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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2023

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VOLUME 61, NO. 7 \$1.00

CCSO Detention Deputy of the Year Jesse Holbert's intuition leads to identifying Philadelphia murder suspect

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The more Sean Williams refused to reveal his real name, the more Clay County Sheriff's Office Detention Deputy Jesse Holbert was determined to find out why.

It didn't matter Williams was only in jail for a minor possession of marijuana charge. Holbert sensed something didn't add up.

Williams didn't understand that as long as he kept giving the agency a fake name, the longer he would be behind bars. So Holbert started digging deeper.

"When he got pulled over, he said his name was Keyshawn West," Holbert said. "He gave us the right date of birth, but he said he didn't know his social security number. Other guys showed up at the scene and he used the name James. So now we had two names."

Williams told another detention deputy he was Sean West.

And none were correct.

"John Doe" believed the sheriff's office would flinch first, but deputies couldn't file charges without a proper name. So Williams sat.



Sean Williams

Sean Williams, who was wanted for murder.

"He figured since it was a simple marijuana charge, he would get out soon," Holbert said.

Holbert checked with Williams' roommate and learned his real name was Sean. He also learned he was from Philadelphia, so Holbert called the Philadelphia Police Department. That's when both agencies realized the man in the Clay County Jail was actually



STAFF PHOTO BY DON COBLE

Clay County Sheriff's Office Detention Deputy Jesse Holbert didn't stop until he found Sean Williams' true identity.

SEE DEPUTY, 23

Rebuilding a life; building a business

Dees recovers from a life of drugs to owning a contracting business

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

MIDDLEBURG – Derek Dees has lived a difficult life from the day he was born.

His mother was 14 when he was delivered. He was 6 when she became addicted to drugs.

"Growing up, you deal with anxiety and depression, not understanding why other kids were treated differently than you. It's only human reaction for parents to treat their own children like that," he said.

As a child, Derek drove down the street to a stop sign about a mile down the road

with drugs wrapped in tin foil to help his mother make ends meet.

Derek found a release by playing quarterback at Orange Park, West Nassau and Columbia highs.

"Football was what kind of kept me together all throughout high school," Dees

said.

The constant variable of moving from town to town and the popularity of playing the position took his mind down a rabbit hole from a dark childhood past.

SEE LIFE, 12

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Despite some concerns, red light cameras aren't coming down

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – The Town has a population of 8,764, according to the 2020 United States census, and it's grown in the past three years.

However, despite its small size, Orange Park still provides a major artery for traffic flowing between four Northeast Florida counties: Clay, Duval, St. John's and Putnam.

More than 85,000 vehicles pass through the town a day, according to the Florida Department of Transportation.

U.S. Highway 17 runs north and south through the town, with Wells Road and Kingsley Avenue being one short turn away from Blanding Blvd, each providing a quick connection to Interstate 295.

In a town where tens of thousands of automobiles pass through daily, red light cameras have been installed at three locations since 2013: northbound and southbound lanes at Park and Kingsley avenues, Park and Loring avenues, and westbound and westbound and eastbound lanes at Kingsley Avenue and DeBarry.

The cameras take photos of red light runners at the designated intersections, with cameras taking still images and videos of violators, who are issued a \$158 fine.

In most recent data, the National Coalition for Safer Roads found that Florida was the No. 3 most deadly state for red-light running in 2019, with 84 overall fatalities.



However, in Orange Park, numbers haven't been nearly as detrimental as in other areas of the state.

Since red light cameras were established 10 years ago, annual crashes have not decreased. Data from FDOT from 2013-20 denotes an average of 32.1 crashes a year, compared to a total of 15 in 2011 and 25 in 2012.

Meanwhile, injury numbers from those crashes increased slightly. Between 2011-12, an average of 19 injuries were reported, while from 2013-20, an average of 21 injuries took place a year.

No deaths took place at the three intersections between 2011-20, according to the FDOT.

Green Cove Springs also relies on three

SEE CAMERA, 18



Apprentice Lineworker Craig Smith took a test drive with the new Chevy Bolt EV shortly after it rolled off the production line.

Plug into the facts while considering electric cars

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – Clay County Electric Cooperative advertises purchasing an electric vehicle as a wise transportation choice. They have the virtues of buying an electric vehicle, including lower operational costs than a gas-powered car, environmental benefits, and performance benefits like quiet, smooth operation, more decisive acceleration, and less maintenance than their gasoline-powered internal combustion counterparts.

However, when Clay County residents ponder the purchase of an electric vehicle, there are many factors they should

consider.

Christine Pinkley is an owner of a hybrid electric vehicle who resides in Keystone Heights. She drives a 2018 Kia Optima, which runs on battery and gas power.

How long an electric vehicle can run without a charge is a primary consideration that should be factored into the decision-making process when contemplating a purchase of an EV.

Pinkley said her HEV gets more than 600 miles to the tank, which is double that of her previous vehicle, a gas-powered Kia.

SEE CARS, 10

Commissioners agree to raise impact fees to help school district

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – A public hearing for a proposed ordinance that would raise public school impact fees and a discussion on nonprofit funding was the center of discussion during a relatively short session for the Clay County Board of Commissioners Tuesday night.

As required by the BCC, public school impact fees must be reviewed and revised if necessary in consideration of additional costs such as changes in prices, revenues and other factors.

The BCC reviewed a new study conducted and also examined by the Clay County School Board.

The fees are set not to increase by 12.5% of the current rate but by 12.5% of the 50% that the District is allowed to

increase the impact fee.

This means that the impact fee would only increase by \$800 annually, according to Bryce Ellis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations.

For example, in Year 1 (June 1, 2023-May 30, 2024), a single-family unit would pay \$7,913, a multi-family unit would pay \$3,629, and a mobile home would pay \$6,721 and in Year 2 (June 1, 2024-May 30, 2025) a single-family unit would pay \$8,793, multi-family unit \$4,022, and mobile home \$7,464.

While impact fees are still set to increase in June but would still be capped at a limit, the study requested a much more significant amount than residents will have to pay.

The impact fee was set in place as costs continued to rise for the county's schools,

infrastructure projects and additional police and fire protection.

The fees will help cover costs for current schools already established in Clay and two future schools that are set to be completed in the next few years.

Spring Park Elementary, a new school in Green Cove Springs set to open in August, will feature the same design and construction as Discovery Oaks Elementary, which was completed in 2018 for \$26 million.

Spring Park, however, will cost \$40 million, she said.

"The costs are exorbitant, and you just have to keep up," Ellis said.

The CCDS is also looking into building a Kindergarten-through-eighth grade school and high school in the Saratoga Springs area, which would cost \$200 million, she

said. "We already know we are in a bind. We need schools, our kids are at max capacity, and people are still coming in because we have such a wonderful county," said Commissioner Kristen Burke.

The motion passed, 5-0.

In other business, the BCC and Assistant County Manager Troy Nagel had a productive discussion on nonprofit funding.

A framework for funding charitable organizations will be further examined during the commissioners' next meeting on Feb. 28.

Nagle said he would continue conversations with the organizations before the board's next meeting to get moving with the final contracts.

Nagle recommended the county fund capital projects at 10% and small projects at 15%.

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Hartle's dream fulfilled; Lynyrd Skynyrd's history preserved at Hell House site

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Last June, Adam Hartle stood on the old fishing dock at the back of the lot where Hell House once rocked and his mind wandered.

The black water of Peter's Creek was a few feet behind him. Down at the water's edge, not up on the ridge where Lynyrd Skynyrd practiced and created much of its iconic Southern Rock classics, is where Hartle found peace.

Hartle bought the property two years ago where Hell House and Ronnie Van Zant's dock once stood. He did it to make sure the spot where songs like "Swamp Music," "Simple Man," "Free Bird," Gimme Three Steps" and "Saturday Night Special" was written and perfected would never be transformed into another house in a busy subdivision.

"I didn't want this to be some dude's backyard," he said when his nonprofit foundation completed the purchase. "I'm a Jacksonville boy and just want this place to stay special."

He promised his neighbors the land

would be home only to the mossy live oaks, alligators and snakes. Since he believed in the sanctity of Lynyrd Skynyrd's legacy, Hartle said he would only have a historical marker implanted near the dock, just a few steps away from where the original building once stood.

"January 15th is Ronnie's birthday," Hartle said in November. I want to throw a party, invite the neighbors. I'd even love to do the hologram thing. I'm a Jacksonville boy and just want this place to stay special."

The marker arrived in December, but it was too late for Hartle to appreciate it. At 43, he died a few weeks earlier of a heart attack while he was in Austin, Texas, to perform his comedy standup routine.

His wife reached out to me in January about picking up the marker. Hartle was friends with Bob Kealing, a historian and journalist from the Orlando area, and together we carried out Hartle's vision on Saturday.

Six students from Florida State Univer-



From left, Will Kealing, Mitchell Stockwell and Matt Freehan are students at Florida State University and they drove to Green Cove Springs last Saturday to help with the installation of a historical marker honoring Lynyrd Skynyrd and the music created at Hell House.

SEE DREAM, 14

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Protect your financial health before you walk down the aisle

By StatePoint Media
For Clay Today

February is the month of love and one of the most popular times for couples to get engaged. According to a recent study, 36% of respondents said Valentine's Day is the most romantic day to propose.

The Clay Bridal Spectacular Expo is coming to the Thrasher-Horne Center on Feb. 26, so if you're about to get married or just walked down the aisle, here are five things to do to ensure your financial health.

First, determine how you will handle finances. They say money can't buy love and happiness, but talking about it in a marriage or beforehand goes a long way. You'll want to discuss whether you'll have a joint bank account and credit cards, separate accounts, or a combination of the two. It's a personal decision, so consider the pros and cons.

The Clay Bridal Spectacular Expo is coming to the Thrasher-Horne Center on Feb. 26, so if you're about to get married or just walked down the aisle, here are five things to do to ensure your financial health.

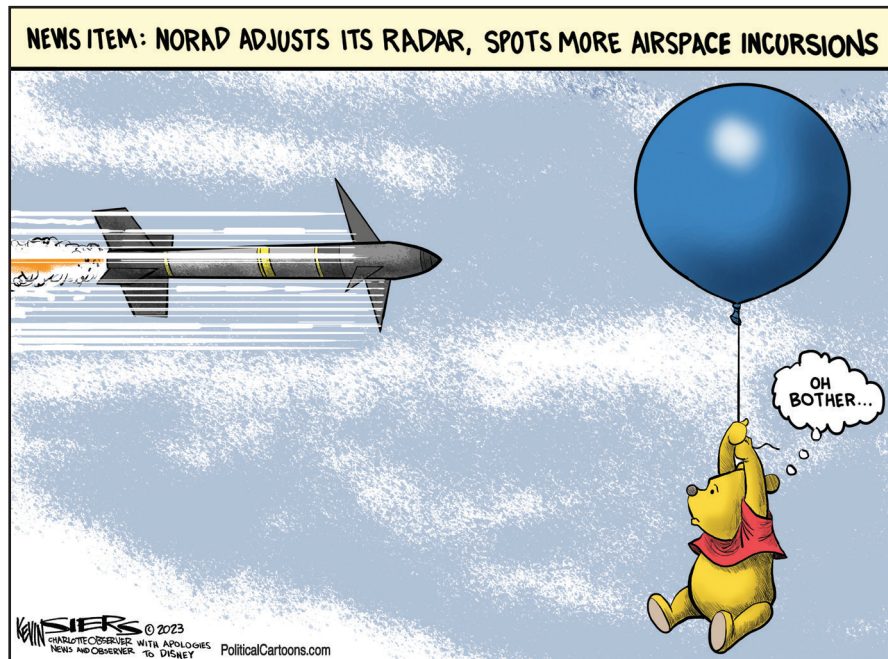
It's also a good idea to know the roles you will play. For example, will you or your partner pay the day-to-day bills? The other person may want to manage the monthly mortgage, auto expenses, or long-term investments and retirement funds. If you need help with a plan, you may want to seek the advice of a financial counselor.

Second, get insurance. You may not realize that February is also Insure Your Love Month, a time to consider protecting your loved ones if something unfortunate happens. "If you have people who depend on you – including your new spouse – chances are you need life insurance," said Lou Colaizzo, senior vice president Erie Family Life. "While it's hard to think about the possibility of not being there for a loved one, it's so important to plan for."

Colaizzo said some people might hesitate to seek out life insurance because they don't want to get a medical exam, but that's not always necessary. For example, Erie Insurance has a policy called ERExpress Life, which may protect with a simple application process and no physical medical exam. Colaizzo recommends people consult with their insurance agent to find the

SEE WEDDING, 5

OPINIONS



Don't let progress allow Hell House, Adam Hartle's legacy fade

By Don Coble
Managing Editor

I stood on the corners of Plymouth Street and Lenox Avenue in the West-side of Jacksonville Monday and tried to imagine what the intersection looked like 60 years ago.

Back then, a half-mile dirt track was cut in a thicket of tall pines and mossy oaks. Stock car fans filled crude wooden bleachers to watch their favorite drivers like Willie Carter and LeeRoy Yarbrough. They drank beer and threw chicken bones toward the speeding cars.

Speedway Park is where Wendell Scout became the first Black driver to win a NASCAR race. It happened in 1963 during the height of the civil rights movement. Officials originally declared Buck Baker the winner, but they changed their minds two hours after reviewing scorecards. By then, the crowd had gone home. So did the white race queen, so there were no Victory Lane photos or celebrations.

Scott got the \$1,000 winner's check, but he never got the trophy. Sixty years later, the official trophy has never been located.

Speedway Park closed in 1973. Jacksonville was growing, and the land was too valuable to be used on occasional weekends.



Don Coble

The track also is where Lynyrd Skynyrd frontman Ronnie Van Zant sat in a tree outside the track on Saturday nights, watching Yarbrough carve through traffic.

Now it's gone, replaced by apartments. Some call it progress. I call it disappointing because the bulldozers also plowed over the property's historical significance.

There are no plaques or markers at the site, and memories continue to fade as drivers and fans from that era pass away.

Adam Hartle didn't like to see legacies being covered by concrete. That's why he bought the lot where Lynyrd Skynyrd mastered their brand of Southern Rock in a small shack in the Green Cove Springs woods.

The woods have been transformed into a 158-lot housing development off County Road 209. Docks now crowd the southern side of Peter's Creek.

No matter how much they build around Hell House, the hallowed grounds where "Free Bird" and "Sweet Home Alabama" were created will only have a few trees, sand, patches of grass and a rickety dock where Van Zant used to fish and find musical inspiration.

"Jacksonville is changing. Listen to the song, 'Every Mother's Son,' and its lyrics, man, 'I can see the concrete creeping.' And it's true, there are dump trucks everywhere, and it's erasing Jacksonville's and the band's history," Hartle once said.

Despite some pushback from Edgewater residents who feared their

SEE LEGACY, 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.

Velleity: (v'-LEE-'-dee) a noun that means an inclination not strong enough to act on.

"Although we were low on funds, we felt a velleity to cook at home and instead, we decided to order out."

This Week in History

Five years ago, 2018

- U.S. Rep. Ted Yoho and county officials ask for a Department of Veterans Affairs clinic to be built in Clay.
- A contractor's widow, Christine Cella of Orange Park, files a lawsuit against CSX and Amtrak after her husband, Mike, was killed when the passenger train slammed into a crewless CSX freight train.
- The county commission learns the Florida Department of Transportation will fund the proposed First Coast Expressway.

10 years ago, 2013

- The Orange Park Medical Center took part in a Department of Health workshop to ask the state not to close its Level Two trauma center.
- Sheriff Rick Beseler laid a wreath at the gravesite of Det. David White was shot and killed a year earlier in a drug raid in Middleburg.
- The local chapter of the Sierra Club attend a zoning meeting to oppose plans to build an asphalt plant on Country Road 15A.

20 years ago, 2003

- Residents on Fleming Island are alarmed after separate fires destroyed a pickup truck, a wooden swing set and a pile of wood.
- Students at Montclair Elementary were treated to a visit by Michael Waltrip's Daytona 500-winning Chevrolet ahead of the FCAT test.
- Orange Park's Margaret Ivey wins the Nursing Spectrum's Travel Nursing Without Working Sweepstakes. She also got a \$3,000 travel voucher and \$2,000 in cash.

30 years ago, 1993

- A circuit judge rules the Clay County District Schools must turn over reports of the number of fires and construction proj-

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.



Wedding

from page 4

right life insurance policy and coverage amount that's best for them.

Third, protect your bling. Chances are you spent a lot of time and money picking out rings you'll love and wear daily. Unfortunately, burglaries are more common than you may think. According to the FBI, there were more than 1.1 million burglaries in 2019.

Protect your wedding jewelry, and any other expensive jewelry, by adding these items to your homeowners or renter's policy. It is advisable to have photos and documentation of the value of the ring and other valuable jewelry in the event of a theft or a loss.

Fourth, update your car insurance. Notify your agent to ensure you're both covered to drive each other's cars. You may also be eligible for savings, such as a multi-car discount or bundling your car

insurance with homeowners and/or life insurance. Additionally, some insurance companies offer a lower rate for married couples.

Fifth, make updates to your records if you change your last name. It's a big decision and takes a lot of work if one of you changes your name after marriage. Being patient and diligent is important as the entire process may take several months. Remember to update all the appropriate forms, including a new Social Security card, driver's license, passport, bank accounts and credit cards, among other considerations. Additionally, notify your employer for payroll and health insurance coverage updates.

Getting married is an exciting, big life event. While you and your partner start your new life together, have an open conversation about financial considerations and double-check to make sure you're covered to protect the life you're building.

Legacy

from page 4

community would become a tourist stop, Hartle installed a historical marker to ensure Hell House's legacy wouldn't be eroded by time.

It proved to be his dying wish.

The 43-year-old comedian died of a heart attack while the marker was being created.

Along with five students from Florida State and marker installer Tim Fillmon, Bob Kealing and I carried out Adam's wishes last weekend. Hartle's wife called me when the marker was delivered and I picked it up last week. We met at the site and installed it facing Peter's Creek near the dock.

It can't be seen from the street so Edgewater residents – some who live on streets like Free Bird Loop, Southern Oaks Drive and Tuesday's Cove – won't be disturbed.

Bob and I decided not to make a big deal about the marker. Neither of us mentioned it on our social media pages. But it didn't take long for somebody to take a picture of

it and put it on Facebook.

In four days, one page already more than 6,600 likes, 1,100 shares and 240 comments.

A friend of mine from St. Augustine called Sunday night and said she saw a picture of me on the dock. That was on a different Facebook page.

Bob and I carried out Adam's vision as a tribute to his commitment to preserving history. We also did it because we are big Skynrd fans.

We know Adam bought the lot through his nonprofit trust. That means nobody has the authority to sell it. And true to his desires, it will be left undeveloped.

We knew someone would notice the marker. We just didn't know it would be this quick ... or this big.

To best honor the work done by the band and Adam's desire to preserve it, Bob and I ask that everyone respect the neighborhood. If you take anything, let it be a picture. If you leave anything, let it be a footprint.

And never let the music – or Adam's legacy – die.

History

from page 4

30 years ago, 1993

- A circuit judge rules the Clay County District Schools must turn over reports of the number of fires and construction projects in the county since 1986 to a Tampa television station.
- The Orange Park High boys' soccer team won its seventh consecutive district title with a 6-1 win against Middleburg.
- The county hires an Orange Park en-

gineering company to oversee Fleming Island's \$2.6 million sewer project.

40 years ago, 1983

- Associated Minerals Consolidated Limited of Australia decided to reopen a surface mining operation near Green Cove Springs.
- Astronaut David Walker is the keynote speaker during the Eagle Scout inductions.
- Laurie Evans win Miss Clay County Pageant.

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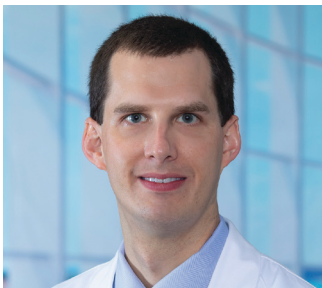
- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. River in Tuscany
 - 5. A way to represent
 - 8. Rocker's guitar
 - 12. Civil Rights group
 - 14. Brew
 - 15. Scratch
 - 16. W. Asian country
 - 18. The Eye Network
 - 19. Clarified butter
 - 20. Part of the Cascade Range
 - 21. Downwind
 - 22. A way to steer
 - 23. Loop
 - 26. Not ingested
 - 30. Swampy coniferous forest
 - 31. Musician
 - 32. Signing
 - 33. Containing iron
 - 34. Part of a theorem or proof
 - 39. Veterans battleground (slang)
 - 42. Of enormous proportions
 - 44. Italian city
 - 46. Come before
 - 47. Balm
 - 49. Undergarments
 - 50. Male parent
 - 51. Ropes
 - 56. Ear part
 - 57. Investment vehicle
 - 58. Dictator
 - 59. Cain and ___
 - 60. A type of code
 - 61. Border river along India and Nepal
 - 62. It's what's for dinner
 - 63. Consume
 - 64. Christian ___, designer
 - 17. Bowling alleys have many
 - 24. Explosive
 - 25. 'The Say Hey Kid'
 - 26. Ultrahigh frequency
 - 27. No (Scottish)
 - 28. Make a mistake
 - 29. Credit card term
 - 35. Keyboard key
 - 36. Woman (French)
 - 37. In the middle of
 - 38. Score perfectly
 - 40. Coat a metal with an oxide coat
 - 41. Deadly disease
 - 42. A place to dock a boat (abbr.)
 - 43. Belch
 - 44. Member of U.S. Navy
 - 45. 'In ___': separate from others
 - 47. Examine extensively
 - 48. Adjust
 - 49. Tattle
 - 52. Actor Pitt
 - 53. Gulls
 - 54. Within
 - 55. Exceptionally talented performer
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Cuckoos
 - 2. Skin issue
 - 3. City in central Japan
 - 4. Sorrels
 - 5. Twinned diamond
 - 6. Canadian province
 - 7. Monetary units
 - 8. Head honcho
 - 9. Goddess of wisdom
 - 10. Part of a play
 - 11. Get rid of
 - 13. Applicant



Ridgeview's NJROTC Cadet Pass in Review attracts dignitaries

ORANGE PARK – Retired Rear Adm. Daniel Fillion joined Superintendent David Broskie, school board members Beth Clark and Ashley Gilhousen and U.S. Navy Cmdr. Jon Moore at the Ridgeview High Navy JROTC Cadet Pass in Review Ceremony on Friday, Feb. 10. Moore is the commander of the P-8 Poseidon Fleet Introduction Team from NAS JAX. Cadets participate in community service projects, civic programs, and educational field trips throughout the year.

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Salman Farhat, MD
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Obituaries

Toby Grubbs

Toby Grubbs, 62, of Green Cove Springs, FL, passed away February 6, 2023.

Please sign the family's online guest-book at www.broadusraines.com

Arrangements are under the care of Broadus-Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. (904) 284-4000



Nina Jensen

Nina Jensen, 87, of Orange Park, FL, passed away February 13, 2023.

Please sign the family's online guest-book at www.broadusraines.com

Arrangements are under the care of Broadus-Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. (904) 284-4000.



Bruce Craig Hendricks

Bruce Craig Hendricks, 56, of Palatka, FL, passed away February 10, 2023

Please sign the family's online guest-book at www.broadusraines.com

Arrangements are under the care of Broadus-Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. (904) 284-4000.



Linda Rhodes Topp

Linda Rhodes Topp of Fleming Island, Florida passed away on Friday, February 10, 2023 at the age of 70. She was born April 29, 1952 in Colorado Springs, Colorado and is survived by her husband Stephen; son Spencer and his wife Rebecca and their children Emily, Lauran, Stephen and Owen; son Matthew and his partner Benjamin; and brother David and his wife Gail. Her father and mother David and Erna Rhodes predeceased Linda.



Linda Rhodes Topp

A memorial service will be held on February 25, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. at Crossroad Lutheran Church in Fleming Island, followed by a celebration of life occasion at the River House in Orange Park at 3 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting a memorial donation in honor of Linda be made to the Food Pantry of Green Cove Springs.

William James Higgins

William James Higgins, 65, of Orange Park, FL, passed away February 13, 2023.

Please sign the family's online guest-book at www.broadusraines.com

Arrangements are under the care of Broadus-Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. (904) 284-4000.



Many participants from last year's Gate River Run will return on March 4 to support Challenge Enterprises.

Challenge Enterprises to make more strides at Gate River Run

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

GREEN COVE SPRINGS - Challenge Enterprises of North Florida partnered again with the Ability Experience to support athletes with disabilities.

This year's event on March 4 will be their fourth year partnering together to participate in The Run for Inclusion at the Gate River Run.

"We are thrilled to be participating in the Gate River Run again this year. We have an incredible team that truly believes in making this event inclusive for athletes of all abilities," Andrew Matznick, Assistant Executive Director of Programs at The Ability Experience, said.

In 2020, Challenge Enterprises and The Ability Experience started participating in the 15-K race at Gate River Run with only four differently-abled athletes, 12 support athletes and a small budget. Five differently-abled and 18 support athletes participated in the race the following year. In 2022, Challenge Enterprises and The Ability Experience participated in the 5-k race and had 16 athletes and 24 support athletes.

A team of 14 differently-abled athletes and 31 support athletes will participate in the Challenge Mile, 15-K and 5-K race at the Run for Inclusion.

"We have been blown away by the growth of our team since 2020," Matznick

said. "It speaks to the impact that the Enabled Athletes, athletes with disabilities, have on the team as well as the inspiration and joy they bring to the event."

Participating in the Gate River Run will allow Challenge Enterprises to showcase their drive for inclusion in the community and share their vision to promote the Power of People and Possibilities. The race will also let individuals with different abilities shine by sharing their achievements, story, and contributions to the community.

"Behind every race bib is a story about overcoming obstacles on the road to greater independence and achievement." Stephanie Young, Director of Marketing and Communications at Challenge Enterprises of North Florida, said.

Currently, Challenge Enterprises and The Ability Experience are forming a fundraiser team to ensure that their differently-abled athletes can participate in the race without difficulty.

All funds raised go toward the expenses of participating in the Gate River Run and towards other adaptive sports opportunities.

To learn more about Challenge Enterprises, visit www.challengeenterprises.org.

To learn more about The Ability Experience, visit abilityexperience.org.



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Heather Nagy Protects Florida's natural beauty through NFLT

By Martha K. Mayes
Martha.Mayes@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – North Florida Land Trust bolstered its commitment to preserving Florida's land and waterways by selecting Heather Nagy as its Community Conservation Coordinator.

She joined NFLT in 2020. It is a not-for-profit organization that protects and preserves natural resources, historical places, and working lands (farms and ranches) in Clay, Duval, St. Johns, Nassau, Baker, Putnam and Flagler counties.

Nagy moved to Orange Park to be closer to her boyfriend, who worked in Jacksonville. Coming from Tampa, she was happy to see more conservation opportunities here in northeast Florida than in the Tampa Bay area, which is already highly developed.

Nagy will become a powerful ally in helping to preserve Florida's natural beauty and land assets through conservation and community planning. That includes protecting the habitats and species of wildlife in the state. The most gratifying part of her job, Nagy said, is finalizing a land conservation project and getting it permanently protected. The most challenging part is figuring out what land to conserve.

"I really enjoy working to conserve Florida's unique and beautiful land spaces," she said. "So many people want to move here for the warm weather and natural beauty, but that places pressure for development on our natural places. It's criti-

cally important to conserve the land where possible, because once it's gone, it's gone."

With a master's degree in Environmental Management and knowledge of Geographic Information System software, which organizes and manages spatial data, she prioritizes areas most critical in conservation value. An example of one of these is water resources.

How does the North Florida Land Trust find properties to conserve and protect? One way is to focus on "willing sellers," people who reach out to NFLT to help them preserve their property and ensure it's not developed while living and even after death. Sometimes the property has been in a family for generations. That is often called a conservation "easement."

Another way to acquire property is for NFLT to look for land with high potential conservation value and approach the owners or managers with a plan for putting it in NFLT. Nagy has also assisted with "facilitations" – helping a partner organization take ownership of land for conservation. She enjoys planning and working with conservation partners and groups.

Being a non-government, nonprofit organization, NFLT has to do some fundraising. Sometimes this is in the form of donations from individuals, corporations, local community foundations, and grants. NFLT can also apply for assistance from a federal agency such as the Natural Resources Conservation Services when it has open cycles for grant applications.



Heather Nagy speaks to the Clay Board County of Commissioner during a recent meeting where the North Florida Land Trust will partner with the county to protect natural land throughout Clay County.

Clay County contracted with NFLT for land acquisition and development. Since 1999 when NFLT was founded, 28 Florida counties have passed 68 different referenda for land conservation programs.

Nagy said in 2021, NFLT joined a large coalition of organizations to form the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative. This group has protected more than 4,000 acres of salt marshland. Its goal is to protect one million acres of salt marsh along the Southeast coastline from Northeast Florida to North Carolina. The SASMI coalition includes the Department of Defense and other state and federal organizations. The

humble salt marsh, which very few people paid attention to until recent years, is a critical habitat for fish, birds, and other animals. Salt marshes support fishing, tourism, and other businesses vital to coastal economies.

They also protect coastlines from floods and storm surges and serve as a first line of defense for many coastal communities, including military installations. Salt marshes have even been found to store carbon and reduce the human carbon footprint. These vital tidal wetlands face threats from rising seas, polluted runoff, and poorly planned development.

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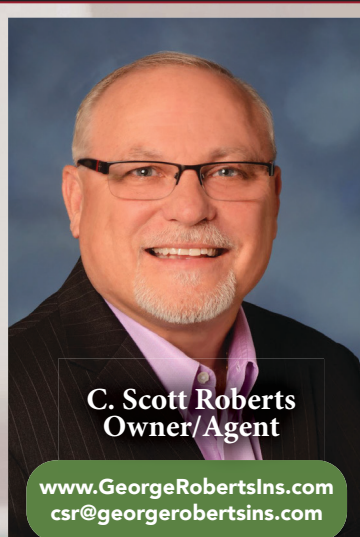




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Community Briefs

More than 230 celebrate leaders during prayer breakfast

ORANGE PARK – Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and Pi Eta Omega celebrated its 35th annual Prayer Breakfast with 230 guests at the Thrasher-Horne Center.

The breakfast is held annually to recognize community leaders who serve in various leadership roles.

This year's event honored Pastor Eddie Henley, pastor of Calvary Missionary Baptist Church and first Black Orange Park Town Councilman, Chris Tobey, CEO and founder of Safe Future Foundation, a nonprofit that includes a diaper bank, food pantry and college readiness and Leo Parker, Senior Pastor of The Emerge Church of Palatka who performs street ministries and works with the School of the Heights.

FSU to present "A Festival of Low Brass" at Penney Farms

PENNEY FARMS – Florida State University's College of Music will present "A Festival of Low Brass" at the Penney Memorial Church on Sunday, Feb. 19.

The group will be under the direction of Dr. Justin Benavidez.

In addition to a tuba performance by Benavidez and his accompanist, the second half of the performance will feature several pieces played by an ensemble for four tubas and euphoniums.

The concert at 4465 Poling Blvd. is free and open to the public.

The ride also includes food, music, 50/50 raffle and prizes for the highest and lowest dice roll.

For more information, visit clayhumane.org or call (904) 276-7729.

Orange Park Chorale coming to Penney Farms, Orange Park Presbyterian

PENNEY PARK – The Orange Park Chorale invites the public to enjoy community voices joined together in song as the group presents its free spring vocal concerts, "Amazing Love" in two performances.

On Saturday, March 25, at 4 p.m., the chorale will perform at the Penney Memorial Church, 4465 Poling Blvd. The second concert is scheduled for Sunday, March 26, at 4 p.m. at the Orange Park Presbyterian Church, 1905 Park Ave.

Both concerts are free. Donations will be accepted.

Under the direction of Artistic Director David Holladay, "Amazing Love" concert selections will include sacred music such as Dan Forrest's "And Can It Be," Moses Hogan's "Ride on, King Jesus" and "You Say," arranged by Heather Sorenson and co-written by contemporary Christian performer Lauren Daigle.

For more information about the Orange Park Chorale or the group's upcoming spring concerts, please contact Board Chair Harolyn Sharpe at (904) 553-8487 or visit www.orangeparkchorale.com.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED ANNEXATION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City of Green Cove Springs proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE NO. O-04-2023

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, ANNEXING APPROXIMATELY 28.81 ACRES OF REAL PROPERTY INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY; SAID PROPERTY BEING GENERALLY LOCATED ON CR 209 AND US 17; DESCRIBING SAID PROPERTY BY METES AND BOUNDS IN EXHIBIT "A"; FINDING THAT ALL THE OWNERS OF SAID PROPERTY HAVE PETITIONED THE CITY PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 171.044, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO VOLUNTARILY ANNEX SAME; FINDING THAT THE PROPERTY IS CONTIGUOUS TO THE EXISTING CITY LIMITS AND REASONABLY COMPACT PROVIDING FOR REPEALER, SEVERABILITY, AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The following public hearings has been scheduled and will be held in the City Council Chambers, 321 Walnut Street, Green Cove Springs, to hear comments, if any, regarding said Ordinances:

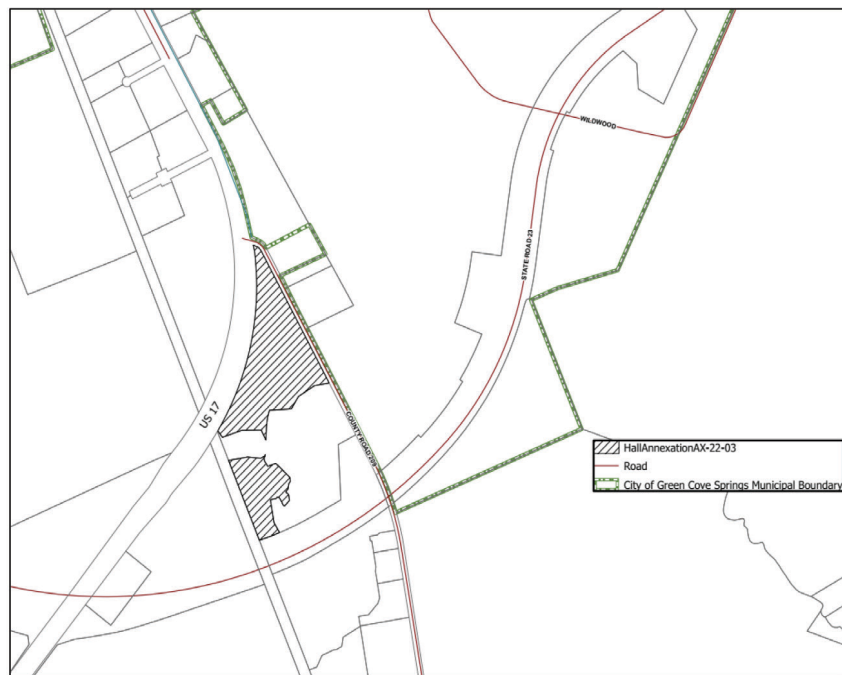
Planning & Zoning Board:	Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;
City Council:	Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;
City Council:	Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;

Please be advised that if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at this scheduled public hearing, they will 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.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in this matter should contact City Hall at (904) 297-7500 at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. Hearing impaired persons may access through Florida Relay – Dial 7-1-1.

A Map clearly showing the area proposed to be annexed is provided below. The complete legal description by metes and bounds and the ordinance can be obtained at the office of the City Clerk at City Hall for review during the hours of 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday.

All interested individuals are invited to attend this public hearing.



City of Green Cove Springs

Lilly Delvecchio, Development Services Representative
321 Walnut Street
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

Legal 55233 published February, 16, 23, 2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper.

Hogs for Dogs to raise money for Clay Humane

ORANGE PARK – Riders are encouraged to meet at Adamec Harley-Davidson on Wells Road on March 25 for the start of a poker run to raise money for Clay Humane.

The ride starts at Adamic and ends at Whitey's Fish Camp on Fleming Island, with stops at Crossroads Saloon in Palatka, Howlin Wolf Bar in Melrose, Watering Hole at Smith Lake in Keystone Heights and Saloon 17 in Green Cove Springs.

Registration starts at 9:30 a.m. and costs \$30 a person. Those who preregister by March 16 will receive a gift bag containing T-shirt and goodies.

Dinner will be served at Whitey's at 3:45 p.m.

Cars from page 2

"It's great for when you take road trips. I can make it all the way from Keystone Heights to Cartersville, Georgia, on one tank of gas," she said.

Full electric vehicles average about 250 miles a trip, but some higher-end models like Tesla and Mercedes can go up to 600 miles on one charge.

Living near a metropolitan area can relieve some of the stress when it comes to charging the cars, and with the county being stationed in close proximity to Jacksonville, there is a myriad of options.

The Fuccillo Nissan at 7447 Blanding Blvd., Cecil Airport at 13365 Simpson Way, the Jax Station at 6500 Lake Gray Blvd., Get Juice Kia Orange Park at 6373 Blanding Blvd., the Best Western Southside Hotels and Suites, Tesla Destination at 4580 Collins Road are all located within a 30-minute drive.

The cost of replacing batteries should be heavily considered during the process.

"I wish I had done more research on the rechargeable batteries because they are so expensive," she said.

Living in a rural area of the county, Pinkley now knows why it may have been

better to do more research on rechargeable batteries.

"Out here, you have to drive so far to get anywhere. You're going to run out of your vehicle warranty so fast, which can put you in a bind if that battery goes out," she said.

Full-electric battery-electric vehicles can run up to 200,000-300,000 miles before an old battery needs to be replaced, but new batteries can cost between \$4,000-\$20,000 to replace, according to NerdWallet, a popular personal finance website.

Batteries aren't cheap to replace, and the market is booming for the electric car battery industry in the United States, which could mean that they won't be getting any cheaper anytime soon.

A 2023 Research and Markets report estimated the electric vehicle battery market to be valued at \$7.2 billion in 2022 and could reach \$17.1 billion by 2030. Meanwhile, the global market, which is currently estimated at \$25.6 billion, could reach \$84.5 billion.

For more information, like EV benefits, models, a fuel savings calculator, offers and events, and public charging stations, please visit the following link: www.clayelectric.com/electric-vehicles.



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Green Cove Springs' Rameriz serves on USS Nimitz in Asia

PHOTO BY SPECIALIST 3RD CLASS CAYLEN MCCUTHESON

SOUTH CHINA SEA – U.S. Navy Aviation Ordnanceman Airman Dallana Ramirez, from Green Cove Springs, cleans the internal components of a BRU-32 bomb rack aboard the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz. Nimitz is in U.S. 7th Fleet conducting routine operations. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with Allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED ANNEXATION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City of Green Cove Springs proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE NO. O-07-2023

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, ANNEXING APPROXIMATELY 39.23 ACRES OF REAL PROPERTY INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY; SAID PROPERTY BEING GENERALLY LOCATED ON CR 209; DESCRIBING SAID PROPERTY BY METES AND BOUNDS IN EXHIBIT "A"; FINDING THAT ALL THE OWNERS OF SAID PROPERTY HAVE PETITIONED THE CITY PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 171.044, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO VOLUNTARILY ANNEX SAME; FINDING THAT THE PROPERTY IS CONTIGUOUS TO THE EXISTING CITY LIMITS AND REASONABLY COMPACT PROVIDING FOR REPEALER, SEVERABILITY, AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

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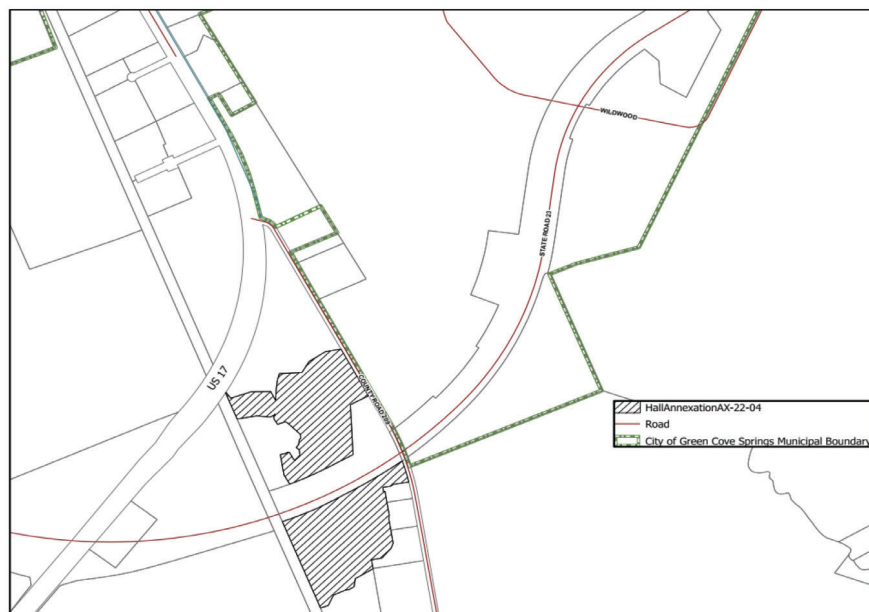
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City of Green Cove Springs

Lilly Delvecchio, Development Services Representative
321 Walnut Street
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

Legal 55234 published Feb, 16 & 23, 2023 in Clay County's Clay Today Newspaper.

Life
from page 1

"During those parties, I would sit there and go back over all those things that I would do for my mom, selling drugs for her. And my dad was an alcoholic, so the only memories I have of him were from when I was 8. We would stay at his buddy's house, and they would pass out by the campfire from drinking," Dees said.

He started snorting Oxycodone and popping Percosets after leaving his college football team to care for his troubled mother during his freshman season.

Rock bottom was still to come.

He lost a \$ 70,000-a-year job when he failed a drug test. His mother died of an overdose. His uncle and cousin also died. He began injecting drugs with needles. His wife's car and his motorcycle were repossessed. And he was arrested for stealing



Derek Dees poses for a photo in rural Middleburg with Carrie Dees, the wife and love of his life that has stuck by his side since day one.



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rings from a neighbor. Then his wife left.

After being locked up for one month, his estranged wife called.

"She said, 'I found a place for you to go that will help get you straightened out.' That was after she left me and everything," Dees said.

He headed to a 10-month program in Okeechobee called Faith Farm. It wound up changing his life.

What he called a "coming to Jesus moment" came in the second month. Part of Faith Farm's rehabilitation regimen required participants to nurse sick baby dairy calves back to health, which is then sold to finance the program.

The calves are raised on an empty 40-acre field with only one shade tree. That's when Dees embraced Christ.

That's when the vision of being six-year-old and finding his mother passed out on the bathroom floor. Suddenly life was

more important than finding his next fix. He began working for his father-in-law six years after graduating from the program. He knew he needed to do more, so Dees kickstarted his small business, Dees Contracting.

"My reason for starting a business 10 or 12 years ago would have been, 'How can I make more money so I can do more drugs?' Now it's, 'how can I go back and help people that need help? How can I help my wife and children? How can I make sure my son doesn't go down the same path that I did?'" he said.

Through all of his struggles, Dees ultimately credits the powerful and forgiving love of his wife, Carrie, who returned after he found sobriety.

"My wife is such a big part of this story. She stuck by my side from Day 1. She helped me find a place that completely changed my life," Dees said.

Dees founded a family-owned and operated service specializing in the construction and installation of specialty woodwork. He also creates beautiful home works like accent walls, decks, stairs, custom built-ins, shelves, pantries, barn doors and much more nearly two years ago.

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Achieve Fitness Boosts younger athletes' strength, ability

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

FLEMING ISLAND – Achieve Fitness Center offers its Boost class for athletes looking to get an edge on the competition.

The sports performance class will teach the young athletes the fundamentals of speed and agility, plyometrics, coordination, strength and conditioning, and proper injury prevention techniques such as stretching. Athletes enrolled in the class compete in various sports, including football, baseball, basketball and soccer.

With a diverse array of students looking to further their playing skills on the field, the class is not a one-size-fits-all program, according to Trish Goldstein, Director of Personal Training at Achieve Fitness and lead for Boost.

"It's a good speed, agility, strength and all-around-training program for all sports," she said.

The program seeks to help build athletes' strengths along with honing in and improving their weaknesses while also developing the physical and mental strength that is ever-so-crucial to succeeding in the sports arena.

"We are going to push them hard so that whatever challenges they may face in the next level, they will have the confidence to succeed," lead instructor Evan Smith said. "Boost is perfect for any athlete looking to



PHOTO COURTESY TRISH GOLDSTEIN
Evan Smith, lead trainer for the Boost program, teaches the young group how to squat with dumbbells.

improve his or her game, whether they are looking to gain more strength over your off-season, improve their vertical jump, or shed a second on their (40-yard dash) time."

The class is divided into two groups: younger children (ages 7-12) and junior high and high school (ages 13-18). Both groups meet on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.

Younger children attend sessions from 5-6 p.m. on Monday and Thursday and 9-10 a.m. on Saturday, while junior high and high school students meet from 6-7 p.m. on Monday and Thursday and 10-11 a.m. on

Saturdays.

The cost of attendance is \$99 monthly.

For those who don't excel in a particular sport but still want to enroll in the program, Boost offers a three-class a-month deal for \$99, including special personal attention via one-on-one training.

This allows those students to get up to speed with the rest of the class.

Goldstein said other virtues of the class include building teamwork with other participants, health benefits, and a strong boost of self-confidence that is provided through strength training and physical fit-

ness. Classes will be held at the fitness center's location at 2349 Village Square Parkway in the Boost Room, which is located to the left of the regular workout facility when facing away from the parking lot.

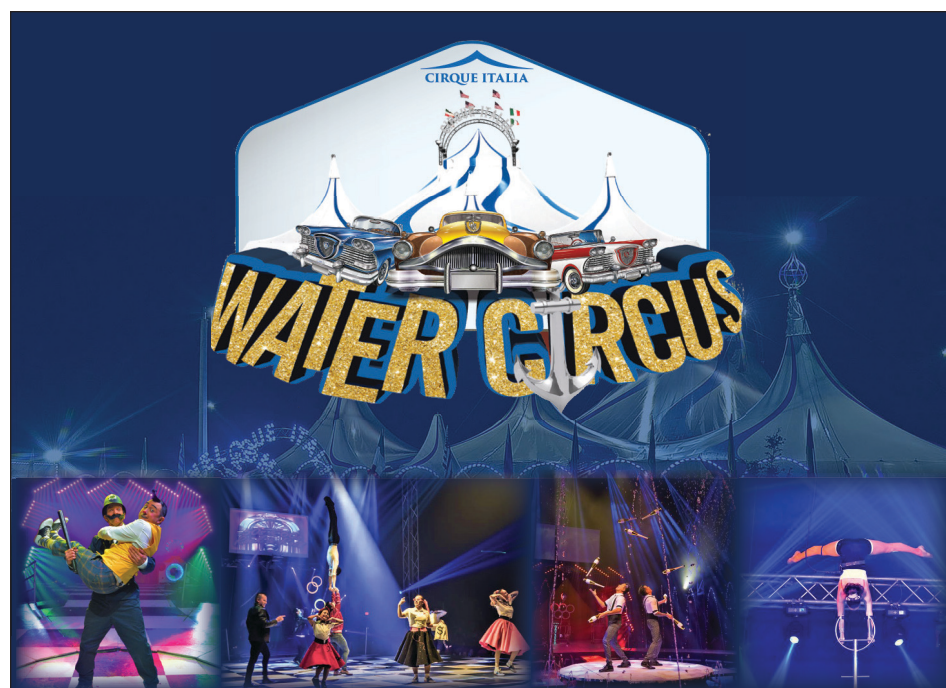
Another way to identify the room when walking in is the room's green turf football field-like structure with hash marks and yard lines on the ground.

Smith, who starred as a baseball player at Fleming Island High, earned All-Conference and All-District honors with the Eagles before earning a baseball scholarship at St. Catherine College in Springfield, Kentucky.

Smith earned his spot on Goldstein's roster after completing his Bachelor's Degree in Health Science and Personal Training certificate from ISSA and has former experience training young athletes in Kentucky in speed, agility, strength and mobility.

Assistant trainer Jen Peltier is certified by the National Academy of Sports Medicine in Personal Training and is a Certified Athletic Trainer specializing in injury evaluation and First Aid administration. She is also well-versed in preventing sports related-injuries via hydrotherapy, heat and cold therapy, and percussion and compression.

Peltier earned her Master of Science in Sports Medicine and Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training. The long-running and successful program has been in existence since 2017.



Event Information

Cirque Italia brings a performance of European style. It is described as a "vivid, dramatic, and moving experience."

Event Location

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Dates/Times

Thursday, Feb 23: 7:30pm

Friday, Feb 24: 7:30pm

Saturday, Feb 25: 1:30pm, 4:30pm, 7:30pm

Sunday, Feb 26: 1:30pm, 4:30pm

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Dream

from page 3

sity and Tim Fillmon, who also installed the historical marker at the Van Zant family house in Jacksonville, joined us. The marker was placed precisely where Hartle wanted.

It faces Peter's Creek because Hartle said he heard Van Zant found inspiration for many of his songs in the solitude of the swamp and wildlife. He also liked to wet a fishing line in the creek when the band took a short break from the unairconditioned shack.

The band picked the isolated location because they could be as loud and rowdy as they wanted. They used to practice near their homes on the Westside of Jacksonville, but they got tired of being harassed by the sheriff's office.

Van Zant paid \$50 a month in rent and the band usually played from sunrise to sunset.

D.R. Horton bought the farm to divide it



Bob Kealing helped Adam Hartle create the words on a cast iron historical marker placed near the dock on the lot where Hell House once stood – and where Lynyrd Skynyrd practiced and wrote most their hits. Hartle paid for the marker, but he died unexpectedly of a heart attack before his vision was completed. Friends, including Tim Fillmon (above), made Hartle's dream a reality last Saturday.



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into 158 lots. All but one – the site of Hell House – are either under construction or already occupied. The developer linked some street names to the band, like Tuesday's Cove, Free Bird Loop, Noble Court and Southern Oak Drive. In 2017, Elkay Development spokesman Wayne Lyle said there were plans to install a historical marker on the lot. That proved to be a shallow promise. Six years later, Adam Hartle turned his vision for the property's heritage into a reality. Too bad he didn't see it.

IT'S TIME TO VOTE!!!

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OP Skatepark organization takes flight on Fromhart Street

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – Skateboarders have been grinding, catching air and attempting other tricks like ollies and kickflips since the Orange Park Skateboard Park opened in 2001.

The park got a significant facelift in 2016, which transformed it from an old, outdated collection of wooden structures into a fully-functional, modern and contemporary fun zone complete with half-pipes, handrails, pools, bowls and other favorite obstacles constructed out of sturdy, clean, state-of-the-art concrete.

But the park at 1006 Fromhart St. still lacked a true soul for lovers of the sport.

That's why Paul Reigel, a longtime town resident, took action shortly after Sammie Reigel, Paul's son and avid skateboarder, pointed out the issue of the seemingly lifeless park to his father.

"Others have tried to operate this park from a retail standpoint. It's not my park; it's not your park; it's the people's park," Reigel said.

It was soon later when Paul and his wife, Melody, formed OP Skatepark Inc, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, last December.

The nonprofit was created with one goal in mind: to operate the town-owned facility in collaboration with the town. By doing so, transform the state-of-the-art facility into a mecca for skateboarders in Orange Park and Clay County that they could enjoy for years to come, all which will be free of charge.

Finances generated through concessions and donations will go directly back to the park.

After getting the proper paperwork prepared to pursue the venture, it didn't take long for the Riegels' to make their dream a reality.

Paul and Melody met with the parks



From left to right: after OP Skatepark Inc. was granted operational rights to the park, the Reigel family posed for a celebratory photograph. From left to right: Stussy Reigel, Sammie Reigel, Paul Reigel and Melody Reigel.

and recreation department and town council to discuss their proposal multiple times during November and December. Then, in January, they won approval for OP Skatepark Inc. to assume operational control.

Fast forward to February, and the park has now been open under their operation for three weeks. Plenty of work is still needed, but the nonprofit has big plans for the park moving forward.

A fully-operating concession stand and skateboard shop are two major upgrades the park will see.

The small shop will sell decks, wheels, bearings and other essentials, along with apparel like T-shirts and other items, which go on to support the park's operations. OP Skatepark Inc. will also offer a repair service.

"If you snap a board, grind a bearing, or something else fails, we want to provide these kids with a way to fix or upgrade that," he said.

Currently, the park's shop is still in the move-in phase. Boards and other parts are making their way into the shop, but much of the soon-to-be inventory is scattered on the floor of the Reigel's nearby home. But soon, it will soon be nice, neat, and organized for the community to enjoy.

The skate shop will open on March 6 at 5 p.m.

A new public address system is already installed, complete with JBL speakers. The big-energy speakers are ready for music, contest announcements and more.

All that is necessary to be completed in time for what will be a massive weekend for OP Skatepark, Inc. on March 10-11.

Then, Spring Break Shred, an all-ages skateboard contest, will commence on Saturday. The competition will include cash prizes for tricks, along with food, vendors, raffles and more.

During the Feb. 7 council meeting, Paul and Melody addressed the council and the



Sammie Reigel hits a big trick at the OP Skatepark.

community on their excitement for taking over operations for the park.

"We are happy to be here, and the progress is coming along wonderfully. We want (the town council) to be proud that they brought us in and partnered with us to make this better for their town. What we want to do is improve it, maintain it, and keep the energy positive, keep the vibes flowing in a good way," Reigel said.

The venture is a collaboration between the town and the nonprofit.

"Our vision is just to make it better. The facility was here; we are just coming in to make it a more inviting place for families," Reigel said.

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Orange Park



As we celebrate Black History Month, Clay Today and the Clerk of Court and Comptroller's office have created a three-part series on Civil Rights Icon Maude Burroughs Jackson. In Part 2, Jackson talked about working with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Maude Burroughs Jackson: In her own words

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

MIDDLEBURG – From May 1963 until July 1964, protesters in St. Augustine endured physical beatings and verbal assaults. They did not fight back, however, based on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s explicit non-violence instructions at the time.

By suffering through the violence and hate-filled rhetoric that embodied our nation's Civil Rights Era, the protesters' ability to literally turn the other cheek garnered national sympathy. This was a major factor in the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

A young woman from Clay County bravely marched in St. Augustine with those protestors, met Dr. King, and went on to inspire generations.

Maude Burroughs Jackson was interviewed by Clay Today's Mary Jo McTammany during January and February of 2007. This is her story in her own words:

"The first time I went to go to jail was the march on Tallahassee, but we didn't get arrested. A lot of Ivy League students came down from up north on spring break. There was nobody going to represent Florida Memorial, and Dr. King thought they ought to be represented, so he asked me

to go. So, I didn't stay in the office – I went on out, ready to go to jail. Before every march, we already knew how many people we wanted in jail, and we knew when and how they are going to get out. It was always a precisely planned Movement. The number to go to jail was determined by how many it took to fill the jail and how many were there to march. It was like the magic number to get the attention of the media. Newspapers and television stations were not going to make a trip to St. Augustine to report unless we hit that number. The more voices you had – the more attention you got. And the more important the people participating, the more they are going to cover and the more you reach. I went to the Monson Motel to sit in, and that was the first time I was arrested. We sat down, and they asked us to leave. They offered to serve us in the kitchen, but we said "no" because that would defeat the purpose. So we stayed, and I got arrested. I went to jail from the Monson Motel twice. The second time I went there, they wouldn't even let us in the door, and they turned the sprinklers on us. Being in jail in St. Augustine was a frightening experience because the KKK threatened to come and tear up the jail to get to us or to burn down the jail. There were threats all the time."



A man dumped muriatic acid in a pool while Blacks swam during the height of the civil rights movement in St. Augustine.

"But we continued to have our marches and mass meetings. At the jail in St. Augustine, they built a pen as if they were going to put some chickens out there. It was May 1964 – so hot. They would not let us have any shade. Dr. King and other men tried to take their jackets off to make some shade for us, but they made them put the jackets back on. Mrs. Peabody, the mother of the Governor of Massachusetts, was in jail with us at that time. She came down and went to jail with us. That got a lot of coverage. And that day, they let us go back inside out of the heat. They wouldn't do that the third day – made us stay out all day. We didn't stop."

"When a meeting was announced, St. Paul's church would just be full of people. And we would just leave out of there and start marching. I went to jail three times. One time I was in there a whole week. You go to jail, and you know you are there for a purpose, and sometimes you have to stay longer than other times. The time I was in jail with Mrs. Peabody, I stayed almost a

week. We were trying to get 500 people in jail that time, and we did it. I was a senior doing my semester of internship and almost got kicked out of college for that – at Florida Memorial, you did not miss a day of internship. I was interning at Webster Elementary School in second grade, and I wasn't there when I was supposed to be teaching that week. It was rumored that I would be removed from the program. Dr. King simply said, 'Don't worry about that. If they do anything, we will handle it.' And I felt real good about that. I never had any problems. The reason he said that was no one else was there representing Florida Memorial, and he felt that Memorial being the Black college in St. Augustine that they should have been there leading the way instead of saying that I would get kicked out of school. A lot of black churches did the same thing – sort of kept their institutions distant from the Movement. They were afraid to participate, and when Dr. King came down so, many of the churches closed their doors to him. When he was assassinated, of course, they felt differently and wished they had participated. But, of course, it was too late. Mass meetings were held at St. Paul's Church, and there were several other churches that opened their doors.

"The Movement grew in St. Augustine instead of Jacksonville because Dr. Hayling was in St. Augustine and he was the driving force at that time. He was a young dentist not long out of dental school and I guess he was ready to see things change. He showed lots of courage and he wasn't afraid to go out there and do what needed to be done. He had a very classy group supporting him in St. Augustine. Mr. and Mrs. Twine, the Eubanks and some of the school principals who couldn't openly participate worked hard in the background. And I think it

happened in St. Augustine because it

SEE CLAY, 17

BLACK HISTORY MONTH PARADE AND MELANIN MARKET: will be on Feb. 18 from noon-5 p.m. along A. Philip Randolph Boulevard in Jacksonville.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA MARKET DAY BLACK HISTORY MONTH COLLABORATION: will be on Feb. 22 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at 1 UNF Dr. in Jacksonville. The event is free.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE ARTS FESTIVAL: will be on Feb. 25 from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at Spring Park, 106 St. Johns Ave. in Green Cove Springs. For more information, visit friends@fasacc.org or call (904) 657-6223.

Submit events to
don@claytodayonline.com



Celebrating
**BLACK
 HISTORY
 MONTH**

Clay High's Riddle was an impactful trailblazer on, off the field

By Lee Wardlaw
 lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – In 1966, he was the first Black teacher to integrate a school in Florida. Still, since his first day as a physical education teacher at Clay High as a physical education instructor, Ron Riddle has done much more.

During the 37-year stint that the larger-than-life community figure at Clay and the sidelines of C.B. Bowles Stadium, Riddle has been driven by one overriding force: an ever-present and powerful feeling of self-worth.

"My self-worth was probably the greatest thing because I gave it everything I had in coaching and teaching. I've really been blessed," he said.

During the onset of Riddle's career at Clay, times were different, and segregation-related tensions were a reality. Any newly-hired employee needed to make a good impression, but since he was the first Black teacher in the state, Riddle especially needed to perform.

"When I first got here, I had to impress the school board, the administration, and the faculty," he said.

Riddle not only taught physical education but several sports: boys' and girls' basketball, boys' and girls' track and field,



STAFF PHOTO BY LEE WARDLAW
 Former Clay High coach Ron Riddle was the first Black to teach at an integrated school.

weightlifting (which allowed his student-athletes to continue their training regiment to grow their skills needed for a possible a college scholarship) and of course, football.

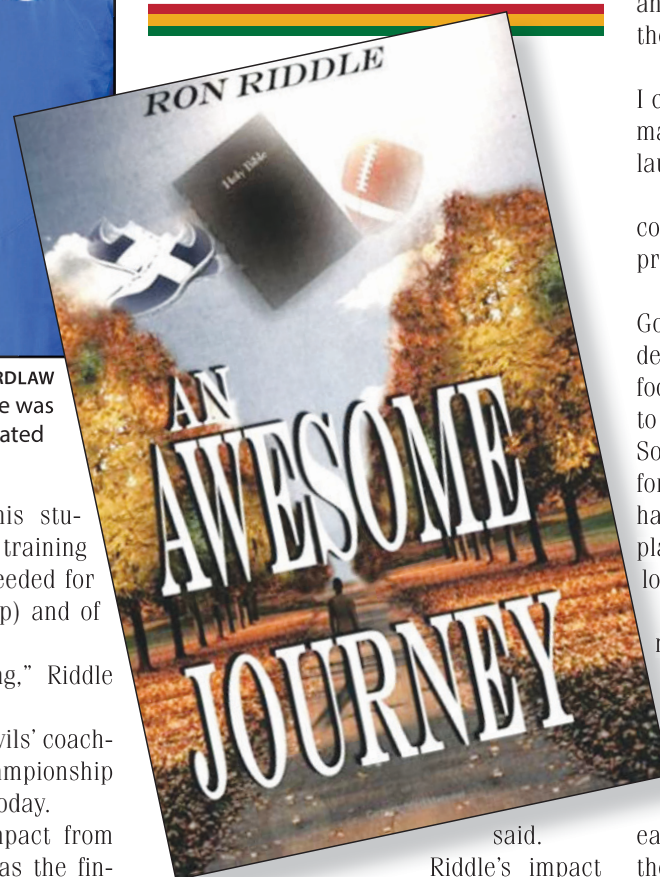
"I did just about everything," Riddle said.

Riddle was part of a Blue Devils' coaching staff that won the state championship in 1967. He still dons the ring today.

Riddle said his greatest impact from his long and tenured career was the fingerprints he left on his students.

"My greatest impact was on the students. You have to give it all in order to teach these kids. I was considered a role model. If they watch you and trust you and you can build a relationship with them, they will run through a brick wall for you. That just happens to be what I was blessed to do," he

"My greatest impact was on the students. You have to give it all in order to teach these kids. I was considered a role model. If they watch you and trust you and you can build a relationship with them, they will run through a brick wall for you. That just happens to be what I was blessed to do,



said. Riddle's impact transcended far beyond his student-athletes.

The role model and local figure even went to feed the entire community before food banks existed in the county through a program he created via the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"I used to have a food program until all

of the (food banks) opened. FGA made sure that all of the students had something for Thanksgiving and Christmas," Riddle said.

The program was popular. It spread like wildfire.

"After that, we did 200 turkeys and hams for Thanksgiving and Christmas. A lot of people were needy, and it was a lot of work, but we made sure that everyone had something to eat," Riddle said.

The longtime leader retired from football and other regular coaching duties in 2003. Still, he continued coaching track and field until 2020, finally retiring after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I coached until COVID came by. Then, I came home," the offensive lineman-sized man said while cracking his signature laugh.

Before entering the teaching and coaching profession, Riddle desired to play professional football.

"All of my life, I wanted to play football. God says that he will give you the secret desires of my heart. Mine was to play pro football, but I got hurt, so I said, 'I'm going to call it quits. I'm not taking an operation.' So the Lord said, 'I've got something else for you.' If that didn't happen, I wouldn't have been this successful, going to these places and doing these things. It means a lot," he said.

Now, Riddle has accomplished what he now knows was more gratifying: helping his students get a full-ride scholarship out of high school and doing whatever it takes to reach that goal.

Among several others, two of those athletes were Charles Clark, who earned a full-ride football scholarship to the University of Mississippi, and Jennifer Charles, who earned a volleyball scholarship at Georgia Southern.

"I took so many kids to West Virginia State that all I had to do was call them. I didn't have to do anything after they were (academically) accepted. At that point, they knew that everybody that I sent was a good kid," Riddle said.

Clay

from page 16

was a tourist town with a slightly more liberal attitude. I come across some who participated every now and then and a lot more who wish they had been more active. I didn't take Dr. King as a celebrity. The question was asked of him one time about how he could feel so comfortable with Queens and Presidents. His answer was that you just talk to them like you were talking to someone else and ask about their children. Gradually, people begin to realize that we all care about the same things. After the mass meetings, when there wasn't a march planned, a group would just come and sit around back at the office. We sat on the sofa, floors – wherever. Might sit there and talk with Dr. King until 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning. Just talking about the con-

ditions of the world and what people can do to change things. We just got into what was real – the hopes and the dreams, and sometimes you would just be sitting around talking just like you would with anybody else."

"Dr. Hayling sometimes calls, and we talk about the old days. I did not know – very few did – where Dr. King would be staying the night. Because there were times when we said he would be at a certain place, and he actually had to go someplace else. One time a lady invited Dr. King to stay at her beach house. Dr. King, Abernathy and Andrew Young, and some others – I don't remember all of them – went to the house. But they didn't stay. They had to be slipped out of there because of threats. And this was not uncommon because St. Augustine was a place where they had vowed that Dr. King would be killed if he

ever marched there again. I remember the Thursday evening when word was received that if he marched that night, he would die. It was indeed the bloodiest night of our Movement. We went out on the march that evening, and so many people got hurt. But Dr. King didn't get hurt - they protected him very well.

I almost got hit, and it just so happened that I was saved. We always marched four across with men on the outside if possible, and the man marching beside me, Jimmy Jackson, pushed me back just as a brick flew past my head. I would have been badly hurt. We had a lot of people go to the hospital that night."

"We started at the church and marched down to the slave market and made the turn and were coming back down King Street to the church. We were right in front of the Flagler Hotel when bricks and bottles and

boards – just everything you can imagine came flying from everywhere, it seemed. We had a nice crowd to turn out to march that night, maybe 300 or 400 people. One thing I have to be grateful for – they didn't start shooting at us. We ran back to the church. People assisted the ones who were injured in getting back to the church.

Those that needed to go to the hospital were loaded into private cars. Less serious injuries we treated right there at the church. I was trying to get the names of the people hurt and was just assisting however I could. We wanted a record of anyone hurt so they could be checked on later. I was so young. We went right back out and marched the next night and every night all week."

Next week: The work to bring equality to Clay County.

Radwanski announces bid to run for Seat 1 on Orange Park Town Council

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – Longtime resident and U.S. Air Force veteran Kenny Radwanski has filed to run for Seat 1 on the Orange Park Town Council.

Radwanski will join a race that already includes incumbent Doug Benefield, appointed last August following the resignation of councilman Eddie Henley. The

Municipal Super Tuesday election will be on April 11.

While the veteran might not have any experience as an elected government official, Radwanski has been keeping a trained eye on town



Kenny Radwanski

affairs since 2001.

Radwanski is a regular figure for residents, officials and town employees at many town functions. The veteran has participated in the following meetings for the last 22 years.

These include Town Council sessions and other meetings crucial to the town's very lifeblood, such as the Pension Board, Public Works, Environmental Quality Board, Economic Development Council, Public Works, Planning and Zoning and Culture and Recreation Department meetings.

He put his dedication to the town like this:

"If I'm in a wheelchair on oxygen, I will still be at these meetings to hear and listen. I've always stood up and will always stand up for all residents, all the time."

The veteran believes that the town government is trying its best but still falling short of meeting the needs of residents.

Town management and town government are trying, but they're not trying hard enough," Radwanski said.

Radwanski is running on several issues. Still, a critical point of focus for the veteran is his position on using ARPA monies, which were awarded to the town and state as part of the American Rescue Plan Act following the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have spent money on many things, and town management has found out that we could have received homeland security, state and federal money without using those funds," Radwanski said.

The candidate also said that he is also committed to improving infrastructure.

"When we get four-to-seven inches of rain in the town, a lot of roads are blocked off from flooding, drainage and infrastructure. The silt is backed up into slews, creeks, and brooks and needs to be cleaned out again. I don't think that they have been cleaned out in four-to-five years. I'm hoping to get the town on some sort of schedule to clean these ditches and slews that flood homes every time we have a big storm, hurricane, or just a lot of rain," Radwanski said.

Radwanski's message to the community is complete with a giant green billboard, which voters can see when they're heading east on Kingsley Avenue.

It says, "Vote Kenny Radwanski: A Voice For All Residents." The sign is at the parking lot between Dubo's Roofing and the railroad tracks.

His final message to voters was this: "I'm not a politician, but I would be the first Radwanski from here to Poland to be one. But I'm not here for politics. I'm here to make a difference."

NOTICE OF PROPOSED ANNEXATION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City of Green Cove Springs proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE NO. O-01-2023

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, ANNEXING APPROXIMATELY 3.44 ACRES OF REAL PROPERTY INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY; SAID PROPERTY BEING GENERALLY LOCATED ON CR 209; DESCRIBING SAID PROPERTY BY METES AND BOUNDS IN EXHIBIT "A"; FINDING THAT ALL THE OWNERS OF SAID PROPERTY HAVE PETITIONED THE CITY PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 171.044, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO VOLUNTARILY ANNEX SAME; FINDING THAT THE PROPERTY IS CONTIGUOUS TO THE EXISTING CITY LIMITS AND REASONABLY COMPACT PROVIDING FOR REPEALER, SEVERABILITY, AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The following public hearings has been scheduled and will be held in the City Council Chambers, 321 Walnut Street, Green Cove Springs, to hear comments, if any, regarding said Ordinances:

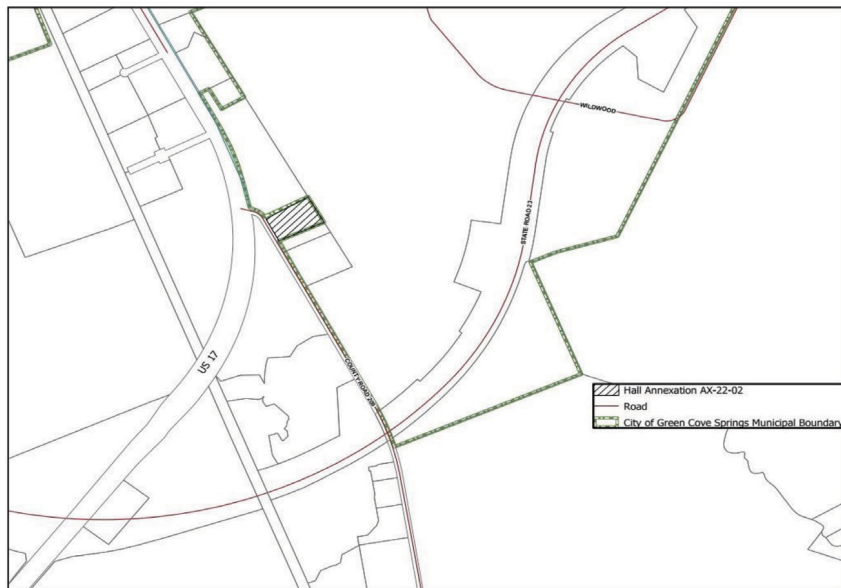
Planning & Zoning Board:	Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;
City Council:	Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;
City Council:	Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;

Please be advised that if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at this scheduled public hearing, they will 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.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in this matter should contact City Hall at (904) 297-7500 at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. Hearing impaired persons may access through Florida Relay – Dial 7-1-1.

A Map clearly showing the area proposed to be annexed is provided below. The complete legal description by metes and bounds and the ordinance can be obtained at the office of the City Clerk at City Hall for review during the hours of 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday.

All interested individuals are invited to attend this public hearing.



Lilly Delvecchio, Development Services Representative 321 Walnut Street Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

Legal 55230 published Feb. 16 & 23 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper.

Camera from page 2

cameras to catch violations.

One major opponent of the red lights is David Coughlin. He lives in the unincorporated portion of Orange Park.

Coughlin said he is concerned that the accused violator is not afforded due process because the state is relieved of the burden of confirming the driver and a variety of mitigating conditions he believes aren't recorded.

He said those mitigating factors include the short-spaced, 11-second video absence of audio and other factors.

After notices are mailed to violators, payment for the tickets is arranged through American Traffic Solutions, which is based in Tempe, Arizona.

Coughlin was an outspoken critic of the red light cameras during town hall meetings on Jan. 10 and again on Jan. 24.

Town council voted to pass a new two-year contract for the cameras with Verra Mobility during their Jan. 10 meeting. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

"We expect Law Enforcement Officers to attest in court to the full hemisphere of events and audio as well as make a proper identification of the motorist; however, we do not require this of our red light camera regime," Coughlin told the council on Jan. 10.

According to town and county records, Coughlin was cited on Nov. 22, 2015, for running a light in Green Cove Springs and again on Nov. 7, 2013, for running a light

at Loring and Park in Orange Park.

"Would I like to get rid of the red light cameras? Yes, at some point. But unless you've got a half million dollars a year in your pocket that you're willing to donate to the town, we're going to have to have that revenue, or we're going to have to lay off a bunch of people and change all kinds of other stuff because this is a continuing source of income, and right now, it's very important to the operation of the town," said Vice Mayor Alan Watt during the Jan. 10 session.

Orange Park generates approximately \$500,000 a year from the cameras.

"I've asked before and have never gotten anything that has been a sufficient answer, but the fact is, until we can figure out how to raise that other \$500,000 annually, we're pretty much stuck," Watt said.

However, in a statement, town manager Sarah Campbell maintains that the town's red light camera operates under Florida's Mark Wandell Statue, which is very clear on the program's requirements and standards.

In an email, Campbell said the town council believes that the red light cameras are crucial to the town.

"It's a small town of just over 9,000 residents, and only four police officers are on patrol a shift. The council believes that the red light camera is an extension of our police force. The cameras utilize modern-day technology in combination with our police officer review to enhance our officers' ability to enforce the safety laws of our state," Campbell said.

St. Johns Classical Academy to offer free, reduced-price meals

For Clay Today

FLEMING ISLAND – Household size and income criteria will be used to determine eligibility for the National School Lunch Program, which offers students free and reduced-price lunches at St. Johns Classical Academy.

An application can not be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information. Once approved, meal benefits are eligible for an entire school year. You need not notify the organization of changes in income and household size.

Application forms are being sent to all homes with a letter to parents or guardians. Households must complete the application and return it to the school to apply for free or reduced-price meals. The information provided on the application will be used to determine eligibility and may be verified at any time during the school year. Applications may be submitted at any time during the year.

Households that receive SNAP TANF are required to list on the application only the child's name, SNAP/TANF case number, and signature of an adult household member.

Foster children will receive free benefits regardless of the child's income or the income of the household.

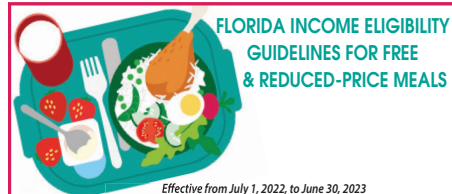
Households with children who are considered migrants, homeless or a runaway should contact the school liaison Melinda Mann at (904) 458-8240.

For the purpose of determining household size, deployed service members are considered a part of the household. Families should include the names of the deployed service members on their applications.

The report only that portion of the deployed service member's income made available to them or on their behalf to the family. Additionally, a housing allowance that is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative is not to be included as income.

All other households must provide the following information listed on the application:

- Total household income listed by gross amount received, type of income (e.g., wages, child support, etc.) and how often each household member receives the income;
- Names of all household members – check the "no income" box if applicable; if household member is a child, list school name for each;



Effective from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023

FREE MEAL SCALE					
Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	17,667	1,473	737	680	340
2	23,803	1,984	992	916	458
3	29,939	2,495	1,248	1,152	576
4	36,075	3,007	1,504	1,388	694
5	42,211	3,518	1,759	1,624	812
6	48,347	4,029	2,015	1,860	930
7	54,483	4,541	2,271	2,096	1,048
8	60,619	5,052	2,526	2,332	1,166
For each additional family member, add	+6,136	+512	+256	+236	+118

REDUCED-PRICE MEAL SCALE					
Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	25,142	2,096	1,048	967	484
2	33,874	2,823	1,412	1,303	652
3	42,606	3,551	1,776	1,639	820
4	51,338	4,279	2,140	1,975	988
5	60,070	5,006	2,503	2,311	1,156
6	68,802	5,734	2,867	2,647	1,324
7	77,534	6,462	3,231	2,983	1,492
8	86,266	7,189	3,595	3,318	1,659
For each additional family member, add	+8,732	+728	+364	+336	+168

To determine annual income:
 • If you receive the income every week, multiply the total gross income by 52.
 • If you receive the income every two weeks, multiply the total gross income by 26.
 • If you receive the income twice a month, multiply the total gross income by 24.
 • If you receive the income monthly, multiply the total gross income by 12.

Remember: The total income before taxes, social security, health benefits, union dues, or other deductions must be reported.

- Signature of an adult household member certifying the information provided is correct; and

- Social security number of the adult signing the application or the word "NONE" for this household member if he or she does not have a social security number.

If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size changes, the school should be contacted. Children of parents or guardians who become unemployed should also contact the school.

Under the provisions of the Free and Reduced-Price meal policy, the Food Service Coordinator will review applications and determine eligibility.

If a parent or guardian is dissatisfied with the ruling of the official, they may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. If the parent wishes to make a formal appeal, they may make a request either orally or in writing to Headmaster Matt Johnson at (904) 458-8240.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture's civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Any interested person may review a copy of the policy by contacting Food Service Coordinator Ashley Cochran at (904) 458-8240.



Despite turning 100, Community Church has evolved from a meager beginning to a modern facility in Keystone Heights.

Community Church celebrates 100th anniversary with focus on future

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Community Church of Keystone Heights is celebrating 100 years of being strong.

On Dec. 19, 1923, a group interested in forming a church met at the Keystone School House and formed a Board of Trustees with the city's founder J.J. Lawrence as the Chairman.

Construction for the original building began in 1924 and served the community for 41 years. In 1966, a new sanctuary was dedicated and is currently being used today. In the late 1980s, the church adopted a contemporary style of worship and focused more on the spiritual relationship with God.

"The mission of Community Church is knowing Jesus and making Him known," Pastor Ray said. "We are a non-denominational Jesus church. It's all about Jesus and Gospel-centered. We're all about proclaiming Jesus and the message of grace."

After 100 years, Community Church continues its mission of making Jesus known. Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas, Hope Grows International, and In His Wakes are just a few worldwide ministries the church supports. In addition, Community Church is heavenly involved in the community.

Since 1980, the church has provided affordable, necessary items such as clothes, shoes, and kitchen appliances to



individuals through their Rummage Ministries. In 2010, the church started participating in Back to School, which provides families with clothes, shoes, coats, and school supplies.

The church has been involved with the local food bank, Lake Area Ministries, for more than 45 years providing the organization with volunteers and financial support. "We represent the community. People from all walks of life, whether it be rich, poor, multi-generational, or multi-ethnic, all are welcomed," Ray said. "This is a no-judgment zone. You just come in just like you are, and the Bible, the Word of God, does the changing."

As of now, the church plans to participate in the Annual Fourth of July Parade and the Christmas Parade to celebrate its 100th anniversary. Also, the church is making plans to host an all-day Centennial Super Sunday on Sept. 10.

"We want people to know that the future is brighter than the past. 100 years strong," Ray said.



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Faith Walk

by Pastor Billy Register
True Life Church
Clay County

What Does God Say About Love Part 1

February is the month of love. Valentine's Day is a special day that celebrates love. God has a lot to say about love. How He loves us, and how we should love Him, and how we should love others.

It's easy to say that we love God. After all, He is pretty awesome! God is not hard to love. He is perfect, powerful, wise, and loving. He guides us through life and never leads us astray.

But how do we show that we love God? It's one thing to feel it, but it's another to live it out. We are called to love God with more than our feelings: we are called to love God with our everything!

In Mark 12:30, Jesus gave us what is known as the great commandments. The first one is, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." This is a beautiful verse, but what does it mean? It means that we must love God in both thought and action. We must have a firm, rooted belief in His love for us that leads to intentional actions in our lives that honor Him. These include things like worship, fellowship, acts of service to others, daily reading of scripture, prayer, and more.

A big part of loving God is telling other people about His love! God wants to be in a relationship with every single person on the planet. We are all His beloved children who He created from an overflow of His love. A common mission we all share as believers is to spread the message of the Gospel, which is the story of His love. Jesus commissioned us to dedicate our lives to this cause. (Matthew 28:18-20)

Expressing our love for God should be what we're all about. At work, home, and in our community, we can be witnesses of the Gospel and wear our love for God on our sleeve. Every day is a new opportunity to love God with everything: our heart, our work, our hobbies, our relationships, and everything else! It's all about inviting God into your life and loving Him with every fiber of your being. He will honor that and bless us abundantly for our obedience.

You can write the Pastor at pastorbilly@findtruelife.com.

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STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

From the heart

Children create their own Valentine's Day cards

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – With the help of volunteers from the Village Improvement Association, children were able to create their own Valentine's Day cards last week at the Augusta Savage Museum and Mentoring Center. They got markers, crayons, pencils, glitter, glue, construction paper and support from VIA volunteers like Deborah Page, above and left, and all they had to bring was their creativity and love. One boy couldn't wait for Feb. 14, so he gave his mother her card moments after he finished it.

Orange Park's Hair by Lee & Friends provide free haircuts on U.S.S. Orleck

For Clay Today

JACKSONVILLE – During the restoration of U.S.S. Orleck, Orange Park's Hair by Lee and Friends has sponsored a barber-shop at the ship's museum.

Salon owner Lee Goodnight met Taylor Shaw, Orleck's "Girl Friday" and assistant event coordinator, who had taken a cosmetology course in high school. But due to the COVID shutdown, she could not take her state board examination.

They struck up a friendship and Goodnight promised her the first haircut once the barber shop was operational. That happened on Wednesday, Feb. 8. Goodnight surprised Shaw with a certificate documenting her haircut. Shaw received only a token trim since she is growing her hair for a Locks of Love donation this summer.

Beth Mynatt, co-owner of The Carpet Tree in Jacksonville and a long-time client of Goodnight and president of the

Navy League, was also in attendance.

Goodnight hopes to organize a cadre of 20-to-25 licensed barbers and cosmetologists willing to volunteer a Sunday afternoon once or twice a year to offer free haircuts onboard the ship. Certificates would be available in the ship's store for those who wanted to document their haircut. Goodnight is also planning to bring Cutting for Kids, the city-wide cut-a-thon to benefit Locks of Love, to the ship this summer. It would also be a fundraiser for the ship. Hair donors would be given a sponsorship form and asked to raise money for the ship's maintenance.

Barbers and cosmetologists who want to participate in either project should contact Goodnight at (904) 264-2244 or Lee@HairByLee.com.

The current barber chair in the shop is barely adequate. Anyone willing to donate a functional period (1960-1980 vintage) chair should contact Goodnight.



Taylor Shaw holds her certificate after she got a haircut at the U.S.S. Orleck museum. Lee & Friends owner Lee Goodnight and Navy League President Beth Mynatt joined her.

Fleming Island woman relocating Ukrainian refugee to Tennessee

By **Kylie Cordell**
For *Clay Today*

FLEMING ISLAND – Katie Rios is single-handedly funding a Ukrainian woman's relocation to Jonesborough, Tennessee, to escape the ravages of war in her hometown in Ukraine.

"When I first heard about the invasion on Feb. 24, my heart just hurt for them. I don't think anyone should have to flee their home," Rios said.

Nearly a year since Russia launched the full-out war with Ukraine, more than 7,100 civilians, including more than 400 children, were killed during the invasion, according to Statista.

Those who survived were forced to flee, sheltering in underground train stations, walking hundreds of miles and leaving everything behind.



Nataliia Ivanova

It's been 11 months since Nataliia Ivanova, 47, of Kharkiv, was awoken by the sounds of bombs rattling the windows of her house.

According to Rios, Ivanova called her mother and sister. They both believed everything would be OK; it would just be that one round of bombing.

But the bombing didn't cease. No one slept for 24 hours. Those who left were met by Russian troops and killed.

"Thousands of civilizations were killed and dumped into mass graves," Rios said. "I wanted to do anything I could to help them. I wanted to host families, but at that time, the only Ukrainians allowed to come here were families of Ukrainians already in the United States, so I donated to many non-profits and continued to post about the war and places people could donate."

That's when she learned about a new program created by the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services called Uniting for Ukraine, a "streamlined process to provide Ukrainian citizens who have fled Russia's unprovoked war of aggression opportunities to come to the United States."

U4U helps Ukrainians leave Ukraine and come to the United States for safety.

"From there, I made a profile on Welcome.US and waited for Ukrainians to

reach out. I had four or five messages when I woke up the next morning," Rios said.

On Feb. 27, 2022, Ivanova managed to flee Ukraine with her daughter, not knowing if they would ever be able to return to their native soil. Eventually, they reached a rail station in Lviv.

After waiting for for nearly five hours in minus-4-degree temperatures, they found themselves in an old, packed evacuation train headed to Poland. But Nataliia's daughter refused to board, not wanting to leave her boyfriend behind.

Nataliia had no other choice. She boarded the train and didn't look back. After reaching Lviv, she had two options: she could go to a camp on the outskirts of the city or board another train – this one to Berlin.

"A day or two before Christmas, Nataliia messaged me from Germany. I wanted to help people still physically in Ukraine, but I started thinking, if that were my mom, I would want someone taking care of her," Rios said. "I filled out the paperwork on Christmas, and we were accepted the next week."

Ivanova will arrive in Tennessee on March 4 through Rios' efforts, escaping the trauma and tragedy of war-torn Ukraine. She longs to reconnect with her daughter and hopes to bring her to the country when the European situation improves.

For the time being, Ivanova will live with Rios and her parents in Tennessee. However, Rios will need help from people to help Ivanova start a new life. She hopes local agencies, churches and individuals will assist with housing, supplies, furniture, food, and other necessities.

"Everyone has been really compassionate and excited to be able to help. I think the community is really going to come together and support Nataliia when she is here," she said.

If you want to support Nataliia, you can donate on Rios' GoFundMe, "Ukrainian relocating to Jonesborough & refugees."

"My goal for GoFundMe is to be able to supplement the financial aid I am providing through my savings and earnings. I also hope to raise enough that I can donate portions to non-profits also assisting Ukraine, such as Restore Ukraine and Vols for Ukraine," Rios said.

To learn more about the objectives for the funds, ways to donate, or to get in contact with Rios, visit her website, <https://uforu.webstarts.com/>.



Katie Rios makes cookies frosted with the colors of the Ukraine flag to sell to raise money to bring Nataliia Ivanova to the United States.

If you want to make at least one Ukrainian safe in the United States, you can also become a sponsor. Welcome.US is the website suggested by DHS for those who want to help but don't know any Ukrainians personally. You can connect with one or a family and offer to sponsor.

Sponsorship includes financially supporting a Ukrainian Refugee, helping with legal paperwork, medical, job searches, affordable housing and applying for SNAP benefits for two years. The goal is that they

will be adjusted to life in the United States so they can become self-sufficient.

"There are still thousands within Ukraine and the surrounding countries that are living in their homes and hearing the shellings daily, or living in hostels or refugee camps and need to feel safe," Rios said.

For more information on the program can be found at the Department of Homeland Security and United States Citizenship and Immigration Services websites.



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Police Briefs

GCS man arrested for distributing, possessing child sex abuse videos, images

JACKSONVILLE – U.S. Attorney Roger B. Handberg announced the arrest and the return of an indictment charging Carl Stephen Smith, Jr., 32 of Green Cove Springs, with distributing and possessing child sexual abuse materials while using the internet. If convicted, Smith faces a minimum mandatory penalty of five years, up to 40 years, in federal prison and a potential life term of supervised release. Smith was arrested on Jan. 31 and has been detained pending trial in this case.

According to court documents and evidence proffered in open court in July 2022, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received a CyberTipline report from an online social media application that three child sexual abuse videos had been uploaded on the app by a user named “daddysir142.”

The IP address used to upload these materials resolved to an internet service provider in Green Cove Springs. An investigation commenced by the Clay County Sheriff's Office revealed nine other CyberTipline reports submitted by several online social media apps for IP addresses that traced back to either the same internet service provider account at Smith's residence or a cellphone service carrier used by Smith.

Agents from Homeland Security Investigations, together with other law enforcement personnel, executed a federal search warrant at Smith's residence and seized a cellphone belonging to Smith. A forensic review of this device revealed that it contained at least 15 videos and 14 images depicting young children being sexually abused. The review also showed Smith had distributed one such video over the internet on Jan. 6 using a social media app.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed one or more violations of federal criminal law, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.

The case was investigated by the Clay County, Jacksonville and Putnam county sheriff's offices, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and Homeland Security Investigations. It is being prosecuted by Asst. U.S. Attorney D. Rodney Brown.

It is another case brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who sexually exploit children, and to identify and rescue child victims.

For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.justice.gov/psc.

Gainesville man arrested for stabbing a man in Keystone

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – A Gainesville man wanted for attempted murder was arrested by Clay County Sheriff's Office deputies when they recognized him walking shortly after the attack.

Justin Thomas Edward King, 25, was taken to the Clay County Jail after the victim was treated and released from the hospital for multiple stab wounds to his back in the 7800 block of State Road 100.

According to the arrest report, deputies responded to a reported stabbing. Deputies on patrol then spotted King after the victim was taken to the hospital.

The motive wasn't listed in the heavily redacted report.

King was denied bond.

Man charged with armed robbery, terrorizing couple

ORANGE PARK – The Clay County Sheriff's Office arrested a man after it determined he terrorized two people for more than an hour by holding them at gunpoint and threatening to kill them on Jan. 7.

Justin M. Walker, 31, was charged with two counts of kidnapping by terrorism, armed robbery, two counts of aggravated assault and domestic battery by strangulation after deputies were called to break up a disturbance in the 300 block of Crossing Boulevard.

A woman said Walker forced her to use Cash App to transfer money from her account into his.

Walker's next court appearance is scheduled for March 6. Until then, he will remain in the Clay County Jail with a \$415,018 bond.

Couple arrested after shooting forces two schools to lock down

ORANGE PARK – A couple from Jacksonville were arrested on Feb. 10 after the Clay County Sheriff's Office said they fired at a second car at 10:43 a.m.

According to the Clay County Sheriff's Office,

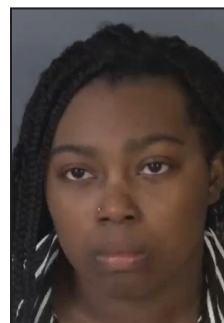


Justin King



Clay County Sheriff's Office deputies and Orange Park Police Department officers found this Mustang with three bullet holes after two were charged with shooting it near Loring Avenue.

Nathaniel Thomas and Natasha Baker-Archibald, both 23, were charged with discharging a firearm from a vehicle within 1,000 feet of another person and with child abuse after a Ford Mustang was hit with three bullets.



Natasha Baker-Archibald

When deputies arrived, they found Baker-Archibald and Thomas in a white Ford on the corner of Anna and Campbell avenues. The Mustang stopped a few blocks away.

The shooting prompted a lockdown of Orange Park and Grove Park elementary schools, according to the Orange Park Police Department.

Investigation into the shooting is ongoing, according to CCSO.

Bond for both was set at \$125,006.

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, Feb. 14

Tonya N. Burdette, 37, Middleburg, shoplifting
Theodore R. Davis, 47, Orange Park, shoplifting
Isaiah W. Tolbert, 44, Green Cove Springs, grand theft auto, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, DWSLR
Brandon V. Diaz, 20, Green Cove Springs, VOP-child abuse, VOP-child neglect
Robbie L. Dorminey, 51, Keystone Heights, domestic battery
Keith V. Robinson, 20, Orange Park, petit theft, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement
Steven P. Collins, 48, Middleburg, shoplifting
Matthew M.M. Wells, 56, Middleburg, felony domestic battery, domestic battery, hinder law enforcement
Joseie E. McClung, 39, Orange Park, possession-drug equipment, DWSLR

Monday, Feb. 13

James S. Ostrander, 59, Orange Park, grand theft

Zachary J. Hartley, 35, Middleburg, FTA
David D. Mitchell, 59, Keystone Heights, DWSLR
Cassandra P. McCray, 53, Fleming Island, shoplifting
Sandra M. Harvey, 27, Green Cove Springs, DWSLR
Vincent M. Myers, 40, Orange Park, aggravated assault with deadly weapon, trespassing, criminal mischief, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement
Jordan T. Van Wingerden, 20, Fleming Island, violation of pretrial release
Christopher A. Wirth, 52, Green Cove Springs, battery of person 65 or older, domestic battery

Sunday, Feb. 12

Waguener Saint-Juste, 24, Fleming Island, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement
Richard S. Vey, 55, Orange Park, defraud innkeeper
Christopher S. Turner, 24, Fleming Island, shoplifting
Arik L.A. Bach, 27, Keystone Heights, violation of injunction for protection against domestic violence
Jennifer R. Riess, 33, Keystone Heights, failure to obey law enforcement to stop, DWSLR
Jesse W. Quigley, 46, Middleburg, possession-fentanyl
Justin E. Riedl, 42, Fleming Island, shoplifting, resist/obstruct/oppose law

SEE ARRESTS, 23



Justin Walker



Nathaniel Thomas

Calendar

LET'S GO SCIENCE SHOW: will be on Feb. 16 at 10:30 a.m. at the Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Dr. in Orange Park. Program features Professor Smart and Ms. Knowitall, who teach physics concepts and theatrically-based experiments and demonstrations. Group tickets of 12 or more are \$10. General admission is \$19 and available at thcenter.org.

EVANGELIST CHRIS MIKKELSON: will be at True Life Church, 2219 County Road 220 in Middleburg, on Feb. 17-18-19 at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are free and childcare is available. Due to limited seating, registration at findtruelife.com/ignite is required.

MARKET IN THE PARK: will be on Feb. 18 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Green Cove Springs City Hall, 321 Walnut St.

FLORIDA PEACEMAKERS' COWBOY MOUNTED SHOOTING ASSOCIATION: will return to the Clay County Fairgrounds on Feb. 18-19 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is free.

ORANGE PARK FARMER'S MARKET: will be on Feb. 19 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at

Town Hall, 2042 Park Ave.

FESTIVAL OF LOW BRASS: will be performed by Florida State University's Dr. Justin Benavidez on Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. at the Penney Memorial Church, 4465 Poling Blvd. in Penney Farms. The concert is free and open to the public.

SOUL II SOUL TOUR: with Kem and Ledisi and featuring Musiq Soulchild will be on Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. at the VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena, 300 A. Philip Randolph Blvd., Jacksonville.

FLORIDA REP. BOBBY PAYNE: will conduct office hours on Feb. 21 at 9 a.m. at Keystone Heights City Hall, 555 S. Lawrence Blvd. in Keystone Heights. For more information, call Tammy Sill at (904) 966-6215.

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS HERITAGE COMMISSION: will meet on Feb. 21 at 10 a.m. at City Hall, 555 S. Lawrence Blvd. in Keystone Heights.

GREEN COVE SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL: will meet on Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 321 Walnut St.

JEFF DUNHAM: STILL NOT CANCELED: tour will be on Feb. 22 at 7 p.m. at the VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena, 300 A. Philip Randolph Blvd., Jacksonville. Tickets are available at ticketmaster.com.

CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS SPELLING BEE: will be on Feb. 23 at 6 p.m. at Lake Asbury Junior High, 2851 Sandridge Road.

ARMY FIELD BAND: will perform for free on Feb. 23 at 7 p.m. at the Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Dr. in Orange Park. The group consists of a 60-person concert band and a 29-person chorus. For tickets, visit thcenter.org.

CIRQUE ITALIA WATER CIRCUS: will be on Feb. 23 at 7:30 p.m. at the Orange Park Mall, 1910 Wells Road. Tickets are \$10-\$50 and available at www.cirqueitalia.com.

COLLEGE DRIVE FOOD TRUCK FRIDAY: will return on Feb. 24 to St. Johns River State College at 283 College Dr. in Orange Park.

ELDERSOURCE AAA FINANCE COMMITTEE: will meet on Zoom on Feb. 24 at

1 p.m. To join, visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83627584805> or call (929) 436-2866 and use Meeting ID 836 2758 4805 #.

CIRQUE ITALIA WATER CIRCUS: will be on Feb. 24 at 7:30 p.m. at the Orange Park Mall, 1910 Wells Road. Tickets are \$10-\$50 and available at www.cirqueitalia.com.

NORTHEAST FLORIDA SCOTTISH GAMES AND FESTIVAL: will be on Feb. 25, starting at 9 a.m. at the Clay County Fairgrounds, 2497 State Road 16 West in Green Cove Springs.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE ARTS FESTIVAL: will be on Feb. 25 from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at Spring Park, 106 St. Johns Ave. in Green Cove Springs. For more information, visit friends@fasacc.org or call (904) 657-6223.

REV. WILLIE HEARD: will host a choral workshop at Penney Memorial Church, 4465 Poling Blvd. in Penney Farms on Feb. 25 from 4-5:30 p.m. The workshop from the vocalist, composer and recording artist is free and open to the public.

Arrests

from page 22

enforcement

Saturday, Feb. 11

Pamela A. Eaton, 43, Middleburg, domestic battery

Haron L. Williams, 30, Orange Park, battery

Kevin S. Adams, 36, Green Cove Springs, trafficking-fentanyl, trafficking-controlled substance

Friday, Feb. 10

Debra S. Maylon, 58, Orange Park, trespassing

Natasha L. Baker-Archibald, 23, child abuse, discharge firearm from vehicle
Melinda E. Potts, 41, Orange Park, vandalism

Nathaniel I. Thomas, 23, child abuse,

discharge firearm from vehicle

Pamela M. Larson, 34, Orange Park, shoplifting

Miles A. Poole, 34, Fleming Island, petit theft, organized fraud

Ronald J. Montgomery, 35, Middleburg, battery, eight counts criminal mischief

Thursday, Feb. 9

Kaycee E. Dickason, 49, Fleming Island, petit theft

Joseph F. Horsley, 56, Fleming Island, domestic battery

Charles E. Hunt, 53, Green Cove Springs, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia, alter/destroy/destroy/conceal evidence

Lindsey N. Thomas, 39, Orange Park, DWLSR

Christopher L. Daragjati, 34, Orange Park, create fictitious ID, failure the rede-liver hired/leased property

Justin T.E. King, 25, Keystone Heights, attempted murder

Megan E. Perry, 24, Orange Park, grand theft

Jesse C. Cain, 24, Green Cove Springs, FTA-petit theft

Joseph L. Fields, 42, Green Cove Springs, two counts FTA-grand theft

Marie L. Alexander, 21, Orange Park, misuse 911 system

Brandon C. Gibbs, 34, Keystone Heights, possession-controlled substance, possession-drug paraphernalia

Wednesday, Feb. 8

Rion D. Jackson, 19, Orange Park, possession-marijuana

Gorman T. Long, 43, Maxville, non-support

Ronald G. Thacker, 39, Middleburg, possession-marijuana, violation of injunction for protection against domestic violence

Harley J. Levontes, 29, Fleming Island, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia

Jael M. Holmes, 45, Middleburg, shop-

lifting

Terry L. Crawford, 27, Oakleaf, VOP-possession-methamphetamine, VOP-possession-fentanyl

Amie M. Willey, 42, Middleburg, shoplifting

Lauren C. White, 31, Maxville, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia, DWLSR

Antonio A. Cushenberry, 27, Green Cove Springs, battery with prior battery conviction, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia

Devin C.D. Frison, 30, Orange Park, possession-methamphetamine with intent to sell/manufacture/deliver, possession-drug paraphernalia

George J. Deane, 31, Green Cove Springs, aggravated assault with deadly weapon, battery, FTA-failure to register vehicle, FTA-license tag not attached

Kenneth W. Corum, 58, Orange Park, domestic battery by strangulation

Deputy

from page 1

Holbert's intuition and determination led to Sean Devant Williams, now 30, being returned to Philadelphia to face charges of murder, robbery, criminal conspiracy and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

It also led CCSO to select him last Friday as the Detention Deputy of the Year.

Holbert worked with PPD's Homicide Squad to identify the man who was on Philadelphia's Most Wanted list. He took pictures of Williams' tattoos and sent them to Philadelphia. Once Williams got to Florida, he cut his hair and attempted to change his appearance.

"But he had some unique tattoos and

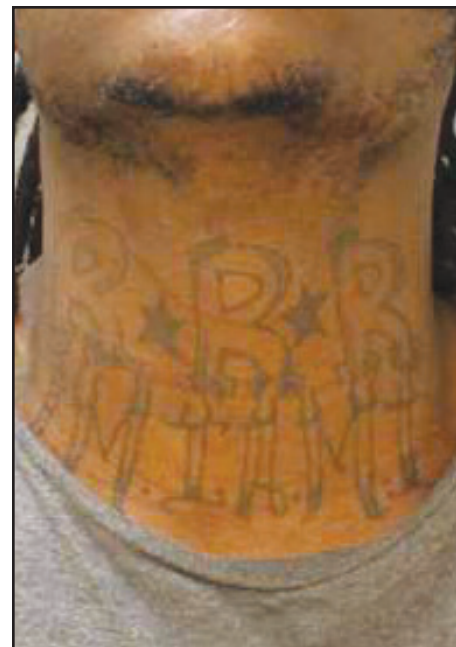
that's how we figured out who he was," Holbert said. "We sent photos back and forth. At one point, when we were taking pictures of his tattoos, he said, 'Is this for Philadelphia?' That's when he knew we knew."

It all started with a Feb. 21, 2022, traffic stop on Blanding Boulevard when Williams was pulled over for not using his headlights. The deputy discovered marijuana and put him under arrest. That's when the cat-and-mouse games started.

"I wasn't going to let it go," Holbert said. "I knew something was up. I didn't think it would be a homicide, though."

Holbert said he monitors the Williams case on Philadelphia media websites.

"I'm waiting to see what happens to him," he said. "I'll be following his trial. This one was personal to me."



Emmanuel Project provides much-needed healthcare in Lake Region

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Emmanuel Project of Northeast Florida is a nonprofit organization that was founded in 2022 after Vaughan Robinson, Chairman of the Board, met a family who needed food and medical treatment.

Its mission is to provide high-quality healthcare services to underserved and vulnerable populations, such as individuals who are homeless, poor, and lack access to healthcare.

Since November, the group now provides services to the Lake Region.

“Emmanuel Project’s team seeks to carry out its mission in a manner that both exemplifies neighborly love and honors God.” Steven Papas, Executive Director, said.

The idea came when the project’s team and Don Fann, Executive Director of The Way Free Medical Clinic, saw a need for healthcare services in Keystone Heights.

“During these meetings, the group determined that the homeless, underserved, and vulnerable residents of Keystone Heights had a greater need for healthcare than those of other parts of Clay County,” Fann said.

Once a month, Emmanuel Project’s mobile medical unit visits Answers Health and

Resource Facility to provide free health services. Some healthcare services offered to adults and children are Wellness and Sick Visits, Nutritional Education and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. Management, COVID-related respiration issues, and primary healthcare education. By July, the team expects to treat at least 1,000 patients in Keystone Heights.

Emmanuel Project also provides services in counties like Clay, Duval, Flagler, Putnam and St. Johns. In addition, they have partnered with various organizations like Alpha Omega Miracle Home, Wildflower Healthcare and SJC Veterans Council.

The organization plans to add additional dates for individuals to receive free healthcare services in Clay and St. Johns counties. They also plan to partner with established social service charities to provide their services at community events further. They will work with Impact Clay and Clay SafetyNet to have their mobile unit at the College Drive Food Truck Nights and the Back to School Bash.

The organization looks forward to continuing its partnership with The Way Free Clinic to provide the first healthcare program that will span across communities.

To learn more about the Emmanuel Project of Northeast Florida and its services, visit emmanuelproject.org/.



PHOTOS BY NATALIE GILSTRAP

Emmanuel Project comes once a month to Answers Health and Resource Facility in Keystone Heights to provide free healthcare services.





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Sisters pull together for regional win

By Ray Dimonda
Correspondent

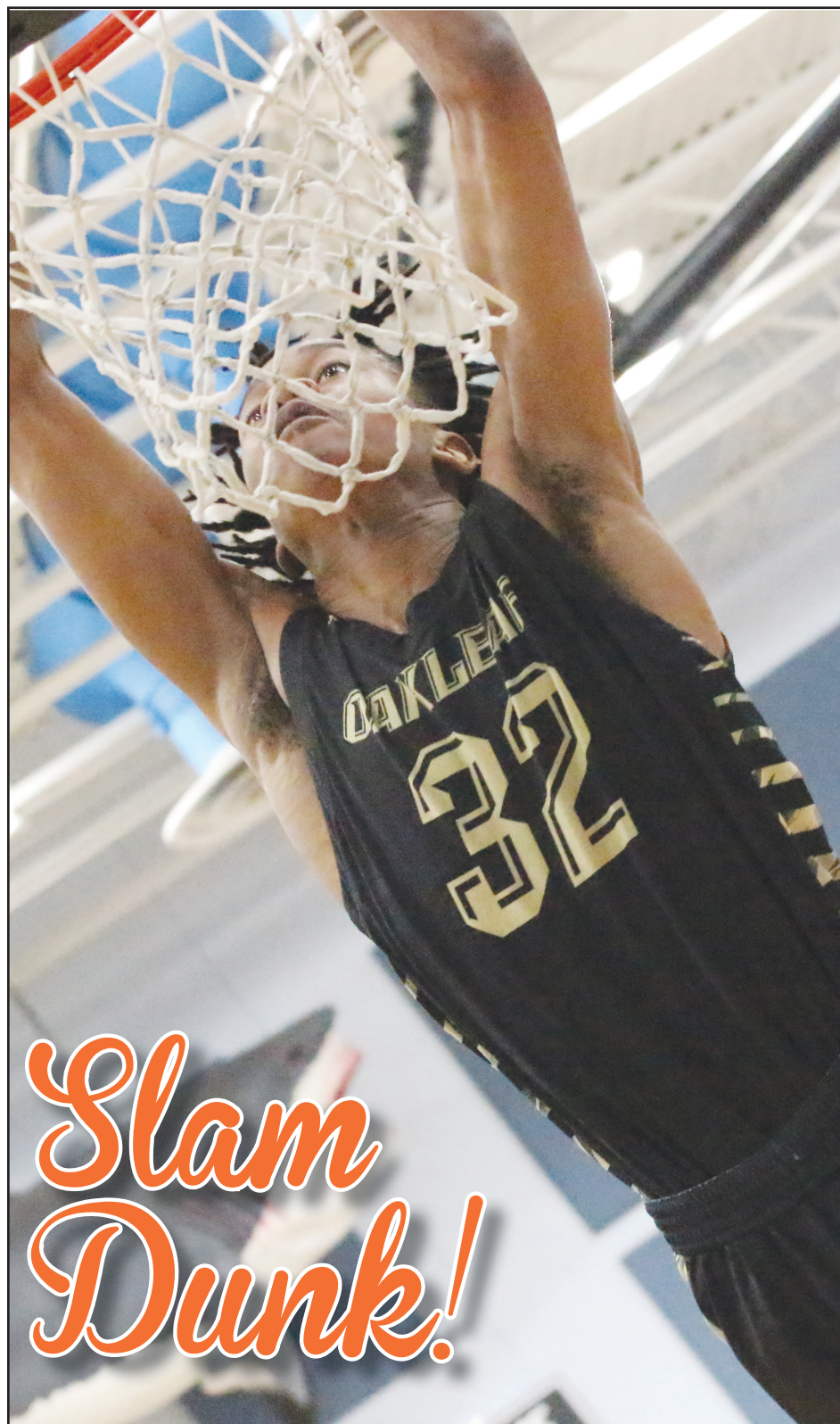
ORANGE PARK - In their region quarterfinal on Fri., Feb. 10, the Ridgeview Lady Panthers faced what may have been the tallest hurdle all season. After defeating the Rickards Lady Raiders just six nights prior to win the first ever Lady Panther District Title, the team faced off again versus the Raiders in round one of the State Championship tournament. The Raiders came out with an entirely different scheme to shut down Nia Blocton who was the team leader in game one with 22 points. The Panthers sisterhood pulled together and had several players, including Nacoya Blocton with 20 points and Paetyn Miller with 13 points, fill the gap making sure they

SEE PANTHERS, 33



CORRESPONDENT PHOTO BY RAY DIMONDA

Ridgeview High forward Nacoya Blocton sets up for free throw in region playoff win over Rickards.



Slam Dunk!

STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

Oakleaf High center Cameron Coachman slam dunks in first half action of Knights district championship win over Ponte Vedra. See game coverage, page 28.

TUSSLE OF MUSCLE Quick peek of districts coming

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor
with excerpts from KabraWrestling/
BrantParson

FLEMING ISLAND - With its usual aggressive and tactical dominance, the Fleming Island High wrestling team took a little umbrance at the annual Tussle of Muscle dual match with rival Clay High, but with a slightly different approach for former Clay High four-time state champion P.J. Cobbert running the show for the Golden Eagles.

With a 55-16 dismantling of the Blue Devils behind six pins for wins; Laird Duhaylungsod 120k Jayce Paridon 132, Kaden Schaefer 145, Matthew Kotler 152, Joshua Sandoval 182 and Robinson 220, Fleming Island again asserted themselves as the north Florida team to reckon with come this week's district championship tournaments.

SEE MUSCLE, 30



Fleming Island wrestler Joshua Sandoval shows off Rocky-like warmup attire in Golden Eagles dual match against Clay.



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Spartans sharp in region semifinal win

By Mike Zima
Correspondent

ORANGE PARK - St. Johns Country Day School girls soccer forwards Sydney Schmidt and Sophia Pontieri scored two goals apiece, spearheading a youth movement that carried St. Johns Country Day to an 8-0 shutout of visiting Christ's Church Academy in a Region 1-2A Semifinal on February 10.

Six of the eight SJCD goals were scored by underclassmen. In the second minute, Schmidt, a freshman, redirected a hard cross from Pontieri into the goal to give the Spartans a 2-0 lead. In the first minute of the second half, she sprinted down the left side to meet a long pass from center back Cece Nowcki, dribbled inside a Christ Church defender and drilled a shot to the opposite side of the goal, extending the SJCD lead to 7-0. Schmidt had two assists to match her two goals, frequently ridding herself of defenders before sending crosses into the middle.

"She [Schmidt] has got the whole package," SJCD head coach Mike Pickett said. "She is two-footed, quick, and can serve the ball or strike the ball."

Pontieri, a sophomore, scored the Spartan's fifth goal on a right-footed laser that sailed just under the crossbar, leaving Eagles keeper Anna Hoffman with no chance for a save. Pontieri had created space for her shot by outmaneuvering two defenders at the top of the box. Then, just a minute and 20 seconds after Schmidt's second goal, Pontieri ended the game on a set play off of a throw-in. Lauryn Mateo drew Hoffman to her by driving hard to the left endline, and then passed to Pontieri in the middle of the box. Pontieri perfectly timed her kick, and the ball splashed into the back of the net.

The Spartans were on the attack from the opening tap, scoring just 29 seconds into the contest on a redirection by senior Avery Raimondo. Mateo had the assist from the right side. SJCD scored three more goals in the next seven minutes, putting on a display of precise passing and winning all of the loose balls. Three minutes after Schmidt scored her first goal, she drove left and found Mateo cutting to the goal for a put away and a 3-0 Spartans lead. Pontieri's first goal came two minutes later.

Having seen what he wanted from his first unit, Pickett made a wholesale substitution 10 minutes into the game.

"We felt like we could high press this game," said Pickett. "I felt the first team moved the ball pretty well. We served [crossing passes] better than we had the last few games."

SJCD only had two corner kicks, a testament to the accuracy of their crosses.

"We don't want a lot of corner kicks, because that means we are hitting defenders with the ball," explained Pickett. "What we



St. Johns Country Day School forward Sophia Pontieri fires in sixth goal of Spartans' 8-0 region 1-2A championship win over Mount Dora Christian on Tuesday. Spartans advance to state semifinals on Fri., Feb. 17 as the top region seed.

want is a lot of opportunities."

The second team continued the assault, albeit at a slower pace. Mia Johnson got enough of a nudge with her right foot as she collided with a charging Hoffman, trickling the ball across the goal line from four yards out for a 5-0 lead at the 25:51 mark of the first half. Fellow sophomore Aloxandria Fletcher sent SJCD to the intermission ahead 6-0 on a left-footer off of a feed from freshman Hannah Melicharek.

Pickett inserted the starters for the start of the second half, and they wasted no time in invoking the mercy rule. Schmidt scored her second goal at the 38:40 mark, and Pontieri ended the game with her second goal just one minute and 20 seconds later.

Mateo had two assists, and her goal moved her into the top 10 on the list of goals scored at SJCD.

"Mateo is very tactical, and she sees the game well," said Pickett. "She is very good in the air and has a nose for knowing where the ball will be."

Goaltender Roxy Mathews saved the only shot that the Eagles put on goal for the Spartans, who outshot the Eagles 30-1 and have not allowed a goal in their last eight games.

SJCD, ranked first in Florida's Class 2A by Maxpreps.com, improved to 18-1-1. The Spartans will host Mount Dora Christian (17-2-1) in the Region 1 final on February 14. The Spartans have not played the Bulldogs yet this season.

Christ's Church Academy ends its season with a 7-11-2 record.



STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

Fleming Island High girls soccer coach Joy Rosano got a quick feather in cap with win over Ponte Vedra's Dave Silverberg, in back, a long-time area coach with seven state titles and the 2021 Florida coach of the year.

Scherer cans Sharks on final kick

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

PONTE VEDRA - Taylor Tamares scored off a penalty kick in the first half of a tense 1-0 journey that the Fleming Island High girls soccer team held until the final minutes before host Ponte Vedra caught a ricochet off a corner kick to send the region 1-6A semifinal into overtime on a blustery afternoon at Beachside High School.

After two overtime stanzas, it came down to senior Kaitlyn Scherer knocking down the final penalty kick to secure the win for Fleming Island, 1-1 (4-3).

"I had to believe in myself to hit that final kick for the team," said Scherer. "I originally asked to hit the second kick, but coach told me to go last. The last one is a lot of pressure. We did not want to go to penalty kicks because that's how we lost to Fletcher last year."

The original game date; Fri., Feb. 10, was suspended due to rain as weather upended north Florida action.

"That was a nationally ranked team out there (sixth in USA according to

Maxpreps with St. Johns Country Day at three) and we played about as hard a game as I could ask for," said Fleming Island coach Joy Rosano, just a day before her birthday on Mon., Feb. 13 and just hours before the Super Bowl. "We got a couple of bounces and that one penalty kick hit the cross bar. Sometimes big games are won by inches they say."

Clay High, in region 1-4A, had to travel on Sunday to Panama City's Arnold High School to play and lost an 8-1 contest to end their season.

Fleming Island, who lost 4-0 in regular season play and 3-0 in the district final to Ponte Vedra, was to regroup for just a day to take a six hour bus trip on Monday to play at Gulf Breeze in the region final on Tues., Feb. 14.

For Fleming Island High girls soccer coach Joy Rosano directed a pressure defended and striking offense against the top-seeded Sharks, but could not penetrate the Sharks much bigger midfield lineup for much of the game.

On the day though, wind was a key fac-

SEE EAGLES, 32



Fleming Island goalie Macy Opp returned to action to shut down vaunted Ponte Vedra soccer squad in Golden Eagles win in region semifinal.

Single-digit defense fuels Spartans' hoops win

By Mike Zima
Correspondent

ORANGE PARK - St. Johns Country Day's Taliah Scott, Mary Kate Kent and Kendall Proffitt buried visiting St. Joseph Academy under a barrage of three-pointers as the Spartans advanced to the Class 2A Regional Semifinals with a 64-29 victory on February 9. St. Joseph Academy was held to under 10 points per quarter; 8, 9, 8, 4, by the Lady Spartan defense.

Scott nailed six treys while Kent and Proffitt made three apiece as SJCD shot a sizzling 48.1 percent from beyond the arc. The Spartans made 13 three-point field goals, more than the twelve two-point baskets they converted. SJCD hoisted up 27 shots from long distance in the game.

"I would not say we rely on the three-pointer, but we tell the girls if they have open looks to take the shot," explained SJCD head coach Yolanda Bronston. "I have got three girls who can shoot the leather off of the ball."

With Scott directing the offense from the point, Kent and Proffitt on the wings, Juliet Moody at the free throw line and Semaj Williams running the baseline, the Spartans moved the ball to whoever the Flashes left open. Scott led all scorers with



24 points, Kent finished with 14, and Proffitt, a seventh-grader, added 11. Williams chipped in with nine.

"Having three great shooters allows us to spread the defense," said Bronston. "Everybody wants to focus on Taliah [an Arkansas commitment], but that makes the defense play honest."

Six of the first seven SJCD field goals were from beyond the arc. Kent got the hosts off to a quick lead by making three-pointers on consecutive possessions to put



St. Johns Country Day School guard Taliah Scott has a tight corner to travel against tough Munroe defender in Spartans region 1-2A semifinal game on Tues., Feb. 14. Left: Guard Mary Kate Kent looks for passing lane in Spartans region 1-2A semifinal game against Munroe High on Tues., Feb. 14.

SJCD ahead 6-2. When St. Joseph Academy closed the gap to 9-8 on a put-back by center Elizabeth Rowe, Proffitt nailed a trey from the right wing to start an 11-0 Spartans run that put SJCD ahead 20-8 at the end of the first quarter. Scott, who had not scored to that point, scored the final eight points of the spurt on left-handed lay-up, a step-back three from the left wing and an open three from top of the key. The Flashes never seriously threatened from that point.

While the three markswomen were do-

ing the offensive damage, the Spartans suffocating man-to-man full court press prevented the Flashes from closing the gap. SJCD forced 18 SJA turnovers, five in the first quarter. The Spartans held the Flashes to less than 10 points in each quarter.

"We usually don't press like that a lot, but it's playoff time," said Bronston, who emphasized the importance of defense and rebounding after the game.

"Pat Summit [the former University of

SEE HOOPS, 34

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Coachman locks down Sharks

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

PONTE VEDRA - Topped by a six blocked shots performance by center Cameron Coachman, the Oakleaf High boys basketball team survived a fourth quarter surge by Ponte Vedra to beat the Sharks 48-47 in the district 3-6A championships held Friday in front of a packed Ponte Vedra High gym.

"The way the guys were selling out on loose balls on the floor is the heart of this defense," said Oakleaf coach Jason Price. "Their guy; like 20 points and 17 free throws, put that team in his back and we had to counter. Defense wins championships, holy smokes, that last sequence was crazy."

Oakleaf, now 23-1, will advance into the region 1-6A playoffs as a top seed and will likely host a first round game on February 16.

Against Ponte Vedra, 19-6, Oakleaf had slight leads throughout the contest, but not enough to be comfortable behind the efforts of the Sharks point guard Nathan Bunkosky, who scored 18 points as the lone double digit scorer for Ponte Vedra.

"He put the team on his back and made big plays throughout the night; 20 points and eight free throws, to keep the game close enough," said Price "At the end, it was the inbounds pass attempt to him that sealed the game."

For Oakleaf, guard Aaron Rivers pumped in 15 points for the Knights with Sean Jones adding 13 and Coachman adding 10. Coachman's six blocks put him at a

new school record 116 blocks for one season. Up 44-34 late in the fourth quarter; 6:37 to go, the Knights defense wilted a bit and allowed Bunkosky to bring the game to a one point deficit with a set of three-pointers that seemed to drain the Knights' defensive effort.

With a seventh team foul on guard Aaron Rivers, Ponte Vedra put themselves in free throw shooting position with the score now at 46-41.

At 5:37, an offensive foul on Coachman gave Ponte Vedra another possession, but the Oakleaf defense held momentarily until 4:35 with a stretch zone not allowing Ponte Vedra to penetrate the lane.

Oakleaf then got called for a 10-second violation on their next possession to give Ponte Vedra another possession with guard Sam Ritchie driving and floating a basket over Coachman to bring the score to 46-43.

"Coach kept telling us on the timeouts to just hold our positions and keep playing defense," said senior forward Dylan Lewis. "We had no doubt we would hold."

Two missed free throws by Oakleaf senior forward Dallas Skinner ratcheted up the game tension level as Ponte Vedra's Sharks' fans were smelling blood in the water.

With 2:56 to go, 46-43, Ponte Vedra center Ben Ritchie tried to back in against Coachman only to have his shot rejected, but Bunkosky got the loose ball and drove to make the game a one-pointer, 46-45.

Ritchie got stuck with an offensive foul on a baseline drive to give Oakleaf posi-



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Oakleaf High defenders Dylan Lewis, left, and Sean Jones deflect in bounds pass to Ponte Vedra guard Nathan Bunkosky in final seconds of Knights win for district title.

tion with 1:47. After a skirmish under the Ponte Vedra basket, Lewis answered with a blocked shot of his own on Ritchie to ignite the Oakleaf defense.

Back on the court at 1:02 after a timeout, Ponte Vedra made its first major error with a misdirected inbound pass that flew out of bounds to give Oakleaf possession.

After an Oakleaf timeout with one minute to go, Lewis and guard Sean Jones kept testing the interior of the Sharks defense before Jones broke through on a layup to 48-45 with 20 seconds to go.

Ponte Vedra broke in to 48-47 with a Bunkosky drive with 17 seconds to go.

Oakleaf had a shot to up their slim edge, but could not score with Lewis missing a free throw with nine seconds to go.

Another frenzy on a loose ball on the court, put Rivers face down on the court with an apparent injury. Rivers got up and eventually jogged up and down the court to

remain in the game.

"I didn't draw up a single thing up in the final possessions and just told them that they were going to run and we had to play the defense like champion defense that we had," said Price.

Now, with 1.8 seconds on the clock and Oakleaf dispersing from a final timeout, officials upped the clock to 2.3 seconds to restart the game amidst a bewildered Price.

On the Ponte Vedra throw-in from mid-court, Lewis and Jones converged on Bunkosky to force a deflection upward as Skinner slid in to capture the loose ball to end the game.

"They kept coming and they kept fighting," said Price. "Think about the defensive possessions and the bodies they are throwing on the floor; life and limb, to win the game. They could have folded at any time, but our guys buckled down over the season."

Knights storm Pace in regions

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

OAKLEAF - Led by three scorers over 20 points; 24 to Fantasia James, 21 to Kaylah Turner and 20 to Trista Brown, the Oakleaf High girls basketball team stormed the gates of Pace High's defense with a 16-6 rapid fire offense in the first four minutes of play; 60-23 after three quarters, to dominate a 67-36 region 1-6A quarterfinal win to advance to the region semifinals.

"I told them to go out fast from the start and see if they could keep up," said Oakleaf coach Fred Cole. "They did and they couldn't keep up. That was probably the best first half we've played all season."

With James swishing home three three-pointers to underscore the intent of fast play, Oakleaf never let up on the accelerator with Turner stealing and dealing from the halfcourt line and James showing off her smooth tall jumper from wherever. Brown was instrumental in bridging the gap of transition from J'Nease Bender and Mighty Mite Armaany Mullins, just 5'3" under the backboard.

"Of course, we practice a slow game because we know from experience that the



further you get in the playoffs, the slower the games goes," said Cole. "Crestview, who beat Ponte Vedra (45-33) with a big power forward, has a big front line and they play a slower game. We saw film on Pace and knew we could run on them."

Top seeded Oakleaf (24-2, No. 3 in 6A) will host fourth seed Crestview (21-7, No. 11 in 6A) on Tues., Feb. 14. In the other



Two main defenders for the Oakleaf High girls basketball team set to move into the region semifinals on Tues., Feb. 14 are, left, guard Armaany Mullins and senior Kaylah Turner, both shown in Knights blowout win over Pace in region playoff opener.

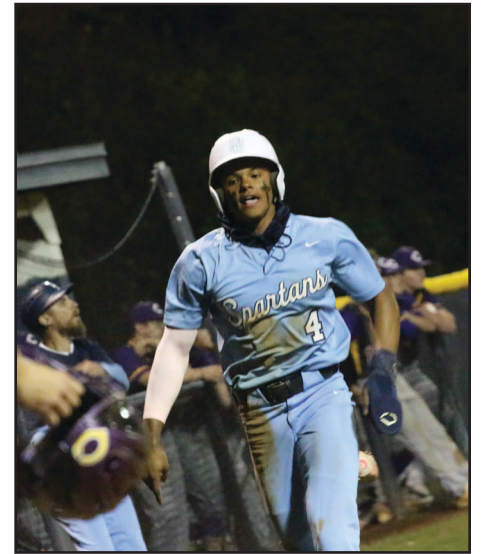
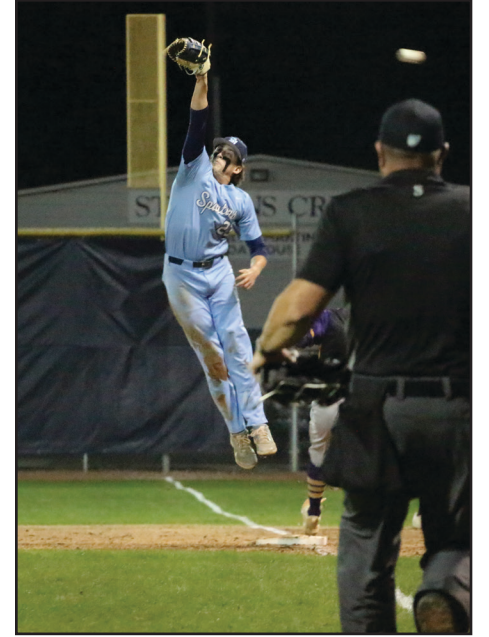
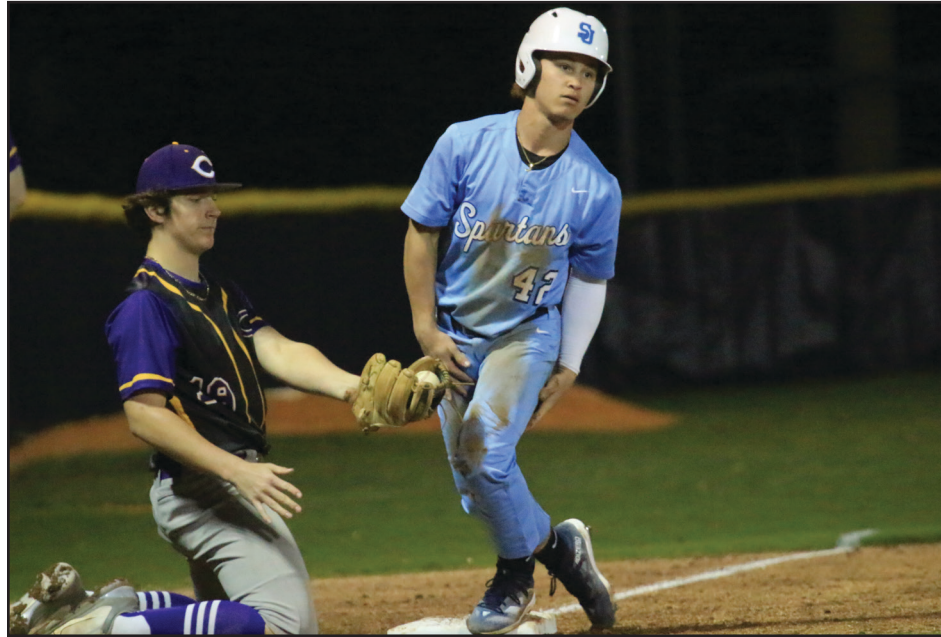
semifinal, seventh seed Land O'Lakes (19-4, No. 17 in 6A, beat No. 2 Nease 65-54 to advance) will host third seed Gainesville (15-7, No. 10 in 6A).

In the other two regions; Charlotte (19-6, No. 2 in 6A) is top seed in region 3 while Blanche Ely (21-3, No. 1 in 6A) is top ranked in region 4.

Class 6A defending champion St. Thomas Aquinas is the second seed in region 4-6A and faces Dillard and, with a win, takes on Blanche Ely in the region final. The two schools split in regular season play.

St. Thomas beat Dillard in their district final two weeks ago.

PLAY BALL



Spartans open with 7-7 tie

Baseball season opened up with a preseason clash at St. Johns Country Day School with, clockwise from top left, pitcher Isaiah Mamea throwin heat, baserunner Nick Bowden getting snagged at third, first baseman Jacob Thomas going big air for errant throw, Kyle Boylston scoring off base hit in second inning, pitcher JD Hay throwing the heat early and third baseman Seth Alford getting set to gun down a baserunner. Spartans tied with Columbia 7-7. Oakleaf lost a 5-4 game to Bartram Trail in the opener.

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Muscle

from page 25

Clay, with still unbeaten Jacob Bucci at 106 (35-0), got one win from Brady Glavin at 126 and a handful of forfeits for their 16 points. At 106, Bucci forfeited to Fleming Island's Matthew Newman.

With one still unbeaten wrestler on the roster; senior 220 pounder Jhoel Robinson, Fleming Island has a potful of top five and top 10 ranked athletes on the books according the Kabra Wrestling guru Brant Parsons, the state's ranking meister.

Fleming Island got two state runnerups last year with Robinson and Jayce Paridon both losing in the state finals. Paridon has bumped up to 132 for the state run with top seed and defending 126 champion Maxius Brady of Mariner High, who defeated Paridon in the championship match last year, sitting at 43-1.



CORRESPONDENT PHOTOS BY JOCELYN DUHAYLUNGSOD

Fleming Island's Shane Duhaylungsod and brother Laird are two medal contenders for Golden Eagles in the lower weight divisions.



Middleburg's Wyatt Leduc is one of coach Coll Robertson contender to gain a medal at the state championships.

Parsons, as he does annually, put together his Who's Who among state wrestling contenders as districts, regions and the state championships start to funnel into the vernacular of weekend wrestling chats.

For the girls, with the region 1-1A staged at Matanzas, Middleburg will give chase to the top rated Pirates, but needing some help to overtake for a team title as evident by the district runnerup finish to Matanzas. Lincoln, champions in district 1-1A, will bring some heavy artillery; three champions, two runners and a pair of thirds and fourth, and that could make head-to-heads advantageous to the Coll Robertson's girls at Middleburg. Should Lincoln and Matanzas; with five champions, four seconds and two thirds, knock a few of each other out, Middleburg, with a supreme total team effort, could sneak in as a runnerup or even a champion.

Middleburg got district titles to unbeaten Cruce, senior Grace Bradshaw at 100 and, in a pseudo upset repeat from the unassuming but brave freshman Skyla Fisher at 105. The catch is neither Bronco wrestled a Matanzas girls in their final.

Add to the mix, from Oakleaf, the Barrientos duo; Adrienna (who won with no wrestlers in her 105) and Kailani, who



Middleburg's Grady Woodard is wiry battler that can escape tight grabs and could be an upset maker.



Fleming Island's Ronan Bozeman, on right tying up Clay's Dominic Martin is one of most underrated wrestlers in state.

District 4-2A

at Clay, Wed., Feb. 15 (FIHS, CHS)
District 3-2A at Westside, Wed., Feb. 15 (MHS, OHS, OPHS, RHS)

District 4-1A

at Baker County (SJCDs-Matthew Braddock, KHHS)
Regionals: Feb. 24-25

For the girls wrestlers, with yet another lone unbeaten wrestler in Middleburg High's 190 pounder Cheyenne Cruce, 31-0, the Lady Broncos took a tough second place finish in their district championships behind Matanzas.

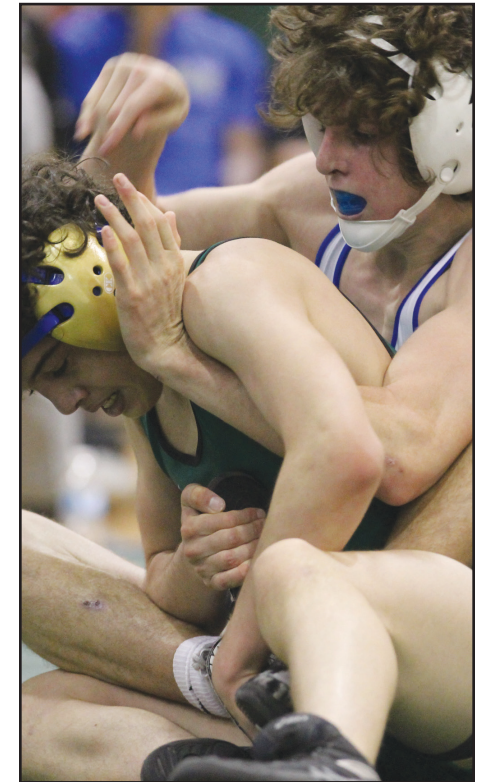
Girls Wrestling Region Tournaments

Region 1-1A (from district 2-1A-OHS, OPHS, from district 3-1A-MHS, CHS, KHHS, FIHS, RHS) at Matanzas on Feb., 17-18

State championships: March 2-4 at Silver Spurs Arena, Kissimmee

Rankings Class 2A

- 106:** 1. Jacob Bucci CHS 35-0; 8. Matthew Newman FIHS 33-3; 18. Jordan Mukaddam FIHS 17-8
- 113:** 7. Shane Duhaylungsod FIHS 33-5, 12. Bryan Davis MHS 24-7
- 120:** 5. Laird Duhaylungsod FIHS 35-4; 15. Rylan Herrera CHS; 19. Grady Woodard MHS 36-9m (Wiggly guy)
- 126:** 9. Brady Glavin CHS 28-5; 17. Dylan Johns MHS 20-16
- 132:** 1. Jayce Paridon FIHS 36-2; 4. Wyatt Leduc MHS 34-5
- 138:** No area wrestlers in top 20
- 145:** 2. Kaden Schaefer FIHS 22-1 (only loss to No. 1 Hayden Whidden of Lake Gibson); 7. Logan Moore MHS 25-9
- 152:** 8. Matthew Kotler FIHS 22-8 (One mistep costly vs. Lake Gibson top seed Gianni Maldonado, 8-7 loss)
- 160:** 4. Christopher Chop FIHS 25-8 (A fence post on his feet)
- 170:** 6. Ronan Bozeman FIHS 31-7 (A senior, Most underrated wrestler for FIHS), 11. Dominic Martin CHS 27-4 (lost to Bozeman 8-6 in overtime in Tussle of Muscle)
- 182:** 3. Joshua Sandoval FIHS 36-4 (lost to top seed Frank Solorzano of Lake Gibson in Duals state championship meet)
- 195:** 4. Isaiah Shevchuck OHS 23-5 (Most unpredictable guy on the mat); 9. Walter Poe FIHS 29-10
- 220:** 1. Jhoel Robinson FIHS 30-0 (Smoothly dominating the weight class); 6. Kedrick Wilbourn CHS 30-2 (Two moves from being unbeaten); 15. Tucker Cody MHS 33-7 (More strong than tactical)
- 285:** 17. Ethan Hoffstetter FIHS 16-9 (Was near the top midseason, got sick, roaring back); 18. William Kelly CHS



In girls wrestling action, far left, Oakleaf's Kailani Barrientos and cousin Adrienna are two medal contenders for coach Mark DeToro as well as Jayla Harrison at 170. Center, the Bradshaw sisters, Grace and Lily have been finalists against each other numerous times this season with a possible finals between the two in the next two weeks. Right: Fleming Island's Jordan Mukkadam, left, and Clay's Brady Glaven could both provide critical team points in the run to state. Left: Kaden Schaefer and Laird Duhaylungsod are solid medal contenders for coach P.J. Cobbert.



pinned at 120, at Oakleaf coming in with Jayla Harrison pinning at 170 and the Lady Broncos have a slight formula for an upset if the moons align. At 145, Oakleaf's Sofia Shirley-Montijo is a capable upset creator; runnerup at districts.

Westside won the district title with Oakleaf and Baker County both tied as run-

nerups at 80 in tightly contested field.

One final addition is Clay's Aubrienna Apple, who could scorch the field at 135; albeit Apple beat Middleburg's Heidi Castleberry at districts. In boys 1A, St. Johns Country Day School eighth grader Matthew Braddock can make history with a few wins, even a title.



CORRESPONDENT PHOTO BY RAY DIMONDA

St. Johns Country Day School's boys soccer team won an overtime penalty kicks region semifinal; 0-0, 0-0 after two overtimes, then a 3-2 win on penalty kicks over St. Joseph Academy to advance to region final. St. Johns travels to John Paul II in Tallahassee for region final and shot at Class 2A Final Four.



Clay High girls weightlifting coach Rodney Keller, here with his two 2022 state champions Janiyah Stevens and Emma Heck, should repeat as double team champion with a shot at even more team points as area athletes head to Lakeland Friday and Saturday for state championships.

Eagles

from page 26



Fleming Island defender Natalia Ramdas is key to Golden Eagles defense.

tor with about a 20 miles per hour cross wind affecting most high-flying balls with Ponte Vedra getting the tailwind advantage for the first half.

“It was kind of a cross wind, but we knew to keep the ball low to move it,” said Rosano. “You could see the ball actually stop in midair on some of the high kicks.”

Despite the wind in their face, Fleming Island was able to move downfield behind the defensive efforts of Natalia Ramdas

and Kennedy Johnsen and midfield direction from senior Kaitlyn Scherer and fresh-

man Rylie Gardner.

In the second, still locked with a precarious 1-0 lead, Fleming Island took to pushing the ball into the Ponte Vedra, but also employing a zone type of defense in front of goalie Macy Opp.

“We didn’t want to give them hard shots right in front of the net,” said Rosano. “Macy did a nice job in goal and the front line defense kept pushing them further away from the goal.”

The strategy seemed to work, but in the final 20 minutes of the game, Ponte Vedra put up a handful of corner kicks after pushing to the back line.

At 9:42 to go, the Sharks scored off a corner kick to tie the game.

After the two overtimes, in penalty kicks to decide, the tally went to 1-1, with Ponte Vedra getting a save and Gianna Gardner up for Fleming Island. Gardner missed wide to keep the score tied still. Opp bent left and Ponte Vedra went right to put the pressure on Tamares to keep the game tied with Tamares burying a right side shot. Opp guessed wrong on the shot before Megan Cobb tied the game at 3-3.

On the next shot, Opp guessed right and the shot went right, but too high and hit the cross bar to set up Scherer’s gamewinner.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City of Green Cove Springs proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE NO. O-11-2023

AN ORDINANCE TO BE KNOWN AS THE GREEN COVE SPRINGS MOBILITY FEE ORDINANCE; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS, RULES OF CONSTRUCTION, AND FINDINGS; ADOPTING THE MOBILITY FEE STUDY; PROVIDING FOR MUNICIPAL PARTICIPATION; IMPOSING MOBILITY FEES ON NEW CONSTRUCTION; PROVIDING FOR CALCULATION AND ALTERNATIVE CALCULATION PROCEDURES FOR MOBILITY FEES; PROVIDING FOR PAYMENT; PROVIDING FOR THE USE OF MOBILITY FEE PROCEEDS; PROVIDING FOR EXEMPTIONS; PROVIDING FOR AFFORDABLE AND WORKFORCE HOUSING MOBILITY FEE DEFERRAL; PROVIDING FOR AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MITIGATION PROGRAM; PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN SIZE AND USE; PROVIDING FOR DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTION CREDIT; PROVIDING FOR APPLICABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN ALTERNATIVE COLLECTION METHOD; PROVIDING FOR REVIEW HEARINGS; PROVIDING A REVIEW REQUIREMENT; PROVIDING FOR PERIODIC MOBILITY FEE RATE ADJUSTMENT; PROVIDING FOR A DECLARATION OF EXCLUSION FROM ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES ACT; PROVIDING FOR ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING OF MOBILITY FEES; PROVIDING FOR NOTICE OF MOBILITY FEE RATES.

The following public hearings have been scheduled and will be held in the City Council Chambers, 321 Walnut Street, Green Cove Springs, to hear comments, if any, regarding said Ordinance:

Planning and Zoning: Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;
 City Council: Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;
 City Council: Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;

Please be advised that if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Council with respect to any matter considered at these scheduled public hearings, they will 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.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in this matter should contact City Hall at (904) 297-7500 at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. Hearing impaired persons may access through Florida Relay – Dial 7-1-1.

Said Ordinance is available at City Hall for review during the hours of 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday.

All interested individuals are invited to attend this public hearing.

City of Green Cove Springs
 Lilly Delvecchio, Development Services Representative
 321 Walnut Street
 Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

Steve Kennedy, City Manager

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City of Green Cove Springs proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE NO. O-10-2023

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 117 OF THE CITY CODE; AMENDING CHAPTER 117 SECTION 117-3 LIST OF PERMITTED TO INCLUDE CONVENIENCE RETAIL STORES WITH AND WITHOUT GAS PUMPS AS A PERMITTED USE IN THE COMMERCIAL HIGH INTENSIVE LAND USE (CHI), C-2 GENERAL COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICT; AMENDING SECTION 117-253 (2) TO ALLOW CONVENIENCE STORES WITH AND WITHOUT GAS PUMPS AS A PERMITTED USE IN THE COMMERCIAL HIGH INTENSIVE LAND USE (CHI), C-2 GENERAL COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICT; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The following public hearings have been scheduled and will be held in the City Council Chambers, 321 Walnut Street, Green Cove Springs, to hear comments, if any, regarding said Ordinance:

Planning and Zoning: Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;
 City Council: Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;
 City Council: Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;

Please be advised that if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Council with respect to any matter considered at these scheduled public hearings, they will 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.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in this matter should contact City Hall at (904) 297-7500 at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. Hearing impaired persons may access through Florida Relay – Dial 7-1-1.

Said Ordinance is available at City Hall for review during the hours of 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday.

All interested individuals are invited to attend this public hearing.

City of Green Cove Springs
 Lilly Delvecchio, Development Services Representative
 321 Walnut Street
 Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

Steve Kennedy, City Manager

Five still in it to win it!

St. Johns Country Day School girls soccer will make an historic 12th straight Final Four journey while the St. Johns boys soccer team and three area girls basketball teams have one more game to win to travel to their respective class Final Fours next week; Oakleaf (6A), Ridgeview (5A) and St. Johns Country Day School (2A). All three teams won region semifinals on Tuesday to advance to their region finals on Fri., Feb. 17. St. Johns boys team won on Monday.

Girls Basketball

Region 1-6A Final: 1. Oakleaf hosts 7. Land O'Lakes

Oakleaf beat No. 4 Crestview 79-45 to advance.

Region 1-5A Final: 1. Mainland hosts 3. Ridgeview defeated No. 2 Fort Walton Beach 52-43 to advance.

Region 1-2A Final: 1. St. Johns Country Day School hosts 2. North Florida Educational Institute. St. Johns defeated No. 4 Munroe 58-44 on Tuesday to advance.

Soccer

In girls soccer, the St. Johns Country Day School Lady Spartans advanced to their 12th straight Final Four with a 8-0 region 1-2A final win over Mount Dora Christian on Tuesday. The Lady Spartans under head coach Mike Pickett have won 11 straight state titles in Classes 1A and 2A recently.

Fleming Island, in region 1-6A, lost a 2-1 region final to Gulf Breeze after a 1-1 regulation time finish and a Gulf Breeze goal in the second 10-minute overtime. Fleming Island beat Ponte Vedra 1-1 (4-3 PK) in penalty kicks on Sunday to advance.

St. Johns Country Day School's boys soccer team won a penalty kick 3-2 decision over St. Joseph Academy after a 0-0 regulation finish and also through two overtime periods.

Panthers

from page 25

formance to send the Raiders home for the season with a 51-44 region quarterfinal win to advance to the semifinal round.

"Pretty tough because they knew us, but we knew them as well," said Panther Head Coach Tyler Miller. "I fought myself, should I change it up and show them something new defensive wise, or stick with what worked?"

In region 4-5A, American Heritage (20-7) is the top seed while, in region 3-5A, Clearwater (16-10) is the top seed.

Gateway High of Kissimmee (22-6) is the to seed in region 2-5A.

After defeating Rickards last Friday in their district final, Ridgeview emerged ranked third in the region. In a strange twist of FHSAA line-up fate, the Raiders ranked sixth would draw the same Panthers for their region 1-5A opener.

While the Panthers would know all the tricks the Raiders would try, the Raiders also knew how Ridgeview would defend them and could adjust. The modifications around their number one player, Genesis Henry seemed to work as she was held to six points in the first meeting and had 19 tonight. The other obvious change was guarding of the Panthers scoring leader, Nia Blocton who was held to zero field goals on the evening, and hit three of five foul shots.

The Panther bench went deep tonight with six different players racking up points, led by Nacoya Blocton and backed up by Paetyn Miller. Miller was on fire all evening, flying around the court on defense and making steal after steal.

"We knew it was going to be tough playing them back-to-back and they wanted their win back," said Miller. "We went in with 100 percent and stayed focused. We got away from it a little bit, and we just talked to each other and got back into it."



CORRESPONDENT PHOTO BY RAY DIMONDA
Ridgeview senior Paetyn Miller is key shooter and playmaker for Panthers.

The other pickpocket was Emma Rayes. The five-foot, two-inch guard was all over the floor being nothing but a menace to the Raider offense. Her stat of only nine points doesn't tell the whole story as her two three-pointers were jumper cables when her team needed them, lighting the gym up and getting her teammates to pick it up a notch.

Ridgeview scored quarters of 11-11 after one and just a 23-22 lead at the half before both teams put on their track shoes as both teams were flying up and down the court, and the 14 combined fouls showed the intensity.

With around 2:00 to play, left all alone at the top of the key, Rayes opted not to pass and try again as she hit her second three, 45-42.

"It feels really good, like my team knows I have their back," said an elated Rayes. "In the fourth, they just gave me too much space, hand down, man down so I had to shoot it. I started to hang my head when the first one didn't go in early, but I just had to worry about the next play."

For the Raiders, Henry fouled out near the two minute mark to give the Panthers a breather to the end for the win.

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