

CLAY TODAY

PRESEASON GAMES

Thurs., Aug. 18
Oakleaf at Sandalwood

Fri., Aug. 19
Orange Park at Bolles
Westside at Fleming Island
Clay vs. Bishop Kenny
Keystone at Ridgeview
Middleburg vs. Episcopal

THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 2022

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VOLUME 60, NO. 35 75¢

Challenge accepted



STAFF PHOTO BY DON COBLE

Despite being in different levels of disrepair, Challenge Enterprises CEO Nancy Keating is eager to start work on remodeling a kitchen lab to help members learn new skills.

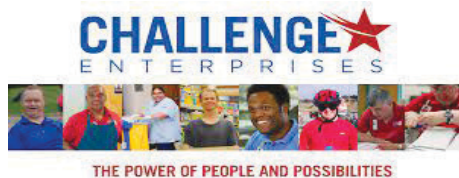
Kitchen 'lab' to offer specific skills for members with individual abilities

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – One of the sink leaks in the back room that once was a kitchen at Club Enterprise at the Challenge Enterprise Plaza on Kingsley Avenue.

Many ceiling tiles are either missing, broken or stained ed by water damage. Pieces of the floor are loose or gone. There are gaps where cabinets once hung; the walls still are painted with dingy yellow paint.

The dining room area is cluttered with boxes of children's clothes and toys. One



of the doorknobs is missing leading out to the hallway.

For many, the abandoned kitchen area is delapidated. But for Nancy Keating, it's a blank canvas that can provide new resources to create job skills and more

SEE CHALLENGE, 19

District hopes latest round of new hires solve late school bus pickups

By Nick Blank
nick@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – The Clay County School District is confident 12 school bus driver vacancies will be filled by 20 candidates who already are in different stages of the hiring process.

The district has 12 current vacancies about a week into the current school year, which began Aug. 10. Supervisor of Transportation Randall Crawford said each driver is responsible for three routes. When times are lean, drivers double back due to the high capacity, meaning some drivers are handling six routes. Interim Transportation Director Scott Wiand is currently driving buses.

"Ultimately, in every district there's a driver shortage. Certain routes must be covered. Unfortunately, we have only a certain number of drivers currently," Crawford said. "One driver is a big deal. We celebrate every trainee that comes through."

School districts across the country experience a shortage of drivers prior to the 2020-2021 school year, the first full year beset by the COVID-19 pandemic. The driver shortage led to district's upping the pay and benefits due to necessity of the position.

"(COVID) did cause more driver shortages. Unfortunately, as things relaxed a bit, we still had the after effects of CO-



VID," Crawford said. "(Hiring drivers) would give us more breathing room with those routes. Some veterans can cover six routes."

Crawford said the district has hired 13 drivers the past two months. Had the district not taken that step things may be more drastic than they are now, he said.

"If we haven't taken those measures, our storm would have been greyer, on that note," Crawford said.

The district pays for all training and the Commercial Driver's License, other than the fee to take the test at a Department of Motor Vehicles location. Crawford said there are nine candidates in the four-to-six-week training process and 12 other potential drivers are being screened.

The hourly rate starts at \$15.92 and

SEE BUS, 8

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Orange Park council opens its 2022-23 budget talks

By Nick Blank
nick@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – The town of Orange Park started to break down and hash out its next budget during the first of three public meetings.

At Monday night's two-hour budget workshop, Town Manager Sarah Campbell said the town had about \$15.7 million in revenues.

The town's largest projected revenues are ad valorem taxes, which increased from \$3,678,699 in the 2021-2022 fiscal year to \$4,055,769 in the upcoming fiscal year.

"Property values increased pretty dramatically countywide," Campbell said. "The other revenues are smaller with not much change in those."

The American Rescue Plan Act will provide \$2.2 million for the second consecutive and final year. Campbell said there are



Sarah Campbell

about \$1.4 million in federal funds rolling over.

The commission then heard budget reports from department heads Finance Director John Villanueva and Economic and Community Development Director Stephen Smith. On the event side, Events Coordinator Emily Dockery said 45,000 people attended the Fall Festival last year. The event raised \$59,882, according to the town. This year's Fall Festival is the 40th and it takes place on Oct. 15-16.

"This is how we showcase our town," Mayor Randy Anderson said.

The farmer's market events had 15,000 people spread out over 17 dates. Kids Fest, attendance 8,000, finally got a break from the weather, she said.

"Everybody was super happy, it was one of the first times we've had the event both days," Dockery said.

Inflation presented a challenge, Dockery said. Costs for event-related equipment like porta-potties have increased, but the town lost transportation services to one of its events, which Dockery said stack on one another.



"There's a lot of little things like that that add up," Dockery said.

Anderson asked about events for adults, including the Longest Table event, which was canceled by inclement weather.

"I think we need to budget about \$20,000 for adult events," Anderson said.

Budget and Finance Committee member Winnette Sandlin said when the town spends money it needs to be flexible. Paying attention to trends is important, she said. "We live in an era where the attention span is very short," Sandlin said.

With building permits, Campbell

showed projections of the town breaking even for the next fiscal year. However, by 2025 the town could see a potential \$57,000 deficit in the fund. Campbell said the town has to be competitive with other local entities, but also must cover costs for the particular funds. "The permit costs need to be increased to break even every year," she said. Council members noted the small size of each department and thanked town staff for a thorough process.

The next two budget meetings are at 6 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 22, and Wednesday, Aug. 24.

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Fleming Island senior first from county to serve with Boys Nation Senate

White picked among 430 applicants for state position with American Legion

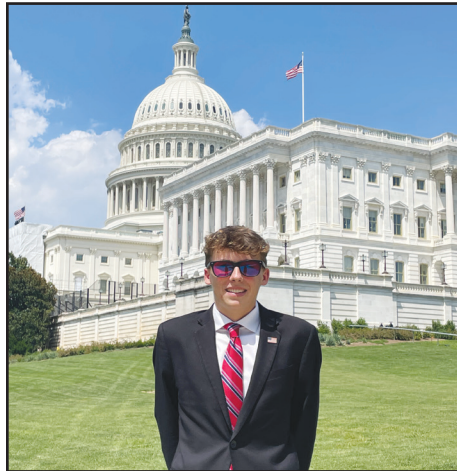
By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

FLEMING ISLAND – By the time Brady White heard his name announced for a leading position in the American Legion’s Boys Nation, he had given up hope of winning a top office in the American Legion program.

“I honestly don’t remember what kind of happened,” the senior at Fleming Island High said. “I was tearing up. It was crazy.”

White became the first student from the county to be selected as a senator for the program that includes “civic training, leadership development and a focus on Americanism,” he said.

White wants to be an attorney, so his training at the state level will create a broader base of knowledge. His credentials already include being the senior class secretary and National Honor Society senior membership coordinator. His other ac-



Fleming Island’s Brady White is the first from Clay to be selected as a Boys Nation senator.

tivities include being Chairman of the Clay County Superintendent’s Student Advisory Council, the only student ex officio board member of the Clay Education Foundation, an attorney at the Clay County Teen Court, Clay County Teen Court FSU Mock Trial Team, winner of the Gold President’s Volunteer Service Award, Youth Leadership

SEE BOYS, 5

Green Cove Springs starts process to upgrade two landmark parks

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The city council set aside an extra 90 minutes ahead of Tuesday night’s regular meeting to discuss plans to make upgrades to Vera Francis Hall and Augusta Savage Friendship parks, but it needed less than 15 minutes to push both projects forward.

In the first special session meeting, Public Works Field Supervisor Greg Bauer asked the council to approve Phase 6 of a plan to install new lights for the baseball/softball field and repave nature and walking paths at Vera Hall Park on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Bauer said the city could get as much as \$112,500 from the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program to help pay for the \$150,000 project.

There have been six layers in the approval process and the council quickly agreed it would be willing to spend \$37,5000 from its Capital Improvement Plan. Green Cove Springs must submit the grant application by the end of the month.

In the second meeting, it took the council less than eight minutes to push

a second grant application to the FRDAP to the second phase. That project would lead to a pair of picnic pavilions, resurfacing the basketball court and enhancing the picnic and recreational areas of Augusta Savage Friendship Park.

The city will ask for \$50,000 and it won’t have to match any of the state funds, Bauer said.

“We usually stagger (grant requests), but you know, this year we decided it would take too long,” Bauer said. “We’ve got to look at the scope of the work because we have to balance staff and the scope of the work. You don’t like to bite off more than you can chew by having too much going on at one time. But we will make sure that if they give us the money, they definitely will get results.”

That grant application also faces an Aug. 31 deadline.

In business from the regular session, the city council voted 5-0 to request \$69,099 from the American Recovery Plan Fund for the creation of a citywide transportation mobility plan and fee.

The city council meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

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Reading, writing and Miranda Rights:

DeSantis wants cops as teachers

By A.G. Gancarski
For FloridaPolitics.com

Gov. Ron DeSantis is rolling out new proposals intended to bring teachers to Florida, with shortages affecting districts throughout the state.

One such proposal would take first responders, including former police officers, firefighters and EMTs, from those high-pressure environments and move them to K-12 classrooms.

DeSantis said his proposed Governor's Recruitment Program was "focusing on our heroes," seeking to bring former first responders in the way that former members of the military are now eligible for hire.

"We will waive the exam fees for the state teachers certification," DeSantis vowed, floating a \$4,000 bonus for all recruits and an additional \$1,000 incentive for those teachers who are addressing "acute shortages" in the classroom.

"Science, ESE, reading," DeSantis exemplified. "Those are all very important."

"We've got people who served in law enforcement, retired, and now they're looking for the next chapter in their life," DeSantis explained.

Education Commissioner Manny Diaz was on board.

"Sheriff, we may be going back into these rows behind you to recruit," Diaz joked. "What better place to have them than in front of our young people in the classroom?"

DeSantis rolled out other proposals beyond expanding eligibility to former first responders, including a two-year teacher apprenticeship program that would allow anyone with an associate of arts degree to get "real world classroom experience" under a mentor.

"What makes a teacher great is actually being there, doing it," DeSantis said.

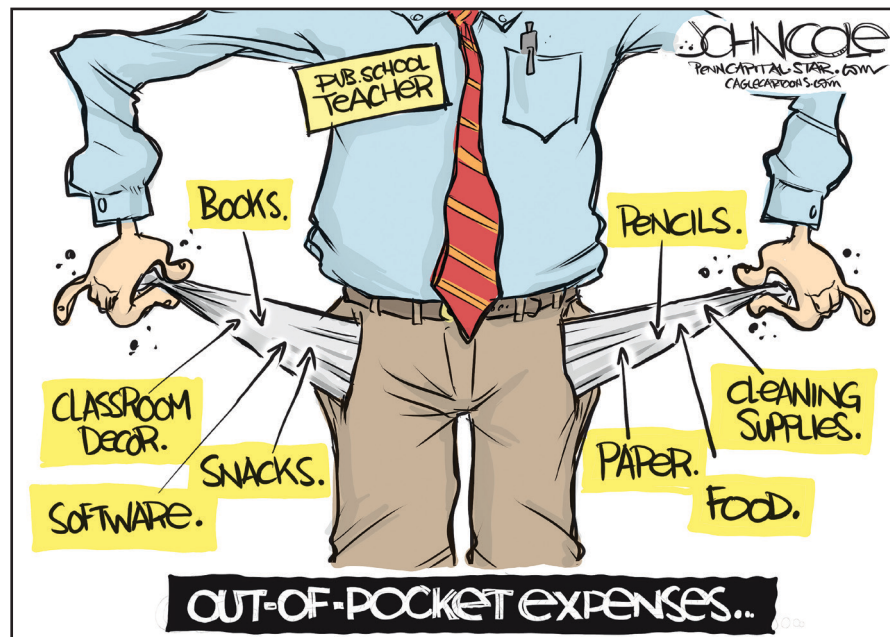
Mentors would get \$4,000 bonuses per trainee.

DeSantis rolled out a second proposal tailored to current classroom teachers, a scholarship program to allow current teachers to get master's degrees so they can teach increasingly popular dual enrollment classes. More than 92,000 students took those classes last year, which allow students to get college credit while in K-12 settings.

DeSantis was in Pasco County Tuesday, at River Ridge High School in New Port Richey, when he made the remarks. After his formal announcement, a reporter asked about recruiting international

SEE TEACHERS, 5

OPINIONS



'You can't fake gravity' – or the escape pro wrestling provides

By Don Coble
Managing Editor

Hello. My name is Don, and I love professional wrestling.

There, I said it. And I stand behind my words and a conviction for the absurd. To me, it's smart to have an escape from reality.

Throughout my adulthood, I've been told the first step to recovery is admitting you have a problem. I'm not sure liking professional wrestling is a problem, but it's something that many consider being a failure of common sense.

But I stand by my admiration of fake muscles, scripted outcomes and storylines that would make soap opera writers cringe.

So do an overwhelming number of other television viewers. There's a reason why WWE's Monday Night Raw is the longest-running weekly episode show in TV history. The company's first episode was aired in 1993. I was 26 then. Now I'm three weeks away from my 65th birthday.

My love, however, of the entertainment industry started long before Hulk Hogan ripped off his first T-shirt, the Undertaker delivered his first Tombstone Piledriver and Ric Flair won his first match with the Figure-Four.

I lived in Shelby, North Carolina



Don Coble

when I was in sixth grade. The highlight of the week for a middle-schooler was the weekly NWA wrestling show on Saturday afternoon. That was a time long before prime time and pay-for-view. If you tuned in then, you were a fan. And for that moment, it was as real as Baron von Raschke using "The Claw" or an "Atomic Drop" by Eddie Graham to win a match.

Of course, I know better now. Sort of. When I was in sixth grade, I looked forward to the local Carolina wrestling group coming to the Shelby, North Carolina Recreation Area. I watched my heroes like Johnny Weaver, Hiro Matsuda, Mr. Wrestling, Cowboy Ron Orton and the Missouri Mauler. Shelby wasn't ever big enough for superstars like Jack Brisko, Harley Race or Mr. Wrestling, but I was thrilled to see most of my weekly heroes.

To me, it was real. Now, 51 years later, it still seems so. A year later, I sat in front of a 19-inch black-and-white TV in seventh grade and saw Neil Armstrong walk on the moon. That didn't seem as real as watching Aldo Bogni getting the

Back then, wrestlers simply beat on each other. Mickey Rourke's "The Wrestler" was more true than you know. Dusty Rhodes, whose real first name was Virgil, made a living from getting cut on his forehead and having hour-long battles with guys like Terry Funk, Flair, Nitkia Koloff and Blackjack Mulligan. They'd then drive 100 miles to another city and do it all over again.

Today's wrestlers are more technical. Performers have big muscles and small

SEE WRESTLE, 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.

Echt: (ekt) an adjective that means authentic and typical.

"The speech given during graduation was an echt sermon that bored everyone."

This Week in History

Five years ago, 2017

- Sarah Campbell is selected by the Orange Park Town Council as the new town manager eight days after Jim Hanson resigned.

- The nonprofit organization, Changing Homelessness, canvasses shopping center parking lots before sunrise to get an accurate count of homeless veterans in the county.

- Green Cove Springs City Council considers a plan to make Wi-Fi available at Spring Park.

10 years ago, 2012

- Charlie Van Zant uses his military service, former position on the school board and the fact he didn't oppose Russell Baptist Church Paster Ron Baker's plan to hold prayer service circles at the flagpoles at four elementary schools as the catalyst to win the election for Superintendent over incumbent Ben Wortham.

- Newcomer Tara Green win the primary election to be the next Clerk and Comptroller of the County Court.

- Sheriff Rick Beseler wins re-election during the primary. He is unopposed in primary election.

20 years ago, 2002

- The state launches a manhunt for 300 suspected sexual predators, including Miguel A. Cardoza, 21, and Rodney L. Prevatt, 21, who are wanted in Clay County for violation of probation after being convicted of being sexual predators.

- The cost of traffic tickets was increased by \$3 by the Clay County Board of Commissioners.

- Walter J. Morgan, 65, is arrested for stalking a 16-year-old girl while she was walking on County Road 218.

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@claytodayonline.com

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.

Wrestle

from page 4

small waists who won't spill blood. Their flips and theatrics are more reminiscent of Cirque du Soleil than a "fighting" organization.

But make no mistake, it's still physical.

Even then – and now – there wasn't a time when I *really* thought it was real. But when you're at a match live, it's easy to get swept up at the moment. I have two college degrees, but I used to scream out the number of times my favorite wrestler beat up his opponent.

I never realized how much wrestling is a physical and difficult business until I met Bill Goldberg. I was covering a NASCAR race in Las Vegas and I arrived four hours early. I went to the press room restroom and before I could unbuckle my belt there was a loud punch against the door. I yelled for the person to wait his turn. He yelled back, "Dude, I'm dying out here!" I decided I could wait, so I gave up my spot. I started to yell: "What's your problem?" as I opened the door.

It was Goldberg. The former WCW World Heavyweight Champion.

A half-hour later, we ate breakfast together. We talked about his business and

my long interest in the sport. He admitted he knows the audience – well, most of the audience – knows it's not real. Then he said something that I've never forgotten:

"We may know how it ends up, but you can't fake gravity. When you get thrown off the top rope, you just got thrown off the top rope and it hurts."

That's when I realized professional wrestlers are carnival geeks. But I still will watch. I will yell at cheap shots from the bad guys and scream for popular wins. And I still get goosebumps when John Cena enters the ring.

For the two or three hours I'm watching wrestling, the matches seem real and the rest of the world seems fake. I need an escape from the news of the day, even if it's only for a couple of hours a week. It may be fake – and extremely physical – but it's a distraction millions of us enjoy.

A body slam certainly must hurt, but it's nothing like the reality of political discord and rising costs and crime that tries to consume us every day. It's why my heroes have always had scarred bodies and wretched lifestyles in a "fake" industry, not the power to filibuster or be cozy with lobbyists in real life.

Somebody, please ring the bell. For the next couple of hours, I need to return to make-believe for a little while.

Teachers

from page 4

teachers, but DeSantis did not embrace the proposal.

"I don't want to go with a foreigner over someone from our communities," DeSantis said.

In the wake of the Governor's announcement, Agriculture Commissioner and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Nikki Fried denounced the proposal.

"Let me be clear: we should not be lowering the bar for teachers in Florida. Instead of paying teachers what they're worth and agreeing to stop politicizing their jobs, DeSantis is trying to let Floridians with no experience and minimal training teach our kids.

"It's not rocket science: we have a teacher shortage crisis because DeSantis has turned classrooms into battlegrounds

to fight his culture wars and divide our state. Allowing anyone to teach without a certificate will push Florida even further to the bottom of the rankings when it comes to the quality of our education, and our kids will ultimately pay the price," Fried said, before saying the real issue is compensation for currently qualified teachers.

"There are plenty of qualified people who would love to be certified teachers if they were paid enough to make ends meet and didn't have to buy basic classroom supplies with their own money," she said. "This is unfortunately just another fight in DeSantis' war on public education and kids in Florida."

A.G. Gancarski has written for FloridaPolitics.com since 2014. He is based in Northeast Florida. He can be reached at AG@FloridaPolitics.com or on Twitter: @AGGancarski.

tering after a Green Cove Springs Police Department officer found him on the driving range of the Reynolds Park Golf Course at 3:27 a.m.

40 years ago, 1982

- Leroy Wood is sentenced to 30 years for the shotgun slaying of Frank Davis.
- Sen. Lawton Chiles addresses the Clay County Executive Committee's Biennial Dinner Dance.

- Republican gubernatorial candidate "Skip" Bafalis campaigns in Clay County.

Boys

from page 3

Jacksonville delegate, blue ribbon at the county science fair and Clay County Agricultural Fairgrounds, an ISEF nomination in 2020 and varsity swimming.

He was the youngest intern for U.S. Congresswoman Kat Cammack and was an intern on the campaign for Senator Marco Rubio.

White said during his eight days at American Legion Boys Nation, 100 aspiring senators got a hands-on approach to how the U.S. Senate and federal government function. They were divided into two political parties – the Federalists and the Nationalists. Each conducted a party convention, set a platform and nominated members for elected offices, including Boys Nation president, vice president and party leaders.

Each senator also wrote, introduced

and debated a bill before an appropriate Senate committee. If successful, the bill was debated in front of the entire Senate. Bills passing the Senate are later signed or vetoed by the Boys Nation president.

White originally wanted to be selected as the Boys Nation Attorney General. He went through several rounds of rigorous questioning ahead of the final selections.

"They drilled you on just about every issue," he said.

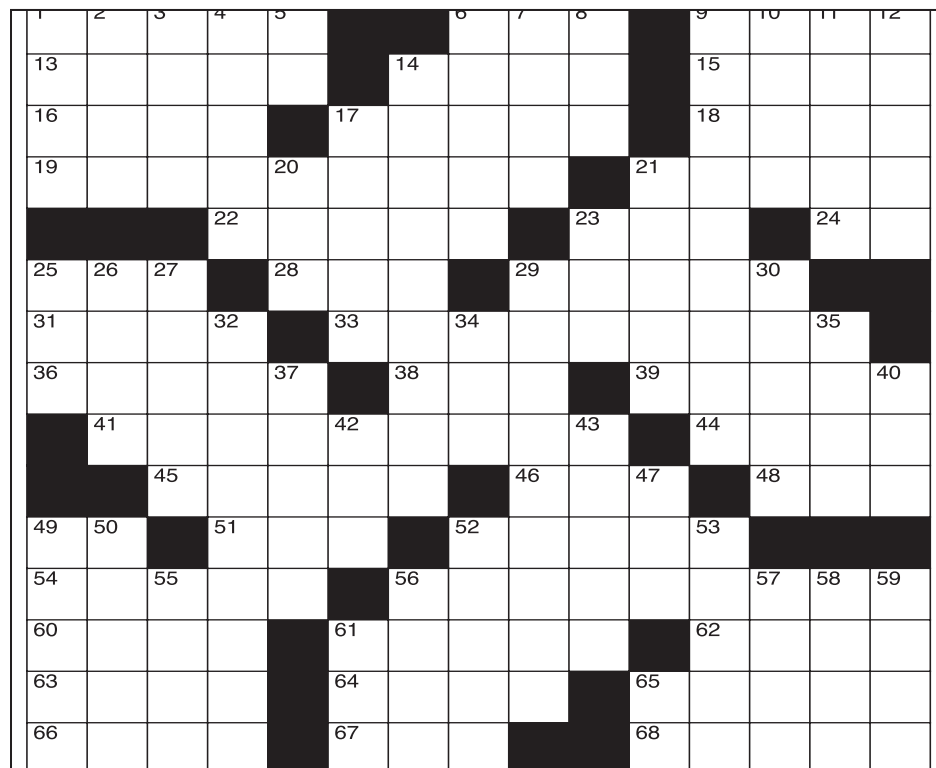
He was bypassed as a delegate or alternate during the awards ceremony.

"And then they said, 'the first senator going to Boys Nation on behalf of Florida will be Brady White,'" he said.

White was supposed to meet President Joe Biden, but he was quarantined after testing positive for the COVID-19 virus.

"But I got to meet his dog instead," White said.

The American Legion spends \$300,000 a year to sponsor the program.



CLUES ACROSS

- Influential Swedish, Belgian clan
- Swiss river
- Nocturnal S. American rodent
- Like coagulated milk
- Lima is its capital
- Lying down
- Jai __, sport
- Egyptian statesman
- Napoleon Dynamite's uncle
- Renovated
- Chadic language
- 18-year period
- Beverage container
- Natural logarithm
- The 'mecca' of basketball
- A way to darken
- Mackerels
- Actor Pitt
- Places to buy seafood
- True firs
- Neither
- Fencing sword
- Italian pastas
- Island nation close to the U.S.
- Begets
- Resembles a pouch
- __ student, learns healing

- Sodium
- Indicates position
- The world has one
- Partner to pains
- Photographer
- Chew the fat
- Culture of the British Iron Age
- Weaverbird
- Advice or counsel
- Asian nation
- Brought on board
- German river
- Airborne (abbr.)
- Leaf-footed bug genus

CLUES DOWN

- Mark left behind
- Cry weakly
- Ancient region in modern Syria
- Farewell
- Blue grass state
- Genus of mosquitoes
- S. Israeli city
- You can get stuck in one
- One who mistrusts others unjustifiably
- First month of ancient Hebrew calendar
- Tigers legend fielder
- Make more attractive

- Horses
- Slight projection in typefaces
- Male parent
- Jack and Jill are two
- After B
- Licensed for Wall Street
- Missile with about 600-mile range
- Goddesses
- A day kids love
- Oily secretion
- One-tenth of a meter
- A father's male child
- One point east of southeast
- Silk garments
- Cool!
- The color of anger
- Trade profession
- It can get you around
- Mother-of-pearl
- Hurt
- Legendary slugger Hank
- Polio vaccine developer
- Incline from vertical
- Sea creature
- Actress Kate
- Affirmative votes
- Nothing
- Pie __ mode
- Expresses surprise

History

from page 4

30 years ago, 1992

- A week after his body was discovered in some woods in Green Cove Springs, there has been no arrest in the murder of former Orange Park sanitation worker Larry Brister.
- The creation of a Municipal Service Benefit District means residents who live on private dirt roads are eligible for county maintenance.
- John Neumann was arrested for loitering

County's tourism includes updates, new guidelines for next five-year plan

By Nick Blank
nick@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – A plan to shape, improve and guide tourism in Clay County is under way.

The recent Tourism Development Council meeting included a presentation from the firm CSL, Conventions, Sports and Leisure International, which is responsible for the five-year plan.

CSL's Tyler Othen said the firm surveyed more than 500 residents and about 40 stakeholders. They also reviewed the area's hotels, events, attractions and competition.

"We looked at what niches Clay County could tap into," Othen said.

He said there are several ways to enhance tourism and the survey responses helped. Residents scored possible concepts including a waterfront entertainment district, unique restaurants and an outdoor waterpark, which were the three highest scored items. Recreation was well-represented further with bike paths, an ad-



venture park and an outdoor concert venue also scoring high.

"You can see that a lot of the ideas that scored very highly are quality of life assets," Othen said.

He said linking the county's tourism and residents' needs is a challenge, though there is some overlap with activities for both. CSL was conducting interviews and research studies related to family entertainment, amateur sports, and arts and culture events in the county.

He used soccer, a sport dominated by private expensive clubs at the youth level, as an example. Though the sport is ap-



preciated with various amateur teams in Jacksonville over the years and infrequent men and women U.S. National Team visits, the area does not have a hub for youth levels of the sport. Clay could take advantage of that, Othen said.

"There's just a lack of indoor facilities especially," he said. "That's an exciting opportunity."

Board chairman Mike Cella called the plan edifying and said he was eager for more. A full version of the plan will be available next month, Othen said.

In other business, the TDC examined grant guidelines recommendations for sporting events. Tourism Director Kimberley Morgan recommended a maximum amount of \$35,000 for sports-related grants, which are different from reimbursable grants for special or signature events.

The board also unanimously approved

allowing event-holders to enter multi-year agreements with the county.

Committee members later reviewed its bed tax collections. From January to June, the county collected \$1,238,105 in bed tax. That figure is \$199,310 greater than 2021's January-to-June year-to-date number.

April 2022 collection was the highest ever monthly bed tax collection at \$161,106. Collections have not dipped below \$116,000 during the first six months of the year. The average monthly collection, going as far back as 2016, usually hovers between \$80,000-\$102,000.

"April and May are the highest we've ever had on record," Morgan said. "... We are really excited about that. That's setting us on pace to meet and exceed the \$1.5 million we projected for collecting this fiscal year."

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Safe to cross: Traffic guard discusses important role

By Nick Blank
nick@claytodayonline.com

FLEMING ISLAND – The role of a crossing guard is more than shepherding students from point A to point B.

Donning a reflective vest, crossing guard Sandy Massaro assists children in crossing the street, though that's not all.

Massaro is now in her fifth year as a part-time employee of the Clay County Sheriff's Office. She retired at 70 from a long career in the banking industry. She also works with the Salvation Army and volunteers with new U.S. citizens with their tests.

"I needed something else to fill my time," she said. "I need to be busy all the time."

Her grandchildren attended Fleming Island Elementary, and one application later, the wheels were in motion.

"I love kids, they are young. I went online and got the job," Massaro said. "Here I am five years later doing it because it's so much fun."

Massaro said she gives the students compliments and asks what's on their minds. Massaro chuckled that she keeps up with the latest trends by talking to the students.

"We get to be friends by the end of the school year," she added. "You get to know

entire families – moms, dads, uncles, nieces – because they walk with their kids."

Safety and security are Massaro's primary goals on both her morning and afternoon shifts. The Eagle Harbor Parkway and Lakeshore Drive intersection is an array of boaters, golf carts, bikes and pedestrians. Several things could happen, which is why she needs children and parents to listen and pay attention. There can be confusion about whose turn it is to proceed.

"The children know I'm there for them



STAFF PHOTO BY NICK BLANK

Crossing guard Sandy Massaro stands in front of Fleming Island Elementary School.

and they know I won't let them get hurt. You have to be vigilant. The No.1 priority is the kids. I have rules for them that they have to do certain things," Massaro said. "It's hugely important those kids do not step off the curb when I tell them to."

Numerous drivers pass through Lakeshore Drive and Eagle Harbor Parkway intersection. Massaro said drivers need to follow speed limits in school zones, which decrease to 15 mph. She also asked drivers not to encroach on sidewalks.

"The first three days of school were fabulous. Friday went well, they really are a wonderful group of students," Massaro

said of the first week of school.

The job takes a certain person, she said. For more information about the crossing guard position, visit governmentjobs.com/careers/claysheriff.

"Whatever the weather is, you're a part of it," Massaro said. "You have to be an outside person."

The children are what makes the job special for her, Massaro said.

"The children themselves, when they are little, they are easier to read, happy or not," Massaro said. "In general, they smile. I'm a happy person and I try to make them smile."

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Girl Scout to add Raspberry Rally cookies to next year's drive

For Clay Today

CLAY COUNTY – Girl Scouts of Gateway Council, which includes Clay County, and Girl Scouts of the USA will offer a new cookie, Raspberry Rally, to the nationwide lineup for the 2023 Girl Scout Cookie season. The thin, crispy cookie is a “sister cookie” to the beloved Thin Mints, infused with raspberry flavor in place of mint, and dipped in the same delicious chocolatey coating. Raspberry Rally gives devoted Girl Scout Cookie lovers yet another reason to be excited for the upcoming cookie season. This must-have new cookie will be the first in the Girl Scout Cookie lineup to be exclusively offered for online sale and direct shipment only, enhancing girls’ e-commerce sales and entrepreneurial skills. Raspberry Rally will be available to consumers nationally during the 2023 Girl



Scout Cookie season. Girl Scouts active in the Gateway Council and across the United States will offer the new treat alongside favorites like Thin Mints, Adventurefuls and Samoas.

Cookie season is an exciting annual event for Girl Scouts across the nation

and is about so much more than delicious treats. Proceeds raised from in-person and online cookie orders directly benefit local councils and troops. When Girl Scouts run their own cookie business, they are a part of the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world. Girl Scouts learn leadership, problem-solving and community building through the Girl Scout Cookie Program, resulting in an invaluable experience that cultivates an innovative, entrepreneurial spirit, which is an integral pillar of the Girl Scouts’ mission.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program encourages girls to be risk takers, to think outside of the box and to be confident in their own abilities. Whether they’re working toward earning their Cookie Goal Setter badge as a Daisy or their My Cookie Business Resume badge as an Ambassador, Girl Scouts are learning qualities crucial for all forms

of leadership and life skills. The program embraces the understanding of the world of business, money management and entrepreneurship. Cookie Business badges range anywhere from goal setting to learning effective in-person and online sales pitches, using market research, creating business plans and implementing digital marketing campaigns.

Available nationwide, every purchase of the online-exclusive Raspberry Rally cookie supports local Girl Scouts who are helping make our world a better place.

Girl Scouts of Gateway Council kicks off cookie season on Jan. 3 across North Florida; visit www.girlscoutcookies.org to sign up to be notified as soon as Raspberry Rally and other Girl Scout Cookies are on sale. Find your adventure at Girl Scouts by joining or volunteering at www.girlscouts-gateway.org/joinGSGC.

Bus from page 1

pay rates can increase based on experience, he said.

The lack of drivers meant that some students waited for an hour or more during the first three days of school, whether it’s pickup or drop-off. Not every area is the same, Crawford said, and the district expected parent feedback. Crawford, who said he takes parents’ calls daily, said the district has reduced some of its wait times.

For example, groups of students were still waiting along College Drive in Orange Park and Middleburg until 9:45 a.m. on Aug. 11 – meaning they didn’t get to class before 10.

County officials use robocalls daily to keep parents apprised of any possible delays.

“You had some schools waiting additional time, some were less and some more. You have to think about the rural areas. There’s a lot of miles to cover,” Crawford said. “There’s some frustration from parents, especially when you don’t know when your kid is getting dropped off.”

For Crawford and the district transpor-



tation team, the roughly 20 potential drivers represent a kind of light at the end of the tunnel.

“That will basically eliminate those double backs, we can then turn and make buses for a single school route rather than have a jam-packed bus,” Crawford said.

More information is available at bus.mycorncounty.net.

Calendar

CLAY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT

REVIEW: will meet on Aug. 18 at 10 a.m. in the Zoning Department Conference Room, third floor, in the Administration Building, 477 Houston St. in Green Cove Springs.

CLAY CHAMBER: will host Lunch and Learn on Aug. 18 at noon at the Courtyard Marriott, 610 Wells Road in Orange Park. Deadline to register is Aug. 17. For more information, visit www.claychamber.com.

CLAYSTOCK: will be on Aug. 20 from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. at the Middleburg American Legion Post 250, 2608 Black Creek Dr. Event benefits the St. Michael’s Soldiers’ The Hometown Kindness Project. In addition to food and games, the music lineup includes The Curt Towne Band, Gemma Mathews, Stephen Quinn, The Southern Steele Band, 1 Hot Mess, High-

way Jones and Big Engine.

TOWN OF ORANGE PARK: will conduct a budget workshop on Aug. 22 at 6 p.m. at the Town Hall Council Meeting room, 2042 Park Ave.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: will meet on Aug. 23 at 4 p.m. at the Commissioners Meeting Room, fourth floor, Administration Building, 477 Houston St. in Green Cove Springs.

GOO GOO DOLLS: will perform with Blue October on Aug. 24 at 7 p.m. at Daily’s Place Amphitheater, 1 Daily Place at TIAA Bank Field, in Jacksonville. For tickets, visit dailysplace.com.

TOWN OF ORANGE PARK: will conduct a budget workshop on Aug. 24 at 6 p.m. at the Town Hall Council Meeting room, 2042 Park Ave.

Obituary

Gary Lawrence Koon

Gary Lawrence Koon of Fleming Island, FL passed peacefully in his home on Aug. 14, 2022 at age 59.

Gary was born in Alex, VA on August 10, 1963. He is survived by his two daughters Katie Woodbeck and Kassie Stuzinski and both live locally. Also survived by his moth-

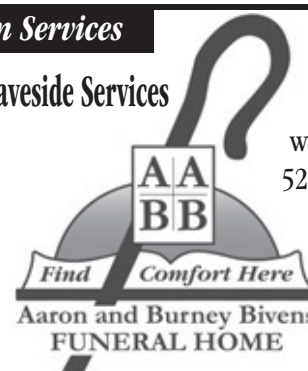
er, Betty Koon and brothers Leonard and Kevin Koon, 3 grandchildren, and many in-laws. Gary was preceded in death by his father, Leonard L. Koon in 2009. Gary worked for DavLin and Above All Ceilings as a drywall installer. He attended Calvary United Methodist Church.

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Benefield reflects on council appointment, town's prospects

By Nick Blank
nick@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – A local accountant saw a government vacancy as a chance to help the community, so he took it.

Doug Benefield sat in his Kingsley Avenue office before a town meeting. Benefield was appointed to the town of Orange Park's Seat 1 earlier this month following the resignation of Eddie Henley in June. Benefield sat on the dais for a large part of the Aug. 2 meeting after confirmation by a 3-1 margin.

He said he has deep roots in the town and felt he might as well get involved.

"I didn't want to just show up when something is wrong," Benefield said. "I think there's some general apathy with people. They don't want to be involved but they have problems with the way things happen. The best way to fix it was just to be involved."

An Orange Park Elementary and St. Johns Country Day alumnus, Benefield wants to make the town a destination for



Doug Benefield

young families, contribute to the town's visioning, and improve walkability and pedestrian safety.

"I think it's a good spot," Benefield said.

The town of Orange Park is hemmed in by Blanding Boulevard, Jacksonville, the St. Johns River and Fleming Island. He said the town's arterial roads have high usage. Orange Park is trying to establish an identity, he said.

"I just want it to feel like something. I like that we have a farmer's market and events," he said.

He said he's already familiar with the town's infrastructure projects, park maintenance and drainage. He has met a few town staff and said he supported the town's business community.

"I want businesses to want to be inside the town and I want them to be rewarded for being here. I don't see that policy," Benefield said. "That's something that I think we can get done."

Two other candidates also applied: Frank Ricketts and Winnette Sandlin. COVID-19 issues postponed the appointment by a meeting.

On Tuesday, council members needed a simple majority, three of four possible votes, to fill the seat.

Benefield said he left a large CPA firm to return to Orange Park, where he began Elevate CPA early last year. There are parallels with the accounting of municipalities and small firms, though Benefield's professional focus is small businesses and taxes.

He described governments securing funding from multiple sources, as well as public opinion, as a complicated process. However, paying taxes or spending money to support the town is a good feeling.

"It's going to a sidewalk I'm going to walk on. It's going to roads I'm going to drive on. It feels better to me," he said.

Benefield's seat is up for election during Municipal Super Tuesday in April.

"It's not that far away. It's like tax season for us. The (election) push starts in November. You have to start ramping up," he added. "I'll be here for the long run."

47 to take Oath of Allegiance to become citizens on Friday

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – In partnership with the United States District Court, Middle District of Florida and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services,

Green Cove Springs Junior High will host a naturalization ceremony on Friday, Aug. 19, from 11 a.m. to noon.

The ceremony will welcome 47 individuals from 32 countries as new U.S. citizens as they take the Oath of Allegiance in front of family, friends, faculty members and students. The Honorable Marcia

Morales Howard, U.S. District Judge will administer the Oath. Approximately 50 student leaders will be assisting with the naturalization ceremony and 100 students currently enrolled in Civics at Green Cove Springs Junior High will witness the process as audience members. Superintendent David Broskie and other

elected officials will be in attendance as well for the event.

The ceremony will honor and recognize our newest U.S. Citizens and provide a real-world learning experience of welcoming immigrants into the country for our junior high students.



Seniors

The stock market is down so far this year; despite a rally since mid-June, the S&P is still down 15% year-to-date and the NASDAQ is down 23%. Share price drops like these get senior investors thinking about portfolio defense, and that naturally brings them around to dividend stocks.

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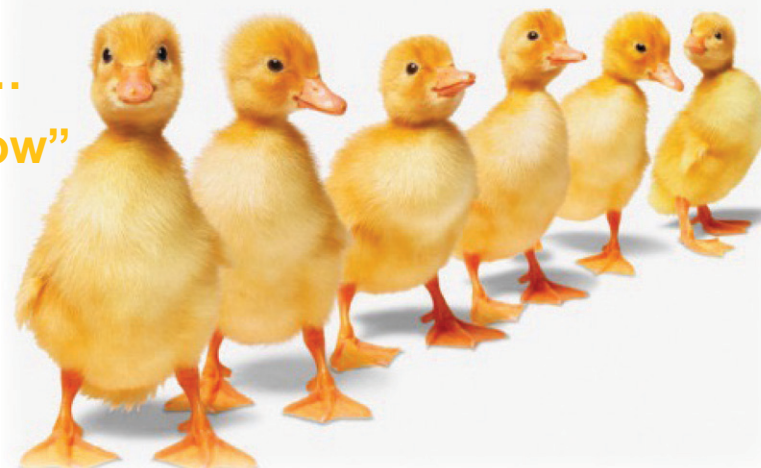
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Property appraiser's office sends out its TRIM notices

For Clay Today

CLAY COUNTY – Tracy Scott Drake, the Clay County Property Appraiser, announced that Notice of Proposed Property Tax forms, also known as Truth in Millage (TRIM) notices, were mailed to all Clay County property owners on Aug. 9.

Florida law requires the TRIM notice to be prepared and mailed each year by the property appraiser on behalf of the taxing authorities. Although the TRIM notice is not a tax bill, it is intended to notify property owners of possible changes that may appear on the November tax bill. Therefore, property owners are encouraged to review the information and deadlines carefully.

The property appraiser is responsible for annually administering exemptions and estimating the value of all property as of Jan. 1. The TRIM notice displays three values: market value, assessed value, and taxable value. The market value is the most probable sale price (on January 1, 2022), and may increase or decrease as the market dictates. Due to the upward direction of the real estate market in 2021, the majority of properties in Clay County experienced an increase in market value. Although market values have increased, the assessed value of properties with an existing homestead exemption will be limited to a 3% increase and non-homestead residential and commercial properties will be limited to a 10% – except for properties with new construction, additions and/or renovations. It is important to remember that although assessed value increases may be limited, property taxes are not.

Taxing Authority	Last Year's Millage	Proposed 2022 Maximum Millage
Board of County Commissioners:		
BCC - County Services	5.5727	5.5605
Fire Control MSTU - 8	0.5048	0.5048
Law Enforcement MSTU - 4	2.4014	2.4014
Unincorporated Services MSTU	0.1221	0.1343
Board of County Commissioners Total	8.6010	8.6010
School Board:		
State Law (Local Required Effort)	3.5270	3.1710
Local Board (Discretionary)	3.2480	3.2480
School Board Total	6.8890	6.4190
St. Johns River Water Management:		
	0.2189	0.1974
Green Cove Springs		
	3.8000	4.5000
Keystone Heights		
	4.2901	4.2901
Orange Park		
	5.8781	5.8781
Penney Farms		
	4.4535	4.4535
Lake Asbury MSBD		
	0.0000	0.0000
Challenger Center MSTU		
	3.0000	3.0000

Ad valorem property taxes are calculated as follows: Taxable Value x Millage

Rate = Property Taxes. The taxable value is the assessed value minus any exemptions and is estimated by the property appraiser. The millage rates are established by the taxing authorities.

Property owners who have questions regarding an exemption status or a property's value are encouraged to contact the property appraiser's office for an informal

review. This informal review can be handled in person, by telephone, email or mail. A property owner also has the option to file a formal appeal with the county Value Adjustment Board by the deadline listed on the bottom of the TRIM notice on Sept. 13. This date is also the absolute deadline for the property appraiser to accept late-filed applications for exemptions, assessment reductions and agricultural classifications.

The back of the TRIM notice displays public hearing dates and explanations of the various columns to assist property owners in understanding the notice. By law, each taxing authority must establish maximum millage rates necessary to fund their proposed budgets. The millage rates can be reduced prior to the mailing of the November tax bills. Property owners who are concerned or have questions regarding proposed budgets, millage rates or resulting taxation levels, should contact the taxing authorities or attend the budget hearings listed on the notice.

Additional information including a TRIM Guide, detailed property record cards, Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, and answers to Frequently Asked Questions are available on the property appraiser's website at www.ccpao.com.



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Students encouraged to write about Constitution, win prizes

For Clay Today

CLAY COUNTY – On Sept. 17, 1787, delegates to the Constitutional Convention signed the Constitution, which begins with the following preamble:

We the People of the United States, to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Since its ratification, the Constitution has been amended 27 times. Students are encouraged to choose one of the 27 Amendments to the U. S. Constitution and, using relevant external sources, explain how that Amendment promotes the goals the framers articulated in the preamble.

Student essays must be submitted via the Middle District website (www.flmd.uscourts.gov/contest) no later than noon on Sept.

During the past four years, essays have been submitted by students residing in 10

THE CONSTITUTION OVER TIME



2022 HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

The lawyers and judges of the United States District Court, Middle District of Florida, and the members of the Jacksonville Chapter of the Federal Bar Association are sponsoring a Celebrating Constitution Week essay contest.

of the 12 counties of the Jacksonville Division and cash prizes totaling more than \$21,000 have been awarded to students, teachers and schools.

Cash prizes are made possible by the lawyers and judges of the U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida, through the Bench Bar Fund. The awards include:

- First-place – \$2,000
- Second-place – \$1,000
- Third-place – \$500

- Fourth- through 10th – \$50
- Classroom grant for teachers of the top three (one grant a teacher) – \$500
- Grant to school with the most qualifying submissions – \$1,000

If public health conditions permit, the

top 10 students, their family members and teachers, and a representative of the school with the most submissions will be recognized at a ceremony in the Bryan Simson U.S. Courthouse in Jacksonville on Dec. 7.

In addition, the first-place winner will be allowed to shadow a federal judge for a day, as did Avi Patel, the 2021 winner.

For the contest rules and additional information about the Essay Contest and how to enter visit www.flmd.uscourts.gov/contest.

The contest is open to students currently in grades 9 through 12 in counties in the Jacksonville Division of the Middle District of Florida, which includes Clay, Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Duval, Flagler, Hamilton, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Suwannee, and Union.





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

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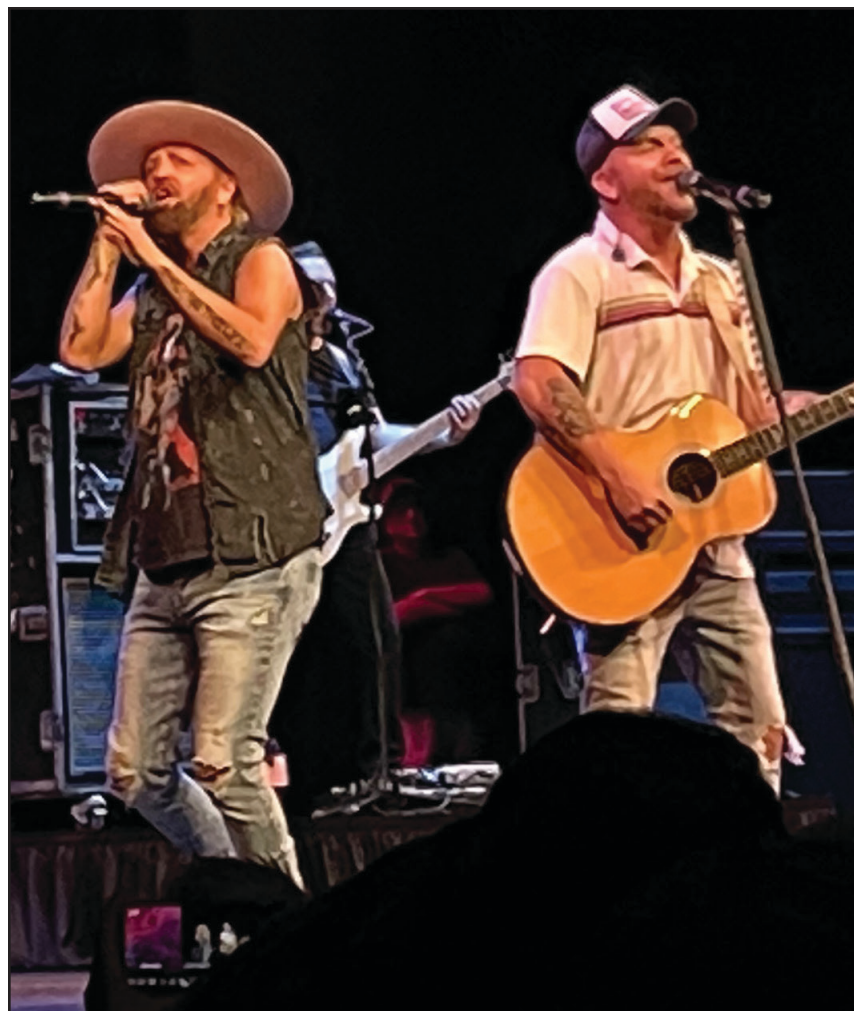


Johnny VanZant

Rock the Box 2, St. Michael's Soldiers honor first responders with free show

ORANGE PARK – Rock the Box 2, a free night of music to honor heroes and first responders, delighted the Thrasher-Horne Center on Saturday, Aug. 13. LOCASH was the headlining act, but performances by Lynyrd Skynyrd frontman Johnny Van Zant, Brett Myers and Cumberland had the crowd on its feet most of the night. The show was free to troops and veterans, hospital/front line workers, first responders, teachers and linemen. Van Zant joined LOCASH's Preston Brust and Chris Lucas to sign a couple of Skynyrd songs. The show was organized by St. Michael's Soldiers, the Middleburg-based nonprofit that supports deployed men and women in the military, as well as local and active military and their families.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIKE CELLA



LOCASH



Brett Myers



Cumberland



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First-year cadets complete mini-boot camp at Middleburg High School

MIDDLEBURG – Middleburg High Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps completed its mini-boot camp on Aug. 5. First-year cadets who attended and graduated laid a firm foundation of the basic core principles that they will build on during the upcoming academic year as part of the NJROTC unit. While voluntary, 20 new cadets sacrificed their last full week of summer to attend – getting up early, executing physical fitness training as well as drill basics and learning required cadet knowledge that will put them at an advantage starting the school year. Also sacrificing their summer break, the senior cadet leadership orchestrated, organized, and executed the week of events. Led by the unit Commanding Officer, Cadet Lt. Cmdr. Alexa Avecillas and her staff, the week was a huge success in its mission of indoctrinating the new first-year cadets. The staff demonstrated great leadership skills in the daily interaction with the new cadets foreshadowing what is in store this year for the unit under their leadership.



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Dr. Keighron joins Florida Orange Park Primary Care

ORANGE PARK – HCA Florida Orange Park Hospital is excited to announce Dr. Jillian Keighron as the newest provider to join HCA Florida Orange Park Primary Care.

An esteemed honor graduate of the Edward College of Osteopathic Medicine in Auburn, Alabama Dr. Keighron holds a special interest in preventive medicine, general wellness and spiritual care.

"My passion for family medicine is for the patient," says Dr. Keighron. "I truly enjoy building relationships with all of my patients and developing personalized care plan goals that we can achieve, together."

Familiar with providing care to the local community, she served as a general family medicine resident at Orange Park Hospital for the past three years, winning an Orange Park Hospital Star Spotlight award for her extraordinary patient service experience and receiving superior scores in family medicine and pediatrics residency rotation evaluations.

She is a current member of the Family Medicine Committee and Ethics Committee for Orange Park Hospital.

"Dr. Keighron will serve as an excellent extension for our care team at HCA Florida Orange Park Primary Care," said



Dr. Lillian Keighron

Dr. Bradley Shumaker, Chief Medical Officer at Orange Park Hospital. "Her dedication to support quality care for our patients will advance our efforts to supporting the health and wellness of the Clay County community."

Dr. Keighron will provide care at 1825 Kingsley Ave., Suite 200 in Orange Park.

WILD ADVENTURES
THEME PARK

GREAT PUMPKIN LUMI NIGHTS

SEPT. 23 - OCT. 30

Celebrating Clay County history: Paleo-Indians, Timucua, Creek and Seminoles

By Archives Specialist Vishi Garig
A Service of Clerk of Court and Comptroller Tara S. Green

CLAY COUNTY – The county has many well-kept secrets, and one of the best kept is the fact that it is the locale of several significant archeological discoveries.

Many years back, when Fleming Island and Eagle Harbor developments were just in the planning stages, archeological studies of the area were undertaken. As part of the development plan, archeologists were hired to go out and look at the sight to gauge if there was anything of significance in the area.

There was.

Paleo-Indians (people living in Florida before the Timucua) made Clay County their home.

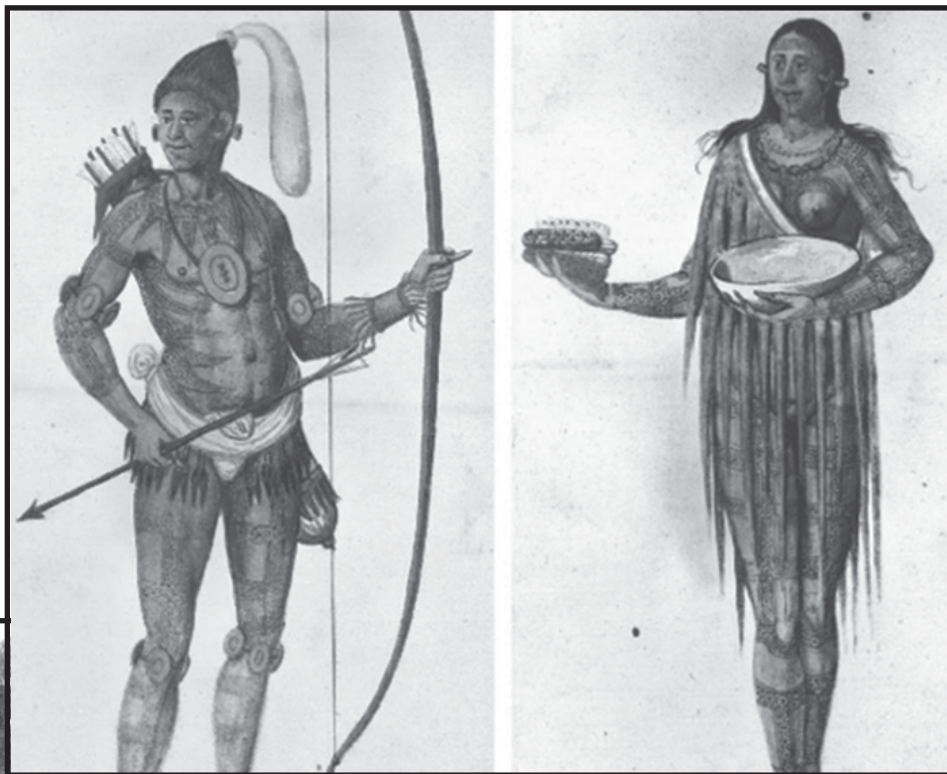
Refuse mounds, as well as burial mounds, graced the shores of our waterways. Their exact location is a state secret, literally. You cannot get the GPS coordinates for the sites from the state. This is so because of the fear that pothunters and others with bad intentions will dig up the mounds and trash middens (another term for refuse mound). By definition, a pothunter is a person who seeks objects of archaeological interest or value for personal use or benefit, especially by unscientific or illicit methods.

Dating back to about 1900, one such pothunter named Leigh Pearsall, a Melrose, Florida resident, did just that. He

dug up several mounds in Clay and Putnam counties even though he was not a professional archeologist. His methods were crude and haphazard at best. The artifacts he found were never to be seen again. Such cultural and scientific treasures as these were most likely lost to time, becoming the property of people to whom they were sold or given. Back then, and sometimes even today, the burial grounds of Native Americans were not respected or protected.

The detailed names and locations of two of the mounds discussed here will not be given, lest folks be tempted. These two mounds are scientifically significant in the study of our local Paleo-Indians and later the Timucua. Obscurity is often the best defense.

One such mound is a refuse mound –



that's right, it is an ancient trash heap. Archeologists also refer to similar mounds as shell mounds because that is the primary composition. The archeologist surmised, from the size and depth of this local mound, that the heap had been used for a significant time. Layers of shells, animal and fish bones and potshards (from later Native Americans) filled the mound. The oldest layers are the deepest down. Disturbing a mound messes up these layers, rendering it almost useless to an archeologist in terms of assessing age. Sarah Miller of Florida Public Archeology Network once said that one scoop of overturned earth at a sensitive site by an untrained person can

SEE CLAY HISTORY, 15

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HOME AUTO BUNDLE

Clay History

from page 15

destroy hundreds or maybe thousands of years of information.

The local mound is very significant because it is the only known and scientifically tested freshwater shell midden in the St. Johns River area.

Most shell mounds in the area are filled with saltwater or brackish water shells. Without giving away the location, remember that Black Creek is a freshwater creek. This allowed for the growth of freshwater shellfish in the area and the harvest of the same by the indigenous peoples. This mound is on the National Register of Historic Places and the Florida Master Site file.

Another mound nearby is a sand mound. In northeast Florida, sand mounds are usually the foundation of a structure or a burial mound. This mound might be both.

Plus, this mound was UNDISTURBED and that is VERY SIGNIFICANT because most mounds in Clay County have been disturbed or demolished before experts arrive.

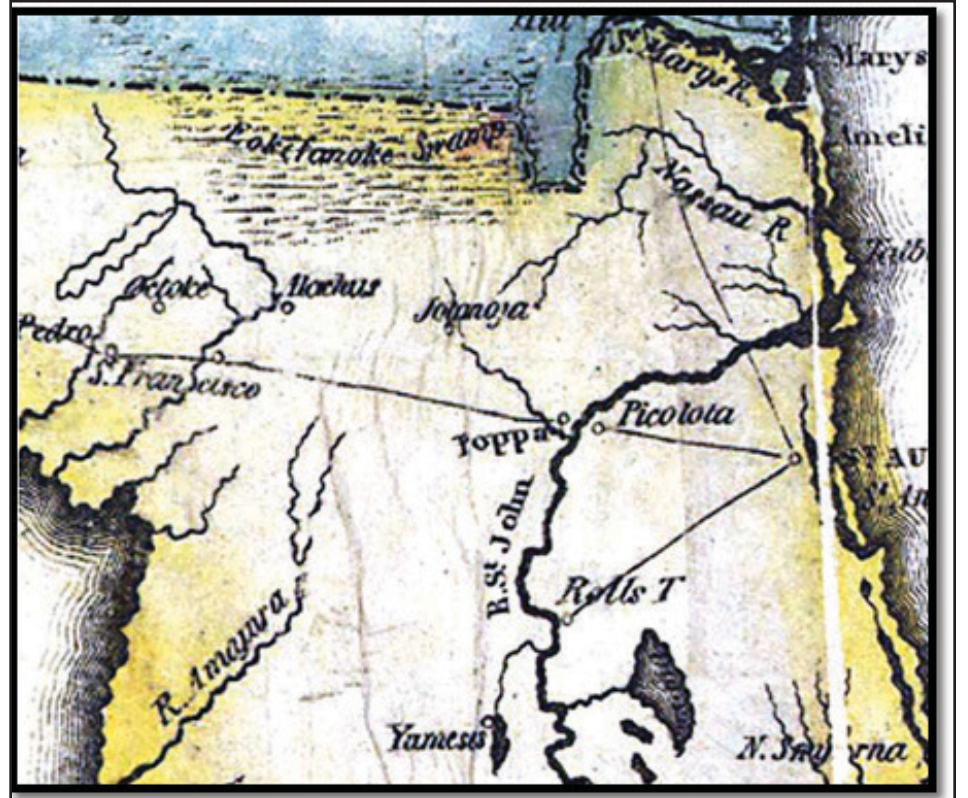
On March 2, 1990, this second location was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places and the Florida Master Site file. In the mound were St John Period II ceramics, chert flakes, and nodules of hematite (red ochre). Chert is a sedimentary rock consisting almost entirely of silica and can form in a variety of ways.

From 1950 to 1952, Dr. John M. Goggin, a well-respected archeologist, conducted a study of the site of a Spanish-era fort near the Bayard Conservation area, known as Fort San Francisco de Pupo. When Goggin dug his trenches he discovered Native American pottery from the "Orange Series" (which dates back to 1000 BC). This means that the site at Fort Pupo was used by early human inhabitants before the land there became a Spanish fort. It is an archeologically significant site, now on private property.

As Goggin dug his trenches he found that after the original use, the site lay untouched for about 2,000 years before the Spanish troops' use of the area. By looking at pottery and the artifacts retrieved, Goggin created a timeline of the site's use. He found a total of 1,532 artifacts in all. Some were wonderful objects like locks, a gun barrel, pipes and beads. Others were ordinary refuse like charred corncobs and even a bison bone – yes, bison in Florida.

What if you should stumble across one of these mounds or middens? Most of them in Clay County are on private property so, first, ask yourself, "Am I trespassing?" If so, keep moving. Next, remember that it is illegal to dig up a burial site anyway.

Plus, it is just plain bad karma to mess with such wonderful and sacred things as a burial mound or other archeological sites. Just take a good look, walk away, and challenge yourself to make the location your well-kept secret.





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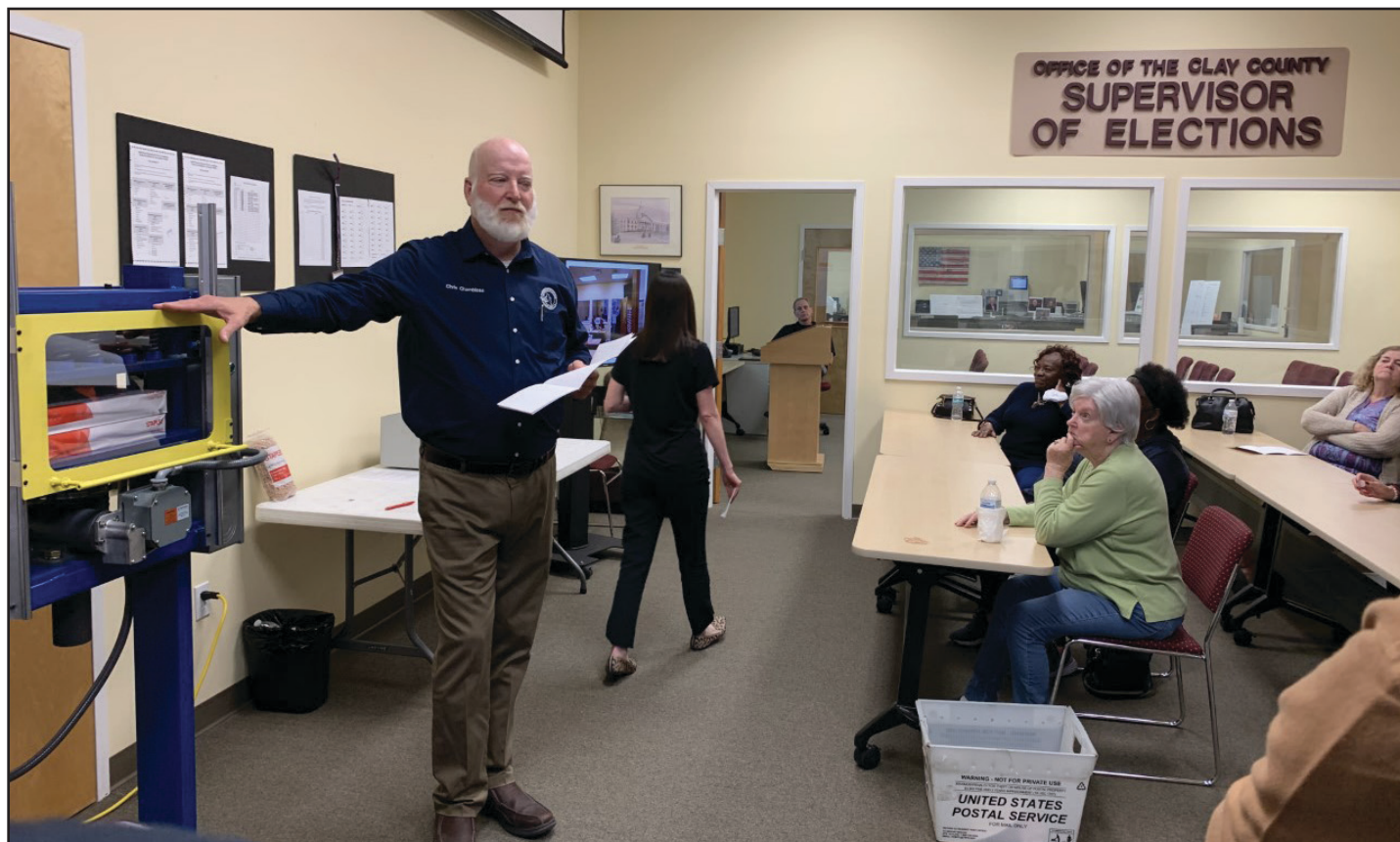
Election Supervisor shares optimism ahead of '22 primaries

By Nick Blank
nick@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – The election world and voting itself were very different four years ago.

The Primary Election Day is Aug. 23, but Supervisor of Elections Chris Chambless appeared optimistic about a higher turnout this year compared to the 2018 election primaries. Early voting is underway for several primary races with the polls kicking off on Aug. 13.

Greater participation in the vote by mail is a stark change from four years ago, Chambless said.



STAFF PHOTOS BY NICK BLANK

Supervisor of Elections Chris Chambless goes over details with poll workers ahead of the Aug. 23 Primary. Early voting suggests a big turnout.

27%.

However, Chambless said, the primary turnout was as low as 17% in 2014. A 28-30% primary turnout is expected this year.

“So, we’re going to be better than average, but then the question becomes what happened to the 70% of people who stayed at home?” Chambless asked. “That’s the question we always look to.”

The 2018 gubernatorial primary received 10,295 ballots by mail. This year, that figure was almost equaled three days into early voting.

“If the trend continues, we’re looking at a 25% return compared to the 2018 primary,” he said Tuesday. “It’s a difficult thing to estimate, but based on what we know today, it looks stronger.”

Voter misinformation is a key target for Chambless and his constituents. Recently, he said he was asked about ballot harvesting and other false claims of voter fraud.

“Vote by mail didn’t have the scarlet letter that it has now with 2020,” Chambless said. “Things are easy to say and difficult to prove, that’s the way these conspiracies get wheels. You don’t have to prove anything. You just have to suggest. That goes back to the days of Adam and Eve, when Eve asked, ‘Did (God) really say we can’t eat from a particular tree?’”

Chambless said he was pleased with the business side of the election. Previously, his staff would print ballots for all possible 160,000-plus voters, even for primaries, where the aforementioned 70% might not vote.

He said ballots can be printed at precincts on-site, meaning there are no more empty ballots left to be destroyed. Those blank ballots can be repurposed in fewer than three months for the general election.

Chambless said ballot paper is being affected by the supply chain crisis like several other items; ballots are about \$.37 a piece.

“That’s \$41,699 we would have spent

on unused ballots. To add insult to injury, I would have to pay to have the blank ballots destroyed. Now, we only print when the voter is authenticated,” Chambless said. “It’s just smart business.”

The primaries will see two pairs of Republican county commission candidates contest two seats. Alexandra Compere faces Rodney Herring in the Oakleaf-based District 2, though the winner will oppose Democrat Leroy Edwards in November. For the Keystone Heights and Middleburg-based District 4, incumbent Betsy Condon will contest fellow Republican Dale Carter.

The Clay County School District, non-partisan, has one three-candidate race and two two-person races. In District 1, incumbent Janice Kerekes will go up against Charles Kirk and Erin Skipper. Incumbents Tina Bullock and Ashley Gilhousen will face candidates Michele Hanson and Gerald Beasley, respectively, to retain their seats in Districts 1 and 4.

An important County Court Judge Group 1 vacancy is also being contested between Tonya Barge, Raymond Forbess and Geraldine Hartin.

More voting resources are available at clayelections.gov.

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Claystock, Boogerville hosting day-long music fests on Saturday

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – If you like music, you'll like being in Clay County this Saturday.

A day of performances will start at 11 a.m. at the American Legion Post 250 in Middleburg with Claystock, while another music fest, starting at noon, will be featured at Boogerville Hideout Bar in Green Cove Springs.

Claystock is presented by St. Michael's Soldiers and the Hometown Kindness Project. Gemma Mathews, Stephen Quinn, The Southern Steele Band, 1 Hot Mess, Highway Jones, Big Engine and The Curt Towne Band that honor the memory of Lindsay Michelle Van Zant, the daughter of Lynyrd Skynyrd lead singer Johnny Van Zant. Lindsay died in 2018 of cancer.

The day of concerts, food and vendors will raise money for both St. Michael's Soldiers and the Hometown Kindness Project.

"If you guys can do something great for somebody and pay it forward, do it," John-

ny Van Zant posted on the organization's social media pages. "It will make you feel good. I know we appreciate it."

Towne, who lives in Green Cove Springs, said the show will be the beginning of a busy few months. He announced on Monday, Aug. 14, his band will open for 38 Special on Oct. 21 at 8 p.m. at the Florida Theatre in Jacksonville. He also said an announcement on a show on Nov. 10 may be announced soon.

"We're going to be there with a bunch of friends of ours," Towne said of Claystock. "It's a wonderful, wonderful thing."

For more information, visit stmichaels-soldiers.org.

Six acts are scheduled to hit the stage at Boogerville. Once Kings, Bleeding in Stereo, Divided Truth, Losing Daylight and The Deplorables all will play ahead of headliner Order by Chaos.

For tickets, which are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door, visit Boogerville's Facebook page.



Two music fests to hit the stage on Saturday

The American Legion Post 250 in Middleburg will host Claystock, featuring Big Engine, top, and the Curt Towne Band, above, to benefit St. Michael's Soldier's and Hometown Heroes Program from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., while the Boogerville Hideout Bar in Green Cove Springs will be home to another day-long festival starting at 1 p.m. Between both venues, 13 bands will perform.



PET ADOPTION



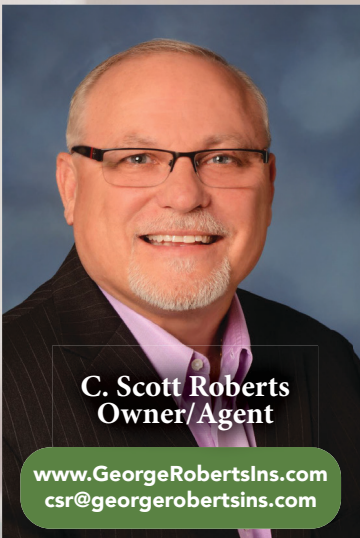
♥ STAFF PICK OF THE WEEK ♥

This week we asked Sherry, the Director, who her favorite animal here at the shelter is and she chose Cooper! Here's what she said about Cooper:

Cooper is such a misunderstood dog. He has been returned 3 different times in the past month due to no fault of his own. He just needs a home that can understand him and give him time to grow. He really is a great boy and deserves a loving home that just gives him a chance. He has severe thunderstorm anxiety so with all of these thunderstorms in the summer he isn't doing the best here. He shakes alone in his kennel and just wants a comfy couch to snooze on and people that love him. Cooper loves car rides, going on walks, and sunbathing. Once he meets someone, he becomes so attached and never wants to leave their side! Please come give this sweet boy a chance.



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Challenge

from page 1

self-reliant.

The nonprofit promotes friendships and volunteering to learn job skills so they can become valued members of the community. The ragged space soon will be another tool for adults with different intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities.

Once completed, it will be a place where members can learn to use kitchen equipment and the importance of sanitation. They will be taught the proper way to prep food, dice, cut and chop food. They will learn what items need to be refrigerated, how to hold utensils, monitoring food temperatures, how to clean equipment and where to air dry large pots and pans.

And they will be empowered with the skills to prepare their meals.

There's a lot of work to make the program a reality. Challenge Enterprises will need help with equipment, volunteers and money. Keating knows it won't be easy, but the mission is too important to fail.

"Our preschool was here, so all of our toilets are baby toilets. We're going to need new fixtures," she said. "We're working on cooking, pots and pan washing as you'd do in a restaurant. The big dishwashers, things like that."

Rebecca McQuaid, the project manager for Club Challenge, said since individual needs vary, it's important to offer options. Challenge Enterprises already provides workers at the IRS mailroom, loading ships at NAS in Mayport, shredding services and at Wawa convenience stores, while some work under several federal building contracts at NAS-JAX, Downtown Jacksonville, Kings Bay, Georgia and Gainesville.

"We've got work to do, trying to move things out," McQuaid said. "We're going to put new racks and shelves in. There will be a big double-refrigerator. This will be a training outlet.

"We wanted to make sure there's no confusion with the community. It's not going to be a bistro for the public to come in. It will be in-house for training for people who need the jobs."

There currently are 4,308 members across the Challenge Enterprise spectrum, and 46 of them participate in Club Chal-



Nancy Keating has visions of shelves and cabinets filling bare walls at Club Challenge. The new kitchen should be ready by the end of the year.

enge, McQuaid said. As the need for expanded services grows, so does the need for more assistance.

"We need everything," Keating said. "We're looking for volunteers; we're looking for money. The new space for Club Challenge will have a new kitchen. Usually, it's everyone's favorite place to be.

"This space served as the agency's preschool for 20 years. Now new fixtures are needed for adults. We need a new floor, paint the rooms, cut cable for the computer lab, install the big screens for gaming stations and make the kitchen a working lab."

Building services manager Rick Stafford said once the overall is started, it likely will take about a month to complete. Keating said the goal is to have the kitchen operational by the end of the year.

Anyone interested in volunteering is encouraged to complete an online application and identify specific skills. The website is challengeenterprises.org, or you can call (904) 284-9859.

Three represent Clay at first 4-H Space Project

By Elaine Giles

Extension Agent I -Youth Development-Clay

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Three Clay County 4-Hers participated in the first 4-H in Space: Mission Command Team project. Noah Hall, Celine Torkzad and Aidan McCabe worked with Higher Orbits' "Go For Launch" program and 45 other 4-Hers from Florida, Arizona, Illinois and Indiana to develop a science experiment that would possibly be flown into space to the International Space Station.

In two and a half days, the 4-Hers worked with their peers in teams of four to design and present a science experiment that could feasibly be flown to the International Space Station. The 4-H teams had to consider the effect of microgravity in their experiment design.

Additionally, the teams' experiment designs needed to fit in a box no larger than a rectangular tissue box and had to function autonomously. Noah, Celine and Aidan's teams proposed experiments that looked at the possibilities of composting in space and identifying alternative protein food sources that can be grown in microgravity.

Throughout the experience, the students learned various STEM concepts such as how microgravity impacts to water and fluids and the challenges and opportunities of space travel. The 4-Hers learned from astronaut Dr. JR Reilly, Michelle Lucas, Higher Orbits Founder & CEO, and John Ramsey, the head of Launch Control Systems with the Jacobs Engineering Inc. Group.

Outside of working in their teams, the youth toured the Kennedy Space Center and received a personal guided tour



Three Clay County 4-H members, including Celine Torkzad, were part of the first 4-H Space Project.

about the Atlantis Space Shuttle from astronaut Dr. JR Reilly who flew on the Atlantis for two space shuttle missions. The youth also witnessed the launch of the SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket from Jetty Park in Cape Canaveral.

For Celine, she witnessed her first rocket launch on this trip, but it won't be her last. Celine's team, which proposed the experiment "Growing Spirulina in Space," won the competition and will have their science experiment flown up to the International Space Station tentatively in 2023. As part of being on the winning team, she'll be invited to watch her team's science experiment launch into space.

Celine shared, "Winning was unexpected, but not unwelcome. I would love

SEE SPACE, 20



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Space

from page 19

to do something like that again. I can't wait to see another launch."

Florida 4-H was a recipient of the National Lab Research award "4-H Multi-State Space

Exploration Consortium" from the International Space Station National Lab,

managed by the Center for the Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS), and in collaboration with University of



Arizona, University of Illinois and Purdue University. The award made this experience possible.

This truly was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for all 48 of the 4-H youth who participated in the 4-H in Space: Mission

Command Team project. Our Florida 4-H youth from Clay, Palm Beach, Walton, Osceola, and Lee counties helped welcome their counterparts to Florida with a riverboat dinner cruise, holding baby alligators, and enjoying a summer beach day.

As part of the award, each youth had to teach a topic about planetary or Heat Meditated Antigen Retrieval Science to 20 youth. The Clay in Space youth were taught about stars and constellations and shared their experience at the Orange Park library as part of Space Science Day.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Clay County Board of Adjustment will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, August 25, 2022 at 6:00 P.M.**, in the Board of County Commissioners Meeting Room, 4th Floor, Clay County Administration Building, 477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs, Florida, for the purpose of hearing objections, if any, to issuing a Variance to the Clay County Land Development Code, Article III, Section 3-13(e)(5)(i), to increase the maximum lot size from 21,780 square feet to 61,515.83 square feet.

Location Address for BOA-22-16

434 Logan Avenue

Tax Parcel Identification Number 22-04-25-020563-000-00

Interested parties may appear at the meeting and be heard with respect to the proposed Variance. If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Board or Commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, such person will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, such person 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. A copy of the Variance Application is available for inspection by the public at the County Economic Development Services Department, Planning and Zoning Division, Third Floor of the Administration Building, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in this matter should contact the Clay County ADA Coordinator by mail at P.O. Box 1366, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043, or by telephone at number (904) 284-6347 no later than three (3) days prior to the hearing or proceeding for which this notice has been given. Hearing impaired persons can access the foregoing telephone number by the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770 (Voice), or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

BOA-22-16 published August 12, 2022 in Clay Today.

Clay County Board of Adjustment
Keith Hadden
Chairman

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Clay County Board of Adjustment will hold a public hearing on Thursday, August 25, 2022 at 6:00 P.M., in the Board of County Commissioners Meeting Room, 4th Floor, Clay County Administration Building, 477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs, Florida, for the purpose of hearing objections, if any, to issuing a Variance to the Clay County Land Development Code, Article III, Section 3-13(f)(3), to decrease the front setback from 30 feet to 5 feet; Section 3-13(f)(4) to decrease the rear setback from 35 feet to 5 feet; and, Section 3-13(f)(5) to decrease the side setback from 20 feet to 5 feet, on property zoned AR.

Location Address for BOA-22-14

2569 Pinellas Lane

Tax Parcel Identification Number 14-05-24-006372-001-00

Interested parties may appear at the meeting and be heard with respect to the proposed Variance. If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Board or Commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, such person will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, such person 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. A copy of the Variance Application is available for inspection by the public at the County Economic Development Services Department, Planning and Zoning Division, Third Floor of the Administration Building, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays.

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BOA-22-14 published August 12, 2022 in Clay Today.

Clay County Board of Adjustment
Keith Hadden
Chairman

Community Briefs

Women of Cultural Foundation to honor first responders

For Clay Today

JACKSONVILLE – The Women of Cultural Foundation will host the first Fifty Star Gala to honor First Responders from five surrounding counties – Clay, Duval, St John, Nassau, and Baker. The event will be on Sept. 9 at 6 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Riverfront Hotel Downtown Jacksonville.

The event is called “Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue for all the First Responders Do” for first responders on the First Coast for their heroic duties, unwavering commitment and tireless sacrifices. The event will include dinner, awards, dancing and more.

These men and women put themselves in harm’s way every day so that we are free to go about our normal lives knowing that we are protected. It is in that spirit we honor the selfless sacrifice of firefighters, police officers, emergency medical personnel, life flight staff, emergency room personnel, 911 operators, U.S. military personnel, veterans and other service members. Proceeds from the event will further support first responders and provide scholarships and other programs for the Women of Color Cultural Foundation.

First Responders are some of the bravest service men and women in our country, let us never forget. Call (904) 635-5191 for tickets and additional information on how to join in honoring first responders.

Quiltfest headed to Jacksonville on Sept. 15-17

JACKSONVILLE – The annual Jacksonville Quiltfest will be held at the Prime Osborn Convention Center from Sept. 15-17.

Open daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. with a \$14 admission. On Sept. 15 seniors will

pay \$13 and active and retired military will pay \$13. This all-volunteer-managed event is hosted by six sister quilt guilds. See www.quiltfestjax.com for more information.

Shred For Good: Challenge Enterprises offers shredding drop-off

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Shred for Good hosts Residential Shred Drop Off events for the benefit of individuals that don’t have an ongoing need for regular shredding service. During the drop-off events every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to

noon, participants may deposit their sensitive documents in secure and locked bins at 3530 Enterprise Way in Green Cove Springs. The bins are then securely transported to the Shred for Good facility, where it is destroyed.

After a six-month shutdown for the pandemic, Shred for Good rolled out a rebooted Residential Shred Drop Off Program in October 2020. On the first day, 92 households were able to destroy 5,116 pounds of sensitive materials in just two hours. Each one of these events is focused on convenience for the consumer and streamlined processes for the staff.

Residential consumers now follow the

signs to the drop zone, complete a short form, donate and drive away without ever having to leave their vehicle. To save even more time, both the form and donation have been made available in advance online.

The average household drops off about 55 pounds and donates \$14 a visit. Considering that most drop-off shred sites charge more than \$.50 a pound; the Shred for Good’s Residential Shred Drop-Off Program at \$.26/pound is a cost-effective alternative for the community it serves.

Business and Commercial Customers please call (904) 252-9786 to schedule a pickup using one of our secure bins.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Clay County Utility Authority has tentatively adopted a budget for Fiscal Year 2022/2023. A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Clay County Utility Authority Board Room, 3176 Old Jennings Road, Middleburg, Florida.

BUDGET SUMMARY CLAY COUNTY UTILITY AUTHORITY PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2022/2023

	Operating Fund	Capital Fund	Self Insurance Fund	Total Fund Budget
Revenues:				
Projected Cash at October 1, 2022	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 79,753,659	\$ 525,000	\$ 82,278,659
Water & Sewer Revenue	63,660,738			63,660,738
Miscellaneous Revenue/Borrowing	3,198,252	34,000,000		37,198,252
Fund Transfers		13,426,255		13,426,255
Total Revenues	\$ 68,858,990	\$ 127,179,914	\$ 525,000	\$ 196,563,904
Expenditures:				
Debt Service	\$ 9,238,085	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,238,085
Fund Transfers	13,426,255			13,426,255
Operation Expenses	41,670,797			41,670,797
Due in Lieu of Taxes	2,523,853			2,523,853
Capital Projects		125,194,754		125,194,754
Projected Cash at September 30, 2023	2,000,000	1,985,160	525,000	4,510,160
Total Expenditures	\$ 68,858,990	\$ 127,179,914	\$ 525,000	\$ 196,563,904

Additional information on the proposed budget is available at www.clayutility.org/rates or you can come to the office of the Clay County Utility Authority at 3176 Old Jennings Road, Middleburg, Florida, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. except legal holidays.

Following the public hearing, which may be adjourned from time to time, The Board of Supervisors may adopt or modify the proposed budget.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in this matter, should contact the Clay County Utility Authority by mail at 3176 Old Jennings Road, Middleburg, Florida 32068 or by telephone at (904) 272-5999 x 2464, no later than 7 days prior to the hearing or proceeding for which this notice has been given. Those requiring auditory assistance can access the foregoing telephone number by contacting the Florida Relay service at 1-800-955-8770 (Voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

If any person intends to appeal any decision related to this action, such person will need to provide a court reporter at such person's own expense, for a transcript of the proceedings. All interested persons are invited to attend.

CLAY COUNTY UTILITY AUTHORITY
Jeremy Johnston, Executive Director

Legal 36810 was published on August 11 & 18, 2022 in Clay County's ClayToday Newspaper.

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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE ADOPTION OF A PROPOSED RESOLUTION AMENDING CERTAIN RATES AND CHARGES FOR THE CLAY COUNTY UTILITY AUTHORITY.

The Clay County Utility Authority ("CCUA") will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, September 13, 2022, at 7:00 PM, in the Clay County Utility Authority's Board Room, located at 3176 Old Jennings Road, Middleburg, Florida, for the purpose of receiving public comment concerning the adoption of the 2022/2023 budgets.

Note: All service rates are stated as monthly rates. Proposed 2% increase to all Base and Consumption charges except Water Consumption over 6,000 gallons increase of 20%. All changes noted below.

SYSTEM BASE CHARGES:	Water	Wastewater	Reuse
Meter Size			
5/8" x 3/4"	\$11.36	\$25.77 *	\$17.19
3/4"	\$17.04	\$35.37	\$25.82
1"	\$28.48	\$64.43	\$42.97
1 & 1/2"	\$56.90	\$128.84	\$85.96
2"	\$91.06	\$206.20	\$137.51
3"	\$182.08	\$412.42	\$275.00
4"	\$284.52	\$644.19	\$429.70
6"	\$569.03	\$1,288.39	\$859.38
8"	\$910.45	\$2,061.94	\$1,375.02
10"	\$1,308.78	\$2,962.91	\$1,976.60
12"	\$2,444.90	\$5,539.75	\$3,694.49

*Residential Wastewater will be charged the same rate regardless of meter size

WATER SURCHARGES:

Alternative Water Supply Surcharge - Per Monthly Water Bill	\$1.15
SJRWMD Black Creek Water Resource Development Project Surcharge	\$1.09

CONSUMPTION CHARGES (based on 30 days):

Water System Consumption Rates:

Residential Service:

First 6,000 gallons	\$1.57
Next 6,000 gallons	\$4.66
Next 6,000 gallons	\$6.04
All usage over 18,000 gallons	\$7.74

Note: Consumption charge per 1,000 gallons with allowance per meter equivalent ERC

General Service:

All consumption per 1,000 gallons (Excluding Potable Irrigation Meters)	\$2.35
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Potable Irrigation Metered Services

First 10,000 gallons	\$1.57
Next 15,000 gallons	\$4.66
Next 25,000 gallons	\$6.04
All usage over 50,000 gallons	\$7.74

Note: Consumption charge per 1,000 gallons with allowance per meter equivalent ERC

Wastewater System Consumption Rates:

Residential Service:

All Meter Sizes (10,000 gallon cap)	\$3.85
Unmetered Flat Rate	\$55.36
Multi-family Unmetered per Unit	\$43.58

Note: Where reclaimed water is available the cap for residential wastewater usage will not apply

General Service:

Consumption charge per 1,000 gallons of metered water, no cap	\$4.69
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Reclaimed Water Consumption Rates:

Residential and General Service:

First 15,000 gallons	\$0.85
Next 5,000 gallons	\$1.66
All usage over 20,000 gallons	\$2.51

Note: Consumption charge per 1,000 gallons with allowance per meter equivalent ERC

CUSTOMER DEPOSIT: (per ERC)

Security Deposit Amount:

	Water	Wastewater	Reuse
Initial Deposit	\$25.00	\$50.00	\$25.00
Initial Deposit for Customers Without SSN	\$50.00	\$100.00	\$50.00

Annual Interest Rate of 0.14% will be paid on deposit held at least 6 months

Note: A security deposit is required for all new accounts including transfers and existing accounts that become delinquent and require a field visit. An additional deposit will be required for accounts that are disconnected twice in one 12 month period.

SERVICE CHARGES & MISCELLANEOUS FEES:

After Hours Prepayment for New Service	\$225.00
Same Day Service Charge and After Hours Premise Visit Surcharge (Normal Hours 8 AM to 5 PM, M-F)	\$30.00
Initial Connection, Premise Visit Charge, Normal Reconnection, Reconnection due to Repair, and 2nd Trip	\$30.00
Special Meter Rereads, Hydrant Reading Charge and Backflow Test Final Notice	\$30.00
Nonpayment Charge Before 4:00 PM, Monday - Friday	\$30.00
Nonpayment Charge After 4:00 PM and before 9:00 PM, Monday - Friday	\$85.00
Nonpayment Charge on Weekends and Holidays	\$105.00
Nonpayment Charge Flat Rate Sewer Account	\$70.00
Late Notice Charge	\$3.00
Returned Check Charge	\$30.00
Hydrant Meter: Application Set Up, Relocation Charge, and Fee to Replace Cut Meter Lock	\$30.00
Meter Inspection Fee for New Meter Installations	\$30.00
Meter Testing Charge (5/8"x3/4" & 3/4")	\$65.00
Meter Reset Fee	\$115.00
Meter Tampering Charge	\$50.00
Replacement of Broken Curb Stop	\$70.00
Lien Charge (Charge does not include any recording costs, additional collection fees or attorney fees)	\$120.00
Violation Reconnection	\$30.00
Monthly Hydrant Base Charge (plus water at metered rates)	\$89.54
Hydrant Meter Deposit per Hydrant Policy	\$500.00 to \$1,100.00
Hydrant Meter One-Time Fill at CCUA Main Office (plus water at metered rates)	\$50.00
Waste Disposal Deposit per Septage Haulers Disposal Deposit Policy	
Building Water Monthly Charge All Systems (Un-metered used during construction)	\$64.49
Wholesale Reclaimed Water Usage Charge Per 1,000 Gallons	\$0.48
Waste Disposal From Portable Toilets, Septic Tanks, and Landfill Leachate at Sewage Treatment Plant Per 1,000 Gallons	\$99.74
Processing fees to CCUA for Potable Water (Public Water Supply) Distribution and Transmission System Permits	\$250.00
Processing fees to CCUA for Domestic Wastewater Collection/Transmission System Permits	\$250.00
Processing fees to CCUA for Permit Modifications	\$50.00
Energy Surcharge (to be assessed based on a formula) when actual energy sensitive operating expenses exceed budgeted energy sensitive expenses	

Account collection fees and/or costs incurred by CCUA in the course of collecting delinquent balances, which may be based on a percentage at a maximum of 40% of the debt, and all costs and expenses, including reasonable attorneys' fees, which CCUA incurs in such collection efforts, will be paid, in addition to the original balance due, by the customer responsible for the delinquent balance.

SERVICE AVAILABILITY CHARGES:

Water Capacity Charge Per ERC	\$360.00
Alternative Water Supply Charge Per ERC	\$376.71
SJRWMD Black Creek Water Resource Development Project Connection Charge Per ERC	\$108.77
Wastewater Capacity Charge Per ERC excluding Keystone included in FDEP Grant SG481030 and LP0512	\$3,200.00
Reclaimed Water Capacity Charge Per ERC For Developments with Reclaimed Water Piping Systems	\$300.00
Surcharge for Development of Reclaimed Program (Applicable To All Developments That Do Not Install Reclaimed Piping Systems)	\$410.00
Debt Service Charge Per ERC	\$149.00
Fire Protection - Initial Charge (Per Gallons Per Minute "GPM" Flow)	\$15.81
Inspection, Plan Review, As-built Drafting, and Recording Fees	Actual Cost
Potable Water Meter, with Backflow Device (5/8" x3/4" Meter with other sizes at cost) Includes Meter Box	\$433.39
Reclaimed Water Meter (5/8" x3/4" Meter with other sizes at cost) Developments with Reclaimed Water Piping Systems & Includes Meter Box	\$384.98
As defined in Rate Resolution:	
Supplemental Developer Agreement Administrative Charge	\$100.00
Financed Developer Agreement Administrative Charge	\$100.00
Flex Space Meter Audit (2nd and subsequent trips) - \$50.00, plus \$75.00, per hour in excess of .75 hours per trip	
Master Meter Violation Charge, where applicable	\$500.00
Carrying Charge for Middleburg Service Area Policy and Infill Policy	2.19%
Finance Charge	2.60%
Middleburg Service Area Development Policy - Distribution and Collection Infrastructure Charge Per Acre	
Water	\$5,637.00
Wastewater	\$10,798.00

Additional information on the proposed rates, charges, and fees is available for inspection in the office of the Clay County Utility Authority at 3176 Old Jennings Road, Middleburg, Florida, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, except legal holidays. Following the Public Hearing, which may be adjourned from time to time, the Board of Supervisors may adopt or modify the proposed rates, charges, and fees.

In accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, any person needing special accommodation to participate in this matter, should contact the Clay County Utility Authority by mail at 3176 Old Jennings Road, Middleburg, Florida 32068-3907, or by telephone at (904) 272-5999, extension 2464, no later than 7 days prior to the hearing or proceeding for which this notice has been given. Those requiring auditory assistance can access the foregoing telephone number by contacting the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770 (Voice), or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

If any person intends to appeal any decision related to this action, such person will need to provide a court reporter at such person's own expense, for a transcript of the proceedings. All interested persons are invited to attend.

CLAY COUNTY UTILITY AUTHORITY

Jeremy Johnston, Executive Director

Legal 36809 was published on August 11 & 18, 2022 in Clay County's Clay Today Newspaper.

Olympian Miller to speak at Women's Empowerment Council

ORANGE PARK – Shannon Miller, who competed in two Olympic Games, will be the guest speaker at the Clay Chambers' Women's Empowerment Council meeting on Sept. 1 at Club Continental.

Miller won two gold, two silver and three bronze medals in gymnastics at the 1992 and 1996 Summer Games. She has been inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame on two occasions. Her five medals in 1992 were the most by any American athlete. In January of 2011, Shannon was diagnosed with a rare form of ovarian cancer. She has remained open and public about her diagnosis and treatment and continues to empower women to make their health a priority. She is currently cancer-free and continues to be a strong advocate for early detection, awareness, research and survivorship. Miller is now a mother of two, cancer survivor, author and sports analyst but she will forever be remembered for her focus, determination and as leader of the 1996 Magnificent Seven gymnastics team.

The cost is \$25 for Chamber members and \$35 for non-members. The meeting at 2143 Astor St. will start at 11:30 a.m. Seating is Limited. Register at Women's Empowerment Council at claychamber.com.

Election sign theft reported by 2 school board candidates

By Clay Today Staff

CLAY COUNTY – A man is accused of taking signs belonging to two school board candidates near Keystone Heights earlier this month. According to a Clay County Sheriff's Office arrest report, four signs belonging to incumbents Tina Bullock and Janice Kerekes were taken from where they were placed near County road 315C and Long Pond Drive.

The report said two of the signs had Apple Air-Tags that told a user the location of the sign. Cameras placed near the sign showed a man taking the signs from a private property on Aug. 6 around 10:12 a.m.

The report said a deputy found the missing signs near Melrose and returned them to the candidates at 12:53 p.m. The identity of the man driving the truck was



A surveillance camera shows a man apparently taking school board campaign signs for Janice Kerekes and Tina Bullock on Aug. 6 near Melrose. Anyone with information should call the Clay County Sheriff's Office's non-emergency number at (904) 264-6512.

not released. The report referred to the man receiving petty theft and trespassing

charges, both misdemeanors.

Kerekes said that constructing and in-

stalling signs is costly and requires volunteer hours. The Kerekes campaign claimed at least 15 signs have been removed from their original placement.

"... We were alerted that some of our signs were on the move in the Keystone area. Upon opening the GPS tracking app we were shocked to see the signs driving south on CR-315 into the Melrose area near Sunnybrook Road.

"After notifying the sheriff's office, deputies responded and were able to locate and retrieve the stolen signs which were found still in the back of the suspect's truck. Thank you to the Clay County Sheriff's Office for their quick and professional response to this matter," Kerekes said in a statement.

The investigation is ongoing.

Police Briefs

Man who tried to run over Green Cove Springs officer sentenced to 18 years in prison

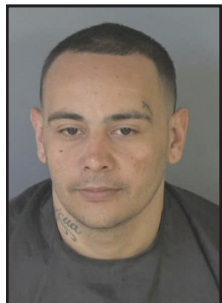
GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The man who was found guilty of trying to run over a Green Cove Springs Police Department detective was sentenced to a total of 18 years in prison on Monday.

Davis Kelvin Soto-Martinez, 32, was found guilty on July 18 of aggravated assault of a law enforcement officer, attempting to flee or elude without regard to safety of people or property, resisting arrest with violence, reckless driving, driving with a suspended license and possession of cocaine after Det. B.R. Camp saw Soto-Martinez "accelerate rapidly" on Leonard C. Taylor Parkway on July 4, 2021. When Soto-Martinez's car started swerving, Camp attempted to stop him. Camp also said Soto-Martinez's car also had blue lights.

Soto-Martinez sped away while Camp was interviewing him. Following a short chase, Soto-Martinez drove to a dead-end road at the St. Johns River and Bulkhead Road.

Soto-Martinez made a u-turn and "drove directly towards me in a blatant attempt to cause a head-on collision with me at a high rate of speed," Camp wrote in his affidavit for an arrest warrant. Camp said Soto-Martinez missed him by three feet.

Soto-Martinez drove over the Shands Bridge into St. Johns County where he eventually crashed in a yard in a residential community. St. Johns Sheriff's Office joined in the pursuit. Deputies also found handgun, ammunition and burglary tools in



Davis Kelvin Soto-Martinez

the abandoned car. Soto-Martinez eventually was arrested in Jacksonville for dealing with stolen property. He was sent back to face charges in Green Cove Springs on March 10.

He was sentenced to 10 years for crimes in Duval County and eight years by Judge Don Lester for trying to run over the deputy in Green Cove Springs.

The GCSPD posted the following statement on its Facebook page: "We will not tolerate violent criminals in our community."

Bond set at \$300,000 for man who fought with CCSO deputies

MIDDLEBURG – A Middleburg man was charged with kicking and punching three Clay County Sheriff's Office deputies with his fists after they responded to a domestic battery call on Aug. 13.

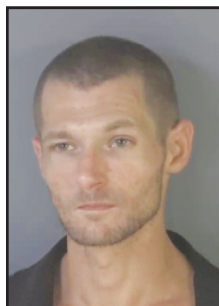
Travis Sean Turner, 34, was charged with battery on three law enforcement officers, resisting arrest with violence and domestic battery after CCSO was forced to taser the man after he fought with deputies, according to the arrest report.

When deputies arrived, Turner became belligerent, CCSO said.

Turner's bond was set at \$300,014.

Clay men accused of trafficking methamphetamine, fentanyl

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – A man was transported from the Duval County Jail to face a litany of drug charges in Clay County, where he will join an Orange Park man who already was in jail from the same



Travis Turner

incident.

Christopher Michael Darnell, 40, of Green Cove Springs, was charged with trafficking methamphetamine and fentanyl, possession of ecstasy and driving with a suspended license after he was stopped by members of the Clay County Sheriff's Office Task Force Unit on Aug. 17, 2021.

Richard Dean Lowe, 36, is accused of trafficking methamphetamine and fentanyl and possession of ecstasy and drug paraphernalia.

According to a pair of arrest reports, deputies got a tip Lowe was selling "large quantities of methamphetamine and fentanyl from his residence."

During the surveillance, a deputy saw Lowe talking to several "contacts" and receiving cash from people in Duval County in the Argyle Forest area. When the car re-entered Clay County, the task force stopped them. A K-9 alerted them to the likely presence of narcotics in the car, and they eventually found two black boxes containing the methamphetamine and fentanyl attached to the engine compartment with magnets.

Lowe has been in the Clay County Jail since Aug. 18, 2021, with a \$355,761 bond. Darnell's bond was set at \$127,511.

CCSO: Man jailed after his house burns down

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – A local man was arrested and charged with setting his house of fire on Aug. 11, according to the Clay County Sheriff's Office.

Timothy Alan Harp, 63, was charged with second-degree arson after his house



Christopher Darnell

at 5854 Hillridge Road was "entirely engulfed in flames," according to the arrest report.

Harp wasn't at the house when deputies arrived, but they found him at his mother's house five miles away. Deputies said he was fully clothed when they found him in a running shower.

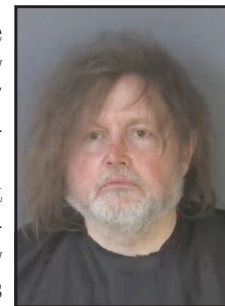
Harp's bond was set at \$75,003.

Clay Behavioral arsonist back in jail after violating probation

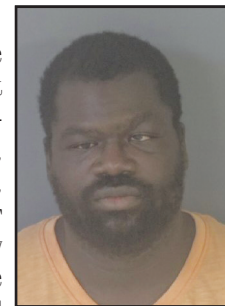
CLAY COUNTY – A man on probation for setting a fire at a four-unit apartment building in 2010 is back behind bars after he failed to follow the conditions of his release – including paying for damages.

According to the Florida Department of Corrections, Troydell Jabari Francis, 32, of Orange Park, failed to appear for mandatory monthly probation visits since July 25, and he failed to continue to make restitution of a total of \$28,753.76 associated with convictions of setting two fires at an apartment owned by Clay Behavioral on April 9, 2010. The state also said Francis failed to complete an advanced driving course or to obtain a valid driver's license.

According to the arrest report, the Orange Park Police Department responded to a fire set on Lombard Street in an outside



Timothy Harp



Troydell Francis

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 Probation; BAL-blood alcohol level. There are no assumptions or representations about guilt or innocence. Anyone arrested or booked is presumed innocent.

Tuesday, Aug. 16

Jairo A. Correa, 32, Fleming Island, DUI with property damage, driving without valid license

George O. Fagan, 45, Orange Park, following/harassing/threatening

Malena R. Harris, 19, Orange Park, battery, vandalism

Robert Galler, 50, fugitive from justice
Kelly J. Swartout, 37, Orange Park, grand theft

Indiy A.N. Whyte, 24, Orange Park, burglary

Sean T. Lewis, 30, Green Cove Springs, DWLSR

Quarderal D. Martin, 32, Green Cove Springs, VOP-felony battery

Ashley M. Owen, 38, Green Cove Springs, FTA-petit theft

Natalee J. Strombeck, 30, Middleburg, burglary, grand theft auto

Pamela L. Easter, 21, Keystone Heights, burglary, grand theft auto

Erika S. Saunders, 30, Green Cove Springs, FTA-trespassing

Troy L. Peck, 29, Green Cove Springs, VOP-criminal mischief, VOP-resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, VOP-trespassing

Vivion L. Locklear, 42, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Steven D. Wisneski, 58, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Marc S. Allen, 48, Orange Park, VOP-community control

Monday, Aug. 15

Theodore R. Davis, 47, Green Cove Springs, abandonment of animal

Jacob A. Garza, 34, Orange Pak, FTA-DWLSR

Skyelar J. Biscardi, 18, Fleming Island, petit theft

Shirley L. Wells, 50, Fleming Island, grand theft auto, burglary, grand theft, possession-drug paraphernalia, possession-marijuana

Ronald A. Boike, 58, Jacksonville, failure to comply with sexual predator requirements, sexual offenders/predators residency requirement violation

Karen E. Horne, 36, Green Cove Springs, VOP-possession-cocaine

Ronald M. Gilliland, 58, Green Cove Springs, fugitive from justice

Ethan E. Bader, 31, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Morgan R. Tindall, 34, Keystone Heights, DWLSR

Timothy A. Taylor, 38, Green Cove Springs, DWLSR

Leah M. Trammell, 39, Fleming Island, domestic battery, batter

Sunday, Aug. 14

Jacinto L. Suarez, 23, Fleming Island, DUI

Tracey L. McCourt, 33, Keystone Heights, possession-drug paraphernalia

Matthew J. Gray, 40, Green Cove Springs, DUI

Richard L. Brenner, 38, Orange Park, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Kathleen B. Carroll, 47, Orange Park, petit theft

Victoria G. Greenway, 24, Green Cove Springs, criminal mischief

Katarina I. Kay, 31, Middleburg, DUI

Kimberly S. Quinn, 23, Middleburg, possession-controlled substance

Timothy J. Kelley, 37, Fleming Island,

battery

Saturday, Aug. 13

Samantha M. Weaver, 36, Fleming Island, DUI

Chainy B. Mullins, 40, Middleburg, possession-methamphetamine, DWLSR

Kelly J. Swartout, 37, Orange Park, shoplifting, possession-drug paraphernalia

Brittany A. Siplin-Riley, 35, Orange Park, shoplifting

Kyle J. Crawford, Oakleaf, two counts each felony battery, domestic battery by strangulation

Ladalo C. Lopez, 65, Orange Park, battery

Travis S. Turner, 34, Middleburg, three counts battery on law enforcement,

resisting law enforcement with violence, domestic battery

Ervin P. Stewart, 38, Orange Park, DUI

Quinn S. Rogers, 38, Orange Park, two counts domestic battery

Lucas C.B. Sparrow, 38, Middleburg, aggravated assault with deadly weapon, battery, vandalism

Friday, Aug. 12

Clifford M. Bramlett, 29, Middleburg, aggravated assault with deadly weapon

Tori L. Kirby, 52, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Javon D. Bell, 31, Green Cove Springs, BOP-domestic battery

Durwood C. Horne, 47, Orange Park, battery

Stephanie K. Wilke, 32, Orange Park, possession-controlled substance

Thursday, Aug. 11

Shalik C. Coit, 30, Orange Park, DWLSR

Morgan J. Kelly, 31, Fleming Island, child neglect

Shammon T.D. Sherwood, 24, driving without valid license

Eric Hall, 44, Green Cove Springs, failure to register vehicle

Aaliyah L. Baker, 28, Green Cove Springs, follow/harass/cyberstalking

Tera J. Rushing, 32, Fleming Island, battery

Timothy A. Harp, 63, Keystone Heights, arson

Kimberly A. Morgan, 54, Middleburg, FTA

Wednesday, Aug. 10

Troydell J. Francis, 32, Middleburg, two counts VOP-arson

Jose E. Soto, 26, Orange Park, possession-methamphetamine with intent to sell/manufacture/deliver

Isaac D. Higginbotham, 26, Orange Park, possession-fentanyl, possession-methamphetamine, possession-marijuana

Sam P. Hughlon, 43, Green Cove Springs, two counts possession-controlled substance

Mark C. Prescott, 51, Middleburg, battery, trespassing

Ronnie L. Whiten, 43, Green Cove Springs, DWLSR

Christopher M. Darnell, 40, Orange Park, trafficking-methamphetamine, trafficking-fentanyl, possession-controlled substance, DWLSR

Julie C. McHenry, 52, Middleburg, aggravated battery with deadly weapon

Jordan T. Van Wingerden, 19, Fleming Island, domestic battery

Eric Hall, 44, Keystone Heights, fugitive from justice

Ayden J. Hancotte, 19, Middleburg, possession-marijuana

Police

from page 24

eave. A neighbor put the fire out with a garden hose.

Less than 30 minutes later, the neighbor was awakened by the popping sound of another fire in an eave. OPPD reported four fires were reported at the apartments in a short span. The Clay County Sheriff's Office arrested Francis for a fire set to an air conditioning unit on March 16, 2010, at the same complex. Francis already was in jail for the April fire.

Francis, who pled guilty on Sept. 9, 2010, to setting both fires, now is being held without bond.

Orange Park Police looking to return case of memories

ORANGE PARK – Officers with the Orange Park Police Department were called recently when a patron found a poker chip case in the 4Rivers Smokehouse on Park Avenue and they found a cache of old photos and newspaper clippings.

If someone is missing any valuable memories, the department is eager to



make sure they are returned.

If you can prove ownership, please call (904) 264-5555.



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Fleming Island running back Sam Singleton, who recently committed to FSU, is one big question mark for Golden Eagle offense as he has tendered a very tender hamstring through the summer, but is expected full tilt for Clay High season opener.

Top prospects for Player of Year

Ammon, Broughton, Restall, Singleton?

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

OAKLEAF - After a statistics filled season led to a dismal 4-6 record, Oakleaf High quarterback Drew Ammon made it clear he wants the playoffs more than more statistics.

"At this point, with the start of the season, football is what I'm all about," said Ammon, also a soccer and tennis standout for Oakleaf. "I want more of everything. More touchdowns, more yards and more wins. We have to win some playoff games."

For the Knights, Ammon's targets are impressive; senior Taylor Bradshaw, also a candidate for player of year, is a major NCAA Div. I target with his incredible wing-

span and his innate jumping ability for Ammon's dimes down field.

"I just know he will be open when I need him," said Ammon. "We've been throwing together since we were 10 and we want a ring together before it's over."

Ammon as the top drawer to be a repeat Clay Today player of year has a few chasers of the title with Fleming Island High sophomore quarterback Gibastian Broughton on his heels.

Broughton, as a surly freshman with a brash, but confident swagger, opened his season last year with a bit of turbulence, but settled in, realized his value as a field general and guided the Golden Eagles to a fast finish and a playoff spot for coach

Damenyum Springs.

"He has learned to direct traffic out there now and make better decisions," said Springs. "We kind of kept pushing him to keep playing despite some freshman mistakes and he proved to be a very fast and quick learner of the game of high school football."

Broughton has a plethora of weaponry around him with Deonte Domenick a prime target at one end and Brenden Cook, a sinewy speedster with the heart of a lion and the chatter of a mockingbird, one of the best kept secrets last year. Cook, a track hurdler, could be the highlight reel for the Golden Eagles with Broughton the guy to

SEE PLAYER, 28



Orange Park senior running back JoJo Restall is driving force for Raider offense as one of the toughest tackles in north Florida when he is carrying the ball.

Who's 'The Guy?'

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

ORANGE PARK - As football Friday nights amp up to provide 11 or more weeks of county-wide action, teams have returned

PRESEASON GAMES

Thurs., Aug. 18
Oakleaf at Sandalwood

Fri., Aug. 19
Orange Park at Bolles
Westside at Fleming Island
Clay vs. Bishop Kenny
Keystone Heights at Ridgeview
Middleburg vs. Episcopal

to their practice fields to test out schemes, structure conditioning and input new twists on traditional strategies.

"It's a tough month because we can't do much on the run game without pads on and guys across the line trying to stop us," said

SEE THE GUY, 29



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NEW ARRIVALS
BENNINGTON





Four viable candidates capable of Player Of Year seasons include any one of the five Fleming Island offensive linemen; Ethan Hoffstetter, Michael Zeray, Ethan Williams, Braden Cunningham and T.J. Lawrence, all top returners, while the quarterback battle may be between Oakleaf's Drew Ammon, last year's player of year, and Fleming Island's Cibastian Broughton, who had a brilliant freshman season for the Golden Eagles. If Broughton is hot, wide receiver Darion Domenick could become the Golden Eagle bread and butter man.

Player

from page 27

make or break his vertical speed.

Tight end Dakota Rowe likes Broughton's growth into his sophomore season and sees Broughton and also running back Sam Singleton's return to the gridiron as an exciting combination.

"Sam has been at every practice and I'm ready to see him explode out there," said Rowe. "Cibastian has become very versatile in his short to deep passes and has been getting us quality passes this summer that we are able to extend to bigger plays."

For Broughton, and for Singleton, who has been nursing a lingering hamstring, the possibility of either of the two blowing up the player of year choices, makes the Golden Eagles that much more potent as an offense.

Should Singleton, who recently made a commit to FSU, be 100 percent and able to blast the entire season, the end result could be astounding as he showed glimpses of his ability break long last year; one a 99 yarder, for his near 1000 yards.

At the Oakleaf end of the county, running back Devin Outlaw has been in the same rowboat as Singleton with nagging injuries impeding his stats package, but Outlaw is confident of his return.

"I want to get that stack of stats to let people know that my good year was not a one time thing," said Outlaw. "I'm stronger, fitter, more flexible and ready to roll."

Oakleaf football coach Marcus Miller has repeatedly said that Outlaw's rugged between-the-tackles style lends itself to a lot of wear and tear and that his goal is to have him all season to show off his prowess.

"Any running back that is carrying 25-30 reps a game is going to be dinged up," said Miller. "We have probably six pretty good offense weapons to choose from and hope to get the ball around so no one athlete is taking all the shots. We will go big as Devin goes big."

Orange Park running back JoJo Restall has kind of quietly been one of the most productive ball carriers in north Florida and with a massive offensive line in front of him and four track-fast wide receivers on his wings, the barn door could be open for this quarterhorse-strong runner to shred the gridiron.

"We know he needs just a sliver to go," said offensive tackler Roderick Kearney, who at 300-plus pounds and already a Florida State University commit, has his own wingman, Braylon Hawkins ready to steamroll one side of the defensive fronts opposite them.

"We can control the game with our blocking up front, JoJo's running and our passing game," said Kearney. "If all three

phases are humming, we're scoring."

At Middleburg, an interesting story will be told in 2022 with second year coach Ryan Wolfe embarking on a path of legitimacy after giving Bronco fans a 5-5 season to chew on for this season.

Three key guys on the front lines; running back Mike Mitchell, linebacker Austin Cruce and quarterback Jaydan Jenkins all have the tools around them and the instinct inside them to make this season epic for Middleburg's always faithful following.

"We changed the culture of thinking last year with our wins and even with our losses by showing ourselves that we belong in the mix," said Wolfe. "Our key is not to give good teams a 20-30 point lead off the first half, then wake up to chase them."

Mitchell, a recent University of Utah commit, is a complete run, pass downfield package for Wolfe with a keen eye for open field.

"They want to get the ball to me in the open field so I can go," said Mitchell, who spent most of the summer as a wingback, slot back kind of offensive lineup with Jenkins having T.J. Lane behind me as the inside threat.

Lane, also a fast trackster, blasted two 80-plus yards scoring runs in a recent Middleburg team scrimmage, arguably against the second defense, but still a small snapshot of his ability to possibly be the Broncos second breakaway threat.

Jenkins, in this scenario, is the unknown character on a team of high potential only because he has learned an entirely new system under Wolfe at Middleburg. Jenkins, younger brother of Clay High standout Jaylan Jenkins who lit up fields for the Blue Devils in his prime time, has similar instincts as big brother and also got some varsity reps as backup to Clay High's Billy Mobley last year.

One factor in all this player of year contemplation is Clay Today's choices in history of the occasional offensive or defensive linemen as players of year; Jarrod Leeds

of Clay, Kendy Charles of Orange Park, to name two.

With that, Bradley Warren of Clay, Kearney of Orange Park, Kyland Armstrong of Oakleaf, a Wake Forest commit, and any one of five at Fleming Island; Ethan Hoffstetter, Braden Cunningham, Michael Zeray, Ethan Williams and T.J. Lawrence, all returners, could be one chosen if Singleton and Broughton have monster seasons.

Wolfe has five of his own Godzillas with two massive bookend tackles; Jaylin Booker and Micah George; both 6-3 ish, 300 poundish, locking in returners Dakota Gober, Khoda Moses and Landen Padgett, all three near the 280-300 mark.

Defensively, watch for Middleburg safety Aidan Postemski. Who? Postemski is probably the smallest secondary player in the county, but the wily, second string quarterback could become the most dangerous guy in centerfield. Oakleaf's Drake Stubbs snagged six picks last year and could spell POY with another half dozen or more.

Linebackers; watch for Fleming Island's crew of three; led by Jhoel Robinson and Walker Whiddon, to be big splash players with Cruce for Middleburg a blue-collar kind of hero and Oakleaf newcomer Jaiden Hicks a guy to watch. Ridgeview's pair of Hunter Creech and Sheppard Bridges, plus RB to LB Rayhn Hutchinson may surprise some observers.

Quarterback wise around the county, Clay's Merrick Rapoze is a playmaker that could explode to the high school scene after a bunch of youth football success with Orange Park coach Marcus Wimberly dangling his starting slot between two guys; Elijah Cragette and Durrionte Myrick. If Wimberly can get his two quarterbacks on the same page as his outstanding pass catchers; speedsters Nolan Chambers and Brian Green with Larry Thomas and Jermel Brown adding 4 x 100 track prowess to the mix, Orange Park could be the most dangerous team in north Florida.

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TRY IT AGAIN ...



The Guy

from page 27

Oakleaf coach Marcus Miller. "Mainly in the summer, we have passing scrimmages with other teams and we throw against our own guys, but when the pads come on, everything changes."

The "everything changes" part is the part where running plays and catches passes and blocking and tackling by kind of running into somebody else morphs into full speed collisions, airborne acrobatics with violence for zipped passes and barking across the line of scrimmage in an attempt to put a bit of a scare into the other guy.

"There is a lot of jawboning back and forth, but with it they are still teammates and everyone knows you kind of don't want to hurt your teammate," said Ridgeview coach Bryan Arnette. "You don't get to see the real football players on the team until those pads are on and it's live."

All that preparation being done and the transition from summer conditioning and game preparations to hand-to-hand contact in the heat of the day (after school 3 p.m. rather than before sunrise 8 a.m.).

"When it's hot, attitudes change to," said Fleming Island coach Damenym Springs. "The weather; especially hot weather and humid weather makes a kid think about why he is out here. The real players don't seem to mind it or they are good at coping and not revealing any discomfort. Others are the ones looking for the water bottles after every snap."

Amidst all this sport posturing comes that one kid, that one player, that seems impervious to the weather, to the jawboning, to the tackles after the whistle and all the other things that take concentration away from the task at hand.

"It doesn't have to be the biggest guy out there or the strongest guy on the team or the running back or the middle linebacker, but just the guy that kind of loves the heck out of just being on the field and being fearless amidst the chaos," said Clay coach Kyle Kennard. "We got a lot of puppies out here this year because we graduated a ton and the beauty of the practices is that a lot of young guys see a chance to play varsity as a Blue Devil as a sophomore. The team's history makes that a special space."

"The Guy" for Ridgeview High is 6'3, 240 pound J.J. Moore, according to Arnette.

"He is the face of the program right now because he is always running at top speed and running through people whether at tight end or at defensive end," said Arnette. "You watch him practice and you can see the fire in his eyes and can see his demeanor doesn't change much from half speed to live contact. He scares people."



Tough guys around the county include, top left, Middleburg safety Aidan Postemski, Keystone Heights defensive tackler Trey Jeffries, right, and, below, Fleming Island strongman Joey Couch.

Moore, who is most noted for his notably beat down of seven tacklers for a 30 plus yard touchdown pass after catch at Fort White in the Panthers' spring game, is all about doing whatever it takes to stay on the field and to produce for his team.

"He absolutely loves his brothers," said Arnette.

For Oakleaf, "The Guy" could be tight end plus Isaiah Shevchok, a quirky kind of in-deep pass catcher that is willing to scare guys away from tackling him when in the red zone. Shevchok, also an Oakleaf High wrestler, has the personality of a pistol-toting gunslinger in the Wild West with his runs downfield literally challenging, daring tacklers to stop him.

"He's our Swiss Army Knife out there and takes that title kind of serious," said Miller. "I don't think he gets a lot of the press he deserves so he might act weird and do a flip or shoot a basketball shot af-

ter a score, but going to battle, he's the one in the foxhole you want next to you."

Orange Park's run game is led by one guy who is pretty massive and a tank-sized source of power on the offensive line, but the guy who makes the Raiders tick is power running back JoJo Restall.

Very quiet, very stocky and muscular and with slightly bowed legs, Restall is the A-10 Warhog of Raider football with his downhill strength running that can quickly morph to breakaway T-38 sideline speed and is all about the proverbial in-your-face type offensive weapon.

"His presence is enough to make defensive coaches think about filling the box to

stop him and, with Roderick up there (Roderick Kearney, 300-plus pound FSU commit offensive tackle), that's a pretty scary pair of bodies bearing down on tacklers," said Orange Park offensive coach Corey Hawkins. "Those two can control a game if they want to."

Clay's "That Guy" is senior middle linebacker Dominic Martin, who is one of a few returners for the Blue Devils, who graduated a bucket ton of seniors from last year's 7-3 finish.

"I want to see my teammates working hard and lifting weights and getting strong and then flying to the ball every down," said Martin. "We don't have a lot of guys coming back and we don't have a lot of size, but we are going to stick you if you have the ball and more of us will be close by to finish the job."

Last year, Kennard's main Black OPs guy was Clay Today defensive player of year Blake Thompson, but Thompson has moved with family away from Clay County.

"Dominic knows his role," said Kennard.

At Middleburg, the role of "The Guy" goes to a guy who has his own nickname, "Cowboy" and who lives that image very toughly (?) on each down even in practice at half speed.

"I don't know a different speed," said Cruce. "I'm linebacker and I'm here to hit people and make plays."

One guy who has liked being able to see Cruce up close is former Middleburg High linebacker Carvin Duverge, who himself was a classic Bronco bludgeoner then a collegiate linebacker that has returned to coach up his linebacker brethren.

"He is what you want for a linebacker in mental state," said Duverge. "He's tough. He'll put a lick on you on every play. And, he will come you full tilt, four quarters. That's the part that makes him special. He'll be rocking your world in the final few minutes of a game whether Middleburg is up by 30 or down by 30."

Keystone Heights coach Chuck Dickinson has had his share of "ornery (poop) kickers in his 30 plus years with John Brown and Sam Anderson recent small-sized linebackers with massive reputations as guys to avoid on the field, but, with a graduation class that took the likes of Logan Williams, Mason Dicks and Dalton Hollingsworth as guys that would rather knock you out than run out of bounds, Dickinson says he is waiting for "The Guy" to arrive.

SEE THE GUY, 33



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FINAL COUNTDOWN



One of the biggest questions is who is Orange Park quarterback with offensive coordinator Corey Hawkins, top pic, having to make choice of either Elijah Craggette or Durriente Myrick, while Middleburg's T.J. Lane, a running back, is making moves to get his name out there with teammate Mike Mitchell and Ridgeview now going with wide receiver Jarren Rosier, bottom pic, as signal caller.



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Level: Intermediate

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CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to traffic.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 10 = A)

- A. 11 10 22 21**
Clue: Automobiles
- B. 13 19 8 19 21 15 22 9 10 5 21**
Clue: Persons walking
- C. 21 10 7 19 15 12**
Clue: Condition of being protected
- D. 22 3 10 8 17 10 12 21**
Clue: Places to drive

Answers: A. cars B. pedestrians C. safety D. roadways

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to traffic awareness.

REMSEG

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Answer: Merges

Guess Who?

I am a pop singer born in Arizona on August 15, 1989. My brothers and I made an appearance on the TV show Hannah Montana and won legions of fans. As a trio, we're quite popular. In 2011, I released a solo album.

Answer: Joe Jonas



The Guy

from page 29

"We have a lot of young guys of course from graduation and one will surface," said Dickinson. "These guys are all little tough guys, all live the weightroom and all love their school. It's kind of a badge of honor to be 'That Guy.'"

Defensive tackler Trey Jeffries emerged in the Indians region final loss to The Villages as the guy who surfaced past a massive offensive line by The Villages to disrupt the backfield despite the Indians' loss.

"He also runs the ball the same way, attacking the tackler," said Dickinson. "He could be 'The Guy' this year if he runs hard he will be a load to take down. Any one of those young guys gets a shot, they can step in to that role."

Over at Fleming Island, "The Guy" is a tough call as the Golden Eagles are ripe with tough, ornery guys that just want to win and win tough.

In the past, Ryan or Austin Smenda were missiles on defense, Vince Buzby was a crash test battering ram and Brandyne Mackey was a lethal trajectory as the top sack guy for the Golden Eagle defense.

For 2022, Joey Couch, defensive end, could be the guy that rises out of the pile of debris as the bottom feeder with a smile on his face like the first shark to the prey. Couch is a super strong, tough inside chaos maker and plays with a high emotion rating that makes him a force against much bigger blockers. Fleming Island has had its share of fast, strong defensive line prototypes and Couch could be the next on the list.

And, finally, Oakleaf's scary guy is running back Devin Outlaw who brings a dump truck of brute strength with him when he runs.

TRAFFIC SAFETY WORD SEARCH

O C R U I S I N G F D I P P B S V Y M C
 K E E U N E V A R B H A R L W I K K W C
 W T T L L Y O A C S U U G P T L E T H H
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 G P R T G O O T A S G F H H F A P I T M
 P B T E L G L G W H U V X A Y Y B F M F
 A K A C U F U E L C M P C U R V E L U T
 F P P T L D D M I V C B A W I B C K I R

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

- ACCELERATE
- ACCIDENT
- AIRBAG
- ASPHALT
- AUTOMOBILE
- AVENUE
- BOULEVARD
- BRAKES
- BRIDGE
- CLOVERLEAF
- CRASH
- CRUISING
- CURVE
- DANGER
- DEFENSIVE
- DENT
- EXHAUST
- EXPRESSWAY
- FAST
- FUEL
- GEAR
- INTERCHANGE
- LICENSE
- PATROL

S	P	A	A	K		A	A	R		P	A	C	A		
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7	5	9	3	1	6	4	2	8
3	8	2	4	5	9	1	7	6
5	4	6	2	9	7	3	8	1
9	7	8	6	3	1	5	4	2
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