

CLAY TODAY

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Spartans earn eighth state bid for state title
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BEST OF CLAY

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Broskie selected as interim superintendent

Governor taps Davis assistant to run school district until elections

By Don Coble
don@opcfla.com

TALLAHASSEE – Gov. Ron DeSantis appointed David Broskie as the interim Clay County Superintendent of Schools on Monday. This appointment is effective March 2.

The governor acted quickly to replace Addison Davis, who resigned his position after being selected unanimously by the Hillsborough County School Board to be its next superintendent. Davis' resignation



David Broskie

is effect March 1.

Broskie, of Fleming Island, has been the assistant superintendent of the Clay County School District since 2015. He's worked for the school district for 30 years and served as a principal from 2003 until 2015.

"I think there was a group of people who really wanted to see stability in the district, to continue the upward trend," Broskie said. "There isn't a capacity I haven't been involved with in the last 30

years.

"At the same time, this is all brand new."

He was recognized as Principal of the Year in 2010 by the Florida Department of Education. Broskie earned his bachelor's degree in education from Mansfield University of Pennsylvania and his master's degree in educational leadership from the University of North Florida.

SEE BROSKIE, 13



Even at 92, World War II veteran Mell Garrett said he's not ready to slow down. He's been a crossing guard with the Clay County Sheriff's Office for seven years and he always greets students with a warm "hello" as they go to and from school. See story page 7.

District slowly overhauling dilapidated fleet of buses

By Wesley LeBlanc
wesley@opcfla.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Students around the district soon will be riding to school on new buses.

Many students agree the district's school buses are old and could use a facelift. Some have air conditioning, some don't. Some drive smoothly. As the district's plans becomes a reality, students will be able to enjoy new buses by the start of the next school year this August.

"It's a very exciting time for us," Transportation Director Derald Sweatt said. "More are coming in every week

SEE BUS, 20



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\$250,000 Florida Job Growth Grant awarded to Green Cove Springs

For Clay Today

TALAHASSEE – Gov. Ron DeSantis announced Feb. 20 he is awarding \$250,000 to the city of Green Cove Springs for electrical line infrastructure upgrades through the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund. The City of Green Cove Springs will also match the grant with \$50,000 and is prepared to immediately begin work on what is projected to be a six-month project.

The announcement was made during Clay Day at the State Capitol.

The governor was joined by Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis, Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Rob Bradley, House Appropriations Committee Chairman Travis Cummings, Representative Bobby Payne, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Executive Director Ken Lawson, Enterprise Florida, Inc. President and CEO Jamal Sowell, Clay County Chairman Gayward Hendry and City of Green Cove Springs Mayor Steven Kelley.

“Clay County is home to several companies in the manufacturing, aerospace and defense sectors, with plenty of room to grow,” DeSantis said. “This strategic investment in public infrastructure, will help support and attract additional investment and growth for current and future busi-



Gov. Ron DeSantis, left, presents a check for \$250,000 to Green Cove Springs Mayor Steven Kelley and other county officials for infrastructure upgrades in the city.

nesses that call Green Cove Springs home. Clay County’s future is bright, and we look forward to their continued growth and success.”

The funding will also assist Green Cove Springs Utility Department with upgrading the powerlines and transformers to support existing and future manufacturing facilities in the industrial park on County

Road 315.

“Providing opportunities for Florida communities to enhance infrastructure is an important element of the business-friendly environment Gov. DeSantis is committed to in our great state,” said Lawson. “We are proud to support Green Cove Springs in their efforts to diversify their economy through strategic investments

and create jobs for their citizens.”

“[Last Thursday’s] award goes a long way toward bolstering a small town’s local infrastructure and diversifying northeast Florida’s economy,” Sowell said. “I cannot think of a better use of these funds for long-term growth.”

“Gov. DeSantis has once again shown his dedication in helping provide growth and development in the Clay County region through this Job Growth Grant Fund award,” Bradley said. “I know this funding will be a catalyst for businesses to begin to call this region their home. The best is yet to come for Clay County and the surrounding regions.”

“This award will provide much needed growth to the City of Green Cove Springs, and more specifically, the industrial park,” said Cummings. “I appreciate governor DeSantis for his commitment to bringing businesses and growth to not only Clay County, but to the state of Florida.”

“Thanks to the Job Growth Grant Fund awarded to the City of Green Cove Springs, we are able to make some necessary upgrades to the electrical infrastructure and attract new and exciting growth to the area,” Payne said. “On behalf of the people

SEE GRANT, 5

State of Schools: Davis leaves Clay following unprecedented success

By Bruce Hope
bruce@opcfla.com

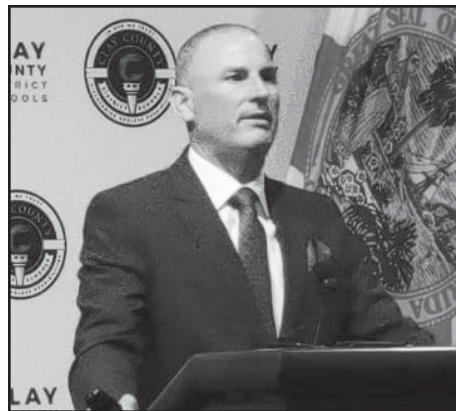
ORANGE PARK – Outgoing superintendent Clay County schools Addison Davis was energetic and charismatic in his final State of Schools address before moving to the same position in Hillsborough County.

The address focused mainly on featuring the many improvements the Clay School district has been able to achieve during Davis’ time in leadership before closing with the introduction and ceremonial, yet unofficial, swearing-in of interim superintendent and 30-year Clay schools veteran David Broskie.

“It’s a tough act to follow when you follow Addison Davis,” Broskie said. “The standard is high. The bar has been set extremely high. I’m just so proud that the governor chose an educator to lead the school system.”

Davis held the role of superintendent for over three years before resigning to become the superintendent in Hillsborough County.

“I can tell you, from Day 1 that I put in my papers to become superintendent of Clay County until today, I’ve given my heart,



Addison Davis

I’ve given my time, I’ve sacrificed my family’s time and my energy to do great things in the school district,” said Addison. “Each of you has made me a better educator and a better person.”

Many district-level accomplishments were highlighted during the presentation. Between the 2015-16 school year and present, Clay County has made leaps and bounds in multiple categories of achievement.

The district grade improved from “B” to “A.” The state ranking has jumped 12 spots, from 20th to eighth. Graduation rate im-

proved almost 8% while college readiness in reading and math both rose more than 20%. As well, industry certifications rose by more than 700. Clay also made huge strides in terms of diversity, closing the gap between graduation rates between students of all color.

Clay County not only made strides in the classroom but on other fronts as well. Fiscal responsibility has also improved. Teachers, support and administration, have been better compensated for their efforts, seeing total raises in earnings of over \$9 million over the since 2015-16.

Other improvements include in the areas of mental health, exceptional student graduation (students with disabilities), which rose 13.4%. The expansion of support for mental health was a focal point.

Mental health clinics were launched at 11 schools. Drop-in clinics were made available at all high schools and elementary schools, and the buddy bench initiative was launched. The buddy bench is a program that enables a troubled child to sit on the bench, making it known that need help of some sort, whether from a peer or an adult. There has also been an increase in the

training of staff in youth mental health first aid and trauma-informed training. Since 2017, almost 1000 personnel have received this training.

Safety in the district has also improved. BY implementing the CCDS Police department, overall arrests at or in schools have decreased by 79%. Camera surveillance has been installed in every school.

Several county dignitaries were present such as Green Cove Springs city councilwoman Connie Butler, Keystone Heights Mayor Karen Lake and Clay County District Schools Police Department Chief Kenneth Wagner, among others.

With the transition from Davis to Broskie and whoever will be the fulltime superintendent following upcoming elections, the Clay County school district now looks to the future with the intent of building on the successes of the last administration.

“When you take on leadership roles, every time you take on a new journey, you want to be able to say that you left it in a better spot. I can honestly, openly say, we have done just that,” Addison said. “We want to create magic every day for our children.”

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Black History Month

Local history defined by the struggles, fight for racial justice

Maude Jackson, Annie Keyes, Edward Keyes were central to creating racial equality

By Wesley LeBlanc
wesley@opcfla.com

ORANGE PARK – Black History Month is about the trials, tribulations and successes of black people and their history.

There are, of course, still improvements to be made but leaders in black history like Rosa Parks, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. paved a new world for black people.

Those names are synonymous with black history and February, which is black history month, as they should be, but Clay



Maude Jackson Keyes



Annie Keyes



Edward Keyes, Jr.

County has some black leaders of its own. Maude Jackson grew up in Middleburg. She went to school with other black children, segregated away from white children. She succeeded despite segregation and society telling her otherwise. After graduating from high school, she traveled daily to St. Augustine from Middleburg to attend Florida Memorial college.

“All blacks in the area had to go to Florida Memorial to get a college education before integration happened,” Jackson’s nephew and Orange Park resident Edward Keyes said.

In that time, Jackson became an activist. Unsettled and unhappy with the way black people were treated in America, Jackson began to peacefully protest. At a

time when black people were being physically attacked by white people, Jackson, like Martin Luther King Jr., chose to counter with peaceful discord.

She participated in sit-ins at all-white establishments. She marched in St. Augustine and she did all she could to show that

SEE HISTORY, 18

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Cummings considers merging Florida Poly, New College with University of Florida

By Sarah Mueller
For FloridaPolitics

A new version of a proposal that would consolidate some of the state's universities was heard in the House Appropriations Committee last Tuesday.

Appropriations Chair Travis Cummings, a Clay County Republican, is weighing in on the behind the scenes discussions about merging the universities. The new proposed committee substitute to HB 7087 sponsored by Higher Education Subcommittee Chair Randy Fine has Florida Polytechnic University and New College of Florida merging into the University of Florida.

Cummings says he has not spoken directly with UF officials on their level of interest in acquiring the two independent universities.

"I think they are in the early stages of evaluating the opportunity and we appreciate them being open-minded," he said.

The original proposal would have consolidated New College into Florida State University and folded Florida Polytechnic University into the University of Florida. Fine says he made the change to consolidate both schools with UF after discussions with UF, FSU and the University of South Florida. Fine would not say if UF has indicated it wants the schools.

Both New College and Florida Poly have been part of USF before. New College, founded as a private school, was brought into Florida's university system in 1975 as part of USF and remained until becoming independent in 2001. Florida Poly started as a satellite campus for USF before being gaining its independence in 2012.

"UF is closer than FSU to New College," he said. "Two, UF is the highest ranked and then, third, there would be more cost efficiencies if both go to one then split them up."

Cummings added the University of South Florida is also a good fit for both Florida Poly and New College from a geographical standpoint. That follows the musings of Gov. Ron DeSantis who recently wondered why USF wasn't also being considered to house New College.

Adam Freeman, USF's director of media relations would not comment on DeSantis' remarks about USF being more of a natural fit for New College because of its close geographical proximity. He also had little to say about the legislation.

"USF is aware of the bill and we'll continue to monitor its progress, however at this time it would not be appropriate for us

SEE MERGE, 5

OPINIONS



Presidential primary ballot an example of many choices we face

By Don Coble
don@opcfla.com

Do you know Roque "Rocky" De La Fuente or Bill Weld? Would you vote for Joe Walsh - even if he's not the Eagles guitarist who plays the solo from "Hotel California?"

Of course not.

All three are running against Donald Trump for the Republican Party nomination in next month's Florida Primary.

There are a lot more names on this year's sample ballot for the March 17 election than the handful of names generally trumpeted by the 24-hour news cycle.

Officially, there are 16 names on the Democrat ballot, although former Representative John Delany, New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, former San Antonio Mayor and U.S. Secretary of HUD Julian Castro, attorney and Venture for America founder Andrew Yang, former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, former Representative Joe Sestak and spiritual leader and activist Marianne Williamson all have suspended their campaigns.

We're entering a political season like we've never seen before - and one we hope we never see again. Sides are so deeply entrenched in their ideology that they've stopped trying to find middle ground. Maybe it's time we start asking the right ques-



Don Coble

tions - and demanding answers instead of soundbites. I shudder to think what kind of political climate my grandson, who will turn 7 on Saturday, faces by the time he's an adult. Maybe his generation will be the one that gets it right. The current generations certainly aren't doing a very good job of it right now.

We've been lured into too many half-truths - which really are lies - and unsubstantiated statements. Marketing companies have taken control of our campaigns. They tell you eating carrots will help you vision, swimming is dangerous after eating, eating turkey makes you sleepy, drinking alcohol warms you up and sharks can smell blood in the water. It's called "illusory truth effect," an anomaly in the human brain that associates repetition with truth. In short, tell the same lie often enough, it seems believable.

The Florida Primary ballot is a reminder we have a lot of options. It also proves we have to do our due diligence to study the candidates and not surrender to what the mainstream media tells us to think.

While there are no local primary decisions to be made, we certainly face a lot of decisions between now and November's general election. We face a wide-open race to replace Ted Yoho in District 3 in the U.S. House of Representatives. Our local state senate and house seats are open. And closer to home, nothing will be more important than electing a sheriff and school superintendent. Remember, all politics is local.

It appears we have some very capable candidates. In the next few months, we will allow them to lay out their plans for

SEE CHOICES, 5

Word OF THE WEEK

Word of the Week is a feature that aims to help readers boost their vocabulary in a meaningful way that has practical application. Each week, our editorial staff presents a word, its definition and its use in a sentence.

Laconic: (lə'känik) an adjective that means a speech or style of writing that uses very few words.

"New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick is known for giving laconic answers, usually just one or two words, during his weekly press conferences.

This week in history

Five years ago, 2015

- The North Florida Transportation Planning Organization will prepare a study to ease the travel time for county commuters, which is estimated to be the second-longest in the state with more than half driving out of the county for work.

- Clay County's child mortality rate nearly doubles compared to the number of deaths reported in 2014, according to the Florida Department of Children and Families.

- The Girl Scouts kick off World Thinking Day with a parade of international flags around Lake Asbury Junior High.

10 years ago, 2010

- The Clay County School Board agrees to hire 40 new teachers.

- An Orange Park mother, Chelle' Flakes, uses rap music to deliver her ministry.

- Thousands pack the Keystone Heights Airport for the Wings of Dreams Air Show.

20 years ago, 2000

- A 21-month-old girl, Dallas Isham, dies after she was bitten in the neck, head and chest by a dog in Middleburg.

- Orange Park Town Councilman Garry McIntyre won't face any opposition in the upcoming election for Seat 3.

- The Green Cove Springs City Council approves a plan to build a skateboard park, less than a month after the Orange Park Town Council approves its own skateboard park.

30 years ago, 1990

- The Green Cove Springs Police Department and Clay County Sheriff's Office arrest 19 adults and two children in Green

SEE HISTORY, 5

Send us a letter ...

We'd like to hear from you. Perhaps you are concerned about the county commission, the school board or your city council or commission, sit down and take a few moments to write us a letter. All we ask is that you keep it

civil, no name-calling and write no more than 600 words. All we ask is that you stick to local issues, be clear and make a point. We reserve the right to edit for AP Stylebook errors, grammar and spelling. In your email, type Letter to the Editor in your subject and send it to Managing Editor Don Coble at don@opcfla.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Opinions ...

The views and opinions expressed on this page are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Clay Today

Merge

from page 4

to comment on a bill that does not name or directly impact our university,” he wrote in response to a request for comment.

Cummings said New College is not being targeted because it’s a liberal arts school, but because of its struggles growing its enrollment. He argues it’s very costly to operate compared to other Florida universities. But Florida TaxWatch, which released a statement on the original committee bill, highlighted the fact that any cost savings are currently “indeterminate.”

Senate President Bill Galvano has thrown his support behind a consolidation plan for New College, although he has cautioned that he hasn’t made a final decision yet.

The original version of HB 7087 would have also made the Effective Access To Student Education grant program, or EASE, and Access to Better Learning and Education Grant program, or ABLE, means-tested. The new proposed committee bill removes that language.

Fine says removing the proposed requirement that EASE and ABLE programs become means-tested was a result of discussions with House and Senate members.

The language was a non-starter in the Senate.

The new proposed committee bill keeps the changes to Florida’s “Bright Futures” merit-based college scholarships. The measure rolls back the \$300 per-student stipend for textbooks to students receiving the top “Academic” scholarship.

It also expands the award for Florida Medallion Scholars. Those recipients could receive a full ride beginning in Fall 2021 if they are enrolled in an associate degree program at a Florida College System institution. As long as they earned their associate’s degree with at least a 3.5 GPA, students could then transfer the scholarship to a four-year state college. Under the state’s current system, the second-tier “Medallion” award only covers 75% of tuition.

Sarah Mueller has extensive experience covering public policy. She earned her bachelor’s degree in journalism in 2010. She began her career covering local government in Texas, Georgia and Colorado. She returned to school in 2016 to earn a master’s degree in Public Affairs Reporting. Since then, she’s worked in public radio covering state politics in Illinois, Florida and Delaware. If you’d like to contact her, send an email to sarah@floridapolitics.com.

Nominations for BEST OF CLAY awards now in full swing

Dear readers,

Last year marked our first “Readers’ Choice Awards,” or BEST OF CLAY Awards. With more than 117,000 votes and 219 winners, it was incredible for area businesses and individuals to be recognized as the best in their profession. This will again be the biggest contest for local Clay County businesses. All nominations and voting will be done online at www.claytodayonline.com.

We are gearing up to begin the 2020 “Best of Contest” and can only imagine the engagement from the Clay County community through the nomination and voting period will be bigger than we experienced last year. The annual contest is an excellent opportunity for local businesses, charities, clubs and individuals to promote their business, charity or themselves.

This year’s nominations start on Thursday, Feb. 20 at 12:01 a.m. A business only needs to be nominated one time to be entered into a specific category. Nominations will go through March 19 at 11:59 p.m. At midnight, the voting process will be opened to the community, ending on April 20 at 11:59 p.m.

Anyone can register to vote and you can

cast one vote a day for each category.

For this year, the 2020 contest businesses will again have the chance to promote on each of our digital products as well as through word of mouth, business associations, the Clay County Chamber of Commerce as well as their own social media, friends and family and employees.

Once the contest ends, Clay Today will gather winners from the special online contest and publish a very special listing of the Best of the Best of Clay County.

As your family-owned local media company since 1950 and ownership for more than a century, thank you for being a community to us. Thank you for spending part of your day with our products, for trusting us and relying on us. By a wide margin, more people today read The Clay Today and Associated Newspaper Products than ever before, and for that we are grateful. Plan now to visit our website at www.claytodayonline.com to nominate and cast your vote for the BEST OF CLAY Nominee of your choice for BEST OF CLAY contest.

Best Regards,
Jon Cantrell, Publisher, Clay Today

Choices

from page 4

making our lives better in Clay County. Let’s hope our candidates tell us why they are the best fit for Clay County, not why they’re a more-tolerable pick compare to somebody else. Elections shouldn’t be a choice between mustard or mayonnaise on a flip-flop. Our futures are too important to be force to a candidate who will do the least damage.

I believe our candidates will rise above the noise. When they do, it’s up to us to ask pertinent questions and listen to answers.

If a response starts with “With all due

respect ...” the answer will be anything but respectful. That’s politics.

We invite you to take a look at this year’s Presidential Primary sample ballot on page 15. Then start asking questions and listening for answers.

Grant

from page 2

of Clay County and Green Cove Springs, we applaud the governor and his commitment to provide help to our citizens and the regional economy.”

The Florida Job Growth Grant Fund is an economic development program designed to promote public infrastructure and workforce training across the state. Proposals are reviewed by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and Enterprise Florida, Inc., and chosen by the governor to help meet workforce or infrastructure needs in the community to which they are awarded.

Since July 2019, DEO and EFI have received 89 proposals requesting more than \$286 million in funding. The Feb. 20 announcement reflects a total of nearly \$186 million in funding awarded to 57 communities across the state since the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund was established.

In 2019-20, \$40 million in awards are available for projects that focus on rapidly developing a highly-skilled workforce and on infrastructure initiatives that attract businesses, create jobs and promote economic growth. DEO and EFI are currently accepting proposals. For more information, visit Floridajobs.org/jobgrowth.

History

from page 4

Cove Springs in a drug sting called “Rockpile IV.”

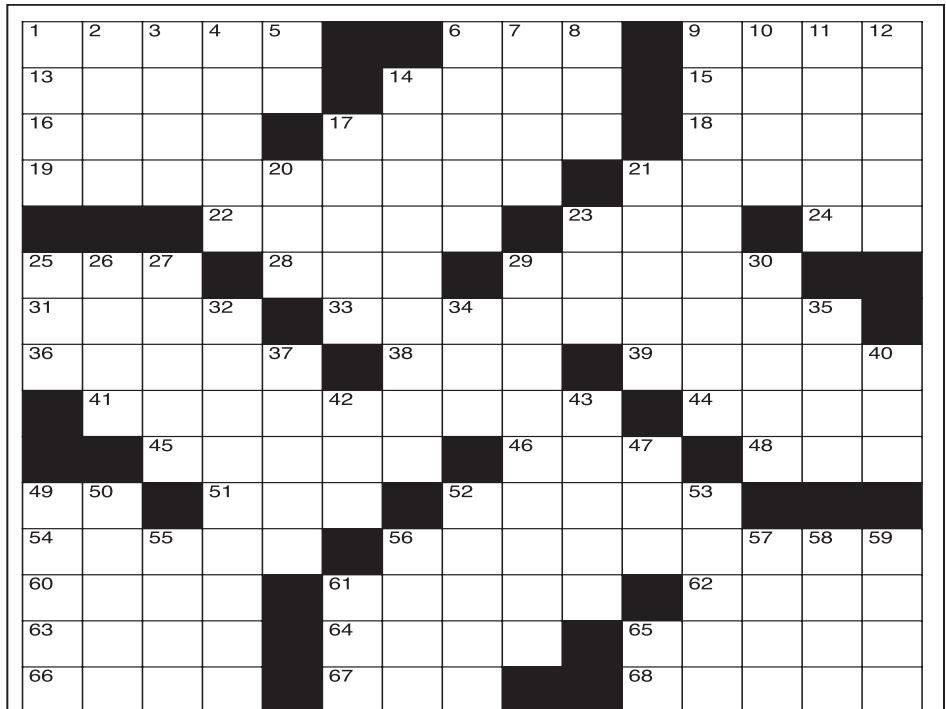
- The Department of Environmental Regulations will meet with residents who want portions of North Fork of Black Creek to be designated Outstanding Florida Waters.

40 years ago, 1980

- The county creates at task force ahead of creating the Clay County Housing Authority.

- Services are held for Margaret Imbrie, 97, one of the oldest residents at Penny Retirement Community.

- The Board of County Commissioners authorize the formation of a Government Study Commission.



CLUES ACROSS

- Indicates number of days
- When you hope to get there
- Hairstyle
- Black (Spanish)
- Expresses pleasure
- Away from wind
- Tech pros organization
- Wile E. Coyote is familiar with it
- Clean
- Saints’ signal caller
- A way to hunt
- Poetries
- Automobile
- Secondary school (abbr.)
- Indicates before
- Male parent
- Short-billed rails
- It pays to keep yours
- On occasion
- David __, US playwright
- Slang for cigarette
- Vaccine developer
- Returned to health
- Toni Morrison novel
- Period between eclipses
- Veterans battleground
- Gang
- A radio band

- Jaws of a voracious animal
- Elaborate garments
- Chinese province
- Checks
- Horizontal passage
- Steep hillsides
- Fertility god
- Dried-up
- Signs a name
- ___ Winger, actress
- German river
- Gov’t lawyers
- Take something somewhere

CLUES DOWN

- ___ Blyton, children’s author
- Colleague
- ‘The African Queen’ writer
- Crater on the moon
- Toward
- Overhang
- Identifies something close at hand
- Sign language
- Unbroken views
- Ancient Greek City
- Stretch out to grasp
- Alcohols that are unfit for drinking
- Humorous stories
- Long song for a solo

- Barrels per day (abbr.)
- City of Lights
- A place to sleep
- Advanced degree (abbr.)
- The back
- Furniture-makers Charles and ‘Ray’
- Songs to a lover
- Gland secretion
- 10 meters
- Disfigure
- Stores grain
- Sacred book of Judaism
- Catch
- Promise
- Challenges
- Russian space station
- Banking giant
- Served as an omen
- Drenches
- Type of sword
- Minor planet
- Messenger ribonucleic acid
- Japanese ankle sock
- Obtain in return for services
- Waste matter
- A proposal to buy at a specified price
- Unit of loudness

Community forges new relationships at Orange Park's Longest Table

By Wesley LeBlanc
wesley@opcfla.com

ORANGE PARK – The town showed Clay County what community is all about last Saturday at its first Longest Table event.

Hundreds of local residents lined dozens of tables for an event meant to spotlight the importance of community and neighborly connections. All of the tables were lined in such a way that at first glance, it appeared it was one extremely long table stretching from one end of Kingsley East to Astor Street. For residents and Orange Park officials, it was a sight to behold.

"This is so thrilling," Orange Park Mayor Connie Thomas said. "You've got strangers and neighbors all gathered here getting to know each other, and it's awesome to see."

Thomas hoped before the event that it would bring back the idea of community to Orange Park. She remembers parades that went down U.S. Highway 17 often and other events that brought people out of their homes. She wanted to bring back those feelings.

After seeing hundreds of residents at the Longest Table, Thomas thinks it was a success.

Thomas said it's a refreshing start of something special in Clay County. She hopes that this Longest Table is the first of many more to come.

Thomas, the town council and other town staff helped make the event happen but residents and local businesses and organizations brought it to life.

Moosehaven and the Urban Bean Coffeehouse provided the meals and local organizations like the Orange Park Women's Club were selling desserts and hot chocolate. OPWC President Jane Bromagen said she was thrilled to be a part of the event.



STAFF PHOTOS BY WESLEY LEBLANC

Hundreds of residents took a seat at Orange Park's Longest Table event last weekend. The town believed the community was strengthened by creating new neighborhood connections.

"We're all about community so to be a part of this was a no-brainer for us," Bromagen said.

The OPWC does a lot around the town. One day they brought children's books to a local laundromat for people to read and it brought activity books to Title 1 schools in the area.

Because of OPWC's work in the community, the money raised by selling desserts to residents at the Longest Table will find its way back into the local economy.



Residents shared stories and met new friends during last weekend's Longest Table. It was a chance to create new relationships that bring the community closer, Mayor Connie Thomas said.

"We strive to do a lot around here," Bromagen said.

A host as positioned at each table. Thomas said each host had questions to ask the others to strike up a conversation.

"We asked things as simple as why did you come and got some really interesting answers," table host Winnette Sandlin said.

Sandlin said one couple attended the event to reinfuse themselves within Orange Park. The couple had lived in Middle-

burg for years after moving away, but now they were ready to move back. Another at the table, a woman said she attended a Longest Table in Jacksonville and enjoyed it so much that she came to Orange Park.

"It really is a wonderful way to meet new people and hear from others in the town," Sandlin said. "You realize just how important community is and how similar we all are despite our differences."

"It's about coming together at the end of the day and I think that was absolutely achieved here tonight."



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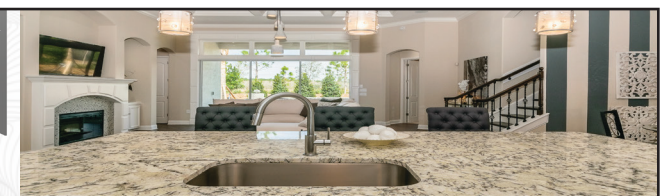
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World War II veteran stays busy as school crossing guard

At 92, Garrett says part-time job better 'than sitting at home'

By Don Coble
don@opcfla.com

OAKLEAF – It was unseasonable cold, and the wind made it even more uncomfortable as Mel Garrett backed his car into a power sub-station driveway last week on Cheswick Oak Avenue.

But children walking and riding bikes home from Argyle Elementary still got a warm welcome from the 92-year-old World War II veteran as they crossed the busy crosswalk at Spencer Plantation Boulevard.

"I tell every one of them 'Have a good day' when they go to school and 'Have a good evening' when they go home," Garrett said. "I always greet them with a hello."

The children are just as fond of him. Students prepared dozens of handwritten birthday cards for his 92nd birthday earlier this month. Other children who ride home from school often roll down their windows and wave every afternoon.

"You get to know all of them," Garrett said. "It puts a smile on my face."

Garrett enlisted in the U.S. Army when he was 17. He was sent to Japan as part of the occupation force at the end of World War II. He worked security most of his life before joining his brother-in-law, who retired on Fleming Island, in Clay County.

But he wasn't ready to quit. "I can't just sit there and watch television," he said. "You should be doing something that keeps your mind and your body active. That feeds your energy. I've always had something to do. This was something else other than sitting at home."

Garrett has worked for the Clay County Sheriff's Office for seven years. His post includes one of the busiest roadways in the Oakleaf area, and traffic soon will double when construction to extend Cheswick Road is completed.

Garrett isn't sure how many more years he will blow his whistle, stroll into traffic and help children safely cross the



Mel Garrett doesn't mind cold days. "Standing out here in the heat isn't a good choice for a 92-year-old."

road – all for \$22.26 a day. But one thing is for sure: he's going to stay busy.

"Standing out here in the heat isn't a good choice for a 92-year-old," he said. "But it gives me a couple hours a day. And I get weekends off. I believe if you keep your brain and your muscles strong, you can do anything. There are times when I think maybe it's time for someone else to do this job, then I think as long as I'm healthy, why not? Right now, I'm taking it one year at a time."

Garrett said he eventually wants to do volunteer work with his wife.

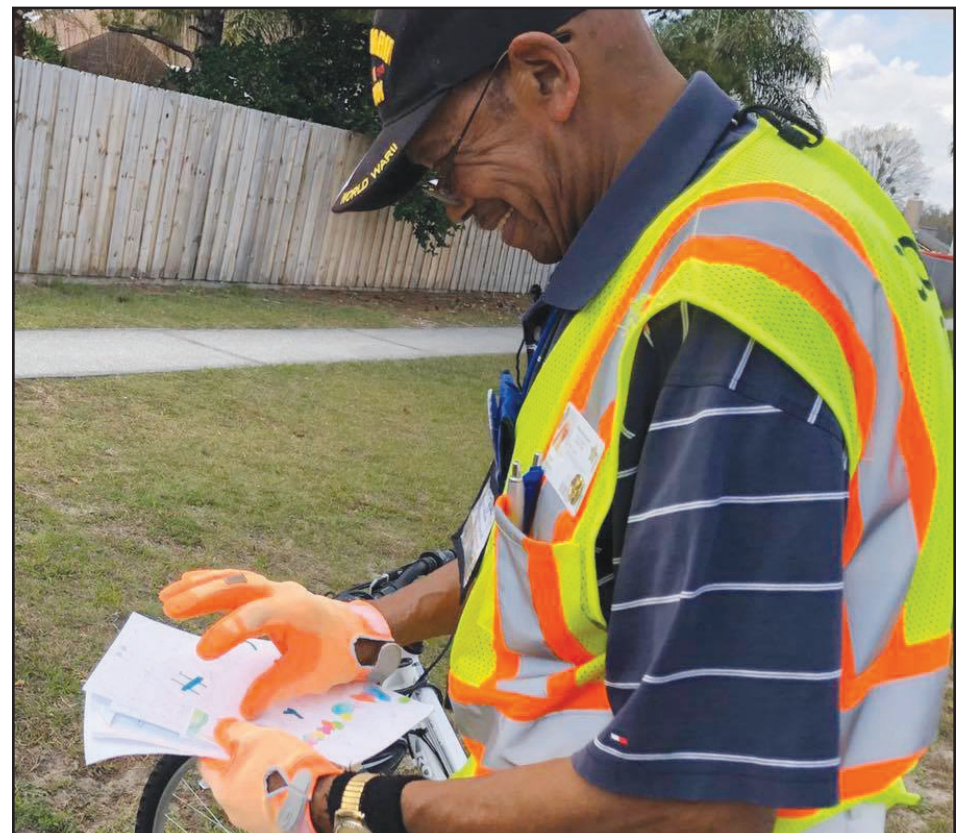
"I like to do a lot of things," he said. "Slowing down isn't one of them."

Garrett pours through dozens of handmade birthday wishes from students at Argyle Elementary.



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

Retirement isn't something 92-year-old Mel Garrett is considering. He works as a crossing guard for Argyle Elementary along Cheswick Oaks Boulevard.



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Obituaries

Jere Ben Thomas

Jere Ben Thomas, 88 of Green Cove Springs, FL, passed away February 12, 2020. Visitation was Sunday, February 16, 11 AM - 2 PM at Rudder Funeral Home in Stevenson. The Funeral Service began at 2 PM in the funeral home chapel. Interment and Military Honors will be in Stevenson City Cemetery.

Jere Ben was the son of Walter Russell and Bennie Lee Riddle Thomas born July 14, 1931 in Richard City, TN. He was a Stevenson High School Graduate Class of 1949. Jere Ben was U.S. Marine Corps Korean War Veteran having fought in the Chosin Reservoir Campaign in 1950. He was a member of Bolivar Masonic Lodge, VFW, Elks Club in Green Cove Springs and Shriners in Tampa.

Mr. Thomas was preceded in death by his parents; stepmother, Ruby Troxell Thomas and brother, John Walter Riddle Thomas.

Survivors include his brother, Charles Wendell (Carolyn) Thomas of Stevenson; sister-in-law, Beth Thomas and nephew, David Thomas both of Richmond, VA and special friend, Tom Bradford of FL.



Jere Ben Thomas

Goldie Mae Brown (Sawyer)

Goldie Mae Brown (Sawyer), 90, passed away on February 21, 2020, surrounded by her loving family.

Goldie was born on March 12, 1929, in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina and was the oldest of eleven children to the late Pluman Elmer Sawyer and Lovie Ellen Beasley.

She was a consummate homemaker in every way and a loving and caring wife and mother.

She is predeceased by her husband of almost 63 years, John Gerald Brown, Sr. She is survived by their three sons, John Gerald Brown, Jr., Kenneth Paul Brown and Thomas Edward Brown, their daughter, Sandra Gayle Kuhn, 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

The family will have visitation services on Saturday, February 29, 2020, from 9-10 a.m. at Jacksonville Memory Gardens Funeral Home.

Funeral services are scheduled immediately afterwards on Saturday, February 29, 2020 at 10 a.m. at the same location, 111 Blanding Blvd., Orange Park. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Goldie's name to the Alzheimer's Association.

Please sign the online guestbook at www.jacksonvillememorygardens.com

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Willard Daniel Mask, Jr.

Willard Daniel Mask, Jr., 79, of Jacksonville, FL, passed away Feb. 22, 2020

Broadus-Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL (904) 284-4000. www.broadusraines.com



Leonard Royce Bell

Leonard Royce Bell, 83 of Middleburg, FL passed away February 19, 2020.

Russell Haven of Rest Cemetery, Funeral Home and Cremation Center, 2335 Sandridge Road, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. 904-284-7720. www.RHRFH.com



Verna Riley

Verna Riley, Age 89, passed away peacefully on Sunday, February 23 due to heart complications.

Verna is survived by her son Patrick, and daughter Pamela, six grandsons, and five sisters. "Mom" was a Naval Officer's wife, a strong mother and family leader. She enjoyed her career and volunteering for numerous organizations.

She will be fondly remembered, and dearly missed. Verna was preceded in death by her loving husband, Kenneth. We are grateful she is finally at eternal peace and has no more struggles or concerns.

There will be a memorial service on March 14, at 10:00am at St. Giles Presbyterian Church in Orange Park. Following the service there will be a gathering for sharing and refreshments at the church. We humbly welcome all who knew and cared for Verna to come share with us.

Donald Ray Kelley

Donald Ray Kelley, 70 of Middleburg, FL passed away February 18, 2020.

Russell Haven of Rest Cemetery, Funeral Home and Cremation Center, 2335 Sandridge Road, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. 904-284-7720. www.RHRFH.com



Debra Lindsay Raines

Debra Lindsay Raines, 61 of Jacksonville, FL passed away February 24, 2020

Russell Haven of Rest Cemetery, Funeral Home and Cremation Center, 2335 Sandridge Road, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. 904-284-7720. www.RHRFH.com



Community Calendar

JACOBS BROTHERS: will perform on Feb. 29 at Advent Lutheran Church, 2156 Loch Rane Blvd., Orange Park, at 6 p.m. The Jacob Brothers have been singing gospel music since 1962.

ORANGE PARK WOMEN'S CLUB THRIFT SHOP: is open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on Feb. 29, at 130 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park.

FARMERS AND ARTS MARKET: is March 1 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Orange Park Town Hall, 2042 Park Ave.

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL: will meet March 2 at 6 p.m. at City Hall, 555 S. Lawrence St.

ORANGE PARK WOMEN'S CLUB THRIFT SHOP: is open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on March 2, at 130 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park.

HEALTH CARE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS: is March 3 at the North Florida Community Action Agency, 1543 Kingsley Ave., Suite 10, Orange Park. Veterans are served on a walk-in basis from 10 a.m.-noon.

ORANGE PARK TOWN COUNCIL: will meet on March 3 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 2042 Park Ave.

CLAY COUNTY FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE: will meet March 3 at 3 p.m. at the Board of County Commissioners meeting room, fourth floor, 477 Houston St., Green Cove Springs.

GREEN COVE SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL: will meet on March 3 at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 321 Walnut St., Green Cove Springs.

CLAY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION: will be March 3 at 7 p.m. at the Board of County Commissioners meeting room, fourth floor, 477 Houston St., Green Cove Springs.

CLAY COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: will meet on March 5 at 6 p.m. at the Teacher Inservice Center at Fleming Island High, 2233 Village Square Pkwy.

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT: will meet March 5 at the Board of County Commissioners meeting room, fourth floor, 477 Houston St., Green Cove Springs.

GARDEN CLUB OF MIDDLEBURG: will meet March 6 at 2239 Blanding Blvd. at 9:30 a.m. to involve, share and engage fellow gardeners. Meetings include educational programs, plant sales, field trips and community involvement. For more information, contact (904) 252-7818.

SEE CALENDAR, 23

Karen Kennedy Casey

Karen Kennedy Casey, 67 of Orange Park, FL passed away February 21, 2020.

Russell Haven of Rest Cemetery, Funeral Home and Cremation Center, 2335 Sandridge Road, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. 904-284-7720. www.RHRFH.com



Nalani Lynn Kerns

Nalani Lynn Kerns, 70, of Middleburg, FL, passed away February 19, 2020.

Broadus-Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL (904) 284-4000. www.broadusraines.com



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BCC puts temporary brakes on plans for Fleming Island apartment complex

Chairman Gayward Hendry also announces he won't seek re-election next year

By Wesley LeBlanc
wesley@opcfia.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Plans for a new apartment complex were delayed by 30 days for further discussion after a 5-0 vote by county commissioners.

Fleming Island Business Park III, LLC, owner Jerry Agrestie requested a change in zoning from Planned Unit Development to a different PUD categorization in order to build a new apartment complex on Radar Road. The development, if approved, will be built on the corner of Radar Road and U.S. Highway 17 on Fleming Island, and it will bring 180 multi-family units to the area.

"The applicant is requesting a change in zoning from PUD to PUD in order to provide a site plan and standards for the development of 180 multi-family units on

approximately 11.36 acres located within the Planned Community future land use," the application reads.

The complex will include a clubhouse, a pool area and a dog park, and it will consist of single-story living units as well as multi-story units reaching as high as four stories. Residents packed Tuesday night's meeting to express their concerns about traffic flow.

Residents generally were in favor of the apartment complex, but they weren't happy with the handling of the apartment's impact on traffic. The apartment be across the street from Grace Anglican Church. Residents said pulling out onto U.S. 7 is already difficult enough with the church's congregation.

"What are you doing to do with another 180 families trying to pull out onto 17?" one resident asked.

Another resident said it's not a matter of annoyance any longer and that instead, it's a matter of safety.



STAFF PHOTO BY WESLEY LEBLANC

Residents voiced concerns about additional traffic at Radar Road at U.S. Highway 17 if construction for a new 180-unit apartment complex is approved.

"This has grown to be beyond obnoxious and intrusive to the neighborhoods. It's a matter of safety now."

The owner of the property, Agrestie, said this project has been a long time coming. Agrestie bought the property in 2008 with plans to create a business park. He built a business park in a different area that brought 300 jobs to Clay County, according to Agrestie.

Agrestie said he's been searching for alternative uses for the property and he decided the area has a critical need for additional housing. Baptist Health is building a new hospital on Fleming Island, and that's expected to bring 700 jobs.

The BCC voted to delay the project by 30 days to allow for additional discussion.

"A delay isn't impossible, but it does put a crimp in the wheels to just stop it over traffic that we've paid a great deal to mitigate already," Agrestie said, referring to the traffic studies already completed for the project.

In other business, the BCC voted unanimously against a plan for a new development in the Lake Asbury area with a high density. The development is still possible, but it won't feature the changes proposed at Tuesday's meeting. The density proposed would have included several apartments on a single acre.

Residents from the Lake Asbury area voiced their disdain for the proposed project citing too high of a density, and the removal of too much natural land. The BCC reached a compromise by giving the developer time to rework his plan.

And the bond project to improve county roads was finally approved Tuesday night. The bond transaction will be finalized on March 26 which would allow for immediate construction.

BCC Chairman Gayward Hendry then closed the meeting out by announcing that he does not intend to run for re-election this year.



PHOTOS BY AMY MORIE

Back Country Horsemen give Bayard Conservation spring cleaning

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The Back Country Horsemen First Coast recently spent an afternoon sprucing up the Bayard Conservation Area. The area is owned by the by St. Johns River Water Management District. The effort was organized by Heather Vantor and it included painting fences and clearing debris.



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Tynes Blvd. opening will give relief to 20,000 motorists

By Wesley LeBlanc
wesley@opcfla.com

OAKLEAF – Tynes Boulevard is officially open.

The Board of County Commissioners worked with East West Partners to create the roadway that connected Eagle Landing at Oakleaf Plantation with the First Coast Expressway that was formally opened Feb. 24. The BCC held an opening ceremony but cars drove on the road during the event because the road was already open.

“On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, I declare Tynes Boulevard officially open,” said commissioner Wayne Bolla, whose district includes Oakleaf.

Bolla said the boulevard project marks a positive relationship between the public sector, which is the BCC in this instance, and the private sector, which is East West Partners. It’s how work should get done in Clay County, Bolla said, joking about how long government projects can often take.

The project originally came with a \$10 million price tag but East West Partners Florida Division President Roger Arrowsmith said it was done with \$8.5 million. Arrowsmith said there’s still plenty of work to be done to spruce up the surrounding

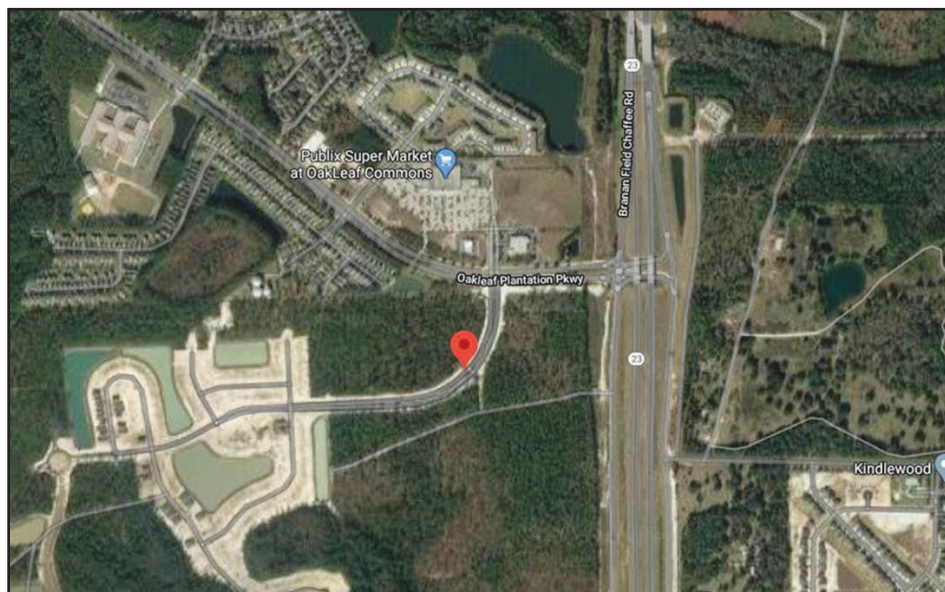
areas.

There are already residential areas with housing but Arrowsmith said an assisted living facility, 500 apartments, a shopping center and more are on the way. Once the First Coast Expressway is open, the boulevard will give drivers in the area an easy entrance to the connection.

Bolla explained the project had been a long time coming. It was first brought to Arrowsmith by former County Manager Stephanie Kopelousos and is made up of features Bolla is excited for drivers to experience: namely, the roundabout.

Bolla has long been in favor of roundabouts where possible instead of red lights but is often in the minority when discussions of this road feature are brought up in BCC meetings. The boulevard features not only the roundabout but two lanes with curbs and gutters in the residential areas and an additional two lanes for the commercial area. The entirety of Tynes Boulevard was designed to handle 20,000 vehicles a day.

When you drive into Oakleaf Plantation, Tynes Boulevard can be reached by turning left at the first light of the area. It’s right before the Oakleaf Commons Publix and



The county provided a map of Tynes Boulevard and how it connects Eagle Landing at Oakleaf Plantation with the First Coast Expressway. East West Partners President Roger Arrowsmith, below, speaks at Feb. 24 grand opening.



SEE TYNES, 11

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Ocean Pyramid LEGO team show how education, academia have changed

By **Bruce Hope**
bruce@opcfla.com

ORANGE PARK – The FIRST LEGO League junior team No. 11157 Ocean Pyramid Master Builders embodies how much education and academia have changed.

The team made up of first through third-grade boys and girls from Orange Park are learning and working to make their mark. The Ocean Pyramid Master Builders is a team of six home-schooled children. Members of the team are Matthew Oswald, 6, Kender Sikora, 8, Aden Marbut, 7, Reagan Singletary, 7, Eliana Tinoco, 7, Ema Cauvel, 7, Eva Cuavel, 9, and Ethan Marbut, 6.

Each year the FLL has a theme. This year's theme is "Boomtown Build." The students who participate work to create, via LEGO and robotics, a "safe, healthy and happy community" that demonstrates their view of First City.

The OPMB team's build is a motorized LEGO build of a floating hotel and pet sanctuary. The team met weekly to work on their build, during which time they received instruction in basic computer programming coding and learning about structural engineering, design and architecture. The build turned out to be a great success, securing the team a spot in the upcoming world competition in Texas from April 15-18.

Of the team, only six are authorized to present at competition, although all members played significant roles in the development of the project. Reagan, Aden, Ema, Eva and Eliana will travel to Houston.

"These kids have worked for about three months putting this project together," said Charlotte Singletary, coach of OPMB and mother of Reagan Singletary. "They're just excited to share their enthusiasm and pas-



From left, Matthew Oswald, Kender Sikora, Aden Marbut, Reagan Singletary and Eliana Tinoco are some of the members of the Ocean Pyramid Master Builders team.

Tynes

from page 10

because of how new it is, it is one of the smoothest roads in the county.

Tynes Boulevard is the first of many road projects to be completed in Clay County. The BCC has approved a massive transportation project that will see five roads transformed and a new road built to connect drivers on U.S. Highway 17 to

a new First Coast Expressway connection near County Road 315.

The BCC voted Tuesday night to approve this project and work will begin in the coming months. Because the project is being funded by bonds, all phases of the projects must be completed within five years so residents around the county won't have to wait long to experience new roads like those in Oakleaf are currently experiencing on Tynes Boulevard.

sion for science and STEM and engineering and programming. A lot of them just hope to continue and grow up to be programmers and architects and scientists. This is a great steppingstone for that next level."

"I think it's great that [FIRST LEGO] is introducing young kids to STEM and to coding," said Virginia Marbut, mother of team member Aden. "These are all skills that we are going to need in our future and I'm really excited for the kids to go to worlds and experience different teams from other cultures and pick their brains about what

their builds are and what they've done." "My daughter has gained so much confidence with science, technology and engineering," said Katie Sikora, Kender's mother. "She's learned a lot of physics which I don't think would have ordinarily been available for her. She's gained a lot of confidence in her area of science that she loves so much. I think it's just a really cool opportunity."

The team has had great support from

SEE LEGO, 12

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Clay schools rack up \$27,000 debt in unpaid lunches

Groups look for options since hungry children struggle to succeed in classroom

By Bruce Hope
bruce@opcfla.com

CLAY COUNTY – Hungry students have a more difficult time learning.

Some buy lunch; others bring it with them. Some students can receive free lunch by virtue of financial need; others get lunch at a reduced rate.

Regardless, as of Feb. 24, Clay County schools currently has a \$27,000 debt in unpaid meals.

Until students pay off their balances, many will continue to grow hungry.

When students don't pay for their lunches, their account goes into arrears. Students can only go \$10 in the red, and once the limit is reached, a student may no longer get an entree in the lunch line.

They then have the option of either a turkey and cheese or ham and cheese sandwich.

Some schools have supplemental accounts that allow a student to get additional lunch funds.

"When parents make a payment, the payment is first applied to the negative balance. The remaining amount is credited to the account. Negative balances not paid are taken as a loss by the Food and Nutrition Services Department. Anyone in the community can donate to our Food and



Nutrition Services Department. Individuals interested in donating can contact the school's cafeteria manager or the Director of Food and Nutrition Services," said Nicole Young of Clay County District schools.

"We are a federal program, so all of our revenues and expenditures are in a federal food service account," said Glover. "We

don't use any money from the general fund, so from an overall district standpoint, it really doesn't adversely impact the district. But I do have a budget I'm responsible for, so I don't like to see any negatives, but feeding children is important and allowing them to go into the negative is something we've allowed for quite some time.

"We have 36,000-37,000 children enrolled in Clay County, so we are going to see students that forget money. If we allow them to go into the negative, then we are going to have to expect to have a negative impact in regards to that negative outstanding balance."

Glover says that there are donors who help, especially at Christmas time. According to her, some may randomly select 10 children and clear their balances; others may select an entire school and wipe the slate clean.

"Recently, last year, Elevate Life Church gave us a couple of different contributions, so we were able to clear negative balances at several schools, which is obviously very helpful," Glover said.

Glover doesn't solicit donors to pay down or pay off lunch debt, but contributions are appreciated. The key, she says, is that parents are aware of this situation and when possible, taking the responsibility for paying down their children's deficit.

Davis requests \$3.4 million from state for staff allocation

By Wesley LeBlanc
wesley@opcfla.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Superintendent Addison Davis's final school board workshop, which is also his last public meeting at the district, included a \$3.4 million staff allocation request.

The uncertainty in the Florida legislature might prevent the allocation from happening in full. Davis and his staff must determine staff allocation each year based on a number of variables like school capacity and classroom size. This year's allocation asks for dozens of new staff members in areas like instructional, ESE support and counseling.

"In this book is every allocation for every school that's proposed as we always do," Davis said. "It provides a two-year analysis to show you the plus and the deltas, the overall impact based on enrollment. In addition, you'll have documents... that give you an entire snapshot of instructional support and administrative requirements outlined by our current models and

allocation plans."

This new staff allocation plan follows staff models that the district has used each year, Davis said. Elementary allocation includes a removal of four instructional teachers and the addition of 8.8 ESE teachers, 9.9 ESE support staff, two counselors, two medical tech staff members and three assistant principal positions. This part of the plan carries a financial impact of \$982,229. The junior high allocation would see the district add four instructional teachers, four ESE teachers, .9 support staff and 10.8 ESE support staff members to the educational ranks. This carries a cost of \$775,616 to the district.

The high school allocation includes an additional 7.4 instructional teachers, four ESE teachers, .9 support staff members, 1.8 ESE support staff members and two counselors. The financial impact for high school would be \$907,670.

The grand total of these three sections of the allocation plan come out to \$2,665,515 and that's to cover an expected 658 additional students for next school

year. The district office has an allocation plan as well and its financial impact is \$769,328, bringing the total school staff allocation cost to \$3,434,843.

While the district would love for this to be a reality, Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs Susan Legutko said uncertainty in the Florida legislature might prevent that from happening.

"The uncertainty of the legislature has us not really sure what's going to happen," Legutko said. "At this point, it's very hard to predict what our budget could be. In the past, we were able to do that but now there's a new wrench they've placed in there with the teacher increases. Based on that as well as the reduction of some of our categoricals as well as (other budget funds)...so we don't know if this is an impact we can afford."

If it's not affordable, the district essentially just handles what they can – it can't spend money they don't have, Davis said. Only time will tell as the Florida legislature determines what educational spending looks like across the state.

Lego

from page 11

local contributors, including Renaissance Jax and Shiva Robotics.

Before going to the world competition, OPMB will have a private meeting with Orange Park Mayor Connie Thomas on Friday, where they will demonstrate and explain their project. Following the meeting, the team will attend the regional championship on Saturday which will be the largest robotics tournament in Florida history with more than 150 teams.

The parents aren't the only ones excited about the upcoming trip to Texas.

"First, I'm also going to visit my grandpa," said Aden Marbut. "Also, I really want to see if we can make the build more durable, accessible and any one of our missions, I guess."

Excitement is at a high not only for the trip, but for continuing STEM education for the team and the parents of the team members. Some say their daughters are empowered by the knowledge they are gaining and seeing a cool new world of opportunities available for girls. STEM is the future; the OPMB team is exploring that future and it looks bright.

With each successive generation, the focus on specific academic disciplines

shifts to whatever is most important for that time in history and whatever is most applicable to society.

Right now, the focus is on science, technology, engineering and math. In an era of technology and its continuous advancement, there is no greater and arguably no more important academic focus in history. Just about everything we do and how we interact in the modern developed world is dependent on STEM. As the future becomes the present and invariably, the present again gives way to the future, the STEM disciplines become more and more important.

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Broskie

from page 1

Broskie will remain in office until the November general election.

Davis applauded DeSantis' pick during Tuesday's school board workshop.

"I'm really proud of the governor yesterday to make the right decision to put a qualified educator into the interim position," Davis said. "David Broskie brings over 30 years of experience and he's going to do a great job in the school district. He works tirelessly every single day on behalf of children so this is a win for the school district and the children in it."

Davis submitted his resignation to the governor, saying:

"Over the last three years as Superintendent of Clay County District Schools, we have made monumental growth in the areas of student performance, climate and culture, safety and security, school choice programs, graduation rate, career and technical education, equity of curriculum offerings, school-based supports, technology accessibility, and fiscal responsibility (including our reserve balance and district credit rating)."

He also said working in Clay County "has been a great honor, and my decision to pursue the Superintendent of Hillsborough County Schools was not made lightly."

Former superintendent Charlie Van



From left; Sheryl Timm with Vystar Credit Union, School Board member Carol Studard, Fleming Island student Brad White and David Broskie at the Feb. 13 Clay Rotary Science & Engineering Fair.

Zant and teachers Aaron Smith and Melanie Walls have filed as candidates to replace Davis. As Republicans, all will face each other in an August primary.

Staff writer Wesley LeBlanc contributed to this story.

March 3 - 8, 2020

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Residents yell ‘Hoodie-Hoo!’ to usher earlier start to spring

By Bruce Hope
bruce@opclt.com

ORANGE PARK – Hoodie-Hoo!

That’s what staff and residents of Signature Healthcare shouted over and over while waving their hands in the air last Thursday.

There are two questions to go along with that cry: what is Hoodie-Hoo and why were they yelling it?

Most people aren’t aware Feb. 20 is Northern Hemisphere Hoodie-Hoo Day.

And what exactly does that mean?

Hoodie-Hoo Day is celebrated to help people to overcome the winter blahs and welcome springtime.

Thomas Roy, creator of more than 80 holidays, created and copyrighted Hoodie-Hoo day during the 1980s. Those who know of it celebrate and participate in hopes of calling for an early spring.

Barbara Nicholls, Activities Director at Signature Health Care, is a believer in Hoodie-Hoo Day.

“I love our residents here and want them to have as much fun daily as possible,” she said.



STAFF PHOTO BY BRUCE HOPE

Residents and staff at Signature Health Care yell “hoodie-hoo!” to call for an early end of winter and a quick start to springtime.

Nicholls gathered many of her residents and some of the staff outside to participate in the “ceremony.”

At exactly noon, the group pushed their hands into the air, shook them vigorously and sounded off with “Hoodie-Hoo!” multiple times.

Whether or not Hoodie-Hoo day was successful in shaking off the winter blues and bringing spring along more quickly is left to be seen.

SJCDS’s Hodges wins Rotary Oratory competition, \$5,000 scholarship

For Clay Today

JACKSONVILLE – St. Johns Country Day School senior Sheila Hodges won this year’s Rotary Oratory competition, along with a \$5,000 scholarship.

Hodges, the daughter of Lawsikia Hodges of Orange Park, won the competition last week against four other area finalists. Hodges was representing the Rotary Club of Orange Park.

This year’s speech topic was to “select a person in history (deceased and not related to you) who, by their achievements, would be an ideal person to improve life today, utilizing their talents, skills and today’s advancements to “connect the world.” Finalists were asked to support their decision by historic reports, opinions by cultural experts and documentation you can deliver verbally.


Hodges won with her speech about Fred Rogers, discussing how he is the best person to help better connect the world as evidenced by his many years of encour-




Sheila Hodges

aging all to be good neighbors on his hit television program, “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood.”

PET ADOPTIONS



Amaya
Amaya is a beautiful 2 and a half year old shepherd mix dog who is full of love and affection. She just started heartworm treatment which is being sponsored by Safe Animal Shelter. Amaya is yearning for a home where she can recover and eventually become their forever gal! She loves lounging on the bed and going for leash walks in her temporary foster home. She needs someone who is willing to cuddle with her and take her for long leash walks until her treatment is completed and she can run free and play fetch with her furrever family.



Harry Potter
Hello, my name is Harry Potter. I am a 1 year old and I have the most adorable bob tale. I can be a little shy at the beginning, so I am dreaming of someone that has the patience to bring me out of my shell, just like my feline friend East (yes, I managed to make a very good friend here at Safe Animal Shelter). I will not disappoint you! I am very friendly and loving with the people I know.

Safe Animal Shelter | 2913 County Road 220 Middleburg | 904-276-7233
Wednesday-Sunday 12pm-5pm | www.safeanimalshelter.com

2020 Presidential Preference Primary

March 17, 2020

Early Voting March 6 – March 14, 2020 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Daily

For more election related information visit ClayElections.gov

<p align="center">Official Presidential Preference Primary Ballot March 17, 2020 Republican Party Clay County, Florida</p> <p align="center">Boleta Oficial de Preferencia Presidencial Primaria 17 de marzo, 2020 Partido Republicano Condado de Clay, Florida</p>	<p align="center">Official Presidential Preference Primary Ballot March 17, 2020 Democratic Party Clay County, Florida</p> <p align="center">Boleta Oficial de Preferencia Presidencial Primaria 17 de marzo, 2020 Partido Democrático Condado de Clay, Florida</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions: To vote, fill in the oval completely (●) next to your choice. Use only the marker provided or a black or blue pen. • If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot. Do not cross out or your vote may not count. • Instrucciones: Para votar, llene completamente el óvalo (●) al lado de su selección. Use bolígrafo de tinta negra o azul. • Si comete un error, pida una nueva boleta. No lo taches, o su voto no contara. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions: To vote, fill in the oval completely (●) next to your choice. Use only the marker provided or a black or blue pen. • If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot. Do not cross out or your vote may not count. • Instrucciones: Para votar, llene completamente el óvalo (●) al lado de su selección. Use bolígrafo de tinta negra o azul. • Si comete un error, pida una nueva boleta. No lo taches, o su voto no contara.
<p>President of the United States (Vote for 1)</p> <p>Presidente de los Estados Unidos (Vote por 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Roque "Rocky" De La Fuente <input type="radio"/> Donald J. Trump <input type="radio"/> Joe Walsh <input type="radio"/> Bill Weld 	<p>President of the United States (Vote for 1)</p> <p>Presidente de los Estados Unidos (Vote por 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Michael Bennet <input type="radio"/> Joe Biden <input type="radio"/> Michael R. Bloomberg <input type="radio"/> Cory Booker <input type="radio"/> Pete Buttigieg <input type="radio"/> Julián Castro <input type="radio"/> John Delaney <input type="radio"/> Tulsi Gabbard <input type="radio"/> Amy Klobuchar <input type="radio"/> Deval Patrick <input type="radio"/> Bernie Sanders <input type="radio"/> Joe Sestak <input type="radio"/> Tom Steyer <input type="radio"/> Elizabeth Warren <input type="radio"/> Marianne Williamson <input type="radio"/> Andrew Yang
<p align="center">LEGAL NOTICE / PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE CANVASSING BOARD EVENTS</p> <p>Notice is hereby given that all meetings for the Presidential Preference Primary Canvassing Board will be held at the Supervisor of Elections Office, 500 N. Orange Ave., Green Cove Springs on the following dates at the scheduled time or as soon as possible thereafter.</p> <p>February 29, 2020 9:00 a.m. Orientation & Logic and Accuracy Test March 5, 2020 9:00 a.m. Public Inspection of Mail Ballots & Opening of Mail Ballots (Batch 1) March 9, 2020 9:30 a.m. Process and Duplication of Mail Ballots (Batch 1) and Signature Differences March 13, 2020 9:00 a.m. Opening of Mail Ballots & UOCAVA Ballots (Batch 2) March 14, 2020 8:30 a.m. Process and Duplicate: Mail & UOCAVA Ballots (Batch2) and Signature Differences</p> <p>March 17, 2020 11:00 a.m. Opening of Mail Ballots & UOCAVA Ballots (Batch 3 & 4) 2:00 p.m. Process and Duplicate: Mail & UOCAVA Ballots (Batch 3) 7:00 p.m. Canvass of Election Returns (includes Cured Provisionals) March 19, 2020 5:00 p.m. Canvass Provisional Ballots, Unofficial March 27, 2020 5:00 p.m. Canvass Overseas Ballots, Official Certification & Conduct of Election, Audit Selection March 28, 2020 1:00 p.m. Mandatory Audit</p> <p>In accordance with the Sunshine Law of Florida, this meeting is open to the public. Note: Section 286.01105, Florida Statutes, states that if a person decides to appeal any decision by the board, agency, or commission with respect to any matter considered at a meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purposes, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.</p> <hr/> <p align="center">AVISO LEGAL / AVISO DE REUNIÓN PÚBLICA EVENTOS DE LA JUNTA CANVASSING</p> <p>Se da aviso que todas las reuniones de la Junta de Escrutinio Primario de Preferencia Presidencial se llevarán a cabo en la Oficina del Supervisor de Elecciones, 500 N. Orange Ave., Green Cove Springs en las siguientes fechas a la hora programada o tan pronto como sea posible después de eso.</p> <p>29 de febrero de 2020 9:00 a.m. Orientación y prueba de lógica y precisión 5 de marzo de 2020 9:00 a.m. Inspección pública de boletas de correo y apertura de boletas de correo (lote 1) 9 de marzo de 2020 9:30 a.m. Proceso y duplicación de boletas de correo (lote 1) y diferencias de firma 13 de marzo de 2020 9:00 a.m. Apertura de boletas por correo y boletas de UOCAVA (Lote 2) 14 de marzo de 2020 8:30 a.m. Proceso y duplicado: correo y boletas de UOCAVA (Lote2) y diferencias de firma</p> <p>17 de marzo de 2020 11:00 a.m. Apertura de boletas por correo y boletas de UOCAVA (Lote 3 y 4) 2:00 pm. Proceso y duplicado: boletas de correo y UOCAVA (lote 3) 7:00 pm. Lienzos de devoluciones electorales (incluye provisionales curados) 19 de marzo de 2020 5:00 p.m. Boletas electorales provisionales, no oficiales 27 de marzo de 2020 5:00 p.m. Boletas electorales en el extranjero, certificación oficial y conducta de elección, selección de auditoría 28 de marzo de 2020 1:00 p.m. Auditoría obligatoria</p> <p>De acuerdo con la Ley Sunshine de Florida, esta reunión está abierta al público. Nota: La Sección 286.01105, Estatutos de la Florida, establece que si una persona decide apelar cualquier decisión de la junta, agencia o comisión con respecto a cualquier asunto considerado en una reunión o audiencia, necesitará un registro de los procedimientos, y que, para tales fines, él o ella puede necesitar asegurarse de que se haga un registro literal de los procedimientos, el cual incluye el testimonio y la evidencia sobre los cuales se basará la apelación.</p>	<p>Some party candidates for president have reportedly suspended or ended their presidential campaigns. If a candidate does not submit a formal withdrawal by December 9, 2019 in accordance with section 103.101(3), Fla. Stat., the candidate's name must remain on the Presidential Preference Primary (PPP) ballot for his or her respective party. A vote cast for any candidate appearing on the ballot will count as a vote for that candidate.</p> <p>Se ha reportado que algunos candidatos habrían suspendido o terminado sus campañas presidenciales. Sin embargo, si un candidato no ha presentado un retiro formal para el 9 de diciembre de 2019, de acuerdo con la sección 103.101(3) de los Estatutos de Florida, su nombre debe permanecer en las papeletas de la Primaria de Preferencia Presidencial (PPP) para su partido respectivo. Un voto emitido para cualquier candidato en la papeleta será contado como un voto para ese candidato.</p>

North Florida Land Trust celebrates 20th birthday

Group responsible for preserving 1,040 acres in Clay in last three months

For Clay Today

JACKSONVILLE – The North Florida Land Trust celebrated its 20 years in operation with a special celebration last week at the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens.

Andrew Bowman, president of the Land Trust Alliance, was the guest speaker for the event and NFLT President Jim McCarthy delivered the nonprofit's annual report. One of the things he highlighted was the milestone achieved this year; more than 20,000 acres of land preserved in north Florida.

"I am very proud of our team who worked hard to reach the major milestone of preserving 24,804 acres of land and am thankful for the great partnerships they helped forge that will lead us into another year of successful land conservation," said Jim McCarthy, president of NFLT. "The work we do every year sets the stage for future partnerships and acquisitions. We are thankful for the support we receive from the community including our volunteers and donors. We would not be able to do what we do without them."

Conservation within the Osceola to Ocala (O2O) wildlife corridor was one of the organization's main missions in 2019 and they will continue to focus on conservation within the O2O. NFLT is leading the partnership, comprised of federal and state agencies and other nonprofits, to preserve land in the 1.6 million-acre network of public and private lands that connect the Ocala and Osceola National Forests. The O2O project was awarded a grant in 2019 from the Landscape Conservation Catalyst

Fund which will directly support the O2O partnership. NFLT was the only applicant in Florida and one of 14 out of 250 chosen to receive the grant.

In 2019, NFLT preserved 482 acres within the O2O in Clay County and helped preserve 3,694 acres of land in Putnam County, called Wetland Preserve, through the Florida Forever program. The Wetland Preserve conservation easement closed in early 2020 which brings NFLT to more than 11,100 acres of land they have helped conserve within the critical wildlife corridor and a grand total of more than 12,600 that the O2O partnership has preserved.

The O2O provides important habitat for the Florida Black Bear and numerous endangered species including the red-cockaded woodpecker, indigo snake and gopher tortoises. They received proof last year that the preservation within the O2O is working when a red-cockaded wood-



From left, Andrew Bowman, artist Abby Howard Murphy and NFLT Land Protection Director Marc Hudson celebrate the organization's 20th birthday.

pecker that had been banded for research purposes was found at Camp Blanding in Clay County. It was the first time the en-

dangered species had moved between one of the national forests and the military installation since they began banding and recording the birds over 25 years ago.

"Congratulations to North Florida Land Trust for the last 20 years and I look forward to all that will happen in the next 20," said Bowman. "Land is the answer for building resiliency to climate change. Between now and 2030, 21 percent of U.S. carbon emissions can be offset by how we manage land. Our mission is to find resources and it is going to take everyone to help make our future success possible."

NFLT also entered into partnerships with the Sustainable Water Investment Group and with Groundwork Jacksonville. SWIG is leading the Doctors Lake Phosphorus Removal Pilot Project to reduce the phosphorus discharge from the Fleming Island Regional Wastewater Plant using state-of-the-art technology. NFLT is also assisting Groundwork Jacksonville to identify, acquire and rehabilitate parcels of land for conservation within the urban core of Jacksonville.

At the annual meeting, NFLT also recognized a number of people including new members of the McQuilkin Society, which honors major donors to the land conservation organization and was named for NFLT Founder Bill McQuilkin. Recognized at the meeting for their major donations were Kathi Chalk, Andrus and Natalie Healy, Bob and Cynthia Kastner, Connie and Ken McDaniel, Chuck and Diane Newman Sally and Tony Perez, Matthew Rapp, Sandra and Richey Smith. Elizabeth Strawbridge, and Ben and Louann Williams who were also the Black Bear sponsors of the event. NFLT also recognized the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Division of State Lands with the 2019 Partners Award. The award was presented to Callie DeHaven, director of the state agency. The Advocate of the Year was presented to Senator Rob Bradley, who was unable to attend the event, and presented the Volunteer of the Year award to Kathi Chalk.



More than 100 residents attended a special birthday party for North Florida Land Trust, which preserved 24,804 acres last year, including 1,040 in Clay County.



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Orange Park teacher Jump jumping off building for charity

Rappelling from 32-story hotel raises \$140,000 for Give Kids the World Village

By Randy Lefko
randy@opefla.com

ORLANDO – Orange Park High teacher Christine Jump has had her share of unique charity involvements, including the start of her then-7-year-old son's Tyler's



Foundation CEO Pam Landwirth joins Christine Jump before she rappelled down an Orlando hotel for charity.

Tab's enterprise that collected soda can tabs for the Ronald McDonald House in Jacksonville.

Tyler Jump is now 24 years old, still running Tyler Tabs and wrapping his education to become a middle school teacher in Mississippi.

Now Jump jumps for another charity, Give Kids the World Village – and she's literally jumping – make that, rappelling – off a building.

"This is my second time at the Over The Edge jump in Orlando and I'm still terrified," said Jump, prior to her scaling down Hyatt Regency's 428-foot, 32-story rooftop to support her donations for the Give Kids the World Village foundation. "We do a day of training, harnessing and mental training, haha, then we go. The first step is the scariest because you have to go over the ledge. Once I'm settled and I start moving, that second leg over the edge is the scariest because there is no turning back then you get super focused on the ropes and technique."

Jump's efforts were to benefit the Give Kids the World Village in Orlando, which is an 84-acre non-profit "storybook" resort in the Orlando area created to give children with critical illnesses a weeklong, cost-free vacation. Jump noted the efforts raised more than \$140,000 from last weekend's rappel. Children from the Make

a Wish foundation can stay at the Village while their "Wish" is fulfilled. The donation goal was \$100,000.

"The Village is an amazing gift set up by a gentleman named Henri Landwirth from Ponte Vedra [Beach] that I met in 2008," said Jump, noting that Landwirth's wife Pam is currently CEO and President of Give Kids the World. "He was a Holocaust survivor that came to the United States with \$15 in his pocket. He became a successful hotel manager and owner after starting as a bell hop at a hotel in Cape Canaveral."

According to the Give Kids the World website (gktw.org), Landwirth, who died at 91 in 2018, was affected by a young child to garner support from his hotel connections to bring her, named Amy, and other families to Orlando to give children with critical illness "a best day."

"Landwirth's known for saying he never wanted a child to not have a best day," said Jump. "While at his Cape Canaveral hotel, he met many influential people, including Astronaut John Glenn and newsman Walter Cronkite, and started the foundation from there."

Jump noted that the Give Kids the World Village includes a 24-hour ice cream parlor, Santa Claus visits "because they may not get a chance to see him in December or a second time, said Jump" and a ton



Don't look down: Orange Park English teacher Christine Jump keeps her eyes and focus up as she goes down a 32-story building.

of amusement and fun activities. Statistics show that 175,000 families from all 50 states and 76 countries have been to the Village.

"It's pretty overwhelming to see what they do," said Jump.

The Over the Edge jump for Jump entailed a two-day excursion for Jump to not only rappel herself, but to also prepare other jumpers for the opportunity.

SEE JUMPER, 23





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History

from page 3

black people like her deserved the same rights afforded to whites.

"I think a slogan back then that was noted was, 'Know your place and stay in it,'" Jackson said in an interview with Voice of the Civil Rights Movement. "I think black children were taught that early in life. The world is not the same or equal for all people.

"There are places you cannot go and things you cannot do, even though there are other children there, that's not for you. So, I started asking questions."

These questions led Jackson to activism – and that led to some of her lowest lows and highest highs. She recalled being jailed and put in a pin better fit for pigs, not humans.

"That was the most inhumane thing that I think could have ever happened to us," Jackson said.

She said they built a place fit for farm animals that she and other black people would have to stay in under the Florida sun. Those lows were met with highs she'll never forget though, was cooking a meal for King Jr. and marching with him in St. Augustine. Jackson told the Voice of the Civil Rights Movement that she prepared steak, toast and salad for King Jr. She also participated in a march with him where he was expected to die.

"They said if Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. marched in St. Augustine that night, he would die," Jackson said. "Everyone tried to get Dr. King to not march but he still did and he led it."

Keyes said moments like that in history inspired Jackson to continue spreading the message of equality that she's spread all of her life.

Jackson, however, is not the only black leader in Keyes' life. His mother, Annie Keyes, was born in Middleburg. Born in 1932, Annie attended T.C. Miller for elementary education. At the time, that school in Orange Park was for only black children and had students from kindergarten to eighth grade.

"It was there that she found her passion and dream of teaching," Keyes said.

Annie's teacher was often so busy that she would entrust Annie with teaching children in the class on another blackboard in the classroom at the same time as her. Eventually, Annie got her bachelor's degree and returned to T.C. Miller to be a

teacher. She taught before integration, so her classroom was all-black at the time.

When integration came about, Annie taught black and white children. Keyes said at first thought, it's easy to imagine her having problems. But surprisingly, Annie had "no problems."

"I remember asking her why she didn't have any problems and she told me it was because of her method," Keyes said. "She taught the white kids the same way she taught the black kids because kids are kids."

Keyes' family history doesn't end there though because his father, Edward Keyes Sr., fought back against segregation and racism in his own ways.

Keyes Sr. was born in Palatka but after an airborne disease spread through the area, he was sent to live with his grandmother in St. Petersburg. Shortly after that, he was drafted into World War II. Upon his return, he moved to Jacksonville and took a position at Barnett Bank, now called Bank of America, as a janitor.

Wanting to work his way up to a different position in the company, Keyes Sr. worked hard every day. Eventually, he was able to leave the mop and bucket behind for a job in the bank's print shop, where he met Billy Porch.

When Porch arrived to the print shop, he was the newbie – and he was white. Keyes Sr. taught him as much as he could

and the two became great friends. When the position of print shop manager opened up, Keyes Sr. thought he was the best candidate.

But Porch got the promotion.

"Porch wasn't undeserving because he worked hard too but that promotion was my father's," Keyes said. "Porch got it because he was white."

Keyes Sr. wasn't upset with Porch. He was, however, mad at a system that promoted racial discrimination. The relationship between Keyes Sr. and Porch remained void of racism, and that helped Keyes Sr. to eventually getting the job.

When Porch moved on to a new job, he stuck up for his friend to replace him in the print shop.

Keyes Sr. wound up working in that position for 35 years. He protested on Ax Handle Saturday in Jacksonville on Aug. 27, 1960, according to Keyes. This remains disturbing day in Jacksonville's history when more than 300 white men chased black protesters in the city with baseball bats and ax handles.

Keyes Sr. survived the day though and continued his protest by succeeding in his position at the print shop, despite racial discrimination that he faced.

He died a few years back at 91. Keyes said that Porch called recently to recount that story and it matched the story Keyes had heard his father tell all his life.

"They were two good men," Keyes said.

The black leadership and excellence displayed by Keyes Sr., Annie Keyes and Jackson keep Keyes beaming with pride about his family and race's history. It also keeps him in check with a sense of responsibility.

"It's on me and others to pass on that knowledge and that will," Keyes said. "We all have to do better and be our best. We need to look out for others. It's my duty to pass that on to the next generation."

Keyes said that as a black man, it's important for others, and for generations to come, know that the opportunities they have didn't come for free. There was a price paid for them, Keyes said, and if people understand the price paid for what they have today, it will be more important and appreciative.

"If I were looking at all of this from a white man's perspective, I would point out that they don't have an ancestry like me that went through these things," Keyes said. "It should be important to know how these things could be or as impossible as it seems, to know that a human mind, actual human beings, did all of those barbaric things.

"It can happen again so it needs to be remembered, through generation and generation, so that we can prevent our nation from ever going back to a place like that."

Nurturing the nurturer

SJR State student spotlight: Sabrain Edwards

By Penny Powell
St. Johns River State College

ORANGE PARK – Attending college was not on Sabrain Edwards' radar, until he was awarded the Collier-Blocker Minority In-District Scholarship at St. Johns River State College.

"I knew that had to be divine intervention, because I had no intention of going to college and no financial means to get there, but here I am, and it's paid for," Edwards said.

The scholarship opened the door of opportunity and ultimately resulted in more than Edwards earning an Associate in Arts degree, which he will receive May.

He will then begin working on SJR State's bachelor's degree program in Early Childhood Education. After being exposed

to ECE courses at Oakleaf High, Edwards had no doubt what his career path would be and is thrilled to continue his education at SJR State with his bachelor's degree.

Edwards credits much of his success to SJR State's small college environment, where building relationships and participating in extra-curricular activities helped develop his potential for leadership and nurturing others.

"There are a lot of things that take place on a college campus other than just lectures," Edwards said. "I knew I wanted to do more than just come here, go to class, and leave." The various hats Edwards wears at SJR State prove this to be true.

Today, Edwards serves as the president of the Student Government Association, an opportunity that has allowed him to build his leadership skills in ways he never imagined. He interacts with the College's leaders and is a bridge and voice for other students.

"Joining SGA is a great opportunity, and I'm enjoying every moment of it," Edwards said. "Growing my leadership skills through my involvement with SGA has been my biggest takeaway."

Edwards also serves as the co-president of the Students Focused on Christ Club, a club that he and a few friends were instrumental in establishing on the Orange Park campus.

To see him in action on campus lead-

ing a Bible study group is to easily witness that teaching is his passion.

"I never would have imagined I would have been so involved with my school, let alone a college," Edwards said.

Whether through teaching or working in administration or serving on a school board, Edwards' ultimate goal is to plant seeds that will "encourage children, and students in general, to take more confidence in the ownership of their education," he said.

With many students questioning why certain content is necessary, Edwards hopes to embolden students to be proactive, look beyond what is being taught and research the various ways the content in question can be applied to their lives. "Don't just take in what the teachers give you," he said.

What would Edwards tell a student contemplating enrolling at SJR State? The words "relationships, connections, small class sizes, and an easy-to-navigate campus" are what quickly come to mind for him.

"When it comes to relationships and connections, I found it was so easy to build those at SJR State, especially the connections with your teachers because of the class sizes," he said.

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Bus

from page 1

and our plan is to have all 100 transitioned by the beginning of next school year.”

The new buses began to roll into the district’s transportation department a couple of weeks ago and they’ll continue to roll in over the coming weeks. The district’s bus program consists of 240 buses. Of those 240 buses, 139 have air conditioning. The district plans to replace 100 buses which comes with a cost of \$10 million to be paid over seven years.

The new buses began to roll into the district’s transportation department a couple of weeks ago and they’ll continue to roll in over the coming weeks. The district’s bus program consists of 240 buses. Of those 240 buses, 139 have air conditioning. The district plans to replace 100 buses which comes with a cost of \$10 million to be paid over seven years.

The district said it will soon have one of the newest bus fleets in Florida. It also anticipates easier recruiting measures moving forward. The district also has been struggling to hire bus drivers it needs, and new buses should make it easier to attract them.

Sweatt said it takes about two hours for mechanics to transition old bus equipment to the new bus. This includes things like radios. He hopes to have another 10 buses fully transitioned by next week.

“That’ll be a great accomplishment if we can do that and the hope is to continue that pattern moving forward as we near August,” Sweatt said.

New buses are great for everyone involved but what do bus drivers who have driven the new buses think? Clay Today spoke with bus driver Amy Smith about these new buses and what they mean for drivers in the district.

Compared to the old buses, what is it like driving these new buses?

“It’s a good bit smoother and it drives better on the dirt roads. It’s not as loud either.”

How long had you been driving the older bus?

“Eight years.”
Why was it important for the district to get new buses?

“New buses with air conditioning was as important as getting raises. We got both so we are excited. The students behave better on air-conditioned buses when it’s very hot outside, plus, us drivers who didn’t have air conditioning will feel better. It came down to the safety of my students and for myself.”

How has the reception from students been so far?

“I think I’m one of the first ones because I needed the extra seats on the bus. The students loved it though. Like they got a new car for Christmas.”

Final thoughts?

“All of us drivers are excited for the next school year when we will all have air conditioning and video cameras on our buses.”



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Clay Extension offers successful beginner beekeeper's class

By Cassidy Dossin

Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent
UF/IFAS Extension Clay County

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The Clay County UF/IFAS Extension recently welcomed 60 participants to the Beginner Beekeeper's Short Course.

Clay County Extension hosts the interactive beekeeping course two Saturdays every year, once in the spring and once in the fall. Participants traveled from across Northeast Florida to hear from the seasoned experts: veteran beekeepers and Master Beekeepers, the Agriculture and Natural Resources County Extension Agent, and the District Apiary Inspector.

Guests came pouring in and received an extensive binder of resources, and were ready to learn all about beekeeping. Speakers discussed bee biology and behavior, the ins and outs of all a beekeeper's equipment, inspection rules and regulations, and everything to expect when starting your first hive.

Participants had the chance to talk one-on-one with experienced and passion-

ate beekeepers; the course ended with an informative question and answer session with the experts and a quick trip to the Clay County Beekeeper's Association demonstration apiary on site at the extension office. Participants left the course with a jar of locally produced honey in hand, confident and excited to start a hive and join a strong local community of beekeepers.

According to researchers at the University of Florida, there are almost 5,000 registered beekeepers in Florida and just about 85% of these are considered "backyard" beekeepers (owning as many as 40 hives). Hobbyists take interest in beekeeping to pollinate their crops and garden, produce honey and simply to enjoy the caretaking of the hive.

More and more residents across Florida are starting their own backyard hives, and Clay County's Beginner Beekeeper's Short Course is the perfect event to get all the information you need to get started.

Keep an eye out for the next Beginner Beekeeper's Short Course this September and contact the Clay County Extension office for more information.



There were 60 residents at the recent Beginner Beekeeper's Short Course at the Clay Extension Office in Green Cove Springs. Novices were shown how to build hives, as well as where to place them to maximize their honey harvest.



Extension Office workers show how honey is extracted from hives. There are about 5,000 registered beekeepers in Florida, with the overwhelming majority owning hives as a hobby or for personal use.

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Police Briefs

Woman returns to Clay to face 2019 burglary charges

OAKLEAF – The Clay County Sheriff's Office tracked down a woman to the Duval County Jail who was wanted for stealing cooper wiring last year from several homes under construction at Lennar at Grayhawk.

Lorrie Michelle Seaman, 37, of Jacksonville, was charged with five counts of burglary and five counts of grand theft, with three resulting in losses between \$300 and \$4,999.

A construction superintendent noticed wiring had been removed from several houses under construction last April. He found the wiring in an empty house with a man upstairs who previously worked at the site installing windows.

According to the arrest warrant, Florida Highway Patrolman who lived in the community saw the man leave the area in a car reportedly driven by Seaman.

The couple also were wanted for burglarizing homes under construction in Duval County.

Seaman was transported from Jacksonville to the Clay County Jail. Her bond was set at \$125,015.

Middleburg man killed in Blanding Boulevard crash

MIDDLEBURG – A 47-year-old man was killed last Saturday morning when his car was struck by a pickup truck as he crossed Blanding Boulevard.

James Thomas Brown of Middleburg was pronounced dead shortly after arriving to Orange Park Medical Center.

According to the Florida Highway Patrol, Brown was driving east on Peppergrass Street when he attempted to cross Blanding Boulevard. A truck driven by Jerry Dean Wahl, 32, of Middleburg was southbound on Blanding when the vehicles crashed.

Both cars had children on board, including an 8-year-old riding with Brown and a 2-year-old with Wahl. Neither were injured.

Man killed crossing U.S. 17 in Green Cove Springs

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – A pedestrian was struck and killed when he ran into traffic Monday night on U.S. Highway 17.

Oscar Jucum, 30, of Green Cove Springs, ran into the northbound lane near the Garber Automall and was struck by Dodge Charger driven by Kingsley Gayle, 41, of Green Cove Springs.

Jucum was thrown onto the hood of the car at impact, according to the Florida Highway Patrol.



Men evicted, then arrested in Middleburg drug sting

MIDDLEBURG – A man was caught selling methamphetamine from the same house he was evicted from a day earlier.

Walter Midyette, 66, of Middleburg was charged with three counts of selling and delivering methamphetamine from his house at 4681 Peppergrass St. on Feb. 21. A Clay County judge signed a final order to have Midyette evicted from the house on Feb. 20.

He didn't have time to pack.

Clay County Sheriff's Office deputies already had Midyette under surveillance after the agency said the man bought methamphetamine three times from confidential sources. He sold 3.12 grams of meth to an informant on Jan. 8, 1.2 grams on Feb. 12 and 1.2 grams on Feb. 18, according to the arrest report.

Another man, Jeffrey Michael Smith, 37, of Orange Park, was arrested at the house after deputies found drugs, straw and a pipe in a spare bedroom. He was charged with possessing cocaine and drug paraphernalia.

Midyette's bond was set at \$120,009.

Arrests & Bookings

(Name, age, location of arrest, charges). Key: FTA-Failure to Appear; DWLSR-Driving Without a License-Suspended or Revoked; DUI-Driving Under the Influence; VOP-Violation of Parole. There are no assumptions or representations about guilt or innocence. Everyone arrested or booked is presumed innocent.

Tuesday, Feb. 25

Deborah S. Wills, 51, Orange Park, DUI with damage

David A. Lance, 31, Green Cove Springs, DWLSR

Ryan A. Willick, 30, Middleburg, DUI
Thomas C. Williams, 54, Orange Park, DWLSR-permanently revoked

Michael A. Roman, 32, Orange Park, three counts burglary

Michael R. Surla, 38, Green Cove Springs, failing to register

Joseph L. Clark, 34, Orange Park, three counts VOP-burglary, VOP-grand theft \$300-\$20,000

Timothy R. Warfle, 53, Green Cove Springs, aggravated battery with deadly weapon

Elton C. Fortner, 43, Middleburg, petit theft
Shaun D. Rhodes, 34, Keystone Heights, possession-methamphetamine, possession/use-drug paraphernalia

Aliena M. Hall, 23, Green Cove Springs, retail petit theft

Lewis C. Jones, 43, Green Cove Springs, FTA-

possession/use-drug paraphernalia

Andraerikia L. Wallas, 29, Orange Park, retail petit theft

Christopher D. Watts, 48, Green Cove Springs, simple domestic battery

Monday, Feb. 24

Malisa A. Alcorn, 46, Green Cove Springs, possession-marijuana, possession/use-drug paraphernalia

Andrew C. Bartley, 20, Orange Park, possession-marijuana

Farad O. Hutton, 31, Green Cove Springs, FTA-hit and run/leaving scene of accident with property damage

James W. Alexander, 35, Green Cove Springs, FTA-possession-cocaine

Tanner C. Griffin, 20, Middleburg, burglary
Kyesha L. Johnson, 18, Orange Park, retail petit theft

Kanarica R. Williams, 18, Orange Park, retail petit theft

Aaron M. Mink, 40, Middleburg, felony battery, domestic battery by strangulation, simple domestic battery

Sarah D. Broadwater, 36, Middleburg, simple battery

Gregory A. Witkowski, 32, Orange Park, VOP-community control

Roger B. Coker, 39, Green Cove Springs, possession-methamphetamine, possession/use-drug paraphernalia, DWLSR

Sunday, Feb. 23

Sheena L. Hammontree, 34, Orange Park, possession-methamphetamine, possession/use-drug paraphernalia, DWLSR, failure to register

Elton C. Fortner, 43, Middleburg, child abuse, attempting to flee/elude police officer, operating motorcycle without license

Rajeev Desikan, 44, Middleburg, DUI

Mitchel K. Claxton, 44, Orange Park, possession-methamphetamine

Leslie W. Hunter, 35, Green Cove Springs, possession-controlled substance, simple domestic battery

Patrick B. Gunter, 34, Orange Park, possession-marijuana, possession/use-drug paraphernalia

Noah C. Goodin, 37, Keystone Heights, two counts FTA

Joshua P. Fralick, 24, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Shanon M. Wray, 20, Green Cove Springs, simple battery, possession-unlicensed firearm

James R. Kratzer, 37, Middleburg, non-support

Saturday, Feb. 2

David P. Powell, 57, Orange Park, possession-firearm by convicted felon, possession/use-drug paraphernalia, possession-marijuana, DWLSR

Christopher A. Langone, 26, Fleming Island,

DUI with BAL .15 or higher

John M. Cornish, 43, Orange Park, possession-controlled substance, possession-methamphetamine, possession/use-drug paraphernalia

James R. Vicsik, 38, VOP

Katie A. Haley, 22, Orange Park, fraudulent use of credit card

David W. Brobst, 21, Orange Park, grand theft auto

Megan S. Stiles, 36, Middleburg, FTA

Armando J. Naar, 19, Orange Park, retail petit theft

Paul D. Stone, 41, Green Cove Springs, trespassing

Friday, Feb. 21

Richard H. Hill, 39, Orange Park, DUI

Katherine A. Boyles, 29, Orange Park, simple domestic battery

Walter Midyette, 66, Middleburg, three counts selling methamphetamine

George Ramirez, 27, Orange Park, trespassing

Jeffrey M. Smith, 37, Middleburg, possession-cocaine, possession/use-drug paraphernalia

Brittany N. Fike, 29, Keystone Heights, burglary

Community Calendar

from page 8

ORANGE PARK WOMEN'S CLUB THRIFT SHOP: is open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on March 6, at 130 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park.

VIETNAM VETERANS MONTHLY MEETING: is March 7 at the Col. William G. Byrns Chapter at the American Legion Post 250, 2608 Black Creek Drive, Middleburg, at 11 a.m. For more information, contact David Treffinger at (609) 320-1723.

JACKSONVILLE MASTERWORKS CHORALE: will perform March 7 at Grace Episcopal Church, 245 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park, at 7 p.m. and March 8 at the Moosehaven Chapel, 1701 Park Ave., Orange Park at 3 p.m. Admission to the program that celebrates St. Patrick's Day is free.

ORANGE PARK WOMEN'S CLUB THRIFT SHOP: is open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on March 9, at 130 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park.

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS: will meet on March 10 at 4 p.m. at the fourth floor of Administration Building, 477 Houston St., Green Cove Springs.

CLAY COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL: will meet March 11 at 3:30 p.m. at the Board of County Commissioners

meeting room, fourth floor, 477 Houston St., Green Cove Springs.

ORANGE PARK WOMEN'S CLUB THRIFT SHOP: is open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on March 13, at 130 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park.

CARRIE CLARKE DAY: is March 14 from, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Clarke House Park, 1039 Kingsley Ave., in Orange Park. The event features tours of the Clarke House as well as re-enactors who will tell the story of the Clarke family.

FREE QUIT SMOKING PROGRAM: is March 14 from 10 a.m.-noon at the Orange Park Medical Center, 2001 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park. Free nicotine patches, lozenges and gum will be available. Call Northeast Florida AHEC at (904) 482-0189 for more information.

FARMERS AND ARTS MARKET: is March 15 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Orange Park Town Hall, 2042 Park Ave.

ORANGE PARK WOMEN'S CLUB THRIFT SHOP: is open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on March 16, at 130 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park.

AMERICAN BUSINESS WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION-ORANGE PARK CHAPTER: will meet March 16 from 6 p.m.-8 p.m. at the Club Continental, 2143 Astor St., Orange Park.

ORANGE PARK TOWN COUNCIL: will meet on March 17 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 2042 Park Ave.

CLAY COUNTY FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE: will meet March 17 at 3 p.m. at the Board of County Commissioners meeting room, fourth floor, 477 Houston St., Green Cove Springs.

LAKE REGION KIWANIS CLUB MEETING: on March 19 at 6:30 p.m. at Clyde's Cozy Corner Cafe, 195 Lawrence Blvd., Keystone Heights.

CLAY SAFETYNET ALLIANCE: will meet March 19 at 8:30 a.m. at Haven-Custead Care Center, 745 Blanding Blvd., Orange Park. Representatives from local government, faith-based groups and nonprofits collaborate to find solutions for important issues affecting Clay County.

ORANGE PARK WOMEN'S CLUB THRIFT SHOP: is open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on March 20, at 130 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park.

FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES: will host a flea market March 21 at 8 a.m. at 1932 Long Bay Road in Middleburg. Table space is \$10. Reserve a spot by calling (904) 413-7542 or (904) 449-9716.

HOGS FOR DOGS BIKE RUN: is March 21 at 9:30 a.m. Ride, which benefits Clay Humane, starts at Adamec Harley-Davidson, 1520 Wells Road, Orange Park, and ends at Whitey's Fish Camp, 2032 County Road 220, Fleming Island. Registration is \$30 a person. Online registration includes T-shirt, goodie bag, food, music, raffle and prizes. For more information, call Clay Humane at (904) 276-7729.

MARKET IN THE PARK: will be March 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the corners of Walnut Street and Magnolia Avenue in Green Cove Springs. Local business league's monthly local grocery and craft market is the third Saturday of each month.

ORANGE PARK WOMEN'S CLUB THRIFT SHOP: is open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on March 23, at 130 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park.

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS: will meet on March 24 at 4 p.m. at the fourth floor of Administration Building, 477 Houston St., Green Cove Springs.

GREEN COVE SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL: will meet on March 24 at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 321 Walnut St., Green Cove Springs.

FREE GENEALOGY CLASS: will be offered on March 25 at 10 a.m. at the Orange Park Senior Center, 414 Stowe Ave., Orange Park. For more information, call Bill at (904) 803-6312.

ORANGE PARK WOMEN'S CLUB THRIFT SHOP: is open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on March

27, at 130 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park.

ORANGE PARK WOMEN'S CLUB THRIFT SHOP: is open from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on March 30, at 130 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park.

CLAY COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: will meet on April 2 at 6 p.m. at the Teacher Inservice Center at Fleming Island High, 2233 Village Square Pkwy.

GARDEN CLUB OF MIDDLEBURG: will meet April 3 at 2239 Blanding Blvd. at 9:30 a.m. to involve, share and engage fellow gardeners. Meetings include educational programs, plant sales, field trips and community involvement. For more information, contact (904) 252-7818.

VIETNAM VETERANS MONTHLY MEETING: is April 4 at the Col. William G. Byrns Chapter at the American Legion Post 250, 2608 Black Creek Drive, Middleburg, at 11 a.m. For more information, contact David Treffinger at (609) 320-1723.

FARMERS AND ARTS MARKET: is April 5 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Orange Park Town Hall, 2042 Park Ave.

KEystone HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL: will meet April 6 at 6 p.m. at City Hall, 555 S. Lawrence St.

Arrests

from page 22

Jason A. Moody, 29, Orange Park, trespassing
 Pamela M. Weister, 49, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial conditions against domestic violence
 Travis D. Jackson, 36, Orange Park, possession-marijuana
 Amber A. Gordon, 32, Fleming Island, child neglect
 Antwuan L. Partee, 36, Orange Park, two counts sexual battery on child 12 or younger
 Terry A. Wyatt, 34, Fleming Island, disorderly intoxication
 Daveion B. Austin, 19, Middleburg, out of county warrant
 Paquito J. DeJesus, 39, Keystone Heights, trespassing
 Cynthia N. Williams, 25, Middleburg, domestic battery
 Darwin O. Custodio, 39, Orange Park, FTA-DWLSR
 Trent A. Huggins, 29, Orange Park, possession-cocaine, possession-methamphetamine, possession-amphetamine, possession/use-drug paraphernalia
 Bryan J.C. Brown, 31, Green Cove Springs, lewd/lascivious behavior on child 12-16

Thursday, Feb. 20

Victoria E. McRee, 44, Middleburg, DUI
 Clifford M. Bramlett, 26, Middleburg, possession-cocaine, possession-marijuana, possession/use-drug paraphernalia, DWLSR, no valid vehicle registration
 Anthony M. Boyle, 39, Middleburg, possession-marijuana, possession/use-drug paraphernalia
 Justin T. Berry, 28, Green Cove Springs, possession-marijuana, possession-controlled substance
 Ra'ann M. Love, 25, Middleburg, DUI
 Tiffani D. Peters, 25, Orange Park, battery on police officer/firefighter/EMT, vandalism

Michael A. Roman, 32, Orange Park, burglary
 Floyd C. Guy, 46, Orange Park, simple battery
 Lacey N. Ditcher, 30, Orange Park, fraudulent use of credit card

Ryan W. Bunker, 37, Green Cove Springs, writ of attachment

David N. Montenegro Portal, 52, Green Cove Springs, FTA-driving without valid license

Tyler L. McConnell, 22, Orange Park, two counts battery on police officer/firefighter/EMT
 Thomas S. Butts, 37, Middleburg, burglary
 Danett B. Hrinik, 40, Orange Park, retail petit theft

Nichole E. Mercer, 34, Green Cove Springs, writ of attachment

Shaun D. Raley, 19, Keystone Heights, aggravated assault with deadly weapon, simple battery

Timothy W. Stennett, 18, Middleburg, simple domestic battery

Travis G. Cartmel, 36, Green Cove Springs, DUI with property damage

Kasey N. Baker, 27, Middleburg, VOP-community control

James S. Perdue, 49, Middleburg, domestic battery

Kenneth C. Nettles, 23, Orange Park, retail petit theft

Wednesday, Feb. 19

Reginald B. Shaw, 36, Middleburg, DWLSR
 Daniel R. Marks, 34, Keystone Heights, aggravated assault with deadly weapon

Allison H. Smith, 35, Middleburg, DWLSR
 Emali A. Lauter, 31, Green Cove Springs,

FTA-first degree DWLSR, FTA-DWLSR, FTA-no attached vehicle tag

Valerie L. Todd, 42, Keystone Heights, grand theft \$300-\$4,999

Jordan M. Littles, 22, Green Cove Springs, VOP-reckless driving

John E. Kennedy, 54, Orange Park, resist/obstruct/oppose police officer

Emilee J. Haynes, 22, Oakleaf, possession-marijuana

Lamar M. Chesser, 31, Orange Park, trespassing

Jumper

from page 17

“We had a few Amazing Race competitors from TV that were going to be a part of the weekend and us volunteers were there for them to get ready,” said Jump. “There is a smaller wall inside the Hyatt that we practice on and there is some instruction involved, obviously,” said Jump. “Each jumper raises \$1,000 for the jump that goes to the foundation.”

Jump measured the intensity of the jump from the top with the size of the hotel pool down below.

“From up there, the pool looks tiny,” said Jump. “And, after actually seeing it on the ground when we arrive, and then seeing it from up top, it's pretty scary.”

Jump also observed family members and parents of Make A Wish kids who did not live to get the Wish making the jump in their honor.

“There were lots of tears and emotions,” said Jump. “One dad said his kid fought with all his heart to live and that he, the dad, was going over no matter how terrified he was for his boy.”

FIND MY ATTACKER

Im looking for a man who would have been in Middleburg FL in 01/88. He was 20-25 with light brown/aub hair & light blue eyes. He was 5'9"- 6 ft & thin with an oval face, straight nose, crooked teeth and dipped. He was wearing a big light brown jacket, blue flannel & jeans w/ a light brown trucker hat. He had a class ring. He drove a 2 door, chevy hatchback with tan interior. The panel & speaker was missing behind the drivers side door in back seat.

After the Minute Mart on CR 218/Mimosa, my car broke down before Cocoa. He offered a ride to call my dad but then refused to turn around. He yelled about police coming to his work & making him look bad, they said he hurt a girl.

This man knew Middleburg very well, Main St boat ramp, past mimosa into the woods/fields and a property in Muscovy area w/ lighted barn. He probably offered other girls rides or tried to talk them into his car. I was 16; he may have targeted young women.

This man he may have offered you/friend a ride after a breakdown or any other time please.

Call/email or go to the **Facebook Page: Unsolved In Northeast Florida**

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College News

Orange Park's Patterson earns degree at Valdosta State

VALDOSTA, Ga. – Quahlin Patterson of Orange Park recently earned a Bachelor of Science in Health Science de-

gree from Valdosta State University. Patterson was among more than 800 undergraduate and graduate students who completed the requirements for their respective degrees during the Fall 2019 semester.

Moser graduates from Southeast Missouri State

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo. – Green Cove Springs' Robert Moser was among the Southeast Missouri State University's Fall graduates.

Moser earned a Master's degree in Business Administration with a major in general management.

Fleming Island's Swope earns degree at Miami University

OXFORD, Ohio – Alaina Swope of Fleming Island was among 1,300 students to be awarded a degree recently from Miami University. Swope graduated MAGNA with a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in psychology.

Orange Park's Fisher earns degree at Greensboro College

GREENSBORO, N.C. – Kyle Thomas Fisher of Orange Park earned his Bachelor of Science in Health and Physical Education degree from Greensboro College. Greensboro College provides a liberal arts education grounded in the traditions of the United Methodist Church and fosters the intellectual, social, and spiritual development of all students while supporting their individual needs.

Middleburg's Lloyd makes Georgia State's President's List

ATLANTA – Alexander Lloyd of Middleburg made the President's List at Georgia State University for the Fall semester. To be eligible for the President's List, degree-seeking students must have earned a GPA of at least 4.0 for a minimum of nine semester hours of academic credit taken at Georgia State during the fall or spring term with no incompletes for the semester. Eligible students must have a minimum GPA of 2.0 for all classes taken at Georgia State.

Clay trio on Dean's List at Florida Tech

MELBOURNE – Three local students were selected to the Dean's List at Florida Tech for the Fall semester. Dorian During and Luc Larson, both from Fleming Island, and Christopher Mickel of Middleburg, finished the semester with at least a 3.4 GPA with a minimum of 12 credit hours.

Orange Park's Fogarty makes Georgia State's Dean's List

ATLANTA – Elizabeth Fogarty of Orange Park was selected to the Dean's List for the Fall semester at Georgia State University. To be eligible for the Dean's List, degree-seeking students must have earned a GPA of at least 3.5 for a minimum of nine semester hours of academic credit taken at Georgia State during the fall or spring term with no incompletes for the semester. Eligible students must have a minimum GPA of 2.0 for all classes taken at Georgia State.



HEART DISEASE

HEART ATTACK, STROKE, MINI STROKE, STENT PLACEMENT, PERIPHERAL ARTERIAL DISEASE (PAD)

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Research has shown that treatment with semaglutide may reduce the risk of stroke and heart attack in people with type 2 diabetes in a study called SELECT. The purpose of this research study is to see if semaglutide reduces the risk of cardiovascular events such as heart attack and stroke in people that are overweight or obese.

Volunteers may be eligible if they:

- Are 45 years or older
- Have had a brain attack (stroke), or heart attack (myocardial infarction), or have poor circulation (peripheral arterial disease)
- Are overweight or obese

There are additional criteria to meet to qualify for this study. Volunteers who qualify for our study will receive study related medication, medical exams and procedures at no cost, as well as reimbursement for time and travel. No health insurance is required to participate.

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TODAY'S Sports

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Eagles' stamina stymies Tate

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

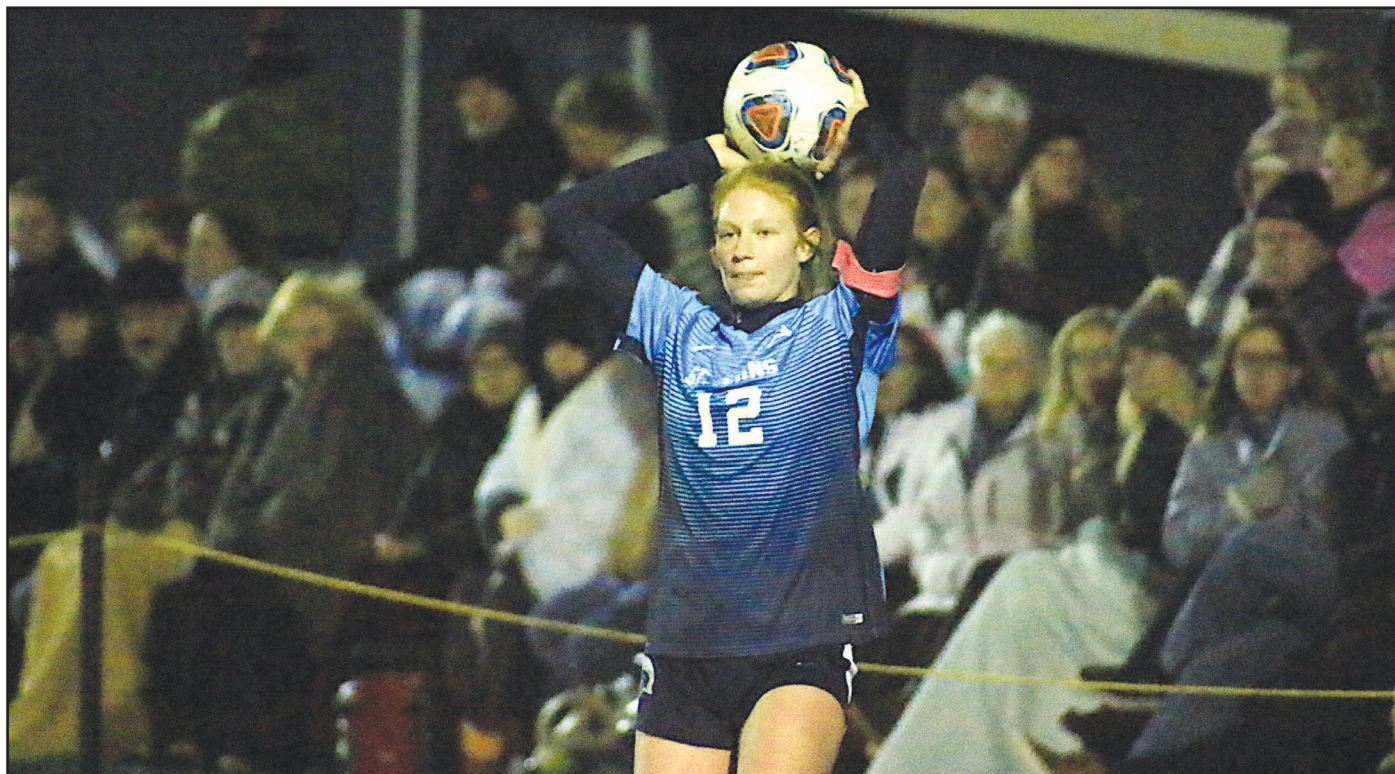
FLEMING ISLAND – Fleming Island High basketball revved up their fourth quarter engines, led by senior center Aaron Brown's game high 26 points, to take away the speed of Tate High's attack in the Golden Eagles' 79-67 region quarterfinal win over Tate High Thursday night at Fleming Island High School.

"We wanted to keep the tempo high and run them out of the gym tonight," said

SEE EAGLES, 28



Fleming Island's dynamic duo; Sebastian Astor, left, and Aaron Brown combined forces for region playoff win.



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

St. Johns Country Day School junior Maddy Moody's sideline throw-ins have become a key part of the Lady Spartans' offensive attack.

Spartans' second half seals state bid

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

ORANGE PARK – St. Johns Country Day School girls soccer may want to keep permanent hotel rooms in the Deland area after the Lady Spartans earned an eighth straight bid for a state soccer title on Friday with a 4-0 win over International Community in the Class 2A state semifinals.

"They are all different," said St. Johns coach Mike Pickett, referring to the feel of going to another state championship game. "This team is very inexperienced even though we have a lot of juniors, but there are a lot of new faces. This is a new level for some of the kids on this team."

Pickett's lone senior is midfielder Lindsay Sabo.

St. Johns (23-1), the top seed of

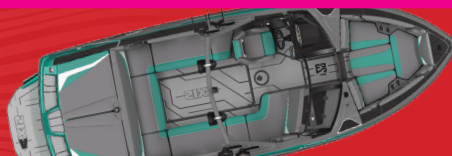
SEE SPARTANS, 27



St. Johns Country Day School girls soccer, pictured from left, Ava Johnson, Lexi Drumm, Paige Crews and Brooke Remolde, heads to Deland's Spec Martin Stadium for the Class 2A championship game at 1 p.m. against Shorecrest Prep out of St. Petersburg.

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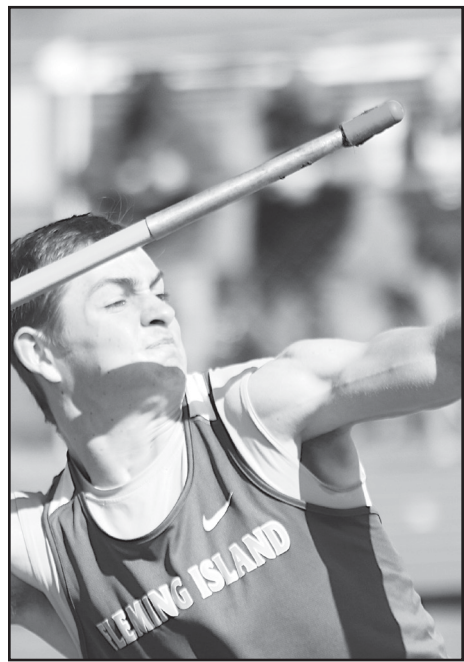
LAKE AREA WATERSPORTS

Collier highlights Danny Brown sprintfest

Fleming Island girls fourth

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

JACKSONVILLE – Orange Park High senior track sprinter Alex Collier threw down on the first major meet of the 2020 outdoor season with two impressive wins at the



Fleming Island High javelin thrower Grant Bisbee rears back for toss downfield at Bishop Snyder's Danny Brown Invitational.



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Orange Park senior sprinter Alex Collier blew away the field in the 100 and 200 meters.

Danny Brown Invitational held Saturday at Bishop Snyder High School.

Collier, the defending 400 meter Class 3A champion (46.33), opted to put his legs to a faster spin in the 100 and 200 meter dashes and proved prophetic in his endeavor to dominate all three sprint disciplines.

"I felt good for it to be a season opener," said Collier. I'm going to keep working on those times in the 100 and 200 and keep dropping them for the 400."

In the 100, Collier, third in 3A last

year with a 10.75 split, blasted to a 10.79 overwhelming top time, ironically, followed closely by an 11.03 by teammate Markez Sermons, in prelims before returning later in the afternoon to better that split to 10.70 for the win with Bartram Trail's TreVez Johnson second at 10.84. Sermons finished fourth at 11.06. Sermons also finished third in the long jump at 21'-4.75".

In the 200, Collier again sizzled the field with a 21.73 prelim split that was up on Mandarin's Brian Brown at 22.31 and Raines' Reginald Harden at 22.58.

In the final, the top two remained the same; Collier at 21.96 and Brown at 22.27, with Bartram Trail's Jeffrey Stiles third at 22.79. Fleming Island High freshman Sam Singleton took fourth at 22.85 with Harden falling to 23.31 for sixth.

Last year's 3A 200 final was won in 21.01 with 21.78 second place.

Collier added to his aura for the day with an explosive anchor leg on the 4 x 100 preliminary relay with teammates Diego Soto, Vincent Walker and Sermons to score a 42.37 prelim to finish just ahead of Oakleaf. Orange Park, though, was disqualified from the final with Raines winning in 44.03.

In high jump, Oakleaf's Donovan Thomas won in 6'-2" with Fleming Island's Ezra McCollum second at 5'-10" and St. Johns Cameron Mackenzie third, also at 5'-10".

In the final team scores, Bartram Trail won the boys title with 123 points with Raines second at 77 and Bolles third at 76. Orange Park finished sixth with 50.50 with Fleming Island eighth at 36, Oakleaf ninth at 24, Middleburg 16th at 11 and St. Johns Country Day School 18th at 10.

In a very fast 110 hurdles final, won in 14.81 by Raines' Da'mon Daniels, Orange Park's Joel Childs hit seventh in 15.91. Childs was sixth in the 300 hurdles in 41.89 with Daniels winning in 40.38.

In the 400, Orange Park's Sean Dixon

SEE TRACK, 32

Eagles, Blue Devils surge to district wrestling titles

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Clay and Fleming Island wrestling have taken slightly divergent turns to getting to their respective district titles with the Blue Devils; smarted twice in 10 days by the Golden Eagles; Clay Rotary and Tussle of Muscle, regrouping to a 21st district title, in newly aligned District 4-1A, while the Golden Eagles continued their disruption of northeast Florida wrestling with their sixth straight title; district 1-3A, in a week of state meet preparation.

A resurgent Oakleaf High team, under coaches Marcus Miller and Sean Conroy finished second to Fleming Island ahead of Creekside and Bartram Trail, two new teams to district 1-3A and former 2A programs. The Knights got one district title with 285 Josh Murrell winning in overtime over Fleming Island's Raul Gonzales.

In district 2-2A, Orange Park chased behind annual 2A powers Tallahassee Lincoln and Columbia for most of that tournament before finishing fourth with Mos-

ley sneaking ahead in the championship rounds. Columbia would snare the team title with a 167 point total with Lincoln second at 149 and Mosley 128. Orange Park scored 125.5.

Also in district 2-2A, Middleburg finished sixth with 67 points. The Broncos advanced seven wrestlers with Jeffrey Parker, at 113) and Riley Girgis, at 120, both tops for the Broncos with third place finishes.

For Fleming Island, with 12 champions and 13 region qualifiers, the onslaught has been in step with the last three weeks of coach P.J. Cobbert's preparation to finally wrestle away the elusive 3A title from South Dade High this year.

Top four finishers in each district advance to region championship meets with top four finishers there advancing to the respective state meets.



CORRESPONDENT PHOTO BY RICKI NIX

Fleming Island's Riley Holton, left, has been at the top of his game for Golden Eagles.

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SEE WRESTLE, 31

Spartans

from page 25

region 1-2A, will venture to Deland's Spec Martin Stadium to face the number one seed out of region 3-2A, Shorecrest Prep (14-3-2) on Wed., Feb. 26 at 1 p.m.. Shorecrest, located in St. Petersburg, defeated Westminster Academy, the top seed of region 4-2A, 3-1 to advance to the final. St. Johns defeated Shorecrest 4-0 in 2007 in the Class 2A final.

In 2006, Shorecrest lost to American Heritage 5-0 in the 2A final.

Shorecrest's last playoff appearance was a region finals loss to Evangelical Christian in 2017 in Class 1A with St. Johns beating Evangelical 5-0 in that state semifinal before beating Lakeland Christian 2-0 in the final.

Shorecrest has a long history of playoff appearances dating back to 2002 with the two finals' appearance and the region final the furthest they have gone in the playoffs.

St Johns, on the flip side of the equation, has simply dominated both Class 1A and Class 2A for more than two decades under Pickett's tutelage with this championship game a possible 11th state title. St. Johns last lost in 2010 in double overtime to American Heritage (Delray Beach). Pickett has titles dating as far back as 2005 with his first finals loss in 2004, a 1-0 match to American Heritage (Delray Beach). Against International, nicknamed the Comets, St. Johns scored first off a crossing pass from deep in the Comets cor-



St. Johns Country Day School junior forward Paige Crews fires off hard shot on goal against International Community in Spartans' 4-0 Class 2A state semifinal win Friday night.

ner after a pass from Mia Sadler found no one in front of the goal before Paige Crews picked up the ball in the corner.

Crews returned the ball with a loft over top and found Natalie Wilson and Lauryn Mateo in front of the goal for a short scramble before Mateo put the ball in the net at 21 minutes. The score stayed at 1-0 past the first water break that came after Crews put a left foot shot over the goal.

Up to the halftime break, St. Johns had a handful of corner kicks and deep throw-ins, but failed to further the 1-0 score.

"We had plenty of opportunities in the first half, by far, but we were just miss-

ing the mark," said Pickett. "In the second half, we calmed down a bit and just executed our plays."

Part of Pickett's offensive plan relies on the long throw-ins by junior Maddy Moody, a defender, who jogs to most of the Spartan throw-ins from beyond midfield.

"After Peyton Walton graduated and did such a great job with her long throw-ins, I worked all summer to make mine better," said Moody, who, ironically, scored the lone goal for the Spartans state title last year off a late (throw-in from Walton) that Moody headed in. "I'd rather be in front to head the goal in, but whatever the team

needs."

Pickett noted that Deland's field is slightly smaller than normal and that throw-ins will be a key weapon.

"Her throws will be a major factor for us," said Pickett. "Again, like tonight, we have to get that second ball in the net."

In the first five minutes of the second half, St. Johns got deep three times with Mateo moving the ball quickly down the Comet sideline with the Spartan second goal coming after a Moody throw-in near the International 40 that Ellie Rosenau shot just off the goal to create a corner kick for Julia Boaventura. Boaventura's corner got to Crews' header, but missed to create a second corner kick; this time from Crews.

Moody got her head on the ball, but the ball got ejected out to Mateo who punched in her second goal for a 2-0 lead at 31:44.

"I tell them to think that they are going to get the ball in front of the net and score off those plays," said Pickett, noting that St. Johns had 12-13 corner kicks in the second half versus five in the first. "That (corner kicks) puts a lot more pressure on their defense. Our second half was much better at finishing." Just a minute later, Boaventura caught a missed header by Mateo off another Moody throw-in in front of the Comet goal with her right foot and made a wicked spin move before firing the ball into the net with her left foot putting

Goal four came from Kamryn Towers on a rush from the opposite side of the Spartans' fan section to end the game at 4-0 with 26:24 left on the clock.



2018

A Spartan history of state titles

STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

St. Johns Country Day School girls soccer coach Mike Pickett, center (Photo by Donna Conversano), has orchestrated a handful of state titles including, top left, a 2018 6-0 win over Miami Country Day, Maddy Moody (No. 12) and Peyton Crews (No. 15) battling for corner kick head ball; bottom left, 2015, with KayKay Harding (No. 5) and Abbey Newton (No. 20) getting a 4-0 win over Lakeland Christian; bottom center, 2019, Kamy Loustau, now at Princeton, leading Spartans to 1-0 win over Lakeland Christian, and, 2017, Peyton Walton's throw-ins instrumental in Spartans winning a 2-0 title over Lakeland Christian. Walton (No. 13) on bottom of photo.



2015



2019



2017



ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



Courtney Sage
SJCD Track

Courtney Sage, a senior at St. Johns Country Day School, won her 300 meters hurdles specialty at the Danny Brown Invitational at Bishop Snyder in 45.89 seconds. Sage's time is just over her 45.38 that she ran at last year's Class 1A championship race for second place.



Aaron Brown
FIHS Basketball

Fleming Island High senior center Aaron Brown finished with 26 points in Golden Eagles region playoff win over Tate High. Brown sparked a second half scoring blitz with a dunk followed by a three pointer.

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Eagles

from page 25

Brown. "Our target was their number three (guard Bettis Love, 21.4 points per game) to keep pressure on him. He got us in the first half, but we slowed him down in the second half."

Brown, who spurned a third quarter momentum shift with an alley-oop slam dunk from guard Sebastian Astor, that was followed by a soft three pointer. The crowd-pleasing double play turned a 41-38 Tate lead to a 44-40 Fleming Island shift that pushed the Golden Eagles attack



Fleming Island senior guard Sebastian Astor absorbs final seconds of region playoff win over Tate.

to outscore Tate 15-6 in a three minute span to end the third quarter.

"Seb and I work that in practice and we had it set up nice in that third quarter," said Brown. "And then, to add to the gym, I hit that three and the place went nuts."

Astor, who dished seven assists, finished with 17 points with Ahman Greenidge adding 13 and Elias Martin punching in 10 under the backboard on top of 11 rebounds. Greenidge had 10 rebounds.

Third-seeded for region 1-6A Fleming Island (20-8) now travels to second-seed Daytona Beach Mainland (18-10) for their region 1-6A semifinal on Tues., Feb. 25. Columbia High (26-2) is top seed for region 1-6A and will face fifth seed Tallahassee Lincoln (23-5) in their semifinal.

Mainland did beat Fleming Island 71-65 on January 10 in regular season play. Mainland averages nearly 76 points per game in the last five games; all wins with a 94 point outing against Spruce Creek on February 5.

"We needed Aaron's effort; running the floor and a couple of big moments out there," said Chandler. "The excitement of the gym kept us in the game and we improved a lot of those little things in big



Fleming Island forward Ahman Greenidge puts the clamps on Tate guard Devin Campbell in tight defensive battle in region 1-3A playoffs. Golden Eagles traveled to Daytona Beach Mainland High for region semifinal on Tues., Feb. 25.

games that we still need to work on. The other teams only get tougher and tougher as we go."

With the 12 point gap entering the fourth quarter, Fleming Island coach Traavis Chandler was wary of a Tate regroup and kept his troops on full throttle to grow the lead to 66-52 with four minutes to play.

"That guard (Love) put a lot of pressure on us in the first half and we were just trying to stay up with him," said Chandler. "We figured we could wear him down, but he broke our press and we had to go zone."

From there, Tate made some quick scores against the looser Fleming Island defense to close the game to 69-60, but Chandler quickly reinserted his main weapons to finish with a 10-7 surge to the

final 79-67 score.

Tate was already at 11 team fouls in the final two minutes making a comeback futile despite a nifty steal to layup plus free throw by Tate guard Keshawn Black that closed the gap to 73-65 with 1:12 to go.

In region 1-5A, Orange Park High (sixth seed, 15-11) punched in with a 14-7 fourth quarter to tie Choctowhatchee (third-seed), but eventually fell 48-42 in overtime to end their season in the region quarterfinals.

Choctawhatchee stormed to a 12-7 first quarter lead, but could not shake the pesky Raiders who answered with a three pointer from D'Marre Craddock to pull to 35-34 late in the fourth quarter before tying the game at 37-37.



STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

Season Over

Fleming Island High head basketball coach Traavis Chandler watches the final seconds tick away as his Golden Eagles; tied at 30-30 at halftime, down by as much as 13 points in the second half and as close as two points twice in the fourth quarter, fell 71-64 to Daytona Beach Mainland in the region 1-6A semifinal Tues., Feb. 25 in Daytona Beach. Fleming Island finished season with a 20-9 record and earned a first-time district title for the basketball program. See full coverage in Clay Today sports pages next week.

Fast start fuels Panthers during home opener win

By Ray DiMonda
Correspondent

ORANGE PARK - The Ridgeview High Panthers baseball team wasted no time in building a lead in the second inning, then never looking back as the Panthers extinguished the St. Joseph Academy Flashes, 6-2, on a cold, blustery Friday in Orange Park.

The St. Joseph Academy Flashes came into the Jungle at Ridgeview with a little spring in their step as they were coming off a four inning 15-0 win just four days prior. Ridgeview was rebounding from a tough 3-2 loss to Bartram Trail via a walk-off single in the eighth inning in their season opener on Tues., Feb. 18.

"I really liked the way we adjusted at the plate tonight," said Panther coach John Sgromolo. "Early in the pre-season we were struggling on adjusting at the plate, but I think tonight we did a really good job making mid-pitch adjustments. That's what it's going to take against a quality schedule like we play this year."

The Flashes made their own road much harder to travel with six errors on the night as the Panthers committed only a single error behind Jayden Long, who went five innings, and was closed out by Nomar Almanzar.

"I loved Jayden's intensity tonight," said Sgromolo. "He's only a sophomore, yet he understood the magnitude of two strike pitches and has a heavy fast ball. That's his second quality outing from him and we'll need more performances like that."

After both teams went three up, three out, The Flashes left a runner on with nothing to show for the

effort. The Panthers came back to bat and got things warmed up with a walk to Richard Long. With Kyle Richards at bat, Long took advantage of a wild pitch to reach third base. Then Richards had another wild

pitch on strike three that allowed him to make it to first, and score Long, 1-0.

Richards made his way to second on another error by the first baseman.

"I love this group of kids," said Sgromolo. "They are tough, they are hardnosed, they play the game the right way, and they are respectful."

Next up, McFarland dinked an RBI single to center field, scoring courtesy runner Avanti Anderson, 2-0.

The Flashes finally sparked enough and halted the rally, but the Panthers were off to an early two run lead.

In the bottom of the third, the Panthers poured on more fuel to the fire scoring Ryan Dickey off a Max Williams triple, 3-0. After a Richard Long walk, Williams would score off an RBI single from Jayden Long, 4-0.

The Panthers next travel to Bolles to take on the Bulldogs Tuesday which tops a four game road trip for the Panthers before they return to the Jungle to take on the Middleburg High Broncos.

"Next week is huge," said Sgromolo. "With the new playoff system, every game has that impact. Even games that you would not think are going to be that good, has that playoff vibe, so to speak, because you never know the one game that could keep you out of the playoffs."

Clay holds off Indians

Clay High opened with wins over Keystone Heights, 4-2, and Baker County, 4-1, in the first week of the season with the Blue Devils showing off timely hitting and tough pitching.

Against Keystone Heights, Clay grabbed two first inning runs off an RBI single by Chase Holman and an RBI grounder from Logan Wilson, but went scoreless to Keystone Heights pitcher Garfield Johns who had three strikeouts in the first two innings. Keystone Heights got a run in the second off a walk and two grounders with Chase Mattox getting Johns in from second base on a fielder's choice. Keystone Heights tied the game in the third off an



Clay High senior outfielder and pitcher Garrett Chun is poised at first base for steal attempt in Blue Devils' 4-2 win over Keystone Heights.



Ridgeview High's Richard Long scores early second inning run in Panthers' 6-2 home opener win over St. Joseph Academy.

error and single to Moreland Mike to score Andrew Cox.

An error in the fifth gave Clay the lead after a single and walk before Mike closed the inning with three strikeouts.

Against Baker County, Clay again struck for two first inning runs off a Logan Wilson 2RBI single with two more in the fifth off a walk and three singles for the win. Mason Barrett laid down a scoring bunt and Brandon Adams hit a grounder for two runs. Adams went five innings with five strikeouts and the one run for the Blue Devils.

Clay was set to play Oakleaf on Mon., Feb. 24 at the Jacksonville Baseball Grounds before hosting Baldwin on Tues., Feb. 25 and St. Johns Country Day School on Thurs., Feb. 27.

Spartans blast Stanton prep; Hodges, Taylor homers

St. Johns Country Day School blasted for five first inning runs off opportunistic baserunning and added homers from Brad Hodges and Jordan Taylor to crush Stanton Prep 14-7 in a Saturday night home opener on the St. Johns campus.

Taylor, who started on the mound with three strikeouts in the first inning, nearly hit his first homer of the year with a long fly ball to centerfield in the first inning, but the ball was caught at the fence. The flyball did allow one run to score; Finn Howell, who was on base after being hit by a pitch. Two walks set up Taylor RBI with J Oman grounding out scoring a second Spartan run. Luke Shannahan doubles to push the score to 5-0.

St. Johns will have a gauntlet week with a home game against Fleming Island on Tues., Feb. 25, at Clay on Thurs., Feb. 27 and at Bolles on Fri., Feb. 28.

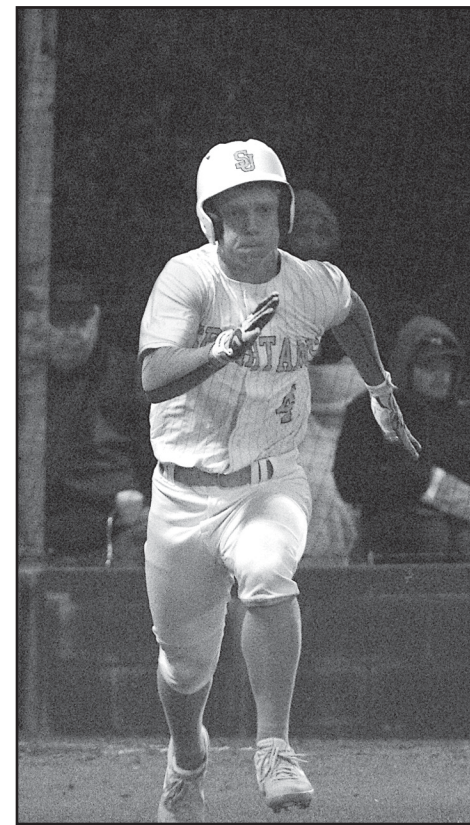
Oakleaf dimes Raiders in opener; Knights 4-0

Oakleaf High opened their baseball season with a 10-0 win over Orange Park then proceeded to halt University Christian, 10-2, and Fernandina Beach, 4-3, in an energetic season opening win.

Note: In a Monday night game (Feb. 24) at the Jacksonville Baseball Grounds, Oakleaf got an RBI single from Dalton Holland

in the seventh inning to edge Clay, 3-2.

The Knights have been crushing the baseball with 15 hits in 47 at bats (.319 team batting average) to start the season led by three batters; Dalton Holland, Leo Diaz and Luis Torres hitting for two RBIs apiece.



St. Johns Country Day School hitter Connor Moore makes sprint to first in 14-7 win over Stanton Prep.

Against Orange Park, the Knights scored nine runs in the first four innings to walk away with the win. Simon Kohn doubled in the first, 2-0; then hit an RBI single in the second with bases loaded with Diaz doubling in the fourth for two RBIs. Davion Hickox pitched four innings with four strikeouts to get the win.

Against University Christian, Oakleaf exploded to a 7-0 lead in the fourth off a walk to Jayden Rivera, a single to Diaz and an RBI double to Torres. Kohn hit an RBI single that also loaded the bases with Maddox and Holland both getting walked for two runs, 7-0.



Oakleaf High pitcher Davion Hickson had power in Knights' 10-0 win over Orange Park. Knights stayed unbeaten with seventh inning 3-2 win over Clay at Jacksonville Baseball Grounds.



Clay High assistant coach Travis McQuaig gives the old two fingers on the cap bll signal to his catcher for next pitch in Clay's 4-2 win over Keystone Heights.

Baseball

from page 29

Against Fernandina Beach, with the score tied at 3-3 in the fifth, Oakleaf got Torres on base with a single with a ground-er from Wooten putting Torres at third. P Smith singled in Torres for the gamewinner. Pitcher Landen Wooten, the gamewinner with six strikeouts, closed the game with three strikeouts in the sixth with Dan-non Smith knocking out three strikeouts in the seventh.

Oakleaf travels to the Jacksonville Baseball Grounds to play Clay on Mon., Feb. 24 with a home game against Middleburg on Tues., Feb. 25 and a Thurs., Feb. 27 game against Nease.

Fleming Island opens with 3-0 over Paxon

A pitcher's dual against Paxon High ended with the Fleming Island Golden Eagles baseball team getting two runs in the seventh to win 3-0 in their season opener in Jacksonville.

With just eight hits in 49 at bats between both teams, Fleming Island got eight

strikeouts from Aiden Mastantuno while Paxon starter Jackson Durant issued nine strikeouts to the Fleming Island batting lineup.

Fleming Island pushed their 1-0 lead to 3-0 behind a double by Drew Homitz in the seventh that came after Justin Lebesch reached first on an error at second base. Divine Valle's sacrifice fly scored Lebesch while an error scored Homitz for the 3-0 lead.

Fleming Island heads to St. Johns Coun-try Day School on Tues., Feb. 25 then back home to play Ridgeview on Fri., Feb. 28.

Middleburg 8, Bradford 3

Middleburg scores three runs in the fifth, four in the sixth to beat Bradford 8-3 in season opener on Thurs., Feb. 20.

Hunter Conaway blasted nine strike-outs in six innings from the mound for the Broncos.

A slew of walks and errors put three runs on the board for the Broncos.

Samuel Rollins had a double for Middleburg.

The Broncos travel to Oakleaf on Tues., Feb. 25 then head to Orange Park on Thurs., Feb. 28.



Orange Park hair-filled pitcher Stussy Riegel fires off fastball in Raiders' 10-0 loss to Oakleaf in season home opener for Oakleaf High Knights.



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Wrestle

from page 26

Region wrestling tournaments

(Fri.-Sat., Feb. 28-29)

Region 1-3A at Fleming Island High (District 1-3A top three: Fleming Island 276, Oakleaf 140.5, Creekside 126.5; 3-3A top three: Apopka 136, Colonial 129.5, Windermere 117; 2-3A top three: Flagler 220, Buchholz 195, University 145.5; 4-3A top three: Timber Creek 199.5, Hagerty 189.5, Lake Mary 141). 2019 Class 3A: 2. Fleming Island; 6. Hagerty; 17. Seminole; 19. Buchholz; 21. Lake Mary; 27. Freedom; 42. University; 49. Timber Creek. Creekside 42nd in 2A.

Region 1-2A at Tallahassee Chiles (District 1-2A top three: Pace 215.5, Fort Walton Beach 183, Gulf Breeze 166.5; 2-2A top three: Columbia 167, Lincoln 149, Mosley 128; 3-2A top three: Fletcher 205, Robert E. Lee 147, Ponte Vedra 132; 4-2A top three: Matanzas 231.5, St. Augustine 143.5, Seabreeze 140.5). 2019 Class 2A: 12. Matanzas; 16. Orange Park; 22. Pace; 28. Terry Parker; 33. Lincoln; 42. Columbia. (Mosley, 45th in 1A; Robert E. Lee 56th in 3A).

Region 1-1A at Wakulla (District 4-1A top three: Clay 255, Bolles 171, Ridgeview 95; 1-1A top three: Bay 141, South Walton 139, Marianna 135; 2-1A top three: Wakulla 259.5, Suwannee 167, Florida High 94; 3-1A top three: Yulee 180, Bishop Kenny 133, Raines 119. 2019 Class 1A: 6. Wakulla; 8. Florida High; 17. Suwannee; 21. Clay; 23. Bishop Kenny; 23. Raines; 23. Arnold; 27. Yulee

At Nease High School, Fleming Island's entire lineup, minus a 106 forfeit and a third quarter pin at 182 to Nick Janssen from Creekside 2019 state qualifier Jalen Hines, a slew of pins ensued led by Gannon Janssen's pancake in just 38 seconds over Stephen Farris of Bartram Trail.

Gannon Janssen had pins of 16 seconds, 43 seconds and 38 seconds to dominate his 145 weight class.

Nix, top ranked in Florida at 220, executed a 16 second pin in his semifinal match while Jeffrey Lascano scored a pin at 37 seconds in his semifinal.

At 170, Gavin Smith pinned Nease's Colin White in 41 seconds in his semifinal with Tanner Hill, at 152, flattening Creekside's Zach Johnson in 44 seconds in his semifinal.

In 2019, Fleming Island won the region title over Winter Springs and Hagerty. Fleming Island returns just one region champion; Chad Nix at 195 last year, 220 this year, with eight region top four finishers; Riley Holton (2nd at 113), Ryan Hobson (2nd at 126), Tyler Williams (2nd at 138), Gannon Janssen (3rd at 145), Luke Chop (3rd at 152), Tanner Hill (3rd at 160), Gavin Smith (3rd at 170) and Jeffrey Lascano (3rd at 220).

Oakleaf had no state qualifiers last year with four district finishers losing in the consolation rounds at regions; Marcus McGee, Abdiert Escobar (now at Clay), Logan Gilbert and David Parkes.

With Murrell crowned 2020 champion, Oakleaf sends nine wrestlers to the region meet with five wrestlers losing in finals to Fleming Island wrestlers; Trevor Owens to Isaac Padgett at 132; David Parkes to Tan-



Ridgeview High junior Matthew Rodriguez has a third and a second at state meet visits.

ner Hill at 152; Onjel Caraballo to Gavin Smith at 170; Isiah Schevchook to Lascano at 195 and Jason Mitchell to Nix at 220.

At Clay High, the Blue Devils dominated the field with 255 points with Bolles second at 171 and Ridgeview third at 95 with just nine wrestlers.

Seven Panthers wrestlers would advance to region with two crowned champions; Matthew Rodriguez, third two years ago in 1A, second last year, at 126 and Gabe Guzman, a state qualifier last year, at 145.

The Panthers got a second place to Shawn Tahir at 132, and thirds to Ian Finnorn at 138 and Spencer Robertson at 182.

For the Blue Devils, led by Luke Davis at 120, who has had his finest final week of wrestling with back-to-back wins against Fleming Island, put out nine champions for the day with three second place finishers and two thirds.

With district titles were Davis, Luke Boree at 138, Gale Hoskinson at 152, Tucker Reape at 160, Isaiah Clifford at 170, Jordan Bell at 182, Joe Grelli at 195, Garrett Tyre at 220 and Derrek Mosley at 285.

In 2019, Wakulla dominated the region 1-1A tournament with 241 points to Florida High's 129. Clay finished fourth with 123.5; just half a point behind Suwannee.

Clay returns region champions Tazz Hampton (106) and Gale Hoskinson (132). Joe Grelli (4th at 220), returns as a state qualifier.

Last year, Ridgeview had Rodriguez as a region 1-2A champion with Guzman third for the Panthers top returners this year.

At Lincoln, Orange Park came home with three district champions; Davon Bailey (120), Cameron Broughton (145) and James McArthur (220), one second placer, one third and one fourth place finisher. Middleburg finished with two thirds and four fourth place finishers.

In 2019, Lincoln inched away from Matanzas for the region 1-2A title, 193.5-185, with Orange Park sixth with 92 points, Ridgeview (now 1A) 10th and Middleburg 11th. Bartram Trail (4th) and Creekside (5th) are now in region 1-3A.

The Raiders return state qualifiers Cameron Broughton (second at 138) and Jacob Moore (third at 182) from last year's team.

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HIGHLIGHTS



SUZE ORMAN'S ULTIMATE RETIREMENT GUIDE

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For more information visit wjct.org

Fun and Humor



Fleming Island long jumper Sierra Deleon gets sand-filled landing at Bishop Snyder.

Track

from page 26

finished third in 51.54 with Middleburg's Robert Nogales sixth in 53.86.

In the 1600, Oakleaf's Dylan Nelson was top area finisher in sixth at 4:33.37 with Bartram Trail's Jalani White winning at 4:26.20.

For the girls, Mandarin, Bolles and Bartram Trail battled to a 1-2-3 finish by just two points; 80-79-78, with Fleming Island fourth with 53, Oakleaf 10th with 32, St. Johns Country Day School 12th at 16, Orange Park 18th at 12.50 and Middleburg 19th at 12.

Oakleaf got a top time in the 4 x 100 relay for the girls with a 49.95 second win over Bartram Trail's 51.26 in an impressive first split for the Lady Knights. Fleming Island was third at 52.21.

St. Johns got a crown to hurdler Courtney Sage who won the 300 hurdles in 45.89 ahead of Fleming Island's Isabelle Flores at 48.59. Sage was third in the 100 hurdles. Last year, Sage was second in the Class 1A 300 hurdles in 45.38.

In the 1600, Fleming Island sophomore Mei Chiang duked it out with Bolles sophomore Hadley Ropp and teammate Marisa Kortright in a race that ended with Ropp first at 5:25.96, Chiang second at 5:28.32 and Kortright third at 5:29.47 in a thrilling final lap. Chiang was 18th in 4A last year in 5:24.18.

⊙ ** ☪ ☼ ☽ ☾ ☿ ♁ ♃ ♄ ♅ ♆ ♇ ♈ ♉ ♊ ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to the library.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 21 = a)

A. 4 24 24 14 6

Clue: Volumes

B. 22 21 10 21 17 24 7

Clue: List of items

C. 21 17 15 2 21 4 13 10 25 12 13

Clue: Sort by letter

D. 5 13 21 20 25 11 7

Clue: Interpreting printed words

Answers: A. books B. catalog C. alphabetize D. reading

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to the library.

SIESLA

□ □ □ □ □ □

Answer: Aisles

Guess Who?

I am a singer born in California on February 8, 1961. I played basketball and football in school and also enjoyed surfing near my LA home. I rose to fame in the 1980s, when I was part of a "crüe" with other hard rock musicians.

Answer: Vince Neil

Flying McCoy's



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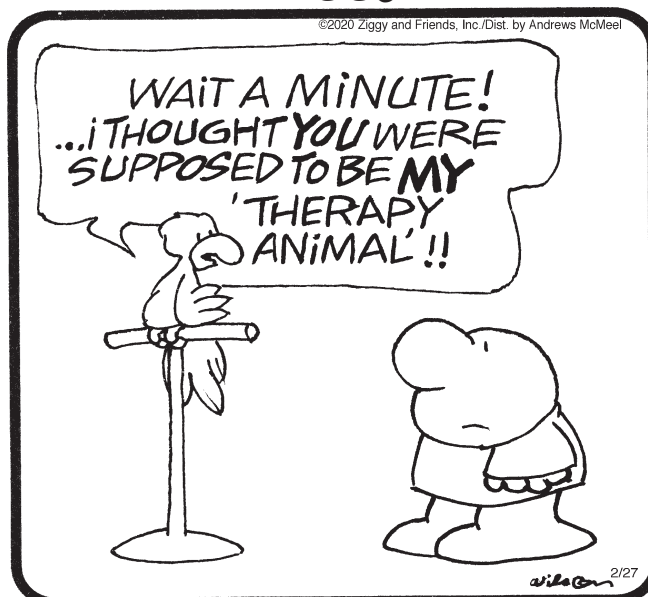
In the Bleachers



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Ziggy

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UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

			2	6		5		
				3		4	1	
7				9	1		8	
						8	9	3
				1				
9	6	3						
	9		7	8				6
	2	1		5				
		6		4	2			

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I	E	E				A	N	V	I	L		N	E
D	R	E	W	B	R	E	E	S		P	O	A	C
						E	P	I	C	S		C	A
P	R	E		D	A	D		S	O	R	A	S	
H	E	A	D		S	O	M	E	T	I	M	E	S
M	A	M	E	T		T	A	R		S	A	B	I
						R	E	C	O	V	E	R	E
						S	A	R	O	S		N	A
C	B					M	A	W		S	A	R	I
H	O	P	E	H		M	O	D	E	R	A	T	E
A	D	I	T			B	R	A	E	S		B	A
S	E	R	E			I	N	K	S		D	E	B
E	D	E	R			D	A	S			B	R	I

SOLUTION:

4	1	9	2	6	8	5	3	7
6	8	2	5	3	7	4	1	9
7	3	5	4	9	1	6	8	2
1	5	7	6	2	4	8	9	3
2	4	8	3	1	9	7	6	5
9	6	3	8	7	5	2	4	1
5	9	4	7	8	3	1	2	6
8	2	1	9	5	6	3	7	4
3	7	6	1	4	2	9	5	8

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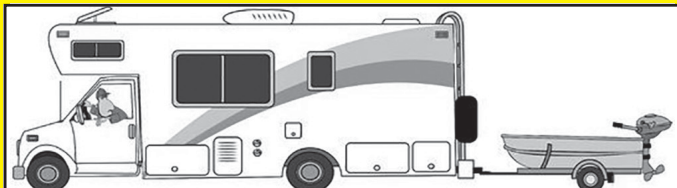
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