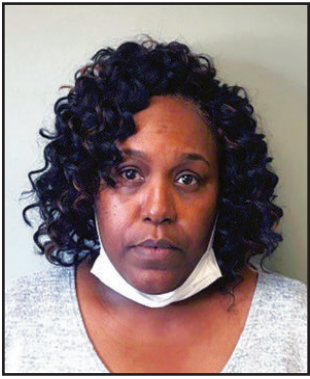


Auditor's office arrests former town clerk for embezzlement

Press Release

On Tuesday, February 9, State Auditor Shad White announced Special Agents from his office have arrested Amanda Lewis for embezzlement. Lewis was previously employed as the town clerk of Roxie in Franklin County. A \$109,425.77 demand letter was issued to her when she was arrested. This amount includes interest, investigative expenses, and credit for money she has already returned to the town. Lewis is accused of embezzling over \$81,000 from the Town of Roxie while she was employed as town clerk. She allegedly stole cash and money orders collected from town residents as they paid



AMANDA LEWIS

water bills. Without proper oversight, Lewis was purportedly able to manipulate the town's accounting software and conceal her scheme from December 2015 to August 2018. When Lewis resigned as town clerk in late 2018 to take a new job, Rox-

ie officials identified nearly \$10,000 missing from the town's water fund and filed a complaint at the State Auditor's office. Investigators then identified over \$80,000 missing from the fund.

After being approached about missing money by local officials, Lewis made payments totaling \$9,269.53 to the Town of Roxie. These payments have already been credited to her demand amount and begin the process of repaying the taxpayers of Roxie.

Lewis was arrested and booked into the Franklin County Jail. Her bond will be set by the court.

If convicted, Lewis faces up to 20 years in prison and Auditor's office arrests former town clerk for embezzlement \$5,000 in fines. All persons arrested by the Mississippi Office of the State Auditor are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The case will be prosecuted by the office of District Attorney Ronnie Harper.

"This is another case where a significant amount of money was stolen from the water department of a municipality," said Auditor White. "We've had several of these in the last two years. I'm grateful for the investigators in the Auditor's office building this case, but I also want to challenge municipalities around the state to keep a careful eye on their



Shirley Riley is on vacation in Iowa Wednesday, February 10. She went to a hospital as the result of a fall in the snow. She did not break any bones. She was just bruised up.

I don't have much news, but please sign up to take the Covid-19 vaccine. Be patient on the phone. Stay on the phone until you get an answer. People don't be pea brained (small minded) and decide you will not take the vaccine.

I'm going to tell you all

water departments. It's time to put a stop to this sort of theft, and working together, we can do that."

A \$50,000 surety bond covers Lewis's employment as Town Clerk of Roxie. Surety bonds are similar to insurance designed to protect taxpayers from corruption. Lewis will remain liable for the full amount of the demand in addition to criminal proceedings.

Suspected fraud can be reported to the Auditor's office online any time by clicking the red button at www.osa.ms.gov or via telephone during normal business hours at 1-(800)-321-1275.

State treasurer: millions of dollars goes unclaimed by Mississippians

Press Release

State Treasurer David McRae today released the following statement to recognize National Unclaimed Property Day:

"Since about one in 10 people have unclaimed money, your chances of 'winning big' are much better by searching our database than buying a lottery ticket. Still, many don't even know to look. I am encouraging every Mississippian to visit Treasury.MS.gov/Search today. If you find money in your name, claim it, and we'll get to work verifying your return."

Unclaimed property is money Mississippians have that's gone unclaimed for more than 5 years. It could be an energy bill refund that went to the wrong address, a forgotten-about CD, or an inheritance they were unaware of.

In 2020, the State Treasury returned more than \$20 million in unclaimed money to Mississippi - the largest calendar-year amount on record.

To search for unclaimed money, please visit Treasury.MS.gov/Search.



OLIVIA HARTHCOCK GONZALES

In memory of Olivia Harthcock Gonzales of Hurst, TX. She was born at home on February 2, 1933 from Yellow Bluff Rd. in the Coxburg Community and passed away on Friday, January 29, 2021 in a COVID-19 area

ERMA SUE CARR

Erma Sue Carr, 70, of Cleveland, TN, passed away on Sunday, January 31, 2021. She was born in Mississippi on November 30, 1950, to the late Rev. James C. and Erma Carr.

She leaves behind her siblings, Harvey Carr, Carolyn (Rick) Hudgen, David (Dorean) Carr and Rebecca (Chris) Draper; several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, 7619 Blue Springs Rd., Cleveland, TN 37311.

hospital in Dallas, TX.

She is preceded in death by father James Harthcock, mother Rosalie McCurdy Harthcock Kuhn and stepfather Walter Kuhn, all of Lexington, MS; husband Albert Gonzales of Chalmette, LA; and son Dennis Domingo Gonzales who is survived by his wife Isabell Mejia and stepdaughter Andrea Mejia of Hurst, TX.

She is survived by sister Grace (Gene) Harthcock Ray of Vicksburg, MS; daughter Tamberly (Walter) Ray Gray and sons, Denver and Martin of Metarie and New Orleans, LA; sister Walterine (Rena) Kuhn Dudak Strength Hodge of Lexington, MS and daughter Rose Dudak, son Christin of Lexington, MS, son Ian Deveroux of Baltimore, MS and son Christos Dudek and sons Peyton and Justin of Baltimore, MD and far too many cousins and Coxburg School friends and loved ones too numerous to name.

MR. IRISH LEE DAY

Mr. Irish Lee Day, 75, of Goodman, MS passed away Wednesday, February 10, 2021 of natural causes at St. Dominic Hospital in Jackson, MS. Funeral services were held Saturday, February 13 at Winters Funeral Home in Kosciusko, MS.



again about buying cars with your tax refund. Do not try to buy a new car knowing you do not have enough tax money to pay cash. Just take a good mechanic with you

and buy a good conditioned used car. This way the repo man won't come get your car in three or four months. Use common sense; spend your refund wisely!



Retirement funding comes before college savings

Dear Dave,

A friend told me about your Baby Steps program. I have one question, though. I noticed that according to your plan, saving for retirement should come before saving up a college fund for your kids. Why is this?

Natalie

Dear Natalie,

In short, college funding is not a necessity. Being able to set aside money for college is a great thing to do if parents can afford that sort of thing. But you can fund your education in other ways. There are loads of scholarships out there just for getting good grades. You can also work while you're taking classes. And one of the biggest things when it comes to getting an education is choosing a school or training program you can afford. Trust me, I believe in education. But there are lots of ways to get a college degree, or other career training, without your parents having to foot the bill or taking out student loans.

Another reason I advise this approach is because

everyone is going to retire someday—unless, unfortunately, they happen to die before reaching retirement age. Retiring and eating are necessities. College is a luxury. Lots of people succeed in life without going to college, and thousands have worked their way through college. I worked 40-plus hours a week in college, and still graduated in four years. The only good way to retire is by planning for it years ahead of time, and that means saving and investing.

Sure, you should try to help your kids with their educations if you can. Even a little bit each month over the course of several years can help a lot. But some parents might not be able to put a dime toward their kids' educations after high school. That doesn't make them bad people or bad parents. And it doesn't mean their kids can't still go to college, and avoid debt doing it!

—Dave

**Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 16 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.*



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APPLICATOR TRAINING

There will be a Private Pesticide Applicator training and certification on Thursday, February 25, at the new Holmes County Extension office at 1 p.m. in Lexington. Betsy Padgett will conduct the training for those farmers and anyone else needing certification for their private use of "RESTRICTED USE" pesticides. This certification is NOT for those wanting to be certified for commercial application of "restricted use" pesticides. Registration for the training is on site and \$20.00 per participant. If you have questions, please call the Holmes County Extension Service Office at 662-834-2795. Please note—the Extension office has moved to 299 1/2 Yazoo St. in the Fred's Store parking lot – it

is the former Factory Connection building.

Also, this training is available ONLINE. Visit <http://msuext.ms/agmes> to access the Private Applicator training and testing online. \$20. Cost. The training will be presented in modules, exam will be online at the same time, upon completion and passing you will receive your private applicator certification from the MS Bureau of Plant Industry.

2-18,25

WEST GROVE M.B.C.

West Grove M.B. Church in Lexington will host a Black History Program on Sunday, February 28, at 11:00 a.m. This event is free and open to the public.

2-18,25