

Grand opening held for Fire Station Number 3

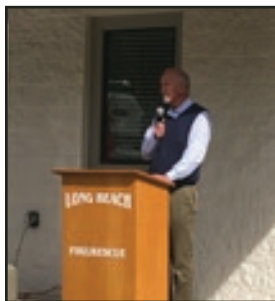
By Toni Miles

The City of Long Beach is home to a new-and-improved fire station. Dozens of dignitaries, first responders and community members were on hand in late March for the grand opening celebration of Fire Station Number 3, located on Johnson Road in west Harrison County near the Industrial Park.

The \$1.2 million facility is now up-and-running, not only providing additional fire safety protection to local residents and businesses, but is also no longer a health hazard to those who are always on stand-by to respond in times of disaster.

"The kitchen cabinets were full of black mold," Long Beach Mayor George Bass told the crowd, in reference to the former facility, which was rebuilt after Hurricane Katrina, but was not fit for the safety and health of the city's firefighters who worked there. "There was mold on their [the firefighters'] plates and cups, on their glasses. We knew it was time then that we had to make a move."

"The firefighters started getting sick, keeping some type of upper respiratory thing going," Long Beach Fire Chief Griff Skellie said. "We knew we had



Toni Miles

Long Beach Mayor George Bass addresses the crowd.



Special to Long Beach Breeze

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Local pickleball players are in full swing

By Toni Miles

On just about any given day, one can find dozens of people playing pickleball at the Long Beach Senior Center.

"Everybody in the community can participate in pickleball games here," says Courtney Cuevas, community affairs director for the City of Long Beach. "If you are a single player, you are more than welcome to come in. They have people who meet up and do teams together. If you already have a permanent team that you are comfortable playing with, you can come in."

To say pickleball has become a popular sport in South Mississippi would be an understatement.

"Pickleball is like a miniature tennis, and tennis has always been popular, and will continue to be popular," Cuevas says. "I don't know what created the whole pickleball drive, but it's making more people in the community get active."

Those who are approaching or now living in their "golden years" are no exception. Pickleball is one of the most popular activities at the Senior Center.

"It [pickleball] doesn't involve as much running as tennis, so I think this is just one



Toni Miles

Pass Christian resident Mark Bridges (far right) is one of a number of locals who plays pickleball almost daily at the Long Beach Senior Center.

reason why members of our senior citizen's community are able to play it. It's a closer-knit court, and it's easier to move around and hit the ball. Pickleball also uses a smaller racquet than tennis," Cuevas says.

Mark Bridges is a regular on the Senior Center pickleball courts and, as a Pass Christian resident, crosses city lines to play. An experienced player, the avid competitor has done more than his fair share of research off-court, too.

"It's a cross between ping-pong and tennis," Bridges says. "They say ping-pong players make the best pickleball players. It's all in the way that you stroke the ball. Just having that aptitude takes you a long way in this game. A lot of the other stuff, like strategy and where to place yourself on the court, is more like tennis. It's mostly a doubles game, especially at our age."

Networking and socializing are just a few of the benefits of playing pickleball, according to the AARP. Pickleball affords not only much-needed physical activity to stay in shape, but also sharpens the mind. Studies have proven that playing pickleball enhances brain function and helps prevent memory loss and cognitive decline, while also reduc-

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Magnolia Gulf Coast Beta Club participates in State Competition



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Magnolia Gulf Coast Beta Club Senior Division convention attendees included (l to r) sponsor Joanna Dillman, SJ Dillman, Apollo Stafford, Elijah Hudson, Austin Cucuzza, Kaitlyn Atwater, Ronald Stanbro, Jr., Alexis Dillman, Connor Williams, Jacob Dial, sponsor Jennifer Atwater and sponsor Ashley Stanbro (seated).

Special to Long Beach Breeze

National Beta members from Magnolia Gulf Coast Beta Club recently participated in the 78th Annual Mississippi State Senior and 32nd Annual Mississippi State Elementary and Junior Beta State Conventions, bringing home multiple awards from each.

Students attending the Senior convention from Long Beach included Jacob Dial; S.J. Dillman, who serves as chaplain; Alexis Dillman, who serves as treasurer; and Ronald Stanbro, Jr., who serves as historian. Elementary/junior members from Long Beach included Luke Dillman, who serves as elementary treasurer, and Hailey Dial, who serves as elementary vice pres-

ident.

In the Senior Division, they won third place for club technology entry and fourth place for service-learning showcase. Kaitlyn Atwater won third place for Division I creative writing, Alexis Dillman won fourth place for tenth-grade biomedical academic testing and first place in digital art. In Division I visual arts, Elijah Hudson won first place in black and white photography, and Connor Williams won fourth place in woodworking. Austin Cucuzza won fourth place in Division II visual arts in woodworking.

In the Junior Division, the group won second place in accessorized design. In academic testing, Wyatt Nelson won first place in seventh-grade science, Lydia



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Magnolia Gulf Coast Beta Club Elementary and Junior Division convention attendees included (l to r), front row: Sponsor Ashley Stanbro, Luke Dillman, Angela Dacus, Micah Cameron and sponsor Lauren Nelson; and back row: Garrett Nelson, sponsor Joanna Dillman, Hailey Dial, Abigail Dillard, Elizabeth Dacus, Madelyn Dillard, Wyatt Nelson, Lydia Crepps and sponsor Maria Dacus.

Crepps won second place in creative writing and Madelyn Dillard won fifth place in seventh-grade social studies. In junior visual arts, Alexander Bouchard won third place in color photography.

In the Elementary Division, they won first place for their club technology entry, fourth place for their club trading pin, second place for club three-dimensional design, and first place in Quiz Bowl. In academic testing, Abigail Dillard won fifth place in fourth-grade science, Hailey Dial won fourth place for fourth-grade social studies, and Garrett Nelson won third place for fifth-grade language and first place for fifth-grade social studies. In performance arts, Angela Dacus won second place for elementary solo dance. In elementary visu-

al arts, Abigail Dillard won fifth place in mixed media, Hailey Dial won fourth place in digital art, Garret Nelson won second place in sculpture, and Luke Dillman won first place in quilting.

Magnolia Gulf Coast Beta Club (MGC Beta) is a group of homeschool students in fourth through twelfth grades from across the Gulf Coast area. Sponsors for the groups include Joanna Dillman, Maria Dacus, Jennifer Atwater, Ashley Stanbro and Lauren Nelson.

"We are thrilled to celebrate the remarkable achievements of all of our scholars at State competition," said Joanna Dillman. "Their dedication, hard work and triumph exemplify excellence, and we couldn't be prouder to support such remarkable talent."

National Beta State Convention allows students the opportunity to compete in various academic and STEM-based, virtual and performing arts competitions. These victories at the state level provide an opportunity to compete at the national level. National Convention will be held at the Savannah International Convention Center this summer.

With more than 500,000 active members and 8,750 clubs nationally and internationally, National Beta has become the nation's largest independent, non-profit, educational youth organization, promoting the ideals of academic achievement, character, service, and leadership among elementary and secondary school students. For information about membership with Magnolia Gulf Coast Beta, visit "Prospective Magnolia GC Home School Beta Members" on Facebook.



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Volume 8, Number 5
Circulation 7,000

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The Long Beach Breeze is published on the 1st week of each month in Long Beach, Mississippi.

For submission information, email News@LongBeachBreeze.com.

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cont. from front page

Grand opening held for Fire Station Number 3



Toni Miles

Dignitaries, first responders and community members were among those who turned out for the grand opening celebration of Fire Station Number 3.

to do something about it. Just like everything else, we didn't know where we would get the funding."

The overall cost of the new fire station came in at \$1.2 million. The City of Long Beach contributed \$600,000 to the project. At an April meeting, the Harrison County Board of Supervisors approved to provide the marching funding of \$600,000 to cover the remaining balance.

Bass and Skellie praised those who made the project and the new station possible, including Overstreet Engineering and Watters Architecture firms.

"Awesome job," Skellie said. "I have a background in construction, and I know how jobs can be sometimes. This was easy.

It couldn't have happened that way without y'all. All the way from the way the building looks to the colors inside, everything is just great."

Skellie also expressed appreciation for all those who serve the Long Beach Fire Department.

"I'd like to thank my firefighters," Skellie said. "When we closed this station down, we bunched them up at Central [Fire Station], and it made for some tight quarters. It wasn't always fun for them, either. Thank y'all for your patience. I'm glad to tell you we have a

nice, healthy environment for you to work in now."

Also, for the first time, firefighters will now be able to man and work out of Fire Station Number 3 during hurricanes. Bass gave much credit to Skellie for his vision and many contributions to the project and new facility.

"I can't say enough about what Chief Griff Skellie has done with this, and the leadership he's shown," Bass said.

"We tried to design this thing where it would carry us well into the future, and I think it will," Skellie said.



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Toni Miles

Fire Chief Griff Skellie

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Library Summer Reading registration opens May 1

By Guest Columnist Renee Rayburn, LBPL Youth and Technology Services

Summer is almost upon us, and that means Summer Reading! The theme this year is “Adventure Begins at Your Library,” and we hope you join us here at Long Beach Public Library for some family fun! We decided to dig into the “vault” of past programming and repeat some family favorites. Some will have a new twist; others will remain true to the original program.

Online registration for all who plan to attend begins on Wednesday, May 1. Schedules of all events will be available at that time, as well. Programs begin on Saturday, June 1, at 10 a.m. with Family Movie Day.

At the time of this writing, there are no scheduled meetings for the Long Beach Board of Trustees or the Friends of the Long Beach Public Library for the month of May.

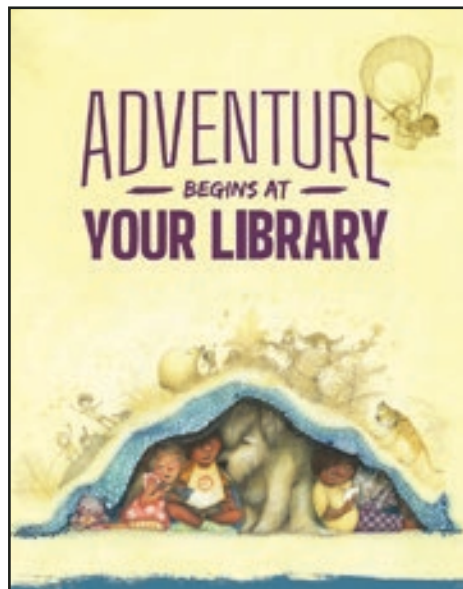
Family Movie Day will be on Saturday, May 18, at 10 a.m. in the Children’s wing.

As a reminder to everyone, the library hours are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. We are open on Saturdays from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. On Saturdays, we hold our book sale. Prices are ten cents each for magazines, twenty-five cents each for paperbacks, and fifty cents each for hardbacks, audiobooks and movies.

The library will be closed from Saturday, May 25, through Monday, May 27, for Memorial Day. We will reopen on Tuesday, May 28, at 9 a.m.

For more information about any of our events or offerings, please give us a call at 228-863-0711. The library is located at 209 Jeff Davis Avenue.

We would like to thank you all for your continued support. As always, thank you for your patronage, and stay safe!



Science Café on May 9 to feature the art and science of ceramics

Special to Long Beach Breeze

On Thursday, May 9, Science Café on the Coast will host a presentation on “The Art and Science of Ceramics” at 3 p.m. at the Biloxi Public Library.

The event will feature Amanda Bush, who serves as education director for the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum of Art. Bush will give a talk that will delve into the intricacies of the ancient craft of ceramics. Attendees will explore everything from the mineral properties of clay to the crucial role temperature plays in the firing process, and will learn how George Ohr, the “mad potter of Biloxi,” formed his unique shapes and redefined the Arts and Crafts movement.

Science Café on the Coast is a collab-

oration between The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Libraries, the Harrison County Library System, the Long Beach Public Library, the Hancock County Library System, the Infinity Science Center and Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. It is designed to offer those with minimal background in science the chance to meet and discuss scientific issues in a relaxed social setting, and the location of each installment of the program rotates between venues.

Admission is free and open to the public, and light refreshments will be available. For more information, call Librarian

Janessa Ullendorf at 228-436-3095.

The Biloxi Public Library is located at 580 Howard Avenue.



cont. from front page

Local pickleball players are in full swing



Toni Miles

Pickleball is one of the most popular activities at the Long Beach Senior Center.

ing anxiety and depression-related behaviors.

While competition can be fierce and often no mercy is shown even to friends on the courts, many friendships have been forged playing pickleball.

“We didn’t win, but it was still a good game,” said Joni Maloy, after wrapping up a recent game of pickleball at the Senior Center. “I think pickleball is a very social sport, which I don’t think you can say about any other sport.”

“It’s true,” Bridges says. “The people here are friendly. They – we – enjoy the company and the social aspect of it [pickleball]. It’s something we need.”

According to the 2022 *Sports & Industry* report, more than half (52 percent) of core players – those who play eight or more times a year – are 55 or older, and almost a third (32.7 percent) are 65-plus.

Bridges can be seen almost daily playing pickleball at the Senior Center, a spot he considers one of the best for pickleball in the area.

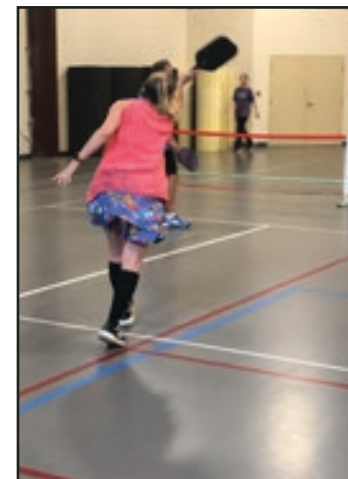
“You’re indoors,” Bridges says. “It’s climate-controlled. For me, having played tennis for fifty years on hard courts, my knees are about gone, so these are rubberized floors. They’re a lot more forgiving than concrete or a lot of other surfaces around, unless you can get on a good basketball wooden floor.”

With the sport of pickleball growing in popularity across the U.S., players here in South Mississippi say they would like to see its venues expand in the local area, as well.

Cuevas says there’s been increasing community interest in having outdoor facilities for pickleball games. At the mid-April Board of Aldermen meeting, Mayor George Bass indicated that the City is looking at three potential sites for constructing outdoor public tennis/pickleball courts. Bass said the City has been in contact with the school system about the possibility of building some courts at the back of the Town Green property, a location which has the benefits of already having a bathroom facility, electricity for lighting, and parking. Bass said the tentative idea includes four to five wind-secured courts, with fencing.

For more information about playing pickleball at the Long Beach Senior Center, call 228-868-7517, or visit the City of Long Beach’s website at CityOfLongBeachMS.info.

The Long Beach Senior Center is located at 20257 Daugherty Road and is open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Toni Miles

Joni Maloy is fierce competition on the pickleball court.

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Magnolia Girls State delegates selected



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Pictured (l to r) are LBHS Magnolia Girls State delegates and members of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1995, who sponsored the delegates: President Margaret Levens, Delegate Marlie Rath, Delegate Abigail Glass, Co-Chair and Legionnaire Wendy Griffioen, and LBHS Principal Justin Sutton.

By Toni Miles

Delegates for the 2024 American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Magnolia Girls State, sponsored by American Legion Auxiliary Donnie Levens Unit 1995 in Long Beach, have been selected.

ALA President and Co-Chair Margaret Levens and Legionnaire/Auxiliary member and Co-Chair Wendy Griffioen recently announced this year's delegates from Long Beach High School (LBHS). They are Marlie Rath and Abigail Glass.

Pass Christian High School (PCHS) delegates are Sarah Taylor, Aria Grady, Amelia Batten and Lillia Fuller.

ALA has several youth programs, all of which center around their mission, purposes and values. However, ALA Magnolia Girls State is one of their programs where selection and participation is one of prestige and honor. This year, ALA Magnolia Girls State is celebrating its 76th year of participation in this annual event, where selected delegates from all over the Magnolia State will spend one week on campus of the University of Mississippi in June.

"ALA Magnolia Girls State participation is designed to provide our delegates with leadership skills needed to aid in life as a productive part of their chosen communities," Griffioen says. "Some of the skills learned include participation in a mock government, complete with debates, elections, making laws and other skills needed from a democratic style government, such as journalism and entertainment activities."

For more information, visit the American Legion Auxiliary Magnolia Girls State website at ALAMississippiGirlsState.com.



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Pictured (l to r) are PCHS Magnolia Girls State delegates and members of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1995, who sponsored the delegates: Co-Chair Wendy Griffioen, Delegate Sarah Taylor, Delegate Aria Grady, Delegate Amelia Batten, Delegate Lillia Fuller and President and Co-Chair Margaret Levens.

P.E.O. Chapter B of Long Beach delivers school supplies



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Representatives of P.E.O. Chapter B-Long Beach deliver supplies to Long Beach High School. Pictured (l to r) are Long Beach High School Counselor Marsha Bishop; P.E.O. Sisters Dominique Perryman, Linda Reeves, Kathy Cook, Vivian Ward, Linda Carden and Mary Westmoreland; and Long Beach High School Principal Justin Sutton.

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Throughout the school year, P.E.O. Chapter B of Long Beach has been delivering school supplies to each of the campuses of the Long Beach School District. Recently, the last delivery of the year was made to Long Beach High School.

Members of Chapter B selected the supply drive as one of their annual community service projects. Members purchased and collected items for the drive.

P.E.O. is a philanthropic educational organization. True to the mission of promoting opportunities for women, educa-

tion continues to be the primary philanthropy of the P.E.O. Sisterhood. Through membership, the P.E.O. Sisterhood has brought together more than a half a million women in the United States and Canada who are passionate about helping women advance through education, while supporting and motivating them.

Organized in 1930, Chapter B-Long Beach serves as Mississippi's second oldest chapter and remains very active in the community.

For more information about P.E.O., visit PEOInternational.org and/or PEOMississippi.org.

Bearcat Belles bring home trophies



Special to Long Beach Breeze

The Long Beach High School Bearcat Belles recently competed in the American All-Star National Dance Team Championship in Orlando, Florida. They placed second in both the pom and hip hop dance categories, and Coach Rigby won an overall choreography award for their Barbie-themed hip hop routine. Pictured (l to r) are: Jessica James, Co-Captain Emma Kate Desnoyers, Captain Shaniece Chapple, Seli Gundlach and Co-Captain Bri Dunning; middle row: Emily Roslin, Madison Hudson, Celena Shankle, Andria Hamilton, Sophia Ward and Ashlyn Johnson; and back row: Coach Leslie Rigby, Alexis Gray, Julianne Wahl, Vesper Newman, Anna McCraw, Milli Richards and Abby McCaffrey.

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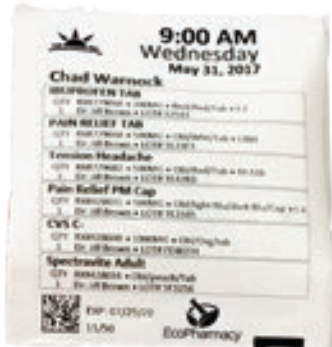
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Free live concert series kicks off in Long Beach



Toni Miles

The Lisa Albritton Band kicked off this year's Long Beach Live concert series.

By Toni Miles

The Lisa Albritton Band took to the stage at the Harper McCaughan Town Green Pavilion on Friday, April 5, marking the first installment in the City of Long Beach's annual Long Beach Live concert series this year.

The concert series launched in 2011, and, as with each year, concerts will run monthly from April to October. The concerts are free and held the first Friday of every month, with occasional exceptions for holidays, at the Harper McCaughan Town Green amphitheater. Concerts start at 7 p.m. and usually end around 9 p.m.

This year's Long Beach Live concert dates are May 3, June 7, June 29 (4th of



July Jubilee), August 2, September 6 and October 11 (Cruisin' the Coast). For updates and names of bands scheduled to perform, visit the City of Long Beach Mayor's Office Facebook page.

Long Beach families are encouraged to bring chairs or blankets and come out and enjoy the live entertainment each month. Local businesses are typically open late and offer specials and deals during the night out.

Mayor's Youth Council visits Greenvale

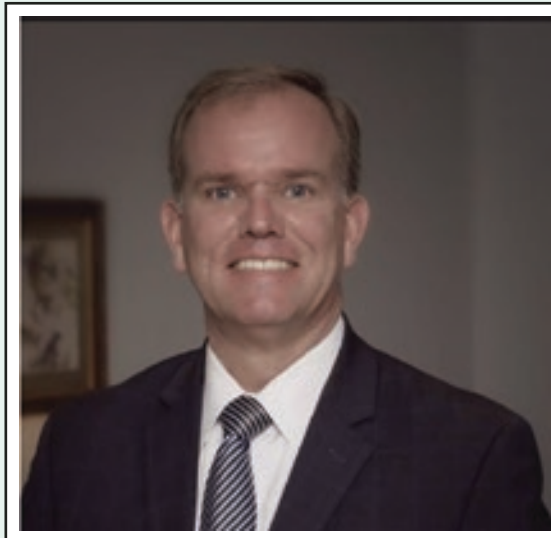


Special to Long Beach Breeze

The Long Beach Mayor's Youth Council recently toured Greenvale, also known as the Quarles House, to learn about Long Beach's history. Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Shane Patrick Walker, Arlene Nguyen, Chloe Fox, Jenna Shirk and Brianna Carver; and back row: Brooklyn Hudson, Trent Rishel, Seli Grundlach, Marie Rath and Jared Smith.

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Not-so-typical senior prom hosted by LBHS Student Council



By Toni Miles

St. Patrick's Day in Long Beach didn't only recognize its Irish roots, it also brought the opportunity for those in their "golden years" to gather for a "senior prom" at the City's Senior Center.

"We have so many senior citizens in our community, and we all know them," said Jared Smith, a Long Beach High School (LBHS) senior who also serves as Student Body President. Smith was among the LBHS students who partnered with the City of Long Beach, the Long Beach Senior Center and other community members and organizations to host the event.

"We just wanted to do something really fun, invite some of our Student Council members out and play some games with them," said Smith.

This wasn't a typical senior prom: attendees ditched the sequined dresses and high heels for more sensible attire - at least in some cases.

"Some people came in their green, then some people went all out," Smith said. "My partner for bingo [was] Mary Anne. She [had] green hair and green eyebrows. She came decked all out and was ready to play!"

James Ware reigned as King and Linda Kerr as Queen of the St. Patrick's Day Senior Prom event.

Instead of dancing, there was cornhole, ladder ball and blue tennis on the nearby courts in the Long Beach Senior Center.

"Our Student Council, every year we try to do a big philanthropy project, and this [the Senior Prom] is our big project for this year," Smith said. "We all got together after Christmas, sat down to discuss it and really wanted to help out."

Smith said he hopes history will repeat itself.

"This is the first time that we know of that we have done this, and we're really hoping to make it an annual tradition at our school," Smith said.

Instead of dance cards, attendees at the Senior Prom were focused on Bingo cards.

All photos by Toni Miles



LBHS Student Body President Jared Smith (second from left) plays bingo with his senior friends at the St. Patrick's Day Senior Prom hosted by the LBHS Student Council.



Attendees also participated in games such as cornhole.



There were plenty of games for attendees at the Senior Prom to participate in at the Senior Center.



Local organizations and businesses helped to provide food for the event.



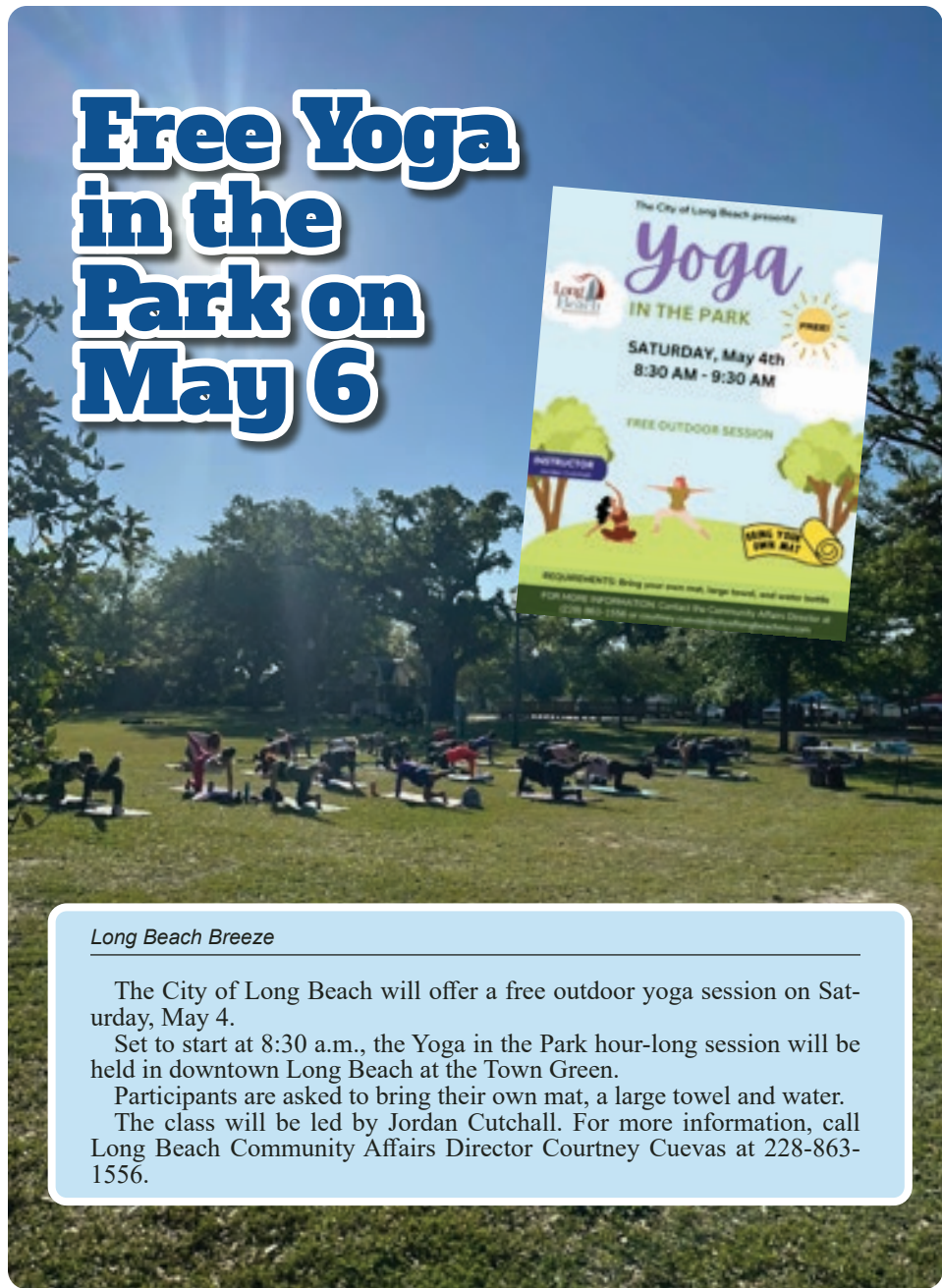
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Free Yoga in the Park on May 6



Long Beach Breeze

The City of Long Beach will offer a free outdoor yoga session on Saturday, May 4.

Set to start at 8:30 a.m., the Yoga in the Park hour-long session will be held in downtown Long Beach at the Town Green.

Participants are asked to bring their own mat, a large towel and water.

The class will be led by Jordan Cutchall. For more information, call Long Beach Community Affairs Director Courtney Cuevas at 228-863-1556.

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Inaugural Mother's Day Sip, Shop & Stroll planned for May 4



Long Beach Breeze

On Saturday, May 4, local businesses in Long Beach will participate in the city's first Mother's Day Sip, Shop & Stroll.

Residents are encouraged to bring their mom and/or their friends for a full day of shopping, eating and drinking at local businesses in Long Beach.

Participating stores will have bingo cards for shoppers, who can complete a square and get a stamp or signature from each business. Once BINGO is reached, shoppers can turn their completed card in to any participating business for a chance to win prizes from the businesses.

Winners will be contacted on Tuesday, May 7.

For more information, visit the "City of Long Beach - Mayor's Office" Facebook page.



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Spring to Life festival draws crowds

By Toni Miles

First Baptist Church of Long Beach resurrected its much-anticipated, annual Easter festival this year after a brief hiatus due to the COVID pandemic, with its hosts focused on their mission of sharing the good news celebrated by Christians— the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“Easter isn’t just bunnies and chocolate candy for the Christian,” says Rev. Matthew Gaddy, who serves as worship pastor at First Baptist Church. “Easter is a celebration of not only the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but...we celebrate through this week, Holy Week, that period between Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem until the time of His death, His burial and His resurrection. You can see this by all of the many different scriptures that we have up. The kids go around and find those scriptures, and they take them back to the table. They get a prize, but they also get the Word of God right there in front of them. They also get resurrection eggs which tell the story of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus; so everything we do is centered on that message. It’s the central message that Christ is risen. He’s not dead. He’s alive and also alive in the hearts of people. We really love it.”

Apparently, so did the hundreds of youth who attended the Spring to Life Easter Festival held Sunday, March 24, at the Harper McCaughan Town Green. Nobody left empty-handed, either. Once kids completed the scripture-driven treasure hunt, they were rewarded with one of more than two hundred Easter basket giveaways, filled with goodies, at the event.

Ten-year-old Mason Ray was one of the happy recipients, as he unwrapped his Eas-



A bird of prey is perched on the arm of one of the handlers during the Freedom Ranch Animal Show.



Live, interactive animal exhibits hosted by the non-profit Freedom Ranch were part of the festival's activities.



Pictured (l to r) at the Spring to Life Easter Festival are Jeremy Davis, London Haliday, Baraka Poullard, A'Memri Harris and Paris Haliday.



Ten-year-old Mason Ray shows off his hoop throwing skills at the Easter festival.



Members of First Baptist Church of Long Beach gave away more than two hundred Easter baskets.

ter basket and inspected the contents, which included a sticker book, kite, chalk, crayons and a Bible.

“This is awesome,” Ray said, “and it’s not even Easter yet! I’m having a great time,

and can’t wait to fly my kite, and, of course, read my new Bible!”

Live music, puppet shows, a variety of games, a prayer table and cake walk were all part of this year’s line-up.

The live, interactive animal displays and animal show put on by the non-profit group Freedom Ranch was also a hit. Kids and adults got hands-on experience with birds of prey such as hooting owls and falcons, which were also featured by their handlers during live demonstrations at the festival.

“There’s lots of fun and fellowship,” said Gaddy. “The great thing about this event is it brings our community together. This is what we desire to do -- bring people together. It’s our whole mission and purpose. We want to connect people to Jesus, and the best way we can do that is to connect people to each other.”

“This is one of the larger turnouts I’ve seen at our Easter festival,” Gaddy said. “A lot of times we run into rain, weather, things like that, but it’s been a really good turnout. We’re just glad as always to be out here making connections with more families.”

The Spring to Life Easter festival is just one of several free, family-friendly events the Long Beach church hosts each year. Other annual events hosted by First Baptist Church of Long Beach include the Night-in-Bethlehem experience during the Christmas season and the Trunk-or-Treat fall festival each October.

Gaddy says everyone is invited and welcomed with open arms at these events, regardless of faith, and community members are also encouraged to join the church each week at services held at its location on Cleveland Avenue in Long Beach.

Free Touch-A-Truck event boasts best turnout yet



Toni Miles

With more than 1,500 people in attendance, this year’s Touch-A-Truck event, held annually by the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, marked the largest turnout to date.



Toni Miles

Youngsters and adults appeared to all have a good time at the annual fundraiser. Pictured (l to r) are Charlene McQueen, Teala Magee and her son, Andreas Magee.



Toni Miles

Kids especially seemed to enjoy the event, getting hands-on experience and even sitting behind the wheels of the more than forty vehicles on display this year.

By Toni Miles

Palm trees gently swayed in the wind as the blare of horns blowing rode the breeze throughout the mid-March morning at the west side of the Long Beach Harbor. More than 1,500 kids, their parents and others got hands-on experience behind the wheels of emergency response vehicles, big rigs and other vehicles on display at this year’s Touch-A-Truck.

Touch-A-Truck is one of the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce’s biggest annual events and fundraisers, but this year there were a few changes - and organizers say they were good ones.

“This is the largest it’s ever been,” said Anna Claire Perronne, director of the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce. “We have over forty vehicles out here. We have the most people we’ve ever had. It’s a great turnout. The weather has been perfect.”

This was the first year attendees were not charged admission, fulfilling a long-time wish of one of the Chamber’s most dedicated leaders.

“We lost a beloved Board Member, Ms. Angela Bowell, and it was super important to us - it was her vision - to have Touch-A-Truck be a free event,” Perronne said. “This year, we had an outpouring of support from all of our sponsors. It was super amazing. We’ve been able to raise the most funds we’ve ever raised from Touch-A-Truck, and we were able to allow the whole community to come in for free admission.”

This wasn’t the only first - this year’s event also marked the first time food trucks and vendors were on site.



Toni Miles

Each year, Touch-A-Truck gives children the opportunity to get hands-on experience with big rig, company and first responder vehicles, such as the fire truck seen here.



Toni Miles

Ten-year-old Amethyst Bichon and six-year-old Rowan Bichon were among the thousands of kids having a blast at the event.



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Long Beach Breeze

Pre-registration is open through April 29 for the 2024 Jeepin the Coast (JTC), which is set for May 29 through June 2.

Pre-registration is \$80 for a ticket that includes the Jeep Beach Crawl, one event t-shirt and koozie, a JTC cinch bag, a JTC decal, entry to the Jeep Show N Shine Competition, entry to the Jeep Light Show and the Jeep Sound Competition, a Poker Run, a Scavenger Hunt, the Kick-Off Party and other concerts. Jeepers who wish to take part in the JTC parade can pre-register for \$95, which includes all of the JTC goodies and entries, plus entry to the Jeep Mardi Gras-style parade.

Registration is a one-time cost that covers the Jeep and all passengers within seat belts. On-site registration (not including the parade) will be \$100. T-shirts for on-site registration will only be available while supplies last. Only Jeeps will be allowed to drive on the beach, in the parade



and participate in the JTC events.

Additional t-shirts, tank tops, beach towels and event hats are available for purchase for \$25. Trucker hats can be purchased for \$30, a JTC metal badge is available for \$20, and extra event koozies are \$6.

Jeepin the Coast (JTC) will include live entertainment, a kick-off Hawaiian luau, several meet and greet opportunities, a few beach crawls, a vendor village, a hot wing eating contest, Jeep shows and competitions, fireworks, and a parade through downtown Long Beach. Awards are also given.

JTC unites Jeepers with its annual event on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, drawing Jeep owners to the 26-mile-long beach. Organizers set up multiple events in the coastal cities for Jeepers to either stay together or branch off into their own adventure throughout the coast.

Visit JeepinTheCoast.com to register for JTC 2024 and for more information.

Energy Club honored for 35th anniversary



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Frank and Sheryl Olavar were recently recognized by the Long Beach Board of Aldermen for the 35th anniversary of their business, The Energy Club, and their commitment and contributions to the community of Long Beach. The Energy Club celebrated its milestone April 6 and April 8 with prizes, raffles to support area non-profits, specials, refreshments and lots of fun. They are located at 2 Tower Plaza on Pineville Road. The Olavars are pictured with Long Beach Mayor George Bass (left).

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LBHS and PCHS select Boys State delegates



Special to Long Beach Breeze

Pictured (l to r) are LBHS Boys State delegates and members of American Legion Donnie Levens Post 1995, who sponsored the delegates: Legionnaire Ray Chavaree, Delegate Zachary Johnson, Delegate Jose Garcia III, Delegate Henry Sawyer, Delegate Triston Flanary and LBHS Principal Justin Sutton.

By Toni Miles

Long Beach High School (LBHS) and Pass Christian High School (PCHS) recently selected their delegates to attend American Legion Boys State 2024. These young men will represent their school and communities in one of the most respected programs of government instruction for high school students.

Selected from LBHS were Zachary Johnson, Jose Garcia III, Henry Sawyer and Triston Flanary.

PCHS delegates chosen include Jacoby Johnson, Joseph Daniel, Erik Lindmark and Tristin Jones.

At American Legion Boys State, participants are exposed to the rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities of a franchised citizen. The training is objective and practical with city, county and state governments operated by the students elected to various offices.

This year's American Legion Mississippi Boys State Delegation Convention is scheduled for May 26 through June 1 at the University of Mississippi in Oxford.



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Special to Long Beach Breeze

Pictured (l to r) are PCHS Boys State delegates and members of American Legion Donnie Levens Post 1995, who sponsored the delegates: Legionnaire Mike Griffioen, Delegate Jacoby Johnson, Delegate Joseph Daniel, Delegate Erik Lindmark, Delegate Tristin Jones and Legionnaire Ray Chavaree.

Pass Christian breaks ground on new pedestrian walkway



Special to The Pass Post

The Pass Post

A crowd recently gathered in Pass Christian's harbor to celebrate the groundbreaking for the first of four phases of Pass Christian's portion of a Highway 90 boardwalk that will eventually span from the Bay Saint Louis bridge to the Ocean Springs bridge.

Pass Christian Mayor Jimmy Rafferty and other local officials were joined by other coastal mayors, as well as General Joe Spraggins from the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, to break ground on the \$2.5 million grant-funded walkway. The walkway will be made of cement and is designed not only to withstand storms but also to keep sand off of Highway 90 during heavy storms. Once fully completed, the boardwalk will provide pedestrians, joggers and bicyclists with a safer means of traveling from one coastal city to another.

Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) of 2006 created a revenue-sharing model for oil- and gas-producing gulf states.

Under the act, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas receive a portion of the revenue generated from oil and gas production offshore in the Gulf of Mexico. The act also directs a portion of revenue to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Mississippi Legislature is tasked with appropriating those funds received by the state. In 2023, that total exceeded \$100 million. The monies are to be used for coastal restoration projects that promote coastal conservation, restoration and hurricane protection.

The \$2.5 million grant, awarded in 2023, is expected to be the first of four grants provided to assist the City of Pass Christian with the West Breakwater Wall Hurricane Mitigation Improvements.

Offering his remarks by a recorded video, Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves said, "I'm excited to congratulate y'all on today's groundbreaking. Mississippi's Gulf Coast is blessed with an abundance of natural beauty. From beaches and parks to rivers and waterways, the Coast is something our entire state can be proud of."

"This pedestrian walkway is another great example of GOMESA funds at work," continued Reeves. "That's because this project is incredibly important to Pass Christian and all of our coastal cities, which will be connected. Not only will it allow pedestrians and joggers and bicyclists to safely travel from city to city along our beaches, but it will also help to lessen the impact of future storms and keep sand off of Highway 90."

"One thing is for certain, the Coast's future is bright, and that means Mississippi's future is bright," concluded Reeves.



Jazz in the Pass set for May 26

The Pass Post

Pass Christian's War Memorial Park at 101 Fleitas Avenue will once again be filled with toe-tapping, live music echoing over the Mississippi Sound on Sunday of Memorial Day weekend. The annual Jazz in the Pass returns to Pass Christian on Sunday, May 26, from noon until 8 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

While the musicians are playing, visitors will be able to buy food and drink, as well as browse a selection of craft vendors. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and/or blankets to come and relax under the oaks and enjoy the music. The event will close with a fireworks display. Outside food and drink is welcome, but those attending are asked to leave all glass containers and bottles at home.

The first Jazz in the Pass was held on May 8, 1999, and the event continued for the next eight years as a way to show support and appreciation to Pass Christian's musical heritage. The popular event was discontinued after Hurricane Katrina and has recently returned as a program of Pass Christian Main Street.

Food and craft vendor booth applications are currently available, with registration accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. The registration fee for a 10' by 10' booth is \$100. Electricity is not provided, but "whisper-quiet" generators are allowed. Vendors may only sell tea and/or lemonade; no other beverage sales are allowed. Booth locations will be assigned the day of the event.

For more information, visit PassMainStreet.com or at [Facebook.com/JazzInThePass](https://www.facebook.com/JazzInThePass).



Library Friends receive grant

Special to The Pass Post

The Friends of the Pass Christian Library were recently named as recipients of the 2024 Margaret Murray Grant from the Friends of Mississippi Libraries Inc. The organization will receive \$500 to support the "Read to the Bump" early literacy program at Pass Christian Library.

The library noticed an increased number of expectant mothers coming into the library, and research shows that there are benefits to reading to babies, even prior to delivery.

Grant funds will purchase books, bags and print resources. Books will include board books and a "Read to the Bump" series available for library checkout. Bags will contain relevant literature and will be offered to families who check out these books to encourage not only library usage, but also to educate families on the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Program, MSU Extension's Happy Healthy Baby Program and local resources.

The Friends of the Pass Christian Library are a non-profit organization that supports the programs and mission of the Pass Christian Library, and membership is open to everyone. For more information, call 228-452-4596.



Plant swap planned for May 9

Special to The Pass Post

Residents who have unneeded plants in their yards or gardens, who like to "pass along" plants and who would like to pick up some new plants for their yard are invited to a plant swap at the Pass Christian Public Library.

Set for Thursday, May 9, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m., the swap allows residents to bring a plant(s), cutting(s) or seeds to the library to trade for a new plant(s) brought by someone else.

The event, which will be held rain or shine, is free and open to the public. It will be held under the portico near the library, which is located at 111 Hiern Avenue.

For more information, call 228-452-4596.



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Pups to make final visit to library for spring

Special to The Pass Post

The final spring session of the Sit, Stay, READ! children's reading program will be offered on May 18 at the Pass Christian Library at 111 Hiern Avenue. Friendly and lovable reading pet partners will be on hand to help children enhance their reading skills. Children can read to the dogs anytime from 10 a.m. until noon. Pre-registration is not required.

The program, which is free, is sponsored by the Visiting Pet Teams of South Mississippi. Reading sessions usually last for thirty minutes. Children are rewarded with bookmarks, stickers or pencils for participating. In order to participate, children must not be afraid of or allergic to animals.

For more information, call 228-452-4596.



Special to The Pass Post

Youth Summer Workshop registration opens

Special to The Pass Post

Registration is now open for Youth Summer Workshops at the Pass Christian Library.

This year, programs will be offered in creative writing, Mississippi saxophone blues harmonica playing, filmmaking, arts, science, cooking and more, as part of the library's "Adventures in Your Library" summer reading program.



Special to The Pass Post

2023 summer youth harmonica class

Beginning on June 3, and continuing on June 5 and June 7, musician "Bayou" Shannon Williford will lead a youth "Mississippi Saxophone" blues harmonica workshop.

Then, on June 4, author Margaret McMullen will lead a teen creative writing class.

From June 10 to June 14, the library will hold a "Teen Lights! Camera! Action!" film workshop, which will be taught by Dr. Richard Ward.

Also in June as well as July, the library will offer "Teen Art for Youth Sake" classes on Thursdays. Community artists will teach teens the art of pottery, abstract watercolor painting, landscaping with charcoal and more.

July 16 will bring the "Youth GSK Science in Summer" workshop with the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center. On July 18, Sharonda Allen will teach the "Teen

Build Your Own Charcuterie Board" workshop; and, finally, to close out the summer, Steve Dewitt will offer sushi-making classes. The teen/adult class will be held on July 22, and the family class will be held on July 23. One last event will be the Youth Silent Book Club on July 25.

Youth can choose which workshops they would like to attend, and all workshops are free. However, space is limited, so interested youth are encouraged to reserve a spot by calling the library. For more information about workshop and event times, age requirements, specific program information or to reserve a spot in a program, call the library at 228-452-4596.

Putting in the Pass set for May 6

The Pass Post

The Pass Christian Chamber of Commerce will hold their fourth annual "Putting in the Pass" golf tournament on Monday, May 6.

The Oaks Golf Club at 24384 Clubhouse Drive will host the tournament, with registration beginning at 7 a.m. Tee off starts at 8 a.m. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

For team sign up and sponsorship information, contact Anna Claire Perronne at 228-604-0014.

Computer classes offered at library

Special to The Pass Post

Once again, Pass Christian residents who are "scared" of their computers will have the opportunity to put their fears at ease on May 23, when the Pass Christian library offers two computer classes about email.

The library will have two sessions, Email 101 at 1 p.m., and Email 102 at 2:15 p.m., both in the library conference room.

Participants will learn how to set up an email account, manage files and send email attachments.

No experience is necessary, and the classes are free and open to the public. However, class size is limited, and reservations are recommended.

To reserve a spot or for further information, call the Pass Christian Public Library at 228-452-4596.

The Pass Christian Library is located at 111 Hiern Avenue.



Robin's Nest : 255 Davis Ave., Pass Christian, MS, 228.222.4863
Roberts Place Café : 233 Davis Ave., Pass Christian. 228.222.4031



Easter Bunny and eggs galore found at City's pre-holiday event



Toni Miles

And they're off! Youngsters who participated in the City's pre-Easter holiday event snatched up hundreds of eggs in less than a minute.

By Toni Miles

While Easter weekend didn't begin until Good Friday on March 29, the holiday's iconic Easter Bunny made a special appearance at the Harper McCaughan Town Green in Long Beach on Saturday, March 23.

Face painting, crafts and three Easter egg hunts were held for children up to age twelve at the City-sponsored event.

With hundreds of youngsters showing up armed with baskets, the swift-of-foot were able to scoop up the coveted plastic eggs sprawled out across the grassy knoll of the town green during the three separate egg hunts, organized according to age groups.

Less than a minute into the hunt, the little ones managed to pick up all the eggs laid out across the Town Green, but it was all worth it, as evidenced by glowing smiles as the children popped open their plastic eggs and discovered the goodies that had been tucked inside.

Kids of all ages – some shy and some excited – took time out of their busy schedules to take a photo with the Easter Bunny himself at the free, family-friendly event sponsored by the City of Long Beach.



Toni Miles

There were plenty of free, fun things to do at the event, including face painting, arts and crafts.

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