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Wesson News

SPOTLIGHT

Free and Fair Elections

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Volume 10, Number 10

“Good News You Can Use”

October, 2022

Funds coming to spare taxpayers

Special to Wesson News

Wesson fire and police departments, local streets and the town's water system are in line to benefit from a variety of state and federal funds that will reduce the burden of local taxpayers.

At recent meetings, Wesson Aldermen have been looking at ways to spend money from British Petroleum (BP) funds paid to the state for oil spill damages and disbursed to localities, federal government American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) two-for-one matching funds being distributed through the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, state rebate funds from the Municipal Fire Protection Fund (MFPF) and federal Homeland Security funds for emergency preparedness.

The most immediate expenditure will be \$60,000 of BP funds for paving Eighth and Spring Streets.

Longer term are expenditures anticipated for a new fire truck and other fire fighting equipment that will cost more than \$400,000, of which \$182,000 is now available from the state MFPF rebate funds. The

maintenance costs of Wesson Volunteer Fire Department's primary fire truck are soaring, town officials note.

Town Aldermen have also set in motion the process to tap matching funds of more than \$400,000 for the town water system from federal ARPA funds that Congress allocated for COVID-19 relief and recovery. They approved the hiring of Brookhaven-based Dungan Engineering to analyze

town water system needs with an eye towards purchases of generators and equipment, upgrading stations and replacing meters.

The Wesson Police Department also stands to benefit from an \$86,000 federal Homeland Security grant, and Police Chief Chad O'Quinn has already told Aldermen he wants to equip his officers with five tasers with a five-year life at \$2,500 each.

No changes in town's budget

By Bob Arnold

Wesson Aldermen adopted a 2022-2023 budget with revenues and expenditures at the same level as the previous fiscal year with no tax rate increases required.

Forecasted revenues remain at \$1,170,757, with expenditures estimated again at \$1,145,261 for the new fiscal year.

The town's budget encompasses revenues that pay for general government expenses, the police and street departments, Old School Community Center and public library; and revenues and expenses for the fire and water/sewer departments, and

water meters.

Government expenditures for the new fiscal year are budgeted at \$607,960, reflecting \$200,000 for police salaries, which was boosted 7.5 percent in the previous fiscal year in a commitment by the town to catch up with other municipalities in pay to police officers.

Overall, revenues for government expenditures are projected to be \$615,600, with funds from the ad valorem tax at \$210,000, the county road and bridge allowance at \$50,000, the mobile home and motor vehicle tax levy at \$50,000 and the sales tax at \$160,000.

Old School Community Center expenditures are expected to be

\$20,200, with no income anticipated from rentals in 2022-2023.

Street department and library expenses are projected at \$83,350 and \$12,460 respectively. Fire department expenses were projected to remain the same at \$24,900 on revenues of \$31,532. Water meter revenues and expenses are budgeted at \$7,025 and \$5,000, respectively.

Water/sewer revenues are forecast to remain at \$516,600, with metered sales to customers and sewer charges to customers projected respectively at \$250,000 and \$187,000. Last year's 10 percent water/sewer expenditures to \$507,401 reflected a 10.7 percent increase in salaries.

WAC graded B among state schools



Special to Wesson News

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Only 12% of school districts in the state received D or F grades, according to data released by the Department of Education (DOE), though officials warn the pandemic played a role in schools' improved letter ratings.

DOE's Office of District and School Performance provides state, district, and school level accountability or performance measures on an annual basis to help stakeholders make decisions regarding areas of improvement and need within the state education system.

The Statewide Accountability System assigns a performance rating of A, B, C, D, and F for each school and district based on student achievement, student academic growth, graduation rate and participation rate. Statewide assessments measure proficiency and growth in proficiency for students on five levels -- minimal, basic, passing, proficient and advanced -- in grades 3-8 and high school students taking end-of-course subject area assessments in Algebra I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History. Schools and districts are expected to have an assessment participation rate of 95% or greater.

Due to pandemic disruptions, schools have not received new grades since 2019. Assessments did not occur in the spring of 2020, and while tests were administered in 2021, no accountability grades were given for student performance.

Many schools and districts saw significant improvement in their accountability score from 2019, but the education officials cautioned against year-to-year comparisons because of the impact of the pandemic on the data.

cont. on page 3

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Mississippi's new blues history-makers

Photos special to Wesson News



Castro Coleman



Christone Kingfish Ingram



Vasti Jackson

By Guest Columnist R. Shaw Furlow

If you've missed it so far, I want to remind you again that Mississippi's musical heritage runs deep in the blues, country and rock. It's the birthplace of America's music.



Dockery Farm is where Charlie Patton and others worked during the day and played blues at night on the stoops or in a local juke joint. B.B. King's ambition was to be the best tractor driver in the Delta region before he became the "King of the Blues." Tommy Johnson from Terry and his nephew Robert Johnson from Hazlehurst became "overnight" stars once they made their first recordings and made a little money.

These folks invented, defined and, in a round-about way, promoted the blues. But Mississippi is still making blues history as blues capital of the world. The folks from the early 1900s are gone, but others have picked up the torch.

Probably the best known of the current Bluesmen is Vasti Jackson. Jackson grew up in McComb close to the railroad tracks. At the age of twelve, he hopped a train, but was caught by the train authorities and returned home. He heard the blues from his family, and soon picked up a guitar and started replicating what he heard on the records. While studying music at Jackson State, he started playing juke joints, and before long had landed

staff positions at Malaco and Alligator records. From there, it was on to playing with Cassandra Wilson, The Williams Bothers and B.B. King. He produced Bobby Rush's Grammy nominated album *Hootchie Man*. Jackson has been involved with many film projects, including working with Martin Scorsese. Jackson currently lives in Hattiesburg.

I first met Castro Coleman, better known as "Mr. Sipp, the Mississippi Blues child" six years ago when he and I were working on a project for the Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame. His set knocked me out. He wore a suit in 90 degree weather, but looked and sounded as cool as cool could be. Also born in McComb, Coleman picked up the guitar at six years of age and started playing gospel music, eventually attracting the attention of the Williams Brothers and became their guitarist. As most sidemen do, he wanted his own band, and started the True Believers gospel group. The group had pretty good success, but in 2012 he tried the blues and was instantly a hit, and has now won several national and international blues awards. In 2018, he opened the wildly popular Sipp's Place in Magnolia just before the pandemic shut him down.

Now with his album, *Castro Coleman and the True Believers, Back to the Roots*, he has returned to gospel -- his first love.

Then there is Christone Kingfish Ingram. At 23, he has turned the blues world upside down. Born

in Clarksdale, Ingram became a sensation at age 14. Critics say he doesn't play guitar, but becomes one with it. The emotion of the moment not only can be heard, but seen in his body language. Buddy Guy says Kingfish is the future of blues. At his age, he hasn't accumulated the resume of Jackson and Coleman, but he was asked to play at the prestigious Berklee Performance Center in Boston, where there are many guitarists studying all types of music. They all came out to hear the kid, and were blown away by his prowess and shocked that he was their age.

That covers the blues, but I could have written much the same column on Mississippi country, rock or gospel artists. Or on the number of composers writing music for bands and choirs. Our bench is deep, and there's no end in sight. These three new blues history-makers, along with Libby Rae Watson, Carey Hudson, Bobby Rush and many others, continue to make Mississippi the place that keeps birthing American music.

That's it for another month, my friends. Do yourself a favor, and 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. Bob Arnold is Editor of the Wesson News.*



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cont. from page 1

WAC graded B among state schools

Wesson Attendance Center (WAC), which received a B grade, in Copiah County School District, paced the performance of area schools, along with Lincoln County School District's West Lincoln School and Bogue Chitto School, which received A and B grades; Enterprise School District's Enterprise High School and Enterprise Elementary, both rated A, and Enterprise Middle School rated B; and Lipsey School, which received a B in Brookhaven School District.

Enterprise School District, graded A, ranked among the top 10 rated school districts in the state. Among other area districts, Lincoln County School District and North Pike School Districts received B grades, and Cs were awarded to Brookhaven School District, Copiah County School District, Franklin County School District, Hazlehurst City School District, Lawrence County School District, McComb School District and South Pike School District. Among other area schools, Alexander Junior High School, Brookhaven High School, Hazlehurst Elementary School, Hazlehurst High School, Hazlehurst Middle School and Mamie Martin Elementary School received C grades.

State test performance decreased significantly in 2021, so when test scores returned to more normal levels this year, schools saw significant year-over-year growth. Since growth is a key metric used to assign schools grades, it is possible that many districts and schools saw increased overall grades because of that growth.

"Because the accountability system relies heavily on growth, it may be challenging for some schools and districts to maintain grades (in the future) that improved considerably in 2021-22," said Interim State Superintendent of Education Kim Benton.

Benton also pointed out that the graduation requirements were waived for students to pass some state tests in 2020 and 2021 and graduation rates were positively impacted. This trend will continue until all students who took those courses during the pandemic have graduated.

"We will likely see some variability in A-F grades over the next few years as the pandemic disruptions work their way out of our accountability system," she said.

District superintendents expected this outcome, and said that accountability results should be taken "with a grain of salt" because of the pandemic disruptions. They said they hoped community members would be understanding as grades fluctuated and these disruptions worked their way out of the system.

While pandemic-related growth and waivers affected school grades, a quarter of all districts have increased reading and math proficiency since 2019.

With the exception of reading proficiency (45.2%), WAC students demonstrated proficiencies above fifty percent in math (53.1%), history (88.1%) and science (67.1%), with a growth rate of 56.8 percent and 73.3 percent in reading and math. WAC had an 89.9 percent graduation rate.

The ten highest rated districts for the 2021-22 school year are:

- Long Beach School District
- Clinton Public School District
- Ocean Springs School District
- Union County School District
- Petal School District
- Madison County School District
- New Albany Public School District
- Enterprise School District
- Pass Christian Public School District
- Rankin County School District

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Flea Market prepared for big crowds

Wesson News

More than 150 vendors -- individuals, church groups, clubs and civic organizations and businesses -- will line the streets of downtown Wesson in their special tents to offer arts and crafts items, fleas, clothing, food, snacks and refreshments, among other things, to thousands of browsers and shoppers expected to flood into town on Saturday, October 15, for the 51st annual Flea Market and Outdoor Arts and Crafts Show.

Wesson Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD) Chief Ken Carraway, who is coordinating the Flea Market for WVFD, the managing organization, predicts a big crowd will be browsing, shopping and munching on the concessions. The Flea Market will start at 8 a.m. on Highway 51, Factory, Spring and Beech Streets and run until 4 p.m.

While their parents shop, kids can play and run off their energy at a special fun zone.

“With help of some good weather, it will be a time for great food, shopping and fellowship,” says Carraway.

For the first time, a food court will be set up on Spring Street near Highway 51, where Smyrna Baptist Church, Zion Hill Baptist Church and The Doll’s House, among other mostly



Special to Wesson News

local not-for-profit organizations, will offer such food selections as pulled pork parfaits and sandwiches, egg rolls, jambalaya, burgers, chicken strips, chicken on stick, funnel cakes, along with Mississippi’s favorite beverage -- sweet tea, of course.

The Wesson Lions Club will also be on hand with sweet potatoes in its annual seasonal fundraiser. The food choices will also include turkey legs, fish plates, pork skins, kettle corn, jellies and jams and baked goods to

enjoy then or take home for later or prepare as gifts.

Vendors from throughout Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Texas and Tennessee will be on hand to help visitors with their gift lists for Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years, offer seasonal decorations and meet varied home and personal needs.

Local artists will offer drawings and paintings and yard art. Shoppers looking for decorations will find yard

art, wreaths, door hangers, candles and much, much more. There will be live pets, flowers and plants and an array of fleas and crafts, including dolls and doll clothing, wood and iron work, men’s and women’s clothes, leather products, candles, bath products, collectible knives, hair bows, jewelry and antiques.

Friends of the Library will hold its annual book sale in the building next to the Wesson public library pavilion. Town Hall staff will be in a special tent, where residents can get to know government officials.

Started by a local merchants association, WVFD turned the event, better known today as the "Wesson Flea Market," into a major fundraiser held annually on the third Saturday in October. The volunteer fire fighters generate some \$5,000 each year on sales of the 10-foot-by-10-foot display areas at \$45 each to purchase equipment for the fire department, Carraway says.

Vendors and exhibitors can still reserve display areas. They must furnish their own tables, chairs, and other display equipment and may sell from tents, booths or their cars and trucks. Set-up for the Flea Market is after 5 p.m. on Friday, October 14, and before 8 a.m. on Saturday. Get information at 601-265-1694 or wessonfd@gmail.com.

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*does not yet include Q3 2021!

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Wesson Public Library winners

Mary Hopson and August Clark were September Wesson Public Library books giveaway winners. Hopson received the adult category prize book -- *James Patterson* by James Patterson and Clark received *Bug in a Rug* by Russell Puter and David Semple, the children/youth category prize. Friends of the Library (FOL) funds the prize books awarded in drawings every month. The goal is bringing people to the library to learn how it can meet their needs. In September, FOL started another library promotion program – “Fall for Books” in which the library will track book check-outs by patrons during September, October and early November, tally the traffic and award the top library user on November 15. The details of the new program have changed since they were announced last month. Instead of selecting two winners of \$25 gift certificates for menu items at Dump’s Barbeque, one winner will receive a \$50 gift certificate to use at any business in the Wesson area. FOL is a support organization that conducts fundraisers for the library and assists in its programming through advice and counsel, volunteers, and donations.



Mary Hopson

Special to Wesson News



August Clark

Special to Wesson News

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Erin Johnson: Events lady finds career at Co-Lin

By Bob Arnold

Erin Johnson, who joined Co-Lin as Events Coordinator and director of its Institute for Learning in Retirement (ILR) program back in February, isn't job-hunting any more and can't foresee doing so in the future.

When the interviewer for the Co-Lin job asked her where she saw herself working in five years, she answered simply: "I hope I will be right here in the job that I want now."

After a flurry of people had left the Co-Lin position in recent years to enjoy their retirement years, it was exactly what Co-Lin officials wanted to hear from the woman who had graduated from the school 15 years earlier and was ready to settle in to a career at her alma mater. ILR members, other beneficiaries of the college's special events and co-workers who are involved in producing them as well say they couldn't be happier about the new stability in the critical position she has taken over.

Johnson's career journey started at a tender age nurturing a bottle calf, and included helping a corporate CEO grow a major business and managing her own clothing and jewelry store.

Born at Natchitoches, Louisiana, Johnson came to the area around Topisaw Creek at Ruth, Mississippi, when she was four years old with her parents, two older brothers, and one older and one younger sister. Her father worked as a forester at Georgia Pacific, and her mother was a school nurse.

She recalls a "wholesome" childhood growing up on 40 acres in the small rural community, where she played with her sisters, enjoyed 4-H activities and participated in the life of Topisaw Baptist Church.

In the second grade, Johnson started her first job on her family's mini-farm when she persuaded her father to get her a bottle calf that required care a mother cow couldn't provide. She nurtured the calf, which generated a modest income for her as a cow when it had its own calves that could be sold. "When I reached driving age at 16 years old, I had saved enough money to buy my own vehicle," she says.

At Enterprise High School, Johnson served on the yearbook staff, played basketball and her fellow students chose her to reign as Miss Enterprise. She graduated as valedictorian. Then it was off to Co-Lin.

"I cut down on my involvement in extracurricular activities at Co-Lin, where I studied business," Johnson says. "I was a Co-Lin Trail Blazer who helped introduce the college to new and prospective students, but also worked outside the school to earn money for my education by making shakes and pouring energy drinks at the juice bar at the therapy and performance center that is now run by King's Daughters Medical Center in Brookhaven."

After Co-Lin, she headed for Mississippi State, spending all of one day there before deciding the life and atmosphere at Starkville wasn't for her. She quit, took a semester off from studies, and then enrolled at Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi, which had been her first choice for ongoing college education all along. Over two years there, she completed a BS in Business Administration with a focus on marketing.

In 2009, Johnson joined Brookhaven-based Reed's Metals as executive assistant to Bernie Reed, the company's President and CEO, who was focused on growing a company with \$12 million in annual sales into a major international player in the metal fabricating industry. "That's where I really learned business," says Johnson. "I was involved in every aspect of the company – assisting in purchasing materials and machines for manufacturing and product sales. I traveled on small planes visiting suppliers and customers, attended trade shows and hosted foreign visitors, including Taiwanese delegations."

By 2015, Johnson says she had pretty much "burned myself out" in helping her boss engineer the growth of a major business and started looking for an

opportunity to go into business for herself on a smaller scale in retail. She found store-front space in the rear of a building across the street from Reed's Metals, which her brothers owned, and where they operated Johnson's Fencing. With the help of her brothers, she created the boutique environment she wanted, and opened Erin & Co. to sell clothing and jewelry.

When she lost her retail space in 2020, Johnson kept Erin & Co. alive as an online business selling graphic t-shirts for women, and rejoined Bernie Reed as his assistant at Reed Capital Investors, which he started after selling Reed's Metals. Johnson learned about the Co-Lin job from her sister, who also works at the college. "I had become good at events works, and it was what I really wanted to do."

Today, at Co-Lin, Johnson arranges space, staffing and services and assures a proper setup for college and non-college events, helps sell college facilities to outside users and manages finances and overall operations of the events function at the college. For ILR, she also helps its member committees plan programs, in addition to coordinating its events.

Johnson continues to live on Topisaw Creek and goes to the nearby church, which has been a part of her life since childhood. Erin & Co. also continues on the internet.

She lives in a small house across the street from her parents, and her brothers and sisters are neighbors. Together, they all live on about 150 contiguous acres, of which they are all partial owners. Before coming to work in the mornings and on returning home from work, she tends to her cows, dogs and cats. "I can't think of any other place where I would like to live," she says.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy family, particularly being around my nieces and nephews. I exercise to keep in shape, enjoy movies and am active in the church in which I grew up. When I vacation, I prefer mission trips associated with my church – often to Indian reservations, where we help build homes, feed people and teach vacation Bible schools. I also serve on the board of Hands & Feet Ministries based in Guatemala.

Are you a reader?

I read the Bible, enjoy Jane Austin novels and delve into business books to hone my professional skills. More than reading what others write, I enjoy writing – and want to do more of it. Short stories, essays, whatever.

Do you enjoy movies or theater?

My favorite movie is *Gone with the Wind*, but I also enjoy Marvel films and westerns. I like Kevin Costner, Robert Downey, Jr. and Maureen O'Hara. On television, I am an avid *NCIS* fan, and enjoy the old *JAG* and *Magnum PI* series. I am a Tom Selleck fan, too.

Do you enjoy any music?

I listen to 90s Country and Christian music, particularly that of Third Day and Casting Crowns. I sing in my church choir, and will even do a solo when asked, but it makes me very nervous.

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

I don't buy lottery tickets, but if I did and won big, I would buy land, build a bigger house, purchase more cows and travel.

How would you change the world?

I would tell people about Jesus and practice the Golden Rule – being kind and treating people well.

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Honor yards

Photos special to Wesson News

In September, Wesson Garden Club recognized the landscaping efforts of David and Gwen Douglas at 1005 Pear Street, Hillary and Misty Britt at 1058 Bufkin Lane and Dollar General at 1058 Spring Street in its Yard of the Month town and rural residential and organizational categories. The Yard of the Month awards that recognize maintenance principles and elements of landscape design seek to encourage ongoing beautification and cleanliness of the Wesson area and cultivate a citizenry which values and protects natural resources and assumes responsibility for enhancing the environment. The Garden Club's Yard of the Month awards honor landscapes during the spring, summer and fall.



Britt property.



Dollar general property.



Douglas property.

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Health literacy affects everyone

By Guest Columnist Stephanie Duguid

Are you health literate?

In the report *Healthy People*, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services identified health literacy as an important component of health communication, medical product safety, and oral health. Health literacy is defined in *Healthy People 2010* as "the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions." If you are health literate, you can take care of your health as a part of everyday life, not just when you visit a doctor, clinic or hospital.

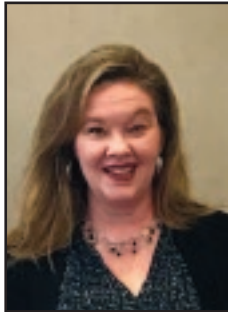
Even people who read well and are comfortable using numbers can face health literacy issues when:

- They aren't familiar with medical terms or how their bodies work.
- They have to interpret statistics and evaluate risks and benefits that affect their health and safety.
- They are diagnosed with a serious illness and are scared and confused.
- They have health conditions that require complicated self-care.
- They are voting on an issue affecting the community's health and relying on unfamiliar technical information.

Health literacy can help us prevent health problems, protect our health, and better manage health problems when they arise. At some point in our lives, we all need to be able to find, understand, and use health information and services.

Health literacy includes the ability to understand instructions on prescription drug bottles, appointment slips, medical education brochures, doctor's directions, and consent forms; and the ability to negotiate complex health-care systems.

Health literacy varies by context and setting and is not necessarily related to years of education or general reading ability. With the move towards a more "consumer-centric" health-care system as part of an overall effort to improve the quality of health care and to reduce health-care costs, individuals need to take an even more active role in health-care-related decisions. To do this, people need strong health-information skills, including being able to:



- Evaluate information for credibility and quality,
- Analyze relative risks and benefits,
- Calculate dosages, and
- Locate health information.

Oral language skills are important, as well. Patients need to articulate their health concerns and describe their symptoms accurately. They need to ask pertinent questions, and they need to understand spoken medical advice or treatment directions. In an age of shared responsibility between physician and patient for health care, patients need strong decision-making skills. With the development of the internet as a source of health information, health literacy may also include the ability to search for and evaluate Web sites.

In *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion*, the Institute of Medicine reports 90 million people in the United States have difficulty understanding and using health information. As a result, patients often take medicines on erratic schedules, miss follow-up appointments, and do not understand instructions such as "take on an empty stomach."

Vulnerable populations include:

- The elderly (age 65+). Two thirds of U.S. adults age 60 and over have inadequate or marginal health literacy skills, and 81% of patients age 60 and older at a public hospital could not read or understand basic materials such as prescription labels.
- Minority populations.
- Immigrant populations.
- Low-income populations. Approximately half of Medicare/Medicaid recipients read below the fifth-grade level
- People with chronic mental and/or physical health conditions.

The relationship between literacy and health is complex. Literacy impacts health knowledge, health status, and access to health services.

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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New Co-Lin Sports Hall of Famers

Special to Wesson News

Photos special to Wesson News

Co-Lin has inducted five members into the Sports Hall of Fame -- Chris Caughman of Mendenhall, Latoria Holder of Pensacola, Florida, formerly of Lumberton, the late Tim Johnson of Monticello, Matt Mooney of Phoenix, Arizona, formerly of Brookhaven, and Chandler Rogers of Virginia Beach, Virginia, formerly of Brookhaven.



Caughman

Caughman is a 1987 graduate of Co-Lin, where he was a member of the basketball team. While at Co-Lin, he and his team won the 1986 Region 23 Championship and went on to compete for a national championship in Hutchinson, Kansas. During his sophomore year, he was a co-captain and starter. The 1986-1987 team was ranked in the top 20 in the nation for most of the year. Caughman received the John Beard Award for Scholastics & Leadership in 1987 and was the leading three-point shooter on the team that year.

After Co-Lin, he continued his basketball career at Belhaven College, where he was best defensive player in 1988 and was named to the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference team, the All-Region 30 team, and was best offensive player in 1989. He led the team in scoring with an average of 15.6 points per game and holds the second highest single season three-point shooting record of all time at Belhaven. He received a Bachelor of Arts in history in 1989 from Belhaven.

Caughman continued his education at graduate schools of banking at the University of Mississippi, Louisiana State University, Southern Methodist University, and the Southeast School of Commercial Lending at Vanderbilt University. He started his career as a basketball coach and teacher working at Hillcrest Christian School, East Rankin Academy and Simpson County Academy.

He currently works as senior vice president of Peoples Bank and has served as a Mississippi state senator for District 35 since 2016, where he spent the last three years as chairman on the banking committee. He is president of Simpson County Youth Leadership. He is a past president of Simpson County Ducks Unlimited, Magee Lion's Club, Simpson County Academy, Mendenhall Area Chamber of Commerce and the Simpson County Economic Foundation. He is also a past board member of the Magee Chamber of Commerce and the Co-Lin Foundation. He was named Co-Lin Alumnus of the Year in 2019. He and his wife, Melissa, have three children Cade, Abby and Bryce.

Holder is 2010 graduate of Co-Lin, where she was a member of the ladies basketball team. While at Co-Lin, she was nationally ranked both years. She averaged 13.2 points with 4.6 rebounds and 2.5 assists per game during her freshman year. In her sophomore year, she averaged 17.3 points with 4.7 rebounds and 3.4 assists. In both years, she was named to the NJCAA All-Region XXIII Team and the MACJC All-State First Team.



Holder

During the 2008-2009 school year, her team had a record of 26-4 and won the MACJC South Division Championship. They were runners-up at the MACJC State Tournament and at the NJCAA Region XXIII Tournament. During the 2009-2010 school year, her team had a record of 31-2 and won the MACJC South Division Championship and Region XXIII Championship. They were runner-up in the MACJC State Tournament and won seventh place in the NJCAA National Tournament.

After Co-Lin, Holder went on to play basketball for Southeastern Louisiana University. She graduated in 2012 with a bachelor's degree

in general studies and a minor in athletic coaching. She played semi-professional basketball for five years. During the 2013-2014 season, she worked as an assistant coach for the Terry High School women varsity basketball team and as head coach for the women junior varsity basketball team. During that year, the team won district and south state. She currently lives in Pensacola, Florida, where she works for the United States Postal Service.



Johnson

Johnson was a 1982 graduate of Co-Lin, where he played tennis and football. While at Co-Lin, he won a state tennis title in men's doubles twice and was a runner-up in regionals.

After Co-Lin, he played USTA league tennis for many years and won several district championships and two state championship titles in men's 4.0 tennis. He worked as a manager at Wal-Mart Distribution and then Georgia Pacific for 21 years. Johnson was a member of Bethel Baptist Church. He and his wife, Melissa, had two children -- Jessica Darlene Johnson Channell and Timothy Crawford Johnson; and three grandchildren -- Fisher Gage Channell, Asher James Channell and Beau Crawford Johnson. Johnson died on February 12, 2021.



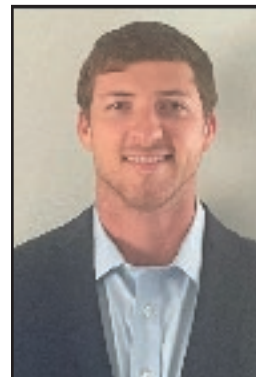
Mooney

Mooney is a 2002 graduate of Co-Lin, where he was a member of the golf team. While at Co-Lin he placed second in the 2002 NJCAA DIII National Tournament, and he was named First Team All American after posting the second lowest score at the national tournament. He was a medalist in the 2002 Hinds Community College Spring Invitational, and he was named to the MACJC All-Tournament Team in 2001. He was president of the Baptist Student Union and Phi Theta Kappa, where he was named Distinguished

Academic All-American. He was elected Mr. Co-Lin and to the Co-Lin Hall of Fame.

After Co-Lin, he attended Mississippi State University (MSU), where he continued his golf career with the Bulldogs. He served on the SEC Student Athlete Advisory Council and was named to the SEC Academic Honor Roll. He graduated from MSU with bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration.

Mooney currently is the senior vice president and director of investments and operations at Parkway Properties in Phoenix, Arizona, where he is responsible for the oversight of operations in the Western U.S. and pursues new investment and development opportunities across the Sunbelt and Mountain West. He also serves as director for the Catch-A-Dream Foundation and is involved with the Urban Land Institute and Phoenix Thunderbirds. He and his wife, Anna, have three children -- Connor, 12, Kathryn, 10, and Cullen, 7.



Rogers

Rogers is a 2012 graduate of Co-Lin, where he was a member of the football team. While at Co-Lin, he was a two-year starting quarterback and led his team to the 2012 State Championship. During his time at Co-Lin, he had 320 completions for 4,254 yards and a 60 percent completion rate with 37 touchdowns. He was named to the All State and All Region teams.

After Co-Lin, he played football at Arkansas State and graduated in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in finance. He currently serves in the U.S. Navy. He and his fiancé, Hanna Qedan plan to marry in October.

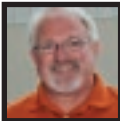


2022-2023 Wesson Attendance Center Basketball

Date	Opponent	Location	Times	Teams
10/29/2022	Jamboree @ Oak Grove	Away	TBD	Varsity Girls Only
10/31/2022	West Lincoln	Away	5 & 6	Junior High Only
11/1/2022	Loyd Star	Away	5 & 6	Junior High Only
11/3/2022	Bogue Chitto	Home	5 & 6	Junior High Only
11/7/2022	Enterprise	Home	5 & 6	Junior High Only
11/8/2022	Loyd Star	Home	4/5/6/7:30	Junior High/Varsity
11/10/2022	Bogue Chitto	Away	5 & 6	Junior High Only
11/11/2022	Puckett	Home	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
11/12/2022	Crystal Springs	Home	1 & 2:30	Varsity Only
11/14/2022	Enterprise	Away	5 & 6	Junior High Only
11/15/2022	West Lincoln	Home	4/5/6/7:30	Junior High/Varsity
11/17/2022	Crystal Springs	Home	5 & 6	Junior High Only
11/18/2022	Enterprise	Away	6/7:30	Varsity
11/29/2022	Crystal Springs	Away	6/7:30	Varsity Only
12/1/2022	Crystal Springs	Away	5 & 6	Junior High Only
12/2/2022	Bogue Chitto	Home	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
12/6/2022	West Lincoln	Away	5/6/7:30	JV/Varisty
12/9/2022	Bogue Chitto	Away	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
12/13/2022	Loyd Star	Away	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
12/15/2022	Enterprise	Home	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
12/28/2022	Puckett Shootout	Away	TBA	Varsity Only
12/29/2022	Puckett Shootout	Away	TBA	Varsity Only
1/3/2023	Jefferson County	Away	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
1/6/2023	Hazlehurst	Home	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
1/10/2023	Franklin County	Away	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
1/13/2023	Port Gibson	Home	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
1/17/2023	Wilkinson County	Home	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
1/20/2023	Jefferson County	Home	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
1/24/2023	Hazlehurst	Home	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
1/27/2023	Franklin County	Home	6/7:30	Varsity Only
1/31/2023	Port Gibson	Away	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
2/3/2023	Wilkinson County	Away	5/6/7:30	JV/Varsity
2/6-10/2023	District Tourney @ Franklin County	Away	TBA	Varsity Only

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- 2014 Ford Explorer XLT, 3rd Row Seat, Rear A/C, Power Seat, Family Size!
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- 2017 Malibu LT Sedan, 36 MPG, Pwr seat, windows, locks, mirrors, Rearview camera, Sharp!
- 2009 Chevy Avalanche, White LTZ, Sunroof, Leather, DVD, Sharp!
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- 2010 Chrysler Town and Country Touring with Low Mileage and Leather!
- 2014 Mercedes E350 Sedan, Black with Beige Leather, sunroof, Navi!
- 2013 GMC 3500 HD SLE Crew Cab 4x4, Only 104k Miles, PW, PL, Tilt, Cruise, Don't miss this one!
- 2010 Honda Accord EX- V6, Sunroof, Super low mileage, Nice!
- 2009 Chevyrolay Avalance LTZ, Low miles, Sunroof, Leather, Sharp!
- 2007 Toyota Highlander, Low miles, Super well cared for, Like New!
- 2010 Dodge Ram 2500 Big Horn Mega Cab, Rare find, Low miles, Nice!
- 2014 Chevy Camaro LS, New tires, PW, PL, 6 cyl, great gas mileage, fun!
- 2008 Cadillac Escalade Luxury Package, Super low mileage, X-tra clean, chrome wheels, Sharp!
- 2012 Chevy Impala LTZ, Sunroof, Leather Buckets, Rear Spoiler, Nicest one around!
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WGC focuses on invasive plants

Special to Wesson News

Shaun Broderick, who has been working in the horticulture industry for more than twenty-two years, highlighted the September meeting of the Wesson Garden Club (WGC) as guest speaker.

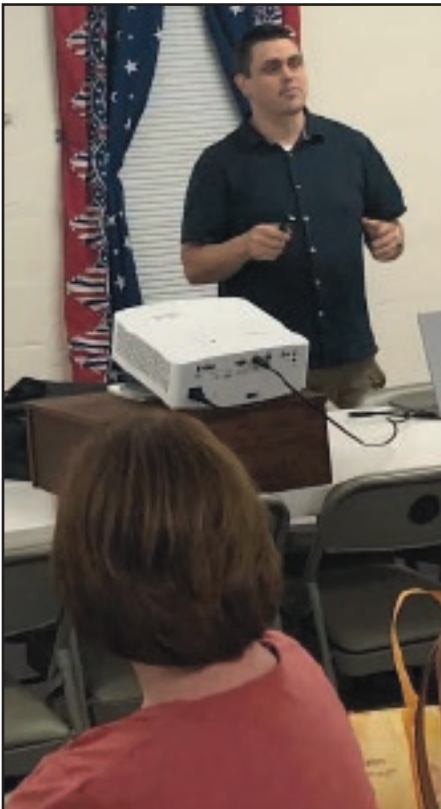
Broderick shared how to control and recognize invasive plants with the WGC members, who enjoyed taking a fun test on invasive plants, asked questions and brought plant samples from their yards for Mr. Broderick to identify.

Broderick studied plant genetics, molecular biology, and biotechnology at Brigham Young University and Ohio State University, and now oversees the trial garden at the Mississippi State University Truck Crops Experiment Station in Crystal Springs, where he is working on plant genetics and breeding projects.

Attending the WGC meeting at the American Legion building were Marilyn Britt, Sherri Carty, Sonya Cowen, Sherry Davis, Rebecca Harrison, Cherry Head, Debbie Hoaglin, Denise Jackson, Camille Johnston, Pam McLemore, Ashley Munn, June Owens, Pam Owens, Jennifer Peets, Joy Phillips, Jean Ricks, Meghan Shepherd, Debbie Smith, Lisa Smith, Dixie Thornton, Brittney Warren and Joy Wesbrooks.

Refreshments provided by Hostesses Marilyn Britt, Sonya Cowen, Rebecca Harrison and Joy Phillips were served at a table decorated for the fall season.

The Wesson Garden Club is a member of The Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc., National Garden Clubs, Inc., Deep South Garden Clubs, Inc., Natchez Trace District-Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc.



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Voting free & fair in Mississippi

Wesson News

Voting machines that cast ballots for the wrong candidate or can be sabotaged by internet hackers. Abuse of absentee voting. Voting by non-citizens or even dead people.

These allegations were among those made in the wake of the contentious 2020 Presidential election, but they are unlikely to happen in Mississippi, Lincoln County Circuit Clerk Dustin Bairfield told members of Institute for Retirement in Learning (ILR) at a brunch last month.

Bairfield pointed to key components of the Mississippi election system that assure fair and free elections:

- The Mississippi Secretary of State must confirm that a new voter-registration applicant is an American citizen by cross-referencing two databases: the Mississippi Department of Public Safety's driver's license and identification system and the federal Systematic Alien Verification For Entitlements database, also known as SAVE.

- Individuals voting at the polls or in person by absentee ballot are required to show a photo ID. Acceptable IDs include a driver's license, a photo ID issued by a branch, department or entity of the State of Mississippi; a United States passport, a government employee ID card, a firearms license, a student photo ID issued by an accredited Mississippi university, college or community/junior college; a United States military ID, tribal photo ID, any other photo ID issued by any branch, department, agency or entity of the United States government or any State government, a Mississippi Voter Identification Card.

A voter may use an expired photo as long as it is an acceptable form of photo ID and not more than ten years old. The expired ID must contain the name and photograph of the voter, and have been validly issued by the federal or a state government. Exempt from the photo ID requirements are voters who cast absentee ballots by mail, fax or email, voters with religious objections to being photographed, any registered voter who resides at a state-licensed care facility and who

votes in person at a polling place located in that state-licensed care facility.

- Over half of the state's voting population is already using voting machines that generate voter-verifiable paper ballots, not just an electronic vote, and are not capable of connecting to the internet. By 2024, all the Mississippi counties will be using them.

- Ballots are electronically scanned, with virtually no errors occurring because poll workers and vote counters touch them.

- Only voters who will be out of town, working during the election, are over 65 years old, working at polls, away at college or physically unable to go to a polling place can cast absentee ballots. Most state voters cast absentee ballots in person, but those who are temporarily away from their homes (for work or school), overseas, in the military, over 65 years old or temporarily or permanently physically disabled can cast mail-absentee ballots. Email absentee voting is also an option for persons who are in the military or overseas. Only about ten per cent of absentee ballots are cast by mail, fax or email.

- There is no early voting in Mississippi. State and local officials, by and large, do not oppose it, but logistical and staffing requirements associated with early voting have made

it impractical. Mississippi requires three poll workers at all its voting places.

- A state system notifies counties when voters need to be removed from rolls because of deaths, and local election commissioners continue to be responsible for

voter roll maintenance.

Bairfield noted voter registration is open through October 10 at the Lincoln County Circuit Clerk's office or online at www.sos.ms.gov/voter-id/register. Absentee voting has begun and will continue until the election in November, he said.



Dustin Bairfield

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Scavenger hunters



Special to Wesson News

Forty-two members of The Butterbeans, the Wesson Garden Club (WGC) youth gardeners, met at the Wesson Old School Community Center to compete in a nature scavenger hunt. Eight teams of these third through sixth graders were given a list of nature items that could be found on the grounds around the community center. Their search encompassed 31 different items, including different colored flowers, a pine cone, a worm, a pretty colored leaf, and much more. Two teams tied for finding all their items. These teams included Katie Grace Garcia, Kori Peets, Emmett Case, Abigail Holloway, Paris Beasley, Emma Lewis, Leighton Hall, Trajan Upton, Jax White and Will Wade. Wesson Garden Club members helping the teams with their search were Jennifer Peets, Lisa Smith, Brittney Warren, Marilyn Phillips, Debbie Smith, Dixie Thornton, and Pam Owens. The Wesson Garden Club is a member of The Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc., National Garden Clubs, Inc., Deep South Garden Clubs, Inc., Natchez Trace District-Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc.

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Workshops explore scientific & art tools

By Bob Arnold

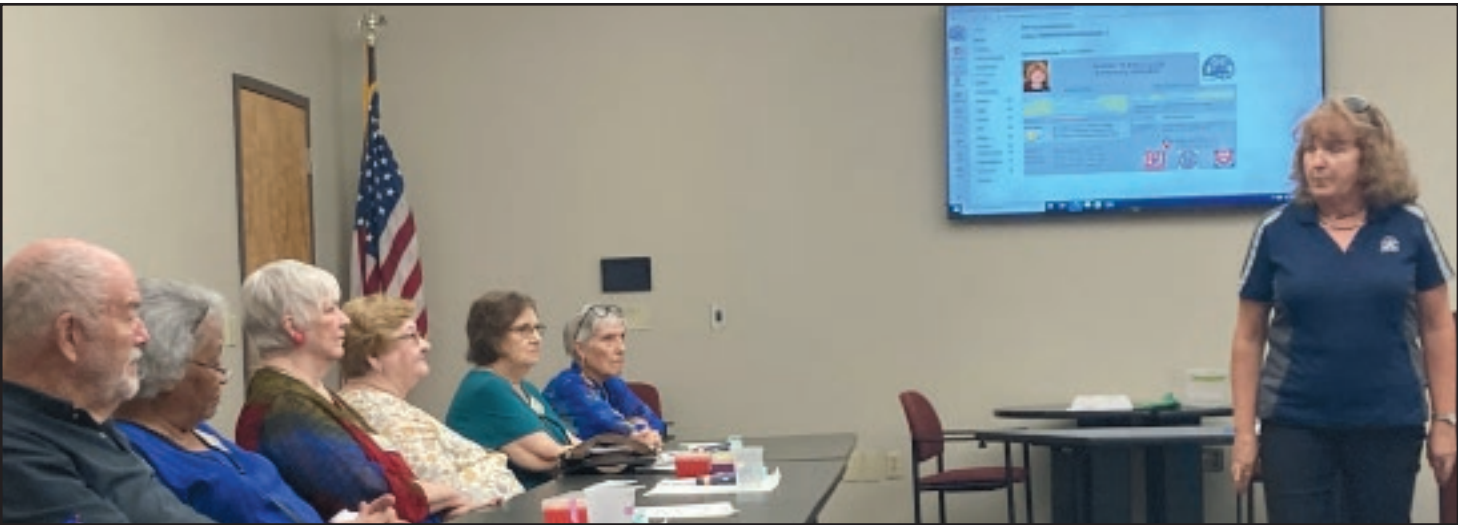
Would-be scientists and would-be artists practiced operating key instruments of biological research and oil painting – a digital micropipette and brush -- at Institute for Learning in Retirement workshops last month.

Kathy McKone from Co-Lin’s Bio-Medical Research Class introduced the science-minded to the most commonly used digital micropipette, which uses an air cushion to create a vacuum and draw liquid into a chamber. The main function of the lab tool, which is used in DNA analysis, is to extract, transport and dispense small volumes of liquids with a range between 1 and 1,000 microliters.

Workshop participants learned how to work with p20 and p200 micropipettes -- gripping the instruments, setting the volume indicators on them to handle varied amounts of liquid, installing and ejecting tips on the shafts of the devices and drawing and dispensing liquids with the tool plungers.

During the bulk of the workshop, they practiced proper micropipetting techniques.

For the arts-minded, Dawn Marks guided workshop participants in painting a fall still life on wood



Kathy McKone leads workshop.

planks.

Marks brought the wood planks outlined with pumpkins and sunflowers and provided brushes and oil paint for the workshop participants to bring chalk-outlined subject matter to life. Using the broad brush strokes, which she encouraged, each one applied dominant and highlighting colors to the pumpkins and flowers to create unique works to decorate their homes and yards.

Painting for more than 35 years on the roots of trees and planks cut from timbers as her medium, Marks

now teaches the skills she has honed over the years to children, youth and adults who want to manifest their creative drives in small classes that assemble at churches, other not-for-profit groups and house parties in southwest Mississippi and Louisiana from Wesson to Houma. She offers her classes through Original Cypress, a small home-based company she started with her husband 15 years ago to sell her works. While she continues to paint her own works to sell, teaching others to paint has become the main thrust of Original Cypress.

ILR, a Co-Lin-sponsored membership organization, provides continuing education experiences for retired and semi-retired older adults who define their own informal educational goals and pursue them at their own pace, based on their own choices and talents. Members, who design the group's program, come from wide ranging backgrounds and bring varied experiences to the organization. Co-Lin staff administers ILR, and the college provides facilities for the organization, which is fully funded by member dues.

Special to Wesson News

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Business Type	W2s	Total Refund
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Manufacturing	21	\$330,530
Law Office	4	\$86,331
Gas Station	1	\$19,000
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Fire, burn care, scholarships & honors

Special to Wesson News

Fire destroys grocery store. A fire last month destroyed the East End grocery store in Wesson. Wesson Police and Fire departments responded to the blaze, but could not save the structure that housed the business at 1187 East Railroad Street. Allen, Stronghope and New Sight fire fighters also assisted. No one was injured in the fire.

Burn care. The University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) is establishing the resources and expertise for the state's only academic medical center to fill the health care void caused by the closure of the state's only burn center. With coordination by Mississippi MED-COM, which is housed at UMMC in the Mississippi Center for Emergency Services, burn patients who require a higher level of care will either be accepted and cared for at UMMC or transferred to the most appropriate regional burn center for treatment. UMMC in Jackson is the state's only academic medical center. Its education, research and health care missions share the objectives of improving the health of the state's population and eliminating health disparities.

Education initiative. U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith from Brookhaven is sponsoring federal legislation that will allow states to redirect unspent COVID-19 relief funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to award Child Opportunity Scholarships to parents so they can help their children recover learning losses as a result of school shutdowns due to the pandemic. The scholarships that are the focus of the Raising Expectations with Child Opportunity Vouchers for Educational Recovery (RECOVER) Act would be targeted for low-

income families to be used for educational opportunities, including tutoring services, private school tuition, books and other curriculum materials, testing fees and educational therapies for children with disabilities. States and school districts have not yet spent 93 percent of \$122 billion in ARPA funds allocated for education.

State C of C honored. The National Association of State Chambers has honored the Mississippi Economic Council (MEC) as the 2022 State Chamber of the Year. MEC – the State Chamber of Commerce – has been the voice of Mississippi business since 1949, and deals with broad issues to grow the state's economy through collaboration between top private and public sector leaders.

KDMC top performer. Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi has recognized Brookhaven-based King's Daughters Medical Center (KDMC) as one of four top-performing hospitals that are improving and ensuring quality healthcare in the state based on its Comprehensive Quality Model (CQM) which evaluates hospitals on patient safety, clinical quality and efficiency and health outcomes. BCBS also recognized North

Mississippi Medical Center at Tupelo, Baptist Memorial Hospital-North Mississippi at Oxford and Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson.

COVID scorecard. The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) reports total cases of COVID-19 have inched up to 927,465, with 12,912 deaths. MSDH also reports 52 percent of the state's population is fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and its variant viruses.

NEWS NUGGETS

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- 2014 Honda Accord EXL, V6, Leather, sunroof, Highway-miles, Bargain, Super Nice!
- 2010 Ford F150 XLT Super Cab, V8, PW, PL, Power Mirrors, Chrome side steps, come look!
- 2014 Ford Fusion SE, Leather, 36 MPG, Alloy Wheels, Bluetooth.
- 2007 Toyota Highlander, one owner, low miles, Cleanest one around, Don't miss this cream puff!
- 2014 Chevy Silverado Crew **SOLD!** 4, Lifted, Custom Wheels, Tuscany Pkg, Leather Buckets, Sharp!
- 2015 Chevy Silverado LT, Crew Cab, 4x4, Leather Buckets, Low mileage, Super nice!
- 2014 Ford Explorer XLT, 3rd Row Seat, Rear A/C, Power Seat, Family Size!
- 2012 Lexus RX 350, AWD, Leather, Sunroof, NAVI, Rear Camera, Clean, Like New!
- 2017 Malibu LT Sedan, 36 MPG, Pwr seat, windows, locks, mirrors, Rearview camera, Sharp!
- 2009 Chevy Avalanche, White LTZ, Sunroof, Leather, DVD, Sharp!
- 2014 RARE Find, E-Class 550, **SOLD!** Convertible, Low mileage, Super Nice!
- 2010 Chrysler Town and Country Touring with Low Mileage and Leather!
- 2014 Mercedes E350 Sedan, Black with Beige Leather, sunroof, Navi!
- 2013 GMC 3500 HD SLE Crew Cab 4x4, Only 104k Miles, PW, PL, Tilt, Cruise, Don't miss this one!
- 2010 Honda Accord EX- V6, Sunroof, Super low mileage, Nice!
- 2009 Chevy Avalance LTZ, Low miles, Sunroof, Leather, Sharp!
- 2007 Toyota Highlander, Low miles, Super well cared for, Like New!
- 2010 Dodge Ram 2500 Big Horn Mega Cab, Rare find, Low miles, Nice!
- 2014 Chevy Camaro LS, New tires, PW, PL, 6 cyl, great gas mileage, fun!
- 2008 Cadillac Escalade Luxury Package, Super low mileage, X-tra clean, chrome wheels, Sharp!
- 2012 Chevy Impala LTZ, Sunroof, Leather Buckets, Rear Spoiler, Nicest one around!
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Polly's garden



Special to Wesson News

Brittney Warren, third grade teacher at Wesson Attendance Center, recently requested assistance from the Wesson Garden Club to help in beautifying a space outside her classroom. The request resulted in the creation of a pollinator garden known as Polly's Garden. Polly has become the mascot of the Wesson Garden Club. Mrs. Warren, also a member of the Wesson Garden Club, has been instrumental in getting the students involved in taking care of the garden. Braylee Davis, a "plant doctor" for a week last month, and Rayne McManus are shown watering and caring for the plants and flowers in Polly's Garden. The Wesson Garden Club is a member of The Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc., National Garden Clubs, Inc., Deep South Garden Clubs, Inc., Natchez Trace District-Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc.