

CLAY TODAY

Holiday Happenings

See pages 18-19 for the festivities in December.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2023

WWW.CLAYTODAYONLINE.COM

VOLUME 61, NO. 48 \$1.00



STAFF PHOTO BY DON COBLE

Christmas on Walnut is also the biggest day of the year for many downtown shops. Spring Park Coffee owner Valerie Kelley and The Corner Pocket owner Cheri Starnes said Saturday would be their busiest day of the year for customers and sales.

Green Cove Springs celebrates Christmas on Walnut

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Spring Park has been bustling with activity and anticipation for the past month. The grounds have been neatly manicured. More than 225 Christmas trees have been erected and placed throughout the city's iconic hub of activity. Displays are ready at the pavilion, and more than 100 letters have been dropped

SEE WALNUT, 24

Keating takes center stage

Friends, colleagues honor CEO's retirement after 50 years

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Nancy Keating's final day at Challenge Enterprises will be Dec. 31. She plans to be on the golf course on New Year's Day.

"There's a Hangover League, and I plan on playing," she said moments after arriving at her retirement party Tuesday night at the Clay Theatre.

She arrived in a 50th-anniversary Chevrolet Camaro, which was fitting because her last day on the job, Dec. 31, will mark 50 years at the organization she directed to provide skills allowing

people with different abilities to lead a productive, active and rewarding life.

Almost immediately, her knees buckled when her former classmate, Irene Smith, was one of the first to greet her. The two attended high school together in Bethpage, New York, on Long Island. They graduated in 1967, and Smith's

SEE KEATING, 13

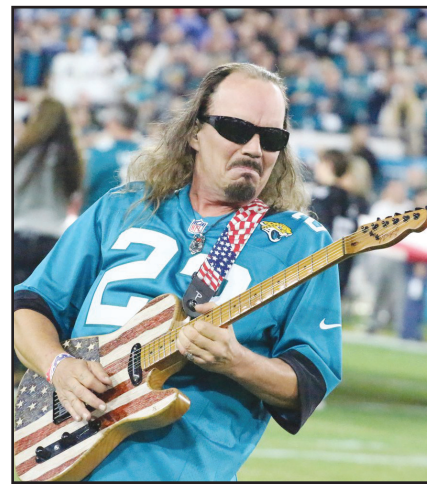
STAFF PHOTO BY DON COBLE

Nancy Keating arrived at the Clay Theatre in a 50th-anniversary edition Chevrolet Camaro for her retirement party celebrating 50 years at Challenge Enterprises. She walked the red carpet to a warm welcome by an appreciative group of friends.



Santa Claus, Rising Stars will be 'Rockin' for Stockins'

Holiday event to provide inspiration, instruments, toys, music and food to children



By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Children attending the "Rockin' for Stockins" program at the Boogerville Hideout will leave with a bag of gifts and, hopefully, a song in their

PHOTO LISA WANE

Paul Wane, who won national acclaim by playing the "Star Spangled Banner" before last year's game between the Jacksonville Jaguars and Tennessee Titans, will host his third "Rockin' for Stockins" to provide children with instruments and encouragement to inspire creativity at Boogerville Hideout on Sunday, Dec. 3.

hearts. The Rising Star Guitars For Kids fulfills Paul and Lisa Wane's mission to unite the community with "the magic of music, where individuals are provided platforms that showcase their talents and bring their dreams to reality."

The "Rockin' for Stockins" event on Sunday, Dec. 3, at Boogerville Hideout is a culmination of the couple's commitment to providing children with alternatives to cellphones, video games and substance abuse. For years, the Wanes have gifted hundreds of free instruments to their

SEE ROCKIN', 14

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INDEX

Opinion | 4-5
Obituaries | 8

Crime | 22-23
Sports | 25-34

Puzzle | 340
Classifieds & Legals | 35-39

BCC extends Lake Asbury Master Plan moratorium

Council slows development so infrastructure projects can keep pace

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS- The Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved an extension Tuesday night of the Lake Asbury Master Plan moratorium to allow infrastructure projects time to catch

up. Currently, the number of homes built in the Master Plan is less than 14,000 units. The Comprehensive Plan allows a maximum of 24,492 units, but only 1,700 permits were approved this year. That puts thousands of future permits on hold until the county finds solutions for roads, fire

rescue, schools and drainage.


Kristen Burke, who represents the Lake Asbury area, said, "A large amount of growth is happening in the county right now. We are faced with constant reminders every time we see the trees coming down and new homes going up. And this won't stop (new homes that are already approved under the plan)."

Lake Asbury relies on Station 15 for fire and rescue services. That station has three fire trucks, rescue and a brush fire engine. However, given the number of homes, road conditions, traffic and the expansive layout of the area, firefighters are already challenged to meet demands. New growth

SEE MASTER PLAN, 20

#3B Bond Transportation Project
Sandridge Realignment - Swoosh & Roundabout at CR209B

- Kiewit GMP for Construction = \$17,732,307
- Budget Shortfall = \$7.7M
- For consideration, Adjust CIP budget line items



Commissioners hear requests for road improvement projects

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The Board of County Commissioners considered operational improvements at the intersections of County Road 209B and Sandridge Road, Oak Stream Drive and County Road 209 and Watkins Road and County Road 209 during its workshop on Tuesday.

Now, the much-needed infrastructure improvements may not happen at all.

The commissioners will vote on whether to fund the \$17.73 million project by Kiewit GMP for construction, at a following meeting after the public advertising of the item at the board's Dec. 12 meeting.

The Bonded Transportation Project reported a shortfall of \$7.7 million. The board will consider adjusting Capital Improvements budget line items to free coun-

ty monies. The dangerous intersection of Sandridge and County Road 209B, where a \$2 million swoosh and roundabout are planned, is a major component of the plan, especially since hundreds of housing permits have been issued or planned for the area.

An expansion to three lanes was already denied. That would have created a better distribution of cars on the highly trafficked, dangerous roadway.

A third option was to complete the project before costs for asphalt, materials and a likely labor increase.


Commissioner Kristen Burke said \$6 million has already been spent on the project. "With the amount of people moving there, it is necessary that we (get this project completed)," Burke said.

If approved, the project would be in her district.



STAFF PHOTO BY LEE WARDLAW

Bonded Transportation Program Administrator Ed Dendor told county commissioners adjustments to the Capital Improvement Plan were needed to free up enough money to pay for three much-need road projects.

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Gift a child's imagination this Christmas

Drive imagination with these children's holiday gift ideas

By StatePoint Media

To fill the holiday season with magic and joy for little ones, consider these five gift ideas that will spark the imagination and create endless opportunities for fun.

Great books

Listening to a book read aloud is a chance to imagine oneself in the setting and circumstances of the characters. This is especially true when the literature is personalized. Build out a child's library this holiday season with a book that allows you to customize the story with the child's name and an illustrated character that resembles them.

Construction fun

The Go! Go! Smart Wheels Spiral Construction Tower from VTech is not just a regular track set. It features five play pieces, 11 movable parts, and seven interactive SmartPoint areas so children can imagine they are in a real construction zone. From spinning down the spiral tower to hauling the boulder in the talking dump truck to transferring the steel with the cargo hook, there is no shortage of playful ways to cruise through the construction site while building first words and motor skills. A companion to other Go! Go Smart Wheels sets such as the 4-1 Zig-Zag Raceway, the Fast-and-Friendly Garage and the Rescue Tower Firehouse, young vehicle enthusiasts can race, repair and rescue during pretend play.

Costumes

Playing dress up doesn't need to be an annual occasion reserved for Halloween. Whether it's a superhero, a princess, an animal, or a character from a book or show, a costume makes playing pretend more thrilling all year round and is an

SEE GIFT, 5

OPINIONS



FSU is why NCAA should expand football playoffs to eight teams

By Don Coble
Managing Editor

Let me say this: Florida State doesn't belong in the current four-team College Football Playoff National Championship tournament.

My opinion isn't based on quarterback Jordan Travis' gruesome broken leg suffered against North Alabama. It's because the injury came in another easy game in a schedule stocked with easy opponents.

Every team on the Seminoles' schedule lost at least three games this season, and only four of 12 opponents finished with a winning record. Only one opponent, Louisiana State, is ranked in the Top 25.

Granted, schedules are made years in advance. There's no way the FSU Athletics Department knew the Atlantic Coast Conference would have such a down year.

Louisville proved to be the second-best team in the conference and will play the Seminoles on Saturday in Charlotte, North Carolina, for the ACC Championship. The Cardinals are coming off a home loss to a 7-5 Kentucky team last Saturday.

Florida State's signature victory was a 45-24 win against LSU, a team that wound up third in the SEC West.



Don Coble

Last Saturday, Florida State used a backup quarterback to beat Florida (who hasn't?), 24-15 to improve this season's record to 12-0.

I know fans are tired of hearing the Seminoles didn't play anyone. All you can do is line up and play the team on the other side of the ball. But I know your pain. I'm a Central Florida graduate and ardent fan of the Knights' football team, and we heard the same comments in 2017 and 2018 – many from FSU fans.

The culmination of the 2017 campaign was a 34-27 win against Auburn in the Peach Bowl that made the Knights the only undefeated team – 13-0 – in the nation. All Auburn did that year was beat Alabama, 26-14, and Georgia, 40-17. They certainly weren't considered a nobody back then.

The Knights were rewarded with a sixth-place finish in the final poll.

The following year, UCF was 12-0 before losing 40-32 to LSU in the Fiesta Bowl to snap a 25-game winning streak. That year, UCF finished 11th in the final polls.

Quarterback McKenzie Milton suffered a catastrophic leg injury against rival South Florida a month earlier. His right knee was only attached by his skin. The hit severed nerves, bones, muscles and arteries. Doctors considered amputating his leg, but they saved it with five surgeries.

Florida State, does this scenario suddenly sound familiar?

Here's the rub: UCF won nine games in 2017 against teams that finished with

SEE TEAMS, 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.

Terminus: (ter-men-us) a noun that means a final point in space or time; an end or extremity.

"The Shands Bridge starts in Green Cove Springs and reaches its terminus in St. Johns County."

This Week in History

Five years ago, 2018

- Following the recent discontinuation of the Teal Line in Keystone Heights, a Clay County commission debated discontinuing the Flex Lines transit system to cut expenses by \$280,000 further.

- After 10 years of litigation, The First District Court of Appeal sided with the original ruling in a case between the Keystone Airpark Authority and an aviation engineering firm. The original ruling declared that Passero Associates, one of the firms involved in the construction of hangers and taxiways, was not liable.

10 years ago, 2013

- A football playoff game between the Clay High Blue Devils and the Bishop Kenny Crusaders set state and school records from the number of points earned by both sides. The Blue Devils narrowly finished on top in a bellicose back-and-forth match, winning 74 to 73.

- Clay County School Board members reelected Carol Studdard for a record third consecutive term as board chair after an unprofessional session. Former Florida senator and education commissioner Jim Horne described the lengthy board meeting as "dysfunctional."

20 years ago, 2003

- A Christmas tree arrived at scenic Walnut Street in Green Cove Springs long before Santa Claus. "Christmas on Walnut Street" was an event prepared to lift GCS residents' spirits for the holidays.

- Orange Park Junior High students created a butterfly garden to serve as a 9/11 memorial. The students shared pictures of the garden with pen pals in China and England.

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.

Teams

from page 4

winning records. Three of the opponents that year finished ranked in the Top 25.

In 2018, they won six games against teams that finished with a winning record, and two were Top 25.

Including conference championship games in 2017 and 2018, four UCF wins came against Mike Norvell's Memphis Tigers. Norvell now leads Florida State.

So, who belongs in the football playoffs? Certainly, Georgia and Michigan. After that, it could get a little dicey.

An expansion to an eight-team playoff would satisfy most of us fans, but the No. 9 team will feel left out. So would the top teams from the Group of Five conferences. That's the emotional nature of college football. Adding four teams would only add one extra week of games, and it would be a great way to level the playing field for every deserving team.

If Alabama beats Georgia in the SEC

Championship game in Atlanta, both teams deserve to advance. Alabama probably will be dropped to the Bowl Championship Series if the Bulldogs win and extend their winning streak to 30.

Michigan should easily throttle Iowa for a spot. Ohio State shouldn't go because it didn't qualify for a conference championship.

As I said, all you can do is line up and beat the team on the other side of the ball. You can't do that if you're not on the field or at home watching television.

The winner of the Washington-Oregon Pac-12 championship game will advance. And 11-1 Texas, which won at Alabama this year, could get in if it wins the Big 12 championship game.

No matter what happens, many fan bases will be upset their teams won't be part of the national championship picture. It happens every season because a fan's rationality is usually clouded by their demonstrative ties to a program.

It happened to a deserving Central Florida team. Get ready, Seminoles.

Letter to the editor claytodayonline.com

Editor:

I note in the article on local elected officials Jennifer Bradley, Bobby Payne, and Sam Garrison, that none touched on the otherwise all-consuming "culture wars" being waged by Florida Republicans from the governor's office on down.

Nonetheless, as someone who's marched on Washington and elsewhere for women's rights for decades – and especially the right to a safe and legal abortion – I note all three are anti-abortionists.

To them I say the same two things I say to all anti-choice people. First, as Maya Angelou said so succinctly, "I am capable of what every other human is capable of. This is one of the great lessons of war and life." I would take up arms to defend my country, my family, because I am as strong as any man in that regard. Virtually every woman I know is.

Secondly, when officials like these deny

grown American women the right to make that choice for themselves, they broadcast they do not believe women are capable of making tough decisions.

Then why is Bradley in office? Governing is all about hard choices. Why are ANY women in office? Or running businesses? Or fighting wars? And why do the men "let" them be there when they don't trust the women's decision-making either?

The hypocrisy is glaring. They can't have it both ways.

As has been said for decades, abortion is a matter best left to the woman, her family, and her faith -- not strangers, elected or not.

No Republican will get my vote. They may take that right away from my kind, too.

**Cary Murphy Herold
Fleming Island**

Gift

from page 4

excellent and unexpected gift for the holiday season.

Puppets

Role-playing games are always more fun and creative when puppets are involved. For very young children, consider machine-washable, all-plush puppets to make playtime more cozy and hygienic.

Occupation playset

From doctor's kits, complete with toy stethoscopes and thermometers, to tool sets with toy hammers and saws, occupation playsets build confidence and offer up chances for children to pretend to be grown-ups hard at work.

Thoughtfully selected holiday gifts can brighten the season for little ones and help them have more creative and imaginative playtime adventures in the year ahead.

History

from page 4

30 years ago, 1993

- Students from Lakeside Junior High walked out of class in protest over teacher salaries. After the 12:45 two-minute bell rang, students met at the Friendship Garden where they carried signs.

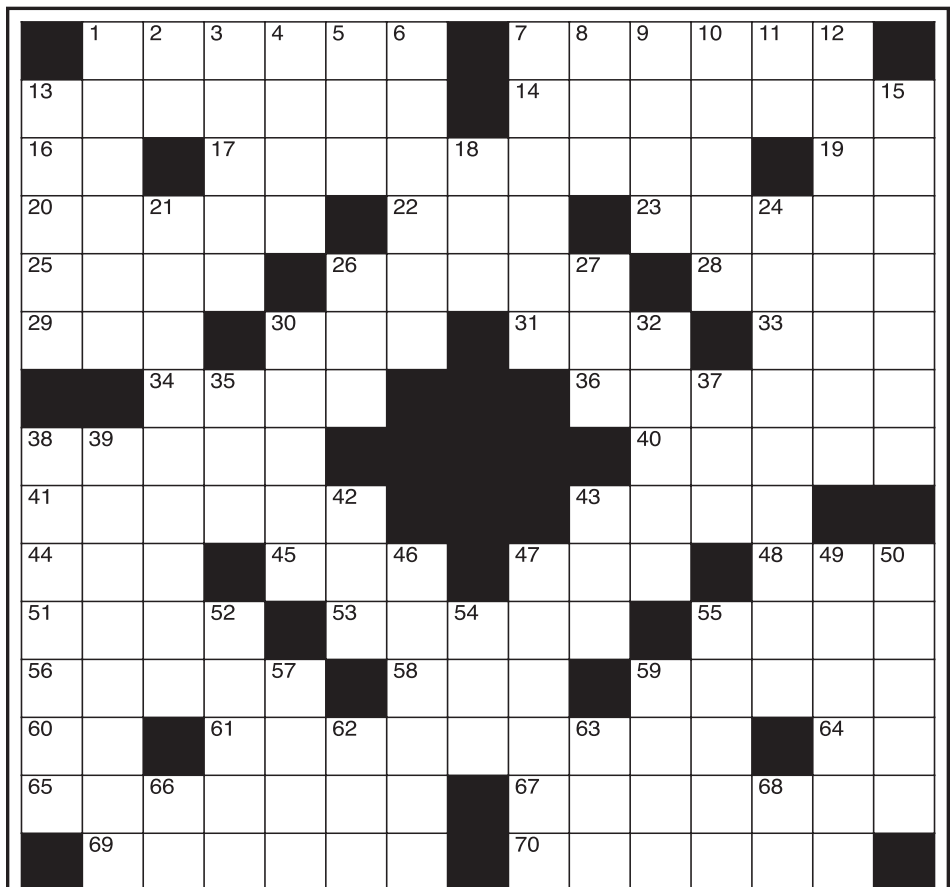
- Clay County family home sales were on the rise. The Florida Association of Realtors said that the rate had risen nine percent in Clay.

40 years ago, 1983

- A woman in a wheelchair pulled a baby from a burning trailer. Lois Pit-

tman, 36, was able to escape a fire in her mobile home. She had plugged in an iron and returned to the porch to wash some clothes. After smelling smoke and seeing flames on the wall, Pittman then took her baby to safety.

- A Clay County Fire spokesman urged the Clay County Fire and Rescue Committee to buy three new fire engines and four tanker trunks. Fire Chief George Dempsey said the new equipment should cost the county approximately \$90,000 per year for the next five years.



- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Spiritual leaders
 - 7. Salt
 - 13. Fortified wine
 - 14. Edible mollusk
 - 16. It begins with them
 - 17. A way to compare
 - 19. Government lawyer
 - 20. Back parts
 - 22. 8th month (abbr.)
 - 23. Very willing
 - 25. ___ ex machina
 - 26. Satisfies
 - 28. Quebec river
 - 29. A doctrine
 - 30. Popular pickup truck
 - 31. Dekagram
 - 33. Naturally occurring solid material
 - 34. Company officer
 - 36. Villains
 - 38. Cricket frogs
 - 40. German founder of psychology
 - 41. Endured
 - 43. A female domestic
 - 44. A "lace" to avoid
 - 45. Cigarette (slang)
 - 47. Canadian politician Josephine
 - 48. French ballet/acting dynasty
 - 51. Employee stock ownership plan
 - 53. Belonging to the bottom
 - 55. Sound
 - 56. Yankees slugger Judge
 - 58. Dickens character
 - 59. More wise
 - 60. Flash memory card
 - 61. Exposing human vice or folly to ridicule
 - 64. Atomic #79
 - 65. Longtime Braves pitcher Julio
 - 67. Humor
 - 69. Shawl
 - 70. Preliminary assessment of patients
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Animal disease
 - 2. Commercial
 - 3. Craft supply
 - 4. Storage units
 - 5. Investment vehicle
 - 6. Colorado Heisman winner
 - 7. In a way, sank
 - 8. Post-birth brain damage (abbr.)
 - 9. Lay about
 - 10. Intestinal
 - 11. The opposite of yes
 - 12. Caused to be loved
 - 13. Messianic in Islamic eschatology
 - 15. Showing since conviction
 - 18. Not safe
 - 21. The number above the line in a fraction
 - 24. Yard invader
 - 26. Pouch
 - 27. Swedish krona
 - 30. Start anew
 - 32. While white or yellow flower
 - 35. Fourteen
 - 37. Graphical user interface
 - 38. Up-to-date on the news
 - 39. Campaigns
 - 42. Touch softly
 - 43. Boardwalk Empire actress Gretchen
 - 46. Violent seizure of property
 - 47. One who supports the Pope
 - 49. Anxiety
 - 50. Body fluid
 - 52. Phony person
 - 54. Title of respect
 - 55. Chilean city
 - 57. City in central Japan
 - 59. Silk garment
 - 62. Draw from
 - 63. Automobile
 - 66. Man
 - 68. Legal bigwig (abbr.)

Ascension St. Vincent's joins local law enforcement to feed hungry

For Clay Today

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Volunteers and associates led by chefs Chase Turgeon and Robert Wilson from Ascension St. Vincent's prepared more than 150 warm Thanksgiving meals for Clay County seniors in need. It was the 30th consecutive year the health system has prepared the meals delivered to seniors on Nov. 23 with help from the nonprofit Aging True Community Senior Services, zTrip taxi company, the Clay County Sheriff's Office and Green Cove Springs and Orange Park police departments.

Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County prepared approximately 150 meals on Thanksgiving Day to help serve Aging True's Clay County senior clients, said Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County President Kevin Rinks.

"The Thanksgiving meal outreach is reflective of Ascension St. Vincent's commitment to residents in Clay County," Rinks said. "We're committed to serving our patients and our communities with special attention to the poor and vulnerable. Thanksgiving is perfect for us to show and extend this commitment."

St. Vincent's in Clay partnered with Aging True to identify meal recipients and



Orange Park PD Assistant Chief Randy Case helps fill food boxes while members of the Orange Park Police Department and Clay County Sheriff's Office load cars for deliveries to seniors. Volunteers from Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County joined members of the Clay County Sheriff's Office, Aging True Community Seniors, zTrip Taxi, Middleburg High NJROTC and the Orange Park and Green Cove Springs police departments to dish out and deliver 150 meals on Thanksgiving to Clay County seniors.



taxi company zTrip managed the deliveries. An estimated 10,000 Thanksgiving meals have been served through this partnership over the years.

"As we all give thanks on this special day for our blessings, it is so fitting for us at Aging True to thank our incredible partners who have worked tirelessly to make our Thanksgiving Meals on Wheels deliveries possible," said Teresa Barton, CEO of Aging True. "We're especially grateful that over these years, they have given resources, time, and faithful care to some of our most isolated and frail individuals. They make this day so extraordinary for so

many."

Meals were delivered to seniors that Aging True serves by zTrip drivers who donate their time and gasoline to ensure meal delivery.

"We were profoundly grateful to participate in the 30th year of this Thanksgiving meal delivery event. At ZTrip, we recognize the importance of community, and we're honored to make a difference in the lives of our community's seniors during this special season," said zTrip General Manager Robert Gagliardi.





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Sunday Dec. 25
10am-2pm

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Daytona 500 enjoys earliest sellout in 52 years

For Clay Today

DAYTONA BEACH – With decades of rich racing history, the Daytona 500 is one of the grandest spectacles in motorsports, with fans and drivers from all over clamoring to be a part of The Great American Race. Today, that sentiment continues to reign true.

Daytona International Speedway announced Tuesday that the 2024 Daytona 500 grandstands and camping are sold out nearly three months before the NASCAR Cup Series season opener. That is the earliest The World Center of Racing has announced a sellout in the modern era, dating back to the 1972 season, and the ninth consecutive sellout. Limited Fanzone and hospitality packages, including the Daytona 500 Club and 31 Degrees, are still available.

“Our fans continue to impress year after year, but the rate at which the 2024 Daytona 500 has sold out is a true testament to what this race represents,” said Daytona International Speedway President Frank Kelleher. “It’s anticipation that builds throughout the year and into the offseason, then all comes together for a week of pure entertainment, competition, and this passionate feeling you don’t get anywhere else

but The World Center of Racing. We can’t wait to have a full house of race fans for the NASCAR season opener.”

Daytona continues to show its affinity for making history. Last year, the World Center of Racing celebrated the 65th running of the 500 alongside NASCAR’s 75th anniversary with the longest race in NASCAR history. Ricky Stenhouse Jr. drove to victory after two intense overtimes, capturing his first 500 victory.

From the first race, Daytona has provided a thrill like any other scheduled event. The inaugural Daytona 500 in 1959 ended in a rare photo finish between Lee Petty and Johnny Beauchamp, with Petty winning in a photo finish that took three days to determine. History repeated itself nearly six decades later when Denny Hamlin defeated Martin Truex Jr. in 2016 by winning by .01 seconds, which also required cameras.

The Great American Race is just one event in a multi-day swing of vigorous racing at Daytona International Speedway during Speedweeks.

Fans can catch the first glimpse of the Cup Series as they prepare to open the points season with Daytona 500 qualifying on Wednesday, Feb. 14. Qualifying will set



PHOTO COURTESY OF NASCAR/GETTY IMAGES

All 101,500 seats and every camping spot are sold out at the Daytona International Speedway ahead of the Feb. 18 Daytona 500, where a field of 40 will take the checkered flag at 2:30 p.m., hoping to match last year’s exciting finish.

the front row for the race, as well as the field for a set of head-to-head battles in the Bluegreen Vacations Duel at Daytona on Thursday, Feb. 15, where drivers fight for their starting position for the Feb. 18 main event. The Craftsman Truck Series season-opening Fresh From Florida 250 takes the green flag on Friday, Feb. 16. Then on Saturday, fans get a doubleheader with the kickoff to the ARCA Menards Series season followed by the United Rentals 300 NASCAR Xfinity Series race. Drivers in all three series will look to begin their year with a win, putting everything on the line at one of the biggest races on the schedule. All this cul-

minates in one of the greatest motorsports events in the world, the DAYTONA 500. Drivers will face the steep banking of Daytona International Speedway with nothing but inches between one car and the next, all in front of a massive sellout crowd.

Tickets are available for all other events during Speedweeks, including packages for the Xfinity and ARCA series doubleheader.

Fans can also witness all the action with the Daytona 500 at 2:30 p.m. on FOX, or tune in to MRN/SiriusXM.

For more information on how to acquire pre-sale access, please visit Daytonainternationalspeedway.com.



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Obituaries claytodayonline.com

Jerry T. Walker

Jerry T. Walker, 87, of Green Cove Springs, FL, passed away November 16, 2023

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

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



William "Wild Bill" Lied

William "Wild Bill" Lied, 58, of Middleburg, FL, passed away November 18, 2023

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

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



Raymond J. Winkler

Raymond J. Winkler, 94, of Orange Park, FL, passed away November 23, 2023

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



Thrasher-Horne

ClayToday

STARSHIP to land at Thrasher-Horne for one night

ORANGE PARK – Mickey Thomas owns the soaring voice that propelled STARSHIP through the decade of the 80's. With his

soulful and compelling vocals, Thomas has become one of Rock Music's most recognizable stars.

The iconic band will play at the Thrasher-Horne Center on March 9 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets start at \$29 and are available

SEE THRASHER, 15



FOR CLAY TODAY

News4Jax surprised Ridgeview High's Master Chief Sha'Reff Rashad by announcing he won its Hometown Military Hero award on Wednesday. Rashad, who's been with the Navy and Ridgeview for 19 years, won a new Hyundai Tucson.

News4JAX selects Ridgeview's MCPO Sha'Reff Rashad as its Hyundai Hometown Hero

Naval Science Instructor presented with a new car during Wednesday's *Courtesy of News4Jax*

ORANGE PARK – In a heartwarming surprise event at Ridgeview High on Wednesday, News4JAX presented Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPO) Sha'Reff Rashad with the prestigious title of Hyundai Hometown Hero. The unsuspecting MCPO, renowned for his dedication to his country and community, was further delighted when he was informed that he would be the new owner of a brand-new 2023 Hyundai Tucson.

The News4JAX crew, headed by producer Tom Swider and photographer/producer Marshall Malone, made their entrance mid-school day. Principal Becky Murphy graciously escorted them via a golf cart to the rear of the campus, where MCPO Rashad and his cadets stood at at-

tention. Breaking from the usual routine, Swider, microphone in hand, approached Rashad to deliver the thrilling news. The Master Chief's initial response was a mix of surprise and laughter, followed by heartfelt gratitude expressed towards News4JAX, the school's principal, and a nod to the divine.

"Wow! Well, first of all, let me thank God for it, as well as News4JAX for the opportunity and the principal for the chance to serve the kids at Ridgeview High School. It is truly an honor. Again, thank you all for your support," said MCPO Rashad.

As the exchange unfolded, Lt. Cmdr. Robert Peterson, a colleague of Rashad,

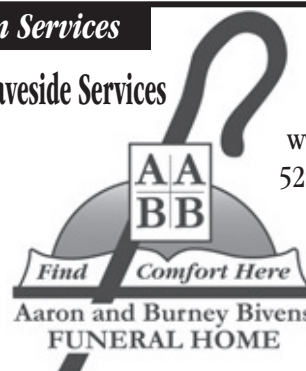
SEE HOMETOWN, 15

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Community Briefs



Everyone welcomed at Hendry Farms Cane Grinding Festival Saturday in Lake Asbury

LAKE ASBURY – Former Clay County Commission Chairman Gayward Hendry will open his farm to the public on Saturday for his annual Cane Grinding Festival.

Hendry will show the process of turning cane into syrup at his ranch at 577 Branscomb Road from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The event also features farm tours, including animals, a wooden smokehouse and cane presses that create Hendry's Ol' Kelsey's Sugar Cane Syrup.

While other items will be on the buffet, Hendry said the featured lunch items will be fried flounder and swamp cabbage.

The event is free.

Free animal shelter training during a disaster at UF/IFAS Extension Office

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – A disaster doesn't know bounds - it affects everyone, including pets and animals. One way you can help is to become an emergency animal responder so you can be ready to help when you get the call to action.

Thanks to a grant from the Florida State Agricultural Response Team, Clay County Emergency Management, UF/IFAS Extension, and the Florida State Animal Response Coalition are partnering to provide free training on how to respond to local, state, and national disasters, save animals and operate temporary emergency animal or pet-friendly shelters. This training is open to the public.

The event is Saturday, Dec. 3, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Clay County UF/IFAS Extension Godbold Building at State Road 16.

Registering is a \$40 administration fee, but you can use the promo code SART and receive free registration by visiting bit.ly.CLAYAWARELVL1.

The course is called Small Animal Emergency and Disaster Sheltering Course – Awareness Level.

The Awareness Level class will give you the knowledge and skills you need to work in an emergency animal shelter or pet-friendly shelter. It will provide you with

the expertise and practical experience required to become an emergency animal responder. The Awareness Level Small Animal Emergency Sheltering class is FEMA-recognized and certified by the Florida Department of Emergency Management. FL SARC responders require this class to respond in Florida to help companion animals during a disaster.

After successful completion of the class, you will receive a complimentary Florida SARC uniform T-shirt and a pet evacuation information bag. Choose your shirt size on the registration page. On the registration page, you may also order additional shirts for \$15 or pet info bags in packs of 5 for \$10.



Fundraiser to support Anthony Reynolds' recovery at Heritage Park this Saturday

MELROSE – The Lake Region community will unite on Saturday, Dec. 2, at

Heritage Park to raise money and, more importantly, rally to embrace Anthony Reynolds' difficult recovery from injuries sustained in an ATV crash on Aug. 20.

The event is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will feature four bands, food, a raffle and a 50/50 drawing.

Reynolds suffered a fractured sixth thoracic vertebrae in his spine after he was thrown from his four-wheeler while riding on a dirt road near County Road 315C. He approached a turn at a high rate of speed – and with no brakes.

The accident left him paralyzed.

The event will include sets by Mismanagement, Low Key, Outlaw Country and Second Chance, said organizer Terry Huffman. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be available. And hopefully, Anthony can attend to see the community's love and support.

Melrose Heritage Park is at 300 State Road 26.

Clay County 'space jellyfish' photograph earns praise in statewide contest

CLAY COUNTY – The county is getting spotlighted thanks to photographer Dennis T. Hoban, who captured the sight of a "space jellyfish" cloud while watching an early morning Space-X launch across the St. Johns River.

The image shot from Clay County has won a photo contest and will be featured in a statewide calendar.

The Florida Association of Counties

SEE BRIEFS, 11

golden corral

Breakfast with the Grinch

Dec. 9

8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Photos With Santa

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golden corral 582 Blanding Blvd. Orange Park

Students served variety of business skills at SJR State College's Lunch and Learn

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – Last Wednesday, the Lunch and Learn at St. Johns River State College featured Heidi Aderman, founder of HeidzAlyn Coaching, a Jacksonville-based business offering life coaching and consulting services.

Lunch and Learn is a weekly meeting that provides a platform for students to share their expertise in various fields. The program offers valuable learning opportunities and fosters community collaboration, enhances business skills, explores the potential for additional sources of income and delves into the intricacies of social media marketing.

The free sessions also cover topics like arts, sciences and social skills.

“(Literally) anything you want to share with the community. I’m talking about art, musical skills, and technical skills (such as) Microsoft Word or Excel. Or, if you’ve learned anything from a business owner that would really help someone (build) a successful career. My grandmother taught me how to teach crochet, but not every-

one has someone to teach them how to do something,” Aderman said.

Dr. Daniel Ray, who runs the Continuing Education program at SJRSC, approached Aderman during a recent Clay Chamber “Finally Friday” meeting. They decided to create “Lunch and Learn.”

“He said they were looking to create a non-credit course catalog for the community,” Aderman said. “That appealed to me right away. I’ve been wanting to do that because there are so many knowledgeable people in the community. But where can we all go to receive that (education)?”

“I stepped up pretty quickly and said, ‘Wow, I (believe) I know a lot of people that would be into this.’”

Her pitch focuses on collaboration and learning.

“Wednesday is about comfortably getting out of your comfort zone. This is a powerful exercise we are doing each week,” Aderman said.

The sessions build on one another, ensuring a cohesive and progressive learning experience. Aderman emphasized the program’s inclusive, community-friendly nature, reiterating that all are welcome



STAFF PHOTO BY LEE WARDLAW

Heidi Aderman runs a small business based in Jacksonville that provides life coaching and consulting services, HeidzAlyn Coaching. She is a teacher at Lunch and Learn at St. Johns River State College, a class taught weekly to promote community collaboration, business and social media marketing skills.

regardless of background or experience.

“We’re all on the same page and at the same spot. The tide rises for all boats,” she said.

Ray said the goal is to develop a better workforce through a mix of formal and informal education.

“This is a great example of how the community can teach without a degree. The opportunities for learning are just beginning,” he said.

“Our mission is to make it easy for

people to access education and experience in one place. With Lunch and Learn, we’re figuring out how to work together as a community to make learning easy and accessible for all,” Aderman said.

“We’re doing something completely different and unique, and we’re doing it together as a community.”

The two-month-old program is in Building A, Room 74, on Wednesdays from noon to 1:30 p.m.



UPCOMING SHOWS

 <p>THE GREATEST PIANO MEN JANUARY 12 AT 7:30 PM</p>	 <p>CLAY BRIDAL SPECTACULAR EXPO FEBRUARY 11 AT 1-4PM</p>	 <p>ALMOST ABBA MARCH 15 AT 7:30 PM</p>
 <p>SHEN YUN JANUARY 16 AT 7:30 PM</p>	 <p>RUMOURS: A FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE FEBRUARY 16 AT 7:30 PM</p>	 <p>THE RAT PACK MARCH 16 AT 7:30 PM</p>
 <p>LORRIE MORGAN FEBRUARY 2 AT 7:30 PM</p>	 <p>DANCING WITH THE STARS: LIVE! FEBRUARY 22 AT 7:30 PM</p>	 <p>WORLD BALLET SERIES SWAN LAKE MARCH 29 AT 7:00 PM</p>
 <p>RICKY SKAGGS & KENTUCKY THUNDER FEBRUARY 9 AT 7:30 PM</p>	 <p>STARSHIP FEATURING MICKEY THOMAS MARCH 9 AT 7:30 PM</p>	 <p>DINOSAUR WORLD LIVE APRIL 4 AT 7:00 PM</p>
 <p>GRAND FUNK RAILROAD FEBRUARY 10 AT 7:30 PM</p>	 <p>MUSICAL MYSTERY TOUR</p>	 <p>RAIN - A TRIBUTE TO THE BEATLES APRIL 30 AT 7:30 PM</p>

MORE AT THCENTER.ORG



Briefs
from page 9

chose to feature this photo and 15 other photos from different Florida counties in its annual calendar. The contest was open to all of Florida's 67 counties, and photographers from 52 Florida counties submitted more than 580 photos. FAC announced the winners during its Legislative Conference in Hillsborough County.

Space jellyfish clouds, which resemble the translucent bodies of their namesake, are a phenomenon that occurs when the sun's rays light up the plume of gases that a rocket leaves behind.

Heritage Singers hosting holiday benefit concert for Challenge Enterprises

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Prepare to be enchanted as The Heritage Singers of Jacksonville, a distinguished nonprofit choral group, cordially invites you to their eagerly awaited holiday concert, "Oh, by Gosh, by Golly." Under the masterful direction of Artistic Director Michael Dell, this musical extravaganza promises an unforgettable experience of enchanting melodies and soul-stirring harmony.

The group will perform its holiday benefit concert for Challenge Enterprises on Friday, Dec. 3, at the First Presbyterian Church at 300 Gume St. The show starts at 7 p.m.

Immerse yourself in the season's magic as Heritage Singers fill the air with festive tunes and seasonal cheer. The concert offers an evening of musical delight and an opportunity to make a real difference in the community.

While admission is free for all attendees, the Heritage Singers encourage generous donations from the audience. Every contribution will directly support Challenge Enterprises, an organization dedicated to

positively impacting our community for people of all abilities.

In its 14th year, The Heritage Singers of Jacksonville continues to captivate audiences with their high-quality choral performances. The nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, comprised of gifted singers, fosters a sense of community by celebrating our diverse heritage through innovative and thematic choral music.

"We're thrilled to invite the community to our holiday concert, where the magic of music meets the spirit of giving," said Artistic Director Michael Dell. "Join us for an evening of enchantment and contribute to a truly worthy cause. Together, we can celebrate the joy of music while making a positive impact in the lives of others."

Extend the invitation to your friends and family, and join us for a night of music, harmony, and giving. Together, let's celebrate the holiday season by supporting a meaningful cause and experiencing the transformative power of music.

Clay County eager to fill several job openings

CLAY COUNTY – The Board of County Commissioners is looking for a few good people – make that a lot of good people.

County employees can enjoy a generous benefits package, including ample vacation, sick leave, twelve paid holidays and tuition assistance. Some of the open positions and job descriptions include:

- Planning and Zoning Director (clay-countybcc.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/External_Careers/details/Planning--Zoning-Director_JR100009).
- Zoning Chief (claycountybcc.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/External_Careers/details/Zoning-Chief_JR100010).
- Senior Planner (claycountybcc.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/External_Careers/details/Senior-Planner_JR100025).
- Planning Technician (claycountybcc.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/External_Careers/details/Planning-Technician_JR100081).

For more information, click the Career Opportunities tab on the county's website, www.claycountygov.com.

Residents encouraged to support Wreaths Across America

CLAY COUNTY – The National Wreaths Across America Day will be held on Saturday, Dec. 16. Join the more than two



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Festive Garage

ORANGE PARK – The home of Judi and Joseph Angelieri in Fox Valley is decorated for Christmas with soldiers, presents and Santa Claus. The pieces were all designed, fabricated and painted by Joseph.

million volunteers and supporters who will gather to Remember, Honor and Teach at more than 4,000 participating locations in all 50 states, at sea and abroad.

The event will include four locations in Clay County – Magnolia Cemetery, 1040 Kingsley Ave. in Orange Park at 9:30 a.m.; Keystone Heights Memorial Gardens, 7304 State Road 100 at noon; Moosehaven, 1701 Park Ave. in Orange Park; and Hardage-Giddens Holly Hill Memorial Park, 3601 Old Jennings Road in Middleburg at noon. Sponsor a veteran's wreath in honor of or in memory of a loved one who served in the armed forces. Or, sponsor

and allow the group to designate a recipient among the millions of heroes who rest in honored glory. To sponsor a wreath, visit wreathscrossamerica.com.

Volunteer with the organization as they honor our veterans throughout the year. There are many ways to get involved, from laying wreaths locally to leading a sponsorship group or coordinating a ceremony location. Invite your network of friends, family, coworkers and organizations to join us as we strive to honor every veteran. As our mission's scope grows, so does the need for support.

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Album Review

The Curt Towne Band "At it again"

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – There is an undeniable Southern swagger in every note of The Curt Towne Band's new release, "At It Again."

The band is delightfully unafraid to display their "old school" brand of Southern rock. The music is edgy yet smooth. It has a blend of honky-tonk and classic rock. It has blues.

"I try to put a lot of effort into everything," Towne said. "I'm always pouring everything into anything I do. This was no different. With all the negative things going on, we decided to be positive."

The project took three years to complete. The band had time booked Martell Studios in Kingsland, Georgia, for the album. Then, COVID-19 shut down the world.

As things slowly returned to normal, the band had trouble fitting studio time into their touring schedule and personal lives.

"We had a block of time for recording, but we started touring," Towne said. "It was more of a challenge, but we're extremely proud of the effort. So are the guys."

Barry Rapp, who played with the Henry Paul Band, wrote or co-wrote seven songs, including what may become the band's anthem, "West Side." Fleming Island's keyboard player and singer has spent over 50 years in the music business.

The rest of the band includes drummer Mike "Thunderfoot" Cansler on drums, Orange Park's Greg "GT" Thompson on bass and Carol Bristow-Zur on background vocals.

"I started out playing cover bands and always wanted to do originals because that's where you really find the most long-lasting success," Thompson said. "So it's our own style. So you gotta be a little different, do your own thing to separate. We did it our way."

The band has opened for nearly every legendary Southern Rock band. None have been more accommodating than Lynyrd Skynyrd. The two were paired for a two-nights in St. Augustine last month, and Skynyrd frontman Johnny Van Zant and lead guitarist Rickey Medlocke joined Towne's band on stage at Whitey's Fish Camp for "Sweet Home Alabama."

The CTB also has played with ZZ Top, Marshall Tucker Band, 38 Special, Molly Hatchet, Blackberry Smoke, Van Zant, Montgomery Gentry, Hank Williams Jr., The Outlaws, Atlanta Rhythm Section and Pat Travers.



*They got guitars and cars
They got stars and bars
Down at the Wishing Well
They're drinking rebel yell
They got (barbecue) chicken on the grill
Drinking moonshine liquor from the whiskey still
On the west side
It's the best side*

The band released "At It Again" at Food Truck Friday on Nov. 3. Great Britain's voodoradio.online offered a glowing review, calling it "exceptional brilliance." It also reported, "This musical odyssey isn't merely an exploration; it's a sonic masterpiece that effortlessly earns the well-deserved crown of the paramount album of 2023 for this humble scribe."

Everyone in the band has been playing for decades, but there's something special about creating new music.

"No matter how long you do this, it kind of gives you a jolt of energy to have something new, and something that's yours and it belongs to you," Cansler said.

"I think it turned out it turned out really good. You know, we took some extra time to polish it and get it the way we wanted. I'm proud of it. I like the way they all turned out. Everybody's got their favorites, you know. Some people have 'Cyclone' and other people have 'Sleeping Dogs' or 'Flowers.'"

Towne decided to add the Beatles' "Let It Be" because it was one of his favorite songs. Unsurprisingly, the piano introduction had obvious hints of Skynyrd's "Free Bird."

"My attitude is to have fun, express fun," Towne said. "That's what we did. We're always working, always creating.



PHOTOS BY AMANDA/JOEY KING STEADY ROCKIN', DEVINEVISION2020

The Curt Towne Band is getting enthusiastic reviews of their new album, "At It Again." The band consists of Towne, left, and (top, from left) bassist Greg "GT" Thompson, drummer Michael Cansler, (bottom, from left) backup singer Carol Bristow-Zur and keyboardist and lead singer Barry Rapp. The release is available at all downloading services.



eiWe've gotten a lot of positive feedback. Everyone seems to love it."

Record stores in Germany and Brazil have already purchased more than 300 copies of the album.

*One the west side
It's the best side
If you're looking for a thrill
The west side
It's the best side
Of old Jacksonville
We got the beach
We got the river
All points in between
We got the finest looking women
That you've ever seen*

The album cover shows an orange motorcycle helmet. Towne said he used to ride motorcycles a lot and wanted something that would pay tribute to one of his heroes, Evel Knievel.

Neither have been afraid to push the limit. Towne said his family quickly noticed his immersion in the new project.

"When we were working on this album, my mom said, 'You're at it again.' I said, 'Funny you should say that.'"

One of the songs on "At It Again" is called "Ain't Done Yet."

Thompson said the delays and effort were worth it.

"You finally get everything coming together in the final mix, and that's why people don't realize how much time it takes to get a good product," he said.

The album is available on all streaming platforms, and it can be purchased at Towne's Guitar Station at 421 Walnut St. in Green Cove Springs.

"It's a journey," Towne said. "It's fun. It can be challenging. We'll be firing up the touring engine again real soon. We ain't done yet."

*Well if you ever find yourself
Around the Florida-Georgia line
Well come on down baby
to the warm sunshine
Yeah come on down
You can be my guest
Come on down baby
Let me do the rest
On the west side
It's the best side*



Nancy Keating was the first person hired by Challenge Enterprises of North Florida in Clay County. That was 50 years ago. Friends, including Class of 1967 classmate Irene Smith, and the community united Tuesday night to celebrate her service, which positively affected hundreds of people with different abilities to find confidence, comfort and employment.

Keating from page 1

appearance caught Keating by surprise.

“When I found out, I practically invited myself,” Smith said. “Then I got an invitation a couple of days later. After graduation, we didn’t hear from each other for 40 years. I had some friends down in Florida, and they knew how to reach Nancy. I got her number, and 10 years ago, I came down, and we spent nearly a week together.”

“I wanted to be here. I couldn’t miss this.”

In October, Keating earned the Clay Chamber of Commerce’s top honor, the Louis Huntley Pacesetter Award.

Keating was the first employee hired in 1973 by Challenge Enterprises in Clay County. To put that in perspective, she started at the same time the U.S. Supreme Court issued its Roe v. Wade decision; Congress confirmed President Richard Nixon’s presidential victory and then he announced the suspension of offensive action in Vietnam; Golden Corral opened its first of what would be 395 locations; the United States mandated screening of all airline passengers; Joe Biden was sworn in for his second term as a U.S. Senator from Delaware;

“The Poseidon Adventure” was the No. 1 movie and Stevie Wonder’s “Superstition” was the No. 1 song in the United States.

Smith described Keating as an outstanding athlete with a relentless zeal to succeed. Those attributes made her a prominent fundraiser and advocate for those who needed direction and confidence to be assets in the community.

“She was very athletic in high school,” Smith said. “Everything she did, she put a

Keating was honored with the Louis Huntley Pacesetter Award.

lot of effort into it.”

Even in retirement, Keating said she won’t slow down. She plans to spend much of her retirement on the golf course, including participating in a women’s league where players use hickory-shafted golf clubs. She is excited to be off traveling after her first day in retirement, playing in the Hangover Open at the Golf Club in South Hampton in St. Johns

“Then, on Jan. 6, I’m going to Costa Rica for 16 days,” Keating said.

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Rockin'

from page 1

community.

"What's so good about this year's 'Rockin' for Stockins' is we're going to have some of our Rising Stars play two 30-minute sets," Paul Wane said. "It's incredible to see it come full circle.

"Once you're a Rising Star, you're a Rising Star for life. These kids build bands together. They write music together."

The Wanes host two events annually at Boogerville, including the "Jumpin' and Jivin' Juneboree" in the summer. Children are treated to games, face-painting, bounce houses, food and, of course, music each time.

From noon to 6 p.m., the first 150 children will get a photo and workshop with Santa Claus, a gift bag, a meal voucher, an event T-shirt, toys and an instrument.

"We put a little toy instrument in there. Not every child gets full-sized instruments, but every child gets a toy instrument – even if it's a harmonica, a ukulele, a maraca, recorder," Lisa Wane said.

And once a child accepts an instrument, they become a Rising Star.

"The significant part of music for these kids, especially those with special needs, is it gives them something to be in control of that has a huge impact on their independence," Wane said. "It's important that kids have a chance to have a voice in how they will live. Music can be that voice.



STAFF PHOTO BY DON COBLE

Once you receive an instrument from Paul Wane, he said you are a Rising Star "for life." These children all were gifted with musical instruments two years ago and many will be at Boogerville Hideout on Sunday for Wane's annual "Rockin' for Stockins." Some of the previous young stars will play two 30-minute sets at the holiday festival that will include food, games, music and, of course, a giveaway of more instruments.

"I try to keep the phones and the game controllers out of their hands so they can use their minds to be creative."

The event is free, but donations to the foundation will be accepted.

Wane gained national notoriety a year ago when he played a blistering guitar version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" ahead of the Jacksonville Jaguars-Tennessee Titans final regular season game. By then,

Rising Stars had already given more than 200 instruments away. Days later, Wane appeared at AMIKids of Clay County and donated an entire music studio, including guitars, a public address system, amplifiers, bass, drums, keyboards, a mixing board and lighting.

"This whole thing has been humbling," he said. Wane accepts instruments used by fellow musicians, the community, or in

remembrance of loved ones to extend their legacies. They are repaired and restored. Keystone Heights' guitar maker Jay Murphy repurposes many of the guitars.

"So ever since I was a little kid, if I could get my hands on a guitar, I would give it to someone else and say, 'Hey, let's jam together.' I've been doing this my whole life, which really inspired Guitars for Kids," Wane said.



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Thrasher

from page 8

p.m. Tickets start at \$29 and are available at the box office or thcenter.org.

Thomas made his mark in 1976 as lead vocalist on the mega-hit "Fooled Around And Fell In Love" with The Elvin Bishop Band. In 1979, Thomas joined Jefferson Starship as the lead vocalist after the departure of Grace Slick and Marty Balin and recorded a string of hits, including "Jane," "No Way Out," "Find Your Way Back," "Stranger," and "Layin' It on the Line."

The group was renamed STARSHIP in 1985 and went on to record three No. 1 hit songs, including "We Built This City," "Sara," and "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now," from the film, "Mannequin," which also was an Academy Award nominee. Their hit "It's Not Over 'Til It's Over" became Major League Baseball's theme in 1987. Thomas's stellar voice and video charisma on STARSHIP's video classics such as "We

Built This City" and "Sara" became staples on MTV and VH1. One can expect to hear hits from STARSHIP and Jefferson Starship at STARSHIP's live performances and a few selections from Jefferson Airplane as a nod to both band's beginnings.

Grammy award winner Ricky Skaggs coming to Thrasher-Horne

ORANGE PARK – During his 50-plus-year career, Ricky Skaggs has won 15 Grammy Awards, eight CMA Awards, nine ACM Awards, 13 International Bluegrass Music Association Awards, nine ICM Awards, two Dove Awards, three honorary Doctorate degrees and countless other awards.

Ricky also has 12 consecutive Grammy-nominated albums from his Skaggs Family Records label.

Skaggs will bring his band, Kentucky Thunder, to the Thrasher-Horne stage on Feb. 9 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets, on sale now to

members, are available at the box office or at thcenter.org.

Skaggs has been honored with inductions into the Gospel Music Association's Gospel Music Hall of Fame and the Musicians Hall of Fame in the past decade.

In 2018, Skaggs was awarded membership into the National Fiddler Hall of Fame, the IBMA Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame and country music's greatest honor, the Country Music Hall of Fame. Most recently, he was awarded the prestigious National Medal of Arts in 2020.

Grand Funk bringing 'We're An American Band' tour to town

ORANGE PARK – Multi-platinum-selling iconic group GRAND FUNK RAILROAD announced tour dates to their highly anticipated upcoming 'The American Band Tour,' in honor of the 50th anniversary of their 1973 "We're An American Band" platinum-selling single and album. One of those stops will be at the Thrasher-Horne Center

on Feb. 10 at 7:30 p.m. For tickets, which start at \$39, visit the box office or thcenter.org. One of rock's most definitive anthems, founding member Don Brewer (vocals and drums) was the soul writer and vocalist on "We're An American Band," which went all the way to No. 1 on the Billboard "Hot 100" chart on Sept. 29, 1973. "We're An American Band" came to me when we were flying to town on its "Phoenix Tour" in 1972," said Brewer of writing the song.

"We were being sued by our former manager, Terry Knight, and he was trying to stop us from performing. The line, 'We're comin' to your town, we'll help you party it down,' came to me first, and I wrote the song around that line, taking snippets of things going on during the tour at that time - like staying up all night with Freddy King playing poker, four young chiquitas in Omaha, sweet, sweet Connie in Little Rock, and, finally, the declaration, 'We're An American Band,' because it sounds great and sings well. I feel lucky and blessed every time we play it live."

Hometown

from page 8

colleague of Rashad, shared, "Master Chief is wonderful with the children at Ridgeview High School. I don't know if he mentioned it, but he was a Navy Counselor, which means he counseled sailors. So it's a perfect job for him to have here after retiring because he's excellent at counseling the young men and women, the people that we work with."

Principal Becky Murphy also praised Rashad's impact on the school community, stating, "He has a great impact on our school community and the community as a whole. He preaches in our local community. Our students look to him for advice just in everyday life and their classes. He's someone that I go to a lot to just ask questions."

Rashad's wife, who nominated him for the Hyundai Hometown Hero award, declined to appear on camera but shared her sentiments in a letter to News4JAX. The letter highlighted Rashad's 27-year military career, his commitment to community service, and his 19-year tenure as a Naval Science Instructor at Ridgeview High.

Retired Master Chief Sha'Reff Rashad spent 27 years in the Navy as a loyal and dedicated Sailor. His military journey in-

cluded graduating from the Senior Enlisted Academy, Community Service in places like South America, serving as Career Information Program Manager for 10,000 sailors and so much more.

After retiring, he had a strong desire to positively influence the lives of some of the most influential in our community, our youth. He has spent the last 19 years as a Naval Science Instructor (NJROTC) at Ridgeview High. His influence and guidance continue to impact the lives of these young cadets to guide them in positive future endeavors where they can be productive members of our country and their local communities.

Under the guidance of Master Chief Rashad and the NJROTC program at Ridgeview, the unit has been awarded the "Distinctive Unit" award by the Navy seven (7) times. This prestigious award is a result of excelling in areas such as drill team,

academic team, PT team, color guard, and community service.

Master Chief Rashad has always ensured that this community benefits from his program. Under his guidance, his unit has logged over 12,000 community service hours during his time with the program which includes Salvation Army bell ringing, SeaMark Ranch volunteer opportunities, numerous Veterans Day and Christmas parades along with participating in Wreaths Across America to honor our military and events where the presence of color guards show pride for the military in Jacksonville and its active duty and veterans.

In addition to his service to the country as a member of the Armed Forces and an influential role model to the cadets at Ridgeview High, Sha'Reff Rashad is also known as Rev. Sha'Reff Rashad to the congregation where he has served as Pastor of New Mount Moriah AME Church for the

last 12 years. His desire to make our community better also includes saving souls and being of service to his congregation.

Sha'Reff Rashad is truly a Hometown Hero who loves his country and the Jacksonville community!

Nomination Letter from Sharon Rashad

When asked about the person who nominated him, Rashad revealed he knew it was his wife, whom he'd known for 40 years. When asked if he would be taking her out in his new Hyundai Tuscon first, in good spirits, he humorously stated, "No! I'll be taking my grandson and keeping the keys at work."

The joyous event showcased MCPO Rashad's positive spirit and well-deserved recognition as a Hyundai Hometown Hero for his unwavering dedication to his country and the Jacksonville community.

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Residents enjoy fellowship, food at Feast of Plenty

1,500 Thanksgiving meals served at The Springs Church

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – Feast of Plenty’s move to a new location on Thanksgiving Day did not diminish the response and was not curtailed by need.

Orders for deliveries, takeouts and dining in for families at The Springs Church included ample servings of smoked turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, rolls, pie and fruit salad in the annual event that makes sure nobody goes hungry, physically or spiritually, during the holiday.

“It unites people,” said the church’s outreach director, Ilya Mikhalevich.

Together with First Baptist Church of Orange Park, Celebration Church and St. James AME Zion Church, they served 1,500 meals.

“Success? I’d say it was a success,” Mikhalevich said. “We were able to give out 1,500 food boxes. The way everyone worked together was incredible. All of the congregations worked together. They all came together to serve people.”

The feast had been at the First Baptist Church of Orange Park for 20 years. There were no glitches in the relocation to The Springs.

While most dinners were picked up in the drive-thru, more than 25 drivers delivered hundreds of orders to shut-ins. Orders came from as far north as the Jack-



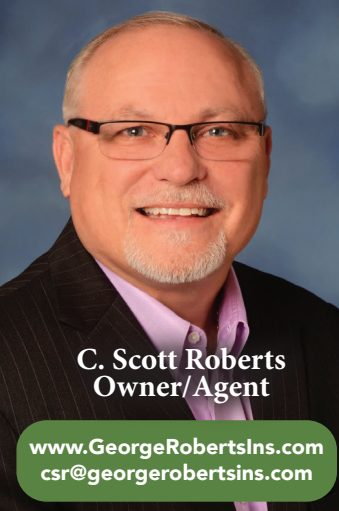
PHOTOS BY DON COBLE, IMPACT CLAY

Volunteers arrived a day in advance to start preparations, including smoking 80 turkeys, at The Springs Church ahead of the 21st Feast of Plenty on Thanksgiving Day. More than 200 volunteers served free meals consisting of turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green bean casserole, bread, pie and fruit salad for dine-in guests, while more meals were delivered in person or through the drive-thru.



sonville International Airport, east as the beaches, south as Clay Hill and from the Westside.

Mikhalevich said future feasts will fo-

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cus more on Clay County residents. Since some of the out-of-county trips took as long as 90 minutes, he said that deliveries would only be made for beneficiaries physically unable to travel.

“We delivered all over Clay County,” he said. “We had a lot of deliveries. We had a

lot of pickup orders. And, obviously, dining was a real big success. We saw people who had already finished food and were still hanging out because it was a welcoming place for everybody. “Not only were people fed, they were able to get out and see friends – or make new ones.”



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Fleming Island Garden Club stays busy during holidays

By Rhonda Scoville
Fleming Island Garden Club

FLEMING ISLAND – The Garden Club recently hosted a garden clean-up at the Fleming Island Library. We collected 95 pounds of food and \$160 in donations for the food pantry there.

Our November food pantry delivery focused on items for Thanksgiving side dishes, and we donated 371 pounds of food and \$430. Club members took all the plants and crafts we had been working on to the Duval County Extension Office to set up for display on Nov. 2.

The 20th annual Gardenfest was held this year on Nov. 3. This year's theme was Environmental Conservation: Air, Land and Water. Duval Extension Agent Tonya Ashworth's topic was Protecting Habitats – Say No to Invasives.

Judy Willis, President of Ixia, a chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, explained how to provide a bird-friendly yard.

Dr. Jennifer Hinton of Preservation Parks Jacksonville demonstrated how to protect and restore ecosystems throughout Duval County. Haley Moody of Florida Springs Institute spoke about the Blue Water Audit Project and the Springs Friendly Yard Program.

Gardenfest was both fun and educational. If you missed it, Clay County will



have a Day of Education on Feb. 3, and Duval County a Day of Gardening on Feb. 24. Both will be held at their county extension offices.

Carol Hixenbaugh from Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society was the guest speaker at our November meeting. Carol demonstrated repotting and propagation and showed the basics of African violet care. If you want to get into African violets, their society on San Jose Avenue has been around for more than 30 years and has monthly meetings. Their website, jacksonvilleviolets.org, has loads of helpful information.

We've been decorating our holiday tree in Spring Park for the Christmas on Walnut Street celebration in Green Cove Springs on Dec. 2. We've also met at the Fleming Island Library for a crafting social to make holiday decorations and soap bars with homegrown loofah.

There won't be a December meeting due to the holidays. The next meeting will be at the library at 10 a.m. on Jan. 8. The club's program in January is on "Weird, Wild, Wonderful Nature" and will be presented by Master Gardener Care Valleau.

Meetings are free and open to the public.



PHOTOS BY FLEMING ISLAND GARDEN CLUB
Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society's Carol Hixenbaugh shared insight on repotting and propagating plants.

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'Tis the season for parades, lights, shopping, caroling and celebration

CLAY COUNTY – With so many events already on the schedule, you won't have to go far to find the Christmas spirit this year.

From tree lightings to parades to month-long festivals to drive-through decoration exhibits, the halls will be decked in the spirit of the season,

The challenge will be deciding which event you want to attend.

Here are some of your options:

All month

- Green Cove Springs Parade of Trees will be at Spring Park through Dec. 31. A record 225 civic, nonprofits, families and local businesses will have decorated trees on display throughout the park.
- Sniktaw Farm's Christmas Lights Spectacular will be on Dec. 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22 and 23 starting at 6 p.m. at 2579 Russell Road in Green Cove Springs. For tickets, visit sniktawfarm.ticketspice.com.
- "It's a Wonderful Life" will hit the Island Theater stage at 1860 Town Hall Circle on Fleming Island from Dec. 14-23. Evening performances start at 7:30 p.m., while a 2 p.m. matinee is planned for Dec. 17. Tickets, are available at theislandtheater.com. They are \$18 for adults and \$10 for students.
- Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn will be performed through Dec. 30 at the Spotlight Center, 1809 East-West Pkwy. on Fleming Island. Showtimes and tickets, which must be purchased in advance, are available at spotlighteventscenter.com.
- A Tuna Christmas will be at the Spotlight Center, 1809 East-West Pkwy. on Fleming Island from Dec. 23-30. Showtimes and tickets, which must be purchased in advance, are available at spotlight-eventscenter.com.
- Keystone Heights Festival of Trees will be on

display at Keystone Heights Natural Park at 555 S. Lawrence Blvd.

Friday, Dec. 1

● The classic Christmas movie, "Home Alone" will be shown at 7 p.m. at the Historic Triangle at the Old Clay County Courthouse, 21 Gratio Place in Green Cove Springs. The movie and popcorn are free. Bring a chair or blanket for the outside event.

Holiday Pup Photos with Santa Paws will be from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Woof Gang Bakery and Grooming at 1960 East-West Pkwy. on Fleming Island. Admission is free.

Saturday, Dec. 2

● The Christmas parade, tree lighting, Santa's Workshop, "Oh, Tannenbaum" and Christmas on Walnut will highlight a busy day in Green Cove Springs. Christmas on Walnut will start at noon with craft vendors and food trucks. Santa will be at the Spring Park Pool Pavilion from 3-5:30 p.m. Clamour Theatre Company will present "Oh, Tannenbaum" at the Spring Park Gazebo at 4:15 p.m. The parade will start at the Clay County Administration Building and proceed south on Orange Avenue to Walnut Street, where it will make a U-turn and return to the Administration Building. That way, everyone on both sides of Orange Avenue will have a perfect view. This year's theme is Christmas Movie Magic. At 8:30 p.m., the city's Christmas tree in Spring Park will be lit.

● The Lake Asbury Christmas Celebration will feature lighted or decorated golf carts, yards and docks from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. The parade will start at the Community Center, 282 Branscomb Road. Children can talk with Santa Claus from 5:30-6:30 pm. and enjoy Christmas music, hot chocolate and apple cider.

Sunday, Dec. 3

● Rockin' for Stockins' will benefit the Rising Star Guitars for Kids program at Boogerville Hideout, 6043, U.S. Highway 17, in Green Cove Springs from noon to 6 p.m. Event includes live music, a visit from Santa Claus, toys, slingshot rides, a bounce house, face-painting, a Santa Workshop, food and giveaways. Musical instruments will be given to children. The event is free, but donations will be accepted.

● The Ultimate Elvis Christmas will be at the Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Dr. in Orange Park, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Cote Deonath will perform many of Elvis Presley's holiday hits. Tickets are available at thcenter.org.



Thursday, Dec. 7

● GFWC's Orange Park Women's Club will host a Mingle and Jingle Holiday Open House from 10 a.m. to noon at the Orange Park Women's Club, 130 Kingsley Ave. Guest will enjoy hors d'oeuvres and Christmas music from the Ridgeview High Chorus.

Friday, Dec. 8

● A Country Christmas will be at Elrod Acres, 3679 Thunder Road in Green Cove Springs, from 5-9 p.m. on Dec. 8 and noon to 9 p.m. on Dec. 9. The event includes a live nativity, more than 75 vendors, classic cars, live music, acts from Star Wars and holiday characters, photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, food trucks, a petting zoo, games, letters to Santa, a 20-foot Christmas tree and more than 750,000 lights. Tickets, which start at \$10, are available at acountrychristmas.org.

● The Hometown Holiday in the Park will be at the Clarke House, 1039 Kingsley Ave.

SEE HAPPENINGS, 19



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Happenings

from page 18

The property will open from 5-9 p.m. There will be tours of the house, pictures with Santa Claus, train and pony rides, a holiday shopping village and music.

- River Christian Church's Journey to the Nativity will be on display on Friday and Saturday at 5900 U.S. Highway 17 on Fleming Island from 5:30-9:30 p.m. when guests can tour nativity exhibits.

- Santa at the Silos will be at the True Life Church, 2221 County Road 220 in Middleburg from 5-8 p.m. There will be a live nativity, free photos with Santa Claus and The Grinch, carolers, cookies, hot cocoa, face painting and Christmas crafts.

- Vintage Oaks Country Christmas will be at 5960 Sweet Moody Road in Green Cove Springs from 2-6 p.m. There will be a petting zoo, corn box and, arts and crafts, photos with Santa Claus, live music and entertainment. Tickets are only cash, \$10 for adults, and \$5 for children. Children 3 and younger are free.

Saturday, Dec. 9

- The Keystone Heights Christmas Parade will be downtown along Lawrence Boulevard at 6 p.m. This year's theme is Keystone Heights and Christmas Lights. The parade will line up on Pecan Street at Lawrence and will go down Lawrence to Flamingo Street. Floats will be judged in six categories: Judges' Choice, Most Original, Closest to Theme, Best Youth, Best Marching Unit and Best Business Entry.

- The Oakleaf Christmas Parade will start at 6 p.m. at the Oakleaf Baptist Church, 800 Oakleaf Plantation Pkwy. It will go north, turn right onto Plantation Oaks Boulevard and end at Oakleaf High. Portions of Oakleaf Plantation Parkway and Plantation Oaks Boulevard will be closed. The Clay County Sheriff's Office also asks not to park in neighborhoods.

- The Whitey's Fish Camp Lighted Boat Parade will feature decorated boats on Doctors Lake and Swimming Pen Creek at 6:30 p.m. Overflow parking and a free shuttle will be at Swimming Pen Elementary. Expect some lane closures at the Swimming Pen bridge on County Road 220. Proceeds benefit the Safe Animal Shelter.

- The Middleburg Christmas Parade will start at 7 p.m. at Omega Park, 4317 County Road 218 in Middleburg, and go east on CR 218, make a U-turn at Pine Avenue, and return to the park.

- The Penney Farms Christmas Parade will start at 9 a.m. and will be confined within the community.

- KIDX's Cookies and Claus will be near JC Penney at the Orange Park Mall, 1910 Wells Road, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Children can decorate Christmas cookies with Mrs. Claus, write notes to a deployed soldier and play reindeer games.

- The Florida Ballet's The Nutcracker will be on Saturday at 4:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. at the Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Dr. in Orange Park. For tickets, visit thcenter.org.

- Story Time with Santa will be at Ripple Effect Martial Arts, 1851 Golden Eagle Way, on Fleming Island from 1-1:30 p.m.

- Clay County Outreach Ministry Council Christmas Party will be on Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at noon at 2156 Loch Rane Road in Orange Park. For tickets and information, visit eventbrite.com/e/clay-county-outreach-ministry-council-inc-christmas-party.

Sunday, Dec. 10

- The Azalea Ridge Holiday Village will be from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 3813 Great Falls Loop in Middleburg. Food trucks, shaved ice, hot cocoa, and a bounce house will be there.

- A Country Christmas Dance Party will be from 3:30-8:30 p.m. at Spring Park, 106 St. Johns Ave. For tickets and information, visit meetup.com/activebeaches/events.



[com/activebeaches/events](http://meetup.com/activebeaches/events).

- The Springs Church's Christmas Spectacular, a 90-minute musical adventure featuring Christmas musical favorites, storytelling and visual effects, will be at 900 Park Ave. in Orange Park with services at 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 11

- The Tea Room of Keystone Heights will celebrate a visit from Santa Claus and members of the Clay County Sheriff's Office at 7433 State Road 21.

Friday, Dec. 15

- The Town of Orange Park's Firetruck Parade will start at the Orange Park Fire Department at 2025 Smith St. at 6:30 p.m. The parade will weave around the town streets, including Doctors Lake Drive, Kingsley Avenue, Gano Street, River Road, Wells Road, Holly Point Road, Plainfield Avenue, Grove Park Drive, Astor Street and Milwaukee Avenue.

Saturday, Dec. 16

- The 42nd J.P. Hall Children's Charities Christmas Party will be from 9 a.m. to noon at the Clay County Fairgrounds, 2463 State Road 16 in Green Cove Springs. Clay County families can pick up gender- and age-appropriate gifts for children 14 and younger in the drive-through event, including bicycles. Santa Claus will greet families, and there will be no charge.

- The Merry Melrose Christmas Festival will start at 2 p.m. at Heritage Park, State Road 26. The parade of lights will start at 6 p.m. There will be gift vendors, free crafts for children and food trucks.

- Wehner's School of the Arts Christmas Spectacular will be from 7:30-9 p.m. at the Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Dr. in Orange Park. Tickets are available at thcenter.org.

Sunday, Dec. 17

- The Christmas Extravaganza will be at Asbury United Methodist Church, 16 College Dr. in Orange Park, on Sunday from 6-8 p.m. Be immersed in the holiday spirit by enjoying activities, entertainment and displays. Tickets are \$25 and available at eventbrite.com/e/annual-christmas-extravaganza.

Tuesday, Dec. 19

- Paint Your Own Christmas Ceramic will be from 6-8:30 p.m. at Whitey's Fish Camp, 2032 County Road 220 on Fleming Island. For more information or tickets, visit eventbrite.com/e/diy-paint-your-own-christmas-ceramic.

Monday, Dec. 25

- The Christmas Morning Social Run/Walk will start at 6 a.m. at the Orange Park Mall parking lot at 1910 Wells Road. Participants can bring a dish or drink to share.

Students in for a Reality Check at Keystone Heights Junior High

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Capital City Bank and Keystone Heights Junior High held their third annual Reality Check event in the school's gymnasium.

"It is a somewhat immersive financial planning program for students," said Assistant Director of Community Partnership Schools Isaac Morford.

During the event, eighth-grade students had the opportunity to learn about financial literacy and start preparing for their future.

Students received an envelope containing their jobs, marital status, family, and income. They were directed to the bank, housing and utility tables before being allowed to visit the other booths. Doctors, furniture, clothing, insurance and groceries were some of the tables available. Students learned how to balance their checkbooks and budget their income and taxes.

The school incorporated law enforcement, which allowed students to learn about fines and the importance of having a vehicle tag and insurance.

"This is a one-day event, but it's an event that we are teaching those skills that they are going to have in real life," Morford said.

The event was a success, as more than 500 students participated.

"That's a big increase over the last



PHOTO BY NATALIE GILSTRAP

Eighth-grade students at Keystone Heights Junior High cashed in on Capital City's Reality Check, where they learned financial literacy. They were given life obstacles and the tools to navigate through the challenges, like balancing their checkbooks, paying rent and utilities and budgeting for groceries.

few years," Morford said.

Students said they found it engaging and asked to return for another session.

They also thought it was informative because they could speak with professionals and gain insight on various subjects for their futures.

Reality Check was made possible through local businesses, organizations, and individuals volunteering to operate the booths and answer any questions.

"Thanks to our sponsors, volunteers, staff and students. We were able to give over 500 students, from all grade levels, an opportunity to practice the financial realities they will be facing in their not-too-distant future," said Morford.

Kiwanis annual golf tournament continues to benefit community

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – The Lake Region Kiwanis recently held its fourth annual golf tournament at the Keystone Golf and Country Club.

"The Kiwanis Tournament is basically one of our big fundraisers," said chairman Todd Beals.

The idea to host golf tournaments at the country club was first suggested by a member in 2019. Since then, Kiwanis has continued hosting the tournament yearly to raise funds for its philanthropic endeavors.

"A lot of this money goes towards our kids' clubs and stuff like that," Beals said.

This year's tournament funds went toward the organization's leadership programs, such as Terrific Kids, K-Kids, Builders Club and Key Club.

Local golfers and Kiwanis members from the Gainesville chamber showed their support by participating. The event also had a silent auction, a raffle and rewards for the top three winners.



PHOTO BY NATALIE GILSTRAP

Golfers at the Lake Region Kiwanis Golf Tournament supported the organization's goal to support youth programs in the area.

Music, breakfast and lunch were available while the Keystone Heights Band sold refreshments.

"As much as this community is asked to do things, they always come through," said Beals. "This area is such a giving community."

Lake Region Kiwanis is a civic organization and a part of Kiwanis International. As an organization, their focus is to improve the lives of children and their communities through their service acts. College scholarships and award programs are some of the many ways the organization supports youth. In addition, the group is actively involved in its community through its parades and fundraisers. They also support the local food pantry, Lake Area Ministries, and operate the concession stands during football games at Keystone High.



Faith Walk

by Pastor Billy Register
True Life Church
Clay County

Best Christmas ever: A season of hope

Well, Thanksgiving is over, and we now turn our eyes toward the Christmas season. Just look around if you're not sure. Decorations are out in force. Christmas is a season of hope, a time when the world is inspired by the promise of joy, peace, and the redemptive power of love. It's a season that celebrates the birth of Jesus, the embodiment of hope for every Christian around the world.

At the heart of the Christmas story lies the gift of hope, a concept deeply embedded in Christian faith. The birth of Jesus was a beacon of hope for humanity, as He came to bring salvation and reconciliation between God and His people. Isaiah 9:6 reads, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

The act of gift-giving at Christmas reflects the generosity of God, who gave the greatest gift of all in Jesus. As Christ-Followers, we pursue the example of God's love by sharing with others and offering gifts, just as the Wise Men brought gifts to Jesus. It's a time to share hope, kindness, and goodwill with those around us.

While we celebrate Christmas on a specific day, the spirit of hope and redemption should be a continuous practice. We are encouraged to "Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Christmas offers an opportunity to express this gratitude for the hope and salvation we find in Jesus, a gratitude we should carry with us all year round.

Christmas is a time of great hope, symbolizing the promise of redemption and renewal. It's a season that celebrates the birth of Jesus, who brings hope to a world in need. May this Christmas be a joyous occasion for you and your family, filled with hope, love, and a heart full of praise for the Savior of the world. Make this your best Christmas ever!

You can write the Pastor at pastor-billy@findtruelife.com



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Keystone Knights of Columbus, Clay Electric continue to support Holiday Helpers program

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – The Knights of Columbus' Holiday Helpers program got an early and much-appreciated Christmas gift: a \$12,000 donation from Clay Electric Cooperative.

The Knights have served the needs of local families, children, senior citizens, veterans and the homeless since 2019.

Holiday Helpers started as a continuation of the Angel Tree program, which provided children with toys for the holiday.

"We wanted to expand it to include the children and Angel Trees and their families, said Chairman David Dickinson. "We also wanted to work with the churches and businesses in the Lake Region Area to make them have better holiday seasons. Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, we expanded it to include those."

Clay Electric is a major benefactor of Holiday Helpers.

Every year, the committee reaches out to the local churches, schools and service organizations to learn about their individual needs. The group shares the information with the churches, businesses, and organizations in the community. The committee then distributes toys, bicycles, gas cards, food cards and clothing to those in need. The committee also provides Christmas



PHOTO BY NATALIE GILSTRAP

Santa Claus and Clay Electric gave the Knights of Columbus of Keystone Heights an early Christmas present with a \$12,000 donation to support the club's Holiday Helpers program, including Angel Tree requests to provide children with clothes and toys during the holidays.

dinners for families and luncheons for senior citizens.

Donations will be distributed on Dec. 16-17.

Holiday Helpers has impacted the lives of Keystone Heights, Melrose, Ochwilla, Palatka, Interlachen and Orange Heights. The group has served more than 300 children, 100 families, adults and seniors.

The Knights will host its Senior Citizen Luncheon on Dec. 5 at St. William's Catholic Church. Local seniors are welcome to enjoy a host of festivities, including a Mass

service for shut-in members and seniors.

Lunch will be available, and the Keystone Heights Elementary Chorus group will sing Christmas carols. The event will also feature BINGO and a visit from Santa Claus.

"We'll have door prizes, and each senior will get a bag that will have socks, a gift card to one of the local fast-food places, and other little things," Dickinson said.

If you have a need or want to volunteer, call Dickinson at (352) 478-5475.

Master Plan

from page 2

means additional cars congesting Sandridge and Russell roads, where many of the new homes are being built. The county recently finished widening Sandridge from Henley to Lake Asbury Junior High, and now it's in the second phase to widen Sandridge 2.8 miles to Russell Baptist Church. The third and final phase will go one mile from the Baptist church to Russell Road. The project costs \$31.4 million and won't be completed until spring 2025.

"We're still waiting on the road (infrastructure improvements). The plans are coming, but the (roads improvements) haven't been (completed) yet," she said.

Commission Chair Betsy Condon



STAFF PHOTO

On Tuesday, the Board of County Commissioners voted to extend a moratorium on future development like this community on Henley Road. The slowdown is to keep growth from overwhelming infrastructure projects.

agreed with Burke and said she is sympathetic with property owners' rights in the county, among other values.

Mike Cella said real estate is impor-

tant to the county's economy. Maintaining a good relationship with builders is paramount, but growth must be controlled at a responsible rate to not overwhelm infrastructure, traffic, and other important factors.

"The bottom line is if we don't pass the moratorium, people are going to come in and put their applications in and go through the process. By declaring a moratorium, we're telling them not to spend your money because it won't happen. Otherwise, they would flow through the system. It's better to tell everyone at the front door rather than invite them in and have them sit down before you say no. The board can repeal this decision (later) if we need to," he said.

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EMPTY BOWLS will be on Nov. 30 to benefit Lake Area Ministries' food pantry that feeds 700 people a month. Each ticket can be redeemed for a bowl of soup, bread and water, and you get to keep the bowl. Call Tanya C. Dennis at (352) 473-2846 for more information.

FOOD AND FRIENDS WEEKLY FAMILY-STYLE MEAL: will be served on Nov. 30 from 5-6:30 p.m. for families needing nourishment at River Christian Church, 5900 U.S. Highway 17 on Fleming Island. For more information, call (904) 458-4809.

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT: will meet on Nov. 30 at 6 p.m. at the BCC Meeting Room, fourth floor, at Administration Building, 477 Houston St. in Green Cove Springs.

LAKE REGION KIWANIS: will meet on Nov. 30 at 7:30 a.m. at the Montgomery Center, 88 SE 75th St. in Starke.

MIDDLEBURG GARDEN CLUB: will host its monthly meeting on Dec. 1 from 9:30-11 a.m. at the Watson Realty Building, 2239 Blanding Blvd. Light refreshments, a raffle, educational demonstrations and resources, gardening tips, plant trades, sales, and civic projects will be featured. For more information, call (904) 343-8235 or email gardenclubofmiddleburg@hotmail.com.

DINKLEBELLS PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT: will be Dec. 1-3 at the Thomas Hogan Memorial Gym, 415 Lemon St. in Green Cove Springs. Presented by the Green Cove Springs Rotary Club, the tournament will have women's, men's, and mixed doubles divided by age groups.

MICHAEL CARBONARO – LIES ON STAGE: will be on Dec. 1 at the Florida

Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St. in Jacksonville at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available at floridatheatre.com.

A CHORAL CHRISTMAS WITH THE UNF CHOIRS: will be on Dec. 1 at 7 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 U.S. Highway A1A. Tickets are available at pvconcerthall.com.

VINTAGE MARKET DAYS: Dec. 1-3 will be at the Clay County Fairgrounds, 2497 State Road 16 in Green Cove Springs. Hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The event offers an upscale vintage-inspired market for 120 vendors with original art, antiques, clothing, jewelry, handmade treasures, home décor, outdoor furnishings, treats and seasonal plantings. Tickets are available at Eventbrite.com/e/vintage-market-days.

GREEN COVE SPRINGS CHRISTMAS PARADE: It will be on Dec. 2 at 6 p.m. It will proceed from The Clay County Administration Building on U.S. Highway 17 to Walnut Street, then return to the Administration Building.

EMERGENCY PET SHELTER TRAINING: will be on Dec. 2 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Clay County UF/IFAS Extension Goldbold Building, State Road 16 in Green Cove Springs, The Florida State Agriculture Response Team, Clay County Emergency Management, UF/IFAS Extension and the Florida State Animal Response Coalition will provide training how to respond to disasters, save animals and operation temporary emergency animal or pet-friendly shelters. Visit bit.ly/CLAYAWARELVL1 and use promo code SART to receive free registration.

ANTHONY REYNOLDS BENEFIT: will be on Dec. 2 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Heritage Park, 300 State Road 26 in Melrose. Mismanagement, Low Key, Outlaw Country and Second Chance will perform, while food and a raffle will be available to raise money for Anthony Reynolds, a Keystone Heights High senior who was paralyzed in an ATV accident on Aug. 20.

FLORIDA BLUE HEALTHY WALK: will be on Dec. 2 at 10 a.m. at the Orange Park Mall, 1910 Wells Road. Walkers should meet near AMC Theatre entrance.

DESI BANKS – THE PURPOSE CHASER: will be at the Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St. in Jacksonville, on Dec. 2 at 7 p.m. Tickets are available at floridatheatre.com.

ROCKIN' FOR STOCKINS': will be on Dec. 3 from noon-6 p.m. at Boogerville Hideout, 6043 U.S. Highway 17 in Green Cove Springs. The event supports the Rising Star Guitars for Kids program, which provides children with free instruments to inspire creativity and build unity. Live music, including sets by two groups of Rising Star children, will be provided, along with free T-shirts, gift bags, dinner vouchers and toys for the first 150 children. The event is free, but donations to the charity will be accepted.

WHOSE LINE IS IT ANYWAY?: featuring Ryan Stiles, Greg Proops, Jeff. Davis and

Joel Murray will be on Dec. 3 at the Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St. in Jacksonville. Tickets are available at floridatheatre.com.

ORANGE PARK FARMERS AND ARTS MARKET: It will be on Dec. 3 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Town Hall Park, 2042 Park Ave.

ULTIMATE ELVIS CHRISTMAS CONCERT: will be on Dec. 3 at 3 p.m. at the Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Dr., in Orange Park. For tickets starting at \$25, visit the box office or thcenter.org.

MARKET DAY AT NAKAMA: will be on Dec. 3 from 1-5 p.m. at Nakama Anime Bard, 1540 Wells Road in Orange Park. Shop for homemade items, stickers, figures and pushies.

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL: will meet on Dec. 4 at 6 p.m. at City Hall, 555 S. Lawrence Blvd.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS: will host the Cincinnati Bengals at EverBank Stadium, 1 TIAA Bank Field Dr. in Jacksonville at 8:15 p.m. For tickets, visit jaguars.com/tickets/.

ORANGE PARK HOLIDAY LIGHTING OF TOWN PARK: will be on Dec. 5 at 5 p.m. at Town Hall Park, 2042 Park Ave.

GREEN COVE SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL: will meet on Dec. 5 at 7 p.m. in council chambers at 321 Walnut St.

ORANGE PARK TOWN COUNCIL: will meet on Dec. 5 at 7 p.m. in town council chambers, 2042 Park Ave.

CLAY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION: will meet on Dec. 5 at 5 p.m. at the BCC Meeting Room, fourth floor, at Administration Building, 477 Houston St. in Green Cove Springs.

A PETER WHITE CHRISTMAS: featuring Mindi Abair and Vincent Ingala will be at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 U.S. Highway A1A, on Dec. 6 at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at pvconcerthall.com.

CLAY COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: will meet on Dec. 7 at 6 p.m. at the Teacher Training Center at Fleming Island High, 2233 Village Square Pkwy.

FOOD AND FRIENDS WEEKLY FAMILY-STYLE MEAL: will be served on Dec. 7 from 5-6:30 p.m. for families needing nourishment at River Christian Church, 5900 U.S. Highway 17 on Fleming Island. For more information, call (904) 458-4809.

ORANGE PARK ECONOMIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: will meet on Dec. 7 at 5:30 p.m. at town council chambers, 2042 Park Ave.

LAKE REGION KIWANIS: will meet on Dec. 7 at 7:30 a.m. at the Montgomery Center, 88 SE 75th St. in Starke.

A JIMMY BUFFETT CHRISTMAS PARTY: will be celebrated on Dec. 8 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Hilltop Club and Restaurant, 2030 Wells Road in Orange Park. Hosts HCA Florida Orange Park Hospital and the Clay Chamber invite guests to wear tropical shirts, shorts, grass skirts and straw hats. Shoes are optional. New, unwrapped toys will be collected for the JP Hall Children's Charities. Table sponsorships and tickets are available by calling (904) 264-2651.

THE HERITAGE SINGERS OF JACKSONVILLE: will perform a concert on Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. to benefit Challenge Enterprises of Florida at the First Presbyterian Church

of Green Cove Springs, 300 Gum St. Admission is free, but donations would be greatly appreciated.

ANDY SUMMERS: will be at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 U.S. Highway A1A, on Dec. 8 at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at pvconcerthall.com.

ORANGE PARK HOMETOWN HOLIDAY: will be on Dec. 8-9 at 9 p.m. at Clarke House Park, 1039 Kingsley Ave.

JOURNEY TO THE NATIVITY: will be on Dec. 8-9 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at River Christian Church, 5900 U.S. Highway 17 on Fleming Island. Families can walk through an inspiring live nativity. For more information, visit riverchristian.church/nativity.

A COUNTRY CHRISTMAS: will be on Dec. 8-9 at Elrod Acres, 3679 Thunder Road in Green Cove Springs. Hours on Saturday, Dec. 8, are from 5-9 p.m., and on Sunday, Dec. 9, from noon-9 p.m. Venue will include displays and activities.

WHITEY'S BOAT PARADE: will be on Dec. 9 at 6 p.m. along Swimming Pen Creek. Event benefits the Safe Animal Shelter, and it includes an auction, raffle, family fun and music. Whitey's Fish Camp is located at 2032 County Road on Fleming Island.

MIDDLEBURG CHRISTMAS PARADE: It will be on Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. The parade will start at Omega Park on County Road 218 and end at Winn-Dixie.

OAKLEAF CHRISTMAS PARADE: It will be on Dec. 9 from 6-9 p.m. The parade will run along Oakleaf Plantation Parkway and Plantation Oaks Boulevard.

THE NUTCRACKER: is coming to the Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Dr. in Orange Park at noon and 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 9. Tickets, which start at \$10 for the noon performance and \$28 for the afternoon show, are available at the box office or at thcenter.org.

FLORIDA BLUE HEALTHY WALK: will be on Dec. 9 at 10 a.m. at the Orange Park Mall, 1910 Wells Road. Walkers to meet near AMC Theatre entrance.

THE SIXTIES SHOW: will be on Dec. 9 at 8 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 U.S. Highway A1A. Tickets are available at pvconcerthall.com.

CLARKE HOUSE TOURS: will be on Dec. 10 from 2-4 p.m. at Clarke House Park, 1039 Kingsley Ave. in Orange Park. The house was built in 1912, and guests are invited to tour it.

THE NUTCRACKER: is coming to the Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Dr. in Orange Park at 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 10. Tickets, which start at \$28 for the afternoon show, are available at the box office or at thcenter.org.

THE OUTLAWS WITH THE ARTIMUS PYLE BAND: will perform its Skynyrd Celebration on Dec. 10 at 7 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 U.S. Highway A1A. Tickets are available at pvconcerthall.com.

NURSE BLAKE – SHOCK ADVISED TOUR: will be at the Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St. in Jacksonville, on Dec. 10 at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at floridatheatre.com.

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Police Briefs claytodayonline.com

Compiled by Don Coble

CCSO: Middleburg man charged with trafficking drugs to an informant

MIDDLEBURG – A confidential informant working with the Clay County Sheriff's Office helped the agency make a significant drug bust on Thanksgiving Day.

Daniel Ray Stamer, 18, of Middleburg, was charged with three counts of trafficking LSD, trafficking hydrocodone, and two counts of selling methamphetamine and one count each of selling Xanax, hydrocodone and fentanyl.



Daniel Ray Stamer

According to the affidavit for an arrest warrant, the informant bought an assortment of drugs on Aug. 22 and 23, Sept. 12 at Stamer's home on Treeland Avenue. According to Florida law, trafficking is when someone has at least one gram of LSD and 14 grams of hydrocodone.

Stamer is due back in court on Dec. 11. His bond was set at \$690,027.

Green Cove Springs PD arrest man for selling crack cocaine near school

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – According to an affidavit for an arrest warrant, a confidential informant bought crack cocaine from Darrick Lindell Johnson, 53, of Jacksonville, on Sept. 27 – 500 feet from Green Cove Springs Junior High.

A warrant was issued on Nov. 16 and the Green Cove Springs Police Department arrested him on Nov. 21 while he was sitting on the porch on Palm Street.

According to court records, Johnson was arrested on May 28, 2022, for possession of cocaine.

His bond was set at \$200,003.

Man accused of threatening sheriff's office deputies extradited from Texas

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – A man charged with threatening and using racial



Darrick Johnson



PHOTO BY GCSPD

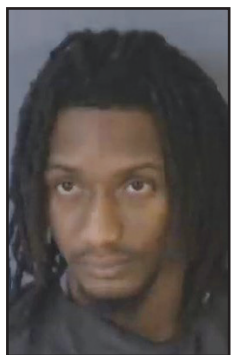
Darrick Johnson was arrested by the Green Cove Springs Police Department after the agency said a confidential informant purchased crack cocaine from him. The house where he was arrested is about 500 yards from Green Cove Springs Junior High.

slurs against a Clay County Sheriff's Office deputy after he was asked to leave the Orange Park Walmart, was transported from Texas to face charges of threatening to kill or do serious bodily harm to law enforcement.

Timothy Walker, 26, also was charged with trespassing after warning.

According to the arrest report, CCSO was called to the store for a fight. Witnesses said someone was thrown from a van in the parking lot. When the deputy arrived, he found Walker sitting.

Walker became irate because he couldn't find his phone, CCSO said. That's when he became combative. He was arrested because he didn't leave Walmart after he was banned from the store.



Timothy Walker

SEE POLICE, 23

Arrests & Bookings

Compiled by Don Coble

(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, Nov. 28

April D. Brown, 54, Middleburg, possession-controlled substance

Rachel L. Atkinson, 25, Orange Park, possession-cocaine, possession-heroin, possession-controlled substance, possession-drug paraphernalia

James C. Ambrose, 31, Middleburg, possession-controlled substance, possession-drug paraphernalia

Jaiden K. Beasley, 20, Orange Park, aggravated assault with intent to commit felony, domestic battery, adult false imprisonment

Leon H. Green, 50, Green Cove Springs, writ of attachment

Michael S.L. Channell, 43, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Charles W. Pease, 44, Green Cove Springs, VOP-DUI

Matthew M.M. Wells, 57, Middleburg, domestic battery

Jiquan J. Payton, 23, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

Joseph Settembrino, 50, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

Michael R. Williams, 36, Keystone Heights, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, trespassing

Kristine N. Madej, 32, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

Meliss A. Faulmino, 43, Fleming Island, domestic battery

Devon M.P. Schefano, 38, vandalism

Monday, Nov. 27

Robert S. Warren, 50, Orange Park, DWLSR, FTA-DWLSR, non-support

Xavier L. Benjamin, 25, Orange Park, domestic battery, FTA-driving without valid license, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Steven J. Smith, 44, Middleburg, disorderly intoxication

John W. Cardenas, 60, Keystone Heights, aggravated domestic battery with deadly weapon

Alfred D. Burke, 64, Green Cove Springs, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Glenn D. Manning, 45, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

Sandra G. Coody, 54, Orange Park, public aid fraud

William H. Smith, 28, Green Cove

Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

Randy L. Freeman, 67, Middleburg, battery on law enforcement/firefighter/EMT, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Sadrak E.C. Cortes, 42, Green Cove Springs, FTA-driving without valid license

Jose A.G. Rincon, 43, Green Cove Springs, FTA-driving without valid license

Glenda K. Raggins, 61, Green Cove Springs, VOP-battery

Zachary J. White, 23, Green Cove Springs, VOP-possession-fentanyl

David P. Burger, 29, Green Cove Springs, VOP-possession of photographs of child sex

Brandi L. Flemming, 45, Green Cove Springs, VOP-possession-amphetamine

Sean D. Letterle, 33, Orange Park, VOP-possession-controlled substance, VOP-selling marijuana

Jeffery W. Bierman, 41, Green Cove Springs, violation of jail rules

Sunday, Nov. 26

Lee V. Walton, 47, Orange Park, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, refusal to submit to BAL test, DUI

Katherine L. Couch, 32, Green Cove Springs, possession-controlled substance, possession-drug paraphernalia

Stephen M. Cossich, 27, Middleburg, possession-controlled substance

Codi N. Peavey, 29, Middleburg, domestic battery, aggravated battery with deadly weapon

Michelle A. Hansen, Middleburg, possession-controlled substance, possession-drug paraphernalia

Saturday, Nov. 25

Cemetries S. Meadows, 47, Orange Park, shoplifting, use of anti-shoplifting device

Shenell Q. Frazier, 50, Orange Park, domestic battery

Christopher A. Willingham, 50, Keystone Heights, domestic battery

Christian J.R. Schiarratta, 26, Orange Park, domestic battery

Stephen c. Costley, 43, Middleburg, burglary, petit theft

Derrick K. Miller, 34, Middleburg, petit theft

Viktoria Dziuba, 24, Green Cove Springs, disorderly intoxication

Friday, Nov. 24

Jaylen A. Muller, 23, Orange Park, shoplifting, trespassing

Edward J. Bryant, 49, Orange Park, DWLSR

Jesus A. Chirinos-Chirinos, 32, Keystone Heights, driving without valid license

Brett T. Watson, 23, Middleburg, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, two counts attempting to flee/elude law enforcement with lights/siren active, two counts DWLSR, two counts battery on law enforcement/firefighter/EMT, burglary

Abbey J. Hurst, 29, Fleming Island, DUI

Kemuel Ramos, 24, Orange Park, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, trespassing

Jesus M.S. Ortiz, 39, Orange Park, aggravated domestic battery, hinder communication with law enforcement

Thursday, Nov. 23

Scott E. Shepherd, 55, Maxville, non-

SEE ARRESTS, 23

Police

from page 22

After he was handcuffed, the deputy said Walker threatened him.

He was taken to Texas to appear for not appearing in court for carrying a prohibited weapon.

Clay County went to the Brazoria County Jail in Angleton, Texas, on Nov. 21 to arrest him for his outstanding charges once his Texas case was closed.

Walker will remain in the Clay County Jail until his arraignment on Dec. 12. Until then, he will be retained without bond.

Man attempts to run from CCSO, but caught hiding in his underwear

MIDDLEBURG – According to the Clay County Sheriff's Office, what started as an investigation into a garage break-in on Nov. 24 quickly escalated into a chase that ended up with him being caught wearing only his underwear.

Brett Tyler Watson, 23, of Middleburg, was spotted driving a pick-up truck on Everett Avenue that matched the description of a truck that fled from a previous traffic stop. The deputy said Watson crossed over the double-yellow line twice at a high rate of speed. He turned on his emergency lights and siren, but Watson continued onto Banks Road and Cotton Gin Court, where he stopped at the end of the cul de sac. He ran into a swampy wooded area. A deputy found a pair of muddy blue jeans behind a house on the same street.

CCSO then got a call about a break-in on Cotton Gin Court. Deputies found a window screen on the ground. They found Watson hiding in the rafters when they entered the unoccupied garage. He told deputies he

was cold and was trying to hide from law enforcement.

According to the arrest report, Watson told a deputy that he ran because his license was suspended. He also was charged with two counts of battery on law enforcement, resisting law enforcement, driving with an open container of alcohol, speeding, running a stop sign, attempting to flee from law enforcement with lights and siren active and no proof of insurance.

His bond was set at \$117,523.

Store security leads CCSO to quick arrest of shoplifting suspect

ORANGE PARK – A grab-and-go shoplifter was quickly arrested and charged with grand theft, using an anti-shoplifting device, criminal mischief and providing a false identity to law enforcement, according to the Clay County Sheriff's Office.

According to the arrest report, a loss prevention officer at the Orange Park Mall saw Kenneth Shuman, 39, of Callahan, "grabbed several high dollar items and depart the store." The officer told deputies she saw Shuman stuff the items in a black garbage bag and walk toward Wells Road. He was quickly arrested in the Home Depot parking lot.

Shuman told deputies he met somebody on Facebook who wanted to buy the stolen items. He said he needed money to rent a

hotel room in Jacksonville.

The officer said she had surveillance video of Shuman taking items, and she found anti-theft lock cables that he removed with wire cutters.

The cost of the items – perfumes and purses – reported as stolen was \$1,786.80, and the value of the damaged cables was \$81.

His bond was set at \$30,010.

Man gets 10 years for distributing methamphetamine from Wells Road hotel room

JACKSONVILLE – U.S. District Judge Marcia Morales Howard sentenced Shawn-tae Jamell Clark, 45, of Orange Park, to 10 years and five months in federal prison for possession with the intent to distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

The court also ordered Clark to forfeit two firearms, ammunition and cash traceable to his offenses. He was arrested on July 6, 2022, and ordered detained. Clark pleaded guilty on Aug. 21.

According to court documents, deputies from the Clay County Sheriff's Office were investigating Clark based on reports that he was selling drugs, including methamphetamine, out of a hotel room at the Stay Suites on Wells Road. On July 2, 2021, deputies observed Clark leaving his hotel room with a backpack and getting into a car. During a subsequent traffic stop of the vehicle, a CCSO K-9 alerted the likely presence of illegal narcotics. A subsequent search of the car revealed a small safe containing a loaded Beretta pistol and Taurus revolver, seven baggies of methamphetamine, and approximately 100 small

baggies. Further investigation determined that the total weight of the methamphetamine was approximately 159 grams, and that Clark had multiple prior felony convictions for armed robbery, attempted lewd or lascivious act – sexual battery and multiple convictions for possession of cocaine. As such, he is prohibited from possessing a firearm or ammunition under federal law.

On Sept. 25, Judge Howard sentenced a related defendant, David Lee Rucker, 35, of Elberton, Georgia, to six years and eight months in federal prison for possession with the intent to distribute methamphetamine on Wells road. The court also ordered Rucker to forfeit a firearm and ammunition. Rucker had pleaded guilty on May 19, 2022.

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Clay County Sheriff's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin C. Frein prosecuted it. Assistant United States Attorney Mai Tran handled the forfeiture.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a program that brings together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence and make our neighborhoods safer.

On May 26, 2021, the Department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities and measuring the results.



Kenneth Shuman

Arrests

from page 22

support

Craig S. Jackson, 50, Green Cove Springs, VOP-community control

Thomas E. Fogus, 36, Middleburg, child abuse

Nicole A. Masey, 42, Fleming Island, VOP-possession-drug paraphernalia

Jack D. Poole, 24, Fleming Island, DUI

Daniel R. Stamer, 18, Middleburg, three counts trafficking-LSD, two counts trafficking-hydrocodone, two counts sale/delivery-methamphetamine, sale/delivery-Xanax, sale/delivery-fentanyl

Mickayla L. Santiago, 27, Orange Park, possession-marijuana with intent to sell/manufacture/deliver, possession-drug paraphernalia

Justice T. Gotay, 23, Orange Park, possession-marijuana, VOP-community control

Angel L. Coakley, 39, Keystone Heights, domestic battery

Wednesday, Nov. 22

Michael D. Breen, 60, Fleming Island, DUI

Keith L. Rowell, 45, Green Cove Springs,

FTA-possession-fentanyl, two counts FTA, FTA-possession-drug paraphernalia

Darren L. Hutchins, 43, Orange Park, domestic battery, hinder communication with law enforcement

Dean A.K. Rockwood, 31, Green Cove Springs, VOP-possession-methamphetamine, VOP-burglary

Jackson N. Vu, 29, Orange Park, grand theft auto, possession-drug paraphernalia

Joseph P. Kane, 41, Green Cove Springs, VOP-battery

Benjamin R. Walters, 37, Middleburg, possession-methamphetamine, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Samantha J. Bianco, 43, Green Cove Springs, possession-heroin

Maurice C. Wildes, 33, Orange Park, possession-marijuana

Katherine D. Dietrich, 38, Orange Park, possession-controlled substance

Robert A. Berrian, 24, Fleming Island, DUI with BAL .15 or higher

Tuesday, Nov. 21

Howard B. Wagner, 53, Orange Park, domestic battery

Timothy Walker, 26, Green Cove Springs, intimidation with threat of death/serious bodily injury on law enforcement, trespassing

Minor C. Catledge, 59, Green Cove Springs, VOP-burglary

Chelsea L. Pelletier, 35, Fleming Island, possession-controlled substance, possession-drug paraphernalia, breach of peace/disorderly conduct/fighting/brawling

Glenn D. Manning, 45, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

Kenneth Shuman, 39, Orange Park, grand theft, criminal mischief, giving false name/ID, use of anti-shoplifting device

Cameron A. Leek, 23, Middleburg, disorderly intoxication

David J. Burch, 54, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

Cherry M. Padgett, 43, Green Cove Springs, two counts VOP-battery

Bobby B. Williams, 27, Fleming Island, following/harassing/cyberstalking

Joshua B. Thigpen, 38, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release condition for protection against domestic violence

Jennifer S. Stratten, 30, Green Cove Springs, DWLSR

Monday, Nov. 20

Darrick L. Johnson, 53, Green Cove

Springs, distribution of cocaine within 1,000 feet of a school

Denise R. Sutherland, 34, Middleburg, shoplifting

Veronica L. Johnson, 42, Middleburg, domestic battery

Devin J. Newman, 36, Orange Park, domestic battery

Samantha A. Truman, 47, Keystone Heights, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, trespassing

Jacob J. Williams, 43, Keystone Heights, domestic battery, child abuse, burglary

Thomas B. Reed, 50, Fleming Island, possession-controlled substance

Derrick D. Evans, 20, Green Cove Springs, VOP-attempting to flee/elude law enforcement

Zachary T Watt, 40, Middleburg, possession-ammo/firearm by convicted felon

Dennis J. Smith, 60, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

Sean F. Anest, 29, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

Christian E.M. Chirinos, 30, Orange Park, driving without valid license

Walnut

from page 1

off in a mailbox for Santa Claus.

Christmas on Walnut is more than a party. It's a hometown celebration befitting the spirit of a Saturday Evening Post cover by Norman Rockwell.

"It's home. It's home. Fortunately, and unfortunately, we're having to handle different growth in the city," said Kimberly Thomas, the executive assistant to City Manager Steve Kennedy, who organizes the annual event. "I mean, the people here, it's a hometown, and what more of the hometown than Christmas lights, a Christmas parade and Santa Claus? It's just a happy, joyful day."

The festivities start at 10 a.m. with shopping along Walnut Street, other downtown streets, and throughout the park. There will be 85 vendors and 17 food trucks, but local merchants will benefit the most.



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

Harbor Baptist Church on Fleming Island members decorate their tree in Spring Park. Santa's mailbox has been full of wish lists, but the biggest draw is the parade along Orange Avenue.



Public Works Field Supervisor Greg Bauer said work to get ready for the parade, shopping on Walnut Street and Parade of Trees in Spring Park started on Nov. 6 and will continue through the morning of the day-long celebration.



"It's so much fun," said Spring Park Coffee's Valerie Kelley. "Everybody looks forward to working that day. We'll be open during our regular hours (7 a.m. to 8 p.m.), but we'll bring in two extra people. It's our busiest day of the year."

Kelley said there were "pallets" of hot chocolate on the ready.

"We love Christmas," she said. "You definitely feel the Christmas spirit here all day."

Cheri Starnes, who owns The Corner Pocket and Around the Corner Diner on Magnolia Street, said she will serve breakfast and lunch.

"That's our busiest day of the year," she said. "There are so many people, and they all have so much fun. It's a great day."

Public Works Field Supervisor Greg Bauer said that parade watchers will start lining along Orange Avenue three hours before the parade starts at 6 p.m.

"We do it for the community," he said. "There are a lot of moving parts from guys who work hard. They take pride in what they do. These guys live here and work here. That's why we do what we do."



Bauer said the preparation started on Nov. 6. His department needed eight to 10 people daily to unpack, install and fluff 225 artificial trees around Town Hall and Spring Park. Each was sold to nonprofits, businesses, groups and families, and it only took 26 hours to sell each spot.

"The Parade of Trees is probably my favorite because of the stories I hear," Thomas said. "There are some businesses that advertise, and there are some organizations. But most of them are in memory of, or in honor of, veterans, grandma, and

family members. This year, we added 50 trees. It's crazy because it's an online system. I had phone calls from people who just were heartbroken. They weren't able to get a tree."

The 24-foot official city Christmas tree, which took more than a week to set up, will be lit at 8:30 p.m. in Spring Park. The Parade of Trees will stay open from dusk to 10 p.m. through Dec. 31.

The parade, organized by the Green Cove Springs Business League, is the cornerstone of the celebration. It starts at

the Clay County Administration Building at Houston Street and moves south along Orange Avenue until it makes a U-turn at Walnut and returns to the administration building. That way, both sides of the roadway will get a close view.

The highlight of the day is a big challenge for the Green Cove Springs Police Department.

"Our No. 1 concern, our biggest priority, is making sure we have enough law enforcement officers there," Chief E.J. Guzman said. "Second is the closure of the roads that interfere with traffic. So that's something that we get pre-approved with the Department of Transportation to shut down (Orange Avenue). That normally goes flawlessly as long as we have enough officers to manage it all."

Orange and all side streets connecting to it will be closed from 5 p.m. until the final parade float finishes, Guzman said.

And like last year, the department created a route along and adjacent to Orange for emergency vehicles.

"We have emergency access in and out of the area (Orange) because the road is going to be closed," he said. "If it's not done right, it can hamper response for emergency vehicles. We started arranging that with the sheriff 10 days ago. We came up with this last year, and we're going to use it again. We moved the parade to (Orange) a couple of years ago. We meet after every parade and talk about things we learned."

Guzman also expects many more attendees this year.

"It's a big event," he said. "And it's only getting bigger."



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

City officials and residents have been preparing for Saturday's Christmas on Walnut for more than a month. The event will likely attract more than 10,000 people and kick off the city's year-long 150th birthday celebration.

Sports

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STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

Oakleaf High junior guard Trista Brown was a big part of last year's Final Four finish and will be a big part of putting back the fast-paced Knights attack.

"Three Amigas" gone, OHS girls hoops searching

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

OAKLEAF - Oakleaf High girls basketball coach Fred Cole has had his share of marquis players in the past four years with the likes of Kaylah Turner, Fantasia James, and Kamiya Jones and even included Taliah Scott, who took her senior year at St. Johns Country Day School after a Final Four season with Cole, all sensational sophomores in their starts and all bonafide superstars in their finishes.

After a sensational Final Four finish last year (26-3); lost to eventual runner-

SEE BASKETBALL, 30

It's early, but SJCDs remains undefeated

Area hoops open with fire

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

OAKLEAF - A thrilling district championship win over eventual Class 6A boys basketball runner-up Ponte Vedra may have been the highlight of the Oakleaf High basketball season last year and an iconic memory for the program participants. Still, Knights' coach Jason Price is looking for more than a region semifinal finish in 2024.

"This is probably the deepest lineup I've ever had," said Price, before his season-opening doubleheader on Friday and Saturday that included a 75-21 thrashing of Matanzas followed by a 63-56 slugfest win over Bishop Kenny on Saturday. "Last year, we were deep and that gave us the ability to practice hard and play the way we played. This group is deeper."

Against Matanzas, Oakleaf amped up the full-court press behind sopho-



STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

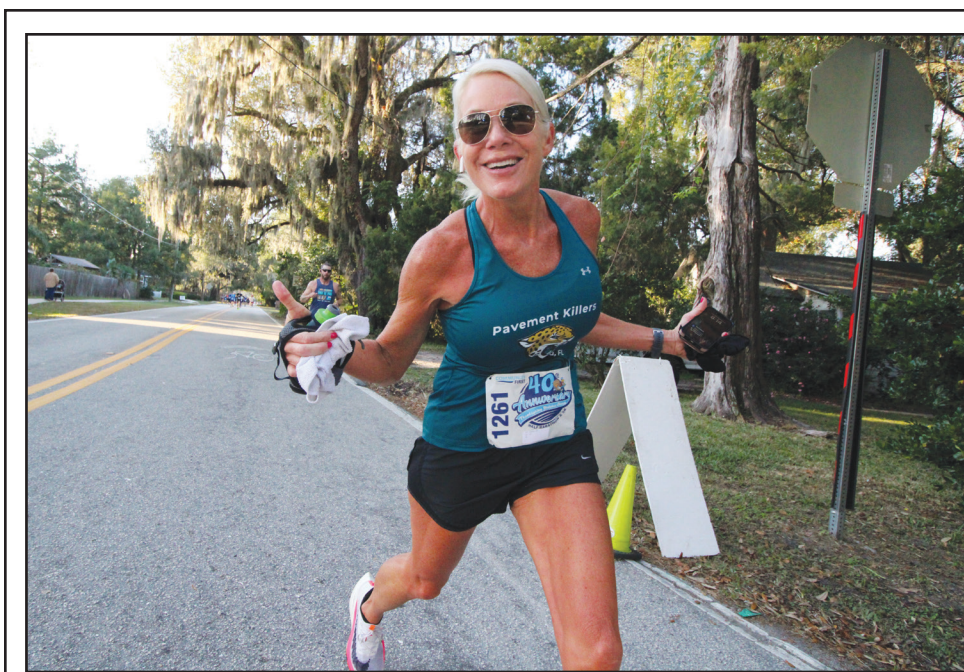
St. Johns Country Day School basketball got a glimpse of the prowess of seventh-grader Cameron Cooper last year. The Spartans will be expecting some more highlights this season.

more guard Aaron Rivers who helped deliver an astounding 19 steals to 19 layups that stole the third quarter.

"Aaron gets after it," said Price.

Price, with post players Cameron Coachman, a shot-blocking menace on

SEE HOOPS, 29



Thanksgiving run

STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

Fleming Island runner Vanessa Lain, President of the Fleming Island Pavement Killers running club, is at the halfway mark of the Jacksonville Thanksgiving Day Distance Classic Half Marathon on Thanksgiving. Lain was with 3,500 runners for the annual pre-Turkey dinner 13.1 mile trek along the St. Johns River. See more pictures, page 28.

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NEW ARRIVALS!
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Myers finishes third at state; 12th at Foot Locker race

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

TALLAHASSEE - Fleming Island High senior cross country runner Graham Myers had a bit of a lull in his season near the end of his illustrious career of top-five finishes in cross country and track, but the wispy fleet-footed flyer had one of his strongest races in the Class 3A championship race on Friday in Tallahassee to finish third against a two-time champion that has been his Moby Dick since last year.

"Graham came back today and ran a strong race against a strong field," said Fleming Island cross country coach Dave Allen, who watched his team clinging to a second-place mid-race position before finally settling in at fourth place behind defending team champion Belen Jesuit, Naples, and Leon. "We beat Leon in the region race, but they edged ahead of us in the end with Naples squeezing in there."

For the team scores, where Fleming Island was third last year with Myers third then, the dominant Belen Jesuit team scored just 33 points to take the team title with little challenge while the next three scored 146, 150 and 159 in one of the tensest final moments of the 2023 season.

"Think about the talent in the field to have that many teams that close in the top five," said Allen. "We got a great race again from Jacob Campbell who came in just ahead of John Keester IV to get us in that second place spot, but the fours and fives of all three teams made it very close."

With two-time defending champion Patrick Koon, a recent Stanford University commit, testing the field with a 4:44 first mile then edging away from Belen Jesuit freshman Marcelo Mantecon in the final 800 meters to win in 15 minutes, 2.1 seconds to Mantecon's 15:09.9, Myers finished third in 15:23.2 with Campbell in at 22nd in 16:22.6 and Keester in at 28th in 16:31.3 giving Fleming Island and early race boost. Belen's 33 points came by way of Mantecon at second and finishers at fifth, sixth and eighth.

Fleming Island's fourth finisher was Roman Mollicone at 48th in 16:55.1 with Andrew Boyer 74th in 17:12.5.

For the Fleming Island girls, where an injury to Allie Knotts in mid-race had her on the ground for nearly two minutes, sophomore Brooke Reynolds commanded the top finish for the team with a 21st place finish in 19:30.8, one of her best races on the very hill trek in Tallahassee. With Knotts out of the mix and a top 10 finish seemingly out of reach, it was senior Reese Scott in 67th place in 20:43.1 that made a top 10 finish objective a final 13th place finish. Knotts gallantly finished in 172nd in 23:02.8.

"We were shooting for seventh place on paper and had a good shot at it, but Allie had problems in the race and it was serious and girls were going by her while she was on the ground," said Allen. "Brooke



Fleming Island sophomore runner Brooke Reynolds was the lone area runner in the Foot Locker National Championship elite race.



St. Johns Country Day School junior Rebecca Stratton strides during the Foot Locker Juniors Race in North Carolina.

had no idea and just kept running strong."

Miami Dillard, with 3A champion Christiana Coleman, sixth last year, winning in 17:53.4, duked it out with Ponte Vedra, the 2021 3A champion, in the team finishes with a 46-66 edge with Lourdes High a distant third at 142. Dillard placed three runners in the top five with Ponte Vedra's Lindy White fourth to put the Sharks in position to run for the top spot. Dillard, second in 3A last year, got their fourth runner in at 11th, but the fifth finisher was way off the pace; 34th, to give the pack-running



Fleming Island senior cross country runner Graham Myers, center in white, just missed an invite to the Foot Locker National Championship race with a 12th-place finish at the South Region qualifier in North Carolina.



Fleming Island senior John Keester IV finished a strong career of running since his junior high days with the final race at the Foot Locker South Region Championship.

Ponte Vedra team a chance to recapture their 2022 title.

Fleming Island's finishers were senior Marlea Feld at 102nd in 21:36.2, senior Sydney Fallin at 114th in 21:50.4 and junior Emma Schlotthauer in 160th at 22:39.8.

In the boy's 2A race, Keystone Heights senior Tyler Griffin finished his strong career with a 141st-place finish in 18:32.2.

In Class 1A, the St. Johns Country Day Schools girl's team finished 21st with the boys finishing 31st. The Lady Spartans were led by junior Rebecca Stratton who was 62nd in 21:07.9 followed by seventh grader Kate Staten in 113th in 22:26.4 and junior Kaitlyn Sunderhaus in 124th in 22:39. St. Johns' two seniors; Sofia Condon and Sarah Robinson finished their careers together at 151st and 152nd with two more seventh graders; Olivia Morris and Matilda Morris finishing the Spartan scoring.

For the Spartan boys, senior Richard

Nichols finished his career with a 123rd in 18:19.4 with two freshmen; Arlo Kistner and Thomas Nichols behind him followed by sophomore Wyatt Hollingsworth, freshman Nathan Robinson and eighth grader Marcus Giles. Senior Timothy Jackson was the final Spartan finisher in 225th.

In Charlotte, NC, on Sat., Nov. 25, at the Foot Locker XC South Region Championship Boys race, a race to determine the top 10 runners from the South Region of the United States for the upcoming Foot Locker XC National Championship race, Fleming Island High senior Graham Myers coupled his third-place state finish with a 12th place finish in 15:10.5.

In first place was a familiar face to Fleming Island cross country in Tallahassee Leon's Patrick Koon, who won the Class 3A race in Tallahassee. Koon blitzed the field with a 14:48.6 split to edge a 14:54.8 by

Community First Thanksgiving Distance Classic

10 years later; RHS Midgett is still fast

Conference XC runner of the year at 29

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

JACKSONVILLE - With nearly 3,500 runners around her; with 3,479 behind her, former Ridgeview High distance running standout Alexandra Midgett, 29, a former Florida State University cross country and head women coach and now a graduate student runner at Savannah College of Art and Design, emerged as third place female at the Community First Thanksgiving Distance Classic, a 13.1 mile half marathon race on Thanksgiving Day in Jacksonville.

"I had been at FSU for 10 years between running, a knee injury and coaching and decided I needed to do something different," said Midgett, named the Sun Conference runner of the year after the Savannah women's cross country team, led by Midgett's first overall finish, dominated the Conference championship race with just 15 points (a cross country shutout with SCAD scoring top five finishers). "I gave Savannah a call, we talked about my year of eligibility and the coach called me back later that day and asked if I would come to his team. And, I did."

Midgett finished the half marathon with a one hour, 22 minutes, 26-second split for third behind winner Kelsey Pontius, 32, who won in 1:17:57, and Hayleigh Haid, 23, in second at 1:18:47.

Midgett's half marathon finish was 21st overall with the men's winner, David Too, 29, winning in 1:08:53 as the top three runners all broke 1:10 for the event in one of the fastest fields in recent history.

At Savannah, with their cross country ranked 19th in NAIA polls, Midgett, a 2012 graduate of Ridgeview High School, has returned to racing with fervor with her 53rd



As a member of the 1st Place Sports elite racing team, Alexandra Midgett is seen here with a powerful stride in the Thanksgiving Day Distance Classic Half Marathon where she finished third female; and 21st overall.

place finish for 6K in 23:02.1 to be SCAD's top finisher at the November 17 NAIA National Championships in Vancouver, Washington. SCAD finished 16th team in the championship race.

"I ran at Ridgeview, walked on at FSU, ran four years, tore an ACL and then became a volunteer women's cross country coach and, last year, was the head women coach," said Midgett. "I got my degree in exercise physiology so I had the smart degree, now I want to get the fun degree; a master's in filmmaking, so I can make movies."

Midgett has maintained an impressive level of excellence in both her running and



The Ridgeview High cross country standout, Alex Midgett, second from left, was a powerful runner for the Lady Panthers and had a host of record-setting athletes in the decade of strong running.



Alexandra Midgett powers in the lead for Savannah College of Arts and Design where she led a 1-2-3-4-5 finish at the Sun Conference championship race and was top finisher.

her coaching and said her sharing of ideas with the coaching staff and her teammates has made the transition even more fruitful.

"Our coach knows my background and my teammates kind of know a bit, but I am just along for the ride and to help make the team better," said Midgett. "It's been a nice experience to be able to contribute at my age."

For her physical well-being, Midgett maintains a strong flexibility regimen with some cross fit and, if need be, some off time and some fun time.

"I would tell younger athletes, be con-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CINNAMONS

Ridgeview High 2012 graduate Alexandra Midgett, holding a right corner of the banner, has maintained her excellent high school running skills for 10 years with a conference runner of the year award as a 29-year graduate student runner at the Savannah College of Arts and Design.



Alexandra Midgett strides in track action as a Florida State University walk-on athlete.

sistent, that's the key, be patient, it doesn't happen overnight and do all the little things; stretching, diet, therapy, to keep the body and mind healthy," said Midgett. "I've had the privilege of being able to compete at a high level in four different jerseys; Ridgeview, FSU, SCAD and the 1st Place Sports Elite Team."

Midgett plans to challenge her personal best of 1:21 in the half marathon at the Ameris Jacksonville Half Marathon on December 10 where she was the second female last year.

FIHS Domenico earns All-Conference nod

By Matt McIntosh
'23/Shenandoah

FOREST, Va. - Ten members of the Shenandoah University football team have been selected to the 2023 All-ODAC Teams as announced by the league on Wednesday morning. The Hornets finished at 5-5 after an 8-2 record in 2022.

On offense, David Munoz earned first-team honors, while Andre Jackson represents the Hornets on the second team. Quarterback Steven Hugney, receiver Broden Domenico, and lineman Dominic Gulli round out the offensive selections on the third team.

Domenico, a senior, is a Fleming Island High School graduate out of Florida. Do-



Fleming Island football standout Broden Domenico was a dynamic multi-faceted player for the Golden Eagles and recently earned a college All-Conference selection as a wide receiver at Shenandoah University in Virginia.

menico finished with 58 pass catches to lead the team with 669 yards, seven touchdowns with a 68-yard longest pass catch.

Domenico finished strong at the season's end with two games with 11 catches (vs. Averett, vs. Hampden-Sydney) and a

final game with seven grabs (vs. Washington & Lee).

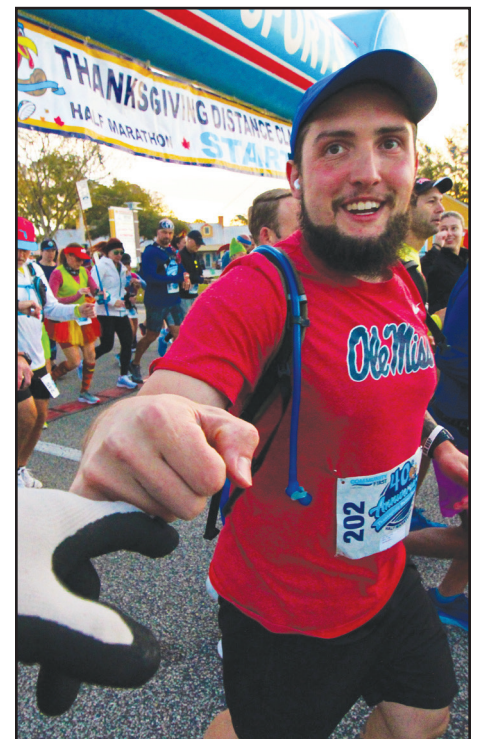
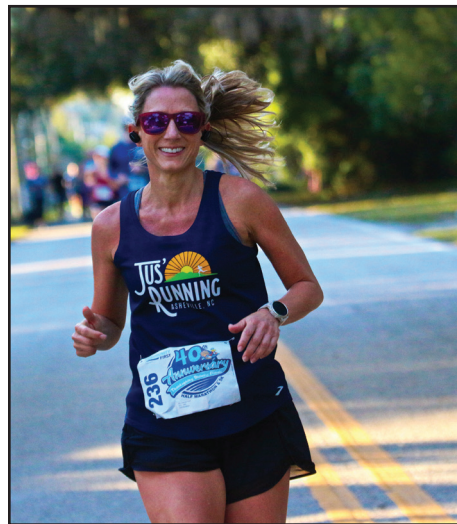
Matt Conroy and Keyshawn Wilder represent the SU defense with first-team honors. Ethan Brown is the lone Hornet on the second team for defense, as Corey Kidwell and Sean Perry make the third team.

Receivers Jackson and Domenico had 474 and 669 receiving yards, respectively. Of Domenico's 58 catches, seven of them were touchdowns, which is a team-high. Jackson caught four touchdowns and added a 91-yard kickoff return TD in week one versus Methodist.

The two receivers helped QB Steven Hugney earn his All-ODAC honors. Hugney passed for 2280 yards on 199 completions. The QB threw for 15 TDs and used his legs to add five more to his total. On the ground, the Fairfax, Virginia native ran for 251 yards, third most for the Hornets.



Thanksgiving Distance Classic





St John's Country Day School junior Grayson Moody is one of the few returners for the Spartan basketball team. Right: Oakleaf High defender Austin Davenport, left, pictures for Matanzas driving guard in first of two wins weekend at the Knight Invitation at Oakleaf High School.



Hoops

from page 25

defense, and Dylan, a smooth as silk slash driver, in the college game, Price got big mileage from Travis Knox in the paint and Jarius Brown shooting threes on the perimeter to put an early 34-9 first quarter lead, a 37-12 halftime lead and a 56-16 lead with a running clock into the fourth quarter.

"Travis was our fourth-leading scorer last year and our leading free throw shooter," said Price. "We've got some guys that have been on the court a few years for us."

Against Bishop Kenny, with the Crusaders sinking a handful of second-half three-pointers, the Knights relied on Rivers' breaks with five steals to 18 points on the night with Austin Davenport adding another 14 with six rebounds and three blocked shots.

Oakleaf gets back in the gym on Fri., Dec. 1 with a home game against Ridgeview, who opened with a 61-49 win over West Nassau under new coach Chandler Harper. Harper takes over for Jerome Clyburn.

Chandler's lineup features a host of high-flying athletes including high jump state qualifier T'Vario Willis, football wide receiver Deshun Green and massive football defensive end Jarius "JJ" Moore at 6'2, 220 lbs.

Against West Nassau, Deidrick Parsons, a senior, punched in with 18 points with Willis adding 16.

Ridgeview gets a first test with Orange Park visiting on Tuesday, November 28. The game will be the Raiders season opener. Also in district 2-5A with Ridgeview, Clay (7-16 last year) and Middleburg (10-14) will be battling with Baker County, Rickards and Columbia in a district that had just Columbia with a winning season record, 20-10.

The Raiders, 18-9 last year with an early exit to Ponte Vedra in the district 3-6A tournament, don't have all everything Josiah Sabino, now at Jacksonville University, but do return rugged paint player Archie Triggs III, a 6'-2" attack player. Orange Park had two strong preseason wins over Episcopal (50-44) and Nease (40-38) at the Clay High Preseason Classic two

weeks ago in what coach Derek Kurnitsky called the best defensive effort he's seen as a Raider coach. Kurnitsky got mileage from transfer Jacob Hensen from Westside who put in 12 points with six assists against Episcopal and 22 points and three dishes against Nease.

The other early out from last year's district 3-6A tournament, Fleming Island (lost to Nease in quarters) looks to return to Final Four status as in past seasons and will rely heavily on a freshman postman; Carson Crawford, a 6'5" post player that could be the answer to departed power players Ethan Williams (6'-4"), Axel Holmquist (6'-8"), Aidan Tarter (6'-6") and Darion Domenick (6'-4").

"He's going to be a dominant player once he learns how to position his body against much heavier guys," said Fleming Island coach Traavis Chandler. "We have our backcourt guys back; George Hamm, Trace Burney and Michael Hayward Jr., who will have to control the game with their speed and outside shooting."

In their season opener, Fleming Island beat a tough Ed White team 69-57 before bouncing back to take out Pensacola Escambia on Saturday at the Andrew Jackson's Jackie Simmons Thanksgiving Classic 56-50 with Crawford scoring a team-high 16 points with 18 rebounds and four assists. Hamm added four assists on breakaways with seven points.

"We made this game easier for them with our poor free throw shooting," said Chandler, noting a 22 of 34 slate at the free throw line and just three three-pointers. "We had guys on vacation and not in the gym and we can correct that."

Against ED White, Hamm's 15 points led a three-man double-digit scoring spread with Marcus Reed adding 10 and Crawford putting in 13. Fleming Island was 14 of 22 from the free throw stripe.

"We expected sloppy against ED White because of new personnel," said Chandler. "Pace and space is our motto and not being as big as we have been, we have to control the floor and wear teams down with our speed and athleticism."

In district 3-2A, St. Johns Country Day School will lean on eighth-grader Cameron Cooper again after the talented youngster returns to open his season with a 25-point



STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

Orange Park power forward Archie Triggs III goes up for windmill dunk over Ridgeview defender JJ Moore in Raiders' 81-32 season opening win over the Panthers. Triggs led Raider scoring with 17 points.

bonanza in the Spartans opener against River City Prep, a 69-34 win on November 21. The Spartans got 10 points apiece from freshman Dylan Reach and Luke Holcomb against River City.

Cooper will need help despite his high point totals to push the Spartans past the district tournament and that will fall on the likes of junior Grayson Moody who returns as second-team scorer but at just 7.4 points per game last year. Spartan coach Ian Gibson has a bucket load of young athletes with Moody and Carter Graham as his

upperclassmen, which is good for the next few years but will be tough on the young team to grind out the season.

At Keystone Heights (14-11 last year), the Indians, under coach Carlos Lamar and the incomparable Ken Mudge, opened on the road against unbeaten (2-0) Williston on Mon, Nov. 27 with some pretty big guys led by 6'-9" Bryant Kubisiak, 6'-7" Michael Bruzzese and 6'-3" Garrison Teague under the glass. Connor Guy looks to be the backcourt ace as senior shooting ace Seth Gagnon has graduated (17 points per game).



Fleming Island guard London Jenkins is the Secretary of Defense for the Golden Eagles basketball team. One of St. John's Country Day School's best 3-point shooter is Kendall Proffitt who is also a rebound menace under the basket. Oakleaf High forward Ja'Nease Bender established herself as a gritty paint player last year in the Oakleaf Final Four run.

Basketball

from page 25

up Charlotte in the 6A state semifinal, and before a season opener against a highly-touted University Christian team that was a region semifinalist last year, Cole noted that the "Three Amigas" (Turner, James and Jones) have all graduated and that his team is fairly fresh.

"We had quarterhorses for a few years," said Cole, before the hard-fought 42-38 loss. "We got ponies now, but we'll make them quarterhorses."

On the bench with Cole is long-time assistant Ronald Jefferson who, as the conditioning guru of the duo, has been the architect of the fast-paced, no let up attack that Cole employs.

"They will do the work and as the season goes, will get faster, stronger and mentally tougher," said Cole. "We know the formula."

Against UC in the opener on Saturday,

the three main cogs of the Knights attack that have returned to take the flag of the Oakleaf attack; Trista Brown, Ja'Nease Bender and still-tiny-but-tough-as-nails Armaany Mullins (just 5'-2) put their noses up against the much bigger Lady Christians and nearly pulled off a scintillating fourth quarter takedown.

After a sizing-up 4-4 first-quarter score with both teams kind of forgetting about playing foundation basketball and both missing standard shots, the second quarter started to look like two championship-level teams duking it out.

Brown was the engine up the court with a driving layup and a three-pointer, Bender down below coughing up balls back out to the stripe and Mullins sneaking under her much taller adversaries for rebounds in crowds while she was sent sprawling down the court.

With sophomore Shelby Gaines throwing in some tough drives to the basket, Oakleaf held the line to a 20-15 gap at halftime.

In the third quarter, junior Makiya Trusel and Gaines battled underneath to keep a ball heading to the Oakleaf bucket before Trusel muscled up a three-pointer and a jumper on the next run down that seemed to energize the Knights sideline with Oakleaf pushing to a 22-20 gap.

University extended to 28-22 before Gaines knocked in a layup and free throw three-point play and followed with a second drive to the hoop to close the score to 28-25 as the fourth quarter started.

The score gap hovered around 1-2 points; Brown with a three with 38 seconds putting the game at 38-37 for UC to set up a chess match finish.

With both coaches implementing time-saving tactics, it was two errant throws by Oakleaf that put the game in the University's hands, 42-38.

Oakleaf had a preseason loss, 47-38, to 7A-Spruce Creek (23-6 last year, lost in the region final) on November 21.

Cole's normally rugged schedule moves right into go mode with Paxon on Novem-

ber 30, a trip to Orange Park on Fri., Dec. 1 and road trips to Bartram Trail and Nease next week with Ponte Vedra home on December 15. Oakleaf beat Ponte Vedra in last year's district 3-6A final with Ponte Vedra beating Nease in the semifinal. Oakleaf, Nease and Ponte Vedra were all-region qualifiers last year.

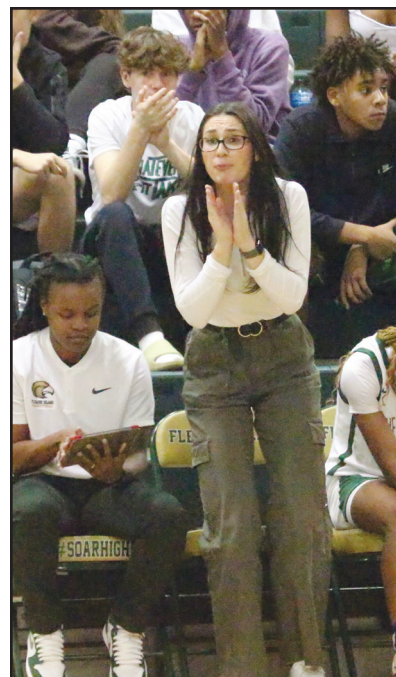
Jenkins stealing and dealing for the Golden Eagles

Also in the district 3-6A lineup is Fleming Island under coach Michael Hayward and assistant coaches Kenya Johnson and Molly Ragle, both former stellar players for Fleming Island High School.

The Golden Eagles, with a double front attack of slasher London Jenkins and shooter Victoria Noble, opened with a 65-35 win over Stanton Prep but fell 61-46 to unbeaten Toco Creek.

Against Stanton, a 15-15 mid-sec-

SEE BASKETBALL, 31



Middleburg High girls basketball coach Lindsay Burghart is on her toes and excited about a trap about to occur with Desiree Hall and Ruby Owens on an unlucky Trinity Christian player in Broncos win Tuesday night. Broncos are now 2-0. Familiar faces on the bench for Fleming Island girls basketball are former standouts Kenya Johnson, left, and Molly Ragle, assistant coaches with Michael Hayward. Fleming Island's steady enforcer is Victoria Noble who can shoot from the perimeter and dig for tough rebounds

Deters injects new energy into Blue Devils program

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

GREEN COVE SPRINGS - New coaches have a way of instilling new energy into their respective programs and the district 2-5A girls basketball arena features two new coaches, though both are well known in basketball circles in north Florida.

For Clay High, which has had a history of one guy coaching both boys and girls and years with a host of annual new coaches, former Green Cove Springs Junior High basketball icon Doug Deters, who patrolled the sidelines for the Cougars' boys team for years, took over the Lady Blue Devils duties (as well as being the voice of Blue Devil football on Friday nights) last year, went 3-20 and looks to be putting his Tennessee Volunteer energy into the task.

"We only won three games last season, and I own that as the head coach," said Deters. "Our core players; Teaghan Moses, Madison "Mad Dog" Kilgore and Julia Weaver also owned that, and we all committed this summer to turn this program around. We played 15-20 games in the month of June between team camps and summer leagues and also implemented a weight training program."

Opening with two preseason wins, a season-opening win over Englewood and a loss to Stanton Prep, Deters relies on sophomore shooter Teaghan Moses, a fa-

miliar face to Deters who had Moses on his flag football teams at Green Cove. Also, Teaghan is the daughter of Clay Athletic Director Jared Moses, himself a Clay High prolific shooter in his day.

Thus far, Moses has led the Lady Blue Devils with a second 22-point total against Stanton, a 42-36 loss, after she bucketed her first 22 in a 43-23 win over Englewood.

"The players we have now on the roster know the commitment that is required to rebuild this program," said Deters.

Deters, the forever optimist with an uncanny notion of his Volunteers football team beating Alabama every now and then, will need to exceed his three wins to earn the high school street cred. He will have 6'-1" senior Julia Weaver and senior Shandia Asbell in his holster; Asbell part of a long Clay tradition of athletes from that family; Boobie, Shannon, etc.

"The positivity and optimism around our program is night and day from a year ago," said Deters. "I am so proud of our players' physical and mental toughness so far this season. Our team goal this season is to be the most improved team in Clay County from last season to this season."

At the other end of the county, Gussie Solomon returns to the bench for Ridgeview High with the move of Tyler Miller to St. Johns Country Day School after a region final run last year.



Clay High girls basketball looks to reverse a three-win season under second year coach Doug Deters, left, who already posted two preseason wins and a regular season opening win.

Solomon, who coached a handful of the now seniors on the Ridgeview roster in her 2021 year, is well versed in the Lady Panthers gymnasium and has the advantage of a three-pronged sister attack: the Blocton's Nia, Narissa and Nacoya to lean on for another deep playoff run. Nia Blocton, the senior, recently committed to Florida Southern College and is expected to dominate the paint while, in a 25-0 opening quarter against Keystone Heights to a 53-10 win, it was sister Nacoya Blocton, the junior, who ran the ship and executed the Godzilla pressure attack on defense that Solomon likes.

The fourth element of the Solomon full-court press is sophomore Mighty Mite Emma Rayes, who at just 5'-2", is a menace on the halfcourt traps with her speed, dexterity and ability to get her hands on

the ball without the concurrent body foul.

Against Keystone Heights, the plan was flawless to the point that the varsity sat for three quarters after the explosive opening stanza. Rayes was a prolific three-point shooter last year as the season shifted to the second half after finding her symbiosis with seniors Alyssa Sherman and Payton Miller.

In game two, the attack rolled to a 17-7 first-quarter lead but got stifled 18-9 to the half. Providence, with seasons of 22-6 last year, 20-6 in 2021, and a 3A Final Four finish last year, answered the Panthers' quarter outbursts to the tune of overtime 61-55 loss; 8-2 Providence in the OT, that saw Providence's inside game up to the task of Ridgeview's inside prowess;

SEE DEVILS, 33

Basketball

from page 30

ond quarter score turned to fire with the Golden Eagles slashing out a 36-14 scoring blitz; Jenkins 20 Pts. (7 steals), Noble had 16 points with four threes and Ariana Pierce had 13, en route to the win.

Tocoi Creek got their own 18-8 first-quarter blitz on Fleming Island with the Golden Eagles answering with a 23-20 second and third-quarter scenario, but Tocoi owned the fourth quarter 23-15 for the win. Jenkins had 23 points with Pierce adding 16 with eight rebounds, but Noble just with three.

Fleming Island hosts Paxon on Monday, Nov. 27 with a four-game slate of powerhouses in Creekside, Trinity Christian, Orange Park and Ridgeview to open December with.

Lester-less Lady Raiders? Uh-Oh?

Orange Park High girls basketball coach Michael Nesmith "coyly" lamented the loss of all-everything guard Eris Lester to the transfer portals of high school basketball saying his Lady Raiders team will be struggling this year.

"Everyone writes about how with Lester (now at Monteverde Academy), Orange



Ridgeview eyes will be on the "Three Bs" on the girls basketball team; sisters from left Nia, Narissa and Nacoya Blocton who will be driving the Panther train to another possible region final finish with a Final Four in the mix. Nia, a senior, is committed to Florida Southern while her siblings, Narissa (No. 13) and Nacoya (24) will surely join her in the college ranks in a few years.

Park basketball is going to be struggling," said Nesmith. "We'll see."

Nesmith's reluctance to throw in the towel even before the season starts comes from his senior strong lineup of daughter Autumn Nesmith, guard Piera "Ice" Alexander, Hailey Revak and power center Mychaela Parker.

"Those writers forget that we had some

pretty good players around Eris," said Nesmith, who opened with a game against St. Johns Country Day School team in a 57-47 Raider win. "I think these seniors may have something to prove this year."

Against the Lady Spartans much smaller team; with seven athletes, and led by super shooter Mary Kate Kent's outside prowess, Orange Park got lulled into an 8-7

lead by the Lady Spartans before Nesmith called a time-out and probably "reminded" his team of their supposed senior prowess as the second quarter was a show of power basketball to a 25-21 halftime lead.

After the break, St. Johns, under new coach Tyler Miller of Ridgeview region final history last year, flexed a little more muscle to an 18-16 stanza and a 41-39 game behind a flurry of three-pointers from eighth-grade forward Kendall Proffitt who also finished with 16 points. Sophomore Ashanti Williams pulled down 11 rebounds for St. Johns.

"I have seen and coached against the Orange Park girls and know what they do," said Miller. "We are small, but this team is very receptive and smart on the court."

Orange Park's schedule gets bigger and stronger with the likes of Buchholz, Gainesville, Oakleaf and Fleming Island slated through the first week of December.

St. Johns, in district 3-2A, got back on the W track with a 45-30 win over Keystone Heights on November 22 with Kent, Proffitt and sophomore Sophia Mejias all scoring 12 points apiece. Proffitt had four threes.

Keystone Heights 0-2, is now coached by first-year coach Sarah Andrews, a former Keystone Heights High player. The Lady Indians lost their opener to Ridgeview 53-10.

Berry, Olson return to Fleming Island soccer sideline

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

FLEMING ISLAND - Fleming Island High girls soccer coaches have an affinity for the monicker of Final Four with outgoing coach Joy Rosano leaving with a couple of Final Four finishes in her short span as Fleming Island girls head coach and incoming coach Taylor Berry bringing four years of Final Four play for Fleming Island.

"We had a good run back then," said Berry, Class of 2014, "We had great players like Audrey Johnson, Abby Austin and Janiece Quick and now, 10 years later, me and my teammate Mikki Olson are returning to coach at Fleming Island."

Berry, who graduated and played soccer at Florida Gulf Coast University in south Florida, wants to bring some fun back to Fleming Island soccer.

"One thing I want to bring into the game is the love of the game," said Berry, who opened her season with a 4-3 loss to Atlantic Coast after losing a 2-0 early lead. "Winning is fun, but in high school, the fun part is the team camaraderie. You play harder if you are having fun because you are looser and love your teammates. It's pretty simple but sometimes fun gets lost in the club soccer scene."

Berry, a left-back defender while at Fleming Island and Florida Gulf Coast, will be joined by Olson, who played at the University of North Florida after her Golden Eagle days.

"We had a good run back then under coach Darryl Ivey, even played in front of goalie Katie Nimitz who went through our entire junior season, I believe, without a goal scored against her," said Berry. "We lost in penalty kicks in the state championship and that was an excruciating feeling that I don't wish on anyone."

After leaving Gulf Coast, Berry found her first coaching stint at New Smyrna Beach High School with a district title finish and region playoff in 2022 off a 12-4 season record.

"I left to get closer to family and friends and here I am," said Berry. "I hope to keep the momentum going that coach Rosano established and give the girls a fun team to play on. Our motto has been "We work hard, we go home."

From last year's region final finish for Fleming Island which included an overtime win over Ponte Vedra in the region semifinal before a 2-1 loss to Gulf Breeze in the region championship, Berry has a handful of key returners on her team with goalie Macie Opp, multi-position athlete Jenna Moreland and forward Taylor Tamares as well as Ryder Gardner, sister to scorer Gianna Gardner who left with 13 goals last year. Tamares finished with 10 scores with Gardner punching in two as a freshman. Added to the lineup is St. Johns Country Day School forward Sophia Pontieri.

For 2023, thus far, Berry has the Golden Eagles with a 1-3 season record with



ClayHigh soccer is undefeated (2-0) behind the eight goals combined between Brooke Bunton, right, Kirra Dodson.



a lone win over rival Buchholz (8-0) with losses to Atlantic Coast (4-3), Toco Creek (2-1) and Bishop Kenny (2-0).

Fleming Island will travel to Bolles and Beachside this week with Ponte Vedra visiting on December 7 and a road game at Clay on December 12.

For the rest of district 3-6A, Nease and Ponte Vedra are both unbeaten; 5-0 and 4-0-1, respectively, with First Coast at 3-1. Oakleaf is 1-2-1, Fletcher at 3-4-0 and Fleming Island at 1-3-0. Nease has 21 goals on the season with Ponte Vedra and First Coast both with 20 and Fletcher at 17. Fleming Island has 12 with Oakleaf scoring just five.

In District 3-5A, Orange Park is running away with the top spot at 4-0-9 with 20 goals and just three scored against the Raider lineup. The Raiders have wins of 4-0 over Crescent City, 7-1 over Suwannee, 3-2 over Middleburg and 6-0 over Bishop Snyder.

In district 2-3A, Columbia and Clay sit atop the lineup unbeaten at 3-0 and 2-0 with Lincoln at 2-1. Ridgeview, Middleburg and Rickards are all at 1-2.

For Clay, with wins of 9-1 over Keystone Heights; seven goals by halftime and 3-2 over Gainesville. Sophomore Brooke Benton leads with five goals with last year's scoring leader, Kirra Dodson, following her with three goals. Dodson finished with 34 goals last year.

Ridgeview has a 4-0 win over Paxon



Former Fleming Island soccer teammates Taylor Berry, left, and Mikki Olson will be leading the Golden Eagles as head coach and assistant coach in 2023.



Left: Former Fleming Island girls head coach Joy Rosano will bring her Final Four talents to Middleburg High in 2023. Above: St John's will look to some new faces in their front attack trying to reestablish State title status. Here, Raygan Roper moves on to goal in match up against Tallahassee Chiles. One of Fleming Island's power hitters is Megan Cobb here blasting a corner kick. One of Middleburg's top defenders will be Riley Toomey, here blasting the ball from Ridgeview player in season opening win. Clay High Kirra Dodson moves against Keystone Heights Parker Collins in early season matchup.



while Middleburg beat Ridgeview in their season opener with a loss to Orange Park and Christ's Church Academy.

Keystone Heights is at 2-2-1 with top scorer Kiersten Shaw hitting six goals to lead the Indians with one against Clay.

St. Johns Country Day School is looking to get back to the W column of the state title game and start maybe another 11-season streak with coach Mike Pickett commenting that he has until January to have his Spartans ready.

St. Johns still plays one of the toughest schedules in Florida and that will toughen up the squad quickly, hopefully led by Syd-

ney Schmidt up front with newcomer Gabby DeSuza and Roxy Matthews in goal. Though Schmidt is one of the best sets of soccer feet around, the Spartans have been 0-0 tied twice, 2-2 with unbeaten Ponte Vedra and have scored just two goals in their 1-1-3 season slate with the loss a 3-1 game to unbeaten 6A Chiles (5-0-1).

The Spartan schedule is a gauntlet for sure with 7A region semifinalist Doral Academy, 5A champion American Heritage, 7A champion Bartram Trail, South Walton, Niceville and Bishop Moore on tap in December.



Orange Park girls basketball will rely on Piera Alexander to lock down opposing top players.

Devils

from page 31

Nacoya Blocton with 22, Nia with 15, Narissa with 14 versus Providence's Janie Boyd's 19, Janai Jordan's 14 and Kennedy Loux's 14. Boyd, a junior, was Providence's lead scorer at about 15-17 points per game as a freshman and has been playing since her eighth grade.

Ridgeview, who beat Providence last year 43-34, won the rebound battle 31-28 with Nia snaring 13 and senior Aniyah Campbell grabbing 10.

At Middleburg, veteran coach Lindsay Burghart opened with a 43-21 win over Baldwin and looks to lean on returners Desiree "Terminator" Hall (4.4 points per game), guard Juliana White (5.5 points per game) and senior bruiser Cheyenne Jenkins (7.2 points per game) to turn a five-win season around without lead scorer Brandy Mann who graduated and took her 11 points per game with her.

Burghart had a bevy of young players last year that got court time and that should translate to some experienced play in 2023.

Ridgeview, 22-8, and Baker County, 17-6, ran away at the top of the district last year, but a feisty Rickards team rolled Baker County 58-8 to get to the district final (lost to Ridgeview 51-44), but earn the region playoff ticket. Ridgeview should definitely be in the mix again, but Middleburg and Clay have some players that could create a stir.

In a season opening clash of two marquis players in the county, St John's Country Days Mary Kate Kent takes on Orange Park's Autumn Nesmith.



Nacoya Blocton is one of three Blocton sisters playing for Ridgeview girls basketball and will be key ball mover for Panther attack.



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FROM WJCT PUBLIC MEDIA, IN ASSOCIATION WITH FSCJ

CLAY COUNTY LEGAL NOTICES

By: Rebecca Crews
Deputy Clerk
Legal 90800 Published 11/9/2023,
11/16/2023, 11/23/2023 and 11/30/2023
in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

**PUBLIC HEARING
NOTICE**

The City of Green Cove Springs proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:
**ORDINANCE NO. O-33-2023
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, MODIFYING WASTEWATER RATES BY AMENDING CITY CODE CHAPTER 90 - UTILITIES, ARTICLE IV - SEWERS AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL, DIVISION 3 - RATES AND CHARGES, SECTION 90-376 ENTITLED "WASTEWATER RATES"; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT, SEVERABILITY, CODIFICATION, AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**
The following public hearing has been scheduled and will be held in the City Council Chambers, 321 Walnut Street, Green Cove Springs, to hear comments, if any, regarding said Ordinance:
City Council: First Reading on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter
City Council: Second & Final Reading on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter
Please be advised that if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at this scheduled public hearing, 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 (904) 284-4849 (TDD).
Said Ordinance is available at City Hall for review during the hours of 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday.

All interested individuals are invited to attend this public hearing.
City of Green Cove Springs
Erin West, City Clerk
321 Walnut Street
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
Steve Kennedy, City Manager
Legal 90257 Published 11/2/2023 and 11/30/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

**PUBLIC HEARING
NOTICE**

The City of Green Cove Springs proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:
**ORDINANCE NO. O-32-2023
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, MODIFYING WATER RATES BY AMENDING CITY CODE CHAPTER 90 UTILITIES, ARTICLE IV - WATER SERVICE, DIVISION 3 - RATES AND CHARGES, SECTION 90-253 ENTITLED "WATER USAGE AND MONTHLY MINIMUM CHARGES"; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, CODIFICATION, AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**
The following public hearing has been scheduled and will be held in the City Council Chambers, 321 Walnut Street, Green Cove Springs, to hear comments, if any, regarding said Ordinance:
City Council: First Reading on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter
City Council: Second & Final Reading on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter
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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 (904) 284-4849 (TDD).
Said Ordinance is available at City Hall for review during the hours of 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday.
All interested individuals are invited to attend this public hearing.
City of Green Cove Springs
Erin West, City Clerk
321 Walnut Street
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
Steve Kennedy, City Manager
Legal 90255 Published 11/2/2023 and 11/30/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC
HEARING**

The Board of County Commissioners of Clay County, Florida, will hold a public hearing Tuesday, December 12, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as can be heard, in the Board of County Commissioners Meeting Room on the Fourth Floor of the Clay County Administration Building, 477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs, Florida, to consider the adoption of an ordinance bearing the following title: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING TABLES 1 AND 2 OF THE CLAY COUNTY FIVE YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**
All interested persons are invited to attend the public hearing and be heard by the Board on matters pertaining to the ordinance. 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 meeting or at any subsequent meeting 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. A copy of the proposed ordinance may be inspected by members of the public at the County Commission Offices, Fourth Floor of the

Clay County Administration Building, 477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs, Florida, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, with the exception of legal holidays.
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).
Board of County Commissioners
Clay County, Florida
Legal 93228 Published 11/30/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

**NOTICE OF
FORECLOSURE SALE**

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 4TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA
CIVIL DIVISION:
CASE NO.: 2023CA001260
PENNYMAC LOAN SERVICES, LLC,
Plaintiff,
vs.
LANCE C. LAHRING; EAGLE LANDING AT OAKLEAF PLANTATION HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF LANCE C. LAHRING; UNKNOWN TENANT IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY,
Defendants.
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to an Order or Final Judgment entered in the above styled cause now pending in said court and as required by Florida Statute 45.031(2), TARA S. GREEN as the Clerk of the Circuit Court shall sell to the highest and best bidder for cash electronically at <https://clay.realforeclose.com/> at 10:00 AM on the 10 day of January, 2024, the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment, to wit:
LOT 55, OF EAGLE LANDING AT OAKLEAF PLANTATION PHASE THREE, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF, RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 50, PAGE 15, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA.
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 2198 CLUB LAKE DR, FLEMING ISLAND, FL 32065
IF YOU ARE A PERSON CLAIMING A RIGHT TO FUNDS REMAINING AFTER THE SALE, YOU MUST FILE A CLAIM WITH THE CLERK NO LATER THAN THE DATE THAT THE CLERK REPORTS THE FUNDS AS UNCLAIMED. IF YOU FAIL TO FILE A CLAIM, YOU WILL NOT BE ENTITLED TO ANY REMAINING FUNDS. AFTER THE FUNDS ARE REPORTED AS UNCLAIMED, ONLY THE OWNER OF RECORD AS OF THE DATE OF THE LIS PENDENS MAY CLAIM THE SURPLUS.
If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in or

der to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator at crtntrp@coj.net or (904) 255-1695 at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.
Dated this 20th day of November, 2023.
TARA S. GREEN
Clerk Of The Circuit Court
By: Gracie Moore
Deputy Clerk
Legal 92717 Published 11/30/2023 and 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

**NOTICE OF ACTION
FOR DISSOLUTION
OF MARRIAGE (NO
CHILD OR FINANCIAL
SUPPORT)**

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 4TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE# 2023DR1516
Division
Allison N. Shurn
Petitioner
and
Mariah N. Shurn
Respondent.
TO: Mariah N. Shurn
1964 Traceland Avenue, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action for dissolution of marriage has been filed against you and that you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on Allison N. Shurn whose address is 1964 Traceland Avenue, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043, on or before January 1, 2024, and file the original with the clerk of this Court at 825 North Orange Ave, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043, before service on Petitioner or immediately thereafter. If you fail to do so, a default may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the petition.
Copies of all court documents in this case, including orders, are available at the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office. You may review these documents upon request.
You must keep the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office notified of your current address. (You may file Designation of Current mailing and E-Mail Address, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.915.) Future papers in this lawsuit will be mailed or e-mailed to the addresses on record at the clerk's office.
WARNING: Rule 12.285, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, requires certain automatic disclosure of documents and information. Failure to comply can result in sanctions, including dismissal or striking of pleadings.

Dated: November 17, 2023
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
By: Jennifer Brosky
Deputy Clerk
Legal 92553 Published 11/23/2023, 11/30/2023, 12/7/2023 and 12/14/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

PUBLIC AUCTION

Extra Space Storage, on behalf of itself or its affiliates, Life Storage or Storage Express, will hold a public auction to sell personal property described below belonging to those individuals listed below at the location indicated:
45 Jefferson Rd, Jacksonville FL, 32225, December 12, 2023 at 1:00pm.
Chonesty Lewis-sofa set, 3 beds, bar stools, dining table/chairs, boxes, 2 deep freezers, bicycles, power wheels
Yvette Pettiford-Household Goods
The auction will be listed and advertised on www.storageexpress.com. Purchases must be made with cash only and paid at the above referenced facility in order to complete the transaction. Extra Space Storage may refuse any bid and may rescind any purchase up until the winning bidder takes possession of the personal property.
Legal 92552 Published 11/23/2023 and 11/30/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

PUBLIC AUCTION

Extra Space Storage, on behalf of itself or its affiliates, Life Storage or Storage Express, will hold a public auction to sell personal property described below belonging to those individuals listed below at the location indicated:
3780 Kori Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32257, on December 12th 2023 at 9:30am.
Santos Rodriguez - Household Goods
The auction will be listed and advertised on www.storageexpress.com. Purchases must be made with cash only and paid at the above referenced facility in order to complete the transaction. Extra Space Storage may refuse any bid and may rescind any purchase up until the winning bidder takes possession of the personal property.
Legal 91833 Published 11/23/2023 and 11/30/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

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