

Toddlers and teens are most at risk for medicine poisonings

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Muscadine Health Fair combined fun with learning

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**June
2015**

**Volume 4
Number 6
Pelahatchie, MS**

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Pelahatchie News
P.O. Box 771
Pelahatchie, MS 39145

East Rankin Academy Graduating Class of 2015



The 2015 East Rankin Academy graduating class includes: Anna Beth Bowman, Ben Callahan, John Bailey Cooke, Will Denson, Haleigh Denton, Will Dunn, Kaitlyn Evans, Chance Gaddis, Curtis Graves, Hannah Gray, Tanner Hale, Katlyn Harris, David Herz, John Elliott Jolley, Falon Jones, Marley Maddox, Karleigh Mahaffey, Elizabeth Martin, Noah Mashburn, Sam McCoy, Zach McCurdy, Talor McMurtrey, Max Miller, Mallory Moore, Hayden Neal, Maci Phillips, Hailey Robinson, Hayes Roden, Seth Sherrill, Houston Smith, Cassidy Still, Blake Sumerall, Daniel Teh, Carrie Thompson, Drew Thompson, Beaman Triplett, Isabella Vining, Carlie Vinzant, Mason Wallace, John Michael Watkins, Jimmie Webb, Anna Kathryn Whatley, Kathryn White, Win Winstead, Luke Yancey and Saylee Yount. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

Pelahatchie High School Graduating Class of 2015



The 2015 Pelahatchie High School graduating class includes: Emily Marie Addy, Devon Michael Ballard, Tristen Damon Bass, Aubrey Dequan Bennett, Austin Dwayne Bowman, Juleah Antionette Unique Boyd, Ivy Lynn Brock, Kaylee Brooke Burnham, Haley Danielle Dunn, Jesse Kyle Edwards, Cherrell Courtney Ficklin, Tyler Deon Flores, Andrew Lee Floyd, Richard Morgan Franklin, Thomas Hunter Gibney, Haley Alexis Groves, August Ireland Hall, Jennifer Ann Harvey, Wesley Tyler Howell, LaChaz Charles Geran Irvin, Autumn Nicole Johnson, Tyler Eugene Johnson, Kristen Noel Johnston, Haley Michelle Jolly, Alfred, Antwone Jones, Brandon Tyler Kahn, Jason Lee King, Kandis Danielle King, Dillian Mon'Treze Lassiter, Desmond Montrel McGee, Joshua Nathaniel Myers, Austin Cole Nelson, Courtney Santez Ousley, McKenna Suzanne Outlaw, Travion Deviontae Patterson, Anna Collette Phillips, Zackary Tomas Reach, Monica Monique Sanders, Noah Tremayne Smith, Roger Charlie Daniel Stewart, Kenneth Eugene Edward Stewart, Antonio Cor-tez Taylor-Beeman, Brittany Ann Thompson, Samantha Elizabeth Townsend, Samantha Joyce Walker, Kent Marquise Watson, Austin Scott Westbrook, Andrew Hayes White and Brady Keith White (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)



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East Rankin Academy names valedictorian and salutatorian



Carlie Vinzant, East Rankin Academy 2015 valedictorian (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)



Daniel Teh, East Rankin Academy 2015 salutatorian (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

Pelahatchie High School names valedictorian and salutatorian



Kaylee Brooke Burnham, Pelahatchie High School 2015 valedictorian (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)



Kandis Danielle King, Pelahatchie High School 2015 salutatorian (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

East Rankin Academy students win at Envirothon Competition

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

This year, East Rankin Academy (ERA) Envirothon Teams competed in the Central Area Competition on April 2 at Chautauqua Park in Crystal Springs.

The Mississippi Envirothon is a hands-on natural resource competition designed to challenge students in grades 9-12 to explore the natural world around them, testing their knowledge in the categories of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and current issues.

ERA Team A finished fifth in the overall competition and also had the highest score in the Soils Division part of the competition. ERA Team B finished second place in the overall competition and had the highest score in the Current Issues Division of the competition.

Both teams qualified to compete at the State Level of the competition. At the state competition, Team B had the highest score in the Soils Division, and Team A had the highest Oral Presentation Score and finished in sixth place.



The East Rankin Academy Envirothon Team, pictured (l to r) are, Hayden Neal, Will Denson, Curtis Graves, Bryce Overby, Zach Nettles, Trace Sugg, Tanner Guy, Zach McCurdy, Forrest Russell, Bailey Hudson, Jack Langford and Adrienne Pittman. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)



P.O. Box 771
Pelahatchie, MS 39145

Volume 4 Issue 6
Circulation - 3,300

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The Pelahatchie News is published on the first Tuesday of every month in Pelahatchie, MS

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Merit Health becomes state’s largest health network

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Merit Health, owner of Pelahatchie’s closest hospital, recently added seven more hospitals to its system, making it the largest health network in the state by number of facilities. Merit Health now consists of twelve hospitals across Mississippi affiliated with Community Health Systems.

"As affiliates, our hospitals already have a lot in common and enjoy strong working relationships. We are excited to see the Merit Health network brand expand," said Tobey Houston, Vice President, Network Development, Merit Health. "This is an opportunity to combine the strengths and resources of all of our hospitals into an even stronger system, to serve communities throughout the state."

The network has approximately 2,300 licensed beds, 2,500 physicians on the combined active medical staffs,

and 7,000 employees, and more than 53,000 admissions and 300,000 emergency department visits each year.

The newest hospitals in the Merit Health network are:

- Tri-Lakes Medical Center will become Merit Health Batesville
- Biloxi Regional Medical Center will become Merit Health Biloxi
- Gilmore Memorial Regional Medical Center will become Merit Health Gilmore Memorial (Amory)
- Natchez Regional Medical Center and Natchez Community Hospital will become Merit Health Natchez
- Northwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center will become Merit Health Northwest Mississippi (Clarksdale)
- Wesley Medical Center will become Merit Health Wesley (Hattiesburg)

All programs, services and em-



Image special to The Pelahatchie News

ployed physician practices of the hospitals will also become part of the Merit Health family.

Many hospitals and health systems combine their strengths and resources in order to respond quickly to the rapid changes happening in the healthcare industry.

Company officials say that, through their affiliation with Merit Health, the hospitals will be able to use the network’s size and shared resources to

exchange best clinical practices, operate more efficiently, expand services and improve access to care.

In January, six hospitals in Jackson and Vicksburg announced they formed Merit Health, including: Merit Health Central (Jackson), Merit Health Madison (Canton), Merit Health Rankin (Brandon), Merit Health River Oaks (Flowood), Merit Health River Region (Vicksburg) and Merit Health Woman’s Hospital (Flowood).

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Healthy Workplace initiative at Multicraft International



Multicraft International employees walk after lunch as part of their partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi's Healthy Workplace program. (Photo by Katie White)

By: Katie White

Multicraft International, an American manufacturer focused on innovative building solutions in a variety of industries, partnered with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Miss. (BCBSMS) for a Healthy Workplace on Feb. 28, 2015.

Since then, the BCBSMS Healthy Workplace program has helped Multicraft International with such wellness initiatives as health risk assessments. The risk assessments lead to knowing the best recommendations and pro-

grams necessary for any individual in obtaining personal good nutrition, weight management, fitness promotion and even cancer risk reductions.

The program also provides resources and suggestions on how to help "maintain" a Healthy Workplace. For example, companies may be advised to promote a "no gain" goal for specific holidays like Thanksgiving or Christmas, where society on average tends to indulge more than usual during meals and parties.

BCBSMS further provides Multi-

craft International with registered nutritionists that meet with their staff and discuss the importance of good nutrition.

Multicraft International encourages its staff to engage in the Healthy Workplace initiative by offering four additional hours of personal time to take part in a Healthy You visit.

The company also pays the joining fees and are paying half of the gym membership fees, on a monthly basis, for staff that work out at Brick House Fitness Center in Pelahatchie or at Fit-

ness Masters in Morton.

Andrew Mallinson, Multicraft International Chief Executive Officer, recognizes the program as "a big focus for our employees. We have a very good medical program here, and Blue Cross Blue Shield gives us the results. Our people do a really good job of using the program. It takes both sides."

On April 29, after lunch, Multicraft International employees joined together for a Healthy Workplace one mile walk around the Multicraft International facilities.



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Toddlers and teens are most at-risk for medicine poisonings

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Nearly half of the 1.34 million calls to poison centers for children each year are related to medicine. In fact, every day, there are more than 1,100 calls about a young child getting into medicine or getting too much medicine.

While those numbers are alarming, the most surprising insight from a new study by Safe Kids Worldwide reveals that teens are also at risk for unintentional medicine poisoning. For example, the percent of 15- to 19-year-olds experiencing a serious outcome is more than six times greater than the percent for 1- to 4-year-olds.

In a new report, "Medicine Safety for Children: An In-Depth Look at Calls to Poison Centers," Safe Kids Worldwide, in partnership with the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC), analyzed more than 547,000 calls to poison centers to better understand what types of medicine little kids and teens are getting into and how it happens.

What is leading to the more severe incidents with teens? Teens in charge of managing their own medicine can make mistakes. There are about 10,000 emergency department visits a year for medicine overdose by adolescents

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Top Tips for a Safe Home

- Give young children your full and undivided attention when they are in the bathtub or around water.
- Check smoke alarm batteries every six months to make sure they are working.
- Keep cribs clear of objects, and make sure babies sleep alone, on their backs, and in a crib every time they sleep.
- Install safety gates to keep children from falling down staircases and window guards or stops to prevent falls from windows.
- Keep all medicine up and away, even medicine you take every day. Be alert to medicine stored in other locations, like pills in purses, vitamins on counters, and medicine on nightstands.

Image by Safe Kids Worldwide

self-administering over-the-counter medicine. Examples include forgetting to take medicine and then doubling up, taking two medicines with the same ingredient, and taking the wrong medicine.

Medicines that ranked high in calls to poison centers that resulted in serious medical issues include those used to treat mental health conditions or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

What medicines are most often involved for little kids? For children under age 4, the most common medicines kids get into are ibuprofen, multivitamins and diaper care and rash products. It's easy to think that these

everyday over-the-counter items are not as dangerous, but they can be very harmful if taken the wrong way. Iron and calcium in multivitamins can be poisonous if too many are taken.

It's also interesting to learn how these little children are getting into medicine. A 2013 Safe Kids study revealed that in 43 percent of emergency department visits resulting from young children getting into medicine, the medicine belonged to a grandparent, aunt or uncle. Most frequently, children get into misplaced drugs found on the ground, on the nightstand or in a purse.

"I encourage everyone to program the Poison Help line into your phone,

(800) 222-1222," said Kate Carr, president and CEO of Safe Kids Worldwide. "This is a tremendously valuable service: it's free, it's available 24/7, and you will be talking to the nation's poison experts. It's far better than going online to find help."

"Our nation's fifty-five poison centers play a crucial role in keeping Americans safe by providing poison prevention and free, expert information and advice," said AAPCC Executive Director Stephen Kaminski, JD. "In addition to the public, emergency clinicians and pediatricians rely on poison center professionals to help treat their patients. In fact, about twenty percent of all poison center exposure calls come from health care providers. It's good to know that expert help is just a phone call away when the unthinkable happens."

"We want every parent to know what to do in case of an emergency," said Carr, "but even more important is to take a few precautions now to prevent these frightening emergencies from ever happening."

Safe Kids Worldwide encourages every family to take these steps:

1. For parents of toddlers, put all medicine up and away and out of sight, including your own. Make

continued on page 15

Teacher places nationally in reading contest and wins a Chromebook



Sharon Hall, second grade teacher at Pelahatchie Elementary and member of the Achieve3000's Founders of the Future, placed nationally in a reading contest - winning her classroom a free Chromebook. Hall's certifications include Elementary Education K-3, Elementary Education 4-6, Health Education K-12 and Physical Education K-12. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

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Food allergies present challenges to families

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

On Easter weekend in 2014, mom Suzie Veillette made a small concession for her kids that would change all of their lives forever.

The bit of surrender came in the form of a Reese's Peanut Butter Egg.

"We had just finished dinner, and my oldest one begged, 'please let us have some of our Easter candy for dessert,'" Veillette said.

She agreed and intentionally picked up the Reese's candy because she believed it would be easy for her son Liam, then 18 months of age, to chew.

"So we gave it to him and within two bites, I mean it was quick, he started breaking out around his mouth, and he started rubbing his throat," she said. "I knew immediately he was having a food allergy."

According to the Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE) organization, nearly six million children – that's one in thirteen kids or two kids in every classroom – have food allergies.

Dr. Anne Yates, professor of pediatrics and medicine and chief of the Section of Allergy and Immunology in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Mississippi Medical

Center, said a reaction to a food allergy can vary widely from an eczema flare, hives and itching, swelling of the face, to vomiting and diarrhea.

More severe symptoms include wheezing, shortness of breath, throat swelling, or cardiovascular symptoms also known as anaphylactic shock, where blood pressure drops. Death is a possibility -- and minutes count.

"With mild symptoms, just a little bit of hives, itching or skin swelling, you can give Benadryl and watch closely," Yates said. "If the hives or swelling worsens or if the child is having any breathing difficulty or feeling weak or faint, then you have to give epinephrine and call 911 for the ambulance to take them to the hospital, because it could get worse and become deadly."

The diagnosis was later confirmed by blood tests that also showed Liam was allergic to the part of the protein in peanuts that carries a higher risk for anaphylactic shock.

"It's completely changed our life," Veillette said, recalling the events of that week. "It's a little easier now, because I've had a year to deal with it; but every day I drop him off at school and I get that thought in my head, 'Am I going to get that phone call today?'"

She has become somewhat of a food allergies expert since her son's diagnosis and worries about the lack of understanding, something she experienced firsthand.

Experts know reactions can get more severe with repeated exposures, but they can't anticipate what the reaction will be – even in one individual. It's entirely possible Liam may indeed need epinephrine next time.

In 2004, the Food and Drug Administration passed the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act, which requires the eight most prevalent food allergens to be listed on all packaged food labels in clear language – "May contain: peanuts."

The problem is, the requirement only applies to packaged foods, and the top eight often show up in unexpected places.

Veillette cites peanut oil in sunscreen, fish oil in baby food, milk in non-dairy creamer, and wheat in paste, as some examples.

"I have to read every label on everything every single time," she adds. That's where Yates comes in. Aside from testing for and diagnosing food allergies, she and her colleagues help families with the only weapon one really has in this fight – proper planning.



Dr. Anne Yates, left, professor of pediatrics and medicine and chief of the Section of Allergy and Immunology in the Department of Pediatrics, walks mom Suzie Veillette and her son Liam through the directions for injecting epinephrine should Liam come into contact with peanuts. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

So, after a family receives the diagnosis telling them what the child can't eat, Yates helps them figure out what they can eat.

"We try to help them out with making sure they're getting a balanced nutritious diet," she said.

She also teaches parents how to use an epinephrine injector. The Veillettes now have more than one.

She's also become committed to the cause of spreading the word about the dangers of food allergies, so other parents won't be caught unawares.

"There's this perception that they're not that big of deal; that we're blowing this out of proportion," she said. "But this is a medical condition, and its life-threatening; and we've got to treat it as such."

Anderson awarded Metro Teacher of the Year

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Voncille Anderson, teacher at Pelahatchie Attendance Center, was awarded the Metro Teacher of the Year award for the 2014-2015 school year.

"Mrs. Anderson has been our right hand, arm and body for this year. She has lead the charge in testing which was no easy task and still managed to serve and serve well as our instructional coach," said Dr. Bryan Marshall, Pelahatchie High School Principal.

Anderson is an instructional coach for students K5 through the 12th grade.

"I am honored to serve as the Instruc-

tional Coach for the Pelahatchie school zone," said Anderson.

Anderson earned her Masters of Education at Mississippi College.

Anderson's philosophy is "anyone who is motivated enough to learn, can learn."

She is married to John Anderson, retired Army Lieut. Col. They have two children, Mikaela and Wesley.



Voncille Anderson (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

Carter awarded Teacher of the Year

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Wendy Carter, teacher at Pelahatchie Attendance Center, was awarded the Teacher of the Year award for the 2014-2015 school year.

"Mrs. Carter has risen to the challenge time and again when she is faced with a project. While she may get rattled for a second she finds a way to get it done," said Dr. Bryan Marshall, Pelahatchie High School Principal.

Carter is a graduate of Pelahatchie High School and the University of Southern Mississippi. She feels she has been "fortunate to spend her en-

tire educational career, 12 years as a student and 22 years as a teacher, at Pelahatchie Attendance Center."

Carter has taught in grades 4th-8th over the span of her career. Currently, Carter teaches ICT 1 and 7th grade science.

She is married to Doug Carter and they have two daughters, Anna Grace and Leah Kathryn.



Wendy Carter (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

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Norman Session named new Vice President at Hinds Community College

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Dr. Norman Session will be the new vice president of the Rankin Campus and Jackson Campus—Academic/Technical Center (JATC) at Hinds Community College, as of July 1, 2015. He is currently serving as principal of Pisgah High School in the Rankin County School District, where he won the distinction of being named the district's Principal of the Year in 2007 and 2010.

Session's selection was approved today (May 6, 2015) by the Hinds Community College Board of Trustees at its monthly meeting. He is replacing Dr. Sue Powell, who retires June 30 after 12 years as the vice president for the Rankin and Jackson campuses.

"Dr. Session is a graduate of Hinds and has also served as an adjunct instructor at the Rankin and Jackson campuses. As Pisgah High School principal, he led early efforts to make college more accessible and affordable to his students by offering dual enrollment courses at Pisgah," said Dr. Clyde Muse, president of Hinds Community College.

"The knowledge and experience he has gained as a secondary education leader will serve the college and community very well, and we look forward to him joining our leadership team,"

Muse said.

After earning an associate degree at Hinds in 1988, Session transferred to Mississippi College, where he completed a bachelor's degree in secondary education and a master's degree in social science, as well as a master's degree in education, school leadership and administration. He completed the educational leadership program at the University of Mississippi, earning a Ph.D. in 2000.

"Hinds gave me the foundation that I needed to be successful at the university level," Session said, adding, "Even though Hinds was a large institution, it maintained a small school feel with small class size and individual attention."

Dr. Ben Fatherree, retired history department chair who still teaches at the Raymond Campus, gets the credit for Session's pursuit of a career in education. "He was the catalyst – so intelligent, so energetic, and so knowledgeable. He never brought the first note or book to class. He knew it all.

"I was going to study accounting; but I knew if I could be a fraction of the educator he was, I could be successful," Session said.

After earning his first master's degree, Session was a 22-year-old adjunct instructor at the Jackson Campus-Aca-

demic/Technical Center. About that experience, he said, "We have to be able to be flexible and meet the needs of all students, including adult learners. That is one thing that I learned teaching at the Jackson Campus."

His professional career began as a teacher in Jackson Public Schools and Rankin County schools. He moved into administration at Forest Municipal Schools as high school assistant principal. He then served as a middle school assistant principal in Madison County schools and high school assistant principal in the Rankin County School District before becoming principal at Pisgah High School in 2002. At Pisgah, school activities keep him busy most nights of the week, but he signed up again to be an adjunct instructor for Hinds, teaching Western Civilization I and II and Sociology in the dual enrollment/dual credit program at Pisgah High School.

"At a small school, we couldn't offer everything to our students. Dual enrollment with Hinds was a way to let our kids know that college was within reach, especially for a first-generation college student," Session said.

This year, one Pisgah senior will graduate with 38 college credits, and several will have more than 25 college credits. "The partnership has led to

more scholarship dollars for our students," he said.

When he reports to his new office at Hinds' Rankin Campus, Session plans to meet with faculty and students and focus on building relationships with the community. "I think that the college and community are intertwined; you can't separate them. You have to pull in all the stakeholders," he said.

The Hinds tradition carries on with his family. His wife Suzanna also attended Hinds. Their oldest son, Paxton, is a junior at the University of Mississippi who graduated from Pisgah High School with 29 dual enrollment college credits from Hinds. The couple's other son, Sloan, graduates this month with 26 dual enrollment credits and will attend the Hinds Rankin Campus.

"Everybody recognizes that Hinds is a flagship institution in Mississippi," he said, "I'm excited for this opportunity and ready to get to work."



Dr. Norman Session (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

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Franklin seeks Superintendent of Education



By: Bobby Franklin

My name is Bobby Franklin, and I am a candidate for the Office of Superintendent of Education in Rankin County. My

wife and I are residents of the Reservoir and members of Pinelake Church.

My youth was spent in the Leesburg community, where we attended Leesburg Baptist Church. My educational training includes a Bachelor Degree in chemistry from the University of Southern Mississippi; a Master of Education from Auburn University, and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from LSU. My teaching career began in 1973 at Warren Central High School teaching Chemistry, Semi-micro Qualitative Analysis, and Organic Chemistry. In addition to teaching, I directed student research, where my students

placed first in the state, first in the nation, and was one of seven students representing the US in London.

While employed with the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE), I was involved with developing school report cards and served as director of the state data system. Our data system was one of the top three systems in the nation. I also represented Louisiana on five national committees and was appointed by U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige to serve on a panel to examine graduation and dropout

indicators. In 2009, I accepted a position at Mississippi College teaching classes in the methods of educational research, test and measurement, and comparative education.

My education, training and experience qualify me for this position. It is my desire and goal to make Rankin County Schools the best in the state and among the best in the nation. I believe Rankin County Schools are performing beneath their potential.

Rankin County has more National
continued on page 15

Williard seeks Place 3 Chancery Court



By: Robert R. Williard

I am pleased to announce my candidacy for the Place 3 Chancery Court position. It is a welcomed and

needed position in the Rankin County Chancery Court system. Having spent 30 years trying Chancery cases

and 15 years out of Rankin County I am well suited to assume the role of Chancellor. I have seen the case load at the Chancery Court mushroom into more work than they can handle. I am sure this new position will give some needed relief to the citizens of Rankin County

I graduated from Millsaps College and later Mississippi College School of Law and moved my practice to Rankin County some 15 years ago. I began my career by being sworn in at 10:30 A.M. by Judge Alexander in

Hinds County Chancery Court and appearing in front of him at 1:30 P.M. for a contempt case. My life experiences have given me great insight to the issues presented to a Chancellor. I married rather late in life and was blessed with a stepson who was about 12.

I learned firsthand the issues of child support, visitation and custody as he grew up. He is now a fine young man with a family of his own. The three granddaughters born to him have given me insight to the role of grand-

parents in the modern family.

My wife passed away after a long battle with cancer and that has gained me insight to the conservatorship and estate issue for families battling this disease.

In short I believe my life experiences have given me a unique insight to the issues that would be brought before me and will allow me to make fair and informed decisions for the people of Rankin County. I humbly ask for your support as the campaigning begins and for your vote in November.



YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

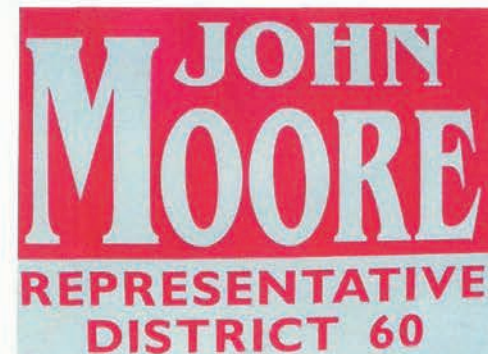
- *John, his wife Kim, and all three children graduated Rankin County Schools
- *6 Grandchildren
- *Married for 39 years
- *Bivocational Music Minister over 25 years
- *Elected as President of the Conservative Coalition of the MS House 2012-2013. Only member to have served twice in this office
- *Served as Chairman, MS House Education Committee 2011-2015
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Beeman signs letter of intent with Holmes

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Tony Beeman, center-fielder for the Pelahatchie Chiefs baseball team and graduating senior, recently signed to play baseball with Holmes Community College Bulldogs

Rob Knight, Head Coach of Pelahatchie High School and Junior High baseball teams, said of Beeman, "He works hard and he deserves every accolade he's gotten. You couldn't ask for a better kid. Not only is he a great athlete, but he's a top-notch young man."

Tony was also selected as 1st Team

All-State for 1A as an outfielder this season in 2015, 1st Team All-District for Region 6-1A in 2015, and the State Games of Mississippi High School Team in 2014 and 2015.



Tony Beeman during 2013 West Lowndes game. (Photo special to *The Pelahatchie News*)



Tony Beeman, center-field player for the Pelahatchie Chiefs baseball team, recently signed to play baseball with Holmes Community College. Pictured (l to r) are: Kimberly Brown, Mother; Tony Beeman; and Coach Rob Knight. (Photo by Katie White)



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Community members pay it forward at Pelahatchie Elementary

By: Stephanie Goss

Somewhere in the middle of Pelahatchie lies a golden nugget of love, encouragement and learning called Pelahatchie Elementary School (PES). At PES, little Chieftains are taught pride in themselves, their school and their community. Three years ago, the community noticed and began to respond by paying it forward.

One way the community gives back to PES is through a reading program called Thursday Readers (or Reading Buddies). In this program, volunteers from the community help struggling readers by listening and prompting while they read books. Volunteers range from retired community members to community church members, many coming from Pelahatchie Baptist Church. Volunteers come in whichever day they are able and come

on a regular schedule. The children look forward to seeing their reading buddy each and every week. These stakeholders build lasting relationships with their buddies and are always touched by the bonds that are created.

Pelahatchie Elementary students have benefited greatly from the interaction with their reading buddies. Many of the students who have reading buddies don't have anyone at home to listen to them or have parent(s) who are so overwhelmed that an outside source of assistance with helping their



Thursday Readers are adult volunteers in the community that visit Pelahatchie Elementary students to help them build their reading skills. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

struggling learner to reach reading comprehension goals is much appreciated.

PES first grade teachers guide the reading buddies to focus on particular skills the learner needs in order to progress in reading fluency, prosody and comprehension. For example, one Thursday Reader might encourage a student

to pay close attention to how she pronounces sound blends, while another might be asked to encourage a reader to read with prosody – paying attention to the rhythm, stress and intonation of speech. The reading buddies take the

learners to a quiet place, usually the cafeteria, and allow them the freedom to read out loud while providing the one-on-one attention the learner needs.

On May 21, the PES staff organized a party for the Thursday Readers and their buddies, complete with refreshments, gifts and picture time. The students gave their buddies hand-made gifts, thanking them for the time and attention given during the school year. This sort of outreach is just one example of how Pelahatchie Elementary is trying to achieve its vision – PES: In Literacy, In Numeracy, In Well-Being – 'Everything a Learner Needs.'

Anyone interested in becoming a Thursday Reader for the upcoming school year can contact the Pelahatchie Elementary School office at (601) 854-8050 for more information and join the other Thursday Readers in paying it forward.

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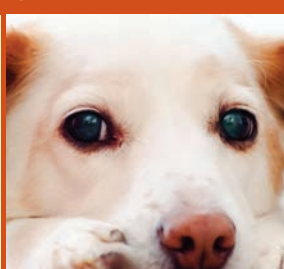
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Pastor's perspective: thinking about fatherhood



By: John Vaughn,
Pastor, Cross Roads
Baptist Church in
Pelahatchie

Father's Day is coming soon, and it's time to let your father know that you appreciate him, or to remember your father if he is no longer living. It's also a good time for fathers to reflect on the role you play in the life of your children.

I remember the day our first child was born. Of course, she was beautiful! That was almost 38 years ago, and she is still beautiful. A couple of years later, our first son was born. Back then, sonograms were only done if there was an obvious problem with the unborn child, so we didn't know if we were getting a boy or girl until they were actually born.

With our third child, it was a little different. We were living in Brazil and had notified the child welfare agencies in several cities of our desire to adopt a child. One day, we got a phone call that said, "We've got a baby boy. Come get him if you want him." Of course, we did want him; and when we left the hospital with him, he was 23

hours old and weighed in at a whopping 4.5 pounds. That was over 22 years ago.

So, I've been working on this fathering thing for quite a while now. My older son has two sons of his own now, and it's interesting to watch him be a father. Sometimes I think I see him repeating some of the things I did in fathering him - and I'm sure there are things that I did with him that he avoids doing with his sons!

The first time that a day was set aside to honor fathers can be traced back to 1908, in West Virginia. But Father's Day did not become an official holiday in the United States until 1972, when Congress passed a bill to establish the second Sunday of June each year as a day to honor fathers.

Many other countries followed suit, and now Father's Day is observed around the world, although some countries designate a different day. That was true in Brazil; so, while we were there, I made sure our children observed the U.S. Father's Day in June and the Brazilian Father's Day in August!

The Bible has a lot to say about fathers. Some significant passages include the instructions to children in the Ten Commandments found in Exodus



Photo by Katie White

20:12, "Honor your father and your mother...."

Then there is the passage in I Kings 2:2-3, where David advises his son Solomon, "As the time of King David's death approached, he gave this charge to his son Solomon: 'I am going where everyone on earth must someday go. Take courage and be a man. Observe the requirements of the Lord your God, and follow all his ways. Keep the decrees, commands, regulations, and laws written in the Law of

Moses so that you will be successful in all you do and wherever you go.'"

In Romans 8:15-16, Paul tells us to regard the Lord as our Heavenly Father, or "Daddy": "So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father.'"

Be sure to recognize and honor your earthly father on June 14, and your heavenly Father every day!



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Monday, June 22 @ 11 a.m. - Unmasking the Superheroes
Monday, June 29 @ 11 a.m. - True Grit
Thursday, July 9 @ 6:30 p.m. - Family Movie Night

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Monday, June 8 @ 2:00 p.m. Villains: Do we love to hate them or hate to love them?
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Pelahatchie Elementary students enthusiastic on graduation day



Pelahatchie Elementary School students graduated from kindergarten on Tuesday, May 19. The 2015 PES Kindergarten graduating class of 2027 includes: Javeon Banks, Nialija Boone, Chyna Bowie, Tyregious Bowie, Nathan Brown, Trinity Buckner, Ethan Butler, Tadarius Collier, Za'Yonna Collier, Brooklyn Conger, Kaiden Davis, Kyla Fletcher, Xayden Floyd, Lucas Gardner, Cheyenne Gibson, Caitlin Goodson, Zion Grant, Natalie Hand, Kysaac Harris, Jamauri Hollis, Alysa Irby, Bradley Johnson, Conner Jolly, Parker Jones, Harley Kitchens, Elijah Lee, Lailyn Macklin, Jamirah Magee, Georgia Massey, Kali Mitchell, Demaryus Moses, Katlynn Murray, Tyler Myers, Leila Oexman, Audrey Paul, Kingston Jena Phillipe, Eli Poarch, Angelina Quick, Natalie Redditt, Kaylee Renfro, Landyn Rodgers, Kyle Sherrill, Heath Steadham, Kelly Stingley, Alisa Strickland, Browdy Taylor, Maci Vanderford, James White, Alyssa Wilder, Levi Willingham, Milionna Wilkerson, Amber Wiltcher and Mitchell Wiltcher. Kindergarten teachers include: Brianna Battistelli, Lessie Johnson and Tanya Scherer. (Photo by Katie White)

By: Katie White

On May 19, Pelahatchie Elementary students graduated from Kindergarten with much enthusiasm.

As the 2015 kindergarten graduates marched in to find their designated seats, parents and guardians looked on with evident pride. Family members couldn't help positioning themselves to take photos of their child at this momentous occasion.

Principal Benjamin Barlow welcomed everyone to the ceremony and led the crowd, as they stood with hands on hearts, in the Pledge of Allegiance and as Madi Holmes sang the "Star Spangled Banner."

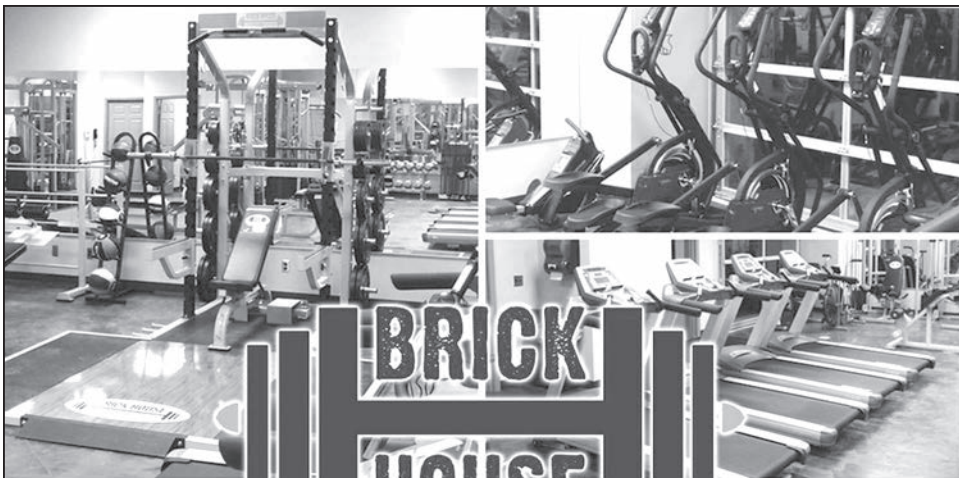
The guest speaker was Richard Morrison, Rankin County School District Assistant Superintendent. Morrison spoke about his own children graduating from high school and how he knows that every parent should

"cherish every moment." Morrison also asked the students to remember to "share" and also "be respectful" as they continue on with school and in the future. He asked the parents to remember "to work together, because these are our future" (pointing to the students).

The graduates performed the songs "The World's Greatest" and Katy Perry's "Roar."

When the graduates accepted their

diplomas, their teachers announced their future aspirations, which included such careers as: teacher, dentist, veterinarian, nurse, doctor, policeman, popstar, a parent, drummer, fireman, astronaut, zoo keeper, professional softball player, River Man like actor John Wayne, housekeeper, police-woman, army man, princess, preacher, Spiderman, chess master, professional football player, cheerleader, pediatrician, Strongman and ninja.



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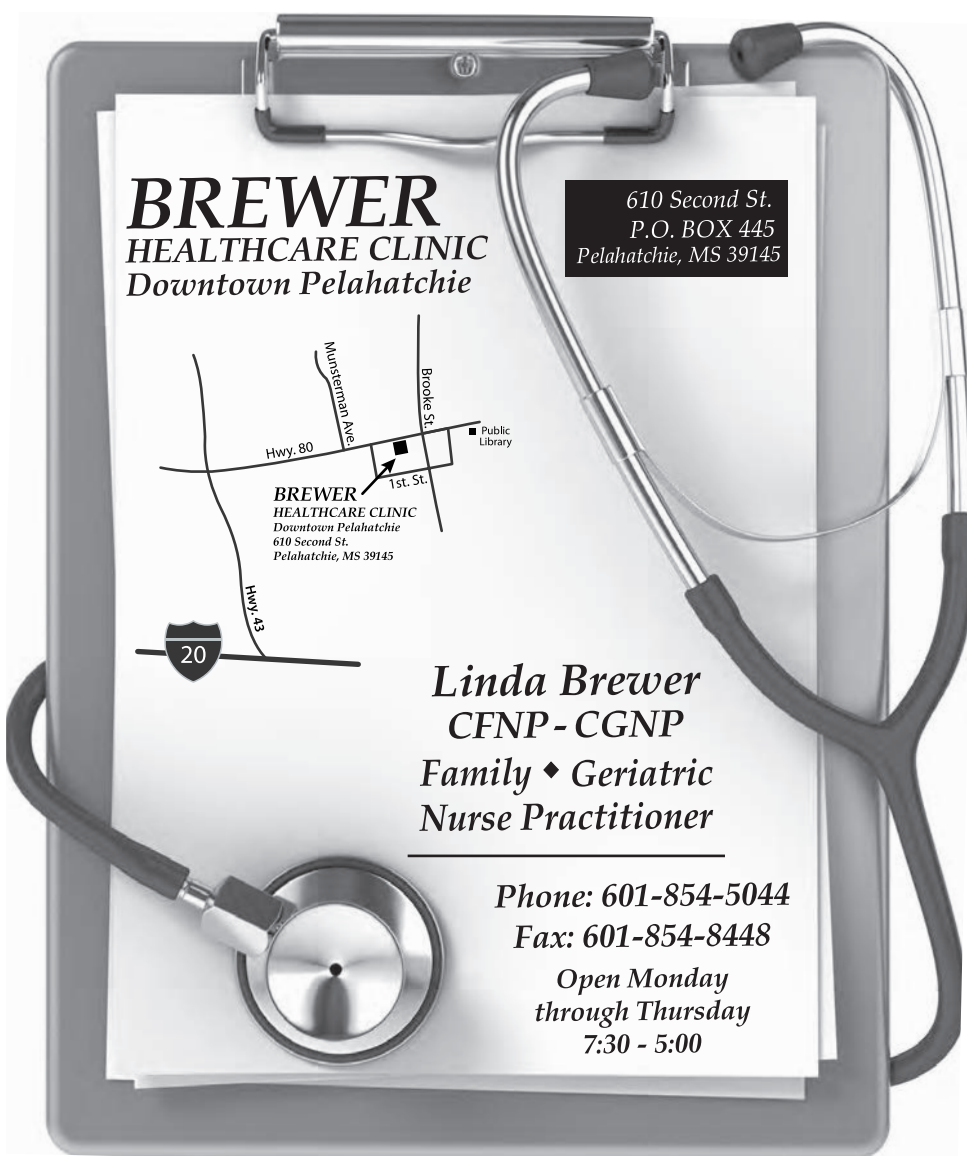
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Pelahatchie Elementary enjoys Field Day in May



On May 15, Pelahatchie Elementary students celebrated the end of the 2014-2015 school year with Field Day. The students spent almost a whole day in the fresh air playing games, jumping and sliding on inflatables and dunking the principal. (Photo by Kaitlyn White)



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continued from page 5

Toddlers and teens are most at-risk for medicine poisonings

sure that all medicine and vitamins are stored out of reach and out of sight of children. Consider places where kids get into medicine, like in purses, counters and nightstands.

2. Consider products you might not think about as medicine. Most parents store medicine up and away - or at least the products they consider to be medicine. You may not think about products such as diaper rash remedies, vitamins or eye drops as medicine, but they actually are and need to be stored safely.

3. Use the dosing device that comes with the medicine. Proper dosing is important. Kitchen spoons aren't all the same, and a teaspoon or tablespoon used for cooking won't measure the same amount as the dosing device.

4. Parents of young children should write clear instructions for caregivers about your child's medicine. When other caregivers are giving your child medicine, write clear instructions about what medicine to give, when to give it and how much to give.

5. Check in with your teens, and talk about medicine they are taking regularly. Even teens who need to take medicine daily may make errors in dose or dosing frequency, so it is important to communicate with them

regularly about taking medicine responsibly.

6. Teach your child how to read the over-the-counter drug facts or prescription labels and the importance of following the directions. Be sure your teen knows that taking more than the recommended dose will not help them get relief any faster, and it could hurt them.

7. Communicate to teens the importance of only taking medicine that is meant for them. Taking medicine that belongs to someone else or misusing medicines (even over-the-counter medicine) can cause harm.

8. Save the toll-free Poison Help line number on your phone: (800) 222-1222. You can also put the number on your refrigerator or another place in your home where babysitters and caregivers can see it. And remember, the Poison Help line is not just for emergencies, you can call with questions about how to take or give medicine, concerns about plants, chemicals, carbon monoxide, bites, stings and more.

For more medicine safety tips, visit SafeKids.org.

Editor's Note: This information was printed with permission from Safe Kids Worldwide. More information and safety tips are available on their website at www.safekids.org.

continued from page 8

Franklin seeks Superintendent of Education

Board Certified Teachers than any other district, so there is no reason for test scores to decline. A new type of leadership is needed. My plan is to:

1. Stop nepotism,
2. Strengthen the school curricula, especially reading, writing and math,
3. Improve the quality of instruction,
4. Set up good lines of communication with the Board and parents,
5. Lower dropout rates and raise test scores, and

6. Closely examine the financial condition of the system and establish proper controls. This would require an audit and close examination of the budget.

These efforts will set the stage for moving Rankin County Schools forward. I look forward to serving you and the children of Rankin County.

For more information, go to <https://www.facebook.com/bobbyfranklin2015> or bobbyfranklin2015.com.



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Burnham retires after 59 years

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

On May 28, longtime owner of Burnham's Barbershop, Lennis Burnham, is closing the doors at the age of 82 - after 59 years.

Burnham took over the barbershop approximately 23 years after Marion Holmes retired, but he has worked at the barbershop since 1956.

"I want to thank my customers. I have some of the best customers," said Burnham.

The barbershop has been a landmark in Pelahatchie for many years. For some, getting your hair cut at the barbershop was a right of passage. For



Lennis Burnham at Burnham's Barbershop
(Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

others, being there meant a chance to help solve the world's problems. For all of Burnham's customers that are sure to reminisce of their time spent at the barbershop, don't forget to get your piece of bubble gum on the way out.

Measells retires from Pelahatchie Medical

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

After almost 13 years as a receptionist at Pelahatchie Family Medical Clinic, Florence Measells is retiring and hoping to spend her time getting reacquainted with family and friends.

"I plan on gardening, traveling and taking care of grand kids. I also plan to visit folks I haven't seen in a while," said Measells.

On May 28, Measells Pelahatchie Family Medical Clinic family held a retirement party for Measells at the clinic.

Pelahatchie Family Medical Clinic wrote on their Facebook page, "Thanks



Florence Measells poses for one of many photos taken during her retirement reception.
(Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

to everyone that came and celebrated Florence's retirement today. She will always be a part of our family!"

Mercier retires as music teacher and choral director from Pelahatchie Schools

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

On May 26, at the Pelahatchie Town Center, Vicki Mercier said "goodbye" to faculty and staff at Pelahatchie Schools while trying to make it through the reception without tears.

Mercier taught music and choral music to kindergarten through 12th grade for 16 years - which is more than half of her teaching career.

"Pelahatchie people have my heart. I will miss them so much, but hope to visit often," said Mercier.

Mercier plans to travel and to relax,

knowing that she now has the freedom to do so. She also hopes to see all of her children and grandchildren, even the ones who live in Florida and Hawaii. "It has been hard to see them much, but hopefully that will change."

"Being able to decide on the spur of the moment to attend a show or a concert, go to a sports event, or pack up and go to our cabin sounds heavenly to us," said Mercier. "I will take some piano students when school begins again."

So, it's not a goodbye forever moment. It's a see you later moment.



Pictured (l to r) are: Robby Scucchi, director of musicals and longtime friend of Vicki Mercier; Tom Mercier, Vicki Mercier's husband; Vicki Mercier; and Jonathan Ebelhar, Vicki Mercier's son. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)



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Muscadine Health Fair combined fun with learning

By: Katie White

On May 30, the town of Pelahatchie partnered with the Mississippi State Department of Health's (MSDH) Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) team for the first ever Muscadine Health Fair.

The health fair combined learning about injury prevention with fun. MSDH provided a bike obstacle course, complete with road signs. They also gave away free bike helmets to children.

Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) provided the Seat Belt Convincer. The Seat Belt Con-

vincer is a mild impact simulator which proves just how important it is for everyone to wear a seatbelt - even at a low impact it is convincing.

Kim Kiddy gave her testimony about caring for her husband, Gary Kiddy. Gary was in an accident in which he suffered a severe concussion and brain damage. To help with his therapy, Gary wanted to paint. Although his memory has been put to the test and he has never painted artistically before, he paints vivid colorful paintings - most from memory.

The Muscadine Health Fair made injury prevention fun. It's safe to say the world may have gotten a little safer.



MSDH Div. of Injury and Violence used bicycles to teach traffic safety, and they gave away free helmets.



Gary Kiddy creates art as part of his therapy after an accident in which he suffered a severe concussion.



Brittany Rollings gives blood in the Mississippi Blood Services mobile blood bank.



United Health Care Community and Mississippi 4-H Youth Development demonstrate their stationary bike that blends smoothies when pedaled.



ATV Riders joined the health fair to promote the free ATV training course they offer.



Volunteer tries out the MDOT Seat Belt Convincer - a low impact seat belt crash simulator.



The Drummer Boys and many other talented artists entertain at the health fair. (Photos by Katie White)

Hinds CC's Gray inducted into MACJC Sports Hall of Fame

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

John R. Gray, a native of Pelahatchie and two-sport standout (baseball and basketball) at Hinds Junior College from 1956 to 1958, was inducted into the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC) Sports Hall of Fame at an induction ceremony recently held at the Clyde Muse Center in Pearl.

Gray was a two-year letterman in both sports at Hinds, becoming the second guard in Hinds basketball history to make the All-State team and had an amazing .650 batting average in baseball. For his achievements in two sports on the Raymond Campus, he was inducted into the school's Sports Hall of Fame in 2000.

After graduating from Hinds in 1958, Gray moved on to nearby Mississippi College, where he averaged 21.5 points per game for his career on the school's basketball team and was part of the Choctaws' record setting offense that averaged 114 points per game in his senior season. He was selected as an honorable mention All-American and ranked 14th in the country in scoring among small college players.

Gray, who received his bachelor's



John R. Gray (left) and Hinds President Dr. Clyde Muse (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

degree from MC in 1960, was later inducted into the school's Sports Hall of Fame in 1998.

After his time at Mississippi College, Gray moved into the world of high school athletics, where his first gig was at Okolona High School, coaching football and basketball alongside former Mississippi State University coach Bob Tyler.

He would then move on to Beau-

mont High School, where he coached baseball and basketball for three years, before moving to nearby Utica High School, where he was involved in coaching basketball, football and track and field.

In 1975, Gray moved to Brookhaven Academy, where for 25 years he served in a variety of roles, including headmaster, teacher and coach, including stints as the boys head basketball

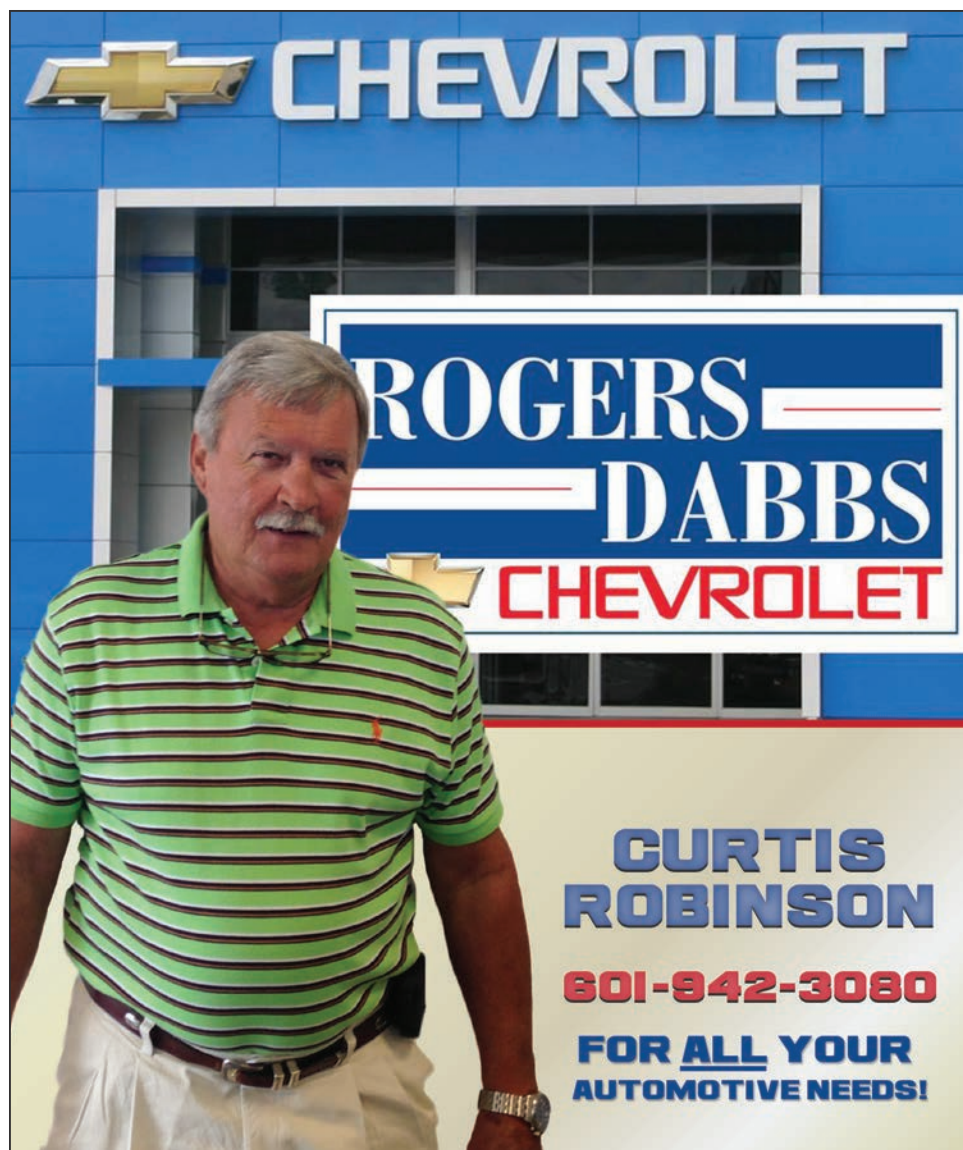
coach for six years and head football coach for four years. The gymnasium at BA is named "The John R. Gray Gymnasium" in his honor.

His 1981 boys' basketball team at BA captured the Mississippi Private School Association (MPSA) state tournament at East Rankin Academy in his hometown of Pelahatchie.

He also served as an administrator and basketball coach at Adams County Christian School in Natchez for six years, a basketball coach at Centreville Academy for two years and is currently employed as an assistant principal at Enterprise Attendance Center.

Gray, who was inducted into the Mississippi Association of Independent Schools (MAIS) Hall of Fame in 2002, is a deacon at First Baptist Church of Brookhaven and is a former member of the MPSA Athletic Committee and board of directors of the Brookhaven Chamber of Commerce.

He resides in Brookhaven with his wife, the former Alice Marie Allen of Mendenhall, who, like Gray, was a student at Hinds from 1956-1958, and was a member of the nationally renowned Hi-Stepper dance team. The couple has two sons, Ricky and Barry, who are both coaching basketball, and four grandchildren.



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Children to enjoy increased protection, accommodations in courtrooms

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Governor Phil Bryant recently signed a bill that allows children to receive special accommodations in court, while still protecting the rights of the accused. The accommodations in House Bill 959, which takes effect July 1, 2015, will help ease the stress for child victims and witnesses, making courtrooms across the state of Mississippi more child-friendly.

The Governor stated that children [in a courtroom] have often been through so much already and said this bill will help children during the stressful cross-examination by the defense.

The bill came to be after a District Attorney's Victim Advocate approached Karla Steckler Tye, Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi, and said something that really resonate with her. "[The advocate] said that this child was bullied his whole life by other kids; and then, in court, he was bullied throughout the trial by the failures of the court system," recalls Tye. "I couldn't get it out of my head."

As a result, Tye reached out to Senator Briggs Hopson and other state representatives for help with legislation she knew Mississippi children

needed and deserved. Legislators agreed. Votes were unanimous in both the Senate and House, with 100% voting in favor of HB 959 with no one absent.

"We have been concerned about children being intimidated with the process to start with, but also being intimidated by the attorneys as well as the parties that can sometimes treat them negatively," said Senator Hopson. "We have mechanisms in the bill that they can have a toy, a blanket, or whatever makes them feel comfortable. This will help them feel like they are in an area where they can offer true and accurate testimony without any intimidation."

Research has shown that the high level of stress and anxiety experienced by child witnesses can decrease children's ability and willingness to provide complete and accurate evidence. Small but significant changes in the courtroom will increase a child's comfort level and his ability to testify accurately and effectively, promoting justice in the courts, while preserving the integrity of the process.

One modification the legislation includes is the use of developmentally appropriate language. Research shows that children understand "promising to

tell the truth" better than "swearing to tell the truth."

HB 959 modifications and protection for children include:

- To relax the formalities of the proceedings
- To permit facility animals or comfort items
- To provide a child-friendly waiting area
- Use of closed circuit television
- Appoint a standby counsel in instances where the defendant is proceeding without counsel
- Protection of identifying information such as address, date of birth, copies of interviews, etc.
- Child's Guardian At Large or counsel will be given notice of any pre-trial discovery motions
- In proceedings where it is necessary, a videotaped deposition of the child should be granted.

Courtroom Accommodations for Children is one of the many ways Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi continue to fight for children since their incorporation in 2009.

"We are proud to be a part of continuing to expand these rights even fur-



Photo special to The Pelahatchie News

ther for the special needs of children," Tye stated after Gov. Bryant signed House Bill 959.

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, or is at risk of abuse or neglect, call the Mississippi Department of Human Services' hotline number at (800) 222-8000.



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Graves places 2nd in discus throw



On May 1, 2015, East Rankin Academy senior, Curtis Graves, won 2nd Place Silver Medalist at the 2015 Mississippi Association of Independent Schools (MAIS) Boys Discus Throw Class AAA. Graves also placed as a Silver Medalist in 2014. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)



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