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Wesson News
PO Box 1028
Wesson, MS 39191

Volume 8, Number 4

“Good News You Can Use”

April 14, 2020

Town seeks to stay healthy

By Bob Arnold

Urged on by elected officials, emergency management and public health authorities across the state and Federal leadership, including the President, Governor Tate Reeves ordered Mississippi residents to stay at home until at least April 20 to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) unless they are essential workers.

The Governor's response reflected fears like those raised by Lincoln County Emergency Manager Clifford Galey last month, who voiced concerns that the numbers of those infected by the virus could grow in the area because people



Governor Reeves

aren't taking the spread of the virus seriously enough. "We have to go to the grocery and the doctor and the bank, and have to get

something to eat, but it's spreading rapidly and we need to be vigilant," Galey said. He said it's important

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Local Court responds to coronavirus

Wesson News

When municipal court convened in Wesson at city hall on April 9, there were some startling changes.

Court business went on as usual, but the judge and prosecutor were not physically present. Fewer people were there to do business and for hearings.

Thank the coronavirus if things weren't as hectic.

At what you might call the coronavirus court, the most dramatic difference was the way hearings were conducted without the physical presence of Judge Jeff Varris and Bob Lawrence, the prosecutor. Yet they conducted court hearings just the same with the help of internet technology through a video conference.

Court sessions were held in front of television sets in the main meeting hall. The judge and prosecutor, who are both considered vulnerable to a coronavirus infection because of their ages, were at safe social distances while hearing cases of a handful people at the city

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What's opened & closed around town

City park closed.

Wesson City Hall

open M-F 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Call 601-643-5221
if you have an upcoming court case.

Wesson Police

open 24/7
601-643-2211

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Five customer limit inside the store, curbside service encouraged.
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Families becoming unexpected homeschoolers

By Guest Columnist Bonnie Coblentz

COVID-19 has turned millions of families into homeschoolers who suddenly must decide how to structure learning for their students.

Anita Webb, a Mississippi State University Extension agent in Scott County, says parents have a long list of

explore family and consumer sciences skills with a focus on food while at home with their kids.

“Cooking and baking are processes that demonstrate the scientific method,”

what will happen when using different ingredients, and explore the impact on sensory properties, such as color, aro-



Special to Wesson News

questions about the long-term impacts of missing traditional school, including its impact on graduating seniors, state testing and the length of the academic year.

“There are many things over which parents have no control, but there are also many things they can control for their kids,” Webb said. “Many young parents are creating extra art and craft opportunities for their children, and also getting their kids outside more to help with the garden or to go fishing or walking in the woods.”

Courtney Crist, an assistant Extension professor of food safety, encourages parents to

Crist says. “Many common sciences -- such as biology, physics, chemistry and mathematics -- are involved in the process of preparing and cooking foods. Food can be an easy, fun and tasty way to learn some of these principles.”

Baking cookies, for example, Crist points out, is an easy process to teach how to experiment. Create a hypothesis for



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Although the setting is now home instead of school, parents can take steps to see that their children's education continues.



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ma, appearance, flavor and texture.

Beth Bell, Extension agent in Tallahatchie County, says

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City girl now loves small town

By Bob Arnold

At age 3, when Angela Hester came to Wesson from Tuscaloosa with her mother after her parents' divorce in 1986, she didn't think she would ever like the town.

"It was quite a change from the city," Hester recalls. "I was in the eighth grade at Wesson Attendance Center in class with sixty other students, leaving behind a class of 1,200 at Tuscaloosa. So I returned to Tuscaloosa to live with my father for my freshman and sophomore years in high school."

Two years later, she came back to Wesson, and has never left, although she has never stopped rooting for the University of Alabama Crimson Tide either. Now, fittingly, Hester is the Town Clerk for the small town she learned to love.

"I came to appreciate and enjoy the close relationships the people of Wesson have with their neighbors, the town's special quiet, and, most of all, the way people here help each other when they are in need," Hester summarizes.

Shortly after graduating from high school, Hester married her first husband, Carl Roberts, with whom she had three children over nine years: Trace, 29, a truck driver; Nickoles, who died in a traffic accident when he was 21; and

Taylor, 25, a natural gas production supervisor.

"It was with two babies and trying to be a student at Co-Lin while working that I really came to appreciate and love small town Wesson, and the help people here will provide when you need it," she says.

Hester started her working career at the Sunflower grocery store in Wesson in the 1990s and studied a year at Co-Lin in 1992. "I was at the Sunflower, when it closed," she recalls. "It was a sad occasion."

She worked at the truck stop on Sylvarena Road as a waitress and then did bookkeeping there -- her first office job -- before moving to Precoat Metals in Jackson in 1994, where she was a line operator for four years, and then going across the street to Consolidated Metal Products, where she went back into the office as an administrative assistant and bookkeeper in a career she has never left.

Her next career stop was the Crystal Springs Police Department, where she acquired municipal court experience. While there in 2007, she also learned again about the generous help the people of Wesson offer when you're in need. It came after a major boating accident at Roosevelt State Park. It was eight months before she could work again. One week

of hospitalization and six surgeries later, she became a Rural Carrier Assistant at Hazlehurst and assisted part time with Wesson municipal court needs, gaining the experience that would bring her to Wesson city hall full time.

Until 2016, when she became full time Court Assistant for Wesson, she was on the road for four years with her husband Chad Hester, a natural gas production consultant, whose work was in Pennsylvania during that period. In 2017, Hester became Wesson's Town Clerk.

Hester and her husband of 17 years live on 200 acres on Rocky Hill Road, where they graze cattle. They have one son, J.C. Hester, 26, who works in oil and natural gas production for his brother, Taylor.

What are your hobbies?

I grew up on the water. I learned to water ski when I was five years old on Miller Dollar Lake in Bessimer, Alabama, and the Black Warrior River in Tuscaloosa. But my current focus when I am not working are my grandchildren -- Laney, 10, Rhylee, 7, Addisyn, 6, and Ainslee, 10 months. I also have twin grandbabies coming this summer. While my husband works in Ohio, I spend my time spoiling them on Rocky Hill Road. When I can get them to water, I teach

them to ski and swim, and learn not to be afraid of the water as I was as a kid.

What do you read?

I am a fan of the *Fifty Shades* trilogy.

Do you enjoy movies or theater?

Again, the *Fifty Shades* movies. I also like *Titanic* and *Pearl Harbor*. My favorite actors are Matthew McConaughey and Leonardo DiCaprio. On television, I follow *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago PD*, and *Chicago Med*. I particularly like police series, having acquired that interest when I worked for the Crystal Springs Police Department.

How about music?

Country. Tim McGraw is my favorite singer/songwriter. I enjoyed going to the Swampstock concerts with Gerri Lynn Porter, who works at Copiah Bank. We try to go to a concert each year.

How would you spend your lottery winnings if you were so lucky?

I have already won the lottery. God gave me a wonderful family with a loving husband, along with kids and grandchildren. There is not enough money in the world that could give me the happiness that they do.

How would you change the world?

I really don't know if you can. Pray a lot, I guess.


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cont. from page 1

Town seeks to stay healthy

to follow Mississippi State Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines on hand washing, social distancing and quarantines, and "not going anywhere that we don't need to go."

Yet many Wesson residents were already staying at home and avoiding crowds where they are highly vulnerable to contracting the coronavirus, which can be spread in the air through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes and land on the mouths or noses of other nearby people who inhale them into their lungs.

Also, local businesses, organizations and institutions had already either halted activities and operations or were experiencing drastic slowdowns.

Wesson Attendance Center had closed at least through April 17, in line with an earlier executive order issued by the Governor. The Town of Wesson cancelled its annual Easter celebration. Wesson Chamber of Commerce cancelled the annual Founders' Day festivities in April. The public library shut down. The Wesson Lions Club, American Legion Post and Masonic Lodge cancelled meetings. The Wesson Athletic Foundation indefinitely delayed its spring/summer baseball/softball season for children and youth. Local churches started reaching parishioners online with Sunday worship and cancelled Bible studies and others ac-

tivities. Wesson Baptist Church, among other congregations, is planning to hold its Easter service in its parking lot, with members sitting in their cars instead of pews. Under the Governor's executive order, the municipal park is still open for individuals, but not for group activities.

Co-Lin -- Wesson's largest employer -- shifted its academic and adult education courses to the internet and developed a limited access delivery plan for its Career Technical Education programs, closed its daycare center and indefinitely suspended all events hosted by the college or meeting in a college facility, along with travel, golf course operations and high school equivalency testing. The National Junior College Athletic Association shut down its sports activities. The college told residential students not to return to campus following their spring break and to retrieve essential items from their residence halls.

Another Time... Another Place and Mill Town Spa closed before the Governor's order, and Mill Town Mall closed when he issued his executive order. Local restaurants are now just offering takeout meals. Initially, Porches restaurant closed altogether, but reopened to serve takeouts. Dump's Barbeque and the 51 Diner, which had continued limited inside dining service with fewer customers, are now providing only takeout service under the Governor's executive

order. The takeout only ice cream parlor across from the municipal park remains open.

Ace Hardware proprietor Tim Sutton said he didn't particularly like benefiting from a pandemic as an essential business, but his customers are apparently working on long-delayed projects while ensconced in their homes to social distance themselves from others. At other retailers considered essential because of their gas and/or food sales, business was off. At the Dollar General and Family Dollar stores, customers are coming in the morning and late afternoon to stock up on food and other necessities, but business is slow during other hours. At convenience stores -- Ashley's 51, Shop 'N Wash, East End -- "business is like a Saturday afternoon -- our worst time," Jared Ashley at Ashley's 51 reported. At the former API building, metal fabricating work continued as an essential business, with Steel Outdoors consumer sales down and Alpha Machine & Welding's industrial sales remaining steady.

The Governor's statewide stay-at-home executive encompasses the following guidelines:

- Individuals are to stay at home except for limited exceptions -- working for an essential business, going out to buy food, gas, and necessary supplies; buying food and necessities for someone who can't get out of the house; running, walking or exercising alone.

ing alone.

- When outside of their homes, people must follow social distancing guidelines by maintaining a 6-foot distance from others and avoid groups of 10 or more.

- Evictions are suspended, although people are still required to pay any rent or make any mortgage payments.

- All nonessential businesses are to stop all activities other than those necessary for minimum operations (e.g. payroll, health insurance, security) and enable employees to work from home.

- Social and other non-essential gatherings in groups of more than 10 people must be cancelled or rescheduled.

- Restaurants and bars may only remain open for drive-thru, curbside, and/or delivery service.

So far, the town has stayed healthy, Dr. Stephen Liverman said. He has been screening possible COVID-19 cases among his local patients by telephone and setting appointments at intervals so his waiting room is not crowded. "I have heard from many people who 'think' they have been infected by the coronavirus, but have not had to refer anyone to be tested so far," he said.

Are all the precautions necessary? Yes, Liverman affirmed. The virus can cause a severe lung infection, and the seemingly "draconian" response to stop its spread is warranted.

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Gardening: an ancient art continues



Wesson News

Hanging Garden of Babylon

By Guest Columnist Gary R. Bachman

I speak with new gardeners who seem to think that the idea of having a home garden is a brand-new idea. In reality, it is a new idea for them, but it is not new at all for many others.

When you look at the development of human civilization, having a garden was a pretty big deal. In fact, it was one of the main reasons that humans became civilized. I don't have the exact date, but it's generally recognized that about 12,000 years ago, humans were hunter/gathers constantly searching for their next meal. In this

time period, Atouk, who was portrayed by Ringo Starr in the 1981 comedy documentary film, *Caveman*, discovered that, with the domestication of plants and animals, he and his family could live

in one place. Agriculture was "discovered," and it would provide a consistent food source, putting an end to constant wandering. I'm sure that gardeners bragging about who grew the best-tasting tomato started shortly after that.

Evidence of gardening dates back to the Egyptian pharaohs, who documented the gardens of their various kingdoms in elaborate tomb paintings.

Among the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World were the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. These gardens were said to have been built on terraces and were

probably the first raised garden beds, a style of gardening we still practice. The story goes that King Nebuchadnezzar had the gardens built

TENDING YOUR GARDEN

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COVID-19 cautions when pregnant

Special to Wesson News

What special precautions must expectant mothers heed during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis?

The good news is that compared to other viral infections, COVID-19 does not appear to cause an increased risk of miscarriage, stillbirth or birth defects, says Dr. Marty Tucker, professor and chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC). "Additionally, if a pregnant woman or her newborn baby contracts COVID-19, it appears that the chance of severe illness is low," Tucker says.

At the same time, she adds, we all need to follow the recommendations given to us by public health agencies, our government authorities and our employers -- social distancing, avoiding travel, avoiding contact with people who are or may be infected, and being vigilant of symptoms of COVID-19 infection, such as fever, shortness of breath, sore throat and cough.

Based on guidance from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Tucker answered these questions that concern expectant mothers:

I am pregnant. Am I at higher risk of contracting COVID-19?

Pregnancy changes your immune system, making you more susceptible to some viral respiratory infections. But data so far indicates pregnancy does not make someone more susceptible to COVID-19.

How might coronavirus affect my pregnancy?

Although data from the present COVID-19 pandemic is limited, other coronavirus in-

fections do not show increased rates of miscarriage or stillbirth. Other viral infections during pregnancy, such as influenza, have been associated with low birth weight and preterm birth. Having a high fever early in pregnancy may also increase the risk of certain birth defects.

Can I transmit COVID-19 to my baby during pregnancy or delivery?

The few case studies of babies born to mothers with COVID-19 published in peer-reviewed literature showed that none of the infants tested positive for COVID-19, although a mother may transmit infection to her infant through close contact after birth.

Is it safe for me to deliver at a hospital where there have been COVID-19 cases?

Hospitals are taking great precautions to keep patients and health care providers safe.

I am a health care worker. Should my doctor excuse me from work since I am pregnant?

You may continue to work in a clinical setting and should adhere to standard precautions, limiting exposure to patients who are or may be infected with COVID-19, particularly through aerosol-generating procedures -- intubation, airway suctioning, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and sputum collection. If you are exposed to COVID-19, self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days. If you develop a fever of 100.4° F or greater, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat or gastrointestinal symptoms, stay home from work and call your obstetrician to arrange a follow-up if symptoms worsen.

I work in a school, the trav-

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Bread-making when shelves are bare



By Guest Columnist Al McSwain

With the shortage of bread in some stores these days, I have resorted to making my own.

What I like about this recipe is that it uses all-purpose flour, requires very little kneading and only minimal kitchen utensils. It is my interpretation of the Mi'kmaq Mama recipe from Youtube.

If you can, watch her video to get a better understanding the kneading and rolling process.

Recipe for two loaves.

2 cups of lukewarm water (as warm as a baby's bottle)

¼ cup white sugar

2 tablespoons of active dry yeast*

2 teaspoons of salt

3 tablespoons of oil

4 cups of flour plus more for board

¼ cup melted butter

*note: 1 packet of yeast = 2 1/4 teaspoons (double check your packet), so 2 tablespoons = 6 teaspoons = 2 & 2/3 packets

1. In a large bowl, mix water and sugar, add yeast. Let set for about seven to eight minutes until yeast is foamy. Add salt, oil and two cups of the flour; mix until dough is about the consistency of a

pancake batter. Add the remaining 2 cups of flour. Fold and mix until all the flour is incorporated.

Dough will be very sticky.

2. Dump dough onto a well-floured surface and knead for about three to four minutes. Keep adding flour as you knead, until dough does not stick to surface. Knead until you have a fairly smooth surface.

Place in a well-greased bowl, cover and let rise until doubled (about one hour).

3. Divide dough into two equal parts. Roll dough into a rectangle not wider than bread pans until all air bubbles have been removed. Tightly roll dough into a log, seal the seam and edges. Place in a well-buttered loaf pan. Cover and let rise for 30 minutes. Brush generously with melted butter. Place pans in center of cold oven, set temperature to 375°F and bake for 25 minutes. Remove from oven, brush generously with melted butter. After five minutes, remove from loaf pans to wire rack. Let stand for one hour before slicing.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Al McSwain owns Porches Restaurant in Wesson.

WESSON DINING GUIDE



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De-stressing in stressing times



Special to Wesson News

You're not sounding the alarm to friends and family just yet, but you're down to a six-pack of toilet paper, and you're kicking yourself for not stocking up when it was on shelves two weeks ago.

It's just one more stress to juggle during the current COVID-19 outbreak, with health experts advising Mississippians to hole up at home, and fears about contracting the highly contagious virus a great motivator for seclusion.

Take a step back and focus on what's in your power, not what isn't, experts at the University of Mississippi Medical Center say. Dr. Daniel Williams, division chief in the Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior and associate director in the Office of Well-being, offers this advice on how to cope with a very unwelcome new normal and, quite frankly, just to get through your day:

- **Try not to fixate on worrisome things, no matter how big or small, that you can't change.** You don't have control over whether your loved ones will stay well, but you do have control over whether you practice social distancing around them, or wash hands around them.

- **Focus on reality.** A trip to the grocery store can be scary for those who look at empty shelves, or pictures of them on Facebook. But every day, almost all grocery stores are being restocked, Williams points out. The supply chain is working. We shouldn't hoard food.

- **Avoid information overload.** Each new COVID-19 development in Italy or New York City leaves us sleepless and glued to our phone at 3 a.m. "Limit your amount of news consumption," Williams says. "It's tempting to stay connected to

every development and update and tweet, but that creates a very stressful and anxious way of living.

- **Find safe ways to get around social distancing, if contact with others is important to you.** Keep up co-worker contact via email, Face Time, Zoom, Skype and old-fashioned phone calls, and keep meetings going electronically. "Just because we're doing social distancing doesn't mean we have to do emotional distancing," Williams says. "Use it as a chance to reconnect with old friends. Really reach out to each other for support."

- **Reduce anxiety about contracting the virus or spreading it by taking healthy actions that make you feel safe.** That ranges from frequent hand washing to cleaning and disinfecting your desk or other surfaces you may encounter that can carry

germs.

- **Create structure in your day, whether you are stuck at home or in a work twilight zone.** Set an alarm and wake up at the same time you usually do. Go to bed when you usually do. Make a list of what you want to accomplish that day.

- **Good deeds and meaningful action can help you de-stress.** Research shows if you are experiencing a high level of stress, serving others helps to diminish it.

- **Talk about it.** Sometimes, if you talk about it, it comes back into perspective. "Talk it out, and process how you are feeling," says Williams. "You might find that you built some of it up in your mind to be more catastrophic than it is because you were stuck in your feelings."

"We can adjust," summarizes Williams. "Life will go on, and the sun will come up."

New norms during COVID-19 crisis

Special to Wesson News

No visitations. To protect its patients and staff from COVID-19, Copiah County Medical Center (CCMC) has ended hospital visitation based on guidance of the Mississippi State Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CCMC is encouraging people with hospitalized friends and loved ones to communicate with them by telephone at (601)-574-7000. All patient rooms have phones.

Unemployment claims rules. New Mississippi unemployment regulations implemented by an executive order issued by Governor Reeves waive work search requirements and eliminate the one-week waiting period for benefits. The changes recognize the difficult time small businesses and their employees are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The new rules apply to people unable to work because of a quarantine order from a medical professional or government agency, those who

were laid off or sent home without pay because of the virus, those diagnosed with COVID-19 or caring for immediate family members with COVID-19. People can file unemployment claims at www.mdes.ms.gov or via telephone (888-844-3577).

Small funerals. Area funeral homes are finding new ways to help grieving families and friends. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the traditional funeral service with public visitations and services packed with mourners is no longer considered a safe option. Funeral homes are now handling arrangements by phone, limiting visitations to family or no more than ten people for up to an hour, conducting graveside services for a few and livestreaming services via the internet to reach greater numbers.

Mobile screening. King's Daughters Medical Center (KDMC) is now providing mobile screening for persons age 12 and older who have been exposed to COVID-19 or are experiencing symp-

toms. People drive into the screening site, which is behind the KDMC emergency room, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week and do not have to leave their vehicles. Call (601)-835-9455 before visiting the screening site. Call the KDMC Pediatric and Adolescent Clinic at (601)-823-5204 about screening patients under 12 years old.

Pets & animals okay. Although canine respiratory and enteric coronaviruses can cause illnesses in pets, they are not related to the human coronavirus infection. "No animals in the United States have been identified with COVID-19," contrary to widely-circulating misinformation, says Dr. Kent Hoblet, dean of the Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Another misconception is that there is a cattle vaccine for COVID-19. In fact, there is a vaccine for bovine coronavirus, but it will neither infect nor protect humans. Hoblet encourages animal owners to look to American

Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) guidelines as their primary resource on vaccines and animal illnesses related to COVID-19. The AVMA webpage dedicated to answering questions regarding coronavirus in animals can be found at <https://www.avma.org/blog/what-do-you-need-know-about-coronavirus>.

Vaccine progress. The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, which is experienced in vaccine development and did extensive research on MERS in 2014 and SARS in 2003 -- both coronaviruses similar in structure to COVID-19, has announced progress on a COVID-19 vaccine. There are now 254 clinical trials exploring vaccines and treatments for COVID-19, with many more in the pipeline. Unprecedented activity in the private sector and academia is currently focused on developing a therapy, supporting testing, or finding a vaccine to manage the effects of COVID-19 the world over.

Mississippi Public Service Commission urges public to stay away from utility workers

Special to Wesson News

The Mississippi Public Service Commission is urging the public to stay away from utility crews working in the field.

"These employees are working hard to ensure the public has essential services, like electricity and gas," said Chairman Dane Maxwell. "When someone approaches these field workers, it can create a dangerous situation for the employees and the person who approaches them. It's imperative that people stay safely away."

"As we take precautions to protect ourselves during

this crisis, we must be reminded that our utility workers continue their daily work in the field to ensure that we have the various utility services we need," Central District Commissioner Brent Bailey said. "Utility personnel and crews are taking special measures to help keep our lights, gas and water on and we ask you to help us all stay healthy and safe by adhering to CDC and MSDH guidelines and keep your distance from utility workers and work zones."

"We ask each Mississippian to please not com-

plicate this crisis or make it more dangerous by approaching utility workers," Northern District Commissioner Brandon Presley said. "These employees are critical to keeping our utility infrastructure up and running during COVID-19, and we need all citizens to commit to helping by staying away from these utility workers and adhering to health guidelines. We cannot afford to make this situation worse because of careless behavior."

Work sites can have any number of hidden dangers for the public, and dis-

tracting crews can cause accidents to happen. Practicing social distancing (six or more feet apart) is the best way to keep a safe distance from crews, so that citizens and workers can stay healthy and virus-free.

These workers provide an essential service and are working to ensure power and gas continues to flow to homes and businesses during these challenging times. Anyone who has a question about their utility's service should contact the utility provider by phone, website or mobile app if available.

Understanding & fighting the coronavirus

By Guest Columnist Dr. Stephanie Duguid

Our daily lives have changed drastically because of the coronavirus pandemic. The situation



is fluid, and we are learning more and more about it daily.

What is it? Who is at risk? What is the incubation period? How can you help prevent the spread of the disease? How can you address the stress related to social distancing from other people? How can you stay active at home, while keeping your social distance?

Here is some information and advice from the World Health Organization (WHO) based on what we know now:

•Coronavirus, known also as COVID-19 or SARS-CoV-2, is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. Symptoms are a cough, a high temperature and shortness of breath.

•Simple measures like washing your hands often with soap and water can help stop viruses like coronavirus (COVID-19) spreading.

•There's no specific treatment for coronavirus (COVID-19). Treatments seek to relieve the symptoms until you recover.

•It's not known exactly how coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads from person to person, but similar viruses are spread in cough droplets.

•While we are still learning about how COVID-2019 affects people, older persons and persons with pre-existing medical conditions (such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes) appear to develop serious illness more often than others.

•The "incubation period" -- the time between catching

Social Distancing:

What does it mean?
It means stay away from places where people gather, avoid mass gatherings, and whenever not possible, maintains a distance of at least one metre from each other. Together we can help to slow the infection from spreading away.

Red Light – Avoid / Don't Do

- All gatherings of religious, commercial, official or personal nature (e.g. market/mall, cinema, meeting/conference, wedding, party/picnic, tuition, gym/yoga, dancing etc.) involving a sizeable and flowing crowd
- Social visitors or non-essential workers in your house
- Non-essential visitors in the workplace
- Non-essential travel in public transportation

Yellow Light – Do with Caution

- Attend private gatherings limited to a few family members or known friends
- Travelling in a private transport (public transport only if it is a NECESSITY)
- Visit a local restaurant BUT choose the open-air type, sitting with at least one metre apart whenever possible (takeaway food is a better choice)
- Buying in a grocery store or supermarkets without a crowd
- Pick up medicines from the pharmacy without a crowd
- Play sports in the open air with family or a few known friends

Green Light – Safe to Do

- Take a walk or jog in open park or stadium
- Cycling
- Play in the home garden, or go for a fun drive with family
- Read a book or listen to music in private
- Play games or watch TV/movie at home
- Home cooking and meals at home

Wash your hands frequently with soaps and water, or alcohol-based hand rub.
Best to do thing online whenever possible (e.g. Video chat, e-payment, Internet games, or chat over a phone).

World Health Organisation, March 2020.

the virus and beginning to have symptoms of the disease -- ranges from one to fourteen days, most commonly around five days.

Since there is no vaccine, specific form of treatment, or antibiotics for COVID-19, the best thing is to try and prevent the spread. WHO suggests seven actions you can take to keep yourself safe and contain the spread of COVID-19:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.

2. Avoid touching your

face, eyes, mouth, and nose.

3. Avoid contact with people who are vulnerable. And if you can, wear a mask.

4. Cover your cough with the bend of your elbow.

5. Disinfect surfaces you regularly use.

6. If you feel unwell, stay at home and call your healthcare provider.

7. Only share information from trusted sources.

At this time, we are all surrounded by information (good and bad) from social media, newspapers, and friends. It can be a very

stressful time. Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

•Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones.

•Changes in sleep or eating patterns.

•Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.

•Worsening of chronic health problems.

•Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

Combat stress by:

•Taking breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.

•Taking care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.

•Making time to unwind. Try to do some activities you enjoy.

•Connecting with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Above all, be sure to maintain your social distance as recommended by all health sources. Stay at least three feet away from anyone in your immediate space and be very careful about your activity around others.

Do your part to stay healthy and safe during these times!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Stephanie Duguid is Dean of Academic Instruction at Co-Lin. She is also an athletic trainer and nutrition specialist and has been teaching courses related to those two areas as well as practicing what she preaches for more than twenty years.

Artist teaches painting on cypress

By Bob Arnold

Back in 1983, Dawn Marks' father, a fisherman in the Louisiana bayous, started encouraging his daughter to begin expressing herself as a painter on a wood plank, which he gave her. For the past 35 years, she hasn't stopped painting, and wood has been her primary medium -- on those distinctive structures that grow above the roots of cypress trees, called cypress knees, and the planks cut from cypress timbers -- occasionally, on old tin.

Today, Marks teaches the painting skills she has honed over the years to children, youth and adults who want to manifest their creative drives in small classes (no more than a dozen students) that assemble at churches, other not-for-profit groups and house parties in southwest Mississippi and Louisiana from Wesson to Houma.

During the holiday season, she guided novice painters in creating nativity scenes on cypress planks for their Christmas decor at an Institute for Learning in Retirement workshop at Co-Lin.

Marks offers her classes through Original Cypress, a small home-based company operated by Marks and her husband Mike. Original Cypress began 15 years ago, selling her cypress works, which feature Louisiana motifs, such as pelicans and swamp scenes, to gifts and crafts stores. While Marks continues to paint her own works to sell, teaching others to paint has become the main thrust of Original Cypress. She has been teaching five classes a week.

"We have been blessed," she says. "The classes have really taken off." Marks sees her teaching as a min-



Wesson News

istry that provides a venue, where people can enjoy food and fellowship, while "creating something meaningful which they can hang on their walls."

"God has given me this tool to use my talent," she summarizes.

Mark's husband dives into Lake Maurepas, adjacent Lake Pontchartrain at New Orleans, to retrieve the cypress timbers; some thousands of years old, which he fashions into planks and prepares for the painting. Marks draws the outlines of subject matter on the media for her student painters to add colors. Many of them are religious in nature, although others are whimsical, like one with a deer eating a snowman's carrot nose. With Mike's help or the assistance for her good friend, Debbie Bertrand, Marks brings all the materials to the class -- the cypress planks or sometimes old tin, which she also uses as a medium; usually house paints and sometimes watercolors for the palettes of her student painters.

"We make things as easy as possible for our classes," she says.

Marks grew up in Prairieville, Louisiana, south

of Baton Rouge, graduated from high school in Louisiana, and studied fashion design in college for two years. After leaving college, she worked in a variety of jobs, while continuing to paint as an avocation before starting Original Cy-

press. Marks and her husband acquired an old farm, where they rode horses, in Amite County, Mississippi, and resettled there from Louisiana. Contact Dawn and Mike Marks at 601-551-5467 or through Facebook@Original Cypress.



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Trying to survive with new norms

By Guest Columnist Shaw Furlow

I have seen a lot of posts on Facebook lately that in essence say: "I don't need athletes, actors or singers to survive." May-



Wesson News

be not. For me, though, they sure make it easier to live through this quarantine. Thankfully, many are discovering new normals.

Our daily routines have been disrupted. There's the uncertainty. COVID-19 is serious and dangerous to many people --especially to those in my age bracket. Not enough is known about it. Is it a seasonal virus? Will it mutate? No one seems to know. Then there's what we have to do to protect ourselves. Experts say an anti-virus vaccine is eight to 17 months away. So our leaders have issued orders to ban large gatherings -- including school, sporting events and even church services. All of that makes sense, even though it is a tough pill to swallow. Many families are trying to balance child care and work responsibilities. Small businesses, especially restaurants, are already taking a hit. I feel badly for student athletes at Co-Lin this spring. They have trained and practiced in order to compete this spring, but are now sitting on the sidelines wondering if they will play at all.

If you read my last month's column about the way our television viewing habits have changed, it should come as no surprise that you were able to watch either your church service or another one on your cellular device or computer. I watched parts of three services on Sunday. A new normal. And one way I am surviving.

The arts have been disrupted like everything else.

For a musician, there's little worse than rehearsing for weeks, and then having nowhere to perform. State evaluations for high school bands have been cancelled. School band and choir concerts have been postponed or canceled altogether. A friend in the travel industry tells me musical groups are cancelling plans to perform at Disney World.

Being human, I wondered how this was going to affect me. I have a certain weekly routine, albeit a retirement routine, that doesn't put me in front of a classroom or ensemble rehearsal. But I do have responsibilities, and I like to meet those obligations. So, what to do? The other day I got a notice that one of my gigs had been postponed from March to October. Music and Art in Brookhaven's Trinity Park, one of my productions which was scheduled for April, has been cancelled. To me, this is an annoyance, but friends of mine, who rely on gigs for their income, are worried. One of them in north Mississippi, who plays large venues, told me about his concerns: "I can take a week or so off, but eight weeks will kick my rear."

At a little show I produced a while back, I counted thirty-five in attendance. While I would have liked to have had more, I was pleased with the turnout. Even when we get past the quarantines, small crowds will probably be the new normal, at least for a while.

Another new normal artists are discovering: Just like schools and colleges across the country are doing with their classrooms, musicians are

turning to social media to try to make ends meet. It works like this: At an advertised time, the artist begins streaming a performance on the internet from his or her living room or back porch. Once the show

begins, the artist can take requests for a tip via Venmo or Pay Pal. If you have no request, you may tip them anyway.

Everyone from big names like Garth Brooks to local artists like Sam Mooney and Ashley Dalton Stephens are doing this. After all, necessity is the mother of invention. And this new normal may not be so bad. I've talked to several of these folks, who tell me they are not making as much money, but neither are they spending time behind the wheel at 2 a.m. af-

ter a show.

Teachers at the Downtown Music Academy in Brookhaven are reaching their students via Skype. Again, this may be the new normal for a while.

But the internet doesn't work for everyone. Derrick Covington Smith, who owns the Little Yellow Building in Brookhaven, tells me teaching art via the internet does not work for him: "I like to see the process, and somehow it loses something if I'm not physically there." So he has just shut down for the duration.

Stay home. Stay safe. Support the arts from home, 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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Thawing the frozen safely



Special to Wesson News

Social distancing to protect yourself from COVID-19 probably means making fewer trips to the grocery store, cooking at home and using freezers -- also a safety concern.

Natasha Haynes, a family and consumer science agent with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, says freezing meats and other items is a great way to keep a supply of perishable foods on hand. However, she reminds people to follow U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines for safe thawing when it comes time to use the items.

"Don't thaw meats and poultry on the counter or in hot water," says Haynes, who is also host of *The Food Factor*, a digital platform she uses to share recipes, tips and other information about food and nutrition on the Extension for Real Life blog.

"Put these items in the refrigerator a day or two before you plan to use them," she counsels. "If you need to thaw items more quickly, you can put them in a sealed plastic bag and submerge the bagged item in cold water, changing the water every 30 minutes to maintain a safe temperature. You can also use the microwave's defrost feature. Be sure to cook the items immediately after thawing if you use the cold water or microwave method."

Meats and poultry also can be cooked from a frozen state, but plan to cook them for about 50 percent longer than normal. Always use a meat thermometer to confirm the item has reached a safe temperature, Haynes says. UDSA guidelines on these temperatures can be found on the agency's website at <https://bit.ly/2QsEjtA>.

Take control of worsening finances

Special to Wesson News

Increased social distancing measures and shelter-in-place orders are leaving millions of people with reduced income or without a paycheck. But there are some steps you can take to gain control over your finances.

Becky Smith, a family financial management specialist with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, says people should immediately review their budgets and adjust their lifestyles.

Above all, don't panic, she says.

First, analyze what cash or remaining income is available, make a list of monthly bills and expenses, and then prioritize those bills and expenses by need and due date.

"Look for ways to reduce your expenses," Smith says. Subscription cancellations. Changing phone and cable plans. If you can't pay all your bills, decide which bills are most important to meet critical family needs -- utilities, food, and rent or mortgage.

Second, list debts, including credit cards, student loans, car payments and medical bills. Continue to pay creditors if possible. But if making these payments is impossible, contact each creditor to negotiate a payment plan, and get it in

writing. Creditors are more willing to be lenient with the current economic situation.

Pay for groceries and other necessities with cash or a debit card instead of credit cards. Avoid using credit to replace lost income.

Apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program through the Mississippi Department of Human Services to get temporary assistance with groceries instead of using credit. Individuals who have lost their jobs should file an unemployment insurance claim with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security immediately and seek out community organizations that can provide food and possibly bill payment assistance if benefit payments are delayed.

"Be mindful of how stress can trigger unnecessary spending, if this is one of the ways you handle stress," says David Buys, Extension health specialist.

For more information about managing personal finances during the COVID-19 pandemic, visit the Extension website at <https://bit.ly/2XebF3D>. Extension Information Sheet 1867, "Take Control of Your Finances When Your Income Drops," provides a road map for managing finances after income loss.

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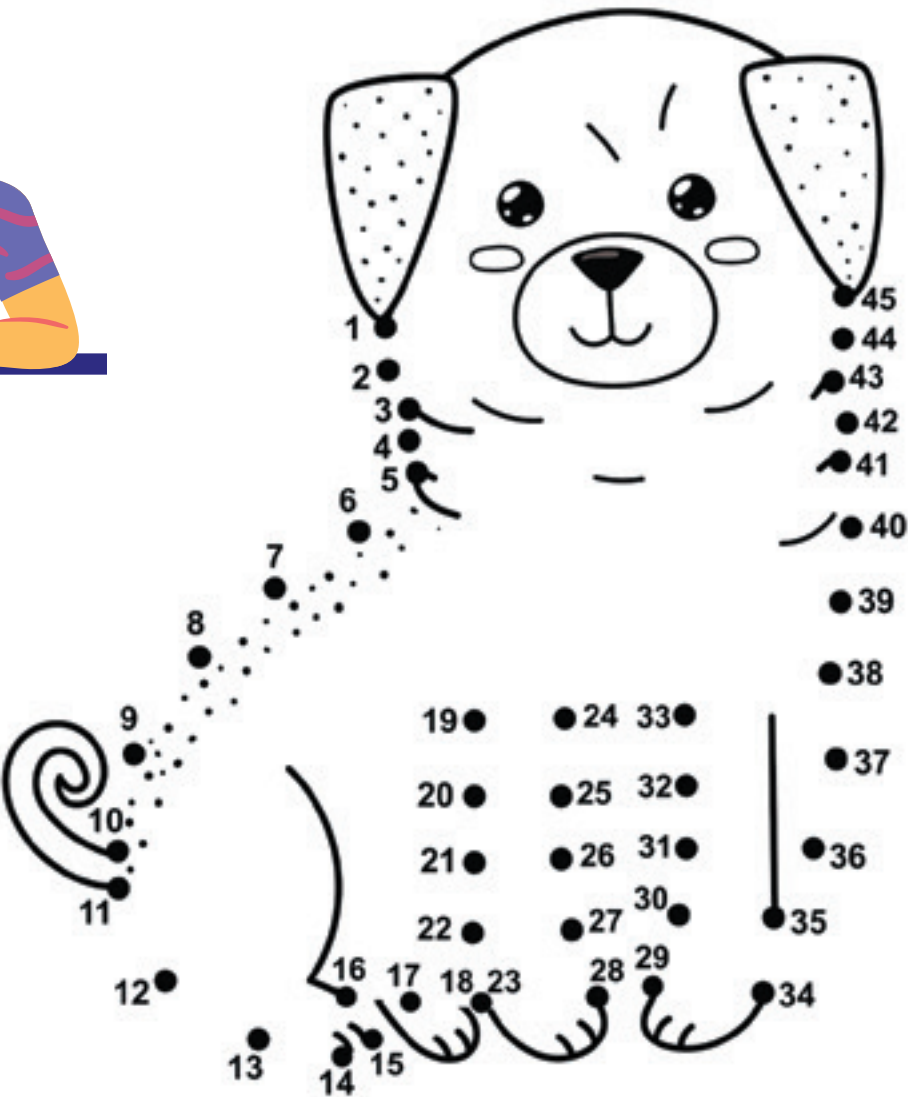
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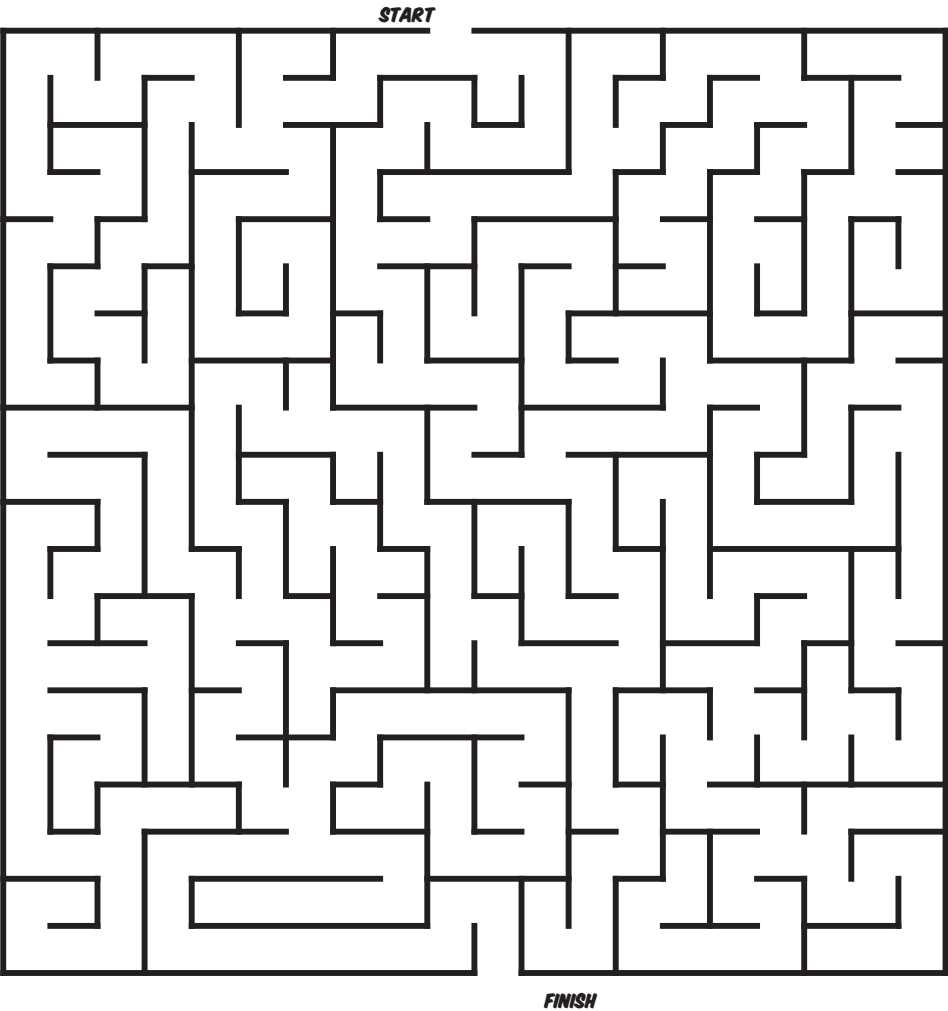
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MAZE



Mississippi Center for Justice launches Mississippi Mask Drive

Special to Wesson News

The Mississippi Center for Justice (MCJ) has launched a Mississippi mask drive in which volunteers can sew cloth masks to help protect the thousands of Mississippians who are unusually vulnerable to COVID-19 because they work or live in locked facilities like prisons, jails, mental health institutions, and restitution centers.

Because basic protective necessities like surgical masks are often not available to these staff and residents, MCJ has created a webpage,

www.mscenterforjustice.org/masks, through which facilities can request cloth masks and volunteers can learn how to make and where to send masks. Volunteers can also sign up for live mask-making video workshops and download instructional materials. MCJ has already received orders for over 1,000 masks and counting.

The Centers for Disease Control has promulgated "Crisis Capacity Strategies," which provide that, when surgical and N95 face masks are not available, cloth masks can be used. This effort is part of MCJ's tradition of responding to crises, which included campaigns to help poor and marginalized Mississippians recover from the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill.

"Every person who can sew or learn how to sew a mask can make a tremendous difference right now," said Paloma Wu, Deputy Director of Impact

Litigation at MCJ. "Every mask you give makes our communities and our shared health care system better able to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic." MCJ has joined other groups in urging for release of residents who do not pose public safety concerns so that facilities can better contain an outbreak. "When all responsible population reduction

measures have been exhausted, staff and individuals who remain need masks," said Wu.

MCJ is joined in the Mississippi Mask Drive by partners from across Mississippi, including the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Mississippi, Catholic Charities, the Catholic Diocese of Jackson, and other religious and community-based organizations.

Jason Coker, Field Coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Mississippi, discussed the reasons for his organization's involvement in the effort: "Because of our conviction that God loves everyone and calls us to do the same, we absolutely believe that employees of correctional facilities and those who live there deserve the right to be as safe as possible during this COVID-19 pandemic. In close quarters, these fellow human beings are at a higher risk than many of us. Please join us in our efforts to provide safety masks for this population. This is one way we are trying to be the presence of God in the midst of extraordinary circumstances."

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Call Today to Protect Your Family

Sheltering at home can increase energy bills



Special to Wesson News

With schools closed and many workers temporarily unemployed or telecommuting due to the coronavirus pandemic, many families have a full house during times the home would normally be empty. The result is often an increased demand for energy to fuel daily lives, and that can quickly lead to a higher-than-normal energy bill.

The best way to manage this increase in energy use is to follow simple energy-saving tips, like wrapping the water heater, regularly replacing HVAC filters and insulating doors and windows. But if a high bill has already arrived, there are ways consumers can get help managing costs or even paying the electricity bill. Effective March 15, Entergy Mississippi, working with its regulators, has temporarily suspended service disconnections through May 14, subject to the Mississippi Public Service Commission's review after thirty days.

However, Entergy encourages customers to make payments on their account if possible, and will work directly with customers to make payment arrangements if they are unable to pay in full. Customers requiring such arrangements should call 1-800-ENTERGY (800-368-3749) or visit myAccount.

Here are four more ways to manage through the higher costs of powering a home:

- **Level Billing** - Entergy averages consumer's bill over a

rolling twelve-month period so consumers have a consistent bill each month of the year. Customers can pay about the same every month, with no surprises.

- **Pick-A-Date** – Customers can choose what day of the month they get billed to line up with their budget and manage their cash flow.

- **Power to Care** - Through Entergy's The Power to Care program, local nonprofit agencies can provide emergency bill payment assistance to seniors and disabled individuals in crisis. More information is available at entergy-mississippi.com/bill-help/.

- **LIHEAP--LIHEAP** (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) is a program that provides money to help people with energy bills and other energy-related expenses. LIHEAP is funded through the federal government and works with community action agencies to help customers pay for and keep electric service in their homes. For information on how to apply for assistance, call 1-800-421-0762, or visit the state Division of Community Services Web site.

Consumers who think they will need help with their power bills are encouraged to not delay calling Entergy's customer service representatives at 1-800-Entergy (1-800-368-3749) to see what solution might be right for them.

State Board of Education suspends key policies to manage impact of extended school closures

Special to Wesson News

The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) has suspended several statewide policies to manage the impact of extended school closures due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) public health crisis. The policy suspensions apply

I, Biology, English II and/or U. S. History during the 2019-20 school year will not be required to take and/or pass the corresponding end-of-course subject area test(s) or meet one of the options in lieu of passing the test(s) to meet gradua-



only to students and educator candidates in the 2019-20 school year and educator preparation program applicants through December 2021.

Some of the key statewide policy suspensions enacted include the following:

Graduation for the Class of 2020

Current seniors who meet all district and state requirements may graduate this school year. The requirement that students take end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, English II, Biology and U.S. History has been suspended for seniors, because these assessments cannot be administered in spring 2020. Statewide, students are required to earn a minimum of 24 Carnegie units to graduate.

Students Scheduled to Take High School End-of-Course Assessments

Any student in grades 7 through 12 who is currently enrolled in Algebra

tion requirements.

High School Credits (Carnegie Units)

School districts shall determine a process for awarding a Carnegie unit credit for courses that are incomplete for school year 2019-20. Local school boards have the authority to suspend or amend their graduation policies for the 2019-20 school year, provided the policies continue to meet state standards.

3rd Graders

Current 3rd graders will be promoted to 4th grade for the 2020-21 school year if the student meets all other district requirements for promotion.

Education Preparation Program Entry

Candidates seeking admission to an SBE-approved traditional or non-traditional educator preparation program on or before December 31, 2021, are exempt from the educator preparation program

cont. on page 24

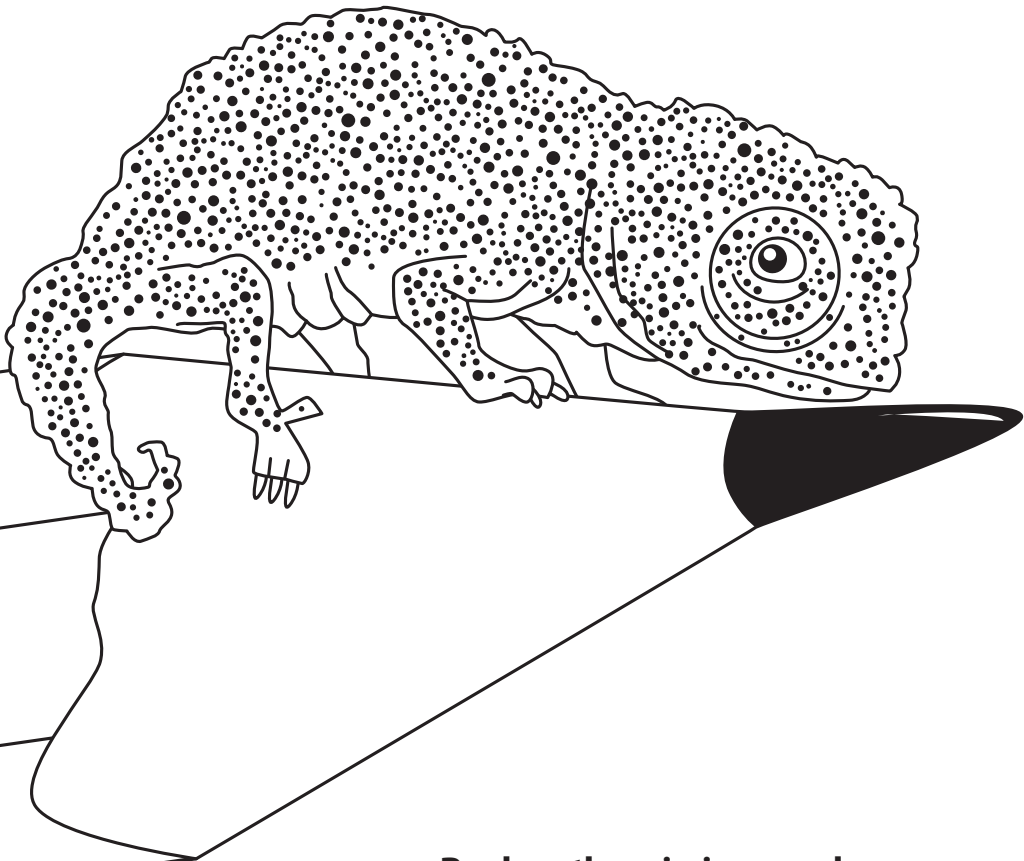


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Chameleon Cutie

The world’s smallest chameleon, the *Brookesia micra* chameleon lives on the island of Madagascar.

Adult males grow to only about a half-inch (16 millimeters) from nose to tail.

This chameleon is so small that you might miss it if you don’t look very closely. In fact, scientists did miss this tiny guy for a long time.

Circle every third number to discover the year the *Brookesia micra* chameleon was discovered.

7 1 2 4 9 0 3 7 1 5 1 2

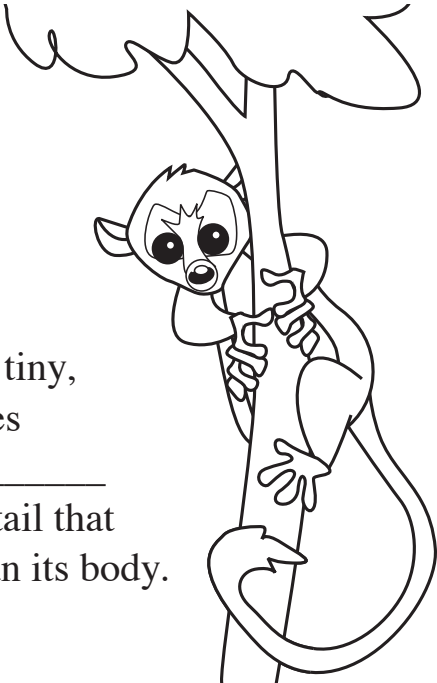
2

Madame Berthe’s Mouse Lemur

The world’s smallest primate _____ only one ounce (30 grams), or about the same as a slice of _____.

It is called Madame Berthe’s mouse lemur.

While the cute critter is super tiny, it has large eyes which help it _____ at night and a tail that is _____ than its body.

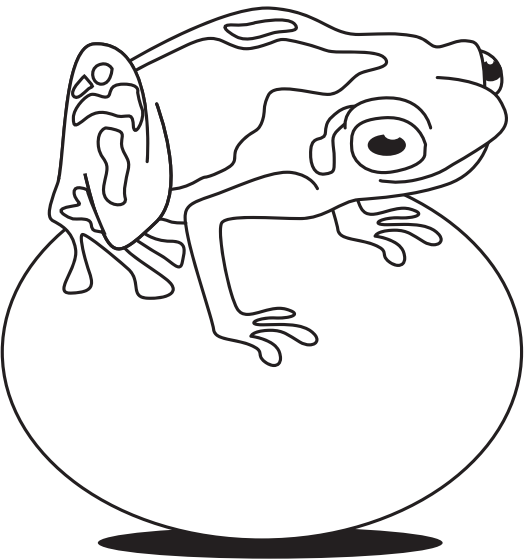




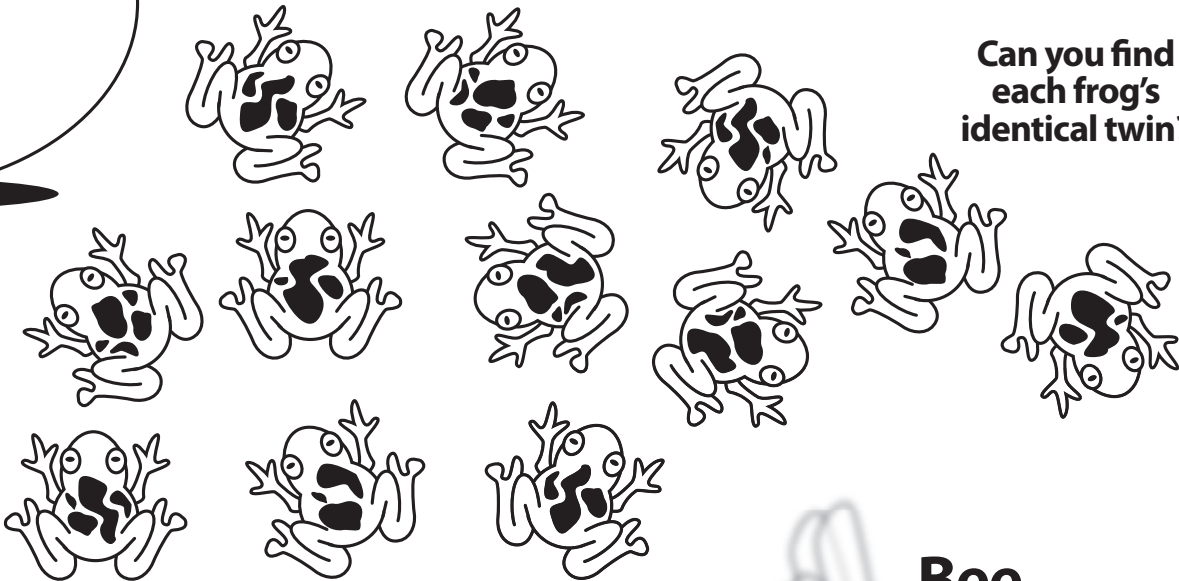
THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE

Name:

A frog the size of a fly? Oh my!



The *Paedophryne amauensis* frog is about the size of a housefly. It is so tiny that it can fit on a grape. It measures only about a third of an inch or 7.7 millimeters long.



Can you find each frog's identical twin?

Standards Link: Life Science: Animals have structures that serve different functions in survival.

Royal Antelope

The **royal antelope** is the world's smallest antelope, measuring only ten inches tall and weighing less than seven pounds (3kg). This cute little creature lives in the rainforests of Ghana and Sierra Leone, but the chances of you seeing one are very slim because they're nocturnal.

How many words can you make with the letters in **Royal Antelope**?

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>



Bee Hummingbird



It's the smallest bird in the world and weighs less than two ounces (57g). Don't let its size fool you! It's tiny but powerful. It can flap its little wings 80 times per second!

MDEQ advises against flushing wet wipes and paper towels

Special to Wesson News

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is advising people to not flush disinfecting wipes, paper towels, or similar products in toilets but to dispose of them in household garbage. These items can cause damage to wastewater treatment and collection systems creating clogs, backups, pump failures and sewer overflows, which then create additional public health issues. Wipes listed as “flushable” can also cause problems for wastewater and septic systems.

“An increasing number of people are currently at home and consuming more wipes and paper towels than normal. We are advising people to remember that toilets and wastewater systems are not designed to process those types of things, which we

consider to be trash. Please dispose of these items properly with your other household garbage,” said Chris Wells, MDEQ Interim Executive Director.

Wipes are among the leading

causes of sewer system backups and impacts to wastewater collection and treatment systems. Many centralized sewage collection systems depend on gravity and water flow to move human waste

and biodegradable toilet paper. Other items in the system can result in backups and spills that can cause discharges to the state’s waterbodies, creating public health and environmental issues.



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Mississippi Department of Education compiles learning-at-home resources

Special to The Wesson News

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) has compiled a host of learning-at-home resources for students in pre-K through grade 12 to support student learning during the extended school closure. The resources are available online at www.mdek12.org/LearningAtHome.

The learning-at-home resources do not replace what children have learned at school, but instead help students practice the skills and strategies taught by their teachers. The resources are intended to help parents and caregivers engage students in continued education.

Resources include learning activities, example videos and digital resources that support the Mississippi College-and

Career-Readiness Standards to continue and reinforce children's education.

MDE content specialists have selected all resources, which include dedicated webpages for students in pre-K-grade 1, grades 2-3, grades 4-5, grades 6-8 and grades 9-12. Also, resources for students with visual or hearing impairments are available and guidance on social emotional learning.

During this unusual time of extended school closures nationwide, it is important that students continue to read, write, and engage in social studies, science and math activities.

The MDE learning-at-home webpages will be updated periodically with additional resources.

cont. from page 6

COVID-19 cautions during pregnancy

el industry or other high-risk setting. Should I stay home from work?

Ask your employer about what is being done to protect employees and minimize the risk of infection. Wash your hands often. Practice social distancing with six feet of space between you and others, if possible.

Should we delay trying to conceive during the COVID-19 pandemic?

We do not know if the virus lives in semen or can be sexually transmitted.

We plan to travel during the pregnancy or shortly after our baby is born. Is this OK?

Avoid places where large numbers of people gather -- airports, for example. Even traveling by car in the United

States increases your risk to exposure.

Will the hospital separate me from my newborn and keep my baby in quarantine?

If you do not have COVID-19 and have not been exposed to the virus, the hospital will not separate you from your baby.

Can I breastfeed or pump for my child if I have COVID-19?

It does not appear that COVID-19 can be passed through breast milk. With proper washing techniques of pumping parts, milk can be effectively pumped and stored. Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for the newborn as it has natural immune boosting properties.



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GO TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS AND THE PHARMACY	GET CLOSER THAN 6 FEET TO OTHERS
CARE FOR A SICK LOVED ONE	LEAVE YOUR HOME FOR NON-ESSENTIAL ERRANDS
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Bear-hunting new social distancing activity

Special to Wesson News

Bored staying at home to protect yourself and others from COVID-19?

How about a bear hunt?

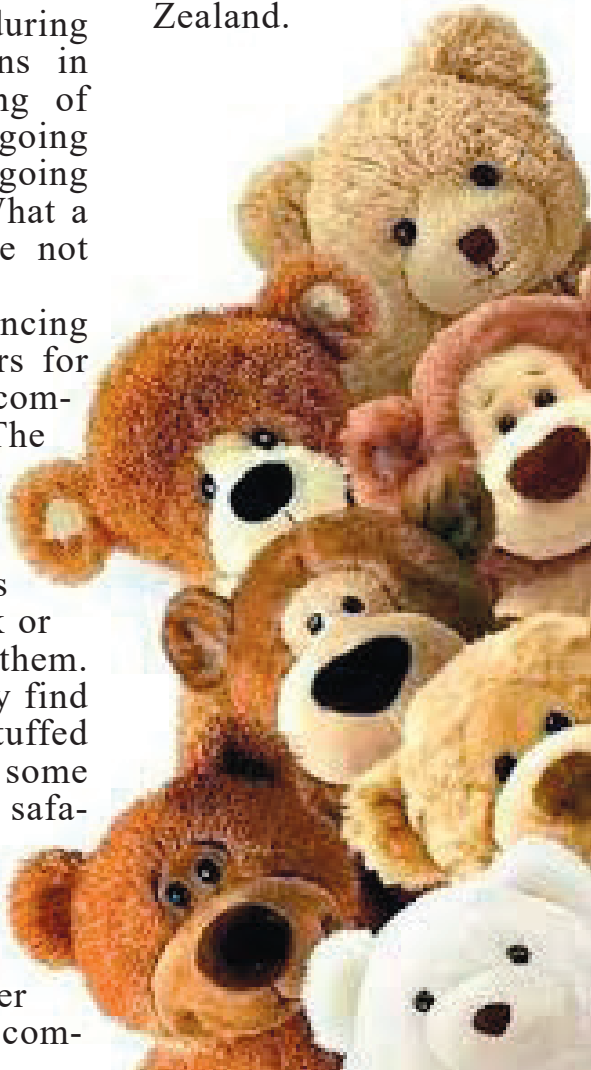
Inspired by Michael Rosen's 1989 children's book, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, teddy bears are appearing everywhere along streets made empty by coronavirus. The stuffed animals are appearing in windows around the world to give children, and even the young at heart, an exciting, social-distancing-safe scavenger hunt activity during coronavirus lockdowns in line with the opening of Rosen's book: "We're going on a bear hunt. We're going to catch a big one. What a beautiful day! We're not scared."

In its social distancing guidelines, the Centers for Disease Control recommends bear hunts. The idea is for some folk to display teddy bears and other stuffed animals in the windows and neighbors to walk or drive around to find them. You may find not only find bears, but perhaps a stuffed bunny or camel. In some places, the hunt is for safari-themed animals.

In neighborhoods where they're happening, people say the hunts build a stronger sense of community, com-

municating in a symbolic way that we're all in this together.

Laura Ann Walker, a seventh grade teacher at Alexander Junior High in Brookhaven, may have been one of the first to promote the idea in the area, stealing it from other teachers on social media and posting it as a suggestion on the Neighborhood Watch Facebook page of Brookhaven's Vernondale area. But the bears are appearing in locations as far flung as New Zealand.



cont. from page 2

Families are becoming unexpected homeschoolers

some structure is a key to keeping students' lives normal and their education moving forward. She emphasizes the importance of creating a routine, which does not mean a day has to be rigidly scheduled.

"Being organized is extremely important when students have lessons and assignments from their teachers that must be downloaded, completed and then uploaded," Bell says. "It is also important to have a positive attitude no matter how inconvenient the whole situation becomes. Children of all ages respond to the negativity and complaints that they hear the adults in their lives express."

Bell says parents who typically limit their children's TV time may be tempted to ignore those limits for the sake of sanity or to create a quiet space for them to work from home.

"I worry that this new normal will lead to too much TV time, and that is not good regardless of the situation," she says. "Children's brains can stall when they get into screen mode, and that is not healthy."

Samantha Laird of West Point has a young son who is missing preschool. She is working from home while trying to keep him engaged and learning.

"Encouraging students to

read frequently during this period may be helpful," Laird says. "Being organized makes it easier for parents to keep up with assignments from teachers and help their children follow lesson plans and activities."

Kellie Gartman, a first-grade teacher at Sudduth Elementary School in Starkville, is now homeschooling her third-grade daughter. Gartman says parents should focus on reading, quality conversations about material read or viewed, and encouraging imagination.

"With young kids, ask how the story made them feel and why, or explain whether or not you've ever done something like a character in the story or had something similar happen," Gartman says.

She also encourages parents to be creative with learning opportunities, realizing that learning does not have to come from a book or a screen.

"Design and build a fort, design and create a game board to practice math skills, plant some flowers from seeds and then keep a journal with drawings of your observations," she says. "Visit museums virtually. Many are putting up new material due to quarantine."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bonnie Coblenz writes for the Mississippi State University Extension Service.



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cont. from page 1

What's opened and closed around town

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601-563-7213

Runyans Automotive
M-F 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
601-717-4412

Ashley's 51
M-Th 6 a.m. - 9 p.m.
F 6 a.m. - 10 p.m.
S 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Sun 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
601-643-0072

Carpenter Shop
closed for walk-in retail.
Call 601-643-0062 with ques-
tions.

Dr. Liverman
Call 601-643-6878 with any
questions.

Shop and Wash
M-S 4 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Sun 4 a.m. - 6 p.m.
601-643-5676

Steel Outdoors
M-F 6 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Appointment only
601-643-6024

East End Grocery
M-F 5 a.m. - 10 p.m.
S & Sun 6 a.m. - 10 p.m.
601-643-2626

Tennis courts at Co-Lin
Closed. Track and nature trail
open
Call 601-643-8351.

Wilmas Veggies
M - S 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Curbside service

Salons closed.

Parkers Body Shop
M-F 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
601-643-2902

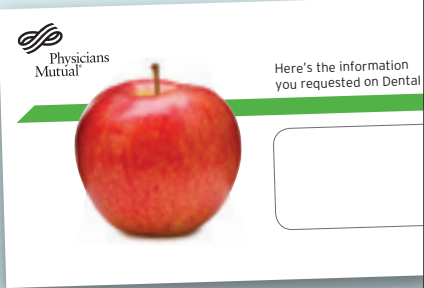
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cont. from page 5

Gardening: an ancient art continues

for his wife.

Many modern gardeners, myself included, grow flowers and vegetables because our spouses like them.

Let's fast forward to gardening today. Many of my gardening friends know that I have quite the home vegetable garden. I really enjoy the taste of homegrown vegetables, and I go all the way back to starting my own seeds. I'm poring over the catalogs that are stacking up, and selecting new varieties to try in 2020. With all the selection of seeds and plants we have available today, I'd kind of feel sorry for Atouk if he were still gardening.

There is satisfaction in knowing that the home garden can produce good, nutritious food. One crop I grow for my wife is fresh heirloom tomatoes. She loves them, and she loves me for growing them for her, even though I really don't like fresh toma-

atoes. So, I'm encouraged when I talk to homeowners who are starting their first gardens or Master Gardeners expanding their landscapes and gardens. While we don't have to rely on our gardens for survival anymore, I'm encouraged that the human species is still practicing and benefitting from this eons-old tradition that was a leading force in stabilizing our society.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Gary Bachman is an Extension and research professor of horticulture at the Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center in Biloxi. He is also the host of the popular Southern Gardening television and radio programs. Contact him at southerngardening@msstate.edu. Locate Southern Gardening products online at <http://extension.msstate.edu/shows/southern-gardening>.

cont. from page 1

Local Court responds to coronavirus

hall location.

Gone too were other people there to pay fines. Court staff at city hall is now accepting advance payments by mail and phone, including by credit card. People required to take defensive driving courses can sign up for them by phone.

The new court procedures will continue next month and longer, if necessary.

Mississippi municipal courts have jurisdiction over misdemeanor crimes, municipal ordinances and

city traffic violations. Municipal judges may conduct initial appearances in which defendants are advised of the charges being filed, as well as bond hearings and preliminary hearings.

There are 237 Municipal Courts. Most municipalities have one municipal judge, although a few jurisdictions have several.

Most municipal judges are appointed by governing bodies of municipalities. Terms of office vary.

cont. from page 17

State Board of Education suspends key policies to manage impact of extended school closures

entry testing criterion. The exemption extends through the 2021 calendar year to mitigate the impact of a prolonged suspension of candidate testing nationwide.

Education Preparation

Spring 2020 educator licensure candidates no longer need to meet the minimum of twelve weeks of full-day student teaching to become licensed. The MDE will continue to work collaboratively with Education Preparation Providers (EPP) to determine the acceptable experiences necessary for student teaching and demonstration of teaching competency prior to licensure.

Previous SBE Actions

The SBE voted on March

19 to suspend all required federal and state assessments for the 2019-20 school year, to seek a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for federal accountability requirements and to allow school districts to forego the requirement of a 180-day school year per state law. ED informed MDE on March 20 of its intention to issue a formal approval of MDE's waiver request in the coming weeks.

Local Policies

Local school districts have the authority to establish additional policies regarding grading, promotion, retention and graduation. Contact school districts for details on local policies.

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