



THE CANTON NEWS

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Canton News
P.O. Box 1163, Canton, MS 39046

Canton named one of best Christmas celebrations

Special to The Canton News

The Canton City of Lights Festival was recently recognized by Arcadia Publishing as one of fourteen Best Small-Town Christmas Celebrations and Light Shows. It is the only site in Mississippi named to the list, and one of the only locations in the South.

Other recognized celebrations are in California, Virginia, Kentucky, Washington, South Carolina, Vermont, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Ohio and New York.

“These 14 small towns take the Christmas spirit to a new level,” said the online copy. “Each of these unique Christmas celebrations has something incredible to offer, from dazzling Christmas light displays and horse-drawn parades to costume contests and seasonal shopping markets.”

“It is a real honor to see Canton included in the fourteen best Christmas celebrations across the

country,” said Tourism Director Jana Dear. “This festival started out with Jo Ann Gordon placing a blow-up snow man under the gazebo every night and now has

grown to a notable event all across the country. As the ole saying goes, big things come in small packages, it is even true for small towns! I hope this

also encourages every small town to dream big and have events like our Christmas festival that help keep a small town alive.”

The City of Lights Festival kicks off the holiday season in this Mississippi small town every year.

Residents from surrounding areas, including Jackson, flock to the scene with their families to spread their holiday cheer. The festival includes a brightly lit town square,



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displaying over 200,000 twinkling lights. Other activities include a Santa’s Workshop and an opportunity for children to sit

on Santa’s lap and spill their holiday wish list.

The City of Lights Festival is jam-packed with festive foods, horse-drawn carriage rides, and children’s crafts and games. Canton’s famous animation museum

takes part in the festivities as well, decorating itself with a special collection of lights and colors and allowing free access to the public.

The festival runs through December, ending two days before Christmas. The city turns on the lights every evening at 5 p.m.”

For over twenty years, Arcadia Publishing has reconnected people to their community, their neighbors, and their past by offering a curbside view of hometown history and often forgotten aspects of American life. Composed in a unique pictorial format with over two hundred vintage images and accompanying captions, Arcadia books animate the cherished memories, people, places, and events that define a community. From the iconic Images of America series and Images of Aviation series to Postcard Histories and so many more, these richly illustrated histories bring to life small town America.

International film crews study Canton civil rights

By Guest Columnist Flonzie Brown-Wright

I am often asked, “Girl, where have you been travelin’, or where have you spoken lately,” or have you written another book and so on and so on? Well, I can say that this has been an interesting summer, one which confirms for me that international audiences are very interested in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement.

We never thought that fifty years ago when we were risking our lives to gain the right to vote that people from all over the world would come to Mississippi and Canton, in particular, to gain more of a first-hand perspective

on what occurred “back in the day!” While I am blessed to stay busy, either doing special initia-

tives for the Canton School District, the Canton Convention & Visitors Bureau or speaking for



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Pictured (l to r) on the front row, are: Mrs. Annelies and Rev. Harcourt Klinefelter, Brown Wright, Director-Martin Maat and Producer-Hans Shermans; and back row; Sound-Ton Spruitt and photographer. Not pictured is Camera-Coen Van Ouwerkerks.

Teaching for America, Teaching for Change, I want to always give a candid representation of the involvement of our Civil Rights Activists. As an example, I have been asked to participate in five (5) film documentaries from international news media outlets. Pictured are film crews from ICU, (the Netherlands Public Broadcasting Company), who visited Canton on October 13 to retrace the steps of the Canton March Against Fear. History tells that what began as one man’s Walk Against Fear in June 1966 by James Meredith, culminated in thousands joining this historic march, led by Dr. Martin Lu-

cont. on page 6

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Know Your Neighbor: Gayla Buckner

By Guest Columnist Jim Ritchie

Should you enter the yard of a recent addition to the Shocco community east of Canton, you will be greeted by three dogs; a Norwegian Elkhound, a Portuguese Water Dog and an American Mastiff. You might



Special to The Canton News

think that this diversity could be an indication of the varied interests of the owners, and you'd be right.

Meet Gayla Buckner, wife, mother, English teacher, theater teacher, drama coach, equestrienne, accomplished dog groomer, dog obedience trainer, and

certified by The American Kennel Club to judge dog obedience competition.

She was born in North Carolina, but spent most of her life in Virginia with interspersed residences in Montana, Iowa, and South Dakota. She graduated from George Mason University with a degree in English and received a Master's Degree in Education from Old Dominion University. After retiring from teaching school in Virginia, she and her husband Jerry, an airbrush artist, decided to move to a place friendlier to retirees. They selected five states to consider. Canton was among the last places visited and she had not found a place that fitted her criteria for retirement. Then a realtor showed her the house in Shocco. She says that it "just felt right." She called Jerry, he came to look at it, agreed with her assessment, and they bought

it along with 23 acres, which now contain a barn, a chicken coop housing an impressive variety of chickens, a garden, flower beds, and pasture for their four horses, and there's plenty of room for their cats. A crowning component in their decision was the presence of friendly, helpful neighbors. And the folks in Shocco agree that in this case, Virginia's loss is Shocco's and Mississippi's gain!!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jim Ritchie is a published author, storyteller, entertainer and grandfather of eleven. He is amazed at the number of talented and accomplished people who live in the Canton area, and he thinks you should know about some of them. Ritchie and professional artist wife, Perry, live in the Shocco community out from Canton. View their work at: www.southernstories.com.

Christmas Festival adds new attraction

Special to The Canton News

Trustmark Nation Bank is the Canton Christmas Festival's new title sponsor. This year, more than 200,000 twinkling white lights will once again make Canton's Historic Courthouse Square glow with small-town charm, nostalgia for holidays past and a dash of the season's magic.

"This year's new attraction is our interactive Christmas Village," Canton Tourism Executive Director Jana Dear said. "Children will be able to make reindeer food for Santa's reindeer to eat on Christmas Eve. Frosty will be near his igloo handing out marshmallows to roast by his fire, and Santa's elves will teach the children how to create their own picture frame and become a certified elf. The interactive Christmas Village will allow the children to take home their memories from the Canton Christmas

festival while creating special memories with the characters."

To take full advantage of the festival's breathtaking night-time views, festival hours will be 5-9 p.m. November 24-26. Activities



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and more.

The two Animation Museums have been completely redecorated. The historical museum features replicas of past merchants on Canton's Historic Square; the other museum brings you all aboard the Polar Express with animation figures that travel to the North Pole. The \$4 admission buys entry to both museums.

"As we all know, moments and memories are priceless treasures we will have forever; and Canton's Christmas Festival allows you to capture those times with your loved ones during the special holiday season," said Canton Tourism Executive Director Jana Dear.

Additional festival highlights include: Canton Chamber of Commerce's

Sip 'n' Cider 4-8 p.m. December 8: Mrs. Claus' Story Time, 6-9 p.m., horse and buggy rides around the Square, an old-fashioned carousel, and trolley rides around the Square, as well as photos with Santa nightly throughout the festival.

are also available for nightly festival fun December 1-23.

Light and character parades, at 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturday nights throughout the festival's run, enhance the family fun with a chance to meet favorite princesses, superheroes

Improvements to cut energy bills this winter season

Special to The Canton News

Whether you live in a mobile home, an apartment, or a multi-level house, your first steps for reducing energy costs will be similar. Start with a room-by-room tour. Take notes as you tour each room, list any supplies you will need, and prioritize bigger projects. As you implement your plan from these easy, low-cost energy improvements you will see a difference in your utility bills.

Start with the entrance to your home. Change your outside lights to energy-saving bulbs. Check to ensure that air is not seeping into your home. Most homes have gaps around the windows, doors, and edges where walls and floors meet. You can purchase supplies such as foam weather-stripping from many home improvement stores to quickly fix these problems.

Appliances can also consume a tremendous amount of energy. You can save on your util-



Pictured is Rickey Brown, Canton Municipal Utilities (CMU) Meter Reader Supervisor. He has been with CMU for 36 years.

ity bill by making a few minor adjustments, such as scraping dishes instead of rinsing before loading them in the dishwasher. Run the dishwasher with a full

load and use the air-dry option if available. Try to wash most clothes in cold water and always rinse cold. You can save hundreds of dollars on water

heating each year. Remember to keep that lint trap clean.

Keep the condenser coils clean on your freezer and refrigerator. Also, don't just stand and look in the refrigerator! Get what you need and close the refrigerator door. If you can, unplug appliances such as coffee makers and microwave ovens and any electronic equipment when not in use. They will continue to consume energy even in the off mode. Most homes have 50 devices that are always drawing power. Research indicates the average household spends about \$420 per year on energy leakage from these devices.

Another way to save on heating cost is to set your thermostat to around 68 degrees. A smart or programmable thermostat can make it easy to adjust the temperature for times you are at home or away for school or work. Also, air filters in your home should be changed regularly — most experts recommend once a month during the heating season.

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Families First ribbon cutting draws an large crowd



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More than 100 interested community leaders attended the November ribbon cutting and open house of the new Families First Resource Center on Nissan Parkway in Canton. It is designed to stimulate employment through job readiness, support family financial stability, promote literacy, and increase graduation rates while continuing to support positive youth development, decreasing teen pregnancy rates, promoting positive father involvement, parenting education and parenting skills development.

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cont. from front page

International film crews study Canton civil rights

ther King, Jr. After Mr. Meredith was shot in Hernando just outside of Memphis, all major civil rights organizations joined forces to continue the March Against Fear from Memphis to Jackson, the Mississippi State Capital.

During the summer, I met with John Hendren from Al Jazeera, Emiliano Bos and crew from Switzerland, Nene Grignaffini from Germany, Emily Wagster Pettus from the International Associated Press and a number of Mississippi and national representatives, including several print media, including *The Sip*.

One of my greatest honors was to participate in the documentary "Stand Up," which chronicled the life of Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer. It was aired on MPB on October 5, the day before Mrs. Hamer's 100 birthday. It was my honor to take the crew from the Netherlands to Canton to visit those historic sites including Freedom House, (Mr. Glen

Cotton, host and curator), McNeil Elementary School – the site of the tear gassing, Holy Child Jesus School and Gymnasium, (where Dr. King spoke), the homes of Mr. and Mrs. George Washington, Sr., (where strategy meetings were conducted) and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Brown, Sr., where Dr. King and others enjoyed a home cooked meal. Other sites noted were the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, the Madison County Court House and other significant and historical sites. It is worthy to note that when we visited Holy Child Jesus Gymnasium, the podium that Dr. King spoke from in June 1966 is still there. What memories.

Why are our stories still relevant and important? Because - at the end of the day...what is the bottom line? For me it's this. It's not about being famous, wealthy or sought after; it's about remembering the commitment I and others made to Dr. King in 1966

in the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Washington. His request to each of us was... whenever we saw discrimination, segregation and racism, that we would find ways to "step up to the plate" and allow our voices to be heard. He admonished us that his days were numbered and he would not be with us very long because of the constant death threats against his life and the lives of his wife and children.

That day I made a vow that whenever I had an opportunity to "tell the story" and tell it the way it happened, I would do that. So, in each instance when I am called upon for an interview, I make it plain from the beginning that the story **MUST** be printed exactly the way I articulated it and not what someone may perceive... and if that is not possible, I am not the one. I've seen too often how words can be misconstrued, and I will not be a part of that. I

am blessed to have lived this "Civil Rights" life, but more importantly, I lived through it. Cantonians, you've heard me say this many times... Please write your stories, not just for you, but for the young people who don't know how they have the splendid opportunities they have today. If not us, who? If not now, when?

There is much work yet to be done, let's collectively and collaboratively – **JUST DO IT!!!**

EDITOR'S NOTE: After more than 50 years, Fonzie Brown-Wright, a former local resident, continues to share Canton's rich history on the national and international stage. Flonzie "Goodloe" Brown Wright has taught civil rights history while a Scholar at Miami University at Oxford and Middletown, Ohio. She was elected Election Commissioner in 1968, a position which allowed her to correct many voting injustices.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

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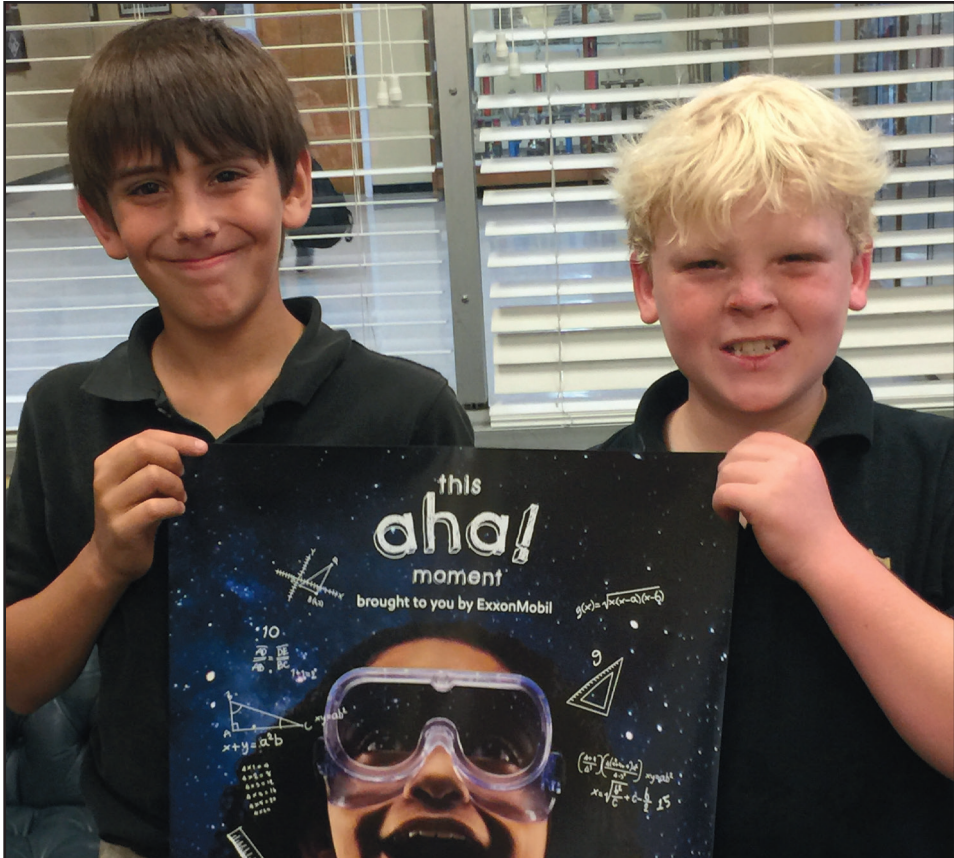
CA forms Outreach Club



Special to The Canton News

The newly-formed Outreach Club at Canton Academy organized the upper school students who collected 595 boxes for Operation Christmas Child through Samaritan's Purse. Pictured (l to r) are CA Outreach Club officers Shelby Johnson, Prestley Smith, Sloan Powell, Emerald Ravenstein, Annaleigh Sandridge, and Betsy Pace during their Packing Party.

CA gets ExxonMobil grant



Special to The Canton News

ExxonMobil awarded Canton Academy a Math/Science Grant of \$500 that was presented November 15 by Bob Burns of Warinoil. Headmaster Ron Jurney also thanked Dent Anglin of ExxonMobil for setting this grant in motion several years ago. Pictured (l to r), are: Matthew Galloway, sixth grade, and Andrew Willis, fifth grade.



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Canton Academy's Holiday Hustle reaches 10 years

Special to The Canton News

What started out as a good fundraiser for Canton Academy Parents Auxiliary back in 2007 has evolved into an annual unique, family-friendly community event. Dawn Lampkin, original run-organizer, remembers when the 5K course started at the school and went through Kathy Circle and down Dinkins Street. "It was my oldest daughter's first year at CA, and we had about 75 runners/walkers participate in the Panther Run," Lampkin said.

Eventually the race attracted more runners, and it was suggested that the Panther Run be changed to an evening run during the Victorian Christmas on Canton's Square so participants could enjoy the city's light display. From that idea, the Holiday Hustle was born. Beginning at the train depot and winding through the Square, Fulton and Center Streets and ending at the Gin, racers like the change of scenery and the uniqueness of an evening run. CA junior and cross country team member Ava Dickerson has won the Holiday Hustle in her age group more than once, and she said, "I like that the race is at night. It's laid back. There are lots of people dressed up and kids everywhere, and I love the lights."

Matthew Manning also puts running under the Christmas lights at the top of his what-makes-this-race-fun list. He has run this particular event more times than he can remember and has been the overall winner all but one of those years. "The novelty of it being at night, and I get to run in my hometown makes it a beautiful, worthwhile

event."

While in town, runners' families and friends can enjoy the Victorian Christmas with attractions on the Courthouse lawn, rides around the Square, photos with Santa, animation museum, busi-

ness' extended holiday hours, and of course the thousands of lights.

"We are excited about our new Christmas Village this year," said Jana Padgett Dear, Executive Director of Canton Tourism. The Victorian Christmas through December 23.

Wearing Santa hats, the Canton Academy cheerleaders stand in several spots along the race course cheering runners on to the finish line, which adds to the festive Christmas spirit. Jenny Wadford (Canton, MS) and her whole family will be participating again this year – as they have for the past six years. When they first started, her two boys ran in the Reindeer Trot run for kids and won, but since then they have both joined the high

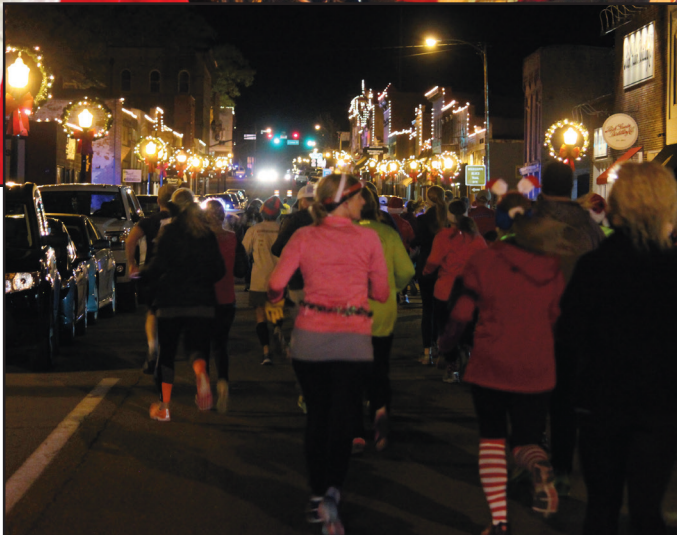
school cross country team and run the entire 5K.

Sarah Willis, past race organizer adds, "I appreciate the Madison County Sheriff's Office and the Canton Police Department for keeping us safe. With them on the route, even running at night, I feel safe." Officers are visible throughout the route, closing streets to traffic so that runners basically have an open track. All focus is on runners' safety.

"The Holiday Hustle is a great event for Canton Academy. Lots of work goes into it! It's a fun run that has attracted some great runners in years past," said Head of Schools Ron Jurney.

The 2017 Holiday Hustle will be Thursday, December 14. The Reindeer Trot fun run will begin at 6 p.m., and the 5K begins at 6:30 at the historic train depot in downtown Canton. More information may be found at:

www.cantonacademy.org and also www.msracetiming.com or by contacting this year's race director Stacey Sanders at: scauthen2@comcast.net.



All photos Special to The Canton News

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Darlene Austin, Trustmark Bank. It is an honor to be an Ambassador for the Canton Chamber of Commerce. It is my pleasure to be a part of the wonderful opportunities that are taking place in my hometown of Canton, MS. I look forward to serving this wonderful community in the years to come. Thank you Toya Veals and Mary Carol Patrick for all you do.

Madison County's Youth Court Judge



Madison County's Youth Court Judge Staci O'Neal discussed Chamber members about the Jobs4Youth Program. A program for out-of-school youth who are in the juvenile system where they can attend classes to obtain their GED and learn job skills. For more information about the program go to mcjobs4youth.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sip'N Cider

December 8th
5:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Historic Downtown Canton

Canton Christmas Festival

December 1st-23rd
5:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Historic Downtown Canton

Best of Canton Voting Begins

December 6th

Christmas Paraade Friday & Saturdays

6:30 pm & 8:00 pm
Historic Downtown Canton

Caroling on the Square

December 11th-15th
Historic Downtown Canton

Annual Meeting

January 25th
6:00 pm
The Opera House



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Holiday hours announced for Canton Train Museum

Special to The Canton News

Canton was part of the “glory days” of the Illinois Central system, both passenger and freight. This museum was also the intended destination of the famed Casey Jones, who died in 1900 while trying to save the lives of his passengers.

These facts and many others are displayed in the Canton Train Museum located at the Railroad Depot 108 Depot Drive.

The depot was built in 1890; and, in 1926, the north and south buildings were added. The Illinois Central Railroad Company owned and maintained the depot until it was purchased by the Canton Redevelopment Authority in 1991.

Restoration was completed in June 1999. The museum reflects the history of Madison County and how the “iron horse” affected social and economic growth and development, particularly the area around Canton.

The Depot Museum celebrates that segment of history in Canton and Madison County which continues to attract railroad and history enthusiasts. From the Mississippi Central and the Great Northern to the Illinois Cen-

tral, Amtrak, and now Canadian-owned Illinois Central, Canton continues to be on the mainline of Mid-America.

Admission is \$3.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children under 12 years of age. For more information, call 601-859-3815.

The museum, which is operated by the Canton Redevelopment Authority, will have the following holiday hours:

December 7 & 8	10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
December 9 & 10	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
December 11 - 15	10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
December 16 & 17	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
December 18 - 22	10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
December 23 & 24	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Madison Co. Library adds job and career accelerator

Special to The Canton News

The Madison County Library System (MCLS) has added a Job and Career Accelerator to help individuals who are seeking jobs. This new service offers free access

to over a thousand occupation profiles providing building workplace skills, researching career paths, searching for jobs, writing winning resumes and cover letters, and preparing for interviews.

“We are pleased to offer this new service to our patrons as part of our career readiness initiative. It is our goal to address the changing needs of the workplace and help prepare our patrons as they enter the workforce,” said Tonja Johnson, MCLS director.

Job and Career Accelerator

provides personalized, step-by-step job search assistance, from exploring more than 1,100 detailed occupation profiles, to matching skills and interests with careers, to finding available jobs from a database with

millions of current job postings. With Job and Career Accelerator, patrons can easily create professional and effective resumes and cover letters, master interviewing and networking techniques, and prepare for occupation-related

exams. It also helps plan, tailor, and track progress for multiple job searches while providing expert advice and tips at every step of the way.

The Job and Career Accelerator is available free of charge to residents of Madison County at www.mclsms.org under the research tab.



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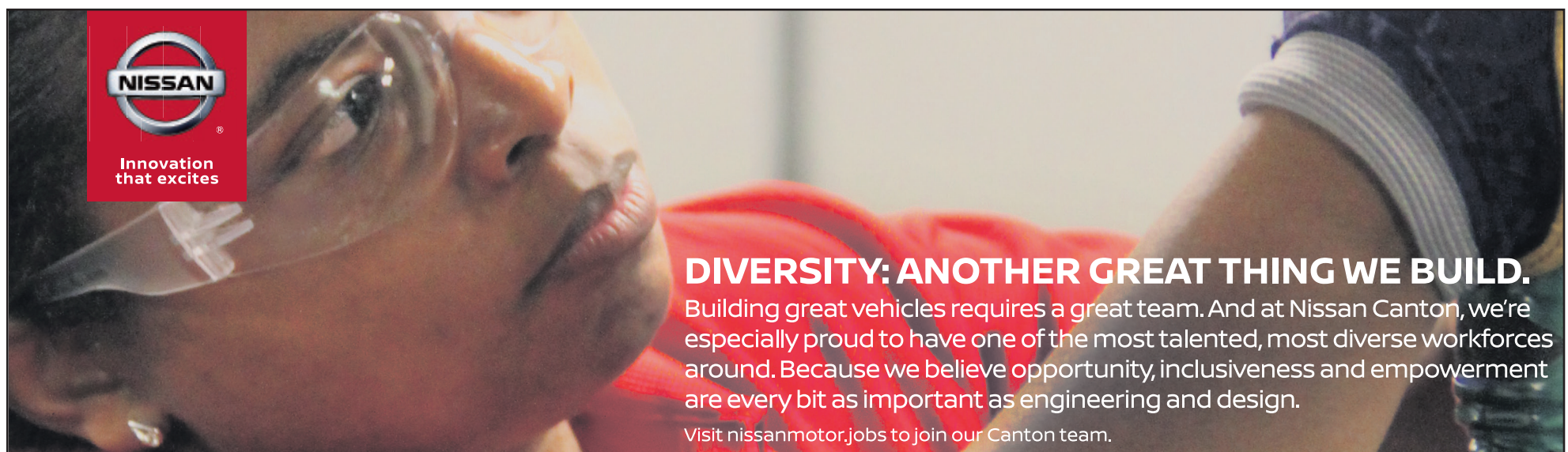
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Fleming commits to Alabama



Special to The Canton News

It's Roll Tide as Canton High center Javian Fleming, a top 5 Mississippi recruit in the 2018 class, commits to the University of Alabama. As one of the State's top basketball recruits, the ball was in his court as Fleming found himself being recruited by 25 colleges. Among the top contenders, Georgetown and Alabama. The two teams are led by two former NBA Superstars Patrick Ewing and Avery Johnson, respectively. They came to Canton High to personally woo Fleming to their school. Fleming said Alabama Crimson Tide men's basketball team was the best fit for him. He is pictured here with his mother, Kajwana Davis.

Madison youth leaders meet



Special to The Canton News

Madison County Youth leadership students met Miss Mississippi Anne Elizabeth Buys at the recent 2017 Vision Celebration luncheon hosted by the Madison County Business League & Foundation and MCEDA at the Country Club of Jackson. Pictured (l-r) are: Leeyah Hughes, New Summit School; Anna Kump and Wyatt Butler, Tri-County Academy; Madeleine Blaylock, Madison-Ridgeland Academy; Miss Mississippi Anne Elizabeth Buys; and Justin Kelly and Wendalyn Towner, Velma Jackson High School.

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Turning Point has blessed Canton's children with uniforms

Special to The Canton News

Local business owners join forces with Turning Point Fellowship Ministries International Church

to provide school uniforms for needy students in the Canton Public School District. The initiative was birthed from the Annual Blessing

Canton Week hosted by the church under the leadership of Apostles Joe and Kathy Amos.

Since the beginning of this event, the church's vision is to bless the Canton community in its areas of need. This year, the church's focus

is on the schools. They collaborated with superintendent Cassandra Williams to set up "The Blessing Canton Children's Fund." The fund will provide school uniforms as well as other personal care items to needy students.

Financial donations as well as new or gently used uniforms of all sizes,

along with other personal care items can be dropped

off at the Canton Chamber of Commerce or mailed to P. O. Box 727, Canton, MS 39046. For more information on how to partner, email: tpfmipastors@gmail.com.



Special to The Canton News

The first to donate uniforms to "The Blessing Canton Children's Fund" were John Jones, owner of Jones Cleaners, and Dr. Vibha Vig of the Sunshine Medical Clinic. Pictured (l to r) are: Joe and Kathy Amos of Turning Point Fellowship; Jones; Chasedey Bergold, principal at Rueben Myers School of Arts and Sciences where this clothes closet is set up; and Dr. Vig.



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- Start with the entrance to your home. Change your outside lights to energy-saving bulbs. Check to ensure that air is not seeping into your home. Most homes have gaps around the windows, doors, and edges where walls and floors meet. You can purchase supplies such as foam weather-stripping from many home improvement stores to quickly fix these problems.
- Appliances can also consume a tremendous amount of energy. You can save on your utility bill by making a few minor adjustments. Such as scraping dishes instead of rinsing before loading them in the dishwasher. Run the dishwasher with a full load and use the air-dry option if available. Try to wash most clothes in cold water and always rinse cold. You can save hundreds of dollars on water heating each year. Remember to keep that lint trap clean! Keep the condenser coils clean on your freezer and refrigerator.
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Literacy-Based Promotion Act Annual Report for CPSD



Literacy-Based Promotion Act Annual Report of Performance and Student Retention

The Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) was enacted to improve the reading skills of Kindergarten and First through Third Grade students enrolled in the public schools so that every student completing the 3rd grade is able to read at or above grade level. This report displays the components required under the guidelines of the LBPA, which include the number and percentage of students scoring at each performance level on the state assessment in reading and math, taking the alternative assessment, being retained at each grade level Kindergarten through 8th grade, passing for good-cause exemptions; and any revised district policies for promotion and retention.

District: CANTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DIST (4520)

School Year: 2016-2017

State Assessment - 3rd Grade Reading

Level 5	≤5% (<10)
Level 4	12.5% (41)
Level 3	32.1% (105)
Level 2	41.6% (136)
Level 1	12.5% (41)

State Assessment - 3rd Grade Math

Level 5	≤5% (<10)
Level 4	18.2% (59)
Level 3	32.9% (107)
Level 2	35.4% (115)
Level 1	11.7% (38)

Levels 4 and 5 indicate proficiency.

3rd Grade Reading Assessment for Promotion

Initial (MAAP-ELA)	Initial & Retest (MKAS)
12.8% (42) Pass	87.2% (285) Pass
10.4% (34) Fail	89.6% (293) Pass

Students Retained K-8th

Grade	Percentage	Count
K	10.40%	(29)
1st	10.90%	(35)
2nd	17.10%	(62)
3rd	6.20%	(20)
4th	≤5% (<10)	
5th	≤5% (<10)	
6th	≤5% (<10)	
7th	≤5% (<10)	
8th	≤5% (<10)	

Students Promoted by Good Cause Exemption

11.1% (<10)	A. Limited-English Proficiency with less than two Years in English Learner Program
11.1% (<10)	B. Students with disabilities for whom participation in statewide accountability system is not appropriate
66.7% (<10)	C. Students with disabilities receiving two years intensive remediation or previously retained
0.0%	D. Students tested on an alternative assessment (for 2015-2016 this is an alternate form of the 3rd Grade Summative Assessment)
11.1% (<10)	E. Students receiving two years intensive remediation and previously retained for two years

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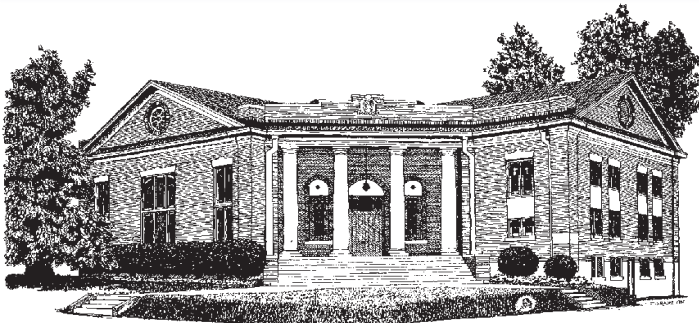
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Time to focus on Jesus

By Guest Columnist Pastor Guy Odom,
First Baptist Canton

Has Christmas become, or has it been for a while, just a cultural phenomenon?



Photo by The Canton News

Not sure if you have ever asked yourself this question or even thought about it this way. Well, your first question may be, what do I mean by cultural phenomenon? Has Christmas become so redundant and routine that we as Americans take it for granted as a time just for exchanging gifts between loved ones and friends? Has the tradition of family gatherings, food, and exchanging gifts taken the place of what the Spirit of Christmas is truly all about?

Now, for one, every year as I get older I really seek to not overlook the true meaning for this fantastic tradition of ours. But what I have seen over the years is the stress, pressure, hurt, frustration, anxiety, depression, busyness, and financial burdens to name a few, of what Christmas has become by watching other families walk through what ought to be the

most joy filled and joyful occasion on earth.

For Mary, the mother of Jesus was absolutely filled with joy. Luke 1:46-49 says, "Mary responded, Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! For He took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me." After she finally settled down and the reality set in that she would carry in her womb God's Son, her fear turned into joy! Not only did she give birth to the Son of God, scripture also says in Luke 2:19 that she, "kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often." Her main focus was on Jesus Christ and the story of how God worked out a miracle through her!

Let that sink in! You and I really ought to do the same thing concerning God's greatest gift in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world and the truth that eternal life resides in HIM! God Bless and Merry Christmas!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Guy Odom has been pastor at First Baptist Church of Canton since 2012. He and his wife, Tommi, have two sons, Ely and Cy. He is originally from Vicksburg.

KCB Cleanup is a success

By Guest Columnist Joy Dodson

The Great Canton Cleanup collected over 17.84 tons at the first pickup in October and more on

affiliate is to help beautify our city, which has a direct effect on so many things, including growth in economy, property value increases, revenue, and even



Special to The Canton News

Members of the Canton Cleanup crew pictured (l to r) are Canton Public Works employees Rucker Stewart, Andra Robinson, Lawrence Morris, Corey Griffin.

November 30. One more pickup is scheduled for January 18. Like our Keep Canton Beautiful page on Facebook for all updates and information.

Hopefully, you have gotten a chance to stroll around the square to shop and gaze at the beautiful holiday lights. It gets me in the Christmas spirit every time I go. I love to walk into the stores and see people that I know, look around at their new items and decorations; it fills me with happiness. Make a special point to take a look at the Canton Cinema windows as Keep Canton Beautiful designed and installed that display.

In the month ahead keep an eye out for two building updates we think will impress everyone. Our job as a Keep America Beautiful

can help improve education. It's amazing what a domino affect these changes can cause.

As always, please message us with any inquiries you might have, properties you want to report, or areas you think need attention. The huge Canton Cemetery dump pile is a perfect example! We would have not known that was there unless someone reported it to us. Now it is not only cleaned up, but blocked off to eliminate future illegal dumping. We are volunteers, and we cannot help what we don't know about.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Joy Dodson lives in Canton with her husband Gary and their two sons. She is the Director of Keep Canton Beautiful.

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Museums chronicle history made in Canton



Photo by The Canton News

Special to The Canton News

Canton has a rich history in civil rights, blues, movies and trains. The Historic District has a Mississippi Blues Trail marker on Hickory Street and a Civil Rights Trail

marker on the Square. The Freedom House also chronicles Civil Rights history. Shown is Canton Civil Rights Pioneer Flonzie Brown-Wright who speaks to groups about events that happened in Canton in the 1960s.



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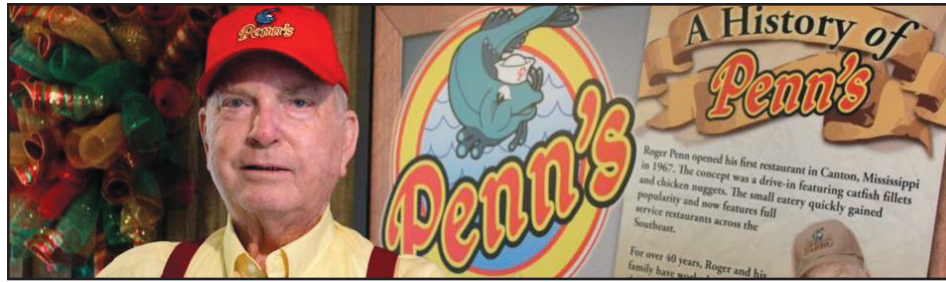
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Penn's Fish House is still going strong at 50 years

By Susie A. Wolfe

Roger Penn built the Penn's Fish House franchise out of the Highway 43 restaurant that still exists just south of Canton. While he and Jean Blackman cooked his secret recipe pond-raised catfish, his wife Margaret ran the front, and they fed 500-700 people a day, seven days a week.

It was that hard work, the secret recipes and his personal attention to customers that grew that one restaurant into 18 locations in Mississippi. At 82 with no plans of retiring, Penn still works six days a week, checking with customers at the Jackson location on



Roger Penn has been doing what he loves for 50 years, and, at 82, still works six days a week to make sure customers are getting his secret recipe pond-raised catfish and more.

Lakeland Drive.

"I just enjoy what I'm doing," said Penn. "I have a beautiful, wonderful life."

Authentic Southern cooking and attention to fresh ingredients is

the core of Penn's success. That, and making sure the customers are happy, said Penn. "I don't get any complaints."

In addition to the pond-raised catfish, Penn's all-you-can-eat buffet includes fried and baked chicken, and fried pork chops. Friday and Saturday nights, they also include

frog legs, popcorn shrimp, and stuffed crab cakes in addition to their peach cobbler, cakes and pies.

Currently, Canton has three Penn's locations, including the original restaurant on Highway 43, that is now open all day. Other locations are on Yandell Road and Penn's On the Go on Peace Street.

A Pisgah and Southern Miss graduate, Penn met his wife, Margaret, in the eighth grade. They have been married 62 years, and have four children, three of whom are involved in the business. Twins Michael and Mark, and daughter Linda Chaney all run restaurants in the area. Another daughter, Debbie Case, is a minister's wife and is not a restaurant owner.



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