

Lyle serving Town as City Clerk

See page 6

Cunningham Courage Award given to her sister

See page 12

PELAHATCHIE NEWS

Good News You Can Use

June
2018

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Pelahatchie, MS

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State Auditor issues \$500k demand for misspent drug forfeiture funds

Special to Pelahatchie News

On May 21, special agents from the Mississippi Office of the State Auditor (OSA) delivered civil demands to several current and former officials in the Town of Pelahatchie. The OSA's demands claim that drug seizure funds, which are required to be used for law enforcement purposes, were misspent by the Town. Two demands were issued, for a total \$502,363.07, which includes interest and investigative costs. The OSA states that current and former officials - and the bonding company that insures them - have thirty days to pay. If not, State Auditor Stacey Pickering said he will sue them in civil court.

Mississippi law requires the transfer of all funds received through the forfeiture proceedings under the Uniform Controlled Substance Law into the budget of the corresponding law

enforcement agency. An OSA review of Pelahatchie's Forfeiture Account shows this transfer did not occur. After an OSA investigation, several illegal transfers were discovered. Some of the illegal transfers relate to:

- Transfers to the Town's Enterprise Account (Utility Account)
- Transfers to the Town's Special Fire Fund
- Transfers made to prevent overdraft in the regular Town checking account
- Transfers to pay salaries of non-police department employees
- Transfers to pay for items not associated with the Pelahatchie Police Department in any way

In Mississippi, asset forfeiture has a dual purpose of discouraging drug trafficking and providing a direct benefit



Photo by Pelahatchie News
Pelahatchie City Hall

to law enforcement agencies across the state. The goal of asset forfeiture is to provide police departments with additional funds to spend on equipment, additional training, officer overtime payment, and salary to hire new officers. The intent is to provide citizens with a better-equipped and more qualified police department.

Pelahatchie Mayor Ryshonda Beechem released a response to the

Pickering's demands on May 22, stating, "When the Board and city clerks continued to request [that I] sign checks of this nature, [I] contacted the State Auditor for clarification on the issues. [I] was instructed to contact Investigations at that point. [I] complied with all requests made of [me] by the State Auditor's office relative to the investigation."

The first demand, totaling \$421,688.10, represents the period of January 2015 to June 2017. It was issued to former Pelahatchie mayor Knox Ross, Jr., former Pelahatchie alderman Jerry Norwood, former Pelahatchie alderwoman Megan Hall, former city clerk Bettye Massey, current alderman Frank Boyd, current alderman Michael Adams, and current alderwoman Margie Warren. The demand indicates that all recipients of the demand are jointly

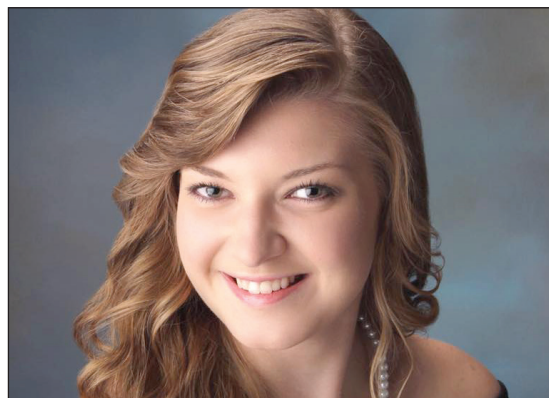
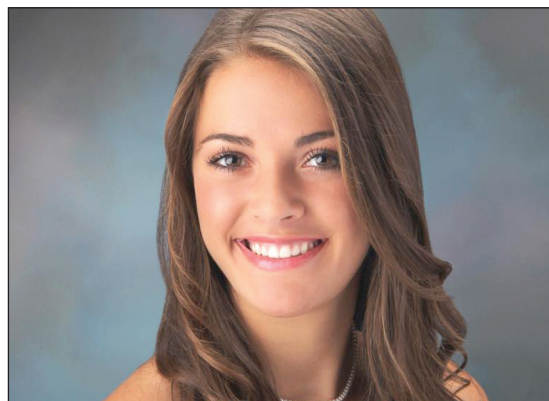
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Tadlock, Myers awarded ERA top honors

Special to Pelahatchie News

In addition to being named East Rankin Academy's (ERA) valedictorian, Emilee Tadlock also served as student body vice-president. Tadlock was a member of Mu Alpha Theta Mathematics Honor Society, ACT Academic Team, and served as vice-president of the ERA Chapter of the National Honor Society. Tadlock won subject awards in Anatomy and Physiology, Psychology, Honors English 12, and Speech. She also was a member of the varsity girls soccer and basketball teams. Tadlock was named MAIS All Conference and All District in varsity girls basketball and was selected to play in the MAIS Class AAAA All Star Basketball Game. She plans to continue her education at East Central Community College.

Emily Myers, salutatorian,
continued on page 5



Special to Pelahatchie News

Emilee Tadlock, top, is ERA's Valedictorian, and Emily Myers is the Salutatorian.

Walters, Attkisson lead PHS senior class

Special to Pelahatchie News

The 2018 Pelahatchie High School (PHS) senior class valedictorian is Gabbi Lee Walters, the daughter of Gabe and Lacy Walters. She held a GPA of 96.243. Walters participated in Rankin Youth Leadership, served as Student Council President and FFA President, and was a member of the Beta Club. She graduated with academic and ACT honors, being recognized as a Mississippi Scholar and distinguished service graduate, and was inducted into the Pelahatchie High School Hall of Fame. She plans to attend Hinds Community College and Mississippi State University and become a veterinarian.

Anna Grace Attkisson was named salutatorian. She is the daughter of Tim Attkisson and Lisa Attkisson. She held a GPA

continued on page 3



Special to Pelahatchie News

Gabbi Walters, top, is PHS's Valedictorian, and Anna Attkisson is the Salutatorian.



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Three new part-time officers hired



Photo by Pelahatchie News

The Pelahatchie Board of Aldermen recently approved the hiring of three new part-time police officers. They include (l to r): Charlie Scoggins, Heath Taylor and Travis Crain.



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continued from page 1

State Auditor issues \$500k demand for misspent drug forfeiture funds

responsible for its repayment.

The second demand, totaling \$80,694.97, represents the period from July 2017 to December 2017. It was issued to former city clerk Bettye Massey; Mayor Ryshonda Beechem; and current aldermen Eddie Jones, Frank Boyd, James Harrell, Michael Adams and Margie Warren. The demand indicates that all recipients of the demand are jointly responsible for its repayment.

Beechem's first day in office was July 1, 2017. According to a statement from Beechem, "In the days that followed, the City Clerk presented [me] with checks to sign on behalf of the City, indicating that they needed to be signed right away because 'bills were due' and that the Board had 'already approved the expenditures at the board meeting.' [I] was initially under the impression that this was normal procedure, and signed what [I] understood to be checks for the City's bills for July and August, 2017."

Shortly thereafter, Beechem says she became suspicious as to the bookkeeping methods, and also "took notice of the 'drug fund account.'" She says she researched and found the relevant Mississippi statute dealing with how seized monies were to be spent and showed it to the Board members. In her statement, Beechem said that, "in response, the Board refused to change their practices." Beechem further indicated that, in September 2017, "the Pelahatchie City Attorney provided [me] with a copy of a research memo he prepared which concluded that, in his opinion, 'All money disbursed or used from the Police Seizure Fund was done so properly, and in accordance with State and Federal Law.' [I] resisted, stating the usage of the drug fund account in this manner appears to violate the law."

On May 26, former mayor Knox Ross released a statement saying, "This past week (May 21), the current and former administrations of the Town of Pelahatchie were served with demands by the State Auditor regarding the operation of our criminal seizure fund. We were surprised by the action, as we believed, and continue to believe based on the audits and subsequent additional review of the fund operations by our Certified Public Accountant, that we were operating within the law."

Knox continued, "The town's public safety operations have vastly improved over the past few years, with additional officers, vehicles, equipment, and facilities, all made possible by the criminal seizure fund. We are proud of what we have been able to accomplish, and the State Auditor agrees with us that there are no funds missing, and at no time were any funds spent for any personal benefit. The funds were all spent on public purposes for the benefit of our town."

Pickering said, "For years, the leadership of Pelahatchie abused these funds by attempting to use them to enhance the overall city budget, when they were mandated to be allocated to the Pelahatchie Police Department. OSA will continue to work to assist local governments when questions regarding proper use of public funds arise, but we will also ensure that misspent money is recovered on behalf of Mississippians."

"We look forward to meeting with the State Auditor and his staff to further explain our position and belief that we handled these funds correctly," said Ross. "We are proud of our town and how we all worked together to make it better. All of us are committed to resolving this issue and cooperating fully with the State Auditor to do just that."

continued from page 1

Walters, Attkisson lead PHS senior class

of 93.67. Attkisson was a member of the student council and Beta Club. She was also the offensive MVP for the soccer team this year. She graduated

with honors and was recognized as a distinguished service graduate. She plans to attend East Central Community College and major in nursing.

PHS graduates extend education

By Susie A. Wolfe

Pelahatchie High School (PHS) held Signings Day on May 4 where 93% of the 55 graduating seniors will be attending college or joining the military. The seniors graduated May 21 at Clyde Muse Center at Hinds Community College. Four will be going into the military, and 47 will be attending Mississippi State and the following community colleges: Hinds, Holmes, Meridian, East Central, MS Delta, and Gulf Coast.

This high percentage of college-bound seniors is in part due to Pelahatchie Attendance Center being one of eight Mississippi public high schools in of the Get2College pilot program started in the fall of 2015. Based on research by the National Association of College Admission Counseling, the program implements best practices for creating a college culture, including ACT preparation, college search, and the admissions application process. Its long-term goal is to increase the rates of college enrollment and graduation for its students.

"Research shows that community-school partnerships help break down barriers that hold students back from enrolling in and graduating from col-

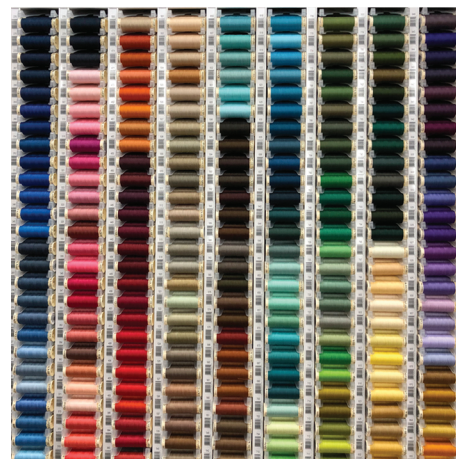


Special to Pelahatchie News

Ninety-three percent of the 55 graduating seniors will be attending college or joining the military. Senior shown signing with Hinds Community College.

lege," said Ann Hendrick, director of the Get2College program. "The pilot program works because counselors, administrators, and teachers are all providing an environment that encourages students to go to college."

Principal Bryan Marshall said, "Get2College has been a vital part of our success in sending students to college with large amounts of financial aid and scholarship monies. This partnership has brought in countless thousands of dollars for our students, and we are truly grateful for this alliance and hope to continue this strong partnership in the future."



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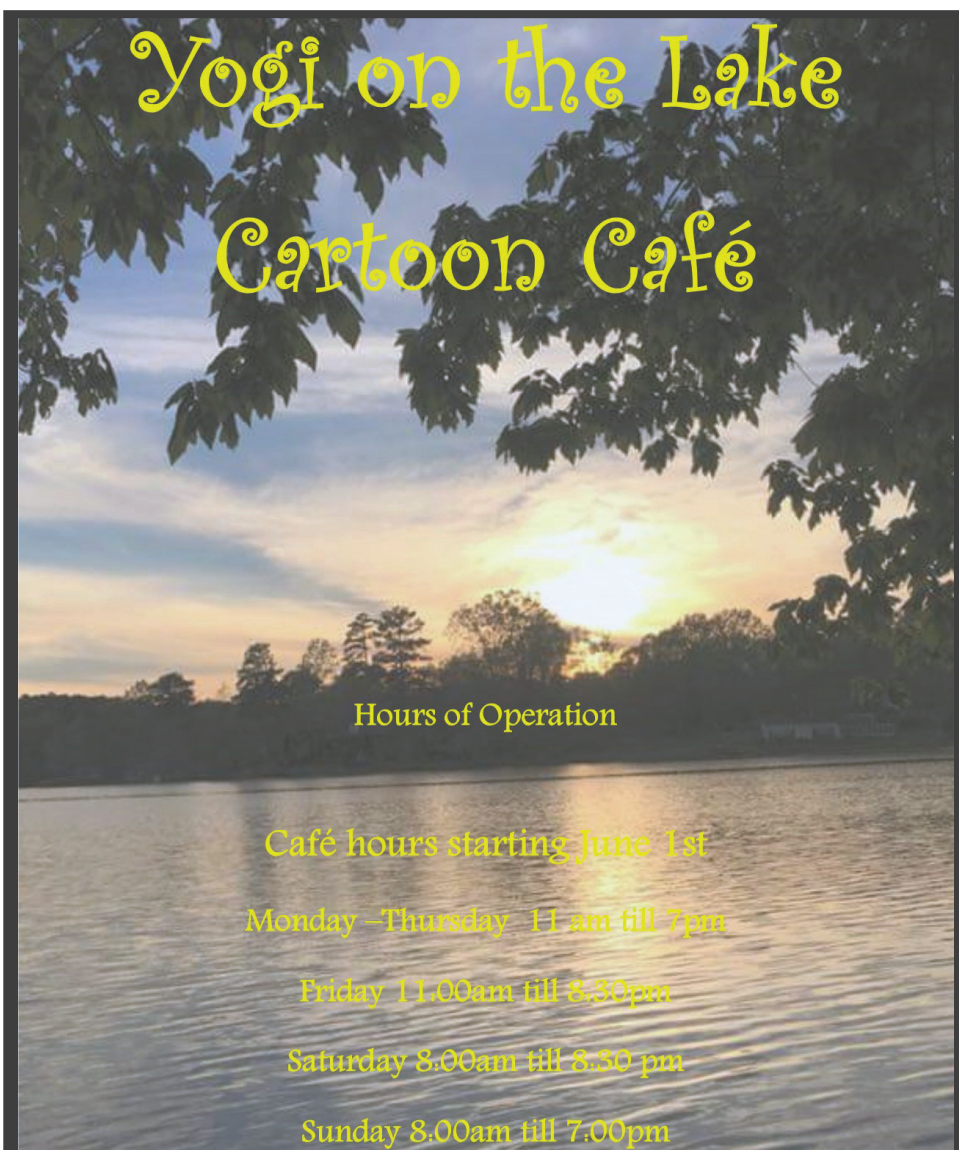
Mrs. Sirmon's Pre-K class at PES had a lesson on metamorphosis. The students fed 50 caterpillars that they watched turn into Monarch butterflies. Aubri Key is shown holding a butterfly.

Local residents graduate from Leadership Rankin



Special to Pelahatchie News

Rankin County Chamber's Leadership Rankin Graduation was in May. Two Pelahatchie residents (l to r), Brent Robinson and Marlo Sarrett, are included in the group.



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- June 12 - CMRLS Puppets (puppet show)
- June 19 - Animal Tales (live animals)
- June 26 - Our Own Band (craft)

Teen:

Tuesday, June 19, 2:00 p.m., Reed Photo Frames (craft)

Adult:

Tuesday, June 12, 1:00 p.m., Crafting Corner – Terrariums

Wednesday, June 20, 9:30 a.m., Adult Book Club

Discussing Anita Shreve's novel, Fortune's Rocks

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Control fire ants in your yard this summer



By Doug Carter,
Rankin County
Extension Agent

Special to
Pelahatchie News

Fire ants are the most common insect pests of home lawns. They occur practically in every lawn in the state. Even if you manage to achieve a fire ant-free yard, it probably won't stay that way long, because newly-mated fire ant queens will quickly recolonize it. Fire ant control is a never-ending battle in the Southeast, but there are steps you can do to reduce the number of mounds in your yard.

The easiest, cheapest and most effective thing you can do to control fire ants is to use baits. Use baits properly, and you can reduce the number of mounds in your yard by 80 to 90 percent. For even better control, you can supplement your baiting program, by spot treating mounds that survive the bait treatments.

We apply baits as broadcast treatments instead of treating only individual mounds. You will never win the battle against fire ants by only treating individual mounds. If we only elim-

inate the big mounds, the small colonies will thrive, because they have less competition, and they will quickly grow into large mounds.

Early spring is the best time to apply fire ant baits, because fire ants are actively foraging for food at this time. If you are going to treat only one time per year, do it in the spring. But you can improve control by treating again in midsummer and a third time in the fall. We can use the holidays, Easter, Independence Day, and Labor Day, to remind us when it is time to put out fire ant bait.

The yard around my house is so big, I just usually put out fire ant bait just in the front yard, and just around the house in the back. I usually put out fire ant bait three times a year. A few years ago, I was working in the yard in



Photo by Pelahatchie News

September, and I noticed that the front yard had very few fire ant mounds, and the back yard was covered with fire ant mounds. I remember thinking, this system works.

If you can't wait four weeks on bait treatments to control fire ant mounds, individual mound treatments containing contact insecticides provide much quicker control than bait treatments. There are two basic methods of treating individual fire ant mounds: liquid drenches and dry mound treatments.

The liquid drenches provide the quickest control, however they are time consuming to mix and apply. The dry mound treatments are easy and convenient to use, but are less effective.

Another method to control fire ants is by using broadcast insecticide treatments. Broadcast insecticide treatments are contact insecticides that are applied over the entire lawn. These are more costly to use than baits. They are usually applied to highly managed areas such as athletic fields and golf courses.

Don't confuse granular contact insecticides with granular baits. Baits are impregnated with oil and a small amount of slow-acting insecticide. The worker ant actively collects the bait granules and carries them back to the colony.

Granular insecticides are simply granules that are impregnated with insecticide. The insecticide in the granules moves into the soil and controls foraging ants and newly settled queens by contact.

For more information on controlling fire ants, visit your Mississippi State University Extension Office, 601 Marquette Road, Brandon.

continued from page 1

Tadlock, Myers awarded ERA top honors

was a member of the ERA Chapter of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Mathematics Honor Society, and ACT Academic Team. She also participated on the Science Quiz Bowl Team and the Robotics Team. Myers was also a member of the Science and Math Team that won first place at the Missis-

sippi College Science and Math Tournament. She won subject wards in Calculus, Physics II, and Economics. She was also presented the Gwen Massey Gregory Award in recognition of her leadership, citizenship, and scholarship. Myers plans to attend Mississippi State University.

Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	Arrangements
James Rogers	34	Rose, OK	4/9/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Jeffrey Yarbrough	58	Morton, MS	4/12/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Darryl Lucas	53	Morton, MS	4/16/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Roma Pickett	83	Morton, MS	5/1/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Sylvia Roland	72	Lake, MS	5/2/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Christopher Anderson	36	Lake, MS	5/9/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Susan Crosby	56	Morton, MS	5/12/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Betty Patrick	75	Forest, MS	5/12/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Debra Dennis	62	Lake, MS	5/13/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Jerry Haralson	72	Forest, MS	5/15/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Deborah Scoggins	63	Morton, MS	5/20/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Travis Parker	51	Camden, MS	5/20/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Ronald Stein	78	Lake, MS	5/21/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
John Watson	58	Morton, MS	5/27/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Dwayne Quick	58	Pelahatchie, MS	5/27/18	Wolf Funeral Serv.

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PLACE 2

Knight named Deputy Clerk | Lyle serving Town as City Clerk

By Susie A. Wolfe

Rachel Knight started as Pelahatchie Deputy Clerk on May 23. She was approved by the Board at the May Board Meeting.

A native of Pelahatchie, Knight graduated from East Rankin Academy and Mississippi State University. Her degree is in biology, but she enjoys working with books and money. She was previously employed at the Rankin Co-Op and at the City of Brandon as office manager. She also helped with the Brandon Amphitheater.

"I want to do a good job and help get the Town back on track," said Knight.

The daughter of Randy and Mary Knight, she lives in the Shiloh area.



Photo by Pelahatchie News

Rachel Knight took office as Deputy Clerk on May 23.



Photo by Pelahatchie News

Mayor Ryshonda Beechem, left, is shown with new City Clerk Tommy Lyle after swearing him in on May 14.

By Susie A. Wolfe

Tommy Lyle, life-long resident of Pelahatchie, started as the Town's City Clerk on May 21. He previously served as alderman from 1989-1993, and mayor from 1993-1997.

"I care about our little Town," said Lyle, a retired AT&T manager of Net-

work Engineering. "I have been on both sides and bring unique experience to the table. I want to help the Town."

His great grandfather owned a general store across from where Marathon is now, and his grandparents operated the local City Café many years ago. His son, Chris, owns Lyle's Power Equipment.



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HERE'S what folks are saying about the new store:

"I am SO happy about him opening a store here. He is so nice and has best employees at Puckett location."	"Glad to see Bob's spreading out. Frequent his store in Puckett a lot."	"The honey butter biscuits are addictive."	"The food in Puckett is very good. The burger is excellent."	"Yay!!! We love Bob!!!"
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Hands UP benefits from Cross Roads' tablescap event

Special to Pelahatchie News

The Hands UP Outreach, a ministry in Pelahatchie and Richland, was the Cross Roads Baptist Church (CRBC) JOY Ministry service project this year. The ladies ministry held a tablescap event on April 28 where more than 200 purses and \$1,200 was raised for Hands UP's Handbags for Hope. Mary Callahan, co-director of Hands UP Outreach along with her husband, Roy, was the guest speaker.

Mary was concerned about women leaving the prison system not having purses and basic items to start over. She found out women were leaving the prison with plastic Walmart bags for their belongings. Handbags for Hope was then started by asking church members to collect slightly-used purses to give away. She asks others to collect toiletries and items needed for starting over.

Hands UP Outreach collects hundreds of bags and purses each year. They are loaded down with items to use starting over. Some purses go to ladies in recovery programs for Christmas gifts. Money is hidden in the purses. Many ladies say, "they find the money in their purses when they need gas money or food." They also give

out around 30,000 Christmas cards so inmates can send cards to their families.

Roy and Mary Callahan also have other community ministries. Their nighttime Christian Women's/Men's Job Corp, GED, and ESL meet at First Baptist Church in Richland on Monday nights. The same classes also meet three days a week at the Grace Center in Richland, a resource center, where Debra Baker is the program director.

Recently, the Pelahatchie Half Way House across from Pelahatchie Baptist was opened to help women get their GED in the eastern part of Rankin County. Belinda Moseley is the program director for that location.

Roy Callahan spent 24 years in the



Photos by Pelahatchie News

The women's ministry at Cross Roads Baptist Church, named JOY Ministry for Joy Huff and their purpose of finding JOY by serving Jesus, Others, and Yourself, held a tablescap event on April 28 to benefit Hands UP Outreach.

U.S. Navy before surrendering to the ministry. He went on to earn his seminary degree, and Mary spent fifteen years working for the federal government as a contracting officer in various

locations. While in Norfolk, Virginia, and Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Mary started Christian Military support groups to share Jesus with military wives.

After answering God's call to work with hurting women, Mary was commissioned as a faith-supported missionary through the North American Mission Board under the umbrella of the Rankin County Baptist Association. Mary has a passion to help women find new life in Christ and spends many hours each week ministering in the jail and prison system. Roy, a minister of education, left his staff position to minister with Mary through Hands UP Outreach in 2015.

The Callahans' ministries are always in need of mentors, teachers, and encouragers. Anyone interested should contact Belinda at the Pelahatchie Half Way House at 601-665-

2403. Other needs are copy paper, folders and composition books with no metal. Also, paper goods for restrooms and kitchens.

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Gosain opens new store downtown

By Susie A. Wolfe

Bobby Gosain immigrated from India in 1999 when he was ten years old. He lived with his uncle's family in Hazlehurst and Clinton and eventually managed his uncle's stores. The new Bob's Gas of Pelahatchie, LLC, at the four-way stop downtown, is his second convenience store of his own. The other Bob's Gas is in Puckett.

After marrying Hena Arora in 2015, they have lived in Hattiesburg while she worked as an RN at Pine Grove Behavioral Health and Addiction Services. He has commuted from Hattiesburg to Puckett every day to manage that property. At the first of June, Gosain and Hena moved to Madison to live. She plans to continue nursing school as he continues to study accounting. Inder Arora, his father-in-law, helped him



Special to Pelahatchie News

Hena Arora and Bobby Gosain married in February 2015, and now live in Madison.

locate and finance both the Puckett and Pelahatchie properties.

Gosain said the secret of his success at his Puckett store is to provide the very best customer service. He also listens to his customers. He said that if he is not carrying what a customer wants, he will order it.

He has also been involved in the community. He believes in education and encourages children to get the best education possible.

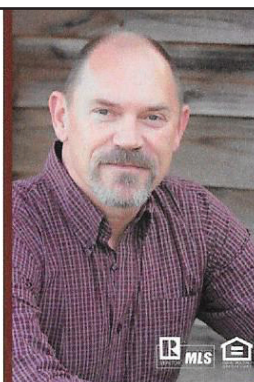
Gosain renovated the Pelahatchie property before opening on June 1. The gas tanks were improved and approved by MDEQ. He added a food area, where he will serve fresh food, including fried chicken, lunch plates, burgers, catfish, bar-b-que, pizza and much more. He will also open at 4:30 a.m. and serve breakfast, and he will carry live bait.

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Cumbest named Shiloh UMC's new pastor

By Susie A. Wolfe

Chris Cumbest has been appointed the new pastor at Shiloh United Methodist Church (UMC) beginning June 1. Now in his thirty-fourth year of ministry, he comes from his most recent appointment at Crossgates UMC in Brandon, where he had served since 2014.

Cumbest said he has had a diverse ministry, from small rural to large two-campus churches, an inter-city church and those rebuilding on the Coast after Hurricane Katrina. Originally from Cumbest Bluff in Jackson County, Cumbest grew up at Salem UMC, where they had camp meetings like those held at the 350-member Shiloh UMC. He fondly remembers that in 1990, he was the youth pastor for Shiloh Camp Meeting, and Sheila was the children's minister.

Sheila is currently the associate pastor of worship and missions at Christ UMC in Jackson. Their daughter, Elizabeth Byrd, who just graduated from seminary, has been appointed to Peachtree Roads UMC in Atlanta, Georgia. Both were formally recognized by the church in a June 1 ceremony in Jackson. Sheila was ordained as an elder, while Elizabeth

was commissioned. Cumbest's brother, David, also served in the ministry. Their son, Jesse, will finish college with a psychology degree from the University of Southern Mississippi in July.

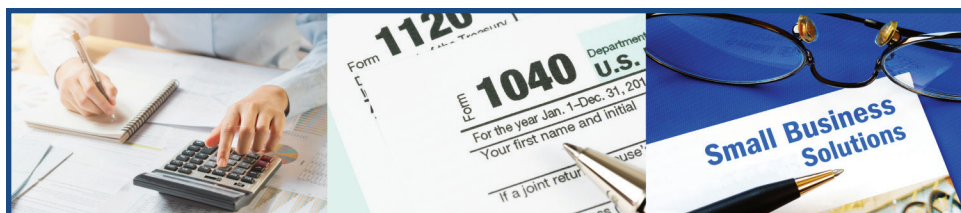
The Cumbests have resided in Morton since October 2016. He enjoys most anything outdoors, and his hobbies include hunting, fishing, gardening, farming, kayaking, hiking, camping, and mission trips.

He also has an unusual hobby, now an annual tradition, of making cane syrup at his family's homeplace on the Coast. It began with his dad and two friends, who always made cane syrup each fall, but it is now a community event. Although his dad and one of his friends have passed on, Cumbest and his family continue to keep the tradition and make sure the legacy lives on. His wife, son, daughter and son-in-law gather each Thanksgiving weekend to mill the cane and make the syrup.



Special to Pelahatchie News

The Cumbest family serves the United Methodist Church (UMC). Chris, Sheila and now daughter Elizabeth all work for the UMC. Pictured (l to r) are: Son-in-law Phillip Byrd, with daughter Elizabeth, son Jesse, and Sheila and Chris Cumbest.



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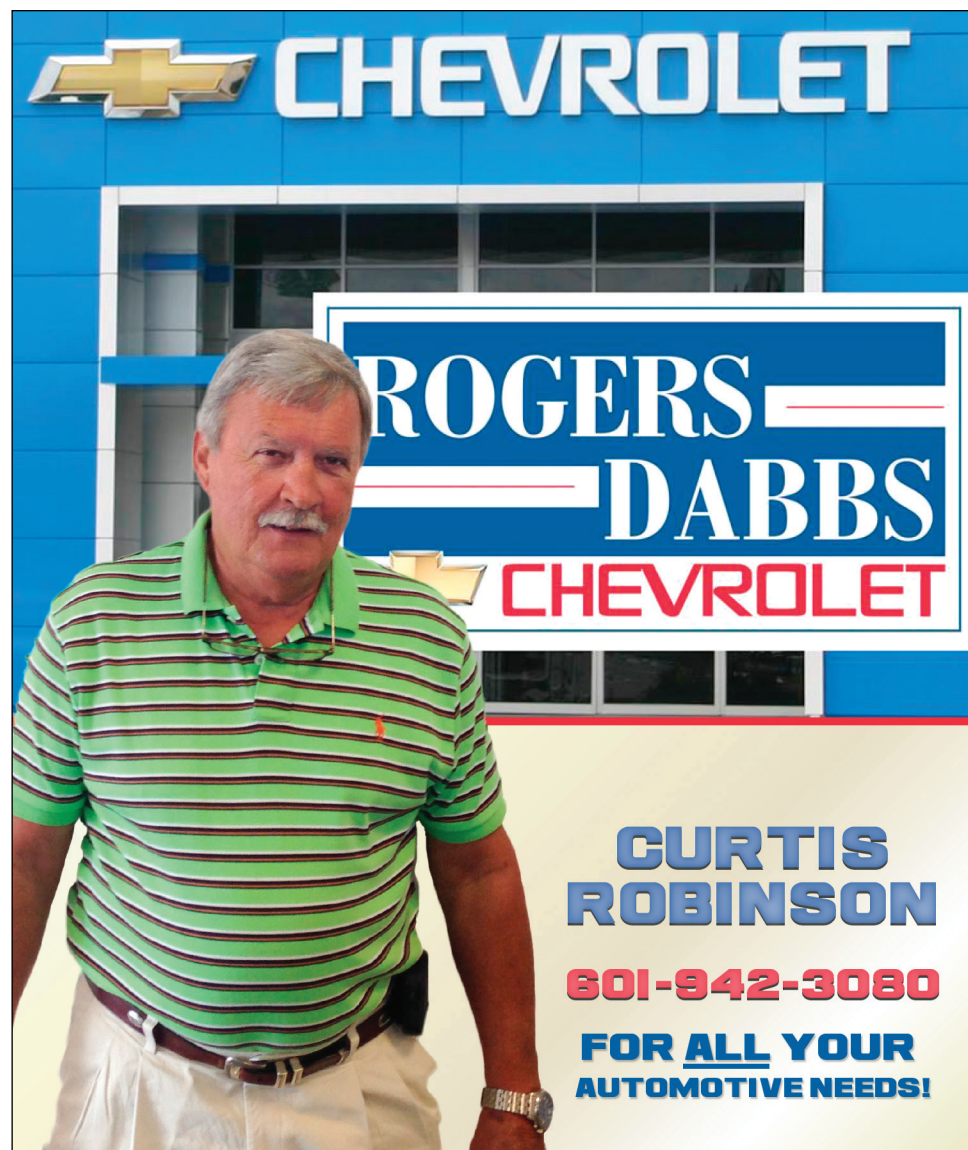
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Shiloh Camp Meeting now through June 10

By Susie A. Wolfe

The one hundred eighty-sixth Annual Shiloh Camp Meeting is currently being held through Sunday, June 10, at Shiloh United Methodist Church (UMC). The annual summer event is the oldest camp meeting in the state. The Nobles sisters, Gay and Fay, are decedents of one of the Shiloh community's oldest families, the Kershs, that came from North Carolina and settled Shiloh in the late 1820s. Some of the history is recorded, and some came from their grandmother's stories.

At Camp Meeting, 300-400 Shiloh UMC members, family and guests hear preaching daily and participate in children's and youth activities. Some stay in some of the 60 cabin "tents" around the church and attend services in the open tabernacle with wooden benches and sawdust floors.

The church and community were built around the springs in the area, and the church has worked to make that area easily accessible to members with a wooden boardwalk on the hill behind the tents. Some of the earlier tents are connected and called "the motel." Others are stand-alone similar to those at the Neshoba County Fair, where they are used ten days once a year.

The worship services are held at 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. daily. There's prayer meetings each morning at 9 a.m. and at 5 p.m. for the children, youth and ladies. Men meet at 6:30 p.m. Choir practice is at 7 p.m. before the service, and the youth have activities after the service at 9:30 each night.

Families own the tents that have electricity and water, but no bathrooms.



They have to walk to the bathhouse or the church for those facilities. Many families stay during the day, and some stay the night after visiting with relatives and life-long friends.

The Nobles sisters manage the museum that displays Camp Meeting history. It is in the first tent at the front of the campground.

There are stories about unique camp meetings and people. One year, each night a deceased person was depicted in character dressed in period clothing talking about their life. For

ten days, they had a different person portrayed.

Another story is about Navada Martin, Gay and Fay's grandmother's first cousin. She left the Shiloh Community to travel to China to be a missionary in 1905. She stayed there five years and established a school. After she came back to the United States, she moved to China, Texas, where she started a family and taught school.

Photos by
Pelahatchie News

A thousand names of youth from the last 40 to 50 years are written on the walls of the tent used for food preparation during events. Pictured (l to r) are: Laurie Flickner, Jennifer Clark, James Flickner and Brian Rhodes.

Photos by Pelahatchie News

The current tabernacle was built in 1925. The benches were cleaned, and new sawdust is put down on the floors before camp meeting started.



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- Week 1: JOY- swimming
- Week 2: PATIENCE- fishing
- Week 3: KINDNESS-Braves game
- Week 4: LOVE- Bowling

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Cyclists ride through Town



Photo by Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie was a favorite rest stop for cyclists in the Natchez Trace Century Ride. Volunteers were ready with cheers and refreshments as hundreds of cyclists rode from 25-100 miles. Ace Neicase from Ocean Springs, right, was a cyclist in the Ride. He is pictured with Mayor Ryshonda Beechem.

Leah Cunningham Courage Award given to her sister



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pictured (l to r) are sisters Leah and Brooke Cunningham.

Special to Pelahatchie News

At the May 6 Upward Soccer Celebration at Pelahatchie Baptist Church (PBC), the first annual Leah Cunningham Courage Award was given to her sister, Brooke. Leah, 16, a sophomore at East Rankin Academy, passed away Dec. 23, 2017.

The annual award will be given to a person in the community who has exhibited great courage in the midst of adversity. Names will be added to the plaque

that is located in the most traveled hall at PBC right outside the fellowship hall.

Pastor Guy Hughes said, "Leah's precious spirit will always be remembered at Pelahatchie Baptist Church. Her infectious, engaging smile and energy were a vital part of the PBC ministry. She volunteered constantly and brought life and laughter."

Brooke, 17, overcame major surgery and a brain injury to go back to school. She will join her senior class next year at East Rankin Academy.

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PES names April students of the month



Special to Pelahatchie News

The Pelahatchie Elementary April students of the month (l to r) are, front row: Alaina Jordan, Breanna Goggin, Damien Blaylock, Hunter Sanders, Araya Perkins, Dannea Hicks, Sara Myers, Haylee Blackwell, and Brelynn Burnham; and back row: Rylee Covert, Graison Reddmann, Javion Harris-McGee, Jack Herrington, Carson Moore, Keaghan Ellington, Jacob Harvey and Sarah Westbrooks. Not pictured: Cameron Banks, Mark Frey, Anna Langley, Kaine Jones, Christian Beeman, Sam Till, Payton Sanders and Trent McGraw.

Miss Mississippi attends Shiloh Tea



Special to Pelahatchie News

Miss Mississippi Anne Elizabeth Buys was the guest speaker at the Daughters of the King-Beyond Gems Brunch on May 5 at Shiloh United Methodist Church. Eighty-four heard her address that true beauty is on the inside. Shown (l to r) front row, are: Buys, Charlotte Jones, and Anna Belle Rhodes; and second row: Lucy Rhodes and Rylee Edwards.

Cross Roads Baptist Church



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
- Prayer Meeting and Bible Study

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Dance competition held in Pelahatchie

Special to Pelahatchie News

The Spring Fever Dance Competition was held in Pelahatchie in April. Rittany from the TV show *Bring It* and young artists Lil Qua & Lil J provided entertainment. The judges were Kimberly Noel Washington from Madison, Mississippi, Jessica Thompson from McComb, and Alexis Porter from Biloxi.

Winners by category include: parade category: first place, LAS Soldierettes; and second place, Dancing Divas of Meridian; field show: first place, Dancing Divas of Natchez; and second place, LAS Soldierettes; trio: first place, LAS Soldierettes; and second place, Dancing Divas of Meridian; call out: first place, LAS Soldierettes; and second place, Dancing Divas of Meridian; junior varsity stand battle: first place, Dancing Divas of Natchez; and second place, Dancing Divas of Meridian; and varsity: first place, Dancing Divas of Meridian; and second place, LAS Soldierettes.



The LAS Soldierettes from Baton Rouge won Grand Champs at the April competition.

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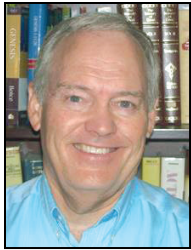


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Pastor's perspective: Only you can change the situation



Special to
Pelahatchie News

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

Both my grandfather and father had a disease called BBS, otherwise known as "Big Belly Syndrome." I had always said I would never allow myself to develop BBS. But recently, I have had to admit, that I suffer from it, too. It must be genetic!

Of course, BBS is not a real disease, but it certainly does affect a lot of people. And, even with all my good intentions, it affects me, too.

The reality is that having a weight problem could actually have a genetic component. But I must admit, also, that I am the one who controls what I eat and how much exercise I get. Those two factors are probably more significant than genetics in controlling

my weight. So, if I want to do something about my BBS, I am the one who must do what is necessary to change my situation. There is no doubt that by exercising more and eating better, I can reduce the effects of BBS. But I am the one who must do it. It will take personal discipline and dedication, and those must come from within me.

The same thing is true of our spiritual development. It is easy to get out of shape spiritually. We can call it OOF, "Out Of Fellowship." And, it can happen to any believer. But if you realize that you are not where you need to be in your relationship to the Lord, only you can change the situation. You must have the desire, then put forth the effort to strengthen your spiritual life. You must have the dedication and spiritual discipline to do the things that will help you grow spiritually and defeat OOF.

I hope you have a great month! Be sure to take your family to church on Sunday!

Nelson to play Belhaven golf



Photo by Pelahatchie News

Reid Nelson signed to play golf at Belhaven University in May. Shown with his parents (l to r) Stacie and Kelly. He plans to major in Sports Management.

Adams inducted into Phi Kappa Phi

Special to Pelahatchie News

Nodja Adams of Pelahatchie was recently initiated into the honor society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society. Adams was initiated at Jackson State University in May.

Adams is among approximately 30,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year. Membership is by invitation only and requires nomination and approval by a chapter. Only the top ten percent of seniors and 7.5 percent of juniors are eligible for membership.

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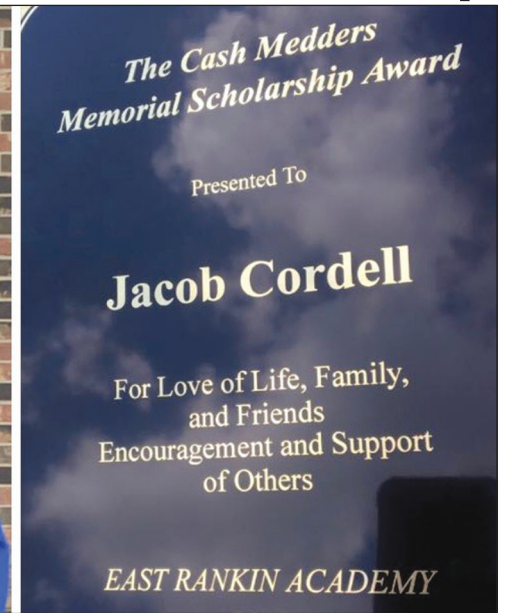
Pastor Brown celebrates 15 years



Special to Pelahatchie News

Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church (MBC) celebrated the 15 years of dedicated service of Pastor Ronnie Brown, Sr. and First Lady Demetra Brown with a banquet on April 28 and Sunday worship service on May 6. The banquet speaker was Pastor Mark Johnson of Farris Hill Church M. B. Church in Pelahatchie, and the anniversary message was delivered by Pastor Doug Lacy of Ratliff Baptist in Edwards, Mississippi.

Cordell awarded scholarship



Special to Pelahatchie News

Jacob Cordell received the first Cash Medders Memorial Scholarship.

Special to Pelahatchie News

Jacob Cordell was awarded the \$300 Cash Medders Memorial Scholarship at the East Rankin graduation ceremonies on May 20. The first annual scholarship was given in memory of eight-year-old Cash Medders, who passed away on August 25, 2017.

The inscription on the plaque says,

"For love of life, family and friends; encouragement and support of others."

More than \$20,000 was raised for the scholarship, according to East Rankin Headmaster Dan Boyce.

Elisa McKinion, Cash's mother, said, "Everyone has been amazing, going above and beyond to remember Cash and carry on his legacy."



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