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June 2023 • Volume 7, Number 6 • "Good News You Can Use"

# A sign of progress in the City's Gateway Project

By Toni Miles

There is literally a sign of progress when it comes to the City of Long Beach's Gateway Project, as the Streetscape Signage Project is now well underway.

A new sign heralding the different types of businesses, such as a skin care studio and antiques, operating in the hub of the Friendly City now welcomes those passing through or driving along Highway 90 in Long Beach. The sign is perched at one of the busiest intersections in the city, Jeff Davis Avenue and Highway 90.



Toni Miles

The sign, perched at the intersection of Jeff Davis Avenue and Highway 90, is part of phase one of the city's Gateway Project.



Toni Miles

The sign features several types of businesses operating in the Friendly City.

It's part of Long Beach's \$4.3 million Gateway Project, which is being implemented in two phases. The new street sign is part of the first phase of the project, which includes welcome signs at the intersection of Jeff Davis Avenue and Highway 90, as well as at the intersection of South Cleveland Avenue and Highway 90, designed to draw tourists to the city's harbor area. Once complete, phase two will begin, which includes harbor parking lot improvements and a lighthouse.

# New LBSD CTE Center slated to open for 2024-25 school year

By Toni Miles

*"Two roads diverged in a wood... and I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."*

- Robert Frost, in his poem "The Road Not Taken"

While a majority of graduating seniors choose the common "road" to pursue a college or university degree, others opt for the "road not taken." Among them are high school students who are gifted in vocational areas, such as welding or carpentry.

These are gifts and career paths that leaders of the Long Beach School District (LBSD) don't want to overlook, and that's just one reason why they've decided to invest millions of dollars to pave a wider pathway to success for students seeking vocational careers right out of high school through construction of a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center.



Toni Miles

Pictured is a rendering of the Long Beach School District's new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center.

More than one hundred people, including State representatives

and City leaders, current and former leaders of LBSD, and representatives from the University of

Southern Mississippi were on hand for the May 11 groundbreaking for a new, multimillion dollar CTE Center that will provide additional opportunities and classes for vocational students in the Long Beach School District.

"This is so important to our community and our students. They're now going to have another opportunity to be able to make sure that they are as successful as they possibly can be once they leave the doors of Long Beach High School," said LBSD Superintendent Dr. Talia Lock, who is a Long Beach High School graduate herself.

The 2,800-square-foot facility will open new doors for students choosing to go straight into the workforce upon graduation to work in fields such as carpentry and welding.

Expected to be complete in July of next year for the 2024-2025

cont. on page 6

HOUSING *The Coast*

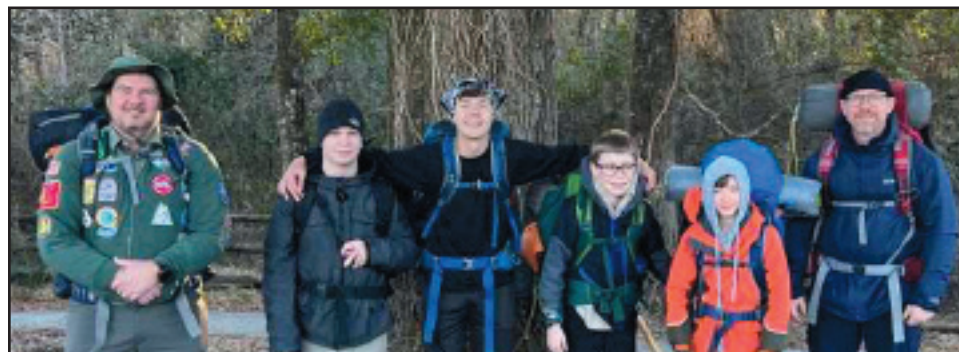
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# Scouts BSA Troop 321 backpacks the historic Tuxachanie Trail



*Special to Long Beach Breeze*

Pictured (l to r) on their Tuxachanie Trail adventure are Scoutmaster Tommy Carroll, Nick Sokolowski, Addison Carroll, Nathan Pyron, Max Elenbaas and Assistant Scoutmaster Jason Pyron.

By Guest Columnist Tommy Carroll

Boy Scouts of America High Adventure Troop 321 from Long Beach recently traveled to Perkinston, Mississippi, to backpack the historic Tuxachanie Trail. Four scouts and two leaders from the troop braved forty-degree temperatures to keep their skills sharp and to enjoy doing what scouts do – enjoying the outdoors!

The troop was transported on their bus by Assistant Scoutmaster Terry Togstad to their drop off. Scouts Max Elenbaas, Nate Pyron, Nick Sokolowski and Addison Carroll, along with Assistant Scoutmaster Jason Pyron and Scoutmaster Tommy Carroll, set out on the trek from the Highway 49 Tuxachanie Trailhead early on a Saturday morning. Temperatures for the day were perfect for backpacking. The cool weather and crystal-blue sky gave the hikers the opportunity to see numerous wildlife and foliage native to the area as they trekked through the Longleaf and Loblolly pines.

For lunch, the scouts stopped at Airey Lake Campground, where they were able to enjoy the luxury of a picnic table to eat their lunch, as well as a public bathroom. At the end of their first day, they hiked across Spike Buck Branch bridge, a bridge that they, themselves, had helped repair for a recent Eagle Scout project for one of their fellow troopmates, Colin Christensen. The bridge was a very welcome site to the scouts and their leaders, who planned on camping for the night on just the other side of the bridge at a clearing that is part of the Bigfoot Horse Trail Loop.



Temperatures that evening were predicted to drop down to the lower 40s, and the scouts, living up to their motto, were prepared with cool-weather jackets and sleeping bags. That evening, they enjoyed their meal in camp and refilled their water bottles by filtering water from the nearby stream, Spike Buck Branch. They sat around their campfire telling stories and jokes, doing skits and trying to scare each other with their favorite ghost stories.

The following morning, the scouts were reverent and paused their camp breakdown in order to hold a chapel service around the campfire. Shortly after, they hit the trail again, again enjoying the cool and clear weather.

About a mile before the end of their journey, the trail runs along the bank of the Tuxachanie Creek. The scouts couldn't resist and had to go dip their feet in the water.

At the end of the trail, the scouts arrived at their destination at the P.O.W. Camp, where they awaited their ride. While waiting, the scouts checked on a previous service project that they had completed there of building bat houses. Shortly after their arrival, Assistant Scoutmaster Wordie Carroll arrived, and the scouts were on their way home with more memories and stories.

Troop 321 is a high adventure troop from Long Beach. In addition to the Boy Scouts of America program, the troop is working its way around the country, with an objective of seeing the seven wonders of the contiguous states. Its next high adventure destination as a troop is to Washington state, where they will visit Mount Olympic National Park and hike the one-hundred-mile Wonderland Trail around Mount Rainier in 2024. Scouts in Troop 321 hail from Diamondhead, Poplarville, Gulfport and Long Beach.



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# Zombies spread kindness message at CES

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Coast Episcopal School's (CES) sixth grade class recently presented Roger Emerson and John Jacobson's *Zombies The Musical* to parents and the school's student body.

The story, which includes a script filled with funny zombie references and six pop and Broadway-style songs, was created to inspire an anti-bullying theme for school communities. The production's overall message - that bullying is not okay and that all people, no matter how different, should be treated with kindness - reiterates the Long Beach independent school's commitment to the same sentiments.

"Our students surprise me on a daily basis with their enthusiasm for learning," said CES Head of School Jake Winter. "Taking part in a production that spreads a message of kindness and acceptance for all was not just fun, it was touching to watch."

CES' fifteen sixth graders danced and joked their way throughout the production, which was directed by sixth-grade teacher Angela Colegrove. Music was coordinated by music teacher Jody Smith, and Makerspace and art teacher Tarah Herbert designed the set. According to Colegrove, the students enthusiastically added their own variations to the mu-



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Coast Episcopal School sixth graders recently presented *Zombies the Musical*, promoting kindness and acceptance for all with funny zombie references and songs.

sical's script and choreography.

"The students love to perform and requested a musical early in the school year," said Colegrove. "The theme of acceptance is something we practice every day in our classrooms, and the cheeky humor written throughout the show suited our student personalities too well; we just had to do it."

"What I loved most about performing the musical was getting to spend time with my friends," said Dax Hansell, who played the lead role.

"It was really fun learning [the musical] along with my friends and sharing our weaknesses and strengths," said singing and dancing cheerleader Hadley Mayfield.





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### LaRosa awarded Key Club scholarship



Dom Fimiano

Jillian LaRosa (center), a senior at Long Beach High School (LBHS), was recently named the recipient of the Kiwanis Club of Long Beach Key Club scholarship. LaRosa is a member of the LBHS Key Club, a student-led organization founded by Kiwanis International that encourages leadership development through service to others. The scholarship winner is selected by the Key Club sponsors and school counselors. LaRosa, who is also a LBHS Hall of Fame honoree, was presented with the \$500 scholarship at a recent dinner. Pictured (l to r) are Susan LaRosa (mother), Jillian LaRosa, Kiwanis Division 14S Lt. Governor Brian Lake, and David LaRosa (father).



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# “Open Gym” to the rescue

By Marilou D. Horton

For over twenty years, the City of Long Beach has provided a solution to summer boredom and a way to beat the Mississippi heat, and this year is no different. From June 6 through July 15, youngsters ages kindergarten through sixth grade are invited to engage in various activities offered at the Long Beach Senior Center for as little as \$15 per day or \$50 a week.

Director Amanda Yarbrough said the program was held at O'Malley Field for many years but has since found a home at the senior center at 20253 Daughtery Road. Even though the "Open Gym" is offered from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m., Yarbrough said children don't have to arrive as soon as the doors open, and they can also be picked up early; the price, however, remains \$15.

"They can sleep late and don't have to be here right at 8 a.m.," said Yarbrough. "This is not as much a daycare as something just for them [the children] to do. It is something affordable, and parents can drop them off."

Activities at the gym will include basketball, volleyball, hockey, wall ball, soccer, baseball, softball and more, the director said. She added that, although organized games will be introduced, children with endless imagination often create and add many more.

"We are in the movie room until 9 a.m. and then go into the gym for dodge ball," said Yarbrough. "Various organized games exist, but the children often develop their own."

Store-bought games like giant Jenga and Connect-Four games are still a big hit.

On the last day of each week, the children have what they refer to as "Fun Fridays." Yarbrough explained that, during

the week, there is a container where parents can leave donations, if they wish. Then, that money is used on Friday to treat the children with something special.

"Sometimes we have enough for ice cream or even chicken nuggets."

The daily fee includes lunch and an afternoon snack; morning snacks and drinks are available for \$1 each. School cafeteria food is delivered and served as the noon meal. Yarbrough said attendees

are welcome to bring water bottles labeled with their names.

Parents must pay the total amount on Mondays to receive the weekly rate of \$50. Aftercare is available - by the week only - and is priced at \$40.

"It is \$40 for aftercare, whether one day or five days," Yarbrough noted. She added that she noticed attendance during the 4th of July week has typically dropped over the years. As a result, the gym will close during that week and then reopen. Also of importance is that the Open Gym has no pre-registration.

This summer is the fifth year in which Yarbrough is in charge of the program, and working alongside her are her high school and college-age children and her mother, who is retired. It is truly a family affair for the Yarbroughs, she says.

"We are at the gym daily and don't leave until the kids do," she said.

As the tradition of "Open Gym" in Long Beach continues, so does the director's and the City's desire to provide something affordable for everyone.

"Camps are so expensive," Yarbrough said. "This economical program allows the children of Long Beach to have fun, be safe, and stay busy." It also provides flexibility for parents, she stressed.

For more information, contact the Long Beach Senior Center at 228-868-7517. Amanda Yarbrough can be reached at [AmYarbrough02@gmail.com](mailto:AmYarbrough02@gmail.com).

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cont. from front page

## New LBSD CTE Center slated to open for 2024-25 school year

school year, the new CTE Center will be located at 1 Bearcat Boulevard, across from the LBSD Central Services building on Commission Road, and will be able to accommodate hundreds of students with an expanded curriculum and additional vocational and technical education classes, such as auto mechanics.

“We do now have CTE programs, but most of them are going to be college-bound type of CTE programs that we have, a program for business and finance,” said Dr. Lock. “We have a program for engineering, nurse sciences, a teacher academy; but we don’t really have a vocational type of program such as auto mechanics, welding, things like that. Right now, we don’t offer that curriculum, so to be able to offer these additional vocational, technical programs for some of our students is one extra layer that we can provide to make sure they succeed.”

The cost of the new CTE facility and equipment rings in at a little more than \$10 million and will strengthen the district’s current CTE program, adding education and specialized training in the fields of auto

mechanics, welding, carpentry and digital media.

“This is an investment in those students,” said Ward 1 Alderman Patrick Bennett, who helped spearhead the project. “If you look in the workforce right now, a lot of the in-demand jobs require only high level technical training. We’re going to focus on some of the more industrial jobs on this campus. We also have implemented a program called work-based learning ... basically, we can give students credit for any meaningful job experience, whether that’s working at an auto shop or Ingalls. We can get them on-the-job training where they can learn the soft skills, and we can actually give them credits through the high school.”

“This is an investment not only in our kids, but it’s an investment in the city and our local economy,” Bennett said.

At the groundbreaking, Long Beach School Board President Tim Pierce pointed out the District was not going to rest on its laurels as being ranked number one in the state of Mississippi when it comes to education.



Toni Miles

District 120 Mississippi State Representative Richard Bennett addresses the crowd at the May 11 groundbreaking.



Toni Miles

The groundbreaking ceremony took place on May 11 on the site where the new CTE Center will be located in Long Beach.



Toni Miles

Long Beach School Superintendent Dr. Talia Lock shows the crowd a souvenir shovel at the groundbreaking.



Toni Miles

More than 100 people, including City, State and educational leaders, showed up for the groundbreaking.

“Over the years, we have been really worried about those kids who may slip through the cracks, who may not have that opportunity because they’re not college bound,” Pierce said. “For me, we are giving these kids the opportunity to be productive and take part in society. I couldn’t be happier. We’ve done a lot of things over the years that I’ve been very proud of, but I think this has got to be the top because for those kids, this is their future.”

Leaders pointed out that the investment has been years in the making and required teamwork across-the-board.

“At the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, Richard Bennett [District 120 Mississippi Representative] helped us secure the funding for the facility and for the equipment that we needed to make this become a reality. He saw this need for our community and for our students, and he fought hard for our Long Beach School District to get the funding needed to make this goal a reality,” Dr. Lock said before Bennett, a Long Beach resident who serves as Chairman of Education for the Mississippi House of Representatives,

took to the podium at the event.

“A lot of people don’t realize Long Beach is the poorest school district of the six counties on the Coast,” Bennett said. “We did more with less than any other district that I know of, and you’re the number one school district in the state of Mississippi academically. That is a reflection of the community that we live in. It’s a reflection of our School Board, a reflection of our teachers, our leadership. Our schools are a reflection of our community.”

Leaders at the groundbreaking say they hope the new programs offered at the CTE Center will lead to even more students choosing to finish high school and to get their diplomas.

According to the Department of Education, eight years after their expected graduation date, students who focused on CTE courses while in high school had higher median annual earnings than students who did not focus on CTE.

AnderCorp will be serving as the construction manager for the new CTE Center and will be working closely with MP Design Group on the project.

# Clean up and rebuilding continues at Long Beach Harbor

By Toni Miles

Those who have weathered hurricanes and other storms throughout South Mississippi's hurricane seasons know how long it can take to clean up the damage and rebuild. The Long Beach Harbor is no exception, say City officials, especially considering the additional work, surveys and protocols that have to be followed to secure funding from the government to make the needed repairs, and work is still underway to mitigate the colossal damage left behind in Hurricane Zeta's wake when it made landfall on October 28 of 2020.

While boaters and other watercraft operators can now launch from at least one section of the Long Beach Harbor, work is continuing in other areas, including on the northernmost launch pad and channel, which is expected to open soon.

Aside from this, debris is still being located via side-scan sonar investigation of the harbor, which has already revealed significant sunken debris, including three sunken vessels, loose and floating portions of damaged piers throughout the harbor, trailing electrical components and water service lines.

A bathymetric survey of the Long



Toni Miles

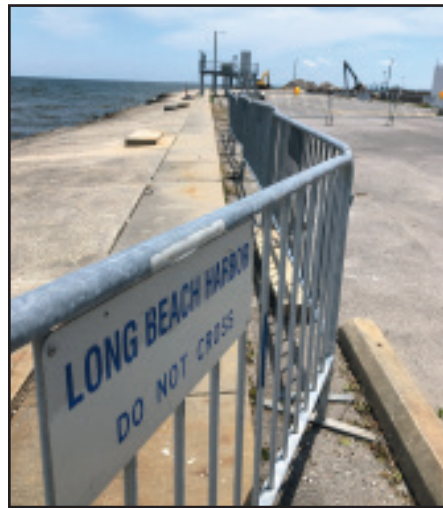
A group of people are shown launching their boat from one of the operational boat launches at the Long Beach Harbor.

Beach Boat Launch is expected to be carried out in the next few weeks, with emergency dredging of the channel and boat launch approach to follow the survey. The two southernmost boat launches are damaged and heaved, requiring further repairs.

A pile integrity testing program to investigate damage to the pilings is also underway. So far, ninety percent of the inspected pilings are damaged in some way.

Assessments of electrical damage are also taking place, with the land-side electrical platforms still being reviewed. More than fifty percent of all pier electrical components have been determined to have more than fifty percent damage due to extensive pier damage to the pilings.

Meanwhile, failed bulkheads and seawalls have moved and shifted,



Toni Miles

A fence guards an area of the Long Beach Harbor that is still closed off until repairs are complete.

and a non-destructive investigation of the pavements, sidewalks and bulkheads (sidewalks and pavement that have sunken, settled and buckled) has been planned.

City leaders say, based on previous hurricane damage, there is always unknown debris locations throughout the harbor, and, while the City is doing its best to assess and mitigate these damages, those who use the harbor are urged to exercise extreme caution until repairs are complete. The City will provide



Toni Miles

Work continues on a new welcome sign at one of the entrances of the Long Beach Harbor.



A rendering of what the completed sign will look like.

updates as further information from damage surveys continues.

While harbor repairs have been a long-time coming and an arduous process, the City's efforts are paying off. A new welcome sign at the Long Beach Harbor is almost complete as work in and along the harbor continues.

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Photos by Ann Madden

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## Family programs, preschool story time and book sales on tap for library

By Guest Columnist Renee Rayburn, LBPL Youth and Technology Services

Have you registered for summer reading? Time is running out, so don't forget the deadline for doing so. Online registration began May 1, and it ends on May 31. Visit the library's website at [www.LongBeach.lib.ms.us](http://www.LongBeach.lib.ms.us) and click on the bright orange "Click here..." button.

Preschool events will still be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:30, however, we do ask our parents who normally attend preschool story time to please register for the family programs if they will be attending any of these, as well.

Check out the schedule of events that shows both preschool story time and all family programs.

Any families interested in painting a ceiling tile for the children's wing must first be registered for summer reading, and second must sign a form in the children's wing reserving their tile. Tiles are limited to one per family.

The book sale will continue through June. Remember, it is open only on Saturdays beginning at 9 a.m. Prices are ten cents each for magazines, twenty-five cents each for paperbacks, and fifty cents each for hardbacks, audiobooks and movies.

There are no meetings scheduled in June for the Long Beach Board of Trustees or the Friends of the Long Beach Public Library.

Thank you for your patronage and, as always, stay safe!


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| TUESDAY   | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY   | SATURDAY  | TUESDAY   | WEDNESDAY   | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY   | SATURDAY   |
|   |  | <b>JUNE 1</b><br>PRESCHOOL STORYTIME<br>Theme - Dinosaurs<br><i>I'm Bad!</i><br>by Kate & Jim McMullan<br>10:30 am                        |  | <b>JUNE 2</b><br>FAMILY PROGRAM<br>Family Coloring Day<br>Bring in an old white t-shirt and design a fresh new look!<br>10:30 am - 12:30 pm | <b>JUNE 3</b><br>FAMILY PROGRAM<br>Family Puzzle Challenge<br>How fast can your family complete a puzzle?<br>10:30 am - 12:30 pm  |   |   |  |  |
| <b>JUNE 6</b><br>PRESCHOOL STORYTIME<br>Fabric Crayon T-shirts!<br>Bring in an old white t-shirt and design a fresh new look!<br>10:30 am | <b>JUNE 7</b><br>FAMILY PROGRAM<br>DEPART OF MARINE RESOURCES<br>Boat & Water Safety<br>10:30 am                   | <b>JUNE 8</b><br>PRESCHOOL STORYTIME<br>Fabric Crayon T-shirts!<br>Bring in an old white t-shirt and design a fresh new look!<br>10:30 am | <b>JUNE 9</b><br>FAMILY PROGRAM<br>INSTITUTE FOR MARINE MAMMAL STUDIES<br>10:30 am                                 |   | <b>JUNE 10</b><br>PRESCHOOL STORYTIME<br>Theme - Father's Day<br><i>Froggy's Day with Dad</i><br>by Jonathan London<br>10:30 am   | <b>JUNE 11</b><br>FAMILY PROGRAM<br>Marvelous Mammals - Learn what makes a mammal. What is a habitat? Why is the beaver skull flat on top? Students will investigate skulls, fur, tracks, and much more!<br>2:00 pm | <b>JUNE 12</b><br>PRESCHOOL STORYTIME<br>Theme - Father's Day<br><i>How to Surprise a Dad</i><br>by Jean Reagan<br>10:30 am | <b>JUNE 13</b><br>FAMILY PROGRAM<br>Trivia Pursuit Challenge and Family Game Day<br>10:30 am - 12:30 pm                                    | <b>JUNE 14</b><br>FAMILY PROGRAM<br>MOVIE & POPCORN DAY<br><i>The Peanuts Movie</i><br>10:30 am - 12:30 pm |
| <b>JUNE 20</b><br>PRESCHOOL STORYTIME<br>Theme - Summer<br><i>One Magical Day</i><br>by Claire Freedman<br>10:30 am                       | <b>JUNE 21</b><br>FAMILY PROGRAM<br>Decorate a Ceiling Tile for the Children's Wing (Day 1)<br>10:30 am - 12:30 pm | <b>JUNE 22</b><br>PRESCHOOL STORYTIME<br>Theme - Chalk Art<br><i>Summer Wonders</i><br>by Bob Raczk<br>10:30 am                           | <b>JUNE 23</b><br>FAMILY PROGRAM<br>Decorate a Ceiling Tile for the Children's Wing (Day 2)<br>10:30 am - 12:30 pm |   | <b>JUNE 27</b><br>PRESCHOOL STORYTIME<br>Theme - Beach<br><i>Turtle and Snake's Day at the Beach</i><br>by Kate Spohn<br>10:30 am | <b>JUNE 28</b><br>FAMILY PROGRAM<br>CANINE COACHING WITH CHRIS - A Family Pet Training Program for those with (or thinking of getting) a dog.<br>10:30 am   | <b>JUNE 29</b><br>PRESCHOOL STORYTIME<br>Theme - Tugboats<br><i>I'm Mighty!</i><br>by Kate & Jim McMullan<br>10:30 am       | <b>JUNE 30</b><br>FAMILY PROGRAM<br>Learn about trees with members of the Long Beach Garden Club and make a family tree craft.<br>10:30 am |  |

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# Program sprinkled with librarian's love for reading, families

By Carole Kelly

Long Beach reading enthusiasts who met the much-publicized May 31 registration deadline are set to participate in a summer program specifically geared toward the entire family.

The Youth and Technology Services Specialist at the Long Beach Public Library, Renee Rayburn, has worked tirelessly to create a summer program that is not only exciting but family-friendly. Entitled "All Together Now," the month-long event features activities, special programs, movies and presentations of interest for the entire family.

A librarian for over twenty-seven years, Rayburn's love for reading and children is evident in books she has selected for preschool storytime during June and her desire to connect families through the library. Even though planning and orchestrating the summer reading program is quite a feat, Rayburn devotes the extra hours because of the children.

"It's the kids, just the kids, that keep me going. When they stop to show me all the books they want to check out, it's great. It's them; they are important. They [the children] have made it their library," she explained. Her love for reading and children is reflected by the books she selects for the younger patients during the summer reading program and how she collates activities into storytime.

When visiting the facility in Long Beach, it is evident that children and reading hold a special place in this librarian's heart. Much of the decorations in the children's wing, which was destroyed during Katrina, have been crafted by the youth who adopted that portion of the library as their own.

An inviting focal point is a brightly-colored theater, carefully painted by young volunteers. In the entryway is a homemade cabinet containing sci-fi books bought and donated by an avid teen reader. In addition, a room used by high school students is now adorned by painted bearcat paws. Young readers have been encouraged to claim that portion of the library as their own, and they have done it with incredible flair.

Summer program activities for families will include a coloring day, puzzle challenges, movies, and more, but standouts are the special programs designed for the month-long program. The schedule consists of a boat and water safety presentation by the Department of Marine Resources and a visit from the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies. Also on the

agenda is a session on family pet training and a visit from the Long Beach Garden Club.

• **Department of Marine Resources:** The legislature created the Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) as a new state agency in 1994 to manage Mississippi's coastal resources through the authority of the Commission on Marine Resources (CMR). The MDMR is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving the marine interests of Mississippi for present and future generations. Their presentation for library attendees in June will focus on staying safe in the water, whether swimming somewhere along the Gulf Coast or boating with their friends and families.

• **The Institute for Marine Mammals Studies:** A visit from the Institute for Marine Mammals Studies will instruct young and old attendees on mammal characteristics and their natural habitats. During the sessions, students will explore skills, fur, tracks, and more, explained Rayburn. The Institute for Marine Mammal Studies is a research organization in Gulfport, Mississippi, dedicated to education, conservation, and research on marine mammals in the wild and captivity.

• **Dog Trainer Christopher Lamy:** Lamy, who holds a law degree from LSU, worked as a dog trainer in Mandeville, Louisiana, for two years before opening Canine Coaching with Christ. An Air Force veteran, Lamy said, "I use my extensive dog-psychology knowledge, coupled with an extreme love for dogs and love of teaching." In his presentation at the Long Beach Library, Lamy will provide tips on dog training for participants with dogs or those considering purchasing or adopting a pet.

• **Long Beach Garden Club:** The local club will teach children and parents about trees and then instruct them on creating a tree-related craft.

See the "All Together Now" calendar for specific dates and times set for the many activities and presentations. Events are open only to those who registered before May 31.



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# DeFillips named new coach for LBHS boys soccer program

*Special to Long Beach Breeze*

Matthew DeFillips was recently named the new head coach of the Long Beach High School Bearcats boys' soccer team.

Long Beach School District (LBSD) Athletic Director Shane Rutledge says he is eager to work with DeFillips.

"We are excited to have someone with Coach DeFillips' experience and soccer acumen take over the boys' program. I look forward to its continued success under his leadership," Rutledge said.

DeFillips says he is honored to have been selected to lead the boys' program and looks forward to continuing their success.

"I'm excited for this incredible opportunity to serve in this community and school district that is so supportive of their soccer program," DeFillips said. "I'm very aware of the recent success that the boys have achieved and am hon-

ored to be entrusted with leading the boys' program into this new chapter. I look forward to adding to the great foundation that Coach Wilburn has built. My family can't wait to join the community and get started!"

Superintendent Dr. Talia Lock says she is excited to welcome DeFillips to the Bearcat family in Long Beach.

"Coach DeFillips brings with him a history of pushing his teams to be their best on the field and in the classroom. I look forward to watching our Bearcat boys' soccer program continue their championship legacy under his direction," Lock said.

DeFillips is a graduate of Delta State University, where he played soccer from 2010 to 2012 and served as the team manager from 2012 to 2014.

He comes to Long Beach from Cleveland Central High School, where he has served as head coach of the men's soccer program since 2017 and also the women's soccer program from 2019.



*Special to Long Beach Breeze*

Matthew DeFillips

# OBITUARY

## Mary Ann Sessions

Mrs. Mary Ann Sessions, 94, passed away on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, at St. Martin's in the Pines in Birmingham, Alabama. Funeral services were held at 3 p.m. on Sunday, May 21, at Porter Funeral Home, with Rev. Mike Dowd officiating. Visitation was Sunday from 2 p.m. until service time at the funeral home. Interment was held on Monday at Long Beach City Cemetery, in Long Beach, Mississippi. Porter Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Mary Ann was born June 24, 1928, in Winston County, Mississippi. She was a graduate of Lobutchka High School, East Central Community College, and the University of Southern Mississippi. She was a longtime resident of Long Beach, Mississippi, where she was a school teacher for many years at Long Beach High School. During her retirement years, she relocated to Winston County, Mississippi, and more recently to Birmingham, Alabama.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Austin Sessions; her parents, Clara Watts Tabor and William Earl Tabor, Sr.; her sisters, Ruth Kitchens, Becky Dorroh, Betty Lou Burchfield, and Doris Steed; a sister-in-law, Frances Tabor; and her brothers, Tuck Tabor and William E. "Bill" Tabor, Jr.

She is survived by her daughter, Beth (Walter) Sorensen of Trussville, Alabama; a son, Joe (Millie) Sessions of Pensacola, Florida; a brother, Larry Tabor of Starkville, Mississippi; four grandchildren, Lia Sorensen, Laina Sorensen, Bryan (Ariel) Wheeler-Sessions, and Mark Sessions; and two great grandchildren, Henry Wheeler-Sessions and Cooper Wheeler-Sessions. She is also survived by a large extended family with whom she was very close.

Memorials may be made to Rural Hill Methodist Church (Winston County, MS) or M. D. Anderson Hospital (Houston, TX).

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# Gal Pals feed Long Beach veterans



All photos Special to Long Beach Breeze

By Marilou D. Horton

While women's "Pop Up Groups" have emerged as a new way to meet friends, they aren't only that -- some host events around town to support local businesses and charities.

On Friday, May 5, a new group called Long Beach Gal Pals sponsored

meals for Equal Steps Veterans Home. According to group founder Jamie Taylor, the gals and Access Control Group owner Cliff King supplied meals for the veterans and raised over \$200 for Equal Steps.

"We had a food truck and lawn

to support Equal Steps Veterans Home. Veteran-owned 'Who Datz' food truck brought food to the event."

Admission was \$5, which provided meals for the veterans, and all proceeds went to the veteran's home. Over sixty-five guests attended the family-friendly event.

games," said Taylor. "The rain put a slight damper on things, but sure enough, our ladies and families came

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# LBHS Bearcat Band captures sweepstakes award

By Marilou D. Horton

Long Beach High School Director of Bands Zac Cannon recently shared several outstanding moments he had witnessed while overseeing the overall band program at the three Long Beach School District schools. There have been many highlights, Cannon said, but scoring the Sweepstakes Award this year ranks at the top.

“This was something that has not been achieved since 2017, and these students had worked so hard to earn this,” said Cannon. “The students had tears of joy and were beyond excited. Seeing the students this happy was remarkable.”

The Long Beach High School Band received All-Superior ratings at the marching, concert and sight reading competition. Also on the list of accolades was ranking seventh at the 2022 State Marching Championship.

Most recently, the band went on their first trip in over a decade. The destination was Disney World, and the group performed at the Magic Kingdom as the Premier Marching Band. Students leading the band were drum majors Payton Parsons, Noelle David and Aidan Drake. Cannon added that all his band members are incredibly hard-work-



Special to Long Beach Breeze

The Long Beach High School Band claimed the Sweepstakes Award this year, the band's first sweepstakes title since 2017.

ing students who stand out “in their own special ways.”

The musicians impress the director with solid work ethics and the

desire to improve daily.

“These students also love and enjoy music and making music,” Cannon said. He noted there are current-

ly several students in the band program at the high school who plan to major in music when they head off

cont. on page 14

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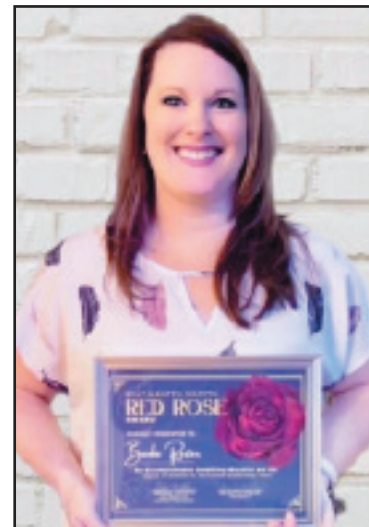
# Rester honored with Red Rose Award

*Special to Long Beach Breeze*

Brook Rester, co-owner of the Dolce Bakeshop, was recently presented with the Red Rose Award by the local Alpha Upsilon Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma (DKG). The Red Rose Award is presented annually to a female leader who resides or works in the chapter area and whose accomplishments benefit education and the status of women in education leadership roles. The award included a framed certificate and a symbolic red rose pin with gold details.

Chapter leadership says that Rester's contributions are many and definitely make a positive difference in her community. Rester enjoys hosting week-long baking camps for children, where she teaches basic kitchen safety and the science behind baking. She has a place in her bakery called "Gather," where she offers baking classes and also rents the space to others for photography, painting classes and various other teaching/learning opportunities.

In addition to being named one of the 100 Most Successful Women on



*Special to Long Beach Breeze*

Brooke Rester

the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Rester has been featured several times over the years in the *Gulf Coast Woman* magazine. Additional accolades include having her baked goods premiered in the Lifetime movie *Christmas in Mississippi* and also winning Gulf Coast Best Small Business of Long Beach for her recipes and input on topics such as choosing the perfect wedding cake.

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cont. from page 12

# LBHS Bearcat Band captures sweepstakes award

to college. "I know for sure we have one that is going to Mississippi State next year and will major in music education. She [Noelle David] was one of our drum majors this past year and is our first chair french horn player."

Band is vital for all secondary school programs, Cannon stressed. He said it teaches many disciplines that can be carried throughout life, such as teamwork, persevering through difficult situations and not allowing failure to deter one from progress.

"Band - and music in general - applies to all academics. It helps students to study and practice mathematics, science and history, as well as helping with language."

Taking his band to the Florida theme park was a special event for the high school director. His father, Jeff, was a band director for thirty-three years who remains active through judging, teaching and directing/managing the Mississippi Lions All-State Band.

"My first ever trip to Disney World was with the Pearl [High School] Band when I was about four years old, and I got to see my dad and his band do the Main Street USA Parade," recalls Cannon. "I also got to march in the parade twice as a student in the Pearl Band."

Participating in the parade in Disney World and retracing those steps taken with his father was a full-circle moment for Cannon, he said.

"I have been around band my entire life, and I grew up wanting to do what my dad did," said the younger Cannon.

Cannon is predominantly at the high school in Long Beach, but he, as well as the other band staff members, float to Harper McCaughan Elementary School for the sixth-grade band and instruct seventh- and eighth-grades classes at the middle school.

"I organize the marching band. I plan the camps, rehearsals, shows and competitions and communicate with the staff on plans and goals. I also oversee our symphonic band program and plan concerts."

It takes a village, or a team of educators, to create a successful band department. Those in the Long Beach School District, in addition to Cannon, include Assistant Director and color guard instructor Nathan Waycaster, Assistant Director/Middle School Director/Jazz Band Director Adrienne Cocco, visual instructor and choreographer Megan Bradberry, front ensemble instructor Holly Brown and drumline instructor Jalon Cooper.

Even with the achievement of numerous goals in 2023, Cannon says the Long Beach High School Band will proceed in their pursuit to be the best they can be.

"We hope to continue building our competitive marching band and strive for the Sweepstakes Award again. We also hope to bring back our indoor percussion ensemble next school year," Cannon concluded.

According to the Director of Bands, the programs at all three Long Beach schools aim to continue their march to success....without missing a beat.



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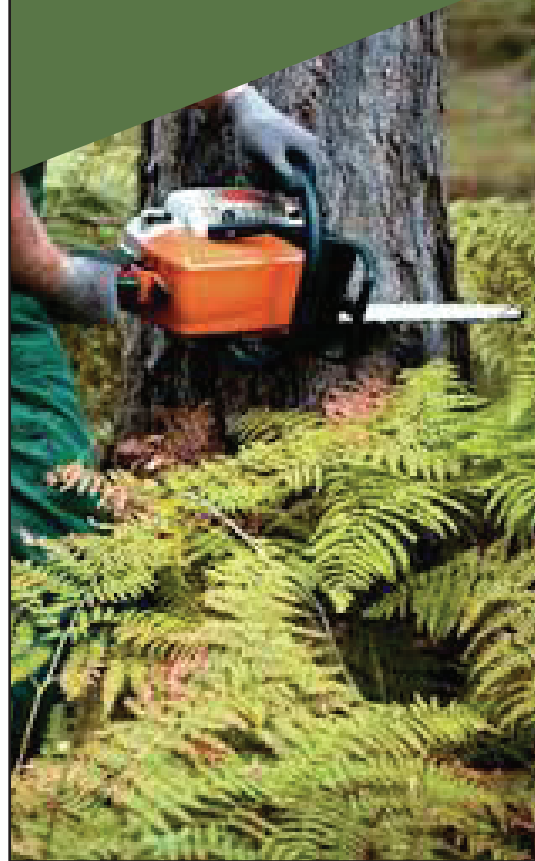
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# Safe Haven Baby Box bill signed into law

By Toni Miles

Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves signed several bills into law on April 24, including one (House Bill 1318) known as the Safe Haven Baby Box bill, legislation driven greatly in part by Caitlin Kelly, a South Mississippi nurse who has adopted and fostered children herself. Kelly was among dozens on hand for the signing ceremony held at the State Capitol in Jackson.

The legislation helps clear the way for Long Beach to install the state's first Safe Haven Baby Box (SHBB), which is used to provide a safe place for people to anonymously surrender newborns they are unable to care for. The box will be installed at Central Fire Station on Klondyke Road once funding is complete. This new legislation extends the length of time for newborns to be surrendered from just seven days to forty-five days without prosecution.

The local SHBB fundraising goal of \$20,000 has already been half-way met, and the baby box is expected to be installed and available for use by the end of this year.



Special to Long Beach Breeze

South Mississippian Caitlin Kelly (front row, third from right), a nurse who has adopted and fostered children herself was on hand as the Safe Haven Baby Box bill was signed into law.



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Governor Tate Reeves signed a number of bills into law on April 24 in Jackson, including the Safe Haven Baby Box legislation.

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# People from all walks of life join forces for Day of Prayer

By Toni Miles

A lot of prayers were going up throughout the entire nation on May 4, marking the 72nd annual observance of the National Day of Prayer, started in 1952 by a joint act of Congress, and South Mississippians from all walks of life, faiths, vocations and ages joined together for the City of Long Beach's National Day of Prayer observance at Long Beach City Hall.

"Pray Fervently in Righteousness, and Avail Much," a Biblical Scripture found in James 5:16, was this year's

theme, and there was a packed house at City Hall.

Local leaders and pastors from throughout South Mississippi led prayers for family and youth, churches, businesses and work places, education, the military, state and local police, fire and other first responders, arts, media and entertainment, and the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government.

This year's National Day of Prayer event in Long Beach was organized by Coordinator Brenda Rolison and fellow members of the area's National Day of Prayer group.

All photos by Toni Miles



Pastors from various faiths and churches throughout South Mississippi participated, and also led prayers, at Long Beach's National Day of Prayer.



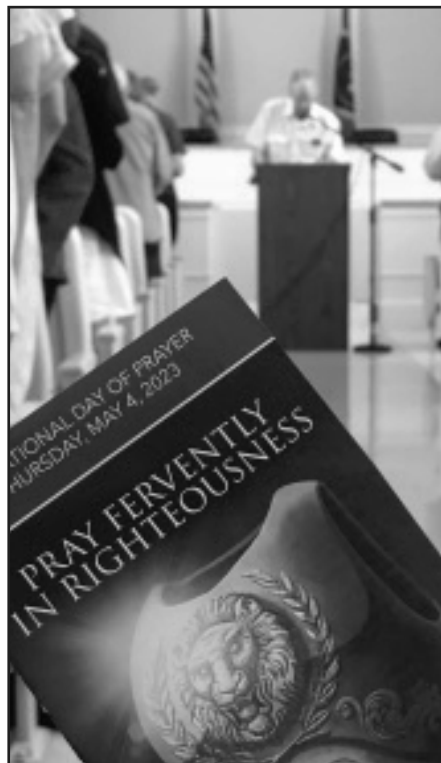
Local pastors and leaders from churches throughout the area led prayers for sectors such as military, arts, media and entertainment and education.



Long Beach Police Chief Billy Seal looks over the National Day of Prayer program at the prayer rally.



Local students were among those who gathered at City Hall for Long Beach's National Day of Prayer event on May 4.



The theme for this year's National Day of Prayer was "Pray Fervently in Righteousness, and Avail Much."



It was a packed house at Long Beach City Hall as residents, students, first responders, church members and local leaders gathered together to pray at event.





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## Local establishment holds inaugural pet adoption day



Toni Miles

Several dogs and puppies were adopted at an adoption day event held by the Humane Society of South Mississippi at Coastal Daiquiri Bar and Grill in Long Beach.

By Toni Miles

The overpopulation of animals, especially cats and dogs, is an ongoing problem year-round, but especially this time of year, according to the Humane Society of South Mississippi (HSSM). The non-profit operates daily to find forever homes for unwanted animals, and HSSM workers and volunteers venture outside their facility, located at 2615 25th Avenue in Gulfport, to hold special adoption events throughout the year in an effort to adopt out as many pets as possible.

One recent Saturday, Coastal Bar & Daiquiri, on Jeff Davis Avenue in Long Beach, served as host for one of the HSSM's adoption events. Several dogs and puppies found their forever homes at this inaugural adoption day event, the first of many planned at the Long Beach establishment.

A raffle with prizes helped raise money for the HSSM, and the adoption event was followed by live entertainment and drink specials at the popular bar and restaurant.

The HSSM held a similar event, Rescue Doggy Day Out, at Shaggy's locations in Pass Christian, Gulfport and Biloxi, on Saturday, May 20, where prospective pet parents had the chance to check out dogs on site, providing some with a forever home. Every dog from the HSSM at Shaggy's received a free item off their Good Dog Menu. Volunteer dog handlers were given a \$10 gift card to Shaggy's, and everyone who adopted a dog at the May 20 event received a \$25 gift card to Shaggy's.

Another on-site HSSM adoption event, Rock 'N Roll Over: Welcome to the Jungle, is scheduled for Thursday, August 17, from 6 to 10 p.m. at the Hard Rock Casino and Hotel in Biloxi.

To volunteer or adopt a pet from the Humane Society of South Mississippi, call HSSM at 228-863-3354. For information about upcoming events, follow HSSM on Facebook.

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## Coastal Living names Pass as 2023 Best Place to Live on the Coast

Special to The Pass Post

The Spring issue of *Coastal Living* has named Pass Christian on its list of Best Places to Live on the Coast for 2023. It is the first time a Mississippi Gulf Coast community has been named to the list.

Citing Pass Christian’s natural beauty, including “picket fences, historic cottages and moss-decked Spanish oaks,” the article calls “The Pass,” as it is lovingly known by locals, “a gleaming, sweet place with affordable real estate on offer to raise a family and embrace a true Gulf lifestyle of strolling, kayaking, crabbing, boating and birding; and, of course, pass the time on tidy gracious little porches.”

“To be named alongside coastal cities like Kiawah Island, South Carolina; Kihei, Hawaii; and Laguna Beach, California, is an incredible and well-deserved honor for Pass Christian,” said Judy Young, chief executive officer at Coastal Mississippi Convention and Visitor’s Bureau. “As a destination marketing organization, we firmly believe that tourism is the front door to economic development—especially for those looking to relocate or retire to a place with a temperate cli-



mate, excellent quality of life, and many attractions and amenities. We have all of that in Coastal Mississippi, and now even more people will know just how great the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and Pass Christian in particular, really [is].”

“Pass Christian is grateful to be selected as one of the Best Coastal Places to live in the U.S.,” added Pass Christian Mayor Jimmy Rafferty. “The Pass’ is a charming city with a picturesque harbor, award-winning charter fishing, and the oldest yacht club in the South.”

“Our city also boasts excellent restaurants, a premier school system, vibrant festivals (Art in the Pass, Jazz in the Pass, etc.), hospitality at its finest, and breathtaking views of the Gulf of Mexico,” said Rafferty.

Each year, Coastal Living names the Best Places to Live on the Coast. For 2023 the list includes (1) New Buffalo, Michigan; (2) Vero Beach, Florida; (3) Bandon, Oregon; (4) Pass Christian, Mississippi; (5) Ocracoke, North Carolina; (6) Laguna Beach, California; (7) Kiawah Island, South Carolina; (8) Apalachicola, Florida; (9) Bar Harbor, Maine; (10) Kihei, Hawaii; (11) Havre de Grace, Maryland; and (12) Barnstable, Massachusetts.

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# June 24 is annual Paddle the Bay with a 5K

*The Pass Post*

The Rotary Club of Pass Christian will hold Paddle the Bay with a 5K as its 2023 fundraiser on Saturday, June 24. The annual event, which serves as the club's only fundraiser for the year, will be held from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. at Henderson Point Park in Harrison County, at the base of the Bay Bridge. Last year's event raised over \$30,000.

After securing monetary sponsors, Paddle the Bay participants can paddle around Mallini Bayou or across the bay in kayaks, canoes or on paddleboards. There will be buoys and spotter boats along the route between Highway 90 and the railroad bridges, and participants can paddle at their leisure, launching from Henderson Point Park or the Henderson Point boat launch.

Kayaks, if needed, are available to be rented by contacting Everything Kayak at 228-865-1000.

For those who wish to stay on land, a 5K run is also an option. 5K registration begins at 7 a.m., and the run will start at 8 a.m.

The suggested minimum donation is \$50, and the top three participants with the most money donated will win the golden paddle, silver paddle or bronze paddle, as well as other prizes. The event is billed not as a race on the road or the water, but rather a race to raise the most money, so running or paddling is not required.

Event day will include food, beverages, music and a silent auction. All proceeds will benefit the community work of the Rotary Club of Pass Christian, which was founded in 1924 and, in addition to being one of the first two hundred Rotary Clubs in the world, is also the oldest service organization in Pass Christian.

To register or for more information, visit the club on Facebook, or call Paul Ellis at 228-343-1559 or Marshall Smith at 228-493-3305. Mail donations may be sent by check payable to The Rotary Charity Trust Fund at P.O. Box 143, Pass Christian, MS 39571.



*Special to The Pass Post*

# Author to speak on state's history from 1798-1840

*Special to The Pass Post*

The Pass Christian Historical Society will hold its monthly luncheon on Monday, June 26, at noon. The group will welcome author Mike Bunn, who will speak about Mississippi history from 1798-1840. His latest book, *Old Southwest to Old South: Mississippi, 1798-1840*, explains how Mississippi's early development shaped the state and continues to define it today.

Lunch will begin at noon, and the cost is \$12 for members and \$15 for non-members. Those who plan to attend are asked to make lunch reservations by 5 p.m. on Friday, June 23. Reservations and more information are available by calling 228-452-7254 or emailing [Reservations@PassHistory.org](mailto:Reservations@PassHistory.org).

The Historical Society is located at 201 East Scenic Drive in Pass Christian.

# Juneteenth brunch, celebration planned

*Special to The Pass Post*

The Juneteenth in the Pass committee has been hard at work organizing a day-long event in observance of Juneteenth.

The Emancipation Proclamation ended slavery in the Confederacy, but it wasn't applied nationally until two years later, on June 19, 1865. Today, the holiday is the most popular annual celebration of emancipation from slavery in the United States.

The celebration, set for Saturday, June 17, will begin with the "If Not You, Then Who" Brunch at 10 a.m. at the J. W. Randolph Center.

The brunch, with Leon Roberts as keynote speaker, will honor five community activists who serve in a voluntary capacity and work to achieve the common goal of unity and love for all. Activists honored will include Joseph Piernas, Sr., Eleanor Jones, Mary Bowser, Patrick

Walker, Sr., and Alva Singleton. Tickets for the brunch are \$35 per person.

At noon, the event will move outside for a free community June-



teenth celebration, complete with entertainment by DJ Mixx Maestro and food and craft vendors on site. The celebration will end at 5 p.m.

The J. W. Randolph Center is located at 315 Clark Avenue in Pass Christian. For more information, call 228-313-8033.

# Pedal in the Pass is June 8

*Special to The Pass Post*

June 8 will be the next Pedal in the Pass, a community bicycle dinner ride. Pedal in the Pass, a free event, takes place on the second Thursday of each month. Future ride dates include July 13, August 10, September 14 and October 12.

The activity is described as "an easy, no drop bicycle ride" through downtown Pass Christian, with riders invited to conclude the evening with an optional Dutch treat group dinner at one of the downtown restaurants.

All participants must have a bike and a helmet, and all ages are welcome. Those wishing to participate should near Scenic Drive in War Memorial Park in Pass Christian. Weather permitting, the ride begins at 6 p.m.

For more information, call 228-452-2453.

# Community Center to host summer camps

*Special to The Pass Post*

The Pass Christian Marsha Barbour Community Center will host several summer camp sessions, beginning in June.

Swim camp will be held from June 5 through June 9.

June 19 through June 23 will bring "Explore the Best You," a STEM camp for girls.

And karate camp will be held June 26 through June 30.

Limited spots are available for each camp. For more information or to register, call 228-263-0703.



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# 200-year-old historic oak leveled by developers on Earth Day

By Toni Miles

After months of heated debate, both inside and outside of Long Beach City Hall, on April 22, also Earth Day, developers moved forward with plans to remove a nearly 200-year-old oak tree perched downtown at the corner of 4th Street and Jeff Davis Avenue.

Many residents say they were shocked by the sudden removal of the historic tree, with roots older than even the existence of Long Beach as a city. As work got underway to remove the tree that Saturday morning, word spread quickly, drawing a crowd of dozens who watched with sadness, disbelief and anger over the tree's dismantling.

Some recorded the event. Others expressed shock over the fact it was even happening, considering the open discussions and outrage expressed in public and private forums over developers' plans to remove the aged tree, as well as another oak situated on the property, to make way for a boutique hotel. Most said that the fact that work was being completed by masked workers, who worked from unmarked vehicles at the site, on Earth Day was like rubbing salt in their wounds. Before the tree was cut down, thousands of people had signed a petition requesting the city to stop developers with Phenom Investments, LLC, from removing the trees.

According to a post on the City of Long Beach's Facebook page, the Planning and Development Commission gave conditional approval to remove the tree in December of 2022, pending submission of site plans from the property developers. According to the City, the Community Development Committee approved submitted plans for the hotel development on April 19, and two days later, on Friday, April 21, a permit was issued for the developer to remove the tree after all fees were paid that day. The next day, April 22, the oak tree was cut down.

All photos by Toni Miles



A masked worker begins the task of dismantling, and ultimately, removing a nearly 200-year-old historic oak tree at the corner of 4th Street and Jeff Davis Avenue on April 22.



Once word got out that the historic oak tree was being removed, people took to the streets, some even in protest and holding Earth Day signs.



It took several hours to dismantle and remove the old oak tree.



Caution tape sectioned off the site of the tree removal at the corner of 4th Street and Jeff Davis Avenue on April 22.



Residents look on in shock as crews dismantle the aged oak tree.



Crews cut the tree down on Earth Day, April 22.



A stump was all that was left of the nearly 200-year-old oak tree once crews were done with their work on April 22.

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# “SHARE THE SHORE” THIS SPRING AND SUMMER

Audubon Mississippi staff recently found the first Least Tern nest of the year, and they expect colonies will grow quickly and new sites will develop. Beachgoers are reminded to “Share the Shore,” be careful where they walk on the beach, and avoid entering areas where pink flags marked “Protected Bird Area” are displayed. For more information about the area’s Audubon organization, visit [Delta.Audubon.org](http://Delta.Audubon.org).



Photos Special to Long Beach Breeze

# Gulf Coast Library honors long-time employees

By Toni Miles

Allisa Beck and Saidul Hassan were recently honored for their service to the University of Southern Mississippi’s Gulf Coast Library. Beck, who serves as the Arts and Humanities and Collection Management Librarian, was recognized for four decades of service. Hassan, who serves as the Library Technology Specialist, was honored for twenty years of service.

All photos Special to Long Beach Breeze



Allisa Beck (center) was recognized for forty years of service to the USM Gulf Coast Library.



Saidul Hassan (right) was recognized for twenty years of service to the USM Gulf Coast Library.

**Community encouraged to learn more about foster care during National Foster Care Month**

By Guest Columnist Kelsey Neeley

National Foster Care Month is an initiative of the U.S. Children’s Bureau that seeks to increase national awareness of foster care issues. Southern Christian Services is joining in the effort to raise awareness for this year’s theme, “Strengthening Minds. Uplifting Families.”



According to the Children’s Bureau, there are more than 390,000 children and youth in the foster care system nationwide. Eighty percent of those children and youth are experiencing significant mental health issues. This is four times higher than children in the general population.

There are two primary contributing factors to the development of a child’s mental health. The first is biology. A large majority of children served in the child welfare system are predisposed to mental health challenges at birth solely based on genetics being passed down to them from their biological family. The second contributing factor is environment. Children who enter the foster care system have been exposed to a wide range of adverse experiences, such as substance abuse, deplorable living environments and abuse by the hands of those tasked with caring for them. Studies conducted by the CDC show that ad-

verse childhood experiences increase the likelihood of a child developing long-term emotional, physical and behavioral health issues as they age.

While the odds seem stacked against our children, there is hope for healing. Research shows that the brain of a traumatized child can be healed through positive experiences. It is through repeated positive, safe and loving experiences created in connected relationships that a traumatized child can truly heal from the adversity they have experienced. Despite the hope offered for healing,

mental and behavioral health continue to be one of largest unmet health needs for children and youth in the foster care system today.

Considering these facts, Southern Christian Services is committed to meeting those needs by providing safe places for our Mississippi foster children. One way we do this is through our therapeutic foster care program. This program utilizes a community-based and trauma-informed approach to caring for children and youth with mental, emotional and behavioral challenges in the least re-

strictive environment possible. The program incorporates a “team” approach by directly engaging the therapeutic foster parents and foster children in the healing process.

It is critical for everyone’s voice to be heard and valued in this process. By working alongside our therapeutic foster parents, we are able to provide our parents with practical tools and insights to help our Mississippi foster children reach their fullest potential and heal from the trauma they have experienced.

In addition to providing targeted support to our foster parents, we also ensure every child has access to qualified mental health therapists who specialize in treating trauma.

As an agency, we envision a community where every child has a safe place to call home and the opportunity to thrive. You can help give our Mississippi foster children that opportunity by becoming a licensed therapeutic foster parent.

To learn more about how you can change a Mississippi child’s life forever, please visit our website at [www.SCSCY.org/TherapeuticFosterCare](http://www.SCSCY.org/TherapeuticFosterCare), or call 601-354-0983.

*EDITOR’S NOTE: Kelsey Neeley is a licensed master social worker who serves as division director of therapeutic foster care and adoption for Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth, Inc.*

# Summer day camps offered at Marine Education Center

Long Beach Breeze

The The University of Southern Mississippi's Marine Education Center has opened registration for their 2023 summer camps, which include Sea Camp, Shaggy's Angler Camp, Sharkheads Shark Fest, Island Adventure Camp, and Ocean Science and Technology Camp. The STEM-rich day camps will offer children who are interested in science and love being outdoors hands-on, immersive learning activities in a unique coastal setting.

Various outdoor activities, such as working aboard a research vessel, beach walking, kayaking, fishing and trail hiking, will be offered.

Week-long camps, available for grades one through twelve, will begin June 5 and

will continue through July 14. Prices range from \$300 to \$450 per camper. Transportation to and from camp and meals are not provided. For a schedule of camp offering dates, ages, and prices, visit [UMC.edu/MEC](http://UMC.edu/MEC).

Scholarships are available for applicants who meet the eligibility requirement of underserved and underrepresented ethnicities and/or financial need. Scholarship candidates will be selected based on the criteria listed on the scholarship form, and there will be a limit on how many times a scholarship may be awarded to an eligible camper. One camper can only receive one scholarship per summer for a one-week camp experience; first time campers are given priority over all returning campers. Scholarship applications must be received by May 1.

For more information, visit [www.USM.edu/MEC](http://www.USM.edu/MEC), or call 228-818-8095.



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# Troop 321 finishes fire pit project for church

*Troop 321, a High Adventure Boy Scouts of America Troop from Long Beach, recently broke in a new fire pit they built as a request from First United Methodist Church of Long Beach. The fire pit, an Eagle Scout project, is built at an angle lining up with the main doors leading into the narthex of the church, using the same pattern of the doors. Troop 321, which was formed in 2018 with a focus on high adventure and working with younger scouts in local camps, meets on Tuesdays from 6:30 until 8 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, located at 208 Pine Street. For more information about Troop 321, contact Scoutmaster Tommy Carroll at 228-547-3237.*

