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SWRANKIN NEWS

Good News You Can Use

Vol. 8, No. 01 | January 2023

The Pearl News

THE NEWS
RICHLAND

THE FLORENCE
NEWS

PLE named 2023 National ESEA Distinguished Schools

Special to The Pearl News

Pearl Lower Elementary School (PLE) was one of only two Mississippi Schools named the 2023 National Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Distinguished Schools. A project of the National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators (NAESPA), the National ESEA Distinguished School program recognizes up to 100 schools annually for exceptional student achievement in three categories: exceptional student performance and academic growth, closing the achievement gap between student groups, or excellence in serving special populations of students (e.g. homeless, migrant, English learners).

Schools are named by their State Education Agency (up to two schools per state) and collectively exhibit the characteristics of a poverty rate of at least 35% for the selected year, demonstrated high academic achievement for two or more consecutive years, and met or exceeded state standards

of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for at least two consecutive years.

PLE earned recognition for excellence in serving special populations of students.

"I congratulate the teachers, staff and leaders of...Pearl Lower Elementary School for earning national recognition for improving academic outcomes while meeting the needs of all students," said Dr. Kim Benton, state superintendent of education, interim. "Mississippi's 2023 ESEA National Distinguished Schools are

models of academic excellence."

NAESPA implements the National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program to highlight selected schools that have successfully used their ESEA federal funds to improve the education for all students – including economically disadvantaged students.

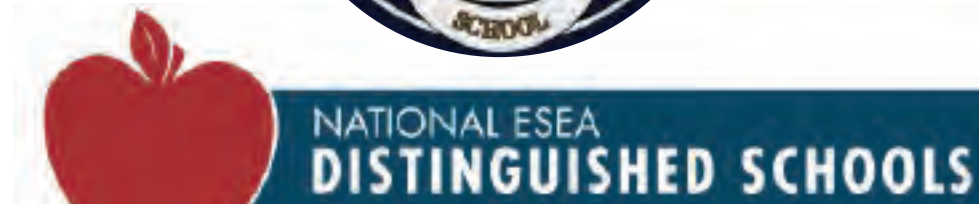
"We are so thankful to the Mississippi Department of Education for selecting Pearl Lower for this honor recognizing the outstanding achievements of our students," said Dr. Laurin Bailey, principal of

Pearl Lower Elementary. "We are honored to be a recipient of this distinguished award. Our success is a culmination of hard work from our students, staff, parents, and community."

All National ESEA Distinguished Schools are honored with a commemorative award package, a dedicated section on the ESEA Network website, and a special presentation at the National ESEA Conference. Throughout the National ESEA Conference, select sessions feature Stories of Success from Distinguished Schools, highlighting the notable work they have done to make significant improvements for their students. Distinguished School attendees are celebrated during several exclusive Conference events.

This year's National ESEA Conference will be held February 1 through February 4 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

More information about all National ESEA Distinguished Schools is available on the ESEA Network website at www.eseanetwork.org/ds.



Amerigroup Mississippi and Comfort Cases host "Packing Party" in Pearl

Special to The Pearl News

Two organizations, Amerigroup Mississippi and Comfort Cases, recently joined forces to make care packages for children in foster care. The purpose of the "Packing Party" was to support youth entering the foster care system and survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence. It was held on Tuesday, December 13, at the Pearl Community Center (Blue Room) in Pearl.

During the packing party, community partners filled 550 high quality duffle bags and backpacks with comfort and personal care items, such as blankets, pajamas, and books.

Among those in attendance on December 13 for the "Packing Party" were world-renowned author, public speaker, and owner of Comfort Cases Rob Scheer, Mayor Jake Windham, Police Chief Dean Scott, as well as members of the Pearl Police Department.

Once the duffle bags and backpacks



Participants of a previous "Packing Party"

were filled, they were formally accepted by Police Chief Scott and Mayor Windham, to distribute to the Pearl Police Department, Mississippi Department of Child Protective Services, Methodist Children's Home of Mississippi and Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Mississippi. Over 23,000 Comfort Cases were distributed in 2021.

Comfort Cases founder Rob Scheer,

who spent time in foster care as a child, says the purpose of the event is to provide much needed support and hope to local children in need.

"We wanted our kids to know that your legacy is not what you take but what you give," said Scheer. "We wanted every child to have a brand-new pair of pajamas, their own toiletry set, their own

toothbrush. We wanted every child to have their own book, their own blanket, their own stuffy, their own activity."

Scheer speaks to hundreds each year to educate the public about foster care and to share his personal story.

Mayor Windham says that events such as this inspire a "feeling of hope that someone actually loves and cares about them. In a serious situation like that, the smallest things can touch someone's life."

Tara Clark of Amerigroup Mississippi adds that, "When folks are going through a difficult time, that not only affects your physical health, but your mental health, as well...it is important that everybody steps up and helps our community out - and that's what we are doing."

Other community partners supporting the effort included Goodwill of Mississippi, Glenn Family Foundation, United Way, Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health, and Amerigroup's Health and Equity Advisory Board.



All photos special to The Pearl News
Founder of Comfort Cases Rob Scheer

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Richland hosting Father-Daughter Mardi-Gras Ball this February

Special to The Richland News

The annual Richland Father-Daughter Ball is back in 2023 with a special theme – Mardi Gras. It is scheduled for Saturday, February 18, at the Richland Community Center, located at 410 East Harper Street in Richland. Proceeds from the event will go to fund the programs of the Richland Mayor's Youth Council (RMYC).

Girls ages four through thirteen are invited to attend with their fathers, including step-dads, uncles or grandfathers. The evening begins at 6 p.m. for girls ages four through seven, who will have the dance floor until 7 p.m. Following at 7:30 p.m., girls ages eight through thirteen will be allotted an hour and a half with their father-figure, with all activities scheduled to wind down around 9 p.m.



The evening is expected to be filled with music, dancing, appetizers, photo booths, and more.

Special guests – princesses - will also make an appearance during the evening.

Limited tickets go on sale Monday, January 23, and cost \$35 per couple and \$10 for each additional child. Payments may be made by cash or checks only, and tickets will be available at the Richland Senior Center and Community Center. The deadline to purchase tickets is Thursday, February 16. There will be no ticket sales at the door.

The Father-Daughter Ball is sponsored by the City of Richland, Richland Economic Development Association (REDA), RMYC, and Engineering Service.

For more information about the event, contact Stephanie Ward, special events coordinator and Mayor's youth council sponsor, at 601-487-1186.

Save the Date: Foundation for the Rankin County Public Schools Golf Tourney

Special to The Richland News

The Foundation for the Rankin County Public Schools encourages all to "Dust off your golf clubs!" and gear up for their thirteenth annual golf tournament. This year's event is scheduled for Thursday, March 30, through Friday, March 31.

The Foundation was established in 2008 in order to generate private support for priority projects for the Rankin County School District. Thanks to the generous contributions from community supporters, the funds raised have been used to hire a nurse practitioner and two nurses, implement an emergency messaging system for parents and students and provide a scholarship program to students. The funds have also awarded many grants to teachers and students.



Special to The Richland News

Attendees at the 10th Annual Golf Tournament preparing to head out to the course

The Tournament will be held in a new location this year - The Refuge Golf Course located at 2100 Refuge

Boulevard in Flowood. The 18-hole golf course was originally designed by Roy Case and quickly gained acclaim as one of the top public golf courses in the state. Most recently, the course has undergone a complete renovation under the direction of golf course architect Nathan Crace, ASGCA. The newly-renovated course provides a more playable layout with three new holes and returning nines.

All proceeds from the annual tournament benefit the students of the Rankin County School District.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, all contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

For more information or to make a contribution to the Foundation, call 601-825-5590 or email FoundationFor-RankinSchools@gmail.com.

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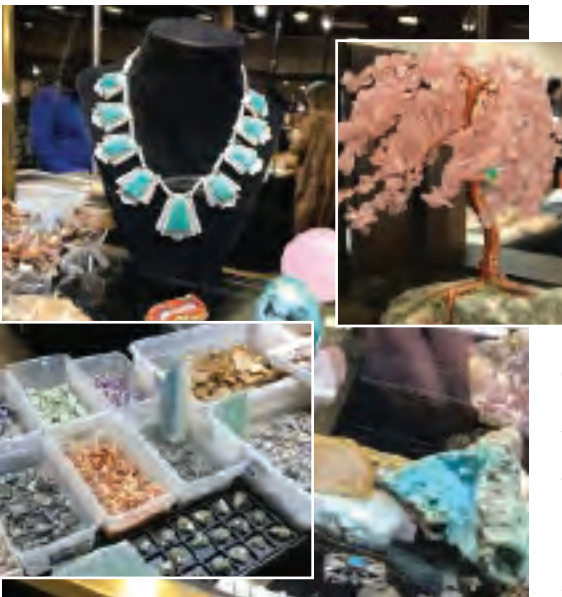


MGMS of Florence announces dates for Gem, Mineral, Fossil & Jewelry Show

Special to The Florence News

Florence residents are encouraged to save the date for the Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society's (MGMS's) 2023 Show, which is returning to the TradeMart on the State Fairgrounds in Jackson. Running from February 25 through February 26, dealers from across the country will converge in the Capital City to sell minerals and fossil specimens, beads, lapidary tools and cutting materials, gems, jewelry and more. There will be over twenty-five dealers in all. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$3 for students, \$2 for scouts and leaders in uniform, and children five years of age and under are welcome to attend free of charge.

Vendors are required to sell gems, minerals, fossils, related jewelry, or lapidary tools/cutting materials, and sale items must be at least ninety percent related to these categories. The MGMS vendor committee reviews all informa-



All photos special to The Florence News

tion submitted by potential vendors to determine eligibility.

Previous participating vendors have included Bailey Beach Gems, Baron

Jewelry, Boxed Rocks, Caveny International, Creek View Minerals, Custom Creations, Dwarven Stonecraft and Lapidary, ERS Jewelry, Geode Gallery, High Strung Jewels, Jewelry & Bead Oasis, Lambert Fine Minerals, McNeil Minerals, Nightjar Minerals, O'Bryan's Minerals, P. Loraine Artisanry, Planetary Parts, Rick's Rocks, Royal Expressions, Russell's Trees and Treasures, S & J Fine Jewelry, S & S Gold & Diamonds, Silver City USA, The Brewer's Alley, Unique Jewelry & Gems, Wings & Things and Xingyi Creation.

Demonstrators will be in attendance throughout the event, illustrating the diversity of the lapidary arts, including cabochon cutting, flint knapping, jewelry making and faceting masters.

There will also be fun activities for the young (or young at heart), such as

the Children's Activities booth and the touch and see table. Organizers say there is truly something for everyone at the MGMS Show.

Various state organizations, colleges, and earth science professionals and enthusiasts will also be in attendance to provide educational opportunities. Last year's education booths included the Mississippi Office of Geology, Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, Mississippi Archeology Association, Mississippi State University, University of Southern Mississippi and University of Mississippi.

The doors open Saturday, February 25 at 9 a.m. and run until 6 p.m. Sunday, February 26, will be another day of activities beginning at 9 a.m., and winding down by 4 p.m.

For more information about the Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society's (MGMS's) 2023 Show, or how to become a member, visit www.MissGens.org. The MGMS Lapidary School is located at 176 Tazan Avenue, Florence, Mississippi.

Ben Duncan of Florence recognized for exceptional performance on the field

Special to The Florence News

Ben Duncan, a graduate of Florence High School (FHS) and former kicker on the varsity football team, is currently in his sophomore year at Hind Community College (Hinds CC) as a placekicker.

During his senior year with FHS, he was making quite an impression on the field.

"I was five for seven over the two years of kicking, and I was 29 for 30 for PATs (extra points after a touchdown)."

Currently in his second season at Hinds CC, his accomplishments on the field have continued to grow.

For starters, he was selected as the Mississippi Association of Community College Conference (MACCC) Special Teams Player of the Week - five times in two years. This includes two times during his freshman year with Hinds CC.

Last year, 2021, he was also selected twice as the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Special Team Player of the Year as well as an

All-Academic Athlete (4.0 GPA), and he played in the 2021 Salt City Bowl in Hutchinson, Kansas, and the 2021 MACCC State Championship game. He maintains a top 10-12 national ranking among all NJCAA colleges in the country as punter and top twenty-five as kicker.

Duncan also earned the Mississippi Association of Community College Conference (MACCC) Special Teams Player of the Week three times in 2022. First in week six (September 28), Duncan had a big night in the Eagles' 14-0 win over Pearl River. Duncan punted eight times for an average of 47.5 per punt. He also downed two punts inside the 20-yard line and had a long punt of 71 yards.

Then, during the week of October 18, he was again named the Mississippi Association of Community Colleges Conference (MACCC) Special Teams Player of the Week for his performance in the Eagles' 34-7 win over Itawamba.

Duncan, who handled all of the kick-



Special to The Florence News

In 2022, Ben Duncan, #25, was selected as All-MACCC Conference Special Teams First Team as Punter and All-MACCC Conference Special Teams Honorable Mention as Kicker.

off, punting and place-kicking duties for Hinds' special teams' unit against the Indians, had a productive night in the win. Duncan contributed 10 points on two

made field goals (43 and 25 yards) and four extra points.

He also punted five times for 188 yards and downed three inside the 20-yard line. Two of those punts were downed inside the 10.

Last but not least, on November 15, fourteen Hinds Community College Eagle football players were recognized by the Mississippi Association of Community Colleges Conference (MACCC) for their performances on the gridiron in the 2022 season - among those was Ben Duncan.

For Special Teams, Duncan (Florence) was named First Team All-Conference as a punter for his ability to flip the field in 2022. Duncan also received an honorable mention honor as a kicker from the conference.

The future continues to get brighter and brighter for this Florence native.

See page 2 for more of his story, "Florence's Ben Duncan: What excellence is made of."

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Florence's Ben Duncan: What excellence is made of

Special to SW Rankin News

Florence native Ben Duncan, a graduate of Florence High School (FHS), previously known for his stellar academic and athletic record as a junior and senior kicker with FHS, continues his narrative of excellence.

Academically, as a student at Hinds Community College, he has achieved Presidents List twice - in fall 2021, as well as spring 2022. It is highly likely he will make Dean's List for this past fall semester, as well. He is also a member of Phi Beta Kappa with an impressive GPA of 3.7.

This season at Hinds CC as a punter, he made first team with MACCC South and then achieved honorable mention for MACCC South as a kicker. He was also recently selected for the regional team in NJCAA (which includes Mississippi and Louisiana).

Currently, he has several four-year college coaches looking at him.

"I've got Alcorn State looking at me, I've got several [coaches]...interested in getting me on the team," said Duncan. "But more offers are coming in, more coaches are calling, and hopefully more offers will follow."

Ultimately, he says his plan is to move on to a four-year college next year.

Academically, Duncan plans to major in business management/business



administration.

"I want to do some sort of sports management job, and I just don't know what schools have sports management; so right now I am keeping it at business...but [ultimately] what I want to do is some sort of managerial job with a sports team, preferably college."

This period of success and prosperity for Duncan has not been without its challenges. In the middle of all this success and forward motion, there was also some bad news,

"Dad was sick in the hospital for a couple of months. I was really missing him on the sidelines, 'cause he is one of the staff photographers for Hinds, so he was with me every game. When he went out, it was in playoffs, so it was a terrible time for him to miss. [It was] unfortunate for him, because he really wanted to see us go to playoffs, especially [to] see me go play in there. It was kind of difficult seeing him in the hospital and

not being able to see him really because of COVID and those rules that we can't go see them at all. It was tough, but I just kept doing what I do."

During the time of stress and uncertainty, Duncan continued to exhibit the qualities that prove that his exceptional character is more than skin deep.

"I had to learn how to manage pressure, because, as a kicker, it kind of goes hand in hand with life. It is kind of more of a physical thing when you are kicking, [but] it is mental, [because] you have to be able to manage the pressure of 'I have to do this one thing, I have to make this kick, or I have to get this good punt to get us out of a bad situation,'" said Duncan.

"I have always been like that; I have always had priorities, and I know that I need to keep those priorities straight. Both my parents instilled it in me...I just kept my nose to the grindstone and just kept doing what I had to do."



All photos special to SW Rankin News

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Generous donation proves to be “A Pearl Christmas Blessing”



Special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Youth Football Coach Antonio Washington and Pearl Parks and Recreation recently passed along a generous donation of bicycles and toys to the Pearl Tree of Angels campaign. The Tree of Angels is put together by counselors at all the Pearl Public Schools to assist students and their families in need at Christmas. Counselors and administrators had a chance to select bikes and toys for their students that were given in addition to the gifts purchased by generous folks that adopted an Angel on the trees that were at the Pearl Chamber of Commerce.

Hinds CC Foundation scholarships awarded



Special to SW Rankin News

The Hinds Community College Foundation recently recognized 2022-2023 scholarship recipients, donors and other honorees at a reception held at the George-Oakes Building on the Vicksburg-Warren Campus. Pictured (l to r) are Kayla Evans of Brandon, Aubrey Brooke Frazier of Florence, Katelyn Walter of Pearl, Trekilah Roberts of Richland, Chole Walters of Pelahatchie and Tanner Wixon of Raymond, all of whom received the Vicksburg Medical Center Foundation Scholarship. With them was Hal Gage Jr. of Vicksburg, center.

2023's premier book report - *Future Shock* by Alvin Toffler

A book report by Beth Woodmansee for The Friends of the Richland Library

I have been reading one of the most interesting books about the future, how time is moving much too fast, how change is creating a deep anxiety in people everywhere. *Future Shock* was published in 1970, a mere fifty-three years in the past. The author, Alvin Toffler, packed all 541 pages with examples of how our lives are much too intense, causing anxiety. A hundred years ago, most people lived on farms and had little knowledge of even the simplest technology so prevalent today. Their lives moved slowly by comparison to our own. Today, we feel the tension of our speeded-up lives.

Toffler breaks his book into six parts: Part One is “Death of Permanence.” Part Two is “Transience,” followed by “Novelty,” “Diversity,” “Limits of Adaptability,” and Part Six is “Strategies for Survival.”

In Part One, Chapter One, Toffler explains why life and time and change are speeding up to the point that many struggle to maintain a semblance of balance. In the early twen-

tieth century, people believed that things would always be the same, “Permanence.” A farmer tilled the land because his father before him did so. His sons followed his plowed row and didn’t consider another way.

Today, a much smaller group of people choose to farm; their descendants work in offices, sell items in shops, design machinery rather than work using them and have moved into white collar jobs.

Slowly at first, the world took on a different spirit, one of “Transience,” of movement from what was the norm or expected work or ideas. Movement upwardly. Movement from side to side. Movement from the farm to the city. Movement from the factory to the administrative office.

With this transience came movement in ideas and inventions spurring

further movement, and the movement picked up its tempo. Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876, and compared to the latest

Smart phone, it’s beyond primitive; but a start. There followed a rush of improvements followed quickly and other technologies were invented. We have only to compare these early prototypes to the technology of today to understand “Transience” as being movement and that movement picks up speed with each succeeding development.

Toffler once stated that *Future Shock* is “Too much change in too short a period of time.”

Too much stress, we say. Life is a rat race!

I experienced my own very real “Future Shock” several nights ago, when I was using my computer to set up something my doctor’s office

wanted me to do to facilitate communications between his office and myself. I became more and more anxious - and angry - as I tried several times to follow directions, only to be foiled by the computer’s not allowing me to do what needed to be done.

Remember Bell’s telephone? I experience future shock when attempting to maneuver my cell phone’s menu of choices.

I’d like to go back to the days when there were no computers and the only phone was the big black desk model with a rotary dial and no answering device attached to it.

I have read only twenty-three percent of this book, and I cannot put it down until it is finished. December is a bad month to read a long, interesting, thought-provoking book, because all those special holiday activities get in the way - and then try to write a report on it? I will stop now and hope I have sparked your interest in reading *Future Shock*. You may have to borrow a copy via Intra-Library Loan and wait a while; but the wait is worth it. Happy New Year!



Florence Middle School selects 2022-23 award winners



Florence Middle School (FMS) recently announced that Adrienne Rainer has been selected as Parent of the Year for 2022-23. Pictured (l to r) are Assistant Principal Brock Sistrunk, Adrienne Rainer, Assistant Principal Kelsey Williams and Head Principal Keith Reed.



FMS recently announced that Leidy Velez has been selected as New Teacher of the Year for 2022-23. Pictured (l to r) are Assistant Principal Brock Sistrunk, Adrienne Rainer, Assistant Principal Leidy Velez and Head Principal Keith Reed.



All photos special to SW Rankin News

FMS recently announced that Nicole Greer has been selected as Teacher of the Year for 2022-23. Pictured (l to r) are Assistant Principal Brock Sistrunk, Adrienne Rainer, Assistant Principal Nicole Greer and Head Principal Keith Reed.





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Old Truths for Today

J.T. Morgan



The Road Less Traveled

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13-14).

Life is all about choices. Everyone has made poor choices in their life. As we face a New Year may we resolve to make better choices, the choices that God approves of.

God calls us to walk with Him and to do means that we will choose a path that is different from the one upon which most of the world travels. Though seldom traveled, it is a good path that will bless your life and allow you to bless the lives of others. The Bible states, "Enoch walked with God for 300 years". (Gen. 5:22). As we travel very quickly down life's highway there is a time that we have to make a choice of one of two ways to travel, because choosing our path affects our eternal destiny.

Robert Frost wrote a poem, "The Road Less Taken". "Two roads diverged in a wood and I took the one less traveled by and that has made all the difference." If we choose the right path in life, it will indeed, make all the difference in the world. Not only in our lives, but also in the lives of others.

Jesus presents in the text in a very vivid way two paths or ways that people are traveling – the narrow and the broad way. Here the two ways are contrasted: narrow is opposed to wide; few to many; and life to destruction. Notice that the "narrow gate" and "difficult is the way" but it leads to "life" and "there are few that find it". The pathway to life is hindered by many difficulties and troubles. It must be walked with care and watchfulness, lest the way be missed. The way of life is a plain and simple way. Many turn and decides to go his own way.

The way that leads away from God and downward to ruin is broad and "there are many who go in by it". The end of this path is "destruction". It may seem the way of least resistance because "many" are traveling on this road. "It must be right because nearly everyone is on this road". The majority does not make right. People are deceived to think that the narrow way is too difficult. All roads do not go to heaven! It does make a difference in which road we travel.

As we approach this New Year may each one search out and look for the "narrow way which leads to life". Not only will it make a difference in this life but in the life to come.

May each one of you have a Happy New Year!

Florence church of Christ- P.O. Box 277 –Florence, Ms 39073
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2023 Braves Bookworms registration now open



Special to SW Rankin News

The Mississippi Braves (M-Braves) are offering a free reading incentive program that is open to all teachers and students. The program is designed to help promote a lifelong love of reading and baseball in children through a partnership with local schools. All students from Pre-K through eighth grade are invited to participate.

M-Braves Bookworms incentivize students to read outside the classroom by rewarding them for reaching specific goals set by their teachers. The program is designed for four weeks, but parents/teachers may customize it to fit their curriculum and school schedule. After completing their teacher's reading

requirement, students will receive a customized Mississippi Braves bookmark and earn (two) free tickets to any 2023 Mississippi Braves Home Game. The bookmarks can be distributed to students at the teacher's discretion once received.

The Mississippi Braves and mascot Diddy are available to put on a "Reading Pep Rally" assembly for schools or classes on a first-come, first-serve basis.

To register a school or students for the program, visit www.milb.com/mississippi/community/braves-bookworms. Once the enrollment form is received, a member of the M-Braves front office will reach out about program materials. For more information, contact Garrett Butler at 601-664-7630.



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Special to SW Rankin News

Mississippi Spay & Neuter (MS SPAN), a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, is currently welcoming donations from their wish list. All items on the list are vital for their daily operation. The most valuable contributions include regular bleach, distilled water, baby wipes, size medium and large exam gloves, postage stamps, and a Windows 10 laptop with Wi-Fi access (new or used). Other less critical items on the wish list include regular yarn, size forty metal clipper blades, paper towels, 1-ply toilet paper, pill pockets, copy paper, gift bags

and paper shopping bags with handles, greeting card envelopes in any color, and lint rollers/refills. For further information about the wish list, visit www.msspan.org/wish_list. MS SPAN is dedicated to ending the homelessness, suffering and euthanasia of cats and dogs in Central Mississippi by providing affordable and accessible spay and neuter services. Their work can also be supported by making a tax-deductible gift. Items may be dropped off in person, purchased online and/or shipped. MS SPAN is located at 657 Hwy 49 South in Richland. For general inquiries, call 601-420-2438.

Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	FUNERAL HOME
Mrs. Dorothy Lucas	72y	Richland, MS	12/01/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Rhonda McDonald	60y	Florence, MS	12/03/2022	Chancellor FH
Mason McClelland	2mths.	Richland, MS	12/05/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Sue Owen	84y	Richland, MS	12/09/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Maudina Williams	87y	Richland, MS	12/10/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Maggie Sharp	86y	Florence, MS	12/05/2022	Chancellor FH
Poppy Brock	1mth.	MS	12/01/2022	Chancellor FH
Linda Burney	77y	Jackson, MS	11/12/2022	Chancellor FH
Curtis Smith Jr.	26y	Carthage, MS	12/01/2022	Chancellor FH
Raymond Sims	85y	Richland, MS	12/14/2022	Chancellor FH
Nancy Hancock	76y	Florence, MS	12/14/2022	Chancellor FH
Nancy Odom	87y	Florence, MS	12/19/2022	Chancellor FH
John Mosley	69y	Jackson, MS	12/21/2022	Chancellor FH
Doris Anderson	80y	Richland, MS	12/23/2022	Chancellor FH
Mamie Sowell	86y	Richland, MS	12/26/2022	Chancellor FH
Michael Swofford	74y	Pearl, MS	12/26/2022	Chancellor FH
Romie Jennings	78y	Florence, MS	12/28/2022	Chancellor FH

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Pearl Senior Services offers fantastic line-up to ring in the new year

Special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Senior Services (PSS) is offering a full schedule of activities for the month of January. For starters, on Tuesday, January 17, at 11:30 a.m. the **Guest Speaker of the Month** will be Major Lamond Wilson of the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation.

Major Wilson, who is the Director of Criminal Intelligence, will be discussing several important topics, such as Silver Alerts, Amber Alerts, auto theft trends and human trafficking. Tickets are \$6 per registrant. Space is limited, and there will be no holds. The ticket limit is four per person.

Tuesday, January 24, at 1 p.m., PSS will host their monthly **Birthday Bingo**, where “Happiness is yelling BINGO and celebrating birthdays with the ones you care about.” Sign up must be done in advance, and space is limited.

On Thursday, January 26, at 11:30 a.m., there is **Brown Bag Lunch and Learn**. Join PSS for an informative brown bag



lunch discussing diet and nutrition. Registered dietician Jason Stogner will address today’s complex issues surrounding food and nutrition and living a healthier lifestyle and achieving health goals. Each participant will bring their own lunch, and drinks will be provided. Advanced sign up is a must, as space is limited.

Game Day is scheduled for Monday, January 30, at 1 p.m. Come and join PSS as they play “Would I Lie to You?” an activity based off of a British TV game show. Pearl Senior Center and City staff will have to bluff about their deepest secrets, and each team must decipher which ones are true. Space is limited.

On Tuesday, January 31, at 10 a.m., PSS is offering a **Valentine Craft** activity. Michelle Woodward of Specialty Hospice will show participants

how to create a cute Valentine craft. There is no charge for this month’s craft.

PSS also offers many weekly activities for area seniors, including: Monday **Men’s Coffee** at 8 a.m.; Monday **Senior Power Fitness** at 9 a.m.; Monday **Spanish Class** beginning at 10 a.m.; Tuesday **Bible Study** at 8 a.m.; Wednesday **Senior**



Power Fitness at 9 a.m.; Wednesday **Intermediate Line Dance** at noon; Wednesday **Beginner Line Dance** at 1 p.m.; Wednesday **Crochet** at 1 p.m.; Thursday **Chairrobics** at 9 a.m.; Thursday **Bridge** at 1 p.m.; Thursday **Hand and Foot** at 1 p.m.; Friday **Cardio and Strength Training**

Video at 9 a.m.; and Friday **Sports Activity Day** at 10 a.m.

Other sports activities include **bowling at Fannin Lanes** on the first and third Tuesday of the month (\$3 for two games/\$4 shoe rental) and **golf at the Pearl Municipal Golf**



Course on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month (cost is \$8 per nine holes). Contact Sports Activity Coordinator Danny Neal for further information at 601-863-3229.

The City of Pearl Senior Services is located at 110 Valentour Road in Pearl. The center hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. For further information, call 601-863-3229.



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EEOC Compliance: Marquise Kessee, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion , Box 1100 Raymond MS 39154; Phone: 601-857-3458 or Email: EEOC@hindscc.edu.

Title IX: DeAndre House, Associate Vice President Student Services, Title IX Coordinator , Box 1100 Raymond MS 39154; Phone: 601-857-3353 or Email: TitleIX@hindscc.edu.



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Pearl Upper Elementary honors Students of the Month



Special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Upper Elementary (PUE) recently announced its fourth-grade students of the month for September. Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Emma Odom, Rianna Ollie, Krystal Benson, Lane Parham and Madison Washington; and back row: Emma Timbs, Joseph Lemus Mayorga, Skylar Glenn, Eva Patterson, Paulina Gomez-Patishtan, Richard Berger and Principal Gavin Gill. Not pictured are Bennett Muirhead and Liam Smith.



Special to SW Rankin News

PUE's fifth grade students of the month for September, pictured (l to r) are, front row: Briley Wempren, Eric Sebastian, Destinee Scott, Chase Berry, Jayden Donald, Jakaeden Smith, Aleah Morgan and Mya Smith; and back row: Rainie Anthony-Ray, Katherine Veliz-Gonzalez, Alexis Guthrie, Abigail Shaw, Jacob Patton, Kasen Ragsdale, Carlos Cedeno-Arreola, Edgar Morales-Saturno, Malaiya Lumpkin and Principal Gavin Gill.



Special to SW Rankin News

PUE's fourth grade students of the month for November pictured (l to r) are, front row: Sheyla Veliz-Gonzalez, Alyssa Jordan, Nehemias Santay Machic, Sarah Woods, Taylor Grice and Athena Mahaffey; and back row: Julianne Hill, Matilyn Little, Paisley Dixon, Carlos Madrigal-Perez, Marilyn Little, Troy Hargrave and Principal Gavin Gill. Not pictured is CJ Cleveland.



Special to SW Rankin News

PUE's fifth grade students of the month for November pictured (l to r) are, front row: Tiffany Thomas, Danny Lopez Hernandez, Nate Coz, Jay Cardenas, Kai Branch, Aubree Sykes and Caiden Hill; and back row: Bentley Smith, Baylee Vanderford, Allee Vanderford, Sarah Johnson, Cayden Lee and Kendall Giramonti. Not pictured are Zaireah Flemming, Cayden McFarland and Skylar Torrence.

Richland Public Library offering something for everyone in Jan

Special to SW Rankin News

Richland residents are encouraged to celebrate the new year by paying a visit to Richland Public Library (RPL), where there are activities and hosted events designed for bibliophiles of all ages.

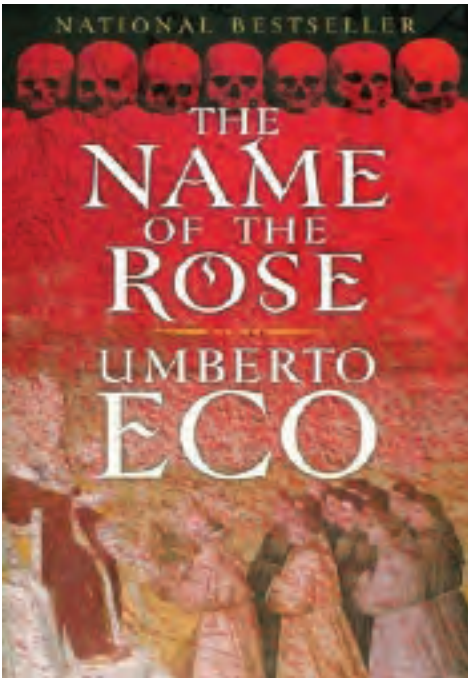
Preschool Story Time is offered every Monday at 11 am. for children from birth to preschool age. There will be stories, songs and crafts. January’s themes include snow owls, polar bears and ground hogs.

Scheduled for Thursday, January 19, at 6 p.m., RPL will host **Family Craft Night**, where participants will be instructed on how to make snow globes. Registration is required.

For adult and senior adult patrons, there is the **Richland Writers group**. On Monday, January 9, at 6 p.m., members gather to discuss the craft of writing. All skill levels are welcome to attend.

The **Richland Book Club** will meet on Tuesday, January 24, at 11 a.m. to discuss *The Name of the Rose*, by Umberto Eco. Book lovers and/or fans of Umberto Eco’s work are welcome to attend.

Finally, the **Beanstack Winter Reading Challenge** is being offered during the month of January. Interested readers can register for the challenge any time before January 31, and all library fines are forgiven. Participants also have a



Special to SW Rankin News

chance to win a \$50 Visa gift card. Library patrons with no outstanding fines are also eligible to enter to win. Register by visiting www.cmrls.beanstack.org.

Richland Public Library is located at 370 Scarbrough Street in Richland. For more information, visit online at www.cmrls.lib.ms.us/cmrlsbranches/richland or call 601-932-1846.

Steen’s Creek selects Teacher, New Teacher of the Year



Special to SW Rankin News

Steen’s Creek Elementary School (SCE) recently selected their Teacher of the Year Laurie Smith and New Teacher of the Year Sarah Beth Scarbrough. Pictured (l to r) are SCE Assistant Principal Kristy Wilson, Scarbrough, Smith and SCE Head Principal Catie Gunn.

2023 MS Braves home game times announced

Special to SW Rankin News

The Mississippi Braves (M-Braves) will open the 2023 season at Trustmark Park on Friday, April 7, against the Biloxi Shuckers at 6:35 p.m.

Tuesday through Friday games will once again be played at 6:35 p.m., Saturday games featuring Post-Game Fireworks will start at 6:05 p.m., and Sunday matinees will begin at 2:05 p.m. The exceptions are 11:05 a.m. for a School Day Game presented by Two Mississippi Museums on Wednesday, April 19, against Montgomery and a Camp Day Game on Wednesday, June 21, against Birmingham.

Sunday, May 28, the M-Braves will take on Pensacola and celebrate Memorial Day with a 6:05 p.m. game with post-game fireworks. The Sunday, September 3, matchup with Rocket City on Labor Day weekend will begin at 6:05 with post-game fireworks.

Thirty-six games will take place on weekend dates. The team will be home on Easter (Sunday, April 9), Mother’s Day (Sunday, May 14), and Independence Day (Tuesday, July 4). Fireworks will light up the night sky above Trustmark Park on sixteen dates in 2023, in-

The image is a graphic for the 2023 MS Braves schedule. It features a large 'M' logo with a baseball bat and a ball. To the right, it says '2023 SEASON' and 'HOME GAMES IN BLUE'. Below this, there are two columns of dates and game times, with home games highlighted in blue and away games in red. The dates range from April to September.

2023 MS Braves schedule

cluding opening night and all twelve Saturday home dates.

The M-Braves will announce a detailed promotional calendar in the coming weeks. Dates and times are subject to change.

Season tickets are available for purchase by calling 601-932-8788. Single-game tickets for the 2023 season will go on sale at a later date.



Word Seed

With the turn of the calendar, we take the first steps into the uncharted waters of the New Year. Even with all the technology available, not one of us knows what tomorrow holds much less what the next twelve months hold. Of this we can be sure and certain: *Nothing will come our way that God will not lead us through.* God is forever faithful. So, in this first month of 2023, I share with you A Proverb, A Provision, A Privilege, A Promise, and A Prophecy.

A Proverb

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

A Provision

“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” (John 14:16-17)

A Privilege

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16)

A Promise

“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever.” (Philippians 4:19)

A Prophecy

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.” (I Thess. 4:15-18)

Pearl PD selects Jonathan Welker as Officer of the Month

Special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Chamber of Commerce recently announced that the Pearl Police Department (Pearl PD) December Officer of the Month is Officer Jonathan Welker.

Welker graduated from Northwest Rankin in 2013 and immediately joined the U.S. Air Force, where he continues to serve. He began his law enforcement career in 2019 as a jailer at the Rankin County Sheriff's Department. He later came to work at Pearl PD in March 2020.

Officer Welker graduated from Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers' Training Academy (MLEOTA) in August 2020, and, through his stellar work ethic and professionalism, he was selected to be a member of the Pearl PD Swat Team.

In addition, Welker elected to fur-



Officer Jonathan Welker

Special to SW Rankin News

ther his education by taking the necessary courses to become an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

He has used his EMT training many times on the job as an officer. Most recently, he assisted a gentleman that

was having an emergency medical issue in the parking lot of a local restaurant. The young man was not breathing and was unresponsive. Officer Welker was quick to respond and, through his expertise and training, he was able to resuscitate and stabilize the gentleman. He assisted Pearl Fire Department in transporting him to a local hospital for further medical care.

Officer Welker is described by his peers as "an outstanding officer that is well respected and is truly an asset to PPD and the City of Pearl."

The Pearl Chamber of Commerce presented Officer Welker with a framed certificate, a \$100 gift card and a gift basket. He also received numerous gift cards from various local businesses, a coffee tumbler and a cookie platter, a bag of coffee and a stainless-steel tumbler.

Mississippi SBE seeks high school sophomores as junior representatives

Special to SW Rankin News

The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) is seeking applications from high school sophomores to serve as the new high school junior student representative on the SBE Board for the 2023-24 school year. The application deadline is January 27, 2023.

Now in its fifth year, the Student Representatives of the Mississippi State Board of Education program includes a high school junior and a high school senior, who serve as non-voting SBE members, to share their viewpoints on policy decisions regarding Mississippi's public schools.

The current SBE junior representative, Charlie Frugé of Oxford High



School, will serve as the senior representative in 2023-24. Through a competitive process, the SBE will appoint a new junior representative to serve a two-year term starting July 1, 2023.

The top ten semi-finalists among applicants, including the junior representative appointed and an alternate rep-

resentative, automatically get to serve on the State Superintendent's Student Advisory Council. There were thirty-five students who applied to be the 2022-23 junior representative.

The SBE adopted policy in 2018 outlining criteria for adding student representatives to the State Board.

Student representatives are responsible for attending monthly SBE meetings and any standing committees or subcommittees to which they are assigned. They are excused from school to attend SBE meetings as official school business, and they also work as liaisons for their peers to SBE.

The application packet must be mailed and postmarked by January 27, 2023. The application is available at www.mdek12.org/MBE/Student-Representatives. A video component of the application must be uploaded by 5 p.m. on January 27.

For questions, contact Donna Hales by calling 601-359-2331 or email at: dhales@mdek12.org.

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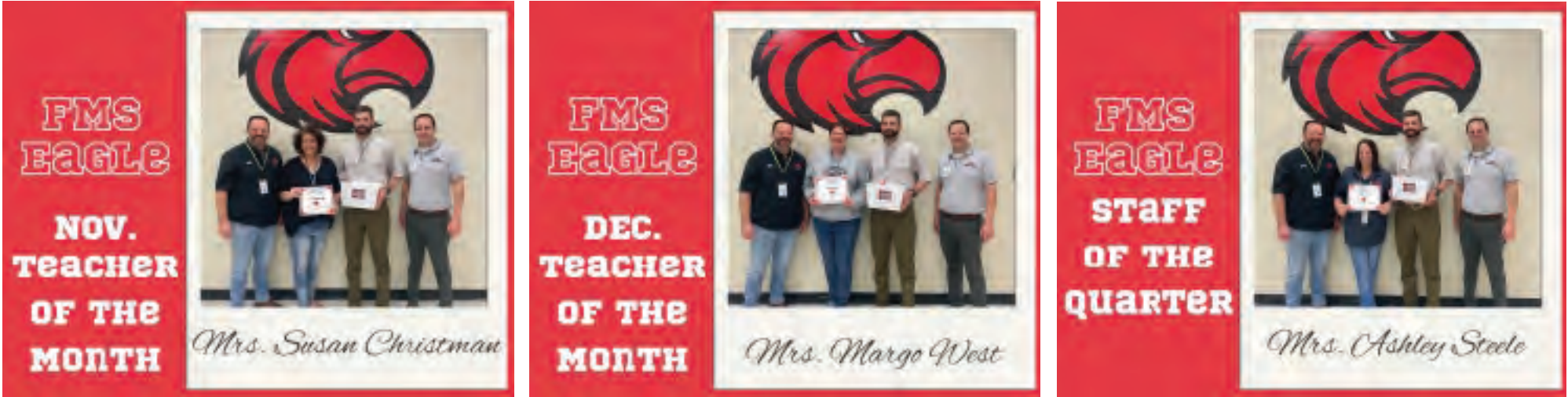
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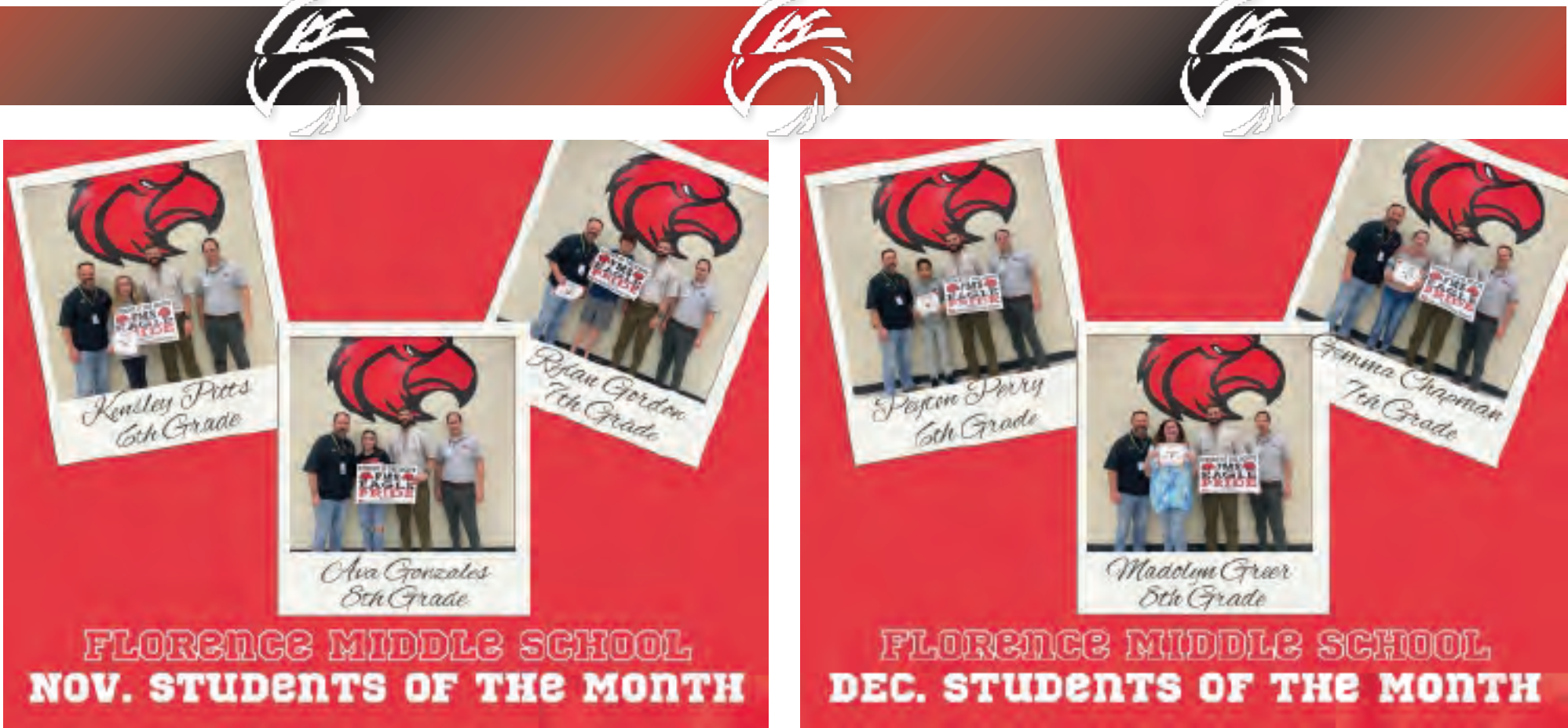
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FMS celebrates students, teachers, staff in 2022



Florence Middle School (FMS) recently sent out congratulations to their November and December Eagles of the Month.

All photos special to SW Rankin News



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MFC encourages residents to harvest firewood locally

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They give you shade. They provide oxygen. Residents are encouraged to do their part to make sure trees everywhere can do the same for future generations. For campers heading out for a trip — or for those just getting firewood for a wood stove — there are some important facts to note about where firewood is collected.

Authorities in Mississippi strongly advise campers and travelers to avoid bringing firewood into Mississippi from out-of-state. Harmful forest pests such as emerald ash borer, giant African land snail, and sirenix woodwasp occur in many nearby states and are known to spread on firewood.

Mississippi’s Forestry Commission asks that firewood users take a few simple steps to help prevent the spread of harmful non-native forest



pests. They recommend buying firewood that is cut in a resident’s local county, ideally within fifty miles. It is also important to note that in many cases, moving firewood from Mis-

issippi to other states is against the law, as this can spread forest pests, like the federally regulated imported fire ant.

Campgrounds often have strict fire-

wood rules, and many times campers are required to purchase firewood in the campground or from nearby vendors; sometimes they permit the collection of dead and downed firewood near the campsite. Campers are encouraged to learn the rules in their area and destination before traveling with firewood.

For additional resources, including a firewood map, answers to frequently asked questions, free downloadable posters and kid’s coloring pages visit www.DontMoveFirewood.org.



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RHS, RJHS selects Top Rangers

The Top Ranger Award is given to Richland High School and Richland Junior High School students who have shown exemplary behavior in and out of the classroom. Students receiving this award have been standout students and have continually worked hard at their coursework.



Special to SW Rankin News

Richland High School's November Top Rangers pictured (l to r) are, front row: Kimberly Mariano, Aarya Freeman, Hannah Newman, Anna-Lynn Bishop, Skylar Reel, Alexis Christensen and Peyton Hobbs; and back row: Ottman Chun, Gage Boyer, Mason Moha, Jeremy Thomas, Abram Yates, Jaylen Chatman and Gabriel Pilcher.



Special to SW Rankin News

Richland Jr. High School's November Top Rangers are, front row: Anna Keith, Antionisha Wright, Destini Johnson, Sydne Bass, Palak Kaur and Jordan Berry; and back row: Preston Stern, William Chavez, Dominic Norwood, Joshua McKnight, Elijah Hughey, Willie Levy, Milton Simmons, Nicholas Harris, Andrew Sanford and Dylan Walker.

PPD honors 2022 award winners



Support Services of the Year winner Ashton Whitty



Officer of the Year winner Issac Edwards Jr.



Patrolman of the Year winner Kyle Camardelle



Investigator of the Year winner Mike Hollingsworth



Communication officer of the Year winner Orlando Redd



Supervisor of the Year winner Ruben Miles

All photos special to SW Rankin News

2023 ACA open enrollment continues through Jan. 15



Special to SW Rankin News

Open enrollment through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace began November 1 and continues through January 15, 2023. Five health insurance companies will offer plans in Mississippi. They are Ambetter from Magnolia Health, Molina Healthcare, Vantage Health Plan of Mississippi and UnitedHealthcare. Cigna also joined the Marketplace in 2022.

“Carefully review the options available to you and in your area,” said Mississippi Insurance Commissioner Mike Chaney. “Make sure that the plan you are considering provides the coverage that you need. While

low monthly costs are attractive, you also need to consider copays and deductibles that you may have to pay later. Check with the provider to see which facilities are in-network.”

Mississippians can see plan options, monthly premiums and more by visiting www.healthcare.gov/see-plans/.

For other insurance-related questions, contact the Mississippi Insurance Department at 601-359-3569.



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Grant program offers free graduate degree to aspiring educators

Special to SW Rankin News

Applications are now open for new candidates to the Mississippi Department of Education’s Mississippi Teacher Residency (MTR) program, where up to two hundred aspiring educators can receive a graduate degree in elementary and secondary education and professional mentorship at no cost.

The priority deadline to submit applications is February 15, 2023. Applicants must have a bachelor’s degree and either meet the minimum required passing score on the Praxis Core, have a 21 or higher on the ACT/SAT equivalent or have a 3.0 GPA (last 60 hours of coursework).

Last year, the MDE used \$9.8 million of its American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to award grants to five universities – Delta State University, Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, University of Southern Mississippi and William Carey University – in the MTR program over a two-year



period. A total of 103 candidates were admitted with several MTR partner universities currently initiating a mid-year application process.

In this next round, those universities will once again enroll diverse participants into their educator preparation programs to work toward their graduate degree and Mississippi teacher certification. Individuals accepted into the MTR program will receive full scholarships, testing fees, books and

mentor stipends. MTR will include training alongside a mentor teacher, testing support, professional development, ongoing assessment and a commitment to teach in a geographical critical shortage district serving low-income children, racial/ethnic minorities and children with disabilities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Candidates admitted in the latest round of the MTR program should graduate by summer 2024.

When applying, applicants will indicate what university program they want to join and select up to two school district options to work in. Confirmed participating school districts are included in the application and will be updated as needed on the MTR website based on each university’s established process for selecting district partners in geographical critical shortage areas.

All complete applications will be provided to MTR universities to determine candidate eligibility. Eligible applications will then be provided to each candidate’s top-choice MTR partner school districts, which may then opt to interview applicants either in-person or virtually. After interviews are complete, the MDE will conduct a matching process based on information from MTR applicants, universities and school districts. Applicants will be notified of their possible acceptance into the MTR program by May 2023.

For more information on the MTR program, visit mdek12.org/OTL/MTR.

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A day in the life at PLE

Students in Christina Ivy's kindergarten class counted with leaves by gluing the written number of leaves on each tree. Pictured are Hayden Wilson (left) and Amari Williams (right).

Special to SW Rankin News

Students in Nicole Jones' kindergarten class drew pirate pictures to show their Pirate pride. Pictured (l to r) are Naddie Woods, Dayna Flores-Morales, Abe DeFord and Evie Nolan.

Special to SW Rankin News

Kindergartners in Robin Gentry's class created maps of their community after learning about community helpers. Pictured (l to r) are Maggie Belle Stevens, Liberty Lofton, Thaddeus Blair and Camilla Castro.

Special to SW Rankin News

Medical Science Academy students learn from the pros



Members of SWR Volunteer Fire Department took part in the Leadership Conference for local Medical Science Academy students at Florence High School. Students learned about opportunities in emergency medical services, both at the paid level and as a volunteer for their community.



Director of Orthotics & Prosthetics (O&P) Chris Wallace educated students on the basics of O&P - from fitting through finalization. Lauren Feagin, an orthotist from their Hattiesburg clinic, described the education path and certification processes for O&P, as well.



Methodist Orthotics and Prosthetics presented in Florence High School's Medical Science Program's Leadership Conference. Students gathered to hear from multiple healthcare organizations and learn more about health-related careers.



Representatives from Pafford Medical Services were in attendance at Florence High School's Medical Science Program's Leadership Conference.



Students from Florence, Florence Middle, Pisgah, Pelahatchie, and McLaurin recently participated in Florence High School's Medical Science Program's Leadership Conference.

All photos special to SW Rankin News

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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MPB Education team presents PHS’s Jack Durr with plaque



Special to SW Rankin News

The Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB) Education team recently presented Jack Durr with a plaque for his participation in the 2021-2022 MPB Student Council. Durr is a ninth-grade student at Pearl High School (PHS). During his year with the MPB Student Council, along with other council members, he participated in the student council podcast, community service, civic engagement, and many other events with Mississippi Public Broadcasting. Those in attendance at Durr’s presentation were Pearl High School Principal Michael Brewer, Pearl Junior High School Principal John Wallace and Brian Quick, a teacher and 2021-2022 National Beta Junior Sponsor of the year at Pearl Junior High School.

Hinds CC Foundation names recent scholarship recipients



Special to SW Rankin News

The Hinds Community College Foundation recently recognized 2022-2023 scholarship recipients, donors and other honorees at a reception held at the George-Oakes Building on the Vicksburg-Warren Campus. Taylor Outlaw of Pearl was awarded a Vicksburg Medical Foundation Scholarship. Pictured (l to r) are Alicia Sutton of Terry, Olivia William of Utah, Tionnie Watts of Clinton, Taylor Outlaw of Pearl, Carley Smith of Vicksburg, Adrianan Dodson of Terry, Jayden Nash of Clinton and Allie Barnes of Vicksburg, all of whom received the Vicksburg Medical Center Foundation Scholarship. With them was Hal Gage Jr. of Vicksburg, center.

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