

The Vicksburg Post.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2010 • 50¢

SPORTS



SHARPIE
VHS' Gibbs
revs up
Gators
B1

WEATHER

Tonight:
Partly cloudy, lows in the 20s
Saturday:
Partly cloudy; highs in the 50s
Mississippi River:
18.5 feet
Fell: 1.3 foot
Flood stage: 43 feet

A9

DEATHS

- Janice L. Blackmore
- Jeri Ann Gartman
- Agnes Wardean Nevels
- Effie L. Stockton
- Lelia Marion Ware

A9

TODAY IN HISTORY

1830: South American patriot Simon Bolivar dies in Colombia.
1903: Wilbur and Orville Wright of Dayton, Ohio, conduct the first successful manned powered-airplane flights, near Kitty Hawk, N.C., using their experimental craft.
1957: The United States successfully test-fires the Atlas intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time.
1969: The U.S. Air Force closes its Project "Blue Book" by concluding there is no evidence of extraterrestrial spaceships behind thousands of UFO sightings.
1975: Lynette Fromme is sentenced in Sacramento, Calif., to life in prison for her attempt on the life of President Gerald R. Ford.
2005: President George W. Bush, in his weekly radio address, acknowledges he'd personally authorized a secret eavesdropping program in the U.S. following 9/11, calling it "crucial to our national security."

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Health booster sets new goal to ban public-building puffing

By Manivanh Chanprasith
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A community health advocate and local gym owner is seeking a ban on smoking on all tax-paid properties and facilities in Vicksburg. "Smoking kills people," the 55-year-old Linda Fondren, who has been featured on national television for her free weight-loss campaigns, told Vicksburg's Port City Kiwanis Club Thursday. "This is about healthy living and healthy lifestyles. Smoking, the lack of physical activity, the lack of



Linda Fondren

healthy eating all contribute to chronic illnesses that come later in life."

Fondren said she has approached Vicksburg Mayor Paul Winfield about her intentions to campaign against smoking on taxpayers' property and plans to address the full Board of Mayor and Aldermen as well as the Warren County Board of Supervisors after the holidays. "I have been to many other cities, and I see what they are doing to

See Smoking, Page A9.



DAVID JACKSON-THE VICKSBURG POST

A smoker puffs in front of the Warren County Courthouse; in the background, another stands on the front steps.

COMING DOWN



DAVID JACKSON-THE VICKSBURG POST

An old water tower at 2400 Levee St., as seen from Washington and Speed streets.

Change to make way for storage facility

By Manivanh Chanprasith
mchan@vicksburgpost.com

An empty water tower above Vicksburg Compress buildings at 2400 Levee St., railroad tracks and cars is coming down.

The tower, built in the 1940s to hold water for fire suppression, is rusting and in danger of falling, Leland Speed, a Madison insurance and real estate agent representing the owner, told the city's Board of Architectural Review.

"We would like to remove this structure because it's no longer utilized ... and it poses a danger to anybody that goes around the back side of the building because



Leland Speed

of the condition it's in now," Speed told the board before receiving unanimous approval. "It has deteriorated over time and it poses a public hazard," board member Dorwin Shields said.

The property's owner, Vicksburg Compress, will use it for a self-storage facility, Speed said.

The compress facility, which covers about 22 acres near where the Yazoo Diversion Canal meets the Mis-

issippi River and dates to 1903, formerly housed a cotton gin press, 13 warehouses and sheds with about 340,000 square feet of storage space.

It has been in poor shape because of water damage and asbestos following years of vacancy because its owners, investors from New York City, had gotten out of the cotton-trading business, said Speed, a nephew of former Mississippi Development Authority Leland R. Speed.

The younger Speed said demolishing some structures and restoring others will make way for the prop-

See Tower, Page A9.

County woman headed to prison for infant's injury

By Pamela Hitchins
phitchins@vicksburgpost.com

A Vicksburg woman who pleaded no-contest last month to charges that she injured her 19-day-old baby will go to state prison for eight years, a judge ordered Thursday as he cited a previous case in which a child in her care had been injured.

Kristen Elizabeth Walter, 26, 7094 Oak Ridge Road, admitted at her pre-sentencing hearing Dec. 3 that she was under the influence of methamphetamine on July 5, 2009, when she caused the injuries to her baby girl that included twist fractures of



Kristen Walter

the arm and leg, a skull fracture and bruising.

She pleaded no-contest to the charges on Nov. 19.

"This is a difficult case," Circuit Judge

Isadore Patrick said Thursday, adding that in trying to determine a fair sentence for Walter he had to look not just at the facts of her life but also at her baby's.

"I believe you have some issues," he said, citing a his-

See Walter, Page A9.

House approves U.S. tax package

Obama expected to sign bill today

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A massive bipartisan tax package preventing a big New Year's Day tax hike for millions of Americans is on its way to President Barack Obama for his signature today.

The measure would extend tax cuts for families at every income level, renew jobless benefits for the long-term unemployed and enact a new one-year cut in Social Security taxes that would benefit nearly every worker who earns a wage. The president was expected to sign the bill this afternoon.

In a remarkable show of bipartisanship, the House gave final approval to the measure just before midnight Thursday, overcoming an attempt by rebellious Democrats who wanted to impose a higher estate tax than the one to which Obama had agreed. The vote was

13.4M could get surprise tax bill

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — About 13.4 million taxpayers might be getting unexpected tax bills because they were awarded too much money under President Barack Obama's Making Work Pay tax credit, a government audit said Thursday.

The tax credit, which expires Jan. 1, was designed to increase take-home pay by about \$8 a week through new tax withholding tables. The credit was capped at \$400 for individuals and \$800 for married couples filing jointly.

However, the credit put millions of taxpayers at risk for not having enough taxes withheld from their paychecks, resulting in a tax bill when they file their returns, said the audit by J. Russell George, the Treasury inspector general for tax administration.

Those at risk included people with multiple jobs, married couples who both work, Social Security recipients who also work, and young workers who are also

See Bills, Page A9.

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Cuts

Continued from Page A1. 277-148, with each party contributing an almost identical number of votes in favor (the Democrats, 139 and the Republicans, 138). In a rare reach across party

lines, Obama negotiated the \$858 billion package with Senate Republicans. Mississippi's congressmen were split on the votes. Democrat Travis Childers voted for the measure, while Republican Gregg Harper and Gene Taylor and Bennie Thompson, both Democrats,

voted against it. Sweeping tax cuts enacted when George W. Bush was president are scheduled to expire Jan. 1 — a little more than two weeks away. The bill extends them for two years, placing the issue squarely in the middle of the next presidential election.

The cuts include lower rates for the rich, the middle class and the working poor, a \$1,000-per-child tax credit, tax breaks for college students and lower taxes on capital gains and dividends. Workers' Social Security taxes would be cut by nearly a third.

Bills

Continued from Page A1. claimed as dependents on their parents' tax returns. "The Making Work Pay credit is a key tax credit designed to increase spending and stimulate the economy," George said. "However, many taxpayers who are accustomed to receiving refunds when they file their tax returns may have owed taxes and incurred penalties in 2009, and may again."

The Internal Revenue Service reported the average tax refund was \$2,892 in the 2010 filing season, up from \$2,663 in 2009. However, the number of refunds dropped by 3.5 percent, to 93.3 million. The audit says the Making Work Pay credit could have been a factor in the reduced number of refunds.

The credit was Obama's signature break in the massive economic recovery package passed in 2009. The IRS moved quickly to start getting the credit to workers.

About 122 million families and individuals have benefited from the credit, according to the agency's written response to the audit.

The IRS says it undertook an aggressive campaign in 2009 and 2010 to warn at-risk taxpayers that they might not be withholding enough money from their pay, including public service announcements and YouTube videos.

The agency regularly advises taxpayers to check their withholding so they don't get a surprise tax bill when they file their returns.

"This provision was specifically intended to help taxpayers through the severe economic downturn by putting more money into their hands right away, in each paycheck," wrote Richard Byrd, commissioner of the agency's wage and investment division.

Walter

Continued from Page A1. tory of drug abuse and possible mental illness. "But I am concerned that this was not the first incident. It was the second time a child in your care had been injured and hurt. That is disturbing."

Less than two years ago, Walter lost custody of another daughter, then 18-months-old, while living in the New Orleans area, according to information disclosed at the pre-sentencing hearing. Louisiana authorities removed from her care the child, now 3 and being raised by adoptive parents.

The details of that case were not available. A third baby, court records showed, was given up for adoption by Walter when she was a teenager.

On Thursday, Patrick sentenced Walter to 20 years in prison but suspended 12. He said he would require her to receive psychological counseling during her imprisonment and to undergo drug and alcohol treatment.

When she is released from prison, she will not be allowed to have contact with her child unless the guardians allow it, Patrick ruled.

Walter cried and covered her face with her hands after hearing the sentence. Her attorney, John Bullard, held her shoulders and spoke quietly in her ear for a few seconds before she was led back to the Warren County Jail en route to the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility in Pearl.

The baby, now about 18 months old, is healthy and in the care of family members on the father's side. She shows no effects of the abuse that required her to be admitted to University Medical Center in Jackson for three

days, said District Attorney Ricky Smith.

Walter was arrested shortly after taking the baby to the emergency room at River Region Medical Center. She initially told doctors she was holding the baby when she tripped over a threshold in her home and fell, landing on the infant, but doctors found the baby's injuries could not have happened with such a fall.

River Region doctors notified the Warren County Sheriff's Office of the baby's injuries, and the Mississippi Department of Human Services took custody of the baby, who was transferred to UMC and the Children's Justice Center, where Dr. Scott Benton, a forensic expert in child abuse, determined that the arm and leg fractures were "spiral fractures," likely caused by twisting, Smith said.

It is not known how the skull fracture occurred, he said.

The DA agreed that the case was troubling.

"We can understand the defendant has had some difficulties in her life, but this was a 19-day-old child whose life was counted in hours who suffered severe injuries in her hands," Smith said. "We think that the court's decision to require prison time is just."

At Walter's presentencing hearing, it was disclosed that she was raised in an adoptive family and began to use drugs around the age of 12. Walter had no previous felony arrests in Warren County, Smith said, but had been charged in Louisiana with giving a false name and identification to a police officer. She also initially gave false identification when arrested on the child-abuse charges, Smith said.

Smoking

Continued from Page A1.

improve the health of their citizens," she said. "At what point do we step up and say we care about ourselves?"

In speaking with Winfield, Fondren said she was met with "careful consideration." The city prohibits smoking in city vehicles, but has no ordinance against smoking on public property.

"I'm not opposed to a ban on smoking on city-owned property," said Winfield, who is not a smoker.

"It's something we would need to talk about and study," he said.

He said this kind of initiative would require a petition from citizens before being brought to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

"There are other dynamics in place," he said. "This is just shy of invading privacy rights. People may do things to harm their health, but that's their right."

Insurance companies offer incentives for employers who designate their property smoke-free, and Winfield said the city, which is self-insured by Blue Cross and Blue Shield, will research the situation.

The City of Ridgeland, which has a population of about 21,000, also is self-insured.

Two years ago, the city enacted a ban on smoking on all city facilities and properties, which include the Madison County town's city hall, police and fire departments, public works buildings, courts, parks and vehicles, City Clerk David Overby said.

He said the ban is working well there.

"We've had an ongoing program to improve health among our employees," Overby said.

Other initiatives Fondren has put in motion since her launch last year of Shape Up Vicksburg are a 17-week weight-loss challenge to the city that includes a walking club with about 400 members registered and the Healthy Role Models for Students program.

For these efforts, she was selected from an international pool as a top 10 finalist in the 2010 CNN Heroes Tribute last month and was awarded \$25,000 to continue her crusade against obesity.

She plans to spend the money on marketing drives to promote and implement more programs to help the community unanimously toward a healthy lifestyle.

In development is a counseling group for about 50 of Warren County's low-income and overweight women.

"This is for the women who don't have a way to get to the resources," Fondren said.

"I will give them the tools like child care, transportation and a workout facility, not just to lose weight, but for a life transformation," she said.

Fondren is working to secure state and federal grants to operate her programs.

"I'll be tracking to see if they get a job, tracking their weight loss," she said. "I'm tracking to see if this is working. If not, then we have to change it. Even if we don't get the funds, it won't stop me because we have a community that will help."

DEATHS

The Vicksburg Post prints obituaries in news form for area residents, their family members and for former residents at no charge. Families wishing to publish additional information or to use specific wording have the option of a paid obituary.

Janice L. Blackmore

Janice L. Blackmore died Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2010, at River Region Medical Center. She was 47.

Mrs. Blackmore was of the Baptist faith.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Alice Marie Blackmore Williams; her maternal grandparents, Inetta Williams and Sam Jackson; her paternal grandparents, Suzanna Blackmore and Ellis Banks; and an uncle, James Blackmore.

Dillon-Chisley Funeral Home has charge of arrangements.

Jeri Anne Gartman

Jeri Anne Gartman died Thursday, Dec. 16, 2010, at Shady Lawn Nursing Home. She was 77.

A lifelong resident of Vicksburg, Mrs. Gartman was a member of Bowmar Baptist Church. She retired as an administrative aide from Vicksburg Hospital.

She was preceded in death by her parents, W.J. and Thelma Husbands.

She is survived by two daughters, Toni Godwin of Vicksburg and Tracy Cupples of Utica; three grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

Services will be at 2 today at Cedar Hill Cemetery. Burial will follow under the direction of Glenwood Funeral Home.

Agnes Wardean Nevels

Agnes Wardean Nevels died Thursday, Dec. 16, 2010,

at Covenant Health and Rehab of Vicksburg. She was 77.

Mrs. Nevels owned Aunt Dean's Hot Tamales for years.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Cecil Nevels; a sister, Mattie Rebecca Barnes; and a brother, Bobby Bluite Edwards.

Survivors include two brothers, James Edwards and J.C. Edwards.

Services will be at 2 p.m. Saturday at First Pentecostal Church with Pastors Don Tipton and John Parks officiating. Burial will follow at Cedar Hill Cemetery under the direction of Frank J. Fisher Funeral Home. Visitation will be at the church from 1 p.m. Saturday until the service.

Pallbearers will be Andrew Edwards, Raymond Edwards, Nick Cloy, William Day, Jesse Cloy, Jamie Acuff and Michael Paul Sanderford.

Online guestbook may be signed at www.fisherfuneralhome.net.

Effie L. Stockton

TALLULAH — Effie L. Stockton died Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2010, at Olive Branch Senior Care Center in Tallulah. She was 85.

She ministered at several churches.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Roger and Rosa Eads; her husband, James Holice Stockton; a brother, Otto Eads; and a sister, Faye Heminger.

Survivors include two daughters, Linda Sikes of Newellton and Brinda Stockton of Tallulah; two sons, Lee Stockton of Vicksburg and Jim Stockton; a brother, Roy Eads; 12 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren. Services will be at 10 a.m. Saturday at Frank J. Fisher

Funeral Home with the Rev. Dennis Campbell officiating. Burial will follow at Greenlawn Gardens Cemetery. Visitation will be from 5 until 7 tonight at the funeral home.

Pallbearers will be John Sikes, Rob Sikes, Alex Stockton, Jason Stockton, Jeremy Hearn and James Curtis Stockton.

Honorary pallbearers are Tim Wilson, Neilson Harrison and Pat Baer.

Online guestbook may be signed at www.fisherfuneralhome.net.

Lelia Marion Ware


ARLINGTON, Texas — Lelia Marion Ware died Monday, Dec. 13, 2010, at Arlington Memorial Hospital in Arlington, Texas. She was 82.

Mrs. Ware retired from the

Sharkey County Schools as a kindergarten teacher and home economics instructor.

She is survived by two sons, Floyd Stewart Ware Jr. of Arlington and Dr. Nolan Ware of Jackson; one daughter, Zelma Annese Isaacs of Anniston, Ala.; two brothers, Charlie M. Johnson of Chicago and William "Billy" Johnson of San Francisco, Calif.; eight grandchildren; and nieces, nephews, cousins and other relatives, including Pamela Wade of Memphis.

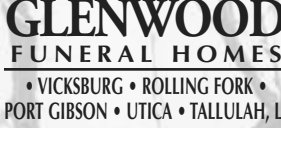
Services will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at Christian Light M.B. Church in Anguilla with the Rev. Thomas Wicks Jr. officiating. Burial will follow at Locust Grove M.B. Church Cemetery. Visitation will be from noon until 5 today at Smith Funeral Home in Belzoni.



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Mrs. Jeri Anne Gartman
Graveside Service
 2 p.m. Friday, December 17, 2010
 Cedar Hill Cemetery

Mrs. Effie Stockton
Service
 10 a.m. Saturday, December 18, 2010
 Frank J. Fisher Funeral Home
Interment
 Greenlawn Gardens Cemetery
Visitation
 5 - 7 p.m. Friday

Mrs. Agnes W. Nevels
Service
 2 p.m. Saturday, December 18, 2010
 First Pentecostal Church
Interment
 Cedar Hill Cemetery
Visitation
 1 p.m. Saturday until the hour of service at the church

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Tower

Continued from Page A1.

erty to be used as a self-storage business.

"We're trapped by the railroad," he said. "We have to either utilize the river as a distribution center or change the structure into something that doesn't need direct access at the drop of the dime. We've done a little research and found the self-storage facilities around here have a waiting list."

The property is surrounded by Kansas City Southern railroad tracks, Anderson-Tully to the north and Smith Towing to the south.



Frank J. Fisher
FISHER FUNERAL HOME

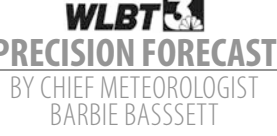
Infant Savannah M. Hickman
Memorial Service
 2 p.m. Friday, December 17, 2010
 Frank J. Fisher Funeral Chapel
Visitation
 Noon Friday until the hour of service
Memorials
 Dandy Walker Alliance
 In Memory of Savannah M. Hickman
 10325 Kensington Parkway Suite 384
 Kensington, Maryland 20895

Mrs. Effie Stockton
Service
 10 a.m. Saturday, December 18, 2010
 Frank J. Fisher Funeral Home
Interment
 Greenlawn Gardens Cemetery
Visitation
 5 - 7 p.m. Friday

Mrs. Agnes W. Nevels
Service
 2 p.m. Saturday, December 18, 2010
 First Pentecostal Church
Interment
 Cedar Hill Cemetery
Visitation
 1 p.m. Saturday until the hour of service at the church




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www.fisherfuneralhome.net




WLBT 3
PRECISION FORECAST
 BY CHIEF METEOROLOGIST
 BARBIE BASSSETT

TONIGHT



29°

SATURDAY



52°

Partly cloudy tonight, lows in the 20s; partly cloudy Saturday, highs in the 50s

WEATHER

This weather package is compiled from historical records and information provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Vicksburg and The Associated Press.

LOCAL FORECAST

SATURDAY-SUNDAY
 Partly cloudy; lows in the 20s, highs in the 50s

STATE FORECAST

TONIGHT
 Partly cloudy; lows in the 20s

SATURDAY-SUNDAY
 Partly cloudy; lows in the 20s, highs in the 40s and 50s

ALMANAC

HIGHS AND LOWS
 High/past 24 hours..... 68°
 Low/past 24 hours..... 40°
 Average temperature..... 54°
 Normal this date..... 49°
 Record low 16° in 1932
 Record high 79° in 1984

RAINFALL
 Recorded at the Vicksburg Water Plant

Past 24 hours 0.0 inch
 This month 0.37 inches
 Total/year 44.58 inches
 Normal/month 3.21 inches
 Normal/year 49.63 inches

SOLUNAR TABLE
 Most active times for fish and wildlife Saturday:

A.M. Active 1:50
 A.M. Most active 8:03
 P.M. Active 2:16
 P.M. Most active 8:29

SUNRISE/SUNSET

Sunset today 4:59
 Sunset tomorrow 5:00
 Sunrise tomorrow 6:58

RIVER DATA

STAGES
 Mississippi River at Vicksburg
Current: 18.5 | Change: -1.3
Flood: 43 feet

Yazoo River at Greenwood
Current: 12.9 | Change: +0.4
Flood: 35 feet

Yazoo River at Yazoo City
Current: 8.5 | Change: +0.3
Flood: 29 feet

Yazoo River at Belzoni
Current: 10.6 | Change: +0.5
Flood: 34 feet

Big Black River at West
Current: 3.4 | Change: -0.1
Flood: 12 feet

Big Black River at Bovina
Current: 7.4 | Change: -0.1
Flood: 28 feet

STEELE BAYOU

Land 69.1
 River 65.6

MISSISSIPPI RIVER FORECAST

Cairo, Ill.

Saturday 20.9
 Sunday 21.6
 Monday 21.7

Memphis

Saturday 5.7
 Sunday 5.3
 Monday 5.7

Greenville

Saturday 23.4
 Sunday 22.8
 Monday 22.2

Vicksburg

Saturday 17.9
 Sunday 17.3
 Monday 16.8