



GULF HILLS NEWS



A Neighborhood Watch Community
A Bird Sanctuary Community
October 1, 2021

Welcome to Autumn!

John Fleming, President, Gulf Hills Civic Association

The best thing about the arrival of September is that I can easily count the days until it's autumn. The temperature is on the decrease, festivals are on the increase, and the collective human consciousness breathes a sigh of relief, yet is stimulated by the excitement of possibilities. Within this short time of mostly perfect weather, we tend to pack in as much experience as possible without regard to rest and reflection. This fall, I urge each of our residents to take the time, put it on the calendar if needed, and just feel that what is autumn.



I plan to do this by taking items off my calendar, and I've encouraged the Gulf Hills Civic Association to move events from autumn to spring. My days need to be more open to do as the weather has offered. The GHCA Board of Directors is focusing on the Halloween in the Hills event on October 31st, then the Memorial Garden/Christmas activities in December. The annual Gulf Hills Community Yard Sale is moving to Saturday, March 12, 2022.

Now, allow me to offer a few suggestions for activities that will do much to bring you into synchronization with Fall. If you have not been to a high school football game in many years, check the weather forecast and go. You may have been to a big college or NFL game recently, but it's just not the same. Pick any school, spend a lot at the concession stand, and cheer for the home team. If you are a regular at the football games, then try bird watching. Don't worry about their identification as much as enjoying the birds' activity and diversity that is expected on the coast. However, bird identification aids are now available by smart phone applications and make that task easier. This next suggestion is hardest, but may be the most beneficial. Go visit someone you haven't seen in many years. It will be a good bet that you have shared many experiences in the fall that can be remembered.

Autumn is great. Autumn is wise. Autumn is calling to us. Reach out to a friend from long ago and take them to a high school football game. And, yes, there are birds at night.

Gulf Hills Civic Association Membership

Do today what you may forget tomorrow.

October 1st starts our membership drive for 2022. Your \$30/year membership fee can be paid by: check and including the information slip on page 6 or going to our website, Gulphills.org and following the check or credit process there.

Funds provided by payment of membership fees go toward programs of the civic association, which now include maintenance of the Memorial Garden (see article on page 5). Thank you for your participation in the Gulf Hills Civic Association.



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Hurricane Ida - Our Community Stepped Up

Hurricane Ida – we are blessed that she decided to hold her course to our West. But our neighbors in Louisiana were not so fortunate and over 250 of them arrived at the Gulf Hills Hotel before, during, and after Ida came ashore.

Some of them arrived after a few days with horrible stories of having been price-gouged, including one man explaining how his room in Biloxi went up \$50 per night with spurious new charges. One family arrived sleeping in their car; the mother and four children had stayed in their home as it collapsed around them, and the children were traumatized. Others arrived way after the storm to escape the dire situation at home. One woman needed shoes because a fight broke out in a gas station in New Orleans and someone sprayed gas on everyone around the pump. Another family were headed to the North-East because their home was gone, and they were on their way to live with cousins. The wife carried her dog in her arms. Finally, we had people arrive who had fled as far as Florida to find a room and were now making their way west, to be closer when the power came on.



Many of you have been the survivors, have lived through the eye of the storm, have lost your homes, have lost everything. When the call went out for help, the Gulf Hills community stepped up and took care of our friends from area code 504; the 504 Club as we came to call them.

Perhaps you followed this story on Facebook? Perhaps you saw Gulf Hills on WLOX, ABC News, CNN? Capone's, the Gulf Hills Hotel, and the Gulf Hills community came together to care for these people with shelter, food, water, soda, diapers, toys, hair-brushes, dog kennels, full gas cans, kitty litter, dog food, endless baby wipes, and bananas, especially bananas! (People could take bananas to their room, take fruit in their car, and feel they were feeding something decent to their kids)

For days, the Hotel Staff patiently fielded desperate calls with 'No, I am sorry, we don't have a room, but I will put you on a waiting list'. It was heartbreaking to listen to. For the lucky ones who stayed in the Hotel, they were wrapped in a warm Mississippi hug. And soon some people arrived from other Hotels who had been told to come and eat because "Gulf Hills will take care of you".

We heard some sad stories – you know what happens in a storm – but we also created a lot of smiles. The traumatized little girl said 'My rainbow Barbie died in the storm' and within an hour, someone in our

Community had brought a replacement! She joined her siblings in the Hotel pool (in donated swimsuits) and they had a blast. The lady headed north-east with her dog, walked out with a dog crate, a leash, dog bowls and dog food. The man who had been price gouged and abused said he had his faith restored.

For over a week, we collectively served breakfast and dinner, and the Hotel was kind enough to give us access to the Ballroom and back kitchen. There was a commissary with free supplies. An area full of toys and coloring books so the kids could run around and let lose. We had two pool parties; and Double Dee of Lucedale came down to entertain with some great live music.

As they left, a lady offered \$20 coupons to fill up with gas at her Marathon Station on Route 49. And the community came up with a dozen 5-gallon cans of gas to be delivered into the heart of the damage to run generators. We piled water and cans of food into the departing cars and there were lots of smiles and heart-felt thank you's.

So many people were involved from the Gulf Hills community and gave freely of their time, their cooking skills, their financial donations, and even their potty-training seat! We won't even try to list everyone. Your heart is warmer because you know how you helped.

We will extend a big thank you to the Trident Foundation, McDonalds, Chick Filet, Waffle House, the Lions Club, the Mosaic Church, Double Dee of Lucedale, Tay's BBQ, MiMi's Sugar Sack and the owner of the Marathon Gas Station 2 miles N on Route 49.

It was an amazing collaboration between the Hotel, Capone's, and the community, and just shows Mississippi is indeed the Hospitality State. Thank y'all.



Lighting District Reminder

Van Arnold, Lightning District Commissioner

Please report outages or malfunctioning streetlights to Mississippi Power at 800-487-3275. Give the address closest to the light. The Gulf Hills Lighting District is being charged for each light, working or not.

Recently, several residents have complained that MS Power has not responded to their reporting of malfunctioning lights. If you have a malfunctioning or burned out street light, email: vanmarnold@gmail.com with the location of that light. I will report it to for proper replacement.



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Venomous Cottonmouth Snakes and Non-Venomous Banded Water Snakes Roy Lipscomb, Mississippi Patrol Officer, MDMR

Venomous Cottonmouth snakes are also called “water moccasins” When threatened, Cottonmouths open wide, displaying their gaping white mouths to potential predators and rattle their tail.



Cottonmouths, also called water moccasins, are venomous snakes found in the southeastern United States. They are called Cottonmouths because of the white coloration on the inside of their mouths, which they display when threatened. Cottonmouths are semiaquatic, so they are comfortable both swimming in water (hence their other common name of water moccasin) and basking on land. They are the only venomous snake in the U.S. that spends a lot of time in the water. We have them in Gulf Hills, but they tend to live in isolated places away from humans. Many of them get washed into the neighborhood after hurricanes.

MYTHS VS REALITY

Many people ask how to keep them away? Well, none of the snake repellants commercial or legends passed down actually work. The best way is to keep brush and hiding places away from the house. Bird feeders are great, but they also attract rodents; hence a snake will show up. If you have bird feeders try to keep them in open areas away from the house. I had a Cottonmouth show up by my birdfeeder and I am at a 30ft elevation with the closest water 80 yards away. If you encounter one it is best to back away slowly and leave it alone. You can spray it with a water hose to get it to move along.

In my experience about what 90% of the population believe about snakes is not true. They are not aggressive, they WON'T chase you, they don't travel in pairs, ETC... You have them around you all the time and do not realize it. “Well, I will just kill it and not worry about it”. Most snake bites are caused by someone trying to kill or harass it. The snake you might see in your yard has probably been living there for awhile and is used to your family's and pets' habits and has been good about avoiding you. If it is killed another snake not familiar with your habits might move into the deceased snake's territory. There are probably only around three deaths annually in the United States from someone minding their own business and being bitten by a venomous snake and six to eight total deaths. Most are from people trying to capture, kill, harass, and those employed in the herpetological field.

Cottonmouths are pit vipers, as are copperheads and rattlesnakes, like all pit vipers, [cottonmouths] have heat-sensing facial pits between their eyes and nostrils. These specialized pits are able to detect minute differences in temperature so that the snake can accurately strike the source of heat, which is often potential prey. Cottonmouths rarely bite humans, and only do so when provoked.

Banded Water snakes are solitary creatures. They are active both during the day and at night spending their time basking on logs and branches or hunting in shallow water for prey. These snakes



Continue page 5 **venomous snakes**

are common in Gulf Hills culverts, garden ponds, and in yards. These harmless snakes are often confused as Cottonmouths and are needlessly killed. They hunt by smell and sight flicking their tongue to pick up chemicals and sending these chemicals to their Jacobson's organ to identify what it is. Banded Water snakes are quick to flee from danger, but if cornered or captured, they usually will not hesitate to defend themselves and can bite. If irritated, they release a foul-smelling musk to deter predators. During cold winter months, Banded Water snakes semi-hibernate, usually under logs, rocks, or in burrows. They mainly feed on fish and amphibians. We had one in our ornamental pond the kids named "Bandit", and once it realized we meant it no harm it ignored us even from a few feet away.

HOW TO IDENTIFY A COTTONMOUTH

Cottonmouths are relatively large, usually ranging from 2 to 4 feet long, they have thick, muscular bodies covered in keeled, or ridged, scales and blocky heads with large jowls. Their pupils are vertical, similar to cat pupils, and they have dark stripes next to each nostril. Their coloration varies from dark brown or black to olive, banded brown or yellow.

Cottonmouths are often confused with nonvenomous Banded Water Snakes as both species have similar coloring and patterns and are all usually found near water. Even though water snakes are nonvenomous, they can still bite and are often killed by humans out of fear that they are Cottonmouths.

There are a few ways you can tell a non-venomous Water snake from a venomous Cottonmouth. Water snakes are slender compared with Cottonmouths, which are thicker and heavier. Water snakes also have longer, thinner tails, and their heads are a similar width to their necks, whereas a Cottonmouth's head is thick, blocky, and noticeably wider than the snake's neck. Water snake pupils are round, not vertical, and not cat-like like the pupils of Cottonmouths. Water snakes also lack the facial pits that are characteristic of pit vipers, such as Cottonmouths. Water snakes have vertical bands along the lower lips, and Cottonmouths have a dark band running through its eyes. If you look down at the head of a Water snake you can see its eyes, but you cannot on the Cottonmouth. You cannot identify from just the triangle head as Water snakes will flatten out its body and head when threatened.

WHAT DO COTTONMOUTHS EAT



Cottonmouths can hunt prey in water or on land. They eat fish, small mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles including other snakes and even smaller water moccasins. Cottonmouths kill with a single, venomous bite, until it stops moving before swallowing their food whole.

Cottonmouths mate in spring, usually from April to May. During the mating process, males slither around, waving their tails to lure females away from other male suitors. The males also fight each other when competing for females. Impregnated females have a gestation period of five months, on average. Cottonmouths and Water snakes are ovoviviparous, which means that eggs incubate inside the mother's body. Females give birth to live young every two to three years, in litters of about 10 to 20 offspring.

Baby cottonmouths are born brightly colored and go off on their own as soon as they are born. Most baby cottonmouths don't make it to adulthood because they are eaten by other animals, such as raccoons, cats, birds of prey, and snapping turtles.

COTTONMOUTH BEHAVIOR

Cottonmouths have a reputation for being dangerous, but they rarely bite humans unless they are picked up or stepped on. They may stand their ground against potential predators, including humans, by using defensive behaviors.

"When a Cottonmouth feels threatened, it will coil its body and open its mouth wide to expose the white coloration of the inside of its mouth. The flash of white contrasts with the snake's dark body colors to create a startling display. "Exposing the white of the mouth serves as a warning signal to potential predators."

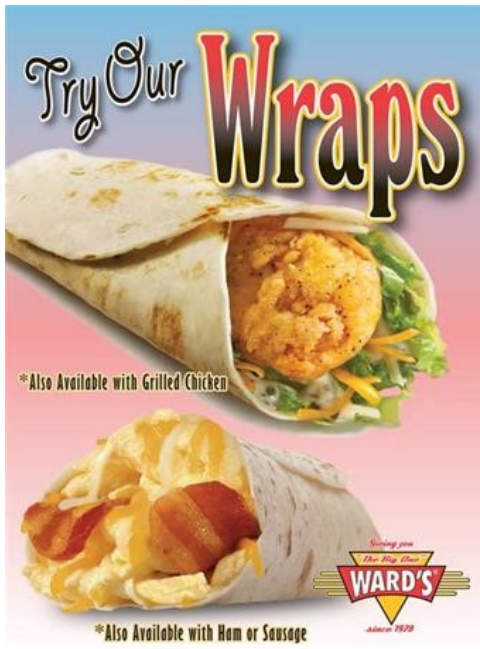
We teach our kids to not put fingers in electrical sockets, play in busy streets, avoid lightning, ETC...

Just a bit of knowledge about our snake species will alleviate the inherited fear parents teach their children about these fascinating creatures.



Sunset over the Gulf Hills Bayou

Photo credit: FredLSalinas



**Ward's loves
Gulf Hills**

Gulf Hills Resident



617 Pass Road
Gulfport MS 39501
(228) 864-6911

Gulf Hills Civic Association and the Memorial Gardens

In order to provide continued management and financial resources for the Gulf Hills Memorial Garden, the Gulf Hills Garden Club has requested and the GHCA Board of Directors agreed to take on this responsibility. The civic association is honored to be trusted with the perpetual care of this common area that has received so much love and work over the years. The Gulf Hills Garden Club designed and worked tirelessly to provide a beautiful area for reflection and observation. A standing committee of the GHCA has been designated for management purposes, and the funds needed will be outlined in the yearly budget. Your participation as an active member of the civic association will provide support needed for the Memorial Garden continued upkeep.



Gulf Hills Newsletter Information

Gulf Hills News is published four times each year, delivering via first class mail to more than 420 residents in our community. This effort has been mostly undertaken by one long serving GHCA Director, Van Arnold. While there are a variety of contributors for articles throughout the year, the work of design, ad sales, editing, etc. consumes a lot of personal time. As we are now starting work on the first publication in 2022, we will be formalizing the use of an editor, ad sales, and distribution team. If you would like to help with the any of these aspects of publication, please become a member of GHCA and send an email to president@gulphills.org.

Upcoming Events in Gulf Hills

Mark your calendars, y'all! We have some great community events coming up over the last few months of 2021 and on into 2022. We hope you'll join us for these great opportunities to catch up with old friends, make new friends and learn more about the Gulf Hills Civic Association and Gulf Hills neighborhood!

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

2021 EVENTS:

CRUISING THE COAST, OCTOBER 7th - 5PM, Gulf Hills Hotel & Resort 13701 Paso Rd. Join us for food, fun and music! **BIG thanks to the Hotel for continuing this wonderful tradition in the neighborhood!**

HALLOWEEN IN THE HILLS, OCTOBER 31st - 4PM - 6PM, Gulf Hills Golf Club/Capone's Restaurant, 13700 Paso Rd. Yes, it's back! Food, games, haunted house, kid's costume contest and lots of fun!

PETER ANDERSON FESTIVAL, NOVEMBER 6th & 7th, Downtown Ocean Springs

MEMORIAL GARDEN CHRISTMAS LIGHTING and GOLF CART PARADE, DECEMBER 5th - 5:30 PM,

Parade from Hotel/Golf Club to Memorial Garden

HOME/YARD CHRISTMAS DECORATING CONTEST - JUDGING ON DECEMBER 18-19th

(NO COMMUNITY YARD SALE THIS FALL...RESCHEDULED FOR SPRING OF 2022)

2022 EVENTS

COMMUNITY YARD SALE, MARCH 12, 2022

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING, MARCH 15, 2022 - 7PM

COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT, APRIL 9, 2022 - TIME TBD

More details on all of these events will be coming soon, so continue to check Facebook and the GHCA website at <https://www.Gulphills.org>

Please return this form with
Your membership dues to:

Gulf Hills Civic Association
P.O. Box 475
Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0475

I have enclosed payment in the amount of **\$30.00** for my Gulf Hills Civic Association membership dues for the year **2022**. or go to gulfhills.org and pay by credit card. There is a **\$2.00** service fee when paying by credit card.

Please fill in your name,
Address, phone number, and
Email address.

Cut Along the dotted lines

Rubbish Reminder

Rubbish (no-household garbage) pickup is scheduled for the second week of every month and all limbs and debris need to be put out by 7:00 am Monday of that week.

Limitations of Rubbish Pick-Up

The maximum volume of trash, trees, debris and/or vegetation that Jackson County may remove per pick-up per month is 3 cubic yards.

Use the landfill whenever possible - the Seaman Landfill is free to residents!

Get Connected to Facebook

Join one or more of these social media groups to get involved and connected with your fellow residents of Gulf Hills.



Here's how to connect:

For Gulf Hills Living Facebook Group

1. Log into Facebook (get an account using your current email)
2. Search in Facebook for the group (Gulf Hills Living), then click a request to join.
3. Answer the required questions. The administrator will review your answers and approve as appropriate. Administrator for Gulf Hills Living Facebook Group is Jackie Parker.

For Gulf Hills Civic Association Group

1. Log into Facebook (get an account using your current email)
2. Search in Facebook for the group (Gulf Hills Civic Association), then click a request to join.
3. Answer the required questions. One of the administrators will review your answers and approve as appropriate.

Administrators for Gulf Hills Civic Association Facebook Group are John Fleming and Heather Wagner. One of them will send you an invite to join.

Garbage Pickup Reminder



Household garbage pickup is scheduled each Tuesday. On **THREE** major holidays (New Years, Thanksgiving, Christmas) pickup will be postponed a day. Check the holiday schedule in the newspaper or on TV.

Helpful Phone Numbers

UTILITIES

Cable: (Sparklight)	374-5900
Electric: (MS Power)	800-532-1502
Power outage/trouble	800-487-3275
Natural Gas: (Center Point)	896-7500
Water & Sewer: (WJCUD)	872-3898

COUNTY SERVICES

Animal Shelter	497-6350
Health Department	875-1336
Justice Court	875-4125
Planning Department (Zoning)	769-3112
Road Department	875-4545
Rubbish Disposal (Landfill)	872-8340
Sheriff- Hwy 609 substation	875-6963

PUBLIC SERVICES

Ambulance (Acadian)	762-0214
Northwest Fire Dept. 911 or	818-0370
Refuse (Waste Management)	832-3144
St Martin Community Center	392-7361

HEALTH CARE

Singing River Hospital	809-5000
Ocean Springs Hospital	818-1111
Merit Hospital	432-1571
Bethesda Free Clinic	818-9191
Gulf Coast Center for Nonviolence	875-5433

OTHER

Wild at Heart (Wildlife)	669-7907
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LIBRARIES

Ocean Springs Library	875-1193
St Martin Library	392-3250