



THE CANTON NEWS

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Canton News
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Canton hosts Hot Air Balloon Championship

Special to The Canton News

The “City of Lights” will soon transform into the “City of the Hot Air Balloon.” Every year since 1986, Canton has hosted its very own hot air balloon championship race.

In 1986, the first hot air balloon was brought to Canton for the celebration of Canton’s Sesqui-centennial. There were eleven balloons at the inaugural event, which grew the next year to include its very first special shaped balloon, Tony the Tiger. Managed through the years by the Canton Redevelopment Authority, Canton’s Parks and Recreation Department and the Canton Tourism Department, the festival is always family-friendly and promises a colorful weekend of fun and sights.

This year’s event will begin on



Special to The Canton News

Thursday night, June 28, with a launch party on the Canton Square. Thursday night’s activities will feature a special time of recognition in honor of Balloon Meister Joe McKay, who was one of the first Canton residents to ever crew a balloon and then to become a pilot. McKay passed away in November 2017, and his memory will be honored with a balloon release on the square. The

events on the square include a live band and food vendors as well as hot air balloons.

Friday morning will bring the “media flight,” followed by a balloon glow and activities at Northpark Mall that evening.

Saturday morning, June 30, will see a competitive flight coming into the field adjacent to the multi-purpose building. The pilots will fly their balloons away

from the multi-purpose building for three miles and then will return to the launch site. Upon returning to the site, each pilot and crew will throw a bean bag down below at a designated target. The bean bag closest to the target will win a prize.

To cap off the weekend of events, there will be several balloons flying Saturday afternoon before the balloon glow at dusk. There will be entertainment and food vendors to accompany the balloon glow. The finale of the night will be a huge fireworks show and a movie under the stars.

The balloon glow at Northpark Mall is free, as are the balloon glow, fireworks and movies under the stars at the multi-purpose building. For more information, visit www.cantontourism.com or call Canton Tourism at 601-859-1307.

KCB earns honors

Special to The Canton News

Keep America Beautiful, the nation’s iconic community improvement nonprofit organization, presented Keep Canton Beautiful with its President’s Circle Award recognition at Keep America Beautiful’s recent National Conference, which took place in Dallas, Texas. The President’s Circle Award recognizes exemplary performance by certified affiliates of Keep America Beautiful in creating clean, green and beautiful communities.

In qualifying for the President’s Circle Award, Keep Canton Beautiful has met Keep America Beautiful’s standards of merit by conducting an annual Community Appearance Index, calculating the

affiliate’s cost/benefit ratio, and administering initiatives to end littering, improve recycling, and beautify Canton’s community. Celebrating its 65th anniversary in 2018, Keep America Beautiful consists of a national network of more than 600 community-based affiliates whose programs, initiatives and efforts, supported by millions of volunteers, help transform public spaces into beautiful places.

“One of Keep America Beautiful’s most effective grassroots community resources is our local affiliates, which have an impact on millions of Americans each year,” said Keep America Beautiful President and CEO Helen Lowman. “Our affiliates provide real

cont. on page 5

Luckett appointed new superintendent

Special to The Canton News

The Canton Public School District Board of Trustees recently appointed former CPSD superintendent Dwight Luckett, Sr. as the district’s interim superintendent, following the dismissal of former superintendent Cassandra Williams, who was hired in 2016 after the termination of her predecessor, Ike Haynes.

Luckett was highly recommended by the Mississippi School Boards Association (MSBA).

“I recommend that, out of an abundance of caution, the Canton School District school board appoint Dwight Luckett as the

interim superintendent. Dwight Luckett, having previously served as the superintendent of the Canton School District and the former interim superintendent of the Kosciusko Municipal School District, meets all of the statutory requirements to serve as an interim superintendent,” said Mike Waldrop, MSBA Executive Director.

“I believe that this is the best course of action for the school board, given the current ambiguities of the Miss. Code Ann. § 37-9-13(b), the Attorney General’s opinions on the statute and the administrative regulations adopted by the Mississippi Department

cont. on page 13

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Canton High names top seniors of class of 2018



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Canton High School recently held its commencement exercises announcing the Class of 2018. During the commencement program, the two seniors with the highest class averages were announced. The 2018 Canton High School Valedictorian is Kayla Wilkes and the Salutatorian is Kenna Pierce, Jr. Wilkes will be attending Jackson State University in the fall, and Pierce will be attending the U.S. Naval Academy.

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Know Your Neighbor: Larry W. Joiner

By Guest Columnist Jim Ritchie

There is in our midst an example of the true American success story. Meet Larry Joiner, whose business career started as a kid delivering papers and culminated as the Chief Executive Officer of a 150 million-dollar company employing 3,000 people.

Joiner was born in Monroe, Louisiana. His father, an Air Force veteran, was employed by a company that required the Joiners to move frequently. In grades one through seven, Joiner attended five different schools in three states. This journey ended in Greenville, Mississippi, where Joiner graduated from Greenville High, and where his high school sweetheart was Miss Nonie Rounsaville. After graduation, Rounsaville headed to Ole Miss, and Joiner, at the urging of his parents, went to LSU, where he was uncomfortable because of the sheer size of the school and transferred to Mississippi State,



Special to The Canton News

where he graduated with a B.S. in business management. An interesting side note here is that, with his savings and without loans, he paid his own way through college. After college, he applied for officer training school in the U.S. Air Force and was one of the one thousand successful applicants in a group of twenty-two thousand who had applied. Discharged as a captain after four years in the Air Force, he was offered a sales job with a large packaging container company in Ohio. One of his customers, Georgio Foods, recognized his abilities, and he accepted their offer to serve as vice president of sales and marketing, a position he held for four years. In 1979, his interest was piqued by an article he read featuring Joe Glover, the owner of Farm Fresh Catfish, one of the first processing plants in the fledgling catfish industry. Joiner called Glover to chat about the business, and the upshot of that call was an offer by Glover for Joiner to become the Farm Fresh Vice President and general manager of the Farm Fresh Hollandale plant. He subsequently was lured away from Farm Fresh by Delta Pride Catfish to become their Vice Presi-

dent, then Executive Vice President, and finally Chief Executive Officer, during which time he guided Delta Pride's sales from 30 million to the aforementioned 150 million dollars. Joiner left Delta Pride to become a manager of Simmons Catfish Company in Yazoo City. It was during this time that he attended a Greenville High School class reunion, which was also attended by Rounsaville, who was now a Trustmark attorney. The old romance was rekindled and they were married in 1998. They decided to move to Canton because it was about halfway between Joiner's position in Yazoo City and Rounsaville's in Jackson, and they both like a small town. Canton got lucky.

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 local citizens 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.

Canton native named to Hall of Fame

Special to The Canton News

Mississippi Public Broadcasting Director of News Teresa Collier



Special to The Canton News

MPB News Director
Teresa Collier

is among the latest inductees into the Mississippi Associated Press Broadcasters Hall of Fame. Collier, a native of Canton, became the Director of News in July, 2005, and prior to that, she was a public affairs producer and senior producer at MPB. Her career has included stints at television stations in Alabama and Greenville, Mississippi.

Collier and three other inductees were recognized at the Louisiana-Mississippi AP Broadcasters and Media Editors awards banquet April 7 at the World War II

Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Under Collier's leadership, MPB's News Department has won four national Edward R. Murrow awards for outstanding achievement in broadcast journalism as well as numerous Mississippi Associated Press Broadcasters awards. Collier has won several Mississippi Associated Press Broadcasters awards, including first place for public affairs reporting.

"I'm truly humbled and honored to receive this recognition and to join past recipients who I have long admired and respected," Collier said. "Journalism and storytelling have been my life's work, and I'm sincerely grateful to all the people who have helped me along the way. I've worked with some remarkably skilled professionals who strive each day to tell Mississippi stories in a fair, accurate and timely manner. This is a fulfilling career, and I

believe in this profession's ability to impact lives."

Collier earned her bachelor's degree in communications/broadcast journalism from the University of Southern Mississippi, where she was initiated into the Kappa Chapter of Alpha Kappa Sorority. She was inducted into USM's Mass Communications and Journalism Hall of Fame in 2010.

The MAPB Hall of Fame honors journalists with distinguished broadcasting careers in the state. Those eligible for induction include reporters, producers, anchors, news directors, videographers and other news staff who have worked in Mississippi for at least five years.

The MAPB Board of Directors selected the inductees by vote during the week of February 22. Other MAPB Hall of Fame inductees are John Dolusic of WTVA-TV, Bill Gamel of WCBI-TV and Brad Kessie of WLOX-TV.



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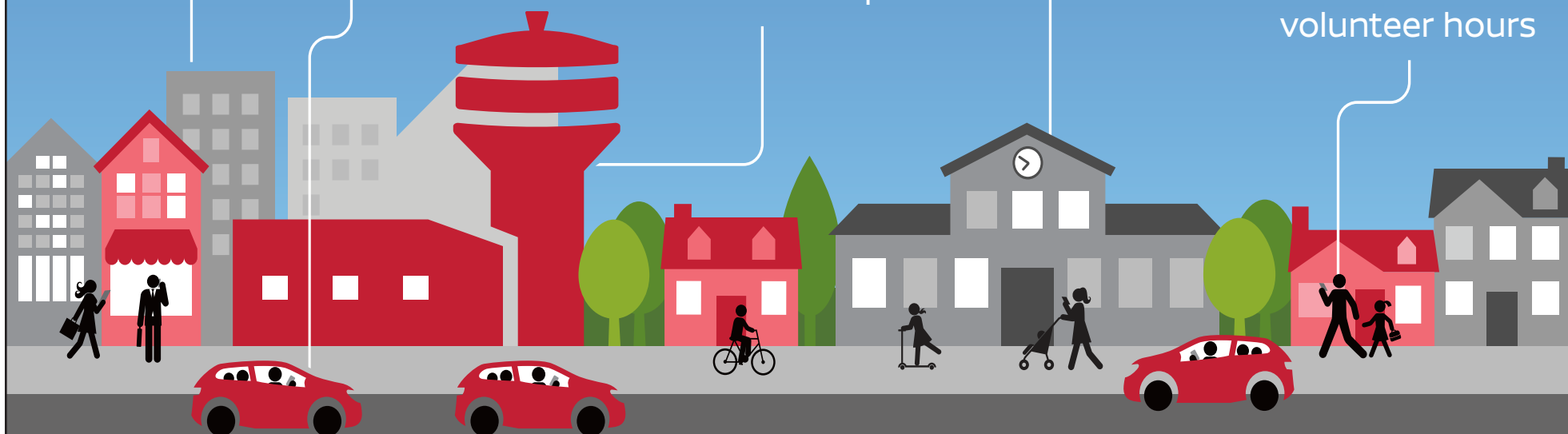
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* "Nissan Canton: A Catalyst for Advanced Automotive Manufacturing in Mississippi." A study from Mississippi State University. June 2016.

cont. from front page

Keep Canton Beautiful earns national honors

solutions that help create communities that are socially connected, environmentally healthy and economically sound. They enrich the communities they serve and help create opportunities for Americans to do beautiful things."

"'Leave it better than you found it' is a saying that I try to practice every single day here in this city I call home," said Joy Dodson, director of Keep Canton Beautiful.

The Keep America Beautiful Community Appearance Index-Litter Index is a tool used by its affiliates to visually assess overall appearance of communities through indicators such as litter, illegal signs, graffiti, abandoned or junk vehicles, and outside storage. A team of community, business and government representatives conducts the visual analysis using a scoring system ranging from one to four, with "1" rated as "no litter" to "4" being "extremely littered." Each year, affiliates grade their communities during

a drive-by examination of the same areas at the same time of the year. This provides an indication of the success of each community's anti-littering education

every dollar invested by government.

The Keep America Beautiful National Conference, its premier educational and network-

cycling, and beautify America's communities.

Keep Canton Beautiful, which is operated and managed solely by unpaid volunteers, became an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful in December 2016. The organization is primarily funded by private contributions, which are helping Canton become more environmentally healthy, socially connected, and economically sound.

Keep America Beautiful, the nation's iconic community improvement nonprofit organization, inspires and educates people to take action every day to improve and beautify their community environment. Celebrating its 65th Anniversary in 2018, Keep America Beautiful strives to end littering, improve recycling and beautify America's communities. We believe everyone has a right to live in a clean, green and beautiful community, and shares a responsibility to contribute to that vision.

Keep Canton Beautiful meets monthly at the Canton Welcome Center. To join this group and get involved, contact Joy Dodson at joydodson@hotmail.com or find them on facebook, www.facebook.com/KeepCantonBeautiful.



Special to The Canton News

Joy Dodson, Director of Keep Canton Beautiful, was recognized at the 25th Annual Keep Mississippi Beautiful Awards banquet for winning the Keep Mississippi Beautiful Pat Fordice Award. The Pat Fordice Award honors a leader in beautification, recycling, and litter cleanup in Mississippi. This award is given in honor of the former First Lady who was a dedicated supporter of Keep Mississippi Beautiful. Lauren Fordice, the late Pat Fordice's granddaughter, presented this award to Joy Dodson in April 2018. Pictured (l to r) are: Gary Dodson, Joy Dodson, Lauren Fordice.

and other anti-littering programs.

The cost/benefit analysis measurement tool enables Keep America Beautiful affiliates to demonstrate their ability to leverage community resources by determining the dollar value returned to the community for

ing event, brought together more than 350 leaders from Keep America Beautiful's national network of affiliates, business leaders, policymakers and other experts who shared innovative ideas and proven strategies to help end littering, improve re-



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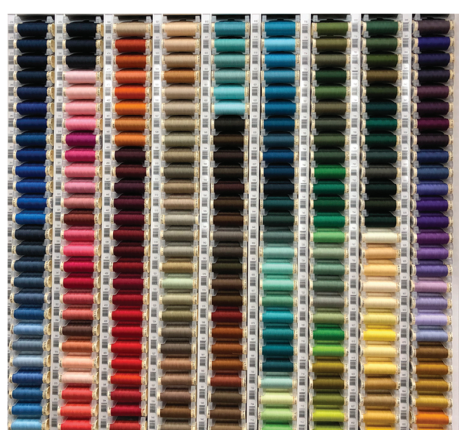
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VJHS gets scholarships



Special to The Canton News

Velma Jackson High School juniors Justin Kelly and Wendalyn Towner received scholarships presented by Madison County Business League & Foundation Youth leadership Committee Member Rochelle Culp-Thompson for their participation in the 2017-18 program. Pictured (l to r): are Kelly, Culp-Thompson and Towner.

3rd graders pass gate test

Special to The Canton News

Nearly all of Canton's third-graders passed the recent reading state test and will move to fourth grade this fall.

The Canton Public School District had a 96% first-time pass rate for the exam, often referred to as the "Third Grade Gate." Last school year, the district had an 88% pass rate.

Mississippi's Literacy-Based Promotion Act requires that all third-graders must pass this test before they can pass to fourth grade, with some exceptions for learning disabilities.

Students who don't pass on the first try will be given another attempt to take the test. School officials say that CPSD expects

to be at an almost 100% pass rate when the students retest.

The district says that, before the school year ended, CPSD students received "summer reading packets" containing the lists of books that students at all grade levels should read during the summer. The packet can be found at www.cantonschools.net under the link titled "Summer Reading Packet 2018."

School officials say that the Canton Public Library will help parents and students find the appropriate books for summer reading.

The CPSD Office of Curriculum and Instruction can be reached at 601-859-6720 for further information.

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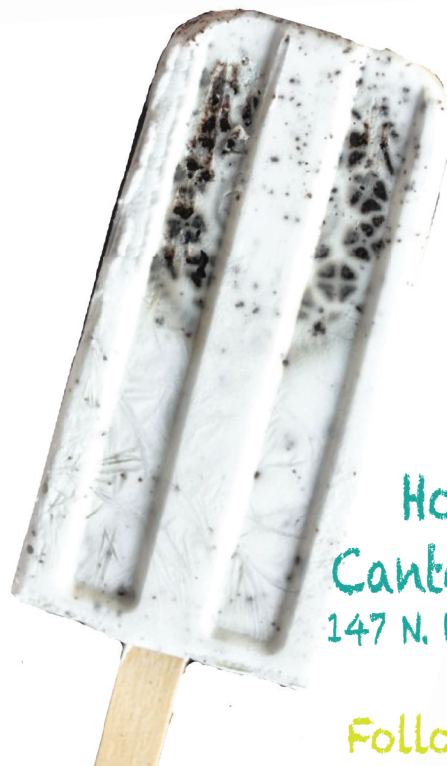
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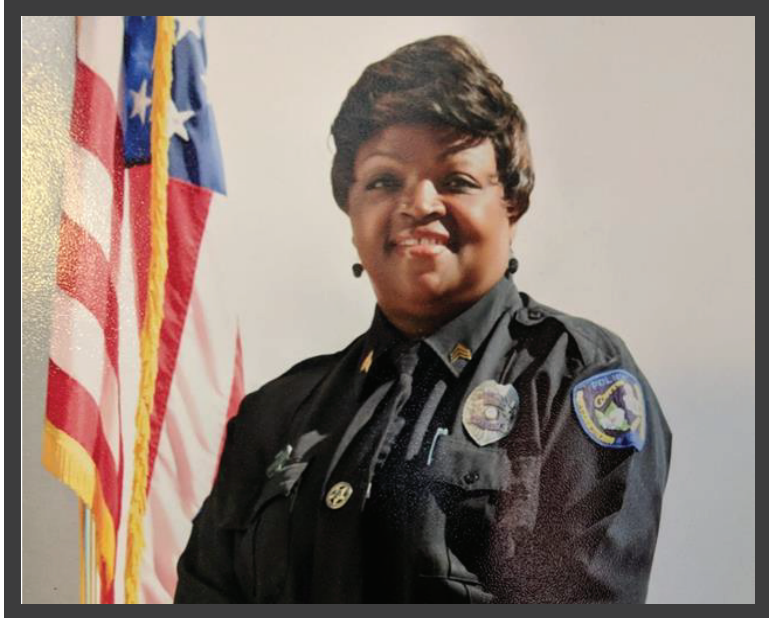


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Canton Academy announces the Class of 2018



Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy held graduation for the class of 2018 on campus Friday, May 11, 2018. Graduated included (l to r) first row: Bianca Appuzo, Alexis Guth, Macy Gordy (Valedictorian), Samiyah Williams, Virginia Grace Lavender, Kristen Osborne, London Hunt, Lyric Stewart; second row: Colson Lambert, Brayden Brumfield, Sarah Grace Thompson, Harris Coleman, Sydney Thomason, Jordan Windham, Mia Riley, Austin Green, Tori Denson, Ryan Lindsey, Anna McNeer (Salutatorian), Patrick Sandridge, Sadie McCann, Matthew Dinkins, Nathan Earnhart; and third row: Travis Smith, Joseph McLean, Kyle Kindred, Andrew Hankins, Kade Pigg, Hayden Vaughn, Garret Clack, Chris Clanton, Keaton Permenter, Jackson Vance.

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Canton Academy announces top seniors of ‘18



Special to The Canton News



Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy recently held its commencement exercises on campus. During the ceremony, Head of School Ron Jurney announced the two students that have earned the highest averages in the senior class based on academic credits earned for graduation. The Valedictorian for the 2018 senior class is Macy Gordy. She is the daughter of Brent and Janet Gordy. Gordy will be attending Holmes Community College in the fall on an academic scholarship. The Salutatorian for the 2018 senior class is Anna McNeer. She is the daughter of Billy and Carol McNeer. McNeer will be attending East Central Community College in the fall, where she will continue her softball career.

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Canton Academy award day



Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy recently held its awards day ceremony on campus. The award for Highest Class Average are given in recognition of the students who have maintained the highest overall average in all of their classes for the entire year. Canton Academy winners are (pictured l to r) 7th Grade Reese Willis, 8th Grade John Hollis Hutchinson, 9th Grade Heaven McNalty, 10th Grade Bethany Biggers, 11th Grade Betsy Pace.

Duke students selected



Special to The Canton News

Shirley D. Simmons Middle School is celebrating an increase in the number of students participating in the Duke University Talent Identification Program (Duke TIP). The school recently announced that twenty-three percent of their seventh grade students have qualified for the Scholastic Talent Search Program, which is sponsored by Duke University. Seventh grade students who scored at or above the 95th percentile on any part of the state mandated assessments are selected to become a Duke Scholar. Pictured are (l to r), front row: Anasthasia Brown, Laila Young, Jeremiah T. Harris, RaKyah Hawkins, Octavia Johnson, Khadijah Smith, Kohl Griffin and Justin Clerk; and back row: Bryon Perry, Ciara Kiner, Carltaivious Ross, Reginald Collins, Devon Jones and Jarvious Ousley.

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Lions club civic organization forms positive culture

Special to The Canton News

The Canton Lions Club is 75+ years old. Lions International is the world's largest service organization, with 1.4+ million members. The Lions' Mission Statement is "To empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international understanding through Lions clubs."

Regional and national programs that receive assistance through Canton Lions include White Cane, Mid-South Lions, Leader Dog, Addie McBryde, Lions Club International Foundation, Lions Band and Mississippi Eye Bank. The Lions of Canton also have helped 11 people locally to receive eye glasses this year, sent four Canton High School boys to the Boys Leadership Conference, provided an essay contest for all the local high school students and awarded \$1,000 scholarships to the essay winners at Canton High, Velma Jackson and Canton Academy.

Every spring since 1976, the Canton civic projects have been

funded mainly through an annual auction and chicken bar-b-que dinner. This year, seventy-two donors contributed to the auction. Members and friends gathered early the day of the event at the First United Methodist Church to help Danny Murphy grill 600+ chicken halves.

Other members, friends (special thanks to Frank Carter), and family provided and dished up desserts and side items for the dinner, which began at 5 p.m. The auction always follows the dinner.

Marketing for the event includes advertisements on WMGO, banners around the courthouse square, flyers in storefronts, and by word-of-mouth. For the 2018 event, to ensure the guests stayed around until the end of the auction, a 55" television was given as a door prize. Manuel Oliveros won the TV, and Alli-



son Gilmore won the drawing for the \$500 cash.

After all these years, the auction and bar-b-que are ingrained into Canton's culture. It has become a great reunion where Cantonians come together to catch up and to enjoy a wonderful BBQ meal and good-humored fellowship.

Guests remember the moist, smoked chicken; others rave about the wonderful potato salad and some come early to get their favorite dessert. The best part for Lions Club Members is when an auction item is just what two people want, thus making the auction competitive.

The club members are very grateful for the donors and friends who support the fund-raising efforts each year. The club meets every Wednesday at the original Penn's Fish House on Highway 43. The meeting begins at noon. Web-

ster Ford will continue as president until July, when Bobby Long will take over the lead for the 2018-2019 Lions Club year.

Those who are interested in becoming a Lion and enriching the lives of fellow citizens are welcome to come as a guest. Ford suggests showing up around 11:30 to visit with long time like James Chandler, Maureen Simpson, Timmy Pickett, Morris Taylor, Gil Kyker or Melvin Ray. New members like Shelia Spann and Kathy Hammack, who only joined in 2018, may also be familiar. Chan Chandler, Darlene Austin, Tamika Liddell, Daniel Logan, Moses Thompson, Simon Collier, Tom Corlett, Arnel Bolden, Bill Power, David Robertson, Todd Rhinewalt, Tonja Johnson, Al Sami, Richard Case, Jon Harlen, Christine Greenwood, Mark and Marty Hopson are also names that locals may recognize. This is not a complete list of the members, but the Canton Lions is a group of distinguished citizens. They are having a good time as they meet the needs both here and around the world.



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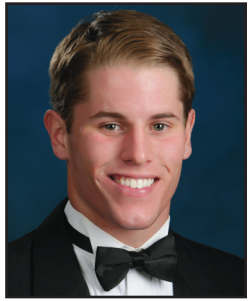


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McLean honored at CA

Special to The Canton News



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Joseph McLean was recently inducted into the Canton Academy Hall of Fame. Being inducted into The Hall of Fame is the highest honor a graduating senior at Canton Academy can receive. To qualify, a student must exemplify the qualities of scholarship, leadership, character, and service. They must maintain a 90 or above average for their four years of high school

and must have been outstanding in all phases of activity within the school. They must accumulate 170 points in academic and extracurricular activities using a scale of 1 - 10 points per activity. Only 130 Canton Academy graduates have attained the honor of being elected to the Hall of Fame.

In addition to being inducted into the Academic Hall of Fame, McLean was also inducted into the Canton Academy Sports Hall of Fame. McLean will attend the University of Mississippi, where he has been accepted into the Center for Manufacturing Excellence program. McLean is the son of Charlie and Mary Elizabeth McLean from Canton.

Lions Club scholarships



Special to The Canton News

Pictured with the presenter/Lions Club president/Lions Club representative/etc, Kayla Wilkes (center) are the students who were awarded the Lions Club Scholarship, Anna McNeer (left) and Kyla Harris (right).

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Crews graduates AFA

Special to The Canton News

Canton native Turner Crews recently graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Crews received his Bachelor of Science degree in management and was commissioned as Second Lieutenant on May 23, 2018.

Upon completion of his four year degree at the Air Force Academy, he will report to Vance Air Force Base near Enid, Oklahoma, in July, where he will begin pilot training in February, 2019. Once Crews completes this training, he will be assigned to a base where he will serve his country as a pilot in the United States Air Force.

When asked what made him want to join the military, Crews stated, "I've always wanted to go to the military. Both of my grandfathers and my uncle were in the military.

I grew up wanting to become a pilot. I found out about the United States Air Force Academy early in my junior year at Canton Academy. I knew it would be very hard, but earning your keep while getting a massive scholarship and the opportunity to serve my country really appealed to me."

Crews also stated "for those that want to serve: there are many ways to serve. Whether enlisting, going to the academy or doing ROTC or OCS, they are all wonderful avenues that can open many doors for you." One of the best pieces of advice Crews says he was given while at the academy was: there are two different reasons that you develop while you're serving. There is a reason for you to step up, and there is a reason for you to stay in. Find the reasons for both, and hold onto them.

Crews is the son of Jim and Allison Crews and the grandson of Bill and Billie Grogan and the late Nancy Grogan, all of Canton and Jimmy and Elaine Crews of Memphis, Tennessee. Crews is a 2014 graduate of Canton Academy.

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TSA students compete



Special to The Canton News

Three Shirley D. Simmons Middle School students in the school's Technology Student Association (TSA) program recently placed third in Inventions and Innovations at the Technology Student Association state competition. They include (l to r) Damyia Vaughn, Carsyn Day and Shekia Page. The students will compete at the National Technology Student Association competition June 22-26 in Atlanta, Georgia.

cont. from front page

Luckett appointed new superintendent

of Education establishing an alternative route for qualifications of superintendents and interim superintendents," said Waldrop.

Luckett served as superintendent of Canton schools from 2006 until 2014, when he retired.

Luckett recently served as inter-

im principal of Nichols Middle School at the request of former superintendent Williams. In just six months, Luckett stabilized the school, improving its culture and climate and moved it from an "F" to a "D." This helped the district's overall rating go from an "F" to a "D" rating.

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Summer tips for trees

By Guest Columnist, Terry Kees



Special to The Canton News

Caring for your trees is much like caring for your home and your health. It is important to catch small problems before they become big ones. Harsh heat, drought, pest infestations, and more, can damage your trees during the summer months.

This is a good time to have a professional evaluate the health of your landscape trees. You can also inspect them yourself, looking for any signs of disease, illness, or pests. Any time you see diseased, dead, or damaged branches, they should be pruned for both the health of the tree and for safety reasons.

Pruning your trees is important to promoting healthy growth, maintaining the desired shape of the tree, and keeping your property beautiful. Healthy, attractive trees

increase property value, as well as providing shade and beauty. Specific methods should be used for pruning and thinning, so be sure and have a trusted tree care professional handle the task for you. Sometimes an entire tree may need to be removed. Perhaps it has died, or it may be too close to your house or other structures,

Toward the end of the summer season, you should prepare your trees for the fall and winter months. Inspect them again for any dead spots or signs of disease or pests. Mature trees usually do not require a support system, but young trees that are not yet well established and those weakened by drought may require cabling and bracing to help them withstand winter winds and storms. Cabling can prevent branch breakage and split trunks.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Terry Kees is the owner of Kees Trees, LLC. and is happy to answer questions. He can be reached at 601-874-2671.

MCBL & F scholarships



Special to The Canton News

Madison County Business League & Foundation Executive Director Jan Collins presented Madison County Youth Leadership scholarships to Canton Academy juniors Betsy Pace and Jacob Carter, who participated in the 2017-18 program. Madison County Youth League is sponsored by the Madison County Business League & Foundation and Madison County Economic Development Authority. Pictured (l to r) are: Betsy Pace, Jan Collins and Jacob Carter.

Summer meals for free



Special to The Canton News

Special to The Canton News

Through June 29, Canton children can have a free summer meal or two each day. From Monday through Friday, breakfast will be served at Porter/Goodloe, Canton High and Canton Elementary schools from 7 until 8 a.m.

Lunch is served at Porter/Goodloe, Canton High, Canton Elementary, Nichols Middle and St. Paul schools on Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Lunch is also being served for

children at the Canton Public Library from 11 a.m. until noon Monday through Friday.

All children between the ages of one and seventeen are eligible to receive a free breakfast and lunch daily during this period. The child does not need to be a student to receive the meals, and there is no paperwork to complete or eligibility form to fill out.

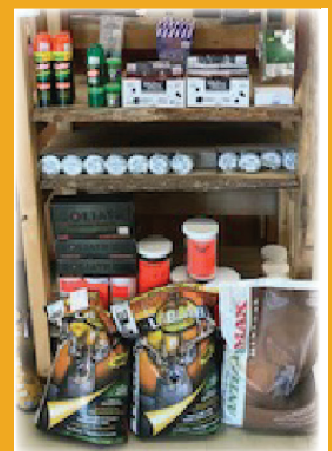
The program is sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture. For more information, visit www.usda.gov.

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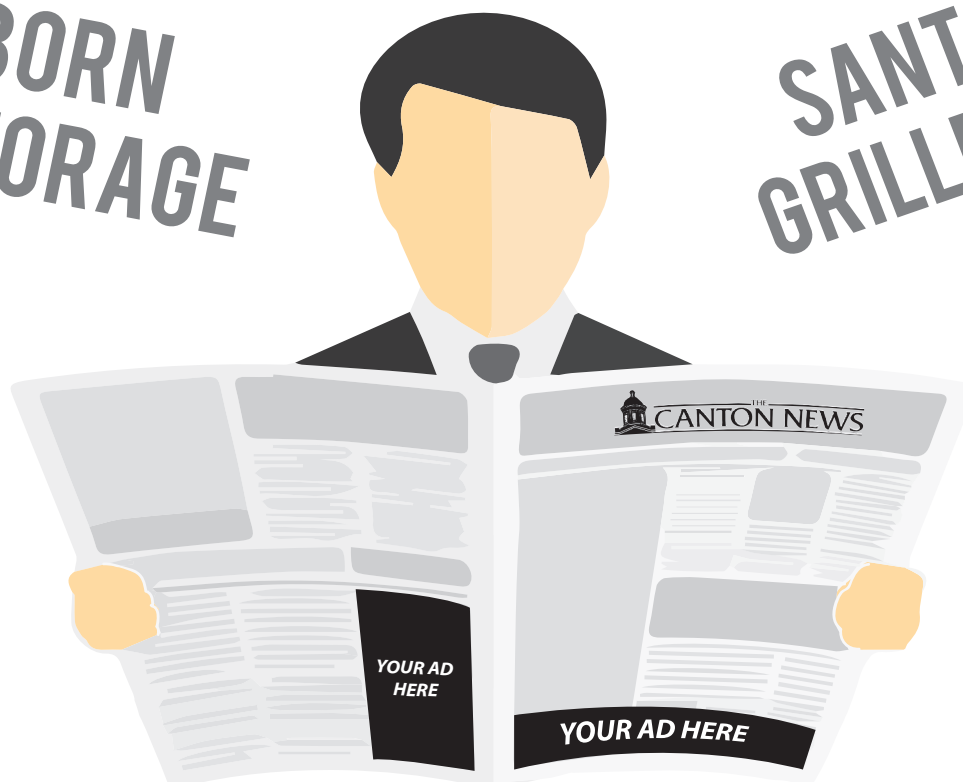
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Following the Father as a father the month of June

By Guest Columnist Pastor Guy Odom,
First Baptist Canton



Special to The Canton News

I want to share a devotion that I read recently. I know that in the month of June Father's Day is usually highlighted. I certainly want to do that but I also want to share a story I read concerning a Husband and his wife:

My wife buried her face in my chest and through heaving sobs uttered one word: WHY? I didn't have an answer. We had just lost our second child to a miscarriage,

and our whole world was shattered. Pain from the loss was the only reality we knew. Why did this happen again? In the moment, all I could do was reflect on and respond to the truth of God's Word. I hugged my wife tighter and whispered: "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

It was not sanctimonious pride that caused me to utter words of another father who had lost all of his children. It was a cry against the effects of a sinful and painful world. It was a declaration of trust in the only One I knew who could mend our broken hearts.

We have all faced pains associated with living in a fallen world. My experience was not of the same

caliber as Job's. He lost all 10 of his children at the same time. And doubtlessly there are those who have experienced more and less pain than I have. However, it is not the degree of pain we experience that is the issue, but the degree of pain to which we press into God's grace. As Job's confession relates, God is greater than all the pain that is generated by this world. For my wife and I, the scars of our two miscarriages and imprinted upon our hearts. But God's mercy and blessing are dearer to us now than before our losses. Further, we have the hope that when this evil and fallen world is finally abolished, we will one day see our children.

"When pain is to be born, a little courage helps more than much

knowledge, a little human sympathy more than much courage, and the least tincture of the love of God more than all." C.S. Lewis.

Job 1:21 says, "The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Being a Father and Husband can be difficult, but God puts us there to be an example of the Lord in whatever life deals us. God will help us!

Happy Father's Day,
-Pastor Guy

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.

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