



PELAHATCHIE NEWS NETWORK



December 2023 ■ Volume 12, Issue 12 ■ Pelahatchie, MS

Jellystone Park honored with multiple awards

Special to Pelahatchie News

The park staff are incredibly grateful and humbled to announce the awards received at Jellystone Park™ Symposium 2023. Heartfelt thanks goes out to the wonderful guests for unwavering support at park campground. Both the presence and enthusiasm shown by park guests have earned Pelahatchie's Jellystone the Recreation, Pinnacle, Outstanding Customer Service recognition, Outstanding recreation program, and the Store Of The Year award. The park was thrilled to also be nominated for Southern Region Park Of The Year. This achievement is a testament to the incredible community we've built together. Thank you for being a part of our journey!



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ERA quiz bowl team wins first place



Special to Pelahatchie News

Congratulations to the East Rankin Academy Middle School Quiz Bowl team for successfully competing against Hartfield Academy in the semi-finals and Catholic Cathedral School in the finals to win 1st Place in the 24 team MAIS Overall Middle School Quiz Bowl! Team members: Samantha Gardner, Liam Frazier, Zack Price, Jillian Breland, Christopher Chalk, Brad Taylor, Ben Tingle, and Seth Neely.

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Mississippi Dental Center: Where Smiles Find a Home Among Caring Experts

By Kenneth McDade

Your Dental Family Just Got Bigger and Brighter!

In the heart of Jackson, Mississippi Dental Center is not merely a dental office; it's a warm community where smiles find a home. Meet the extended family of caring experts who make your dental experience a truly personal journey.

Meet Our Friendly Faces:

Dr. Stewart Strange: Your Smile's Best Friend Rooted in Raymond, Dr. Stewart Strange is more than a dentist; he's your Smile's Best Friend. Graduating with honors from the University of Mississippi in 2008 and earning his D.M.D. in 2012, Dr. Strange brings a wealth of experience and awards in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. When away from the clinic, he cherishes family time, hunting, and enjoying a round of golf. Dr. Strange is not just about teeth; he's about building lasting smiles.



Dr. Chandler Pleasant: Crafting Smiles with Care With over a decade of experience, Dr. Chandler Pleasant is the craftsman behind countless smiles. Graduating with hon-



ors from Mississippi State University and earning his dental degree in 2012, he has become a local icon in Brandon. Dr. Pleasant's passion for cosmetics and implants is matched only by his dedication to patient-centered care. Outside the clinic, he enjoys family moments, tennis matches, and the thrill of hunting.

Dr. Garrett Hall: A Fresh Face in Dentistry Dr. Garrett Hall, a proud Columbus native, brings fresh energy to our team. Graduating in 2016 with a degree in Finance and Biological Sciences, he embraced his true calling in den-



tistry, earning his dental degree in 2022. Dr. Hall has received awards for his skills and dedication, making him a rising star in the field. With advanced training in Endodontics, Prosthodontics, and Botox, he ensures comprehensive and personalized care. Beyond dentistry, Dr. Hall finds joy in golf, cheering for MSU, and exploring new destinations with his wife, Reagan, an Occupational Therapist.

Dr. Anna McVey: Bringing Compassion and Holistic Care A compassionate soul, Dr. Anna McVey, joined Mississippi Dental Center immediately after graduating from the University of Mississippi School of Dentistry in 2012. Recognized for High Achievement for Persons with Disabilities, Dr. McVey infuses her gentle spirit into daily interactions with patients of all ages. Her commitment to highly personalized care aligns with the utmost standards of oral health, hygiene, and aesthetics. Dr. McVey is not only open to holistic approaches but also brings a unique blend of western dental medicine rigor to her practice. A proud alumna of Jackson Preparatory School and the University of Mississippi, Dr. McVey, alongside her husband Micah Usry and two children, currently resides in Jackson, where they attend First Presbyterian Church.



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2023-24 is the year to Level Up at PHS



By Guest Columnist, Voncille
Anderson, Head Principal,
Pelahatchie High School

Level Up, Chiefs! The Pelahatchie High School leadership team chose “Level Up” as our theme for the 2023-2024 school year. We challenged our faculty, staff, and student body to give their best efforts to help our school “Level Up” in every possible way. As expected, our school community has embraced this theme.

So what does Level Up mean to the Pelahatchie Tribe? It means an intense focus on leveling up academically. This focus shows up when we walk the halls and notice the deep conversations happening in every classroom. It shows up when students are tossing with the “Root Word Soccer Ball” to enhance vocabulary skills, or when students are working in the hallways in small groups to create posters about the American Revolution. It shows up while students are conducting research in a science lab in their biology class or participating in a Socratic discussion in history class or grappling with word problems in math or marching through

the science of reading framework. Our teachers are leveling up by employing strategies and discovering new resources to engage students in reading, writing, and thinking.

The idea of leveling up also appears in



our athletic competitions. Our athletes are challenged to level up their skills so that they can compete and represent their Tribe at the highest level. They want to perform a little better today than they did yesterday. They want to get one step closer to a state championship than they did the previous year.

Level up is a mindset that goes into any testing room to remind our students to do their best. Students consider how leveling up applies to their personal goals. If they have a 21 on the ACT, they can level up by increasing their overall score by one or more points. If they were proficient on the MAAP assessment, they can level up to advanced. Ultimately, our school and community benefit when we all level up.

As we enter the last month of the first semester and begin to approach benchmark and semester exams, we want our students to remember the goals they have set. They may need to sacrifice video game or social media scrolling time to study for their exams, to read a little more, or to spend time completing ACT practice tests. Doing so can yield the results they hope to attain.

“Level Up” has embedded itself into the climate and culture of PHS. So when you see “Level Up” on the back of a basketball shirt or a baseball cap, just know that this phrase means more to PHS than a game. It signifies a culture of giving our best efforts for the success of our teams, our classes, and our school. Join us in Leveling Up, Pelahatchie! Go Chiefs!



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A bag of homemade Christmas treats might be a lifesaver

By Kara Kimbrough

Borrowing a phrase from a former college student of mine who once said, "Wow, you lecture a LOT about stuff you're passionate about!" I'm continuing my series (not lecture) on the joys of gifting others this Christmas with homemade candy, cookies and other treats. I even have a story from Christmas '22 to back up my claim that home-baked gifts are the best – and it's a good one.

Last year, I gave a friend a bag full of homemade treats a few days before Christmas that include a tin of orange balls. This is an old-school Christmas treat best served chilled due to its butter content. Unbeknownst to me, she and her husband were about to embark on a day-long journey to their son's home in Tennessee.

Halfway there, she texted me to say they were parked on the side of the road devouring the contents of the bag. I was concerned a lunch of sugar and spice pecans, sugar cookies and lukewarm orange balls was less than filling; however, she assured me it was a lifesaver in their quest to reach their destination before dark.

Now that I've convinced you (without lecturing) that gifting homemade Christmas treats might just turn into a lifesaver for those on your list, I'll share a few more of my favorite old-fashioned Christmas treats.

After previously publishing my favorites - the recipe for my grandmother's buttermilk fudge and microwave pecan pralines - and hearing from readers about sugar-related disasters, I vowed never to share them in



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Old-Fashioned Orange Balls are easy to make, but are so delicious, nobody will ever know.

print again. However, if you'd like these two recipes, drop me an email and I'll send it to you.

In the meantime, get into the kitchen and start compiling your own "Life-saving Christmas Treat Bags!"

Scottish Shortbread Cookies

1 pound cold unsalted butter, sliced
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1-1/4 teaspoon fine grain sea salt
4 cups all-purpose flour

In the bowl of a stand mixer with a paddle attachment, cream the butter until soft. Add the sugars and salt, and continue to mix until the texture is fluffy. Scrape down the bowl once or twice along the way. Add the flour in two additions, mixing on low until just combined. Turn out onto the countertop, form a ball and press into a thick disc shape. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate until completely chilled, minimum of a couple of hours.

Heat oven to 350 degrees with a rack in the center. Roll the dough out 3/4-inch thick and use a cookie cutter or knife to create as many cookies as possible. Use a cookie stamp to imprint a design on top, if desired. Arrange an inch apart on parchment-lined baking sheet. Return the cookies to refrigerator, on the pan, for another 15-30 minutes to prevent spreading.

Bake for 20 minutes, rotate pan, and bake for another 10-15 minutes or until cookies are golden.

Old-Fashioned Orange Balls

11 ounce box Nilla Wafers Vanilla Wafer Cookies, crumbled
1 Stick of Butter, melted
6 ounces Orange Juice Concentrate (I used half a 12 ounce size)
1/2 cup Chopped Pecans
2 cups Confectioner's Sugar
3 cups Flaked Sweetened Coconut, more if needed

Add the crumbled vanilla wafers, orange juice concentrate, pecans and melted butter to the large bowl of a stand mixer. Using the paddle attachment; mix on a medium speed until combined. Add confectioner's powdered sugar, then continue to mix until combine. Dough will be sticky.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper then use a one inch scoop to form orange balls, placing them on the lined baking sheet. After all the balls are formed, gently roll them in the flaked coconut to coat and transfer the orange snowball back to the lined baking sheet; repeat until all are coated. Refrigerate the orange snowballs until ready to serve.

Note: Orange balls do need to be refrigerated before and after serving.

Christmas Turtles

Nonstick cooking spray
1 cup pecan halves
24 individually wrapped caramels, unwrapped 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
1 teaspoon shortening

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Line a cookie sheet with aluminum foil and spray with nonstick spray. Arrange 3 pecan halves in a "Y" shape on the prepared cookie sheet. Place 1 caramel candy in the center of the "Y". Repeat with remaining pecans and caramels. Bake in preheated oven just until caramel is melted, 8 to 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat chocolate chips and shortening in a saucepan over low heat until chocolate is melted. Spoon chocolate over candies and refrigerate until set, about 30 minutes.

Kara Kimbrough is a food and travel writer and travel agent from Mississippi. Email her at kkprco@yahoo.com.



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Crossroads Baptist congregation celebrates Thanksgiving

Special to Pelahatchie News

Happy Thanksgiving from our youngest to our oldest at Cross Roads Baptist Church! We have so much to be thankful for!



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

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PHS 2023-24 Soccer Schedule Pelahatchie Library December Events

Special to Pelahatchie News

Our Chiefs opened up our soccer season November 7th with a 3-3 tie for our Lady Chiefs and a 7-0 shut out for our Chiefs against the Philadelphia Tornadoes. We look forward to an exciting season for both teams. Below is their current schedule, but follow our Pelahatchie High School Facebook page for updates.

2023-24 PELAHATCHIE SOCCER SCHEDULE		
Nov. 7	Vs. Philadelphia	5:30/7:00
Nov. 9	@ Pisgah	5:30/7:00
Nov. 13	@ Raymond	5:30/7:00
Nov. 16	@ Canton	5:30/7:00
Nov. 27	@ Philadelphia	5:30/7:00
Dec. 1	vs. Hazlehurst	5:30/7:00
Dec. 4	Vs. Canton	5:30/7:00
Dec. 7	@ Hazlehurst	5:30/7:00
Dec 11	vs. Crystal Springs	5:30/7:00
Dec. 14	vs. Puckett	5:30/7:00
Dec. 19	vs. Loyd Star	5:30/7:00
Dec. 21	@ McLaurin	5:30/7:00
Jan. 11	@Puckett	5:30/7:00
Jan. 16	vs. McLaurin	5:30/7:00
Jan. 18	@ Crystal Springs	5:30/7:00
Jan 19.	@ Forest	5:30/7:00
Jan. 23	vs. Terry #	5:30/7:00
Jan 25	vs. Morton	5:30/7:00
Jan 27	PLAYOFFS BEGIN	TBD

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Rankin County Co-op

Pelahatchie HS recognizes October monthly award winners



The October Counselor's Award for Integrity is Mary Taylor Nutt.



Pictured: October Faculty Member of the Month Ms. Meagan Moffatt (left) with Assistant Principal Philip Nelson. PHS would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Longino for sponsoring our October Special Recognitions.



Congratulations to the October Student Athlete of the Month, Ross Phillips. Ross represents what a true leader in the classroom and on the field looks like. Thank you for your impact on our Tribe and football team this season. #LevelUpChiefs

October students of the month by grade (not in order): Jayla McKinnis (7), Amya Wynn (8), Luke Wier (9), Madeline McFadden (10 - not pictured), Benjamin Burnham (11), Tyler Johns (12).



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Cross Roads Baptist Church



Sunday Schedule:

9:00 a.m. - Worship Service
10:30 a.m. - Sunday School for all ages

Wednesday Schedule:

5:30 p.m. - Family Dinner (Call to make reservations)
6:30 p.m. - Prayer Meeting; Youth Worship; Children's Activities;
Couples Support Group; College Age Bible Study; Ladies Bible Study

Online Worship Opportunity:

(Cross Roads Baptist Church Facebook Page)
9:00 a.m. - Worship Service every Sunday

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Update on Rankin County Sheriff's Office Training, Policies

Special to Pelahatchie News

This past January, inappropriate conduct from an isolated group of deputies injured citizens in our county and undermined the reputation of this department. The safety and security of our citizens, and visitors, is one of our main objectives, and we take all occurrences of this nature very seriously.

Once the true facts were discovered, we took immediate action to remove the perpetrators from the Rankin County Sheriff's Department, cooperated fully with the official investigation, and they are being dealt with through the legal system. We didn't stop there.

- With assistance from Jeffrey Artis and his team at J. Artis Consulting – who collectively have 50 plus years of experience with the FBI – we revamped the department's patrol policy and procedure manual. In an effort to keep the community informed, we have placed many of these policies on our website under the "Useful



Links" tab and are open to feedback from our citizens.

- We also updated our Compliments /Complaints process so that submissions can be made online, in addition to in-person, via telephone, and/or via U.S. Mail. Look for a new tab on our website to be active by this coming Friday. With this new process, measures have been put in place to ensure that the entire management team has access to every compliment

/complaint. The duties will be shared amongst our entire team so that every citizen critique is reviewed.

- We recruited and hired an Internal Affairs Investigator from outside of the department to help foster impartiality and fairness in our reviews. We are expanding our Compliance Division to include additional IA investigators so that all complaints that rise to the level of serious investigation can be dealt with in a

timely manner.

- Our deputies and jailors recently completed a Color of Law training session taught by Ron Reed and others from the Civil Rights Unit at the FBI headquartered in Washington, D.C. For clarity, "under color of law" means the real or purported use of authority provided by law. This training was designed to help our staff know what is expected when interacting with our citizens.

- Our management team has completed leadership training taught by experienced leaders.

We appreciate the seriousness of what occurred this past January. Even though the prior actions were abnormal and extreme, we will make every effort to ensure that they do not occur in the future. Everyone expects to be treated fairly and we will continually strive to improve how we protect and serve our community.

- Sheriff Bryan Bailey, Rankin County Sheriff's Office (MS)

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6:00-6:45 - Beginner/Intermediate

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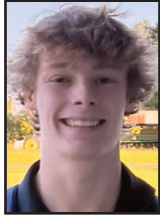


Merry Christmas

Mary Ann Griffin, CFNP • Kim Risher • Keli Robertson

East Rankin Soccer: 2023-2024 Team Overview

By Cooper Lytton



Special to Pelahatchie News

As the MAIS boys soccer season begins to open up, a team to look out for is the East Rankin Academy Patriots. The Patriots finished the 2022-23 season one win shy of the

playoffs, losing their last district game to Saint Joseph Catholic late in the season; This season, the Patriots defeated Saint Joseph Catholic 2-1.

The biggest advantage for the Patriots is their well-equipped senior class. East Rankin will have five graduating seniors. The biggest impact is Brax Rials, who moved from goalkeeper to midfield this season. With Rials at midfield, the Patriots will have more goal-scoring opportunities with his passing ability. Additionally, Rials collected a goal in the Patriot's win against Saint Joseph Catholic. Another



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important senior for the Patriots is defender Cooper Loper. Loper, one of the most experienced backs, has allowed only minimal scoring opportunities defensively. Loper's defense has been effective at shutting

down runs by the wingers and shot attempts within the box.

East Rankin has multiple young up-and-coming players this year. Freshman midfielders Nick and Jon Riemann have added to the chemis-

try in the midfield and will allow the Patriots to move the ball up-field more efficiently. Winger Noah Craig will be crucial in the offensive third with his proficiency in dribbling and playmaking.

East Rankin's district has also been restructured to their benefit. Last year, the Patriots had Saint Aloysius, Saint Joseph, Central Hinds Academy, and Park Place Christian in their district. This year, their district is composed of Copiah Academy, Brookhaven Academy, and Park Place Christian. As the Patriots were winless to Saint Aloysius and Saint Joseph, the new format will give East Rankin a great shot at being in the playoffs.

The Patriots' early win to Saint Joseph has only put them in the right direction this far in the season. With their well-rounded roster and new district layout, the Patriots will undoubtedly achieve success this year. Don't be surprised if the Patriots make a playoff run this season.



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Continued from Page 2

Mississippi Dental Center: Where Smiles Feel Right at Home!

Dr. Paula Stewart: A Trailblazer in Dentistry A trailblazer in dentistry, Dr. Paula Stewart, brings a wealth of experience to the Mississippi Dental Center family. After receiving her certificate of dental hygiene in 1981, she graduated cum laude from the UMMC School of Dentistry in 1995. Practicing for seventeen years as the sole practitioner, Dr. Stewart relocated her practice to Highland Village in Jackson, MS, in 2012. Here, she welcomed her son, Dr. Stewart Strange, and Dr. Anna McVey, creating the Paula Stewart DMD & Associates Family Dental Center. Recognized as the Best Dentist in 2013 and 2014 by "The Best of Jackson," the clinic reflects Dr. Stewart's commitment to excellence.



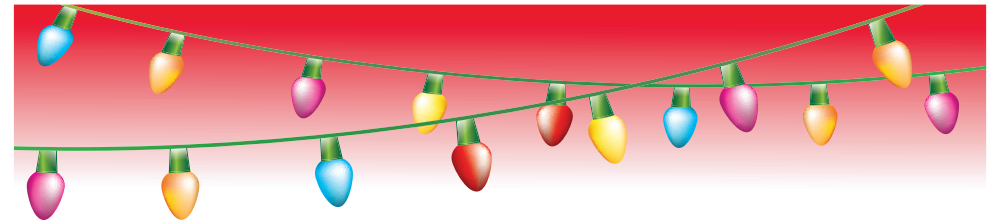
Mississippi Dental Association President and President of the Dental Chapter of the University Of Mississippi Alumni Association. Recognized as a Fellow of the American College of Dentists and the Pierre Fauchard Academy, Dr. Stewart is also a member of various associations, including the Mississippi Dental Association and the American Dental Association. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, skiing, hiking, and cherishing moments with her family, including two grandchildren.

Building Smiles, Building Connections: Mississippi Dental Center stands as a testament to the commitment of these caring professionals. From Dr. Stewart's trailblazing leadership to Dr. McVey's holistic approach, each dentist contributes to a diverse and welcoming atmosphere.

Your dental journey at Mississippi Dental Center is more than an appointment; it's an experience of warmth, expertise, and a sense of belonging. Because here, your smile is not just a part of your visit—it's the heart of their practice.

Dr. Stewart is not just a dentist; she's an active member of numerous dental organizations, serving on boards and committees. Her leadership extends to roles such as the 139th Mis-

PHS 2023-24 Basketball Schedule



2023-2024 Chiefs Basketball Schedule



<u>Date</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
October			
28	Jamboree	Neshoba Central	TBA
November			
7	Velma Jackson	Away	6:00/7:30
9	Leake County	Away	4:00/5:00/6:00/7:30
14	Richland	Away	6:00/7:30
16	Sebastopol	Away	6:00/7:30
21	West Lauderdale	Home	1:00JVG/2:00/3:30
22	Choctaw Central (Court of Dreams)	Away	New Orleans 12:30/2:00
28	Morton	Away	5:00JVG/6:00/7:30
30	Noxapater	Away	6:00/7:30
December			
1	McLaurin	Away	6:00/7:30
5	Leake County	Home	4:00/5:00/6:00/7:30
8	Sebastopol	Home	6:00/7:30
12	Pearl	Away	6:00/7:30
14	Richland	Home	5:00JVG/6:00/7:30
19	Crystal Springs	Home	6:00/7:30
21	HillCrest Christian	Home	5:00JVB/6:00/7:30
28	NWR Christmas Tournament	Away	TBA
29	NWR Christmas Tournament	Away	TBA
January			
5	St. Andrews	Away	6:00/7:30
9	Puckett	Home	6:00/7:30
12	Raleigh	Away	5:00JVB/6:00/7:30
16	Pisgah	Home	6:00/7:30
23	St. Andrews	Home	6:00/7:30
26	Puckett	Away	6:00/7:30
30	Raleigh	Home	5:00 JVG/6:00/7:30
February			
2	Pisgah	Away	6:00/7:30
6-9	District Tournament	Raleigh High School	TBA

Court of Dreams Dates to be announced asap



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JROTC trip to Air Guard base



Pelahatchie JROTC cadets went on a field trip Friday to the Air Guard base in Flowood. The cadets were exposed to several career options and toured a C17 aircraft. It was a great day of learning and growing with our Tribe. #LevelUpChiefs

PELAHATCHIE NEWS NETWORK






PAST HEADLINES

2013 - 10 years ago

- “Robotics team places in state competition”
- “Tips and tricks to save Christmas”

2018 - 5 years ago

- “RCSD approves cutting-edge school safety initiative”
- “Sweetgum isn't so bad afterall”

2022 - Last Year

- “Yogi Bear on the Lake in Pelahatchie wins several awards”
- “Menasha Packaging increasing footprint”



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Preparation and staying safe with hunting season



By Doug Carter, Rankin County Extension Agent

With many hunting seasons opening this time of year, I want to stress hunting safety. The 10 commandments of firearms safety are:

- 1) Always watch the muzzle! Keep it pointed in a safe direction at all times.
- 2) Treat every firearm with the respect due a loaded gun. It may be loaded even if you think it is not.
- 3) Be sure of your target and what is in front of it and beyond it. Know the identifying features of the game you hunt. Make sure you have an adequate backstop, don't shoot at a flat, hard surface or water.
- 4) The best way to prevent an accidental discharge is to keep your finger outside of the trigger guard, until you are ready to shoot.
- 5) Make sure the barrel and action are free of obstructions, and carry only the proper ammunition for your firearm.
- 6) Unload firearms when not in use. Leave actions open, and carry firearms in cases and unloaded to and from the



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- 7) Only point a firearm at something you intend to shoot. Avoid horseplay with a gun.
- 8) Don't run, jump, or climb with a loaded firearm. Unload a firearm before you climb a fence or tree, or jump a ditch. Pull a firearm toward you by the butt, not the muzzle.
- 9) Store firearms and ammunition separately and safely. Store each in a secured location beyond the reach of children and careless adults.
- 10) Avoid alcoholic beverages before and during shooting activities. Also avoid mind-or behavior-altering medicines or drugs.

tem during this critical time. Failure to wear a fall restraint system is the most important factor in tree stand falls.

I sometimes wonder, why hunters climb 20 feet off the ground, without any fall restraint system. Some people are willing to take more risks than others. Just maybe it's the same thing that draws hunters to wild places.

Another problem is financial in nature. Many hunters just don't want to spend a lot of money on a fall restraint system. Some hunters will pay thousands of dollars each year to participate in the sport they love. They spend money on hunting gear, leases or licenses, but when it comes to climbing safety, that willingness disappears.

Tree stands are a popular and effective method of hunting. However, they also pose a significant safety risk. If you choose to hunt from a tree stand, you alone must be responsible for your own safety. Knowing and practicing safe tree stand procedures can minimize these risks and ensure your time afield will be both safe and enjoyable.

Source: *Today's Mississippi Hunter*; "Mississippi's Guide to Hunting Responsibly and Safely" Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks.

Also, more and more hunters are using tree stands, so I want to stress tree stand safety. Most deer hunters in Mississippi know someone who has been involved in a fall from a tree stand. There are hunters who are now confined to a wheelchair and many others, who have lost their lives due to tree stand falls. While the number of firearm-related accidents has dropped dramatically in the past two-decades, the number of tree stand accidents has risen sharply.

Seventy percent of tree stand falls occur when hunters are climbing up and into the stand or getting down from the stand. Almost the same percentage of hunters don't wear a fall restraint sys-

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ERA 2023 National Honor Society Inductees



Special to Pelahatchie News

Front Row: Lydia Collipp, Cole Cotnam, Jackson Fountain, Audrey Hawk, Brody Hill, Kylee Holifield, Dalton McDill, Audrey Mayatte, Cooper Lytton, Cooper Loper, and Truitt Lewis. Back Row: Evan McIlwain, Gabe Nutt, Mackenzie Phillips, Jordan Porter, Abby Raines, Marlee Rakinic, Lane Riemann, Maury Ann Walley, Katie Tadlock, Raylin Smith, Rachel Smith, Brooke Shedd, Lesley Scarberry, and Abram Rowell.

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Pastor's Perspective: God's Generosity and our Joy



By Guest Columnist, Spencer Sullivan, Pastor, Pelahatchie Baptist

Special to Pelahatchie News

When Melanie and I were first married, like many newlyweds, we struggled to make ends meet. I was going to grad school full-time and also working part-time. Melanie was starting her career as a teacher.

By God's grace and provision, we never went hungry and we were able to take care of the expenses we had. God's grace and provision took multiple forms. Yes, we had the regular income of our jobs, but we were also the recipients of God's provision through His people. I remember one such occasion when our water bill was due and we just didn't have the money to pay it. The next day we received a check in the mail from a friend (who didn't have much herself!) for almost the exact amount we needed for the bill. She told us that she sensed God leading her to send us the gift. We were so thankful, but also amazed at God's care and provision through His people. I could share many other similar examples of how God used the generosity of His people to take care of us and provide for the needs we had.

As a pastor, I am regularly reminded of the struggles that people have not only in our own community, but also throughout the world. At the time of this writing, it is actually the week of Thanksgiving. More than any other time of the year, we are reminded to be thankful for the blessings in our lives. The call and command



Special to Pelahatchie News

for God's people to be thankful to Him is a thread woven throughout the Bible. James 1:17 reminds us that, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." Everything good in our lives finds its source in our loving Heavenly Father. In fact, by the time you are reading this, we are now enjoying Christmas lights, decorations, and music in anticipation of Christmas, which of course is the celebration of God's greatest gift – His Son, the Lord Jesus. Through Him, we have the opportunity not only to be reconciled to God, but even adopted into His family so that we can live eternally

with Him! No greater gift has ever been given in all of human history.

Our God owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10-12) and lacks nothing, yet He is also incredibly generous. Yes, He has given His own Son so that we can be forgiven of our sin and brought into relationship with Him, but as a loving Father, He also gives and provides good things for His children (Matthew 7:7-11). As we learned in the early years of our marriage, sometimes He does that through the obedience and generosity of His children. But, not only does He use His children to bless others through generosity, God also gives a unique joy to the giver in the process. Whether our family has been able to partner with our church or other ministries to give and bless others or when we sense God's leading to do so as individuals, the reality is that we then experience an incredible joy from seeing God do His amazing work firsthand.

Christmas is certainly a season of giving. I'd like to challenge all of us to consider how we might be part of God's grace and provision for others by blessing those who may have greater needs than our own. There are likely needs all around us, perhaps some in which we may be completely unaware. Therefore, it is important for us to seek God and listen carefully for His voice. I am grateful that our friend heard God's voice many years ago. If we listen carefully, I'm confident we can hear it ourselves today and sense how He might lead us to bless others. When we do, get ready to experience that unique joy from being part of His plan to bless others.



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Title IX: Associate Vice President Student Services, Title IX Coordinator Box 1100 Raymond MS 39154; Phone: 601-857-3353 or Email: TitleIX@hindscc.edu.

Lady Chiefs showcase basketball players of the week



Payton "Big Paint" Wilson
Player of the game @ Velma Jackson
16 points
11 Rebounds
2 Blocks
2 Steals
She finished the night with a double of double.



Bre "Sniper" Ward
Player of the Game vs. Leake County
15 points
2 Rebounds
3 Steals



Photos special to Pelahatchie News



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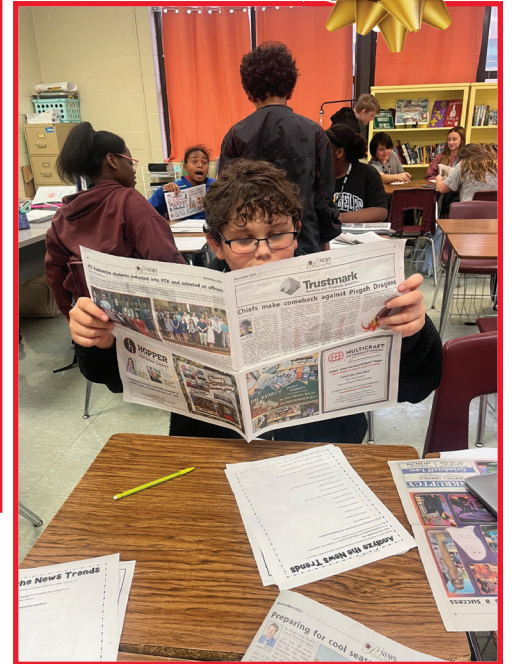
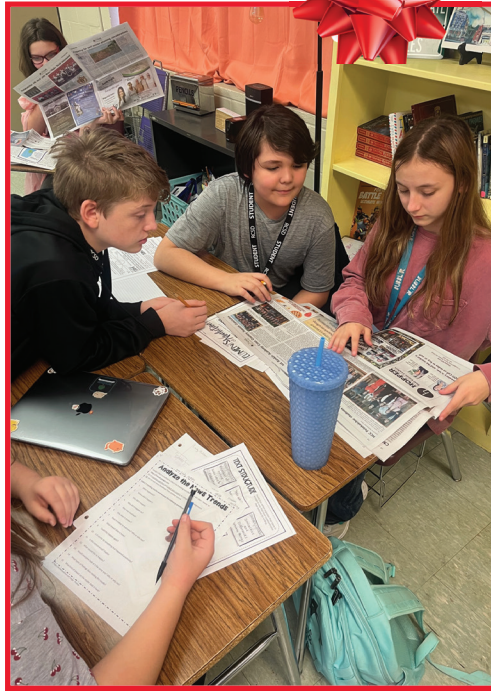
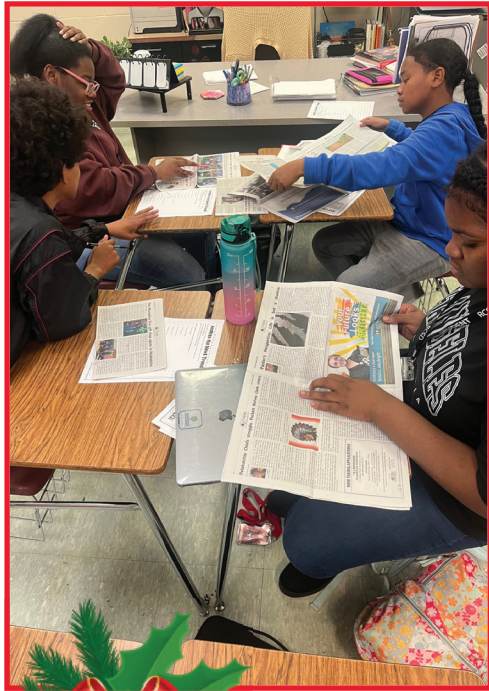
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HOTTEST STEERS This Week!

Junior High class studies creative writing and local news

Special to Pelahatchie News

Ms. Moffatt's 7th Grade Creative Writing students have been learning about all of the elements of "Nonfiction" in various formats including the latest edition of *The Pelahatchie News Network*. Students were excited to dissect the various elements of this genre and most of all see familiar faces and all of the positive impacts reported in the community. Their excitement and willingness to own their learning is inspiring. #Long live printed text



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

PJHS top spelling bee competitors



Special to Pelahatchie News

The Middle School Spelling Bee competition was fierce this year. Many spellers competed through numerous rounds. Congratulations to all our spellers today for making this bee one of the best we have seen in many years! Landry McMillan, our Champion, and Jayla McKinnis, our runner-up, will both compete at the RCSD bee held at Richland High School on January 19.

MERRY Christmas

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December Events:

<p>MONDAY-THURSDAY 6-8PM \$5 PER PERSON</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -SLEIGH HEY RIDE LIGHT TOUR WITH POPCORN & COCOA -OUTDOOR CHRISTMAS MOVIE 	<p>SATURDAY 10AM-8:00PM \$12.50 PER PERSON</p> <p>10AM-4PM FUN FILLED CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES EVERY HOUR AT THE ACTIVITY CENTER</p> <p>5PM-8PM CHRISTMAS STATIONS INCLUDING: COOKIES W/MRS. CLAUS MAKING REINDEER FOOD TREE DECORATING SLEIGH HEY RIDE AND MORE</p>
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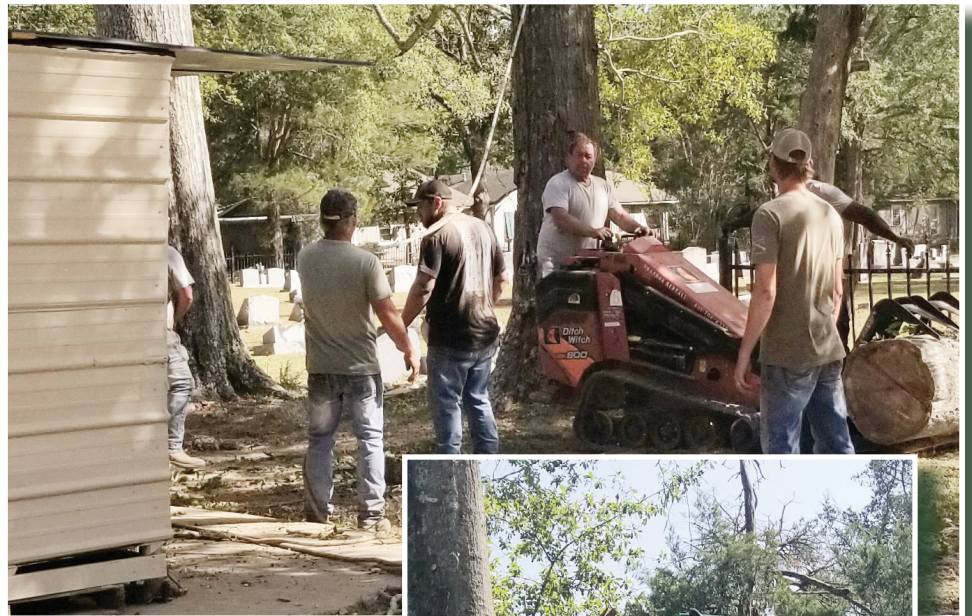
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Seventeen RCSD schools have earned the prestigious "Energy Star" designation for superior energy performance. Thank you to Mr. Brett Rasmussen, Utilities Engineer with Nissan, who is a mentor for the schools & has helped RCSD with this certification process. #EverythingMatters

ERCO and Cutting Edge highlight good neighbors

Special to Pelahatchie News

A Cutting Edge came and cut down 2 trees (one that was dead and about to fall, and one that was leaning over our building.) They cut some other problematic limbs and then did something incredible for ERCO. When they discovered what we do at Ever Reaching Community Outreach, they donated their work. This town is filled with some of the most caring, hard-working, skilled people who are willing to help their neighbors. ERCO is blessed to be a part of it.



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