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*"Good News You Can Use"***SPOTLIGHT****Christmas
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WESSON, MS
PERMIT NO. 3

Volume 6, Number 12

December 11, 2018

Town is unique Christmas shopping venue

By Bob Arnold

There are many reasons to shop in Wesson during the Christmas season. You support the community when you buy from local merchants, put money into the wider economy and pay sales taxes that fund the town's services. But more personally, you can find unique gifts, while saving money on purchases and travel.

"Out-of-town visitors often think they have made a surprise discovery when they stumble on stores and restaurants in Wesson that residents often take for granted," Melissa Meredith at the Mill Town Mall observes. Whether it's local arts and crafts, exotic firearms, collectibles, something different to use, wear or eat and drink, Wesson is often the place to find what is unavailable or not easily found elsewhere.

At Mill Town Mall in the center of downtown Wesson on Highway 51,



Photo by Wesson News
Gift shop at Porches restaurant is a Christmas shopping stop in Wesson, where co-owner/manager Al McSweyn suggests coffee and cookbook.

more than 60 vendors offer items in a browser's paradise: local arts and crafts -- handmade furniture, leather bracelets, pottery, soaps and paintings; collectibles -- old records, books and comics, dolls, jewelry, ceramics and old world arts and crafts; antiques -- cast iron cookware, bird cages, tools and railroad lanterns; sports memorabilia and knives.

Next door, Lonnie Keller at Wesson Arms Company touts exotic firearms not available at most gun stores -- a Heizer 410/45 colt pocket pistol for under \$400, and an Uzi pistol and FNPS90 Belgium-made rifle that sell for more than \$1,000. An assortment of quality knives for under \$20 each is also on the shelves.

Across the road is Wesson Ace Hardware and Ashley's 51.

Among the wide array of hardware items at Wesson Ace, Van Graham

suggests several items for unique and useful gifts: a cable skewer for barbecue grills, an air chuck to inflate tires, easy-to-use low-vibration dead blow hammers, a pickup tool that can retrieve items lost in nooks and crannies, flasher bulbs for creative lighting, a weed popper to help maintain gardens and yards.

At Ashley's 51, which is rapidly evolving from a human food venue into one for animal feed, has ground blinds for deer hunters, among other feed products. Proprietor Jarred Ashley also suggests turkey calls for the hunters on your gift list. The Ashley family's sister store, Shop 'n Wash, which has built a new state-of-the art kitchen since a fire, is a human food venue with grocery items and various takeout selections. It offers pizza gift certificates and gas cards for the Marathon gas sold there that make good stocking stuffers,

Cont. on page 8

Voters decide on beer sales in Wesson

By Bob Arnold

Heading north on Highway 51, you now enter Wesson in Lincoln County three miles from Brookhaven. If you live in Wesson, you will also be able to vote on January 15 whether or not beer and light wine can be sold in town.

One makes the other possible.

Lincoln County Chancery Court Judge Edward Patton approved Wesson's annexation of a strip of Highway 51 starting at the old Wesson corporate boundary near the Co-Lin bridge south to within three miles of Brookhaven. The annexation, in the works for several months and finalized on November 9, pertains only to the roadway and does

not affect citizenship or tax obligations of residents along the applicable portion of Highway 51, who will remain outside the Wesson corporate limits.

So why annex a roadway alone without increasing the town's population and tax base?

"It's about beer," Wesson Mayor Alton Shaw says simply.

Wesson is taking advantage of a new state law that allows municipalities to legalize beer sales if they have populations of 1,500 or more and are within three miles of another municipality in which beer sales are legal.

At its December meeting, the Wesson Board of Aldermen declared an election for voters to decide on legalization of beer and light wine sales on being presented with a petition for such a referendum that was signed by twenty percent of registered town voters. Town Alderman Jarred Ashley collected the necessary signatures for the petition and presented it to the Board at its meeting last Tuesday.

Mayor Shaw, who supports the beer sales initiative, is optimistic about an affirmative vote on a referendum and is asking people who may not support it to discuss their issues with him.

"In reality, it won't change anything except generate new tax revenues on sales of beer and other items and services buyers purchase when they get the beer," Shaw notes. "Currently, Wesson beer drinkers go out of town -- to Brookhaven or Hazlehurst -- to buy their favorite brew and pay the taxes there on the beer, gasoline and other purchases they make on their trips. Liquor and wine have been sold in Wesson for fifty years."

When Brookhaven legalized liquor and wine sales, Wesson lost close to \$4,000 per month in tax revenues with the move of Newman's liquor store to Brookhaven, Shaw points out.

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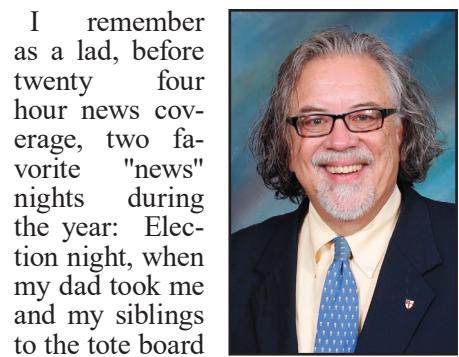
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Plethora of art topics feed column

By Guest Columnist Shaw Furlow



Special to Wesson News

I remember as a lad, before twenty four hour news coverage, two favorite "news" nights during the year: Election night, when my dad took me and my siblings to the tote board in downtown Brookhaven, where men with pieces of chalk, standing on ladders, wrote on giant green boards the vote totals as they came in. An exciting time with lots of hoopla. The other one was the annual news wrap up -- both state and national -- when heads of the television news division or top anchor reviewed all the past year's events. This column takes its cue from the second night, looking back at the local arts scene during the past year.

When I first started writing about the local arts scene, I wondered if there was enough material to sustain a monthly column. I was wrong. I never have to search far for a topic, and I look forward to what's next. Here's a quick review this past year's coverage:

Although I try not to cover the same

things, some recurring events dictate that I do. For example, there is Brookstock every July that demands an article focusing on the local rock and roll festival. The Natchez Literary and Film Festival is another recurring event. The February festival is featured every year in my column and will be in the coming year again. The Natchez festival is cosponsored by Co-Lin and is one of the top literary festivals in the southeast.

I try to mix in artist profiles as well as events.

The hardest column I had to write this year was about my friend, Blues man Virgil Brawley, following his death. Brawley was larger than life and brought joy to all of his friends and many fans. He also played a big part in educating my son on blues guitar. A friend to me, a mentor to my son and a huge talent to so many. He is missed.

This past year, I also focused on Derek Covington Smith, the Brookhaven artist who took many paths before finding his life's calling. I vaguely remember Smith as a student at Co-Lin when I taught there, but what a mature,

impressive young man he is now. Visit his studio on Cherokee Alley, if you haven't already heeded my counsel.

I looked, too, at Lester Powell, the carpenter from Wesson tasked with the restoration of Magnolia Hall in Natchez. Powell described in great detail the painstaking procedure of repairing or replacing each wooden peg used to pin the windows together. The theme of the column was restore, not raze. In the case of Magnolia Hall, wooden pegs made in 1858 are being reused.

Architecture is an ongoing topic. This year, I wrote about the renovation of the old Wesson school and its new life and continued to find subject matter in the beautiful old houses throughout the Town of Wesson.

I had fun writing the yard art article this year. I enjoyed doing the research on the legend of the bottle tree. I got so involved that I had to edit all the information I found to fit my allotted space. Let me encourage you to do some reading on the bottle tree. Interesting.

Christmas lights are always on my radar screen at this time of year. I get stopped from time to time by people

telling me I should go by so and so's house and check out their lights. But I believe the best display belongs to long-time Co-Lin employees, Carey and Celeste Williamson from Brookhaven. Their Tanglewood address is transformed into an amazing light and music show coordinated by computers. The day after Thanksgiving, the entire family begins laying out and plugging in nearly 100,000 lights. Grab a mug of hot chocolate and enjoy the sights and sounds. There is a donation box there for strictly voluntary contributions which go to the Parents Project Muscular Dystrophy.

Brookhaven Little Theatre, Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild, Brookstock Musicians Guild and Mississippi School of the Arts all offer new grist for my mill in *Wesson News* throughout the year.

Merry Christmas, y'all. Support the arts.

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

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Officer likes 'old school' police work

By Bob Arnold

At 64 years old, Ron Boysel likes his part-time job as a patrolman with the Wesson Police Department because, he says, WPD as an "old school" local law enforcement agency.

"I enjoy working as part of a team with my fellow officers," he says. "We're a brotherhood. More importantly, our focus is on building and maintaining relationships with the public. That's old time local law enforcement, and you don't see it much anymore. The emphasis today is too often on the drama of police work and not spending time with the public."

A Dayton, Ohio, native, Boysel got his first taste of law enforcement in the 1970s as the chief of security in a department store and in the U.S. Army at Homestead Air Force Base in Florida, where he served before an injury landed him in an Army payroll job, working at a computer. Retiring from the Army as a sergeant, he stud-

ied computer science and religion at Cumberland University in Williamsburg, Kentucky, and earned a degree in pastoral ministries at New Orleans Baptist Seminary from 1985 to 1987.

Serving as a pastor in rural churches in the Liberty, Mississippi, and Burlington, North Carolina, areas for forty-two years, Boysel returned to law enforcement because he needed a second job. Over twenty-two years, he worked for Mississippi police forces part-time in Brookhaven, Liberty and Magnolia and joined the Hazlehurst Police Department full-time and WPD part-time after retiring from the ministry in 2017. Along the way, he studied law enforcement at the Lincoln County Sheriff's Academy and the Southern Academy at Camp Shelby in 2010 and 2012.

"The ministry and working for police forces have been a good combination," he says. "I often find myself in situations where crime victims or

those who break the law need pastoral counseling," he points out.

Boysel has two grown children -- a daughter, Angel, 42, who lives in Liberty, Mississippi; and a son, Bobby,

39, who resides in North Carolina -- and five grandchildren. He resides in Brookhaven, but wants to relocate to Wesson, where "people love their police officers and receive them well."



Photo by Wesson News

Ron Boysel

Christmas fete raises community center funds



Photo by Wesson News

Decorators prepare tree, which memorialized the late John Tarver, for town Christmas party to raise funds for community center.

By Bob Arnold

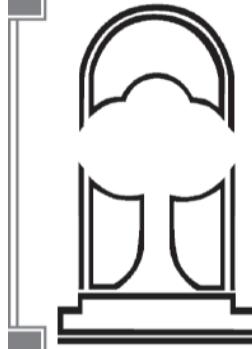
Wesson area families shopped, partied and played last Friday and helped support the Old School Community Center at a Christmas season event that the town-appointed old school committee hopes to make an annual affair to raise funds.

At the "Old Fashioned Christmas" party, upwards of thirty vendors, including many that are home-based, offered gift options for people who still needed to shop for those on their Christmas lists. They snacked on cookies and hot chocolate while children watched a movie. Mr. and Mrs.

Claus were on hand to be part of family photos, listen to Christmas wishes of kids and just mingle with the crowd.

The Christmas tree at the event memorialized the late John Tarver.

Although the Old School Community Center is funded by the town and revenues from special events, such as weddings and meetings, at the facility, it requires additional support to sustain its operation. The Christmas event, which the old school committee wants to make an ongoing community tradition, raised funds through vendor fees and a small charge at the door.



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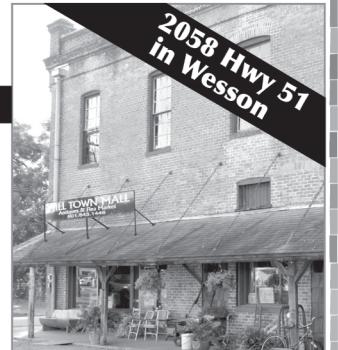
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Police Blotter

Special to Wesson News

During November, Wesson Police Department activity encompassed:

Responses to:

- Missing person
- Shoplifting
- Simple assault
- Shooting into a vehicle
- Two petit larcenies
- Three vehicle accidents, including a hit-and-run
- Two burglaries

Arrests & citations:

- Three speeding violations
- DUI second offence
- Suspended driver's license under implied consent
- No turn signal
- Improper equipment
- Contributing to the delinquency of a minor
- Simple assault
- Expired tag

A Wesson Police officer is on duty during school hours at Wesson Attendance Center every day. Wesson Police also conduct nightly business checks at the school. On school days, they facilitate traffic, with officers on duty between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

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Elections, facilities upgrades & housing

Special to Wesson News

Election results. Victories of Republican Cindy Hyde-Smith and David McCarty for the U.S. Senate and the District 4 Court of Appeals ended local mid-term elections in runoffs late last month. In voting earlier in the month, Republicans Roger Wicker and Michael Guest and Democrat Bennie Thompson won U.S. Senate and Third and Second Congressional District seats; Joseph Durr, Mike Taylor and Tomika Harris-Irving were elected judges for the 15th Chancery District and 14th and 22nd Circuit Districts; and Billy Vaughn and Timothy Cunningham won Lincoln County School District Board of Trustees races, and Terry Munn, Ernest L. Munn and Arthur (Pokey) Evans won Copiah County School Board races.

Sports facilities upgrades planned. Co-Lin is launching a three-year capital campaign to raise and spend some \$5.2 million to upgrade its sports facilities and stop a loss of prospective students it believes are choosing to attend institutions with superior facilities. The Back the Pack campaign calls for first-year expenditures of \$1.3 million to install artificial turf at Stone Stadium, \$750,000 for a new digital scoreboard at the stadium, \$500,000 for construction of concrete tennis courts, \$18,000 for a Mullen Gymnasium scoreboard and smaller spending for rehabilitation and structural improvements at the softball

field. Year two projects would include moving dugouts on the baseball field for \$250,000 to address safety concerns and relocation of the athletic training room to the fitness center for \$200,000. In year three, plans include \$800,000 renovation of Mullen Gymnasium, including a new floor and roof; \$1 million to improve the baseball facility, \$260,000 to remodel the football field house and \$250,000 for irrigation on the Wolf Hollow golf course.

Group seeks land for housing. Habitat for Humanity for Lincoln County, which has built only two homes over five years, wants the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors to build roads to access a 37-acre tract of land the owner has agreed to sell it on a build-now, pay-later plan so it can construct new homes. The Habitat board does not believe it is doing enough to help the needy in the area and says the prospective purchase would give it the space to build eighty new homes. Lately, its deals on land for new homes have collapsed during the acquisition process for a variety of reasons. When it isn't building homes, the local group is helping needy families repair existing homes and is seeking volunteers and donations. For information, contact Suzanne Smith, executive director of the organization at 601-823-4061.

Reed's Metals sold. Industrial Opportunities Partners of Evanston, Illinois, has purchased Brookhaven-based Reed's Metals to move into the market for metal roofing and steel buildings across the South. Reed's founder Bernie Reed will continue to oversee operations of the local metal fabricator, one of Lincoln County's biggest businesses.

Southwest system leaves WellCare. Area Medicare patients using WellCare Advantage supplementary health plans

NEWS NUGGETS

will have to look for their care outside the Southwest Health System, including Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center, Lawrence County Hospital and affiliated clinics and physicians, which are leaving the network at the end of the year due to disputes about reimbursement rates. Medicare patients can use other health care systems, such as King's Daughters Medical Center in Brookhaven, which will continue to accept WellCare Advantage plans or enroll in new plans. For assistance call the Mississippi State Health Insurance Assistance Program at 844-822-4622.



Photo by Wesson News

The Wesson Chamber of Commerce led the celebration of the opening of Copiah Nutrition (CN), a new business on Highway 51 which features shakes as healthy meal replacements, energy teas and protein bar snacks. At a ribbon-cutting ceremony to inaugurate the business were (front row left to right) Arthur Lee Evans, Jr., and Brenda Harper, director and administrative assistant at Copiah County Economic Development District; Janet Currie, Chamber President; Mary Hopson, mother of CN owner; Callie Carter, CN employee; Ana Mason, CN owner; Chasadey Peden, CN employee; Brad Mason, husband of CN owner; Elizabeth Shirley, Chamber Founders Day queen; Stephen Ashley and Marty Stroud, Chamber members; (back row left to right) Cindy Mason, mother-in-law of CN owner; Libby Kirton, Town Hall staff; Joe Mason, father-in-law of CN owner; and Laura Smith. CN's hours are 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday thru Friday and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. CN offers 43 flavors of shakes and 53 teas.

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New ornaments light up downtown



Photo by Wesson News

By Bob Arnold

There's something different about downtown Wesson this Christmas season.

Look up at the lamp posts and utility polls, and you won't see the traditional lighted candle decorations that have adorned them for many years running. They have been replaced by new snowflake-designed lighted ornaments, courtesy of a campaign spearheaded by Wesson Garden Club to bring a new Christmas look to the downtown area.

In total, there are ten snowflake ornaments on the downtown lamp posts and utility polls this year -- seven donated to the town by the Garden Club, and three others, each purchased by the town, Chamber of Commerce and people who wanted to remember the late Randall King. The Garden Club wants to add another one to two new snowflake ornaments every year to put up on side

streets.

The new ornaments are expensive, at \$425 each.

As for the old candle ornaments, you may see them again in other towns in the future. The town has designated them as surplus and plans to sell them to bring Christmas lights to towns which have not been lit up in past years.

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Cont. from page 1

Town is unique Christmas shopping venue

Ashley notes.

Down Eighth Street not far from Shop 'n Wash, Mike Webb maintains Little Dixie Sutler in a small barn-like structure next to his house. Webb is the sutler, in the tradition of the merchants who followed behind Rebel Armies during the U.S. War Between the States, a part of Southern history he keeps alive with blankets, cups, flags, beach towels, lapel pins and other small gift items. He suggests items with "Ole Miss Pride," "Ole Miss Colonel," and the Gadsden "Don't Tread on Me" designs, Mississippi state flags and Christian flags.

Back on Highway 51, just south of the stop light, is Porches Restaurant, which has a small gift store. Co-owner/manager Al McSweyn points to Cain's Coffee and Tea, which the restaurant serves and sells in the store -- the only place in Mississippi where it is available. "The coffee isn't flavored water," he says. "It is full body with robust flavor, but not bitter." Among other gift possibilities at the store are Porches Time t-shirts that highlight Travis Mills' movie, *Porches and Private Eyes*, which was filmed in the Wesson and Brookhaven area; the popular Porches cookbook with recipes for meal selections on the restaurant menu and gift certificates for meals or store items.

Back in town on Church Street, just

off Highway 51, is another restaurant -- Dump's Barbeque, a new addition to Wesson that features a secret sauce that gives its smoked meats a distinctly different flavor. Throughout the Christmas season, the restaurant is selling it in pint and quart size mason jars. "The State told us we didn't have to label them and give away our recipe," chef-owner Ken Dale Sullivan says.

Behind Dump's, facing Spring Street is a Wesson retail institution -- Another Time. . . .Another Place, a gift shop maintained by Janet Currie, a savvy shopper who stocks her shelves with quality, relatively low cost items she finds -- local arts and crafts, beautiful necklaces and other costume jewelry, fashionable clothing and candles, among other unique bargain gifts. Currie also makes one-of-a-kind custom-made wreaths and florals and provides free gift wrapping.

That's just the beginning. You can even find gems in convenience stores like Dollar General and Family Dollar. If you ask around, you may find a home-based artisan or craftsman with interesting gifts. You can even find your Christmas tree a few miles out of town, where Gary Keller grows them and will cut down your choice on his ten-acre property on Highway 51 in Beauregard. Most Wesson merchants offer gift certificates. You don't have to leave town!

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Local artists are honored for works

By Bob Arnold

Twenty-six area artists were honored for their works in seven categories in the Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild's (BRAG) annual fall exhibition and competition.

Rhonda Rich won the Best of the Show award for "Endangered," also the Mixed Media first place winner, which Judge Randy Jolly commended as a "complex and compelling work" that featured "outstanding use of color and color tonality" and a "delightful mix of material" with a "unified visual field." "It makes the viewer want to know the rest of the story or narrative, while allowing him/her to place their own travels or life journeys into the work," he said. Rich's "Downtown" was also an honorable mention selection in Mixed Media.

In the seven categories judged, other artists receiving awards were:

3D. Janet Campbell Smith, first and third place and honorable mention for "Teapot," "Covered Box" and "Covered Jar." Joshua Hamilton, second place for "Flesh Cube."

Acrylic. Dianne Burris, first place for "The Fourth Day;" Lyndie Flynn, second place for "Hubert the Wolfhound;" Rose Mahoney, third place for "Reflection;" and Katherine Bumgarner, honorable

mention for "Nature Ablaze."

Drawing & Pastel. Emily Goss, first place for "Fairly Local;" Theresa Beaubouef, second place for "Another Good;" Rosemary Leggett, third place for "Calm Before the Storm;" and Gwin Robertson and Stephanie Gustavson, honorable mentions fro "Symphony in Green" and "A Sword Shall Pass You."

Mixed Media. Elizabeth Kaplan, second place for "Twigs I;" and Boots McKay, third place for "Marsha."

Oil. Cherie Langston, first and third place for "Home" and "Red, Red & Red;" and Katheryn Zansler, second place and honorable mention for "Lost Story/Found" and "Quandary."

Photography. Bill Perkins, first place for "Amazing Skardu;" April Alsbury, second place for "American Pride;" Paul Gandy, third place for "Gardens."

Becky Corkern, third place for "County Clare Church Yard;" Andrew Morgan and Dorothy Mitchell, honorable mentions for "Grand Canal Venice" and "Portrait of an Eagle."

Water Media. Janet Smith, first place for "Ole Brook Inez;" Suzanne Shumate, second and third place for "My Happy Place" and "Great Blue Heron;" and Lauren Morris, honorable mention for "I Love Lifted Me."

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Community Calendar

December weather forecast: The Old Farmer's Almanac calls for an average temperature of 46 degrees (2 degrees below average) with precipitation of 4 inches (one inch below average) in December. December 12-15: Rain to snow, then sunny, cold. December 20-22: Sunny, cool. December 23-27: Rain. December 28-31: Showers, mild.

DECEMBER 11

Institute for Learning in Retirement Movie Day features "The Man Who Invented Christmas," Thames Center on Co-Lin campus. 10 a.m.-12 noon.

Diabetes support group. Meets weekly on Tuesdays. Education Annex at King's Daughters Medical Center, Brookhaven. 1:30 p.m. For information, call Natalie Ybarra at 601-835-9489.

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and VFW Auxiliary Post 2618 meet. \$5 for meal. VFW Hall on Industrial Park Road, Brookhaven. 5:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 12

WorkKeys Assessment for Career Readiness Certificate. Thames Center at Co-Lin. 8:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Register in advance at 601-643-8707.

DECEMBER 13

Wesson Lions Club meets. Co-Lin Student Cafeteria. 6 p.m. (Board). 6:30 p.m. (Membership).

Lincoln County Historical and Genealogical Society presents "Night of the Museum" with a showing of "Spotlight on Brookhaven -- 1975," a digitalized version of the original film.

DECEMBER 14

"Junie B, Jingle Bells, Batman" Smells performance at Brookhaven Little Theater, continuing on December 15 & 16. Haven Theater on West Cherokee Street in downtown Brookhaven. 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 2 p.m. Sunday matinee.

DECEMBER 17

Beginner clogging classes for persons of all ages beyond five-years-old are held every Monday night. A small fee is charged each month. Brookhaven Recreation Department on Highway 51. Call 601-833-3791.

DECEMBER 18

Copiah County Master Gardeners meeting on third Tuesday of each month. Mississippi State University Extension Office at Gallman. Member meeting at 5 p.m. & educational program open to the public at 6 p.m.

DECEMBER 24

Blood drive every second and fourth Monday. King's Daughters Medical Center Hospital Annex. 1 p.m.- 6 p.m. Call 800-817-7449 for information.

DECEMBER 25

Merry Christmas.

JANUARY 1

Happy New Year!

CONTINUING

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

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

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

Brookhaven 55 South Flea Market is open on Saturdays and Sundays next to the Lincoln County Civic Center. Ten per cent of the profits each weekend are donated to a local charity. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Email Community Calendar items to bobarnold@wessonnews.com.

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Combat holiday stress & weight gain

By Guest Columnist
Dr. Stephanie Duguid

Strive to maintain your well-being this holiday season by making smart choices. At this time of year, weight gain and increased stress, particularly, demand attention. Make positive choices to minimize stress, continue to exercise, and do your best to adhere to other healthy practices, so you and your loved ones get the most out of this joyous season. Let's look at some specific healthy choices to end your year on a positive note and continue making progress as you move to the New Year!

Many think: "So what's the harm in a little holiday weight gain, especially if it's just a pound?" Yet researchers at the National Institutes of Health point out that most Americans never lose the weight they gain during the holidays — on average, one to five additional pounds. The pounds accumulate 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. Here are some tips for activity and food consumption to make it through the season:

- Plan & act on it.** Make a point to be active 30 minutes a day and focus on your goals

- Never arrive hungry where there is food.** Before a party or large meal, munch on some raw vegetables or a piece of fruit to curb your appetite.

- Pace yourself when eating.** Eat slowly to give your stomach time to tell you when it is full.

- Give something else attention besides food.** 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. Be sure to watch out for sauces and dips with extra calories.

- Limit alcohol.** It's not just about the calories. It's about the control. Take control of your choices.

- Stay active.** Even in the hustle and bustle of the season, stay physically active.

Stress and depression also come with dizzying array of demands of the holiday season — parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few. When stress gets the best of you, you set yourself up for a variety of health issues:

- Heart disease, including heart attacks.
- Skin conditions, including psoriasis and shingles.
- Digestive disorder flare-ups, such as irritable bowel syndrome, ulcerative colitis, and Crohn's disease.
- Immune disorders, including flare-ups



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of multiple sclerosis and lupus.

- Anxiety and insomnia.**
- Worsening pain of arthritis, your back and muscles (spasms).**

However, you can minimize holiday stress, and even end up enjoying the season more than you thought you would. When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. So try to prevent it, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past:

- 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 in places of worship or at other social events.

- 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 as well.

- 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. Limit expenses by:

- Donating to a charity in someone's name.
- Giving homemade gifts.
- Starting a family gift exchange.
- Offering others the gift of wellness by giving subscriptions to health magazines, gym memberships, or gift certificates for yoga classes.

- Planning.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan 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. Over-indulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.

- Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spend just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, to refresh for everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to stay healthy, and prevent stress. Learn to recognize your holiday stress triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands. Combat them before you melt down. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.

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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Teacher's reward is student success

By Wesson News

After studying nursing as a student at Co-Lin for one semester, Vanda Brister, the November Teacher of the Month at Wesson Attendance Center (WAC), realized she wanted to make a difference in the lives of kids and that her future was as an educator.

She remembered how teachers like Philip Knight at Wesson High School (WHS), where she graduated in 2001, made a difference for her as a student -- particularly in math, a subject she had never liked or understood until Knight changed that in his class. "I wanted to introduce kids to new things and present things in different ways to make a difference in their lives."

Brister made new career plans, earned an Associate Degree in Applied Science with an elementary education specialty at Co-Lin and received her BS Degree in K-8 Elementary Education with endorsements in reading and science at Southern Mississippi in 2005. For the past three years, she has taught fifth graders, focused especially on reading, at WAC after teaching six years at Pearl Lower Elementary School and three years at Simpson Central School.

Growing up in Wesson, the seeds of her teaching career were planted at the Nena Smith Dance Studio, where she was an instructor following her days there as a student. She also played soccer at WHS.

"The biggest reward in teaching for me is to see a child succeed," she says. "Helping students recognize their own success and being able to see when they recognize these successes is the biggest reward of all." Brister says she wants to help children "discover the world" and does not believe that it is effective "to simply stand in a room and spout facts for students to memorize and attempt to recall." "My goal," she adds, "is for my students to wake up eager to come to school and learn. I strive to meet the children on their own level both academically and socially. By using a



Photo by Wesson News

Vanda Brister

variety of learning styles and setting realistic goals for each student gives them something to work towards and the opportunity to be successful."

Brister and her husband Tyler Brister, an offshore maintenance coordinator for Chevron, are active in mission work with homeless persons in the Jackson area where they work with Jackson Street Ministries through New Zion Baptist Church in Crystal Springs. They are looking forward to a March mission trip to Haiti.

Brister and her husband live in Crystal Springs with their two children, Tate, 11, and Mason, 6, who attend WAC.

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By Guest Columnist Rebecca Bates

Camellias, a group of plants from the Far East that have been popular in the south for generations, add beauty to landscapes at this time of year. Large-scale production of camellias in Mississippi began just after WWII,



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when J.D. Dean and Malley Wilburn started Dean and Wilburn Nursery near Agricola. At one time, they maintained up to 200,000 camellia plants with more than 100 varieties.

There are at least 200 species of camellias in the world, but in our climate two types grow exceptionally well and are treasured in Southern landscapes: *Camellia japonica* and *Camellia sasanqua*.

The majority of blooms seen at this time of year belong to the sasanqua camellias. Sasanquas are grown for their outstanding floral display in shades of white, pink or red. Their glossy, dark green foliage add year-round richness and beauty to the landscape. They are often used as specimen trees or as a screen or hedge.

When planting camellias, prepare the soil well, selecting a site that is well drained with good sun exposure.

TENDING YOUR GARDEN

formed. The list of suitable sasanqua cultivars is lengthy: 'Shishigashira' is a popular cultivar that received the MS Medallion Award. It has rose

pink, semi-double blooms and is considered a dwarf type. A popular white cultivar is 'Mine-no-Yuki'.

It has large, white peony blooms. 'Kanjiro' has semi-double deep red blooms with a silvery sheen on each petal. 'Yuletide' has brilliant red flowers that appear just in time for Christmas.

Take a trip to the local garden center, where you can select one or several of these beautiful, long-lived and nearly trouble free plants. No Southern landscape is complete without them.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Rebecca Bates is the Mississippi State University Agricultural Extension Agent based at Lincoln County Courthouse in Brookhaven..*

Light shines in the darkness

By Guest Columnist Rev. Nelson Santa Ana

As a child, and even today as a parent, one of my favorite parts of the Christmas season is hanging lights outside the house. I can remember times when my siblings and I would get out all the boxes of tangled lights and begin the unraveling process. We would get frustrated, quit, get started again, quit, and keep starting over until the job was finished. Once that was done, then the job was easy. Stringing lights over bushes, hanging them in trees, outlining the sidewalk or driveway was all fun. But none of those things were the best part.

The best part came when the sun went down in the western sky and darkness now blanketed our town. It wasn't until this time of the day that we could go out into the yard, usually bundled up because of the cold, and admire our handiwork. This was the highlight because it was the culmination of every new plan different from last year, every hour of frustration untangling lights, every intentional placement of strings of lights and, sometimes, even the individual bulbs. Then, suddenly, in one moment, all the lights came to life and where the darkness was just resting, now the light

came in its place.

This moment has always been one of my favorites, but now it carries even more meaning because I have come to learn that Christmas lights are not random. Christmas lights are not just a cultural norm that we have all unwittingly followed because it's what we've always done. No. Christmas lights have a purpose and proclaim a familiar story found all throughout Scripture: the birth of Jesus Christ.

This year, as I have begun reading through the different Christmas prophecies and narratives found in Scripture, one theme continues to show itself over and over again. The theme of light. Here is a sampling:

Isaiah 9:2, 6 – The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. . . For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

John 1:1-5 – In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was

with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness.

Luke 2:8-9 – And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks by night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them.

Matthew 2:1-2 – After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

Whether it is a star's bright shining light, the light of the glory of God glowing from His angels, or the metaphorical light of new life and new hope found in Christ alone, what connects all of these passages is that every single time the light is always penetrating the darkness. Have you ever noticed Jesus was born at night? Have you ever thought about the fact that the wise men could only track the star when it was dark? Why would God arrange it this way? Why would God make darkness the setting for the arrival of His Son?

The message is clear and it is profound. God brought His Son into the physical darkness of the world as a picture of His sending our Savior into the spiritual darkness of our hearts. Mankind are those that Isaiah describes as "living in the land of the shadow of death" and "people walking in darkness." It is our hearts that are blinded, our hearts that are stumbling about, our hearts that need direction. It is this darkness that Jesus came to illuminate. No longer do we have to walk in darkness, because Jesus, suddenly, in one moment, can bring us the life that is the light of men.

So, this Christmas season, as you hang up and pass by homes decorated in beautiful, colorful, decorative lights, remember what it is you are actually seeing: Light shining in the darkness! The message of Jesus! The message of Christmas!

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

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

Dr. Liverman: Serving Wesson since 1984

By Bob Arnold

When Dr. Steven Liverman joined the medical practice of his father-in-law, Dr. Barton Friedman, in Wesson in 1984, he wasn't expected to stay very long.

"Dr. Friedman created office space for me in his building, but didn't spend much on materials and construction because he thought I would leave soon," Liverman recalls. "But I am still here more than thirty years later."

Born in Canada, Liverman moved with his family to Brookhaven when he was two years old after his father accepted an offer to manage a jewelry store there. He graduated from Brookhaven High School in 1970, received a BS in Biology from Milsaps College and his medical degree from the University of Mississippi Medical Center at Jackson in 1978. He did a three-year residency in family medicine at the Naval Hospital in Jacksonville, Florida, on a Navy Health Professional Scholarship and then worked in a three-year payback program related to his scholarship at the Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point, North Carolina, from 1981-84.

"I enjoyed taking care of Marine Corps personnel, but Dr. Friedman was my mentor, and I came to Wesson at his invitation," Dr. Liverman recounts. "He doctored nearly everyone in town, and we had a cradle-to-grave practice, including birthing."

Dr. Liverman partnered with Dr.

Friedman until his retirement in 2008 -- three years before his death -- and took over the practice alone. Dr. Liverman studied acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine and for a

settled in Wesson, they lived initially above his office, but since 1986 have resided in a two-story home that was built from materials salvaged after the demolition of the old Wesson Hotel.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

while alternate and complimentary medical care were important parts of his practice. Today, he serves thirty to thirty-five patients daily, largely on a walk-in same-day appointment basis, providing routine family care and doing minor surgery. Many of them are on Medicaid. Although delivering babies was part of the practice at one time, that ended shortly after moving it from the Wesson office to King's Daughters Medical Center.

Dr. Liverman met his wife, Sandra, Dr. Friedman's daughter, and they were friends as youth in a synagogue at Brookhaven during the 1960s. Her care has been an important part of his life since she was diagnosed with stage four breast cancer twenty-five years ago. Although she has fought the disease successfully, her health has deteriorated with treatments, including experimental therapy at Duke University Medical Center. They have two grown daughters -- Leaf, who teaches speech and language, and Dov, a violinist who also does organic farming.

When Dr. Liverman and Sandra

His family continued to worship at the Jewish Temple in Brookhaven, which was decommissioned after more than 120 years. He and Sandra are now associated with the Beth-Israel Temple in Jackson.

Looking back over his years as a physician, Dr. Liverman says doctor-patient relationships have deteriorated with big corporations, increasingly, dominating medical care. He advocates single payer national health insurance that will provide equitable care for all patients.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy gardening and landscaping. I am also a cyclist and hiker. I have bicycled along the Long Leaf Trace between Prentiss and Hattiesburg.

Are you a reader?

I read biographies and travelogues. I recommend *Riding the Iron Rooster*, a travel book in which Paul Theroux reports on his travels through China in 1980s and seeks to disprove the Chinese maxim that "you can always fool a

foreigner." Scot Berg's *Wilson* about Woodrow Wilson is another good read. I also enjoy John Grisham's novels. I am excited about reading more as I have more time. I have a long list of books I want to read.

Do you enjoy movies or theater?

I am a Mel Brooks fan. I like his humor in *Blazing Saddles*. *Blues Brothers* and *Argo* are two other movies I like. I enjoy mafia movies -- *The Godfather*, particularly. I watch Turner Movie Classics on television with my wife and am beginning to get into old films.

How about music?

I am eclectic. The Beatles. Bob Dylan. Streisand. Middler. The Four Tops. The Temptations. Country music. I am not a musician, but I played the clarinet in high school and a bit of piano.

If you won the lottery, how would you spend your winnings?

I'd give it away to those in need. It's dangerous to have money in excess of your needs. One thought I have had over the years is opening a free clinic in Wesson.

How would you change the world?

In my practice, I believe I am helping to change the world one person at a time. All else is secondary to health, and if I can help prevent or treat someone's disease, I am changing the world. Beyond that, the world needs more compassion and love today. I would wish for that.