

March 2023 • Volume 7, Number 3 • "Good News You Can Use"

Crowds show up to urge aldermen to save trees

By Toni Miles

They are deep-rooted, have weathered many storms and are still standing after hurricanes Camille and Katrina, but it is a boutique hotel development planned at the corner of 4th Street and Jeff Davis Avenue in downtown Long Beach that concerned residents believe pose the biggest threat to a pair of live oak trees, each estimated to be more than a century old, entrenched on the site.

Once again, it was a packed house at the February 21 Board of Aldermen meeting, where citizens took to the public comment podium to continue to voice their concerns and speak out passionately against the removal of either of the two aged oak trees located on a site where developers plan to build an eight-room boutique hotel. Ward 4 Alderman Timothy McCaffrey participated via phone. Ward 3 Alderman Angie Johnson was not present.

Deborah Caldwell with the Long Beach Garden Club was the first of three citizens to address aldermen at this meeting, citing frustration over what she called

a lack of engagement among City leaders when the issue was brought up at a meeting less than two weeks prior.

"We came. We spoke. We brought our concerns about the tree. We brought an arborist and presented many alternatives to the [development's] design...to include the tree[s]," said Caldwell, referencing a prior City meeting on February 9 where more than a hundred people turned out to show their opposition to removing trees entrenched on the development site. "Basically, we got blank stares. Nobody engaged in anything. Nobody asked Barbra [Reed] about any of the studies that she had done. Nobody asked the arborist anything."

Caldwell was referencing

arborist Will Loftus, who appeared before the Board of Aldermen at the February 9 meeting, where a petition with the signatures of more than 1,500 residents opposed to removing the trees was presented to City leaders. Loftus, a Long Beach native, had visited the site and measured the two old oak trees, estimated to be 192-years-old and 136-years-old.

"The tree's healthy," Loftus told the Board on February 9. "There are ways to incorporate the tree, a happy medium that everyone can win. The tree has been through many hurricanes, and what doesn't literally kill

trees makes them stronger, so it would be a shame to see this tree grow and make it through these hurricanes just for somebody to cut it down for a hotel," Loftus said.

At their December 8, 2022, meeting, the Long Beach Planning and Development Commission (P&DC), Phenom Investments, LLC, submitted a request to remove the larger of the two trees and trim the smaller tree in order to construct a hotel on the property at 4th Street and Jeff Davis Avenue. The request was submitted with a recommendation to deny approval from the Long Beach Tree Board, dated December 6, 2022.

The Tree Board cited Section 6 of "The Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance of the City of Long Beach, MS," noting that the applicant was requesting to remove the only two trees on

cont. on page 4



Special to Long Beach Breeze
Deborah Caldwell, member of the Long Beach Garden Club, addresses City officials at the February 9 Board of Aldermen meeting.



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\$2,500 Drawdown Party planned to raise money for Camp Awesome

Special to The Long Beach Breeze

Camp Awesome, an organization that provides overnight camps for individuals with disabilities, will be holding a \$2,500 Drawdown Party on Saturday, March 11, at 6 p.m. With entertainment provided by Unfazed Show and Band, the evening will also include food, a silent auction and a chance to win \$2,500.

The annual drawdown is the main fundraiser for the Camp Awesome camps, which include adult camping weekends in the fall and spring, as well as a kids' camping week each summer. The organization relies on adult volunteers and teenage counselors to organize and run the camps, and on the kindness of friends, family, and



strangers to support the drawdown to help raise the money it takes to put on the camps. All proceeds from the drawdown will be used to fund summer camp for children with special needs.

Tickets to the event, which will be held at the West Harrison County Civic Center, are \$40. Insurance can be purchased for an additional \$10 per ticket. Each ticket admits two adults, and only a limited number of tickets will be sold.

Tickets can be purchased through PayPal at CampOfMS@gmail.com or by Venmo @CAMPofSMS (Last 4 digits 1550). Ticket purchasers need not be present to win. For more information, call 228-547-2286. The Civic Center is located at 4670 Espy Avenue in Long Beach.

Library book sale returns, Science Café event planned

By Guest Columnist Renee Rayburn, LBPL Youth and Technology Services

The library book sale will resume in March on Saturdays, beginning on Saturday, March 4, at 9 a.m. Prices will be as follows:

- Magazines are 10 cents each.
- Paperbacks are 25 cents each.
- Hardbacks are 50 cents each.
- Audiobooks are 50 cents each.
- Movies are 50 cents each.

The Friends of the Long Beach Public Library will have a meeting on Monday, March 6, at 1 p.m. However, there is no meeting for the Long Beach Board of Trustees in March.

Long Beach Public Library will be hosting a Science Café event in March. It will be held at City Hall at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 29, and the program will be on geo-mapping. It is open to the public and free of charge.

Preschool story time will continue through March on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. in the children's wing. For a current schedule of events, visit the library's website at www.LongBeach.lib.ms.us, or give us a call at 228-863-0711.

There are no holidays or library closings scheduled for March. Thank you for your patronage, and, as always, stay safe!



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Publisher/Owner

Clay Mansell
ClayMansell@LongBeachBreeze.com

Editor-in-Chief

Stephanie Tracy

Managing Editor

Toni Miles
Toni@LongBeachBreeze.com

Office Manager

Doris Bynum

Designer

Brad Henderson

Writers

Dom Fimiano

Marilou Horton

Datti Jankiri

Lindy Sholes

Sales

Keith Clark

Keith@LongBeachBreeze.com

Dominick Fimiano

(Biloxi & Gulfport)

Dom@longbeachbreeze.com

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Bearcat soccer team comes home with third straight state champ title



Special to Long Beach Breeze

The Long Beach Bearcats brought home their third straight MHSAA Boys Class 5A State Championship last month, with a 1-0 win against the Lafayette Commodores off a goal by Alexander Mink. This was the sixth year in a row that the Bearcats played for the title. The team is coached by Andee Blaine Wilburn.

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cont. from front page

Crowds show up to urge aldermen to save trees

the property, one of which the Board estimated to be between 192- to 220-years-old, and the other of which is estimated to be between 136- to 152-years-old. The request submitted to the Tree Board included the removal of both trees; but, prior to submittal to the PDC, that request was revised to ask for approval to remove only the larger tree and trim the smaller tree.

The Tree Board's memo to the P&DC said, "Both trees predate the founding and incorporation of our city in 1905 and are public treasures."

The Tree Board continued: "When the property was purchased in 2021, the applicant knew or should have known that trees would hinder the space available for the prospective use of the property for a hotel on the 0.45-acre parcel of land with an additional easement running through the property. However, the application states that the reason the trees need to be removed is to provide the appropriate space needed to construct a hotel because of the small size of the lot. Ultimately, both live oaks at 310 Jeff Davis Avenue (two of only three live oaks located directly across the street from the Town Green) are healthy and thriving trees that provide a significant canopy and unquantifiable benefits to downtown Long Beach. The approximate limb spans are over 60 feet, and both trees have withstood the test of time and hurricanes (including hurricanes Camille in 1968 and Katrina in



Toni Miles

Two live oak trees are situated on a proposed boutique hotel development site located at the corner of 4th Street and Jeff Davis Avenue.

2005) over their long lives and are worthy of preservation."

The members of the Tree Board "strongly urge[d] the Planning Commission to deny the application for the removal of the live oaks."

However, after discussion, P&D Commissioner Chris Fields made the motion to approve Phenom Investments, LLC's application as submitted, with direction that the applicants refrain from removing the live oak tree until building plans are received by the Building Official's office. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Michael Levens and was carried unanimously.

"What's the use of having a tree ordinance, if not to protect a tree like this?"

Loftus asked at the February 9 meeting. His comments were followed by those of another concerned resident, Barbra Reed.

"Katrina in 2005. Hurricane Gustav and Ike in 2008, and Hurricane Zeta in 2020 – so many storms that it's lived through," said Reed. "These trees stand strong together. They are the downtown history and all we have left. They deserve the stewardship and integrity shown to them, just like you would a historical downtown building," Reed said.

Reed, Caldwell and other residents told the Board at both meetings they are not against the development, but want the trees to be incorporated and preserved in the developer's overall plans for the site.

"We understand this development will bring tax revenue, but when this property was purchased, the investors knew these protected trees were there," Reed told the Board on February 9. "I'm shocked that I am here tonight trying to protect these trees located on our beautiful main street. This is not too much to require a new architectural plan to feature these trees that sit in the middle of town to set a higher standard for our downtown and keep the historical character that we have."

After publicly expressing her concern over what she called a lack of engagement by the Board of Aldermen, Caldwell asked each alderman to express his stance on the question of the trees' removal at the most recent February 21 meeting.

"I've definitely had an overwhelming majority of the people in my ward that I've spoken to make it pretty clear if it came down to the tree or the development, they would rather the tree [go]," said Ward 1 Alderman Patrick Bennett.

Only Ward 2 Alderman Bernie Parker said he was against removing either tree from the property, reversing his prior stance at the December 20, 2022, Board of Aldermen meeting, where the aldermen unanimously approved the Planning and Development Commission meeting minutes approving the removal of one tree and the trimming of the other.

"I'm in favor of working with the contractor to see if they can move the thing back. I'm not in favor of cutting the tree down," Parker said at the February 21 meeting, prompting a round of applause from the packed meeting room.

Mayor George Bass took time to address a major concern by residents regarding the accuracy of the official minutes from the December 8 P&DC meeting that served as a basis for the Board's previous vote to allow cutting down the trees on the development site.

The P&DC minutes note in one instance that the Tree Board recommended the approval of the application, but the memo from the Tree Board dated December 6, 2022, which is included in the December 8 minutes of the Commission, states that the



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Tree Board recommends that the application be denied.

"I hope this is going to be settled where we are able to save the tree and still get a development," Bass said. "That's my goal. My concern is that we got a letter from the Tree Board that was pretty adamant against taking the tree down... In the Planning and Development minutes, it reflected the statement of the Tree Board to not recommend taking the tree down, and then, when it gets to the end, it said 'based on the recommendation of the Tree Board' – and I think that's a problem for us."

"I think that's a problem for us, too," Caldwell said.

"I think that needs to be addressed [where] we send it back to the Planning and Development Commission and ask them to correct that," Bass said, drawing applause from the crowd.

Ultimately, at the February 21 meeting, the Board did not rescind the permit approval allowing for the removal of the tree on the property, but a motion was made by Ward 1 Alderman Patrick Bennett and approved by the Board to have the P&DC give their specific reasons for recommending to



Toni Miles

Long Beach native and arborist Will Loftus shares his findings and recommendations with City leaders at the February 9 meeting.



Toni Miles

Two members of the Long Beach Garden Club stand in front of a 150-year-old historic oak just hours before the February 9 meeting.



Toni Miles

A sign showcasing local developments that incorporated long-standing trees into their overall plan stands in the foreground of a packed house at the February 9 Board of Aldermen meeting in Long Beach.



Toni Miles

Concerned resident Barbra Reed urges City leaders to find a way to preserve the three trees located at the site of a proposed boutique hotel in downtown Long Beach.

allow removal of the tree, which aldermen said they would then review.

Once this is done and the Board has had the chance to review the reasons, they are expected to again take up the matter at a public meeting.

The official date for the Board of Aldermen's next regularly-scheduled meeting is

Tuesday, March 7, at 5 p.m. at Long Beach City Hall.

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the Tree Board's December 6, 2022, memo to the Planning and Development Commission, as well as in several other references to the location of the tree(s), the address of the property being developed has been listed as 310 Jeff Davis Avenue, which is the address that was provided on the Application for Tree Permit submitted by the property owner, who is listed on the application as Phenom Investments, LLC. However, that address has been subsequently noted to be occupied by Pilgar Title. The tree(s) property being referenced is on the corner of 4th Street and Jeff Davis.


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Lady Bearcat bowlers bring home championship again



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Both the boys' and girls' Long Beach High School bowling teams qualified for the MHSAA Class 5A State Championship last month. For the second year in a row, the Lady Bearcats won the championship. In addition, several students were named to the All Regional teams, including boys' team members Joshua Norra, Ayden Mulvaney and Gavin Whited, and girls' team members Lilly Sprinkle, Maddy Badeaux and Ivy Sprinkle.

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Wittmann Learning Center seeks funding for playground equipment

By Marilou D. Horton

In August 2022, Deonne Wittmann began fulfilling her dream of opening a full-time private school in Long Beach with a one-room schoolhouse vibe. Now, the Wittmann Learning Center needs playground equipment to complete the educator's vision, and she is asking for help.

The empty fenced-in lot behind the private school is eager to embrace the smiles and giggles of youngsters swinging, sliding and socializing with their peers. To accomplish this, Wittmann, who holds both her bachelor's and master's degrees in education, has created an online Go Fund Me account.

Wittmann explained that when the center moved into a larger building across from its original location, rent increased drastically, and no money remained for the much-needed playground equipment. A parent of one of her students suggested asking for financial assistance online.

"I went on there [Go Fund Me] to ask the community for help with the playground," the former Quarles Elementary teacher explained. Through her Go Fund Me account, the director has received many messages from residents of the area who want to help. She added that every penny raised is documented and will go toward playground equipment.

"It's for the children. To grow the business, I have to have a place for the kids to play," said Wittman. "Right now, they run around with nothing to do. The children need it, and they deserve it."

Wittmann first opened a local tutoring and afterschool program in December 2021. Through conversations with peers

and parents in Long Beach, she discovered a need for a small, Christian-based all-day education program. She explained that the facility incorporates the Bible into the curriculum and teacher-created assignments, while following standards used in the public school system. The Wittmann Learning Center utilizes Accelerated Christian Education (ACE), a Bible-based, Christian K-12 curriculum consisting of reading programs, core curriculum, required electives and additional instructional programs.

The director, who first pursued a college degree in music education before committing to elementary ed, says she believes that many of the problems in public schools today began when religion was removed from the classroom.

"I taught in a private Christian school during my first year as a certified teacher, and then I taught in public schools. There is a vast difference. I wanted to go to a family environment here. We are small, and the kids get along," Wittmann said. She added that the students know they have expectations and consequences at both school and home.

The experienced educator has seen a significant difference between her students from the beginning of the school year to where they are today - self-discipline. Wittmann and the other two teachers at the school educate the children on how to take ownership of their learning. She says they are not regimented by the common core or the scope and sequence as in public schools. As a result, Wittmann says her private school teaches the students everything required, but using inquiry-based learning.

"Here, the students take ownership of their learning, and the teacher is the facili-



Marilou Horton

Wittmann Learning Center owner and director Deonne Whittman assists one her students at the all-day private learning facility. The former educator recently reached out to the community for help with providing playground equipment for the center.

tator," she explained.

Wittmann added that she follows a checklist to ensure she is teaching the same standards as in the public school system. However, an advantage of a private facility is a smaller class size, one-on-one instruction, and the assurance that the educators are addressing each student's individual needs and learning styles.

"Not all the students who go here have some challenge or disability that prevents their learning in the regular classroom;

however, some do. So, I want to ensure the community knows this is a school for anyone interested. Because we are a small school, we benefit from one-on-one instruction."

Currently, the private all-day school has eighteen students, ranging from kindergarten to the sixth grade, and a preschool class. Learning standards are in place, and the educators at Wittmann Learning Center use them as they would if teaching in a public school.

"The students must learn to put commas where they need to go," said Whittman. "They need to know how to add and subtract. The ACE curriculum has a scope and sequence. We use a traditional way that is easy for the students. If what is in the book doesn't work for them, we do it another way and differentiate instruction for each child." Much of that includes nature-based learning, field trips, and learning through real-life situations.

Wittmann's vision for the private school is that the students continue to grow, remain self-sufficient and sustain their existence.

"I would like to increase our preschool program to ten or fifteen kids, where I can hire another teacher. I would also like to have some high school enrollment."

The educator, who is also board certified, said she has a five-year plan which includes positively impacting the community and increasing the school's attendance numbers. At the same time, she does not want to grow too much.

"I still want us to remain small and continue to have a family environment, while maintaining that one-room schoolhouse feel."



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LBHS tennis team opens season with a win

Special to Long Beach Breeze

The Long Beach High School (LBHS) tennis team has opened their 2023 season. The team competes in Class 5A, district 7 of the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA).

Matches include boys and girls singles, boys doubles, girls doubles, and mixed (one boy, one girl) doubles. Each individual match consists of a best-of-three set format, with the third set as a super (ten-point) tie breaker. With a total of seven varsity individual matches played, the winner of the overall match is the team that wins at least four individual matches.

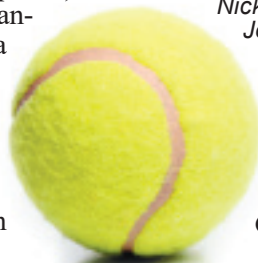
The LBHS Bearcat tennis team is working to build upon their success of last season through the return of twelve varsity players, including eight seniors. With the addition of Head Coach Courtney Ulrich, the team is poised to make a deep run to the state championships.

Team members include seniors Stokley Sawyer and Ada Shirk (Captains), Caleb Solangi, Timothy Stanley, Kendall Dunn, Samantha "Sammy" Wilson, JaneClaire King, Wilhelmina Vall and Kenyah Lacour; and underclassmen Alex Hailes, Nick Dulaney, Luke Dulaney, Easton van Norden, Braydon



Nate Stirrat

Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Lexie Griffith, Jenna Shirk, Madelyn Nguyen, Marlie Rath and Bella West; middle row: Trent Rishel, Henry Sawyer, Braydon Meadows, Alex Hailes, Nick Dulaney, Easton van Norden and Luke Dulaney; and back row: Coach Erik Johnson, JaneClaire King, Coach Tash Solangi, Tim Stanley, Sammy Wilson, Kendall Dunn, Ada Shirk, Caleb Solangi, Wilhelmina Vall, Stokley Sawyer and Head Coach Courtney Ulrich. Not pictured is Kenyah Lacour.



Meadows, Trent Rishel, Henry Sawyer, Marlie Rath, Jenna Shirk, Bella West, Lexie Griffith and Madelyn Nguyen.

As of press time, the Bearcats had begun their season by hosting their longtime border rivals, the Pass Christian Pirates, at their season opener. After al-

LBHS tennis team upcoming matches include:

Feb. 28	Hancock	Home
March 2	Gulfport	Away
March 7	St. Patrick	Away
March 8	St. Stanislaus / OLA	Home
March 10	East Central	Home
March 13	Stone	Away
March 16	Resurrection	Home
March 17	West Harrison (district)	Home
March 22	St. Stanislaus / OLA	Home
March 29	District Tournament	Home

most three hours of matches, the Bearcats prevailed and won all seven individual matches, giving them a sweep over the Pirates.

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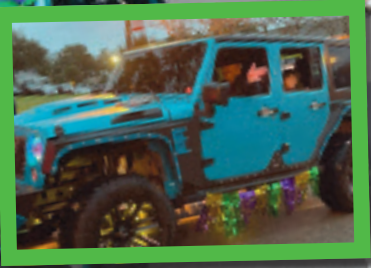
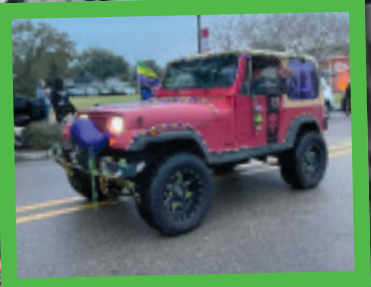
By Toni Miles

Overcast skies and wet streets couldn't dampen the 2nd Annual Jeep-A-Gras parade that rolled down the streets of Long Beach in late January.

More than one hundred Jeeps, decked out in traditional Mardi Gras colors and décor, took part in this year's parade, which preceded the City's annual Mardi Gras parade on February 11.

Hundreds lined the parade route, some decked out in their own celebratory costumes, and competed for the many throws distributed in this year's parade.

More than 100 Jeeps lined up for this year's Jeep-A-Gras parade.



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Inaugural golf event planned to benefit local families

By Toni Miles

The Oaks Golf Course in Pass Christian will set the scene for an inaugural fundraising event in May to help local families who have children with Down Syndrome and other disabilities.

The 1st Mississippi Buddy Cruise Charity Golf Scramble is scheduled to take place on Friday, May 19, at the Oaks Golf Course, located at The Oaks Golf Club on Clubhouse Drive in Pass Christian. Registration opens at 7 a.m., followed by an 18-hole shotgun start at 8 a.m. A buffet, along with raffles, prizes and a silent auction, will take place at 1 p.m.

While participants from all walks of life will be “swinging for a good cause” at the May 19 event, it is local children and their families who will be in the spotlight and who will benefit from this charitable cause. Proceeds will go to Buddy Cruise, Inc., a non-profit that provides funding for families who have children with Down Syndrome and other disabilities to attend a Buddy Cruise, a “conference at sea,” that sets sail each fall. It’s an event where presenters address a wide range of disability-related topics during interactive workshops.

Pass Christian resident Mika Hartman and her young son Hudson attended the 2022 Buddy Cruise last fall. She says the interaction, networking

and informative seminars offered on this sea voyage are priceless and will benefit the entire community.

“Between the amazing vacation and the conference at sea, this trip was beyond what we expected,” Hartman says. “When you have four hundred cabins filled with families on similar journeys, the weight of travel gets lifted, because you’re not alone. When traveling with a medically fragile family member, to be able to relax and enjoy means so much.”

Hartman and her son Hudson are familiar faces in South Mississippi and beyond.

Hudson is just four years old, but the Pass Christian youngster’s life and impact cannot be quantified by mere age. His life and story have helped pass three laws in Mississippi: the Human Life Equality Act, Hudson’s Law (Down Syndrome Information), and Cole’s Law (Organ Transplant Discrimination Prevention). He has been on magazine covers, in international magazines, on the Jumbotron in New York City four times, and he served as the 2018 Grand Marshal for NDSS’s Buddy Walk in New York’s Central Park.

Hudson was born in 2018 with Down Syndrome, but this and other challenges in his young life have not stopped his contagious smile and soul-piercing laugh.



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Hudson and Mika Hartman

“Hudson had a large hole in his heart and transient leukemia, but none of this stopped him for a second,” Hartman says. “His little heart was repaired when he was three-and-a-half months old, and his leukemia he fought with no medication. Hudson was later diagnosed with autism and has been learning ways to communicate with his family, even though he is non-verbal for now. Hudson’s challenges don’t de-

fine him. Actually, he’s doing just fine navigating all obstacles, and we are celebrating him and every ‘inchstone’ he crosses.”

And now the Hartmans are teaming up for yet another milestone.

The upcoming golf tournament will raise awareness and funds for local families who have children with Down Syndrome and other disabilities.

“Not only will a local family be awarded a vacation of a lifetime with an instant huge family, but our local community will be treated to a day of fun for a very good cause,” Hartman says. “Many of our friends with disabilities plan to join in on the fun. When we remove a diagnosis and see the ability in a person, we grow.”

While the event is just three months away, additional raffle prizes and silent auction items are still being sought, as well as sponsors. Buddy Cruise is the main sponsor of the event, but, so far, quite a few area businesses have also lined up as sponsors.

Many levels of sponsorships are still available, and tickets to participate in the golf tournament are \$160 per golfer. Groups of less than four are also welcome at the event.

To sign up to be a sponsor, to donate or to register for the 1st Mississippi Buddy Cruise Charity Golf Scramble, contact Hartman at 719-822-6497 or email her at mikacj@yahoo.com.

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Photos by Ann Madden

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Coast Episcopal says innovative TK program yields results

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Coast Episcopal School in Long Beach launched its Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program in August 2021, after identifying a need to provide a “bridge year” for students who would benefit from an extra year between preschool and kindergarten. Now in place for over a year and a half, educators at the independent school say they are convinced that the program has provided untold benefits to its participating students.

According to TK teacher Melissa Flickinger, students who participated in last year’s class are leaders in this year’s kindergarten class, due to more self-confidence and an understanding of what is expected in an elementary classroom. She attributes that to the additional year providing adequate time for social and emotional growth, which enabled her former charges to be on a social level equal to their age-leveled peers.

Parent Leah Watters, whose son participated in last year’s TK program and now is in kindergarten at Coast Episcopal, echoes Flickinger’s observations.

“Our son’s transition into kindergarten was seamless on account of established friendships, an understanding of the rhythms of the school, and having been enticed to love learning. He began kindergarten reading-ready and delights

in the new things he learns.”

Flickinger also notes that, academically, her former students are exhibiting math and literacy skills ahead of, rather than behind, their kindergarten peers.

“They have an expanded vocabulary and exhibit more advanced critical thinking skills,” says Flickinger.

Allyson Winter, a CES parent who chose this year’s TK program for her son, says, “Transitional Kindergarten at Coast was the perfect fit for our son. He has a summer birthday and was not quite developmentally ready for kindergarten but was ready to graduate from preschool. TK bridged the gap, allowing him to mature socially in a smaller class setting.”

CES Head of School Jake Winter points out that the only downside to the program has been getting the message out that the transitional kindergarten program is not designed for students who have been identified as lacking in academic abilities.

“That’s just not so,” said Winter. “These are students who, for a myriad of reasons, will benefit greatly from an extra year of developmental growth.”

Kathy Terrell, CES kindergarten teacher, also sees a significant benefit from the Transitional Kindergarten program.

“Since the TK option for ‘an extra year of growth’ has been in place,



Special to Long Beach Breeze
Coast Episcopal School Transitional Kindergarteners’ lessons include time in the Seemann Makerspace, which supports the school’s STEAM-based curriculum. Students are pictured learning about how rockets are launched into space by creating their own wind-powered rockets with paper, tape and straws.

there has been a considerable, for the better, change in kindergarten’s pace. As a whole, this year’s kindergarten class has been more mature, with fewer tendencies toward distractions, longer attention spans, improved communication skills, improved independence, and more eagerness to engage, participate, work, and listen.”

She added that the program sets the foundation of student-teacher rela-

tionships.

“TK and kindergarten students share playground time, thus allowing for an outside-of-the-classroom relationship to begin to form between the TK students and the kindergarten teachers.”

The school is so committed to the program’s ability to serve students well that they have implemented an academic assessment program for all new students who are kindergarten age-appropriate.

“All of our prospective new students are assessed - from toddler through sixth grades - to ensure that they are grade-level appropriate,” says Admissions Director Amy Ego-If. “However, when it comes to prospective five-year-olds, we have them assessed simultaneously by both our T-K and kindergarten teachers. Then, along with input from their parents, the two educational professionals decide which of the two programs will be the most beneficial and are in the child’s best interest.”

New student enrollment at Coast Episcopal School is scheduled to open on Wednesday, March 1. Families interested in additional information regarding the Transitional Kindergarten are encouraged to complete an online inquiry and schedule a tour of the CES Campus.

For information, call Coast Episcopal School at 228-452-9442.



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USM Gulf Park's Byrnes named LB Chamber Chair

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Colette Byrnes, director of event services for The University of Southern Mississippi's (USM) Gulf Park campus, views partnership and leadership as key objectives in her role as the new chair of the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for 2023. Byrnes has served as a member of the Board since 2020.

"It is important to continuously grow the University's relationship with our external community partners across the coast, and, because the Gulf Park campus serves as a host location for so many Chamber events, I felt this was an excellent opportunity get involved," Byrnes said of her decision to originally apply for Chamber membership.

In her USM position, Byrnes is responsible for strategic planning, policy development and budget management for Gulf Park Event Services. She assists both internal and external customers in reserving event spaces and classrooms at the Gulf Park Campus for events ranging from wedding receptions and social events to small conferences and University Presidential events.

Byrnes notes that the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce features a proactive Board of Directors with a robust agenda. Her primary responsibilities as chair include supporting the Board across all programs, while providing guidance and leadership to ensure goals are met.



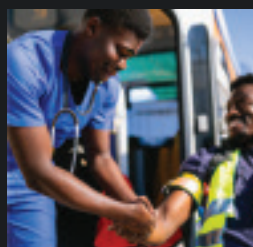
Special to Long Beach Breeze
Colette Byrnes will serve as the 2023 Chair of the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

"The Board also plans and manages fundraising programming in support of scholarships and small business and teacher grants," said Byrnes. "Our main fundraisers include the annual Taste of Long Beach, Breakfast with the Mayor, and Touch-A-Truck. I also represent the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce on the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors."

Byrnes points out that her time as a Board director provided rewarding opportunities, with more to come as she embarks on her new position.

"The Long Beach Chamber of Commerce is a wonderful resource for the local business community, and I am honored to serve as the 2023 chair," she said. "2022 was a banner year for the Chamber, and I am excited to continue gaining the forward momentum our immediate past chair cultivated."

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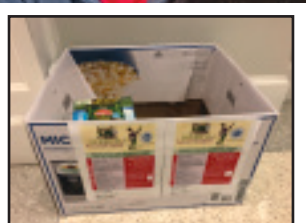
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Green bean donations needed for March of the Mayors



Donations for this year's food collection can be dropped off in boxes just inside Long Beach City Hall until March 24.

Photos by Toni Miles

Pictured are Long Beach residents and Mississippi Power volunteers organizing and distributing cans of green beans collected by the City of Long Beach for last year's drive.



By Toni Miles

A few cans of green beans can go a long way for South Mississippi families in need, and, if history repeats itself, Long Beach residents will make sure they do their part in this year's annual March of the Mayors food collection event, hosted by the non-profit Extra Table.

Residents, schools and businesses are asked to donate cans of green beans by March 24 for this year's drive. This marks the third year the Mayor's Office has participated in the Coast-wide food drive; and, like last year, the City of Long Beach is asking residents to donate green beans for the overall collection. Last year, the City collected more than 1,200 cans of green

beans, with Harper McCaughan Elementary School's BETA Club accounting for more than 900 cans of green beans in that drive.

It's all part of a mission to pack local food pantries to help provide food to those in the area who need it most. Each participating city is designated a particular item to donate, which will be gathered and distributed at what has been dubbed "Mississippi's largest food box packing party."

Canned green bean donations can be dropped off at Long Beach City Hall, located at 201 Jeff Davis Avenue. This year's Box Packing Party will be held on Thursday, March 30, at 9:30 a.m. at the Lyman Community Center, located at 13742 Highway 90 in Gulfport.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Pass Christian is also participating in the March of the Mayors, collecting canned corn for the food drive. Corn can be dropped off at Pass Christian High School, Pass Christian K-8 schools, Pass Christian City Hall, PC Fire Station 1 on 2nd Street and the Pass Christian WalMart.

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THE PASS POST

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UPDATE ON EDUCATION SET FOR MARCH 2

Pass Christian School District Superintendent of Education Dr. Carla Evers will share updates on the school district and answer questions at a Pass Christian Update on Education event scheduled for Thursday, March 2, at the Pass Christian Yacht Club.



The event is sponsored by the Pass Christian Chamber of Commerce. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. for a breakfast and networking. The program starts at 8 a.m. Tickets, which include breakfast, are \$30 for Chamber members, \$35 for general admission.

For more information, call 228-604-0014. Registration is available at MSCoastChamber.com. The Yacht Club is located at 120 Market Street in Pass Christian.

Free dance classes begin February 27



Beginning on Monday, February 27, the South Mississippi Ballroom Dance Urban Style group will offer a six-week series of classes featuring a volunteer instructor teaching the basics of urban style ballroom dance. According to the group's Facebook page, urban ballroom dancing is a smooth, elegant, graceful dance which combines slow dancing, hand dancing, and cha-cha all in one dance. Those who like jazz and R&B music are encouraged to come and try urban style ballroom dancing.

Classes will be held at the Randolph Center at 6 p.m. each Monday through April 3. The Randolph Center is located at 315 Clark Avenue. No experience is required, and attendees do not have to bring a partner.

Those attending are asked to wear comfortable shoes. The class is free and open to adults.

For more information, contact Edward Landry at 228-254-6868.

Historical Society plans luncheon on March 27

The Pass Christian Historical Society's (PCHS) March luncheon will feature speakers Dr. Donald Davis and Dr. Carl Brasseux with LSU, authors of *Asian Cajun Fusion: Shrimp from the Bay to the Bayou*. Their talk will include a history of the shrimping industry in Louisiana, as well as provide an analysis of the paradox between shrimp's popularity as America's favorite seafood and the wellspring of problems that threaten the shrimp industry's existence. The event will be held at noon on Monday, March 27, at the PCHS building at 201 East Scenic Drive. Copies of their book will be available for purchase.



The cost for the luncheon is \$12 for members and \$15 for non-members, and reservations are required by 5 p.m. on Friday, March 24. No walk-ins, observers or standing reservations will be available. Reservations can be made by email to reservations@PassHistory.org. Call 228-452-7254 for more information.

Garden Club sets March 2 meeting



The Pass Christian Garden Club will gather on Thursday, March 2, for their monthly meeting. Social time begins at 11:30 a.m., followed by the program, which will feature speaker Pat Drackett, director of the Crosby Arboretum. She will speak on "How To Design a Pollinator Garden."

The Garden Club will meet this month in the conference room of the Pass Christian Library, located at 111 Hiern Avenue, and the public is welcome to attend. For more information, call Anita Giana at 650-743-0870.

Author Event set for March 4

The Pass Christian Library will welcome Jane Friedman, an author, business woman, educator and more, for a special Author Event on "Hot Topics in Publishing" on Saturday, March 4, at 1 p.m.



Friedman is the author of *The Business of Being a Writer* and has made her living reporting and speaking about the publishing industry. She specializes in business strategies for authors and publishers. Additionally, she is a professor with The Great Courses and her expertise has been featured by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, NPR and many other outlets. Her free newsletter, "Electric Speed," published since 2009, has more than 25,000 subscribers; and her paid newsletter, "The Hot Sheet," has more than 2,200 subscribers.

The public is invited to attend the free event, which will include copies of her book available for purchase, as well as light refreshments. For more information, call the library at 228-452-4596. The Pass Christian Library is located at 111 Hiern Avenue.

MONDAYS BRINGS NEW YOGA WITH AMANDA SERIES



A new yoga instructor, Amanda Bauer, will be teaching a "Yoga with Amanda" series on Mondays at 12:30 p.m. beginning on Monday, March 6. The six-week series will continue at that time each Monday through April 10.

The instructor will incorporate physical postures, breath work and flows, and postures will be adapted to individual ability. The one-hour sessions will begin promptly at 12:30 p.m. in the conference room of the library located at 111 Hiern Avenue. Attendees are encouraged to wear comfortable clothes and bring an exercise (or yoga) mat. The series is free, but donations will be accepted for instructional costs. For more information, call the library at 228-452-4596.

Pass Christian show choir already winning awards



Special to The Pass Post

At the end of January, the Pass Christian "Luminary" Show Choir competed in their first-ever competition, the Purvis Show Choir Invitational, and placed second with best costumes. The choir will participate in five competitions this year, with two remaining. They will compete in Hattiesburg at the Magnolia Invitational on March 4, and then in Biloxi on March 11 at the Biloxi Gulf Coast Classic.

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Pass Christian Coastal Cleanup set for March 18

The Pass Post

The Mississippi State University Extension and Mississippi Coastal Cleanup have designated Pass Christian as their March Monthly Cleanup location.

Each month, the two organizations select various locations within the coastal counties of Hancock, Harrison and Jackson for a cleanup to keep the community engaged in preserving the environment and to keep it healthy and beautiful.

Each Monthly Cleanup takes place on a Saturday from 8:30 to 10 a.m. and includes a Site Captain at the location to lead the event. Site Captains are responsible for getting volunteers signed in and geared up for the event.

The Pass Christian event will begin at the Pass Christian Harbor at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 18. The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup Program

provides all the supplies necessary for the beach cleanup, including gloves and trash bags. Volunteers are asked to wear closed-toe shoes, bring a refillable water bottle and a bucket to collect trash in, and wear appropriate sun protection.

During the cleanup, volunteers will pick up trash and record what they are picking up on to a data card. After the cleanup, participants will return the supplies, turn in their data card, and have the option to enter their name into a running tally for a raffle prize at the end of the year. The more monthly cleanups a volunteer participates in, the higher their chances of winning are.

All cleanups have one backup day set for weather cancellations. The Pass Christian reschedule day is Saturday, March 25.

For more information or to sign up to help, visit www.CoastalCleanup.Extension.MSState.edu.



New K9 officer joins PC police department



Special to The Pass Post

The Pass Christian Police Department recently hired a new officer – a British Labrador Retriever from a champion bloodline, donated by the Daniel family of Pass Christian. Through community input, the puppy has been named Scout Bleu Daniel. Tyler Ann, Maria Meyers and Susie Clements Beattie submitted the winning name suggestions and will be awarded a meet and greet and photo op with Officer Scout. In the near future, the new officer will attend K9 school and will be available to meet the public during various community events.

Pass resident named Chamber chair for 2023



Special to The Pass Post

Kristen Garriga will serve as the 2023 Chair of the Pass Christian Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

Special to The Pass Post

The Pass Christian Chamber of Commerce recently announced Kristen Garriga as the chair of the Pass Christian Chamber of Commerce for 2023.

Garriga started her career with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices in 2018 and has grown in the real estate business ever since. Today Kristen holds the title of marketing and business development director at Berkshire Hathaway Panoramic Properties.

Prior to her real estate journey, she worked for nearly a decade for a local

orthodontist's office as a chairside assistant and marketing coordinator.

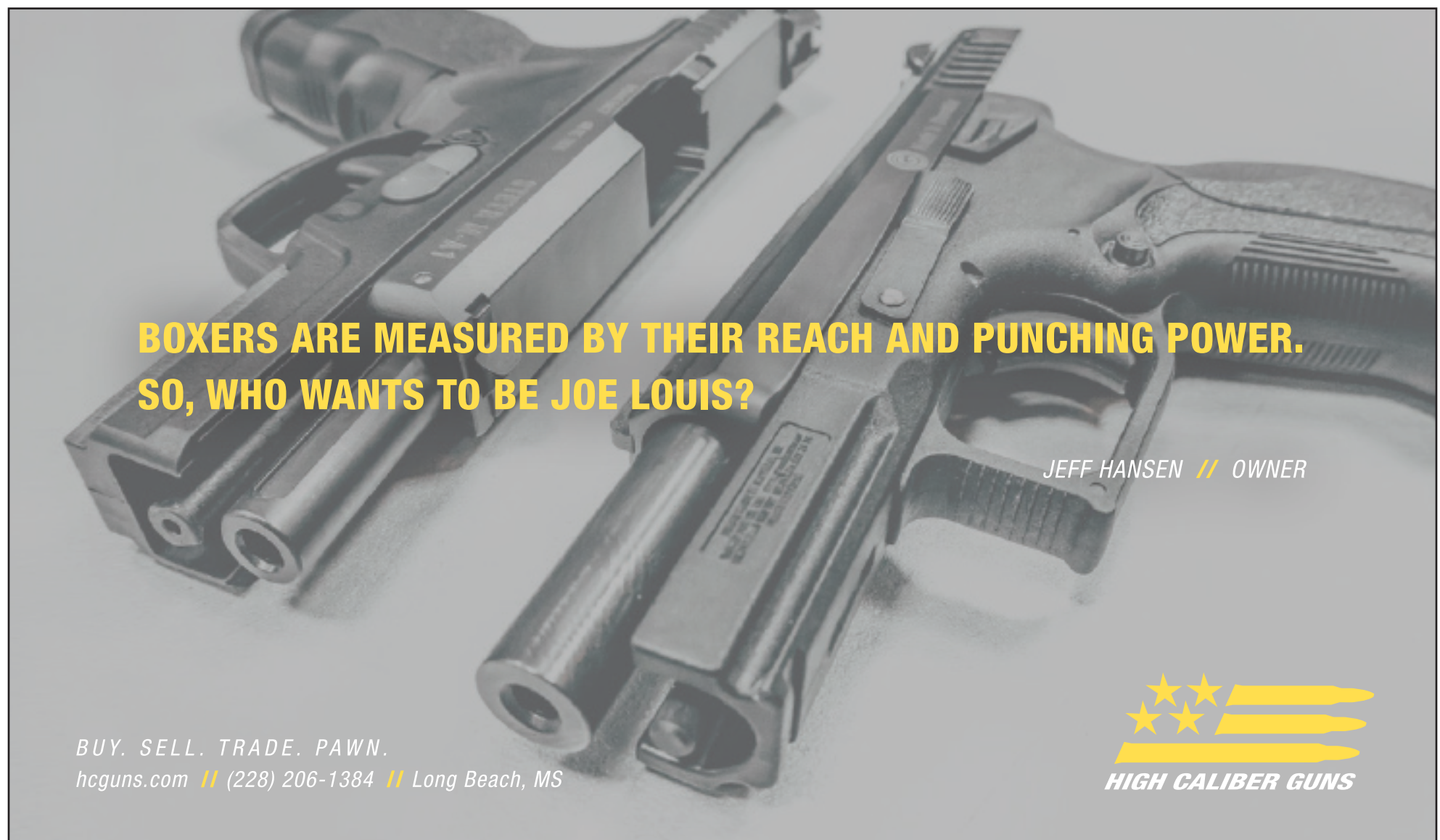
As a lifelong resident of the area, Garriga says she takes pride in calling the Mississippi Gulf Coast home. She and her husband, Brent Garriga, and their three children reside in Pass Christian and are very active in the Gulf Coast community. Serving on the Pass Christian Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for the past three years, Garriga says she has had many opportunities to help the local communities thrive, and helping and supporting small businesses is truly her passion.



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