The Mississippi Delta is situated in the northwest region of the state between the Mississippi and Yazoo rivers. It was created by recurrent flooding over hundreds of years and now contains some of the most fertile soil in the world. The Delta includes all or part of the following counties: Washington, DeSoto, Humphreys, Carroll, Issaquena, Panola, Quitman, Bolivar, Coahoma, Leflore, Sunflower, Sharkey, Tunica, Tallahatchie, Holmes, Yazoo, and Warren. “This is a place where hospitality, authenticity, and personality resonate like nowhere else in America. The echo of blues guitars flooding from juke joints. The scent of BBQ and tamales funneling out of famous local dives. The sweeping views of cotton fields eyed from the balconies of antebellum bed and breakfasts. A land of music and heartwarming food. History and adventure. Creativity and inspiration. And when you get close, you can hear, see, and relish the vibe.”

www.visitthedelta.com

Cover Photography by My-lihn Ngo, M2
Everyone always had certain memories that stood out while growing up. To me, one of the most exciting days of the year was the first day of school. The summer that consisted of playing outside, video games, and having basically no responsibilities whatsoever was about to end. The days of homework assignments, classrooms, and getting up before lunch every day was about to begin. One particular morning stands out to me more so than others. I can remember being a little anxious as I was eating my breakfast of Lucky Charms. The cartoons on TV weren’t as entertaining as they were the morning before, but I was still looking forward to the new day. I ran out of the house and grabbed my ‘Transformers’ lunchbox as I caught my first ride to school of the year. My schoolmate gave me a high five as I got in the backseat of his mom’s Astro-Van. It was an exciting time, and we both knew that our first day as students at UMC was going to be a great one.

The first day of school was always exciting to me no matter what age I was or what grade I was about to begin. It was an opportunity to start a new year with a clean slate and to see old friends again and make some new ones. Each year brought new challenges and required more work and dedication than the year before. From first grade to freshman year of college there were many books to be read and experiences to be had, and UMC was no different. It was a consensus among students in my class and my friends in other schools around campus that those first few months were pretty rough. Those long nights of studying and the burden of exams were certainly difficult at times.

Throughout the first part of my academic career here at UMC I was fortunate enough to make even more friends across campus. While the common theme of our conversations revolved around how much ‘fun’ we were having with school, I began to notice that there were some truly special folks going to school here. An incredible work ethic, great character, and a strong sense of professionalism are universal among everyone at this institution. The students here are the people that someone wants taking care of Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, and anyone else that is special in their life. Students here work hard, and it impresses me every day how selflessly dedicated everyone is to his/her training.

I have been lucky enough to be able to attend a program like UMC and even luckier to be surrounded by people like the students, faculty, and administration. It is an honor to have the opportunity to serve as the ASB President and to represent a group as great as students at UMC. The upcoming year is going to be an exciting one, and I can’t wait for it to get started.

A much as I’ve talked about my first day of school I realize that it is about to be a great number of students’ last day of school very soon. I know that you all will do a fantastic job in your respective programs and will represent your families, communities, and UMC exceptionally well in the future. I want to wish all of you the best of luck in your future careers, and congratulations to everyone else for finishing another year.

After reading his eye-opening book, CODE BLUE: A Katrina Physician’s Memoir, Literati Medicus had the good fortune of meeting Dr. Richard Deichmann and listening to his wonderfully prepared presentation.

After enjoying a bike ride down the Natchez Trace (he was in training for a “Bike Across America”), Dr. Deichmann spent nearly two hours with medical students, residents, and faculty discussing the state of healthcare present in New Orleans during and after Hurricane Katrina. He outlined the city using graphics, demonstrated precisely how the city’s safeguards failed, and explained how that failure led to a state of emergency at Memorial Medical Center. With vivid imagery and shocking photographs, Dr. Deichmann educated the group on crisis management. Those present were very appreciative of his presentation.

Looking to BUY, SELL or RENT, Call me today!
My Trip to the Mississippi Delta

Abby Furr Garcia, PY4 student, Martin Hall of Lambert, MS (patient); and Jann Cross, Clinical Instructor with the School of Pharmacy. This picture is from Kroger Pharmacy in Bayonne, MS.

The satisfaction I get from my guests…that satisfaction that we are important to them. This is by far the hardest job I have ever had, and the hours are long. But when my customers leave happy, it is all worth it.

NOLA in Indianola, MS

Discovering the Hidden Restaurants of Mississippi....

Priya Srivastava, M4

I have thoroughly enjoyed traveling to various cities in Mississippi this year, discovering the hidden restaurants of Mississippi. Not only did I enjoy eating at the many restaurants I visited, but I also took pleasure in meeting locals of each city and seeing new landscapes along the way. During this past year, I traveled everywhere from the Delta to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. I now feel I have a good grasp of all this wonderful state has to offer—such as its wide array of cuisines, music, museums, state parks, festivals, and people. I firmly believe that Mississippi is the best kept secret of the south.

My last review features one of the best restaurants I have visited all year. On my way home from Cleveland, MS (where I did an internal medicine rotation), I visited Indianola for an afternoon. Before venturing to NOLA restaurant, I spent some time in the very impressive B.B. King museum. If you plan on taking a trip to Indianola soon to try out NOLA, I suggest you go during the weekend of July 2nd as B.B. King will be there performing during his homecoming.

NOLA features a variety of seafood appetizers, salads, pasta and grill specialties, and house specials. Customer favorites at NOLA include the shrimp and grits, the tuna provençal, and the Cajun catfish cakes. During my visit there, I enjoyed the Cajun catfish cakes, the NOLA salad (romaine lettuce, red onion, toasted hot/sweet pecans, mandarin oranges, pean and blue cheese crumbles topped with a sweet and sour vinagrette dressing…delicious), tuna tartar, and the shrimp & chilies. My meal was absolutely delectable, especially the last 2 items listed above. The tuna tartar was marinated in sesamo oil, served over a bed of lettuce, and topped with wasabi chili dressing. The shrimp & chilies consisted of crawfish and shrimp served over fried cheese grits and then topped with creamy Lafitte sauce. NOLA also had many enticing desserts to choose from, but after my filling meal, I knew I would have to make a second trip up there to try them. I have plenty of reason to dine at NOLA again and again.

Thanks Chuck for answering the questions below.

How do you guys advertise?
Cable TV, Print (regional magazines), Radio
Do you host large parties (weddings, graduations, etc)?
We can host parties with 20 people or less inside the restaurant, but for any party larger, we cater at an outside facility. We cater for many parties in the B.B. King museum.
What magazines have featured NOLA?
Delta magazine (our restaurant was featured in the "best of" issue), Delta Business Journal, Catfish Journal
What is your favorite part of NOLA?
Our core menu will always be the same, and there are some staples that will never be taken off the menu. For example, some people drive all the way here for the shrimp and grits, so I wouldn't dream of not serving it. We always offer seasonal specials such as crawfish platters and royal red shrimp, and we change our restaurant specials each week.
What is your favorite part of NOLA?
For lunch, our sandwiches are all under $10. For dinner, all of our entrées, except for our steaks, are between $10-$20. Our steaks run around $25.
How often does the menu change?
Our core menu will always be the same, and there are some staples that will never be taken off the menu. For example, some people drive all the way here for the shrimp and grits, so I wouldn't dream of not serving it. We always offer seasonal specials such as crawfish platters and royal red shrimp, and we change our restaurant specials each week.
What is your favorite part of NOLA?
How are the hours of operation?
Dinner: Tuesday-Saturday 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Full Service Bar: 6 p.m. – until
What is the attire?
Casual for both lunch and dinner—if you think you are appropriately attired, you probably are.
What are the price ranges?
Lunch: Monday-Friday 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

NOLA is not a take off of New Orleans or the restaurant NOLA there. Initially, as I said, I was apprehensive about going to a place I had never been before and talking to a group of Mississippians that couldn’t even answer any of the questions that I may or may not have the answers to. But once I get there and after I left, I felt as though I was actually having an impact on the lives of others.

In addition to bridging the gap between textbooks and clinical practice, another obvious benefit of rotations and practice experiences is to expose us to diverse practice sites. On my current rotation, I had the opportunity to travel to the Mississippi Delta and partner with TEAM Sugar Free to teach a diabetes education class to a group of Mississippi Delta residents. The TEAM Sugar Free project focuses on providing diabetic screening and services in different areas of the Mississippi Delta with one of the focuses being community based education and clinician training.

At the beginning of the meeting, a couple of team members introduced the program and reviewed some of the basics about diabetes. Then it was my turn to talk about medications with the group. I began by making sure everyone in attendance was currently on some type of diabetic medication. Then I tried to break down the participants by their diabetes type. Finally I gave a brief talk about the classes of medications and then asked for questions. For the first time in my life, I got some dialogue and genuine interest out of the audience. Sure, I got some questions that I had already covered in my talk, but I was happy to answer any question I could. After all, I was there to try and make a difference through education. And while this article is not intended to review the many health disparities we face as a state, it goes without saying that we need as many educational initiatives as we can get to help improve the health care of our fellow Mississippi residents.

So what’s the moral of this story? Did I save a life that day? Probably not. But did I increase knowledge and awareness about a prevalent chronic disease state that has serious long term consequences if not adequately controlled? I think so. Regardless of how much the patients learned that day, I left feeling fulfilled and proud that I had stepped out of my comfort zone with a program I had known nothing about for over a year. But most of all, the majority of us hope that one day our chosen field will actually apply what we have been reading and studying about for so long in real world settings.
The School of Nursing & Their Mississippi Delta

Kayla Logan, Senior BS

It's that time of year. Students from the School of Nursing have graduated, have been through Pinning Ceremony, and have taken the Nightingale Pledge. We're all hard at work seeking job opportunities, preparing for NCLEX-RN, and making a little time to celebrate, too. In preparation for graduating and taking boards, many of us prepare to "dream big" and apply out-of-state hospitals—Vanderbilt, UAB, Emory. For a new graduate, the possibilities are endless. I was certainly one of these students, eager to leave the state where I'd lived my whole life for a change of scenery, excited to enter practice as a new nurse in a new place. That all changed this past year.

In January 2009, I approached Dr. Lisa Haynie, one of my professors, with a research idea. I became very interested in public health and maternal-child health outcomes as indicators of overall community health. Dr. Haynie presented me and a fellow student, Margaret Hines, with an incredible research opportunity. We set out to explore two topics. Margaret would focus on access to health care for children in the Mississippi South Delta, and I would focus on school-based health centers as a way to combat poor adolescent health outcomes in the region. As one might expect, our research revealed serious issues with access care including a shortage of health care professionals, transportation issues, and lack of insurance. The reproductive health outcomes for adolescents in the Mississippi South Delta are staggeringly poor when compared to both state and national averages.

The School of Nursing has a longstanding relationship with the Mississippi Delta. Much faculty research has been done in the region, and student research at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels has been conducted there. In recent years, groups of students have traveled to the towns of Rolling Fork and Maysville to conduct health fairs and health screenings. The most notable project to come out of the School of Nursing was the Mercy Delta Express in 2003, a project that has been recognized nationally as a model for non-traditional ways to deal with access issues in access to healthcare for rural regions.

Any resident of Mississippi to describe the Delta, and you're likely to get a variety of responses. Many will include things like "hot tamales," "Ground Zero," or "H.C. Porter." Some may be too quick to recognize the region as "poor" or "underprivileged." Though I have seen firsthand the poverty and rampant health disparities experienced in the MS Delta, there is one thing that the region certainly is not—defeated. In general, all of the community members we came in contact with during our research were incredibly proactive about their health and wellness, and though they have less than adequate access to care, they are eager to learn and have a strong desire to pursue the life of wellness that we all do.

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To many Mississippians, April 24 was a day not too unlike other days—hot, heavy, and overcast—but to the residents of Ebenezer in Holmes County, April 24 will be a day permanently etched in their minds as a moment in time marred by tragedy and ravaged by tornadoes. The tornadoes killed one and stripped several others of their homes and livelihood.

With a little encouragement from our class philanthropist, several M4s and I set out early one morning to Ebenezer to see what we could do to help. Upon arrival at the volunteer station, there were no apparent signs of tornado damage. After signing a sea of consent forms, we were handed a pair of gloves and given directions to the home of the school volunteers, medical students, or other group was going to successfully clean that place up without the use of heavy machinery. We then set out to help in other ways—separating the debris into four categories: burnable products (plastics, clothes, trash), wood, metals, and chemicals. After a couple of hours of labor-intensive cleanup, we had hardly made a dent in the rubble.

After getting over the initial shock of the sheer destruction that lay before us, we quickly realized that no group of high school students, school volunteers, medical students, or other group was going to go over it with a fine-tooth comb, we set out to do just that. With directions in hand, we slowly made our way down the rubble-filled roads of Ebenezer. Before we knew it, we found ourselves immersed in the wake of the tornado’s destruction. Trees stream aside like paper dolls and power lines snapped in two rot alongside displaced furniture and the beloved family heirlooms that littered the grounds of the small Ebenezer community. Somehow, in spite of the lack of identifying landmarks and visible signs of life, we knew when we arrived at what was once the location of Rev. Brown’s home. The destruction before us was paramount.

Nothing on that spot of land even faintly resembled a house. There were no free-standing walls, no windows anywhere. There were just huge piles of gnarled trees, twisted pieces of tin and lumber, heaps of broken appliances, and stacks of clothes and trash. While the majority of the rubble was concentrated in one location, there were some things that could be seen high in trees several hundred yards away. Even Reverend Brown’s truck was found a quarter of a mile down the road from his home.

For Reverend Espy Brown, who was the tornado’s sole casualty. Told that the home had been cleaned once by a group of high school students and that it would be our job to go over it with a fine-tooth comb, we set out to do just that. With directions in hand, we slowly made our way down the rubble-filled roads of Ebenezer. Before we knew it, we found ourselves immersed in the wake of the tornado’s destruction. Trees stream aside like paper dolls and power lines snapped in two rot alongside displaced furniture and the beloved family heirlooms that littered the grounds of the small Ebenezer community. Somehow, in spite of the lack of identifying landmarks and visible signs of life, we knew when we arrived at what was once the location of Rev. Brown’s home. The destruction before us was paramount.

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The attitude of the Coast-ians is very friendly and laid-back, and the accents have a slight flavor of New Orleans much like the gumbo, etouffes, and other delicious seafood dishes. Despite all the struggle the Coast has been through, most recently being the BP oil spill disaster, coast folks stick together and are willing to lift-up one another during hard times.

If you haven’t been to the Coast, take a day trip or a weekend visit. Enjoy the sunset on the beach while strolling on the sea-wall boardwalks. Cruise down Scenic Drive in Pass Christian to awe at the huge, beautiful homes overlooking the Mississippi Sound. Take a picnic to the beach or to the Friendship Oak Tree House in Long Beach if you don’t like seagulls hovering over you. Or, visit the more artsy towns like Ocean Springs, home of the colorful, nature-loving painter Walter Anderson and Bay St. Louis to look at galleries, used-book stores, and antiques. There are also good buffets at the many casinos if you’d like that, too.

Here are a few of my favorite places to eat, visit, and dearly miss when I move.

- **Our Lady of the Gulf Crab Festival – July 4th weekend**, Biloxi
- **Scenic Drive, Pass Christian**
- **Charley’s French Wine Bar, Pass Christian Harbor**
- **Charley’s, Pass Christian**
- **Ricky’s, Bay St. Louis**
- **Our Lady of the Gulf Crab Festival – July 4th weekend**, Bay St. Louis
- **Rory’s Eatery, Bay St. Louis**
- **Ricky’s, Bay St. Louis**
- **Half Shell Oyster House Restaurant, Gulfport**
- **The Blow-Fly Inn Restaurant, Gulfport**
- **The Chimney Restaurant, Gulfport**
- **The Friendship Oak Tree, Long Beach – a huge, historic Live Oak tree house**
- **Darrell’s Cafe, Long Beach**
- **Scenic Drive, Pass Christian**
- **Pirates Cove, Pass Christian – hands down, THE best Po’boy in Mississippi.**
- **Shaggy’s, Pass Christian**
- **Modebird Cafè, Bay St. Louis**
- **2nd Saturday Art Walk, Main Street, Bay St. Louis**
- **Trapani’s Eatery, Bay St. Louis**
- **The Chimney Restaurant, Gulfport**
- **The Blow Fly Inn Restaurant, Gulfport**
- **The Ohr-O’Keefe Museum, Biloxi – displaying the work of George Ohr, Mississippi’s Mad Potter. Museum is currently under construction.**
- **Shearwater Pottery, Ocean Springs**
- **Walter Anderson Museum, Ocean Springs**
- **Gulf Islands National Seashore Park, Ocean Springs**
- **Shearwater Pottery, Ocean Springs**
- **The Ohr-O’Keefe Museum, Biloxi – displaying the work of George Ohr, Mississippi’s Mad Potter. Museum is currently under construction.**
- **Beauvoir, Home of Jefferson Davis, Biloxi**
- **Mary Mahoney’s Old French House Restaurant, Biloxi**
- **Beau Rivage Casino & the Hard Rock Casino and Resort, Biloxi**
- **Long Beach, Pass Christian, and Bay St. Louis – great for jogging/cycling.**

The same, for the record. And, I won’t even be an official Mississippi resident, at least seafood won’t be as easily attainable or cheap. Chesapeake blue crabs just aren’t cents have a slight flavor of New Orleans much like the gumbo, etouffes, and other delicious seafood dishes. Despite all the struggle the Coast has been through, most recently being the BP oil spill disaster, coast folks stick together and are willing to lift-up one another during hard times.

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The Mississippi Delta: A Place We Call Home

Photography by Kristen Cox, M2

These photos are from Glen Allan (located on Lake Washington in Washington county), Grace (small town in Issaquena county with a post office but not even one four way stop), Anguilla (small town in Sharkey county, just on the outskirts of Rolling Fork), and Mayersville (county seat of Issaquena county that sits on the Mississippi River and its western city limits abut the levee). These towns are all located within 15 miles of Rolling Fork, which is the only one with a practicing physician.


Below: A Man’s Man. Pepaw on the Farm

Right: Fishing at Grandmother’s House

Below: My Favorite Hunting Spot

Rainbow over Lake Washington

River High behind the Levee

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Special Thanks to Jon Steadman for the many ways he made UMC a better place as ASB President

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Belzoni, Mississippi: Take Me to the Delta One More Time

Nicholas Whipple, M4

In the fall of 2006, good fortune sent me into the deep Delta. I called Tutwiler, MS, home and experienced a new kind of medicine as I completed requirements for my Family Medicine preceptorship with Dr. Anne Brooks and Dr. Narayan Bhetwals. I saw cotton gins and julep joints and witnessed Habitat for Humanity in full swing. Doubblequick replaced Shell, and Savervalu replaced Wal-mart. I fell in love with my home state and fell pride in calling myself a Mississippian.

An M4 elective entitled Rural Medicine gave me chance to once again experience Delta life, extend a hand to the educationally disadvantaged, and taste Delta cuisine. The recent creation of this elective is in large measure to ensure that Delta students may experience medicine in Mississippi. It hopes to show them the special beauties of our state and let them experience the satisfaction of assisting medically impoverished patients. The Medicine Department has selected some of the most qualified primary care physicians in various Delta towns to serve as preceptors. I have yet to hear a classmate speak of their Rural Medicine experience without becoming visibly animated and sharing numerous stories of patient care, clinic excitement, or hole-in-the-wall Delta diners. And to add to the already attractive package, each student receives a generous stipend and has all expenses paid for through grant money (travel, lodging, food).

With purple wisteria blossoming as I drove and crop dusting dancing overhead, I traveled each day this April from Gluckstadt to Belzoni, MS. With John Grisham audio books keeping me company and increasing my overall Mississippi experience, I claimed Delta citizenship once more. Just after a long, bright orange sign announced that I had entered Belzoni’s city limits on my first day, I became surrounded by human-sized catfish, painted and decorated, which stood in front of each major downtown business. There was a high school pep-squad selling baked goods as a fundraiser, a foldout chalkboard displaying the day’s plate lunches, and a banner announcing the upcoming 35th Annual Belzoni World Catfish Festival. As Grisham’s The Summons was approaching its climax, I turned the corner by a star-spangled catfish and pulled into the Gorton Clinic. Dr. Carlton Gorton (Medicine-Pediatrics) and his father Dr. Mack Gorton (Medicine) welcomed me into their Church Street clinic and taught me unreservedly of rural medicine and life in Belzoni.

“My baby is wheezing and his prescription of Antiasthema is out. This doc, he see on my leg aint gettin’ no bettah, and I think I needs some more of that Bestrum.” “This arthritis aint player, it hurts and I limps, and I already rubbed alcohol on my knee and soaked it in Epsom salt.” My patients were sincere and friendly. Everyone knew everyone. It was not uncommon for mother, aunt, and grandmother to accompany a patient during routine visits. They were quick to smile and laugh and all made sure I was planning to attend the Catfish Festival. Medicine bottles were stored in Supervalu bags and old lunchboxes instead of purses. I was “the new doc in town,” and Belzoni let me know I was welcome. I was made an honorary member of the Belzoni Rotary Club and joined them for lunch, business, the pledge, and the singing of God Bless America each Wednesday at noon. A 50%-discount was given to me at the Catfish Museum Gift Shop, and I made the nightly news during my second week.

To the medical community presented with this or similar opportunities, I invite you to visit and experience the Mississippi Delta. Blues music will surround you, and you will find something, no many things, that amaze and become an agent in solving complex problems. You will be blessed with a feeling of self-satisfaction and nobility as genuine as anywhere you can experience it.}

Dr. Carlton Gorton is the only physician I know who can successfully attend to five or more clinic patients simultaneously. If there is not a cake, cinnamon rolls, or cookies sitting on his desk as a gift from a patient it is because the nursing staff consumed the baked goods while the icing was still warm. He has a unique Belzoni inflection which is made even more genuine by the fact that he doesn’t even realize he has it. He is the father of medicine in Humphreys County and a close friend of our captain Dr. Jimmy Keeton.}

To the medical community presented with this or similar opportunities, I invite you to visit and experience the Mississippi Delta. Blues music will surround you, and you will find something, no many things, that amaze you and that teach you. It will politically charge you as you identify that education, especially primary and secondary, is in absolute danger. You will feel needed and become an agent in solving complex problems. You will be blessed with a feeling of self-satisfaction and nobility as genuine as anywhere you can experience it. There are beautiful fields, wonder-ful fishing holes, and spectacularly delicious restaurants. Go and see. Belzoni was the perfect way to bring closure to my M4 year. It was the perfect way to complete my medical school career.
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