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Volume 9, Number 1

“Good News You Can Use”

January 12, 2021

Families laud rescue & recovery help



Special to Wesson News

By Bob Arnold

Families of two area duck hunters missing on the Mississippi River since December 3 and presumed drowned praise the assistance provided by people and organizations involved in ongoing search and rescue and recovery operations.

Since Wesson and Strong Hope residents Zeb Hughes, 21, and Gunner Palmer, 16, and Hughes' nine-month old black labrador retriever Kye went missing in the waters of the Mississippi near Vicksburg, many hundreds of volunteers have participated in the seven-day-a-week dawn-until-dusk efforts, joining Zeb's father, Barry Hughes, and Gunner's father, Med Palmer, who have been a constant part of the search. They have come on their own and under the auspices of organizations. Many have come with sonar-equipped boats, drones, airplanes, helicopters, horses and trained search and rescue dogs.

The Hughes and Palmer families laud Warren County Sheriff Martin Pace and his office for coordinating operations and communicating with them. Pace's department maintains a command center at LeTourneau Landing where volunteers check in and learn how they can help.

"He is a Godsend," Sharon Hughes, Zeb's mother says. "Each day, he calls the families to report what's going on, explaining everything in layman's terms we can understand." Pace says he is determined to find the answers and provide closure for the families. On Christmas eve, Warren County Chief Deputy Sheriff Billy Heggins and Deputy Sheriff Johnny Beauchamp worked with Pace to help make that happen.

Among the organizations that have provided assistance, Sharon Hughes singles out Mercy Search & Rescue. The Southeast Louisiana-based not-for-profit trains and utilizes dogs and provides volunteer spotters and boat captains to search for missing persons without charge. She also cites Vicksburg-based Big River Shipbuilders' donation of a barge and towboat to operations.

For donors who want to help the families, Barbara Roper of Hazlehurst set up the Gunner Palmer & Zeb Hughes Search Fund through GoFundMe online (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/gunner-palmer-zeb-hughes-search-funds>). More than \$9,500 has been raised towards a \$20,000 goal. Although its primary purpose is to assist the Palmer and Hughes families with their expenses related to the search and rescue and recovery operations (lodging, food, lost pay due to missing work), funds will also be contributed to Mercy Search & Rescue. Memory decals created by one of Zeb's friends are also available for \$10 each to support the Hughes family.

Zeb's mom may have been the last to hear from the hunters when she talked to her son on her cell phone around 2:30 p.m. on December 3. Later that day, the search for them was triggered when Gunner did not respond to attempts by his girl friend and father to call him. AT&T reported detecting the last pings from a cell phone they were carrying at 4 p.m.

Hughes, who was attending Mississippi State University during the fall until he contracted COVID-19 and would have started a machine shop job in Brookhaven last week, and Palmer, a Copiah Academy student, apparently set out into Mississippi River in a small boat with their dog

cont. on page 5



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Lisa Vandevere Lann

Johnnye Pearl Box Creek, born in Hazlehurst, MS and a resident of Lexington Medical Lodge in Farmersville, TX, departed this life on the 15th day of December, 2020 at the age of 79.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Hazel Hennington Box, John Preston Box; her brother John Philip Box and her husband Bruce Langdon Creek.

She is survived by her sister, Cherie Box Taylor; her daughters Rebecca Creek Baxter



and husband Brian, Jennifer Creek Steuerwald and husband Jimmy; grandsons Chris Purcell, Mathew Purcell and Michael Steuerwald; granddaughters Lauren Steuerwald and Brandee Donahue and husband Nick and her great-grandchildren, Tyler, Tristan and Evelyn; many nieces, nephews and countless family and friends.

Due to Covid, we will have a graveside service at 11:00a on Saturday, March 6th at the Wesson Cemetery for her family and friends in Mississippi and Louisiana.



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Not such a bad year!

By Guest Columnist Shaw Furlow

Happy new year, friends. Here's to health, healing and prosperity. Finally 2020 is in the rear view mirror, and even though we know there will be setbacks, 2021 will be a better year.

It would be easy to look back and gripe about all the things we missed, especially family gatherings, sporting events, graduations, concerts and church services. But, instead, let's look at the bright side of 2020.

Working from home allowed many parents to spend more time with their kids. Stores and restaurants adapted to the new normal, perhaps creating additions to their business plans. How many books did you read? How many movies did you see?

I found time to watch old cowboy TV shows like *Gunsmoke*,

Wanted: Dead or Alive and *Bat Masterson*. I found time to read a few books and write a couple songs. I dabbled with painting, but was terrible at it. I'll try again, maybe. I found time to plant some bushes and move some furniture around. I found time to make a couple "pop-up" concert videos streamed from my living room. I even picked up the game of chess (I'm better at painting). I missed New Year's Eve with my family, but discovered Zoom. It was almost like being there.

So, 2020 was a bear, but it's over, done with, gone!

What is on the horizon? Brookhaven Little Theatre intends to pick up where it left off. The season it planned for 2020 will be produced during 2021. BLT is the second longest, continually running amateur theatre in Mississippi, and is known for its great productions.

Music venues have slowly begun to reopen. Not the big ones, like the Brandon Amphitheater or Duling Hall, but restaurants and smaller venues like Recess 101. Musicians, whose livelihood depend on gigging are beginning to breathe a sigh of relief. Music festivals that were cancelled last summer are already on the 2021 calendar. I look forward to going to Houma, Baton Rouge and Morgan City to perform again. I'm looking forward to Brookstock XX this July and



The Overbrook Songwriters Festival.

Even Hollywood has discovered a new normal, releasing many new films on streaming services, since theaters are closed. We'll see what box office receipts say if this experiment works.

Locally, Brookhaven artist/entrepreneur and owner of The Little Yellow Building Studio, Derick Covington Smith, has once again hit a home run. I've written about Smith a few times over the last ten months. He and the Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild (BRAG) sponsored a drive-through art show in a downtown Brookhaven parking lot and several virtual shows. The visual artists have kept busy!

The latest virtual endeavor is an eclectic collection entitled "21," a reference to the new year. The exhibit is a virtual exhibition representing the last two decades in words and art from artists throughout Mississippi. Artists submitted entries in December, and eighteen were chosen to show their works. One of my favorites is a bronze piece entitled "Infestation," inspired and dedicated to the artist's father. Jackson artist and Brookhaven native Don Jacobs has a couple paintings from his blues artist series.

By the way, Jacobs' new album, *Meanwhile Back at the Ranch*, dropped right before the new year. The album has fourteen original songs, either written or co-written by Jacobs over a period of years, and in my opinion is the best of his three albums. It was co-produced by Brookhaven native Ed Tree and features some great musicians. I highly recommend buying the CD or downloading it from your favorite source.

I believe the pandemic may have stimulated the local recording industry, and I'll be reporting about several new works in the near future.

That's it for another month of throttled down performances. I look forward to the spring and hope we are back to some semblance of past summers. Check out "21" and other projects by Derick Covington Smith at:

www.thelittleyellowbuilding.com. Artists need our support now more than ever before. So I ask once again, please support the arts.

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



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SMART goals for New Year

By Guest Columnist Stephanie Duguid

As we begin the New Year, it is time to think about resolutions. Goals you may have set in the past may not be relevant in 2021, however, because of COVID-19 adjusted lifestyles.

Traditionally, most resolutions address an undesired behavior towards accomplishing a personal goal or otherwise improving lifestyles. Over the years, most popular resolutions include eating less, exercising more, quitting a habit, improving financial status, or reducing the amount of time using technology. This year, our focus may be on family, safety, creativity, and strategic health goals, while not excluding budgets, personal habits, and the future.



Special to Wesson News

Historically, at least thirty percent of resolutions never get us anywhere because we set unrealistic goals, fail to keep track of our progress and just plane forget them. This year, try to make one small change a month throughout the year to work toward a healthier you

Anytime you decide to make a change in life such as a resolution, it is very helpful if you create SMART goals. SMART is an acronym that helps you create more focused and objective goals so that you will be successful. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely:

- **Specific** means that you have narrowly focused on what you would like to do.
- **Measurable** means that you have a way to objectively determine if you are reaching your goals or not.
- **Achievable** means that your goal is reasonable and ambitious but can be reached.
- **Relevant** means that the goal is made by you and relevant to you.
- **Timely** means that you have a specific time-frame to reach your goal.

Some goals you may hear are, "I want to lose weight," or "I want to get healthier". These are poor goals because they are not SMART goals. Examples of SMART goals:

- "I want to lose 5 pounds in the next 6 weeks by working out 30 minutes 4 times per week."
- "I want to improve my health by eating 4 servings of vegetables and drinking 3 bottles of water each day for 30 days."

Here are some starting points for this year's SMART goals:

- Prioritize family
- Keep a jar of things you are grateful for during the year
- Cook one new thing each week
- Rearrange, declutter, or redecorate your space
- Move more, sit less
- Spend 5 minutes a day cleaning
- Tackle your email inbox
- Take the stairs
- Practice intentional breathing
- Adopt an attitude of gratitude
- Stay hydrated—drink more water
- Send handwritten letters
- Delete unused apps on your phone
- Listen to novels while you work out
- Do one new exercise move
- Sanitize your phone weekly
- Turn on music instead of the TV
- Keep clutter out of the kitchen
- Find some time for yourself
- Take a 24-hour break from social media every month
- Donate old clothes
- Put together an emergency kit
- Journal
- Do one thing at a time
- Ditch one bad habit
- Take more walks

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These are things you can do today. Expand the topics you like into your own SMART goal. For example, for the topic "Prioritize family," you may adjust that to be: "Carve out 15 minutes to call my dad two times per week." Your SMART goals can be very simple or complex. Remember, these are goals for YOU in this state in YOUR life. Here is to a happier, healthier YOU!

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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- 2013 Subaru Outback Limited, AWD Leather, Sunroof, Like New!
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- 2016 GMC Yukon XL, SLT, Fully Loaded, Leather, Sunroof, DVD, Bose, New Tires, Nice!

2012 Mercedes E350 Sport



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cont. from page 1

Families laud rescue & recovery help



Special to Wesson News

from LeTourneau Landing just south of Vicksburg to scout hunting spots in the vicinity of Davis Island.

Search and rescue operations involving several hundred persons and seven boats started at Grand Gulf Launch the night of December 3, focusing on the river, its banks, and land. The rescue teams discovered a boat believed to be Palmer's and the hunters' boat upside down along the bank about 16 miles south on the Louisiana side of the river.

The base of operations, which has been focused on recovery since December 10, moved to the more spacious LeTourneau Landing, where more than 300 persons at a time have checked in to participate in the search for the missing young men throughout the past month. Over the course of the operations, the searchers have found another boat, believed to be Hughes', life jackets, a gas can and Hughes' hunting bag.

There are many theories about what happened to the hunters, but most likely the boat they were in hit a rock dyke near the river bank, which tipped it end over end, dumping the occupants into unforgiving waters, observers say.

The search has encompassed 65 miles along the river from LeTourneau Landing north to Vicksburg and south to Natchez. Today, it includes largely sonar-equipped boats. The boats drop their sonar devices to the bottom of the river where they scan the surrounding area.

"The families will be forever grateful to the countless persons who have sacrificed their time, boats, aircraft and money to help," says Sharon Hughes.

Interested volunteers should contact the Warren County Sheriff at 601-636-1761.

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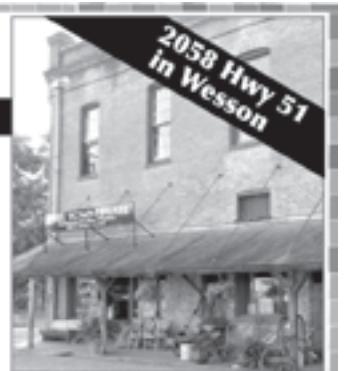
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Mr. Fix It when things break

By Bob Arnold

When things break in Wesson, Joe Glasper is Mr. Fix It.

For 33 years, the Town of Wesson has sent Glasper out to make sure broken water and sewer lines are properly repaired and roads are cleared after storms and other incidents that bring down trees and limbs and cause other debris-disruptions -- initially on maintenance crews and now as a supervisor.

Glasper, whose passion is heavy equipment, is the man you'll see on the shovels and loaders.

A life-long Wesson resident, Glasper remembers a boyhood dominated by his interest in sports. At Wesson High School (WHS), from which he graduated in 1974, Glasper played football and basketball and dazzled Cobra fans on the gridiron and court, leading WHS teams to winning seasons.

"I was a hard man to catch as a fullback, helping to bring a lot of trophies to the Cobras with the touchdowns I scored," he says proudly. "I played center on the basketball court, and scored 30 points -- and more -- in several games."

You can probably still find some videos of his WHS sports exploits, Glasper says.

Glasper stayed on at Wesson Attendance Center after graduating from WHS as janitor for the elementary school, leaving after three years for his first stint in maintenance services for the Town of Wesson. In 1982, he joined Co-Lin's maintenance staff, and then came back to the Town of Wesson after five years in 1987.

"I have been with the Town since 1987," Glasper says. "I love working with the Town. In the last few years, I have learned a lot about water and sewer systems from Brad Turner, who manages the department."

Glasper grew up in the St. Peter Rock Baptist Church at Beauregard and



Wesson News

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

now is a member of Faith Baptist Church at Bogue Chitto. He and his wife Rhonda have two grown sons -- Joe Ellis, Jr., 40, a maintenance supervisor for Greenbriar, Mississippi, and Terrance, 34, who is a supervisor at a Laurel, Mississippi, lumber yard. They have nine grandchildren and are regular foster parents for kids 12-13 years old.

What are your hobbies?

Outside of work, I work elsewhere, too, as a heavy equipment operator. When Meadville, Mississippi, needs someone to operate machinery to repair its water and sewer line, I go there. I would rather go to a job than do the work around the house. Foster kids, of course, keep my wife and me busy. I love kids.

Are you a reader?

I read the Bible.

Do you enjoy movies or theater?

On the days I don't work, I enjoy relaxing in my La-Z-Boy chair watching police dramas -- *Law & Order*, the *CSI* series.

What kind of music do you like?

I am into Blues and play bass guitar.

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

I would spend it wisely -- not on stuff I don't need. I am pretty tight with money. I would give it to my church and St. Jude Hospital, and for my grandkids.

How would you change the world?

Folks need to get along better and love one another. A lot needs to change around the world, even though we have everything under control in Wesson.

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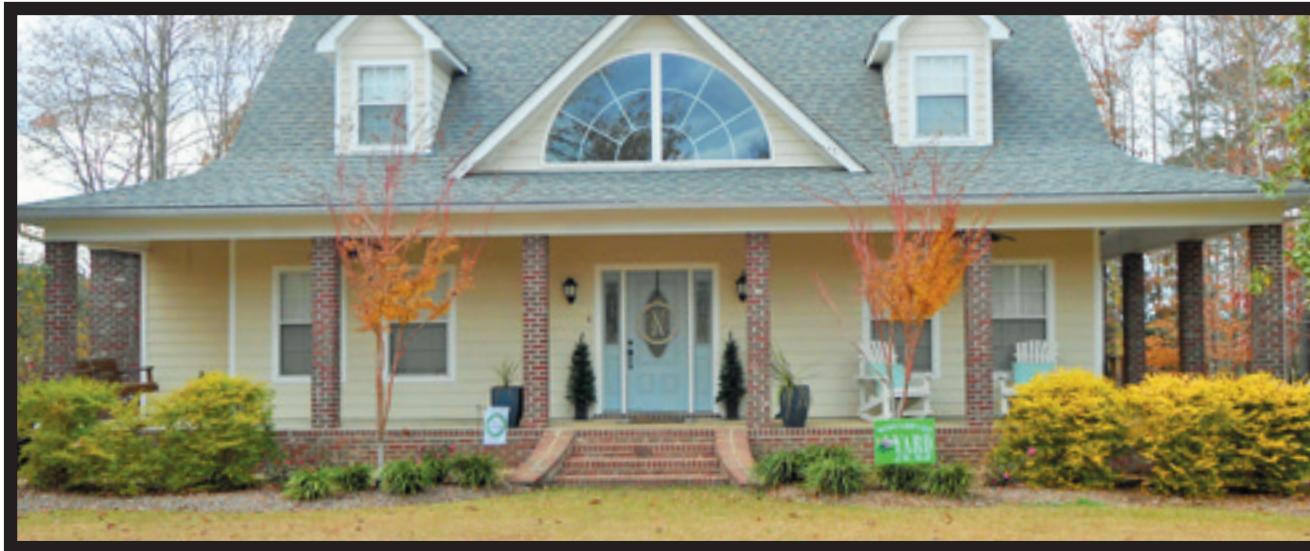


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December Honor yards

Wesson Garden Club has recognized the December landscaping efforts of Sharon Langley at 1006 West Street, Cameron and Carla Newell at 2115 Stegall Road and Todd and Scarlet Mooney at 1001 Dixie Garden Road in residential and rural categories. The awards, based on maintenance principles and elements of landscape design, seek to encourage ongoing beautification and cleanliness of the Wesson area and cultivate a citizenry that values and protects natural resources and assumes responsibility for enhancing the environment. The Garden Club's Yard of the Month awards honor properties during the spring, summer and fall.

All photos Special to Wesson News



Rural, awarded to Newells



Residential, awarded to Sharon Langley



Rural, awarded to Mooneys

Seven grididders honored for play



Special to Wesson News

Despite the 2020 football season being cut short for the Wolves, seven players earned post-season honors for their efforts on the gridiron. The honorees included six sophomores in Jalen Armstrong, Demarcus Gordon, Chris Rias, Kobe Windham, Xavier Curry, and Bryce Lofton and one freshman in Tyquan Henderson.

Jalen Armstrong earned First Team All-MACCC South Division as he helped lead the Co-Lin offensive line. The 6'3, 315-pound lineman from Calhoun City helped Co-Lin post 271 rushing yards through three games.

Defensively, Chris Rias and Kobe Windham both picked up First Team All-MACCC South Division honors. Rias, a Carrollton native, finished the season with 14 tackles, one and a half tackles for loss, one sack, one forced fumble, and one fumble recovery, while Windham, a Petal High School graduate, wrapped up 10 tackles and posted a team-high three interceptions.

Bryce Lofton got the nod for First Team All-MACCC South Division as kicker after a stellar year during the abbreviated season. The Pisgah High School product was five-for-seven on field goals with a long of 46-yards.

He also went nine-for-nine on extra points and earned MACCC Special Teams Player of the Week recognition in back-to-back weeks to open the season. Lofton also earned Second Team honors as a punter after he averaged 40.6 yards through 16 punts with seven landing inside the 20-yard line.

Tyquan Henderson landed Second Team All-MACCC South Division after his breakout performances through three games. The freshman from Canton posted 15 receptions, a team-high 192 yards, and three scores on the year.

Demarcus Gordon held things down on the offensive line for Co-Lin and earned Second Team All-MACCC South Division honors. The 6'5, 320-pound lineman from Tunica has been a staple on the offensive line and helped lead the group.

Xavier Curry, a sophomore linebacker from Meridian, earned Second Team All-MACCC South Division recognition after posting 32 tackles and two and a half tackles for loss.

Co-Lin finished the season 2-1 overall as the season was called off due to complications with the COVID-19 pandemic.



Delayed hoops season to begin

Special to Wesson News

Co-Lin men and women basketball teams, if nothing else, will be well-prepared to play if their seasons begin as scheduled against Coahoma on January 20.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their seasons so far have been filled with practices and scrimmages, but no games.

The current plan calls for the Wolves to play a 21-game schedule -- one game with each Mississippi Association of Community College Conference northern division teams and home-and-home games with MACCC southern division teams. But that very likely could change, with less scheduled games and a period for contests that need to be made up due to COVID-19 postponements.

Coach Kenny Bizot's men hoopsters is loaded with freshman following a 7-16 season. Among the ten first-year players are 6-foot-3 guards Jermario Hersey from Brookhaven High School and Jordan Marshall from Raymond High School, 6-foot-7 forward A.J. Warnsley from Terry High School, and 6-foot-4 Jason Perry and 6-foot-8 Jordan Johnson from Madison Prep Academy in Louisiana.

Coach Gwyn Young's Lady Wolves, coming off a 13-11 season, has four returning sophomores on a 13-player roster.

The full men's roster also includes:

- Sophomores: 6-foot-2 guard T.J. Monroe from Columbia High School, 6-foot guard Demarcus Ellzey from South Pike High School, 6-foot-2 guard J.D. Allen from Wesson High School, and 5-foot-10

guard Shermar Dickerson from Wesson High School.

- Freshmen: 6-foot-2 guard Dee Merriweather from East Memphis High School, 6-foot guard Quandarius Studaway from Clinton High School, 6-foot guard Cameron Butler from Vicksburg High School, 6-foot-3 forward Zach Upkins from Bogue Chitto High School and 6-foot forward Daniel Smothers from Warren Central High School.

The Lady Wolves roster includes:

- Sophomores: 5-foot-7 guard Orlandrea McGee from Forest High School, 5-foot-10 forward Morgan McCray from Ridgeland High School, 5-foot-9 guard Jana Case from Clinton High School and 5-foot-11 forward Derrica Gilbert from Minden (Louisiana) High School.
- Freshmen: 5-foot-6 guard Jamya Blue from Brandon High School, 5-foot-5 guard Marvia Spann from Germantown High School, 5-foot-5 guard Kallyah Taylor from Provine High School, 5-foot-9 Nezhiah Smith from Lawrence County High School, 5-foot-8 guard Anlyia Sanders from Warren Central High School, 5-foot-8 guard Jakrya Young from Koschusko High School, 5-foot-7 guard Deshunnae Sykes from Canton High School, 6-foot-1 forward Madelynn Webster from Clinton High School and 6-foot forward Jakayla Esco from Ridgeland High School.

WPD officers in training program



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Wesson Police Department (WPD) Officers Kelsey Evans and John Brent started basic training classes at the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Training Academy (MLEOTA) at Pearl, Mississippi, on Sunday.

Both officers joined WPD late last year, Brent coming on board after serving as Hazlehurst Police Department patrolman for one year, and Evans beginning her career in law enforcement after studying criminal justice at Southwest Community College.

MLEOTA is the largest law enforcement training facility in Mississippi. Basic and advanced programs that encompass firearms training and classroom instruction are provided to state, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies. In-service training is also provided to state law enforcement agencies. Students in the basic law enforcement training program:

- Learn basic police skills and knowledge
- Apply learned skills and knowledge in a controlled training environment
- Learn self-discipline and how to follow society's rules
- Learn to inculcate ethical standards, particularly the law enforcement code of ethics
- Learn how to relate to peers, superiors and the public

In other WPD personnel matters, Ron Boysel has returned as part-time patrolman after leaving the department last year. Boysel has combined law enforcement service in Brookhaven, Liberty, Magnolia and Hazlehurst as well as Wesson with pastorates in rural churches over almost three decades.

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Decorating awards honor local businesses

Wesson News

The Spirit of Christmas Awards recognized the Trustmark Bank Wesson branch as the Christmas Design Award winner and top business holiday decorator in town.

The awards program sponsored by *Wesson News*, Wesson Garden Club, and Wesson Chamber of Commerce also cited four other businesses for their efforts in helping to sustain Wesson's traditional Southern small town Christmas tradition in a year when the COVID-19 pandemic forced cancellation of events and otherwise tamped down seasonal features:

- 2nd -- Milltown Salon and Day Slaon
- 3rd -- Fil-Am Produce & Asian Market
(Christmas Special Award Winner) Design Award
- 4th -- Milltown Mall
- 5th -- Dumps BBQ

Trustmark received \$125 donated by the Wesson Chamber for its magnificent holiday design, both inside and outside, featuring a host of twinkling lights, natural elements, Santa and his red sleigh flanked by live poinsettias and lighted trees.

"Every year, Wesson businesses and residents turn their town into a Southern Christmas postcard-like setting with their special seasonal decor and lighting," says *Wesson News* Editor Bob Arnold. "Along with the Chamber of Commerce and Garden Club, we honor these efforts towards



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promoting the Christmas spirit, which they help to spark and sustain, and encourage expanding efforts in future years through friendly competition among decorators."

This year, the awards program focused on business efforts, because the Wesson Garden Club will honor residential holiday decorators in a separate recognition.

Wesson Garden Club members Debbie Hoaglin, Jennifer Peets and Dixie Thornton selected the five Spirit of Christmas winners among thirteen local businesses, including Copiah Bank, Copiah Nutrition, the City of Wesson, Wesson Fire Department, 51 Diner, Ashley's 51 Convenience, Wesson Police Department and The Carpenter's Shop, as well as the honorees. The judges fanned out into the town following the December 4 Christmas parade and made their choices based on originality, creativity and how the overall design reflected the spirit of Christmas.

"All of the businesses brighten the town and are truly a must see this season," Garden Club judge Dixie Thornton said.

"Milltown Salon and Day Spa's beautifully decorated windows filled with snowflakes and snow-covered trees. Peek inside to see their stunning twelve-foot snow-covered tree. Fil-Am's strings of colored lights and tinsel, lighted trees, Santas and Christmas ornaments give a true hometown feeling and visions of sugar plums. Peek into the front window of Milltown Mall and see their lighted Christmas village display, and step inside to see the vintage items of dolls and toys that will take you back to a simpler time. Dump's BBQ will truly brighten the holiday spirits of both young and old with their talking Santa and his sleigh pulled by a pig."



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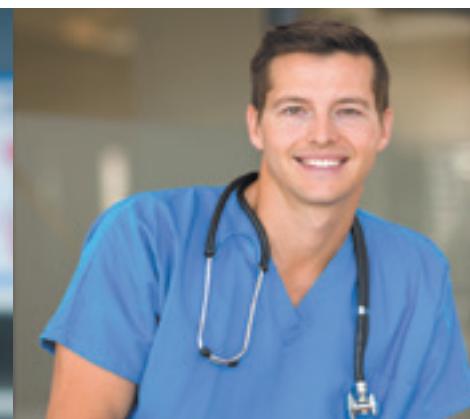
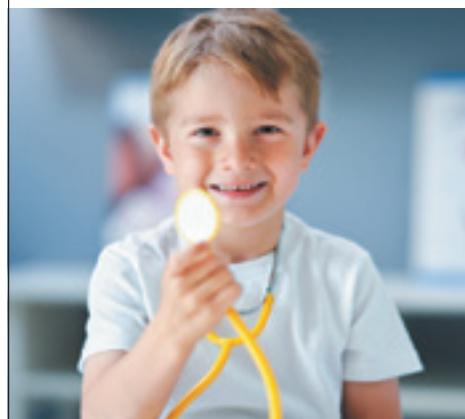
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Post Office name honors slain officers

Wesson News

Federal legislation sponsored by U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.) and Congressman Michael Guest (R-Miss.) has renamed the Brookhaven post office in honor of three local law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty.

The legislation, also co-sponsored by U.S. Senator Roger Wicker, was approved by unanimous consent in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives for President Trump's signature. The bill designates the U.S. Postal Service facility at 201 West Cherokee Street, Brookhaven, as the "Deputy Donald William Durr, Corporal Zach Moak, and Patrolman James White Memorial Post Office Building."

"Brookhaven is my home; and the loss of these officers continues to break the hearts of so many in our community," Hyde-Smith said.

"Mississippi respects our law enforcement officers, and we are grateful for the risk they take on in the line of duty," Guest noted. "For this reason, it's important to



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commemorate those we've lost in remembrance of their sacrifice. It's my hope that our efforts will preserve the memory of Deputy Donald William Durr, Corporal Zach Moak,

and Patrolman James White, who demonstrated John 15:13 in their heroism: 'Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.'

"Every single day, our law enforcement officers risk their lives to protect and serve their communities," Wicker said. "Renaming the Brookhaven Post Office is a small but fitting tribute to the sacrifices of Deputy Durr, Corporal Moak, and Patrolman White. I hope this renaming will serve as a powerful reminder of all those men and women who wear the badge."

Lincoln County Deputy Sheriff William Durr was killed while responding to a domestic dispute in May 2017. A veteran law enforcement officer, he previously served with the Brookhaven Police Department.

Brookhaven Police Officer James Kevin White and Corporal Walter Zachery Marshall Moak lost their lives in a standoff in September 2018. Moak served with the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department before serving with the Wesson and Brookhaven police departments. In addition to serving as a police officer, White served in Iraq with the Mississippi National Guard where he sustained a serious injury.



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Thirty-Four Co-Lin students were recently inducted into the National Technical Honor Society on the college's Wesson Campus. Inductees from the Business and Office Technology Program were Ashley Evans of Florence (second from left), Christie Hargrove of Wesson (center) and Mamie Hilbish of Ruth (second from right). Also pictured are Dr. Suzanne Johnson, Program Coordinator of Business and Office Technology (far left) and Leigh Easterling, Business and Office Technology Instructor. Not pictured are Ashlee Boyles of Mendenhall and Mandie Murray of Wesson. The National Technical Honor Society encourages and rewards outstanding student achievement in workforce education. The students selected for membership were recommended by their instructors and have exhibited the qualities of skilled workmanship, honesty, responsibility, leadership, citizenship, and scholastic achievement.

Special to Wesson News

Local vaccinations start. COVID-19 vaccine distribution has started in the area. King's Daughters Medical Center (KDMC) received 400 dosage units of the Moderna vaccine just before Christmas. Following Mississippi State Department of Health priority access plans, KDMC initially vaccinated its employees who are in direct contact with COVID-19 patients.

Hemp growers licensed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has approved some 250 farmers to grow hemp in Mississippi since state lawmakers voted to legalize the crop, which belongs to the same species as marijuana, but has only trace amounts of THC -- the psychoactive compound that gets pot smokers high. Cannabidiol oil, or CBD, which is extracted from the plant and touted for its health benefits, has boosted the popularity

of the plant previously outlawed in Mississippi among a handful of states. Congress legalized it as part of the 2018 farm bill, and many other states have set up hemp cultivation oversight programs in recent years.

Unemployment rates. With a 6.4 percent unemployment rate, Lincoln County is among 26 Mississippi counties below the state's 7 percent average. Copiah and Lawrence Counties unemployment rates are 7.6 percent and 8.1 percent respectively. Rankin County boasts the state's lowest unemployment rate at 4.2 percent.

Mask mandate enforcement. Mississippi police officials are not



Wesson News

Jason Barrett of Brookhaven was sworn in by Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann as state senator of Mississippi Senate District 39. He defeated Brookhaven banker Bill Sones in a special runoff election. Barrett, (R), an attorney, represents Copiah, Lawrence, Lincoln and Walthall counties. Sally Doty, who resigned, previously represented the area. Barrett is pictured with wife Brandi and children John Henry and Emme.

proactively enforcing mask mandates, but rather regard it as an educational opportunity to respond to complaints about persons not wearing face coverings to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Sixty-one Mississippi Counties are under a mask mandate through an executive order of the Governor that is effective until January 15.

Home schooling spike. Increased home schooling in Mississippi largely explains a 23,000 drop in public school enrollments. A total of 442,627 students are enrolled in public schools and 25,489 are home schooled. Over the past three years, public school enrollments have declined 5,511 per year on average. The major drop this year in public school enrollments coin-

cides with uncertainty related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced public schools to close during the spring and offer a mix of in-person and online instruction during the fall. Mississippi law requires children ages 6-17 to be enrolled in public, private or home school programs.

Low vaccination acceptance. Governor Tate Reeves and health authorities are worried that not enough Mississippi residents will get the COVID-19 vaccine. Mississippi has the lowest COVID-19 vaccine acceptance rate in the nation at 43 percent, but herd immunity will need to be about 70 percent for the coronavirus to burn itself out. Immunity occurs after a person has been infected with the virus or has taken a vaccine, and health authorities estimate only about ten percent of Mississippians have been infected by the coronavirus.

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Dixie National starts January 22

Wesson News

The fifty-sixth Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo starts January 22 and runs through February 21 with youth and open livestock exhibitions and the largest rodeo competition east of the Mississippi River.

The rodeo portion of the event is Thursday, February 11, through Wednesday, February 17, 2021, at the Mississippi Coliseum on the State Fairgrounds, and tickets will be available beginning Tuesday, February 8.

"I want to invite everyone to come out to the greatest show on dirt at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds," said Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture Andy Gipson. "The annual Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo will include all the usual events, like the palomino show, Dixie Queen pageant and Junior Sale of Champions in addition to the rodeo. I'm excited to announce that this year we will



host an agricultural and vendor expo in the new Mississippi Trade Mart for the very first time at the Dixie National."

The 2021 rodeo features different acclaimed musical artists each night following the competitions. Performers include The Oak Ridge Boys, Parker McCollum, Moe Bandy, John Conlee, Sawyer Brown, Gary Allan and Riley Green. Tickets will be limited due to public health guidance. Sanitization stations and safe practices signage will be posted throughout the facility. Applicable public health guidance will be observed regarding social distancing and masks.

To purchase tickets to the Dixie National Rodeo, visit: www.ticketmaster.com/dixie-national-rodeo-tickets/artist/848320. For more information on the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo, visit www.DixieNational.org or call 601-961-4000.

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Hulon Sims joins board



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Co-Lin President Dr. Jane Hulon Sims has been elected to the Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

SACSCOC named Dr. Hulon Sims to the Mississippi delegation of the board at its annual meeting held virtually last month.

SACSCOC is the body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the southern states. It serves as the common denominator of shared values and practices among the diverse institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Latin America and other international sites approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees that award associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degrees.

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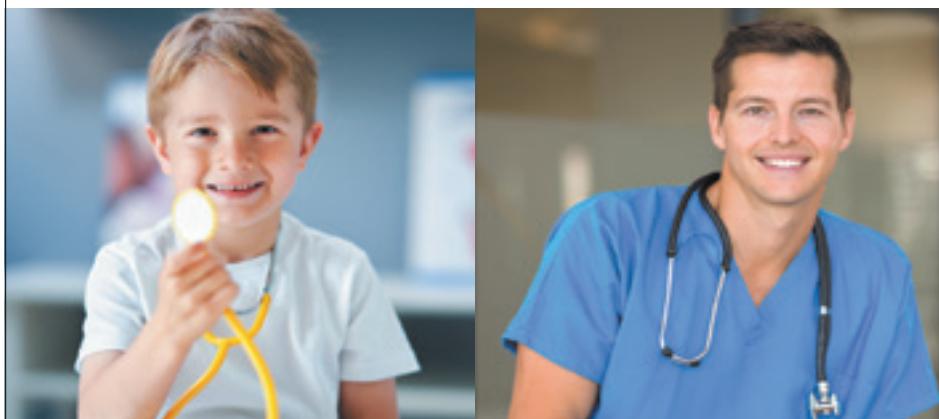


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Time to build raised beds



Special to Wesson News

By Guest Columnist Gary R. Bachman

The winter months are a great time to get ready for the summer growing season. A project every gardener will benefit from is building a raised bed.

A raised bed is exactly as the name suggests: a landscape or garden bed that is higher than the surrounding grade. A raised bed should be no wider than 4 feet, so the longest reach is only 2 feet. This allows easy access to the bed from either side. The size can be whatever suits the site or gardener's needs, like two-foot square rosemary beds, or longer display beds.

Hardscape materials, like lumber, galvanized metal, stones, and bricks are used to build sides that will keep the growing mix where it belongs and keeps your garden looking tidy.

The choice of materials is the gardener's decision. Newer treated lumber is very garden friendly.

Once the sides are built, fill the garden with a mix designed for raised beds. Don't use regular ground soil. A raised bed is really just a very large container, so we need to use a mix that drains well and remains light and fluffy. This makes your raised bed easy to work in, and the plants really respond well to these mixes.

For more information see the Mississippi State University Extension publication *Constructing Raised Beds for the Mississippi Gardener*.

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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Wesson's annual Christmas parade



Wesson News

Wesson's annual Christmas parade stirred the holiday spirit in town with the Wesson High School band, floats, vehicles carrying dignitaries and beauties and beaux and, of course, Santa claus who delighted children with gifts of candy at the fire house following his arrival.



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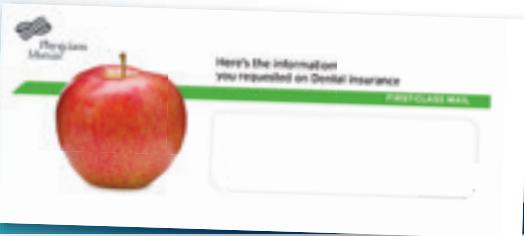
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