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Another project in progress is the men's and women's soccer field house that will be finished this fall. It will include offices, a training room, a film room and a big equipment storage room that both teams will use. Along with the ongoing projects, there are some that are already completed. The renovation of the auditorium in the Fine Arts building is one of them, which included replacing the outdated seating and carpet, installing a new sound and installing light strips that light the walkways down the aisles. (Continued on page 6)

The Pine Burr

Editor.....Ella Pattie
Co-editors.....Emily Caston, Anna Comeaux, Lorelai Davis, Olivia Ellison, Natali Moore
Staff Writers... Lauren Coon, Maci Haygood, Charlie Harrell, Cameron Leon, Dylan Meyers, Allisen Moore, Karen Wimberley
Advisor.....Joyce Mabry

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Joyce Mabry

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Southwest Mississippi Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries and grievances regarding the non-discrimination policies: Rhonda Gibson, Director of Disability Support Services, 601-276-3885; 1156 College Dr., Summit, MS 39666.-



Lauren Coon

BEAR AWARE

In order to effectively communicate emergency information to SMCC employees and students, SMCC has implemented a rapid alert and notification system developed by SchoolCast. BearAware is a service that allows employees and students of SMCC to receive alerts, news, or other emergency information via text, email, or by phone. Participation in Bear Aware is not mandatory but encouraged. At this time, the only information entered into the SchoolCast database is the student's "smcc.edu" email address.

Please read the following because our procedures for handling Bear Aware have changed. An email has been sent to all current students, faculty, and staff with their login information for Bear Aware. Students, faculty, and staff no longer need to request this information by emailing bearaware@smcc.edu.

Dear Students,
You should have received an email with your Bear Aware Login Information on August 2024. An additional email will be sent to your email account at 9:00 AM with your login information. It's basically the same email that was sent on August 2024. If you have already logged in and set up your account, no additional action is required on your part. We will be sending more of these login information emails on the 20th of each month this semester to encourage participation in the system. Again, if you have already set up your account, no action is required on your part. We do recommend logging in to Bear Aware at least once a month and verifying the accuracy of your information. Please read the login information email in its entirety. It will explain why your password may be represented by asterisks (*) and what to do if you cannot log in or if you forgot your password.

If you have any questions, send them to bearaware@smcc.edu from your SMCC email account. We cannot communicate about Bear Aware accounts from other personal or business email accounts you may have. You do not have to contact bearaware@smcc.edu for your login information unless you don't get a login information email.

Editorial: Make the Year the Best

Good day, everyone! I am excited to serve as this year's editor of the Pine Burr. As this school year begins, I want to introduce new and returning students to student organizations around campus. The truth is life is what you make it and that especially goes for your college experience. Getting involved is an excellent way to ensure that you have the best year possible and make new friends.

The first organization I want to highlight is the Baptist Student Union, also known as the BSU. The BSU serves as a place for Christian students to gather and grow in their relationship with Christ as well as each other. A worship service is hosted on Monday nights followed by *Bible* study on Tuesday, both begin at 7.

Next, the Student Government Association serves as the representative body for student related issues across campus. Bear Trackers are student volunteers who are representatives of Southwest. They assist with recruitment, campus orientation, and promotional events. Intramural sports are a great way to get involved and meet new friends. Phi Theta Kappa and Tri Beta Biological Honor Society are merit based organizations that recognize the academic integrity of community college students. The Pine Burr is the campus newspaper that is almost entirely led by students, and the Whispering Pines is the SMCC yearbook edited by Lorelai Davis. Both of these organizations offer

opportunities to students who are interested in journalism, whether that be writing, photography, or illustration.

Other organizations around campus are Collegiate DECA, Student Nurses Organization, Marching Band and Stage Band, Choir, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the Math Club. For more information, visit the Student Organizations tab on the Southwest website.

Getting involved around campus and in your community is great way to start off this school year. Remember, life is what you make, so make it fun, adventurous, and enjoyable, but do not forget to work hard. I hope everyone has an amazing year filled with success and laughter.



Ella Pattie
Editor

Over seven-dozen SMCC student athletes earn MACCC All-Academic honors

Over seven-dozen Southwest student athletes earn MACCC All-Academic honors

The long grind for many Southwest student athletes went from beyond the courts and fields, it also occurred in the classrooms and, recently, over seven-dozen were honored for their success with MACCC Conference All-Academic nods.

The honorees are recognized as either Distinguished Academic All-State with a 3.8 GPA or higher or Academic All-State with a 3.25-3.79 GPA.

Below is a list of the honorees:

BASEBALL,

Coach Jack Edmonson
Distinguished Academic All State

Cru Bella
Gavin Bledsoe
Collin Netto
Tyler Otts
Dawson Richard
Trace Roy
Noah Russ
Academic All-State
Jackson Hawsey
John Lyon
Gage Hinnant
Marcus Jackson
Luke Lirette
Trace Dearman
Garrison Shows
Colson Thompson
Andrew Burgess

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Coach Nicole Daigle Cooper
Distinguished Academic All State

Juliette Charriez Rivera
Abby Davis
Abigail Green
Mary Claire McCurley
Emily Sturdivant
Kaitlyn Williams
Makenna Williams
Academic All-State
Peyton Alexander
Caroline Barcelona
Tristan Byrd
Hannah Case
Kayla Martin
Jennifer Neal
Amari Simmons
Alexis Taylor

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Coach Brent Harris
Distinguished Academic All State

Kara Beth Addison
Kalea Williams
Academic All-State
Ja'Kya Brown
Brianna Doucet
Bethany Graves
Kennedee Shelton
SOFTBALL
Coach Shea Johnson
Distinguished Academic All State
Karleigh Daze'
Liberty Gillihan
Morgan Gras
Alyssa Leggett

Lauren Mounce

London Robertson
Abbey Pevey
Anlyssa Richardson
Maggie Wilks
Academic All-State
Erin Acey
Presley Dease
MaryClaire Johnson
Olivia Rhodes
Anne Claire Sistrunk
Brooke Tillman

MEN'S TENNIS

Coach Joyce Mabry
Distinguished Academic All State

Cameron Leon
Jackson Stanford
Academic All-State
Jack Brewer
Phillip Chandler
Jacob Fairley
Will Knight
Luke Sowell
Alex Velasquez

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Coach Joyce Mabry
Distinguished Academic All State

Elise Gillissie
Academic All-State
Kayla Eby
Sophie Tompkins

MEN'S SOCCER

Coach Zach Mills
Distinguished Academic All State
Nico Fischer

Roberto Garcia Gomez

Connor Goodman
Braydon Green
Sergio Padin
Caleb Trisdale
Academic All-State
Joel Bastida
Jeysson Cruz
Ethan Gobble
Holden Helms
Loan Marin
Ivan Martinez
Justin Ruiz

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Coach Corey Schmidt
Academic All-State

MEN'S GOLF

Coach Jay O'Hern
Distinguished Academic All State

Zack Boyd
Daillon Kryzanowski
Academic All-State
Whit Price
Ryan Spears
FOOTBALL
Coach Clifton Collins
Distinguished Academic All State

Jeffrey Polk, Jr.
Academic All-State
Lyndell Boatman
Anthonie Dunn
Marquez Goss
Jaylon Price
LaDamion Williams

SMCC Alumni Association announces 2024 Honorees

Anthony L. Williams,
2024 Sports Hall of Fame

Anthony L. Williams holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminology from Arkansas State University, a Master of Science in Administration from Central Michigan University, and a Master of Strategic Studies from the US Army War College, which he attended from 1976 to 1977. Anthony is married to the former Joni Lewis who is a veteran that served over 21 years in the Army. They have been married for more than 33 years and are the proud parents to Jeremy and Bryan and grandparents to Jackson, Milah, and Bodhi. After his retirement from the Army, Anthony worked as a Department of Defense Contractor from August 2007 through July 2009 as the Project Manager for equipment left behind by units executing combat deployment from Ft Bragg, NC, and the reissue of equipment to those units upon their redeployment to Ft Bragg. From 2009 through 2022, he served as Deputy Support Operations Officer and Deputy to the Army Field Support Battalion-Bragg Commander. In this capacity, he provided logistics support to the 82d Airborne Division, XVIII Corps (separate units), and Logistic Support Teams at Fort Eustis, Virginia, Fort AP Hill Virginia, Fort Lee Virginia, Joint Base Myers-Henderson Hall, Virginia, Fort Lee, Virginia and Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Today, he is a fully retired avid golfer who resides in the Fayetteville, NC area. Anthony and Joni are heavily involved in support of the local community through their church food pantry and summer feeding program. The food pantry issues non-perishable food items to families in need once monthly throughout the year and the summer feeding program provides hot meals to school age children during June and July each year. Williams played running back at SMCC in 1976 and 1977. Over the course of the 1976 season, Anthony made big plays and had big games during a season in which he was honored as the Outstanding Offensive Back at the SMCC Athletic Banquet. In

his first game, he carried the football 19 times for 70 yards in the 16-7 loss to Northwest Junior College. In his second game, a 21-0 victory over Hinds Junior College, he broke a 59-yard run and returned a punt 74 yards for a touchdown. In the third game, a crushing 9-6 loss to Holmes Community College, he returned a punt 32 yards. In game five, a 30-12 thumping at the hands of Jones County Junior College, he broke two runs of 21 yards on a night in which the whole team ran for 40 yards. In game six, a 7-6 loss to Co-Lin, he scored on a 12-yard run. In game seven, he put on a performance worthy of the SMCC homecoming as he carried 19 times for 187 yards in the 16-3 victory over East Mississippi Community College. In game eight against East Central Community College, he ran for 119 yards, scored on a short touchdown run, caught a 14-yard touchdown, and completed a 69-yard pass. In the game nine loss to Pearl River Junior College, he scored on an 81-yard touchdown run. During his sophomore year, Williams continued to play well. In the season's first game, he ran for 80 yards in the 14-7 victory over Northeast Junior College. In game two, a 29-0 whitewashing of Hinds Junior College, he ran for 110 yards on 21 carries and scored on a 31-yard run. In game three, a 25-0 shutout of Holmes Community College, Anthony ran for 76 yards on 15 carries. In game five, SMCC suffered its second loss of the season, this one to Jones County Junior College by a heart-breaking score of 14-7. Despite the loss, Anthony ran for 123 yards. In game six, a 16-6 homecoming win against Co-Lin, he carried the ball 26 times for 106 yards and scored on a 2-yard run. In game seven's 14-12 loss to East Mississippi Community College, he ran for 168 yards. In game eight, a 22-10 victory against East Central Community College, Anthony dominated, rushing for 214 yards and two touchdowns. In the game nine victory against Pearl River Junior College, he ran for 92 yards. The final game of his SMCC career

was the best game of his career as Anthony ran for 228 yards and three touchdowns in the team's 28-14 win over Northwest Mississippi Community College. The 1977 SMCC Bears finished their season with seven wins against three losses, the school's best season in 19 years. Anthony finished the season with 230 carries for 1259 yards. After the season, the Mississippi Junior College Association unanimously named Anthony to the South Division All State Football Team, as the South Division's Outstanding Offensive Back, and to the All-State Team. He was also selected as a J.C. Grid Wire Second Team All-American. Coach Floyd Davis, the SMCC head football coach, said in August 1978 at a meeting of the McComb Noon Lions Club, that his biggest concern for that year was running back. In 1983, when Coach Davis stepped down as the SMCC head football coach, he said, "There's a great deal of satisfaction watching young people improve and mature. How can you equate spending time with young men like Randy Hedstrom, Patrick McCabe, and Anthony Williams? There's no price tag you can put on that." Williams was the South Pike High School Most Valuable Offensive Back, 1973 and 1974, and in 1975, he was the South Pike High School Most Valuable Player. He received a full athletic scholarship to Arkansas State University from 1978 to 1981. In 2015, he became the Senior Division USGA Golf Tournament Winner from the Whispering Pines Golf Club in Whispering Pines, NC. In the same year, he won the Senior Division USGA Golf Tournament Winner in the Hyland Golf Club in Southern Pines, NC. He worked within the United States Army from 1981 until 2007. He was assigned to various duty stations in the United States as well as in Japan, Germany, and Korea. He was promoted to the rank of Colonel and commanded a unit at that level. He also deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Williams attends Clearview Missionary Baptist Church in Fayetteville, NC.

Bo Milton,
2024 Sports Hall of Fame

Summit native Bo Milton is a former graduate of Parklane Academy, SMCC, and Northwestern State University, where he attended from 1988 to 1989. Milton played football at Northwestern, and in 1989, he won the All-Conference award, the All-State award, and the All-Star award. He was also the team Captain for that year. He joined the Northwestern State University All-Decade Team in 1988, where he was a 2-year starter. After graduation, Milton won the American Football Coaches Association Coach of the Year award in 2006. He also won the District Coach of the Year nine times and the All-Star Coach award six times. He had 183 wins in 26 years as a head coach and three state runner-up titles. He joined the MAIS Coaches Association and was a member of the MAIS -AAC Committee for three years. Milton currently lives in Carrollton, MS, where he is a Board Member on the Town Council. He is also a Carrollton Baptist Church Member.

Dr. Tomekia Luckett,
2024 Alumnus of the Year

Homecoming Honoree Dr. Tomekia Luckett lives in Summit, and she earned two degrees from Southwest Mississippi Community College; an Associate of Arts degree in Biology in 1998, and an Associate of Science Nursing in 2001. After Southwest, Luckett transferred to William Carey University, where she completed a Bachelor of Science Nursing in 2012 and a Master of Science Nursing in 2013. She finished her education with a Doctor of Philosophy Nursing Leadership degree from the University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. Luckett was a faculty member at SMCC from 2008 to 2012. She resigned to relocate to Hattiesburg to complete an MSN and pursue a PhD. Dr. Luckett is a nurse, nurse educator, author, speaker, and mother of triplet sons. At Louisiana Christian University, she is the dean of nursing. From 2008-2012, Dr. Luckett was a member of three committees: the Student Governance Committee, the

Continued on page 4

Student Spotlight: Sergio Padin Rey

By Olivia Ellison
Staff Writer

Sergio Padin Rey is a sophomore soccer player here at SMCC. He was born and raised in Spain, where he developed a strong passion for futbol, or as we call it, soccer. In 2020 he began looking at coming to America to play, but COVID-19 put a halt on his dreams. In 2023 he tried out in his city, performing for many coaches from all over the world. One of those coaches including the SMCC men’s soccer coach. They were introduced, and Sergio finally found himself playing for the Bears here on campus. During his difficult decision of moving to the U.S., he gives thanks to his parents for being his biggest inspiration and always supporting and loving him no matter where he decided to continue his soccer career.

One of Sergio’s favorite things about being at SMCC is meeting many new people. One of the biggest changes for Sergio has been his ability to cope with South Mississippi’s weather. He states, “It is too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter.” Since Sergio spoke no English when he came to America, the language barrier was one of his most difficult challenges to overcome. If you have not seen him around campus, Sergio is known for having a profound following on social media. He still enjoys making TikTok videos and posting for his friends in both America and Spain. Although Sergio moved away from his friends and family to a foreign place, he found a new home here.

SMCC: #1 Community College in Mississippi

By Natali Moore,
co-editor

Southwest Mississippi Community College earned first place in a statewide poll on Niche.com for the “2025 #1 Community College in Mississippi.”

Participants used the traditional grading scale as they judged different aspects of SMCC, including academics, campus location and their professors. SMCC earned a B+ overall grading average, with an A in student life, campus life, and values. The category of safety scored the highest with an A+.

“Southwest is an above-average public college located in Mississippi,” said Niche.com. “It is a small institution with an enrollment of 1,387 undergraduate students. The Southwest acceptance rate is 100%.”

SMCC also ranked as the 9th college out of 229 in the category of ‘Best Online Colleges in America’ and the 45th college out of 755 in the category of ‘Best Community Colleges in America.’

Both enrolled and graduated students participated in the poll, which generated over one hundred insightful reviews for SMCC. 92% of students agreed that their professors put a lot of effort into teaching their classes, while 73% agreed that it was easy to get the classes they wanted and that the workload was not difficult to manage.

“Popular majors include Liberal Arts and Humanities, Nursing, and Licensed Practical Nurse Training,” said Niche.com. “Graduating 50% of students, Southwest alumni go on to earn a starting salary of \$21,600.” According to Niche.com, the yearly cost of attending SMCC is \$4,253, which is more than ten thousand dollars lower than the national average of \$15,523. Pell Grant money awarded each year more than covers the cost of tuition at \$6,852. A segment of the poll asked participants to choose a word to best describe a typical student at SMCC, and the majority voted that the word outgoing fit well. A similar segment asked to describe the college itself, and the word awesome won.



Redline: Aly Lynch, Bella Gaskin and Tanijah Garner; second row: Jalyn Bates, Jaszlynn Jackson, Breawna Henry, Lauren Dunaway, Loran Pigott, Ruth Bishop, Avery Chisholm, Lily Gaskin, Natalie Fleming

photo by Chuck Barnes



Women's Basketball Team: Akeelah Hobson, Gracie Miller, Kayla Arterberry, Kara Beth Addison, Mady Smith, Jakya Brown, Kalea Williams, Mookie Lampley; second row: Bailey Fortenberry, manager; Ric' Kyra Wells, manager; Niyla Wright, Dekeria Walls, Nakeria Coleman, Shanell Celestine, Bethany Graves, Aysha Hare, manager; Lana Burkett, manager

photo by Chuck Barnes



PTK Officers: Dr. Jennifer McLaughlin, advisor; Grace Speights, Vice-President of Service, Rachel McKey, Vice-President of Fellowship; Noah Sutton, President; Hannah Michaels, Vice-President of Public Relations; Dally Holmes, Vice-President of Leadership; second row: Peyton Davis, Vice-President of Scholarship; Makayla Huber, Vice-President of Records; Luke Dickerson, Vice-President of Finance, Braden Paulk, Vice-President of Chapter History; Maddison Carraway, Vice-President

photo by Joyce Mabry



Honors Forum Class: President Dr. Bishop joined Dr. McLaughlin's Honors Forum Class to share his leadership philosophy and engage in a lively Q&A session with current students. It was an inspiring and insightful discussion. #SMCC #YourBestNextStep Pictured above are Madeline Rabalias, Devin Vandall, Rachel McKey, Dr. Steve Bishop, Alecia Mitchell, Kayla Eby, Michael Dillon; second row: Noah Russ, Jordan Mills, Jabraella Gillard, Cole Claire

photo by Jennifer McLaughlin



Cheer Team: Makynna Keller, Ashlyn Troutman, Madison Curtner, Rylea Carney, Cary Wilkinson, Reagan Carney, Anna Rai Cline; second row: Chloe Carney, Kane White, Bethanee Guzzardo, John Rivers Brown, Savannah Arnold, Colby Terrell, Hannah Martin, Reid Smith, Olivia Magee, Brandon Mcphail, Jazzmine Watts, Jaden Pierre, Kylee Girau, Ramsey Brown, Blair Rutland, Elijah Smith, Kami Jackson, Travis Everett

photo by Chuck Barnes



PTK: PTK Omicron Delta Chapter attends Fall Regional Conference in Biloxi, MS. The students learned leadership skills from guest speaker, Billy Hewes, Gulfport Mayor, and they learned research techniques from Dr. David Davies, Media and Communication professor at the University of Southern Mississippi. Pictured are Madison Carraway, Peyton Davis, Braden Paulk, Noah Sutton, Luke Dickerson, Dally Holmes, Rachel McKey, Grace Speights

photo by Jennifer McLaughlin

Student Spotlight: Daniela Cervantes Flores

By Emily Caston,
Staff Writer

Daniela Cervantes Flores is a freshman student at Southwest Mississippi Community College. She is from Matamoros, Mexico, and moved to the United States to be with her sister and brother-in-law. Her sister, Vanessa Mills, is the lead math facilitator on campus and her brother in law, Zach Mills, is the men’s soccer coach. Before Southwest, Dani attended an international school in Australia for five months to improve her English. She loves to travel and her favorite place that she has been to is Bali, Indonesia. At Southwest, she is one of the managers of the men’s soccer team, where she spends most of her time. Dani’s favorite part about SMCC is the diversity within the student body. She believes the most difficult thing in adjusting to life in Mississippi is the deep southern accents of the students and how fast people talk.

Dani is majoring in Business and Marketing at Southwest, in hopes of one day opening up her own coffee shop that incorporates some of her favorite past-times. Her hobbies include crocheting and reading, and she loves to try different kinds of coffee. However, she prefers black coffee, and says “sugar and creamer mask the true flavor.” When asked who her biggest inspiration was, Dani explained that improving herself is the only inspiration she needs. She is constantly working to pursue her goals, and she lives by the words of Dory from Finding Nemo, who says “Just keep swimming.” Dani is still adapting to SMCC. She is a Southwest Bear tracker and is eager to meet new people, work, and get more involved on campus.

Student Academic Support Center CRLA certified

The Student Academic Support Center is proud to announce that we are now CRLA certified! “Congratulations! Your program is now certified by CRLA’s International Peer Educator Training Program Certification (IPTPC) at Levels 1 & 2 through September 1st, 2027.” – Mike Saenz.

The College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA) tutoring program is a professional development and certification program for tutors and academic support professionals. The program offers different levels of certification for tutors, typically including Regular, Advanced, and Master Tutor certifications. Each level requires specific training hours, experience, and demonstrated competencies. The program emphasizes comprehensive training and ongoing professional development for tutors. This training includes workshops, seminars, and practical sessions designed to enhance tutoring skills and effectiveness.

DenishaJohnson (Remote Learning Specialist) and Cindy Reid-Henderson (PBI Director) from the Student Academic Support Center attended the CRLA Summer institute in July in Grand Rapids, MI. The Institute included intensive, hands-on learning and was designed to meet you where you are, whether you are just beginning to think about a training program for your institute, strengthening your existing program or are ready to begin the certification process. CRLA is the resource of choice for college professionals dedicated to enhancing student academic success. The decision to attend the CRLA Summer Institute enhanced the Center’s professional development, created a more effective training program and assisted our staff to prepare tutors and peer educators to deliver high quality academic support services.

Parents keep up

By Natali Moore, Co-editor

How parents keep up with their kids’ grades is a question that local schools like Parklane and Southwest Mississippi Community College have answered.

Parklane has a new program called FACTS, and SMCC has created the Parent Portal.

Matt Calhoun, Vice-President for Academic Affairs at SMCC contacted Alliant Data Systems, the software company that created the online accounts for students, and asked for a program that would allow parents of students to access their child’s information.

In response, Alliant Data Systems created the Parent Portal.

“I know that there are times when parents need to pay a balance for a student,” Calhoun said. “And this process makes that much simpler. Instead of coming to campus, this is more convenient for parents, and it gives the student another option.”

The Parent Portal is a program that allows students to create an account for their parents that links to their existing Access Southwest accounts. The Access Southwest account lets students view any of their information, including records, scheduling, or financial information.

As SMCC students create the account for their parents, they can filter what their parents have access to, including schedules, final grades, financial aid status, 1098-T information and dorm payments.

“I think it’s a great thing to have,” said Lorelai Davis, a student entering her third year at SMCC. “I defiantly like that there’s a little variance to it.”

Through the Parent Portal, parents can pay any outstanding charges that their child may have, like tuition or meal plan fees.

As a parent himself, Calhoun got the idea from the University of Southern Mississippi, where his son attended.

“My son has a similar product which I have accessed,” Calhoun said. “And it had the ease in which I could pay the balance for him if I needed to.”

Parklane Academy has had an app similar to Access SW and its Parent Portal for the last 12 years.

“We have had one for years,” said Jill Jackson, the Parklane high school principal. “It provides an app for our parents and in that app they have communication with their child’s teachers.”

In the program, parents could access their kids’ grades and contact their kids’ teacher, but Jackson said Parklane is upgrading to a new program called FACTS.

“We’ve used another online student information system for 12 years,” Jackson said. “We think that FACTS is going to be more user friendly.”

Jackson said FACTS is available to all students at Parklane, and it will be less complicated than the previous program. The previous program required more clicks, she said.

“Parents can see as soon as the teacher posts the grades, they can see lesson plans,” Jackson said. “And any assignments their child may have.”

Jackson gave an example that if a student was missing an assignment, the parents could see that and contact the teacher. Students could also contact their teachers via their school email on their school provided iPads.

FACTS still has all the functions of the old program, but with an additional module that allows parents to pay tuition and other miscellaneous fees, similar to the Parent Portal at SMCC.

“In February, we launched the financial side of FACTS,” Jackson said. “They could upload any paper, birth certificate, or send records that they need to register their child for school.”

But Jackson explained that the new module will not be launched until closer to the beginning of the school year.

“We’ve been looking at it for a year,” Jackson said. “it starts live on Aug. 1.” The Parent Portal has been available for SMCC students since the summer.

Davis said she had not created a Parent Portal account for her parents, but that it would be helpful to parents who may live far away. “I do feel like it’s very helpful, especially for people who do not live locally,” she said.



Football Team:Vjay Singh, T.J. Johnson, Henry Brewer, Tory Morgan, Quez Goss, Jeffery Polk, E.J. Luckett, Tavaris Henshaw, Gary Bailey, Jalen Williams, Danarius Hillard; second row: Tony Burns, Cardell McDowell, Kaden Iupe, Antoine Johnson, Kaden Batieste, Steven Mboumoua, Jaylon Price, Marcellus Jackson, Jordan Mills, Damareco Blanton; third row: Chris Hunter, Ryan Harvey, Fred Wells, Tedarrius Aych, Zay Tenner, Koren Harris, Artez McCray, Kam Carter, Skylar Husband, Darrell Coleman, Donny Anderson; fourth row: Lyndall Boatman, Kye Braddock, Tytus Bridges, Landon Pettis, Malcolm Stokes, Mar’Tavius Jones, Tamar Griffin, La’Darien Haynes, Devin Knight; fifth row: David Johnson, Hackman Pierre, Nicholas Riley, Tyler Gardner, Patrick Johnson, Jeffrey Anderson, Lozavious Armstrong, Semaj Holmes, Zachary Kammer; sixth row: Kadarrus Reed, Rodney Hills, Exavier McDowell, Jeffrey Hobbs, Xynarus Haynes, Kentravian Young, Jordan Scott, Stuart Goldman, Anthonnee Dunn, Kyjameonne Bingham; seventh row: Ladarrius Chester, Manager; Jeremy Smith, Manager; Zyan Tremont, Maliek Robertson, Jeremiah Nickerson; eighth row: Michael Dillon, Manager; Dominique Sullivan, Offensive Coordinator; Stuart Coggins, Defensive Line Coach; Untareo Johnson, Linebackers Coach; Cliff Collins, Head Coach/ Defensive Coordinator; Quentin Saulsberry, Offensive Line Coach; Brinson Johnson, Wide Receivers Coach; Stephon Huderson, Running Backs Coach

photo by Chuch Barnes



Whispering Pines/ Yearbook Staff: Karen Wimberley, Joyce Mabry, Advisor; Anna Comeaux, Natali Moore, Co-Editor; Allisen Moore, Maci Haygood, Emily Caston, Lauren Coon, Olivia Ellison, Co-Editor; Lorelai Davis, Co-Editor; Ella Pattie, Editor not pictured; Cameron Leon, Dylan Meyers

photo by Manuel Scott



“Bears on the Prowl”

by Dylan Meyers



“Make Some Noise”

by Dylan Meyers

Book Review: A Mule, A Cow, and 5 Jugs of Shine

By Karen Wimberley, Staff Writer

A Mule, A Cow, and 5 Jugs of Shine, my first novel was published in 2017, by Vanilla Palm Publishing, a small firm seeking to publish first time authors. I started writing at a very young age, but through life circumstances, my road split and I spent forty years as a Critical Care and Trauma nurse. I have entered many writing competitions, earning several awards for short stories and essays.

In 2016, I received word that Minnie had passed away at the age of 103. I sat down that night

and began to write her story just as she told me with a few embellishments, and historical facts. Within four weeks, I had finished writing. While editing the first draft I decided to step out of my comfort zone and sent out many submissions. I grabbed the first one that answered. In hindsight, I recommend breathing and then deciding. The book is considered a “Best Seller” having sold over 200,000 copies with five Star reviews.

The story is centered on the real-life story of “Minnie Leigh Roberson” a humble character that I met while living in the mountains of East Tennessee. The

more I became acquainted with Minnie, the more I found her life story very intriguing. She was born in 1913, in the East Tennessee Mountains; she was the youngest of nine children and the only girl. Her father, finding himself single in 1926, did what one fathers did then; they found husbands for their daughters. In Minnie’s case however, she was traded for “A mule, a cow and 5 jugs of Shine” She was just thirteen years old and her soon to be husband was in his 40s. Minnie Leigh is the only true to life character in this book. After spending so much time with all the characters, you become much acquaint-

ed with them and their back-stories. I carefully researched the history of the different areas that Minnie traveled to in her lifetime and filled in the blanks as I imagined her in each setting. I had the opportunity to visit her in the very cabin mentioned in the book. Though she and her husband had added running water, electricity and other modern conveniences, I could sense the history of lives lived out in the small cabin. A Mule, A Cow and 5 Jugs of Shine is still available on Amazon in paperback and e-book. Audio is no longer available.

Student Spotlight: Raul Alegre

By Ella Pattie, Editor

Freshman soccer player, Raul Alegre, traveled from Valencia, Spain, to continue his academic and athletic career here at Southwest. Like many other kids in Spain, his love for soccer began at the early age of three. Raul dreamt of coming to the United States, so he worked with an agency in Spain that sent films of his skills to many universities across America. He was inspired to choose Southwest through social media by a mutual friend, who was once an SMCC soccer player. Since becoming a Bear, Raul has shown that his hard work and love for soccer is prominent in his performance of the game.

So far, Raul’s favorite part about Southwest is improving his English, making new friends, and playing alongside his teammates. Some of the biggest differences between Raul’s hometown and Summit are greeting people with a handshake or a hug, as opposed to a kiss. He is also stunned at the ability to go on a lengthy road trip and still be in the same state, rather than another country. Just like many of us locals, Raul battles with the might of the southern humidity. His advice to future international students is, “to be prepared because everything is different.” Raul is pursuing a degree in marketing with the hopes of one day owning his own business. He aspires to be like his grandfather who owns and runs a successful company in his home country, Spain. Raul has already proven himself on the soccer field this season, and as he continues to commit himself on and off the field, we welcome him here at SMCC.

Dr. Tomekia Luckett (Continued from page 2)

Governance Committee, the Basic Education Committee, and the Curriculum and Resources Committee. She joined the American Nurses Association and the Mississippi Nurses Association, and she is still a member of both. Within the American Nurses Association, Dr. Luckett has held several offices, including the Director of Council on Nursing Education MNA Board from 2017 to 2021, District 7 Executive Board member from 2013 to 2015, and a membership position in the Council on Nursing Research Committee from 2012 to 2013. Dr. Luckett joined the National Black Nurses Association in 2013 and the National League for Nursing in 2012. She is still a member of both organizations. Also in 2014, Luckett became a member of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society and still holds that membership today. From 2013 to 2014, Luckett involved herself in the Gamma Lambda Chapter of USM. She is a Member at Large of the Upsilon Theta Chapter of WCU, the Central MS Black Nurses Association and the Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society from USM. Dr. Luckett is the president of Finding Your Way Out of Poverty, a nonprofit community organization providing scholarship, education, and empowerment events within McComb and the surrounding area.



Bears claw and fight to the end of every game



By Travis Connelley, Sports Information Director

August 29, 2024

Despite multiple positives including 342 total yards of offense and five takeaways, it wasn't enough for Southwest Football as mistakes and inconsistent play hurt the Bears in Thursday's 48-31 season-opening loss at home against the Holmes Bulldogs.

"We didn't play with great effort," Southwest head coach Cliff Collins said. "I was very displeased with how we played effort-wise. Too many turnovers, too many small things that we didn't do right. We have to get that corrected, the small things. So we have to get that corrected and we have to get energized."

It didn't take long for the Bears (0-1) to make a statement. After the Bulldogs drove the ball down inside the red zone on the opening play of the game, the Southwest defense held strong before a fumble recovery by Jeffrey Anderson Jr. on a Holmes field goal attempt gave the ball and the momentum to the hosts.

But the Bears were unable to capitalize and had to punt the ball away.

Another impressive defensive stand, stuffing a fourth-and-short run attempt gave the ball back to the Southwest offense. This time, however, it resulted in points. Jordan Mills completed passes to Marcellus Jackson and Damarcco Blanton with the latter being a 40-yard connection setting up a nine-yard touchdown run by Jalen Williams. With the successful PAT by Lyndell Boatman, the Bears took a 7-0 lead with 7:18 to go in the opening quarter.

As play wound down in the first quarter and spilled into the second, both offense struggled as the defenses got fourth down stops, forced punts and turnovers. Two Bear takeaways occurred during this time period as sophomore Kam Carter shined with a pair of interceptions.

The streak of struggling offensive play was unfortunately broken by Holmes as they put together a drive which wrapped with a 19-yard touchdown pass and with the PAT, the game was tied at 7 with 11:00 to go until halftime.

Yet another Bear takeaway, this time courtesy of an interception by linebacker Danarius Hilliard gave Southwest pristine field position, and it would take advantage. Williams found the end zone again on a beautiful 17-yard run, which included a nifty spin move, making it a 14-7 game.

With the ball and the momen-

tum, the Bears took an unfortunate step backwards as a Holmes pick-6 put the Bulldogs right back in the ballgame which was now tied at 14 with 5:20 to go in the second quarter.

Points off of turnovers was a common theme for both teams and it reared its ugly head for Southwest in the third quarter. Following an interception, the Bulldogs punched it in on the third play of the ensuing drive with a 13-yard touchdown pass. Xynarus Haynes blocked the PAT but the Bears trailed for the first time in the contest finding themselves down 20-14.

A big 50-yard kick return by up-man Tamar Griffin not only gave the Bears great field position but it resulted in points later in the drive when Boatman connected on a 24-yard field goal pulling the Bears within three at 20-17.

The next two defensive drives were struggles for Southwest as Holmes got touchdowns in each to increase its lead to 34-17 with just under a minute to go in the third quarter.

But yet another strong Griffin return gave the Bears favorable field position. Henry Brewer, who came on at quarterback earlier in the contest, led a four-play drive that wrapped with a 32-yard touchdown pass to Jordan Scott which pulled the Bears within 10 at 34-24.

The momentum stayed on the home side as the defense forced a three-and-out before the offense shined once again. The combination of Brewer, Blanton and Williams moved the Bears down to the 28 yard line before freshman running back Chris

Hunter made his presence known with a strong run into the end zone showing great balance along the sideline. The score moved Southwest within three at 34-31 with 7:15 to go.

But unfortunately, the Bears could not keep it going as Holmes got one more touchdown on an 9-yard pass before getting another score on a 43-yard punt return making the score the eventual final.

Both Williams and Hunter finished with 54 yards apiece rushing on 17 and 10 carries, respectively. Williams had two scores with Hunter had one. Blanton led the receivers with six grabs for 87 yards. TJ Johnson had four catches for 54 yards while Scott had two for 44 yards and a touchdown.

Brewer completed 11-of-24 passes for 129 yards and one touchdown.

On defense, Jeffery Polk Jr. and Carter led the Bears with eight tackles apiece with the latter also recording two interceptions. Vinay Singh had seven tackles including one for a loss of three yards. Exavier McDowell had a strong showing with five tackles, two and a half for loss and one sack.

September 5, 2024

Hoping to right the ship in Week 2, the Bears took the long road trip north to Booneville, Thursday, to face Northeast Mississippi. And despite getting off to a good start, the Bears lost momentum in the fourth quarter, falling 49-30 to the Tigers.

"It is the same thing, it is like a repeat of last week," Southwest head coach Cliff Collins said. "It was not quite as bad early on but it is the little things and we have to fix those things. Until we fix those little things and until we do those the right way, the outcome won't change."

Right out of the gate, the Bears (0-2) got on the scoreboard after Damarcco Blanton took the opening kickoff back 92 yards for a touchdown. Lyndell Boatman added the extra point putting Southwest up 7-0.

The momentum unfortunately didn't last long, however, as the Tigers answered with a lengthy drive before finding the end zone themselves on a short TD run, tying the game at 7.

After the Bears could not answer, the Tigers took their first lead of the game at the 8:36 mark on a 79-yard touchdown pass.

Quarterback Henry Brewer and Southwest got into a rhythm offensively the following drive, moving the ball inside the Northeast 10-yard line. They could not get the ball in the end zone but inched closer on the scoreboard following a 23-yard field goal by Boatman making it a 14-10 game.

Another field goal attempt on the ensuing Bear drive, this time from 33 yards out, was blocked keeping it a four-point deficit for the visitors.

After trading punts, the Tigers added to their lead on a six-yard touchdown pass with 3:36 to go in the second quarter pushing the Bear deficit to 11 at 21-10.

Unfazed by the recent Tiger score, Brewer facilitated another successful Southwest drive. He led a 10-play 71-yard drive, completing the ball to five different receivers before finding Blanton on a 9-yard score pulling the Bears within five at 21-16 with under a minute to go until halftime.

With the momentum on the visiting sideline, the Bears took advantage early in the third quarter. The Southwest defense stepped up and stopped the Tigers, holding them on a 4th and 4 from the Bear 48.

Afterward, the Bear offense went back to work. A personal foul penalty following a Jalen Williams run moved the ball just outside the Northeast red zone. Two plays later, Brewer connected with TJ Johnson from 18 yards out giving Southwest the lead once again at 23-21.

Later in the quarter, another Brewer to Blanton touchdown pass, this time from 13 yards out,

pushed the Bear lead to 30-21 at the 1:11 mark.

Unfortunately for Southwest, it could not hang on to that momentum. Northeast went on a run in the fourth quarter, scoring touchdowns on its next four drives to pull away before handing the Bears the loss.

Brewer led the Bears with 253 yards and 3 touchdowns on 28-of-44 passing. Blanton hauled in 8 passes for 72 yards and two touchdowns. Marcellus Jackson also caught 8 balls for 75 yards while TJ Johnson had 4 for 40 yards and a score.

Koren Harris finished with 11 total tackles to lead Southwest while Vinay Singh and Jeffery Polk Jr. each had 8.

September 12, 2024

The Bears entered Thursday's contest at Pearl River hoping to put the rough outings in the first two weeks of the season behind them and turn things around in the MACCC South Division opener against the Wildcats. And even though they went toe-to-toe with the hosts through the first half, things fell apart in the second and they could not climb back into the contest, falling 27-17.

"The guys have to find a way to make the plays," Southwest head coach Cliff Collins said. "They were in position, they were playing hard but was the same old thing. We have to have a breakthrough week."

The Bears (0-3), fell behind early when the Wildcats moved down the field, on the game's opening drive, before scoring on a 15-yard run.

Despite this, Southwest answered right back on the ensuing drive. Success both on the ground and through the air moved the Bears down to the Wildcat 7-yard line before Tedarrius Aych punched it in for the score. Lyndell Boatman added the extra point tying the game at 7.

Later in the quarter, the Wildcats jumped back on top following a 4-yard touchdown run.

With just under 6:00 to go until halftime, the Bears pulled even once again. An 11-play, 76-yard drive, which was highlighted by a 33-yard run by Jalen Williams down to the Pearl River 1-yard line, wrapped with another short touchdown run by Aych.

Pearl River scored again with under a minute to go to take a 21-14 lead but the Bears displayed a strong two-minute offense getting a big 28-yard pass from Henry Brewer to Marcellus Jackson which set up a 21-yard field goal by Boatman as time expired pulling the Bears within four at 21-17 at the half.

Even though the Bears inched closer and got the score just before the half to make it a one-score game, they could not hang on to the momentum in the second half. A three-and-out by the Southwest offense on the opening

possession was answered by a Pearl River 11-play, 95-yard drive that took nearly 6:00 off the clock and culminated with a 7-yard rushing score growing the deficit for the visitors to 10 at 27-17.

Three-and-outs during the next two Bear drives kept the deficit at 10 as play moved into the fourth quarter.

After the Southwest defense forced a three-and-out on Pearl River, the Bears regained possession and put together a promising drive, moving the ball down inside the red zone. The drive stalled, forcing a field goal attempt which missed just to the left keeping the score at 27-17.

The Wildcats then put together a 13-play, 44-yard drive and even though they came away with no points on the possession, they ran an additional 6:34 off of the game clock. When Southwest regained possession, the Bears had under two minutes to go to try and climb back into the contest.

Despite a valiant effort from the Bears including a big 37-yard completion from Brewer to Jackson, they could not come away with any points as the Wildcats took over and ran the clock out, handing Southwest the loss.

Jackson led the offense finishing with six catches for 148 yards. Williams led the ground game with 72 yards on 15 carries while Aych had two rushing touchdowns.

Danarius Hilliard and Jeffery Polk Jr each had big games on defense with 11 and 10 tackles, respectively. Each also had a tackle for loss with Polk also adding a forced fumble.

September 19, 2024

The Bears fought hard Thursday night and had many positives to take away from their home contest against No. 4 Mississippi Gulf Coast, but costly mistakes coupled with a strong Bulldog offense ultimately did Southwest in as the hosts fell 55-36 in a high-scoring affair.

"We have a good team here at Southwest. We played hard but we made some mistakes and that is why the outcome is the way that it is like that," Southwest head coach Cliff Collins said. "I am proud of my guys but we have to get it together and stop making the mistakes at the wrong time. We have to make plays, we have to tackle and that is the bottom line."

Early on, a mistake from the Bears (0-4, 0-2 MACCC) hurt as a fumble was scooped up by the Bulldogs and returned 24 yards for a score putting the hosts in a 7-0 hole.

Southwest tried to answer, but a costly interception on a promising Bear drive shut the door on the opportunity for the potential equalizer.

Another Bear mistake proved costly as a Tory Morgan interception of Gulf Coast quarterback

Landon Varnes was erased following a penalty. Four plays later, the Bulldogs punched it in making it a 14-0 deficit for Southwest.

A second Bear turnover on the ensuing drive put the brakes on yet another promising drive as the Bulldogs jumped on a fumble inside their own 20-yard line.

The Southwest defense stepped up and stopped Gulf Coast before the Bear offense took over once again, however this time, they got points at the end of the drive. Jordan Mills, who came on in relief at quarterback, hooked with Jordan Scott on a 14-yard touchdown pass. Lyndell Boatman's PAT cut the Bulldog lead in half at 14-7.

After trading punts Gulf Coast struck on their next two possessions as both ended with touchdown passes, the second of which made it a 27-7 game.

Early in the third quarter, the Bears took advantage of a Bulldog mistake as a long Gulf Coast drive was halted after a fumble, forced by Vinay Singh was scooped up by Tony Burns and returned 55 yards to the Bulldog 40 yard line.

A 12-play ensuing drive wrapped with another Bear touchdown pass, this time it was Quez Goss finding Marcellus Jackson from two yards out pulling the Bears within 13 at 27-14.

Unfortunately, that would be the closest the Bears would get for the remainder of the night. The Bulldogs got their next two touchdowns on a long kick return followed by a long run making it a 41-14 game.

Southwest answered late in the third with another touchdown pass from Goss, this time finding Scott from 62 yards out, reducing the Gulf Coast lead down to 20 at 41-21.

After the Bulldogs scored a touchdown early in the fourth on a pass, the Bears immediately answered with a 92-yard kick return touchdown from Jackson.

With just under 7:00 to go in the contest, the Bulldogs scored their final touchdown on the night on a 30-yard run before the Bears scored their final during the ensuing drive when Goss connected with Jackson from 26 yards out, making the score the eventual final.

Goss led the Bear offense coming in on relief and completing 11-of-17 passes for 183 yards, three touchdowns and no interceptions.

Damarcco Blanton had a big night with 10 catches for 68 yards. Scott and Jackson had two touchdown catches each with the previous catching four balls for 104 yards and the prior recording seven for 81. Jackson also added 148 yards and a score three kick returns.

Defensively Jeffery Polk Jr. led the Bears with seven tackles and a pass breakup.

Lady Bears move the ball down field

September 14, 2024

In what could be a preview of what's to come in MACCC play, the Lady Bears endured a tough, grueling match against the Hinds Lady Eagles in non-conference play Saturday night. And even though the visitors jumped ahead first, Southwest regained its composure and drew even late before the match ended in a 1-1 draw.

For Lady Bear head coach Nicole Cooper, Saturday's match was a good barometer of where her team is before they begin conference play next week.

"I think that today gave us an idea of some components that we need to continue to work on," she said. "Finding the back of the net in the final third, we had our chances, and we just couldn't put it away."

Those missed opportunities caused frustration for the Lady Bears (3-1-2) who tried to gain the upper hand first on their opponents from Raymond. Both teams spent the first 45:00 of play jockeying for position, trying to set the tone, but it was the opposing defenses who shined as the first half buzzer sounded with the score still even at 0-0.

Hinds broke through first in the 52nd minute when the Lady Eagles scored on a penalty kick putting Southwest down 1-0.

The Lady Bears pressed on, looking for the equalizer. And they got it in the 74th minute when Kayla Martin sent a shot in from about 25 yards out tying the match at 1.

Down the stretch, Southwest tried to use that momentum to its advantage and get a go-ahead goal. And even though they kept the ball on the Hinds half of the pitch for the majority of the remaining 16:00 of play, they could not get the goal they needed as the match ended in a draw.

In one final test before MACCC Conference play begins next week, the Bears played host to Hinds Saturday evening, hoping to build some momentum.

And even though it got off to a positive start, Southwest could not close the deal in the end, falling to the Eagles 3-2.

"It was a scrappy game, and we had a lot of good play today, we did well," Southwest head coach Zach Mills said. "Hinds is a good team; they have been beating everyone else. We knew that it was going to be a good challenge."

The Bears (4-2) got off to a strong start as in just the 7th minute, Raul Alegre got in position for a quick shot which he made count, scoring a goal and putting the Bears ahead 1-0.

The momentum, unfortunately, did not last as the Eagles got on the board 10:00 later on a penalty kick, tying the match at 1.

Early in the second half, the Bears regained some of that magic shown in the first as in the 45th minute, Jack Boyd scored following an assist from a Justin Ruiz corner kick, giving Southwest a 2-1 advantage.

As the match wore on, the Bears lost a step. The Eagles not only tied the match once again in the 56th minute but they added the go-ahead goal with only 10:30 to go.

Southwest tried to regain focus and claw its way back in the match, but was unable to as Hinds escaped with the win.

September 21, 2024

In what started out as a competitive contest unfortunately got away from Southwest as the Lady Bears fell to the Mississippi Gulf Coast Lady Bulldogs 6-2 Friday evening in Perkinston.

"We struggled defensively tonight," Southwest head coach Nicole Cooper said. "I thought that we were playing with good intensity. Our big positive (tonight) was that they (Gulf Coast) have not been scored on all year and these were the first two goals that they have given up this year."

After Gulf Coast struck first with a goal in the seventh minute, the Lady Bears (3-3-2) battled back and tied the match less than a minute later as Caroline Barcelona sent one in the net after getting an assist from Mary Claire McCurley.

Unfortunately, that was the closest that Southwest would get for the remainder of the match. Gulf Coast rallied to score two more goals in the first half, putting the Lady Bears in a 3-1 hole at the intermission.

The momentum stayed on the home side as Gulf Coast added

three more scores in the 62nd, 64th and 75th minutes. Despite the deficit, the Lady Bears showed great fight and got a score with just over a minute to go when Evie Peet set up Kayla Martin for a goal, making the score the eventual final.

Despite entering Friday's road contest at Mississippi Gulf Coast confident, the Bears were unable to get their offense going and had some struggles on defense against the host Bulldogs who walked away with a 4-0 win.

"They (Gulf Coast) are very, very good," Southwest head coach Zach Mills said. "We didn't play our game and if we would have played our game, we would have had our chance."

Unfortunately for the Bears (4-4, 0-2 MACCC) they could not get their offense fully established.

The Bulldogs put the Bears in a 2-0 hole with goals in the 14th and 19th minutes, setting the tone early. They added one more with 6:00 to go in the first half putting the Bears down 3-0.

Gulf Coast got its final in the 65th minute getting one past freshman goalkeeper Carson Lee who got praise from Mills after the match as he recorded six saves in his first regular season action this year.

September 24, 2024

Hoping to turn things around following tough losses last week, the Lady Bears entered Tuesday's home contest against Meridian aiming to get the win against the Eagles. And despite plenty of

positives, ultimately, the miscues were difficult to recover from as the Lady Bears fell 4-0.

"We are struggling a little bit with making simple mistakes that are avoidable and that that is going to be the difference in us winning and losing," Southwest head coach Nicole Cooper said. "They had a very dangerous player up top and she can score and put some goals away. We have a hard time trying to apply things that we are saying. They understand but we are not applying it."

Southwest (3-4-2, 0-3 MACCC) fell behind early as Meridian got on the board in the 6th minute with a goal.

The Lady Bears looked for the equalizer but could not get their offense going. The Lady Eagles added to their lead late in the first half getting another goal making it a 2-0 game.

About 5:00 into the second half, the deficit unfortunately grew for Southwest as Meridian found the back of the net once again putting the Lady Bears down 3-0.

The final Lady Eagle goal came in the 53rd minute on a penalty kick. The Lady Bears pressed on and showed a much more aggressive push towards the end but could not get into rhythm and climb back into the ball game.

The Bears showed great resilience Tuesday night at home against Meridian, battling back to score the equalizing goal late before their match ended in a 2-2 tie. "We turned off two times in this

game and they (Meridian) capitalized on both," Southwest head coach Zach Mills said. "Kudos to Meridian for making sure that they finish their chances, but I was super sad that we could not win this game. I am proud of the guys for being resilient, coming back and tying it."

It didn't take long for the Bears (4-4-1, 0-2-1 MACCC) to make the first move as Joel Bastida found Justin Ruiz on a key pass before the latter found the back of the net giving Southwest a 1-0 advantage.

As the first half wound down, however, the Bears struggled a bit. The Eagles scored two goals over an eight-minute span to not only climb back in the contest but take the lead.

Despite being down, the Bears were not out. They continued to battle and their hard work paid off in the 54th minute when the Bastida to Ruiz connection worked its magic once again resulting in another score for Southwest who pulled even at 2-2.

In one last effort to try and get the go-ahead and potential game-winning goal, the Bears used the momentum from their latest score but were unable to get the ball in the net once more as the match ended in a tie.

Go Bears!

Flash Fiction: The Cobra Chicken

By Allisen Moore,
Staff Writer

The sophomore saw them coming from across campus. They were hard to miss, clad in their new backpacks and bright smiles. They were a loud bunch, laughing and chatting as if they were auditioning for the High School Musical. They were freshman.

The sophomore's lips pursed, brows furrowing with worry. The group was not paying enough attention. They did not seem to know the potential danger they were in. He hoped they would not come his way. He was quite comfortable perched on one of the several benches strategically placed around the pond. He would hate to have to move.

Nevertheless, they were not coming his way. They had spotted something down by the edge of the pond. Even from his spot he could hear the excited, "OMG, ducks!" As they moved towards the fowl.

The sophomore was on his feet in a moment.

"Wait," he jogged towards them. "Stop!"

Startled, the group did, facing him with wide eyes, their smiles faltering.

"What is it?" one brave soul asked.

"Don't go any closer," the sophomore breathed, close enough now that they could hear him. His eyes were glued to the danger, "slowly back away. Now."

One, confused girl took a step back, followed soon by another, and a boy.

"What is it?" one girl whispered.

"A foul and deadly beast," the sophomore described soberly. "Many a man has faced it and few live to tell the tale. It would eat out your heart in a moment!"

The girl looked around, and then scoffed.

"I don't see anything."

"Is it behind the ducks?" another girl innocently asked.

"He's just trying to scare us," the boy smirked, walking closer to the pond and the bloodthirsty beast. "He's probably a sophomore."

"Oh," a girl giggled, "you almost had me."

"Did none of you read the warnings?"

"What are you even talking about," everyone was smiling again, moving towards the ponds edge. "The only warnings are for geese; those are obviously ducks."

For the most part, the younger boy was right; it was a small flock of ducks grooming and dozing at the edge of the pond. All ducks besides one, at the back, its head tucked beneath its wing to disguise its identity.

However, the freshman were not listening to him anymore, certain that he was pranking them.

"I tried to warn them," he said helplessly as one freshman stepped too close to a duck. The poor animal gave a terrified quack. The cobra chicken awoke in an instant, its serrated bill hissing, and its neck stretched to it maximum, glorious length.

The sophomore calmly walked away.

He had tried to warn them.

There was a mighty honky behind him, panicked squeals following the students all the way to the road.

New Projects (Continued from page 1

"We were wondering if we should get the electrician to do the carpet laying or get the carpet layer to do the electricity," Director of Media Systems and Facilities Nathan Wells quipped, pointing to light strips in aisles of the auditorium. "We decided to do it ourselves."Despite being in this job for only two years, Paulk has over 13 major construction projects in the works, along with several smaller ones.On top of all the other projects, there are plans to build a new grandstand for the baseball field, which is planned to be finished for the upcoming season in spring, and to redo the interior of Charlie's Grill. Combined, the projects will cost over \$2 million.

Pine Burr Staff welcomes you to Southwest



Pine Burr Staff: Natali Moore, Co-Editor; Ella Pattie, Editor; Allisen Moore, Anna Comeaux, Co-Editor; Lauren Coon, Lorelai Davis, Co-Editor; Maci Haygood, Emily Caston, Co-Editor; Karen Wimberley, Olivia Ellison, and Joyce Mabry, Advisor; Not Pictured: Dylan Meyers, Cameron Leon, and Charlie Harrell

photo by Manuel Scott

Emily Caston is a recent high school graduate of Parklane Academy, where she maintained a 4.0 GPA and held a spot in MAIS Honors Society and Mu Alpha Theta. She was a member of the Parklane Academy swim team and also the Fitlife Flippers swim team for the majority of her school career, starting in the fourth grade. Emily has a passion for missions and has attended and served at numerous church camps and Vacation Bible Schools. She loves children and is majoring in Elementary Education to become a teacher. As a freshman at SMCC, she plans to be actively involved in the Baptist Student Union and in the Choir. Emily is also a staff writer for the *Pine Burr* and *Whispering Pines* and serves as Co-editor of the *Pine Burr*.

Anna Comeaux graduated from Picayune Memorial High School, and she is now a freshman at Southwest. She is on the women's tennis team, and she frequents the Baptist student union. Anna is currently majoring in Art, so that she can work towards a career in adaptive fashion. Adaptive fashion is clothing designed for those with disabilities, not only to suit their needs but also without the look of medical equipment. Anna has many passions, which includes: trying new hobbies, Bible study, research, and diving into history. A staff writer for the *Pine Burr* and *Whispering Pines* and serves as co-editor of the *Pine Burr*.

Lauren Coon is a recent graduate from Parklane Academy and is now a freshman student at Southwest. She was born and raised in Magnolia, Mississippi. In high school, she participated in the Honors Society and Mu Alpha Theta. She is the comic strip artist for the *Pine Burr* newspaper, and she has been creating art her entire life as a hobby, starting when she was six. Her art is inspired by her favorite TV shows from her childhood as well as her peers. After Southwest, Lauren plans on attending Southern Miss.

Lorelai Davis is a sophomore at Southwest Mississippi Community College. She was born and raised in McComb, where she still resides. Lorelai is majoring in biomedical science and after graduating from SMCC, she plans to attend The University of Southern Mississippi followed by medical school. During all four years of high school, she was on the yearbook staff of Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi and was selected to be editor her senior year. At SMCC, she is a member of many student organizations, such as Phi Theta Kappa, Tri-Beta, and Bear Trackers. During her freshman year, she was the editor of both the *Whispering Pines* yearbook and the *Pine Burr*. Currently, she is the editor of the *Whispering Pines* and the co-editor of the *Pine Burr*. Additionally, she serves as the Co-President of Bear Trackers and as the Co-man at Southwest. Lorelai is committed to her studies and extracurriculars. She works as an assistant dance teacher in her spare time. When not studying or working, she can usually be found curled up with a good book.

Olivia Ellison is a recent graduate of Parklane Academy, where she graduated as a member of Mu Alpha Theta and Honor Society. She is from Summit and is now a freshman at SMCC. On campus, she enjoys watching different sporting events, fellowshiping at the BSU, hanging out with her friends, and meeting classmates. As a writer for the newspaper, her interests include watching movies, listening to music, researching topics, and physical exercise. She loves to teach others, and she hopes to pursue her degree in Speech Pathology while at SMCC.

Maci Haygood is a recent high school graduate of Amite School Center, where she maintained a 4.0 GPA. She was awarded the D.A.R Good Citizens award her senior year. At ASC, she played basketball for the majority of her high school career, starting in the

third grade. Maci attends Liberty Baptist Church where she has participated in church camps in multiple states. She is majoring in Business and Marketing Management Technologies, and she hopes to one day start her own business out of her favorite hobby, photography. As a freshman at SMCC, she plans to be involved in writing and taking photos for the *Pine Burr* newspaper and the *Whispering Pines*.

Cameron Leon is a writer for the journalism team at Southwest Mississippi Community College. He is currently pursuing a pre-med degree with the goal of becoming an ophthalmologist to help others see the world more clearly. In addition to his academic pursuits, Cameron is a member of the prestigious honor society Phi Theta Kappa and is also in his second year on the Bears tennis team and was recently honored with the NJCAA Academic Student-Athlete Award for his outstanding academic performance last semester.

Dylan Meyers is a 2024 graduate of North Pike Senior High School. At North Pike, he participated in basketball, track, and photography. Dylan enjoys playing pickleball with his friends and snapping photos in his free time. He is a freshman here at Southwest, and he is the student photographer for the *Pine Burr* and *Whispering Pines*.

Allisen Moore is majoring in Pre-AgriBusiness and has been a member of PTK for the last three semesters. Allisen is also the Vice President of SMCC's DECA Chapter, through which she had the opportunity to compete at state and international levels in Financial Accounting. Currently, she works on her family farm and, after graduating, she plans to continue working as the farms' manager to help grow the business.

Natali Moore is majoring in Pre-Entrepreneurship while also being a member of PTK for three semesters. Here at SMCC, Natali is the President of DECA, an international organization dedi-

cated to preparing emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in colleges around the globe. Within DECA, she won first place in Sales Presentation at the state level of competition, which qualified her to compete in the international competition of 2024. There, she was presented with an Executive Level Leadership Passport, which she earned through community service and attending leadership conferences. After SMCC, Natali plans to start an authorship business and become a full time novelist.

Ella Pattie is a recent graduate of Parklane Academy, where she graduated as a member of Mu Alpha Theta and Honor Society. At Parklane, she served as the Co-Editor of the yearbook from 2021-2023, eventually serving as the Editor in 2024. She is currently a freshman at Southwest. Here on campus, she enjoys attending sporting events, going to the BSU, and laughing with her friends. At Southwest, she holds the positions of Editor of the *Pine Burr* and Co-Editor of the *Whispering Pines*. Ella has a myriad of interests including biochemistry, biomechanics, and theology. She plans to pursue a degree in a science major unless God has other plans.

Karen E Wimberley is a non-traditional freshman at Southwest Mississippi Community College. Originally from Mobile Alabama, she now resides in Tylertown Mississippi. For the last forty years her career has been in the medical field, practicing as a Critical Care and Cardiac Nurse. She has traveled to all fifty states and can always find a good story in everyone's life. In 2017 she fulfilled her lifelong dream of becoming a published author, when her first book was published by Vanilla Palm Productions and Publishing. She is currently a staff member of the *Whispering Pines*. Karen returned to college at sixty-three to pursue new adventures.

Lady Bear Basketball players sign

By Travis Connelley, SID

Three Lady Bear Basketball players sign with four-year schools. After finding great success on the basketball court in Summit and helping to lead Southwest to an MACCC Conference Runners-Up and NJCAA Region 23 Runners-Up finish this past season, three Lady Bear Basketball players will get the chance to shine once again – this time on the four-year level.

Morgan Sullivan (Lane College), Kennedee Shelton (Arkansas-Monticello) and Michaela Payton (Mobile) all recently made it be known where they will continue their academic and athletic careers. Sullivan, Shelton and Payton are just three from this year's class who have signed with more expected at a later date. For Sullivan, she is anxiously awaiting the chance to show what she can do on the next level from the post position.

"I'm very excited for the next chapter," she said. "I'm ready to see what it is going to look like. I'm really excited to see how much better I can get as time goes on." Sullivan adds that she chose to sign with the Dragons despite receiving interest from a pair of in-state schools in Millsaps and Mississippi University for Women."

She started all 30 games this past season and averaged 5.6 points, 4.3 rebounds and 1.3 assists per game. Like Sullivan, Michaela Payton was a post player from Moss Point who stepped her game up after arriving at Southwest. Even though she is signing close to home, she knows that it will not be easy, yet she is anxious for what awaits her at Mobile.

"I'm really ready to get out there and I'm ready for something new. I'm ready for the new challenges," Payton said.

Another factor that worked in the favor of Payton was re-connecting with former Lady Bear teammate Courtney Bradford who signed with the Lady Rams last year.

"She gave me a heads up about how they play and practice," she said. "She said that they run a lot but running isn't a problem for me." Payton started in all 30 games and averaged 9.7 points, 6.3 rebounds and a team-high 0.8 blocks per game last season for the Lady Bears. It may have been for only a year, but Shelton was another player who made the most of her time in Summit as the Shreveport, LA-native stepped into a leading role for the Lady Bears. She too started all 30 games and averaged team highs in points per game at 13.2, 3-point percentage at 31.2, steals per game at 2.1 and rebounds per game at 6.5. She adds that she is excited to get the opportunity to continue playing and that she chose to sign with the Cotton Blossoms despite receiving interest from a number of other schools including Mississippi College, Midwestern State and Christian Brothers.

Shelton said that she was thankful for her time in Summit and explains that she had to make a bit of a change to her game.

"I'm very thankful that I came here," she said. "I didn't get to play guard much before this, I was a post player. This was my first year of being a guard and I know at the next level it is a position that I know that I will be playing. I had to adjust to everything and I feel like it was needed coming from where I came from." Shelton adds that even though she was at Southwest for only a year, she is happy to have built strong relationships with her teammates. "I didn't think I would get this close to them since it was my only year here," she said. "But I feel like this team is very together. It is way bigger than just basketball between us."

Southwest head coach Brent Harris explained that Sullivan, Payton and Shelton all made strong, positive marks with the program and in different ways. "Kennedee (Shelton), obviously was a big part of our offense and had to be a play maker later in the year," he said. "She is a really good rebounder. We were fortunate to get her experience after she transferred in. I think that she is going to a good program. Morgan (Sullivan) was a really solid asset for us in the post. She is always dialed in.

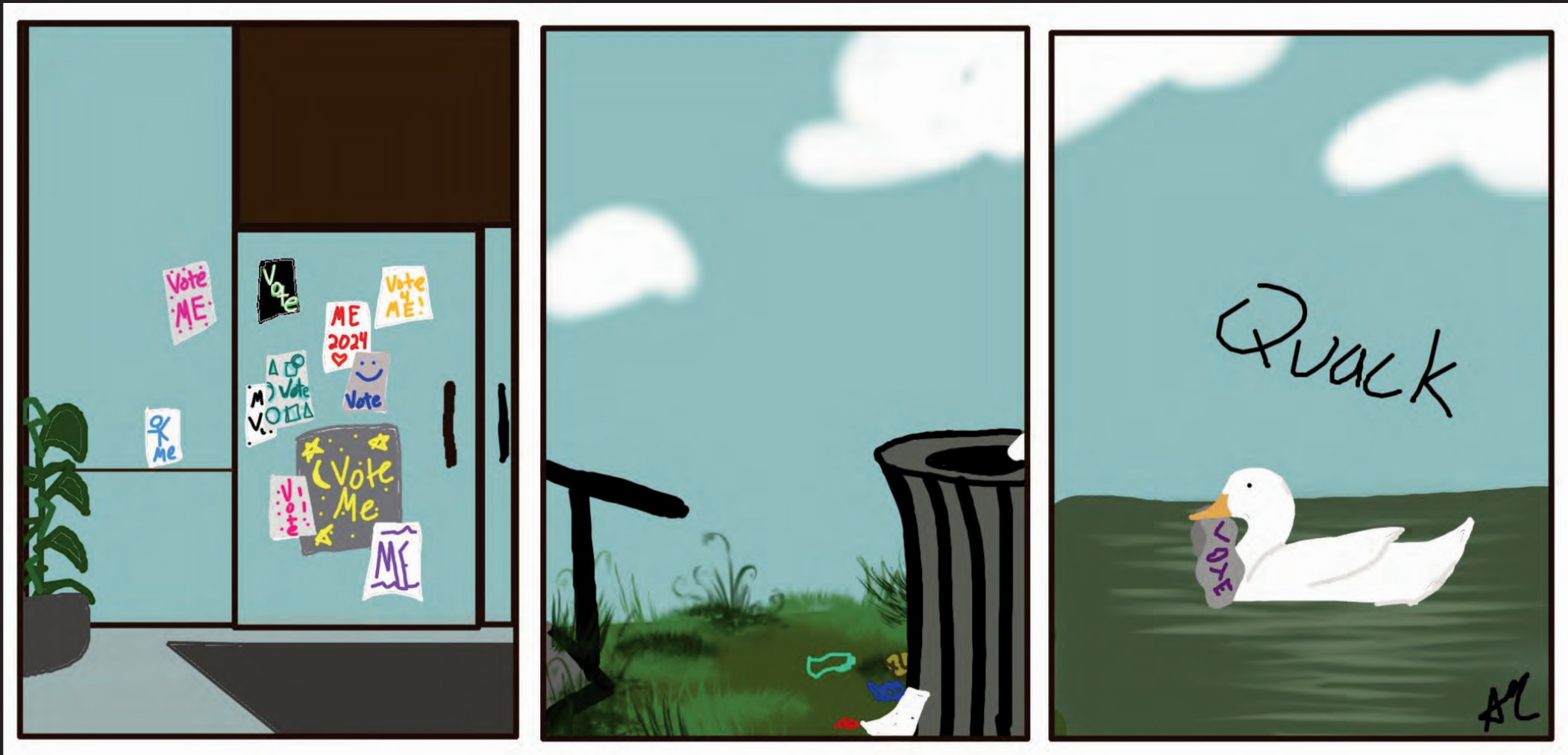


2024-2025 Who's Who: Jaden Pierre, Mr. SMCC; Ruth Bishop, Freshman Vice-President, Freshman Class Favorite; Gracie Amacker, Freshman Class Favorite; Bella Gaskin, Sophomore Class Favorite; Addison Ward, Freshman Class Favorite; Lily Gaskin, Freshman Class Favorite; Malorie Dreher, Sophomore Delegate; Kailea Dillon, Sophomore Vice-President, Sophomore Class Favorite ;Jabari Garner, Beau; second row: Aysha Hare, Sophomore Delegate; Emily Caston, Freshman Secretary; Josi Spears, Freshman Treasurer; Olivia Goldman, Miss SMCC; Maddison Carraway, Sophomore President, Sophomore Class Favorite; Mary Katherine Gray, Sophomore Delegate; Grace Speights, Sophomore Class Favorite; Savannah Arnold, Freshman Delegate, Freshman Class Favorite; third row: Bryan Walsh, Freshman Class Favorite; Matthew Brister, Sophomore Class Favorite, Beau; Jeb Robinson, Campus Favorite; Dana Pena, Sophomore Secretary, Campus Favorite; Joseph Kenny, Freshman President; Bethany Graves, Sophomore Treasurer; Evan Brumfield, Beau; Colby Terrell, Beau; Caleb James, Sophomore Class Favorite, Most Handsome; William Cedotal, Beau

photo by Chuck Barnes

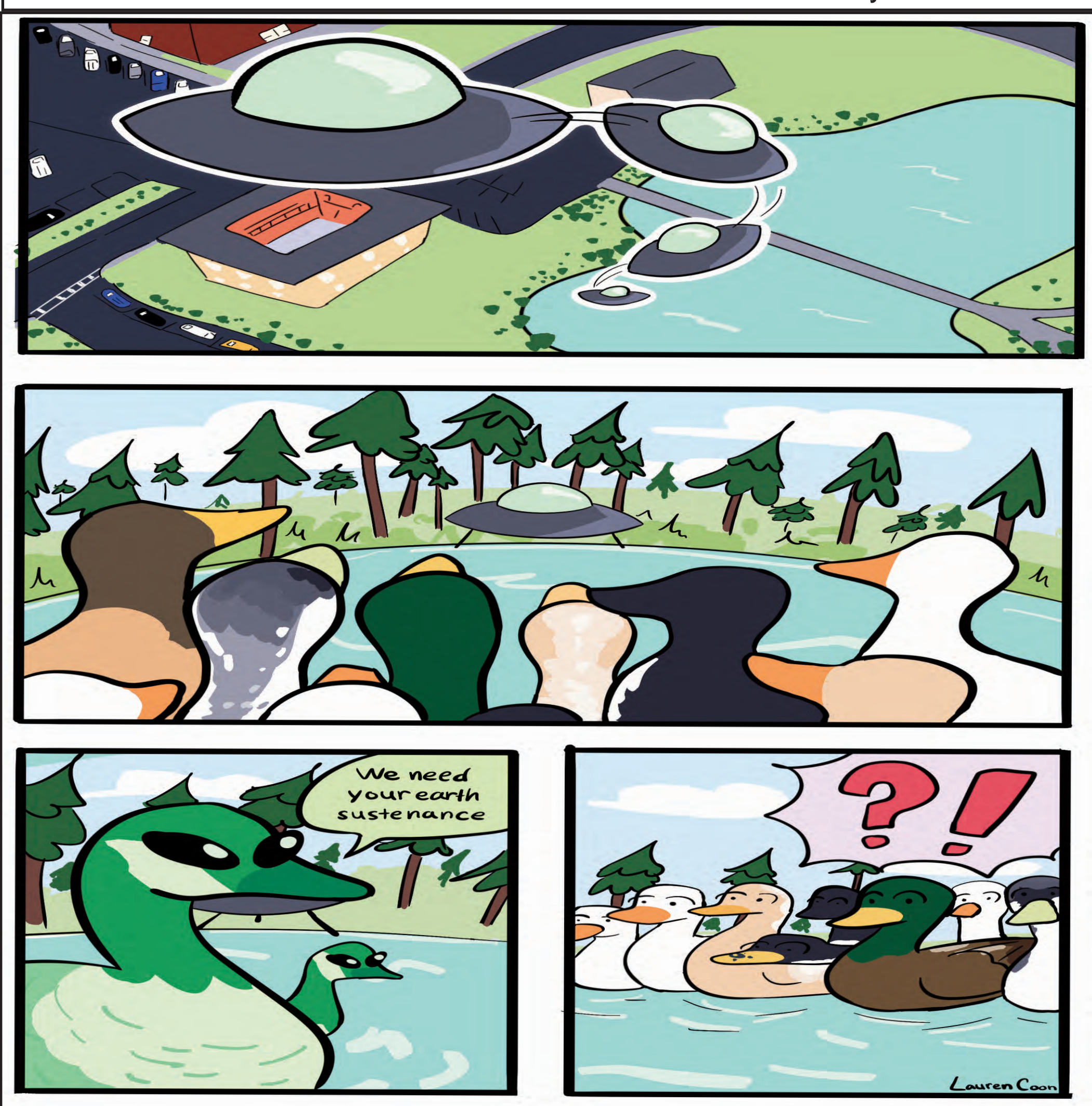
Vote

by Anna Comeaux



Ducks

by Lauren Coon



ADS



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TODAY!**



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SMCC VS
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