



CRYSTAL PLACE NEWS

Jeanie 261-1852

December 2008

Central is Doing Just Fine, Thank you!

By Jeanie Barnett

According to a November 18th article in the Advocate, The City of Central has ended the 2007-2008 fiscal year nearly \$3 million in the black according to an independent audit of the city's finances. While this is true, we have had the opportunity to speak to Mayor Mac Watts and get more accurate and updated information.

Hurricane Gustav has delivered an unforeseen "blow" to that budget, (pun intended) as Central's portion of the over \$1 million cost of the ensuing cleanup is yet to be paid off. Fortunately, Central's portion will not be the expected 25% as in the Advocate report, but 5% due to two FEMA funding projects.

Even taking into consideration the storm expenses, there will be a surplus, due in large part to a 3 mil pothole tax. That tax is to be portioned out with 70% going to new construction, 27% to rehab (road repair) and 3% to beautification.

What can we see as a result of this budget?

*Sullivan and Hooper roads are slated to be widened on an accelerated time line.

*As soon as possible, a capital improvements program will be started to maintain and improve the roads for which the city is responsible.

*A new municipal center. Currently City Hall is in a private home. Central has landed state funds to design the new center.

After the audit, Jacob Waguespack of the Baton Rouge firm Faulk & Winkler has proclaimed Central financially healthy.

Mayor Watts reminds us that a one time \$800,000 start up fee to CH2M Hill is paid off. We should end this year with \$300,000 to \$400,000 surplus in the general fund. The projection is that Central will end the next fiscal year with a one and a half to two million dollar surplus.



Saying Goodbye

Many will remember and mourn the passing of **Mr. J.T. Messina**. He passed away on Sunday November 9th at the home of his son and daughter-in-law, Greg and Maxine here on Crystal Drive.

Mr. Messina began his life in Bayou Goula and had no formal education beyond elementary school, yet through his own hard work he made a good life for himself and his family.

He is remembered as being "green" before it was the popular thing to do. "Repurpose, reuse and renew" was not just a catchy motto, but a way of life for a man who couldn't throw anything away, but made it onto something useful, or made it available for someone who could use it.

In 1977 he started buying property in Crystal Place and eventually ended up owning about 15 properties here, some he sold on a lease-purchase basis for those who couldn't qualify for loans.

Mr. Messina loved to garden, saying, "God likes people who scratch in the ground." Many who rented or bought from him found a vegetable garden already on the property.

For over half a century, he was married to his childhood sweetheart, Doris. She passed away in August of 2004 and he never knew a day after that without missing her.

There are pages and pages of sentiments of sorrow, stories of remembrance and outpourings of love in the online guest book sponsored by The Advocate. Among these heartfelt messages from family and friends, there are a number of reoccurring words and phrases. These include, "respect," "cherish," "love," "joyful times" and "loving memories." But there is one phrase that is repeated most often in these messages of condolence; a phrase to which we all should aspire today in our living and tomorrow in memories, that is: "a life well lived."



J.T. & Doris Messina



Shop Central First!

The City of Central is now getting its fair portion of sales tax revenue. When you shop near home, not only are you saving in time and gasoline, you are helping to make your city a better place to live.

Crystal Place Care Team

In last month's newsletter, I put out a call to those who would rise to the challenge to organize a team of people to reach out to those of our neighbors who may be in need of assistance. There are elderly and otherwise physically challenged people who need simple help from time to time. I have had some response and hope to hear from more of you.

Kristina Mixon is the contact person for this group. Her number is 938-7113. Of course, you can always call me, Jeanie, at 261-1852 for more information.

Kristina would like to hear from all who could volunteer just a limited amount of their time to this project and arrange to meet and work out the details in January.

Let us know if you can help or if you know of someone deserving who needs a bit of assistance such as an errand run or a heavy object moved, or simply a phone call or visit to cheer them up.

There are a multitude of small ways you can reach out to another that may be almost nothing to you in time or trouble, but make all the difference in the world to someone else. Here is your opportunity to be an angel and touch a life.



We're online!
Check us out at
CentralSpeaks.com
and click on the
"Community" tab.

Now What???

It's over! No more political ads on TV and radio. Yeah! No more arguments around the dinner table at family gatherings. Yahoo! No more mudslinging, negative comments and unfounded rumors. Hurray! Right?

Well, maybe it isn't all over. I still get emails with outrageous claims. I still hear jokes, slurs, grumblings and prophecies of gloom and doom. There seems to be as much hate and animosity as there was during the campaign period. Well, everyone needs to realize that "nobody any more has a dog in the race, 'cause there ain't no race!"

It is now time for all American to come together in the original spirit of unity that made this the greatest nation on earth. Some people think that the quote, "A house divided cannot stand," came from Abraham Lincoln. Our first record of this principle is in the New Testament in Luke 11:17, "a house divided against itself falls."

It is time for all the shouting to be over and only cheering to ensue...cheering for the team we all not only support, but are players in: The United States of America. Go Team!

New Years Customs

It is interesting to note the many different ways that differing cultures celebrate the coming of a new year. Two common themes are good luck in the new year and renewal. Here are just a few:

Japan-grudges are forgiven, houses are scrubbed

Spain-they eat 12 grapes at midnight to secure a happy 12 months

Netherlands-bonfires are made of old Christmas trees to symbolize purging the old and welcoming the new.

Greece-St Basil's cake is baked with a gold coin inside. The one to whom it is served will be lucky all year

USA-Eating black eyed peas represent good luck and plenty all year. Some add cabbage for financial abundance and, ironically, pork for health.



The Barnett Family wishes you all a happy and blessed Christmas and a 2009 filled with all the joy, prosperity and goodness you can handle!



This issue of the Crystal Place Newsletter was made possible in part by a donation from:

John and Betty Thibodeaux

"In honor of our neighbors."

Thanks so much!!!