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NEWS

Pelahatchie

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

December
2020

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Pelahatchie News
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Parker named PES Teacher of the Year

Special to Pelahatchie News

Kindergarten teacher Mallory Parker was named the Pelahatchie Elementary School (PES) Teacher of the Year for 2020-2021. She has been at PES three years but is an eleven-year veteran.

"Mrs. Parker is soft spoken and nurturing. She establishes norms and routines that are evident, whether she is present or not. She not only is an asset in the classroom, she is an asset to the school as a whole. She is making a difference every day," said PES Principal Robin Sanders.

Parker said that she teaches because she loves children. "I feel it is my calling. I love to watch them grow and be successful."

"I am so appreciative to be picked as PES Teacher of the Year. The teachers

in our school are full of perseverance and work every day with a positive attitude. It is a great honor to be chosen out of this amazing group of people."

Parker is from Carthage, but now lives in Brandon. She has an undergraduate degree in elementary education from Mississippi State University and a Master's in elementary education from Mississippi College.

Parker said, "The Pandemic has required all of us to make changes, but I am so thankful to have my students in the classroom with me. In some ways, I feel like I am a brand-new teacher. However, I've trained and have filled my teacher toolbox with a variety of new teaching tools."

Parker and her husband, Joseph, have three sons, Chase, eleven; Tuff, nine; and Jax, eight.



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie Elementary Teacher of the Year, Mallory Parker, is shown with her family. Pictured (l to r) front row, are: Chase, Tuff, and Jax Parker; and back row: Joseph and Mallory Parker.

Beechem named Top 50 Under 40 honoree

By Susie A. Wolfe

On November 10, the *Mississippi Business Journal* named Pelahatchie Mayor Ryshonda Beechem one of its 2020 Top 50 Under 40, awarded to professionals recognized for contributions to the state's economic progress, civic involvement, and commitment to serving her community.

"We are truly pleased to recognize and honor a great group of Mississippi's business and civic leaders under 40," said Tami Jones, publisher of the *Mississippi Business Journal*. "These deserving men and women have already proven themselves as high achievers and trend setters, and we have no doubt that many of these individuals will go on to even greater success in the years to come."

Since its inception in 1993, the *Mississippi Business Journal* has honored hundreds of Mississippi business leaders who are playing active day-to-day roles in moving the state's economy well into the 21st century.



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie Mayor Ryshonda Beechem was named to Mississippi Business Journal's Top 50 Under 40 list for 2020. She is one of the individuals who have made significant contributions to Mississippi's overall economic progress.

ERA named Old Capitol Bowl Champions



Special to Pelahatchie News

Special to Pelahatchie News

On November 18, the East Rankin Academy Government Quiz Bowl team competed in the Old Capitol Bowl hosted by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. The team finished

first place after successfully competing against Jackson Prep in the finals of the tournament and was declared 2020 Old Capitol Bowl Champions. Representing East Rankin Academy in the competition pictured (l to r) are: Will Price, Colby Stewart, and Dylan Davis.

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Pandemic results in new Pelahatchie company going worldwide

By Susie A. Wolfe

Pelahatchie resident Will Sims, formerly Human Resources Director at the Mid-South Baking Company, is one of two founders of TRU-SPOT Technologies, located on Leesburg Road. Sims and his Brandon, Mississippi, childhood friend, Gregory Proctor, got the idea for their high-tech company when they both played football for Brandon many years ago.

TRU-SPOT is an app for first down measurement in football. In addition, the app can also sell virtual seats at football games, concerts, and other events around the world. The pair is still working out details, but Sims said that their childhood dream never went away. They are seeking to launch the app in fall 2021, in time for the next football season.

"It's a thought that remained with me for forty years. The name TRU-SPOT is the only name that I've ever conceived for this dream for many years, because the name says it all... the purpose of the app," said Sims.

Proctor said the idea of an app used in conjunction with Augmented Reality (AR) features for purposes of online virtual seat purchasing was conceived

during the pandemic. Proctor, who lives and works in San Antonio, Texas, said the idea came to him as he watched each professional and collegiate sporting season cancel because of COVID-19. He said, "until social distancing restricting is fully lifted, stadiums and concert venues could utilize our technology to fill the void seats, based upon limited capacity. Our technology is fully scalable and adaptive to any situation for any largely crowded arena – worldwide."

They have a working prototype that is available for viewing on company website – www.truspotar.com + menu option + prototype. They are currently seeking the right investment funding to further define the app's AR and proof of concept capabilities.

"The idea was conceived during my senior year at Brandon High School after football practice," said Sims. "One of

the assistant coaches asked me and two other players on the team if we'd run the chains (or be part of the chain crew) for the Brandon junior high football game that evening. Being dog tired after running sprints during earlier practice, I reluctantly agreed. During the course of that football game that night, the referee called for a first down measurement. I remember saying to a teammate on the chain crew, 'During science class today, we talked about technology advancing to the point of having household robots and flying cars by the year 2000. I hope one day someone invents a way to measure first downs by a

computer or some type of laser on the field, and give the fans in the stands an opportunity to witness up close the whole spot measurement process with the official!"

Proctor said, "Rapidly, as the pandem-

ic occurred, I discovered that being an avid NBA fan and concert goer, I would no longer be able to partake in these types of activities. Also, I begin to contemplate how the fans, team owners, and musicians/artists were going to play live without fans. Realizing the potential for lost revenue and ticket sales, we began to brainstorm how to place fans into a stadium or concert venue seat virtually."

The duo conceptualizes that, if a fan wanted to attend a Drake, Adele, or Carrie Underwood concert in Toronto, Canada, they could purchase virtual seating in any seats that they chose and have a virtual experience, just like they were there, using the Tru-Spot app.

The app is also used as a distance measurement system using machine learning, visual recognition algorithms, and a visual positioning service that can be used indoors/outdoors for purposes of establishing yardage measurement in a football game. The location and measurement technologies are used in conjunction with a mobile application device for displaying measurement results. There is also an option to add team logos, schedules, player position and stats.

For more information on Sims' and Proctor's new concept, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=ur_RyDotGvg&feature=youtu.be.



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie resident Will Sims and his partner, Gregory Proctor, have developed an app to measure first downs in football that also allows people to attend concerts and events around the world virtually from their homes.



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Banks named new Board attorney

Special to Pelahatchie News

Kimberly C. Banks was appointed the new Town of Pelahatchie's attorney after John Wakeland's resignation was announced at the November 2 Board meeting. She is the sixth attorney hired in the last three and a half years.

Banks is a municipal attorney with Banks Law & Associates of Ridgeland who has practiced for 16 years. Her experience includes the City of Jackson, the City of Canton, the City of Pickens, and Hinds County.

She was hired under the same contract terms that Wakeland had, \$500 retainer and \$150 an hour. It is a month-to-month contract that can be terminated at any time by both parties.



Special to Pelahatchie News

Kimberly Celeste Banks was named the Board attorney for the Town of Pelahatchie at the November Board Meeting.

Harrell named Pelahatchie Employee of the Month



Special to Pelahatchie News

The Town of Pelahatchie named Brady Harrell Employee of the Month for October at the Town of Pelahatchie October 5 Board meeting. Harrell is pictured with Pelahatchie Mayor Ryshonda Beechem.



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Multicraft International announces Halloween costume winners



Special to Pelahatchie News

Multicraft employees enjoyed participating in a Halloween contest and winning great cash awards in October. Employees competed in two categories: Best Theme and Best Costume. The winners were Best Theme, first place, The Pink Ladies, pictured (l to r) are: Sandra Wall, Bettina Graffenread, Chaunna Bates, Monica Moore and Samantha Sullivan; Best Theme second place, Voodoo Witch, Katherine Kennedy; Best Theme, third place, black/orange outfit, Lori Lewis; Best Costume, first place, witch, Chuck Flumm; Best Costume, second place, Hattie Mae Love, Shennia Holifield; and Best Costume, third place, Samara Morgan, The Ring, Casey Wright.

Bowie recognized for October character trait



Special to Pelahatchie News

Chyna Bowie of Pelahatchie Elementary was recognized by the RCSD for Character Trait of the Month for October. The character trait was integrity. One student out of all those recognized is submitted to the Rankin County School District as the Pelahatchie representative.

Three PHS seniors inducted into PTK



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie High School (PHS) seniors, Bailey Johnson, Reagan Sanders, and Chloe Walters, pictured (l to r), were inducted into Phi Theta Kappa at Hinds Community College in November.



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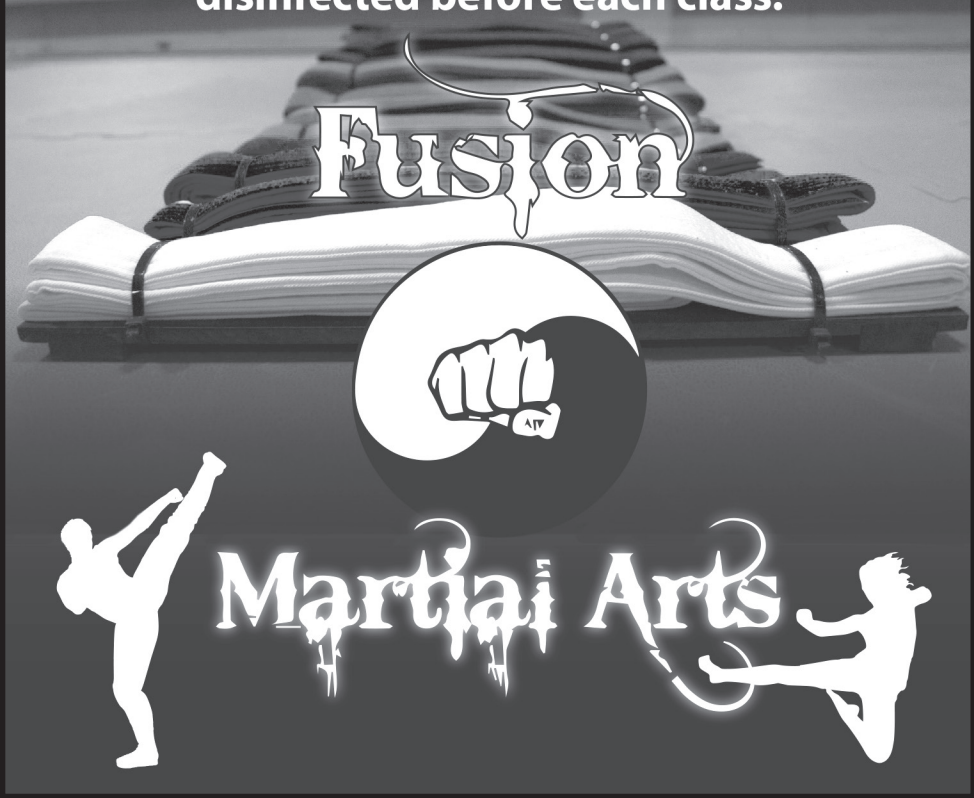
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Crooked Letter Kitchen serves Rankin County foodies



Special to Pelahatchie News

Chef Jonathan Beard operates the Crooked Letter Kitchen food truck that specializes in Cajun bar-b-que fusion. Based in the Pelahatchie area, the food truck moves around Rankin County weekly.

By Susie A. Wolfe

Crooked Letter Kitchen (CLK) is a food truck that specializes in Cajun bar-b-que fusion. Owned by Jonathan Beard, whose family is from the Cross Roads area, he moves around Rankin County weekly. A chef that served in the United States Marine Corp, he serves his own creations partnered with his father, Charles Beard's, award-winning bar-b-que.

"Food trucks are mobile restaurants that have to get the food out fast," said Beard. "The biggest issue is space. We have flavor and experience but are unique in our customer service. We treat everyone like family and try to know our customers by their first name."

Beard was featured in a May *Clarion Ledger* article about on food trucks during the pandemic said driving into neighborhoods has become the new normal.

He said, "We're not working at the festivals or markets throughout the summer and spring months, we're going into the neighborhoods where a lot of people are confined to their homes

or working from home. When everyone was shut down and people could only get take-out, food trucks were all you had for about three or four weeks."

Crooked Letter Kitchen opened in 2018. Beard worked as a chef for the Marine Corps and as a general manager at several restaurants before opening his own food truck business. He said he typically spent five to six days a week feeding families in the Jackson Metro Area during the first part of the pandemic.

Beard said business has always been good for Crooked Letter, and the response he's gotten since the pandemic has been overwhelming. One customer who worked in Madison drove to Pelahatchie one night when they were serving late. After ordering three meals, she said the food is even rated on the local "foodie" web pages.

Crooked Letter Kitchen has two full-time employees, Kimberly Beard and Kaitlyn McIntyre, and one part-time, Kim Darrow. They are also available for parties, weddings, and corporate events. His hashtag is #bustintastebuds. Call 601-374-1757 for more information.

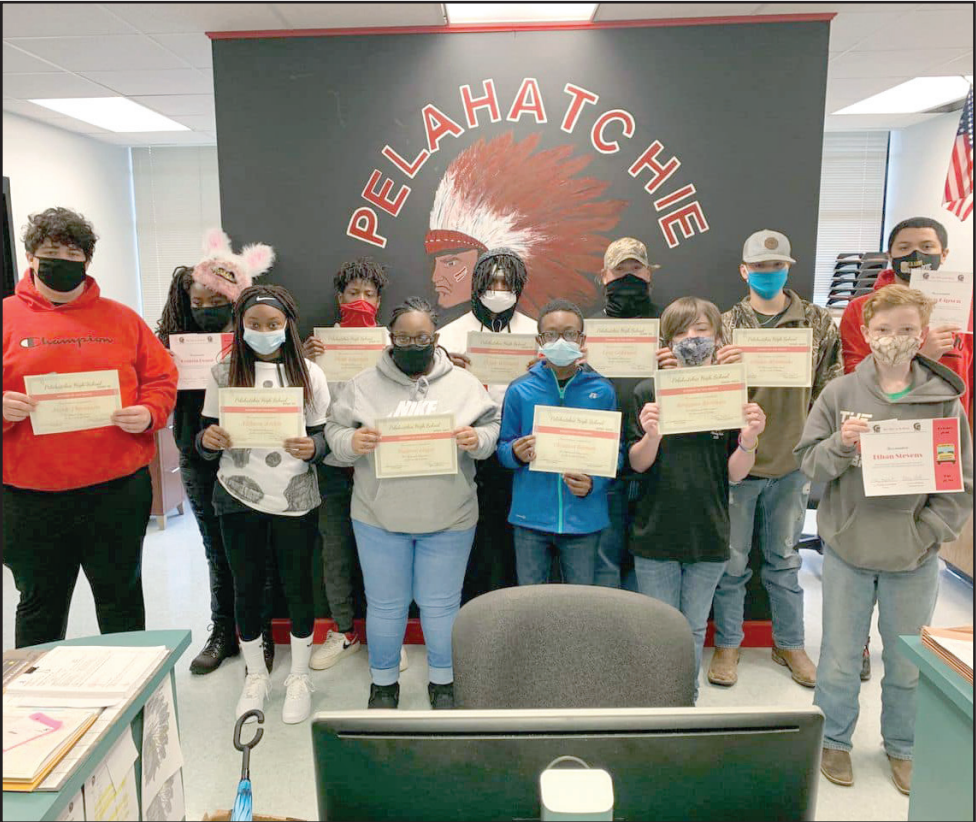
PES Bus Riders of the Month named



Special to Pelahatchie News

The October Pelahatchie Elementary Bus Riders of the Month pictured (l to r) front row, are: Cyntria Beard, Ethan Stevens, Aaron Gipson, Alisa Strickland and Ayden Collier; and back row: Lanna Grant, Kaylla Lester, Mary Askew (Bus Driver), Robert Westbrooks, and Tanner Flores.

Pelahatchie High School October Student of the Month awards



Special to Pelahatchie News

The recipients of the Pelahatchie High School October Student of the Month pictured (l to r) are: Jacob Thompson, Addison Archie, Madyson McGee, Christian Beeman, Benjamin Burnham, and Ethan Stevens (PES Bus award); and back row: Cyntria Beard (PES Bus award), Jacob Ragsdale, Elijah Williams, Levi Goldman, Hayden Westbrook, and Aaron Gipson (PES Bus award); Not pictured: Tyson Beeman, Brooklyn Johnson, and Kayleigh Keyes. All PES Bus award recipients are listed on page 5.

PHS plays first round of playoffs



Special to Pelahatchie News

Pelahatchie High School (PHS) hosted a first round 2A Region 4 playoff game against East Webster (4-4) on November 6. The Chiefs (5-5) who were first in the district play (3-0), winning against South Delta 41-7, Pisgah 41-21, and SJCHS 40-14. They lost the playoff 41 to 13.

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Chiefs will finish strong in 2020

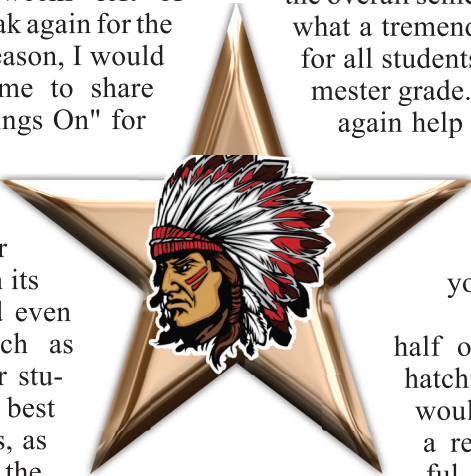


By Guest Columnist
Dr. Teague Burchfield,
Principal, Pelahatchie
High School

With Thanksgiving break behind us and only a couple of weeks left of school before we break again for the Christmas holiday season, I would like to take this time to share with you a few "Goings On" for our students at Pelahatchie High School.

First of all, our first benchmark is on its way! As always and even in trying times such as these, we expect our students to be their very best on these assessments, as they are a gauge of the work they have done this semester. This first benchmark will be the baseline we need to move forward through the second semester. As parents, you can get involved by simply communicating the expectation of a successful outcome on these assessments.

Also, make sure to check our website



and social media outlets in the upcoming week for "Exam Week" details; this information will include the semester exam schedule as well as test week policies (Check Out Process) that help protect our classroom from any unnecessary interruptions. Regarding the semester exam, with it weighing 20% of the overall semester grade for a class, what a tremendous opportunity it is for all students to improve their semester grade. With that being said, again help us coach up yours to finish the semester on a positive note. Thank you all in advance for your support!

To close, and on behalf of everyone at Pelahatchie High School, I would like to wish you all a restful, safe, and joyful holiday season with your family and friends. As we close 2020, let's reflect on the great work that has been done through some very trying times by everyone in the Pelahatchie High School Family, and, as for 2021, let's ALL make a decision to continue to build on the successes our Chiefs have already achieved. Go Chiefs!

PHS names October student, teacher awards



Special to Pelahatchie News

The Farm Bureau Teacher of the Month for Pelahatchie High School (PHS) October is Nikki Nutt. The Student of the Month winner for October is Adlyn Till. Pictured (l to r) are: Tanner Wilson, Farm Bureau; Nutt; Till; Leslie Hebert, instructional supervisor; and Dr. Teague Burchfield, principal.

PES students collect donations for ERCO



Special to Pelahatchie News

The Pelahatchie Elementary School (PES) students and faculty went above and beyond for the good of their community by collecting 2,235 can food items for Ever Reaching Community Outreach. The collection campaign was led by Counselor Dana Lee. Mrs. Hillard's fifth grade class collected the most per class with 266 cans. Mrs. Thompson's second grade class collected 156 cans. ERCO's Director KathyJo Latham said that the food items will be a great blessing to help feed hungry families this holiday season. Pictured (l to r) front row, are: Gage Goldman, Jose Lopez, Mahogani Hollis, Zanyia Hollis, Ethan Butler, Katlynn Murray, and Braylon Jordan; and back row: Mrs. Lee.

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A shout out to those who work behind the scenes



By Guest Columnist,
Robin Sanders,
Principal, Pelahatchie
Elementary

Special to
Pelahatchie News

As much as teachers deserve praise and support, there are other heroes in the school who put in the time to prepare for our students. They work the same hours to help ensure our students are safe and happy. It truly does take a village. I want the people behind the scenes to know that we appreciate their support and hard work.

School office workers are the heartbeat of the school! These ladies have mastered the art of multitasking while ensuring that students, staff and visitors feel welcome at school. They are a school's first line of defense, because they know who's allowed in the building and who isn't. Say thank you to your school office workers the next time you see them.

Teacher's assistants are the lifeline for teachers. They take the time to get to know

your kid on a personal level, because they spend extra time helping them throughout the day. They work hard to help a teacher perform their duties and ensure that students feel loved and supported. Teacher's aides are the unsung heroes of schools.

Custodians rock! Now more than ever, they work tirelessly to make sure that the school building is in working order. They help to ensure that the staff and students walk into a fresh, clean building every morning.

School bus drivers deserve a special place in heaven. If your child rides the bus, their bus driver is the first person to greet them each morning and the last to say goodbye. Their mission is to provide a safe mode of transportation for your students each day. Next time you see your bus driver, thank them for getting your child to and from school safely each day.

Cafeteria staff have a tough job, especially with all of the current safety procedures in place. People often don't realize how much planning goes into a school's menu, much less how hard it is to provide

healthy meals that are safe for all of the children. This is a job that deserves more recognition than these workers usually get.

School nurses. Can we just stand up and give our nurse a round of applause? She does so much more than just hand out Band-Aids and ice packs. She develops care plans for kids who have diabetes, ADHD, and other physical differences. When an emergency happens in a classroom, or when a child is not feeling their best, the school nurse is on the scene to assist with the situation. Just like everyone else mentioned above, her duties this year have multiplied. We are grateful for her daily assistance with our staff, students and parents.

Every day, our students are surrounded by an army of dedicated people who are ready, willing, and able to make sure they succeed at school. So, don't forget to send a card or note of thanks to those who are the often-forgotten heroes of school. They will appreciate it more than you know.

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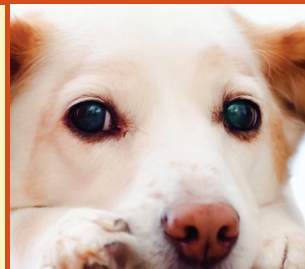
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Christmas and agriculture are tied together



By Doug Carter,
Rankin County
Extension Agent

Special to
Pelahatchie News

Having been raised on a farm in rural Rankin County, I can easily say that Christmas is a very important time of the year for those of us involved in agriculture. Most of us are from Christian families, so the reason we celebrate Christmas is no big surprise. As I look back, it seems the whole time I was growing up, Christmas was such a magical time of the year.

The setting that is a stable is something that we can easily refer to since we grew up around farm animals. I can remember as I grew up, both of my grandfathers had stalls in their barns.

We understand that a manger was not a bad place or situation; it could be used as the resting place for a newborn child. According to the dictionary, a manger is a structure used to hold food for farm animals. The word comes from the French language mangier (meaning "to eat"). Mangers are mostly used in raising livestock and generally found in stables and farmhouses.



Special to Pelahatchie News

We all know the story, the time came for the baby to be born, and Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son, she wrapped him in clothes, and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in an inn.

Inns during that time were nothing like they are today. The occupants slept in rooms together, probably without any heat, except what was produced by their own bodies. Try to imagine all the snoring and other sounds, not to mention the smells, the diseases and the pests the travelers carried with them from all over the Roman Empire.

I just believe the innkeeper did them

a huge favor by placing them in a stable away from the other travelers with the animals. There was hay for bedding, and the warmth of the animals could help take the edge off the cold of a long winter night.

It is so easy to see that all of this had been planned, and it came to set the stage for the story we know today.

After Jesus's birth, a very bright star was seen in the eastern sky. There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby keeping watch of their flocks, and an angel appeared to them. This part of the story confirms to me the apparent im-

portance of these lowly people who, as shepherds, were producing sheep for the sheep's wool. These shepherds were regarded as highly important members of society.

The actual story sounds like they all left their sheep and traveled to see the child. However, anyone that understands sheep will understand that some went, and some stayed with the flocks to guard them from the predators of the night. Just think of the story they had to tell their fellow shepherds when they returned.

During this time, agriculture was the occupation that sustained society, just as it is today. At that time, it required most of the population to do all the work required to produce the food and clothing they needed.

The week he was crucified, Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey, a beast that was used to transport farm products.

Agriculture cannot be removed from this great story, and it has translated into the faith of so many people of the world today.

From the Rankin County Extension Service, "Merry Christmas" and "Happy New Year."

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Pastor's Perspective: Don't let COVID-19 keep you from celebrating Christmas



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

Special to Pelahatchie News

The coronavirus has changed our lives and the way we live them. I don't have to remind you of all the ways that our lives have been altered and adjusted during 2020. And this year is not over yet! Just like everything else, Christmas will be different for all of us this year.

At our church, we normally have a Children's Program, an Adult Choir Pageant, a church-wide Christmas party, and each class has a get together with gift exchanges or "dirty Santa." All of those things have been canceled for this year. We hope to just be able to continue to meet on Sunday mornings for worship!

And most family gatherings will probably look different this year, if they are even held. Because of factors like travel complications and susceptible family members, there will be plenty of re-thinking plans and, possibly, canceling them altogether, adding more anguish to a period already filled with immense stress.

And even if you make tentative plans, be mindful that your situation could also

change suddenly. Whether it's a positive test or an onset of symptoms for either you or your family, it's possible that even the best-made plans might go sideways at the last minute.

One thing to be mindful of as you make, and possibly change, plans, is the fact that everyone is emotionally exhausted, if not physically sick over COVID-19. We're all tired of it! But it's still here and will probably be hanging around well into 2021.

So be mindful of how others feel and understand that many family members and others may have very thin emotions right now. Be encouraging rather than demanding. Be joyful rather than sad. Be positive rather than negative. Be hopeful rather than discouraging.

While the way we celebrate Christmas may look different this year, the reason we celebrate has not changed at all! COVID-19 may have forced us to change a lot of things, but it cannot change the truth of God's Word. Matthew 1:18-23 still tells us this truth,

"This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want

to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give



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birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means 'God with us')."

Luke 2:4-14 still confirms His birth. "So, Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because

he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them."

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, goodwill toward all men."

Don't let COVID-19 or anything else keep you from celebrating Christmas this year. It hasn't changed! Be sure to take your family to church on Sunday or watch a service together.



WINTER SCHEDULE

*Sunday Worship Service:

9:00 a.m. - Blended Worship Service
10:30 a.m. - Sunday School for All Ages

*Wednesday:

5:30 p.m. - Family Dinner
6:30 p.m. - All Activities

Morning Devotions

7:30 a.m. on the Cross Roads Baptist Church Facebook Page

*Services broadcast live on the Cross Roads Baptist Church Facebook page.

"The Church has not been closed...the Church has been deployed!"

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Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	Arrangements
Frank Edward Evans	92	Oklahoma	10/29/2020	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Clarice Inonelle Pope	84	Forest, MS	11/12/2020	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Addie Mae	94	Jackson, MS	11/12/2020	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Betty Louise Rhineheart	79	Forest, MS	11/14/2020	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Brian Keith Dolan	56	Forest, MS	11/15/2020	Wolf Funeral Serv.
James C. "Jimmy"	77	Lake, MS	11/19/2020	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Cooksey				
Bobby Joe Loper	76	Walnut Grove, MS	11/19/2020	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Kay Pettis Morgan	78	Gulfport, MS	11/19/2020	Wolf Funeral Serv.
Debby Hall Mccrory	67	Morton, MS	11/20/2020	Wolf Funeral Serv.

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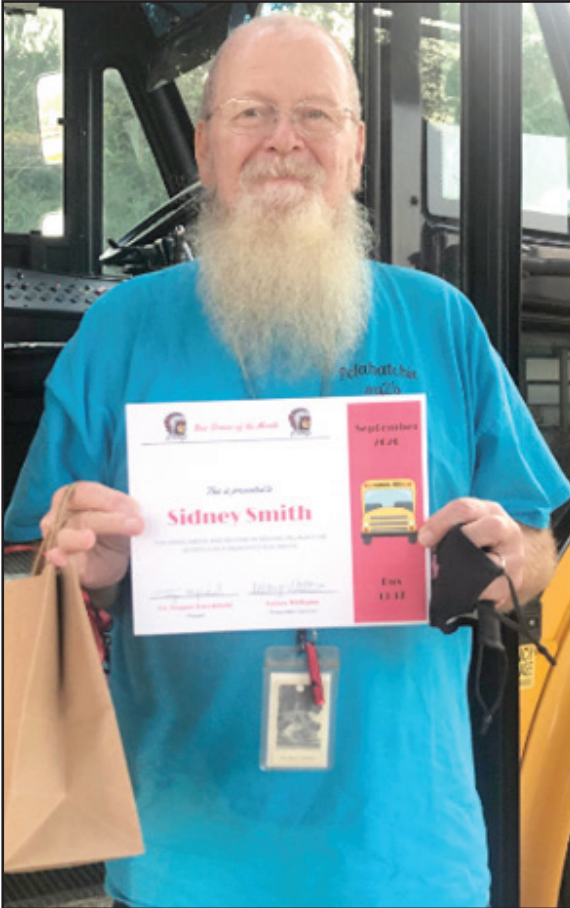
PES October Character Trait awards



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Pelahatchie Elementary School (PES) named the October Character Trait awards for "integrity." Pictured (l to r) front row, are: Ty Bowie, Jamie Phillips, Chase Parker, Jalyn Magee, Mary Taylor Nutt, and Orby Renfro; second row: Ross Clarke, Chyna Bowie, Dannea Hicks, Stacey Wilson, Jose Lopez, and Somaya Hillie; third row: Travis Butler, Kaiah Myers, Greenlee Gregory, Aaron Griffin, JaRiyah Eubanks, and Easton Laughlin; and fourth row: Korbin Akins, Lance Wilkerson, Demi Ward, Dillon Courtney, Landon May, Brandon Reuben, and Vada Eutzler.

Smith receives Rankin County SD October award



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The Rankin County School District (RCSD) recognized Pelahatchie's Sidney Smith as the Secondary Classified employee for October. He is a bus driver for Pelahatchie schools.



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Gold Coast's permit pulled for dumping

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The Mississippi Environmental Quality Permit Board voted unanimously at its meeting last week to revoke the wastewater permit for a Brandon-based chemical plant that allowed it to dump its wastewater in Pelahatchie.

Gold Coast Commodities can reapply for a permit, but the Permit Board's action means the company has been ordered three times by the DEQ to stop disposing of its wastewater in three different cities in the metro area: first Brandon, then Jackson and now Pelahatchie, where the company had constructed a lagoon with aerators in an agreement reached with city officials.

The DEQ has ordered the company to pump out the wastewater from the lagoon, which has resulted in numerous odor complaints filed with the environmental watchdog agency by area residents.

The board denied a continuance request by Gold Coast to postpone the matter to a later date.

Gold Coast could also be facing fines as the Mississippi Board of Environmental Quality, the DEQ's governing board, is convening an evidentiary

hearing for today, November 19 over the Pelahatchie site.

"My perspective about the odor (from the Pelahatchie site) is that it is not particularly offensive and not particularly strong," said Sam Hardin, an engineer who works for Starkville-based Clearwater Consulting, a company contracted by Gold Coast. He said the company had problems with some of the five aerators on site, but removed and repaired them in an expedient manner.

The company was issued its permit for the lagoons and, after treatment, land application in August 2019. The DEQ later issued a notice of violation over storm water runoff from the construction of the lagoon. An inspection on June 12 of this year found that Gold Coast had not installed the required aerators or hook electric lines to them and didn't emplace the required depth markers in the lagoon itself. Another notice of violation was issued on July 20.

When the company turned on the

aerators in July, emergency personnel and others were exposed to dangerous hydrogen sulfide gas at concentrations above the 10-minute emergency maximum recommended by the U.S. Occu-

pational Health and Safety Administration. Eleven times DEQ officials noticed strong odors emanating from the facility.

The DEQ issued a water contact advisory in September after more than

400,000 gallons of wastewater was released accidentally into nearby Dry Creek. On September 11, the DEQ issued an order demanding the company fix the issues with the disposal lagoon within two weeks of the order.

Since the DEQ issued a cease and desist letter for disposing of its wastewater in Pelahatchie, the company has curtailed production and is storing its wastewater on site in railcars and in storage tanks. Company officials said they've tried to stay within the guidelines of the permit, but that they won't be able to stay in business at the Brandon site if forced to ship their wastewater outside the state.



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"Things have not gotten better," said Lane Stubbs, whose father Lewis Mashburn is the closest property owner to the Pelahatchie disposal site. "We keep getting reassurances that this will be taken care of it. The smell burns your nose and your throat and that doesn't seem safe to me. I don't like my father living there having to endure that."

She said that the odor was so bad that the scent clung to her brother's clothes even after a 45-minute drive home.

In a lawsuit filed by the city of Brandon, where the company dumped its wastewater for years, the company is accused of damaging the city's sewer system that ultimately empties into the city of Jackson's system.

Gold Coast then used a third-party contractor to truck and another to dump the wastewater directly into Jackson's system. The owner of this company, Rebel High Velocity Sewer Services, was ordered to stop dumping Gold Coast waste into Jackson's system and he was later indicted by the federal government for violations of the Clean Water Act.

A sample of the wastewater taken from where the contractor was dumping it into Jackson's system exploded in the lab under test.



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