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# Wesson News

**SPOTLIGHT**

**Christmas  
Meditation**  
Page 10

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**Wesson News**  
PO Box 1028  
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Volume 7, Number 12

*"Good News You Can Use"*

December 10, 2019

## Don't leave Wesson to Christmas shop

*Special to Wesson News*

You can breeze through Wesson in a car on Highway 51 and not realize you have passed by a Christmas shopping mecca. The few visible merchants -- Ace Hardware, Family Dollar, Dollar General -- belie what is also here: Seventy vendors under the roof of the Mill Town Mall -- one of the few remaining industrial buildings that housed vast textile manufacturing facilities in the Nineteenth Century. Busy B's -- a clothing retailer that may be the best kept secret in town at Salon 51. Gift shops like Another Time. . . .Another Place, located in an unassuming building on a side street, the retail space at Porches Restaurant, or Little Dixie Sutler, situated in a small barn next to a Victorian style home outside the commercial area.

The fact of the matter is you don't have to leave Wesson to do your Christmas shopping.

"We have everything on your Christmas shopping list," asserts Melissa Meredith at Mill Town Mall. Located in the center of downtown Wesson on Highway 51, the mall has a full house of vendors. Meredith ticks off a long list of possible gift available through them: Imperial and Old Timer knives, collectible coins, glassware, jewelry, including handmade items; leather goods, furniture, pottery.



*Wesson News*

*Steel Outdoors owner Dwayne McLemore suggests an outdoor battery-powered bike as Christmas gift for hunters.*

Mill Town Mall is a good place to start shopping, but don't stop there. You can also find gifts at:

**Busy B's** on the north side of Highway 51 at Factory Street. Vera Boyles operates it at Salon 51, and features a wide array clothing for infants and toddlers -- dresses, play suits, jumpers and gowns -- and juniors -- pageant and prom dresses.

**Salons.** At Salon 51, Boyles also offers gift certificates for her salon services and hair care products, which she says make good stocking stuffers. On the west side of Highway 41 at Spring Street, Angie Wade at Mill Town Salon and Spa also suggests hair care products and gift certificates for manicures, pedicures, massages and hair care services.

**Another Time. . . .Another Place.** A Wesson retail institution on the south side of Mill Town Mall on Spring Street. There, Janet Currie maintains a unique gift shop, which stocks its shelves with quality, relatively low cost items, including local arts and crafts, necklaces and other costume jewelry, candles and yard art, among other unique bargain gifts for Christmas. Currie also makes one-of-a-kind custom-made wreaths and florals and provides free gift wrapping at the shop.

**National retail chain stores.** Dollar General is also on Spring Street, where

*cont. on page 4*

## Old Time Christmas features Santa

*Special to Wesson News*

Santa Claus is coming back to Wesson to help mind the kids while the adults shop.

The occasion is the second annual Town-sponsored Old Time Christmas this coming Friday evening at the Wesson Old School Community Center. Santa will be the center of attention for the kids who come along with the adults to the event that will start at 6 p.m. and run until 9 p.m.

Town Clerk Angela Hester, who is putting together the December 13

event, persuaded Santa to return to Wesson from the North Pole a week following his arrival in the Christmas parade and meeting with children afterwards at the Wesson Volunteer Department station house on Spring Street.

"We'll be serving hot chocolate and cookies to the kids while they wait to visit Santa, and giving them post cards to write reminders of their Christmas gift wishes to Santa, which they can drop in a mail box for him to take back to the North Pole," Hester

reports.

If that's not enough to occupy the kids, they can also decorate a tree at the event.

Meanwhile, Hester is still lining up vendors for adult shoppers. She will continue recruiting them into the day of the event and is expecting to have at least twenty-five vendors on hand to occupy the adults, as well.

Vendors, who have already committed to participate in the event, will be selling baked goods, monograms,

Posh skin care products, knives, Norwex cleaning supplies, handbags, ornaments and plates commemorating the season and Paparazzi jewelry, among other gift possibilities for Christmas. They will be largely locals.

"It should be a joyful occasion for all," says Hester. "With Santa on hand to visit with the kids, it should also be a relaxing shopping experience, making for an old time Christmas without the stresses of Christmas in the Twenty-First Century."

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## Wesson beautification projects celebrated

*Special to Wesson News*

Another \$20,000 is coming to Wesson for tree planting and beautification through a grant to Co-Lin that the college will spend on developing a community fruit orchard and landscaping.

The Mississippi Urban Forest Council (MUFC) wrote the grant proposal and will help with all aspects of project implementation. Co-Lin students, employees and community members will participate in the project.

With officials from the college and the Town of Wesson, representatives of America in Bloom (AIB), which awarded the grant, and CN Railway (CNR), which provided the funds, celebrated the new money coming to Co-Lin and work already accomplished under earlier beautification monies utilized by the Town.

"We are so excited to participate in this initiative for both campus beautification and the educational opportunities it will provide," said Dr. Jane Hulon, Co-Lin President.

Earlier, the Town of Wesson received a beautification grant for \$12,500 from CNR and AIB for planting trees and flowers. With the help and support of a large number of volunteers and the Wesson Garden Club, landscaping was completed at the Old Wesson School Community Center and in the courtyard fountain area on Main Street in addition to other work around town. In Wesson, tree-planting is continuing around the municipal park and elsewhere.

"Wesson is looking alive again," said Curtis Howington, a longtime resident of the town. "It is great to

see people come together to make our home beautiful."

"These types of activities are significant improvements to the community," MUFC Executive Director Donna Yowell said. "The social impact of green space, trees and gardens can be

with connections to all points in North America.

AIB, an independent not-for-profit organization, promotes nationwide beautification through education and community involvement by encouraging the use of flowers, plants, trees and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements. It envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work and play, benefiting from colorful plants and trees; enjoying clean environments; celebrating heritage; and nurturing pride through volunteerism.

MUFC is a statewide not-for-profit organization that works with communities and local groups to improve quality of life and support strong communities for economic success on a local level. Through its Help Green Our Communities program, it is promoting tree-planting to enhance property values, improve the look and feel of commercial

areas, and even help reduce crime. Its volunteers -- Urban Forest Masters -- have planted more than 379,000 trees and donated more than three million flower bulbs in Mississippi since 2010. MUFC envisions Mississippi Arboretum Trail encompassing a series of arboretums in cities and towns across the state. Mississippi Business Journal has recognized it as one of Mississippi's best nonprofits.

For more information on Mississippi programs visit [www.msurbanforest.com](http://www.msurbanforest.com) and [www.AmericaInBloom.org/CN](http://www.AmericaInBloom.org/CN).



*Special to Wesson News*

On hand to celebrate Co-Lin and the town of Wesson receiving beautification grants were (left to right) Co-Lin Associate Vice President of Instructional Services Jackie Martin, Co-Lin WIOA Recruiter Tuwana Williams, Reed Harrington of Canadian National Railroad; Wesson City Clerk Angela Hester, Co-Lin President Dr. Jane Hulon, America In Bloom representative Bill Hahn, Wesson Garden Club members Debbie Smith, Jennifer Peets, Debbie Hoaglin, Denise Jackson and Jean Ricks.

particularly pronounced when public spaces are transformed into places of beauty that foster safe places for neighborhood interaction, economic and property value enhancement, and improves the lives of those that live in or visit the community."

CNR transports some \$250 billion worth of goods annually for wide-ranging business sectors, including resource and manufactured products and consumer goods, across a rail network spanning Canada and mid-America. CNR, along with its operating railway subsidiaries, serves the cities and ports of Vancouver, Montreal, New Orleans, Mobile and Jackson, Mississippi,

## Police Blotter

*Special to Wesson News*

During November, Wesson Police Department activity encompassed:

**Responses to:**

- One debit card fraud
- One house fire
- One petit larceny
- One vehicle burglary
- Thirteen business alarms
- Seven requests for ambulance or fire department assistance
- Eight animal calls
- Sixty-nine general complaints
- Sixteen suspicious vehicles
- Three vehicle unlocks
- Three stranded motorists

**Arrests & citations for:**

- Fifteen speeding violations
- Three careless driving incidents
- Two driving without a license
- Two expired tags
- Three disregard for traffic devices (stop signs)
- One reckless driving
- Three contempt of court
- One dog ordinance violation

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.



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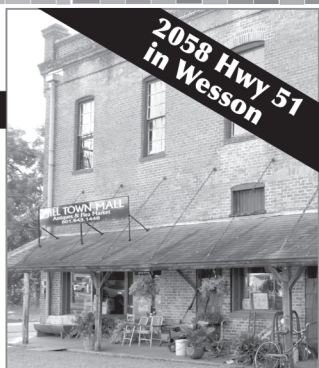
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# Marilyn Phillips stands up when called

By Bob Arnold

Marilyn Phillips, the long-time educator who is Wesson Attendance Center principal, never aspired to the career in which she has been so successful.

"In my youth, I never wanted to be a teacher," she recalls. "Maybe an accountant. But a teacher? No!"

That changed when her son Christopher was born with a disability. "As it turned out, the disability was correctable, but it looked like he might have to be home schooled," Phillips details. "So I prepared for it by studying to become a teacher."

Throughout her career, she has "stood up" and taken on responsibilities she resisted initially because "it wasn't me or I can't do it." But "stood up" she has done, and it has worked out well. "God has blessed me in career and my personal life," she affirms.

tor. It wasn't me."

Her move into administration was irreversible. She took over as WAC's assistant principal and then became principal in 2011, when Ron Greer asked her to recruit a replacement for him so he could return to coaching. She found Dr. Barbara Roberson, who moved into her job after Greer and other school officials convinced Phillips she needed to serve as principal. "I couldn't see myself doing it, but I stepped up," she says.

When Phillips isn't behind her desk or roaming the halls at WAC to conduct business with staff or interact with students, you can find her at her home on Dixie Garden Road on family farm land once owned by grandparents, which she and her husband now share with her mother and father and a brother.

**What are your hobbies?**

I am pretty much a homebody, and

## MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Phillips grew up in Strong Hope, where the local Baptist Church made "a huge impact" on her life, completed elementary school at Wesson Attendance Center, graduated from Wesson High School, then at Co-Lin; studied voice at what was then Co-Lin Junior College, and received her BS and MA degrees in education from Mississippi College at Clinton, and William Carey University at Hattiesburg.

She married her high school sweetheart, Freddie ("Flip") Phillips, now a retired Certified Public Accountant, who had a long career with the Mississippi Department of Finance. Over 43 years of marriage, they had three children -- Jessica Dowd, now an educator in Copiah County, Staci Booth, a healthcare professional in Nashville, Tennessee, and Christopher, a Minister of Music, who is moving to Alaska after serving in Nashville. They also have two grandsons and two granddaughters.

Phillips started her 20-year career at Wesson Attendance Center (WAC) after teaching kindergarten for one year in Crystal Springs and then working seven years at Mamie Martin Elementary School in Brookhaven. After teaching first and sixth grades at WAC, she moved into administration in 2005, prodded by Copiah County School officials to write a grant proposal to fund a federal Reading First program, which they persuaded her to manage. Again, Phillips initially resisted the career turn: "I loved classroom teaching. I couldn't see myself as an administra-

tor. I like to cook. There was a time before I became a school administrator when I bowled in a league and participated in a national tournament. When I find time, I could get into horses, enjoy fishing and do some traveling. I teach adult Sunday School at Sylvarena Baptist Church.

**Are you a reader?**

I read a lot, mostly inspirational and self-help/growth books like Billy Graham's *Holy Spirit*.

**Do you enjoy movies or theater?**

I can't sit still long enough. I am a project person. Remodeling. Refurbishing furniture. Redoing all things. I have my eye on my kitchen now. When I married, my father told my husband: "She and her projects now belong to you."

**How about music?**

At Co-Lin, I sang in recitals -- pieces in five different languages. I didn't pursue a singing career, largely because I didn't want to go too far from home. But I still sing, often in revivals.

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

I would first give ten per cent to the ministry of the church. Then I would look for ways to help people -- poor families with need for medical care, clothes and food.

**How would you change the world?**

I try not to worry about the future, but go to my knees before the Lord, whom I seek and follow. I would try to help other people find the answers to their needs through the Lord.

cont. from page 1

# Don't leave Wesson to Christmas shop

manager Tommy Tate has dedicated two aisles for Christmas items. For gifts, there are candies, scents, soaps and skin lotions. At Family Dollar on the west side of Highway 51, just south of Wesson Baptist Church, manager Audrey Fields features a special Christmas display with toys and electronic items -- can openers, coffee pots and wireless speakers for adults, miniature play sets for children who want to pretend to be chefs or nurses or tea servers at a party, dolls for girls, toy trucks and race cars for boys, or a telescope for adults or kids who want to explore the skies. "Don't forget our Christmas cookies," she reminds.

**Ashley family stores.** Proprietor Jarred Ashley has added animal feed to his human food service business at Ashley's 51 on the west side of Highway 510. He suggests gifts for hunters -- ground blinds and even turkey calls. Shop 'n Wash, the Ashley family's sister store, a solely a human food venue, with grocery items and various takeout selections, where you can purchase pizza gift certificates and Marathon gas cards for stocking stuffers.

**Wesson Ace Hardware.** Among a wide array of hardware items, Tim Sutton points to Traeger wood pellet grills, power tools -- Milwaukee and Dewalt drills and impact driver kits -- and pet beds for unique Christmas gifts.

**Restaurants.** Headed out of town

south on Highway 51 is Porches Restaurant, which also houses a gift shop, where co-owner Al McSweyn recommends Christmas shoppers look at the locally-made bracelets and earrings and ladies' shawls, scarfs, sweaters and coats. "Sorry, no menswear," he says. "In general, it isn't readily available in the markets, we visit." McSweyn suggests Porches holiday food for Christmas parties and dinners, as well: baked pit ham, pineapple casserole, bread pudding in almond sauce and cornbread dressing. "While you're at, put our cookbook -- *Pineapple Days and Bread Pudding Nights* -- on your Christmas shopping list," says McSweyn.

On Church Street, Dump's Barbeque is another restaurant stop, where Christmas shoppers can not only order food for parties and dinners, but acquire the secret sauce that gives its smoked meats a distinctly different flavor. Owner Ken Dale Sullivan sells it in pint and quart size mason jars.

**New shopping stop.** North on Highway 51 going out of town is a new Christmas shopping stop: a store operated by Steel Outdoors at its manufacturing location, where it produces some thirty products, including deer feeders, deer blinds, fire pits and cookers sold nationally. The store, which features archery and hunting related products, is geared to locals. Owner Dwayne Mc-Lemore's Christmas suggestions: a

battery-powered outdoor Predator bike, ground blinds, stands, archery equipment and hunting accessories.

**Elsewhere in town.** Out of the commercial area, you can find unique places to shop like Mike Webb's Little Dixie Sutler located in a small barn-like structure next to his house on Eighth Street. Webb is the sutler, in the tradition of the merchants who followed behind Rebel armies during the U.S. War Between the States, a part of Southern history he keeps alive with blankets, cups, flags, beach towels, lapel pins and other small gift items. For Christmas gifts, he suggests items with "Ole Miss Pride," "Ole Miss Colonel," and the Gadsden "Don't Tread on Me" designs, Mississippi state flags and Christian flags.

If you ask around, you may find a home-based artisan or craftsperson with interesting gifts. You can even find your Christmas tree a few miles out of town, where Gary Keller grows them and will cut down your choice on his ten-acre property on Highway 51 in Beauregard. Whether it's local arts and crafts, collectibles, something different to use, wear or eat and drink, Wesson is often the place to find what is unavailable or not easily found elsewhere.

"Out-of-town visitors often think they have made a surprise discovery when they stumble on stores and restaurants in Wesson that residents often take for granted," Mill Town Mall's Meredith says.

Research reports show that, for every dollar spent at a local business, 3.5 dollars are re-circulated into the local economy, which creates more local jobs. Local businesses are the backbone of a community. When you shop locally, you get to know the people behind the business, and you enjoy a connection you would not otherwise have. Local businesses also buy locally themselves. They hire architects, designers, cabinet shops, sign makers and contractors for construction. They use local accountants, insurance brokers, computer consultants, attorneys, and advertising agencies. Local businesses give communities their flavor. The combined presence of many local businesses makes it different from every other city or town in the world. By supporting those businesses, you help preserve the uniqueness of Wesson. Local businesses define our sense of place, and their survival depends on our patronage.

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# Teacher comes home to her dream job

By Bob Arnold

It took a while, but Bethany Martin is back in Wesson, and working in a dream job at Wesson Attendance Center (WAC) in which she has been recognized as Teacher of the Month.

Born in Wesson, her father, a preacher, and her husband, who served in the military, kept her away because of their varied career responsibilities.

"As long as I can remember, I wanted to be a teacher; and when my husband and I decided to return to the area, my goal was to work at that best school -- and that was Wesson Attendance Center," Martin relates.

In April, Martin applied for a job teaching at WAC, and she started teaching fourth graders there this fall.

After a brief childhood in the Wesson area, where her father, Van Windom, served as pastor at Mission Hill Baptist Church, Martin grew up in Crystal Springs and Roxie, where her father served other churches. She returned to Wesson after graduating from Franklin County High School for two years to study at Co-Lin, where she earned an Associate Arts Degree in education. She received her BS Degree Elementary Education in 2006 after Co-Lin at the University of South Alabama at Mobile. Her teaching specialty is reading, and she earned a certification to teach mathematics as well through testing.

Along the way, she met and married Brian Martin from Crystal Springs and made career stops at Mobile and Corpus Christi, Texas, during his military service.

Martin did her student teaching at Gilliard Elementary School in Mobile, started her career there teaching fifth graders for one year, moved to Texas, where she taught math to seventh graders for two years in Odem and then math, science and social studies at Corpus Christi for five years before returning to Mobile in 2014 to teach advanced math to seventh graders at



Wesson News

Philips Preparatory School. She came back to Covich County with her husband to be near family when he left the military, settled in Hazlehurst and applied for her dream job at WAC.

Martin sees teaching as "being an inspired servant" and tells students "I work for you." Her reward, she says, is "seeing kids make connections, working to get the job done and light bulbs going off in their heads when they have come to understand something."

The Martins have two children, a daughter, Gracyn, 13, who is a seventh grader at WAC, and a son, Ethan, 11, who is a fifth grader at WAC. When she isn't teaching or occupied by her children, Martin reads ("I'm eclectic. I read everything.") and enjoys the beach.

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# Wesson Community Calendar

December weather forecast: *The Old Farmer's Almanac* calls for an average temperature of 51 degrees F (three degrees above average) with precipitation of 4 inches (one inch below average). December 10-12: Rain, then sunny, cold. December 13-24: Rainy periods, quite mild. December 25-28: Sunny, cool. December 29-31: Showers, mild.

DECEMBER 10

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.

Final exams at Co-Lin through December 12.

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).

DECEMBER 13

Old Time Christmas sponsored by the Town of Wesson. Some twenty-five vendors will be on hand to serve Christmas shoppers. Santa Claus will meet with the kids. Hot chocolate and cookies for kids and adults. Wesson Old School Community Center. 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

DECEMBER 15

"Only the Lowly -- A Shepherd's Christmas." A Christmas musical at 10 a.m. Brookhaven United Methodist Church.

Christmas children's program. Wesson Baptist Church. 5:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 16

WorkKeys Assessment for Career Readiness Certificate. 12:45 p.m. Also 8:45 a.m. December 18. Thames Center of Co-Lin campus. Call 601-643-8707 to register.

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.

DECEMBER 17

Institute for Learning in Retirement luncheon. Guest speaker will be Craig Ray from Visit Mississippi, the tourism division of the Mississippi Development Authority. \$10. Thames Conference Center on the Co-Lin Wesson campus. 10:30 a.m.

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

DECEMBER 18

Co-Lin graduation. 9:30 a.m.

DECEMBER 19

"Food as a Business: Disaster Preparedness for Food Businesses" for anyone who operates or is interested in operating an agriculture-based food business, including retail, cottage food or food processing operations. Covers financial preparedness, risk management, record keeping, crisis communication planning, emergency-action planning and food recall and traceability planning. \$15. Mississippi State University Central Mississippi Research and Extension Center in Raymond (1320 Seven Springs Road). Register online at <http://bit.ly/2qMPmEh> or download and print a registration form through the Extension calendar listing at <https://extension.msstate.edu/calendar/events>.

DECEMBER 22

"Light and Life," a musical presented by the adult choir during the 11 a.m. worship service. Sylvarena Baptist Church, Wesson.

DECEMBER 23

Wesson Attendance Center Christmas holidays begin.

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.

DECEMBER 25

Merry Christmas

JANUARY 1

Happy New Year.

JANUARY 2

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

JANUARY 6

Second semester classes begin at Wesson Attendance Center.

JANUARY 9

Co-Lin registration.

JANUARY 13

Classes begin at Co-Lin.

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.

Email Community Calendar items to [bobarnold@wessonnews.com](mailto:bobarnold@wessonnews.com)

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**BOB ARNOLD, EDITOR**

# Movie-making: opportunity & hard work

By Guest Columnist Shaw Furlow

Ever wanted to be in a movie? Recently, those of us in our little corner of the world have had the opportunity. And to participate in the hard work, as well.

For the past few weeks, I and several other locals have been involved in a movie being shot in and around Lincoln County as part of the cast. *The Band Forgettable*, a film written, directed, produced and starring local musician JF Oakes, has been a major undertaking of Oakes as a first-time filmmaker.

Without giving away the plot, the story centers around an aging musician. Bands like the Bridge and Learned Hills make an appearance, along with a very special performance by Cary Hudson. While music plays a major part of the story, there is a dramatic back story, as well.

It hasn't been easy:

• **Try writing a script.** A complete story line with beginning, middle and end. With compelling dialogue. I've tried and failed more often than I've



Wesson News

succeeded.

• **Locations.** Who is willing to give up their space -- a home, office or bar -- for a weekend to a film crew? You call on friends and hope for the best.

• **Crew.** Assemble a crew of tech people who know how to bring the screenwriter's vision to the screen. Easy, right? Wrong!

Oakes called on filmmaker JB Lawrence from Jackson to be the cinematographer. Oakes and Lawrence had worked together before on Oakes' video for "Bless Your Heart," a song that won a Josie Award last year in Nashville.

Lawrence, a veteran filmmaker, knows the Mississippi music scene probably better than anyone, having shot music videos with dozens of bands. Most recently, he filmed Natchez band Bishop Gunn's new video. If you haven't heard of Bishop Gunn yet, you will. This past summer, they opened for The Rolling Stones in Houston.

Now about the cast. Believe it or not, that has been relatively easy for Oakes, if not for those of us in the cast.

I can't guess what would even come close as to how many people are in the cast. I am in a scene that called for several speaking roles and at least a dozen

extras. Between Oakes and Lawrence, they had a list of actors they wanted to use. Veteran actors Elizabeth Marsh and LeLane Higgins came from the Jackson area, while Donnie Pierre and Ella Clark from New Orleans and Baton Rouge, and Heather Thurgood from Brookhaven.

The rest of the cast includes locals, like myself, with little or no film experience. However, many of us have been involved in Brookhaven Little Theatre productions, and pretty much know the lingo at least.

Shooting days are long and can be quite grueling. Block the scene, rehearse the scene, light the scene, roll camera, sound and "action." Then do it again. And again.

Now from another angle, and close ups. If you think learning lines and hitting your mark is hard, try being an extra. You do the same thing over, over and over again. Bottles, napkins, cell phones anything on your table must be put back in the exact place for every shot. The clothes you wore last week must be exactly the same this week. And men, did you have facial stubble last week? As with most things in life, it's the little things that are important.

But on my longest day on set, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., I didn't hear one complaint. Oakes and Lawrence are super nice people and kept the set light hearted. Again, the extras sat in the same chairs and made "background conversation" that entire day, oh, and for no pay.

There is still a lot to be done, with more scenes to shoot before the hard work begins -- hours and hours of editing, adding the soundtrack, making sure the color is right, along with a myriad of other technical details.

Oakes intends to enter the completed film in some festivals, where many independent films catch the eye of major distributors.

"That would be great, but my intention is more personal than to make any money," Oakes told me recently. "I've had this story, and it just had to be written and filmed. A 'can I really do this kind of thing'."

There is no release date scheduled yet, but hopefully you'll be able to see *The Band Forgettable* in a theatre next summer.

Until next time, enjoy the season and support the arts.

*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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## Alzheimer's is growing health crisis

*By Guest Columnist Dr. Stephanie Duguid*

President Ronald Reagan helped launch a national campaign against Alzheimer's disease in 1983, calling members of the Alzheimer's Association to the White House for the signing of a proclamation, declaring National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month (NADAM).

Alzheimer's is the only cause of death among the top ten in America that does not currently have a way to prevent, cure, or even slow its progression.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia, which is caused by damage to nerve cells in the brain. It is ultimately fatal. Experts agree that in the vast majority of cases, it probably develops as a result of complex interactions among multiple factors, including age, genetics, environment, lifestyle, and coexisting medication. Some risk factors like age and genes you cannot control, while others, such as high blood pressure and lack of exercise, you can control.

With the number of Americans aged 65 and older expected to reach 13.8 million in 2059, Alzheimer's, which is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States and the fifth leading cause of death in those aged 65 and older, is a growing health crisis. One in ten people over the age of 65 have Alzheimer's disease, while more than 200,000 under the age of 65 have been diagnosed with this disease. More than 5.8 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's. Two-thirds of them are women, and it is estimated that women in their 60s are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's over the rest of their lives. Deaths from



*Special to Wesson News*

Alzheimer's increased 66 percent between 2000 and 2008. Every 65 seconds, another American develops Alzheimer's disease.

Focus on the six pillars of a brain-healthy, Alzheimer's prevention lifestyle to help reduce your chances of developing the disease:

1. Regular exercise
2. Healthy diet
3. Mental stimulation
4. Quality sleep
5. Stress management
6. An active social life

Recognize the warning signs:

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

Early detection can improve access to medical and support services, provide the opportunity to make any legal, financial, and care plans while you can and may reduce health care costs by delaying placement in a

care facility. Now is the time to get involved, learn more, help build awareness about Alzheimer's and to be an advocate for those affected.

Contact the Alzheimer's Association for more information at alz.org or at 800-272-3900.

*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.*

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# Receiving the gift that lasts

By Guest Columnist Rev. Nelson Santa Ana

I have a Christmas confession to make. I'm not as fun as my parents were at this time of the year. You see, my family gets a boring artificial Christmas tree every year. But when I was growing up, my parents would take me and my siblings out to a tree farm to pick out our Christmas tree. It was like the unofficial start of the Christmas season in my home. So every year, I eagerly waited for the weekend that we would go get the tree.

However, as I glamorize my memories of this holiday tradition, I'm reminded of just how aggravating having a live Christmas tree actually was. Getting the tree was the best part, but after that it was nothing but work. Strapping it to the roof of the car, cutting off branches to make it fit in the house, trimming the trunk so it would fit in the stand, hanging lights and ornaments while fighting with siblings over what goes where, vacuuming fallen pine needles and watering the tree every day. It wasn't nearly as satisfying as my initial memories seem to recall. In fact, there was probably more screaming and fighting in my house during the Christmas season over taking care

of the tree than over anything else. And, ultimately, by the end of December, the tree would be mostly dead and we would take it down and throw it on the side of the road for the city to dispose.

Now, that's not the brightest picture of Christmas that's ever been painted. But isn't it true of most of the things in our lives? We get excited and wait in eager anticipation for big events and special occasions. Yet, without fail, every one of them



eventually comes to an end. Not to say that these things are bad or are not enjoyable, but ultimately they do not satisfy, because they do not last.

That's what makes Christmas unique. Not the commercialized caricature of Christmas we see in our culture, but the actual coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible describes this event through the eyes of a man named Simeon:

"There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking forward to Israel's consolation, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, he entered the temple. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform what was customary under the law, Simeon took him up in his arms, praised

ference, though, is found in Simeon's response. He wasn't happy he got a new tie, a new set of golf clubs or a new car. None of those things would last. He was overwhelmed and overjoyed that he was given the opportunity to embrace an eternal Savior in the form of the baby Jesus. He was given a gift that will never fade away but will always satisfy!

Now, here's the beauty of the true Christmas story. That same gift is still available for you! Jesus is no less alive today than He was on that first Christmas day some 2000 years ago. And this same Jesus, who is still living and will live forever, is offering you the greatest and most satisfying gift ever given: Himself. If you don't know Jesus, stop putting all your anticipation on the next thing in life to satisfy your innermost longing. Rather, trust in the One who has been filling those longings for millions of people for generations and unending generations to come. Jesus is "the way, the truth and the life" and He can be yours this Christmas and forever.

Merry Christmas!

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Rev. Nelson Santa Ana is the pastor at Wesson Baptist Church.*



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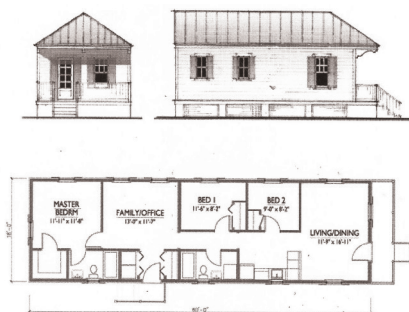
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# Hoopsters look for success on court



Wolves men's basketball team.

Special to Wesson News



Lady Wolves basketball team.

Special to Wesson News

## Special to Wesson News

With six returning sophomores, the Co-Lin men's basketball Wolves are looking to rebound from an 11-12 record in 2018-2019 and recapture the success of 2017-2018 when they finished 19-6 and made a playoff run in one of their best seasons in recent years. The Lady Wolves, at the same time, return to the court after finishing 21-7 in 2018-2019 with an experienced team featuring the top two leading scorers, the top rebounder, the top three-point shooter, and the assists leader in their sophomore campaigns.

For the men, Cameron Woodall, Lance Madison, and Darius Kent return along with three other sophomores who had limited experience on the court -- Dajon Whitworth, Dayquan Perkins, and Je'Kevious Williams.

Woodall, a 6'6 forward from Raymond, Mississippi, an athletic big man who can be effective both inside and out, is the leading returning scorer, who averaged 12.9 points and 6.9 rebounds a game as a freshman, while shooting 47.5 percent from the floor. Madison saw action in 19 games last season, and averaged 5.6 points per game, shooting a staggering 57.1 percent from the field. Whitworth is a quick point guard who enjoys spreading the ball to teammates and finding the open man. Perkins is a hardnosed forward who can play above the rim and saw limited action in eight

games as a freshman after injuries. He averaged 6.9 points and 6.4 boards in those games while shooting 58.5 percent from the field. The Gulfport native looks to be a force on the floor as a sophomore. Williams is an athletic forward who can get it done under the rim, but battled injuries as a freshman. Kent is a returning guard who is very crafty and has the ability to play multiple positions.

Joining the returners in 2019-2020 are transfer Tyree Lomax from Clarendon Community College in Clarendon, Texas, TJ Monroe, an athletic wing player from Columbia (Mississippi) High School, who has the ability to score in a variety of ways; Jamarkus Wilson, a skilled player from Rayville, Louisiana, who can make shots behind the three-point line; Demarcus Ellzey, a strong guard from South Pike, who has an extremely deep range; JD Allen, a big-time shooter from Wesson, who can score a lot of points in a hurry; Jay Burton, another quick-footed point guard from Lauderdale, whose ball-handling enables him to get off shots at any time; Shemar Dickerson, another Wesson product who can finish around the rim; and Dewey Shannon, a long and athletic forward from Copiah Academy, who is developing a great back-to-the-basket game.

"We are looking for better chemistry as a team," says Head Coach Kenny Bizot. "I think our guys are getting along really well this year. We are going to have to execute better this year, utilize some key sets, rebound the basketball, and have a warrior mentality. These will all be big keys to our success this year."

Lady Wolves returning this season are Sha'Quandra Carter, a 5'9 forward from Monroe, Louisiana, who led the team in points per game with 13.3 during her freshman campaign; Camryn Davis, a 5'9 forward and Lawrence County High School graduate, who averaged 11.9 points per game as a freshman, with 202 rebounds and 27 blocks; TaMara Riley, a 5'7 guard from Durant, who averaged 9.8 points per game and shot 42.2 percent from the floor;

Darien Tubby, a 5'6 point guard from Choctaw, who led the team in shooting percentage with a staggering 50.4 percent from the floor, shot a team-best 80 percent from the free-throw line and piled up a team-high 153 assists; Azaria Magee, a 5'9 guard from Jefferson Davis High School, who was 12-for-30 (40 percent) from long range in division games last season; Dashell Davis, a 6'1 forward from New Orleans, who brought down 121 rebounds last year; Chardonay Williams, a 5'6 guard from

McComb, who made some big shots last year to spark the team; Dellesheonia Dixon, a 5'6 guard from McComb, who provides a solid offensive presence and is a leader on defense; and Orion James, a 5'8 forward from Houma, Louisiana, who battled an injury for most of last year.

Joining the returning sophomore talent are five freshmen: Cianna Jones, a 5'5 guard from Jackson; Morgan McCray, a 5'11 forward from Ridgeland, who averaged 13 points per game as a senior and earned All-District honors in high school; Jana Case, 5'9 graduate of Brookhaven Academy, who lit up the scoreboard in her senior year with an average 22 points and eight rebounds per game; Orlandrea McGee, a 5'7 guard from Forest, who averaged 19.5 points and five rebounds per game in high school; Myja McNichols, a 5'9 forward and graduate of Newton High School, where she averaged 16 points and seven rebounds per game.

"Hopefully the sophomores have the desire to lead this team to do what it takes to win," Head Coach Gwyn Young says. "Every team wants to win, but few do what it takes. We hope our girls communicate, have good chemistry, are aggressive on defense, and have the right mental attitude. If we can do that well and consistently, I think this is going to be a really good basketball team."

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# Wesson Garden Club honors yards



*Special to Wesson News*

The Wesson Garden Club recognized autumn landscaping efforts of local organizations and town and rural residents: Winners included Porches Restaurant (top row left) and Co-Lin (top row center) -- organizational, Ramona Smith at 1010 Bayou Pierre (top row right) and Sandra Loar at 1025 Grove Street (bottom row left) -- town, and Larry and Dianne Miller at 1017 Dickerson (bottom row center) and Ira and Cherry Head at 3008 Monticello Road (bottom row right) -- rural. Yard of the Month awards, based on maintenance principles and elements of landscape design, seek to encourage ongoing beautification and cleanliness of the Wesson area and cultivate a citizenry that values and protects natural resources and assumes responsibility for enhancing the environment. The Garden Club's Yard of the Month awards honor properties during the spring, summer and fall.



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