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SWRANKIN NEWS

Good News You Can Use

Vol. 6, No. 4 | May 2021

The Pearl News

THE RICHLAND NEWS

THE FLORENCE NEWS

Mississippi Dynasty: For the love of the game

Special to The Pearl News

Local sports fans need look no further for spring and summer entertainment. Thanks to the efforts of Coach Michael Lloyd, football enthusiasts may enjoy watching a competitive game of football through the month of June. The lifelong resident of Pearl says his commitment to the game of football started very early, "I have actually always loved football. I did not play at the high school level, but I always loved it, I went to all of the games. So it was always something that I liked to do."

The local Amateur to Professional Developmental Football League (APDFL) team, known as "Mississippi Dynasty," includes a few stand outs: Anthony Williams from Clinton, who originally played for the Clinton High School football team, then moved on to play for Alcorn State University; Sam Wash-



ington who hails from Starkville and played college level football at Jackson State University; and Lewis Ellis from Jackson, who reached professional level football playing for the Miami Dolphins and the Carolina Panthers.

Although COVID-19 put a stop to their potential fourth straight championship for Mississippi Dynasty, the team has



Images special to The Pearl News

returned with a few things to prove this year. After joining the league in 2016, the Dynasty has never had a losing record. Their motto, in keeping with their history of success, is "Practice to Win, Play to Dominate!" As far as current ranking, Lloyd says

"This year we started off 3 and 2, so we have not been as productive as we need to be, but I think we are ranked around ten or eleven [out of thirty teams] this year. But it is a long season, it is a ten game season, so we do have time to turn it around."

Those interested in attending games in person may purchase tickets at the gate. The cost per ticket is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children, and, for children under a certain age, attendance is free. Mississippi Dynasty t-shirts are also available for purchase at all the games.

See page 4 for the full story.

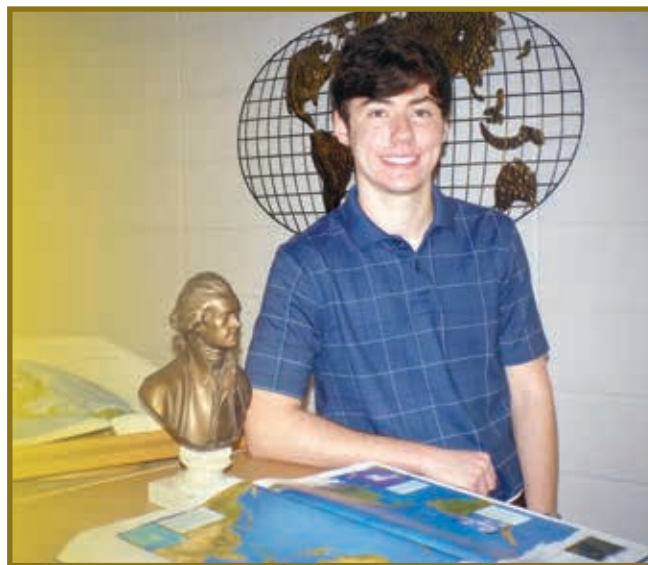
PHS's Gangwer chosen as 2020-2021 STAR student

By Alexa Haik

Pearl High School (PHS) recently selected senior Hayden Gangwer as the 2020-2021 STAR Student. The purpose of the Student-Teacher Achievement Recognition program is to honor academic achievement among Mississippi High School students.

Enrolled in Pearl Public School District since kindergarten, Gangwer has accumulated a respectable record of achievements. According to Gangwer, "I have a 4.0 GPA and had the highest score on the Algebra I and English II state test my ninth and tenth grade year. I also was a presidential scholar at Hinds Community college, where I take dual-enrollment courses. I am a member of Pearl High School's Super Scholars program and a member of National Honor Society."

As the STAR student, Gangwer was asked to designate his STAR Teacher. The selection is based on one of his ele-



Hayden Gangwer

mentary or secondary classroom teachers (active, former, or retired) who, "has made the greatest contribution to the student's scholastic achievement," according to the Mississippi Economic

subject matter. This propelled me to do my very best, not just in his class, but in all classes at Pearl High School. He also never doubted my abilities to reach

Council's (MEC) website, www.msmecc.com.

In this case, Gangwer chose his Algebra one and Algebra three teacher, Dennis Philebar, as his STAR teacher. To Gangwer, the choice was a no-brainer, "From the moment I stepped foot into his classroom my freshman year, I knew I would enjoy his teaching and his class, which I was in freshman and junior year. He has a true love for teaching students that you could feel every day that inspired me to match his passion with genuine interest in the

my goals, like becoming STAR student, and since he has never been nominated before, there was no doubt who I would make my STAR teacher."

According to Philebar, the admiration is mutual, "He has been telling me since ninth grade that if he got STAR Student, he will pick me. I was happy he did."

"He is a brilliant kid. Hayden was the one [student that] if he messed up on a test, I am going [to go] back and check my answer to see if it's wrong."

As far as Hayden's future, Philebar is confident that "he can have his pick of the litter," in regards to his choice of college.

After graduation this spring, Gangwer plans on first attending the University of Mississippi to receive his undergraduate degree, and moving on to law school to become a criminal prosecutor.

Each STAR Student and STAR Teacher will be honored at the MEC's Education Celebration in the spring.



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Rangers track team prevail in district, region

By Richland High School Track Team
Coach Blake Windham

The Boy's Richland Ranger Track and Field team have kept their winning streak in the post-season rolling as they secured the Region 3-4A Championship at Pearl High School. The Rangers also previously won the Division 5-4A meet at Northwest Rankin, scoring an incredible 289 points, and claimed two regular season victories at St. Andrew's and Bay Springs.

To qualify for the MHSAA 4A South State Meet, athletes needed to finish in the top four of their competition at the Region meet. Teams from Raymond, North Pike, McComb, Florence, and Newton County also competed in the Region 3-4A meet.

First place finishers for the Rangers boys' team at region were Makial Mus-

grove (100-meter, 200-meter), Jose Gutierrez (1600-meter, 3200-meter), and Kameron Levi (High Jump). Mus-

ter), and Ted Windom (Shotput, Discus).

Third Place finishers were Gentry Da-

Jump). The Rangers also qualified in several other events that will advance to South State. The additional quali-

fiers are Gentry Davis (100-meter) and Draten Norwood (Discus), along with the 4x200-meter and 4x800-meter relays. These relays were completed by Davis, Shoto, Levi, and Darren Davidson on the 4x200-meter, and Gutierrez, Nevon Taylor, Kevin Ragoyta, and Gavin Myers on the 4x800-meter.

The Rangers are favorites in several key events at the South State meet and are bringing the depth needed in order to make a run at a South State Championship.



Pictured (l to r) are: Garret Burney, Charles Williams, Jose Gutierrez, Gavin Myers and Kevin Ragoyta.



Photos special to The Richland News

Students pictured (l to r) are, front row: Gentry Davis, Makial Musgrove; middle row: Reggie Hill, Quimon Ray, Kameron Levi, Darren Davidson and Jose Gutierrez; and back row: Draten Norwood, Nevon Taylor, Blake Windham, Malachi Newell, Micah Shoto, Judah Turner, Coach Richard Housley, Ted Windom, Carter Smith, Garret Burney, Charles Williams, Gavin Myers and Kevin Ragoyta. Not pictured: Stacy McDaniel.

grove, Levi, Micah Shoto, and Malachi Newell also took first place in the 4x100-meter relay.

Second place finishers at the region meet included Malachi Newell (100-meter), Gentry Davis (400-meter), Jose Gutierrez (800-me-

vis (200-meter), Judah Turner (300-meter hurdles), and Micah Shoto (Triple

make a run at a South State Championship.

Progress on horizon for Intermodal Connection

Special to The Richland News

For Richland motorists, some good news is on the horizon. Recently, officials from Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT), the City of Richland and the City of Pearl gathered together to celebrate the next phase in the Pearl-Richland Intermodal Connector.

It has been a long time coming, but with the contract signed with Hemphill Construction, progress was officially marked by the Ground Breaking Ceremony held Tuesday, April 27.

The project will extend Adkins Drive to State Route 468 and upgrade the signal at South Pearson and SR 468. The work includes water and sewer relocation.

This connector will ease traffic congestion at the train track crossing on South Pearson Road, a main conduit between Richland and Pearl. The plan includes a twenty-seven foot, four lane bridge that will span the intersection, eliminating



Special to The Richland News

Pictured (l to r) are: Richland Mayor Pat Sullivan, Central Transportation Commissioner Willie Simmons and Pearl Mayor Jake Windham.

long waits for drivers as trains commute to and from their intended destinations.

"This is the type of project that, once complete, will have a positive impact on these communities for generations to

come," said Willie Simmons, the Central Transportation Commissioner for Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT). "It will improve safety conditions, for both motorists and first re-

sponders during emergencies, as well as provide a more convenient, sustainable and enjoyable travel experience."

The project is the first phase of a larger bridge construction over the railroad on South Pearson. The \$2.15 million project has a projected completion date of spring 2022.

"This is a three tier partnership between the state, cities and consultant," said Jeffrey C. Altman, P.E., (MDOT) Acting Executive Director. "All three pulling their weight is what it takes to have a project like this come to fruition."

The project was funded by the Federal Highway Administration and appropriated by MDOT with a local match. Stay updated on active construction and maintenance projects at MDOTtraffic.com, download the MDOT Traffic mobile app and follow @MississippiDOT on Facebook and Twitter.

See page 15 for further details.

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Florence's Hill selected for specialized apprenticeship

Special to The Florence News

The partnership between the Hinds Diesel Equipment Technology program and Empire Truck Sales has turned into potential high-earning careers for eleven newly-registered Diesel Mechanic Apprentices at the company's Richland location. Among those selected was Austin Hill of Florence.

All graduated from the program at Hinds and have moved seamlessly into the industry. The eleven were recently selected to participate in the Empire Truck Sales Apprenticeship Program which is sponsored by Hinds Community College.

Supervisors at Empire are mentors to the apprentices along the way, providing invaluable insight and career guidance.

Combining hands-on training with a chance to talk to longtime industry professionals will give them a leg up on

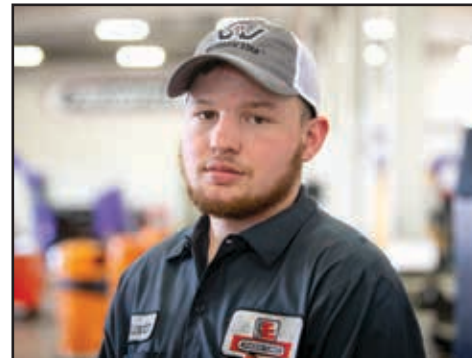


Pictured (l to r) are: Todd Rhodes, Bob Bullard, both of Empire Truck Sales; students Darius Jackson, Trey Harris, Jordan Coleman, Dustin Tew, David McGowan, Jacob St. Amant, Colby Cockrell, Kade Stennett, Cordarryl Nichols, Austin Hill, Keith Steen and Lonnie Cook, owner of Empire Truck Sales.

their careers.

Bob Bullard, general service manager for Empire Truck Sales, touted the value of the Diesel Equipment Technology program being certified in certain areas by Daimler Trucks North America as a huge plus toward quality workmanship.

"The importance the apprenticeship



Photos special to The Florence News

Austin Hill

program brings is a structured way of making sure you get a well-rounded employee. The partnership Hinds has developed with Empire has made the end product better than it's ever been before."

Hinds Community College is a partner of the Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP). Funding for the MAP pro-

gram is provided by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and via the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. WIOA is an equal opportunity program.

As Mississippi's largest community college, Hinds Community College is a comprehensive institution offering quality,

affordable educational opportunities with academic programs of study leading to seamless university transfer and career and technical programs teaching job-ready skills. With six locations in central Mississippi, Hinds enrolls about 12,000 students each fall semester.

To learn more, visit www.hindscc.edu or call 1-800-HindsCC.

CMTR announces new hours, emergency contact protocol

Special to The Florence News

Central Mississippi Turtle Rescue (CMTR) of Florence recently announced that they have significantly restructured their operating procedures. These changes include: hours of operations; phone lines for urgent and non-urgent calls; as well as updated transportation protocols. The following is a breakdown of the new system.

While they are always "open" for emergencies, there are certain times of the day when the rescue will not be able to answer any calls. Calls received after 8 p.m., or before 8 a.m., Central Time, Monday through Saturday, or anytime on a Sunday, will be sent to voicemail. The voicemail will provide the caller with explicit instructions on how to house/care for an injured turtle until CMTR calls. The rescue will return the call as soon as possible.

Regarding transportation protocols for turtles: although CMTR contin-

ues to accept turtles from every corner of the state, they will no longer provide pick-up services. Callers may deliver a turtle to the rescue, but must call in advance to receive driving instructions. Although the rescue cannot provide pick up services, they do utilize other resources, such as



Facebook, to secure transport. Always call CMTR for injured turtles. Instructions will be provided on how to care for the turtle until it can be retrieved.

As a reminder, CMTR is a two-person team, both employed full-time, and are currently sharing one vehicle. Although,

as they explain, "We can't be everywhere at once, and we can't possibly an-



Special to The Florence News

swer every single phone call as it comes in," they will implement every resource

at their disposal "to come to the aid of an injured or displaced tortoise or turtle."

In addition, CMTR will no longer accept urgent/emergent calls to the 601-500-5033 phone number. For urgent issues such as sick or injured turtles, turtles that are in danger, or questions about whether or not the turtle needs help, call 601-672-1418. If sent to voicemail, leave a detailed message, and someone will call back as soon as possible. This number may receive texts. However, if it is truly urgent, call, don't text.

To reach CMTR for non-urgent issues, adoptions or care questions, dial 601-845-1932 to leave a voicemail. The rescue will respond as soon as possible.

For more information on how to care for an injured turtle or tortoise, visit www.centralmsturtlerescue.com/-turtle-emergency.

See page 7 for further details.

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Michael Lloyd takes love of the game to the next level

By Alexa Haik

The "Mississippi Dynasty" formed originally as a group of local guys, all football enthusiasts, getting together to participate in a simple game of recreational football, merely for the fun and love of the sport. These friends and associates, some hailing from Jackson State University, others from Alcorn State University and even Mississippi State University, decided they wanted more. As things developed, they sought the help of Michael Lloyd, who eagerly took on the role of head-coach. With a coach selected, the Mississippi Dynasty made it official in 2016 by joining the Amateur to Professional Developmental Football League (APDFL). As Lloyd describes it, "We just rolled with it."

The APDFL is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the promotion and advancement of adult minor league football teams throughout the southeastern states. The team's goal is two-fold: to stay fit, but also give guys the opportunity to continue to play the sport they love. Since their affiliation with the league, the Mississippi Dynasty has won four consecutive championships in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Currently the ages of team members

range from eighteen to forty-three. Membership averages around fifty players a year. For the 2021 season, the team consists of approximately fifty-five members. They hail from all corners of the state, including: Pearl,

Pearl, I like to play in Pearl." The team also plays in other select venues, or "As many places as we can, to kind of get people in Mississippi more involved," according to Coach Lloyd.

When commuting to away games, the

state. The guys kind of use it as vacation during the spring and summertime.

We play from March until June, and, during that time of the year, [players] take their families and make it a weekend."

When asked if all players get a shot to play, Lloyd responds that not every player can attend every game, "because of work, or family related things," but all players "do get the opportunity to play when they can."

For those curious about joining, Mississippi Dynasty holds tryouts every August. "For the month of August, we put out our tryout location and times, and we have the guys come out and we try to make sure that we fill out our roster for the needed positions and for the new guys that want to come over and be a part."

As far as plans for the future, Lloyd says, "We are just going to try to continue the team as long as we can continue to keep the name Mississippi Dynasty."

To learn more about the APDFL visit www.theapdf.net.

To follow the Mississippi Dynasty, and to stay up-to-date on game locations, times, and or view online feeds of their games, visit their self-titled Facebook page.



Jackson, Hickory, Biloxi, Hattiesburg, Starkville and Madison. Home field is located at the old high school in Pearl because, as Lloyd explains, "I am from

team uses the means at their disposal-carpooling. Lloyd says "We carpool because when we moved to the APDFL, we play a bunch of games out of

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FYSA hosts another successful "Mud Bowl"

Special to SW Rankin News

Hosted by the Florence Youth Soccer Association (FYSA), the Mud Bowl is an annual community-wide event centered around a recreational soccer tournament. The goal is to provide an opportunity for recreational teams to participate in a local tournament to further their skills, while enjoying the game in a truly competitive atmosphere. All recreational soccer teams are qualified to participate. Registration is by team with downloadable registration forms available at www.florencesoccer.com.

Although an exact date is unknown, lifelong residents of Florence agree that the original Mud Bowl began somewhere around 1989. No one is able to pinpoint a single individual responsible for the original idea, however, all agree that it was more than likely the soccer board, as a whole, who initiated the very first tournament.

For the past thirty-one years, the Mud Bowl has been an annual occurrence. However, in 2020, things changed. Due to restrictions placed on social gatherings because of

the COVID-19 pandemic, FYSA board members were forced to cancel this community mainstay.

Fortunately, in 2021, the Mud Bowl returned. The return not only heralded the good news that COVID-19 cases were on the down-swing and social restrictions have consequently been loosened, but also symbolized the resiliency of the community. Emboldened by the event's return, participants this year took nothing as a given. As the FYSA board president, Emily Read explains, she and all of the local community are "grateful/ appreciative because we took for granted these things prior to 2020."

This year, spectators were safely distanced from one another. Both the Florence Police Department and the Rankin County Sheriff's Office made their presence known as they patrolled the area to ensure the safety of the participants and their belongings. A parking lot that stood empty in 2020 was almost at capacity for Mud Bowl 2021.

Ready explains that, to pull off an event of this scope, "It is truly a team effort. It takes work from every person on the board and even those who are not on the board. An example of help from non-board members would be my husband, Adrian, and sons, Wilder and Ryker, who helped with parking on Friday evening. Our youngest son, Deacon, played in the tournament Friday evening. It is truly 'all hands on deck!'"

Joshua Cavanaugh, this year's tournament director, organized the registration process, the schedule, and all things game-related. Cavanaugh was also the go-to with spe-

Nick Williams helped stock refreshments, sort registration paperwork, and essentially helped with any role thrown his way.

Ashley Bullock actually created the graphic for Mud Bowl 2021, advertised for the tournament via social media platforms, and was always ready and willing to help anywhere necessary.

Haley Owen coached two teams participating in the tournament.



MudBowl 2021 t-shirt



Journee Thompson dribbles the ball down the field.



Pictured (l to r) are: Secretary/ Treasurer for FYSA Brandy Bell Byrd, President for FYSA Emily Eklund Ready, Vice President for FYSA Brad Hebert, and U4/5 age group coordinator Nick Williams.



Ryleigh Owen (U8 FYSA player) dribbles the ball down the field to score a goal.



Tournament Director, Joshua Cavanaugh, organizes rosters and registration information.



Special to SW Rankin News

Pictured (l to r) are: Jamison Byrd, Deacon Ready and Avett Johnson enjoying a snow-cone between games.

Many other volunteers were also required, but Ready says, "The city of Florence is blessed to have a soccer board of volunteers who donate their time frequently."

Volunteers also include regular assistance from local boy scout troops which, in 2021, was Florence's own Troop 85 who stepped in to assist with parking. Includes regular assistance from local boy scout troops. In 2021, Troop 85 volunteered to help with parking.

The event itself kicked off on Friday evening at 6 p.m. with the first round of games. On Saturday morning, games began again at 8 a.m. The championship games were held on Sunday afternoon. They were intentionally scheduled in

the afternoon, Ready says, "because we believe it is essential to allow families time to worship on Sunday mornings and spend time together before heading to the soccer field."

The board members were initially concerned that the turn-out might be less than in years' past, with all that a global pandemic encompasses, but it was, indeed, extraordinary.

There were games as far as the eye could see at Hemphill Park. All told,

thirty-three teams registered this year.

Ready expressed gratitude for the impressive showing at the event, "It was heartwarming to hear the clapping, cheers, and whistles that we all longed to hear while our state was shut down in 2020. I can genuinely say that we did not take

this year's festivities for granted. While the town of Florence may be considered relatively small in size, it has volunteers, city officials, and citizens with the most generous hearts. This city comes together to help one another, and as we are slowly navigating our new 'normal,' the

citizens managed it with both grace and gratitude for Mud Bowl 2021."

Many teams walked away from Mud-Bowl 2021 with winning records, including: U6 division Champion - NWRAA Sharks; the U6 Finalist - FYSA Creatures; U8G division Champion - NWRAA Angels; U8G division Finalist - FYSA Crush; U8B division Champion - RFC Thunder; U8B division Finalist - NWRAA Cheetos; U10G division Champion - PFC Blue Bombers; U10G division Finalist - FYSA Red; U10B division Champion - PFC Khaos Kickers; U10B division Finalist - BSA Honey Badgers; U12 division Champion - Ole Brook Soccer; and U12 division Finalists - RFC Survivors.

Those interested in learning more about Florence Youth Soccer Association, or to contact FYSA, visit their Facebook page or website at www.florencesoccer.com.



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RCSD recognizes Williams as outstanding employee



Rankin County School District recently recognized the Elementary Classified employee for March, Shannon Williams.



Pictured here, Williams is the cafeteria manager at Richland Upper Elementary (RUE).

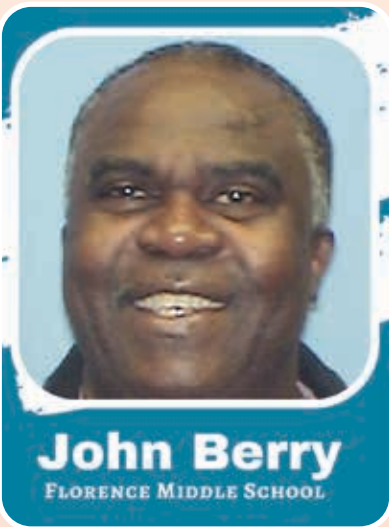


Williams with Principal Lindsay Starbuck and coworkers at RUE.
Photos special to SW Rankin News

RCSD honors Berry as Employee of the Month



John Berry, a cafeteria worker at Florence Middle School (FMS), was recently chosen as the Rankin County School District Secondary Classified Employee of the Month for March. He was selected because of his dedication to the students and staff members at FMS.



Berry, with fellow co-workers at FMS.
Photos special to SW Rankin News

Old Truths for Today

By J.T. Morgan



Thoughts On Mother's Day

"Honor thy father and thy mother, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee; that thy days may be long, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee." (Deut. 5:16; Ex. 20:12). "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." (Eph. 6:1-3).

The Bible plainly teaches that we are to honor our parents. To honor them means we are to obey and respect them while we are young and to provide for them when they are old. One day out of the year has been specifically set aside to honor and remember our fathers and mothers. The first day of honor is Mother's Day.

Life began with God in the miracle of creation. (Gen. 2:7). Man was created in the image of God. (Gen. 1:27). Life is a gift from God that we ought not to take for granted. It is through mothers that God chose to perpetuate life through the natural process of procreation. (Gen. 3:20; 2 Tim. 2:14-15). No man can fulfill the role in this respect of a mother. It is truly a blessing to know that God has given women the special role of mother to impart the blessing of life upon their children.

The Bible gives us examples of good mothers. (1) Sarah (Gen. 17:15-16). (2) Hannah (1 Sam. 1,2). (3) Elizabeth (Lk. 1:6). (4) Mary, the mother of Jesus (John 19:25-27). These women of old stand out as good examples for us today. Take time to read and consider Proverbs 31:10-31.

There is a need in our society to understand what is involved in being a good mother. "Simply having children does not make a mother." (John Shedd). Hollywood and the feminist movement sadly has defined motherhood and the home through sitcoms and movies. The home as they portray it is a far cry from what God would have it to be. Neither should our government tell us what kind our homes should be.

"There is a degree of affectionate respect which is owing to parents, that no person else can properly claim. For a considerable time, parents stand as it were in the place of God to their children, and therefore rebellion against their lawful commands has been considered as rebellion against God. This precept therefore prohibits, not only all injurious acts, irreverent and unkind speeches to parents, but enjoins all necessary acts of kindness, filial respect, and obedience. We can scarcely suppose that a man honors his parents who, when they fall weak, blind, or sick, does not exert himself to the uttermost in their support. In such cases God as truly requires the children to provide for their parents, as he required the parents to feed, nourish, support, instruct, and defend the children when they were in the lowest state of helpless infancy" - Adam Clarke's Commentary.

Florence Church of Christ
P.O. Box 277, 220 White Street, Florence, Ms 39073
Visitors are always welcome!

Central MS Turtle Rescue: Spring announcements, guidelines

By Central MS Turtle Rescue

It didn't take long once the weather started warming-up for our phone to start ringing. Spring and summer are the busiest times for our turtle rescue. Turtles are up from hibernation and out and about, often entering dangerous territory in the search for food, mates, or a place to lay eggs. This means that we see more and more injured turtles.

We are the only state-permitted, dedicated turtle and tortoise rescue in Mississippi. Unfortunately, we can't be everywhere at once. If you have found a turtle that is injured and needs our help, collect the turtle (don't leave it) and let us know right away by calling or texting 601-500-5033.

Please note that only emergencies are answered right away (injured/threatened turtles). Non-emergency calls and texts will be answered as soon as we are able. We have also put together a registry of other rescues and veterinary offices around Mississippi that may be able to help: www.centralmsturtlerescue.com/-ms-wildlife-rescue.

Please keep in mind the following: **We can't always stop what we're doing to handle the next emergency.** We are a two-person rescue, and have full-time jobs. We have a responsibility to the turtles already in our care, as well as a responsibility to our employers. We will make every effort to get the injured turtle from you.

In most cases, we will not be able to come to you, especially if you live more than thirty minutes away from Florence. We may ask that you bring the turtle to us, meet us closer to Florence, or we may seek volunteers to help transport the turtle from you to us.

We reserve Sundays as the day we take care of weekly maintenance at

our home and facility. If you have an emergency on a Sunday, please call, but understand that we will not be able to come to you. You will need to transport the injured turtle to us or arrange for transport.

If you've found an injured/sick turtle, do not leave the turtle. If you have located an injured turtle, ideally we recommend you stay with the turtle until help can arrive, or take the turtle with you if you must leave. However, If you are unable to safely extract the turtle or remain with the turtle, contact us. Provide as much detail as possible about their location. If able, we will post a request on our Facebook page in hopes that someone near the turtle's location can respond on our behalf.

Do not assume the turtle is dead. Turtles have the uncanny ability to slow down their respiration to an almost imperceptible level. If you see a turtle injured on the road, stop and check it. Give us a call. At the very least we can save it from dying slowly and painfully. And if the turtle is female, we might be able to save any eggs she's carrying.

The following are important tips for caring an injured turtle:

Note the location where the injured turtle was found. This is critical information for a rescue or veterinary office. If the veterinary office doesn't ask for this information have them make note of it.

Put the turtle in a box that is large and strong enough to prevent escape.

Put towels, newspaper, or paper towels in the bottom of the box to make him/her more comfortable. Don't underestimate a turtle's ability to climb. Make sure the container is tall and/or has a lid (include holes for air).

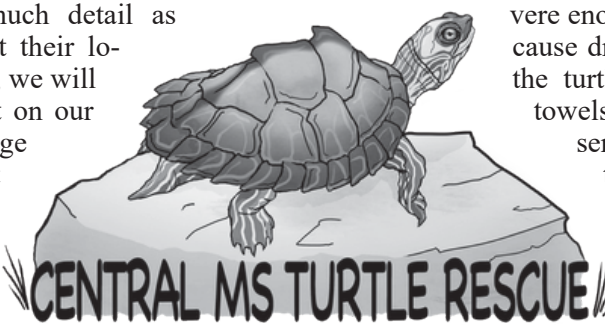
Keep the turtle dry. Unlike fish, aquatic turtles don't have to be in water to survive. They can safely be kept dry for several hours (or even longer) if needed. Putting a turtle in water spreads germs and bacteria into the wounded area, and also prevents blood from clotting. If the injury is severe enough it could also cause drowning. Placing the turtle in or on wet towels or blankets only serves to make the turtle cold.

Keep the turtle indoors, and keep him protected from

insects. Some bugs, such as flies or gnats, will be attracted to the smell of blood, will land on the injuries, and will lay their eggs there. These eggs hatch into maggots, which can do serious damage to the turtle.

If the turtle is bleeding heavily, use sterile gauze to help stem the flow. You can also wrap the turtle with sterile gauze to help stabilize any broken shell pieces that may be present. Neosporin/triple antibiotic ointment can be placed on minor open wounds to help kill bacteria, and to help prevent any gauze from sticking to the wounds.

Do not use any ointment, cream or salve on deep wounds (for example, on shell breaks where you can see the membranes, tissues, or organs underneath.)



Special to SW Rankin News

Southwest Rankin Municipal Elections: A tale of three cities

By Alexa Haik

Registered voters in southwest Rankin will be heading to the polls on Tuesday, June 8, to cast their ballots for key municipal positions in their respective cities.

The results of Pearl's Primary Elections are in and the following are a list of candidates who secured their position for the next four years: Sammy Williams (Republican) for Alderman District 1 who beat out David Lockett (Republican) with a total of 331 votes and Keith Dennis (Republican) for Alderman District 2 who won out over Michael Sartor (Republican) and Beau Camardelle (Republican) with a total of 341 votes.

The following positions remain unopposed: Mayor, currently held by Jake Windham; Alderman District 3, current-

ly held by Johnny Steverson (Republican); Alderman District 4 Casey S. Foy (Republican); and Alderman District 6, currently held by Gavin D. Gill (Republican).

For the position of Alderman at Large, incumbent John P. McHenry (Republican) will face Willie Moore (Independent) on the eighth, as will three candidates who will vie for the position of Alderman District 5: James W. Thompson (Independent), Gary Spurgeon (Republican) and Willie Harvey (Democrat).

Pearl residents take note that the polling place location for Ward 6-1 has

moved to McLaurin Heights Methodist, 325 Mary Ann Drive.

On the other hand, the municipal structure for the Cities of Richland and Florence are made up of a mayor and five aldermen. The Mayors, Pat Sullivan of Richland, and Robert (Billy Bob) Morris of Florence, remain unopposed for the 2021 election cycle. For the 2021 General Elections, all aldermen will run at large in both cities.

Alderman candidates run independent, and the top five vote getters (whether there are five or thirty people running) will secure the positions of aldermen

for the next four years. The individuals running for the coveted spots in the City of Richland are: incumbent Gus Black, incumbent Clay Burns, John "8 Ball" Hamilton, Wayne King, Larry Nipper, Matthew "Matt" Quick, incumbent Beth Sanford, A.J. Shields; and incumbent Cathey Wynne. For Florence, the 2021 candidates for Alderman include: incumbent John Banks, Stephen Deckard, incumbent Brian Grantham, incumbent Trey Gunn, incumbent John Helms and incumbent Todd Norris.

Voter Registration Deadline is May 10, 2021 for the General Election.

For more information about Pearl General Elections call 601-932-2262.

For more information about Richland General Elections call 601-932-3000.

For more information about Florence General Elections call 601-845-8856.



RCSD celebrates completion of Richland Elementary projects



Special to SW Rankin News

Pictured holding ribbon (l to r) are: Richland Mayor Pat Sullivan, Richland Elementary 2021-22 Assistant Principal Johnna Henley, Richland Elementary Principal Anitra Hollis, RCSD School Board Member Kym Jamison, RCSD Superintendent Dr. Sue Townsend and RCSD Assistant Superintendent Shane Sanders.

Special to SW Rankin News

Richland Elementary School held a ribbon cutting to celebrate the completion of several school bond issue projects, including: six new classrooms, an electrical upgrade, mechanical upgrade, new intercom/fire alarm, security cameras for doors/halls, re-roof, new toilets, ceilings, lights, new serving line, drainage, fencing, parking, and site work.

Those in attendance included: Rankin County School District (RCSD) Assistant Superintendent Karen Schmidt; RCSD Assistant Superintendent Dr. Scott Rimes; RCSD Assistant Superintendent Dr. Undray Scott; RCSD Construction Administrator Jay Yarbrough; Richland Elementary Assistant Principal Lisa Sammons; Richland second grade teacher Jessica Perkins; Richland Elementary Kindergarten Assistant Chrissy Thompson; Richland Elementary Literacy Coach Mary Margaret Tuttle; Richland Elementary Counselor Whitney Gray; Richland Elementary Custodian Wayland Cole-

man; Richland Elementary Custodian Joe Rice; Richland Elementary student Breah Obasuyi; Richland Elementary student Quinn Snow; Richland Elementary student Carly Kate Chapman; Richland Elementary student Joseph Wooten; Richland Elementary student Jackson Fletcher; Richland Elementary student Kenlee Benson; Richland Elementary student Yuliana Felipe; Richland Elementary student Noah Patrick; Richland Elementary student Xuan Hoang; Miss Mississippi Junior High Peyton Perkins; Richland Elementary parent Vickie Chapman (PTO); Richland Elementary parent Mary Ellen Snow (PTO); Richland Elementary parent Cynthia Fletcher; Richland Elementary parent Jeff Wooten; Richland Mayor's Administrative Assistant Stephanie Ward; Richland Alderman Beth Sanford; Richland Alderman Clay Burns; Richland Alderman Gus Black; Pryor Morrow; Jose' Arellano; Ashley Sanders; Richland Fire Chief Brandon Weems and Richland Upper Elementary Principal Lindsay Starbuck.

News and updated hours from local libraries

Special to SW Rankin News

Are you ready for the summer? Many exciting things are happening at the Central Mississippi Regional Library System. Earlier in the year, the Central Mississippi Regional Library System (CMRLS) Board of Trustees voted to approve for the annual summer library program to be virtual this year.

Virtual events for the month of May include: Preschool Story Time videos posted weekly on Mondays at 9 a.m.; Page Turner Adventures, which is designed for kindergarten through fourth grades, posted daily; kindergarten-fourth grade Story Time videos posted weekly on Tuesdays at 12 p.m.; Tween and Teen Programs posted on the first Thursday monthly; Adult Programs posted on the first Thursday monthly; and Family Programs posted on Fridays at 9 a.m.

The Tails and Tales Summer Library Program 2021 is scheduled for June 7



Special to SW Rankin News

through July 16. The details of this and many more virtual programs are available by visiting the CMRLS online events calendar at www.cmrls.evanced.info/signup or the CMRLS Facebook Groups page for details. Participants may sign up on Beanstack at <https://cmrls.beanstack.org/reader365> to be registered for drawings.

Pearl Public Library announcements: Starting on May 1, the Pearl Li-

brary will have a new Children's Supervisor. Brenda Martin-Campbell will be transitioning from her role in Circulation to head up Pearl's Children's Department. Her favorite children's book is *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats.

Beginning June 1, Pearl Library hours will be Monday through Thursday 9 a.m.-8 p.m., Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Florence Public Library announcements: On May 2, at the Florence Library is Brothers and Sisters Day. They will have a month long contest to find the funniest story submitted to them by patrons about siblings. Stop by the Library, bring a story or compose it at the library, and at the end of the month, the Florence Library will announce a prize winner. All ages are welcome to enter.

The Florence Library will also have Happy Mother's Day sheets for the kids to fill out and give to their moms for Mother's Day.

Richland Public Library announcements: Beginning June 1, the Florence Library hours will be Monday and Thursday 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

Beginning June 1, Library hours at the Richland Library will be Monday and Thursday 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Friday and Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

All CMRLS Libraries will be closed Monday, May 31, 2021, for National Memorial Day.

Contact the local library for more details, or check our online calendar for more information.

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Pearl News

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Dancing, engineering complementary pursuits for Ezell

By Alexa Haik

Although beginner ballet classes are typically offered to students ages three to four-years-old, Olivia Ezell, currently a junior at Pearl High School (PHS), undertook dancing when she was a mere two and half-years-old. "I actually wanted to do it, my sister was five and she was at Pine Lake Ballet doing her dance lessons. So I just came in [one day] and started dancing with them. They let me join." Even though the next youngest student enrolled in the class was four, she was not deterred. Ezell has since reached the level four designation in ballet, which means among other things, she is able to perform on point and has been for approximately four years.

Dance has since become an integral part in her development as an individual. "It has broken me out of my shell, and it has led me to some places I had no idea I would go."

At her current dance studio, CTM-Dance, there is also a real sense of community spirit. Ezell explains that her weekly routine includes spending "four days a week [at the dance studio, which allows us to get close to some of the dancers here, and its like a second

family."

Her motivation for continuing to pursue dance, in addition to its athletic and social benefits, is the healing aspect. "I love it. It's hard some days, but it's all worth it. I love what I do, and dancing is almost therapeutic, because I know I will be struggling with something and I'll come in and I'll just forget all about it. And I will just be able to pursue this. And channel all of my energy into it."

In addition to annual Christmas performances at First Baptist in Byram, her dance group has performed at craft fairs as well as annual spring recitals at Belhaven University in Jackson.

After graduation from PHS, Ezell says she will continue on with the summer camps that are held each year. However, her higher education ambitions include a move



Special to SW Rankin News
Olivia Ezell

to Starkville to attend Mississippi State, where she plans to major in engineering. Although this might seem out of character for her, given her current pursuits, Ezell sees a direct correlation between her interest in mathematics and dance. "I am taking Advanced Placement Music Theory this year, and there is so much math in music, and so here I see that as well, because I am trying to listen to the music and trying to see what I hear and also I am counting it, and feeling it out." She says if the opportunity presents itself, Ezell will continue to pursue her first love at a local dance studio near MSU.

Based on the many ways in which dance has significantly enriched her life, the advice Ezell has for someone interested in pursuing ballet is this: "I would tell them to definitely consider your options and try to pursue it, because it is worth it." If it is anything like Ezell's experience, there is no telling where it might lead.

For those interested in following Ezell's dance activities, or those of her dance studio, visit the CTM-Dance Facebook page or on Instagram.

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PJHS Band students selected for All-State Band

Lakirah Alexander receives Defensive MVP



Special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Junior High School (PJHS) band students were recently selected as members of the Mississippi American School Band Directors Association Middle School All-State Band. Pictured (l to r) are: Trent Brookins, Jonathan Ezell and John Adams.



Special to SW Rankin News

The 2021 Mississippi Sports Medicine North/South All-Star Basketball Games were recently held at A.E. Wood Coliseum in Clinton. McLaurin High School's Lakirah Alexander took part as a member of the 1A/2A/3A Girls' South Team. Alexander was selected as The Most Valuable Defensive Player. She scored nine points, pulled down a game-high nine rebounds, had four steals, and received the game ball for most program ad sales.

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Matt

Quick

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ALDERMAN

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JUNE 8

MATT QUICK for ALDERMAN,

City of Richland

To the people of Richland,

My name is Matthew Quick. My wife, Brooke Patterson Quick and I are lifelong residents of the City of Richland. I'm 34 years old, married with three children, and have a strong love for this city. My family is deeply rooted in this community and growing up here has been a joy of my life. My goal is to serve and give back to the place that made me who I am. With your support, I will serve the city of Richland. As YOUR Alderman, I will be a man of the people, serving with integrity and honesty to ensure YOUR voice is heard.



I will always be available for the citizens of Richland.

Matt Quick

Paid for by Matt Quick.

McLaurin High School's Owens wins tiebreaker



Terrial Owens



Special to SWRankin News

Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Maddie Hemphill, Terrial Owens and Emily Webb; and back row: Joshua Valencia, A.J. Webster, Delta Terry, Zoie Aikens and Sarah McRaney.

Special to SW Rankin News

The McLaurin High School's (MHS) tennis team fought long and hard in the State Playoffs match against Franklin County on April 12. Every match was close and competitive. While their doubles teams and boy's singles fell, Terrial Owens pulled out a tough match, split-


ting sets (6-4, 4-6) and winning the tie-breaker 12-10. For the first time in McLaurin tennis history, the MHS tennis team qualified for the State Championship Games held April 26 in Oxford. Terrial Owens qualified for the Girl's Singles State Tournament, and Mattie Hemphill and A.J. Webster qualified for Mixed Doubles.

PJHS student places first in district tournament



Special to SW Rankin News

Pearl Junior High School (PJHS) eighth-grader Allie Myers recently placed first in the Girls Golf District Tournament. She was named the District Medalist Champion. Myers will compete for the Individual 6A State Championship in Biloxi. Pictured with Allie is Pearl Golf Coach David Houston.



Elect

☒

Larry Nipper

For Richland Alderman

Plainview Circle; Richland, Ms. 39218
larrynipper@att.net

Life long resident of Plain/Richland.
4 children and 6 grandchildren attended Richland grades 1-9, and Florence
Highschool 10-12. Active Member First Baptist Church of Richland.

Points of Interest:

1. Life Long resident of Plain/ Richland

2. Active member First Baptist Church Richland

3. Past member and Coach in the Richland Youth Association.

4. 37 years service IBEW local 480. (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers)

4(a.) Past Executive Board Member

(b.) Past Trustee Of IBEW local 480 Health and welfare fund

(c.) Past Assistant Business Manager and Worker Development Manager of IBEW local 480

(d.) Past Supervisor/ Superintendent in Maintenance and Construction Industry

(e) Past Contract Negotiator

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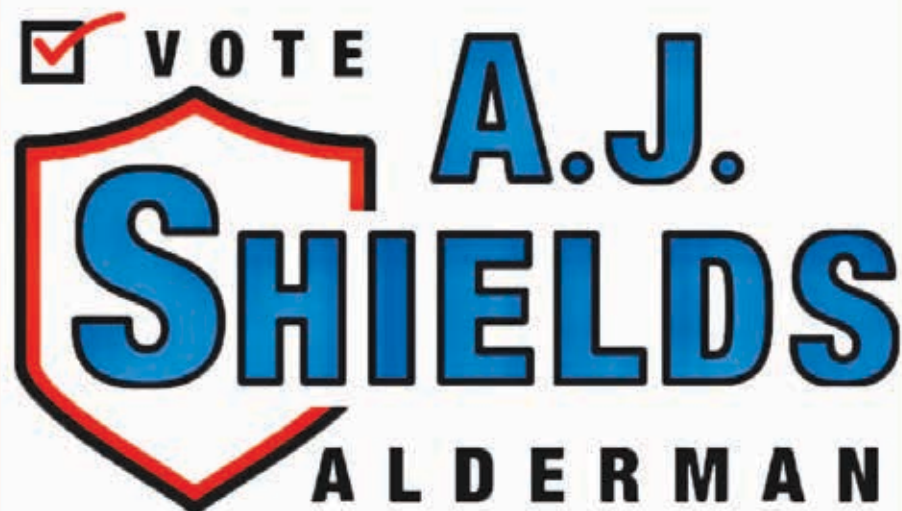
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A.J.'s vision for Richland:

Richland will be recognized statewide as a beautiful and safe place to raise families, operate and grow successful businesses, and proudly call home.

Mission Statement:

In an effort to materialize my vision for the City of Richland, I will:

- Work hard with other elected officials and the various departments within the city to encourage and maintain a beautiful city.
- Strive to ensure that public safety and transportation conditions encourage business interests for Richland.
- Focus on community involvement as a priority to ensure an environment for sustainable projects and activities.
- Most of all, BE TRANSPARENT and LISTEN to the voices of the men, women, and children that make up this great city.

Support Richland on June 8th - ***VOTE A.J. SHIELDS***

The "common sense" choice!

A.J. SHIELDS was raised in Richland and proudly calls this city home. He acquired his management skills from both the Richland Fire Department, where he quickly advanced to the rank of Captain, and by running successful businesses for over 17 years. Now, A.J. wants to share his disciplined work ethic, conservative values, and common sense approach in the capacity of Alderman.

Get to know A.J. Shields:

- 3rd generation Richland resident (raising the 4th generation)
- Loving husband and father to a Christian family with conservative values
- Served with the Richland Fire Department for over 13 years, where he advanced to the rank of Captain and is a Certified Smoke Diver. He stepped away from the Fire Department with hopes to better serve the City of Richland in the Alderman position.
- Achieved the rank of Eagle Scout with the Boy Scouts of America
- Multiple recognitions for recruiting and team management, serving dual roles as a Group Sales Director and Marketing Director for T&T Marketing Specialists



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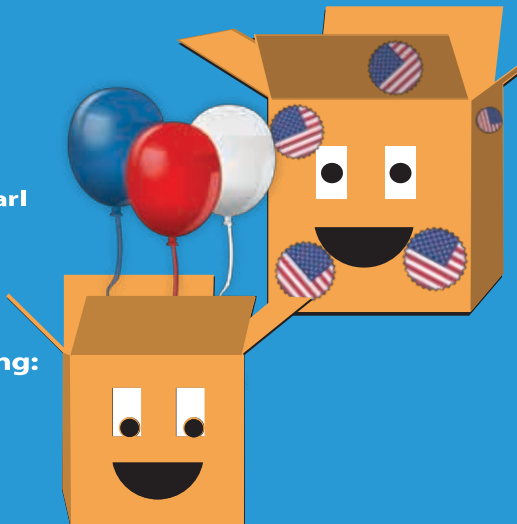
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Guest speakers, special luncheons, armchair travel hosted by PSC

Special to SW Rankin News

Mark the calendar for multiple activities and events to be held at Pearl Senior Center in the month of May.

For starters, a **special viewing of *The Crown***, which began May 3, will continue each Tuesday at 1 p.m. The Seasons Two and Three of the Netflix original drama will be featured. It chronicles the life of Queen Elizabeth II from her appointment to the throne in the 1940s to modern times.

Also in May, the game of bridge returns Thursdays at 1 p.m.

Brown Bag Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, May 13, at 11:30 a.m. The guest speaker for the event is Dr. Harriet Jones, an internist at St. Dominic Internal Medicine Group in Jackson. She will discuss Type 2 Diabetes and You. Pearl Senior Services (PSS) encourages local residents fifty-five and older to bring a bag lunch (drinks will be provided) and come to "lunch and learn." Attendees must sign up in advance as space is limited.



Armchair Travel to Zambia is scheduled for Friday, May 14 at 10 a.m. Join PSS for their armchair adventure as they travel virtually to the Republic of Zambia, a landlocked country in central southern Africa. There they will explore the National Wildlife Park and rivers, and visit one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, and largest waterfall, The Victoria Falls. After the adventure, Zambian treats will be provided. Participants are encouraged to make a souvenir of the journey. Space is limited.

Mississippi Braves (M-Braves) Vice-President and General Manager **Pete Laven** will be the guest speaker for PSS May luncheon. The special luncheon is scheduled to begin Thursday, May 20, at 11:30 a.m. Laven begins his third year with the M-Braves (thirtieth



season in baseball overall) and is excited to have baseball return to Trustmark Park in 2021. First pitch of the season was Wednesday, May 5, against the Pensacola Blue Wahoos. Tickets are available for purchase at \$5, space is limited, and no holds are allowed.

The Hummingbird Swing is scheduled for Tuesday, May 25 at 10 a.m. Perri is back in May to teach how to make a hummingbird swing. The cost to attend is \$5. Interested parties must pre-register to attend and the craft fee is due upon registration. Space is limited.



Birthday Bingo is scheduled for May 27 at 1 p.m. Come and celebrate May birthdays by playing a game of Bingo. Space is limited.

Lastly, there will be a **Light a Candle in Honor and Memory of** event scheduled on Memorial Day, Friday, May 28 from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. This will be a "come and go" event.

WIN \$25!

THE FLORENCE NEWS

THE RICHLAND NEWS

Pearl News

In one advertisement in this issue, we've placed this newspaper image. Find it, write the advertiser's name and the page number where you found it below, and mail this form to the indicated address. A drawing will be held to determine our winner from all correct entries received by May 25, 2021. There will be one winner per each issue in which this contest entry form appears. One entry per household per issue, please.

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Pearl-Richland Intermodal project advances to next phase

Special to SW Rankin News

A component of a transportation improvement program that was initiated in 2012, the Pearl-Richland Intermodal Connection's primary purpose is to facilitate traffic flow on Highway 468 and South Pearson Road. During the summer of 2018, demolition began. Most recently, on Tuesday, April 27, an official ground breaking ceremony took place.

Those in attendance were Transportation Commissioner Willie Simmons, Pearl Mayor Jake Windham, Richland Mayor Pat Sullivan as well as an assortment of other officials.

The goal of the project is to extend Adkins Drive to State Route 468 and upgrade the signal at South Pearson and SR 468. It also includes water and sewer relocation. The project is the first phase of a large bridge construction over the railroad on South Pearson.

"This groundbreaking is a great milestone for both the City of Pearl and The

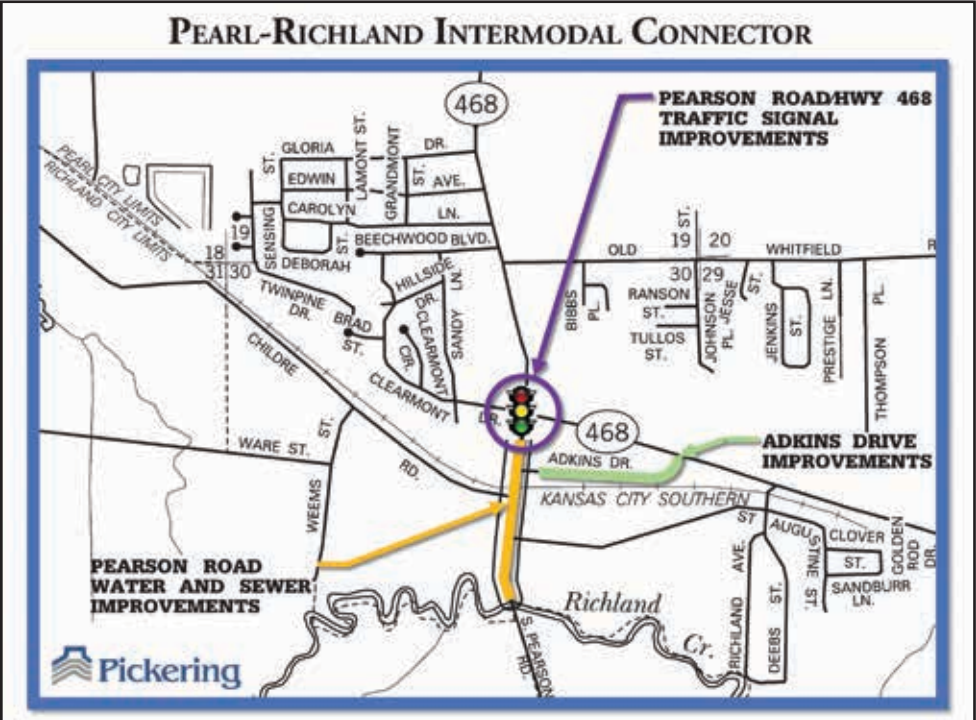
City of Richland," said Pearl Mayor Jake Windham. "This project will first and foremost increase public safety. A flyover bridge will allow police, fire and ambulances to quickly cross the intersection without being blocked by a train. It will also alleviate daily traffic congestion as vehicles will be able to move freely over the bridge as well. A second benefit will come in economic development. The area between Pearl and Richland will now be accessible at all times which will lead to more business investment and more efficient shopping and shipping opportunities."

Mayor Sullivan added that, "The Phase I Intermodal project will enhance the flow of transportation in and out of the City of Richland and in return spur economic growth."

The \$2.15 million project, awarded to Hemphill Construction, was funded by the Federal Highway Administration and appropriated by the Mississippi Department of Transportation with a local match.



April 27 Ground Breaking Ceremony held at the intersection of South Pearson and Childre roads in Pearl in Rankin County.



Layout of the proposed work. Special to SW Rankin News

City of Richland congratulates Payne for service



Special to SW Rankin News


Jeff Payne was recently honored by the City of Richland for his twenty years of service with the Parks & Recreation Department. He was presented with his service pin on April 6, 2021 by Alderman Beth Sanford.



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Fun had by all at Father ~ Daughter Ball



Photos special to SW Rankin News

Saturday, April 17, 2021 was a spectacular evening at the Richland Community Center for fathers and daughters during the Sixth Annual Father-Daughter Cinderella Ball. Girls ages four through thirteen were invited to attend with their fathers or father-figures. Food and beverages were available on site, with entertainment provided by DJ 7-8. Proceeds from the event went to fund the programs of the Richland Mayor's Youth Council.

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FHS selects "Prom King and Queen" for 2021



Special to SW Rankin News

Florence High School (FHS) held its 2021 Junior-Senior Prom at The Vault Venue in Brandon on April 10. The students voted to select their Prom King and Queen 2021. Ian McGee, son of Chuck and Melissa McGee, was chosen as the 2021 Prom King. Sara Grace Jackson, daughter of Kris and Robin Jackson, was selected as the 2021 Prom Queen.

Spring news from Richland-Florence Garden Club



Pictured (l to r) are: Susan Harrison, Rowan Craft, Beth Sanford, Shirley Wilson, Minetta Veazy, Teenie Boone, Scottie Boyanton, Gaynell Ainsworth, Doris McBride, Debbie Knight, Sandra Boyd and Area Extension Horticulture Agent Donna Bellicch.



Special to SW Rankin News

Donna Bellicch

Special to SW Rankin News

The Richland-Florence Garden Club (R-F GC) held their monthly meeting on Thursday, April 8, 2021. The speaker of the month was Area Extension Horticulture Agent Donna Bellicch. The main topic of discussion was the use of pesticides and the best way to protect the environment. Bellicch explained how rain is refreshing due to the low pH and water from the hose

has a very high pH and is not always helpful to plants. There were eleven club members in attendance: Gaynell Ainsworth, Teenie Boone, Scottie Boyanton, Sandra Boyd, Rowan Craft, Susan Harrison, Debbie Knight, Doris McBride, Beth Sanford, Minetta Veazy and Shirley Wilson.

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

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Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	Funeral Home
Lisa Karyn Boyd	52	Florence, MS	4/2/2021	Chancellor Funeral Home
Stella Bridges White	69	Harrisville, MS	4/3/2021	Chancellor Funeral Home
Eleanor Jean Martin	78	Richland, MS	4/13/2021	Chancellor Funeral Home
Jeanne Hester	67	Pearl, MS	4/18/2021	Chancellor Funeral Home
Charles Oscar Berryhill	82	Brandon, MS	4/21/2021	Chancellor Funeral Home
Michael "Mike" Clair	57	Byram, MS	4/22/2021	Chancellor Funeral Home
James "Sammy" Wheeler	76	Florence, MS	4/22/2021	Chancellor Funeral Home
Danny Ray Bailey	48	Florence, MS	4/22/2021	Chancellor Funeral Home
Pedro Enriquez	76	Pearl, MS	4/28/2021	Chancellor Funeral Home

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Thames named 4A Mississippi State Champion

Special to SW Rankin News

Richland’s Ivan Thames was recently named 4A South State Powerlifting Champion in the 308 weight class. He scored the following in competition: 700 lb. squat, 350 lb. bench press, and a 635 lb. deadlift for a combined total of 1685 lbs. He was also slated to compete

for the state title in April. On April 17, Thames secured the Mississippi State Championship in the 4A 308 class. In addition to the following: 710 Squat (meet record), 350 Bench, 655 DL (meet record) and 1715 total (meet record), He made the Super 12 as the best class 308 lifter in all classifications.



Ivan Thames at the South State Powerlifting competition.



Thames pictured second from left.

Special to SW Rankin News



Thames with Coach Todd Montgomery.

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FHS JROTC Drill Team takes top honors

Special to SW Rankin News

Florence High School (FHS) JROTC Drill team took top honors at the Rankin County School District (RCSD JROTC) Drill meet by placing first in Armed Platoon, Unarmed Platoon and Unarmed Squad drill routines. They also placed second in Armed Squad and third in Color Guard drill routines.

The Raider team also won the RCSD Raider competition for the eighth year in a row by running the Raider Road in one hour and fifteen minutes. Raider Road is a 6.25 mile course cadets run and incorporates five tasks; build a rope bridge, splint a fracture, evacuate a casualty, 200 meter tire pull, and tie knots.



Pictured is Cadet CSM Sean Walters leading the members of FHS JROTC Armed Platoon in their drill routine.



Cadet MAJ Bella Pigg receives the first place award for the Unarmed Platoon drill routine.



FHS JROTC Drill team with awards. Photos special to SW Rankin News



Pictured (l to r) are: Cadets Kyle McLendon, Ayden Johnson, Dylan McLain, Jada Berry, Matthew Allen, Haley Mooneyhan and Brayden Karcarka completing the one-rope bridge at the RCSD Raider competition.



FHS JROTC Raiders Pictured (l to r) are, front row: JJ McQueen, Cole Mangum, Judy Slay, Wes Smalley, Jay Whitty, Alex Holmes, Andrew White and Craig Millette; and back row: Conner Wallet, Kyle McLendon, Jada Berry, Brayden Karcarka, Haley Mooneyhan, Ayden Johnson, Matthew Allen and Dylan McLain.

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The Book Charmer, FRL book report for May

Special to SW Rankin News

The Book Charmer, by Karen Hawkins, published in 2019, is a magical book - not dark magic, but subtle magic you are not aware of unless you begin to notice that some things change a bit from time to time. The flowers around town might be red; then they are yellow. Another time, they are purple. The "Book Charmer," is Sarah May Dove, librarian in the town of Dove Pond, North Carolina.

The first book which spoke to Sarah Dove was the old original diary of Charlotte Dove, written in 1702, the year the original Dove family arrived in the valley which would become Dove Pond. In 2001, when Sarah was seven, the old book lay inside a locked, glass cabinet inside the library and called to Sarah, "Read me." Sarah resisted for weeks; finally, she read the book and learned that whenever Dove Pond needed help, one of the seven Dove Daughters, if there were any at that time, would rescue the

town. Sarah Dove had six sisters.

On that same day in another town, two little girls, ten-year old Grace and seven-year-old Hannah Wheeler, sat in the back of Miss Wanda's car, their case worker. Miss Wanda had told Grace this might be her last chance to find a home for the girls. She drove into Dove Pond, to the small home of Mrs. Giano, who had fostered many children in the past. Mrs. Giano was particular, not taking in just any child; however, she quickly took the girls into her home and her heart. Grace felt she had come home.

Nineteen years later, Grace and Mama G, with Grace's niece, Daisy, the ten-year old daughter of her sister, Hannah, returned to Dove Pond. Two months and eleven days earlier, Hannah

died.

Since 2001, Grace had become a successful career woman working as a financial analyst for an investment firm in Charleston, NC. Sadly, Hannah's life spiraled downward. One day, she left her small daughter, Daisy, with Mama G, and disappeared. When they learned of Hannah's death, it was hard on all of them, Daisy, Mama G, and Grace. Grace decided that moving back to Dove Pond would help Mama G, whose memory was slipping, and the move might also be good for Daisy.

Settling into Mama G's old house in Dove Pond, Grace found a job as the Town Clerk in the City Hall. For the past ten years, the town's mayor had let important decisions slide; he was too

busy fishing. Magical signs everywhere indicated Dove Pond was ailing.

The town librarian, Sarah Dove, became friends with Grace. One day, she noticed flowers on one end of a street had turned to a bright cheerful yellow. Sarah realized that Grace lived on that end of the street and this was THE SIGN that Grace would bring Dove Pond back to life. She convinced Grace that, with her background and understanding of finances, she was the perfect person to revive the annual Dove Pond festival, which was key to saving the town of Dove Pond.

A lot of things happen on the way to reviving the town; yet, they will have to remain unknown unless you borrow a copy of *The Book Charmer* at your local library and read how Sarah, Grace, Mama G., and young Daisy create a magical miracle for Dove Pond and for themselves.

When you visit the library, listen to the books. They just might be telling you something you need to know.



Special to SW Rankin News

RFC team finalists in Mississippi State Cup



Special to SW Rankin News

Richland Futbol Club's U14 Freedom team were recently named 2021 Finalist in the Mississippi Recreational State Cup. In Game One the final score was RFC -3, Mississippi Futbol Club (MFC) - 0; Game Two's final score was RFC -5 and Pearl River -3; Semi-Finals final score was RFC - 4 and Pearl River -0; and Championship final score was RFC - 1 and MFC - 2.

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Rankin County fans welcome Braves' return

By Bill Colvin

In recent weeks, several thousand people in vehicles have scurried across the south parking lot of Pearl's Trustmark Park to obtain their COVID-19 vaccine shot. Many will soon return to get another type of "shot in the arm."

No needle involved this time. Another Southern League baseball season will be underway to ignite and excite the West Pearl neighborhood with crowd noise and Friday night fireworks. Family fun is coming back to town, y'all!

Last year's season had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, but the lid on loudness is coming off May 4 as the Pensacola Blue Wahoos roll into town to help with another Southern League resurrection of "America's game."

The 2021 season will be shorter by a total of twenty (ten home, ten away) games, but I would wager that those will hardly be missed. Local fans are sick of the sickness and ready for the buzz of baseball and the wonderful aroma of popcorn and sausage dogs.

The powers-that-be have restricted the seating capacity for normal Double A South (formerly Southern League) contests to fifty percent. As drastic as that may sound, given those few college capacity crowds, it will be a good lesson for life for those young folks (makes me

think about a sign I read on a Southern Mississippi school principal's office entrance...it read: THIS AIN'T NO BURGER KING, AND YOU CAN'T ALWAYS HAVE IT YOUR WAY!)

When I was a kid in St. Louis, Missouri, watching a Cardinal double dipper in which Stan "The Man" Musial went deep no less than five times in one afternoon, I thought I would never see anything as exciting again. I was wrong. It came about in the mid-1990s at a five-game Texas League playoff between the Jackson Generals and the Shreveport Captains. It was Game Five. The team who won three of the five games would be declared that year's Texas League Champion.

It took place at Smith-Wills Stadium on a perfect baseball night. The crowd was disappointingly small for such a season-ending event. With the series tied 2-2, we trailed them 1-0 in the ninth inning. The Captains' best starter had pitched his heart out but was showing his tiredness. They signaled their bullpen to send in their league-best closer. Our crowd (you could see it on their faces) could see that the inevitable was about to happen.

The Generals' third-baseman (I named him "toe tapper" because of the way he always tapped his toes behind him before

he would step up to the plate and take his practice swings), batting right-handed, wasted no time launching a beautiful, high-arching homerun into the tall pines behind the right field fence. It reminded me how Darryl Strawberry used to do it when he came to town for an Exhibition game with the "Big Mets."

So "toe tapper" had lit the fuse with his game-tying launch to right. The crowd was obviously relieved of a lot of tension, and almost everybody had scooted forward in their seats in hesitant wonderment. In comes our little fireplug catcher, Jeff Ball, trying to look calm, cool, and collected. Shreveport's closer-hero looked confident. He had been getting batters out like magic all summer. Ball gets comfortable, and sixty feet, six inches away, the Shreveport closer winds up and turns it loose!

I was still collecting homerun dollars for "toe tapper's" minutes-old feat to knot things up. Suddenly, I hear a loud WHAP! I look up just in time to see the ball sail into the darkness behind the centerfield wall. Then followed an incredibly loud clap of crowd-thunder! It had to have awakened half of Northeast Jackson! The tennis court nets a half-mile away undoubtedly must have shuddered and then fell limp.

The crowd is in happy heaven. Every-

one is slapping each other on the back, hugging and squealing. Jackson State University head coach Bob Braddy is pacing, hat off, scratching his head saying over and over: "I cannot believe this! I cannot believe this!" Someone up in the announcer's booth flipped on "WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS! WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS!" and turns the volume way up. Veteran game radio announcer Bill Wahlberg has almost lost his voice. He quickly names the game perfectly... "The Miracle on Dirt" game.

I turn eighty-eight-years old on St. Patrick's Day. I'll probably never see any game again like that Wahlberg "Miracle," but who knows? You can safely bet your boots though...I'll be out at Trustmark Park just about every time the gates open. Come on out every chance you get. God willing, I and many of my steady baseball friends from those old times out there on Cool Papa Bell Drive will be there hoping that the unbelievable will re-occur. That's what miracles are all about.

For the Braves' full 2021 schedule, visit www.MILB.com/mississippi/schedule.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bill Colvin has lived in Pearl since 1968 and has been a staunch supporter of professional baseball since the '70s. Colvin worked as a freelancer for the The Clarion Ledger in the '70s, as well.



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