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April is National Sexual Assault Month



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

Sheriff Michelle Cook is flanked by Assistant State Attorney Pam Hazel (left) and Quigley House CEO Jennifer Rodrigues while remembering April has been designated as National Sexual Assault Month.

Quigley House, law enforcement join forces to stop 'scourge' of abuse

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Law enforcement, prosecutors and advocates for survivors of sexual abuse were stoic and resolute Tuesday when they talked about April being National Sexual Assault Month.

They were steadfast in their determination to rid the community of those who prey on families, neighbors and friends. Clay County Sheriff Michelle Cook and Quigley House CEO Jennifer Rodriguez talked of resources – and consequences – of those who hurt others.

Their backdrop was an array of T-shirts with messages writ-

SEE ABUSE, 7



Crisis Line

Quigley House's 24-hour crisis line is (904) 284-0061. To report abuse, call the Sheriff's Office at (904) 264-6512 or leave a message on SaferWatch.com.



FAIR IS FOR FAMILY

Record crowds storm to Clay County Agriculture Fair

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Carl and Beverly Young took Bernice Taylor to her first fair last week. They got to the Clay County Fairgrounds nearly two hours before opening ceremonies because they wanted to enjoy every second of the day.

Despite being from Middleburg, the Youngs planned their trip five months earlier. They were first

in line – and eager to get inside – when the fair's board of directors arrived, Ashton Hernandez and Rosie Williams were honored as top fans and 94-year-old Lemmie Kirkland and fair chairman Bob Olson cut the ribbon to kick off 11 days of carnival rides, agriculture exhibits, concerts, entertainment and fair food.

The grand opening celebration accelerated when Rosie, who's 7, was asked about



SEE FAIR, 13



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Orange Park cuts deal with United Land Services for landscaping

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – The Town Council unanimously approved an authorization to award a contract for Orange Park’s landscaping services to United Land Services during its meeting on Tuesday night.

After the extended deal with Brightview Landscape Services expires at the end of May, United will begin its contract with the town on June 1, said Public Works Director Kyle Croce.

“We will sit down with United and get all of their paperwork together (in May), and then we’ll have a pre-construction, pre-maintenance meeting in May as well, for them to get ready starting June 1,” he said.

The contract will be for three years, with two or one-year renewal options at the sole option of the town.

The agreement will provide Orange

Park with 18% savings.

During the process, four landscaping agencies submitted a Request for Proposal, which was reviewed by a Selection Advisory Committee, which reviewed, ranked, and scored the proposals.

The committee, consisting of Eddie Smith, Rachel Savidge, Vada Davis, Emily Dockery and Croce, ranked United first with 474 points out of 500. Brightview was second with 419 points.

In another positive development for Orange Park, while their new contractor doesn’t live inside town limits, the company is headquartered at Green Cove Springs.

“We’re all about ‘shop local,’ and while there isn’t anybody that’s certified and capable within town limits, I’m just thrilled we got somebody from Clay County, which is as close to home as you’re going to get. I’m thrilled that we are getting (a service) that is local,” he said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF ORANGE PARK
Town of Orange Park Public Works Director Kyle Croce addressed town council shortly before the local officials unanimously voted in favor of approving a measure to reward a three-year landscaping contract to United Land Services, a company based in Green Cove Springs. The town will save 18% over a three-year period with the new deal.

Guardian ad Litem protects abandoned, abused, neglected children

By Kylie Cordell
For Clay Today

CLAY COUNTY – When a child is removed from their home due to abuse or neglect, the Department of Children and Families is responsible for caring for them and providing them with a place to live.

On any given day in the United States, approximately 440,000 children are living in foster care, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These children range from newborns to 21 and, on average, will remain in state care for more than a year and can be placed in several different homes.

Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office volunteers act on behalf of children in the courts and play a role in determining if a child is placed back with their family or in a foster home and assisting them in expressing their needs and wishes.

“We are a multi-disciplinary team that represents children in court using a Guardian ad Litem Attorney, child welfare professional, and hopefully a volunteer or pro bono attorney from the child’s community,” said 4th Circuit Guardian ad Litem Volunteer Recruiter Grant Jones. “Together, we work to represent a child’s legal interests in court and their social needs in the community.”

The Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office has more than 175 attorneys on staff and more than 200 pro-bono attorneys





Bring Smiles to Children,
by Changing their Lives.

who volunteer their services. In 2022, the Office served more than 36,000 children in Florida and had more than 11,000 volunteers.

The volunteer’s primary duty is to collect information about the child’s life for two-to-three hours a week and for 12-to-18 months.

“We give every volunteer one case.

However, there could be multiple children in one case. Let’s say a brother and sister were removed from the home, then there would be two kids in that case. Volunteers can do activities with the children to get to know them and build their trust. They are also looking around at the home environment, how their foster parents are treating them, and taking note of any unaddressed

needs the child may have,” Jones said.

As a result, children represented by a Guardian ad Litem Volunteer are more likely to receive the services and resources they and their families need, maintain stable placements while in foster care, and find safe, loving permanent homes.

“There are a lot of people that are involved, and that really is heartening,” said three-year Guardian ad Litem Volunteer Aaron Wiess. “Between seeing the kids’ successes and hearing experiences from foster parents and other people who have volunteered, it really motivates me, still motivates me.”

Weiss, a computer forensics analyst, became involved with the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office after hearing a close friend’s account of growing up in the foster care system and the impact his Guardian ad Litem had on his adulthood.

“My first case was with young teens that were similar ages to my own kids. I was able to relate to them, and I felt like I had sufficient training. My child advocate manager, who we report to, is amazing and helped me feel comfortable and confident going into those first visits,” he said.

“Anyone with a good heart and a clean background can do this. We provide all the training and support of a Guardian ad Litem Attorney and child welfare professional,” said Jones. Guardian ad Litem provides a comprehensive 30-hour train-

SEE PROTECT, 9

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|--|--|--------------|------|------------------|------|----------------------|------|--|
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Disney CEO talks 'sensitive' content with shareholders

By Gabrielle Russon
For FloridaPolitics.com

'We've recently gotten criticism ... for what some perceived to be agenda-driven content, and I'm sensitive to that, actually,' Disney CEO Bob Iger said Monday.

Iger said the company will continue to speak out on political issues affecting employees although he acknowledged he is "sensitive" to criticism Disney's content has an agenda.

Iger spoke candidly about a wide range of topics – including addressing Disney's feud with Gov. Ron DeSantis – during Monday's annual shareholders meeting.

The meet is a time where Disney shareholders can confront Iger with whatever issue is on their mind, leading to an enlightening dialogue between regular Disney fans and the head of a multibillion-dollar company.

"Is it wise for the company to take political positions to satisfy a very small portion of the people when our primary mission is entertainment, not education?" one shareholder asked.

Iger pointed to the long history of Corporate America speaking out on political issues, like during the Civil Rights Era. He said our country "is better off for that."

"As long as I'm in the job, I'm going to continue to be guided by a sense of decency and respect and trust our instincts that when we do weigh in, we weigh in because the issue is truly relevant to our business and to the people that work for us," Iger said.

One shareholder from New York made comments targeting people who identify as LGBTQ+ and complained about Disney getting involved with organizations, like the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus.

"Please turn Disney back to the apolitical fun place that it used to be," the shareholder said.

Iger defended Disney's content which he said celebrates heroes, good triumphing evil and friendship as well as the company's focus of "being accessible to all people."

But Iger acknowledged he is paying attention to criticism.

A rallying cry of conservatives has been calling Disney a "woke" corporation, heightened as DeSantis attacked Disney and Florida Republicans passed legislation to take over the Reedy Creek board that oversees Disney World's government.

"We've recently gotten criticism, as you just expressed, for what some perceived to be agenda-driven content, and I'm

SEE DISNEY, 5

OPINIONS



It will take all of us working every day to end sexual, domestic abuse

By Don Coble
Managing Editor

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – We are lucky to have someone so passionate and unrelenting running Quigley House. It's clear CEO Jennifer Rodriguez doesn't view her role as a job. It's a calling. And we should all be happy she's here.

And mad that we need her.

But as long as people are sexually and domestically abused, we will need Rodriguez. And she needs us.

It should outrage all of us that people are subject to so much physical and emotional. What kind of person hurts a woman or a child?

Quigley House is a secure home for people who are trying to escape abuse. It's a place where bruises can heal; survivors can get counseling and find support to chart a new course in life.

Going to Quigley House is a difficult choice. It often requires severing a relationship and financial support. It means working through uncertainty and rebuilding a sense of importance.

Rodriguez and her staff and investigators joined with the Clay County Sheriff's, State Attorney's and Clerk of County Courts offices Tuesday to remind everyone April is Sexual Awareness Month. The group stood shoulder to shoulder, both symbolically and literally, to assure



Don Coble

"I promise you we will be here for you. You know, working together, we can hold those responsible for sexual violence accountable. I said it before, and I'm gonna say it again: the Clay County Sheriff's Office will continue to take action needed to prevent these crimes, support our victims and hold violators accountable."

- Sheriff Michelle Cook

survivors they could help break the vicious cycle of abuse.

"I promise you we will be here for you," Sheriff Michelle Cook said. "You know, working together, we can hold those responsible for sexual violence accountable. I said it before, and I'm gonna say it again: the Clay County Sheriff's Office will continue to take action needed to prevent these crimes, support our victims and hold violators accountable."

It's difficult to understand why survivors – abuse centers don't use the word 'victims' – don't just walk away. It's not that easy, Rodriguez said, because some don't know what services and support are available. More important, many aren't aware others care.

"Cultural norms have contributed to misunderstanding and confusion around sexual violence," Rodriguez said. "This makes it difficult for survivors to wrap their minds around their own personal experience, often leading to shame and

SEE ABUSE, 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.

Ephemeral: (ah-fem-ar-awl) an adjective that means fleeting or short-lived.

"My ephemeral romance lasted a few short days."

This Week in History

Five years ago, 2018

- The Green Cove Springs City Council votes to borrow \$10.7 million to pay for an electrical system upgrade.
- The Clay County District School selected Wilkinson Junior High to be the first to become a Community Partnership School designed to provide additional services to students and residents.
- Orange Park residents express outrage at the Town Council meeting after the Board of County Commissioners vote to remove an ambulance from the town's fire department.

10 years ago, 2013

- The Orange Park Town Council votes 4-1 to select Jim Renninger as mayor.
- Grace Episcopal Day School names a classroom after longtime educator Jan Burton, who founded the school in 1953.
- Incumbent Felecia Hampshire will be in a runoff with Alan Stevenson for a seat on the Green Cove Springs City Council.

20 years ago, 2003

- Investigators use DNA evidence to link a 17-year-old rape case to David John Kaiser, who was in the Mayo Correctional Facility in Lafayette County on a sexual battery charge.
- City Council members break ground for a new Green Cove Springs City Hall at the site of the cleared Qui-Si-Sana Hotel.
- The Clay County Mock Trial team wins the Circuit 4 Mock Trial competition in Jacksonville.

30 years ago, 1993

- School administrators launch an investigation into Clay High basketball coach Lemont Jones on whether he knew about a reported sexual misconduct by five players and a student days before he allowed all of

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.

Oakleaf's Niegos serves as cryptological technician in Navy

By Megan Brown
Navy Office of Community Outreach

NORFOLK, Va. — Petty Officer 3rd Class Tyler Niegos, a native of Oakleaf, serves aboard a U.S. Navy warship operating out of Norfolk, Virginia.

Niegos joined the Navy three years ago. Today, Niegos serves as a cryptological technician technical aboard USS Forest Sherman.



"I joined the Navy because I didn't have a set direction I wanted to go in life," said Niegos.

Growing up in Middleburg, Niegos attended Oakleaf High and graduated in 2019. Skills and values similar to those found in Oakleaf and Middleburg area are similar to those required to succeed in the military.

"Middleburg taught me a lot of self-discipline," said Niegos. "My first two years of high school I didn't care and had mediocre grades. However, the last two years I had to pick it up, learning to discipline myself and not fall behind."

These lessons have helped Niegos while serving aboard USS Forest Sherman. Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers provide a wide range of warfighting capabilities in multi-threat air,

surface and subsurface environments.

A Navy destroyer is a multi-mission ship that can operate independently or as part of a larger group of ships at sea. The ship is equipped with tomahawk missiles, torpedoes, guns and a phalanx close-in weapons system.

More than 300 sailors serve aboard USS Forest Sherman. Their jobs are highly specialized, requiring both dedication and skill. The jobs range from maintaining engines to handling weaponry along with a multitude of other assignments that keep the ship mission-ready at all times, according to Navy officials.

As a member of the Navy, Niegos is part of a world-class organization focused on maintaining maritime dominance, strengthening partnerships, increasing competitive warfighting capabilities and sustaining combat-ready forces in support of the National Defense Strategy.

"My proudest Navy accomplishment is completing a NATO deployment," said Niegos. "We were working with foreign allies and places like Israel and Egypt. We haven't really tried to create a partnership with them before. It was fun."

"I would like to thank my dad, Michael, my sister, Ashley and my friend, Jose Saba," added Niegos. "I want to thank them for being supportive and for always reassuring me when I feel overburdened."

Disney

from page 4

sensitive to that actually," Iger said. "I'm very serious about that. It should not be agenda-driven. It should be entertainment-driven. That should be the goal of all of our stories."

Iger went on to say that content should be focused on children.

"While I know we're just never going to please everyone all the time, we should be sensitive to the fact that parents have different levels of comfort with the content that is delivered to their children. I want parents to be able to trust the content that we're creating for their children. We're

committed to delivering age-appropriate content for family audiences while also telling stories that reflect the world around us."

Gabrielle Russon is an award-winning journalist based in Orlando. She covered the business of theme parks for the Orlando Sentinel. Her previous newspaper stops include the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, Toledo Blade, Kalamazoo Gazette and Elkhart Truth as well as an internship covering the nation's capital for the Chicago Tribune. For fun, she runs marathons. She gets her training from chasing a toddler around. Contact her at gabriellerusson@gmail.com or on Twitter @GabrielleRusson.

History

from page 4

them to play in a regional basketball tournament game.

- Green Cove Springs City Manager Bill Sutton resigns.

- Three neighborhoods are evacuated in Green Cove Springs after propane gas leaks from a valve at Sawyer Gas Storage on Center Street.

40 years ago, 1983

- Orange Park's Liane May and Erin McKenney will represent Clay County at the Scottish Highland Games.

- The Green Cove Springs City Council votes to deny a request by Chessco Industries to hook into the city's sewage treatment plant.

- Business owners learn the Florida Department of Transportation plans to enforce rules that state anyone erecting a sign on state and federal roadways must purchase a permit in advance.

Abuse

from page 4

guilt. At Quigley House, we work to educate survivors on the dynamics of sexual assault and provide intervention to heal. So survivors can rebuild their lives and have a healthy and safe future."

Cook said a month-long to bring awareness to sexual assault wasn't enough. It should be something everyone should commit to every day.

Rows of colored T-shirts were hung from a line and along the fence at Quigley's management headquarters Tuesday. They were a sad reminder of the torturous pain inflicted. Survivors were encouraged to write a message against their aggressors and for their recoveries as part of the healing process.

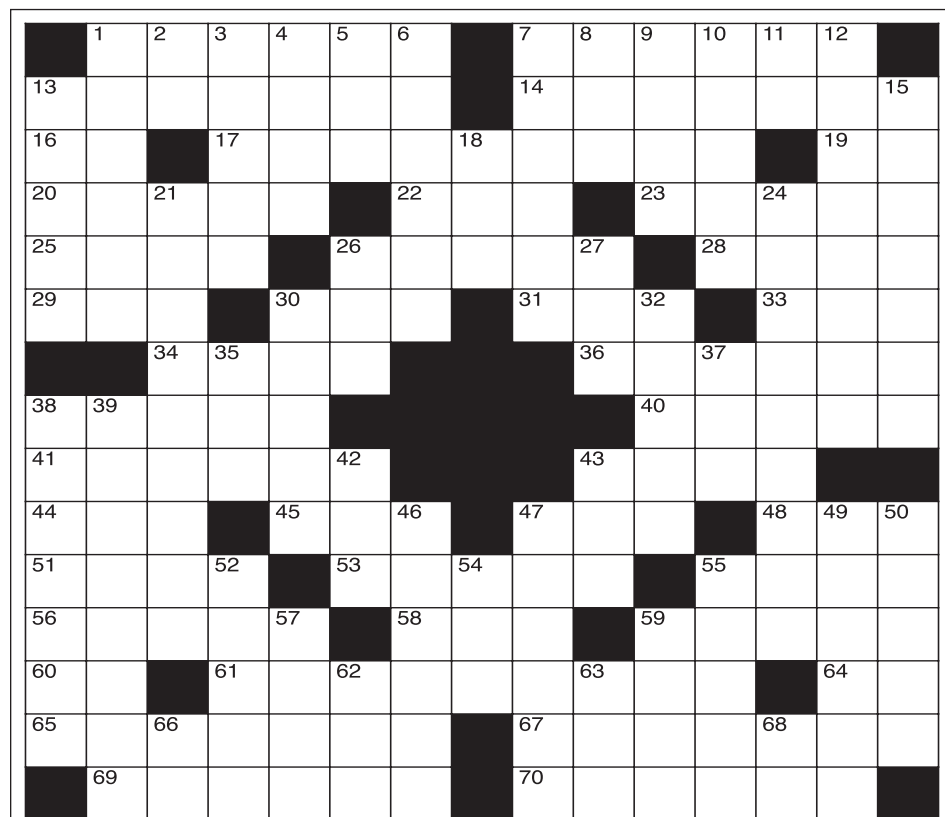
Tiny hands wrote some of the messages. Others were painted on smaller shirts. You quickly realize this behavior must stop.

"We recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress in children, families and caregivers by providing education on trauma, increasing coping skills and incorporating these skills into programs and policies. In other words, we

are here for survivors," Rodriguez said. "Today, we stand together, hoping that survivors who are in need will call our helpline (904-284-0061) to learn more about programs and services and the options they have after an assault."

We must stand with Quigley House, law enforcement and prosecutors as a community. It will take all of us to end this madness. We can reach out to a victim and let them know we are willing to help. We can hug them and tell them we love them. But they must take the biggest step by contacting Quigley House or the sheriff's office.

And when they do, they will be comforted by a fortress of support, protection and compassion.



CLUES ACROSS

- Colas
- Single-celled animals
- The rear car of a train
- Endangered
- It cools your home
- Helper
- 'The First State'
- More aged
- Partner to cheese
- Type of wrap
- From a distance
- Satisfies
- 'Dallas Buyers' Club actor Jared
- God of battle (Scandinavian)
- Cooking utensil
- Soviet Socialist Republic
- Able to perform
- Big man on campus
- Second epoch of the Tertiary period
- Porticos
- Alban and Peter are two
- Gets up
- Humble request for help
- One-thousandth of an inch (abbr.)
- Unhappy
- Hint or indication
- A way to plead

- Digits
- Broadway actress Daisy
- Jewish calendar month
- Author Gore __
- Peacock network
- White poplar
- Promotional material
- A period of calm
- Take too much
- Emit energy
- Something you can take
- Mended with yarn
- Inconsistent

CLUES DOWN

- Calm down
- One quintillion bytes (abbr.)
- One who pretends
- Hang glide
- Distinctive practice
- Mariner
- Peaks
- Queens ballplayer
- Geological times
- Twofold
- Atomic #13
- Tranquillizing
- Metric weight unit
- Indicates

- Unwanted rodent
- Partly cooked with hot water
- One who can be recommended
- Resembles a bag or pouch
- Midway between south and southeast
- Sets up for a photo
- California white oak
- More (Spanish)
- After B
- Decorated tea urn
- Island
- Car mechanics group
- Wordplay joke
- Cut a rug
- Prickly plant
- Speech in praise of a deceased person
- European buzzard
- Influential linguist
- West African languages
- Siskel's partner
- Skinny
- Oblong pulpit
- Consumed
- Small, mischievous sprite
- Powerful lawyer
- Indicates position



STAFF PHOTOS BY LEESA TILLMAN

Fair art that's high in cholesterol, creativity

Couple turn tubs of butter into lip-smacking sculptures

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Amongst the typical fare of funnel cakes, chicken tenders, pizza, barbecue, collection of Midway rides at Clay County Agricultural Fair, fair-goers can see an utterly unorthodox attraction if they visit Jim Victor and Marie Pelton's Food Sculpture.

While others are deep frying sticks of butter or dipping shrimp into melted bowls of goodness, Victor and Pelton are transforming blocks of butter into works of art.

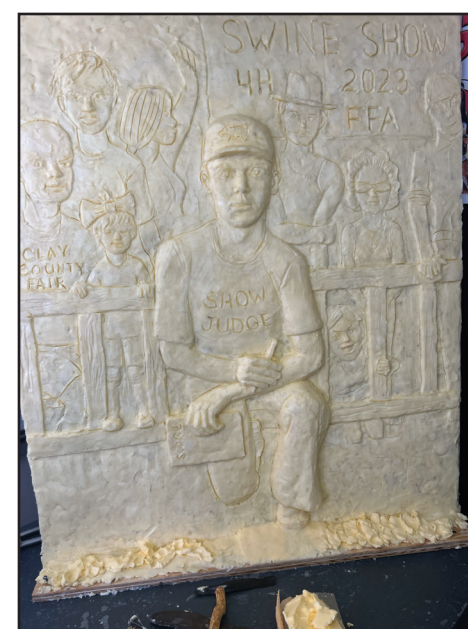
Their exhibit depicts a scene at the fair, including a judge, spectators and a girl with a contest pig she is attempting to control to display showmanship.

But one burning question remains: whether their collection of churned cream will survive or melt away from the hot sun.

Victor runs two air conditioners on full blast with one hand and keeps a thermostat handy in the other. He said tempera-



tures need to remain between 50-60 degrees inside the small yellow trailer where they create their art to keep the sculptures at optimum condition.



"Sometimes it can be a little challenging because the weather is warm here," he said.

Usually, the pair operates inside an air-conditioned building, so their temporary space at the County Fair provides yet another challenge for the sculptors. A typical sculpture consists of as many as 4,000 sticks of butter.

"The sun is hitting us, which is causing us a little bit of a problem. When the sun goes down, it cools off and brings everything back to normal again. We're getting by," Victor said.

The fight will continue when the Florida sun wakes back in the morning, but likewise, the Philadelphia-based pair will fight back.

But he said Victor and Pelton are willing to go even further in their battle to beat the heat.

Victor said the food sculpture-loving pair seeks to add more sculptures to present at their exhibit during the fair's final day.

"We keep adding stuff. Next Saturday (April 8), we (plan) to have another figure of a little child, another little pig and maybe even some other items as well," he said.

The Sunshine State may have second thoughts, but the Philadelphia-based artists have several years of experience.

Victor has been creating butter sculptures since 1995, while Pelton has been going on strong since 2000.

Cheese and chocolate aren't off the menu, either.

Victor and Pelton have also specialized in those two foods during their near half-century combined experience.

"To do this, you have to be skilled in sculpture. We have both studied and taught sculpture for years," Victor said.

Visitors can access the small "studio" by following the main pathway behind the large grandstands of the Clay County Cattlemen's Arena.

But get to the attraction soon because the sculptures might melt away sooner than you think.



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Abuse

from page 1

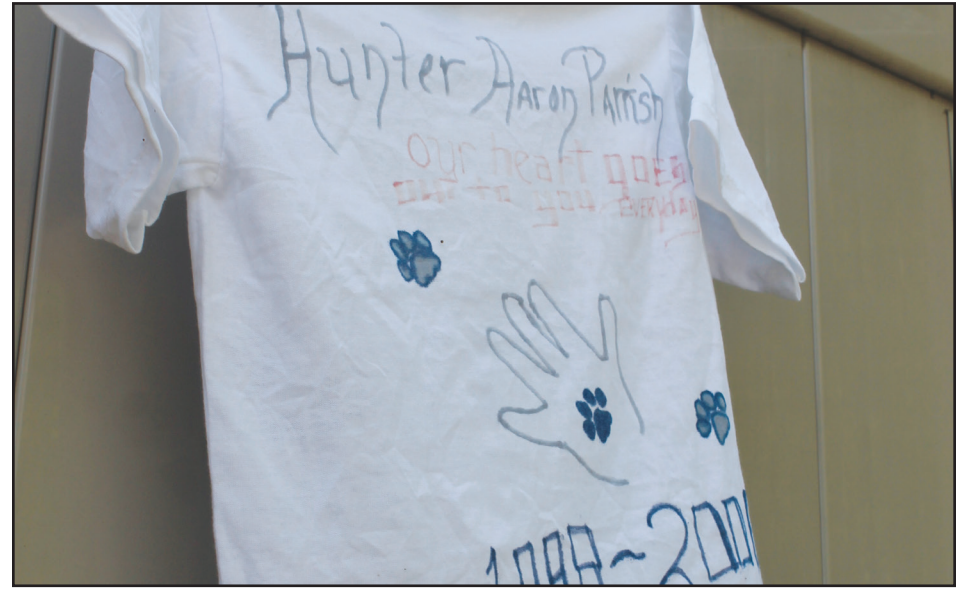
Their backdrop was an array of T-shirts with messages written by survivors and friends. The color of the shirt categorized the crime, with white representing someone who died in an assault.

"It is a time for us to join together to prevent sexual assaults by educating our community and focusing on how the scourge of sexual violence impacts everyone in our community," Cook said. "I, along with everyone standing here today, know that a single month isn't enough to address the widespread problem of sexual assault. However, it does provide an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the issue, focus our support on the survivors and energize our prevention efforts."

Three of the T-shirts draped on the fence and on a clothesline at Quigley House's headquarters were white. They reminded everyone of the senseless and brutal outcome of acts of terror.

One was made by someone who remembered Brittany Nicole Cherubini, a 2-year-old girl murdered by her mother's boyfriend.

"In April, we focus on building awareness around sexual assault and breaking the stigmas and biases that surround the subject," Rodriguez said. "Cultural norms have contributed to misunderstanding and confusion around sexual violence. This makes it difficult for survivors to wrap their minds around their own personal experiences, of-



White T-shirts are reminders of people who were killed by their aggressors, including 2-year-old Brittany Nicole Cherubini, who was murdered by her mother's boyfriend. Quigley House and the sheriff's office said they need everyone's help stop sexual abuse.

ten leading to shame and guilt. We quickly work to educate survivors on the dynamics of sexual assault and provide intervention to heal so survivors can rebuild their lives and have a healthy and safe future."

Quigley House is the county's only dual-certified domestic violence and sexual assault center. It provides a haven for victims as they try to rebuild their lives. It's a place where they can get counseling, education and other tools to find a new path in life.

Cook said her department, investigators from the Attorney General's Office, and Quigley House officials would relentlessly pursue justice.

"Every day, the men and women of the Clay County Sheriff's Office focused our attention on sexual assaults, especially our investigators and our special victims and Internet Crimes Against Children units," she said. "They have a job that isn't easy to stomach, but they do it every single day. And they do it exceptionally well.

"Our victims advocates work countless hours to bring the support needed for survivors. We must work together to educate our community about preventing sexual assault, sexual violence. We must work together to support survivors and to speak out against the harmful attitudes and actions that may

promote sexual violence by partnering with Quigley House to help bring resources and healing to victims of these terrible, terrible acts."

Cook said making the public aware of sexual abuse should be a year-long project, not just focused on April.

"This is something that we need to be talking about and working towards ending every single day of the year," she said. "If you are a victim or you know of a victim, we're asking you to please come forward, and I promise you this team right here that standing with us, we are here to support you."

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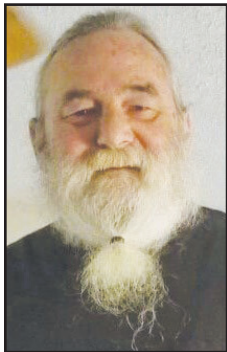
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Obituaries

Samuel DeWayne Huff

It is with heavy hearts that the family of Samuel DeWayne Huff (64) of Middleburg, FL shares that he closed his eyes for the last time on March 14, 2023. Often it was the bearded biker look that caught the attention of others, only to later be captivated by the warmth of his sweet soul. He always gave more than he received.



Samuel DeWayne Huff

After his retirement from Ironworkers Local 597, he found joy in simplicity. He was a lover of sweet tea, onion sausage and the freedom he felt while riding his Harley. His family was what his world revolved around, and he cherished every moment spent with them. To know him, was to love him and to be loved by him, was a blessing. He will be dearly missed by many.

He leaves behind so many who loved him immensely: Children; Aaron (Helen), Julie Ann (Dustin) and DeAnn (Derrick); Grandchildren; Leland, Grace, and Sophie. His sister, best friend and confidant Susan Harmon and brother Chris (Denielle) Huff. Nieces; Amy (Tim), April, Mallory (Chris) and Dreama (Steve). Nephews; Eric and Matthew. Great nieces; Kari, Kayla (Shawn), Karly (Jonathan), Lauren (Casey), Josie (Ray), Emilee, Katelynn (Hunter) and Brianna. Great nephews; Chris, Justin (Kaitlynn), Reese (Amanda) and Julian. Wife; Kathy Huff. Numerous great-great nieces and great-great nephews. His biker brothers, iron worker brothers and anyone who was blessed enough to call him friend. A celebration of life service for "Huff" to be announced later. All his family and friends will be welcome.

Dixie Lee Koch

On Sunday, March 5, 2023, Dixie Lee Koch, loving mother, sister, and grandmother, passed away at age eighty-four. Born to Ellen Mae Krambeer Koopman and G. H. Koopman in Postville, Iowa, Dixie was the sixth of eight children. Dixie married her husband, John Koch, in 1959 and they were married for fifty-six years. Together they raised four children. Dixie Loved her family more than anything and was proud to be the matriarch of a family that included seven grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.



Dixie Lee Koch

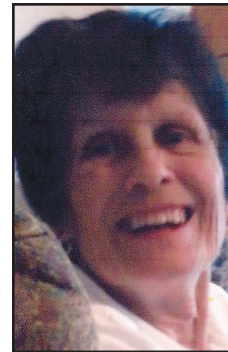
For many years, Dixie was an avid seamstress and quilter. She made Halloween costumes for her children and grandchildren that were the envy of the neighborhood. She also made beautiful quilts, many of which were donated to those in need.

Dixie had a generous heart and knew that it was important to give to those in need, even if that meant making do with a little less. Her love was limitless. She is preceded in death by her beloved husband, John, her infant son in 1973, and her son, Eric and her brothers Dean Koopman, James Koopman and Louis (Bud) Koopman, and sisters Lois Wahls and Geraldine Cook. She is survived by her brother Arvin Koopman, and sister Cora Hansen, her son Edward "Boo" Koch, her daughters Lisa Koch and Melody Keene, her grandchildren Bethany Koch, Erica Markley, Victoria Keene, Daniel Delano, Nick Koch, Priscilla Keene and Callie Koch, as well as seven great grandchildren. We love you to

the moon and back grandma, and way more than the Buckman Bridge.

Clarine Coleman

Clarine Coleman died on March 27, of Natural Causes. She was a Proud 90 year old. After marrying Jacob Coleman they had three children. Clarine was born in Alabama and worked as a Phone Operator at Southern Bell. Clarine was a Real Southern Bell.



Clarine Coleman

After retiring in Orange Park Florida with her husband and children. She worked and retired from Barnett Bank after twenty years of Service. She loved and missed the Barnett Bank Picnic's. Clarine's favorite sport was bowling. She loved shopping and heading out in the car. She was an amazing Gardner. She had the best Green Thumb on the block.

She is preceded in death by her husband Jacob F. Coleman, Her daughter Donna Jean Thompson, Her son Larry A Coleman and her Grand Daughter Brooke Lynne Bedit. She is now at peace with her Lord. Her last surviving child is Karen Lynne Bedit. Services will be announced shortly.

Ronald Batten

Ronald Batten, retired auto executive, loving husband and father of three, died of cancer Wednesday, March 22, at the age of 78. Born into humble beginnings as the youngest of nine children in Bryan, TX, Ron grew to be a four-sport athlete at Stephen F. Austin High School and a cadet at his beloved Texas A&M University. While still a



Ronald Batten

19-year-old college student, he married his childhood sweetheart, Jacqueline Mallard, and the two would stay together for the rest of his life.

Ron started his career at Ford Motor Company in Memphis, TN, before joining Dobbs Family Automotive where he was trained in dealership management. The Batten family moved to Jacksonville, FL, in 1978 where Ron served as General Manager at Westside Toyota before founding Orange Park Toyota in 1982. He went on to manage several other dealerships in Buffalo, NY, Jackson, MS, and Sugarland, TX, before returning to the Jacksonville area to be Operations Director for the Garber Auto Mall in Green Cove Springs.

Ron loved football and was a passionate fan of his alma mater, Texas A&M, as well as the Florida Gators. He was active in the community as a Charter Member and former Club President of the Rotary Club of Orange Park, a parishioner and former Treasurer of the Orange Park United Methodist Church and a former President of the Daniel's Landing Eagle Harbor Community Association.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Jacqueline Mallard Batten; three children, Carlton Batten, Sarah Batten Crocker and Joel Batten; and three grandsons, Jesse, Brooks and Cooper Batten.

Donald Glenn Miller, Jr

Donald Glenn Miller, Jr., 54, of Jacksonville, FL, passed away March 26, 2023

Please sign the family's online guestbook 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.



SEE OBITUARIES, 9

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Calendar

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

CLAY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE: will meet on April 6 at 10 a.m. in the Planning Department Conference Room, third floor of the Administration Building, 477 Houston St. in Green Cove Springs.

CLAY COUNTY AGRICULTURE FAIR: will continue on April 6 from 4-11 p.m. at the Clay County Fairgrounds, 2493 State Road 16 West in Green Cove Springs. For tickets, visit claycountyfair.org.

CLAY COUNTY AGRICULTURE FAIR: will continue on April 7 from 10 a.m.-midnight at the Clay County Fairgrounds, 2493 State Road 16 West in Green Cove Springs. For tickets, visit claycountyfair.org.

MONTGOMERY CENTER FISH FRY FRIDAYS: will be on April 7 from 4:30-7:30 at the Montgomery Center, 88 SE 75th St. in Starke. The fundraiser includes cheese grits, collard greens, scratch-made hush-puppies, drink and dessert. The cost is \$15 for fish dinner, \$20 for fish and shrimp and children \$8.

CLAY COUNTY AGRICULTURE FAIR: will continue on April 8 from 10 a.m.-midnight at the Clay County Fairgrounds, 2493 State Road 16 West in Green Cove Springs. For tickets, visit claycountyfair.org.

FOOD TRUCK FRIDAY: will be on April 7 from 5-9:30 p.m. at Spring Park in Green Cove Springs. There will be several food trucks and live music by Big Engine. Bring your own chair and cooler to the free event.

CLAY COUNTY AGRICULTURE FAIR: will continue on April 7 from 10 a.m.-mid-

night at the Clay County Fairgrounds, 2493 State Road 16 West in Green Cove Springs. For tickets, visit claycountyfair.org.

SHEN YUN: will return on April 8 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. to the Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Dr. in Orange Park. Tickets, which range from \$80-\$200, are available at ShenYun.com/FL.

CLAY COUNTY AGRICULTURE FAIR: will conclude on April 8. Gates open at 11 a.m. and close 9 p.m. at the Clay County Fairgrounds, 2493 State Road 16 West in Green Cove Springs. For tickets, visit claycountyfair.org.

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE: will be celebrated on April 9 at 6:30 a.m. at Keystone Beach, 565 S. Lawrence Blvd., Keystone Heights. Rev. Melanie Fierbaugh of Keystone Heights Methodist Church will conduct the service. Martin Coffee Company will serve coffee and doughnuts and juice will be provided by Hitchcock's.

CLAY COUNTY PUBLIC WORKSHOP: to discuss Conservation Lands Program will be on April 10 at 6 p.m. at Keystone Beach Pavilion, 5654 S. Lawrence Blvd. in Keystone Heights. Residents are encouraged to talk about their priorities regarding the conservation of land and natural resources.

DOLLARS 4 TIC SCHOLARS: will be April 11 from 4-9 p.m. at Miller's Ale House, 1756 Wells Road, Orange Park. A portion of each tab will be donated to scholarship fund for students with Tourette Syndrome.

MUNICIPAL SUPER TUESDAY: is April 11 from 7 a.m.-7 p.m. The only poll open in Clay County is for Orange Park residents at Town Hall, 2042 Park Ave.

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: will meet on April 11

at 4 p.m. in the Administration Building, fourth floor, 477 Houston St. in Green Cove Springs.

PENNEY RETIREMENT CENTER: will celebrate its 10th Governor's Gold Seal Award for Excellence in long-term care on April 13 at 11 a.m. at The Pavilion for Health Care, 3465 Caroline Blvd.

CLAY COUNTY PUBLIC WORKSHOP: to discuss Conservation Lands Program will be on April 13 at 6 p.m. at the Middleburg Public Library, 2245 Aster Ave. Residents are encouraged to talk about their priorities regarding the conservation of land and natural resources.

CLAY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE: will meet on April 13 at 10 a.m. in the Planning Department Conference Room, third floor of the Administration Building, 477 Houston St. in Green Cove Springs.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS TORCH RUN: will be on April 14 and start at 10 a.m. at the Publix on County Road 220 on Fleming

Island.

KENNY CHESNEY: will bring his "I Go Back" Tour with special guest Kelsea Ballerini on April 14 at 7:30 p.m. at Daily's Place Amphitheater, 1 Daily's Place, in Jacksonville. Tickets, which start at \$89, are available at ticketmaster.com.

SPRING CRAFT AND VENDOR FESTIVAL: The Keystone Heights Junior Woman's Club will be offered on April 15 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Women's Club, 6747 Womans Club Dr.

MARKET IN THE PARK: will be on April 15 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Green Cove Springs City Hall, 321 Walnut St.

CLARKE HOUSE: will be open for tours on April 16 from 2-4 p.m. Clarke House is located at 1039 Kingsley Ave. in Orange Park.

SALVATION ARMY'S EMPTY BOWL: fundraising event will be on April 18 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Orange Park United Methodist Church's Family Life Center, 2042 Reed St.

Obituaries

from page 8

Robert "Bobby" Guice

Robert "Bobby" Guice, 81, of Green Cove Springs, FL, passed away March 29, 2023.

Please sign the family's online guestbook 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.

Richard Lee Medcalf

Richard Lee Medcalf, 79, passed away Saturday, April 1st, 2023.

Please sign the family's online guestbook at www.nauglefuneral.com Arrangements under the care of Naugle Funeral Home & Cremation Services, 1203 Hendricks Ave. Jacksonville, FL 32207. (904)396-1611.

Protect

from page 2

ing that involves online learning and in-person mentorship accompanied by a child welfare professional. Potential

volunteers must complete an application and background check before an interview. If approved after the interview process, individuals will then complete the 30 hours of training.

Once approved, volunteer child advocates are paired with a Guardian ad Litem Child Advocate Manager who will accompany them to their first visitation and introduce them to others on the case.

Volunteers are also involved in court hearings for their cases. They can advocate for therapy, tutoring, after-school electives, and various other support services," he said.

However, it doesn't come without challenges.

"You don't always know what to expect on your first case. It can be hard," said Jeff Richie, a three-year Guardian ad Litem Volunteer and long-time Bikers Against Child Abuse member. "These kids get moved around a lot, and you're the only

one that is stable in their life."

The goal is for every volunteer to remain with the child to the end of the case. They should strive to stay connected throughout the process, sometimes even after the child has been reunited with their biological or new family.

"A lot of the reward has come from after the cases are over," Weiss said. "Their adoptive parents will send pictures and let me know how the kids are doing, and it's just so reassuring."

Richie agreed.

"I visited yesterday, and the kids have changed for the better. Seeing that change in themselves is the most rewarding part of it," he said.

If you want to make a difference in people's lives, especially abused and neglected children, visit www.guardianadlitem.org or call (904) 535-7152 to learn how you can get involved in volunteering.

"We have several hundred volunteers, and twice as many children at any given moment need a volunteer advocate to join their child advocacy team," Jones said. "It is a gratifying experience, so I urge anyone thinking about volunteering to contact us."



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Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center opens at Baptist Clay

For Clay Today

FLEMING ISLAND – Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center is bringing world-renowned cancer care by opening a new satellite location on the Baptist Medical Center Clay campus.

The Baptist MD Anderson satellite will offer patients access to medical oncology, radiation oncology and infusion services. Breast surgery services soon will be available in late 2023.

Dr. Kerwin Cumberbatch, a medical oncologist, and Dr. Neenad Shah, a radiation oncologist, will join the Baptist MD Anderson multidisciplinary team dedicated to serving patients at the new facility. The pair are both fellowship-trained and have over 20 years of combined experience in treating cancer. Dr. Mona Janfaza, a fellowship-trained breast surgical oncologist, is set to join the team at Baptist Clay in 2023.

“Having the caliber of Baptist MD Anderson, an affiliation between Baptist Health and MD Anderson Cancer Center, right here in Clay County, is a tremendous advantage to our residents, who often have to travel for this level of expertise,” said Darin Roark, hospital president of Baptist Clay. “Now, patients can access leading-edge technology, therapies and a multidisciplinary team in their neighborhood.”



The Baptist MD Anderson satellite will offer patients access to medical oncology, radiation oncology and infusion services. Breast surgery services soon will be available in late 2023.

Baptist MD Anderson is a partnership between Baptist Health, the region’s most preferred healthcare provider, and MD Anderson, one of the world’s largest and most respected cancer centers in Houston, Texas. The addition of Baptist MD Anderson at Baptist Clay will be Baptist MD Anderson’s third site in the Jacksonville area, with locations on the Baptist Jacksonville and Baptist South campuses.

“We will mirror the highly coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to care pio-

neered by MD Anderson. Baptist MD Anderson at Baptist Clay will provide adult patients access to the same advanced technologies, treatment protocols and care options as they would receive in Texas,” said Dr. Joe B. Putnam Jr., FACS, medical director of Baptist MD Anderson. “Every patient will benefit from a group of cancer care experts with experience in the patient’s specific type of cancer.”

Additionally, a new state-of-the-art linear accelerator is coming to the Bap-

tist Clay campus in spring 2023. This advanced technology uses radiation therapy to shrink cancer tumors without destroying the surrounding tissue. This year, there are estimated to be 162,000 new cases of cancer diagnosed in Florida, with Florida second only to California, with the highest rate of new cases a year in the United States.

According to the National Cancer Institute, the cancer incidence rate in Clay County is 36.1% higher than the statewide rate and 47.2% higher than the national average.

Baptist MD Anderson at Baptist Clay is at Baptist HealthPlace at Fleming Island off Village Square Parkway. The new health and wellness center features a variety of other specialties, including primary care, cardiology, urology, neurology, a walk-in lab and a women’s imaging center.

“It is gratifying to see how our presence has gone from a single site on our Baptist Jacksonville campus to Baptist South and now Baptist Clay,” said RN LeeAnn Mengel, vice president of Baptist MD Anderson. “Part of our growth involves enhancing our ability to treat more patients, and we plan to continue expanding our access points to better serve the entire region.”

For more information about Baptist MD Anderson, visit BaptistMDAnderson.com.

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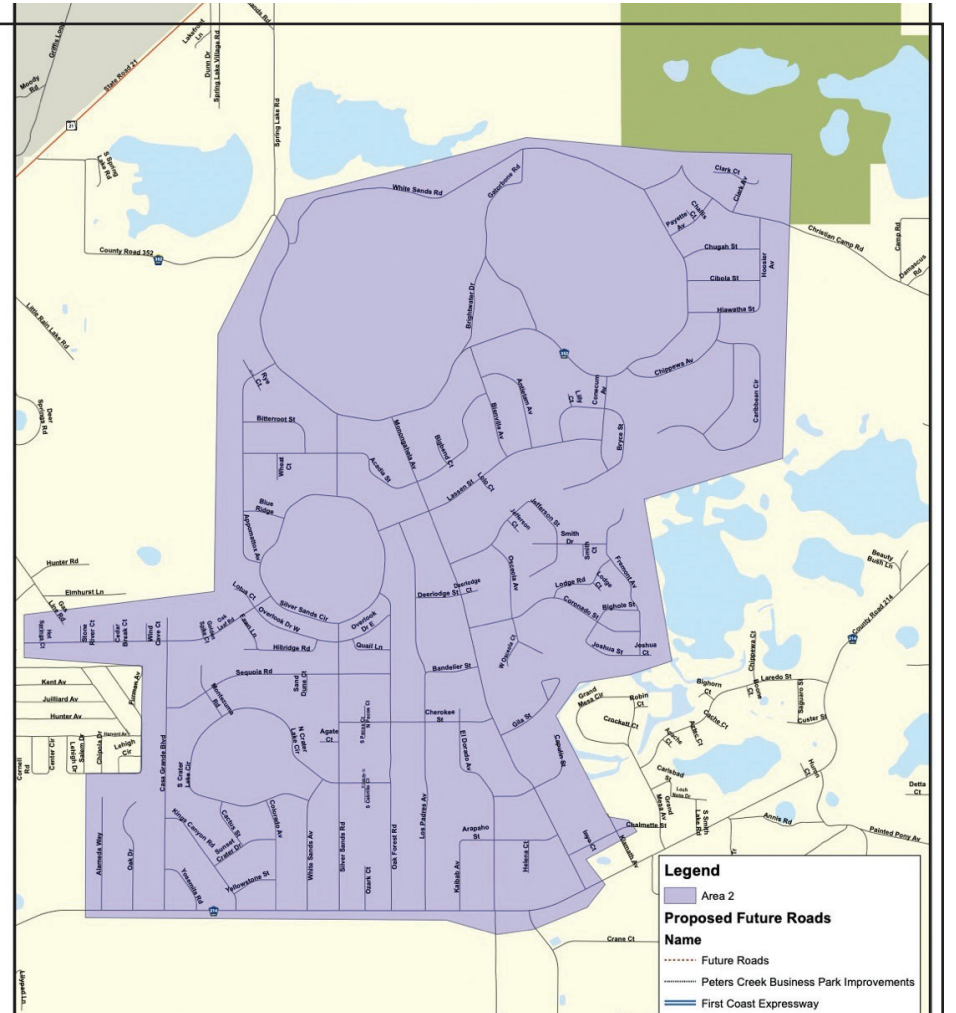
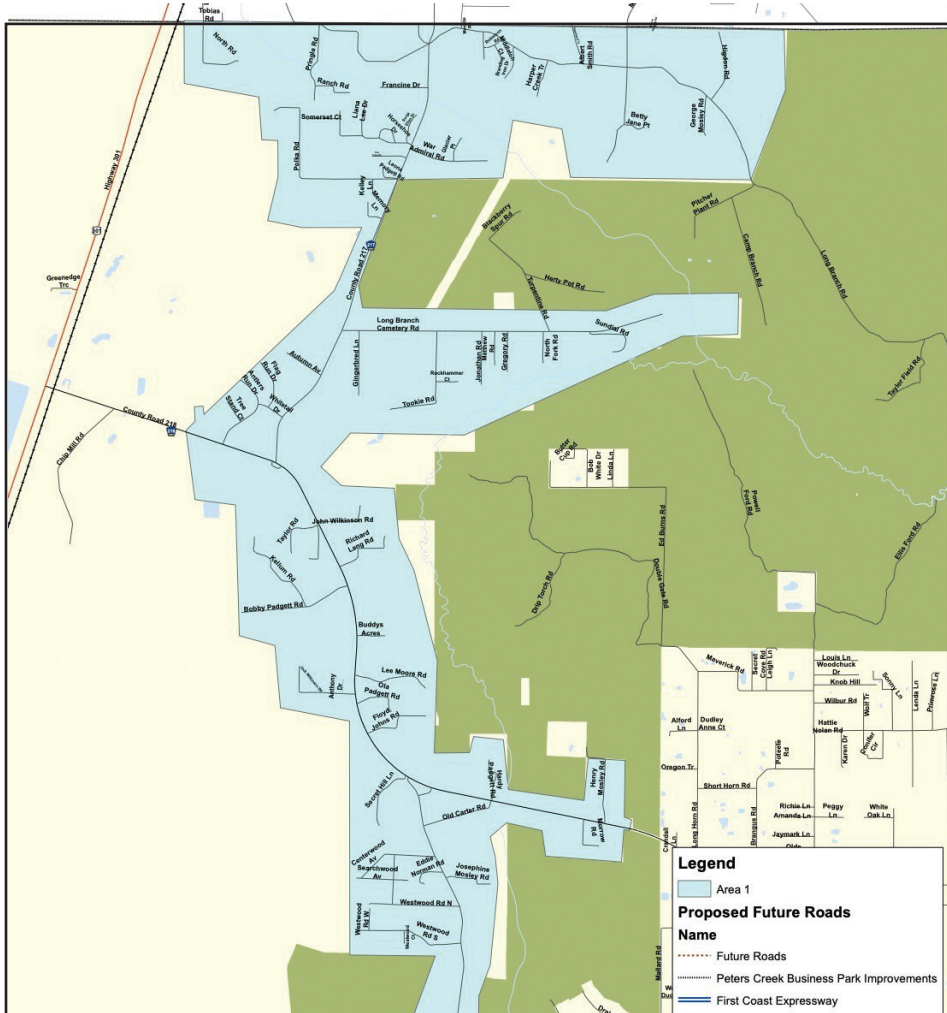
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Left, Phase 1 of the Clay County Broadband Project is nearly done, and residents will soon be able to sign up for service in Phase 2. Plans were approved to improve internet connection in rural areas of Clay Hill and Keystone Heights with the approval of County Commissioners in 2022.

Program helps underserved residents log into broadband service

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – Residents in rural areas of Clay County are now connecting to faster broadband internet service.

The Board of County Commissioners voted last year to approve a significant measure with Comcast to extend broadband service into areas with either spotty or no internet service.

In a recent interview with Clay Today, Commission Chair Betsy Condon, whose district includes Keystone Heights and Clay Hill, provided an update on Phase 1 and Phase 2 portions of the project, which will be owned, operated and maintained by Comcast.

The Phase 1 portion of the project will provide internet service to the northwest portion of Clay Hill and the area of Keystone Heights north of County Road 214 and State Road 21 toward McRae. Many of the homes in that area now have service.

Condon said by April 10, the project connecting Clay residents to the much-needed essential service will have reached approximately 1,200 homes in the Clay Hill area and another 600-to-800 homes in the southern part of the county.

Condon said only about 30% of homes in the Keystone Heights area were connected during Phase 1 due to permitting delays with Clay Electric Cooperative lines.

“It is a little bit behind schedule and (that) is in a more compacted area,” she said.

Condon maintains the first phase is still

on track for timely completion.

“I think it’s been on track. Keystone Heights does not have as many homes, but it is a much more rural area that has been underserved. The whole project is expected to be right on schedule,” she said.

The commissioner said Comcast had honored its commitment dates well within the time frames.

Meanwhile, the landing page for the Clay County Broadband Project on the county website maintains that the Phase 1 portion of the project is “completed.”

Condon said Phase 2, which will encompass more of the Keystone Heights area, is set for an official timeline of two years, although she hopes it will be completed ahead of schedule.

After all future improvements, including Phase 3, are done, 96% to 99% of the county will have access fast, affordable, high-speed internet, Condon said.

She said that contract language for Phase 2 is being completed “as we speak,” which would then go through the engineering, construction, and permitting process. Comcast was awarded grants for Phase 2 of the project through the State Department of Economic Opportunity, Condon said.

As the process unfolds, county commissioners continue to come across some roadblocks that come with the unique circumstances of connecting rural areas to the world wide web. For example, Condon

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SEE SERVICE, 14



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

Supervisor of Elections Chris Chambless (back) is joined by five of 17 active Clay County voters who are at least 100 years old during a special ceremony at Penney Retirement Community Tuesday. Five of the 17, including Eleanor Pendley (top), Margaret Walsh and Lisa Williams, were able to attend and receive citations - and gratitude - from several county officials.

Municipal Super Tuesday, April 11

At Orange Park Town Hall
Kenny Radwanski vs. Doug Bennefield for Seat 2 on Town Council

At Keystone Heights*
Four amendment changes to city charter

1. To amend the charter to allow a majority of the city council to set the maximum purchasing amount for bids.
 2. To prohibit city council members from interfering with routine operations by the city manager.
 3. To change the way the mayor's role is determined. Currently, residents vote for four people on the council and the mayor, but the amendment would change it to the election of five city council members, with the council selecting who would serve as mayor.
 4. To create a procedure in the city charter to censure or reprimand a council member for illegal or serious violations of city policy.
- (* Voting only by mail)

Centenarian voters even more committed to casting their ballots

By Don Coble
 don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The first four times Eleanor Pendley voted for president, she didn't have the benefit of television. She relied on studying a candidate, reading the newspaper and listening to the radio.

Her first presidential election was for Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944; she hasn't missed an election since. In fact, she recently voted early in the Municipal Super Tuesday in Orange Park for a seat on the town council, and she plans to participate in her 21st presidential General Election in 2024.

Pendley was one of 17 county residents at least 100 years old and participated in every election. Five attended a special ceremony hosted by Supervisor of Elections Chris Chambless to acknowledge their contributions.

"One of the things our youth, unfortunately, believes is why is it important to vote? My vote doesn't count," he said.

"I assure you, the only vote that doesn't count is the one that's not cast. You will never get your representation unless you get into the game.

"I am certainly encouraged by the individuals we recognize today."

Pendley was joined by Claire Bryant, Winifred Mills, Margaret Walsh and Lila Williams. All received special boutonnieres donated by Park Avenue Florist and Gift Shop in Orange Park.

Now 101, Pendley said voting is "a privilege and a responsibility for each American to be involved in the process that we equate with our freedom and right to be heard."

She also said she tries to know each candidate. "I keep track of them. I want to know what their interests are, what their public life is like. There are many things to have to take in," she said.

Pendley said meeting Roosevelt made an impression.

"We traveled to the site of the Grand Coulee Dam (in Washington) to hear newly-elected President Franklin Roosevelt announce the building of the low dam," she said. "My brother had been asked, or he volunteered, to meet the train to pick up Sen. (Clarence) Dill at the train when it arrived with him and President Roosevelt. It was a very big day for our family to travel from our farm to Grand Coulee for this occasion. I'm sure this affected my responsibility for being a voter and impressed on me what elected officials could do to change lives."

Bryant, also 101, said the election she remembers the most was her first when she lived in Washington, D.C., and she voted for FDR.

"Vote in every election, not just in national elections," Bryant said. "Local elections have more impact on you."

Tuesday's election will determine who



wins the Orange Park Town Council seat and whether Keystone Heights will amend its city charter. Votes in Orange Park can be cast at Town Hall, while all ballots in Keystone Heights were submitted by mail.

Even at 101, Williams said her future depends on her vote. She also said her most-memorable presidential election was in 1960 when she got her first television.

Walsh, 101, had advice for younger voters, saying everyone should understand the Bill of Rights and the Constitution to understand how the republic works.



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33rd Craft Festival

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The festival time is 8:30-3:30pm. Proceeds are donated to missions. We hear from other crafters, this show is one of the best and will be held on **October 7, 2023 at 11270 San Jose Blvd., Jacksonville, Fl. 32223.**



Fair

from page 1

her favorite part of the fair.

"I like the rides. I like the food," she bel-
lowed. "Can we go in now?"

Once the gates opened, fans flooded the
fairgrounds, creating new logistical chal-
lenges to organizers.

A year after rain and floods essentially
washed out the two of the first three days,
fair-goers came back in record numbers
this year.

"We are on track to break the (overall
attendance) record," said fair executive di-
rector Tasha Hyder.

In fact, attendance was up by more than
42,000 compared to the first four days of
last year's fair, Hyder said.

"The important thing to remember is
last year we had a lot of rain," Hyder said.
"We lost a Saturday (due to flooded parking
lots). Opening day was rainout. This year
we've got beautiful weather and we're go-
ing to keep on truckin'."

Although the single-day record is
25,976 fans on March 29, 2019, records
were broken for a Sunday (23,475) and
Tuesday (4,767).

"Traditionally, our final weekend is our
biggest days," Hyder said. "Our final week-
end should be interesting. Of course, with
that, we have to find space for everybody.
I know we ran out of handicap parking on
Sunday, but we made a quick adjustment
and added a new row. As cars left, we only
let people with handicap stickers in."

Vendors were overwhelmed by the first
weekend. Many struggled to keep pace
with the demand for water, soft drinks and
lemonade. In fact, some sold out of water
by midday on Sunday.

"We were very busy," said Peachey
Baking Company's Sam Peachey, whose
food trailer makes the famous Amish
doughnuts. "Normally, our line dies down
about 10 (p.m.). But on Sunday, we still
had a line at 11. A lot of that was because
the concert let out. It's been a very good
week for us."

Vendors get their drinks from Coca-
Cola. The company delivers cases of water
and soft drink syrup every day, except Sun-
day. On Monday, the distributed a tractor-
trailer of drinks.

Workers said they distributed 420 cas-
es of water last year. With 24 bottles in a
case, that's 10,080 bottles. This year, they
expect to deliver more than 500 cases.

"We did three pallets of water (nearly
4,000 bottles) just on Monday," one driver
said.



Beverly and Carl Young and Bernice Taylor (top left) were first to get into this year's fair. Sam Peachey unloads much-needed water, while another batch of Amish doughnuts come out of the fryer. Below, Lemmie Kirkland, 94, opens the fair before Rosie Williams and Ashton Hernandez are honored as the best fans of the fair. The Clay County Agriculture Fair will end its 11-day run on Sunday, April 9.



The concerts also have been successful.
Sunday's show featuring Tracy Lawrence
and the local band Cumberland had slow
pre-sales, but a last-minute rush turned it
into one of the biggest shows of the year.

"That was a last-minute splurge," Hy-
der said. "That concert was trailing (in
advance-sale tickets) and all of a sudden it
was a huge crowd."

Tuesday night's show featuring Ashley
McBryde and Lily Rose was the fair's big-
gest draw.

"We're fortunate everyone loves our
fair," Hyder said. "We made a compre-
hensive master plan two years ago. I hope ev-
eryone knows we're doing something about
it, but we can't just do it tomorrow. We're
land-locked. People own land around us.

The state operates the road (State Road
16)."

Backups on SR 16 were common on the
weekends, but fair-goers generally were in
the parking lot in about 30 minutes.

The fair concludes on Sunday at 9 p.m.

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Community Briefs

Attic Resale stores raise \$1.8 Million for hospice patients

For Clay Today

ORANGE PARK – Last year, Haven Hospice's combined five Attic Resale Stores, including one at 821 Blanding Blvd., made more than \$1.8 million in net revenue in support of Haven Hospice.

Thanks to the dedication of 345 volunteers, loyal customers, donated goods and committed staff, the Attic Resale Stores generated a total net revue of \$1,823,422.

"Haven Hospice Attic volunteers are the true reason the Attic stores can keep their doors open and products stocked," said Clay Dzioba, Haven Hospice Attic Volunteer Services Manager. "Attic volunteers give their time, hearts and many inventive ideas that differentiate our stores from others."

Dzioba extended Haven's thanks to the shoppers and donors who have supported the Attics. He said their continued support brings shoppers and builds the Attics' positive reputation.

"Without the support of our communities providing the much-needed donations, we would not be able to offer the wonderful quality products to those that may not otherwise be able to afford them," said Dzioba.

Donations solely generate merchandise in the Attic. Each Attic accepts new or gently used housewares, clothing, and electronics. All proceeds financially support the Haven mission, local hospice patients and families, and many other people in the community served by Haven programs and services.

If you're interested in volunteering with Haven's Attic Resale stores, please visit, BeYourHaven.org/Attic for more information.

Challenge Enterprises part of National Disabilities Awareness Month

CLAY COUNTY – Challenge Enterprises spent March participating in National Disabilities Awareness Month programs.

Funded by the Agency for Persons with

Disabilities and Vocational Rehabilitative Services, Challenge Enterprises is committed to providing quality services to individuals with disabilities, including screening and certifying all staff. The agency's mission is to proudly promote the Power of People and Possibilities for individuals with disabilities.

For the past 50 years, Challenge Enterprises has been grateful to many partner agencies, businesses, churches, corporations, and private citizens in Clay County and surrounding communities who have significantly enriched the quality of life for persons with disabilities to find jobs, own a house, rent an apartment and have friends to share the good times.

President Reagan recognized March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in 1987 as a way to increase public awareness of the needs and potential of Americans with developmental disabilities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, developmental disabilities include impairments in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas, such as autism spectrum disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, hearing loss, vision impairment and other developmental delays.

Clay Humane needs donations for severely injured dog

ORANGE PARK – Clay Humane, a non-profit veterinary clinic in Orange Park, is asking for donations to care for Trevor, an injured Border Collie mix found by Clay County Animal Services on Jan. 21.

"Clay County Animal Services transferred Trevor to us. He came in lame on his left hind leg with a deep laceration in his neck, more than likely from an embedded collar," said Clay Humane Executive Director Linda Welzant. "He had little fur and a severe skin infection affecting the entire body due to malnutrition and neglect."

Trevor is recovering from a cranial cruciate ligament repair. With the help of heavy antibiotics, antiparasitic medications, pain management, medicinal bathing and quality nourishment, he is healing nicely from all his conditions. While officials don't know the exact circumstances

of Trevor's situation, they suspect neglect. Although he has multiple fractures in his tail, they don't believe he was involved in dogfighting.

"Trevor has an exceptional disposition and is good around other animals," said Welzant. "He is a calm and sweet boy who learns quickly and wants to be with you, preferably in your lap."

Trevor is between 5-8 years old and weighs about 60 pounds. He has several potential adopters and will go into a forever home following his recovery over the next few months. The total cost of Trevor's rehabilitation so far is approximately \$4,000. To donate to Trevor's Fund, visit www.clayhumane.org/donate.php or call (904) 276-7729.

Garden Club of Middleburg to host 'Meet and Greet'

MIDDLEBURG – The Garden Club of Middleburg will host a "Meet and Greet" in the nursery section of Lowe's Home Improvement, 1700 Blanding Blvd., on April 14 from 10-11:30 a.m. The club will have a table in the garden department. Members will be available to answer questions about plants, where to plant, bee and butterfly pollinators and much more.

For more information, call (904) 252-7818 or (904) 343-8235.

Active and Retired Federal Employees meet monthly

ORANGE PARK – As the only organization dedicated to the general welfare of all federal workers and retirees, the National Association of Active and Retired Federal Employees delivers valuable guidance, timely resources and powerful advocacy.

Clay County Chapter 141 meets on the third Tuesday of each month at the Orange Park Library at 2054 Plainfield Ave. at 12:30 p.m. Each gathering consists of a short business meeting and a presentation.

Since NARFE's founding in 1921, the association's mission has been to defend and advance America's civil servants'

earned pay and benefits. Today, NARFE'S team of professional lobbyists continues to work tirelessly on behalf of the federal community. Supported by grassroots advocates, NARFE is a leading voice in Washington and across the country, although often unknown to our local civil servants, both active and retired, along with postal personnel.

Federal benefits and retirement plans are unique, complex and subject to change. NARFE provides federal workers and retirees with the precise, reliable and accessible counsel they need to make critical decisions and gain confidence in a secure future.

Mission of the Dirt Road offering free showers

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Adults can sign up for free showers on Tuesdays and Fridays at the Mission of the Dirt Road, 7790 State Road 100.

Adults can utilize the services from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays and from 9 a.m. to noon on Fridays. Families with children can get free showers on Tuesdays from 4-6 p.m. Showers are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Residents are required to sign up during the day of the shower. To make a reservation, call or text (601) 568-3473.

Thrasher-Horne: Show memorabilia on sale to fund future shows

ORANGE PARK – Signed posters, flyers and banners from recent acts at the Thrasher-Horne Center are on sale at the center's box office at 483 College Dr. in Orange Park.

The money will go to the Thrasher-Horne Center Annual Fund to provide financial assistance for future programs.

Items range from \$5 to \$50, and they can only be picked up at the center.

For more information, call (904) 276-6815 or visit thcenter.org.

Service

from page 11

said officials learned Penney Farms was formerly under the contract of a small, independent provider that went out of business.

The county is working with the town so it can be part of future phases.

While high-speed internet infrastructure is a challenge for parts of the county, much of the project is done, so it should provide relief for several residents struggling with connection issues.

Condon said a college student enrolled at St. Johns River State College in Orange Park who was taking an online class had

to go to the library or work in the McDonald's parking lot to be connected. Another example is a Middleburg-based Telehealth nurse who worked remotely had to find a hotspot. And a dock builder in McRae had to use city wifi to conduct estimates via computer software.

"There are a lot of underserved residents in Clay County and my district, so I want to put them on an equal playing field with everyone else in the 21st Century. Internet is an essential part of family life," Condon said.

Broadband sign-up is tentatively scheduled for April 29, but details on the time and location still have to be determined.



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Ridgeview hosts three-on-three basketball tourney for KidsFirst

By Kylie Cordell
For Clay Today

ORANGE PARK – Ridgeview High's National Honor Society will host a three-on-three basketball tournament to benefit Kids First of Florida, a community-based care agency providing child welfare and foster care services to residents of Clay County.

The event will be in the school's gym on Friday, April 14th, at 4 p.m. Tickets are \$5.

To enter, students can use the QR code posted in the Ridgeview gym. Advance registration is required. County students from neighboring schools are encouraged to join Ridgeview teams. Each team will have three-to-five players. The field will be limited to 16 teams.

"This is the Honor Society's first three-on-three basketball fundraiser," said National Honor Society Co-Adviser Carolyn Holt. "The students are leading the event."

The NHS board has 93 current members. Honor Society Secretary Kloe Goolsby and President Jonathan Metelus spearheaded the project with Andrew Palma,

another board member involved in the fundraiser.

The Society's first major fundraiser for Kids First of Florida is the basketball tournament. The idea behind the tournament was based on March Madness.

"We just wanted to create a game or something to bring the school and community together to support a good cause in a fun way. So we decided on the three-on-three basketball tournament to get as many people as involved as possible to support this organization," Metelus said.

"There will be a point and time limit. The point limit will be 21 points if the game doesn't end within 50 minutes. The team with the winning lead wins the game."

Prizes will be given to first-, second- and third-place winners. Honorable mentions will be given to teams with the most school spirit and sportsmanship.

Although there isn't a current sales goal, the NHS held a Powder Puff Football game in August of 2022. Student Sponsors Kloe and Abby raised more than \$1,000



National Honor Society students at Ridgeview High will put on a three-on-three basketball tournament in the school's gym on April 14 to raise money for KidsFirst of Florida.

for Clay Behavioral Health Organization in hopes of treating mental health and substance abuse in Clay County.

"We're looking to create the same impact on our community this year," Goolsby said.

Meletus agreed, noting the importance of recruiting new members to help with fundraising efforts. "The more people that join the National Honors Society, the more good we can do. We can do more good in our school and our community," he said.

To learn more about the Ridgeview High National Honors Society, call Holt at phone (904) 336-8975, extension 68930 or by email at carolyn.holt@myoneclay.net.

While players will be pitted against each other, their drive for the game is unified. These athletes not only share a goal on the court but in their community as well.

Aimed at raising money for child abuse prevention, the fundraiser also seeks to gain community action and educate the public on the current child abuse epidemic among neglected and abused minorities.

During April, National Child Abuse Prevention Month, First Kids of Florida encourages all individuals to get involved in their community to give every child the safe, loving home they deserve.

Gators Coach Billy Napier stirs Florida faithful during booster visit

Gators high on future for Orange Park's Roderick Kearney

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – Ahead of his second season as head coach of the Florida football team, Billy Napier stopped at the Thrasher-Horne Center last Monday to delight a conference room filled with orange-and-blue-clad Gators fans.

Following the press conference, fans enjoyed a gourmet, tailgate-style dinner while hearing Napier's "state-of-the-union" style address.

Napier noted the importance of recruiting the talent-laden Northeast Florida area.

"Our emphasis is building the team inside-out," he said. "We certainly want



to start by defending our backyard, working our way out. We start our evaluation process that way. We firmly believe that it means more to a kid who grew up right in the middle of it. What I say is, "They (have got to) go home and put up with it whether it's good or bad" so I just think there's certain motivation that comes from that."

After sophomore quarterback Anthony Richardson declared himself eligible for the upcoming NFL Draft, Napier said the competition was heating up as the Gators prepared for the Orange and Blue Spring Game.

The scrimmage will take place at Ben-Hill Griffin Stadium on April 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Former Ohio State transfer and Florida returner Jack Miller, Wisconsin transfer Graham Mertz and redshirt freshman Max Brown have been taking turns running the offense to determine who will lead the offense for the team's regular season opener at Utah on Aug. 31.

Napier was asked about the prospects of 6-foot-4, 300-pound, four-star offensive tackle Roderick Kearney of Orange Park.

"Rod is one of my favorite players," the

coach said. "Rod is a leader. (He) is passionate about the game. He's playing center, which is a new position for him, but he's off to a good start. Really, you talk about learning a new system and how to play a new position and all of the communication that comes with that.

"Rod is a lot of fun to be around, and he's got a lot of personality. He's going to be a future leader on our team. He's strong, plays with great effort, and always brings a great attitude.

He's gaining valuable experience. His phenomenal family, (you) can't compliment them enough. Just getting to know them throughout the recruitment process. They've got strong values, and know who they are. They've got a fantastic son, and he's going to represent the Gators the right way," Napier said.

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PHOTOS BY NATALIE GILSTRAP

The Trading Post allows students to turn in their "Indian bucks" earned during the week for snacks every Friday. The program benefits many low-income students.

Keystone Heights' Trading Post 'removes stigma' for those in need

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – In 2019, Community Partnership School performed a needs assessment that identified the challenges and opportunities of Keystone Heights Junior/Senior High.

The Trading Post was the result of the assessment. It opened as a way for students to be rewarded for positive behaviors and receive needed items.

"The Trading Post is set up in a way that removes the stigma of a low-income stu-

dent coming in for a specific need," said Tina Baker, the Director of Community Partnerships Schools.

Community volunteers fully operate the store and supplied by community donations.

"We depend on donations from the community members and grants to stock the Trading Post," Baker said.

The Trading Post is open every Friday for students to visit during their lunch break. Students can purchase something from the store by using Indian Bucks rewarded to students who demonstrate

positive behaviors such as having good attendance, showing teamwork, showing respect, taking responsibility, persevering and showing determination.

Though students are limited to buying one soda and two snacks, the store offers a variety of items. Chips, small toys, sodas, cheese sticks and salads are available. In addition, students can put their extra Indian Bucks into a bin for a chance to win a \$25 gift card to either McDonald's, Subway, Dunkin Donuts, Taco Bell or Wendy's.

The Trading Post also is working toward providing healthier options for students.

"They love the salads and the fresh fruits," said Alicia Hunter, Family and Community Engagement Coordinator. "My goal for next year is to have even more healthier options."

Abbey, a student, said that she likes the Trading Post because of volunteers. Another student named Delilah also said she likes the store because it's always welcoming.

"I've seen change and growth," Hunter said. "I feel like it's affecting more kids across the board and not just our behavioral kids."

SJR State College hosting Open House on April 20

For Clay Today

ORANGE PARK – Looking for a new career? Ready to begin college this summer or fall? The St. Johns River State College's Open House on April 20 is for you.

The free event doesn't require reg-

istration, but prospective students can meet college faculty, advisors and other students, explore the college's programs, discover the many paths toward earning an Association of Arts degree and apply for scholarships, financial aid and for the summer and fall semesters.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SJR STATE COLLEGE

There will be children's activities, club tables, swag bags and a dinner prepared by the Rolling Stoves Family Grill of hot dogs, chips and drinks for those who complete the open house passport.

The event will be at the Orange Park campus from 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The event is open to current high school students, parents and guardians interested in a career change, improving a skill set, starting a business or advancing in a current job.

Workplace programs include nursing, EMT/paramedic, radiologic technology, medical assisting, health information technology, medical office administration,

criminal justice, corrections, business, accounting, risk management, insurance management, network infrastructure, engineering technology, robotics, simulation technician and mechatronics.

Interested students also can enter for a chance to win a free class or concert tickets.

They also can get information on a transfer degree, bachelor's degrees, early childhood education, organizational management, BSN, dual enrollment, financial aid, scholarships, veterans services and the University of North Florida transfers.

For more information, visit www.sjrstate.edu/open-house.

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Community rallies around Dani-Lynn at The Corner Pocket

Day of music, food, games, auctions provide support to critically ill girl

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – All everyone saw during last Saturday’s fundraiser at The Corner Pocket was her sparkling eyes, enthusiasm for joy and carefree smile. Even tiny Dani-Lynn Early seemed removed from her critical heart issues that, for now, aren’t treatable.

Music lovers and fans of the girl that united a community came together for a daylong celebration with hopes of lifting her spirits and helping the family pay their bills.

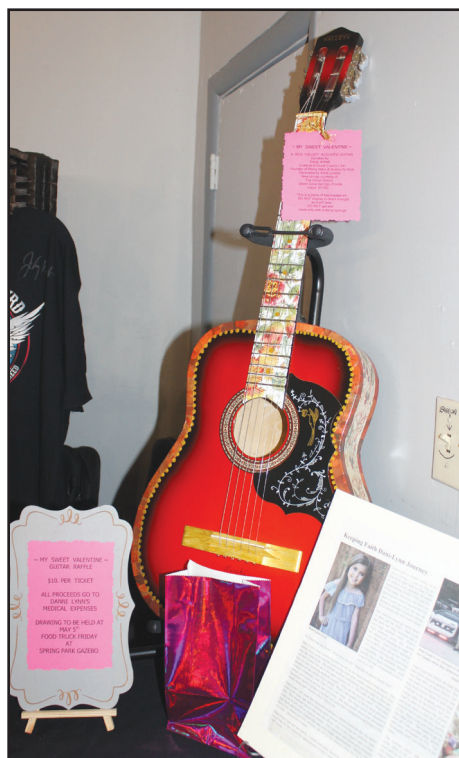
Collecting \$7,000 made the fundraiser a success – and that number will grow when the auction for a specialty guitar created by Duval County Line’s Paul Wane, Curt Towne and artist Lyneke Rae concludes on May 5 – Dani-Lynn’s 8th birthday. Bids are being accepted at Towne’s Guitar Station at 421 Walnut St. in Green Cove Springs. A link also will be created at The Corner Pocket’s Facebook page.

“We had an incredible time,” Wane said. “It was so incredible seeing ‘Nugget’ having a good time. This is why we do things like this. This is what it’s all about.”

Dani-Lynn joined Wane, Curt Towne, bassist G.T. Thompson, Doc Moccasin and members of Remedy during an afternoon jam session. During one song, Wane sang about everyone getting together next year – with Dani-Lynn – for another day of songs, music and auctions.

“We treated her like the rock star she is,” Towne said. “She got up and played guitar, and that was really cool. Everybody poured their heart out.”

Dani-Lynn was born with HLHS, VSD



Bids are still being accepted until Dani-Lynn’s birthday for the specialty-made guitar.

and PAPVR. Essentially, that means she’s missing a portion of her heart. Moreover, she’s not considered a good candidate for a transplant. She also had poor lung function.

“It’s not easy. There are good days and bad days,” her mother, Amelia Early, said.

Dani-Lynn has already been through two heart surgeries, but she had the energy to play her guitar, shoot a game of pool and join the party.

“It makes me feel good,” she said.

Green Cove Springs Police Department officers Terry Arnold and Ronnie Gann, GCSPD Chief Jon Guzman and Clay County District School’s Police Department Chief Kenneth Wagner also donated their time to ensure everything proceeded smoothly and safely.



Paul Wane sets up the microphone for Dani-Lynn Early during last Saturday’s fundraiser at The Corner Pocket in Green Cove Springs while Doc Moccasin waits to jam with both. The girl was born with a heart defect that’s not correctable. The community came together to raise more than \$7,000 to help the family pay their mounting medical bills.

Johnny Van Zant and Donnie Van Zant brothers have embraced Dani-Lynn’s story. “Hopefully, this will help the family out

in a small way,” Towne said. “The important thing was everybody got together and donated their time and showed Dani-Lynn how much we care.”



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GCS's Market in the Park's Pellegrino is a man of many skills

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – When real estate agent and radio personality Joe Pellegrino isn't selling homes or doing voiceovers, his hands are busy with the successful Third Saturday Market in the Park, held every third Saturday on Walnut Street in front of Spring Park.

The monthly gathering includes the marketing, promotion and set-up of the monthly big-ticket event, along with the several other behind-the-scenes tasks it takes to throw a family-friendly, Mardi Gras-style event unique to Clay County.



Joe Pellegrino

The market is organized through the Green Cove Springs Business League and has existed for approximately 10 years. But it wasn't until six years ago the market began to see its true potential.

Due mainly due to the tireless efforts and the unique marketing strategy by Pellegrino, the jack-of-all-trades businessman, he successfully executed a complete turnaround for the then-middling vendor-style city market, such as beautiful artisan crafts, wood products and homemade goods like clothing, and delicious, fresh-to-serve foods, desserts and drinks.

Coordinator, organizer, promoter and advertiser at Showcase Events, Pellegrino serves as an independent contractor for most of the market's operations, a role he has performed since 2017.

He interviews vendors on his radio segment "The Joey P Show," on 103.9 FM in St. Augustine, to organize sponsors and deal with processing fees and permitting, insurance, affidavits, permissions, set-up and takedown of the event.

The businessman helped head the committee responsible for organizing the First Coast Ham Jam and organizing the music for the Republican National Convention in Tampa Bay. He utilizes his big, booming voice and skills with social media marketing, sign-flippers and real-life posters in brick-and-mortar stores to spread the message about the market.

"We do contests and advertising for (the vendors).

I also do separate interviews to discuss local events and history in the city. When I started advertising on the 'Joey P Show,' we started getting more and more people (that wanted to become vendors)," he said.

Harboring a "never-fail" attitude and dedication to the community throughout the process, Pellegrino has pushed the market from 13 to 70 vendors. It's be-



come such a big deal there aren't any available street corners remaining.

He also serves as a disk jockey at the market.

The hard work comes in a city he's called home for more than 20 years.

"I just do this because I want to see us grow in Green Cove Springs," he said.

The event is worth between \$200-\$2,000 in additional income for vendors, which comes with free marketing, advertising and exposure from the "Market Man." Many sellers are from low or middle-income backgrounds.

Pellegrino remembered one vendor living on social security. The extra cash helped her stay afloat, and that's just one of several success stories.

Pellegrino's skillfully-executed marketing strategy is working so well that it has reached far beyond city limits. More than 500 names are on a preferred vendors list, and he will soon expand his operation to Palatka in July, pending city approval.

He continued his campaign with three car shows, including the Market and Music at the Cove on Saturday, April 1, at the Cove Plaza. At the event, cars, trucks and vans can enter the show for \$10, with first-, second- and third-place winners earning a cash prize.

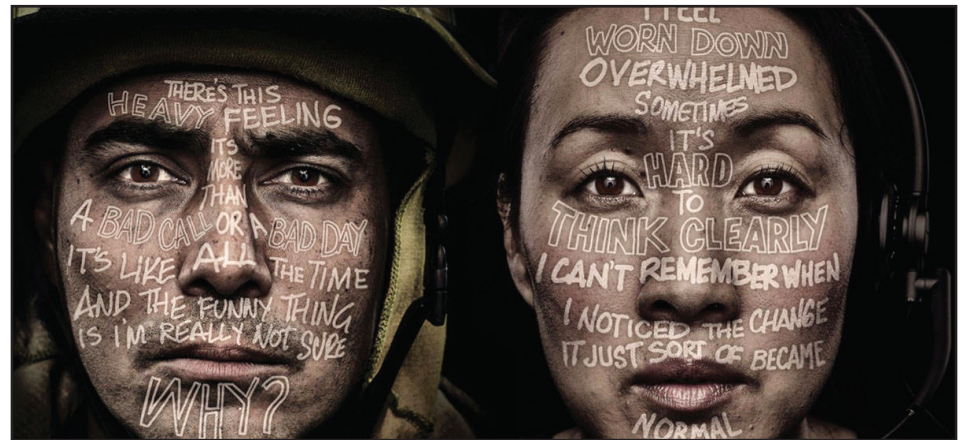
There also were vendors, crafters, jewelry, food trucks and more.

The car show winner on May 6 will receive two tickets to a destination in either the Caribbean or Mexico.

The same car show with a moonlight twist will be at 1451 S. Orange Ave. on June 3, July 1 and Aug. 5 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. A trip to Mexico or the Caribbean will also be offered.

An additional car show will be in July and August at the Palatka Mall.

The Market at the Park is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The next market will be on April 15.



Nobody fights alone:

Peer support program available to first responders

By Kylie Cordell
For Clay Today

CLAY COUNTY – The job of a first responder is inherently dangerous. They are often the first to arrive and assist in an emergency, such as an accident, disaster, medical emergency, fire, crime or terrorist attack. They are the core of our communities.

First responders put their lives on the front lines for the sake of their communities, often at risk of their own well-being and personal safety. While most communities are aware of their sacrifices, they endure stresses most people cannot truly understand.

But sometimes, even the heroes need rescuing.

Statistics show nearly 30% of first responders will develop a behavioral health condition, including but not limited to depression and PTSD, during their career. According to the CDC, first responders are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty.

"Historically, in the first responder culture, there hasn't been an understanding of the need for behavioral health services regarding the trauma they witness daily," said CEO of LSF Health Systems, Dr. Christine Cauffield. "People used to say, you signed up for this; this is part of your

job. They told us to move on and go to the next call without any time for debriefing what might be going on with them."

When trauma is suppressed, individuals often display erratic behaviors. They are easily startled. They might want to isolate themselves from others. They might be moody, depressed, or anxious. They may use unhealthy coping mechanisms such as drugs and alcohol to self-medicate.

Unfortunately, the consequence of mental illness doesn't stop there.

"I can tell you that a lot of family is-

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FAITH WALK

by Pastor Billy Register
True Life Church
Clay County

Easter is Here!

Easter is here, and that's a beautiful thing! It's a time that we celebrate family, spring, and Jesus. While it's always pleasant and brings its own wonderful traditions every year for so many of us, Easter is SO much more than that. Easter is one of the most powerful and important days on the entire Christian calendar. Why? Because it marks the day of Jesus' resurrection, the very foundation of the hope of the Christian faith.

1 Peter 1:3-4 reads, "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay."

This is the hope of our faith: that even though we all will die a physical death, if we walk with Jesus in this life, we will be raised to eternal life in the next. As 1 Peter tells us, this is an inheritance to those of us who believe, and it's something that no one can ever take away. God's promise of eternal life through Jesus all stems from the amazing event that took place on the first Easter Sunday Jesus rising from the grave. Our culture celebrates Easter in captivating ways, with bunnies, flowers, and bright pastel colors. While all these things are fun, beautiful, and enjoyable, we must not let them distract us from the true message and hope of Easter. The enemy would rather have us focus on the worldly aspects of the season instead of the true significance of this day.

Why? Because if we do, the season will come and pass without us truly experiencing the change the resurrection stirs in us. If we focus on the bunnies, flowers, and bright spring colors, we won't harness the power God has given us Christ. The message of Easter couldn't be any more foundational or critical to our faith. No matter what traditions you enjoy during this season, make sure each and every one of them is centered on the truth and hope of Jesus' resurrection. Let this Easter be a time that enriches our faith in every way. Happy Easter!



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Fourth graders headed to an educational, interactive field trip

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – The Heritage Commission will host a school field trip at the Keystone Beach Pavilion for the Keystone Heights Elementary fourth-grade students on April 6.

"Our goal is to teach and educate the students about the history of Keystone Heights so they can learn more about the heritage of the community," said co-chairman Kerry Collins.

The idea was one of the many projects that the former Chairman, Nina Rodenroth, wanted to do to increase awareness and foster a relationship between the Heritage Commission and the community.

"It was one of our projects from last year that came to fruition this year," she said. The field trip will consist of fun activities for the students to enjoy as they learn about their city's history.

The committee plans to provide a broad overview of the city's history with four stations that the students can visit. These stations will focus on critical aspects in which students will learn about the Historic Beach Pavilion, Chautauqua in Keystone Heights, Keystone Heights Inn and Fort 11. The trip will also have a volunteer dressed as a 1920s soldier and perform a reenactment.

Students will learn about life in the 1920s. The school's cafeteria will provide



PHOTO BY NATALIE GILSTRAP

From left, Heritage Commission members Deidre Murphy, Kerry Collins, Helen Hersey and Christine Arnold said their organization would host a field trip to the Keystone Beach Pavilion for fourth-graders from Keystone Heights Elementary.

bagged lunch and students can play at the Geneva Playground. Students also will receive a souvenir once the field trip is over.

"We really wanted it to be fun and interactive for them," Collins said. "We wanted them to enjoy it and for it to be a nice memory."

Overall, the commission, students, and teachers said they were excited about the field trip. The committee anticipates that

110 students will attend the field trip, which will last two-to-three hours. They hope to host the field trip once a year for the fourth graders and eventually expand it.

"We're going to start with the fourth grade, and if it's a success, we might eventually grow it by adding another grade from middle school," Collins said. "There's potential to grow, for sure."

Students emerged in politics at Senate Page Program

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

CLAY COUNTY – In 2009, the Children's Home Society of Florida wanted to provide students, through its own or Community Partnership Schools, an opportunity to attend the Senate Page Program.

The program allows junior and senior high students to experience the state's legislative process firsthand as senate pages. They have provided 120 students with the opportunity and continue to do so. "We have 15 this year that will be serving in those nine weeks," Summer Pfeiffer, Vice President of Governmental Relations, said.

Paige Wilkinson from Keystone Heights High and Rachele Simmons from Orange Park High were two students who recently attended the Senate Page Program in Tallahassee.

"It provided me with an irreplaceable experience that I could hold into for the rest of my life," Wilkinson said.

The program includes a five-day stay in the state's capitol. Wilkinson and Simmons stayed either with a host family that the Children's Home Society coordinated or at a hotel with a family member. The students toured the capitol's museums, spoke with senators, and attended committee meetings. In addition, they learned about creating bills and amendments, campaigns, and



Form left, Paige Wilkerson and Rachele Simmons, both of Keystone Heights High, took part of the Senate Page Program in Tallahassee. The program was offered by Community Partnership Schools.

the Senate's protocols. They also assisted the senators on the state senate floor, which involved delivering and taking messages, fetching bottled water or completing deliveries. Students were allowed to choose a collective topic to make bills and amendments before presenting them in a mock session at the end of the week.

"It was really exciting," Simmons said. "It really made me look at bills and laws with a deeper lens."

After attending the Senate Page Program, Wilkinson and Simmons found the experience to be educational and influential.

"It affected my view on government, and it helped me understand the process that I hope to be a part of someday," Wilkinson said. In addition, they would recommend other students to apply whether they are planning to enter political science or not. "It's one of those programs where you think you know a lot of things, but there is always some new nuance," Simmons said.

Justin Smith from Orange Park High is currently attending the program as a page.

For more information about the Senate Page program, visit senatepages.flsenate.gov/, or to contribute visit, chsfl.org/advocate/.

Penney's Pavilion for Health Care to receive Governor's Gold Seal Award

For Clay Today

PENNEY FARMS — Penney Retirement Community's nursing care home, The Pavilion for Health Care, will be honored with the Governor's Gold Seal Award for Excellence in Long-Term Care for the 10th consecutive time.

The Pavilion has been honored to earn this distinction for over 20 years. The Florida Agency for Health Care Administration reports as of Thursday, March 30 there are currently only 10 Gold Seal nursing homes in the State of Florida.

With close to 700 nursing homes in the state, less than 2% are Gold Seal facilities.

Recognition of the Gold Seal is based on the quality of care, financial stability and staff retention. The Gold Seal program is regulated by state statute, with the application process administered by the Governor's Panel on Excellence in Long-Term Care.

In the official Gold Seal site visit report, the panel member noted the loving care demonstrated by the staff for the residents, their unique approach to individual-centered care, and their strong sense of family.

"As President/CEO of our community, I am extremely proud of the leadership and staff devoted to the daily care of those they serve, and they do so with the utmost respect and concern to provide the highest



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

Penney Retirement Community's Pavilion for Health Care is one of only 10 long-term care centers in Florida to earn the Governor's Gold Seal Award. A ceremony is planned for April 13 at 11 a.m.

quality of care," said Teresa Scott, President/CEO of Penney Retirement Community.

The unique nature of service to others at Penney Retirement Community is a significant factor in the quality of care provided at The Pavilion. Because those in The Pavilion have been longtime friends with their neighbors in retirement, it allows their neighbors to visit and volunteer as they continue to live a purposeful life in

a caring, long-term environment.

In addition to providing excellent care to residents of the retirement community, The Pavilion serves the greater Clay County community and is the only Gold Seal home in the county.

The Pavilion for Health Care will host a celebration of the Gold Seal Award on Thursday, April 13, at 11 a.m. The Pavilion is located at 3465 Caroline Blvd. on the campus of Penney Retirement Community.

The community is a Christian Continuing Care Retirement Community with more than 500 residents. The not-for-profit organization provides residents with independent living, assisted living, nursing home care, memory care, and short-term rehabilitation.

Founded in 1926 by J.C. Penney, the community offers an active, purposeful lifestyle. For more information, visit Visit-PRC.org.

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Police Briefs

Trio arrested for drugs during stop for expired tag

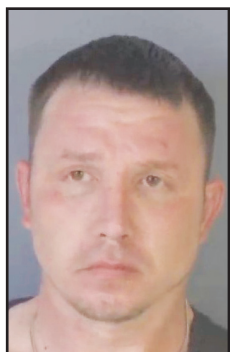
KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – A traffic stop on March 30 for an expired tag led to the arrest of three people on drug charges.

Katrina Ann Daniels, 20, of Keystone Heights, was charged with possession of marijuana, drug paraphernalia and methamphetamine.



Katrina Daniels

Kenneth John Waters, 38, of Ashland, Virginia, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, trafficking fentanyl, possession of Suboxone and drug paraphernalia. David Neil Oliver, 46, of Orange Park, was charged with conspiring with others to traffick amphetamine and a controlled substance.



Kenneth Waters

Waters was charged with trafficking fentanyl because deputies found 25 multi-colored pills on the floorboard.

a Clay County Sheriff's Office deputy made the stop on County Road 100 after he noticed the tag expired a year earlier. When the deputy told Kenneth Waters why he stopped him, the deputy noticed

a glass pipe with burnt residue in the center console. After Waters said he might have "ice" in his right-front pants pocket, a search of the vehicle uncovered methamphetamine, marijuana, drug paraphernalia, fentanyl and Suboxone either in their clothing or scattered throughout the car.

Oliver's bond was set at \$100,758; Daniels' was set at \$7,007; and, Waters' was set at \$153,514.

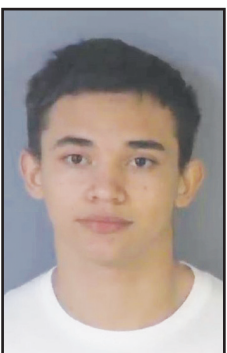


David Oliver

CCSO: Man accused of exposing himself to girls

OAKLEAF – Investigators "worked tirelessly" during the past five months reviewing video surveillance and collecting information through it Real-Time Crime Center to arrest a man suspected of exposing himself to at least three girls.

Landon Michael Hillman, 19, of Oakleaf, was charged on March 30 with four counts of lewd and lascivious behavior to three girls and one



Landon Hillman

count of enticing a child after the Clay County Sheriff's Office linked all three incidents.

According to CCSO, one girl said a man pulled up in a gold Honda and exposed himself on Oct. 1. Another girl reported the same crime on March 19 and a third called the sheriff's office on March 27.

Hillman was taken to the Clay County Jail. His bond was set at \$375,015. His next court appearance will be on April 25.

"We will continue working to protect the children of our community. If you have any information involving this or any other crime, we can be contacted at (904) 264-6512 or via the SaferWatch app," Sheriff Michelle Cook said.

Girl, 5, drowns at babysitter's pool on Hilltop Drive

ORANGE PARK – The Clay County Sheriff's Office is investigating why a 5-year-old girl was left unattended at a residential swimming pool on Hilltop Drive on April 4.

According to the sheriff's office, the girl drowned at a babysitter's house.

CCSO said it is investigating the incident.

Middleburg man charged with ID theft, defrauding Social Security

JACKSONVILLE – U.S. Attorney Roger B. Handberg announces the return of an indictment charging Christopher Leo Daragjati, 33, of Middleburg, with seven counts of wire fraud, 10 counts of aggravated identity theft, one count of theft of government property of more than \$1,000 and two counts of false representation of a Social Security number.

If convicted, Daragjati faces up to 20 years in federal prison on each wire fraud count, a consecutive minimum mandatory penalty of two years' imprisonment for each aggravated identity theft count, as many as five years on each false SSN representation count, up to 10 years in prison on the charge of theft of government property and payment of restitution to the victims he defrauded.

Daragjati appeared in federal court on yesterday. The court ordered him temporarily detained. No trial date has been set.

According to the indictment, Daragjati obtained personally identifiable information, including the SSNs of multiple victims. Using the victims' PII, Daragjati went to the Lake County Tax Collector and the Orange County Tax Collector and obtained Florida Identification cards in the identity of the

two victims. Using the two Florida Identification cards, he then applied for three different Paycheck Protection Program loans in the identity of the two victims. When applying for the three PPP loans, Daragjati is alleged to have submitted numerous fraudulent tax-related documents and repeatedly made false statements when completing the Small Business Administration loan application for each of the loans. In reliance on this false information, lenders approved the loan applications and Daragjati received approximately \$150,000 in PPP loan proceeds for the three approved loans. As part of the scheme, he also set up bank accounts in the identities of the victims to receive the PPP loan proceeds.

In another fraud scheme, Daragjati opened four commercial lines of credit with Sunbelt Rentals, using the PII of four victims. After being approved for the lines of commercial credit under the victims' identities, he rented thousands of dollars of equipment. Rather than return the rented equipment, Daragjati pawned some of the items using the identities of various victims or otherwise disposed of the stolen equipment. In at least one incident, this resulted in a felony arrest warrant being issued and entered into the National Crime Information Center for a victim of identity theft.

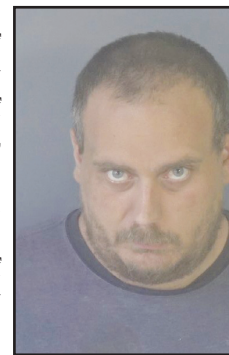
In another scheme, in January 2022, Daragjati filed a false tax return using the identity of a victim. In reliance on the false documents and use of the stolen identity by Daragjati, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) approved a tax refund in which he received a tax refund of more than \$1,000 under the assumed victim's identity. Daragjati arranged to have the fraudulently obtained tax refund deposited directly into a bank account that was in the victim's name but controlled by Daragjati.

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

This case was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation, and the Clay County Sheriff's Office, with assistance from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Florida Highway Patrol – Bureau of Criminal Investigations and Intelligence, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, and the United States Secret Service - Jacksonville Field Office. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin C. Frein will prosecute it.

Man transferred from Lake City Jail to face shoplifting charges

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – A man wanted for taking \$952 worth of merchandise two years ago from the Walgreen's on North Lawrence Avenue was transferred from



Christopher Daragjati

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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, April 4

Juan D.M. Avalos, 23, Fleming Island, driving without valid license

Cortez D. Lipson, 21, Middleburg, shoplifting

Derek A. Butler, 21, Middleburg, shoplifting

Brittany K. Biggs, 32, Green Cove Springs, possession-drug paraphernalia, possession-methamphetamine, possession-fentanyl, possession-buprenorphine

Ashlee E. Mosher, 40, Green Cove Springs, VOP-possession-cocaine

Shawn D. Marcum, 42, Green Cove Springs, VOP-possession-cocaine

Thomas H. Stewart, 45, Middleburg, battery on law enforcement/firefighter/EMT

Danett B. Hrink, 43, Middleburg, possession-methamphetamine

Patricia L. Ouzts, 39, Middleburg, possession-drug paraphernalia, DWLSR

Monday, April 3

William D. Harrison, 24, Orange Park, resisting law enforcement with violence, petit theft, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Denice M. Marsh, 48, Orange Park, violation of conditions for pre-trial release

Mason E. Cornish, 44, Orange Park, DWLSR

Kevin L. Riley, 32, Green Cove Springs, VOP-possession-drug paraphernalia

Bryanna N. Redfern, 24, Middleburg, shoplifting

Jennifer R. Worrell, 39, Middleburg, two counts FTA

Katie M. St. Onge, 33, Green Cove Springs,

DUI

Alyssa N. Wiseman, 27, Green Cove Springs, battery in jail

Megan N. Stenson, 36, Middleburg, three counts violation of condition for pre-trial release

Lam M. Yieb, 25, Green Cove Springs, FTA-driving without valid license

Tracy A. Carnell, 47, Middleburg, domestic battery

Sunday, April 2

Tenisha L. Bailey, 33, Orange Park, battery on law enforcement/firefighter/EMT, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Christopher J. Layfield, 37, Green Cove Springs, aggravated domestic battery with deadly weapon, domestic battery

Kathryn Barthle-Kelly, 47, Green Cove Springs, battery

Eric M. Casillas, 37, Fleming Island, DUI

Melanie A. Orenge, 31, Middleburg, shoplifting

Sabrina R. Sapp, 31, Middleburg, shoplifting

Syeshia M. McKie, 32, Orange Park, vandalism

Joshua E. McKean, 28, Middleburg, felony domestic battery by strangulation

Travis A. Ward, 29, Fleming Island, DWLSR

Khalil M. Jones, 21, Middleburg, DUI with BAL .15 or greater

Robbie L. Dorminey, 51, Keystone Heights, violation of pre-trial release conditions against domestic violence

Christian M. Breen, 32, Orange Park, possession-marijuana

Saturday, April 1

Melisdalia L. Morales, 22, Keystone Heights, battery, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Kyle L. Varnes, 26, Green Cove Springs, dating violence, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

David N. Oliver, 46, Orange Park, conspiracy to traffick amphetamine, trafficking controlled substance, driving without valid

license

Dilyn E. Webb-Kerr, 20, Keystone Heights, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, attempting to flee/elude law enforcement with lights/siren active

Raymond S.A. Drawdy, 26, Keystone Heights, possession-controlled substance

Theresa R. Sapitan, 38, Green Cove Springs, FTA

Friday, March 31

Cheryl S. Lizenbee, 36, Middleburg, DUI

Paul D. Stone, 44, Orange Park, battery on law enforcement/firefighter/EMT, possession-controlled substance, possession-fentanyl, possession-buprenorphine, possession-drug paraphernalia, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Raymond Castro, 56, Orange Park, FTA-DWLSR, FTA-failure to register vehicle

Brandon C.E. Dugan, 31, Green Cove Springs, two counts violation of injunction for protection against domestic violence

Kenneth K. Jackson, 36, Orange Park, aggravated battery on pregnant woman

Yoniseider Gonzalez-Alvarez, 21, Keystone Heights, retail grand theft, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Enok M. Byrd, 36, Green Cove Springs, trespassing, contempt of court-violation of injunction to be within 500 feet of residence/school/employment

Denice M. Marsh, 48, Orange Park, battery

Erica K. Taylor, 33, Middleburg, possession-controlled substance, possession-drug paraphernalia

Joshua W. Moynihan, 35, Middleburg, possession-controlled substance, possession-drug paraphernalia, providing false name/ID to law enforcement

Keith E. Outtin, 45, Middleburg, DUI

Thursday, March 30

Shelby V. Kiggins, 27, Middleburg, FTA-expired registration

Carrie L. Collier, 38, Melrose, battery

Landen M. Hillman, 19, Orange Park, four counts lewd/lascivious behavior to child 16,

enticing/luring child

Shawn D. Marcum, 42, Green Cove Springs, two counts burglary

Curtis L. Courtney, 32, Green Cove Springs, battery in jail

Braelyn K.Z. Johnson, 22, Green Cove Springs, battery in jail

Ricky D. Overton, 20, Green Cove Springs, battery in jail

Kenneth J. Waters, 38, Keystone Heights, possession-methamphetamine, trafficking-fentanyl, possession-suboxone, possession-drug paraphernalia, introduce/remove contraband from jail

Katrina A. Daniels, 20, Keystone Heights, possession-methamphetamine, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia

David J. Reid, 39, Fleming Island, DUI

Wednesday, March 29

Dannessa N. Williams, 35, Orange Park, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, DUI

Joshua C. Reed, 35, Melrose, domestic battery

Ryan M. Ragsdale, 26, Middleburg, possession-methamphetamine, trespassing

Shawn D. Marcum, 42, Green Cove Springs, possession-methamphetamine, possession-Xanax, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia

Elizabell B.S. Orta, 57, Green Cove Springs, driving without valid license

Zachary J. Brown, 22, Green Cove Springs, possession-fentanyl

Joseph L. Champion, 41, Orange Park, larceny

Ronald J. Montgomery, 35, Green Cove Springs, FTA-battery, eight counts FTA-criminal mischief

Tyrone L. Simmons, 62, Green Cove Springs, FTA-grand theft

Sherman A. McGee, 36, Green Cove Springs, VOP-domestic battery

Ailene N. Cain, 36, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Charles R. Accordino, 36, Keystone Heights, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia

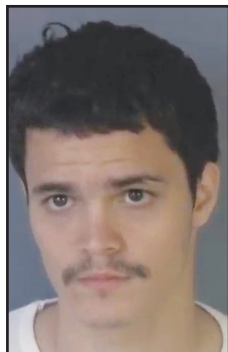
Police

from page 22

the Columbia Correctional Institution Annex to face shoplifting charges.

Yoniseider Gonzalez-Alvarez, 21, of Port Richey, faces retail grand theft and resisting arrest charges after the Clay County Sheriff's Office said he and an accomplice loaded four baskets of merchandise and left the store on April 18, 2020, without paying.

According to the arrest warrant, both left the store to a waiting car. They were stopped on County Road 352. Gonzalez-Alvarez ran into a wooded area from the scene.



Yoniseider Gonzalez-Alvarez

Support

from page 19

occur when first responders don't get those necessary resources. There are a lot of divorces and domestic violence in the home. The children feel like they are walking on eggshells," Cauffield said.

"They feel hopeless. They feel there is no remedy for their pain. They feel isolated and alone, and the repeated traumas certainly add to that feeling of alienation that can really cause a spiral in their behavioral health."

Clay County joined the Critical Incident Stress Management program for law enforcement and fire/rescue and military members several years ago. The program helps officers find release from internalizing grief, fear, anxiety and stress.

Former deputy Chris Padgett was a member of the agency's SWAT team when he was forced to shoot a man to death in 2016. Five years later, he said he was still

traumatized by the incident. He eventually quit CCSI to become a minister.

He said CISM is one tool to keep first responders from slipping into a world of drug and alcohol abuse.

Statistics show firefighters have higher suicide attempt and ideation rates than the general population. Studies also show between 125 and 300 law enforcement officers commit suicide yearly.

Through his struggles, former Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and Atlantic Beach Police officer Brannon Hicks wants to help others, including Clay County first responders, facing the same battles he did to help them overcome their pain.

"I am building and leading a program called 'Here Tomorrow.' It's funded my LSF for First Responders and Veterans. We're peer support, so they go through the same stuff that we went through, which gives us the confidence to relate to them and their experiences and help them through," he said.

The new First Responder Peer Support Program hopes to bring awareness around mental health and mental illness. The program comprises trained peer specialists like Hicks, current or former first responders or military members. These peer specialists will provide confidential and free support to first responders and their family members.

"We are in recovery and know what moving through that process is like. That way, when people come in, and they are experiencing hopelessness, depression, anxiety, or suicidal thoughts- we've been there, and we know what it's like to come out of it," he said. "It's a free program, and it's confidential. There's no waitlist, and we have the 211 operators that answer the calls."

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BACK-TO-BACK THRILLERS

Cougars, Yellow Jackets steal tickets to baseball finals

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

MIDDLEBURG - Green Cove Springs Junior High baseball had the unenviable task of facing the undefeated top seed Lake Asbury Junior High Tigers in their semifinal while the Oakleaf Junior High Yellow Jackets had to face second seed Baker County in the Northeast Florida Athletic Conference baseball championship tournament Monday night at Middleburg High School.

In both games, late inning surges spelled victory for both teams with the Cougars nipping Lake Asbury 7-6 off an RBI single by Wyatt Horejsi in the fifth inning and Oakleaf getting a monster double from Ezekiel Johnson and a spectacular left field snag by Gabe Moyer to snuff a possible seventh inning scoring opportunity for Baker County.

For Oakleaf, the nip and tuck battle swayed with both starting pitchers on limiting base time until the final inning when Gregory Breaston doubled home the game winning run in the seventh inning.

Oakleaf and Green Cove Springs will play Wed., April 5 at Middleburg for the NEFAC championship.

In the final at bats for Baker County, with Oakleaf up 4-3, relief pitcher Ezekiel Johnson came in and smoked the Baker County lineup with two strikeouts around a sterling left field stab from Gabe Moyers between the strikeouts to end the contest. Johnson also hit a towering fly ball double that bounced off the Baker County outfielders glove to score the tying run with Conner Tant on first base after alertly sprinting to first on a dropped third strike. A

second field error, at first base after a

SEE THRILLER, 28



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Above: Green Cove Springs baseball's Evan Durrance and Jayden Counts celebrate Cougars win over Lake Asbury in Northeast Florida Athletic Conference semifinal game on Monday at Middleburg High School. Below: Oakleaf Junior High's dugout meets up with Ezekiel Johnson at home after he scored in Yellow Jackets win over Baker County. Green Cove and Oakleaf will play Thurs., April 6 at Middleburg High for the NEFAC championship.



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NEW ARRIVALS

BENNINGTON

Stratton strikes; fourth in Pepsi 5K Relays

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

GAINESVILLE - St. Johns Country Day School double state champion Matthew Stratton gave a little glimpse of what the University of Florida has for the next four years with a scintillating track performance Friday night at the University of Florida's Pepsi Relays track invitational.

"This was my first race since I got here and my first real test in the last two months," said Stratton, the Class 1A cross country state champion and the Class 1A 3200 track champion last year for the Spartans, now a freshman as a Gator in Gainesville. "I couldn't run much when I first got here with a little injury, but have had two months of training to use tonight. It's a little overwhelming."

Overwhelming was Stratton's courageous attachment to the front pack of runners in the final event of Friday's Pepsi Relays docket; the 5,000 meters, with the



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Left: Former Orange Park High 400 meter state champion Alex Collier, now at Florida State, sprint to finish of 200 meters at Pepsi Relays in Gainesville. Above: Former St. Johns Country Day School state champion (cross country and 3200 track) Matthew Stratton, in blue, battles leaders of Pepsi Relays 5,000 meter run.

company of two University of Alabama standouts; Will Pinson, also a freshman, and the eventual winner in 14 minutes, 28.33 seconds, and Gator teammates Ethan Geiger, a sophomore, second in 14:28.61, and Cavan Wilson, a fifth year senior, third in 14:28.84, and Stratton, in an surge at the end that put the first four

finishers under 15 minutes with Stratton in at 14:29.18.

"When Cavan went in second to last lap, I wanted to stay with him and see if I was strong enough to finish with him," said Stratton. "He took the shot and I

SEE STRATTON, 29

Oakleaf sprinters hang with big boys at Pepsi Relays

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

GAINESVILLE - In a massive show of raw speed, led by Ammarion Grant, Evan Brown, Josber Stimpfil and Devin Collins power, the Oakleaf High boys 4 x 100 relay team, blasted a wicked fast split to finish fifth in the finals at Saturday's Pepsi Relays in Gainesville.

Oakleaf, with a 41.82 split, was running elbows with the likes of Florida powerhouses Miami Northwestern (40.79), Vero Beach (41.21), American Heritage (41.22) and Miami Columbus (41.28) in



Fleming Island's Katie Thompson, in white, and Oakleaf's Sierra Barrera, left, battled in 1600 meters at Pepsi Relays.

the exciting final with Tampa Armwood the sixth finisher in 42.24.

Oakleaf entered the high-powered meet with just a 42.22 seed split with American Heritage, the record holder for the event with a 40.17 split in 2017, in as the top seed at 41.21.

Oakleaf got into the final as the eighth seed with a 42.22 qualifier.

In the boys 100 meters, Brown was ninth overall in 10.78 for a tick off of his string of 10.8 splits in recent weeks. Winner Issamade Asinga of Montverde clocked



Oakleaf High's boys 4 x 100 relay team battled the best of Florida relay teams at the Pepsi Relays and came home with a fifth place finish.

an astounding 10.10 for the win.

In the long jump, Grant was 26th at 19-3.25.

In other relays, Oakleaf's girls and Orange Park's girls finished at 19th and 20th in 1:49.53 and 1:49.71 to winner Bullis High of Washington DC in 1:35.16 by four seconds over Miami Southridge.

In the distance events, Fleming Island got top five finishes in the 1600 and 3200 while Oakleaf senior Sierra Barrera battled in the elite 1600.

For Fleming Island's Graham Myers, yet another dntnck on his growing list of school records with a 4:14.11 split for fourth place in the 1600 with winner Braxton Legg of Cambridge Christian outkicking Alex Pena of Sunlake to win 4:12.64 to 4:13.08. Myers led with a long surge in the

backstretch of the third lap, but could not hold the effort. Mandarin's Gavin Nelson finished next to Myers for a second week for a third place time of 4:13.63.

"I tried to be courageous with a surge further out to try and get away from the sprinters, but they caught me," said Myers. "It'll work one day and I'll will keep testing myself."

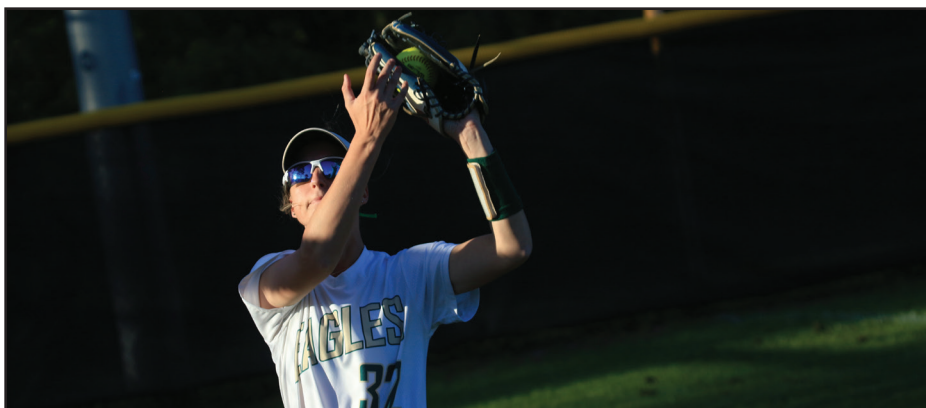
Barrera, who has also attacked her personal bests in the both the 800 and 1600, bested in both with a 10th place 2:17.93 in the 800 and a 5:13.96 for 16th in the 1600. Fleming Island's Katie Thompson was 26th in the 1600 in 5:22.27.

In the 3200, Fleming Island's John Keester IV is getting his race legs back into

SEE OAKLEAF, 31



Orange Park anchorman Larry Thomas sprints home in 4 x 100 relay.



Clay vs. Fleming Island softball

STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Clay and Fleming Island had a double header week with games in baseball and softball. Pictured is softball action on Thursday; Clay won 4-2 with, from left, big hits from Bailey Parker and Fleming Island's Anisten Kurlander. On base, with coach Crystal Rice directing the basepaths and a solid outfield catch by Fleming Island's Ella Morris. Clay also got a 19-0 win over Ed White on Friday to improve to 10-4. Fleming Island beat Bishop Snyder 17-0 on Mon., April 3 to go to 4-10.

Checkmate: Blue Devils clip Eagles, 3-1

By Ray Dimonda
Correspondent

FLEMING ISLAND - With matching 11-3 records, the Clay Blue Devils traveled across town to face off against intra-county rival Fleming Island Golden Eagles for some Friday night action under the lights.

Less than 24 hours prior, on Thursday, it was the Lady Blue Devils who came to Fleming Island to take the win in the Thursday night matchup.

On Friday, Clay was rolling into the game after a previous nights five inning 10-0 win over Orange Park. Thursday, Fleming Island was visiting the not too friendly hosts at St. Johns Country Day who sent the Golden Eagles home early with an 11-1 six inning loss.

Friday's clash was something like a chess match with each team seeing who would make the first move.

"We talked about this game several weeks ago, had several games in there, but really, it was one game at a time," said Clay Head Coach Josh Persinger. "On Wednesday, we had the worst game of the season for us. Preparation was not there. I was not pleased with some things, so we went back to work. Tonight, was the best pre-game we've taken. I have a phrase; we have to beat them at everything. Tonight, we were focused."

Finally in the top of the third inning, the Blue Devils would get a run around and draw first blood. The Golden Eagles had no answer for the bottom of the inning and Clay added another run in the top of the fourth. Fleming Island could do no better than a single run in the bottom of the

fourth as the Clay Blue Devils used a stout defense with 12 strikeouts from pitchers Elijah Roberts and Merrick Rapoza to take the Friday night showdown, 3-1.

Clay's Roberts went five innings on the mound, earning the win.

"It feels great," said Roberts. "I did everything right. It was one of those games where everything I was throwing was working. A lot of them were moving up on the plate more, trying to cut off that outside fastball that they haven't been able to hit, but it didn't work. It was just a great game. I don't know what to say, I just did me."

Roberts would go through five innings, giving up only a single hit, one run, zero walks, and 10 strikeouts. Roberts was pulled after the fifth inning only due to pitch count. Rapoza came in for the final two innings, earning the save.

After the first two batters hit back to Rapoza which he turned both for outs, he commented about the one that did make contact.

"The second one caught me right in the thigh, but I'm good," said Rapoza, used to contact as the Blue Devil football quarterback. I didn't feel it, probably from the adrenaline."

Rapoza had no hits, no runs, no walks, and two strikeouts, including the final Fleming Island batter to shut down the Golden Eagles. "I struck him out with fastballs. He didn't even swing once."

After feeling one another out for two innings, the Clay Dugout got things roller with Sean Alvers singling to center field with no outs. Alvers was brought around



CORRESPONDENT PHOTO BY RAY DIMONDA

Clay High baserunner Jacob Deel dives back to first base against Fleming Island's Anders Caldwell in Blue Devil win Friday night.

when Cole Carnell nailed an RBI double line drive to left field, 1-0.

After the Golden Eagles couldn't answer, Clay started the top of the fourth with a walk for Parker Lowrance. Lowrance got caught stealing second base, but was replaced on base on the next pitch as Easton McMahan popped up to the pitcher who errored and missed the ball. McMahan made his way to second base off a wild pitch with Chase Haggard in the batter's box. Haggard drove a line drive into center

field to score McMahan, 2-0.

In the bottom of the fourth, with two outs, Fleming Island looked like they had a fire started as Jackson Mercer singled off a grounder to third base. Jonah Friedman came in as a courtesy runner for Mercer. Anders Chadwell drove a deep fly ball to center field which Clay had issues getting a play on. With the error in the outfield, Friedman came around the bases to get the

SEE CHECKMATE, 32

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Thriller

from page 25

second field error, at first base after a muffed catcher's play at home, put Tant at third before Johnson's blast tied the game.

With Johnson at second, Breaston hammered a second double to the left center fence for the go ahead tally.

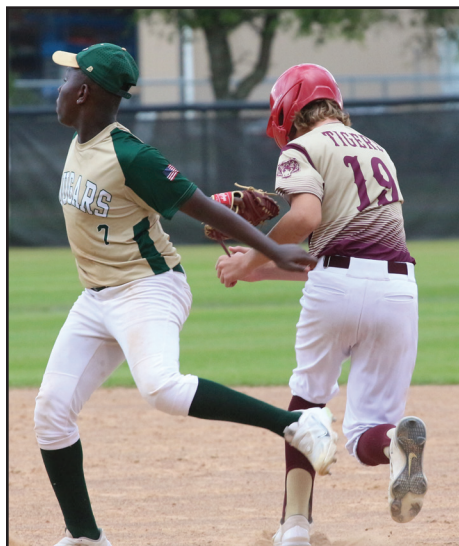
Oakleaf got excellent mileage from starting pitcher Tant who lasted until the seventh when Johnson was installed in relief.

In the first semifinal, Lake Asbury got punched with a five run third inning by Green Cove to feel the sting of a championship atmosphere at the home of the Broncos baseball team.

Green Cove showed off early bat power with a single by Ocean Bland and a double by Chase Donaldson, but Lake Asbury pitcher Lucas Montoro staved off the opening salvo.

Lake Asbury answered quickly with a single by McRae and and fielder's choice to Conte that put the Tigers up 1-0. Lake Asbury also posted a double, by Hester, but could not get him to home plate.

In the third, Montoro got pelted with two singles and a walk to set up a bases



Green Cove first baseman Kaden Lewis makes tag on Lake Asburys Jonah Quesenberry in seventh inning steal attempt. Right: Green Cove's Connor Massey sits at secondbase with score at 6-5 with the Cougars winning the comeback with an 7-6 score.



loaded scenario before Bland was hit by a pitch for the Cougars first run.

Two more singles and a walk put Green Cove up 5-1 with the feel of an upset imminent.

Lake Asbury, in championship form, answered quickly with Peyton McRae singling and stealing second before a line drive from Cole Conte got a run.

With Bland on the Cougar mound, Lake

Asbury kept intent on getting the score back with singles and walks plus a monster double from Clayton Hickey to go ahead 6-5 in the fourth.

Caleb Ainsworth hit a run scoring double for Green Cove in the fifth to tie with Horejsi's single giving the Cougars the final tally.

Oakleaf and Baker County split in the regular season; 3-0 for Oakleaf on Febru-

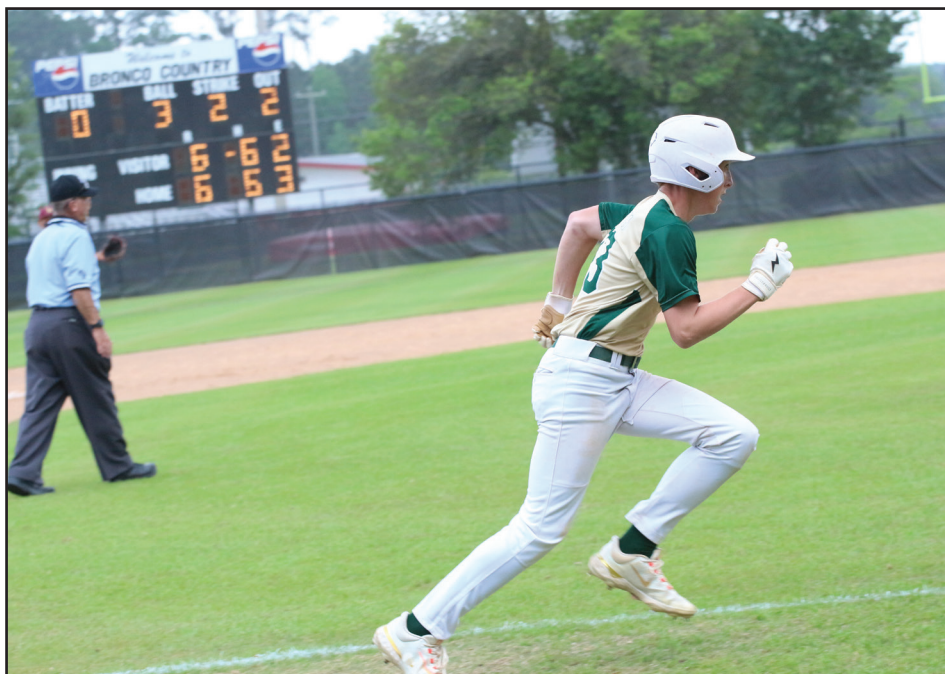
ary 28 and 11-1 to Baker County of March 30.

For Green Cove, Lake Asbury won a 7-4 match on February 23. Green Cove lost twice to Baker County; 12-0 and 9-4.

Oakleaf and Green Cove split in the regular season with Green Cove winning a 3-2 match on February 21 and Oakleaf winning 3-1 on March 23.

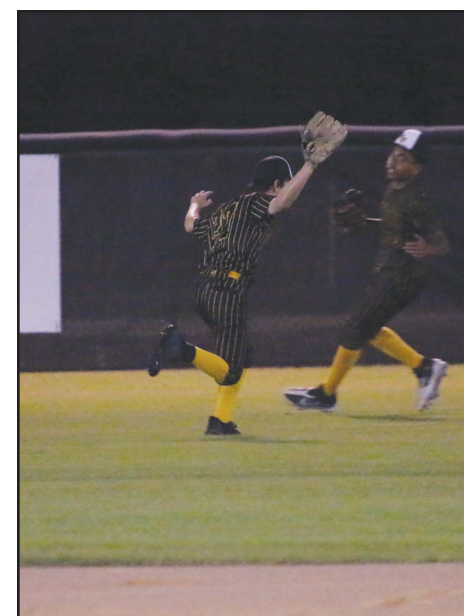


Lake Asbury coach Reuben Gonzalez addresses team between innings in Tigers first loss of season to Green Cove in NEFAC semifinal. Top Right: Green Cove coach Dan Slater shakes with assistant coach Sean Upton after win. Bottom Left: Green Cove pitcher Kaden Lewis fires fastball. Bottom right: Green Cove's Caleb Ainsworth heads home off base hit in final inning.





Oakleaf second baseman Deter Farina fires ahead of Baker County baserunner for out. Right, Deter Farina awaits teammate Gregory Breaston at home with key run in win over Baker County.



Oakleaf catcher Sebastian Albanese gets the strike call as pitcher Ezekiel Johnson leaves the mound with game-ending strikeout. Green Cove Springs left fielder Gabe Moyer snags second out of seven innings with spectacular grab of a Lake Asbury fly ball.

Stratton

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went. The other responded in the final lap and that's how we finish."

Stratton, running in a vacation-like Miami running singlet as an unattached runner, look comfortable as the 3.1 mile race opened with a lead pack of 12 runners cruised the first two miles in a relatively cautious pace before runners within the group, including Stratton, started to surge on the track's backstretch to test the mental will of the pack as the pace increased slightly for the next of the last five laps.

"We were throwing body blows on the backside, regrouping and assessing," said Stratton. "I was very comfortable and well within myself. I was getting tanked up for the final two laps to see if my training would carry me. It was getting fast."

Also in the race, but relegating to the behind the initial power pack of 12 runners was University of North Florida Kameron Wallizada, a Fleming Island High standout also on the track and in cross country, who has responded from nagging injuries through the latter part of his high school career to the college regimen with a recent 30-plus 10K (6.2 miles) track win a week ago at the River City Classic race at the



Fleming Island High grad Kameron Wallizada, now a freshman at University of North Florida finished 20th in Pepsi Relays 5,000 meters. Right: Former Orange Park High sprinter Markez Sermons is now at FAMU, here finishing 200 meters at Pepsi Relays in Gainesville.



University of North Florida.

"I just had a bad night (15:07.60) for 20th place," said Wallizada. "I wish I could have been up there with Matthew and mix it up, but my legs were not there after last week. That would have been fun."

With 11:40 on the clock, Stratton and Wilson made the strongest surge of the night with a power move that looked to separate a four-man pack; two Gators, two Alabama runners, from the rest of the field.

With two laps, Stratton sat in third place with Geiger, Wilson and Pinson tak-

ing the front before the bell lap unleashed Wilson to the front with Pinson and Stratton chasing to stay up.

"Once it got slow, we wanted to ramp it up," said Stratton. "When Ethan went first, I thought I could catch him. He can ramp it up very quickly."

At 200 meters, Stratton sling-shotted to the outside of the trio in lane two to make a move to the tape.

At the finish, with four runners crashing the line, Stratton hit the tape then hit the track with a big smile.

"That tells me the training and rehab is going fine," said Stratton. "Not bad for a couple of Jacksonville boys. I saw what Kam did in the 10K and said, 'He's back.'"

In the sprints, former Orange Park High sprinters Alex Collier, 400 state champion, and Markez Sermons; at FSU and FAMU, respectively, finished 39th in 21.75 for Collier and 47th in 22.45 for Sermons in the college 200 meters.

In triple jump, Oakleaf state champion Loren Johnson, now at USF, was 12th at 39-2.5.

Eagles headed for lacrosse playoffs

Goalie Walter heads to Spain

By Mike Zima
Correspondent

FLEMING ISLAND - Fleming Island High lacrosse midfielder Will Krupsky scored seven goals as the host Golden Eagles celebrated Senior Night with a 14-3 victory over Sandalwood in boys lacrosse on April 3.

The Golden Eagles end the regular season with a 7-9 ledger and will host their opening playoff game, a Class 2A District 3 quarterfinal, on Saturday, April 8. Their opponent was unknown at press time, as the seedings will be determined by the schools Florida state ranking on MaxPreps.com after all of the district teams have completed their seasons.

Head coach John Hawley had warned his Golden Eagles not to overlook the Saints despite their 5-8 record entering the game. Sandalwood was riding a two-game winning streak and had won five of their last seven.

The Golden Eagles responded with intensity, outshooting the visitors 13-1 in the opening quarter while opening up a 5-0 lead. Krupsky got the party started two minutes into the game, scoring in transition on a bounce shot from the left wing. The 6'2" senior added two more goals in the first quarter, one on a laser to the upper right corner of the goal after a dodge and the other from point blank range off a feed from sophomore attack Daniel Hawley.

"Will is a physical, bruising dodger, and he is proficient with both his right and left hands," said John Hawley. "At least half of his goals tonight were shot left-handed."

In the third quarter, Krupsky faked a



shot, ducked inside a defender and tallied a mid-range goal at the 3:39 mark. The Jacksonville University signee ripped two more lasers from distance past Saints goalie Aaron Back before sitting out the fourth.

Hawley, Nate LeStrange and Ty Teschner scored goals in the second quarter as Fleming Island took a 9-2 lead into the intermission.

Junior Brady Goldblatt scored twice in the third quarter as the Golden Eagles extended their lead to 14-2, triggering a running clock for the final period.

Seniors Jace Van Wierop and goaltender Paul Walter anchored a Golden Eagles defense that allowed only eight shots on goal. Van Wierop, a long stick midfielder whom Hawley called Fleming Island's top on-ball defender, held Nikko Paulite, Sandalwood's leading scorer, scoreless, and



Left: Will Krupsky scored seven goals in Fleming Island win over Sandalwood while, above, goalie Paul Walters earned an invite to play this summer with the Spain national team.

scooped three ground balls. He has verbally committed to play for Lynn University next year.

Walter made five saves, two during a minute-long two-men down penalty in the third quarter.

"All year long he has been great in the cage," Hawley said of Walter, who earned a spot with the Spanish national team in the off-season and will go to Valencia for practices this summer. He is eligible to play for Spain because his mother was born and raised there, and will play with either Spain's U-20 team or the men's national team in European and world tournaments between this summer and 2026.

"Paul is kind of the quarterback on defense, calling out the cutters and the slides," said Hawley. "It is so important to have his leadership out there."

A bit of strategy kept Fleming Island in possession of the ball against highly touted Saints faceoff specialist Alan Basic, who will play for Weber University next season. The Golden Eagles essentially conceded the draw, but had their midfielders closely guard the Sandalwood wings and had their

defense stick to the Saints attack men. Basic won 13 of 18 faceoffs, but the Saints rarely moved the ball to within range of the goal because he had no outlets.

"We knew coming in that he was good at faceoffs," explained Hawley. "So we locked down the wings and locked down the attack so he [Basic] had nowhere to go with the ball. And then [Fleming Island faceoff specialist] Cameron [Eldridge] did a good job of pressuring him."

Overall, the Golden Eagles outshot the Saints 38-13 and enjoyed a 26-15 advantage in ground balls.

Hawley is pleased that the Golden Eagles will have an opportunity to practice for four days in a row prior to the playoffs, a luxury they did not enjoy during the regular season.

"We will watch some film, try to find our opponents top three offensive threats and make a plan to stop them," said Hawley.

Midfielder Damien Krech had two goals while Back had 14 saves for Sandalwood, which had two more regular season games before playing in the District 2-2A playoffs.



Ridgeview weightlifter Collier Stevens finishes clean and jerk in district championships held at Ridgeview. Keystone Heights, Middleburg and Fleming Island all won district titles and area lifters will head to regions this weekend.



Ridgeview flag football running back Lexi Haile, in white, tries to avoid diving flag tag from Clay High defender Addison Holestin who make successful stop at the Clay one yard line. Ridgeview later scored and beat Clay 12-6.



Fleming Island High distance runner Graham Myers is at start of Pepsi Relays 1600 on way to a fourth place finish and another school record in 4:14.11.



After lap one of the Pepsi Relays 1600, Fleming Island's Graham Myers sits outside lead pack.



Oakleaf 4 x 100 relay Devin Collins takes second leg on backstretch in Knights fifth place finish at Pepsi Relays.

Oakleaf

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hard competition shape after a few sub-10 efforts in the past weeks; one a Bob Hayes title, this one a fifth place in 9:31.03.

In the hurdles, Orange Park freshman Nethan Verger was 22nd in 15.44 with Oakleaf's Ca'Mari Davis 25th in 15.74. Winner at 14.24 was Jabari Armstrong of George Steinbrenner.

In the 400, former Doctors Inlet Elementary track standout Kavon Miller, a senior at Bolles, was fourth in the 400 in

47.27. Miller is slated to play football at Princeton University in the fall.

In discus, the sibling Underwoods; Madison and Wyatt, of Middleburg High, finished 10th in 114-11 and eighth in 152-00 in their events.

Also in discus, Clay's Annalee Harbison was 14th at 113-02. Harbison was also 11th in shotput at 35-1.25 with Clay teammate Kenya Tinajero 13th at 35-.25. Orange Park's Mychalea Parker was 18th in 33.-10.75.

In boys high jump, Ridgeview's T'Vario Willis was fourth at 6'-6.25.

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CLAY COUNTY LEGAL NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

The Board of Supervisors of the Clay County Utility Authority will meet in Regular Session at 2:00 P.M. on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, in the Board Room at the Clay County Utility Authority, 3176 Old Jennings Road, Middleburg, Florida. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in this matter, should contact the Clay County Utility Authority by mail at 3176 Old Jennings Road, Middleburg, Florida 32068 or by telephone at (904) 213-2464, no later than 7 days prior to the hearing or proceeding for which this notice has been given. Persons requiring auditory assistance may access the foregoing telephone number by contacting the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770 (Voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD). If any person intends to appeal any decision related to this action, such person will need to provide a court reporter at such person's own expense, for a transcript of the proceedings. All interested persons are invited to attend. For further information, call (904) 213-2464.

Legal 63674 Published 4/6/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

BURGART ENTERPRISES TOWING INC. gives notice that on 04/21/2023 at 12:00 PM the following vehicles(s) may be sold by public sale at 4360 CR 218 MIDDLEBURG, FL 32068 to satisfy the lien for the amount owed on each vehicle for any recovery, towing, or storage services charges and administrative fees allowed pursuant to Florida statute 713.78. 4A3AK24F67E046368 2007 MIT S JM3ER2A54B0409551 2011 MAZD JT3GN86R6V0026523 1997 TOYT

Legal 63672 Published 4/6/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

FIRST COAST TOWING gives notice that on 05/01/2023 at 10:00 AM the following vehicles(s) may be sold by public sale at 2905 BLANDING BLVD. MIDDLEBURG, FL 32068 to satisfy the lien for the amount owed on each vehicle for any recovery, towing, or storage services charges and administrative fees allowed pursuant to Florida statute 713.78. 3VWRW31C17M515612 2007 VOLK JTKDE177460124558 2006 TOYT

Legal 63671 Published 4/6/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Board of County Commissioners (the Board) of Clay County, Florida (the County), will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at 5:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard, in the Board's Meeting Room, 4th Floor, Clay County Administration Building, 477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs, Florida, for the purpose of considering entry into a Purchase and Sale Agreement for the purchase by the County of a certain parcel of real property being particularly described as follows:

PARCEL ID NO.: 16-05-24-005954-140-00, CONSISTING OF APPROXIMATELY 1.185 ACRES.

This notice is given pursuant to Section 125.355, Florida Statutes, and Clay County Ordinance 99-65. A copy of the Agreement is available for public inspection between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, exclusive of legal holidays, in the Office of the County Attorney located on the 2nd Floor of the Clay County Administration Building at the foregoing address. All interested parties are invited to attend the public hearing and be heard. Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, any person who desires to appeal any decision with respect to any matter considered at the public hearing or at any subsequent meeting to which the Board has continued its deliberations will need a record of the proceedings, and may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made to include 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 the Clay County ADA Coordinator by mail at Post Office Box 1366, Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043, or by telephone at number (904) 269-6347, no later than three (3) days prior to the hearing or proceeding for which this notice has been given. Hearing impaired persons can access the foregoing telephone number by contacting the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770 (Voice), or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD). Board of County Commissioners Clay County, Florida

Legal 63669 Published 4/6/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 4TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA
CIVIL DIVISION:
CASE NO.: 2022-CA-001163-XXXX
U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, NOT IN ITS INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUT SOLELY AS INDENTURE TRUSTEE, FOR THE HOLDERS OF THE CIM TRUST 2021-R1, MORTGAGE-BACKED NOTES, SERIES 2021-R1, Plaintiff,

vs.
DANIEL THIBEAULT; TAMMY THIBEAULT; UNKNOWN TENANT IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY, Defendant.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated the 22nd day of March 2023, and entered in Case No. 2022-CA-001163-XXXX, of the Circuit Court of the 4TH Judicial Circuit in and for CLAY County, Florida, wherein U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, NOT IN ITS INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUT SOLELY AS INDENTURE TRUSTEE, FOR THE HOLDERS OF THE CIM TRUST 2021-R1, MORTGAGE-BACKED NOTES, SERIES 2021-R1 is the Plaintiff and DANIEL THIBEAULT TAMMY THIBEAULT UNKNOWN TENANT; and IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY are defendants.

TARA S. GREEN as the Clerk of the Circuit Court shall sell to the highest and best bidder for cash electronically at <https://clay.realforeclose.com/> at **10:00 AM on the 8th day of May 2023**, the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment, to wit:

LOT 31 WESTWOOD ROAD SOUTH A PART OF SECTION 34, TOWNSHIP 4 SOUTH, RANGE 23 EAST, CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENCE FOR A POINT OF REFERENCE AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 34; THENCE RUN NORTH 00 DEG. 15 MIN. 00 SEC. EAST ALONG THE WESTERLY LINE OF SAJD SECTION 34, A DISTANCE OF 1000 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 89 DEG. 36 MIN. 00 SEC. EAST, A DISTANCE OF 1090.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. FROM SAID POINT OF BEGINNING CONTINUE NORTH 89 DEG. 36 MIN. 00 SEC. EAST A DISTANCE OF 160 FEET TO A POINT; THENCE RUN SOUTH 00 DEG. 15 MIN. 00 SEC. WEST TO THE CENTERLINE OF THAT CERTAIN EASEMENT DESCRIBED IN INSTRUMENT RECORDED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 532, PAGE 499 OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF

CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA; THENCE RUN NORTHWESTERLY ALONG THE CENTERLINE OF SAID EASEMENT TO A POINT LYING SOUTH 00 DEG. 15 MIN. 00 SEC. WEST OF THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE RUN NORTH 00 DEG. 15 MIN. 00 SEC. EAST TO SAID POINT OF BEGINNING.
IF YOU ARE A PERSON CLAIMING A RIGHT TO FUNDS REMAINING AFTER THE SALE, YOU MUST FILE A CLAIM WITH THE CLERK NO LATER THAN THE DATE THAT THE CLERK REPORTS THE FUNDS AS UNCLAIMED. IF YOU FAIL TO FILE A CLAIM, YOU WILL NOT BE ENTITLED TO ANY REMAINING FUNDS. AFTER THE FUNDS ARE REPORTED AS UNCLAIMED, ONLY THE OWNER OF RECORD AS OF THE DATE OF THE LIS PENDENS MAY CLAIM THE SURPLUS.
If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator at crtrntp@coj.net or (904) 255-1695 at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.
Dated this 31st day of March, 2023.

TARA S. GREEN
Clerk Of The Circuit Court
By: Leigh Lucroy
Deputy Clerk

Legal 63668 Published 4/6/2023 and 4/13/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: ROBIN ALAN FEISER, the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:
Certificate No.: 946/2019
Legal Description: LOT 15 BLK 109 HIGHLRIIDGE ESTATES AS REC O R 2009 PG 238
Parcel ID No.: 160823-004491-000-00
Opening Bid Amount: \$1,710.22
Physical Address: 7080 SMITH ST , KEYSTONE HEIGHTS
Classification: VACANT RESIDENTIAL
Name in which assessed: HIGHLRIIDGE DEV GROUP INC
Said property being in the County of Clay, State of Florida.
Unless said certificate shall be redeemed according to law, the property described in such certificate shall be sold to the highest bidder online on the 7th day of June, 2023 at 9:30 A.M at www.clay.realtaxdeed.com.
Dated this 31st day of March, 2023
TARA S. GREEN
Clay County Clerk & Comptroller
Clay County, Florida
By: Christina Spadea
Deputy Clerk

Legal 63667 Published 4/6/2023, 4/13/202, 4/20/2023 and 4/27/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

PUBLIC SALE

SCOTT'S AFFORDABLE TOWING INC gives Notice to sell the following vehicles for towing and storage lien on April 20, 2023, at 10:00 AM at 2909 BLANDING BLVD MIDDLEBURG, FL 32068, pursuant to subsection 713.78 of the Florida Statutes.
2008 Nissan ID# JN8AZ08W26W546649
2016 Honda ID# 2HKRM3H73GH508037
2008 Volkswagen ID# 3VWRM-71K48M148128

Legal 63665 Published 4/6/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

CREEKVIEW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT REVISED NOTICE OF FISCAL YEAR 2022/2023 MEETINGS

The Board of Supervisors ("Board") of the Creekview Community Development District ("District") will hold meetings for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2022/2023 immediately following the adjournment of the Sandridge CDD meetings, scheduled to commence at 2:00 p.m., at the Holiday Inn and Suites, 620 Wells Road, Orange Park, Florida 32073 on the following dates:
April 25, 2023
May 23, 2023
June 27, 2023
July 25, 2023
August 22, 2023
September 26, 2023

The purpose of the meetings is for the Board to consider any business, which may properly come before it. The meetings are open to the public and will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Florida law. The meetings may be continued to a date, time, and place to be specified on the record at the meetings. There may be occasions when Board Supervisors or District Staff may participate by speaker telephone. A copy of the agenda for the meetings Budgets may be obtained by contacting the offices of the District Manager, Wrathell Hunt & Associates, 2300 Glades Road, Suite 410W, Boca Raton, Florida, 33431, (877) 276-0889 ("District Manager's Office"), during normal business hours or by visiting the District's website, <https://creekviewcdd.net/>.

Any person requiring special accommodations at the meetings because of a disability or physical impairment should contact the District Office at (877) 276-0889 at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meetings. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Service by dialing 800-955-8770, for aid in contacting the District Office.

Each person who decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at the meetings is advised that person will need a record of proceedings and that accordingly, the person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, including the testimony and evidence upon which such appeal is to be based. District Manager

Legal 63664 Published 4/6/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

SANDRIDGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT REVISED NOTICE OF FISCAL YEAR 2022/2023 MEETINGS

The Board of Supervisors ("Board") of the Sandridge Community Development District ("District") will hold meetings for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2022/2023 at 2:00 p.m., at the Holiday Inn and Suites, 620 Wells Road, Orange Park, Florida 32073 on the following dates:
April 25, 2023
May 23, 2023
June 27, 2023
July 25, 2023
August 22, 2023
September 26, 2023

The meetings are open to the public and will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Florida law. The meetings may be continued to a date, time, and place to be specified on the record at the meetings. There may be occasions when Board Supervisors or District Staff may participate by speaker telephone. A copy of the agenda for the meetings may be obtained by contacting the offices of the District Manager, Wrathell, Hunt & Associates, LLC, 2300 Glades Road, Suite 410W, Boca Raton, Florida 33431, (561) 571-0010, during normal business hours or by visiting the District's website <https://>

sandridgecdd.net/. Any person requiring special accommodations at the meetings because of a disability or physical impairment should contact the District Office at (877) 276-0889 at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meetings. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Service by dialing 800-955-8770, for aid in contacting the District Office. Each person who decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at the meetings is advised that person will need a record of proceedings and that accordingly, the person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, including the testimony and evidence upon which such appeal is to be based. District Manager

Legal 63662 Published 4/6/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

LEGAL NOTICE

A request for rezoning has been filed with the Town of Orange Park Economic and Community Development Department regarding property located on Park Avenue between Milwaukee Avenue and Elbow Road. The parcel number is 41-04-26-019029-000-00.

The Town Council and Planning and Zoning Board will hold public hearings for the proposed rezoning application. Anyone interested in this matter will be given an opportunity to be heard at the public hearing. A sign will be posted on the property concerned for the information of the general public.

The Planning and Zoning Board public hearing will be held on Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 6:00 P.M. in the Town Council Chambers, located at the corner of Park Avenue and Kingsley Avenue.

The Town Council public hearing will be held on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at 7:00 P.M. also in the Town Council Chambers. Information regarding the proposed change is noted below.

Application No.: R-8-2023 Acreage: 3.26 +/-
Current Zoning District: Residential, Single Family-2 (RS-2)
Proposed Zoning District: Governmental Use (GU)
Owner: Town of Orange Park

Any person(s) deciding to appeal any decision made by the Planning and Zoning Board with respect to any matter considered at this meeting or hearing will need a verbatim record of the proceedings made, which record would include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Copies may be examined in the office of the Town Clerk, Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. by appointment.

Courtney Russo, Town Clerk
Legal 63521 Published 4/6/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

LEGAL NOTICE

A request for rezoning has been filed with the Town of Orange Park Economic and Community Development Department regarding property located on Frog Hollow Road between Elbow Road and Grass-hopper Lane. The parcel number is 41-04-26-019050-000-00.

The Town Council and Planning and Zoning Board will hold public hearings for the proposed rezoning application. Anyone interested in this matter will be given an opportunity to be heard at the public hearing. A sign will be posted on the property concerned for the information of the general public.

The Planning and Zoning Board public hearing will be held on Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 6:00 P.M. in the Town Council Chambers, located at the corner of Park Avenue and Kingsley Avenue.

The Town Council public hearing will be held on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at 7:00 P.M. also in the Town Council Chambers. Information regarding the proposed change is noted below.

Application No.: R-7-2023 Acreage: 0.91 +/-
Current Zoning District: Residential, Single Family-2 (RS-2)
Proposed Zoning District: Governmental Use (GU)
Owner: Town of Orange Park

Any person(s) deciding to appeal any decision made by the Planning and Zoning Board with respect to any matter considered at this meeting or hearing will need a verbatim record of the proceedings made, which record would include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Copies may be examined in the office of the Town Clerk, Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. by appointment.

Courtney Russo, Town Clerk
Legal 63520 Published 4/6/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

LEGAL NOTICE

A request for rezoning has been filed with the Town of Orange Park Economic and Community Development Department regarding property located on Frog Hollow Road between Elbow Road and Grass-hopper Lane. The parcel number is 41-04-26-019048-000-00.

The Town Council and Planning and Zoning Board will hold public hearings for the proposed rezoning application. Anyone interested in this matter will be given an opportunity to be heard at the public hearing. A sign will be posted on the property concerned for the information of the general public.

NOTICE

TAX IMPACT OF VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD

Clay County Tax Year 2022

| Members of the Board | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Honorable James Renninger | Board of County Commissioners, District No. | 3 |
| Honorable Mike Cella | Board of County Commissioners, District No. | 1 |
| Honorable Mary Bolla | School Board, District No. | 2 |
| Citizen Member Joseph Wiggins | Business owner within the school district | |
| Citizen Member Richard Klinzman | Homestead property owner | |

The Value Adjustment Board (VAB) meets each year to hear petitions and make decisions relating to property tax assessments, exemptions, classifications, and tax deferrals.

| Type of Property | Number of Parcels | | | | | Reduction in | | Shift in |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|
| | Exemptions | | Assessments* | | Both | County Taxable Value | Taxes | |
| | Granted | Requested | Reduced | Requested | | | | Withdrawn or settled |
| Residential | | | 530 | 530 | | 0.00 | \$ 0.00 | |
| Commercial | | | 57 | 57 | | 0.00 | \$ 0.00 | |
| Industrial and miscellaneous | | | | | | | \$ | |
| Agricultural or classified use | | | 2 | 2 | | 0.00 | \$ 0.00 | |
| High-water recharge | | | | | | | \$ | |
| Historic commercial or nonprofit | | | | | | | \$ | |
| Business machinery and equipment | | | 30 | 30 | | 0.00 | \$ 0.00 | |
| Vacant lots and acreage | | | 1 | 1 | | 0.00 | \$ 0.00 | |
| TOTALS | | | 620 | 620 | | 0.00 | \$ 0.00 | |

All values should be county taxable values. School and other taxing authority values may differ.

*Include transfer of assessment difference (portability) requests.

| If you have a question about these actions, contact the Chair or the Clerk of the Value Adjustment Board. | | | |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|
| Chair's name | James Renninger | Phone | 9042696300 ext. |
| Clerk's name | Tara S. Green | Phone | 9045294125 ext. |

Legal 63504 published April 6, 2023 in Clay County's Clay Today Newspaper.

NOTICE OF EXTENSION AND RE-CERTIFICATION OF TAX ROLLS

Tracy Scott Drake, Property Appraiser, pursuant of Florida Statute 193.122(2), hereby serves notice that on March 30, 2023, all required extensions to, and the second certification of the 2022 tax rolls in Clay County, were completed.

Honorable Tracy Scott Drake, Property Appraiser

Legal 63663 published April 6, 2023 in Clay County's Clay Today Newspaper.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER IMPOSITION OF SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS PURSUANT TO SECTION 170.07, FLORIDA STATUTES, BY THE LAKES AT BELLA LAGO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER ADOPTION OF ASSESSMENT ROLL PURSUANT TO SECTION 197.3632(4)(b), FLORIDA STATUTES, BY THE LAKES AT BELLA LAGO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE LAKES AT BELLA LAGO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

The Board of Supervisors ("Board") of the Lakes at Bella Lago Community Development District ("District") will hold a public hearing on **Monday, April 24, 2023 at 11:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, at the Holiday Inn and Suites, 620 Wells Road, Orange Park, FL 32073** to consider the adoption of an assessment roll, the imposition of special assessments to secure proposed bonds on benefited lands within the District, a depiction of which lands is shown below, and to provide for the levy, collection and enforcement of the special assessments. The streets and areas to be improved are geographically depicted below and in the District's *Engineer's Report for the Lakes at Bella Lago Community Development District*, dated March 13, 2023, as may be further amended (the master project described therein, the "CIP"). The public hearing is being conducted pursuant to Chapters 170, 190 and 197, Florida Statutes. A description of the property to be assessed and the amount to be assessed to each piece or parcel of property may be ascertained at the office of the District Manager located at c/o Wrathell, Hunt and Associates, LLC, 2300 Glades Road, Suite 410W, Boca Raton, Florida 33431, (561) 571-0010 ("District Manager's Office").

The District is a unit of special-purpose local government responsible for providing infrastructure improvements for lands within the District. The infrastructure improvements expected to be funded by the District ("Improvements") are described in the CIP, and are currently expected to include, but are not limited to, roadways, stormwater management system, utilities (water, sewer, reclaim), hardscape/landscape/irrigation, undergrounding of conduit, environmental conservation/mitigation, amenities, off-site improvements, and other improvements, all as more specifically described in the CIP, on file and available during normal business hours at the District Manager's Office. According to the CIP, the estimated cost of the Improvements, including contingency and professional services, is **\$39,463,276.00**.

The District intends to impose assessments on benefited lands within the District in the manner set forth in the District's *Master Special Assessment Methodology for Lakes at Bella Lago Community Development District*, dated March 9, 2023, as may be amended and supplemented ("Assessment Report"), which is also on file and available during normal business hours at the District Manager's Office. The purpose of any such assessment is to secure the bonds issued to fund the Improvements.

As described in more detail in the Assessment Report, the District's assessments will be levied against all benefited lands within the District. The Assessment Report identifies maximum assessment amounts for each land use category that is currently expected to be assessed. The method of allocating assessments for the Improvements to be funded by the District will initially be determined on an equal assessment per gross acre basis and will be allocated on an equivalent residential unit ("ERU") basis at the time that such property is platted or subject to a site plan. Please consult the Assessment Report for a more detailed explanation of the methodology.

The annual principal assessment levied against each parcel will be based on repayment over thirty (30) years of the total debt allocated to each parcel. The District expects to collect sufficient revenues to retire no more than **\$54,320,000** in debt to be assessed by the District, exclusive of fees and costs of collection or enforcement, discounts for early payment and interest. The proposed annual schedule of assessments is as follows:

| Land Use | Total # of Units/Acres | ERU Factor | Proposed Maximum Principal Per Unit/Acre | Proposed Maximum Annual Assessment Per Unit* |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------|--|--|
| 40' Single-family | 106 | 0.80 | \$81,074.63 | \$7,663.33 |
| 50' Single-family | 264 | 1.0 | \$101,343.28 | \$9,576.66 |
| 60' Single-family | 156 | 1.20 | \$121,611.94 | \$11,492.00 |

* Includes costs of collection and early payment discounts when collected on the County tax bill. All amounts stated herein are subject to change and/or final determination at the public hearings and meeting identified above. Specific maximum amounts expected per parcel or

product type are as set forth in the Assessment Report.

The assessments may be prepaid in whole at any time, or in some instances in part, or may be paid in not more than thirty (30) annual installments subsequent to the issuance of debt to finance the improvements. These annual assessments are anticipated to be collected on the Clay County tax roll by the Tax Collector. Alternatively, the District may choose to directly collect and enforce these assessments. All affected property owners have the right to appear at the public hearings and the right to file written objections with the District within twenty (20) days of the publication of this notice. Notwithstanding the description of the Maximum Assessments herein, landowners will not have a payment obligation until the issuance of bonds, at which time the fixed assessment amounts securing those bonds, as well as a collection protocol, will be determined. The fixed assessment amounts will be determined at a public meeting, pursuant to a supplemental assessment resolution, engineer's report and assessment methodology, but will in no event exceed the Maximum Assessments noticed herein. Please note that the preceding statement only applies to capital (debt) assessments and shall have no effect on the ability of the District to levy assessments and collect payments related to the operation and maintenance of the District.

At the same date, time, and place, the Board will hold a regular public meeting to consider any other business that may lawfully be considered by the District. The Board meeting and hearings are open to the public and will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Florida law for community development districts. The Board meeting and/or the public hearings may be continued in progress to a date and time certain announced at the meeting and/or hearings.

If anyone chooses to appeal any decision of the Board with respect to any matter considered at the meeting or hearings, such person will need a record of the proceedings and should accordingly ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which includes the testimony and evidence upon which such appeal is to be based.

Pursuant to provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations at this meeting because of a disability or physical impairment should contact the District Manager's Office, Wrathell, Hunt and Associates, LLC, 2300 Glades Road, Suite 410W, Boca Raton, Florida 33431, or by calling (561) 571-0010, at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Service by dialing 7-1-1, or 1-800-955-8771 (TTY) / 1-800-955-8770 (Voice), for aid in contacting the District Manager's Office.

WHEREAS, the Lakes at Bella Lago Community Development District ("District") was established by Ordinance No. 2023-7 as adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Clay County, Florida, effective February 6, 2023, and is a local unit of special-purpose government organized and existing under and pursuant to Chapter 190, Florida Statutes, as amended, located entirely within Clay County, Florida; and

WHEREAS, the District is authorized by Chapter 190, Florida Statutes, to finance, fund, plan, establish, acquire, install, equip, operate, extend, or construct certain improvements, including but not limited to: transportation facilities, utility facilities, recreational facilities, and other infrastructure projects, and services necessitated by the development of, and serving lands within, the District; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors ("Board") of the District hereby determines to undertake, install, plan, establish, construct or reconstruct, enlarge or extend, equip, acquire, operate, and/or maintain the infrastructure improvements described in the District's *Engineer's Report For The Lakes At Bella Lago Community Development District*, dated February 6, 2023, attached hereto as **Exhibit A** and incorporated herein by reference ("CIP" and the improvements described therein, the "Improvements"); and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the District to pay all or a portion of the cost of the Improvements by special assessments levied on benefited lands within the District pursuant to Chapters 170, 190 and 197, Florida Statutes ("Assessments"); and

WHEREAS, the District is empowered by Chapters 170, 190, and 197, Florida Statutes, to finance, fund, plan, establish, acquire, construct or reconstruct, enlarge or extend, equip, operate, and maintain the Improvements and to impose, levy and collect the Assessments; and

WHEREAS, this Resolution shall serve as the "resolution required to declare special assessments" contemplated by Section 170.03, Florida Statutes, for the assessment lien(s) levied against the property as described in **Exhibits A and B** that secure the Assessments.

WHEREAS, as set forth in the *Master Special Assessment Methodology Report*, dated March 9, 2023, attached hereto as **Exhibit B** and incorporated herein by reference ("Assessment Report"), and on file at Wrathell, Hunt and Associates, LLC, 2300 Glades Road, Suite 410W, Boca Raton, Florida 33431 ("District Records Office"), the District hereby finds and determines that:

- (i) benefits from the Improvements will accrue to the property improved,
- (ii) the amount of those benefits will exceed the amount of the Assessments, and
- (iii) the Assessments are fairly and reasonably allocated.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE LAKES AT BELLA LAGO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT:

1. AUTHORITY FOR THIS RESOLUTION; INCORPORATION OF RECITALS. This Resolution is adopted pursuant to the provisions of Florida law, including without limitation Chapters 170, 190, and 197, Florida Statutes. The recitals stated above are incorporated herein and are adopted by the Board as true and correct statements.

2. DECLARATION OF ASSESSMENTS. The Board hereby declares that it has determined to undertake all or a portion of the Improvements and to defray all or a portion of the cost thereof by the Assessments and is as set forth in the Assessment Report attached as **Exhibit B**.

3. DESIGNATING THE NATURE AND LOCATION OF IMPROVEMENTS. The nature and general location of, and plans and specifications for, the Improvements are described in **Exhibit A** and as set forth in the CIP, which is on file at the District Records Office. **Exhibit B** is also on file and available for public inspection at the same location.

4. DECLARING THE TOTAL ESTIMATED COST OF THE IMPROVEMENTS, THE PORTION TO BE PAID BY ASSESSMENTS, AND THE MANNER AND TIMING IN WHICH THE ASSESSMENTS ARE TO BE PAID.

A. The total estimated construction cost of the Improvements is **\$39,463,276.00** ("Estimated Cost").

B. The Assessments will defray approximately **\$54,320,000.00**, which is the anticipated maximum par value of any bonds and which includes all or a portion of the Estimated Cost, as well as other financing-related costs, capitalized interest, and a debt service reserve as set forth in **Exhibit B**.

C. The manner in which the Assessments shall be apportioned and paid is set forth in the Assessment Report attached as **Exhibit B**, as may be modified by supplemental assessment resolutions. Commencing with the years in which the Assessments are certified for collection, the Assessments shall each be paid in not more than thirty (30) annual installments. The Assessments may be payable at the same time and in the same manner as are ad valorem taxes and collected pursuant to Chapter 197, Florida Statutes; provided, however, that in the event the uniform non-ad valorem assessment method of collecting the Assessments is not available to the District in any year, or if determined by the District to be in its best interest, the Assessments may be collected as is otherwise permitted by law, including but not limited to by direct bill. The decision to collect Assessments by any particular method

LAKES AT BELLA LAGO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT



RESOLUTION 2023-25

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE LAKES AT BELLA LAGO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT DECLARING SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS; DESIGNATING THE NATURE AND LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS; DECLARING THE TOTAL ESTIMATED COST OF THE IMPROVEMENTS, THE PORTION TO BE PAID BY ASSESSMENTS, AND THE MANNER AND TIMING IN WHICH THE ASSESSMENTS ARE TO BE PAID; DESIGNATING THE LANDS UPON WHICH THE ASSESSMENTS SHALL BE LEVIED; PROVIDING FOR AN ASSESSMENT PLAT AND A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT ROLL; ADDRESSING THE SETTING OF PUBLIC HEARINGS; PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION OF THIS RESOLUTION; AND ADDRESSING CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

– e.g., on the tax roll or by direct bill – does not mean that such method will be used to collect Assessments in future years, and the District reserves the right in its sole discretion to select collection methods in any given year, regardless of past practices.

5. DESIGNATING THE LANDS UPON WHICH THE ASSESSMENTS SHALL BE LEVIED. The Assessments shall be levied, within the District, on all lots and lands adjoining and contiguous or bounding and abutting upon such Improvements or specially benefited thereby and further designated by the assessment plat hereinafter provided for.

6. ASSESSMENT PLAT. Pursuant to Section 170.04, Florida Statutes, there is on file, at the District Records Office, an assessment plat showing the area to be assessed, with certain plans and specifications describing the Improvements and the estimated cost of the Improvements, all of which are open to inspection by the public.

7. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT ROLL. Pursuant to Section 170.06, Florida Statutes, the District Manager has caused to be made a preliminary assessment roll, in accordance with the method of assessment described in **Exhibit B** hereto, which shows the lots and lands assessed, the amount of benefit to and the maximum assessment against each lot or parcel of land and the number of annual installments into which the assessment may be divided, which assessment roll is hereby adopted and approved as the District's preliminary assessment roll.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS DECLARED; DIRECTION TO PROVIDE NOTICE OF THE HEARINGS. Pursuant to Sections 170.07 and 197.3632(4)(b), Florida Statutes, among other provisions of Florida law, there are hereby declared two (2) public hearings to be held as follows:

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS
 DATE: April 24, 2023
 TIME: 11:00 a.m.
 LOCATION: Holiday Inn and Suites
 620 Wells Road
 Orange Park, Florida 32073

The purpose of the public hearings is to hear comment and objections to the proposed special assessment program for District Improvements as identified in the CIP and the preliminary assessment roll, a copy of which is on file at the District Records Office. Interested parties may appear at that hearing or submit their comments in writing prior to the hearings at the District Records Office.

Notice of said hearings shall be advertised in accordance with Chapters 170 and 197, Florida Statutes, and the District Manager is hereby authorized and directed to place said notice in

a newspaper of general circulation within Clay County (by two (2) publications one (1) week apart with the first publication at least twenty (20) days prior to the date of the hearing established herein). The District Manager shall file a publisher's affidavit with the District Secretary verifying such publication of notice. The District Manager is further authorized and directed to give thirty (30) days written notice by mail of the time and place of the hearing to the owners of all property to be assessed and include in such notice the amount of the assessment for each such property owner, a description of the areas to be improved and notice that information concerning all assessments may be ascertained at the District Records Office. The District Manager shall file proof of such mailing by affidavit with the District Secretary.

9. PUBLICATION OF RESOLUTION. Pursuant to Section 170.05, Florida Statutes, the District Manager is hereby directed to cause this Resolution to be published twice (once a week for two (2) weeks) in a newspaper of general circulation within Clay County and to provide such other notice as may be required by law or desired in the best interests of the District.

10. CONFLICTS. All resolutions or parts thereof in conflict herewith are, to the extent of such conflict, superseded and repealed.

11. SEVERABILITY. If any section or part of a section of this Resolution is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the validity, force, and effect of any other section or part of a section of this Resolution shall not thereby be affected or impaired unless it clearly appears that such other section or part of a section of this Resolution is wholly or necessarily dependent upon the section or part of a section so held to be invalid or unconstitutional.

12. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Resolution shall become effective upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED This 9th day of March, 2023.

ATTEST: **LAKES AT BELLA LAGO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**
 /s/ Craig Wrathell Secretary
 /s/ DJ Smith Chair, Board of Supervisors

Exhibit A: Engineer's Report for the Lakes at Bella Lago Community Development District
Exhibit B: Master Special Assessment Methodology Report

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DEADLINE MONDAY NOON

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| 4 week \$40 | 4 week \$72 |

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HELP WANTED

Vehicle Mechanic— Town of Orange Park
The Town of Orange Park is seeking candidates for vehicle mechanic. This position performs routine maintenance, repair, and overhaul

of town fleet vehicles and equipment. Must have high school diploma or equivalent and valid Florida driver's license. ASE Certifications and CDL license preferred. Full time with benefits including vacation and retirement. Starting salary is \$31,841 DOQ. Please send a completed application to Orange Park

Town Clerk, 2042 Park Avenue, Orange Park, FL 32073 or crusso@townop.com. Application and full position description available at <http://www.townoforangepark.com/town-government/jobs/>. Position open until filled. The Town is an equal opportunity employer.

PINEWOOD APARTMENTS AVAILABLE

Pinewood Apartments, a USDA/RD elderly project in Green Cove Springs is available for purchase by a nonprofit or unit of government for 180 days from November 24, 2022.

Contact Jay Mason at jay.mason@covington.net

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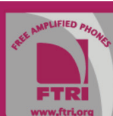
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