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 PO Box 1028
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Volume 8, Number 1

"Good News You Can Use"

January 14, 2020

Town celebrates lives of deceased

Wesson News

Wesson celebrated the lives of two long-time residents and community leaders last month after the deaths of Dorothy Ragland Mercier and William Brown, Senior.

Mercier, who had been married to 102-year-old George Mercier, Junior, for 73 years, died at her home December 9 at 97. Brown, the resource officer who helped maintain security at Wesson Attendance Center (WAC) for some twenty years, died December 16.

Mercier had a lifelong love for gardening and music. She shared her beautiful singing voice as a choir member and soloist throughout her life, much of it as a member of Wesson Presbyterian Church. She also was a member and past president of the Wesson Garden Club.

She was born December 20, 1922, in Elmhurst, Illinois, to Bess and Chester Ragland, graduated from Vanderbilt University and met her future husband, then Naval officer George T. Mercier Jr., in Washington, D.C., after World War II. They were married in 1946 and lived in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Houston, Texas, before retiring to Wesson. Preceding her in death were her parents, three sisters and a brother. She



Wesson News

is survived by her husband; her children, George T. Mercier III of Houston and Wesson; Anne Woodson and husband, Lee, of Galveston, Texas; Laurie Mercier and husband, John, of Portland, Oregon; Patricia Nicklas and husband, Ed, of Houston, Texas; and Chester Mercier and wife Leslie of Houston, Texas. She is also survived by 10 grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and nieces and nephews.

Born in Clayton, Louisiana, in 1940, Brown grew up in Santa Monica, California, and earned his high school degree at Havre de Grace, Maryland, before settling down in Wesson in 1982.



Wesson News

Before going into law enforcement as the Wesson Police Department's (WPD) first black officer, Brown did building maintenance and was a painter in California, and worked in restaurants during a brief interlude in Maryland, where he completed his secondary school education. After returning to California, he went to Mississippi. Following WPD, Brown moved to the Copiah County Sheriff's Office, where he served as the Chief Deputy and was assigned to assist with security at WAC ball games and special events on a part-time basis. When voters elected

Harold L. Jones Copiah County Sheriff, he went to WAC as full-time security officer, starting in 2004. In 2004, he also earned a certificate from the Police Academy at Pearl, Mississippi. Brown was a member of the Wesson Lions Club, which he served as president, and was active in Union Grove Baptist Church, where he served as a Deacon. He served seven churches in the area Baptist community as president of their Sunday School Institute.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Dolores: two grown children, Renee, 52, who lives in Seattle, and William Brown, Jr., 41, who resides in Wesson; and one grandchild, William Brown III.

On the morning of his funeral, former students, parents and children lined the street in front of WAC to pay their respects to Brown.

Noting that Southerners often elevate people who have passed away to the "status of sainthood" and "sugarcoat the truth," WAC teacher Rod Martin said that was not the case with Brown -- "a father, husband, grandfather, friend, pastor, sheriff's deputy, goodwill ambassador, and school resource officer, one of the few men I have known who tried to live diligently by the Good Book. I will greatly miss his smile, encouragement and wisdom."

Wreaths laid at veterans' grave sites

Wesson News

A crowd at Wesson Cemetery in mid December joined millions of persons across the nation in a unique event memorializing fallen military heroes, recognizing persons serving in the military and raising awareness about the many contributions of U.S. military personnel.

Wesson Chamber of Commerce's Marty Stroud, State Senator Sally Doty, State Representative Becky Currie and Mayor Alton Shaw led Wesson's participation in annual Wreaths Across America (WAA) ceremonies, at which wreaths are laid at the graves of veterans, who are celebrated with a minute of silence and the playing of *Taps*.

Socks for Heroes organizes WAA in Wesson. In the area, wreaths were also laid at Riverwood Memorial Park in Brookhaven, Monticello and Georgetown, while, overall, people gathered at some 2,100 locations nationally.

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992.

"Our mission today is to remember the fallen, honor those who serve and to teach our children the value of freedom," Stroud told the assembled at Wesson Cemetery. "What makes this ceremony unique is bringing everyone together. I know it's a busy time, but sometimes we have to take time out to recognize the people that made the ultimate sacrifice."

At the Wesson ceremony, Doty, Currie and Shaw each spoke briefly on one of the three aspects of the WAA mission -- remembering, honoring and educating. After the minute of silence and playing of *Taps*, the event leaders and members of the crowd picked up some one hundred wreaths and laid them at grave sites marked with red ribbons to designate veterans. At each grave site, the person laying the wreath offered a silent prayer and said the name of the deceased veteran aloud.

"Everyone plays a part" was the theme of the 2019 WAA observation

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Community Calendar

January weather forecast: The Old Farmer's Almanac calls for an average temperature of 51 degrees F (six degrees above average) with precipitation of 7 inches (two inches above average). **January 14 & 15:** Sunny, cold. **January 16-19:** Rainy, mild. **January 20-29:** Rainy periods, quite mild. **January 30 & 31:** Flurries, cold.

JANUARY 14

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.

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).

JANUARY 15

WorkKeys Assessment for Career Readiness Certificate. 12:45 p.m. Also 12:45 a.m. January 29. Thames Center of Co-Lin campus. Call 601-643-8707 to register.

JANUARY 19

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.

JANUARY 21

Institute for Learning in Retirement membership social. ILR will announce full details for spring semester events, including travel, luncheon and workshop plans. Thames Conference Center on the Co-Lin Wesson campus. 1:30 p.m.

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

JANUARY 23

Wesson Chamber of Commerce annual awards banquet Citizens of the year recognized. Tickets \$20 sold at Trustmark Bank and Another Time. . . . Another Place. Or call Chamber at 601-643-5000 for reservations. Thames Center on Co-Lin campus. 6:30 p.m.

JANUARY 27

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.

JANUARY 30

Lincoln County-Brookhaven Friends of the Library annual meeting. Refreshments will be served. Come with a prospective member. Dues: \$10 for individuals, \$20 for family. Library, downtown Brookhaven. 5:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY 4

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

CONTINUING

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

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

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

Email Community Calendar items to bobarnold@wessonnews.com

Police Blotter

Special to Wesson News

During December, Wesson Police Department activity encompassed:

Responses to:

- Two motor vehicle accidents
- Three general information reports
- Two petit larcenies
- Two malicious mischievous
- One counterfeit money
- One identity theft
- One home repair fraud
- One simple domestic violence

Arrests & citations for:

- One armed robbery
- Eight speeding violations
- Five contempt of court
- Five expired tags
- One disregard of traffic device (stop sign)
- Four no insurance violations
- Seven driving without a license violations
- One improper equipment violation
- Two suspended licenses

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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Healthy New Year resolutions

By Guest Columnist Dr. Stephanie Duguid

As the New Year dawns, it is time to think of resolutions and positive changes. Think of 2020 as a "Happy You Year!" Reflect on your current health, nutritional, and activity status.



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What are your realistic and reachable goals? In general, we make New Year Resolutions that last for a few weeks, and then get thrown aside. For the most part, these resolutions were unrealistic, poorly executed and were preceded with no preparation. Make some plans that will last! For long-term success, a detailed and sustainable action plan is the key.

As you work through your New Year resolutions, integrate these elements into a workable plan.

1. Change your health outlook. Instead of seeing health as all-or-nothing, look at your health as a continual process. Every decision you make pushes you in one direction or the other. If you keep making small, positive decisions, you move closer and closer to good health. Start with small steps to change big habits.

2. Integrate exercise. The number one reason people do not exercise is time. Try to make activity part of your daily routine so you do not have to take extra time. Park farther away

from your office to walk a little more. Climb the stairs rather than using the elevator. Walk to check your mailbox or take out your trash rather than drive. Rather than emailing at work to get the message across, get up from your desk and visit your colleagues. Focus on being active at least 30 minutes a day.

3. Say goodbye to fad diets. If a diet offers you a quick fix, it is a fad diet! You didn't get in your current shape overnight, and you will not return to your ideal shape overnight either! Stay clear of empty calories and focus on foods that are nutritionally dense and foods that are mostly natural and not processed. When you go to the grocery store, stay on the perimeter, where you will find fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh meats, dairy, and whole grain breads. When you travel into the aisles, you will find processed, high calorie foods.

4. Head back to the kitchen. Prepare your own food from fresh ingredients. You will save calories and money and will be healthier, too! Although fast-food and restaurants may be convenient, they are also high fat, high calorie and high in poor health!

5. Unplug daily. With access to technology 24/7, it is no wonder that we are suffering from more and more stress-related illnesses. Spend time away from technology and focus on

your families as well as yourself.

6. Conquer clutter. Living in the midst of clutter can drive your energy down. Clean up your mess and use the renewed positive energy for creativity and being active.

7. Get your finances in order. Financial challenges are big stressors. In a time when spending is continually increasing and it is difficult to make ends meet, create an emergency fund and reduce your credit card use. The goal for an emergency fund should be about two months of your monthly output (if all of your monthly bills add up to \$2,000, build an emergency fund of \$4,000). Try to live

below your means and aim to save at least 10% monthly for retirement. Any amount of savings can add up. The key is beginning.

8. Embrace generosity. In the Hospitality State, Mississippians are the first to help in a time of need. Donate time or money to people in need. Volunteer at a food bank. Go out of your way to assist someone. Or simply compliment someone when it is deserved. You will boost your morale as well as others' -- and you'll feel that life is good.

Your path to a Healthy and Happy You should also include:

- Reducing the number of diet and regular sodas because of all the additives, and drinking lots of water instead.

- Going to the gym and getting active after work instead of immediately going home.

- Keeping healthy snacks, like almonds, in your drawer at work, so you won't reach for junk food when you get hungry.

- Regular health screenings, including mammograms and annual physicals.

- Doing at least one good deed a day as a way of "paying it forward."

Set goals for positive changes by:

- Making them realistic!

- Write them down and posting them where you can see them.

- Distinguishing between short-term and long-term goals. Your short-term goals are milestones that give you a continued sense of achievement.

- Rewarding yourself in a healthy way -- new clothes, shoes or haircut -- when you achieve milestone goals. Shed habits that can derail all your hard work.

- Going for it! Little changes can make a big difference.

This is the perfect time to reflect and make your plan for the New Year. Remember, small steps make a difference. The key is to keep focusing on your path toward success. Happy You Year!!

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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Time to visit Mississippi museums

By Guest Columnist Shaw Furlow

Mississippi is blessed with an abundance of museums. It seems each town has a museum highlighting its history. Most items found in these museums were donated by old families or defunct schools.



Wesson News

Programs from school plays, letter jackets, formal dresses, yearbooks and military artifacts -- uniforms, newspaper articles and pictures, replicas of famous warships and medals -- make up a good bit of the displays.

Cemeteries are like museums, in an odd way, as well. The names and dates carved on the headstones tell the stories of the citizens who founded, developed and populated towns. Libraries, like the one in Brookhaven, have also begun turning their lobbies into art galleries. Permanent and temporary on-loan pieces are a welcomed addition for library visitors.

Museums in Crystal Springs and Hazlehurst document our rich music

history. If you haven't visited the Mississippi Music Museum in Hazlehurst, stop in. Dr Jim Brewer has done a remarkable job gathering and curating a collection.

The Grammy Museum in Cleveland, Mississippi, which opened in 2016, has become a major destination for the music lover and historian. It's a short drive, and well worth it. Located on the campus of Delta State University, the 27,000 square foot facility houses some of music's great treasures

-- BB King's Gibson guitar, Lucille, and other instruments of the state's famed musicians. Album covers adorn floor-to-ceiling and pillars, welcoming the visitors. "I've got that one and that one," people are overheard saying as they check them out. At the museum, visiting exhibits from Grammy Museum in L.A. rotate in and out for three month stays. There, I saw the actual set-up the Beatles used on the Ed Sullivan Show. The guitars, amps and Ringo's Ludwig drum kit are a real find for gear junkies. Plus original, handwritten lyrics from some of

Lennon and McCartney's greatest hits were on display.

Two Museums in Jackson are an incredible addition to our state. Be prepared to stay a while after the short drive. The Two Museums share the same lobby, and you choose which one to attend. Doing both the Mississippi History Museum and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum could be an overload, however. Both would take about eight hours if you read everything, like I

do. It's not all reading, though. Like the Grammy Museum, they offer several interactive, hands-on displays. If you want to learn more about something, you press a button and more information appears on

a screen. "One Mississippi, Many Stories" introduces you to room displays set up with original elegant furniture from plantations and old cabins heated by a stove.

One of my favorite new museums opened in downtown Meridian in the spring of 2018. The Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Experience, known as the Max, honors all Mississippi musicians, authors, play-

wrights, chefs and actors. Portraits of Hall of Fame members encircle the grand staircase that leads to the second floor. Interactive exhibits include sitting in a small boat while virtually floating through a bayou dodging stumps and overhanging tree branches. Very cool. Other exhibits include an old church with pews and stained-glass windows and a short movie. The juke joint exhibit recreates those old shanties where Mississippi's music began. But the exhibit lately making the news there is the Governor's Recording Studio. Mississippi native songwriter Steve Azar recorded "One Mississippi," an anthem celebrating Mississippi's bicentennial, for the exhibit. The video of the session includes a scene with Governor Bryant in a leather jacket, wearing sunglasses and playing a tambourine. I call that interactive.

We are a blessed state. Our history is what it is, good and bad. Take a weekend and make a road trip and, as always, support the arts, my friends.

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



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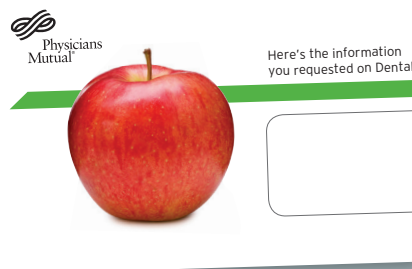


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cont. from page 1

Wreaths laid at veterans' grave sites



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Wesson Mayor Alton Shaw lays wreath at veteran's grave site.

-- a suggestion of ten-year-old Miles Worcester, the grandson of the WAA founder. A U.S. military member in uniform at a hotel where he was staying responded to his expression of thanks for serving his country: "Thank you...everyone plays a part." Miles told his grandmother, WAA Executive Director Karen Worcester, it would be the perfect theme because "those serving in the military are doing their part, but it is our part as Americans to remember and honor them, and that's what Wreaths Across America does."

It all started in 1992 when Worcester Wreath in Maine found itself with a surplus of wreaths nearing the end of the holiday season. Remembering a moving boyhood experience at Arlington National Cemetery, owner Morrill Worcester seized on it as an opportunity to honor the country's veterans. With the aid of Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, he arranged for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington in one of the older sections of the cemetery that had been receiving fewer visitors with each passing year. A number of other individuals and organizations stepped up to help, in-

cluding a local trucking company that transported the wreaths to Virginia, volunteers from local American Legion and VFW Posts and members of the Maine State Society of Washington, D.C. who helped make wreaths and organized laying them.

The event continued quietly each year until 2005, when a photo of gravestones at Arlington, adorned with wreaths and covered in snow, circulated around the internet. The event drew national attention and expanded to thousands of other locations where the Arlington ceremonies were emulated. Last year, nearly 1.8 million veteran wreaths were placed on headstones at 1,640 participating cemeteries around the country.

The Arlington wreath-laying is still held annually, on the second or third Saturday of December. WAA's annual pilgrimage from Harrington, Maine, to Arlington National Cemetery has become known as the world's largest veterans' parade, stopping at schools, monuments, veterans' homes and communities all along the way to remind people how important it is to remember, honor and teach.



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Captain, adviser, jobless & employer

Special to Wesson News

CAP Cadet Captain. Sixteen-year-old Jardon Carr of Wesson has received the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Amelia Earhart Award (AEA), with promotion to CAP cadet captain -- an honor he earned with only three percent of 22,000 cadets who are part of the U.S. Air Force auxiliary nationwide. Carr, the son of Michael and Cherron Carr of Wesson, has participated for three years in the Madison Cadet Squadron, MS-111, in which he has been working his way through a curriculum focusing on leadership, aerospace, fitness and character. A junior in a homeschool program, Carr passed comprehensive leadership and aerospace exams and a physical fitness test to earn the rank of cadet captain and the AEA. He is now eligible to apply to represent the U.S. in the International Air Cadet Challenge and will continue in Phase IV of the Cadet Program to earn the prestigious Spaatz Award.

Currie advising on mental health. State Representative Becky Currie, who is serving on the White House Mental Health Task Force, attended a meeting of the group last month that brought together an array of speakers and other task force members appointed from other states. Currie said the problem is largely the same throughout the U.S.: patients are being discharged from mental health hospitals, which are closing or drastically cutting services, and community-based services are unprepared to take them on. "I left the meeting with a renewed sense of urgency and determination to come back and work on our mental health system. This is our responsibility, and ignoring the problems won't fix them. We must have a state hospital and other programs to take care patients and their needs. Not having inpatient care for them is a risk for them and the public."

Unemployment rates climb. Unemployment throughout the Co-Lin District, encompassing Adams, Copiah, Franklin, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lincoln and Simpson Counties, has



Fifth grade members of Butterbeans -- Wesson Garden Club's new kids group -- assisted residents at the Geriatric Boswell Center in planting greens, collards, lettuce and kale. Third grade members planted pansies and ornamental flowering vegetables in the library garden, and fourth graders planted pansies in the downtown area.

climbed from 4.9 percent of the workforce at this time last year to 6.2 percent this year. Simpson is faring the best with a 4.7 percent unemployment rate, up from 4.0 percent last year, but down from 5.2 percent last month.

Lincoln County has a 5.7 unemployment rate, up from 5.6 percent last month and 4.1 percent a year ago. Jefferson County continues to show the highest unemployment rate at 13.8 percent, up from 10.6 percent last year, but down from 16.3 percent last month. Copiah, Franklin and Lawrence Counties have current unemployment rates of 6.2 percent, 7.0 percent and 6.4 percent respectively vs. 5.1 percent, 5.3 percent and 5.0 percent last year and 6.6 percent, 7.7 percent and 7.1 percent a month ago. Overall, Mississippi's unemployment rate is 5.2 percent compared to 3.3 percent across the U.S., with Rankin and Lamar Counties boasting the lowest rate at 3.8 percent.

Ebbers freed. One-time Brookhaven billionaire and WorldCom CEO Bernie Ebbers has been released from prison after serving 13 years of a 25-year sentence for orchestrating an \$11 billion accounting fraud by the now

defunct telecommunications company he directed. U.S. District Judge Valerie E. Caproni ordered Ebbers, who is reported suffering from dementia and heart disease, freed based on Compassionate Release laws.

New employer. Harbor Freight (HF), a California-based discount tool and equipment retailer, is opening a new facility at the former Fred's Super Store on Brookway Boulevard in Brookhaven, where it plans to hire some 35 to 40 persons. HF operates more than 1,000 stores in 48 states and an e-commerce business, which employ over 20,000 persons.

Light lunches to go. If you're in downtown Brookhaven, you will find a unique new luncheon option beginning this month: Crouton -- for diners looking for a light menu. The restaurant, at 103 South Railroad Avenue, features a salad bar with 70 items, housemade dressings and croutons, at which customers can create their own meals sold by the pound. There are also two fresh soups, baked potatoes, panini and grilled cheese sandwiches. Although Crouton seats about 40 persons, everything is designed for workers who want to drop in and leave with their lunches, including packaged grab-and-go salad and fruit plates. Donna Therrell owns the new venue and operates it with her sister, Olivia Wallace.

BARL fundraiser. Segue into your Valentine's Day celebration at a wine tasting fundraiser for Brookhaven Animal Rescue League (BARL) -- Canines, Cats and Corks" -- hosted by BARL from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on February 13 at the Brookhaven Building (1134 Belt Line Drive NE). There will be three dozen wines, a selection of distilled liquors and non-alcoholic beverages available for sampling complemented by appetizers. Bob and Vicki Hamm of Brookway Wine and Spirits are sponsoring the event. Admission will be \$45 for persons age 21 and older, with tickets on sale at Brookway Wine and Spirits, the BARL animal shelter or available through shelter volunteers Gail Garbo (601-757-3211) and Anna Giust (601-757-5077).

NEWS NUGGETS



In an annual tradition, Wesson Attendance Center honored area veterans with a biscuit breakfast, a reception line in which elementary school students personally thanked each veteran for serving the country. There was a standing ovation for them as they paraded into WAC's old gymnasium for a special program and the gymnasium event featuring an arrangement of "America the Beautiful" presented by the high school concert band, "Taps," and recognition of each veteran by branch of service. The student council at WAC produces the annual event, which seeks to raise the awareness of students about the extraordinary service of veterans, as well as honoring them. Veterans aged 22-years-old to 102-years-old from throughout the Wesson area attended.

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Copiah County recieves MDEQ solid waste grant



Special to Wesson News

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has awarded Copiah County a solid waste assistance grant of \$45,214 for a solid waste enforcement officer and unauthorized dumpsite cleanup programs.

"The Solid Waste Assistance Grants support a variety of useful solid waste management activities for cities and counties, and this grant will assist Copiah County's efforts in improving its management of solid waste," said Gary Rikard, MDEQ Executive Director.

Cities and counties apply for Solid Waste Assistance Grants through the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality. These grants are used by local communities for preventing and cleaning up unauthorized dumps, hiring local solid waste enforcement officers, public education efforts on solid waste disposal and recycling and establishing programs for collecting white goods, bulky wastes and recyclables.

Information about the grant program and other initiatives is available at www.mdeq.ms.gov/solid-waste-management-programs.

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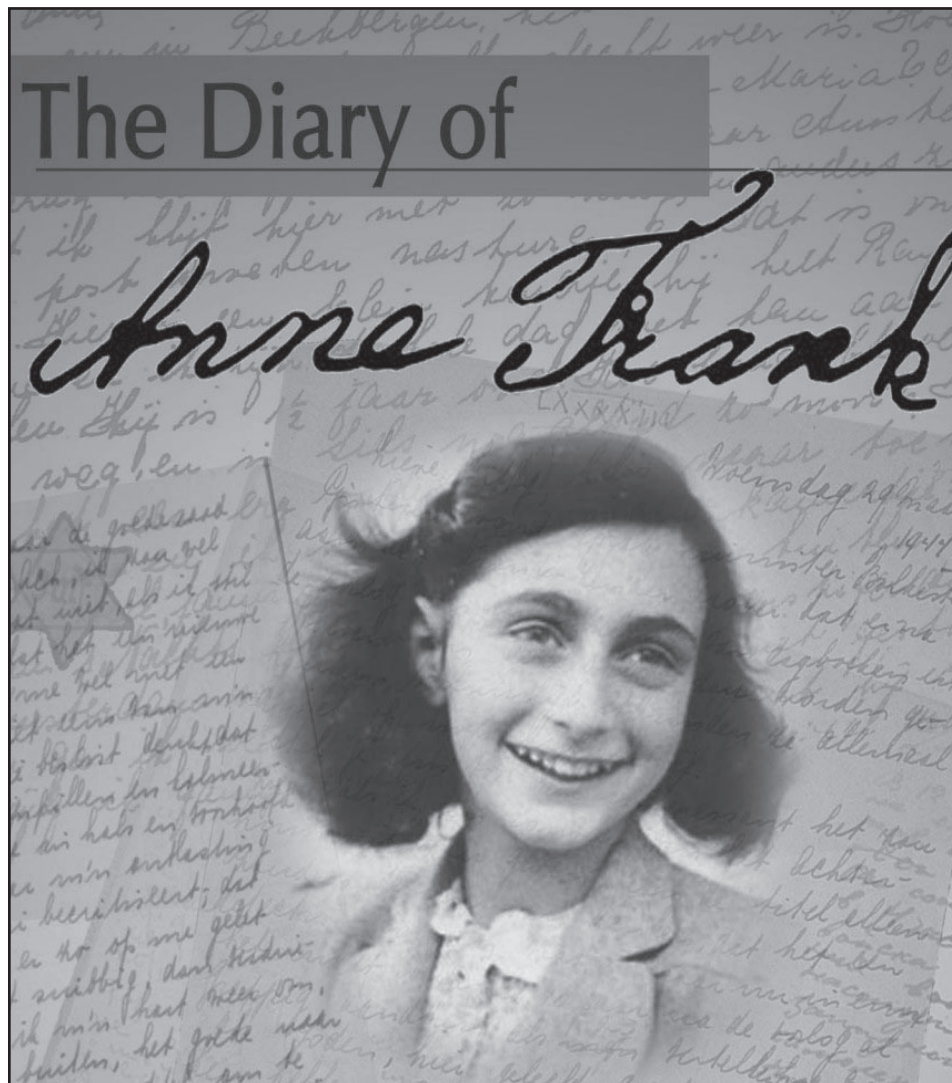
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BLT Anne Frank rehearsals begin



Special to Wesson News

Wesson News

Rehearsals are beginning for the February production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* at Brookhaven Little Theater following two days of auditions last week.

The play will have a cast of 13, including three teenagers and ten adults in performances scheduled Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays February 14 and 21, February 15 and 22 and February 16 and 23. The Friday and Saturday shows are at 7:30 p.m. and the Sunday matinees at 2 p.m.

The 13 actors are cast in roles as Anne Frank, Otto Frank, Edith Frank, Miep Gies, Peter Van Dann, Putti Van Dann, Petronella Van Dann, Mr. Kruler, Mr. Jan Dussel and three Nazi officers.

The play is based on a book of writings from the Dutch language diary kept by Anne Frank while she was in hiding for two years with her family during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands and published as *The Diary of a Young Girl*, also known as *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Her family was apprehended in 1944, and she died of typhus in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945. Her diary was retrieved by Miep Gies, who

gave it to Anne's father, Otto Frank, the family's only known survivor, just after the war was over. The diary has since been published in more than 60 languages.

First published under the title *Het Achterhuis. Dagboekenbrieven 14 Juni 1942 – 1 Augustus 1944* (*The Annex: Diary Notes 14 June 1942 – 1 August 1944*) by Contact Publishing in Amsterdam in 1947, the diary received widespread critical and popular attention on the appearance of its English language translation *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Doubleday & Company (United States) and Valentine Mitchell (United Kingdom) in 1952. Its popularity inspired the play by the screenwriters Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, which they adapted for the the 1959 movie version. The book is included in several lists of the top books of the 20th century.

Emily Waterloo is producing the BLT play and Walker Minter is directing it.

For information and to purchase tickets, contact BLT at 126 West Cherokee, Brookhaven 39601 (P.O. Box 943), call 601-990-2243 or email tickets@brookhavenlittletheater.com.

Students learn about the real world

Special to Wesson News

Career and Technical Education (CTE) students at Co-Lin got a one-day opportunity to learn about navigating the real world and the expenses -- such things as insurance deductibles, property taxes, and even unexpected trips to the emergency room that can all be budget busters for families.

The Career and Technical Division of the college created and organized REALity -- a one-day, real world look and hands-on educational experience featuring realtors, accountants, bankers, insurance professionals, power company reps, cable services, cellular phone services and grocery managers, who volunteered their time to give some 300 students the tools they need to make a smooth transition to what they will face after Co-Lin when they graduate.

At the event, hosted in the Thames Conference Center on the college's Wesson Campus, students from each career-tech program at the Wesson Campus received handouts on various types of financial information, learned job interview tips and took pages of notes for their future reference.

"We have been saying for years that a program like Junior Auxiliary's (JA) 'Reality Town' should extend to the community college level," Stephanie



Co-Lin students learn about the real world.

Smith, realtor and past president of JA of Brookhaven, said. "We love working with ninth graders because we help them understand that they will soon have bills of their own to pay, but many of the students at the Co-Lin event have probably already been paying bills."

Keshaun Herring, 19, is one of those students. The father and graduate of the college's electrical program has been working two jobs. Often staying at Wendy's in Brookhaven until 3 a.m. cleaning up after his night shift, a new opportunity to work at a sawmill allowed him to be home more and receive better health benefits for his

family. "I've been working so much while I'm in school, and I'm paying my house note, a \$600 car insurance bill, and taking care of my family. I didn't realize the difference in health benefits at jobs, and I learned to ask about that. I didn't know until Wal-Mart people told me today that their Great Value products are the same quality as brand merchandise. You're paying more just for the brand name, and that doesn't make sense to me."

Automation and Controls student Ridge Sullivan was furiously taking notes at the banking and finance table hosted by Trustmark Bank President Stan Foster.

"The accountants table took a broad look at taxes and how important it is to track your yearly expenses, but I didn't realize there was so much to the mortgage process," said the 19-year-old. "Front and back ratio, PMI (private mortgage insurance). All of that really adds up fast."

Mandy Case, Automation and Control Engineering Technology instructor, tried to prepare her students for what they would hear, but she knew that students need to experience it.

"Analyzing benefits packages versus the salary is something they may have never done before," said Case. "I know for me personally, it makes all the difference in my career choices. Child-care, dental insurance, growing grocery bills are all a shock to them. This event gets them thinking about how difficult it can be to live in the real world."

"All of our CTE programs came through the event to what equates to an extension of their classroom," said Dean of Career, Technical and Workforce Education Brent Duguid. "It gave them the opportunity to learn about future expectations. We hope they don't just look at their good salary and decide to buy an expensive vehicle or an expensive house. It's our job to prepare them as much as possible for the real world, and this event did that."

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Football grads, tennis complex & archers

Special to Wesson News

The Co-Lin football team has set the precedent in the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC) for December graduation for several years, and 25 players received degrees in 2019. Many of these players helped lead the Wolves to an MACJC playoff run in 2018 during their freshman campaigns and finish their careers at Co-Lin with a 10-9 overall record.

"This class finished strong just like our players last year," said Co-Lin head coach Glenn Davis. "This is a group of really good guys that have grown and trusted the process that we put them through. As a staff, we can not be more proud of these men."

Many of the graduating players immediately contacted four-year programs with their intentions to play next season as the graduation ceremony on Co-Lin's Wesson campus fell on National Signing Day.

December graduation for community college football players places them in an excellent position to excel at the next level. Practicing in the spring and becoming acclimated to the college during the off-season is very desirable to four-year coaching staffs.

"We always talk about making our players marketable and putting them in the best position," said Davis. "Our players getting to enroll in these programs in January puts them in a great place at the next level."

Co-Lin has built an atmosphere of success around student-athletes in providing opportunities on the field and in the classroom. The Wolves have now graduated over 60 players in just the last three years in December.

"Co-Lin has always been a leader in graduating student-athletes, and our football program is another example of that," said Co-Lin athletic director Bryan Nobile. "Coach Davis and his staff strive to develop these players both on and off the field, and having 25 players graduate is a testament to their efforts. We are very proud of what these guys mean to our college, and we look forward to watching several of them at the next level."

Tennis complex approved. The Co-Lin Board of Trustees has approved a \$1.9 million project, including construc-



Special to Wesson News

Katie McSweyn (center front row), a four-year golfing standout voted Most Valuable Player for the past two years at Wesson Attendance Center (WAC), has signed a golf scholarship with the Mississippi University for Women Owls. "I'm excited that Katie is going to further her playing for the Owl's Golf Program," said Bobo Douglas, WAC's Golf coach. "She's got a lot of experience playing golf, and she should be able to step in and contribute right away. During her sophomore and junior year, McSweyn finished in the top 10 among all Class II Mississippi high school girl's golfers, with a 85 scoring average her junior season in the state golf tournament. "Katie cut more than four shots off her sophomore state scoring average," Douglas said. "That shows that she's willing to work hard and do what it takes to get better. With her experience, I expect her to continue to be a team leader for us this year." Mississippi University for Women or "The W" is a coeducational public university located in Columbus, Mississippi. It competes in the United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA). With McSweyn, are her parents Tonya and Chris McSweyn (left and right in front row). In back row are Bobo Douglas, WAC Golf Coach, McSweyn's sister and Ronald Greer, WAC Athletic Director.



Special to Wesson News

Wesson High School (WHS) seniors Shelbi Maxwell and Catherine Wilson have signed on for scholarships at Co-Lin to continue their softball playing careers in their hometown. "I am very proud of these two young ladies," WHS softball Coach Michelle Nunnery said. "Both Shelbi and Catherine have put in the years of work to be able to play at the next level. They have been great leaders on and off the field. I know that they will both be great assets to the Lady Wolves program." Wilson commented: "I have been working hard for this for a long time and making it official is really exciting. I can't wait to see what next year holds." Maxwell added: "This has been a goal I have been striving for since I started playing softball. I am grateful for this opportunity and excited for next year." Wilson and Maxwell still have their senior season of fast-pitch ahead of them at WHS, playing on a team with a great deal of experience.

tion of eight new tennis courts and a full parking lot -- a facilities upgrade Co-Lin President Jane Hulon says "allows for increased support of our outstanding men's and women's tennis program." The Board followed the lead of Trustees Barry Tyson and Randall Lofton, who argued for a complex with eight courts instead of six and the parking area. Tyson said building eight courts was more financially efficient and would better serve the needs of the Co-Lin district, where tennis has grown in popularity. Co-Lin plans to demolish its current tennis courts -- three of them next to its football field and two other lower courts across from the football field house at the bottom of a hill. The new complex will include all eight courts and the parking area in a consolidated location on its old soccer field next to the softball field.

Co-Lin griddier starts for Jets. A former Co-Lin griddier helped the New York Jets get back to their winning ways in a disappointing season by stabilizing a cornerback position that had been shaky because of injuries. Arthur Maulet, a standout at Bonabel High School in Louisiana who made the Wolves as a walk-on before transferring to the University of Memphis, moved into a starting role at cornerback for the Jets late in the season. "He played well," affirms Jets Defensive Coordinator Gregg Williams. "He's extremely tough, and he's the first guy in here in the morning and last guy to leave at night. He wants to be coached very hard. He wants the opportunity to do whatever he can." The New Orleans native, who fled to Michigan when he was 12 years old for a year and half with his family after Hurricane Katrina, signed with his hometown Saints as an undrafted free agent in 2017, spent part of last season at Indianapolis, returned to the Saints briefly and joined the Jets in January 2019.

Archers fare well in championship. Meagan Jones scored 161 for top spot in the Bow Hunter category in the Mississippi Archery State Championships, while men on the team swept the podium in the Bow Hunter division, with Jim Guess, Caleb Weeks and Dalton West finishing one, two and three with 193, 176 and 174. Ben Martin placed sixth in the event. In the open category, Samuel Carraway captured first place with a 168.

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Co-Lin competing for Aspen Prize

Special to Wesson News

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program (AICEP) has named Co-Lin as one of 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence (APCCE), the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.

Based on strong and improving in student outcomes -- learning, completion rates, employment rates and earnings and equity -- fifteen percent of community colleges nationwide have been invited to apply for the Aspen Prize.

"This special recognition affirms the important work Co-Lin is doing to ensure the success of each and every student the college serves," says Co-Lin President Dr. Jane G. Hulon. "The faculty and staff commitment to advisement, retention, instruction, and completion is making a huge difference."

AICEP officials selected the 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the 2021 Aspen Prize from a pool of nearly 1,000 public two-year colleges nationwide, drawing on publicly available data on student outcomes. Located in 39 states in urban,

rural, and suburban areas, serving as few as 500 students and as many as 75,000 students, these colleges represent the diversity and depth of the community college sector. Data show that over the last two years, student retention, graduation rates, and degree completion have improved at the top tier of 150 Aspen Prize-eligible colleges.

"Community colleges play a vital role in developing talent and enabling social mobility across the country, and it's critical for them to get better at what they do," says Josh Wyner, AICEP Executive Director. "We're pleased to see evidence that these institutions are improving and that more are delivering on their prom-

ise. We're also pleased to play a role in honoring outstanding community colleges and sharing what works to ensure great outcomes for students through graduation and beyond."

The top ten finalists for the 2021 Aspen Prize will be named in May. The Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits to each of the finalists and collect additional quantitative data, including employment and earnings data. A distinguished jury will make award decisions in spring 2021.

Previous APCCE winners are Miami Dade College (FL) and Indian River State College (FL), 2019; Lake Area Technical College (SD), 2017; Santa Fe College (FL), 2015;

Santa Barbara City College (CA) and Walla Walla Community College (WA), 2013; Valencia College (FL), 2011.

The Aspen Institute is a community-serving organization with global reach whose vision is a free, just, and equitable society. For 70 years, the Institute has driven change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the world's greatest challenges. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Institute has offices in Aspen, Colorado, and New York City, and an international network of partners.

The Aspen Prize is funded by ECMC Foundation, Joyce Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, and Siemens Foundation. AICEP seeks to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership that significantly improve student outcomes, especially for the growing population of low-income students and students of color on American campuses.

Visit <http://highered.aspeninstitute.org/>, www.linkedin.com/showcase/aspenhighered, www.aspeninstitute.org and follow @AspenHigherEd on Twitter for more information. See the full list of the top 150 eligible institutions at www.highered.aspeninstitute.org/aspen-prize.



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