

CURRENTS

first quarter twenty-fifteen . baton rouge area foundation

Autism Rx

*Foundation project will recommend
model for care of children, adults
with growing malady*



Baton Rouge Lakes Master Plan meeting,
December 4, 2014—story on page 16

Photo by Tim Mueller





YOU vs. A 2-TON CAR. YOU LOSE.

Better—and safer—running and biking paths are being drawn up in a master plan for the City Park and University lakes. So are wetlands to restore the lakes and parks to make them an even better place.

The master plan and our other civic projects are underwritten by fund donors and members, so that we all may live a better life.

Memberships start at \$100. Become a member at BRAf.org/membership or by calling John Carpenter at 225-387-6126.

**More information about the
Baton Rouge Lakes project may be
found at BatonRougeLakes.org**

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*



VOLUME NINE | NUMBER ONE

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*Baton Rouge
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402 N. Fourth Street | Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802 | braf.org

LETTER



shimmering lakes in the heart of Baton Rouge. The men had no jobs, but they had strong backs and a willingness to work, so the federal government hired them for this task as part of the larger plan of driving American progress and lifting the country out of its deepest depression ever. The men got more than a paycheck. They got the lasting satisfaction of seeing a true landmark that they had made for this city, a place for canoeing, fishing and picnicking for many generations to come.

In December, nearly 200 people worked together for the future of those lakes, which is now threatened. Instead of sweating over shovels, though, they peered over maps. They arranged tiny blocks representing dredged materials and moved markers to signify new improvements on the shoreline. Imaginary wetlands were laid out in plans for filtering excess nutrients that now wash into the lakes and pollute them. Pedestrian bridges, boardwalks, boathouses and even beer gardens on manmade

Back in the 1920s and 1930s, nearly 1,000 men worked together with shovels, wheelbarrows and draglines to transform a swamp into

islands took shape on the maps of the lakes.

These citizen planners were building on the legacy of those 1,000 men who first muscled our beloved lakes from out of the mud in the name of progress about a century ago. They were creating a master plan for the future of our lakes, and they were showing that Baton Rouge has progressed in the last 15 years, too, because of partnerships between residents, the government, businesses, and philanthropists.

With projects like the master plan, we are reminded that collaborations allow us to do what cannot be done alone.

That was the same shared sentiment at a topping off ceremony for the new IBM building and its companion residential complex. This project, which brings 800 high-tech jobs to downtown and returns residential living to the riverfront, was possible only because state and local government worked together to draw IBM to Baton Rouge, in collaboration with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and Commercial Properties Realty Trust, which develops real estate for the Foundation. Shared endeavor will deliver a downtown building for IBM at a low cost and on time.

Within these pages, you'll read about other projects coming about through cooperation, along with the grants from our fund donors that provide nonprofits with the means to make life

With projects like the master plan, we are reminded that collaborations allow us to do what cannot be done alone.

better for our neighbors who need help the most.

Our members provide funding to underwrite projects like The Water Campus, and our fund donors—philanthropists—contribute millions each year through the Foundation to those nonprofits doing the hard day-to-day work of making Baton Rouge, and the world around it, a better place to live.

It's a labor that requires many hands and no small amount of patience, like transforming a swamp into shining grace, one shovelful at a time. But we know that this is how landmarks get built, legacies are created, and good works are passed along from one generation to the next.

•••

At the Foundation, we remember the disagreements over the fate of downtown Baton Rouge. Some ridiculed the effort to resuscitate the heart of the city. Others were not so ready give up.

We believed that Baton Rouge needed a vibrant downtown, a place that would welcome people from all across the parish and encourage them to get to know their neighbors, especially those who were not like them. To make our case, the Foundation underwrote Plan Baton Rouge, a roadmap to revival.

The outcome?

More than \$2 billion has been invested in downtown since then.

Now, the same debate is playing out in Mid City, where Government Street—grown a little dog-eared over the years—is the dividing line between diverse economic communities. We stand squarely on the side of reviving the area because we believe that vibrant neighborhoods are the product of people from different income levels living next door to each other, neighbors ennobling one another.

In this issue, we offer two stories about Mid City. Both show the same pattern we saw downtown. And, as experience teaches, rebirth comes down to collaboration: people buying and fixing up houses, business pioneers demonstrating there's demand for what they're selling, maverick developers remaking entire blocks, and local government improving the infrastructure—all because they know that great neighborhoods can thrive once again.

Sincerely,



C. Kris Kirkpatrick
Chair

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

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The Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAf) 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 education reform. Two, BRAf invests in and manages pivotal projects to improve the region.

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.

ABOUT US

THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION ACCOMPLISHES ITS MISSION IN TWO WAYS :

1 We connect fund donors—philanthropists—to worthwhile projects and nonprofits. Over 50 years, our donors have granted more than \$325 million across South Louisiana and the world.

The Foundation offers several types of charitable funds, including donor-advised funds, which can be opened for a minimum of \$10,000. Contributions to the fund are tax deductible. Donors use these funds to make grants to nonprofits. The Foundation manages the money in the charitable accounts, offers local knowledge about issues and nonprofits, and manages all the necessary paperwork.

2 We conduct civic leadership initiatives that change the direction of the Baton Rouge region and South Louisiana. Members support these projects, which solve fundamental problems. Tax-deductible memberships range from \$100 to \$10,000.

KEY CIVIC LEADERSHIP PROJECTS

NEW SCHOOLS FOR BATON ROUGE : Created and underwrote startup costs for a nonprofit that will support turnaround schools in Baton Rouge by recruiting the best charters, teachers and staff.

THE WATER INSTITUTE OF THE GULF : Launched the scientific institute to offer solutions for coexisting with rising seas and vanishing coastlines. The independent nonprofit has hired several top scientists and expects to grow in coming years as a worldwide resource.

ARDENDALE : Supported the EBR Redevelopment Authority in advancing a 200-acre community off Florida Boulevard that will include housing, retail and parks—and be anchored by a career high school operated by EBR schools and an automotive training academy operated by Louisiana Community and Technical College System.

BATON ROUGE LAKES : The Foundation has hired landscape architects to create a master plan for the University and City Park lakes. The goal is to restore the declining lakes and make them a better place for all people. Drawn up with public input, the plan will be completed this summer.

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*

MISSION :

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation unites human and financial resources to enhance the quality of life in South Louisiana.

To achieve our mission, we:

- serve our donors to build the assets that drive initiatives and solutions;
- engage community leaders to develop appropriate responses to emerging opportunities and challenges;
- partner with entities from our service area, as well as with other community foundations, in order to leverage our collective resources and create the capacity to be a stimulus of positive regional change; and,
- evaluate our work and share the results with our stakeholders.

POPULATION OF PRIMARY SERVICE AREA :

2+ million

POPULATION OF SECONDARY SERVICE AREA :

7+ billion (world)

The Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge and the River City Jazz Coalition present

RIVER CITY JAZZMASTERS

UNFORGETTABLE EVENINGS OF MUSIC AT THE MANSHIP THEATRE

ALL SHOWS
7:30
START TIME

MAR 11 Irvin Mayfield & NOJO
GRAMMY & BILLBOARD AWARD WINNER

ARTIST SPONSOR



APR 29 Marcus Roberts Trio
THE GENIUS OF THE MODERN PIANO

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW! 225.334.0334 | manshiptheatre.org
SUPPORT A CREATIVE BATON ROUGE. BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ARTS COUNCIL AT ARTSBR.ORG
This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. **Art Works.**

The River City Jazz Masters Series is sponsored in part by the River City Jazz Coalition whose members include Pris & Eddie Ashworth, Verge & Cheri Ausberry, C.J. Blache & Sherri McConnell, Maria & Brian Despinasse II, Leo & Gwendolyn Hamilton, Tim & Stacia Hardy, Darrell Hunt, Dr. Antoine Keller & Allison Chauvin, Cornelius & Karen Lewis, Drs. Jamel & Nicolette Martin, Ronald & Belinda Mason, The John & Virginia Noland Fund, Albert & Roberta Sam, & The Josef Sternberg Memorial Fund.



arts council
GREATER BATON ROUGE



LEAD IN



IBM BUILDING READY THIS YEAR Commercial Properties Realty Trust, which develops and manages real estate for the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, topped off the IBM building in downtown in December. The building and the companion 525 Lafayette will be completed this summer. IBM will relocate up to 800 workers into the riverside complex, while 525 Lafayette will have 85 apartments overlooking the Mississippi River.

The project is a collaboration of CPRT and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, as well as state and local government. The IBM project has a goal of expanding the technology job base in the region. CPRT is investing in the apartments to continue the revival of downtown and to spark redevelopment along the riverfront.

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Mike Bruce and John Noland sign a construction beam at the topping off ceremony.

THE ST. GEORGE REPORTS

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

Baton Rouge Area Chamber

FOUNDATION, BRAC REPORT ON ST. GEORGE

A proposed city of St. George would quickly run into a cash shortfall, likely causing an increase in property taxes for running the city and to build new school facilities, concludes a report by Faulk & Winkler for the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber.

The Foundation and BRAC asked accountants to review St. George's proposed budget, a means to inform residents ahead of a vote for incorporation if the effort is not derailed in court or by having too few signatures on a petition.

Faulk & Winkler concluded that at least 20.5 mills in additional property taxes would be needed, with about half to cover a \$12.6 million annual operating deficit and the rest to build new schools. On a \$350,000 house after a homestead exemption, 20.5 mills equals \$720 in property taxes each year.

Why more taxes? For one, annexations of large commercial enterprises—the Mall of Louisiana, for instance, have reduced the amount available to operate St. George. Two, St. George would have to share in legacy costs of EBR. Three, a St. George school district would have to spend \$141 million right away on facilities, including schools.

For a complete report, visit BRAf.org and click to news.

GET WELL SOONER Pennington Biomedical Research Center and ProteoVec of Baton Rouge have joined three others to form the Southern Biologics Network. Together, the five want to provide research and protein production that will help biopharmaceutical companies deliver drugs faster and cheaper to patients.

Each brings its specialty to the network. Pennington offers research, while ProteoVec has proprietary technology for manufacturing proteins. Other members of the network are the Southern Research Institute, which has created seven FDA-approved cancer drugs; The Center for Structural Biology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, which provides structural information on protein and protein/drug complexes; and Soluble Therapeutics Inc., expert at turning around formulations that maximize the solubility and stability for protein-based therapeutics.

Biologics are genetically engineered proteins that are often used in vaccines and drugs. Seven of the eight best-selling drugs were biologics in 2013.

MURDERS ARE DOWN Baton Rouge

CityStats, our annual review of the city, produces data on crime in East Baton Rouge Parish. Later on this year, CityStats will include a bit of good news: The number of murders were down in EBR in 2014, the second annual decline and a sharp decrease from two years earlier. The murder rate, though, remains higher in EBR than in cities of comparable size.

Sixty-three homicides occurred in EBR in 2014, down from 65 in 2013. For many years, there were more than 80 homicides per year.

EBR public security officials created a project to target loosely organized gangs in high-crime neighborhoods, which is being credited for reducing homicides.

BR JUMPS IN ECONOMIC PROSPERITY The Baton Rouge MSA was ranked No. 21 on The Milken Institute's Best-Performing Cities in 2014. Job and wage growth are among factors the Institute used to move Baton Rouge up 66 spots in its rankings. Writes Milken: "Baton Rouge, La., climbed 55 spots to 21st, the biggest jump of any city in the Top 25. It ranked 11th for short-term job growth and improved its performance in measures for job and wage growth. The metro's small high-tech sector posted a large percentage increase in output, placing it sixth in that category, but employment gains were driven primarily by other sectors, especially construction and health care."

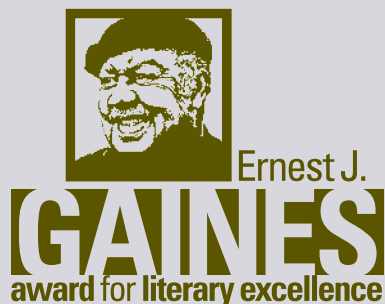
HOT CAUSES

The *Chronicle of Philanthropy* surveyed the field nationally to pick five hot causes for donors this year.

1. The battle for racial justice
2. Support for minority women and girls
3. Protection of gay rights in conservative states
4. More impact investing, or investing for both social change and financial return
5. Strengthening low-income families



MITCHELL S. JACKSON IS THE 2014 WINNER OF THE ERNEST J. GAINES AWARD FOR LITERARY EXCELLENCE. His debut novel *The Residue Years* received international praise from publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Times of London* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*. The novel was a finalist for the Center For Fiction's Flaherty-Dunnán First Novel prize, the PEN / Hemingway award for first fiction, and the Hurston / Wright Legacy Award. Jackson's honors also include fellowships from the Lannan Foundation, the Center For Fiction, and the Urban Artist Initiative. His writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *The New York Times Book Review*, *Salon* and *Tin House*. He is on the writing faculty of New York University and Columbia University.



MITCHELL S. JACKSON WINS 8TH GAINES BOOK AWARD If past is prologue, then Mitchell S. Jackson may become a literary star. He's the latest winner of the Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence, awarded each year by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to a rising African-American writer.

Previous winners have continued their successes. Dinaw Mengestu, for example, won a MacArthur Genius Award in 2012, and his latest book, *All Our Names*, made the *New York Times* top 100 list last year.

Jackson has won the 2014 Gaines Award for *The Residue Years*. The novel is a semi-autobiographical telling of growing up in a Portland, Ore., neighborhood ravaged by violence and drug use. It follows a mother and former addict trying to steer her three sons away from drugs.

Jackson accepted the Gaines Award in Baton Rouge in January, reading from his work at the Manship Theatre and teaching at local schools.

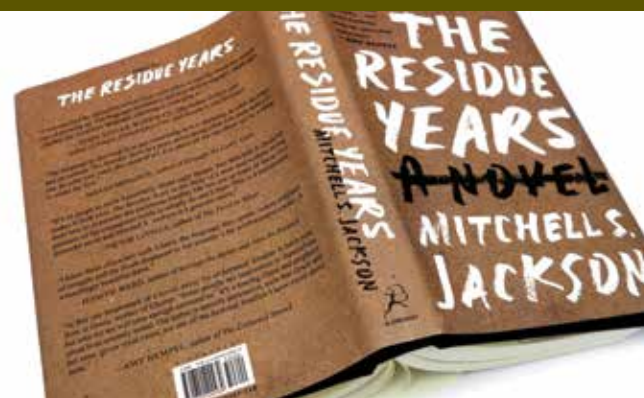
He earned a master's degree in writing from Portland State University and a master's in creative writing from New York University, where he now teaches. His previous honors include the Hurston/Wright Foundation award for college writers. In 2012, he published the e-book *Oversoul: Stories and Essays*.

Now in its eighth year, the Gaines Award is a nationally acclaimed, \$10,000 annual prize created by Foundation donors to honor outstanding work from rising African-American fiction writers while honoring Louisiana native Ernest Gaines' extraordinary contribution to the literary world.

The national panel of judges for the 2014 Gaines Award are: Thomas Beller, award-winning author and journalist; Anthony Grooms, a critically acclaimed author and creative writing professor at Kennesaw State University; renowned author Elizabeth Nunez, professor of English at Hunter College-City University of New York; Francine Prose, author of more than 20 books, including *Blue Angel*, a nominee for the 2000 National Book Award; and Patricia Towers, former features editor for *O, The Oprah Magazine* and a founding editor of *Vanity Fair* magazine.

AN EXCERPT FROM *THE RESIDUE YEARS*

“Mom, here’s the truth of the truth of the truth: There ain’t an expectation these walls can’t change, not a one, though truthbetold a nigger should be steeled against this grief, should, since I’m seasons and seasons into my set, have spent days and days and days gazing through cyclone fence, spent months of wake-ups and lights-out and chow time and count time and (a time or two) hole-time. Everywhere inside this place is flaking fish-colored paint, which is proof the white boys in charge would give not a shit if we died from breathing lead. And believe me, sometimes it’s as if I could die here, fall comatose on a mattress so thin, it takes prayer for a wink of sleep. Weeks and weeks go by with no more than the Wednesday transport to get me through, the tiny comfort of seeing dudes more inconsolable than me slug off a bus dressed in a dingy one-piece and the orange plastic slippers that chafe your feet to bleeding.



It’s no wonder why years later this year could mean more yearning—at least for me.

But hey, Mom, there’s a chance you’ll find love—the suckers might be right. And hey, let’s take heart, you’re sober, off-paper, working-swelled with what gets you, me, a human through.”

CIVIC LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES



BECAUSE OF OUR MEMBERS

Members of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation provide funding for civic leadership initiatives. Current projects include a master plan for the University and City Park lakes, improvement of autism services in the region, a master plan for the Health District, pursuing high-speed rail between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, and diverting the mentally ill and drug addicted to treatment instead of jail. Join the Foundation at BRAf.org/membership.

ARDENDALE BEGINS CONSTRUCTION Thirty acres have been cleared on North Lobdell to start building a community like no other in Louisiana. On 200 acres surrounding North Ardenwood and North Lobdell, Ardendale will be anchored by several educational facilities, and mixed in with them will be places to live and shop.

Ardendale began as the Smiley Heights project at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation soon after Hurricane Katrina. With the Foundation's support, the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority is now developing the project. First up is a \$25 million automotive training center that will be operated by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System. East Baton Rouge public schools will build a \$17 million career high school at the site. The automotive training center and career high school should open in fall 2016. Negotiations to secure other education facilities are underway.

Ardendale's plan includes at least 175 housing units and 45,000 square feet of offices and shops.



NEW ROADS, PATHS RECOMMENDED FOR ESSEN, PERKINS In

December, urban planners showed new roads and other infrastructure improvements for the Health District, a traffic-choked area around Bluebonnet Boulevard and Perkins Road where medical assets are clustered. Nearly 200 people at a public meeting welcomed the recommendations and shared their own ideas to sharpen what was presented.

An implementation group for East Baton Rouge’s comprehensive plan—FuturEBR—asked the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to oversee a more detailed blueprint for the medical corridor. We hired Perkins + Will to do the work. Improving mobility was the original intent. But talks with health care providers within the area inspired consultants to start building a case for a Health District, a destination of its own for creating a healthy community and serving the world with research and clinical trials.

In a working draft, Perkins + Will recommends building Midway, a road between Bluebonnet and Essen for connecting Perkins and I-10. The city-parish has already reserved a right of way for the connector. Other suggestions: Extending Dijon Road, which is next to Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, to the new Midway; connecting Summa and Picardy to Bluebonnet; and the building a frontage road along I-10, linking Kenilworth Parkway to Dijon. As well, they suggest looking at underpasses at the railroad tracks on Dijon, Brittany and Midway; reducing the size of some blocks to make them pedestrian friendly; and incorporating a trail network within the area. Their recommendations can be read at BRHealthDistrict.org/reports.

Perkins+Will will deliver the master plan this year.



WETLANDS KEY IN LAKES MASTER PLAN Landscape architects were drawing up working designs for a master plan for the University and City Park lakes when this magazine was going to press. They were finishing the designs ahead of a meeting in late January, when residents were expected to give feedback on the work so far.

Wetlands are a vital part of the plan. Building wetlands with dredged materials in some areas—such as near City Park Golf Course—would naturally clean the nutrients from runoff, improving the water quality. Also in the working designs were gateways on Dalrymple Drive to announce an entrance to Louisiana State University.

16

We've posted the initial designs at BatonRougeLakes.org and TheLakes.MindMixer.com. The planners will return in spring to show a draft of the plan.

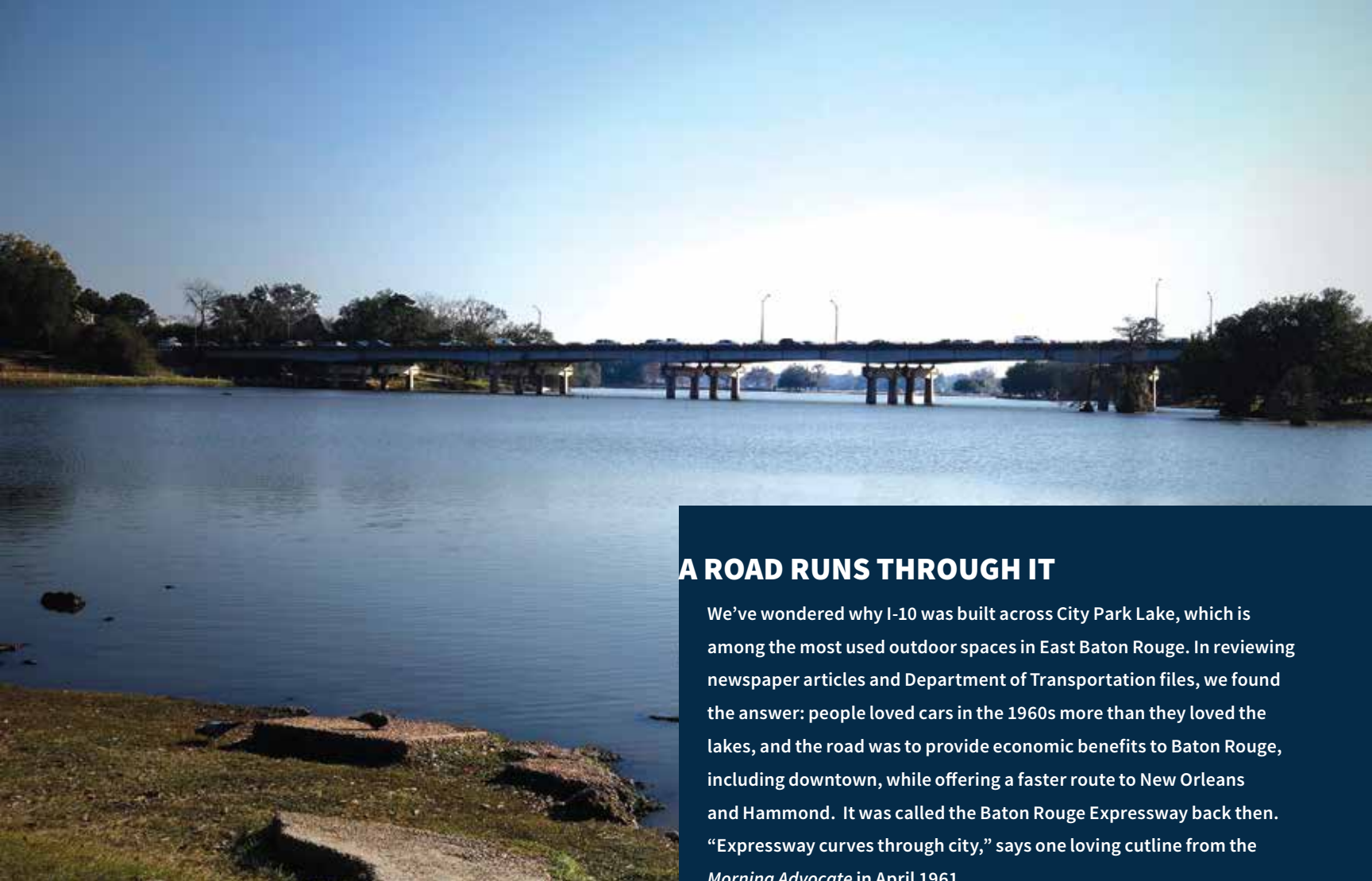
The Foundation began a master plan after consulting LSU and city-parish government, which own the lakes, and BREC, which cares for the lakes and operates parks around them. SWA Group, in asso-

ciation with Jeffrey Carbo Landscape Architects, was hired last summer to do the work, which is a first step toward reversing the decline of the lakes.

The problem: University and City Park lakes—and three of the four smaller lakes that surround them—are too shallow, and are silting over time. In 2008, the Army Corps of Engineers issued a draft report that recommended dredging to deepen the lakes and installing pipes to flush sediment to keep them rich with oxygen for more than five decades.

To advance the Corps' draft, the Foundation raised nearly \$750,000 for the master plan and related studies.

The work is being conducted in consultation with donors to the project and lake area residents, users of the lakes, LSU, the city-parish, BREC, Louisiana Division of Administration, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.



A ROAD RUNS THROUGH IT

We've wondered why I-10 was built across City Park Lake, which is among the most used outdoor spaces in East Baton Rouge. In reviewing newspaper articles and Department of Transportation files, we found the answer: people loved cars in the 1960s more than they loved the lakes, and the road was to provide economic benefits to Baton Rouge, including downtown, while offering a faster route to New Orleans and Hammond. It was called the Baton Rouge Expressway back then. "Expressway curves through city," says one loving cutline from the *Morning Advocate* in April 1961.

I-10, though, did something not expected back then. It opened untouched areas to development, transferring the vitality from downtown and the city to suburbs that now reach about halfway to Hammond.



CAA REDUCES EUTHANASIA RATE The euthanasia rate at the East Baton Rouge animal shelter has dropped below 40%, thanks to the Companion Animal Alliance. CAA took over the shelter in 2011, when the euthanasia rate was more than 80% and thousands of dogs and cats were being killed annually.

CAA was created by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation with animal welfare groups.

To learn more about CAA and to donate, visit CAABR.org.

NON-RELIGIOUS WOMEN ARE MORE GENEROUS People who are more religious *do* tend to give more. But a study from the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy discovered a surprise: Young, single women without a religious affiliation are more generous than all others. Together, these women give two-and-a-half times more money than middle age and older single women who are religiously unaffiliated, and twice as much as young, single women who are religiously affiliated but attend services infrequently. They also give twice as much as their unaffiliated male peers.

“Many in the nonprofit sector have expressed concern that recent declines in Americans’ religious affiliation and attendance might foreshadow a decline in charitable giving to both religiously and non-religiously identified nonprofits. This study demonstrates that donors’ religiosity is not a one-size-fits-all predictor of whether, how much and for what they give,” said Mark Ottoni-Wilhelm, lead researcher for the study.

GOOGLE FOR GOOD A gift from Google coupled with online fundraising on Indiegogo let a nonprofit build rolling shower stalls to serve the homeless in San Francisco.

Lava Mae, the nonprofit, converted a decommissioned city bus into two shower stalls, each with its own entrance so the homeless could shower in a private and secure space. The bus expects to provide 12,000 showers this year; a second mobile shower will begin rolling in March.

Google donated \$100,000 to the project, and the nonprofit raised \$26,000 more on Indiegogo.

VERBATIM

“Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone else planted a tree long ago.”

– Warren Buffett

The Foundation’s fund donors make more than 3,000 grants each year. We account for them in this section, and all of them are listed in the annual review that is inside a future issue of this magazine.

In the fourth quarter of 2014, grants from the Foundation and fund donors totaled \$7.7 million. You can learn more about opening a charitable fund—an investment account for doing good—by calling John Carpenter, director of donor services, at (225) 387-6126.

Academic Distinction Fund \$55,930
 Academy of the Sacred Heart New Orleans Foundation Inc. \$2,000
 Adult Literacy Advocates of Greater Baton Rouge \$5,000
 Agenda for Children - New Orleans \$500
 Alley Theatre \$1,000
 Alliance Francaise de la Nouvelle Orleans \$2,500
 ALS Association Louisiana-Mississippi Chapter \$1,100
 Alzheimer’s Association of Louisiana \$200
 Alzheimer’s Services of the Capital Area \$6,500
 American Cancer Society Inc. \$33,867
 American Forest Foundation \$100
 American Foundation for the Blind \$100
 American Heart Association \$500
 American Heart Association Greater Southeast Affiliate \$35,392
 AMIkids \$300
 Annunciation Orthodox School \$3,000
 Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$26,500
 Arts Council of New Orleans \$800
 Ascension Parish Sheriff’s Office \$981
 Atlantic Theater Company \$28,150
 Autism Speaks Inc. \$1,000
 Backstreet Cultural Museum \$1,000
 Baddour Memorial Center Inc. \$1,000
 Baton Rouge Area Alcohol and Drug Center Inc. \$1,000
 Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre Inc. \$10,300
 Baton Rouge Bar Foundation \$1,500
 Baton Rouge Basketball and Volleyball Association \$3,000
 Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center \$3,855
 Baton Rouge Gallery Inc. \$2,500
 Baton Rouge Green Association Inc. \$581
 Baton Rouge High School Foundation \$15,943
 Baton Rouge Opera Guild Inc. \$3,884
 Baton Rouge Regional Eye Bank Inc. \$10,100
 Baton Rouge Speech and Hearing Foundation Inc. (The Emerge Center) \$22,665
 Baton Rouge Sponsoring Committee \$5,000
 Baton Rouge Youth Coalition \$7,500
 Be the Change Inc. \$25,000
 Beyond Batten Disease Foundation \$1,000
 Bible Church of Little Rock \$100,000
 Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Louisiana Inc. \$5,000
 Big Buddy Program \$2,000
 Bishop Ott Works of Mercy Trust/Cath Diocese \$200
 Boy Scouts of America Istrouma Area Council \$1,000

Boy Scouts of America Istrouma Area Council \$1,000
 Boy Scouts of America Istrouma Area Council \$1,000
 Boys & Girls Club of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$1,500
 Boys & Girls Club of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$5,000
 Boys & Girls Club of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$250
 Boys Hope Girls Hope of Baton Rouge \$5,000
 Boys Hope Girls Hope of Baton Rouge \$500
 BREADA (Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance) \$8,850
 Breakthrough New Orleans \$1,000
 BREC Foundation \$500
 Broadmoor United Methodist Church \$30,000
 Broadway Cares-Equity Fights AIDS Inc. \$5,000
 Brothers of the Sacred Heart Foundation of the
 New Orleans Province \$500
 Building Excellent Schools Inc. \$10,000
 Cancer Services of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$28,700
 Capital Area Animal Welfare Society \$328
 Capital Area Family Violence Intervention Center \$300
 Capital Area United Way \$189,950
 Cards 4 Kids Fund \$400
 Catholic Archdiocese of New Orleans \$5,000
 Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans \$35,000
 Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge Inc. \$20,000
 Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge/Bishop's Annual Appeal \$4,400
 Catholic High School Foundation \$4,874
 Catholic of Pointe Coupee \$750
 Catholic Relief Services Inc. \$750
 Celebrating Community Foundation \$5,000
 Center for Disaster Philanthropy \$50,000
 Center for Orangutan and Chimpanzee Conservation Inc. \$500
 Center for Planning Excellence Inc. \$53,000
 Center for Strategic and International Studies Inc. \$65,000
 Centre for the Arts \$1,000
 Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc./McMains
 Childrens Development Center \$21,000
 Change Lives Now \$3,000
 Child Advocacy Services \$500
 Chinese Christian Church of Baton Rouge \$306
 Christ the King Parish and Catholic Center at LSU \$4,385
 Church of the Good Shepherd \$6,000
 Cinderella Project of Baton Rouge \$10,000
 City of Baton Rouge \$9,000
 City Year Baton Rouge \$10,000
 CLIMB Community Development Corporation \$133,333
 Community Fund for the Arts \$250
 Community Initiatives Foundation \$2,000
 Companion Animal Alliance \$65,555
 Congregation B'nai Israel of Baton Rouge \$13,980
 Covenant House New Orleans \$600
 Creative Alliance New Orleans \$5,000
 Crippled Children Foundation \$500
 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation \$250
 Dance Theatre of Harlem Inc. \$8,500
 David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies \$10,000
 Delta Delta Delta Foundation \$1,000
 Department of Special Education Diocese of Baton Rouge \$2,500
 Doctors Without Borders USA \$3,100
 Domestic Abuse Project \$1,000
 Douglas Manship Sr. Theatre Complex Holding Inc. \$54,759
 Ducks Unlimited Inc. \$3,000
 Duke University \$100
 Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge \$646
 East Baton Rouge Master Gardener Association \$500
 East Baton Rouge Parish Council on Aging Inc. \$200

East Baton Rouge Parish Library \$2,491
 Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion \$6,000
 Episcopal High School of Baton Rouge \$529,123
 Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre \$1,200
 Ernest J. Gaines Literature Award \$30,000
 Family Life \$500
 Father Flanagan's Boys Home \$200
 First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge \$2,737
 First United Methodist Church \$16,500
 Foundation for a Better Louisiana \$6,500
 Foundation for East Baton Rouge School System \$3,000
 Foundation for Excellence in Louisiana Public Broadcasting \$2,000
 Foundation for Historical Louisiana Inc. \$4,226
 Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady \$200

HOW WE ISSUE GRANTS

Philanthropists establish charitable funds at the Foundation and deposit money in those accounts.

The Foundation manages the money in these donor-advised funds. Donors recommend grants to nonprofits; the Foundation board reviews and approves the grants. Our staff manages all the paperwork, including issuing checks and sending acknowledgement letters.

Contributions to donor-advised funds are tax-deductible.

French Camp Academy \$1,000
 Friends of Hilltop Arboretum Inc. \$3,250
 Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting Inc. \$3,355
 Friends of Magnolia Mound \$1,500
 Friends of the Louisiana State Archives \$200
 Gardere Community Christian School \$250
 General Health Foundation \$4,000
 George W. Bush Foundation \$2,000
 Girl Scouts Louisiana East \$1,000
 Girl Scouts-Audubon Council Inc. \$150
 Girls on the Run of Greater Baton Rouge \$3,500
 Good Fellows - Good Samaritans Inc. \$200
 Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank Inc. \$116,450
 Greater Baton Rouge Hope Academy \$10,600
 Greater Educational Opportunities Foundation \$5,000
 Gresham, Christopher \$10,000
 Groton School \$525,000
 Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge \$1,000
 Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society \$100
 Hathaway Brown School \$1,000
 Heifer Project International \$500
 Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Foundation \$200

Holy Family Catholic Church \$12,352
Homes for Our Troops \$500
Hope for Positive Youth Fund \$1,000
HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge \$5,800
Hospice Foundation of Greater Baton Rouge \$42,901
Houston Chamber Choir \$1,500
Houston Symphony Society \$1,000
Iberville Foundation for Academic Excellence \$6,211
Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church \$500
International Hospitality Foundation LSU \$2,093
International Rescue Committee \$1,250
International Rett Syndrome Foundation \$150
Internews Network \$85,000
Isidore Newman School \$1,004,000
Itinerant Theatre, Inc. \$1,800
James Dick Foundation for the Performing Arts \$1,000
Jazz Foundation of America \$500
Jefferson Performing Arts Society \$1,000
Jewish Family Service of New Orleans \$500
Jewish Federation of Greater Baton Rouge \$2,100
Junior Achievement of Greater Baton Rouge \$2,080
Junior Achievement of Greater Baton Rouge \$434
Junior League of Baton Rouge Inc. \$1,200
Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation/Baton Rouge Branch \$250
Kappa Alpha Order Educational Foundation \$100
Karnival Krewe de Louisiane \$1,238
Kenyon College \$1,000
Knock Knock Children's Museum \$5,000
Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre \$1,000
Legatus \$1,240
Lighthouse for the Blind in New Orleans Inc. \$2,500
Louise S. McGehee School \$500
Louisiana Art and Science Museum Inc. \$26,635
Louisiana Bar Foundation \$2,500
Louisiana Cancer Research Consortium \$1,000
Louisiana Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross \$7,478
Louisiana Cultural Economy Foundation \$1,000
Louisiana Lemonade Day Fund \$2,500
Louisiana Pediatric Cardiology Foundation \$250
Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra \$10,000
Louisiana Public Health Institute \$167,552
Louisiana Resource Center for Educators \$100
Louisiana State University and A&M College \$2,000
Louisiana Symphony Association/Baton Rouge
Symphony Orchestra \$69,318
Louisiana Tech University \$1,000
Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation \$50,000
Louisiana United Methodist Children and Family Services Inc. \$100
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation \$200
louisianachildren.org \$9,000
Loyola Educational Corporation of Shreveport \$500
Loyola University \$750
LSU Alumni Association \$300
LSU at Alexandria Foundation Inc. \$1,000
LSU Foundation \$102,250
Maison des Ami of Louisiana Inc. \$10,000
Manners of the Heart Community Fund \$250
Mantle of Mary Inc. \$1,400
Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center \$107,600
Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center Foundation \$6,000
Marymount University \$250
Mercy Corps \$7,000
MetroMorphosis \$2,000
Metropolitan Crime Commission \$5,000

Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research \$1,000
Mid City Redevelopment Alliance Inc. \$1,000
Millennium Relief and Development Services Inc. \$1,000
Mission of Our Lady of Mercy \$500
Missionaries of Charity Inc. \$7,000
Muscular Dystrophy Association \$1,000
Myron and Roberta Falk Fund \$1,000
National Audubon Society Inc. \$1,000
National Center for Disaster Preparedness \$263,061
National World War II Museum Inc. \$1,000
New Orleans Bayou Steppers Social Aid and Pleasure Club \$20,000
New Orleans Mission Inc. \$15,000
New Orleans Musicians Assistance Foundation \$25,000
New Schools for Baton Rouge \$61,000
Oakland Public Education Fund \$1,200
Oasis for Youth \$100
O'Brien House Inc. \$5,200
Ochsner Clinic Foundation \$3,000
Of Moving Colors Productions \$2,000
Old State Capital Associates \$100
Old State Capitol Foundation Inc. \$150
Ollie Steele Burden Manor \$874
Opera Louisiane \$1,000
Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church \$3,250
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church \$38,041
Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church \$2,400
Our Lady of the Lake College \$2,500
Our Lady of the Lake Foundation \$19,700
Parkinson's Disease Foundation Inc. \$500
Particular Council of St. Vincent de Paul of Baton Rouge Louisiana \$9,200
Partners in Health \$1,000
Peggy Crosby Community Service Center \$300
Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation \$53,850
Phillips Exeter Academy \$2,000
Planned Parenthood of the Gulf Coast \$1,000
Pointe Coupee Historical Society Inc. \$500
Pointe Coupee Parish Police Jury \$250
Pointe Coupee Parish School Board \$750
Pointe Coupee Private School System Inc. \$750
President & Fellows of Harvard College \$1,000
Press Street \$21,000
Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana Inc. \$1,000
Pro Bono Publico Foundation \$1,500
Project HOPE \$1,250
Project Purr BR \$500
Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana Inc. \$1,100
Rebuilding Together Baton Rouge \$8,500
Red Shoes Inc. \$2,500
Redemptorist High School \$3,172
Research Park Corporation \$500
Rice University \$2,000
Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge \$112,039
Roots of Music Inc. \$25,000
Rotary Club of Baton Rouge Inc. Foundation \$3,150
Sacred Heart Catholic Church \$1,000
Saint Jean Vianney Catholic Church \$2,558
Saint Josephs Abbey \$1,000
Salvation Army Lake Charles \$10,000
SARC \$500
School Board of Miami-Dade County Florida \$10,000
Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee \$500
Shriners Hospital for Children \$200
Sigma Chi Foundation \$1,000
Single Stop USA Inc. \$450,000

Sister Dulce Foundation \$60,000
 Southeastern Louisiana University \$500
 Southern Rep \$100,000
 Southern University and A&M College \$500
 Southern University System Foundation Inc. \$2,000
 Southwest Louisiana Alliance Foundation \$5,000
 St. Albans Episcopal Chapel \$2,000
 St. Aloysius Church \$13,600
 St. Aloysius School \$7,700
 St. Andrew's - Sewanee School \$250
 St. Anne Catholic Church \$1,978
 St. Augustine Church \$948
 St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School \$1,500
 St. Elizabeth Foundation \$500
 St. Francis de Sales School \$2,000
 St. Gabriel Catholic Church \$18,000
 St. George Catholic School \$500
 St. George Episcopal School \$250
 St. Gerard Majella Church \$10,500
 St. James Episcopal Church \$13,000
 St. James Episcopal Day School \$2,500
 St. James Place of Baton Rouge Foundation Inc. \$300
 St. John's Jesuit High School \$1,500
 St. Joseph Cathedral \$1,800
 St. Joseph Seminary College \$500
 St. Joseph Spirituality Center \$500
 St. Joseph the Worker Church \$6,127
 St. Joseph's Academy \$9,500
 St. Joseph's Academy Foundation \$300
 St. Jude Catholic Church \$7,500
 St. Jude Children's Research Hospital \$3,250
 St. Luke's Episcopal Church \$15,100
 St. Mary's Episcopal Church \$200
 St. Mary's Episcopal Church and Cemetery Association Inc. \$100
 St. Patrick's Episcopal Church \$5,000
 St. Paul Adult Learning Center \$3,000
 St. Paul's Holy Trinity Episcopal Church \$16,030
 St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School \$14,609
 St. Thomas by the Sea Catholic Church \$750
 St. Thomas More Catholic Church \$300
 Stuart Hall School for Boys \$2,000
 Stuart Hall School Foundation \$100
 Swine Palace Productions Inc. \$3,000
 Teach for America - South Louisiana \$15,000
 The Arc Baton Rouge \$500
 The Ascension Fund \$11,632
 The Children's Health Fund \$187,500
 The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana \$500
 The Dunham School \$4,463
 The Foundation for Outdoor Advertising Research and Education \$5,000
 The Friends of the Rural Life Museum Inc. \$225
 The Jason Project \$90,000
 The JL Foundation \$2,500
 The Louisiana Architectural Foundation \$1,000
 The Louisiana International Film Festival \$10,000
 The Nature Conservancy Mississippi Chapter \$75,000
 The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana \$102,392
 The Norwegian Seamen's Church of New Orleans Inc. \$4,000
 The Original Richland Library Restoration Society Inc. \$856
 The Salvation Army \$16,150
 The Seeing Eye Inc. \$100
 THRIVE Baton Rouge \$1,000
 Tiger Athletic Foundation \$100,000
 Trinity Episcopal Church \$35,973
 Triumph Kitchen \$10,000
 Tulane Alumni Association \$1,173
 Tulane University \$10,850
 Tulane University Sponsored Projects Administration \$309,396
 Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge \$7,000
 University of Houston \$1,000
 University of Missouri \$6,000
 University of New Mexico Foundation Inc. \$200
 University of New Orleans Foundation \$1,000
 University of North Carolina Chapel Hill \$1,000
 University of Richmond \$250
 University of South Alabama \$146,452
 University of the South \$10,000
 University Presbyterian Church \$20,500
 University School \$1,000
 US Biennial Inc. \$16,747
 Vandebilt Catholic High School \$2,000
 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States \$200
 Vision 21 Foundation \$1,000
 Volunteer Health Corps of Baton Rouge \$20,000
 Volunteers In Public Schools Inc. \$1,650
 Water Institute of the Gulfs Delta \$411,250
 West Baton Rouge Foundation for Academic Excellence \$6,484
 Willwoods Community Management Inc. \$750
 Woman's Hospital Foundation \$83,992
 Woodlawn Foundation \$1,000
 Wounded Warrior Project Inc. \$325
 WRKF Public Radio Inc. \$12,005
 Xavier University \$1,000
 Yelp!BR \$2,500
 YMCA of the Capital Area \$1,000
 Young Life New Orleans \$25,000
 YWCA of Greater Baton Rouge \$1,000

PHILANTHROPY



ROOPY

Fertile minds

BP grant leads to curriculum about delicate and imperiled wetlands

By Sara Bongiorno | Photos by Tim Mueller

About 100,000 middle-school students across south Louisiana are the first in the nation to learn about the state’s unstable wetlands through a new interactive science curriculum.

Developed from a grant by BP’s fund at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, JASON Learning’s *Wetlands: Race to Restore* curriculum explores the region’s coastal swamps and marshes through hundreds of games, articles, activities, animated lessons, learning modules and short video lessons.

The curriculum draws on the the role of Louisiana’s \$1-billion-a-year seafood industry in examining topics such as diversity and ecosystems.

It highlights the work of scientists aboard the Gordon Gunter, a 224-foot National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration research ship, after the BP 2010 oil leak to show the recovery effort, unique and vulnerable natural resources, and how people live in coastal communities.

Wetlands, Race to Restore illuminates the challenges that wetland loss poses for all the inhabitants of Louisiana and the

effects of vanishing wetlands on the Louisiana region and the United States.

In multimedia “expeditions” led by real scientists in the classroom and online, the students are exploring basic processes by which rivers form wetlands and why Louisiana’s wetlands are slowly sinking. They are examining ways in which human activities affect Louisiana’s wetlands and the plants and animals living there, and seeing how researchers are working to protect and preserve wetland environments.

“Students want reality, so keeping the curriculum real is a big priority,” said Dr. Eleanor Smalley, executive vice president of Mystic, Conn.-based JASON Learning.

Online science curricula developed by JASON Learning, which is affiliated with the National Geographic Society, is used by 3 million kindergarten through 12th-grade students in the U.S.

Ocean scientist Robert Ballard, best known for discovering the wreck of the ocean liner Titanic,

founded the nonprofit JASON to inspire children to become scientists. Creating engaging materials for middle school

BP’s Fund for the Future of the Gulf, a charitable account managed by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, provided \$1.26 million to JASON Learning for promoting science in schools and for creating a curriculum that teaches about wetlands.



“We want children to understand that you can be from anywhere and become a scientist.”

—Eleanor Smalley, JASON Learning

students is a special focus of the organization.

Using real-world examples is essential to JASON Learning’s larger mission: motivating students to pursue further study and careers in science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM.

To that end, it introduces new chapters with interviews that trace the life and work of scientists so that students can better relate to them as role models.

“We want children to understand that you can be from anywhere and become a scientist,” Dr. Smalley said. “Helping students identify the paths that lead to work in science is a big part of what we do.”

Sparking an interest in science and technology is an important objective for educators in Louisiana, which trails most of the nation in science literacy. Jobs in STEM fields will drive the nation’s economy: science- and technology-related jobs grew at triple the pace of other types of work over the past decade, federal data show. Having a workforce highly skilled in STEM fields will determine which regions prosper, experts say.

Yet about 40% of Louisiana 8th-graders have never designed a science project, and the state ranks 46th in student achievement in math, according to the Cain Center at Louisiana State University.

The Foundation's funding of the JASON Project is part of the effort to fill that gap in skills and knowledge. It first partnered with JASON Learning to train science teachers across South Louisiana in using its award-winning K-12 curricula, which meet both state-specific and national academic standards.

Over the past two years, JASON Learning sponsored training workshops for South Louisiana science teachers in 35 parishes, including East and West Baton Rouge, Ascension, Livingston, Point Coupee and the Felicianas.

The Foundation subsequently asked JASON Learning to develop the new wetlands-specific curriculum, which will be used in classrooms nationwide.

The curriculum was rolled out across South Louisiana classrooms last fall. The 1,000 science teachers given early access to it have a combined reach of about 100,000 students in the region's private and parochial schools, Dr. Smalley said.

The program was released to teachers across the U.S. in late December.

Dr. Smalley said the curriculum is designed to play a special role in Louisiana that reaches far beyond the classroom. Sound decision-making about how to safeguard the state's eroding wetlands requires an understanding of issues such as water flow, energy and how to balance energy-extraction with environmental protection, she said.

"You can't have that discourse without a certain level of science literacy," Dr. Smalley said. "The rest of the country will be watching to see what Louisiana does to save its coast and protect its children's future." •

BP FUND FOR THE FUTURE OF THE GULF

About a month after the BP oil leak began in the Gulf of Mexico, President Obama ordered oil companies to shut down their deepwater drilling operations. This move jeopardized the livelihoods of rig workers across the entire Gulf, so BP decided to take care of displaced employees, not only their own but also those of every other company drilling in those waters, from Texas to Florida.

BP learned that the Baton Rouge Area Foundation had some experience in matters like these. The Foundation had administered employee assistance programs following hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Reassured by the Foundation's effectiveness after those storms, BP donated \$100 million to a charitable fund to assist rig workers who'd lost some or all of their incomes to the drilling moratorium. The Foundation promptly issued grants to make sure the workers could make ends meet.

There was a little good news. Rig workers were valuable to their employers, who couldn't let them drift to rigs operating far away. So drilling companies kept their workers on the clock, shifting them to other jobs until the moratorium was lifted.

After all the affected rig workers had received the support they needed, the Foundation still had \$82 million. Under an agreement with BP, the remaining money moved to the Fund for the Future of the Gulf. From that fund, grants were made across the Gulf Coast to nonprofits taking care of people affected by the leak, directly or indirectly.

The BP gift did help workers who needed the money the most. But a greater and lasting good has been achieved too.

Grants are listed on the next page. >>>>>

BP FUND GRANTS MILLIONS ACROSS GULF COAST

AMIkids Pensacola \$80,000

Matching grant for annual fund campaign

AMIkids Inc. Tampa \$250,000

Implementation of the Personal Growth Model; transitional funding allocated in the discretion of AMIkids National within the same geographic area

Audubon Nature Institute Coastal Wildlife Conservation Center \$2 million

Triage for marine mammal and sea turtle emergencies

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans \$15 million

Funding for social services, especially mental health facilities

Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida \$5 million

Provide services to those impacted by the oil spill along the north Florida Gulf coastal region

Columbia University—National Center for Disaster Preparedness \$1.2 million

A project to assess Gulf Coast children's needs as a result of the oil spill and prepare options for services

Columbia University—National Center for Disaster Preparedness \$2.1 million

Monitoring the well-being of children through a continuation of the Gulf Coast Population Impact Project, addressing children's and community needs with a youth empowerment effort

Community Foundation of South Alabama \$150,000

General funding to provide for continual of work

The JASON Project \$500,000

Raise student achievement and teacher preparation in STEM topics

Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center \$2 million

Mobile units for cancer screening of underserved populations across the Gulf Coast

Mississippi Oil Spill Case Management Collaborative \$1.9 million

Provide outreach, case management, referrals and related services to oil spill victims

The Nature Conservancy \$1.7 million

Support for a Decision Support Tool for coastal restoration developed to assess the success of a given restoration project

Single Stop USA \$5.6 million

Fund a social service resource center at Delgado Community College and expand it to 18 more sites across the Gulf Coast over five years

Tri-State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster \$410,000

Regional conferences of disaster relief organizations along the Gulf Coast

Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine \$3.7 million

A health program addressing community risk and resilience in environmental disasters

Children's Health Fund \$1.5 million

A new model for reducing access barriers to pediatric primary and subspecialty care; assess how well this model meets vulnerable communities' needs

The Health District \$750,000

Medical infrastructure and transportation planning for Baton Rouge health corridor, which serves as evacuation for patients across the coast during and after disasters

Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center \$35,000

Develop a strategic plan for statewide expansion

Louisiana Public Health Institute \$86,500

Matching funds to assess and align the behavioral health service system in South Louisiana

JASON Learning \$762,000

Develop new educational curriculum surrounding Louisiana's changing wetlands for use in schools

Louisiana Public Health Institute 1.6 million

Replicate the Healthy Communities/HealthyNOLA.org model, which uses community-level data and mapping to promote health equality, in at least three Gulf Coast locations

National Hurricane Museum and Science Center \$75,000

Developing curriculum to engage students around science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and to increase national weather and water literacy

Climb CDC \$1.02 million

Expanding a workforce training institute that teaches restaurant and construction industry skills to underserved populations and establish a women's business center for Mississippi Gulf Coast

The Nature Conservancy \$475,000

The Mississippi freshwater assessment is a data resource and analysis tool to facilitate the development of freshwater science and conservation objectives, and prioritize freshwater conservation statewide

The Nature Conservancy \$1,162,972

Freshwater Assessment with a focus on Flow Modeling, Groundwater Resource Assessment and Integration with the DST

University of South Alabama Coastal Resource and Resilience Center \$2.3 million

Training for community health workers along the northern Gulf Coast

The Water Institute of the Gulf \$10 million

To establish and operate a global science center for solutions to rising seas and drowning wetlands

The Water Campus \$16 million

A world-class collaborative research campus devoted to the study of coastal restoration and sustainability



**MEMBERS OF THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION
SUPPORT PROJECTS THAT MAKE LIVES A LITTLE BETTER EACH DAY.**

BE ONE WITH THEM AT BRAFO.ORG/MEMBERSHIP.

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*

COVER





Fifteen-year-old Grace Christian kisses her mother, Dr. Mary Elizabeth Christian, while she watches one of her favorite cartoons on a VHS tape.

Autism Rx

Foundation project will recommend model for care of children, adults with growing malady

By Sara Bongiorno | Photos by Tim Mueller

Dr. Mary Elizabeth Christian has traveled to New York and South Carolina to get care for her 15-year-old daughter with autism. Years ago, the local breast surgeon spent her extra time to secure a license in Applied Behavioral Analysis, an intense and very expensive therapy that is the gold standard of autism treatment. She used what she learned to treat her own daughter at home.

Christian has watched her friends pack up and exit Louisiana to seek better treatment for their children in other states. She understands why they are leaving, for she's waited up to six months to get an appointment with a specialist for her daughter.

"You can watch your child wither while waiting to get treatment," Christian said. "Resources here are inadequate."

Too few doctors and therapists means a line awaits children with autism, no matter if they are from rich or poor families, insured or not. And that waiting means squandered opportunities for children, for UCLA research has found that early therapy results in half of autistic children catching up to their peers in four years. Experts say that children do their best when ABA

starts by age 3.

But not having enough physician specialists, therapists and other resources in Baton Rouge means families here often miss that window for intervention, erasing the best chance at success in school, life and work for their autistic children.

As a nation, we are not doing any better. There is no national strategy for dealing with the alarming rise in the number of American children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. As well, no city has set out to catalogue its autism resources and identify community-driven solutions to better serve children and adults with autism.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is trying to change that. Last year, the Foundation's civic leadership initiatives staff began reviewing and researching autism services, identifying existing community resources and highlighting barriers to care.

The goal is to deliver a blueprint to fill gaps in services, giving a chance for all children and adults with autism to live a better life.

It's too early to guess at proposed solutions to gaps in treatment and access, but they are likely to include collaborations among researchers, hospitals, treatment centers, nonprofits, governments and universities.

A near-certain priority will be devising ways to produce or attract more physicians and behavioral therapists to fill unmet needs. Another challenge: money.

"We don't have any answers today, but the bottom line is you need funds and you need to have services to get effective treatment," said John Spain, Foundation executive vice president. "Our community doesn't have either."

The Foundation staff spent much of 2014 visiting with providers of autism treatment, along with hundreds of parents of children who have been diagnosed with one of the roughly 70

disorders that fall under the spectrum of autism, including Asperger syndrome. They heard from beleaguered parents, who spoke of inadequate education and support services for their children.

Parents were frightened, too: What would happen to their children in the years to come, after the parents were no longer around to take care of them?

The Foundation staff has taken what has been learned and turned it over to outside consultants, who will round out the research and pen a thorough report. Six months from now, we expect the report to be completed, along with its recommendations on community-based solutions to improve access to care.

Shelley Hendrix is the national director of grassroots advocacy for Autism Speaks, and she also happens to work from Baton Rouge. She says this effort to catalogue local resources and devise local answers appears to be unique.

Solutions will reflect needs and assets that are particular to Baton Rouge—which is what Hendrix and others familiar with the project say will make it powerful and effective. "No other capital city is doing this," said Hendrix, who has an 18-year-old son with autism. "This is a chance to create a model for other communities."

The initiative already has produced a new collaboration:

The Foundation is being joined in the project by The Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation, which has focused its grants on education, health and prison release.

"We need to look at new and better ways to invest in our community, to give all our citizens the best chance to be successful," said Dan Bevan, president of the Wilson Foundation.

Autism is not just a problem in Baton Rouge; it is a problem everywhere, and a fast-growing one. The Centers for Disease

"You can watch your child wither while waiting to get treatment. Resources here are inadequate."

—Dr. Mary Elizabeth Christian

Control reckons that 1 in 68 children are at risk for the diagnosis—a startling 30% jump in just two years.

Louisiana does not track how many children are autistic, as a handful of other states do. But applying those national statistics to Baton Rouge means that 1 of every 34 parents across our metro area has a child with autism.

There is no cure for this lifelong disorder, nor is the science clear on its causes. Many experts point to a combination of genetic and environmental factors as playing a role in the rise

gives a good chance that many autistic children will find a path to work, and become productive residents who also use far fewer public services. “You are going to pay on the back end if kids don’t get treatment,” Hendrix said.

Louisiana has made progress in helping children with autism spectrum disorders. Twice in recent years it has expanded insurance rules to include ABA therapy, although the changes do not benefit families with coverage through self-insured employers.

The expansion in insurance has, in turn, drawn more



in diagnoses, but better and earlier detection is also a likely factor. Many children with autism also have serious gastrointestinal conditions and allergies, suggesting an autoimmune connection.

Hendrix and other advocates say that autism’s impact extends far beyond individual families. Children who don’t get effective, early treatment can cost taxpayers \$2.7 million or more in public services over their lifetime.

By comparison, delivering the right treatment early enough

resources to the region. The highly regarded Center for Autism and Related Disorders, or CARD, opened a clinic in Baton Rouge about a year ago to provide ABA and other key therapies.

Baton Rouge has even produced treatment in line with leading therapy. The Emerge Center in south Baton Rouge combines ABA with group speech therapy in a preschool-class format. The approach began locally in 2004 as a pilot project involving LSU psychology researchers and the precursor to Emerge, Baton Rouge Speech and Hearing Foundation.

Very successful, the combination therapy is now improving the lives of children at some of the nation's best-known treatment centers as well as the Emerge Center, which this fall opened an 11-student kindergarten class for children with communication disorders.

Yet the gaps in treatment and diagnostic resources are huge. Probably half of the children diagnosed with autism in the region are covered by insurance, but ABA and other treatment for those without it is "limited by what the parents can pay," Hendrix said. Treatment can cost up to \$50,000 per year.

Meanwhile, the state hasn't allocated enough money or resources to help. For instance, the average time on Louisiana's waiting list for a Medicaid waiver to help families with treatment expenses is nearly 10 years. And while the Emerge Center and other providers offer early intervention to children from infants to age 5, there are few options for older children, teens and adults when it comes to therapy, educational opportunities and work.

Children on the autism spectrum who get early intervention and make enough progress to start school in a mainstream classroom often falter in elementary and middle school as the demands of schoolwork intensify. And available therapy tends to focus on intervention for the youngest children.

"You'll see fear in parents' eyes because they don't know where they are going next," said Kathryn Kissam, a former board member at the Emerge Center, which provides treatment for autism until about age 5. "The big unanswered question is: who are going to be our innovative partners for K-12?"

While the Emerge Center's one-stop location for multiple therapies represents meaningful progress, the facility still has a waiting list of about 40 children, down from about 100 at its

former, smaller West Roosevelt Street location.

In fact, work to open the Emerge Center is directly tied to the Foundation's autism initiative. Melissa Juneau, its executive director, encouraged the Foundation to consider a project that would identify gaps in treatment and education that families would continue to face. Juneau said she hopes the project will help the Emerge Center identify potential partnerships as part of an effective strategy to fill those gaps.

Therapists trained or willing to treat larger, older children are scarce, as are local physicians focused on the older age group or children with severe behavior problems. Dr. Christian said her daughter has regressed since reaching adolescence, but she has not found a local geneticist with the expertise or interest to see her child.

Regardless of specialty, there is a real shortage of therapists licensed to provide ABA. In Louisiana, there are only about 85 such licensed therapists, according to Spain.

"There is a lack of people working in this field," says Jamie Tindle, director of Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge.

Costs of private schools with small classrooms or special services for children with autism make them off limits to many families. Even those schools willing to enroll autistic children say they can only handle a small number

and many teachers lack special training for children with autism.

There is a lack of experienced therapists in the public schools as well, according to interviews with local parents. Many families in Baton Rouge end up home-schooling their children "because they flat out have nowhere to put them," said Colleen Waguespack, the mother of a 9-year-old boy with autism. She served as co-chairman of the Emerge Center's capital campaign.

Confusion about services poses another challenge. Tindle's

"We can build a model not just for the region and state but for the rest of the country. People can come to see what we do as a community to get this right."

—Colleen Waguespack, co-chair of Emerge Center capital campaign



Liam Reynolds, who has autism, speaks at the screening of *Sounding the Alarm*, a film about the challenges of autism on families. Next to him is his mother, Shelley Hendrix, the National Director of Grassroots Advocacy for Autism Speaks. The group and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation sponsored the movie screening and a panel discussion.

nonprofit is an advocacy and resource center for parents of children with disabilities. Its 12-person staff, mostly parents of children with disabilities, steers often-overwhelmed parents through the maze of government programs to help them get care, teaches them how to be advocates for the kids and provides information on service providers. It also organizes opportunities for fun as varied as lights-on, low-volume “sensory sensitive” movies at local theaters, dance classes and social gatherings.

For Tindle, a big part of getting families improved access is helping them understand the resources the community has and what they need to do to get services. “That is a huge problem,” she said. “There is a need for accurate information.”

Another need: There are a small handful of semi-independent residential communities around the country for adults with developmental disabilities, including autism. There is no such facility in Baton Rouge.

Jan Ross, grants administrator at the Wilson Foundation, said she hopes the initiative will boost awareness of the challenges of all children and adults in the community who have special needs, including a lack of educational resources and opportunity for many.

For Waguespack, the project is a chance for Baton Rouge to lead cities across the U.S. “We can build a model not just for the region and state but for the rest of the country. People can come to see what we do as a community to get this right.” •

An eternal echo

Ada Pollock-Blundon gave her entire life to serve poor and orphaned black children of Baton Rouge.

By Ed Cullen

Those with a passion for the rich history of Baton Rouge will know Sweet Olive Cemetery, located in the heart of town, as one of the city's first black cemeteries. And those familiar with our African American history in particular know that the character of Baton Rouge was shaped in no small way by many of the people buried in that place, set aside, sadly, to segregate whites from blacks even into the next world.

Many important historic figures resting there have faded from memory. However, among the weeds at Sweet Olive Cemetery, there is one headstone that remains well-tended and often visited. It marks the grave of Ada C. Pollock-Blundon—the only white person buried there.

“This tablet was erected by the colored people of Baton Rouge,” her headstone reads, “as a tribute of respect to the twenty-nine years of untiring service that she has given to them.”

Two years before the end of the Civil War, when Ada C. Pollock was born in 1863, there was a desperate need for people like her, willing to work to make the world better. That need persists, and so does the work.

Pollock grew up on her father's farm, a patch of rich land about 20 miles from Albany, N.Y., in Schoharie County, a region

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known for production of hops and other crops near a boundary with Massachusetts. Her father wasn't rich, but he was ambitious. Young Ada worked hard alongside him and raised vegetables in her mother's garden. Her mother was a school-teacher who made sure her daughter got a proper education.

In Ada was an ideal union of her father's industriousness and her mother's love of sharing knowledge.

In time, she would bring these virtues to fruition in a faraway place, by building a school for the poor and orphaned African American children of Baton Rouge.

Like so many others buried at Sweet Olive, there's little written about her in the history books, or anywhere else.

“From early childhood, she was serious-minded and seemed to have acquired from her father a boundless ambition and the ability to work hard, and from her mother an urge to help others and to do well the tasks assigned her.” Those words are among the few reflections anyone recorded about her life. We have them only because John Sykes, a historian and director of BREC's Magnolia Mound Plantation, unearthed some of her history.

Through careful research by people who cared and kept a few scraps of documentary evidence, the outlines of an inspir-



ADA C. POLLOCK-BLUNDON
1863 - 1917

THE LEGACY CONTINUES

After the Blundon Home was closed, the \$50,000 that remained was invested in a charitable fund at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation last year. Earnings from the fund are dedicated to Boys Hope and Girls Hope, a program that teaches underserved children.

ing story begin to emerge. We know, for instance, that Ada was educated at Albany State Normal. In the fall of 1887, when she was 24, the Rev. Mr. Young of Carlisle hired her to teach at a school for black children in South Carolina. A year later, she was hired to teach at Gilbert Academy, a school for African American children in Baldwin, La., where she met her husband, Frank Blundon, a Baptist minister from Ohio. They wed in 1889.

While at the school, she also met a woman named Helen Taylor. Taylor was a student from Baton Rouge who persuaded Ada to consider opening a school for black children in the Capital City. The young educator apparently weighed the prospect carefully, then told Taylor, “If you want me to go to Baton Rouge, write to the mayor of that city, also the minister of your church and your father.” That’s according to a recollection of Ada Pollock-Blundon’s life by her brother, Horatio Pollock.

Taylor did indeed write those letters. It’s not known what reply Ms. Pollock-Blundon expected to receive, if any, but the enthusiasm expressed in the letters that came back prompted her to explore further the idea of starting a school. She traveled by train from Baldwin to Baton Rouge, where Helen Taylor’s father greeted her at the station. Together, they visited Taylor’s home and enjoyed together a dinner that included those staples of poor Southerners, mustard greens and cornbread. Soon after, they visited with the minister and the mayor, both of whom conveyed

warm support for the plan to start the school. But support would have to come from other corners too.

“In order to let the colored people know what they were doing and planning to do, the Blundons visited various colored churches, and occasionally Mr. Blundon would preach for the ministers, and Mrs. Blundon would tell about the school and the opportunities it afforded,” says a brief history of the institution, which was known as the Live Oak School.

The Blundons started their work with a school in the basement of Wesley Chapel, a Methodist church for African Americans. At a time when virtually no good public schools for black children existed in the South, and few black parents were able to educate their kids themselves, the Live Oak School was a rare and precious anomaly; a pioneering effort, in many ways.

“First, second and third grades, 10 cents per week; higher grades, 25 cents per week; board and tuition, \$8 per calendar month,” reads a notice for Live Oak School in the 1913-14 “Special Advertisers’ Directory.” It announced that the school was open year round and listed the Rev. Frank Blundon as president, with Ada Blundon as secretary-treasurer.

The Blundons didn’t charge poorer children. Sometimes they accepted food in exchange for schooling. Children who lived in the country brought sweet potatoes, corn meal, flour and chickens; these were valuable commodities for the couple who, it must be remembered, were operating not only a school but an orphanage as well. Much of the funding came from Northern donors, who were asked for support each summer during visits by Mrs. Pollock-Blundon or a school staff member. Mrs. Pollock-Blundon’s brother wrote that total donations varied from \$1,000 to \$17,000 per year. Some of the donations came in goods, and were accounted for as packages or barrels.

“During the past few days, these two remittances were received which filled our hearts with praise,” says an excerpt from *The Oak Leaf*, which was the Blundon Association newsletter. “One was a gift of money and scrap books from a band of Jewish children in New York City who wished to help in this work of ours, and the other was a check for \$25 from a Baptist Young Peoples Union to help in the care and training of one of our dear little girls, who is not an orphan, but worse than one, for neither father nor mother love her enough to care for her.”

The challenges faced by the Blundons in their work gave them insight into the struggles of African Americans that few white people of the time understood. “We are white, but our whole life is given to helping the colored people up the heights of knowledge,” writes Frank Blundon in 1891. His note was found among the papers of Booker T. Washington, founder of the Tuskegee

Institute in Alabama. Blundon conveyed his solidarity with Washington, and his understanding of the difficulties confronting him. "...Just such opposition as is thrown against you now is the great retarding obstacle to the progress the race needs."

Those obstacles were many and diverse, but it appears that the economic difficulties were a particular constant. No matter what period of history, it seems that one thing never changes: Doing good means raising money, and often that work is even harder than the good you're trying to accomplish.

"Your gift of \$5 was most gratefully received," writes Gertrude Brown, a staff member at the Live Oak School, in a 1929 letter acknowledging a donation from a man in Warsaw, New York. "All gifts mean so much to our work. We have already enrolled 104 children in the Home and 980 children in our seven Day Schools. This is an unusually large number for so early in the year. More will come during the winter."

What Ada Pollock-Blundon began with the most modest of means had grown, by this time, to an ambitious charitable enterprise.

"This past week we began work on the new Nursery," Gertrude Brown's letter continues. "We are so very happy over it, as it means that as soon as the building is done we can (care) for a greater number of these needy little ones. We still are in need of funds to pay for the building, but we feel that somewhere there is a friend who will help us."

The letter was written on stationery identifying the institution as the Ada C. Pollock-Blundon Association Inc., Schools and Orphanages for Colored. It concludes, "We are very grateful to you for your gift and for the kindly interest which you take in our work."

Ada did not live to see the scope of her work as described by Gertrude Brown's 1929 letter. She died in 1917, a year before the worldwide flu epidemic that killed millions, at the age of 54. Her husband Frank appears to have moved on after losing her.

At the time, Ada's school was located at the corner of South Boulevard and Eleanor. She lived nearby at 110 Eleanor. The Live Oak School had been operating for nearly 30 years at the time of her death, and some 600 students and orphans were enrolled then. The Ada C. Pollock-Blundon Association was formed to protect the property and to carry on the Blundons' work.

The Blundon Home, as it came to be known, closed its doors on McKinley Street in the early 1990s. Its most notable gradu-



A headstone for Ada Pollock-Blundon is the most recognizable memorial in Sweet Olive Cemetery. She is the only white person known to be buried in the Mid City cemetery.

ate was Dr. Leo S. Butler, who devoted time to the school after becoming a physician and was chairman of the board.

Freddie Pitcher remembers well the ending of that chapter in this story. Pitcher, who is now chancellor of the Southern University Law Center, retired as the judge from the First Circuit Court of Appeal. He was also one of the two remaining board members of the Blundon Association when the institution finally closed.

“I knew a lot of the kids who lived there,” he said. “Blundon Home served them well. These were kids from dire circumstances. Many of them became upstanding citizens.” Pitcher, 69, attended public schools in Baton Rouge with some of the children cared for at the home. “Without Blundon Home, who knows what would have happened to them?”

After tidying up the Blundon Association’s finances, there was \$50,000 left. The money was placed with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation in a fund benefiting Boys Hope Girls Hope of Baton Rouge.

“We would hope that money attracts other funds for Boys Hope Girls Hope,” Pitcher said.

Baton Rouge’s history is filled with remarkable outsiders, John Sykes reflected. “Ada Pollock-Blundon spent nearly 30 years as a teacher to African-Americans in Baton Rouge, along with her husband, Frank. ... The fact that Ada was white, New York-born and listed in the first ‘Woman’s Who’s Who of America’ (1915) makes her story a compelling one.”

She was driven to act by the needs of young people in her time. Those needs have changed in some ways in the years since then. In other ways, they haven’t. Perhaps that’s why Ada Pollock-Blundon’s story remains so compelling, and why it continues. •

GIVING OPPORTUNITY

The work of Ada Pollock-Blundon to provide educational opportunities to underserved youth in Baton Rouge continues with the establishment of the Ada C. Pollock-Blundon Association Fund for Boys Hope Girls Hope.

Boys Hope Girls Hope International was founded in 1977 in St. Louis, Mo., by Father Paul Sheridan, S.J., as a residential and academic enrichment program for youth in need. Boys Hope Girls Hope has grown to include affiliates in 15 U.S. cities and three Latin American countries, and currently serves 650 scholars in the U.S. and 170 scholars internationally.

The Baton Rouge affiliate was created in 1993. Boys Hope Girls Hope of Baton Rouge helps academically capable and motivated children in need to meet their full potential by becoming successful men and women in the community by providing value-centered, family-like homes and environments, opportunities and education through college and beyond. The program aims to develop leadership skills, provide educational opportunities and mentorship to more than 60 children annually throughout the Greater Baton Rouge area.

>>> You can make an online gift to the Blundon Fund in support of Boys Hope Girls Hope of Baton Rouge at BRAAF.org/BlundonFund. Or you can give directly to Boys Hope Girls Hope at their mailing address, P.O. Box 4414, Baton Rouge, LA, 70821.



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Joshua Hoffpauir will build a mixed-use development on Government Street near South Foster. Financing for projects in the area has become easier to find.



GOLD RUSH?

*Government Street and Mid City
are being reclaimed*

By David Jacobs

Designer and developer Michael Hogstrom grew up in Houston and spent much of the early part of his career in the Northeast. But his parents live in Louisiana now, and he moved to Baton Rouge in 2009 to be close to them. Here, he met and married a local girl, and you can probably fill in the rest of the story.

“I love the pace here,” he says. “I love the people.”

While Hogstrom has worked on many projects for other developers, his firm, Onsite Design + Development, recently took on its first development. E'tage Gardens, an eight-home neighborhood fronting Government Street in the Goodwood section of Mid City, is under construction; Hogstrom says all eight lots sold within 30 days of going on the market about a year ago.

Mid City, much like downtown Baton Rouge, suffered for decades from a dearth of investment. Now that big money is flowing into downtown, Mid City may be poised for a rebirth of its own.

FuturEBR, the parish's master plan, seeks to encourage infill development as a way of mitigating sprawl and offering new housing and lifestyle choices for people interested in a more

“I think Government Street will be the place to be in five years. Everyone's going to want to be on Government Street.”

—Developer Joshua Hoffpauir

compact urban setting. Hogstrom says perhaps 60% of people looking for homes—particularly baby boomers and millennials—are in that group. Mid City, anchored by the Government Street corridor, is in position to capitalize on that market, he believes.

The area has its share of dilapidated buildings, under-leased shopping centers, tacky discount stores and check cashing joints. But it also has a decent street grid, beloved older neighborhoods, and a funky, artsy personality that's appealing to the young professionals and creative types that Baton Rouge leaders often say they want to attract and retain.

“Baton Rouge is just primed for really significant growth if we do it right over the next 10 years,” Hogstrom says. “I think 10

years is our critical window... Other cities are working hard and fast too.”

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Samuel Sanders has been with the Mid City Redevelopment Alliance since 2003, and became its executive director in 2006. “In the beginning of my term as director, I was saying there was a buzz about Mid City,” he says. “I feel comfortable changing that today from a buzz to true action. We are actually seeing dollars going into the ground.”

Circa 1857, which specializes in “art, antiques and architectural salvage,” generated some of that buzz when it opened at 19th and Government streets in 2002. Sanders calls it a “beacon” for the Mid City arts scene.

“We were the first white guys that stepped across Government Street,” says Danny McGlynn, an attorney who co-developed the project. “There was nobody doing anything on the north side of Government, and we were able to pull a higher economic crowd into a lower economic zone.”

When McGlynn first noticed the former Griffon's drug store, it was more of a crime hub than an arts hub. He didn't know what it would eventually become, he just thought it was a nice building on a highly visible corner that had fallen into disrepair and could be had at an attractive price.

It's still hard to get financing for “something nice” in the area, simply because it's hard to command high enough rental rates to justify the initial investment, McGlynn says. He hopes to add live/work spaces for artists at Circa, but the project is on hold because the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority has so far been unable to secure the New Market Tax Credits to help make the numbers work.

The good news is that Mid City remains accessible to moderate-income buyers and renters and relatively small-time investors like McGlynn. He was also an early investor in downtown's comeback, and sees parallels between the neighboring sectors.

“It's following the same pattern,” he says, noting that formerly inexpensive downtown real estate now commands a premium. Government Street is no longer “dirt cheap,” he says, because things are starting to happen there, but it hasn't yet really taken off.

“Mid City and downtown are connected, even though they're divided by the interstate,” Sanders says. “We know from our travels to other places that as cities have rediscovered their down-

“I believe that the resurgence of Government Street is tied to people in Baton Rouge starting to look for more urban options with their lifestyle. All of the right infrastructure exists in the Government Street corridor, and with the pending road improvements, it makes total sense to infill in this area. Also, there is a new group of young developers and small business owners who are looking for diversity in their surroundings rather than trying to avoid it. These young developers stand on the shoulders of the Mid City leaders who have been fighting for this type of growth for years. It is exciting to see the changes on the horizon, and I believe that we will look back on this new attitude as one of the major reasons that Baton Rouge is able to attract more young professionals. I expect the next five to ten years to include a great deal of all types of development from retail to office to residential, because Government Street affords appropriate opportunities for all of these. I also believe that the new planning director and planning staff are going to do a good job of promoting and supporting the right kind of growth in Mid-City.”

—Dyke Nelson, architect and developer, took an early chance on Government Street. He renovated a warehouse on South 14th for DNA Workshop, his firm.



towns, neighborhoods on the perimeter benefit from that... Not everyone wants to live in the hustle and bustle of downtown, but they want to be close to it.”

Planner Andres Duany, one of the nation’s most prominent New Urbanism advocates, worked on the original Plan Baton Rouge downtown master plan in 1998. This year, he’s creating a proposal for a mixed-use development in Mid City. Entergy donated the 6-acre site, which fronts Government Street and is divided by 15th Street, to the Redevelopment Authority.

The RDA owns the land and buildings free and clear of any debt. Susannah Bing, RDA’s director of finance and economic development, expects to put out a call for co-developers after the Duany plan is released this spring.

Bing attributes downtown’s resurgence to intense, sustained interest from the public and private sectors, and says she’s beginning to see a similar focus on Mid City. Existing infrastructure and available land east of downtown make the area ripe for development, she says, which should only strengthen the connection between downtown and established Mid City neighborhoods like Goodwood, the Garden District and Ogden Park.

“It just takes time. Time and money,” she says. “You have to have a strong base, and then you have to continue adding to that base by the ripple effect. Mid City is a significant ripple effect.”

THE NEW MAGAZINE STREET?

The Government Street corridor is the main artery of Mid City, so pretty much everyone who has any stake in the area will be closely following plans for the street’s redesign. Mike Bruce of Stantec, the consultant for the project, says the entire stretch of Government from Interstate 110 to Lobdell Boulevard is under the microscope.

The public will have a chance to weigh in before the details are finalized. But the general idea is to put Government on a “road diet” to slim it down from four through lanes to two plus a turning lane, while making it more pedestrian- and bike-friendly.

Some business owners are worried that shrinking Government will greatly reduce traffic counts, leading to fewer customers. But Bruce says the turning lane will improve traffic flow, so that capacity won’t be reduced as much as one might expect.

In fact, Sanders says slowing the traffic down might allow more drivers to actually notice what the area has to offer. Proponents hope improved walkability will make the strip feel more like a coherent arts district, similar to Magazine Street in New Orleans.

“Once this Government Street project does what it’s supposed to do, that alone will help developers and other people wanting to move into Mid City,” says Joshua Hoffpauir of Hoffpauir Studio

ON GOVERNMENT

DNA WORKSHOP Renovation of warehouse into offices for Dyke Nelson’s architecture firm

MODEL BLOCK The renovation of a block next to Baton Rouge High School anchored by Ritter Maher Architects

ENTERGY BUILDINGS EBR Redevelopment Authority will ask developers to rehab donated properties it owns on Government near the railroad tracks

SQUARE 46 A mix of shops, offices and residences on a Government Street block near South Foster

E’TAGE GARDENS An 8-home subdivision near Our Lady of Mercy School

ANTHONY’S ITALIAN DELI Restaurant relocated from Florida Boulevard

on Lobdell. “Right now, it’s kind of an unknown.”

Hoffpauir is working on Square 46, a planned mixed-use development on the former Giamanco’s restaurant site fronting Government, Mouton and Moore streets. He expects to include restaurants, retail and office spaces, and eight to 15 residences.

Hoffpauir says finding financing for Mid City projects is easier than it used to be. As recently as 2011, he was rejected by 12 Baton Rouge banks when looking for money to back a small single-family development before finally getting a “yes” from a Lafayette bank.

When Hoffpauir finished his architecture degree 15 years ago, his senior project was focused on Government Street. Even then, he thought the area was full of promise, but “it was nowhere close” to realizing that potential.

“Baton Rouge as a whole was holding Mid City back,” he says.

At the time, he says, there just wasn’t much happening downtown or in Mid City. Residents and investors were mostly interested in the suburbs. But today, people in their 20s and 30s nationwide want to live in urban communities where they can walk or ride their bikes to stores and restaurants, he says. Baton Rouge is finally starting to catch on to that trend, which can only benefit Mid City.

“Now, it’s on the cusp,” he says. “I think Government Street will be the place to be in five years. Everyone’s going to want to be on Government Street.” •

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Street smart

*Pop-up demonstrations
could balance traffic,
walking around Webb Park*

By Maggie Heyn Richardson
Photos by Brian Baiamonte

Government Street is one of Baton Rouge's most influential thoroughfares. The four-lane artery spans downtown to Mid City, terminating near Independence Park and connecting the Mississippi River, several schools, the East Baton Rouge Parish Main Library and other essential civic features. Both sides of the street are flanked by established neighborhoods with engaged residents, many of them families or young professionals.

The street's fast-moving traffic and absence of pedestrian-friendly features made it a priority project in FuturEBR, the master plan for East Baton Rouge Parish completed by Oregon-based Fregonese and Associates in 2012.

Government Street will soon be transformed from four to three lanes, with amenities that slow-down traffic, while making it easier to bike and walk.

It makes good sense, therefore, to engage the adjacent neighborhoods in their own simultaneous planning processes, says Camille Manning-Broome, senior vice president of planning and implementation at the Center for Planning Excellence.

Valley Park, Capital Heights, Bernard Terrace and Webb Park are already familiar with issues like speeding and cut through traffic, so while the Government Street plan is underway, CPEX invited these neighborhoods to participate in a new project called Street Smart. The goal was to create an extended area of connected streets to balance cars and people.



The Center for Planning Excellence was created by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and our donors after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The nonprofit is independent now and provides land planning across South Louisiana.



“We saw a huge opportunity to work with those neighborhoods and redesign streets to help with traffic calming,” says Manning-Broome.

CPEX’s Street Smart launched earlier this year, bringing together residents from each of the four neighborhoods to improve how the streets within the neighborhoods function. The Greater Baton Rouge Association of Realtors and the Department of Public Works provided support.

The strategic location of these neighborhoods is a double-edged sword. While convenient to residents, they are escape routes for motorists eager to shave time from their daily commutes, particularly at peak hours.

“We saw a huge opportunity to work with those neighborhoods and redesign streets to help with traffic calming.”

—Camille Manning-Broome, Center for Planning Excellence

Residents shared their frustrations and feedback with CPEX planners, who began working on several possible solutions. Planners initially drafted them on paper, then brought them to life with simulated, pop-up planning over the course of one fall weekend.

Between Oct. 24 and 26, residents got to experience what various strategies, such as one-way streets and traffic “chokers,” would be like if enacted permanently. With DPW’s help, these changes were implemented temporarily over the course of the three-day project.

This real-life method of planning is known as tactical urbanism, says Broome, and it got off the ground in earnest in Dallas,



Texas, in 2010, when an artist and IT consultant named Jason Roberts decided to get involved in improving his neighborhood, Oak Hill. Roberts' strategy was to spark change through "pop up" planning or living charrettes that allowed fellow residents to see and experience what was possible without being paralyzed by fear, doubt or an overabundance of rules.

In one case, Roberts and a team of like-minded residents set up small businesses, a café, public art and landscaping along an abandoned block in Oak Hill, a depressed area near Dallas, and invited city officials and residents to come out and experience it. In another project, they established a "Pop Up Pooch Park," a temporary dog park on an abandoned, overgrown lot. It hastened the establishment of a permanent dog park in a nearby location because residents got excited about what was possible and kept the idea alive until it was completed.

Roberts' Better Block movement was so effective at creat-

ing change and building momentum for civic change in Dallas that it inspired numerous similar efforts around the country, including one in Baton Rouge. In April 2013, CPEX led Better Block BR, a two-day demonstration in which Government Street between Bedford Avenue and Beverly Street suddenly had a bike lane, public art and improved landscaping. The project helped jumpstart the forthcoming permanent changes on Government Street.

Manning-Broome says that cooperation among the four neighborhoods was impressive. In fact, Webb Park banded with more than a dozen adjacent neighborhoods, including Steele Place and Westdale Heights, to form a super-neighborhood with a collective voice.

Webb Park Neighborhood Association board member Julie Perrault says the Street Smart project has gone a long way in addressing one of the neighborhood's biggest concerns: how to



slow traffic in an area where the streets are unusually wide and long, and where hundreds of families live.

“We have a lot of kids and a lot of traffic,” says Perrault, a marketing consultant. “It’s a recipe for disaster.”

Perrault says residents were encouraged by the Street Smart demonstration weekend because it revealed doable, affordable solutions for improving their neighborhood’s safety and livability. An expensive public investment, such as sidewalks, might not happen throughout the neighborhood, but other fast and affordable measures could, she says. Perrault says the project helped residents understand exactly how the various strategies would function.

“We have a lot of kids and a lot of traffic. It’s a recipe for disaster.”

—Julie Perrault, Webb Park resident

“We saw how a traffic choker could work in the middle of Richland [Avenue] between Claycut and Broussard,” says Perrault. “When we were discussing it on paper, I couldn’t visualize it, but seeing it and experiencing it made all the difference.”

CPEX conducted 11 simultaneous demonstrations over the course of the weekend, including converting Richland Avenue between Government and North Boulevard into a one-way street. Bernard Terrace Civic Association board member Bryan Piazza, who lives on this block of Richland with his wife and two children, says the reduction in speeders over the course of the weekend was remarkable.

He says the living charrette has two important by-products.



“First, is that it can help a resident try it on for size, just like you try on clothes or test drive a car,” says Piazza, a scientist at The Nature Conservancy.

“And the other,” continues Piazza, “is that it gave us an opportunity to discuss the project with anyone who came by. Lots of people were asking questions and more often than not, when they learned more about it, they would say, ‘That’s great, I want a safe place, too. What do I have to do to make this permanent?’”

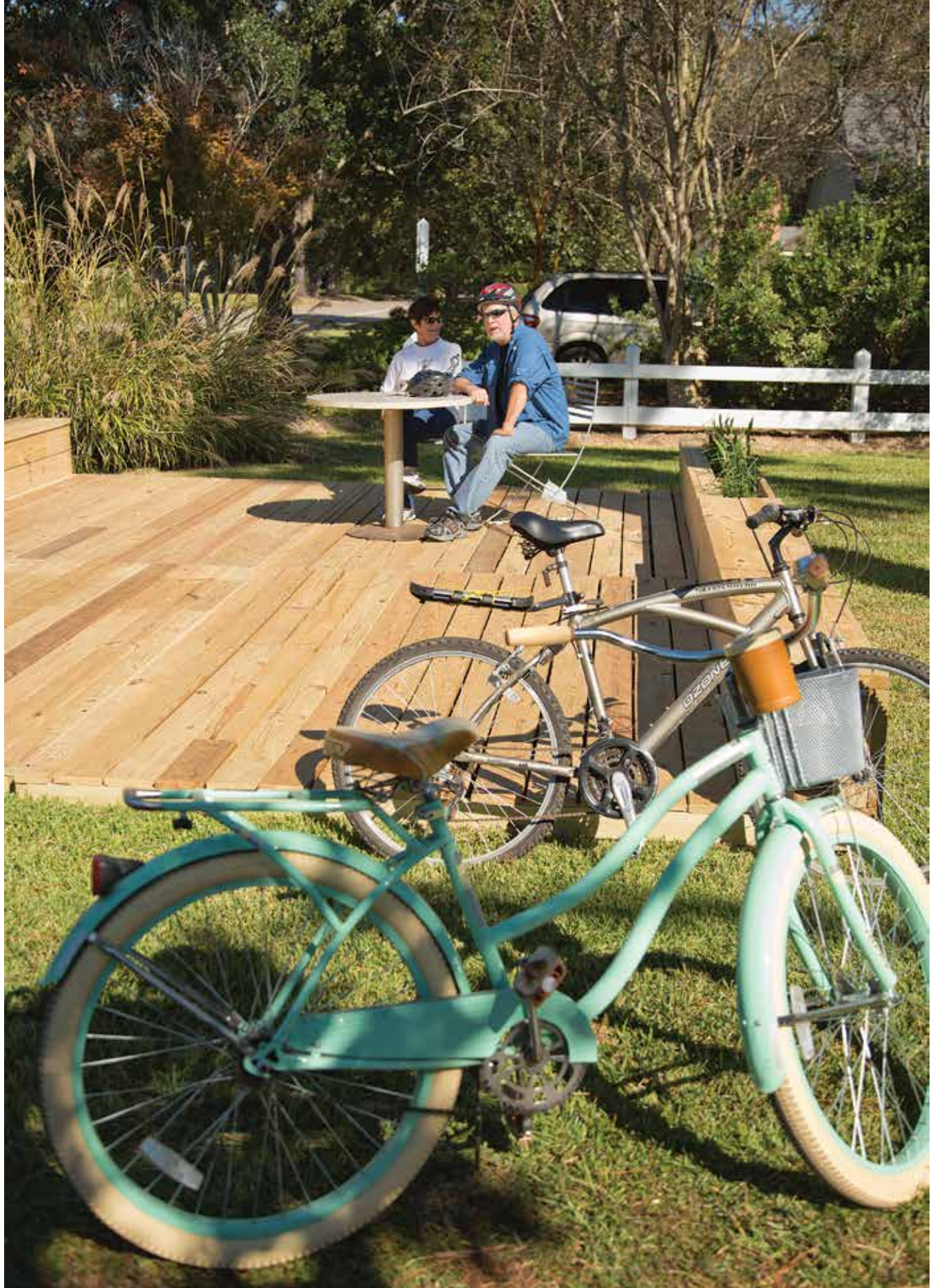
Other demonstration projects throughout the area included painting the existing bike lanes in Capital Heights a vibrant green, establishing a new bike lane along Webb Park, and connecting an existing bike lane near Country Club Drive to a possible new lane. CPEX solicited electronic comments from residents using the program MindMixer.

Capital Heights Civic Association board member David

Johnson says the process worked well.

“A lot of times, things get lost in translation, but this really restored my faith in the concept of making a difference,” says Johnson. “Having a system of connectivity from the neighborhoods to all of the retail and restaurants in the area is something to rally behind.”

CPEX is in the process of working with each neighborhood to finalize plans by February. DPW has worked with CPEX and the neighborhoods throughout the process and will be aware of the solutions identified. Manning-Broome says the neighborhoods will use a phased approach to implement projects directly with DPW. •





SMOKE AND MIRRORS?

Remember cold fusion? The idea that a fusion reaction could occur at room temperature enticed people to believe cheap and boundless energy would power the world. Cold fusion, though, was not replicated in scientific testing, and was shelved like all other tries at fusion energy.

It would be easy then to ridicule the latest assertion that a technology has been invented to produce energy by fusing hydrogen nuclei. Except that the claim this time is being made by Lockheed Martin, among the world's largest defense contractors and employers of brilliant scientists.

In October, the company said a technological breakthrough will let it build fusion reactors that will fit in the back of pickup trucks. One reactor could power up to 100,000 homes, or keep a plane in the air for an entire year.

54

Lockheed Martin is remaining mostly quiet about the breakthrough, saying only that a “magnetic mirror confinement” controls the fusion reaction, which burns at millions of degrees.

Lockheed says the reactor could be on the market within a decade. If so, could it be the beginning of the end of the petroleum and coal era?

EBR SMART SCHOOL

Through wise management, the EBR school system has produced one of the nation's most energy-efficient schools. The EPA says Clairborne Elementary was among the 15 best at reducing energy use in a national contest. The building's utility bill was cut in nearly half—about \$115,000 in savings—from 2012-13. Private firm Aramark, which maintains EBR school buildings, used technology and assistance from school students and staff to trim consumption of air conditioning, heating, lighting and more. Thermostats were turned down by staff and electronic devices were turned off each afternoon.



Thync

GOOD VIBRATIONS

Humans have been trying to right their minds with handy chemicals since before way back when. The digital age may change that. Up for trial is a device that sends electrical pulses to the mind, apparently soothing or jolting it for some period with—as far as is known—no real harm. Conjured up by a professor at Arizona State University, the device, named Thync, sends an electrical current through electrodes to specific nerves and muscles beneath the skin. A current running to behind the ear boosts energy; to behind the neck relaxes. Thync has received \$13 million in venture capital to move it to market.

Jamie Tyler, the inventor, has a more ambitious device in development: a technology that uses ultrasound to repair the brain without surgery or drugs.

PAY AS YOU GO

No matter our political ideology, we all travel, whether it's to work during the week or for pleasure on weekends. When we do, the rides are bumpy; the gas tax doesn't generate enough money to build and maintain the infrastructure.

In a report by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, some experts found a simple financing idea to their liking: a mileage-based driving fee. Charging motorists a penny per mile would produce \$175.58 billion by 2020. A four-cent-a-mile fee on trucks, which cause more damage to roads, would generate another \$70.7 billion. Together, the money would be plenty enough to improve roads and transit, and to start building high-speed rail and other infrastructure.

FLYING APART

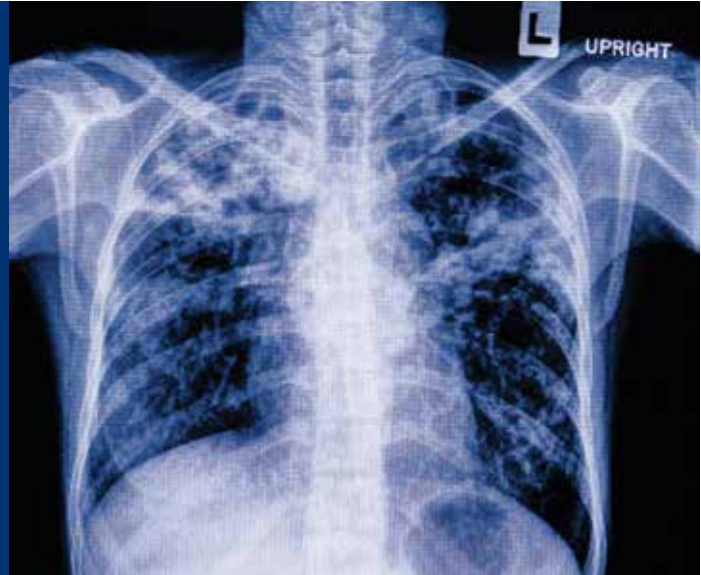
LSU researcher Bradley E. Schaefer is sharing the 2015 Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics award with a team of scientists. The group had an unexpected discovery. The universe, they found, is expanding at an accelerating rate, rather than slowing down, as has been long assumed. Schaefer was on a team of 51 scientists who shared a prize of \$3 million.

The Breakthrough Prizes are funded by a grant from The Brin Wojcicki Foundation, a grant from Mark Zuckerberg's fund at the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, a grant from the Jack Ma Foundation and a grant from the Milner Foundation.

PERFECT PEEK

The inventor of two successful medical imaging devices says he's creating an inexpensive scanner that can provide cheap video images of what's happening inside the body, reports MIT's online magazine. Jonathan Rothberg has raised \$100 million to pursue the device, which will use a new ultrasound chip to diagnose diseases. He claims the inexpensive device will make doctors far more effective, and marrying it to database of images will let computers with artificial intelligence diagnose problems.

Rothberg won't reveal the device for about 18 months. He has started and sold two imaging companies for \$500 million.



KEEPING BABIES WARM

About one in 10 babies are born prematurely, and 75% of their deaths could be avoided if inexpensive treatments were available. The 2014 James Dyson Award Winner solves a part of the problem with a low-cost, inflatable incubator for use in the developing world. Named MOM, the invention can be collapsed for transportation and runs off a battery that lasts 24 hours, in case of power outages. The incubator is blown up manually and heated using ceramic elements. The current temperature and humidity can be custom set, depending on the gestation age. The device will cost about \$300 to manufacture, compared to about \$40,000 for a modern incubation system. The device was developed by James Roberts, a 23-year-old design engineer from England. He won \$40,000, which will be used to improve and test the prototype.



SOLAR GETTING CHEAPER

A new study by Deutsche Bank says that solar energy will be cheaper than electricity from the grid in almost every U.S. state in just two years, if the 30% federal subsidy remains in place. Even if the subsidy dropped to 10%, solar power would be cheaper in 36 states. With improved technology, the cost of solar energy is dropping; at the same time, fossil fuels are ultimately expected to cost more because of their limited supply.

Deutsche Bank expects solar power production to grow sevenfold to 50 gigawatts in 2016, representing about 2% of electricity production.

CITIES



NEW MONEY

Norway has redesigned its bank notes and passport. Snohetta Design's abstract coastal settings will be on the front of krone bills, while Metric Studio's work will be on the back of notes. A jury picked the winning designs.

A contest was also used to remake the Norwegian passport. Neue Design Studio's minimalist cover images will be on the passport cover, while inside is a surprise: holding the passport under a UV light turns a Norwegian landscape from day to night, revealing the northern lights and hidden text.

NOW THAT'S FAST

Japan is testing a bullet train that travels 310 miles per hour, faster than the 268 miles per hour traveled by the world's fastest train, which operates in China. Passengers are already riding a leg of Japan's train on test tracks. The train will begin service in 2027, halving the travel time to 40 minutes between Tokyo and Nagoya.



WATER TO GO

The long bike ride may take less time. No need to break for water if you are packing an invention by Kristof Retezar's that makes water out of humid air. Attached to a bike frame, the Fontus system funnels air and distributes it across a condensing structure, where a solar-powered cooling element turns it into thick drops. They drip through a pipe into a water bottle. The Fontus can collect up to 17 ounces per hour, depending on the climate.



NOW HEAR THIS

Cameras are yesterday's security technology. Point, by Form Devices, uses the sounds a home makes to keep people safe. The gizmo listens for noises around your home, alerting an app when it hears unusual sounds, such as the sound of a breaking window or doors opening at unexpected times. The device learns patterns to know when you are not home, and it works as a smoke alarm, too.

CODA



Photo by Tim Mueller

A GOOD RUN

The Louisiana Marathon has grown faster than world record holder Dennis Kimetto cruising for 26.2 miles. More than 8,100 ran in races of varying distances in January, 30% more than in 2014. After only four years, the race is within the founders' original goal of 10,000 runners. Baton Rouge benefits from the race. People from every state have been to the city to run in crisp temperatures on a fast and flat course, except for the relatively punishing overpass on North Boulevard. The race also has an unseen benefit. Some proceeds are placed in the Louisiana Runs Fund, which was started by race organizers and is managed by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. The fund has granted more than \$31,000 to promote running and active lifestyles across Louisiana.



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