

CITYBUSINESS

North Shore Report

Your Business & Lifestyle Magazine

December 2011

Movie Meals

Caterers find it tough to break into show biz

PAGE 15

Defending DWIs in St. Tammany

Holiday cupcake recipes

PAGE 28

Youth Movement

The children of St. Tammany will have a destination of their own after years of planning

Mandeville City Hall rebuilds its reputation

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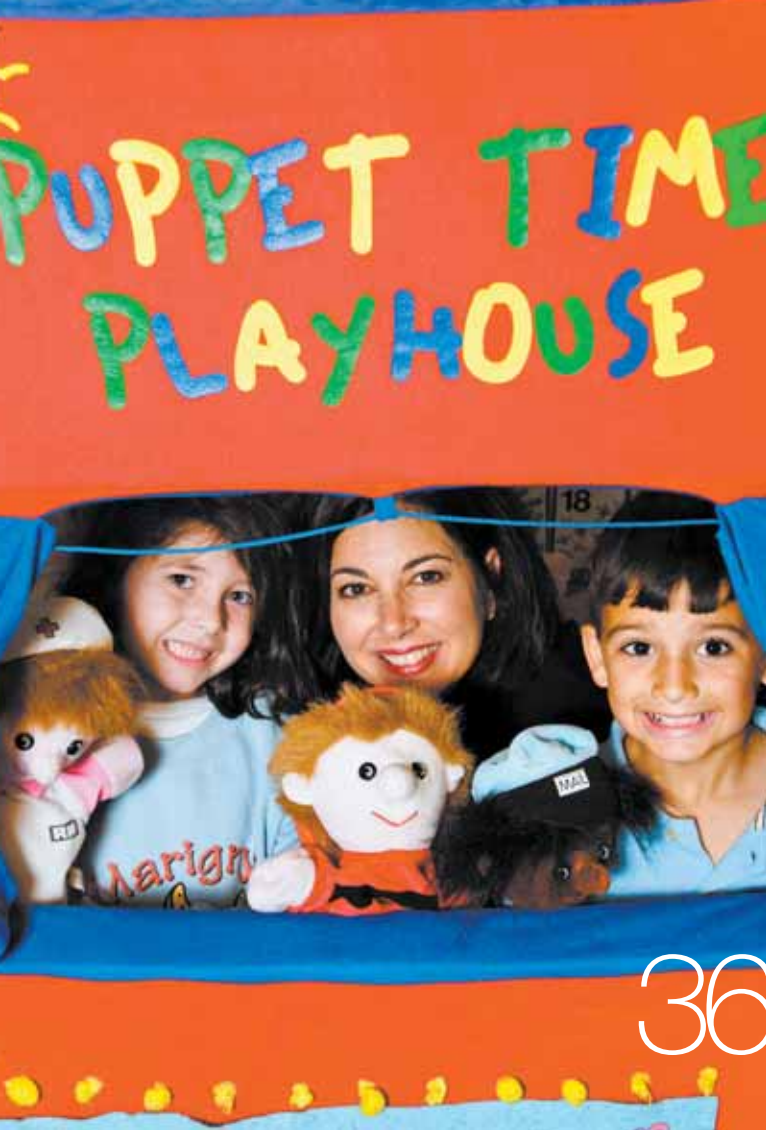
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Lisa Barnett, center, president of the Children's Museum of St. Tammany board, puts on a puppet show with Marigny Elementary students Isabella Harrell and Chad Rehage. On the cover with Barnett are Brady Laborde and Mariam Reimonenq. (Photo by Frank Aymami)



NORTH SHORE FACES

Around the Parish
People moving up, events, ribbon cuttings and more who's who 44

Last Word
Lisa Pratt Maddox, Tammany Trace director 48

What's Inside

December 2011

FEATURES

Youth Movement

The long-planned Children's Museum of St. Tammany starts to take shape with guidance from the Junior League of Covington 36

Rebuilding a Reputation

Mandeville attempts to repair the damage at City Hall in the wake of the Eddie Price scandals 40

Tapping the Potential

Although other local water bottling operations have dried up, a burgeoning business sees opportunity in St. Tammany 42

NORTH SHORE BUSINESS

Holiday

If your gift-giving list include those who enjoy a potent potable, there are multiple options on the North Shore for pleasing their palate 12

Dining & Catering

North Shore kitchen crews hope to get their lucky break in the movie business by serving on location 15

Legal Report

Defense attorneys agree that St. Tammany is a tough jurisdiction when it comes to driving while intoxicated 19

Who's Who List: Law firms 21

NORTH SHORE LIVING

Window Shopping

Local merchants have unique gift ideas for children ... 27

Off the Menu

Your family can help with these tasty cupcake recipes that are certain to spread holiday cheer 30

Favorite Spaces

A Covington homeowner converts a workshop into a masculine man cave 32

Your Health

Fitness experts suggest taking an athletic approach to weight loss 34

IN EVERY ISSUE

From the Publisher 5
Editor 7
Go.See.Do 8
Shorts 10



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STAFF QUESTION

What's your favorite **holiday**
movie or TV show?

December

North Shore Report

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David Muller
It was "A Christmas Story," but I've seen it too many times so now I can't watch it. It's like eating too much funnel cake.

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Shelley Costa
The TV classic, "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer."
It brings back childhood memories of watching it with my sister and brother every year. Now I watch it with my daughter and husband.

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THE DOLAN COMPANY



from the publisher

Lisa Blossman

'Women of the Year' highlights North Shore standout

CityBusiness honored 50 outstanding women at its annual Women of the Year awards ceremony in November. The North Shore's Alicia Irmischer was recognized along with the overall Woman of the Year, Ti Martin.

Visit www.neworleanscitybusiness.com to view a copy of the event program by clicking on "Women of the Year" under events on the toolbar.



ALICIA IRMSCHER

Title: Notification is Prevention Foundation executive director; Watch Systems business development director and state account manager

Age: 57

Family: husband, Eric; daughter, Campbell, 4

Education: bachelor's degree in psychology, Northwestern State University; graduate student in quality management, University of Alabama



TI MARTIN

Title: Commander's Palace and Café Adelaide co-proprietor; Bistro Alex and Brennan's of Houston co-partner

Age: 51

Family: mother, Ella Brennan; aunt, Dottie Brennan; brother, Alex Brennan-Martin; cousin, Lally Brennan

Education: bachelor's degree in business, Southern Methodist University; master's degree in business administration, Tulane University A.B. Freeman School of Business

Lisa Blossman, publisher of North Shore Report and associate publisher/senior vice president of CityBusiness, can be reached at (504) 293-9226 or at lisa.blossman@nopg.com.

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from the editor

Greg LaRose

Holiday season shaping up well for retail spending

There's something about the holidays on the North Shore that makes it like no place else. Its rural and suburban qualities combine to provide the best of both worlds — a shopper's delight and a rustic retreat.

Telltale signs of the season, such as holly wreaths and Christmas tree lots, trigger heightened senses. We become keenly aware of the slightest waft of smoke from a chimney, gingerbread baking in the oven and the appearance of nutmeg destined for eggnog and other gustatory pleasures.

Retailers on the North Shore can expect to share in the spirit, too, as national forecasts for holiday shopping indicate another uptick in how much consumers will spend this year. It's not projected to be as much as the 5.2 percent climb the National Retail Federation reported from 2010, but it's still moving in the right direction.

NRF forecasts receipts to hit \$465.6 billion this year, a 2.8 percent increase. Even that mini-

mal bump is significant, given that 2005-08 saw a declining trend in holiday spending.

Based on our informal survey of malls in the New Orleans area, shoppers are expected to spend about 10 percent more than they did a year ago. On the North Shore, anecdotal evidence points to a level just below that given its greater sensitivity to economic issues present around the country.

SEASONAL SPENDING

U.S. holiday shopping sales in November and December are expected to post a 2.8 percent gain over last year.

Year	Sales	Change
2011*	\$465.6 billion	2.8 percent
2010	\$453 billion	5.2 percent
2009	\$430.7 billion	(0.4 percent)
2008	\$432.6 billion	(4.4 percent)
2007	\$452.5 billion	1.8 percent

Source: National Retail Federation *projection



In other words, when compared with most of Louisiana, St. Tammany shoppers tend to behave more like consumers in other areas of the U.S. But they aren't nearly as constrained financially as those in locales where the recession has been especially damaging.

What does that mean to local retailers?

It could be that shoppers will still look for big-ticket items but they'll expect more package deals, such as a new car with certain extras thrown in as a purchase incentive.

Or perhaps they'll economize and seek more items at lower prices, choosing quantity over quality.

The good news is that all of these options are available to shoppers on the North Shore. Now if only we could get Santa to share that naughty-nice list. •

Greg LaRose is editor of New Orleans CityBusiness. Reach him at greg.larose@nophg.com or (504) 293-9299.

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Go, See, Do

December

Calendar Listings

GET CRAFTY...

The 26th annual **Christmas Extravaganza**, an arts and crafts show, will be held at 10 a.m. Dec. 2-4 at the Covington Fairgrounds, 600 U.S. Highway 190 N., Covington. The event features numerous Christmas village-themed booths and 20 Louisiana food booths. Admission is \$5 per person. For more information, call (504) 796-5853.



BE MERRY...

The Madisonville Chamber of Commerce hosts **Merry Madisonville** at 4 p.m. Dec. 3 at Madisonville Town Hall. The Christmas parade starts at 4 p.m. at the Maritime Museum and ends at Town Hall. Santa arrives by boat at 5 p.m. The free event features pictures with Santa, readings by Mrs. Claus, coloring, cookie decorating, jewelry making, hot chocolate, a tree lighting ceremony and caroling. For more information, call 845-9824.

NETWORK...

The **St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce** holds its business after hours from 5 to 7 p.m. Dec. 7 at Banner Ford, 1943 N. Causeway Blvd., Mandeville. Admission is \$5 for members and \$10 for nonmembers. For more information or to register, call 892-3216 or visit www.sttammanychamber.org.

GNOSH...

The **East St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce** holds its holiday luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 7 at the Northshore Harbor Center, 100 Oak Harbor, Slidell. Donna Peavey, an associate professor at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, will speak at the event. Donations for the Marine Corps Toys for Tots Drive will be accepted. Admission is \$25 per person and reservations are required. For more information, call 643-5678 or visit www.estchamber.com.

GLOW...

St. Tammany Parish Hospital presents **Angel of Light 2011**, an annual holiday lighting ceremony for the Hospice Tree of Life, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Dec. 8. The event will feature performances by the hospital choir and refreshments. Tribute Angels are available to purchase. The event is



free and open to the public. For more information or to purchase an angel, call 898-4171 or email nsuhre@stph.org.

FLIP...

The **Northshore Mandeville Kiwanis Club** holds its 19th annual Pancake Breakfast with Santa Claus to benefit Kiwanis youth and community service projects from 9 to 11 a.m. Dec. 10 at the New Covenant Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 4375 Highway 22, Mandeville. The event will feature breakfast and complimentary pictures with Santa. Tickets are \$5. For more information or to purchase tickets, call 966-4673 or visit www.northshore-kiwanis.org.

CELEBRATE...

The city of Mandeville holds its **Winter on the Water** event at 4 p.m. Dec. 10 at the Lakefront Gazebo on Lakeshore Drive in Mandeville. The event features live entertainment by the Kathy DeRouen Quintet, visits with Santa, a Christmas lighting ceremony and Christmas boat parade. Admission is free. For more information, call 624-3147.

SHOP...

The **Old Mandeville Business Association** hosts the eighth annual Christmas Past Festival, a holiday shopping and arts event, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 11 along Girod Street in Old Mandeville. The event will feature arts and crafts, holiday-themed booths and live music. Admission is free. For more information, visit www.oldmandevillebiz.com.

BROWSE AND BENEFIT...

The **Junior Auxiliary of Slidell** holds its seventh annual Holiday Tour of Homes to benefit its community projects from 1 to 5 p.m. Dec. 11. The event will feature five homes, a basket raffle and refreshments and entertainment at each home. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 on the day of the event. For more information, for the location of homes or to purchase tickets, visit www.jaslidell.org.

LISTEN...

The **Northlake Performing Arts Society** choir and soloists holds its Ring in the Holidays concert at 3 p.m. Dec. 11 at North Cross United Methodist Church, 311 Highway 21, Mandeville. Tickets are \$15 per person. For more information, call 792-1392 or visit www.npassingers.org.



TRAVEL BACK...

The **Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra** presents "A Baroque Christmas" at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 16 at First Baptist Church in Covington. Ticket prices range from \$15 to \$35. For more information, visit www.lpomusic.com.

ILLUMINATE...

The annual Holiday of Lights event will take place from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Dec. 2-3 and Dec. 9-10 at the Tammany Trace, 21490 Koop Drive, Mandeville. The event will feature rides

for children, pictures with Santa and live music. Admission is free. For more information, call 867-9490.

TAKE IN A SHOW...

The **Slidell Little Theatre** will hold performances of "Little Women" at 8 p.m. Dec. 3-19 on Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. on Sunday at the Slidell Little Theatre, 2024 Nellie Drive, Slidell. Tickets are \$7 for youth and \$14 for adults. For more information, call 641-0324.

BRIGHTEN THE NIGHT...

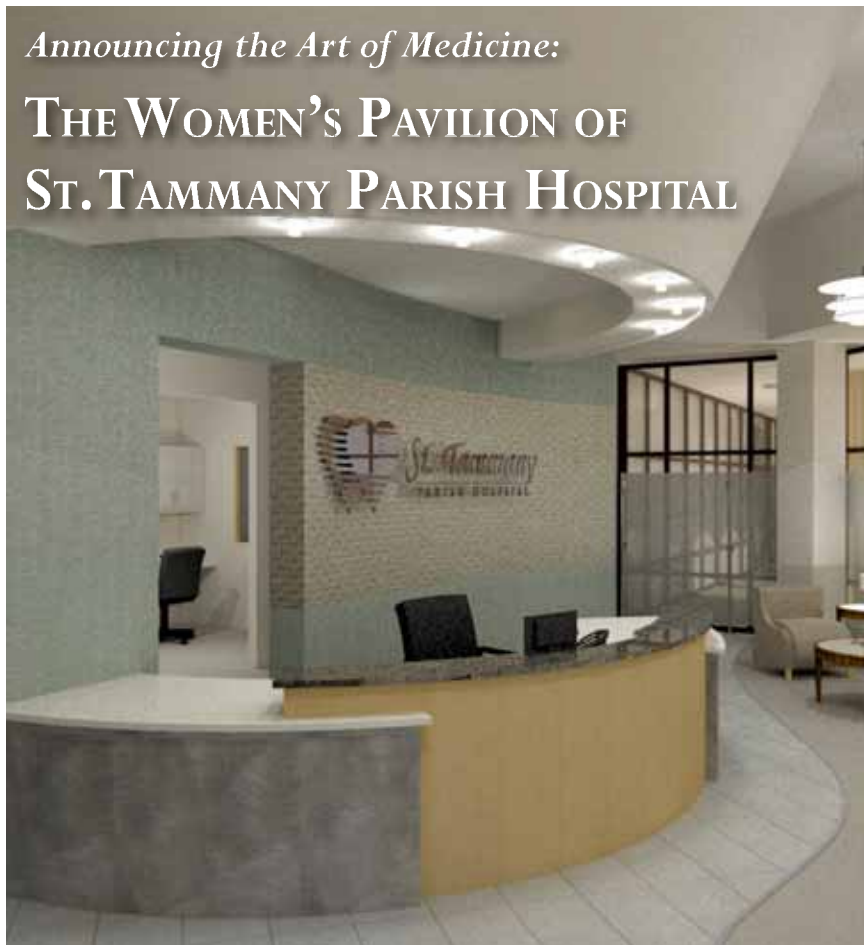
Slidell's annual **Christmas Under the Stars** will take place from 6 to 9 p.m. Dec. 9-10 and



Dec. 16-17 at Griffith Park in Slidell. The event features live entertainment by local organizations, holiday decorations, storytelling, visits with Santa and a Christmas and train village display. Admission is free. For more information, call 646-4375 or visit www.slidell.la.us.

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Shorts

News, notes and other mentionables



Pool Corp. income improves in 3Q

More homeowners are beginning to replace their old swimming pools, helping boost the bottom line of Covington-based Pool Corp., a distributor of pool supplies and backyard products.

Its net income for the three months ending Sept. 30 was \$24.2 million or 50 cents a share, up from \$22.8 million, or 46 cents a share, a year earlier.

The late summer months are critical to Pool Corp.'s financial performance as it's the peak time when most homeowners build pools or buy products to use their pools.

The company's net sales climbed to \$503.6 million in the third quarter from \$455 million during the same period a year earlier.

On Nov. 3, the company's board of directors declared a quarterly cash dividend of 14 cents a share to shareholders of record Nov. 21.

St. Tammany Parish Hospital refinances debt

A higher bond rating will allow St. Tammany Parish Hospital to retire some its debt ahead of schedule.

Fitch Ratings has given an A rating to \$53.1 million in bonds STPH sold in late October. Tim Lessing, the hospital's chief financial officer, said the bond sale will allow STPH to speed up repayment of money borrowed going back to 1998 when the hospital underwent a major physical expansion. There will also be enough cash to retire a \$10 million line of credit the hospital obtained in 2004, he said.

By combining its debts, STPH will obtain a better interest rate and move up its repayment schedule to 2022 from 2028, Lessing said.

The hospital had 204.8 days cash on hand as of Aug. 31 and a cash-to-debt ratio of 223.5 percent.

Bankruptcy judge approves plans to sell Central Progressive Bank

As of mid-November, all signs pointed toward a new owner taking over Central Progressive Bank of Lacombe. Earlier in the month, a bankruptcy judge approved First NBC Bank's basic plan to buy the business from Blossman Bancshares.

CPB has been saddled with problem loans and under orders from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., which backs all of its deposits, to either clean up its balance sheet or merge with a stronger bank.

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Jerry Brown pushed back the due date for bids to take over CPB to Nov. 28, one day before an auction was scheduled to take place. The timeline will likely allow First NBC Bank to take over CPB, which filed for Chapter 11 reorganization in late October.

The selling price is a reported \$900,000, for which First NBC Bank would gain 17 CPB branches on the North Shore and \$384 million in assets — more than a quarter of which are considered high-risk.

Archdiocese seeks money for Roquette Lodge redo

Christopher Homes Inc., the housing agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of New Orleans, is working with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to refinance the renovations to the exterior of the Roquette Lodge, a senior residence and learning center in Mandeville.

It's part of an \$80 million construction plan the diocese has for new senior housing throughout the New Orleans metropolitan area.

The projects will range from new construction to historic renovations and will create an

additional 560 apartments for qualifying seniors 62 years and older.

Christopher Homes currently has 1,800 affordable housing apartments in the metro area. Tenants who qualify for its affordable housing program pay 10 percent of their income in rent.

The new units will bring the agency up to pre-Katrina levels.

All projects will take about a year to complete, diocese spokeswoman Sarah Comiskey McDonald said.

Church challenges zoning board rejection

A state court ultimately could decide whether Our Lady of the Lake gets to build a larger church in Old Mandeville. The Archdiocese of New Orleans, on behalf of the church parish, has filed suit against the Mandeville Planning and Zoning Commission's after its Oct. 6 decision to deny a building permit.

OLOL wants to build a 16,715-square-foot Gothic structure that will seat more than 1,000 people on its property across Lafitte Street from the existing church, which has a capacity of 465.

The church is routinely filled to capacity for its weekend Masses and numerous vigils, forcing overflow parishioners to attend in an adjacent gymnasium. Counts reach 6,500 attendees during a typical weekend, church officials say.

Those opposing the \$13 million project in the Old Mandeville neighborhood say the plans don't account for the impact of additional traffic and parking.





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H O L I D A Y

Abita Brewing Co. President David Blossman hoists a bottle of Save our Shore, the beer that was brewed to raise money for the restoration of the Gulf Coast after the BP oil spill.



NORTH SHORE FILE PHOTO

Holiday Spirits

Three North Shore businesses provide festive options for gift giving and celebrating the season with cheer

By Diana Chandler
Contributing Writer

David Blossman's love of brewing beer was born from his grandfather's tales of making homemade strawberry wine during Prohibition.

"I like beer and it made me think," says Blossman, president of Abita Brewing Co.

Before the 18th Amendment, Louisiana was the beer capital of the South. While the commodity never returned to its glory days after Prohibition was repealed, the North Shore is home to two breweries whose offerings spike the holiday season and promise to bring cheer and respite.

Add to that Bush's own Pontchartrain

Vineyards, and there's plenty of homegrown Christmas spirit to fill gift baskets and complete holiday meals.

Blossman's brewery in Abita Springs has choice holiday offerings, including its brown Christmas Ale, which Blossman describes as a versatile brew with a malty flavor balanced with nice bitterness.

Heiner Brau Microbrewery in Covington heralds the holiday season by offering its Mardi Gras FestBier as early as November.

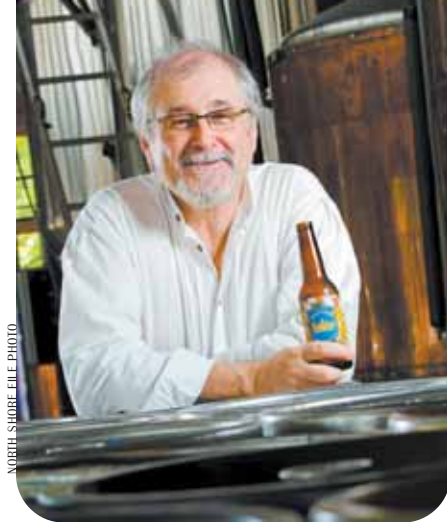
Grape Expectations

For those looking for a more exclusive offering,

Pontchartrain Vineyards has less than 100 cases left of its limited Rouge Militaire 2005 Vintage, which began to ferment the night before Katrina and survived the storm in perfect form.

"The building was unscathed and the wine did its job on its own," says Lincoln Case, Pontchartrain Vineyards vice president and owner.

The limited edition is made with Cynthiana/Norton grapes grown at the vineyard. Case says the variety has a limited yield and is probably the only native American, New World species of grape usable to make a quality wine.



Henryk Orlik says Heiner Brau provides its Mardi Gras Festbier starting in November to coincide with the Fasching season in Germany.

Rouge Militaire is offered on the vineyard's website for \$24.99 a bottle.

The vineyard's most exclusive offering is its Port of New Orleans, which sells for \$27.99 a bottle. The tawny port is very popular this time of year, says John Seago, vineyard founder and president. It's bottled with a removable and reusable tea cork, making the vintage suitable for consumption over time.

"That's our No. 1 seller as far as the holiday season," Seago says. "It's not like an everyday wine. It's the 'another-log-on-the-fire' wine. Servings are small and the bottle will last."

Best of the Fest

Brewing beer is Henryk Orlik's dream job come true, and he lives it each day as owner of Heiner Brau Microbrewery. The beer master came to the North Shore from Germany by way of Cleveland in 1997, serving first at Abita Brewery before starting his own business in 2005.

"I try to go back on the old roots of making beer," Orlik explains in his smooth German accent. "Everything is natural — natural fermentation, natural carbonation and aging."

Christmas at Heiner Brau evokes the Fasching season in southern Germany, a celebration that begins at 11:11 a.m. Nov. 11 and is highlighted with parties, dancing and costumes.

Like Carnival season, Fasching ends at midnight on the Tuesday just before Lent — Mardi Gras.

The accompanying brew is Heiner Brau's Mardi Gras Festbier, and Orlik recommends it throughout the season of excess. Festbier is a strong, hoppy brew that is 6 percent alcohol by volume, with a malty body and a dark golden color. Hops relax the stomach, allowing consumers to eat and drink more, Orlik says.

Orlik's top selling beer and a holiday favorite, brewed year-round, is the Strawberry Ale. This dessert brew was created for the Pontchartrain Strawberry Festival, offering the sweetness of barley and

See HOLIDAY SPIRITS, page 14

Together...

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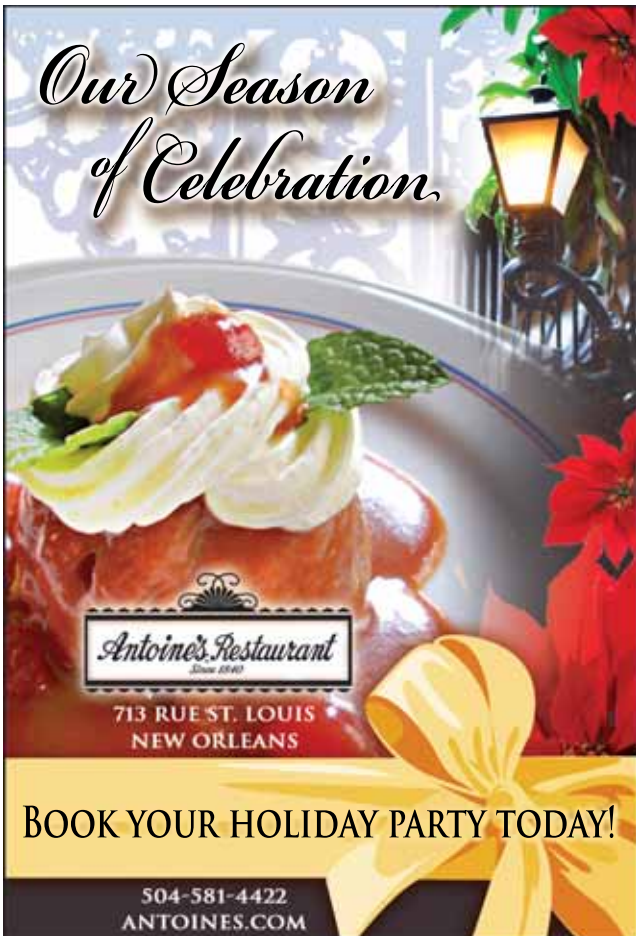
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Pontchartrain Vineyard founder John Seago, left, and owner Lincoln Case report their Rouge Militaire wine is selling fast. The limited vintage began to ferment the night before Hurricane Katrina made landfall.

PHOTO BY FRANK AYVAH

Holiday Spirits

continued from page 13

fruit. Orlik adds strawberry puree to cream ale to create the treat.

Seasonal signature

At Abita Brewing Co., brew master Mark Wilson creates the Christmas Ale to accompany soft cheeses, nuts, gumbo, chicken sausage and seafood.

"It's really very versatile," Blossman says, with the sweetness of the barley and the bitterness of the hops shining through. The dry hops add spice, aroma and flavor.

"That's kind of like a signature for Christmas," he says. "It's a very thoughtful gift to those who appreciate a full-flavored, all-natural ale."

Other holiday offerings at Abita include the 25th anniversary Vanilla Doubledog, a 7 percent alcohol brew accented with chocolate and vanilla beans. •

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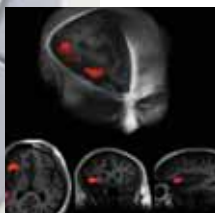
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Nicholas Deluzain of Benedict's Plantation says his family's catering business is eager to use its fully outfitted kitchen truck on movie sets.



PHOTO BY FRANK AYMANI

Serving On Set

Louisiana's growing movie industry is providing work for local catering crews, but it's not so easy to break into the business

By David Muller

Staff Writer

david.muller@npg.com

Back when Benedict's Plantation was at its busiest with catering work for movie productions, its offsite kitchen was on the set of a film that featured a difficult-to-please Jean-Claude Van Damme.

The actor was finally sated with bread pudding, but owner Shirley Deluzain says that's one of the challenges she enjoys when it comes to production catering — meeting the varied tastes and needs of cast and crew.

"We need it, and we like it," Deluzain says.

But after a decade of being out of the film catering business, Benedict's is finding it difficult to reconnect.

"I'm finding a lot of roadblocks, and I've been doing this for a long time," she says, wondering aloud whether the shortage of work is because of film budget restraints or heightened competition from other catering companies.

"We can't get a handle on it," she says.

At the same time, the economy in St. Tammany for the catering industry has been sporadic, she says.

See **SERVING ON SET**, page 16

Serving On Set

continued from page 15

Big weddings have been put on the backburner for many local families, both off site and at the 19th century plantation in Mandeville where she launched the business with her late husband, Benedict, in 1991.

"A lot of people are watching their pennies," she says. "Weddings that were going to be 350 (guests) are now 150."

In the midst of the economic downturn, Benedict's found an unexpected boost from the Gulf of Mexico oil spill when it was contracted to feed a work crew cleaning up the coastline.

The Lakehouse, a restaurant and catering service in Mandeville, served food to Vessels of Opportunity captains and their crews on the east side of St. Tammany Parish.

"We were feeding a little over 600 men a day at two meals a day," owner Cayman Sinclair says.

That experience prepared Lakehouse for film catering from a logistical and quantity standpoint. Sinclair says he got a foot in the film catering door by way of an old high school friend who is a location scout for large-scale productions.

Serving food to film crews comprises 70 percent of his catering business, he says. But even with an inside track, Sinclair admits the business is difficult to obtain.

"You have to have the equipment, and you have to have the 'ins' to the people in the film industry, and you have to get accepted into their circle," he says.

Sinclair says he believes catering for film productions will only




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“You have to have the equipment, and you have to have the ‘ins’ to the people in the film industry.”

CAYMAN SINCLAIR

The Lakehouse

grow, so long as the state continues to support it through tax credits. Louisiana has a 30 percent transferable tax credit for all money spent within the state during the production of the film. Another 5 percent payroll tax break is tacked on for Louisiana citizens who are employed by a state certified motion picture production.

During the oil spill, Don Phillips was in Chalmette feeding thousands of cleanup crewmembers per day. Today, his Covington-based business, Catering by Don, has found a unique niche in supplying lunches for pharmaceutical representatives when they hold meetings at doctor's offices and hospitals. It makes up 60 percent of his revenues, he says.

Despite the potential for growth in serving movie productions, Phillips says he will steer clear of that type of work because he doesn't have the proper equipment. He has a kitchen in Covington and a large van, but not a fully rigged truck like the ones on movie sets.

The one time he bid on work for a production, they “wanted it for nothing,” he says.

Plus, there's the time factor.

“You've got to set up breakfast at four in the morning, and you could be there until midnight depending on how the shoot's going,” he says. “And there's all sorts of diets, and you have to accommodate that. I'm happy with the niche we have.”

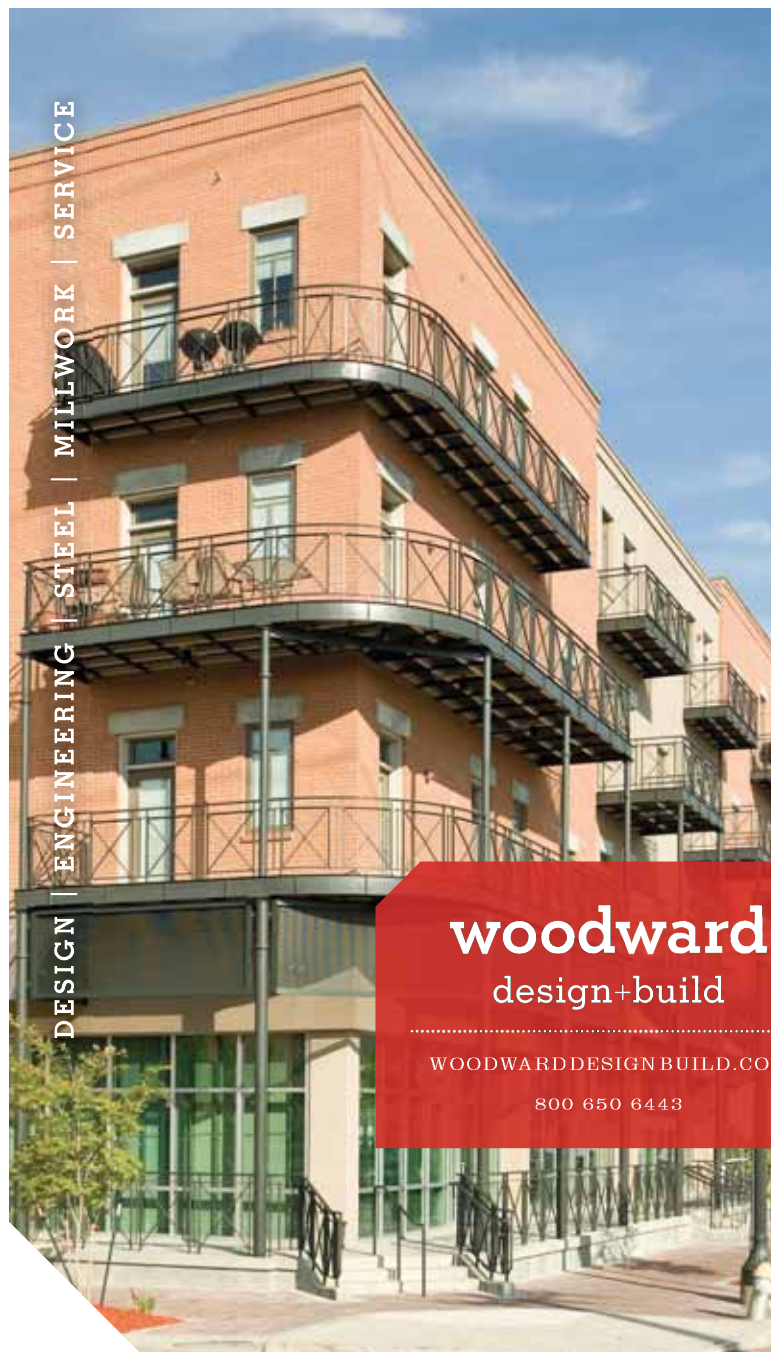
Benedict's, however, is intent on getting back into the movie catering segment. The last time its catering truck was on a movie set was Sept. 11, 2001, when it worked with the TV series “America's Most Wanted.”

The following January, Benedict Deluzain passed away.

After Hurricane Katrina, Benedict's responded to increased demand from weddings on the South Shore where caterers and venues were recovering.

But now, “Film business is a priority,” says Nicholas Deluzain, Shirley and Benedict's son, and the company is eager to use the 40-foot catering truck it bought for its oil spill relief work on movie sets.

“I could do 5,000 to 6,000 meals out of it,” he says. •



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LEGAL
REPORT

Know Your Limits

Attorneys say St. Tammany is the toughest jurisdiction when it comes to defending DWIs

By David Muller
Staff Writer
david.muller@nopg.com

Defense lawyers who handle drunken driving cases in south Louisiana agree St. Tammany is by far the toughest jurisdiction.

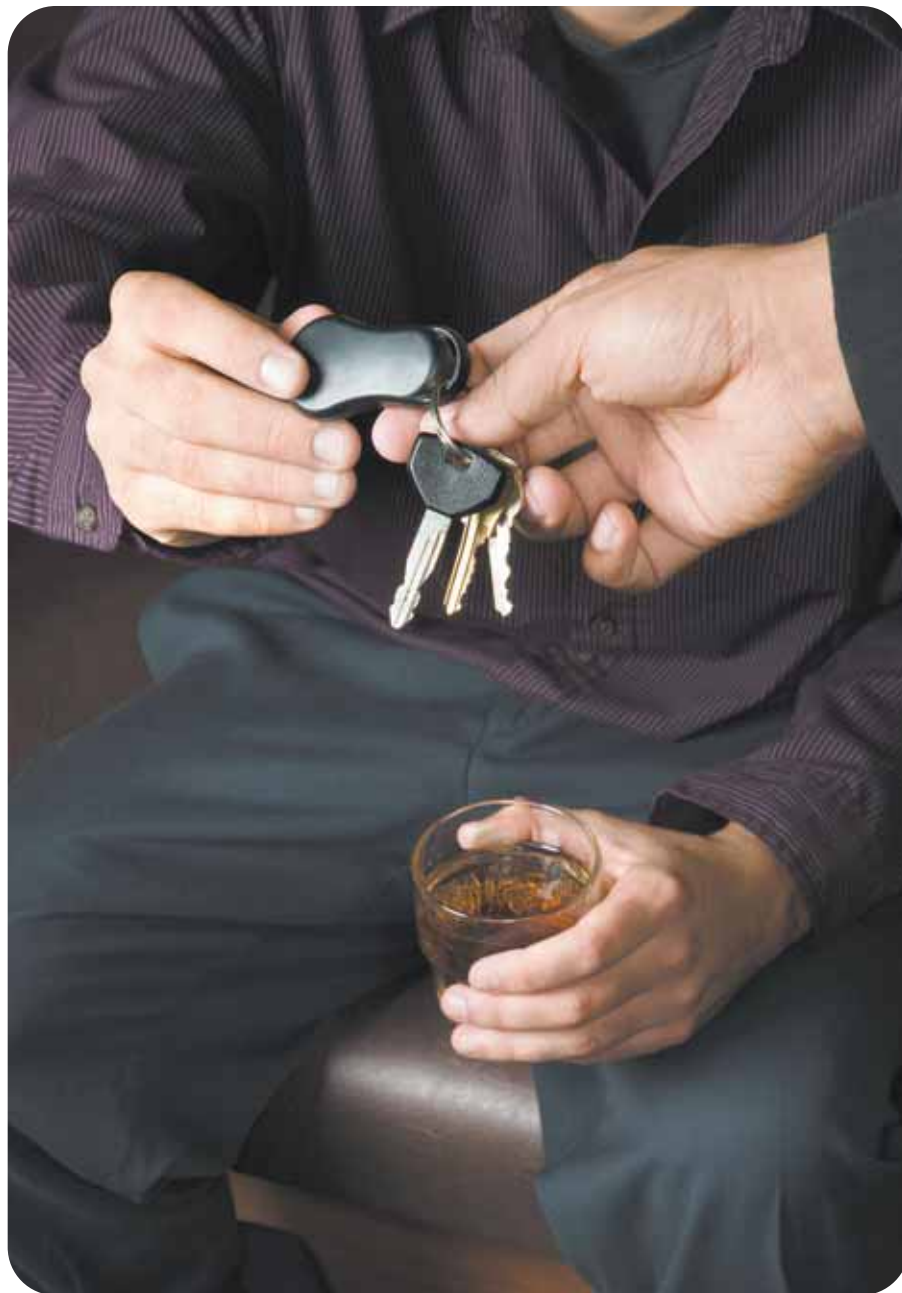
"For years and years, this has been one of the harshest parishes to get a favorable resolution," said Robert Rees, a Mandeville defense attorney and former state trooper who is considered one of two experts in Louisiana on field sobriety tests.

Calls seeking conviction rates from the district attorney's office for the 22nd Judicial District, which includes St. Tammany and Washington parishes, were not returned. But among those in the criminal defense community, the North Shore's reputation for strictly enforcing driving while intoxicated laws is well deserved.

Through October, there have been 882 arrests for first-offense drunk driving and 186 second-offense arrests in the parish, excluding Slidell, according to the St. Tammany Sheriff's Office.

Parishwide, there were 151 third-offense arrests and 69 for a fourth offense or more through the first 10 months of the year.

While defense attorneys acknowledge the



challenges of DWI defense in St. Tammany, advocacy groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving credit its justice system for upholding the law better than other areas.

"As far as I know, St. Tammany Parish had and still has the highest conviction rates for DWIs in the state," MADD South Louisiana spokeswoman Brenda Sinclair says. "If you're committing any crime, you should be prosecuted for it."

Joseph Larre, a Gretna-based defense attorney, suspects St. Tammany's high conviction

rate is attributed to the fact that its district judges are likely to see the same DWI defendants for repeat arrests. If more than one judge is involved when a repeat offender goes back to court, a defense attorney can try to find a procedural mistake that was made in a prior misdemeanor plea, he says.

"It's hard to make the argument that one of the lower courts screwed up when it's the same judge hearing the case," Larre says.

See **KNOW YOUR LIMITS**, page 20

Know Your Limits

continued from page 19

For Larre, Rees and other defense attorneys, there are new developments involving DWI laws and the repercussions for their clients.

Some jurisdictions are implementing "no refusal weekends," which police generally enforce during a holiday period or a time when drunken drivers are expected to be on the road in greater numbers. The policy allows officers to issue a warrant on the spot if the suspected driver refuses a breath test. The warrant is sent to a judge on duty and, if approved, the driver is taken to the closest emergency medical technician for a blood test.

It's still a somewhat controversial practice, with some judges disregarding these arrests, Rees says. Proponents say the streamlined process is aimed at keeping roads safe while protecting the rights of the defendant.

Police in St. Tammany began doing "no refusals" on a limited scale in 2010, and they have since become a law enforcement staple, attorneys say.

Technology, such as video cameras and blood alcohol content tests, often creates an iron-clad case against a driver accused of driving

under the influence, making it harder for defense attorneys to challenge arrests. Rees says much of the focus during DWI defense is on whether the field sobriety test is performed correctly.

For those who are convicted, a new first offender alternative program is being considered that could offer an additional option to DWI attorneys and their clients.

For a defendant to take part in the program, the arrest cannot involve any collateral issues such as weapons or drug possession or resisting police. The defendant must pay \$3,000 for enrollment, court costs and other expenses, go through a substance abuse evaluation and perform 32 hours of community service. It also requires installing an interlock device, which requires the driver to pass a breathalyzer test before the vehicle's engine will start, in the person's car for six months.

The first offender alternative program is in place in many rural Louisiana jurisdiction as well as East Baton Rouge Parish, but Larre says it's not an option for every defendant.

"When you look at this program, it's really set out for the upper middle class, people that can afford this," Larre says.

Commercial drivers may also benefit from

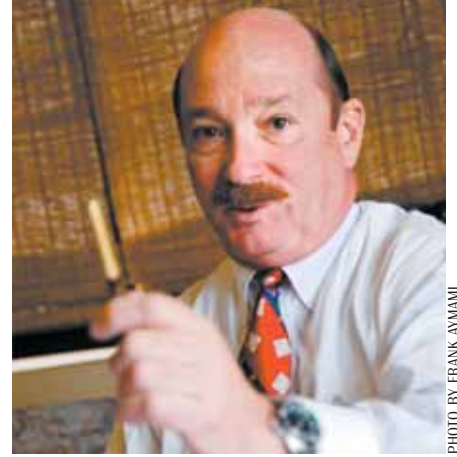


PHOTO BY FRANK AYMANI

Mandeville attorney Robert Rees, a recognized expert on field sobriety tests, acknowledges that St. Tammany Parish is a tough jurisdiction when it comes to defending DWI cases.

the program in that it would allow them to resume working quicker than a traditional DWI arrest and conviction, he says.

Sinclair, with MADD, says the organization opposes the first offender diversion program, adding that she suspects it's just a way for parishes to make more money off of a commonly committed crime.

In her view, there's a social stigma attached to a DWI arrest, and that, combined with fees and fines and loss of driver's license, typically prevents people risking a second offense.

"That's not the problem," Sinclair says. "It's the guy who gets five of them." •

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Herman, Herman, Katz & Cotlar 200 S. Tyler St., Suite 200 B Covington 70433	2 19	NA www.hhkc.com 871-1037 871-6937	1 0 1 0 0 0 0	class action, commercial and business law, complex multi- district litigation, construction litigation, family law, personal injury

NA=Not applicable The above information was provided by the firms themselves. There are smaller law firms that were surveyed that are not listed because of space constraints. Any additions or corrections should be mailed on company letterhead to Research, New Orleans CityBusiness, 111 Veterans Blvd., Suite 1440, Metairie 70005.

North Shore law firms

(ranked by the number of attorneys on the North Shore)

Name Address	Local attorneys Attorneys companywide	Managing partner(s) Email/Website Telephone Fax	Partners Associates Of counsel Special counsel Paralegals Staff	Areas of practice
Elizabeth W. Wiedemann, Attorney at Law 121 Brookside Drive Mandeville 70471	1 1	Elizabeth W. Wiedemann NA NA 626-9957 NA	1 1 0 0 1 2	wills, trusts and successions
J. Marie Rudd, Attorney at Law 601 Asbury Drive, Suite 2A Mandeville 70471	1 1	J. Marie Rudd Marie@RuddLawFirm.com www.RuddLawFirm.com 624-9696 624-9698	1 0 0 0 1 0	family law, collaborative divorce, personal injury
Law Office of Warren Montgomery 321 N. Vermont St. Covington 70433	1 1	Warren Montgomery warrenmontgomery@bellsouth.net NA 893-6585 893-7104	0 0 1 1 1 1	general litigation, criminal, bankruptcy
McChord Carrico 115 Crapemyrtle Circle Covington 70433	1 1	McChord Carrico president chord@charter.net NA 892-4396 892-4359	1 0 0 0 0 0	business, regulatory and environmental

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McCool Law 1772 Orleans St. Mandeville 70448	1 1	Nanine McCool attorney at law mccoollegal.com www.mccoollegal.com 624-7664 (866) 257-7742	1 0 1 0 1 1	bankruptcy; wills and estate planning; family law; entertainment law/intellectual property
O'Connor Law Firm 302 West 26th Ave. Covington 70433	1 1	Sheila O'Connor owner jaimee@oconnor-law-firm.net www.oconnor-law-firm.net 867-1575 867-1577	0 0 0 0 2 3	family law, personal injury, criminal, estate
Olivier Law 1106 Girod St. Mandeville 70448	1 1	Jason Olivier managing member jason@olivierlaw.com www.olivierlaw.com 871-8172 (504) 617-6699	1 0 0 0 0 1	business, collection, health care, personal injury, general
The Law Office of Randy P. Russell 1590 W. Causeway Approach, Suite 2 Mandeville 70471	1 1	Randy P. Russell owner and managing attorney rpriawoffice@bellsouth.net NA 727-9042 727-9043	1 0 0 0 1 3	personal injury, workers' compensation, successions and business litigation



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Window Shopping



Kids' Christmas

Santa Claus by now has received his annual slew of wish lists for this year's desired presents. If you are wondering how to supplement your child's gift list or what to buy your sweet, respectful niece or nephew, here are some ideas:

By Jaime Guillet
Contributing Writer



TODDLER THRILL RIDE

Your little snuggle bug might not have requested this cool backyard amusement ride because they probably aren't aware it exists. Make the Step 2 Extreme Coaster one of the big stunners of the day for your 3- or 4-year-old.

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St. Joseph Abbey, Covington
892-1800
Prices vary



NEWBIE ATTIRE

A newborn still can enjoy Christmas, even if they don't understand its significance. Check out some cute options such as this dashing getup for boys. Fashion for Kids offers items for children ranging from newborns to 12 year olds.

Fashion for Kids, Mandeville
626-4848
Zackali jumper, \$86



SPIFFY THREADS

You can just never go wrong with giving kids clothes. They need them, and you love picking them out. Shop through a variety of well-known children's brands.

Sixpence Children's Apparel & Gifts, Mandeville
674-1822
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WHAT A KICK

Martial arts offer a variety of benefits, not least of which are physical exercise, discipline and self-defense. Another benefit: a multitude of schools and locations on the North Shore. They include Rick Weems' Martial Arts, which is American Taekwondo Association-accredited and has been in the area since 1982.

Classes for children and adults are twice a week over a six-month period. Prices vary depending on age and type of class.

Rick Weems' Martial Arts, Slidell
288-0395



Off the Menu

PHOTOS BY FRANK AYAMI



Cupcakes at Christmas

Seasonal sweets provide satisfying family flavor for the holidays

By Christine Fontana
Contributing Writer

One of the sweetest ways to dazzle family and friends is to shower them with enticingly delicious and festive holiday cupcakes. KC Dinhofer, owner of KC's Babycakes in Mandeville, shares her luscious recipes that bring those visions of dancing sugarplums straight out of dreams and right into your kitchen.

"Red velvet whoopies with peppermint filling are gorgeous for holiday parties," Dinhofer says

These treats marry two traditional holiday flavors.

"A whoopie pie is a unique, soft, cookie-like cake that has an icing-type filling," she explains, "so I created these cupcakes with a similar texture, more firm and dense than traditional cake, yet still soft."

Cream cheese peppermint filling inhabits the insides, while cream cheese frosting sprin-

kled with crushed peppermint sits on top. The mint flavor is delightfully underwhelming.

After the cakes are cooled completely, use a small paring knife to carve out a cone shape at the top center of the cake to fill the whoopies.

"These whoopies are easy to cut because they're firmer than regular cupcakes," Dinhofer says, and the swirl of frosting on top helps cover the hole left behind. "You can put the piece back after filling it, or snack on it right away like we do at the bakery."

Gingerbread cupcakes are perfect to enjoy on cold winter mornings, says Dinhofer. She sprinkles confectioner's sugar through a doily over them. These beautiful, deep milk-chocolate brown cupcakes have nice crowns, thanks to the molasses and ginger.

"Molasses adds richness and imparts a brown sugar-type flavor," she says.

Whisking the ingredients sweeps air into the batter and helps with volume. Dinhofer considers gingerbread cupcakes a good recipe to have help from younger members of the family because it's simple and needs no mixer.

"These cupcakes give you that warm, cozy holiday feeling, and when you open up the oven, my goodness, the smell is unbelievable," she says.

Vegan chocolate pumpkin cupcakes, one of the biggest sellers at KC's Babycakes, are incredibly moist and rich. It's a healthier cupcake because it has no animal products or cholesterol, Dinhofer says.

Canned pumpkin adds a beautiful orange color to the frosting, which also has little specs of cinnamon, allspice and nutmeg in it. The vegan chocolate ganache is easy to make and use, and can be drizzled or dolloped atop the frosting.

"This is a beautiful cupcake to add to your repertoire for holiday cupcake centerpieces," says Dinhofer. "People sometimes freak out over vegan cupcakes because they think something will be lacking. But they'll put one of these in their mouths and go nuts and tell me they love it. Truly, these vegans are va-va-voom!"

See OFF THE MENU RECIPES, page 30

LET THE HOLIDAY SHOPPING BEGIN



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RED VELVET WHOOPIES WITH PEPPERMINT FILLING

Makes 12 cupcakes

Cupcakes

2 cups sifted all-purpose unbleached flour
1/2 tsp. baking soda
2 tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 cup (1 stick) softened butter
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 egg
1/2 cup buttermilk
1 tsp. vanilla
2 tbsp. red food coloring

Sift flour, baking soda, cocoa powder, and salt together. Put to side. Beat butter and brown sugar; add egg. Combine buttermilk, vanilla and red food coloring. Add dry ingredients and liquid ingredients to butter mixture, alternating, starting and ending with the dry ingredients with this process.

Spoon mixture into white cupcake liners. Bake at 350 degrees for about 16 minutes. After the cupcakes have cooled and become firmer, take a small pairing knife and cut a cone shaped, nickel-sized hole in the top center of cupcakes. Take either a pastry bag or a Ziploc bag and fill with peppermint filling, (clip a tip out of corner of Ziploc bag), then squeeze the bag into the cupcakes to fill with peppermint filling.

Frost cupcakes with cream cheese frosting, and use frosting to cover up the hole cut in order to fill cupcakes. Sprinkle crushed peppermint candies on top, if desired.

Peppermint filling

4 oz. softened cream cheese
1 tbsp. softened butter
1/2 tsp. peppermint extract
3 cups (approx. 1 box) confectioner's sugar
1 tsp. whole milk (only if necessary to thin)

Beat cream cheese, butter and extract together until fluffy. Add powdered sugar. Add milk only if necessary for proper consistency.

Cream cheese frosting

1/4 lb. butter, unsalted
8 oz. cream cheese
1 1/2 to 2 cups confectioner's sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
peppermint candies, crushed (if desired)*

Cream together softened butter and cream cheese. Add sugar in several batches, beating well. Beat in vanilla extract until creamy.

GINGERBREAD CUPCAKES

Makes 11 cupcakes

1 2/3 cups all-purpose unbleached flour
1 1/4 tsp. baking soda
1 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
3/4 tsp. cinnamon
3/4 tsp. salt
1 egg, lightly beaten
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup molasses
1/2 cup boiling water
1/2 cup canola oil

Sift together flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon and salt. Add beaten egg, sugar



and molasses. Mix well with whisk. Pour boiling water and oil together and add to mixture. Stir thoroughly until smooth. Spoon mixture into white cupcake liners. Bake at 350 degrees for about 19 minutes.

VEGAN CHOCOLATE PUMPKIN CUPCAKES

Makes 12 cupcakes

1 1/4 cups all-purpose unbleached flour
1 cup sugar
1/3 cup cocoa
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1 1/2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
1/3 cup canola oil
1 tsp. cider vinegar
1 cup warm water
1 tsp. vanilla extract

Sift flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, salt and pumpkin pie spice together. Put to side.

Mix oil, cider vinegar, warm water and vanilla. Add liquid to flour mixture, stir with whisk. Spoon mixture into black cupcake liners. Bake at 350 degrees for about 14 to 16 minutes. After cupcakes have cooled, frost with pumpkin buttercream frosting, then spoon about a nickel-sized dollop of chocolate ganache atop the frosting. Chocolate ganache can be drizzled over frosting instead if desired.

Pumpkin buttercream frosting

3 tbsp. non-hydrogenated shortening
1 tbsp. non-hydrogenated margarine
3 to 4 tbsp. canned 100 percent pumpkin
2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
3 to 3 1/2 cups confectioner's sugar
2 tsp. vanilla extract
Coconut or soy milk (only if necessary to thin)*

Blend together shortening and margarine. Add pumpkin and pumpkin pie spice. Blend in confectioner's sugar in several batches. Add extract. Adjust consistency with coconut or soy milk, only if necessary.

Chocolate ganache

1/3 cup vegan chocolate chips
1 tbsp. coconut or soy milk
1/4 tsp. pumpkin pie spice

Melt chocolate chips and milk in microwave for about 30 seconds. Stir well to blend, then stir in spice.

* Confectioner's sugar is normally sold by weight in boxes labeled to contain 3 cups, yet often a box can actually weigh more than 3 cups. For bakers who dump the box out instead of measuring the proper amount of sugar, thereby adding extra sugar to the recipe, milk can be used to thicken a thin consistency to perfection if necessary.



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Favorite Spaces

Man Cave

A Tchefuncte Estates homeowner creates a nearby retreat to reflect his masculine pursuits



Tucker Whittington's hunting trophies surround a poker table that doubles as a serving area in the man cave at his Covington home.

PHOTOS BY CHAD CHENIER

By Suzy Kessenich
Contributing Writer

The term “man cave” truly doesn’t justify the comfort of Tucker Whittington’s retreat at his Covington home.

Whittington recently converted a workshop next to the home he recently purchased in Covington’s Tchefuncte Estates into his favorite space. Instead of keeping them in storage, he can now proudly exhibit his game trophies and sports memorabilia.

“My family has privately owned property in Mississippi for hunting. We have deer, turkey and fox among other wild game,” he says.

Mounted on the wall is a pair of large, wide-mouth bass he caught on a fishing trip to Cuba. A deer is also on display.

“I shot him on a guy hunting trip to Montana in the 1980s.”

During the height of football season, Whittington watches his favorite games with his kids and friends in his media room. It features a television projector system with a 110-inch screen and surround sound.

For a poker game or serving a bite to eat while entertaining, Whittington has a glass-top game table with barrel upholstered swivel game chairs situated behind a row of black leather recliners that face the screen. On a nearby console, he has a fox trophy displayed along with a humidor for cigars and a fine collection of brandy to enjoy when hanging out with the guys.

Home Trends

Guys' getaway

Five suggestions for an ideal man cave experience

1. To enjoy sporting events, incorporate a media room with surround sound and proper acoustics to absorb sound.
2. Add a bar or game table and chairs for games and to enjoy meals without having to leave the cave.
3. Build custom shelving to display autographed sports collectibles.
4. Provide ample wall space for framed jerseys, team pennants and game trophies.
5. Rather than add on new space, turn an empty room such as a garage, loft, screen porch or workshop into a manly destination.

— Suzy Kessenich



Your Health



New year, new you

Health and fitness experts suggest adopting an athlete's lifestyle

By Jaime Guillet
Contributing Writer

By the first week of January, after all of the Champagne has been consumed and the rich vittles from the holidays have settled unceremoniously into love handles, our thoughts turn to working the pounds off through exercise or austere eating.

Healthy Weight Awareness Week, celebrated nationally during the third week of January, reminds people that healthy living habits are more important than those numbers on the scale, something local health professionals say they preach all year long.

Healthy living — or unhealthy living, as it may be — usually is an issue of motivation, says Dr. Richard Long, a family practice physician with the St. Tammany Physicians Network.


“Most people are losing weight because of external stimulus such as illness or because of body images. They want to look like the gal on the magazine,” Long says. “They have to break down that wall. They don’t put their health first. They’ve got to realize that they are important, their life is important and that the people around them want them to be healthy.”

The best way to do that, Long says, is to adopt the lifestyle of an athlete.

“People need to become something of an athlete,” he says. “Consistency is what it’s all about. They just need to get that in their heads.”

Mackie Shilstone has made it his life’s work to educate people on healthy living and views the matter in exactly the same terms. He says healthy living means taking ownership of your life, not just the way you look.

“You can have all the best laid plans, but if you don’t have a



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FIT TIPS

The Harvard School of Public Health suggests individuals engage in daily exercise.

- Choose activities you like. A lot of different things count as exercise: dancing, walking, gardening, yoga, cycling, basketball.
To make it easier, choose whatever gets you moving and an activity that fits your identity.
- Piece your workout together. You don't need to get all your exercise at one time. Ten minutes in the morning, during the day and at night can give much of the same benefit as 30 minutes all at once.
- Keep it brisk. When you walk, set a good pace because it may help more than walking at a leisurely pace. What's brisk enough? Walk as though you are meeting someone for lunch and you are a little late. You can also time your steps for one minute: 120 to 135 steps per minute corresponds to a walking pace of 3 to 4 miles per hour, a good goal for many people.

Source: Harvard School of Public Health

passion for a healthy lifestyle it's just a flash in the pan," he said.

In tangible terms, that means starting the year with a full physical to determine your health. Verify your body fat percentage and check that you are not a candidate for metabolic syndrome, diabetes or coronary vascular disease.

Once "you know where you are in the game," he says, begin or maintain an active lifestyle.

"Get a pedometer. Measure your steps," Shilstone says. "You want between 8,000 to 10,000 steps per day to get weight off, or at least 60 to 90 minutes per day of movement. It is amazing how simple it is but how complex we make it."

Reconsider jogging if there is an issue of joint aches or if you're older, says Long, who enjoys swimming.

Long also recommends not dieting but just remaining cognizant of the fuel you feed your body. Monitor your carbohydrates intake, especially those from refined sugar, and eat complex carbs such as oatmeal instead.

"Lowering carbs is better because you burn carbs before anything else," said Logan. "As long as carbs are on board ... you'll burn those before fat."•

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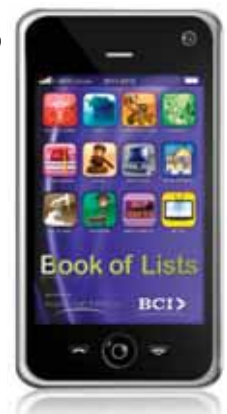
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Youth *Movement*

THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF ST. TAMMANY STARTS TO TAKE SHAPE AFTER YEARS OF THOUGHTFUL PLANNING FROM THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF GREATER COVINGTON AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

PHOTOS BY FRANK AYMAMI

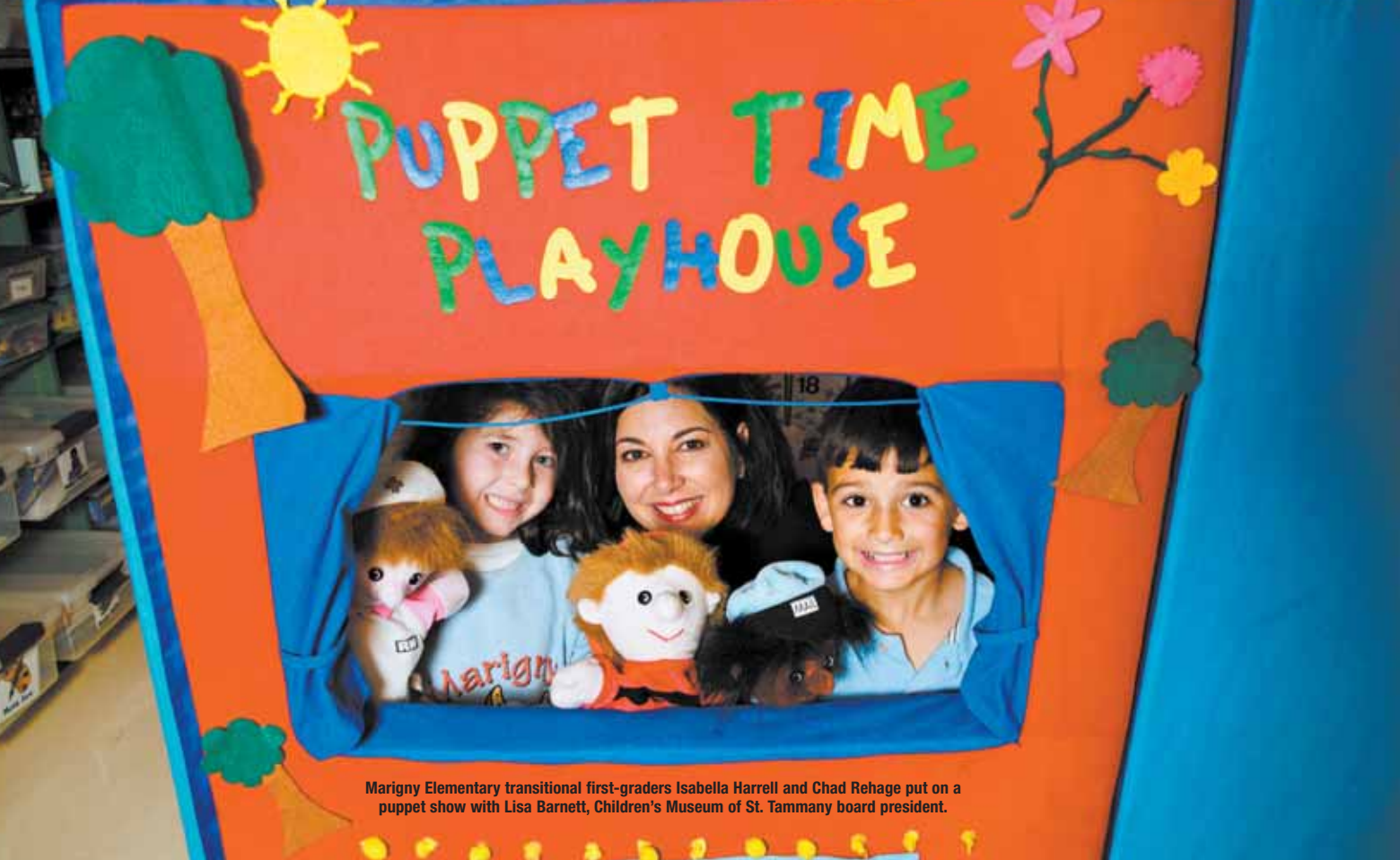
By Ben Myers
Staff Writer
ben.myers@nopg.com



ment



Lisa Barnett, Children's Museum of St. Tammany board president, visits the transitional first-grade class at Marigny Elementary. Students, from left: Dylan Perez, Lilly Neft, Brady Laborde, Na'imah Harley and Elena Torman.



Marigny Elementary transitional first-graders Isabella Harrell and Chad Rehage put on a puppet show with Lisa Barnett, Children's Museum of St. Tammany board president.

Youth *Movement*

The Children's Museum of St. Tammany is growing into something tangible.

A seven-member board overseeing the museum's development has fulfilled the Junior League of Greater Covington's original vision by formally incorporating into a nonprofit organization. The Junior League conceived the idea about seven years ago but has always planned for the museum to operate independently.

The board eventually will grow to 13 members, five of whom will be Junior League members.

The new board is about to begin a process that should result in final, detailed plans for the museum around the end of next year. Final negotiations are under way with a New York-based exhibit design firm that will solicit input from residents about what they want to see in the museum. Once the contract is signed, the firm will cull ideas gleaned from community meetings into detailed construction documents.

The board's president, Lisa Barnett, will not disclose the firm's name or contract award until negotiations are complete but she says the firm was selected after a rigorous selection process. A national capital campaign to gather construction funding will ramp up after completion of the design phase, most likely in 2013.

"You can take (the design) and sell it to your audience, whether it's a national foundation, or a philanthropic group or service-oriented

group that wants to help in any way," Barnett says, "whether it's donating or actually manually participating in the building of a project."

Barnett says it's possible the museum will be built in phases, depending on designs and funding levels. The museum board is currently looking at a \$12.5 million price tag, but how that is divvied up among exhibits, installations and other components will depend on the design.

A four-year-old museum master plan shows a basic footprint of 20,000 square feet as part of a larger arts-focused development near the Koop Drive Trailhead. Planners are eager to see how community input fills in the details.

There are multiple points of balance to achieve as the process unfolds. For one thing, Barnett says, the museum should reflect St. Tammany's environment, heritage and culture while also "teaching about the world outside your area."

Museum exhibits should blend art, science and technology, she says. At the same time, Barnett wants to avoid creating competition with other museums, such as the Louisiana Children's Museum in New Orleans.

Fauntleroy and Latham Architects President Kieran Weldon, whose firm designed the master plan and is now acting as a pro bono project manager, says the museum design needs to be flexible. He hopes the community will avoid trying to define the museum by a particular theme.

“

We want something that grows with the community and allows us to tell a story that two or three years from now may change and still be relevant.”

KIERAN WELDON

president

Fauntleroy and Latham Architects

“This is not going to be a dinosaur museum. This is not going to be a planetarium museum. This is going to be a children’s museum that has to be timeless,” he says.

Additionally, Weldon says the design should avoid the trap of being too reliant on flashy technology that will become obsolete in short order.

“We’ve found it’s really cutting edge when you open and then within three or four years, technology changes so much and those are the types of exhibits that are least used,” Weldon says. “We want something that grows with the community and allows us to tell a story that two or three years from now may change and still be relevant.”

Weldon says the design firm will have to work with existing sponsors as well as the community in finalizing its plans.

Those sponsors include the Dunavant Wealth Group, which helps sponsor an annual polo competition in support of the museum’s development. President Eric Dunavant says he has asked the museum’s planners to store away one-third of his firm’s annual contribution, about \$5,000, to help build an exhibit that helps children learn to handle money.

Dunavant says the idea was born from his personal experience growing up in a single-parent household that went bankrupt during his senior year in high school. He soon developed a passion before building a career to educate people about money management and says he’s looking forward to spreading his life’s work to the museum.

“It might be counting money. It might be how you budget for a month,” Dunavant says. “There’s a lot of different exciting things that could happen. The younger you can catch people and get those ideas embedded, the better chance they have of success.” •

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Mandeville Mayor Donald Villere talks with executive assistant Marlaine Peachey.

North Shore
Features

REBUILDING A REPUTATION

**SCARS FROM THE EDDIE PRICE SCANDAL
ARE STILL HEALING AT MANDEVILLE CITY HALL**

PHOTOS BY FRANK AYMAMI

The story of Eddie Price didn't end when Judge Martin Feldman sentenced the former mayor of Mandeville to 40 months for corruption and income tax evasion.

Price's crimes cast a shadow that continues to linger over the thriving hamlet on Lake Pontchartrain, though with each passing day more sunlight makes its way through.

"When you have a good reputation and then that reputation is destroyed, it takes an extraordinary amount of effort, patience and time to restore that," says Louissette Kidd, director of the city's planning and development department.

Kidd witnessed the impact the scandal had on the people who work in City Hall, the day-to-day employees who toil in anonymity to keep the machine running. Their mood darkened with each nasty comment thrown their way from members of the public who felt betrayed and lashed out in anger at anyone connected with the government, she says.

"The lack of public trust was really amazing because there was such a strong public trust prior to that," Kidd says. "Being a small municipality, we were on the cutting edge of a lot of planning initiatives. We used to be the model for communities of a similar size. We were really moving along, and then you have this big question."

Mayor Donald Villere, elected in March 2010, says he could feel the frustration among government employees when he first walked into City Hall.

"They just wanted that big monkey off their back. They felt if people were looking at city government as suspect, they were looking at them as suspect. What happened here should never have been a reflection on those folks," he said.

Architect Lynn Mitchell, a longtime friend of Price, who Mitchell believes got a "bad deal," says the incident has polarized the community between two camps — people who are either for or against the government.

"I don't find people as objective or as accepting as they may have been before," Mitchell says.

Before the Price debacle, if the government didn't work exactly the way people wanted or in their favor, they might have been upset but they looked at the larger pic-

“Every citizen has a right to know what’s going on in their government so we’ve tried to open up it up as much as possible.”

DONALD VILLERE

mayor

Mandeville

ture and said, "Hey, things aren't all that bad," Mitchell says. "Now, 'If it's not the way I like it, it's because everything is crooked and wrong.'"

Villere has sought to improve the public trust by increasing communication. He updated the city website and created an "outbound response system to notify residents of special events and causeway construction delays," according to a progress report.

"If people have any questions, we want them to feel free to come on in," Villere says. "You won't be met with resistance or someone asking, 'What are you looking for and why?'" Every citizen has a right to know what's going on in their government so we've tried to open up it up as much as possible."

The Price incident created an increased level of scrutiny in city government, which is a good thing, Kidd says. And Villere's initiatives and the return to a sense of normalcy have improved the overall mood by at least 90 percent.

"We don't expect people to just say that it was a blip on the screen and to never ask questions again," Kidd says. "There is still a strong perception about government that they still don't know what they're doing or that they're hiding

something. That hasn't gone away; it's gotten a lot better."

Denis Bechac, a board member of the Old Mandeville Business Association and fifth-generation Mandeville resident, says people were shell-shocked after the Price scandal, but most have healed and insist on moving forward.

"There's no doubt the city got a black eye, but we're moving past that pretty quickly."

Bechac, a former city councilman at-large, feels so strongly about improving the future of his hometown that he will run for mayor next spring. When term limits forced him to vacate his at-large seat in 2008, he ran unsuccessfully for the District 3 post. •



Angie Schott, left, a permit clerk for the city of Mandeville, and building inspector Christopher Brown share a laugh with Mandeville Mayor Donald Villere.

TAPPING THE POTENTIAL



**AFTER OTHER LOCAL
WATER BOTTLING
OPERATIONS HAVE
DRIED UP, ONE COMPANY
SEES POTENTIAL IN
THE NORTH SHORE'S
NATURAL RESOURCES**

By Jennifer Larino
Staff Writer
jenniter.larino@npg.com

The Evamor water bottling plant off Highway 1077 in Covington has the feel of a top-secret laboratory but company president Bo Reily insists there are few secrets behind his drinking water brand as he scans his fingerprint to access the facility.

The scan, Reily says, is a U.S. Department of Homeland Security measure. He and Damion Michaels, vice president of marketing, enter a warehouse occupied by a few hair-netted employees moving around loud humming machines and military lines of bottled Evamor water.

They wind their way into a quieter room where they point out a pipe system that draws water up from an aquifer 2,000 feet below the ground and filters out hard minerals. A nearby touch screen reveals its mineral properties, including the naturally high pH level of the water, a key selling point for the brand.

"It's not glorified tap water," Reily says.

Evamor is the newest player in the low-key bottled water industry that has cropped up on the North Shore. For hundreds of years, entrepreneurs have sought to turn the clear-running springs and artesian wells of local lore into a profitable drinking water brand.

Kentwood Springs has tapped its name-sake to provide bottled drinking water for homes and offices throughout the Gulf Coast region for 50 years. Atlanta water conglomerate DS Waters of America now owns Kentwood Springs, though it maintains some operations in Tangipahoa Parish.

Evamor is Reily's second go at the water business. A fourth generation member of the Reily Foods Co. family, he led its purchase of Abita Springs Water Co., a tiny company that tapped the North Shore town's famous springs, in 1994.

Reily Foods, founded in 1902, is known for brands such as Luzianne tea and Blue Plate mayonnaise.

"(Bottled water) hadn't really become what it is now. People made jokes about selling water," Reily says.

By 2005, Abita Springs bottled water was sold from Florida to Texas and in an exclusive deal with the Louisiana Superdome. In August 2005, levee failures and catastrophic flooding after Hurricane Katrina devastated its New Orleans bottling plant. The losses overwhelmed the company, and Reily Foods sold the Abita Springs brand to DS Waters in 2007.

Reily says Evamor has a chance to create a premium national brand that bottles water directly at a local source.

Abita Springs Mayor Louis Fitzmorris has seen just how coveted local waters can be. Long a destination for its naturally pure drinking water, the city sold the rights to its town seal to Princess Abita Water in 2008. The small



Charles Toth moves bottles through the case packing machine at the Evamor water facility in Covington.

company had been working with property owners to bottle water from area artesian wells.

Princess Abita foundered after a lengthy trademark infringement lawsuit with DS Waters, the new owners of the Abita Springs brand.

A DS Waters representative declined to be interviewed, and phone numbers for Princess Abita have been disconnected.

Fitzmorris says DS Waters hasn't made an effort to partner with the town.

"Now we're more famous for our beer than our water," Fitzmorris says, referring to Abita Brewing Co., established there in 1986.

Chris Hogan, spokesman for the International Bottled Water Association, says the small companies that make up most of the bottled water industry face plenty of other challenges.

The business appears simple but Hogan says small volume bottlers face steep costs, a reason many stick to one-gallon and five-gallon delivery operations.

Not only do they have to carve market share from beverage giants such as PepsiCo and Coca-Cola Co., facilities and processes must meet strict Food and Drug Administration guidelines, he says.

"It's not something where you take a hose over and fill a couple of bottles and throw it on a shelf," Hogan says.

None of that is lost on Reily and Michaels. Evamor, which only produces small bottles, had to produce about 900,000 bottles of water last year that never hit the market to meet in-house purity and efficiency standards. It took New York and California health inspectors two years to give Evamor their approval.

"Still, the perception is that if it comes flowing out of your tap for pennies on the dollar, why would anyone in their right mind spend a

dollar on a bottle of water? I would say that if you were looking at 90 percent of other waters that would almost be true," Michaels says.

They say Evamor stands out in that it is naturally alkaline, with low acidity. The brand markets the artesian water as helpful in fighting the detriments of dietary acids such as sugars, preservatives and fats.

Sebastian Concha, a beverage analyst with Mintel, isn't sure how many consumers will understand or care about alkalinity. He notes that bottled water sales saw a steep drop in 2008 as consumers backed away from higher prices.

"The main difficulty for water is how to change to their pricing point from being an alternative to tap water to being an alternative to all other drinks," Concha says.

Concha notes that consumers assume purity is a given in all bottled waters. Brands with momentum are often niche, premium waters or local waters, he says.

Reily says Evamor may well be more popular in Asian countries where alkaline waters are valued for their health benefits than in U.S. Still, it has scored a sponsorship deals with the Toyota Center, where the Houston Rockets basketball team plays, and television personality Dr. Mehmet Oz's Health Corps, a national wellness program geared toward children.

Evamor is also available in all 50 states and in grocery chains such as Whole Foods Market and Rouses. If the brand is successful, Reily and Michaels say it could reignite interest in St. Tammany Parish and Louisiana as a water source and potentially offer a clean industry option for a state long reliant on oil and gas.

"You had a natural resource that was coming out of the ground in Louisiana that revolutionized energy consumption and drove a lot of industries," Michaels says. "Our hope is that we have another natural resource that comes out of the ground that revolutionizes the food chain."•

500,000

Bottles of water the 70,000-square-foot Evamor plant in Covington can produce in one day.

Source: Evamor Products Inc.

Around the Parish

The people of St. Tammany

Community shots

PHOTO COURTESY SLIDELL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL



The Fit as a Firefighter Childhood Obesity Initiative, a partnership between Slidell Memorial Hospital and St. Tammany Fire Protection District No. 1, was recognized as an innovative and successful community initiative at the fifth annual Southern Obesity Summit. Fit as a Firefighter Camp Director Taffy Morrison, left, and Camp Dietitian Yvette Rodriguez show off the displays used during their presentation on the program at the 5th annual Southern Obesity Summit.

PHOTO COURTESY NORTH OAKS MEDICAL CENTER



In honor of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Belle Oaks Garden Club, Ponchatoula Community Garden Club and the Ponchatoula Gardenettes donated "Bosom Buddy Bags" to North Oaks Medical Center to be given as a resource to women following breast cancer surgery. The three local garden clubs sewed 140 of the fabric bags, which are designed to hold drainage bottles in place during recovery. Front row, from left: Patricia Sweeney, Vicky Fannaly, Peggy Avery, Rachel Fitzgerald, Janice Hickey, April McIntyre, Loren Hux, Rosalind Darsam and Lynda Byrd. Back row: Cricket Ayala, Mona Middlebrook, Margaret Bailey, Diane Dufour, Kathy Bedenbaugh and Phyllis Berner.

People

Awards

St. Tammany Parish Hospital employees **Michelle Chaix** earned the American Society of Healthcare Human Resources Association's Region 7 MetLife 2011 conference scholarship, and the Northshore District Nurses Association recognized **Jan Fox** as one of 12 nurses that patients nominated for making a difference in their lives.

The North Oaks Sports Medicine program has recognized Dr. **Carlton Faller** for his 49 years of service to the citizens of Tangipahoa Parish.



Michelle Chaix



Carlton Faller



Maurer Van Voorthuysen

Banking

Business First Northshore Banking Center has named **Maurer Van Voorthuysen** senior vice president.

Financial services

Edward Jones has named **Joseph Thibeaux** a financial adviser in its Mandeville branch.

Health care

The Louisiana Hospital Association has named **Patti Elish** and **James Cathey Jr.** at-large members of its board of trustees.

St. Tammany Parish Hospital has named **Lisa Linville** administrator of its home health and hospice, and **Karen Nicholson** has retired after 20 years of service.

The Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians has named Drs. **David Euans** president, **Herbert Muncie** treasurer and **Daniel Jens** vice-speaker/GA and District 2 director of its board of directors.

Ochsner Medical Center-North Shore has named **Polly Davenport** CEO, **Cheryl Woods** chief nursing officer, **Tiffany Baglio** patient advocate, **Andrea Sauvage**, **Jennifer Patterson**, **Kimberly Holmes** facilitator and volunteer coordinator, Dr. **James Newcomb** vice president of medical affairs, **Mike Sibley** facilitator/chaplain, and **Sharon Terry**, **David Terry**, **Stacey Boitnott**, **Cindy Ettinger** and **Tianni Rowley** members of its Family Advisory board.

Rehab Dynamics has named **Devon Nolan** a physical therapist.

The St. Tammany Hospital Foundation has awarded St. Tammany Parish Hospital staff member **Veronica Pregeant** its fall 2011 Dorothy L. Blossman nursing scholarship.

Townsend has named **Sid Kennedy**, **Brian McNulty** and Dr. **Arnell Bodden** staff clinicians.



Karen Nicholson



Devon Nolan



Sid Kennedy



Brian McNulty



Arnell Bodden



Becky Budd

Insurance

Northwestern Mutual of Louisiana has named **Becky Gustafson Budd** field director in the North Shore area.



Gerald Rooks



Tomorrow Fondal



Raymond Delaney

Nonprofits

Volunteers of America of Greater New Orleans has named **Gerald Rooks** director of children and family services, **Tomorrow Fondal** director of senior services and **Raymond Delaney** director of the Residential Re-entry Center.



James Hickey



Marcus Leach



Donna Mansfield

Real estate

Coldwell Banker TEC Realtors has named **Lisa Auguello**, **John Reaves** and **Stephanie Reaves** agents in its Mandeville Beau Chene office, and **James Hickey**, **Marcus Leach** and **Donna Mansfield** agents in its Slidell office.

Stirling Properties has named **Colleen Angerdina** controller of property accounting.

Latter and Blum Inc. has named **Dale Burks** a sales manager in its Slidell office.



Colleen Angerdina



Dale Burks

PHOTO COURTESY SLIDELL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL



The Slidell Memorial Hospital Outpatient Rehabilitation Center held a ribbon cutting ceremony Sept. 30 to celebrate the opening of the renovated facility at 1045 Florida Blvd. Front row, from left: state Rep. A.G. Crowe, SMH Acting CEO Bill Davis, Slidell Mayor Freddie Drennan, SMH Rehabilitation Director Julia Thomas, Parish Councilman Al Hamauei, East St. Tammany Chamber CEO Dawn Brackett and SMH Business Development Director Sam Caruso Jr.

FYI

Openings

The Groves at Mile Branch, a new mixed-income and single-family home community, has opened at 1120 Polders Lane, Covington.

Vicky Magas Insurance Agency has opened at 2208 Second St., Slidell.

Baumann & Company has opened at 2051 E. Gause Blvd., Slidell.

Three Divas & A Sugardaddy has opened at 2306 Front St., Slidell.

Verizon Wireless Zone has opened at 1579 Gause Blvd., Suite A, Slidell.

Multipractice Clinic Inc. has opened at 27403 Highway 190, Lacombe.

Cinnamonster has opened at 150 Northshore Blvd., Slidell.

Northshore Barre & Pilates has opened at 2163 E. Gause Blvd., Slidell.

Zellco Federal Credit Union has opened at 64724 Highway 41, Suite E, Pearl River.

Lakeshore Family Dentistry has opened at 720 Robert Blvd., Slidell.

Moving

The St. Tammany Cancer Fund has moved to 2895 Highway 190, Suite S-3, Mandeville.

The North Oaks Orthopaedic Specialty Center has moved to Suite 100 on the first floor of the new four-story North Oaks Clinic Building, 15813 Paul Vega Drive in Hammond.

Business notables

North Oaks Health System has received a \$100,000 grant from the Baton Rouge area affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

Michaels, Chuck E. Cheese's, ULTA Beauty, Charming Charlie and Carter's will open in Spring 2012 at River Chase Shopping Center in Covington.

The American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation has renewed certification of the North Oaks Medical Center Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program.

Volunteers of America Greater New Orleans received a \$105,000 grant from the Home Depot Foundation to address the critical housing needs of U.S. military veterans.

The second annual Benefits of Home Gala raised \$65,000 for the Cancer Program of Mary Bird Perkins and St. Tammany Parish Hospital.

Miscellaneous

The historic Jean Baptiste Lang House has been moved from the donor's property, 2603 Lakeshore Drive, Mandeville, to Kierr Family Gardens, a site donated to the city.

PHOTO COURTESY ST. TAMMANY PARISH HOSPITAL



On Oct. 4, St. Tammany Parish Hospital celebrated the grand opening of its new Women's Pavilion, 301 N. Highway 190, Suite C-2, Covington. Front row, from left: Covington Councilmen Rick Smith and Jerry Coner; SPTH Board Commissioner Tom Davis; SPTH President and CEO Patti Ellish; SPTH Board Commissioner James Core; SPTH Chief Operating Officer Sharon Toups; Women's Pavilion radiologist Dr. William Wells; Alice McNeely, artist; and Sue Osbon. Back row: SPTH Board Commissioner Greg Lemons and Pizzie Romano; Keith Barré, principal, Faunteroy Latham Weldon Barré Architects; Rachel Chappetta, SPTH Women's Pavilion staff; SPTH Chief Nursing Officer Kerry Milton; Kelly Mullins, SPTH Women's Pavilion staff; SPTH Women's Pavilion Manager Pam Ballard; Jennifer Rice, St. Tammany Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees; and SPTH Women's Pavilion staff members Cindy Scharfenstein, Tiffany Raiford and Kerri Billiot.

PHOTO COURTESY NORTHSHORE LEGISLATIVE ALLIANCE



Gov. Bobby Jindal addressed more than 200 attendees at the Northshore Legislative Alliance luncheon Sept. 19 at the Tchefuncta Country Club. From left: Northshore Legislative Alliance chairman James Person, St. Tammany West Chamber chairwoman Lisa Blossman, East St. Tammany Chamber chairman Sam Caruso, Gov. Bobby Jindal, Humana Market President Rhonda Bagby, NBC Executive Director Larry Rase, Northshore Legislative Alliance Legislative Advocate Dino Paternostro and Pointevent Interests President Edward Poitevent.

Send us your people news

North Shore Report welcomes submissions for Around the Parish. To be considered for inclusion in a coming issue, information must be received six weeks to the anticipated publication date, which is the first day of the issue month. Submissions, including photographs, are published subject to space availability. Photos submitted by email should be in color and in .jpg format. Black-and-white photos will not be published.

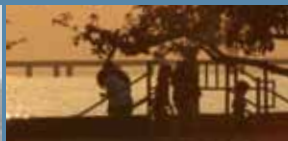
Please email all submissions to Jennifer Nall at jennifer.nall@nopg.com, or call (504) 293-9203 for more information.

All photo attachments and submissions must include the subject's name.

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North Shore Report

www.northshorereport.com

Last word

with **Lisa Pratt Maddox**, Tammany Trace director

By Diana Chandler
Contributing Writer

PHOTO BY FRANK ANAMI

Age: 51

Family: husband, Terry Maddox; sons, Kyle Pratt, 31, Stuart Pratt, 27, and Cory Pratt, 24

Education: Bogalusa High School

Hometown: Bogalusa



From her office at the Mandeville Trailhead, Lisa Pratt Maddox manages the tranquil 31-mile Tammany Trace.

The trailhead is once again the site of St. Tammany's annual Holiday of Lights Christmas celebration. This marks the 11th year Maddox has organized the event Parish President Kevin Davis began 12 years ago.

Holiday of Lights opens this year with a \$50-per-ticket adults-only sponsors' party from 7-10 p.m. Dec. 1 at the Koop Drive Trailhead. The free celebration continues through December, with special programming the first two weekends. Details are available on the events calendar at www.tammanytrace.org.

When do you begin planning the annual Holiday of Lights?

We begin planning the event in June, but we do some work on it year-round.

What are your goals for the event?

To have all the lights work.

How many hours does it take you to plan the event?

Should I include the hours of sleep that I lose?

How many lights are used for the event and where are the lights placed?

The lights start as you turn onto Koop Drive and extend all the way down and into the Kids Town Pavilion area. Just the Tower of Lights stands 160 feet tall and has over 4,000 bulbs on it. It sparkles and can be seen for miles.

How many people and hours does it take to install the light bulbs?

We have never really counted how many it takes because we have so many that come and work together.

What are you most looking forward to at this year's event?

This year will be Mr. Davis' last year as parish president. Since he was the driving force behind the Holiday of Lights, we have a few special surprises in store for the visitors.

What's new to the event this year?

We will have great entertainment, free kiddie rides and a few other new additions ... (a) great lineup of entertainment adding more dance and theater.

What's the biggest emergency you've ever encountered in planning the event?

You can never control the weather. There have been times that we had to cancel some evenings, but we only do that when the conditions are hazardous and we don't want people out on the streets. In such emergencies, we talk with emergency officials and the administration about the public safety. The public safety is always our first concern.

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