

CES celebrates more than \$1 million in renovations

By Toni Miles

Thanksgiving hadn't even arrived yet, but hundreds of students, families, faculty, administrators and board directors offered up thanks as Coast Episcopal School (CES) celebrated and dedicated campus renovations at a November 17 ribbon cutting at the school.

"The improvements you see today encompass forty years of repair work, completed in just two months this past summer," said Head of School Jake Winter before a ribbon cutting celebrating the completion of the first phase of a \$2.5 million capital campaign launched in fall of 2022.

Renovations to the fifty-year-old elementary school building include new electrical and HVAC systems, ceilings and flooring, and a restroom and water fountain located adjacent to the school's playground.



Toni Miles



Toni Miles

The Rt. Rev. Brian Seage knocks on the door to begin CES's blessings on classrooms and new offices at the ribbon cutting and campus renovations dedication.

The first phase of the renovations also improves security at the Long Beach school, with campus safety upgrades such as reconfiguration of the front office, additional security cameras and monitors and a new phone system that connects all seven buildings on the twenty-five acre campus.

The \$1,054,837 cost of the first phase of the \$2.5 million capital campaign project was covered by almost \$1 million of cash and in-kind donations that came from nearly one-hundred CES families, friends and suppliers, including Watters Architecture and Crane Builders.

"The generous support of CES friends and family has been even greater than we hoped," says Capital Campaign Manager Evelina Burnett, who coordinated the fundraising activities that financed the campus en-

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Three-time state champs soccer celebrated with ring ceremony at LBHS

By Toni Miles

What better way to celebrate a ring ceremony for the Long Beach High School (LBHS) three-time state champion Bearcat Boys Soccer Team than to spread the love of the game?

That's just what happened at the LBHS gym, as members of the three-time state champion Long Beach Bearcat Soccer Team were presented with their State Championship rings in late November.

"We're celebrating our 2022-2023 boys soccer team that won the state championship," said Long Beach School District (LBSD) Athletic Director Shane Rutledge. "Their rings have taken a little while to get in, but they are getting them today."

Members of the 2022-2023 LBHS Bearcat boys soccer team walked on stage and were presented with their championship rings.



Toni Miles

Members of the 2022-2023 Bearcat boys soccer team with LBSD Athletic Director Shane Rutledge

"We're going to win some, and we're going to lose some; but one thing we can say without a doubt is our kids are going to come out if it as better people after going through high school athletics. That's our mission," Rutledge said.

That mission was further underscored by a donation of seventy-five soccer balls to LBSD by the Coast Trash Football Club (CTFC). Kevin Smith is a member of CTFC and also a 2013 LBHS graduate and former Bearcat soccer player who was among



Toni Miles

A member of the 2022-2023 LBHS Bearcat boys soccer team walks on stage to get his State Championship ring.

the group on hand at the ceremony to announce the soccer ball donation.

"We have had the adult league team down here," Smith says. "We want soccer to keep growing. We have three coaches on our team and three

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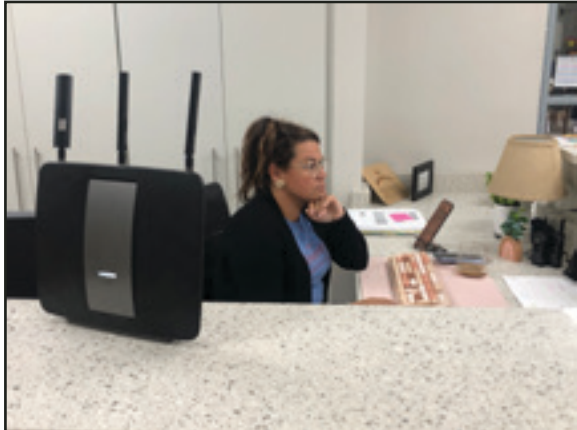
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CES celebrates more than \$1 million in renovations



Toni Miles

The first phase of CES's \$2.5 million capital campaign is complete and includes campus safety upgrades such as reconfiguration of the front office, additional security cameras and monitors, and a new phone system.



Toni Miles



Toni Miles

CES Head Master Jake Winter snips the ribbon.

hancements. "This speaks to the vitality of our school, and, more importantly, to their commitment to our students. We are excited by the support of our community for these efforts to improve CES for future generations."

CES was founded in 1950 and has a mission that is dedicated to a life-long love of learning by developing the whole child-mind, body and spirit, and providing a joyful, unique and nurturing Judeo-Christian community that inspires its students to image and create a better world.

On the day of the ribbon cutting, the entire school celebrated all the much-needed improvements to the campus.

"The completed work we're dedicating today is just the beginning, and we are looking forward to sharing our vision and plans with even more CES friends and family over the coming months," Burnett said. "The \$2.5 million, three-year plan will result in a contemporary and cohesive look using unifying elements on the exteriors of the main building, Gail Keenan Art Center and Seemann Makerspace. Windows throughout the campus buildings will be replaced. The Toddler Town (serving eighteen-months to three-year-olds) and Preschool buildings (serving three- and four-year-olds) will have revamped parking, including ADA spaces, and new landscaping and wayfinding signage will be added around the campus grounds."

"The Coast Episcopal School Board has been excited to support the much-needed renovations to the existing elementary school building," said CES Board President Casey Maugh Funderburk. "As the first of many exciting changes coming to CES, this initial phase of the capital campaign marks an important milestone for the growth and development of our children and the school. As our fundraising efforts continue, we hope the community will continue to support our growth as we move toward exciting new additions to the CES footprint."

"The main building has been largely untouched for decades, and the Board and Administration made a bold decision to invest in the existing infrastructure," said Leah Watters, principal architect. "We believe that these renovations provide a clean backdrop to the academic discoveries that happen within the walls of CES."

The dedication and celebration opened with a prayer, followed by a welcome and dedication from Head of School Jake Winter, who commended all those in the community who have pitched in to make the project and renovations possible, including Crane Builders of Waveland, who served as the general contractor for the project's first phase.

"Crane Builders was honored to have the opportunity to be part of the capital improvements at CES," said Project Manager Chris Hansen. "Our own children have started their school careers here, and we couldn't be happier that they will be able to take advantage of the facelifts Watters Architecture has designed for the school, and that today's administration and Board of Directors are moving forward with additional projects."

After the ribbon cutting, the Rt. Rev. Brian Seage knocked on the door to begin the blessings on the school's classrooms and new offices. The celebration concluded with the Thanksgiving Holy Eucharist.



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About 200 students, family members, friends, faculty, administrators and board directors gathered for the celebration.



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Third annual Jeep-a-Gras rolling into Long Beach January 12 and 13

By Toni Miles

The third annual Jeep-a-Gras, hosted by the Carnival Association of Long Beach, is just around the corner, set to take place January 12 and 13 in the Friendly City.

The weekend includes several events, beginning with Jeep-a-Greet, which is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Friday, January 12. That will be followed by a parade on Saturday, January 13, at 6 p.m. and then a 9 p.m. Jeep-A-Gras event afterwards.

Jeps participating in the parade will line up at Long Beach High School beginning at 2 p.m. on January 13 and will roll through downtown Long Beach at 6 p.m.

Registration for Jeepers who want to sign up to be a part of the parade can be completed online by visiting the Jeep-a-Gras 2024 Facebook page or in person at the Jeep-a-Greet on Friday, January 12, from 6 to 8 p.m. Proof of insurance must be submitted in order to participate in the parade procession.

Last year, one hundred thirty-seven Jeepers rolled down the Long Beach parade route, with Jeepers driving to South Mississippi from states as far as Florida and Iowa.

The parade is free, and everyone is invited to line the parade route on January 13 and enjoy the festivities.



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The Jeep-a-Gras parade is scheduled for Saturday, January 13, at 6 p.m.

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cont. from front page

Three-time state champs soccer celebrated with ring ceremony at LBHS

referees, so we have soccer on all levels on our team. We really wanted to give back to the youth. We want it to grow, so we decided to get a soccer ball for each classroom, not only the



Toni Miles



Toni Miles



Toni Miles

Long Beach School District, but we have other school districts that we also plan on giving to; so we bought a total of one hundred fifty soccer balls to spread out along the coast.”

“In our first golf tournament, we raised a lot of money, and it was more

than what we were needing at this moment, so we decided we wanted to give back to the kids,” said CTFC member Andrew Sessums. “I’ve always had a heart for the kids. I’ve worked for years with the Boys and Girls Club, so it’s something I’m pas-

sionate about.”

“We’re excited to be able to have the opportunity to show how athletics comes full circle for a community through teamwork, and the sense of community that you learn in high school athletics and how it pays off for years to come for everybody that it touches,” Rutledge said.



Toni Miles

Coast Trash Football Club members Kevin Smith and Andrew Sessums



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Homeschool Honor Society installs officers, adds members

Special to Long Beach Breeze

The 2023-2024 Zeta Pi Chapter of the Eta Sigma Alpha National Home School Honor Society recently held a ceremony of induction and installation of officers.

Three new members who met the criteria of scholarship, character, leadership and service participated in the induction ceremony: Emma Davis, Alyssa Frost and Hannah Yarborough.

In addition to inducting new members, returning members Samantha Diard of Pass Christian, Alexis Dillman of Long Beach and Stephen Dillman of Long Beach were recognized, along with returning members Apollo Stafford and Drew Tiedt. Stephen Dillman was installed as president, and Diard was installed as communications officer. Tiedt was named vice president, and Stafford was selected as secretary/treasurer.

Membership in the Eta Sigma Alpha National Home School Honor Society is an opportunity for home school scholars to



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Pictured (l to r) are Samantha Diard of Pass Christian; Alexis Dillman of Long Beach; Alyssa Frost of Hattiesburg; Hannah Yarborough of Wilmer, Alabama; Apollo Stafford of Saucier and Stephen Dillman of Long Beach.

be rewarded for their academic successes. To be eligible for membership consideration, students must be homeschooled, have a 3.5 grade point average, provide proof of test scores from approved standardized achievement tests, and submit a written personal statement explaining why the applicant wants to be a


member, as well as letters of recommendation.

Zeta Pi members must complete a minimum of ten service hours per year to remain active in the chapter. Each year, the chapter sponsors several service projects for the community, which, in the last few years, have included assisting with the

installation of holiday displays and Mardi Gras route clean-up activities.

“We are very proud to recognize these outstanding members of our home school community,” said Joanna Dillman, who serves as chapter sponsor, along with Wendy Tiedt. “Eta Sigma Alpha National Home School Honor Society Zeta Pi Chapter members are chosen for and then expected to continue their exemplary contributions to their education and community.”

Eta Sigma Alpha is the first honor society established exclusively for homeschooled students in grades nine through twelve. It was founded in 1999 by Joanne E. Juren, M.Ed., Executive Director of the Home Education Partnership of Texas, Inc., and it has grown into a national organization. The Zeta Pi Chapter has been active since 2015, serving the Mississippi Gulf Coast region with the purpose of providing learners with opportunities for leadership, service, networking and socialization for homeschooled students.



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Bearcat cheerleaders bring home first place win



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The Long Beach High School Bearcat cheerleaders recently competed at the Baton Rouge Regional. The team won first place in the small varsity division.

Celebrate the Gulf art contests open for entries

Special to Long Beach Breeze

The Celebrate the Gulf Marine Education Festival, which is held the first Saturday in April in Memorial Park in Pass Christian, is holding their annual poster contest and children's art contest.

The festival, which was established in 1991 to teach residents and visitors about the importance of the Gulf of Mexico, will feature several dozen exhibitors with information about everything from upland habitats and wildlife to the recreational and commercial services that the Gulf of Mexico provides.

All artists, both amateur and professional, are invited to submit an original poster design that depicts the conservation, recreation, or the scenic qualities of Mississippi's coastal resources. The winning artist will be awarded \$250 and ten posters. The artwork chosen will be printed as the official festival poster, and the artist will sign the posters the day of the festival. Additionally, the artwork may be used as the artwork for the festival t-shirt.

The children's art contest is open to all children in kindergarten through eighth grade. Children are asked to submit an original design that depicts the conservation, recreation, or the scenic qualities of Mississippi's coastal resources. Art submissions will be judged according to grade of artist; and the winning artwork will be featured at the festival. Awards will be given out at the festival to the winning artists.

Poster contest entries must be submitted by January 10 at 5 p.m. Children's art entries must be submitted by March 6 at noon.

For more information and entry forms, visit: www.GrandBayNERR.org/Celebrate-The-Gulf.



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Long Beach native continues a 123-year tradition of service under the sea

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Submariners make up only ten percent of the U.S. Navy's personnel, but they play a critical role in carrying out one of the Defense Department's most important missions: strategic deterrence. Petty Officer 1st Class Alex Arnold, a native of Long Beach, is one of the sailors continuing a 123-year tradition of service under the sea to help ensure Americans' safety.

Arnold joined the Navy over thirteen years ago and today serves as an electronics technician (nuclear) aboard USS Alaska.

"I wanted to pay for college and gain marketable skills for future employment," said Arnold.

Growing up in Long Beach, Arnold attended Long Beach High School and graduated in 2008.

Skills and values similar to those found in Long Beach are similar to those required to succeed in the military.

"I have learned from my hometown to make friends wherever you go," said Arnold. "Personnel are our greatest untapped resource."

These lessons have helped Arnold while serving in the Navy.

Known as America's "Apex Predators!," the Navy's submarine force operates a large fleet of technically-advanced vessels. These submarines are capable of conducting rapid defensive and offensive operations around the world, in furtherance of U.S. national security.

"Our mission remains timeless - to provide our fellow citizens with nothing less than the very best Navy: fully combat ready at all times, focused on warfighting excellence, and committed to superior leadership at every single level," said Adm. Mike Gilday, Chief of Naval Operations. "This is our calling, and I cannot imagine a calling more worthy."



Special to Long Beach Breeze
Petty Officer 1st Class Alex Arnold

Strategic deterrence is the Nation's ultimate insurance program, according to Navy officials. As a member of the submarine force, Arnold is part of a rich history of the U.S. Navy's most versatile weapons platform, capable of taking the fight to the enemy

in the defense of America and its allies. "The Navy's submarine force provides strategic deterrence and intelligence gathering capabilities," said Arnold.

With ninety percent of global commerce traveling by sea and access to the internet relying on the security of undersea fiber optic cables, Navy officials continue to emphasize that the prosperity of the United States is directly linked to trained sailors and a strong Navy.

"Serving in the Navy has allowed me to meet a wide variety of people and form bonds that will last a lifetime," said Arnold.

Arnold said he is grateful to others for helping make a Navy career possible.

"I'd like to thank my wife for supporting me through this tough career," added Arnold. "Realistically, I would not have made it through my first sea command without her love and support."

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Coast Episcopal School students learn about owls

Special to Long Beach Breeze

The first graders at Coast Episcopal School (CES), along with their teacher, Dody Bennett, recently had the opportunity to see owls from representatives of Whisper of Hope, a non-releasable wildlife rescue and sanctuary in Gulfport.

Executive Director Jamie Pope brought several owls for the students to observe. Pope started rehabbing in 2013 and, once she began rehabbing birds of prey, she fell in love with the owls.

"I've had training under two different rescue groups and a falconer, and I've taken courses through places like Cornell Lab of Ornithology," said Pope. "The rehab world and the learning world are always changing. Science and research changes constantly, so what we 'know' as true one year may change the next. I am by no means an expert, but I try to always learn, so I can share my love with others."

Pope's goal for Whisper of Hope is to enhance its education outreach, and this year marks the fifth time she's shared her knowledge with CES first graders. The organization also visits civic groups and festivals and welcomes all invitations to educate groups along the Mississippi Coast. Whisper of Hope plans raise funds necessary to purchase land and build an educational facility.

"Education is key for survival for so many species," said Pope. "An educa-

tional facility will help us continue to teach for years to come."

Two other Whisper of Hope representatives, Becky and Jessie Evans, a mother-daughter duo who rescue, rehab and provide educational programs for bats, joined Pope. Jessie helped with the first-grade owl lessons, while her mother, Becky, spoke with CES second graders about her passion, bats.

"Ever since I was a kid, I have found bats to be cool," said Becky. "I've been working with them since 2014. I've trained and worked in California with microbats and in Queensland, Australia, with flying foxes and microbats. My love for them - along with knowing that bat rehabbers make a difference - is what drives me."

First graders also had the opportunity to investigate the pellets that owls produce. The nuggets of undigested bones, teeth, fur and more are regurgitated by owls to protect their digestive systems. The pellets provide hands-on learning about the food chain, animal anatomy and principles of ecology. Each student was allowed to dissect a pellet, an activity that was coordinated by two retired teachers, Cindy Groves and Denise Brown.

"After Ms. Groves gave a short lesson on what owls are and what contents the students should look for when dissecting, the class spent about an hour going through the pellets and matching



Special to Long Beach Breeze

CES Students gained owl wisdom from Jamie Pope, executive director of Gulfport's Whisper of Hope non-releasable wildlife rescue and sanctuary.



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Retired teachers Cindy Groves and Denise Brown provided CES first graders with insights about the mysteries that can be uncovered by dissecting owl pellets.



Special to Long Beach Breeze

First grader Quinn Long was very focused on dissecting an owl pellet to discover the secrets it contained.



Special to Long Beach Breeze

The owls who visited CES are rescues who live at Whisper of Hope in Gulfport and participate in off-site educational sessions designed to ensure species survival.

the bones to charts to see what the owls had eaten," said Bennett. "Many found mice skulls and jaws, bird bones and

lots of fur."

For more information about CES, call 228-452-9442.

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Harper McCaughan Beta students team up for world-wide special delivery

By Toni Miles

Needy children throughout the world will soon be on the receiving end of a special delivery, thanks to Harper McCaughan Elementary Beta Club students, teachers and Samaritans Purse, who teamed up for Operation Christmas Child ahead of the holiday season.

In all, Beta students stuffed one hundred fifty gift boxes with more than two thousand donations they collected, ranging from stuffed animals to school supplies, all to be distributed to young people, ages two to fourteen, throughout the world.

“The students love it,” said teacher Lucy Pribyl. “That is what Beta Club does. Our motto is ‘Let us lead by serving others,’ so this is what we’re teaching and why I love Beta Club, because it teaches the students through all the activities we do about helping other people.”

It was all-hands-on-deck for the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students as they worked together for the special delivery.



Toni Miles



Toni Miles

Stuffing the gift boxes was a team effort at Harper McCaughan Elementary School.



Toni Miles

Harper McCaughan students placed donations ranging from stuffed animals to notebooks in gift boxes.



Toni Miles

Doug Bradford, Samaritan's Purse Gulf Coast Area Coordinator, sorts through Christmas boxes that students packed with goodies for needy children throughout the world.



Toni Miles



Toni Miles

Students stayed after class to pack the boxes for Operation Christmas Child.



Toni Miles

A teacher gives instructions to Beta Club students as they prepare to fill gift boxes with more than 2,000 collected donations.

“It’s going to more than a hundred countries,” says Samaritan’s Purse Gulf Coast Area Coordinator Doug Bradford. “We have 75,000 events already scheduled where these boxes will be delivered. Every day, 2,800 children will receive one of these boxes. So far, in thirty years, we have collected over two hundred million boxes.”

There were plenty of smiles to go around as the students got into the holiday spirit and got a hands-on lesson about the gift of giving.

“We have been collecting items for Operation Christmas Child for the last week,” said Pribyl.

“We’ve [also] collected cans for Feed My Sheep this year.”

Teachers say they hope charitable events like these the students participate in will parlay into life-long lessons on the gift of giving.



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Library programs, closures for January

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With the new year, the Long Beach Library is looking to get some new technology. The facility will be closed to the public on January 22-24 in order to have new cabling and technology installed throughout the facility. For the remainder of the week, library staff is hopeful that the cable installers will be able to work around the library being open and patrons being able to visit.

The library will also be closed on January 1 for New Years Day, as well as on January 15 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Young patrons are invited to start the year exploring some new stories at Preschool Story Time, which will be offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays, except for January 23.

Library staff say they would like to thank everyone who donated items for their recent Silent Auction and all of the Friends of the Library who made the auction happen. They say they are very grateful to all who purchased items and helped out the library, as well as for Sully Wilson for performing during the event.

The Long Beach Public Library is located at 209 Jeff Davis Avenue. For more information about the library, call 228-863-0711, or visit the library online at www.LongBeach.lib.ms.us.



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Brooks named self-advocacy coordinator for USM IDS

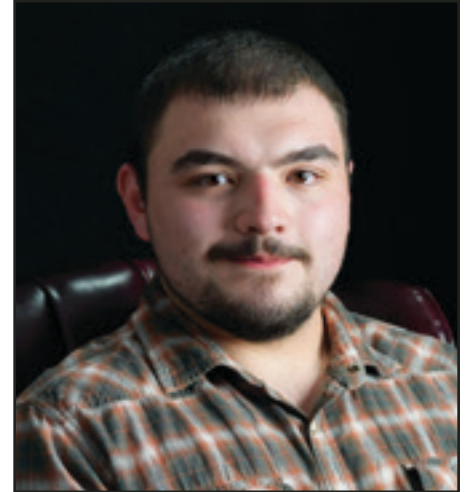
Special to Long Beach Breeze

Gunner Brooks has been named self-advocacy coordinator at The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) Gulf Coast offices. He is the second employee to serve in this role at IDS and the first on the coastal campus. This position highlights IDS' commitment to promoting self-advocacy in Mississippi with a focus on youth and young adults.

"IDS has a long-standing history of promoting the development of Mississippi self-advocates, especially youth and young adults," said Dr. Jerry R. Alliston, associate director. "With the expansion of our transition to adulthood focused programs on the coast, it was evident that a self-advocacy coordinator was needed. Gunner is very deserving of this new role, and it has been inspiring to see his professional and personal growth into a leader."

Brook's first connection with IDS was through the Transition of Teens to Adult Life (ToTAL) Program, as he received pre-employment training. He then became active with the coastal STEP UP to Leadership Council, was the president from 2022-2023 and became a TRIAD AmeriCorps member, IDS' inclusive national service program. In August 2023, he just completed a year of service as a full-time member with TRIAD and assisted in providing health education to youth and young adults with disabilities and community service to meet needs.

It was during Brooks' time in leadership positions at IDS that he truly found his voice, began to work on his



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Gunner Brooks

professional development and decided to pursue further education.

He has spoken to numerous classes in middle and high schools, served on a HEART Disability Awareness Panel to celebrate Developmental Disabilities Month 2023 and was appointed by Governor Tate Reeves to serve on the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities in early 2023.

Through his role as self-advocacy coordinator, Brooks will be able to represent self-advocates and educate his peers on the ever-growing transition to adulthood opportunities in Mississippi. He will continue serving on the STEP UP Council and the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities.

IDS provides pre-service training, community services and technical assistance programs for individuals with disabilities of all ages and their families. For more information, visit www.usm.edu/ids.

Bartman joins Phi Kappa Phi

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Zane Bartman of Long Beach, who is majoring in accountancy at the University of Mississippi, is among the more than one hundred ninety Ole Miss students who were recently welcomed into the Phi Kappa Phi honor society, one of the nation's oldest and most prestigious honor societies for all academic disciplines.

"Phi Kappa Phi is an all-discipline honor society," said Annette S. Kluck, Phi Kappa Phi chapter president and dean of the Graduate School. "Membership is by invitation only and is highly selective. Thus, the students invited to join our chapter are the top in their class."

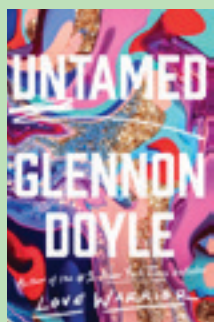
"Membership signifies a student who passionately pursues academic excellence," said Kluck. "The ceremony is a wonderful opportunity for us to recognize these outstanding students."

Phi Kappa Phi membership is based on a student's character and academic standing. Juniors must have completed seventy-two credit hours and rank in the top 7.5% of their class, while seniors and graduate students must rank in the top ten percent of their class.

New year, new books, new you

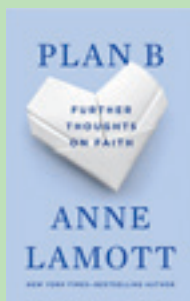
By Guest Columnist Taylor McKay Hathorn

We all make New Year's Resolutions: the gym, healthier eating, working less. However, all of our biggest changes start from within - by changing how we think, we slowly become more able to make those changes that affect how we behave. These books can help you change your mindset, get you out of a rut, or just plain motivate you to finally motivate yourself to keep those resolutions.



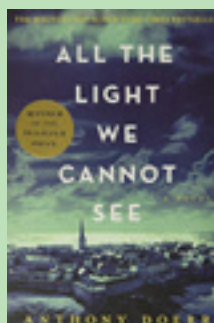
- **Untamed by Glennon Doyle:** A trip to the zoo led famous “mommy-blogger” Glennon Doyle to write this fiery memoir, inspired by her horror at watching a majestic cheetah stalk an enclosure for which it was far too large. Untamed is Melton’s raw challenge to herself and her readers to find the places in their life that reduce them and to “untame” themselves out of stagnant marriages, unhelpful thought patterns, and the female desire to shrink to fit societal expectations.

- **Plan B by Anne Lamott:** So many of us end up on our “Plan B” for our lives (or plan C, D, E...), and Lamott’s faith-based memoir recounts the way the author dealt with her own carefully-laid plans having gone awry, as she copes with a terminally-ill friend, single motherhood, and addiction recovery. Lamott’s advice is practical and down-to-earth, and she adds levity to the gravity of her topics with humor and a keen eye for observing the underside of life.



- **Feed These People by Jen Hatmaker:** If your goal is to spend more time in the kitchen in the new year, then Jen Hatmaker’s new cookbook is the perfect addition to your reading repertoire. Hatmaker, a devoted Texan, fills her cookbook with “food for real people,” as her recipes call for ingredients all Mississippians are sure to have on hand: hot sauce, ranch dressing, gravies of every variety. Her funny, down-to-earth instructions make her recipes approachable for any cook, whether novice or expert.

- **Learning to Walk in the Dark by Barbara Brown Taylor:** When Barbara Brown Taylor, a lapsed Episcopal priest, began to struggle with feelings of darkness and loneliness, she began taking very literal “walks in the dark” to learn more about the nature of physical darkness: she ventured into caves and into forests around her home, seeking the connection between the darkness she felt within and the darkness that was an inevitable part of the natural world, guiding herself (and her readers) into the discovery of the unquenchable light within.



- **All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr:** If you always wanted to read more but need a book to remind you how much fun picking up a novel can be, Doerr’s double-narrative about a French girl living in Nazi-occupied Paris and a German boy living as an orphan in a mining town is poignant, elegantly written, and will keep you reading until the very last page - and you can reward yourself by watching the TV adaptation that’s available on Netflix!

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USM Gulf Park Health Center donates toys

Special to Long Beach Breeze

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) Gulf Park Health Center (GPHC) had its donation box overflowing with gifts for children in need during the recent holiday season with its second annual Stuff the Truck with Toys for Tots event.

Jennifer Larson, office manager of the GPHC, said she was thrilled to see such incredible participation from the campus and community.

"This event is important, because there are underprivileged kids all along the coast that want to have a Christmas like all the other kids get," said Larson. "This is one way for the USM community to help make that happen, and that's why we continue to hold this event."

Gifts were piled up in the back of the University Police Department truck. Four members of the Marine Corp Reserves were present to help load the truck.

Toys collected at the Gulf Park Campus were distributed directly to disadvantaged children in Harrison County. Larson says she plans on hosting the event every year during the holiday season.



Special to Long Beach Breeze



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Richardson named new Gulf Park Health Center provider

Special to Long Beach Breeze

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) Gulf Park Health Center recently welcomed Connie Richardson as the new provider on the Gulf Park Campus in Long Beach. Richardson holds twenty-seven years of experience as a family nurse practitioner in a variety of settings.

"I really enjoy providing care for the university population," said Richardson.

Richardson is a USM alumna and obtained her undergraduate degree from the College of Nursing and Health Professions in 1987. In 1996, she became a graduate of the first nurse practitioner class. Richardson's passion for black and gold runs through her veins as she returns to campus ready to take her expertise to the top.

"It feels good to give back to the University," said Richardson. "It's been a wonderful experience so far. I love working alongside other nursing faculty."

Richardson has focused on family practice and has worked with other medical professionals in many settings, including ER minor care and investigative drug trials. Within the last two years, she partnered with Ochsner Health in family practice. Richardson



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Connie Richardson

says she is thrilled to see students, faculty, staff and their families at the clinic. Her hope is to further expand services to the greater community.

The Gulf Park Health Center offers a variety of services, including annual wellness screenings, minor urgent care, pregnancy screenings, flu and COVID-19 testing and more. They also offer mental health counseling referrals. Richardson has plans to provide educational sessions promoting wellness, proper nutrition and good sleep habits in the upcoming semester.

For more information, visit www.usm.edu/gulf-park-health-center.

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Phenology focus of Jan. 4 program

Special to The Pass Post

The Pass Christian Public Library and the Pass Christian Garden Club are partnering to host a garden program on Thursday, January 4. The program will feature Gail Bishop from the Gulf Coast Phenology Trail, who will explain what phenology is and the purpose and importance of the Gulf Coast Phenology Trail.

This program, set to begin at 1 p.m., is free, and the public is invited.

For more information, call 228-452-4596. The Pass Christian Library is located at 111 Hiern Avenue.



Schmidt elected vice-chair of Conference

Special to The Pass Post

Circuit Judge Christopher Schmidt of Pass Christian was recently elected vice-chair of the Conference of Circuit Court Judges. Circuit Judge Tomika Irving of Fayette was elected chair, and Circuit Judge Celeste Wilson of Southaven was elected secretary-treasurer.

Conference elections were held during the fall Trial and Appellate Judges Conference in Biloxi. Conference officers make recommendations on issues affecting the courts.

Judge Schmidt has served since January 2015 in the Second Circuit District of Hancock, Harrison and Stone counties. He previously worked as an assistant district attorney in the Second Circuit for fourteen years. He was in private law practice from 2010 until his election in 2014. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University



Special to The Pass Post

of Southern Mississippi and a law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

PCHS coach, player receive gridiron awards



Special to The Pass Post

The Gulfport Gridiron Club recently recognized Coach Jeff Stockstill of Pass Christian High School (left) as the Lindy Callahan Coach of the Year, and Pass Christian High School football player Ladd Scribner (right) was given the Joe and Mitch Salloum Award/Harrison County Player of the Year.

Joseph Daniel named Youth of the Year



Joseph Daniel was recently named Youth of the Year at the Boys and Girls Club Qatar Center. "The Club's mission is to serve all young people, but especially those who need us most," said Daniel. "For some, this means kids like me, who come from a two-parent working household and need a safe and constructive place to go so we aren't left home alone. For others, this means a safe haven from abuse, neglect and food insecurity. The Club has allowed me to connect and make friends with and learn from so many kids that are different from me. This experience has helped me grow into a better person, judging less, and listening more."

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Rotary names 2024-25 officers



Special to The Pass Post

The Rotary Club of Pass Christian recently selected their officers for 2024-25. Pictured (l to r) are: Chipper McDermott, president; Jeff Moore, president-elect 2025-26; Robin Rafferty, secretary; Steve Ethridge, treasurer; Andrew McNeil, sergeant-at-arms; and Ken Austin, past president.

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Free transportation to health appointments available

Special to Long Beach Breeze

The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) recently announced a new program, Transportation to Health, an effort to address transportation barriers in both rural and urban areas in the state.

The new federal grant-funded demonstration program, which began November 1, will provide patient transportation to and from county health departments and offices for health services. In addition, patients will have the opportunity to pick up prescriptions at partnering pharmacies if they were prescribed during their health department appointment.

"Improving and protecting the health of all Mississippians is the mission of our agency," explained State Health Officer Dr. Edney. "This new program will assist us in achieving the mission. Creating access to health care is always the best choice."

For new or existing appointments, patients can contact the MSDH call center at 855-767-0170 to request transportation. The Office of Health Equity will coordinate an Uber ride at no cost to the patient, and the patient does not need to download the Uber app.

"Transportation to Health can eliminate delayed or missed appointments by the most vulnerable people in Mississippi," said Victor D. Sutton, Chief of Community Health and Clinical Services at the Mississippi State Department of Health. "With Mississippi being a rural state, this initiative will also allow the opportunity for community and economic development by creating jobs. Uber will support MSDH in creating a plan to support driver availability within the program service area," he said.

For additional information, visit MSDH at HealthyMS.com/connect.

Coast Episcopal School's Art Center plans new shows

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Coast Episcopal School's (CES) Gail Keenan Art Center (GKAC) will feature the South Mississippi High School Art Exhibit beginning January 19. The show, curated by Gulf Coast artist Ann Dinwiddle Madden, will continue through February 8. It will be followed by "Call of the Coast," also curated by Madden, which will begin February 23 and conclude April 19.

"Ann Madden has provided her expertise to several shows held in our GKAC in the last year or so. Being able to work with her as the official curator for these three new shows is a privilege and will raise the bar for the artists and attendees," said CES Head of School Jake Winter.

Madden's photographs and mixed media pieces have been shown at galleries all over the United States. She splits her time behind the camera between New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. She owned and operated Smith & Lens Gallery with Sandy Maggio, silversmith, for six years in Old Town Bay St. Louis. Perpetually on the hunt for collaborators, unexpected beauty and new adventures, the CES/GKAC/ANN MADDEN Partnership, in addition to enhancing the Long Beach independent school's art shows, will support her search for new artists.

"Organizing art shows in this special space named for Gail Keenan, an incredible, beloved and widely collected artist, is such an honor!" said Madden. "I hope to



Special to Long Beach Breeze co

Artist Ann Madden is curating two new open-to-the-public art shows at Coast Episcopal School's Gail Keenan Art Center this year.

make these openings as inviting and as exciting as she would have wanted."

Each of the shows will include an evening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. on opening night.

The MS Gulf Coast High School Art Show will feature two-dimensional and three-dimensional media created by public, private, parochial and homeschooled students in ninth through twelfth grades who live in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties. Media will include printing, printmaking, drawing, photography, digital and mixed media artwork, as well as sculpture, ceramics, and metal and jewelry arts. Show Juror Erica Larkin Gaudet will award cash prizes for first (\$150), second (\$100) and third (\$75) places. Reception attendees will have the opportunity to vote for their personal "People's Choice" Award, and featured works will be available for sale throughout the three-week exhibition.

"Call of the Coast," set for February 23 through April 19, will feature the works of up to eight professional artists representing inspiration from land and sea, which will be available for sale throughout the duration of the show.

The Gail Keenan Art Center was dedicated in February 2011 to the memory of the recognized ceramic artist and printmaker who was born in 1940 in New Orleans and passed away in February 2005.

Coast Episcopal School is located at 5065 Espy Avenue. For more information, call 228-452-9442.

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