

CURRENTS

A way OUT

They were trapped in their addictions. Then came a woman named Angel.





THRIVE Academy graduated its first class. The only boarding school for at-risk children will open a new classroom building in August. More in the Lead In section of this magazine.





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CONTENTS

VOLUME THIRTEEN | NUMBER THREE

6–Letter from the chair

8–About us

9–Lead in

12–Civic projects

14–*The Shape of water*

16–*Follow the Trail*

22–Second quarter grants

30–Cover story: *A way out*

38–Cover story: Bridge Center Q&A

42–Nonprofit: *A time to heal*

46–Spark: *Rocket Man*

52–Spark briefs

54–Coda: *Road trip to Detroit*

5

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*

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LETTER



Erasers are for fixing mistakes. At the Foundation, they're also used for marking achievements. On our whiteboard are listed all our civic improvement projects

and their various tasks along the way. When one is completed, an eraser wipes it away. Quickly, another one takes its place.

In June, we celebrated the implementation of bikeshare as we erased it from the board. It had been up there for a little while. In 2015, the Foundation started a broad initiative known as New Mobility. At the core of this project was a stubborn fact about transportation: adding more traffic lanes only attracts more people to use them, and traffic worsens.

To break this maddening cycle, we worked with state and local government to offer alternatives that included using our automobiles in more efficient ways. We supported car-share initiatives, for instance, and teamed up with Entergy and government to install electric car chargers, which are now serving a growing number of electric cars around the parish. We also sponsored alternatives to driving altogether, like bikeshare. It's a service that shifts some traffic from cars to bikes that can be used by anyone. Fifty stations and 500 bikes were deployed in June and July and the service will expand within two years.

Gotcha, the bikeshare provider, has also signed agreements with LSU and Southern to potentially offer other transportation choices, including electric ride-share—a kind of paid carpooling for short rides at and near the universities.

The New Mobility project is bigger than bikesharing, though. With regional economic development agencies across South Louisiana, the Foundation continues to press its case for passen-

Putting sick people in treatment instead of housing them in prisons—it's a simple idea, and it's the right thing to do.

ger rail service between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, called the SoLa Express. Many of the benefits are immediately obvious: a train would reduce road use and maintenance costs; it would provide a regular, reliable schedule without the uncertainties surrounding road traffic; it would reduce traffic accidents and deaths; riders could use the time they once spent behind the wheel working or enjoying the scenery from aboard the train. There are other benefits that might not come to mind so easily, like using the train to evacuate cities on the route ahead of hurricanes, which are becoming more frequent and fiercer.

The SoLa Express is still on the whiteboard, but a related New Mobility project will be erased within two years. Last month, the federal government awarded a matching grant to the Southern Rail Commission, which is chaired by the Foundation's own Executive Vice President John Spain. The funding will restart passenger service twice daily between New Orleans and Mobile, with four whistle stops in Mississippi. The SRC's plan is to extend the service to Jacksonville, and Orlando, Florida. Families could take the train to Disneyworld, for example, instead of driving endless hours to the Magic Kingdom. Plus, there's a bonus: Kids on trains are so entranced by the journey they forget to ask, "Are we there yet?"

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

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The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is a community foundation that takes advantage of opportunities to improve the quality of life in South Louisiana. We do so by providing three 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. Three, we provide consulting services to nonprofits. For more information, contact Mukul Verma at mverma@braf.org.

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In this issue, you'll meet women whose job it is to search for hope in the darkest places. Angel Rushing and Debbie Norwood work at the parish prison, sifting through dossiers of inmates suffering from mental illness and drug addictions, scouring the files for people who show enough promise to warrant a chance at treatment instead of jail. Together with partners in this work, including the district attorney, public defender, sheriff, city prosecutor, 19th Judicial District and City Court, they have selected more than 70 people for the Bridge Center's pre-trial release program. In treatment or back with family, many of them are now living productive lives.

Putting sick people in treatment instead of housing them in prisons—it's a simple idea, and it's the right thing to do. That's why Baton Rouge voters approved a tax to add a related program to the Bridge Center's portfolio. Next year, when winter turns to spring, hundreds of people in crisis will get the kind of professional care they need.

Sincerely,



William E. Balhoff,
Chair

ABOUT US

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

1 We connect fund donors—philanthropists—to worthwhile projects and nonprofits. Over 55 years, our donors have granted more than \$500 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.

3 We offer strategic consulting services to nonprofits.

KEY CIVIC LEADERSHIP PROJECTS

THE NEW MOBILITY :

The Foundation is trying to make it easier for people to get around the parish. We are participating with local and state government on several projects that give residents transportation choices. Engineers say that more choices reduce the burden on roads. The projects include a train connecting Baton Rouge to New Orleans, a bike sharing system that is launching in April and support for car sharing.

BATON ROUGE HEALTH DISTRICT

(BRHEALTHDISTRICT.ORG) : The parish asked the Foundation to pay for a master plan for the Bluebonnet, Perkins and Essen Lane corridor, where most of the health care assets are located. The plan has been adopted by the parish, and an independent nonprofit—the Baton Rouge Health District—has been formed to implement the plan.

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.

LEAD IN



HIGH WATER DELAYS WATER CAMPUS

Construction of The Water Campus has been slowed by water. Workers can't start building an apartment complex or the main park until the river—which has been above flood stage for the longest period in modern history—drops below flood level. But an office building, 1200 Brickyard Lane, was completed in July, with Stantec as the lead tenant and more to be named soon.

On Nicholson Drive, the Water Campus is a nexus for scientists, engineers and others who are working on water management challenges, especially how to adapt boggy coastal areas to vanishing wetlands and rising seas. The Water Institute of the Gulf, LSU's Center for River Studies and Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority are on the 35-acre campus, an undertaking of the Foundation and Commercial Properties Realty Trust.

GOOD THINGS



TIM MUELLER

LET THEM THRIVE

THRIVE Academy's first graduating class was 18 students. Some of the graduates are off to college, attending Morehouse, Southern, LSU, Southeastern and Baton Rouge Community College. The school will enroll 180 students when classes begin in August in a new classroom building. Fund donors of the Foundation have supported THRIVE, and the Foundation has assisted school founder Sarah Broome with fundraising strategies. The school is the only boarding school in Louisiana serving at-risk children.





PLACE TO ROLL

The downtown greenway will link to City Park by year-end. The Downtown Development District is spending \$1.4 million to extend the North Boulevard bike route. Dedicated lanes are being built on T.J. Jemison/East Boulevard to BREC's Expressway Park, with shared lanes down Myrtle Avenue and Eddie Robinson connecting with City Park. Davis Rhorer, DDD executive director, says the shared lanes—known as sharrows—are temporary. When the state widens I-10, the sharrows will be replaced with bike lanes. Going north, BREC will extend the Greenway to Memorial Park and North Baton Rouge.



BORROW A BIKE

Bikeshare, which began as a Foundation project, started up in June, with 50 hubs and 500 bikes at Southern University, LSU, downtown and some surrounding neighborhoods. Gotcha, the provider, will expand its network to Mid City and the Baton Rouge Health District in 18 months or so. Learn more at ridegotcha.com.



TIM MUELLER

GULF COAST TRAIN ON TRACK

The Southern Rail Commission has secured funding to return passenger rail service to the Gulf Coast, which was halted after Hurricane Katrina. Within 24 months, Amtrak is expected to restart twice-daily trains from New Orleans to Mobile, with hop-on, hop-off stops in four coastal Mississippi cities. A \$33 million federal grant is being matched with funding from Louisiana and Mississippi, and perhaps Alabama, to pay for infrastructure improvements.

The SRC, which is chaired by Foundation Executive Vice President John Spain, wants to expand the service to Jacksonville, Florida, and onward to Orlando.

The Foundation's civic projects include adding passenger rail service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. We are working on that initiative with economic development agencies and governments along the route.



HEALTH DISTRICT GETTING NEW ROADS, HOTEL

The Baton Rouge Health District is getting a street grid to improve traffic flow, new developments and a unique identity.

City-parish government is completing the Dijon Avenue extension to the new Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital and has funding to link that road to the future Midway, which will run parallel to Essen Lane and Bluebonnet Boulevard. On the intersection of those streets will be a new 124-room Element hotel, under construction now. You can also see first signs of the Health District's brand at Ochsner at The Grove, which has put up distinct street signs and banners.

Upon a request from parish government, the Foundation created a master plan for the Baton Rouge Health District. A nonprofit of the same name was formed to implement the master plan.

CIVIC PROJECTS

WATER TALK

Henk Ovink, the Dutch water ambassador, spoke at the Water Campus to a group invited by The Foundation. His visit was the result of the most recent Louisiana leadership mission to the Netherlands. Ovink was in Baton Rouge to lead a best-practices workshop as the state moves forward with a plan to manage watersheds to reduce the chance of flooding. Ovink consulted with The Water Institute, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and Louisiana's Office of Community Development.



East Baton Rouge Parish's career high school at Ardendale



REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY EXPANDS MISSION, REBRANDS

The East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority has changed its name, reflecting a broader vision and mission on its 10th anniversary.

After a four-month reimagining process, the RDA board approved the new name—Build Baton Rouge. The agency's new mission statement is "Bringing people and resources together to promote equitable investment, innovative development, and thriving communities across all of Baton Rouge."

The Foundation and city-parish created BBR to revive blighted areas. Its most visible projects are the Ardendale mixed-use development on 200 acres between North Ardenwood and Lobdell Avenue, and putting the former Entergy buildings on Government Street into commerce with Weinstein Nelson as the chosen developers.

BBR is also writing up a master plan for Plank Road and administers block grants for the city-parish. It plans to apply for New Market Tax Credits to accelerate reclamation of disadvantaged areas of the parish.



EBR WINS \$30M REDEVELOPMENT GRANT

Baton Rouge is one of four cities to win a \$30 million federal grant for transforming a neighborhood. With the money, the East Baton Rouge Housing Authority will target an area around Lobdell Avenue and North Ardenwood for revival, including new housing and services at Ardendale, a project that began at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and is being developed by Build Baton Rouge, formerly the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority. The Housing Authority is refining the plan with a goal of starting projects in 2020.

The Shape of WATER

*The Water Institute and Tulane team
on a waterfront plan in Argentina*

By Maggie Heyn Richardson

South of Argentina's cosmopolitan capital of Buenos Aires is the city of Quilmes, a port city with a half million people situated on the Río de la Plata. The widest river in the world, the Río de la Plata flows past Buenos Aires, Quilmes and other coastal communities before joining forces with the Atlantic Ocean. The riverfront makes up some of Argentina's most densely populated areas.

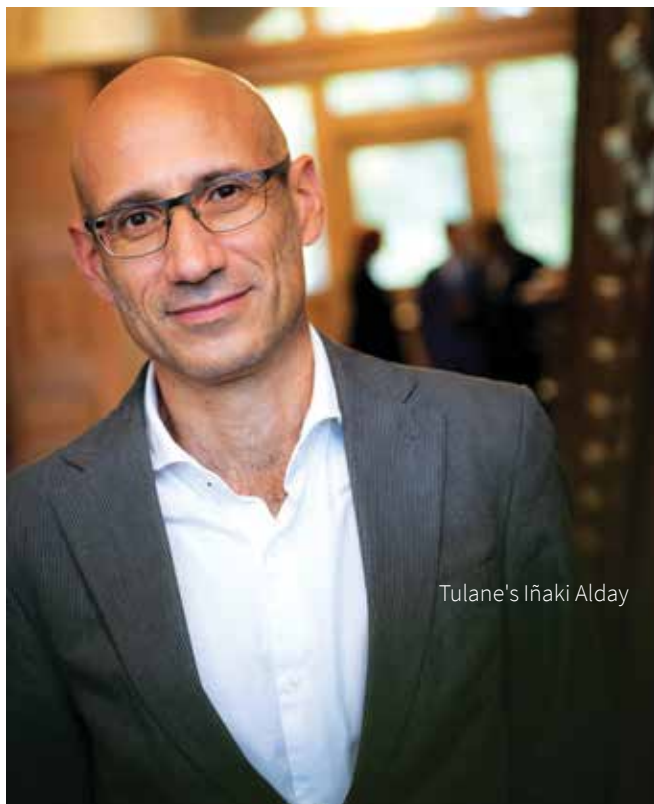
Quilmes, best known as the home of the popular South American beer, *Cerveza Quilmes*, finds itself at a crossroads today. A growing number of developers see the city's indus-

trial riverfront as ripe for transformation. They look north to Buenos Aires where a portion of the Río de la Plata's frontage was converted to a wildly popular development called Puerto Madero Waterfront. Home to world-class hotels, chic condominiums and pricey retail, the area is a desirable address for the wealthy and a popular spot for international tourists.

It's an enviable model, but in Quilmes, it could spell disaster if handled without a holistic approach. The waterfront and its environs come with a thorny mix, including the presence of slaughterhouses and industrial facilities and a shortage of affordable housing. Regular flooding occurs in this low-lying area, bringing misery to the city's large number of make-shift neighborhoods.

Now, as part of its growing body of international applied research, The Water Institute of the Gulf is teaming with the Tulane University School of Architecture on a project intended to bring cohesion, equity and safety to a future Quilmes waterfront plan. In early June, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation announced a \$75,000 grant to support the work, which could be a game-changer for Quilmes residents while showcasing the growing reach of the Water Institute and its partners.

The Foundation originally launched the Water Institute to provide independent science for implementing the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan, a strategy to combat wetlands loss and rising seas in the state's coastal communities. Now a stand-alone science institute, it has expanded its work around the globe, offering solutions to deltaic communities in Fiji, Vietnam and



Tulane's Iñaki Alday

Chile, with more recent collaborations with science organizations in Israel, the Netherlands, France and Samoa.

“This project in Argentina represents another incredible opportunity to bring the best of The Water Institute of the Gulf and Tulane University to make a difference in coastal communities that are experiencing all sorts of pressures,” says Justin Ehrenwerth, Water Institute president and CEO. “This is an applied research project that brings the best available science along with cutting-edge landscape architecture together in coastal Argentina.”

The Water Institute and Tulane have partnered before on projects, but this is the first between the research institute and the university’s School of Architecture. The project came about in part through the work of the school’s recently appointed dean, Iñaki Alday, a renowned global architect whose career focus has been on the relationship between cities and waterbodies, and how to integrate natural phenomena, including flooding, into design.

Through their Barcelona-based design firm, AldayJover, Alday and partner Margarita Jover have developed an international reputation for designing buildings and public spaces that can accept environmental challenges instead of working against them. For example, they have found ways to create spaces that can take on a certain level of flooding, rather than treating rising water as a catastrophe. The two have become thought leaders in design principles built on social equity and economic sustainability. Most recently, they were each on the faculty of the University of Virginia. Like Alday, Jover is now a new faculty member in the School of Architecture at Tulane.

The Quilmes project gets off the ground in August when researchers from Tulane and the Water Institute will make an initial visit to the city to gather data and conduct site visits. The team will review the current conditions and the impact of potential interventions to create scenarios for the city and its residents to consider. These scenarios may include recommending changes to existing land-use plans and working to develop a unified vision for the entire waterfront to achieve the long-term vibrancy of the city.

A major goal of the project is to transform an area of heavy industry along the coast into new pockets of affordable housing, parks and plazas. Since flooding is a big factor, creating a plan that softens the blow of routine high water events is a key design consideration, says Alday.

“The plan will be to partner with the municipality on how

ecosystems and river dynamics can play a role in sustainable development, especially now that flood events are happening more often,” Alday says. “Quilmes is looking for guidance about how water events and coastline development can be brought together in the holistic planning of a public space. We want to help create a call to action in terms of how to deal with development pressure in a delicate area.”

FOUNDATION FACT:

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation provided a \$75,000 grant to The Water Institute and Tulane to start the master plan for Quilmes, Argentina. The Foundation created The Water Institute, which now stands on its own, to provide solutions to managing shifting coasts around the world.

The project will happen in two phases; the first will focus on portions of a swath of coastline along the Río de la Plata targeted for development. The prevailing goal of this phase will be to create design strategies that will be sensitive to the area’s delicate natural balance. The second phase, which will take place next spring, is meant to look at the network of smaller streams and bodies of water throughout the city that flood regularly. This network crisscrosses vulnerable, densely populated areas that lack basic infrastructure. At times, these areas can take on between 3 and 5 feet of water, says Alday. Flooding also spreads industrial trash and pollutants here to an alarming degree.

The research team is taking a holistic approach with the project, says Alday. The Water Institute team, led by Scott Hemmerling, will bring GIS modeling and hard and social science to the project, while the Tulane team will examine design strategies that factor in economic, environmental and social equity considerations. These data and design ideas will be synthesized and presented as a series of possible findings of what the future could look like.

The applied research will be considered open-source and is intended to help the Quilmes community in its future decision making. •

Follow *the* trail

*Lessons from Little Rock's
emergence as the
Cycling Hub of the South*

By Jeff Roedel

Imagine riding a bike up Mount Everest. Then down its rocky peaks. Then back up again. That's roughly the elevation champion rider Rebecca Rusch traversed through Little Rock and across Arkansas, from the Ouachitas to the Ozarks, while setting a speed record of biking 1,200 miles in 8 days, 3 hours and 33 minutes back in May.

The route had been mapped out by a Russellville science teacher named Chuck Campbell, and community partners working with Red Bull were excited to show off the trail by letting Rusch ride it first, and potentially break a world record.

"The weather didn't cooperate (she endured six days of rain during the ride), but everyone else did," Rusch says. "There were people with signs in these small towns along the trail, firefighters who turned on their truck lights for me, people walking out and bringing me food—it was amazing."

Rusch's experience speaks to the power of a collective love for biking in Arkansas. But Rusch also is a freak of nature, and at age 50, a stunningly accomplished athlete still in her prime.

Reporting that the top endurance racer praises Little Rock's bike trails is like saying "LeBron James enjoys a basketball court." He's so phenomenal, pretty much any backboard and rim guarantee a good time.



Rebecca Rusch, elevation champion rider





Opened in 2006, the \$13-million Big Dam Bridge lets cyclists and walkers travel between Little Rock and North Little Rock. At nearly a mile in length, it's the longest, dedicated pedestrian and biking bridge in the U.S.

And yet at a fundamental level, Rusch's experience, as hard on her body as a spin around the block for others is a joy, isn't all that different from the one any amateur can have on a bike path. Hands grip the bars, thighs flex, feet holster into pedals, blood pumps through legs, air slides by kissing the face, and two wheels roll on to the horizon.

"I was blown away by the beauty of the area, and just how the Arkansas High Country Trail had been funded and mapped out and created by all those involved," Rusch says of the trail sponsored by the Walton Family Foundation and the Arkansas

Department of Parks and Tourism. "That level of collaboration was really impressive."

The seven-time world champion's latest record is perhaps the most astounding recognition that Arkansas cycling has received of late, but thanks to the development of one presidential library, the obsession of a pair of billionaire grandsons of a legacy retailer and a collective will to fight for a community that supports more modes of transportation than the automobile, Little Rock and the regions of Northwest and Central Arkansas have quietly birthed a bike boom unlike anywhere else in the South.

That boom is anchored by the Arkansas River Trail (known as ART), a 15.3-mile loop on both sides of the Arkansas River that crosses at the Clinton Presidential Park Bridge and the Big Dam Bridge—yes, that's the name of the longest bridge in the U.S. built specifically for bikes and pedestrians.

FOUNDATION FACT:

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation has advocated for smart planning, which includes giving people alternative means of getting around. The Foundation has championed complete streets, such as the remaking of Government Street with bike lanes and proper sidewalks. With leaders in state and local government and bike enthusiasts, we started and implemented bikeshare and are backing a parish pedestrian and bike plan that will be released this summer.

CLOSING THE LOOP

Mason Ellis was a late bloomer to biking. At least, compared to most diehards. Ellis became an avid rider only by necessity while studying architecture at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. The Little Rock native hated parking a mile from classes and needed an easy way to criss-cross campus and commute to and from his apartment.

While he was away at school in the mid-'00s, Little Rock's cycling revolution accelerated with the launch of the nonprofit Bicycle Advocacy of Central Arkansas. Well over 100 riders and engaged community leaders turned up at the very first meeting of what would soon grow into a large umbrella organization for a highly mobilized network of bike-related groups in the region.

A few years later, Ellis returned home to Little Rock, his beloved bike in tow, and he decided to look into the group.

"There were all these advocates involved who had steered the development of Riverfront Drive in Little Rock from a planned highway into a mixed-use, bike-friendly avenue with green spaces and footpaths," Ellis recalls. "It was a fight at city hall for sure, but there was a collection of local businessmen, developers, parks folks and bike enthusiasts who showed up to blast the city council and to stop suburban sprawl. As an architect and a bike

“There is a typical pattern which is that at first no one is riding bikes, then there is a surge of recreational ridership, which ultimately translates into transportation ridership. Little Rock seems to have followed this.”

—John Landosky, BikePed Coordinator for the City of Little Rock Public Works Department

commuter, that was something I wanted to be a part of, too.”

BACA was undergoing its first major leadership changeover at the time, and not long after hellos were exchanged, Ellis was told that his enthusiasm and organizational skills made him the perfect candidate for president of the group. He accepted the challenge, even as that has meant confronting an iconic department store.

“We are currently engaging with the Dillard’s corporate headquarters to close the loop around Little Rock with a one-quarter of a mile stretch on their property,” says Ellis, now serving as secretary for BACA after his time as president. “Once we close the loop, the next step is to connect the Arkansas River Trail to the neighborhoods so people don’t have to drive their cars at all to start out on the loop.”

ROLLING TOGETHER

There are dozens of Mason Ellises in Little Rock, citizen volunteers concerned with their home’s health and wellness and doing something about it. But one avid cyclist who is paid to make the

Arkansas capital more bike smart is Dr. John Landosky.

As BikePed Coordinator for the City of Little Rock Public Works Department, Landosky has been for seven years something of an advisor and enabler for all the advocate-led initiatives and events related to on-street riding. While recreational riding and cycling tourism have boomed, Landosky says commuter riding has increased of late thanks to smart connectivity downtown and new bike lanes.

“There is a typical pattern which is that at first no one is riding bikes, then there is a surge of recreational ridership, which ultimately translates into transportation ridership,” Landosky says. “Little Rock seems to have followed this.”

Landosky is extremely knowledgeable about cycling access and safety, which helps keep a multi-use and “complete streets” ethos in play for all DPW projects. The creation of a position such as the one he holds seems to be a key piece to the puzzle of how to power up grassroots bicycle advocacy.

That advocacy began in the 1990s, and when Bill Fitzgerald relocated to Little Rock from New Orleans to take a post with



COURTESY CHAINWHEEL BIKE SHOP

the local Convention and Visitors Bureau, he was immediately struck by the energy locals had for the bicycle.

“It’s not always been painless, but it was easy to see there was a biking boom up ahead, and those who pushed forward on projects seemed to just focus on that, the future,” Fitzgerald says. “Really, if the funding is there, there’s no downside to adding bike trails.”

Even with BACA’s “Close The Loop” campaign continuing to spar with Dillard’s, the Arkansas River Trail is now host to 17 annual organized rides. It’s become a community focal point and a draw for visitors.

Tourism spending is up more than \$40 million since 2017, at the same time that the Little Rock CVB has poured more marketing dollars into promoting its biking amenities and events in the past 18 months.

As Landosky says, “the ART has probably done more to promote cycling in our community than anything else.”

WAL-MART LEGACY

About three hours from Little Rock, Tom and Stuart Walton, grandsons of Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton, have put roughly \$74 million into cycling infrastructure in and around Bentonville, still headquarters for their \$500 billion company. A recent study by the Walton Family Foundation found the economic impact of that investment to be roughly \$137 million in 2017 alone.

Ellis says BACA and other local groups are not opposed to initiating conversations with the Waltons about extending their support for cycling to the Little Rock region. “We are a little envious of everything the Waltons are doing in Northwest Arkansas, but that’s just fuel for us to make a lot of positive change here in Little Rock, and we have,” Fitzgerald says.

Since the opening of the William J. Clinton Center on the south side of the Arkansas River in 2004, and the adjacent, two-wheel accessible River Market Development, Little Rock has had bikes on the brain as its downtown redevelops.



Fifty-year-old Rebecca Rusch is a cycling world champion. To build a biking network, she says, requires endurance. “These changes are hard work. They take time and energy, education and collaboration. Leaving a lasting legacy is an endurance sport.”

Two years later, the Big Dam Bridge opened. That \$12.8 million project is 4,226 feet long, making it the longest bridge in North America devoted solely to pedestrian and bicycle traffic. “Things really exploded with the building of the Big Dam Bridge,” recalls Dan Lysk, a veteran lifelong cyclist who relocated from New York to Little Rock with IBM in the 1990s. “Some people said the project was a misuse of funds that should go to police or something, but the thing is if you give people diverse things to do, things that bring lots of different people together, then everyone wins—and crime can decrease.”

Lysk calls this bike benefit “seeing your community eye-to-eye,” and says he encountered a similar spirit of togetherness when cycling all over New Orleans this summer. This change can happen anywhere, he believes.

And Ellis agrees. It is remarkable the power a bicycle can have to enact change on a personal level and, as he’s seen through working with BACA, a community level, too. “Little Rock is still dealing with racial tensions and problems, but the Arkansas River Trail is the most diverse place in the city,” Ellis says. “People of all backgrounds and walks of life enjoy it and interact together on the trail.”

And Ellis should know. He admits he wasn’t always a biking fanatic, but seeing its positive effects, he’s evolved into a staunch apostle in the past decade, just like his hometown of Little Rock has done in the same span of time.

“On a bike you see things in your city like you’ve never seen them before,” Ellis says. “You actually think different.”

A FINAL BIT OF ADVICE

Rusch has always been a believer that biking can bridge social divides and combat obesity, while supporting mental health and a greater appreciation for nature. Her recent record-setting ride and community connections made across Arkansas have inspired her to develop something similar in her home state of Idaho, where a new cycling renaissance is gearing up. “Seeing is believing,” Rusch says. “Biking is great for our world.”

That vision is one thing, but getting there, as the Little Rock stakeholders agree, is another challenge all together. And yet, the fact that new development and community initiatives revolving around bikes are happening in conservative areas like Idaho and Arkansas is welcome news for the likes of Louisiana.

“Change is happening so stay in it, and keep bringing more players to the table, because no one can do this alone,” Rusch offers to those in the thick of the fight. “These changes are hard work. They take time and energy, education and collaboration. Leaving a lasting legacy is an endurance sport.” •

THE ROADMAP TO A BIKE CITY

Six points to success from John Landosky, BikePed Coordinator, City of Little Rock

1 A group of dedicated individuals needs to become familiar with the benefits of active transportation.

2 This group needs to build coalitions with stakeholders that may see a benefit to Complete Streets but for different reasons. Those reasons are, generally: sustainability, health, safety, accessibility, equity.

3 This group needs to educate elected officials and other decision-makers about the benefits of active transportation and underscore the links to reasons most important to the individual decision-maker.

4 The municipality needs to set policy that promotes active transportation.

5 The municipality needs to modify its plans to achieve that policy, and elected officials and advocates need to hold city staff accountable for implementing the policy and plan.

6 They need to fund this new approach to their transportation network.

GRANTS



Contractors for Emerge Center started building a 7,000-square-foot school with room for nearly 50 students, up from 20. “Not only is The Emerge School the first and only public charter school in Louisiana exclusively designed for children with autism, it is also a significant extension of The Emerge Center’s successful interdisciplinary therapeutic model,” said CEO Melissa Juneau. “We look forward to seeing our campus grow with the addition of a freestanding building for the new school.”

FOUNDATION FACT:

Fund donors of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation have granted \$1.7 million to Emerge in the last five years.

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COVER

A way OUT

For Baton Rouge and addicts, a collaborative pre-trial release program is part of the behavioral health solution

By Sara Bongiorno | Photos by Tim Mueller

Every morning for years Rachel Wilson woke with a prayer. *Please, God, let me die today.*

But the Navy veteran who had guided F14s for the Navy in Puerto Rico did not leave the matter to God's hands. Wilson attempted suicide multiple times amid spiraling addiction to computer-cleaning dust.

Inhaling the potentially deadly chemical dust numbed the pain of domestic violence that started after her husband began using cocaine. "I thought my daughter would be better off without me," says Wilson, 38.

She cycled in and out of jail and hospitals in Florida and Texas, binged on dust that deprived her brain of oxygen, got sober, started huffing again.



Rachel Wilson, Navy veteran

The program “showed me a way to live without drugs and alcohol, that life is a whole lot easier without them.”

—Larry Milton

She lived on the streets, slept in alleys and under bridges, went days without eating, weeks without speaking to anyone. Her weight dropped from 125 to 86 pounds. In time she lost custody of her daughter.

Injury compounded guilt and shame after her husband’s death from an overdose. The loss set off another binge on dust. “He was a good person,” Wilson says. “Drugs do horrible things to people.”

In 2017, she was hit by a car as she walked along a highway in Pearl River. There are three metal plates and 189 tiny screws in her face, which is numb on the right side. The accident broke ribs, her back and her neck in two places, left her blind in her right eye.

She was arrested for shoplifting in 2018 after passing out on the bathroom floor of a Wal-Mart in Lafayette, a can of computer dust beside her.

Wilson landed in prison in Baton Rouge. She spent 45 days there. She kept asking God to let her die. Instead, she has turned her life around, with a hand from the new East Baton Rouge Parish Pre-Trial Release Program.

Twenty-eight people have completed the Bridge Center for Hope program that moves low-level offenders with substance abuse or mental health challenges out of jail and into treatment.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation provided initial funding for a pilot of the multi-agency program two years ago.

Program graduates include Larry Milton, 60, a 1978 alumnus of McKinley High School who drank and used drugs daily for 34 years until his arrest for cocaine possession in September 2018.

The soft-spoken Milton, who towers at six-feet, five inches, passed on an offer out of high school to play basketball at Grambling and went to work in construction. He was always a family man, fond of brushing his daughters’ hair when they were little and cooking favorites like red beans and rice.





Larry Milton, McKinley
High School alumnus

*“The program isn’t about getting out of jail.
This is about giving you a chance to change your life.”*

—Angel Rushing

But he squandered what he earned, spent as much as \$3,000 a month on drugs and alcohol. He lost jobs, his marriage broke up. He did stints in jail for drug possession.

Milton had a history of rising to a challenge: He was expelled from school in the third-grade—he never learned why—and missed fourth- and fifth-grade yet still managed to graduate from McKinley, where he ran track and played basketball.

He could not imagine life without drugs. “I saw myself as a controlled user,” Milton says.

He spent 28 days in rehab through the pre-trial program, then moved into a halfway house near downtown.

He got a job filling and boxing king cakes, then applied for a position with an industrial construction firm. Through rehab he learned how to say no to friends he’d drunk and done drugs with for years. The gravity of substance abuse hit home with the death of his look-alike older brother from drinking-related liver failure.

He completed the pre-trial program in April. He attends sobriety meetings five or six times a week and will continue to do so. He spends time with his fiancée, cooking and watching sports—golf, tennis, basketball, track and field. His head is clear.

The Bridge Center for Hope was created by the Foundation and partners to operate a pre-trial release program and to operate a crisis stabilization center, which will open next year.

His daughters tell him how proud they are of him.

“I felt trapped with no way out,” Milton says. “It showed me a way to live without drugs and alcohol, that life is a whole lot easier without them.”

Angel Rushing is a licensed social worker and the plain-spoken, down-to-earth heart of the pre-trial program. On a June afternoon, Rushing lays out how the program works to four women seated across from her on a bench in the call-out room, a

sort of make-shift courtroom at the jail that serves as her office.

The women, all arrested days earlier on drug charges, wait with an air of nervous expectation. They do not know what Rushing is going to tell them. She breaks the ice with a joke.

“I hope nobody’s missing a nail appointment,” she says. The women laugh. One tells Rushing that inmates talk about her.

“They say if you see a lady with salt-and-pepper hair and a polo shirt she is going to help you.”

Already the women have been vetted by the district attorney’s office for offenses that would disqualify them from the program, such as gun charges, or violent or sexual crimes.

“You all are what you call low-risk, public-safety people,” Rushing begins.

That’s a good thing, right? One of the women asks.

“That’s a very good thing,” Rushing answers.

She moves to the point. The women are candidates for a voluntary program that will allow them to get out of jail and have their charges dropped. But they will have to stick to a rigorous case-management plan that includes 28 days in rehab followed by five months in supervised housing—a halfway house.

They will have to get jobs and go to work during the program.

If they don’t comply with the rules—say, fail a drug test or miss a monthly court appearance with Judge Don Johnson in the 19th Judicial District Court—they will be re-arrested and brought back to jail to wait for trial.

“This is a trust program,” she says.

Rushing comes to a larger point. The program isn’t about getting out of jail, she tells them. “This is about giving you a chance to change your life,” Rushing says.

She doesn’t use the word hope, but that is what’s visible on the faces of the four women. “This is about getting you better,” she continues. “This is about giving you time to figure things out and make your lives better.”

She repeats a point she made at the outset.

“This is voluntary, up to you.”

The women are silent for a moment, then pepper Rushing with questions.

Does it cost? No.

How do you get a job while you are in rehab? You get a job after rehab.

What happens if you mess up? We'll bring you back to jail.

What rehab do you go to? It depends.

Is it for different age groups? I have people 19 to 57 in it.

The decision to enter the program might seem obvious at first take, but the exchange demonstrates that it can involve painful choices. One of the women has two children under age 10. She says she will have the option of waiting for trial at home if she wears an ankle monitor. She doesn't know how she would pay for that, but it would allow her to see her children, something she is desperate to do.

"Let me sleep on it," she tells Rushing.

Another woman has no hesitation.

"I am going to do it," she says.

One of the four is quieter than the others. She sits at the end of the bench, hands folded on her lap, head dipped.

Debbie Norwood, the program's community-resource officer who works hand-in-hand with Rushing, has been watching and listening.

"What do you think, Quiet One?" Norwood asks her.

The woman's voice is soft. She lifts a hand to brush tears and looks up at Rushing. "I've been waiting for you to come see me," the woman says.

Norwood runs a finger down a list of names of people arrested the day before. Most are ruled out: armed robbery, second-offense DUI, battery, dating violence.

"Nope, nope, nope."

Of the 21 names on the list, two look like possible candidates for pre-trial release. Norwood will send the names to the district attorney's office for further evaluation. Maybe one or two out of 10 names sent to the district attorney will get the go-ahead for further consideration.

A few feet away, Rushing is hunched at a desk with one of the four inmates she summoned to the call-out room earlier in the afternoon.

The 29-year-old woman is striking, with caramel-colored eyes. She was arrested for possession of heroin and drug paraphernalia. Rushing wants to understand her history, what kind of support system she has, what was happening in her life before her arrest, factors that will help her develop a plan for her to follow if she is released.

She has been working as a prostitute, staying in motel rooms and buying heroin. She tells Rushing she worked mostly as an administrative assistant and in fast food after dropping out of



Angel Rushing, licensed social worker, leads the pre-trial release program

Istrouma High School in the 11th grade, walked away from jobs for drug use that escalated from marijuana to cocaine to heroin. Her mother used drugs all her life, and recently sobered up. Her siblings don't talk to her. She has no friends.

"I've always been on my own," she says.

Years ago, she tested positive for Hepatitis C at since-closed Earl K. Long Hospital. She has never seen a doctor about the test results.

She asks Rushing if she plans to call her mother and share what she has told her. She isn't worried about what her mother will say about her to Rushing but about what she has told the social worker about her mother's drug use. "I don't want to hurt her feelings."

Rushing asks what she wants.

"A house, a car, a job. To be successful. I just want to stay sober. I would love to get my high school diploma."

Rushing reassures the woman, who repeats a question she



Gerald Tate, carpenter

“I want people to know that this program changed my life.”

—Gerald Tate

has asked three times over the course of the hour they spend together at the desk.

“You think I’m a good candidate for the program?”

“I think you are an awesome candidate,” Rushing says. “You are exactly who we look for.”

Norwood calls to the woman across the room as she and Rushing move toward the door.

“You have so many good years of life ahead of you,” Rushing says. “This is going to help you with your education, your life.”

•••

Gerald Tate turned 47 in March. “It was the first birthday I can remember as an adult that I was sober,” he says.

Tate was arrested on drug-possession charges last December. Rushing approached him about the program and a few days later he entered in-patient rehab.

Tate admits his first focus was on getting out of jail, not giving up drugs and alcohol that had become a fixture of daily life after graduating from Capitol High School. The stories of broken families and homelessness the carpenter and construction worker heard at required sobriety meetings made him re-think what was at stake.

“I didn’t want to go down that same path,” Tate says. “Other people’s stories motivated me to change.”

He got serious about sobriety. He joined a church, got baptized. He began to think differently. Meetings with a counselor made him more optimistic about life, even when its ups and downs are no longer tuned out.

“Feelings are intense once you detox,” says Tate, who is on schedule to complete the pre-trial program this summer.

He always spent time with his family, but “I wasn’t sober,” he says. He spends more time than ever with his children and grandchildren these days, enjoying sobriety.

He looks back at his arrest last year and sees a blessing in disguise. “I want people to know that this program changed my life,” Tate says.

When Rushing approached her about the pre-trial program, Wilson, the Navy vet, recalls her asking, *What is it going to take to save you?*

“I told her, Jesus,” Wilson says.

Rushing suggested a faith-based recovery program in Zachary. It was a good fit for Wilson. An assault during her time in the Navy and her husband’s later abuse had made her fearful of men and large groups. The Zachary program provided more separation between men and women than many in-patient facilities and fewer large-group gatherings, Wilson says.

Computer-dust is highly psychologically addictive but does not involve physical dependency, meaning she did not need medical detox. What she needed, Wilson says, was spiritual healing.

“She understood what I needed,” Wilson says of Rushing.

Rushing also helped Wilson write a letter to her daughter, who turns 10 this summer. The girl is musical, like her father, and Wilson sent her a blue guitar for Christmas. She longs to see her but understands the process needs to move at her daughter’s pace.

She continues to rebuild her life.

She remarried last year. She has undergone three surgeries since the 2017 car accident and will undergo a procedure later this year to repair delicate connective tissue in her eyelid.

She is learning to trust people and making connections with people worthy of trust. She was one of the pre-trial program’s first three graduates. The charges against her were dropped when she completed the program in summer 2018.

Completing the program made Wilson eligible for a state program to help her complete her bachelor’s degree. Class credits from three years at LSU are still good. She will take online courses through Northwestern University in the fall to complete her undergraduate degree in psychology in December.

Wilson will then complete more than 400 clinical hours to become a licensed clinical dependency counselor. She plans to focus on helping women in abusive situations.

Wilson thanks God and her mother above all others. Suicide is off the table, she says. She owes certain people who have helped her survive, she says.

She repeats a different morning prayer. *Let me make every moment count. Let me do better for myself and for others.* •

For people in crisis, *a brighter horizon*

When law enforcement officers arrest nonviolent people in crisis, they have two bad options—jail or the emergency room. A far better choice will be available next year when the Bridge Center opens its crisis stabilization center. Kathy Kliebert, Bridge Center board chair, gives us an update on the center, the first of its kind for Baton Rouge.

CURRENTS: THE NATION, STATES AND CITIES ARE REFORMING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES, WHICH INCLUDES INCARCERATION REFORM. WHY IS THAT HAPPENING NOW?

KLIEBERT: Across the country, and certainly in Baton Rouge, individuals are realizing that people with behavioral health challenges do not belong in prison; they belong in treatment programs that help them establish a productive and fulfilling life. Providing early, effective care also saves taxpayer dollars. Most important, though, it's the right, humane thing to do.

TELL US ABOUT THE PROGRAMS OF THE BRIDGE CENTER AND HOW THEY FIT INTO THE REFORM MOVEMENT.

In our recently released Solicitation of Proposals, we've asked respondents to present comprehensive proposals to include a Mobile Assessment Team, Crisis Assessment Center, Sobering Beds, Detox Beds, Respite Services and a Care Management Team operating from a facility approved by the Bridge Center. These particular services will help to fill identified gaps in service, without duplicating services that are already provided in the capital area.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF CONTRACTING WITH A SERVICE PROVIDER VERSUS BRIDGE OPERATING THE CENTER ITSELF?

There are many advantages. We anticipate contracting with an experienced provider. That provider will bring best practices

and a wealth of experience in operating the first behavioral-health, crisis stabilization unit in Louisiana.

WILL THE PROVIDER OR THE BOARD CHOOSE A LOCATION FOR THE SERVICES?

The final location will be determined by the Bridge Center board in concert with the service provider.

HAVE YOU NARROWED DOWN POSSIBLE SITES OR AN AREA OF THE PARISH FOR LOCATING THE CENTER?

We've had some preliminary meetings but are not making any decisions until we see how the responses to the Solicitation shake out.

DO YOU ANTICIPATE A GRADUAL PHASE-IN OF OPERATIONS BY MARCH OF NEXT YEAR? WILL SOME ASPECTS OF THE CENTER REQUIRE MORE TIME TO REACH FULL SPEED?

We hope to get all programs up and running as soon as possible. It may be reasonable to expect some will reach full capacity sooner than others, though we will work to bring the facility to full operations as expediently as possible.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE SERVED BY THE CENTER EACH YEAR?

The number of people served will depend on how the community chooses to utilize the center. We expect annual capacity of up to 5,000 served, using 30 beds in keeping with best practices around care delivery.

ONE OF THE STATED AIMS IN THE SOLICITATION OF PROPOSALS IS REDUCING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUES WHO NOW END UP IN PARISH PRISON. DO YOU HAVE A SPECIFIC TARGET FOR A REDUCED NUMBER OF SUCH IMPRISONMENTS?

No, but we anticipate that the number of people who are



Kathy Kliebert, Bridge Center chair, was head of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals.

diverted from prison will increase as first responders better understand the benefit of the Bridge Center.

BIG PICTURE, HOW SIGNIFICANT IS THE CENTER'S OPENING TO OUR COMMUNITY? CAN YOU GIVE A SENSE OF WHAT THIS MEANS TO THE PARISH?

The Bridge Center will be a significant asset to our community. Voters in this parish overwhelmingly voted in favor of taxing

themselves so we can better care for loved ones and neighbors who are working to overcome mental health and substance abuse challenges. While we have many great service providers in the parish, the truth is that there is still a significant need. Some of that need will be addressed by the Bridge Center. It will provide stabilization for those in behavioral health crises, something that is not now available anywhere in Louisiana in a coordinated way. •



MANSHIP THEATRE
SHAW CENTER FOR THE ARTS
YOUR NON-PROFIT VENUE

MANSHIP THEATRE 2019-2020 Season

Aug 2-3 | 7:30 PM | Aug 4 | 2:00 PM

Musical Encore Series Presents: Sondheim On Sondheim in Hartley/Vey Theatre

Using exclusive interview footage, and ranging from the beloved to the obscure, the carefully selected two-dozen songs hang from a framework of in-depth video interviews, delving into Sondheim's personal life and artistic process.

Aug 3 | 7:30 PM | Pablo Cruise

After a long hiatus (over 25 years!), the band is back on tour - featuring three of the original founders. The Yacht Rock genre at its best!

Aug 28 | 7:30 PM | Jake Shimabukuro

Shimabukuro's records have topped the Billboard World Music Charts on numerous occasions, and as a live performer he has become one of the hottest tickets around. See him master the ukelele with his trio.

Sept 9 | 7:30 PM | Keb Mo

He has received 11 GRAMMY nominations, in total, including Country Song of the Year for "I Hope," co-written with The Dixie Chicks, and 3 alone for his 2014 self-produced release, BLUESAmericana including Americana Album of the Year.

Sept 18 | 7:30 PM | Tapestry: The Story of Carole King

Suzanne O. Davis recreates the sound and vibe of a 1970's Carole King concert following her legendary album, Tapestry.

Oct 8 | 7:30 PM | Harlem 100

Created in collaboration with the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, this multi-media show captures the sights and sounds of Harlem when legendary artists such as Fats Waller, Duke Ellington, Langston Hughes and Billie Holiday made Harlem the cultural center of the country.

Oct 17 | 7:30 PM | War

Formed in 1969, War is a musical crossover band that fuses elements of rock, funk, jazz, Latin, rhythm and blues, and reggae.

Oct 20 | 2:00 & 7:00 PM | Ballet X

BalletX produces original choreography that expands the vocabulary of classical dance for all audiences. In partnership with Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre.

Oct 24 | 7:30 PM | Pablo Sainz Villegas

Praised as "the soul of the Spanish guitar" (Billboard 2016), Pablo Sáinz Villegas has become a worldwide sensation known as this generation's great guitarist.

Oct 27 | 2:00 PM | Lightwire Theatre: The Ugly Duckling

Lined with electroluminescent wire, the beloved story of The Ugly Duckling plays out on stage through a cutting-edge blend of puppetry, technology and dance.

Nov 10 | 4:00 PM | Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia: Rainbow Fish

These widely-travelled productions incorporate innovative puppetry, striking scenic effects, and evocative original music to provide very young audiences with an effortless introduction to the performing arts and the excitement of reading.

Nov 17 | 2:00 PM | National Geographic Live! Speaker Series: Mireya Mayor

Host of Nat Geo WILD series Wild Nights with Mireya Mayor, Mayor has been hailed as a "female Indiana Jones," and an inspiration to young women interested in science and exploration.

Dec 2 | 7:30 PM | The Doo Wop Project Holiday Show

Featuring stars from the Broadway hits Jersey Boys, Motown: The Musical, and A Bronx Tale, The Doo Wop Project brings unparalleled authenticity of sound and vocal excellence to recreate—and in some cases entirely reimagine—the greatest music in American pop and rock history.



FOR TICKETS: MANSHIPTHEATRE.ORG • (225) 344 - 0334

Supported in part by a grant from the Louisiana Division of the Arts, Office of Cultural Development, Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism, in cooperation with the Louisiana State Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency.



John G. Turner
Jerry G. Fischer





Dec 3 | 7:30 PM | The Wood Brothers

A roots music trio featuring brothers that bring a distinctive flair to their union of folk, blues, gospel, and jazz.

Dec 12 | 7:30 PM | Gatlin Brothers Country & Christmas Tour

Bringing you a holly mix of Christmas music and gospel, all with country roots.

Dec 15 | 2:00 PM | Angelina Ballerina: Very Merry Holiday The Musical

With dancing, singing and festivities, this heart-warming musical is perfect for everyone's holiday season!

Dec 17 & 18 | 7:30 PM | Cool Winter Nights and Hot Jazz

Cool Winter Nights and Hot Jazz will feature Brian Shaw, Willis Delony, Fr. Greg Daigle, Sasha Masakowski, and Bill Grimes in a program of new arrangements and holiday favorites.

Dec 26 | 7:30 PM | 10th Annual Home for the Holidays

The event was started to shine light on Louisiana singer-songwriters that are living in Nashville who are "home for the holidays".

Jan 21 | 7:30 PM | National Geographic Live! Speaker Series: Kevin Hand

Working at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, he is designing instruments that will travel to Jupiter's moon Europa to search for a possible subsurface ocean there that may support primitive forms of life.

Jan 26 | 2:00 PM | Walk On: The Story of Rosa Parks

Exciting and inspirational, Walk On: The Story of Rosa Parks shows how the determination of one individual made all the difference in the struggle for freedom and equality in the United States.

Feb 4 | 7:30 PM | National Geographic Live! Speaker Series: Bryan Smith

Join filmmaker Bryan Smith on the edge of what's possible in extreme filmmaking.

Feb 6 | 7:30 PM | Steve Riley & Geno Delafosse with Los Texmaniacs

All accordionists will perform in duos or trios taking people on an exotic journey from the roots & history to the current state of each player's unique traditional music.

Feb 13 | 7:30 PM | Aquila Theatre Presents: 1984

1984 is a classic by one of literature's most significant authors and provides the kind of evocative and innovative storytelling that suits Aquila's bold, ensemble driven, physical style. Homer's Odyssey will be presented Feb 12 at 9:00 AM.

Feb 14 | 7:30 PM | A Cappella Live!

A high-energy musical celebration of contemporary a cappella, conceived and arranged by the vocal producer of Pitch Perfect and The Sing-Off.

Feb 16 | 2:00 PM | Theatre Heroes Present: Call of the Wild

This multi-media adventure mixes performance and storytelling with projected illustrations to tell a thrilling tale of courage and survival.

Mar 5 | 6:00 PM | Red Carpet Gala

Stay tuned for artist reveal!

Mar 22 | 2:00 PM | Inlet Dance Theatre: What Do You Do With an Idea

Told through movement, music, and narration, an ensemble of dancers creates a magical world where ideas grow and take flight.

Mar 26 | 7:30 PM | Drum Tao: Japanese Drum Art

In 2004, DRUM TAO attended the world's largest festival of the arts - the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and made No.1 box-office smash hit of the festival in spite of their first participation.

May 7 | 7:30 PM | Colin Hay

Scottish-Australian singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist and actor who came to prominence as the lead vocalist of the band Men at Work, and later also as a solo artist.

May 14 | 7:30 PM | The Allman Betts Band

The sons of Gregg Allman (Devon Allman) and Dickey Betts (Duane Betts) have joined forces to form The Allman Betts Band. The show features new music, songs from their solo projects and classic Allman Brothers and Gregg Allman tunes in honor of the 50th Anniversary of The Allman Brothers Band.

FOR TICKETS: MANSHIPTHEATRE.ORG • (225) 344 - 0334

Supported in part by a grant from the Louisiana Division of the Arts, Office of Cultural Development, Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism, in cooperation with the Louisiana State Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency.



John G. Turner
Jerry G. Fischer



A time to HEAL

*For children in poverty, basic health screenings
a gamechanger in classroom learning*

By Maggie Heyn Richardson | Photo by Tim Mueller

Sometimes, it's the simplest solution that yields the best results.

For Health and Education Alliance of Louisiana (HEAL), that means connecting the dots between the health care needs of children in poverty and how they succeed in the classroom. School-based hearing, vision and BMI screenings can reveal a multitude of data points that can get to the heart of what's holding a student back academically, says CEO Connie Bellone of the New Orleans-based nonprofit.

"When we first started screening children, 48% of them failed their vision screenings," Bellone says. "How can you pay attention in class when you can't see?"

HEAL's mission is to eliminate the health disparities of children in poverty through a holistic model that operates in public schools and brings teachers, school administrators and school nurses together, with them ultimately running the program.

The organization started as the Early Childhood and Family

Learning Foundation in 2006 for the purpose of restoring early learning programs to young children in post-Katrina New Orleans. Health programming was a component of the work, and it revealed the strong connection between health and school success, says Bellone, a registered nurse.

At the time, the program was largely associated with one school where a multitude of community partners were working together. Bellone says something became clear, that 20% of the served population required about 80% of staff time and resources—the so-called Pareto Principle in action.

"Over and over, we would hear that the special education students, or the ones who really struggled, were often the unhealthiest kids, including mental and behavioral health issues," says Bellone. "Children often don't have the vocabulary to describe what's going on with them, so they act out and perform poorly."

The model that would eventually become HEAL took root. It is based on the core principle of prioritizing children's health



Connie Bellone

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation granted \$300,000 to Health and Education Alliance to expand across New Orleans and Louisiana. HEAL is exploring options to serve Baton Rouge.

within a school community through basic health screenings and through regular conferences and follow-up strategies between teachers and school nurses.

A decentralized model based on a “whole child” approach, HEAL has created a new culture of school-based health awareness and action. The program currently works in more than 50 schools in four school districts, and it has screened more than 47,000 children.

In February, HEAL received a \$300,000 grant from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation to help the program expand across greater New Orleans and in other parts of the state over the next three years.

HEAL works through capacity building. Bellone dispatches her small staff to schools where, for a period of time, they demonstrate how to create a whole child-focused program,

“What we do is build the capacity of the school district to manage the health of the students. We are teaching schools how to case manage kids, work with parents and access health benefits.”

—Connie Bellone, Health and Education Alliance of Louisiana

complete with annual health screenings and multi disciplinary action plans. HEAL nurses are part of the team and are sometimes accompanied by junior and senior nursing students from the LSU School of Nursing.

“What we do is build the capacity of the school district to manage the health of the students,” she says. “We are teaching schools how to case manage kids, work with parents and access health benefits.”

The HEAL team stays as long as it takes to create a working system within the school. For some schools, it happens in a matter of months, while other schools need three years. In the beginning, HEAL employees handle the bulk of the work, but then gradually train school staff on best practices.

Bellone says providing annual screenings has been a powerful tool and key to the program’s success. HEAL found that hearing and vision screening failures among children dropped from 48% to 17% after schools implemented annual screenings. The screenings not only reveal vision and hearing problems that need correction, but can also unearth other conditions, like glaucoma and diabetes.

Another factor in HEAL’s success is that its staff works closely with teachers and nurses to casework the needs of each student. As a team, these individuals discuss possible classroom modifications, parent follow-ups and what basic services a child may need to be able to thrive in and out of the classroom.


“This is where the magic happens,” says Bellone. “It gives everyone at the school buy-in. The nurses and teachers are given support and everyone understands the issues that might be going on with a particular student.”

Bellone says HEAL has also made a difference with teacher retention because teachers now have additional resources for children who were struggling academically. With their health issues being addressed, these students have a better chance of succeeding in the classroom. Grade point averages rose from between 25% and 60% in schools where HEAL operates.

Most importantly, the HEAL team shows schools and the Local Education Authority (LEA) or school district how to access Medicaid funds intended for school-based health care costs, including health screenings, speech therapy, occupational therapy, psychological counseling and other services. To date, Louisiana schools have not taken full advantage of accessing these federal funds, she says.

“We know how to access this funding stream and we can show LEAs how to do it,” says Bellone. “Louisiana is the fourth worst state in the country for accessing these funds, while having one of the highest numbers of children in poverty.”

Bellone adds that Louisiana has incorporated the importance of accessing these funds in its 2019 Medicaid State Plan. Using them for school-based health care means saving the state money now and as children get older, says Bellone. •



“My heart swells when we talk about the mental health project. Baton Rouge is recognizing that it's up to all of us to make sure that we're treating the people who need that help—effectively.”

Crowning more than five years of Foundation work, voters approved a tax for a mental health treatment center. The center will open next year, thanks to our members.

Rose Hudson
Member since 2011

Membership

is more than financial support.

It's a declaration by our members that they *believe in our region* and its future.

In 2019, we'll use member support to expand justice reforms with local officials, pursue funding to implement the lakes master plan, add more space for scientists on the Water Campus, press efforts to reclaim the city, and expand education opportunities for schoolchildren.

Please renew your membership or join us as a new member at BRAf.org/membership.

Memberships start at \$200.

mental HEALTH

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*

Rocket Man

*50 years ago, an LSU graduate made
the walk on the moon possible*

By Libby Haydel

Apollo 11 astronaut Neil Armstrong is rightfully remembered for taking man's first steps on the moon 50 years ago on July 20, 1969. Less well known, perhaps, is LSU mechanical engineering alumnus Maxime "Max" Faget, who designed the spacecraft responsible for that "giant leap for mankind."

Born in Stann Creek, British Honduras, now Belize, in 1921, Faget was the son of American doctor Guy Henry Faget and the great-grandson of New Orleans doctor Jean Charles Faget. Guy Henry was famous for discovering the first effective treatment for leprosy using promin and also served as director of the United States Marine Hospital in Carville, Louisiana. Jean Charles is renowned for discovering the unique symptom of yellow fever, known as the Faget sign, which allowed early detection and quarantine. Unlike the men before him, however, Max took a different path in life.

His quest for discovery began at a young age when he built model airplanes with his brother and read science fiction magazines. After graduating from high school in San Francisco, Faget enrolled in mechanical engineering at LSU, where he earned his bachelor's degree in 1943. Rather than find a job in his field right away, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served as a submarine

naval officer aboard the USS Guavina in the South Pacific during World War II.

"You had to volunteer to be on a submarine," Faget's only son, Guy, said. "They couldn't just assign you to it. Dad chose a submarine because it behaves like a plane, except they're in water. The dynamics are similar."

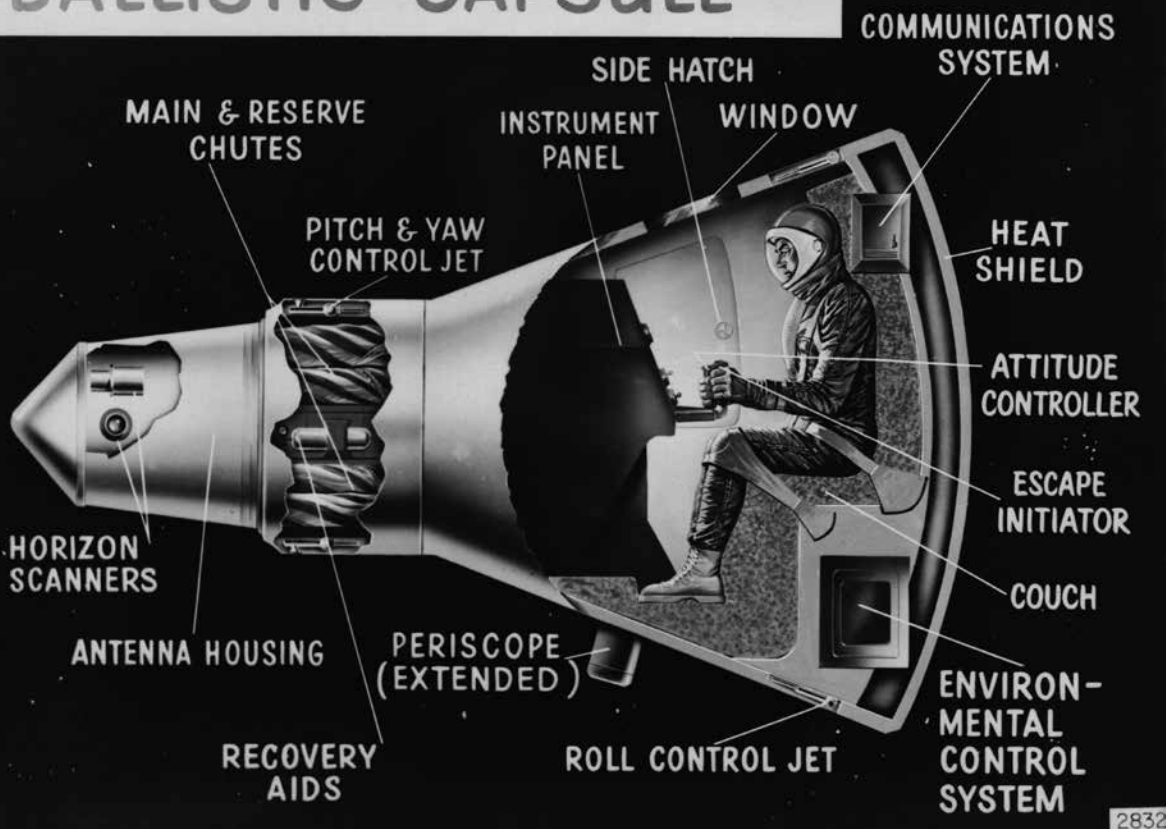
Once the USS Guavina was decommissioned in 1946, Faget contacted a college friend who worked at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory in Langley, Virginia. It was here that he became a research scientist first assigned to Langley's Applied Materials and Physics Division working on rocket propulsion. He then transferred to the Pilotless Aircraft Research Division, where he helped create the North American X-15, a hypersonic spacecraft designed to reach the edge of outer space and return with valuable information that could be used to design aircraft and spacecraft.

FROM MERCURY TO APOLLO

In 1958, NACA became NASA, and the Space Task Group was created. Faget was part of this team of 35 engineers who were responsible for NASA's manned spaceflight programs, includ-



PROJECT MERCURY BALLISTIC CAPSULE



LSU alum Max Faget designed the Mercury capsule and, later, was among lead designers of the Space Shuttle.

ing Project Mercury, the first U.S. human spaceflight program that ran from 1958 to 1963. The goal of this project was to put a man into Earth's orbit and return him safely, ideally beating the Soviet Union in the process.

Faget served as the principal designer of the Mercury spacecraft, which included a launch escape system (called a "chicken switch" by Faget) and small retrorockets to bring the spacecraft out of its orbit. The capsule and astronaut would then return to Earth by way of a parachute water landing. Ironically, the launch escape system Faget designed was never needed by the U.S.—a good thing—but the idea was stolen by the Soviets and saved two of their cosmonauts.

The Mercury program's success led to Project Gemini, in which Faget designed a two-person capsule and perfected space-docking maneuvers that would help with the subsequent Apollo program announced a few weeks after the first manned-Mercury

flight. Altogether, there were 20 unmanned-Mercury flights and six successfully manned.

Though the Apollo program was conceived during the Eisenhower administration in 1960, President John F. Kennedy announced in 1961 that the U.S. would send astronauts to the moon and bring them safely back to Earth. In order to reach this goal, NASA found it necessary to build a larger new facility in Houston called the Manned Spacecraft Center (later named the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center), where Faget would serve as director of engineering and development until his retirement.

After years of perfecting the Apollo mission, NASA was ready to send three astronauts to the moon in the Saturn V rocket. It would take the crew 76 hours to travel 240,000 miles to their destination.

"I remember we were at home and dad was at the office, in case they needed any consultation, since they didn't have pagers in

FOUNDATION FACT:

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and our fund donors granted \$317,575 to the LSU School of Engineering. Overall, the Foundation distributed \$3.3 million to LSU and all of its affiliates from 2015 to 2018.

those days,” Guy said. “We were pretty flabbergasted watching the landing on TV. When you walked outside that day, you could see the moon, and I thought, ‘Wow. There are people up there.’”

“I was at summer school at LSU at the time, but I remember going outside and looking up at the moon, trying to imagine that there were actually men up there,” said Ann Faget, the oldest of Faget’s children.

“We all watched it together, and it was so exciting,” Faget’s second oldest daughter, Carol, said. “The tension, though; I was so afraid something was going to go wrong.”

Faget’s children weren’t the only people amazed by his work. It’s estimated that 600 million people across the world watched the first U.S. moon landing on TV.

Over the course of 11 years, the Apollo program saw six missions land on the moon, with 12 astronauts walking on the lunar surface.

THE SPACE SHUTTLE

Before the Apollo program ended in 1972, Faget had begun designing the first Space Shuttle that could carry up to eight astronauts and serve as an airplane gliding them back to Earth. The Space Shuttle program, officially known as the Space Transportation System, would become the only winged, reusable, manned spacecraft in the world. It was 17 times bigger than the Apollo capsule.

Guy remembers hearing his dad talk about the new invention he was working on.

“When I was 15 in the spring of 1969, my dad took his friend Dr. Dan Daniel [LSU professor emeritus of mechanical engineering and former chairperson of the LSU Department of Mechanical Engineering], his son, and myself on a two-hour drive to go fishing,” Guy said. “Dad was telling Dr. Daniel about his new invention, the concept of a reusable rocket that would go

into space and return safely to earth as a glider.

“Not long after that, dad made his balsa wood models that he would glide in the back yard. I was out there with him and would watch him throw these like a paper airplane. Then I would pick them up and glide them back to him. What I remember is each time he would pick one up, he would look at it and examine it with his aerodynamic eye, trying to figure out a way to make it perform better. I distinctly remember that.”

It would be nine years after the Apollo program ended before the Space Shuttle first launched on April 12, 1981. Astronauts John

Young and Robert Crippen were aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia, which lifted off from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The flight was a success, to which Faget said, “Thank God.”

“My mother and I were present in the Mission Control viewing room for the first shuttle landing,” Ann said. “The biggest cheer came when they broke radio silence, indicating they had safely re-entered Earth’s atmosphere. It was a very proud moment for my dad and the rest of the team.”

Faget retired soon after the first shuttle flight, but not without leaving his mark on American history. From 1981 to 2011, the STS would see 133 successful flights, none of which would have been possible without Faget’s design expertise.

“Dr. Faget was known to be an outstanding engineer and had great concepts,” said former NASA Chief Engineer for the International Space Station Chester Vaughan, who worked under Faget at NACA and the Johnson Space Center. “We considered him the father of our organization. He always had new ideas, which is why he had such a great career.”

RETIREMENT FROM NASA AND A LOVE FOR LSU

Leaving NASA, however, didn’t mean Faget was done with space exploration. He joined consulting firm Eagle Engineering, then went on to found Space Industries Inc., with hopes to build a privately owned space station called the Industrial Space Facility. Though the ISF did not come to fruition, Space Industries Inc. created the Wake Shield Facility, an experimental science platform that flew twice aboard the Space Shuttle to demonstrate a technique for processing material in a near-perfect vacuum.

“After Space Industries, my dad still liked to build things at home, read, watch sports, play pool and cards, travel, socialize with friends, and dote on his dog, Cleo,” Nanette said.

TO THE MAX


1921: Born in British Honduras, now Belize


1943: graduated from LSU in mechanical engineering


1962-1981: Director of Development for NASA Johnson Space Center

2003: Inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame. “It’s hard to tell people how you invent something. You see a problem, you solve a problem. I enjoy solving problems,” said Faget at the induction ceremony.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

 Designed the Mercury capsule with an escape tower, called the “chicken switch.” Design ultimately saved two Russian cosmonauts in 1983.

 Collaborated with NASA engineer Caldwell Johnson to design the Apollo spacecraft for lunar landing.

 Collaborated to design the Space Shuttle

Faget didn’t watch just any sports, however. He loved LSU sports.

“He loved everything about LSU,” Guy said. “One thing he wasn’t shy about was bragging about LSU sports.”

“I remember listening to LSU football games on the radio on Saturdays and then watching them on TV when we had access to a station,” Nanette recalled.

His children remember that in June 2000, their dad suffered a heart attack while watching LSU play in the College World Series Championship game. After arriving to the hospital, the first thing Faget asked Ann was, “What’s the score?”

“He didn’t want me to stay in the room with him,” Ann said. “I had to go out to the waiting room where the game was on and report back to him at the top and bottom of every inning. Who knows if the stress of watching the game brought on his attack, but the news that LSU had won its fifth CWS title certainly put him in a good mood!”

An even bigger testament to Faget’s love for LSU is that two of his children attended the university.

“You could definitely say dad had a lot to do with my coming to LSU,” said Ann, who earned an English degree from LSU and worked for a NASA contractor. “He was a real LSU fan.”

Guy, who graduated from LSU with an entomology degree and is a commercial pilot, said that it felt natural to attend his dad’s alma mater.

“Ann had already gone, so I thought it was a cool idea, and Dr. Daniels was still there,” Guy said. “In my case, I finished school [at LSU] and never moved back to Texas.”

Though Carol and Nanette didn’t attend LSU, they still followed in the Faget family’s footsteps. Carol, like her grandfather, became a doctor—one of only three female pediatricians in Austin at the time. Nanette not only went into aerospace and worked for NASA for 36 years as an engineering manager, but she also married an astronaut who was on the STS-125 mission to repair the Hubble Space Telescope in 2009.

“When we were looking at colleges, dad gave me some advice,” Nanette said. “He said, if you just major in aerospace, you’ll be limited, but if you become a mechanical engineer, you’ll be able to do anything an aerospace engineer can do, and you’ll have a lot more opportunities. So, that’s what I did. I was always good in math and science, so it was a natural inclination to become an engineer.”

FAMILY LIFE

Though renowned for his extensive work with NASA, Faget’s engineering skills paled in comparison to his role as a husband

“There is no one in space flight history, in this or any other country, who has had a larger impact on man's quest for space exploration.”

—Christopher Kraft, former Johnson Space Center director, when Faget died in 2004, at age 83 of cancer.

and father. According to Faget's four children, their fondest memories of their dad are stolen moments spent at the beach or the dinner table after a long day.

“He was always home for dinner, and we got to hear about his work—other leaders at NASA and the technical, strategic, and operational decisions they struggled with,” Nanette said. “It was always interesting. I had a sense that he was very influential, and I was very proud of that.”

“Dad would always find time to take us on vacation in the summer, which we have tried to pass on to our kids,” Guy said.

Carol fondly remembers being on her dad's shoulders while wading in the Atlantic Ocean on their beach trips to North Carolina. Faget also loved sailing and would take all four kids out on the boat to crew for him. He also knew his way around the kitchen. Nanette recalls her dad making crepes with bacon, powdered sugar, and syrup every New Year's Day, and Ann looked forward to his Bananas Foster.

“He had a special recipe,” Nanette said. “It was quite the production.”

“For us, he was just our dad,” Ann said.

“He wasn't just a great father, he was a great husband,” Guy said. “Mom was his anchor.”

Faget met his wife Nancy while training in Philadelphia to become a submariner, and the two were married for 47 years before Nancy passed away in 1994.

“When she passed away, he told us several times how much he missed her,” Guy said. “Those 10 years without her were very tough for him.”

“Mom was proud and a big supporter,” Nanette said. “She kept everything going smoothly for him at home so he could focus on work.”

Faget's family and NASA weren't the only ones to recognize his talent. In October 1969, Faget was inducted into the International Space Hall of Fame in New Mexico. In 2003, just a year before his death, Faget was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in Akron, Ohio.

“He was very excited about that,” said Guy, who alongside his sister Ann, accompanied their father to Akron.

Faget, who was inducted into the LSU Alumni Association Hall of Distinction in 1971, also received the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, the Arthur S. Flemming Award, and the John J. Montgomery Award, which was created by the National Society of Aerospace Professionals and the San Diego Aerospace Museum for aerospace achievement. He was also the first recipient of the Rotary National Award for Space Achievement and one of the first inductees to the LSU College of Engineering Hall of Distinction.

Faget has 12 patents to his name, including the Aerial Capsule Emergency Separation Device, the Survival Couch, the Mercury Capsule, and a Mach Number Indicator.

If he were here today, his children said their father would be excited to see the senior design projects that LSU Engineering students are working on. Carol also thinks he would have a bit of advice to offer students.

“He has told students at lectures that besides being a good engineer, you need to know how to write,” she said. “You must be able to convey your ideas. I think he would also say do what you love. Don't sell yourself short. We're designed to be curious, and there's such satisfaction in discovery.” •

SMART VEGETABLES

AppHarvest will do good by growing good. The company is building a 60-acre greenhouse in Morehead, Kentucky. Among the largest greenhouses in the world, it will employ 275, with some workers transitioning from the declining coal industry. The company will grow hydroponic tomatoes and cucumbers without pesticides. A retention pond will reduce water use by 90%. “By establishing a homegrown food supply here in the central location of Appalachia, we’ll be able to reach 70% of the U.S. population in just a day’s drive,” says CEO Jonathan Webb. Vegetable production begins next year.



CATCHING CANCER

Investors have provided \$110 million in capital to Thrive Early Detection, a startup that is competing with Grail, which has raised \$1 billion to detect cancers using a simple blood test. The companies are searching for distinct proteins and mutated DNA that are sloughed into blood by tumors of all types. A routine blood test could detect cancers earlier, when treatment is cheaper and more successful. Thrive will release findings of a clinical trial next year.





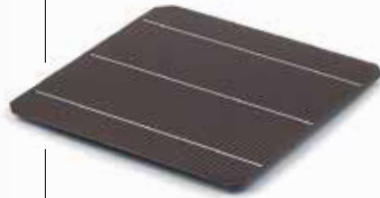
CENTRAL TO HEALTH

CVS is transforming itself into a wellness company. It was the first large chain to stop selling cigarettes. This year, it tested HealthHubs in three Houston pharmacies, dedicating about 20% of retail space to nutrition counseling, fitness classes and products, and homeopathy offerings, such as supplements to improve sleep, as well as quick clinics. Meeting revenue goals in Houston, CVS is adding HealthHubs to 1,500 pharmacies by the end of 2021.



ELECTED JUDGES BIASED

Do elected judges impose harsher sentences? A new study asserts that's the case, but not across the board. A working paper from Christian Dipple of UCLA and Michael Boyer of Columbia Business School, coupled with solid research in other instances, says that judges in four of 12 states dispensed longer sentences near election time, an indication they were currying favor with voters. Louisiana voters elect judges. Independent panels appoint judges in some states.



SOLAR BATTERY RACE

A UK company will market solar panels that include perovskite. By layering the mineral atop silicon, Oxford PV's cells will convert 28% of sunlight into energy, a 21% boost from the best cells today. Theoretically, a perovskite-on-silicon array could turn 43% of sunlight into power, which would upend the energy business. Several companies are testing perovskite-silicon cells.



FOOD DESERT SOLUTION

In Baltimore, there is food in the food desert and a lesson for other cities. Salvation Army leader Gene Hogg's vision has been turned into DMG Foods, an innovative grocery store that began operating in an underserved community last year. Shoppers who qualify for government assistance can discreetly print extra vouchers at in-store kiosks, which also dispense healthy recipes. Children get free fruit, adults get workforce training. Volunteers work at DMG ("Do the Most Good") to keep grocery costs down. FastCompany chose Hogg for its list of most creative people.

CLEVER PACKAGING

A simple solution for reducing plastic use. Replace the water in cleaning products with tablets that can be mixed with water at home, reducing the use of single-use plastic bottles. A company named Blueland is the latest to offer direct delivery of cleaning tablets. Blueland's \$29 startup kit includes three reusable plastic bottles and cleaning pills for glass, bathroom and multi-surfaces. The company sells \$2 refills. Dazz and Bottle Bright are in the same market.



CODA



GEARS OF INNOVATION

Leroy and Fran Harvey established a donor-advised fund at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and used the charitable account to send 18 students from East Feliciana Middle School on a summer field trip to Michigan. The students traveled with four chaperones to explore the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation in Dearborn. It features the Rosa Parks bus, driving America exhibit, the Heroes of the Sky Exhibit and Greenfield Village.

If you are interested in opening a charitable fund at the Foundation, please contact Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126 or ehutchison@braf.org.

“Reclaiming downtown has given a lot of hope to our younger generation. The energy is spreading across our parish. You can see it in Mid City and the exciting redevelopment that’s taking place there.”

More than \$2 billion has been invested in downtown since the Foundation underwrote a master plan. The city center is alive again; our members have made it so.

Cordell Haymon
Member since 1989



Membership

is more than financial support.

It’s a declaration by our members that they

*believe in
our region*

and its future.

In 2019, we’ll use member support to expand justice reforms with local officials, pursue funding to implement the lakes master plan, add more space for scientists on the Water Campus, press efforts to reclaim the city, and expand education opportunities for schoolchildren.

Please renew your membership or join us as a new member at BRAf.org/membership.

DOWNTOWN *redevelopment*

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TOMORROW IS BUILT BY WHAT WE DO TODAY

Lemoine is proud to partner with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation in a shared vision to improve the community where we live and work. Together, we are all constructors of our community, builders of our future.



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