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Wesson News

SPOTLIGHT

Porches Menu Still Alive

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Wesson News
PO Box 1028
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Volume 8, Number 11

"Good News You Can Use"

November 10, 2020

Christmas traditions continue in town

Special to Wesson News

COVID-19 will not be the grinch that stole Christmas in Wesson.

The traditional Christmas parade, although scaled down, is on. And *Wesson News*, Wesson Garden Club and Wesson Chamber of Commerce will be encouraging residents and businesses to decorate the town through the Spirit of Christmas Awards.

As usual on the Sunday before the parade on November 29, members of the Wesson Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD) will get the town's decorations out of storage and install them on utility polls throughout the downtown area.

The Christmas parade rolls at 4 p.m. on Friday, December 4, but just who will participate is uncertain now. Wesson Fire Department Chief Ken Carraway and Town Clerk are registering persons and organizations.



Wesson News

Carraway is still trying to confirm that Santa will arrive in town as part of the parade. Plans call for children bringing letters with Christmas wishes to Santa and getting candy bag gifts from him without contact at the fire house following the parade.

Parade planners hope to recruit floats and vehicles that will feature members of the Wesson High

School homecoming court, beauty and beau winners and local business leaders and community service volunteers; trucks from Wesson Volunteer Fire Department, siren-sounding cars from Wesson Police Department and marchers from the America Legion, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts. Wesson Attendance Center, including its

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New patrolman joins Wesson Police Department



Special to Wesson News

A 23-year-old Crystal Springs native who wanted to become a policeman since his childhood has joined Wesson Police Department (WPD) as a patrolman.

John Brent comes to WPD after one year of service as a patrolman at Hazlehurst Police Department. A graduate of Crystal Springs High School, he worked in warehousing before joining the Hazlehurst police force.

"Growing up, I always wanted to be a policeman," says Brent. "So when there was an opportunity, I started my law enforcement career at Hazlehurst."

Brent is the son of John and Simiko Brent of Crystal Springs,

cont. on page 11

\$20,000 + raised for child's foster mother

Special to Wesson News

Wesson area residents and businesses are demonstrating their compassion and generosity in the wake of a two-vehicle accident that claimed the life of ten-year-old Lilly Ann Durr and seriously injured her younger sister Mallory and foster father Calvin Fisk.

Local donors have contributed more than \$20,000 online through a GoFundMe initiative organized by Heidi Green of Hazlehurst on behalf of Rebecca Fisk, the child's foster mother, who faces major expenses, with her husband and other foster daughter recovering from their injuries at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and Batson Children Hospital in Jackson. Her husband may not be able to return to work during an extended recovery period, Green said.

Wesson Police Chief Chad



Special to Wesson News

O'Quinn said speed was a factor in what he called a "horrific" accident, which he reported occurred at the

intersection of Sylvarena Road and Highway 51 when a vehicle driven

cont. on page 4

Giving thanks for a REAL king

By Guest Columnist Nelson Santa Ana

As I sit down to write this meditation for Thanksgiving, we have not yet had our nation's Presidential election. So, honestly, my first thought is: "I'm glad the election is over!" All the TV and radio ads, one sided news networks, and online bickering can make a person go crazy. I am thankful for the rest from campaign trails that have consumed our nation's biggest platforms for the last several months.

And it is on that note that I want to dive a little deeper. This year has been a hard one for our nation and our world. Obviously, when I first write that down, many minds will go to COVID-19, and rightfully so. This virus has changed so much of the way we do things and interact with other people. But there's much more to 2020 than the coronavirus itself. We have experienced its repercussions, as well. We have had an economic

collapse and seen millions lose their jobs. We have experienced empty houses of worship, while simultaneously seeing beaches full of fun-seekers. We've endured facemasks and social distancing. And we've witnessed an entire segment of our population, the 65 and older crowd, largely lock themselves in their homes as a precaution to protect their lives. On top of all that, we have seen the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. We have seen major protests and rioting in the streets of some of our nation's great cities. We've had wildfires out west and hurricanes down south. I'm not saying these things are all bad or all good, but I am saying these things have been hard.

That brings me back to politics. Many, if not all, of these things have been highly politicized. No matter which side of the aisle you find yourself on, these areas have been used by politicians to make their own party look good and their

opponents' party look bad. It's all been very overwhelming and quite exhausting as Americans. Yet, I am thankful.

As I consider our political landscape and consider what I perceive as the overall trajectory of our nation, I am thankful. Not because I have some false hope of the "good ole days," that so many in the Silent and Baby Boomer generations long for, actually being restored. Not because I think the rise of some political party will swoop in and save the day. No, I am thankful precisely because these sorts of things bring me no hope. That is, I'm thankful because my hope is not in man, not in government, not in wealth, power, or politics. Rather, I can be thankful because my hope is in a King.

Not just any king, though. A King whose authority has no bounds. Yet whose love, wisdom, and compassion have no end. A

cont. on page 10



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Police Blotter

Special to Wesson News

During October, Wesson Police Department activity encompassed:

Responses to:

- One accident
- One vehicle fire
- One tree fallen on vehicle
- One disturbing the peace
- One missing property
- One domestic assault

Arrests & citations for:

- Vehicular homicide and felonious hit and run, car theft and aggravated assault of a police officer following a two-vehicle accident with a fatality
- Two without driver licenses
- Six speeding
- Five for disregard of traffic device
- One contributing to the delinquency of a minor
- One seatbelt violation

Wesson Police conduct nightly business checks. On school days, they facilitate traffic flow at Wesson Attendance Center, with officers on duty between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

City Hall displaying local talent



Special to Wesson News



Special to Wesson News

Wesson News

City Hall is showcasing Wesson artists to build community support for them.

It has started by displaying the works of Sylvia Rutherford, a local painter, but plans call for spotlighting the wide array of talent around town.

Why go to a gallery to make purchases or order art online from strangers, when you can find the creative product of a neighbor, Town Clerk Angela Hester asks. Locals are engaged in quilting, pottery and other arts, as well as painting, she points out.

There's no place more appropriate than City Hall to display local talent, Hester adds. The City Hall lobby is great space in which members of the

community regularly come and go.

Rutherford started oil painting to indulge her need for creative expression while pursuing a career as a nurse before her retirement. A Union Church native, she worked in and around New Orleans, where she served as director of surgical services at Lakeside Hospital at Metairie, LA. She returned to her native Union Church in 1998 with her husband Jimmy, a retired electrician and car dealership manager, to care for her 83-year-old father. After her father died, she and her husband moved to a home they built in Wesson. She is a twenty-year cancer survivor.

Contact Town Clerk Angela Hester at City Hall about displaying art or suggesting an artist whose works should be spotlighted.

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WESSON'S

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AWARDS

Wesson News, in partnership with Wesson Garden Club and Wesson Chamber of Commerce, is pleased to present and sponsor the Spirit of Christmas Awards. Business and resident Christmas decorators will be recognized for distinct and creative displays.

Wesson Garden Club will judge displays and select winners in the Wesson area, encompassing the corporate limits of the town and the Wesson School District. *Wesson News* will announce winners. Wesson Chamber of Commerce will present \$125 to the top business winner. You do not officially have to enter. To assure consideration of your display, however, complete the form below and mail to P.O. Box 1028, Wesson, Mississippi 39191, or email to [Wesson News](mailto:wessonnews.com) (bobarnold@wessonnews.com).

REGISTRATION FORM FOR ENTRY IN WESSON'S 2020 SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS AWARDS COMPETITION

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cont. from page 1

\$20,000 + raised for child's foster mother

by Matthew Miller of Wesson re-arranged the vehicle driven by Calvin Fisk in which his foster daughters were passengers.

Police said Miller sped off following the accident, crashed into a nearby house, abandoned his vehicle, stole the parked car of a good Samaritan, who was assisting at the accident scene, and continued to flee. Officers from the Wesson Police Department and Copiah County Sheriff's Office finally took Miller into custody after he was in another accident on Bahala Road, and charged him with vehicular manslaughter and felonious hit and run, car theft and the aggravated assault of a police officer. Miller was treated for injuries at a Jackson hospital, and his case is scheduled to be presented to the Copiah County Grand Jury, O'Quinn said.

The Fisks, who are the aunt and uncle of the deceased child and her sister, have been in the process of adopting them, Kimberly Douglas, another aunt, said. She described the accident victim, a fourth grader, as an "energetic, loving, empathetic little girl" who "had so much life and the biggest smile that could light up a room." In a letter she wrote to her foster parents just days before the crash, she expressed her love for them and signed it "Lilly Fisk," Douglas said.

Services were held for Lilly Durr on Saturday, October 31, at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Hazlehurst and graveside at Clear Branch Baptist Church.

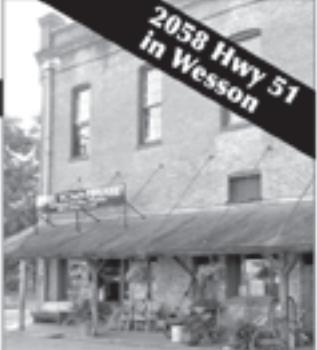
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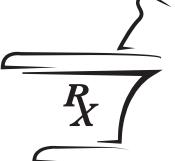
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Haunted house is a tribute to late husband



Wesson News

Wanda Westbrook celebrates her purchase of the old Wesson Sunflower store with friends and family in one of the scary rooms inside the building, which has been the setting for a Halloween haunted house -- The Fear -- that she plans to make an ongoing Halloween attraction in Wesson to honor her deceased husband Jacob, who helped build the habitat for its array of characters in 2018 and 2019. From left to right are Kristin Bonsall, Westbrook's daughter Brianna, Westbrook, Westbrook's son Blake, Trish Bradford and Lee Bradford.

Wesson News

The Fear -- the Wesson Chamber of Commerce haunted house that has become a local attraction during the Halloween season -- will become an ongoing part of the community in honor of a 41-year old commercial plumber for whom it was an avocation before his death in July.

Wanda Westbrook purchased the old Sunflower store and the surrounding property from the Town of Wesson to memorialize her husband, whose seasonal pastime was helping to transform the building into a venue that for the past two years has been a source of enjoyment of her children and many others -- both kids and adults -- seeking scary experiences at a habitat for Halloween ghosts, vampires, zombies, wicked witches and monsters.

Wanda and Jacob and three other couples with whom they were friends planned, built and operated The Fear for Wesson Chamber of Commerce in 2018 and 2019, constructing 20 to 25 rooms, hallways and tunnels in the old Sunflower store, where the scary characters lingered to frighten visitors. The haunted house didn't scare people this year because of crowd safety concerns in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Westbrook, however, says she guarantees it will return next year, and promises it will be an ongoing part of the Wesson Halloween tradition, and a source of fun and excitement for the town's people and visitors from throughout Mississippi.

On Halloween and the October and November weekends immediately before and after the celebration in 2018 and 2019, some 2,000 to 3,000 people each year flocked to The Fear to be frightened, and the Wesson Chamber of Commerce, in the process, raised the bulk of its program funds.

Wanda and Jacob Westbrook, Lee and Trish Bradford, Dean and Kristin Bonsall and Patrick and Tori Ferguson started building The Fear in July, working on it in evenings and weekends after their regular day jobs to make it ready for the Halloween crowds. It was a labor of love. "We walked into the old Sunflower and built the haunted house from scratch," Westbrook says.

This summer, Jacob succumbed to illnesses with which he had been struggling over the years. So when the Town of Wesson asked for bids to purchase the Sunflower building and property adjacent to her home, his widow bought it for \$80,000, seeing it as a fitting tribute to her husband and a way to keep his memory alive.

Westbrook, a registered nurse at Brookhaven-based Home Health, will operate and maintain The Fear with the help of the Bonsalls, Bradfords and Fergusons, who she has appointed to a board of directors. Proceeds from the operation during the Halloween season will continue to go to the Wesson Chamber of Commerce. She sees The Fear growing, too, expanding the Sunflower building and making it a "bigger and better" Halloween venue, which is an important Wesson attraction.

Her songs & massages make people happy

By Bob Arnold

Some people around here know Marti Stephens for her voice as a country singer. Others know her for her hands as a massage therapist.

Actually, country music brought her here when she was three years old from her native Bakersfield, California. Her parents, who worked for country music star Buck Owens, found property off Highway 51 between Brookhaven and Wesson and settled there after a performance tour during which they fell in love with the area.

For her, life was pretty much country music until 1996, when she discovered massage therapy at the Florida College of Natural Health. She enrolled at the Altamonte, Florida, school after an acupuncture therapist treated her successfully for rheumatoid arthritis. In 1999, she became a massage therapist. In 2012, she started practicing the profession around here -- a career step her many clients in the area are happy she took.

"The herbs and needles worked when I had rheumatoid arthritis, and I wanted to learn about it," she recalls. "After beginning natural health studies in acupuncture, I discovered massage was a healing art that I wanted to practice. I have met so many interesting people from all walks of life as a massage therapist -- bartenders, industrial workers, nurses and doctors, politicians, housewives, lawyers -- and enjoy helping them."

Stephen's country music roots run deep, however, and it has remained a major part of her life, with gigs as a country vocalist when they become available.

Stephens recalls spending her childhood in her father's local recording studio, where she learned to play keyboard, and participating in Pleasant Ridge Pentecostal Church. She attended Mamie Martin Elementary School in Brookhaven, Loyd Star Attendance Center and Brookhaven Christian School. She moved with her family to Ohio when she was 16 years old, lived there for seven years and married, but returned to the area at 22 years old as a country singer with local bands and to rear two daughters because "I hated the cold weather and gray skies."

After a divorce, Stephens relocated to Orlando, Florida, where she stayed 13 years and started her second career in massage at Daytona Day Spa before resettling in the area. She started practicing massage around here after a one-and-one-half hour commute every day to the Jackson area to work at the Aqua Day Spa at the Renaissance Hotel in Ridgeland and at her own spa on Lakeland Drive became too much for her. She also earned an online BA degree in Alternative Medicine from Everglades University at Boca Raton, Florida.

The COVID-19 pandemic threw a curve ball at Stephens this year. Her massage clients, wearing masks and maintaining social distance, are scarce these days. And the gigs with country bands have been rare, as well. Stephens says she is looking at new career directions -- perhaps becoming a health coach and teaching techniques to other massage therapists, while rebuilding her massage practice as COVID-19 subsides.

Stephens has three grown daughters by two marriages -- Amanda, 31,



Marti Stephens and granddaughter Hannah.

Wesson News

Eden, 29, and Hollie, 26, whose five children occupy her time these days as a grandmother -- Brandon, 15, Halley, 8, Hannah, 5, and infants Ollie and Jack.

What are your hobbies?

Although I love traveling to the mountains, I mostly hang out at home. My grandkids are here, of course. I love music and singing when I have the opportunity. I am into gardening -- flowers and vegetables. I cook, focusing on Cajun foods, which I try to make healthy.

Are you a reader?

I am not so much into books, but I am a voracious reader of articles on such topics as alternative medicine and quantum physics -- anything revolving around healthcare and science.

Do you enjoy movies or theater?

I like dramas and thrillers. My favorite movies are *The Help* and *Django Unchained*. I am a fan of the *Star Trek* television series. I like Al Pacino,

Jeff Goldblum and Matthew McConaughey. I follow science and history on the History Channel.

What kind of music do you like?

I am into everything -- the music of just about all talented people and groups. Classical and popular music. Classic country, of course, but also the sounds of Arrowsmith, the Beatles, the Eagles and Elton John; Matt Buble and Nat King Cole.

What would you do with lottery winnings if you were so lucky?

I would pay off my student loans, travel and see the world and buy a yacht.

How would you change the world?

I would feed the hungry, assist torture victims and provide refuge to abused animals.

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Music awards program recognizes local artist

By Guest Columnist Shaw Furlow

Award shows are all over TV and the web. They are glitzy and packed with A-List musicians, actors and other big name celebrities. And it's a big deal. Winning the Oscar for *Good Will Hunting* at an early age changed the careers of Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. And they are not easy to come by. While he was nominated for dozens of Grammy Awards, Elvis Presley only received three, all in the Gospel category.



Wesson News

I rarely watch awards shows because, for the most part, I am out of the loop and don't know the artists or their works. However, a new award show appeared on my radar screen when my friend JF Oakes received the Josie Award for best Southern Rock Single of the Year in 2018. His song, "Bless Your Heart" is a lighthearted toe tapper. Now a local artist has been recognized by the Josie Awards. A Jayess musician, no less.

For those of you who have never heard of them, the Josie Awards are for independent musicians. They aren't presented on TV, and they don't give awards to big name stars. What it does have are artists from all walks of life, who have either written, produced or performed music that should be recognized. They are plumbers, housewives or accountants whose day job pays the bills so they can pursue their musical passions.

The Josie Music Awards was the idea of music entrepreneur Josie Passantino. She and her mother and business partner, Tinamarie Passantino, started the awards program in 2010. In the beginning, they handed out the awards in Nashville. Then they moved the



Wesson News

Jayess' Cole Powell.

program to Dollywood at Pigeon Forge. This year, the event moved to Country Tonight Theatre in Pigeon Forge, because Dollywood was closed.

As with most music awards shows, its presentations encompass many categories -- jazz, blues, folk, country, pop and rock. Many of these categories have sub categories.

This year, Cole Powell, a local singer/songwriter/music producer and author, won the award for the Best EP for his album "Redux II." When you think of the number of entries from all over the country, it staggers the mind. It's impressive!

This is not an award selected by a go to the internet and vote every day poll. The nominations are reviewed by a panel of industry experts and narrowed down until finally one comes out on top. The award is about quality, not popularity.

Powell's EP album, which in-

cludes his song "Always Ever Be," was recorded in his home studio at Jayess.

"Yeah, I'm writing and recording all the time, and having a little studio helps," he says.

You may have a hard time finding Powell in a live performance, as he has drastically cut down on



travel. "I have a young family, and I really enjoy what I'm doing now," he explains. "I never say never, but right now I'm focused on writing and recording."

Recently, Powell was asked to contribute a song for JF Oakes' independent film, *The Band For-*

gettable. The film, which is tentatively scheduled for release in the spring of 2021, features Powell's haunting song, "The Prospects of Time." The film is a different take on the story of an aging rock star and features many local, amateur actors as well as professionals from Jackson, New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

Powell's website is colepowell.net. There you will find movie and music reviews, as well as his music. Check him out.

It feels good to be writing about actual events and news again. We will get through this mess together, friends. Until then, please continue to support the arts.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Shaw Furlow is a local composer, musician and arts promoter. He produces an internet-based video show -- From the Shadyside -- that spotlights area musical talent and is a consultant to school bands in the region.

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America's tech giants are not the problem, and an antitrust lawsuit is not the solution

By Chip Pickering

America's tech giants are not the problem, and antitrust is not the solution. As we enter into a new age of competition and rivalry with China on strategic, on national security, on economic grounds, we have a lot of people in Washington who are wanting to now either break up or heavily regulate the internet companies just at the wrong time and in the wrong way. As you look at every measurement of consumer welfare - lower prices, more innovation, greater investment across all parts of the economy - American tech companies are creating greater growth, lower prices, better services - and that's a hallmark of a very competitive market and not a concentrated monopolistic market.

Ask yourself, is it not the American way to encourage innovation with our brightest minds? Do we want to stifle our ideas and productivity, which is what I would argue is the very thing that has put us on top. Fourteen of the world's top twenty tech companies are American; we are in a new age of competition and rivalry with China. The U.S. tech industry's global market position is at risk and has huge ramifications for re-starting the American economy and our long-term prospects. It's clear the American technology and e-commerce sector drives U.S. growth. States are aggressively competing on a daily basis for good technology jobs. Our universities and colleges are investing in more and more technology and public-private partnerships. Lawsuits will definitely damage our fastest growing industry and threaten these American jobs.

With a global pandemic threatening the entire world, again ask yourself where would we have been over the last six months without technology to assist our businesses to continue to operate, to educate

our children with distance learning, and to provide much needed health care by the use of telehealth? In a recent nationwide survey by the Connected Commerce Council, 93% of small businesses reported they were disrupted by COVID-19 and nearly three in four increased their use of digital tools with COVID-19. A majority of small businesses found digital tools more helpful during COVID-19 than before it. Most also plan to continue to use more digital tools after the pandemic.

By attacking U.S. companies like Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google, the Justice Department, members of Congress, and some state attorneys general have taken a step back in time and are forgetting the hard work that has been done on the issue of antitrust. Companies being too large or successful is not a violation of antitrust laws. Antitrust was established to focus on the consumer and there is a robust consumer welfare standard in our antitrust laws now. Plus, many of the technology companies that are currently being attacked provide free services to our families, services that we use every day in our lives. Comments have been made about political bias within our technology companies from both sides of the aisle. There are solutions to political bias, but mistakenly using antitrust is not the right way to encourage free speech.

Politicizing antitrust by attacking our technology companies and filing federal and state antitrust lawsuits are not the way to go for our country's future. Lawsuits are a distraction from real issues that need to be addressed and a waste of taxpayers' money. Solutions are out there; decision makers and our technology companies can find them together. Lawsuits will only cause delay, distraction and economic losses. Our technology jobs and our future are at stake.

Pickering currently serves as CEO of INCOMPAS.

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cont. from page 2

Giving thanks for a REAL king

King who does not serve one or two four-year terms, but whose term is eternal. A King who has seen corrupt political powers come and go, but is good enough to sacrifice of Himself in order to see His people live and thrive. A King who is not content with better behavior and morality alone, but One who desires and enables actual change of heart.

The truth of this world is that governments are exceedingly imperfect and will all pass away. They cannot remedy human depravity. They cannot change human hearts. Therefore, they cannot last.

But this King, who is King of kings, has come to set the captives free, to seek and to save the lost, to give abundant life, and to proclaim the Lord's favor on His people. His Name is Jesus. He was and is

and is to come. He is fully man and fully God. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He is the Bread of Life, the Light of the World, and The Way, The Truth and The Life. He is the All in All, God's own Son, He is Christ the Lord! And did I mention, He is King!

So, despite everything else that has made 2020 so hard, I am still thankful because of this truth: "Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever'" (Revelation 11:15).

Happy Thanksgiving and God Bless you all.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Nelson Santa Ana is pastor at Wesson Baptist Church.

cont. from page 1

Christmas traditions continue in town

marching band, and specialized local schools are still evaluating parade participation within the context of COVID-19 concerns. Because Co-Lin's fall term ends in November, its Show Band, Colette dancers and cheerleading squad cannot participate.

The Spirit of Christmas Awards will recognize residents, businesses and other organizations for distinctive Christmas decor and creative displays. The Wesson Garden Club will judge displays in the Wesson area, encompassing the corporate limits of the town and the Wesson School District, and select the Overall Best and Design Excellence winners. The Chamber of Commerce will present a \$125 cash prize to the local business recognized for the best Christmas display.

"The Spirit of Christmas Awards seek to encourage efforts to make Wesson a special place during

the holiday season," says *Wesson News* editor Bob Arnold. An official entry is not required, but those who want to assure they are considered should complete the form in the display ad in this issue and mail it to P.O. Box 1028, Wesson, MS 39191, or email bobarnold@wessonnews.com.

In a year in which the COVID-19 pandemic has shut down local civic organizations and forced cancellations of events like Wesson Flea Market, the parade and Spirit of Christmas awards are about maintaining community morale by promoting the cheer and joy that characterizes the Christmas season, community leaders say.

The December issue of *Wesson News* will spotlight choral and other Christmas events of churches and community organizations that will also help to boost and sustain the holiday spirit.

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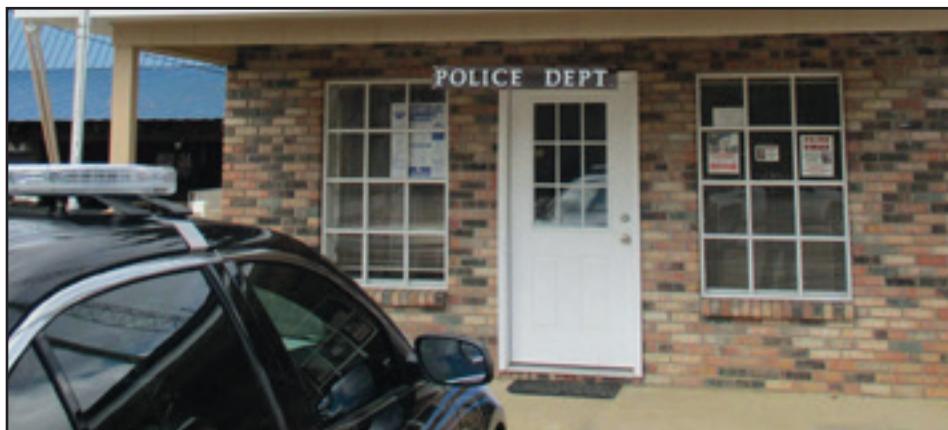
cont. from page 1

New patrolman joins Wesson Police Department

where he grew up and continues to live with his parents.

In January, Brent will attend the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers' Training Academy (MLEOTA), WPD Chief Chad O'Quinn reported.

MLEOTA is the largest law enforcement training facility in Mississippi, O'Quinn notes. Basic and Advanced Training Classes are



provided to state, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies. In-service training is also provided to state law enforcement agencies. The academy has a well trained staff of professional instructors who are proficient in all aspects of law enforcement.

Brent said he is delighted to be working at WPD. "I love my job here," he affirms.

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Porches finds new home in Hazlehurst

By Bob Arnold

After 25 years, the landmark Porches Restaurant in Wesson has closed its doors, but its menu remains alive a few short miles up the road.

Chris McSweyn, who opened Porches with his parents, Al and Ceal McSweyn, as a four-month temporary intern project for a Culinary Arts Technology course at Co-Lin, is serving its unique meals -- Southern cooking with a flair -- at Le Soul on Galitan Street in Hazlehurst, where he is now chef and manager.

Earlier this year, a substantial loss of business due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions on restaurants forced Porches to stop its in-house dining for lunch Monday thru Friday and on Sundays and dinner on Friday, and switch to takeout and curbside service.

Porches maintained its profitability with the business change, but the pandemic closure provided an opportunity to allow Al and Ceal to retire and live normally in the spacious and elegant Victorian home on Highway 51 in Wesson that housed the restaurant.

"We looked at several business location alternatives at Crystal Springs and in the Jackson area that could house Porches once we resumed in-house dining," McSweyn explains.

"Out of the blue," McSwain says, Le Soul owner Donna Stigall invited him to cook and serve Porches' unique cuisine as a guest chef at her restaurant. McSweyn felt comfortable in the quarters, which is much smaller than the Porches' Victorian setting in Wesson, with two dining areas -- one intimate room with a bar and a slightly larger room with a similar ambiance.

Stigall opened Le Soul in 2017, but had not yet found a winning formula for the restaurant, which tried fine dining with New Orleans, Mexican and Italian cuisine at different times. Le Soul had a handful of loyal customers, and McSweyn told Stigall he thought he could bring the Porches crowd to Hazlehurst in a setting with a casual atmosphere with the food specialties that he developed under the influence of "mom and dad" and his former teacher at Co-Lin, Kay Woodrick.

Over two and one half months, former Porches customers have gradually

rediscovered their favorite meals at Le Soul, and new patrons from the surrounding neighborhood -- Copley County Courthouse, Copley and Trustmark banks, Copley County School District offices, professionals, including doctors and lawyers.

McSweyn serves lunches at Le Soul Monday thru Friday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinners on Thursday (5:30 p.m.- 8 p.m.) and Friday (5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.). "Special Events Night" is on Saturdays with live music, dinner theater and other entertainment, along with food and bar service until customers are ready to leave. On Sundays, McSweyn has begun serving a New Orleans style champagne brunch. With resort status in Hazlehurst's historic district, Le Soul serves beer, wine and spirits into the late evening and on Sunday.

Le Soul isn't a temporary stop for Porches, McSweyn affirms.

"Hazlehurst has embraced us," he says. "I expect to be here for a long time."



Special to Wesson News



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Wesson Lions Club selling sweet potatoes



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Wesson Lions Club has again brought some of the world's best sweet potatoes to town.

For the seventh consecutive year, the club trucked in sweet potatoes from Landreth Farms in the Vardaman area in north central Mississippi -- the "Sweet Potato Capital of the World" -- to Wesson to sell at a bargain basement rates to locals and raise funds, in the process, for the international and local charities it helps support.

Wesson Lions Club members started selling them last month and will continue offering them until their supply runs out. On Tuesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., they will be available at a vendor tent in front of the Mill Town Mall.

This year, the Lions Club's inventory includes 400 forty-pound boxes of regular sweet potatoes. In addition to individuals, area restaurants look forward to stocking up on the quality sweet potatoes during the Lions Club's annual fundraising effort.

Landreth Farms officials say it's the loamy soil -- along with timely early rains -- in the Vardaman area that make their potato crops sweet and special. Landreth plants sweet potatoes on 600 acres, among Mississippi farmers, who raise sweet potatoes on more than 18,400 acres across the state. The farm sells commercially to national food stores, such as Kroger and Wal-Mart; and canners, like Gerber; and produces a line of pre-wrapped sweet potatoes for microwave cooking.

The annual sweet potato sale is among three major fundraising activities of the Wesson Lions Club. The Club also has an annual spring pancake breakfast and manages the concession stands at Co-Lin athletic events. It disburses some \$10,000 every year to assist deaf and blind persons through the International Lions Club and to support local organizations and causes related to community improvement, children and youth, veterans, hospice care and address other issues and concerns.

For information and to order sweet potatoes, contact Ric Crockett (985-285-1780) or Alton Ricks (601-643-2466).

WAC Homecoming court

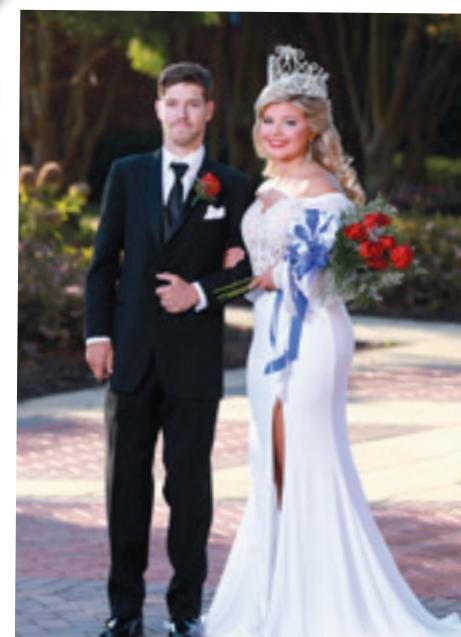


Special to Wesson News
Mr. and Miss Wesson Antrelle Sims and Kayla Barfield helped Queen Avery Kyle preside over WAC homecoming.



Special to Wesson News

Wesson High School Homecoming Queen Avery Kyle and her court highlighted fall at Wesson Attendance Center. Back Row (L to R): Macy Loy, 7th grade maid; Courtney Carr, 8th grade maid; Maggie Runnels, Jr. High Football Maid; Aubree Lee Smith, 8th grade maid; and Mary Margaret Woods, 7th grade maid. Third Row (L to R): Marley Channell, 10th grade maid; Kamryn Bridges, 11th grade maid; Vivian McRee, 11th grade maid; Allyson Sullivan, 10th grade maid; and Hailey Walker, 9th grade maid. Not pictured: Madison Kirton, 9th grade maid. Second Row (L to R): Antrelle Sims, Mr. Wesson High School; Kayla Barfield, Miss Wesson High School; O'Koya Barlow, High School Football Maid; Avery Kyle, 2020 Homecoming Queen; Marisa Becerra, 12th grade maid; and Aubree Leigh Smith, 12th grade maid. Front Row (L to R): Trajan Upton and Reagan Johnson, attendants for Mr. and Miss Wesson; and Brantley Smith and Makinley Johnson, attendants for the 2020 Homecoming Queen.



Special to Wesson News
Justus Davis escorted Queen Avery Kyle at homecoming ceremony.



Special to Wesson News
Trajan Upton and Reagan Johnson were attendants for Mr. and Miss Wesson.



Special to Wesson News
Brantley Smith and Makinley Johnson were attendants for homecoming Queen.

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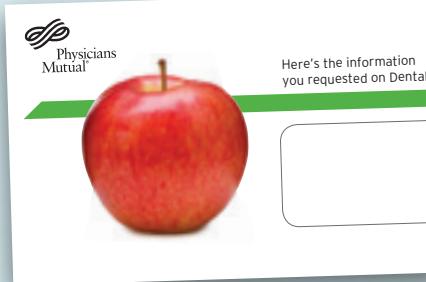
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Veterans Appreciation Days



Special to Wesson News

Among SFH volunteers on hand for Veterans Appreciation Day were (left to right) Cathy Stroud, Carolyn Butler, Jean King, Ann Herbert and Sharon Langley.

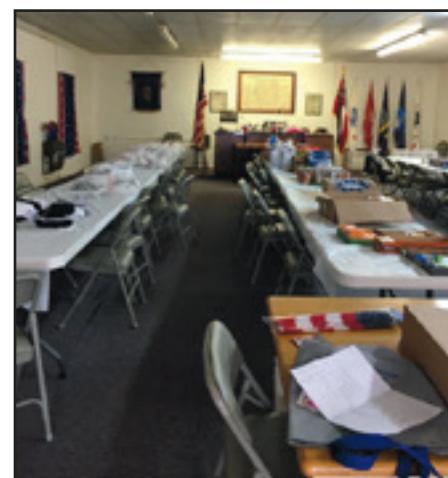
Special to Wesson News

Socks for Heroes (SFH) can't deliver Christmas gifts to veterans homes this year because of COVID-19 restrictions, but it is inviting veterans to special Veterans Appreciation Day events at which they can get special gift packages with socks, of course, and canned food, soap, razors, shampoo, notebooks and pens. More than 100 veterans claimed their gifts in the American Legion parking lot at Wesson in September. More than 60 showed up at the town hall in Georgetown. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on November 11, the Brookhaven VFW will welcome veterans. At Wesson, Veterans Appreciation Day looked like this.

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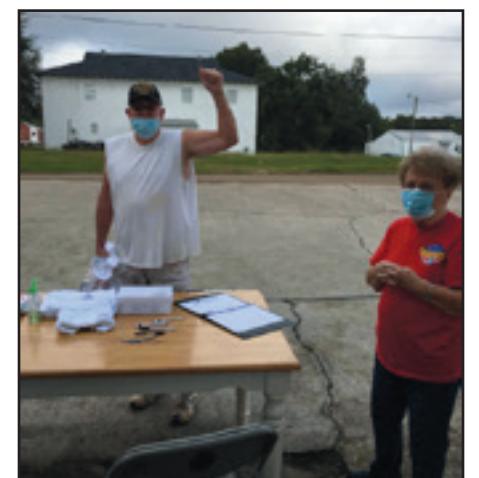
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Inside Wesson American Legion Hall, assorted gifts are ready to be packaged for veterans.



Special to Wesson News

Veteran Jay Maples thanks SFH volunteer Jean King for gift package.



Special to Wesson News

SFH volunteers Carrie McSweyn, a student, and Ann Herbert met cars in Wesson American Legion parking lot to present gifts to veterans.

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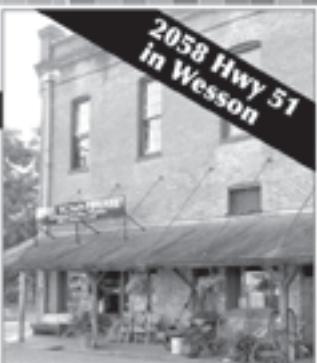
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October Honor yards

Wesson Garden Club has recognized the September landscaping efforts of the Mill Town Mall at 2058 Highway 51 (below, first photo), Clint and Dawn Dunn at 1050 Oak Street (below, second photo), Johnny and Jackie Stewart at 1079 Mount Zion Road (below, third photo) and the Town of Wesson Park on Church Street (below, fourth photo) in special merit, autumn design, rural and organizational categories. The awards, based on maintenance principles and elements of landscape design, seek to encourage ongoing beautification and cleanliness of the Wesson area and cultivate a citizenry that values and protects natural resources and assumes responsibility for enhancing the environment. The Garden Club's Yard of the Month awards honor properties during the spring, summer and fall.

All photos Special to Wesson News



Mill Town Mall at 2058 Highway 51.



Clint and Dawn Dunn at 1050 Oak Street



1079 Mt. Zion Road



Town of Wesson Park on Church Street.

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- 2008 Toyota Highlander Limited, Leather, Backup Camera, New Tires
- 2014 Ford Escape Titanium, Leather, Backup Camera, 32 MPG
- 2012 Chrysler Town and Country Touring L Pkge, Leather, DVD
- 2013 Ford F550 Flatbed, **SOLD!**, 6.7 Diesel, New fuel pump, pickup pump, filters, runs like new
- 2011 Chrysler 300 Limited, Low Miles, Leather, Custom Wheels, Super Sharp!
- 2012 GMC Acadia SLT, Low Miles, Leather, 3rd Row
- 2014 Ford Explorer Limited, Leather 3rd row, Rear air, New tires
- 2010 Toyota Corolla S Automatic, Rear Spoiler, Great Gas Mileage
- 2014 Dodge Grand Caravan SXT, 3rd Row, Rear Air, DVD, nice nice
- 2016 GMC Yukon XL, SLT pkge, Leather, New tires, DVD
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Managing diabetes for better health

By Guest Columnist Stephanie Duguid

November is National Diabetes Awareness Month.

Diabetes is a condition that involves the relationship between glucose (sugar/carbohydrates) and insulin. There are two main types of diabetes: Type 1 and Type 2.

Type 1 diabetes is a condition with which you are born or that develops very early in life. It is considered an autoimmune disease and accounts for approximately 10 percent of people with diabetes. The pancreas, which produces insulin in response to glucose levels, does not function correctly. Type 1 diabetics are required to take insulin injections or have an insulin pump for all of their lives, under the direction of a physician.

Type 2 diabetes, on the other hand, is a condition that tends to develop over time due to poor choices around activity/exercise and nutrition. With persons who are inactive or eat foods high in carbohydrates and fats (fried foods included), their pancreas cannot release enough insulin to keep up with the high levels of glucose (sugar) consumed. Over time, the pancreas begins to function improperly, generating higher and higher levels of glucose (sugar) in the body.

Normal levels of glucose are between 80 and 120 mg/Dl. Anyone with glucose levels consistently below that level would be considered hypoglycemic or to have low blood sugar. Anyone with glucose levels consistently above that would be considered hyperglycemic or diabetic. See your doctor to determine your level and the next step in care.

General symptoms of diabetes include:

- Increased hunger and thirst
- Weight loss
- Frequent urination
- Blurry vision
- Extreme fatigue
- Sores that do not heal



Special to Wesson News

Type 1 diabetes is more likely to develop if you are a child or teenager, you have a parent or sibling with the condition, or if you carry certain genes that are linked to the disease.

Type 2 diabetes risk increases when you:

- Are overweight
- Are 45 or older
- Have a parent or sibling with the condition
- Are not physically active
- Have had gestational diabetes (diabetes while pregnant)
- Have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or high triglycerides

Diabetes is not a disease by itself. It can contribute to the development of other conditions, including:

- Heart disease, heart attack, and stroke
- Neuropathy
- Hypertension
- Blindness and eye problems
- Hearing loss
- Kidney disease
- Nervous system disease
- Amputations

The good news is that Type 2 diabetes can be managed, reducing the risk of complications. First and foremost, get active at least 60 minutes every day, become tobacco-free, get a blood test for glucose and cholesterol (lipids) annually, regularly check your blood pressure and practice preventive care for your eyes, feet and kidneys. For those

with challenges controlling glucose or cholesterol levels, see your doctor. Research shows that lifestyle intervention to lose weight and increase physical activity can reduce the development of Type 2 diabetes by 58% for most adults and up to 71% for adults over the age of 60.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Stephanie Duguid is Dean of Academic Instruction at Co-Lin. She is also an athletic trainer and nutrition specialist and has been teaching courses related to those two areas as well as practicing what she preaches for more than twenty years.

**LIVING
+HEALTHY+**

BANKRUPTCY



**CHAPTER 7
DEBT ELIMINATION**

**\$545 + court cost
uncontested**

**CHAPTER 13
DEBT CONSOLIDATION**

**\$200 + court cost
gets it filed**

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