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P.O. Box 771
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Special to Pelahatchie News

With the qualifying deadline for municipal election candidates passed, the 2017 Town of Pelahatchie election season has begun in earnest. As all candidates are running independent, citizens will vote in the general election scheduled for June 6.

Three mayoral candidates have qualified in a bid to succeed Mayor Knox Ross, who is leaving the Mayor's office after sixteen years in that position. Alderwoman Megan Hall, Educator Shannon Boyce, and Businesswoman Ryshonda Beechem.

Three vying for mayor's post, seven qualified for aldermen's races

Three aldermen are running unopposed, Michael Adams in Ward One, Frank Boyd in Ward Two, and Margie Warren in Ward Three. Ward Four has two candidates who want to replace Megan Hall, Chris Courtney and James Harrell.

Alderman-At-Large Jerry Norwood is not seeking reelection, and has two candidates running for his position. Patsy Jo Watson and Eddie Jones have qualified for the June election.



Special to Pelahatchie News
Educator Shannon Boyce



Special to Pelahatchie News
Businesswoman Ryshonda Beechem



Special to Pelahatchie News
Alderwoman Megan Hall

Constance Sherrod named PHS' Teacher of the Year

By Susie A. Wolfe

This is Constance Sherrod's first year at Pelahatchie High School (PHS), but it is her seventh-year teaching. The Bruce, Mississippi, native and Brandon resident spent the last three years at Brandon teaching self-contained Special Education.

This year, she is teaching job skills math, career prep, and compensatory reading and writing classes. She started her teaching career in Durant, Mississippi, teaching physical education, but her "heart grew to work with students with disabilities."

A graduate of Mississippi University for Women, Sherrod has a B.S. in Health and Kinesiology and an M.Ed. in Differentiated Instruction.

She likes working in a small community, since that is her background. She said she missed a small environment where she could truly make a difference.

Sherrod is also working on her National Boards, and she plans to become board certified by 2018. Towards that



Photo by Pelahatchie News

end, she is involved in the World Class Teacher Program at Jackson State University, where she works with other teachers from around the state on various Saturdays each month.

"I'm grateful for every individual who sowed into my life, poured into me, encouraged and inspired me to dig deeper," said Sherrod. "I am a better Constance because God blessed me to cross paths with some great teachers along this journey. My desire is to have the same kind of influence on the lives on individuals who cross my path."

Renee' Buynar is PES' Teacher of the Year

By Susie A. Wolfe

Fifth grade math and science teacher Renee' Buynar is Pelahatchie Elementary's (PES) Teacher of the Year. A 15-year teaching veteran, Buynar, who has a degree in Business Administration from Belhaven University, served as operations manager at J.C. Bradford prior to becoming a teacher at Pelahatchie.

In addition to ensuring that all students are learning at their full potential, Buynar has been the Spelling Bee coordinator for the past nine years, and has coordinated the PES Science Fair with another science teacher.

She took the winners to the state fair at Jackson State where they placed three out of four years.

"I love the kids and the relationships we build," said Buynar. "I have watched kids that I've taught grow up. Some are in college, and some have families. It's not only about grades. It's about who they grow up to be."

"I have never been happier," she



Photo by Pelahatchie News

said. "It is not like work. It's a joy. I'm not a missionary, but this is my mission. I strive to use effective teaching methods while focusing on the individual needs of each student."

Originally from South Jackson, Buynar moved to Pelahatchie and loves the smalltown life. Her parents, Will and Frances Reynolds, also live in town. Her son, Jay, lives in Houston, Texas, and is also a teacher.

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Linda Brewer, RN, CFNP, CGNP

Chief's Comments: Be Observant



*By Guest Columnist
Chief Kevin Poole,
Pelahatchie Police
Dept.*

The Pelahatchie Police captured the perpetrator who tried to break in Rhodes and Robby Drug Store on March 15 by being observant. An employee noticed something which the video confirmed, and the police were able to apprehend the suspect within seven hours.

Please let the police know if you notice anything unusual going on. That's what we are here for. If you are uncomfortable going in a building alone or suspect unusual behavior, please let us know. Even to the point of taking photos of tags from out of the area. Being observant is the first step in stopping criminal or unlawful behavior.

Now that spring is here, people will be outside working in the yard, so please watch for kids on bicy-

cles or people close to the street.

We have a new court clerk in the Police Department. Kirschen Craft was promoted from dispatcher to her new position as court clerk. Her background includes being a paramedic at AMR, Pafford and the Vicksburg Fire Department. She is at the station Monday thru Friday, which gives us extra coverage in case of emergency.

Her energy has greatly modified and enhanced the atmosphere in our office.

Kirschen is also working on the old fines and warrants at the PPD, so if you have something to settle, let her know. We've already had one person with a 7-year-old case pending to pay a fine.



Pelahatchie Police Department's new court clerk, Kirschen Craft

Special to Pelahatchie News



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Clay Mansell

Publisher
claymansell@pelahatchienews.com

Susie A. Wolfe

Managing Editor
(601) 566-1932 x2
news@pelahatchienews.com

Katie White

Graphic Designer
(601) 566-1932 x5
designer@pelahatchienews.com

Staff Writer

Stephanie Goss

For submission information, email
news@pelahatchienews.com.

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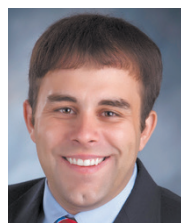
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Legislative Updates: Negotiations underway to determine final budget



By Tom Miles, State Representative, House District #75

We are now in the portion of the Legislative session where negotiations are underway to determine

the final numbers on the budget and to iron out whatever differences there are between the House and the Senate on specific issues.

Negotiators meet in conference committees to make final determinations on the language of the bills that will come before legislators for a final vote. These committees are not required to post their meeting times and places, nor are they required to meet and discuss the measures in public.

I believe in transparency and accountability when conducting the people's business, including in conference committees.

I was proud to welcome teachers and students and supporters to the Capitol on Thursday, March 16, when they came to ask for a "Seat at the Table" during education funding discussions. Education supporters were working

very hard to see their own Representatives and Senators to let them know about their concerns. Again, it is so important that we see real people from out in the real world at the Capitol. That's how we get a good understanding of what the people of Mississippi think about issues. Sometimes the action "under the dome" is pretty far removed from "real" Mississippi, and having a crowd at the Capitol like we did on March 16 brings "real" Mississippi to us. Thank you to all who participated.

Others who visited the Capitol in March were representatives of our public libraries from all over the State. In the rural areas especially, libraries provide important resources to people who do not otherwise have access to them. Like so many public services, libraries are being threatened with funding cuts.

We also welcomed representatives of the state's Mental Health services community. The State Department of Mental Health is under threat of severe budget cuts. We as a Legislature should make sure that our most vulnerable citizens have the resources they need to have a good quality of life.

To say that the money situation in

state government is in crisis mode would be an understatement. We have cut hundreds of millions in revenues even in the face of a struggling economic recovery. We only have to look to Louisiana or Kansas to see what happens when decision-makers base their actions on political philosophy rather than what's good for the people or even on what's common sense. This situation has been at a slow boil since 2012, but it's about to get real when corporate giveaways cost us about a half-a-billion dollars next year, and we can't even repair about 4,000 deficient bridges.

Senate Bill 2273, containing a mandate for cursive writing in the schools passed the House. This addition to the school curriculum will result in students with better hand-eye coordination, an increased ability to concentrate, and an ability to write faster and more legibly. We tweaked this bill a little, and it has gone back to the Senate for concurrence. I am hopeful it will become law.

The House stood our ground on the need for road and bridge repair. The House inserted language in Senate Bill 2939 to provide for a \$50 million bonding authority for local roads and

bridges. It also includes a voluntary sales tax on out-of-state purchases, which, if received, will go toward road and bridge repair.

I am proud of the House for taking a strong stand to see to it that our roads and bridges have some source of help, at least for the short term. Governor Bryant signed the bill to declare March 29 as Vietnam Veteran Memorial Day in Mississippi. It's time for this recognition for an entire generation of brave men and women who answered the call of duty.

The House overwhelmingly passed SB 2689, the Senate version of campaign finance reform which prohibits personal use of campaign funds. I supported both this effort and the House version of campaign finance reform.

I appreciate very much your words of support and encouragement as my colleagues and I work hard to do what's right for the people at your State Capitol. We know that no matter how petty and divisive the partisan divide becomes here, if we do the right thing, in the end, right will prevail.

Next month I will recap what bills will be signed into law from this session.

Lyle Power Equipment gearing up for success

Special to Pelahatchie News

For Chris Lyle, owning his own business runs in the family. A fifth generation Pelahatchian, he comes from a line of business owners in town. His grandparents used to own the City Café restaurant in the building across from City Hall, and his great great grandparents had a store across from Marathon at I-20 before the interstate was built.

The thirty-five-year-old father of two ran his own grass maintenance company based in Pelahatchie, but served the metro area. He attended East Rankin Academy and Mississippi State University, where he received a degree in business and landscape.

"I was on the customer side of the counter for the last twelve years," said Lyle. "I understand customers' needs and am making customer service number one."

Long-time owners Terrell and Gretchen Walters operated Walters

Power Equipment here for the past 39 years, with Terrell having worked two years prior to that.

"The Walters' grew the business from a general parts shop to a successful outdoor equipment shop plus parts," said Lyle. "They bought the store when they were 18 and were told they would never make it. Now, it's time for them to enjoy themselves and travel."

He said that the shop will continue to carry the same brands, Scag, Kohler, Stihl, Briggs & Stratton, Husqvarna and Kawasaki. Hours of operation are 7:30-5 Monday through Friday and 7:30-12 Saturday.

Lyle and his wife, Luran, live with their children, Emerson, 3, and Thompson, 18 months, in the Cross Roads, Shiloh community.



Photo by Pelahatchie News

Lyle's Power Equipment, formerly Walter's Power Equipment, had its Chamber ribbon cutting on March 10. Shown passing the keys to new management pictured (l to r) are: Tommy Thompson, Luran and Chris Lyle with Terrell and Gretchen Walters.

Muscadine Park upgrades plans moving forward

By Susie A. Wolfe

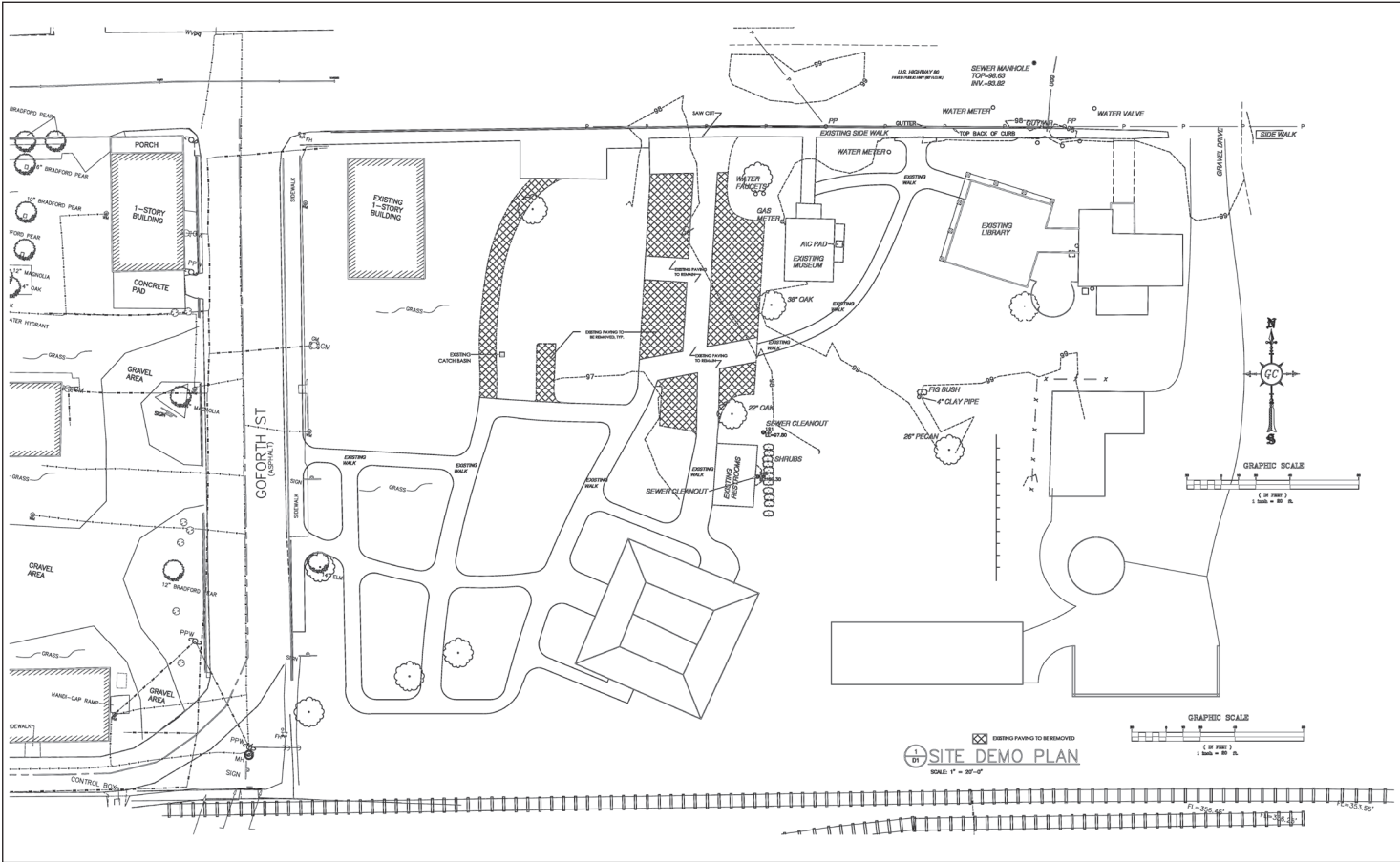
The Town of Pelahatchie is getting upgrades to Muscadine Park. The plans/bids were accepted, so construction should begin right away, according to Mayor Knox Ross, to be completed before this year's Jubilee, if possible.

In addition to landscaping, there will be an entrance plaza with sidewalks and a Circle of Champions that will honor all of the town's championship teams. Ross said, "The Circle of Champions is a unique feature. It is very exciting, substantive and meaningful for everyone in town."

The championship teams include McCall, Cross Roads, Pelahatchie High School, and East Rankin Academy.

Another unique feature will be a bicycle rack and air kit. Ross said the bicycle tree will also include tools.

In addition to relocating the parking lot currently next to the restrooms to behind the library, there will be a walking path in the same area in the pecan grove. Public art displays will include sculpture, a limestone trail and benches. Additionally, a memorial to former Police Chief Glenda Shoemaker will be added.



Special to Pelahatchie News

Muscadine Park plans include expanding the park to behind the library and adding trails and statues, plus a memorial to former police chief Glenda Shoemaker.

ERA students compete in MC Tournament

Special to Pelahatchie News

East Rankin Academy (ERA) students attended the 2017 Mississippi College Science and Math Tournament

on February 2, where more than 40 high schools participated. Several students had winning test scores that include scholarships.



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pictured (l to r) are: Ward Winstead, second place in Physics and third place in Mathematics; Brandon Evans, third place in Chemistry and top 10 percent in Biology; Christine Schroeder, top 20 percent in Chemistry; Emily Myers, top 20 percent in Mathematics; Cade Thornton, top 20 percent in Biology; and Blaine Hill-top 20 percent in Mathematics.



Special to Pelahatchie News

Four ERA students competed in the team competition at the Mississippi College Science and Math Tournament and won third place in the overall team competition. Team members pictured (l to r) are: Ward Winstead, Hayden Hawk, Brandon Evans, and Blaine Hill.

Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	Arrangements
Sherry Griffin	58	Forest, MS	3/3/2017	Wolfe Funeral Serv.
Infant River Harman	Stillborn	Morton, MS	3/6/2017	Wolfe Funeral Serv.
Charles Ted Hawkins	71	Forest, MS	3/13/2017	Wolfe Funeral Serv.
Brian Easterling	37	Pelahatchie, MS	3/15/2017	Wolfe Funeral Serv.
Jimmy Williams	69	Newton, MS	3/16/2017	Wolfe Funeral Serv.
Joe Brown	86	Morton, MS	3/17/2017	Wolfe Funeral Serv.



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Seven ERA students win writing awards



Photo by Pelahatchie News

Writing contest winners from East Rankin Academy pictured (l to r) are: Claire Harris, Jean Ross, Kyle McMillian, Ethan Crain, Noah Parker, Katie Beth Simmons, and Dana Watkins.

By Susie A. Wolfe

Seven East Rankin Academy (ERA) students received Mississippi Scholastic Writing Awards.

The Eudora Welty Foundation, the state's affiliate for the Alliance for the Young Artists & Writers' who presented the contest, provided students opportunities for recognition, exhibition,

publication, and scholarships.

The mission of the Alliance is to identify students with exceptional artistic and literary talent and present their work to the world. Students submitted works in the categories of critical essay, dramatic script, flash fiction, humor, journalism, personal essay/memoir, novel, poetry, science fiction/fantasy, and short story.

East Rankin history teams to compete in D.C.

Special to Pelahatchie News

The East Rankin Academy Varsity and Junior Varsity History Bowl teams competed in the Mississippi State Championship History Bowl

held at Madison Central High School. The Varsity Team finished in third place, and the Junior Varsity Team finished in second place and qualified to compete in the National History Bowl in Washington D.C.



Special to Pelahatchie News

Varsity team members pictured (l to r) are: Jared Vardaman, Reid Wuestefeld, Brandon Evans, and Ward Winstead.



Special to Pelahatchie News

Junior Varsity members pictured (l to r) are: Andrew Stewart, Ethan Crain, Jackson Harper, and Thad Webb.



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PHS is proud of its seniors



By Dr. Bryan Marshall,
Pelahatchie High School Principal

Baseball. Softball. Tennis. Track. Powerlifting. Archery. Band. State testing. Pelahatchie

has a few things going on in April. Spring Break has long passed us by, and Easter break is coming in a few short days. With the school year's end looming and summer coming rapidly, we as parents and teachers must remember to press through with quality instruction and push students to do their best in their academic endeavors.

Although state testing does not define us as a person or an institution, we still want to do well and see students be successful. With that said, school should be fun and engaging, prompting students to want to do well and succeed.

Parents and guardians, we need your help in promoting the ideals of doing well in school and working hard to perform well on the state assessments that are coming at the end of April and the beginning of May. Soon students will be finishing their curriculums and entering review mode for these assessments in most classes. Each student has taken their last benchmark exam that gives us the insight to see student strengths and weaknesses in these specific courses, so the reviews will be set up to address the deficiencies seen through these assessments as well as the teacher made assessments throughout the year. Please encourage each student to work hard

during these reviews and get the needed information to do well at the end on the assessments.

Enough about assessments, the year is winding down quickly and graduation is just around the corner. Graduation this year is May 18 at 7 p.m. at the Clyde Muse Center at Hinds Community College. Parents of seniors, I strongly encourage you to participate in Project Graduation, which will start promptly after graduation on the eighteenth. This is an all night engaging and fun night for seniors sponsored by parents and meant to keep students safe as they celebrate their accomplishments.

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to every parent and guardian of a senior student. Many times, I feel sure, there were doubts of whether they would make it or not. However, I want to say, for all of the staff at Pelahatchie High School, that we are super proud of the seniors and their accomplishments. Many have been offered scholarships to college and even more have simply been accepted. Almost 85 percent of the senior class will have the opportunity to go to college. This is a tremendous accomplishment and worthy of praise. Some students have signed scholarships to play athletics, which includes football, baseball, soccer, and basketball. Each of the major sports will be represented at the next level, which again is a major accomplishment. This year has been great so far, and we are looking for all the great things to continue through the remainder of the year.

Again, parents and guardians, continue to encourage hard work, reading, and enjoying school! And, as always, GO CHIEFS.

PES hosting Chief Madness April 11



Photo by Pelahatchie News

Will Frank or Little Willie get a kiss?



Special to
Pelahatchie News

By Guest Columnist
Lisa Attkisson,
Pelahatchie Elementary
School Principal

The first annual Chief Madness will be held from 5 – 8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 11. This is our only fundraiser to help with activity money throughout the year, and is a celebration of all students' efforts to go from 'great to best' this year.

Many exciting special events are planned that the kids are sure to enjoy, including a teacher dance off (all teachers are included), a slam dunk contest, a student versus teacher basketball game, and a talent show. There will also be a silent auction with those

great gift baskets prepared by each grade, fifty-cent games, and concessions.

Also, two teachers and I plan to "Kiss A Camel." Meet Frank or Little Willie. Now, that will be something to see!

The Slam Dunk competition will have two divisions, K-3 and fourth – sixth grade. The winners in each division will receive a cash prize in the form of a gift card. Students must try-out during school the week of March 27, and have parents sign a permission form.

Admission is \$4 in advance and \$5 at the door. There are either pizza or hamburger full meal deals at \$8 each with chips, drink and cookie. Kona Ice will also be offering concessions.

Hope to see you there!

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Beechem vying for Mayor of Pelahatchie



By Ryshonda
Harper
Beechem

Special to Pelahatchie News

I, Ryshonda Harper Beechem, am officially announcing my candidacy for Mayor of Pelahatchie. I am excited and delighted to be a part of such potential greatness. I look forward to helping our community grow and mature to a beautiful developed town.

A long-time resident of the great community of Pelahatchie, I received my education from Head Start, later Pelahatchie Elementary, and then Pelahatchie High School, where I was taught by phenomenal teachers who groomed me to be the woman I am today. I am a graduate of Jackson State University where I obtained a degree in accounting. I am also a CPA candidate for the state of Mississippi. My husband and I are proud owners of HBG Academy, Inc., HBG & Associates, Inc. and StaTuned Multimedia.

Hard work and persistence has been the cornerstone of my academic and professional life and I believe that hard work and persistence will help the town of Pelahatchie take flight. Additionally, my Christian faith has served as my backbone and has given me the courage to run for Mayor and affect positive change in the community. I have been a long-standing member of Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church, where I learned my first lessons of what it truly means to be of service to others. I am the product and beneficiary of the environment that I grew up in, and it is my desire to give back to the very community that nurtured and developed me.

I am looking forward to working with the many wonderful residents, the continuous building and expanding of our parks and recreations and the growth of the town as a whole. I am ready to help and inspire our town to be the Great Town of Pelahatchie that I grew up to know. I appreciate your prayers, support and your vote on June 6. Let's kick this term off with a FRESH START; I will be holding a meet-and-greet and a community fun day soon! See you guys around! It's Time for Progress, EXPECT MORE!!!!

Pelahatchie sailor continues 75 years of Seabee tradition



Special to Pelahatchie News

By Dusty Good, Navy Office of
Community Outreach

"We Build, We Fight" has been the motto of the U. S. Navy's Construction Force, known as the "Seabees," for the past 75 years. Today, Pelahatchie native

and a 2012 Puckett High School graduate, Petty Officer 2nd Class Kevin Perry builds and fights with the Navy on the East Coast and around the world as a member of the Navy serving at Amphibious Construction Battalion 2 (PHIBCB Two) located in Norfolk, Virginia.

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Second grade pen pals with soldiers



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pictured are PES second grade students who sent cards to soldiers and received a letter back from the soldier. Teachers are encouraging their students to write a letter back to the soldier and to become ongoing pen pals. Students pictured (l to r) are: Jack Herrington, Brooklyn Kelly, Nathan Brown, Arianna Gipson, Tucker Lindsey, Georgia Massey, Chyna Bowie, Jermiya Johnson, Kaiden Davis, Malachi Macklin, Lucas Sofikitis, and Tyler Myers.



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Thelma Davis' Annual Easter Egg Hunt set for April

By Susie A. Wolfe

The Cleveland Davis, Sr. Easter Egg Hunt has been a Pelahatchie neighborhood tradition for 19 years. Approximately 180 children will hunt around 400 eggs at 3 p.m. on Easter Sunday, April 16, on Clayton Street.

Thelma Davis, with the help of her neighbor, Martha Collier, started the Easter Egg Hunt in 1998 for Davis' daddy, who loved to watch the kids hunt eggs. She provides food and prizes, but does have 32 helpers that help manage the age categories and jumpers and the meal.

According to Collier who worked with Davis at Walmart, "Everybody loves Thelma and knows she has a good heart. She also coordinates a senior dinner for 100 folks at Christmas through the Angel Club."

The Town of Pelahatchie recognized Davis in 2000 for her help in the community.

Davis said that it is now a tradition that her daughter, Essie Davis Florence of Pearl, plans to continue.



Photo by Pelahatchie News

Thelma Davis, right, with the help of her neighbor, Martha Collier, started the Easter Egg Hunt in 1998 for her daddy, who loved to watch the kids hunt eggs. In the 19 years it has been held on Clayton Street, it has grown to just under 200 children hunting 400 eggs.

East Rankin Academy robotics team visits Raytheon



Special to Pelahatchie News

ERA Team Members (l to r) are: Andrew Harrell, Reid Wuestefeld, Daniel Jones, Joseph Crawford, Lilly Herring, Hayden Hawk, Ward Winstead, and Cody Batte.

Special to Pelahatchie News

East Rankin Academy Robotics Team students were invited to participate in activities associated with Na-

tional Engineers Week at an event at Raytheon of Forest.

Students with an interest in pursuing career paths in engineering, science, technology, or mathemat-

ics enjoyed an educational day filled with activities to help them gain a better understanding of the world of engineering. The students also participated in competitions to build radio

transmitters and crystal radio receivers.

East Rankin Academy students were recognized for placing first in the competitions.

Beware of poison ivy when outdoors



By Doug Carter, Rankin County Extension Agent

Special to Pelahatchie News

I remember years ago, my brother got the worst case of poison ivy I have ever seen. He got it while we were home from college for spring break. He was exposed to poison ivy while we were fixing a fence.

Outdoor activities in the spring and summer increase the risk of exposure to poison ivy, but the plant's danger does not disappear with the warmer temperature. Thriving on Mississippi's hot, humid climate, poison ivy is very common across the state and causes discomfort for 80 to 85 percent of the state's population.

Poison ivy and poison oak have sim-

ilar three-leaf patterns and should not be confused with the five-leaf Virginia creeper. Remember, leaves of three, let it be.

Poison oak is the least common of the plants and is rarely found in the state. Poison ivy is spread mainly by birds that feed on its clusters of white berries, which are present in late summer and early fall. Poison ivy can be found as either a shrub or a vine.

In most cases, a person must come in contact with the plant in order to be affected. Occasionally, the poison may be transmitted from a pet, which has been exposed, or from clothing that has touched the plants. Reaction to the plants will occur 12 to 48 hours after contact.

For those who are extremely sensitive, pollen under normal circumstances or oil in the air, from burning

plants, may cause an adverse reaction. Therefore, burning is not recommended for eliminating the plants. Herbicides are safer and more effective in removing the plants.

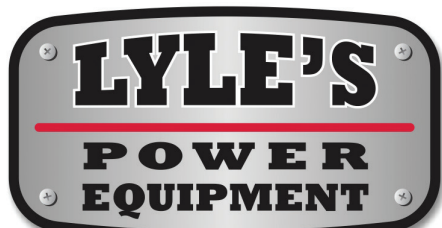
Please use caution when you are outdoors!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Doug Carter serves as the Rankin County Extension Agent, Agriculture and Natural Resources/County Coordinator. He lives south of Pelahatchie, with his wife and two daughters.



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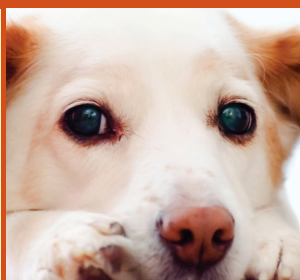
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Aldridge is new PHS baseball coach

By Stephanie Goss

Among the new faces at Pelahatchie High School this year is Kelcy Aldridge, head baseball coach.

"He was touted as being one of the best coaches in the state," said Dr. Bryan Marshall, PHS principal. "Knowing him personally, I knew he would be a solid, moral role model for our kids to learn the game of baseball and life lessons from."

Aldridge is no stranger to baseball. He played from the time he was four years old until he graduated from Millsaps College. Most of his philosophies as a coach could be traced back to his dad, and Coach McClaskey, at Northwest Rankin, and Coach Jim Page, at Millsaps.

Some of Aldridge's strengths as a coach are that he is a workhorse and that he demands excellence. He is relentless when it comes to work. From working on the field, to evolving with the game, to raising money for the program, he is going to put forth maximum effort. He expects the same from the guys on the team.

"Effort is essential, not only on the baseball field, but even more importantly in the classroom," he said.

He also likes his players to show a great attitude. He wants them to practice all out and be knowledgeable about the game. Aldridge said that, in his experience, guys loaded with talent, but lazy, will be passed up for a guy with lesser talent that has the heart and the drive to succeed.

Aldridge is excited to be in the Pelahatchie community where "people have a mindset of hard work and determination. We definitely want Pelahatchie and the surrounding communities to support our program, but we want to support them as well."

Aldridge stresses to the guys to be supportive of community and school events. The team has helped with the community's Fall Festival and will be hosting summer baseball camps for 7-12 year olds. The coaching staff is



Special to Pelahatchie News

Coach Kelcy Aldridge and wife, Malory Aldridge.

putting maximum effort forth as well by holding a spring coaching clinic for the youth baseball program at Milltown Park.

"Our program doesn't start when kids get to the 7th grade. It begins when the kids start playing out at Milltown. I want the coaches there to feel equipped in teaching these younger players the

fundamentals of baseball. The earlier we teach these fundamentals, the better chance these young athletes have to reach their full potential," Aldridge says.

Aldridge's goal beyond the field is to see his baseball team lead all other sports and activities in GPA. He knows that this is a tough goal, but he is willing to push the guys to work hard, be responsible, accountable, and successful leaders with integrity now as well as later when they begin to raise their own families.

Aldridge receives a tremendous amount of support from PHS, parents, and the community, but his greatest support comes from his family. "They have always believed in me as a person and a coach." He also has had former coaches and players encouraging him this year. His wife, Malorie, a softball and volleyball coach at Brandon, has been a rock for him.

The effect Aldridge is having on the baseball team is evident when you see the guys play. They are working hard and having fun. They are putting forth the effort their coach asks for on and off the field. With his staff, Dylan Parker and Brent Leach, things are looking up for this small town baseball team.



Sunday Schedule

8:30 - Contemporary Worship Service
 10:00 - Bible Study for all ages
 11:00 - Blended Worship Service
 6:00 - Evening Worship

Wednesday Schedule

6:00 Family Dinner
 7:00 - Children's Mission Activities • Student Worship
 Ladies Bible Study • Couples Support Group
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Wyatt set to play tennis at Co-Lin



Special to Pelahatchie News

Tripp Wyatt, East Rankin senior, signed to play tennis at Co-Lin CC. Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Cammie Wyatt, Tripp Wyatt, and Marc Wyatt; and back row: Coach Stacey Wesson.

Jones signs to play basketball at EMCC



Special to Pelahatchie News

Chloe Jones signed to play basketball at East Mississippi Community College. Pictured (l to r) are: Kenyatta Hobson, Enfinity Collier, Chloe Jones, Vicki Jones, and TK Gipson.

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Pastor's Perspective: Celebrate Jesus' resurrection at Easter



By Guest Columnist John Vaughn, Pastor, Cross Roads Baptist Church

Special to Pelahatchie News

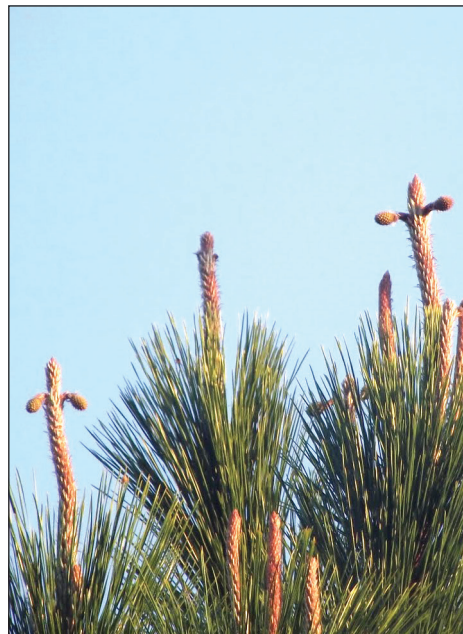
April is the month when we celebrate Easter this year. For many, Easter is just another holiday on the calendar; a day off from work, or a special family meal. There are many interesting customs and traditions that have evolved around the Easter holiday. The History Channel web site offers information about some of the traditions.

"The Easter Bunny has become a prominent symbol of Christianity's most important holiday. The exact origins of this mythical mammal are unclear, but rabbits, known to be prolific procreators, are an ancient symbol of fertility and new life. According to some sources, the Easter bunny first arrived in America in the 1700s with German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania and transported their tradition of an egg-laying hare. Their children made nests in which this creature could lay its colored eggs. Eventually, the custom spread across the U.S., and the fabled rabbit's Easter morning deliveries expanded to include chocolate and other types of candy and gifts,

while decorated baskets replaced nests. Additionally, children often left out carrots for the bunny, in case he got hungry from all his hopping.

Easter eggs are likely linked to pagan traditions. The egg, an ancient symbol of new life, has been associated with pagan festivals celebrating spring. From a Christian perspective, Easter eggs are said to represent Jesus' emergence from the tomb and resurrection. Decorating eggs for Easter is a tradition that dates back to at least the 13th century, according to some sources. One explanation for this custom is that eggs were formerly a forbidden food during the Lenten season, so people would paint and decorate them to mark the end of the period of penance and fasting, then eat them on Easter as a celebration.

Easter egg hunts and egg rolling are two popular egg-related traditions. In the U.S., the White House Easter Egg Roll, a race in which children push decorated, hard-boiled eggs across the White House lawn, is an annual event held the Monday after Easter. The first official White House egg roll occurred in 1878, when Rutherford B. Hayes was president. The event has no religious significance, although some people have considered egg rolling symbolic



Special to Pelahatchie News

Seemingly, pine trees seem to know when Easter arrives.

of the stone blocking Jesus' tomb being rolled away, leading to his resurrection.

Easter candy is very popular. In fact, Easter is the second best-selling candy holiday in America, after Halloween. Among the most popular sweet treats associated with this day are chocolate eggs, which date back to early 19th century Europe. Eggs have long been associated with Easter as a symbol of

new life and Jesus' resurrection. Another egg-shaped candy, the jelly bean, became associated with Easter in the 1930s. According to the National Confectioners Association, over 16 billion jelly beans are made in the U.S. each year for Easter, enough to fill a giant egg measuring 89 feet high and 60 feet wide. In recent years, the top-selling non-chocolate Easter candy has been the marshmallow Peep, a sugary, pastel-colored confection. Bethlehem, Pennsylvania-based candy manufacturer Just Born (founded by Russian immigrant Sam Born in 1923) began selling Peeps in the 1950s. The original Peeps were handmade, marshmallow-flavored yellow chicks, but other shapes and flavors were later introduced, including chocolate mousse bunnies."

The most important aspect about Easter is neither custom nor tradition; it is fact! Easter Sunday is the day that His followers celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the tomb and His victory over death and sin. Don't let the traditions and customs of Easter overshadow what we know is fact. Jesus Christ is alive! And He lives out His life through those who believe in Him and follow Him with their lives. Be sure to celebrate Easter this year by taking your family to church!

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Power lifting has weight class



Special to Pelahatchie News

Matthew Harper, Clayton Kilgore and Idarias Jones, shown, finished first in their classes. Blake Ferguson finished second and Dashaun Gipson finished third in his class. They all advanced to the State Championship, which takes place April 14 at the Mississippi Coliseum.

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Padgett named Star Student, McMillian named Star teacher

Special to Pelahatchie News

Cameron Padgett has been named STAR Student for the 2016-2017 school year by the Mississippi Economic Council (MEC) M. B. Swayze Foundation, sponsor of the Student Teacher Achievement Recognition (STAR) program. Established by the Mississippi Economic Council in 1965, the purpose of the STAR program is to recognize outstanding students & teachers in Mississippi through its Education Celebration. The theme this year is: Inspire. Empower. Motivate.

The Pelahatchie High School senior will be honored during the annual Education Celebration on April 27, at the Jackson Convention Complex in downtown Jackson. The Education Celebra-

tion will start at 9:30 a.m.

Star Students are selected on the basis of academic excellence. Both American College Test scores and scholastic averages are compared to determine the school's STAR Student, explained Vickie Powell of Jackson, Senior Vice President of Foundations. "The STAR program encourages and promotes academic achievement among Mississippi's high school seniors," she said. Each STAR Student is asked to designate a STAR Teacher, the teacher who has made the greatest contribution to the student's scholastic achievement. Mrs. Donna McMillian was designated STAR Teacher.

Over 500 STAR Students and STAR Teachers will receive recognition from MEC's M.B. Swayze Foundation at the

Celebration. The top 20 STAR Students – The ALL-STAR Scholars – will receive scholarships and their STAR Teachers will receive awards provided by the Kelly Gene Cook, Sr. Charitable Foundation. The highlight of the Education Celebration will be the naming of the Mississippi ALL-STAR Scholar for 2016-2017 school year, winner of the \$24,000 Cook Foundation Scholarship.



Special to Pelahatchie News

Cameron Padgett and Donna McMillian were named STAR student and teacher.

Strebeck is new Ott and Lee owner

Special to Pelahatchie News

In 1934, Little and Ware opened a funeral home in Forest, Mississippi servicing the Scott County area. Ollie Ott and Hugh Lee purchased the funeral home in 1942. From 1942 until November, 2016, the funeral home was owned by the Lee family. In November of 2016, Hugh Strebeck partnered with investors to purchase Ott & Lee Funeral Home. Now, with four locations to serve the counties of Scott, Smith, Rankin, Hinds, Simpson, and other areas in central Mississippi, Ott & Lee remains one of the largest independent funeral home operations in the State of

Mississippi.

Ott & Lee has two locations in Scott County. The original location was Forest with the Morton location being built in 1968. Taking pride in their facilities, the company undertook a complete renovation of the Morton funeral home in 2008 and renovated the Forest funeral home in 2015. The company moved into Rankin County in 1995, building a new funeral home in Brandon. In 2004, the company completed its expansion into Rankin County with a new funeral home in Richland. Ott & Lee has a staff of 33 employees which is comprised of many long time employees and includes nine full time and

three part time licensed funeral directors.

As the time approached for the Lee family to sell the funeral home, it was important for them to leave the funeral home in the hands of someone who had a strong sense of community and who had many years of experience in the funeral industry. Hugh Strebeck, who had been an employee of Ott & Lee since 1981, was the logical choice. Strebeck was able to partner with investors, the Signature Group, to continue the legacy of Ott & Lee. Strebeck said, "My family and I feel very blessed the Lee family afforded us this opportunity."

Strebeck is a Scott County native

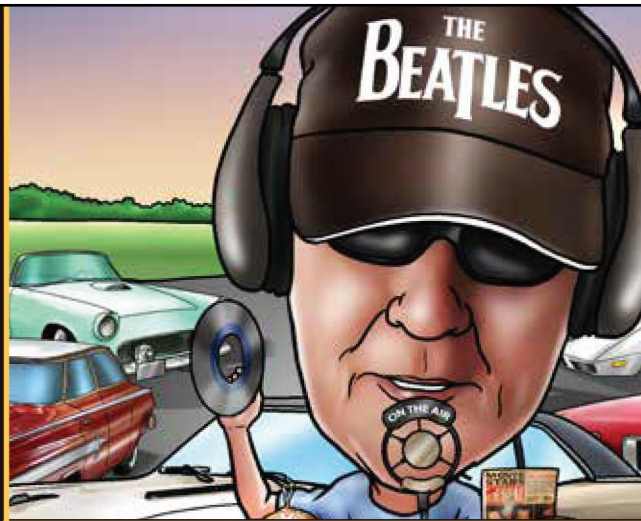
and is married to Susan Brittain, from the Pea Ridge community in Scott County. He was a 1976 graduate of Scott Academy, a 1978 graduate of East Central Community College, and a 1981 graduate of East Mississippi School of Mortuary Science. The Strebecks have three children, Chris Strebeck (Jessica) of Forest, Melissa Cobb (Justin) of Pontotoc, and Erin (Michael) Pollard of Brandon, and have been blessed with four grandchildren.

"It is my goal to continue to meet the expectations of the community by providing excellent service, care and compassion for those at their time of need" said Strebeck.

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Key tax-preparation tips to cut stress

Special to Pelahatchie News

Tax season tends to inflict the same headaches year after year. To reduce your stress — and maximize your refund — it'll help to stay organized and be aware of recent changes to the tax code.

Keep in mind that the average refund has been about \$3,000 in recent years. Even if you don't expect to get that much back, there are plenty of ways to put a refund to good use. But first, you'll have to file your returns properly, taking advantage of any deductions you might qualify for. Here's a look at where to get started.

Compiling the necessary information. For starters, you'll need your W-2 form listing earnings and tax withholding. Be sure to have your Social Security number or taxpayer identification number available, as well as those numbers for any dependents you'll claim. You'll also need documentation of any income they may have had.

Affordable Care Act penalty. The 2010 Affordable Care Act ushered in one of the most significant tax law changes in recent years. It stipulates that if you didn't have health insurance for more than three months in 2015 and didn't qualify for an exemption, you may face a penalty.



Photo created by Katemangostar - Freepik.com

Tax deductions reduce taxable income. Deductions reduce the amount of your income that you have to pay taxes on. Sit down and figure out whether the standard deduction or itemized deductions will work best for you. If your itemized deductions add up to more than your standard deduction amount, go with that.

So, what kinds of expenses can you deduct? Contributions to eligible organizations and interest on education loans are among the more well-known deductions. Others, such as medical and home office aren't as widely used for various reasons. Make sure to look at which of your expenses you can use to reduce your taxable income, which will probably increase your refund.

If you qualify to contribute to a traditional individual retirement account, or IRA, you may be able to shield up to \$5,500 of income from taxes — plus \$1,000 more if you're 50 or over — by putting it in an IRA. You have until April 15 to make deductible contributions for the previous year.

The bottom line. Just remember to compile all the essential paperwork before getting started, keeping an eye out for tax credits and changes to the tax code.

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