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February 2025 • Volume 9, Number 2 • "Good News You Can Use"

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New mayor likely to be elected in upcoming primary

By Toni Miles

Elections are critical in shaping the future of the community, making decisions on key issues like infrastructure, education, public safety and economic development, and, on April 1, voters will be casting their ballots in the municipal primary, which will determine the candidates who will make it to the municipal election ballot on June 3, 2025. The qualifying deadline for candidates is January 31, 2025.

A new mayor for the City of Long Beach will be elected. Two-term mayor George Bass announced recently he will not be seeking re-election. As of press time, candidates who have qualified for the mayor's race include Raymond DeFlavis, Wheelchair Larry Harvey, former Alderman and Long Beach School District Superintendent Tim Pierce, and Glen Powell. All are Republican, and, after the April primary, one will move on to the June 3



Toni Miles

Voters will be casting their ballots and deciding who Long Beach's next new mayor and aldermen will be in the upcoming municipal elections. Primaries are scheduled for April 1, and the general election is set for June 3.

ballot to face a Democrat contender, if a Democrat candidate qualifies before the January 31 deadline. If there is no other party candidate (than Republican) that appears on the primary

ballot, the winner of the April primary will be Long Beach's next new mayor.

Aldermen for each ward will also be elected. A number of incumbent aldermen -Alderman-at-Large Don-

ald Frazer, Ward 1 Alderman Patrick Bennett, Ward 2 Alderman Bernie Parker, Ward 3 Alderman Angie Johnson, Ward 4 Alderman Timothy McCaffrey and Ward 6 Alderman Pete McGoey - have already qualified; but, at press time, Ward 5 Aldermen Mike Brown had not sought qualification for the upcoming election.

So far, Republican Jesse Allen has qualified to run for the Ward 2 seat against incumbent Parker, and Thomas Elsworth has qualified to run for the Ward 4 seat against incumbent McCaffrey. Republican Greg Bonds is running for the Ward 5 Alderman seat, currently unopposed.

At press time, At-Large Frazer (R-Incumbent), Ward 1 Bennett (R-Incumbent), Ward 3 Johnson (R-Incumbent), Ward 5 Bonds (R), and Ward 6 McGoey (R-Incumbent) were all running unopposed.

Winners of the June 1 election will take office on July 1, 2025.

Groundbreaking held for downtown hotel

By Toni Miles

Dozens of people gathered at the corner of Fourth Street and Jeff Davis Avenue in downtown Long Beach on Thursday, January 16, for the official groundbreaking ceremony for Hotel Whiskey.

Local officials, community members and the project team were on hand for the ceremony. Long Beach Mayor George Bass spoke briefly before he and others, including the developer, turned dirt with shovels, concluding the ceremony with the groundbreaking.

According to Long Beach Community Affairs Director Courtney Cuevas, "The new hotel is expected to be a significant addition to the Long Beach area, offering enhanced accommodations and amenities for residents and visitors alike."

The project was delayed due to controversy over the developer's plans to remove a centuries-old oak tree on the property, which happened after months of protests and fiery City meetings.

At the groundbreaking ceremony, Mayor Bass assured the crowd the development would operate as a hotel, and added that the hotel will now be three stories instead of two stories tall. Officials say twenty-seven rooms are planned, with an investment totaling more than the original \$5 million mark estimate. Weather permitting, the build is expected to take around twelve months.



Toni Miles

City leaders and developers of the Whiskey Hotel turned dirt at an official groundbreaking ceremony on January 16. The hotel is slated to be built at the intersection of Fourth Street and Jeff Davis Avenue, on the west side.



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Let the good times roll at upcoming Long Beach Mardi Gras parade

By Toni Miles

On Saturday, February 22, the streets of downtown Long Beach will come alive as the 2025 Carnival Association of Long Beach's (CALB's) annual Mardi Gras Parade rolls out at 6 pm. The parade is free to attend, and revelers will be sure to walk away with a lot of Mardi Gras throws, so those who plan to attend will need to bring a bag to collect their parade throws in and will want to stake out a spot on the parade route early for the best view and staging area to collect throws, which will include everything from Moonpies to doubloons.

Roads along the parade route will shut down at 5:30 p.m. Floats will gather at the Long Beach High School Stadium at the staging area before the parade begins, then the procession will head south on Cleveland Avenue, turn west down Railroad Street, turn south on Jeff Davis Avenue, turn east at the intersection of Jeff Davis and Highway 90 to run along the Long Beach Harbor, then turn north back up Cleveland Avenue, with a final turn west on 1st Steet, ending at the Harper McCaughan Town Green in downtown Long Beach.

CALB, headed up by this year's



Toni Miles

Thousands are expected to line the streets of downtown Long Beach for this year's CALB Mardi Gras Parade, scheduled for Saturday, February 22, at 6 pm.



Team Stirrat Brown for the 2024-25 season, has been holding numerous events and fundraisers over the past year as Carnival season approaches, and, as with each year, this year's CALB King Scott LXIV and Queen Rosalie 2025, who will both be officially stepping into the roles held by last year (2024's) CALB King Scott LXIV

Junior Husband and Queen Rosalie

Lisa Frazer, will be at the front of the parade lineup on their floats. The new king and queen will be the focus of the 2025 CALB Royal Ball, scheduled to take place the day prior to the parade on Friday, February 21.

The first CALB parade rolled through the streets of Long Beach in 1971, with the participants tossing doubloons made of wood, which are now considered among the most sought-after of collectibles, as have the .999 silver doubloons minted each year in a limited quantity.



P.O. Box 144
Long Beach, MS 39560
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Volume 9, Number 2
Circulation 7,500

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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
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Long Beach participates in local Wreaths Across America

By Toni Miles

More than one-hundred people showed up to pay homage to late veterans at the sixth annual Wreaths Across America Ceremony in Long Beach. The national Wreaths Across America program started in December 1992, when wreath-maker Morrill Worcester found himself with a surplus of 5,000 wreaths during the holiday season. Worcester saw the surplus as an opportunity to pay tribute to the country's veterans and arranged for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington National Cemetery. This now-annual tribute to the country's veterans has continued ever since, touching the lives of millions of veterans' families and volunteers and growing in scope to a local level through the years.

All photos by Toni Miles



A wreath was laid for each branch of the military at the December 14 ceremony, honoring those who served and have since passed.



An empty chair was placed at the ceremonial table (far right) in remembrance of all those still Missing In Action, as well as a wreath in their remembrance.



Retired military servicemen and women were among those who attended the Long Beach event.





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Blackhurst named LBHS's BSN Student-Athlete of the Month

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Luke Blackhurst, a junior at Long Beach High School (LBHS), was recently recognized as the Bearcat Sports Network (BSN) Student Athlete of the Month for January. Officials say the "prestigious acknowledgment highlights Luke's exceptional leadership qualities, unwavering commitment to his team, and remarkable character both in the classroom and during athletic competitions."

As a team captain this season, officials say Blackhurst has demonstrated impressive growth as a leader, embodying the core values of perseverance, positivity, gratitude, selflessness and accountability. They report that his dedication to these principles is evident in every practice and game, making him an invaluable asset to the Long Beach High School athletics program.

"Luke is a coach's dream," says LBHS Head Soccer Coach Matthew Defillips. "He not only excels as an athlete, but also as a teammate and role model for younger players. His selflessness and ability to put the needs of his teammates before his own are what truly set him apart."

Coaches say that, throughout the season, Blackhurst has faced challenges with steadfast resilience, and his positive attitude and unwavering encouragement have made him a source of inspiration for his teammates, fostering a sense of unity and



Special to Long Beach Breeze

motivation within the team. His work ethic reflects the saying, "The way you do some things is the way you do everything," as he operates at an elite level in all areas of his life.

In addition to his accomplishments on the field, Blackhurst's commitment extends beyond athletics. He actively participates in community service and maintains excellence in his academics, dedicated to his growth both as a scholar and a citizen.

Coast Young Professionals opens year on Feb. 6

Special to Long Beach Breeze

Coast Young Professionals, a program of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce, will hold its annual meeting, CYP Launch 2025, on February 6 at the Biloxi Visitor Center from 5:30 until 7:30 p.m.

Coast Young Professionals (CYP) is an organization committed to developing young leaders on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. CYP offers numerous opportunities in professional development, leadership, networking, volunteerism, education and government.

The event will highlight the organization's past year's successes and goals for the upcoming year. Attendees can hear from 2024 Chair Christian Hartley and 2025 Chair Gardner Hewes as they share insights, updates and plans for the year ahead. Additionally, a 20% membership discount will be given for first-time members the week of February 6-10.

"Our annual meeting, CYP Launch, aims to inspire our members to get involved in the coming year, and to enlist support within our community," said Coast Young Professionals Director Shilah Triplett. "This event exemplifies our mission and purpose and is a great way to expose young professionals to our organization. We are excited to launch into 2025 with our members."

Sponsorships are available for the event. For more information, contact Triplett at Shilah@MSCoastChamber.com, visit MSCoastChamber or call 228-604-0014. For any other information, visit mscoastchamber.com or call 228-604-0014.

Mississippi Gulf Coast
Chamber of Commerce



Local Veterans organization collecting blood on Feb. 27

By Toni Miles

They've served their country proudly, but now a local veterans' organization is on the front lines – the mission – to supply much-needed blood to those in need through the American Red Cross. Not only is there an increased need for victims of the California fires, the fires on the west coast have led to many blood drives being cancelled, increasing the need for blood donations nationwide. All blood types, especially O-negative and platelet donors, are encouraged to donate.

The Donnie Levens American Legion Post 1995 of Long Beach is holding a blood drive on Thursday, February 27, at the Long Beach Activity and Senior Center, located at 20257 Daugherty Road from 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.. All donors will receive a \$15 e-gift card to a merchant of choice.

For those who would like to sign up to donate blood early, visit www.RedCrossBlood.org, or call 1-800-733-2767.

This is just one of many community drives and services the veterans' organization does each year, and one local member was recently honored for his service and participation. American



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Legionnaire Don Moran recently was honored and presented with a certificate and pin upon completing fifty years of continuous membership in the American Legion. Pictured (l to r) are Cdr. Ray Chavaree, Legionnaire Don Moran and Adjutant Kevin McKenzie. The Donnie Levens American Legion Post 1995 will be holding a blood drive on February 27 from 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Long Beach Activity and Senior Center.

Legion Post 1995 Long Beach Commander Ray Chavaree presented Legionnaire Don Moran a certificate and a pin upon completing fifty years of continuous membership in the American Legion in early January.



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Jeep-A-Gras parade set to roll for third year

By Toni Miles

It's not a long-standing tradition just yet, but the Jeep-A-Gras parade, which rolled out for the first time in 2023, has been revving up over the past two years and drawing quite the crowd in the Friendly City.

In fact, this event has become so popular that, last year, the city saw not one, but two Jeep-A-Gras parades – one in January of 2024 and one just a few months ago in November – and this year's parade for the Carnival season is just around the corner.

This Jeep-A-Gras parade is hosted by the Long Beach Carnival Association's (CALB's) 2024-25 Team Stirrat-Brown and is scheduled to take place on Saturday, February 25, at 5:30 p.m.

The parade will roll along the typ-



Special to Long Beach Breeze

The Long Beach High School football stadium parking lot will be the staging point for Jeeps that will roll out in the Jeep-A-Gras Parade, scheduled to take place in Long Beach at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 1.



Toni Miles

The Jeep-A-Gras Parade has become a crowd favorite during the past three years, since its inception and debut in the Friendly City.

ical parade route in downtown Long Beach, starting at its staging point at the Long Beach High School football stadium parking lot, moving south on Cleveland Avenue, turning west on Railroad Street, then heading south down Jeff Davis Avenue, turning west along the Highway 90 route just north of the City Harbor and winding north at the east end of the harbor, wrapping up at the Harper McCaughan Town Green, where plenty of vendors and food trucks will be set up, alongside other festivities.

The event is free to the public, and those who want to line up and find the perfect spot to catch throws should stake out a prime spot along the parade route early, before the parade launches at 5:30 p.m.

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Applications open for March 2 SPCA Mardi Gras parade

The Pass Post

The annual St. Paul Carnival Association (SPCA) Mardi Gras parade will be held this year on Sunday, March 2. Those who wish to be a part of the parade can submit applications until February 13 at 5 p.m. The application fee is \$400. Applications, rules and policies are available at StPaulCarnival.com.

This year's parade theme for team Butcher/Koennen is "Welcome to Emerald City."

The parade will start at the corner of Davis Avenue and Second Street and proceed to Scenic Drive. From there, it will turn west to Henderson Avenue, north to St. Louis, east to Church Street, south to Second Street, and then east on Second to Davis Avenue.

For questions, email PassParade@gmail.com, and additional information will be available on the St. Paul Carnival Association's Facebook page.

Separate from the SPCA event, the Pass Christian Carnival Association will have a parade on Saturday, February 15. The parade will have no theme, and lineup will be on Edwin Ladner Road. The parade will roll at noon.

For more information or to enter a float, side-by-side or antique car, email PCCAParade@gmail.com or call Sabrina at 228-363-5220.



Historical Society announces Board of Trustees



Special to The Pass Post

The Pass Christian Historical Society recently announced its 2025 Board of Trustees. Pictured (l to r) are Vice President Char Zimmerman, Recording Secretary Catherine Myers, Insurance Chair John Saik, President Robin Rafferty, Chair of 2025 Tour of Homes Amy Steiner, Corresponding Secretary Jena Shepherd, Treasurer Don DeMetz and Entertainment Chair Mark Ohmke. Not pictured is Director of Board Bob Cutting and Archivist Bruce Stinson.

Sanderson wins Lajuanie Scholarship



Special to The Pass Post

The Pass Christian Library Head of Circulation, Jennifer Sanderson, recently attended the Mississippi Library Association annual convention in Natchez, where she was named the recipient of the Terry Lajuanie Scholarship, which helped to pay for her attendance at the conference.

Wood honored as library Volunteer of the Year



Special to The Pass Post

The Pass Christian Public Library (PCPL) recently named Lauri Wood as its Volunteer of the Year. Wood has volunteered many hours at the library. She helps run the monthly Sit, Stay, READ! Children's Reading Program, volunteers at the Butterflies in the Pass Monarch Festival, and assists at many of the library's outreach events. Library staff say that Wood "excels at working with children, adults, and even therapy dogs. We greatly appreciate all she does for the library and consider her a wonderful ambassador." Pictured (l to r) are Youth Services PCPL Librarian Melanie Walrod, Harrison County Library System Board Member Tammie Gray, Volunteer of the Year Lauri Wood, Harrison County Library System Director Sarah Crisler-Ruskey and PCPL Head Librarian Wendy Allard.



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Message from City leaders:
Follow the signs and the rules!



Toni Miles

A railroad crossing safety sign stands out at the intersection of Jeff Davis Avenue and Railroad Street. In the background stand several utility poles. City leaders are reminding residents about a local ordinance that prohibits the placing of signs of any kind on utility poles or City easements.

By Toni Miles

Signs have been popping up throughout Long Beach lately – from the reduced speed limit signs posted along several popular roadways in the area to more visible railroad grade crossing signs to more adequately warn 18-wheelers, big rigs and trucks pulling boats and other things on trailers about the clearance at these junctures.

These signs are official and serve a purpose, and City leaders say they want to remind local residents and business owners that utility poles and City easements are not the place for the public to post their own signs.

City Ordinance 598 prohibits signs from being placed on utility poles and City easements. Crews will continue to be on the lookout for violations of this ordinance and will take down any sign that isn't lined up with City Ordinance 598; so those who'd like to retrieve and reuse their signs should be sure to pick a good, legal spot for placing them.

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Long Beach Chamber names Sanders as 2025 Chair

Special to Long Beach Breeze

The Long Beach Chamber recently announced Pam Sanders as the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce Chair for 2025.

Sanders is a distinguished community leader and accomplished entrepreneur with a longstanding commitment to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. A graduate of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (1973-1975), she has served the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce in various capacities since 2006, including as a Board Member, Finance Chair, Chairman of the Kite Festival, and Chair of initiatives such as Long Beach Touch-a-Truck and the Taste of Long Beach. Her contributions have been widely recognized, earning her the Long Beach Chamber Citizen of the Year Award in 2012 and the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber Forever Young Award in 2020.



Special to Long Beach Breeze
Pam Sanders

In addition to her civic endeavors, Sanders is the owner of One Stop Tire & Service, a full-service automotive repair shop with over thirty-six years of operation, and Bacchus Wine & Liquor, which is ranked among the top fifty liquor stores in Mississippi. Chamber leaders say her entrepreneurial achievements reflect her “leadership, strategic planning, and unwavering determination. Notably, she transformed a struggling family business into a thriving enterprise and has consistently demonstrated her ability to lead with vision and efficiency.”

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Sanders is dedicated to the betterment of her community. Her efforts have ranged from organizing community events and sponsoring local initiatives to providing vital support during times of crisis, including leading recovery efforts following Hurricane Katrina. As the incoming Chair of the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, Sanders say she is committed to fostering growth, collaboration and resilience within the business community and beyond.

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Special library days encourage reading in February

By Guest Columnist Renee Rayburn, LBPL Youth and Technology Services

February is Library Lover's Month. Make sure to check out one of the books on display as part of our "Blind Date with A Book" promotion. There will be several genres from which to choose.

On February 1, be sure to celebrate Take Your Child to The Library Day. Children who stop by and check out a book will receive a tote bag with a surprise!

For our Hoopla users, Hoopla has added two fantastic new BingePasses: SeasonPass and Creativebug. SeasonPass lets patrons binge-watch all episodes of a single TV season for seven days with just one borrow.

Starting off, we have fourteen amazing SeasonPasses, featuring hit series like *The Librarians* (Season 1), PBS's *Finding Your Roots* (Season 1), and BBC's *Absolutely Fabulous* (Season 1).

Meanwhile, the Creativebug BingePass provides patrons with unlimited access to thousands of online arts and crafts video classes without the library paying for or managing an individual subscription. Patrons can learn to crochet, knit, paint, draw, sew, quilt and more. It's perfect for every skill level, all with just one borrow.

There are no meetings for the Friends of the Long Beach Public Library or the Long Beach Board of Trustees for the month of February.

Family Movie Day will be scheduled for Saturday, February 8, at 10 a.m. in the children's wing. In honor of Norman Bridwell's birthday on February 15, we will be showing *Clifford, the Big Red Dog*.

Preschool story time will continue to be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.

The library will be closed for Presidents' Day on Saturday, February 15, and Monday, February 17. We will reopen on Tuesday, February 18, at 9 a.m.

As a reminder to everyone, the Long Beach Public Library's 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 in the main meeting room.

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!

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Long Beach School District celebrates outstanding achievements



Special to Long Beach Breeze
Pictured (l to r) are Administrator of the Year Justin Sutton, Teacher of the Year Hannah Dulin and Parent of the Year Haley Rishel.

Special to Long Beach Breeze

The Long Beach School District (LBSD) recently announced the recipients of the 2024 LBSD Parent of the Year, Teacher of the Year and Administrator of the Year awards, along with the school-level teacher and parent winners, individuals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication, passion and commitment to the students and community of Long Beach.

Named as Parent of the Year was Haley Rishel. District officials say that Rishel has been “an invaluable asset to the Long Beach School District community. Her tireless efforts in organizing events, supporting teachers, and advocating for students have made a



Special to Long Beach Breeze
Pictured are Teachers of the Year: for Reeves Elementary, Breana Swarnowicz; for Quarles Elementary, Brianna Graves; for Long Beach Middle School, Hannah Dulin; for Harper McCaughan, John McCreary; and for Long Beach High School, Sean Walters.

significant impact. Haley's dedication to fostering a positive and inclusive environment for all students is truly commendable.”

Hannah Dulin was awarded Teacher of the Year. District officials say that Dulin, “a beloved educator at Long Beach Middle School, has been recognized for her innovative teaching methods and unwavering commitment to student success. Hannah's ability to inspire and engage her students has earned her the admiration of both her peers and the community. Her dedication to creating a nurturing and stimulating learning environment is evident in everything she does for her students.”

Honored as Administrator of the Year was Justin Sutton, the principal of Long



Special to Long Beach Breeze
Pictured are Parents of the Year (l to r): for Long Beach High School, Breauna Finch; for Quarles Elementary, Brittany Robinson; for Long Beach Middle School, Haley Rishel; and for Harper McCaughan, Jennifer Breeland. Not pictured is Reeves Elementary Parent of the Year Victor Rodriguez.

Beach High School (LBHS), for his outstanding leadership and vision. District officials say “his dedication to the students, faculty and staff of LBHS goes beyond the classroom. Justin's commitment to excellence and his ability to foster a collaborative and supportive environment have made him a respected leader in the district.”

“We are incredibly fortunate to have such dedicated and passionate individuals in our district,” said LBSD Superintendent Dr. Talia Lock. “Haley, Hannah and Justin exemplify the very best of what our community has to offer. Their contributions have made a lasting impact on our students and schools, and we are grateful for their unwavering commitment to excellence.”

In addition to the district-wide honorees, the Long Beach School District also recognized the outstanding achievements of the school-level Parents and Teachers of the Year:

• **W. J. Quarles Elementary School**
Parent of the Year - Brittany Robinson
Teacher of the Year - Brianna Graves

• **Thomas L. Reeves Elementary School**
Parent of the Year - Victor Rodriguez
Teacher of the Year - Breana Swarnowicz

• **Harper McCaughan Elementary School**
Parent of the Year - Jenny Breeland
Teacher of the Year - John McCreary

• **Long Beach Middle School**
Parent of the Year - Haley Rishel
Teacher of the Year - Hannah Dulin

• **Long Beach High School**
Parent of the Year - Breauna Finch
Teacher of the Year - Sean Walters

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