

## Westbrook named Pearl Police Officer and Patrolman of the Year

By Susie A. Wolfe

Pearl Police Department Officer of 2018 is Officer Glen Westbrook. Westbrook graduated from Madison Central Academy and later began working at the Rankin County jail. He graduated from MLEOTA in 2010 and went to work for the Brandon Police Department (PD). He was hired by Pearl PD in 2016, and currently works a burglary suppression unit on patrol and also on the SWAT team.

"The reason I got into law enforcement was to try to make a difference in the community," said Westbrook. "I began my law enforcement career in 2009, and I have been employed by Pearl for almost three years. The best part of my job is when someone that I have previously arrested approaches me and tells me how they have turned



Special to SW Rankin News  
Officer Glen Westbrook, left, is shown with Pearl Police Chief Dean Scott.

their life around since the arrest."

"Receiving both Officer of the Year and Patrolman of the Year is very humbling. It is an honor in itself to know that I am respected by my peers. I appreciate this recognition for my dedication and commitment to my job. I am genuinely thankful for my shift because in this profession, we rely on each other to ensure the job is done and everyone goes home to their family," he said.

Lieutenant Brian McGairty said this about Westbrook, "Officer Westbrook's enhanced training, precision skills, and quick thinking ended a potential threat not just to himself but as well as to the many motorists that were traveling Interstate 20 at the time of the 2018 incident, as well as residential areas parallel with I-20. This incident could very well be an obituary, but instead an officer went back to his shift, a community was kept safe, and a daddy and husband went home to his wife and four children. We are grateful and appreciative for Officer Glen Westbrook. Police Chief Dean Scott said, "Glen does an excellent job, going the extra mile to keep the citizens of Pearl safe. He loves his job and makes my job easier by being what the citizens want out of a police officer."

## FHS Random Acts of Kindness Club shared Christmas cheer



Special to SW Rankin News

Members of the Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Club at Florence High School (FHS) "decked the halls" before Christmas break with stockings that had kind messages for every student in the school. Students were able to go around the school throughout the day to look for their stocking. The RAK Club also hosted its annual Christmas Party for the FHS special-needs students. They provided food, gifts, and a great time of fellowship. The RAK Club works hard to make sure that all students feel loved, included, appreciated, and noticed.

### Inside this issue:

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Walley named new pastor at FBC Florence - pg. 9

## Plummer named Ranger head football coach

Special to SW Rankin News

New Richland High head football coach J.J. Plummer is no stranger to the metro area. Plummer joins the Rangers after serving the last four seasons as the head coach at 6A Terry High School. His 7-5 season in 2017 was the first winning record for the Bulldog program since 2006, as Terry just missed out on a playoff berth in the brutal Region 3-6A.

Plummer has a history of improving programs and has been named Coach of the Year three times in his career. His tenure at Terry was preceded by a stint at St. Andrew's Episcopal School. Plummer has also served as the head coach at North Pontotoc High School.

Prior to working in the high school ranks, Plummer spent time coaching on the college level for eight years. He was an assistant at Hinds Community College and also worked under head coach Jackie Sherril at Mississippi State. While in Starkville, Plummer was a de-



Special to SW Rankin News

J.J. Plummer was selected to lead RHS football.

fensive assistant on the staff run by Joe Lee Dunn. Plummer also worked on the professional level with The Mississippi Pride, a late 90's member of the Regional Football League (RFL).

"I'd like to thank Dr. Townsend with the Rankin County School District, and Dr. Rimes with the school for this opportunity," said Plummer. "I'm looking

continued on page 3

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## "Krewe de Roux" Mardi Gras Parade set for 7 p.m. March 1

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The Inaugural "Krewe de Roux" Mardi Gras Parade and Block Party and Gumbo Festival will kick off March's first weekend's festivities. The Mardi Gras Parade and Block Party will be held on Friday, March 1, in Downtown Brandon, followed by the Gumbo Festival on Saturday, March 2, at the Brandon Amphitheater. This event is being held to support the Chamber Youth Leadership program, which has been and continues to develop young leaders from all schools in Rankin County for more than 20 years.

Friday evening, March 1, the celebration will kick off with a Mardi Gras themed parade that will take place in Downtown Brandon. This will begin promptly at 7 p.m. at the corner of Jasper St. and College St. Following the parade, local restaurants such as Genna Benna, Mud Bugs, and The Gallows Bar will be open late with entertainment. Proceeds of their sales will help support the Chamber project.

Saturday morning, March 2, at 11 a.m., the Amphitheater gates will open to the Gumbo Festival. Approximately



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40 teams will be providing sample size gumbo, competing for prizes including Best Gumbo. Along with the food, there will be music provided by Southern Komfort Brass Band and Jason Miller Band.

For more information on any of the Mardi Gras and Gumbo Fest activities, call the Rankin Chamber at 601-825-2268.

## The Central Mississippi Regional Library System earns Star Status

Special to SW Rankin News

The Mississippi Library Commission (MLC) recently named the Central Mississippi Regional Library System (CMRLS) as one of twelve public library systems as Mississippi Library Stars for FY 2017. In the level four category, CMRLS joined the Jackson and Hattiesburg systems in receiving this honor.

The star ratings are then calculated by comparing libraries' in the following areas: Mississippi Measures – an amalgamation of statistics on interlibrary loan, statewide database use, number of registered users, and items withdrawn; circulation per capita; total program attendance per capita; and public Internet terminal uses per capita.

"Being named a Mississippi Star Library System is a great honor and shows we are committed to providing quality products and services," said CMRLS Director Mara Polk. "As our newly-adopted mission statement states 'CMRLS is a strong community partner that provides resources, services, and programs to foster creativity, curiosity, and lifelong learning.'"

Central Mississippi Regional Library System serves the twenty public libraries and more than 216,000 residents

of Rankin, Scott, Simpson, and Smith Counties. Visit online at [www.cmrls.lib.ms.us](http://www.cmrls.lib.ms.us) for information on library branches and hours of operation; as well as to download eBooks, Audiobooks, magazines, music, and homework help.



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CMRLS was awarded a Mississippi Library Star because it is one of the best-scoring libraries in this state in usage.

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## Calender named MSH Employee of the Month



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Linda Calender of Pearl has been named Mississippi State Hospital (MSH)'s December Employee of the Month for Direct Care. A Phillips Junior College alumna, Calender is a direct care supervisor in Inpatient Services and has been employed at MSH for 22 years.

## PPSD names Parents of the Year



Special to SW Rankin News

Annually, Pearl Public School District participates in the Parent of the Year program sponsored by the Mississippi Department of Education. Each school selects one parent as its Parent of the Year for the contributions made to the educational program of the school. The 2018-2019 Parents of the Year for each school are pictured (l to r): PJ Turner, Pearl Junior High School; Sharon Bennett, Pearl Lower Elementary; Betty Eaton, Pearl High School; Shannon Ellis, Pearl Upper Elementary; and Summer Slovak, Northside Elementary.

continued from page 1

## Plummer named Ranger head football coach

forward to getting to work and beginning to build relationships with our student-athletes."

Football is something that is in Plummer's blood as his father, Johnny, is a coaching legend in the state. The elder Plummer was the head coach at Delta State, Northeast Mississippi Com-

munity College, and an assistant under Emory Bellard at Mississippi State. He also served as an assistant coach and head coach at the high school level during his 55-year coaching career.

J.J. Plummer and his wife, Olivia, are the parents of Halle Jane, seven, and Jett, 18.





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## D-BAT opens in Pearl



Photo by SW Rankin News

Pearl Fire Chief Brad Thornton and Battalion Chief Donnie Boykin opened the only Mississippi franchise of D-BAT in Pearl in February. They offer memberships and special events like Date Night for February 14 and 15 for a Valentine's Day parents' night-out.

By Susie A. Wolfe

Pearl Fire Chief Brad Thornton and Battalion Chief Donnie Boykin have opened a franchise of D-BAT, a baseball and softball training facility, in Pearl across the highway from Park Place Baptist Church. It is the only D-BAT location in Mississippi.

D-BAT originally meant "Dallas baseball" where the franchise started, but has been revised to mean "developing beliefs, attitudes, and traditions." There are 70 other D-BAT locations around the country, including Monroe and Shreveport, Louisiana.

Thornton, a Pearl native, and Boykin, from Florence, have been friends since they joined the Pearl Fire Department on the same day 25 years ago. Both have children who play baseball and softball, so Thornton found out about the franchise opportunity, and they officially opened their doors around the first of February.

"We have hand-picked instructors that are the best in the area," said Boykin. "They offer private lesson on hitting, pitching, fielding and catching."

D-BAT instructors include Jordan Herring, softball pitching instructor; Bry Castro, softball instructor; Dani Craft, softball instructor; Quinton Robertson, pitching instructor; Kevin Griffin, baseball and softball instructor; Will Costinett, baseball instructor; and JG Miley, hitting and fielding;

They have renovated the Fads & Frames location into batting cage, and

turfed fields for instruction and automated pitching machines. They have computer programs that allow members to choose any MLB field where the pitching machines can throw out a curve ball, slow pitch or anything else. It captures analytics for the players' files.

The D-BAT team is comprised of the two owners as well as eight instructors and six part-timers. Even before officially opening, the facility has had packed houses getting ready for the 2019 season. In addition to private baseball and softball lessons, they offer pitching machines with real baseballs and softballs, a fully-stocked pro shop, and over 50 camps and clinics. They also offer a membership program with discounts on lessons, camps and clinics, cage rentals, and pro shop merchandise, along with the option of being able to use the pitching machines for free every day.

Boykin and his wife, Kelly, have two children, Breley, a senior at Jackson Prep who has signed to play softball at the University of Southern Mississippi starting this summer; and Keaton, an eighth grader at Park Place Christian Academy who plays both baseball and football. Thornton and his wife, Angie, also have two children who play. Nick is a ninth grader at Brandon who plays soccer and baseball, and Katie is at Brandon Elementary School and she plays volleyball.

D-BAT is open Monday-Friday, 10-9, Saturday, 10-6, and Sunday, 1-6. For more information, call 601-706-3228.



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# Hite named PPSD Teacher of the Year



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Jennifer Hite, a fifth-grade science teacher at Pearl Upper Elementary (PUE), has been selected as the 2018-2019 Pearl Public School District (PPSD) Teacher of the Year. Hite, a ten-year veteran educator, will represent PPSD in the Mississippi Department of Education's Teacher of the Year Program. This program recognizes exemplary teachers in the state. Pictured (l to r) are: PPSD Assistant Superintendent Cedric Graham, PUE Principal Gavin Gill, PPSD Superintendent Dr. Raymond Morgigno, Hite, PUE Assistant Principal Sheila McKay, PUE Assistant Principal Kim Scutch, and PPSD Assistant Superintendent Kim LaFontaine.

# Pearl student assists in Mississippi House

Special to SW Rankin News

Brady Boykin of Pearl served as a page for the Mississippi House of Representatives on January 17. Pages generally run errands for officials and House staff.

Boykin is the son of Jennifer and Justin Boykin. He attends Pearl High School.

"This is my third time serving here at the Mississippi State Capitol, and every year I am challenged with new learning experiences," said Boykin when asked about this week. "I would like to first thank Representative Jay Hughes for giving me this opportunity. Secondly, I would like to thank my parents for set-



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Brady Boykin is pictured (l to r) with his sponsor of the week, Representative Jay Hughes, Boykin, fellow page Carter Moore and Speaker Pro Tempore Greg Snowden.

ting me up to take part in this experience. And lastly, I would like to thank all three head pages for their encouragement and open-mindedness."



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Annie "Ann" Mae Lynch	85	Old Pearl, MS	1/12/19	Chanellow Funeral Home
Betty Ann Barrow	68	Florence, MS	1/12/19	Chancellor Funeral Home
Dynnea Edwards	47	Crystal Springs, MS	1/16/19	Chancellor Funeral Home
Allie Russell Harris	83	Florence, MS	1/20/19	Chancellor Funeral Home
Nell Walters Ashley	81	Florence, MS	1/23/19	Chancellor Funeral Home
Zenia Davis Spencer	92	Florence, MS	1/26/19	Chancellor Funeral Home
Gina Marie Vaughn	52	Florence, MS	1/29/19	Chancellor Funeral Home
Stella "Rudi" Hilbun	72	Florence, MS	1/29/19	Chancellor Funeral Home

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Garden Club studies faux painting



Special to SW Rankin News

The Richland-Florence Garden Club held their January Meeting at the Richland Community Center. Their guest, Virginia Weathersby, owner of Southern Faux Painting, demonstrated her technique for faux painting. She showed how to chalk paint a clay flower pot and a wooden birdhouse. Richland Garden Club is federated with The Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc. and National Garden clubs, Inc. For information contact Debbie Knight, club president, at [beautistop@att.net](mailto:beautistop@att.net).

RHS men’s soccer beats Florence



Special to SW Rankin News

Richland High School (RHS) men's Ranger soccer team claimed their third straight district championship with a 3-1 win over the Florence Eagles. They hosted a first round playoff game in late January.

Morris named Pearl January Firefighter of the Month

Special to SW Rankin News

Captain Alvin Morris was selected as the Pearl Fire Department Firefighter of the Month in January. Captain Morris is a 1985 Pearl High School graduate and has been with Pearl Fire Department since April 1989. Throughout the years, he has made his way through the ranks, while amassing over 1000 training hours at the Mississippi State Fire Academy. Captain Morris was promoted to the rank of Captain on October 1, 2010, while also serving as the

Chaplain of the Fire Department. Over the past two years, Captain Morris has spearheaded an effort to collect toys and supplies for the less fortunate in our community. Through his relationship with a local retailer, he was able to provide Christmas gifts and supplies for families of the Center for Violence Prevention. His fellow officers say Captain Morris is always willing to lend a helping hand in any situation while on duty or off and is well deserving of this award. He has influenced many throughout the Fire Department and the rest of the community.



Special to SW Rankin News

Captain Morris was recognized at the January City of Pearl Board Meeting. He is surrounded by City officials, firefighters and family.

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## Why the Mayor's Youth Council is important



By Gray Macoy,  
President of Richland  
Mayor's Youth Council

Special to  
SW Rankin News  
Gray Macoy is the  
current president  
of the Richland  
Mayor's Youth  
Council.

When I joined the Richland Mayor's Youth Council (RMYC) in ninth grade, I joined because I thought it would just be an easy way to earn community service hours. What

I didn't realize is that it is so much more than just community service hours. It really shows you and teaches you important things you need later on in life as you grow up. Things like leadership, being involved in your community, and friendship, as well as relationships in your community.

Throughout my time in RMYC, I have been able to see what makes a good leader. What separates the good leaders from the bad ones, and RMYC

has helped me to become a better leader and to be more confident in my leadership. RMYC has also taught me how important it is to be involved in your community. It showed me that we shouldn't just sit back and watch as the city does all the work, we as residents should jump in as much as we can to help them and to get a better understanding of what all the community consists of. We should always strive to be active and a part of the community to help create an amazing place to live. The other thing RMYC has taught me is how everything in the community works together. It isn't just a one-man show, everything works together, the schools, the residents, the stores, and the city workers, everything works together to create the community.

I am extremely proud of being a part of the RMYC and will always cherish what I've learned through it and the memories I've made while being a part of it.

## RHS names November Student Athletes of Month



Special to SW Rankin News

Joshua Jackson and Savannah Lewis were chosen as Richland High School (RHS)'s Student-Athletes of the Month for November. The award recognizes students who perform exceptionally on the field and in the classroom. Pictured (l to r) are: RHS Athletic Director Trey Bailey, Lewis, Jackson, and Principal Dr. Scott Rimes.

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# HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

## Love your local businesses

By Susie A. Wolfe

Whether giving gifts for Valentine's Day or at other times of the year, Pelahatchie residents are encouraged to shop local, which not only helps neighbors, it also helps themselves.

Each dollar spent at independent businesses returns three times more money to the local economy than one spent at a chain (Source:

American Independent Business Association). It also helps build relationships and community cohesiveness.

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## Florentine Club hears about canine companions



Special to SW Rankin News

Speaker for the January Florentine Club meeting was Cindy Bailey, left, with Canine Companions of the Mississippi Animal Rescue League, shown with Betty Harpe, Florentine Club President.

## DCS announces honor roll

Special to SW Rankin News

Discovery Christian School announced the following third through twelfth grade second nine weeks honor roll students.

**Third grade:** All As: Malachi Byrd, Brody Randall, Emma Walker  
A&B Honors: Reagan Russell  
All Bs: Kyleigh Bledsoe, Abby Burleson, Ava Floyd, Kenzie Lambright, and Chasidy Skinner.

**Fourth grade:**  
All As: Jesse Cheatham, Dryskol Fryery, Abby Gipson, Marley Jackson  
A&B Honors: Miles Horne, Hunter Isbell, Mylee Mangum, and Allison Vincent; All Bs: Sophie Wade.

**Fifth grade:** All As: Riley Campbell, Aaron Engel, Luke Germany, Blaire Kelly, and Jimmy Wilson; A&B Honors: Isabella Applewhite, Noah Ellis, Evionne Hervey, Nathan Knight, Trent Poe, Emily Straut, and Meredith Ware.

**Sixth grade:** All As: Olivia Teten  
A&B Honors: Sara Benton, Shelby Gousset, Marissa Spitchley, Makayla Staten, Tyler Roden, and Coleman Wil-

liams.

**Eighth grade:** All As: Matthew Bradshaw and Noah Eiler; A&B Honor Roll: Nevada Bailey, Lona Coleman, Preston Engle, Emma Lacey, Brianna Marino, Brady Nelson, Nathan Prine, Anna Vincent, and Anna Watkins.

**Ninth grade:** All As: Makaylin Cuelar, Haydon Dillon, and Avery Garrett.  
A&B Honors: Connor Adcock, Briana Benton, Jarrod Boteler, Isaac Bradshaw, Jackson Campbell, Braydon Evans, Logan Fryery, Joe Gipson, Alexis Harrell, Peyton Hollingsworth, Katelyn Roden, and Hannah Williams.

**Tenth grade:**  
All As: Wesley Murphy; A&B Honors: Caleb Dyess, Zach Eiler, Sydney Grace

Lewis, Scout McCrory, Mack Talley, Gabby Wade, and Madelin Wilson.

**Eleventh grade:** All As: Jaydn Bledsoe, Audrey Garrett, Melody Leggett, Jade Neal, and Isaiah Yates; A&B Honors: Emma Gifford, Elizabeth Russell, and Piper Tolleson.

**Twelfth grade:** All As: Aaron Effinger and Mackenzie McCrory; A&B Honors: Sydney Helms.



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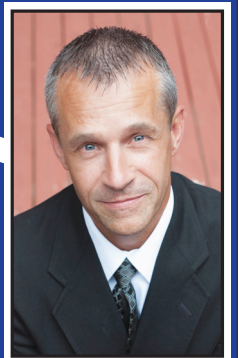
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## Lions honor Florence cadet



Special to SW Rankin News

The Florence Lions Club was honored to have as its guest speaker Cadet Ben Neely of Florence, who is finishing his senior year at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York. He will be commissioned in May of this year. His major field of study is engineering. Cadet Neely gave the Lions Club an overview of his time at West Point. Pictured (l to r) are: Cadet Neely (center) is pictured with his parents, Barbara and Tally Neely.

## Walley named new pastor at FBC Florence

By Susie A. Wolfe

Jamie Walley is the new pastor at First Baptist Church (FBC) in Florence. He assumed his new role in December 17, 2018.

Walley grew up in Maryland with his mom and step-father, then moved back to Mississippi in 1987. He gave his life to Christ at the age of 13 and began his faith journey at Griffith Memorial Baptist Church.

Walley's call to ministry was made clear to him in 2003. While attending Meadow Grove Baptist Church, he had an opportunity to serve bi-vocationally as the student pastor. Eventually, the church called him to be the full-time Student and Missions Pastor, where he served faithfully for over fifteen years. He was ordained at Meadow Grove on August 14, 2005. He recently served as the interim student pastor at Pinelake Madison and plans to continue his seminary training online through Spurgeon College in the spring of 2019.

Walley and his wife, Stephanie, have been married for twenty-two years and have four children. Evan is 21 and serves as the Pastor of Worship Bands/Music Director for Pinelake Reservoir Campus. Eli, 16, and Olivia, 14, are both homeschooled. While serving as



Special to SW Rankin News

Jamie Walley is the new pastor at FBC Florence. He started on December 17. Pictured (l to r) with his family, front row: Timothy, Stephanie, Jamie, and Olivia; and second row: Evan and Eli.

a foster family, they brought Timothy into their home when he was five months old in 2014. Timothy has Congenital Nephrotic Syndrome and will need a kidney transplant. He was officially adopted in August of 2017 and "has a smile that lights up any room!"

Walley's ministerial philosophy is based on 2 Timothy 3:16-17: All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

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## FHS JROTC drill team places third



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FHS Cadet Frankie Monk reporting in with her platoon at the JROTC Army Drill State Championship.

### Special to SW Rankin News

The Florence High School JROTC Drill Team recently competed in the sixth Brigade Army Drill State Championship, where they placed third overall. The team earned many individual awards, including a first-place unarmed exhibition, second place armed exhibi-

tion, second place armed squad, third place unarmed inspection, fourth place armed inspection and a fifth-place color guard. The seniors of the drill team competed in their last competition of the year and now look forward to training the new and younger cadets to be prepared for their upcoming drill competitions and seasons ahead.

## Griffin selected as Florence High's Teacher of the Year

### Special to SW Rankin News

Florence High School (FHS) named Tonya Griffin as its 2018-19 Teacher of the Year. Griffin is in her sixth year teaching math at FHS and is in her fifteenth year in education, which also included a lengthy tenure at Florence Middle School prior to joining the faculty at FHS. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Griffin serves as the Math Department chairperson and a member of the FHS Leadership Team.

When asked about her philosophy of teaching, Griffin responded, "As a teacher and an individual, I have had to realize that my class is not about me, but about the impressionable students that walk through my door. Some days, it is hard to put aside my problems and thoughts and listen to what they have to say, but when I manage to do that, I learn so much. Our world will go on, but these kids think the smallest things

will end theirs. Listening to them and talking to them have shown me how to be more compassionate in all areas of my life. Being an educator is the hardest job I have ever had, but it is by far the most rewarding job I could ever imagine having."

Griffin is married to John Griffin, and they have a son, Brady. She is an avid baseball, football, and basketball mom who is always on the go. In her free time, she enjoys exercising and reading.



Special to SW Rankin News

Math chair Tonya Griffin is the 2018-19 FHS Teacher of the Year.

## Old Truths for Today

By J.T. Morgan



### Is God Real?

Some men say, "There is no God." "All the wonders around you are accidental caused by no outside force. There is no way some almighty hand made a thousand billion stars. Man is a mere child of chance, an offspring of lower forms of life."

Here are some facts:

The surface of our land has a layer of top soil, without which we would have no vegetables to eat, no grass for the animals to graze whose meat is used for our food.

The inexhaustible envelope of air is only 50 miles deep and of exactly the right density to support human life. This is just another natural law of physics.

Water expands when it freezes, while other substances contract. This makes ice lighter than water and keeps it floating on the surface. Otherwise lakes would be solid ice down to the bottom and no fish could survive.

We have day and night because the earth spins at a given speed without slowing down. Who made this arrangement? Who tilts the earth just the right angle, so we have the different seasons? The sun's, the great ball of fire, generates tremendous amounts of heat that if the earth were closer, we would burn up. The earth is just the right distance, so we don't burn up and we don't freeze to death. So who designed this and put these things in motion?

The human heart will beat for 70 or 80 years. How does it get sufficient rest between heart beats? A kidney will filter the poison and impurities from the blood and leave the good things alone. How does the kidney know which is good or bad? Who gave the human tongue flexibility to form words, and who made a brain to understand them?

Is it all accidental? "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'." (Psa.14:1). The psalmist said, "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psa. 139:14).

It all begins with God! "In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth." (Gen.1:1). If we do not get this part right the remainder will not be right either! In the creation God made something from nothing. A watch tells us that at some period in time there was a watchmaker. A watch did not just suddenly appear. God has always existed, and all that He created was good. "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the sixth day. (Gen. 1:31). "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done." (Gen.2:1-3). "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?" (Psa.8:3-4). The universe is so huge, and man is so small, yet God has paid attention to us. It should make us humble to realize that God knows each one of us among all of His creation!

Florence Church of Christ, P.O. Box 277, Florence, Ms 39073

## FHS JROTC places first and second



Special to SW Rankin News

Florence High School (FHS) JROTC recently participated in the Rankin County School District Orienteering meet. There were over twenty teams from five schools participating in the event. The FHS JROTC team of Andrew White, JJ McQueen and Ethan Woods placed second overall and had the fastest time finding all five of their points.

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GETTING TO KNOW: Eddie Grimes enjoys helping the community

By Susie A. Wolfe

Eddie Grimes has sold insurance since April, 1989. He started with Allstate at the sales booth in the Jackson Sears Store in the Metro Center Mall. He opened his neighborhood sales office at on Highway 49 in Richland. He moved to his current office in Riverwood Center in Richland in 2013.

"First, I do my best to find out what a customer's needs are so I can make the best recommendations to them," said Grimes. "As a multiline insurance provider, at my office we focus on bundling our customers' needs to offer our customers' premium discounts to help lower their insurance costs."

Originally from Aberdeen, Mississippi, Grimes has spent most of his life as a resident of Rankin County in the Pearl, Richland, and Florence areas. He graduated from Florence High School and Mississippi State University. After graduation, he took a job with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, but still continued to have an interest in working in insurance.

Grimes began his insurance career in 1971 as a property and casualty underwriter with Allstate but took a job as a life underwriter at Standard Life Insurance



Eddie Grimes and his wife, Sherri, live in Pearl and spend much of their time with 11 nieces and nephews and 12 grand nieces and nephews. She is the Eddie Grimes Insurance office manager.

Company in Jackson before that company went out of business. He had reached the position of assistant vice president and senior life underwriter. He went back with Allstate as an agent at that point.

When he began my sales career with Allstate almost thirty years ago, he

said the agents did not have computers to help quote, service and communicate with our customers, but now they do all that through computers. After purchasing online, Allstate assigns that policy to the agent to service to that customer.

While working in South Rankin Coun-

ty, Grimes helped charter the Rotary Club of South Rankin County in 2007. He served the club as charter president in 2007-2008 and then again as president in 2014-2015. He was the club's Rotarian of the Year in 2010-2011. Currently, he is a member of the club's board and serves as the club's coordinator with the Richland High School Interact Club. He also currently serves as the District 6820 assistant district governor.


In addition to Rotary, Grimes participates in food drives for local food pantries like The Center for Violence Prevention.

"I'm most proud of my work with the Richland High School Interact Club, which our Rotary Club sponsors. Along with the high school Interact counselor, I coordinate the Interact students' activities and projects to teach them to help serve others, particularly the people of their community. I hope that when they become adults, they will become Rotarians and continue to help others."

Grimes is a member of McLaurin Heights United Methodist Church in Pearl and is a member of Gideons International where they distribute bibles and witness.

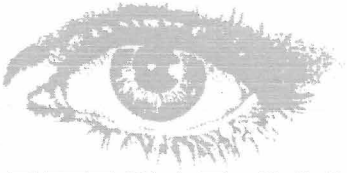
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# Hinds standout Hodge played in Super Bowl

Special to SW Rankin News

Former Hinds Eagle football standout and current wide receiver for the Los Angeles Rams, KhaDarel Hodge (D'Lo) made his Super Bowl debut Sunday, February 3, when the Rams took on the New England Patriots in Super Bowl LIII.

Hodge makes his first Super Bowl appearance in his rookie campaign following a regular season where his Rams went 11-3 overall to earn a first-place seed and a buy in the NFL Playoffs. The Rams went on to have a perfect 2-0 in the playoffs defeating the Dallas Cowboys (30-22) and the New

Orleans Saints (26-23). This marks the first time the Rams have reached the Super Bowl since 2002, when they also took on the Patriots.

Hodge played one season at Hinds (2014), where he made the transition from quarterback to wide receiver. From Hinds, Hodge transferred to Prairie View A&M where he started for three seasons and racked up 104 receptions, 1,797 yards and 21 touchdowns in 30 games played. As a senior in 2017, Hodge earned first-team All-SWAC honors. Hodge was signed on July 24, 2018, by the Los Angeles Rams and is currently on their playoff roster at wide receiver.



Special to SW Rankin News

Los Angeles Rams wide receiver KhaDarel Hodge of D'Lo played in the February 3 Super Bowl when the Rams take on the New England Patriots in Super Bowl LIII.

The last Eagle alumni to play in the Super Bowl was Malcolm Butler in 2015 in Super Bowl XLIX. Butler

played for the New England Patriots and made one of the greatest plays in Super Bowl history when, with just 26 seconds remaining, he intercepted Russell Wilson's pass from the one-yard line in the end zone to save the game and seal a 28-24 victory for the Patriots over the Seahawks.



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