

Clean Sweep was a big success

An estimated 400 volunteers take part in litter pick-up effort

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — Commissioner Henry Lovette said that last Saturday's "Operation Clean Sweep" litter collection effort was a big success.

"I want to thank everyone involved, it looks a lot better," he said at the April 2 meeting of the Choctaw Co. Commission. "You can't put a value on it."

Commissioner C.D. "Budd" Ruffin agreed.

"I want to thank the folks in my area and across the county for participating," he said. "We're hoping this will be the start of a good thing that folks will continue to work at."

"I just want to thank the citizens," said Commissioner Dandy Brown. "I hope they keep it up."

Commissioner Clyde Dixon said he saw people out working countywide.

"I appreciate people donating their time," he said. "It was a good thing."

Probate Judge D'Wayne May said

that convincing people to stop trashing the sides of the roads would be a long-term, educational process.

"I think we should bring the public's attention to this on a regular basis and get some (guest) speakers," he said. May said that an educational program in the school system for children ought to be established. "Start them out early in life to know that roadways are not a place for garbage, and how important it is to keep the county clean."

On a related note, Bart Robinson, the county's Solid Waste Enforcement Officer and an environmentalist with the Choctaw Co. Health Department, said that he, Chamber of Commerce Director Nancy Gibson, and local Co. Extension Agent-Coordinator Jennifer Miller have met and discussed setting up just such an educational program in the schools.

"Education is the key," Commissioner Brown agreed. "I think that's a good move."

Commissioner Dixon asked what

grades will be targeted.

"From kindergarten through high school," Robinson said, adding that poster contests, coloring contests and other events are being discussed to get children involved.

All four commissioners promised their support for such a program.

A representative with PALS — People Against a Littered State — will be in Choctaw County in May to meet with interested persons about establishing a local PALS chapter.

PALS offers educational curriculum, along with helping set up the familiar Adopt-a-Mile, Adopt-a-Stream, Adopt-an-Area, and Adopt-a-Campus programs.

An estimated 400 people turned out last weekend to help with the effort, and several commercial-size dumpsters — provided by Terry Kelley of Arrow Waste Disposal and the Choctaw Regional Landfill — and several dump trucks — provided by commissioners — were filled with hundreds of bags of unsightly litter

collected from Choctaw County's roadsides.

Dozens of brightly colored T-shirts were given to volunteers by MidStar Timber, which also bought 2,500 small, in-vehicle litter bags for distribution within the community.

The Commission donated more than 2,000 large plastic garbage bags to the effort, and several local citizens and churches donated safety vests, additional bags, plus food and water for the volunteers.

Volunteers hope to make "Operation Clean Sweep" a twice-a-year event.

The event grew out of the public's concern over the condition of the county's rights-of-way after a number of SoundOffs appeared in *The Choctaw Sun*, prompting other citizens to call to ask what could be done to establish a day for a countywide litter control "sweep". Volunteers have been meeting for more than a month to plan the event.

April proclaimed Child Abuse Prevention Month

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — The director of the Regional Child Advocacy Center that serves abused children in Clarke, Choctaw and Washington counties told the Co. Commission on Monday that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Mary English said that the Grove Hill-based center works closely with law enforcement officials and other agencies to investigate reports of sexual and physical abuse.

"Our main facility is in Clarke County, but we are opening a center at Gilbertown Town Hall, and one in Washington County to do forensic interviews with these children," she said. "There, the District Attorney, police, everybody who is involved with the case can use this facility, and watch the children's interviews on closed circuit TV."

Those interviews can be videotaped through cameras that are being installed now, she said.

"There is room enough there for family members to wait in the back while the interviews are in progress," she said.

At her request, Probate Judge D'Wayne May signed a proclamation designating the month of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in the county.

English introduced several members of the local Department of Human Resources and local law enforcement officers, and gave commissioners bright blue lapel pins to wear during the month, and a large blue bow for the Courthouse door to symbolize their support for the prevention of child abuse.

CCC will decide on April 9th whether to seek new bids for solid waste services

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — Choctaw County has the option of renewing an existing contract with Waste Management of Meridian for the pickup and disposal of solid waste, or it can solicit new bids from any interested companies, the Commission was told on Monday.

Treasurer Alice Carol Smith said that the current contract with Waste Management ends on Sept. 30th of this year.

"You can extend this contract for a three-year period, or you can send out for new bids," she said.

Whatever the decision, the county needs to take action at least 90 days before Sept. 30th so that, if a new company were to get the bid, they would have adequate time to set up routes and make all necessary billing arrangements.

"Do we want them to do the collection and billing or do we want to keep that responsibility?" Smith asked. Currently, local accountant Deborah Hutchinson handles both the billing and the collection of the mandatory \$45 quarterly solid waste fees.

Probate Judge D'Wayne May recommended and the board voted unanimously to table the matter until the April 9th meeting.

Sikes Auto Service to reopen

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — Sikes Auto Service, located on the "winding mountain hill" just south of the fire tower on Ala. 17, will reopen in the near future.

Owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Sikes, the repair shop will offer most types of air conditioning service, electronic/computer services, engine, transmission, and brake work, oil changes, and tire service with computer balancing.

Sikes told the *Sun* that the

business has been closed for several years but that he is reopening and plans to offer even more services than before.

As an added "extra," Jimmy Tanks will be providing car washes and detailing on Saturdays beginning April 7th from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. Prices vary depending on the size of the vehicle, and the first two vehicles to come by for a wash each Saturday will be washed free of charge.

Sikes said that renovation work is underway in the building and that the repair shop will open

soon.

Operating hours will be 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Saturdays, and the business can be reached by calling 205-459-4963.

"All of my work is guaranteed," Sikes said, adding that he is looking for some highly qualified, motivated, detail-oriented mechanics. "One thing that I will not put up with, out of myself or anybody else, is sloppy work. Skilled mechanics who would like to interview for a job may also call Sikes at the number listed above."

Work to resume on Pennington sewer

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

PENNINGTON — Work on the Town of Pennington's new sewer system will be starting again in April after a lull of several months as a new contractor takes over the project.

According to Michael Armistead, attorney for the town, the original contractor was unable to complete the project. As a result, the bonding insurance company has brought in a new contractor who plans to get started by April 16th.

The target date for completion of the project is Aug. 31st.

"My understanding is that the new contractor's job is to come in

and comply with hooking up everybody that is supposed to be hooked up, then check everyone who has been hooked up and make sure every customer's system is working properly," he said.

Mayor Fendley and the four council members present said that they were looking forward to the day when the system will be 100% complete.

In other matters Thursday, written reports were read from various departments.

In the Fire Department's report, Fire Chief Allen Richardson asked for approval to look into getting physical examinations for firefighters.

Richardson estimated the cost would probably be about \$200 per

person. Council Member Rhonda Goodman, who has prior experience in that field, said she would be willing to negotiate with physicians for the best price.

"They had ten fires in March," Goodman said. "They are volunteers and when you see them be sure and thank them."

Teresa Cherry, with the Parks and Recreation Department, said she had obtained cost estimates on the new playground equipment and would give that information to the council for discussion at the next meeting.

The modern new playground area will include separate areas for toddlers (under age two), children ages two through six, and ages six through twelve.

Obituaries

Suzanne Marie Busby

SILAS — Services for Suzanne Marie Busby, 62, were held March 29, 2007 at Spring Bank Baptist Church in Silas with Rev. Wesley Slay officiating. Interment was in the Stewart Cemetery in Gilbertown.

Mrs. Busby died March 25 at Jeff Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian, MS.

Survivors include three sons, Harry Busby, of Silas, Ed Lavoisier, of Branch, MS, Gary (Peggy) Eckardt, of Plattville, IL; three daughters, Debra (Doyle) Bartel, of Joliet, IL., Jeanine Eckardt, of Lockport, IL, Kelly (Wade) Barham, of Meridian, MS; ten grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Elmer Busby, two daughters, Lorraine Lavoisier, Dorothy Busby, and one grandchild.

Pallbearers were Gary Eckardt, Ed Lavoisier, Wade Barham, James Williams, Tyler Barham, and Brian Donnelly.

Phillips Funeral Home in Gilbertown was in charge of arrangements.

Mary Olene Cato Griffith

MERIDIAN, Miss. — Services for Mary Olene Cato Griffith, 87, were held last week at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Meridian, MS with Rev. Leslie Oquin officiating. Interment was in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Meridian.

Mrs. Griffith, who was a housewife, died March 26, 2007 at Guardian Angel Hospice in Meridian.

She is survived by one granddaughter, two grandsons, and five great-grandchildren.

Pallbearers were Ty Lee, Brian Long, Johnny Shelton Keith Avera, Arthur Weaver, and Larry Palermo.

Bumpers Funeral Home in Butler was in charge of arrangements.

Harold Blunt Waite

MOBILE — Services for Harold Blunt Waite, 68, were held March 30, 2007 at Valhalla Memorial Funeral Home in Semmes with interment in Valhalla Memorial Gardens.

Mr. Waite was a native of Silas and a longtime resident of Mobile. He was a painter.

Survivors include two sons, Danny Waite, of Moss Point, MS, and Michael Allen Harris of Meridian, MS; and five grandchildren.

James Thrash

THOMASVILLE — Services were held last week for James Thrash, a retired maintenance worker for MacMillan Bloedel, who died March 29, 2007 at a nursing facility in Thomasville. Burial was in Sunny

South Baptist Church Cemetery.

Thrash, 83, was a native of

Pennington and a resident of Thomasville. He was a U.S. Army veteran.

Survivors include two sons, Billy Thrash, of Sunny South, and Larry Joe Thrash, of Picayune, MS; three daughters, Linda Ramshue, of Columbia, MS, Phyllis Leeton, of Thomasville, and Sharon Crosby, of Sunny South; 16 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

O'Bryant Chapel Funeral Home in Thomasville was in charge of the arrangements.

Memorials may be made to the Alzheimer's Foundation or to Gideons International.

Fronie Robinson Lolley

PLEASANT HILL — Services for Fronie Robinson Lolley were held at Bumpers Funeral Home in Butler on March 27, 2007 with Rev. Bennie Crawford and Rev. Nate

Ballard officiating. Interment was in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

Mrs. Lolley, who was 97, died on March 24 at a health care facility in Meridian, MS.

Survivors include eight children, Clovis Bice, of Semmes, Mary Lucas, of Fort Valley, CA, Nora Thompson, of Jackson, Betty Cowan of Butler, Ralph Lolley of Tibbie, Jim Lolley, of Wagarville, Caty Hendrix, of Wimberly, and Jeff Lolley, of Thomasville; 15 grandchildren, 28 great grandchildren, and three great-great grandchildren.

Pallbearers were Brad Bice, Greg Bice, Mark Lucas, Randall Lucas, John Cowan, Eric Lolley, Gary Thompson Brian Hendrix.

Bumpers Funeral Home in Butler was in charge of the arrangements.

Terry Louis Frost

MELVIN — Terry Louis Frost, 45, died March 25, 2007 at Guardian Angels Health Care Facility in Marion, MS.

He was a veteran of the United States Army.

Services were held at Mt. Mariah Baptist

Church in Melvin on March 31, 2007 with Rev. Timothy Pearson officiating. Interment was in Kaiser Hill Cemetery.

Survivors include his parents, Earnest and Mary Frost; three brothers, Edward Frost and Earnest Frost, both of Gilbertown, Edward (Helen) Thompson, of Hattiesburg, MS.; one daughter, Mary Causey, of Silas; three grandchildren and a host of nieces and nephews. Pallbearers were friends and family.

Christian Memorial Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

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