the principles of business with the good intentions of a nonprofit. It’s an example of “social enterprise,” defined by the national Social Enterprise Alliance as an organization or venture that achieves its primary social or environmental mission using business methods. Social enterprise is one of the fastest growing disciplines among nonprofits today, born of the necessity to increase sustainability, generate consistent revenue and fortify community relevance.

Indeed, in the two years since it was founded, the Community Café has provided significant financial support to First United Methodist Church of Baker’s service projects at a time when church membership is on the decline. Revenue from the school lunch business has helped the church conduct relief work in Honduras and, recently, in central Louisiana towns affected by spring 2010 tornados, says Rives.

“It’s provided income back into our ministry,” he says. “This has been incredible. I never dreamed it would grow like it has.”

The lunch business has been so well received that orders have nearly doubled, increasing from about 700 a day in the spring to an expected 1,200 a day this fall. “It’s really made all the difference in our ability to serve the community and to take care of the



Eighty-four-year-old June McCormick often goes to the Community Café to meet with friends and neighbors.

church,” says Community Café Coordinator Ronald Stott.

For the Community Café and other thriving social enterprises, success isn’t an accident. Behind every flourishing project is a well-crafted strategy that borrows from the principles of business.

“This is not like starting a new thing all of a sudden,”

says Susan Hymel, sector relations director for the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations. “It needs to fit what a nonprofit is already good at, and there should be awareness of where start-up funding is going to come from, and when you’re going to break even.”

Hymel says LANO has watched a growing number of nonprofits investigate adding entrepreneurial ventures in the last few years. Many are now using business plan software and they’re examining successful programs nationwide for best practices. The trick, Hymel says, is to plan deliberately.

“It doesn’t happen overnight,” she says.

In the case of the Community Café, says Stott, FUMC of Baker built on a two-year practice run. Post-Katrina, Rives, a former restaurateur, and his flock began delivering lunches to residents of nearby Renaissance Village, the FEMA trailer community for storm victims. That turned into the onsite Wednesday service and lunch, which morphed into the revenue-generating school lunch venture in 2008.

A social enterprise venture works best when it dovetails with a nonprofit’s mission, say experts. The

TIM MUELLER

Katherine Martin in the O'Brien House meditative garden.



LORI WASLECHUK

YWCA of Baton Rouge, an organization devoted to ending racism and empowering women, is poised to launch “La Friperie,” a clothing store featuring used fashionable work attire in excellent condition sold at thrift store prices. The nonprofit is currently shopping for the right location for its store, designed to help lower income women acquire quality professional clothing they can feel good about, says Marketing and Communications Coordinator Peggy Johnson.

“It’s aimed at low-income households, but it will be open to the public,” says Johnson.

Johnson says the YWCA created a business plan to get the venture off the ground. It will rely on donations of clothing from individuals and from retail outlets to stock racks. The nonprofit has also crafted another enterprise, a monthly e-newsletter aimed at women that covers issues like health and business.

“We know we need to do a good job in order to get referrals and to have repeat business, and we’ve done it.”

—Katherine Martin

Six months ago, the YWCA began selling ad space to companies for whom women are a target market.

Creating an independent stream of revenue is one of the biggest motivators behind social enterprise, but there are other byproducts as well. Many nonprofits already serve the community by assisting adults in need or in transition. These clients can form an enthusiastic labor pool that keeps the social enterprise running.

For example, O’Brien House, a halfway house for adult alcoholics and drug addicts, helps clients build their skills to attain meaningful employment. Earlier this year, the nonprofit formed a lawn business named

Plant it Forward, staffed by clients. Within the first six months, the venture had already earned enough revenue to clear its start-up costs.

Executive Director Katherine Martin says O'Brien House had been interested in forming a social enterprise for some time, and finally took the plunge in lawn care. It started with the purchase of a few pieces of equipment, and as spring progressed, demand grew. She said the objective in a competitive field like lawn care has been to provide excellent customer service and a willingness to fill niches other companies might pass up, like the removal of trash and debris.

"We know we need to do a good job in order to get referrals and to have repeat business, and we've done it. We've had incredible feedback from our customers," she says.

O'Brien House has also moved into the business of providing DWI classes. Two years ago, penalties were tightened for first-time local offenders. They are now required to attend six hours of classes. The nonprofit earns a fee from each DWI offender, and can offer services to class members who believe they may have a serious problem with alcohol.

Hymel says that one of the most important residual effects of social enterprise is collaboration among nonprofits. The Arc of Baton Rouge, which has a history of entrepreneurial employment programs for adults with disabilities, recently formed a partnership to grow produce at United Methodist Hope Ministries, a local food pantry site. Arc Executive Director Barry Meyer worked with students from LSU's E.J. Ourso College of Business to develop a plan for the enterprise. Arc clients built and filled raised beds, and throughout the summer, fall and following spring, they will cultivate produce for the benefit of the food pantry and, eventually, to sell at the Red Stick Farmers Market.

"The business plan really allowed us to give it the right structure," says Meyer. "We want to do this at multiple food pantry locations throughout Greater Baton Rouge."

Social entrepreneurs say this is one of the most promising areas of nonprofit management they've experienced.

"It's incredibly hard work," says Martin. "But the possibilities are endless." •

How can we
link hands
where
blight once
claimed
victory?

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*





OnSite

The grass is greener

Community garden takes root in Old South BR

By Maggie Heyn Richardson | Illustration by Chris Ede | Photo by Tim Mueller

New Ark Baptist Church Pastor Melvin Carter can taste and smell the possibilities. Behind the sanctuary, a new garden has taken root. Hundreds of mammoth sunflowers will eventually reach six feet. Seedlings of Southern green peas, Chinese long beans, watermelon, winter squash and “jack-o-lantern” pumpkins drape over the edges of raised beds. Apple, fig and peach trees are coming soon, along with native muscadine vines and an herb spiral, an attractive elevated coil of soil and bricks that allows for compact, urban planting.

Carter has long envisioned a community garden

like this here in Old South Baton Rouge. He grew up in the neighborhood and prefers to call it “Original” South Baton Rouge because of its sturdy legacy. He remembers when gardens were a regular part of life for area residents. Today, however, Old South Baton Rouge is short on both outdoor gardening and on sources of healthy produce. There are neither farm stands nor grocery stores in the immediate vicinity—only convenience stores specializing in liquor and processed foods.

“For many years now, I have wanted to see more fresh fruits and vegetables get into the inner city,” says

Carter. “Why not go back to an original concept? Everyone used to have gardens. It was a common thing, and people ate from them.”

They will again if Carter and a handful of like-minded compatriots have their way. Facilitated by the Center for Planning Excellence, the new OSBR Community Garden Initiative combines the wherewithal of New Ark Baptist Church, LSU’s Community University Partnership, and horticulture students, neighborhood residents and the South Garden Project, a grassroots organization created by Stephanie Elwood and Marguerite Green. The two are managing the garden’s startup.

“We want to build community gardens wherever they’re wanted,” says Elwood, 24, who launched a children’s community garden last year in OSBR at the corner of East Washington Street and Thomas Delpit Drive. A resident of the neighborhood herself, she says the youth project has exceeded expectations.

“I’ve watched 5-year-olds picking and eating raw turnips. If that’s not successful, I don’t know what is,” she laughs.

Today, there is renewed enthusiasm across the country about how a simple patch of earth can transform the relationship between neighbors. More than half a million residents nationwide currently participate in community greening projects, according to the nonprofit American Community Garden Association. From plot to plot, they’ve helped reduce crime, increase property values and provide what’s known as food security, or the supply of indigenous healthy food options in a given location.

The tradition has picked up steam in the last few years as concern grows over the source and quality of food. The new enthusiasm is evidenced in the rise of public farmers markets, in the alarm over adult and childhood obesity and the attention given to events like First Lady Michelle Obama’s organic White House vegetable garden.

It’s not a new movement. During World Wars I and II, “Victory Gardens” provided food and boosted morale, and during the ecology movement of the early ’70s, urban gardening was a central emblem, according to the ACGA. Now, projects take on a variety of forms and serve many purposes, from Edible Schoolyards that confront the industrial school lunch regime, to neighborhood gardens that restore pride

How can we stand between children and violence?

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*



and provide healthy options.

“The purpose of this pilot is to support Old South Baton Rouge as it works to become an economically sound community,” says Marcelle Boudreaux, economic development program manager for CPEX, a partner of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. “It has the potential to reclaim vacant land and return it to production while engaging the community in fresh food production at the same time.”

Boudreaux says the project supports the ongoing OSBR Neighborhood and Economic Revitalization Strategy, particularly its goal to improve housing conditions, use land resources, and enliven the appearance, character and economic viability of the

A revival of Old South Baton Rouge is among the Foundation's civic leadership initiatives.

neighborhood. The project's multiple partners demonstrate the interest and enthusiasm in gardening, she says.

“People are drawn to things growing,” Boudreaux says. “It's a great way to help revitalize Old South Baton Rouge and empower the community.”

CPEX's Director of Redevelopment Susan Ludwig says the organization will study the successes and challenges of the New Ark pilot project in the hope of replicating it in the future.

“There are projects like this across the country, but you never know what's worked and what the impediments have been,” Ludwig says. “We want to really document what happens so it can have the best chance of spreading in the future.”



Denee Elwood, left, and sister Stephanie Elwood joined volunteers to plant a pilot community garden in Old South Baton Rouge. Lessons learned at the garden will be used to build more of them in the neighborhoods between LSU and downtown.

“I’ve watched 5-year-olds picking and eating raw turnips. If that’s not successful, I don’t know what is.”

—Stephanie Elwood, South Garden Project

The garden sits on an approximately 50-by-100-foot parcel of church-owned land. Early soil testing revealed the presence of lead, which sometimes occurs on properties that have hosted older structures containing lead-based paint. Elwood, Green and the neighbors who joined them planted sunflowers as a means of phytoremediation. They will continue to do so during the first few growing seasons since the plants will absorb the lead over time naturally. For vegetables and other edibles, the garden will rely on newly constructed raised beds filled solely with rich, fertile compost donated by LSU.

Elwood and Green are supplementing their gardening with occasional classes for the community on organic growing. Residents from the neighborhood gather at New Ark’s fellowship hall, where they discuss everything from compost to earthworms to harvesting seeds from homegrown fruits and veggies. There’s a lot of dynamism between the teachers and their students, who laugh mutually about the trial-and-errors aspect of coaxing fresh produce from the earth.

Elwood makes them feel confident, cheerfully offering, “You’re doing great. There are no mistakes in nature.” •

How can we
make a
rollicking
downtown?

With our
members...
They make it
happen.

Join them
today.

braf.org

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*



Transit troubles

By Mukul Verma

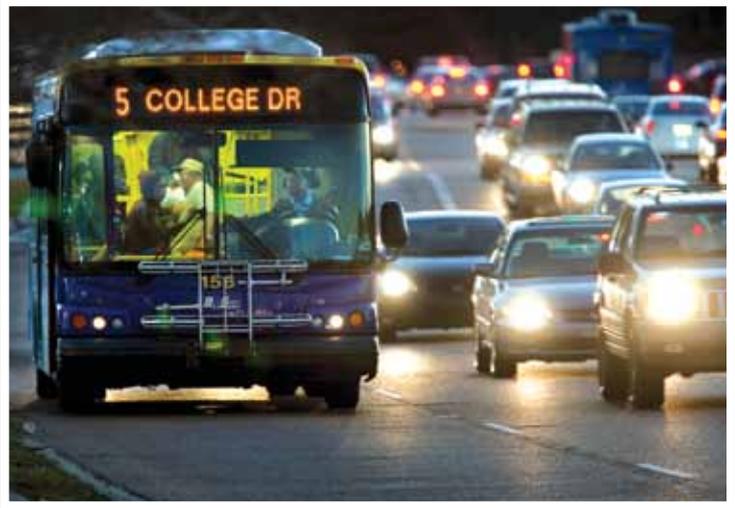
Mass transit offers obvious benefits. People can save money by opting for a bus instead of an automobile. A well-run system reduces road congestion and can even defer the need to build more roads. Transit can become more important with the aging of the nation, offering the elderly an option when they can no longer drive safely.

In Baton Rouge, the bus system could do much better. Even people who run the Capital Area Transit System are unhappy with the performance. There are not enough buses and routes; a trip across town can take longer than a car ride to Biloxi.

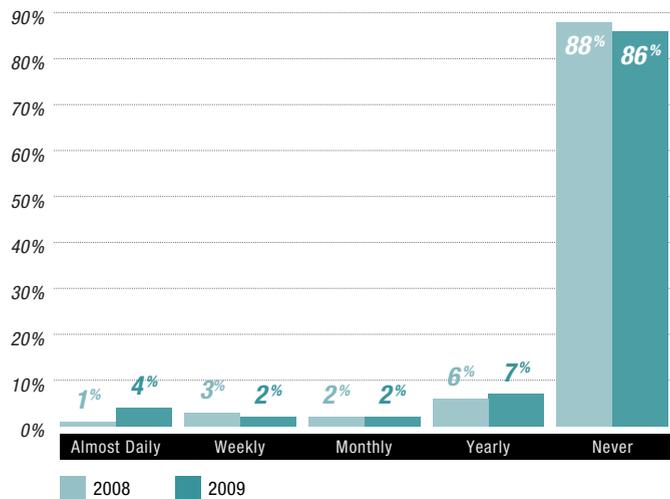
Yet more people rode Baton Rouge buses regularly in 2009 (4% daily) than 2008 (1% daily), according to BRCityStats, the Foundation's annual quality of life survey. Evidence says they were riding because of economic hardship during a recession, not because buses were a sensible choice.

CATS wants more money to boost service. The system has asked voters to approve a 3.5-mill property tax Oct. 2 to generate \$10.8 million a year, which would double the current CATS budget. Each new dollar, CATS says, will be leveraged for \$4 from the federal government.

For more CityStats data, visit BRCityStats.org.



FREQUENCY OF BUS RIDERSHIP

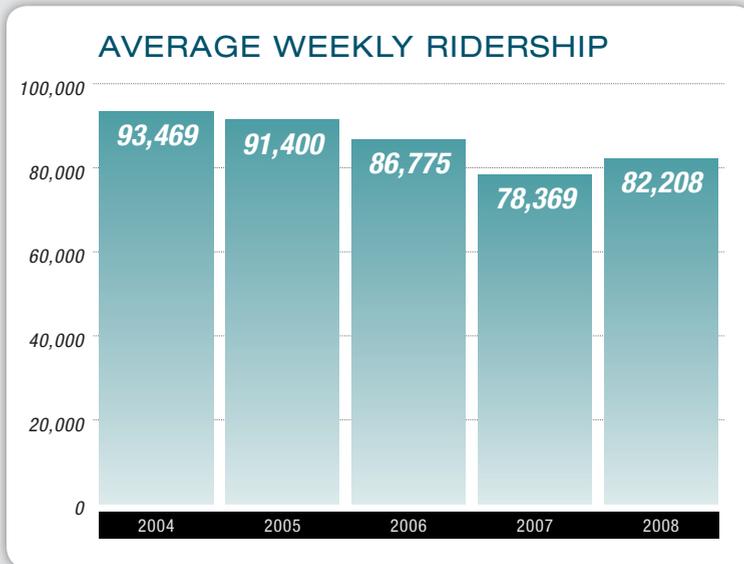


Source: CityStats survey

Measures: In our survey, respondents tell how frequently they ride the bus each week.

How EBR is doing: In our 2009 survey, the percentage of people who said they ride the bus daily grew to 4% from about 1%.

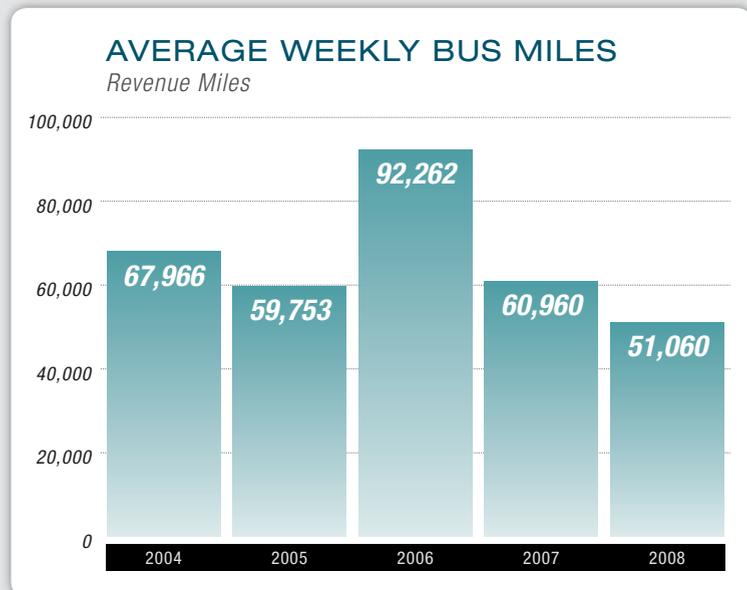
CityStats is a quality of life report published annually by the Foundation.



Source: Capital Area Transit System

Measures: Number of weekly riders using Capital Area Transit System.

How EBR is doing: As the economy slowed, the number of people riding buses rose 5% in 2008.



Source: Capital Area Transit System

Measures: Number of revenue-generating miles driven weekly by Capital Area Transit System buses.

How EBR is doing: Poor. Financial struggles caused the Baton Rouge bus system to reduce routes, dropping average weekly bus miles by 16% in 2008. The reduction in routes has made it harder for the working poor; nearly 20% earning less than \$25,000 in our survey said they ride the bus daily or a few times a week.



Oil disaster: Foundation responds

By Mukul Verma | Photos by Tim Mueller

Left: Terrebonne Parish shrimper Phillip Sevin, his wife Darlene and son Joe trawl Bayou Petit Caillou in the recently opened areas near Cocodrie, Robinson Canal and Lake Boudreaux. The BP oil spill closed the inland waters for much of the brown shrimp season and area shrimpers took advantage of the recent opening to shrimp the last few days of the season.

Just after the Deepwater Horizon well in the Gulf of Mexico began gushing thousands of barrels of oil into the water, the Foundation dispatched three representatives to understand what was happening on the ground—and in the water.

Back then, there was much uncertainty. Shrimpers and oystermen had either harbored their boats or were fishing as fast as they could to catch as much as they could.

Since then, the Foundation has continued to meet with state and national disaster response officials, nonprofit leaders, scientists and the people affected by the oil disaster.

The meetings have made the importance of our Gulf Coast even more clear.

The wetlands are a stopover point for 110 species of migratory songbirds and 75% of all migratory U.S. waterfowl. The Gulf of Mexico is the spawning area for fish, including the Bluefin tuna that eventually swim to the Atlantic Ocean as far north as Prince Edward Island off Canada. An endangered species of sea turtle spawns in a tiny area along the Louisiana coast. Gulf waters provide more than 30% of the nation's seafood.

The gusher is threatening the people and culture of the coast as well. Many oystermen, shrimpers and fishermen now are at a standstill, their boats harbored, maybe for a decade or more. Look among them and you will see Creoles, Cajuns, African Americans, Native Americans, many working a



At a meeting in Plaquemines Parish soon after the oil blowout, hundreds of shrimpers and deckhands listen to officials explain BP's program.

trade taught to them by their fathers and mothers—and on down through the generations. Newer to the fishing businesses are the Vietnamese. Losing their own country, they traveled to America, worked

and became our neighbors, only to have the spreading oil disrupt their livelihoods.

BP has committed \$20 billion to cover the costs of this disaster, the worst in U.S. history. At the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, experience has taught us that the amount won't be enough. Given time, BP will exit and the government will turn its attention elsewhere, leaving much more work to do.

In response, we have established charitable funds to do whatever is necessary to save the birds, the fish, the turtles—and to make sure the people of the coast get another chance to make a respectable living. The Foundation's oil disaster funds also will raise money and provide grants for initiatives that prepare the coast to rebound stronger from future disasters.

There are four funds. One is a flexible fund that allows the Foundation to move quickly to meet different needs. Three other funds let donors choose their cause—helping people, wildlife or the environment of the gulf.

Donations can be made to any of the funds by calling Helen Lowery at 225.387.6126 or online at BRAF.org.

The Foundation will provide updates of our efforts through this publication and our e-newsletter.

Colbert Nation to the front

Cleaning the gulf is a dirty job. Satirist Stephen Colbert and his fans are unflinching in doing their share. The head of Colbert Nation on Comedy Central created the Gulf of America Fund to provide money for a relief response.

Housed at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, the fund had more than \$143,000 when *Currents* went to press. More than 750 Colbert fans donated at the Foundation website, with the biggest individual donation at \$1,000. Microsoft donated \$2,500 each time Colbert mentioned the Bing search engine on his show, netting the fund \$100,000 of the total. A separate organization has pledged up to \$50,000 to the fund based on Colbert's Twitter feed.

How did Colbert link up with the Foundation? His sister-in-law and Foundation CEO John Davies were colleagues on a community foundation leadership group.

Brew for the beach

Abita Brewing is serving up SOS, a lager to benefit the Gulf Coast.

For every bottle sold, the Abita Springs company is donating 75 cents to rescue and restoration of the environment, industry and individuals fighting to survive the disastrous oil spill.

To manage the donations, the company has opened a charitable account at the Northshore Community Foundation, which is a Covington-based affiliate of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Abita and the Louisiana Seafood Marketing Board are fund advisors, meaning they will make grant recommendations from the charitable account.

Abita has offered charitable beers in the past. Restoration Pale Ale raised more than \$500,000 for hurricane relief, while Abbey Ale benefited St. Joseph's Abbey in Covington. •

Carroll Eschete of Houma and Louise Head of Florida toss nets into Robinson Canal in Terrebonne Parish. The oil gusher caused trawlers, in background, to scramble between fishing spots and grab as much shrimp as possible before more oil despoiled the water.





Promise Road

Will Nicholson Drive ever live up to the hype of being the potential and strategic link between LSU and downtown?

By Jeremy Alford

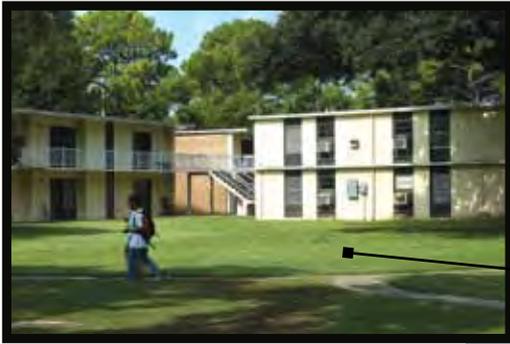
James William Nicholson, known better to friends and family as JW, lived out a life that seemed guided by divine providence. He pulled himself out of mid-19th century plantation life in Claiborne Parish to enroll in college at the tender age of 14. Just two years later, he enlisted to fight in the American Civil War and returned home in 1865 with the rank of sergeant and a dream to build a college in the Homer area. He did that, too, in short order.

Above all else, though, Nicholson was a mathematical genius, something the academics over at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge took notice of before inviting him to become chair of the mathematics department. Yet as with everything else in his life, Nicholson was meant for much more—he went on to serve two terms as president of LSU from 1883 to 1884 and 1887 to 1896. During his tenure, LSU played, and lost, its first football game to Tulane (34-0) and, in what was Nicholson’s final year as president, the campus selected the tiger as its mascot.

Before and after his time as president, Nicholson continued to teach and further mathematics, and that’s largely from where his true legacy sprung. He allowed LSU’s first female student into his math classes; authored textbooks that were used by Harvard and Yale; and invented a mnemonic device for trigonometry.

Now go and stand anywhere on Nicholson Drive—under the shade of Magnolia Mound’s expansive oaks, on the sidewalks lining LSU’s outdated graduate housing or the hallowed and former grounds of old Alex Box—and just ask folks along the boulevard who JW Nicholson was and why the thoroughfare was named in his honor. You’ll likely receive blank stares.

Nicholson’s history is fading from modern recall with the passage of time, as are many mental relics of bygone eras, and his, in particular, seems to be known today in street name only. And that’s a shame; the most recent generations being reared in Baton Rouge have witnessed Nicholson Drive be treated with the same kind of neglect afforded to its namesake’s legacy.



The future of Nicholson

LSU wants to replace married student housing and the former Alex Box site with new developments. Housing and retail are being considered.



Victory Commons and Fieldhouse are new condos at the North Gate of LSU.

Oil industry tycoon Mike Moreno has purchased more than 30 acres across from and around Magnolia Mound for a mixed-used project, though he's not revealing his plans yet.



Under the city-parish sewer upgrade, the treatment plant on 20 acres of riverfront will be demolished. It could be built upon.



Mike Wampold owns land on Nicholson for future development. He has leased space in a warehouse to a new microbrewer, Tin Roof Brewing.

Donnie Jarreau and partners are putting up new homes on Nicholson near Terrace Boulevard.



A project with apartments and retail will rise on Nicholson at Terrace starting this fall. The Foundation has provided financial and staff support for the development, which is part of the revitalization of Old South Baton Rouge.



While boomers might remember the steaks at Mickey's Gold Nugget and thriving neighborhood retail stores, those of a younger persuasion see the pockets of blight, miserable traffic and a sometimes bleak facade.

But Baton Rouge is at a crossroads in regard to Nicholson Drive. The funk from the sewer treatment plant along River Road will soon be torn down. Developers are targeting the area, architects are being commissioned and dirt is already turning for what could be a major facelift. Downtown enthusiasts are taking steps to link up LSU through the corridor and the flagship university has created a study commission. Additionally, mass transit and foot-friendly components are being studied publicly and privately.

If you're an urban planning professional it's enough to make you want to geek out. That's the case with Rachel DiResto, and her enthusiasm is contagious. She's the vice president of the Center for Planning Excellence, or CPEX, a nonprofit that helped the state craft a regional vision for South Louisiana during the post-Katrina years with Louisiana Speaks. DiResto's office is about a dozen or so blocks from the start of Nicholson Drive or the front door of Pastime. The distance can be measured either way.

She's seen movements like this start up before. And it can be a slow process—real movement along Nicholson probably won't be seen for another year.

"You could draw in downtown workers, have multi-family offerings, different housing for empty nesters, younger residents from LSU and the people who want to have that urban feel."

—Rachel DiResto, Center for Planning Excellence

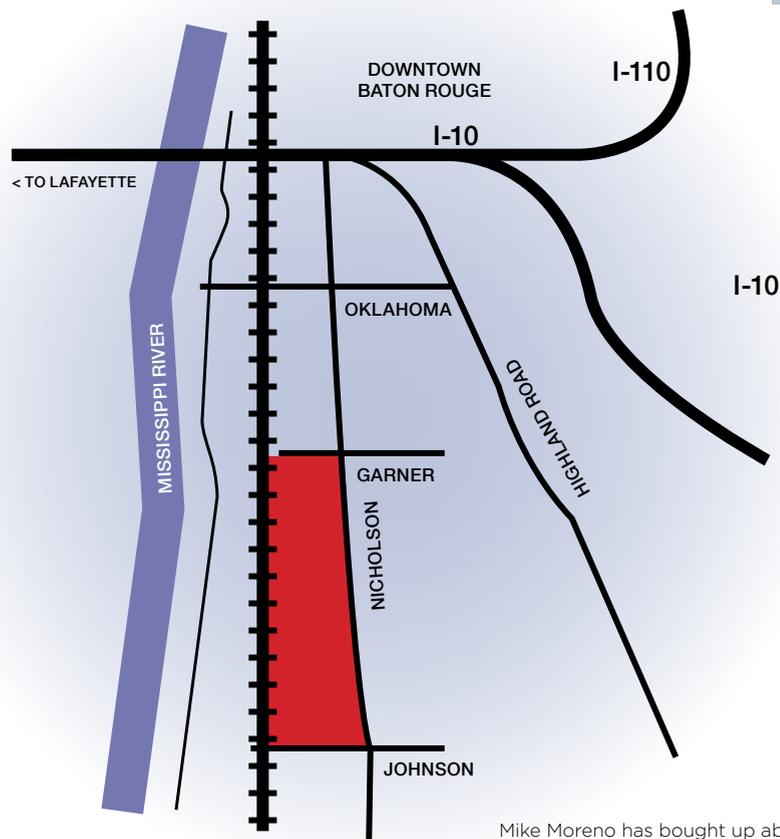
Still, DiResto envisions a layout that's walkable, has a definite urban feel, multi-storied developments and a wide spectrum of residents. "It's much more than a downtown thing or an LSU thing," she says. "Its proximity to the river is a major draw with the newly designed levee top. You could draw in downtown workers, have multi-family offerings, different housing for empty nesters, younger residents from LSU and the people who want to have that urban feel."

If anything, the corridor upgrade could become a case study for infill development, she adds. That means planners and developers will be relying upon techniques that utilize portions of land in an already developed area to

give it a new life and reuse what might look like obsolete buildings. "I think it definitely has the potential to set a great standard," DiResto says.

Still, the new urbanism mantra might not apply to one Nicholson Drive development that grabbed the attention of editors over at *Acadiana Business* magazine. In fact, the story carried the entire May cover.

Here's the deal: Lafayette oil industry tycoon Mike Moreno is reportedly bulldozing homes for a 30-acre development next to and across from the Chinese Inn, which, as locals will tell you, is less a hotel and more a restaurant guarded by two bronze lions. Moreno's undertaking is expected to be another smart-growth development—and with a name like River District, it



Mike Moreno has bought up about 30 acres on Nicholson. Houses have been razed but final plans for the land have not been revealed, though word is Moreno will build housing and shops on the site.

will fit perfectly into the local nomenclature of modern speculative real estate (think Towne Center, Perkins Rowe).

LSU, meanwhile, is trying to cobble together its own plans. Jason Tolliver, director of university auxiliary services, says Chancellor Mike Martin has appointed members to a study commission to figure out how to best approach its stretch along Nicholson Drive and act in concert with the private developments. Those involved with the process, however, complain that the commission has been ceremonial only, a charge LSU officials find it hard to deny. “The current budget issues we have been dealing with have really created a new necessity to focus on a variety of matters,” says Tolliver.

If there is a focus bubbling to the surface, it’s unarguably the student housing that runs from the university gates to the former left field of Alex Box. There are hopes to raze the buildings and start from scratch, maybe mix in some retail stores. Tolliver and other LSU officials have gone on a number of fact-gathering trips to other universities to look at best prac-

tices and possible models. Ohio State, for example, has a vibrant corridor anchored by a Barnes and Noble that offers housing to the university’s law students. Arizona State has linked its corridor project to its honors college.

LSU seems to have similar plans. “Graduate and family housing along Nicholson is very outdated and exists in buildings that have gone beyond their useful lives,” Tolliver says. “While they are in decent condition, we have a desire to grow our graduate population and that’s part of the reason we’re looking hard at Nicholson Drive.”

University officials already have some evidence that such an undertaking could be successful—just consider the new Fieldhouse condos coming into campus through the corridor from downtown. Furthermore, a study by Zimmerman/Volk Associates shows a potential market demand of more than 1,620 new multi-family units in the area of the proposed River District site.

Then there’s transportation, which is infamously a drag and among the reasons Davis Rhorer, well-

known director of the Downtown Development District, has used his trusty scooter in the past to get to meetings. As for a more practical approach for those still on four wheels, DDD is behind a project that will eventually make St. Louis Street two-ways instead of one to connect Nicholson Drive to downtown. “That gives us a better connection to LSU,” Rhorer says. “Right now, we need to focus on strengthening that connection. The private sector is already doing its part and moving along well.”

The rebirth of the Nicholson Drive corridor is vital for downtown supporters, as there really isn’t much more downtown to develop and grow, relatively speaking. The only place for real growth is along Nicholson. “Obviously, strengthening the river corridor will be a tremendous response to the suburban sprawl,” Rhorer says. “We’re open to these new avenues and we want to help in any way we can.”

Fregonese Architects, an Oregon-based land-use planning firm, is developing a master plan for Baton Rouge that identifies Nicholson Drive as a corridor primed for smart growth. It’s also looking at transit modeling, maybe linking the downtown trolley system to the proposed corridor and improving walking paths.

“It has enough traffic to be viable for a street car or biking or pedestrian paths. You don’t have to travel rapidly there. You could slow down traffic eventually and have this great environment,” says CEO and president John Fregonese.

He agrees with DiResto, too—Nicholson Drive is a blank canvas. “It has a lot of unique characteristics,” says Fregonese. “It’s what you want to work with when doing a plan like this. You want overlooked areas and things that aren’t being used for whatever reason.”

He says he can see a day when Nicholson Drive is lined with a major grocery, mini business hubs, casual housing, fine dining and a nightclub or two. The market is there and ready. “When Baton Rouge was a smaller place, Nicholson just went down to the little state university and it was almost the edge of town,” Fregonese says. “But in the last 30 years or so, it has



“But in the last 30 years or so, Nicholson has become a powerhouse region with LSU on one side and state government on the other.”

—John Fregonese

become a powerhouse region with LSU on one side and state government on the other.”

It’s a far cry from the meager beginnings that JW Nicholson had a role in molding, but it also sounds like the kind of upward mobility that graced Nicholson throughout his life. For a change, the future of Nicholson drive is starting to parallel the history of its storied namesake. If only local officials could figure out a way to erect a plaque or proper monument that explains as much to those who rely on the boulevard each and every day. To be certain, JW would like that. •



It's a wonderful world



MANSHIP THEATRE

AT THE SHAW CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Curtains up. From Randy Newman to the B-52s, the Manship Theatre has presented the finest and most diverse selection of arts and entertainment in the region. In the wings of this success are members, who take a chance—and believe—that the finest theatre in the region can make Baton Rouge a better place. Because of their faith, the theatre has been able to provide arts education and host innovative gatherings, such as Art Melt, which brings thousands each year to downtown for arts and fun.

Now it's time to make Manship even better.

**Man the footlights;
become a member today
at ManshipTheatre.org
(225) 389-7222**



Why people kill

And what can be done to stop them

By Mukul Verma | Illustration by Chris Ede

Over two weeks this summer, there were nearly a dozen murders in Baton Rouge. With the per-capita murder rate in East Baton Rouge among the highest in the country, we asked David Livingstone Smith why people kill.

Skeptical of psychotherapy, Smith switched from that field to earn a doctorate in philosophy from the University of London, where he was introduced to the significance of evolutionary biology for understanding human nature. That led him to examine why humans kill each other.

His most recent book was *The Most Dangerous Animal: Human Nature and the Origins of War*, which was published by St. Martin's Press in 2007. Due out this fall, his next book expands on dehumanization, which is an underlying idea of his work.

You have said that humans are the most sociable creatures on Earth. How so?

Smith: The secret of our success as a species lies largely in our capacity to form large, complex communities. From the beginning, we were group-living creatures capable of a high degree of cooperation and collective action. Just think of the extraordinary amount of coordination that makes this magazine possible. Think of all the people involved in editing, writing, photography, production and distribution—not to mention the immense network of people producing the cameras, computers, paper and so on. Each of us is part of a vast, ramifying network of cooperative relationships. That's uniquely human.

Is there a biological or evolutionary reason that violence or killing doesn't come easy to us?

Yes. There are two factors involved. First of all, we are social animals, and social animals have in-built inhibitions against killing members of their own communities, as opposed to members of other communities. In most social species, violence is restrained when it comes to "us" and unleashed against

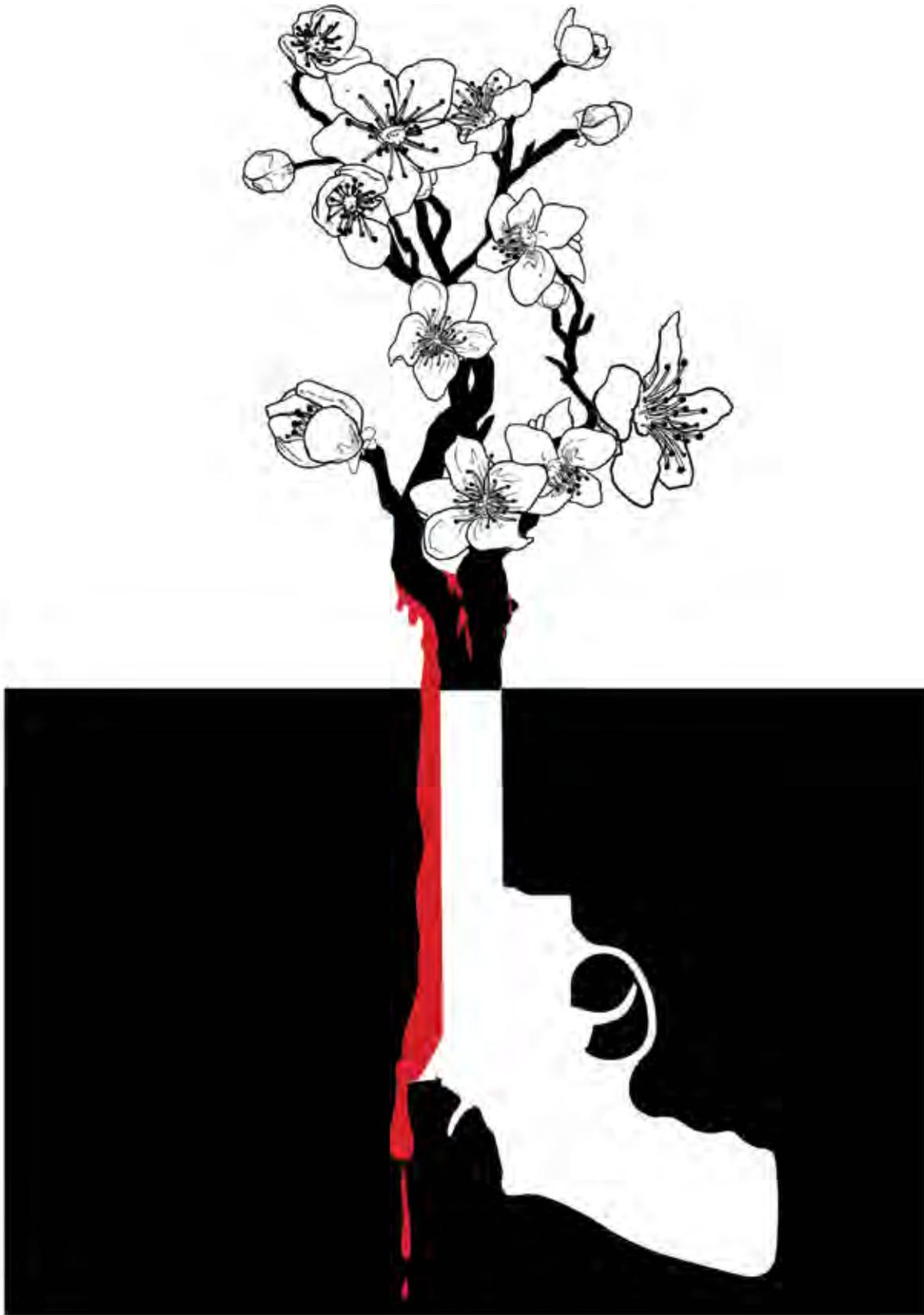
"them"—the strangers, aliens and outsiders. If social animals didn't have these inhibitions, social living would be impossible.

Animal communities are nothing more than local breeding groups. Not so with human beings. We humans have uniquely powerful brains that make us capable of abstract thought, and we use this ability to build larger, more abstract communities. Unlike other animals, we can conceive of ourselves as members of a single species—members of one broad human "community." This awareness of a common humanity activates our deep, biologically based inhibitions against intra-community violence, which makes it psychologically difficult for us to kill our fellow human beings.

Yet we have a dark side and violence is tempting.

Yes, that's the other side of human nature. We are ambivalent about violence. We simultaneously abhor it and are fatally attracted to it.

Our highly cooperative nature makes us especially dangerous, because it enables us to band together to kill, enslave or oppress other human groups. War is a supremely cooperative activity, as was the slave trade,



and the construction and operation of Auschwitz. It is a paradox that, thanks to our extreme sociability, we are the only mammals that engage in deliberate, cold-blooded, group-on-group violence.

Why do we do this? The answer isn't pretty. Those ancestral groups that could destroy or enslave their neighbors, and thereby steal or monopolize their resources, were able to thrive. As a result, the penchant for group violence was bred into our ancestors over many generations and has, unfortunately, been passed down to us. But our prehistoric ancestors killed one another with sticks and stones, whereas we are equipped with M-16s, cluster bombs and nuclear weapons. The result is a deadly cocktail of stone-age mentality mixed with 21st century military technology.

With this dark pull, why isn't there more violence in the world?

It's surprising how rarely human beings kill one another. Even in the countries like Jamaica, with very high homicide rates, killing is uncommon.

In fact, each year more lives are lost by suicide than by war and homicide combined.

Of course, one reason for this is that humans are good at policing one another. That's why when social infrastructures break down and resources become scarce (for example, the aftermath of natural disasters), violence tends to erupt. But more importantly, we are blessed with the inhibitions mentioned earlier. We are able to recognize that other people are members of the broader human community and this produces an aversion to killing them.

Could you give examples that show the violence ordinary men can do?

People have a tendency to imagine that the purveyors of mass violence are madmen, but this isn't gen-

erally true. Let's consider the most horrific form of violence: genocide. The Nazi high command were, in most respects, ordinary human beings, as were the mobile killing squads responsible for the mass execution of Jews in eastern Europe, as well as the men and women who ran the death camps (as one psychologist put it, they were the sort of people that you might run into at a PTA meeting). Likewise, the Hutus who chopped their Tutsi neighbors to death with rusty machetes in Rwanda in 1994 were

ordinary men. It's extremely important to recognize that these terrible, wicked acts are part and parcel of human nature. Under the right circumstance, we are all capable of performing these sorts of acts.

What goes on in the human mind to make such brutality possible?

I think that one of the most powerful factors is our ability to dehumanize one another. As I've described it, human beings are torn between two tendencies: the tendency to kill others to acquire their resources and the visceral horror of killing other

human beings. Dehumanization breaks the deadlock between these two contending forces.

How do we dehumanize others?

When we dehumanize others, we imagine that although they look like human beings, they are not really human "inside." The Nazis described Jews as Untermenschen (subhumans) and conceived of them as rats and other sorts of vermin; Hutus described Tutsi as cockroaches and snakes. During World War II, Americans represented the Japanese as monkeys, rats and lice. During the genocide in Darfur, the Janjaweed militias referred to black Darfurians as monkeys and donkeys, and today Palestinians describe Israelis as dogs, while Israelis describe Palestinians as subhuman animals.



David Livingstone Smith

As important, why do we dehumanize other people?

So we can harm them without feeling guilt or remorse.

But it's also important to bear in mind that people are often persuaded by propaganda to dehumanize others. Governments, terrorist organizations, religious groups and others exploit the dehumanizing tendency for their own nefarious purposes.

Besides violence, don't many of us commonly dehumanize other people, such as the poor?

Yes, but remember, not all violence involves bloodshed. Callously allowing people to suffer and die is also a form of violence. And that, sadly, is a typical attitude of the haves towards the have-nots. The poor are often thought of as refuse, rather than as human beings worthy of consideration and respect.

Doesn't dehumanization also play a role in intolerance, such as racism?

I'm devoting a lot of attention to racism in my current research and I'll be saying quite a bit about it in my forthcoming book. If we look at how the dehumanizing process unfolds, the first step is to imagine that some population is a separate "race" with a special racial essence that sets them apart from others. The next step is to imagine that members of the race are less than human. So racism and dehumanization go hand in hand. For much of U.S. history, people of African descent were considered subhuman. Many believed that they didn't have souls, and therefore didn't have a human pedigree. There were similar attitudes toward Native Americans and Chinese settlers

in California. In fact, any human population can be imagined as a race. For example, a century ago Jews, Italians, Russians, Irish and many others were seen as races, and there were panicky calls for regulations to prevent these "inferior races" from entering the U.S., much like the attitudes towards Mexican immigrants today.

Could you offer some ideas on how individuals and organizations can work to stop dehumanization?

Sure. I think that one of the most important factors is racism. If we can prevent racism, we will have gone a long way towards preventing dehumanization.

Race is an extraordinarily dangerous and compelling fiction. It's a fiction because it has no scientific basis—so we should stop speaking as though race is something real. We should give it the same status that we give to unicorns and the tooth fairy. This position obviously goes against the grain of many people's assumptions.

Although their hearts are in the right place, people who promote the idea that we should celebrate racial diversity are making a grave mistake. They are exacerbating the problem. We need to liberate people from the oppressive illusion of race, rather than encouraging them to affirm its reality. The best way to prevent dehumanization is to combat racism, and the best way to combat racism is to combat the very idea of race. •

When we dehumanize others, we imagine that although they look like human beings, they are not really human "inside."

Learning spirit

Devotion to education continues in Barker scholarship

By Sara Bongiorno

Jarvis Harry never met Bringier Hudson Barker, a teacher, guidance counselor and school board president from a Washington Parish family whose pioneering achievements in education stretch from small-town Louisiana to the campus of elite Stanford University.

Bringier Barker, a man of intelligence, physical strength and enduring humor, died suddenly in 1996 when Harry was a small boy. Yet Barker's devotion to education for young people in Washington Parish lives on in the 21-year-old Harry.

The Twiley, Marie and Bringier Barker Scholarship Fund helped Harry, an Angie native, achieve his dream of college. He is an incoming senior at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, where he expects to graduate in 2011 with a degree in communications sciences.

A sister's earlier battle with cancer and the diabetes that sidelined his father's work in the offshore oil industry had made the cost of college an additional source of financial stress for his family, Harry

said. "The only way I can describe it is as a blessing," Harry said of the scholarship.

The fund is named for Bringier Barker and his parents, Twiley Barker Sr. and his wife, Marie Hudson

Barker, a Franklinton couple that instilled a devotion to education in each of their six children. That devotion continues to provide opportunities for young people, regardless of race, in rural Washington Parish, where the poverty rate, at 24.1%, is nearly twice that of the U.S.

One of the Barker siblings, Lucius Barker, began the scholarship in 1996 with the special support of his wife, Maude, and family and friends as a tribute to his younger brother and parents.

Twiley Barker Sr. had worked as a principal and supervisor in then-segregated Washington Parish Training

School, later called the Franklinton Colored High School. His wife, Marie Hudson Barker, was a piano and elementary school teacher.

All but one of the couple's three daughters and three sons went on to teach in public schools or at the

Barker scholarships are available to students at public high schools in Washington Parish, including Bogalusa city schools, who meet specific academic criteria. The criteria include a grade point average of 2.7 or higher, demonstrated financial need and acceptance to a university or college as a full-time student for the fall semester for which the scholarship is awarded. The application process includes significant evidence of scholarship, an in-depth essay and several letters of recommendation.

More information on the fund is available by contacting Helen Lowery at (225) 387-6126 or hlowery@braf.org.

university level. The oldest daughter, Blanche Barker Felder (now retired and living in Baton Rouge), was a sign language and music teacher for the School for the Deaf at Southern University. A second daughter, the late Olevia Henry, taught in the public schools in San Francisco. The third daughter, the late Marie Partridge Finch of San Leandro, Calif., was a registered nurse.

“Education is the key to life—it’s everything—and we want to help as many young people as possible achieve it,” said Lucius Barker, a professor emeritus of political science at Stanford. He is co-author with another brother, the late Twiley Barker Jr., and several other co-authors of a seminal textbook on civil liberties and the Constitution that was going into its ninth edition this summer. (Lucius Barker was at work on three other books, including a biography of Thurgood Marshall and an autobiography, when he spoke to *Currents*.)

The Barker family’s story is a multigenerational tapestry of the power of education to transform lives. It’s also a legacy to the triumph of courage in the face of the peril of the Civil Rights era, when the family’s work in education put them on the front lines of a painful chapter in local and national history.

His parents’ reverence for education was crucial in helping Lucius Barker and his siblings overcome the racism that curtailed opportunities for black students. He graduated magna cum laude from Southern in Baton Rouge, and then followed brother Twiley Barker Jr. to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where Lucius Barker received his doctorate degree in 1954.

“He paved the way for me there,” said Lucius Barker of brother Twiley Barker Jr., who also completed his doctorate degree at the University of Illinois and died last year after many years on the political science faculty at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Lucius Barker’s own journey in academia brought him briefly back to Baton



Stanford professor Lucius Barker, seen with wife Maude, began a scholarship at the Foundation to honor the learning legacy of his Washington Parish family.

“I can see him now running down the field and having the time of his life. He had great strength; he had a presence.”

—Juanita Barker, speaking of her husband, Bringier

Rouge, where he taught at Southern before holding positions at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Indiana University-Bloomington, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Washington University in St. Louis, Harvard University and, since 1990, Stanford.

But Lucius Barker was eager to highlight the courage and achievements of Bringier, the only sibling to remain in Washington Parish to work and raise a family.

That courage was tested during desegregation of public schools in Washington Parish, where Bringier Barker and his wife, Juanita Barker, worked in the local schools. The heartache of that period was followed a few years later by a milestone in parish history: Bringier Barker was elected the first African-American member of the parish school board, and then later chosen as its president by its other members, all of them white.

Bringier Barker went on to work as a longtime human resource manager at the Bogalusa paper mill, and he was serving his second term as school board president at the time of his death. In accordance with legal procedures, his position then passed to his wife, Juanita. In addition to her stint on the school board, she also worked as a school librarian and parish library director.

Those who knew Bringier Barker best describe an

even-keeled man of great energy who maintained his dignity whether enduring racial acrimony or enjoying the pastime he loved best—officiating at local high school and college football and basketball games.

“I can see him now running down the field and having the time of his life,” said Juanita Barker. “He had great strength; he had a presence.”

In a real sense, the Barker scholarship fund builds on the family’s legacy of providing opportunities to local young people. And scholarship recipients are creating their own legacy of opportunity for other youngsters. Harry, for instance, plans to return to the parish to work as a speech pathologist in the public elementary schools after completing a master’s degree.

Likewise, three Franklinton sisters who received Barker scholarships are now working in education and health. Kenita August Nicoulin, a 26-year-old 2006 graduate of Dillard University, teaches English at Franklinton High School. Her sister Kewanda, another Dillard grad, teaches at Franklinton Primary School. The youngest sister, Katasha, attended college at Southern and is studying nursing.

August Nicoulin said the Barkers were widely admired in Washington Parish for their educational achievements and commitment to the local community. “They gave so much, and I wanted to do that as well,” she said. •



**Thursday, August 19
and Friday, August 20**

Manship Theatre at
the Shaw Center for the Arts
Downtown Baton Rouge, LA

**With Keynote Reception
Wednesday, August 18**

Old State Capitol
Downtown Baton Rouge, LA

Systems for Resiliency and Rejuvenation

The 2010 Summit will explore the diverse and interconnected systems in Louisiana communities that fall under the banner of Smart Growth because it is those systems that enable our resiliency and rejuvenation. We hope you will join us for presentations and discussions on such topics as:

- **Disaster response and dealing with the oil leak**
- **Transit-oriented development**
- **Healthy communities**
- **Green construction**
- **Coastal planning**
- **Progress made since the 2005 hurricanes**
- **Mobility and transportation**

Made possible by:



FannieMae



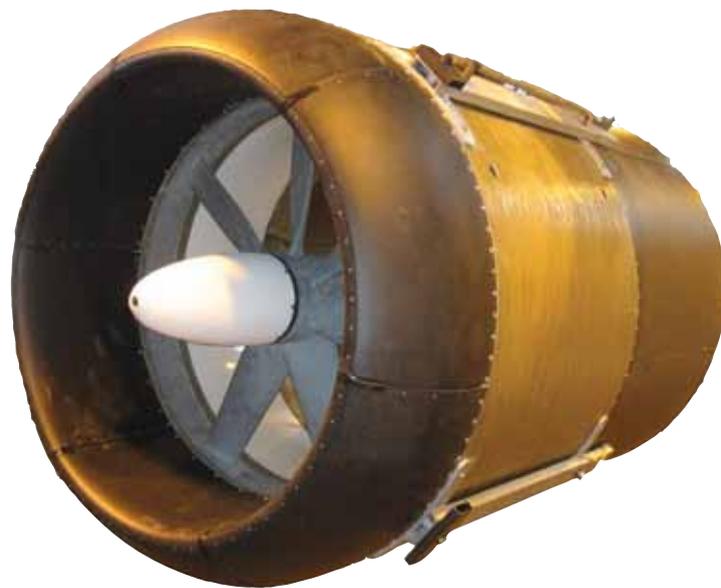
*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Louisiana**

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross
and Blue Shield Association.





Monitor

Glow from flow

River could be harvested for renewable energy

By Mukul Verma

By building levees and canals, humans have diverted and channeled the Mississippi River to the detriment of the coast. But one firm could pivot this engineering madness toward a benefit for the planet, while creating green jobs in Louisiana.

Free Flow Power Corp. wants to use the flow of the river—made more predictable by man’s hands—to generate more electricity than is consumed by all the homes in Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

Based in Massachusetts with an outpost in New Orleans, the company has successfully demonstrated its technology to private investors. In an undisclosed spot on the river in Louisiana, Free Flow harvested energy from its invention, a turbine immersed in the river to generate energy from the movement of water across its blades.

“The state of Louisiana is really well-positioned to do what no one else in the world has done,” said Jon Guidroz, director of project development for Free Flow and a Louisiana native. Louisiana waters would

be the first for a large-scale deployment of underwater turbines.

Sites on the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers were picked because turbines can be tethered deep enough to avoid watercraft and because the river flows consistently and at the appropriate speed, a benefit of levee building and channeling.

Securing operating licenses also is easier on the chosen rivers because the state is sole owner of water bottoms. “Louisiana is the only state that has the river entirely within its border, so there’s no debate on who owns it,” said Guidroz. “The negotiation of leases is simplified, as long as the state simplifies the process.”

SmarTurbine is Free Flow’s branded generator. The firm chose ducted turbines—they resemble jet engines instead of windmills—to keep fish and other undersea life from being sliced into bits. The three-meter device has a single-moving part that can generate 40 kilowatts of electricity. On the lower Mississippi River, the company wants to in-

“This is the U.S. launching its own form of renewable energy.”

—Jon Guidroz, Free Flow Power director of project development

stall enough turbines to power up to 1 million homes, roughly the electricity produced by a typical nuclear power plant.

Coal and other hydrocarbons are hard to beat on price because they pack a lot of energy. But power turned out by SmartTurbines will be cheaper than solar and wind, while reaching the Holy Grail of competing on price with cheap coal, says Guidroz.

The firm is attempting to satisfy regulators before beginning manufacturing of SmartTurbines. Eight months of public comment and federal reviews concluded in January when the government approved an intense study phase. Free Flow now has 11 studies under way. Will the turbines harm river life is being considered in one of them. Will navigation be impacted is being examined in another.

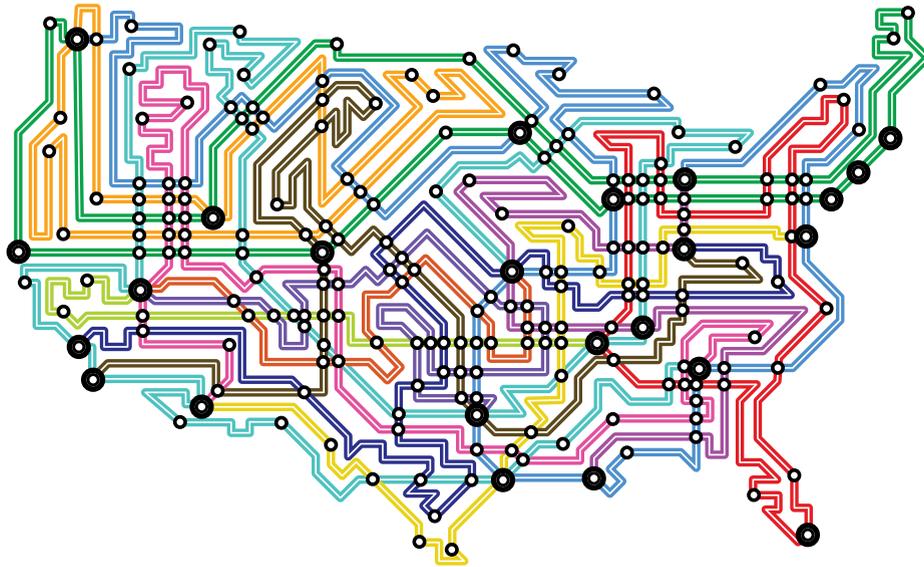
An April 2011 company deadline has been set to complete all tests, which would be followed by government review. If approved, Free Flow would raise the money to begin production. It's seeking federal grants now for more testing.

Free Flow is interested in opening a manufacturing facility in Louisiana but is far from choosing any location. “I think it's important to start with a big enough step to achieve economies of scale, but small enough to know what we are dealing with as a form of energy,” says Guidroz.

If it does deploy in Louisiana, the company would hire workers to maintain the turbines. “Our highest number of jobs will be for operations and maintenance; that means job creation on the river. These are jobs that cannot be outsourced.”

As in other manufacturing, the costs of making the turbines will decline with an increase in production. That should let Free Flow expand its markets across the world. Turbines will also be scaled for different uses. Free Flow even envisions the turbines used in canals in developing countries for powering villages.

Free Flow expects to begin the first commercial deployment in 2013. “This is the U.S. launching its own form of renewable energy,” says Guidroz. •



Dig that data

Networked cities are working smarter, better

By Mukul Verma

Earlier this year, Google shook unflappable investment managers. The Street learned the software firm had hired investment sharpshooters to manage its cash and short-term investments. It doesn't seem extraordinary until you consider that Google already had top-notch software engineers and access to volumes of proprietary data flowing through its unparalleled search engine.

The Google team created a system that reportedly values 98% of the company's \$27 billion in worldwide holdings in real time, compared to just 60% to 70% for competitors.

Google is among a handful of software companies and consulting firms working at the center of an accelerating data revolution. IBM is another knowledge

behemoth. The company has built an entire practice around turning incomprehensible data into smart knowledge to improve how the planet works.

The IBM Smarter Planet initiative has helped to reduce violent crime in New York even with fewer

cops on the street, dissolved traffic bottlenecks with smartcards and even tracked meat with radio chips from farm to market to table.

John B. Gordon, a director in IBM's Smarter Cities project, says three trends underlie the

venture. One is the migration of people into urban areas, which accommodated more than half the globe's population for the first time in 2009. By 2050, 70% of people—in a more populous world—are expected to live in cities. The question: How will we manage this

John B. Gordon of IBM's Smarter Cities program will be a keynote speaker at the Smart Growth Summit in Baton Rouge. Created by the Center for Planning Excellence, the fifth annual summit will be held August 18-20, 2010. For a full schedule, visit summit.cpep.org.

swelling urban population, providing the “right level of services so the quality of life grows without overstraining services?” asks Gordon.

Billions residing in urban areas illuminates the second trend. Built for smaller populations of yesteryear, city infrastructure, such as energy, water and transportation capacity, must be updated. “And making these changes is not an easy thing to do,” he says.

Offsetting the first two is the third: Growing at a mind-boggling pace and being created from all types of new sources, data can be turned into usable knowledge to improve how the world works. For instance, real-time sensors on manhole covers in South Bend, Ind., are ensuring sewers don’t overflow in an IBM Smarter Cities project.

“Because we have more data, we can capture it and analyze it faster than ever before; we can predict how the trends relate to each other and help cities operate better and fix things before they break,” said Gordon.

Here are examples of Smarter Cities projects.

Corpus Christi, Texas, deployed software to tie together its infrastructure—the sewers, water network and roadways. The system lets the city respond quickly to problems and report back to residents, while also managing daily operations.

The software integrates a mapping system that provides spatial information to city employees. In one instance, the software revealed that 33% of problems were being reported by a small percentage of residents who lived near each other, alerting the city to the real problem that when solved reduced expenses. “That was a dramatic insight for them; they didn’t realize it was connected,” Gordon said.

“The spatial analysis is very exciting,” says Stephen Klepper, a superintendent for the city. “For the first time, it enables us to really understand where service levels are not being met and why.” He’s become such an enthusiast that his Twitter name is Maximo Steve after IBM’s Maximo software.

Queensland had a problem. An area targeted for growth in the Australian state had done so. But a roadway and bridge leading to the economic trade zone had become clogged—and growth was projected to make the roads more congested.

In spending nearly \$2 billion on an upgrade,

Queensland also set the roads up for smart traffic systems. An automated tolling system, for instance, has been integrated into the roadways. Cameras and computers recognize license plates to charge appropriate tolls based on location and the class of vehicle, eliminating the time-wasting queues caused by tolling booths. “The interchange went from 300 cars per hour to 2,000 per hour,” said Gordon.

Meanwhile, in Singapore, residents have a single card to use for all mass transit services. With one card, the mass transit systems can better understand the movement of people, improving service times. “And it’s better for the cities because people are encouraged to use public transportation. If you cut travel times by 10% to 20%, transit becomes more attractive.”

The **New York** Police Department has been heralded for decreasing violent crime, including murder, with fewer cops on the street. The force partly credits its linked computer databases to not only responding quicker to find criminals, but also dashing to potential hot spots, essentially breaking up crime before it occurs.

Before networked databases, NYPD was a “classic case of a big organization not knowing what it knows,” Raymond Kelly, NYPD police commissioner, has said.

Says Gordon, “We try to help the different departments link into each other better so they can share information. When people respond, they can act more efficiently.”

NYPD databases for incidents, arrests, patrols, corrections and warrants were stitched together to form the NYPD Real Time Crime Center. There, cops can identify potential perpetrators from the scantest crime scene data, such as a criminal’s tattoo described by a victim. Criminal names are related to recent known whereabouts, letting dispatchers send cops to quickly nab offenders.

The result: This summer, fewer inmates were locked up in New York on any given day than at any time in the past 24 years. •

Five metro trends

The U.S. faces five new realities that are redefining who we are, where and with whom we live and how we provide for our own welfare, says the Brookings Institution in its comprehensive review of the state of metro areas.

For the report, Brookings looked at the top 100 metro areas, including Baton Rouge, which it ranked at No. 67 in population with 774,327 residents in 2009.

Brookings said the five realities are:

The growth and spread of metro areas. More people are living in cities, with the top metro areas growing by 10.5% from 2000 to 2009, compared to 5.8% for outlying areas. Less-developed, outer rings of metro areas grew more than three times the rate of cities and inner suburbs.

Population diversification. The current one-third non-white population accounted for 83% of national population growth from 2000 to 2008. One-fourth of U.S. children have at least one immigrant parent. Brookings says this coming-of-age generation will stand at the precipice of a transition to a non-white majority in three decades. Large metro areas will reach that milestone first.

Aging population. Large metro areas are in some ways aging faster, with their 55-to-64-year-old population increasing 45% from 2000 to 2008. As a result, their single-person households are

growing more rapidly as well, especially in suburban communities that were not designed with these populations in mind.

Uneven higher educational attainment: More than one-third of U.S. adults held a post-secondary degree in 2008, up from one-quarter in 1990. But there has been a falloff among younger adults with college degrees, particularly in large metro areas. And African Americans and Hispanics in metros are 20% behind whites and Asians in obtaining college degrees.

Income polarization: Not only is the income gap widening, but typical American households are earning less money. Inflation-adjusted income for American households declined by more than \$2,000 between 1999 and 2008. Large metro areas stood at the vanguard of these troubling trends. By 2008, high-wage workers in metro areas out-earned their low-wage counterparts by a ratio of more than five to one, and the number of their residents living in poverty had risen 15% since 2000.



Prime:

Where Baton Rouge metro ranks for people driving alone to work. Eighty-four percent of residents commuted alone to work in 2008, says Brookings Institution in its State of the Metropolitan America report, which reviewed the top 100 metro areas.

4





Let potholes be

A new shock absorber by Levant Power of Cambridge, Mass., converts the everyday jolts of driving into energy, reducing energy use in vehicles from 1.5% to 6%.

With each jar, the shock absorber pumps oil inside it over a tiny transformer to convert mechanical energy into electrical energy. The absorber looks no different than those on the market, except for the wire that hooks up to a vehicle's central electrical system. Levant says the absorbers provide a return on investment in 18 months. We suspect the payback is quicker when riding on Louisiana streets.



POP-UP VIDEO

Your cell phone rings; an image of the caller pops up in three dimensions. That strange future is already at hand in South Korea, where Samsung has included the software to turn 2D images into 3D ones—no embarrassing glasses required.

The software was created by Dynamic Digital Depth's Julien Flack. It estimates the depth of different images—a mountain, for instance, is computed in the background—to create two distinct images that trick the mind into sensing depth, says Technology Review, an MIT publication that included the software in its annual list of Top 10 transformative inventions.

Dynamic Digital's software works best on cell phones, where one person is viewing images at a specific angle. But it can be used for larger displays, including 3D TV sets. Consumers can expect more 3D cell phones in coming years. And that may lead to novel new touch interfaces and smarter phones.

OILY RESPONSE

Using open source software, Tulane University students partnered with designers to create Oil Spill Crisis Map, a means to track what was happening on the ground and the water.

Online submissions, Tweets, texts and emails from people experiencing the spill's effects were mapped on the site. People visiting the site, particularly over time, could see the creeping devastation as the number of reported incidents—oil in marshes, oystermen out of business and so on—grew and spread from

Louisiana to other parts of the coast.

The open source software was created by Ushahidi, which means “testimony” in Swahili. The software and site were initially developed to map reports of violence in Kenya after the post-election fallout at the beginning of 2008. The site was used to track devastation after Haiti, allowing quicker relief to victims.



monitor briefs

OFF THE GRID

When given the chance, the Village of Downers Grove pitched toward a hopeful future. A neighborhood in the Illinois hamlet is the first to reportedly have street lights powered only by renewable energy.

A turbine and solar panel charge batteries hidden within the light poles. The poles use energy-sipping LED lights. The batteries store three days worth of backup power.

Manufactured by King Luminaire, bulbs in the hybrid street light last up to 100,000 hours, compared to 10,000 for a conventional streetlight. Over 30 years, the 25 streetlights will save more than 500,000 kilowatts of electricity and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by almost 350 tons. Cost of the project, installation included, was \$282,500.



Flower bomb

Germinating in California, where crazy notions often are put to the test, here comes the seedbomb.

Put some coins in a vending machine to get your seedbomb, a ball of clay, compost and seeds. You now are a terrorist for beauty. Just toss the seedbomb into a blighted space—a vacant lot, median, cracked sidewalk—give it some time and watch plants and flowers bloom.

Seedbomb is the happy brainchild of Commonstudio, a design studio that focuses on urban ecology, social enterprise and adaptive reuse.

There are only a handful of seedbomb vending machines in the country, but you can buy seedbombs online at TheCommonStudio.com. At the site, seedbombers can post bombed locations on a map as well.



Here comes the sun

Because a genius was among the founders of Semprius, you would expect something extraordinary from the Durham, N.C., tech startup. Joe Carr, CEO, who was awarded a genius grant from the John T. and Catherine D. MacArthur Foundation, has created a solar cell printing press that uses gallium arsenide to produce twice the energy from the same amount of sunlight than conventional solar cells.

The modules produce power at \$2 to \$3 per watt, which makes them competitive in the market. The company is expected to begin producing cells in larger quantities by the end of 2010. Funding has come from the federal government and engineering giant Siemens.



26 hours

Amount of time the Solar Impulse, a solar plane, spent aloft in a trial run. To conserve energy, the plane flies at 28 miles per hour when the sun isn't shining.



Healthy food for inner city

Inner city residents have a hard time making groceries. Stores are far away and mass transit often is difficult to use. Just try to lug armloads of groceries on a bus.

Baltimore may have an answer.

The city has partnered with the local library and a local grocer to offer deliveries. Residents order food online, using library computers if they lack the Internet at home. The supermarket delivers the groceries at a designated time to library branches. Baltimore is expanding delivery points to some parks.

By pooling deliveries, customers can avoid a delivery fee and a minimum spending requirement.

Baltimore has partnered with a design firm to brand, advertise and market the online supermarket. Says the city's website, "The virtual supermarket will transform urban food deserts into neighborhoods that enjoy convenient, rapid access to less expensive, healthy food."

CLEANING UP

In Washington, D.C., residents would park in the streets, requiring street sweepers to circumvent them. For each car parked in the street, the sweeper would miss the equivalent of three parking spaces. The trash left behind would be swept away by rain, fouling the Potomac River.

To solve the problem, the D.C. Department of Public Works created the Sweepcam, which is used by drivers to take pictures on-the-fly of license plates on illegally parked cars and to pinpoint the vehicles' locations with GPS. The images are used to send tickets to the miscreants.

Other jurisdictions, including Pittsburgh, are looking to implement the solution.



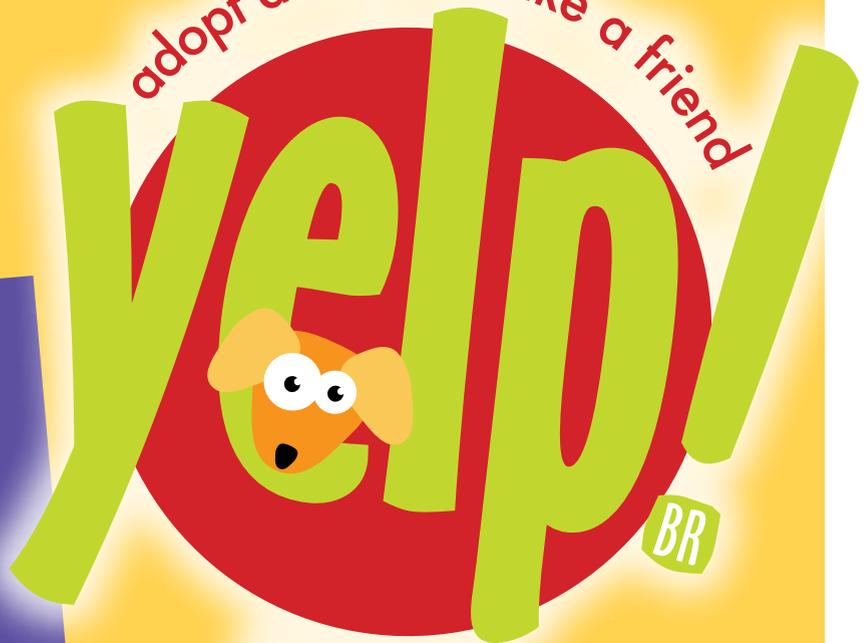
WELCOME ALERT

Soon, victims of domestic violence will be able to sleep a bit easier.

Connecticut is trying a pilot program that is likely to catch on across the country. There, 21 high-risk violent offenders are wearing GPS monitors. GPS receivers carried by the victims and the police are alerted when offenders tamper with monitors or break a court-established buffer zone.

The project was funded with \$140,000 in stimulus funds, and the governor has pledged to expand it.

adopt a dog • make a friend



yelpbr.com



yappy halloween run

1 MILE RUN &
COSTUME STROLL

OCTOBER 30, 2010

Come in costume to our
first annual 1 mile run with your dog
and costume stroll!

YELP ADOPTION DAYS

- July 31** 10-2 The Mall of Louisiana
- Aug. 7** 8-12 Arts Market downtown
at the Main Street Market
- Aug. 13** 4-7 PetSmart Millerville
- Aug. 14** 10-2 PetSmart Millerville
- Aug. 14** 4-7:30 Sherwood at Coursey
- Aug. 21** 10-2 Sherwood at Coursey
10-2 Acadian at Perkins
- Aug. 27** 4-7 Petsmart Millerville
- Sept. 3** 4-7 Petsmart Millerville
- Sept. 4** 8-12 Arts Market downtown
at the Main Street Market
- Sept. 10, 11 12** PetSmart Millerville
- Sept. 18** 10-2 Sherwood at Coursey
10-2 Acadian at Perkins



DAILY ADOPTIONS AT THE YELP HOUSE 10-6 M-F

3205 Lanier Drive
(off Greenwell Springs Road behind
Greco's Veterinarian Supply)

Check yelpbr.com for other available
adoption dates and locations.

For more information,
call 225.485.9200



DONATE TO YELP BATON ROUGE AT YELPBR.COM

Visit Baton Rouge and Experience the Arts First-Hand



World-class
Jazz Performances
Tickets: 344.0334



Year-round programs to
unleash the artist within
Fee info: www.artsbr.org



Baton Rouge's foremost
Art & Music Festival
April 30 and May 1, 2011 - FREE



Funding 14 area arts
organizations - To
contribute: www.brcfa.org

**Debbie Allen
Dance Productions**

Engaging hundreds of
talented young dancers
Info: 344-8558



Year-round exhibitions
by area artists
427 Laurel Street
FREE to the public



The first Saturday of
each month downtown
at 5th St. & Main St.
FREE to the public



Sunday concerts
every Spring & Fall
downtown
FREE to the public



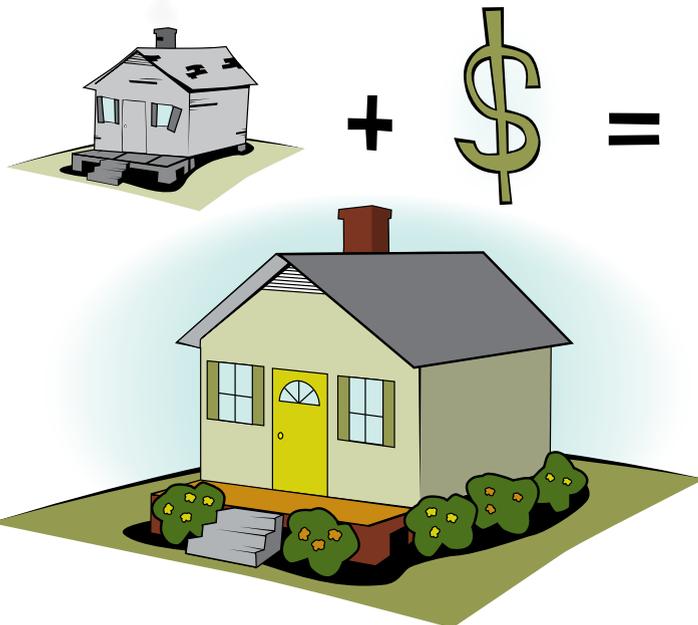
225.344.8558
427 Laurel Street,
Baton Rouge, LA 70801

Go to www.artsbr.org for more information on all
Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge
events and programs

Old South Baton Rouge and Scotlandville Homeowner Occupied

Home Fix-Up

Program



What is it?

The Center for Planning Excellence is offering a Homeowner Occupied Rehabilitation Grant Program to assist in the repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of homes to bring them up to the property standards defined by HOME, up to physical codes, and to improve efficiency and handicapped accessibility. The program offers funding between **\$5,000** and **\$25,000** per home.

Requirements

Eligible low-income homeowners must reside in single-family homes located in the communities of Scotlandville and Old South Baton Rouge (see program requirements and map in the application).

Applications due by July 26th!

Download an application at www.cpex.org
or call 225-267-6300 for more information.

Brought to you by





TIM MUELLER

Amy Strother, pioneer

For Amy Strother, it wasn't easy being green. She faced unexpected challenges in an eco-friendly home renovation and in making her health care company green. "I found it ridiculous that I had to call people in Portland; there was no one local."

From that frustration, Noelie Harmon and the Green Building Shop were born. "When you walk in, we're a little bit vintage, a little bit eco-friendly, a little bit local. I don't sell anything you can get anywhere else in Baton Rouge or even statewide."

Strother's stores offer an array of sustainable products. The boutique Noelie Harmon sources products that are eco-friendly, socially responsible, meet fair trade rules and are made by artisans. The Green

Building Shop's products include bamboo flooring and paint free of toxic chemicals.

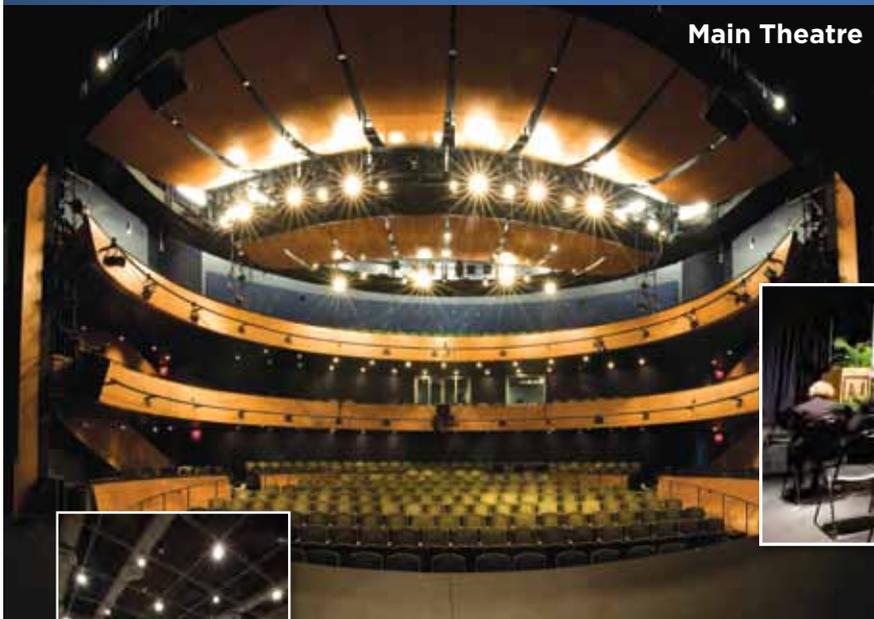
After watching demand drop with the economy, the businesses have started to grow once again, making Strother hopeful for the future.

"Green building gets a bad rap in the industry because everyone thinks there's a premium, from contractors to architects to products to consumers. If people realized it's often less expensive, you'd see higher demand."

—ELLEN FARGASON

Rent the Manship Theatre

It's been called the "jewel box" inside the Shaw Center for the Arts. Any event you dream up will sparkle at the Manship Theatre. Or in one of the three adjacent spaces, which are flexible enough to be made up as you choose. Whatever you imagine, we can do.



Main Theatre



Hartley-Vey Workshop



Hartley-Vey Studio



Upstairs at the Manship



THE MANSHIP THEATRE
AT THE SHAW CENTER FOR THE ARTS

100 LAFAYETTE STREET • BATON ROUGE, LA 70801

(225) 389-7227 • MANSHIPTHEATRE.ORG

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Baton Rouge, LA
Permit 485

How can we link hands where blight once claimed victory?



For too many years, Baton Rouge has watched other places rise and flourish, thanks to New Markets Tax Credits. Now it's our turn. Along with local government, the Foundation created the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, which obtained \$60 million of the tax credits last year to bring life back to distressed neighborhoods. The credits bridge financial gaps to help developers create new housing, retail, office and public works projects, such as a YMCA in North Baton Rouge. The Authority is underpinning its investments with master plans that are being created with ideas from the very people who call those neighborhoods home.

Join our members.
They make it happen.
at braf.org.

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*