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Wesson News

SPOTLIGHT

Country Music

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Volume 11, Number 1

“Good News You Can Use”

January, 2023

Lake Lincoln prepares for a big year

By Bob Arnold

Celebrating its 39th birthday this year, Lake Lincoln State Park is expecting to draw up to 16,000 visitors to the Wesson area during 2023.

Over nearly four decades, visitors have continued to grow as the park's peak season has, increasingly, started earlier and stretched further into the fall. While once used mostly by folk from southwest Mississippi, Louisianans now make up the majority of those who stay for a week or more at the park's 71 camp sites, three cottages and one cabin. Day visitors, including individuals and members of scouting, church and civic and service organizations, enjoy the park facilities, as well. Campers from Australia, Canada, France and Germany, among other nations outside the U.S., add an international flare to the crowds.

“During our busy season, upwards of 300 persons stay in the park every week,” says park Clerk Rebecca Thigpin, who manages day-to-day operations. “On weekends, we operate at full capacity. We're at about two thirds of capacity on weekdays. During the off-season, we come down to about one-quarter of capacity. If the weather is good, we have fishermen in the park every day.”

The park is open 24/7 throughout the year, with the exception of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years days.

"Fishing is always nice," Thigpin says. "A 47-pound catfish and 12-pound bass are not uncommon catches. Watch out for the alligators, however!"

The cold weather around the Christmas holidays curbed the customary spike in park use at the end of its slowest time of year during the four weeks after Thanksgiving, but traffic is building with the dawn of the new year.

Mardi Gras in early March will mark the beginning of the park's busy season,

cont. on page 3



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Campers can choose premium lake front sites fully equipped with water, electricity and sewage facilities, other fully equipped sites, standard sites with only water and electricity and primitive sites for tents.



Special to Wesson News

Three cottages and a cabin appeal to people who want to live like they are at home.



Special to Wesson News

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Special to Wesson News

Playground facilities for kids.



Special to Wesson News

Pavilions offer picnic facilities for groups.



Special to Wesson News

Co-Lin has highest graduation rate

Special to Wesson News

In a recent report released by University HQ for the Best Associate Degree Colleges in Mississippi, Copiah-Lincoln Community College has the highest graduation rate of any Mississippi community college at 51 percent.

Additionally, Co-Lin was ranked the No. 2 Mississippi community college overall based on its cost of tuition, admission and retention rates, graduation rates, number of programs offered, online programs offered, loan default rate, diplomas awarded, and number of students receiving financial aid.

Co-Lin offers both academic and career-technical education on all three campuses, as well as programs that can be completed fully online. Tour Co-Lin virtually at www.colin.edu/tour.

See the full list of rankings here: <https://universityhq.org/best-colleges/mississippi/#associate>





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Myra Morgan: landmark store owner

By Bob Arnold

Back in the 1990s when you wanted to find out what was going on in the Wesson area, you would start your day with a morning trip to the lake store across from the entrance to Lake Lincoln park on Sunset Road for coffee and maybe a small or big breakfast, but mostly for conversation and sharing news with other locals also seeking to keep up on happenings.

At 88 years old, just down the road from the eatery, convenience store and bait shop she established, Myra Morgan recalls those days at her mobile home, which she has fashioned as a cozy little cottage. Owners of the landmark have come and gone since Morgan managed it, but have not quite managed it as successfully, although she is around as a consultant for anyone who will listen to her, and she remains hopeful that the tradition she left will be resurrected.

Myra grew up on Morgan Road off Mission Hill Road, and attended the old Heucks Retreat School, where 250 students received their education in grades one to twelve. She married Bill Morgan in 1952 just before her high school graduation, but stayed on to earn her diploma after her father gave her \$100 to finish her studies.

She and Bill promptly left the Wesson area to make a life in Texas when she graduated. Myra worked in a furniture store at Beaumont and operated music stores in Houston and Dallas that sold eight-track tapes. Bill worked for United Gas Company, while forging a career in country music as a performer and song writer. He played with county legend George Jones throughout the Lone Star State and recorded in Nashville. They also had one daughter, Debbie.

Some 20 years later, Myra wanted to come home to be with her parents in Mississippi, and persuaded Bill to return to the Wesson area with her in 1970. Bill transplanted his country music career to Mississippi, and for 20 years they operated Debbie's Tape and Record shop, named for their daughter, in Lincoln Plaza at Brookhaven.

Meanwhile, their daughter Debbie and her husband purchased the lake store across from Lake Lincoln park. Myra, now seasoned with some 40 years of business experience, bought it from them in 1992, believing that she could effectively exploit the potential of tailoring it to Lincoln County residents, Co-Lin students, faculty and staff; and Lake Lincoln campers.

"We cleaned the place up, remodeled it, and focused on building its restaurant business," she recalls. "We offered breakfasts, lunches and dinners." Not only did it become a popular breakfast site, but worshippers after church services on Sundays enjoyed its country style meals. "We served 176 persons on one Mothers' Day," she says.

Between 1992 and 2004, she bought and sold the lake store three times, and it has changed ownership nine times. "People have seen its potential, but haven't always had their hearts in the business," she says. "I loved the people I met there, and serving customers."

Today from her little cottage two doors down the road, Myra watches the lake store hopefully under an owner who, she says, seems dedicated and committed



Wesson News

Myra Morgan with woodcrafted furniture piece.

to making it work, and is a knowledgeable businessman.

Myra lives with Lil' Man, her 12-year-old dog, and often sees her three grandchildren – Jeremy Blakeney, 49, an offshore oil worker; Brandy Myers, 41, a Brookhaven educator; and Dusty Gerald, 39, who lives in Hattiesburg; five great grandchildren and one great grandchild. She also enjoys visits from neighbors and the owner and workers at the lake store, now called Uncle Ray's. Her daughter perished in a 2003 automobile accident and her husband died in May 2010.

What are your hobbies?

For many years, I did oil painting. After my husband died, I started using his woodworking tools to make home furnishings and décor, but my shoulder is a problem now. I also enjoy my family, and I am a member of Mission Hill Baptist Church.

Are you a reader?

I read cookbooks, and like to browse pictures of country living in books and magazines.

Do you have any favorite movies or plays?

I am not really into movies or theater, but I am an avid football fan and enjoy watching the New Orleans Saints play on television.

Do you enjoy music?

With husband in country music, how could I not be a country fan? I like Alan Jackson a lot. As a music store owner, I also got into rhythm and blues and B.B. King.

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

I would give it to my large family. I never thought I would live as long as I have, and be able to consider the possibility.

How would you change the world?

People need to get along better. Cultural and political differences shouldn't divide us. We need to live with people with whom we disagree. But changing this today is a bigger job than I can imagine.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR



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cont. from front page

Lake Lincoln prepares for a big year

when its camp sites and other lodging will be fully booked for 30 to 40 weeks. That's when the first Louisiana visitors come to get away from the noisy celebrations around New Orleans and other cities and towns in their state. This year, for the first time, a low key Mardi Gras parade around the park's looping roadways will provide a touch of the festivities they left behind, as well as herald the park's new season.

Lincoln County opened the 1000-acre facility in 1984 as a watershed lake area to control flooding of streams in its northeastern sector, and the State of Mississippi took it over in 1996. It is now the third most used park in the state system, and it ranks in the top 25 among 4,000 parks and campgrounds nationally for water recreation, picnic areas, beaches, fishing, bird-watching, camping, and being "kid-friendly," according to a *Reserve America* survey a few years ago.

The park's major feature is its 550-acre lake stocked with brim, large-mouth and striped bass, white perch, and catfish for fishermen who come year-round, and which offers a 1 1/2-acre swimming beach and sections for boating and water and jet skiing. The park also has nature trails for hiking, volleyball sand courts, playgrounds with swings and other equipment for kids and a 200-foot walk bridge where fishermen cast their lines. There is even an 18-hole disk golf course where players hurl frisbees towards baskets, rather than hit small balls towards holes.

Nestled in the shade of towering hardwood trees are the picnic areas with grills, tables, shelters and two group pavilions; two rebuilt fishing piers, a water skiing pier, a boat dock, laundry facilities, bath houses and the Magnolia Arbor chapel for worship services and weddings, as well as the camping and lodging options.

The park sits in a valley and "we tell visitors it is a great place to unplug, because cell phone and internet service is problematic," says Thigpin. But connecting with civilization, if you really want to do it, is one of the park's off-premises amenities not provided by the state. At Uncle Ray's, just across from the park's entrance on Sunset Road, you can find a good cellular phone signal and set up a computer to get email, while picking up needed camping supplies, including food and snacks, buying bait for their fishing adventures, taking out meals or sitting down for lunches and dinners.

Besides the convenience store, bait shop and eatery, golfers can play 18 holes of real golf on the Wolf Hollow course at Copiah-Lincoln Community College, a five-mile drive; and hunters can go to Wildlife Management Areas within 30 minutes of the park.

Special events, increasingly, are attracting park visitors. For many years, the time around the July 4 holiday has been an occasion for a celebration. At this time, locals tend to join the out-of-towners at the park as both campers and day visitors. This year, the Marid Gras parade is new. Also new was a camp Halloween trick-or-treat for children. Next year, Thigpin plans an Easter egg hunt, and she is looking to introduce an antique car show and flea market in the future.

Current park rates are:

- **Day use:** \$2 per person per day (under five years old no charge). \$6 for special events.
- **Fishing:** \$5 per person per day (16-64 years old)/\$7 with skiing boat, \$3 per person per day for disabled and seniors/\$6 with skiing boat.
- **Disk golf:** \$3 per person per day.
- **Cabin:** Two-night minimum. \$86.50 per day.
- **Cottages:** Two-bedroom at \$101.65 per day and three-bedroom at \$111.35 per day on weekends with a 40 percent weekday discount.
- **Camping Sites:** 26 standard with water and electricity for campers at \$26.75 per day, 22 fully equipped with water, electricity and sewage facilities for campers at \$29.96 per day and 21 premium fully equipped for campers on the lake front at \$34.24 per day. 14 primitive sites for tents near the beach and a bath house with no amenities at \$18.19 per day.
- **Small pavilions suitable for 60 persons:** \$48.15 per day plus entrance fee.
- **Large pavilions for 100-150 persons:** \$58.85 per day plus entrance fee.

The park also sells hunting and fishing licenses.

Joshua Hinton, based at Percy Quin State Park at McComb, Mississippi, is the regional manager of Lake Lincoln State Park. Its local staff includes Thigpin, Randy Chance, maintenance supervisor; and Cynthia Durr, housekeeper. For information, contact Lake Lincoln (2573 Sunset Road North East, Wesson, MS 39191) at 601-643-9044.

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Slow cooking for jet setters

By Guest Cooking Columnist Charles Fortson, Jr.

In our hustle-bustle world of instant gratification, slow-cooked meals in crockpots, ironically, may be the answer for people on the go.

There's nothing like coming home after work to a savory chicken dinner that recalls the meals grandma used to cook in simpler days,

My "Whole Chicken in a Crock Pot" features spices I like, but you can add your favorites instead. Toss in some vegetables and potatoes, too, for a more complete meal.

CHOW TIME

Ingredients:

2 tsp paprika
1 tsp salt
1 tsp onion powder
1 tsp thyme
½ tsp garlic powder
¼ tsp cayenne pepper
¼ tsp black pepper
1 yellow onion, chopped
2 stalks of celery, chopped
1 large chicken

Directions:

- 1) Combine all the spices in a small bowl.
- 2) Place the chopped onion and celery in the bottom of the crock pot.
- 3) Remove any parts from inside the chicken.
- 4) Rub the seasonings all over the chicken. I like to rub some of the seasonings under the skin covering the breasts. This allows the flavors to really seep into the meat.
- 5) Place the prepared chicken in the crock pot on top of the onions, breast side up.
- 6) Cook on high for four to five hours or on low for eight to ten hours.

Enjoy the wonderful world of slow cooking.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Charles Fortson, Jr., is proprietor-chef at Uncle Ray's across from Lake Lincoln State Park. He makes lunches and dinners to take out or for table service, while also operating a convenience store and bait shop at his Sunset Road location. Follow his cooking tips on Uncle Ray's Facebook page or call 601-643-0174 to check on his daily specials.

COVID \$

The Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) program is one of the most misunderstood elements of the pandemic relief package passed by congress.

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Library veteran in new Co-Lin job

Special to Wesson News

Bryon Conville of Magee has been named Co-Lin's District Director of Learning Resources.

Conville has served as the librarian for Co-Lin's Simpson County Center since the campus opened in 2005. In his new role, he oversees library and learning resources for all three of Co-Lin's campuses, maintaining digital resource access for state consortia and institutional resources, serving as the administrator of the Integrated Library System, maintaining the college archives, acquiring and cataloging library resources, supervising Wesson Campus library staff and representing the college at local, state, and national library activities.

Conville earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Auburn University, a master's degree in library service from the University of Alabama, and a master's degree in English from William Carey

University.

"We are excited for Byron Conville in his new role as District Director of Learning Resources," said Co-Lin Dean of Academic Instruction Dr. Stephanie Duguid. "He brings a wealth of knowledge from his experience developing a library from the ground up and from his many years in large multi-scale interactive libraries in other states. He loves encouraging student interaction and plans to enhance college and community activities to fruition."

Conville received Co-Lin's Howell C. Garner High Performance Award in 2006, and was honored as Co-Lin's Simpson County Center Outstanding Faculty/Staff Member in 2015, Humanities Instructor of the Year in 2017, and the Trillium Yearbook Dedication in 2020. He is also a graduate of the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy.



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New books by mother & son



Special to Wesson News

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Two Wesson authors – Co-Lin Dean of Academic Instruction Stephanie Duguid and her son Dalton, a Wesson Attendance Center student – can help put food on your table, get your life in order and build better relationships through effective communication in three new books they have penned.

In *Recipes from a Texas Angel in Heaven* and *Texas Angel*, the elder Duguid shares some 800 family recipes that her deceased mother collected and essential life lessons she learned from her mother. In *My Grandpa and Baseball: How I Came to Love the Game of Baseball*, the younger Duguid discusses his conversations with his grandfather in Arizona, which centered largely on baseball, but also encompassed a wide array of small talk that illustrate relationship-building communication between people.

The recipes and life lessons books honor Margie Rector, who died 20 years ago in an automobile accident.

“Mom had collected the recipes over the years and entrusted them to a friend, who turned them over to me,” her daughter explains. “The irony is I don’t cook, but I compiled the recipes into book form and am selling it to support a scholarship in her honor that I have established at Co-Lin to help students studying education, nursing and social work. Mom was a strong, confident woman who taught government, economics and leadership in Texas schools for more than 40 years.”

In *Texas Angel*, Margie Rector’s daughter further honors her mother, sharing memories of growing up as her child in Texas along with five essential life lessons she garnered during those years – Be Present, Know Your Why, Introspection and Reflection, Find the Good and Be a Servant Leader. She promises a sequel in the near future.

The writing process he saw in his mother’s work on her two books inspired Dalton. In his book, the younger Duguid tells about his relationship with his grandfather in person and in daily telephone calls after the COVID-19 pandemic halted their get-togethers in Mississippi. Dalton presents his story in snippets followed by questions that encourage readers to think about their own conversations and communication with other persons.

The three Duguid books are available at amazon.com. Search for Stephanie Duguid.

Police recruiting & training initiatives

Special to Wesson News

Wesson Police are looking at novel ways to improve recruiting and reduce costs of training.

Town Aldermen approved a request by Police Chief Chad O’Quinn to spend \$350 on a virtual program and learned about his vision of a police exploration program for youth.

O’Quinn reports that training that meets ongoing requirements for police officers is now available 24/7 online through a Tennessee company. The training conducted by highly qualified law enforcement instructors is wide-ranging, covering general patrols, administration, Constitutional and criminal law and procedure, corrections, leadership, investigation, corrections and school safety, among other areas in which police officers must build their skills and knowledge.

“Through this training, which officers can take in their offices, we can drastically reduce expenses for travel and lodging and training fees at on-site facilities,” O’Quinn points out.

While the virtual training will be immediately available, the police exploration program for youth is a long way off, and very much in the exploratory stages, O’Quinn says.

“It’s not a done deal,” O’Quinn stressed. “Many of the programs are in big cities, and we want to see if it’s feasible in a small town setting. By getting youth inter-

ested in police work, we pave the way for recruiting future officers.”

A model program is an outgrowth of the Boy Scouts of America and Learning For Life, open to boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 21. The program seeks to educate youth about police work, whether or not they want to pursue a law enforcement career. Some local programs have an Explorer Academy, which adapts the curriculum of a real police academy to the youth. Courses may cover the history of law enforcement, contemporary law enforcement, juvenile law and protection, criminal law, criminal investigation, narcotics, criminalistics and forensics, and communication.

Explorer cadets’ duties vary from program to program, but for the most part they perform a wide variety of community service and volunteer duties within police departments. Many provide extra help for large gatherings such as fairs and festivals, as well as in traffic control details. They also assist in clerical duties related to police records and report writing. Explorer cadets may participate in dispatching centers and patrol ride-a-longs. Some departments involve Explorers in searches for missing children, finding evidence in major crimes, and assisting at disaster scenes. Some are even used as undercover agents in under-age alcohol and tobacco sting operations.

Town employees get wage hikes

Special to Wesson News

Wesson Aldermen voted to give all town employees at least a three percent pay hike, with three receiving bigger raises:

- Town Clerk Angela Hester: \$5,500.
- Chief of Police Chad O’Quinn: \$2,000.
- Public Works and Water Department Director Brad Turner: \$2,000.

In Police Department personnel changes, the Aldermen approved the hiring of Ryan Everette on a part time basis, moved Officer Tillman from full time to part time and accepted the resignation of Officer Kelsie Evans.

In other actions, the Aldermen approved:

- A five-year contract with Terry Services to service the Old School Community Center HVAC system.
- A support contract with BBI Software for the upcoming year.
- Purchase of five hand-held radios for the Police Department for \$8,900 from Jackson Communications funded by a Homeland Security grant.
- Expenditure of \$350 for a virtual training program that will be used by the Police Department.
- A study by the Police Department of a youth police explorers program.

Is country music country music?

Special to Wesson News

Unlike a rose, which is a rose, which is a rose, country music isn't country music isn't country music.

That's the message Josh McCreary brought to an Institute for Learning in Retirement audience in a presentation on the history of country music. McCreary, the president of the Centurion history club at Co-Lin, traced American country music from its beginning as a popular genre in the pre-Depression 1920s up to its expression by composers, vocalists and players of musical instruments today, concluding that diversity is its hallmark.

Country music, in general, often consists of ballads and dance tunes (most commonly known as "Honky Tonk music") with generally simple forms, folk lyrics, and harmonies accompanied by stringed instruments such as electric and acoustic guitars, steel guitars (such as pedal steels and dobros), banjos, and fiddles, as well as harmonicas. But that oversimplifies it. While it continues to be the music of common people that evolved from the folk songs and instruments immigrants brought to America, its varied subgenres with diverse motifs and instrumentation may bear little discernable resemblance to each other, McCreary pointed out.

McCreary cited nine distinct country subgenres, commenting on the nature of the music and the artists who brought them to the public with samplings:

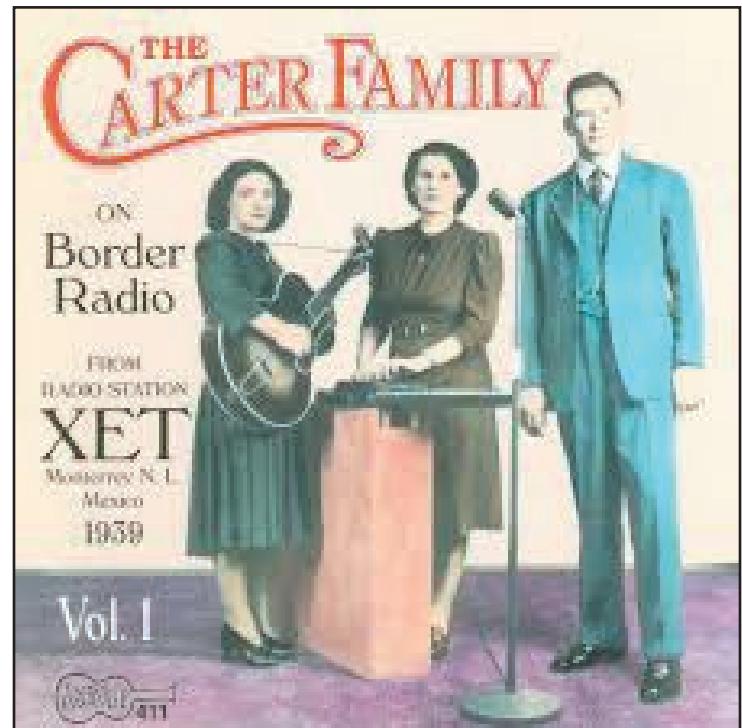
- With the invention of the carbon microphone, which enabled smaller performance venues, and the dawn of commercial radio in the 1920, original country music in the style of The Carter Family made the initial footprint in popular culture, he said. The acoustic guitar was the primary instrument, sometimes with a fiddle. "The Carter Family reflected the public reception of the new genre, receiving \$50 for their performances and earning ½ cent each on each of the 300,000 records the group sold," McCreary noted. During the 1930s, the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, other similar regional and local theater-like settings and barn dances spread the new musical genre nationally. Hank Williams, who died at age 29 with a spinal disease as a drug addict in search of relief from his pain, was the first country super star.

- When Elvis and other rock musicians challenged the popularity of the new genre in the 1950s, country artists, including Patsy Cline and Eddy Arnold – the "country crooner," brought background orchestration to their genre in the Nashville Sound, McCreary said. Charley Pride was the first Black artist associated with the Nashville Sound.

- "The Bakersfield Sound, coming out of California in the music of Buck Owens and Dwight Yokam, introduced the electric guitar and a full drum set to country," McCreary added. "Country met rock in the electric sound." The "fuzzy peddle" on the electric guitar was a mark of the genre.

- Bill Monroe, Earl Scruggs, Lester Flatt, Marty Stuart and Ricky Skaggs brought faster strumming and picking on mandolins and banjos in bluegrass, with "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" as an example of a new direction for county, he said.

- Outlaw country, through Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Hank Williams, Jr., and Lynyrd Skynyrd, departed from the softer mainstream into traditional honky tonk, folk storytelling and counter-culture with songs about drinking and rebellion, in general, backed by bare instrumentation, according to McCreary. Hank Williams, Jr.'s "Family Tradition" captured the philosophy of the subgenre. Mainstream country's music represented by Glen Campbell, John Denver and Dolly Parton – sometimes



called country-politan – contrasted with outlaw country's break with tradition, McCreary pointed out.

- In the 1980s, pop country – or Urban Cowboy – started blending rock, pop and country to reach a broader mainstream audience, continuing efforts of artists associated with the Nashville Sound and "country-politan." By the mid-1970s, many country artists were transitioning to the pop-country sound, while many pop and easy listening artists crossed over to country. Alabama's music exemplifies the sound, McCreary said.

- Neo-traditional country music introduced in the 1980s emphasizes instrumental background and a traditional country vocal style. Neo-traditional country artists often dress in the fashions of the country music scene of the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s. Ricky Skaggs, George Strait, Randy Travis, Alan Jackson and Tracy Lawrence are associated with the genre. In the 1990s and into the 2000s, the genre influenced Shania Twain, Lone Star, the Dixie Chicks, Billy Ray Cyrus and Garth Brooks, McCreary said.

- Bro country originated in the 2010s, influenced by 21st-century hip hop, hard rock and electronica, is musically upbeat with lyrics about attractive young girls, the consumption of alcohol, partying, and pickup trucks. Florida Georgia Line, with "Cruise," Luke Bryan, Jason Aldean, and Jake Owen also associated with the genre, according to McCreary.

- Modern country. Country music continues to evolve, McCreary said. New artists include Carrie Underwood, Kane Brown and Morgan Wallen. McCreary noted the influence of George Jones, often considered the "father of country music singing" because of his eclectic style encompassing religious, gospel, country pop, honky tonk, traditional country, country gospel and Nashville.

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Tax assessor still likes his job

By Bob Arnold

Copiah County Tax Assessor Todd Mooney says he doesn't like taxes or politics, but still likes the job he has been doing since he was in his 20s.

Despite a lot of changes over the years, Mooney told the Wesson Lions Club he likes dealing with people, which remains the core of his work.

The Tax Assessor's office, he explains, appraises all land and buildings and other permanent improvements that contribute value to the land. It is also responsible for appraising all furniture, fixtures, machinery, equipment, and inventory used in business operations. Mobile homes are also registered in the office, and it accepts applications for homestead exemptions beginning on the first working day of January through April 1.

Mooney spends most of his time visiting properties and talking to their owners about them to calculate their values. For owner-occupied residential properties in Mississippi, the assessed value is equal to 10% of market value. The rate for all other real estate is 15%. Based on its use value, agricultural land in Mississippi was priced at \$3,100 per acre in 2019. Veterans, seniors 65 years of age and older and disabled persons are eligible for a homestead exemption from all ad valorem taxes up to \$7,500 of assessed value of residential property for a tax credit of up to \$300.

"Sometimes, people don't want to talk to me, and I have to sit in my truck and sketch pictures of the property and the buildings on it," he says. "But most of time, I am talking to people either on the road or at my office."

Among changes over the years that have helped tax assessors, Mooney highlights:

- Fly-over photography every three years to provide the initial basis for assessments.
- Computerization of property records.
- Online services that access property records, including deeds, facilitate payment of taxes and fees.
- A new Mississippi law that requires property owners in rural areas to obtain building permits for construction.

"It also seems that there are a lot more weird people with whom you have to deal," Mooney adds. "And one thing that hasn't changed is people want to pay less taxes, which keep going up nevertheless. That will never change because even as people want to pay less, they want more services from government. You can quit asking for police and fire protection, and you won't have to pay taxes. It won't happen."



Todd Mooney

Special to Wesson News

Tax Assessor Todd Mooney advises Copiah County property owners to keep these dates in minds:

- First working day in January – Homestead exemption filings begin and continue until April 1.
- February 1 – Last day to pay real estate, personal property, and mobile home taxes without a late fee.
- April 1 – Last day for businesses to file personal property renditions.
- Last Monday in August – Property tax sale of all delinquent accounts.
- October 1 – New millage rates go into effect.
- Middle of December – Begin collecting real and personal property taxes.

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Christmas luncheon



Special to Wesson News

Left to right: Jean Ricks, Jennifer Peets, Dixie Thornton, Pam Owens, Ashley Munn and Lisa Smith

By Bob Arnold

Wesson Garden Club members celebrated Christmas at the beautifully decorated home of Jean Ricks last month with a holiday luncheon. On hand for the festive occasion were Marilyn Britt, Rebecca Norma Carroll, Sherri Carty, Sherry Davis, Debbie Hoaglin, Camille Johnston, Vickie Martin, Ashley Munn, Pam Owens, Jennifer Peets, Lisa Smith, Dixie Thornton, and Cathy Warren. A fun time of ornament dirty Santa enlivened the party. 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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(Left to right) Marilyn Britt, Camille Johnston, Rebecca Norma Carroll, Debbie Hoaglin, Sherri Carty, Sherry Davis, Cathy Warren and Vickie Martin

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Christmas décor honors

A business, residence and outdoor hangout received Wesson Garden Club's 2022 Christmas decorating awards. The annual awards program seeks to encourage town folk to apply their creative skills to building the holiday spirit by decorating commercial buildings, homes and places where they congregate. Award winners were Angie Wade, who operates Milltown Salon and Day Spa on Highway 51, the home and yard of Mike and Nancy King on 10041 Sylvarena Road and the Wesson Fountain/Butterfly Garden on Highway 51 maintained by the Town of Wesson. A Wesson Garden Club judges team, including Debbie Hoaglin, June Owens, Jean Ricks and Ramona Smith, selected the award winners. The Wesson Garden Club is a member of Deep South Garden Clubs, Inc., The Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc., and the Natchez Trace District.

All photos special to Wesson News



Wesson Fountain/Butterfly Garden.



King home during daylight hours.



King home at night.



Milltown Salon and Day Spa.

Litter learners



Special to Wesson News

The Wesson Garden Club Youth Gardeners, the Butterbeans, heard Mississippi Department of Transportation's (MDOT) Wanda Woodard discuss MDOT's anti-litter program last month at its regular meeting at American Legion Post 79. The Butterbeans are now saying: "I'm not your mama, pick it up!" 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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- 2010 Chrysler Town and Country with Touring Pkge, Sunroof, DVD, Low mileage!
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Your 2023 one word focus

By Guest Columnist Stephanie Duguid



Every New Year, 87 percent of adults create new goals and resolutions only to experience the same frustrating results: false starts and failure, according to Jon Gordon, a renowned speaker and author.

We're all part of the trend! In fact, 50 percent of resolution-makers will fail by the end of January! Millions of people try to improve their lives starting in January to attempt new diets, new self-help methods or to follow the next fad to improve. Only half stick to initial goals for 30 days, and most resolutions are forgotten by summer.

But what if you could accomplish it all a different way?

This year, I encourage you to try something different. What if we could focus every day on a purpose? What if we could remember why we do what we do?

"We don't get burned out because of what we do," says Gordon. "We get burned out because we forget why we do it." The why is always more important than the what according to Gordon!

In *One Word That Will Change Your Life*, Jon Gordon delivers a powerful new approach to simplifying and transforming your life. He offers a different way to begin your new year.

This year, focus on one word. One word to be your driving force this year. No goals. No wish lists. Just one word!

Anyone anytime can discover their word for the year.

By focusing on one word, you can create clarity, power, passion, and life change.

"One word can impact all six dimensions of your life -- mental, physical, emotional, relational, spiritual, and financial," Gordon says.

You can find one word that is meant for you. When you find it, live it and share it, your life will become more rewarding and exciting than ever.

How do you determine your one word? Here's how to get started:

- **Prepare your heart and look into it.** Unplug from any noise and the ask yourself three questions. What do I need? What is in my way? What needs to go?
- **Discover your word and look up.** In your silence, embrace the thoughts that allow your word to come. Some may pray, meditate, or just keep silent. You will be amazed that your word will come to you.
- **Live your word and look out.** Write down your word so that you can see it every day. Share your word so that others know your focus.
- **Spread the word.** Share your excitement with others and tell them about your journey and your transformation for the year.

As a guide, let me share my word with you: Intentional. I choose to be intentional in all that I do. Intentional in my work, intentional in my time with my family, and intentional in my actions.

Whatever your word is, find it, live it, and share it. I also add: see it! Write it down so that you can refer to it every day.

Here is to an amazing new year and new focus! Now go discover your one word!

For those of you who are my friends on Facebook, share your one word with me! You can find me @stephanie.rectorduguid. I look forward to hearing about your one word that will change your life!

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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Sculpture contest



Special to Wesson News

Susan Lee at Wesson Attendance Center guided Journey Class students in a recycle sculpture contest sponsored by Wesson Garden Club. Lexie Ryan created a Banana Spider (above) and Ja'thai Burrows fashioned a Fantasy Animal. The students are also members of the Wesson Garden Club's Youth Gardeners, the Butterbeans. 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.

Thank-you



Special to Wesson News

The Wesson Attendance Center second grade Journey class sent creative thank you notes to Wesson Garden Club for helping with its pollinator garden. Journey teacher Susan Lee says these print/ink transfers were created by the students with styrofoam plates to create pollinator design templates. After painting the templates, the images were transferred to postcards. 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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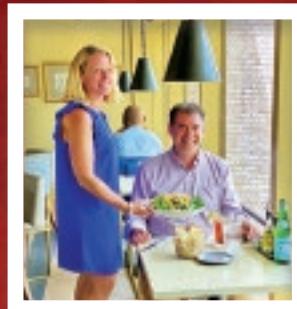
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Special to Wesson News

The Co-Lin baseball team will begin its 2023 season by hosting its inaugural First Pitch dinner fundraiser on Wednesday, January 25, 2023.

The dinner will be held at the Thames Center on the campus of Co-Lin and will begin at 6 p.m.

Head coach Adam Chamblee and the Wolves staff will welcome former Mississippi State baseball coach Ron Polk as guest speaker for the event, and members of the 2023 Co-Lin baseball squad will be introduced.

VIP Tables are available for \$500 and include a reserved table for seven. Individual tickets are \$40 per person.

Visit <https://bit.ly/3hg2RXs> to register for the First Pitch Dinner. For more information contact Angela Furr at 601-643-8332 or Adam Chamblee at 601-643-8412

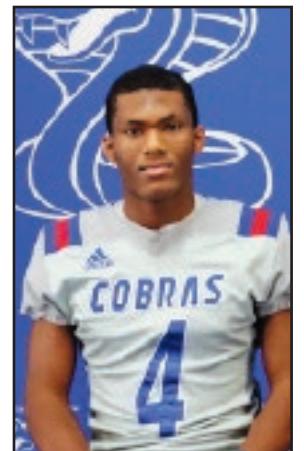
Wesson Cobras honored

Special to Wesson News

The Mississippi High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) honored two Wesson High School Cobras for their performance on the gridiron. MHSAA named senior quarterback Will Loy 3A Offensive Player of the Year and freshman wide receiver Omari Johnson to its 3A Second Team All State.



Will Loy



Omari Johnson

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WGC reaches radio audience



Special to Wesson News

Pam McLemore (left) and Cheery Head debut Wesson Garden Club radio segments.

Special to Wesson News

Wesson Garden Club (WGC) members Cherry Head and Pam McLemore kicked off the club's debut on local radio.

The club's radio segments, which will be broadcast as "Polly's Garden," will be on Brookhaven Broadcasting Inc.'s WBKN 92.1FM and WMJU 104.3FM.

In the first radio segment, Head and McLemore talked about the Monarch Butterfly's pollination of plants and its importance to the environment.

They also invited listeners to visit Wesson's Fountain Garden Park, a pollinator garden, to view the beautiful butterfly sculptures painted by Wesson's local artists, Richard Hoaglin and Mitch Berch. These sculptures were made possible through the Club's partnership with Wesson's Steel Outdoors, Inc. A recently added feature to the garden park is the "Monarch Butterfly Wall" installed by WGC's Jennifer Peets.

More "Polly's Garden" moments are coming with gardening tips, WGC says.

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.

Wreaths celebrate vets



Special to Wesson News

At the Wesson American Legion Hall last month, Alton Ricks talked about U.S. military veterans who sacrificed their lives before local volunteers laid wreaths on their graves at Wesson Cemetery as part of a national program recognizing more than two million deceased veterans in 2,100 cemeteries throughout the country. Wesson-based Socks for Heroes (SFH) coordinated the Wreaths Across America (WAA) event, which, along with the others, is designed to remember the fallen, honor those who serve and teach children the value of freedom -- "taking time out to recognize the people who made the ultimate sacrifice," says SFH's Cathy Stroud. Maine businessman Morrill Worcester started the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery in 1992 when his organization -- Worcester Wreath in Maine -- found itself with a surplus of wreaths nearing the end of the holiday season. Remembering a moving boyhood experience at Arlington National Cemetery, Worcester seized on it as an opportunity to honor the country's veterans. The first event, implemented with help from many government officials, businesses and volunteers, became an annual tradition that continued quietly each year until 2005, when a photo of gravestones at Arlington, adorned with wreaths and covered in snow, circulated around the internet. The event drew national attention and expanded to thousands of other locations where the Arlington ceremonies were emulated.

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Internet, Medicaid, violence & lottery

Special to Wesson News

Mississippi internet map. The Office of Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi (BEAM) directed by former state Senator Sally Doty of Brookhaven has launched a website – <https://broadbandms.com/> -- to create and update a map of internet coverage throughout the state, and this month initially challenge an erroneous Federal Communications Commission (FCC) map (<https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov>) unveiled last year. From users who visit the site, it will gather and continuously update information about internet usage and availability to get an accurate picture of speeds and service critical to expanding the state's broadband infrastructure. Doty says southwest Mississippi is one of the most “unserved and underserved areas.” The FCC map inaccurately shows Mississippi is 100 percent covered because it includes satellite providers, she points out. Anyone in Mississippi who lacks adequate internet should visit www.broadbandms.com, call 601-439-2535 or text “internet” to the phone number to report locations with no service.

Arkansas model. State Senate Medicaid Committee Chair Kevin Blackwell, R-Southaven, like other Mississippi Legislative leaders, opposes expansion of Medicaid, but he sees an alternative in a plan adopted by Arkansas that draws down federal Medicaid expansion funds to help eligible people buy private health insurance coverage. Arkansas took the private health insurance route in 2014, and instead of expanding Medicaid to provide health insurance to primarily the working poor – up to \$18,500 per year for an individual – with the federal government paying 90% of the costs, opted to use available funds to help people purchase private health insurance policies. The program started under Arkansas Democrat Governor Mike Beebe has been left in tact by the subsequent Republican Governor Asa Hutchinson, and Governor-elect, Sarah Huckabee Sanders isn't seeking its repeal. A 2018 study showed the Arkansas program helped the state financially because the amount it had to provide hospitals for uncompensated care decreased. The Mississippi Hospital Association says expanding Medicaid either through the traditional route or through the Arkansas model would be a big help to state hospitals.

Violence research. Gun and domestic violence research at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) is seeking to better understand the causes of both and find ways to help those scarred by their impact. Two federal grants awarded in September totaling \$7.5 million from the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are funding the research. One grant will establish the Mississippi Violence Injury Prevention Program at UMMC to address gun violence and involve 11 researchers from multiple departments, including emergency medicine, psychiatry and preventative medicine. Mississippi has the highest firearm mortality

rate in the country (28.6 per 100,000 population), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the highest prevalence of domestic violence, based on data from 2009-2015 collected through the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System.

Hazlehurst lottery winner. A lucky player won \$1 million by matching all five white balls in a Mega Million drawing on a one dollar ticket purchased at the Phillips 66 Food Plaza at Hazlehurst. The Copiah County player was the second million dollar winner in the Mississippi lottery during 2022.

Expanding obstetric skills. First responders and medical professionals without specialized obstetrics training – including emergency room doctors and nurses – are learning how to handle pregnancy and delivery complications like hypertension and hemorrhage through the STORK training program created by doctors at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC), who recognized that in a rural state with dwindling options for obstetrical care, women are likely to deliver outside of dedicated labor and delivery wards, and to need care from people who don't see pregnant patients every day. The STORK Program's half-day training includes lectures and simulations to change that dynamic.

STORK stands for Stabilizing OB and Neonatal Patients, Training for OB/Neonatal Emergencies, Outcome Improvements, Resource Sharing, and Kind Care for Vulnerable Families. The training is funded with a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and is run by MCES, a division of UMMC that houses critical care transport services – including helicopter teams – and the state's communications system for hospitals and first responders, Mississippi MED-COM. So far, about 150 people from around the state – a mix of registered nurses, physicians, medical residents, firefighters and paramedics – have completed the training. More than 18 trainings are on the calendar.

Medal for Till. The House of Representatives has unanimously passed a bill to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal to Emmett Till, the Chicago teenager murdered by white supremacists in the 1950s, and his mother, Mamie Till-Mobley. The bill, which passed the Senate in January 2022, is meant to honor Till and his mother — who had insisted on an open casket funeral to demonstrate the brutality of his killing — with the highest civilian honor that Congress awards. The medal will be given to the National Museum of African American History, where it will be displayed near the casket in which Till was buried. Till was abducted, tortured and killed in 1955 after witnesses said he whistled at a white woman at a grocery store in rural Mississippi. The killing galvanized the civil rights movement after Till's mother insisted on the open casket and *Jet* magazine published photos of his body.

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