

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

UCLA Head Coach Metzger leads satellite camp in Richland - pg. 2

Exchange Club of Richland honors first responders - pg. 12

SWRANKIN NEWS

Good News You Can Use

Vol. 7, No. 6 | June 2022

The Pearl News

THE RICHLAND NEWS

THE FLORENCE NEWS

Main Street Pearl kicks into high gear with proposed “Downtown Roadmap”

Special to The Pearl News

Originally, the City of Pearl was established as a post-World War II suburb of Jackson. It wasn't until 1973 that it became an official city. So, when it was accepted into the Mississippi Main Street Association on February 11, 2021, a unique opportunity at revitalization was born.

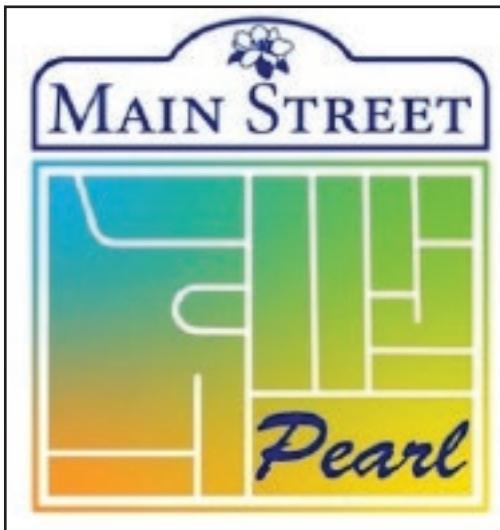
The hope of Main Street Pearl is to create a true city center within the oldest historical district, which runs from Old Brandon Road to Highway 80, between Valentour and Bierdeman Roads.

“What Mississippi Main Street is bringing to us is invaluable,” said Main Street Pearl Executive Director Kathy Bourgeois. “Our goal for this process is to bring a diversity of ideas from all parts of the city to our program.”

Although progress was temporarily stalled due to issues surrounding the

COVID-19 pandemic, things once again geared up this past May as the Mississippi Main Street Association (MMSA) designed a “Downtown Roadmap” for Main Street Pearl. The purpose of the Downtown Roadmap is to provide Main Street Pearl with a strategic framework with prioritized recommendations and specific implementation tactics for the next three to five years, as the organization guides the downtown revitalization activities.

“We are excited to get our Main Street program off and running,” said Mayor



Special to The Pearl News

specific area to stimulate economic and cultural growth, while preserving our history. We are seeking new restaurants, boutiques, small businesses, along with parks and green spaces, to create places people will come visit, dine, shop and relax.”

Jake Windham of Pearl. “We want to make sure we understand and take into account the thoughts of our citizens and businesses throughout the process of developing Main Street Pearl.”

Bourgeois says the ultimate objective is simple.

“We want to bring local businesses back to a

Currently, the City is working closely with local merchants in the proposed Main Street area to strategically identify areas where improvements can be made.

Main Street will operate as a non-profit organization under the umbrella of the City, with an executive director, board of directors, committees and volunteers. The Mayor and Main Street Pearl Board will decide on community projects that will best serve the citizens and merchants of the city.

Stay tuned to *The Pearl News* for future updates and progress reports as Main Street Pearl takes shape and evolves.



Special to The Pearl News

35th Annual Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza coming soon to Pearl

Special to The Pearl News

The Mississippi Wildlife Federation (MWF) recently announced that the 35th Annual Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza is scheduled for July 29 through July 31 and will be held in Pearl at the Clyde Muse Center. The large venue will provide space needed for the numerous exhibitors, attendees, children's activities and entertainment that will be on-site.

The “Ganza” will play host to many historic crowd-favorite exhibitions, demonstrations and contests, such as the Magnolia Records and Big Buck contest, Jason Reynolds' famous High-flying Retrievers, Kid's Handgrabbin' Catfish tanks, children's bb gun and archery ranges, kayaking fishing demonstrations, field dressing, taxidermy

and game cooking demonstrations, and outdoor hunting and fishing seminars.

This year, the show will also include a dining hall with grab-and-go options, as well as sit-down dining, so that guests can enjoy some of the best local vittles in town.

“We loved everything about hosting the Ganza in Rankin County last year,” said MWF CEO Ashlee Ellis Smith. “The community and its leadership could not have been more welcoming, and it proved to be a safe, family-friendly environment perfectly suited for



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our show... We are already having a blast working with the folks at Hinds Community College and the Mayor

of Pearl and his staff and look forward to making this the best Wildlife Extravaganza yet, to get everyone ready for the 2022-23 hunting and fishing season.”

The Ganza will also host a Saturday night Sponsor and Exhibitor Party and will have an Exhibitor Hospitality Suite open all weekend onsite. MWF works with vendors and sponsors in advance to learn about booth giveaways, raffles and promotions, which are then promoted on its social media pages in the days leading up to the Ganza, as well as promoting during the show over the facility's PA system.

For more information on the 2022 Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza, contact Dan Robinson at 601-540-6275, Rob Neblett at 601-506-9148 or Robin Carlin at 601-605-1790.

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UCLA Head Coach Metzger leads satellite camp in Richland

By Alexa Haik

Coqui Beach Volleyball Club of Richland recently hosted a Satellite Camp for Division 1 college led by UCLA Head Coach Stein Metzger. According to Coqui Volleyball Club Director Gabriel Rivera, having Metzger coach a summer camp in Richland was “one of our biggest achievements...[he] is technically one of the best beach coaches that has ever existed.”

Based on Metzger’s stats, Rivera’s bold statement rings true. Not only was he inducted into the UCLA Athletics Hall of Fame in 2009, Metzger was also the 2017 and 2018 Pac-12 Coach of the Year and the 2017 and 2018 USMC/AVCA National Coach of the Year, guiding UCLA to back-to-back NCAA Championships in 2018 and in 2019.

Securing Metzger as a summer camp



Special to The Richland News

UCLA Head Coach Stein Metzger with Coqui Beach Volleyball Club satellite camp attendees.

instructor was surprisingly simple, according to Rivera.

“I reached out and told him what my belief was, [that I was] trying to [raise] the game level in Mississippi, to put our kids in Mississippi on the map,” and Metzger was on board.

As it turns out, Metzger’s camp was just the beginning of an impressive line-

up of summer satellite camps hosted by colleges located throughout the southeast United States.

Rivera’s goal this season, and for all seasons to come, is to continue scheduling training sessions with as many colleges as possible and thereby preparing young Mississippi athletes for future success.

Rivera welcomes anyone who is interested in signing up for a summer camp session, or volleyball in general, no matter their age or financial situation.

“Coming from a background where [my family] didn’t have a lot of money...I am very inclined to work with people when it comes to finances...[it has] never been about the money...I just want the girls to get recognized for all of their hard work.”

With that in mind, Rivera hints that Coqui Volleyball Club will be reducing their sign-on fees this coming season, with the intent to recruit more promising athletes and provide them the opportunity to excel.

For more information, contact Coqui Volleyball Club Director Gabriel Rivera at griveracoqui@gmail.com, or visit www.coquivolleyballclub.com/summercamps.

City of Richland hosts “Rock the Park” to kickoff summertime festivities

Special to The Richland News

Local residents are encouraged to join the City of Richland for a fun evening at “Rock the Park” on Saturday, June 18, from 5 p.m. until 10 p.m.

This is the second year of Richland’s Highway 49 SummerFest, a bi-annual event. There is no cost for admission. The agenda for the family friendly event includes a foam party, inflatables, food trucks, new activities available at the Parks and Rec center, and a movie screening.

The foam party is designed to entertain kids of all ages and includes microbubble foam with music. Swim suits and towels are required, as well as changes of clothing.

Inflatables on-site this year will include a combo bouncer (wet), small combo, princess bouncer, and a sports bouncer, and the new splash pad located



Special to The Richland News

at the Parks and Recreation building will also be open.

In addition, there will be multiple food vendors providing a variety of food

items, such as barbeque, hamburgers, tamales and Kona Ice.

Other activities that will be featured at the Parks and Rec building include new playground equipment, corn hole, basketball and outdoor volleyball.

The movie to be screened, *Sing 2*, features the story of a theater owner named Buster Moon, who has set his sights on producing a brand-new musical with his troupe in the glamorous Redshore City.

General parking for the event will be available in Eastside Park, Ranger Drive, and the parking lot located behind First Baptist Church. Handicap parking will be available at the Community Center in a pre-designated area.

The City of Richland’s new Parks and Recreation facility is located at 460 East Harper Street in Richland.

For more information, contact Barbara Adams, events coordinator for the City of Richland, at 601-420-3402.

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DCS hosts Teacher Appreciation Week...with a twist

By Alexa Haik

This year at Discovery Christian School (DCS), May 2 through May 6 was not a typical Teacher Appreciation Week. When Special Events Coordinator Katy Richards and Co-Head of School Wendi Teten were discussing plans for the week, they knew they wanted to do something to “hold the teachers up.”

Teten turned to the internet. What she found was a type of game show package where there were challenges - some were inspirational, and others were “downright hilarious.” Although the challenges were designed to bring participants out of their comfort zones, they proved to be not only fun, but also energizing. Faculty and staff unaccustomed to opportunities to “goof around” were asked to try something a little crazy.

One of the more memorable challenges involved Principal Eunice Bruce. Bruce, whose temperament is typically very professional, very structured, very serious, was instructed to toss mini-marshmallows at students and faculty in the hallways, without being observed.

“If you know Miss Bruce, you would never guess that she is [the one] tossing marshmallows in the hallway at teachers and students,” explains Richards. “It was funny because the four-year-old kindergarten teacher...thought that one of the kids threw a marshmallow at her. It really brought out a side of



Special to The Florence News
2021-2022 Discovery Christian School faculty

[Miss Bruce] that I have never seen.” Finally, it took the keen eye of a kindergartener to catch Bruce red-handed: “That lady over there with the gray hair - that’s who did it! That’s who

threw it at you!”

Inspirational challenges included teachers anonymously penning encouraging notes or recording videos to tell a fellow teacher about their positive impact. These motivating and energizing gestures proved to be the catalyst that brought faculty and staff closer together.

All told, approximately forty teachers and staff participated in this year’s event.

According to Richards, the important takeaway from the Teacher Appreciation Week Challenge was “that we need to do a lot more team building [activities]. It’s good for the school, and it’s good for [the] staff, too.”

Although prizes were awarded to participants, this Teacher Appreciation Week proved to be more about bonding than winning a prize.

Florence educators earn MPE Scholarships at MC

Special to The Florence News

Two Florence residents were recently granted scholarships from Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE), the State’s largest organization for professional educators.

Charla Lewis, who serves as an English language arts and social studies teacher at Brandon Elementary School, and Kelly Taylor, a mathematics teacher at Florence High School, each received a \$1,000 graduate scholarship.

Kelly Taylor earned her B.S. at MC and is pursuing a Master’s Degree in Curriculum and Instruction.

Taylor says the scholarship will help defray the cost of tuition.

“It lifts a financial burden,” she said. “I appreciate Rankin County School District and Florence High School for allowing me the opportunity to teach in this district, and I thank MPE for offering the scholarship to its members. They know how important higher education is.”



Special to The Florence News
Kelly Taylor

Charla Lewis earned her B.S. in Education at MC and is also pursuing her Master’s Degree in Curriculum and Instruction.

She credits her grandfather, Rufo Jones, for fueling her desire for education.



Special to The Florence News
Charla Lewis

“It was my grandfather’s dream that I be the first Jones family member to graduate college,” Lewis said. “He only had a ninth-grade education, but was a brilliant man. He believed in education.”

The scholarship will help cover her tu-

ition and encourages her that she’s on the right career track.

“Teaching is honestly my passion,” Lewis says, “I can’t remember a time when I didn’t know I was going to be one.”

Dr. Stephanie L. Henderson, assistant professor and chair of the Department of Teacher Education and Leadership at MC, said the scholarship recipients represent the excellence the department strives for in all its teachers and teacher leaders.

“A portion of our mission is to ‘develop reflective practitioners with the appropriate knowledge, dispositions, and skills.’ These awards confirm the work of our faculty as we work toward this mission every day,” Henderson said. “We are proud of the work that each of them has done to qualify them for these scholarships, and we are eager to see what impact they will continue to have in schools.”

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Careless Whiskers by Miranda James

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

In 2018, Mississippi's own Miranda James published *Careless Whiskers*, a cozy mystery featuring librarian/sleuth Charlie Harris and his sidekick, Diesel, a Maine coon cat of typical large size. Named for his loud purr, which sounds like a big rig's idling motor, Diesel is sensitive to emotions of those around him and communicates with chirps and trills, as well as the occasional meow.

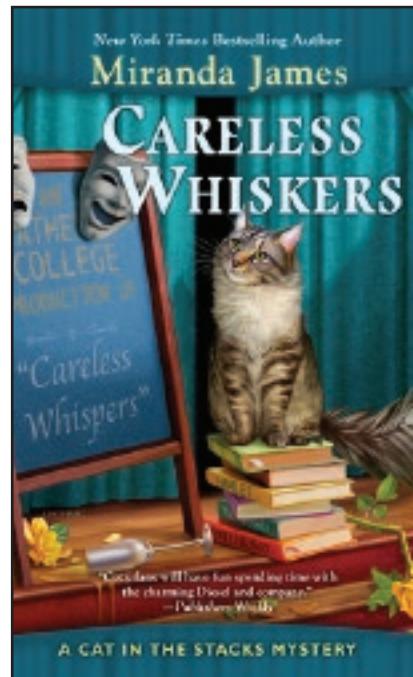
It is set in the fictional small town of Athena, Mississippi, where everyone is discussing the upcoming annual fund-raiser for the college, a student production of a new play, *Careless Whiskers*. Charlie Harris' daughter, Lauren, teaches at the college, and her husband, Frank Salisbury, is the director.

Saturday night, there's a reception for the special guest star, a somewhat successful Broadway actor, Luke Lombardi. Laura will play the female lead opposite Lombardi. Laura has already had unpleasant experiences acting with Lombardi in New York and just hopes the week passes quickly.

The playwright, Finnigan Zwake, tall,

with curly red hair and a red mustache of unique proportions, arrives late to the reception. Tension builds as guests witness Lombardi's irritating, king-size ego. Two elderly Southern ladies, Misses An'gel and Dickce DuCotte, devise a ruse to keep Lombardi in line during the rehearsal week.

Sunday evening, cast and crew gather at the college theater to rehearse before next Saturday's performance. A second Finn Zwake comes and sits next to Charlie in the theater. A day or so later, the red-headed playwright quickly leaves the theater after seeing a sheriff's officer on duty. Found hidden outside is a red wig and the mustache, and Zwake disappears. The two men's real names are Jack Howell and Micah Krause. What does the imposter hope to achieve?



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While in rehearsal, the reader meets Luke's entourage; middle-aged Madam Delphine du Jardin and her ex-husband, Anton du Jardin, who is Luke's dresser. Luke's young understudy is Jared Eckworth, very talented, but eager to take Luke's place should he be unable to go onstage. A few pranks occur - a dead snake in Luke's dressing room, and Luke's glass of whiskey (actually tea) for a scene in Act II is loaded with hot pepper. After an alarming few moments, Lombardi is all right; a glass of milk soothed the painful heat in his throat.

Saturday night arrives, and the play begins. Act I is a big success; however, right after Act II begins, Luke and Laura's characters are to share a drink onstage. Luke hesitates, then downs his

drink; all too quickly, he collapses and dies onstage. Laura didn't drink hers, making her the prime suspect. A fearful Charlie Harris rushes onstage to protect her, and everyone waits for Athena County's Chief Deputy Sheriff Kanasha Berry to arrive and take control of a possible crime scene.

A few nights later, Charlie sneaks into the theater by an unlocked back door, climbs to the balcony and listens in on the reconstruction of the crime conducted by Chief Berry. A few questions are cleared up, but the killer remains unknown.

The next morning, Charlie learns that student actor Lexi Hollinsworth was severely attacked and is in a coma at the local hospital. As terrible as this news is, it prompts Charlie to follow obscure clues to discover the source of the cyanide placed in the bottle. He later gives Kanasha Berry the information she needs to charge the killer, whom she has already detained.

Everyone is relieved to learn that Lexi recovers from her attack. Diesel isn't actually involved in solving this mystery; he offers comfort to Charlie Harris and friends. Perhaps his calming influence boosts Charlie's mental processes.

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Garden Club selects officers for 2022-23



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The Richland-Florence Garden Club (R-FGC) held their May meeting at the Richland Community Center. The new officers for the upcoming year were installed.

Sharing the president's office are Carol Azzone, Shannon Laseter and Debbie Knight; the corresponding secretary is Linda Stringer; and the treasurer is Susan Harrison. Multiple plans have already been scheduled for the new year.



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Along with installation of officers, R-FGC had a member participation plant swap and a luncheon.

Earlier in April, ten members attended the Garden Clubs of Mississippi convention that was held in Brandon. Richland-Florence's Yearbook won first place in the State and the Deep South Regional competitions.

The Garden Club is federated with the Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc., a member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc., and the Natchez Trace District.

City of Richland planning patriotic parade for June 25

Special to SW Rankin News

The City of Richland will host a patriotic parade on Saturday, June 25, at 10 a.m. in the Town Square. Participants are encouraged to "decorate your bike, scooter, trike, golfcart, wagon, stroller...even your dog. Bring your whole family!"

The parade line-up is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. next to Richland City Hall.

Attendees are encouraged to wear patriotic attire, and individuals who have served in the Armed Forces are encouraged to attend in uniform.

The parade route will travel south out of City Hall Drive and turn left onto Scarbrough Street, walking east to Town Square. It will then turn left onto Town Square and proceed back to Richland City Hall.

Safety protocols for the family friendly event include: no adult ATVs, motorized vehicles for children six-years-of-age and under only; parents must accompany all children under the age of nine; dogs must

be on a leash and kept under control; items may be handed out, but nothing may be thrown; costuming must be geared toward a general audience; foul or abusive language, nudity and sexually explicit costumes or appearance is not acceptable; and no alcohol or smoking on premises.

As "a community celebration of our nation's independence," the City asks that all participants keep the tone and attitude of participation positive, upbeat and celebratory.

Although there is no charge for parade registration, applications must be completed and submitted prior to the day of the parade.

Applications may be picked up at Richland City Hall, the Richland Senior Center or downloaded at www.richlandms.org.

Completed applications should be mailed to: REDA, P.O. Box 180875, Richland, Mississippi, 39218 or delivered to the Richland Senior Center at 371 Scarbrough Street in Richland.



Special to SW Rankin News

FMS's Trammell, Toyota qualify for High School State Championship



Special to SW Rankin News

Florence Middle School (FMS) recently congratulated Grayson Trammell and Tak Toyota for participating in the High School State Championship Tournament (HSSCT) in the boys doubles draw, noting that not many middle schoolers qualify for the state tournaments.

Richland's PriorityOne Bank welcomes Sondra Cline

Special to SW Rankin News

Robert J. Barnes, President and CEO of PriorityOne Bank, recently announced the hire of Sondra Cline as Vice President, Branch Manager/Loan Officer for PriorityOne Bank's Richland location.

"We are extremely pleased to bring Sondra on to our team," said Barnes. "She has a great deal of experience and will be a very valuable asset to PriorityOne Bank."

Cline brings to PriorityOne Bank over twenty-eight years of experience in the banking industry, with twenty-three of those years in management. She has previously worked for Magnolia Federal, Union Planters, Regions, Bank of Forest, Metropolitan Bank and Renasant Bank.

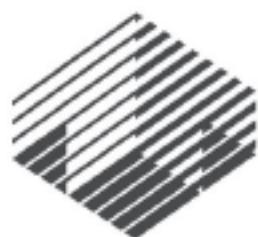
Cline has served her community in multiple leadership roles, including the



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Sondra Cline

Rotary Club. Most recently, she served as a board member for the Pearl Chamber of Commerce. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her husband, Tony, and her two dogs. Her hobbies include deer hunting and gardening.



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Pearl's PEARSON Foundation: Impacting the community one child at a time

Special to SW Rankin News

The PEARSON (People Employing Available Resources to Strengthen Our Neighborhoods) Foundation operates as a State of Mississippi nonprofit organization best practice model for in-school and after-school mentoring/tutoring programs. Led by Foundation President Jarvis Ward, its primary mission is to provide programs and activities that add value to peoples' lives so that they are positively transformed.

The after-school tutoring program employs volunteers who are available from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m., Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. The goal is one-on-one tutoring in the areas of reading and math, while also providing assistance with homework assignments. Volunteers come from various churches, as well as

local universities and colleges. Ward says he has seen the positive impact that the program has had on the local youth, not only academically, but also in the building of character.

"The idea is to help children in their

reading and math and science and to mentor them into making wise choices," says Ward.

"That's why we use Proverbs as kind of our anchor book. They have learned [that] wisdom is informational, instructional and educational knowledge used

in a wise or right way...So we encourage them to make wise choices."

PEARSON has also been working with the Rankin County Juvenile Justice Court, who refers students to the foundation as potential members of their



Special to SW Rankin News

"post detention youth mentoring." This program remains small, because the mentoring and instruction by nature is more individualized.

Currently, PEARSON is hosting their Summer Learning Institute, which provides an avenue for local youth to re-

main active and engaged in their education during the summer months.

Ward emphasizes his ongoing philosophy – to maintain singleness of purpose: "What we have focused on, and one of the things I was able to gain in my journey, is to do few things very well...Try to go as deep as possible, not necessarily as wide."

He believes that this philosophy has proven most effective, and, to that end, "if it's working, why change it?"

PEARSON Foundation, Inc. is located at 206 Old Whitfield Road in Pearl. Their hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., and Saturday by appointment and special events.

To learn more about the programs PEARSON offers, visit online at: www.pearson39208.org or contact them by phone at 601-939-7517.





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Old Truths for Today

J.T. Morgan



Memorial Day

On Monday, May 30 we observe a national holiday – Memorial Day. To many Memorial Day is the beginning of vacations, barbecues, picnics and outdoor activity. Memorial Day always falls on the last Monday in May as set by Congress.

Most people it seems have forgotten the actual reason Memorial Day became a holiday. The observance dates back to 1868 was named to honor the graves of Union soldiers. It was also known as Decoration Day when the graves the fallen soldiers was decorated with flowers. The observance of Memorial Day was started in this country in remembrance of those who died in the War between the States. Since that time, those who have sacrificed their lives in the service of our nation in any war, and since 9/11 more mention of those who lost their lives in the line of duty.

My father served in WW2 aboard a troop transport ship that was sunk by a German submarine. Many Army and Navy alike lost their lives that day. My dad was fortunate to have survived and was washed ashore. Like Memorial Day, Veterans Day is also important to remember those who have served in the military.

Memorials are nothing new to the Old and New Testaments. Stones and grave sites were set as memorials for special events to remind people of what God had done for them.

In the New Testament we find a central memorial is found in worship. Paul explains the purpose of this memorial known as The Lord's Supper or Communion. (1 Cor.11:23-29). Paul states that Jesus said the Communion was to be done "in remembrance of me" (Vs 24-25). This memorial was to be done "often". We have an example where the early church assembled on the "first day of the week" (Acts 20:7) to remember the death of Christ. The memorial is observed by His followers as a proclamation of His death until He comes. (1 Cor.11:26).

The Lord's Supper is a memorial, a reminder that the Son of God became flesh and blood; He suffered; and He was crucified on the cross of Calvary. There are two elements that are symbolic to help us in remembering. The unleavened bread (Matt.26:26) and the fruit of the vine (Matt.26:27-28). The Lord's Supper reminds of Jesus' presence with us. (Matt.26:29;18:20). This is also a time of fellowship with other Christians. (1 Cor.10:16-17).

The practice of the early church (Acts 20:7) was observed on the "first day of the week". How many weeks have a first day? Remember Jesus said, "as often as you do this you do show the Lord's death till He comes". (1 Cor.11:26). Paul waited a week in Troas for the church "to come together", which they did on Sunday, the first day of the week, to observe the Lord's Supper and to give of their means. (1 Cor.16:2). The English Standard Version states "every week". How often to you come together to partake of this important Memorial Day for Christians?

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

220 White Street

Pearl remembers Detective Mike Walter on anniversary

Special to SW Rankin News

Every year on the anniversary date, the City of Pearl remembers Detective Mike Walter, who was killed in the line of duty on May 1, 2012.

Det. Walter was shot and killed as he and other detectives served a search warrant at an apartment complex. The suspect was also killed that day.

Walter was known for the four loves he had in his life: his family, the San Diego Chargers, baseball (he was a minor league pitcher for the Jackson Generals) and law enforcement.

He is the only officer in Pearl's history to die in the line of duty. His name is etched on the Public Safety Memorial across from City Hall on

Old Brandon Road. His badge number, X-6 with a Chargers logo, is still found on many police units in the city in his honor.

The City also honors two other officers injured that day, Dave McCarty and Shaun Terwilliger, who have since recovered.

The City of Pearl continues to pray for the officers involved, their families, as well as their entire law enforcement and public safety community.



Special to SW Rankin News

RUNable \$5 5K for Central Mississippi Turtle Rescue

Special to SW Rankin News

RUNable, a low-cost, zero-pressure, high-level fun family-friendly 5K race that donates one hundred percent of entry fees to small, local causes, will be hosting the \$5 5K for Central Mississippi Turtle Rescue on Thursday, July 14, at 6 p.m. The race will be held at Trustmark Park in Pearl.

No registration is required. The cost for sign-up is \$5 in cash, per participant. The \$5 5K is a family event, and the route is dog- and stroller-friendly.

Designated as a "No Pressure" 5K, organizers say it is the perfect opportunity

for a first race or a great training run for those gearing up for marathon season. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to come.

The first 100 participants to check in on race day will receive free admission to the Mississippi Braves' game that night, when they take on the Rocket City Trash Pandas at 6:35 p.m.

Donations are also being accepted through Paypal, Venmo, or Cash App. Paypal: Chris@RUNable.life;

Venmo: @RUNableChris; and Cash App: RUNableChris.

For more information, visit www.RUNable.life.



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RCSD selects winners in annual competition



Special to SW Rankin News

Each year, the Rankin County School District (RCSD) selects an elementary teacher, secondary teacher, elementary administrator, secondary administrator, new teacher elementary, new teacher secondary and elementary assistant administrator, secondary assistant administrator, elementary parent, and a secondary parent of the year. Among the winners were Mary Anderson of McLaurin Elementary School, Elementary Teacher of the Year (front row, left); Carrie Clark of Richland Upper Elementary School, Elementary New Teacher of the Year (front row, third from left); and Amanda Clark of Florence Elementary School, Elementary Administrator of the Year (front row, right).

Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	FUNERAL HOME
Mr. David Joe Dale	69y	Florence, MS	04/29/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Larry Dewayne Williams	62y	Florence, MS	05/01/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Edward "Butch" Tinnon, Jr.	45y	Harrisville, MS	05/02/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Dennis Ray Broome	73y	Florence, MS	05/01/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Jason "Tyler" Wade	32y	Florence, MS	04/24/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Pearl Brinson Quick	93y	Florence, MS	05/03/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Billie Louise Wilkerson	89y	Florence, MS	05/05/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Leeroy "Butch" Harrison	81y	Florence, MS	05/06/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Dale Martin Moody	82y	Richland, MS	05/11/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Beatrice S. Greer	87y	Braxton, MS	05/14/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. J. W. Smith	93y	Florence, MS	05/15/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Jeff H. Schell	67y	Florence, MS	05/17/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. Robert "Bob" Smith	86y	Vicksburg, MS	05/20/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. William "Billy" Mancil	86y	Richland, MS	05/20/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. John C. "Jay" White, Jr.	75y	Florence, MS	05/21/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Judy Brady McGrady	74y	Florence, MS	05/24/2022	Chancellor FH
Mrs. Elizabeth "Ann" Beard	68y	Pearl, MS	05/26/2022	Chancellor FH
Mr. James "Jim" Blackwell	66y	Florence, MS	05/26/2022	Chancellor FH
Ms. Dorothy Barlow Loftin	88y	Florence, MS	05/28/2022	Chancellor FH

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U.S. Highway 49 project nears completion

Special to SW Rankin News

The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) is nearing the completion of a major reconstruction project on U.S. Highway 49 in Rankin County.

The massive infrastructure improvement project calls for the reconstruction of 7.5 miles of U.S. 49 from Florence to Richland. Work began in the fall of 2017 and remains on track to be completed by late summer 2022. Once complete, there will be three travel lanes and a shoulder in each direction.

“We understand the completion of this project has been a long time coming,” said Central Transportation Commissioner Willie Simmons. “I applaud MDOT crews for finding innovative ways to address issues throughout the project that undoubtedly are getting us to the finish line this summer.”

Crews are currently in the final stages of the project. Work includes placing the surface lift and tying in all side roads for the remainder of the project. All stone work is complete throughout the project, and the permanent signals are up and running.

Last month, crews reopened the Old U.S. Highway 49 crossover, the final high priority closure of the project. While the project is nearing completion, motorists



Special to SW Rankin News

should continue expecting temporary lane closures until work is complete. Other remaining work includes striping operations and sign placement.

“Please continue to be alert for roadside crews throughout the entire work zone as crews work to complete this project as safely and efficiently as possible,” said Simmons. “Once complete, the entire state will benefit from this critical infrastructure improvement project for decades to come.”

Highway work zones are meant to protect the traveling public and the highway workers on the side of the road. Highway work zones can be found throughout the state and often present unfamiliar traffic conditions. Examples of common

work zones found on Mississippi highways and a complete list of tips can be found at GoMDOT.com/drivesmartms.

To stay updated on this project and others, visit MDOTtraffic.com, download the free MDOT Traffic app or like and follow @MississippiDOT on Facebook and Twitter.



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Pearl changes Broadcasting frequencies



Special to SW Rankin News

The City of Pearl's local radio station, WPBP "The Pirate," recently announced that, as of May 27, they have changed frequencies from 104.5 to 104.3 FM. With a new look and a new parrot mascot, WPBP will continue to broadcast the same music, as well as live local sports. Pearl Municipal Broadcasting (PMB) is available live on television, radio and internet. The station broadcasts all football games, as well as most basketball and baseball games, for Pearl High School (PHS). In addition, they broadcast fast-pitch softball, soccer and other select sports, as scheduling allows. PMB also works with the Digital Media Class at PHS to teach, mentor and involve the students in their production. WPBP 104.3 FM is also available on the Tune-In Radio App.

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Florence Middle School honors Monthly Winners

Florence Middle School (FMS) recently honored the Students, Teacher and Staff of the Month for April.



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The sixth-grade Student of the Month was Kenzie Greer. Pictured (l to r) are FMS Head Principal Keith Reed, Greer, FMS Assistant Principal Kelsey Williams and FMS Assistant Principal Brock Sistrunk.



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The seventh-grade FMS Student of the Month was Kale Taylor. Pictured (l to r) are Head Principal Reed, Taylor, Assistant Principal Williams and Assistant Principal Sistrunk.



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The eighth-grade FMS Student of the Month was Kylie Bates. Pictured (l to r) are Head Principal Reed, Bates, Assistant Principal Williams and Assistant Principal Sistrunk.



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The FMS Staff Member of the Month was Paul Pruitt. Pictured (l to r) are Head Principal Reed, Pruitt, Assistant Principal Williams and Assistant Principal Sistrunk.



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The FMS Teacher of the Month was Jessica Dear. Pictured (l to r) are Head Principal Reed, Dear, Assistant Principal Williams and Assistant Principal Sistrunk.

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Local students honored with art show awards

Hinds Community College recently announced the winners of its student art show during a ceremony at the Marie Hull Art Gallery on the Raymond Campus. About 160 works of art were considered for this year's contest, which was judged by Jacob Rowan, assistant professor of art at Belhaven University.



Special to SW Rankin News

In the drawing category, Inya Kirkland of Pearl won second place. Pictured (l to r) are: Kalia Bradshaw, third place; Kirkland; and Emmanuel Burnett and Drew Winter, both honorable mentions. Not pictured are Jamiah Smith, Hannah Coon and Erin Gullett.



Special to SW Rankin News

Rachel Miestchovich of Florence placed first in the graphic design category and second in the photography category. Not pictured in the photography category are Anwar Alhanshaly, first place, and Zac Boyd, third place.

Pearl Singers perform at Winters Memorial Service



Special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Singers were recently chosen to perform at the William and Elise Winters Memorial Service. They had the opportunity to sing for Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves, U.S. Congressmen Bennie Thompson and Michael Guest, Mississippi Lieutenant Governor Delbert Hoseman, Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba, former Mississippi Governors Phil Bryant and Ronnie Musgrove, former Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Rueben Anderson, Reena Evers-Everette (daughter of civil rights advocate Medgar Evers), and former President of the United States of America Bill Clinton.

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Exchange Club of Richland honors first-responders

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Exchange Club of Richland, an all-volunteer, service organization for men and women in Richland who want to serve their community, develop leadership skills, and enjoy new friendships, recently hosted a candlelight vigil to show support for community first-responders. It was held at the gazebo across from Richland City Hall on the evening of Tuesday, May 17. Guest speakers included Pastor Kevin Jones, Pastor Gayland Sayles and Pastor Terry Fant.

The candlelight vigil will continue to be held annually, as a way to honor first-responders who support the health and well-being of those who reside in the City of Richland.



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Pastor Gayland Sayles (pictured standing on left) of Star Hill Church of Christ Holiness USA in McComb



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Pastor Terry Fant (pictured standing on left) of Hickory Ridge Baptist Church in Florence.



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Pastor Kevin Jones of First Baptist Church Richland.



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 <p>ZTX6 Series Zero-Turn Riders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23.5 - 27 HP† Engine 54"-60" deck options Heavy-duty steel frame <p>STARTING AT: \$8,699*</p>	 <p>MX 550 Camo Utility Vehicle †</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 546cc EFI Liquid-Cooler Fully-loaded feature Up to 45 mph <p>STARTING AT: \$14,799*</p>	 <p>XT2 Enduro Series Lawn Tractors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powerful Kohler† Engines 42" - 54" deck options Tuff Torq® Transmission <p>STARTING AT: \$2,999*</p>	 <p>XT3 Enduro Series Garden Tractors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22.5-25 HP† engine 42"-54" deck options Heavy-Duty Shaft Drive <p>STARTING AT: \$5,099*</p>	<p>Woods Equipment Inc. Save a horse, ride a tractor!</p> <p>3698 Hwy 80 Pearl, MS 39208 (601) 487-6647</p> <p>901 East Northside Dr. Clinton MS, 39056</p> <p>www.woodsequipmentinc.com</p> <p><small>* Product Price - Actual retail prices are set by dealer and may vary. Taxes, freight, setup and handling charges may be additional and may vary. Models subject to limited availability. Specifications and programs are subject to change without notice. Images may not reflect dealer inventory and/or unit specifications. † As rated by Kohler, all power levels are stated in gross horsepower at 3,600 RPM per SAE J1940 as rated by engine manufacturer. ‡ As rated by Kawasaki, horsepower tested in accordance with SAE J1995 and rated in accordance with SAE J2723 and certified by SAE International. Δ Cadet Commercial products are intended for professional use. †Cub Cadet Utility Vehicles are intended for off-road use, by adults only.</small></p>
 <p>PRO X 660 Stand On MowerΔ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25.5 HP†† Kawasaki FX801 60" Fabricated Deck 12cc pump transmission <p>STARTING AT: \$10,599*</p>	 <p>PRO Z 100S Series Commercial Zero-Turns Δ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial-grade engine 48-60" triple-blade FAB deck Heavy-duty steel frame <p>STARTING AT: \$8,399*</p>	 <p>PRO Z 900L Series Commercial Zero-Turn Δ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kawasaki †† Engines 60"-72" FAB triple-blade options 16cc Parker HTG, ROPS <p>STARTING AT: \$13,199*</p>	 <p>SC 500 Self-Propelled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 173cc Kohler Engine 21" Steel Deck w/wash 11" High Rear Wheels <p>STARTING AT: \$549*</p>	

Pearl student overcomes visual impairment to graduate from Hinds Community College

Special to SW Rankin News

May 12, 2022, was a big day for Whitney Jones of Pearl, who received a certificate in medical data technology from Hinds Community College.

Jones, 35, is visually impaired and overcame a few hurdles to get through her program and to the stage to pick up her credential. But, with the help of close friends, including best friend Susan Hudson, who guided her throughout the day, she persevered. Now she will return in the fall to continue the program and earn a two-year degree.

Jones attended the program on the Rankin Campus for a year and a half before transitioning to online study.

“It was very difficult. I will say that [Business Office Technology instructor] Tracy Smith was amazing. She was the best teacher I’ve ever had,” Jones said.

Jones has Addison’s Disease, which sometimes results in visual impairment as the illness progresses.

“I could see for a very long time. I could drive,” she said. “Then I found a blind spot in my vision, and it continued to grow over time. I’m thinking this is as bad as it’s going to get. It’s been pretty stable for a while, so I’m going to keep on keeping on.”

Hudson accompanied Jones as a guide throughout the graduation ceremony on May 12.

“She is the most courageous person I know. She has never let any of her hurdles stop her or slow her down. She continues to push through life to accomplish everything that she feels she should,” Hudson said. “She is an asset to my life.”

Using “taking steps” as her theme, Abby Granberry, daughter of McLaurin High School’s Head Principal Russell



Special to SW Rankin News

Pictured third from right is Whitney Jones of Pearl.

Granberry, gave remarks on behalf of her classmates. She is planning a career in elementary education. At Hinds, she served as president of Phi Theta Kappa on the Raymond Campus and vice president of Hinds Connection.

“Over the last two years, Hinds has continued to be a place that encourages me and has given me the support I need. Most importantly, Hinds is a place where I have been inspired to grow not only academically, but personally, as well,” Granberry said.

“Everyone chooses Hinds for different reasons. Maybe you fell in love with it while you were touring colleges, or your friends and family came here, or perhaps it made the most financial sense to start here. No matter why you chose Hinds, while you were here, you have grown and are now ready to step

into the next phase of your life,” she said.

Hinds Community College graduated more than 1,300 students in four graduation ceremonies over two days at the Muse Center on the Rankin Campus and a fifth ceremony at J.D. Boyd Gymnasium on the Utica Campus. Hinds awarded 1,671 certificates and

degrees, with some students receiving more than one credential.

Of the graduates, 252 graduated cum laude with a grade point average of 3.2 to 3.59; 199 graduated magna cum laude with a grade point average of 3.6 to 3.99, and 209 graduated summa cum laude with a grade point average of 4.0.

“Every graduation ceremony is special to the college, as we celebrate the success of each student. It is important that we truly celebrate what our graduates have achieved,” said Hinds President Dr. Stephen Vacik.



Special to SW Rankin News

Pictured third from the right is Abby Granberry.

MHS welcomes Hedgepeth as new coach

Special to SW Rankin News



Special to SW Rankin News

Will Hedgepeth

McLaurin High School (MHS) recently welcomed Will Hedgepeth as their new coach. Hedgepeth is a graduate of Madison Ridgeland Academy, where he played football, basketball and baseball. He graduated with a B.S. in kinesiology sports management and has a Masters of Education in teaching arts from Mississippi College.

His career began at Parklane Academy in McComb, coaching football and baseball (advancing to the football state championship his third year). He has served most recently at Richland High School as the offensive coordinator for football and pitching coach for the baseball team.

Hedgepeth and his wife Lacey have been married for almost six years and have two daughters, Rhysanne (three years old) and Corley (seven months old).

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Libraries bring back in-person summer programs

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The Central Mississippi Regional Library System (CMRLS) recently announced that, after two years of virtual Summer Library Programming, this year's programs will be held in-person.

The 2022 Summer Library Program theme is Oceans of Possibilities. Running through Friday, July 15, all CMRLS libraries will host in-person programming. The goal during the summer library program each year is to encourage children to continue to read while out of school. Studies have proven that if they do not read during the summer months, children may lose much of the reading ability that they have worked so hard to achieve.

Registration for the CMRLS Summer Library Program can be com-

pleted on Beanstack, an online tool that facilitates reading challenges, to have any library fines forgiven. Those who complete the reading goals by July 15 will be entered into the Grand Prize Drawing for Rankin County. Patrons can visit the Pearl, Richland or Florence Public Library for more information on programs and how to register.



The Pearl Public Library is located at 2416 Old Brandon Road in Pearl. For more information, call 601-932-2562.

The Richland Public Library is located at 370 Scarbrough Street in Richland. For more information, call 601-932-1846.

The Florence Public Library is located at 115 West Main Street in Florence. For more information, call 601-845-6032. CMRLS is also available online at www.cmrls.lib.ms.us.

Miss Black Rankin County makes special visit to RES



Special to SW Rankin News

Pictured (l to r) are Jamie Adams, Faith Dillon, Anitra Hollis and Johnna Henley.



Special to SW Rankin News

Miss Black Rankin County, Faith Dillon, recently had the opportunity to read to students at her former elementary school, Richland Elementary (RES). Head Principal Anitra Hollis, Assistant Principal Johnna Henley, Literacy Coach Jelisa Davis and Dillon's first-grade teacher Jamie Adams were on hand while Dillon read from Tim Tebow's *Mission Possible* and Dr. Seuss's *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*



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Pictured (l to r) are Jelisa Davis and Dillon.

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PEARL RESERVOIR RICHLAND/FLORENCE OUTDOOR POWER

Richland High names Students of the Month



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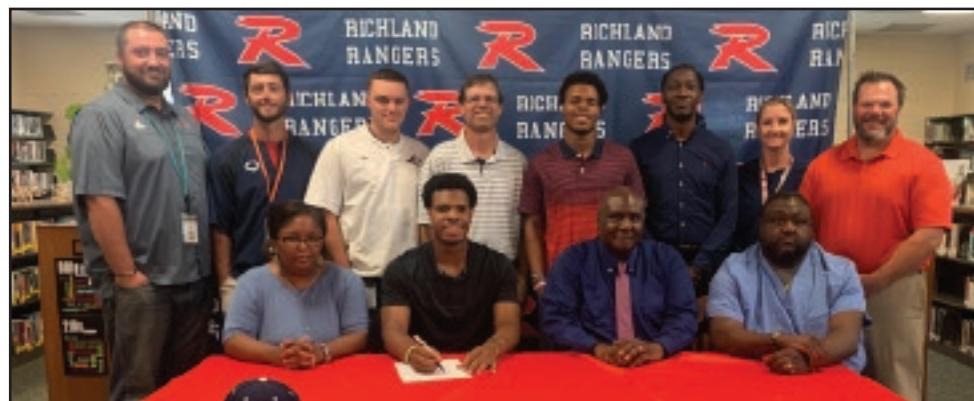
Richland High School (RHS) recently named the April 2022 Students of the Month. These students are nominated and selected by their teachers for such qualities as dependability, attitude, leadership, attendance and class work. Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Arianna Norwood, Sara Beth Bates and Kylie Sutphin; and back row: Breanna Lenard, Ben Bates and Logan Weber.

Richland High athletes sign with local CCs



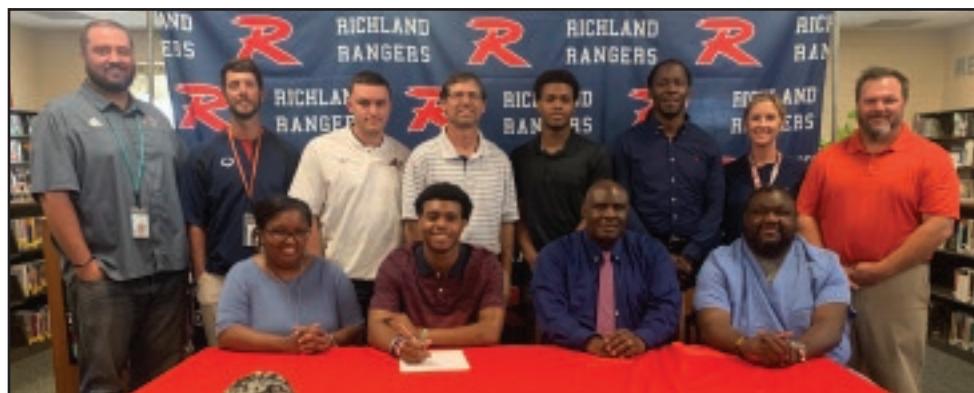
Special to SW Rankin News

Richland High School (RHS) football standout Carter Smith signed a scholarship with Hinds Community College for the 2022-2023 school year. Pictured at the signing (l to r) were, front row: Barbara Monroe (mother) and Carter Smith; and back row: RHS Assistant Principal Corey Yates, Assistant Athletic Director Katie Allen, Assistant Coach Tony Boyd, RHS Coach JJ Plummer, Athletic Director Todd Montgomery, Assistant Coach Reggie Smith and Assistant Principal Dr. Terrance McEwen.



Special to SW Rankin News

RHS baseball standout Marcus Jackson signed a scholarship with Southwest Community College for the 2022-2023 school year. Pictured at the signing (l to r) were, front row: Teresa Jackson (mother), Marcus Jackson, Marvin Jackson (father) and Fred Terry; and back row: Assistant Coach Will Hedgepeth, Assistant Coach Chad Wooten, Assistant Coach Dylan Scruggs, Head Coach Jonathan Broome, Marvin Martin (brother), Principal Dr. Marcus Stewart, Assistant Athletic Director Katie Allen and Athletic Director Montgomery.



Special to SW Rankin News

RHS baseball standout Marvin Jackson IV signed a scholarship with East Central Community College for the 2022-2023 school year. Pictured (l to r) at the signing were, front row: Teresa Jackson (mother), Marvin Jackson, Marvin Jackson (father) and Fred Terry; and back row: Assistant Coach Hedgepeth, Assistant Coach Wooten, Assistant Coach Scruggs, Head Coach Broome, Marvin Martin (brother), Principal Stewart, Assistant Athletic Director Allen and Athletic Director Montgomery.



Special to SW Rankin News

RHS cheerleader Alyssa Grantham signed a scholarship with Hinds Community College for the 2022-2023 school year. Pictured at the signing (l to r) were, front row: Shelby Grantham (sister), Missy Grantham (mother), Alyssa Grantham, Joe Grantham (father) and Chris Grantham (brother); and back row: Principal Stewart, RHS Coach Terri Sullivan, HCC Coach Karlee Nobles and Athletic Director Montgomery.

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Final days of school at Pearl Lower Elementary



Special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Lower Elementary students in Jennifer Noel's first-grade class enjoy going to the computer lab to work on a reading program that helps them become successful readers. Pictured (l to r) are Javeya Lang, T.W. Lobin, Levi Matthews and Jordyn Patton.



Special to SW Rankin News

Students in Nicole Jones' kindergarten class learned about different insects and made a worms in dirt treat to celebrate all of their hard work this year. Pictured (l to r) are Maynor Muralles-Torres, Jacob Broadway, Kaylin Jones and Holly Marie Cox.



Special to SW Rankin News

Students in Rhonda Green's class counted and planted seeds to celebrate Earth Day. Students recycled milk cartons to use as pots for their plants. Pictured (l to r) are Jared Rodriguez, Austin Carnahan and Deija Mixon.



Richland HS announces leadership award recipients



Special to SW Rankin News

Each month, Richland High School recognizes two students for exemplary performance in academics, leadership and service. The students are selected by teachers and announced to the student body. Sophomores Ethan Keen and Anecia Robinson were chosen for the April award.

Cresap, Harrison presented with Star Interact Club Student Award



Special to SW Rankin News

Rotary Club of South Rankin County recently presented Landon Cresap of Florence High School the Star Interact Club Student Award at their Senior Awards night.



Special to SW Rankin News

Kaygan Harrison of Richland High School received the Star Interact Club Student Award at Rotary Club of South Rankin County Senior Awards night. Each award comes with a \$250 dollar scholarship.

Pearl Upper Elementary end of year activities



Special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Upper Elementary (PUE) students participated in a dodgeball tournament as a reward for doing their best during testing. Jenny Keith's fourth-grade class placed first in the tournament. Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Anna Lowe, Addy Alford, Sophie Shelton and Garrett Smith; second row: Jenny Keith, Cortez Jackson, Kayden Thompson, Maddox Westerfield, Hudson Wright and Kayden Belford; third row: Christopher Gregory, Ava Hatch, Katherine Veliz-Gonzales and Holden Webb; and back row: Annalise Williams, Hannah Williams, Shakayla Thompson, Zayden Coleman and Jared Lopez.



Special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Junior High School (PJHS) Counselor Brigit Nelson visited PUE to speak to fifth-grade students about filling out schedule sheets and choosing electives for sixth-grade.



Special to SW Rankin News

Katie Tupy, a conservation educator from the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, visited with fifth-grade Quest students to discuss owls and owl conservation. The students also got to meet Griffin, a rescue barred owl, during her visit.



Special to SW Rankin News

PUE Quest students prepared care bags for Gateway Rescue Mission as part of a school-wide service project. Pictured (l to r) are: Kenzie Anslum, Brayden Chambliss, Carrington Taylor, Madeline Henderson and Katelyn Cole.



Special to SW Rankin News

Two fifth-grade students placed in the Rankin County Soil Conservation Poster Contest. Pictured from (l to r) are second place winner Hartleigh Carter, PUE Principal Gavin Gill and third place winner Jackson Lewis.



Special to SW Rankin News

PUE recently recognized the top sellers from its World's Finest Chocolate fundraiser. Pictured are fourth-grade student Cayden McFarland (left) and fifth-grade student Christian Callender (right). Both students received a cash prize and a five-pound chocolate bar for their achievement.

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