



Berwick Beacon

Town of Berwick

July 2013

Town Council Members
Duval Arthur-Mayor Pro tem
Troy Lombardo
Edgar Thomas
Damon Robison
Greg Roussel

Special points of interest:

- www.sitesbylea.com/Recollections/
- Facebook search: "You Know You Are From Berwick If..."
- [History of South-west Reef Light-house](#)

FUTURE NEWSLETTERS WILL BE ELECTRONIC ONLY AND WILL BE POSTED ON THE TOWN WEBSITE. SCAN THIS CODE WITH YOUR MOBILE/SMART DEVICE TO GO DIRECTLY TO OUR WEBSITE AND REGISTER YOUR EMAIL TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF THE PUBLICATION OF A NEW EDITION OF THE BERWICK BEACON



We are on the web.
www.townofberwick.com



From The Mayor's Desk.....

On early Sunday morning, June 9th, our community received a heavy deluge of rain in excess of 5 inches in about 2 hours time causing major street flooding and also causing some homes to be flooded. At the June Council meeting the following week, our residents came to voice their concerns about the heavy rain fall and drainage problems they encountered. They challenged us as leaders to do what leaders are supposed to do - to protect and sustain our Town and all of its resources - specifically our people. As Mayor, I was encouraged by the sight of a packed Council meeting room; and then I was humbled by their presentations. Berwick should always be a Town where citizens can voice not only content, but discontent as well.



Due to a past storm about six weeks earlier, our Town had already begun an aggressive maintenance program of cleaning outfall ditches that remove rain water out of our neighborhoods. After the storm on June 9th, we contracted with an engineering firm that would be surveying and studying elevations to better determine our course of action to achieve our goal of no homes and businesses being flooded during these types of heavy rainfall events.

Our Council and our Town workers are making progress toward resolving our drainage issues. I am also requesting your assistance by making sure that the street drainage catch basins around your home remain free of any debris and grass clippings that would impede the flow of rain water during these substantial downpours.

I am very proud of our residents approach and of our Council's resolve to affect meaningful change. And in the future, should an occasion arise where anyone has a concern, I hope that they would feel comfortable to address our Council. With all of us working together, we can find solutions to lessen challenges to the growth and prosperity of our Town.

May God Bless You All, *Mayor Louis Ratcliff*



The 4th Annual Tour du Teche is a 135 mile canoe/kayak/pirogue race through the heart of Louisiana's Cajun Country and takes place on October 4th, 5th, and 6th. Paddlers for this race will pass through four parishes, woods, swamps, cane fields, and a dozen of the friendliest communities around. Tour du Teche began in

2010 with the dual purpose of introducing the beautiful Teche Country to paddlers and other eco-tourists from beyond and to illustrate for its residents the recreational, aesthetic, cultural and economic value of Bayou Teche. The race will conclude at the Everett S. Berry Memorial Light-house Park on the Berwick river front. The Town of Berwick will host festivities on Sunday October 6th from 11:00 am until 6:00 pm.

A LOOK BACK



The swimming pool in Berwick in the Atchafalaya River in the 1920's.



November 11, 1906, street scene in Berwick prior to its incorporation.



May, 2013 the Beacon Shines on former Town Superintendent Allen Benoit as the town honors him for his many years of service to the community.



July, 2013 the Beacon Shined on former Police Chief/CAO Ovary Rogers as he was honored for his service to the Town of Berwick.



Gen Thorguson, wife of Carroll Thorguson and her son Brian Thorguson accept a resolution of respect from Mayor Louis Ratcliff for Carroll Thorguson, honoring him and thanking him for his years of service to the community.



Councilman Greg Roussel

As the newest member of the Berwick Town Council, I am still learning what is required and expected of me as a council member. Let me first say that the cooperation and support I have experienced from the council members and our mayor has been exceptional. I have truly enjoyed working with them on many projects - from town infrastructure to recreation and everything in-between. I am proud and blessed to serve on this council and to be a resident of the Town of Berwick.

The recent flooding that we have experienced, as mentioned by Mayor Ratcliff, has allowed me to work closely with the citizens of this town as we attempt to figure out a solution to help us with our flooding dilemma. I truly enjoyed meeting and listening to everyone. Your input and suggestions have helped and have given me insight that I was privileged to share with our engineers.

As one of your councilman, I am available to listen to any and all concerns or opinions you have. This council is opened to working with the citizens of this town to make it the best it can be.



Pharr Park Tennis Courts, newly resurfaced and ready for play.

Berwick Recreation Committee

Berwick's recreation committee is a volunteer committee formed by

the mayor to present recreation needs and ideas for the town to the mayor and council. It was designed to be a five member committee consisting of four citizens and one councilperson. Due to the recent special election, there are currently two council members on the committee. Members currently serving are, Rosalyn Conrad, Troy Lombardo, Randal Monceaux, Greg Roussel, and Dominique Thomas.

The committee meets at the Civic Center on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 5:00pm to 6:00pm. All meetings are open to the public. Recent projects that originated in the Recreation Committee are the marquis sign at the entrance to the Civic Center and improvements to Pharr Park. Future projects include upgraded play equipment at the Civic Center and a new basketball court at the Willie P. Steward Park on Oregon Street. The committee is always open to new ideas from the community and looks forward to public input on the town's recreation needs. If you have an idea or suggestion, please contact one of the committee members above or Town Hall at 985-384-8858.



Girls Softball Field at the Civic Center being prepared for the installation of in-ground sprinklers and re-seeding.

BERWICK EDUCATOR HONORED DRIVE NAMED FOR TOMMY BOURGEOIS

by [Jean L. Kaess](#)

Courtesy of The [Daily Review](#)

Perseverance in the face of adversity.

It's something Tommy Bourgeois taught his athletes at Berwick High School, his students at Berwick Junior High, and now practices daily.



In honor of everything the former coach, who now battles ALS, has done for his students over the course of his 32-year career, the circle drive at Berwick Junior High was named Bourgeois Drive today. In addition, a move is on to change the official address of the school from its 3010 La. 182 address to 3010 Bourgeois Drive.

As a high school teacher and coach, Bourgeois served as a motivator and strategically skillful guide for many baseball, basketball and football teams, including the Berwick High basketball state runner-up team in 1994 and football playoff team in 1996.

A resolution approved during Thursday's St. Mary Parish School Board meeting made the action official, and signs were erected this morning, along with a ribbon cutting being held to officially dedicate the road.

Acting Berwick Junior High Principal Teresa Bagwell said she thinks the movement started in the right way.

"I think it started in the right way because nobody loves a principal or teacher more than their kids and the idea of paying tribute to him started with his former students who wanted to make sure he was properly honored. We wanted to find a loving tribute that would forever mark the school that he was dedicated to all these years," Bagwell said, adding "One thing about Tommy, that you may find in talking to him, he is for the kids. The sole source of his existence is to make life better for these kids and to help pave the way for them to succeed."

Berwick School Board member Mike Taylor said, "It's a great day in honor of somebody that's been a tremendous asset to the Berwick school system and the Berwick community. It's just a tribute to all the lives that he's touched to see the huge crowd that's here today for this dedication," Taylor said, referring to the 50 or so assembled for the ribbon cutting.

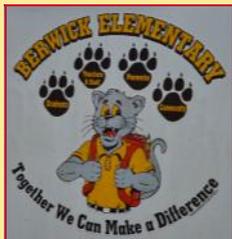
Bourgeois himself issued a written statement on the occasion:

"I don't think anyone ever expects this kind of recognition at the end of their career. If you are truly teaching for the right reasons, you hope you get one or two students to come back and thank you for helping them academically or socially as your reward. Words cannot express how humbled I am from the outpouring of love and support I have received from students past and present, colleagues, parents, and the community of Berwick as a whole. I look forward to working with Dr. Bagwell and helping her continue with the motto 'Right Thing Right Attitude'."

[Read the full story at smarynow.com](http://smarynow.com)

EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION IN BERWICK

BERWICK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



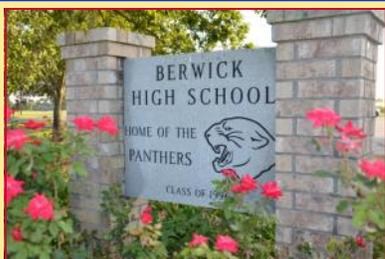
Summer is in full swing, but B. E. S. is working diligently to prepare for the upcoming school year. As always, student achievement is at the forefront of our daily operations. This year's LEAP and iLEAP results are proof that increasing student achievement is our number one priority. In Language Arts, 86% of our third through fifth graders scored proficient or higher. For math, 88% scored proficient or higher. While we are proud of all of our students, we are researching new strategies to continue challenging all learners. Also, B. E. S. is in the planning phase of offering additional activities for students as well as for parental involvement. We are considering hosting an open house the day before school starts for some of our student body; please check the school's website at www.stmary.k12.la.us/bes for the date, time, and grade levels. This information will be posted by the end of July. I hope everyone has a wonderful summer, and I look forward to a new and exciting school year.

BERWICK JR. HIGH SCHOOL

BJHS will be under the leadership of an acting principal for the 2013-14 school year. Instructional program manager Dr. Teresa Bagwell was transferred to the position in June and has been working diligently to build upon the successes of Mr. Tommy Bourgeois, long-time BJHS principal who is currently on medical leave. Dr. Bagwell reported that the school will be undertaking an innovative scheduling option in an effort to enhance academic opportunities for students and increase instructional time for the foundational courses of reading, English, language arts and math. The administration, teachers, and staff of BJHS deeply appreciate the involvement and support of the Berwick community and are looking forward to further growth of student academic skills as the new school year opens on August 7th.



BERWICK HIGH SCHOOL



What a great year 12-13 was for Dear Old Berwick High. Through the efforts of the school faculty, students, parents, and community, the school was recognized as an A school based upon the Louisiana Department of Education's accountability system. BHS's score of 141.1 ranked us at #5 in the state of Louisiana for traditional high school settings. Wow! This rating is a result of high test scores, high graduation rates, and ACT results. We are so proud!

This year, BHS reached a graduation rate of 87% and over 1.7 million dollars worth of scholarships were earned by the graduating class. Over 70% of the students earned varying levels of the state scholarship program awarded through TOPS. This was only accomplished through a strong relationship between school and community.

Many BHS individuals were recognized for their accomplishments. Congratulations to:

Student of the Year, Shereen Richard

Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Noelle Lowrimore

Wendy's Heisman State Finalist, Abigail Ohlin

Athletic Scholarship Signees ,VC Caruso (football), Abigail Ohlin (Softball), and Celeste Bowers (Volleyball and Softball)

Girls Tennis Team, State Runner-up for Division III

Louisiana Band Director's Association Director of the Year, Mr. Walter Shepherd, and

State Finalist for Principal of the Year, Dr. Buffy Fegenbush

Berwick High School has been working to establish more classes for college prep and also for technical prep. Students now have the opportunity to make connections through technical campuses and our local businesses to earn industry-based certifications. This is really opening many doors for them in their future.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Interesting information on former Berwick residents now residing elsewhere and who are competing and contributing on the national and international scenes.



Janice Elaine Hebert currently resides in Portland, Oregon where she is an Assistant United States Attorney at the U. S. Department of Justice, US Attorney's Office, District of Oregon. She is the daughter of Earl Hebert and Nelwyn Shepherd Hebert who still reside on John Street in Berwick.

Mr. Earl served as Berwick town clerk from 1958-1959. Oscar Hebert and Anita Aucoin, her paternal grandparents, moved to Berwick as a young couple and for many years operated Our Little Grocery on Fourth Street. Her maternal grandparents, Percy Shepherd and Lottie Price lived in Morgan City all of their adult lives. Ms. Hebert attended the Berwick public schools and graduated in 1975 from Berwick High School. Janice finished at BHS in three years and in hindsight believes it was a poor choice, wishing that she would have graduated in 1976 with her lifelong classmates.

After graduation, Ms. Hebert attended USL(ULL) during the 1980s while working there, graduating in Political Science and Philosophy with a B.S. Magna Cum Laude. Admitted to law school, Janice received her Juris Doctorate from LSU in Law 1990.

When asked of her fondest memories of Berwick, Janice recalls "running around Golden Farms with the kids, reading comic books in the clover filled ditches, riding bikes to Bayou Vista, camping out, listening to music, and trying to stay out of the prying eyes of all the parents that were around. Eventually, we drove around, and had fun. We had a good gang, and the parents were like a neighborhood watch group. You couldn't walk into a bar in Morgan City without running into someone's father, who didn't tell on you, but made sure that no one got into trouble.... I had lots of opportunities to excel, some of which I took, many I overlooked. It was a very safe, nurturing place to grow up. The friends I made in Berwick are always there for me. Everyday I play Words with Friends with my old best Berwick friends, Rani Robison Braus, Kathy Johnston and Kirk Chauvin."

Professionally, Janice previously served as an Assistant United States Attorney, District of Louisiana in Lafayette, from 1995 to 2012 until being transferred to the Oregon District. She currently represents federal agencies in court when they are sued, doing mostly medical malpractice defense for VA hospitals, employment discrimination defense, and basic tort(personal injury) defense. Ms. Hebert also does some regulatory defense work, like Indian Health Care, General Services Administration First Amendment issues, and whatever else is thrown at her.

In 1995, Janice was honored with a U.S. Attorney General's John Marshall award for Mediation and in 2004 an award from the Director of the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys for designing a mediation program for employment disputes within U.S. Attorneys' Offices across the country. She has also been recognized by her peers in the U.S. Depart-

ment of Justice Civil Rights Division for her work in school desegregation, fair housing, voting rights, and public accommodations.

Janice married Chris Williams from Morgan City in 1976 and they have a son, Stephan (37), who is an Electrical Engineer in Portland with daughters, Satie (10) and Odile (7). She and Chris went their separate ways in 1980, but she recently convinced him that the Northwest was a great place, and he now lives in Seattle and is thinking of opening a Cajun restaurant there. In 1987, Ms. Hebert married Arthur (Bubba) Cormier, and together they have two daughters, Carlin (Annie) Cormier, who lives and works in Lafayette, and attends ULL for Design; and Lillian (Lily) who is a Sophomore at LSU in Chemical Engineering. Bubba owns the Rok Haus Climbing Gym in Lafayette and lives in an ecologically friendly "tiny house" that he built out of cypress. Janice moved to Portland in 2012 to spend more time with her granddaughters and to work in the Northwest. She loves it here, but misses Louisiana.

Janice enjoys reading, knitting, people watching, kayaking, playing piano, listening to music, watching movies, and most of all spending time with her family.



"Recollections of Berwick, LA"

By Nina Guzzetta

Republished Courtesy of Daily Review

From February 6, 1998

Remember the big fire on Pacific Street in 1924? This was before we had city water and we had to fight fires with well and cistern water. There was a certain widow, very attractive, living next to Bella's Grocery.

One night, as of many nights, her lover was there in the house with her. He was a married man and did not want his presence in the house to be known. The man was a Latin lover and very passionate.

He was so passionate in his love-making that he kicked over the lamp and set the curtains on fire. He was so afraid to be seen, that he jumped into a trunk that was sitting at the foot of the bed. Vincent Bella noticed the fire and yelled to my brother Baby to run and ring the fire bell, which was one block away at the City Hall.

When the fire truck arrived, a couple of firemen ran into the burning house. They could hear a muffled sound saying, "Save the trunk; save the trunk; save the trunk!"

Remember when Mr. Bonner used to have a lunch car at the Ferry Landing in Morgan City? He had a sign on his wagon which read: "Coffee 5 cents a Cup - Strong 100% Proof Coffee 25 cents a Cup."

