

In and about Washington

October 2024
FREE—TAKE ONE



South Louisiana radar showed rain but little else as Francine moved through the Gulf south of us.

Two Gulf storms, two misses

Major hurricane Helene that struck Florida September 26 never threatened us, but it was a little bit scary earlier in the month when the first computer models showed hurricane Francine making a beeline for Washington. Luckily that storm system was pushed far enough to the east that we ended up with just a little rainfall.

Francine made landfall on September 11 about 30 miles from Morgan City. Maximum sustained winds were estimated at 100 mph on the coast, but we felt nothing like that.

The average steady windspeed was only 10 mph at both the St. Landry airport, two miles south of town, and at R&D Research, just east of us. The highest gusts were about 25 mph. Less than a half inch of rain fell here.

Unfortunately, storm watchers say an October storm is a possibility.

Presidential hopefuls fill November 5 ballot here

Eleven candidates for president will be on the Washington ballot in the November 5 election, along with five hopefuls for the newly created 6th Congressional District and a proposed constitutional amendment.

There are no local races on the ballot.

Early voting is October 18 through 29 from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the registrar's office in the parish courthouse. On election day, the poll at Town Hall will be open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

In addition to the Democratic and Republican nominees Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, the choices for President will include Jill Stein (Green Party), Chase Oliver (Libertarian), Peter Sonski (American Solidarity), Randall Terry (Constitution), Mattie Preston (Godliness, Truth, Justice), Cornel West (Justice for All), Claudia de la Cruz (Socialism and Liberation), Rachele Fruit (Socialist Workers), and Robert Kennedy Jr. (We the People).

Preston is a native of Minden in northwestern Louisiana who ran unsuccessfully for the state senate in 2019. Kennedy withdrew from the race, but too late to have his name removed.

Candidates for the new congressional seat are Quentin Anderson, Democrat, Baton Rouge; Cleo Fields, Democrat, Baton Rouge; Elbert Guillory, Republican, Opelousas; Wilken Jones Jr., Democrat, Opelousas; and Peter Williams, Democrat, Baton Rouge.

The constitutional amendment would continue a requirement that federal oil and gas revenues are dedicated solely to hurricane protection and coastal conservation, but would also dedicate money from offshore solar power; energy generated by wind, tides, and waves; and other sources to storm and coastal projects.

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Of Note

THE SECOND HARVEST mobile market will offer fresh produce, healthy food, and nutrition advice at Shiloh Baptist, 419 Buhot St., from 10 a.m. until noon on October 4.

THE FALL antique fair and yard sale at the Old Schoolhouse Antique Mall is scheduled for October 11-13.

THE SQUIRREL COOKOFF at Willie's Campground will be from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on October 19. Events include food, music, kids' activities, and silent and live auctions.

THE BLESSING of the graves at Cedar Hill will be on Saturday, November 2, following the 9 a.m. Mass at Immaculate Conception.

THE AMERICAN LEGION offers pork or chicken barbecue dinners for \$12 on the first Saturday of each month. Pickup is between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the legion home.

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

Send items for In and About Washington to
jimbradshaw4321@gmail.com



"Trunk or Treat" at Pavilion

The Town will host a "Trunk or Treat" at the Pavilion across from Town Hall from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on October 31. Adults are invited to come in costume, bring candy, and set up cars in the parking lot beginning at 5 p.m. The event is sponsored by Mayor Dwight Landreneau and the Washington Town Council.

Class of 1974 holds 50-year reunion

The Washington High School class of 1974 celebrated its Golden 50th class reunion at the Evangeline Downs Hotel on August 31. Wilfred W. Times was master of ceremonies, and five former faculty members attended

Class members lit candles to honor students and faculty who have died since the class graduated on May 24, 1974. Six of the 53 graduates and 15 faculty members have died, including the principal and vice principal D. L. Vidrine and Clifton Lemelle. Thirty-two of the classmates attended the reunion.

The former class president, Charles R. Smith said the class will provide three scholarships for college or vocational education for grandchildren of class members.

He also presented \$100 each to support youth programs at Washington Baptist Church and to provide supplies for Washington Elementary School. Smith said the class plans to support the school with a donation each year and that members will make an annual donation to a local church.



Washington classmates reunite

Attending the Washington High class reunion were, seated from left, Shirley Coleman-Robinson, Martha Celestine-Etienne, Barbara Ann Johnson, Judy Nevills-Rideau, Lucy LeDay-Smith, Viola Lastrapes-Robicheaux, Carolyn Jones-Portlock, Karen Hebert-Ducote, Connie Wilson-Cain, Jackie Fontenot-Lalonde; standing from left are Charles R. Smith, Wilfred W. Times, Ruth Ann Harris-Siverand, Mary Jane Rose-Hooker, Rolton M. Thomas II, and Vincent Johnson Jr., and faculty members Clifford Thierry, Eva Briscoe, and Mary Jane Guidry.



Volunteers clean park

Dennis Anderson conducted what was called, tongue-in-cheek, an “advanced weed pulling demonstration” at Ethel Park on **Saturday, September 14**, after which volunteers used skills learned to weed and clean the little park across from Town Hall.

Contract awarded for electronic meters

The firm of Core & Main has been awarded the contract to install electronic water meters in Washington.

The firm submitted the low bid of \$324,495, which was some \$67,000 less than the second lowest submitted by Construction Pro, Inc. Core & Main is based in St. Louis and has a branch in Baton Rouge.

The work will be paid for using state capital outlay funding.

The Town Council also authorized Mayor Dwight Landreneau to apply for a Community Infrastructure Fund Grant from the Delta Regional Authority for other water system improvements.

Council approves Hotel Klaus tax abatement

The Town Council has approved an application by Bayou Courtableau Investments, the corporation under which Hotel Klaus was restored, for a tax abatement.

Under the state’s Restoration Tax Abatement Program, restorers of properties such as the hotel can pay property taxes for five years based upon the assessment for the year before the project began. After five years, the tax will be based on the value of the improved building.

Mark the date for Christmas fête

Planning is well under way for Washington’s annual Christmas celebration. The fête that has helped open the holiday season each year since 2020 will be held this year from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on December 14. The theme will be “Christmas in Washington, a Special Time and Place.” The event, created and is put on by volunteers, is administered through the Steamboat City Association.

From Town Hall

THE MAYOR is working from home while recuperating from major back surgery.

UTILITY CUSTOMERS are reminded that bill payments are due on the 17th of each month and that payments received after 3 p.m. are posted on the next business day. A \$10 late fee is charged if the bill is not paid on time

REGULAR MEETINGS of the Town Council are at 6 p.m. on each third Monday at Town Hall.

THE TOWN’S Facebook page. Historic Washington, Louisiana, can be accessed at [townofwashington.la](https://www.facebook.com/townofwashington.la).

THE WEATHER



NOAA forecast: October will be hotter and drier than usual.

September 1-27

High: 95, Sept. 3

Avg. High: 83.6

Low: 61, Sept. 9

Avg. Low: 67.3

Avg. Temp: 75.5

5-year Avg.: 78.1

Sept. Rainfall: 3.11

Avg. for Sept.: 4.40

Rain for 2024: 52.25

20-year Avg.: 43.81

First woman elected in St. Landry was from Washington

When Jennie Mae Brown Oge was elected to the board of aldermen in Washington in April 1940 the *Opelousas Daily World* reported that she was thought to be the first woman ever elected to office in St. Landry Parish. Another woman, Irene Shute, had served as a deputy sheriff but was appointed.

Mrs. Oge was born March 18, 1891, probably in St. Landry Parish, the daughter of William Lynn Brown and Martha R. Johnson about whom we know very little. The report of her election said that she was “of Cheneyville, but has resided in Washington for the past 19 years,” coming to town “after her marriage to Mr. Oge, employee of the Washington post office.”

She married George Gordon Oge Sr. before 1920, when the census shows them living in Ward 2 of St. Landry Parish. The 1930 and 1940 censuses show them living in Washington. The 1940 census lists George as a rural mail carrier and indicates that the couple owned a homer on Dejean Street.

According to a 1940 news account, “Mrs. Oge had no political affiliation during the campaign which lead to her election. ... ‘My friends on both sides elected me,’ she contends, ‘and my major plank in my campaign platform was the improvement and beautification of Washington.’”

The report said that “one of her first official acts was to arrange for and decorate the Washington prize-winning float” in the July 4 parade in Opelousas,

Her husband died in 1967 in Beaumont, Texas, and she died there in November 1978, but her funeral was held at Immaculate Conception Church and she was buried in Washington. One account says that she was buried in the Old Church Landing Cemetery, but her obituary says it was in Cedar Hill, which is more likely.

She had four children, Dorothy Elton Oge (1921-2007), George Gordon Oge Jr. (1923-1989), Robert Joseph Oge (1926-1945), and Rose Mary Oge (1929-2010). Both of her daughters were living in Beaumont at the time of her death. She was probably living with Dorothy, who had studied nursing.

Robert Joseph (Bobby) Oge was killed May 14, 1945, during the World War II battle for the Pacific Island of Okinawa. He had been an all-state center on the six-man football team at the Academy of the Immaculate Conception and attended SLI briefly before enlisting in the Marines.

A report of his death noted that Bobby was “a member of a prominent and widely known family in St. Landry. His father is with the Washington post office and Mrs. Oge is a member of the Grand Prairie school faculty. His grandfather was an especially well-known planter of the parish.”

Mrs. Oge apparently served only one term. She is not listed among the council members in 1945.



Looking Back

In and About
Washington

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