



THE CANTON NEWS

Good News You Can Use • March 7, 2019 • Vol. 5, No. 3 • Canton, Mississippi

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Canton News
P.O. Box 1163, Canton, MS 39046

Canton receives beautification grant

Special to The Canton News

Canton was recently selected as the recipient of a \$25,000 grant to help pay for tree planting and beautification efforts around the city.



Alvin Davis,
Parks and Rec Director

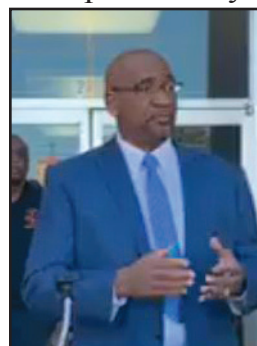
Several years ago, the Canadian National Railway Company (CN) partnered with America in Bloom (AIB) to launch greening projects across the United States. Their most recent stop was Mississippi, to award Canton a grant, whose funds will help pay for projects that include developing an arboretum at the local park, a community fruit orchard and landscaping in the business district.

The Mississippi Urban Forest Council (MUFC) wrote the

grant for the city and will help with all aspects of project implementation. Local groups that will also participate in the projects are the Canton Garden Club and Keep Canton Beautiful.

"We are proud to bring this opportunity to six Mississippi cities: Yazoo City, Terry, Canton, Jackson, Byram and McComb," said Donna Yowell, executive director of MUFC. "These types of activities are significant improvements to the community."

"The social impact of green space, trees and gardens can be particularly pronounced



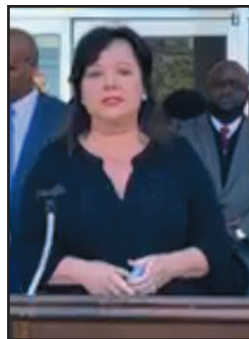
Fred Esco,
Alderman

when public spaces are transformed into places of beauty that foster safe places for neighborhood interaction, economic and property value

enhancement and improves the lives of those who live in or visit the community," said Yowell.

The funds for the grant came partly from the Canadian National Railroad Company, whose website describes the company as "a true backbone of the economy, transporting approximately C\$250 billion worth of goods annually for the wide range of business sectors, ranging from resource products to manufactured products to consumer goods, across a rail network spanning Canada and mid-America."

CN, along with its operating railway subsidiaries, serves the cities and ports of Vancouver, Montreal, New Orleans, Mobile and Jackson, with connections



Donna Yowell,
Mississippi Urban Forest Council

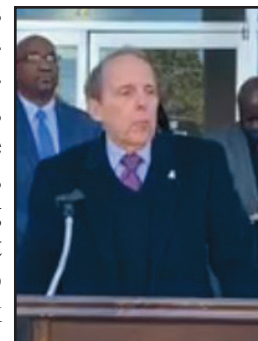
to all points in North America.

America in Bloom, who also partnered on the grant funding, explains that it envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work and play; benefitting from colorful plants and trees; enjoying clean environments; celebrating heritage; and planting pride through volunteerism.

AIB, an independent non-profit, promotes nationwide beautification through education and community involvement by encouraging the use of flowers, plants, trees and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements.

The Mississippi Urban Forest Council, who wrote the grant

Cont. on page 3



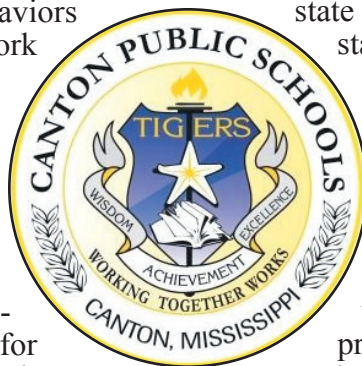
Marvin Miller,
America in Bloom

CPSD Community Learning Center awarded \$700K

Special to The Canton News

The Canton Public School District (CPSD) 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) has been chosen to receive a \$700,000 grant over the next three years, aimed at inspiring learning, supporting families and increasing program results. CPSD officials say that some anticipated program benefits for students include higher state assessment scores, a decrease in disciplinary referrals and absences and the development of positive relationships between increased student attendance and improvement in student motivation and attentiveness, prosocial behaviors and quality homework completion.

The 21st CCLC initiative is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to supporting local afterschool and summer learning opportunities for children and youth. These programs support:



- Opportunities for new, hands on academic enrichment activities that can help students meet state and local achievement standards.

- A broad array of additional enrichment services designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program, such as: drug and violence prevention programs, career and technical programs, counseling programs, art and music

programs, STEM programs and physical activity/nutrition education programs.

- Literacy and related educational development services to the families of children who are served in the program.

More than twenty-one million children and youth are eligible to attend Community Learning Centers, but funding allows only 1.7 million to participate. Studies show that for every child in an afterschool program, two are waiting to get in.

Cont. on page 8

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Canton High places in regional stock market game

Special to The Canton News

Most people consult their financial advisors for investing tips and strategies, but Cantonians might find the top advisors at a local school. Students from the Canton High School 9th Grade Academy, coached by Teena Ruth, were named Region Three second place winners in the fall high school division of the Mississippi Stock Market Game (SMG).

Organizers say the simulation is one of the most effective learning tools available about the free enterprise system for students in grades four through twelve. The program enables teams of students to invest a hypothetical \$100,000 in the stock market over a 13-week period. Winners are determined on the percentage return above or below S&P 500 growth. The Canton High second place team outperformed the S&P by 9.8% and grew their portfolio to \$100,986. MCEE will award prizes to each first and second place team in each region from each division to be presented at



Special to The Canton News

Pictured are, seated: Rodarion Hodges and Erionna Flowers; standing: Ivett Rios; Teena Ruth, instructor; and Tubius White.

the school's local awards ceremony in the spring.

The curriculum used in the Stock Market Game is correlated with Mississippi College and Career Ready Standards and meets the criteria of a STEM program. Teachers report that math scores increase when the SMG is used

in the classroom. The SMG is an online education program used in thousands of classrooms nationwide to help teach math, social studies, business, economics and language skills. Students in grades four through twelve participate in teams and manage a simulated investment portfolio

during the school year. The SMG is made possible by the support of more than 600 securities firms, combined with grass-roots support in schools and communities. It is the only stock market simulation supported by the New York Stock Exchange and the Nasdaq Stock Market.

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Volume 5, Issue 3
Circulation 14,000

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The Canton News is published on the first Thursday
of each month in Canton, Mississippi.

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Follow God into change, rebirth

By Guest Columnist Beth Foose

I have been thinking a lot about change lately. Spring is in the air. Trees are wearing the thin veil of green created by unfurling buds, and daffodils are waning as azaleas begin to blossom. We are trading coats for shirtsleeves and thinking of which tomatoes to plant this year. Most of us welcome the transition from winter to spring, but we can be mighty resistant to other changes in our lives.

Here in Canton, we live in the midst of change. For most small towns in the South, "change" means "decline." But it doesn't have to be that way. As persons of faith, we believe in the cycle of birth-life-decline-death-resurrection or new life. The story is told over and over, not just in scripture but in the processes of the natural world. It can also be the story of our community.

As those who worship a living God, we believe God is in the midst of the change...always creating, always making new...new directions, new possibilities, new relationships. Yet, instead of

seeing change as God among us, we often misunderstand change as something to be avoided rather than embraced.

Sure, change is hard. It inevitably involves the grief of letting go and the fear and difficult work of making choices about a new future. But grief is part and parcel of transformation and new life.

Contrary to what our culture tries to tell us with its unwavering focus on perfection, decline and consequent need to change, are not sins. They are part of a process...a God-ordained process...and they are opportunities for new life...for resurrection.

As a community, we have choices about how we approach the inevitability of change. We can choose hope or despair, indifference or activism, isolation or community.

I have seen the ways in which God lives in and through the changes we are experiencing here in Canton. God is here in neighbors helping one another, in children learning and laughing together, in responsible citizens voicing their opinion. God is here constantly calling us to choose movement over stagnation, change over security, life over fear.

The challenges we face as a small town provide possibilities for us to respond to God with new dreams, new ministries and renewed devotion. They are opportunities for us

to be reborn.

By God's grace, we have the capacity to move beyond the barriers of racism, poverty, injustice and violence that divide us and to work side by side toward improving the common good. Our work begins with honest dialogue, with empathy and with shared purpose toward making real changes, instead of falling victim to what feels like inevitable change and decline.

We must not be bound by our old expectations and prejudices that we miss God in faces unlike our own. We must not be so focused on our own tired notions of ministry that we become unwilling to imagine new ways that God's presence might be made known here in Canton.

We must follow God into change and into new life. Just as every year winter becomes spring, Canton can be reborn into a more just, more inclusive, more merciful and more loving community. We can pass through the midst of our fear, our grief, our prejudices and our expectations toward new life, toward resurrection and toward God.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Reverend Beth Foose is the Rector of Grace Episcopal Church- the one with the red door.

cont. from front page

Canton receives beautification grant

for Canton, is Mississippi's own statewide nonprofit that works with communities and local groups to improve quality of life and support strong communities for economic success on a local level. MUFC was recently recognized by the *Mississippi Business Journal* as one of Mississippi's best nonprofits.

"We are thrilled to work so very closely with the City of

Canton and to provide this opportunity for more enhancement to our state," said Yowell. "These projects will begin a series of arboretums in the state, and these cities will become part of the Mississippi Arboretum Trail.

"Help green our communities," continued Yowell. "Trees enhance property values, improve the look and feel of commer-

cial areas and even help reduce crime! The Mississippi Urban Forest Council and its volunteers, the Urban Forest Masters, have planted over 379,000 trees and donated over three million flower bulbs in Mississippi since 2010."

For more information on Mississippi Urban Forest Council programs, visit www.msurbanforest.com.

THE CANTON NEWS

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CPSD wins Reading Fair



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Pictured (l to r) are: First place winners Ashunti Johnson and Dwight Luckett, Jr.; and second place winners Jeremy Harris and Aurelia Nash.

Special to The Canton News

Superintendent Gary Hannah and the School Board of Trustees honored CPSD's Mississippi Regional Reading Fair winners at a recent board meeting. CPSD won two first place awards and two second place awards at the 2019 Mississippi Regional Reading Fair. Dwight Luckett, Jr. and Ashunti Johnson won first place in the Digital Media Category. Jeremy Harris and Aurelia Nash won second place in the Story Board Category. The event was held at the Mississippi School for the Deaf and Blind. The two first place

winners, Luckett and Johnson, advanced to the State Reading Fair at the Mississippi School for the Deaf and Blind.

State Regional Reading Fair participants from CPSD included Alexandria Luckett; John Woodard, Jr.; Jeremy Harris, Jr.; Jakayla Washington; Monterious Coleman; Arnage Golston; Angel Williams; Tyarian Carson; Aurelia Nash; A'miyah Matlock; Makayla Smoot; Ashunti Johnson; and Dwight Luckett, Jr.

Shoney Harris served as the District Reading Fair Coordinator, and school coordinators included Ms. Nichols, Mrs. Nelson, Ms. Joyner, and Mrs. Pettit.

Governor Bryant signs MSA Week proclamation



Special to The Canton News

Physician anesthesiologists Dr. Lori Marshall (left) and Dr. LaToya Mason-Bolden (right), both of Madison County, were among those in attendance at the recent Mississippi Society of Anesthesiologists (MSA) Day at the Mississippi State Capitol. During this event, Governor Phil Bryant signed the MSA 2019 Proclamation that officially acknowledged January 27-February 2 as Physician Anesthesiologists Week. Physician anesthesiologists are leaders of anesthesia care teams during most surgical procedures. Physician Anesthesiologist Week is an action-packed week-long event to alert policymakers, the media and the public at large that when seconds count, physician anesthesiologists save lives.

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CPSD springs forward to assessment readiness

By Guest Columnist Gary Hannah

I am dually honored and humbled to write not only my first superintendent's column for *The Canton News*, but this is also my first column as a superintendent. The students, parents, community and staff of Canton Public School District (CPSD) have welcomed me with open arms, and I am excited to be a member of the Canton family. My vision for our district can be condensed to two simple words: kids first. I believe that Canton Public School District has the potential to not only become a successful district, but we have the potential to be a district that maintains a successful rating. The first step in becoming a successful district is to ensure that all actions are based on what is best for students and not adults. Whether it's a hiring decision, purchasing resources, or fine-tuning instruction based on



Special to The Canton News

data, we will put our children first. Canton Public School District has so many current practices that are working; we want to continue to build on our current teaching and learning momentum and establish consistency and stability for our students. One of my primary focus areas this first year will be on teacher recruitment and retention. We need to make Canton Public School District a place where teachers, administrators and support staff want to come to work. We will accomplish this by not only recruiting the best teachers, administrators and staff, but we will work to make sure that we retain them once they are here. After recruitment comes retention, and we will support our staff through professional development and by providing them with the resources and encouragement that they need to do well. Once we have stability and retain the best staff possible, success is inevitable. The beginning of March signals several things for our district. Spring Break is March 11-15, but once our students return from Spring Break, we will begin a rapid process of assessment readiness. Some of our smaller scale tests like our LAS LINKS EL Assessment and our Kindergarten assessment begin in early April. We will have retests for our seniors in mid-April, and then our large scale MAAP assessments in grades 3-8, Algebra I, English II, Biology I and U.S. History will begin April 30, and they will continue throughout May. Parents should expect detailed testing schedules from their children's principals in the next few weeks. To prepare for our state tests, we will also administer mock assessments in March to help us gauge where our children are and determine what additional support we need to provide before testing. Based on the data that we receive from the mock assessments, we will identify students who need additional instructional time to master content, and we will provide additional layers of learning support for those students. We will also use our mock data to identify students who will benefit most from Saturday instruction to fill learning gaps in reading and mathematics.

This year, our Saturday School sessions will have a very narrow focus as we streamline our resources to focus on students who have specific growth needs. Parents can assist us in preparing their children for these assessments by encouraging them to complete any supplemental assignments that they receive (as well as their regular assignments) and by talking with them about the importance of doing their best on these assessments.

I am committed to the children of Canton Public School District, and I believe that we are on the right track. We will reach our goal if we stay focused. Our students will come first as long as I am here, and it will take all of us to show them that we believe that they will be successful.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Gary Hannah joined Canton Public School District as superintendent in January 2019. He is a former teacher, principal and deputy superintendent. He and his wife Monica are the parents of three children, Kia, Mady and Mason.

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Grace Christian Counseling now in Canton, MS

By Guest Columnist Joy Foy



Special to The Canton News

Canton has a new business! It's called the Grace Christian Counseling Center (GCCC) and is located in the house just east of the First Presbyterian Church at 210 East Peace Street, which previously housed the Presbyterian Kindergarten. GCCC started in Vicksburg, Mississippi, over twenty years ago and now has offices in Vicksburg, Port Gibson and an office right here in Canton, Mississippi! The organization operates under the highest standards in all regards, as it must abide by the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics.

Grace Christian Counseling Center welcomes all people from all walks of life and faiths. They pride themselves on never turning anyone away for any reason. You are accepted as you are, and no one wants to change you. Counseling

services are provided daily from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., and after-hour appointments are available. Referrals are not necessary, and interested persons can request an appointment by contacting 601-859-3570. The goal of this service is to help individuals and families, and they use multiple therapy approaches to treat a wide range of conditions.

This counseling center ensures that children, teens and adults in our community dealing with problems including low self-image, depression/anxiety, relationship conflict, divorce, addiction, substance abuse, sexual and gender identity journeys, risky behaviors, work conflict or any other need have a new convenient option to begin a positive change for their life! Grace is a place where your new journey can

begin, and the counselors there will accompany you every step of the way.

Harold Melancon is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in Mississippi. Harold uses multiple therapy approaches to assist his

clients. Andrew Breland is an LPC in Mississippi and Texas and is able to provide services in-person and online. Andrew primarily uses drama and experiential therapy. LPCs practice strict confidentiality. Anyone

holding a license as an LPC has completed the training required while obtaining a counseling master's degree as well as two years of supervised clinical experience, has passed a background check, passed a national counseling examination from the National Board of Certified Counselors and has been approved by the state licensing board before

practicing independently.

With your help, we can spread the word that Grace Christian Counseling Center is readily available, and professional counseling can be an option when things aren't going right. Parents, teachers, doctors and our court system personnel can easily refer people to these local therapists to guarantee better tomorrows for those hurting today. Most insurance is accepted, including Medicaid, and there are several working models of Employee Assistance Programs to help in utilizing the counselors. This new business pledges to work with one and all to customize a payment plan that allows everyone the means to get help while dealing with changing circumstances.

Tell someone this good news!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Joy Foy is married to James Foy and is a retired Economic Developer with the Mississippi Development Authority. Foy is an active participant in the community of Canton. She is a member of the Lions Club and on the Keep Canton Beautiful Committee.



Special to The Canton News

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Canton HS students receive CC football scholarships



Zharien Carson and family

Special to The Canton News



Thomas Simmons and family

Special to The Canton News



Pizarro Travis and family

Special to The Canton News

Special to The Canton News

On National Signing Day, three Canton High School (CHS) seniors signed with local colleges to play football as they pursue their degrees. Thomas Simmons signed with Coahoma Community College and plans to earn his degree in physical education/

sports administration so he can become a coach. Zharien Carson signed with Coahoma Community College and plans to earn his degree in mass communications with the goal of becoming a sports analyst. Pizarro Travis signed with Holmes Community College and plans to earn a nursing degree.

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CA teacher recognized

Special to The Canton News

Nine years ago, Mrs. Alison Martin began teaching yearbook at Canton Academy (CA), mainly to get help with her boys' tuition; but she instantly loved teaching there, and the school felt like home to her. About three years ago, the school was looking for more math teachers when they realized that Martin could teach all the way up to calculus. She could also teach French, but said, "French is a very hard subject to teach, and I would much rather teach any other kind of math. My favorite subject to teach is math, because I like to watch the expression on a student's face when they understand how to work a problem." Martin also loves being over the yearbook, because it's so relaxed and fun to watch the book come together. She has completed a few that have won the state



Mrs. Alison Martin

yearbook contest. Her students even asked her if they could get a banner to hang in the gym like the sports teams get when they win state.

Martin's favorite thing about teaching at CA is being at the same school as her boys, Sam (6th grade), Carter (9th grade) and Lane (11th grade), in case they need her for anything, and can also keep an eye on them to make sure they stay out of trouble. She is also able to attend most of their sporting events. Martin didn't attend Canton Academy herself but is very happy that her sons are students there.

The students at Canton Academy love having Mrs. Martin as a teacher and have nothing but good things to say about her. She says she loved the staff and students right when she first started teaching at CA, as well as the school's program. Over the years, she has watched the school change and grow, and she's excited to see it getting better, especially advancing in technology, which has really helped attract new students and families.

cont. from front page

CPSD Community Learning Center was awarded \$700K

The Canton program will be offered to children in second through fifth grades, on a most-needed basis, and will take place inside each participating school three days a week from 2:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Organizers expect to begin after Spring Break this school year and continue through June. The grant

money will be divided among Canton Elementary School, Jimmie M. Goodloe Elementary School, McNeal Elementary School and Reuben B. Myers Canton School of Arts and Sciences. It will be used to pay the staff as well as provide instructional materials and snacks for the students.



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Canton Academy Quiz Bowl team competes at Madison Cent.



Special to The Canton News

Members of the Canton Academy (CA) Quiz Bowl team took part in a recent competition at Madison Central High School. The team won three out of five rounds. Pictured (l to r) are: Alex Mary, Jack Carr, Alaina Nichols, Heaven McNaulty, Kendall Calloway, Graham Lambert and Chaney Hale.

Canton Academy 4K students celebrate 100th day of school



Special to The Canton News

Canton Academy 4K students, Sloane Montgomery, BayLynn Bates and Emoree' Dease, dressed up as senior citizens to celebrate the 100th day of school.

CMU OFFERS TIP TO CUT YOUR ENERGY BILL

At CMU we are always working to keep your utility rates the lowest in the area. Our rate payers have the lowest electric, gas and water rates in the metro area and we are proud to be your utility provider!

Energy Tips to Cut your Energy Bills This Winter

- Whether you live in a mobile home, an apartment, or a multi-level house, your first steps for reducing energy costs will be similar. Start with a room-by-room tour. Take notes as you tour each room, list any supplies you will need, and prioritize bigger projects. As you implement your plan from these easy, low-cost energy improvements you will see a difference in your utility bills.
- Start with the entrance to your home. Change your outside lights to energy-saving bulbs. Check to ensure that air is not seeping into your home. Most homes have gaps around the windows, doors, and edges where walls and floors meet. You can purchase supplies such as foam weather-stripping from many home improvement stores to quickly fix these problems.
- Appliances can also consume a tremendous amount of energy. You can save on your utility bill by making a few minor adjustments. Such as scraping dishes instead of rinsing before loading them in the dishwasher. Run the dishwasher with a full load and use the air-dry option if available. Try to wash most clothes in cold water and always rinse cold. You can save hundreds of dollars on water heating each year. Remember to keep that lint trap clean! Keep the condenser coils clean on your freezer and refrigerator.

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Lions Club dinner at the historic 1869 Trolio Hotel

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The 1869 Trolio Hotel, one of Mississippi's noted Landmark properties, was the setting for the Canton Lions Club Dinner with Spouses on February 19, 2019. The town square lighting up the front windows and the New Orleans courtyard visible through the glass wall on the opposite end helped create the right atmosphere for the evening.

With thirty-three attending, Club President Bobby Long welcomed the crowd, followed by an elegant dinner catered by Kathy Hammack. President Long then recognized the Club's accomplishments starting with two new members, Reverend Larry Saxton and Adam Moore, who were both recruited in 2019, then followed up with cleanup projects around town, partnerships with the Garden Club to host tours of the upstairs apartments around the square and a very successful Lions Club Auction. He expressed thanks to all

seventy-one merchants and friends for the donated auction items.

Long reported that funds from the auction had allowed the Lions to give \$1,500 each to three Canton students, support numerous state and national Lions Club programs and to give to local organizations.

The guest speaker for the evening was long-time Mississippi radio and television personality Walt Grayson, who told of his many adventures around the state of Mississippi. He has also authored several books and ended the night with a book signing. The Lions say they want to thank the City of Canton for its support of this yearly fundraiser.



Pictured (l to r) are: Lions Club members Kathy Hammack and Joy Foy; guest speaker Walt Grayson; and Canton Lions Club President Bobby Long.

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Canton library offering Friday computer class



Special to The Canton News

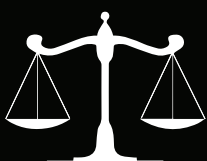
The Canton branch of the Madison County Library System offers a free computer class every Friday from 9 to 10 a.m. The library's own Technology Programming Specialist, David Jackson, teaches this basic, hands-on class which provides an introduction to the parts of the computer and how to use them. Jackson uses a step-by-step approach when teaching patrons the basic skills needed to navigate in a virtual space. According to participants, the library's basic computer classes have built their confidence, computer literacy and knowledge of computer terms.

Canton Music Study Club holds monthly meeting



Special to The Canton News

The Canton Music Study Club (CMSC) held its February meeting at the First United Methodist Church, Canton. President Kathy Hammack called the meeting to order and led members and guests in the club ritual. Mrs. Hammack introduced the Together We Sing selection for February, "Work, for the Night is Coming," by Anna Louisa Walker Coghill (lyrics) and Lowell Mason (tune). Charlyne Jones introduced Laura and Seth Womack, program participants for the evening. The Womacks both teach elementary music in local public school systems. The couple performed a vocal duet, "Consider the Lillies," accompanied by Miss Jones on the piano. Mr. Womack performed an interpretation of the hymn, "Amazing Grace," on trumpet. Hostesses for the evening were Jennifer Lariviere and Princess Thompson. A short business meeting concluded the evening. Pictured (l to r) are: Seth and Laura Womack, and Charlyne Jones.




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Mad-CAAP and library host first Lego® Day for Canton kids



(right) Deaysia Lewis, Becky Bowen and Kay-Lee Stokes



Special to The Canton News

(left) Jebron Ross



(right) Markenza (Peaches) Brown, Markeith Brown and Honey Davis



Special to The Canton News

(left) Zanyala (Strawberry) Robinson

Special to The Canton News

Nearly twenty kids recently attended Lego® Day at the Joe Prichard Homes in Canton, marking Becky Bowen's and the Madison Library's first Lego® outreach program in Madison County. The program provided the opportunity for the children to listen to a story about the importance of friendship and to use their imaginations to build a Lego® house. Each

Thursday, several volunteers help kids read, do homework and play board and card games on behalf of Madison Countians Allied Against Poverty (Mad-CAAP). Cantonians who have a special talent, program, lesson or craft that they would be willing to share with kids at the Joe are encouraged to let Katie Paczak know at 601-421-0971. Organizers say they are always looking for new experiences to offer the children.

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Quilters prep for show

By Lori Lycette

The Allison's Wells Quilt Guild was begun over twelve years ago by several women who share a common love for making quilts. It currently consists of about fifteen ladies of various ages and backgrounds

(Maurice is a snowbird from New York) who meet every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. at the Canton Tourism Welcome Center. They say they really enjoy sharing their knowledge with each other, as well as showing off their new creations to the group. The Guild has made several charity quilts to benefit organizations such as Quilts Beyond Borders, Blair Batson Children's Hospital, the Ronald McDonald House and the VA

Nursing Home.

Their annual quilt show is free to the public and will take place April 5 and April 6 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day at the Welcome Center located at 137 North Union Street on the Canton Square. About fifty quilts will



Photo By Lori Lycette

Some of Allison's Wells Quilt Guild members (l to r) include: Ricki Barbuto, Maurice Anding, Mary Jane Boutwell, Ann McKay, Edna Hillhouse, Beverly Herring, Belva Cauthen, Laura Key and Bernice Jefferson.

be on display, ranging from freshly made to antique, with the history given on those. One quilt that was made by Allison's Wells Quilters will be raffled off this November, with the proceeds going to various projects,

including supplies for more charity quilts. Raffle tickets will be \$1 each and will be available to purchase at the Welcome Center or from any member until the day of the raffle.

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Bush completes NFPA course



Special to *The Canton News*

Firefighter DeShawn T. Bush of the Canton Fire Department recently graduated from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 Firefighter I-II course held at the Mississippi State Fire Academy in Jackson, Mississippi. This intense seven-week course included classroom and hands-on instruction in the areas of fire behavior, fire suppression, rescue, incident command, hazardous materials and other fire related topics. This course meets and exceeds the National Fire Protection Association for Firefighter Qualifications and the uniform minimum training standards stated in the Mississippi Code section 45-11-7. The Mississippi State Fire Academy is a division of the Mississippi Insurance Department. Commissioner Mike Chaney and Academy Executive Director Reggie Bell conclude that firefighters, through their newly acquired skills and knowledge, will be an asset to the fire departments they represent in implementing fire protection and prevention for their community.

Merit Health Madison Wears Red



Special to *The Canton News*

Merit Health Madison employees participated in The American Heart Association's Wear Red Day as part of their commitment to help raise awareness and save more lives. Pictured (l to r) are: Tim Greenwood, Beth Harkins, Precia Johnson, Rhonda Hayes, Angie Yeatts, Lywanis Steele, Antoinette Davenport, Donna Parker, Mary Gill, Sabrina Bryant and Athena Chapin.



canton academy Spring Fling drawdown 2019

Fri., April 5, 2019 • 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Country Club of Canton, 183 Country Club Rd

The purchase of a \$100 ticket allows one entry into the drawdown for a chance to win **\$5,000** and admits a couple to the *Spring Fling* event – a dressy casual evening of great food, silent auction and terrific friends. Funds raised from the CA drawdown go toward technology, campus improvements, and student experience.

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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Strong literacy skills lead to great success in school

By Guest Columnist Dr. Jason Dean



Dr. Jason Dean, chair of the Mississippi State Board of Education

Special to The Canton News

When I worked as Gov. Haley Barbour's education policy advisor, I often heard him say that children first learn to read so they can read to learn. While this seems like a simple maxim, the ability to read is essential for success in school and in life.

Without this set of skills, children fall behind in school and struggle to learn the important lessons that an increasingly competitive global economy requires. That is why it is vital for our state's youngest citizens to develop literacy skills at school so that they may compete for jobs and lead innovation in the twenty-first century at work.

In the past, students in Mississippi were passed on from the third grade to the fourth grade, even when they may not have been entirely ready. That's not what we

do anymore. Recent efforts by the Mississippi Legislature, specifically the Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), have been signed into law to promote early literacy and set a critical foundation for improving our children's path to success. For the most part, children live up or down to adult expectations. This year, LBPA requires that third grade students must score at level three or higher on the reading portion of the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) English Language Arts test to qualify for promotion to fourth grade. This is an increase from last year's level two score, which is considered basic comprehension. The highest score on the test is level five.

Simply put, if students do not meet expectations for reading skills as determined by scoring level three or higher on the reading assessment, then, with some exceptions, they are retained for another year in third grade so they can benefit from intensive reading supports.

We know what resources are needed for success. The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) is

providing our schools and districts with additional support to assist students who need help improving their reading skills. Under the LBPA provisions, schools and districts work to identify struggling readers early, provide immediate supports to help students strengthen their reading skills, and ensure students read at or above grade level by the end of third grade. Additionally, the LBPA provides important support for kindergarten through third grade teachers, who receive literacy-focused professional development opportunities, supports and tools they need to help all students read at grade level. The MDE has also deployed literacy coaches to schools and districts across the state to support the staff and help improve student reading achievement.

The LBPA has provided a solid foundation for improved reading skills and its intervention strategies are already providing a return on investment (ROI) for the taxpayers in Mississippi. These interventions have contributed to an increase in the initial passing rate among third grade students from eighty-

five percent in 2015 to ninety-three percent by 2018. Additionally, the scores on our NAEP test – known as the Nation's Report Card – are now second in the nation for gains in fourth grade reading. No one is claiming total victory, and we know the road is long, but these are inarguably steps in the direction we'd like to be heading.

The Mississippi State Board of Education is committed to helping the boys and girls of this state develop the reading skills they need to build a successful future not only for themselves but for the entire state. The time to set the course is today. I urge all of us to raise our expectations as we raise the bar of achievement of what kids can do and to support these efforts to make an important difference in the lives of the next generation of Mississippi leaders.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Jason Dean is chair of the Mississippi State Board of Education. For more information about third grade literacy, visit strongreadersms.com.



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Columnist Cleveland speaks to Canton Rotary Club

Special to The Canton News

Longtime newspaper columnist Rick Cleveland was invited by Rotarian Jim Richie to speak to the Canton Rotary Club at Penn's Fish House. Mr. Cleveland told how he began working for the *Hattiesburg American* newspaper while in the eighth grade, at thirteen years old. Mr. Cleveland moved to Jackson in 1979 and was with the *Jackson Daily News/Clarion-Ledger* for many years. He has been the Mississippi Sportswriter of the Year eleven times, since first being recognized in 1975. He is in the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame, the Hattiesburg Hall of Fame and the Uni-

versity of Southern Mississippi

Hall of Fame. Cleveland writes

for twenty-eight newspapers in the state via syndicated articles. He is currently employed with *Mississippi Today*, an email/electronic news service. It is locally-owned, employing more reporters than any other statewide newspaper and also has the largest number covering the Mississippi Legislature.



Special to The Canton News

Pictured (l to r) are: Jim Richie, Canton Rotarian/local author and storyteller; guest speaker Rick Cleveland; and David Overby, Canton Rotary Club President.

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