

Over 100 teddy bears donated

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Business Spotlight: Brick House Fitness Center

See page 12

PELAHATCHIE NEWS

May
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Severe weather leaves imprint in Pelahatchie

By: Katie White

On Monday, April 28, Mississippi, as well as other states in the South, were warned of severe weather that could produce hail, damaging winds, more flooding and dangerous tornadoes. The warning proved true for several areas in Mississippi, and the damage from tornadoes and high winds was substantial.

For the most part, the town of Pelahatchie had received very little rain. Most of the thunderstorm and tornado warnings in Mississippi were north of the town in counties such as Yazoo, Warren, Sharkey, Humphreys, Issaquena, Lee and Holmes. Unfortunately, those warnings proved disastrous when tornadoes touched down in the cities of Vicksburg, Yazoo City, Tupelo, Canton, Decatur, and Louisville, Miss.

Tornado alerts for Rankin, Attala,

Hinds, Simpson, and Leake Counties started around 12:30 p.m. and remained until 9:30 p.m. Still, in Pelahatchie, only very small amounts of precipitation had begun.

Looking at the weather radars may have proved confusing for some. The storms cells on radar seemed to pop up out of nowhere. Weather experts worked diligently on-air to inform viewers which storm cells were producing severe weather, and when to seek shelter.



(Top) A light pole lands on a diesel truck behind the Chevron on Hwy. 43. (Bottom) The Texaco sustained damage to roof and structure walls. (Photos by Katie White)

Some cities received another round of warnings from Yazoo City to Madison in central Mississippi and more south from Vicksburg to Laurel.

Late in the afternoon, a storm cell moving northeast produced tornadoes in the cities of Richland, Pearl and Brandon, leaving a spotted path of destruction through the area.

In the same path, although not listed on any tornado maps as an area that received an actual tornado, was

the town of Pelahatchie. Pelahatchie received some degree of high winds and tornado-like severe weather. The storm passed through the town around 7:15 p.m. The severe weather, tornado or not, began around Exit 68. A vehicle was tossed off of the interstate, trees were shredded, and structures at two gas stations were damaged. Continuing through town, more trees were stripped of their leaves, and the fence at the Pelahatchie High School softball field was partially laid on its side.

"Pelahatchie was spared the brunt of the storm. We had some damage at the interstate; but, thankfully, no one was injured. Please say a prayer and make a contribution when appropriate to those that bore the brunt of this storm. I am very thankful to our police, fire, and public works [personnel] who got out in the thick of things and made sure everyone was safe," says Mayor Ross in a tweet that evening.

\$6.9M approved for Trooper School



On April 21, bills aiming to strengthen law enforcement were signed. Department of Public Safety Commissioner Albert Santa Cruz, Rep. Mark Baker (R-Brandon), Speaker of the House Philip Gunn and members of the Mississippi Highway Patrol look on as Gov. Phil Bryant signs into law funding to support a new Trooper School. Further provisions will increase funding for 16 additional Assistant District Attorneys in various high-case load areas around Miss. and drug courts, and a requirement of DNA collections from persons convicted of certain crimes (Katie's Law). (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

Windham announces candidacy



By: Gary Windham

With much encouragement and support, I, Gary Windham, announce that I have qualified to run for election as the Constable for District 4 in Rankin County, Mississippi. The Republican primary is on June 3, 2014.

I am 50 years old and married to Judy Windham, who works in the family business, Dukes Steakhouse in Pelahatchie. We have three children, Devin, Clay and Brittney. We are members of Concord Baptist Church. In civic organizations, I am a charter member and past president of the Pelahatchie Lions Club, and a member of the John P. Byrd Masonic Lodge, where I am a master mason.

I am a lifelong resident of Rankin County. I graduated from Pearl High School in 1981. I have been a process server and owner of Metro Process Servers for 17 years, which is primarily focused in Rankin County and the

Jackson Metro Area. In this capacity, every day I perform many of the critically important aspects of the duties of Constable, and I work regularly with the judges, prosecutors and law enforcement professionals that I will interact with on a daily basis as your Constable.

I have been working diligently to meet each of you personally. If for some reason we have not met, please know it is not because of lack of effort on my part. We are walking the streets and knocking on doors all over the district every day. In my business, I'm on call 24/7. It's something that I'm used to and something that I intend to continue as your Constable. My cell phone is 601-613-2328. Please call anytime.

Having the experience and qualifications to provide effective professional service with the highest standards of integrity, honesty and trust, I, Gary Windham, ask for your vote and support as your Constable for District 4.

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From the Mayor's Desk



By Knox Ross, Jr.
Mayor of the Town of
Pelahatchie

As I compose this month's column, the disastrous tornadoes we have experienced are fresh in our memories. I am thankful that we experienced only a relatively small amount of damage, for others have been devastated by these storms. One of the hardest hit areas is Louisville, where my good friend, Will Hill, is leading the recovery as Mayor. I would ask that you join me in praying for that community as they deal with the human loss and the material loss they have experienced. Many in our community are responding and volunteering their time and possessions to help. I am very appreciative of how our community responds in times of need. If you are able to help, we have been posting on Facebook a list of ways to do that. I will also list a couple of them here. If you want to send items to help, they need toiletry items, undergarments, and non-perishable food and finger items, but not clothing. This can be sent to City of Louisville, 201 Ivy Street, Louisville, MS 39339. Also, many times the best help is simply



Photo special to *The Pelahatchie News*

cash in the hands of those who are trained to get the items most needed. If you would like to help directly, donations can be sent to Winston Community Development Disaster Relief Fund, c/o Renasant Bank, P.O. Box 389, Louisville, MS 39339.

We are enjoying some wonderful weather between the storms, and the spring flowers have been beautiful this year. The spring showers have slowed the progress of many of our local projects, but hopefully May will see renewed action to see some of these completed. The first phase of Milltown Park will be completed this month. We have a good bit of clean up to do, and the parking area needs to be completed. We will also be installing the new playground equipment there. The sew-

continued on page 5

Reason behind the booms



The Pelahatchie water tower on Hwy 80. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Taking pride in Pelahatchie's resources comes with a big boom. It's a safe boom, and its purpose is controlling the buzzard population on the Pelahatchie water tower.

People living or working in downtown Pelahatchie have become accustomed to hearing the boom, which sounds like a gunshot. People visiting the town wonder what it is.

It's actually a butane cannon. The cannon runs on an automatic timer, and it can be set to go off as often as

needed. In this case, the cannon cycles every 16 minutes with four rounds. The cannon is purposely set not to cycle at night so that a person's sleep is not disturbed. The cannon's timer is battery operated.

Buzzards are legally protected under the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918* in the U.S. However, a buzzard's messy discharge is extremely acidic and eats away at the beautifully painted water tower. The butane cannon is an effective and humane method for controlling the near 100 buzzards that tend to light on the tower daily.



P.O. Box 771
Pelahatchie, MS 39145

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Clay Mansell

Publisher
601-397-4442
claymansell@pelahatchienews.com

Katie White

Managing Editor
601-566-1932 x5
katie@pelahatchienews.com

Kristen J. Rials

Staff Writer

Sales

601-566-1932 x5

Rachael H. Boyer

Photographer

For submission information, email
katie@pelahatchienews.com

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Legislative Issues: wrap up of the 2014 session



By: Tom Miles
State Representative

The Legislature went home Sine Die on April 2 following a whirlwind 90-day session that even included one Extraordinary Special Session in the waning hours of the final night. The short session was the result of pushed up deadlines in an effort to close out business as soon as possible. We left a full four days prior to our original closing schedule – at a savings to Mississippians of around \$143,000. We left Jackson with over \$400 million dollars in our Rainy Day Fund and passing almost a \$200 million dollar bond bill to help with many needed projects and investments across the State.

We were able to pass important measures in displays of bipartisanship and cooperation. I believe it is important that leaders sit down and reason

together. It invariably results in better service to the people.

First, we were able to secure a respectable pay raise for our public school teachers. The effort began in the House as a complicated process and was amended by the Senate to provide a total of \$2,500 across-the-board pay raises to all teachers during the next two years, with the opportunity for future pay increases based upon the success of the schools and school districts in which the teachers are employed. The House overwhelmingly voted to approve the Senate version of House Bill 545.

We were also able to provide \$1,000 raises to our most underpaid state employees. State employees who make less than \$30,000 will receive these raises, and there is hope for more employee considerations next year. While this amount was not as great as our hard-working employees deserve, I was glad that we were able to at least

offer some help.

The House demanded State Aid Road Construction bonding authority for rural county projects by refusing approve funding bills for both the Mississippi State Department of Transportation and the State Aid Division. We balked on March 31 by sending the MDOT appropriation bill and the State Aid bonding bill back to the Senate. The Governor called a special session in the session to address the House demands, and we overwhelmingly approved SB 2001 and SB 2002 of the special session.

Also during the special session, we approved HB 1 and HB 2, which provide for an additional 16 assistant district attorneys and supportive appropriation to help clear crowded criminal dockets in specified districts.

We voted to approve an amendment to the Department of Public Safety's budget, which included a \$6.9 million appropriation for a Trooper School.

The last one was funded in 2011. The Mississippi Highway Patrol is roughly 150 troopers short of a full complement, and this school should graduate 60 recruits. I was among a number of my colleagues who introduced stand-alone measures to fund such a school previously, and am very pleased we were able to secure the start of a school during this calendar year.

Thanks to some innovative legislation, we have approved the right of high school juniors to have the option of taking an ACT test as their high school exit exam. This idea was first mentioned by the Governor as an alternative to the massive testing program currently employed to determine whether or not our students are learning. I strongly supported this evaluation approach.

We voted to include "In God We Trust" on our State Seal, and protect the religious freedom of all Mississipp-

continued on page 4

Highway construction ongoing



During 2013, the Town of Pelahatchie began working on resurfacing Brooks Avenue to Lake Road, as well as Hwy 80. Other reconstruction efforts include Hwy. 43, where officials are working towards creating a wider and direct passageway through the Cross Roads area of Pelahatchie. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

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continued from page 3

Legislative Issues: wrap up session

pians by passing Senate Bill 2681. House Bill 1400 bans abortion after the 20th week of pregnancy. This measure was widely supported by both chambers in our continuing effort to protect the sanctity of human life.

The bill that I authored the last two years that increases the death benefit for our law enforcement officers and fire fighters from \$65,000 to \$100,000 was signed into law by the Governor. The entire Legislature approved of this effort. We also approved not requiring first responders who are injured in the line of duty to use their personal leave in lieu of depleted sick leave. Senate Bill 2597 was named after TPD Officer Gale Stafford who lost his life in Tupelo in December 2013.

There were a several other measures that I have authored and worked on the last couple years that will go into law on July 1, 2014. Tax exemption to food pantries, this bill will make our food pantries that have a 501 C3 tax exempt when they buy food from a store. Erin's Law Awareness is the result of the Study committee that was passed last year that will educate our children by protecting them from sexual abuse in an age appropriate manner. The CPR bill that we worked with American Heart Association to get pass will al-

low CPR to be taught to students in the public schools.

A couple of bills that I sponsored were aimed at helping our disabled veterans. One was House Bill 764 which allows disabled veterans to acquire a gun permit at no cost, and HB 1165 which expands the homestead exemption for these courageous individuals.

House Bill 810, which I sponsored, provides that the Department of Human Services must be notified if a minor child is in the home of an individual who is under treatment for mental health issues. This measure is named after Andrew Lloyd, a young boy whose mentally ill father killed him in a murder-suicide. I hope that this bill will help protect innocent lives.

In all, I feel we had a successful session that provided help for deserving Mississippians. There is always more to do, and I am looking forward to visiting with you around the district in the coming months and hearing your ideas for the next session. Thanks again for the opportunity you have given me and the trust you have placed in me. I'll continue to work hard every day to honor that. Rep Tom Miles can be reached by phone at 601-469-7886 or via email to tmiles@house.ms.gov

Goldman wins art award

Special to The Pelahatchie News

The Awards Ceremony and Reception for the 26th Annual Goodwill Art Show was held at the Madison Square Center for the Arts on Sunday, March 23, 2014.

The Goodwill Art Show celebrated the creative flair, diversity and expression of people with disabilities. Those with disabilities of all ages were encouraged to enter – professional, non-professional and school student artists annually submit outstanding works of art, and this year was no different.

Among the winners at The Goodwill Art Show was Barbara Goldman of Pelahatchie. Goldman received the Non-Professional Honorable Mention award. She also received a cash prize of \$50. "It was very touching to see a lot of handicapped people there. It was heart-warming to see their work and to see them get so excited when they won. The children and adults at the art show really conquered being handicapped, and I loved getting to see that," says Goldman.

"Goodwill has for over 50 years in Mississippi provided training and jobs for people with disabilities. The cre-



Barbara Goldman of Pelahatchie won an Honorable Mention award for her artwork. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

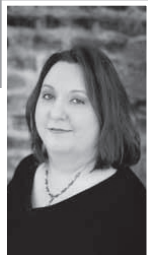
ative diversity exhibited by our friends is extraordinary," says Gray Wiggers, Goodwill of Mississippi's President and CEO.



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From the Mayor's Desk

er project on the south side of town is a substantially complete, and you will see road paving equipment there soon.

The new Multicraft headquarters next to Fairway is making good progress, and is going to be a great addition to our downtown area. We are continuing to aggressively market our town and are in detailed discussions with potential investors. I want to thank each of you for your efforts in making your part of our town shine. This makes our town much more welcoming and easier to market. I am confident that our efforts will be rewarded soon.

The Lions Club Car Show will be

on May 17, as well as other events celebrating the beginning of summer and the end of school. I want to congratulate our graduates and wish them success in their future endeavors.

As the weather encourages more outdoor activity, please don't forget that you are welcome to drive your golf cart around town. Just make sure you follow the traffic rules and the cart is driven by a licensed driver. Also, we have bins to receive your spring cleaning rubbish at the town barn, as well as a recycling bin for your recyclables.

Thank you all for taking pride in your town and making it a great place to live and work.

Over 100 teddy bears donated



(Top) The Spirit Riders awarded Mrs. Beasley's class with a certificate and a pizza party for donating the most teddy bears. (Bottom) Pelahatchie Elementary donated over 100 teddy bears. (Photos special to The Pelahatchie News)

Special to The Pelahatchie News

The Shamrock LE Motorcycle Club and the Spirit Riders Motorcycle Ministry worked with schools in the area to donate teddy bears for the children at Blair E. Batson Hospital. Over 100 teddy bears were donated from Pelahatchie Elementary alone.

On Thursday, April 3, the Spirit Riders visited the students of Pelahatchie Elementary to tell the students

how much they appreciated their hard work and donations.

Mrs. Janet Beasley's class donated the most teddy bears, and the Spirit Riders awarded them with a certificate and a pizza party.

The Spirit Riders were formed in 2008 to help those in need in the community. Their motto is "Have you helped someone today," says Joe Lacey, Vice President. "We do whatever God lays upon us to help others."

Scott Central player recognized



On April 1 at the State Capitol, the Miss. House of Representatives recognized Victoria Vivians for a record-breaking basketball career at Scott Central High School in Forest. House members presented House Resolution 88 to Vivians, which commends her on her achievements. Pictured (l to r) are: Representative John Moore, Victoria Vivians, Head Coach Chad Harrison, and Representative Tom Miles. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

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Serve Out Loud a day about serving the community

Special to The Pelahatchie News

On Saturday, April 26, the Ever Reaching Community Outreach *Serve Out Loud* event was deemed a success by organizers. The event brought over 40 churches and ministries together for a day of celebration to serve others in Mississippi communities.

Performers included praise teams and choirs from different groups, such as: Antioch Baptist Church, Groverton Presbyterian, Holmes Assembly of God. Other entertainment included Grace Alman, Judahseed, and Cross Roads Praise & Worship Band.

Bro. Scott Walters of Antioch Baptist Church served as emcee of the event. Speakers included: Sheriff Bryan Bailey, Rep. Tom Miles, Charles Holmes from Miss. Benevolence, Bro. Scott Mangum from LifeSpring Church, Bro. David Brewer of Holmes Assembly of God, and Bro. Sino Agueze from *Making Jesus Real*.

Other participants ran booths. Booths included: Sole Hope, who takes milk jugs and worn blue jeans and creates shoes for children in Uganda; Eastside Baptist Church raised funds for a local cancer patient, Tim Chunn; Kristi Pennington Shanks, with the Rankin County Sheriff's Of-

fice, sold beautiful homemade bird-houses to raise funds for her sister and brother-in-law's traveling expenses to bring home their 3-year-old adopted daughter from Ethiopia; Groverton Presbyterian's youth group sold ice cream and special treats to raise funds for summer camp.

Drop-off bins for donations were also available. There were bins for: purses and toiletries for *Handbags 4 Hope's* women's ministries; plastic grocery bags for a local church who makes mats for the homeless; pop tabs from soda cans for bracelets made by *Hands Up Outreach*; canned food for ERCO's food pantry.

Attendees could participate in *Serve Out Loud* by donating the gift of life with Mississippi Blood Services.

Other participants consisted of Catholic Charities, Celebrate Recovery, Center for Pregnancy Choices, Center for Violence Prevention, Christian Women & Men's Job Corp., Gallant Hearts, Lighthouse Community Dev. of Miss., Living Free, Pioneer Ministries, S.H.E. (Sisters Here to Empower), and Stewpot.

Children enjoyed free train rides, bounce houses, face painting, balloons, and more. Food plates were also available.



Participants and attendees at *Serve Out Loud*, hosted by the Ever Reaching Community Outreach, enjoyed a day of ministry and fun. (Photos special to The Pelahatchie News)



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10:00 - Bible Study for all ages
11:00 - Blended Worship Service
5:00 - Cross Clubs for Children & Students
6:00 - Evening Worship

Wednesday Schedule

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7:00 - Children's Mission Activities • Student Worship
Ladies Bible Study • Couples Support Group
Prayer Meeting and Bible Study

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Camp facility for special needs children in the planning stage

Special to The Pelahatchie News

Central Mississippi will soon see a resource for children with serious illnesses and special needs, as the Mississippi's Toughest Kids Foundation (MTK) has received conceptual plans for a new facility to be located in northern Copiah County.

The 326-acre camp facility will be located near Calling Panther Lake, approximately nine miles northwest of Crystal Springs, and will include many outdoor and indoor activities built specifically for those with special needs.

"The whole purpose of the MTK Foundation is to get these children outdoors and having fun," said Mrs. Jim Kitchens, MTK director. "We want to give them a place where they can be safe, enjoy nature and just be kids for a few days."

The organization worked with landscape architect Jared Acy and Watkins Acy Strunk Design on the design of the facility.

Plans for the camp facility call for ball fields, a horse arena, swimming pool, primitive camping grounds, ropes course, archery range, a ten-acre lake, Christmas tree farm, star-gazing area, and other sites. Several buildings will house a gymnasium, cafeteria, library, teaching kitchen, music room, photography room and staff offices. There will also be a chapel, large cabins and an open-air multi-purpose facility. Perhaps the most important building will be the state-of-the-art infirmary where children will receive therapy, medicine (including chemo) and even kidney dialysis. Level



Photo special to The Pelahatchie News

thresholds and covered walkways will connect all the amenities and areas at the site. The entire facility will be constructed without stairs.

"At this point, the most important part of the foundation is its volunteers who donate their time, professional expertise, and without them we wouldn't be nearly this close to our goal," said foundation board members Dan Kitchens and Dr. Ronne Nettles. "The entire idea came from the hearts of volunteers and from their love for these children, and it will be through their continued hard work that we succeed."

More information, including an illustrated map of the grounds, can be found at www.mtkfound.com.

Pelahatchie Seniors score high on ACT



On April 17, Pelahatchie High School seniors were recognized by the Rankin County School District at the Annual ACT Honors program for scoring a 22 or above on the ACT. The student recipients (l to r) are, Carolyn Williams, Jessie Jones, Khadejah Stokes, Mitchell Tagert, Kortni Atkinson, Lacey Harpe, Drew Harrell, Brittney Keene, Caitlin Bishop, Zach Varner, and Jacob Henderson. Drew Harrell was also honored as the Star Student for 2014. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

Team Pelahatchie runs for the cure



On April 12, team Pelahatchie Elementary ran in the Central Miss. Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. Pictured (l to r) are Megan Thompson, Robin Sanders, and Rebecca Nelson. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

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Joshua 1:9

**Have I not commanded you be strong and courageous.
Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for The Lord your God
will be with you wherever you go.**



- **Former Two Term elected Rankin County Constable**
- **Attends Pink Lake Church**
- **Co-managed Family Business based in Rankin County for 20 years *Lindz's a Place of Christmas***
- **Mississippi National Guard Teen Challenge Mentor (Camp Shelby)**
- **Over 20 years of criminal and civil investigation experience**

- **Completed Law Enforcement courses with US Marshals Service, Rankin County Sheriff's Dept., Interstate Crime Interdiction (I.C.E.) and other Drug Enforcement Training.**
- **Made over 5,000 arrests as your Constable in District 4 to include felony and misdemeanor drug arrest, crimes against our families, our children and our communities with an' estimated recovery of over 1/2 million dollars**
- **43 year resident of Rankin County**

Endorsed by: 3 Term elected Supervisor & Former Mayor of Brandon Carlo Martella



/LindsayforConstable



@Lindsay

Phone: 601-941-6348

Thank you for your support in previous elections. And I ask for your continued support on June 3rd, 2014 Republican Primary.

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Annual Pelahatchie Easter Egg Hunt at Muscadine Park



Special to The Pelahatchie News

On April 12, several showed up to make the Annual Pelahatchie Easter Egg hunt at Muscadine Park a great success. By the looks of it, every child had a successful hunt, too.

Snacks were served, eggs were found, faces were painted,

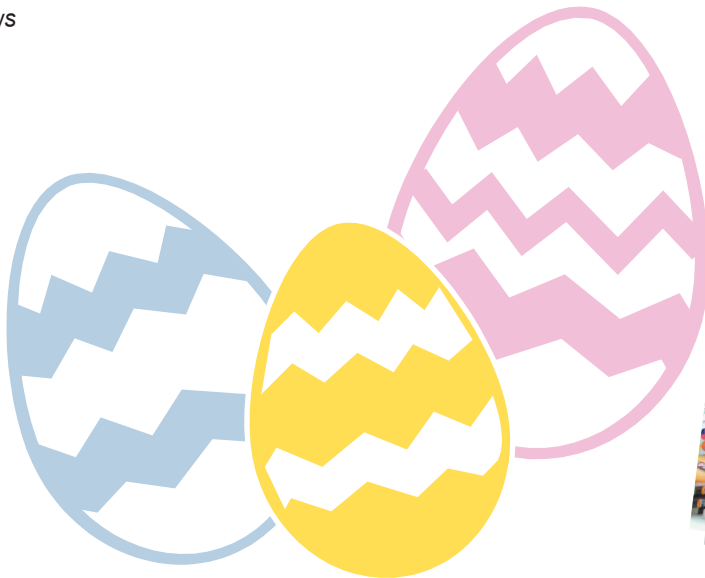
and live baby chicks, rabbits, and puppies were on-hand.

It wouldn't be an Easter egg hunt without the Easter bunny. Even though he's busy this time of year, he managed to show up and brighten the day even more than it was already.

It's safe to say that children, parents, and visitors had a great time at the Pelahatchie Easter egg hunt this year.



Photos special to *The Pelahatchie News*



Teachers receive P.R.E.P.S. awards



Pelahatchie High School recently received three P.R.E.P.S. (Program of Research and Evaluation for Public Schools) Value Added Awards. The awards were presented at the P.R.E.P.S. annual conference held in March, 2014. The awards were presented for the subject area testing program that students participate in each year. Pelahatchie High School received the P.R.E.P.S. awards in U.S. History, English 2 and Biology 1. Pictured (l to r) are: Donna McMillian, U.S. History; Nina Mills, English 2; and Shannon Moore, Biology 1. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

A story of faith in Mississippi

Special to The Pelahatchie News

Author Vera Simpson Gaines chronicles the life of an extraordinary woman in her new book, *Chosen From Birth*.

"Bonnie Davis requested on her death bed to have her story told," Gaines recalls. "Her husband asked me to review all her notes to see if it would make a good book. I was in awe of her story and how she survived such a horrible life of abuse."

Compiled from Davis' journals, *Chosen From Birth* takes readers to 1960s rural Mississippi, where Davis grew up with an abusive, bipolar mother who dabbled in witchcraft. Her story is one of resolve and steadfast faith, and she turned to God for the strength she needed to survive.

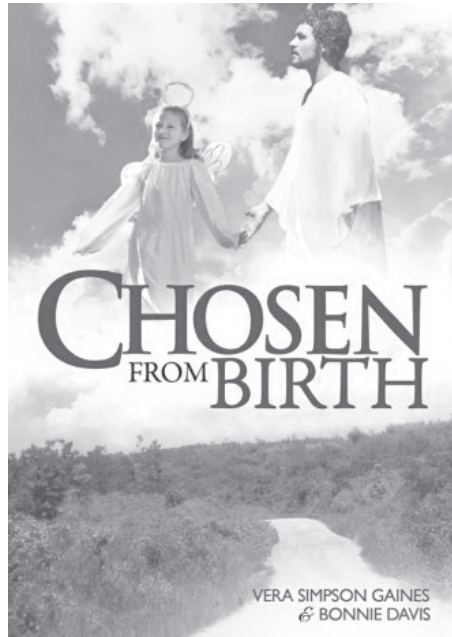


Photo special to The Pelahatchie News

The Pastor's Perspective: What is God's will for my life



By: Leslie Trigg
East Rankin Academy
Chaplain

Congratulations to all our high school seniors! You have completed one chapter in your life, and now you begin a new journey. As you begin this new journey, many of you are finding yourself at a crossroads. "Where am I going to college?" "What is my major going to be?" "Am I going to start working a job?" There are so many questions that race around your minds. One question that may be on many of your minds is: "What is God's will for my life?"

As you grow older, the questions change to "Who am I going to marry?" "Where am I going to live?" "Am I going to buy this house?" or "Do I start my own business?" The one question that remains is, "What is God's will for my life?"

What a life-changing, life-directing, and life-giving question. If knowing God's will for your life is so important, how does one know it? Will God speak to us through a burning

bush like Moses? Will there be a big billboard with flashing lights pointing to the answer? Unfortunately, for the most of us, there are no burning bushes or flashing billboards, but I will let you in on something. We already know God's will for our lives.

God has revealed His will for our lives in the Bible. "Love your Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind." "Love your neighbor as yourself." "Let your yes be yes and your no be no." "Whatever you do, do for the glory of God." "Seek first the Kingdom of God." "Honor your father and mother." "Husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church." "Pray for enemies." These are but a few of the many parts of God's will for our lives, and they all point to God's ultimate will for our lives: To be like Jesus!

Doing what God calls us to do in the Bible will keep you busy for the rest of your life. All the questions about college, career, and marriage become details along the way. As you seek to honor God and live for Him, You will discover life's details will be revealed to you along the way as you seek to live out the Bible each day.



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Business Spotlight: Brick House Fitness Center

By: Katie White

Pelahatchie is a town where people like to keep fit. They ride bikes from Hwy. 43 in Pelahatchie to where it ends in Brandon at Shiloh Park. They walk and run on sidewalks and streets in the downtown area, and also on the more rural roads, where the chicken and cow farms are found. Now, due to a dream coming true for one certified Physical Trainer, there is a new place in town where people in Pelahatchie can continue their fitness regimen.

Brick House Fitness Center opened its doors on February 1, 2014. Michelle Carter, owner, feels extremely blessed by the outpouring of support the gym has received before and after it opened. Carter and her family are originally from Pelahatchie.

The decision to open the fitness center in Pelahatchie was based on convenience. Not only was Carter running out of time driving to an out-of-town gym, she thought others might be as well. "People stop working out because they have to put so much time and effort into just getting to a gym, but our location makes it very convenient for the people of Pelahatchie," says Carter. "The gym is very non-intimidating. It's just normal people

wanting to get healthy. People don't feel like they need to already be in perfect shape just to fit in. The gym and tanning are both open 24/7, which helps members make time to come workout."

Mayor Knox Ross also played a pivotal role in the opening of the gym. "He is so passionate about helping our town grow that if you're around him you can't help but have that passion rub off on you. It makes me proud to see all the positive changes taking place in Pelahatchie, and I'm excited to be a part of that."

As Carter was considering opening a fitness center, she approached Josh Carter, her nephew and a senior at East Rankin Academy, about working for her after school. "Josh and I work very well together. He is an amazing young man. When I first conceived of the idea of opening a gym, Josh was the first person that I approached to see if he would be interested in working for me. I literally offered him the job before

the first brick was laid on the building. He and I are both learning the ropes of running a gym together."

"Our gym, of course, is smaller than other gyms in larger cities; but, what we lack in size, we make up for in quality. We have everything one would need to get a good workout."

Brick House uses the brand Wilder Athletics, and all the equipment is new. They pride themselves on keeping the equipment clean and in good working condition. Along with a good workout, members can also utilize the tanning bed. Carter says the rates at Brick House are very competitive with other gyms, as well. "For an individual, it's \$30 per month; for a couple, it's \$50;

and for a family of up to four members, it's \$60. Unlimited tanning is an additional \$15 per month per person."

Carter had previously received a Bachelors degree from Belhaven College, and a Master's degree from The University of Southern Mississippi in education. She was a teacher for

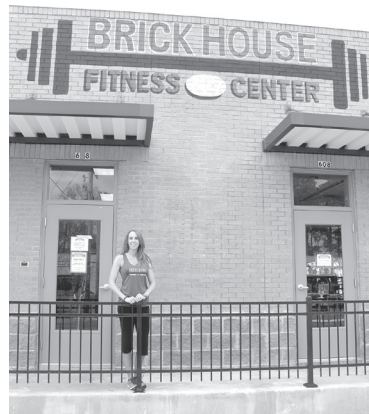
10 years. Before Brick House Fitness Center was built, Carter continued her education by completing PT training from FiTOUR.

"When I decided to open a gym, I thought the best thing for my members would be to have a certified personal trainer available on location. I don't charge extra for this service."

When a customer becomes a member, Carter can help them establish a step-by-step program they can follow to help "acclimate them to working out properly." Members don't have to follow any program to join, but the service is available if they feel they need it. Carter is always available for questions; and, if she doesn't know the answers, then she has a network of professionals she can learn from.

Brick House has a strong membership following. "The 300 members that we have are some of the nicest people. They follow the rules and help ensure that our gym is a friendly, safe place to come enjoy not only getting into shape, but a place to enjoy socializing and making new friends."

For more information about Brick House Fitness Center, call Michelle Carter at 601-665-2788 or 601-854-5600, or visit them online at www.brickhouse-fitness.com.



Michelle Carter, owner, stands in front of Brick House Fitness Center. (Photo by Katie White.)

PTO Parents of the Year



On April 10, the Rankin County School District honored Parents of the Year 2014. Among the parents who were recognized are Paige Tucker (L), Pelahatchie Elementary Parent of the Year; and Jessica Sledge (R), Pelahatchie High School Parent of the Year. (Photo special The Pelahatchie News)



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Summer shouldn't mean hunger for our nation's children



By: Kevin Concannon,
USDA Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services

As a child, I always looked forward to the carefree joy of summertime. I remember the long days of playing outside at a nearby park until I needed to come home for lunch. Unfortunately, many of our nation's children do not experience the simple joys of summer. In fact, far too many are left worrying where their next breakfast or lunch will come from when schools are dismissed for summer break.

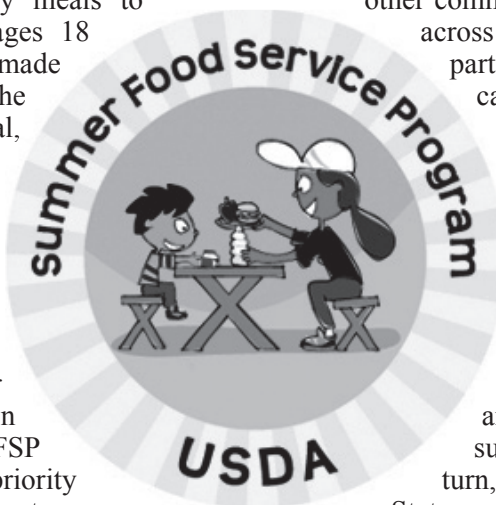
During the school year, about 31 million American children receive school meals through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program every day. About 21 million of those children receive meals at a discounted rate or for free, based on their family's income. When summer rolls around, though, only about 3.5 million of these children participate in USDA's summer meals programs.

That means millions of eligible low-income children are at risk of going hungry during the summer months.

And we know that to thrive and reach their highest potential, children need good nutrition all year long.

USDA's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is working to fill this hunger gap for children who qualify for free and reduced price meals during the school year. The program serves free healthy meals to eligible children ages 18 and under, and is made possible through the efforts of national, state, and local partners, including a cadre of energized volunteers.

While USDA has worked to increase access to summer meals for low-income children for many years, SFSP began receiving priority attention in 2013. Last summer, USDA employed a new tactic of working with partners to deliver intensive, targeted technical assistance on SFSP in five states. The result was a historic increase in the number of meals served, nationwide—7 million more than the previous year! We hope to continue building on last year's suc-



cesses with our state and local partners in 2014, and move closer to closing the summer hunger gap.

The key to success this year will be expanding the number of sites open for summer meals. We must spread the word to schools, parks and recreation departments, libraries, and faith and other community organizations across the nation; their participation is critical for the continued success of SFSP. The deadlines to become Summer Food Service Program sponsors vary by State, and begin as early as April 15. Program sponsors oversee and provide meals to summer sites. In return, USDA, through the States, reimburses program sponsors for the meals served to children.

I'm sure it comes as no surprise when I say that galvanizing hundreds of faith-based groups, civic groups, recreation centers, food banks, schools, other non-profit organizations, and volunteers takes time, effort

and commitment on all sides. For any community that treasures its youth (and I haven't met one that doesn't), we must organize now to fight hunger this summer.

If you or your organization is interested in helping us reduce the risk of hunger among our nation's youth, visit our website, www.summerfood.usda.gov. The summer meals outreach toolkit includes sample outreach plans, templates, customizable flyers, door hangers, letters to parents, examples of site activities, best practices, and more. State representatives are also available to answer questions and facilitate sponsor enrollment and site registration.

This year, let's work together to make sure every child in our great nation has a hunger-free summer.

Editor's Note: Kevin Concannon is the USDA Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services. The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The program was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. Concannon lives in the Washington D.C. Metro area.

Keene district Student of the Month



Pelahatchie senior Brittney Keene was selected as the Rankin County School District Student of the Month. Brittney (right) is pictured with her mother, Jennifer Harris (left), after being honored at the RCSD board meeting on April 9. (Photos special to The Pelahatchie News)

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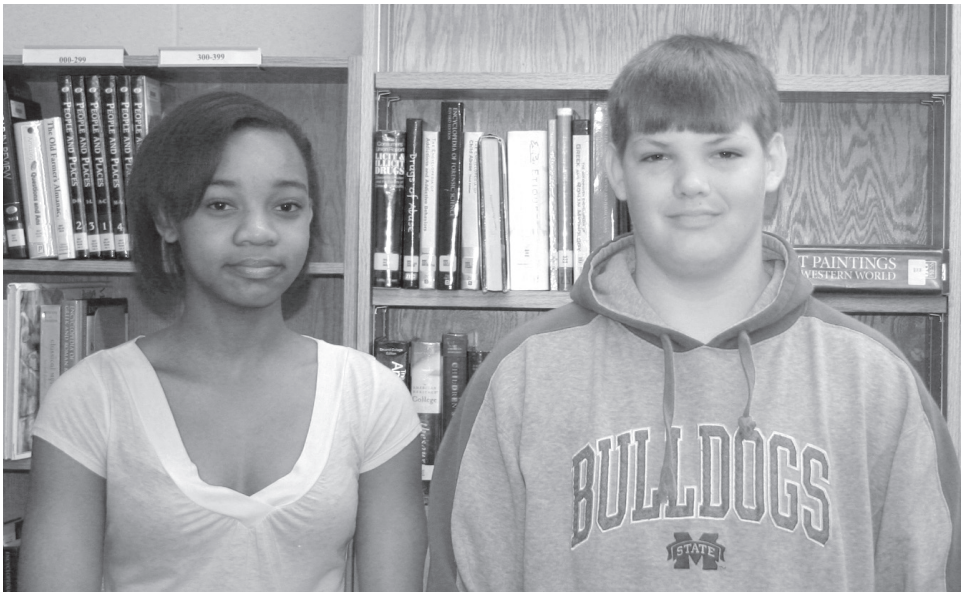
DEAL OF THE MONTH

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Student of the Month and Citizenship Awards



March Student of the Month recipients at Pelahatchie Attendance Center included (l to r), front row: Maleigh Edwards, 8th; Mrs. Lauren Barkley, teacher; and Alexis Johnson, 9th; back row: Sandra Lewis, 7th; Scheldon Irvin, 10th; Drew Harrell, 12th; and Anna Phillips, 11th.



March Citizenship award recipients at Pelahatchie Attendance Center included Janae Collier, 11th (left); and Cody Lane, 9th (right). (Photos special to The Pelahatchie News)

AT THE LIBRARY IN PELAHATCHIE

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May 21, 11:30 a.m. - Adult Book Club
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Library appreciation breakfast held for city officials and employees. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

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A Day At

Thursday
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COOKING SCHOOL

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The group will get an up-close-and-personal look at the "Viking Lifestyle" with a tour of the Viking Hospitality Group in Greenwood. Also included is a tour of the beautiful Alluvian Hotel, the Alluvian Spa and the Viking Cooking School and Retail Store. Following that, the group will meet a step-on guide from the Greenwood Convention and Visitor's Bureau for *The Help* tour.

Filmed primarily in Greenwood, *The Help*, Mississippi native Kathryn Stockett's bestselling novel, went on to claim an Oscar for best supporting actress. The group will take a riding tour of where scenes were filmed and will see some of the areas where the cast and crew enjoyed their time in Greenwood.

In the Viking Theatre Kitchen, the group will enjoy a demonstration by a staff Chef, enjoy a wonderful lunch, and take home a recipe booklet.

On the drive back, the group will stop in Indianola to visit the new B.B. King Museum, where interactive displays and "Smithsonian" grade artifacts depict the life and times of the Mississippi legend and how his work has made a lasting impression on American music.

The tour will conclude in Pelahatchie around 7:30 p.m.



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- A Delta "goody bag" from the Greenwood Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Guided tour of the Viking Cooking School and Retail store in Greenwood
- Riding tour highlighting the movie, *The Help*, including seeing where key scenes were filmed, where the stars lived, worked, and enjoyed their spare time in the Mississippi Delta
- A Viking Demonstration Class for lunch, including a customized menu and a recipe guide
- Time to shop at the Mississippi Gift Company, which offers Mississippi-made products including arts and crafts, food products, books and magazines
- A visit to the Welcome Center in Belzoni, "The Catfish Capitol of the World," and a take-home packet of several catfish recipes
- A tour of the B.B. King Museum in Indianola

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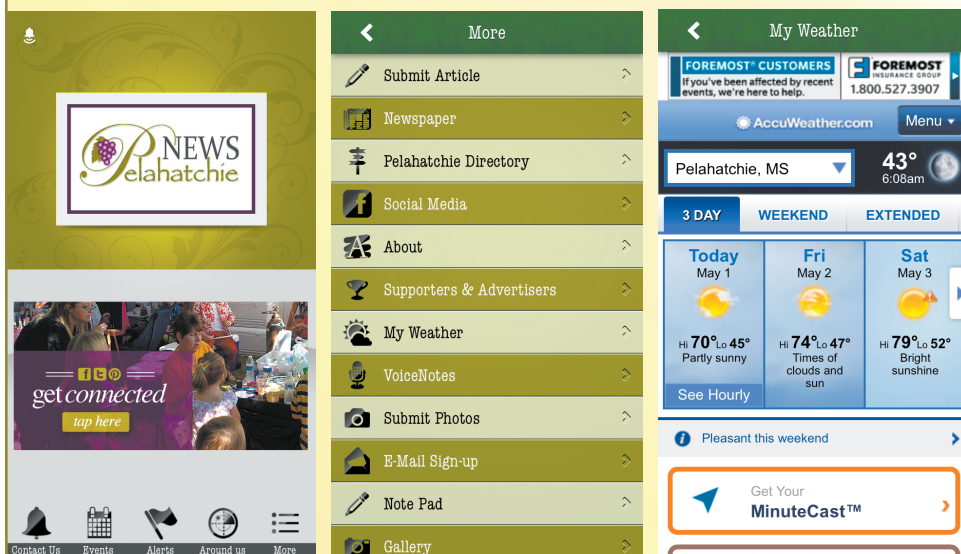
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