

Co-Lin graduation ceremonies this week

Special to Wesson News

2021 Co-Lin's spring commencement ceremonies begin today on the Wesson campus and will continue tomorrow at the Simpson County Center and Thursday on the Natchez campus.

On the Wesson campus, two commencement ceremonies will be held at Mullen Gymnasium for Spring 2021 graduates. Graduates with last names A-J will participate in the 9:30 a.m. ceremony and last names K-Z will participate in the 1:30 p.m.



ceremony. At the Boswell Regional Center in Magee and Natchez Convention Center, Simpson County Center and Natchez campus graduates will

receive their diplomas at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. respectively.

To ensure social distancing, only two guests per graduate allowed at will be each

commencement ceremony. Tickets were distributed at the mandatory graduation rehearsals last Friday. Only graduates, selected Co-Lin staff and ticket holders will be allowed inside the commencement venues. Graduates will be provided with a Co-Lin face mask to wear as they enter the site. Masks are mandatory for all graduates, staff members and guests present.

The ceremonies will be streamed LIVE at www.colin. edu and on Co-Lin's Facebook page for family and friends to view.

election Town prepares for June 8

Wesson News

With the June 8 municipal election nearing, poll workers, ballot counters and those who oversee voting are preparing to carry out their responsibilities and make the day go smoothly.

City Hall, rather than the American Legion Hall, will be the polling place for the election, since it will be held for municipal officials only. The polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Inperson absentee voting at City Hall will be on May 29 and June 5 from 8 a.m. to 12 noon.

Town Clerk Angela Hester is conducting training sessions for key people in the election process.

Last week, the three election commissioners appointed by the

Wesson Board of Aldermen who oversee the election -- Alena Hughes, Chad Sills and Sabrina Brown -- learned about their responsibilities.

"The job of each commissioner is to uphold the election law and see that the election is conducted in an honest and fair manner," Hester says. "Their duties encompass preparing and printing ballots, overeseeing poll workers, securing all supplies, preparing poll books, compiling precinct results on election day, certifying election results, providing election data to the public and purging voter rolls in compliance with the National Voters Rights Act."

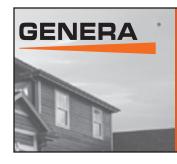
Hester will train two resolution board members responsible for counting absentee ballots at a May 27 session beginning 9:30 a.m. at and the three poll managers responsible for election day voting details at City Hall on May 29 at 9 a.m.

Wesson residents who will be at least 18 years old before June 8

can register to vote at City Hall or with Copiah County Circuit Clerk Edna Stevens through May 10 if they are not already registered or need to change their registrations. Wesson City Hall is open Monday thru Friday, May 3-7, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday, May 8, from 8 a.m. to noon for voter registration.

In the election, incumbents Mayor Alton Shaw and Ward Aldermen Larry Hall (Ward 1), Jarrad Ashley (Ward 2), Billy Ellison (Ward 3) and Michael King (Ward 4) will run unopposed. Incumbent Stephen Ashley will face former Alderman Van Graham and Mark Douglas in a contentious Alderman-at-Large race.

Because Wesson municipal candidates run as independents, they vie only in a general election, with no preliminary primary election.



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The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society, has initiated Will McInnis of Phi Wesson at Mississippi State University. McInnis is among approximately 30,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi W

McInnis is among approximately 30,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year. Membership is by invitation only and requires nomination and approval by a chapter.

Only the top 10 percent of seniors and 7.5 percent of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10 percent of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann who wanted to create a different kind of honor society that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the Society has chapters on more than 325 campuses in the United States and the Philippines. Its mission is "to recognize and promote academic excellence in all fields of higher education and to engage the

community of scholars in service to others."

Since its founding, more than 1.5 million members have been initiated into Phi Kappa Phi. Some of the organization's members include notable former President Jimmy Carter, NASA astronaut Wendv Lawrence, novelist John Grisham and YouTube cofounder Chad Hurley. Each year, Phi Kappa Phi awards more than \$1 million to outstanding students

and members through graduate and dissertation fellowships, undergraduate study abroad grants, funding for post-baccalaureate development, and grants for local, national and international literacy initiatives.

For more information about Phi Kappa Phi, visit www.phikappaphi.org.

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May 11, 2021

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Volume 9, Number 5

Circulation 5,000 Publisher/Owner Clay Mansell

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Wesson News is published on the second Tuesday of every month in Wesson, Mississippi.

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Butterbeans honored



Special to Wesson News

The Wesson Garden Club Junior Gardeners, "The Butterbeans," were honored at the Keep Mississippi Beautiful Annual Awards/Great American Cleanup State Kickoff on the steps of the Mississippi State Capitol last month. The Second Place Youth Award for exemplary efforts made to keep Mississippi beautiful was presented by the First Lady of Mississippi, Elee Reeves. Those accepting the Award were (left to right) Junior Gardners Jennifer Peets, Kori Peets, Brooke Coleman, Kate Norwood and Katie Brooke West. Dixie Thornton, who also accepted the award, is not pictured. The Wesson Garden Club is a member of The Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc. and The National Garden Clubs, Inc.



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By Guest Columnist Dr. Stephanie Duguid

High Blood Pressure (otherwise known as hypertension) affects nearly half of adults (45% or 108 million people) in the United States.



"Blood pressure" is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries as the heart pumps blood. If this pressure rises and stays high, it can damage the body in many ways over time, including your heart, blood vessels, kidneys, and more. Hypertension increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. Only about one in four adults with hypertension have their condition under control.

This condition is known as the "Silent Killer," as there are no signs or symptoms. You can have it for years and not know. The main factors in developing high blood pressure include obesity, excessive alcohol consumption, smoking, salt intake, and family history.

So, how can you find out if you are at risk? Know your numbers! When your blood pressure is taken, you may be told your pressure is 120/80. The top number is known as "systolic," the blood pressure when the heart beats, and the bottom number is the "diastolic," the blood pressure when the heart is at rest. If you are in any category other than "normal" -- 120/80 -on a regular basis, see your physician.

Blood pressure does not stay the same all the time. It fluctuates with your activity levels, excitement levels, and health issues. Take note of it often. There are places to have it checked on a regular basis -- drug stores, Walmart, and more.

Many times, people ask which number is more important, top (systolic) or bottom (diastolic)? Typically more attention is given to the top number (the systolic blood pressure) as a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease for people over 50 years old. In most people, systolic blood pressure rises steadily with age due to increasing stiffness of large arteries, long-term build-up of plaque, and increased incidence of cardiac and vascular disease.

Take control today. You can make a difference with a few changes to your lifestyle, taking medication and/or following a treatment plan. If you have high blood pressure, there are steps you can take to get it under control:



• Take your blood pressure medication as directed.

• Quit smoking -- and if you don't smoke, don't start.

• Reduce sodium (salt) intake.

There are other healthy habits that can help keep your blood pressure under control:

• Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

• Participate in 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week.

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• Eat a healthy diet that is high in fruits and vegetables and low in sodium, saturated fats, trans fat, and cholesterol.

• Manage stress.

• Limit the amount of alcohol you drink (no more than one drink each day for women and two for men).

• Check your blood pressure regularly.

If you have a family member who has high blood pressure, you can help by taking many of the steps listed above with them. Go for walks together or cook meals with lower sodium. Make it a family affair!

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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Co-Lin partners with Alabama School



Pictured from left, Richard Hester, University of West Alabama Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Ken Tucker, University of West Alabama President; Dr. Jane Hulon Sims, Co-Lin President; and Jackie Martin, Co-Lin Associate Vice President of Instructional Services.

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Co-Lin and The University of West Alabama have partnered to provide Co-Lin graduates increased transfer scholarships and new opportunities to earn their bachelor's degree at UWA.

"We are always looking for partnership opportunities that will benefit our students," said Co-Lin President Dr. Jane Hulon Sims. "Our new agreement with West Alabama is an example of that, and we feel confident our students will thrive at the next level."

In the agreement recently signed on the college's Wesson Campus, UWA guarantees admission to all Co-Lin students with a 2.0 GPA and 45 transferable credit hours or an associate degree from Co-Lin.

In addition, Co-Lin students with a 3.0 GPA or better will receive a \$3,000 to \$4,000 academic scholarship per year for up to four consecutive semesters and will be exempt from out-of-state tuition. Students who receive an academic scholarship will also qualify to apply for a Housing Scholarship of \$2,000 to assist with on-campus residency costs.

UWA is also committed to providing Co-Lin students with personalized counseling and one-on-one assistance to ensure a smooth transition from Co-Lin to UWA.

"Our student body at UWA is very similar to the student body here at Co-Lin," said UWA President Dr. Ken Tucker. "We promise to take excellent care of your students every step of the way."



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Founders Day celebrates



Wesson News

Cody Dunaway was one of an array of entertainers who performed throughout the event.



Kamryn Bridges (front) is crowned Founders Day Queen by outgoing Queen Kayla Barfield.

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Founders Day, traditionally an occasion to commemorate Wesson history, was a celebration of town life and a bourgeoning new post-pandemic normalcy this year.

It was an event-filled evening and day on April 30 and May 1 with a band concert, a variety of musical entertainment, a Glow Run/Walk, art walk, arts, crafts and flea market; car show and snacks, refreshments and meals.

The Wesson Chamber was the primary sponsor of the event with support from Co-Lin, Trust Mark National Bank, Curves of Brookhaven, Dumps Restaurant, the Town of Wesson, Pike National Bank, Wesson Fire Department, Yeagers Auto Sales and the Bank of Brookhaven.

The Chamber crowned Karnryn Bridges, a Wesson High School (WHS) junior, the 2021-22 Founders Day Queen. Bridges plans to attend Co-Lin to pursue occupational therapy. Her involvement at WHS has encompassed Science and Beta Clubs, yearbook staff, First Priority and color guard. She has been recognized for academic achievement, is active in Clear



Chamber of Commerce board members (left to right) Secretary Deemie Letchworth, Kayla W were on hand with Chamber President Marilyn Britt (far right) to welecome new Founders Q on her right). Board members Stephen Ashley, vice president, and Ken Sullivan are not pict



Participants ready for 5K Run.

Wesson News

May 11, 2021 Dining Guide 7 5 town's life and history

Branch Baptist Church and has volunteered at Wesson Public Library and King's Daughters Medical Center, where she assisted with COVID-19 vaccinations. Her parents are Mike and Lori Bridges and grandparents are Bob and Pat McCreary.

The Chamber also presented an appreciation plaque to Dr. Steven Liverman for his service to the organization as a member.

Overall winners in the 5K Glow Run were Truman Poole (male) and Christie Barber (female). The first, second and third place winners in four age categories were Truman Poole, Mason Ashley and Brayden Arbough in the under 20 division; Dalton Rushing, Yerri Wolfe and Blake Smith in the 21-35 division; Christie Barber, Brian Norwood and Beth Hutchinson in the 36-50 division; and Nelson Thames, Patty Jackson and Anna Mason in th 51-over division. The 5K Walk first, second and third place winners were Brendon Duguid, MacKenzine Martin and DaMonica Brown.

In the car show, Patrick Clark with a 1972 Chevrolet Mone Carlo was the Participants Choice winner, and David Mobile with a 1960 Chevrolet Apache was the Chamber Choice winner.



Wesson News

'illiams, Dr. Steven Liverman, Phillip Knight, Nora Berch, Brent Duguid and Stephanie Duguid ueen Karnryn Bridges and say goodbye to outgoing Queen Kayla Barfield (first and second ured.



Vesson News

Dr. Steven Liverman accepts appreciation plaque for his work for /Chamber from Stephanie Duguid.





Wesson Nev

Works of local artists were displayed at City Hall and in the Wesson Ace Hardware window. Participating artists were Darryl Anderson, Polly Jackson, Johnnie Munn, Tom Ross, Sheila Stewart, Marilyn Britt, Valerie Love, Kelly Parks, Janet Smith, Whitney Knight-Rarie, Richard Dorris, Margaret Martin, Gayle Ross and Lillie Stanton.



Fifteen vehicles participated in a car show.

Wesson News

Co-Lin joins statewide tree planting program



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Co-Lin has received a grant for tree planting and beautification throughout the Wesson campus, encompassing landscaping of the campus entrance and pedestrian corridor and creation of a fruit tree orchard.

Mississippi Urban Forest Council (MUFC), in partnership with America in Bloom and Canadian National Railroad (CN), is bringing the project to the college as part of a planting program in varied locales throughout the state that will become part of the "Mississippi Arboretum Trail."

"These types of activities are significant improvements to the community," says MUFC Executive Director Donna Yowell. "The social impact of green space, trees and gardens can be particularly pronounced when public spaces are transformed into places of beauty that foster safe places for neighborhood interaction, economic and property value enhancement, and improve the lives of those that live in or visit the community."

"We are so excited to participate in this initiative for both campus beautification and educational opportunities it will provide." said Dr. Jane Hulon, Co-Lin President.

MUFC is Mississippi's only statewide nonprofit that works with communities and local groups to improve quality of life through landscapes and support strong communities for economic success on a local level. The Mississippi Urban Forest Council and its' volunteers, the Urban Forest Masters, have planted over 379,000 trees and donated over 3 million flower bulbs in Mississippi since 2010.

CN – Canadian National Railroad Company -- along with its operating railway subsidiaries serves the cities and ports of Vancouver, Montreal, New Orleans, Mobile and Jackson, MS with connections to all points in North America. It is a true backbone of the economy, transporting approximately C\$250 billion worth of goods annually for the wide range of business sectors, ranging from resource products to manufactured products to consumer goods, across a rail network spanning Canada and mid-America.

America In Bloom promotes nationwide beautification through education and community involvement by encouraging the use of flowers, plants, trees and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements. It envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work and play – benefitting from colorful plants and trees, enjoying clean environments, celebrating heritage, and planting pride through volunteerism.

For more information on MUFC programs, visit www.msurbanforest. com.

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WESSON AREA DINING GUIDE





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BRAG art show highlights month

By Guest Columnist R. Shaw Furlow

It's May, and that means the art shows and contests are in full swing.

Hazlehurst just completed a successful month of art shows, and the Mississippi Music Museum opened on a limited basis.

Now our friends at the Brookhaven Regional Arts Guild have announced their annual competition, and it promises to be huge. Artists from all around the area have submitted works to be judged with the Best in Show, receiving a prize of \$150. Other cash prizes are available, as well.

This year, the exhibit will not only be viewed online

but in person at the Thames Conference Center on the Co-Lin campus. Entries include acrylics, oil, watercolor and pastel

paintings as well as mixed media, drawing, photography,

digital and 3D design. All work must be original. The show will be up until May 28.

The competition will be judged by a professional artist. Usually, there are about 125 entries from artists all across the area.

There were a few years the Annual Art Competition didn't happen, but it has been held for roughly twenty years, and has grown into one

of the region's most respected competitions. Co-Lin art instructor Janet Smith is the current president of BRAG. Its website is bragarts.com, where you can view the annual show and learn about its Artists of the Month and what its members are doing.

While the annual competition is open to persons 18 years old and up, younger artists are not left out. BRAG Jr. was begun in 2012, open to students K-12. Membership is \$25.00 annually and includes free entry



BRAG includes artists who encourage each other.

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to competitions, access to BRAGjr Zone and a monthly newsletter.

BRAG stated goals are to preserve the art of the area and encourage it. An offshoot of the Brookhaven Trust, it was established when a group of ladies got together each week to paint. I have written about them and the Art Barn where they work in a past article. They chose the word "guild" for BRAG because it suggests craftsmen with a mutual interest who encourage one another.

That's it for this month. Outside restrictions are being loosened. Get out and enjoy all that is going on around you. Until next month, support the arts.

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

-- From the Shadyside -- that spotlights area musical talent and is a consultant to school bands in the region.



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Wesson Garden Club Honor Yards

All photos Special to Wesson News



James property.



Boswell property.



Langley property.



Wesson Garden Club has recognized the April landscaping efforts of Margie F. Smith at 6032 Highway 51, Christropher and Skylar James at 2018 East Railroad Street, Boswell Wesson Geriatric Group Home at 1058 East Railroad Street, Phillip and Lea Ann Knight at 7071 Highway 51 North and Sharon Langley at 1006 West Street in rural residential, city residential, organizational, spring design and spring special award 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.



Smith property.



Knight property.



By Bob Arnold

Christy Ratliff grew up in Brookhaven and has continued to live there throughout her adulthood, but she found her dream job in Wesson.

Ratliff is Post Master at the U.S. Post Office in Wesson, a position in which she has served for the past twelve years.

Growing up as a Brookhaven girl, she recalls walking the downtown streets there with her brother, and learning dance and to twirl the baton. "I wasn't an athlete, but did play basketball in junior high school, and was the bat girl for the high school baseball team," she relates. Mostly, however, she was a diligent student. She served on the staff of Brookhaven High School yearbook, and the BHS faculty and staff chose her for the National Honor Society.

After graduating from BHS in 1995, it was off to Co-Lin where Ratliff thought she might want to become an accountant, but decided after the first semester of her sophomore year that college wasn't for her and took the Post Office exam on the suggestion of her father, a long-time postal service employee who retired in 2019. She scored well on the exam, but worked for five months at Super D Pharmacy as a tech-

nical assistant before the Post Office hired her for a night job at McComb, where she unloaded letters and packages from mail tucks for distribution in the 396 zone encompassing Meadville, Brookhaven and Monticello.

Ratliff never looked back, and has continued to pursue a postal service career. She got her first taste of the Wesson Post Office as a clerk. Unlike her father, who remained in postal craft jobs, she decided to go into manage-ment, applying for Officer in Charge (OIC) jobs, temporary positions where post masters had moved on or retired. 'I loved Wesson -- the people, a place where you became friends with all the other employees," she recalls. "My goal was to come back to Wesson as post master someday."

OIC positions opened for Ratliff at Mendenhall, Port Gibson and Terry, where she became post master in 2008. When the long-time post master retired at Wesson

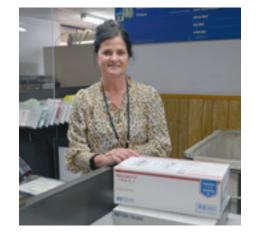
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fit

in 2009, she returned to take her dream job.

"I'll stay here

as long as they let me," Ratliff affirms. While pursuing her postal career, Ratliff also started a family with Kelly Ratliff, who works on natural gas pipelines for Marlin Services. They have



two children -- Lauren Smith, a sophomore at the University of Southern Mississippi; and Piker Ratliff, a Co-Lin freshman.

What are your hobbies?

Kelly and I like to travel to places that are warm, have a beach and sand and host music fes-

tivals where we can enjoy country. I cook for family and friends, get outdoors to care for my yard and jog to stay physically

Are you a reader?

I follow current events and have en-

joyed recent books by Fox News commentators Tucker Carlson and Sean Hannity. I am also an avid Wesson News reader.

Do you enjoy movies or theater?

I am into Indiana Jones movies and follow the Hell's Kitchen and Good Doctor television series.

What kind of music do you like?

Kelly and I took our kids to Jimmy Buffet and B.B. King concerts. We have attended performances of Jerry Jeff Walker and Robert Earl King at the House of Blues in New Oreleans. We also enjoy the local music scene -- Topher Brown, Cody Dunaway and others -- at Magnolia Blues in Brookhaven, which features live music along with a steak and barbeque menu.

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

I've always wanted a home on Key West. I would donate to local charities. Mississippi Special Olympics, particularly. Of course, I would take care of family needs.

How would you change the world?

Nice breeds nice. So I would try to smile and be nice to all people, encouraging them to be nice, too.



Renovation, BP \$\$, poet, census & WIC

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Local Walmart investment. Walmart is investing some \$8 million in renovating its Brookhaven-based distribution facility. The retailer announced the project on its Facebook page with few details other than work would take about four months, but local officials commented favorably: "Expanding existing businesses is important to our continued economic development and job growth," Brookhaven Mayor Joe Cox said and Karen Sullivan, Alderwoman-at-large for the town, added "We congratulate them on their remodel. Walmart has been a valued part of our community for almost 35 years. Last year, they awarded \$25,000 in grants for various nonprofits. Kudos to Bill Sones and others who worked diligently to bring this industry here in the mid-eighties.'

More BP \$\$\$ for state. Mississippi stands to receive nearly \$69 million from British Petroleum (BP) oil spill restoration money for ecosystem recovery. The funds come from the RESTORE Council, which allocates money from Clean Water Act fines paid by BP and

others after the catastrophic 2010 spill. The council is made up of officials from five Gulf states affected by the spill and several federal agencies. Mississippi's money is going into the Mississippi Sound, with \$34.6 million to plan and

implement habitat restoration and more than \$34.2 million for water quality improvement planning and work. Eleven men died when an oil well BP PLC was drilling off Louisiana in 2010 blew. The gusher was about a mile (1.6 kilometers) underwater and spewed an estimated 134 million gallons (507 million liters) of oil over nearly three months.

New state poet laureate. Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves has named a new poet laureate -- Dr. Catherine Pierce, a professor and published author. The poet laureate creates and reads poetry at state occasions, promotes literacy and represents the state's cultural heritage. Pierce, a Delaware native, has served on the faculty of Mississippi State University since 2007 and resides in Starkville. She will serve in the position for the next four years. "We are confident Dr. Pierce will continue to foster a love of poetry and literature throughout Mississippi," Reeves said through the Mississippi Arts Commission. "I've long counted myself tremendously lucky to be a part of Mississippi's dynamic community of writers and artists and citizens, and I am so looking forward to continuing to connect with people across our state, to working with our excellent arts and literary organizations and our incredible educators, and to helping amplify the voices of Mississippians," Pierce said.

Mississippi population down. Mississippi became more diverse during the past decade, but it is also one of only three states, including Illinois and West Virginia, that lost population, according to 2020 Census. Mississippi, which dropped from five to four U.S. House seats after the 2000 Census, will not lose a congressional seat this time. Mississippi lost about 48,400 white residents during the decade, but gained nearly 20,000 Black residents, about 16,700 Hispanic residents and about

NEWS NUGGETS

4,500 Asian residents. The number of people who identify themselves as being of two or more races increased by about 11,200. White people still make up 56% of Mississippi's

population, while Black people are about 38%, Hispanic people are about 3% and Asian people are about 1%. People who identify themselves as being of two or more races are about 1% of Mississippi's population.

WIC sites closing. The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) is closing all 81 of its Women, Infants and Children (WIC) food distribution sites throughout the state in the months ahead. Approximately 70 positions will be eliminated. This action comes as WIC clients throughout the nation are being transferred to the use of electronic banking and a debit card for food purchases due to a federal mandate. The process has also started in Mississippi. The eWIC card



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Mississippi Secretary of State Michael Watson presents National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) Medallions to power company executives for the commitment of their companies to a safe and successful 2020 General Election following Hurricane Zeta. From left to right are Brian Hughey (General Manager/ CEO, Singing River Electric Cooperative), Anthony Wilson (President and CEO, Mississippi Power), Secretary Watson and Ron Barnes (President and CEO, Coast Electric Power Company).

will be more convenient for clients as they will have a choice of where to purchase food and infant formula. The list of products has been expanded as well. The eWIC phased rollout will take place over the next few months. For now, clients will have paper vouchers to take to the existing food centers for WIC food. To date, 85,000 Mississippi-ans are enrolled in the WIC Program. The food distribution sites will be permanently closed by late summer and early fall.



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The Mississippi Department of Agriculture (MDA) has begun assisting landowners and managers seeking to protect properties from the more than \$60 million in annual damages caused by wild hogs across the state. Last month, MDA received applications to participate in its Wild Hog Control Program (WHCP). MDA will provide "smart" wild hog traps to WHCP participants and train them in trapping methods. "The Wild Hog Control Program has been a great success," says MDA Commissioner Gipson. "The program provides a great opportunity for farmers and landowners to gain access to the latest trapping technology and MDA to teach farmers and landowners how to trap wild hogs and use that knowledge for future control efforts on their lands."





Co-Lin HOF adds six students



Selected to the Co-Lin Hall of Fame are (left to right) Anna Kaitlyn Ashley of Magee, Oluniyi Ayedun of Brookhaven, Victoria Jones of Brandon, Morgan McCray of Ridgeland, Susana Patino of Bogota, Colombia, and John Clyde Ready of Monticello.

Special to Wesson News

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Six Wesson campus 2020-21 sophomores have been named to Co-Lin's prestigious Hall of Fame (HOF).

Membership in HOH is the highest honor bestowed on a student by the college. Honorees were Anna Kaitlyn Ashley of Magee, Oluniyi Ayedun of Brookhaven, Victoria Jones of Brandon, Morgan McCray of Ridgeland, Susana Patino of Bogota, Colombia; and John Clyde Ready of Monticello.

Anna Kaitlyn Ashley of Magee serves as Phi Beta Lambda President, and is a member of the Trailblazers, Wolf Tales Student newspaper, Council of Presidents, and the Eta Omega Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa. She was selected as Co-Lin's 2019 Most Beautiful, a freshman homecoming maid, and as a Who's Who at Co-Lin. She is a Wolf Pack Cheerleader and a Taylor Presidential Scholar. She is the daughter of Joey and Jennifer Ashley of Magee.

Oluniyi "Nehi" Ayedun of Brookhaven is President of the Trailblazers, Vice President of Student Government Association, and serves as a tutor in the Writing Center. He was selected as Mr. Co-Lin and a Who's Who at Co-Lin. He is a Co-Lin Cheerleader. He is the son of Jameelah Sharrieff-Ayedun and Taiwo Ayedun.

Victoria Jones of Brandon serves as Baptist Student Union President and is a member of the Centurions, Mu Alpha Theta, the Eta Omega Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, Council of Presidents, and the Trailblazers. She was selected as a beauty in the Trillium Beauty Pageant and to Who's Who at Co-Lin. She is the daughter of Rev. Rodney and Robyn Jones.

May 11, 2021

Morgan McCray of Ridgeland is Student Government Association President, Vice President of Service for Phi Theta Kappa, and is a member of the Trailblazers, Mu Alpha Theta, and Council of Presidents. She was selected as Miss Co-Lin, a Who's Who, and Phi Theta Kappa Officer of the Year. McCray is a member of the Lady Wolves Basketball team and was selected MACCC Academic All-State and NJCAA All-Academic. She was also selected to the PTK All-Mississippi Academic First Team. She is the daughter of Clintis and Shelia McCray of Ridgeland.

Susana Patino of Bogota, Colombia, is a member of the Lady Wolves Tennis Team and Sigma Kappa Delta. She was selected as a Who's Who at Co-Lin and to the Vice President's List. She was named Athlete of the Week and MACCC Player of the Year. Susana is the #1 Women's Singles Player and #1 Women's Doubles Player in the state. She is the daughter of Luis Patino and Rocio Ramirez.

John Clyde Ready of Monticello is a member of the Eta Omega Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa and the Baptist Student Union. He was selected as a Who's Who at Co-Lin and is a Taylor Presidential Scholar. Ready is a member of the Wolf Pack Tennis Team and was selected as MACCC All-Academic and NJCAA All-Academic. He is the son of Damond and Kristina Ready.

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Help for struggling renters

Special to Wesson News

Mississippi is now accepting applications to help struggling renters following passage of the massive COVID-19 stimulus bill signed by then-President Donald Trump, which included \$25 billion for rental assistance.

Mississippi Home Corporation is taking applications from needy renters, as well as landlords who file on behalf of tenants, at ms-ramp.com. The Home Corporation program, called the Rental Assistance for Mississippians Program (RAMP), received \$186 million of the \$200 million U.S. Department of Treasury allocated to Mississippi through the Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

The assistance is meant to help renters who were financially impacted by COVID-19.

The Mississippi Home Corporation first began administering RAMP in July using \$18 million the state received through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Emergency Solutions Grant. The agency, however, stopped offering rental assistance through the program in January on federal guidance because an eviction moratorium had begun September 4, according to MHC Director Scott Spivey. The federal government suggested renters were no longer at a great enough risk of homelessness to qualify for the grant, he explained

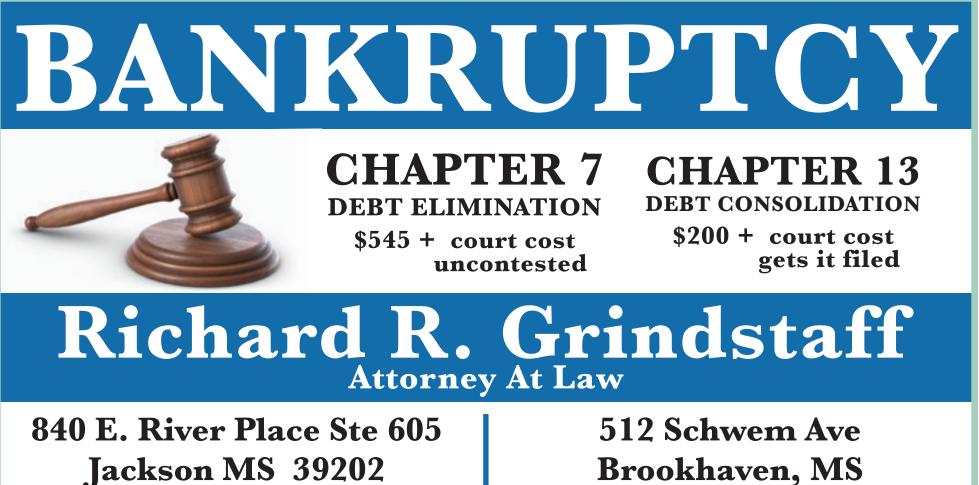
That initial program came with strict eligibility guidelines that caused several thousand renters to be denied, but new treasury money is more flexible. For one, the new program raises the income limit for eligibility from 50% to 80% of the area's median income.

Individuals can now apply to the program for help paying up to 15 months of back due rent, which should help to reduce debts and the number of evictions to come once the moratorium is lifted.

Applicants can also secure help to pay for the following utilities and energy costs: electricity, gas, water and sewer, trash removal and fuel oil. The program will not pay for telephone, cable or internet bills.

Renters will be eligible for the assistance if at least one person in the household meets three requirements: they qualify for unemployment or faced financial hardship as a result of COVID-19, are at risk of homelessness or unstable housing and pull no more than 80 percent of the area median household income.

The Home Corporation directs applicants to call 601-533-8401or 1-888-725-0063 to speak to a representative.



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Thanks for supporting our expanded digital issue!



Harris new NLCC coordinator



Special to Wesson News

Harris Special to Wesson News

Co-Lin has named Betty Jo Harris of Natchez new coordinator for the Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration (NLCC).

Harris received both a bachelor's and master's degree in history from Northeast Louisiana University (now the University of Louisiana Monroe), and a master's degree in teaching from the University of Louisiana Monroe. She currently serves as an instructor at Co-Lin's Natchez Campus teaching World Civilization and American History. Harris also serves as an advisor for the Alpha Alpha Zeta chapter of Phi Theta Kappa. Before Co-Lin, Harris was a history teacher at Delta Charter School and River Oaks School, and served as a field researcher at Louisiana Tech University.

NLCC is one of the most popular conferences involving literature, history, film, and culture in Mississippi. Held each year in February, this well-known event brings scholars, artists, and authors from all over the country to Co-Lin at Natchez to celebrate. The annual conference seeks to encourage public appreciation of the humanities.

For more information about NLCC visit www.colin.edu/nlcc.



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Community College Hall of famer & cheerleaders

Special to Wesson News

Mike McIntyre of Wesson is a new member of the Mississippi Community College Sports Hall of Fame.

McIntyre is a 1967 graduate of Co-Lin where he was outstanding in football and track. An All-State offensive guard for two years, he was named to the Mississippi Junior College All-Star Football Team and was

a starter for the South All-State Team.

In track and field, he was an All-State medalist in discus and shot put and a member of the 1966 State Runners-Up team and 1967 State Championship team. He competed in the Senior Adult division of the State Games of Mississippi and earned multiple medals in discus and shot put from 1993-2007 when he was a gold medalist in both Mike McIntyre events.

McIntyre received his B.S. and MBA from the University of Southern Mississippi. He completed additional studies at USM, Mississippi College, Memphis State University, University of Utah, University of South Carolina, and University of Texas-Arlington.

McIntyre served as chair of the Business Division at Co-Lin and was



an economics instructor for 42 years. McIntvre also served as advisor for Co-Lin's chapter of Phi Beta Lambda, in which his students won 67 state awards and 18 national awards, including four National Championships. He was inducted into the Phi Beta Lambda Hall of Fame in 2014.

He coached men's and women's tennis at Co-Lin for 38 years and was a certified USPTR Ten-

nis Teaching Professional. McIntyre was named MACJC Coach of the Year seven times and NJCAA Region 23 Coach of the Year four times. His career dual match record stands at 458-105, and his teams won seven state championships, 15 runner-up finishes, had 66 individual state and 59 individual NJCAA Special to Wesson News Championships, with over a dozen teams ranked in the National Top 25.

Named Mississippi Association of Coaches Coach of the Year in 1986, 1989, and 1990, McIntyre received the MACJC Leadership and Service award in 1991. He is a former president of the MACJC Tennis Coaches Association and member of the NJCAA Region 23 executive board. He also served as MACJC



Wesson High School's (WHS) Chandler Byrd (center) accepts golf scholarship from Co-Lin. His mother Bridgett Byrd and father Robert Byrd flank him of left and right as WHS golf coach Bobo Douglas (far right) looks on.

State President and Tournament Director from 1985-1990. McIntyre was inducted into the Co-Lin Sports Hall of Fame in 2000.

McIntyre and his wife Diane have one son, Michael, Jr. (Amy), and one granddaughter, Kylie Grace.

Co-Lin 2021-2022 cheerleaders. Cheerleaders for the coming year at Co-Lin are Mary Ellen Brock, Lindsay Norton, Drew Meilstrup, Dustin Prather, Samuel Mabile, Collin Waldrop, William Hodgson, Tate Smith,

Quintaye Bates and August Sullivan, all of Brookhaven; Allison Hendry of Woodville, Abby Graves of Silver Creek, Alyssa Carraway of Wesson, Gabriella Hegwood of Taylorsville, Anna Hedgepeth, Sidney Thurman, Joe Lee Rutland and Brandon McPhail, all of Monticello; Lydia Ellis of Ellisville and Rainie Welch of Bogue Chitto. Selected as mascots were Janie Grace Henning and Turner Owens, both of Brookhaven. Micah Allen is Co-Lin cheerleader sponsor.



Wesson News May 11, 2021 **Divide perennials to perform better**

By Guest Columnist Gary R. Bachman

Many of Mississippi's perennial landscape plants will start to decline after several years. That means they will have smaller foliage and won't flower as much, even though they've been well cared for with regular fertilizer and irrigation.

Most of the time, the change in growth is due to the perennial becoming crowded. Just recently, someone asked me why an older clump of Louisiana irises are not performing like they used to, and my answer was that the plants need to be divided.

Described as garden surgery, division is simply cutting up the plant into smaller pieces and replanting them. Dividing perennial plants is a great way to rejuvenate and renew some of our garden treasures.

You do not need special tools for dividing plants. A garden spade or fork, a serrated knife like a weeding or soil knife, and a small saw are generally all you need to get started. But they must be sharp!

Just as sharp knives are essential in the kitchen, sharp garden tools are essential for any landscape job. Dirt, rocks and tree roots quickly dull garden tool edges. You may have never sharpened your garden spade, but believe it or not, a sharp spade actually makes digging easier. You'll need a 10- or 12-inch bastard cut mill file, which is readily available at home centers and hardware stores. This is a good all-purpose choice for sharpening any garden tool. Make sure the file lays flat across the edge bevel. It sharpens only when you push it, not when you pull it back, and that makes the file easy to control. It takes only a few long strokes to get a good edge.

I try to divide my perennial plants about every 3

to 5 years, depending on the perennial. To begin, carefully lift the entire perennial with most of the root system out of the ground using your garden spade or fork. This will cause less damage, and



A sharpened shovel makes a good dividing tool. Cause less damage and make more divisions by carefully lifting the entire plant with most of the root system out of the ground.

you will be able to make more divisions. Identify the growing points. You may have to use your fingers to find the spots where the division cuts are to be made.

For the greatest success, make sure all divisions have a growing point and attached roots.

When replanting, prune off about half of the foliage. This will reduce water loss as the roots begin to regrow. Plant the

crown of the division at the same level it was in the ground on the original plant. Arrange the pieces in a random fashion so they do not all grow in the same direction.

While most perennials can be divided at any time of the year, spring and fall are considered the optimum times to do this gardening task. Flowering behavior indicates the best times to divide. Divide spring-flowering perennials in the fall and summer, and divide fallflowering plants in the spring.

After planting, apply a layer of mulch and keep the divisions well watered until the roots become established. Hold off on fertilizing until you observe new growth is.

You'll probably end up with more perennial divisions than you can use, so be sure to gift a few to your friends and neighbors.

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. He is also the host of the popular Southern Gardening television and radio programs.



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