

## INSIDE:

Meet Your Neighbor.....	2
Golf Carts.....	5
Library.....	6
Area Arts.....	8
News Nuggets.....	9
Living Healthy.....	11
Sports Shorts.....	14
Page 13-21 online at <a href="http://www.WessonNews.com">www.WessonNews.com</a>	

# Wesson News

## SPOTLIGHT Legislative Work Remains

Page 10

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Volume 9, Number 4

*“Good News You Can Use”*

April 13, 2021

# Founders Day April 30 & May 1

Wesson News

Wesson Founders Day, along with a Crystal Springs flower show and a music festival at Hazlehurst, will bring some cabin fever relief to town folk, people throughout Copiah County and other Mississippians who venture into the area on April 30 and May 1.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused cancellation of the events in 2020.

Copiah County tourism director Nora Berch is encouraging area residents and visitors to enjoy the events in all three municipalities in a May Day Cruise Copiah County alternative to staying indoors, as



Wesson News

*New Founders Day queen will be presented.*

COVID 19 vaccines, masking and social distancing have advanced pandemic safety.

Wesson Founders Day starts at the town municipal park on the evening of Friday, April 30, with a concert presented by the Wesson High School band and a performance by dancers led by Sharon Langley.

The Wesson Chamber of Commerce event continues all day on Saturday, May 1, starting with a Glow Run/Walk. The run is in memory of two Copiah County police who have died this year -- Deputy Percy Calhoun of

*cont. on page 4*

# \$2 million plus coming to town

By Bob Arnold

The Mississippi legislature has designated more than \$2 million for Co-Lin and Wesson from \$145 million the state will receive in bond sales it has authorized to fund repair, renovation and construction at public universities and community colleges and earmarked for an assortment of projects in various districts.

The 2021 legislative session's bond bill includes \$86 million in bonds for capital projects at the state's universities, \$35 million for similar projects at community colleges and \$24 million for the varied district projects.

Co-Lin will get \$1.9 million from the funds designated for community colleges, and the town of Wesson will get at least \$300,000 from the district project funds for Old School Community Center renovations.

According to the bond bill, monies deposited into the fund for community colleges "shall be disbursed, in the discretion of the Department of Finance and Administration, to pay the costs of acquisition of real property, construction of new facilities, equipping

and furnishing facilities, including furniture and technology equipment and infrastructure, and addition to or renovation of existing facilities for community and junior college campuses as recommended by the Mississippi Community College Board."

Wesson Mayor Alton Shaw says funds for the Old School Community Center can be used as the town sees fit, but the priorities are a kitchen, the parking area, and HVAC controls.

Although the Mayor estimated the Old School Community Center will see \$300,000 for the rehabilitation project, an early draft of the bond bill showed \$1 million allocated for the facility's "restoration and renovation."

The bond bill is an important part of state funding. This year's appropriation for debt

service will be more than \$439 million, which is more than that for the Department of Corrections (more than \$323 million) or the Department of Mental Health's general fund appropriation (\$214 million).

State taxpayers owe more than \$4.634 billion in bond debt, according to the latest numbers from the state treasurer's office.



Wesson News

*Wesson Old School getting money from State bond bill.*

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# The world's most avid golfer

By Bob Arnold

If you're a golfer, chances are you have met Yancy Methvien on one of the nearby courses.

Methvien, a Brookhaven resident who has been called "the world's most avid golfer," holds the Guinness World Record for playing the most rounds of golf in a single year. In 2019, he earned the distinction, playing 911 rounds on mostly area links -- Brookhaven Country Club, Wolf Hollow at Co-Lin, Quail Hollow and Fernwood in Pike County and Duncan Park at Natchez, among others. He shunned golf carts, walking all the rounds, each about five miles.

A veteran who struggled with PTSD and depression following his military service and a divorce, Methvien took on the challenge as a therapy, to honor fellow veterans and demonstrate the healing benefits of golf to them.

"Golf is relaxing and has important mental health benefits," he relates. "It gets you outdoors into a variety of natural settings. It requires concentration that takes your mind off the world's distractions and problems and things that trouble you. And then there's the pleasure of hitting the ball." Veterans, he notes, have significant mental health issues that make suicides a major problem among them, and golf can make an important difference in their lives.

Born at Charity Hospital in Independence, Louisiana, Methvien settled with his father, an off-shore oilfield worker, and mother, a nurse, on McCall Creek in Franklin County at age six after a short life in Springfield, Louisiana. The creek, which flowed in the front yard of this Franklin County home toward the Bogue Chitto River, was his playground. He learned to swim there, and it wasn't exactly golf, but he recalls as a young boy knocking rocks with a bat into the creek. When he wasn't on the creek, baseball, which he continued playing into his years in the military, became his passion before he discovered golf.

In 1995, Methvien graduated from Franklin County High School, where he played baseball, was part of the school's first soccer team and a line-backer and running back on its football team. Co-Lin was his next stop, where he played soccer, served as manager of the baseball Wolves and received a degree in communications before embarking on his military career in the Mississippi Air National Guard. In 2005, he left the military for a year to care for his grandparents

back in Franklin County, and then joined the U.S. Coast Guard, serving from 2006 thru 2015.

When Tiger Woods won the Masters Tournament in 2005, golf started to become Methvien's consuming interest beyond his military service. "Tiger made it cool to play," he recalls. The sport was in his genes, too. "My grandmother -- Florence Murray Monroe -- loved golf and would have been good enough to compete in the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA)," says Methvien.



## MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

"She played on the old par 3 course at Quail Hollow in Pike County, where I started the game sixteen years ago."

Since leaving the military with a small pension that supports his living expenses, Methvien has been turning his passion into a business. A business management degree from Coastal Carolina University, which he earned in 2017, has added to his know-how.

His quest for the golf play Guinness World Record has connected him with people and organizations through invitations to events such as the PGA Merchandise Show, benefit tournaments like the New Orleans Golf Marathon and PGA events like the Masters Tournament. His sponsors include *Tee to Green* magazine, Blue Diamond Almonds, Titleist, Footjoy and Srixon. He has met and struck up friendships with golf pros, celebrity amateur golfers from other walks of life, golf equipment manufacturers and publishers -- people like pro golfers Nick Faldo, Greg Norman, John Daly, hockey great Grant Fuhr, football greats Drew Brees and Jerry Rice, actor Alfonso Ribeiro. All potential opportunities.

"Golf is one of the few sports you can play all your life," Methvien points out. "You meet people and doors open. At the same time, the PGA is one of the greatest charities with events that raise money for a lot of things in which I believe."

The COVID-19 pandemic last year has slowed Methvien's progress

into new ventures since 2019, but he would like to teach golf to beginners and intermediates and do some writing. Residing on Palmer Drive, just around the corner from Brookhaven Country Club, he hopes southwestern Mississippi golf courses will continue to be a part of his future.

### What are your hobbies?

Since I'm turning my hobby into a business, I am currently looking to music. I am into live music -- all kinds, but I am also interested in reproducing sound -- building speakers. I also want to compose music, utilizing computer technology. I want to do some writing, as well. Swimming and yard work also consume my spare time. Making contributions as an artist has become more important as I've grown older. But I'm also thinking about taking on another Guinness World Record challenge -- going down the Mississippi from source to mouth in a canoe, kayak or some other vessel. I realize this will be dangerous and will require a lot of research if I undertake it.

### Are you a reader?

My uncle promotes books, and I get copies covering different subjects and genres. Raw history, such as historical westerns, horror fiction and Greg Isles novels are my favorites. I also enjoy journalistic reporting.

### Do you enjoy movies or theater?

I acted when I was in high school and enjoy local talent and theater. I watch the films produced by local artist Travis Mill and am a fan of Brookhaven Little Theater, where I recall seeing performance of two favorites -- *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *Dracula*.

### What kind of music do you like?

I grew up in a music family. I like Motown, old school outlaw country, modern electronic sound and new hip hop.

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

I would take care of mom and dad first. Then I would go to Costa Rica or Puerto Rico to duck people who wanted to borrow money. After spending time in the tropics, I would return home and invest my winnings in a trust that paid me an income on which to live and that I could give to charities.

### How would you change the world?

I would work to make sure our nation used its vast resources to assure everyone had adequate food, shelter and healthcare. We have the resources and do not need to be greedy.



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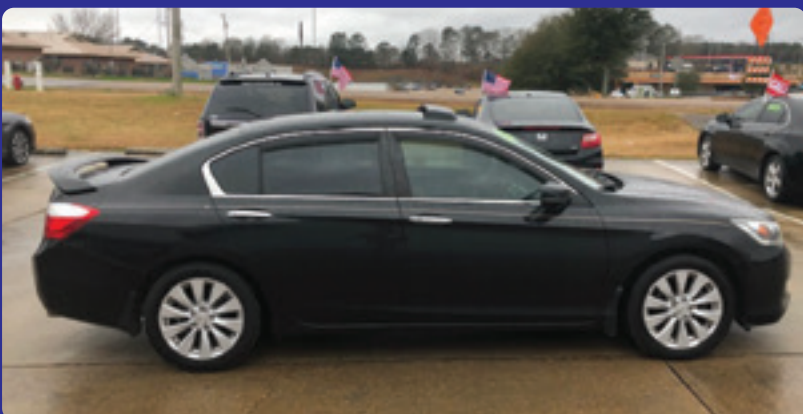
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## Funds allocated for traffic safety

Wesson News

Co-Lin will use \$873,594 awarded by the Mississippi Department of Transportation from Federal Transportation Alternative (TA) Program funds to help ensure the safety of college students, pedestrians, and the citizens of Wesson by constructing new sidewalks and adding speed tables on the Wesson Campus.

Co-Lin will be responsible for a 20 percent local fund match.

The primary areas for use of the funds are high traffic areas for vehicles and student walkers, including the area between Fortenberry Career-Technical Building and Stone Stadium. The direct route from the residence halls to Stone Stadium, Fortenberry building, and the Wesson Building, walked daily by hundreds of students, currently has no direct walking route that includes sidewalks.

The college is planning to remove and reposition the fence on the visitor's side of Stone Stadium and add sidewalks with lighting along the roadway. Speed tables will be added along that same road.

Not only will these funds assist the college in promoting student and visitor safety, but it

will also enhance campus health initiatives by providing well-lit pathways for walking around campus.

"Co-Lin is thrilled to be the recipient of these funds, which will be utilized to significantly enhance the many safety and wellness efforts already underway on the Wesson Campus," said Dr. Jane Hulon Sims, the college's president.

TA funds are federal transportation dollars that are for non-roadway types of improvements such as sidewalks, multiuse paths, pedestrian lighting and traffic calming. The funds flow through the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) Local Public Agency (LPA). LPA programs leverage local investments with federal funds for infrastructure improvements to enhance the quality of life for residents throughout Mississippi.

"This year, I am honored to provide these much-needed grants to our colleges, universities and small towns," said Commissioner Willie Simmons, Central Transportation District. "During these challenging times, safety is a concern that we must address, and these funds will assist them in this effort."

## Mill Town Mall

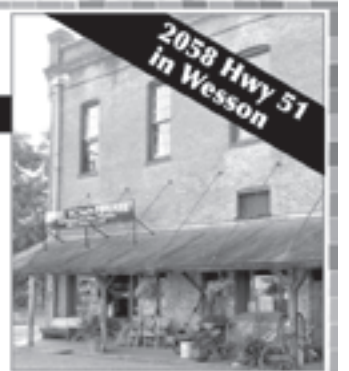
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cont. from page 1

# Founders Day April 30 & May 1

the Copiah County Sheriff's Office and Captain Joe Brown, formerly with the Wesson Police Department. It is called a "glow" run/walk because runners have been asked to glow in the dark as they run the route by wearing white shirts with glow necklaces, bracelets, and other items that will be provided, says event planner Stephanie Duguid.

Runners will begin and finish on Highway 51, with signs directing participants along the route. The fees are \$25 for the run/walk and \$15 for the one mile event. Commemorative t-shirts and medals, beverages and fruits will be sold. Specific details, route, event sign-up are all forthcoming. Contact Duguid at 601-643-8341 for information

There will be a variety of entertainment offered by bands and singers and others throughout the day, and the new Founders Day queen will be presented. Also featured will be:

- A kid's play zone with inflatables.
- An art walk with locals displaying paintings, sculptures, quilts and other works.
- A vendors row with arts, crafts and fleas and fleas on sales.
- Snacks, refreshments and meals.
- A car show.



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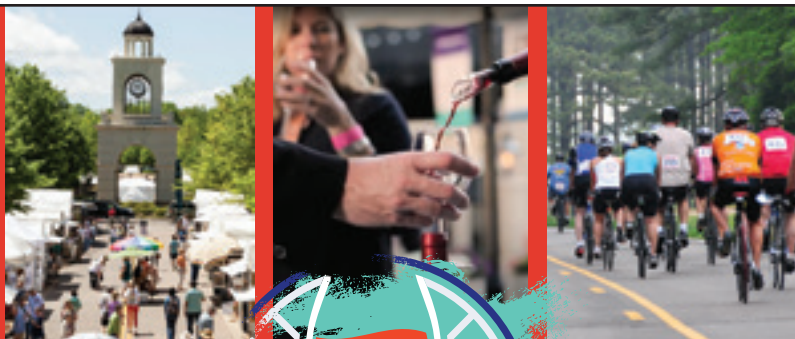
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## Golf cart ordinance in the works for Wesson



Special to Wesson News

### Wesson News

Wesson golfers and others may soon be able to drive their golf carts on public streets to the Wolf Hollow course at Co-Lin or to other town venues.

In the weeks ahead, Mayor Alton Shaw reports that town Aldermen will be considering an ordinance to be drafted in accordance with a new state law to allow local drivers to use golf carts and other low-speed vehicles on town streets.

During the 2021 legislative session, lawmakers approved and the Governor signed an act to authorize the governing authorities of municipalities to allow the operation of golf carts and low-speed vehicles on certain public roads and streets within the municipality. The act requires individuals operating a golf cart or low-speed vehicle to have a valid driver's license or temporary driver's permit and proof of financial responsibility. It also requires registration of golf carts and low-speed vehicles used on public roads. The act does not pertain to ATVs, Mayor Shaw emphasized.

Over the years, several Mississippi municipalities have passed ordinances friendly to golf carts in the absence of any

concrete state laws. Among them are Bay St. Louis, Clinton, Diamondhead, Long Beach, Ocean Springs, Pass Christian, Pascagoula and Waveland.

The Ocean Springs ordinance allows golf carts to drive on public roads alongside cars, provided the carts include a variety of safety features and stick to roads with a maximum speed limit of 30 MPH. The required safety features include headlights, taillights, brake lights, rear-view mirror, seat belts, turn signals, windshield, parking brake, and side reflectors.

The Clinton ordinance specifies where the golf carts may be driven, prohibiting them on freeways, limited access roads, principal arterial streets and some minor arterial streets. Drivers must operate the vehicles on the outside lanes of multilane streets and roads, and they must have a valid driver's license and insurance. Vehicles on the roads from dusk to dawn must have working headlights and tail lights.

"We have been approached by owners of golf carts and low-speed vehicles who want to use them on Wesson's public roads," Mayor Shaw explained. "We are responding."

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# Library returning to renovated home



Wesson News

## Wesson News

Wesson Public Library is coming home.

The nearly year-long rehabilitation and renovation of the library building on Spring Street across from City Hall is complete, and books and equipment are being moved back into the old home with expanded space – a new look from a temporary home at the Old School Community Center.

"The facility should be ready to reopen by the end of the month," says Wesson Mayor Alton Shaw.

The cost of the project, including planning and construction, was \$443,801, with an additional \$128,801 awarded by the Mississippi

Development Authority for the work after it was derailed when initial bids exceeded the original \$315,000 provided by an MDA grant to the town. The total grant monies were provided through Americans with Disability Act (ADA) funding.

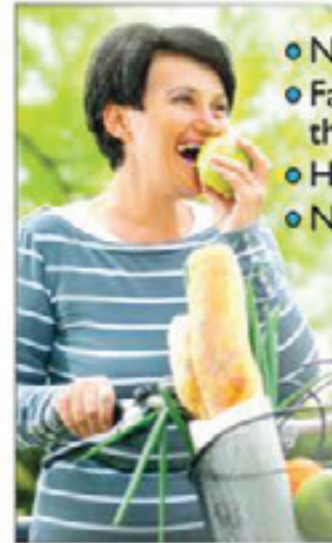
Following receipt of the initial bids, the town asked MDA for the additional funds, which were awarded in a supplemental grant.

The public library renovation work encompassed:

- . A new facade
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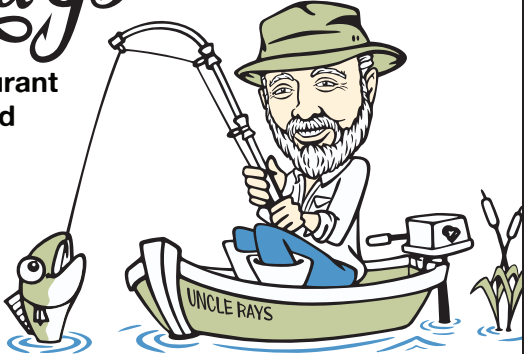
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# In-person arts events returning at last



Quilters displayed works at Hazlehurst.

Special to Wesson News



Window display at Hazlehurst.

Special to Wesson News

By Guest Columnist R. Shaw Furlow

Nearly six years ago, when I was asked to write a monthly column about the arts for the *Wesson News*, I didn't think there was enough material about which I could write every month. I thought maybe an occasional column as a guest writer would be better. I was convinced to give it a try. I've learned a lot and have had good advice and countenance from my editor. Trying to turn a 300-word story into a 700-word article is harder than a thousand word story. For the most part, however, it has been fun.

Now, I am no news writer. I've never been on a school newspaper staff. The only reason I knew the lingo was because my friend Tricia Walker's mother was an owner/publisher/editor/columnist of a local newspaper when I was at Co-Lin. She let me fold papers in a hot press room, where I recall four machines, including the press, all running, carrying out their particular function, producing a rather percussive sound that caught my attention. When all the old machines were working, I found the rhythms relaxing. My brother and his wife were also in the newspaper business during their entire lives.

Over the last twelve months, I've missed the pleasure of covering in-person arts events. I've written eight columns about virtual concerts, a drive-through art show, which really was cool, and conferences that had to go virtual for safety's sake. I've written about musicians, actors, stage hands and others who bring us the arts being out of work. Trucks and buses that transport big shows are sitting idle in lots. I follow a few roadies and stagehands, and I can tell you, these folks are bored and need to go back to work.

At last, it now gives me pleasure to write about some events that will be in-person.

Hazlehurst is once again sponsoring an art walk-through in its downtown area and in local bank lobbies and offices. More than fifty Copiah County artists will be displaying their work in windows easily accessible by taking the walking tour.

One of my personal favorites is photographer Ben Foy. I called him a photographer, but "artist" describes what he does much better. He has



Wesson News



photographed old barns and churches that jump off the page. I could use the same camera and get a picture of a barn, but Foy makes art. You can view his work at Allred's pharmacy.

A new Hazlehurst business is the Groom Room, which will feature the works of Sheila Sanders focused on animals. What else at a pet grooming business?

Moving to the corner and east on Gallatin Street will bring walkers to Luv's Coffee Bistro, a recently renovated antique store. The windows display gorgeous quilts and needle work by Susan For, Connie Anderson and Mary Rutledge.

A former jewelry store houses intriguing miniatures from an antique store and the old Rockport Store lovingly created from reclaimed wood from the now dilapidated building. Darlene Corr has recreated most unique structures complete with electric lights from her childhood memories.

The Rockin Railroad Festival on May 1 will end the month devoted to the arts. This festival is always well attended, and the folks on stage have fun. Headlining it this year is a former Copiah Countian who is making her way in the tough world of *American Idol*. Tatum Henry, 18, who now lives

in Ridgeland, has earned The Golden Ticket, which sends her to Hollywood and a live performance on the popular television show. *American Idol* introduced now superstars Kelly Clarkson, Carrie Underwood and a long list of others. Good luck, Tatum.

Also performing at the festival is the ever-entertaining Babs Wood. Another crowd favorite is Zach Day.

The music starts at 10:30 a.m., and Henry appears from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. On May 1, stop by the Mississippi Music Museum located in the old train depot. It's a great place with unique exhibits.

In the coming months, I will be writing about other in-person events, with the return of Brookstock and the Overbrook Songwriters Festival. Until then, get outside, wear a mask and hit the streets. It's spring in Mississippi. Support the arts, my friends. Local artists are ready to bust loose after the year they've had.

**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.



# Award-winner, COVID victim & vaccinations

Special to Wesson News

**Wesson student award-winner.** Mississippi School of the Arts 2019 graduate Katherine Dina Westbrook from Wesson has won the \$350 third place prize and People's Choice award in an innovative pitch contest at the University of Iowa. In the UI contest, students shared innovative ideas on short videos describing problems and proposed solutions. Westbrook, who submitted her entry in the Creative Concepts category, pitched programmable wallpaper. Her video can be viewed at [www.iowajpec.org/events-competition/ideas-torm-winners](http://www.iowajpec.org/events-competition/ideas-torm-winners). She is the daughter of Sara and Chase Westbrook.

**COVID-19 victim.** Joe Brown, a former captain who served with the Wesson Police Department (WPD), has died from complications of COVID-19. Brown served WPD from 2006 to 2020. "Joe and I graduated from high school in Wesson," WPD Chief Chad O'Quinn said. "He was a fellow Army veteran who served in Iraq. He will be greatly missed."

**Wicker pushes larger Navy.** America needs an armada of new ships to guarantee freedom of the seas and deter the possibility of war, asserts Mississippi U.S. Senator Roger Wicker. China now has the world's largest navy and is projecting its power across the Pacific, threatening the free flow of commerce and undermining the stability of its neighbors, like Taiwan, he says. Meanwhile, to the north, the U.S. Coast Guard is losing influence in the Arctic Ocean, where Russia's fleet of polar icebreakers outnumbers ours 40-2. China has about 350 navy ships compared to the U.S. Navy's 298 vessels, and Russia has plans to construct a dozen new icebreakers over the next decade. "If we do not ramp up shipbuilding dramatically, it will be more and more difficult to prevent a future conflict with our adversaries," Wicker warns.

**Signing up for vaccination.** If you are at least 16 years old in

Mississippi, you can now sign up for a COVID-19 vaccination appointment. Vaccination sites include hospitals, community health centers, private clinics and state-run drive-thru locations throughout the state. You can sign up for vaccinations through [covidvaccine.umc.edu](http://covidvaccine.umc.edu) or by calling 877-978-6453, the federal pharmacy program, which includes more than 30 Walmart pharmacies across Mississippi, and CVS by setting an appointment at its website, calling CVS Customer Service (800-746-7287) or texting COVID to - 287-898. Get more information about vaccination sites on the Mississippi State Department of Health's website.

**COVID-19 Center of Excellence.** King's Daughter Medical Center in Brookhaven is among 33 healthcare facilities named by the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) as COVID-19 Centers of Excellence for their commitment to responding to the pandemic virus in their communities. To be designated as a Center of Excellence, a health care provider must agree to administer the COVID-19 vaccine to eligible members of their communities; serve as a referral location for COVID-19 monoclonal antibody treatment (a therapeutic infusion to reduce the severity of the disease); and address disparities in vaccination access in their communities.

**Housing subdivision taking applications.** The Mill Creek affordable housing subdivision off South First Street in Brookhaven is now accepting applications. The privately-owned neighborhood features three-bedroom/two bathroom single family homes equipped with energy efficient green appliances -- oven, dishwasher, range, refrigerator, washer/dryer. Homes are smoke-free and no pets are allowed. It has an onsite business center, playground and exterior security. Maximum rents are \$973 gross and \$823 net. Applicant household income cannot exceed Housing and Urban Development limits -- \$37,380 for a family of four.

**NEWS  
NUGGETS**

# Wesson student gets writing awards



Wesson News

A Wesson student at the Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) has received awards in the 2021 Scholastic Writing Competition.

Diego Mendez, an MSA junior from Wesson, is among the talented young artists receiving American Voices Nominations, Gold Keys, Silver Keys, and Honorable Mentions who will be recognized at an awards ceremony at the Eudora Welty House in Jackson, Mississippi.

Mendez received four Silver Keys and one Honorable Mention. In total, MSA students received one American Voices Nomination, 11 Gold Keys, 39 Silver Keys, 28 Honorable Mention awards and four Silver and 3 Honorable Mention awards for their Senior Portfolios.

Students from all over Mississippi competed in the Mississippi Regional in critical essays, dramatic scripts, flash fiction, humor, journalism, novel writing, personal essays and memoirs, poetry, science fiction and fantasy and short stories; and for seniors only, writing portfolios. The submissions are juried by artists in the field. Among the thousands of writings submitted, only a small percentage will go to the national level. Jurors look for works that exemplify the core values of the awards program -- originality, technical skill, and the emergence of personal voice or vision. American

Voices (which are the top five in the competition) and Gold Key recipients will advance to the national competition.

MSA is a public statewide eleventh and twelfth grade residential high school located in Brookhaven on the Historic Whitworth College campus. MSA is for those students who want to explore the arts in an extraordinary way and fills a special need for students with demonstrated talent that need a collegiate level learning experience in the arts that is not widely available across Mississippi. Tenth graders who are interested in visual arts, dance, theatre, vocal music, literary arts or filmmaking must apply online by April 16. The process for admission to MSA includes an on-line application, a virtual audition and interview. Accepted students attend their Junior and Senior years of high school at MSA. The school will be holding Round 2 Auditions for its 2021-22 school year in all areas. All auditions will be virtual. Applications are available at [www.msabrookhaven.org](http://www.msabrookhaven.org).

MSA students consistently win awards for their work on the state, regional and national levels, hold the #2 highest ACT average in the state, and enjoy an array of college scholarship opportunities. For additional information and an application, visit [www.msabrookhaven.org](http://www.msabrookhaven.org) or email [admissions@msabrookhaven.org](mailto:admissions@msabrookhaven.org).



# Work remains as Legislature adjourns

Wesson News

As April dawned, the Mississippi Legislature's 2021 session closed with a few accomplishments and much work unfinished.

Among the accomplishments were a \$1,000 teacher pay raise and setting a budget without the cuts of past years.

Notably, House Speaker Phillip Gunn's plan to eliminate the state personal income tax and increase sales taxes — which Gunn has repeatedly called the most important legislation he's ever dealt with — died without even a hearing in the Senate. The House also killed one of Lt. Gov. Delbert Hosemann's top-priorities: an overhaul of the state's economic development incentives used to lure businesses or help them expand.

The Senate GOP expended much energy to pass a legislative-controlled medical marijuana program, an alternative to the program passed by voters in November,



Special to Wesson News

or a "backstop" should a legal challenge to the marijuana voter initiative prove successful. The House rejected it. The House unsuccessfully proposed removing Medicaid from the governor's authority, without the Senate on board for such a

huge policy change. The Senate attempted to take lottery funds from state transportation and give it to local governments, undoing the work of a monumental special session in 2018. The House wasn't onboard with that major shift.

It remains to be seen whether Governor Reeves will break out his veto stamp like he did last year — resulting in recriminations from GOP legislative leaders, an unsuccessful legal challenge from Gunn over the governor's authority and much dead legislation.

In their post-session debriefing with the press, Gunn and Hosemann appeared to diverge on a perennial issue: Whether Mississippi, the poorest state in the nation, should expand Medicaid — with the federal government footing most of the bill — to provide health care to hundreds of thousands of working-poor uninsured people and help the state's struggling hospitals. "I am not open to Medicaid expansion," Gunn said. "We cannot afford it, and there are numerous other reasons ... Taxpayers cannot afford it." Hosemann said: "We have to look in Mississippi at the delivery of health care. That is important."

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Excerpted from Mississippi Today report.*

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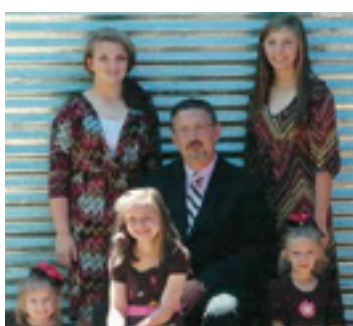
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# Taking time to conquer stress

By Guest Columnist Dr. Stephanie Duguid

Stress happens. Sometimes it's unavoidable, at times it's unbearable. That's why taking time for yourself is a necessity.

National Stress Awareness Month is a good chance to take a deep breath and relax. Stress does not merely afflict your mind; it can also affect you on a cellular level. In fact, long-term stress can lead to a wide range of illnesses – from headaches to stomach disorders to depression – and can even increase the risk of serious conditions like stroke and heart disease.

The sympathetic stress response is a survival mechanism that's "hard wired" into our nervous systems. This automatic response is necessary for mobilizing quick reflexes when there is imminent danger, such as swerving to avoid a car crash. When you perceive a threat, stress hormones rush into your bloodstream -- increasing heart rate, blood pressure, and glucose levels. Other hormones also suppress functions like digestion and the immune system, which is one of the reasons why chronic stress can leave you more vulnerable to illness. Danger triggers the stress response – but, unfortunately, so can work conflicts, worry over debt, bad memories, or anxiety. Although one bad day at work won't compromise your health, weeks or months of stress can dampen your immune response and raise your risk for disease.

If you suffer from chronic stress and can't influence or change the situation, then you'll need to change your approach. Be willing to be flexible. Remember, you have the ability to choose your response to stressors, and you may have to try various options. So here is a list of positive ways to respond to the



stress in your life and keep your own stress levels in check.

**1. Make up your mind to get and/or stay healthy.** Taking control of your personal health can make a great difference in the amount of stress you feel. The best way to reclaim control of your life is by taking charge of your body. Whether it is through diet, exercise, or simply getting that checkup you've been putting off, let April be the month you put yourself back in control.

**2. Make a change.** It can be as simple as clearing the clutter off your desk or as elaborate as taking a well-deserved vacation, the important thing is that you do something different. Even a small change can make a big difference when it comes to stress.

**3. Focus on now.** Most folks live their entire lives in yesterday or tomorrow. In truth, however, there is only NOW. Focusing on this perfect moment, right now, provides a magical

escape from the disappointment of what once was and the fear of what might be, and leaves stress stuck in a time warp.

**4. Talk to yourself.** Sometimes a good pep talk is all that is needed to keep stress at bay. Maybe it is high time you gave yourself one by affirming what is right with your life instead of dwelling on what's wrong.

**5. Get the giggles.** It's true; laughter really is the best medicine. Watch a funny show or video, or



tell a funny joke. Whatever it takes, give yourself time for laughter each and every day.

**6. Meditate.** A still mind is a

stress-free mind, so take a deep breath, quiet your thoughts and let the stress melt away. Even ten minutes of meditation done daily for the next 30 days will do wonders for releasing stress in your life.

**7. Keep a happiness journal.** Every evening for the next 30 days spend a few minutes reflecting on the day you just experienced and list five things about the day that delighted you.

**8. Put a positive spin on it.** No matter what challenge you may be facing, do your best to think about it positively, and then let that new positive mindset become your focal point.

**9. Help someone else.** Sometimes the best way to deal with stress is by providing relief to someone else. Putting your focus on others takes the focus off your own challenges, leading to less rumination and stress. So look around you, see who needs a hand, and then offer yours.

While you can't avoid stress, you can minimize it by changing how you choose to respond to it. The ultimate reward for your efforts is a healthy, balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun.

*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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## Container gardening demo



Wesson News

Wesson Garden Club member Alana Hughes discussed and demonstrated container gardening methods at the March meeting of the organization. Her audience included fellow members Sonya Cowen, Robin Furr, Rhonda Ishee, Denise Jackson, Camille Johnston, June Owens, Pam Owens, Jennifer Peets, Joy Phillips, Jean Ricks, Debbie Smith, Lisa Smith, Nikki Smith, and Dixie Thornton. Hostesses providing delicious refreshments were Sonya Cowen, Robin Furr, and Rhonda Ishee. The Wesson Garden Club is a member of The Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc. and The National Garden Clubs, Inc. The next meeting of the club is April 20, 2021, at Wesson Baptist Church.

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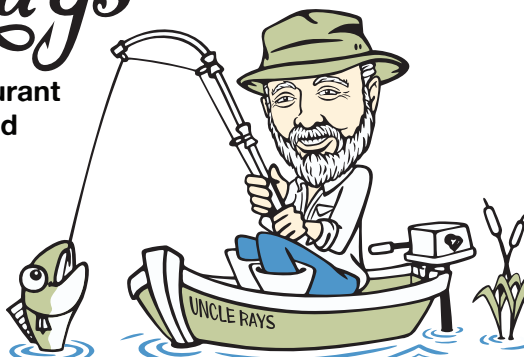


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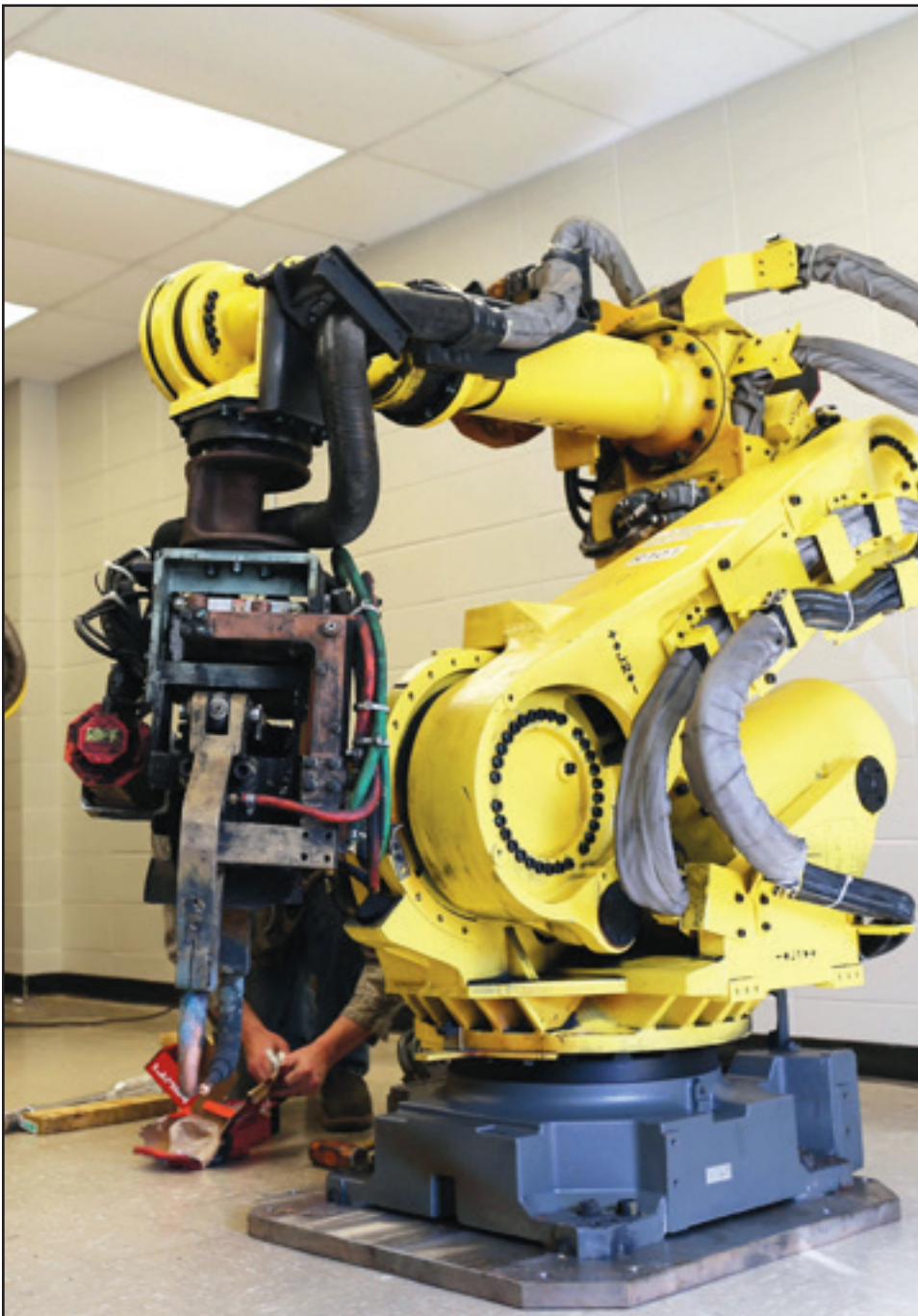
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## Co-Lin receives Nissan robots



Special to Wesson News

### Wesson News

Two FANUC robots and control panels valued at nearly a quarter of a million dollars, generously donated by Nissan Canton, have been delivered and installed on the Wesson campus for Co-Lin's Automation and Control Technology program.

Co-Lin is the only community college in Mississippi with robots of this caliber.

"I am so grateful for our partnership with Nissan Canton," says Mandy Case, Co-Lin Automation & Control Program Coordinator. "This donation will set our amazing students up for even greater success by broadening their skill set."

For students interested in a career in automation, robotics, industrial maintenance, engineering, electrical technology, or electronics, Co-Lin is a great starting point for a rewarding career, Case says.

Thanks to Co-Lin's strong partnership with Nissan Canton, graduates of the college have often found excellent employment opportunities at Nissan, she adds.

To schedule a tour of the college's Automation & Control Engineering Technology facilities, contact Mandy Case at [mandy.case@colin.edu](mailto:mandy.case@colin.edu). For more information about any of Co-Lin's Career-Tech programs, contact our Career-Technical Counselor at 601-643-8324.



# Wolves hoops & golf, Lions benefit

Special to Wesson News

Co-Lin's basketball season for its men and ladies teams both concluded at tournaments, but ended quickly.

The Co-Lin Wolf men fell to the Baton Rouge Community College Bears 75-59 in the first round of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Region 23 Basketball Tournament. The Wolves (3-10, 2-9) never led in the contest. With 3:20 left in the first half, the Bears held a 33-22 lead, but Co-Lin cut the lead to 36-31 at half time on a 9-3 run. In the second half, the Wolves cut the lead to 41-39 with 15 minutes left in the game, but Co-Lin couldn't recover after the Bears went on a 21-6 run with 7:39 remaining.

Freshman Dee Merriweather (Memphis, TN/East Memphis High School) led the Wolves with a double-double, 15 points and 10 rebounds. AJ Wansley (Byrum/Terry High School) chipped in 10 points.

Meanwhile, Ja'Mia Hollings scored a game high 24 points to lead the number six seeded East Mississippi Community College Lady Lions over the No. 11 Co-Lin Lady Wolves 69-49 in the first round of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Region 23 Basketball Tournament held in Scooba. The Lady Wolves finished their season with a 5-9 record.

East Mississippi jumped out to a 19-9 lead at the end of the first quarter, and the Lady Wolves could only muster 18 points in the first half. Although Co-Lin scored more points in the second half, they could not make up any ground. Co-Lin shot 31 percent from the field compared to East Mississippi which shot 41 percent. The Lady



Lions scored 26 points off Co-Lin turnovers. The only other Lady Lion in double figures was Shakira Wilson with 11 points. Hollings and Amiyah Staples had seven rebounds apiece. The Lady Wolves were led by Derrica Gilbert with 17 points. Aniya Sanders followed with 12 points and six rebounds. Jaklyiah Esco pulled down six boards.

**Golfers in fourth place.** The Co-Lin Wolves are currently in fourth place after the first round of the Mississippi Association of Community College Conference's (MACCC) golf Event #6 hosted by Southwest Mississippi Community College at Quail Hollow Golf Club. Meridian Community College is leading after the first round with a score of 292 followed

by Mississippi Gulf Coast (294), Northeast Mississippi (298) and Co-Lin (313). Southwest Mississippi, Itawamba and Hinds (326) shot 319, 323 and 326 respectively.

Individually, Co-Lin's Landon

(Murray High School) are tied for 15th place after shooting 77. Nick Davis (Catholic High School) is tied for 21st place after shooting a 78. Rounding out the scoring is Ty Nelson (Lawrence County High School) at 83 and Seth Beall (Purvis High School) at 84. Co-Lin will play in the MACJC State Championship on April 19-20 at Northwood Country Club in Meridian.

**Lions tournament.** The Terry Lions Club is sponsoring a Golf Tournament April 17 at Eagle Ridge Golf Course in Raymond, MS. It will be a 4-man scramble with a shotgun start at 9 am. Those interested in playing can contact Lion Monty Wilson at [monty\\_wilson@hotmail.com](mailto:monty_wilson@hotmail.com) or 601-259-9354.



Nobles (Alexandria High School, Louisiana) shot 75 that ties him for eighth place. Ty Brewer (Wesson High School) and Jordan Davis

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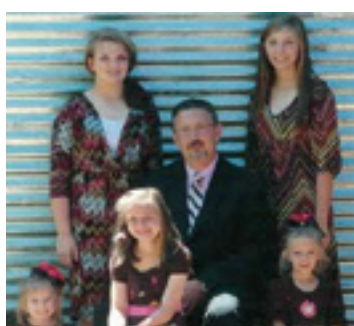
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# Co-Lin prepares for traditional classes



Wesson News

Co-Lin plans to return to traditional, face-to-face classes and offer a host of student life activities during the Fall 2021 semester, all while keeping health and safety a top priority.

A wealth of online class options will continue to be available for students more comfortable in a virtual learning environment.

“While we are proud of the high academic standards maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Co-

Lin family has greatly missed the opportunity to participate in on campus events and student life activities that are a vibrant aspect of the full college experience,” says Dr. Jane Hulon Sims, Co-Lin President. “We are ready to have all our students back on

campus, safely, in the fall.”

Co-Lin will continue to monitor COVID-19 trends and CDC guidelines to keep the appropriate protocols for student, faculty, and staff safety in place. Prospective students can apply online now at [www.colin.edu/apply](http://www.colin.edu/apply).

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# Co-Lin art students win state awards



Wesson News

Five Co-Lin art students have won awards in the Mississippi Community College State Art Competition (MCCSAC). Winners (left to right) are Elizabeth McPhail of Jayess, second place computer arts; Cherise Mann of Biloxi, honorable mention computer arts; Melanie Griffin of Monticello, first place ceramics; Heather Martin of Sontag, second place ceramics; and Faith Pearce of Magee, first place printmaking. For more information about Co-Lin's art department visit [www.colin.edu/majors-programs/academics/fine-arts](http://www.colin.edu/majors-programs/academics/fine-arts) or contact [janet.smith@colin.edu](mailto:janet.smith@colin.edu) or [chris.brady@colin.edu](mailto:chris.brady@colin.edu).



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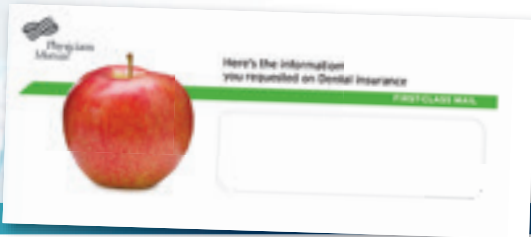
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# Co-Lin students on academic team

*Special to Wesson News*

Two Co-Lin sophomores have been recognized as part of the 2021 Coca-Cola Academic Team.

Morgan McCray of Ridgeland has been named a

Kappa to make it possible for deserving students to achieve their educational goals.”

Students are nominated for the academic team by their college administrators.



Morgan McCray

Wesson News



Elizabeth Stogner

Wesson News

Coca-Cola Academic Team Silver Scholar and will receive a \$1,250 scholarship. Elizabeth Stogner of Bogue Chitto has been named a Coca-Cola Academic Team Bronze Scholar and will receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation sponsors the Coca-Cola Academic Team program by recognizing 50 Gold, 50 Silver, and 50 Bronze Scholars with nearly \$200,000 in scholarships annually. Each scholar also receives a commemorative medallion.

“The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation has a long history of providing financial assistance to outstanding students at community colleges,” said Jane Hale Hopkins, President of the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation. “We are proud to partner with Phi Theta

Selection is based on academic achievement, leadership, and engagement in college and community service.

“We thank the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation for recognizing these student leaders and for investing in their futures,” said Dr. Lynn Tincher-Ladner, President and CEO of Phi Theta Kappa. “Scholarships like these are integral to the success of these students in reaching their educational and career goals.”

Phi Theta Kappa is the premier honor society recognizing the academic achievement of community college students and helping them to grow as scholars and leaders. The Society is made up of more than 3.5 million members and nearly 1,300 chapters in 10 nations. Learn more at [ptk.org](http://ptk.org).



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## MSA application deadline April 16

*Special to Wesson News*

The Mississippi School of the Arts (MSA) will hold Round 2 virtual Auditions for the 2021-22 school year in all its specialty areas following the April 16 application deadline for high school tenth- graders.

The MSA admission process includes an on-line application, the virtual auditions and interviews.

Students accepted for MSA studies attend their junior and senior years of high school at the school located in Brookhaven. Tenth-graders who might be interested in studying visual arts, dance, theatre, vocal music, literary arts or filmmaking can apply and start the MSA admissions process at [www.msabrookhaven.org](http://www.msabrookhaven.org).

MSA is a public statewide eleventh and twelfth grade residential high school located the historic Whitworth College campus at Brookhaven.

The school is for students who want to explore the arts in an extraordinary way, filling



*Special to Wesson News*

a special need for students with demonstrated talent who need a collegiate level learning experience in the arts that is not widely available across the state.

MSA students consistently win awards for their work on the state, regional and national levels. They have the second highest ACT average in the state and significant scholarship opportunities are available for graduating seniors.

For additional information and the MSA application, visit [www.msabrookhaven.org](http://www.msabrookhaven.org) or email [admissions@msabrookhaven.org](mailto:admissions@msabrookhaven.org).

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# Nothing good comes from mulch volcanoes

By Guest Columnist Gary R. Bachman

With glorious weather returning, many gardeners, like myself, are putting down fresh layers of mulch. It is roughly the equivalent of applying a fresh coat of paint in the house. Like paint, there's a variety of mulch colors available. It is an easy way to make the landscape look great.

The big home improvement stores have had bagged mulch on sale the last couple of weeks. Gardeners have also stocked up, waiting for that first nice weekend. But you can get a little overzealous in your mulching habits. Not all mulching is the same.

Over-mulching of landscape trees is perhaps the most visual instance of over-fertilizing, creating what are commonly called "mulch volcanoes." When a thick layer of mulch is spread around the trunk of a tree, many things can happen, and they're all bad.



Two to three inches of mulch is best for trees.

A good rule to remember is to always go out with mulch, not up. In other words, spread mulch horizontally and don't pile it up against the trunk. Use a rake or pull the mulch back away from the trunk by hand. As the mulch is pulled back, contour it to resemble a bowl. This configuration helps

collect water and direct it towards the root system of the tree during rain or irrigation.

Proper mulching provides so many great benefits to our landscape planting: It helps maintain soil temperatures, warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer, reduces weed seed germination and soil

compaction and adds aesthetic beauty to your landscape beds.

Most gardeners love their trees and shrubs and want to do what they can to help them grow and prosper. But you can kill your trees and shrubs with kindness. There are gardeners who think if 2 to 3 inches are good, then 6 to 10 must be great. Don't do that!

The depth of the mulch layer depends on the plant. Annual bedding plants need only 1 to 2 inches. Woody shrubs and roses are longer term plantings and benefit from 2 to 3 inches. Trees like a thicker layer in the 3- to 4-inch range.

*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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