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December 2021 • Volume 5, Number 12 • "Good News You Can Use"

Sea Santa Sail-A-Bratton heads to Long Beach streets on Dec. 4

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Long Beach residents who are ready to get their holiday spirit revved up can mark Saturday, December 4, on their calendars. That evening, the 8th annual Sea Santa Sail-A-Bratton parade will roll through the city, filling the streets with holiday music, excitement and joy.

The annual "waterless" boat parade, which kicks off the Long Beach holiday season, is sponsored by the Long Beach Community Development Association. The parade is a unique event that draws boat owners not only from the local area, but also from other states. Boats, decorated with holiday themes, will be pulled through the city in a Mardi Gras-style type parade.

Santa typically brings up the rear and concludes the parade at the Harper McCaughan Town Green.

The parade will begin at 5:45 p.m. from the Long Beach High School stadi-



um. Registered units will receive a time to check in and a position in the parade.

Advance registration is required to participate in the parade. The deadline for applications, along with the \$25 registration fee, is November 29, at 5 p.m. Applications received after this date will be accepted at the sole discretion of the

parade committee and will have a \$50 registration fee.

Props must be covered or removed during the parade for safety reasons. Boats are allowed (and encouraged) to play Christmas music, but on-board music must be adjusted in volume so as not to overpower the music of other parade

participants.

The maximum height, including riders, for a boat in the parade is fourteen feet, and the maximum length (including the tow vehicle) is sixty-five feet. Any second level riders must have adequate railings around them to protect against falling.

Beads may be thrown, but the City has requested that candy not be tossed from floats.

Following the parade, there will be holiday festivities and the City's tree lighting at the Town Green, and parade awards for Best in Fleet (1st, 2nd and 3rd places), Best Display of Lights, and Best Costumes will be presented. Santa Claus has been rumored to be planning an appearance, as well.

The holiday event has become a family tradition for children and adults of all ages. For more information or to register for the parade, visit:

www.LongBeachCDA.com
or call 228-380-6851.

Harper McCaughan family holds reunion

By Guest Columnist Cathy Mansell

On a beautiful fall weekend, descendants of Harper McCaughan, one of the Founding Fathers of Long Beach, gathered to celebrate family and heritage.

Saturday was spent at the Harper McCaughan Town Green, land that was donated by Harper McCaughan to be used by the City of Long Beach for a school. A school sat on the property for many years until the last building was damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Now, the Town Green is a beautiful area made available to all of the citizens of Harper McCaughan's beloved town.

Harper and his brother, Will, inherited vast tracts of land along the Mississippi Coast from their father, John Johnston McCaughan, who came to the "seashore," as he called it, in 1830 from Kentucky. John and his brother, James, who settled in central Mississippi, were commissioned to build a railroad from the coast to Memphis.



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Descendants of Harper McCaughan, pictured at the Town Green bearing his name in Long Beach.

Because they both died young, this was never accomplished. John went on to make many contributions to the development of the Mississippi Coast, as did his children.

Sunday was spent at Owl Roost, Harper's fish camp on the Wolf River, reliving the many days spent there by the McCaughan family. Owl Roost was a weekend and summer camp for Harper and his family, while their main residence was Rosalie, the present site of USM's Gulf Park Campus.

The McCaughan family reunion was attended by Harper's last living granddaughter, Jennie Lacy of Long Beach, along with sixty-five plus great grandchildren, great great grandchildren and even great great grandchildren. Family came from Nebraska, Virginia, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi to enjoy their time together.

John J. and Harper McCaughan's descendants are now at their seventh

cont. on page 6

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Blue Christmas Service offered at FUMC

By Dom Firiano

The First United Methodist Church (FUMC) of Long Beach is hosting their second annual Blue Christmas Service on Wednesday, December 1, starting at 6 p.m. This grace-filled service is open to everyone, offering a sense of hope in the Christmas season. It is about God meeting people wherever they are in their spiritual journey.

Reverend Jon Kaufman, the church's pastor, recognizes that not everyone can feel happy and joyful simply because it is the Christmas holiday season; pain

those who are feeling blue, offering hope and God's grace. The service will include communion, scriptures and prayerful songs of hope, with music provided by the WELL Band.

The Blue Christmas Service is primarily organized by the church's Wednesday evening Prayer Ministry Team, which consists of about eight core members, with about sixteen people total involved with the planning and organization of the community service.

The service will be accessible live online at the First United Methodist Church of Long Beach Facebook page (fum-clb), the Well's Facebook page (thewelllb) and on Youtube.

"Pain is a process that God carries us through, knowing we never walk alone," said Kaufman. "Christmas is a



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and grief do not take vacations during the holidays. Christmas can be an emotional time for people who are lonely, missing family members, suffering from pain, and mourning the loss of loved ones. The Blue Christmas Service recognizes that, during Christmas, people can indeed feel "blue" and need words of encouragement and hope.

The First United Methodist Church of Long Beach Blue Christmas Service is designed to a celebration that will offer everyone a lift, providing a prayer-filled peaceful experience for

season of hope, offering us words of encouragement. God's grace delivers the lift needed during the Christmas season. All are welcome to join us at First United Methodist Church of Long Beach December 1, with doors opening at 5:30 pm."

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[FatherlessAndWidows.org](https://www.facebook.com/FatherlessAndWidows.org)

M-F 9:30 - 4 pm

NOW HIRING - LONG BEACH REPORTER

The Long Beach Breeze is looking for a freelance reporter to cover two to three news stories per month, take photos at some local events, and attend city meetings as necessary.

If you have a background in writing, journalism, photography or a related field and are interested in freelancing for us, please send us a resume or email with some information about your experience, a writing or photo sample or two, and your contact information! We publish monthly, and our deadline is the 10th of each month.

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www.LongBeachBreeze.com

CES Class of 1973 honors McCulloch with tree

By Dom Firmiano

Coast Episcopal School (CES) members of the Class of 1973 recently returned to campus from as far away as California and Vermont to mark the unveiling of a tree and plaque in honor of long-time Coast Episcopal teacher and principal Linda Louise McCulloch. While visiting, they took a campus tour, including touring the new CES Makerspace, and also checked on the live oak tree the class planted several years ago in memory of Coast Episcopal headmaster and principal Peter Psikogios.



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Pictured are members of the CES Class of 1973 with the live oak planted in memory of McCulloch.



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Pictured is Peter Psikogios, with the tree planted in honor of his father.

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Coast Chorale offers holiday concerts

Special to Long Beach Breeze

This year's Christmas concert, titled "In the Bleak Midwinter...Hope is Born," features the West Harrison High School Choir.

Concerts will be held on December 3 at 6:30 p.m. at Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church at 9062 Kiln Delisle Road in Pass Christian; December 5 at 6 p.m. at Bellingrath Gardens and Home at 12401 Bellingrath Cardens Road in Theodore, Alabama; and De-



ember 10 at 6:30 p.m. at Diamondhead Community Church at 5301 Diamondhead Circle in Diamondhead. In addition, the Coast Chorale will also be participating in the Second Saturday Artwalk, caroling through downtown Bay St. Louis.

Coast Chorale is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community organization founded in 1992, made up of local singers, supported by local musicians, and funded by local supporters. Coast Chorale also serves as mentor to the choral department at West Harrison High School, giving high school singers the opportunity to perform publicly with the Coast Chorale.

Concerts are free, but donations are gratefully accepted. For information, contact Allen Henson, Coast Chorale artistic director, at 228-324-8213.

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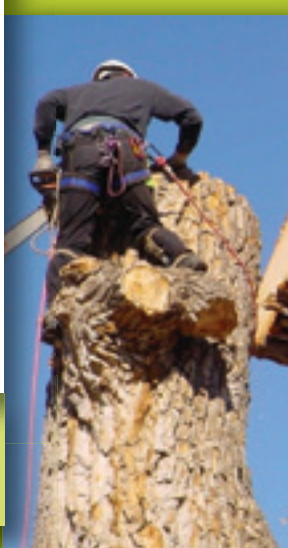
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The extensive renovation as a result of Zeta and Ida resulted in excess of \$1M in cost

We want to welcome our new Executive Staff

John McCusker, Executive General Manager

John has held Senior Restaurant Management Positions with the finest restaurants and casinos on the Gulf Coast. With 20 years in the Hospitality and Restaurant Management, John is a valued member of the Parrish's executive staff.

Lee Parrish, Manager

Lee, in addition to his Years of restaurant experience, is and has been the "go to" Manager for Parrish's restaurant for over three years. His many talents and expertise have been invaluable to the success of our restaurant. Needless to say, we could not have succeeded without Lee's dedication and commitment to our overall success.

Jean-Paul Lavallee, Executive Chef

Canada native Jean-Paul Lavallee considers the Mississippi Gulf Coast home. "I fell in love with the Coast the first time I saw the beach and would not consider raising my daughter anywhere, but Mississippi," he said. Lavallee has been a chef for 33 years and has worked in the restaurant industry since 1984.

Lavallee, like many chefs, got his inspiration from his mother, by helping in the kitchen to prepare family meals. However, his love of creativity in the culinary arts is what drives his passion. "One fresh ingredient and my mind goes crazy with all the possibilities," he said. Not only is Jean-Paul a great chef, he also competes in Food Sports. He has competed in the World Food Championships numerous times, most recently with a 5th place win in the world in the Bacon Category. When he is not in the kitchen, he loves to mentor young chefs and those interested in the profession. "I am so very excited about joining the Parrish family on this new venture," he said.

Melissa James, Pastry Chef

Melissa has over 20 years' experience showcasing her talented baking skills She was the Pastry Chef at the Scarlet Pearl, and worked at the Beau Rivage where she trained under renowned executive pastry chef Thaddeus DuBois and contributed to the opening of The Borgata Casino in Atlantic City NJ.

Ryan Tillman, Mixologist Extraordinaire

With 18 years in the Hospitality Industry, Ryan started her bartending career at the Hard Rock Biloxi, moving on to become the bar manager at Hook Up Bar and Grill on Back Bay. With an additional five year's experience at the Scarlet' restaurant at the Scarlet Pearl, she is now looking forward to the Sunsets at Parrish's Restaurant and Lounge.

217 East Beach Blvd. Long Beach, MS 39560



Taste of Long Beach draws crowds

Special to Long Beach Breeze

The Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce held their 12th Annual Taste of Long Beach this fall. Even though there was a last-minute venue change due to weather, the community showed up to support and enjoy

local foods and beverages, a silent auction and live music. The annual event is designed to showcase local businesses and to allow more people to see what Long Beach has to offer. For more information about the Mississippi Gulf Coast and Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, call 228-604-0014.



All photos Special to Long Beach Breeze/Courtesy MSGC Chamber.





Spataro and Wawrek contribute to PRCC playoff run



Photo courtesy PRCC Athletics
Aubrey Wawrek



Photo courtesy PRCC Athletics
Sydney Spataro

By Datti Jinkiri

Long Beach natives Sydney Spataro and Aubrey Wawrek knew they would have an opportunity to play a big part in Pearl River Community College women's soccer team this season. Spataro already had a college season under her belt, while Wawrek entered as a member of the team's 2021 recruiting class. Their seasons in Poplarville were solid, as they both played a role in the Wildcats' run to the MACCC Semifinals.

Spataro played in 14 games (13 starts) for the Wildcats. The Long Beach High School graduate scored one goal and assisted on three more from the midfield. Her lone goal was a big one, as it was an 82nd minute game-winner against Itawamba in the regular season. She was named to the All-MACCC Second Team at the conclusion of the season.

Wawrek, a forward, featured in nine games for the Wildcats. The Our Lady Academy graduate made four starts and tallied a goal against Louisiana College this season. She was a valuable reserve for the Wildcats this season.

The Wildcats finished the regular season as the number-two seed in the South Division and earned a home playoff game in the process. They topped Itawamba 3-1 in the MACCC Quarterfinals before falling to nationally-ranked Holmes 2-1 in an overtime heartbreaker. They finished the season with an 8-6-2 record.

cont. from page 1

Harper McCaughan family holds reunion



Special to Long Beach Breeze

In addition to spending time at the Harper McCaughan Town Green, the Harper McCaughan family reunion also included time at Owl Roost, Harper's fishing camp off of the Wolf River.

generation, and those not presently living on the Coast visit often to celebrate their ancestors and their contributions to our beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast.

A copy of *A History of the McCaughan Family on the Mississippi Gulf Coast*, based on information gathered by Bettye Jane McCaughan Edgington, was distributed to the family.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Cathy Mansell is a great granddaughter of Harper McCaughan.



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Library offers festive events and location for holiday photos



Special to Long Beach Breeze/Courtesy LBPD

The Long Beach Public Library staff had a booth at the recent Night Out Against Crime hosted by the Long Beach Police Department.

By Guest Columnist Renee Rayburn, LBPL Youth and Technology Services

Hello, Long Beach!

This next month is going to be a festive one at the library! We have programs planned for all age groups, and, beginning in December, the stage in the children's wing will be decorated with lights and packages and all kinds of holiday trimmings for Christmas photos.

Friday, December 3, is Make a Gift Day, so stop by the library anytime during our regular hours to make a special gift for someone this season. There will be several options (something for all ages) from which you can choose that will take just a short amount of time to complete.

The Long Beach High School Beta Club is planning a story time on Monday, December 6, from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. that will include stories, crafts and games for grade school students.

Preschool Story time for December will continue to be held on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.

The Gulf Coast Wildlife Rehab will be here for the next Meet Our Wildlife Second Saturday Story Hour on Saturday, December 11, at 10:30 a.m. in the children's wing of the library. Each month, a special animal and their caretaker will visit. We also read a story and learn about the animal from these special caretakers. This family program is open to all ages and is a great way to learn more about the local wildlife in Mississippi.

We would like to congratulate our winners in the prize giveaways at the Long Beach Police Department's Night Out Against Crime that was held on October 23. The library staff had fun participating in this event and were thrilled at the participation. We hope to be a part of it again. We would like to send a HUGE thank you to Chris and C.J. LoPresto for their Harry Potter Diagon Alley wall and for showing us how to make "Howlers."

The library would also like to acknowledge and thank the Senator Roger F. Wick-er book donation program, which provided our library with twenty-one new books from the Library of Congress (LOC) Surplus Program.

Upcoming holiday closings at the library include the following:

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – The library will be closing at noon on Wednesday, November 24, and will remain closed through Saturday, November 27. We will reopen on Monday, November 29, at 9 a.m.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY – The library will be closed Thursday, December 23, through Saturday, December 25. We will reopen on Monday, December 27, at 9 a.m.

NEW YEAR'S EVE and NEW YEARS DAY – The library will be closed Friday, December 31, through Saturday, January 1, 2022. We will reopen on Monday, January 3, at 9 a.m.

As a reminder, the library's hours have returned to regular business hours. We are now open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Thank you for your patronage, and continue to stay safe!



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Wreaths Across America volunteers, sponsors sought

By Dom Fimiano

The Long Beach Board of Alderman recently approved a request from the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) request to conduct a wreath laying ceremony at the Long Beach Cemetery. The ceremony, set for Saturday, December 18, will honor deceased veterans as part of the nationwide Wreaths Across America program.

This year, National Wreaths Across America day will be held on December 18. This will be the fourth year VFW Post 3937 and American Legion Post 1995 will be participating in the national program. The ceremony will begin at 1 p.m. that day, and the public is invited to attend. In addition, volunteers who would like to



assist in the wreath laying are welcome, as organizers say volunteers are necessary for a successful wreath laying ceremony.

In December 1992, wreath maker Morrill Worcester found himself with a surplus of 5,000 wreaths during the holiday season. Worcester saw the surplus as an opportunity to pay tribute to the country's veterans and arranged for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington National Cemetery. The annual tribute to veterans has continued ever since, touching the lives of millions of veterans' families and volunteers, growing in scope through the years.

In 2007, the Worcester family, along with veterans and volunteers, formed the non-profit organization Wreaths Across America to expand their efforts and to support those around the country who wished to do the same. Wreaths Across America's mission is simple: Remember the fallen, honor those who serve, and



teach the next generation about the value of freedom. In 2020, Wreaths Across America and its national network of volunteers, in spite of COVID-19 restrictions, placed approximately 1.7 million veterans' wreaths at more than 2,500 locations in all fifty U.S. states, at sea, and abroad.

In 2020, with the financial support of businesses, organizations, veterans' families and friends, the Long Beach Wreaths Across America effort laid a wreath at every one of the more than two hundred known veteran's gravesites in and around Long Beach, and the group intends to do the same this year, with current plans to lay wreaths at 261 gravesites.

Residents who know of a veteran at the cemetery who does not have a gravesite indication that he/she is a veteran are encouraged to let the organization know, so that they can ensure that he/she also receives a wreath.

Each handmade, fresh, live wreath costs \$15 and is made in the USA with Maine balsam. Wreaths for veterans interred at cemeteries other than the Long Beach Cemetery and neighboring cemeteries can also be sponsored and picked up the afternoon of December 18.

For those who wish to remember and honor deceased veterans, sponsorships and donations can be accepted until December 18 and can be mailed or delivered to VFW Post 3937, 213 Klondyke Road, Long Beach MS 39560 or mailed to American Legion Post 1995, PO Box 550, Long Beach MS 39560.

For those who are sponsoring a wreath, the organization requests that you include the name of the person who is being sponsored.

For more information, contact Charles Martinek at 228-236-4200.

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USM Children's Center holds ribbon cutting for new playground



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USM's Gulf Park Campus was the site of a ribbon cutting for a new playground at The Children's Center for Communication and Development.

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The Children's Center for Communication and Development has officially cut the ribbon on its brand-new playground on The University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Park Campus in Long Beach, made possible by a gift from the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation through the USM Foundation.

A beautiful fall day set the scene for the Center's guests as they celebrated the space and listened to representatives from The Children's Center, USM, and the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation speak to the impact that it will have on countless families for years to come.

At The Children's Center, a playground is more than a playground. For this non-profit that provides cost-free services for babies and young children with disabilities on both USM's campuses, a playground is a therapy setting. And in many cases, it can be one of the most naturally motivating settings for therapy as it provides innumerable opportunities to work on language, motor, and social skills through play.

"We are incredibly grateful to the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation for their partnership in the construction of this playground and outdoor therapy space," said Sarah Myers, Director at The Children's Center. "The grant award totaled \$323,540, and the goals of the grant project were to target therapeutic milestones like peer-to-peer social interaction and active movement, including age-appropriate play

skills. We worked closely with the Foundation and playground designer, Moonshot Recreation with Landscape Structures, to design a space that would encourage children to work on these skills through the act of outdoor play."

Those in attendance got to see these skills being targeted in person as children from The Children's Center walked along the balance beam, raced each other on the bike track, took turns pushing buttons and pulling levers on the water feature, and interacted with one another on the two-person swing.

"The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation is proud of its partnership with The University of Southern Mississippi Foundation and The Children's Center to provide a playground to encourage children and their families to spend more time outside engaging in fun play activities," said Sheila Grogan, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation President. "The Foundation has a vision for a healthy Mississippi, and studies show there are a variety of health benefits through interactive outdoor play, including physical and cognitive development and social and emotional well-being."

"Thanks to the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation, we now have a custom-designed space that will be used as an essential therapy resource for the fifty families we are currently serving at this location, as well as many more in future years," said Myers. "What a beautiful gift the Foundation has given us – the gift of therapy through play."

For more information, visit www.usm.edu/childrenscenter.

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Keith Clark recognizing Lee Parrish, General Manager, Parrish's Restaurant & Lounge, as business of the month

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Clay nativity workshop offered to residents

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Area residents are invited to sign up for a nativity workshop at the Gail Keenan Art Center at Coast Episcopal School.

Set for Saturday, December 4, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the workshop will feature artist Stacey Hardy, who will guide participants through an easy, enjoyable process of creating a nativity scene from clay. Hardy will provide templates for creating nativity figures and instruction on how participants can embellish their work with texture tools, mark making and glazing.

Participants are encouraged to bring ideas or sketches to class, and the class will also review some nativity images from around the world. Styles of design can be as traditional or modern as the participant desires.

Finished nativity figures will be available for pickup at Coast Episcopal School from December 13-16.

The workshop is open to individuals over the age of 16. Children 6 to 15 years of age may participate if they are working with an adult, but the adult must supervise the child at all times.

The cost for the workshop is \$125 per person, ages 16 and up, with an additional \$25 per child for children who are working with a parent. All participants are asked to bring their lunch with them to the workshop.

The Gail Keenan Art Center is located at 5065 Espy Avenue.



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American Legion announces coloring contest winners



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Winners of the American Legion third grade coloring competition were recently announced. Pictured (l to r) with Quarles Elementary Lead Teacher Robert Reeves (left) and Donnie Levens American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1995 President Irene Brown (right) are: Hope Gegg, overall competition winner Gabbie Cook, Anthony Craig, Jayson Munoz and Chance Poyner. Not pictured is Blake Troyer.

LBSD Discovery Class students visit City Hall

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Students in Mrs. Paola's third-grade Discovery Class from Reeves Elementary and students from Mrs. Cropper's sixth-grade Discovery class from Harper McCaughan Elementary recently stopped by City Hall to tour the facility and learn more about local government.



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Mayor George Bass is pictured with students in Mrs. Cropper's sixth-grade Discovery class.



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Mayor George Bass (center) is pictured with students in Mrs. Paola's third-grade Discovery class.



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Cutrer earns Larkin I. Smith Memorial Award



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Long Beach Police Officer Jordan Cutrer (center) recently graduated from the Harrison County Law Enforcement Training Academy, where he was presented with the Larkin I. Smith Memorial Award as the top graduate in the class.



Long Beach's Parker awarded MPE grant

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Carly Parker, a fourth- through sixth-grade gifted education teacher at Harper McCaughan Elementary in Long Beach School District, has been named a 2021 Mississippi Professional Educator (MPE) classroom grant award winner. Parker's project, entitled "Workshop Wonders," is one of forty-four projects funded this year through MPE's grant program.



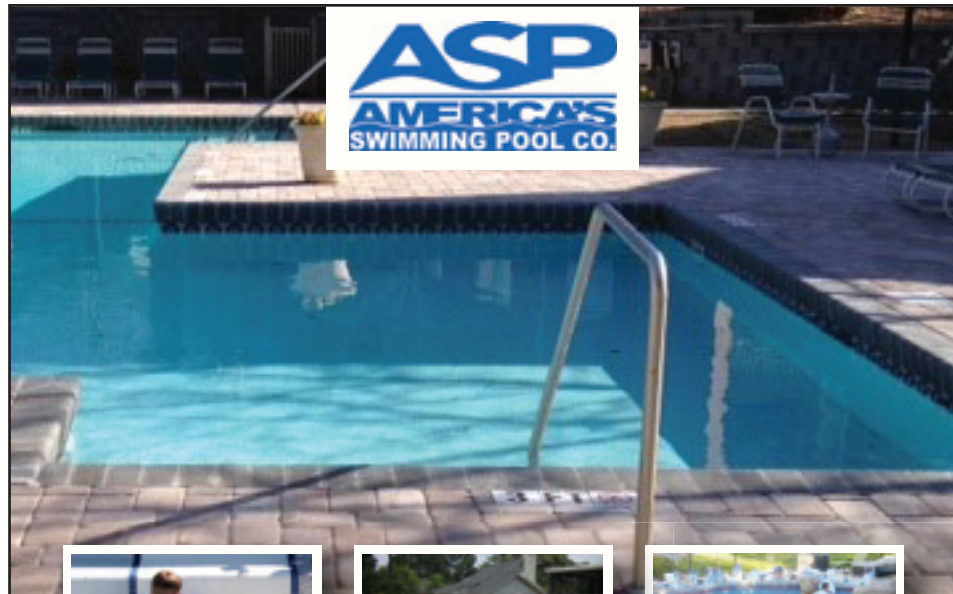
Photo courtesy PRCC Athletics

Carly Parker

Parker says she is honored to have been selected as a winner. Her project will encourage students to use critical thinking, analytical and communications skills to solve a series of real-world challenges.

"I am so excited about this grant," Parker said. "I am able to share it with my cohorts, and it will make our classroom projects more meaningful with the extra funds. The grant money will go toward implementing a series of workshops called 'CSI: Time Travelers;' 'Fairy Tales on Trial;' 'Survivors: Team Trials;' and 'Chocolate, Chocolate, and More Chocolate.'"

MPE is a statewide professional association with approximately 13,500 members. They award up to \$40,000 in classroom grants to members who wish to enhance instructional offerings or educational experiences for their students.



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Crowds gather for Long Beach Night Out Against Crime

Special to Long Beach Breeze

The Long Beach Police Department recently held its Night Out Against Crime at the Long Beach Town Green. The free event featured food, drinks, fun and games, along with community and public safety information booths and emergency vehicle displays. Long Beach Police Department officers and officials from many local civic organizations and businesses were on hand to talk with attendees.

All photos Special to Long Beach Breeze/Courtesy LBPD.



Area between Alverado and Saratoga Drives sees drainage improvements

By Dom Fimiano

The Long Beach Board of Alderman and Mayor George Bass recently approved water drainage improvements between Alverado Drive and Saratoga Drive. The work required easement clearing and widening of a ditch located between neighbors' backyards, including removing privacy fences, an old wooden shed (originally a pool pump house) and a concrete slab built forty to fifty years ago, according to City officials.

The shed was constructed by a prior property owner on the easement in the area and covered about forty feet of the drainage area. The shed's location limited the size of the drainage ditch. A smaller culvert installed beneath the shed many years ago contributed to rainwater flooding nearby yards and at least one home. Flooding did not require heavy rain for the water to back up.

After hearing from all parties involved multiple times, City officials determined that drainage improvements were necessary. City engineer David Ball and the Long Beach Department of Public Works studied the drainage problem and agreed with the Board of Alderman's decision to clear the easement and widen the drainage ditch.

Joe Culpepper, Director of Public Works, explained that flooding would develop under the shed because the 15-inch culvert running the length of the shed was too narrow and previously had blockages develop over the years. The narrow culvert created a bottleneck, and water would flood neighbors' yards. The drainage ditch is 24 to 48 inches wide, and the 15-inch culvert could not handle the amount of water that needed to drain with any rainfall.

Steve Walley, a retired teacher and coach, said he purchased the residence with the shed having already been in place for several

decades. Walley said the shed was built when the area was county property, and the prior owner received permission from Harrison County to build the shed. Walley said he understands why the ditch needed to be corrected, but he wishes the City could have found a way to help him avoid having to replace the shed. Walley mentioned he was unaware the water was flooding a neighbor's home and threatening other homes.

Jill Cibene, a neighbor affected by stormwater flooding her yard, said she joyously welcomes the drainage improvements. Cibene said her yard has flooded regularly over the years, causing damage to her home multiple times. She said that, while she has made improvements to help protect her home, water heavily flooding the yard always found a way to her home.

In past years, Cibene said she had a backyard water drain installed to help minimize the flood risk, but it provided little relief with heavy rain. Cibene eventually hired contractors to build a concrete wall about twenty-four inches high. She says the wall has helped, but flooding water threatening her home was still too risky.

Susan Laurie is another neighbor who says she welcomes the drainage improvements.

"My property is not affected as much as Jill's, but the possibility of water flooding into my home is still something I worry about," said Laurie. "Correcting the flooding problem benefits everyone."

"Public Works' drainage improvements have been a great success," said Cibene. "The water is now easily flowing, and there has been no flooding since the drainage correction."

Cibene said the improvements permit her to finally feel safe and relax.

"Now I do not have to miss my son's activities due to being trapped at home every time it rains," said Cibene.



Dom Fimiano

Public Works widened what was a 15" culvert covered by a shed into a 24" to 48" drainage ditch to allow for better storm water drainage in the area.



Dom Fimiano

Concrete from the old shed's slab was recycled to create a bulkhead waterway turn.



Dom Fimiano

A wooden shed built decades ago on a drainage easement by prior property owners was obstructing a storm water ditch and causing substantial flooding of an adjacent property owner's home and neighboring yards.

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Kiwanis show appreciation for teachers and Key Club

The Long Beach Kiwanis recently held a pizza party for Teacher and Key Club Appreciation Day.



Dom Fimiano



Dom Fimiano

Pictured (l to r) are Long Beach Kiwanis President Ingrid Miscavage, Long Beach High School Key Club Sponsor and physics teacher Aimie Dunaway, Ashton Dunaway, Matt Dunaway, Alex Dunaway, Kiwanis Secretary Howard Lock and Kiwanis Treasurer Deb Kurts.

Long Beach Kiwanis Secretary Howard Lock

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Meet Your Neighbor: Michelle and Tom Ponte

By Will Brown

When Michelle and Tom Ponte moved to Long Beach eleven years ago, the BP oil spill disaster was still ongoing. Balls of tar washed up on the shore for months after the Pontes arrived, and it was unclear if Long Beach would ever recover from such a disaster. Unsure how long they would be staying in Long Beach, the Pontes decided to rent a house instead of buy one. Within a year of living in Long Beach, Michelle and Tom realized they loved the town so much they never wanted to leave.

"We love Long Beach," Michelle said. "The hospitality and sense of community is amazing."

The Pontes met when they were just seven years old. Originally from Connecticut, the couple moved around the country for years after getting married, due to Tom's position with the U.S. Coast Guard, starting with a year in Miami before moving to Hollywood, Florida for three years. After living in Florida, they moved to Irvington, Alabama, while Tom was assigned to a ship in Pascagoula. After returning to Miami for a number of years, the Pontes arrived in Long Beach in 2010. After spending thirty-one years in the service – nine of them aboard ships – Tom recently retired.

Michelle and Tom decided that Long Beach was an ideal community in which to settle down and raise their three daughters. The two have gotten involved in several community events, including the Carnival Association of Long Beach, and they are active members of St. Thomas Church. Tom now works part time for a local technology firm on one of their ships while Michelle works for Hillcrest Dental in Gulfport.

The Pontes were attracted to Long Beach due to the strong sense of community they found.

"It's almost like eight degrees from that Kevin Bacon movie," Michelle said. "If you don't know someone, you know someone who knows someone. Everyone has each other's back."

Michelle and Tom came to understand exactly how strong the community was in Long Beach around seven years ago, when Michelle was hospitalized after complications from surgery. She spent eleven days in a coma, and, during that time, the community came together to support their family.

"People I didn't know were bringing us food and praying for us," Michelle said. "They prayed me out of that mess. There is so much family support - even if you're not blood, it's so amazing. There is nowhere like it."

Question: What is the biggest difference between Long Beach and Connecticut?

Tom: "It's the pace of life, really. In New England, everyone seems to be in a hurry to be somewhere. Down here, people take their time doing stuff. It's much more laid back, relaxed, and enjoyable."

Michelle: "The economy is much better. If we had the same house in Connecticut, the taxes and the insurance would be crazy."

Question: What are some of your favorite hobbies outside of work?

Michelle: "Arts and crafts shows! We also love hockey. Our favorite team was the Hartford Whalers, but they don't exist anymore. We are very active in the Carnival Association. We love fundraising, and my husband was a Grand Knight in the Knights of Columbus at St. Thomas. Our children volunteer with us at everything we do. Anything involving faith, family, and fun, we are there."

Question: What is your favorite restaurant in Long Beach?

Michelle and Tom: "We love The Rusty Pelican for breakfast. For dinner, we love Long Beach Deli. We also love Bull's and Harbor View."

Question: What are some of your favorite books and movies?

Tom: "I've read too many books to have a favorite. I'm mostly into science fiction and mystery, and now that they've made a new *Dune* movie, I'm kind of into that



Tom and Michelle Ponte

Special to Long Beach Breeze

right now."

Michelle: "The Lifetime Channel. My daughters and I were extras in the *Christmas in Mississippi* Lifetime movie from a couple years ago."

Question: What is the favorite place you have ever traveled, and, if you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?

Michelle and Tom: "We love the Florida Keys. We each have Harley-Davidsons and used to ride to the Keys on our Harleys - and that was amazing. Our honeymoon was in Niagara Falls, and that was so impressive."

Michelle: "I would love to see Venice. I would just love to get in those gondolas and go see the city on a boat."

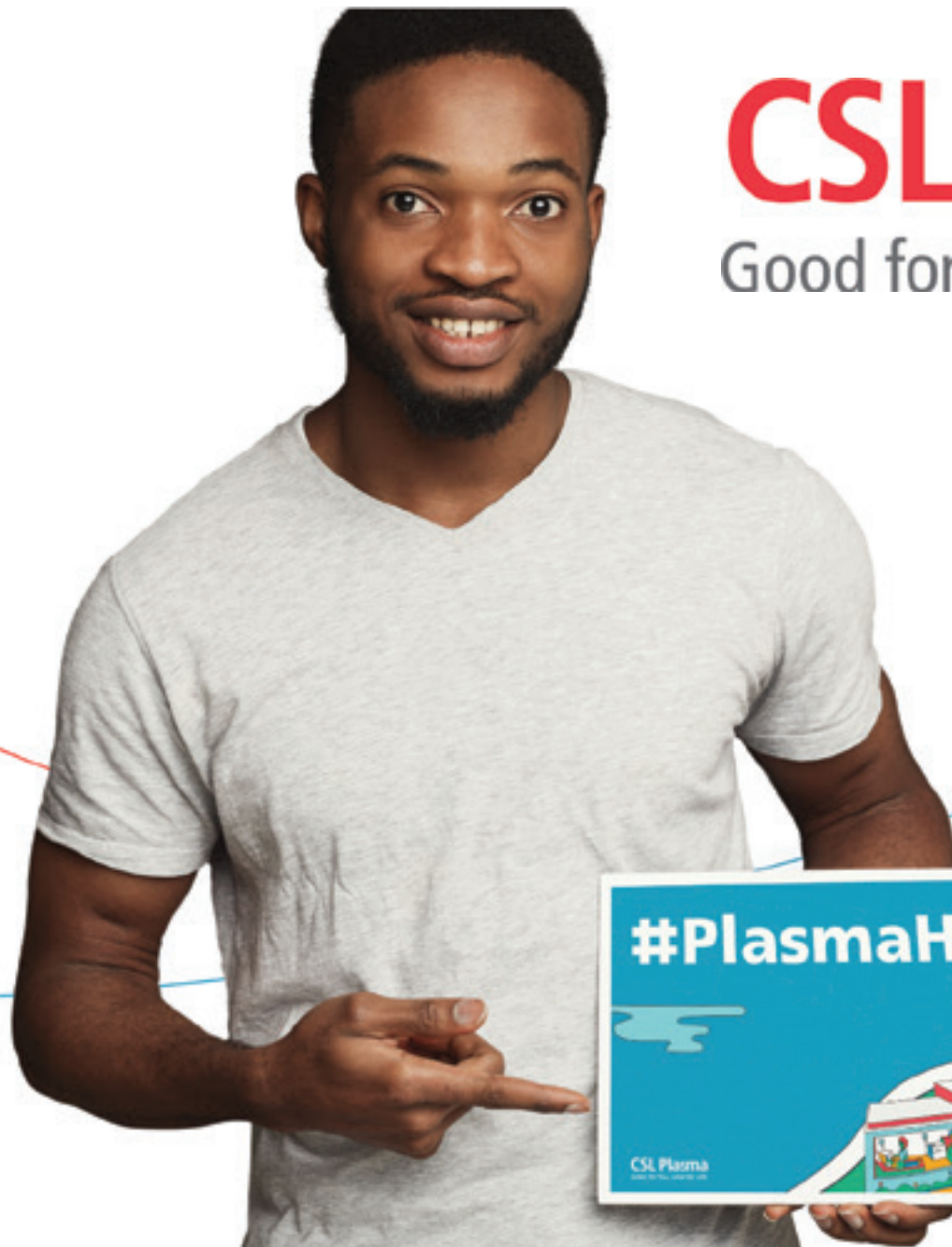
Question: If you won one million dollars in the lottery, how would you spend that money?

Michelle: "I would be responsible first and pay off some bills, but then I would travel. I would definitely donate some."

Tom: "I would get myself out of my 21-year-old truck that has 350,000 miles."

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Show local businesses some love so they can survive

The Long Beach Breeze

It's that time of year again – time to pick out the perfect gifts for friends and family – that important holiday tradition that can create lasting memories for many.

This time of year is important for businesses, as well. Their future depends on how robust their sales are during this season.

That is why it is imperative that Long Beach residents do their best to shop locally.

It's not uncommon to hear the sentiment, "Long Beach is a great place to live" expressed among community members. However, many people, when tasked with getting their holiday shopping done, will quickly hop into their cars and drive off to do their shopping in a neighboring city, not thinking about how shopping elsewhere can impact the "great place to live" that they call home.

Every single dollar spent outside of Long Beach just "disappears" from Long Beach. It doesn't help send Long Beach kids to school. It doesn't help pay for fire and police resources. It doesn't help pave or maintain Long Beach's roads. It doesn't help preserve Long Beach's jobs. And it doesn't keep the little local businesses Long Beach residents know and love stay in business.

Local businesses enter the 2021 holidays after weathering twenty months of COVID-19-related insecurities and challenges. They have suffered unimagined financial hardship, not just from decreased (or no) revenue due to mandated closures and lightened customer traffic, but also from increased labor and goods expenses, the overall labor shortage, and increased cleaning and other operational costs.

For many of Long Beach's local business owners, reserves may have been nearly depleted. A weak holiday season could force some of them to make some hard decisions at the first of the year.



Small business owners don't have a corporate "parent" to help them survive during hard times. The small business owner typically wears almost all of the hats in his/her business – when employees call in sick or can't work and there's no one to cover the shift, the business owner has to fill in – or else close their establishment until someone is available to work. When there's not enough income to pay both the bills and the employees, the owner has to take the hit - and not take any money home to his/her family.

These small business owners – and their employees - are Long Beach residents... friends, family, neighbors, members of local churches and clubs... and the success or failure of their businesses impacts the Long Beach community directly.

The more that Long Beach residents shop elsewhere, the fewer employees local retailers can afford to have, and the less they can afford to pay the employees that they do have. The employees, in turn, can no longer afford to live here and they leave, thereby further reducing Long Beach's tax base and causing other businesses to struggle to survive.

In other words, in order to keep Long Beach as "a great place to live," the community needs to support local businesses. And just

because a business has a "national" logo on it doesn't mean the franchise owner isn't a local member of the community. Long Beach actually has very few retailers and restaurants that are owned by a corporate entity; most businesses in town are owned by individuals who love and care for the community enough to have invested their money and livelihoods in the town.

Long Beach's wonderful and unique shopping, dining and service options offer local flavor and flair. Long Beach residents are urged to express their community pride and show their love, support and patronage to the small and local businesses this holiday season – and beyond.

These businesses need love, support and patronage – and they need it NOW.



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Jingle Bells 5K returns for 2021

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Once again, Long Beach residents can lace up their holiday running shoes for the annual Fred Walker Memorial Jingle Bells 5K on Saturday, December 4. The race was cancelled for 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Starting at 8 a.m. on the Long Beach Town Green, the run/walk will offer a 5K and a one-mile fun run for kids. The course is a flat, out and back route that starts on 4th Street near the Town Green.

Medals/trophies will be awarded to those who place overall and within age groups. The one-mile fun run for kids will be held immediately following the 5K.

Residents are invited to run, walk or roll at the event, which will benefit the Coast Cares Foundation scholarship program. Strollers and pets are welcome.

A holiday costume contest will be held after the race, and the Long Beach High School baseball team will also be collecting Toys for Tots. Participants are asked to bring a new, unwrapped toy to donate for children in need along the Gulf Coast.

Pre-registration is required. T-shirts will be available first-come, first-served for registrants.

The Coast Cares Foundation (CCF) is a 501(c)(3) charity based in Long Beach that serves Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties. The organization provides cash grants and support to other not-for-profit groups focused on health, wellness and community development. They also award yearly scholarships to Long Beach High School students.

The Jingle Bells 5K started when the Gulf Coast Substance Abuse Task Force held a race close to two decades ago to raise funds for its mission. The Force was formed by former Long Beach Alderman, School Board trustee and area businessman Fred



2019 race participants in holiday attire

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Walker, in whose memory the present-day race is named. CCF was formed to continue the race when the task force folded after Walker's death in 2016.

The cost to register for the 5K is \$25 for adults and \$15 for children and students up to age 18. The fun run for kids will be free.

To register, visit www.gulfcoastrunningclub.org.

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11:00 a.m. Sanctuary Worship In-Person in the sanctuary
11:00 a.m. The Well service In-Person at the USM Fleming Auditorium
This service will be live streamed on Facebook.
Seeking to Love, Live, and Serve Like Jesus in Our Community

William Carey University breaks fall enrollment record



Special to Long Beach Breeze

With 5,362 students enrolled for the fall trimester, William Carey University has broken its all-time enrollment record, again, with a two percent increase over last fall's 5,260 students.

"Two percent may not sound like a large increase, but keep in mind, William Carey's enrollment has been rising steadily throughout the pandemic period. We are thankful for our students, who have entrusted us to help them achieve their educational goals in challenging times," said WCU President Dr. Tommy King.

This overall increase also includes a record for WCU's Tradition campus near Long Beach, which grew more than thirteen percent, from 864 students to 1,001 students.

The university's psychology department saw an increase of eight percent, while the School of Education's overall enrollment rose six percent over last fall, and the

number of undergraduate education majors grew by thirteen percent.

"With teacher education enrollment down thirty percent across the nation, and Mississippi struggling to recruit and retain high-quality classroom teachers, I am thrilled as a retired K-12 educator that William Carey is defying the odds and building enrollment to help with our persistent teacher shortage," said Dr. Ben Burnett, WCU executive vice president.

Meanwhile, the WCU College of Osteopathic Medicine was authorized by its accrediting agency in 2019 to double the size of its first-year class. Now in year two of a three-year expansion plan, WCUCOM welcomed 188 first-year medical students in August. In fall 2022, the WCU College of Osteopathic Medicine will accept more than 200 first-year medical students.

When its three-phase enrollment increase is complete, the WCU College of Osteopathic Medicine will have an enrollment of 800 students – making it the largest medical school in the state.

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