

Parent Academy offers kindergarten readiness seminar for parents

By Janet S. Lee

The fourth session of the Parent Academy, funded through a grant from the Barksdale Reading Institute, will be held at Clinton Park Elementary School on Thursday, March 24, from 5:30 until 7 p.m.

The Parent Academy is designed to help parents of rising kindergarteners understand what “kindergarten readiness” is and to equip and empower parents to work on kindergarten readiness skills with their child at home.

The program is divided into six modules, but even those who have not

attended previous sessions are encouraged to attend the March meeting. This session will speak to parents about expectations teachers have for their child entering kindergarten at Clinton Park and how they as parents can help prepare the child for the school experience.

The March Parent Academy is only a few weeks before Clinton Park’s pre-registration date for kindergarten on April 17.

For questions concerning the meeting of the Parent Academy, contact Clinton Park Elementary, 501 Arrow Drive, at 601-924-5205.

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Olde Towne Depot set to open next month

ter to Olde Towne for out-of-town guests; but locals, too, will enjoy the Depot, a destination for history- and rail-related programming and opportunities for growing community involvement.

Visitors young and old alike will be captivated by the HO scale model train display made possible by a gift from the Arts Council of Clinton. The professional display is enhanced by dioramas depicting scenes from Clinton’s history designed by artist Lucky Osborne. Osborne’s creations portray Clinton through the years, with scenes of both 1875 and 1929. Other themes include a 1950s scene, the heyday of train travel in America, and a holiday diorama. Buildings featured include the Spring Park Hotel, the Ritchie House and the old Methodist Church, as well as many others.

Original art and photographs reminiscent of earlier times can be found throughout the Depot. Among them is a watercolor painting, *Clinton Depot*, gifted by artist Carolyn Switzer. Photographs of significance picture historic depots from which the new

construction was designed. Well-known artist and Clintonian Dr. Sam Gore sketched the floor plan of the last depot that stood on the original site. Dr. Gore also rescued the telegraph used there before the building was destroyed. Many items on display are from the personal collections of Clinton families.

The Bell Tower, currently being built on the grounds, will hold a significant historical piece that came by way of the First United Methodist Church of Clinton. The bell was mounted on the first train that came through Clinton in 1840. In 1927, church ladies, led by Mrs. Ann Powers Wood, wife of former Mayor A. E. Wood, obtained the bell from storage in Vicksburg with the help of railroad agent and Clintonian John Fox. The bell has hung in the church’s bell tower. Clinton historian and church trustee Dr. Walter Howell explained that the church Trustees’ decision to loan the bell for display at the Depot was grounded in the shared legacy of their church bell and the people of Clinton.

An inviting place for gatherings,

whether social, educational, or business in nature, the facility is described by Main Street Clinton director Tara Lytal as “typical of many historical depots found in the South.” Outside features include deep porches and beautifully lighted overhangs. Inside, the vaulted ceilings with cypress beams, oak floors and pine-paneled walls are warmed by natural light. Schoolhouse lights mounted on ceiling fans enhance the natural light and add comfort.

The ADA-compliant building can comfortably seat ninety attendees auditorium style, with table set up capacity being sixty-four. The Depot is equipped with up-to-date audiovisual technology for presentations, as well as a podium and small platform. An equipped kitchen is available for food service.

Depot director and events coordinator Anna Boyd Hawks said, “The Olde Towne Depot offers Clinton a beautiful new venue for receptions, showers and group meetings. We are looking forward to hosting these events in a facility that showcases the historic charm of

our community.”

The Olde Towne Depot will be the first stop on the City of Clinton’s Historical On-Line Tour (HOLT). HOLT, set to be active April 6, will provide access to a web-based history tour moving participants between twenty-two markers placed about the City. A tourism kiosk available at the Depot will provide detailed information and maps for easy navigation of the city. While at the Depot, guests can connect with Clinton4Now.com for help in planning their day. The digital concierge will recommend places to eat, shop and tour and suggests activities to engage visitors.

The Olde Towne Depot will also be home to the Main Street Clinton offices. In addition to the events and exhibits, the Depot will be used for Main Street Clinton activities and complementary events, particularly those that benefit community efforts.

To request more information about the Olde Towne Depot or to find out how to book an event there, contact Anna Boyd Hawks at 601-924-0113 or by email at depot@clintonms.org.

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