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Wesson News

SPOTLIGHT

**COVID-19
Meditation**
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Wesson News
PO Box 1028
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Volume 8, Number 5

“Good News You Can Use”

May 12, 2020

Businesses are reopening cautiously

Special to Wesson News

Mississippi businesses are cautiously reopening, even as cases of COVID-19 continue to mount statewide.

Governor Tate Reeves issued a new Safer-At-Home executive order, which has been extended until May 25. He initially allowed retail stores that had been closed under his previous orders to reopen, and subsequently permitted restaurants and bars, parks, and salons, barbershops and gymnasiums to reopen as well -- all with conditions on cleaning and sanitizing their premises, social distancing and protecting employees, and limitations on the number of customers they can serve.

The Governor opened the sa-



Wesson News

Mill Town Mall has reopened following COVID-19 closure.

lons, barbershops and gyms on a day when the number of new COVID-19 cases spiked to 404 -- the largest number reported so far, as the state's total approached 9,000. On average,

the state has been reporting 200 to 300 new cases of COVID-19 each day. Lincoln County's cases are close to 200, including nearly 60 at long-term care

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Wesson Sales tax revenue loss unknown

Wesson News

Wesson isn't expecting a major tax revenue shortfall as a result of the economic shutdown due to COVID-19 precautions, but Mayor Alton Shaw says the town is nevertheless exercising caution and frugality in managing its budget.

As with many small towns across the nation, essential businesses are central to the Wesson economy and remained open throughout the period of Governor Tate Reeve's stay-at-home order and now his Safer-At-Home order.

The Family Dollar Store, Dollar General, Ace Hardware and the package store continued to serve customers, while other businesses were closed or restricted in operations.

Area residents continued spending at unaffected businesses, but sales dollars may have been lost due to consumers related to Co-Lin and Wesson Attendance Center who did not shop in town because they were closed.

"There is a three-month lag time between spending and when the town receives sales tax revenues from the state," Shaw said. "So we don't know the immediate impact at this time."

"The town will be cautious and frugal in case there is any significant sales tax shortfall. Only sales taxes will be affected, as the town has already received property tax revenues for the year."

Computers & cell phones replace classrooms

Special to Wesson News

The COVID-19 pandemic has shut down traditional classroom instruction at Co-Lin, but students in the college's academic and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs have continued to pursue their studies, shifting almost seamlessly from buildings on Co-Lin's campuses to computers and

cell phones in their homes, and even in their vehicles, to continue learning on the internet.

Nearly 100 percent of Co-Lin students who were enrolled in traditional classroom courses before they were shut down by COVID-19 are now taking them online, Stephanie Duguid, the college's Dean of Academic Instruction, and

Brent Duguid, Dean of Career and Technical Education, report.

Instructors made contact with their students via email, telephone and text after the college announced its COVID-19 emergency plan, and kept most of them on board for online classes.

"We were uniquely prepared to make the shift," says Steph-

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Gridders going to the NFL



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Three former Co-Lin football players have inked deals to play at the professional level as undrafted free agents.

Tommy Champion, who played for Co-Lin in 2015 and 2016, signed with the Seattle Seahawks. Jaquarius Landrews, who also played in Wesson in 2015 and 2016, inked with the New York Giants, and Keith Washington II, who played just one season at Co-Lin in 2017, signed a deal with the New Orleans Saints. The trio will all head to NFL camps during the offseason to battle for spots on the newly expanded 55-man roster for each team.

Champion, a Calloway High School graduate from Jackson, was a staple of the Wolves' offensive line for two seasons. The 6-5, 320-pound lineman, helped Co-Lin rush for more than 1,200 yards both years he dressed out as a Wolf and helped Co-Lin produce a 1,000-yard

rusher in Ladarius Galloway. His efforts landed him First Team All-Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC) honors as a sophomore in 2016. He went on to Mississippi State University (MSU), where he played in 18 games and started six times through two seasons.

Landrews, a McComb High School product, was a stellar defensive back for Co-Lin in his two years in Wesson. The lengthy safety wrapped up 43 tackles during his career at Co-Lin and snagged four interceptions, including a game-winning, overtime pick against East Mississippi in 2015, highlighted in Netflix's Last Chance U. After Co-Lin, Landrews played at MSU, where he played in 23 games with 16 starts. He totaled 98 tackles, five tackles for loss, three sacks, one interception, and 13 pass breakups with the Bulldogs.

Washington, a Prattville, Ala-

bama, native, came to Co-Lin as a defensive back for one season after transferring from the University of Michigan. During his season with the Wolves, he wrapped up 20 tackles, brought down two interceptions, posted five pass breakups, and forced one fumble. After Co-Lin, he continued his career at West Virginia University, where he played in 22 games at cornerback, with 17 career starts. During his time with the Mountaineers, he recorded 23 tackles, three interceptions, and 12 breakups which landed him 2019 All-Big 12 Second Team honors.

Another notable player joining the NFL ranks as an undrafted free agent with Co-Lin ties is Wesson native Farrod Green. Green is the son of Co-Lin defensive back coach Calvin Green. He played at Wesson Attendance Center before going to MSU as a tight end. He signed with the Indianapolis Colts.



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Insurance man now minds store

By Bob Arnold

For almost two decades, people around here knew Charles R. Fortson, Jr., as their insurance man. Today, they know Fortson for his cooking and shop keeping as the proprietor of Uncle Ray's, the convenience store/restaurant/bait shop across from Lake Lincoln State Park.

Fortson, a native of Houma, Louisiana, came to southwest Mississippi in 1973 when he was in the fifth grade with his mother and father, who needed to care for his ailing maternal grandmother in McComb. He grew up in Summit, and graduated from North Pike High School in 1981.

"After high school, I worked off shore briefly, and then worked in construction on projects, including the Edgewood Mall in McComb and Wal-Mart stores throughout the area," Fortson recounts.

In May, 1990, Fortson started his insurance career in Brookhaven with Independent Life, which subsequently was bought by American General. In 2000, he started his own agency in Brookhaven, offering multiple insurance products -- home, property, health, life and small business -- for Alfa. He concluded his insurance career with Woodmen in 2018.

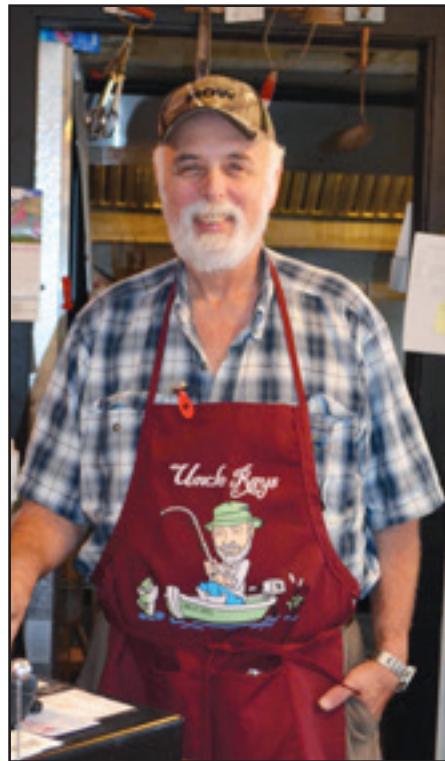
Fortson's insurance career flourished at the Alfa office

he maintained on Highway 51 next to Wand Feed and Seed. He grew a business that served some 1,500 to 2,000 customers. "I enjoyed meeting different people and helping solve their problems," he says. Fortson's special niche as an insurance agent was making sure his customers understood what they bought and reviewing their policies with them periodically to assure that they got what they needed. "God blessed me," he affirms.

As much as he enjoyed his career in insurance, Fortson always had a dream of running a store, and expressing his passion for cooking as part of a business. In 2019, the time was right, and Fortson decided to do something different. Over the years, he had considered buying four or five different stores and switching careers. Ten years before, he had even looked at the Lake Lincoln store. In March, 2019, he bought it and started

pursuing his dream there.

Since embarking on his insurance career in 1990, Fortson has maintained his residence in Lincoln County. He currently lives on the property across from Lake Lin-



coln where he operates Uncle Ray's, and has maintained a Franklin County home on six acres, which he has used to entertain large groups of guests, including family and friends.

But I continue to find diversions in gardening, hunting and fishing. I used to do wood-working. I am not a big book reader or into sports, however.

Do you enjoy movies or theater?

I like comedies and science fiction. Everyone needs to laugh. Life is so serious. I grew up on Godzilla. I was -- and continue to be -- into *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Dark Shadow* and *Batman*. I enjoy the *Marvel* series and *Big Bang Theory*, the real life situation comedy. I was a fan of Fred Sanford, Andy Griffith and Abbot & Costello.

How about music?

Country and gospel. I am a fan of George Strait and the Gaithers, the gospel group.

How would you spend your lottery winnings if you were so lucky?

I would give to the church, pay my bills, help my brothers and sisters and invest anything I had left.

How would you change the world?

One person at a time. I would seek to make a difference to one person, then to another and then to another -- one person at a time. In the insurance business, I tried to make a difference to one person at a time. In my cooking, I try to make a difference in one dish at a time. That's the way you change the world.

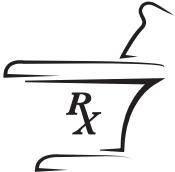
MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR



Fortson has four daughters -- Kayla, 26, Carley, 24, Nikki, 21, and Asia, 18 -- and a granddaughter, Emmaly.

What are your hobbies?

Of course, I have turned my cooking passion into a career.


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cont. from page 1

Businesses are reopening cautiously

facilities. In Copiah County, cases number more than 150, and Lawrence County has reported more than 60 cases.

Restaurants and bars can cautiously allow diners inside at fifty percent of their capacity and separated by six feet, with servers wearing masks if they are in close contact with customers. Similarly, retailers must limit traffic to fifty percent of capacity, and the Governor recommended store employees wear face masks when they are on the

job. At businesses that cannot avoid sustained person-to-person contact -- gyms, salons and barbershops -- employers must wear masks. Salons and barbershops must limit customers inside to one per service employee. In gyms, workout equipment must be separated by at least six feet and sanitized after use. All businesses were required to deep clean and sanitize their premises before reopening, and now must maintain the condition daily.

Seniors, who are more vulnerable to the virus, are asked to continue to stay at home, and people are still being asked to maintain a minimum of six feet apart from each other and avoid groups of 10 or larger. Elective medical and dental procedures are now allowed. People are being asked to limit leaving their households for essential travel only.

"I've been in contact with small and large businesses across the state, and what we have found is that the vast ma-

majority of businesses are taking extra steps and extra precautions," Reeves says. "We anticipate that business owners are going to continue to take necessary precautions."

State health officer Dr. Thomas Dobbs adds: "If we are diligent about wearing our masks in public, employees wearing masks in public, maintaining social distancing, making sure we maintain proper hand hygiene -- all the things we know will work -- it can be safe," said

A soup with everything

By Guest Columnist Al McSweyn

At an early age, I remember getting off the school bus on a cold January day to find a large pot of soup and cornbread on the stove waiting. Mother and grandmother would spend most of the summer canning almost everything. My grandmother's pride was her Soup Stock, as she called it, and seemed to contain everything from the garden. Fresh large tomatoes, lima beans, corn off the cob, carrots, sometimes okra, red potatoes, onions and generally flavored with beef bones and a small amount of stew meat would be in the fifty quarts she would put up. A quart of the Soup Stock would be mixed with a quart of her canned tomato juice for the finished soup.

In our cooking class at Porches, we devote one night just to soups, stressing the basic foundation for most soups -- two-parts onion, one-part celery, one-part carrots, and chicken broth. With these ingredients, you can easily start a Vegetable Beef, Broccoli and Cheese, Creamy Potato Bacon, Roasted Tomato, Grilled Chicken and Pasta or many others. For our soups, I try to keep on-hand onions, celery, carrots, potatoes and green bell peppers. With these items, you have the starting point for most soups, stews and Creole dishes.

Here is a recipe for what I call "The One Soup" because it contains one of everything. I do not drain the fat from the hamburger meat, preferring to let it flavor the soup. However, after cooking, remove the soup from stove and let set for 5 minutes and the fat will float to the top. Take two paper towels folded over and place on top of soup. The paper towels will wick the fat from the top of the soup. Repeat two or three times until you have wicked all the fat.

One box of the Jiffy Corn Muffin mix will make about six muffins and is a great accompaniment for the soup. The sweetness of these muffins is a good balance for this

hearty soup. I know -- it's the Yankee version of cornbread, but on this occasion, it is acceptable.

The One Soup

Ingredients:

- ½ lb hamburger meat
- 1 small onion, large diced
- 1 stalk celery, diced
- 1 large carrot, sliced
- 1 small can chicken broth
- 1 small can diced tomatoes
- 1 small can condensed tomato soup
- 1 small can vegetable mix
- 1 cup of water
- 1 large potato, peeled and diced -- reserved

Preparation:

1. In large pot brown hamburger meat.
2. Add onion, celery, carrots, salt and pepper to taste.
3. Cook until onions are translucent.
4. Add remaining ingredients, with exception of potato.
5. Bring to a boil and reduce to a simmer.
6. Cover and cook for 25 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
7. Adjust with additional water, as needed.
8. When lima beans are tender, add diced potato.
9. Taste to adjust salt and pepper, if needed.
10. Cook until potatoes are tender.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Al McSweyn owns Porches Restaurant in Wesson.

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Herbs are easy for beginning gardeners



Special to Wesson News

Basil is easy to grow in containers

By Gary R. Bachman

As we continue to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, our eating habits are changing, and it's a perfect time for gardeners of all abilities to grow vegetable gardens.

I'm not advocating trying to produce all of your own food, because that would be difficult if starting from scratch. And we need to support our local restaurants as much as we can. But it is a good opportunity to try growing things at home.

The easiest and best plants to grow are herbs. They're also perfect for growing in containers. Home-grown herbs can brighten up any meal, whether it's home-cooked or takeout.

For the beginning gardener, common or sweet Italian basil is most likely the basil of choice. It's versatile in the kitchen and pretty nonthreatening for the novice. The large leaves of this Genovese-type basil are aromatic. It is perfect for pesto or tomato sauces.

The bright-purple leaves of Amethyst resemble the broad, flat leaves of Genovese basil and have the same taste, with a touch of licorice spice. This herb is a great ingredient for purple basil mojitos. After muddling the basil with lemon juice, the leaves surrender

their purple color and turn the drink a pretty, pink-amethyst color.

Basil looks like a delicate garden plant, but it actually is a tough plant for hard times and has been recognized as a Mississippi Medallion winner. Purple Ruffles has deep-purple leaves that are very fragrant. Uses include fresh garnish or color in salads when used as baby greens. And who can resist red basil pesto?

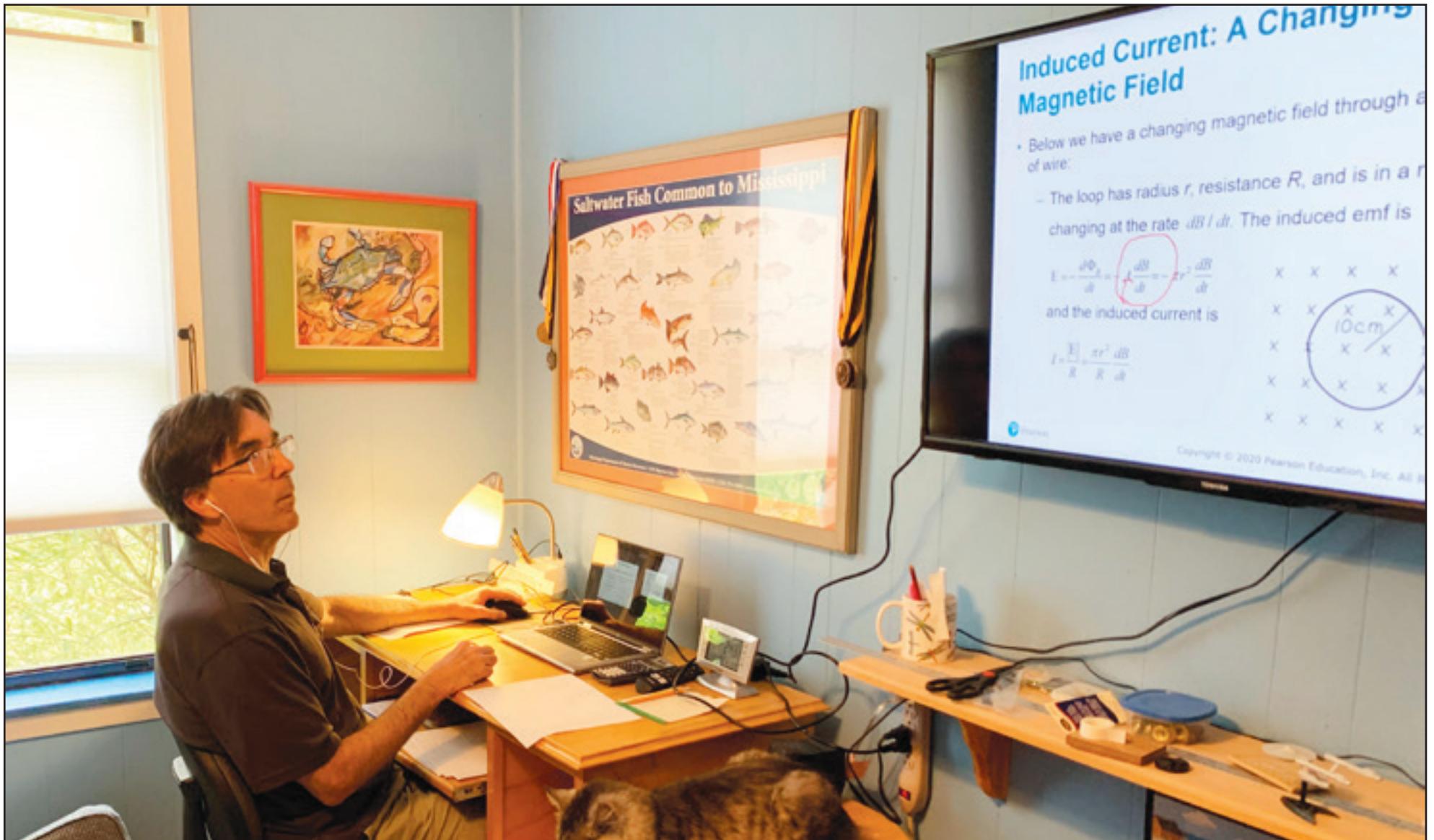
A couple of good heirloom choices are the Thai basil varieties Quenette and Cardinal, which have exotically delicious cinnamon and licorice flavors and aromas. Both have beautiful, bright-green foliage that contrasts with the dark-purple stems.

Basil care is really easy. First, be sure to deadhead the flowers. While they are attractive on their own, flowering halts leaf production. Be sure to keep the containers consistently moist. And for the best flavor, harvest basil sprigs in the morning when the essential oils are at their peak. Place them in a small vase or jar until ready to use for dinner.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Gary Bachman is an Extension and research professor of horticulture at the Mississippi State University Coastal Research and Extension Center in Biloxi.

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Computers & cell phones replace classrooms



Co-Lin teachers are using their home computers, tablets and cell phones.

Wesson News

anie Duguid. "Since 2012, Co-Lin has used Canvas, a web-based mobile-friendly learning management system, to deliver an expanding number of online courses to students and encourage its classroom instructors to prepare online versions of their courses. So both our students and teachers were largely familiar with the technology."

Using Canvas, instructors lecture students online and embed homework, laboratory project assignments, videos and other supplementary materials, interactive games and tests and quizzes that are accessible to students. They conduct classes in their homes on personal computers and even on their cell phones at Co-Lin parking lots, which

are WIFI hot spots.

Students access the Canvas web site on their lap tops, tablets, home computers or cell phones and enter their user names and passwords to attend their online courses. On Canvas, they submit completed homework and other assignments and take their tests. Art students can even upload videos of their works, and music students can upload audio files to their instructors.

For courses that require more interchange between teachers and students, Zoom, a web-based video conferencing application, is meeting the need for "virtual synchronous," or same time interaction, Stephanie Duguid says. Classes that utilize Zoom include those that require

questions and answer, give-and-take discussions among students and between students and teachers. The interaction is especially important for courses like cosmetology, engineering, economics, history and physical science classes.

Rural students with limited access to internet services are going on Canvas and Zoom at WIFI hot spots in Co-Lin parking lots and off campus at varied business and government locations throughout the area. C-Spire in Brookhaven recently announced it was making its parking lot a hot spot.

Academic and CTE courses alike at Co-Lin have been able to apply the internet technologies for the classroom component of learning, but hands-on laboratory work required in

HVAC and welding courses, for example, is a challenge, says Brent Duguid. "Until the shelter-in-place order, we conducted the labs with small groups of less than ten participants," he says. "We're hoping freshmen can catch up on lab requirements when restrictions are lifted, and we're looking to our coop business partners to provide on-the-job lab experiences for our sophomores."

"We're seeking to meet student needs," summarizes Stephanie Duguid. "We were well prepared, transitioned well and are now getting ready for the summer semester with online registration. The success of our COVID-19 online program confirms what we've been doing for almost a decade with digital technology."

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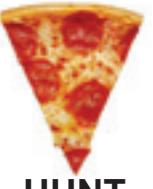
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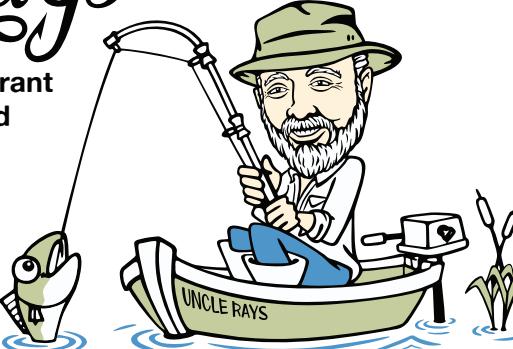
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Coping with allergies & asthma

By Guest Columnist Dr. Stephanie Duguid

Asthma and Allergy Awareness month is a fitting time to focus on conditions that affect one out



Special to Wesson News

of every five Americans and how to mitigate them. An estimated 50 million American suffer from allergies, which are the most frequently reported chronic condition in children and account for more than 17 million outpatient office visits.

Allergies are characterized by an overreaction of the human immune system to a foreign substance that is eaten, breathed into the lungs, injected or touched. This immune overreaction can result in symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, itchy eyes, runny nose, and scratch throat. An allergic reaction may occur anywhere in the body, but usually appears in the nose, eyes, lungs, lining of the stomach, sinuses, throat and skin. In severe cases, it can also result in rashes, hives, lower blood pressure, difficulty breathing, asthma attacks and even death.

Some allergy problems may not need treatment. Others can be controlled with the occasional use of an over-the-counter medication. However, sometimes allergies can interfere with day-to-day activities or decrease quality of life of those who are affected. Although there is no cure for allergies, they can be managed with proper prevention and treatment.

Allergic reactions are triggered indoors and outdoors by common substances, such

as plant pollen, molds, household dust, cockroaches, pets, industrial chemicals, foods, medicines, feathers, second hand smoke and insect stings. There are skin allergies, food and drug allergies and latex allergies.

If you have chronic allergies or frequent symptoms, you may benefit from visiting an allergist. You should see an allergist when:

- Your allergies are causing symptoms such as chronic sinus infections, nasal congestion or difficulty breathing;
- You experience allergy symptoms several months out of the year;
- Over the counter medications do not control your symptoms;
- Your symptoms are interfering with your ability to carry on day-to-day activities.

A visit might include:

- Allergy testing
- Prevention education
- Medication prescriptions
- Immunotherapy (allergy shots)

Asthma is a serious allergic reaction characterized by inflammation of the air passages, resulting in the temporary narrowing of the airways that transport air from the nose and mouth to the lungs. Asthma symptoms can be caused by allergens or irritants that are inhaled into the lung. Symptoms include coughing, chest tightness, wheezing, and shortness of breath.

Asthma is a chronic disorder, and there is no cure for it. But it can be managed. Asthma tends to occur within families and tends to be initiated by a variety of "triggers," such as allergens, exercise, viral respiratory infections, respiratory irritants, second-hand smoke and aspirin.

More Americans than ever

mon chronic condition among children, with almost five million sufferers under the age of 18. Asthma is more common in adult women than adult men, more common in male children than female children, and more common among children than adults. In Mississippi, 9.7 percent of the population has been diagnosed with asthma as of

2018. See an asthma or allergy physician specialist to receive the best treatment possible. Learn everything you can about asthma. Learn what triggers your (or your child's) symptoms and avoid

them as best you can. Recognize the signs of an oncoming episode. Provide preventive care, so that you or your child have the least amount of difficulty with symptoms. Learn self-management skills.

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.

LIVING + HEALTHY+

are suffering from asthma -- one of the country's most common and costly diseases. Every day:

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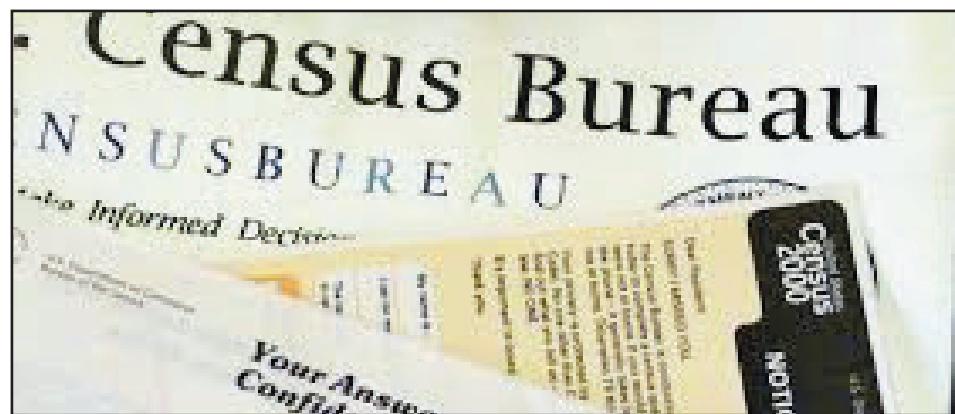
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Census filings bring town tax dollars



Special to Wesson News

Wesson residents are being urged to file their census information online, so the town can tap its fair share of the use tax from the state.

The use tax is paid to the state by shoppers who purchase products online, Wesson Mayor Alton Shaw explained.

"The use taxes collected by the state are shared with Mississippi municipalities based on a formula including fifty percent of

their sales tax revenues and fifty percent of their populations," Shaw said. "So it's important our residents are accurately counted or the town will lose tax revenues."

Wesson residents should have received census information by mail with a code keyed to their addresses. They can complete their census forms at an online website where they enter the code number they were sent and answer the questions.

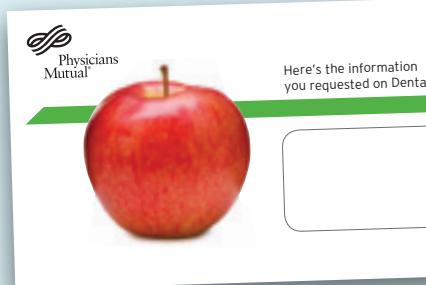
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Grip makes the difference for drummer

By Guest Columnist Shaw Furlow

I'm always happy to spotlight achievements of our former Co-Lin students. We are proud when one of our sports players



Wesson News

moves on to university ball or is drafted into the pros. They have worked hard to learn their crafts, and that work eventually pays off.

Likewise in the arts, persistence and practice pays off.

Buddy Gibbons has such a story. A story about a journey from studying music at Co-Lin to writing music for national television networks. And a story in which the esoterica of gripping drum sticks plays a major role.

Gibbons graduated from Lawrence County High School in the late 1980s and came to Co-Lin as a music major. An admitted "marching band nerd," he wanted to play snare. He played drum set for the Co-Lin Sojourners rock band, but his focus was on marching drum line.

An older Co-Lin student who had marched in drum corps told him "match grip," which he used as the drummer for Sojourners, wouldn't do if he wanted to march in the drum line. It seems all members of the drum corps were playing "traditional grip." In fact, anyone who wanted to march drum corps had to learn to play with traditional grip.

Now, time out for the esoterica. Hang with me. "Match grip" is as it sounds. Left and right hands hold the drum sticks exactly alike, much like how you would pick up a fallen limb in your yard. In traditional grip, the left hand holds the



Wesson News

Buddy Gibbons

stick from the bottom. "Traditional grip" came out of the Revolutionary War, when our snare drummers played cadence to keep the troops moving together. The drums were slung on the left thigh, and therefore a special grip had to be invented in order to play them properly. Traditional grip was born and has been used from sixth graders to marching bands to orchestra percussionists ever since. In the late 1970s-80 period, match grip came into vogue for a few years, but marching band purists soon moved back to traditional.

Okay, back to Buddy. Fast forward several years. After stops in Tuscaloosa and Nashville, he was living in Los Angeles, using the traditional grip he had mastered at Co-Lin in playing drum set for a band which was having pretty good success locally.

On the night of his band's CD release party at the world famous Viper Room, a man approached him at the end of the show. After making polite conversation, he asked Buddy if he had marching band experience. Buddy told

him that is the way he started and asked the man how he knew. "You are playing traditional grip," he pointed out. "Only jazz guys and drummers with marching band experience play traditional."

As it turned out, the man was the music supervisor for Fox Sports and was building a library of music for athletic events. He invited Gibbons and his band to come to his office and discuss the possibility of providing some tracks.

When Buddy approached other members of the band about the invitation, they turned down the opportunity, saying they didn't want to be a

TV band. Their rejection of the invitation blew Buddy's mind. So he went to the meeting alone. When he arrived, guards had his name and were extremely helpful showing him where to park. "They treated me like a star," he recalls.

After explaining why he was alone, Buddy and the Fox Sports executives got down to business. Their meeting went something like this:

"Have you got a home stu-

dio?"

"Yes sir." (In fact, Buddy didn't).

"And you can produce these tracks?"

"Yes sir." (Buddy had no idea how to produce these tracks.)

He got the gig. He wrote, played and produced the tracks, with lots of help from friends. The grip made the difference. And like learning traditional grip, Buddy immersed himself in learning recording software and nuances of recording instruments. Today, he owns a real studio and has had over six-hundred pieces published. If you watch any sports program on NBCS, Fox Sports, CBS or ABC, you have likely heard his music.

"It's still a pretty strange feeling when the TV is on and one of my tunes comes on," Buddy says. A few years ago, the Los Angeles Dodgers asked him to write new music for their season. And he is not limited to sports. One of my favorite TV shows is *GoRVing*. Much of the background music comes from the fertile mind of Buddy Gibbons. Now if all that isn't cool enough, he comes home every summer to teach drum clinics and camps at Co-Lin and Lawrence County High School. He credits former Co-Lin Director of Bands Stanley Stewart for helping him while he was in school. After all, when it comes down to it, Buddy Gibbons is a marching band nerd.

Stay safe. Support the arts, my friends.

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



Battling COVID-19 economy at Lake Lincoln

By Bob Arnold

Emerging from the winter months, 2020 looked like it might be a breakout year for Uncle Ray's, the combination bait shop, convenience store and eatery located across from the entrance to Lake Lincoln State Park.

But it didn't happen. "If I didn't live on the store property, I would have to close the business," says Uncle Ray's proprietor Charles R. Fortson, Jr. "I can barely keep the lights on."

COVID-19, of course, made the difference between what seemed like it could be a good year and an economic disaster.

Fortson bought the building in which he located Uncle Ray's in March, 2019, and gradually opened the components of his operation -- the bait shop for Lake Lincoln fishermen in April, the store primarily for state park campers in May and the restaurant for local residents and park campers in June, enticed by his slogan, "always fresh, never frozen."

Over the course of the year, people discovered the business, started patronizing it, and Uncle Ray's was positioned to breakout, Fortson believed, when fishermen returned to the lake in February and March, campers started returning to the park and locals, increasingly, discovered the store to buy groceries and other odds and ends, and grab a bite to eat.

"Then boom: social distancing, people being told to avoid unnecessary travel, restaurants restricted to take-out and curbside service, and stay-at-home orders," Fortson recounts. "First the restaurant business went downhill. The convenience store business fell off. Finally, there were no fishermen looking for bait. Since I was basically quar-



Wesson News

antined at the store, I kept it open to try to make a few dollars."

Fortson has largely been hunkering down, and not seeking government assistance. "I've had experiences with Small Business Administration loans and would just as soon avoid the red tape," he says. He didn't have any regular employees, although he called on relatives for help as needed. So he is not seeking unemployment compensation.

Now the fishermen are back, and Lake Lincoln State Park is cautiously reopening for campers. So Fortson is crossing his fingers. Business is slow -- a couple of bait customers a day vs. 15 to 20 before COVID-19 took its toll; a handful of customers ordering takeout drinks and meals vs serving ten plates of food each day. When churches resume regular worship services, Fortson hopes to recapture the Sunday lunch crowd that was a growing part of his restaurant business. His convenience store customers are hanging back. One older customer fears shopping at the store and being in contact with someone who has

COVID-19, he says.

As the economy reopens, Fortson isn't so sure Uncle Ray's will experience that breakout year he was antici-

pating. "People will be living a new normal that will at least last a year," he predicts. But Fortson is planning to be part of it.



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Church turns to internet technology

Wesson News

Preaching to a camera instead of parishioner-filled pews "was weird at first," Wesson Baptist Church (WBC) Pastor Nelson Santa Ana admits, but he says he has gotten used to it, and in fact, even likes it a bit, in these times when COVID-19 precautions are changing the way churches conduct their ministries.

Wesson Baptist, like many other area churches, has turned to modern day telecommunications technology, particularly the internet, to carry on its vital ministries.

"About the only thing it can't do is bring people together for the old fashioned church supper," says Santa Ana. Technology is also wanting in recovery ministries that bring people together to share their grief and find support in addressing their addictions. Nor does it replace people-to-people assistance in meeting people's needs in places like Jones County affected by a tornado, where Wesson Baptist members are planning to go door-to-door.

For worship and study, however, technology is proving a life-saver for churches.

"Praise God for technology," says Santa Ana. "Even the older pastors and church leaders, who used to be suspicious of technology, are using the new tools."

Wesson Baptist streams its Sunday worship service live on Facebook, including Santa Ana's sermons and prayers and the program of church musicians and choir members. It is also recorded for presentation on YouTube and as a pod cast.

"Our Easter Sunday worship service had 1,400 congregants on Facebook -- more than seven times the number of attendees that would normally be on hand in person," Santa Ana says.



Once-filled pews in churches are empty, but technology is reaching huge numbers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wesson News

For Sunday School and other groups in which there is interaction among participants, WBC is using Zoom, a video conferencing service, that facilitates questions and answers and discussions.

At Wesson Baptist, Cullin Greer, the congregation's Worship Pastor, has pulled the components of technology together to make the new approach to ministry work, Santa Ana says.

Santa Ana says the challenge is keeping in touch with rural people who can't access the internet. For them, the telephone remains the primary tool of ministry.

If technology is helping churches keep the ministries alive that once brought people into their buildings, it is also enhancing ministry to families and people in their homes at the same time, Santa Ana observes.

"One of the great positives coming out of the COVID-19 response is people are rediscovering home and family life," says Santa Ana. "Personally, I have enjoyed being together with my family more. We're also seeing it in the support and assistance people are giving to their neighbors in need. Wesson Baptist's community ministry that helps people in need with finances, yard work, shop-

ping and other needs hasn't been so necessary during the pandemic stay-at-home."

Santa Ana believes digital technology will continue to be an important part of ministry in the future as churches face the ongoing tension of building ministry in the home or invit-

ing people into their buildings outside the home.

"I am excited about the future as we see the light at the end of the tunnel and think about what reopening churches will look like as we start with a blank slate," says Santa Ana.

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Drug, spat, destroyer, violence & hunger

By Bob Arnold

FDA approves drug for COVID-19. The federal Food and Drug Administration has approved remdesivir, an experimental drug developed by Gilead Science to treat the Ebola virus, for emergency COVID-19 treatment. The emergency authorization allows health care providers to treat patients with “severe” cases of COVID-19 -- those who have low blood oxygen levels or need support like a ventilator. A recent trial found that patients given remdesivir had a lower mortality rate than patients given a placebo – eight percent compared to 11.6 percent – and recovered thirty-one percent faster, according to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Gilead plans to donate 1.5 million doses of remdesivir, which could potentially treat more than 140,000 people. Under the terms of the emergency authorization, the drug is suggested for either a five-day or 10-day treatment, depending on the severity of the case. The U.S. government will coordinate the donation and distribution of the drug to hospitals in the cities hit hardest by the pandemic.

Lawmakers confront Governor. Mississippi lawmakers returned to Jackson to resume the legislative session that they suspended in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and, in their first act, voted to wrest control of \$1.25 billion in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds from Governor Tate Reeves, who has insisted for weeks that he should have sole authority for spending the funds. The lawmakers had planned to return to the Capitol on May 18, but opted to confront the Governor, earlier. Beyond the spat with



Wesson News

Wanda Woodard, the Mississippi Department of Transportation's Litter Prevention Coordinator, talked to Wesson Garden Club's youth group -- Butterbeans, including third through sixth graders from Wesson Attendance Center (WAC), at WAC's elementary school library about the litter problem in Mississippi. After listening to Woodard, each Butterbean pledged not to litter and agreed to promote litter awareness.

the Governor, formulating a budget that reflects the impact of COVID-19 on the state's economy will be a major focus as lawmakers resume business. Legislative leaders say spending will be examined closely.

Destroyer delivered. Huntington Ingalls Industries' shipbuilding division has delivered the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer Delbert D. Black (DDG 119) to

the U.S. Navy. “We are proud to deliver our 32nd state-of-the-art destroyer to the Navy,”

Ingalls Shipbuilding President Brian Cuccias said. “Our workforce plays a critical role in protecting those who serve

our nation. We continue to fulfill our mission as shipbuilders by building highly capable warships that meet and exceed the needs of our military partners.” DDG 119 is the first ship named in honor of Navy

veteran Delbert D. Black, who served as a gunner's mate and was aboard the battleship USS Maryland (BB 46) during the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Prison violence. Violence against guards is a scourge of the Mississippi prison system, analysis of state records and hundreds of pages of court documents, along with interviews with employees, reveals. Prisoners have attacked guards more than 340 times a year, on average, since 2016. About 115 of these assaults each year caused serious injuries. Inmates, officers and experts agree about the principal cause of the violence: Mississippi prisons are so short staffed that nobody is safe in them. As more staff leave, the threat to the remaining officers grows, making it harder to hire and keep workers. Guards say many colleagues don't show up for work every day, so it's common for a single officer to try to control 200 people in cells or dorms.

Mississippi hunger. Nearly 12 percent of Mississippi working adults lived in households that couldn't always afford enough food between 2016 and 2018, and almost half a million people in the state were food insecure, making it the third hungriest state in the nation, according to a Hunger Free America report. Mississippi is one of just six states that has not enacted its own minimum wage, one of the factors that determines a person's ability to afford food. Mississippi employees are covered under the federal minimum wage of \$7.25, which hasn't increased since 2009. Food insecure Mississippians would need to spend as much as non-hungry Mississippians -- \$227 million more on food to meet their basic needs. Higher wages and increased Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program spending could help bridge the gap, the report says.

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Worry-free stay-at-home eating

By Guest Columnist Bonnie Coblentz

Will cooking kill the coronavirus? It's one of the top questions people have about the COVID-19 coronavirus beyond the symptoms.

When you read about all the infections among workers at supermarkets, meat plants, Amazon facilities, and even delivery drivers, you have to wonder. Is the food from these places safe? And can cooking make it safer? Can the COVID-19 virus survive on food?

The good news: Your food is safe. Probably. There are no signs that people are getting the infection from food. COVID-19 is a respiratory virus. So eating it is not how it spreads. The acids in your stomach -- your first line of defense against so many microbes -- would likely kill any virus that against-all-odds somehow managed to survive on food. If food were making people sick with coronavirus, we'd almost certainly have a ton of case reports on that by now.

However, there are some common sense precautions you can take to help you eat safer in the age of coronavirus:

- Your food comes in packages that have been handled by others. So it's a good idea to wipe them down when

bringing them home and then wash your hands afterward.

- Wash your hands before handling the food you're about to cook, of course. And rewash them when you're done and before eating.

- You can also rinse your vegetables with water, or a food-safe spray sold for cleaning produce, to remove any germs clinging to the surface.

- Anything should be cooked to the proper temperature. There is no specific guidance yet on temperatures to kill this coronavirus. Still, it's quite likely that COVID-19 would not survive for long during cooking.

- And, of course, make sure your leftovers are stored correctly in the fridge.

These precautions may not only help protect you from potential coronavirus contamination, but also shield you from other microbes, including the ones more likely to be lurking on your food such as E. coli and salmonella.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bonnie Coblentz is a Mississippi State University Extension Service staff writer."

Healthy coping with your pandemic stress

By Keri Collins Lewis

When confronted with the need to change or adapt to life's circumstances as required by COVID-19, people cope with the resulting stress in many ways.

"Usually trauma is a major life event that leads to intense stress reactions," says David Buys, a health specialist with the Mississippi State University (MSU) Extension Service. "But we are seeing so many changes in such a short time. It's a struggle to manage our feelings and thoughts without falling into anxiety and depression."

As the human body is exposed to flight or fight hormones for an extended period of time, it takes a toll even in otherwise healthy individuals.

Buys says self-awareness is the first step to dealing with stress and trauma in a helpful way.

"Try to look at yourself as though observing a friend or beloved family member," he advises. "How is that person dealing with life right now? If you were a friend, how would you help that person? You would not yell at your friend or tell her to get her act together. You would help her figure out ways to deal with her feelings. Likewise, be

gentle with yourself."

Next, brainstorm a list of positive coping strategies that have worked in the past and some new ideas worth trying -- staying connected with loved ones, choosing healthy habits, engaging in playful activities and making time for favorite hobbies.

List all the positive aspects of life during the pandemic. "Rather than dreaming about returning to normal, consider good things you have discovered that you want to carry forward when our routines resume," Buys says. "Cooking at home more, avoiding a packed schedule, walking daily, keeping a gratitude journal."

Michael Nadorff, associate professor of clinical psychology at MSU, reminds that it is important to check in with each other and to help support each other and encourage healthy coping. "Everyone has to guard against feeling helpless and hopeless, and completely disconnecting from the world. Human connections are essential for our well-being. So stay connected while socially isolating."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Keri Collins Lewis writes for the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

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New library bids to be reviewed

Wesson News

All contractors seeking to do the renovation work on Wesson Public Library over-bid on the project.

Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) has advised that additional funds are available for the project, but the town is required to again advertise for bids and review them a second time, Wesson Mayor Alton Shaw reported.

MDA previously awarded \$314,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds for library renovations based

on an application under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The renovations encompass 1,000 square feet, including a handicap accessible entrance at the rear of the library, new book shelving, upgraded restroom facilities, carpeting and facilities expansion related to improving accessibility for disabled persons.

The call for new bids was published last week, and town Aldermen will open and review submitted bids at their June meeting, Shaw announced.

WAC packets help students keep up

Special to Wesson News

With the help of special instructional packets that guide parents, children and youth, Wesson Attendance Center (WAC) elementary and secondary students are keeping up with learning levels they should have reached in their classes during state-wide school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

WAC just distributed a second round of educational materials through elementary and secondary instructional packets to get students to the achievement levels that they should attain before summer vacation.

Both the previous and new instructional packets for elementary students cover "strands and standards" that teachers would have addressed in reading, math and fifth grade science in school. Similarly, packets geared to secondary students provide

materials for reading and math; eighth, ninth and tenth grade Biology; and eleventh grade U.S. History.

The instructional packets for every grade are accessible at <https://www.copiah.ms/Domain/99>. WAC principal Marilyn Phillips advised parents of elementary students to "feel free to work below a grade level as needed for remediation or above a grade level to be challenged."

In separate letters to parents of elementary and secondary students, Phillips stressed the importance of reading: "Please make sure your child is reading daily."

"The best task for keeping up with reading objectives is simply READ, READ, READ." She recommended <https://www.worldbookonline.com> to check out books and www.khanacademy.com to assist students struggling with math skills.

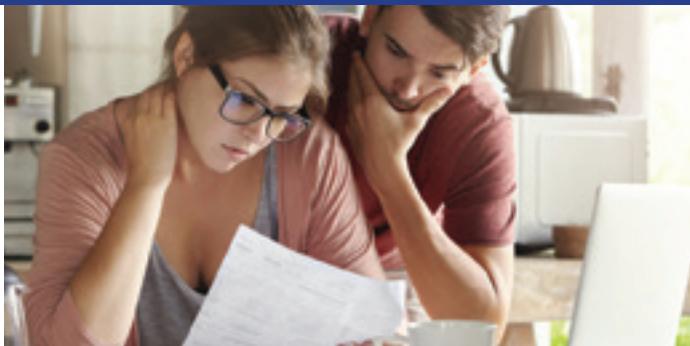
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Library cautiously providing services



Special to Wesson News

Special to Wesson News

After closing for almost three weeks to help keep the public safe from COVID-19, Wesson Public Library is back in operation, serving its constituents and maintaining their safety at the same time.

"A limited number are being allowed inside the library to use computers for school or work projects, and we're providing curbside service for other needs," reports librarian Ann Clark.

The library hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

During those hours, the library door will be locked, and those who want to use the facilities or want special library services will need to knock and request assistance, Clark says.

"Those who need to use a computer will be admitted," she says. "Elementary, middle school, high school and college students will be allowed in the library with an appointment to complete any school assignments, as will people with business-related

needs, such as filing for unemployment benefits. They should call 601-643-3725 between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. to set up appointments.

"For others who want to check out books, copy or print documents or send a faxes, we will provide the services while they wait in their vehicles. We'll retrieve books and bring them to curbside, and meet their varied library service needs inside while they're waiting outside. For books, they should set up an appointment."

Clark also reports the library is moving forward in planning its summer reading program, which brings some 80 elementary school age children to the library to hear speakers and learn to explore their interest through reading and use of library facilities.

"Hopefully, the COVID-19 threat will subside, and the library can be made available to large groups so we can proceed with our traditional summer reading program," Clark says.

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Wesson librarian is making protective masks



Ann Clark is making masks.

Wesson News

Special to Wesson News

When Wesson Public Library closed last month, clerk Ann Clark stayed at home, helping to curb the threat of COVID-19 in Mississippi not only by following Governor Reeve's order to avoid unnecessary trips and interacting with others, but by making protective face masks for healthcare workers and people who want to be extra careful in public places.

Her sister Lynn Sharp had learned from her son-in-law that King's Daughters Medical Center in Brookhaven did not have a sufficient number of protective masks for their personnel. So Clark teamed up with her to make masks for them and others who wanted them. Now that

she has returned to her job at the public library, she continues making masks in her spare time, contributing in her unique way to the ongoing fight against COVID-19.

"We're making high quality double-layered 100 percent cotton masks that feature pockets in which users can insert coffee filters that provide added protection from the air-borne novel coronavirus," Clark relates.

She and her sister buy the cotton material at Joanne's Fabrics in Jackson and have produced more than two hundred masks since they started producing them. They promote their availability on Facebook.

Clark says the cost of making the masks is negligible, and she and her sister offer them on request for free.

Local NA supports recovering addicts

Wesson News

A Narcotics Anonymous (NA) group started meeting weekly in Wesson before the COVID-19 shutdown, and plans to resume when restrictions are lifted.

The group, including recovering addicts who have abused a wide range of mood-altering and mind-changing substances, including drugs and alcohol, and their family members, was coming together on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. at Wesson Volunteer Fire Department (1038 Factory Street). It is part of a global, community-based organization with a multilingual and multicultural membership that was founded in 1953, and now holds nearly 67,000 meetings weekly in 139 countries.

At NA fellowship meetings worldwide, and locally, addicts seek support in maintaining drug-free lives. People with various lengths of clean time attend, including newcomers and members who have been sober for many years. All of them support one another in learning and practicing a way of living that keeps them healthy and drug free. At meetings, addicts share their stories and discuss simple spiritual principles to guide daily living.

The NA program calls for complete abstinence from all drugs and requires only that its members desire to stop using. It advocates a twelve-step guide for persons seeking to overcome addiction:

- Admitting powerlessness over their addictions.
- Belief that only a power

greater than themselves can restore their sanity.

- Turning their wills and lives over to the care of a God as they understand God.
- A searching and fearless understanding of themselves.
- Admitting the exact nature of their wrongs to God, themselves and other persons.
- Readiness for God to remove all their character defects.
- Humbly asking God to remove their shortcomings.
- Willingness to make amends to all persons they have harmed.
- Making direct amends to people they have harmed.
- Continuing to take a personal inventory of themselves and promptly admitting wrongs.
- Prayer and meditation to improve conscious contact with the God they understand, and receive the knowledge of God's will and power to.
- Carrying their spiritual awakening to other addicts and practicing the twelve principles in all their affairs.

The local NA group invites participants to meetings with the reminder that "Even the Broken Rise."

NA is not affiliated with any other organizations. It has no initiation fee or dues, pledges to sign or promises to make to anyone. It is not connected to any political, religious or law enforcement groups, and meetings are under no surveillance. Anyone may become part of an NA group regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion.

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COVID-19 reflections on faith

By Guest Columnist Nelson Santa Ana

A friend of mine who works for a power company told me about an interesting observation of those in his line of work: When the power goes out, people who have been affected by the outage are generally happy with the crews if they can get it back on within three hours. However, after three hours, they become angry with the power company until the lights come back on for three days. After three days, their attitude shifts back again to happiness and appreciation for the power being restored.

I think in many ways the world has gone through this same shift with the coronavirus. At first, we didn't know what to do with all the limitations and changes that were being forced upon us. Then, as time has passed, we have become more and more accustomed to these changes, and are now just really looking forward to life as we knew it to get going again.

Yet, I would argue that during this period that has encompassed emotions like fear and anger, and realities like death and unemployment, there are some things that don't need to go back to the way they were. That there has been a silver lining of blessings coming from the hand of the Lord as well. That is, the coronavirus has not been all bad! I have heard multiple reports of families that were always "on the go" actually getting to slow down, spend time with each other, and rekindle the relationships that the culture had stolen from them. It's as if God decided to use a worldwide pandemic to press the pause button on our lives so that we would stop, think, pray, rest and see God's hand at work. After all, it is God who says: "Be still and know



Special to Wesson News

Families are discovering a new norm in spending time with each other.

that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). And as I have also pumped the brakes on many of my regular activities, two Scriptural truths have come to my mind due to the coronavirus:

The first truth is that this world is not our home! It is so easy for us to get wrapped up into the pleasures of this life and miss the truth that, compared to eternity, this life is but a weekend stay at a hotel. No one goes on a weekend trip and spends thousands of dollars on upgrading a hotel room with new linens for the bed, big screen TVs for each room, and brand new couches and recliners for the living area. That would be foolish, because the length of the stay is so brief. Yet, so many of us have fallen into this trap as we purchase homes, vehicles, toys and trips that are here today and gone tomorrow.

The coronavirus has sent us a not so subtle reminder that the things of this world are not dependable and can be taken from us in a moment's notice. This is why Jesus tells us that, though we live in the world, we don't live for the world. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth,

where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19-20). We are to live with our eyes on a better home, an eternal home, that will never fade away.

This leads me to the second truth about which these unusual times have me thinking. We must be ready for the second coming of Christ. Now, I understand that Christian history is filled with false predictions of Christ's return, but that does not change the fact He is indeed coming back!

"Men of Galilee," the angel said at Jesus's departure, "why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 3:11). We don't know when that will be, but the Bible makes it clear that we must be ready. "You... must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:44).

The coronavirus is a remind-

er that all of creation has been corrupted by the curse of sin (Romans 8:21-23) and we are awaiting a glorified King who will make it all right again. Three times in Mark 13 we are told to "stay awake" in preparation for the return of Christ. For the Christian, this is both an incredible hope as we look forward to our future with Christ forever, but it is also an incredible responsibility as we recognize that so many people are not awake! So many are sound asleep as it pertains to Jesus, and the danger for their souls is infinite. So, the Church, as ambassadors of Christ, must use this opportunity to implore those who don't know Jesus to "be reconciled to God" through Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

And it is on that note that I would like to finish this article with a text message I received from a Christian missionary in a nation where Christianity is not looked upon favorably. She wrote:

"I was at a local store, and we started talking about the coronavirus. He was gripped by fear, tears filling his eyes as we talked about what is happening around the world. I shared with him about my hope not being in a government or quarantine protocols or a vaccine, but my hope being in Jesus—even if this thing were to take my life. He wanted to get together to hear more. A couple days later, we met up, and he eagerly listened as we talked about the gospel and read Scripture. At the end of our meeting, he surrendered to Jesus. Pray for him as he begins sharing with his family and friends...May God use this chaotic time for good in our lives and those around us. Romans 8:28 still applies, even to the coronavirus!"

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



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- Rhonda M

“I heartily recommend my friend Tommy Rice’s new book “Miss Her More Today Than Yesterday”. Tommy’s work is an open, honest, compassionate and at times raw look at a loved one’s handling of a spouse’s terminal illness. Tommy writes unapologetically from a Christian point of view. It is a testimony of how one couple of faith handled a devastating personal crisis. In 47 years of pastoral ministry I have witnessed many who have walked by faith “in the valley of death”. “Miss Her More Today Than Yesterday” is a story of one couple’s faith intersecting a terminal illness. Tommy Rice tells that story in literary form.”

- Tommy Jarrett

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A successful entrepreneur for many years, Tommy Rice has flourished in the car business with Tommy Rice Motors in Byram, Mississippi, and also as a real estate broker in Byram (Tommy L. Rice, Real Estate LLC). An accomplished songwriter, he has ties to the music scene in Nashville that go back several decades. An Alabama native, he's a lifelong Crimson Tide fan. Miss Her More Today Than Yesterday is his first book.



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New ways to mark milestones



Special to Wesson News

Wedding with limited number of guests socially-distancing themselves during COVID-19 pandemic.

By Guest Columnist Bonnie Coblentz

From weddings, birthday parties and baby showers to baptisms, proms and funerals, people are either postponing these events or celebrating them in ways never before considered.

Alisha Hardman, a Mississippi State University Extension Service family life specialist, says social distancing and shelter-in-place orders make these milestones hard to commemorate in traditional ways.

“It is distressing that these major milestones are disrupted,” Hardman said. “It is unwise to pretend there is not an emotional toll on us when we cannot celebrate a life or an achievement in the way we

had imagined we would. But it is important to keep in mind that we can still find creative and meaningful ways, even in our current circumstances.”

Mariah Morgan, a professor in the MSU Extension Center for Technology Outreach, says technology has provided a huge advantage in bringing people together who are geographically apart. Anyone with a smart phone has the tools for videoconferencing, photos, video and social media for sharing the big moments.

“Many of the technological tools available today allow people to make meaningful connections as well as content for such things as photo books or video projects,”

Morgan said. “A decade ago, some of the same technology was in place, but we did not have the ability to work on a single project together like we do now utilizing high-speed internet connections.”

Starkville High School senior Christian Leach has photographic proof of the day he sat in his front yard and signed to run track for Mississippi College this fall.

With the shelter-in-place order going in effect the next day, his mom, Lisa Stricklin, and neighbors quickly put together a backdrop and props, and gathered friends and family to line the road in their cars while he made his commitment.

“Christian placed third in

the state Division 6A and made the *Clarion-Ledger* All State Cross Country team, but track season was over before it started due to COVID-19,” Stricklin said. “I do wish his teammates, coach and other friends could have been there for his signing day like normal, but I think we were able to make it special even though it wasn’t traditional.”

MSU Extension offers some tips at <https://www.facebook.com/msuescto/> on creative ways to use technology to aid a celebration or commemorate a significant event.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Bonnie Coblentz writes for the Mississippi State University Extension Service.*

Seven easy home renovations

Special to Wesson News

What can you do at home while hunkering down to protect yourself from the coronavirus?

Curbed, a web-based daily newspaper, suggests some inexpensive projects that won't break your budget or tax your do-it-yourself skills:

1. Rearranging things for a fresh perspective:

- **Furniture.** Move the couch to a different wall. Change the location of your armchair. Swap rugs from one room to another. Switch a lamp from a side table to another spot in your house.

- **The dinner table.** Add a bit of drama. Bust out the china, special silverware, or fancy wine glasses. Sip and savor at the dinner table using your favorite pieces.

- **Bookshelves.** Rethink them. If you're focused on the literature, arrange your books by alphabetical order or by theme. If aesthetics are the priority, declutter, use neutral colors, and focus on a few standout pieces.

2. **Cleaning projects:**

- **Vents and baseboards.** Get rid of the accumulated dust, reducing allergens and increasing the efficiency of your air conditioning or heating unit at the same time. Vacuum vents with a dusting brush attachment or wipe with a dry microfiber cloth. Don't smear the dust with water or cleaning products. You can also unscrew the vent covers and place them in a sink filled with hot, soapy water. While you're at it, turn your HVAC unit off and change the air filter on your furnace.

- **Under the bed.** Move the bed, empty out any storage boxes you might have underneath, and vacuum the dust. You might be surprised at the



Declutter and focus on standout pieces.

Special to Wesson News

things you'll find.

- **Bathroom drawers.** After emptying the drawers you'll likely find hair, spilled makeup, toothpaste, and so on. Once the insides are free of gunk, toss the junk and reorganize what's left.

3. **Organizing:**

- **Closets.** Purge what's no longer used, and clean the interior. Sort clothes closets by category, hanging delicate items and stacking thicker things like denim. Put your most-used items at the front, and seasonal or rarely used pieces up higher or in the back.

- **The entryway.** Reevaluate your hooks. Are they helpful? Hanging at the right height? Do you need more or fewer of them? Vacuum or shake out any door mats and purge any knick knacks or unused items.

- **Supplies.** A few labels for storage bins or containers in your kitchen pantry, under the bed or in a linen closet can go a long way in creating a more organized household

4. **Walls:**

- **Hangings.** Photos, artwork and TV's become crooked over

time. Straighten them. Or take down all of your photos or artwork and make a new gallery some other place in the house

- **Painting.** Touch up the high-use areas, especially door frames, baseboards, and doors.

- **Empty frames.** Add photos to any unused frames.

5. **Lighting:**

- **Bulbs.** Replace any that have gone out.

- **Lamps.** Clean lampshades with a dry microfiber cloth or vacuum cleaner attachment, and bulbs and hardware with a cloth.

- **Curtains.** Clean curtains to make a room feel much brighter. Determine whether you can wash them or if they must be dry cleaned. Velvet drapes can be washed with a chambray cloth dipped in hot water, while silk curtains sometimes call for hand-washing. If you can machine-wash your curtains, use the gentle cycle, cool water, and mild detergent, and hang them to dry.

6. **The kitchen:**

- **Cutting boards.** To prevent warping or cracking, ap-

ply mineral oil or beeswax to wooden cutting boards and spoons once a month. Restore those gorgeous wooden cutting boards for cheese and charcuterie plates by moisturizing them.

- **Taking stock.** Clean out your liquor cabinet or spice shelf and figure out what you have and what you might be missing.

- **Small appliances.** Hand-wash all of the removable parts of your coffee maker and run a few brewing cycles with distilled water. Empty out your toaster oven or toaster trap door and then shake the appliance over the sink to remove loose crumbs. Deep-clean your Instant Pot by wiping down the inner cooking chamber with a damp dishcloth; washing the silicone sealing ring in hot, soapy water; and running a cycle of water, distilled white vinegar, and a few lemon peels to remove odors.

7. **The yard:**

- **Spring cleaning.** Grab a broom and sweep off the dirt and dust of the past few months on small patios and balconies. In larger yards, get rid of any leaves and pine cones that might have fallen during winter storms first, and then prune away dead or damaged branches. Clean up around perennial plants or shrubs and remove damaged grass areas for seeding.

- **Planters.** Clean them so they are ready for planting. Discard any that might have broken at the end of last season.

- **Outdoor furniture.** Clean wood and wicker furniture with a mild oil-base soap like Murphy Oil mixed with warm water. Other types of furniture do fine with dishwashing liquid mixed in a large bucket of warm water, and many patio cushions can either be wiped down or thrown in the washing machine.

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Six Hall of Famers named

Special to Wesson News

Six outstanding Co-Lin sophomores have been named to the college's Hall of Fame, the highest honor for a student. They are:

- Nick Brumfield of Bogue Chitto, who serves as President of the Eta Omega Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, and is a member the Trailblazers, the Council of Presidents, Student Government Association, and Phi Beta Lambda. A Taylor Presidential Scholar, Brumfield was selected Eta Omega Chapter Officer of the Year and for Who's Who at Co-Lin. He is the son of Lyle and Sharon Brumfield.



- Payton Davis of Monticello, who is President of Mu Alpha Theta and the Alpha Omega Science Club, and a member of the Eta Omega Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, Trailblazers, the Council of Presidents, Baptist Student Union and the SeaWolves Underwater Robotics Team. He is the recipient of the Frank Pitts and Neva B. Thames Scholarships and was selected for Who's Who at Co-Lin. He is the son of Craig and Rachel Davis.

- Adam Martinez of Brookhaven, who serves as President of the Trailblazers, Vice President of Fellowship for the Eta Omega Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, and Parliamentarian of Phi Beta Lambda; and is also a member of the Student Government Association, and was selected Eta Omega Chapter Officer of the Year and for Who's Who at Co-Lin. The recipient of endowed scholarships, Martinez was a first and second place winner at the state conference of Phi Beta Lambda and finished in the Top 10 at the Phi Beta Lambda National Leadership Conference. He is the son of Paul and Misty Martinez.



- Caroline Pace of Brookhaven, who serves as the Blue Wave Show Band Colette Captain, and is a member of the Eta Omega Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, Trailblazers and the Student Government Association. Pace was selected for Who's Who at Co-Lin and as freshman Homecoming Maid. She is also the recipient of two endowed scholarships. She is the daughter of James and Kim Pace.

- Allie Claire Townsend of Brookhaven, who serves as Blue Wave Show Band Color Guard Captain, Vice President of Service for the Eta Omega Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa and Vice President of Membership for Mu Alpha Theta; and is a member of Future Teachers of America, Trailblazers, and the Baptist Student Union. A Taylor Presidential Scholar and President's List student, Townsend was selected for Who's Who at Co-Lin, as a Campus Favorite and Coca-Cola Academic Gold Scholar. She is the daughter of Dwayne and Cindy Townsend.



- Emily Warren of Brandon, who serves as Vice President of Leadership for the Eta Omega Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, Vice President of Communications for Mu Alpha Theta, and Vice President of the Student Government Association; and is a member of the Trailblazers, Diamond Dolls, and volunteers as a tutor. A President's List student, Warren was selected for Who's Who at Co-Lin, as a Campus Favorite, and a freshman Homecoming Maid. She is also the recipient of an endowed scholarship. She is the daughter of Richard and Leigh Warren.

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