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Scarecrow Convention Returns to Wiggins

BY DYLAN HODGE
REPORTER

Scarecrows may not have a brain, but they know when to return downtown! Businesses, churches, families, and organizations will pull out all the stops to decorate the city with scarecrow displays galore. Organized annually by the Pine Hill ladies since 2010, the Scarecrow Convention

is a community-wide event that promotes creativity and fun, ushering in the cool fall weather. The public will have the opportunity to vote online for their favorites at www.stonecounty.com. The popular vote winners will be awarded first, second, and third place

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Community Remembers Longtime Educator, Servant Leader Nell Murray

BY LYNDY BERRYHILL
EDITOR



Nell O'Neal Murray

Family, friends, and neighbors gathered last week at Perkinson Baptist Church to celebrate the life of Nell O'Neal Murray, a longtime pillar of the Stone County community, who passed away Sept. 9 at her home after a long battle with cancer. She was 79. Born Sept. 5, 1946,

Murray spent her life devoted to faith, family, education, and service. Married to the late Hilton Murray Jr. for 53 years, the two were remembered as partners who poured their energy into church work, community projects, education, and economic development.

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SHS Baseball Team Serves Hundreds in Community Effort

BY DYLAN HODGE
REPORTER

The Stone High School baseball team stepped off the field Saturday and into the kitchen, preparing and delivering more than 300 plates for the less fortunate at First Methodist Church in Wiggins. The service project, held on September 13, grew out of the team's fundraising campaign selling raffle tickets for new uniforms and upgrades to the baseball field. Head coach Adam Dyess said the players quickly proved they could handle the challenge. He said he thought the team would be running behind, but they took to it so fast that they were an hour ahead of schedule. "I was calling and seeing if places could take plates early," Dyess said.

"And what's crazy is they said they already had people lining up." Each food box came with three full helpings of spaghetti, green beans, dessert, and an iced canned soda. By the end of the day, spaghetti ran out, and the team filled the boxes with fried chicken and the same sides. Dyess said he was impressed with how smoothly the players worked together. "I just told them what needed to be in the plates, and made them team up and figure out how to do it successfully," he said. For the players, the project was about more than food. Miles Jackson, a 10th grader, said the effort felt personal. "It feels good to give back

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Gateway Christian Academy Eyes Magnolia Community Center as Sports Home Base

BY DYLAN HODGE
REPORTER

Gateway Christian Academy could soon have a home court advantage. Principal Gwen Taylor and volleyball coach Jo-Ann Dale appeared before the Stone County Board of Supervisors to ask about the possibility of using the Magnolia Community Center's gymnasium and other facilities for volleyball and archery practices and games. "We play a lot of homeschool teams right now, but in the future I would love to get our girls into the [Mid-South Association of Independent Schools]... but in order to do that, we really need a home base," Dale said. Dale told supervisors the community center would be an ideal fit. While the volleyball team currently has a facility for practices, moving them

to the community center would give players time to adjust to the gym and its property. Hosting games there could also bring fresh attention to the venue. "If we could use it, we could possibly bring in people to watch us out there," Dale said. "It may bring attention to the community." Dale said revenue from ticket sales would help pay referees, fund new equipment, and cover the cost of renting the center. District 3 Supervisor and Board Vice-President Stevie Lee welcomed the idea. "I've been out there all of my life, especially when the gymnasium was built," Lee said. "I think gospel sings have been about the only thing out there, and birthday parties. I'm glad to see something get started there."

Taylor said the archery team could also benefit from the space. "They're in a bind like us because we can't host home games... It's hard to get a shoot set up for them," she said. Board attorney Norris Hopkins said he was optimistic about finding a way forward. "I think the board probably needs to have some discussions on what's the best way to do that," Hopkins said. Volleyball season does not begin until August 2026, but archery season starts next month. Taylor said if the school could host even one event this year, it would showcase what the facility could offer in the future. "If we could possibly get in there and host something

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MSU Extension Launches Walk Mississippi Challenge

BY NATHAN GREGORY
MSU EXTENSION

A new exercise and nutrition initiative is challenging Mississippians to improve their health and fitness, one step at a time. Walk Mississippi and Live Healthy ... One Step at a Time is a six-week wellness program developed by the Mississippi State University Extension Service that encourages youth and adults to be more physically active and adopt healthier nutritional habits. The objective is for everyone who signs up to virtually walk 180 miles (the equivalent of the width of Mississippi), learn strategies and tips from MSU Extension's Walk-a-Weigh wellness program, and improve dietary and lifestyle behaviors. This no-cost program officially

begins Oct. 11 and wraps up on Nov. 21. During each week of the program, participants will receive weekly emails from MSU Extension nutrition specialist Qula Madkin providing educational materials and video demonstrations on a range of health and wellness topics. Some topics will include building physical activity into each day, preparing healthy meals and reducing sugar and fat intake. "Walk Mississippi is more than just a wellness challenge. It's a chance to build lifelong healthy habits, connect with others and take control of your well-being," Madkin said. "Whether you're looking to lose weight, reduce your risk of chronic disease or

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