

METRO

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Political dynasties fight for Senate seat

A Kerner vs. Connick grudge match emerges for the Oct. 14 election

BY BLAKE PATERSON
Staff writer

A long-running feud between two Jefferson Parish political dynasties burst into the open Thursday when Jean Lafitte Mayor Timothy Kerner Jr. signed up to challenge state Sen. Patrick Connick's bid for reelection to the West Bank-based 8th District Senate seat.

The race pits the Kerners — who have ruled over the town of Jean Lafitte for three generations — against the Connicks — who count longtime Jefferson Parish District Attorney Paul Connick among their ranks.
First elected to the Legislature in 2008, Patrick Connick, a Republican, has never faced an opponent in an election.

Kerner, a 32-year-old Republican in his second term as mayor, decided to run because, in his words, Connick's "aim has been to destroy the area I represent."
Connick, 62, described Kerner as "immature" and said the mayor "doesn't get the big picture of what we're trying to accomplish in Louisiana."
Kerner, meanwhile, called Connick a "vindictive" politician, and said he's tried to cut funding for Jean Lafitte at every turn possible. He pointed to Gov. John Bel Edwards' decision in the most recent legislative session

to veto \$2.3 million in funding for the Louisiana Wetlands Education Center in Lafitte.
The veto came as a surprise to Kerner, given the governor's past support for the museum. Edwards' administration in 2018 provided \$475,000 in funding for the project, and Kerner said the governor even attended its groundbreaking.
Kerner's father, state Rep. Timothy Kerner Sr., said Connick had tried to cut the funding before the bill got to the governor's desk but was unsuccessful. Kerner Jr. accused Connick of lobbying Edwards to veto the proj-

ect to spite him and his father.
"He's not looking out for the best of his district. He's looking out for himself," Kerner Jr. said of Connick.
Connick said he never lobbied Edwards for the veto, but said he supported the governor's decision nonetheless. He said the money would be better spent on levees and other storm protection measures.
According to Connick, Edwards vetoed the funding because Kerner Jr. sued the governor over an appointment he made to the Lafitte Indepen-

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You gotta know when to fold 'em

As you might have noticed, this column does not shy away from controversial topics — such as how to eat pizza.
Russ Wise, of LaPlace, comments on the Aug. 1 story from Marlene Pedesciaux, of Marre-ro, who told us that in Brooklyn pizza slices are eaten without being folded, and "Every kid seemed to know this."
Russ, just back from a visit to Naples, Italy, found another method of pizza consumption there:
"While in Naples, the birthplace of pizzas, I asked about that in two restaurants, and was told that in fact folding a pizza slice lengthwise was exactly the right thing to do!
"I also learned that pizzas do not come to the table pre-sliced, and the true original pizza, called the Pizza Margherita (for the late Queen Margherita, not the frozen drink) has a thin crust covered with tomato sauce and mozzarella, plus a sprinkling of basil. No pepperoni, no sausage, not even a stuffed crust!"
I might add my rule: Pizza is never eaten with a knife and fork; if it's so deep you need utensils, it's a pie, not a pizza.

Speaking of Naples

"Having recently returned from driving in Naples, Italy," says Russ Wise, "I'm now convinced I can drive anywhere in the world.
"Lanes and stop signs there are just suggestions. Speed limits are only recommendations. And motorcycles come at you from all directions, often carrying three or more people.
"But the pizza was great!"

A moving tale

After a reader suggested a photon torpedo from "Star Trek" to deal with irritating drivers, we heard a "back to the past" version of this tactic from Kevin Reed, of New Orleans:
"When I was growing up my mom, when driving, would always think out loud that she would like to find someone who could mount a cowcatcher (Google it) on the front of her car like the old trains.
"She wanted to throw the slowpokes out of the left lanes.
"When she was finally able to pass the slow car, she would mutter to herself, 'The left lane is for passing, not driving. Just wait till I find somebody good at welding. I'll fix ya.'"

Double feature

A drive-in movie story from Darrel Beerbohm, of Terrytown:
"I came from a small town in Nebraska. We had a drive-in theater.
"When I was a junior in high

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STAFF PHOTOS BY SCOTT THRELKELD

Saints superfan Leroy Mitchell Jr., better known as Whistle Monsta, passes City Hall on his way to the Caesars Superdome as Saints fans battle the heat before the preseason game against the Kansas City Chiefs in New Orleans on Sunday. Mitchell said he walked more than 2½ miles on his morning walk before hiking to the Superdome.

Tailgaters turn out despite heat

Saints' first preseason game draws devoted fans amid high temperatures

BY DOUG MacCASH
Staff writer

It was going to take more than 90 degrees — plus blaring sunshine, still air and soupy humidity — to keep Shedrick Bradford from cooking up burgers before the Saints' first preseason game Sunday.
Bradford's blazing grill was positioned on a patch of concrete just off Poydras Street, under the South Claiborne Avenue overpass. Bradford estimated that considering the heat from the grill and the bubbling pot of French fry oil nearby, "it's about 110 degrees."
But, he said, he and his krewes of a dozen sturdy Who Dats "don't start passing out until it gets to about 200."
Bradford, who is a Baton Rouge pipe fitter and food

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Shedrick Bradford, left, talks to Johnrick Franklin while tailgating in the shade of the Interstate 10 overpass at Poydras Street.

Second Harvest to expand in Louisiana

New warehouse part of plan to distribute 70 million meals

BY LEAH CLARK
Staff writer

Second Harvest Food Bank is set to expand its operations in the Houma-Thibodaux area, building a new warehouse and commercial kitchen that's part of a plan to distribute 70 million meals per year across south Louisiana.
The warehouse, located in Houma, will serve as a distribution center for Grand Isle and Terrebonne, Lafourche and St. Mary parishes. Its commercial kitchen will be able to prepare up to 3,000 meals per day.
Construction has already begun

and is expected to finish in early 2024. It comes as the nonprofit, founded in 1982 by the Archdiocese of New Orleans, is using a major grant to help grow its operations in several areas of the state.
Natalie Jayroe, Second Harvest president and CEO, said the new facilities will increase the resources available to its partners.
"That's another way that we could make the local food system stronger and support disadvantaged farmers build assets," she said. "And if we're doing that, then we're hoping to break that long-term cycle of hunger and poverty."
The food bank's infrastructure investments are part of its 10-year strategic plan calling for the food bank to nearly double

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Sugar becoming a 'clean beauty' darling

One of La.'s top crops joins the cosmetic shelves

BY REBECCA HOLLAND
Staff writer

As anyone who has walked through Sephora knows, shelves of brightly colored, bauble-looking bottles make a variety of promises: anti-aging, anti-acne, skin-brightening, skin hydration, pore smoothing, the list goes on.
Many of those products have a common ingredient: glycolic acid. On a recent Wednesday at the Sephora in the Mall of Louisiana, more than 100 products featured it.
Glycolic acid is an alpha hy-

droxy acid, more commonly known in the beauty world as AHA. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, products containing AHA "cause exfoliation, or shedding of the surface skin," and the extent of exfoliation depends on the concentration of glycolic acid in the product.
"The benefit of AHAs is that it actually goes and it breaks up the ionic bonds between the skin cells," said Dr. Jessica Chu, a dermatologist at Ochsner Health in Baton Rouge. "By breaking the bonds of the skin cells, you get superficial exfoliation of the skin. You get rid of the top layer of dead skin, which is why you see it not only in skin care to smooth out skin, but you see

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truck owner, said that for years he and his friends have tried to make it to all Saints home games and three or four away games each year. He views it as a sacred responsibility.

“We ain’t going to ever skip,” he said. “They’d have to cancel the game.”

The commitment of Bradford’s tailgating krewe was undeniable on Sunday. On the entire lake side of the Caesars Superdome, where there are often dozens of tailgate parties, theirs seemed to be the only one. The only one.

But the truth is, in addition to the stifling temperature, tailgating doesn’t really get rolling before the Titans come to town for the season opener on Sept. 10.

Beside Bradford’s bunch, the only other serious tailgaters that seemed to be out on Sunday had staked out a spot on a black asphalt parking lot on Perdido Street, way over on the river side of the Dome’s typical tailgating territory. With a hot grill and a seemingly endless array of ingredients, the group was preparing a fabulous-looking fajita

buffet.

They could be forgiven for wearing the scarlet jerseys of the tiresomely successful Kansas City Chiefs, because they were mostly ancestral Chiefs fans — former Missourians, Kansans, Oklahomans and such — who now live near Mobile, Alabama.

Asked how a Chiefs fan ended up so far from home, Russ Moyer said his wife drugged him, trundled him off to a Gulf beach, and he’s never escaped. Note: He was probably kidding. Probably.

Asked about the heat, Moyer said the fajitas were good, “but we should have just had Popsicles.” Some of the Chiefs tailgaters had taken air-conditioned shelter in their vehicles to await game time.

Despite the temperature, Poydras Street was as busy as always a half-hour before kickoff. Plastic bucket drummers produced the customary racket, sweat beaded on the brows of police officers attempting to shepherd traffic, pedicabs crawled amid the cars, and a sidewalk salesman who called himself S.B.H. hawked chain necklaces with huge Saints and Chiefs pendants.

Asked which was more popular, he said that the wisest customers don’t choose. “It’s like having two

girlfriends or two wives,” he said. “You can’t go wrong.”

Asked about the temperature, S.B.H. said: “It’s as cold as hell out here. Literally, as cold as hell.”

S.B.H. said he’d never been to a pro football game, but that was OK by him. He’s happy with the tailgating scene where he meets lots of nice people.

A small cloud momentarily paused over Champions Square, providing the only whisper of shade to the thousands of fans streaming toward the Dome. It was so hot that the bronze statue of Tom Benson was much too hot to touch for more than a second or two.

Sadly, on the upper plaza, a gentleman reclined on a stretcher, surrounded by emergency personnel. As one attendee said, he had been overwhelmed by the heat. The gentleman was carted off to the Dome, where the gush of chilled air was doubtlessly welcome.

The old Dome, which opened in 1975, is in the midst of interior renovations. The most remarkable of the updates are the new, swifter escalators that have been beautifully carved into the architecture, providing wonderful visual peaks and chasms lit by

sunny skylights above. They’re worth the ride, even if you can afford seats that don’t require escalation.

Among other innovations are small convenience store-style concession markets where football fans can buy prepackaged yogurt parfaits, fruit cups and cold sandwiches. The Dome’s Fresh Garden Salad sells for \$8.49, which is almost exactly the same price as the Bistro Romaine Salad at Galatoire’s.

Sunday’s preseason game was, of course, like New Orleans’ first date with new quarterback Derek Carr. Like many first dates, there was promise but not much action. Carr played splendidly, leading an 80-yard scoring drive. But since he was on the field for less than a quarter, it’s difficult to draw lasting conclusions.

Carr can be sure of one thing. If he doesn’t disappoint, we are prepared to adore him. Or more than that.

In New Orleans, we call the football team the Saints because we worship them.

Email Doug MacCash at dmaccash@theadvocate.com or follow him on Twitter, @DougMacCash.

HARVEST

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its capacity from the 40 million meals it serves annually.

“Seventy million meals is 80% of what we believe families across south Louisiana need after they pay for themselves and their families and they take advantage of some of the federal benefits that are available,” Jayroe said.

Second Harvest’s strategic plan got a significant boost from the \$25 million donation it received in 2020 from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott. Jayroe said she will never forget the day she got the call from a “mysterious donor.”

“At the very end of the call she said, ‘Well, we’re going to give you a significant amount of money. Would you like to know how much it’s going to be?’” Jayroe recalled. “They said ‘\$25 million’, and I went ‘Whoa. Oh my God.’ If she could have heard my chin hitting the desk.”

According to Jayroe, Scott asked that the donation be used for long-term strategic planning and to ensure Second Harvest was sustainable for the future.

New facilities

The Houma warehouse is one of several recent infrastructure investments the food bank is making throughout its service area.

In Lafayette, Second Harvest is finalizing a deal to buy the warehouse and office space it has leased since 2006. The food bank plans to expand the facility’s warehouse capacity to 76,000 square feet. With renovations, Second Harvest hopes to maxi-



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS GRANGER

A volunteer with the Second Harvest Food Bank packs a box with Ensure and protein bars at one of the nonprofit’s distribution centers.

mize its ability to house volunteers, Jayroe said.

In Lake Charles, Second Harvest bought a 23,000-square-foot warehouse to distribute and store food. A commercial kitchen, in partnership with McNeese State University, will prepare meals for those participating in the food bank’s programs for children and senior citizens.

A resiliency hub in North Lake Charles is also in the planning stages, Jayroe said. The facility, in partnership with Lake Charles Mayor Nic Hunter, will feature a variety of kitchens, meeting rooms and classroom spaces. It

will also house emergency responders in times of disaster.

Last fall, Second Harvest completed a \$16 million renovation to its warehouse and offices at its Harahan headquarters.

Reaching new populations

The new facilities in the Houma-Thibodaux region and other areas will enable it to reach previously underserved groups, Second Harvest officials said.

One new population Second Harvest has targeted for help is the United Houma Nation. During the pandemic, the food bank and the Houma Nation partnered

to distribute food to tribal elders in Terrebonne, Lafourche, Jefferson, St. Bernard, St. Mary and Plaquemines parishes.

Second Harvest has continued to work with the Houma Nation, whose officials expect the new warehouse in Houma to alleviate the logistical challenge of traveling to the food bank’s Harahan facility.

“They have been incredible partners, and we are looking forward to our continued relationship as we work together to ease the burden of food insecurity on our tribal communities,” Principal Chief Lora Ann Chaisson said.

SUGAR

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it being used in chemical peels.”

While there’s a complex process to create glycolic acid, the base ingredient is simple: sugar cane. And that’s one of Louisiana’s most prominent crops.

At present, most of Louisiana’s sugar cane is used for making actual sugar, according to Sam Irwin, public relations director for the American Sugar Cane League.

Some of the byproduct is turned into molasses, or cane syrup, and some farmers distill sugar cane into rum. The vast majority, however, is sold by the barge and truckload as sugar.

But the industry is increasingly looking for more varied uses for sugar cane, whether it’s as an alternative fuel source or a way to trap carbon emissions.

“Wouldn’t that be great for Louisiana sugar cane?” Irwin said. “Think of how many people use cosmetics.”

A natural solution

The process for turning sugar into glycolic acid is complicated. But Tony O’Lenick, vice president of the Society of Cosmetic Chemists, said the simple way to explain it is that, when sugar cane juice is being turned into sugar, the solids go one way, crystallize and become sugar; the liquids go another way.

“That’s a hugely oversimplified way of thinking about it. There’s a lot of processing to know how to make it come out the right way, but that’s the basics,” he said. “And there is no chemical part. Materials are naturally

present that are separated from each other. From a sustainability, natural point of view, it’s a great thing.”

Over the past five years or so, interest in natural, biodegradable products has greatly increased, O’Lenick said. As Sephora shoppers know, the store has an entire section devoted to “clean beauty.”

“Sugar cane, for the fact that it’s a naturally occurring material, has become very interesting, very important for skin,” O’Lenick said.

There is a synthetic way to make glycolic acid, from petroleum-based products. But as clean beauty grows in popularity, more glycolic acid is derived from sugar cane.

Biossance, for example, a major clean beauty brand, touts sugar cane as “our sustainable hero” in its marketing materials. The company owns sugar cane fields in Brazil.

Other big companies rely on outside chemists to mix their products. Once chemists have glycolic acid, they combine it with other ingredients to make the products on the shelves.

“Something to moisturize the skin, maybe a UV absorber for some sun capabilities,” O’Lenick said. “Glycolic acid is a good stimulant to not only get exfoliation going, but once the surface of the skin is changed by having the AHA, the cell turnover increases newer cells come out, which also stimulates collagen, which fills in the wrinkles.”

Glycolic acid is the smallest alpha-hydroxy acid, according to the National Institutes of Health, giving it “excellent capability to penetrate skin.”



STAFF FILE PHOTO BY HILARY SCHEINUK

Sugar cane grows along La. 1 in Iberville Parish. Many skin care products have a common ingredient: glycolic acid, and the base ingredient is simply sugar cane, one of Louisiana’s most prominent crops.

“It may reduce wrinkles, acne scarring, hyperpigmentation and improve many other skin conditions, including actinic keratosis, hyperkeratosis, and seborrheic keratosis,” according to a summary of glycolic acid in the National Library of Medicine.

Over-the-counter products contain lower levels of glycolic acid, while dermatologists can use higher levels in chemical peels and other treatments.

“One of the big things we do is recommend it to patients that have acne,” Chu said. “Because it really does help unclog pores, reduce oil production, and it also helps with hyperpigmentation.”

More skin care uses for sugar

Louisiana may not be where most glycolic acid comes from. Still, O’Lenick said if you can get your hands on real sugar, it can be good for the skin.

For years, he said people have

been making sugar scrubs and using sugar in homemade skin care products for exfoliation.

While sugar in multiple forms can be good for your skin, O’Lenick said, if you have acne, psoriasis or other skin conditions, glycolic acid at dermatologist-approved levels is your best bet.

“There are two very distinct differences. One is cosmetic, one medical. If you have skin that requires medication, you need to go to a dermatologist and not use serum from sugar cane directly,” he said.

Chu agreed. “It has to be denatured and formulated correctly,” she said. “You can’t just pour sugar cane juice on your face.”

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SMILEY

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school, a buddy and I, as many did, got in the trunk. After we got parked in the theater we hopped out.

“My cousin and his girlfriend told us to sit in the front seat while they would sit in the back.

“My friend and I had a very hard time focusing on the movie on the screen, with those two being more entertaining in the back seat.

“Might say we had two shows in one. Neither of us could remember what movie was playing on the screen.”

Speaking of THAT ...

Gene Paquette, of Breaux Bridge, says, “It’s utterly amazing that Alfred Hitchcock got away with this scene from ‘North by Northwest’ in 1959.

“It takes place in the 20th Century Limited dining car.

“Eve Kendall (played by Eva Marie Saint): ‘I don’t discuss romance on an empty stomach.’

“Roger Thornhill (played by Cary Grant): ‘You’ve already eaten.’

Kendall: ‘But you haven’t.’”

Special People Dept.

■ Leatus and Felicia Still, of Baton Rouge, celebrate their 58th anniversary Monday.

■ Gwen and Dennis Gibbs, of Covington, celebrate 58 years of marriage Monday.

Having it all

Jacob Scardina comments on our rice vs. potatoes stories:

“I was raised in a Italian family; my wife was raised in a Cajun family. So we have pasta with red sauce (aka gravy); rice and gravy (brown gravy, plus étouffée and gumbo); and occasionally mashed potatoes from both sides. “How blessed can one guy be?”

Write Smiley at Smiley@theadvocate.com.

SENATE

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dent Levee District. The Governor’s Office didn’t respond to a request for comment.

“You don’t sue the governor and at the same time ask for a handout,” Connick said.

Kerner Jr. sued Edwards in August 2022 after the governor — at Connick’s urging — tried to replace Jean Lafitte’s nominee on the levee board with a resident of Crown Point. According to state law, at least one appointee on the five-member board must come from a list of nominees supplied by the town of Jean Lafitte. With Edwards’ replacement, the board would have zero Jean Lafitte nominees. The lawsuit was later dropped after Edwards’ nominee pulled out.

“The governor knew it wasn’t about him,” Kerner Jr. said. “We sued to protect the rights of the town.”

Kerner Jr. framed his candidacy as a battle against the Connick “machine,” saying “the machine in Jefferson Parish needs to get the carpet pulled from under it.”

Connick said he’s part of no such machine and accused the Kerners of running their own machine in Lafitte. Since its incorporation in 1974, the town of Jean Lafitte has always had a Kerner as mayor.

Connick said the Kerners are “doing a great job for Lafitte, but they’re doing a terrible job for the rest of the parish,” adding that Lafitte has received millions of dollars in state funding at the expense of places like Marrero and Harvey.

“It’s never enough for the Kerners,” Connick said.

Kerner Sr. countered that he’s done more for Marrero in his four years as a state lawmaker than Connick has in 15 years.

Senate District 8 covers a large swath of Jefferson Parish’s West Bank, including Waggaman, Avondale, Bridge City, Westwego, Jean Lafitte, Barataria, Estelle and portions of Marrero, Harvey and Gretna. It also includes Belle Chasse in Plaquemines Parish.

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LOTTERY

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