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Participation in the U.S. Census is very important

By Lori Lycette

The United States Census has occurred every ten years since 1790, with the chief goal of counting every single person living in the United States at that time.

The U.S. Constitution mandates that everyone in the country be counted during the census. It is designed to determine how many seats in the House of Representatives that each state receives, and will be adjusted accordingly, if necessary. State officials redistrict the congressional and legislative districts accordingly to account for population shifts in each state.

The distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal funding flows back to states and local communities each year based on census data. That money is then spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public

works and other vital programs. The federal grants are based on population size, not needs.

Taking part is a mandatory, civic

to those who do not complete the census online and will eventually receive a paper questionnaire. The census may also be completed by



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duty which allows each individual to play a part in this nation's democracy.

During March, most households will receive an invitation by mail to respond online to the census. Reminder letters will be mailed

phone, for those who would rather call.

Census workers will then go door-to-door to follow up in person with all households that haven't responded.

All information gathered by the

Census Bureau is kept strictly confidential and may only be used for statistical purposes. By law, the census responses cannot be used against anyone by any government agency or court in any way. Title 13 of the U.S. Code states that no identifiable information about individuals, households or businesses may be released to anyone, even law enforcement agencies. Any violation will result in a penalty of up to \$250,000 and/or up to five years in prison.

Responding to the census helps communities get the funding they need and allows businesses to make data-driven decisions that will help grow the economy.

"The census count is extremely important. We recently had a representative from the census bureau

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Canton Library makes an appearance at the Capitol

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The Madison County Library System (MCLS) recently spent a day at the State Capitol and advocated for the immense amount of services that libraries provide and how those services impact their communities. Representatives from around the state rallied at an "MLA Day at the Capitol."

The Canton Public Library's Digital Innovation Lab was partially on display. The 3D printer produced Mississippi key chains efficiently, while laptops displayed free services and resources from Magnolia, a robust, cloud-based database software. Magnolia is critical to the State's educational infrastructure, job building skills, language learning software called Rocket Language, and SAT, ACT and other test prep software, like Learning

Express.

Magnolia is used by every public school in Mississippi and in all of the state's public community colleges and universities, but it is only partially funded. To be fully funded, the Mississippi Library Commission (MLC) would need an additional \$350,000. The MLC is already planning another day of demonstrating to state representatives how libraries help people find their place in the world and bring people together, and also how the library is a lifeline to many families, college students, diverse cultural groups and the communities they serve.

Community and cultural hub, the Madison County Library System, will have a pop-up library at the Capitol again on March 10, another "MLA Day at the Capitol," showcasing the bookmobile/



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Canton Library Branch Manager Christine Greenwood, Senator Barbara Blackmon, and Madison County Library System Director Tonja Johnson.

outreach services, youth services, adult services and other resources. Public libraries embody the values of democracy by offering free access to knowledge, stretching far beyond books, and offer thousands

of free resources that require qualified staff to teach and administer. To hire qualified staff to assist patrons, the Personnel Incentive Grant (PIG) needs to be increased

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cont. from front page

Canton Library makes an appearance

by 10%. These employees incorporate story times, outreach, literacy, technology, sensory need services and endless other skills, adapting daily for the ever-growing need of the patrons they serve.

This month at the Capitol, the Mississippi Library Commission also plans to show the importance of being fully funded from the 2016-2018 state and federal budget cuts. The MLC is the heart of all libraries in the state, and when they are partially funded, it trickles down like veins to all the libraries it serves. They are asking for a one-time supplemental appropriation funded outside of regular budget appropriations of \$395,000.

Mississippi libraries change lives every day and are about much more than books. They evolve with the needs of the community, and so does the funding commitment around those needs.

MCLS Director Tonja Johnson said, "Mississippi libraries play a crucial role in connecting people, not only to a wide range of resources, but also to their communities and their best selves. Every



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Evanne Flanders, Tonja Johnson, Lt. Governor Hoseman, Jill Berry, Christine Greenwood and Dawn Zimmerer.

day, Mississippians find new skills, new information, culture, opportunity and so much more at their local library. Mississippi libraries

truly change lives."

For more information about this topic, contact Braley Reed at 601-859-7733 ext. 108 or email at

cont. from front page

Participation in the U.S. Census is very important

come speak to the Board of Alderman about the upcoming census. I have established a Census Complete Count Committee and have appointed Alderman Fred Esco to be in charge of this committee," said Canton Mayor Dr. William Truly. "It is extremely important that all citizens are accounted for and participate in the census. People need to be properly counted. A lot of people are hesitant to answer their door, but as mayor, I encourage everyone to be open to speaking with census workers, whether in person when they come to your home or when they call. We don't want to be under-represented or under counted. There is a direct connection to the funds the state receives and welfare to the state and citizens."

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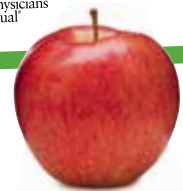
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Publisher

Clay Mansell

ClayMansell@CantonNews.net

Editor in Chief

Stephanie Tracy

Editor

Lori Lycette

601-667-4667 x5
News@CantonNews.net

Sales Representatives

Adam Craven

601-667-4667 x4
adam@ourhometownpaper.com

**Graphic Designer
/ Layout**

Megan Smith

Designer@CantonNews.net

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For submission information, email
news@cantonnews.net

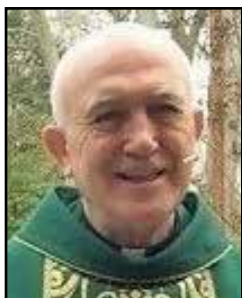
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Know Your Neighbor: Father O'Brien

By Guest Columnist Jim Ritchie

How many people do you know who decided to leave their native country with the explicitly stated purpose of migrating to Mississippi? Not to just the U.S.A., but specifically to Mississippi? This neighbor did.



Special to The Canton News

Father Mike O'Brien

Meet Michael O'Brien...Irishman, soccer player, rugby player, tennis player, golfer and pastor of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Canton. Father Mike, as he's most often called, was born the second oldest of eight children to his schoolteacher parents in County Roscommon, Ireland.

He received his elementary schooling under both parents in the county public school then attended high school in the Garbally Boarding School for Boys. It was during his high school days that he felt the calling to become a priest, and upon graduating from Garbally, he attended seminary at St. Patrick's College in Carlow.

While in seminary, he decided to forgo the usual priestly path of remaining in Ireland and probably teach at a school, which he didn't feel called to do. He thought about serving the church in a foreign place like China or Africa, but in his mind, he was not adept at adequately learning a new language.

His cousin and a good friend, both also attending seminary, interested him in coming to Mississippi. They were planning to come here and thought that Michael, being the country boy that he was, would be happier located in a rural setting where there was a shortage of

priests. Mississippi fit both of those criteria, and all three of them, after ordination and fortunately for our state, located here.

Father Mike's first assignment was as the Associate Priest at St. Mary's Church in west Jackson, which was pastored by Monsignor Eddie Cratin, who was a native of Canton. A member of the church was a coach at Mississippi College, and he invited Michael to play on the Mississippi College soccer team. That offer was accepted, and he participated in the college's games against Belhaven and Millsaps. He also joined the Jackson Rugby team, and they played rugby against Ole Miss, Mississippi State and LSU.

After three years at St. Mary's, he spent seven years as youth director for the diocese of Jackson and Natchez, which required him to travel all over the state, and he says this assignment led him to become very well-acquainted with all parts of Mississippi.

He next was assigned his first parish to pastor, Sacred Heart Church in Canton, where he spent five and a half years and loved this assignment, where he made many fast friends. From here he assumed the position of pastor at St. Joseph's Church in Starkville for the next twelve years, during which time, two unfortunate incidents occurred.

First, in the middle of one night, the church burned to the ground and had to be rebuilt. Second, unfortunately in the opinion of this writer, Father Mike was brainwashed into becoming a dyed-in-the-wool Bulldog fan, a condition from which he shows no sign of recovery.

In 2001, he moved to Natchez as Assumption Church Pastor and Associate Pastor at St. Mary's for three years, then he went to



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St. Richard's Church in Jackson, where he spent the next twelve years.

In 2015, his last assignment was Vicar for Priests in the diocese, as well as returning to Canton as pastor for Sacred Heart, to the undeniable delight of Cantonians.

His soccer and rugby days are over, as are his tennis games, but he still enjoys the occasional round of golf. Retirement is looming in two or three years, and he is undecided about whether he will retire in this area or go back to Ireland.

While his disarming sense of humor and Irish brogue will be enjoyed here for the foreseeable future, there's one blessed condition he can look forward to in his retirement years. He can return to Ireland, where he'll be greeted with love by his large family, or he can remain in Mississippi, where he will enjoy the love of his large extended Mississippi family. He's earned both. Most of us hope he'll stay here.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jim Ritchie is a published author, storyteller, entertainer and grandfather of eleven. He is amazed at the number of talented and accomplished people who live in the Canton area, and he thinks local citizens should know about some of them. Ritchie and his professional artist wife, Perry, live in the Shocco community out from Canton. View their work at www.southernstories.com.

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History of the Canton Elks Lodge is very long

By Lori Lycette

The Canton Elks Lodge #458 has a very long history in this town. The men's organization was chartered in 1899 and formed by twelve local men. The actual building on the Square, located at 3345/3346 North Liberty Street, which houses the lodge, was built in 1900.

The ground floor was originally designed for retail space, while the second floor is believed to have functioned as a hotel in the earliest years. The Canton Elks purchased the building sometime between 1903 and 1905, and it continues to be referred to as the "Elks Lodge Building" to this day.

Today, the ground floor continues to serve as retail space, while the upstairs still houses the meeting room, recreation room, dining hall, parlor and offices for the current eighty-two members of the Canton Elks Lodge. Twice a month, about twenty members meet to conduct the business of the lodge and fellowship over a catered meal.

During the filming of the movie *A Time to Kill* in 1995, the parlor and

dining room were transformed into the law offices of the district attorney played by Kevin Spacey.

For many years, it has been believed that the meeting room is haunted by a former member. It has always been a custom of the Elks to inscribe the names of their deceased brothers on tablets of stone to display, so they will always be remembered. In the 1930s, during the height of the Great Depression, the lodge did not have the funds to honor their departed brothers during this time. After the Depression ended, and they could afford to add those names, they did...with the exception of one. For whatever reason, one Elk was omitted, and it is believed that he roams the meeting room to this day in search of his name.

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America originally began in 1868 under the name "Jolly Corks" by fifteen New York actors, entertainers and others who were associated with the theater. It eventually expanded to other professions.

The "Grand Lodge" is located in



Elks Lodge Building

Photo by Lori Lycette

Chicago and is the national headquarters for nearly 2,000 lodges all over the country, totaling about 850,000 members.

The Elks is a fraternal order which was founded "To promote and practice the four cardinal virtues of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity; to promote the wel-

fare and enhance the happiness of its members; to quicken the spirit of American Patriotism and cultivate good fellowship." An important mission of the organization is to serve people and communities through benevolent programs, demonstrating that "Elks Care and

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Canton mourns the loss of teacher and student

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On Saturday, February 8, many Cantonians woke up to read news of a tragic fire in Clinton that claimed the lives of seven members of the beloved Presley family, which included a Reuben B. Myers teacher and her son, who was a student at the school.

The house fire started 12:30 a.m., early Saturday morning, on Old Vicksburg Road and Hobby Farms Road, according to Clinton Fire Chief Jeff Blackledge. Blackledge said the call came in at 12:34 a.m., firefighters were en route at 12:36 a.m., and they arrived on the scene at 12:38 a.m.

Blackledge said that, when firefighters arrived, there was "fire coming out of every place imaginable."

"When we got on the scene, we found out there were seven inside the house," said Blackledge. "We didn't have any problems other than manpower, and we wound up sending everybody that we had. We sent all four units, [from] all four stations."

Unfortunately, Brittney Presley, 33; Landen Brookshire, 15; Layne Presley, 13; Lawson Presley, 12; Grayson Presley, 6; Malcolm Presley, 4; and Felicity Presley, 1, were all victims of the tragic event.

The father of the family, Jake Presley, was taken to the hospital with injuries substantiated from the fire.

Brittany Presley was a second-grade teacher at Reuben B. Myers Canton School of Arts and Sciences, and her son was a student there. The Canton Public School District also released a statement in the wake of her death.

"The Canton Public School District is saddened by the tragic loss of one of its teachers and her six children in a house fire. Mrs. Brittany Presley, a second-grade teacher at Reuben B. Myers Canton School

of Arts and Sciences, and her son, a pre-k student at the school, will be sorely missed in our district. Principal Alpha Myers says Mrs. Presley was a team leader who was a good, nurturing and loving teacher who gave her all for her students.

Her compassionate heart and giving spirit will forever live on in the hearts of the countless lives she touched."

Investigators from the State Fire Marshal's Office have determined the fire was accidental and electrical in nature, and they also reported that the fire appeared to have started in the attic of the home. Investigators also said there did not appear to be any working smoke alarms in the home to provide early detection of the fire. Additionally, investigators believe metal bars on the windows of

the home may have played a small role in the deaths.

Blackledge, who also confirmed that firefighters believe the fire started in the attic of the 1951 house that the Presley family was renting, addressed the nature of the fire in a press conference the City of Clinton held on Tuesday, February 11.

"The one problem with the house, in my opinion, is that it had a metal roof on top of an asphalt shingle roof, which is a common practice. But what that does is suppresses the heat; it will not let the fire ventilate, so we can't get the heat out. I'm afraid that's probably what happened to the people in the house," said Blackledge.

City of Clinton officials also addressed questions about smoke alarms being present and working in the house.

"We do inspections on rental properties every two years. That property was inspected, and it was due for an inspection, I believe in June of this year," said Blackledge. "But when it was inspected,

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Hendry selected as U.S. Pres. Scholar candidate

Special to The Canton News

Canton resident Holly E. Hendry was recently selected as a candidate for the U.S. Presidential Scholar award. She attends Madison-Ridgeland Academy in Madison.



Holly Hendry

The 2020 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program recently selected 113 Mississippi students as candidates for the national award. Students who have been selected as candidates have an opportunity to become one of the 161 U.S. Presidential Scholars. The scholars represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in young people.

All students who have made it to the candidacy level were mailed the necessary materials from the U.S. Department of Education to continue the next phase of the application process. The application process is a distinguished honor and by invitation only.

A national review committee of qualified individuals experienced in secondary and post-secondary education evaluates candidates on their academic achievement, personal characteristics, leadership and service activities and the quality and content of their essays.

Semifinalists will be announced in April and the final scholars list

will be announced in May. Scholars will be invited to Washington, D.C., for several days in June to receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion at a recognition ceremony and to participate in events and activities.

"We are very proud of our 113 student candidates for the 2020 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program and encourage them to complete the next phase of the process by returning all of the application materials they received from the U.S. Department of Education. This is a great honor and showcases the tremendous talents of our graduating seniors in Mississippi," said Dr. Carey Wright, state superintendent of education.

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964, by Executive Order of the President, to recognize and honor some of the nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. In 2015, the program was again extended to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields.

To view the complete list of candidates for Mississippi or to find more information on the program, visit www.ed.gov/psp. Questions concerning this program can be submitted by email to psp@scholarshipamerica.org or by phone to 507-931-8345.

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Canton mourns the loss of teacher and student

it had working smoke alarms in the house."

"At our last check, the smoke alarms were there - this was in June of 2018 - and...they were working," said Blackledge.

Clinton Mayor Phil Fisher said that an early investigation has revealed that the burglar bars may not have been installed to the appropriate code, with the result being that the bars were not able to be easily opened from the inside.

Blackledge also said there have been a lot of rumors going around about members of the family escaping and then running back into help, but "we have not been able to substantiate that yet, because we still need to talk to the father, and he is at the hospital currently, awaiting surgery."

Blackledge did confirm that "five of them were in the front bedroom, two of them were in the back bedroom."

All City officials and the State Fire Marshall's office openly en-

couraged those listening and reading about the tragedy to take action to ensure that their homes have working smoke detectors, that their families have a plan in place for emergency evacuation due to fire and that those plans and detectors be tested and practiced routinely.

"This is a tragic situation. The family of the victims have my sincere condolences," said State Fire Marshal and Insurance Commissioner Mike Chaney.

Four of the children were students in the Clinton Public School District.

To support the needs of the Presley family, their church has established a fund to meet their immediate and long-term needs. The Presley family's church will distribute one hundred percent of all donations to the Presley Family.

Donations may be mailed to:

Jake Presley Fund
c/o Raymond Road Baptist Church, 4622 Raymond Road, Jackson, MS 39212

CHS Nat'l Signing Day



Special to The Canton News

National Signing Day was recently held for high school football standouts across the nation to sign their National Letter of Intent to play for a particular college. The four Canton High School (CHS) football players who signed their letter that day (l to r) seated, were: Jaiden Burns, Hinds Community College in Raymond; Jacobian Morgan, Syracuse University in New York; Tyquan Henderson, Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Wesson; and Tomic-rin Taylor, Holmes Community College in Goodman; and standing: CHS Offensive Coordinator Jermaine Bryant and CHS Head Football Coach Calvin Bolton.

CANTON ACADEMY



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To purchase your ticket, call Canton Academy at 601-859-5231, go online to www.CantonAcademy.org under the "Support CA" tab, or see any CA student.

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Choices we make always have consequences

By Guest Columnist Sam Hughes



Special to The Canton News

Someone on the radio likes to point out that “choices have consequences.” He also used to talk about his “formerly nicotine-stained fingers” and the fine quality of various Cuban cigars. Now we know he has advanced lung cancer. While I am happy that he has been having more fun than a human being should be allowed to have, it is sobering to realize that indeed, choices have consequences. That is true not only of dietary and lifestyle choices, physically and medically, but it is also true spiritually.

It is wonderfully true that God gave us the freedom and right to make choices. We are free to choose, but we are not free to choose the consequences. The consequences are beyond our ability to control. What we can con-

trol are our choices. We have the ability and freedom to ignore God, but when this life is over, God will ignore us. We can disregard God’s expressed will for how we are to live, but we will experience the consequences of ignoring God’s will.

Many people want to blame God for their unhappy, damaged or dysfunctional lives, but their accusations against God’s justice and goodness are unfounded. Choices have consequences. Some people carry the virus of hate around in their hearts hoping it will hurt the people they hate, but it doesn’t. Instead, it makes the haters sick emotionally and eventually physically. Some people keep secrets and choose not to let anyone close to them. That is their right, of course. But they live isolated and die alone. Choices have consequences.

It does not matter if you are a wealthy, influential and intellectual member of the elite establishment (like Peter Jennings) or a harmless, loveable little fuzzi-ball. Choices have consequences.



Special to The Canton News

If that truth is so obvious, why do we keep making bad choices? Well, it would be easier to make good choices and avoid bad ones if the consequences were always immediate. But they aren’t. If you eat an extra piece of chocolate cake tonight for supper, you probably wouldn’t have much of a consequence. But if you eat that piece every meal everyday and sometimes in between meals, the day will come when you can put your pants on backwards and find they fit better.

Sometimes the consequences of our choices are immediate, but often they do not show up for a long time. But delayed consequences

are still consequences.

Another unchangeable truth about life is that God created us for a purpose. I’ve spent time getting to know Him, and if we fulfill His purpose for our lives, there will inevitably be a wonderful consequence. It may not be immediate, but it is certain. Those who choose to live their lives apart from God and do not seek to fulfill His purpose for their lives will also experience an inevitable consequence. God did give us a free will, but our choices have consequences.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Sam Hughes is pastor of Lone Pine Baptist Church in Canton.

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CES Kesha Young awarded Teacher of the Year

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Canton Elementary School (CES) fourth-grade math teacher Kesha Young has recently been awarded Canton Elementary Teacher of the Year and Canton Public School District Teacher of the Year.

Young's personal philosophy of education is to provide every child with a quality education by building a trusting relationship with her students through a community enriched environment. She continuously reminds them that regardless of skill level or ability, they are all capable of learning, and what sets them apart is the effort and passion they are willing to put in. Young whole-heartedly believes that in order to successfully teach a child, one must build a relationship with them.

Being new to the education field, one of the first videos that spoke to her was Rita Pierson's "Every Kid Needs a Champion." Pierson stated that children do not learn from teachers they do not like. Young stated this has stuck with her throughout her teaching career and has encouraged her to put the student-teacher relationship at the forefront year after year. Through these positive relationships, she says she is able to encourage, motivate and build up her students. This in turn gives the students a safe environment to learn and gain a passion for knowledge.

Community and parental involvement play a major role in student success in the classroom. Not only does Young build relationships with her students, but she also tries to involve the parents in the learning community, with open communication for them to ask questions, receive help and stay informed on academic and behavior updates.

Young says that her husband and his family being Cantonians

gives her a first-hand look into the community where she works. She is able to attend sporting events, church services and community events, where her students play an active role. Providing that familiar face outside of the classroom setting, coupled with keeping the lines of communication open with parents, helps strengthen the classroom community bond that she strives to achieve inside the learning environment.

In her five years of teaching, Young has made many contributions to and accomplishments in the teaching profession by devoting many hours to tutoring students before and after school, as well as coaching and sponsoring the CES cheer squad during parades, pep rallies and community events. She has received several awards for MAAP growth and proficiency scores on school and district levels.

She believes that her greatest accomplishment has been receiving the Canton Elementary School 2019 Award of Honor for Instruc-

tional Excellence. This achievement highlights her hard work and dedication in helping her students achieve exceptional growth and proficiency on the 2018 MAAP.

Student achievement, whether it be academically, mentally or emotionally, is the ultimate goal for Young. She works hard to see all her students achieve individual and collective victory. In her years working at Canton Elementary School, she has shown great gains on district and state assessments. In the recent 2019-2020 school year, she has led the district in fourth-grade math data.

Success is not only measured in numbers, but also in the confidence her students display when they leave her classroom feeling prepared to tackle the years to come with the tools that she has provided them.

With experience comes growth, and Young plans to continue to grow and evolve as an educator. One thing she says she hopes will never change is her passion and drive to see the students in her community succeed and excel.



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SSMS announces newest Jr. Beta Club inductees



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Thirty-eight Shirley D. Simmons Middle School (SSMS) students were recently inducted into the National Junior Beta Club. These students have worked diligently to achieve and maintain the required GPA, as well as conduct themselves in a responsible and respectful manner to earn their spot in Beta. The new members are: Alexis Bailey, Samecia Brinson, Akeelah Brooks, Gredonivan Brooks, Erin Brown, Sariah Day, Elijah Jones, Juliana King, London Lott, Keana May, Kaitlyn McGee, Kendall Miller, Siela Saddler, Stephen Taylor, Morgan Thompson, Landria Wilder, De'kayla Williamson, Serentiy Bolden-Chesser, Nashaun Brown, Jordan Conway, Christian Dawson, David Ford Jr., Ahmirica Jones, R'Jay Jones, Da'Kyla Nettles, Anya Truss, Korea Baker, Caniyla Banks, Salaria Chesser, Jakeliah Crowley, Patricia Evans, Jakeyia Lockett, Destiny Matlock, Carrington Myrick, Cameron Tate, JaKelcey White, Byron Williamson, and Carl Wilson.

Waters leads the CMSC program at FUMC Canton



Special to The Canton News

Mrs. Sarah Waters recently presented the program for the Canton Music Study Club (CMSC) at First United Methodist Church (FUMC) in Canton. She reviewed part one of the book, "The Lives of Great Composers" by Harold Schonberg. She is on the music faculty at Belhaven University, as well as a private vocal and piano teacher.

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Canton High School hosts third annual reality fair



MCYP volunteers and community partners at CPSD Reality Fair

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The Canton Public School District (CPSD) recently hosted the 2020 Reality Fair for over 240 freshmen in the Canton High School (CHS) gym. The Madison County Business League & Foundation Young Professionals (MCYP) partnered with Canton High School to serve as volunteers for the third annual

event.

Recognizing the importance of a well-educated and skilled workforce in the attraction of economic development in Madison County, the MCYP Committee chose financial literacy as their philanthropy. The MCYP Committee was awarded grants from the Madison County Community Trust (MCCT) to train CHS teachers to

incorporate financial literacy in their curriculum. This reality fair tested the students' skills in money management.

Teachers assigned occupations and monthly salaries for each student, based on each student's current GPA. The students then visited fourteen stations, including housing, transportation, utilities, food, health insurance, clothing,

communications and credit union, along with temptations such as entertainment, gym/sports, pets and salon/beauty.

The objective is to have enough money to pay for their expenses which will afford them the lifestyles they desire. Over sixty MCYPs manned the stations and provided real world experience/mentoring.



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cont. from page 4

History of the Canton Elks Lodge is very long

An important mission of the organization is to serve people and communities through benevolent programs, demonstrating that "Elks Care and Elks Share."

The Order spends more than eighty million dollars every year for benevolent, educational and patriotic community-minded programs such as benefiting special needs children, scouting, athletic teams, scholarships, veterans, physical/occupational therapy programs, as well as patriotic programs. A national "Hoop Shoot" free-throw contest, involving more than three million children, is held annually, and the Elks Drug Awareness Education Program was launched to warn grade school students and their parents of the dangers of drug use.

The Canton lodge has adopted a

state veterans' home in Kosciusko, where some of the members travel on a monthly basis to call bingo for the residents and award prize money. At Christmas, they deliver gifts to the neediest residents.

The local Elks make monetary donations to charities such as Our Daily Bread and MadCAAP, as well as to Canton Public Schools and Canton Academy, along with scholarships. They also distribute drug awareness literature to the schools.

The Order of Elks is a non-political, non-sectarian American fraternity. Proposal for membership is only by invitation of a member in good standing. All members must be American citizens, of good moral character, believing in God and must be at least twenty-one years of age.



Photo by Lori Lycette
Canton Elks meeting room

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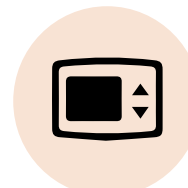
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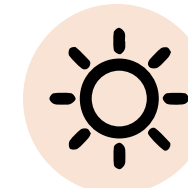
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Shower Power founder speaks to Rotary Club



Special to The Canton News

Pictured are Teresa Renkenberger, realtor and founder of Shower Power Mississippi, and Bobby G. Cumberland, vice president Canton Rotary Club and executive director of Homes for OUR Homeless Brothers and Sisters.

Special to The Canton News

Teresa Renkenberger, founder of Shower Power Mississippi, was the speaker at a recent Rotary Club meeting. Renkenberger stated that homelessness in Mississippi is a big issue and is getting worse. Many people are one or two paychecks from being homeless, and issues such as loss of job, medical bankruptcy, mental illness, drug

dependency/addiction or a major illness can cause people to lose their home.

Shower Power is a mobile shower truck, containing a dressing room and bathroom, that travels to designated locations to assist homeless individuals with their hygiene needs. Shower Power is more than just two showers on wheels...usually a snack/lunch is provided by a local restaurant or small group,



Shower Power truck

Special to The Canton News

haircuts are normally available, and a clothes closet is also provided.

Currently, Shower Power visits churches that serve the homeless, soup kitchens and homeless shelters. On Fridays, Shower Power can be found in the downtown Jackson business district.

Depending on the number of homeless that take advantage of the Shower Power facilities, hot

shower times vary from five to fifteen minutes. Clean towels are provided, and the next Shower Power truck will hopefully have high-speed washers and dryers on-board the truck.

Shower Power of Mississippi is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization. For more information or to donate towards the purchase of a second Shower Power truck, the website is www.showerpower.ms.

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Canton government news

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The City of Canton has plans to re-establish the Chamber of Commerce, with the appointment of a new board, hopefully within the next few months.

The Board of Alderman is in the process of putting together a 2020 Census Complete Count Committee. Mayor Truly appointed Alderman Fred Esco to head this committee.

The Saab Park project is under way, which includes a brand-new concession stand, scoreboard, splash pad and sidewalk. It should be complete by this summer.

The City is planning to apply for

a historical marker to be placed at McNeal Elementary School, which will commemorate the March Against Fear in June 1966. The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and other Civil Rights leaders were in Canton for the march, when law enforcement officials began firing tear gas at the crowd of activists on the school grounds.

The Canton City Council meets the first and third Monday of every month for a work session and the first and third Tuesday of the month for a board meeting, both taking place in the courtroom at City Hall. Both sessions are open to the public and begin at 4:30 p.m.

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SSMS hosts 19-20 Coronation and Winter Ball



Special to The Canton News



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Shirley D. Simmons Middle School (SSMS) recently hosted its Annual Coronation and Winter Ball for 2019-2020. Principal Kelvin Griffin crowned Carl Wilson and Salaria Chesser as Mr. and Miss SSMS. Pictured (l to r) left photo, are: Ashley Stanford, Miss Band; Katia Daughtrey, Miss Cheerleader; Serenity Chesser, Miss Choir; Tamya Brown, Miss Basketball; Caniyla Banks, Miss TSA; Jakeliah Crowley, Miss Drama Club; Salaria Chesser, Miss SSMS; Patricia Evans, Miss Eighth Grade; Siela Saddler, Miss Sixth Grade; Almdria Kilbert, Miss Dance; Ahmirica Jones, Miss Seventh Grade; and Korea Baker, Miss Beta Club (not pictured); and right photo: Kendrick Jobe, Mr. Choir; R'Jay Jones, Mr. TSA; Christian Dawson, Mr. Seventh Grade; Cameron Tate, Mr. Basketball; Byron Williamson, Mr. Beta Club; Elijah Jones, Mr. Sixth Grade; Carl Wilson, Mr. SSMS; Kwame Johnson, Mr. Band; Edward Ross, Mr. Dance; Cody Myers, Mr. Drama Club; Carrington Myrick, Mr. Eighth Grade; and Terrell Smith, Mr. Football.

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Canton Academy Millet's Art class submits video

Special to The Canton News

The Canton Academy (CA) Panthers believe that Canton is a very special place. And once the opportunity arose to see Canton receive a facelift, students and faculty knew they had to ensure this happened in their hometown.

HGTV's popular television show, *Home Town*, announced a contest called *Home Town Takeover*, and that caused the creative wheels of CA students to turn. The criteria for a town entering the contest included a population of 40,000 or less, great architecture and a downtown or main street that needs a facelift.

With that in mind, art teacher Mark Millet turned to his Art 2 students for ideas. Together, the group created a script and a video for submission.

Millet said he envisioned how the video should be laid out before they ever began shooting.

"A lot of my videos, I see the beginning and the end, and I have to figure out what the middle is. I wanted to grab the viewer's attention in the first five seconds, or I felt I'd lost them. I work with kids, so attention spans get short," he said.

Millet saw a black and white scene in his mind with a student opening a door to a colorful street. Choosing that student didn't take long, and after a short discussion, senior Bethany Biggers was named the star of the film.

"I knew Bethany would be able to pull it off because she can speak well, and her mannerisms match her speech. She uses her

whole body to communicate," Millet said.

Biggers was excited about the project and explained, "I feel like it was a great opportunity to give people an insight into the hidden treasures here. I also think that Canton has the potential to be something great if it was shown a little bit more love and atten-

let decided to include an artistic aspect.

"Bethany would pick out houses with the most potential- you couldn't see these houses, you had to step out through the trees. My final scene was going to be two students carrying a frame on a painting and say picture yourself here in Canton," he said. These voiceovers proved to be a challenge for Millet, and Biggers, as well. "It's hard to find a room in the school where it's quiet, so we couldn't do the

able to get in there and film a few seconds. We used the jukebox.

Everything was first take with Bethany. We didn't have to do it again," Millet said.

Biggers said she was excited to show her town in a different way.

"Canton is such a small town that you run into people you know everywhere. Also, people here are really friendly and show their hospitality. We are historically rich and have many community events, such as the annual light show and flea market. I wanted people to see that and understand what makes us special," she said.

Holding onto the CA spirit, the group ensured the video remained positive.

"We are such a small school that we all know each other and have become like a big family. I think the

video reflects that positive feeling that you get about CA and about Canton," said Canton Academy's Director of Admissions Jenny Wadford. "As soon as I saw the contest posted on *Home Town*'s Facebook page, I knew we needed to enter. Within a few minutes several people, including myself, had shared the contest on their Facebook pages and tagged artist Mark Millet, because we all knew that he and his class could tackle this project and nail it. Canton became my hometown when I married a Cantonian. Everyone has welcomed me with open arms from day one. I drive down the streets and see so much potential, such hidden beauty, but it's frustrating not having the means to bring those projects to fruition. The *Home Town* contest could be a game-changer for our little town- and, as I knew they would, Millet's CA art class nailed it."



Bethany Biggers showing courthouse during video.



(above) Millet's painting of the Napiers of Home Town



Canton Museum window shown in video

All photos Special to The Canton News

tion. I really loved getting to be a part and show off all the special things about my town."

Millet said when the time came to shoot the film, he knew there were specific landmarks in Canton he needed to include.

"I knew I had to tell a story, and there could be no wasted frame. We had to talk about the Square, the courthouse, and squeeze in that there are apartments above these shops, which are possible for renovations. I also wanted to make sure we stood out," he said. In order to stand out, Mil-

let decided to include an artistic aspect. "Bethany would pick out houses with the most potential- you couldn't see these houses, you had to step out through the trees. My final scene was going to be two students carrying a frame on a painting and say picture yourself here in Canton," he said. These voiceovers proved to be a challenge for Millet, and Biggers, as well. "It's hard to find a room in the school where it's quiet, so we couldn't do the

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Millet also knew he wanted to include angles of the city that Cantonians have never seen, including the view from one of the apartments downtown and in the coffee shop.

"The shot in the coffee shop -- no one had been there since they shot the film *A Time to Kill*. We went into a hotel and heard a guy with a British accent. I heard someone say, 'go get the key to the coffee shop.' We were

Mason-Bolden serves as the Legislative Doctor of the Day

Dr. C. Latoya Mason-Bolden of Madison County, an anesthesiologist and associate professor at University of Mississippi Medical Center, recently served as Legislative Doctor of the Day at the Capitol. In that capacity, she was available to provide emergency medical treatment to lawmakers and staff.



Senator Hillman T. Frazier, Dr. Mason-Bolden, and Senator Sollie B. Norwood, who introduced her.



Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann and Dr. Mason-Bolden



Senator Barbara Blackmon and Dr. Mason-Bolden

All photos Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy's alumni McNeer signs with Belhaven



Special to The Canton News

Pictured (l to r) are Sue Collums, Carol McNeer, Anna Leigh McNeer, and Billy McNeer.

Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy 2018 graduate Anna McNeer, daughter of Billy and Carol McNeer and granddaughter of Sue Collums and the late J.W. Collums, has decided to further her academic and athletic career with Belhaven University in Jackson, Mississippi. McNeer will finish her current softball season at East Central Community College before entering Belhaven in the fall of 2020.

McNeer had a very successful freshman season, leading the team with twenty-one doubles and fifty-eight runs batted in, hitting eight home runs and ending the season with a .415 batting average.

She was named Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges First Team All-State, Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges Distinguished Academic All-State and National Junior College Athletic Association Second Team All-Academic.

The season culminated with McNeer's team ranking fourteenth in the country. The East Central Community College team accomplished the national ranking by winning fifteen games in a row. This also propelled them into the state playoffs as a #4 seed for the tournament. The Belhaven Blazers compete in the NCAA Division III American Southwest Conference.

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CA National Signing Day



Special to The Canton News

National Signing Day was recently held for high school football standouts across the nation to sign their National Letter of Intent to play for a particular college. Canton Academy (CA) senior Jack Carr signed with the Holmes Community College football program. Shown (l to r) are, seated: Robby Carr, Jack Carr, and Kaye Carr; and standing: Defensive Coordinator Kenner Purvis, Head Coach David Blount, and Special Teams Coordinator Kevin Sanderson.

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Canton Academy holds Who's Who Pageant



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Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy (CA) recently held the Who's Who Beauty and Beau Pageant 2020. Left photo: Canton Academy's Most Handsome Nick Foreman and Most Beautiful Maggie Claire Thomas. Right photo: Mr. CA Lane Martin and Miss CA Bethany Biggers.

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Lions Club to hold annual BBQ, auction and raffle

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The Canton Lions will hold their annual auction and barbecue on Friday, March 20, at the National Guard Armory, located at 2924 U.S. Highway 51 in Canton.

Tickets for the chicken barbecue are ten dollars each and can be purchased from any Lions Club member or at the door the night of the event. Serving will begin at 5:30 p.m., with the auction to follow at 6:30 p.m.

The auction items are donated by local merchants and Lions Club supporters. Money tree tickets cost five dollars each, and the winning ticket will be drawn



during the auction for a \$500 cash prize.

The night will end with a 55" flat screen TV grand door prize, going to one of the auction bidders. The money tree winner does not need to be present to win, however, the bidder will need to be present to win the TV.

For years, the Canton community has supported the Lions for this annual fundraiser, and for this, they say they are thankful.

This year, they are hopeful for a good turnout and are making plans to make everyone's experience of reminiscing with friends, eating good barbecue and having fun bidding for the auction items even better than ever.

New Assistant Police Chief Ware takes oath of office



Special to The Canton News

Terrance Ware was recently sworn in as Canton's assistant police chief during a city council meeting at City Hall. Ware has been in law enforcement since 2000 and with the Canton Police Department for the past seven years. He recently moved into this position after Eddie Brown's retirement from the force. Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Reverend Isaac Jackson; Emma Ware; Assistant Police Chief Terrance Ware; and Mayor William Truly; and back row: Police Chief Otha Brown.

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Natchez Trace Stables wins best float at rodeo

Special to The Canton News

Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson and the First Lady of Agriculture Leslie Gipson led the 2020 Dixie National Parade through Downtown Jackson.

Immediately following, Mississippi's own Miss Hospitality, Kasey Pearson from Monroe County, presented parade awards to the winning participants at the Mississippi Farmers Market.

David Hughes and Andrea Pittman, of Natchez Trace Stables, LLC in Canton, were awarded first place for best float in the parade.

"The Dixie National Rodeo Pa-

rade is a fun-filled family event that the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce looks forward to bringing to the public each year," said Commissioner Gipson. "This would not be possible without the participation of groups from all over the state. I want to thank all those that made it a success and congratulate all of our winners."

Selected judges chosen by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce determine the best participating groups representing each of five categories: marching, motorized, floats, riding and wagon trains, as well as the overall champion who wins the Commissioner's Award.



Special to The Canton News

Natchez Trace Stables' David Hughes (left) and Andrea Pittman (middle) are awarded first place for best float by Mississippi's Miss Hospitality Kasey Pearson (right).

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