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## Nurse diagnosed with coronavirus describes 'roller coaster' of symptoms

**Monique Roth** Editor  
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Surprising symptoms, in-home isolation and experimental drugs – Amy Herzog has had a whirlwind of a month.

“It all started so strangely,” the 35-year-old Montz resident, who works full-time as a nurse, said.

What started on Friday, April 3, as typical seasonal allergies symptoms had progressed to a headache the next day.

“On Monday I called my doctor for allergies worsening and sinusitis,” she said. “He prescribed me a Z-Pak so it wouldn’t get worse ... I suffer from seasonal allergies so this wasn’t something I was unfamiliar with ...since I work in healthcare during the coronavirus pandemic, I figured I would take the antibiotics so it didn’t get worse.”

Herzog initially experienced no sore throat, congestion, fever or chest pain.



Amy Herzog with her family.

**VIRUS on 6A**

## AD hopes to lock down HHS coach in May



**TURN to 4A**

## Schools plan to hold graduation



**TURN to 4A**

## CARES Act passes but some provisions run out – so what’s next?

**Monique Roth** Editor  
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There is no business as usual in St. Charles Parish, as businesses large and small have faced devastating financial effects from the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent economic downturn.

As a result of the same thing happening in cities around the country, the historic Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, was passed in late March and clocks in as the largest economic relief bill in U.S.

**CARES ACT on 7A**



Brandt Dufrene, CEO and president of First National Bank USA, urges businesses to continue to fill out Paycheck Protection Program applications.

## Local real estate market remains strong amid pandemic

**Monique Roth** Editor  
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While coronavirus mandates have shuttered various businesses and stalled the economy, the real estate market in St. Charles Parish appears to be largely unaffected by the pandemic.

“As far as concerns of the real estate market in general, if you can economically sell or buy, this might be the very best time to do so,” Regina Allemand, a realtor with Gardner Realtors, said. “If the current situation was caused by an economic failure then we might be more skeptical, but the current economic climate is being caused by a



non-economic outside influence ... there are still people who want and need to buy and sell ... housing is a basic need of life.”

Allemand said there are ways the real

**REAL ESTATE on 7A**

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# Income uncertainty hitting hard during pandemic

**Ryan Arena** Editor  
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Whether one has been laid off, furloughed, or their own business has been placed on hold indefinitely due to coronavirus, it's an anxious time for many, with so many questions yet to be answered.

When can one get started again? Will a workplace reopen at all? And in either case, how does one make ends meet right now?

For Michele Zeller of Luling, her wedding business, *Décor on a Dime*, is still open and available for customers – but almost all of the calls she's had to field since mid-March have come from brides forced to postpone or cancel their weddings due to pandemic fallout. The well has run dry on new clients, and compounding matters, work she counted on via existing customers disappeared and refunds issued.

"It hit me about four different ways," Zeller said. "Money you were counting on has been pushed to who knows when. On top of that, you're issuing refunds."

The timing was bad for Zeller's family: a nest egg they'd built up savings wise was reduced greatly when she, her husband and their three children moved into a newly built Ashton Plantation home in September.

"With three kids, we needed more space ... we were just building our savings back up," she said. "Now we're just hoping the SBA comes through. Applying for aid ... even food stamps, things we've never had to do before,



Michele Zeller, of Luling, is one of many business owners struggling during the pandemic.

but now we're in that boat. We don't have a big fancy warehouse. It's a little hole in the wall place where people can come see the lanterns, the table cloths. But you still have to pay rent on that. And I'm applying for everything under the sun and getting nowhere with that, so we're just panicking."

**INCOME on 8A**



Lexi Gaubert takes dance lessons from the comfort of her home.

# Dance school doesn't miss a beat - goes virtual amidst pandemic

**Monique Roth** Editor  
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One local dance school's move to tap into technology has meant toes are continuing to tap all across St. Charles Parish.

Social distancing mandates and the stay at home order may have forced Kelli's Kreative Dance in Destrehan to close its doors, but the studio has moved their entire schedule of 90 dance classes a week

**VIRTUAL DANCE on 9A**

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# Schools plan to hold graduation, other events to honor grads

**Ryan Arena** Editor  
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Destrehan High School senior Kayla Porche was looking forward to spring break just a few weeks ago, but now shares what would have been a quite unexpected sentiment with several classmates.

“I’d do anything to go back to school,” Porche said.

Porche is one among countless high school seniors who have seen their senior year compromised, an experience so many have looked forward to for years that is now over, and the status of activities like prom and graduation are in many ways up in the air.

“You think oh, I can’t wait to be out of school, but I know I’ve heard from so many people that wish we were back in school,” Porche continued. “It’s something people take for granted. Nobody feels excited anymore ... we’re all in this mood of there being nothing to really look forward to.”

Porche acknowledged given world events during the COVID-19 pandemic, senior activities are small potatoes compared to the hardships so many people have faced. But it still hurts to think so many senior moments – prom, graduation, senior trip, the final days of class and saying goodbye to classmates and

teachers – might not happen at all or could be significantly altered, she said.

“It’s heartbreaking, obviously,” Porche said. “Everything leads up to this and we won’t get to experience it like everyone else does. You just try to stay positive, stay in contact with classmates and friends ... you’re still trying to figure out what you’ll be able to do for a senior year.”

Hahnville High School senior Montana Smith recently got the news that the Lady Tigers’ softball season was officially finished, which she called a blow.

“Coach (Jerry Nugent) let me know they decided to cancel the season. I didn’t want to get emotional on the call with him, but as soon as I hung up, I couldn’t hold it in,” Smith said. “It was kind of devastating.”

Senior proms for each school have been postponed indefinitely, as well as the annual after prom event Promapalooza. What will happen for graduation, meanwhile, remains unclear. Last week, St. Charles Parish Public Schools noted plans to potentially host an in-person graduation ceremony in July, if allowed to do so.

SENIORS on 8A

# AD hopes to secure next HHS football coach by May 20

Process may have to be done virtually

**Ryan Arena** Editor  
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While Louisiana’s stay at home order came in the midst of the Destrehan High School head football coaching search, the process of hiring the next head football coach at Hahnville figures to present a few more complexities for the school district’s hiring committee.

Days following the announcement that Marcus Scott would be Destrehan’s next head football coach last month, then Hahnville head coach Nick Saltaformaggio resigned from his post to accept the same position at Holy Cross, where he is an alumnus.

For St. Charles Parish Public Schools, that meant a process that had just completed was beginning anew. But the DHS coaching search had already gone through a round of interviews before tight pandemic restrictions were put into place. The Hahnville process, potentially, may have to be a predominantly online based.

“Could it be done face to face, or will we have virtual meetings ... we don’t know that quite yet,” said school district Athletic Director Kade Rogers, who noted the job opening was officially posted last week. “It’s a crazy time for this to be going on. We’re looking to mirror the same process, largely, in terms of the timeline.”

The job will remain posted until April 27, with the first round of interviews slated to be conducted May 7 and 8 and a second round the following week. Rogers said he hopes the committee will be able to recommend a candidate to the School Board at its May 20 meeting.

COACH on 8A



Hahnville linebacker Davontez Simmons.



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# Obituaries

Send your obituary announcements to [obits@heraldguide.com](mailto:obits@heraldguide.com) for speedy publication in the St. Charles Herald-Guide's print and Internet editions.

## Alexander

Brent James Alexander, age 36, passed away on Monday, April 13, 2020 at 7:11 AM at his residence in Jefferson, LA. Brent was known to be friendly, with a ready smile, and a firm handshake. His charismatic personality won him the hearts of people young and old. He was a great son, coworker, friend, neighbor, brother, significant other, dad and brother-in-law. He loved to see his loved ones happy and if you needed help with anything he was willing to help you. Brent resided in Jefferson, LA from December 2015 until his death. Despite several medical conditions since the age of 14 months old, he always kept a positive demeanor and selfless spirit. He is survived by his three sons, Logan James and Brodie Paul Alexander of Nashville, TN and Gabriel Michael Alexander of Baton Rouge, LA. In addition, Mr. Alexander leaves behind his three brothers, Jon and Kade of Uptown New Orleans, his youngest brother Eric of Marrero, LA and his half-brother Randall Scott Alexander of Lake Charles, LA. Also surviving are his significant other, Amy Fahrenholtz of Jefferson, LA; his nephews, Damien Joel and Maddox Nash Alexander of Slidell, LA, Eric Matthew Alexander, Jr. of Marrero, LA; Brittani J. Robbins of Marrero, LA Eric Jr.'s mother; his mother, Susan Louviere Hubbard and stepfather, Robert W. Hubbard, Jr. of Carencro, La, formerly of Destrehan, LA; a host of cousins and "adopted" brothers, survive Mr. Alexander. Born on January 8, 1984 in Baton Rouge, LA he was the second son of four of Clifton (Cliff) W. Alexander, Jr. and Susan Louviere Alexander. Mr. Alexander began his education in Lafayette, LA in 1989 and continued in Destrehan through high school. He also attended Jefferson Vocational College, now Delgado Community College studying welding. Brent had an exceptional aptitude in animals of land, water and air, reading anything he could on them to keep himself up-to-date on their habitat, food, safety and newest equipment to raise and care for them. Mr. Alexander was preceded in death by his father, Clifton W. Alexander, Jr. (Cliff) of Abilene, TX; his maternal grandparents, James Ivy and Volna Landry Louviere of New Iberia, LA and paternal grandparents, Clifton W. Alexander, Sr. and Alice LaVergne of Sulphur, LA. Due to our current extenuating circumstances Mr. Alexander's service will be private. A celebration of Mr. Alexander's life will be held in the Lafayette area for his family and friends at a later date. In lieu of flowers, friends and family are requested to donate to his mother's high school alma mater, Sister's of Mt. Carmel by



way of their "Gift in Memory/In Honor of" Brent's dear grandmother, Mrs. James Ivy (Volna) Louviere for Masses on her birthday of September 26. Check, cash, pay pal, or wire transfer payable to Congregation of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, P.O. Box 1160, LaCombe, LA 70445-1160. The online guestbook is available at [www.leitzeaganfuneralhome.com](http://www.leitzeaganfuneralhome.com).

## Arnold

Earline Arnold, 96, a native of Norflect, AR, and a resident of Des Allemands, LA, passed away on Tuesday, April 14, 2020.



She is survived by her son, Thomas Arnold; grandchildren, Brian Authement, Joshua, Seth and Isaiah Frickey, Donald and Daniel Arnold and Katherine Arnold; and great grandchildren B.J., Tristan, Mia, Aiden, Arabell and one on the way. She was preceded in death by her husband, Donald Arnold; son, Jackie "Jack" Arnold and Rebecca Frickey. Falgout Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

## Touchard

Roy F. Touchard, 80, a native and resident of Des Allemands, passed away on Wednesday, April 15, 2020.

A memorial service will be celebrated at a later date. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Linda Robicheaux Touchard; sons, Anthony Touchard



(Dina) and Ron Touchard (Karina); brothers, Gale and Allen Touchard; sister, Melowae McKnight; 10 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, Roy and Bessie Touchard. Roy was the owner of Touchard's Supermarket in Des Allemands. He was a founding member of the Civic Club. He enjoyed traveling, fishing, hunting, breeding quarter horses and taking care of his cattle.

In lieu of flowers, please wait until the memorial services. Falgout Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

## Beaver

Martha Juanita Carrier Beaver passed away April 18, 2020 at 84 years old. She is survived by her children, Patricia DeLaune (Bill), Nita Naquin (Doug), Nancy Miller (Troy), and Michael Beaver (Alma); grandchildren Kevin, Aaron, Danielle, Shane, Kristina, Charles, Mason, Gunnar, Ivy, Kathy, Alex, Leslie, and Matt, as well as 8 great grandchildren.



Martha is preceded in death by her beloved husband Charles Raymond Beaver, parents, Mary and James Carrier; sister Judith Husdpeth; brother Alvin Carrier, and great grandson Christian Miller.

She was the owner of Beaver's River Road Food Mart in Saint Rose for many years, she loved to travel, take trips to the casino, and read. She was the most wonderful and amazing mother and grandmother, and especially enjoyed spending time with her family.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date, to share a memory with the family please visit [www.HCAlexander.com](http://www.HCAlexander.com).

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or dropped in the "Drop Box" located at the front of our building.

# Norco Civic Association wants debris removed from railroad track

## Safety concerns renewed after youths apparently tried to set fire to it

**Ryan Arena** Editor  
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The Norco Civic Association has raised safety concerns over a pile of crossties on the railroad tracks by Spruce Street in Norco, saying repeated requests to have the pile removed for the past two years have fallen on deaf ears.

Association president Stephen Weber said the group has communicated with Canadian National Railway, which runs the track, but that the company's brief effort to remove the debris in the fall of 2019 ceased after a week with much of the job undone. He also noted no effort to finish the job has seemingly been made since.

He said his concerns over the safety of the pile rose to the surface once again last week, after learning the Norco Fire Department had been called to the scene and that investigators believe someone attempted to set fire to the crossties.

"It's not only unsightly, but it's unsafe," Weber said. "And this last incident, someone tried to light it on fire, I said



and were loading the trash onto the box car, started removing it ... and then they just stopped,” Weber said. “It might have gone on for a week.”

Weber also noted that some new crossties have been placed there, and believes Canadian National could be beginning to do some new work on the railroad.



“I just have a feeling they’re going to use that to say ‘we’re doing some work right there, we’re gonna remove that pile later on,’ but that’s happened before, and the pile is still there,” Weber said. “There’s two new piles, not far from the trash heap ... they may be beginning some work, but I don’t think it’s an excuse to leave a pile of junk there another week, let alone two years.”

“Canadian National Railroad, they know it’s there ... it’s amazing to me how unsightly it is when I go through that neighborhood, but the safety issue is paramount.”

have been moved a long time ago," he said. "I'm worried you'll have kids hanging out there and that someone's getting hurt, eventually."

Weber said late last year, association representatives spoke with parish officials about having the railroad company remove the debris, and things began to move – briefly.

“They brought an old box car there

## VIRUS from 1A

“I had more of a head cold,” she said. “By Tuesday night I lost my sense of smell and taste completely and I knew people who had been diagnosed with coronavirus had complained of this ... I knew this was not allergies.”

Scheduled to work the next day, April 8, Herzog instead went to get tested for coronavirus.

“To my surprise I tested positive,” she said. “After that point life was a whirlwind ... I remember sitting in the parking lot crying trying to figure out how I was going to navigate my life.”

She was plagued with concerns about the health and well-being of her family, including wondering if they would get sick. Other thoughts swirling in her mind, Herzog said, were how she would

homeschool her children, how she was going to be able to make sure her house was sanitized and concerns about if she would go into respiratory distress or have to be hospitalized.

When Herzog called her doctor to let him know the diagnosis, he called in a prescription for Plaquenil, also known as Hydroxychloroquine.

"I was advised on the side effects and how to take it," she said. "Being a nurse, I had read about this drug and knew it was being tried on coronavirus patients with success."

The medication is an immunosuppressant anti-parasite drug used to treat malaria, lupus and rheumatoid arthritis.

“It’s a drug that’s been around for a long time, so it’s not an investigational

drug,” she said. “Since there is little known about COVID, I figured I had to at least give this medication a try ... I’m nervous to take any medication and don’t typically take antibiotics unless I really need them, but I knew there wasn’t anything else I could take, so I figured why not.”

**“I remember sitting in the parking lot crying trying to figure out how I was going to navigate my life,”**

— Amy Herzog

masked up to check on me," she said. "Mason was great ... I had him do a research assignment on coronavirus the week prior to my diagnosis so he could have a better understanding on the severity of the disease and why our lives that we were so used to was so very different."

Her symptoms got worse before they got better, Herzog said, but she was able to avoid hospitalization during her illness.

“The symptoms are like a roller coaster of symptoms,” she said, explaining her symptoms have included complete loss of taste and smell, head cold, migraines, body aches, GI symptoms, chest pain, chest tightness, chest discomfort, loss of appetite and depression.

As her symptoms are subsiding, Herzog said she is regaining energy. She's not positive where she contracted the virus, but she thinks she most likely contracted it in the hospital where she works.

"I'm not 100 percent yet," Herzog said. "I still have good and not so good days ... I can't say bad days because I feel like the worse is hopefully over for me ... I have definitely learned to slow down."

Thankfully, her family has remained healthy.

“We have been very vigilant on cleaning, sanitizing, hand washing and masking up ... hopefully this will continue to be successful,” she said. “I’m hoping once I recover, I can donate plasma to help others who are much worse off than I was. I now feel blessed and that God had a hand in this, and I will be able to save lives.”

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REAL ESTATE from 1A



Desiree Luquette

estate business has changed since the pandemic.

“Many potential buyers were affected with the economy slowing down by job loss or insecurity,” she said, adding there have been some cancellations of pending purchase agreements.

Limited face-to-face contact with clients, along with more virtual dependency on buying and selling, has also altered business. Desiree Luquette, a realtor at Latter & Blum, said it is the main change she has experienced.

“We’re seeing many people shopping remotely, and our technology has helped buyers narrow the number of homes they visit,” Luquette said.

Showing occupied homes is a concern for the occupants as well as the potential buyers, Allemand said, and safety is the key.

Even with the changes in how buyers and sellers are interacting, Allemand said there are currently close to 60 residential homes listed in St. Charles Parish, with prices ranging from \$80,000 to \$1 million. The average price per square foot of those listed homes is \$133. There are also close to 60 properties under contract or awaiting Act of Sale.

Allemand said in the last 30 days there have been 30 homes sold in St. Charles Parish, and the average time on the market was 40 days. The average price per square foot was \$136, with the average sold price at \$260,000.

At this same time last year, there were 48 homes sold with the average days on market at 44 days. However, the price per square foot was just \$113, with the average sold price at \$198,000.



Regina Allemand

When asked how or if the coronavirus would affect home values in the parish, St. Charles Parish Assessor Tab Troxler said it’s too soon to know.

“As you can understand, COVID-19 and the governor’s executive orders concerning it are unprecedented,” he said.

Quoting research conducted by Gardner Realtors, Allemand said the only time since 1975 that home values dropped significantly was 2008 - 2012.

“Interestingly, in almost every market in the country, the average appreciation including the drop in the Great Recession has averaged at least 5 percent per year,” she said. “Trying to time a market is hard ... overall, home prices have been very stable over the long run.”



St. Charles Parish Real Estate Market

- » Nearly 60 homes under contract or awaiting Act of Sale.
- » Average price per square foot is \$133.
- » 30 homes sold in last 30 days.
- » Home prices range from \$80,000 - \$1 million.

CARES ACT from 1A

history. It allocates \$2.2 trillion in support to individuals and businesses affected by the pandemic.

One of the most important elements of the CARES Act - Brandt Dufrene, CEO, chairman and president at First National Bank USA in Boutte, said - is an initiative called the Paycheck Protection Program.

The PPP, as it’s now known, makes loans available to small businesses. Those loans become grants if business owners keep their employees on the payroll. Dufrene said the PPP offers business loans up to \$10M – loans that will be made directly by private, local lenders instead of the Small Business Administration as it has been done in the past.

Corey Faucheux, parish director of economic development and tourism, said his office joined economic development colleagues in advocating for the use of local lenders.

Congress initially allocated \$342 billion for the PPP, which ran out last week. In a phone interview this week, Dufrene said he was confident the Senate would approve more money for the program, which did happen Tuesday.

Because his bank has been the SBA lender for the region since 1970, Dufrene said his established connection to the SBA and their processes meant he and his team were able to quickly process applications. His team worked on Good Friday and Easter, he said, pushing through as many applications as possible before the money ran out.

Dufrene said now is the time for businesses to fill out PPP applications so that processing can be done as quickly as

possible once more money is allocated.

Dufrene said business owners needing assistance with their CARES Act paperwork can call his office at 985-785-8411 or email brandtd@usa.com. First American’s website, www.fnbusa.com, has several detailed CARES Act resources.

Results of the first PPP appropriation show that Louisiana bankers churned out 26,635 PPP loans for a total of \$5.1 billion - money will directly benefit the employees of Louisiana small businesses.

“Louisiana bankers have performed an incredible service for small businesses and their employees in the state,” Louisiana Bankers Association CEO Robert Taylor said. “The data shows Louisiana bankers equaling, and in some cases exceeding, other states of similar or even larger population than Louisiana ... bankers view the PPP as vitally important and have overcome issues of illness, remote working and skeletal staffing to work through a mountain of challenges presented by the program itself.”

Data indicates 74% of all PPP loans are for \$150,000 or less and 60% of all loans approved were by community banks.

Faucheux said his office has been hearing from numerous concerned business owners in the parish since the pandemic started.

“We began contacting businesses in early March,” he said. “In addition to individual calls, we requested many to complete a survey to help us quantify the impacts and develop customized strategies to assist.”

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INCOME from 2A

What also makes things difficult for her is the business was something she had truly grown on her own. Something that started as a secondary venture for her really took off via word of mouth.

She went full time with it in 2016, and felt she had it rolling as a well-oiled machine.

Four years later, nobody has answers.

“Going on Facebook groups for wedding coordinators, talking to other people in the business, they all say it’s gonna be really hard to get going again,” Zeller said. “You’re not sure when things will get going again.”

She said she has a great support system, but that it all comes as a blow nonetheless.

“To know I’ve lost that momentum, and it’s like, ‘now what?’” she said. “It’s rough, but I’m keeping the faith.”

For Cheryl Ricca, who along with her husband Craig own Craig’s Barber Shop in Luling, said the uncertainty of when they may resume can be a bit

unnerving.

“It’s stressful in that you don’t want to lose your customers, your business,” Ricca said. “Financially, it’s scary. In the beauty industry as a whole, be it massages, facials ... there is no social distancing. You’re right on top of them. We’re hoping to be able to reopen wearing masks when things start getting back.”

She said her family has been relatively lucky, compared to others.

“In this business, you kinda live week to week. Over time, you hopefully save some money. But for newer people, they don’t have that luxury. My husband and I have been doing this for 42 years between us. We’re not in boat anymore, but my heart breaks for them,” she said.

The demand has been there, but Ricca said safety comes first.

“We get phone calls every day. People are dying to get a haircut,” Ricca said. “People want to do something normal again. They just want to do normal things.”

SENIORS from 4A

Superintendent Ken Oertling said additional senior recognition plans are being developed.

So were ceremonies to not go on, it won’t be for lack of trying by the schools and students alike. But as with about everything related to the pandemic, plans are fluid and dependent on how things progress in the coming weeks.

“When you think back to high school, there are those major milestones like senior prom, getting to walk across stage ... everyone really wants those things,” Smith said. “It would be really difficult to lose those moments. I know it’s selfish to think ‘Well, what about us,’ when right now it’s really all about helping everyone who is going through this right now. It’s still hard, though.”

Hahnville senior Jude Saucier said the sudden finality of his high school time came as a shock.

“Yeah it was kind of tough for me. Sitting in that class on that Friday, I was never knowing that was the last day I’d be ever be sitting in class with my childhood friends,” Saucier said. “I never imagined this at all when

it started. I was expecting maybe further down the line we’d have to close school, but not right there, right then, where we’re just done.”

In addition to the emotional blow, were there to be no prom, it would turn some purchases into a waste. Porche noted she purchased her prom dress online for \$300, and many of her friends have already bought their dresses as well.

She added a group of parents have talked of organizing a prom, or prom-like event, for the senior students in the case of a full cancellation.

“It’s been really helpful to know they understand and they want to make sure we have prom and graduation, and don’t just have those moments disappear,” Porche said.

While she said nothing concrete has been relayed in terms of graduation, she’s optimistic the parish’s school district will find a way to have graduation happen.

“I don’t think we’ll have a virtual graduation ... they know it’s our senior year and they want us to experience a live graduation,” Porche said. “I think we’ll be doing something.”

COACH from 2A

Rogers said he expects the job will bring considerable interest, much like its cross-parish rival. Nearly 30 applications were considered for the Destrehan post.

“I would consider both of these jobs among the top five in the state,” Rogers said. “When it comes to community based support, district and school board support and the never-ending talent pool we’re so fortunate to have here in St. Charles Parish ... Hahnville is a place you’ll always be able to compete.”

As in the Destrehan search, Rogers said the goal is to determine a candidate best suited for preparing student-athletes for success not just on the field, but off of it as well.

“Somebody passionate about kids, who will be an ambassador for Hahnville, the community and St. Charles Parish Public Schools,” Rogers said. “Someone with energy, passion and commitment, who’s enthusiastic. That’s what we got with Marcus and what we’re looking for again. We want someone who knows how to coach fundamental skills on the field but also who will prepare them to be better husbands, fathers and productive citizens in our community and hopefully the world.”

But he acknowledges the process itself takes Rogers and the coaching search committee into “uncharted waters.” He said the decision to take a bit of extra time with this search – opposed to attempting to secure a hire prior to this month’s School Board meeting on April 29 – was made in part to determine if face-to-face interviews would be a possibility after some time elapses and more information is available.

“You get a real good read and feel for people in person ... can you do that on a Zoom call or over the phone?” Rogers said. “So we didn’t want to rush it. We’ll see if things may change. If they do, we’ll take the necessary precautions. However it goes, we’re going to put a quality process in place to get the best person for the students and community of Hahnville High School.”



Coach Nick Saltaformaggio, who departed HHS to become Holy Cross head coach earlier this month.

When it comes to making a coaching hire during such an unprecedented worldwide scenario, there is no instruction manual.

“We’re kind of writing the blueprint right now,” Rogers said. “There’s so much that goes with this ... how do you build a staff, have meetings, work with players, what does the summer look like, given you’ve lost spring?”

“At the same time, it’s exciting. It’s a process I hope we don’t have to go through for a long time to come (after this hire), but it’s a chance to make a hire who can be so impactful on so many levels, in football but also on the whole community.”

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VIRTUAL DANCE from 2A

online. The classes are live and run 5 days a week during their regularly scheduled times.

“My favorite part of virtual class is being able to still see my teachers and friends,” dance student Lexi Gaubert, 10, said, adding she looks forward to dance days each week.

“We are trying our best to give our students and dance families a little sense of normalcy during this time of so many uncertainties,” Director Kelli Manville said. “Thanks to technology, our studio staff is providing a virtual studio experience for our dancers to keep them moving, learning and interacting with their friends while having fun during this time.”

The live format allows the teachers to watch each student and give immediate feedback on technique and form, which Manville says is an essential element of dance education. While the technology was new to the instructors and they had to learn it very quickly, Manville said her staff rose to the challenge and classes have been going well.

Students are continuing to work on technique during the online classes and are also learning new choreography for their upcoming revue scheduled for June.

Manville said the move to put classes online has received positive feedback from parents.

“During these uncertain times, our children need routines and connections with their teachers and friends,” Melissa Parfait of Luling, a KKD dance mom, said. “These connections provide much needed structure, security and stability for our children ... I’m forever grateful for the connections that we can continue to have through KKD virtual classes.”

Leann Benedict, of Destrehan, said the online classes are allowing her daughter to continue learning and growing and keeping her connected with her teachers and friends.

“I am thankful that they are providing this little piece of normal during a very crazy time,” Benedict said.

Manville said they are committed to providing their dancers with the classes and teachers they know and love so they can continue to improve their skills while combatting boredom.

“As a small business owner, this has been a difficult few weeks, but seeing our students’ smiling faces on the screen reminds me that it’s about so much more than dance ... physical activity, movement, mental stimulation and social interaction are all going to help kids get through this trying time,” she said.



Amelia Marse follows instruction through a laptop.



Blakely Smith setup near the pool while taking dance lessons.

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RESCHEDULED ELECTIONS

Pursuant to Proclamation No. 46 JBE 2020, issued on April 14, 2020, the elections previously scheduled for June 20, 2020 and July 25, 2020 have been rescheduled for July 11, 2020 and August 15, 2020. Early voting for the July 11, 2020 election will be held June 26- July 4, 2020 (excluding Sunday, June 28, 2020 and Friday, July 3, 2020) Early voting for the August 15, 2020 election will be held August 1-8, 2020 (excluding Sunday, August 2, 2020).



Prepared by  
**Secretary of State R. Kyle Ardoin**  
Pursuant to Proclamation No. 46 JBE 2020.

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## Former DHS star, former SPARQ champ hopes to hear name called at NFL Draft

Speedy receiver could go Day 2 or 3

Ryan Arena Editor  
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For his entire life, the NFL was the plan for Kirk Merritt. Arkansas State was not.

Merritt signed with the University of Oregon as a 4-star recruit during his senior year at Destrehan High School and earned national attention by earning the championship win at The Opening athletic competition in 2014. The NFL seemed inevitable. But Merritt would spend time at Texas A&M, East Mississippi Community College and, ultimately, Arkansas State before his college career was through.

“It was a humbling experience ... I went to a JUCO after those big schools, in Power 5 conferences in front of full packed stadiums,” Merritt said. “I went from having everything to not having everything.”

Through it all, though, Merritt could be close to having it all once again and achieving his dream. Thursday night marks the beginning of the NFL Draft the first of a three day event that will see more than 250 collegiate athletes selected, each to join one of the league’s 32 teams.

He’s been preparing for the draft for weeks, though the pre-draft process isn’t a traditional one due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He hasn’t been able to make visits with teams, he held a virtual pro day in Dallas, putting it on video as he went through the NFL’s athletic testing drills and he’s spoken with NFL team representatives through online conferencing.

“We worked around it, and they watched (the pro day film),” Merritt said. “It was kind of tough, but people already knew I could run fast and jump high ... the only thing that kind of hurt was not being able to do any visits because of the virus. But my medical history is good, I’ve never had issues with my health, thankfully.”

While athletes had to find different avenues to make an impression on team

personnel and scouts, NFL teams no doubt are enticed by Merritt’s collegiate production and athleticism.

Merritt caught 70 passes for 806 yards and 12 touchdowns during his senior year at Arkansas State, following a junior season at East Mississippi that saw him rack up 83 receptions for 1,005 yards and seven touchdowns.

But the draft pool is full of players who have posted strong statistical resumes. Where very few of them have been able to compete with Merritt, however, is in terms of pure athleticism—his is elite and very rare, and it’s been that way for years.

In 2014, Merritt bested more than 100 of the nation’s most highly recruited athletes to win the SPARQ national championship at The Opening, an invite-only camp held at Nike headquarters in Oregon. There, Merritt recorded a 4.43 time in the 40-yard dash that helped separate him from a field that included future NFL players Minkah Fitzpatrick (a first round pick) and Josh Sweat.

At his virtual Pro Day, Merritt showed he’s only become faster and stronger since then. He recorded a 4.33 time 40-yard dash, and times of 4.05 and 7.12 in the shuttle and 3-cone, respectively. Merritt posted 23 bench press reps and a 45.5 vertical jump. The website NFL Draft Diamonds, which chronicles NFL prospects, to opine Merritt might be “the most freakish player” athletically that its writers had seen from this draft class. The numbers were verified to teams by former NFL scout Josh Cox. It also led to growing attention on Twitter, where fans took note of the numbers.

“It feels awesome that people were taking notice. That’s been a great experience through this whole thing,” Merritt said.

But for all of his gifts, Merritt admits that were not for the support of his family and friends, he may have given up on



**“It was a humbling experience ... I went from having everything to having nothing.”**

— Kirk Merritt

Courtesy Photo

his dream.

He made his collegiate debut at Oregon in 2015, playing games in a stadium not all that far from where his national spotlight had shined brightest at The Opening competition. He played in 12 games as a true freshman, Merritt announced he would be transferring to another school, and two weeks later he found a landing spot at Texas A&M. He would have to sit out a year, but that was not a large concern as he hadn’t red-shirted while at Oregon.

But weeks before Merritt was set to make his Texas A&M debut in August of 2017, he was dismissed from the Aggies team after he pleaded no contest to two misdemeanor counts of indecent exposure, following allegations by two female students.

Suddenly, the bright lights of the SEC and PAC 12 conferences were a thing of the past for Merritt, and he went on to play in the relatively modest arena of junior college at East Mississippi.

“I’ve gone through a lot of adversity throughout my whole college career,” Merritt said. “Things happen in your life for a reason ... Without the support of my family, friends, teammates and coaches, I wouldn’t have been able to make it through ... I feel like if I can overcome that, I can overcome anything.”

It wasn’t long before he found on-field success again. In 2017, he led the Lions in receptions and helped East Mississippi

win the National Junior College national championship for a second straight season.

“I created a bond with those guys for the rest of my life,” Merritt said.

Following that season, Merritt returned to the Division I ranks, joining Arkansas State for his junior year. He posted his first collegiate 1,000 yard season there, leading his team in receptions, yardage and touchdowns. In 2019, he followed that up by leading his team in all three categories and to a second winning season.

Merritt said Tuesday he had spoken to several NFL teams, including the New Orleans Saints, L.A. Chargers, Cincinnati Bengals, Miami Dolphins, New York Jets, Arizona Cardinals, Green Bay Packers, New York Giants and Washington Redskins. He added that he’s been hearing he projects as a potential mid-round pick, which would make late Friday or Saturday the most likely time to hear his name called. In the event he isn’t drafted, it seems certain he’d garner heavy attention in the undrafted free agent market—but he of course hopes to hear his name called this weekend.

“I wouldn’t say I’m nervous, but I am anxious,” Merritt said. “Anxious to see what team I could be part of, what coaches and teammates I could have ... it’s been a really busy time, but it’s exciting.”

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## Art teacher finds new path during pandemic

**Monique Roth** Lifestyles Editor  
moniquer@heraldguide.com

When Deante Armstrong found himself with extra time on his hands because of the coronavirus pandemic, he used that time – and his hands – to create something extraordinary.

Armstrong, a St. Rose resident and art teacher at Fifth Ward Elementary in Reserve, decided to act upon his idea of creating custom picnic tables for children when the pandemic closed the doors to his job.

“It surprised me with how much it took off ... I didn’t expect it to be that big,” he said. “Facebook was the first place I posted it and it just blew up.”

The picnic tables have been a huge hit for Armstrong - his initial Facebook post that featured four tables has been shared over 12,000 times. He said he has a friend who is building the tables, and after he is painting and customizing them for each customer. The first table he painted was Minnie Mouse-themed for his 3-year-old daughter Dekota.

“I hope Dekota notices my drive and passion for art,” he said. “Also, that no matter what the world throws at you, you can do it ... if you want something, go after it.”

Armstrong is no stranger to the artistic process. He became interested in art when he was a student at Albert Cammon Middle School, and in 8th grade he was accepted into the parish’s talented art program.

“Once I got into talented art my art teacher at Destrehan, Robert Fisher, became



Art teacher Deante Armstrong began creating custom picnic tables when the pandemic closed the doors to his job.



like a father figure to me and pushed me to the limit with different things,” Armstrong said, adding he hadn’t even painted until he was in 9th grade.

Self taught in many artistic processes and mediums, such as air brushing, Armstrong said he has invested almost \$20,000 into renovating a FEMA trailer that he uses to host sip and paint parties, karaoke, slime parties and fundraisers for schools. Because of the pandemic he’s had to shut down party operations, which has given him even more time to create the tables.

“To me art is basically a way to escape what I’m dealing with,” he said. “I lose myself within my art.”

When his grandmother Laura Mae Armstrong, who raised him, passed away in 2013, Armstrong said he used art as an outlet to cope and heal.

“I wasn’t verbal about it,” he said. “With my students I let them know that even when nobody knows what you’re dealing with you can find an escape in art ... I want to inspire kids that they can become whatever they want to be.”

Armstrong said because of his passion and love for kids he felt like he was destined to become an art teacher.

“I think my grandmother would be extremely proud of me,” he said. “I was really just getting into my art right before she passed ... at her funeral I made a promise to her that I was going to be a better man from that day forward and that I was going to try and do my best ... now I’m a certified art teacher ... I would hope she loves the fact that I made a way for myself and my daughter.”

The goal of his teaching career, Armstrong said, is to be a role model.

“Being able to be to them what my art teacher was to me - a role model, a genuine person, and to some a father figure ... that’s my goal,” he said.

Armstrong has at least one person in his corner.

“I knew Deante was going to be a great artist the first day he walked into my classroom,” Fisher said. “He was like a sponge ... he soaked up everything I tried to share that first day ... I’m not surprised he is doing great things.”

For more information on Armstrong and his creations, visit [www.dartshop.online](http://www.dartshop.online), find him on Facebook as Deante Arts or search for him on Instagram @arts\_deante.



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Public Notice

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

THE ST. CHARLES PARISH PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION WILL MEET\* ON MAY 7, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M. TO HEAR:  
**2020-4-HOP** requested by **Carolyn Matherne** for a home occupation – “Carolyn Matherne Massage Therapy” – a licensed massage therapist and cosmetologist at **546 Clayton Dr., Norco**. Zoning District R-1A. Council District 6.  
**2020-5-HOP** requested by **Jennifer Coe** for a home occupation – “Coe’s Custom Catering” – a catering business at **487 West Hoover St., New Sarpy**. Zoning District R-1A. Council District 6.  
**2020-3-R** requested by **Blake and Caitlin Comardelle** for a change in zoning district from R-1A & C-2 to O-L on approximately 2 acres of Lot 2, Block 2, near **10493 River Road, Ama**. Council District 2.  
**2020-4-R** requested by **Bunge North America** for a change in zoning district from R-1A to C-3 for 61,722 sq. ft. in Square 7 of Destrehan Park Subdivision, **north side of Aime St. between Jonathan and Modoc, Destrehan**. Council District 2.  
**2020-5-R** requested by **Paul Hogan** for a change in zoning district from C-2 to R-1M on approx. 3.2 acres of land in the Coteau De France or Ranson Tract southwest of JB Green Rd, near **16630 and 16644 Hwy. 90, Des Allemands** (Proposed Lot 69-A-2A). Council District 4.  
**2020-5-MIN** requested by **Ridgeland Properties, LLC** for resubdivision of A Portion of Ridgeland Properties, LLC, Magnolia Ridge Ranchettes, Phase III into three lots on **Magnolia Ridge Rd., north of Ridgewood Road, Boutte**. Zoning District O-L. Council District 4.  
**2019-9-MAJ** requested by **JCJR St. Charles, LLC** for Construction Approval for River Place Estates, a 42 lot subdivision, near 14855 River Road, Hahnville. Zoning District R-1A. Council District 1.  
**2020-1-MAJ** requested by **310 Development, LLC** for Preliminary Plat Approval for Plantation Business Campus 3, five lots and an extension of W Campus Dr. in Destrehan, with waivers. Zoning Districts C-2 and M-1. Council District 2.  
**ALTERNATE DATE: None / PUBLISH: 4/23, 4/30, 5/7**  
\*Because of the ongoing COVID-19 situation, the meeting will be held virtually. Instructions for participation in this meeting will be released prior to the meeting and will be available at [www.stcharlesparish-la.gov](http://www.stcharlesparish-la.gov).

Publish April 23, 2020

Public Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE  
REMOVAL OF WEEDS, GRASS & OTHER NOXIOUS MATTER

If the following violations are not rectified within (5) days of this published notice, the parish will proceed in bringing the properties listed in compliance with Chapter 16, Article III Sec. 16-24 through Sec. 16-28. (As amended). The fee for performing these services shall be at a rate of 0.037 per square foot of the lot cleaned. The contractor’s fee for performing these services shall be at the rate of 0.029 per square foot of the lot cleaned. In the event a mini-clean up is required prior to performing the above services, a fee of \$58.61 per mini clean up plus actual disposal fees will be assessed, not to exceed then (10) mini-cleanups per property in violation. On property where trash and/or debris accumulation is such that it requires heavy equipment, bulldozer, front-end loaders, etc. a fee of forty-three dollars and ninety six cents (\$43.96) per cubic yard will be assessed. An administration fee of \$36.63 may be assessed on each invoice. The fees in this section shall be increased or decreased on February first of each year by a change in CIP applicable to the US cities average group, all urban consumers, all items published by the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, for the preceding twelve-month period ending each November. The change shall become effective beginning with the period ending November 30, 2000. The department of finance shall notify the department of planning and zoning in writing annually of the revised fees.  
The following lots are in violation of parish ordinance Chapter 16, Article III Sec. 16-24 through Sec. 16-33:

Jean Johnson Fitzgerald (St. Rose Gardens-Caronia Tract)  
Lot 27 (716 St. Rose Ave)  
Nature of violation: Grass cutting & removal of debris

James Pettigrew (Belle Ormond Subd.)  
Lot 1-47 (Belle Ormond Circle)  
Nature of violation: Grass cutting & removal of debris

Lorenza Butler (Mongrue Subd.)  
Lot 5 (326 Good Children Street)  
Nature of violation: Grass cutting & removal of debris

Leotha M. 1/5 Alexander of Elizabeth A. Alexander 1/5 (Booker T. Washington Subd.)  
Lot 43,44,45,46 (431 S. Kinler Street)  
Nature of violation: Grass cutting & removal of debris

Roger Guedry (New Sarpy Subd.)  
Lot 34 (235 W. Easy Street)  
Nature of violation: Grass cutting & removal of debris

Anthony Reynaud (River Oaks Subd.)  
Lot 45B (271 Meadows Drive)  
Nature of violation: Grass cutting & removal of debris

**PUBLISH: April 23, 2020**

Public Notice

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS  
INTRODUCED FOR PUBLIC HEARING  
BY THE ST. CHARLES PARISH COUNCIL,  
ON MONDAY, MAY 4, 2020, 6:00 P.M.,  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, PARISH  
COURTHOUSE, 15045 RIVER ROAD,  
HAHNVILLE:**

**2020-0096** (4/20/20, Jewell, M. Bingham)  
An ordinance to approve and authorize the execution of a Construction Contract with Sealevel Construction, Inc. for Project No. P080905-10A, grant reference Project Numbers U.S. Department of the Treasury Project No. 1 RDCGR380093-01-00, CPRA Project No. BA-0209, and DRA Project No. LA-51112, Paradis Canal Flood Control Structure, as part of the West Bank Hurricane Protection Levee Project, in the amount of \$5,036,169.00.  
**2020-0097** (4/20/20, Jewell, M. Albert)  
An ordinance to amend the St. Charles Parish Zoning Ordinance of 1981, to change the zoning classification from O-L to R-1M on a 23,958 square foot portion of a 1 by 30 arpent tract, River Park to Union Carbide Subdivision, municipal address 16279 River Road, Taft as requested by Bayou Fleet Partnership, LLP.  
**2020-0100** (4/20/20, Jewell, G. Dussom)  
An ordinance to amend the 2019 Consolidated Operating and Capital Budget to adjust Beginning Fund Balances to Actuals and to adjust Revenues and Expenditures in various funds.  
**2020-0101** (4/20/20, Jewell, M. Bingham)  
An ordinance approving and authorizing the execution of Change Order No. 2 for Parish Project No. P081102-8, Dunleith Canal Bank Stabilization – Phase 7, to increase the contract quantities for additional embankment materials and eliminate liquidated damages resulting in an increase of \$58,950.00 in contract price and an increase in the contract time by 13 days.  
**2020-0104** (4/20/20, Jewell, B. Messerly)  
An ordinance approving and authorizing the execution of Change Order No. 1 (Final) Parish Project No. #GB-KA-02-19, Killona Community Center Addition to decrease the contract amount by \$125.00.  
**2020-0110** (4/20/20, Jewell, R. Brou)  
An ordinance to approve and authorize the execution of a contract with Deep South Construction & Salvage, LLC for the West Bank River Intake Modifications (Project No. WWKS 98) in the amount of \$589,265.00.  
**2020-0111** (4/20/20, Jewell, D. Foret)  
An ordinance to approve and authorize the execution of an Agreement between St. Charles Parish and Messina’s Catering, Inc., to provide Professional Catering Services at the Edward A. Dufresne Community Center.  
**2020-0112** (4/20/20, Jewell, D. Foret)  
An ordinance to approve and authorize the execution of an Agreement between St. Charles Parish and ZoraChristina Catering, LLC, to provide Professional Catering Services at the Edward A. Dufresne Community Center.

**PUBLISH: April 23, 30, 2020**

Public Notice

We are applying to the Commissioner of Alcohol and Tobacco Control of the State of Louisiana for a permit to sell beverages of **Low and High alcoholic** content at retail in the Parish of St. Charles at the following address:  
**Mariano’s Italian Eatery : 12287 Hwy 90., Luling, La. 70070**

Member: Jacqueline Dufrene –Diaz,  
Owner

PUBLISH: April 23 & April 30, 2020

St. Charles

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GUIDE

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