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Volume 8, Number 12

"Good News You Can Use"

December 8, 2020

COVID-19 surging in Mississippi

Special to Wesson News

Surging COVID-19 cases in Mississippi over the past few weeks include a 12 percent spike in Lincoln County.

In Lincoln County, which is now under a mask-wearing mandate ordered by Governor Tate Reeves, more than 1,700 cases total have been recorded. Due to the increasing number of cases in the area, the Brookhaven and Lawrence County School Districts switched to virtual learning in mid-November until after Thanksgiving.

The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) reported 8,000 new cases per week in late November similar to the surge in July and August, which saw a 13-day stretch with more than 8,000 new weekly cases.

The number of hospitalizations also started surging, with the seven-

day rolling averages up thirty-two percent, ICU patients increasing by thirty-two percent, and patients on ventilators increasing by thirty-



Special to Wesson News

six percent.

Overall, the state's ICUs are 84% full, with COVID-19 patients comprising 26% of all ICU beds. Sixteen of the state's highest level COVID-care centers are at 86% capacity, and five of them — both Baptist Memorial Hospitals

in Southaven and in the Golden Triangle, University of Mississippi Medical Center and St. Dominic in Jackson, and the Delta Regional Medical Center in Greenville — have zero ICU beds available.

According to the latest White House task force report, Mississippi's test positivity rate is now fourteen percent.

Mississippi has moved from "orange" to "red" on the Global Health Institute's risk level tracker, meaning it now averages over 25 daily new cases per 100,000 residents. Despite the rise in cases in the state, Mississippi now ranks thirty-first in new cases per capita.

In addition to Lincoln County, other Mississippi counties with large increases in cases COVID-19 cases include Choctaw (15%), Stone (12%), Attala (12%) and Marshall (12%).

MSDH reports that 116,683 Mississippians have recovered from COVID-19.

Funds raised for grave marker



Special to Wesson News

Wesson News

A four-year effort to properly honor a World War II Brigadier-General with a grave marker in Wesson cemetery suddenly bore fruit last month.

Publicity about a special video focused on Brigadier-General Luther Rea Stevens, including a local radio interview with Socks for Heroes' (SFH) Cathy Stroud, who has spearheaded the campaign to raise funds for the grave marker, finally generated some \$1,400 -- double the goal -- for a high quality marble military plaque.

"The Brookhaven VFW donated \$700 for a less expensive marker that I was initially looking to purchase for the General's grave site," Stroud reports. "When I went to Brookhaven Monument to purchase the marker, it offered to provide a marble one -- more than double the price of the marker I had picked out."

cont. on page 4

Hester earns clerk certification

Wesson News

Wesson Town Clerk Angela Hester will be officially recognized and designated as a Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) at the Mississippi Municipal League (MML) conference at Biloxi in July.

The 40-year-old CMC program sponsored by the Center for Government and Community Development and the Mississippi Municipal



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Clerks and Collectors Association certifies Mississippi Municipal Clerks, Deputy Municipal Clerks, and Tax Collectors who complete a curriculum presented over a three-year period with two sessions two-and-one-half days each year. The program seeks to enhance the job performance of the Clerk in small and large municipalities. It

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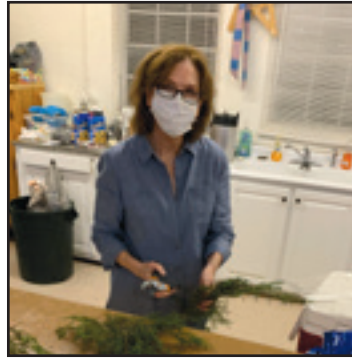
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Garden Club workshops



All photos Special to Wesson News

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At recent meetings, Wesson Garden Club members learned secrets of fellow members about creating fall floral arrangements and greenery decor for the holiday season. On left (left and right) Robin Furr and Dixie Thornton discussed and demonstrated holiday design principles and guided a hands-on workshop in which other Garden Club members like Rhonda Ishee (center) worked on their special personal creations. On right (left and right), at another meeting, June Owens and Denise Jackson shared their known-how of fall floral arrangements. They focused on various designs appropriate for the fall season and raffled off several of their creations.

In other meeting highlights, Jennifer Peets presented \$2,000 on behalf of Nora Berch at Keep Copiah County Beautiful to Garden Club president Debbie Smith for beautification projects in Wesson and the surrounding area. Marilyn Britt also reported new awards are being introduced for design and special decor as part of the Club's Yard of the Month program, which has previously only recognized landscaping efforts in three categories -- town residential, rural residential and organizational/business.

Club members also learned that WGC is purchasing three signs for organization racks at entries into Wesson. Among other members attending the recent WGC meetings were Nancy Sullivan, Debbie Hoaglin, Camille Johnston, Pam Owens, Joy Phillips, Jean Ricks, Debbie Smith, Lisa Smith, Nikki Smith and Joy Westbrooks. Wesson Garden Club is a member of the The Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc. and the National Garden Clubs, Inc.



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November Honor yards

Wesson Garden Club has recognized the November landscaping efforts of Craig and Denise Jackson at 1090 Case Road (below, first photo), the downtown fountain area on Highway 51, Another Time. . . . Another Place at 1024 Spring Street, Jessie and Latonya Collins at 1198 Highway 51 South and Larry and Dianne Miller at 1017 Dickerson Lane in autumn design, special merit, organizational and town and rural residential categories. The awards, based on maintenance principles and elements of landscape design, seek to encourage ongoing beautification and cleanliness of the Wesson area and cultivate a citizenry that values and protects natural resources and assumes responsibility for enhancing the environment. The Garden Club's Yard of the Month awards honor properties during the spring, summer and fall.

All photos Special to Wesson News



Autumn Design, awarded to Jacksons



Autumn Special Merit, awarded to Downtown Fountain Area



Town Residential, awarded to Collins



Organizational, awarded to Another Time. . . . Another Place



Rural Residential, awarded to Millers

cont. from page 1

Funds raised for grave marker

Over the past four years, Stroud has visited dozens of people and organizations to solicit monies for the marker. She credited Brookhaven VFW Commander Greg Marlow for raising the initial funds from VFW members and others in the community.

In honoring the Brigadier-General, the grave marker will highlight the time he and his wife Lula were Prisoners of War.

The production of a special video that is currently being distributed nationally by Wreaths Across America (WAA), which Stroud discussed in her radio interview, helped spur the local fundraising by the Brookhaven VFW. The video spotlights the World War II service of Brigadier-General Stevens in focusing on Wesson Cemetery as one of 2,100 cemeteries throughout the nation where community leaders lay wreaths on the graves of veterans during the Christmas season. WAA coordinates the nationwide wreath-laying ceremonies.

Wreaths Across America (WAA), which coordinates the laying of wreaths on the graves of veterans during the Christmas season at 2,100 cemeteries throughout the U.S., is spotlighting Wesson Cemetery -- one of those locations -- in the new video this fall to inspire local groups across the country to remember veterans who have died for their country, honor those who are serving and teach children about their sacrifices.

Stevens was born on July 4, 1888, and died on February 7, 1973. He served as Commander of the Mindanao & Sula District in the Philippine Constabulary from 1924-27 and 1929, Superintendent of the Philippine Constabulary Academy during 1927 and Commanding General of the 91st Philippine Division in 1941 and 1942. He was a Prisoner of War from 1942-45.

In May, the Brookhaven VFW plans to hold a special ceremony at the General's grave site in Wesson Cemetery to dedicate the grave marker.

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Scholarship honors art instructor



Special to Wesson News

The Thomas A. Ross Art Scholarship was recently endowed with the Copiah-Lincoln Community College Foundation and named in honor of retired instructor Tom Ross of Wesson. Standing from left, Thomas Ross and Co-Lin art instructor Christopher Brady; seated from left are Co-Lin Foundation Director Angela Furr, Co-Lin President Dr. Jane Hulon Sims, and Co-Lin art instructor Janet Smith.

Wesson News

A new endowed scholarship available through the Co-Lin Foundation honors retired Co-Lin art instructor Thomas A. Ross.

The Thomas A Ross Art Scholarship will be awarded for the first time in the fall of 2021 to an incoming freshman at Co-Lin majoring in art and based on a 10-piece portfolio review of the students' work.

Ross was a 1972 graduate of Mississippi College, where he majored in art, and a 1974 graduate of the University of Georgia, where he received a master's in fine arts and majored in painting and drawing. In 1975, Ross started his 38-year teaching career at Co-Lin, where he was an instructor in the art department and named Outstanding Instructor of the Year in 1987. He retired from Co-Lin in 2013.

As a former student and long-time colleague of Ross, Janet Smith, now in her thirty-fourth year as an instructor in Co-Lin's art department, worked to create the scholarship to honor Ross' legacy at Co-Lin. In addition to private donations, Smith helped sell prints of an original watercolor Ross created of the Co-Lin nature trail titled "Two Roads" to raise funds for the scholarship.

"I wouldn't be where I am if it weren't for Tom," Smith said. "When I came to Co-Lin as a student, I had never had any art classes. Once he lit that fire under me, I was gone. I was on my way. To then come back and work with him as long as I did was not only so much fun, but an honor at the same time. When Tom retired, I wanted to do something more for our students that would honor him, as well. I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing with the students today if it hadn't been for Tom and what he did for me."

Ross is grateful to Smith for spearheading the scholarship and for those who donated.

"When you work at a place for 38 years and you love what you do, for me, something like this is such a wonderful thing to have done," Ross said. "This scholarship is going to be something that after I'm gone will still be around, and it will have my name on it. I appreciate that so much. I'm not sure I deserve this, but I still look back and say 'well this is a great period at the end of a sentence.' While it is an ending, there are still more sentences to come."

Co-Lin president Dr. Jane Hulon Sims added, "We are so grateful that we have employees who love the college so much that they want to give back. This scholarship will benefit both our students and the college as a whole, and I'm thrilled that the original painting Ross created will hang in the president's home. I value the story that the nature trail represents, and I love that Tom painted it after his history with the college."

Contributions to this scholarship, or any other Co-Lin scholarship, can be mailed to the Foundation at P.O. Box 649, Wesson, MS 39191, or made online at www.colin.edu/alumni-foundation/give-now/.

A go-to guy for shoppers

By Bob Arnold

When locals are shopping and can't find what they want, chances are they haven't yet touched base with Tim Sutton -- Wesson's go-to guy for shoppers.

Sutton is the owner/manager of Wesson Ace Hardware. The hallmark of a successful hardware store is extensive inventory, and Sutton, by listening to customers and seeking to meet their needs, has created a venue over the past nineteen years where Wesson shoppers can go to acquire both popular items and things that are hard to find.

"I like inventory," Sutton affirms simply.

The son of an asphalt worker who traveled from job to job, Sutton, a Hazlhurst native, moved around a lot as a kid, arriving in Wesson as an eighth grader after stops with his family in Meridian and Vidalia, Louisiana.

Sutton recalls a boyhood in the town that revolved around hunting, fishing and sports when he wasn't going to Wesson Attendance Center. In 1988, he graduated from Wesson High School, where he played on its first tennis team. After going on to Co-Lin, he earned a business finance degree at Mississippi State University.

Sutton started his business career in the security industry at an Atlanta shopping center, and launched his own Atlanta-based nationwide hospital security company in 1987.

"I was a young man, and enjoyed the travel to every U.S. state except Alaska and Hawaii," he recalls. As the years passed, however, Sutton decided he belonged in Wesson, and came home in 2001 to go into the hardware business with his purchase of Wesson Ace Hardware.

"I knew nothing about the hardware business," Sutton says. "I barely knew the difference between a hammer and nail. Three classic principles, however, are applicable to all successful businesses -- 'spending less money than you make, treating employees well and listening to customers and providing quality service to them,'" Sutton says. On that basis, Wesson Ace Hardware has prospered over his nineteen years as owner/manager. With an expanding inventory, it has added space, and is up from three to eight employees, with a customer base that continues to grow.

Since returning to Wesson and becoming the town's go-to guy for shoppers, Sutton has also started a family. He and his wife Stephanie from Tupelo have one son, Caleb, a 16 year-old student at Wesson High School. They live in Beaufort.

What are your hobbies?

When I am not working, I enjoy spending time with my family. I was once a good golfer when I could get out on the course three to four times a week. Now, I am lucky to play golf three to four times a year. I do keep in shape by biking around town when time allows. I am a Southern Baptist and attend Clear Branch Baptist Church.

Are you a reader?

I enjoy biographies of great adventurers like Amelia Earhart and great leaders like Ronald Reagan. I read John MacArthur's spiritual and inspi-



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ration literature.

Do you enjoy movies or theater?

I enjoy comedies like *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, and I am a fan of Andy Griffith and his pal Don Knotts -- particularly in the old *Andy Griffith Show*. I also like Griffith in *No Time for Sergeants* movie. I am a Tim Conway fan, too.

What kind of music do you like?

I am eclectic -- everything except rap. Classical. Opera. Country. Music of the '80s. I like the Van Halen rock band.

What would you do with lottery winnings if you were so lucky?

I would give my winnings to Baptist Missions.

How would you change the world?

The world certainly needs change. People need to live at peace with one another. Just how I would make that happen, I don't know. It's beyond my pay grade.

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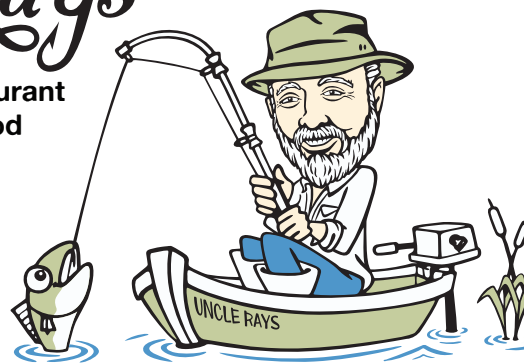
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Christmas traditions survive during season

By Guest Columnist Shaw Furlow

Christmas! Have we ever needed Christmas as much as we do this year? Peace and joy and goodwill. We have suffered through a year like none of us has ever experienced. A year, though we may try, we'll never forget. So, with all the uncertainty in our future, it's comforting to know that some things are constant.

This year, Christmas celebrations may be a bit different, a bit smaller. Maybe a little less formal. If weather permits, meals may be cooked outdoors and eaten around a picnic table. There will be turkey and dressing along with the usual side dishes, but this year, there will be a new addition -- masks. But I am quite sure the Spirit of Christmas will prevail.

Our towns have begun putting up decorations. Trees are going up, and front porches are lit. A touch of normalcy.

But normal, it is not. A number of traditional events have been canceled or trimmed down. I can start with the events that are closed down this year. Blake Scafidel cancelled his show, "Cure for Christmas Chaos." Tuba Christmas did not happen. Wesson and Crystal Springs had parades. Brookhaven did not. There were no high school bands or choir concerts. Co-Lin is out for the rest of the year, so the Blue Wave Show Band isn't participating in parades. Towns want Co-Lin in their parades. They always bring a big following. I have called churches to find out about their music celebrations, and most are not doing a big Cantata. And, of course, Brookhaven Little Theatre is still dark. So there is no big extravaganza this year.

However, there are a few constants.

Brookhaven's Carey and Celeste Williamson are once again offering a great light show. Carey teaches electronics at Co-Lin, and, for the last thirteen years, has used his skill to produce this show.

Celeste told me that they have lost count, but their show has at least fifty-thousand lights that dance, twinkle and move all over their yard, all controlled by a computer. Once in their neighborhood, you tune your car FM radio to a setting provided, and watch and listen from the comfort of your car. On cold nights, I take a thermos of hot chocolate. New this year is a music request list. You can control the song and the movement of the lights, all from your car. There is a list of songs. You choose one and then rock out! That sounds like a lot of fun.

"It takes about three and a half days to assemble the show, and all of our family members have their jobs," Celeste says.

Each year, donations are taken and given to charity. This year, the donations will go to Mississippi's Toughest Kids. Look for the donation box underneath the mailbox to make your voluntary contribution.

The Williamsons are nothing if not high tech. Last year, Carey started live streaming the show. You can go to their Facebook page -- www.facebook.com/williamsonworkshop -- to watch the show if you are unable to get out. You can also pick your music and make a donation to Mississippi's Toughest Kids. The show goes on each night until December 31 unless it



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is raining. You can enjoy the Christmas tradition at 632 Tangelwood Drive in Brookhaven. If you haven't seen it, pack up the kids and some hot chocolate, and enjoy the show. It's worth it.

A few miles out of town in southwestern Covich County near the Claiborne County line, David and Kelly Parks operate Santa's Runway -- a drive-in light show that runs along nearly a quarter of a mile stretch of road winding past their house, utility buildings, yard, and fields on a 43-acre property about 25 miles from Wesson, Hazlehurst, Brookhaven, and Port Gibson. The computerized display features woodcut scenes of Santa and his elves and the nativity with some 100,000 static and synchronized lights. As drivers pass by the lighted scenes, they listen on their car radios to a low-power FM station the Parks maintain to accompany the display with Christmas music.

New this year is "Snowman's Hill," and "Elf Land" got a total remake. A "Mega Tree" area is two times its former size with lots of new lights. Other areas added in recent years continue to delight visitors -- "the tree farm" (2018), "leaping stars" (2013) and "wall of Snowflakes" (2019).

The show started December 1 and runs seven days a week through Christmas, 5 p.m.-9 p.m. Sunday thru Thursday, and 5 p.m.-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Santa's Runway supports Socks for Heroes, and provides a collection point for items needed by the Wesson charity for veterans.

Another Christmas tradition that will continue this year is the drive-thru live nativity scene at New Sight Baptist Church, 2404 New Sight Drive, Brookhaven. Weather permitting, it is scheduled on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, December 11-15, and on Sunday, December 20, from 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

So some traditions continue this year, helping to keep alive Christmas spirit as they have in the past in our little corner of the world. My prayer for you, my friends, is peace and a much better 2021. Until then, let's support the arts. BTW, I just saw that Dr. Fauci says Santa is immune to COVID-19. So leave those cookies and milk out for the jolly rascal -- another worthy tradition.

EDITOR'S NOTE: 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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A CELEBRATION OF GOD SHOWING UP

By Guest Columnist Nelson Santa Ana

Have you ever experienced the typical scene of a child losing sight of his parents in a public place? The scene where a child, in his own daydreaming and carefree living, has wandered off a bit from mom or dad. When the child comes to his senses, he realizes that the safety net that is his parents is out of sight; and, all of a sudden, fear and panic start to overcome him. At this point, the parent, who never really lost sight of the child, shows up to save the day. Honestly, I cannot remember if I have ever experienced this sort of incident as a child, but I know I have as a parent. There have been a few occasions when I watchfully observed a child of mine wandering aimlessly before coming to her senses. And what a relief and joy it seemed to be when dad came and rescued her from what she perceived as being all alone. I bring this type of experience up because it reminds me of the paradox of Christmas.

Christmas is a story about showing up. Jesus showed up at just the right time, in just the right way and just the right place to fulfill all the prophecies spoken about Him in the Old Testament of the Bible. Moreover, we learn in Romans 5:6 that “at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.” That is, on that first Christmas, Jesus didn’t just show up when He was supposed to according to the prophets. He showed up at just the right time in order to save us from our sins.

So, here is the paradox: how can someone show up when he is already there? In fact, this is not just the paradox of Christmas, but one of the great paradoxes of God. All throughout the Old Testament, we are taught that God is with His people, yet He still shows up in miracles, demonstrations of power, a whisper, dreams and interpretations of dreams. But God never shows up in a more clear and wonderful way than in coming in the flesh Himself. Jesus shows up as Immanuel, God with us!

Now, the paradox of God is perfectly exemplified in His Son, when Jesus, about to ascend to Heaven with His Father, makes the ironic promise to us that “surely I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20). So, like God the Father, Jesus is with us, but He still shows up. He has shown up in my life time and time again.

I remember in May of 1998, when I was 15 years old, my dad suffered from a brain hemorrhage that would eventually take his life. During that two-week period while my dad was in the hospital, my family was faced with the hardest decision we have ever had to make. Do we “pull the plug” on dad?

At the time, the doctors told us that my dad had very little hope of surviving, and, if, somehow, he pulled through, he would live the remainder of his life in a vegetative state. With that information, the decision seemed to be pretty clear for everyone in my family but me. I wrestled so hard with the thought of giving up on my dad and even said to my family that “he wouldn’t give up on us.” It was at this point that my mom told me to go pray. So, as a 15-year-old boy, I walked outside into a hospital garden area, and Jesus showed up! I cannot explain it, but in that moment, Jesus was as real to me as the air I was breathing. He gave me peace and strength to let my dad go. It was amazing then, and it is amazing now!

In my mind, Christmas comes in three parts. The first part is when God showed up in the form of an infant around 2000 years ago in the town of Bethlehem. We celebrate the first part of Christmas every year. The second part is that Jesus regularly shows up as we need Him and call out for Him in every different part of our lives. And the third part is that Jesus is going to show up again. The next time He comes in bodily form will be the final time as He brings us into Glory with Him and makes all things new forever!

This Christmas, I encourage you to do two things. First, celebrate the God who showed up, shows up, and will show up again! And, second, remember that Christmas is a story about God showing up. If you are in a place where you recognize you need God to show up in your life, call out to Jesus, and He will be there!

Merry Christmas.

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

Wreaths funds needed for ceremonies

Wesson News

Special December wreath-laying ceremonies to honor veterans buried in the Wesson and Beauregard Cemeteries need donations to cover costs of wreaths.

The wreaths costs \$15 each, and contributions can be made to Socks for Heroes' (SFH) Cathy Stroud at 1032 Cotton Street, Wesson, Mississippi 39191. Call 601-695-4140 for information.

Wesson-based SFH organizes Christmas season wreath-laying on veterans' graves at Wesson, Beauregard, Hazlehurst and Georgetown cemeteries, among 2,100 nationwide where ceremonies sponsored by Wreaths Across America honor men and women who sacrificed their lives in the armed forces.

WAA 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 is to remember the fallen, honor those who serve and to teach our children the value of freedom," Stroud says. "We take time out to recognize the people that made the ultimate sacrifice."

WAA 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



Special to Wesson News
Wesson Mayor Alton Shaw at Socks for Heroes wreath-laying ceremony last year.

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, including 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. Nearly two million veteran wreaths are placed on headstones at 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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Hudgey's is gone, PJs coming

Special to Wesson News

The Brookhaven dining scene is changing with permanent closure of a fifty-year-old restaurant and opening of a New Orleans-style coffee house.

Hudgey's Family Restaurant, a landmark on Brookway Boulevard since it opened as Dog and Suds in 1969, is gone, having been torn down, as a PJ's Coffee franchise prepares to begin service in the former Engravables building on the boulevard.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced closure of Hudgey's in March, and its owners, Sam and Sheila Hudgins, decided not to reopen after they received an offer to buy the property on which the eatery stood for so long.

Sam Hudgins came to the restaurant as its manager after his brother Fred bought out his partner, and it continued to operate as Dog and Suds until 1978, when its name changed to Hudgey's. At the time, it featured a kitchen and

booth side. The brothers expanded the building, and Sam added a dining room after he purchased the business from Fred in 1980. Over the years, Hudgey's menu also expanded with home cooked foods served cafeteria style and then on a buffet in addition to short order items, such as hamburgers.

John and Angie Lambert are opening the new PJ's franchise. PJ's, named for founder Phyllis Jordan, is a 40-year-old New Orleans-based business with more than 100 locations, including ten in Mississippi (the Brookhaven location will be number eleven).

In addition to coffee, the Brookhaven PJ's will serve muffins, cookies, cake balls, breakfast and regular sandwiches, salads, yogurt and possibly beignets; and king cake during the Mardi Gras season. Inside, there will be a seating area with couches, tables and booths where patrons can access free Wi-Fi. There will also be drive-through service, and customers will be able to use a PJ's Coffee app to order takeout.

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Golf & tennis clubs merge



Wesson News

Wesson News

Brookhaven Country Club (BCC) and Brookhill on Natchez have merged into a new entity now known as The Clubs at Ole Brook.

Jeff Henning, general manager of the merged facility, says its management wants it to be known for "full service, healthy living and healthy activities."

"We expect to have a membership plan for everyone, from all inclusive to just single," he said. Through December 31, members of the Country Club and Brookhill have access to both clubs, with new membership plans becoming effective in January. BCC has a golf course and tennis courts, and Brookhill offers tennis courts.

In addition to new membership plans, other changes include overlay asphalt parking in front of the BCC clubhouse, LED lighting for tennis courts and parking lots, new golf turf equipment, a shade sail structure for the BCC tennis court pavilion, new tennis windscreens at both BCC and Brookhill, upgraded golf carts, improvements to the BCC golf course and clubhouse, Brookhill tennis court pavilion upgrades, new water, ice and restroom facilities.

New maintenance equipment is being purchased. The layout and design of the BCC clubhouse will change, with relocation of the pro shop and new short-order grill service.

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Copiah gets development funds

Special to Wesson News

Copiah County is among 17 recipients of \$4.9 million the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) is investing throughout Mississippi to boost economic development and improve quality of life for communities and residents.

Copiah County will use \$241,350 as part of a total \$350,700 investment to rehabilitate a pump station and extend a sanitary sewer to improve services to businesses and residents in the Copiah County Industrial Park area at Hazlehurst. Officials estimate that the project will contribute to retention of 111 jobs.

DRA's \$4,982,686 in investment funds come from States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP), which provides direct investment into community-based and regional projects to support basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, workforce training and education, and small businesses development with an emphasis on entrepreneurship, and the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF), which targets physical infrastructure projects that help build safer, more resilient communities in the Delta region. SEDAP funds are going to Copiah County through DRA.

In addition to improving water and sewer systems, the 17 projects being funded through DRA also encompass updates to transportation infrastructure and innovative job training in communities across Mississippi. The projects are expected to create or retain 371 jobs, train 1,382 individuals, and affect nearly 7,500 families. Beyond the Copiah County project, they include road construction and improvement at Vicksburg, Tate County and Grenada; sewer improvements at Cleveland, Fayette, Heidelberg, Friars Point and Sardis; emergency response training at Greenwood, fire protection at Hernando, electrical line worker training at Goodman and Senatobia, water system improvements at Sylvarena, online grocery delivery at Drew, and a water well project at Charleston

DRA is a federal-state partnership created by Congress in 2000 to promote and encourage the economic development of the lower Mississippi River Delta region and Alabama Black Belt. It seeks to create jobs, build communities, and improve the lives of those who reside in the 252 counties and parishes of the eight-state region. The agency coordinates directly with the Office of the Governor for the State of Mississippi and nine local development districts in the state for program implementation. Its investments will be matched by \$13 million and will attract an additional \$9.5 million in leveraged private investment into Mississippi.

"DRA's \$4.9 million investment into 17 critical projects will strengthen economies by improving vital infrastructure and creating opportunities to foster workforce development," said DRA Federal Co-Chairman Chris Caldwell. "These investments highlight the importance of local and regional public-private partnerships in realizing the long-term success of infrastructure, business, and workforce projects to spur job growth and ultimately improve business competitiveness in the region."

"Thousands of Mississippians and their families across our state will have a brighter future, thanks to this almost \$5 million investment and over \$20 million in additional investments," said Governor Tate Reeves (R-MS). U.S. Senator Roger Wicker noted the impact on "the overall quality of life for our residents" and U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith pointed to "public health and safety benefits in addition to supporting job opportunities to help communities continue to grow."

Congressman Trent Kelly said DRA "has chosen projects that are essential to improving infrastructure while investing in Mississippi's most important asset -- our workforce" and Congressman Bennie Thompson noted that "the additional jobs that will be created and retained are an investment that will improve the quality of life for Mississippians." "Thanks to DRA's dedicated service, our state remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family," Congressman Michael Guest said.



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Nissan Donates engines to Co-Lin Community College



Special to Wesson News

Nissan North America in Canton, Mississippi, has donated 12 engines to the Co-Lin automotive technology program. Nissan has been a partner to the college not only in the career and technical division, but also to Co-Lin's workforce education division. Many Co-Lin alumni from a variety of different programs are employed by Nissan.

A pandemic-safe holiday season

By Guest Columnist Stephanie Duguid

Strive to maintain your well-being this holiday season by making smart choices.

Two facts tend to be inevitable each year at this time -- weight gain, and increased stress. This year, we're also facing a pandemic and challenges to common gatherings and family traditions.

Let's explore some specific healthy choices to end your year on a positive note and continue making progress as you move into the New Year:



Special to Wesson News

1. Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, you can still celebrate the holiday season with family and friends over the next few weeks. Think about virtual celebrations or limiting events to members of your own household to reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus. Plan events with the following in mind:

- **Community levels of COVID-19:** if you have visitors, consider from where they are coming, risk of other visitors and community challenges.
- **Exposure during travel:** use extra precautions and be cautious of your environment.
- **Location of the gathering:** indoors or outdoors.
- **Number of individuals:** try to limit those at the gathering if possible so people can be six feet apart, wear masks, wash hands and follow local safety guidelines.
- **Duration of the gathering:** longer visits pose more risk than shorter ones. If possible, people should not be within six feet of each other for a cumulative total of 15 minutes.
- **Food and Drinks:** encourage guests to bring food and drinks for themselves. If possible, avoid potluck-style gatherings. Ideally, provide food in individual servings to limit cross contamination of any foods.

2. Many think: "So what's the harm in a little holiday weight gain, especially if it's just a pound?"

According to researchers at the National Institutes of Health, most Americans never lose the weight they gain during the winter holidays. On average, Americans add one to five pounds during the holiday season. The pounds add up year after year, making holiday weight gain an important factor in adult obesity. Challenge yourself to stay within one to two pounds of your pre-Thanksgiving weight through the end of the year:

- **Go with a plan:** be active 30 minutes a day and focus on your goals.
- **Never arrive hungry:** before a party or large meal, munch on some raw vegetables or a piece of fruit to curb your appetite.
- **Pace yourself:** eat slowly to give your stomach time to tell you it is full.
- **Divert your attention:** at holiday parties, stay away from the food table and mingle with others.
- **Outsmart the buffet:** use the smallest plate available and don't stack your food, watch out for sauces and dips that quickly add on the extra calories.



• **Limit alcohol:** it's not just about the calories; it is about controlling your choices.

• **Stay active:** even in the hustle and bustle of the season, it is important to stay physically active.

3. Minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would. When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past. Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to stay healthy, and prevent stress. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.

- **Acknowledge your feelings and reach out.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. And you can try to reach out virtually, if possible.
- **Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change, as well.
- **Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.
- **Stick to a budget.** Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. As alternatives, donate to a charity in someone's name, give homemade gifts, start a family gift exchange, offer others the gift of wellness by giving subscriptions to health magazines, gym memberships, or gift certificates for yoga classes.
- **Plan ahead. Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities.** Plan your menus and then make your shopping list.
- **Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed.
- **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.
- **Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.

Make positive choices to minimize stress, continue to exercise, and do your best to stick to other healthy practices. This will ensure that you and your loved ones get the most out of this joyous time of 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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cont. from page 1

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Hester now plans to pursue the Master Municipal Clerk (MMC) designation through Master Academy Courses offered at the MML Annual Conference, prior to the MMCCA Winter Workshop and prior to the MMCA Committee Planning Session.





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Mississippians approve new state flag



Special to Wesson News

Voters in Mississippi have chosen a new state flag to replace the 126-year-old banner that incorporated a version of the Confederate battle flag.

A vote to adopt "The New Magnolia," designed by graphic artist Rocky Vaughan, as the state's new flag, got 68 percent of the vote in a public referendum.

The design was put on the ballot for a simple yes-or-no vote. Had voters rejected "The New Magnolia," the old flag would not have returned. Legislators would have tried again with a new design in the 2021 session.

The new flag is anchored by a magnolia blossom in the center, "a symbol long-used to represent our state and the hospitality of our citizens," according to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

It features red, gold and blue stripes, with a magnolia circled by 20 stars, representing Mississippi's admission as the 20th state. At the base of the circle is the phrase "In God We Trust," with a solitary gold five-point star at its peak, representing the Native tribes who lived on the land that became Mississippi.

The design "represents Mississippi's sense of hope and rebirth, as the Magnolia often blooms more than once and has a long blooming season," the Department of Archives and History said. It called the emblem "sleek and updated to represent the forward progression of Mississippi."

The former banner flag adopted in 1894 featured blue and white stripes and a Confederate emblem in the corner.

In a 2001 statewide vote, a majority chose to keep the banner flag, but a resurgence of racial justice campaigns throughout 2020 resulted in a renewed call to change it. One of those calls came from the NCAA's Southeastern Conference, which warned that it could prohibit championship games in the state if the emblem was not removed.

State lawmakers voted to replace the old flag in June, with a state commission ultimately choosing "The New Magnolia" from among 3,000 submissions.

"Mississippi voters sent a message to the world that we are moving forward together," former Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Reuben Anderson said in a statement. Anderson led the nine-member commission that recommended the new flag design. "I have a renewed sense of hope for my grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and I know this new symbol creates better prospects for the entire state of Mississippi," Anderson said.

The governor, lieutenant governor and House speaker appointed flag commissioners, and the public submitted more than 3,000 designs, including one featuring a giant mosquito.

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The football season has ended in Wesson.

At Co-Lin, COVID-19 halted the season for the Wolves gridders, and the Union Yellowjackets shut down the Wesson High School Cobras in the Mississippi High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) 2A state playoffs.

Co-Lin had postponed football operations for two weeks due to COVID-19 concerns, but had rescheduled a game with Mississippi Gulf Coast Community



College and planned to reschedule a game against the Hinds Eagles. Renewed concerns about COVID-19 shelved those plans, as well as a game with Jones, and Co-Lin ended its season with a 2-1 record that included wins over Southwest (41-3) and Pearl River (27-24) and a loss to East Central (13-10).

"Unfortunately, we will be unable to complete the remainder of this football season," said Co-Lin President Dr. Jane Hulon Sims. "We are disappointed for our student-athletes, coaches and fans. Our top priority remains to be the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff."

The WHS Cobras, meanwhile, finished their season in a playoff game in which the contending teams lit up the scoreboard with a combined 108 points. The Cobras emerged on the short end of the 64-44 battle against the Union Yellowjackets following a 6-2 regular season. Next year, they move up again to 3A play in which they previously struggled in a division that included no local competition.

In the football 6-3A Region next year, the Cobras will play Copiah County rivals Hazlehurst and Crystal Springs, along with Magee, McLaurin and Raleigh, while the basketball Cobras will return to the Region 7-3A in which they will compete against Franklin County, Hazlehurst, Jefferson County, Port Gibson and Wilkinson County.

Gridgers honored. Two Co-Lin gridgers received Mississippi Association of Community College Conference (MACCC) Player of the Week honors during the Wolves' abbreviated football season. Bryce Lofton, Co-Lin's sophomore kicker from Sand Hill, was honored twice as Special Teams Player of the Week, and sophomore linebacker Hayden Hill got the nod for defensive Player of the Week honors after a stellar game against the East Central Community College Warriors. Against Pearl River, Lofton made two field goals on two attempts from 30 and 42 yards out -- both pivotal in the Wolves' 27-24 win. The sophomore also handled all kickoffs and punting with an average punt of 39.6 yards -- one landing inside the 20-yard line. Hill, a Northwest Rankin graduate, wrapped up a career-best 17 tackles, eight solo

**SPORTS
SHORTS**

and nine assists, against East Central. The sophomore also posted one sack for five yards and three tackles for a total loss of 12 yards, and broke up a pass.

Golfers finish fifth. Co-Lin's golf team finished fifth in the MACCC Preview tournament to round out the fall portion of its 2020-21 season on their



home course. The Wolves carded a 337 in the one-round event. Gulf Coast won the event by four strokes with a 309, while Northeast finished in second with a 313. Southwest posted a 315 to finish in third, and Hinds posted a 325. Itawamba closed out the teams with a 347. Reese Dehart led the Wolves with a six-over, 78, while Seth Beall, Nick Davis, and Landon Nobles all finished in the top 20. Co-Lin will be back at home next semester for the fourth MACCC event of the year set for March 5 and 6, before hosting the MACCC State Championship on April 18 and 19.



Archery competition. Anna Carraway of Wesson helped The Mississippi College Archery Team compete in the USA Collegiate 3-D National Archery Championship in Foley, Alabama. Pictured are (left to right back row) Dalton Moore of D'Iberville, Ryan Ivey of McComb and Bryden Herring of Meadville, (left to right front row) Carraway, Kathryn Freeman of Natchez, Lexi Moore of D'Iberville, Jacey Wall of Hattiesburg, Allison Freeman of Natchez and Emily Hootsell of Natchez. Ivey, a senior, shot his personal record with a 214 and Freeman, a sophomore, shot her personal record with a 216, also bringing home the silver medal in Bowhunter Women. The tournament was the last 3-D competition for seniors Freeman, Hootsell, Ivey and Wall.

Tyson joins CL Foundation board

Special to Wesson News

Barry Tyson of Meadville has been appointed to serve on the Co-Lin Foundation Board.

Tyson graduated from Co-Lin in 1986 and then earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in business management from Mississippi College. He is the owner of Franklin Ready-Mix in Bude.

Tyson previously served on the Co-Lin Foundation Board in the 1990s, and has been a member of the Co-Lin Board of Trustees for more than ten years, which he now serves as secretary. He is a lifetime member of the Co-Lin Alumni Association, which he has served as secretary, vice president, and president.

Tyson and his wife Susan are members of Bude Church of God. They have three children, Braden (attending Co-Lin), Anna (attending Co-Lin) and Caden.

The Foundation Board has 25 members, including the chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary of the college Board of Trustees.

"We are pleased to welcome Barry back to our board," Angela Furr, executive director of the Foundation, said. "His long history of service and involvement with Co-Lin will be an asset to the Foundation as we pursue our mission of support to the college."



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