

THE WEST SIDE Journal

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

www.thewestsidejournal.com

\$1.00

VOLUME 83 | NUMBER 15

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2019

PORT ALLEN, LOUISIANA

Crowds line Jefferson Avenue to pay tribute to local veterans

TOMMY COMEAUX
editor@thewestsidejournal.com

Hundreds lined Jefferson Avenue in Port Allen for the Veterans on Parade, an annual event now in its 15th year established to honor local veterans.

Sunday's parade was unusual in that it memorialized a single veteran, Claude Crawford.

"This is the first time in 15 years we have named

the parade in honor of a specific individual," said parade organizer and City of Port Allen Councilman Garry Hubble.

"It has always been in honor of all our veterans but we had one who started with us and that person was Claude Crawford," he said.

"Claude's smile was as big as his heart and he became a true friend," Hubble continued. "His involvement in the parade

was for nothing but the veterans."

"His dream was that it would get bigger each year," he said, then addressed the spirit of Crawford. "Your cause endures and your dream lives on and we will never let it die."

This year's parade was dedicated to three veterans, or parade marshals—U.S. Army veteran Roosevelt B. Gipson Sr., U.S. Navy veteran Oliver A. "Skip"

Holbert Jr., and Nolan J. "Country" Ruiz, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force.

Gipson spent 20 years in the Army before his retirement as a first sergeant in three different airborne divisions.

He was in combat with each one, once in the Dominican Republic with the 82nd Division, three in Vietnam—two with the 173rd and a third with the 101st.

"It was a shock to me that I was chosen, however I'm grateful, and I thank you for the recognition and your support," Gipson said Sunday.

Holbert said he realized while talking to the other parade marshals that they had gone through much more than he did, "So I'm honored to be up here with these other veterans and to be recognized by the City of Port Allen."

Ruiz said he was honored and humbled to have been recognized by the city and pointed out how lucky Americans are.

"We're the luckiest people in the world," he said. "We've got everything here. I wish people would appreciate it more."



Amariz Mendoza of Brusly High plays "Taps."

Hubble acknowledged a number of people who had helped organize the parade, especially Kim Howell.

"This parade is the brainchild of this lady," he said. "Kim has been the major force behind it... I want to thank her for all that she does."

The bands from both of the parish's high schools, Brusly and Port Allen, were there and performed not only in the parade but at the program at the museum. There was a scattering of other youth in the audience.

"The whole purpose of

the parade was to teach patriotism to our youth and it's an honor to have Brusly High School and Port Allen High School here," Howell said.

Hubble gave the parade a rave review Monday.

"I think it went just like clockwork, it was perfect," he said. "The weather was great and we had a good turnout and the veterans felt honored."

"They were happy and that's what the parade is all about," Hubble said. "I feel very dedicated to giving back to them the best way we can and I think the parade does that well."



Navy veterans gather in Brusly to reminiscence days on the USS Kalamazoo

TOMMY COMEAUX
editor@thewestsidejournal.com

A chance meeting on an airline led to an informal reunion in Brusly of sailors who became fast friends aboard a fleet replenishment ship named the USS Kalamazoo.

Peter Curcio was flying home after attending the annual Army-Navy football game. His seatmate was a man named Don Holland.

The two quickly found they had many things in common.

Making small talk, Holland asked where he was from. "A small town in Louisiana," was the response.

Explaining that he Curcio had some knowledge of Louisiana and had spent some time in a small town here, he asked what town. Ironically,

Curcio had lived in Brusly until joining the Navy and it just happened to be Brusly that Holland

had visited while his ship, USS Kalamazoo, had been in overhaul at Avondale Shipyard in New Orleans.

As the conversation continued, the two found they both were now living in a small town in North Carolina, Franklin.

Not long after their chance meeting, Holland came up with the idea of a reunion of some of the officers who'd served on the Kalamazoo's commissioning crew. He knew that many of the men had fond memories of the experience.

"It was one of the most rewarding jobs for me," said the crew's former executive officer, retired Commander Jack Bash. "To have so many people who worked so well together was great."

"At the end of two years, we were working together even better," Bash said. "Everybody worked with everyone else and everyone did their jobs well. We understood one another

and we all felt comfortable in our own shoes."

"I was on five ships and the Kalamazoo was by far the one that worked out the best for me," he continued. "And here we are today (about 45 years later) and we're feeling the same emotions among all of us."

But it was not only the brotherhood the men formed on the Kalamazoo that brought them to Louisiana Wednesday, but

See **NAVY VETS** on **Page 2A**



U.S. Navy Capt. (retired) John Bres.

WBRSO busts Texas man with 163 pounds of pot

Deputies with the West Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office conducted a traffic stop on I-10 Sunday morning on a vehicle with a Texas license plate for a traffic violation.

The stop resulted in the arrest of the driver and the confiscation of about 163 pounds of marijuana with an estimated street value of \$260,000.

While interviewing the driver, Patrick H. Green, deputies became suspicious of his nervous behavior coupled with the inconsistencies between his story and his passenger's.

Deputies requested Green's consent to search his vehicle, but he refused so a K-9 officer was brought to the scene.

"After the Louisiana State Police K-9 indicated a positive alert to narcotics odor on the vehicle, confirming the deputies' suspicion, a search was conducted," said Sheriff's Office spokesman Maj. Zack Simmers. "While doing a search of the vehicle, deputies discovered the large amount of marijuana."



RKM PRIMARY CARE
THE RIGHT CARE, CLOSE TO HOME



Pat Lee, CPNP-PC

Heather Moya, CPNP-PC

Mica Sood, CPNP-PC

Visit us for your **PEDIATRIC** needs!

Services Include:

Sick-Child Visits • Well-Child Visits
Growth & Developmental Screenings
Immunizations • Sports Physicals

Accepts:

Private Insurance • Medicare • Medicaid
Major Credit Cards • Cash

(Sliding fee discount available to those who qualify)

INSIDE

News.....1-3
Events6

Lifestyles.....4-5
Opinion.....7

Legals.....9-12
Bids.....8

Notices.....8
Obits.....8

Classifieds..... 13
Sports.....14