



Fire trucks from across South Louisiana (above, at left) fill the roads of Youngsville, paying tribute to the passing of the city's fire chief, Jason Simon. An Honor Guard (above, at right) made



up of men from the Lafayette Fire Department stands at the casket of Youngsville Fire Chief Jason Simon. Simon was also a captain with the Lafayette Fire Department.

Simon (from 1A)

Anne Catholic Church for a Requiem Mass.

As the Honor Guard accompanied the casket into the church, firefighters stood at attention and saluted, while the mournful sound of bagpipes, drum and fife corps played a traditional Irish farewell. Chief Simon, who also worked with the Lafayette Fire Department, was memorialized by many friends and co-workers.

"He served for 24 years, working his way through the ranks to fire captain level," said Chief Robert P. Benoit of the Lafayette Fire Department. "A dedicated guy, always ready to help with bookkeeping or computer problems. Whether working as a volunteer in Youngsville or a paid employee of our department, he gave 100 percent.

"He lived and breathed for fighting fires."

Those sentiments were sounded repeatedly at a reception the Youngsville Fire Department presented following

services.

"It's a big loss," said Abby Warren. "He was a friend, mentor, teacher and an unbelievable man."

Born in Lafayette Oct. 1, 1958, Chief Simon lived in Youngsville for most of his life. He lived his dream of being a firefighter, volunteering with the Youngsville Fire Department at the age of 17 in 1975. He was elected fire chief in 1991 and served until a November election voted in Chief Shawn Warren. Chief Warren worked for the Iberia Parish Fire department for nine years.

Simon joined the Lafayette Fire Department in 1986, where he served as a captain until his recent illness. Through his dedication he earned an associate's degree in fire science. His devotion to the fire service was evident in his tireless work with both departments.

When he wasn't fighting fires, he could be found fishing, hunting, camping — or

beekeeping and processing honey. He also made biodiesel fuel.

He is survived by his wife of 22 years, Trudy Thibodeaux Simon, of Youngsville; his sons, Jared Simon and wife, Lisa, of Broussard, and Jacob Simon and wife, Heather, of Youngsville; his stepson, Eric Latiolais and wife, Ashley, of Youngsville; his stepdaughter, Jessica Savoie and husband, Jeremy, of Carencro.

He is also survived by eight grandchildren, Grant Simon, Riley and Raynee Simon, Bryce, Jace, and Karmryn Latiolais, Breckin and Elliott Savoie, and was eagerly awaiting the birth of his ninth grandchild at the time of his death.

He is survived by his parents, John Clyde and Marie Roy Simon, of Youngsville; his sisters, Wanda Robbins and husband, Robbie, and Donna Menard and husband, Todd; and one brother, Kevin Simon

and wife, Stacey; along with nieces, nephews, and his Godparents, Annie Derouen and Donald Simon; and his best friend and dog, Roux.

In 1986 Chief Simon married into the family of the late John Berchman and Mildred Dugas Thibodeaux, who had 12 children. He is survived by all of Trudy's siblings: Dena Briley, Merv (Phil) Cron, Kenneth, Erroll, and Davis Thibodeaux, Susan (Randy) Fontenot, Vicky Dohmann, Ricky (Ellen) Thibodeaux, Tama (Dickie) Collier, Gayle Oliviar and Sheila Thibodeaux (Richard Inman).

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Clement and Eunice Reaux Simon and Clebe Roy and Amy Breaux Roy Broussard; his uncle, Jeffery Derouen; and his brother-in-law, Eddie Briley.

Entombment was in the St. Anne Mausoleum. David Funeral Home of Lafayette was in charge of arrangements.

Future (from 1A)

some services to help others make the most of everything financially.

Maturalism — 2010 will be more opinionated, risqué, outspoken, raw than 2009. You can thank the anything goes world for that.

If there is a financial guru in the United States, it would have to be Med Yones, president of the International

Institute of Management. He is one of the few experts who predicted the nation's current economic downturn and crisis. In fact his economic predictions are generally considered to be the most accurate. What does he foresee in his crystal ball for 2010?

- Real estate and construction and financial industries will bottom in 2010 with a

recovery starting in 2011.

- Jobless rate (nationwide) could hit double digits. This doesn't count those who have been long-term unemployed and have given up looking or those working part-time or with pay cuts. Simply fixing the infrastructure won't produce lasting jobs. Only successful businesses can create and sustain jobs.

- Real estate market will hit bottom in 2010.

- Undervalued stocks will provide an excellent investment opportunity.

- Consumer spending will be reduced significantly, especially discretionary income.

- Recovery will come with the advent of more innovation.

Pianist Steve Kerin takes prodigy rep to West Coast

Lafayette-based "piano man" Steve Kerin just turned 37. This means he's been playing piano for an amazing 34 years.

Kerin and I are former close neighbors on Lafayette's northside. But he left his old hometown haunts in 2005 for Portland, Ore., where he and his wife, Jane, now live and work, while he earns a living playing music up and down the West Coast.

A few weeks ago, he slipped into town to jam with friends at Blue Moon Saloon while here for a friend's wedding. But he recalls a mid-1970s morning in the Kerin household when, after watching his dad dabble at the family piano for months, he surprised his parents and, soon, experienced music teachers and musicians.

"When I was 3," Kerin, now a teacher himself, says, "my parents had a piano and my dad played a little bit. And my parents tell me that one morning I just started playing a song on the piano. It was prob-

Culture Corner with Steve Landry



ably just one melody, but my mom was like, 'I didn't know he could play,' and my dad said, 'I didn't, either.'"

Kerin, who can't recall the song, chuckles. "I know, I know. It's a cute story," he says a bit sheepishly.

Acadiana live-music fans will recall Steve's solo gigs in the early to mid-2000s. You could catch him taking requests for R.E.M.'s "Nightswimming" at Lion's Tavern near the old Poets or Elton John's "Ticking" at the Sidebar along Jefferson Street. Or he'd be melting ears with his guitar or bass at the now-defunct Renaissance with alt-rockers Mod Amish, or at 307 Club.

It's not just rock for this guy, however. The Fatima and University of Louisiana at Lafayette graduate with a mas-



Steve Kerin in his element.

ter's in theory cites myriad influences, and I've seen him perform most: Professor Longhair, Keith Emerson-prog-rock (on two keyboards simultaneously), Bach and Debussy, modern rockers the Pixies, Pavement and Ween, and old-schoolers Neil Young, the Allman Brothers, Bob Dylan, the Faces and the Band.

Still, he's most known for his deep-throated, piano-vocal-only rendition of "(What a) Wonderful World," made famous by Louis Armstrong.

"That's my wedding song, actually," Kerin says. "We danced to it at our wedding in 1998. Jane and I think the message is really nice. But it's funny, because when I started

Grant (from 1A)

progress," Boustany said. "With the end of the official hurricane season, we are reminded of the importance of working quickly to restore our coast. This grant is an example of American energy production helping to rebuild our wetlands and strengthen our coast."

The grant will be used to provide protection for shoreline between Southwest Point and Indian Point. This grant is part of the Coastal Impact Assistance Program, which dis-

tributes funds from offshore mineral royalties to rebuild wetlands and coastal protections.

Previous grants awarded by the Minerals Management Service through the CIAP in

2009 include a \$10.6 million grant for the Grand Lake Shoreline Protection project and two other grants totaling \$93,777 to rebuild levees along the North Prong Schooner Bayou and improve water access at Henry Hub in Vermilion Parish.

Teachers (from 1A)

mission requirements, added a career counseling program to better prepare teachers for the transition to the classroom, and boosted coursework requirements in English Language Arts. Real change, based upon the real outcomes of children — revolutionary, isn't it?," he said in a speech at Columbia University's Teacher's College.

Louisiana's accountability efforts began in 2002 with the federal No Child Left Behind initiative of the Bush administration. Now, the Obama administration wants to use test scores to evaluate teachers and the universities that train them.

Washington Post reporter Nick Anderson visited UL and met with Savoie, Dr. Gerald Carlson, dean of the College of Education, and education faculty. Carlson introduced Anderson to current students and recent graduates who are now teachers across Acadiana.

In the article, Savoie described the initiative as "accountability on steroids" and addressed a recent report from the state Board of Regents that examined three years of test data from classrooms. In the report, UL scored lower than expected in elementary English language arts.

"We got the numbers

Museum offers musical history

The Jeanerette Museum is currently selling copies of the booklet, "New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music Along the Banks of Bayou Teche."

This book features a collection of the music history and photographs of several mu-

sicians in the Acadiana area. The books are \$10 each. To purchase your copy, visit the museum at 500 E. Main St. in Jeanerette from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday or call 337.276.4408 for more information.

Arthur Levine, former president of Teacher's College at Columbia University and frequent critic of teacher education programs, said, "A lot of people are talking about doing it, but Louisiana got there first. It's the model."

To read the complete article by Anderson, visit www.washingtonpost.com/education.

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singing that song, you don't really hear yourself in your head like other people hear you, and I felt like it was a joke, like it was an Oscar the Grouch voice. But then people were like, 'That sounds exactly like him!'

"So, the truth is," he says, "I didn't realize it was good until somebody told me."

Piano is first in his life, as it was when he was a tyke, but Kerin likes to talk about his other passion, the guitar. I'll never forget one time when he played "She Talks to Angels," by the Black Crowes, on his acoustic — perfectly — for me and some friends. It was chilling.

"I like them both," Kerin says of his instruments of choice. "One of the things I like about guitar is that you can haul it around with you. You can play guitar by the campfire, you know? But I think my technical capabilities are stronger on piano than guitar."

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