

Politics Will be Taking Center Stage in February ... NOT!

I've been answering the phone "Who Dat?" ever since the Saints won the NFC Championship and weighing my options regarding what is over the top Saints décor and what's just a reasonable response to this momentous occasion. So far, nothing is over the top and everything Saints is winning out. The Super Bowl will be followed in quick succession by Mardi Gras and the NBA All-Star Game.

But seriously, February is going to be filled with political activities that affect all of us. Voters in New Orleans will be going to the polls on February 6, the day before the Super Bowl. They'll have the opportunity to either elect a new mayor or send the top two candidates to a run-off. We'll have a much better idea of the make-up of the Council and see whether voters are paying attention to the Assessor's race as well as other judicial offices. Make no mistake about it: St. Tammany needs for New Orleans to be strong and well governed.

Closer to home, candidates will have qualified for the Mandeville Mayoral Special Election and all of the regularly scheduled Slidell Municipal offices. Qualifying took place on February 3 – 5 while we were all finalizing our food and "*beverage*" purchases and deciding if we needed just one more television so that everyone could see the game.

Mandeville voters will now have to focus on the mayoral candidates and figure out which one will best restore their confidence in local government. Former Mayor Eddie Price's term expires on July 1, 2012. As of the end of January, two experienced politicians had announced their intentions to qualify for Mayor: Trilby Lenfant and Don Villere. There have been persistent rumors that there are others considering the race.

Slidell politics are always interesting and this year is no exception. Due to the unfortunate deaths of both Council Members at Large, Pearl Williams and Kevin Kingston, and Greg Cromer's uncontested win for the State Legislature, residents have been dealing with a number of vacancies, special elections and appointments as council members moved up and created new vacancies.

Three office-holders are prohibited from seeking re-election due to term limits including Mayor Ben Morris, Police Chief Freddy Drennan, and Council Member Ray Canada (District E). Morris has announced he wants his old job back as Police Chief and Drennan's pursuit of the Mayor's office has been a foregone conclusion for a long time.

Several others have already announced their intentions to run for Mayor or Police Chief. Rickey Hursey, the Slidell District B Councilman, and Jay Trainor, the Chief Deputy for the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office, intend to run for Mayor. Lt. Randy Smith, also with the St. Tammany Sheriff's Office, has announced he's running for Police Chief and has hired James Hartman to run his campaign. The verbal slings and arrows have already started and we surely all will be hearing lots more from all of these candidates this Spring.

Long time former mayor, Sam Caruso, has indicated his interest in running for the District E seat being vacated by Canada. Newcomers Buddy Lloyd and Jay Newcomb have signaled their intent to run for council district seats, as well. So far, Canada has not announced his intentions regarding the race.

The League of Women Voters has scheduled Candidate Forums for all the races. In addition, all candidates will be asked to respond to questions in writing prior to the forums. Candidates are urged to call or email the League with contact information as soon as possible. Voters and interested residents are encouraged to send us their questions for the candidates and to make plans to attend the Candidate Forums which are free and open to the public.

And now I've got to get back to hanging fleur-de-lis and painting my umbrella. Geaux Saints!

Election Schedule

Qualifying for Slidell & Mandeville Races: February 3 – 5

Primary Election Date: Saturday, March 27

Early Voting: Saturday, March 13 – Saturday, March 20

General Election Date: Saturday, May 1

Early Voting: Saturday, April 17 – Saturday, April 24

Candidate Forum Schedule

Slidell Mayoral & Chief of Police Forums

Monday, March 1 at 6:30 p.m.

City Council and Administrative Complex (new building)

City Council Chamber – Third Floor

2045 2nd Street – Slidell

Slidell City Council (At Large and Single District Seats)

Monday, March 8 at 6:30 p.m.

Same location as Mayoral and Chief of Police forum

Mandeville Mayoral Forum

Monday, March 15 at 7:00 p.m.

Mandeville's First Baptist Church (next to Chenier)

Auditorium (front building)

1895 Highway 190 – Mandeville

Candidates and voters may contact me at sandraslifer@gmail.com or by phone at 875-9388. Candidate questions and answers will be posted on the League's web site prior to the forums at www.lwvst.info. Please check back often for more details.

