

In and about Washington

April 2022
FREE—TAKE ONE



Festival big success

A bright March 19 brought a big crowd to the first revival of our Main Street festival. It will likely become an annual affair, copying one replaced a dozen years ago by a short-lived Catfish Festival.

It offered food and crafts made by local people. Old cars drew nostalgic comments. The Easter Bunny greeted kids. A street dance ended the day.

We and visitors had a good time.

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Of Note

THE ANTIQUE FAIR and Yard Sale will be April 8 through 10 at the Old Schoolhouse Antique Mall. As many as 200 vendors fill the campus of the old Washington High School during the twice-yearly event.

THE STEAMBOAT CITY Association is provisionally accepting applications for two \$750 scholarships for graduating high school seniors who live in or near Washington and who intend to continue their education. The organization is awaiting funding for the annual grants. To apply, contact Jim Bradshaw, c/o Steamboat City Association, P.O. Box 1121, Washington LA 70589.

THE WASHINGTON BAPTIST Easter Sunday service will be held at 9 a.m.

A 5:30 P.M. Mass, followed by the Way of the Cross, is offered each Friday during Lent at Immaculate Conception Church.

THE HEALTH BUGGY provides free screening for blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol on the Immaculate Conception parking lot from 8 to 11 a.m. each third Friday.

Send items for *In and About Washington* to Jim Bradshaw, P.O. Box 1121, or jimbradshaw4321@gmail.com.



Park pickets

Ole Wood Accents donated more than 800 pickets to the Ethel Park project. “With this donation fencing around the park can be completed,” Mayor Dwight Landreneau said. “Thanks to Ben and Pat Fontenot and their employees for this generous donation.”

Association elects Hallie Coreil

Hallie Coreil has been elected president of the Steamboat City Association, replacing Jim Bradshaw, who stepped down after more than ten years in the position. Other officers are Skip Holloway, vice president; Jenny Malbrue, secretary; and Anne Jones, treasurer.

Board members are Bradshaw, RoseMarye Boudreaux, Mary Ann Lavergne, Stephanie Tompkins, Ted Bertrand, and Haille Polotzola.

The nonprofit group was begun in 2011 to support community activities.

Market planned for pavilion

A monthly Washington Main Street Market featuring local vendors is planned to open May 15 at the town pavilion. Contact Laura Wilson, 337-351-4244 for vendor information.

THE WEATHER



March 1-27
High: 84, March 6
Average High: 70.9
Low: 28, March 12
Average Low: 46.7
March Rainfall: 2.88
Avg. March Rain: 3.89
Rain for 2022: 4.96
Avg. Yearly Rain: 12.59



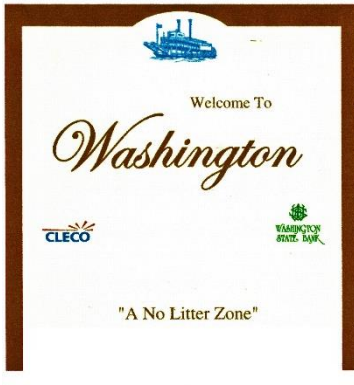
Moving the box

Mayor Dwight Landreneau and Albert Dorsey moved the collection box at the post office to allow easier turning in the parking lot.

Travel leaders to help boost town

The Louisiana Travel Association Leadership Academy will develop an interactive Facebook page and website for Washington that will incorporate a marketing plan developed by students in the Department of Communications at ULL.

The project comes after St. Landry tourism director Herman Fuselier was selected to participate in the academy. It requires that participants adopt a year-long project, and Fuselier adopted promoting Washington as his.



New signs

Thanks to Washington State Bank and CLECO new signs are being installed at the entrances to town. These signs will also serve as a place to advertise community

Mayor Dwight Landreneau met March 18 with Fuselier and members of the academy to discuss the digital media plan and coordinate it with the work by the ULL students. The students met with the mayor and a group of Washington citizens in February to gather ideas and are expected to have a first report this month or next.

Routine Council meeting

The Town Council had a light and routine agenda for the March meeting.

The only voting item was passage of a required resolution regarding pollution protection for the municipal water system.

The town has to upgrade its regulations to conform with state law requiring backup preventers in commercial plumbing systems.

From Town Hall

VOTERS IN Washington mirrored the parishwide vote March 26, soundly defeating three school tax proposals by an average of 75% voting no to 25% voting yes. The taxes would have funded pay raises and construction projects. About 22% of those eligible voted parishwide; the Washington turnout was 15%.

CLECO BEGAN replacing and elevating power poles in March in anticipation of installing high speed fiber for the town.

CREDIT CARDS CAN now be used to pay all town bills after an upgrade in software and Web links at Town Hall. There will be a small transaction fee attached to card payments.

REGULAR MEETINGS of the Town Council are at 6 p.m. on each third Monday at Town Hall. Meeting agendas are posted on the Town Hall door and website beforehand.



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One stop in 1860: Get the mail, read a poem, buy a pistol

It is not clear when Washington got a post office, but the first one was probably established in a general store at least in the 1840s, and possibly earlier than that. Most towns did not have post offices like we know them back then. The postal service contracted with a merchant to handle the mail, and store owners competed for the privilege because it was a way to draw business.

A list of official U. S. post offices published in 1830 did not include one in Washington, but there was something akin to one in Nathan Gilbert's store in 1846, when he advertised a list of letters waiting to be picked up.

Storekeeper Thomas C. Anderson was the postmaster in 1851, when Washington first appeared on the U.S. post office list. Diarist David Jasper McNicoll remembered the store as a wooden building at the corner of Carriere and Bridge streets.

In 1856 Abram Millspaugh's book and stationery store advertised itself as the post office. McNicoll recalled it as a two-story frame building at the corner of Main and Sittig streets. Millspaugh advertised "books of every description and every article usually found in a Stationery Store." The store was "prepared to fill orders at the shortest notice for Books of Standard Literature, elegantly bound and illustrated Works, cheap Publications, Magazines, Newspapers, and School Books" in French or English.

In 1860, a Millspaugh added "music and musical instruments, drawing materials, maps, globes, and mathematical instruments" to his inventory, as well as "the celebrated Deringer Pistols" that were "so well known to every gentleman who has occasion to wear them, to need no comment."

The postal record is pretty much blank from the Deringer days until the middle 1920s. Private carriers such as the Attakapas Mail Transportation Company carried mail from New Orleans until the railroad took over in 1880, but it's not clear where the mail was taken once it got here.

The Postal Service has compiled a list of postmasters here since 1934, but there were others before that. Arthur Deshotels is shown as postmaster from 1934 to 1954. Newspapers said in 1934 that Samuel Plonsky had been postmaster for "many years" before Deshotels. He was probably appointed in the middle 1920s. The 1930 census lists him as postmaster; ten years earlier he was shown as a cotton buyer.

Deshotels was followed by Mrs. Norma C. Anderson, who was acting postmaster in 1954, followed by Eli Speyrer (1955-1960), acting postmaster James W. Wilkins Jr. (1961), Attwood A. Soileau (1961-1963), Rodney C. Deshotels (1963-1986), Grace N. Trahan (acting 1986-1987), Larry L. Primeaux (1987-2004), Debbie L. Richard (acting 2004), Stacey K. Domingue (acting 2005), and the current postmistress Sandra G. Lafleur, who was named in 2005.

Most of those served in the old building across Main Street from Washington State Bank. A flag pole in front marks the old building now used by the bank as the one-time post office. The post office has been in its current location on Moundville Street since 1997.



Looking Back

In and About
Washington

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