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# The Pearl News

## Good News You Can Use

Vol. 7, No. 7 | July 2022

The Pearl News is a subsidiary of **SWRANKIN NEWS**

## Pearl Community Theatre, steering the ship to a bright future

Special to The Pearl News

The Pearl Community Theatre (PCT), under the leadership of Artistic Director Harriet Matthews, has experienced many successes since its inception. During the pandemic, PCT produced a virtual Cabaret entitled, "This is Me, This is Us, This is PCT." Not long after, PCT produced a very successful opening live performance of Pamela Parker's *Second, Samuel*. This production was accompanied with an official ribbon cutting ceremony organized by the City of Pearl Chamber of Commerce and set the foundation for a bright future.

From that point forward, PCT produced an entire seasonal offering of shows including: *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, and John Cariani's *Almost, Maine*. In addition to their staged productions, PCT has also managed to produce two musical theatre camps for children.



PCT is proud to announce their upcoming show, *The Drowsy Chaperone the Musical*, which will conclude their inaugural season. The show is presented with special permission from Music Theatre International. The show is set to open Thursday, July 28, through Sunday, July 31, at the Pirate Auditorium, located at 200 Mary Ann Drive in

Pearl. Tickets can be purchased by visiting PCT's website at [www.pearlcommunitytheatre.org](http://www.pearlcommunitytheatre.org) or by scanning the QR code, which can be found on their social media handles @pearlcommunitytheatre.

The recent successes of Pearl Community Theatre are a direct reflection of the internal leadership and the hard work of all who have played a part in each production. This includes directors, actors, technicians, and the valued season ticket holders. The PCT is led by fourteen board members: Harriet Matthews, Artistic Director; Doug

Hutton, President; Debbie Moore, Vice President; Emily Miller, Secretary; Erick Weeks, Public Relations; Haley Sutton, Finance Director; Sydnee Tapley, Business Outreach; Payton Cook, Student Coordinator; Justin Dennis, Events Director; with Sasha Carpenter, Jeremy Cooper, Shannon McDowell, Shamera Brumfield, and Amanda Bagwell serving as members at large.

The Theatre is currently working on finalizing their upcoming season of shows and plans to make a public announcement in late August. Season tickets will be made available for purchase at a discounted cost shortly thereafter. Those interested in getting involved on or off the stage are encouraged to email [pearlcommunitytheatre@gmail.com](mailto:pearlcommunitytheatre@gmail.com) or follow PCT on Facebook and Instagram.

See page 9 for the photospread of "PCT's inaugural season of programming: A look back."

## Pearl Upper Elementary's Hite named finalist for award

Special to The Pearl News

Jennifer Hite, a fifth-grade math and science teacher at Pearl Upper Elementary School, has been selected as one of only five finalists for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). The PAEMST Program is the nation's highest honor for teachers of mathematics and science (including computer science).

Hite has taught for thirteen and a half years. Her personal philosophy on teaching is, "The success of students and teachers comes down to the relationships we form with them and our enthusiasm, enjoyment, and connection of the content we teach."

Two Mississippi teachers will be selected for the 2021-22 PAEMST award cycle. National honorees receive a

\$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation, recognition at a White House ceremony, and the opportunity to provide input on politics to improve science, technology, engineering, mathematics and computer science education. Awardees serve as models for their colleagues, inspiration to their communities, and leaders in the improvement of mathematics and science education.

Other Mississippi finalists include Le-



Pearl Upper Elementary School teacher Jennifer Hite is a finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science.

Shae Collums, a third-grade teacher in the Pontotoc City School District; Wendy Dean, a fourth-grade teacher in the Lawrence County School District; Dr. Marti Ladner, a fifth-grade teacher in the Pass Christian School District; and Jana Chao, a fifth-grade teacher in the Clinton Public School District.

The PAEMST program, established in 1983 by the White House, allows

each state to select up to three state finalists in mathematics and up to three state finalists in science. One of the state finalists in each content area may be selected as the Presidential Awardee for the state, which is the highest recognition that a kindergarten through twelfth grade mathematics or science teacher may receive for outstanding teaching in the United States.

Each year, PAEMST alternates between recognizing K-6 and 7-12 grade teachers. The 2022-23 PAEMST cycle will award the nation's top teachers who teach science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and computer science in grades 7-12.

The Mississippi State Board of Education will recognize Mississippi's 2022 PAEMST finalists later this year. National winners are announced approximately a year after state-level finalists are identified.

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RHS Cheer receive many accolades at UCA camp - pg. 13

# THE NEWS RICHLAND

## Good News You Can Use

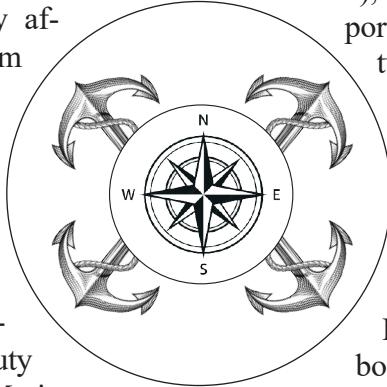
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## RHS alum Lieutenant Michelle D. Washington honored by USCG

Special to The Richland News

Lieutenant (Lt.) Michelle D. Washington of the United States Coast Guard enlisted shortly after graduating from Richland High School (RHS) in 2000. She was recently awarded the Coast Guard Achievement Medal (Gold star in lieu of a second) for superior performance of duty while serving in the Marine Transportation System Resiliency and Recovery (MTSR) Branch in the Office of Port and Facility Compliance at Coast Guard Headquarters. Washington managed Coast Guard



watch support for FEMA's National Response Coordination Center Emergency Support Function 1 (Transportation), tracking and reporting port and critical infrastructure impacts during eight major hurricanes.

As a marine transportation subject matter expert, Lt. Washington spearheaded establishment of the FEMA Port Status Dashboard. Her actions ensured a coordinated response and recovery efforts, bringing the Marine Transportation System back to full operational status safely and expeditiously while minimizing impacts to the nation's just-in-time supply chains.

Lt. Washington was also recently awarded the Input for Retirement Award for Superior Performance of Duty while serving in an inaugural position as an officer recruiter.

Lt. Washington has served in the Coast Guard for over twenty-one years. Her field assignments have included work with domestic and foreign vessel inspections, marine casualty investi-



Lieutenant  
Michelle D. Washington

gations, and other operations. Additionally, she has served two tours under the Coast Guard Recruiting Command.

She is currently serving in the Officer Recruiting Corps in Houston, Texas and is responsible for recruiting at local colleges and Minority Serving Institutes (MSIs) for the Coast Guard's College Student Pre-Initiative Program (CSPI).

## Richland Community Center to host basket weaving class in July

Special to The Richland News

Enjoy socializing with others, or maybe just taking a break from kiddos and household responsibilities? Looking to avoid the heat in July while learning a new craft? If so, Richland Community Center (RCC) is offering the perfect indoor summertime activity. On Thursday, July 28, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. join Casey Giroux as she instructs on basketry - a process of weaving or sewing pliable materials into three-dimensional artifacts, such as baskets, mats, mesh bags or even furniture. Light refreshments will also be served.

A Mississippian born and raised, Giroux is currently the Visual Art 1 and 2 instructor for ninth- through



Special to The Richland News

twelfth-graders at Richland High School. She has been teaching art for six years, five of which have been with Richland.

She received her Bachelor of Fine

Arts (B.F.A.) in painting from Mississippi College in 2015 and also a Masters of

Teaching Arts (M.T.A.) in Education from Mississippi College in 2017.

The cost for registration is \$15 per participant, with an additional \$5 supply fee. Registration may be paid by cash or check only.

The Community Center, located at 410 East Harper Street in Richland, has been constructed and maintained by the tax revenues of the taxpayers of the City of Richland.

Visit online at: [www.richlandms.org/city-government/parks-recreation/community-center](http://www.richlandms.org/city-government/parks-recreation/community-center), or contact Community Center Coordinator Kristina Jordan at 601-420-3400 for more information about this and other upcoming activities with the City of Richland.



Special to The Richland News  
Casey Giroux, Visual Art 1 and 2 instructor at Richland High School.

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Big Red Band welcomes new assistant director - pg. 3

Discovery Christian School celebrates growth - pg. 8

# THE FLORENCE NEWS

## Good News You Can Use

Vol. 7, No. 7 | July 2022

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## Florence Mississippi Angels cinch another tournament win

By Alexa Haik

A two-day event known as the 6th Annual Yazoo Elites Memorial Day Tournament, which culminated in a championship game in Yazoo City, attracted thirty teams from different places, including Yazoo City, Madison, Jackson, Vicksburg and Louisiana. They were competing to win, to be declared champions, a title they would proudly hold for a year.

In 2022, Florence's Mississippi Angels, an AAU girls' team for ages fourteen through sixteen, brought home that title. The program, which has been running for two years, is currently comprised of thirteen players - six from Pearl and seven from Florence. To look at them, the odds of winning the championship might seem remote.

Nevertheless, on May 28, the team suited up and travelled the hour and a half journey to Yazoo City.



2022 Mississippi Angels, Yazoo Elite Memorial Day Champions.

Special to The Florence News

On Saturday, things didn't go so well, as they lost the two games they were scheduled to play. Returning Sunday, they had to win three games to cinch the championship. Again, the odds didn't look good.

The Mississippi Angels were up against the Yazoo Elite girls, and, according to Head Coach Stanley Dixon, "Yazoo City are very tough young ladies, all of their group. All of them play tough;

they don't give up."

However, something significant had transpired in that twenty-four-hour period - a pre-game pep talk. It took the combined efforts of Coach Dixon, his wife Lauren Dixon, and Florence High School's Darrin Chancellor, to speak to the team, to rally them. The results spoke for themselves.

As for the remainder of this AAU season, the Mississippi Angels will defend their title in July for the 2022 Down South Bragging Rights, and, after that, they move on to Nationals. Last year, Mississippi Angels were one game away from being declared national champions, eventually losing to the Mississippi Jazz.

Who knows what might happen this year for the Angels; a lot can change in a year, or a day.

For more information about the Mississippi Angels, or to make a donation to their cause, visit them on Facebook, or call 601-573-8578.

## Get Fit Florence 5K and Fun Run returns for summer 2022

By Alexa Haik

Registration is now open for the 2nd Annual Get Fit Florence 5K and Fun Run hosted by Performance Therapy Florence (PTF). All age ranges and all fitness levels are encouraged to participate. This year, all proceeds go to Florence High School's Medical Science Program, McLaurin's Health Science Academy and Discovery Christian Athletics.

"We hope to double our money raised this year compared to last, so we are setting high goals for the event," said event director Brooks Fortenberry. "Also, I would like to mention/thank that Junior Auxiliary of Rankin County is volunteering to assist us the day of the race. They were so helpful last year with signup and with awarding the winners, and they will be helping again this year."



On Saturday, August 20, the day's activities kick-off at 7:30 a.m. with the run/walk, followed by the Kid's Fun Run at 8:30 a.m. The awards ceremony

is scheduled directly afterwards in the parking lot of Florence High School. A top three for each age group (for walk and run) will be awarded a medal, as

will the overall run/walk winners.

Complementary water and snacks will be provided, and truck vendors will also be available on-site offering a variety of food and beverage items.

Registration is currently available online at \$25 for the 5K, and \$15 for the Kid's Fun Run. Participants may register by visiting [www.raceroster.com](http://www.raceroster.com) (search for Get Fit Florence); clicking the link on the Performance Therapy Florence Facebook page; or in person Saturday, August 20. In-person registration is \$30 a head, but t-shirts are not guaranteed. Registration packets will be provided on race day between 6:30 a.m. and 7:15 a.m. at Florence High School.

FHS is located at 232 Highway 469 North. For more information, contact PTF at 601-891-8179 or [performanceflo@gmail.com](mailto:performanceflo@gmail.com).

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# The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge by David McCullough

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

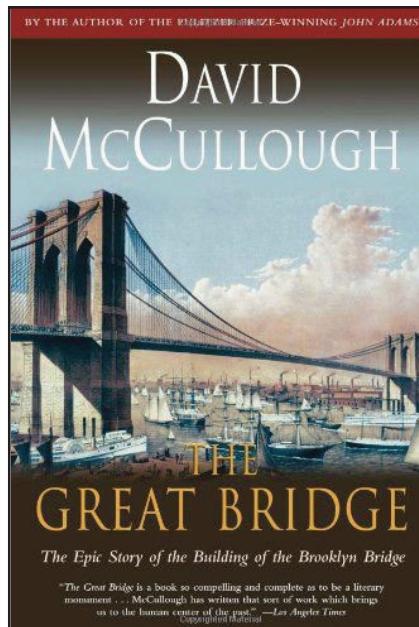
It took fourteen years to build the Brooklyn Bridge spanning the East River, connecting the cities of Manhattan and Brooklyn back in the 1880s.

David McCullough's non-fiction book, *The Great Bridge*, is filled with awe-inspiring accounts of the engineering problems to be overcome and includes much historical information about the so-called "Gilded Age," that period in the latter half of the 1870s to 1900s, so named by Mark Twain - one of the shining lights of this Gilded Age of thinkers, artists and inventors: Walt Whitman, John Singer Sargent, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, et.al. The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Opera House were built at this time.

It was also a time of graft and greed, political bribery and crooked contracts. The king of graft, Boss Tweed in New York City, was the greatest crook of them all; not much was accomplished without kickbacks to him and his "friends." Into this age came John A. Roebling, a German-American civil en-

gineer genius, one of the few engineers with any experience in building wire rope suspension bridges. In 1841, he started a business manufacturing wire rope and used it in his bridges. His suspension bridge over the Ohio River at Cincinnati, finished in 1867, still stands today. An honorable, intelligent, morally strong man, he began designing the Great Bridge in 1867. When he died July 22, 1869, his son, thirty-six-year-old Colonel Washington Roebling, took over as chief engineer. A civil engineer himself, he had worked closely with his father on suspension bridges and understood all that was involved.

His first challenge was building the two massive caissons and lowering them



Special to SW Rankin News

down into the waters of the East River, one on the New York side, and one on the Brooklyn side. McCullough included clear descriptions of all the science involved in just this first step that reading it is like taking a college course in bridge building. His writing enables the reader to feel as if they were at the scene of all the action. As each caisson was slowly lowered below the East River over a period of weeks, men went down into it by way of special shafts. Inside, they cut away and removed mud, stones, boulders and sent them out of the caisson by a similar exit shaft designed for this purpose. Once in place, they were filled with concrete. When the concrete cured, the caissons were ready to support the two huge granite bridge

towers; masons would now begin erecting the two towers.

One horrific effect of working so many feet below the river caused the workers to suffer terribly upon return to the surface. It came to be called "the bends." McCullough devoted much space in his book explaining this mysterious condition. Over time, scientists learned it was caused by being below ground in a heavily compressed environment and that an ascent to the surface, while decompressing slowly, was the only "cure." Chief Engineer Washington Roebling spent many hours inside the caissons dealing with serious problems; he suffered the ill effects of the bends for most of his life.

Actual work on the bridge started in June, 1869. Fourteen years later, May 25, 1883, the bridge was finished and officially opened. That day of parades, speeches by President Chester Arthur, the governor and mayors of both cities, and flying flags was capped by a huge, hourlong display of fireworks over the bridge. The Brooklyn Bridge went into service immediately and has stood solidly in place for 154 years so far. FYI: It is NOT for sale!

## SWRANKIN NEWS

P.O. Box 5963, Pearl, MS 39208  
601-706-9237

Volume 7 Issue 7  
Circulation - 15,000

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Southwest Rankin News is published  
on the second Tuesday of every month.



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## Florence Big Red Band welcomes new assistant director

By Jameson Thompson

The Florence Big Red Band has a new member joining their staff this year, Nick Papania. He joins the staff as the new assistant director.

Papania, an alumnus of Gulfport High School, received his bachelor's and master's degrees in music education at William Carey University (WCU). While at WCU, he played bassoon for WCU's first-ever symphony orchestra performance of Felix Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 2 "Hymn of Praise."

Papania completed his student teaching at Oak Grove Middle and High Schools.

After graduating, Papania worked as an educational representative with Music and Arts in Flowood, Mississippi.

Papania said his interest in band started at a very early stage of his life.

"Once I started in my beginner band, I was hooked," said Papania. "Band was some of the most fun I had growing up. All these years later, and I could never bring myself to quit."

Band is a unique activity that can draw students from different backgrounds and help bring those students together. With each student playing a key role in the overall sound of the band, the students spend a lot of time working together to get and stay



Special to SW Rankin News

New Big Red Band Assistant Director Nick Papania (right), pictured with his wife, Alex (left).

coordinated in order to sound as good as they possibly can.

"Students from all walks of life work towards a singular goal, which is to make the band sound as good as possible," said Papania. "Everyone has a part to play in the success of the group."

Papania expressed much of his excitement for having the opportunity to serve as the new assistant director for the Big Red Band.

"Getting to work with the Florence students is very exciting, but also having Mr. Robinson, Mr. Mennard and Mrs. Bustin as colleagues is quite the bonus."

Papania believes that students enjoying having fun and learning is the ultimate goal of band.

He says he appreciates "watching a student grow both as a musician and person."

"Knowing that you're providing a constructive outlet for your students feels very good," Papania said. "Building strong relationships with staff and students is very important and is one of the many important aspects of this wonderful journey."

Papania says he is excited for this year, as he helps these students become better players and people.

The Big Red Band supporters say they are very excited to welcome Papania to the big Red Band Family.

## Florence native earns award for "Everyday Heroism" essay

Special to SW Rankin News

A project to document and celebrate the heroisms of everyday life in South Mississippi culminated this academic year with four University of Southern Mississippi (USM) students earning awards for their essays on the subject. Top award winners were celebrated during a special ceremony, held May 31, on the University's Gulf Park campus.

Among the winners was Florence native Jennifer Davis, who placed third for "Beyond My Bones," a personal narrative representing a moving study in character and human resilience. Davis is majoring in English licensure. She received a \$125 award for her win.

Created by Dr. Damon Franke,

Associate Professor of English at USM's Gulf Park campus, "The Mississippi Everyday Heroisms Project" is designed to nurture and gather narratives about Southern Mississippi heroism from students, faculty, and community members. The goal is to have the contributions permanently housed on the University's website.

Franke notes that the project was inspired by author James Joyce's *Ulysses* and the film

*O' Brother Where Art Thou*, both of which use the Homer's adventures of Odysseus as a model for everyday modern life.

"Hence, everyday heroes have analogs with myth, but they do not face the unrealizable expectations of superheroes," said Franke. "They are our doctors, our teachers, our police, our stay-at-home moms, our nurses, our scientists, among many others."

The associated writing contest fea-

tured USM students who submitted narratives of resilience and regional true stories about everyday heroism.

"Hopefully, these narratives can accrue in perpetuity as a representation of Mississippi coastal resilience," said Franke. "I hope that these events help to develop a home for writing on the Gulf Park campus that reaches out to the community and serves as a record of our collective experience."

"The Mississippi Everyday Heroisms Project" is funded through a Faculty Development Award presented to Franke by Academic Affairs, USM Coastal Operations.

Judges for the writing contest included Professors Rebecca Powell and Chris Foley in the School of Coastal Resilience, and Heather Miller, Office of the Provost.



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# MS SPAN requesting donations for critical building repairs

Special to SW Rankin News

The Mississippi Spay and Neuter (MS SPAN) Clinic, A.K.A., The Big Fix Clinic, is currently hosting an online fundraiser requesting contributions for much-needed building repairs.

The buildings' original gutters, installed on the back of the building, are rated residential only. They are old and seamed, and are unable to properly drain rain water. Currently, the water drainage issue includes water seeping into the foundation which, in turn, is leaking into the building itself. MS SPAN needs to purchase and install commercial gutters to prevent further damage to the building.

The drainage work will include the installation of a catch basin, a sump pump, a sump pump discharge, 110-foot surface drain and gutter extension/tie-ins.

Mississippi Spay & Neuter is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. 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 goal is to end pet overpopulation in the state of Mississippi. They envision a world where there are no homeless dogs and cats suffering in the streets, but, instead, a world where every dog and cat has a loving home. For this vision to come true, they must

engage local communities by educating them about the many benefits of spay and neuter.

Mississippi's animal shelters can't save and support the huge number of accidental litters, strays, and family pets brought to the shelter door every day. Spay and neuter is the only way to end pet overpopulation at the source.

The Big Fix Clinic, located at 657 Highway 49 in Richland, provides services to more than 5,000 animals each year, and drastically reduces the number of homeless animals entering local animal shelters.

To make a donation, visit Mississippi Spay & Neuter - The Big Fix Clinic on Facebook.



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## Old Truths for Today

J.T. Morgan



### How Do We Get Wisdom?

Here is a question that the Bible directly answers in scripture. In James 1:5, James writes, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James states that if someone wants wisdom, that he may ask God and God will give him wisdom. James doesn't, however, state "how" God gives wisdom; neither does James state that prayer is the ONLY way through which we can get wisdom. James simply says to ask for it if you lack it and God will do the giving. But how does God give wisdom?

In the past, God gave wisdom directly to those who were inspired. In Daniel 2:23, Daniel thanks God for the wisdom that God had miraculously given to Him. He says, "I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast now made known unto me what we desired of thee; for thou hast made known unto us the king's matter." Peter also tells us that God had inspired Paul with wisdom to write his epistles in 2 Peter 3:15-16.

Paul also wrote concerning miraculous wisdom that was given by the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8: "For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit." With the cessation of miraculous gifts (1 Corinthians 13:8-10) also came the cessation of miraculous wisdom. Does God give wisdom directly today? One might just as well argue that God gives knowledge directly as he would that God gives wisdom directly today.

However, God does give wisdom in other ways. Just as God once gave knowledge directly by inspiration, which knowledge is now contained within His word, so also God, who gave wisdom by inspiration, has also left much wisdom for us in His word. The writer of the book of Proverbs states plainly that if one desires to know wisdom, that he should study that book. Proverbs 1:1-3 state: "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity." Paul also spoke concerning the wisdom that was revealed through the gospel in 1 Corinthians 6:7, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." Finally, Paul teaches that within the mystery of Christ "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

Are there other ways in which God makes wisdom known? Yes. In Ephesians 3:10 Paul writes that God makes known His wisdom through the church. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." We also may gain wisdom through our cumulative lifetime experiences. If we believe that all things work together for good for the Christian (Romans 8:28), then God may also use "all things" to give wisdom as well.

God gives wisdom! What a great and wonderful blessing. May we ever look for and expect the wisdom of God in our lives. (Bulletin article written by Kevin Cauley).

Florence church of Christ- P.O. Box 277 -Florence, Ms 39073

220 White Street

Sunday Morning: Bible Study 10:00 Worship 11:00

# Exchange Club of Richland names Board of Directors



Special to SW Rankin News

The Exchange Club of Richland recently selected its new Board of Directors for the 2022 - 2023 administrative year. Pictured (l to r) are: board member Gus Black, Club Treasurer Cathey Wynne, Club President James Barta, Club Secretary April Walters, Past-President Robert Hancock and board member Reed Hawthorne. Not pictured are board members Randall Walters, Melissa Lovorn and Oretha Black. Exchange is an all-volunteer, service organization for men and women in Richland who want to serve their community, develop leadership skills and enjoy new friendships. The club focuses on Americanism, youth and community service projects.



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## R-FGC attends the Natchez Trace District Spring Workshop



Special to SW Rankin News

Five members of the Richland-Florence Garden Club (R-FGC), as well as one guest, attended the Natchez Trace District Spring Workshop hosted by the McComb Garden Club. It was held Wednesday, May 25, at the Fernwood Country Club. Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Shannon Laseter, Debbie Knight and guest Marion Wallace; and back row: Gaynell Ainsworth, Beverly Hemphill and Carol Azzone.

## Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	FUNERAL HOME
Mr. Kenneth Donald Spegal	56y	Hannibal, MO	05/29/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Larry Gene Leonberger	61y	Florence, MS	05/29/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Clarence D. Heintzelman, Jr.	94y	Richland, MS	05/31/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Dora Jean Mangum Whatley	95y	Star, MS	06/04/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Leon Nichelson	78y	Braxton, MS	06/06/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Mamie Lee Brummett	89y	Florence, MS	06/13/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Charles "Ronnie" Woods	75y	Richland, MS	06/16/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Patricia "Pat" McNair	81y	Florence, MS	06/18/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Ann Fortenberry Ainsworth	88y	Richland, MS	06/19/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Robert Atherley, Jr.	60y	Florence, MS	06/19/2022	Chancellor FH
Sidney "Buster" Odom, Jr.	65y	Richland, MS	06/21/2022	Chancellor FH
Justin David Taylor	30y	Mendenhall, MS	06/19/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Jackie Tyler Pyles	68y	Richland, MS	06/25/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Richard Leo Renfro, Sr.	71y	Richland, MS	06/26/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Floyd Foster, Jr.	75y	Pearl, MS	06/25/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Walter "Richard" Neely	76y	Harrisville, MS	06/28/2022	Chancellor FH

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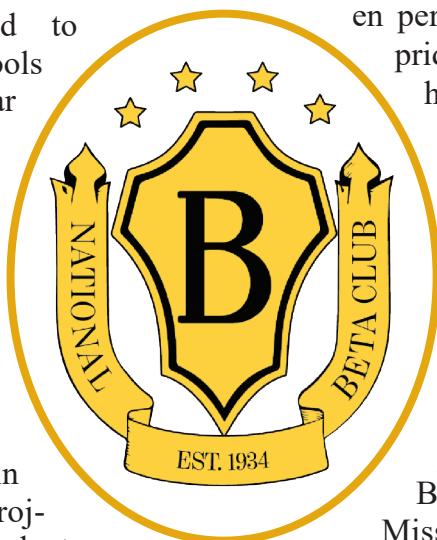
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# PJHS's Fischer Mapp, community service leader in the making

By Alexa Haik

Fischer Mapp, elected as Mississippi National Junior Beta President, was recently invited to run for National Junior Beta President in Nashville.

Mapp transferred to Pearl Public Schools this past school year as a sixth-grader, and Beta Club was the first organization he knew he would join. As the president for Mississippi Junior Beta, Mapp's main focus is leading the team of officers in building service projects that help students grow within their communities as leaders. Mapp hopes to bring the national Beta president title home to Pearl and Mississippi this summer.



Throughout fifth-grade, when the junior high was introducing clubs to the upcoming class, Mapp was very interested in joining Beta Club.

According to his stepmom, Jennifer Mapp, "he's a very driven person and takes great pride in how hard he has worked for his academic achievements."

That said, Fischer was subsequently elected as Mississippi National Junior Beta President by his peers, the Junior Beta members of Mississippi.

"Fischer's first year in Beta Club has been a whirlwind," Mapp further explains. "We are so grateful for the PJHS Beta Sponsor, Mr. Brian Quick, for seeing Fischer's

potential and introducing him to leadership within the Beta community. He knew he would get the chance to participate in exciting competitions, but never thought he would be the newly-elected state Beta President as a new student at PJHS and a sixth-grader. He plans on working with Mr. Quick, his fellow MS Beta members, and our Pearl community to create this upcoming school years' service project."

In order to be able to compete for national office, a member must be elected into state leadership. That year, when they

are elected, they are invited to run for national office. As newly elected leadership, the students are also invited to National Beta Summer Leadership Camp at Clyde Austin 4-H camp in Greenville, Tennessee, that will take place this month.

Mapp hopes to create more ways for junior high students to help their communities outside of working in the concession stands. He hopes to create more connections within Pearl for his peers to see the benefit of serving others and the value of working hard in school.



Special to SW Rankin News

Fischer Mapp

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# Discovery Christian School celebrates growth

By Alexa Haik

Discovery Christian School (DCS), located in Florence, opened its doors in 2011. Co-founders Wendi Teten and Michele Thames, Florence public school teachers at that time, realized they wanted to offer a different educational experience...centered around Christ. Currently DCS is self-described as a private Christian school that educates K4 through twelve.

Discovery started out at Restoration Church on Highway 49. A couple of years in, they knew they had to make a move, because they had grown so much. A promising location, what was then known as Wesley College, was for sale. Teten and Thames met with representatives from the college, believing that, although it was an ideal location, it was not likely they could make an offer that would be acceptable. But, much

to their surprise, the offering price was accepted. This purchase not only included the school building itself, but a significant amount of acreage behind it, which meant lots of room to grow.



The first school year, there was a total twenty-one students in attendance. The age range was from K5 through eighth-grade. Every year since that time, another grade was added until the first class graduated in 2017, four graduates in all.

In 2022, DCS graduated twenty-one students. These students were

not only local residents, but also hailed from cities such as Madison, Pearl, Crystal Springs, Braxton, Pinola and Clinton.

Even now, things continue to evolve, change and grow. There is

the new elementary building to house elementary classes, most of which are doubling in size. Construction is also about to begin on an athletic complex, which will include football and baseball fields. Then there is the cafeteria that will also be doubling in size for the 2022-23 school year to better accommodate

the growing student body.

According to DCS Parent-Teacher Liaison and Special Events Coordinator, Katy Richards, "I think the spiritual aspect is huge for a lot of people. I know that's why I am here, and that's why my kids are here...other things, a lot of students just thrive better in a smaller environment and a smaller classroom. Our community is growing, our schools are growing, their class sizes are growing, [and] some parents just want that smaller class size for their student."

Throughout the years, through the growth and the changes, one thing has stayed the same at DCS: each school day begins with a devotion, followed by an accomplished faith-based education.

DCS is located at 111 Wesley Circle in Florence. For more information, call 601-891-0608, or visit [www.discoverychristianschool.org](http://www.discoverychristianschool.org).

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# PCT's inaugural season of programming: A look back

Children take a bow at the end of their performance from Pearl Community Theatre's (PCT's) Summer Showtime Musical Theatre Camp. The theme this year was, "The Wonderful World of Sports." It was directed by Angie Rawls and Payton Cook.



Photo by Donna McCommon



Photo by Harriet Matthews

Mack Talley and Katie Stovall stargaze together in PCT's recent production of *Almost, Maine* by John Cariani and Directed by Emily Miller.



Photo by Shea Parker

Nellie Massey, Genevieve Moore, and Sara Brumfield sing their hearts out as the emperor's daughters in *The Emperor's New Clothes*, which was directed by Cynthia Stuart.



Photo by Harriet Matthews

The cast of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, which was directed by Colby Faulkner.



Chris Mason, Jacob Sebren, Colby Faulkner, Mike McDowell, and Jakob Gurley have a beer at the Bait and Brew in *Second Samuel* by Pamela Parker, directed by Doug Hutton and Harriet Matthews.

Photo by Sydnee Tapley

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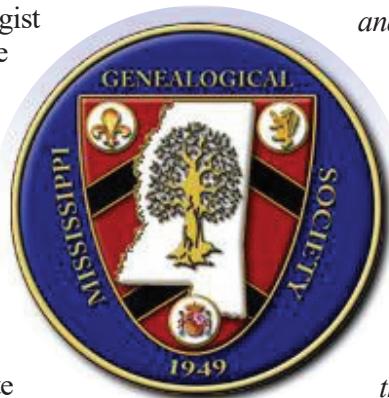
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# Mississippi Genealogical Society hosting 2022 seminar at HCC

Special to SW Rankin News

The Mississippi Genealogical Society will be hosting the 2022 Genealogical Seminar Saturday, July 16, from 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m., at the Clyde Muse Center on the Rankin Campus of Hinds Community College.

The speaker this year will be Judy G. Russell, JD, CG, CGL. Russell is not only a genealogist with a law degree, she is a Certified Genealogist and a Certified Genealogical Lecturer. Russell is also a member of the National Genealogical Society, the Association of Professional Genealogists and faculty member at the Institute of Genealogical and Historical Research (IGHR), the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG), the Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh (GRIP), the Midwest African American Genealogy Institute (MAAGI), and the Genealogical Institute on Federal Records (Gen-Fed). The genealogical topics on which she lectures and



writes, and on which she has extensive knowledge, is vast. She also has Mississippi roots, and Mississippi Genealogical Society members say they are honored and pleased to welcome her back.

The agenda for the day includes registration with light breakfast; the official welcome, announcement and introductions; and a lecture entitled *Dower & Dowry: Women, Property, and Legal Records*. After a brief recess, a lecture entitled *NARA Myth-busters* will follow; and the afternoon will include a lunch break; a lecture entitled *Putting the Records to Work*; and a final break, followed by the lecture *Landing the Fourths: Proving a Case with Court, Land, and DNA Evidence*. The day will conclude with announcements and a question-and-answer session.

The cost of the seminar is \$50 per registrant (registration by July 14 guarantees a box lunch). Registration is available online via Eventbrite, [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com).

# Rankin County Sheriff's Office K-9 "Voodoo" assists in arrest

Special to SW Rankin News

The Rankin County Sheriff's Office recently reported that deputies seized twenty-five pounds of methamphetamine on Interstate 20.

On Wednesday June 15, Rankin County Criminal Interdiction Deputy Shack and his K-9 partner "Voodoo" conducted a traffic stop on a white Infiniti passenger vehicle on Interstate 20 for a traffic

violation. During the traffic stop, the deputy began to suspect the vehicle was possibly transporting drugs and/or contraband. A consensual search of the vehicle revealed approximately twenty-five pounds of methamphetamine hidden in the quarter panels of the vehicle. The driver was placed under arrest for aggravated trafficking of methamphetamine and transported to the Rankin County Jail.



Special to SW Rankin News

Rankin County Sheriff's Office K-9 "Voodoo" with seized methamphetamine.

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# New DPS headquarters to be located in Rankin County

By Alexa Haik



Rendering of Mississippi Department of Public Safety Headquarters to be located in Rankin County.

Commissioner Sean Tindell was appointed by Governor Tate Reeves to lead the Mississippi Department of Public Safety (DPS) in May of 2020. Of the many challenges he faced as he took office was the proposed plan for a new Department of Public Safety headquarters. In the past, some efforts had been made and some money has been allocated to start on the architectural renderings and come up with plans. In 2020, however, the plans had not been finalized.

“When I walked into the office, it really wasn’t even on my radar,” Commissioner Tindell explains. “I met with Senator Dean Kirby one afternoon at the Capitol, and he had advised me that they had put together some funding for a new headquarters building. He wanted to know the status of the construction and when we could expect to be moving forward with it; and so I was surprised by that.”

The project had been something that had been on the table prior to Tindell taking office and had been in the works for about fifteen years. A peer report indicated that Rankin County would be a good location for preliminary funding. There had even been a groundbreaking at one point; it just never really got to the stage where it took off. What they needed was funding, enough funding to actually put it out for bid. Therefore, Tindell’s efforts have centered around receiving the much-needed funding. With the help and commitment of Tindell’s support staff, they were able to get the project out for bid and get the bids finalized so that the construction could start.

“We really got to work on that, and the final step in actually getting the con-

struction started was the funding we received this year. It has been a two-year process ... trying to get the finalized plans as well as the funding for the project. I am very excited about it.”

When asked if the process of receiving the necessary funding was challenging, Tindell, in jest, responded, “It kept me up at night for about two years. It was a major point of interest for me and in my discussions with legislative leadership as well as executive leadership within the state government about the need for it...and then I went to the Capitol, and I worked with the legislative leadership and the legislative leaders on trying to get the funding passed through the bills this session.”

Tindell says that although he was in the leadership position during this time, he could not have accomplished what he did without his team, “particularly Mandy Davis, who oversees our building and operations.”

“As one of our deputy commissioners, she really worked tirelessly to pull it all together with the architect with DFA,” said Tindell. “Mandy did a great job working with the architect, coordinating with them, coordinating with DFA, and my job was to go and be the squeaky wheel for the money. I think, all in all, we pulled together a great plan with

various meetings with our agency heads trying to make sure that we maximize the space at the new headquarters and that we create a great functional law enforcement building that could be a great law enforcement center for the entire state.”

As far as the building itself, the architecture firm responsible for the design is the Jackson-based firm Eley Guild Hardy Architects. The primary architect is Chuck Barlow.

The proposed DPS headquarters site is located next to the State Fire Academy campus in Rankin County, on the south side of I-20. So far, progress on-site has meant doing the ground work and clearing some of the land and trees. The timeline given is around three years to completion.

The new headquarters will enable, among other things, the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation, Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics and Homeland Security to operate on the same floor. This consolidation means, essentially, that instead of having intel analysts work for each division separately, there will be a designated area where all intel analysts work together - with a greater emphasis toward sharing and gathering intelligence. The future plan, facilitated by the consolidation of these DPS departments, is to grow the Mississippi office

of Homeland Security and their cybersecurity efforts and cybersecurity teams.

Tindell says the final product, overall, will vastly improve efficiency and communication between DPS departments.

“I can’t overemphasize how important [the new headquarters] is for the future of this agency as well as public safety in the State of Mississippi,” said Tindell. “We have multiple law enforcement agencies that operate underneath the Department of Public Safety and, as it stands now, just about all of them work out of separate offices. By having the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics, Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, Mississippi Highway Patrol, Mississippi Bureau of Investigation, Commercial Transportation Enforcement Division and Capitol Police all having offices together in the same building, it is going to improve the communication, not only within our agency, but it will also allow a state law enforcement and local law enforcement from across the state to better communicate with us from a central location.”

Tindell says that as of now, and for the near future, “my main focus is to make sure we keep pushing the project forward and get it completed so that, in my mind, we will have a safer Mississippi.”

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## Richland Public Library in-person offerings in July

*Special to SW Rankin News*

With the return of in-person programming after a two-year hiatus, Richland Public Library (RPL) offers something for bibliophiles of all ages.

For children ages birth to twelve years, RPL is once again offering **Preschool Story Time** on Mondays at 11 a.m. Each program will feature songs, books, and a craft designed for children from birth to preschool age. The July 11 theme is *Octopus*.

**Family Craft Night** will be hosted on Thursday, July 14, at 6 p.m. The project for July will be turning ordinary socks into an octopus. Registration is required by visiting the RPL online calendar or by calling 601-932-1846.

Running through July 15, dive in for *Oceans of Possibilities*, which offers fun programming for all ages, including reading challenges and prizes. There's still time to register for the 2022 Summer Library Program and have any outstanding library fines waived.

CMRLS will also be partnering with the Mississippi Braves for **Library Card Night** on July 16, at

6:05 p.m. to end the Summer Library Program with a homerun at Trustmark Park. This is an opportunity that allows library card holders four guests at an entry cost of \$3 each.

The RPL will be closed to the public for renovations starting Saturday, July 16, until further notice. Patrons are encouraged to check out the Central Mississippi Regional Library System Facebook page for updates and pictures of the renovations.

While RPL is closed, all other locations except Pelahatchie will be open. Their digital media and resources can be found 24/7 at [www.cmrls.lib.ms.us](http://www.cmrls.lib.ms.us).



*Special to SW Rankin News*

RPL recently welcomed Chuck Gale, a Jackson resident, who has illustrated over fifty books for educational publishers around the country. He has created covers for Beverly Cleary's *Ribsey* and *Henry Huggins*, and R.L. Stine's *Fear Street* series for Recorded Books, Inc. Gale discussed how to create beautiful works of art.

Richland Public Library is located at 370 Scarbrough Street in Richland. For more information, call 601-932-1846, or visit [cmrls.lib.ms.us/cmrlsbranches/Richland](http://cmrls.lib.ms.us/cmrlsbranches/Richland).

## Gracie Walker MS Governor's School Scholar



*Special to SW Rankin News*

Gracie Walker was recently selected to represent Florence High School at Mississippi Governor's School (MGS). MGS is a residential honors program that offers unique creative and academic experiences to students with exceptional abilities and achievements. For two weeks each June, MGS invites rising high school juniors and seniors from all over the state to the campus of Mississippi University for Women. During their time in the program, MGS scholars take rigorous interdisciplinary courses, engage in team building exercises, and create lifelong friendships and memories.

## 14th Annual Environmental Stewardship program welcomes new members

*Special to SW Rankin News*

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality is recognizing the members of the agency's 2022 enHance Environmental Stewardship program. Siemens Energy of Richland is a renewing member of the program.

MDEQ's enHance program has awarded twelve organizations distinction as top environmental leaders during an annual workshop and awards luncheon, hosted by MDEQ and the Mississippi Manufacturers' Association. enHance is a voluntary stewardship program that recognizes committed environmental leaders who accomplish goals beyond the standard regulatory requirements.

The enHance Class of 2022 has two new members and ten renewing members. The two new members are: Ingalls Shipbuilding Division of Huntington Ingalls Incorporated, (Pascagoula) and Yokohama Tire Manufacturing Mississippi (West Point). The renewing members are: Airbus Helicopters, Inc. (Colum-



*Special to The Pearl News*

*Pictured (l to r) are: MDEQ Executive Director Chris Wells and Siemens Energy, Inc. Environmental Health and Safety Specialist Dominic Dunham.*

bus), Anel Corporation (Winona), Haworth, Inc. (Bruce), Hol-Mac Corporation, Plant #1 (Bay Springs), Hol-Mac Corporation, Plant #2 (Bay Springs), Hol-Mac Corporation, Plant #3 (Bay Springs), Keith Huber Corporation (Gulfport), PACCAR Engine Company (Columbus), Siemens Energy (Richland) and Southwire Company (Starkville).

"The organizations recognized by enHance are leaders in our state who go above and beyond what is required of them and make a commitment to continuous environmental improvements through their work," said Chris Wells, MDEQ Executive Director. "They are to be commended for working to improve the quality of life in their commu-

nities through good environmental stewardship."

enHance members have implemented projects over the history of the program that have resulted in:

The elimination of over 300,000 pounds of hazardous waste; the reduction, reuse or recycling of over 1.5 million tons of solid waste; the conservation of more than 300 million gallons of water per year; the reduction of more than six billion kilowatt hours of annual energy use and over twenty million MMBTUs of total annual energy savings and significant reductions in air emissions, with a CO<sub>2</sub> reduction of almost eight million tons.

enHance is a program that is open to manufacturers, local governments, institutions and other eligible organizations. MDEQ will open the application process for the enHance Class of 2023 in the coming months and interested organizations are invited to apply. More information on MDEQ's enHance program can be found at [enhance.ms](http://enhance.ms).

# RHS Cheer receives many accolades at UCA camp



Special to SW Rankin News

Ranger High School (RHS) Cheer returned from the Universal Cheerleaders Association camp at The Beach Club after receiving multiple awards, including Overall Small Varsity Grand Champions, First Place in Game Day, First Place in Sideline and Cheer, Second Place in Dance, Gold Ribbon first night, Blue Ribbon second night, Spirit Stick, five All-Americans, three Pin it Forward winners, as well as a Jump Off finalist.

# FHS's Starbuck and Grace selected for ALA Girls State

Special to SW Rankin News

Florence High School (FHS) recently congratulated Maelee Starbuck and Hannah Grace Reed for being selected to represent FHS at American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Girls State. Female high school students who have completed their junior year are competitively selected and sponsored by ALA units for this program, where they learn

about the political process by electing officials for all levels of state government and actively running a mock government. The girls are assigned to mock cities and either the "Federalist Party" or "Nationalist Party."

Assistance from dedicated ALA volunteers ensures the program's nonpartisan governmental, patriotic, and civic objectives are carried out through interactive learning.



Special to SW Rankin News

Maelee Starbuck



Special to SW Rankin News

Hannah Grace Reed

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# STOWAWAY

## SELF-STORAGE

# FMS welcomes Mitchell as newest student counselor

Special to SW Rankin News

Florence native Jessica Mitchell was recently selected to serve as Florence Middle School's (FMS's) newest counselor. Mitchell says, "Last year I was able to teach math at FMS, and this year I am so excited to be a counselor at such an amazing school. I graduated from Mississippi State in undergrad, and have completed my M. Ed in school counseling at Mississippi College. I was able to intern at Florence High School and Florence Middle School and knew I wanted to come back in such an amazing community.

During my spare time, I enjoy time with my friends and family, cheering on my Mississippi State Bulldogs with my dog, Ellie. I can't wait to be back at FMS as a counselor this year!"



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# City of Pearl offers tips on preventing mosquito bites

Special to SW Rankin News

The City of Pearl recently offered some great ways for local residents to reduce mosquito breeding grounds around their home or business courtesy of the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH).

According to MSDH, mosquito-borne viral diseases can be transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. They can easily breed around homes and in discarded, unused or unmaintained containers.

Mosquitos can breed in small areas of standing water, such as containers, backed-up gutters, discarded tires, or any area where small amounts of water are left standing for four or more days. Weeds, tall grass and shrubbery provide an outdoor home for adult mosquitos, which may also enter houses through unscreened windows or doors, or through broken screens.

Potential breeding sites include bird baths, pet dishes, children's toys, pot-



ted plants with saucers, rain gutters, tarps and plastic covers, garbage cans/lids, recycling bins, watering cans, buckets, rain barrels, ornamental ponds without fish, tires, tire swings, boats, canoes, kayaks, leaky plumbing, air-conditioning run-off, wheelbarrows, children's wading pools, swimming pools, swimming pool covers, flat roofs, under decks and raised homes, voids under slabs or cracked slabs, plumbing pipes and elbow fittings, drainage ditches and culverts, corrugated pipe and gutter downspouts, base of portable basketball goals and umbrellas, grills, plants, French drains, bamboo, open fence posts,

plastic sheets for weed control, low areas in landscape, individual sewer treatment systems, tree holes/hollows/stumps, lawn ornaments, home irrigation, yard debris (clippings and dead leaves), trash and garbage.

It is important to note that mosquitos are most active at dawn and

dusk when the air is calm, and are most likely to bite at these times. To reduce opportunities for mosquito bites, MSDH recommends reducing or eliminating all standing water in yards and removing containers in which water can collect; making sure all windows and doors that stay open have screens; and keeping all screens repaired.



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