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Living

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Old & New



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- Pillar of Picayune E.F. Tate
- A Peak Behind the Curtain
- Remembering Katrina in Pearl River County
- Photo Galleries
- Spring Brunch!
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Pearl River County Living Magazine

Remembering our Past, Embracing our Future

I know. It's a mouthful.

Coming in right at ten syllables, Pearl River County Living Magazine takes a while to say, but then again, it's all necessary. If we were to drop the 'County', folks would surmise that we were here to cover our fair sister city to the south, but that's not what we do. I guess we could've dropped the 'Living', but that's the whole point of what we're doing here. If we were to go without both, well the mercurial body of water that is our namesake could refer to anywhere along the historic 400 miles of waterway. We prefer to be more exact.

Pearl River County Living Magazine is the result of a year's worth of planning and preparation by the editorial and sales team at Picayune Item. 'Picayune Living' was our nameplate for years, but we wanted to expand our focus to include everything from Nicholson to Poplarville, and sometimes a bit beyond. We're here to provide you with lifestyle, history, entertainment, community and business information that is longer form, more in-depth, and more in

tune with the people who make our area the bastion of southern charm that has always been our community's calling card.

In this, our premiere edition, we have a piece by Alex Moraski on E.F. Tate, one of Picayune's founding fathers and, among many other accomplishments, the first publisher of the Picayune Item. Alex delves into the man from New Orleans who came up the tracks to put his stamp on the then tiny town of Hobolochitto.

Correspondent and ace intern Robyn Woods delivers a personal account of her senior year with PRC's Show Choir. The hard work and dedication these young folks put into their craft is a heartwarming testament to our school system's high achievers.

I chime in with a little essay I like to call 'Home by Dark', a series of mini-travelogues to easy-to-reach places just outside our collective comfort zone. This issue, I visit Biloxi for a college baseball game, and by chance meet a couple whose life's journey curiously mirrors my own.

We also have our take on the 20th anniversary of Hurricane

Katrina; not so much focusing on the devastation, but rather on the will of our communities to help each other in times of need. It's a sentiment that's evident in little ways every day, but reached new heights in the aftermath of the historic storm.

Edition #1 also has a broad-ranging photo gallery, from our 'sneaux day' back in January, to Mardi Gra and more. If we can find room, we might even sneak in a recipe or two. This edition is bursting at the seams, with varied contributions we hope in some way brings to life the place we call home.



DD Singleton

David D. Singleton
General Manager

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Ink and Ambition:



E.F. Tate and the Birth of The Picayune Item

By Alexander Moraski
Pearl River County Living

E.F. Tate the visionary founder of The Picayune Item, a banker, developer, and two-term mayor who helped shape Picayune's identity.

In a world before television and social media, newspapers were the pulse of a town—the lifeblood of local conversation, enterprise, and identity. For Picayune, Mississippi, that pulse began to beat steadily in 1904, thanks to a visionary named Eastman Francis Tate.

Known to most as E.F. Tate, he was a businessman, banker, developer, and ultimately, a newsman. But to the generations who grew up reading the black-and-white pages of *The Picayune Item*, he was something more: the founder of a paper that would document the heartbeat of a growing Southern town for more than a century.

A Newspaper Born with a City

When *The Picayune Item* rolled off the press for the first time in 1904, it was more than just newsprint—it was a declaration of identity for a fledgling town. That same day, the Bank of Picayune opened its doors, which Tate established. He understood that both commerce and communication were essential to community building. One handled capital. The other handled connection.

The newspaper was initially printed in Poplarville and shipped by train to the Bank of Picayune, where it was addressed and mailed from the second floor. In a charming footnote of family history, Tate's daughter, Mrs. Lena Mae Napier, recalled addressing the early editions—and receiving a single nickel from her father for her efforts.

From the very beginning, *The Item* was deeply personal to Tate. He poured his vision into its first editorial, famously stating:

“We believe that no enterprise nor personal efforts can wield a greater power for the upbuilding of the town and country than a newspaper properly edited.”

So, *The Picayune Item* became a mirror of the town's progress, chronicling births, deaths, weddings, storms, triumphs, and tragedies.

The Man Behind the Press

E.F. Tate's journey to journalism was born from his deep commitment to the people of Picayune. Long before the first paper hit the streets, Tate had already built a foundation for civic growth. He helped develop Picayune's first subdivision, known as Tate Row. He founded the Bank of Picayune. He later served two terms as mayor and officially recognized the town as a city in 1922. But the creation of *The Item* may have been his most enduring legacy. He saw the press as a



business and a civic service that could educate, unify, and uplift. His deep religious values and public spirit were evident in every corner of the publication.

A Legacy Carried Forward

Under Tate's guidance, *The Picayune Item* became a trusted institution. Even decades after he died in



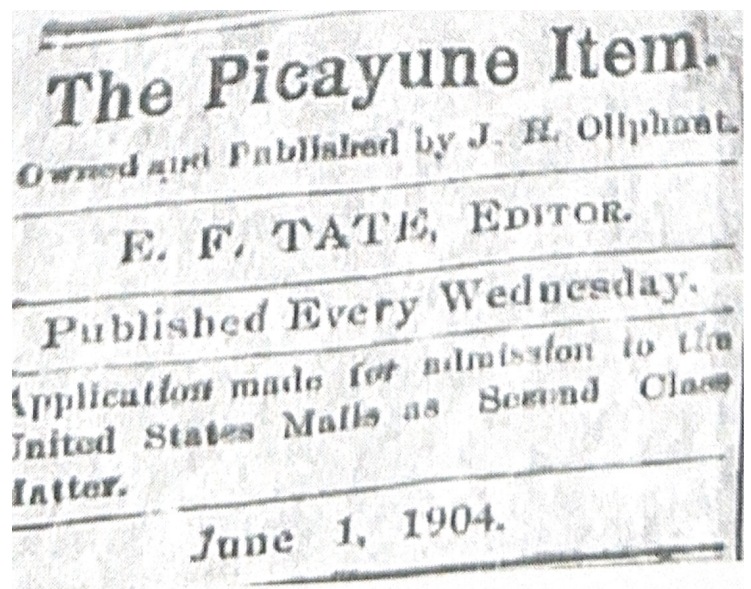
Drawing of the E.F. Tate Mansion by Anna Pigott Sabree

1933, the paper remained central to community life. 1950 The Item honored his contributions with a feature in its Bank of Picayune section. In 1978, local journalist David A. Farnell reflected on Tate's original editorial, linking his words to a continued tradition of local journalism and community advocacy.

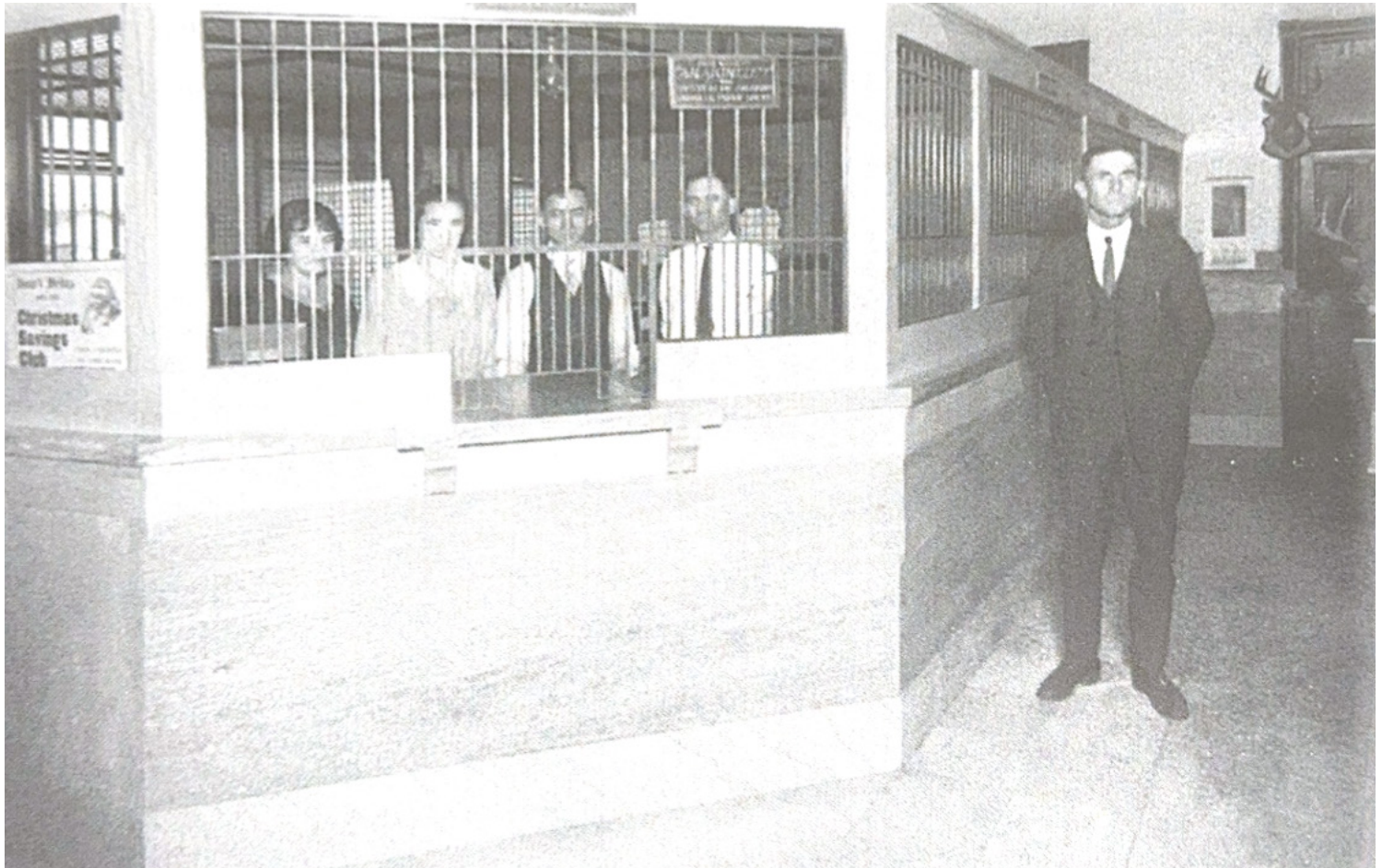
Over the years, The Item has covered the Civil Rights Movement, local elections, natural disasters, and the everyday triumphs and losses that define a small Southern town. At its core, it always carried the spirit of E.F. Tate, a man who believed in the written word as a builder of places and people.

More Than Just News

Today, as newspapers face uncertain futures, The Picayune Item reminds us of what a local paper can be. It's not just a source of information—it's a memory keeper, a watchdog, and a front porch where the town gathers. And it all began with one man's vision, a printing press, and the belief that a town's story deserves to be told.



A Special thanks to Mayor Jim Luke for supplying pictures and resources from his book "Gateway to Picayune's Prosperity"



Interior of Bank of Picayune Jan. 1925

Keep an eye out for ...

Select Upcoming Events from Across the Region

April 2025

Picayune Spring Street Festival

Date: April 5-6, 2025

Location: Downtown Picayune, MS

Details: Live music, arts and crafts vendors, food booths, and local shopping in a festival atmosphere.

Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival

Date: April 11-13, 2025

Location: Ponchatoula, LA

Details: Rides, food, music, and strawberries galore in this regional favorite festival.

Wellness in the Park

Date: April 19, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Location: Crosby Commons, Picayune, MS

Details: Pet wellness services, food trucks, vendors, and family activities.

Kids Day at the Commons

Date: April 26, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: Crosby Commons, Picayune, MS

Details: Free event with fun jumps, face painting, pet adoptions, free hot dogs and drinks.

20th Annual Crawfish Cookoff

Date: April 26, 2025

Location: Fritchie Park, Slidell, LA

Details: All-you-can-eat crawfish, live music, and activities for all ages.

Abita Springs Busker Festival

Date: April 2025 (Exact date TBA)

Location: Abita Springs, LA

Details: Live street performers, musicians, and entertainers in a unique outdoor setting.

June 2025

Kids College Summer Camps

Date: Begins June 2025

Location: Pearl River Community College, Poplarville, MS

Details: Hands-on summer learning with STEM, arts, health, and other topics for various age groups.

Slidell Heritage Festival

Date: June 28, 2025

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: Slidell, LA

Details: Food vendors, live music, craft booths, and a fireworks finale.

Pearl River 4th of July Celebration

Date: June 28, 2025

Time: 5:00 PM

Location: Pearl River, LA

Details: Live entertainment, food, and fireworks celebration for Independence Day.

July 2025

Fourth of July Celebration

Date: July 4, 2025

Location: Picayune, Friendship Park

Details: Parades, fireworks, concerts, and family fun.

Madisonville Old-Fashioned 4th of July Festival

Date: July 4, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: Madisonville, LA

Details: Traditional 4th of July celebration with parade, games, food, and fireworks.



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The Show Choir for Pearl River Central High School takes the stage

My Show Choir Experience Behind the **CURTAIN** By Robyn Woods PRC Living

The music swells, the lights burn hot against my skin, and for a moment, everything else disappears. The rhythm pulses through me, my every movement in sync with the beat, and I am no longer myself. I am a storyteller, a character, a performer bringing stories to life. This is show choir: a world of music, motion, and storytelling where every second on stage counts.

At its core, show choir is more than just singing and dancing; it's a high-energy fusion of music, movement, and storytelling. Unlike traditional choirs, we don't just stand and sing. We combine harmonies with movement, emotion, and theatrical flair to create a visually and musically captivating experience. Every year, groups craft a show around a central theme, complete with costumes, staging, and intricate choreography. We compete, we perform, and most importantly,

we bring stories to life. Groups participate in competitions where they are judged and scored based on factors like vocal quality, choreography, and overall presentation.

When I first joined the show choir in sixth grade, I had no idea how much it would change my life. I'd always loved singing and had a flair for the dramatic, so when my mother suggested I audition, I was all for it. I wasn't sure what to expect, but the idea of blending music and performance intrigued me. From day one, I was captivated by the energy of show choir and the magic of performing—the feeling of turning music into something alive, something powerful. I still remember stepping on stage for the first time. I was young, nervous, and new to the show choir world, terrified I might blank on stage. But as soon as the music started, my anxiety faded, and my body took over. After that performance, I knew I had found my passion. The rush of energy and the connection with my fellow performers was like nothing else I'd ever experienced. Looking back on my first performance, it's hard to believe how far I've come. Now, as a senior, I find myself leading our show with the same energy, passion and drive that first drew me to this world.

This year, our show's theme is Garden of Eden, and preparations for competition season have been in motion since August. A production like this doesn't come together overnight. Every element—music, choreography, costumes, staging—must be meticulously crafted and perfected. As soon as school started, we began intensive rehearsals, working every day in class to master complex rhythms, harmonies, and dynamics.

In October, our choreographer, Samuel Mulligan, flew in for a whirlwind week of “choreography camp.” It was brutal, but I loved every moment of it. Sam's choreography conveyed the emotion and message of the show in a way that was nothing short of incredible. When I saw the choreography alongside the music, I was able to truly appreciate the show for

the first time. I was able to fully envision what it would look like onstage, and it motivated me to work to make that vision a reality. Learning an entire show's worth of choreography in just a few days was both mentally and physically exhausting. My muscles ached, and by the end of each day, I could feel the fatigue settling into my bones. Even still, the sense of accomplishment I felt was unmatched. It wasn't just about the moves coming together; it was the shared experience with my team, the feeling of pushing through together, no matter how sore or tired we were. That week forged our group into a team, strengthening our bond as we pushed through the fatigue together, fueled by adrenaline and the excitement of what we were creating.

After our choreographer left, the real work began. Hours of rehearsals, both in class and after school, were spent refining every move and vocal nuance, ensuring we were polished and performance-ready. Costumes arrived and were fitted to perfection. Putting on my dress felt like stepping into character for the first time. The costume made me feel more connected to the role I was about to play. Dress rehearsals tested our stamina and allowed us to practice putting all the elements of our show together. We got in full costumes and did our show makeup and hair so we could get a feel for what it would be like onstage. We learned to navigate quick costume changes and perform flawlessly under stage lights. Dancing in heels and layered costumes was no easy feat, but repetition turned obstacles into second nature.

While being precise in our vocals and movement is essential, show choir is about more than just technical precision. It's about storytelling. The music, choreography, costumes, and set create the framework, but it's up to the performers to bring the show to life. If we don't fully embody our roles, the message falls flat. We must fully immerse ourselves in the performance to make the magic happen. That, to me, is the hardest—but most rewarding—part of show choir. For Garden of Eden, I don't just perform;

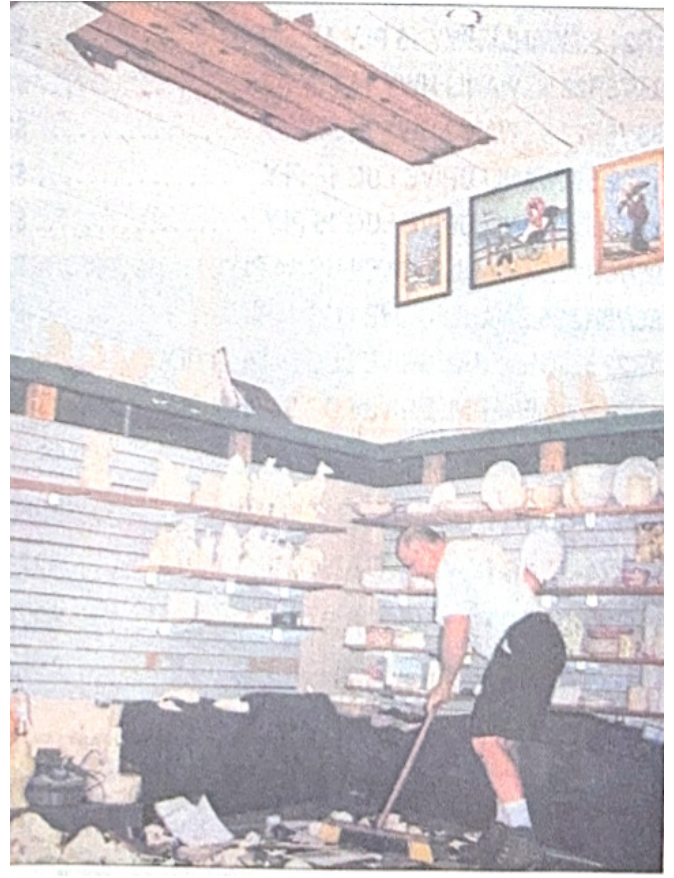
I transform. I become Eve, experiencing temptation, loss, and redemption. Before stepping on stage, I ask myself: What is my role in this story? How does my character interact with the others? What emotions am I trying to convey? The second the music starts, I am no longer just a performer. I am a storyteller, drawing the audience into our world. And that's the magic of show choir. It's not just about hitting the right notes or nailing the choreography. It's about creating a shared emotional experience where the audience doesn't just hear the music; they feel it.

Now, as competition season approaches, I find myself reflecting on how much this journey has shaped me. Every late-night rehearsal, every sore muscle, and every challenge overcome has brought me to this moment, and I'm proud of how far I've come. Show choir has taught me

more than just music and movement. It's taught me resilience, confidence, and the importance of collaboration and storytelling. The lessons I've learned—of perseverance, teamwork, and bringing my fullest self to every moment—are ones I will carry with me long after the final curtain falls. I've made lasting friendships and discovered a lifelong passion for performance. My senior year has been the best yet, and while I'm not quite ready for this chapter to end, I know one thing for sure: this experience has changed me in ways I never could have imagined. Show choir will always be a part of who I am, and I wouldn't trade it for the world.



“When the Wind Stopped Blowing”



Remembering Katrina: 20 Years Later in Picayune and Pearl River County

By Alexander Moraski
Pearl River County Living

Twenty years ago, on August 29, 2005, the wind stopped blowing—but not before Hurricane Katrina left an indelible scar on the Gulf Coast and changed life in Pearl River County forever.

In the early morning hours, as the monster storm roared ashore, residents of Picayune awoke to a world unrecognizable. Winds exceeding 100 mph ripped through neighborhoods, snapping trees, toppling power lines, and flattening homes. The streets of downtown Picayune, usually bustling with life, were left eerily silent, strewn with debris and waterlogged memories.

While New Orleans captured national headlines, communities like Picayune quietly bore the brunt of Katrina’s wrath. Every home and business in Pearl River County sustained some damage. Trees and power poles lay like fallen soldiers, blocking roads and severing lifelines. Electricity vanished, cell towers failed, and the digital world was silenced. As one resident described, the city felt like it had been thrust back into the 18th century.

“We lost so much,” said former Picayune Police Chief Jim Luke. “But what we found was something stronger—our people. The way this community came together was something I’ll

ON EDGE



Item photo by Mary Jim Weems

The line at the Super Wal-Mart in Picayune stretched all the way to the service road as people lined up to get the necessary supplies Wednesday in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

never forget."

A City on Edge

The front pages of the Picayune Item from that week painted a portrait of chaos, resilience, and hope. "ON EDGE," read one headline, capturing the tension that gripped the city as FEMA delays and supply shortages tested patience. Another read, "NORMALCY?" with photos of citizens trying to rebuild their lives amid looting fears and gas shortages. Within days, Historic City Hall became an Emergency Operations Command Center. With no functioning air conditioning, electricity, and little communication with the outside world, city leaders established a "mini-city." Volunteers worked side by side, handing out

HELP ARRIVES



Item photo by Brooke Westbrook

A volunteer from Virginia Baptist Mission Board of Disaster Relief put a smile on the faces of children yesterday as they stood in line for meals. All of the volunteers are doing their best to lift the spirits of Pearl River County residents after being struck by Hurricane Katrina.

Shelters provide temporary home

Occupants coping with hurricane aftermath

By BROOKE WESTBROOK
Item Lifestyles Editor

"Our shelter residents have banded together to take care of themselves," said Loraine Hill, county director of Pearl River County Department of Human Services.

The 484 residents at Picayune Junior High consist of people from Pearl River County, the coast, and Louisiana as are thankful to have a place to stay after Hurricane Katrina disrupted their lives.

A shelter opened at First Baptist Church of Picayune Sunday and provided shelter for 150 people, and the school Tuesday morning.

There was also another shelter at Roseland Park Elementary School which opened Sunday at 1:00 p.m. as provided shelter for approximately 20 people. After the storm, the shelter was moved to Picayune Junior High, which offered more space and easier access to those looking for shelter.

The Red Cross dropped off MREs and fruit for those who have had to make the shelter a temporary home.

"We had no way to get food during the storm or right after," said Hill. "The Baptist church group from Virginia is at First Baptist Church now and they are going to feed people. So at least no one knows where our next meal is coming from," said Hill.

Although the residents have not complained about their shelter, Hill mentioned they have nothing to sleep on and any donated bedding or towels would be appreciated. They have left



MREs, delivering water, and clearing roads with chainsaws and heavy equipment.

The Convoy of Hope Arrives

Just when despair threatened to take root, help arrived. Faith-based organizations like the Virginia Baptist Relief and Convoy of Hope and local churches and nonprofits brought truckloads of aid and a spirit of healing. Clothing, food, diapers, and medicine flowed in nationwide. Distribution sites were established in church parking lots and gymnasiums. These groups didn't just bring supplies—they brought hope.

"There were no strangers," remembered one volunteer. "Everyone was family after Katrina."

NORMALCY?

Looters better beware

Face stiff cash bonds if caught

By WILL SULLIVAN
Item Managing Editor

Looting suspects in Picayune may have a very difficult time getting out of jail.

Municipal Judge M.D. Tate has begun holding court now that Picayune police officers and visiting officers who are helping in the crisis left by Hurricane Katrina are bunking down at the Knights of Columbus Hall.

Judge Tate is setting the bond for those charged with looting at \$15,000 each, and the bond must be paid in cash, said Deputy Police Chief Tom Milar at the City Hall Emergency Operations Center early Wednesday.

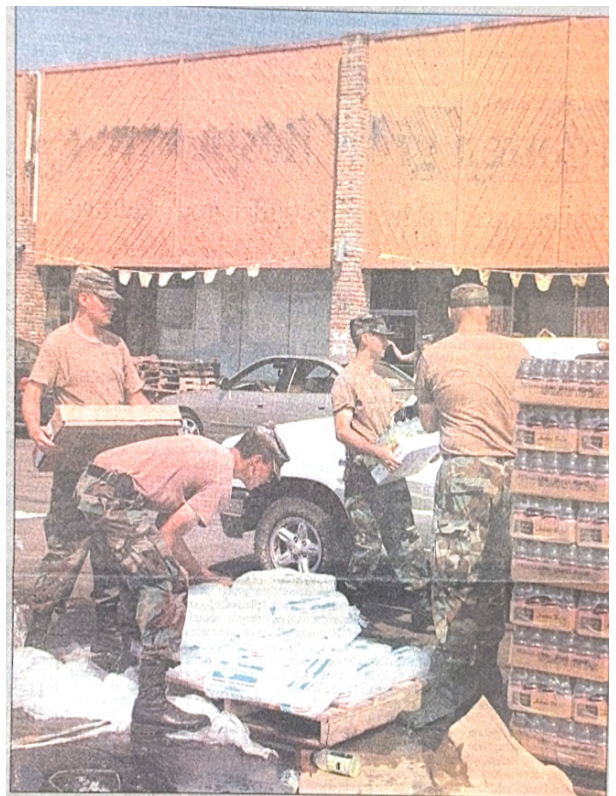
The continuing and persistent rumor that Picayune has issued a boil water notice is completely wrong, said City Manager Reggie Frierson. The Picayune Item has uncovered the probable source of the rumor, a press release issued by Pearl River County, which states such a notice has been issued by Picayune, Poplarville and the county.

Frierson and the city's water and sewage department managers say the water pressure has stayed up in Picayune because the pumps on the wells have never quit working and water pressure has been maintained at acceptable levels. Also, the city has consistently been able to treat its water with chlorine during the crisis caused by the hurricane.

The city has generators on the pumps that run when the power goes out.



Utility crew members go through a chow line at a staging area set up at Farmer Fresh Produce in Picayune. The linemen are from seven different states and Canada to help in restoring power. Item photo by Scott Weems



Item photo by Mary Jim Weems
National Guardsmen help distribute much appreciated ice and water at the FEMA distribution site located at Claiborne Hill shopping center. The guardsmen were surprised by how grateful and cooperative the people of Pearl River County have been in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.



A Community of Heroes

As recovery efforts expanded, the Picayune Item and city leaders began calling attention to the quiet heroes—police officers, utility workers, neighbors, and volunteers—who carried the community through. Billboards and posters were emblazoned: “For all who have helped... You are heroes.”

“We had no playbook for this,” said Luke. “But we had heart. We had each other.”

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina became a defining moment for Pearl River County. It tested the people’s character, and the people answered with courage, faith, and unity. It was

a time when national guardsmen handed out water alongside Sunday school teachers, and strangers instantly became family.

Looking Back, Moving Forward

Today, the wounds of Katrina have healed, but the memories remain etched into the community’s collective soul. A memorial plaque now stands near City Hall, not just to remember the destruction but to honor the resilience that emerged from it.

On this 20th anniversary, residents gather to mourn what was lost and celebrate what was found: strength, spirit, and an unbreakable bond.

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Home By Dark



Spring Break for Boomers

Collegiate baseball in Biloxi makes for a fun twilight road trip

Story and Photos By David D. Singleton
PRC Living

Spring break doesn't mean that much to those of us of a certain age. We may have fond memories of a trip to the Coast in our formative years, or maybe we remember the daily grind of the work that occupied us during our youth while others were craning their necks at Panama City. In either case, it's a memory that sinks deeper every year – a time well remembered if we ever took the time.

The only reason that any aspect of that annual rite of spring came up this year was due to some fortuitous marketing by the social media darlings over at

MGM Ballpark and the algorithm got me. College baseball was coming to Keelser Federal Park in Biloxi for the Hancock Whitney Classic. The Diamond Dawgs of Mississippi State are in it for a two night stand, playing the Monarchs of Old Dominion The pride of Thibodaux, Nichols University, takes the field the following night. The forecast was clear and work could wait, so the impulse won. It's like a mini-spring break for Boomers. Keesler Field is humming. It's a big crowd, but not quite to the stadium's optimistic capacity of 6,000. The lights standards are

glowing against the postcard-level twilight while a cool, stiff spring breeze rips in from the Gulf. I'm here for the first of the two games, this one against the Monarchs from Norfolk Va.

ODU is making their way through the Deep South during their week away from doldrums of academia; coming off of a weekend visit at Auburn and preceding a weekend tilt at Southern Miss. A surprisingly robust enrollment with Tier 1 research credentials belie the Monarch's humble beginnings as a school for the sharecroppers of the Delmarva peninsula. Then,

the annual tuition for a first-year freshman was \$50, or about the cost of two tickets in the cheap seats for tonight's affair.

The opponent and designated host team for tonight's game is Mississippi State, a team that no doubt requires less of an introduction. The Dawgs finished last year ranked #22 and made it to the Regional Final of the Charlottesville Regional before watching their season fade at the hands of #1 seed Virginia. Tonight's matchup seems just a tad bit lopsided.

Soon after finding my seat with my embarrassingly large hot dog and \$10 souvenir cup. I'm befriended by a retired couple who tell me more about the stadium, the regular inhabitants (the AA Biloxi Shuckers) and the area. Handing me extra napkins from her purse, the wife tells me she spent 30 years working as an emergency room nurse in Atlanta, God bless her, and now with her affable husband, are living the good life on the coast. It's all baseball, keno and condo association meetings from here on out.

The game itself fades in and out of the conversation, and we collectively keep an eye out for whistling foul balls. I get a rundown on the local casinos (good to know if I ever take up the sport) as well as restaurant recommendations. Turns out we went to high schools seven miles apart and separated by about as many years as well. The world is smaller than we give it credit for sometimes.

The baseball team from Nichols

“...living the good life on the coast. It's all baseball, keno and condo association meetings from here on out. “

is seated below us, well-behaved but relaxed under the watchful eye of a pair of steely-eyed coaches. Food is passed around, conversations range between rows and the laughter is quick. The Colonels are spending their night off at the old ball park, a regular busman's holiday. They add a lot to the atmosphere until the coaches bark orders to stand up and get in line. I can hear the head count as they file by.

As expected, the game was routine; the Diamond Dawgs winning with a 9-4 advantage after nine. Infielder Ace Reese, whose dad was apparently hoping for a pitcher, extended his hitting streak to eleven games.

The Monarchs fell to 4-10.

The season's early yet, with all the conference season remaining, and of course a few more weeks left in the semester. My little road trip was a good night and a welcome diversion that came with the gentle reminder that sometimes you get your day in the sun, sometimes you have to work on your day off.



Susie and I have a few laughs with the Mississippi State Mascot.

Let the Good Times Roll

Gallery - MLK Day



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Gallery - Mardi Gras Parade







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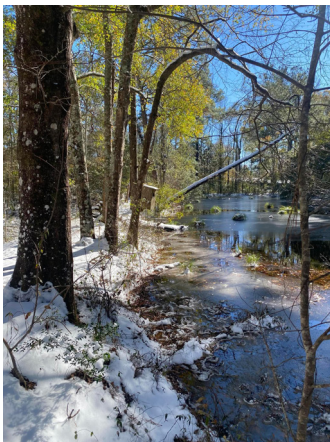
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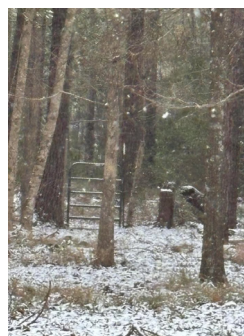
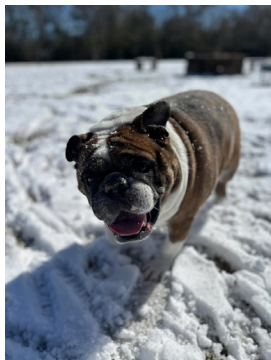
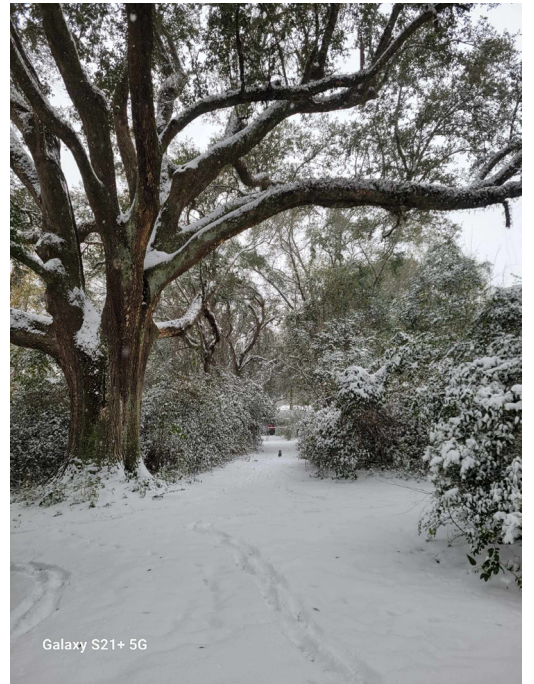
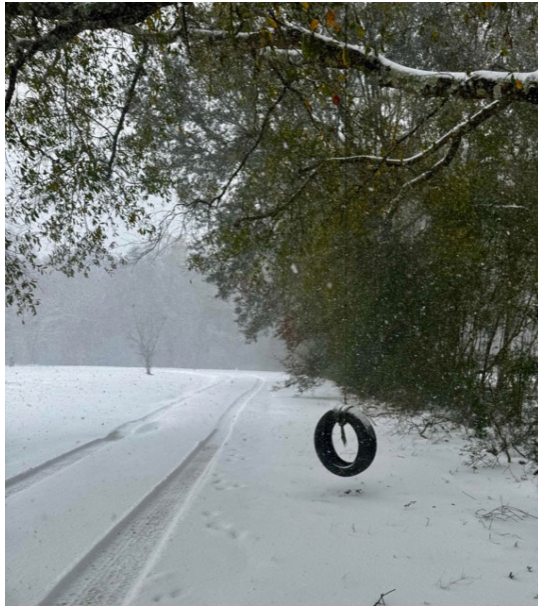


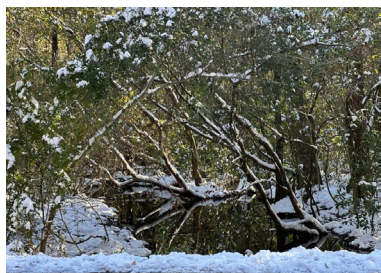
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Gallery - Sneaux Day







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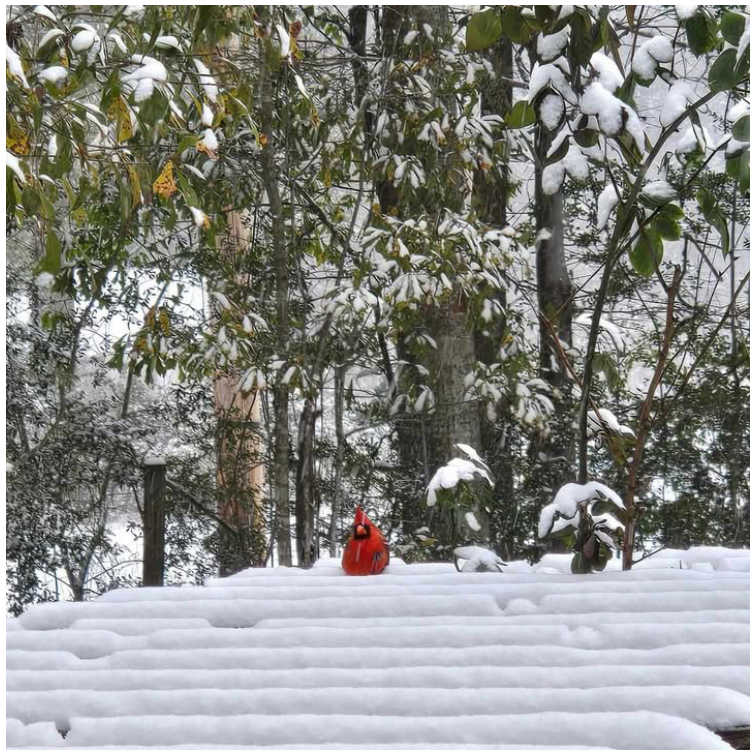
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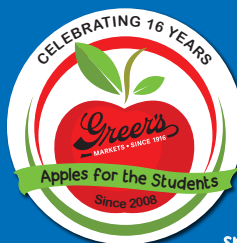
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A wooden cutting board is laden with a variety of brunch items. In the center are several golden-brown scones and biscuits. To the left are several dark, round sausage patties. A small white bowl of dark red jam sits at the top left, with a small knife resting in it. Another small white bowl of yellow butter is at the bottom left, with a butter knife. To the right of the scones are several slices of cooked bacon. At the bottom right are slices of red and yellow apples, a few strawberries, and some banana slices. In the background, a white pitcher with a red lid and a glass are partially visible. The entire scene is set against a red background.

Spring Brunch!

It's officially spring, which means we've entered the season with the most reasons to celebrate. Easter, Mother's Day, graduations, bridal and baby showers, to name just a few special events of spring – each one deserves a festive meal or at least, a sizable spread of appetizers and desserts. To feed guests inexpensively and easily on each of these special days, consider inviting guests to a springtime brunch.

Brunch is a wonderful midmorning repast that conveys just the right mood. Unlike breakfast or lunch, both of which require heavier meals, brunch can be simple and light, requiring less food and preparation time. And even better, a brunch table is usually pretty, filled with foods in lively spring colors like asparagus green, salmon pink, raspberry red and omelet yellow.

However, don't get the idea that serving simple food means sacrificing taste. The best food is about taking excellent-quality ingredients and cooking just enough to enhance them or serving delicious purchased food "as is" on your own platters. You can mix good-quality prepared food items like coffee cakes, muffins, scones and salads with a dish or two you've prepared yourself.

If your idea of cooking is assembling, you can arrange a delicious and filling buffet with items purchased from a local caterer, deli or bakery. If you plan to cook everything from scratch, prepare as much as you can in advance, leaving only last-minute heating or plating tasks for the day of the event.

Most simple brunches start with an assorted fruit tray filled with a variety of tossed cut-up or sliced fresh fruits such as pineapple, grapes, strawberries, peaches, nectarines

and raspberries. Any of your favorites can be served along with Creamy Fruit Dip or vanilla-flavored yogurt.

Main dishes may consist of a simple meat dish like meat-filled Brunch Tacos or Cheesy Bacon Turnovers.

Another way to feed a crowd is to assemble an assortment of fragrant breads like mini cinnamon rolls, muffins, bagels, biscuits and slices of gourmet breads in a variety of flavors. One of my favorite brunches featured a biscuit charcuterie board offering a variety of jellies, fruit spreads, meat and fruit.

A perfect partner to the bread is a platter of artisan cheeses. Include ones with different origins, textures and flavor profiles, along with an assortment of crackers and spicy mustards.

A beverage like Berry Good Iced Tea provides a special touch, especially when served in fancy wine or champagne glasses and topped off with a fresh berry or two.

Try these delicious brunch recipes that are perfect for any springtime celebration:

Berry Good Iced Tea

6 tea bags (wild berry or other berry flavor)
3 cups boiling water
Pineapple-orange-flavored or orange-flavored soft drink mix (1/2 of 1.2 ounce can or 1/4 of 1.5-ounce can)
5 cups cold water
Ice cubes

Place tea bags in a 2-quart

clear glass container. Pour boiling water over tea bags. Cover and let stand about 3 minutes. Remove tea bags; discard. Add drink mix, stirring to dissolve. Add cold water; stir. Serve over ice cubes.

Brunch Tacos

Nonstick cooking spray
1/2 cup chopped celery
1/2 cup chopped green sweet pepper
1 cup chopped cooked ham
1 8-ounce can crushed pineapple (juice pack), well drained, or
1/4 cup finely chopped apple
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese (4 ounces)
8 to 10 6-inch whole wheat or plain flour tortillas, warmed
Lightly coat a small nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Heat skillet over medium heat. Cook celery and sweet pepper in hot skillet until tender, stirring occasionally. Stir in ham and pineapple. Cook and stir until heated through. Remove from heat. Stir in cheese.

Spoon about 1/4 cup filling in the center of each warmed tortilla. Roll up tortillas. To warm: Wrap tortillas tightly in foil. Heat in a 350-degree oven about 10 minutes or until heated through.

Cheesy Bacon Turnovers

10-ounce package refrigerated pizza dough
2 tablespoons orange marmalade
1/4 cup chopped Canadian-style bacon or cooked ham

1/4 cup shredded Swiss cheese (3 ounces)
1/4 cup thinly sliced green onions
Freshly ground black pepper
1/8 cup of milk
Poppy seeds and/or sesame seeds (optional)

Line a baking sheet with foil; lightly spray foil with cooking spray. Set aside. Unroll pizza dough onto a lightly floured surface. Roll dough into a 12-inch square. Spread orange marmalade evenly over dough. Cut dough into nine 4-inch squares.

For filling, in a medium bowl stir together bacon, cheese, and green onions. Place about 3 tablespoons filling on each dough square. Sprinkle each lightly with pepper. Fold one corner of each dough square over filling to opposite corner. Use the tines of a fork to press edges to seal. Prick tops of turnovers with the fork.

Place turnovers on prepared baking sheet. Brush with milk and sprinkle with poppy seeds and/or sesame seeds (optional). Bake in a 400-degree oven for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden (filling will leak out slightly). Serve warm.

By Kara Kimbrough
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