

Learn how to avoid contractor scams

See page 10

Easter Egg Hunt at Muscadine Park

See page 14



**March
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Pelahatchie News
P.O. Box 771
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RCSD students to receive laptops beginning this fall

By: Katie White

Beginning in the fall of 2015, Rankin County School District (RCSD) will follow through with their plan to make sure each student, grades seventh through twelfth, will receive a laptop for educational development.

The planning of providing laptops for students has been ongoing for years through the RCSD technology department, curriculum department, the RCSD board and Dr. Lynn Weathersby, RCSD Superintendent. Their collaborative vision was to evaluate the infrastructure first, and then evaluate if the district had the money for wireless technology in all the RCSD schools.

Since providing laptops for students is not a new concept, RCSD has learned from what other districts are doing when they implemented the same program - a 1:1 initiative.

The 1:1 initiative, states that RCSD

students will receive a laptop at a rate of two grades per year through 2019. However, the 1:1 initiative is not only about the laptop itself, but rather about "new ways of teaching and learning," said Richard Morrison, Assistant Superintendent. "Today's students expect learning to be relevant - be real world, and in order to do that I think we have to look at how we teach and how we can impact their instruction to where it is something that prepares them for the 21st Century. We know that as they graduate and as they go to their career or to college, that we live in a very technology rich society. It's important for us to prepare students for the workplace that they go into, which is going to be full of technology in most instances."

When all students have the same technology in hand, then all students have an equal opportunity in education. The laptops will enhance collaboration, digital downloads direct from

the teacher to the students and ultimately result in a better prepared student upon graduating from a Rankin County school.

The school board approved a millage tax increase to fund the purchase of the laptops over the next three years for approximately 9,000 students (3,000 laptops per year). Teachers at RCSD will also receive 1,500 "refresh" computers. A millage tax can be utilized by school boards to calculate local school taxes to be collected, based on the total property value within a school district's boundaries. One mil tax in Rankin County is worth \$1.2 million. RCSD will spend approximately \$1.9 million the first year, \$2.3 million the second year and \$2.9 million the third year. The total net cost after the three-year period is approximately \$9.8 million.

"We actually have the lowest millage rate in the Metro area, by far. Even after doing this, we will still have the



Photo special to The Pelahatchie News

lowest millage rate of the surrounding school districts," said Morrison.

Students will be allowed to take the computers home with them, so there is a possibility of damage or theft. Morrison said, "We have to have a good plan for replacement, and that's going to be part of what we will roll out as far as our one-on-one plan for the district." Morrison went on to say, "We've visited other schools districts that are using this, and it's amazing how well they are taking care of their computer. They really take ownership of it, and it's important to them. It makes learning more meaningful."

Chiefs and Lady Chiefs basketball teams headed to the Big House

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

It has always been said that 'one is the lonliest number.' The Pelahatchie Chiefs will not be lonely this year because both the High School Girls and Boys basketball teams punched their ticket to the big house with wins in the second round of the 2015 MHSAA Basketball Championships on Saturday, Feb. 28.

The girls team won their District Tournament by defeating St. Aloysius 57-41 in the Semi Finals on Feb. 19, and then defeating Bogue Chitto 46-34 in the Finals on Feb. 20.

The Lady Chiefs' success continued as they defeated Durant 51-29 in the first round of the MHSAA Girls Basketball Championships on Feb. 26. The next day, the Lady Chiefs defeated Salem 66-33 to earn a spot in the Quarter Finals.

The Chiefs took a similar path to that of the girls team by winning their District Tournament. They defeated

Bogue Chitto 55-38 in the Semi Finals on Feb. 19, and then defeated Natchez Cathedral 71-64 in the Finals on Feb. 20.

The boys' team continued their winning streak as they defeated Sebastopol 87-64 in the first round of the MHSAA Boys Basketball Championships on Feb. 26. The next day, the boys team defeated East Oktibbeha 63-61 to earn their spot in the Quarter Finals.

The Lady Chiefs enter the Quarter Finals of the MHSAA Girls Basketball Championships and will play at the Mississippi Coliseum on March 4, at 4 p.m.

The Chiefs enter the Quarter Finals of the MHSAA Boys Basketball Championships and will play at Jackson State University on March 4, at 10:30 a.m.

For the girls' team, this will be their first trip back to Jackson since 1969. The last trip to Jackson for the boys' team was in 1983.



Lady Chiefs celebrating their victory over Bogue Chitto. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)



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Legislative updates: deadlines to consider



By: Tom Miles, State Representative, House District #75

We are now over halfway through the legislative session, and we are working toward deadlines to consider and dispose of measures sent to us by the Senate.

A number of bills I sponsored were approved by my House colleagues and have been sent to the Senate for action.

Among them is House Bill 507, "Noah's Law," which prohibits the sale of caffeine pills to minors. In a similar action, I co-sponsored House Bill 1108, which prohibits the sale of powdered alcohol and powdered alcohol products in stores throughout Mississippi. I agree with our Attorney General, who has called for convenience stores affiliated with major oil companies to cease selling synthetic drugs. These types of over-the-counter products that we see in many retail establishments are problematic because they are not regulated. In the case of "Noah's Law," the measure was introduced because of the death of a rising high school senior, Noah Smith, who

had ingested only two caffeine pills when he died.

The safety of our citizens should be more important than making a profit off of questionable products.

Our veterans are in the forefront of much of the discussion at the Capitol. One thing we have all been shocked to learn is that those who have sacrificed so much for our freedoms are now having a hard time finding employment when they come home. I co-sponsored House Bill 33 to provide a tax incentive to employers who hire honorably discharged veterans. This tax credit can be received for up to five years. I also co-sponsored House Bill 1224, which clarifies how the disabled veterans exemption for gun permit fees is determined.

House Bill 17 is the measure that may finally provide the increase in death benefits to families of coroners and emergency medical responders who are killed in the line of duty. This is an effort that has taken a couple of sessions to get to the forefront of the action, and I am very proud to have helped move it along as a co-sponsor.

The House voted to approve House Bill 220, which provides an income tax credit of up to \$1,500 to reimburse

the expense of installing a storm shelter or a safe room in a person's primary residence. There is simply no escaping the fact that we live in an area that has more tornadoes than most other states in the country. I'm happy the House approved this idea to encourage people to keep themselves and their families safe.

I supported House Bill 38, which authorizes the issuance of bonds so that our small municipalities and counties can apply for grants from the Mississippi Development Authority for up to \$250,000. Cities and towns of less than 10,000 population and counties with fewer than 30,000 residents will be eligible for this opportunity. The total amount of bonds to be issued under this measure is \$5,000,000. These grant opportunities apply to nearly every municipality in District 75.

Similarly, my colleagues and I voted to overwhelmingly approve House Bill 1618, the Main Street Investment Act, which provides loans through the MDA for cities and towns who want to revitalize their downtown areas. Many of our rural cities would like the opportunity to restore their business centers to attract more retail, cultural and restaurant establishments. This idea

was unanimously approved during the past session, but the bill died in a Senate Committee. We are hopeful the measure will make it into law this year.

Our community libraries are so important for our citizens. Many times, libraries are the only source of access to the Internet for many in our rural areas. I was proud to support House Bill 1538, which provides the Mississippi Library Commission with an additional \$1.3 million to go toward improving fiber optics and technology. In this day and time, everyone should be able to go on-line if they need to.

It was my honor to address the graduating class at the Mississippi Fire Academy on February 19. These individuals are training to serve their communities in a most dangerous and selfless way. I am so proud of these new firemen and women and thankful that there are citizens out there who are willing to help protect us all.

I was very proud to host Mississippi's Miss Junior High, Bethani Grace Alman, when she came to the Capitol to help inform the members about House Bill 633, which I sponsored. Although this measure did not pass, by bringing forth the idea that high

Continued from page 3



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Health Mart Healthy Living Tour conducts health screenings at Rhodes and Robby



The Health Mart Healthy Living Tour recently paid a visit to Rhodes and Robby Drugs in Pelahatchie on Feb. 9, 2015. Approximately 30 people showed up for the complimentary health screenings that were offered to community members. The Health Mart Healthy Living Tour is on the road to celebrate and recognize community pharmacists, such as Rhodes and Robby, for the important role they play as trusted healthcare providers in their communities - helping to educate and counsel on a variety of conditions that can be better managed with the help of a pharmacist. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

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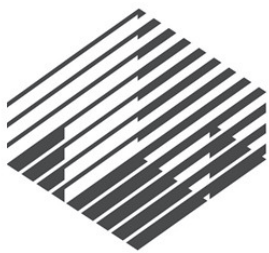
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Pelahatchie seeks public input

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

The Town of Pelahatchie is working with the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District (CMPDD) on an update of the town’s Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

In order to assist CMPDD planners and town leaders in developing this plan, citizens are asked to complete a brief on-line survey. The survey can be found at www.pelahatchie.org. Citizens’ input and comments will be a valuable part of this process.

continued from page 2

Legislative updates: deadlines to consider

school students should be required to complete 25 hours of community service in order to graduate, we are hopeful it will make it to the House floor next year. Bethani Grace brought this idea to me as part of her platform. It’s not often that one sees a 13 year-old working to make such a difference in the greater community. I’m sure her family and friends in Pelahatchie are as proud of her as I am.

Please continue to keep us in your

prayers as we work through the final weeks of the session. There are many important issues before us, and our desire is to do what’s best for our fellow Mississippians.
I’ll be sending more updates to keep you informed as the session continues, and as always, welcome your input. Please feel free to contact me at tmiles@house.ms.gov, call me at (601) 469-7886, via Facebook at www.facebook.com/reptommmiles.

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- 8:30 - Contemporary Worship Service
- 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

- 6:00 Family Dinner
- 7:00 - Children’s Mission Activities • Student Worship
- Ladies Bible Study • Couples Support Group
- Prayer Meeting and Bible Study

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Pelahatchie
Attendance Center
Sports Calendar

www.rcsd.ms/Page/26571

High School and Junior High Baseball 2015

March 16	Sebastopol	JH	Home	6:00 7:30
March 23	Sebastopol	JH	Away	6:00 7:30
March 31	Ethel	JH	Home	4:00
April 2	Ethel	JH	Away	4:00

March 3	Newton	HS	Away	4:00 6:00
March 7	Puckett	HS	Home	11:00 1:00
March 9	Rush Tourn.	HS	TBA	TBA
March 17	Pisgah	HS	Home	5:00 7:00
March 20	Sebastopol	HS	Away	5:00 7:00
March 21	Mclaurin	HS	Away	5:00 7:00
March 24	Natchez Cathedral	HS	Away	5:00 7:00
March 27	Natchez Cathedral	HS	Home	11:00 1:00
March 28	Newton	HS	Home	11:00 1:00
March 31	Ethel	HS	Home	5:00 7:00
April 2	Ethel	HS	Away	5:00 7:00
April 7	St. Aloysius	HS	Away	5:00 7:00

Lady Chiefs Fast Pitch Softball 2015

March 3	Baysprings	HS	Away	5:00 6:30
March 5	Pisgah	HS	Home	6:00 4:30
March 17	Pisgah	HS	Away	6:30 5:00
March 21	Mendenhall	HS	Away	10:00 11:35
March 26	Sebastopol	HS	Away	5:00 6:00
March 30	Pearl	HS	Away	5:00 6:30
March 31	Mize	HS	Away	5:00 6:15
April 7	Sebastopol	HS	Home	6:00 4:30

*District Games in bold
*All game times and dates are subject to change



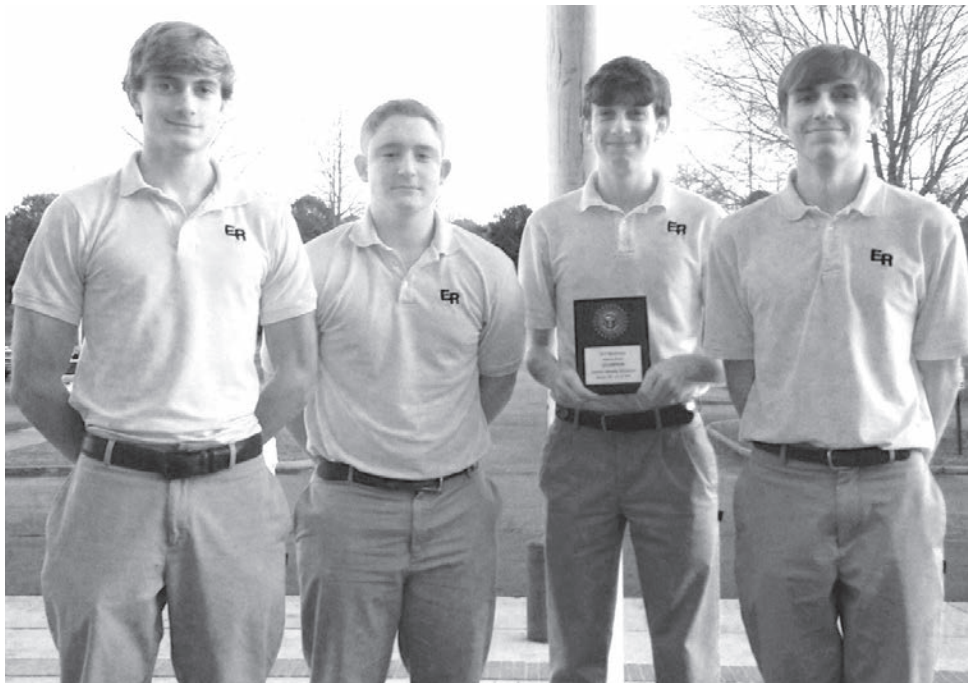
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Junior varsity history students win history bowl championship



East Rankin Academy Junior Varsity Champions, pictured (l to r) are, Reid Wuestefeld, Cade Thornton, Brandon Evans and Ward Winstead. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

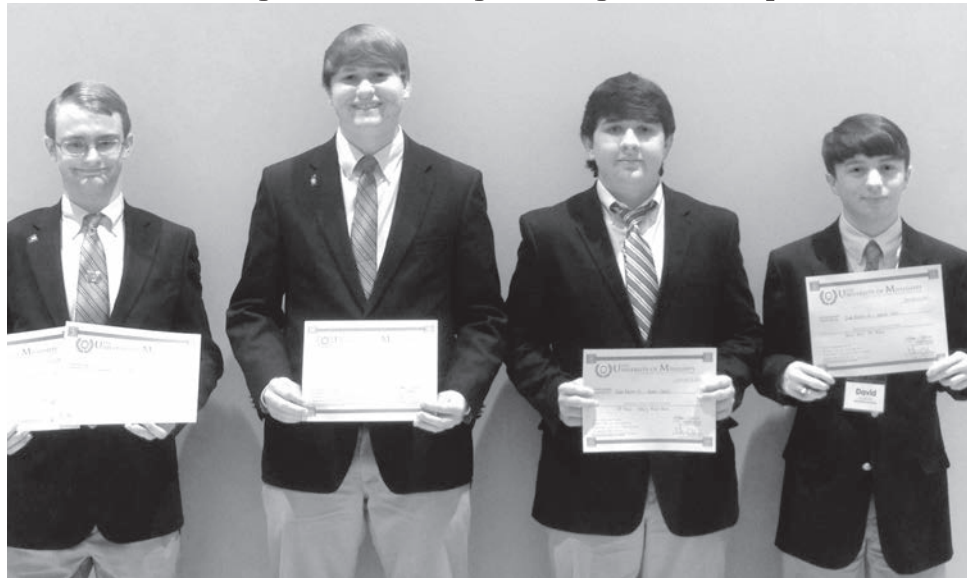
Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

On Jan. 24, the East Rankin Academy Junior Varsity History Bowl Team successfully competed in the Mississippi Regional History Bowl at Mad-

ison Central and was declared Junior Varsity Champion.

Their success at this tournament qualifies the team to compete in April 2015 at the Junior Varsity National History Bowl in Washington, D.C.

Varsity history students win big at University History Day competition



East Rankin Academy High School Quiz Bowl Team A, pictured (above) (l to r) are, Chance Gaddis, Jimmie Webb, Austin Davis and David Herz; East Rankin Academy high school Quiz Bowl Team C, pictured (below) (l to r) are, Jared Vardaman, Cade Thornton, Reid Wuestefeld, Brandon Evans and Ward Winstead. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

On Jan. 31, East Rankin Academy's varsity history student teams competed during the History Day Competitions at the University of Miss. in Oxford. The 2015 History Day theme was "World War I and Its Legacies."

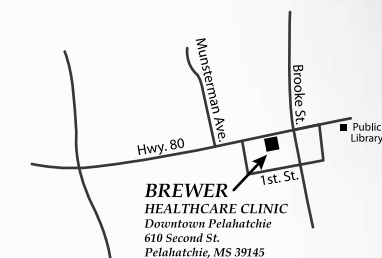
History Day consists of a history exam and multiple competitions, all revolving around a central theme. The competitions offered include: Brain Bowl, Multimedia Projects, Display/Poster and a Research Paper.

East Rankin Academy had two teams that who placed - Team A and Team C.

Team A won First Place in the History Bowl. Team A included: Austin Davis, Chance Gaddis, David Herz and Jimmie Webb. Gaddis of Team A, finished in second place overall on the History Day examination.

Team C won Third Place in the History Bowl. Team C included: Brandon Evans, Cade Thornton, Jared Vardaman, Ward Winstead and Reid Wuestefeld.

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Jolley signs letter of intent with Southwest



Pictured (l to r) front row: Jimmy Thrash, Grandfather; John Elliot Jolley, Senior and Offensive Guard #56 at ERA; and Helen Thrash, Grandmother; back row: Matt Butts, ERA Head Coach; Chandy Lee, Aunt; and Don Davis, ERA Athletic Director. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

On Feb. 17, John Elliot Jolley, a Senior at East Rankin Academy (ERA), signed a letter of intent to play football with Southwest Mississippi Community College.

Jolley is the grandson of Jimmy and Helen Thrash. Helen Thrash had the following to say about John's experience at ERA, "He has been very blessed to have the opportunity that he's had at East Rankin and the help that he's had with coaches and friends

and such, that he's been able to accomplish what he's accomplished."

Speaking about playing football with ERA, Jolley said, "In the eighth-grade it hit me that because everyone else was bigger than me, and because I really wasn't that good, that I needed to start working harder."

Working harder must have paid off. Jolley continued to play for ERA, and he was also selected for First Team All-Conference and the Mississippi Association of Independent Schools All-Star Team.

Candy's named Business of the Month



Candy's Florist and Gifts named Rankin County Chamber of Commerce Business of the Month for February 2015. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

First Annual arts and crafts at Shiloh

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

The first annual Shiloh Arts and Crafts Show is scheduled for Saturday, April 11, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. The event will take place on the campground at Shiloh United Methodist Church.

A variety of handmade arts and crafts will be offered by a group of select Mississippi vendors. Gospel music, craft demonstrations, and chil-

dren's activities are planned for the day.

A silent auction will be held featuring items from each of the vendors. Proceeds from the auction will benefit Operation Christmas Child.

The event is free to the public. Music, craft demonstrations and food will be available while browsing for arts and crafts.

For additional information, contact Skip Lathem at (601) 213.7528.



East Rankin Academy
Sports Calendar
www.eastrankinacademy.org

High School & Junior Baseball 2015

March 16	Presbyterian Christian	JH	Home	5:00 p.m.
March 20	Parklane	JH	Away	5:00 p.m.
March 23	Madison-Ridgeland	JH	Away	5:00 p.m.
March 27	Jackson Prep	JH	Home	5:00 p.m.
March 30	Jackson Academy	JH	Away	5:00 p.m.
April 6	Presbyterian Christian	JH	Away	5:00 p.m.

March 5	Leake	V B	Away	5:00 7:00
March 17	*Jackson Prep	B V	Away	5:00 7:00
March 19	*Jackson Prep	V	Home	5:00
March 24	*Lamar	B V	Home	5:00 7:00
March 26	*Lamar	V	Away	5:00
March 31	*Copiah	B V	Home	5:00 7:00
April 2	*Copiah	V	Away	5:00
April 7	*Columbia	B	Home	7:00

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Gibney signs letter of intent to ECCC



Tommy Gibney signs full scholarship to ECCC. Pictured (l to r) front row: Greg Gibney, father; Tommy Gibney; and Tina Gibney, mother; back row: Bill Ward, Head Football Coach and Athletic Director. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

By: Katie White

On Feb. 4, Tommy Gibney signed a letter of intent to manage the football team at East Mississippi Community College (ECCC), beginning in the Fall of 2015.

Tommy Gibney is the son of Greg and Tina Gibney, and they were present for the official signing at Pelahatchie Attendance Center. Coach Bill Ward, Head Football Coach and Athletic Director, was also present for the

signing.

Gibney has been managing the Pelahatchie football teams since the eighth grade. In the fall of 2014, he was selected as a manager for the Bernard Blackwell High School All-Star game in Gulfport.

"The coaches at Pelahatchie have always told us what a great job he has done, but we never imagined when he started that it could turn into a paid college scholarship," said Tina Gibney.

Miss Hinds Community College 2015



Maggie Shoultz crowned Miss Hinds Community College 2015. (Photo by Tammi Bowles)

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Maggie Shoultz, 19, of Pelahatchie was named Miss Hinds Community College 2015 in the annual pageant on Jan. 22.

As Miss Hinds Community College, Shoultz will participate this summer in the Miss Mississippi pageant.

Shoultz is a Raymond Campus freshman majoring in court reporting and music. She attended East Rankin Academy, where she was a varsity soccer player, high school beauty pageant winner and manager of the basketball team. Her talent was a vocal – pop performance, and her platform is "adoption is an option."

Pelahatchie Attendance Center students receive scholarships to Mississippi College



For the fall 2015 semester, these Pelahatchie High School seniors received scholarships to Mississippi College. Pictured (l to r) front row: August Hall and Samantha Townsend; (l to r) back row: Dillian Lasser, Samantha Walker and Tristen Bass. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

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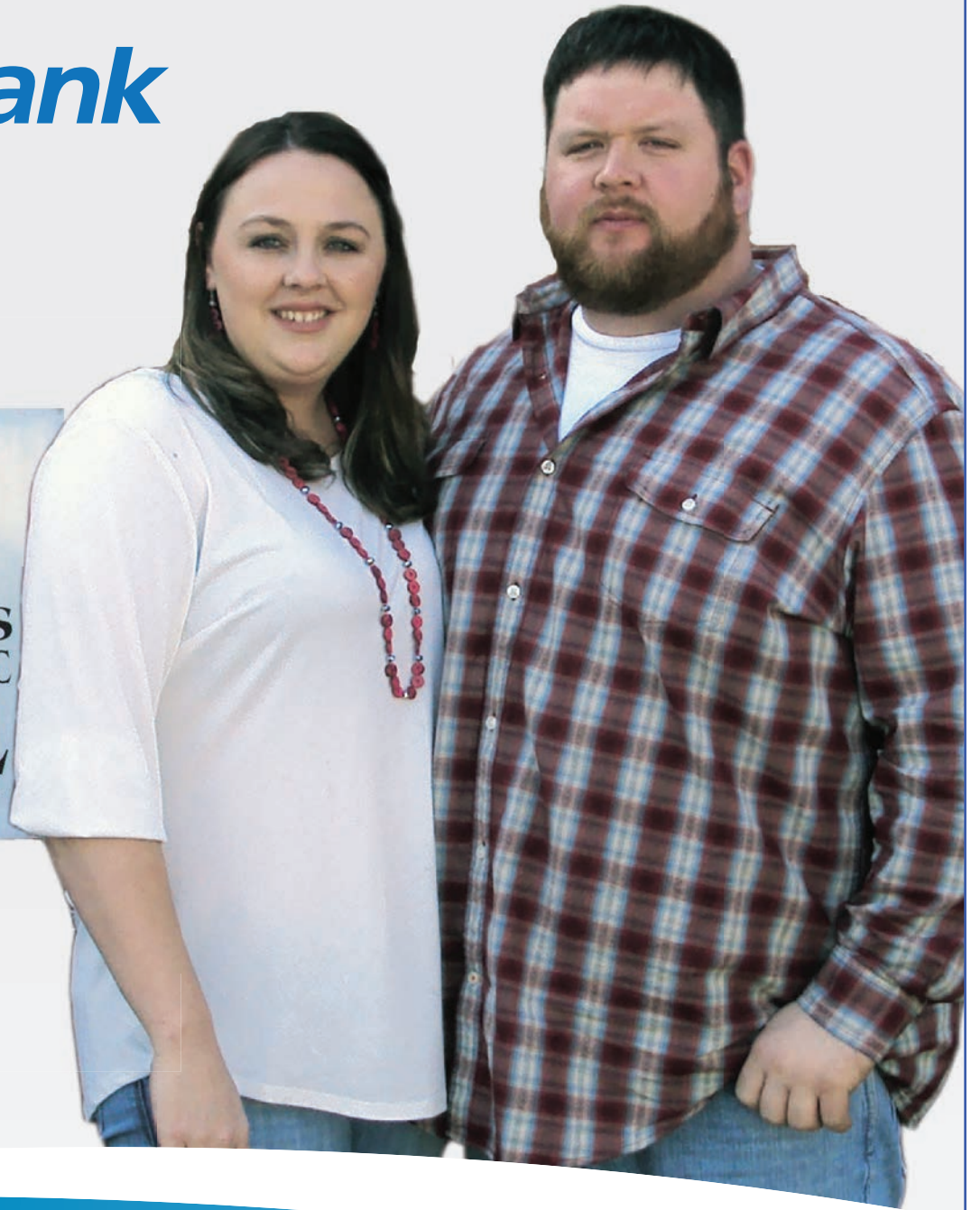
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Cox announces Representative candidacy



Photo special to The Pelahatchie News

By: Vance Cox

It gives me great honor to announce that I, Vance Cox, have qualified as a Republican candidate for the District 75 House of Representative race. A lifelong resident of Forest, Mississippi, I am a proud owner of Cox Chevron, a family-owned convenience store serving Forest since 1963. I graduated from Forest High School in 1990 and went on to study at the University of Southern Mississippi. While at South-

ern Miss, I was an active member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. USM is also where I met my wife of 19 years, Amanda Agerton Cox. Amanda is employed with Medicomp and has been a practicing physical therapist for 17 years. We have 2 boys, Briggs 15, and Bonner, 13, who attend Forest Municipal School District. We are active members of St. Michael's Catholic Church in Forest. For the past four years, I have been proud to serve as Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 63 and as the assistant cope and climbing director for the Andrew Jackson Council for 2 years. I am also a member of Forest Rotary Club and serve as volunteer assistant golf coach for Forest High School. In the past, I have served as President of the Forest Country Club, President of the FES PTO, board member for the Forest Area Chamber of Commerce, and was host of the Bearcat Gridiron Show for 8 years.

At this time, I am asking for your support so that I can bring a strong conservative voice to the House of Representatives, while representing the needs of Scott and Rankin counties. I feel that as a business leader, I greatly understand the need to promote legislation that helps bring better



Photo special to The Pelahatchie News

jobs and opportunities to District 75. I also feel our district needs a representative who can work well with the current Republican leadership in the Legislature and not just another career politician.

Finally, I am very passionate about the public school system. Having two children who attend FMSD, I truly understand the need for a strong and thriving public school. My wife and I have been active supporters of all local school activities and take pride in our family's support of Forest Municipal School District.

In the end, I am asking for your vote

and support so that Scott and Rankin counties can have a true voice in Jackson and not a career politician looking only to promote himself. Those who know me will be the first to say I have no desire to make a career in Jackson, however, at this time, our community is not being properly represented. As a resident of Scott County, I have to think of my children's future, and the current representation is not working. This is why, as an honest business man who wants to see his hometown and community thrive, I am seeking office for the 75th district. Thank you and God bless.

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Learn how to avoid contractor scams

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As part of severe weather preparedness week, a national nonprofit organization encourages Mississippi homeowners to think about home repair scams before severe weather hits. Tornadoes and hail storms can be dangerous and costly, and so can the large number of contractors who appear in storm damaged communities.

Billions of dollars are lost every year, and story after story is reported on how homeowners are scammed by con artists posing as legitimate home repair contractors. Senior citizens and stressed out disaster victims are often the easiest prey for a dishonest repairman.

The National Center for the Prevention of Home Improvement Fraud (NCPHIF), is a national nonprofit whose mission is to educate communities on how to protect themselves.

"It's so frustrating to get calls from homeowners who have been scammed," says home repair fraud prevention expert and NCPHIF Executive Director, Phae Moore. "It breaks my heart because by then, it's too late."

Moore is also the author of *Don't Even Think About Ripping Me Off!* a



NOAA Photo Library, NOAA Central Library; OAR/ERL/National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL)

book on how to find, hire, work with and pay contractors to avoid being scammed.

According to the latest reports from the Consumer Federation of America, home improvement/construction fraud is second in a list of top ten complaints the agency receives (misrepresentation in auto sales is CFA's top complaint). The Better Business Bureau reports inquiries regarding home contractors outnumber all other inquiries.

"It's always sad to see severe weather victims who have been paid for insured losses not receive the repairs they expected from a contractor they trusted," says State Farm spokes-

man Roszell Gadson.

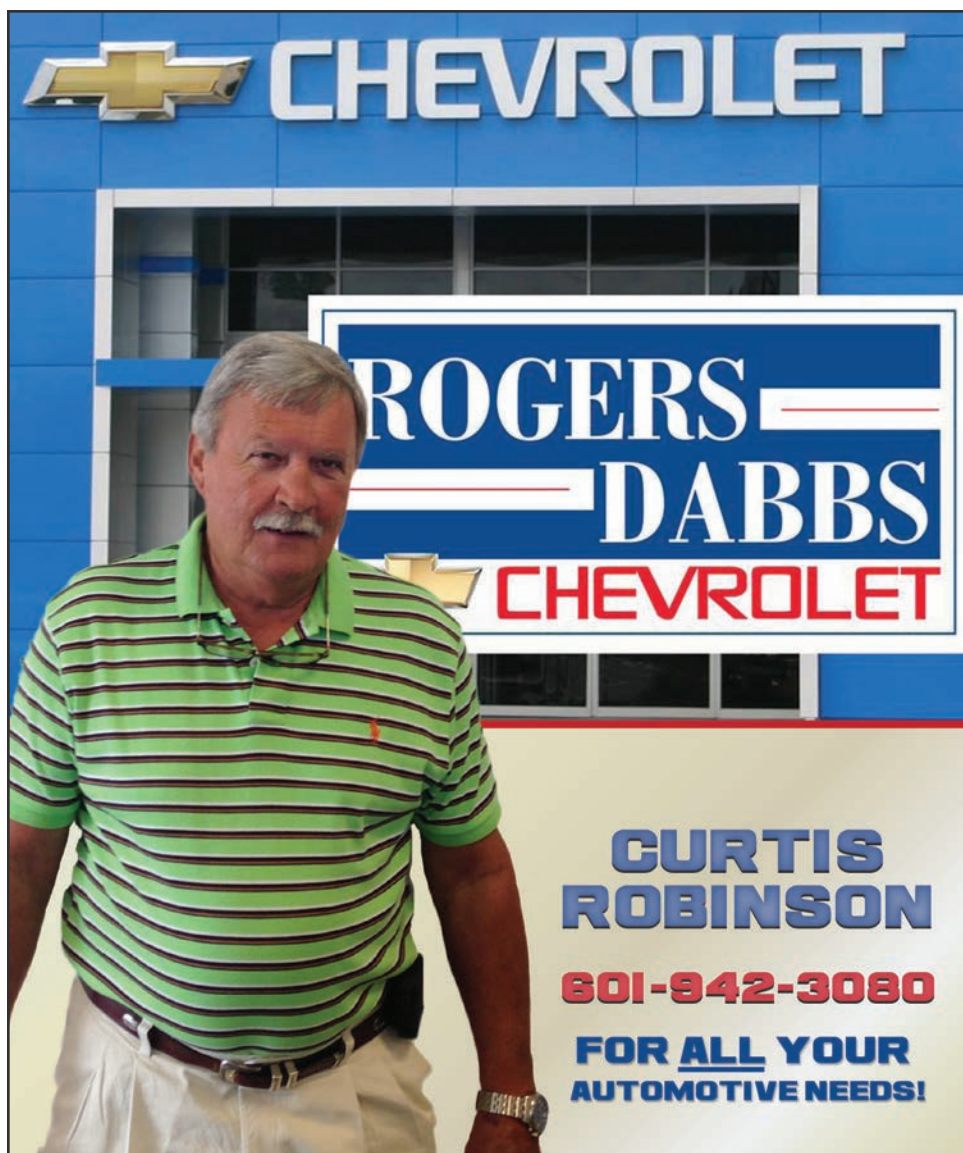
Do not use a contractor who:

1. Is going door to door or who is calling because they are "in the neighborhood." Selecting a contractor on the basis of them coming to your door or via phone call is always a questionable selection method.
2. Wants to "inspect" your property when you are not home. Take photos before, during and after an "inspection." Some contractors have been known to cause damage intentionally during an inspection.
3. Asks you to get any required

building permits. The party pulling a building permit is responsible, among other things, to assure code compliance.

4. Offers you a discount because they have "leftover materials." This may be a signal that another consumer paid for the materials and the contractor failed to leave the materials or give proper credit, or that the materials may be stolen.
5. Only accepts cash. If you do pay cash, be sure to get a clear written receipt.
6. Claims you will get a great rate because your project will be a "demonstration."
7. Offers exceptionally long guarantees or warranties.
8. Asks you to pay for the entire job up front.
9. Tries to scare you into repairs claiming they are urgent.
10. Asks you to "deed" or "transfer title" to your property or sign a promissory note secured by your home.

"The key to protecting yourself is to be proactive," says Moore. "Educate yourself before you hire anyone is the best advice I can give."



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Pastor's perspective: He is the Prince of Peace

By: Michael Simpson, Senior Pastor, Metro Baptist Church



Isaiah 9:6 KJV - For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

At a time when many people are relying on the government to come up with a plan to bail them out of poor management and bad decisions, the true believer is trusting in the reality that a child born two thousand years ago established a government that answers all of our troubling issues.

When we choose not to rely or trust in His abundant guidance and His commands, then we deny ourselves the blessings of prosperity and peace.

He bailed us out of the most deadly decision to go our own way. We chose to establish our own form of government and our own set of rules, but look where it gets us. We may limp out of this but ultimately fall right into another crisis. Simply because man shall continue trying to fix things on his own and within his own form of government, rather than rely on the Son of God and His teachings.

In this passage, I see four names of God that make up good leadership in government and all of them ascribed to the Christ child born to a virgin.

First, the Wonderful Counselor is significant in the fact that everyone needs a leader who is wise and can understand the most complex issue of life. We as believers, appreciate a leader who can pinpoint the real crux of the problem without bias or hypocrisy, but is just in his commands and his answers. He is wonderful to me because I can call and I never have to make an appointment or take second place to someone of status. He always offers counsel at any time. He is wonderful to me because I am not necessarily going to get what I think but rather what I need. Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor.

Second, He is the Mighty God. Ev-

ery successful government must have a powerful military strategy and force to instill fear in the enemies of this peculiar people which are called by His name. As the nation's military force weakens as every great nation has in all of history, let us trust in the one military force that shall never weaken; that of the Mighty God, Jesus.

Third, He is called the Everlasting Father. It is complicated to know God as Father when you have had an ungodly father, who discredited the true character of the Heavenly Father, but it isn't something you can't overcome. To have been raised by a father who cared what you turned out to become and who would bail you out of a self-inflicted problem in the early hours of the morning, and yet didn't accept the slightest excuse for ignorance. It is painful when that presence is no longer in your life. Thank God we have someone who shows this kind of care toward us and more. For Jesus is the Everlasting Father.

Then lastly, He is the Prince of Peace. If I had to give up everything and hold one thing at the end of my days, it would be to have the peace of God. You cannot appreciate that statement if you lack it or don't know the peace of God. Each president contin-

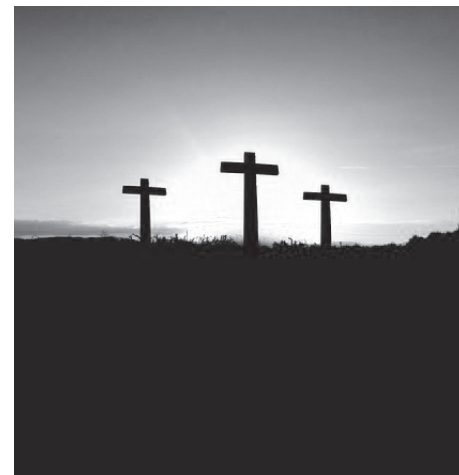


Photo special to The Pelahatchie News

ues to use the term, "world peace," and each has lacked the wisdom or fortitude to accomplish it. One will come to bring a world peace and will cajole the world for three and a half years, but his peace won't remain. Jesus brings peace that is eternal because He is the Prince of Peace. It is foolish to trust in any other government than that which was established in Jesus' day. One pastor said, "This is all we have," speaking of the current government. After that statement, my heart was grieved for him and the people who believed his words, because it isn't all you have if you have Jesus and He is in you.



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Pelahatchie Elementary establishes a Partnership Team project

By: Katie White

As part of a National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) Action Learning Project, Ben Barlow, Pelahatchie Elementary Principal, has made it his personal mission to encourage parents, teachers and the community to help Pelahatchie students by volunteering their time to improve academic achievement, attendance and relationships with students and families.

The project began by first calling on individuals to attend the first Partnership Team meeting on Jan. 6, 2015. During that first meeting, approximately 25 attendants examined present strengths, needed changes, expectations, sense of community and links to goals. After discussing these key topics, the next step was to help the Partnership Teams to establish goals and strategies for the 2015-2016 school year.

Barlow provided the teams with eight steps to achieve their team goals:

- Their vision of what this will look like at Pelahatchie Elementary
- The purpose of this project
- Attitudes or resistance they might encounter
- Resources needed to implement

the project

- How success will be measured
- Strategies planned in the project
- Action steps to achieve the project

Each participant was invited to join one of four groups to quickly identify an area to improve on as a short-term project which could potentially be launched immediately. Once short-term goals are met, then the focus can turn to long-term efforts. The following short-term projects were established as most important:

1. **Tell the Good News** - It is the vision of this team to focus on communication with families regarding good news and not only focusing on the bad. It is believed that if academic achievement is the goal, then it is vital to create an atmosphere where teachers and staff can build positive relationships with families.
2. **Miles of Smiles** - The vision of this team includes a friendlier school environment. When parents and students visit or attend the school, they will feel it is a place where they "belong." The team also envisions a school where families are active participants in the life of the school and that they feel

welcomed, valued and connected to each other, to staff and also to what students are learning in class. The goal of this team is increasing student achievement.

3. **Helping Parents** - The vision of this team is a school where families and school staff continuously collaborate and communicate to support students while both learning at home and at school, and they also have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively. The goal of this team is academic achievement.
4. **Recruiting and Training Volunteers** - It is the vision of this team to engage parents and community members to volunteer in helping teachers, administrators, students and perhaps even other parents. This team discussed several ideas, such as reading projects, lunch helpers, crafts and mentors. In order to best achieve their goal, it is the belief of this team that a survey of the faculty could better direct their efforts.

The partnership teams regrouped on Feb. 3 to further discuss their goals in carrying out their strategies for



Photo by Katie White

the next school year. One by one, the teams spoke to everyone about where they are in achieving their goals.

Barlow spoke passionately about community engagement saying, "If the community wasn't engaged, it was just a rather hollow process. It mattered less about what I wanted and more about me leading an effort to explore what the community needed to get engaged. There's a lot of research that shows that over time with community engagement - chipping away at that effort over time - can show gains in student achievement, and certainly the health of the school."

Barlow calls on the community, parents and teachers to get involved with the Partnership Teams as everyone works toward the goal of student and academic achievement.



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Student of the Month and Citizenship Awards



Pelahatchie Attendance Center recently recognized students and teachers with February awards. They included (l to r), front row: Students of the Month Blaine White, 9th; Makayla McClure, 8th; Kimberly Cochran, 7th; and Bianca McKinnis, 10th; and back row: Team Player of the Month Liz Renfrow, and Student of the Month Dachawn Kincaid, 11th. Not pictured are Student of the Month Austin Nelson, 12th; and Teacher of the Month Vicki Mercier. (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)



February Citizenship Award recipients at Pelahatchie Attendance Center included JaMarion Hardy (left); and John Jason Gill (right). (Photo special to The Pelahatchie News)

CCC holds resource fair



During the Community Resource Fair, Miss. Youth Hwy. Safety simulated drunk driving at the degree twice the legal limit of an adult with the use of specially made goggles. Tyler Howell, Pelahatchie High School Senior, took part in the simulation and had trouble walking in a straight line, as did others participating in the simulation. (Photo by Katie White)

By: Katie White

It won't be long until the class of 2015 will graduate and be on their way to college.

On Feb. 19, the Chieftain Community Club (CCC) held a free College and Community Resource Fair for parents and students. The resource fair was designed to strengthen and support families with students embarking on their college and professional futures.

Several vendors showed their support during the fair by having a repre-

sentative on hand: Center for Violence Prevention; Dream-Youth Highway Safety; Hinds Community College; Jackson State University; Kona Ice; Miss. Community Education Center; Miss. Tobacco Free; Miss. Volunteer Lawyers Project; and The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence.

"There are so many resources out there to strengthen and assist families," said Katrina Phillips, CCC President. "It also gives the parents and students a chance to talk to the different college recruiters and ask questions."



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Citizens of Rankin County receive free tree bundles



Pictured (l to r) are, Linda Pulley and Arthur Pulley of Pelahatchie (Photos special to The Pelahatchie News)

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

Every year, to commemorate Arbor Day, the Rankin County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) gives away trees to the citizens of Rankin County. This year, the event was held on Feb. 5 at the Miss. State Extension Service Building on Mar-

quette Rd. in Brandon.

The bundles contained a mixture of flowering and hardwood trees of Dogwood, Persimmon, Redbud, Water Oak, White Oak, Sawtooth Oak, Red Maple, and Loblolly Pines. The Rankin County SWCD thanks the citizens of Rankin County for coming out and supporting this annual event.

Easter egg hunt at Muscadine Park



Children hunting for Easter eggs in 2014. (Photo by Katie White)

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

On March 28, children eight years of age and younger are welcome to participate in the annual Easter Egg Hunt at Muscadine Park in Pelahatchie.

The festivities will commence at 10 a.m. Participants are encouraged to arrive about ten minutes early. The

hunt will begin on time, and it won't take long for the children to find all the eggs.

Parents are asked to provide an Easter basket for each child who will be participating. After the hunt, children can enjoy other fun activities and Easter refreshments.

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MSU to feature prestigious African American collection

Special to *The Pelahatchie News*

At places like Walt Disney World and the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, more than four million people have viewed The Kinsey Collection's artifacts, manuscripts, books and art documenting African American history.

Soon, the collection, comprising one of the largest private collections of African American pieces in the world, will make its first visit to the Magnolia State at Mississippi State University. Free, public viewings of The Kinsey Collection's "African American Treasures" will be open March 21-June 20 in the John Grisham Room at Mitchell Memorial Library.

Because the collection is private, not a permanent public display, viewing "African American Treasures" is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, according to organizers. They suggest residents, schools and media make plans to see the pieces during its short three-month visit.

Pieces in The Kinsey Collection, owned by Bernard and Shirley Kinsey of Los Angeles, celebrate African Americans' achievements and accomplishments throughout U.S. history, especially through their impacts on culture and art.

Highlights of the "African American Treasures" display coming to MSU include an early copy of the Emancipation Proclamation and a signed copy of Brown v. Board of Education. Also, rare works from early 19th century African American artists will be displayed.

"This is a fabulous exhibit that will be coming to Mitchell Memorial Library, and we're excited about all the great opportunities it offers in support of teaching and research," said MSU Libraries Dean Frances Coleman.

The Kinsey family, including son Khalil, will visit campus to celebrate the opening of The Kinsey Collection at MSU. Bernard Kinsey will speak at a 3 p.m. public presentation on March 22 to offer insights into the respective pieces on display at the university, as well as why he and his wife are so passionate about gathering items for the collection.

"What The Kinsey Collection does is put the 'African' in the story of American history," he said. "This is the story of a people who did so much with so little, and this collection begins to fill in the blanks, trying to give those people a voice, a personality and a name."

The collection is presented by the Bernard and Shirley Kinsey Foundation for Art and Education. The organization seeks to educate the public about African American history by highlighting African American accomplishments over time, closing societal and cultural gaps between African Americans and other populations, and eroding the stereotypes undercutting equality.

Bernard Kinsey, former vice president of Xerox Corp., and Shirley, former teacher, began the collection in the mid-1980s when Khalil brought home a third-grade homework assignment to research his family history.

When the family couldn't trace their family roots past their grandparents, the Kinseys began acquiring art and manuscript pieces to fill the gaps, not only in their own family history, but in African American culture as a whole. Their efforts have resulted in a collection spanning more than 400 years of African American culture.

Shirley said she never wanted the collection to focus on the struggles of African Americans; instead, The Kinsey Collection focuses on their achievements and accomplishments. For the Kinseys, the key to a unified and equal future begins with recognizing the successes of the past.

"Speaking from personal experience, I can say that this collection has a transformative effect. The information

contained in it challenges, inspires and gives broader context to our rich and complex history," Khalil said.

Representatives of Visit Mississippi, a statewide tourism organization assisting in bringing The Kinsey Collection to MSU, agreed that visitors of all ages and races should visit MSU to see The Kinsey Collection.

"The cultural assets that our colleges and universities in Mississippi can offer visitors is unparalleled. We are pleased to partner with Mississippi State University in bringing this impressive collection of African American treasures to our state," said Malcolm White, Visit Mississippi director.

The exhibit is made possible by MSU Libraries, African American Studies at MSU and grants from Visit Mississippi, Starkville Visitors & Convention Council and the Mississippi Humanities Council, through support from the Mississippi Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities or the Mississippi Humanities Council.

To schedule group tours or view exhibit hours for "African American Treasures" from The Kinsey Collection at MSU, visit library.msstate.edu/Kinsey.



"The Cultivators," oil on canvas by Samuel L. Dunson Jr. (2000). (Image special to The Pelahatchie News)



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