

## 'We're waiting on the eye to pass'

Artist Zach DePolo, a Biloxi native and New Orleans-based movie set designer, was in town the other day to add to the outdoor mural collection in downtown Biloxi, and, as pleased as longtime George Ohr supporter Bobby Mahoney is with the new mural on the outside of his family's restaurant, he probably wonders when people will be able to see the George Ohr artwork inside the restaurant.

"I'm just waiting to see what happens," Mahoney says.

"There's no doubt that people are anxious – anxious and

concerned," Mayor Andrew "FoFo" Gilich says. "We realize that people are wanting to get back to some normalcy, but at the same time we want to continue to do things in a responsible manner.

"The numbers have been relatively low – a straight line for the most part – here in Harrison County, but you have to consider that we're a visitor-oriented community, so we have to be especially careful about how we proceed."

Gilich has compared the city's status in hurricane terms: "We're waiting for the eye to pass."

President Trump, in "Opening Up America Again" guidelines, sets a host of parameters for the three-phase opening of the country. One of the key measurements – the "gating criteria" – is to see a 14-day "downward trajectory" in newly identified coronavirus cases, or a decline in the percentage of new cases vs. testing.

The plan also gives authority to governors, "and Governor Reeves certainly looks to mayors and other local leaders," Gilich says.

"We just need to be vigilant in our efforts and

continue to be guided by doing the right thing, by doing the responsible thing as we move forward."

Biloxi's odyssey began just before mid-March. As reports began to make headlines nationwide, the city's St. Patrick's Day Parade and Grillin' on the Green, scheduled for March 14 were the

first casualties, followed by a State of Emergency declared in Biloxi on March 16, which is when the state also closed casinos resorts, the engine of Biloxi's economy. In addition, bars, restaurants dining rooms and non-

essential businesses were closed, and Biloxi has been under an 11 p.m.-to-5 a.m. curfew since the day after April Fool's Day.

"The majority of the folks understand, I truly believe that," said Biloxi Police John Miller, whose department set up patrols to enforce the curfew, disperse crowds and patrol temporarily closed businesses.

"I know we're reaching that point where people are going to begin to get getting antsy," Miller said. "They're getting a little bored. We know school is not going back in session, so the kids are going to be home fulltime now, and they're just not a lot of things to do or a lot of places to go. I know a lot of people have cleaned up their yards.

"I wish I could say it would be another couple of weeks and this would over. Maybe that's the case, maybe not. But we just can't say that.

"Remember what this is. Take it for what it is. And know that's going to last until it ends. That's the only good information we can give you."



Artist Zach DePolo and the latest downtown mural, a homage to George, at Mary Mahoney's, and facing Ohr Street.

### About this issue

This abbreviated issue does not include the monthly Community Calendar or infrastructure progress maps because of coronavirus-prompted restrictions. Information is accurate as of April 20.

### Hit the curb

The city and Main Street say shop locally, but make sure to do it curbside or drive through.



### INSIDE

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# Executive humor: Self-effacing and disarming

"When I was on the City Council, I thought I knew a little about being mayor," A.J. Holloway once quipped. "And then I became mayor and found out I was right. I knew a little bit about being mayor."

And so begins this month's musings: Modern-day executive humor in the mayor's office, which, at its best, is self-effacing.

"I'm smarter than I look," "FoFo" Gilich said in a TV spot in his run up to being elected mayor, which, as he says today, was "47 months ago, but who's counting?"



Newly-minted Mayor "FoFo" Gilich draws an animated laugh from A.J. Holloway in 2015.

city's existing program of work, Gilich issued an edict to senior staff: "If it's stupid, we're not going to do it."

Biloxi's mayor-council form of government, to be sure, establishes a checks and balances between the branches of Executive and Legislative, leading to an occasional dust up between the mayor and council.

"So you have to get the approval of seven members of the City Council?" a student once asked Holloway in an Elks Youth in Government Day. "No," the mayor deadpanned. "I need four."

Gilich, who has not yet employed the veto pen, has his own view of mayor-council relations: "My training was at the Slavonian

Lodge," he's said. "That's where we had 300 members and 600 opinions, so working with the seven-member City Council will not be a problem."

But for all of the colorful pontificating at 140 Lameuse St. our favorite story comes from New Orleans, land of the ever-colorful politician. Vic Schiro, a councilman-at-large, became the "accidental mayor" when President John F. Kennedy in 1961 tapped then-Mayor deLesseps Story Morrison as U.S. ambassador to the Organization of American States.

Schiro (say SKEE-row), who was elected to two full terms as New Orleans's chief executive, in '62 and '65, was at the helm when Hurricane Betsy was on the way to flooding the Lower Ninth Ward and the majority of New Orleans East in '65.

As the threat intensified, the story goes, Schiro took to local television, cautioning New Orleanians of the pending winds and water, but also seeking to be a calming influence. There are a lot of rumors and half-truths spreading about the storm, Schiro warned, adding: "Don't believe any false rumors, unless you hear them from me."

  
**Nick L. Shrimp**  
Encore: Reprinted from May 2019

Those first few weeks, dealing with a dumpster fire of a runaway infrastructure project and the prospect of tens of thousands of dollars in penalties if MGM Park didn't open in

time for the Shuckers season, Gilich opined on the challenges of early day-to-day life in the mayor's office: "It's like taking a drink of water from a fire hose."

It was in those early days, while surveying the

The nom de plume Nick L. Shrimp is a homage to the late Walter Fountain, original olde crab, longtime editor of the Biloxi-D'Iberville Press, and longtime Biloxi Chamber of Commerce manager.

**This FEMA-mandated notice helps keep Biloxi flood insurance rates low.**

## Do You Have Flood Insurance?

It's that time of year again. Hurricane season is just around the corner, and the City of Biloxi is recommending that you purchase flood insurance. Here are a few facts that should move you to action:

- Everyone is vulnerable to flooding. More than 20 percent of the claims in the National Flood Insurance Program are from outside identified flood zones, and claims outside the flood risk area account for a third of disaster assistance for flooding.
- It takes 30 days for a flood insurance policy to take effect, and policies will not be sold when a hurricane is in the Gulf.
- In a high-risk area, your home is more than twice as likely to be damaged by flood than by fire.

The City of Biloxi encourages you to call your insurance agent and buy flood insurance.

Questions? Contact Rick Stickler or Kristin Greger with the City of Biloxi, 228-435-6280.

[rstickler@biloxi.ms.us](mailto:rstickler@biloxi.ms.us) [kgreger@biloxi.ms.us](mailto:kgreger@biloxi.ms.us)



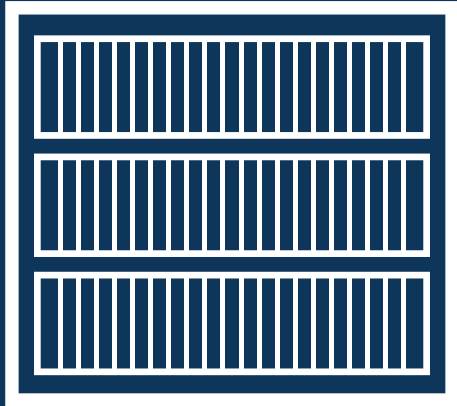
B Smart: Scan to visit the city's online Storm & Flood Preparedness section.





# Be bright.

**Save energy, save money.** Use this tip to help save energy while staying safely at home.



Clean your air filters to ensure your air conditioner runs as efficiently as possible.

Find more energy-saving tips to try while social distancing at [mississippipower.com/COVID19](http://mississippipower.com/COVID19).



## Telehealth Appointments Now Available

**Virtual visits are open  
for new and existing patients.  
Call now to make an appointment.**

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**Lakeview – 228-354-9300  
Cedar Lake – 228-392-7760  
Promenade – 228-456-0173  
Cowan Road – 228-523-8800**

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Whether it's a checkup or something more serious, you and your family want convenient, accessible healthcare. Fortunately, the providers at Merit Health Medical Group are making it easier than ever to get primary care.



[www.MyMeritDoctor.com](http://www.MyMeritDoctor.com)

# Now more than ever, **B** connected

The City of Biloxi has developed a robust communications plan over the years, and now is the time for you to use all of it.

See a live stream from the Lighthouse, City Council meeting or other city event.

See the same agenda and all supporting documents used by the Mayor and City Council.

Find anything and everything on the city website. Just name it.

We're multi-lingual. English, Spanish and Vietnamese are among the 100+ translations we offer instantly.

Current Biloxi conditions, detailed forecast, advisories and real-time radar from the National Weather Service.

Agendas for Planning, Architectural and Historical Review and Development Review, plus info on permits, land use and zoning.

Use Crime mapping to alert you to what's happening in your city and in your neighborhood.

The latest on COVID-19 from the state and federal health authorities.

See an overview of all city public improvement projects throughout the city, by name, cost and status.

Yes, infrastructure work is continuing. See a monthly video update and detailed maps.

## Use the tools

### **B**-Alert

Get info-on-the-go to your cell phone. Text BILOXI to 888777.

### **B**mail

Sign up for news directly from the city. Go to [biloxi.ms.us/register](http://biloxi.ms.us/register)

Like and follow pages for City of Biloxi, Biloxi Police Department, Biloxi Fire Department, Biloxi Visitors Center, and, of course, Jack the Fire Dog.

Watch on Sparklight 56, Uverse 99 or online at [biloxi.ms.us/btv](http://biloxi.ms.us/btv)

See hundreds of City of Biloxi videos on demand. Click on the YouTube icon on the website.

Sign up for all at [biloxi.ms.us/register](http://biloxi.ms.us/register)

Public Affairs Division  
([online@biloxi.ms.us](mailto:online@biloxi.ms.us))

Vincent Creel, Public Affairs Manager  
[vcreel@biloxi.ms.us](mailto:vcreel@biloxi.ms.us)

Cecilia Dobbs Walton, Public Affairs Specialist  
[cdobbswalton@biloxi.ms.us](mailto:cdobbswalton@biloxi.ms.us)

Mayor Andrew "FoFo" Gilich  
and the Biloxi City Council

George Lawrence  
Felix O. Gines  
Dixie Newman  
Robert L. Deming III  
Paul A. Tisdale  
Kenny Glavan  
Nathan Barrett





# Construction going viral



Construction workers hang steel on the new Community Bank building in downtown Biloxi.

## Builders moving forward despite COVID-19

“Both commercial and residential construction continue to boom in Biloxi,” Community Development Director Jerry Creel says, “and as long as construction is continuing, we will issue permits and perform inspections.”

In fact, in a five-week period from when the pandemic began shutting down the local economy – March 16 through April 20 – the city’s Community Development Department has issued \$6.57 million in construction permits.

The majority was \$4.98 million in new housing starts, 32 in all. In fact, the city has about 160 homes under construction at the moment.

Said Creel: “These are all projects where construction companies can move forward while respecting social distancing rules.”

In the Eastland Subdivision, on the west side of Old Highway 67 north of Woolmarket Road, a total

of 41 new homes have received building permits, with many currently under construction, Creel said.

Also issued in the past few weeks was a

construction permit for a new go-cart track and pit buildings, which is being constructed by Big Play at the corner of Veterans and U.S. 90, where the Gus Stevens supper club once stood years ago.

Among the other active construction sites: The Blake Assisted Living and

Memory Care Community on Popp’s Ferry Road, the Performing Arts Center at Biloxi High School, the new downtown location of Community Bank, Newman’s Seafood on Caillavet Street, Camp David RV Resort on Cedar Lake Road, the RW RV Resort on Veterans Avenue, and the J-Mart Chevron Convenience Store on Highway 67.

**“The city issued \$6.57 million in permits during a 5-week period in March and April.”**

– Jerry Creel,  
Community Development Director

- **Scheduling:** Biloxi remains under a daily curfew, from 11 p.m. until 5 a.m. City parks, including dog parks, and boat ramps are open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. for individual recreation. Social distancing must be observed.
- **Schools:** Biloxi public schools have ended their school year. For more info, visit [www.biloxischools.net](http://www.biloxischools.net)
- **Senior Olympics:** All events for the 2020 Mississippi Senior Olympics scheduled for May have been postponed until a later date. For more information, visit online at <https://www.msseniorolymp.org/>.
- **City Council:** All City Council meetings are streamed live on the City of Biloxi website, [www.biloxi.ms.us](http://www.biloxi.ms.us), and are posted after each meeting on the city’s YouTube page and on BTV.
- **City business:** All non-emergency city offices are open normal scheduled hours but ask for business to be handled by phone, email or online. Visit online at [www.biloxi.ms.us](http://www.biloxi.ms.us).
- **Mask:** Want to make a mask to wear in public while going to the grocery store or to a meeting where social distancing is not able to be observed? Well, visit the Centers for Disease Control website for directions on how to make your own mask. Visit online at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>



# GROUPS GIVE BACK!

**\$1 per Ticket  
Donated to  
Local Relief  
Programs**

*Group Minimum of 10  
\$10 Reserved Level Ticket  
\$12 Dugout Box Ticket*

Deadline May 29<sup>th</sup>

Visit our website for more information & to purchase!

**BILOXISHUCKERS.com**

# 10 & 10

B U I L D   Y O U R  
L I N E   U P

**Buy 10**

|    | Games           |
|----|-----------------|
| 1  | Undated Voucher |
| 2  | Undated Voucher |
| 3  | Undated Voucher |
| 4  | Undated Voucher |
| 5  | Undated Voucher |
| 6  | Undated Voucher |
| 7  | Undated Voucher |
| 8  | Undated Voucher |
| 9  | Undated Voucher |
| 10 | Undated Voucher |

**Give 10**

|    | Essential Workers |
|----|-------------------|
| 1  | Doctors           |
| 2  | Teachers          |
| 3  | Sanitary Workers  |
| 4  | Firefighters      |
| 5  | Grocery Workers   |
| 6  | Nurses            |
| 7  | Delivery People   |
| 8  | Mail Men & Women  |
| 9  | Janitors          |
| 10 | Police Officers   |

When you purchase 10 undated vouchers\*, we donate 10 undated vouchers to local essential workers!

*\*Undated vouchers are redeemable for any 2020  
Biloxi Shuckers regular season game*

# To Our 2020 Seniors

**We are so proud of the way you have handled this adversity. You've taken the worst of circumstances and made the best of it through your dedication and positive attitudes.**

**We are all looking forward to the amazing things you'll accomplish going forward.  
Remember, you'll always be a part of the Indian Nation!**

*From the administrators, teachers & staff  
of Biloxi Schools,*  
**CONGRATULATIONS!**







## Still Putting on a Show

By Garrett Greene  
Biloxi Shuckers



The mascot dancing. Eighth-inning rallies. Player interviews. All of these are hallmarks of Biloxi Shuckers games at MGM Park. And while there hasn't been a Shuckers game played in 2020, the creative team with the Shuckers are still doing their part to bring the fun to fans.

Let's start with the mascot dancing. Anyone who has been to a Shuckers game has seen Schooner the Seagull shaking his tailfeather on top of the dugout or pumping fans up as he roams the stadium. Like any good mascot, Schooner wants to stay in shape for when the season starts. That's why you can participate in Zumba with Schooner every Thursday night. Yes, the big bird himself will be busting a move to keep his, ahem, 'trim' figure.

What about those eighth-inning rallies? Well there have already been a few of them in 2020; they've just happened during 'Shuckers Rewind.' As the broadcaster for the Biloxi Shuckers, I have been running back the archives and reliving some of the greatest

moments from the Shuckers five seasons on the Coast. Twice a week, fans can join me and a guest - usually a player - for a few hours of pure, uninterrupted baseball. The broadcasts alternate between the Shuckers Facebook account, Twitter and YouTube channel; tune in and feel like you're at the game!

If you can believe it, the Shuckers actually did play the Montgomery Biscuits on Opening Night. It's true - Alec Bettinger started, C.J. Hinojosa hit a home run and Clayton Andrews got the save in a 3-2 win. It all played out in real time on 'MLB The Show,' a surprisingly life-like simulation of the Shuckers' opener. The highlights even made the nightly news in Biloxi!

And that's just a piece of what the Shuckers concocted while they wait for players to arrive. There have been games of 'Bingo,' trivia, customized jersey backgrounds for your phone, a stadium tour, coloring pages, math

lessons and so much more.

The great Yogi Berra once said, "I usually take a two-hour nap from one to four." Wait, that isn't the correct quote for this occasion. Or maybe it is. If that's the advice you're seeking, you can stop right there. But Yogi also proclaimed, "If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else." Right now, uncertainty abounds, but the Shuckers know where we're going. We're going to be right here every step of the way to laugh, entertain and just have fun. It might not be at the ballpark right now, but we're still here for each and every one of our fans and every person on the Mississippi Coast.

So, reach out to us. Be like Willie Mays and say 'hey,' when you get a chance. Comment on a post, send us your craziest ideas, and maybe one night, pop some popcorn, cook up a hot dog or crack open a soda and sit down for a rewind of a classic Shuckers game. Just don't forget the seventh inning stretch; it's more important now than ever!

[www.milb.com/biloxi](http://www.milb.com/biloxi)   

## Keesler gives insight into base activity

By Col. Heather W. Blackwell  
Commander, 81st Training Wing, Keesler

I look forward to the day when I'm writing you about opening up all services on Keesler. Today is not that day. Keesler continues to see numbers of positive COVID-19 cases.

Because of this, I've implemented additional measures in an attempt to help slow the spread of the virus.

In March, we began working through identification of Operationally Critical personnel. In other words, those personnel who are necessary to keep our training pipelines going, our hospital running, our Airfield open, and those personnel who keep our base safe and secure. We directed only those with "OpCrit" (operationally critical) badges report to work. All other personnel are to stay home and tele-work or go on leave.

We also implemented zoning of the base, which allowed only those with OpCrit badges to enter the area of the base that houses our training dorms and classrooms. We implemented zoning measures so we could limit traffic in key areas while also keeping the base open to spouses and retirees.

The most unpopular measure I implemented in early April was limiting retiree access to the

Commissary and BX to Tuesdays and Thursdays only. This decision pained me. Supporting retirees and their spouses with our Commissary/BX and our hospital is extremely important.

With all that said, I wish you could see your Keesler team in action. Their hard work and dedication amaze me every day. Here are a few examples from just one week:

- Over 150 bags with journals, girl scout cookies, books and other motivational items stuffed for personnel in Quarantine.

- Drive-up COVID clinic served a large number of people while keeping medics safe; Drive-up pharmacy operations are very efficient; Medics and Training Group used 3D printer for medical face shields and bed extensions.

- Training Group expanded tele-school capabilities.

- The 403d Wing helped us with shortfalls and stand ready to transport our Airmen to the next duty station if needed.

- I'll also give a shout-out to my brother CAPT Whitemire at the Seabee base. He adjusted Commissary hours too, but on different days from Keesler.

I'll end on this quote from MSgt Gage, the newly assigned Superintendent of our Quarantine & Isolation (Q&I) area during this



Keesler workers pitch in in time of need.

COVID crisis. We now have Active Duty personnel helping cleaning rooms, assisting with laundry and delivering food each day. I brought Gatorade and chocolate to the team. I thanked them for their help and apologized by saying "Thank you for all your hard work with our Q&I area. I know your volunteers are from all our squadrons on base and doing this is not what you signed up for."

MSgt Gage immediately jumped in and said "Ma'am, this is what we signed up for... we signed up to serve our country and we are doing just that."



# May Schedule

Sparklight 56; Uverse 99 (follow prompts) or at [biloxi.ms.us/btv](http://biloxi.ms.us/btv)

| Morning    |  |
|------------|--|
| 6 a.m.     | "Down in Biloxi," by Rockin' Ray Fournier (4 min)                      |
| 6:04 a.m.  | A Day in the Life of Biloxi (9 min)                                    |
| 6:13 a.m.  | Biloxi Builders and Visionaries (8 min)                                |
| 6:21 a.m.  | Biloxi Today (3 min)   |
| 6:25 a.m.  | Infrastructure video (5 min)   |
| 6:30 a.m.  | Biloxi Public Schools (15 min)   |
| 6:45 a.m.  | Keesler Air Force Base (15 min)  |
| 7 a.m.     | Special Presentation: "Social Change in a Democracy" (1:05)            |
| 8:10 a.m.  | Special Presentation: "Fred Haise: From Biloxi to the Moon" (50 min)   |
| 9 a.m.     | City Council meetings and bonus public affairs programming (3 hours)   |
| Afternoon  |  |
| Noon       | A vintage vignette: "America's Riviera," B&W, 1950s travelogue (9 min) |
| 12:10 p.m. | A vintage vignette: "America's Riviera," 1960s travelogue (14 min)     |
| 12:30 p.m. | Special Presentation: Making Space for Fred Haise (30 min)             |
| 1 p.m.     | Special Presentation: "Social Change in a Democracy" (1:05)            |
| 2:10 p.m.  | Special Presentation: "Fred Haise: From Biloxi to the Moon" (50 min)   |
| 3 p.m.     | City Council meetings and bonus public affairs programming (3 hours)   |
| Evening    |  |
| 6 p.m.     | "Down in Biloxi," by Rockin' Ray Fournier (4 min)                      |
| 6:04 p.m.  | A Day in the Life of Biloxi (9 min)                                    |
| 6:13 p.m.  | Biloxi Builders and Visionaries (8 min)                                |
| 6:21 p.m.  | Biloxi Today (3 min)   |
| 6:25 p.m.  | Infrastructure video (5 min)   |
| 6:30 p.m.  | Biloxi Public Schools (15 min)   |
| 6:45 p.m.  | Keesler Air Force Base (15 min)  |
| 7 p.m.     | Special Presentation: "Social Change in a Democracy" (1:05)            |
| 8:10 p.m.  | Special Presentation: "Fred Haise: From Biloxi to the Moon" (50 min)   |
| 9 p.m.     | City Council meetings and bonus public affairs programming (3 hours)   |
| Midnight   | National anthem by Ronny Broussard (2 min)                             |



You can view individual programs on the city's YouTube channel. Go to the city website at [biloxi.ms.us](http://biloxi.ms.us) and click on the YouTube logo at top right.

## Riddle me this, says George Ohr, the crafty potter

By Nathan Lytle  
Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art

Through George Ohr's "puzzle business card" anyone can see that his self-made title of "Mad Potter of Biloxi" was not just in jest.

It is covered in cryptic words that are meant to lead inquisitive minds to his Biloxi Art & Novelty Pottery at 511 Delauney St.

At the center of this card is the most cryptic of the wording. That's right, it's not just a random symbol and it takes a secret to know how to view George's hidden message here.

I'll not spoil the surprise, but we'll reveal it somewhere on this page. Instead, I'll just hint that perhaps George's favorite carnival ride would have been the Tilt-a-Whirl.

This card was just one of many ways in which George challenged the viewer to take in his art. He was constantly trying to engage the mind with puzzles along with warped shapes and bright glazes. Stop by the museum one day (when we're all clear, of course) and we'll show you how his puzzle mugs work.

Like the spark of electricity that lights a room, George was the spark of eccentricity that brought creative light to Biloxi's culture in the late 1800s. That light has spread throughout the Mississippi Gulf Coast and made our little bit of the world into a center for creativity – which would be seen in the work of Coastal artists such as Dusti Bongé of Biloxi, Walter Anderson and his family in Ocean Springs, and Richmond Barthé in Bay St. Louis.

The Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art is proud to be at the epicenter of the current form of this creative light. It's a light that originates in Biloxi but emanates much further.

The museum is temporarily closed but you can find much more information online at [georgeohr.org](http://georgeohr.org) and by following us on social media @ohrokeefemuseum.

### The solution to George's puzzle

Nothing is Ohrdinary with George. Here's what it says:

### Don't miss a visit 2 the Art & Novelty pottery

(Hidden in the glyph)  
**Biloxi Art Pottery**  
**G.E. Ohr Pro**  
(turn graph on its left side)

At bottom:

**Without you spill  
or let some fall  
That you don't drink  
this liquor all  
I'll hold a wager  
if you will  
Here gentlemen  
come try your skill**

The Puzzle  
by George Ohr, Pro.

## Frequently Called Numbers

Area code is 228  
unless otherwise noted.

- Animal Control . . . . . 392-0641
- Auto Tag/Property Tax Information . . . . . 435-8242
- Birth Certificates . . . . . 601-576-7960
- Building Permits . . . . . 435-6270
- Business Licenses . . . . . 435-6247
- Citizen services (streets, lights) . . . . . 435-6271
- City Council . . . . . 435-6257
- City Court . . . . . 435-6125
- Code Enforcement . . . . . 435-0841
- Drivers Licenses . . . . . 396-7400
- Emergency Police and Fire . . . . . 911
- Garbage Collection . . . . . 701-9086
- Housing Authority . . . . . 374-7771
- Human Resources . . . . . 435-6259
- Mayor's Office . . . . . 435-6254
- Museums Information . . . . . 435-6244
- Parks & Recreation . . . . . 388-7170
- Planning Commission . . . . . 435-6266
- Public Schools . . . . . 374-1810
- Streets and Drainage . . . . . 435-6271
- Visitor Info . . . . . 374-3105 or 1-800-BILOXI-3
- Water Service . . . . . 435-6236

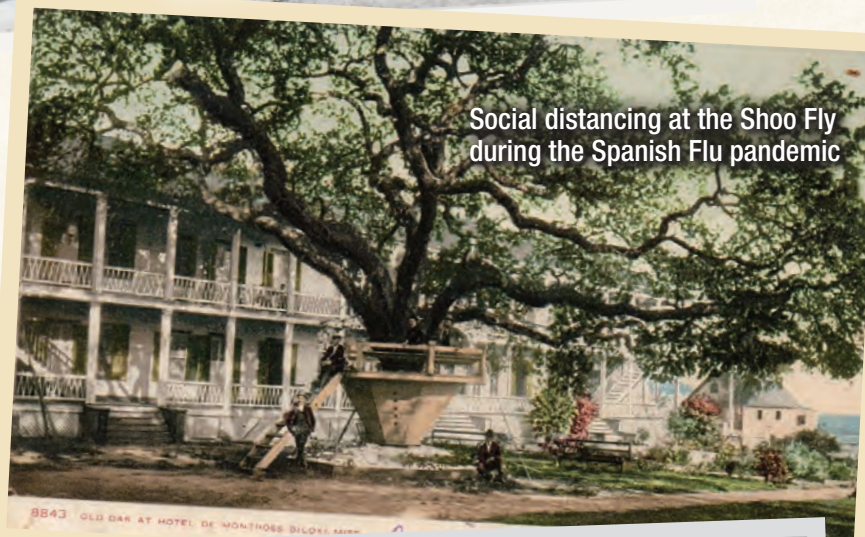


# Peeking into Biloxi's Past:

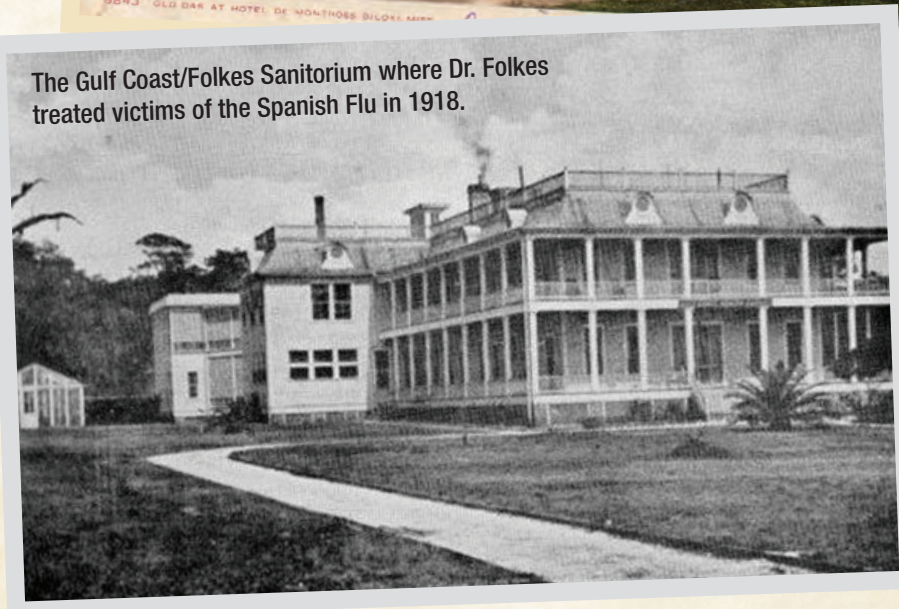
## THE YEARS OF Spanish Flu



Image of the Dukate Theater that was ordered closed by city ordinance during the Spanish Flu pandemic



Social distancing at the Shoo Fly during the Spanish Flu pandemic



The Gulf Coast/Folkes Sanatorium where Dr. Folkes treated victims of the Spanish Flu in 1918.



Article from News Orleans State newspaper on Oct. 25, 1918 announcing the death of Lazaro Lopez from the flu.



Gunston Hall, the home of Dr. Folkes and his family, is now the White Pillars Restaurant.

As we look through Biloxi's history, we see an exciting past. We see growth and prosperity. We see the evolution of coastal lifestyles and landmarks. But if we peek in a little deeper, we see that Biloxians have been faced with devastation from natural disasters such as hurricanes and oil spills and, yes, even pandemics.

As for many of us, we are living in a surreal world, dealing with something we have only read about in text books, something we thought we would only see in a sci-fi movie.

But, fear not. We have been here before with flu pandemics.

### Back in the Day



By Jane Shambra

### The Spanish Flu of 1918

During the end of the World War I, a highly contagious viral infection that mainly affects the respiratory system sweep through the nation. It was observed in Europe, and then in the United States and

Asia. Within a short period of time, the virus quickly spread around the world.

Citizens were ordered to wear masks, schools were closed. There were no effective drugs or vaccines to stop the threat of the scary and deadly virus.

News reporters used the term "influenza" and "la grippe" to describe the epidemic. Newspapers reported it as the Spanish Flu with its initial symptoms as a sudden onset with weakness, pains, dizziness, slow pulse, chills, fever of 100 to 104, and bloodshot eyes, much like the coronavirus.

In March 1918, the United States saw its

first documented cases of the Spanish Flu in Kansas. In September 1918, Mississippi reported its first case in Jackson. The Spanish Flu visited Biloxi during 1918 and 1919.

But how did the City of Biloxi respond to this threat during those trying times? Well, on Oct. 7, 1918, the Biloxi City Council addressed the issues of the Spanish Influenza.

In reply to the recommendation of the Public Health Service of the United States and in an effort to reduce the risk of the "Epidemic of Influenza and Pneumonia," the City of Biloxi, under the directives of Mayor Edward Glennan, passed an ordinance prohibiting the operation of moving picture shows, soda fountain shops, pool rooms – five were located in downtown Biloxi – and any and all public places of entertainment. These establishments were ordered to close immediately.

All public gatherings, including schools and churches were also ordered to cease.

The sale of bottled drinks, including Barq's famous soda pop, as well as packaged ice cream, were allowed.

Persons violating this edict were subject to be penalized with a \$30 fine or 30 days in jail. All city aldermen voted in favor: E. Ott, E. Barq, E. Desporte, W. Hunt, J. Tremmel, and H. Latimer. Later that month, the mayor and board of aldermen adopted the recommendation of a prominent Biloxian J.C. Elmer who had requested that citizens stay away from funerals as well as any house with sick residents.

In those days, a four-foot social distance was recommended and masks were used by many. In fact, during that time, my Grandma volunteered with the local Red Cross to sew "influenza masks." She could accurately measure a three-foot piece of cloth along her arm from her chin to her index finger.

Another face-covering used widely was the handkerchief. Before the days of fancy tissues, folks would always carry handkerchiefs to use for coughing, sneezing, and runny noses.

Maybe that is where the trend come from.

In Biloxi during the time of the Spanish Influenza, about a dozen doctors were on duty. Names of those individuals can be seen in the Biloxi City Directories as well as the "Bradford/O'Keefe Funeral Records" books, which are housed in the Local History Department of the Biloxi Public Library.

Dr. Hyman Folkes is an example of one of these dedicated first responders. He was the founder of the Biloxi Sanatorium, on West Beach Boulevard, the site of the present Chateau Le Grand. His home was the popular Gunston Hall, now the White Pillars Restaurant on Beach Boulevard.

Dr. Folkes was the appointed physician for Beauvoir's Old Soldiers Home. Sadly, Dr. Folkes' brother-in-law, seafood pioneer Lazaro Lopez of Biloxi, succumbed to the vicious epidemic in 1918. He was 41.

In the years of the Spanish Flu, the Bradford Company, located on East Howard Avenue between Lameuse and Main streets, offered funeral services in Biloxi. This included ambulance service, horse and carriages, hearses, embalming, and funerals.

According to records contained in the "Bradford/O'Keefe Funeral Records" book, the number of services provided increased as the threat of the Flu escalated. This company provided the following number of services per year: 199 services in 1916; 247 in 1917; 341 in 1918; and 214 in 1919. Often the cause of death is listed. In most instances the cause of death was listed as bronchial pneumonia and influenza.

In the year 1918, when the flu was at its peak, the highest number of funerals recorded totaled: 58 in October, 32 in November, and 48 in December.

According to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the epidemic killed 9,234 people in the state before it ran its course in 1919.

The Spanish Flu was the first of two pandemics caused by the H1N1 influenza virus. It received its name not because it began in Spain but because newspapers in Spain reported more about the virus than other areas because other areas were, at first, reporting on World War I.

The second pandemic caused by the H1N1 virus was the swine flu in 2009.



Dr. Folkes, who treated patients with the Spanish Flu, pictured with his wife during their honeymoon.



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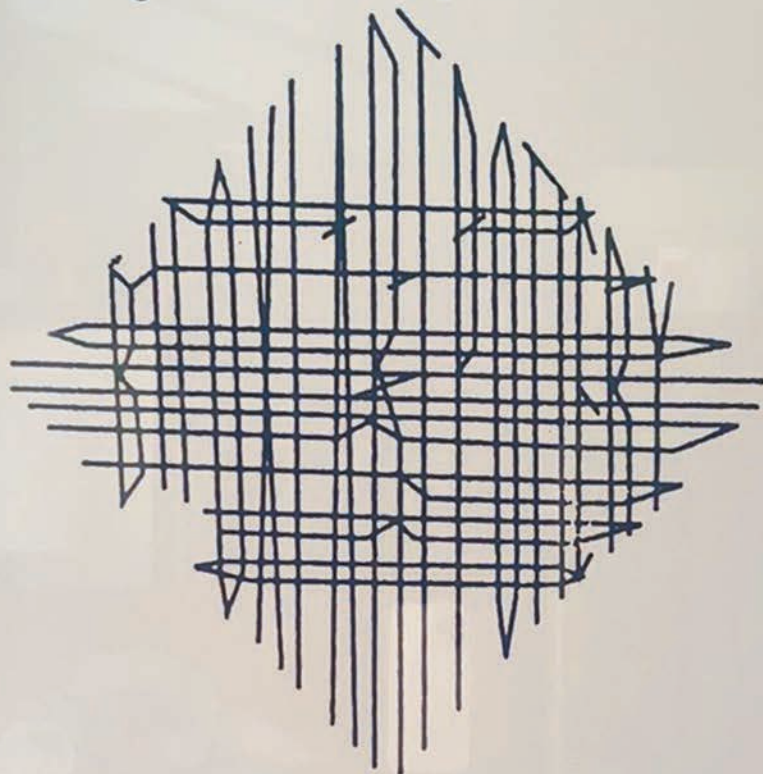
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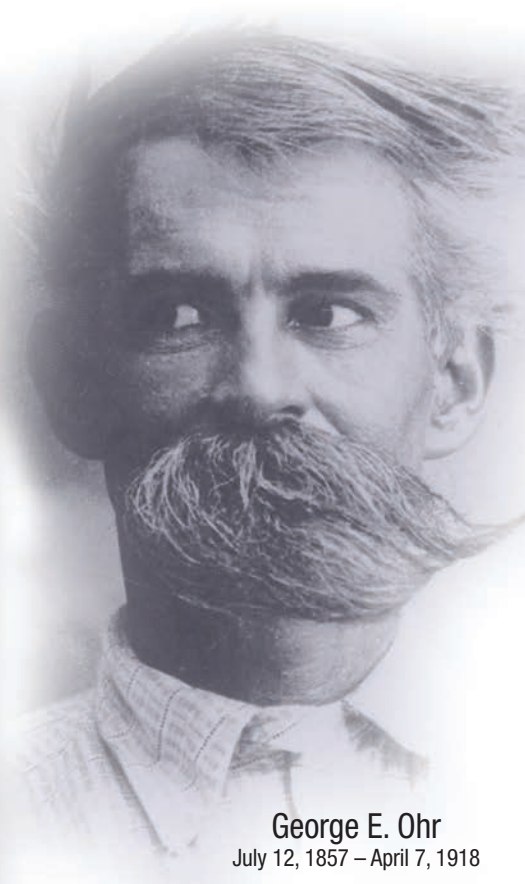
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Mad Potter's



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Lliks ruoy yrt emoc nemeltneg ereh"



THE PUZZLE by G.E. Ohr Pro.



George E. Ohr  
July 12, 1857 – April 7, 1918

## Some fun, by George

Here's some family fun to help pass the time, courtesy of Biloxi's Mad Potter, George E. Ohr, and thanks to the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art and Biloxi Visitors Center. The Puzzle, with its cryptic eye teasers, was actually George's business card to promote this Pot-Ohr-Ee and his general eccentricities.

► Read more and see the solution (in a Gerge, kinda way), Page 9.