

# CLAY TODAY

# NATIONAL MOON DAY

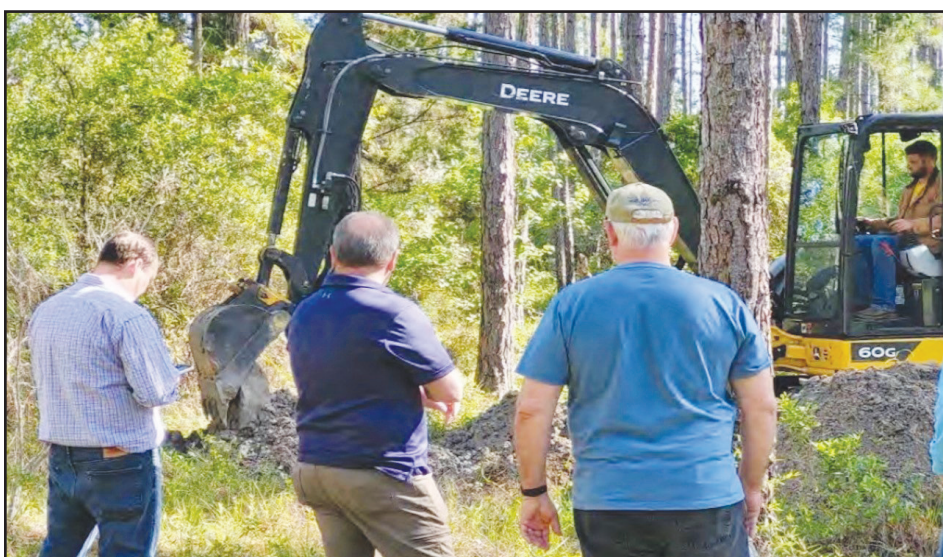
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THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2023

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## DEPA admits finding high levels of arsenic at two Solite sites



The Florida Department of Environmental Protection admitted high levels of arsenic found in two areas of the former aggregate kiln company.

State agency still won't talk to county to test entire property

By Lee Wardlaw  
lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Despite feeling ignored by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Commissioner Kristen Burke said she would join residents near the former Solite to continue to block any development until specific sites are deeply tested.



Kristen Burke

Kristen, County Manager Howard

Wanamaker and County Attorney Courtney Grimm hosted a Zoom call with three former employees of the former aggregate kiln company who said toxic waste is buried throughout the 900-acre property.

Burke told fellow commissioners last week about the of response from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection regarding contamination concerns. The BCC sent a letter in March to the FDEP requesting further investigation following allegations of illegal dumping activities.

Then, during a joint walk-through of the property with FDEP and potential pur-

SEE SOLITE, 18



## Hubel returns home to oversee Baptist Medical Center Clay

Orange Park High graduate to serve as interim president

By Don Coble  
don@claytodayonline.com

FLEMING ISLAND – Everything was so new for Ed Hubel on his first day as the interim president of Baptist Medical Center

Orange Park High graduate Ed Hubel remembers when Blanding Boulevard had two lanes. Now he's returning to the county as the interim president of Baptist Medical Center Clay.

Clay he sometimes forgot if the door leading into the Administration Office needed to be pulled or pushed.

After a few awkward wrong-way clunks, he started to get a feel for the 32-acre campus.

"What I've seen, what impresses me about this facility, is the first impression," Hubel said. "As I walked into a facility, I'm looking for, is it welcoming? Is it aesthetically correct? Does it look from a quality perspective? And how engaged is the team?"

"That impressed me out of the gate – not the bells and the whistles that we

have this imaging equipment or we can do this modality. It's more of what we offer to those we serve in this community that makes them feel welcome, that they're entrusting hope and their care to us. That's powerful."

Hubel was selected to keep Baptist Clay's momentum rolling. Darin Roark was the driving force that took years to get a new 102-bed hospital approved, designed, built and opened. Less than seven months after the hospital opened, Roark moved to

SEE HUBEL, 11

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# Residents get much-needed update on Live Oak Lane improvements

By Lee Wardlaw  
lee@claytodayonline.com

MIDDLEBURG – Residents of Live Oak Lane met with Commissioner Betsy Condon and Clay County officials to discuss funding for long-needed improvements to Live Oak Lane.

Some residents along Live Oak requested the funding, but paving the road will also come with caveats that not all residents like. The county must acquire 20 feet of property parallel to the street. The required footage is within an easement on each property that runs along the road designated for electrical lines.

The county received grant monies from the state during the past few years earmarked for The Northeast Florida Trailway System, which kickstarted comprehensive engineering and research.

Subsequent funding cycles further fueled progress, culminating in the construction of the eagerly-anticipated multi-use trail, which intersects with Live Oak Lane, providing a crucial window of time to allow for the funding of the unpaved rural road.

“Without the grant funding and some (money) kicked in by your County Commissioners, Live Oak would probably not be near the top of the list to get paid,” said Chereese Stewart, Assistant County Manager.

The project hopes to start in September as long as property owners purchase necessary rights-of-ways. That timeline also depends on the Board of County Commissioners’ approval of additional monies required to supplement the state grant,



The county needs a 20-foot easement on each property for electrical lines along the Live Oak Lane portion.

which would likely come out of the Capital Improvement Fund.

The county would like to secure the rest of the funds before the new Fiscal Year on Oct. 1. Stewart expressed gratitude for the state legislature’s funding commitment and underscored the county’s responsibility to optimize the resources at the right time. She discussed financial constraints and said that the grant received from the State Legislature would fall short of the total project cost.

She also said escalating costs of construction materials and conveyed the importance of utilizing the grant funds so that the county could finally complete the criti-



STAFF PHOTOS BY LEE WARDLAW

District 4 Commissioner Betsy Condon held a public meeting with property owners to discuss improvements on Live Oak Lane last Thursday at the Middleburg/Clay Hill Library.

cal infrastructure project.

Bobby Jamieson, Transportation Engineer with HDR, and Richard Smith, Engineering Director for the county, shared information on design plans and answered questions from the community, with Jamieson demonstrating particularly meticulous knowledge of project details.

He said his team conducted a comprehensive design study and thoroughly examined property deeds and legal descriptions.

The efforts were crucial in establishing precise property and right-of-way lines to ensure compliance with county and state requirements. The proposed design for the road guarantees a two-lane paved road that adheres to specific criteria of the SUN Trail, which would connect Gold Head State Park to Cecil Field.

One major factor will be drainage. Jamieson said having an effective drainage system that directs water away from homes would be essential to prevent flooding and safeguard residents’ homes. The

design team conducted thorough assessments of terrain and soil conditions to ensure the infrastructure cooperates with the natural environment.

The design team outlined plans to accommodate a variety of trail users, including pedestrians, cyclists and equestrian riders. A shared-use path will be established on the east side of South Jennings Road to optimize safety and convience by positioning the pavement on the west side, enabling all using the road and sidewalk to coexist. The design addresses ease of use for nearby destinations, such as Jennings State Forest, the pavilion and restrooms.

A Clay County Sheriff’s Office representative said the speed limit would be set at 35 mph to prevent speeding.

Another Live Oak Lane project update will be delivered during the next Board of County Commissioners meeting on July 25. At that meeting, there will be a presentation on criteria for dirt roads and evacuation routes.

# Town Council wrestles with issues surrounding Rob Bradley Conservation Park

By Lee Wardlaw  
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ORANGE PARK – The discussion about the Rob Bradley Conservation Park at Nelson Point was so intense it forced several delays during the Town Council meeting Tuesday night and led to Councilman Doug Benefield walking out in frustration.

The heart of the heated debate revolved around two critical factors: naming the park and determining which entity, the town or the county, should control it. The decision could have implications for taxpayers, depending on how it unfolds.

In her opening comments, Vice Mayor Susana Thompson said taxpayers don’t have exclusive use of the space. Since they



are already paying taxes for the town’s parks and the county’s parks and recreation, following the town charter must be considered to protect the residents’ interests. She suggested Mayor Randy Anderson pursue an interlocal agreement with

the county.

Thompson questioned the park’s name and why the county didn’t request to put “Nelson” at the front of the parcel in honor of John Nelson, a veteran that bought the park in 1948 after moving to the town after World War II and his family.

She also wondered why residents weren’t polled before the final decision.

Councilwoman Winette Sandlin was uncertain about the best course of action.

She said some residents prefer the park to be controlled by the town, while others support county management, suggesting that fellow council members not rush into making a decision. Sandlin emphasized that the control and naming of the park were separate issues.

Councilman Daniel Corbreiro had a similar message. He said that he needed more background information before making a final decision. He said he needed more time to explore the facts and asked that residents give their inputs at the next meeting on Aug. 1.

Anderson then proposed a motion to demolish a house on the park property to save funds long-term, but council members decided against taking a vote.

The council also unanimously approved the proposed millage rate for the 2023-24 Fiscal Year, which is set at 5.8781 mills. To put this in perspective, Corbreiro said the annual rate for the upcoming year would equate to \$2,351 on a \$400,000 home.

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# Sweet smell of success Hendry's farm mixes historical relics, sugar cane to make family syrup

By Lee Wardlaw  
lee@claytodayonline.com

LAKE ASBURY – Drive across the Lake Asbury bridge and take a right turn right from Branscombe Road down a dirt road, and you will be greeted with the sweet smell of success.

Here, you will meet Gayward Hendry, former County Commissioner, Chief Inspector for the Sheriff's Office and retired U.S. Marine, and his wife, Susan Hendry.

The farm has a wide array of animals, from chickens to pigs and donkeys to ducks. But that's just the tip of the iceberg.

The property has a concert stage and a wooden smokehouse, which lies across the road. Next to it is a vintage cabin designed with the exact same blueprint of Susan's former home on a dairy farm in Virginia built in the 1920s.

However, none of these tales are more intriguing than Hendry's made-from-scratch operation, Ol' Kelsey's Sugar Cane Syrup.

The cane syrup holds a special place in the heart of Lake Asbury, a labor of love that comes to life each year in the form of the annual Hendry Farms Cane Grinding.

The 35th annual event will take place Dec. 2-3.

The festival has grown exponentially over the years, becoming a staple event in the community.

"I had the kids out here, and they came and squeezed and cooked the (sugar cane). The next year, they'd bring their parents. They'd bring their grandpa, grandma, and aunts and uncles year after year," he said.

The event grew from approximately 25 visitors to 400 in a few short years, and cane syrup isn't the only thing on the menu.

Fried fish, turnips, collard greens, pig skins and cracklings, fried fish, southern ham and sausage, alligator and buffalo are options.

The buffet is set on a four-foot-wide, 40-foot-long table, each dish capturing the essence of southern cuisine.

A blacksmith will be a true blast from



STAFF PHOTOS BY LEE WARDLAW

Cooking sugar cane syrup is an age-old tradition for Gayward Hendry of Lake Asbury. His grandfather bought this mill in 1899, and Hendry's family has continued the longstanding tradition.

the past while boiled peanuts sizzle under the telephone pole and Ron Davis will perform throughout the event.

But none of that beats the unique process of creating syrup.

It begins with a carefully selected premium crop, which is sourced from Frog Song Farms in neighboring Bradford County.

Hendry used to grow the crop himself at his other parcel on Thunder Road, but as demand grew and time grew more precious, he forged a partnership with a local farmer, streamlining the supply chain.

"It's as simple as driving down with my trailer, honking the horn, and watching the skilled workers bring out their machetes and quickly cut and load the cane," he said.

That process only takes an hour and a half, but that's the beginning of the slow, intensive process from farm to table.

After transporting the freshly harvested crop back home, Hendry and his volunteers embark on the labor-intensive process of extracting the juice from the stalks.

The age-old mill, a cherished family

**SEE HENDRY, 21**

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## Poll: Local news sources garner most trust from both sides of aisle

By Peter Schorsch  
*FloridaPolitics.com*

Republicans and Democrats differ sharply on where to go for political news, according to a new Florida Atlantic University Mainstreet PolCom Lab poll.

The poll showed 44% of Republicans preferred cable news, while just 32% of Democrats turned to cable news programs. Independents prefer cable news even less, at 21%.



Peter Schorsch

Democrats and independents instead prefer network television news and newspapers, with 27% of Democrats and 18% of independents turning to places like ABC or CBS for news content, compared to just 10% of Republicans.

Regardless of political affiliation or leaning, voters generally place more trust in local media than in national outlets, according to the survey. Just 10% of voters said they had unwavering trust in the mainstream media, while 26% said they somewhat trusted it.

There are still some divides, however. About 56% of Democrats expressed faith in mainstream media, while only 32% of independents and 20% of Republicans said the same. And men harbor far more distrust for the national media than women, at 45% to 20%.

However, voters overwhelmingly trust local media, with 59% of Florida voters reporting trust in their local media outlets. Women have slightly more confidence (64%) than men (55%).

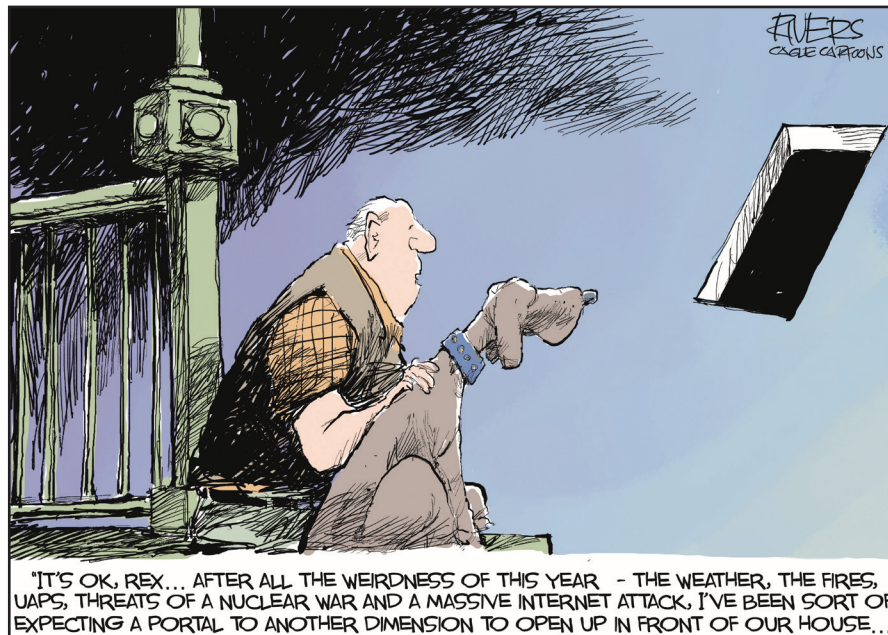
Those trends vary based on communities, with Miami boasting 68% voter confidence, compared to just 48% in the Orlando media market.

And across all markets, Democrats still are more likely to trust the local media than Republicans, with 83% trust compared to just 48% among GOP voters.

"It is great to see that local media is still seen as influential and important to voters," FAU Associate Professor in the School of Communication and Multimedia Studies Robert Gutsche said. "The challenge is that local news increasingly is seeing its ranks and resources cut, which will further influence how and where

SEE TRUST, 5

## OPINIONS



## Turn it up: 'And this duck you cannot change'

By Don Coble  
*Managing Editor*

We have ducks in our neighborhood. We also have crows, squirrels and, unfortunately, Canadian Geese.

You've probably noticed ducks and geese recently hatched new broods of ducklings and goslings. They parade along sidewalks and block traffic without any sense of immediacy. And to be honest, they're cute.

But they make a mess. One of my neighbors had enough of them littering his driveway. He was even more upset one of his neighbors fed them, so they always seemed to congregate around his house.

So he called the sheriff's office, which puts a twist on the term duck call. He was told the ducks weren't breaking the law. So he threatened to shoot them.

That is against the law.

Four deputies arrived within minutes. Ducks are one thing; guns are another. It didn't take long for the deputies to disarm the situation. They told him ducks were federally protected. They also told the neighbor she was not supposed to feed them. Both were told they should call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to have the ducks relocated to a more natural environment.



Don Coble

The next morning, the brood was back. The momma duck led a parade down our sidewalk with her ducklings in quick tow. Everyone forgot they have wings.

Some of my other neighbors, however, decided to fix it. They rounded up the ducks and took them to a remote area void of houses and people.

The next morning, the brood was back. The momma duck led a parade down our sidewalk with her ducklings in quick tow. Everyone forgot they have wings.

The Canadian Geese haven't left, either. Unlike the ducks, they aren't a pleasant bunch. They are the Darth Vader of the bird family. They put foul into fowl. They're mean and unapologetic. They don't leave messes; they leave speed bumps.

As our county continues to grow, wildlife continues to lose its natural habitat. Moss-draped oaks have become backyard porches and three-car garages. Nesting places have been bulldozed and covered with concrete.

We forget this was their home long before we turned acres of thicket into housing developments. Lilly pad-covered ponds are now parking lots, forcing

SEE DUCKS, 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.

**Granivorous:** (grah-NIV-uh-ruhs) an adjective that means animals feeding on grain.

"Betty loved sitting on her porch and watching squirrels plan, so she lured the granivorous animals to her yard with a variety of seeds."

## This Week in History

### Five years ago, 2018

- As Clay County prepares for a new hurricane season, there are hundreds of residents still wading through messy waters from Hurricane Irma a year earlier as federal and state money for repairs from federal and state sources is slow to offer any relief.
- The search to replace Danielle Judd as the City Manager for Green Cove Springs narrows to 12 finalists.
- The Orange Park Town Council express anger about the shoddy work done by several construction projects on Kingsley East and Plainfield Avenue.

### 10 years ago, 2013

- Sheriff Rick Beseler lays out his plan to build a multi-purpose facility that includes a low-security prison gun range, storage and training.
- The Orange Park Town Council votes against raising the millage rate from 6.3 to 6.6 mills.
- A horse and four goats were found abandoned at a property where law enforcement uncovered elaborate marijuana-growing bunkers in Penney Farms.

### 20 years ago, 2003

- Orange Park High football coach Roan McCrone resigns to become an assistant at Southwest Missouri State.
- Brian Curtis Avery was charged with second-degree murder of his friend, Keith Kyle Lavinder.
- Clay High football coach William Ronald Riddle retires after 37 years on the Blue Devils sideline.

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.

# History

from page 4

## 30 years ago, 1993

- The Hospital Corporation of America tours Clay Memorial Hospital in Green Cove Springs to consider reopening it.
- Former Clay High football coach Tony Mathison appeals his firing with the Florida Department of Education because he said it came “without cause and on hearsay alone” after seven players were suspended from the spring game for being at a party where alcohol was served.
- The Clay County Board of County Commissioners are expected to make a

final vote on a 10-acre donation by the Re-inhold Corporation for a water-retention facility at the Rosemary Hill Landfill.

## 40 years ago, 1983

- The Orange Park Community Hospital upgrades its emergency services to handle more patients with serious injuries.
- The county learns widening State Road 21 from Knight Boxx Road to Branan Field Road will cost \$20 million.
- County and Orange Park officials meet to work out an agreement after Orange Park residents said they are double-taxed. The town sued the county a year earlier to increase services since they were paying county taxes.

# Ducks

from page 4

ducks to find refuge in retention ditches and rely on scraps of bread crumbs to survive.

We must respect balance. If we build a community, let's ensure we have natural areas set aside so people and animals can coexist. After all, they were here first. We're the visitors. Just because humanity has the ability – and the desire – to develop doesn't make wildlife any less important.

That's what happens when you focus so much on progress. You forget the past. It's what's about to happen in Green Cove Springs. The sacred land where Lynyrd Skynyrd wrote songs, practiced and perfected their Southern Rock sound will be sold, destined to be transformed into another house in a busy development guarded by iron gates.

For more than 50 years, the historic lot has been spared an indignant demise. It was a noble effort for music lovers to hold onto one last piece of the band's past. All of the original members have died. Now their fabled clubhouse will be buried under yards of concrete, mulch and indifference.

The land where the hell House once stood, where “Free Bird,” “Sweet Home Alabama,” “Gimme Three Steps,” “Simple Man,” “Ballad of Curtis Loew” and “Workin’ for M.C.A.” were written, will fall victim to an insatiable desire to build.

All in the name of progress. But like ducks, history can't be caged and moved for convenience. Legacys have wings, too. No matter how hard you try, it won't go away.

# Trust

from page 4

voters get their information.”

The poll found that while many voters turn to social media for political information, traditional media such as cable and network news continues to serve as a primary source of information. Only 10% of survey respondents relied solely on social media for political information. Further, only 29% said they use social media for some information.

“Even in the social media age, cable news continues to be an important source of news for Florida voters, especially Republicans. Television continues to drive a large portion of political consumption,” said FAU professor of political science Kevin Wagner.

And what's perhaps most promising for political engagement ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election is how much voters are discussing politics. The poll found that 43% of respondents engage in political conversations at least occasionally, while 29% said they have extensive involvement in political discussions.

“Politics play an important role in our everyday lives,” said FAU professor of communication Carol Bishop Mills. “Although there are social taboos surround-

ing political discussions, it is evident that people are talking, and they should be.”

Still, those conversations aren't necessarily expanding voters' viewpoints. The poll found that, among those who have political conversations, talks with individuals who hold opposing views happened just 10% of the time.

“Listening and communicating with others who hold different beliefs are valuable skills,” Mills said. “Having difficult conversations and expanding our perspectives help us avoid merely confirming our own worldview.”

The poll was conducted from June 27-July 1 among 933 Florida voters. It has a margin of error of +/- 3.2% points.

*Peter Schorsch is the President of Extensive Enterprises Media and is the publisher of FloridaPolitics.com, INFLUENCE Magazine, and Sunburn, the morning read of what's hot in Florida politics. Previous to his publishing efforts, Peter was a political consultant to dozens of congressional and state campaigns, as well as several of the state's largest governmental affairs and public relations firms. Peter lives in St. Petersburg with his wife, Michelle, and their daughter, Ella. Follow Peter on Twitter @PeterSchorschFL.*



The lot inside Edgewater Landing has avoided development after Lynyrd Skynyrd used a shack known as Hell House 50 years ago to write many of their iconic songs.

# Lynyrd Skynyrd's Hell House lot going on the market

By Don Coble  
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The lot where Hell House once stood – considered hallowed ground by Southern Rock fans – will soon be on the market.

The lot inside the gated Edgewater

Landing development off County Road 315B is the community's last undeveloped piece of undeveloped property. Depending on who buys the lot, the land where Lynyrd Skynyrd spent years writing and practicing many of their iconic

SEE SKYNYRD, 10

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				64						65				

### CLUES ACROSS

- Database management system
- Medical procedures
- \_\_\_ Clapton, musician
- Defender
- Exert oneself
- Indicates position
- Prevents river overflow
- Atrocities
- Mister
- Ends
- Slope or tilt
- Taxi
- The very ends
- Actor Sean
- Japanese persimmon
- Sours
- Beneficiary
- Baseball official
- Muddy, boggy ground
- Not worldly
- Actress Lathan
- Soil
- \_\_\_-Cola
- Asleep
- \_\_\_ Angeles
- Give birth to a child
- Beach shelter
- Commercial
- Taste property

### CLUES DOWN

- Draw a scene
- Its sultan is famous
- Unlucky accident
- A way to ski
- Abba \_\_\_, Israeli politician
- Saw
- “Westworld” actor Harris
- Belonging to me
- Shoelace tube
- Takes to court
- Early multimedia
- In a way, produces
- Bowlers
- Of I
- Equally
- Gets some sun
- A place to stay
- Town in Galilee
- Aronofsky film
- Klingon character, “Star Trek”
- Equal to 100 square meters

- Atomic #58
- Arrived extinct
- Loosen grip
- A distinctive odor that is unpleasant
- Membranes
- Some is poisonous
- Partner to Pa
- Small brown gray rail
- A salt or ester of acetic acid
- Sodium
- Military official (abbr.)
- Lighted
- Took off
- All
- Ohio city
- More abject
- A radio band
- Controversial tech product (abbr.)
- Monetary unit
- Passed with flying colors
- A way to win a boxing match
- The Golden State
- Home of the Longhorns



# Fun in the Sun

Children enjoy afternoon of play, stories, food at August Savage Center

By Kyla Woodard  
For Clay Today

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Despite a blazing hot day, there was plenty fun in the sun for the local community last Thursday.

The Green Cove Springs' Villiage Improvement Association, the Augusta Savage Arts and Community Center and the Green Cove Springs Citizens Advisory Board, partnered up and hosted their first "Fun in the Sun" for community members.

"We all partnered together to have a day, in the middle of the summer, for just kids to get out of the house and have fun," said Cheri Starnes, chairman of the Citizens Advisory Board and Vice-Chair of the VIA.

After four months of planning, the morning of fun was officially showcased at the Augusta Savage Arts and Community Center and brought entertainment and togetherness for kids in the community. VIA President Larianne Stutts said the event



Clay County Fire Rescue Station 20 not only kept children cool but running through the sprays of water was one of the most popular activities at Fun in the Sun. PHOTOS BY KYLA WOODARD

aimed to get to know the youth better and create more fun opportunities for them to stay involved.

"We thought this was a good place because there are so many different programs, the gym, the AMI, they're right around here. So, the children are familiar

with the area," Stutts said.

As music filled the grassy area, kids showcased their best dance moves and practiced their finest hula-hooping skills. Guests enjoyed free snacks and face painting. And, to help beat the heat, guests were also able to enjoy free-shaved ice from the

local Hawaii FYVE-Sno food truck.

The event and outside festivities allowed guests to go inside and cool off while still enjoying the high spirits. Mother Goose made a special appearance inside

SEE FUN, 7

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Residents also found a way to cool off by enjoying free shaved ice from Hawai FYVE-Sno, one of the food trucks at the inaugural event.



Children enjoyed storytime from Mother Goose at the Augusta Savage Arts and Community Center in Green Cove Springs.



What would Fun in the Sun be without treats? Children were given snacks and gifts from the Village Improvement Association, Citizen's Advisory Board and Augusta Savage Arts and Community Center.

## Fun from page 6

the center, reading some of her popular nursery rhymes and inviting guests to re-enact them.

The Clay County Sheriff's Office and the Green Cove Springs Police Department allowed everyone to hop inside two police cars – one vintage and the other new. Guests were able to get a close-up view, take pictures, as well as hear the siren.

In addition to having fun, Starnes said another important goal of the day was to bring the local youth closer to county service members.

Starnes said it is common for kids to be afraid or not understand the necessity of police officers and firefighters. Starnes said that, with the help of these departments, the event could better show youth what the local community is doing for them.

"Those are things they see along the roadside, and it would be nice for them to kind of see, 'Oh it's not scary, it's a good thing.' So, we wanted to have that," Starnes said.

Starnes said she hopes to add other vital county services next year. She said by involving these departments, she hopes children will see the good that comes from having them around.

"Those are things that kids just don't

realize, that they're here. Our city workers give and give and give to our communities ... we want the kids to not only see them on the side of the road when something bad [has] happened but also see them in the light of all the good things they do too," Starnes said.

To finish off the day, The Clay County Fire Department arrived with a grand finale, showcasing a county fire truck and drenching guests with cool water. Hearty screams and sounds of laughter could be heard as kids ran around the park and through the drizzle.

For the future, Starnes said that 'Fun in the Sun' will be made into an annual event. For next year, she said there are some plans

to double the size of the event. Starnes said there are ideas to include a sock hop dance, sack racing and water balloons.

"We weren't sure what we would have this year because it is the first annual. But, we would like to do it each year," Starnes said.

Stutts said she was happy with the overall turnout at the event and hopes to continue providing support avenues for local youth.

"I hope that they see us as a resource when they need something and just want to know, 'Oh yeah, that those ladies help us'. That's what we want. We want them to see us as someone that's there for them in this community," Stutts said.

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# Obituaries

## LCDR Wayne Hamilton Ledbetter, USN (RET.)

December 3, 1928 – June 5, 2023

In the care of Broadus-Raines Funeral Home

Wayne Hamilton Ledbetter, 94, passed away on June 5, 2023. Born in Douglasville, Ga to Miles Douglas and Lucille Ledbetter, early life highlights include high school football and semi-pro baseball. He married Betty Jean Gilham of Atlanta, Ga in 1950.

Wayne had two substantive careers. Joining the Navy in 1946, he rose from seaman recruit to LCDR, retiring in 1971. He had tours all over the U.S. and in Panama and Cuba, highlighted by his 2000 flight hours with VW-4 at NAS JAX, as command meteorologist flying into hurricanes.



Wayne Hamilton Ledbetter

While serving in the military, Wayne energetically pursued his education, earning a B.S. from Jacksonville University, M. Ed. from the University of North Florida, and Ed. S. from Florida State University. After his military retirement, he began the Ed White High School NJROTC unit, serving as its commander for 6 years, and later taught a variety of subjects, including social studies and science, while also holding a number of administrative and supervisory positions, in Clay County until 1990. He then served as an elected member of the Clay County School Board from 1990-1994.

Some of Wayne's interests over the years were his charitable activities, his support of FSU Seminole sports, his many years as an advisor to U.S. Naval Academy candidates, his raising and showing Weimaraner dogs, and rescuing and breeding Arabian and Tennessee Walking horses, the latter two passions shared with his grandchildren.

Wayne is survived by his wife Betty (Gilham), his bride of 72 years; 4 sons,

Doug (spouse Angela), David (Nikki), Steve (Carolyn), and Brian (Margaret); sisters Jean Coffee and Betty G. Ledbetter (predeceased siblings Don Ledbetter, Dorothy Leiker, and Mike Ledbetter); 6 grandchildren, Nathan (Amy), Lisa-Marie (Andrew Tarquin), Carl, Miles, Aiden, and Will; 3 great grandchildren, Brian, Aya, and Moira (Tarquin); many nieces and nephews, and a host of extended family and friends.

A memorial service with reception to follow will be held on July 29, 2023 at 11:00 A.M. at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Green Cove Springs. In lieu of flowers, donations in Wayne's name to either St. Jude's Children's Hospital, the Tunnel to Towers Foundation, or a charity of your choice would be lovely remembrances.

Please sign the family's online guestbook at [www.broadusraines.com](http://www.broadusraines.com)

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



## Paul Everett Moore

Paul Everett Moore, 87, of Orange Park, FL, passed away July 16, 2023

Please sign the family's online guestbook at [www.broadusraines.com](http://www.broadusraines.com)

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



## (Curtis) James Furman

(Curtis) James Furman, aka "TOAST" went to Glory on May 31, 2023 while visiting family in St. Petersburg, FL. James is survived by Betty (Mom), Richard (Brother), Jennifer (Sister), Diane (Wife), James (Son), Thomas, Nevaeh, Raelynne, Wynter (Grandchildren) and may Nieces, Nephews & Cousins. James was a Commercial Fisherman and Crabber on the Trout River for many years before moving to Clay to be close to his Mom. But he was always drawn to the water. He was everyone's friend and



James Furman

the life of the party, with a forever young enthusiasm. He will be missed. We will be having a Celebration of Life memorial and Lunch in honor of James on July 30, 10 am-12 pm at Spring Park Pavilion in Green Cove Springs. Everyone is Welcome.

# Community Calendar

**WORKING MAN'S BASS TOURNAMENT:** will be on July 20 at 4:30 p.m. at Whitey's Fish Camp, 2032 County Road 220 on Fleming Island. Guaranteed \$500 prize to the winning two-person team. Call Daniel Green at (904) 449-9691 for more information.

**DARIUS RUCKER:** will bring his Starting Fires Tour with Drew Holcomb and The Neighbors on July 20 at 8 p.m. to Daily's Place Amphitheater, 1 Daily's Place in Jacksonville adjacent to TIAA Bank field. For tickets, which start at \$39, are available at [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com).

**HOME RUN DERBY:** will be on July 21 at 6 p.m. at Paul Armstrong Park. The event is sponsored by the Fleming Island Athletic Association and will feature two children's divisions for 8 and 9 years old and 10 to 12 year olds. The adult home run derby will start at 7:30 p.m.

**FISH DAY CAMP:** with Assistant City Manager Mike Null, Steve Thomas and "Papa" Guy Fisher will be on July 22 from 8-11 a.m. at Vera Francis Hall Park Fishing Dock, 1400 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in

Green Cove Springs. Learn fishing basics and fundamentals. Fishing poles, hooks and bait will be provided. Limited to eight students. To register, visit [greencovesprings.com/Augusta](http://greencovesprings.com/Augusta) Savage Center.

**YELLOWCARD:** featuring Mayday Parade, Story of the Year, This Wild Life and Emo Night Brooklyn will be on July 21 and 22 at 7 p.m. to Daily's Place Amphitheater, 1 Daily's Place in Jacksonville adjacent to TIAA Bank field. For tickets, which start at \$39, are available at [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com). Saturday's show is sold out.

**CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:** will meet on July 22 at 4 p.m. at the Administration Building, 477 Houston St., in Green Cove Springs.

**MICHAEL FRANTI AND SPEARHEAD'S BIG BIG LOVE TOUR:** with special guest Fortunate Youth will be on July 23 at 6 p.m. at the Saint Augustine Amphitheatre, 1340C A1A South. Tickets, which start at \$35, are available at [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com).

SEE CALENDAR, 10

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# Newman's military legacy to be preserved on USS Orleck

Veteran's story commemorated during ceremony at Baptist Clay

By Lee Wardlaw  
lee@claytodayonline.com

FLEMING ISLAND – Gary Newman was interviewed by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America's Florida Chapter about his life and career in the U.S. Navy for their Oral History Project of the USS Orleck at the Clay Baptist Medical Center on Thursday.

Newman's history will be forever engraved at USS Orleck through the project, and the Colonial Dames will also submit his history to the Library of Congress. His oral history is at the Library of Congress, but the Colonial Dames will submit another copy to preserve his story.

Before his time in the Navy, Newman told a tale of a hard-knock childhood, where he saw a strict upbringing as a foster child in the Detroit area.

Born in Centerline, Michigan, he was abandoned as a child. Free labor in exchange for room and board was a common practice for children during the time. By the time he was 7, he and his brother drove a tractor and plowing fields, he said.

Newman did this while living in orphanages, or with his brothers and sisters.



Newman brought a couple of keepsakes to the Baptist Medical Center Clay reception, which helped him recall his proud days of adventure sailing across the world.

His father reclaimed him, spending two months with him before putting a \$10 bill in his pocket and sending him on a train from Michigan to California to visit his grandmother. A few years later, his mother reentered his life with a new husband, who was a Marine.

Newman lived in Orlando with his mother and stepfather, but when his mother's new husband shifted from the Marines to the Air Force, the move would significantly impact the outlook for the entire family. They made a 4,590-mile drive to Eielson Air Force Base at Fairbanks, Alaska.

This is where Newman would stay until



STAFF PHOTOS BY LEE WARDLAW

From left, Veterans and Families of America Consultant Jeff Faulkner, U.S. Navy veteran Gary Newman and former President of Baptist Medical Center Clay, Darin Roark met to chronicle Newman's life.

he would end up at a crossroads. He recounted getting into legal trouble, with a judge giving him two options: either joining the military or being sent to a Seattle detention home.

He was sworn into the military at Kodiak Naval Station at age 17.

Newman felt joining the Navy was a perfect fit during boot camp.

"I realized at the time that there was no way I was getting out of the military. The military was my parents. They took care of me and told me what I needed to do. This

was the right thing for my life. I was kind of wild and had no disciplinary training, no one had watched my movements. I wanted to go see the world," he said.

Throughout a legendary 20-year Naval career, Newman learned valuable skills, had life experiences, and was involved in an international incident. He served his first 12 years as a torpedo man until 1973, when he changed his career field to become a Master-At-Arms. He also served on

SEE NEWMAN, 17

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# Skynyrd

from page 5

hits will be developed.

The house got its name because it had a tin roof and lacked air conditioning. But it's where songs like "Free Bird," "Gimme Three Steps," "Tuesday's Gone" and "Sweet Home Alabama" were created.

Clay Today learned a realtor is working on getting the lot listed at 3353 Southern Oaks Dr. According to the Clay County Property Appraiser's Office, the lot is valued at \$225,000.

When the lot was originally on the market, Adam Hardle, a standup comedian and one-time student assistant in the video department for head coach Steve Spurrier at the University of Florida, bought the land because he remembered an interview founding Lynyrd Skynyrd member Ronnie Van Zant gave about "the concrete creeping in."

"I didn't want this special place to be some dude's backyard," Hardle said.

Hardle also was the man who introduced Tim Tebow to Urban Meyer.

But Hardle died unexpectedly of natural causes on Nov. 30. He was 41.

One Home Owner's Association member worked feverishly to keep the band's fans away from the property. He helped convince the state to drop its plan to designate the property as a historical landmark, telling the state since the community was gated, there wasn't public access to the land.

But there was. Equally important as the spot where Hell House once stood was "Ronnie's dock" on Peters Creek. It's a place that inspired several of Van Zant's



songs. Hardle paid to have a historical marker placed at the creek, which has public access. The marker couldn't be seen from the street.

According to the court, the man improperly had the marker removed without a judge issuing an order or the sheriff's office delivering an order. The sign was eventually recovered, but it required help from law enforcement.

Apparently, the constant bickering from a handful of people may have been too much. So it will be sold.

According to county records, Hardle's nonprofit, The Great Church Inc., bought the lot for \$285,000 on Sept. 10, 2021.

25 at 5 p.m. at City Hall, 321 Walnut St. **WORKING MAN'S BASS TOURNAMENT:** will be on July 27 at 4:30 p.m. at Whitey's Fish Camp, 2032 County Road 220 on Fleming Island. Guaranteed \$500 prize to the winning two-person team. Call Daniel Green at (904) 449-9691 for more information.

**GOO GOO DOLLS' THE BIG NIGHT OUT TOUR:** will special guest O.A.R. will be on July 27 at 6 p.m. at the Saint Augustine Amphitheatre, 1340C A1A South. VIP tickets, which start at \$207, are available at ticketmaster.com.



City Manager L. Steve Kennedy explained the proposed budget – and the money needed – to members of the city council during Tuesday's special meeting. Former Mayor Van Royal said he wants to start seeing tangible results of planning and taxation, and he warned the council residents not to ask for a significant tax increase since residents are likely to face a 20% to 25% increase in their insurance rates.

## Green Cove Springs sets tentative millage rate at 5.0

Despite increase, city still has lowest rate in county

By Don Coble  
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The city council took its first step in setting its tax base by setting the tentative rate at 5.0 during a special meeting Tuesday night.

While council members Matt Johnson and Vice Mayor Steven Kelley were in favor of keeping the lower rate of 4.5, Mayor Connie Butler, Ed Gaw and Thomas Smith voted to make the starting point at 5.0. That rate can change as the council receives feedback and further information.

Property value rose by 9.97% in the city last year, according to the county's property appraiser's office. The administration originally considered the 4.5 rate, but decided on the higher figure to create more leeway in the budget. A half-mill will raise an additional \$300,000 for the city coffers.

"Give us a number and we'll balance the budget," Kennedy said.

Green Cove Springs is working through an extensive growth period, and with it comes additional demands to upgrade infrastructure projects while maintaining current responsibilities. Kelley said he's concerned about the growing costs.

"When I came here, the rate was 3.36," he said. "Now we're talking about a 150% increase (to 5.0) in seven years. That's quite a bit. I do think we do a lot with the money, but we need to be more efficient with it."

City residents also have to pay county taxes. Added to the county's millage rate, the overall rate for the city is 17.1817, which means a resident currently has to pay a combined \$17.18 for every \$1,000 of non-homesteaded property value.

Former Mayor Van Royal said the



rate should be capped at 4.625. He said a lot of businesses are spending money to attract new residents and visitors, but many of the city's projects remain unfinished.

"You have to decide whether to set (the rate) at what it should be or what it could be," he said, "but we need to see some results. If we're spending money, I expect to see something done."

Royal suggested the city hire an additional person in the public works department and a grant writer who can search state and federal programs for money.

The council will put the budget, including the millage rate, on its agenda for its Sept. 5 and Sept. 19. Residents are encouraged to attend. In other business, the council agreed to set a public hearing for Sept. 5 on a proposed resolution for the collection of solid waste and recyclable material at the Magnolia West Subdivision. It also set Sept. 5 for a public hearing on estimating the cost of stormwater management services, and it agreed to spend \$62,525 to repair the final section of storm pipe leading along Clay Street to the St. Johns River.

# Calendar

from page 8

**CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT:** will meet on July 24 at 6 p.m. at the Administration Building, 477 Houston St. in Green Cove Springs.

**CLAY COUNTY HISTORIC SOCIETY:** will meet on July 24 at 7 p.m. at the Administration Building, 477 Houston St. in Green Cove Springs.

**GREEN COVE SPRINGS PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD:** will meet on July

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# Hubel

from page 1

another challenge as the CEO and President of Wentworth-Douglass Hospital in Dover, New Hampshire.

Hubel will be at Clay on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and will still serve as president of Baptist's Nassau facility on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"It's only an hour's drive," Hubel said. "That's not bad at all."

Baptist is likely to determine a permanent location in a few months. Until then, Hubel is committed to greeting every employee and studying the hospital's services.

"I look at everything as if I was a patient," he said. "I want to know what they see. We're here to heal people physically and emotionally. To do that, you have to look at things differently."

Hubel's appointment allowed him to return to Clay County. He went to elementary, seventh- and eighth-grade centers in Orange Park and graduated from Orange Park High in 1981.

"Darin gave us a shocker (by leaving). It shocked everyone," Hubel said. "He departed and they said 'Ed, don't you have a Clay County background?' I love Clay County. I grew up here. I can remember when Blanding Boulevard only had two lanes.

"I don't know where I'm going to end up, but I'd love to come back to Clay. I still have roots here."

Hubel said his first job was wrapping



STAFF PHOTO BY DON COBLE

Ed Hubel will have dual responsibilities with the Baptist Health, working as the president at its Nassau County facility on Tuesdays and Thursdays and as the interim president at the Clay County campus on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

and banding Clay Today newspapers for delivery.

"I can still remember the ink made me dizzy," Hubel said with a chuckle. "I realized then the importance of being local, being part of the community."

He originally wanted to be a Navy pilot but didn't meet the rigid physical requirements.

He got a degree in aviation management from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach. He veered into the healthcare industry after working an over-

night job for years.

He started with Baptist in 1986 as a finance leader. He's also been an assistant administrator of operations, administrator of surgical services, director of patient care operations and service-line lead for Baptist Health Orthopedics. In 2016, he was appointed hospital president of Baptist Medical Center Nassau.

Hubel said important for a hospital to serve all of the needs of its community.

"We're in the business for two things: to meet the physical and emotional needs of

those we serve," he said. "It's a neighborhood. When I meet with the team, what's top of my mind is how do we make this a better value product for those we serve?"

Hubel inherited a \$234 million, 300,000-square-foot hospital that opened Dec. 19. The campus also includes Wolfson Children's Hospital, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, an emergency room and a health and wellness center called Baptist Health-Place at Fleming Island.

"This reminds me of Nassau – only bigger," Hubel said.

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# Community Briefs

## Howlin Wolf hosts poker run for couple with medical bills

MELROSE – The Howlin Wolf will host a benefit motorcycle poker run and concert on July 22 to raise money for Brian and Theresa Warden, who have been beset by financial troubles associated with failed hip replacement surgery.

The couple isn't able to work because of their medical problems, so the community will participate in a seven-stop poker run

to support them. The ride starts at 9:30 p.m. and it will end at 3 p.m.

A donation of \$20 includes the poker run, while a \$25 gift is worth the poker run and barbecue meal. Two riders cost \$30, while two riders and two meals cost \$40.

The music lineup includes Amy Webster, All Fired Up, 2 The 9's, Brett Russell, Paul Wane, Sweet William Band, The Gonzo's, Southern Burn, Outlaw Country, Second Chance and Easily Distracted. An

open jam session will be from 7-8 p.m.

There will also be a 50-50 raffle and a live auction.

The couple as established a GoFundMe page.

## Friends to support musician who lost everything in fire

MIDDLEBURG – Friends of Tim West-erwelle will gather on July 29 at American Legion Post 250 for a Poker Chip Run to

raise money after his home was destroyed by fire.

The benefit will start and end at the post at 2608 Black Creek Dr. Registration starts at 9 a.m. and kickstands will go up at 11 a.m. The cost is \$20 a rider, and the fee includes a barbecue lunch.

Stops on the poker run will be at Dalton's Sports Grill, Smith Lake, Red Dog and

SEE BRIEFS, 13

## PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

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

### ORDINANCE NO. O-22-2023

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 113, ARTICLE VI AND VII OF THE CITY CODE TO MAKE REVISIONS TO THE CITY LANDSCAPE AND TREE REQUIREMENTS; AMENDING THE PURPOSE AND INTENT OF SECTION 113-242 ADDING AND AMENDING DEFINITIONS IN SECTION 113-243; AMENDING THE SUBDIVISION STREET TREE REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN SECTION 113-246; AMENDING THE LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND MATERIALS REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 113-247; AMENDING THE TREE PRESERVATION REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN SECTION 113-248; AMENDING THE REMOVAL OF TREE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 113-275; AMENDING THE TREE EXCEPTIONS AND EXEMPTIONS IN SECTION 113-276; AMENDING THE CONDITIONS FOR TREE REMOVAL IN SECTION 113-278; AMENDING THE TREE REPLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN SECTION 113-279 AMENDING THE CITY RECOMMENDED LIST OF PLANTS BY THE CITY IN SECTION 113-280; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Planning and Zoning Board:	Tuesday, July 25, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter
City Council	Tuesday, August 1, 2023, at 7:00 pm or shortly thereafter
City Council	Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 7:00 pm or shortly thereafter

Please be advised that if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at this scheduled public hearing, he will need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

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

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

All interested individuals are invited to attend this public hearing.

City of Green Cove Springs  
Lyndie Knowles, Development Services Representative  
321 Walnut Street  
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

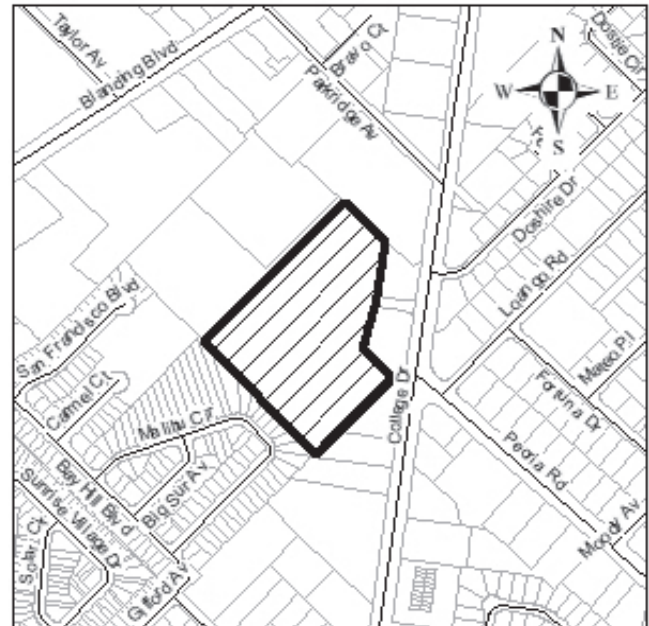
Steve Kennedy, City Manager

Legal 75756 published July 13, and 20, 2023 in Clay County's Clay Today Newspaper.

## NOTICE OF PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE CLAY COUNTY 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Planning Commission of Clay County, Florida, will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, August 1, 2023, at 5:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard, and that the Board of County Commissioners of Clay County, Florida, will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, August 22, 2023 at 5:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard. The hearings will be held in the Board of County Commissioners Meeting Room, 4th Floor, Clay County Administration Building, 477 Houston St, Green Cove Springs, Florida. The public hearings are scheduled for the purpose of considering the adoption of a small-scale amendment to the Future Land Use Map of the Clay County 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The ordinance adopting the proposed amendment is entitled:

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CLAY COUNTY 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INITIALLY ADOPTED PURSUANT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 163.3184, FLORIDA STATUTES, UNDER ORDINANCE NO. 2018-31, AS SUBSEQUENTLY AMENDED, IN ORDER TO AMEND THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP TO CHANGE THE FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION OF A PORTION OF A SINGLE PARCEL (TAX PARCEL IDENTIFICATION # 40-04-25-020673-000-00), TOTALING APPROXIMATELY 12 ACRES, FROM IND (INDUSTRIAL) TO UC-10 (URBAN CORE 10); PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**



Interested parties may appear at the hearings and be heard with respect to the proposed ordinance. After the public hearings the Board may take immediate action on the proposed ordinance, or may continue its deliberations to a date, time and place then announced without publishing further notice thereof. A copy of the proposed ordinance is available for inspection by the public at the Clay County Planning and Zoning Division, Third Floor of the Administration Building, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, a person deciding to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at the hearings or at any subsequent hearing to which the Board has continued its deliberations is advised that such person will need a record of all proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record of all proceedings is made, which must include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing accommodations to participate in this matter should contact Clay County Risk Management by mail at P.O. Box 1366, Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043, or by telephone at (904) 278-4718, no later than three (3) days prior to the hearing or proceeding for which this notice has been given. Deaf and hard of hearing persons can access the telephone number by contacting the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770 (Voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

Clay County Board of County Commissioners

Legal 76211 published July 20, 2023 in Clay County's Clay Today Newspaper.

# Briefs

from page 12

Fat Boyz. Westerwelle's High Ground band will highlight a night of music that includes Southbound 41, Southern Junction, Vynl and JJ Rocs. There also will be an auction and raffle.

Westerwelle lost his home and all of his belongings in a fire in late May.

Call (904) 466-1585 for more information.

## Book sale coming to Middleburg/Clay Hill Library

MIDDLEBURG – Friends of the Middleburg/Clay Hill Library will host a four-day book sale from Aug. 2-5 at 2245 Aster Ave.

Members can shop on Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The public can shop on Thursday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Members can fill their "Friends" book bag on the final day for \$5.

The organization will only accept cash and checks. The club will accept books in good condition. All proceeds will benefit the library.

For more information, call (904) 502-2605.

## Florida Blue hosting free summer health expo on July 29

ORANGE PARK – The Clay County Chamber of Commerce announces Florida Blue will be hosting a free summer health expo at the Orange Park Mall on Saturday, July 29 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Speakers include doctors and health professionals with valuable information on their areas of expertise. There will be 30 vendor booths from a wide variety of health-related businesses. For more infor-

mation contact the Chamber at (904) 264-2651.

## Lynyrd Skynrd, The Curt Towne Band coming to St. Augustine

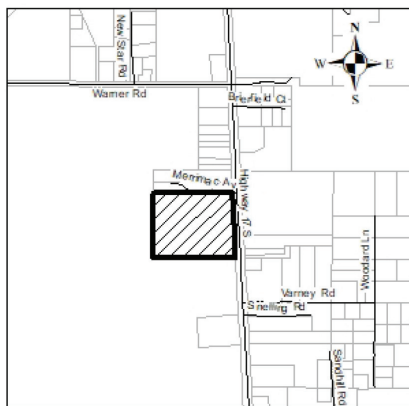
ST. AUGUSTINE – Part of Lynyrd Skynrd's 50th-anniversary tour will include a show on Oct. 6 at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre. The Curt Towne Band will join the legendary band. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the show will start at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are available at the venue at 1340C A1A South or ticketmaster.com and vary between \$45.50 and \$170.50.

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Interested parties may appear at the hearings and be heard with respect to the proposed ordinance. After the public hearings the Board may take immediate action on the proposed ordinance, or may continue its deliberations to a date, time and place then announced without publishing further notice thereof. A copy of the proposed ordinance is available for inspection by the public at the Clay County Planning and Zoning Division, Third Floor of the Administration Building, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays.

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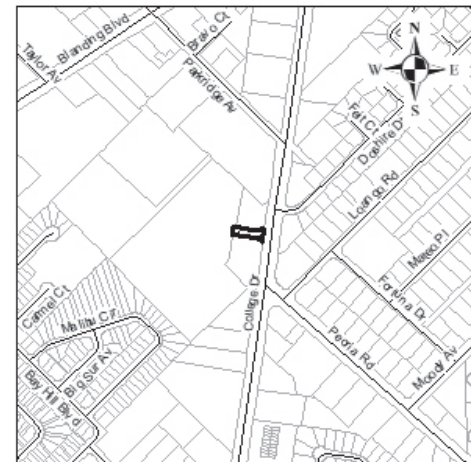
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Clay County Board of County Commissioners

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Interested parties may appear at the hearings and be heard with respect to the proposed ordinance. After the public hearings the Board may take immediate action on the proposed ordinance, or may continue its deliberations to a date, time and place then announced without publishing further notice thereof. A copy of the proposed ordinance is available for inspection by the public at the Clay County Planning and Zoning Division, Third Floor of the Administration Building, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays.

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Clay County Board of County Commissioners



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

### Spring Park Elementary officially opens ahead of school year

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Although work continued on County Road 315 as dignitaries met to officially open Spring Park Elementary, the district’s 43<sup>rd</sup> school will “open on time, on budget and without debt,” according to Superintendent David Broskie. Spring Park will have 48 classrooms that can accommodate as many as 851 students. Principal Tiffany Quitman said getting the school prepared for the first day of school on Aug. 10. “In this building, memories will be made. Lessons will be learned. The hearts and minds of our most precious resource will be nurtured,” Quitman said. Teachers, parents and students were at the ribbon-cutting ceremony, along with School Board Member Beth Clark, County Commissioner Mike Cella, County Manager Howard Wanamaker, the entire Green Cove Springs City Council and members of the Clay County Schools District and Green Cove Springs police departments.





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BY STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

### Storm can't dampen fun, games at Cliff Avril Family Fun Day

Although a quick-moving yet strong storm passed over Paul Armstrong Park shortly after more than 150 children gathered for the 11th Cliff Avril Family Fun Day, the majority found cover and spent the rest of the afternoon enjoying an afternoon of food and free activities. As if bounce houses, water slides, climbing walls, face-painting, kickball, foam machine and bungee swings weren't enough, the wet grass and puddles became another popular option for children. Commissioner Alexandra Compere and Operation Barnabas founder Rylan Heck were one of nearly 30 volunteers for the annual celebration emphasizing family and community values. Avril graduated from Clay High and played linebacker and defensive end at Purdue before he was drafted in the third round by the Detroit Lions. His 12-year career also included a four-year stint with the Seattle Seahawks. See page 26 for story about Cliff Avril Football Camp.





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-----  
 Thursday August 10th, Friday August 11th  
 Saturday August 12th

**Matinees (Doors Open 1:00 pm. Curtain Up at 2:00 pm)**  
 Sunday August 6th, Sunday August 13th

**Synopsis of Barefoot In The Park**

Corie and Paul Bratter are a pair of newlyweds and their first home is an apartment in New York City. Corie is a light-hearted person who is very optimistic about their future. Paul, however, is more grounded and anxious about things like the state of the apartment, the hole in the skylight, the leaky closet and the lack of a bathtub.

Shortly after moving in, Corie tries to 'set up' her Mother with their eccentric neighbor Mr. Velasco. Over the course of four days, Paul and Corie learn to live together while dealing with the daily 'ups and downs' - during which time, Corie tries to get Paul to be more easy-going and run "barefoot in the park"

Booking Office 386-244-7886. Online bookings rcppalatka.org



Gary Newman, retired decorated U.S. Navy veteran and founder of Vietnam Veterans of America Col. William G. Byrns Chapter in Clay County, sat down with the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America to talk about his time in the armed services for their Oral History Project.

**Newman**  
 from page 9

the Armed Forces Police in Brooklyn and Maddalena, Sardinia.

Newman's first mission was aboard the USS Ammen (DD-527) from June 1959 to Aug. 1960. He transferred to the USS Shelton (DD-790), where he was from Aug. 1960-March 1962. Newman forged strong bonds with fellow sailors and immersed himself in local Japanese culture.

Newman stayed on the USS Orleck (DD-886) from March to November 1964, where he traveled the world, forged tight-knit bonds with fellow sailors, experienced new cultures, and met seaman from other countries. Newman survived a typhoon at sea, the ocean rocking the Orleck so violently that he could walk on the walls of the vessel.

While aboard the USS Maddox (DD-731) in August 1964, Newman was involved in the Gulf of Tonkin, an international incident where torpedoes from North Vietnamese forces attacked his and another ship.

Newman said he witnessed the boats coming in. After the first incident, his boat needed refurbishments and soldiers to collect food and ammunition. Enemy submarines were believed to be active again two days later, but no official sightings were confirmed.

However, enough was enough. On Aug. 7, 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to take any measure necessary to retaliate and promote international peace and security in southeast Asia, a legal basis for Johnson and President Richard Nixon for the Vietnam War.

Newman served two tours in Vietnam, where he was the only torpedo man to serve on riverboats. He retired in March 1978 as a Master-at-Arms Chief Petty Officer. He was immediately hired as Clay County Deputy Sheriff, then served as Deputy Director of Security at NAS Jacksonville. Newman retired from civil service in 2007.

Newman is also a passionate advocate for veterans and a highly decorated soldier. He has spent countless hours mentoring fellow soldiers. He founded the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1059 in Clay County in 2012 and the Veterans Interaction Program at Union Correctional Facility in 2013. And he helped organize the Clay County Veterans Council in 2014.

He was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal with combat "V" attachment, the Presidential Unit Citation, and two Navy Meritorious Unit Commendations, among other achievements. Now, his history will now be forever preserved in the Orleck.

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# Solite

from page 1

chaser and developer Micheal Danhour, discarded barrels were discovered, aligning with the employees' descriptions.

After the county asked the FDEP to inspect the entire property, the agency said it found significant levels of arsenic in two highlighted areas. To date, the FDEP has ignored the county's request to test the entire lot.

Following discovering the barrels, the FDEP conducted split-sample testing with Danhour on 10 sites in late April. These were the areas identified by former employees during the March Zoom call. The testing revealed elevated levels of arsenic in two specific areas of the property, consistent with the employees' descriptions.

They said he saw barrels of jet fuel and biohazards being buried or dumped in lakes on the property.

Residents in the area of Russell and Sanridge roads have reported high levels of serious illnesses, like cancer, Spina bifida and heart disease.

The county can't stop the sale of Solite, but it can deny re-zoning requests that would block development.

Burke said she wouldn't quit urging the FDEP to consider the new sampling results and employee accounts and conduct a comprehensive assessment of the entire property.

Commissioner Betsy Condon offered a different perspective, expressing reservations about the county's limited legal standing since the Solite property is owned privately.

She cautioned against jeopardizing a good working relationship with FDEP. Condon said that she needs to maintain this because separate, unrelated issues are ongoing for her district's constituents.

"I don't want to have a negative relationship with the DEP. They know our position on this. I don't want to poke them in the eye," she said.

The recent sale and establishment of an escrow fund for 80 acres on March 31 zoned separately as Village Center is potentially intended for residential development, which has raised additional concerns.

Burke said tampering with soil in the area, especially considering the presence of arsenic and its potential health risks. Disruption of the soil could cause addition-



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY KRISTEN BURKE  
Split-sample testing revealed elevated arsenic in soil in groundwater at "Areas of Concern-5" and groundwater at AOC-2, surpassing the applicable cleanup target levels.

al environmental concerns.

Burke said "credible sources" have told her developers seek to build a nursing home on the property.

"I very much have issue with that," she said.

Burke's concerns and two crucial letters have once again raised concerns about potential contamination and health risks with the site.

In one of the letters on June 30 received by Burke from the FDEP and addressed to Albert Galliano of the Northeast Solite Corporation, the state agency confirmed the presence of two previously unidentified Areas of Concern on the property. The FDEP's Hazardous Waste Program and Site Investigation Section observed Danhour's investigation.

The split samples collected between FDEP and Golder Associates revealed elevated arsenic in soil and groundwater at AOC-5 and groundwater at AOC-2, surpassing the applicable Cleanup Target Levels. Consequently, the state agency deemed additional contamination assessment necessary, requiring Stoneridge to initiate a site assessment and provide a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Facility Investigation (RFI) Report for AOC-2 and AOC-5. The company was given a 30-day window to plan to address the AOCs.

In a second letter, dated July 10, Stoneridge Farms responded to FDEP's letter in a separate correspondence addressed to Robert Cook, who represents the FDEP's Hazardous Waste Regulation Section.

The letter provided a quarterly progress report, a comprehensive overview of the corrective action taken for Solid Waste Management Units (SWMUs), documenting past assessments conducted on the Solite property to remediate contamination issues.

Stoneridge Farms highlighted their involvement with Golder Associates Inc., a consulting firm that has been a client of Solite and their shell company for more than 20 years, to conduct various investigations and studies for a 240-acre portion of the parcel. In this study, the former aggregate kiln company admitted to being contaminated.

The letter detailed the completion of sampling activities, background studies and the submission of an RFI report and other reports by Stoneridge Farms between 2010 and 2019.

Mill Log Creek was a particular area needing additional assessment in 2011, and a report was submitted that August. Further Toxicity Testing was also completed, and a report was filed in May 2013.

A fish tissue report was submitted after Stoneridge, Golder and FDEP met to discuss their next steps in September 2018.

No findings or changes were reported during the current period, and there was no transfer of property.

The two letters served as significant background information for the ongoing developments, highlighting the acknowledgment of new areas of concern and the requirements for additional assessments.

Burke said with additional areas of concern yet to be addressed, it's necessary to conduct comprehensive, independent testing outside of areas previously admitted by Solite to be contaminated, expressing concern that only 240 of the 900-acre property have been tested so far.

During a post-meeting interview with Clay Today, Burke said she hopes to keep the property under a consent order until all contamination concerns are thoroughly addressed, along with deep concern for the community's well-being surrounding the toxic property.

Burke referred to a study conducted by MD Anderson where the data reveals significantly high rates of cancer in Clay – 37% higher than the state average and 47%.

However, tobacco is also believed to be a major contributing factor, and particular areas of the county are not mentioned in the study, Florida Department of Health Administrator for Clay County Heather Huffman told Burke.

## Early Learning Coalition promotes OP's Carro to CEO

For Clay Today

JACKSONVILLE – The Early Learning Coalition's Board of Directors announced Angel Carro will serve as the next President and CEO. Carro, who currently serves

as Chief Operating Officer, will succeed Denise Marzullo, who has been CEO since 2017.

The Orange Park resident has been with the coalition since 2006.



Angel Carro

"After a thorough and comprehensive search, the Board is confident that Angel is the best individual to assume leadership of Jacksonville's largest nonprofit," said Marcus Rowe, Board Chairman. "His peers well respect him, and he has a track record of leadership locally and at the state level. This, combined with his knowledge, experience, and understanding of the organization, makes Angel uniquely qualified to successfully lead the ELC of Duval into the future."

Marzullo moved to South Florida in June.

"Angel is an outstanding leader who has been responsible for a great portion of our success over the years," Marzullo said. "I am thrilled with the board's decision, and I am confident Angel will ensure that ELC of Duval continues to be the best coalition in Florida."

Carro oversaw ELC's \$111 million budget and was instrumental in locally implementing \$56 million in American Recovery Plan Act grants. He has deep knowledge of state and federal nonprofit rules and is well respected by peer coalitions throughout Florida.

Carro has a Bachelor of Science in accounting and finance from Florida State University. He serves on the Division of Early Learning's EFS Mod Change Control Board and co-leads the Association of Early Learning Coalition's Finance Group. The ELC of Duval has grown into the largest nonprofit in Jacksonville, with an annual budget of \$111 million and a staff of 109.

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Challenge Enterprises CEO Nancy Keating accepted a \$6,822 check from the Orange Park Fraternal Order of Eagles' secretary Desiree Bryan, auxiliary President Jackie McClellan and Edward McClellan to help the organization provide services and opportunities to individuals with disabilities.

# Challenge Enterprises awarded \$6,822 from Orange Park FOE

By Natalie Gilstrap  
For Clay Today

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Challenge Enterprises recently was awarded a generous donation of \$6,822 from the Orange Park Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie/Auxiliary 4365.

This generous donation came after the dedicated efforts of FOE members who organized various fundraiser activities throughout the year.

"This generous donation demonstrates the long-term commitment of FOE to the community of individuals with disabilities," said Nancy C. Keating, CEO of Challenge Enterprises. "This financial support will provide needed funds to support the training programs."

Challenge Enterprises' Adult Day Training Program welcomed FOE Aerie Secretary Desiree Bryan, Auxiliary President Jackie McClellan, and Edward McClellan at Challenge Enterprises' Green Cove Springs warehouse location, where they watched Challenge Enterprises' operations firsthand. During their visit, the group witnessed Shred for Good secure document destruction, Food for Clay County Food Bank, production of packing and shipping materials and industrial sewing.

Keating said she was appreciative for the group's continuous support.

"The tour was great and very informative," Bryan said. "Unbelievable what Challenge Enterprises has done and how they make people with disabilities feel like they belong and are useful to society."

The Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie/Auxiliary 4365 is an organization that is dedicated to uplifting individuals in need while making a lasting impact. In addition, they have supported Challenge Enterprises for more than 26 years. The organization has donated approximately \$20,000 over the years, supporting Challenge Enterprises' mission of helping individuals with disability live an independent and successful life.

"FOE Aerie/Auxiliary 4365 remains dedicated to its motto of "People Helping People" and Challenge Enterprises' mission purpose is to promote the Power of People and Possibilities for individuals living with different abilities," said Challenge Director of Marketing and Communications Stephanie Young. "This is a partnership about making a difference in the lives of people."

To learn more about Challenge Enterprises visit [www.challengeenterprises.org/](http://www.challengeenterprises.org/).

To learn more about Fraternal Order of Eagles (FOE) Aerie/Auxiliary 4365, visit [www.foe4365.com/](http://www.foe4365.com/).

# Maria Walker selected as first Volunteer of the Year

Longtime community leader honored by Women's Club of Keystone

By Natalie Gilstrap  
For Clay Today

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – The Woman's Club of Keystone Heights just recently launched its new project called Volunteer of the Year. Originally planned to start next year, the club launched it early after learning that the theme for Our Country Day Parade was "Volunteers, the Heart of Our Community."

After some discussion, the committee chose Maria Walker to be the first recipient. "The committee talked a lot about different people that have done great things in the community," said Tina Bullock, copresident of the Woman's Club. "There were just a lot of great people, and Maria's name kept popping to the top."

When Walker learned that she was selected as the Volunteer of the Year, she was speechless.

"It was an honor for me, and I just cried when Miss Barbra Franklin called me," Walker said. "I never expected anything like that because I rather give than to receive."

As the recipient, she received a Volunteer of the Year yard sign, gift cards to local businesses, a certificate and rode in the Fourth of July parade.

Previously, she served at the Senior Citizen Center for several years and helped deliver food to several senior citizens during the pandemic. Currently, she is actively involved with Holiday Helpers and is the local Clay County Sherriff Net chair. She makes corsages for people and just organized a surprise birthday party for one of their members.

"I will keep on doing this, helping people until I can no longer go."

Walker said she wanted to thank everyone who nominated her.

The Woman's Club was founded in 1924 as one of the first community organizations. Throughout the years, they have contributed to Lake Area Ministries and Community Partnership School. They also have provided scholarships for students



Keystone Heights Women's Club selected Maria Walker as its Volunteer of the Year. Walker represented the organization during the Our Country Day Parade on July 4.

at Keystone Heights Jr./Sr. High and the Florida Youth Challenge Academy.

They also provide activities such as card games and welcome new members into the club.

"We're always looking for new members and would love people to join," Bullock said. The group is making plans for its 100th anniversary next year and plans for the City's 100th anniversary in 2025.

To learn more about the Woman's Club, visit [www.facebook.com/KHWCA](http://www.facebook.com/KHWCA).

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## Faith Walk

by Pastor Billy Register  
True Life Church  
Clay County

### Created on purpose, for purpose

You are not here by accident. God created you on purpose, and for a purpose. Before you were even conceived, God envisioned you and put you together piece by piece in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13 says, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb". He knew who you would become and equipped you with everything you need to fulfill the specific purpose He prepared for you to accomplish.

Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago." This verse teaches clearly that God planned our purpose in advance. When He created you and me, He knew exactly what He was doing, both short and long-term. Every bit of God's creative process was intentional when He pieced you together.

Being created by God for a purpose means that we are set apart. Coming to faith in Christ makes us different than those around us in the world. 1 Peter 2:9 says, "You are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light."

This verse shows us one of the most incredible aspects of being set apart by God: the chance to impact others by sharing God's love! We are representatives of Christ and reflect His love and grace to the world around us. We are God's priests, His chosen people, called to shine His light into the dark world around us. What a blessing it is to be created on purpose and for a purpose!

Never make the mistake of believing that your life is an accident or void of purpose. You were intentionally brought into this world by God, and you have a mission only you can fulfill. Dive into the spiritual journey of Bible study and prayer. There you will find God (Jeremiah 29:13) and He will reveal that perfect plan to you through your personal relationship with Him.

You can write the Pastor at [pastor-billy@findtruelife.com](mailto:pastor-billy@findtruelife.com)



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# Junior Women's Club to use donation to remodel clubhouse

## Clay Electric gives group \$6,500 toward project

By Natalie Gilstrap  
For Clay Today

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – In 2016, Clay Electric Cooperative implemented Operation Round Up to improve the lives of the communities they serve. The program was designed to allow locals to round up to the nearest dollar when paying their Clay Electric bill. Any extra amount that Clay Electric receives goes towards its grants to organizations that focus on community service, education, youth and disaster relief.

Continuing the project's goal, Clay Electric recently awarded the Junior Woman's Club of Keystone Heights the Clay Electric Round Up Grant.

"It's a huge honor," said club president Brooklyn Hayes-Yelin. "There's a lot of applicants. So, it's very exciting, and we are very honored to be able to receive this."

As part of their ongoing project since last year, the Junior Woman's Club plans to use the \$6,500 grant to improve their building.

"We will be able to improve our building, and expand on what we've already done so far. We already painted and cleaned the place up as much as we can,"



From left, Junior Woman's Club members Maria Walker, Tina Bullock, Tori Hersey, Amy Webber, Brooklyn Hayes-Yelin, Dana Eatmon, Cindy Loose, Kim Dyal and Karan Lake were thrilled to get the donation from Clay Electric.

Hayes-Yelin said.

The group plans to host a meeting to discuss how the money will be used toward remodeling. The club was founded in 2022 as a branch of the Woman's Club of Keystone Heights.

"We are the next generation of the Woman's Club. We saw a gap, and we wanted to be able to continue their legacy," Hayes-Yelin said.

As a service-based group, the Junior Woman's Club is heavily involved in its

community. They host community events such as fall and spring festivals. In addition, they hosted a golf tournament to raise money for scholarships and have participated in the Boo on the Boulevard and the Christmas Parade. "We try to do as much as we can in the community, with the schools, with the kids, and just wherever we see a need," Hayes-Yelin said. To learn more about the Jr. Woman's Club, visit [keystoneheightswomansclub.com](http://keystoneheightswomansclub.com) or [www.facebook.com/JrWomansClubKH/](http://www.facebook.com/JrWomansClubKH/).

## Grant will benefit North Florida Land Trust projects

### Gift from Delores Weaver Legacy Fund will maintain 26 properties

For Clay Today

CLAY COUNTY – North Florida Land Trust has received a \$510,000 grant from the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund and The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida for two important initiatives: the creation and rollout of its new membership program and the purchase of essential stewardship equipment to help maintain the nonprofit's 26 preserves and future conservation lands.

"We are beyond grateful to Delores Barr Weaver for her generosity in providing us with much-needed funding that will allow us to more efficiently manage conservation lands and to help us grow our membership and spread the word that it is now or never for conservation in North Florida," said Allison DeFoor, president of NFLT. "We were delighted for Mrs. Weaver to fund both of the initiatives we proposed, as they position us to continue to serve the present and future needs of the region. The Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund is a true community partner."

NFLT bought a 400-acre plot at State Roads 21 and 16 intersections. The land is

adjacent to the Clay County Regional Park, and visitors will be allowed to access the land for hikes. Two other major commitments to preserving land and resources in Clay County were 2,551 acres near Camp Blanding in 2018 and 415 acres at Little Rain Lake Preserve in Keystone Heights in 2017.

NFLT will use \$380,000 of the grant money to purchase a track loader with a unit head and a new fire truck which are critical pieces of equipment needed to support the nonprofit land conservation organization's land stewardship and management program. Owning its equipment means NFLT has more flexibility to recreate lost habitats for endangered species and return the land to its original and natural state. It also means NFLT is not beholden to a third party to provide equipment or services to implement land management plans on the more than 16,000 acres in its portfolio. The addition of these critical pieces of equipment allows NFLT to do more maintenance in-house, thereby reducing costs and maintenance expenses.

The remainder of the grant will be used for NFLT's new membership program created to help establish a strong base of supporters and build long-term community support for the nonprofit. The \$130,000

will fund communications, promotion, outreach, website additions, membership data management, special events and more. Members can join at five levels designed to allow them to share thoughts on NFLT's conservation efforts and to contribute to program successes and NFLT's future plans. The community can join NFLT in preserving land now that can be enjoyed forever. The unrestricted donations generated will also help NFLT act quickly when preservation opportunities arise.

"The work of the North Florida Land Trust encompasses many aspects of land preservation, stewardship, and activation. Recognizing this, I am pleased to play a part in helping people see the value of membership in such a vital organization and also help the NFLT staff to increase its hands-on stewardship of the land they have preserved," said Delores Barr Weaver. "It is my hope these gifts help the Land Trust continue to meet the goals of its expansive mission."

The NFLT membership program includes levels that range from the \$45 Friend Level to the \$1,000 Champion Level.

To learn more, visit [nflt.org/membership/](http://nflt.org/membership/) or contact NFLT at [info@nflt.org](mailto:info@nflt.org) or (904) 479-1967.



Middleburg's Trail Life Troop will help sell wreaths for the annual Wreaths Across America, which will be observed on Dec. 16.

## Middleburg Trail Life Troop 1595 to support Wreaths Across America

### For Clay Today

MIDDLEBURG – Middleburg Trail Life Troop 1595 announced it has chosen to support Wreaths Across America participating location Hardage-Giddens Holly Hill Memorial Park as part of the national organization's Group Sponsorship Program. This is the third year that Troop 1595 will participate in the national program whose mission is to remember the fallen, honor those who served and teach the next generation the value of freedom.

The goal for the troop is to support efforts that help unify our community and celebrate our freedom by thanking the 806 veterans laid to rest at Hardage-Giddens-Holly Hill Memorial Park with the placement of a live, balsam veteran's wreath on Dec. 16. Other ceremonies will be observed at the Keystone Heights Cemetery and Jacksonville Memory Gardens in Orange Park.

Troop participates with Wreaths Across America because it is such an important event to help the youth of our community remember and honor those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice. Even the smallest of children feel the occasion's solemnity and pay attention as the ceremony takes place each year on wreath laying day. Families from the troop often attend and participate together. It is truly a highlight of the year.

"We are forever grateful to all the volunteers and groups who dedicate their time, energy and resources nationwide to fulfilling this yearlong mission," said Karen Worcester, Executive Director of Wreaths Across America. "These individuals and their communities know the value of remembering the fallen, honoring those who currently serve and teaching the next generation about the sacrifices made for our freedom every day, and with their continued support, Wreaths Across America continues to grow."

Those interested in volunteering for Wreaths Across America or sponsoring a wreath to support the Middleburg troop should visit [wreathscrossamerica.org/FL0567P](http://wreathscrossamerica.org/FL0567P) to learn more. National Wreaths Across America Day is a free, non-political community event open to everyone.

## Honey

from page 3

heirloom that has been in operation for well over, will take center stage.

"This mill has been part of our family for generations. It was purchased by my great-granddaddy in 1899 and has remained an integral part of our syrup-making tradition ever since," Hendry said.

Hendry earned his rights of passage from his uncle, who used it from the 1940s to the 1970s.

The mill is a remarkable engineering work with a proud history. The engine came from a harbor boat in London. Made in 1920, it still runs with precision and ease.

Hendry's team will feed the sugar cane stalks through the mills' rollers, crushing the stalks and releasing the precious juice, which then flows down a channel into a collection pan, ready to undergo the next step.

Once the juice is collected, it's transferred to an 80-gallon vat for cooking. The vat is heated by a large propane burner, with a copper skimming tool carefully skimming off any impurities that rise to the surface.

The skimming process, which a skilled group of individuals performs, ensures that only the finest cane syrup remains.

"This step is crucial for achieving the desired purity and clarity of our syrup," he said.

As the syrup slowly cooks, the water evaporates, leaving a concentrated final product behind.

Cooking sugar cane syrup is a delicate balancing act. If it's not cooked long enough, the syrup won't reach its desired thickness. Too much, and it would crystalize.

"You have to be careful. If you kept cooking (the sugar cane syrup), it would turn into candy," Hendry said.



The shed at the property gives the feel of a deer hunter's hangout.

Using a hydrometer, a device that measures the density of the syrup, Hendry has to determine the ideal moment to remove it from the heat.

Next, the syrup is poured into the bottles, sealed and labeled. The transformation from farm to table is remarkable and best served with a batch of pancakes or on a biscuit in the morning.

The process, although time-consuming and demanding, is a tradition old as time, and the syrup, with rich flavor and subtle sweetness, has not only become a beloved staple in local households but a symbol of the region as a whole.

Bottles sell for \$5, but that's only to make up for the cost of production. Hendry isn't in it for the money.

The syrup is cooked once to twice a day during the cane grinding. Cooking is done on Fridays and Saturdays.

A thorough process takes three to four hours, so it's difficult to produce more than two batches daily. Each cooking produces eight to 10 gallons of sweet, nectary juice with a 10-1 water-to-syrup ratio. The process fills 12 cases containing 24 bottles each.



The mill is a remarkable engineering work and has a proud history of its own. The engine came from a harbor boat in London, England. Made in 1920, it still runs with precision and ease.

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# Police Briefs

## Middleburg man caught with child porn on his cellphone

MIDDLEBURG – A Cybertip triggered an investigation that resulted in the arrest on July 17 of a 24-year-old for having at least five files of child pornography on his cellphone.

Tra Charles Jon Koltitz, of Middleburg, was charged with five counts of possessing, viewing or controlling material depicting child sexual acts.



Tra Charles Jon Koltitz

The investigation revealed the IP address used to receive the images belonged to Koltitz's mother. That led Internet Crimes Against Children Unit detectives to the son.

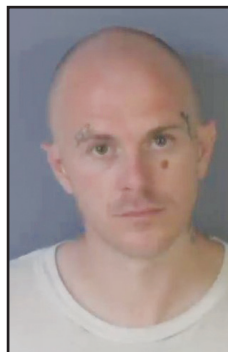
His bond was set at \$375,015. His next court appearance will be on Aug. 7.

## Man wanted for carjacking finally behind bars in Clay County

MIDDLEBURG – A man suspected of carjacking a car on Nov. 4, 2021, was transported from the Suwannee Correctional Institution to face charges.

Michael Shane Beeman Hatch, 31, of Keystone Heights, was charged with armed carjacking after three people took his blue truck at knifepoint.

According to the affidavit for an arrest warrant, the victim met Amber



Michael Shane Hatch

Marie Caudill, 30, in Melrose. The victim agreed to give her a ride to a convenience store and on the way, she asked him to turn into the High Ridge Estates to look for a camper she said was stolen from her a week earlier.

Caudill left the truck and disappeared into a wooded area. The victim said he saw Caudill hiding in the tree line, but Clarissa Thomas approached him from the front and Hatch from behind before he could get back into his truck. Both brandished knives, the affidavit said. Caudill and Hatch were arrested in Putnam County nearly five hours later. Caudill pleaded guilty to armed carjacking and was sentenced to time served (274 days) and a year of probation.

According to the affidavit, the original plan was for Hatch and Thomas to distract the victim long enough for Caudill to take the truck. According to records at the Clay County Courthouse, Thomas wasn't charged for the carjacking.

Hatch's bond is \$150,003. His next court appearance is Aug. 7.

## Man wanted for passing bad check arrested following fight with CCSO

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – A pair of Clay County Sheriff's Office deputies overwhelmed a man with an outstanding warrant following a fight on July 16.

Deputies recognized Christopher Carl Fuller, 31, of Keystone Heights, while he was in the roadway on Colgate Road and Yale Street with another woman.

An affidavit for an arrest warrant was signed earlier that day for Fuller for uttering, passing or altering a false bank note.

When deputies tried to arrest Fuller, they said he became combative. His left hand was already in cuffs, Fuller wrestled with both deputies to keep them from putting his right hand in handcuffs. The struggle required one deputy to punch Fuller to distract him long enough for the second deputy to detain him finally.

One deputy suffered minor cuts on both hands.

Fuller's bond was set at \$50,012.

## Starke man pleads guilty to stealing mail in Keystone Heights

JACKSONVILLE – U.S. Attorney Roger B. Handberg announced Connor Lee Austin, 31, of Starke, has pleaded guilty to mail theft. Austin faces up to five years in federal prison and payment of restitution to the victims in the case. No sentencing date has been set.

According to court documents and public records, in late April 2022, the Clay County Sheriff's Office received multiple reports of mail being stolen from the Keystone Heights area mailboxes. Surveillance footage from homes in that area captured a truck driving down roads with the passenger, later identified as Austin, and his co-defendant, Maranda Ann Stewart, 26, of Starke, stealing mail from mailboxes.

On May 6, 2022, the Baker County Sheriff's Office arrested Austin and Stewart for their involvement with a fraudulent check. During the arrest, the BCSO conducted an inventory search of the truck they used and located more than 100 pieces of mail stolen from various addresses in Clay County.

Further investigation determined that after stealing mail, Austin and Stewart used Austin's phone to deposit stolen checks into their bank accounts through mobile deposit. Law enforcement recovered mail that Austin and Stewart had stolen from Baker, Bradford, Clay, Duval and Putnam counties.

Austin appeared in federal court on April 19, according to a writ bringing him



Christopher Fuller

to Jacksonville from the Florida State Prison, where he is serving a prison sentence of 36 months for grand theft, grand theft from a dwelling and burglary.

On June 27, Stewart pled guilty to one count of mail theft. She faces up to five years imprisonment and restitution payment to the case's victims. A sentencing date hasn't been set.

This case was investigated by the Clay County Sheriff's Office and the United States Postal Inspection Service, with valuable assistance from the Bradford County Sheriff's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin C. Frein is prosecuting it.

## Clay man's arrest included in Project Safe Neighborhoods' success

TAMPA – U.S. Attorney Roger B. Handberg announced the results of the third quarter of fiscal year 2023 Project Safe Neighborhoods strategy last week. During the third quarter, ending on June 30, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida has prosecuted 107 defendants for federal firearms and violent crime offenses, removing 147 firearms from the streets. The prosecutions include defendants who have been indicted, pleaded guilty, convicted at trial, or sentenced.

The agency's results included Edwin Sherwood Gustafson of Green Cove Springs. He was arrested on Jan. 21 on U.S. Highway 17 after a Clay County Sheriff's Office deputy recognized him and pulled him over for an outstanding warrant.

CCSO found drug paraphernalia, marijuana and hydrocodone, buprenorphine, Xanax, cocaine, methamphetamine and morphine. He also was charged with three counts of possession of a firearm or ammo by a convicted felon, use or display of a firearm during a felony, resisting law enforcement, violation of an injunction for protection against domestic violence and violating of probation.

If convicted, Gustafson faces a maximum sentence of 20 years for each illegal drug and 15 years for the weapons violation.

The U.S. Attorney's Office has also engaged in community outreach efforts aimed at violent crime prevention throughout the year. Those efforts in the third quarter involved approximately 200 individuals. These community outreach efforts included presentations to elementary, middle and high school students, meetings with community leaders and re-entry programs.

Middle District of Florida re-entry presentations included federal prosecutors vis-

iting state prisons to speak with inmates nearing their release dates.

"Our office is committed to reducing violent crime throughout the Middle District of Florida," said U.S. Attorney Roger B. Handberg. "We will continue working with our law enforcement partners and community stakeholders as part of our joint effort to make our communities safer."

PSN is the centerpiece of the Department of Justice's violent crime reduction efforts. This evidence-based program has proven effective at reducing violent crime by engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders working together to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in communities and developing comprehensive solutions that reduce crime. As part of this strategy, PSN focuses on prevention and intervention efforts through community engagement and problem-solving partnerships, strategic enforcement of the most violent offenders, and locally based re-entry programs to reduce recidivism.

## Middleburg man part of U.S. Attorney's sweep of COVID-19 fraud

TAMPA – U.S. Attorney Roger B. Handberg announced the results achieved by the Middle District of Florida's efforts to combat fraud related to COVID-19. Those efforts have included complementary actions by the U.S. Attorney's Office's Criminal, Asset Recovery, Appellate and Civil Divisions and federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

The attorney's office specifically highlighted Middleburg's Christopher Daragjati.

According to the indictment, Daragjati obtained the personal 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 (PPP) loans in the identity of the two victims. When applying for the three PPP loans Daragjati allegedly submitted numerous fraudulent tax-related documents and repeatedly made false statements when completing the Small Business Administration loan application for each of the loans. Relating 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

# 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, July 18

Kevin S. Keene, 55, Orange Park, aggravated battery with deadly weapon

Sabrina A. Allen, 33, Fleming Island, possession-fentanyl, possession-methamphetamine

Neil A. Anderson, 40, Fleming Island, petit theft, possession-methamphetamine, possession-fentanyl

Kenneth P. Blair, 78, Keystone Heights, VOP-community control

Richard T. Sprout, 19, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

Brian M. Jad, 26, Orange Park, domestic battery

Reshaune H. Showers, 28, Orange Park, aggravated battery of pregnant woman, FTA-possession-marijuana, FTA-DWLSR

Dewight M. Patton, 24, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

## Monday, July 17

Camron J. Dove, 21, Orange Park, battery, shoplifting

Cherry M. Padgett, 43, Middleburg, two counts battery

John W. Dowden, 55, Middleburg, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, trespassing

Jessica L. Lyncker, 36, Orange Park, disorderly intoxication

Machelle A. Brewer, 56, Orange Park, DUI with property damage/personal injury

Tyler A. Labay, 21, Middleburg, petit theft, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Tra C.J. Kolitz, five counts possess/control/view depiction of child sexual conduct

Dominic A. Ruiz, 40, Green Cove Springs, FTA-threat to do violence

Sessions A. Byrd, 43, Green Cove Springs, FTA

Afo Ba, 21, Green Cove Springs, FTA

Adrienne N. Calhoun, 40, Fleming Island, VOP-community Control

Joshua I. Dockery, 34, Keystone Heights, failure to report residence

Jessie L. Still, 25, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions against domestic violence

Jean H. Justin, 32, Orange Park, armed robbery

Colin J. Morel, 22, Middleburg, resist law enforcement with violence, battery on law enforcement/firefighter/EMT, breach of peace/fighting/brawling, obstruct/resist harbor master

## Sunday, July 16

Matthew Q. Thigpen, 26, Middleburg, battery

Duane C. Damon, 50, Keystone Heights, possession-methamphetamine, possession-drug paraphernalia

Alexander E. Driver, 34, Middleburg, vandalism

Myles G. Montgomery, 24, Middleburg, grand theft auto

## Saturday, July 15

Bert G. Jackson, 48, Orange Park, burglary

Christopher C. Fuller, 31, Keystone Heights, resist law enforcement with violence, battery on law enforcement/firefighter/EMT, giving false name/ID, uttering forged/counterfeit bill

Lauren M. Zimmerman, 23, Orange Park, shoplifting

Seth J. Cole, 23, Orange Park, battery on law enforcement/firefighter/EMT, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, trespassing

Elan N. Maldonado, 33, Middleburg, trespassing

Pedro O.D. Canelas, 26, Orange Park,

driving without valid license

Michael E. Foyt, 60, Middleburg, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

Ashlee N. Hartley, 31, Orange Park, two counts FTA, giving false name/ID

## Friday, July 14

Emily A. Adkins, 36, Green Cove Springs, possession-controlled substance, DUI, refusal to submit to BAL test

Denise N. Gray, 27, Middleburg, domestic dating violence

Dewight M. Patton, 24, Orange Park, violation of injunction for protection against domestic violence

Nicole E. Echelberger, 39, Middleburg, FTA-trespassing

Jeenly Pierre, 22, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions

Justin D. Smith, 28, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Glenda K. Raggins, 60, Green Cove Springs, battery

Braden A. Smith, 23, Middleburg, domestic violence, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Benjamin T. Merriam, 21, Middleburg, trespassing

Joshua A. Vincent, 34, Orange Park, domestic violence

Elizabeth C. Kearns, 34, Green Cove Springs, no valid vehicle registration

John T. Colon, 37, Middleburg, FTA

Kyle A. West, 21, Middleburg, shoplifting

Orentheious P. Redding, 39, Middleburg, trespassing

Jacob R. Snyder, 36, Fleming Island, domestic battery

## Thursday, July 13

Taron S. Murray, 22, Green Cove Springs, introduce/remove contraband into jail, possession-fentanyl, battery, making threat of death/serious injury, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Thuy V. Huynh, 53, Fleming Island, shoplifting

John C. Whitten, 53, Green Cove

Springs, battery

Cody A. Jones, 34, Green Cove Springs, VOP-domestic battery

Michael S. Hatch, 31, Middleburg, armed carjacking

Travis W. Westberry, 32, Green Cove Springs, violation of injunction for protection against domestic violence

Darren B. Hartman, 26, Green Cove Springs, VOP-battery on law enforcement/firefighter/EMT

Scarlett L. Lay, 55, Middleburg, obtaining property

Tereso V. Aldaba, 21, Green Cove Springs, VOP-child abuse

Clara A. Stratton, 52, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Ryan C. Powers, 40, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Tyree B. Fanning, 33, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Adam P. Wagner, 38, VOP-domestic battery

Kaitlin R. Collins, 34, Green Cove Springs, VOP-community control

Dalton L. Potts, 31, Orange Park, burglary

John H. Bamping, 30, Orange Park, DUI

## Wednesday, July 12

John J. Thornton, 20, Keystone Heights, vandalism

Marcellas T.W. Farrell, 33, Orange Park, trespassing

Keturah E. Gipson, 19, Middleburg, shoplifting

Lataysia I. Jones, 18, Middleburg, shoplifting

Margaret L. Ryder, 39, Green Cove Springs, possession-methamphetamine

Ta'Kema K. Gibbons, 18, Middleburg, shoplifting, providing false name/ID

Sean M. Harris, 58, Orange Park, riding motorcycle without valid license

Antonio E. Rameriz, 47, Orange Park, driving without valid license

Craig D. Akers, 52, Green Cove Springs, fugitive from justice

Lanorris B. Jackson, 48, Keystone Heights, FTA

## Police

from page 22

i 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 yet 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 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, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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, up to 5 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.

"The Middle District of Florida United

States Attorney's Office continues to pursue, investigate, prosecute, and recover money from those who were engaged in major or sophisticated fraud schemes designed to steal benefits intended for Americans coping with the myriad impacts of the pandemic," said U.S. Attorney Roger Handberg.

## Trial for man accused of killing Daytona Beach cop moved the Clay County

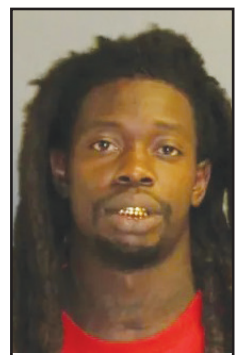
DAYTONA BEACH – The Seventh Judicial Circuit officials will seek the death penalty for a man accused of shooting a Daytona Beach Police Department officer at the Clay County Courthouse.

The trial for Orthal Wallace will start with jury selections on Sept. 5.

Wallace is accused of shooting officer

Jason Raynor in the head, who was investigating a suspicious person call on June 23, 2021, after residents complained of criminal activity in the area. When Raynor asked Wallace if he lived at the apartment complex, the two struggled before Raynor was shot. He lived for two months before dying of his injuries. Three days after the shooting, Wallace was found hiding in a treehouse in DeKalb County, Georgia.

In April, Judge Raul Zambrano ruled the trial be moved from Volusia County following extensive coverage. The state is seeking the death penalty.



Orthal Wallace

# Former Clay star returns home to start semi-pro football team

Clay County Devil Dawgs join state-wide 8-Man EXFL league

By Lee Wardlaw  
Lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – In an ambitious effort to revitalize youth football in Green Cove Springs, Lyndon Dunham, a former wide receiver and safety at Clay High from 2004-2007, recently started a semi-professional football team, the Clay County Devil Dawgs.

The team plays as a member of the Eight-Man Extreme Football League.

Dunham seeks to field a strong team and bring home a championship to the county, but the main goal of his vision is to rekindle the city's youth football program.

"We started this program to bring the little league back here," he said.

Other municipalities in Clay have at least one or multiple youth programs, but not Green Cove Springs.

Dunham's goal is not to detract from existing programs but rather provide an additional avenue for young athletes.

"I'm not trying to take away from anyone," he said.

However, Dunham's dream could be-

come a reality soon, as the former Blue Devils star's vision is already gaining momentum.

Clay County played its first home game on July 8, with the launch of Lyndon's "project" going extremely well, the Devil Dawgs drawing more than 30 fans to Thomas Hogan Field and finishing with a win against the Sanford Tomahawks.

The Devil Dawgs faced the Pinellas County Falcons in St. Petersburg last Saturday, losing 28-24.

They will travel to South Florida on Saturday to face the Palm Beach Capos.

After visiting the Tri-County Steelers - n Lake City on July 29, the team will finish the season with a two-game homestead on Aug. 5 and Aug. 12 against the South Florida Raptors and Sanford Tomahawks, respectively, which will be played at a different stadium location, which has yet to be determined.

Clay County seeks to build excitement by awaiting the big announcement, offering the local community an opportunity to rally behind the hometown team.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Clay County Devil Dawgs, in red and white, opened their Eight-Man Extreme Football League season with a victory at home against the Sanford Tomahawks.

The Devil Dawgs' journey to the field didn't come without plenty of twists and turns.

The former Blue Devils' star wanted to play for Edwards Waters College in Jacksonville after high school but instead joined the U.S. Marines, where he earned honors on the branch's football team.

Dunham later earned a preferred walk-on invite to play for East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, but he decided to come home.

Since returning to Green Cove Springs, his primary focus has been reintegrating youth football into the city.

Dunham has already organized a youth football camp through the Devil Dawgs' program this summer, but he wants to ensure he fully follows through on his big mission.

"We have kids that participate in the camp. Their parents come out and watch it. They like that kind of stuff. You also have people moving here looking for something for their children," Dunham said.

The children that have participated in the camps have built a "big brother-little brother" like relationship with players this summer, relying on their Devil Dawgs' heroes as positive role models in the community on and off the field.

They have also participated in gameday

operations such as performing ball boy duties, holding the down markers, and providing cool water to players during breaks.

In the meantime, Dunham juggles many duties as the head of the operation.

"You have to wear many hats," he said.

This includes seeking sponsorships and finding coaches and players, among other duties.

The Devil Dawgs boast a diverse roster comprising players with various backgrounds and experiences. Dunham expressed excitement for the opportunity to work with former college players, even those who played in high school years ago who want to strap back on their cleats.

"Our mix of talent and experience creates a dynamic team that is determined to succeed. We have the bodies to rotate and the dogs to get there," he said.

The county also offers a potential platform to help players reach their professional dreams, where they can find a roster spot on the Jacksonville Sharks of the National Arena League or in the XFL, USFL or possibly the NFL.

"I can help these guys (play professionally), you know what I'm saying? Getting paid to play a game they're passionate about, why not? I can help sharpen them up," Dunham said.

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STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Eagle Landing swim team member Brylee Wood, with black cap, gets set to race the 50 freestyle against Eagle Harbor's Audrey Hall, left of Wood, in last event of the First Coast Swim League championships held Sunday at the University of North Florida. Wood amassed an astounding 60 team points with three individual gold medals.

## Santana debuts with First Coast team title

Eagle Landing's Brylee Wood shreds in 100 IM, 50 fly, 50 free

By Randy Lefko  
Sports Editor

JACKSONVILLE - With a push on stroke training versus overall speed, newly installed Eagle Harbor Screaming Eagles head swim coach Sondra Santana, used her tactical decision to snag a closely-contested first team championship in the First Coast Swim League with Pace Island and Oakleaf's Orcas running a 1-2-3 team sweep at University of North Florida's pool.

"We all know Fleming Island swimming has been a haven of speed and when I was given this job, plus the Fleming Island High School head coaching job, I wanted to concentrate on stroke techniques in all aspects to get maximum team points," said Santana, who was assistant coach to long-time coach Jordan Bright, now at Toco Creek High School.

"I'm proud of our athletes who swam great against challenges from the other teams."

Eagle Harbor totaled 2598.5 points to outlast Pace Island's runnerup total of 2414.0 and Oakleaf's 2097 points. Eagle Landing finished sixth in the seven team event.

In the mens only scoring, Eagle Harbor won with 1185.5 points to Pace's 1142 and Oakleaf's 944 with Eagle Landing sixth at 534.

In the girls only scoring, Eagle Harbor won with 1413 points with Pace second at 1272 and Oakleaf third at 1153 and Eagle Landing fourth at 541.

In one of the more dominating performances of the day, Eagle Landing's Brylee Wood punched in for 60 team points with wins in the 100 IM, 50 fly and 50 free

SEE SWIM, 28

Wrestling

## Barrientos seventh, Cruce eighth in Fargo

By Randy Lefko  
Sports Editor

FARGO, ND - Oakleaf High wrestler Kailani Barrientos finished seventh and Middleburg High's state champion Cheyenne Cruce finished eighth as area wrestlers joined Team Florida at the 2023 U.S. Marine Corps 16U & Junior Nationals Wrestling Tournament in Fargo, ND for a week of championship wrestling to determine the best in America.

"One thing I definitely learned was that I have to expand my offense and not rely on my one or two moves that work in Florida," said Cruce, who finished unbeaten in Florida to get to her state title. "I got head butted in my very first match and my tooth split my lip. The medics took care of it, but

SEE WRESTLING, 31




PHOTO COURTESY OF SE WRESTLING

Oakleaf High wrestler Kailani Barrientos is done with her seventh place win at the 2023 US Marines National Wrestling Championship in Fargo, ND.




### Catch of the day

Clay Today Sports Editor Randy Lefko shows off his fourth place, 22 pounds Kingfish caught Wednesday in the Greater Jacksonville Kingfish Media Tournament. Lefko hooked three Kingfish for the day; 14 and 18 pounds. See more Kingfish action inside.



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# Cliff Avril brings 11th camp to Clay High

By Randy Lefko  
Sports Editor

GREEN COVE SPRINGS - With fellow Clay High Blue Devil football star Nolan Carroll joining him among a handful of NFL players, former Seattle Seahawks Super Bowl champion Cliff Avril hosted nearly 400 football campers Saturday at Clay High School in his 11th rendition of his free football camp.

"It's crazy to me that we are in our 11th year of this camp here at Clay High," said Avril, 37, who played first with the Detroit Lions; a third round pick in 2008 NFL Draft out of Purdue, then a Seattle Seahawk in 2013 where he was on the 2013 Super Bowl champion team. "I must be getting old."

Avril currently has two NFL trademarks; first, he scored the fastest Super Bowl points with a 12-second safety of Denver Bronco quarterback Payton Manning on the first snap of the 2013 game, and, second, the first player to win a Super Bowl after playing the previous season on a winless team (Lions).

Clay High head football coach Kyle Kennard, admitted not being from Avril's gen-



eration of playing, but knew of Avril's presence on a football field.

"I'm a little bit younger than him," said Kennard, who had some of his varsity players on the fielding leading drills for Avril's crew.

"We are out here supporting Cliff and Nolan as we get ready to go to our own



Former Clay High football star Cliff Avril, above, demonstrates some defensive tactics during drills at the Cliff Avril Youth Football camp on Saturday at Clay High School. Also, bottom left, another Clay High alum, Nolan Carroll, an NFL player for the Miami Dolphins, Philadelphia Eagles and Dallas Cowboys, eyeballs a pass attempt in his direction during Cliff Avril Youth Football camp.

camp in south Florida for the week to prepare for the upcoming season."

Avril, a Pro Bowl selection in 2016, suffered a career-ending neck injury in 2017.

Also with Avril was Carroll, a Miami Dolphin, Dallas Cowboy and Philadelphia Eagle defensive back in his NFL days, plus De'Shaan Dixon, a Jacksonville Jaguar linebacker, and Roberto Wallace, a wide

receiver for the Miami Dolphins.

Carroll, 36, was drafted out of Maryland by Miami in 2010 in round five as the 145th pick.

One of Carroll's top plays was a Monday Night Football interception for a touchdown against Eli Manning in an Eagles' win over rival New York Giants in 2015.



Campers take to the air for pass catching and interception catching while, above, Clay defensive end Omar Goosby handles a tackling for drills with Cliff Avril while, top right, Clay High head football coach Kyle Kennard gets a pic with Cliff Avril during a break in the camp action.

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# Carsen Moore second at Greater Jax Junior Golf

Courtesy of North Florida Junior Golf

EAGLE HARBOR - After a rainy Monday, the Greater Jacksonville Junior Open resumed as a 27-hole tournament Tuesday at Eagle Harbor Golf Club with Lake City golfer Connor Williams eeking out an individual title in a tight race with Fleming Island's Carsen Moore.

Williams, a Columbia High School upcoming senior, roared through the final nine holes of the two-round event at Eagle Harbor Country Club with a three birdie, six par 33 round, to win with a four under par 104 score for the 27 hole format. Action was halted with golfers at the 10th hole on Monday from thunderstorms. Williams was a fourth place finisher at last year's FHSAA Region 1-2A golf championships and finished 43rd at the Class 2A championship tournament.

Moore, 16, who lost his lead with a bogie on his final nine holes and just one birdie, and St. Augustine's Cameron Abitabilo, the co-leaders after the day one nine holes, finished second and third with Moore with a two under par 106 and Abitabilo at 107. Abitabilo double bogied his final hole

For the females, three of the state qualifying Fleming Island High School girls golf team (12th in Class 3A); Chloe Blanc, Cambree Hodges and Kalia Polete, competed in preparation for a trip to Pinehurst Golf Club in Pinehurst, North Carolina as



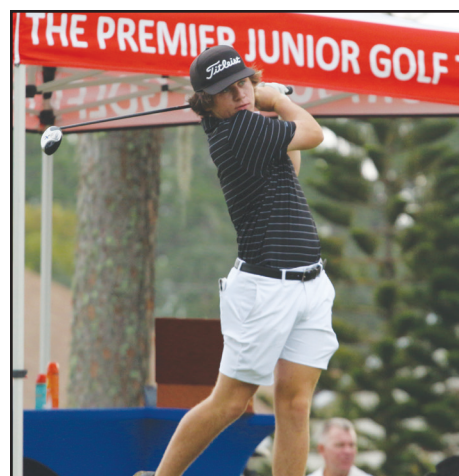
Columbia High golfer Connor Williams blast first tee at hole 10 in day two action at Greater Jacksonville Junior Open at Eagle Harbor Country Club. Williams held off Fleming Island golfer Carsen Moore for the win.

the trio will be playing in the World Teen Championships 2023 (July 27-29). Polete was Fleming Island's top finisher at the Class 3A championship with a 46th place finish with Hodges at 62nd and Blanc 71st.

Also traveling to the World Teens is St. Johns Country Day School state qualifier Addy Vogt (55th in Class 1A championship). All four will be playing in the 15-18 age group at Pinehurst. Polete (73rd) and Vogt (54th) both played in the World Teen Championship last year.



Two of the three Fleming Island High girls heading to the World Teen Championship in North Carolina next week; Kalia Polete, left, and Cambree Hodges blast tee shots at Great Jacksonville Junior Open.



Keystone Heights High's Alex Addington swings away on Day 2.

At the Eagle Harbor event, most of the divisions had tight contests with Alyssa Hardy of Deerwood winning the overall girls title over Emma Wells of Queens Harbor. Hodges finished fourth with her even par 72 the best final 18 holes. Polete and Blanc both finished tied in eighth.

The Foundation had completed their nine-hole flight on Monday with Gracie Dutt of St. Johns winning with a 41. Chloe Blanc of Fleming Island (118/+10) won the two-person flight in the Rising Tour Girls division on Tuesday as the final pairing on the golf course.

In the 10-12 division, first day leader Sophia Moody, a rising incoming Fleming Island High freshman, withdrew on Tuesday leaving Noa Bridges with a two-stroke lead over Sawyer Cook. They played it out in the final 10-12 group and ended up tied at 119 forcing a one-hole playoff. Noa Bridges of Ponte Vedra claimed the championship with a par on that playoff hole,

one better than Sawyer. It was Bridges' second win this season after a 1st place in December at the Hall of Fame Invitational at Slammer & Squire in December.

Ethan Tak of St. Augustine got the only eagle of tournament on day two, on the par-five 12th hole.

In the Rising Tour Boys division, Tyler Kitterman of St. Augustine emerged from the pack to claim 1st place shooting a 75 for a two-day total of 116/+8. Beckham Cummings of Fleming Island shot an 80 to hold on for 2nd at 120/+12.

Alyssa Hardy of Jacksonville (109/+1) won the Elite Tour Girls division with a second-day score of 73. Emma Wells came in 2nd with a two-day total of 110/+2. Alexandra Drum was 3rd at 111/+3 and Cambree Hodge of Fleming Island had the best round of the day at 72 for a two-day total of 112.

Fleming Island High state qualifier Alyzabeth Morgan (62nd in 3A), who has been rehabilitating from recent knee surgery, stopped by Eagle Harbor on day two of the tournament.

With the summer NFJG season winding down we are having a number of our older players compete in their final tournaments before they move on to college.

Other area finishers included Alex Addington, of Keystone Heights, in 10th; Matthew French, of Bishop Snyder High and Orange Park, in 12th; Brock Buhnyerkember, of Orange Park, in 15th; Chase Ricks, of Fleming Island, 18th; Beckham Cummings, of Fleming Island, in 19th, Joseph DeRosa, of Middleburg, at 25th; Owen French, of Fleming Island, in 29th and Ian Garcia, of Middleburg, in 30th.



Bishop Snyder's Matthew French, left, drives off hole 10 on day two with Orange Park' High's Brock Buhnerkemper finishes his drive.



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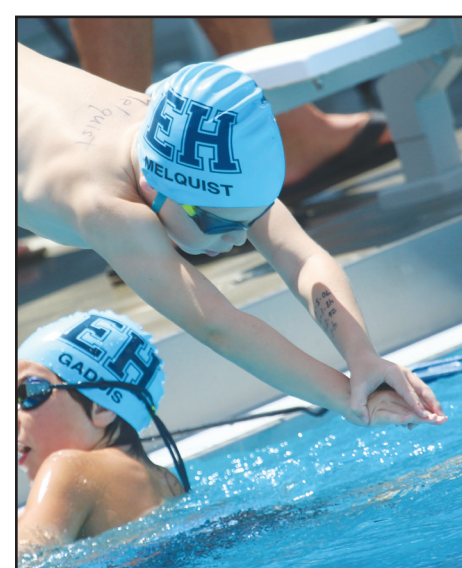
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STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

There was plenty of swim action at the University of North Florida on Sunday as the First Coast swim League championships were staged for the first time at the campus. In the team points Eagle Harbor Screaming Eagles took a close win over the Pace Island Piranhas with Oakleaf's Orcas in third place.

## Swim

from page 25

plus a third in the 200 medley relay.

Top point getters for Eagle Harbor were Brooke Reynolds, 15, who put up 40 team points off gold in the 100 individual medley and the 50 free and Karyssa Booth, 13, who scored 36 team points with a win in the 50 backstroke and seconds in the 100 individual medley and 200 yard medley relay. Booth also earned a second in the mixed 200 yard free relay. Also for the Eagle Harbor girls, nine year old Alyssa Schwanke scored 38 points with wins in the 50 fly and 100 free relay and silver in the 50 free and 100 medley relay. Audrey

Hall, 14, scored 36 points with silver medals in the 50 fly and 50 free plus two relay silvers, and Keira Fetzner, 14, scored 35 team points with a gold in the 100 free and a fourth in the 50 breast.

For the Eagle Harbor boys, 10-year old Padric Conroy punched in for 39 team points with a gold in the mixed 100 medley relay, a second in the 50 breast, a third in the 50 fly and a 12th place finish in the 50 free.

With Conroy, Matthew Harvey, 14, scored 38 team points off gold in the 100 individual medley and silver in the 50 fly and two golds in relays.

Callen Melquist, 9, scored 36 points for Eagle Harbor with wins in the 50 fly and 100 free and a third in the 50 breaststroke.

Pace Island's girls were paced (LOL) by sisters Addison and Alexandra Kuczkowski who scored 74 points combined; 38 to Addison off gold in the the 50 breast and 100 medley relay and silver in 100 free relay and 50 backstroke while Alexandra scored 36 team points off a gold in the 50 breast, 200 medley relay and 200 free relay and third in the 100 free.

Berkley Morgan, 12, added 35 team points with a win in the 50 breast and fourth in the 50 fly plus a relay silver and bronze.

For the Pace boys six year old phenom Elliot Poole punched his clock for 40 team points with an astounding fourth in 25 fly, fifth in 25 back, eighth in 25 free and gold in 100 free relay.

Luke Frisbee, 16, scored 34 for Pace with a second in the 50 fly and a third in the 100 free plus a gold in 200 free relay and silver in mixed 200 medley relay.

Alex Huggins, 10, scored 33 points for Pace with silvers in 50 fly, mixed 100 free relay, 100 free relay and a fourth in the 50 free.

For Oakleaf, Aiden Berndt, 14, scored 42 team points with fourths in the 50 back and 50 fly and a seventh in the 50 free.

For the Oakleaf girls, Brylee Wood, 13, Cassidy Cervantes, 17, scored 41 points with a third in the 100 IM, a sixth in 50 back and a seventh in 50 fly.

Eagle Landing's top scorers were Hannah Bennett, 14, with 41 points and Samuel Bredeson, 10, with 40 points.





Kingfish tournament media day participants, from left, Kevin Laphorn, Ryan Laphorn, captain mate Brody Rose, 9, and Clay Today Sports Editor Randy Lefko show off their catches of the day on the boat Cherokee Rose Captained by Lyle Rose of Hilliard.

## Lefko fourth at Kingfish Media Day

For Clay Today

JACKSONVILLE - With a late hook coming near 11:30 a.m. as the noon docking deadline loomed at the Greater Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament Media Day mini-tournament, Clay Today Sports Editor Randy Lefko hauled in his third kingfish of the day; and his biggest at 22 pounds, to finish fourth at the annual pre-Kingfish event staged at Jim King Park and Boat Ramp in northern Jacksonville.

"It was a fourth-quarter touchdown pass for our boat, the Cherokee Rose, captained by Lyle Rose out of Hillard," said Lefko, who caught the first of his three just two minutes from Rose dropping bait just off the Jacksonville Beach shoreline after the 8 a.m. sendoff.

"We were optimistic that the day would go great with the quick hook and our crew; me and the father/son duo of Kevin and Ryan Laphorn, all had some good battles for the tournament."

Lefko had the added element of a hungry shark chasing his 22-pounder.

"Lyle was going crazy trying to coach me to stay ahead of the shark as he kept the kingfish, now in a frenzied flee attempt, but we finally got him close enough to the boat that he could snag him before the shark got him," said Lefko. "It got crazy going from side to side on the boat trying to not let the shark get the fish or the fish snap the line."

Rose, with multiple-time Kingfish Junior Angler champion son Brody, 9, at his side and assisting the on-board crew, was on target with his advice and placement of boat and hook. The Rose duo finished second overall at last year's Kingfish Aggregate total with a 65.28-pound total.

"When we got a good net full of Pogie bait on the first toss, that is usually a good



Randy Lefko shows off his second catch of the day; about 18 pounds.

sign," said Rose. "The captains of the Media Tournament have a goal to get as many bites as possible to give our guests an experience on the water and also have some fun working the Kingfish to the boat. They all did well this whole morning."

Kevin Laphorn, who runs a Jacksonville Academy Sports retail store, and son, Ryan, a college mechanical engineer student in south Florida, were both first-timers on the ocean fishing scene and both pulled in a Kingfish each. Ryan Laphorn even hooked a small shark.

Lefko's 22-pound snag was fourth behind catches of 36, 27 and 25 pounds. Lefko's first and second snags were about 14 and 16 pounds.

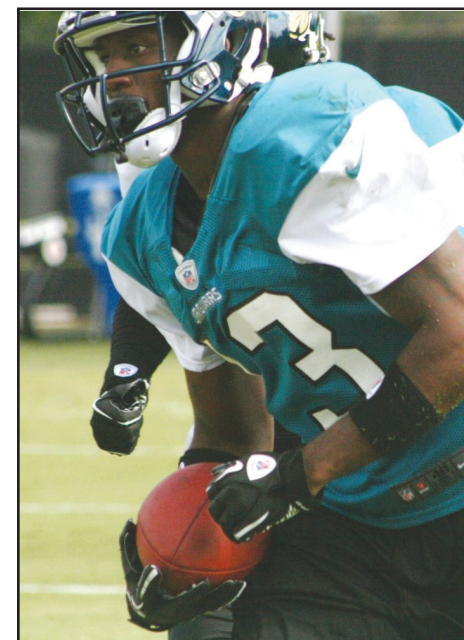
# RHS Gilbert named college Hall of Famer

By Randy Lefko  
Sports Editor

ORANGE PARK - Former Ridgeview High sports star Charlie Gilbert; a football, track and basketball athlete for the Panthers back in the early 2000 era, was recently named a selectee for the Concordia University Athletic Hall of Fame, according to a Concordia University press release. Gilbert, a 2006 Ridgeview High graduate and a lightning fast offensive weapon under then coach Tom Macpherson, who is now at Bishop Kenny High School, finished his season senior with 20 touchdowns with most from passer Joe Everett.

"Joe was a big ball player, went to Ball State and did his thing there," said Gilbert, now a Department of Juvenile Justice counselor married with two children. "He and I had the nine route as our go-to play. He'd peek over, tap his head and then just throw it up for me to chase it. We called it Florida, a fade route."

Gilbert also ran track for Ridgeview



STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

Former Ridgeview High football and track stand out Charlie Gilbert, here in a Jacksonville Jaguar uniform, was recently selected as a Concordia University - St Paul Athletic Hall of Fame selection for his football playing days at Concordia.

SEE GILBERT, 32

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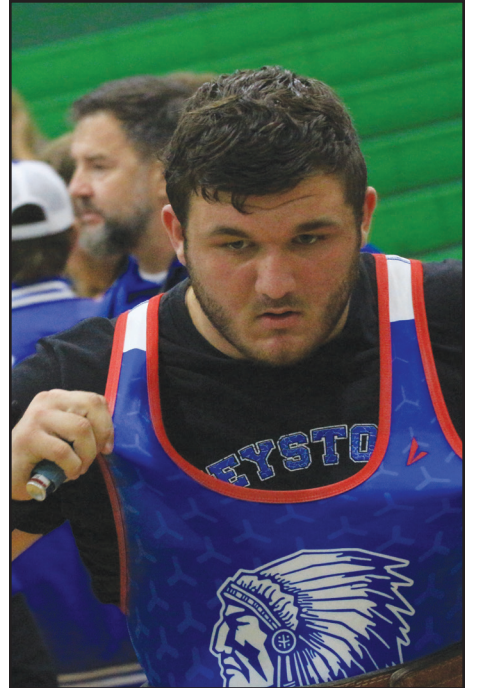




PHOTO COURTESY OF SEWRESTLING

Middleburg High undefeated state champion wrestler Cheyenne Cruce got head butted in her first match but finished in eighth place in the 200 lb weight division at the US Marines Wrestling National Championships in Fargo, ND last week.

## Wrestling

from page 25

it hurt and I wrestled the rest of the tournament with it.”

Barrientos, at 127, competed in the 16Under bracket while Cruce, at 200 pounds, was in the Junior Womens bracket along with Broncos teammates Skyla Fisher, at 100 pounds.

“We went to three days of training three times a day to prepare for Fargo,” said Barrientos, in an interview by SE Wrestling. “It was a hard week but worth it to get ready for here.”

On the Florida team was also state champion Gabriela Tedesco of Lake Gibson (100lbs) and Clare Booe of Palm Harbor (112lbs) who both won national titles. Lake Nona state champion Milana Borrelli finished fifth at 122.

At 127, Barrientos opened with a BYE then won a 10-0 match against S Brown of Nebraska before losing 10-0 to T. McGown of New Jersey.

Barrientos, now dropped back into consolations, stormed back with an 11-6 win over Victoria Espinosa of California, 4-2

over Gwendolyn Jewell of California and 12-2 over Shelby Prather of Idaho to continue into the consolation elite eight.

In her first match toward the third place match, Barrientos beat Bailey Chafin of Oregon 11-0 before falling 4-0 to Julissa Ortiz of Pennsylvania, who finished fifth and won a first-ever Public League title in Pennsylvania this year, to drop off the third place path and get to the seventh place match where she won an 8-0 match against Ava Milliner, a Texas high school freshman and first time state champion from her Ellison High School in Texas.

At 200, Cruce opened with a BYE, then scored back to back 10-0 wins to advance to the quarterfinals where she lost to eventual national runnerup Tirza Twoteeth of Montana 6-2. Twoteeth, a first-ever state champion for the Ronan High School Girls Wrestling Team in Montana, lost in the national championship to Savannah Isaac, ironically, 10-0. Isaac, from Whitmer High in Ohio, was the defending national champion.

Middleburg’s Memphis Moses was 1-2 at 16U women with teammate Skyla Fisher also 1-2 in Junior Women.

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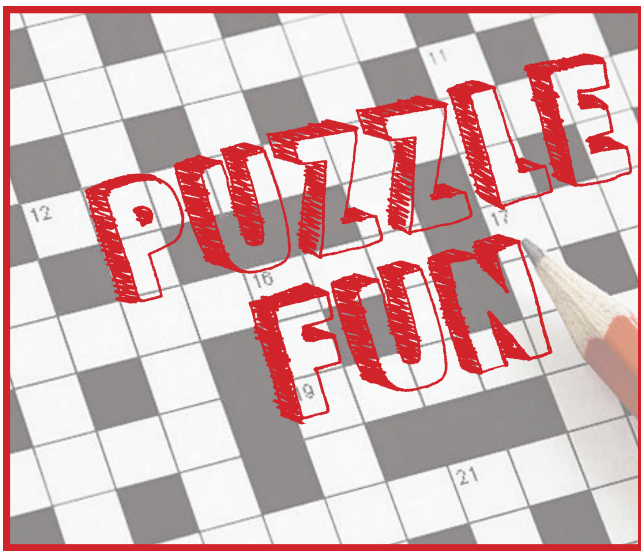
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Level: Beginner



Ridgeview High football standout Charlie Gilbert was a high flying scoring machine for Concordia.

## Gilbert

from page 29

with a 10.48 second 100 and a 47 second 400 still on the Panther record books.

Gilbert later attended Concordia University-St. Paul in NCAA Division II where he led the nation in averaging nearly 30 yards per kickoff return while earning All-America honors. Gilbert's 10.48 100 speed translated to a nation leading 4.26 40 yard split performed for NFL scouts. Gilbert, at an NFL combine also bench pressed the standard 225 pounds 17 times and measured a 38 inch vertical leap.

In his two seasons at Concordia, Gilbert had 43 catches with 11 scores in 2010 and 46 catches for 1,068 yards with 14 touchdowns. Gilbert's longest touchdown pass was a 77 yarder in 2011 against Minot State.

"I loved the kickoff because my first experience in a Concordia uniform was a kick-off return against Minot that I returned 85 yards," said Gilbert. "Kickoffs are great because you are sitting back there and, knowing I had speed, I would find the seam and just go."

Gilbert had some limited success at the NFL level with the Jacksonville Jaguars and the Arena League Jacksonville Sharks, but suffered a knee injury.

Gilbert's selection was among nine Concordia athletes and he will be inducted October 7 at Concordia University.

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Answer: Fire

## Guess Who?

I am a comic actor born in Michigan on July 13, 1969. Before I went into performing, I attended Duke University with the intention of getting a medical degree, and succeeded. In addition to movies, I'm also a judge on a singing talent show.

Answer: Ken Jeong

⊙ \* ☼ ☽ ♁ ♀ ✦ ✧ ✨ ✩ ✪ ✫ ✬ ✭ ✮ ✯ ✰ ✱ ✲ ✳ ✴ ✵ ✶ ✷ ✸ ✹ ✺ ✻ ✼ ✽ ✾ ✿ ☽ ✨ ✩ ✪ ✫ ✬ ✭ ✮ ✯ ✰ ✱ ✲ ✳ ✴ ✵ ✶ ✷ ✸ ✹ ✺ ✻ ✼ ✽ ✾ ✿

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

## CRYPTO FUN

☽ ☼ ☽ ✨ ✩ ✪ ✫ ✬ ✭ ✮ ✯ ✰ ✱ ✲ ✳ ✴ ✵ ✶ ✷ ✸ ✹ ✺ ✻ ✼ ✽ ✾ ✿

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to the grilling. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 1 = R)

A. 25 1 3 19 19

Clue: Cooking appliance

B. 13 19 12 14 20 21

Clue: Generated by fire

C. 2 26 16 6 2 2 1 21

Clue: Not inside

D. 22 26 1 25 20 1

Clue: Served on a bun

Answers: A. grill B. James C. outdoors D. burger

## ON THE GRILL WORD SEARCH

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

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

## WORDS

- ASH
- BACKYARD
- BARBECUE
- CHAR
- CHARCOAL
- DELICIOUS
- ENTERTAIN
- EXTINGUISH
- FIRE
- FLAVOR
- FLIP
- GRATES
- GRILLING
- HARDWOOD
- MARINATE
- OUTDOORS
- PATIO
- ROTATE
- SEAR
- SMOKE
- SPIT
- TEMPERATURE



CLAY COUNTY LEGAL NOTICES

**ANABELLE ISLAND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024 BUDGET; NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE IMPOSITION OF OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS, ADOPTION OF AN ASSESSMENT ROLL, AND THE LEVY, COLLECTION, AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE SAME; AND NOTICE OF REGULAR BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETING.  
Upcoming Public Hearings, and Regular Meeting**

The Board of Supervisors ("Board") for the Anabelle Island Community Development District ("District") will hold the following two public hearings and a regular meeting as follows:

DATE: AUGUST 15, 2023  
 TIME: 2:00 PM  
 LOCATION: Plantation Oaks Amenity Center  
 845 Oakleaf Plantation Parkway  
 Orange Park, Florida 32065

The first public hearing is being held pursuant to Chapter 190, Florida Statutes, to receive public comment and objections on the District's proposed budget ("Proposed Budget") for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023, and ending September 30, 2024 ("Fiscal Year 2023/2024"). The second public hearing is being held pursuant to Chapters 170, 190 and 197, Florida Statutes, to consider the imposition of operations and maintenance special assessments ("O&M Assessments") upon the lands located within the District, to fund the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2023/2024; to consider the adoption of an assessment roll; and, to provide for the levy, collection, and enforcement of assessments. At the conclusion of the hearings, the Board will, by resolution, adopt a budget and levy O&M Assessments as finally approved by the Board. A Board meeting of the District will also be held where the Board may consider any other District business.

**Description of Assessments**

The District imposes O&M Assessments on benefitted property within the District for the purpose of funding the District's general administrative, operations, and maintenance budget. Pursuant to Section 170.07, Florida Statutes, a description of the services to be funded by the O&M Assessments, and the properties to be improved and benefitted from the O&M Assessments, are all set forth in the Proposed Budget. A geographic depiction of the property potentially subject to the proposed O&M Assessments is identified in the map attached hereto. The table below shows the schedule of the proposed O&M Assessments, which are subject to change at the hearing:

Land Use	Total # of Units/Acres	ERU Factor	Proposed O&M Assessment (including collection costs / early payment discounts)
Single Family	79	1	\$800.00

The proposed O&M Assessments as stated include collection costs and/or early payment discounts, which Clay County ("County") may impose on assessments that are collected on the County tax bill. Moreover, pursuant to Section 197.3632(4), Florida Statutes, the lien amount shall serve as the "maximum rate" authorized by law for O&M Assessments, such that no assessment hearing shall be held, or notice provided in future years unless the assessments are proposed to be increased or another criterion within Section 197.3632(4), Florida Statutes, is met. Note that the O&M Assessments do not include any debt service assessments that may be levied by the District in the future.

For Fiscal Year 2023/2024, the District intends to have the County tax collector collect the assessments imposed on certain developed property and will directly collect the assessments imposed on the remaining benefitted property by sending out a bill prior to, or during, November 2023. It is important to pay your assessment because failure to pay will cause a tax certificate to be issued against the property which may result in loss of title, or for direct billed assessments, may result in a foreclosure action, which also may result in a loss of title. The District's decision to collect assessments on the tax roll or by direct billing does not preclude the District from later electing to collect those or other assessments in a different manner at a future time.

**Additional Provisions**

The public hearings and meeting are open to the public and will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Florida law. A copy of the Proposed Budget, proposed assessment roll, and the agenda for the hearings and meeting may be obtained at the offices of the District Manager, located at c/o Governmental Management Services, LLC, 475 West Town Place, Suite 114, St. Augustine, Florida 32092, Ph: (904) 940-5850 ("District Manager's Office"), during normal business hours. The public hearings and meeting may be continued to a date, time, and place to be specified on the record at the hearings or meeting. There may be occasions when staff or board members may participate by speaker telephone.

Any person requiring special accommodation at this meeting because of a disability or physical impairment should contact the District Manager's Office 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.

Please note that all affected property owners have the right to appear at the public hearings and meeting and may also file written objections with the District Manager's Office within twenty days of publication of this notice. Each person who decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at the public hearings or meeting 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.

Marilee Giles, District Manager

RESOLUTION 2023-02

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE ANABELLE ISLAND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT APPROVING A PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024; DECLARING SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS TO FUND THE PROPOSED BUDGET PURSUANT TO CHAPTERS 190, 170, AND/OR 197, FLORIDA STATUTES; SETTING PUBLIC HEARINGS; ADDRESSING PUBLICATION; ADDRESSING SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the District Manager has heretofore prepared and submitted to the Board of Supervisors ("Board") of the Anabelle Island Community Development District ("District") prior to June 15, 2023, a proposed budget ("Proposed Budget") for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023, and ending September 30, 2024 ("Fiscal Year 2023/2024"); and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the District to fund the administrative and operations services (together, "Services") set forth in the Proposed Budget by levy of special assessments pursuant to Chapters 190, 170, and/or 197, Florida Statutes ("Assessments"), as set forth in the preliminary assessment roll included within the Proposed Budget; and

WHEREAS, the District hereby determines that benefits would accrue to the properties within the District, as outlined within the Proposed Budget, in an amount equal to or in excess of the Assessments, and that such Assessments would be fairly and reasonably allocated as set forth in the Proposed Budget; and

WHEREAS, the Board has considered the Proposed Budget, including the Assessments, and desires to set the required public hearings thereon;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE ANABELLE ISLAND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT:

1. PROPOSED BUDGET APPROVED. The Proposed Budget prepared by the District Manager for Fiscal Year 2023/2024 attached hereto as Exhibit A is hereby approved as the basis for conducting a public hearing to adopt said Proposed Budget.

2. DECLARING ASSESSMENTS. Pursuant to Chapters 190, 170, and/or 197, Florida Statutes, the Assessments shall defray the cost of the Services in the total estimated amounts set forth in the Proposed Budget. The nature of, and plans and specifications for, the Services to be funded by the Assessments are described in the Proposed Budget and in the reports (if any) of the District Engineer, all of which are on file and available for public inspection at the "District's Office," Governmental Management Services, LLC, 475 West Town Place, Suite 114, St. Augustine, Florida 32092. The Assessments shall be levied within the District on all benefitted lots and lands, and shall be apportioned, all as described in the Proposed Budget and the preliminary assessment roll included therein. The preliminary assessment roll is also on file and available for public inspection at the District's Office. If levied pursuant to Chapter 170, Florida Statutes, the Assessments shall be paid in one more installments pursuant to a bill issued by the District in November of 2023, or, if levied pursuant to the Uniform Method as set forth in Chapter 197, Florida Statutes, the Assessments shall be collected on the tax roll of Clay County, Florida, and paid as directed therein.

3. SETTING PUBLIC HEARINGS. Pursuant to Chapters 170, 190, and 197, Florida Statutes, public hearings on the approved Proposed Budget and the Assessments are hereby declared and set for the following date, hour and location:

DATE: August 15, 2023  
 HOUR: 2:00 p.m.  
 LOCATION: Plantation Oaks Amenity Center  
 845 Oakleaf Plantation Parkway  
 Orange Park, Florida 32065

4. TRANSMITTAL OF PROPOSED BUDGET TO LOCAL GENERAL-PURPOSE GOVERNMENT. The District Manager is hereby directed to submit a copy of the Proposed Budget to Clay County at least 60 days prior to the hearing set above.

5. POSTING OF PROPOSED BUDGET. In accordance with Section 189.016, Florida Statutes, the District's Secretary is further directed to post the approved Proposed Budget on the District's website at least two days before the budget hearing date as set forth in Section 3, and to ensure the Proposed Budget remains on the website for at least 45 days.

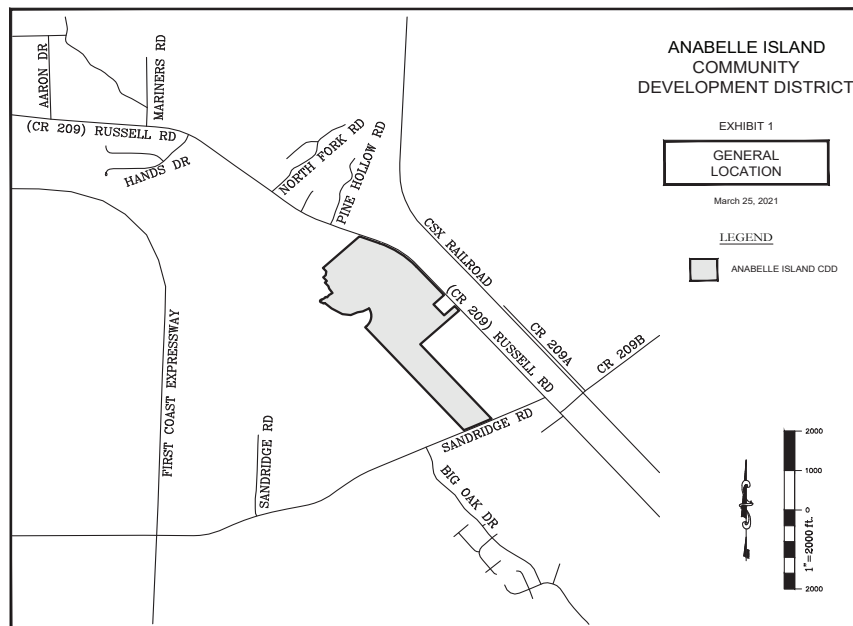
6. PUBLICATION OF NOTICE. Notice of the public hearings shall be published in the manner prescribed in Florida law.

7. SEVERABILITY. The invalidity or unenforceability of any one or more provisions of this Resolution shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 13th day of June, 2023.

ATTEST:(SECRETARY); \_\_\_\_\_  
 ;ANABELLE ISLAND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT  
 BY: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE \_\_\_\_\_













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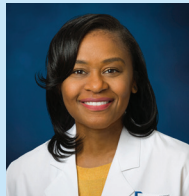
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Baptist HealthPlace  
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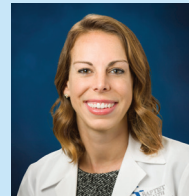
**Michael Schriver, MD**  
Baptist HealthPlace  
Suite 201



**Danisha Stevenson, MD**  
Baptist HealthPlace  
Suite 201



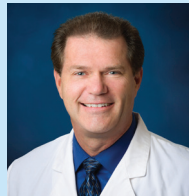
**Barbara Austin, APRN, FNP-BC**  
Baptist HealthPlace,  
Suite 201



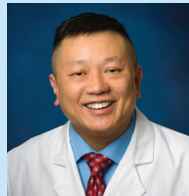
**Alexandra Shoemaker, PA-C**  
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**Sharon Acevedo, MD**  
Baptist HealthPlace  
Suite 206



**Curtis Storm, MD**  
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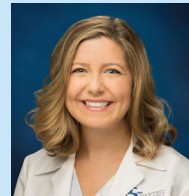
**Jim Tran, MD**  
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Suite 206



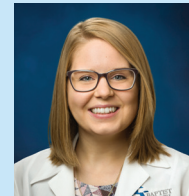
**Meredith Molnar, APRN**  
Baptist HealthPlace, Suite 206



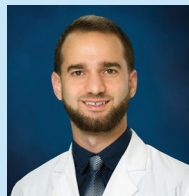
**Dian Trent, APRN, FNP-BC**  
Baptist HealthPlace, Suite 206



**Hannah Arn, DO**  
Blanding Boulevard



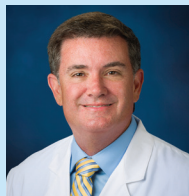
**Kayla Fazio, DO**  
Blanding Boulevard



**Ousama Aboushaar, MD**  
Merchants Gate Drive



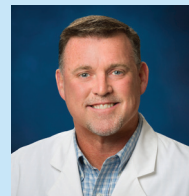
**Crystal Davis, MD**  
Merchants Gate Drive



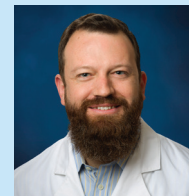
**Todd Pinder, MD**  
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**Michael Stephens, MD**  
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