

INSIDE:	
New Band Leaders	2
Alumni Honored.....	3
Sports Shorts.....	4
Community Calendar	6
Area Arts.	10
News Nuggets.....	11

Wesson News

SPOTLIGHT

**Thanksgiving
Meditation**
Page 8

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PO Box 1028
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Volume 7, Number 11

"Good News You Can Use"

November 12, 2019

Decorating & parade usher in Christmas

Special to Wesson News

With the ghosts and goblins of Halloween season gone and the coming November festivities setting the stage, Wesson is preparing for the Christmas season.

On the Sunday afternoon, December 1, following Thanksgiving, members of the Wesson Volunteer Fire Department will climb their ladders and install ornaments on downtown lamp posts. Last year, Wesson Garden Club purchased a variety of new ornaments, which are replacing some of the older traditional decorations.

Then on December 6, the annual Christmas parade kicks off the season, during which a host of activities will turn Wesson into a unique southern holiday setting, with merriment, conviviality, food, sounds and colors that create a special community spirit at this time every year.

Planners are still at work on lining up parade participants and developing related events, but one thing is certain:



Wesson News

Santa Claus will be coming to town as a highlight.

The parade will roll at 4 p.m., and planners hope the Wesson High School and Co-Lin marching bands can participate, accompanied by the usual array of dignitaries and special townspeople in cars and floats created by local organizations.

Hundreds of persons, including children and youth who are released

early from school to attend, will line both sides of Highway 51 from the south stop light north to Wesson Baptist Church.

The parade is expected to include football homecoming Queens and maidens and members of cheerleading squads from Co-Lin and Wesson High School, children from the Wesson Baptist Pre-School and Precious Moments Day Care Center programs,

Nena Smith Studio dancers and Co-Lin Colettes, Wesson Attendance Center beauty and beau winners, local business leaders, community service volunteers from Keep Copiah County Beautiful, Wesson Chamber of Commerce, Wesson Volunteer Fire Department and Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts.

City officials are tentatively planning the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony in the municipal park on the evening before the parade. After the parade, Santa will again meet children, hear their Christmas wishes and give them gifts of candy and fruit at the Wesson Volunteer Fire Department fire house on Spring Street. Friends of the Library will meet later this month on a possible open house following the parade. In the past, its open house at the Public Library featured Mrs. Claus reading *The Night Before Christmas*, cookies and hot chocolate, face painting, other children's activities, caroling and a movie with popcorn.

Feasting throughout the month in Wesson

Special to Wesson News

There is ample opportunity this month for Wesson residents to participate in the fellowship, feasting and worshipful experiences of traditional fall festivals and Thanksgiving celebrations.

The biggest event comes this Thursday, when Co-Lin will welcome more than 300 persons to its seventeenth holiday community luncheon at the Thames Conference Center on its Wesson campus. Co-Lin employees, members of community social and civic organizations, employees of area businesses, families and individuals will be on hand at the buffet luncheon featuring turkey, ham, country vegetables, salads and a variety of desserts from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The community event evolved from a 2002 marketing showcase of the

Thames Conference Center facilities and food service oriented to prospective profit and not-for-profit users. As more and more individuals and organizations asked Co-Lin for invitations to the luncheon, it became a venue for food, fun and fellowship involving an increasingly wider community.

At the luncheon on Thursday, Wesson town workers, employees of Copiah and Lincoln County government, King's Daughters Hospital, its therapy unit and Co-Lin's Career Education Division business partners; faculty and staff from the college, members of area churches and clubs and unaffiliated individuals who want to be part of the affair will eat and mingle.

Reservations are recommended. Contact Brenda Orr (601-643-8671) or Tricia Russell (601-643-8702/tricia.russell@colin.edu).

Local churches are also reaching out



Wesson News

to special populations with Thanksgiving meals.

This past Saturday, members of Decell Memorial United Methodist Church prepared meals for shut-ins, the needy and others known to the congregation, delivered them, and returned to the church for a special meal together.

"It's a beautiful tradition," said Decell pastor Rev. Heather Hensarling. "Caring for others first, then returning for a celebration meal."

At Wesson Baptist Church, Sharon Ashley is coordinating a special community Thanksgiving Day meal on November 28.

Ashley says it's for the lonely -- "anyone who hates to spend another Thanksgiving dinner alone." The old fashion meal will feature turkey with dressing, vegetables and dessert. There is no charge. The feast starts at noon.

"We are reaching out to people who hate to spend another Thanksgiving dinner alone," says Ashley. "Come join others for an old fashion meal at Wesson Baptist Church. Turkey and dressing with vegetables and dessert. We will serve at 12 noon and there is no charge and no take out. Looking forward to seeing you!"

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Police Blotter

Special to Wesson News

During October, Wesson Police
Department activity encompassed:

Responses to:

- One burglary
- One malicious mischief
- One disturbing the peace incident at Wesson Attendance Center
- One tampering with utilities
- One vehicle accident
- One indecent exposure
- 33 general complaints
- Two business alarms
- One residential alarm
- One suspicious vehicle

Arrests & citations for:

- Sixteen speeding violations
- One no tag
- Five driving without a license
- Two driving with suspended licenses
- Four disregard for traffic devices (stop signs)
- One possession of a controlled substance
- One possession of marijuana in a motor vehicle
- Three no insurance
- Two no seat belt

Wesson police assisted the ambulance service once.

Wesson Police conduct nightly business checks. On school days, they facilitate traffic flow at Wesson Attendance Center, with officers on duty between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

New leadership for band program

By Bob Arnold

Who knows where life's twists and turns would have taken Duval Salvant and Cody Spurlock had authorities granted their wishes to play saxophone when they decided to become part of the band programs in their schools. Both would-be sax musicians, however, landed at Wesson Attendance Center (WAC) this year, where Salvant has his first job as a lead band director and Spurlock has his first job in a band program as Salvant's assistant.

Salvant comes to WAC from Wayne County High School in Waynesboro Mississippi, where he was one of four assistant band directors, and Spurlock, who is a 2019 Ole Miss graduate, is starting his career after student teaching at Hernando, Mississippi, and helping at band camps.

Although surrounded by music in his native New Orleans, Salvant was pushed into musicianship by his grandparents, who introduced him to the piano when he was in kindergarten. While the call to musicianship skipped his parents' generation, his grandfather performed in barbershop quartets and participated in church music programs with Salvant's grandmother. After completing elementary school at St. Francis Xavier in the Crescent City, Salvant started playing in a band at Brother Martin Catholic High School in the eighth grade -- first on the clarinet, instead of the sax he wanted to play, and then the French Horn, after the band director learned he was taking private mellophone lessons.

Salvant also continued to polish his piano skills, and chose to pursue studies in piano performance at Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton, Mississippi, where he had attended an annual piano camp between 2012 and 2018. But he soon decided the life of a concert

pianist didn't suit his personality and interests, and switched his studies to musical education with an emphasis on instruments that could open doors to directing bands.

"I am a loud, personable fellow," Salvant explains. Just naturally, he played the tuba in the MC band. "I also was interested in how instruments



Special to Wesson News

Cody Spurlock and Duval Salvant.

work -- something I enjoy explaining in the classroom," he adds.

Spurlock, who describes himself as "technically minded with a love for math and science," started pursuing band in the sixth grade largely because of its challenge. He wanted to better understand it. Diverted from his desire to play the saxophone "because I lost the drawing," he says, Spurlock turned to the euphonium, which he played through his college years.

A North Carolina native, Spurlock settled in Raymond, Mississippi, with his family when he was one year old, graduated from nearby Hillcrest High School, where he played in the band, and planned to return to his pre-music technical love in computer science studies at Ole Miss until his band director at Hillcrest convinced him his career lay in music. "You're a band director," Todd Taylor told him. Tay-

lor pointed out he had been the section leader in the Hillcrest band as a freshman and its drum major in his senior year. At Oxford, Mississippi, Spurlock enrolled in music education.

WAC band director Suzie Wolfe was a big factor in persuading both Salvant and Spurlock to come to Wesson. "She called Wesson Attendance Center 'a gem,' -- a relatively small school with a large program, including well-educated and enthusiastic students," Salvant recalls.

Indeed, Salvant has found the gem Wolfe described, and his vision is to expand and further refine what he has found. He says Wesson High School's 77-person marching band, along with 79 students enrolled in the band program in the fifth, sixth and seventh grades is "astounding." For his part, Spurlock not only wants to help Salvant realize his vision, but also encourage students to work together in small ensemble groups -- jazz, brass and woodwind, trombone -- to hone fundamentals, improvise and even write.

Both directors agree their reward as teachers lies in seeing empowered students taking their experiences in band and learning to play musical instruments beyond school into their lives.

When Salvant and Spurlock aren't enmeshed in the sounds of directing the WAC band program, you might find them pursuing quieter pastimes. Salvant enjoys fishing and sailing. Spurlock is a reader and also collects "weird musical instruments," like his prize ocarina, a simple-to-play wind instrument made from clay with a great sound.

Salvant is married and lives in Clinton with his wife Jordan, band director at Richland High School. Spurlock is single, and recently moved from Raymond into a new home he purchased at Crystal Springs.



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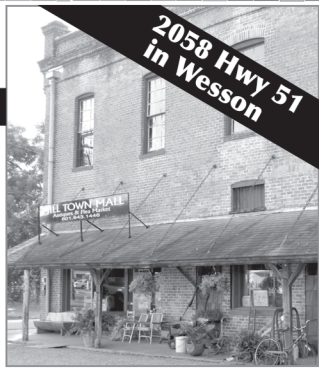
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Co-Lin honors outstanding alumni

Special to Wesson News

At the Co-Lin Homecoming last month, Senator Chris Caughman of Mendenhall and Kathy Sutton of New Hebron were honored as Alumni of the Year, and the Band and Colette chapter of the Alumni Association inducted Randy S. Loftin of Magee into its Hall of Fame and honored Allen Sanders of Southaven as the Stanley Stewart Outstanding Young Alumni.

Caughman, a 1987 Co-Lin graduate, played for the Wolf Pack basketball team, serving as co-captain in his sophomore year, was on the

of the Simpson County Youth Leadership Program and the Co-Lin Foundation. He and his wife Melissa are members of Pleasant Valley Baptist Church. They have three children, Cade, Abby, and Bryce.

Sutton, a 1980 Co-Lin Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT) graduate in which she was named Student of the Year, earned a bachelor's de-



Caughman

Special to Wesson News



Sutton

Special to Wesson News

gree in clinical laboratory science from the University of Cincinnati in 2006 and has worked for Hinds General Hospital, Magee General Hospital, Mississippi State Hospital, and the G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery VA Medical Center. She has published various works in the field of medical laboratory science.

Since 1997, Sutton has been a member of the American Medical Technologists (AMT), serving as Mississippi state delegate to its national business meeting, and is a member of the AMT Laboratory, Certification, Education, Qualifications and Standards (EQS) Committee. In 2017, she received the National American Medical Technologist of the Year Award for her contributions in the medical technology field and service to the AMT on the state, district, and national levels. She has been a member of the organization's Federal Government /Legislative Committee, served on its Professional Standards Board for Medical Technologists, and co-chairs the National American Medical Technologists Publication and Electronic Media Committee. She served as the 2018 president for the Mississippi Society of American Medical Technologists, was the AMT representative at the Coordinating Council on Clinical Laboratory Workforce in Chicago, Illinois, and attended the Medical Technology Legislative Symposium in Washington, D.C, to promote quality laboratory service in the United States.

She and her husband, Lawrence

cont. on page 5

Soccer coach, football & hunting course

Special to Wesson News

The Co-Lin Wolfpack will be playing soccer again, starting in the fall of next year, and the college has hired a former soccer player from England transplanted in Mississippi to coach its men's and women's teams.

Tom Cosgrave, a Manchester, England, native will seek to get the resurrected soccer programs at Co-Lin off to good start as he takes on the challenges of building quality teams from the ground up.

"I'm excited to bring back a professional and competitive soccer program that can compete with any team in the state and that has a mixture of local, state, and out-of-state talent moving forward," said Cosgrave.

Cosgrave played soccer at both the academy and club levels in England before accepting a scholarship to Belhaven University in Jackson to play center back for its soccer team. During his senior season at Belhaven, Cosgrave, as a team captain, helped lead the soccer Blazers to their second NAIA National Championship, scoring an insurance goal in the 2012 national championship match against the University of Mobile. His efforts landed him SSAC All-Conference and NAIA Honorable Mention All-American nods.

Upon graduating from Belhaven with a degree in sports science in 2012, Cosgrave started his soccer coaching career in Mississippi. He has helped lead the Mississippi Rush travel select club for six years. The team, based in Brandon, plays throughout the southeast and has made trips to Spain and England. He also has coaching experience with Park Place Christian Academy, where he has served as the head coach of both the men's and women's programs.

"We are very excited to get such a talented coach as Tom to lead our teams," said Co-Lin Athletic Director Bryan Nobile. "His experience playing, coaching, and knowing the area are all going to be very valuable assets to the college, and we're eager to see where he takes our programs."

Co-Lin will field both men's and women's teams in the 2020 season, which begins next August. Matches will be held in H.L. Stone Stadium on the new state-of-the-art turf that was added this summer. The college installed soccer as a sport in 1998, but suspended it 2017 amid budget cuts and with teams that struggled to

be competitive.

Co-Lin President Dr. Jane Hulon said "overwhelming interest from our students, community and board of trustees" coupled with the new playing surface at Stone Stadium, which will be an important selling point in recruiting players, led to the decision to bring soccer back to the college. The college is budgeting \$58,000 per year for the program, including funds for the coaching staff, equipment and travel, and expects it to generate \$230,000 in annual revenues.

"We have excellent high school programs in our district and are ready to hit the ground running with a new coach who can go out and recruit for the 2020 season," Nobile said.

High notes for football seasons. Wesson High School's (WHS) gridgers finished a 7-4 season with a perfect record in Region 7-2A, while Co-Lin's football Wolves concluded a disappointing season on a high note, smashing Southwest 41-0. The Cobras secured their title in a 53-0 thrashing of Loyd Star in which Wesson quarterback Will Loy completed 12 of 15 passes for

269 yards, and five different Cobras either caught or ran for scores. They went on to finish the season, beating Enterprise 41-7, to go into playoff action in Mississippi High School Athletic Association 2A competition. The Co-Lin victory over Southwest vented a lot of frustration in a season that started 3-0 followed by five consecutive losses, three of which could have been wins without costly mistakes. Only Gulf Coast and Hinds beat the Wolves decisively, 38-20 and 35-21. Overall, the Wolves finished 4-5 and 2-4 in South Division conference play.

Online hunting course. "Today's Hunter in Mississippi," an interactive video-based class for prospective Mississippi hunters age 16 and older, is now available online through MDWFP.com, the Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks website. The certificate of completion for the course can be presented in digital format online or as a printed paper copy to purchase a hunting license from licensed vendors. Mississippi law requires all persons born after January 1, 1972, to complete a hunters education course before purchasing a hunting license. Persons under 16 years old who want to take the internet course must also attend a three-hour classroom course to acquire a hunting license.



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cont. from page 3

Co-Lin honors outstanding alumni

(Pat) Sutton, are members of New Hebron Baptist Church. They have two sons, Andy and Patrick, and five grandchildren.

Loftin, a 1982 graduate of Co-Lin in music education, played trumpet in the Blue Wave marching band and concert band, in which he was first



Special to Wesson News

Loftin

chair trumpet for two years, participated in various brass ensembles

and was a member of the Mississippi Community and Junior College Band for two years. Loftin attended the University of Southern Mississippi, received a bachelor's degree in music education from Mississippi State University and earned a master's degree in music education from Mississippi College. His career encompassed service as band director at Starkville Academy (1985-87), Ackerman High School (1987-92) and Wesson High School (1995-2013); and assistant director at Winona High School (1992-95).

The Starkville Academy, Ackerman, Winona and Wesson bands received superior ratings under his direction. His Ackerman band was honored as Mid-America Champions in St. Louis, Missouri, his Winona band was Grand Champion in the Dixie Classic Championship in Washington, D.C., and his Wesson band was consistently one of the top three bands in the state. Loftin retired from teaching in 2013 and is now a full-time driver for Bus Supply Charters of McComb. He is a member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia and Marching Bands of America, past president of the East Central Band Association, a Mississippi Lion's All-State Band Adjudicator, and past member of the Mississippi

Lion's Band, which won the International Band Championship while he was director in 2009. He is married to Terri Price Loftin and they have one daughter, Lindsey, and two grandchildren.

Sanders, a 2008 graduate of Co-Lin in music education, played in the



Special to Wesson News

Sanders

Blue Wave Show Band, and received a bachelor's degree in music edu-

cation with concentrations in both piano and saxophone at Mississippi State University, where he played in the Symphonic Band, the Maroon Marching Band, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band and Saxophone Ensemble; and performed with the Chamber Singers. Sanders is currently pursuing a master's degree from Florida State University and is a member of the National Association for Music Education.

He is the director of choral activities at Southaven High School and the musical director for Southaven High School theater. He is the accompanist for the CoroFuentes tenor bass choir, and has been a church musician for more than 12 years, currently serving as pianist at First Baptist Church of Horn Lake and organist at Maples Memorial United Methodist Church. Sanders previously accompanied the Mississippi ACDA All-State Treble Honor Choir, the Mississippi ACDA Male Vocal Symposium, and the Southern Division ACDA Treble Honor Choir. In 2018, Sanders was awarded the Best in Class A cappella Choir and Best in Class Men's Choir at Riverland Choral Festival. He has also received consistent superior ratings at the Mississippi State Performance Assessment since 2016. He is married to Caysee Sanders.



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Wesson Community Calendar

November weather forecast: The Old Farmer's Almanac calls for an average temperature of 53 degrees F (two degrees below average) with precipitation of 5 inches (average). November 12 and 13: Rainy periods, turning warm. November 14-21: Occasional rain, turning cold. November 22-25: Rain. November 26-28: Sunny, cold. November 29-30: Rainy.

NOVEMBER 12

Institute for Learning in Retirement luncheon. Brookhaven's Vonda Laird will entertain. A singer since an early age, she recently sang the National Anthem at the opening ceremony of the Dixie National Rodeo. \$10 in advance, \$12 at door. Thames Center on Co-Lin Wesson campus. Contact 601-643-8705, julie.wright@colin.edu, tricia.russell@colin.edu.

Diabetes support group. Meets weekly on Tuesdays. Education Annex at King's Daughters Medical Center, Brookhaven. 1:30 p.m. For information, call Natalie Ybarra at 601-835-9489.

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and VFW Auxiliary Post 2618 meet. \$5 for meal. VFW Hall on Industrial Park Road, Brookhaven. 5:30 p.m.

NOVEMBER 14

Copiah County Master Gardeners meets. Mississippi State University Extension Office at Gallman. 5 p.m. business meeting.

American Legion John Edwards Post 12 meets. All members, veterans and their spouses are welcome. Jimmy Furlow Senior Citizens Center. 4 p.m. For information, call 601-835-8137.

NAMI 4Rivers family support group meets on the second Thursday of each month. Free, confidential and peer-led, the group includes caregivers and loved ones of individuals living with mental illness. Cannon Hall at First Episcopal Church, Brookhaven. 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.

Wesson Lions Club meets. Co-Lin Student Cafeteria. 5:30 p.m. (Board). 6:30 p.m. (Membership).

NOVEMBER 18

Beginner clogging classes for persons of all ages beyond five-years-old are held every Monday night. A small fee is charged each month. Brookhaven Recreation Department on Highway 51. Call 601-833-3791.

NOVEMBER 19

Institute for Learning in Retirement overnight trip to New Orleans November starts with train ride to the city to tour the World War II Museum, with lunch and a matinee performance of "Songs That Won the War." Travelers will leave the Godbold Transportation Center at Brookhaven at 11:45 a.m. on November 19, stay at the Higgins Hotel and return by bus on November 20 with a dinner stop at Middendorf's. Cost is \$270 (single room) and \$200 (double room) for ILR members (plus \$25 for non-members), but the trip is fully booked at this time. To inquire about cancellations, contact ILR at 601-643-8705, julie.wright@colin.edu, tricia.russell@colin.edu.

WorkKeys Assessment for Career Readiness Certificate. Thames Center on Co-Lin campus. Register in advance at 601-643-8707. 12:45 p.m. Also November 21 & December 4 at 8:45 a.m.

American Legion Post #79 meets. American Legion Lodge on Main Street, Wesson. 6:30 p.m. For information, call 601-563-5438.

Holiday Spectacular sponsored by Co-Lin Fine Arts Department features performances of music program bands, ensembles and singing groups. Rhea Auditorium on Co-Lin campus. 7 p.m.-9 p.m. Contact Juanita Proffitt at 601-643-8383/juanita.proffitt@colin.edu.

NOVEMBER 25

Thanksgiving holiday break starts at Wesson Attendance Center and Co-Lin & continues through November 29

NOVEMBER 26

Blood drive every second and fourth Monday. King's Daughters Medical Center Hospital Annex. 1 p.m.- 6 p.m. Call 800-817-7449 for information.

NOVEMBER 28

Thanksgiving Day

DECEMBER 3

Institute for Learning in Retirement four-day trip starts and continues until December 6. Visits to the Billy Graham Library, home and burial site at Charlotte, North Carolina; and the Biltmore House and Gardens at Asheville, North Carolina. Lunches at the Graham Brothers Dairy Barn and Biltmore House Stable Cafe, candlelight buffet at the Biltmore Estate Deer Park Restaurant, candlelight evening tour at Biltmore House, daytime Christmas visit at the Biltmore House and Gardens and the Downton Abbey Exhibition at Biltmore. Cost is \$565 (quad occupancy), \$585 (triple occupancy), \$685 (double occupancy) and \$910 (single occupancy) for ILR members (plus \$25 for non-members). Trip is fully booked at this time. To inquire about cancellations, contact ILR at 601-643-8705, julie.wright@colin.edu, tricia.russell@colin.edu.

Wesson Board of Aldermen meet. Wesson City Hall. 6 p.m.

DECEMBER 7

Tubachristmas. Band featuring tubas and related instruments plays Christmas favorites on Mississippi School of Arts campus. Free. Santa Claus will be on hand. Refreshments sold. 6 p.m.

CONTINUING

Alcoholics Anonymous meets at convenient times seven days of every week. First United Methodist Church, 215 West Cherokee Street, Brookhaven. Open meetings are Mondays at noon and Tuesdays (Big Book Study), Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. Closed meetings are Wednesdays and Fridays (Big Book Study) at noon and Thursdays and Sundays at 7:30 p.m.

Overeaters Anonymous meets every Tuesday. Church of the Redeemer Episcopal, downtown Brookhaven. 6 p.m. Call 601-754-0213 for information.

Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild members work on projects every Thursday of the month from 9 a.m.-12 noon at the Brookhaven-Lincoln County Public Library in the Vernon Room when it is available.

Brookhaven 55 South Flea Market is open on Saturdays and Sundays next to the Lincoln County Civic Center. Ten per cent of the profits each weekend are donated to a local charity. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Email Community Calendar items to bobarnold@wessonnews.com

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Thanksgiving: a time for reflections

By Guest Columnist Rev. Heather Hensarling

"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes."

This passage from the New Testament letter of James is about how one sets priorities -- how one decides what really matters. The scripture is also an appropriate basis for thinking about Thanksgiving in the Twenty-first Century.

The first Thanksgiving, probably around 1620 or 1621, was a celebration of people, who had settled in America, of making it through the winter of their first year at Plymouth with their lives and with a bountiful harvest. They had also suffered through a lot to come to their new home. They sustained great costs in sailing on the the *Mayflower* for a New World.

These seekers, who we now call Pilgrims, could not have known just how hard that first year would be. Did some of them know that they would reach that first anniversary celebration without their beloved husband or wife, or their precious young sons or daughters, who didn't survive the winter? Originally, 102 settled at Plymouth. At the first



Wesson News

Thanksgiving, however, only fifty-three were on hand. Over half of their party had died from disease and starvation. The survivors had a lot for which to be grateful, but they also had much on which to reflect -- reflections that, I'm certain, gave them great pause.

I admire their grit, tenacity and pure bravery in seeking out a New World for religious and other freedoms. Would that I could be so brave today. But I wonder, given their grave losses, would they have done things differently if given the chance? There were probably many things they would have done differently had they only known then, what they knew at that

first anniversary of their arrival.

We're not so very different from those first Pilgrims -- seekers. Every year, a Thanksgiving comes and goes. Every year, we have a new opportunity to reflect and pause. We may think about things we wish we had done differently, with family, with friends, with ourselves. Even now, we consider who was with us last Thanksgiving, but will be absent from the table this year -- perhaps deployed, perhaps living across the country, perhaps gone on to Glory.

Like the first Pilgrims, we may not be able to go back and change the past. But we can decide now to change the present and the future.

While we have had other Thanksgiving celebrations in years past, and we know that another one will roll around in 2020, this Thanksgiving 2019 is one we have never had before and will never have again. As James reminds us in scripture: "We do not know what tomorrow will bring." For we "are but a mist that appears for a little while and vanishes."

We have an opportunity to choose differently in areas where we may have regrets. We have an opportunity to create new family traditions that may deepen our love of one another, and forgiveness. We have an opportunity to make new memories, ones without regret. If we knew that this Thanksgiving would be our last, or the last of some of our loved ones, what would we do to make it special? To what lengths would we go to make Thanksgiving 2019 the best ever and one that we would never look back on with regret?

There is a beautiful song in the Christian community composed by Richard Gillard. I leave you with these verses as a reminder that we are not alone on this Thanksgiving, pilgrim journey:

We are pilgrims on a journey,

Brothers, sisters on the road;

We are here to help each other

Walk the mile and bear the load.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Rev. Heather Hensarling is the pastor at Wesson's Decell Memorial United Methodist Church.

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Wesson man finds Thai spirit house



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Michelle Lovette (left) discusses Thai spirit house with Kasie Beth Brown, head librarian at Lincoln County-Brookhaven Public Library.

Special to Wesson News

Mission Hill Road resident Jimmy Lovette isn't worried about ghosts haunting his home, but he is intrigued by the beauty and curious purpose of Thai spirit houses designed to house the dead.

Last month, Lovette and his daughter Michelle loaned their small black teak wood spirit house to Lincoln County-Brookhaven Public Library to display, so others could appreciate this unique part of Thailand's culture, as well.

Lovette discovered it while browsing at the Mill Town Mall in Wesson some months ago and was fascinated by the unique item -- a hand-carved miniature oriental-style house -- among the array of antiques and other products sold by vendors there. He returned several times to see it, asked questions, did some research and finally bought what he found out was a Thai spirit house. Conversations with visitors convinced him it would have wide interest, and he took it to the library to display.

A Thai tradition, spirit houses are constructed or purchased by families in Thailand for deceased loved ones for whom they want to provide more fitting homes than a conventional one with the living. They range in size from smaller than a shoe box to large enough for someone to enter. Families place them on their properties, hoping the spirit of a deceased loved one will take up residence there, rather than haunt their home.

The houses, which can be seen throughout Thailand, reflect the country's Buddhist philosophy that blends mysticism and superstitions and Thai beliefs in ghosts and mystic energy, which can make life miserable and sad, or rich and happy. Most Thai buildings, including houses and shops, have their spirit houses, often situated in an old tree. Their looks and sizes are dictated by the wealth of their owners. Government institutions and large office building have huge houses, while poor families can afford only modest ones.

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Cure for a chaotic Christmas season

By Guest Columnist Shaw Furlow

Christmas is a time of joy. A time to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. A time of cantatas, school plays and for family. There is shopping to be done, presents to be wrapped, decorations brought down from the attic and, of course, the big family dinner to prepare. At times Mom feels like a traffic cop coordinating all the comings and goings.

Wonderful? Yes. But chaotic, too. And local composer, arranger and entertainer Blake Scafidel is coming back to the stage again to help counter the chaos. Last year, he did it. And with his show, "The Cure for Christmas Chaos," he is planning to do it again.

On December 12, Scafidel will bring his Las Vegas style show to the Brookhaven Building, formerly the FEMA Building, on Beltline Drive. Backed by an orchestra and a cast and crew of approximately fifty members, the show this year will be even bigger and better than last year's premier



Special to Wesson News

performance. "We've added dramatic scenes that tell the story of my Christmases growing up, and more vocalists and musicians," Scafidel told me recently. Joining Scafidel on stage will be vocalists Sienna Smathers, Candy Lee Dobbs, Charayana Johnson, local guitar wizard Kyle Graves and Scafidel's son, Jason, along with a fifteen piece orchestra.

Scafidel faces a bit of chaos himself in putting together the new show. You can imagine how "chaotic" a production of this size can be. Music has to be written and rehearsed, scripts have to be written and then re-written to get it just right. Staging has to be created. A light plot designed. Musicians hired. But Scafidel has found a cure for his own chaos -- help from an old friend, Co-Lin graduate Buddy Gibbons, who will produce his show.

Gibbons, who now lives in Los Angeles, is an Emmy nominated composer, drummer and producer, with too many credits to his name to mention here. However, if you watch LA Dodgers baseball games or sports shows on Fox, CBS or ESPN, you have heard his work, as he has composed music for these networks and others as well.

Scafidel's wife Carrene was a music major at Co-Lin with Gibbons, and through Facebook, has kept up with Gibbons' career. So when Blake needed someone who could handle the size of this production, he called on his friend. "I wasn't sure he would be interested," said Scafidel. "But after a few conversations, we figured this was the right team to pull this show together."

Gibbons got to work, and called on others with whom he had worked to handle lighting and sound. "We have people coming from New York, Miami, Nashville, Jackson and Brookhaven," Gibbons reported. There are two shows this year, one at 2 p.m. and another at 7 p.m. The price of admission is \$20 in advance and \$22 at the door.

In the midst of planning his seasonal music spectacular, Scafidel made news recently by donating an old family piano to the Downtown Music Academy (DMA) in Brookhaven, which people walking by the store are invited to sit down and play as the spirit moves them. Painted by local artist Don Jacobs, the street piano is in front of DMA, and is adorned with the likeness of Elton John. "Elton John, Billy Joel and Yanni really in-

fluenced my life," Scafidel explained. "When I saw street pianos all over New York, I figured I could put one in downtown Brookhaven." He named the piano Rocket Man in honor of Elton John. "We want people to sit down and play, and so far we've had a lot of fun watching kids and adults plunk around on it. We've had some good little shows out there on the street."

Friends, do not miss this show. Unless you plan to go to Branson or Las Vegas this month, you'll not see anything like this production. I guarantee you'll enjoy the show.

Another Christmas musical treat you'll want to put on your calendar is Tubachristmas, which also is back for the second year on December 7 on the campus of the Mississippi School of the Arts. This unique ensemble will thrill you with its catchy arrangements and decorated horns. Santa Claus may even be there.

That's it for this month. There's a lot going on. Enjoy this chaotic time of year with a little help from area musicians. Support the arts my friends.

EDITOR'S NOTE: R. Shaw Furlow is a local composer, musician and arts promoter. He produces an internet-based video show -- From the Shadyside -- that spotlights area musical talent and is a consultant to school bands in the region.



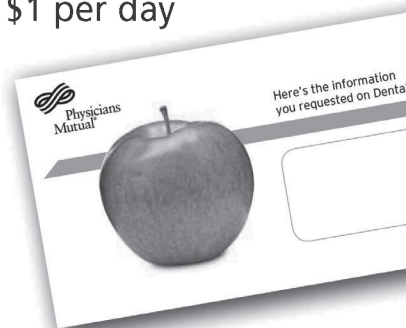
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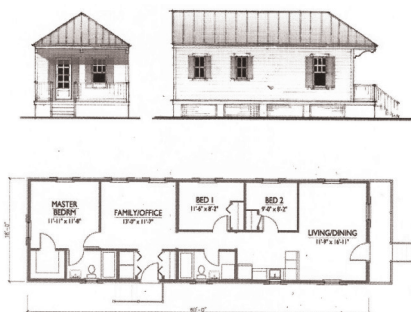
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Store, essay winner & Christmas event

Special to Wesson News

Produce store opens. A small fresh produce store has opened at the retail cottage on the corner of Highway 51 and Spring Street next to the Mill Town Mall. Will and Wilma Turnbo own the Fil-Am Oriental Produce Market, with Wilma on hand daily as operations manager, serving customers. The new store features bins full of apples, oranges, bananas, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, carrots, squash and zucchini, among a growing selection of fruits and vegetables supplied by a Jackson vendor and local growers. Eggs are also available. Wilma, a native of the Philippine islands, is stocking basic filipino cooking ingredients, such as noodles and sauces, on shelf space. William says plans call for selling frozen hamburger meat and gradual expansion into "perhaps a small grocery."

International essay winner from Wesson. Katherine Dian Westbrook, daughter of Chase and Sara Westbrook of Wesson, has won the first place award in the Royal Commonwealth Society Branch of the United States annual essay competition. Each year, more than 12,000 young people from across the world enter the competition, sharing their thoughts on the past, experiences of the present, and ideas for the future. Westbrook, a recent graduate of the Mississippi School of the Arts, travelled to London last month for a reception at Buckingham Palace. Now a freshman at the University of Iowa, where she is majoring in English and Creative Writing, with a track in publishing, her poetry and fiction have been published in many literary journals, including the *Tulane Review*, *The Evansville Review*, and *the Underwood Press*, among others. She was a Gold Level Finalist in the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition and the first place winner among American entries.

Second Old Time Christmas. Planning has begun for the second annual Old Time Christmas at the Old Wesson School Community Center on December 13. Town Hall officials, who are producing the event, are seeking



Wesson News

Wilma Turnbo at new produce store.

local vendors to participate in the event from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Contact Angela Hester at Town Hall (601-643-5221/Fax: 601-643-5201).

Grant supports machining students.

For the third time, Co-Lin's Precision Machining Technology program has received a \$10,000 grant from the Gene Haas Foundation to help support its students with scholarships and cover the cost of the National Institute for Metalworking Skills credentials. The Foundation, founded in 1999 as part of Haas Automation (HA), has awarded more than \$40 million to more than 1,500 schools as part of its commitment to promote U.S. manufacturing through scholarships and machinist training. HA manufactures a complete line of Computer Numerical Control (CNC) vertical machining centers, horizontal machining centers, CNC lathes and rotary products.

Battling charity fraud. Last month, the Mississippi Secretary of State's

Office, as part of the National Association of State Charities Officials, joined charity regulators across the world, including the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the Charities Commission for England & Wales, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, the New Zealand Charities Service, and the Office of the

Scottish Regulator to build consumer understanding about combating fraud. "We want to make sure the money our citizens are donating is going to those who need it the most—and not a fraudulent entity," Mississippi Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann said. In deciding to donate, his office recommends: Ask for the charity's name, website, and physical location. Ask how much of any donation will go to the charitable program you want to support. Check the Secretary of State's website to see whether the charity is registered in Mississippi.

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Search the charity's name online with the word "scam" or "complaint." See what other people say about it. Check out the charity's report and ratings at the BBB Wise Giving Alliance, Charity Navigator, Charity Watch, and Guidestar. Use the IRS's Tax Exempt Organization Search to see if your donation is tax-deductible. Never pay a charity with cash, a gift card, or by wiring money. Consider paying by credit card, but never over the phone, and only after receipt of written information you can verify.

Vaping cautions. In the national investigation into severe pulmonary disease or lung injury linked to the use of e-cigarettes, or vaping, the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) has identified four cases, including one death, among state residents between 28 and 33 years old of 530 nationwide. Symptoms of severe pulmonary disease, which develop anywhere from over a few days of use to weeks of using e-cigarettes, include cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fever and fatigue. Many of the cases in the U.S. report vaping cannabis products, such as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), but some have reported only vaping nicotine products, and no specific product, such as the device, liquid, refill pods or cartridge, has been clearly identified as the cause, says MSDH State Epidemiologist Dr. Paul Byers. Until an exact cause of the illness has been determined, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends refraining from use of e-cigarettes or vaping products, returning to cigarette use or to quit smoking and consulting a health-care provider if you have symptoms. Dr. Byers urges Mississippians not to buy products off the street containing THC or other cannabinoids, and not to modify or add substances to e-cigarette products that are not intended by the manufacturer. For more information on the dangers of e-cigarettes and vaping, visit the MSDH website at HealthyMS.com/lungillness.

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Youth garden club kicks off program

Special to Wesson News

More than 60 students from the third thru the sixth grades at Wesson Attendance Centers turned out for the first meeting of a youth garden club the Wesson Garden Club (WGC) is sponsoring.

National Garden Clubs encourages its local affiliated members to create such groups to introduce youth at an early age to gardening, conservation, protection of wildlife, recognition of plants, trees and shrubs, basic flower arrangements and love and appreciation of nature.

"I thought we would have only five or six kids participating," says Jennifer Peets, who is coordinating the new venture for WGC.

The Wesson youth group will meet five to six times during the year with theme-focused programs that include pertinent book readings, a hands-on project and refreshments. Cancer awareness framed the program for the inaugural event in September at Wesson Public Library, with pumpkin decorating and painting and readings from *Where's Mama's Hair* on dealing with a mother who is battling cancer. Peets divided the more than sixty first-time participants in three



Wesson News

Youth garden club participants paint pumpkins.

small groups that rotated between the readings, pumpkin work and refreshments.

WGC is cooperating with Wesson

Attendance Center on encouraging youth to participate in the program and shaping its educational aspects. Ace Hardware is donating tools and

materials for the hands-on projects. Wesson Public Library is providing meeting space. The Chamber of Commerce has donated funds.

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