

JROTC to raise funds for building

By Dee Ann Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

small classroom with no room to grow.

If the building had been given to them, Cunningham says, it would have allowed the unit the same space as is available for the JROTC unit at Choctaw County High.

"CCHS has 150+ in their ROTC," he explains. "We could have that here, too, if we had a building."

But, Cunningham acknowledges, given the current financial status of the school system, he understands that the funds to build such a building simply may not be available.

For that reason, he says, the JROTC unit itself is making plans to take the initiative in raising funds for the project.

"If the Board of Education cannot do it, then we'll see if we can undertake to start getting some funds on our own," he says.

Over the next few months, the cadets, their family members, and their community supporters will be putting together a series of fund-raising efforts. From such projects as chicken and fish plate sales to a March-a-Thon to more unique plans to raise funds, the cadets are launching an effort to earn \$30,000 to \$45,000 for their new building.

The March-a-Thon has been tentatively set for Friday, May 19, with the cadets marching around the football stadium from 6 p.m. until 6 a.m. Sponsors will be gathered by the cadet, with a certain amount allotted for each mile marched by each cadet.

In the coming weeks, the cadets and their supporters will be holding food sales in Gilbertown and other areas, and will be going to local businesses and individuals for support with the fund-raisers. They will also be announcing more concrete plans for other, larger fund-raising efforts in the near future.

Their efforts, say the cadets, will not only serve to garner funds for the building project, but will also send an unmistakable message to the public, a message that says that their JROTC program is important to them — important enough to work for it.

GILBERTOWN — They want their own building — the one that was supposed to have been built for them when their new school was constructed two years ago.

And they want it so much that they are willing to work for it themselves.

When the JROTC at Southern Choctaw High School meets, they do it in a small classroom in the south hallway of the school. Next door to their classroom is a small, crowded storage area where their uniforms and equipment are stored, with many items stacked in boxes for lack of space.

It's not the ideal situation for the more than 40 cadets who make up the unit. But they've dealt with it, often using the gymnasium to practice their formations — that is, when the basketball team or the P.E. classes don't need it.

But when the unit came up for their formal inspection last month, the lack of a building was one of the primary reasons given for the unit not reaching the coveted superior level.

And, says 1st Sgt. Houston Cunningham, it is that lack of a building that keeps the unit from growing and reaching the potential that it might otherwise reach.

"These cadets need a building to call their own," Cunningham says. "They need somewhere to go where they know that when they walk into that building, they are in a place where they are expected to act a certain way and show respect. They can't see that when they are just in a small classroom with all these other distractions going on outside the door. If we had a building of our own, we could have many more students involved with the program."

According to Cunningham, the original plans for the construction of the new SCHS building included a separate JROTC building, as called for by the U.S. Army. However, once the construction was completed, the building that had been designated for them had to be used for the agri-science department instead, leaving the JROTC in a



Senior Phillip Philon of was also recognized at the JROTC Ceremony. As Warrior Battalion Commander of JROTC, Phillip received multiple awards, including the Dedication and Support Award, Cadet Challenge's Best 1-mile Run Award, and Cadet Challenge's Most Sit-up Award.



Choctaw Sun photo by Dee Ann Campbell

SCHS JROTC takes awards

GILBERTOWN -- During their annual awards ceremony and banquet held last Saturday evening, the Southern Choctaw High School JROTC was given awards for their achievements. Pictured with their awards are: Alexis Gillum (Shuttle Run award), Cassandra Foster (Leadership award), Jerica Bonner (Leadership), Latasha McMillian (Battalion xo), Zakyah James (1-mile run award and overall Female Cadet award), Quincy Pearson, and Sherman Gillum (1-mile run, push-ups, and overall Male Cadet).

Conner, Abston are Mr and Miss SCA

TOXEY -- South Choctaw Academy

recently announced Derek Conner and Laura Abston as Mr. and Miss SCA. Mr. and Miss SCA is voted on by the South Choctaw faculty and is presented to the male and female in the senior class that best epitomize the character of South Choctaw Academy.

Mr. Derek Conner is the eighteen year old son of Floyd and Tricky Conner of Silas. He attends Hickory Grove Baptist Church.

Derek has always been an active member of the student body, as a part of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the school Relay for Life team.

Derek has also been a major part of South Choctaw athletic throughout the years. He has been presented with the Most Valuable Player award in football and made the All-Tournament team twice in basketball his senior year. Derek also helped lead his team to the championship football game and was a finalist for Mr. Football in Alabama.

Derek plans to attend college in the fall to

pursue a degree as a surveyor.

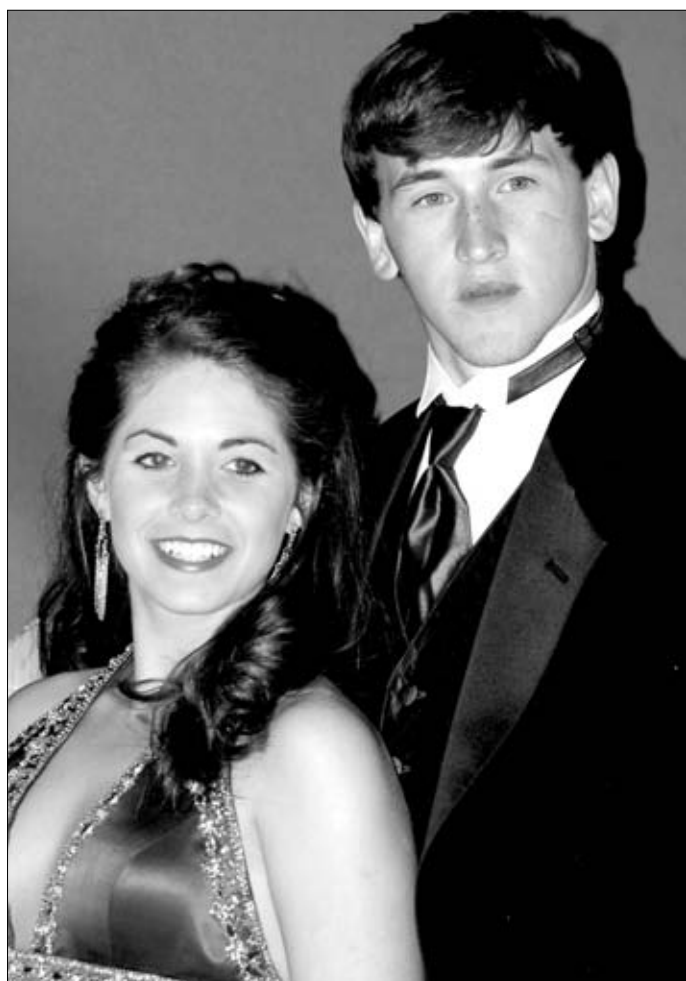
Miss Laura Abston is the eighteen year old daughter of Randy and Melanie Abston of Gilbertown. She attends Womack Hill Baptist Church.

During her senior year, Laura served as the Student Government Association President and the Senior Beta Club President. She has been a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the Varsity cheerleading squad throughout her high school year and was voted Most Likely to Succeed for the past three years.

She has also been very involved in her community, as a Teens Getting Involved for the Future team leader and a Relay for Life team member and captain.

Laura was selected this year's Choctaw County Junior Miss and received a scholastic award during the state program.

Laura plans to attend the University of Alabama in the fall to pursue a pre-law degree.



Choctaw Sun photo by Dee Ann Campbell
Mr. and Miss South Choctaw Academy, Derek Conner and Laura Abston

CCHS announces 3rd nine-weeks honor roll

BUTLER -- The following are the honor roll listings for the third 9-weeks grading period at Choctaw County High School:

7th Grade -- "A": Alvin Hutchinson; **"B":** Kendall Slay, Breanna Smith, Brandon Wallace

8th Grade -- "A": Shakera Blakley, Jereme Gallier; **"B":** Jermaine Blakley, Breanna Chess, Alexandria Duff, Marquille Graham, Shanita Horn, Shaquila Jackson, Antionette Jones, Shanita Thompson

9th Grade -- "B": Brittany Brown, Sadrina Chaney, Monquelle Wigfall

10th Grade -- "A": Oneka Mosley; **"B":** Verdie Coleman, Felicity Davis, Daquan Jackson, Michael Magic

11th Grade: "A": Cardarius Smoot, Nashonda Thomas; **"B":** Sara Bonner, Angela Goodwin, James Magic, Tyrilyn Perkins, Erica Ruffin, Laqueta Rumley, Nakarra Young

12th Grade -- "A": Erin Bryan, Amanda Coleman, Daniel Dykes; **"B":** Tonda Busby, Jennifer Faucherre, Alisha Keeton



Submitted photo

Local students reach out to Enterprise

GILBERTOWN — The Student Government Association of Southern Choctaw Elementary School recently made a monetary donation to the Enterprise City School Tornado Relief Fund. The students said they hope their contribution will aid in the recovery effort caused by the storm which struck in early March. Pictured are SGA officers Jenna Presley, President; G.P. Barefield, Vice-President; Michaela Dew, Treasurer; Imani Powe, Secretary; Brooke Wilson, Reporter; and Mrs. Dottie Grace, SGA Sponsor.

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