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(ELECTION, Continued from page 4)  
 cally with rain and wind. On a sunny day last week the “drainage” canals were overflowing and rushing into yards. This problem will continue to plague us as the Pass grows. We must have a master plan where we bring all the experts and the funding sources together in order to design and implement a more permanent solution.

Attracting businesses is essential to the continued vitality of our city. We have a wealth of resources here with retired executives and committed individuals who are ready, willing and able to share their expertise and experience to create opportunities by forming an economic development committee.

At this stage of our redevelop-

ment, the City Council must be open with its plans and ideas. For example, the City has been planning the redesign of our downtown streets and parking for 18 months, apparently with little or no input from the City Planner, Planning Commission, businesses or residents. If elected, I will push for public input throughout the planning process and ensure that residents and businesses have access to proposed plans online and at a minimum at City Hall.

**Philip Wittmann:** One of the most important issues relates to economic development – the lack of existing structures available to house businesses. The devastating loss to our commercial building stock forces a prospective business to first build the

structure, adding significantly to start-up costs. Our national economic reality and the soaring costs of insurance further confound the issue. However, we are on the verge of spending down \$8 million dollars of federal funds that will replace and enhance downtown infrastructure, decreasing costs for new construction and allowing businesses to once again offer their services and products in the historic, yet completely modernized downtown area.

Another challenging issue is drainage across the city. How water moves in and out of the city after rain is nothing new, and I have experienced this first-hand on my own property. As Alderman-at-Large I have sought a  
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comprehensive city-wide review of the drainage system of our canals, ditches and culverts that do not move water properly. I am confident that we will arrive at some sustainable solutions in the near future. This will require significant funding and the dollars for major projects are limited. Until we make significant movement on this task, it is my priority to keep the ditches and canals flowing freely.

Another issue we face is the compensation of our city employees, who are grossly underpaid in comparison to other city employees across the coast. This disparity is especially felt among personnel in our fire and police departments. We have suffered a loss of hard-working firemen and policemen that we train and provide entry level

experience, as they seek employment elsewhere to make higher wages. We must take swift action to stem this flow from the city to other places.

*Pass Christian is transforming. How do you see the city in 2020?*

**Brooks:** I envision that by 2020, Pass Christian will be a friendly, thriving, walkable community filled with shops, cafes and the businesses that have traditionally been there for us over the years. With all our natural beauty, history and resources, the Pass will be a top eco-tourism destination. By 2020, the Harbor will be thriving and our ability to accommodate both commercial and pleasure craft will be a boon for the Pass. Our school system, with its Level 5 status, will continue to attract young families. I envision a place

where my children can work and raise a family.

**Wittmann:** I do not see the aftermath of Katrina as a transformation of the city, but rather a *rebirth* of the town we all love. I see a city where our local government works in unison with the state and federal government to ensure that the rebirth of our hometown is realized. A hometown we recognize ... a city with an eye on the future while continuing to embrace the traditions of the past. I see thriving businesses that sustain our vibrant community and draw residents from across the Coast. I see our parks filled with the enthusiasm of young and old as summer stretches into fall. A harbor that rivals no other. A renewal of the commercial fisheries with the expansion of the harbor, coexisting with the true birthplace of yacht-

ing in the South. I envision a city that offers choices within the city limits as it did in the not-so-distant past: a city with its own bakeries, dry cleaners, restaurants and doctor's offices. The short answer is that we do not need to transform or change but strategically rebuild what we have lost — and thus sustain our way of life just as we have for 300 years.

*What do you see as your role as Alderman-at-Large?*

**Brooks:** I will work with the Mayor and the other Aldermen to transform the City Council into a vibrant proactive body that brings new and exciting ideas and projects to the Pass. I will work hard to get our police and firemen competitive pay. I will work to maximize the input and experience of the City's advisory Commissions into the

decision-making process of the Council. I will fight for openness and fairness in City government. I will work to change the format of the City Council meeting to enable the public to contribute comments and ask questions before votes are taken.

**Wittmann:** In general terms, the authority to act as Alderman-at-Large lies solely with the board through public meetings. As Aldermen, we are not only asked to see that the city has a budget, but that we are fiscally responsible in how the budget is allocated as well as spent. Additionally, we are tasked with ensuring that the projects the city puts out for bid are approved and that the departments run smoothly. We should have a certain level of confidence in every department and must refrain from

*(Continued on page 8)*

# Rebuilding Pass Christian Together

Robin

# Rafferty

Alderman Ward I

[roraff@cablone.net](mailto:roraff@cablone.net)

## Please Vote June 2<sup>nd</sup>

*Paid by Committee to elect Robin Rafferty*

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(ELECTION, Continued from page 7)  
overstepping boundaries in any department; instead, we must act cohesively through the Board. As Alderman-at-Large, my specific responsibility is not to one ward but to the entire city, thus forcing my perspective somewhat to the larger picture. While there are many aspects of the position, the most important role is pushing issues that may not always be brought out at meetings to the forefront, and thinking creatively through the "big picture" lens to design solutions that will benefit the city and residents in totality.

*Why do you feel are the best candidate?*

**Brooks:** I work hard and get things done. I dig in and get the answers and I find solutions to problems. I am accessible. In addition, my management experience in-

cluded creating and reconciling budgets, supervising various departments, and directing the day-to-day operation of a 24-hr business. All of this experience will serve me well as Alderman-at-Large. I believe that my proven record for accessibility and action establishes that I am the better candidate.

In addition, as I have often said, I may not have been born here but I got here as quickly as I could. My husband and I could live almost anywhere, and we choose to live here because we love the Pass deeply. I truly enjoy getting out and talking with people and hearing their concerns. I get great satisfaction from solving problems and seeing results. I believe I can make a difference.

**Wittmann:** As your Alderman-at-Large for the past

two and a half years, I am well aware of the myriad issues facing our recovering city. My background in finance and the law gives me an understanding of the various disputes that arise on a daily basis, whether it is financing a fire truck, paying off water and sewer loans, or the constitutional issues the city faces in cleaning up blighted properties.

Whether it is sitting down with a project manager to discuss streets or the city engineer to discuss drainage, the multiple tasks and diversity of issues makes it imperative that the Alderman-at-Large have an understanding of local, state, and federal regulations spanning such diverse topics as storm water to labor issues. I also have a deep understanding of the people of this city and what

(ELECTION, Continued on page 10)

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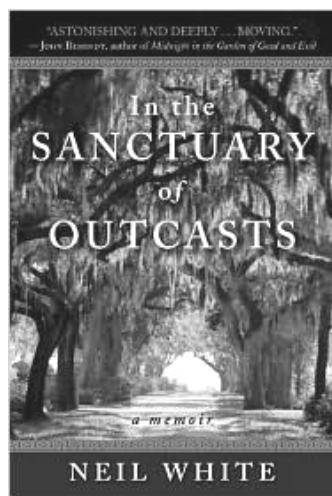
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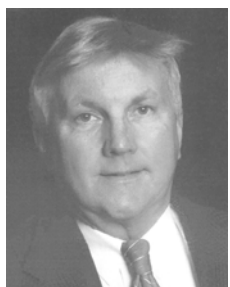
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(ELECTION, Continued from page 8) makes us tick collectively. Our city is no stronger than the bonds that we share and that have kept us tethered together through all manner of storms for centuries. I understand that it is the relationships among residents and their families and the mutual respect for each other that will bring us through this most recent storm.

#### Meet The Candidates WARDS 1, 2 & 3

The Gazebo Gazette also asked the candidates who are running unopposed to share with us their ideas and visions for the city. Ward 4 Alderman Bang answered similar questions before the primary election, so we let him off the hook this time.

**Ward 1: Rory Robin Rafferty, Jr.**, is a school administrator and a retired naval officer. He is running unopposed. This will be his first term on the Board of Aldermen.

*What do you feel are the major issues facing Pass Christian? How do you hope to address them?*

In my opinion, the major issue facing the city is gaining more sales tax revenue to keep the city viable and attracting businesses and industry and tourism dollars. As city leaders, we must study ways to make Pass Christian "The Newport of the South."

*Pass Christian is transforming. Describe the city as you envision it in 2020.*

The city of Pass Christian must be progressive while keeping our image intact. It is imperative that Scenic Drive is thriving by 2010. I would like to see the city expand to the west and the north.

\* \* \*

**Ward 2: Joseph A. Piernas, Sr.**, the incumbent, is running unopposed. This will be his third term.

*What do you feel are the top three issues facing Pass Christian? How do you hope to address them?*

Our citizens who are living in temporary housing should be assisted in finding permanent housing within the city of Pass Christian. Sometimes we get so bogged down on what FEMA wants or what the DFIRM levels are going to be that we don't do enough to fight for our citizens' right to own and have a permanent home here in Pass Christian. Too many out-of-town people and entities are making core decision for the city, and the citizens and I feel we don't do a good enough job of pushing back and demanding something

different. We should stand up and fight hard for the rights of our citizens and our town every day.

Secondly, replacement of infrastructure throughout the whole town is a must. In order for our City to grow and attract new businesses and residents, it is imperative that we have a system that will handle the demand. Now is the time to get it done. Once again, FEMA is trying to dictate only a portion of the town that "they" feel was affected by the hurricane. We must continue to fight to change out our system throughout the town now, so we won't be ripping up our streets year after year doing patchwork.

Third, and definitely not the least, I feel our employees are the City's most valuable asset. We must find ways to increase our sales tax revenue enough to compensate our employees. The turnover rate in our Public Safety Department is at an all-time high, mainly due to lack of better wages to keep and/or attract individuals to work and make Pass Christian their home. I applaud the employees for the service they provide to the City each and every day.

*Pass Christian is transforming. Describe the city as you envision it in 2020.*

The City is indeed transforming and will be built back bigger, better and stronger than before the hurricane. Pass Christian was a beautiful town before the storm and a town we were all proud of. I believe when the downtown revitalization is complete, we

(ELECTION, Continued on page 12)

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*Vote to Re-Elect*

**PHILIP WITTMANN**

**ALDERMAN-AT-LARGE**

**June 2, 2009**

**Philip Wittmann, with roots in Pass Christian spanning six generations, has been your Alderman-at-Large since 2006. He has been married twelve years to Dr. Dena Castanedo Wittmann. They have two children, Philip (8 years) and Eva (3 years).**

- ★ He is a 1986 graduate of Saint Stanislaus College, the University of Mississippi (1990, Bachelor of Business Administration in Managerial Finance) and Western New England School of Law (2000, Juris Doctorate). Philip is an attorney in Gulfport who practices in the areas of criminal and family law.
- ★ He has demonstrated a strong commitment to community building and has been commended for his public service work by such organizations as the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence and USM's Southern Regional Public Safety Institute.
- ★ As Alderman-at-Large, Philip has had an impeccable attendance record, served as the liaison between the City of Pass Christian and the Renaissance Corporation's Employer-Assisted Housing Program (REACH), and has demonstrated proven leadership and commitment to maintaining the vitality of community while promoting smart commercial and residential development.
- ★ Philip has long supported community-based sports in Pass Christian by coaching little league t-ball and baseball through the Parks and Recreation Dept.

**For more information contact Philip Wittmann at [re.electPHILIP@gmail.com](mailto:re.electPHILIP@gmail.com) or call 228-424-8804**

*This ad was sponsored by the Committee to Re-Elect Philip Wittmann*