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JOURNAL

EDITOR'S DESK

Alexandria's Woe

Qualifying starts today for local elections in Rapides and Grant Parishes. Normally we focus on local issues north of the Red River, however, the mayor's election in Alexandria is important to everyone in Rapides. Since the entire parish must visit Alexandria to conduct parish business, shop, or any other of a long list of activities, the political climate of Alexandria is important to everyone.

Lets be frank here, the political corruption rampant in City Hall has been growing for years. Everybody knows that when a political figure stays in one office for too long, a number of bad things will likely evolve. Unqualified friends assume positions of power. Checks and balances fade. A lean, responsible government is replaced with pork projects directed to political cronies who prop up the status quo.

Responsible public servants are aware of this and guard against it. Unfortunately the Randolph administration let their guard down.

Now, Alexandria is faced with the prospect of electing a new mayor. So far there are 6 serious candidates and a few who always run for whatever office is up for grabs. Count on "Red" Hammonds to pay her fee, like clockwork.

Of the "serious 6," there are two candidates who have no connection with the previous administration, three who are deeply imbedded in the current city regime, and one candidate who has served on the Rapides Parish Police Jury. The three are part of the septic tank that city hall has become.

Charles Frederic Smith, Delores Brewer, and Roosevelt Johnson have all played their part in the decline, we can expect nothing more than a continuation of the status quo if any of the three become mayor. They ooze backroom deals and shady appointments. They hire family members as high priced consultants. They use their position for personal gain at the expense of the taxpayer.

The two "outsiders," Dr. John Sams and Jacques Roy are both capable of turning the city around but I wonder if Sams has the will to do what is necessary.

Sams has publicly stated that he will continue his medical practice if he is elected. This causes me to wonder who is first on his list and who is second. If Sams devotes the required amount of time to cleaning up the mess at city hall, he neglects his patients, and violates his Hippocratic oath. I wonder what type of man could so easily discard such an ingrained part of his professional responsibility. If he upholds his responsibility to his patients, the voters who placed their faith in him won't be getting what they voted for. Dr. Sams is faced with quite a dilemma.

Joe Fuller is a part of the City Hall gang, even though he sits on the police jury. Flip a coin, heads or tails, Fuller or the three. It's all the same.

Last we have Jacques Roy. We can find no reason to believe that he will continue the circus that Alexandria City Hall has become. With his legal training, we assume he knows the scope of a mayor's authority, and the best way to put the brakes on a runaway city council. The only question left to answer is if Roy has the backbone to do what he needs to do should he become mayor.

We don't endorse political candidates, and this should not be taken as an endorsement of any one of the "serious 6." We only draw logical conclusions based on the facts as we know them. What is best for Alexandria will be decided by those who live there and they will have to live with their choices.

The Alexandria mayor's race should be interesting indeed.