

In and about Washington

December 2024
FREE—TAKE ONE



December 14
Town Pavilion
10 am. to 7 p.m.
Live Music

Angelic Choir, 10 a.m.
Southwinz, 1-3 p.m.
Don Fontenot, 5-7 p.m.

Pictures with Santa
1 to 3 p.m.

With Mrs. Claus and
Buddy the Elf

Kid's Carnival
10 am. To 5 p.m.

Games, face painting,
balloon art

The Grinch
Noon to 3 p.m.

Train Rides
Noon to 3 p.m.



Coating plant going up

Construction is moving quickly on the Southland Industrial Coatings plant on Highway 103 just east of I-49. The company expects the plant to create 120 new jobs with at least half of them available here in the first phase of operation. The company will begin job recruiting after the first of the year.

Lights, music, Christmas!

Traditional Christmas music sung by the Opelousas Queen of Angels Choir will open Washington's holiday season, businesses and residents will vie for cash prizes in the annual decorating contest, and the Christmas in Washington celebration will again bring Santa and his helpers to town.

The choir, under the direction of William Plummer, will offer a free concert beginning at 6 p.m. on December 7 at the historic St. John's Episcopal Church, the Washington Garden Club headquarters, 308 Church Street.

The garden club will also sponsor the decorating contest, with support from the Steamboat City Association and the Town. First, second, and third place winners in the residential and business categories will be recognized at the Christmas in Washington festival. Entry deadline is December 9. There is no fee. Forms are available at Town Hall.



Former mayor Kirt Soileau remembered

A mayor's proclamation cited former mayor John Kirt Soileau as one of Washington's respected citizens after his death October 30 at the age of 94.

He was a member of the Town Council when he was appointed acting mayor in May 1974 after Terry Martin resigned, was elected mayor in August 1974, and remained in office until 2002.

He was a teacher and school administrator for 20 years before retiring as Washington High principal in 1979 and owned a hardware and auto parts store on Main Street, closing it in 2014 after 49 years in business. He served in the Army as a medical technician during the Korean War era and was honored as a 50-year member of the American Legion.

2—In and about Washington, December 2024

Of Note

WASHINGTON BAPTIST will hold a Christmas 1 backpack giveaway at 10 a.m. on December 7.

THE AMERICAN LEGION first Saturday barbecue has been suspended until spring, but donations are needed to repair the legion home. Send checks to 1American Legion Post 209, P.O. Box 45, Washington 70589.

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.

THE WASHINGTON Cemetery Foundation accepts donations via the Venmo payment app. Donations may be made by check to Washington Cemetery Foundation, P.O. Box 42, Washington 70589.



45th year class reunion

The Washington High Class of 1979 Celebrated its 45th year class reunion over several days at the beginning of November. Events included foods prepared by the classmates and a catered meal, reflections by valedictorian Janet Rideaux, and a worship service.

Altar society elects officers

Cathy B. Callahan was elected president of the St. Mary's Altar Society of Immaculate Conception Church at its November meeting. She succeeds long-time president Pam Landreneau, who stepped down for health reasons. Allison Blevins, secretary, and Brooke Chehotsky, treasurer, were reelected.

Sheriff will get emergency calls, send our officers

Calls for police and emergency services for the Washington Police Department will now go to the St Landry sheriff's department under a new dispatching arrangement, but Washington officers will respond.

The cost-saving measure eliminates the dispatcher here and frees officers certified in Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) to patrol and respond to emergencies. Washington will no longer be required to use POST-certified officers as dispatchers.

Residents should still call 911 for a life-threatening emergency, and other calls can still be placed to the Washington Department at (337) 826-3350. Calls not answered here will automatically go to the sheriff's department.



Event brought happy Halloween

Hundreds of children and parents came to the Halloween Trunk or Treat at the town pavilion where treats were handed out from car trunks. The event was made possible by the mayor and council members, Steamboat City Association, and many volunteers.



Voting in Washington

Kamala Harris got 52% of the vote in Washington in the November 5 election, but Donald Trump carried the parish and state by a 60% to 40% margin. St. Landry native Elbert Guillory carried the parish with 55% of the vote in the new 6th Congressional District, but Cleo Fields was elected with 51% of the vote in the district that includes several parishes. Guillory was second with 38% districtwide. There were 263 votes cast in Washington, 35.7% of eligible voters. Only constitutional amendments will be on our ballot in the December 7 general election.

From Town Hall

THE TOWN COUNCIL ratified a document that codifies expectations for the police department, including shifts for certified officers, patrol duties, overtime pay, and other issues.

THE COUNCIL also approved resolutions supporting the town's applications for two infrastructure grants from the state.

AUDITORS are expected to report on town finances and bookkeeping at the December 16 council meeting at 6 p.m. at Town Hall

WASHINGTON WEATHER



December forecast:
Warmer than usual,
average rain.

November 1-27

High: 85, Nov. 4
Avg. High: 75.3
Low: 39, Nov. 23
Avg. Low: 59.1
Avg. Temp: 67.2
5-year Avg. 57.4
Nov. Rainfall: 5.69
Avg. for Nov.: 3.67
Rain for 2024: 58.00
20-year Avg.: 47.38



Veterans remembered

Members of the Washington Garden Club placed a wreath in front of the Jasper Neyland memorial at the American Legion Home as part of a Veterans Day remembrance November 9. From left are Karen Ducote, Joy Pitre, Anne Jones, Becky Broussard, Stephanie Tompkins, and Kary Landreneau. The post is named for Neyland, who died in World War I.

4-In and about Washington, December 2024

Hapless warehouse burglars were easy to find

The thieves who broke into Captain Gerand Carriere's warehouse in Washington in October 1873 might get an A for effort but would surely flunk a basic burglary course.

The warehouse was a tempting target. Carriere Street is named for Captain Carriere, who ran several successful businesses and was a wealthy man. When he married Elize Roquebert de la Morandier in 1837, the marriage contract said Carriere, then 27 years old, owned a \$6,000 interest in Carriere, Gradnigo & Company. That would be about \$200,000 today, and that was only one of his ventures.

He was the first mayor of Washington after it was incorporated in 1836, and his tenure apparently lasted for three decades, at least into the Civil War. A photo taken in 1863 shows Carriere, identified as mayor, and Union General Nathaniel Banks on the steps of Carriere's home on Main Street, which we now know as the Nicholson house.

He came to Washington as a steamboat captain and later was a boat owner. The 1850 census listed his occupation as "steamboating," but later census reports call him a "commission merchant."

David Jasper McNicoll recalled in his Washington memoir that "Captain Carriere had a thriving steamboat landing and cotton warehouse in the northeastern part of Washington," near the old steamboat turnaround. McNicoll said the warehouse faced south on the bayou side of Water Street.

This was almost certainly the warehouse that was the target of our inept thieves.

According to news reports of the day, they were looking for money when they broke open an iron chest that was in the warehouse, but there was nothing in it.

"Not finding what they wanted," the *Opelousas Courier* reported, "they turned their attention to a larger safe, which was nearby," but couldn't get it open. So, "discouraged by the difficulties they met, they [had to] content themselves with ... a barrel of flour and provisions."

The theft wasn't discovered until daybreak, when the steamboat *Minnie* tied up at the warehouse landing.

"The clerk of the boat, finding the doors open, entered the warehouse and called, but received no answer. He then went and roused the warehouse clerk." They discovered that the door had been broken open, that someone had tried to open the safe, and that a barrel of flour was missing.

Stealing the flour was the big mistake made by the thieves, who were led by a man named Henry Heard. They had no way to carry the heavy barrel, so they simply rolled it to Henry's house. It being dark at the time, they may not have noticed that the barrel had a leak. All the two clerks had to do was follow a white trail of flour that led directly from the warehouse to Henry's door. They found the flour, along with packages of coffee, rice, and other provisions inside.

Poor Henry could do nothing but confess and give up the names of his fellow barrel-rollers.



Looking Back

In and About
Washington

is underwritten by

Member
FDIC



•

