

# Oakland News

By Linda Ross Aldy

The calendar has rolled around to a fresh New Year, meaning many of us will struggle for a few weeks to write 2026 instead of 2025. Many will have made New Year's Resolutions or, as is currently popular, chosen a word for the year. That's what I've elected to do. I've chosen "Balance" and hope I can live into that!

Congratulations to Jennifer Wolfe on her promotion to Branch Manager at Oakland's Cadence Bank. Jennifer Ross, who retired at the end of December, asked me to thank everyone who has wished her a happy retirement! The ladies at the Bank held a retirement reception for her on Dec. 30. Jennifer Ross has spent nearly 40 years at the Bank, the last 12 years as Manager. Her boss during many of those years was Betty Simmons Osborn who retired after 50 years and who was on hand at the reception to give Jennifer advice on retirement! A very interesting thing is that both Jennifers (Ross and Wolfe) had the maiden name of Bailey (but no relation). Customers would call and ask for Jennifer and when asked which Jennifer, some would say "the one who was a Bailey." Cadence has been bought by Huntington Bank, but I'm not sure when that change will occur. Support our local bank! You get personal service. Many towns have had their banks close. It's important to support our local businesses. Oakland is very fortunate to have a bank, a clinic, a library, a post office, a grocery store, and more which allows us to build toward the future.

Speaking of our grocery store, they have new hours. They will now be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Saturday, and closing on

Sunday. They have some amazing specials going on right now, especially on meats! If you are a farmer and want an outlet to sell your products, that's a big part of what the Pharmacy Marketplace was established to do. Pharmacy Marketplace is under the umbrella of In Her Shoes, Inc., a 501c3 nonprofit. Reach out to them to learn more about how to get your produce, your meats, eggs, etc. into the stores. You can email at programming@inshoesinc.org or by calling 929-312-8330. I am proud to serve on the board of this amazing organization. The founder and Executive Director Marquitrice Mangham is a native of Webb and understands small towns. She is recognized nationally for what she is doing and Oakland is absolutely blessed to have her working in our town.

The 2026 Mississippi Legislature is convening this week and as a lobbyist for both the Town of Oakland and my alma mater, The W, I am about to be really busy. The Town of Oakland's major request this year is funding for a new fire truck. Mayor Stephanie Patterson has really been working to put together the right mix of funds to make this happen.

The Mayor has also passed along this traffic alert from MDOT: State Route 32 between U.S. 51 and Walnut St. in Yalobusha County will be CLOSED from 7 a.m. Tuesday, January 6, to 7 a.m. Friday, March 6, for bridge inspection and repair. Based on comments, it appears the detour will be through downtown Oakland, so everyone pay attention. We have many people who walk and cross Hickory Street (the main street) to do banking and go to the post office. One of my favorite holi-

day events is walking (weather permitting) from my mom's house on Christmas Eve to the Oakland Methodist Church for their sweet program. Typically, the Mullen sisters sing and the multi-talented Wiggins sisters are involved and Rev. Clay Baker, who came for 3 months and stayed for 30 years, leads a short service. It is always full and it feels so "It's a Wonderful Life" type gathering. We walk back home where sister Carol has left a simple meal simmering. We typically have four generations attending the service and this year was no exception. The kids love singing "Go Tell It on the Mountain" and did so with gusto!

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History announced that 15 Mississippi sites were placed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2025 and two of those are in our area. From their press re-

lease:

♦ Walker High School, Oakland vicinity, Yalobusha County, March 3 - Constructed in 1954, and designed by Edgar Lucian Malvaney, this Equalization school is where many African American children were taught until desegregation in 1970. The consolidation which followed caused the school to lose numbers until it closed permanently in 1999.

♦ Mitchell & McLendon General Merchants, Enid, Tallahatchie County, Sept. 23 - Constructed c. 1910, the former store served as the commercial and social center of the Town of Enid during the early 20th century, and the building embodies the distinctive characteristics of commercial architecture of the early 20th century. Much like the J. W. Crawford store, this store represents a dwindling historic resource type in rural Mississippi.



Betty Simmons Osborn, left, wishes Jennifer Ross, bank manager, much happiness in her retirement. Betty was Jennifer's boss at Cadence for many years before she retired. Betty was employed at the bank for roughly 50 years. Jennifer has retired after 40 years.



Jennifer Ross, left, shows off the beautiful floral arrangement sent to her retirement reception. Jennifer has retired as branch manager of Cadence Bank after 40 years of service. Her sister-in-law Janet Ross Caulder, right, was on hand to help Jennifer celebrate.



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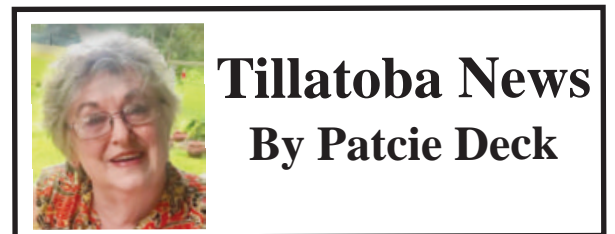
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## Tillatoba News

By Patcie Deck

Seeing the school buses going up and down the road, reminds me that school has started back after a two week vacation for them. I know some were excited about going back and being with their friends.

Love and sympathy to the Virginia Jackson Grubbs family. Virginia passed away over the weekend. She was raised up in Tillatoba and was such a sweet person. Myra Jackson Dempsey is the last remaining girl in that family.

My neighbor, JR Dukes and girlfriend Ashlee Julian, fished at Pickwick Lake and caught a nice big handful of small mouth bass. They are both good at fishing.

Your writer and David visited with Holly and Waylon Dukes and our great-grand, Haven Rose, and Waylon Jr last Sunday.

My daughter, Donna Garripoli, visited me Sunday and helped with some light cleaning.

Joey McClanahan came recently to help his dad, Bobby Joe, grind up deer meat and he was able to get a little deer hunting of his own in while here. Good news, his wife, Katelyn, is

doing much better. God is good. They thank everyone for their prayers.

Ruth Jane, Festus and Amanda Hailey visited Peggy Bailey at the Charleston nursing home a few days before Christmas. The Hailey's also spent Christmas day in Houston with Mike and Rhonda Hailey, Karen and Debora and family.

Freda and Frank Weir visited with their Aunt Jessie Williams on Christmas Eve, then attended the candlelight services at Friendship and enjoyed Christmas Day at home.

Diane Dukes along with John and Kathy Dukes went on a little road trip recently. They went to Woodall Mountain, the highest peak (806) in Mississippi. According to tradition, it was called YOW Hill or YOW mountain and is located in Tishomingo, County.

They are having bingo at George Cossar State Park January 21, 2026. Time 2-4. Come join the fun and meet new people, says Diane Dukes. Diane's granddaughter, Joanna Pullen, daughter of Sam an Anna Pullen, will have a birthday party at Five



Rose's Saturday afternoon. Celebrating birthdays this week are Kim Ayers on the 10th, Erik Bailey and Jo Anna Pullen on the 11th, Bryan Hollis (Bubba Do) on the 12th, and Marnie Box on the 13th. May you all have a wonderful day celebrating!

### Recipe of the week:

Luscious Lemon Muffins

Ingredients:

- 1 can (14 oz sweetened condensed milk.
- 1/2 cup lemon juice (freshly squeezed for best flavor)
- 2 large eggs
- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 1/2 cup self-rising flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Zest of 1 lemon

Directions: Preheat the oven to 350° and lightly grease a muffin tin or line it with paper liners.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the sweetened condensed milk, lemon juice, eggs, melted butter, and vanilla extract until smooth and well combined.

Add the self-rising flour and lemon zest to the mixture and gently stir until just incorporated.

Pour the batter evenly into the prepared muffin tin, filling each cup about 3/4 full. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the tops are lightly golden and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Allow the mini pies to cool in the pan for about 10 minutes before transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely.

**Thought for the day:...**  
I intend to live forever, so far so good



Last week's "Who Is It?" was Allison Brewer. Avis Dean correctly identified her and Eddie Brewer identified her and their cat Trouble. If you would like to identify the "Who Is It?" please call the Courier at 662-675-2446 before noon on Monday or call and leave a message or text 662-458-8939.

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