



# THE TOWN TALK

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Alexandria-Pineville, Louisiana

★ 50 Cents

## THE MARCH ON JENA

### WHAT'S INSIDE

#### PAGE A3

► Local officers ready to handle traffic woes  
 ► Notebook  
 ► Frequently asked questions surrounding the 'Jena Six'

#### PAGE A4

► Reliving history: Students flock to Jena in support of civil rights  
 ► Supporters from across the nation converge  
 ► Jena Timeline



Photos by Tia Owens-Powers/tpowers@thetowntalk.com

LaSalle Parish District Attorney Reed Walters gestures at a press conference Wednesday at the LaSalle Parish Courthouse as Justin Barker (left) and state and local government officials stand behind him. Barker was the victim of the attack for which six black Jena teens have been charged.

# Jena's big day

## On eve of huge rally, chaos reigns

By Abbey Brown  
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JENA — What started out as one unified event in support of the "Jena Six" has evolved into at least three different rallies with details still sketchy on each.

As late as Wednesday evening, parish and law enforcement officials were still unable to say who the organizer was for today's events. They were only able to say there were "various events planned."

But during a 3 p.m. press conference Wednesday, LaSalle Parish District Attorney Reed Walters said he wanted to remind those coming into Jena that with all the focus on the defendants — the six black Jena High stu-



The Rev. Al Sharpton is surrounded by members of the media as he approaches the LaSalle Parish Courthouse in Jena on Wednesday. Sharpton is one of the organizers of today's rally in Jena.

See Jena, A5

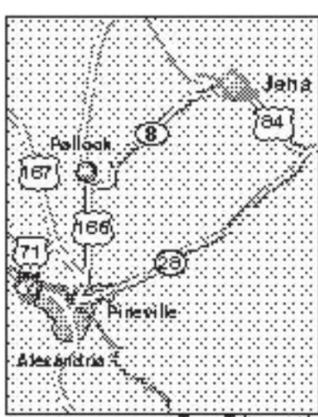
## Sharpton: World's eyes on Jena today

By Tom Bonnette  
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The eyes of the world are on Jena, the Rev. Al Sharpton told "Jena Six" supporters who rallied Wednesday night at the Alexandria Riverfront Center in anticipation of today's protest march.

About 1,500 showed up at the Riverfront Center to cheer Sharpton and show support

See Sharpton, A5



Town Talk graphics

## City, jury not sponsoring events

By Karina Donica  
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The Rapides Parish Police Jury and the city of Alexandria have denied claims that they are sponsoring a rally and a concert in relation to the "Jena Six" case and allowing free use of some facilities.

Information posted on some Web

See City, A5

## Parents, players meet to support ex-CCA coaches

By Bret H. McCormick  
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PINEVILLE — A group of about 50 parents and players from Cenla Christian Academy showed up at a meeting Wednesday evening in support of the recently dismissed coaches at the school.

On Monday, the school fired football coach Matt Middleton and three of his assistants. Softball coach Jay Barber, the recently retired Pineville police chief, resigned his position Monday. A day later, the school fired Barber's assistant, Danny Tullos, who also served as the school's resource officer. He was transferred to a different school for those duties by the Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office.

Wednesday's meeting began at Pineville's Kees Park but was moved to private property in Alexandria when a reporter and a photographer from The Town Talk showed up. Several parents later called to invite The Town Talk to the meeting.

At the meeting, the group heard from the dismissed coaches and discussed the best way to respond to their dismissals.

Middleton told the crowd that three of the church's elders had asked the Rev. Keith Dickens, pastor of Donahue Family Church and founder of Cenla Christian Academy, to reinstate the coaches, but he refused to do so.

"I was told as long as he's the pastor, we are not going to be reinstated," Middleton said.

### Denied severance pay

Middleton said he requested severance pay from Dickens, but that was denied. The coaches are being paid for this week, Middleton said.

"I told him, 'I have a 2-year-old and a 5-year-old, and you're not going to give us severance pay? What am I supposed to do?'" Middleton said. "He said, 'I don't care what you do.'"

The parents, who represented 16 football players, more than a half-dozen softball players and several cheerleaders, also wanted to talk about the education their children were receiving at the school.

"Are they getting a Christian education?" Craig Fussell asked. "That's the most important question."

After the meeting, a group of parents went to Donahue Family Church to request a meeting with the church's elders, but were turned away.

"We're available to talk to the parents one-on-one," said Glen Whatley, administrator of Cenla Christian. "We've already met with the parents as a group."

The school had conducted a meeting Monday to talk about the firings.

Whatley said he didn't want to answer

See Coaches, A5

## AREA DEATHS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Katherine M. Baillio</b><br>/Alexandria  | <b>Judy B. Johnson</b><br>/Clearwater      |
| <b>Thelma I. Brubaker</b><br>/Vidalia       | <b>Curtis L. Jones</b><br>/Baton Rouge     |
| <b>Grady O. Bryant</b><br>/Centerpoint      | <b>Dorothy F. Masingill</b><br>/Alexandria |
| <b>Luther Greenhouse</b><br>/Marksville     | <b>Joshua D. Potts</b><br>/Campti          |
| <b>Sally N. Hintzen</b><br>/Onalaska, Wash. | <b>Sariah N. Romaine</b><br>/Pollock       |

Obituaries on C4

**INSIDE**  
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Advice.....G11, G12, G13, G14	Cenla.....A3	State.....C2, C3
Area.....A8	Nation.....C5	TV Listings.....G10
Business.....B6	Opinions.....C7	US&World.....C1
Classified.....D1	Sports.....B1	World.....C8
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