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NEWCOMERS

Community Spotlight
Pascagoula, MS

Have an A+ summer in Pascagoula

photos by **John Stricklin** and courtesy of **City of Pascagoula**

Imagine a day where one can become *a shrimp boat captain or a snake wrangler. If you can picture it, then you've probably spent a Saturday in Pascagoula. The summer months are full of possibilities for children to explore the greater Gulf Coast and develop skills through one of the City's many camp offerings and for families to get out and enjoy the area for free (or almost free). With 26 parks, historic and cultural assets and ample opportunities for biking and kayaking, visitors of all ages are sure to find something that everyone in the family can enjoy.*

Camps

For those who are seeking long-term possibilities for children, Pascagoula Parks & Recreation puts on a variety of camps in the spring and summer months for all interests and age groups. The first camps offered take place over spring break. The Spring Break Camp is open to children ages 6-12, and includes fun field trips and activities.

"We work hard to make sure that our camps are fun for all the age groups that participate," said Antoinette Johnson, Programs Director for Pascagoula Parks & Recreation. "Our campers get to explore Pascagoula, but we also bring them on field trips all over the region. We have brought the kids to Mobile, New Orleans, and all over the Mississippi Gulf Coast so they can appreciate the region in which we live."

A relatively new camp developed in 2014 is Camp Special Forces, which brings teens together with the Pascagoula Police and Fire Departments for a week of learning all about public safety from behind the scenes. The camp is limited to 50 teens ages 13-16, who spend the week of Spring Break developing their inner community safety guardians. Activities include fitness with the Fire Department, dusting for fingerprints and making impressions of footprints, and K-9 demonstrations, among others. Camp offerings continue through the summer months and include the 8-week Summer Day Camp, the Nature Camp and Outdoor Adventure Camp, and athletic camps for tennis, soccer, baseball, football and cheerleading.

For more information on Pascagoula's camp opportunities, please visit www.cityofpascagoula.com or call Pascagoula Parks & Recreation at 228-938-2356. All camp activities are included in the registration fee.

Museums

Families can also spend their days getting in touch with nature or get a glimpse into the life of a shrimper with the Scranton Museum and Scranton Nature Center.

Located at I.G. Levy Park North, the Scranton Nature Center is a place where people can learn all about Pascagoula's natural environment. There are displays that showcase the flora and fauna found in the area. The grounds around the center also serve as a demonstration site for storm water management, and include a rain garden, a cistern and a variety of plants that were installed from the many workshops available. The staff at the nature center is very knowledgeable and can help visitors with ideas about how to use native plants to reduce flooding or attract more birds to their home.

The best part about the Scranton Nature Center is that you can get up close and personal with some of Pascagoula's wildlife. Children can visit with the peacocks and rabbits, or even hold a snake and pet a baby alligator! The park where the center is located is also full of amenities, including a fishing lake with a pier, a walking track, a playground, a picnic pavilion, a nature trail, soccer fields and more.

For added fun, the Scranton Nature Center offers a Nature Discovery Workshop every third Saturday of the month. Topics from past workshops included "Spooky Critters" from Halloween, bird migration and all things snow. All workshops only last an hour and include story time with the Pascagoula Public Library and an activity related to something that can be seen in I.G. Levy Park. The workshops always take place at 9 a.m. and only cost $1 per child.

Over on the opposite side of town in the newly renovated River Park is the Scranton Museum. This museum is a converted shrimp boat, and is designed to teach children about the different kinds of marine life found in the Gulf and about what life is like for a shrimper. Visitors can go through all the areas on the boat and will see all the different kinds of nets, aquariums, displays, the kitchen and living quarters, wheelhouse and holding room.

FACING PAGE: Beach Park remains a favorite in Pascagoula. Located right on the beach at 600 City Park Street, it features a pier, playground, concession stand and a splash pad for the kids to enjoy.
ABOVE LEFT: Become one with nature at the Scranton Nature Center while getting up close and personal with snakes and alligators (among other things).
ABOVE RIGHT: Gage Hudson enjoyed his visit to the Round Island Lighthouse.

At the gateway to Pascagoula stands the Round Island Lighthouse. The newly renovated lighthouse recently opened to the public after an extensive restoration process. Visitors can now climb up to the lantern gallery and take in the view of the Pascagoula River and the city itself.

"Today was my first time at the lighthouse, and I really liked it," said 8-year-old visitor, Gage Hudson. "I climbed up to the top three times. You can see all over the town, and I liked looking at the lens up close."

Admission to Pascagoula's museums is $2 for adults and $1 for children.

Round Island Lighthouse — 70
815 Cypress Avenue, Pascagoula
228.938.2356 • Hrs: Fri & Sat 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Scranton Nature Center — 71
3928 Nathan Hale Avenue, Pascagoula
228.938.6612 • Hrs: Tues – Sat 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Scranton Museum — 70
4100 Clark Street, Pascagoula
228.938.2356 • Hrs: Fri & Sat 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.