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Good News You Can Use - February 1, 2024 - Vol. 10, No. 2 - Canton, Mississippi

Canton gets piece of largest single capital investment in state history



Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves (center) is pictured during the announcement of the largest economic development project in Mississippi's history. The governor is joined by the Madison County Delegation.

By Courtney Warren

Canton is once again making a mark in Mississippi history, as Mississippi lawmakers recently finalized a \$10 billion planned investment by Amazon Web Services, Inc. (AWS), an Amazon.com, Inc. company that will bring new jobs and economic development opportunities to the state. AWS is investing \$10 billion to establish multiple data center complexes in two Madison County industrial parks. One of the two complexes is planned to be built at the 927-acre Madison County Mega Site adjacent to the Nissan property in Canton.

This investment by AWS is the single largest capital investment in Mississippi history and is four times the size of the previous largest economic development project.

'This project will be transformational, not only for Canton and Madison County, but for the entire state," said Clay Mansell, a Canton native who serves as State Representative for District 56.

"All of us -- our citizens, organizations, schools and agencies that call Canton home -- must work to ensure Canton citizens are trained and equipped to qualify for the jobs in this new industry.

"I am thrilled to have AWS in one of

the counties that I represent," Mansell continued

"I am looking forward to working with them.'

The operation will start in 2025 with 268 employees, including 112 direct employees. By 2034, Amazon will reach 1,000 employees, of which 371 will be direct employees of the company earning \$70,000 salaries, with 629 contract employees earning 125-percent of the average state salary or greater, for an average wage of \$66,000.

AWS is the world's most comprehensive and broadly adopted cloud. These data centers will enable customers of all sizes and across all industries, such as healthcare, manufacturing, automotive, financial services, public sector, telecom, and more, to transform their businesses. Millions of customers—including the fastest-growing startups, largest enterprises, and leading government agencies—are using AWS to lower costs, become more agile and innovate faster. The new data centers will contain computer servers, data storage drives, networking equipment, and other forms of technology infrastructure used to power cloud computing.

Mississippi Major Economic Impact cont. on page 7

FUNDING DETAILS

The Senate approved House Bill 1, which created a fund in the state treasury into which \$4 million, appropriated by passage of House Bill 2, was made available to the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA).

The \$44 million will cover:

- \$32 million in training grants provided for the benefit of the company, which includes:
 - \$16 million for customizable training, recruitment, relocation, and other qualifying expenses with a 50-50 match from the company,
 - \$10 million for Institutions for Higher Learning training for engineers, Artificial Intelligence, data science and industrial technology, with a minimum of \$3 million to be spent with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, minority serving institutions or predominantly black institutions,
 - \$4 million to develop and implement a K-12 pipeline program to foster future talent, and
 - \$2 million to the Institutions of Higher Learning, Community Colleges, for workforce training and certification programs at mutually agreed places by the company and Accelerate Mississippi.
- \$6 million for government expediting support, such as MDA, Department of Environmental Quality, Public Service Commission, Public Utilities Staff, State Auditor, and Accelerate MS
- \$6 million to Madison County to begin the project's design and construction immediately.

Senate Bill 2001 approved incentives and a \$260 million bond, of which \$217 will be repaid by Madison County. Highlights of the \$260 million include:

- \$15.79 million for roads
- \$14.75 million for water system
- \$171.5 million for sewer system
- \$13 million for new fire station

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Brooks and Brent awarded MLK Essay scholarships





Canton High scholars Kamari Brooks and Daquavian Brent recently won scholarships by participating in the Rho Xi Lambda Alphas MLK Day Essay Contest. First-place winner Kamari Brooks received \$1,000, while second-place winner Daqavian Brent received \$906. Both young men delivered inspiring essays on the topic, "Where do we go today: Recommendations from Dr. King's perspective."

Solar farm comes to Madison Co.

Special to The Canton News

The Madison County Board of Supervisors, the Madison County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA), and officials from EDP Renewables North America recently

announced the company's plan to build a state-of-the-art solar farm in Madison County.

EDPŘ North America and its subsidiaries develop, construct, own and operate wind farms and solar throughout parks North America. Headquartered in Houston, Texas, fifty-eight with wind farms and nine solar parks, EDP Renewables North

America (EDPR NA) operates more than 8,200 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy projects. EDPR NA is owned by EDP Renewables and is the world's fourth-largest wind energy producer, and EDPR NA represents EDPR's largest market in terms of in-

stalled capacity and production.

EDPR NA has purchased and/or leased about 1,600 acres east of the Nissan facility for the project. This new project will create a \$150 million

investment for the county and will produce \$600,000 in property tax revenue to Madison County and the Canton Public School District.

EDPR NA will employ two hundred temporary jobs during the construction phase and two permanent jobs.

"We are delighted that EDP Renewables chose Madison Coun-Service Commis-



"The Madison County Board of Supervisors is glad to welcome EPR Renewables to Madison County," said Gerald Steen, President of the Madison County Board of Supervisors. 'We appreciate the leadership that MCEDA provided during the site selection and incentives process. This project will not consume any additional fire, police, or labor resources and will provide valuable revenue to Madison County.'







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CANTON NEWS Captain McGruders visit CPSD students



Mississippi Air National Guard Airman 1st Class Kentravius McGruder and Former United States Marine Corps Captain Kendarius McGruder with CPSD representatives.

Special to The Canton News

Former United States Marine Corps Captain Kendarius McGruder and Mississippi Air National Guard Airman 1st Class Kentravius McGruder recently visited the Canton Public School District (CPSD) High School Equivalency Program students. They shared information about the possible career opportunities that the military can offer. The McGruder brothers, from Sharon, Mississippi, have taken different career paths, but both agree that the military is an excellent way to pursue one's dreams in life.

Kendarius McGruder, who is a graduate of Ole Miss, aspires to become a pilot. He gave the students some valuable advice to help them achieve their goals in life. He said, "Remember 'I am somebody,' remain coachable, be mindful of the company you keep, and stay positive."

On the other hand, Kentravius Mc-Gruder wants to attend Mississippi State and become a construction engineer. The brothers also emphasized that they believe the military is a great way to pay for college expenses while serving their country.

They are the stepsons of Dr. Shelethia McGruder, the High School Equivalency Program Co-Coordi-

Palmer reelected to SNCC Board



The Board of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Legacy Project met in person for the first time in three years from June 20-21, 2023, in Washington, D.C. At the annual meeting, Canton native Cynthia Goodloe Palmer was re-elected as secretary. This will be Palmer's third term serving. Those civil rights veterans in attendance included (I to r), standing: Karen Spellman, Geri Augusto, Dorothy Zellner, Courtland Cox (chairman), Maisha Moses, Jen Lawson, Sharlene Kranz, Cynthia Goodloe Palmer (secretary) and Kim Johnson (recorder); and seated: Maria Varela, Judy Richardson, Charles Cobb, Freddie Biddle, Frank Smith and Larry Rubin (treasurer). Others who joined via Zoom were Joyce Ladner, Timothy Jenkins and Cleve Sellers.



Williams accepted for publication



Williams wrote the poem "Why Can't I?"

Special to The Canton News

Recently, Canton Public School District's Angel Williams' poem "Why Can't I?" was accepted for

publication in the Creative Communications poetry contest. Williams' poem was one of only forty-five entries that were accepted for publica-

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Canton Garden Club: There is always more to arrange

Special to The Canton News

Tuesday, January 9, in the new year of 2024, Joe and Judy Rankin, of Rankin Interiors presented to the

Canton Garden Club. Wanda Baldwin and Sherrye Lacour hosted the meeting, to the great delight of a growing crowd. Joe's displayed talent for stunning architectural flower arrangement left speechseveral less members who doubted there was much new to learn.

Rankin Joe fell into flower arranging by serving clients

through his interior design business co-owned with his wife, Judy. Increasing demand for his unique approach led him to growing many of his own plants. Joe is currently the lone masculine presence in the Jackson Garden Club, and he advocates for low-cost, homegrown designs so cleverly disguised they could be

featured the cover of lifestyle magazines.

After thrilled gasps and sur-prised laughter, the Canton Garden Club voted to keep accepting new

members, with invitation from a current participant.

The group can reached through the Gar-Canton den Club

page. The group second

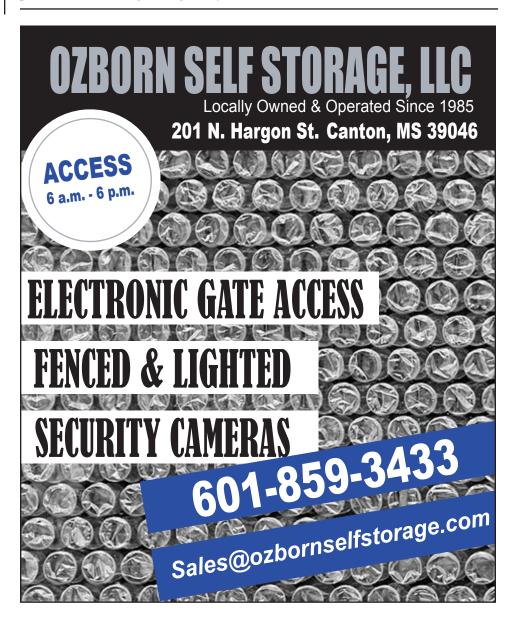
Facebook the Tuesday of every month and values

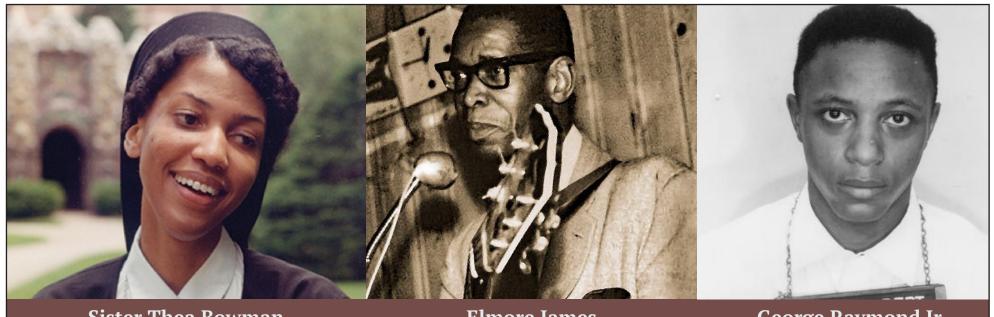
gracious gardening, serving the Can-

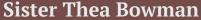
ton community, conservation, and

having fun.









Elmore James

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CANTON

— Heritage & Legacy —

Canton Tourism celebrates
Canton's Black History & Black History Month
Canton Tourism salutes 100 Black Men of Canton

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On the Shelf: Books for Black History Month

By Courtney Warren

I love talking about books, so I'm sure it's no surprise that On the Shelf is one of my favorite columns. All readers should have books in their hands with characters that look like them. We should all be able to fight dragons, sail pirate ships, and fall in love.

Representation in literature is vital, and I'm so grateful to see the voices of people of color be elevated more and more in literature, specifically children's literature. Here are a few awesome books to add to your list. For more information about diverse books, visit DiverseBooks.org.

Adult Literature: The Black Angels

The unfold story of the nurses who helped cure tuberculosis

New York City, 1929. A sanatorium, a deadly disease, and a dire nursing shortage

Young Adult: Skin of the Sea, by Natasha Bowen

This was heartbreakingly beauti-

ful. Skin of the Sea is book one of a duology. According to the publisher, "Simi prayed to the gods, once. Now she serves them as Mami Wata—a mermaid—collecting the souls of those who die at sea and

rather see her fail . . . "Danger lurks at every turn, and draws T GONNA LET

vengeful gods,

treacherous lands,

and legendary creatures.

she must brave

blessing their journeys back home.

"But when a living boy is thrown overboard, Simi goes against an ancient decree and does the unthinkable—she saves his life. And punishment awaits those who dare to defy the gods.'

"To protect the other Mami Wata, Simi must journey to the Supreme Creator to make amends. But all

is not as it seems. There's the boy she rescued, who knows more than he should. And something is shadowing Simi, something that would

Simi

tion learned to celebrate a hero. Kathlyn highlights the foot soldiers who fought to make Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a national holiday through years of protests and petition. Picture book: Sulwe, by Lupita Nyong'o closer,

This is easily one of the most stunning picture books I have

and it's the story of how our na-

ever seen. So much so, that any time we see it out in the wild, my daughter makes a point to mention it to me. We are all made by God, and this story celebrates the beauty of His creation when a little girl feels sad about the color of her skin compared to her family's. According to the publisher, "Sulwe has skin the color of midnight. She is darker than everyone in

her family. She is darker than anyone in her school. Sulwe just wants to be beautiful and bright, like her mother and sister. Then, a magical journey in the night sky opens her eyes and changes

Because if she fails, she risks not only the fate of all Mami Wata, but also the world as she knows it. Elementary Readers: Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round, by Kathlyn J. Kirkwood, illustrated by Steffi Walthall This memoir is told in verse, everything.

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cont. from front page

Canton

Authority funds will be used to assist with infrastructure needs, workforce training and site development.

"Mississippi has done it again," said Governor Tate Reeves. "This record-shattering \$10 billion private sector investment will not only create one thousand high-tech, high-paying

jobs for Mississippians, but it will result in our state remaining at the forefront of innovation. Mississippi is building a business climate that is ripe for further growth, especially in the tech-

nology sector. On top of that, we're doing what it takes to prepare our workforce to take on these high-paying jobs of the future. There really is something special happening here in Mississippi, and the world is noticing."

According to Reeves and others, the revenue from this agreement is expected to have a significant impact on both Madison County and Canton public schools.

Bill Cork, director of the Mississippi Development Authority, said there is a \$2 million line item with the Institutions of Higher Learning to create positions that will engage with the community and help motivate individuals to pursue careers in the associated industry.

Cork said training will focus on STEM education curriculum, certifi-

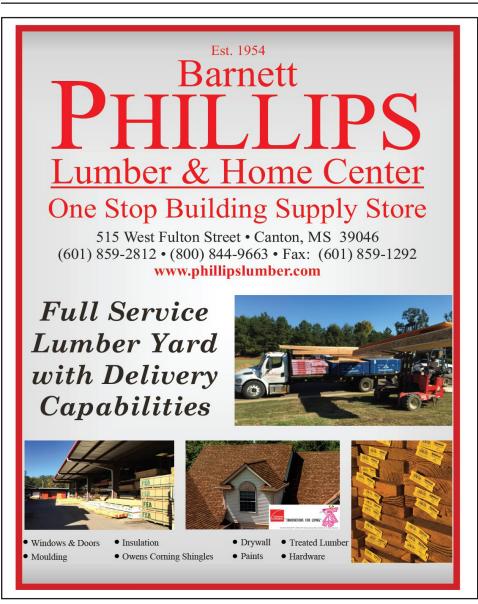
cation programs and internationally renowned programs within the company's own operations. The process will consist of building the team and working with communities and the company

to embed curriculum within in K-12 schools, community colleges and universities.

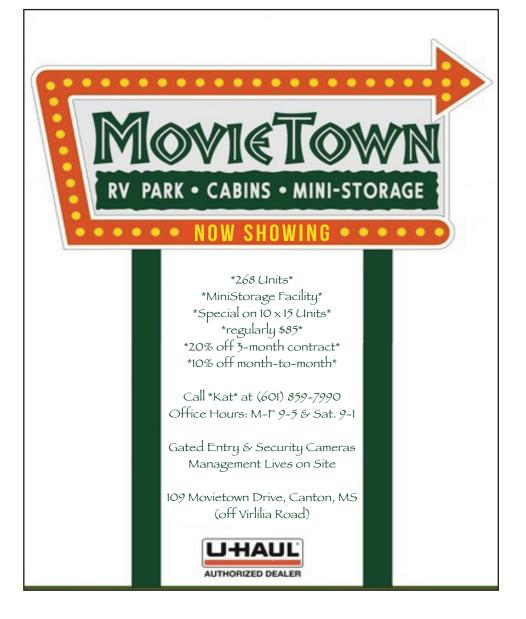
Reeves said the Amazon data centers should be up and running by 2027, with some construction already beginning.

Over the next three years, Reeves has said the company could require between 6,000 and 7,000 construction workers in order to complete the facilities at the two sites. Reeves indicated that number could end up being closer to 15,000.





aws





MCBL&F Steering Committee 2024 announced



The Madison County Business League & Foundation announces its 2023-24 Madison County Youth Leadership Steering Committee. This Committee plans engaging and informative program days for the MCYL class and supplies leadership skills training to the students. The Madison County Youth Leadership's mission is to provide students with a deeper understanding of the careers available in Madison County in an environment that develops their leadership skills and encourages graduates to take their knowledge and their experience into the community for the betterment of Madison County as a whole. Pictured (I to r) are, front row: Jan Collins, Executive Director, MCBL&F; Rochelle Thompson, American Lung Association; Ellis Wise, Executive Assistant, MCBL&F; Dr. Don Burnham, Holmes Community College; and back row: Dr. Mary Sims Johnson, MCCSA; Melanie Green EVIT Bealty; and Bot McNulty, Ballow Wealth Management, Not Bistured: Champe McDonald, Noel Schaffer. Greer, EXIT Realty; and Pat McNulty, Ballew Wealth Management, Not Pictured: Chamar McDonald, Neel-Schaffer.



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100 Black Men of Canton continues community outreach

By Courtney Warren

Recently, the 100 Black Men of Canton gave back to children for the holidays. Visits with mentees and children at Luther Branson Elementary School, Camden Elementary School, McNeil Elementary School, and Myers School of Art focuses on their motto, "What they see is what they will be."

The 100 Black Men of Canton, Inc., an organization focused on mentoring and helping the community.

Executive Director Dr. Leroy Lacy said, "Our number one goal is mentoring and making sure the national office works with us in keeping track on what we do for our students. That's what we do every year to try and change the climate on students and their study habits and grade habits."

Established in 2003, the Canton chapter is one of at least 118 local chapters across the United States and London with the vision of upholding the four focus areas established by the national organization. With their first focus being mentoring, these gentlemen go into the elementary, middle, and high schools to mentor students.

"Under our second focus, edu-

cation, we go into the schools and talk with superintendents and principals about educating our students and getting them what they need. The third focus is health and wellness, which goes on as students are not healthy, are not able to get their lunches, and are not studying. We do that in the community for our senior citizens as well. For our last focus, economic development, some of the city leaders come to us and ask for different items that they are trying to bring into the city and to see what we think about certain things," Lacy said.

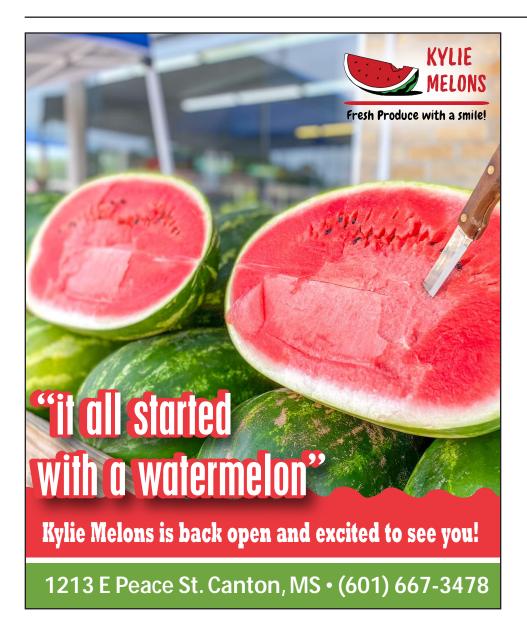
organization's mentorship The reaches beyond the city of Canton and extends to schools across Madison County including Camden Elementary School, Canton Elementary School, Huey L. Porter Middle School, Jimmie M. Goodloe Elementary School, Nichols Middle School, and Reuben B. Myers Canton School of Arts and Sciences. Along with mentoring students, the 100 Black Men awards 10 scholarships to two deserving students at Canton High School, Germantown High School, Madison Central High School, Ridgeland High School, and Velma Jackson High School. In the past, they have given over \$150,000



Special to The Canton New

in scholarships.

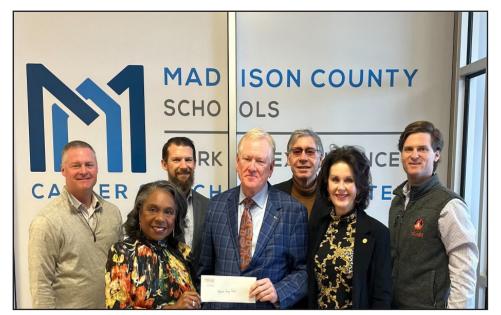
"While mentoring is our number one feature, we still intend to give scholarships and if the climate allows, we still intend to go on field trips," Lacy said. Each year, the 100 Black Men of Canton sponsors events for community outreach, mentoring, and recruitment such as a softball team during summer, a catfish rodeo, an annual gala, and field trips for mentees.







MC Community Trust presents VR | Canton Lions: February update



Pictured I to r: Nason Lollar, MCCT; Blaise King, MCS; Kevin Loud, Lobaki; Sanford Moore, Lobaki; Supt. Charlotte Seals, MCS; Barney Daly, Community Bank of MS; Jan Collins, MCBLF.

Special to The Canton News

The Madison County Community Trust (MCCT), philanthropic arm of the Madison County Business League & Foundation (MCBLF), proudly presented Madison County Schools (MCS) with a check for Virtual Reality headsets provided by MCBL&F member Lobaki. These headsets allow students the ability to experience

career exploration virtually and are equipped with training simulations for certain career choices. This grant continues the commitment to training the future workforce of Madison County. Pictured left to right: Nason Lollar, MCCT; Blaise King, MCS; Kevin Loud, Lobaki; Sanford Moore, Lobaki; Supt. Charlotte Seals, MCS; Barney Daly, Community Bank of MS; Jan Collins, MCBLF.



Canton Lions (I to r) include: Joy Foy, Tim Pickett, Simon Collier, Moses Thompson, Cheyenne Stewart, Tamika Liddell, Chan Chandler, Danny Murphy, Gary Teasley, Kathy Ozborn, Mike Ozborn, Daniel Logan and Arnel Bolden.

By Guest Columnist Joy Foy

Canton Lions started the new year with programs from the Executive Director of Mississippi Soil and Water, Nick Ivy, and Mississippi Central

District Highway Commissioner Willie Simmons, before having to cancel the third week due to icy weather. Planning is underway for projects and fundraising ideas. Scholarship information will be available soon.







Sims encourages Cantonians to remember Black leaders



Special to The Canton News

By Guest Columnist Daphne Johnson-Sims

According to the Library of Congress and the History Channel, Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history.

Also known as African American History Month, the event grew out of "Negro History Week," the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to cele-

brating Black history.

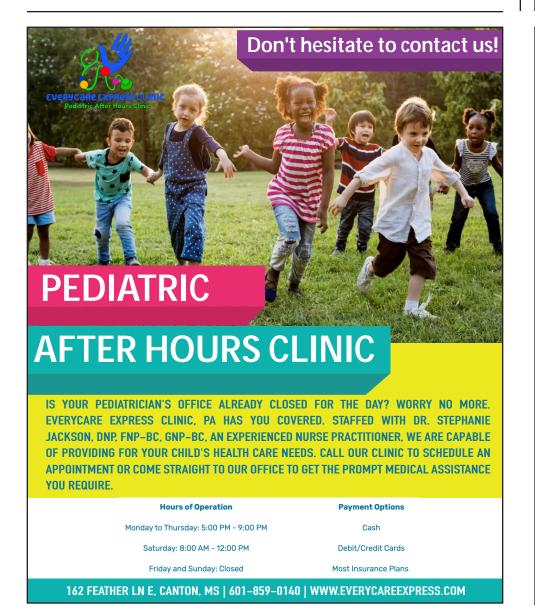
"If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl, But by all means, keep moving."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

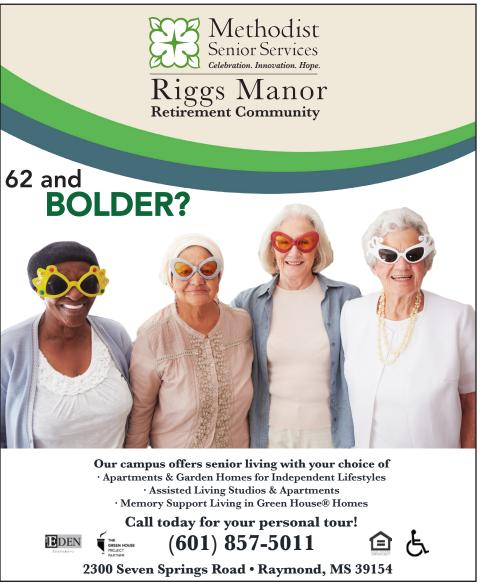
"It takes a lot of blood, sweat, and tears to get to where we are today, but we have just begun. Today, we begin in earnest the work of making sure that the world we leave our children is just a little better than the one we inhabit today."

- President Barack Obama

EDITOR'S NOTE: Daphne Johnson Sims is a former Alderwoman for city of Canton and community leader.



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Remember When: Knowing when to plant and enjoy the snow cream

By Guest Columnist Mary Jane Boutwell

The time is getting close to planting a garden. Several conversations lately have brought back memories of doing it wrong. One was Grandmaw having the workers plant the corn crop during a wonderful spell in January. After Daddy jumped all over her for planting at the wrong time, it was the best crop ever.

Then someone planted field corn in July. All the farmers teased him about his bad timing. A beautiful crop—two small trailer loads were swapped for a gilt, female first time bred pig. That, with a barn full of corn, helped feed a growing family. Oh, the corn variety in Mexican Hune. It was planted in Mexico in June. July in Mississippi worked—that year.

It has been interesting to see the renewed interest in home gardening. COVID had a lot to do with that. But raised beds, working with children, older adults, and handicapped people –outside- and introducing different foods have been a great benefit.

I remember going out East Peace Street. You could occasionally see a lady behind a fence on the south side. She was working on her raised bed garden from a wheelchair. I always thought she was one of the victims of the early 1950s polio epidemic. Her get up and go did not get up and went.

Even though following a mule

was not always the most pleasant place to be, the plowboys learned a You lot. tolcan erate and work around a stubborn smelly mule.

At least the smell may pass. It is possible to walk and work a field that

today would be considered the wrong texture—as wrong as pork fat, fried food, whole milk, butter—lots of things.

But, I do know of one young boy

who learned during those days following a mule. Years later, he applied that knowledge to mechanical farming. He would walk into a field, kick a clod of dirt, and tell if it was ready to plant. A lot of

dirt clods kicked behind a mulepulled plow. With the

With the extreme cold we have had the past several weeks, this next bit seems appropriate—especially if

bit seems appropriate-especially if you live a few miles north of Canton. A young

Mississippi man stationed at the Chicago Navy base was there for the first food snowfall of the season. He

got milk, sugar, vanilla and a bowl.

Mixing the first of these ingredi-

ents into a bowl, he went looking. The close-by parking lot had an area of clean deep snow. Surely, we have all had snow cream. When the other sailors saw what he was doing, there were questions and laughter. After completing the concoction, an area of the parking lot was roped off with threats if anything dirtied the snow.

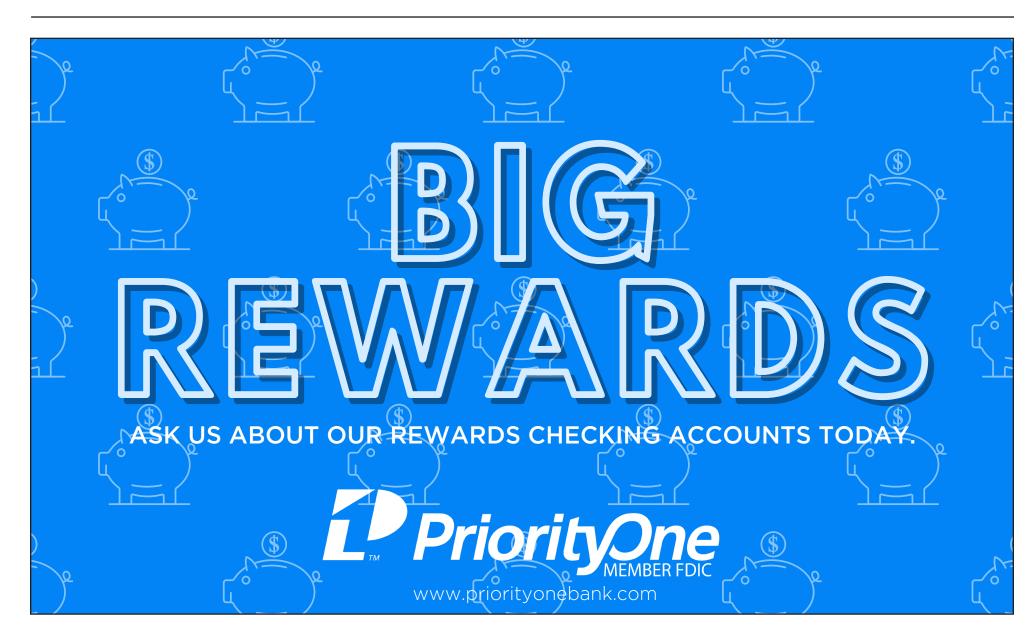
Recently, I was looking through some older cookbooks. Snow ice cream—cook the milk and sugar, add a can of sweetened condensed milk. Sounds to me you would need to get the ice cream freezer out.

One last tale—back in the late 1930s/early 1940s, my older brother was making ice cream on a late spring day. The freezer was a bucket with ice, some salt, and a syrup bucket with a handle for the milk mixture. As the bucket was twisted back and forth by the hand, a spring blizzard flew in. With snow blowing on them, they finished the ice cream and enjoyed eating it.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mary Jane Boutwell is a passionate historian and is thrilled to share stories about "way back when".



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Cantonians named to scholars lists at Mississippi College



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Aubrey Weathersby of Canton was recently named to the Fall 2023 President's List at Mississippi College. Named to the Dean's List were Cantonians Caleb Ries, Kathrine Coward, Lindsey Buie, Ava Sylve, Cody Ellis, Kaitlynn Anderson and Lindsey Newman.

The Mississippi College Office of Academic Affairs releases the President's and Dean's Lists after the close of fall and spring semesters each academic year. To be eligible for the President's List, a student must maintain a 4.0 grade point average, based on a 4.0 system. The student must take a full course load of at least twelve semester hours of undergraduate credit, with all academic courses impacting their grade point average. To be eligible for the Dean's List, a student must maintain a 3.5 grade point average, based on a 4.0 system. The student must take a full course load of at least twelve semester hours of undergraduate credit, with all academic courses impacting their grade point average.

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Madison County Farm Bureau talks with Commerce A. Gipson

By Guest Columnist Joy Foy

Madison County Farm Bureau hosted a meeting on January 11, 2024, at Rob's Fellowship Hall of Thornton Chapel. Mississippi Farm Bureau President Mike Mc-Cormick, and Mississippi Commissioner of Agricultural and Commerce Andy Gipson were invited to share with the group plans for the future and to answer questions. Approximately 40 attended and the discussion ranged from over population of deer to solar farming. Commission Gipson and Mr. Mc-Cormick stayed after the program for one on one visits. Farm Bureau Board Member Sammy Blossom said, "Getting together."



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