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Wesson News

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Sesquicentennial
bringing historical
museum

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"Good News You Can Use"

March 11, 2014

Charles Dale Hart honored as Wesson's 2014 Citizen of Year

Wesson News

Wesson's 2014 Citizen of the Year is business owner, volunteer, and churchman Charles Dale Hart.

The Chamber of Commerce announced its selection of Hart for the honor at its annual banquet last month. At the event, the Chamber also honored Co-Lin and Attendance Center Educators of the Year, the Wesson Ageless Hero, the Organization of the Year, and Public Servant of the Year; Business of the Year and Leadership award winners; and the 2013 and 2014 Founders Day Queens and Ambassadors – the male counterparts of the Founder's Day royalty.

"The people that change our lives are in this room tonight," affirmed featured banquet speaker Marshall Ramsey, nationally-acclaimed editorial cartoonist and writer. "Ordinary people who are in the trenches to make their town better. They, not Justin Bieber, affect our lives. They get a plaque. We get a better quality life."



Photo by Wesson News

Wesson Citizen of the Year Charles Dale Hart (left) receives congratulations from Chamber of Commerce president Marilyn Britt.

Hart, a Wesson native and graduate of Enterprise High School, owns Mississippi Well Testers, serves as an officer of the Wesson Volunteer Fire Department in which he is a Certified First Responder, and is an active member of the Beauregard United Methodist Church (UMC).

In the Fire Department, Hart assists in all its programs, including the planning and implementation of fire safety programs, such as the Kids Fire Fighter Camp. At Beauregard UMC, he serves on the Board of Trustees and the Pastor and Parish Relations Committee, chairs the Missions Committee, directs the vacation bible school, and teaches the youth Sunday school. In the wider Methodist Conference, he serves as a Camp Wesley Pines board member.

A family man as well, Hart and his wife Jennifer have five children.

Ramsey set the stage for honoring Hart and others at the banquet in presenting a selection of his prized cartoons with

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Economic development group shapes campaign

By Bob Arnold

In the midst of decade-high optimism about the direction of the national economy and signs of a strengthening local economy, the Copiah County Economic Development District (CCEDD) is shaping a multifaceted marketing program to sell businesses on settling down in the area.

Central to the program is an asset mapping process, according to SG4 (The Solutions Group Four), a Jackson consulting firm which is working

with CCEDD in creating the program. The mapping process will encompass evaluation of current marketing resources used in conversations with businesses and other organizations about making Copiah County their home, development of a comprehensive list of economic, social, cultural, and historical physical assets – the places and things – that are uniquely important to the identity and character of Copiah County, and identification of human assets – key people who can form a "brain trust" and gener-

ate ideas about building the Copiah County economy.

Arthur Lee Evans, Jr. (Pokey) says new and more effective marketing tools will come out of the process – varied literature, a web site, and a plan to guide Copiah County economic development. CCEDD is already utilizing a CD audio-video presentation produced last year as part of the new marketing program.

Evans expects the program to advance the CCEDD mission – "jobs, jobs, jobs – maintaining existing jobs

and creating new jobs toward generating spending in the community that, in turn, generates more jobs" – and support his agency's essential task as serving as an intermediary, telling the county's story to business and interpreting the needs of business to County and municipal government.

Over the past three years, without the assistance of marketing tools like the ones that will be coming on stream, Evans has been stressing four key assets Copiah County offers the busi-

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cont. from front page

Dale Hart is Citizen of the Year

commentary that interspersed humor with a serious discussion about the nature and sources of successful living that earns recognition and rewards.

He credited his own success to inspiration from a book written by motivational speaker Zig Ziglar which showed him that life change is rooted in attitude change. At the time, Ramsey was working as a high school custodian in Marietta, Georgia.

"It wasn't my dream job," he related. "I called it my fifth year in high school."

On a 15-minute break, Ramsey walked into the school library and saw Ziglar's book *See You at the Top* among the tomes. "I thumbed through it and started reading a few pages," he recalled. "Some of the book was corny. Some of it was hokey. But much of it was profound. I had big dreams when I graduated from the University of Tennessee — only to watch them fall flat. When I entered the real world in 1991, the economy went into a tailspin. So, like so many graduates today, I moved back home. It was my first taste of defeat. But it was only a defeat because I thought it was. Zig straightened me out.

"A few months into my year as a janitor, I had gone to church and heard the Parable of the Talents. I realized I was burying my talent and decided I needed an attitude change. Zig taught me exactly the steps I needed to make that change and turn my life around. Within a year, I was working at a newspaper in Marietta. Within two, I was at a small paper in Texas. And by the third year, I was the creative director and cartoonist for Copley News Service in San Diego, California. My attitude helped me reach a new altitude."

Among other major lessons Ramsey said he has learned about success is that "the worst moments in life can turn out to be the best." Living in Mississippi, he has learned that "when things get bad, we get good," Ramsey added.

In addition to Hart, the Chamber

also honored:

• **Cliff Newman**, who accepted the Business of the Year award as the owner-manager of Newman Construction, which he has operated since 1990. Newman has been building houses since he graduated from high school. Before starting his own construction company, he worked for Wesson developers Larry Ashley and Tony Douglas. Over the years, he has earned a reputation as quality craftsman.

Outside his construction business, Newman enjoys woodworking as a hobby and makes special pieces for family and friends. He also owns a beef cattle farm and is a member of the Copiah County Cattleman's Association. He is a sponsor of Little League baseball teams, and he donated his construction skills to Wesson Attendance Center to build dugouts for its softball field. He and his wife Tammy have two daughters — Taylor Beasley and Reagan.

• **Bob McCreary**, a Wesson resident since 1979, was recognized as the Ageless Hero for the ongoing service he has provided to the community following his retirement after a 34-year career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development division. He is an active member of Wesson Lions Club, in which he has served as president three times, secretary four times, and now treasurer for three years. He is a deacon at Wesson Baptist Church and is a twenty-year member of the Gideons Society, thirteen-year member of Nailbenders, and two-year member of Mississippi Baptist Relief. McCreary also maintains memberships in Keep Copiah County Beautiful, Habitat for Humanity, and



Photo by Wesson News
Cliff Newman

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Martial arts competitors vie at Co-Lin



Special to Wesson News

Grandmaster Dr. He-Young Kimm, founder of the World Han Mu Do Association, with Co-Lin student James Cruse, and David Higgs, Co-Lin Martial Arts Club sponsor and tournament host.

Wesson News

More than 120 competitors, aged five-years-old to 50-years-old, from throughout the southeastern U.S. will participate in the 2014 He-Young Kimm Cup International Han Mu Do Tournament on Saturday, March 29, at Mullen Gymnasium on the Co-Lin campus.

The competition includes men, women, and children who have trained in Han Mu Do — a martial arts system founded by Dr. He-Young Kimm in the late 1980s at Louisiana State University. A self-defense system which integrates a variety of Korean martial arts forms as interpreted by Kimm, it requires study of empty-hand and weapons techniques, ki (internal energy), and martial arts philosophy. Han Mu Do, which means "the way of Korean Martial Arts," is considered a traditional Korean martial art, although it was developed in the U.S.

The Co-Lin Martial Arts Club, which offers Han Mu Do training for Co-Lin students, is hosting The World Han Mu Do Association competition for the fourteenth year — a tradition initiated on the campus by David Higgs, a professor of social science. Higgs, who started training in the martial arts in 1973 and is the sponsor of the Co-Lin Martial Arts Club, brought Han Mu Do to the Wesson campus as a trainer after taking it up in 1997.

The simple, but profound philosophy of Kimm's martial arts form attracted Higgs:

"Han Mu Do calls for cultivating talents of individuals at whatever level they're on, towards using them to help others and to make the world a better

place," he says.

In the Co-Lin tournament, gold, silver, and bronze medals will be awarded in self defense (Ho Shin Sul), free sparring (Dai Ryun), forms (Hyung), weapons (Mu Ki Sul), falling (Nak Sul), and kicking (Jok Sul) competitions in adult men's and women's divisions (Light and Heavy Sun Bi; Brown, Red, Green, Blue, Yellow, and Orange Belts; and White Belt) and junior age divisions (beginning, intermediate, and advanced Young Adult — 17 and 18; Teen — 15 and 16; Junior — 13 and 14; Youth — 11 and 12; Pee Wee — 9 and 10; Mini Pee Wee — 7 and 8; and Little Dragons — 6 and under).

The annual event is the association's lone U.S. tournament and draws competitors largely from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas, where Han Mu Do training is predominantly conducted in the country, according to Higgs. "Although there are Han Mu Do training locations in Seattle, Washington, and Clarksville, Indiana, competitors rarely travel from those areas to the Southern tournament," Higgs says. The World Han Mu Do Association also holds tournaments in Europe, Singapore, and Mexico, reflecting the martial arts system's reach throughout the world.

The Co-Lin event starts at 9:30 a.m. with an opening ceremony. The event will also feature a staff sparring (Bong Dai Ryun) exhibition in addition to the competitions. Participant fees are \$60.00 for the first three events and \$5.00 for each additional event. The fee for spectators is \$5.00 (free for children under 12).

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Local arts bloom as winter wanes

By Guest R. Shaw Furlow

Ok...I have had enough of old man winter. The cold this year has been as bitter as any I can recall in the last several years. But Spring is around the corner; and the local arts scene, like nature, is coming to life. These are pretty busy months for musicians and other artists around here.

The visit of my friend Dr. Jim Brewer to the Co-Lin campus started rousing me from my personal hibernation. Dr. Brewer, Chairman of the Board of the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame, presented the Co-Lin Music Department the first DVD copy of the new film, *Mississippi, Birthplace of America's Music*. The film begins with several short interviews in which musicians, politicians, business people, educators and music industry insiders offer some interesting insights on why Mississippi has been such a dynamic force in our country's musical heritage. It is divided into four parts, each addressing certain aspects of the growth of our music.

Along with the film DVD comes a great companion booklet which provides a time line of Mississippi mu-



Dr. Jim Brewer (left), president of the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame, presents first copy of DVD film *Mississippi, The Birthplace of America's Music* to members of the faculty of the Music Department at Co-Lin (left to right next to Brewer) — Denise Riley, Director of Choral Activities; Juanita Proffitt, Assistant Director of Bands; and R. Shaw Furlow, Director of Bands.

sic history events and spotlights those persons who made the events possible. The DVD and the accompanying booklets, designed to be used in our schools, are another in the series promoting our state's rich musical background. The Mississippi Humanities Council provided funds to assist with

the printing of the booklets. I am extremely proud to have had a small part in this very important project.

And speaking of our musical heritage, congratulations to the city of Hazlehurst for approving a new Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame museum in its old train depot — the third one to be opened. The other museums are located at the Jackson-

Evers International Airport and on the third floor of the new Iron Horse Grill in Jackson. Videos, pictures of movers and shakers, and artifacts either are already on display or will be soon at these museums. I am looking forward to the opening of this important display of our history at Hazlehurst.

Back on the Co-Lin campus in Wesson, baritone James Martin performed an outstanding recital in the Ewing Fine Arts Auditorium last month as part of the Community Art Series. The night was miserably cold and rainy, but the hardy folks who attended heard a great concert. Martin's program, which he called "At the River," had spirituals, hymns (Shall We Gather at the River), art songs, and show tunes, all with the river as the theme. Martin earned a standing ovation from an appreciative audience for singing Ol' Man River, noting that no concert in Mississippi would be complete without it.

Earlier this month, the Jackson State University Jazz Band and Vocal jazz Ensemble performed in Rea Auditorium. These outstanding groups have toured the nation, and it was a great way to top off the 2013-14 Community Arts Series.

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Historical museum coming with city's sesquicentennial



Photo by Wesson News

An historical museum will be housed on Spring Street as part of the Wesson sesquicentennial celebration. Alton Shaw, as a private citizen, is loaning the building on the left temporarily to the Chamber of Commerce to create a museum that tells the story of Wesson. The Wesson Board of Aldermen also voted to loan the structure on the right to the Chamber to supplement the Shaw space if the museum requires. Combined, the buildings offer 4,000 to 5,000 square feet of floor space.

By Bob Arnold

An historical museum – long on the wish list of many townspeople – will become a reality, at least temporarily, as part of the Wesson sesquicentennial celebration.

Alton Shaw, as a private citizen, is loaning out a vacant building he owns on the southwest corner of Spring Street off U.S. Highway 51 to house the museum until July. Wesson Aldermen also voted to donate a city-owned building adjacent to the Shaw structure to supplement its space if the museum needs more room. The two buildings offer a combined 4,000 to 5,000 square feet of floor space across from City Hall and next to the library pavilion. The yellow-brick Shaw building previously housed a bookstore, café, and game room. The red-brick city-owned building has warehoused books for the library in recent years and some persons remember its days as a pool hall.

Steps are being taken to prepare the Shaw space physically for its new role in Wesson's sesquicentennial. Making it a museum may take a little longer, but Dixie Thornton, a Sylvarena Church area resident who is coordinating the task, says exhibits will be in place by April 25 and 26 Founders Day sesquicentennial events.

Thornton, along with Wesson residents steeped in the town's history, including Sonya Cowen, Carolyn Graham, and Mike Hux, has started identifying authentic documents, photos, and artifacts.

Developing a timeline of events that created Wesson and continue to shape the town occurs at the same time. "Museums are about telling stories," explains Thornton, who was development officer for the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby near

Hattiesburg. "As potential display items are identified for the museum, we'll look at how they fit into the story of the town."

Among components of the Wesson timeline are the incorporation of the town, its mills, the role of agriculture in the community – particularly the dairy industry, banking and merchants, religion, and evolution of Co-Lin from an agricultural high school into a community college, Thornton says. "Wesson also has a strong military history," she adds. "We'll want to show this in the museum, honoring the community's armed forces veterans and personnel in the process."

Collection of museum display items through donations and loans is the next step in building a museum. "We'll seek the unusual things – conversation pieces – that are also informative, educational, and will showcase the heart of the town," Thornton says.

After items are collected and authenticated, displays are created.

"Recreating the past can be a long, tedious process," Thornton summarizes. "But it's an exciting process for a community. As cities and towns develop blueprints of their histories in museums and get to know their pasts, they can move into the future more confidently."

Thornton believes much of the museum development work has been done in Wesson. Residents of the town, she points out, have a sense of its history, know its story, and have already authenticated items appropriate for a museum.

"We will fully utilize all of the space donated for the museum and create a wonderful exhibit," Thornton affirms.

To donate and/or loan documents, photos, or artifacts for the museum's displays, contact Dixie Thornton at 601-259-3445 or dh.thornton@yahoo.com.

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Community colleges make funding case

Special to Wesson News

Wearing orange tee-shirts and carrying posters, more than 100 students and faculty from Mississippi's 15 community colleges, including Co-

Based on commitments made by Mississippi legislators in 2007, the state's community colleges, which enroll more than 75,000 students and altogether serve nearly 250,000 state residents each year in university transfer, career/technical, workforce and adult education programs, should be receiving \$5,476 per student, according to the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC). Fiscal Year 2012 data documents that regional public universities are receiving \$6,125 per student and public schools, \$4,828 while the community colleges are being funded at \$3,075 per student – 52 per cent less than promised.

The Mississippi Faculty Association for Community and Junior College (MFACJC) sponsored the rally at the Capitol Rotunda at which speakers stressed the importance of the community college system and said it was losing financial

ground in spite of the 2007 legislation. To reach the mid-level funding commitment made to community colleges in 2007, the state would have to increase planned disbursements to them by more than \$173 million in the coming Fiscal Year. Since Fiscal Year 2000, community college enrollment has grown 44.7 percent, while state support per student has declined by 16.8 percent.

"We are 15 colleges, speaking with one voice for our students," MFACJC president Doug Donahue said. "The quality of our programs, the affordability of a college education and the stability of a highly credentialed faculty workforce depend upon equitable funding for community colleges. Our students deserve the same support the Legislature provides for K-12 and public universities."

Dr. Clyde Muse, president of Hinds Community College, emphasized the critical role of community colleges in the Mississippi economy with 64 per cent of the state's college freshmen students, 54 per cent of undergraduates, and almost half of all students take college credit courses.

"We are the platform not only for the future careers of our students, but the future of our state, as well," added Dr. Ben Cloyd, director of the Honors Institute at Hinds Community College.

"We have a little more than half the college students in the state of Mississippi, but the community colleges only receive seven per cent of state funds," declared Johnny Allen, vice president of MACJC and president of Northeast Community.

"We want to make sure we have the means to support our students with quality faculty not only today but in the future, to provide access to quality higher education through the lowest possible tuition costs, and the means to employ modern technology to make sure we have the tools to do the teaching job. We believe that the means are there. We are calling on the members of the legislature to make sure we preserve one of the state's most outstanding aspects of public education."

Also participating at the Capitol were colleges' Student VOICES groups, a student-led advocacy that encourages students to be civically engaged. Topping student concerns is the cost of a college education.

"Because of the caring faculty that I came in contract with from day one, I feel like I'm making a solid foundation for my future endeavors," Teylor Martinez, an East Central Community College student, told the legislators. "I want to urge you to support the community college students today and our funding request for our schools."



Special to Wesson News

Lin, told state lawmakers last month to keep their promise to fund them at the mid-level point between per student funding of K-12 public schools and regional public universities.



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Dale Hart honored as Wesson's 2014 Citizen of the Year



Photo by Wesson News

Wesson Garden Club members (left to right) Sonya Cowen, Lisa Smith, Sheila Stewart, Jean Ricks, Beverly King, Debbie Smith, Marilyn Britt, and Kate Hampton were on hand at Chamber banquet to accept the Organization of the Year Award for the 80-year old group.

Drug Awareness for Copiah/Lincoln Counties.

A Holmes County native, he graduated from Durdtt High School, Holmes Community College, and Mississippi State University with BS and Masters Degrees. He and his wife Pat have three grown children – Rob, Ken, and Lori, all graduates of Wesson High School and Co-Lin.

• **Cynthia Higgs**, recognized as Co-Lin's Educator of the Year for her 20 years as an instructor in the college's Medical Laboratory Technology Program. A graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi at Hattiesburg, she earned a BS in Medical Technology and worked as a lab technologist at Magee General and Hinds General Hospitals in Jackson before joining Co-Lin in 1994.

Higg's professional memberships

encompass the American Society of Clinical Pathologists; American Society of Clinical Laboratory Scientists, which she serves a board member; the Theta Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International; and the Co-Lin Faculty and Staff Association. In the community, she is a member of Wesson Baptist Church, Wesson Friends of the Library, and the Brookhaven Technical Advisory Committee. She is listed in Who's Who Among American Teachers and International Who's Who of Professionals.

A native of Simpson County, she and her husband David have one grown son, Michael, who is married.

• **Heather McKenzie**, recognized as Wesson Attendance Center Educator of the Year for her four years of service as a second grade teacher. A



Photo by Wesson News

The Chamber of Commerce Leadership Award went to the Wesson Athletic Foundation, Inc. (WAF). Terry Munn (second from left), former WAF board member, said the organization, which started in 1973, now works with 400 area youths in its sports programs. Current WAF board members Stephen Ashley (flanking Munn on left) and (left to right on Munn's right) Joe Coates, WAF commissioner Lillry Britt, and Larry Ashley accepted award.

Wesson native and Co-Lin graduate, she earned Bachelor's and Master's Degrees at the University of Southern Mississippi and is currently in the process of obtaining National Board Certification in Early and Middle Childhood Literacy. Before joining the Wesson Attendance Center faculty, she was a first grade teacher for six years at Eva Gordon Elementary School in the South Pike school district.

"My philosophy is that teachers who love teaching teach children to love learning," McKenzie says. "Every day, I want to make it a day that my students remember, for our time together is so important. I strive to be the teacher who, in twenty years when I see one of my former students, I hear, 'you made a difference in my life.'"

McKenzie and her husband Wayne

have two children, Ben and Kate.

• **Curtis Lee Howington, Jr.**, recognized as Public Servant of the Year for his service with the Wesson Police Department and Copiah County Sheriff's Office. Howington started his law enforcement career in 2010 at the Wesson Police Department after graduating from Wesson Attendance Center and working in

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Free tuition bill gains ground

Special to Wesson News

A plan to pay community college tuition for recent Mississippi high school graduates who are not covered by other financial aid is awaiting action in the state Senate after passing in the House 115-4.

The bill would set up a two-year pilot program at all of Mississippi's 15 community colleges. Local governments and private donors are already running such plans in 20 of Mississippi's 82 counties.

Under the proposed law, Mississippi residents younger than 21 who

graduate from a public or private high school and enroll in a community college full-time within 12 months would be eligible for four semesters of free tuition if they maintain a 2.5 GPA.

The Community College Board estimates 6,852 students would have been eligible for assistance in fall 2012 and cost \$4.5 million. Many community college students in financial need already receive assistance through the Federal Pell Grant and Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grant program as well as other scholarships offered by institutions.

Fire Department holds banquet



Special to Wesson News

The Wesson Volunteer Fire Department honored members for their service at its annual banquet. Among fire fighters who attended (front row left to right) were Fire Chief Ken Carraway, Bethany Carraway, Frank Newell, (back row left to right) Rhonda James, Dale Hart, Jesse James, Michael Rand, and Randal Drane. Newell was recognized as Fire Fighter of the Year and for responding to the most calls during the past year; and Hart received the Hoser Award for "service above and beyond the call of duty."



Special to Wesson News

Christy Jackson (right) received Most Improved Fire Fighter award from Wesson Volunteer Fire Department Chief Ken Carraway at department's annual banquet.

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cont. from front page

Economic development group shapes campaign



Photo by Wesson News

Arthur Lee Evans and Brenda Harper, executive director and assistant executive director of Copiah County Economic Development District, look forward to new marketing tools to help them bring new employers to the area.

ness community:

- Transportation convenience in Copiah County — rail, Interstate 55, and

Highway 51

- Co-Lin, which can develop and tailor workforce programs training as necessary

- Pro-business County Supervisors and people from throughout the county willing to work together to meet business needs through attractive incentives, tax advantages, and financing programs

- A skilled labor force eager to work in a variety of industries

Although Co-Lin can develop training programs to meet the needs of almost any kind of business, Evans says CCEDD targets companies in industries in which “Copiah County people can go right to work.” Copiah County’s primary employers are in:

- Poultry (Sanderson Farms, D.G. Foods);
- Timber (varied lumber companies);
- Gravel (Green Brothers, The Blain Companies, D&B, Krystal).



Photo by Wesson News

Scott King, manager of Wesson branch of Copiah Bank, says community banks are vital in economic development of residential towns.

Among other key employers are companies located at Copiah County Industrial Park (CCIP) — Axiall Cor-

cont. on page 10

cont. from page 3

Local arts bloom as winter wanes

Down the road from Wesson a few miles, Brookhaven Little Theatre is now presenting *The Dixie Swim Club* at the Haven Theatre. The play, which continues through March 14 and 15, is about five women — former members of their college swim team — who get together each year for a reunion. Hysterically funny.

There is still plenty of time for you to drop by the art gallery in Co-Lin’s Mutton Building to take in Melanie Eubanks’ show and the student exhibit. On April 3, *The Way We Worked* — the national traveling Smithsonian exhibit — opens at the Mutton Building. It will run through May 9.

The Co-Lin Symphonic band will also perform its annual spring concert on April 3. On April 10, the Co-Lin choir presents its spring concert. Both

of these concerts will be at 7:00 p.m. in Ewing Fine Arts Auditorium. There is no admission fee.

Finally, the annual Co-Lin Spring Show is April 29 in Rea Auditorium. Traditionally, it is one of the best-attended shows on the Co-Lin campus and features the Co-Lin jazz band and the Colettes. Mark the date.

On another note, I would like to send a shout out to two former Co-Lin music majors who are out in the real world making great music. Boone Daughdrill from New Hebron has been on the road and recording with The Band Perry for several years now. Daughdrill was the first recipient of the Stanley Stewart Young Alumni Award presented by the Band and Colette Alumni Chapter. Anna Grace Kimbrough Shideler from Franklin County is a member of

the Christian-based music group High Road III, which has been nominated this year for AGM (Absolutely Gospel Music) awards in two categories: Breakthrough Artist of the Year and Female Group of the Year. The awards are based totally on fan votes. You can help High Road III by going to the AGM website (<http://absolutelygospel.com>) for further information.

I hope to see you at some of the events. When we speak again, the sun will be out and the Polar Vortex will be just a memory. Remember...support live music.

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

Police Blotter

Special to Wesson News

During February, the Wesson Police Department activity encompassed:

Responses:

- Three vehicle accidents (no injuries)
- One malicious mischievous
- One trespassing
- One petty theft
- One grand larceny felony
- One identity theft felony
- Seven general complaints

Citations:

- One open container
- 40 traffic violations, including 21 for speeding

Arrests:

- Two for possession of marijuana
- One for DUI
- One for public drunkenness
- Four for controlled substances (methamphetamine) felonies with the seizure of one vehicle

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Dale Hart is Citizen of the Year

automotive body repair. He joined the Copiah County Sheriff's Office in 2012. His specialty training in law enforcement has covered Active Shooter Threats, Peer Support Officer Survival, Narcotics Investigation for Campus Communities, Survival Spanish, Crime Scene Analysis, Traffic Protection Strategies, and Standardized Field Sobriety.

A Beauregard native, Howington resides in Crystal Springs with his wife Mariana.

The Chamber also recognized four youths for their service roles within the club – **Elise Whittington** and **Ryan Shirley**, who were 2013 Founders Day Queen and Ambassador, and 2014 Founders Day Queen **Alexis Britt** and Ambassador **Mack Smith**.

"These are service positions in which high school youth assist the Chamber in its projects and, in the process, learn about their community and what taking civic responsibility means," Chamber of Commerce president Marilyn Britt said.

In addition to the people awards, the Chamber also recognized two community organizations:

- The **Wesson Garden Club** received the Organization of Year

award for its 80 years of service in "advancing gardening, development of home grounds, city beautification, and protection of native plants and birds."

- The **Wesson Athletic Foundation** received the Leadership award for providing a summer sports program through its expanding facilities for some 400 area youth.

Wesson Mayor Alton Shaw and Co-Lin president Dr. Ronnie Nettles commended the Chamber of Commerce in brief remarks at the banquet. Shaw noted the group's support of community development projects and Nettles acknowledged the Chamber's spirit inherited from the 1914 Wesson Boosters Club, which was responsible for the birth of Co-Lin as an Agricultural High School and subsequently, a community college.

The Chamber's 2014 officers and board members were acknowledged: Britt, president; Paige Anderson, vice president; Melissa Meredith, secretary/treasurer; Stephen Ashley, Janet Currie, Jane Hulon, Frank Newell, Jennie Skinner, and Brad Turner. Chris McSweyn, Heather McKenzie, and Pete Skinner are leaving the Chamber board.

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10:45 a.m. Morning worship

Sunday evening

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Youth Bible Study
Children's Activities
6:00 p.m. Evening Worship

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5:30 p.m. Supper
6:00 p.m. TeamKids
6:30 p.m. Prayer Meeting
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Economic development group

poration, Dixie Mats, D.G. Foods, MP&L, Moore Machine & Welding, National Textile & Apparel, Universal Lighting, Advance Auto Parts, MMI — and the Hazlehurst and Copiah County school districts.

A primary focus of CCEDD conversations with business prospects that will continue with new marketing tools is CCIP — a 465-acre property at Gallman with 15-acre to 50-acre sites available for companies. The facility is:

- Adjacent to Interstate 55 and U.S. Highway 51 and only 30 miles from Interstate 20
- Six miles from the county airport, 35 miles from Jackson International Airport, and 140 miles from New Orleans International Airport
- 50 miles from the Port of Natchez on the Mississippi River and 140 miles from deep water port at Gulfport, MS, on the Gulf of Mexico

CCIP also has Canadian National/Illinois Central rails on site.

As the new marketing program takes shape, Evans, who joined CCEDD in 2011 after serving as Mayor of Crystal Springs for six years, is optimistic about economic growth in Copiah County with positive signs both locally and nationally. He notes Copiah

County has a 7.5 per cent unemployment rate, which “could be better, but isn’t bad in Mississippi today.” At the same time, he is hopeful his efforts over the past three years — “trips, meetings, leg work” — will pay off as companies start making location decisions within the context of a national economy which grew by a healthy 2.5 per cent to 3 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2013, with solid gains in manufacturing, the trade balance, and homebuilding, along with consumer confidence.

CCEDD shares a small Victorian style home behind the Copiah County court house with the Copiah County Historical District and Hazlehurst Farmers Market. Evans, a trucking company executive for 20 years before moving to the public sector, has one staff person — Brenda Harper, CCEDD assistant executive director. The agency is funded by the Copiah County Board of Supervisors, the Cities of Crystal Springs, Hazlehurst, and Wesson, the Village of Beauregard, and Copiah County businesses.

“We’re small, but we try to work big,” says Evans. “In fact, that’s what CCEDD’s new marketing effort is all about,” he adds.

Wesson — a great place to live

While Wesson may not be an ideal location for large industrial employers because of a shortage of appropriately-sized parcels of land, it benefits as a desirable residential community when jobs are created anywhere in the surrounding area.

The Wesson economy stands on a three-legged stool — its quality of life, decent jobs nearby, and homebuilding, says Scott King, manager of the local branch of Copiah Bank which serves communities in Hinds, Rankin, and Copiah Counties.

“Wesson is a community for people with good jobs who can drive to work,” King explains. “People come to Wesson because they like its primary and secondary schools and college, life style, conveniences, and quality of life attractions; they’re near places where they can work and do business; and they can acquire housing.”

Development efforts which brought companies like Advance Auto Parts and Sanderson Farms to Copiah County, supported growth of the Kings Daughters health care system in Lincoln County, and encouraged Walmart to locate a distribution center in Brookhaven have created jobs important to Wesson’s economic growth. Wesson, however, depends as much, if not more, on healthy community banks which can provide housing loans to

people who want to live there and small businesses and other organizations which enhance its quality of life.

King says community banks have had to streamline their operations — cutting costs and saving money — to stay competitive since the economic downturn in 2008. At community banks, loan demand has slowed. New home construction loans, for example, have fallen off considerably; and, although low rates on mortgages attract prospective home builders and buyers, qualifying for a mortgage loan has become more difficult due to new underwriting rules. Auto manufacturers, at the same time, have reduced their interest rates on new car loans, making that business more competitive. Moreover, as the loan business has declined, generating deposits has become more difficult for community banks as well, particularly with the low interest rates on CDs once so attractive to retirees.

Yet community banks are ready to play their roles in a rebounding economy, King says. “Copiah Bank and other community banks are in good shape and can compete with the online banking services and ATM services of big banks in local markets because we have a niche — knowing our customers by name and developing a relationship with of them.



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Multi-media show celebrated Black History Month in February

Special to Wesson News

The distraction of material things, inability to vision the future, and the belief that we're stuck in our circumstances chain us to sexism, poverty, racism, drugs, alcohol, peer pressure, bullying, obesity, and other roadblocks to greatness, Rev. Marcus L. Thompson, Sr., told Wesson High School students at a special Black History Month program in February.

Thompson, Chief Administrative Officer at the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (MIHL) and Chief of Staff to the Commissioner of Higher Education, headlined a multi-media extravaganza, which revolved around the theme "Breaking the Chains that Bind" and included song, dance, poetry, and a creative poster display.

"Dare to look far into the future, get out of the present if you're in trouble or failing, and live your dream," Thompson urged his audience of students and townspeople.

Posters on the walls of the "old gym" at Wesson Attendance Center spotlighted African American people and events -- a product of students in the English and theater classes taught by Albert Brown, who has orchestrated the Black History Month celebration program since its inception eight years ago.

"Over the past eight years, I have asked my students to research a person or event important in the history of African Americans," Brown relates. "They report on the research orally in their classes and through posters with visuals and a narrative. I archive the posters and display them at the Black History event every year." This year, he hung 500

posters on the walls of the old gym.

Wesson High School student body president Marti Calhoun and president of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) welcomed the audience and spoke about the occasion. Breanna Savage from First Priority Praise, a faith-based Christian worship and service group, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and sang the National Anthem. Dance, song, and literary expression made the event both celebratory and serious:

- The Wesson High School Dance Team, directed by Sharon Speights, presented Tamula Munn's *Break Every Chain* dance routine. Dance performers were freshman Lacie Tarver; sophomores Libby Knight, Brittany Moore, Lindsey Alford; and junior captain Anna Speights.

- Stepping with Our Hearts, led by Wesson High School graduates and current Co-Lin students Vanesha Harris and Terry Brown Harris, performed an original show drawing on an African tradition of rhythmic foot movements and hand-clapping. The members of the group from the seventh through eleventh grades at the Attendance Center are Arthur Harris, Christacia James, Dakota Harris, Alashya Mims, Arevica Cameron, Jamiya Christmas, Nefritiria Carter, and Alyshia Hall.

- The Wesson Gospel Ensemble directed by Deshaun Arnold presented Hezekiah Walker's *Every Praise*, and Arevica Cameron and Aysha Thomas sang Jessica Reedy's *Put It on the Altar*.

- Dakota Harris, Jasmine Glasper, and DeMarkeyus Combs read poetry selections.

Brown's theater classes in grades nine through twelve did the stage and production work for the extravaganza.

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Quick and tasty foods are the risky choices

By Guest Columnist
Dr. Stephanie Duguid

It is very easy to get caught up in the daily hustle and choose quick, tasty foods served at fast food restaurants or available pre-packaged from the grocery store. However, when we choose those quick options, we are also choosing foods higher in sodium (salt) and fats, which can lead to high blood pressure and excess weight gain, among other health problems.

During March — National Nutrition Month — take some time to re-evaluate your food choices and your plate. Make food choices that will make a big difference in your waistline, your overall health, and your energy levels. Start by:

1. **Balancing your calories.** When you consume food, make sure you are also physically active to burn those calories.

2. **Enjoying your food, but eating less.** When you eat too fast or while your attention is focused elsewhere



Special to Wesson News

(i.e., television), you will consume too many calories. Pay attention to what you are actually consuming.

3. **Avoiding oversized portions.** Use a smaller plate, bowl, or glass. When eating out, share a dish or take part of your meal home for later.

4. **Switching to fat-free or low-fat milk.** You'll get the same amount of calcium with a lot less fat!

5. **Drinking water instead of sugary drinks.** Cut calories by drinking water or unsweetened beverages. Most people forget to count the calories in the sugary drinks they consume. Sodas can contain more than 200 calories per serving!

Many times, we simply eat the foods we are served, even when the choices are healthy. The problem is that the standard size of foods have continually increased

over the years while our activity levels have decreased. Over the past 20 years, bagels have doubled in size from three inches, on average, to six inches, with an associated increase in calories from 140 to 350. Similarly, the size of soda containers has increased from 6.5 ounces to 20 ounces, with calories soaring from 82 to 250. Bags of popcorn, which provided 5 cups with 270 calories, now give you 11 cups and 630 calories.

To make your decisions a little easier when thinking about meals, consider the portions for food you put on your plate:

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Make $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate grains (whole grains are preferred)
- Make $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate a protein (lean proteins are preferred)
- Add a small amount of dairy to your meal

Visit choosemyplate.gov for more information.

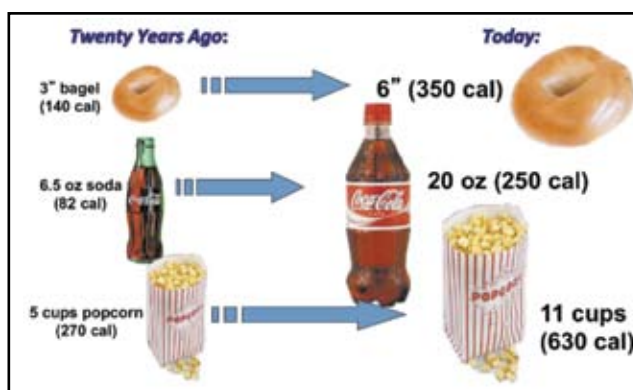
A final thought as you concentrate on nutrition during March: When you go to the grocery store, concentrate on the perimeter of the store (the outside area). You will find the fresh fruits, fresh breads, fresh meats, and dairy in these areas. When you begin to walk up and down the aisles, you will find



the processed foods. They last longer, but that's because they contain more preservatives (typically sodium/salt).

Make a conscious choice to select healthy foods for your meals. Here's to healthy eating!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Stephanie Duguid, Assistant Dean of Academic Instruction and Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Division Chair at Co-Lin, makes regular contributions to Wesson News on healthy living topics. She is also an athletic trainer and nutrition specialist and has been teaching courses related to those two areas as well as practicing what she preaches for more than 20 years. She is an avid reader and learner on health issues and encourages people to follow her example.



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