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Wesson News

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"Good News You Can Use"

April 8, 2014

Wesson gears up to celebrate its history

By Bob Arnold

Most of the time it may be true that "the great eventful Present hides the Past," as the Nineteenth Century poet John Greenleaf Whittier observed. But not in Wesson this month.

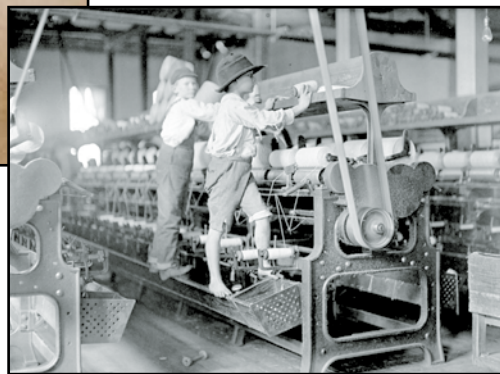
Two events will roll the clock back and put the past on center stage for area residents over the next few weeks: A Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit hosted by Co-Lin that looks at America's work life over the past 150 years and Chamber of Commerce Founders' Day festivities, which will celebrate Wesson's 150th anniversary.

The Way We Worked, the traveling exhibition which explores how work became such a central element in American culture, will officially open for the general public today at 2 p.m. with a ribbon cutting and remarks by Dr. Stuart Rockoff, Executive Director of the Mississippi Humanities Council (MHC), at the Mutton Building on the Co-Lin Wesson campus. Co-Lin is one of six state hosts of the exhibit in cooperation with the MHC, the Museum on Main Street division of the Smithsonian Institution, and the National Archives. Running through May 9, it also features a local component — *The Way Wesson Worked: From Mill Town to College Town*.

While Co-Lin is showcasing the past through its exhibit, the wider community will be focused on the past in its preparations for the Wesson Sesquicentennial celebration on Friday, April 25, and Saturday, April 26. Individual citizens, members of civic organizations, business leaders, and government officials will be building floats for a parade that will highlight key periods, events, and people in the history of Wesson from 1864 to 2014; developing the beginnings of what is hoped will become a permanent, ongoing town historical museum; and planning walking and driving tours, open houses, and other special events.



Among work from the past, highlighted in the Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit at Co-Lin, are ice delivery (1918) to the left, loom work (1909) below, and service as a U.S. Navy nurse (1966) bottom left. Pictures are from the National Archives.



All photos special to Wesson News



Sesquicentennial Celebration

Musical festivities will launch the two-day Sesquicentennial celebration on Friday, April 25, in the car lot on Highway 51 and Spring Street:

- Co-Lin Jazz Band at 4:30 p.m.
- Gospel Sing — Floyd Boys at 7:00 p.m. and The Riders at 8:00 p.m.

The Wesson Birthday Parade will roll at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 26. George and Dottie Mercier are the parade Grand Marshalls. Among dignitaries who will ride in the parade

are State Senators Sally Doty and Albert Butler and State Representatives Becky Currie and Greg Holloway.

The parade will feature an 1860s horse-drawn carriage, recalling transportation in the decade of Wesson's birth. Floats built by various organizations will highlight aspects of Wesson's history: Wesson Baptist Church (1920s), Wesson Baptist Pre-School (1950s), Wesson Garden Club (1930s), *Wesson News* (newspapers today and yesterday), Shop 'N Wash/Ashley's 51 (1980s), American Legion, League of Extraordinary Women of Wesson (decades of beauties), Lions Club (75 years of service), Wesson Masonic Lodge (145 years of service), Milltown Mall (carriage, wagon, and big bale of cotton), Trustmark (banking), Beauregard Methodist Church (soldier march). Co-Lin, Precious Moments, and the Wesson Riding Club, among others, will also have floats in the parade.

Other Saturday highlights include:

- Ceremony honoring veterans of the armed forces sponsored by

Pike County Bank

- Walking and driving tours
- Contests and special events sponsored by Wesson Wagon Train, including a pig race, wood splitting and greased pig catching competitions; pony and carriage rides; a demonstration of antique plows; a petting zoo
- Children's games and contests, including a sack race, three-legged race, turtle race, and an egg toss in girls and boys divisions by age groups (eight and under, nine to twelve, and thirteen to fifteen)
- Open houses at the American Legion and Volunteer Fire Department
- Pie baking, beard, and hot dog eating contests showcasing unique skills, talents, and traits of individuals
- First-time opening of the new Wesson historical museum
- Special visiting hours (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) for Co-Lin Smithsonian exhibit
- Cotton spinning and weaving demonstration with narrative — the story of Mississippi Cotton — by Marva Goodman
- Decades of Beauties Pageant at Old School community center — a fashion show for men and women who want to dress up in attire from their decades of choice

In the midst of all this, the usual Founders Day vendors will be on hand with food and drinks, arts and crafts, and flea market items throughout the day.

"We are also urging business owners to help create an historical environment during the two-day celebration by displaying artifacts and photos from Wesson's or their own past," Chamber of Commerce president Marilyn Britt reports.

The two-day event will culminate with a birthday party for the Town of

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Community Calendar

April weather forecast: *The Old Farmers Almanac* calls for an average temperature of 65 degrees (two degrees above normal) and 5.5 inches of precipitation (one inch above average).

APRIL 8

Official public opening of *The Way We Worked*, Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit. Co-Lin Mutton Building. 2 p.m. Runs thru May 9.

APRIL 9

Institute for Learning in Retirement luncheon & visit to *The Way We Worked*. Co-Lin Thames Center 10:30 a.m.

APRIL 10

Institute for Learning in Retirement Throwback Thursday & program by Brookhaven High School forensic team. Co-Lin Thames Center. 10 a.m.

Co-Lin Concert Choir. Co-Lin Ewing Fine Arts Auditorium. 7 p.m.
Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Enochs Hall at Mississippi School of the Arts. 7:30 p.m. Runs thru April 12.

Pictures with Easter Bunny for children kindergarten thru fourth grade sponsored by Parents Teachers Organization. Elementary School foyer at Wesson Attendance Center. 9 a.m.

APRIL 12

Lions Club pancake breakfast. Wesson Baptist Church. 6 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Blessing of Pets. Decell Memorial United Methodist Church. 4 p.m.

APRIL 14

National Library Week. Programs for Pre-School and elementary school children. Wesson public library. 10 a.m. Also April 15.

APRIL 15

Ident-a-Kid. Picture id cards for elementary school children. Wesson Attendance Center Old Gym. 8 a.m.

APRIL 16

Co-Lin Awards Day. Recognition of scholarship recipients and academic achievers. Rea Auditorium at Co-Lin Administration Building. 10:30 a.m.

APRIL 17

Institute for Learning in Retirement movie. Co-Lin Thames Center. 1:30 p.m.

50-Plus Club luncheon with Becky Currie, District 92 Mississippi House Representative, as speaker. Co-Lin Anderson Building. 10:30 a.m.

Copiah County Master Gardeners monthly meeting. Public invited. Extension Office at Gallman (right off I 55 Exit 65). 1 p.m.

APRIL 18

Wesson High School Prom. Old School community center. 8 p.m.

APRIL 23

Institute for Learning in Retirement trip to New Stage Theater, Jackson. Bus leaves Thames Center at 4:30 p.m.

APRIL 24

Dance Concert. Mississippi School of the Arts. 7:30 p.m.

APRIL 25 & 26

Wesson Sesquicentennial celebration. Downtown & at Old School community center. 4:30 p.m. (April 25). 10 a.m. (April 26).

MAY 1

National Day of Prayer program. Wesson Attendance Center Old Gym. 9 a.m.

Band Concert. Wesson Attendance Center Old Gym. 7:30 p.m.

MAY 4

Vespers Service & Ceremony for Wesson High School juniors & seniors. Rea Auditorium at Co-Lin Administration Building. 8 p.m.

MAY 9

Kindergarten Awards. Wesson Attendance Center Old Gym. 12:30 p.m.

MAY 10

League of Extraordinary Women of Wesson Zombie 5K Race fundraiser. Co-Lin campus. Registration at 6:30 a.m. Race starts at 8 a.m.

MAY 12

Elementary School Awards. Wesson Attendance Center Old Gym. 9 a.m. (fourth thru sixth grades). 12 noon (second thru third grades).

Email Community Calendar items to bobarnold@wessonnews.com

From the Mayor's Desk

By Alton Shaw, Mayor of Wesson

It has been an honor to serve as your mayor over these past eleven years, and even more of an honor to be serving during the 150th anniversary of our town. As I look back through our town's history, it is truly amazing to see our accomplishments and transformations. Starting out as one of the largest cotton and textile operations in the South, we now possess some of the best educational systems our state offers. Its quiet way of life and continual community involvement make me proud to call Wesson home.

It has always been interesting for me to look back and read through the old minutes and ordinances of our town, finding that many of the struggles from the past still arise even today. It is also a stark reminder that the position an elected official possesses is brief and continually changes. That one day I will simply be another name recorded in the minute books, while hoping that together in the present we can contribute in a lasting way for future generations.

I think back to what our forefathers must have been thinking and planning as they laid out the infrastructure of the

town. The debates that may have taken place as to where to put the roads, and what to name them, how the water lines should be run, and where to locate fire hydrants. The footprint of our ancestors is definitely here, and has created the fabric of society that continues to allow us to grow.

As much as I look at the past, I look even more forward to our future. With the multiple planned homes for development, and our upcoming municipal park, I look forward to what is on our horizon. Even as we continue to move forward, we still look back at our past for inspiration through such things as our new downtown streetlights modeled after the original lights in Wesson, and the renovation of our old school, which has both retained many of its original architectural designs and recovered some that had been lost through restoration work.

I look forward to our upcoming 150th anniversary celebration, and am even more enthusiastic about our future as a community. I thank you again for allowing me this honor to serve as your mayor, and as always, if I can ever be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to ask. May God bless.



Special to Wesson News
Mayor Shaw

Attacking Wesson's wildfire threat

Special to Wesson News

Surrounded by forested areas, Wesson is highly vulnerable to wildfires at the woodland/urban interface in a state where fires consumed more than 17,000 acres last year, in Copiah County where 804 acres burned two years ago, and next door to Lincoln County, which was one of the top ten wildfire counties in Mississippi last year with 36.

"Wildfires are inevitable, but most homes threatened by them can be saved when their owners do little things under their control in advance before they occur," Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) Firewise

Coordinator Leslie G. (Oppie) Blackwell told a Wesson Garden Club-sponsored workshop last month at the Old School community center. "The key is understanding that owners and others responsible for homes are in partnership with trained fire fighters. It's not protector heroes and helpless victims."

Firewise is an educational program for homeowners and community leaders that explores design, construction, landscaping, and maintenance of homes and communities to enhance their capacity to withstand wildfires without firefighting resources on scene.

The reported 17,000 Mississippi



Photo by Wesson News

Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) Firewise Coordinator Leslie G. (Oppie) Blackwell.

wildfires are the tip of iceberg — those to which MFC responded, Blackwell said. The actual number could easily be double those if they accounted for fires suppressed by Volunteer Fire Departments. Altogether, they damaged four homes, destroyed twenty, and threatened almost 1,400 during 2013.

At the Old School event attended by some 50 fire fighters, real estate professionals and homeowners, Blackwell elaborated on the three "firewise principles":

- **Design and construction.** Use fire-resistant materials in building and retrofitting a home — asphalt

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Area stages showcase theater, movies and music

By Guest Columnist R. Shaw Furlow

An integral part of the arts scene in the Wesson area and an important element of its quality of life is theater, thanks to the 47-year-old Brookhaven Little Theater (BLT) and, more recently, the Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA).



Special to Wesson News

BLT's origins date to the mid 1960s, when a small group of like-minded citizens met in Brookhaven to discuss the possibility of establishing an amateur theater troupe. After several years of meetings and involvement of more people in the planning process, Brookhaven Little Theater was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1967.

During the early years of the struggling troupe, Mrs. Thelma Case would call everyone involved with the theater to remind them of meetings, auditions, or set construction. Today that would be daunting, because the membership has doubled several times over.

For the first 20 years, BLT produced its plays in any venue available. Lampton Auditorium and Brookhaven Elementary School are two stages that come to mind. In the mid 1980s, BLT found its home at The Haven Theater, the long-abandoned movie theater in downtown Brookhaven. A deal was made, and BLT bought the building housing the old auditorium. John Landress, long-time theater director at Co-Lin and a founding father of BLT, said seats were removed, carpet was replaced, the walls were painted, the stage was extended, dressing rooms were constructed, and other areas were converted to meet the theater needs during an extensive renovation.

Since then, the Haven has been the venue for Brookhaven's amateur actors and directors. Over the years, Landress, who directed at least one play a year for BLT and helped others in designing and building sets, running lights, and working with make-up and costumes, has seen countless of them cross the stage. The Haven auditorium, where performances are held now, carries his name, as does an annual award to a ten-year theater volunteer who has made major contributions to BLT's life either on stage or behind the scenes.

The present and the future both look good for the BLT and for the Haven. The historic venue is hosting increasing numbers of events of different kinds, such as CD release concerts and even movies, once again.

Just a few weeks ago, movies came back to the Haven for the first time in nearly fifty years when Travis Mills, a young filmmaker from Arizona with Brookhaven ties, screened ten of 52 movies he made during the 52 weeks of 2013. The length of the movies were between 5 and 25 minutes each. Extremely well-done and entertaining, they conveyed the message that you do not have to live in Los Angeles to shoot movies and, if I may add, to create art or music.

The Music Man, Meredith Willson's beloved musical, will be produced by BLT May 9-11, and 16 and 17. The cast of 50 locals portray children, townspeople, and, of course, that scoundrel band man, Professor Harold Hill. Tickets are \$10, and the shows begin at 7:30 p.m.

Today, the Mississippi School of Arts joins BLT in the area as a source of theater for area residents. Dr. Robert Brooks, the head of the theater department at MSA, is very enthu-

siastic about what is going on at the special state high school. He has thirty students from all over Mississippi involved in his troupe, and they are receiving instruction in every facet of the theater.

Dr. Brooks says students who have graduated from MSA in theater have demonstrated their preparation in landing roles in plays as freshman over upper classmen. Dr. Brooks, who has taught on the university level, prefers teaching at MSA, where he finds students are dedicated to their craft and eager to learn. "Everyday something great happens in class," he says.

MSA is on the campus of the old Whitworth College in Brookhaven. The land and buildings were given to the state by the city, and the legislature funds the school. At the newly-renovated black box theater in Enochs Hall on the campus, the MSA theater department will produce William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, a play about deceit, betrayal and revenge, which is considered one of Shakespeare's greater works. The performances on April 10-12 start at 7:00 p.m. The house will open at 6:30 p.m. There is no admission fee.

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Overheard around town

Wesson News

Fed watchdog cites concerns

Over the past 13 years, starting in the Presidency of George W. Bush and continuing into the Presidency of Barack Obama, U.S. government agencies have, increasingly, carried on controversial activities based on "secret laws," according to an official of a Washington watchdog group that monitors the federal government and champions good government reforms.

Danielle Brian, Executive Director of Project on Government Oversight (POGO), explained that attorneys of Federal agencies engaged in Constitutionally-questionable activities effectively legalize them by providing Constitutional interpretations which are not made public — thus creating "secret laws" that authorize growing numbers of federal government operations.

Brian, who spoke last month at a 50-Plus Club luncheon and later to students and faculty at Co-Lin in a special seminar, said the goal of her organization is "effective, accountable, open, and ethical government."

"We identify systemic corruption, undue influence, or other misconduct impacting the federal government," Brian said. "We launch independent investigations into cases that meet our guidelines, conducting research with the assistance of whistleblow-

ers and other government insiders to explore tips and document findings. We recommend common-sense solutions for positive change, educate the media and public to empower action, and work with government officials to implement systemic policy improvement."

"Secret laws" are among a multiplicity of issues POGO has identified in its investigative focus on national security, energy and natural resources, public health, and financial services.



Photo by Wesson News

Federal watchdog Danielle Brian is concerned about "secret laws," the government contracting process, and "revolving doors."

Government contracting is another major problem, as dramatically evidenced recently in the catastrophic rollout of the Obamacare web site, which couldn't cope with the traffic that came to it or perform basic tasks, Brian said. "The designer of Healthcare.gov was a Canadian company, which had been terminated by the Canadian government for incompetence on another web site project," she related. "Yet the company got the Obamacare web site project outside a competitive bidding process and without its track record being checked." The Obamacare web site contracting process, however, is the rule, not the exception in federal agencies, Brian added. Seventy-five per cent of federal contractors have blemished track records, and half of federal contracts are awarded to favored companies without competitive bidding, she said.

Another issue is "revolving doors"

in federal agencies whose employees come from the industries they oversee and then return to lucrative jobs in those industries.

POGO pursues only one per cent of the cases presented to it, taking on those through which it can make a difference and is not duplicating the efforts of others, Brian explained. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), a law that gives U.S. citizens the right to access federal government information, is a vital tool in its work. Whistleblowers — government workers who see wrong-doing and are willing to expose it at the risk of their careers — and Inspectors General, internal watchdogs employed by federal agencies, are the starting points for its investigations and critical in its research. So POGO pushes for whistleblower protection. It also pressured the Obama administration to stop delaying appointments of Inspectors General.

POGO started its work in 1981 as a private organization to which Pentagon whistleblowers could funnel information about "outrageously out-of-control military spending," Brian said. An independent, non-partisan organization, it is funded primarily by individuals and family foundations with limited contributions from law firms, corporate employees, and matching donations from their companies.

Other speakers

Wesson area social, civic, fraternal, service, and academic groups also have heard other voices recently.

50-Plus Club—Robotics at Co-Lin

Kevin McKone, physics instructor at Co-Lin, discussed the school's robot-

ics program, including its participation in the Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) competition at Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center in Federal Way, WA., and training it provides to area children in summer camps.

Co-Lin's robotics team, known as the SeaWolves, finished in sixth place



Photo by Wesson News

Co-Lin's Kevin McKone (right) talks about robotics training for college students and kids with 50-Plus' Brenda Kavanagh.

among 23 teams in the twelfth annual International Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) MATE competition in designing, building, and fully testing a ROV — the primary tool in placing and maintaining underwater fiber optic cable and scientific instruments on the ocean floor, McKone reported.

"We competed in five categories — robotic missions, technical report writing, engineering presentation, poster display, and safety inspection," he said. "The academic and career-technical students who are part of the Seawolves acquire skills and background they can immediately transfer into the workforce for employers who

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Overheard around town

hire people who have knowledge of multiple disciplines and can function in a collaborative environment. The tremendous success of the SeaWolves in competition is reflected in the recognition of its student participants in the workplace.”

The Co-Lin program begins piquing interest in robotics among area children through two week-long summer camps – one for beginner elementary school students from grades 5 through 7 and one for intermediate students in grades 8 through 10.

“With user-friendly equipment, the kids pick up the basics of robotics right away,” McCone said. “We don’t so much instruct them as guide their camp experience. Many of them return to the camp year after year. I look forward to teaching some of them in my classroom someday and seeing what they can do there.”

In addition to McKone, the Co-Lin robotics group includes Bo Johnson, Wes Burkett, Bruce Thomas, and Carrey Williamson.

Biblical lobbyist

Dr. Jimmy Porter, Executive Director and Treasurer of the Mississippi Southern Baptist Convention Chris-

tian Action Commission, said his agency focuses on social, moral, and ethical issues raised by bills in the State Legislature and policy matters in government departments, addressing its concerns within the context of what the Bible says.

“Last year, the Commission used the Old Testament scriptures’ condemnation of usury to help stop a bill that would have deregulated some interest rates,” he noted. “The sanctity of life is another Biblical theme which consistently guides our work.”

In this year’s legislative session, Porter said the Commission supported bills that would outlaw participation of Mississippi in human cloning activities and reform the prison system towards assuring “equality and fairness” in incarceration. A bill that would change the legislative session to every-other-year “may have been a good idea,” he added. The Commission also sought to free \$1.6 million for abuse shelters in a Department of Health account.

Porter said the Commission is cautious about Common Core as the state’s educational standard, believes

claims of its proponents are “unproven,” and “the federal government is extending its reach” through it, and it is ultimately a matter of parental rights. It opposed a bill that would legalize gambling on Pearl River cruise vessels — “boats for Jackson area casinos,” he reported.

Although legalization of marijuana and same-sex marriage aren’t under consideration in Mississippi today, “the state will face these issues because that’s where culture is,” Porter said. He encouraged churches to get ahead of the same-sex marriage issue, addressing it in their constitutions and bylaws.

Lions Club—Restoring the past

David Johnson of the Historic Preservation Division of Galvotec Corrosion Services, Harvey, LA, described his work in the marine corrosion industry, in which he is known as an expert in the application of cathodic protection on marine structures and metals underground and conservation of artifacts recovered from marine or wet environments. He worked with Wesson resident Lynn Richards, wife of Lion John Richards, on restoration of the Louisiana Civil War submarine, which is displayed at the Louisiana State Museum.

“Historic restoration focuses on three types of materials — metals, encompassing iron, silver, and pewter;

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Photo by Wesson News

Dr. Jimmy Porter of the Southern Baptist Convention Christian Action Commission said his agency fights for or against legislation based on Biblical principles.

Police Blotter

Special to Wesson News

During March, Wesson Police Department activity encompassed:

- 11 Responses:
 - One-vehicle accident
 - One property fire
 - One petty larceny
 - Eight general complains
- 57 Citations:
 - One contempt of court
 - 56 traffic violations, including 28 for speeding
- 12 Arrests:
 - One wanted felon for parole violation in Texas
 - Six for possession of marijuana
 - One for drug paraphernalia
 - Three for possession of beer
 - One for open container

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	Children’s Activities
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Youth Bible Study	
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New program to offer advanced degree

Special to Wesson News

Area teachers will be able to work towards a Master's Degree in Education offered by Mississippi College (MC) through classroom courses in Brookhaven and online beginning this fall — an alternative to traveling to other institutions such as the University of Southern Mississippi at Hattiesburg to further their education.

Plans call for one MC class this fall in Brookhaven, two additional classes in the spring of 2015, and more classes in the summer of 2015. Courses will cover teaching elementary and junior high math, and technology in education. Half of the classes will be offered at a downtown Brookhaven location, while the remaining courses will be on-line. MC, which will seek full accreditation of the new program by the Mississippi Department of

Education, will explore potential partnerships with schools such as Co-Lin as it expands its course menu in Brookhaven, officials said.

“Our goal is to offer a high-quality



Special to Wesson News
Chair of Mississippi College's Teacher Education Leadership Department Cindy Melton

program to an area where we can invest in the students, teachers, and schools,” said Cindy Melton, education professor at the school based in Clinton, Mississippi. “Our department is about building partnerships and improving student learning.”

Melton and other MC School of Ed-

ucation leaders first started exploring the local program after talking with Mississippi College alumni who work as teachers in the Brookhaven area. Brookhaven business leaders then met with Melton, who chairs Mississippi College's Teacher Education Leadership Department, to iron out details of the 30-hour program.

MC trustee Bill Sones, president and CEO of the Bank of Brookhaven, helped initiate meetings with Brookhaven community leaders.

“I have a great love for Mississippi College and the city of Brookhaven,” said Sones. “This is exciting to me. There's a lot of interest here. People will enjoy not having to go so far

from home to earn their master's degrees.”

With 5,030 students, Mississippi College is the state's largest private university and second oldest Baptist college in the nation. It presently offers more than 50 separate Master's Degree classes.

The School of Education wants to open doors to give busy people an opportunity to earn a Master's Degree one step at a time, said Caley Forbes, the admissions director for MC's Graduate School. “Candidates would be able to get their degree in an accelerated time frame.”

For more information, contact MC education professor Cindy Melton at 601-925-3478 or cmelton@mc.edu.

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Getting to the rodeo the old fashioned way

By Bob Arnold

Eager fans get to the Dixie National Rodeo any way they can. On foot. Driving their cars or pickup trucks. Taking buses, trains, airplanes. One big group of fans – some 1,200 to 1,500 every year from throughout Mississippi and surrounding states – travels there the old fashioned way: in an array of non-motorized wagons and carriages pulled by horses and mules.

The Wesson Wagon Train, for example, brings on average, depending on the weather, some 250 people in 20 such vehicles every year to the Jackson event, which was held this year from late January into mid-February. Begun by Horace Smith here in 1985 as its first wagon master, Wesson Wagon Train is one of eight similar groups in Mississippi which start their journeys to the rodeo every winter from as far north as Philadelphia and as far South as the Gulf Coast. The first groups started the tradition in the early 1980s, and Wesson Wagon Train is the third oldest among them.

“You might assume we are about recalling and honoring the early 19th Century wagon trains which brought settlers to the Western U.S.,” says Randy Hutson of Wesson, who shares wagon master duties with William Allen of Hazlehurst for Wesson Wagon Train. “In fact, we are about having fun. Instead of going to Bermuda for a week, we go the rodeo utilizing 19th Century transportation technology. It’s not for everyone, of course, but I like spending a week with my horse in rain, shine, and even snow.”

Hutson says the wagon train tradition is passed down from generation to generation in families. Wesson Wagon Train and the similar Mississippi groups are not clubs, but rather once-a-year opportunities for people who like to socialize with each other and share interests in horses, horse-



Photos by Wesson News

Wagon master Randy Hutson (top left) continued a 30-year tradition, leading the Wesson Wagon Train to the Dixie National Rodeo at Jackson. Horace Smith was first wagon master. The wagon train traveled about 15 miles each day on back roads. Some 20 wagons embarked on journey from Wesson this year.

drawn transportation, camping, and, of course, the rodeo to travel together, make new friends, and renew old friendships, he explains. Members of the groups -- parents, children, and youth -- come from far and wide, not just near the places where they start their treks to the rodeo. Wesson Wagon Train draws individuals and families from throughout Mississippi and even into Louisiana.

The wagon train caravans feature a variety of horse-drawn traffic, Hutson relates. It’s not just live-in Conestoga wagons – the large, heavy, broad-wheeled covered wagons used in North America during the early

westward migration. The covered wagons themselves come in large, medium, and small sizes today. “Now, of course, they have rubber tires instead of wooden wheels,” Hutson notes. “A variety of carriages, doctor’s buggies, and surreys are also part of the wagon trains.” Some train participants build their own wagons and carriages, and others restore old ones. For those not skilled in the construction crafts, several Amish companies manufacture and sell them in a market that is growing nationally.

Wesson Wagon Train started its seven-day 75-mile journey to Dixie National Rodeo this year at Hutson’s

home near Sylvarena Baptist Church. It traveled “the back, back roads” 15 to 20 miles per day to evening camp sites on host farms and other land which Hutson arranged as one of his primary wagon master responsibilities. In advance, on each day of the journey, drivers brought the modern vehicles owned by Wagon Train participants and stocked with food, water, and other supplies to the camp sites for meals and necessities.

“We have traditional camp fires with song, games, story-telling, and conversation on every night of our travels,” says Hutson. “On Sunday morning, there’s a cowboy church worship service.”

When Wesson Wagon Train arrived in Terry five days after beginning its journey, it made its way to the Jackson Coliseum on the Frontage roads alongside the Interstate highways. The wagon trains parked together. While some people lived and slept in their equipped wagons during the rodeo, others used their modern campers or even stayed at nearby motels. Members of the wagon train groups shared meals together and attended a barn dance at Crystal Springs, but otherwise mostly enjoyed the rodeo on their own and with their families.

The state wagon train groups participated in the annual Dixie National parade, competing against each other on the basis of the authenticity and originality of their wagons and carriages, formation, and organization – a contest in which Wesson Wagon Train has won the first place prize twice.

Hutson credits Horace Smith’s original vision of Wesson Wagon Train for the spirit that continues to inspire the annual trek by the wagons and carriages to the rodeo and the support of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture in sustaining the event.

“Our thirty-year-old tradition lives on,” Hutson affirms.

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cont. from front page

Wesson gears up to celebrate its history

Wesson starting at 6 p.m. on Saturday at the Old School community center. Food and drinks will be provided, and there will be a time for fellowship — “not unlike a church social,” Britt says. In special ceremonies at the party, a time capsule will be dedicated. At 8 p.m., music and dancing will start and go into the evening until the celebratory energy of the day is exhausted.

The Way We Worked

The special Smithsonian traveling exhibit at Co-Lin originated in an exhibition developed by the National Archives and traces the many changes that have affected the national workforce and work environments since the 1860s. Drawing on the rich collection of the National Archives, it tells a compelling story which visitors see in films that focus on various industries and hear through the voices of workers who relate their stories. Interactive components convey the experiences of multiple generations of families involved in the same industry.

Co-Lin’s local exhibit component showcases the history of work in this area through vintage photographs and other artifacts from the life of Wesson and neighboring cities in the Co-Lin district over the past 150 years and Co-Lin over the past 100 years. During the course of the exhibition, a series of programs on work-related topics will be held in the Mutton Building:

- *Working in Mississippi 1870-1970* (lecture and discussion). April 17, 11 a.m.-12 noon. Dr. Max Grivno, Professor of History, University of Southern Mississippi.
- *The Mississippi Mills of Wesson, MS* (lecture and discussion). April 22, 1-2 p.m. Dr. Durr Walker, Retired Chairperson of the Division of Humanities, Co-Lin. David Higgs, Chairperson of the Social Science Division, Co-Lin.
- *100 Years in the Educational Industry — Copiah-Lincoln Community College*. April 24, 11 a.m.-12 noon. Kendall Chapman, Director of Library Resources, Co-Lin.
- Panel Discussion: *Evolution of Unions and Possible Ramifications of the Formation of the National Collegiate Athletic Players Association*. April 29, 1-2 p.m. Richard Baker, Business Division Chair, and Business Students, Co-Lin.
- *First Job Experiences* (a DVD produced by Co-Lin students). May 1, 2014, 11 a.m.-12 noon. Mary Warren, Humanities Instructor and *The Wolf Tales* newspaper staff, Co-Lin.

The regular exhibition hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Admission is free. The exhibit will appeal to everyone from fourth grade and up.

Poet John Greenleaf Whittier believed “hints and echos” behind the din and loud life of the present “steal in;” but in Wesson this month, they WILL BE the loud life of the present.

150 years and still going strong!

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen would like to invite you to attend

April 25 – gospel sing starting at 7:00 pm
 April 26 – flea market, food booths, parade of decades, tour of homes, children’s games, wagon rides, decade of beauties pageant.
 Town of Wesson birthday party and street dance starting at 6:00 pm at the old school.

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cont. from page 5

Overheard around town

organic, including leather and wood; and inorganic ceramics,” Johnson said. “The sea, in which ships lose 10 per cent of their cargo, is a primary source of historic artifacts. Off the coast of Florida, there are four wrecks per month.”

In addition to his work on the Louisiana Civil War submarine, he and his artifact conservators team at Galvotec, among other projects, set up the initial

electrolysis treatment system for conservation of the propeller of the USS Monitor, completely rebuilt the Jefferson Davis Funeral Catafalque Wagon destroyed in Hurricane Katrina, and restored the cannon and carriage from the porch of Cabildo on Jackson Square in the New Orleans French Quarter.

Johnson credited his expertise to an 18-year apprenticeship under Herbert Bump, who served as Chief Conserva-



Special to Wesson News

David Johnson of the Historic Preservation Division of Galvotec Corrosion Services, Harvey, LA, worked with Wesson resident Lynn Richards on restoration of the Louisiana Civil War submarine pictured here. It is displayed at the Louisiana State Museum.

court. “The new jail will have a state-of-the-art on-site kitchen, and it is physically linked to the justice court in an adjacent building,” he explained.

The new jail will have a 106-person capacity, compared to the present jail’s 53-person capacity. This includes a completely separate booking area, 16-bed pod, and two lunacy cells for female prisoners. Other features of the jail include a separate medical unit, remote automated plumbing control outside the incarceration area, video visitation instead of in-person visitation.

Jones, who will become president of the Mississippi Sheriffs Association in June, said he wants to see the state legislature address “antiquated laws” affecting Sheriff departments.

“Although sheriff department personnel have been trained in using radar for traffic control, they do not have speed-enforcement authority and cannot use radar equipment,” he pointed out. “This is silly.” Another law holds a sheriff department potentially liable

if it fails to repossess property in its role as a process server. Often the sheriff’s office doesn’t have resources to handle repossession. “To be held liable in these circumstances just isn’t right,” Jones asserted.

The volume of burglaries in Copeiah County, Jones said, reflects drug traffic. “In the large majority of cases, drug demand coupled with availability is directly related to burglaries,” he observed. “In Copeiah County, a new task force, including the Hazle-

hurst and Crystal Springs police forces and Sheriff’s Office, is working cooperatively to improve drug enforcement and curbing drug traffic.”

tor for the State of Florida’s Conservation Treatment Laboratory.

Sheriff’s agenda

Copeiah County Sheriff Harold Jones reported on progress of the new county jail, commented on antiquated laws affecting the performance of his office, and heralded new efforts to combat drug traffic in Copeiah County.

“The new county jail will come on stream in June,” Jones reported. “We expect it to be an accredited American Correctional Association (ACA) facility, which should make the state receptive to providing our office low-custody inmates for the work details that help keep our roads clean.”

Jones said he will save money on transportation costs and be able to use his personnel optimally because prisoners will no longer have to be driven to and from the new jail for meals at off-site facilities or for hearings at the justice



Photo by Wesson News

Copeiah County Sheriff Harold Jones said new jail will save money and may mean more low-custody inmates for work details that help keep roads clean.

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Library expands access to e-books

Special to Wesson News

Copiah-Jefferson Regional Library (CJRL) is expanding the capacity of its patrons to access, borrow, and download books in electronic formats to smart phones, tablets, e-readers and computers with the addition of Baker & Taylor's Axis 360 digital media solution to its library services.

CJRL has branches in Hazlehurst, Crystal Springs, Fayette, Georgetown and Wesson.

Axis 360 delivers digital content in EPUB, PDF, and Blio formats to PC and Mac computers, laptops and netbooks; smart phones and tablets running on Android and iOS; and popular eReaders such as NOOK, Sony Reader, and Kobo.

Users can search the Axis 360 "Magic Wall" by keyword and browse by subject genre, such as Fiction, Non-Fiction, Juvenile, and Young Adult. It is fully compatible with the leading assistive screen-reader technologies that blind people use to interact with computers and the World Wide Web.

In addition to the new Axis 360 service, the CJRL offers eBooks through

its Freeding and ABDO digital bookshelf products.

The combination of these services maximizes the number of book publishers, authors, and titles available for eBook acquisition and consequently ensures that materials available to patrons address the preferences of all age groups, CJRL Director Katrina Castilaw reports. Local library branches can assist patrons in using the Axis 360 service, Freeding, and ABDO, which are accessible at www.copjef.lib.ms.us and cjrbooksandmore.blogspot.com, on their personal devices, she says.

"The Library's ability to offer free eBook services to our public is critical to meeting patrons' recreational and educational access preferences while positioning the library to take advantage of future technologies," says Castilaw.

The new lending service is partially funded under the federal Library Services and Technology Act administered by the Mississippi Library Commission for the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

cont. from page 3

Area stages showcase theater, movies and music

Like BLT, MSA showcases artists from outside its community. Christian blues harp player Jeff Stone and Mississippi blues man Vasti Jackson brought their Three Faces of Blues ministry to a nearly packed house on March 23 at Lampton Auditorium on the campus of MSA. Mixing gospel music and the blues and joined by MSA'S Total Praise Choir, the build-

ing rocked with great music for nearly two hours. It was a wonderful way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Until we chat again, support live music.

Editor's Note: R. Shaw Furlow is Director of the Bands Program at Co-Lin and oversees the college's Community Arts Series. He is a regular contributor to Wesson News on the area arts scene.

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cont. on page 2

Attacking the wildfire threat

shingles, slate or clay tile, metal, or cement and concrete products for roof construction; stucco or masonry for exterior walls; fire-proof screens and vents on all openings to prevent sparks from entering your home.

- **Landscaping.** Create and maintain at least 30 feet of defensible space around your home. Within this 30 feet of defensible space, reduce or remove the vegetation that has a high content of flammable resins, oils, or waxes. Remove hazards such as woodpiles on the front porch and prune overhanging tree limbs. Consider the use of fire-resistant mulch and planting species that have a high moisture content in the leaves.

- **Maintenance.** Mow the lawn regularly, sweep the roof and clean out the gutters — reduce the amount of fuel that will bring a wildfire into the home.

“It’s a matter of understanding the house as a fuel source,” Blackwell explained. “Fires spread from ignition to ignition, requiring oxygen; heat in the form of radiation, convection, and embers; and fuel. Take away one of them, and you can’t have a fire.”

Big ground fires look dramatic, but

do not ignite homes, by and large, Blackwell said. Rather, firebrands — embers and burning wood — are the biggest threats.

“Eighty to ninety per cent of homes threatened by wildfires will survive when they have non-flammable roofs and 30 feet of relatively clear space separating them from flames,” summarized Blackwell.

Blackwell also talked about the responsibility of Mississippians in preventing wildfires, noting that the two main causes of the state’s wildfires are incendiary/arson and debris burning, with others attributed to campfires, equipment use, lightning, railroads, smoking, and re-ignition. Last year, MFC responded to 680 incendiary/arson fires that burned 9,125 acres and 584 out-of-control debris fires that burned another 5,678 acres.

“Mississippi has roughly 19.8 million acres of timberland across the state, which provides all kinds of outdoor recreation for the citizens of Mississippi and tourists alike,” Blackwell said. “The Mississippi Forestry Commission is charged by law to suppress any wildfires across the state, but it is everybody’s responsibility to help protect our forest/timberland and prevent wildfires.”

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Gaining control of stress for healthier living

By Guest Columnist
Dr. Stephanie Duguid

Stress affects everyone to some degree. Over the past three decades, in fact, stress has become an increasing factor in our national lifestyles, thirty per cent greater today than in the early 1980s. Some sixty-seven per cent of adults say they experience “great stress” at least one day a week.



Special to Wesson News

This is Stress Awareness Month — a good time to begin incorporating stress management into your life. Understanding stress and controlling it — rather than letting it control you — is an important component of healthy living.

Stress isn't all bad. Even positive life events can increase our stress levels. At moderate levels, it can motivate us to reach our goals and keep life interesting. Positive stress is called “eustress.”

When stressors are severe or chronic, however, our bodies may not adapt successfully. The top stressors are

job pressure, money, health, relationships, poor nutrition, media overload, and sleep deprivation.

Negative stress, or “distress,” can compromise immune functioning, leading to a host of physical disorders — heart disease, asthma, diabetes, headaches, gastro-intestinal problems, and Alzheimer's disease, among others. Distress, in fact, has been linked to between 50 and 70 percent of all illnesses. Distress is also associated with negative health behaviors, such as alcohol and other drug use, and with psychological problems, such as depression and anxiety. Obesity, accelerated aging, and premature death are some of the effects.

The body responds to stress in a variety of ways:

- **Physiologically (Body):** elevated heart rate, palms get sweaty, muscles get tense
- **Cognitive (Mind):** worry, lack of concentration, forgetfulness
- **Emotional:** anger, hot-tempered, panicked, sense of dread
- **Behavioral:** less patient, hurrying, high strung



You may experience this as fatigue (51 per cent of the time), headache (44 per cent), upset stomach (34 per cent), muscle tension (30 per cent), change in appetite (23 per cent), teeth grinding (17 per cent), change in sex drive (15 per cent), or feeling dizzy (13 per cent).

Although stress is a part of life, it doesn't have to be detrimental to healthy living. Balanced physical activities, the right amount of sleep, journaling, listening to music, breathing

exercises and guided imagery are among the ways to effectively manage stress.

In our modern world, time management is a particularly effective and useful stress management tool. Make the most of your time. Know how to spend it. Self-assessing how you manage time is the beginning of effective time management. Set goals and deadlines, prioritize them, write them down. Include recreational activities in your schedule in addition to your responsibilities. Avoid procrastination.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Stephanie Duguid, Assistant

Dean of Academic Instruction and Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Division Chair at Co-Lin, makes regular contributions to Wesson News on healthy living topics. 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 20 years. She is an avid reader and learner on health issues, and encourages people to follow her example.

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