



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023 WWW.CLAYTODAYONLINE.COM VOLUME 61, NO. 49 \$1.00

Landon cooks up some holiday fun - Page 14



Christmas on Walnut

More than 10,000 attended last Saturday's Christmas on Walnut and parade in Green Cove Springs. Sheriff Michelle Cook said the city's preparation made them "the benchmark" for other parades this season. For more, see page 18.

Pedaling hope for the Christmas season

Groups repair discarded bikes for J.P. Hall Children's Charities Christmas Party

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The stacks of bicycles at the old Volunteer Fire Department are not shiny or new. An unsuspecting custodian could make the mistake of throwing them out. But for volunteers in Green Cove Springs, the pile represents a potential for Christmas joy, a present under the tree for a family that could not afford otherwise.

SEE BIKES, 15



Fred Phelps said knowing a child will ride away with a bike at Christmas time, along with the "camaraderie" of working with other volunteers, is why he spends hours every week at the old volunteer fire station in Green Cove Springs.

Volunteers needed for Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign

Alex Lemen celebrates his 10th anniversary as a bell ringer

By Jack Randall
jack@claytodayonline.com

MIDDLEBURG – The Christmas season is accentuated yearly with a euphony of ringing bells along storefronts. Beginning in 1891, the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign has been synonymous with

STAFF PHOTO BY JACK RANDALL

Alex Lemen dances and sings while ringing the bell. As someone on the autism spectrum, he finds tremendous joy in smiling and greeting the passing shoppers.

goodwill during Christmas. "The funds we raise have a direct, positive impact on our community," said Mike and Julie Chamberlain, co-directors for the Salvation Army of Clay County. The funds from the Red Kettle Campaign support the Salvation Army's toy and blanket drives, food pantry distributions, youth programs, utility bill

SEE BELL, 17



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City Council thanks employees, braces for a busy upcoming year

By Jack Randall
jack@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Police Chief E.J. Guzman warmly welcomed two new employees, swore in three new officers and commemorated the promotion of Brett Morando to sergeant at Tuesday's city council meeting. The success of the Christmas on Walnut parade was attributed to the dedication of the city's police department, as well as volunteers led by Mike McNaney and city employees who made the event possible.

"It was a wonderful event. The police department does so much. They have championed this for so long. I thank everyone who was involved," said Vice Mayor Steven Kelley.

"What y'all do each and every single year is incredible. It is incredible how many people come to enjoy our town. It is a testament to our city's staff. Hard work pays off, and it is amazing work," said Councilmember Thomas Smith.

"The parade was epic! It was something special, and everyone is talking about it. Children came up to me and asked, 'Where's the candy?' I responded, 'The Grinch took it!' Well, because handing out candy was a safety issue. We don't want anyone running out in front of the vehi-

cles," said Mayor Connie Butler.

"I was proud to be a citizen of Green Cove Springs. Everything was so well done. Absolutely beautiful," said Councilmember Matt Johnson.

In other news, the city is continuing its progress toward a new stormwater plant. The city council has debated financing options in previous meetings. Still, last Tuesday, upon recommendation of the city's financial advisor and Assistant City Manager Mike Null, a unanimous approval was reached for a 20-year loan with a 5.5% interest rate, with the option to renegotiate after four years.

"The rates aren't awesome," said Kelley as he examined the other options.

The loan with a 5.5% interest rate from Truist Bank was chosen for its flexibility to be renegotiated down the road, especially with the targeted Federal funds rate anticipated to be lower.

"Four years from now, the (interest rate) might not be better, but I doubt it will be worse," said Kelley, which the council agreed with.

The city can't cheer yet for its win in the Pegasus vs. Green Cove Springs court case. The lawsuit was filed last year after the city approved the development of a four-story apartment complex a half mile



STAFF PHOTOS BY JACK RANDALL

Left: Sergeant Brett Morando hugged his son after he received his badge. Right: Stephen Donohue was sworn in as a part-time police officer. His daughter pinned his badge on for the first time. Donohue was a recipient of the Medal for Valor during his tenure serving the New York City Police Department.

from the end of the runway used by Pegasus, an aviation company and tenant at Reynolds Industrial Park. Judge Don Lester ruled in favor of the city.

"Pegasus intends to exhaust its litigating capabilities. I don't presume they'll get another hearing, and after their request for an additional hearing is denied, I presume they'll file an appeal," said City Attorney Jim Arnold.

The vote that required the most deliberation was the motion to authorize leas-

ing the old firehouse at 25 Roderigo Ave. City Council cautiously moved the motion to a vote at the next meeting, with the understanding the space has for years been Richard Knoff's workshop, which refurbishes bicycles for children during the Christmas season.

If approved with a majority vote, the city can lease the building to other organizations. City Council may face pressure next year from competing nonprofits that would benefit from the space.

Orange Park police officers want raises from Town Council

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – Officers with the Orange Park Police Department passionately voiced their concerns about their salaries to the Town Council during Tuesday night's meeting.

Mayor Randy Anderson said he and his colleagues on the council are taking the necessary steps to increase their salaries to retain current officers and dispatchers and attract new hires.

The town lags behind other agencies in surrounding municipalities and counties in Northeast Florida for starting pay, Cpl. Samantha Frehulfer said. She said the \$42,500 base pay is the lowest rate in Clay County.

The Clay County Sheriff's Office recently raised its starting pay to \$51,000 and the Florida Highway Patrol is at \$50,000, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement starts at \$52,000 and agencies in St. Johns County have a base be-

tween \$50,000 and \$53,000, she said.

"We now make \$8,500 less per year in starting pay. What I hope to show you is that we are hurting so much. So much so no one is asking how to get hired here. In fact, most people stop looking (at Orange Park) when hearing the starting salary (compared) to other agencies in the area," Frehulfer said.

Sgt. Joel Grant is a 23-year law enforcement veteran who's worked with the town police department for more than 18 years.

He was initially attracted to the town because it offered among the best salaries and pensions in the area. Now, that's no longer the case, he said.

"For the first time in my career, I am concerned about the future and viability of the agency," Grant said.

He said pay is low, and officers must contribute a higher rate to their pension fund compared to other departments.

"The current working conditions have



STAFF PHOTO BY LEE WARDLAW

An Orange Park Police Department officer told the Town Council the agency earns less than other law enforcement departments in surrounding areas.

suffered at our agency. Morale is the lowest I've ever seen. Officers are (not only) working overtime, but are overworked and

are working off duty to provide the town with the same level of services as if we were fully staffed," Grant said.

Det. Greg Swim has worked in several roles at the department in 10 years. Swim gave a fiery speech about the department's unwavering dedication to serving the town. But he also had a warning.

"We are running short squads just to answer calls for service, and that puts us (and residents) at risk. I've never seen anything like this in my professional career. There must be action, and that's why we're here today," he said.

Seven officers resigned or retired this year, which makes up about 27% of the staff, Swim said. But the problem goes beyond patrol, spreading toward emergency communications officers. The first person to pick up the phone in an emergency, the dispatchers are essential in relaying critical information to officers.

Frehulfer said the staff is currently

SEE RAISE, 14

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News Editor: Jack Randall
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Sports Editor: Randy Lefko

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Florida to consider bill to protect buyers from moving company scams

By Jesse Scheckner
For FloridaPolitics.com

A bill that would create new safeguards for consumers against moving company scams is en route to a second hearing after receiving unanimous approval in its first Senate stop.

The measure aims to hold movers and the businesses that connect them with customers more accountable by increasing documentation requirements and banning them from withholding people's possessions for exorbitant sums.

Members of the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee voted to advance it. The bill has two more stops before heading to a floor vote.



Jesse Scheckner

"This bill is about transparency and accountability and works to broaden protections for consumers," said the bill's sponsor, Palm Harbor Republican Sen. Ed Hooper, who has tried for several Sessions to get it passed.

Hooper said his bill will address a rising trend of predatory practices in the moving industry. It addresses intrastate moves, ones that begin and end within Florida. Movers servicing trips between Florida and other states are subject to federal oversight.

When he carried the bill during the 2022 Session – an effort that stalled out after clearing its first committee – he noted that the Better Business Bureau had received more than 30,000 complaints against moving companies in Florida between 2017 and 2019.

The legislation fared better earlier this year, advancing through two of three committees.

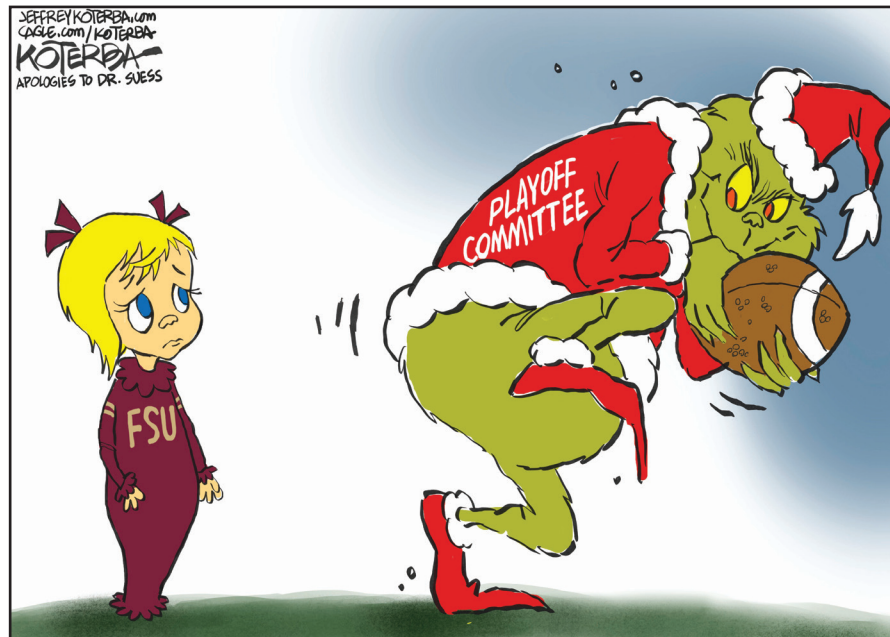
An analysis by Newsweek of complaints filed with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration last year found that more than half the 7,647 cases involved Florida companies.

Last year, the BBB recorded more than 15,000 complaints against movers and moving brokers, which act as intermediaries between movers and customers. Hooper said moving brokers contribute significantly to the state's growing problem.

"Moving brokers do not move furniture. They, for a fee, give an estimate and then sell that to a moving company, and that

SEE SCAMS, 5

OPINIONS



Bet you didn't hear these stories on Sportscenter

By Don Coble
Managing Editor

You see many unusual things when you spend two-thirds of your life in locker rooms and press boxes as a sportswriter. At the time, they seemed insignificant. Now, looking back, I cherish those amusing memories.

In an era before social media, we were bound by truth and trust. I can't help but chuckle at some of these behind-the-scenes moments.

Like the afternoon I drove Shaquille O'Neal home from Orlando Magic practice. We stopped at a small local pizza parlor because the woman there made his meals. As we walked from the parking lot, a young woman saw Shaq. She took a moment before asking, "Aren't you ... Michael Jordan?"

Always playful, Shaq laughed and leaned against the wall, saying, "Well, yes, I am," before striking up a conversation.

Speaking of Jordan, I can never forget Valentine's Day in 1990 when the Chicago Bulls played at Orlando. When Jordan got to his locker, his jersey was gone.

The Bulls saw several fans wearing No. 23 jerseys, and they tried to buy or trade for one, but they were all too



Don Coble



Payne Stewart

small, so Jordan wore the team spare jersey, No. 12. Teams are required to bring a spare in case the original jersey gets ripped during the game.

A security guard was eventually fired for taking the original jersey.

One of my favorite people was Payne Stewart. He played Phil Mickelson in an 18-hole playoff for the 1999 U.S. Open at Pinehurst, and the day started cool and dreary, so Stewart wore a rain jacket. He felt too constrained by it, so he ripped the sleeves off. Stewart won with a 15-foot birdie putt on the final hole.

Speaking of Stewart, he spent years wearing knickers. Fans loved it, but security guards at the Magic Kingdom didn't get the memo.

He won the Walt Disney World Golf Classic in 1983 by two shots. When he got to the media tent, guards wouldn't let him in because they thought he was a caddie. Disney outfitted caddies with

SEE SPORTS, 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.

Niveous: (niv-é-és) a literary adjective that means snowy or resembling a snow-like appearance.

"Last night's cold, misty rain over the field of wild grasses left a coat of sparkling, niveous frost in the morning.

This Week in History

Five years ago, 2018

- The county was engrossed in months of deliberations regarding funding for the Clay Council on Aging (CCA) and its ability to provide senior citizens transportation, which culminated in ElderSource terminating its contract with CCA, opting instead to partner with Aging True from Duval County.

- In a letter to the editor, Al Rizer, former executive director of CCA who was fired nearly two months before, abashed the Board of County Commissioners for insufficient funding of public transportation, which impacted the ability of CCA to provide public services and resulted in the nonprofit losing its contract to ElderSource.

10 years ago, 2013

- In response to the growing popularity of e-cigarette sales, the Town of Orange approved an ordinance that aimed to keep the next-gen products away from minors under 18, the then-legal age to use tobacco products.

- Commissioner Wendell Davis ascended to chairman of the Board of County Commissioners while Commissioner Diane Hutchings assumed the position of vice chairwoman.

20 years ago, 2003

- Clay County Habitat for Humanity held a grand opening for its Re-Store Home Improvement thrift store on Blanding Boulevard. The facility would also serve as the nonprofit's new headquarters.

- The Clay Historical Society presented its "Holiday History Mystery Tour" of 14 historic homes and sites in Green Cove

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.

Sports

from page 4

knickers for the tournament to match Mickey Mouse's golf attire.

One more Stewart story. He was a season ticket holder for the Magic and loved playing pranks on other fans. He'd attach a fishing line to a \$10 bill and toss it on the ground. As someone bent over to pick it up, he'd snatch it back while many in his section laughed uncontrollably. Alcohol may have been involved.

I will never forget his playful attitude and the way he embraced life.

Baseball legend Kirby Puckett was one

of the happiest people I've ever known. When he wasn't on the field, he usually watched professional wrestling in front of a television. He rented a banquet room and a large-screen television once during Spring Training to watch one of the big WWF (now known as WWE) pay-per-view events.

NASCAR has always been known for being creative, and Richard Childress Racing certainly took it to a higher gear.

Twenty years ago, teams learned they gain speed by locking bumpers and pushing each other at tracks like the Daytona International Speedway and Talladega Superspeedway. The only rub was the car doing the push couldn't make sudden moves left or right because it could knock the leading

car out of control.

The crew slathered slippery gel on the rear bumpers, so the driver of a trailing car didn't have to be so precise while pushing. When the team arrived at Daytona, a crewman went to Sam's Club to buy a case of Vagisil. Sometimes, going fast isn't about mechanics.

Long before teams traveled by charter jets, they flew commercial. Magic players put up a dollar at baggage claim, and the player whose bag came out first won the money.

It's a delicate subject, but NASCAR

drivers can't stop if they need to use the restroom. That's right, they go in the car. Clint Bowyer once told me, "There are two types of drivers: ones who go in the car and those who lie about not going in the car."

And sometimes they go in public. Just ask Martin Truex Jr. He was fined \$208 after getting caught relieving himself in a parking garage in Daytona Beach. The Volusia County Beach Patrol apparently didn't hear of Jerry Seinfeld's "Uromystitis."

With that, I got to go. Literally.

Scams

from page 4

company can load your equipment up, take it to your new address and demand whatever they want to demand in money before they offload your belongings," he said.

"This (bill) gives the protection back to the consumer. It says you cannot do that and lays out a series of fixes, allowing the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to act against moving brokers and companies that violate that."

Hooper's bill, if passed, would go into effect July 1. It would:

- Ban moving brokers from giving estimates or providing contracts for services that include estimated costs of a move. They would also have to make clear to customers that as moving brokers, they only arrange such business, and their fees are not included as part of the cost of the actual move.
- Heighten moving broker reporting responsibilities to consumers and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- Require moving brokers to work only with moving companies registered to do business in Florida.
- Require moving brokers to maintain a performance bond or a certificate of deposit of at least \$50,000 in a Florida bank.
- Require movers to provide signed contracts that include the estimated date and service cost to customers before pro-

viding any moving or accessorial work. The contracts must, among other things, provide contact and locational information for their workers and the goods being shipped or stored; an itemized breakdown of all costs and services for the loading, transportation, shipping and storage of a customer's belongings during a household move, including the fees of a moving broker if one is used; and a clearly written and conspicuously placed disclosure of all acceptable forms of payment.

Violators would face up to \$5,000 fines. If a mover refuses to comply with a law enforcement officer's direction to relinquish a customer's household goods after the officer determines the customer paid the agreed-to amount in a written estimate contract, including any amendment to the contract that the customer agreed to by signature, the wrongdoer would be subject to a third-degree felony charge.

Democratic Rep. Allison Tant of Tallahassee has filed a similar measure in the House. It awaits a hearing before the first of three committees to which it was assigned.

Jesse Scheckner has covered South Florida, focusing on Miami-Dade County since 2012. The Hearst Foundation, Society of Professional Journalists, Florida Society of News Editors, Florida MMA Awards and Miami New Times have recognized his work. Email him at Jesse@FloridaPolitics.com and follow him on Twitter @JesseScheckner.

teachers attended a rally at Middleburg High School where the Clay County Education Association members protested the school board's 4.7 percent raise.

40 years ago, 1983

- A proposal made by the Town of Orange Park Charter Review Commission called for rescheduling its 1985 election, as well as electing the mayor by popular vote instead of from within the Council.
- The Florida Highway Patrol investigated a two-vehicle head-on collision in the Ridgewood area. Two of the five passengers were life-flighted by helicopter to Baptist Medical Center in Jacksonville.

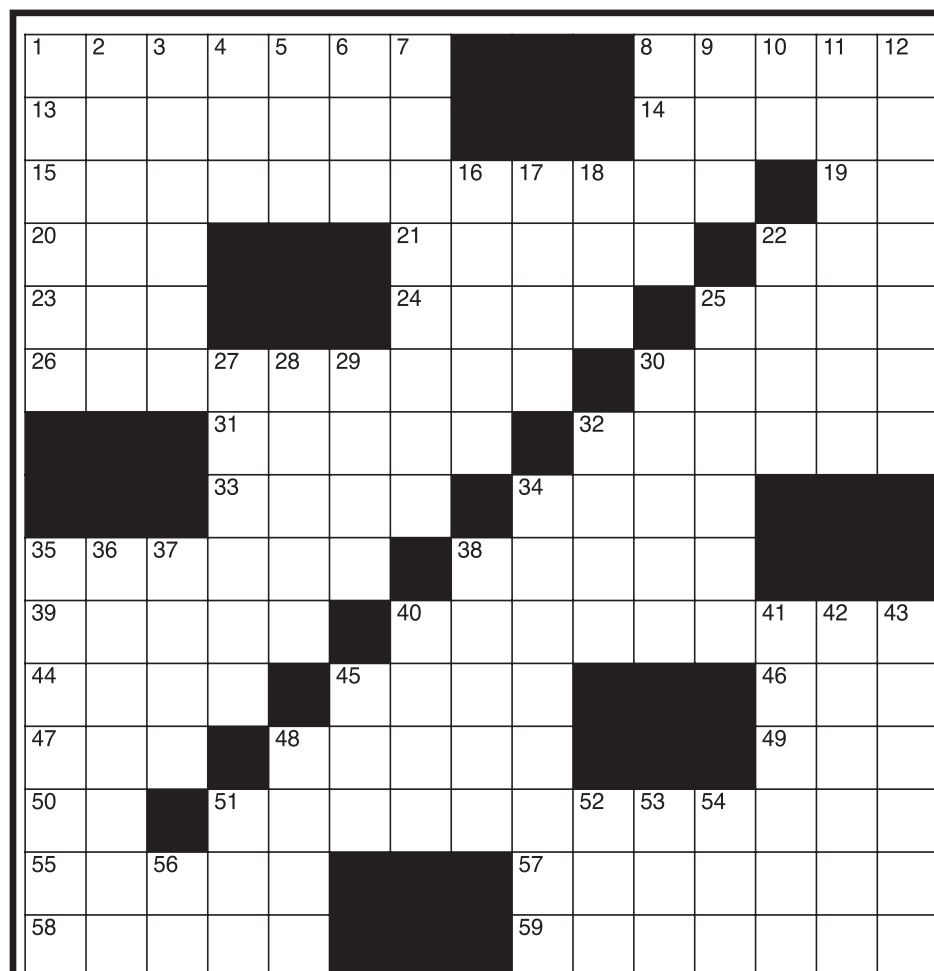
History

from page 4

Springs as part of the annual "Christmas on Walnut Street" event.

30 years ago, 1993

- Clay Co. Sheriff Scott Lancaster held a press conference at FDLE headquarters in Jacksonville where he announced a task force had been set up to investigate the brutal killing of two hunters. He warned hunters to travel in pairs and keep family abreast of their whereabouts.
- About 200 Clay County Public Schools



CLUES ACROSS

1. Happen again
8. Large flightless birds
13. A type of account
14. Beyond what is natural
15. Beloved comfort food
19. Rural delivery
20. Belonging to us
21. Typical
22. Pie ___ mode
23. Returned material authorization (abbr.)
24. Not us
25. Discharge
26. Made empty
30. Fishing net
31. Fast-moving, harmless snake
32. Analyzed into its parts
33. In a way, chilled
34. Hindu queen
35. Circles around the sun
38. Used for emphasis
39. Reactive structures
40. Recommendations
44. Feel intense anger
45. Puke
46. Rural Northern Ireland community
47. Naturally occurring solid material

CLUES DOWN

1. Vital public document
2. Disinter
3. Musical performances
4. After B
5. Every body has one (abbr.)
6. Utilize
7. In a way, disproved
8. Fisherman's tool
9. Of she
10. Trauma center
11. Commercial flyer
12. Administered medicine to calm
16. Popular R&B performer
17. Regretted
18. Leg (slang)
22. Night Train author
25. More supernatural
27. Baltimore ballplayer
28. Shoe parts
29. Scores perfectly
30. More lucid
32. Trim by cutting
34. Disreputable people
35. Dramatic behaviors
36. Disorder
37. Private box in a theater
38. More dried-up
40. Raw
41. In operation
42. Pillager
43. Butterflies with brown wings
45. Disallow
48. Own up
51. Hungarian city
52. A way to condemn
53. Tax collector
54. Lease
56. Not out

County Commission sets its 5-year strategic plan

Vote on five critical categories set for Dec. 12

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The Clay County Board of Commissioners will get the final version of a five-year Strategic Plan from the Northeast Florida Regional Council at its next meeting on Dec. 12. Last week's workshop reviewed goals, targets and actions for five priority categories, including community health and safety, economic and community development, good governance, infrastructure and quality of life.

Commissioners had questions for Assistant County Manager Troy Nagle at a workshop last week, including defining several processes and goals. Nagle said he hopes to tweak the plan for the next commission meeting to meet the project's deadline.

"I truly liked the fact that each of the (items) were brought down to a measurable goal or objective so that we can tell if we're achieving what we set out to do," Commissioner Mike Cella said. "This is truly uncharted territory for the county because we've never had a (five-year strategic plan) before."

Targets include cutting response time for fire rescue by 15%, inspecting all high-risk occupancy buildings, increasing law enforcement staffing to 1.26 deputies for every 1,000 residents, maintaining current law enforcement standards, increasing ac-



1. Health & Safety
2. Economic & Community Development
3. Communication
4. Infrastructure
5. Quality & Balance of Life

cess to Automated External Defibrillators and Narcan to 250 locations, registering 100 private and nonprofit agencies in Care Connect, increasing solid waste processing capacity to 1,500 average tons a day, increasing recycling volume by 10%, increasing the number of participants in PulsePoint by 20% and maintaining 90% live release rates for sheltered animals.

For economic and community development, targets include attracting five new businesses, attracting 20 new tourism



Residents prioritized their long-term vision for the county, including recreation and infrastructure, at public workshops in all six districts.

events, reducing the average permit review time for residential review to seven days and commercial to 30 days, reducing the county's Community Rating system to five, establishing a Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule and encouraging at least one agricultural land owner to participate in the Florida Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services Rural and Family Lands Protection Program.

Among the other targets were increas-

ing overall communication participation through social media, websites and newsletters by 50%, increasing involvement in the county emergency alerting systems by 30%, achieving 100% of procurements more than \$20,000 being sourced through the county's procurement portal for fair bidding, ensuring that 95% of staff receive at least 24 hours of training a year, main-

SEE PLAN, 7



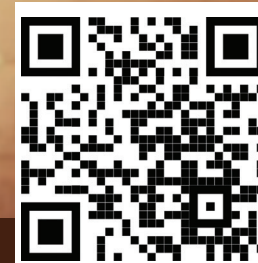
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The county started crafting its five-year Strategic Plan in April and has been conducting public meetings and workshops since. A final version from the Northeast Florida Regional Council was presented to the Board of County Commissioners at a workshop last week, and the board may vote for approval at its Dec. 12 meeting.



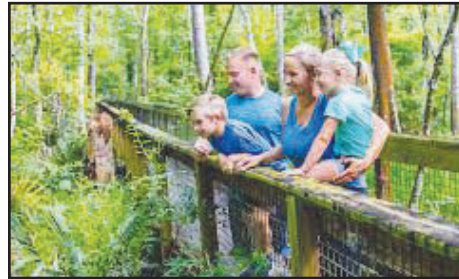
Plan

from page 6

taining an annual 90% retention rate and hosting and facilitating 10 meetings with partner organizations.

For infrastructure, targets included increasing ridership with Jacksonville Transportation Authority by 20%, resurfacing 100 miles of roadways, improving or adding 20 miles of sidewalks and trails, maintaining and improving 10,000 feet of pipes and ditches for stormwater, updating Information Technology infrastructure by not allowing the use of machines that are past one year of intended use and reducing electricity and water consumption by 5%.

For quality and balance of life, there will be an increase of county-hosted programs by 20%, an increase of recreational



access points by three, an increase of recreational space by 10%, and an increase of conservation land by 10%.

Nagle liked the plan because it included a collaboration between several public, private and governmental entities. That included department heads and directors in the county government, county residents of all districts, critical stakeholders like nonprofits and economic development organizations, constitutional offices, includ-

ing the Clerk of Court, Sherriff's Office, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections, School Board and organizations such as the County Utility Authority, Clay Electric, large land owners and developers and municipalities.

Nagle and the commissioners thanked NEFRC CEO Elizabeth Payne and her organization for developing a plan after hosting 30 to 40 meetings.

"It was a pleasure to sit down and listen to the ups and downs of citizens and department and (hear from) the Board of County Commissioners. To be on the same page and really have an aspiration to move forward with your community is inspiring. We're seeing counties grow and change at their own pace, and Clay County is in the posture of exponential growth," Payne said.

Peyton Beattie, Community Resource Development Agent at UF-IFAS, and her staff assisted with discussions to establish a seamless effort between the BCC and NEFRC with note-taking, discussion kits, surveys and data collection.

"All (stakeholders) were invited to share what they thought was important for the county's strategic plan," Beattie said.

"This truly was a partnership among (several) constitutionals and stakeholders," Nagle said.

Commissioners were pleased to welcome several stakeholders to the process.

"Having (several) stakeholders, including residents and business people, is crucial in being successful with the strategic plan," Cella said.



A beautiful lifestyle awaits.

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Obituaries claytodayonline.com

Lt. Col Joseph Francis Platz, Jr.

Lt. Col Joseph Francis Platz, Jr., Ret. US Air Force, widower of Minnie Lee DeWitt Platz, of Green Cove Springs, Florida, entered eternal rest on Saturday, November 25, 2023.



Graveside Funeral Services with Military Honors were held at 1:30 PM on Saturday, December 2, 2023, at Bowman Memorial Cemetery. Visitation was held Saturday from 12:00-1:00 PM at Bryant Funeral Home, St. George.



Joseph Francis Platz Jr.

Joseph was born on May 3, 1937, in Newark, New Jersey, the son of the late Joseph Francis Platz, Sr. and Gladys Schwaner Platz. He graduated from Rutgers University where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Ceramic Engineering and Webster University where he received a master's in business administration. Joe was a career pilot in the US Air Force and served in the Vietnam War.

After retiring from the US Air Force, he was an insurance agent. After his second retirement, Joe spent his time traveling and exploring in his motor home. He was an active member of the VFW Post 1988 and the Fraternal Order of the Eagles in Green Cove Springs, FL.

Joe was predeceased by his parents, Joseph Sr., and Gladys, his wife, Minnie, and grandson, Kyle duPlessis.

Surviving is his son, Kenneth (Tracy) Platz of Colorado, his daughter, Deborah (Shawn) duPlessis of Arizona, his sister, Roberta Keenan of New Jersey, his grandchildren, Chase duPlessis, Simone' duPlessis Aiden duPlessis, Amelia duPlessis and Zachary Platz, and his great-grandchildren, Skyla duPlessis, Jayden duPlessis, and Mason duPlessis.

Marjorie Elizabeth Whitehead Fachko

Marjorie Elizabeth Whitehead Fachko, 80, a long-time resident of Orange Park, peacefully passed away on December 2, 2023. Marge (or "Margie" to many) was born in Starke, Florida, on March 25, 1943, to the late Allen B. Whitehead, Sr., and Leoma (Dobbs) Whitehead. She grew up in Bradford County, surrounded by close-knit generations of loving grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. The home base of her rural childhood remained an important touchstone to her throughout her life.



Marjorie Elizabeth Whitehead Fachko

Marge graduated from high school in Starke in 1960 and – inspired by several aunts who had moved to the big city, she promptly took off for Jacksonville to begin making her way in the world. While working as a young secretary at Florida National Bank, she met her future first husband, George Q. Bishop, Jr. They were married in 1962. Their children, Michael L. Bishop (Shane Thomas), of Atlanta, and Melodie M. Bishop (Brian Morris), of Chicago, survive her, as do her beloved grandchildren, Thomas and Mariella Bishop. Marge was preceded in death by her devoted second husband, Charles F. Fachko, whom she married in 1976, and by her brothers Allen B. "Junior" Whitehead, Jr., Charles E. "Bud" Whitehead, and Larry S. Whitehead. She is also survived by her sister, Charlotte Durrance, and by many loving cousins, nieces and nephews.

Marge was a strong, beautiful and vivacious lady, with a bright and ready smile and a gift for conversation. She never met a stranger. She adored and enjoyed her friends and extended family and she could always be counted on to bring laughter and fun-loving sparkle to any gathering. She was profoundly committed to her Christian faith and that faith guided and sustained her throughout her life. Marge's determi-

nation and resilience were an inspiration to everyone who knew her, and especially to her children. She was for many years an active member of the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville and, later, the First Baptist Church of Orange Park. She was also busy in her community, serving as president of the Orange Park Woman's Club, a member of the Garden Club of Orange Park, and a founding member of the Historical Society of Orange Park.

Details of funeral arrangements can be found at www.jacksonvillememorygardens.com

In lieu of flowers, Marge's family respectfully requests that you please consider honoring her by making a gift to one of her community organizations or a charity of your choice.

Edward John Heise

Edward John Heise 91, of Middleburg, FL passed away Thursday, November 30, 2023. Edward was born in Somerville, Massachusetts to parents Carl and Marion Mansfield Heise. He moved to the Jacksonville and North Florida area in 1951. Edward served in the Navy and then Naval reserves for over 20 years. He also worked Civil service for NADEP Jacksonville for over 30 years. He was a member of the Masonic Order for 59 years as well as many other associations, including being a member of the VFW for 20 plus years. Edward was a man who served his country, community and family with his whole heart.

Edward was preceded in death by his parents, Carl and Marion Heise; brother, Carl Heise; sisters, Elizabeth "Betty" Da-



Edward John Heise

vidson, Helen Razzaboni and Peggy Rhodes and son-in-law, Jack Montpetit.

He is survived by his loving wife, Donna Heise; sons Randall Heise (Barbara), Lyle Heise (Pam); Step-sons, P.J. Seitz (Brenda) and Nevin Seitz (Sharron); daughters, Sara Ellen Heise Beatie (Bill) and Mickey Rawls-Heise Montpetit; Grandchildren, Amy Thomas, Will Beatie, Ryan Seitz, Tiffany Pyle (DJ), Gene Knaggee (Peggy), Brian Knaggee (Amber) and Paige Bogan; Nine (9) great-grandchildren; Five (5) great-great grandchildren and his best friend, Howard Hall and his other Masonic brothers.

A Memorial service will be at 2 p.m. on Friday, December 8, 2023 at the Middleburg Masonic Lodge, 2100 Palmetto Street, Middleburg, FL 32068.

Arrangements are under the care of Russell Haven of Rest Cemetery, Funeral Home and Cremation Center, 2335 Sandridge Road, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. Family and friends may share their condolences at: www.RHRFH.com 904-284-7720.



Jeff Glisson

Jeff Glisson, 75, of Green Cove Springs, FL, passed away December 2, 2023

Please sign the family's online guestbook at www.broadusraines.com

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



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Anthony Reynolds makes heartwarming appearance at fundraiser

Paralyzed Keystone Heights senior embraced by friends at Heritage Park

STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

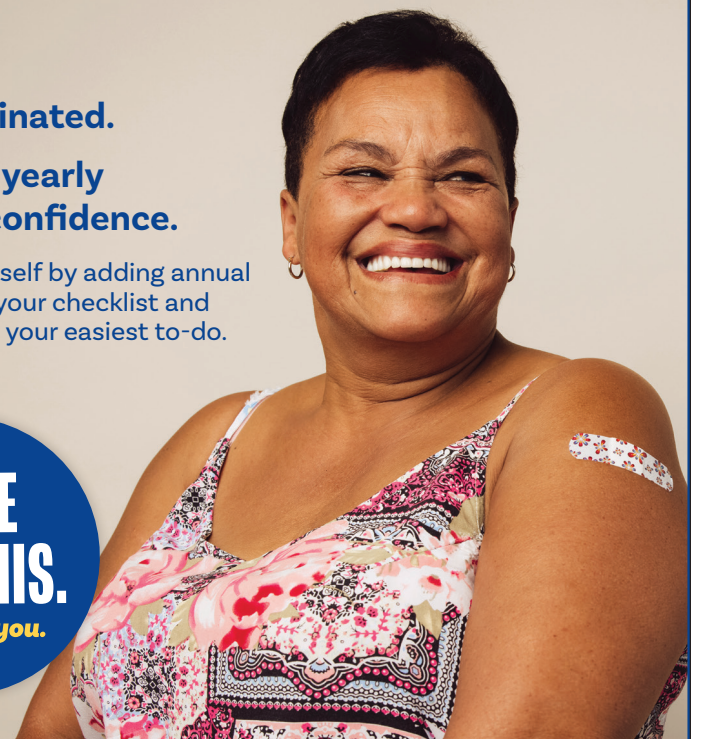
MELROSE – Although 18-year-old Anthony Reynolds, top left, is going through rehabilitation and adjusting to paralysis caused in an Aug. 22 ATV accident near McRae, the Keystone Heights senior appeared at a fundraiser in his honor Saturday at Heritage Park. Friends gathered for music, including a set from Second Chance, and food, raffles and fellowship. But more importantly, they were there to give Reynolds love and support during his struggles. To help, visit Anthony’s Road to Recovery at [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com).



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This project is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)) through USAging as part of a financial assistance award to USAging totaling \$74,999,835 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official view of, nor an endorsement, by USAging, ACL/ HHS or the U.S. Government.

Diversity and healthy Indian dishes on menu at The Turmeric Kitchen



STAFF PHOTOS BY LEE WARDLAW
Turmeric Kitchen owner Chanddeep "C.J." Singh not only serves fine Indian dining but also plans to add a bar, patio and expanded menu in the near future.

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – It was a long time coming, but in the heart of the county seat where transition meets tradition, a restaurant pro-

viding a culinary revolution has opened its doors.

Turmeric Kitchen is offering gourmet Indian dishes with non-GMO oil and hormone-free chicken on a dynamic menu that also includes paleo, vegan and organic choices in a unique atmosphere.

The 18,000-square-foot development is the brainchild of local real estate developer Chanddeep "C.J." Singh. He is seeking to offer a celebration of diversity and health in a culinary journey into the heart of India inside a building designed to replicate a village of the country from times dating back to the Pre-Industrial Revolution era.

"Focusing on health, taste and quality makes us unique," he said.

The interior, wrapped in clay and stucco, is painted in dark red hues to compliment turmeric and aromatic Indian spices. Bamboo, plants, house plants, traditional paintings and additional elements, like a television playing sights and sounds of a flowing tropical creek create the feel of a traditional Indian village.

"We want to create a clean, healthy atmosphere. You'll see that there is a lot of emphasis on (dark red) colors to complement turmeric, which is known to be an anti-inflammatory healing spice," Singh said. "We want to give the feeling of healthy, holy, natural ingredients, and the



What is turmeric?

Native to southern India and Indonesia, turmeric is widely cultivated on the mainland and in the islands of the Indian Ocean. In ancient times it was used as a perfume as well as a spice. The rhizome has a pepperlike aroma and a somewhat bitter warm taste and has a strong staining orange-yellow color.

– britannica.com

textures of the walls of clay give an original, authentic, pre-industrial village feeling, to a time when our food was more nutritious, and not as 'corrupted' as it is now," Singh said.

To add to the effect, a clay oven, matching the county's name and traditionally known as a "tandoor," cooks seven items featured on the menu, with meats like chicken, lamb and salmon served alongside rice and freshly prepared with the day's vegetables.

Less than a month after Singh's restaurant opened, he already envisions an expansion.

In January, he will add a patio and outside bar to serve American continental breakfast and late-night pub food with an Indian twist. The kitchen will be serving side dishes of gyros, hummus and breakfast options to provide ultimate cultural fusion. The flavor bomb and unique atmosphere cater to a diverse audience, making it more than just an Indian restaurant but a cool hangout for residents. The restaurant could be just the beginning.

"We have very high hopes for this location, not just this restaurant, which we are very excited about. The fine dining Indian (experience) on the inside is the first foot forward," he said.

Singh provided a preview.

"We have very high hopes for developing this location to (outfit) multiple benefactors for (cuisine) and (other busi-



Turmeric Kitchen server Wacey Weston delivers a tray of traditional Indian food. The restaurant has been successful, and it is now accepting reservations.

nesses)," Singh said. He said the restaurant will announce plans next year.

It took extra time to complete construction and prepare it for public entry

– all following the businessman's quality standards.

"It's always hard to convert a building or location to your intended use. We did not want to compromise our requirements and vision for where we were going (with this project). That's why it took longer," he said.

Singh's choice of Green Cove Springs stems from increased development in the county's southern end, which he seeks to turn into a "premiere destination food spot." He also said he knows of "no other known location" serving Indian food in the county.

Favorites on the menu have been Chicken Makhani (Butter Chicken), Chicken Tikka Masala and Lamb Karahi, Singh said.

Green Cove Springs resident and military veteran Lloyd McCann stopped to enjoy a cup of tea and pick up a to-go order of a new authentic food option.

While experiencing the nation's cuisine overseas, McCann appreciated the cultural and culinary diversity that reminded him of his international travels.

"It's definitely a new and diverse thing for the community for food and culture," Singh said. "You have to go to Jacksonville to get any 'diversity of food.' I say, 'Let's try it out.' We are blessed to be well received and constantly strive to improve."

Turmeric Kitchen is at 3075 U.S. Highway 17.

Conversation takes off on development, safety at Haller Air Park



STAFF PHOTOS BY LEE WARDLAW

Residents and pilots spoke passionately to Commissioners Jim Renninger and Mike Cella, County Manager Howard Wanamaker and Chief Planner Dodie Selig on zoning regulations related to public and private airports, aircraft and adjacent land uses.

Pilots concerned proposed RV resort would threaten safe takeoffs, landings

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Residents, pilots and officials gathered last week to discuss the county's proposed zoning regulations concerning public and private airports. Led by Commissioners Mike Cella and Jim Renninger, County Manager Howard Wanamaker, and Chief Planner Dodie Selig, the Airport Zoning Regulations Workshop focused on regulations to address the complex concerns of how landowners and pilots can co-exist in the same area.

The central focus of the meeting was the consideration of safe zones during takeoffs and landings. With impending developments near Haller Air Park at Reynolds Industrial Park, the need for comprehensive regulations is becoming increasingly urgent. Clay would be just the 12th county in the state to establish similar zoning guidelines.

The Federal Aviation Administration licenses Haller, but the local government governs it. A 500-plot recreational vehicle resort is being proposed at Haller's end of the runway. Pilots argued a significant portion would be in a flight path and considered a "danger zone." Blueprint plans at the end of the runway could also include "tiny homes."

"The (worry) is the airplanes flying over the top of (the developments), which is what we're trying to solve. The conversation has to determine the rights of the private landowners. Does this allow planes to fly over that property, and what happens to that air space," Cella asked.

The FAA requires a 500-foot "safe zone" at the side of a runway and 1,000 feet at the ends of a runway.

"It's a very complicated process, and I

don't pretend to be some sort of expert on this topic, but that is what's happening," Cella said.

Haller Air Park Manager Don Yoakley said the workshop was necessary to start a meaningful conversation.

"I thought it was a good move. It's the first step to get a proper ordinance to protect the rights of airports and the property owners surrounding them, along with safety for the people," he said.

Yoakley said he was concerned the council may not appreciate the severity of the challenges.

"I wish we could stop the development because I think that (creates) an unsafe situation," he said.

Yoakley said he is now confident a workable solution may be reached.

"I think the forum brought in (a wide range of opinions) of people being affected by this, which should produce a good ordinance that meets most people's expectations," Yoakley said.

Gorden Halbrook said he didn't know what to expect but, like Yoakley, said he's happy the county is getting more involved.

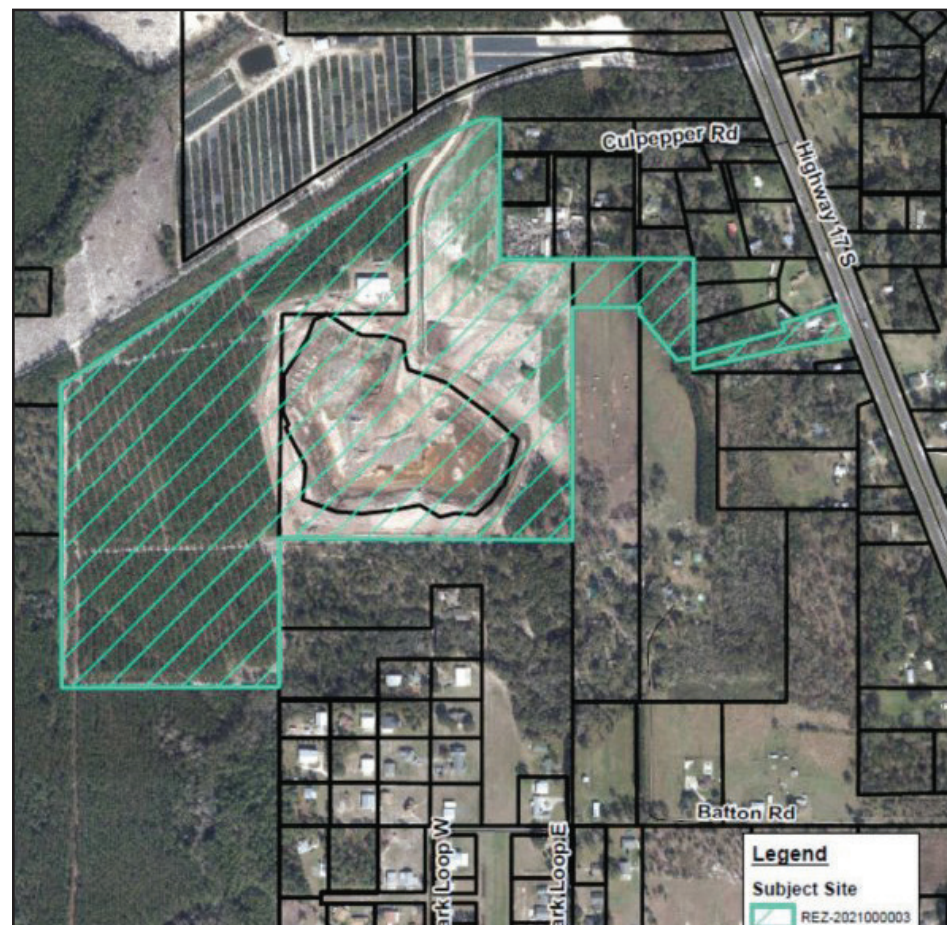
"I think (the government) is trying to help us out and work with us to a degree, as far as they can. I'm sure they have their own agenda, but they are a lot more receptive than I expected. I'm leaving with a lot better attitude than I did when I walked in," he said.

Halbrook said his primary concern was the zones north and south of the runway, which prompted safety concerns for potential off-airport crashes.

"You want to try to mitigate that stuff as much as possible," he said.

Brenna Pedano, a young pilot, said safety was the most critical aspect.

"We're just trying to (make our voices)



heard because we're worried about saving lives," she said. "We don't just want to protect our airport, but also save others."

"We're much closer than we've ever been, and people say that they like the (draft document)," Cella said.

But as the county refines its draft, several questions remain.

"I believe they are trying to address it, and we will see what the next draft looks like," Halbrook said.

Another public hearing will be scheduled to review the updated version of the draft. After working through the Planning Commission, the plan may go before the Board of County Commissioners.

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Clay County readies to fallen soldiers during Wreaths Across America

Five ceremonies planned locally for Dec. 16

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – As the holiday season approaches, the county is preparing to once again participate in a nationwide movement that witnessed more than 2.7 million wreaths being placed throughout thousands of cemeteries last year. Each wreath placed on each gravestone honors the lives of the fallen men and women who served in the military.

Keystone Heights Cemetery, Hardage-Giddens Holly Hill Memorial Park in Middleburg, and Orange Park's Magnolia Cemetery, Jacksonville Memory Gardens and Moosehaven are pledging hundreds of wreaths to join in solidarity with the Wreaths Across America event on Dec. 16.

Tina Bullock, Volunteer Location Coordinator at the Keystone, took over last year after the passing of Lake Region legend Joan Jones, a gentle soul who died at age 95 in October.

Jones married Larry Jones, a Navy officer, and moved to Florida in 1990. She founded the Veterans Memorial Pathway at the cemetery.

"First of all, this is a way to honor our veterans who have been laid to rest. It helps our young people remember that these people have served and given their lives in service to the country," Bullock said.

It is a special time for families of veterans. The program stipulates that a local vol-



Organizer Tina Bullock said Keystone Heights Cemetery will place 568-holiday wreaths on the graves of fallen soldiers. Also, there will be ceremonies at Magnolia Cemetery and Jacksonville Memory Gardens in Orange Park, Moosehaven and Hardage-Giddens Holly Hill Memorial Park in Middleburg. To sponsor a wreath, visit wreathsaacrossamerica.org.

unteer can do the honors if a family member is absent. Often, it's done by a child.

"That young man or young woman (will say) a prayer (for that veteran's) service to the country and their family," she said.

Keystone plans to lay 568 wreaths on gravesites. The ceremony will commemorate members of the military branches – U.S. Air Force, Marines, Navy, Army, Coast



- KEYSTONE HEIGHTS**
7304 State Road 100
Time: Noon
- JACKSONVILLE MEMORY GARDENS**
111 Blanding Blvd.
Time: 11:45 a.m.
- MAGNOLIA CEMETERY**
1040 Kingsley Ave.
Time: Noon
- MOOSEHAVEN**
1701 Park Ave.
Time: Noon
- HARDAGE-GIDDENS HOLLY HILL MEMORIAL PARK**
3601 Old Jennings Rd.
Time: Noon

Guard and Space Force – as well as soldiers still missing or held as prisoners of war. The event will start at noon at 7304 State Road 100.

Opening remarks will be given, local school groups will perform patriotic songs, and Vietnam veterans will be given recognition, along with a keynote address by retired Marine and County Commission Chairman Gayward Hendry. Then, volunteers and family members will disperse the wreaths throughout the cemetery.

"They are beautiful, awesome live wreaths with a red bow," Bullock said.

In Orange Park, an event is planned at the Veterans Memorial at Magnolia Cemetery. Mayor Randy Anderson will be a guest speaker and place the first wreath to honor Joseph Tarr Copeland, a Civil War Union Brigadier General. The event will start at noon at 1040 Kingsley Ave

Volunteers from several groups will place the wreaths, including Boy Scout Troop 25, Girl Scout Troop 31010, the Black Creek Young Marines and other patriotic residents. Volunteer Location Coordinator Sandra DiGiovanni said she doesn't need any more volunteers to place the 175 wreaths.

DiGiovanni, who's lived in Orange Park for 39 years, is also a Town's Cemetery Board member.

"When you realize the significance, and the fact that residents (love) to remind people, 'Hey, we're a military town.' It's a special feeling," DiGiovanni said.

"This ceremony (is special) because it honors the lives veterans lived, (not just) their sacrifice to the country. Just the life they lived while being in the military," she said.

She said the town's support has been overwhelming.

"I started raising money for (this event) in April. I had what I needed by July," she said.

Money kept pouring in, even after the deadline, so her group donated wreaths to Jacksonville Memory Garden in Orange Park.

One of the largest programs in the state will be at Jacksonville Memory Gardens, 111 Blanding Blvd., in Orange Park. The program will start at 11:45 a.m., followed by laying more than 5,000 wreaths.

Another ceremony will be at Moosehaven, led by Vice Mayor Susana Thompson and Councilwoman Winnette Sandlin. They will be joined by Cub Scout Troop 25 and 20 Moosehaven residents. The event will start at noon at 1701 Park Ave.

And at noon, a fifth ceremony will be at Hardage-Giddens Holly Hill Memorial Park, 3601 Old Jennings Road in Middleburg.



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'More blessed to give than receive'

Several groups need help to find their holiday joy

As Christmas time approaches, we count our blessings. Some, however, need help finding their holiday joy. The season opens hearts and, for many, a desire to give. If you want to help others fill their wish lists, consider:

- The Vineyard Transitional Center needs clean and colored T-shirts and socks, bleach, detergent and fabric softener. Items can be left at the Clay County Tax Collector's Office, 477 Houston St. in Green Cove Springs.

- Mercy Support Services is looking for artificial Christmas trees for needy families. The office is at 515 College Dr. in Middleburg. For more information, call (904) 297-4052.

- Salvation Army's Red Kettle and Angel Tree campaigns will collect money for community programs, toys, clothes and gifts for needy children. Children fill out request cards, and those wishlist cards are at the Orange Park Mall Food Court and the Clay County Corps office at 2795 County Road 220 in Middleburg. Call (904) 276-6677 to help.

- Clay County Toys for Tots collection boxes are located throughout the county. The U.S. Marines Corps Reserve needs new, unwrapped toys for 5,000 children whose parents can't afford Christmas



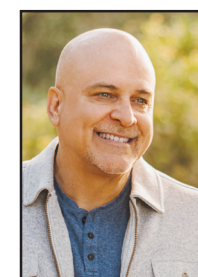
gifts. To find the nearest dropoff location, visit toysfortots.org.

- J.P. Hall Children's Charities Christmas Party collects toys for children 14 and older. They will be divided into gift bags that are gender and age-appropriate and given away in a drive-thru event at the Clay County Fairgrounds on Dec. 16. To find the nearest collection box, call (904) 860-8739.

- The Clay County Sheriff's Office is partnering with local organizations to assist county families with limited means to prepare traditional Christmas dinners. Suggested items include instant rice, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese cups, gravy packets, canned vegetables, dinner rolls, holiday desserts, canned fruit, and cranberry sauce. Remember,



some of these items may go to seniors who have difficulties opening cans and jars. Donations can be dropped off Monday through Friday at the Sheriff's office at 901 N. Orange Ave. in Green Cove Springs and the substation at 1845 Town Center Blvd., Suite 500, on Fleming Island.



Faith Walk

by Pastor Billy Register
True Life Church
Clay County

Best Christmas Ever: A Season of Peace

Christmas, often called the "season of peace," is a time when we come together in a spirit of harmony, tranquility, and the profound peace that transcends societal norms. It is a season that reflects the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, and His message of reconciliation and love.

At the heart of our faith lies the gift of peace, a concept deeply rooted in Christian faith. The birth of Jesus, announced by angels with the proclamation of "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14), ushered in a new era of peace and reconciliation.

Christmas is a time when families come together, mirroring the unity that the birth of Jesus represents. It reflects the unity and fellowship encouraged in the Scriptures, as we find in Romans 12:16, "live in harmony with one another".

God's peace is like a guiding star that leads us out of darkness and into a life of love, grace, and purpose. John 14:27 says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid".

Christmas serves as a reminder to pursue godly peace in our daily lives. The Bible encourages us to "strive for peace with everyone" (Hebrews 12:14) and to "pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up-building" (Romans 14:19). The Christmas season is a time to foster a sense of peace within our hearts and to share it with those around us.

Remember, Christmas is a season of peace, symbolizing the gift of reconciliation and tranquility that Jesus brought into the world. It celebrates the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, and His message of harmony. May this Christmas be a time of profound peace for you and your family, filled with love, goodwill, and a heart full of praise for Jesus, the great Peacemaker.

You can write the Pastor at pastorbilly@findtruelife.com



Christmas decorations shine light to support for boy's recovery

STAFF PHOTO BY DON COBLE

MIDDLEBURG – It took Andrew Nebesnyk a week to set up the Christmas display at his house at 1886 Breckenridge Blvd., and he's been tweaking the massive spectacle for more than another week – all in preparation of Lights for Wyatt on Thursday, Nov. 14. His house and yard are engulfed in lights, and there are moving lights, displays and projections that attract hundreds of passersby every night. The main reason he went to such extremes is to support a teacher at nearby Swimming Pen Elementary, whose 18-month-old son is battling brain cancer. The child's event will be from 6-9 p.m., and it will include photographs with Santa Claus, the Christmas light display, treats, a foam machine, a bounce house and more. While there is no cost, donations will be given to the family, Nebesnyk said. The Light It Up Christmas Display lasts nightly until 10 p.m.

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Oakleaf Village fourth-grader to appear on 'MasterChef Junior: Home For The Holidays'

Brown one of nine finalists to appear on Sunday and Monday on FOX30 at 8 p.m.

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

OAKLEAF – Although just 9 years old, Landon Brown wasn't intimidated by Gordon Ramsay, a celebrity chef with a reputation for his fiery temper.

"Actually, he's pretty nice," he said. "But he will criticize you if you mess up."

Landon should know. He was one of nine contestants picked from more than 12,000 applicants to cook on "MasterChef Junior: Home For The Holidays" this weekend.

The incredible journey started with a lengthy and detailed application. The show's producer interviewed Landon on a Zoom call, and he gave the Oakleaf Village Elementary fourth-grader 30 minutes to cook a meal. Landon prepared blackened salmon with mango salsa and cilantro lime rice. His skills and personality earned him the trip to Hollywood.

"I like cooking pasta dishes and seafood dishes, fancy food fish," he said. "You could put a lot of color and flavor in it. I really like using that stuff."

"I learned cooking from YouTube. I watched a lot of videos and learned from my family. And I love teaching myself sometimes because I can really show creativity and different things."

The trip to Southern California had one important caveat: he couldn't tell anyone. This week, the show said contestants could talk about being on the show but weren't allowed to say how they did. Everyone will have to wait until 8 p.m. on Sunday and Monday to watch the show on FOX30 and find out. The show also will be streamed on Hulu.

"He was in LA for a month," said his father, Alan Brown, a physical education teacher at Oakleaf Village. "That's when they filmed it. So it's been long anticipated. We're definitely excited for it to finally come out on TV."

"Everything was holiday season oriented. We're Jewish, so he did a lot of Jewish dishes. Everybody had their own heritage and cultural types of food."



Landon Brown loves to cook, and he hopes that will lead him to become one of the country's prominent chefs.

Now home, he said his favorite dish to prepare is fettuccine with a creamy pink sauce and shrimp.

Landon hopes the show will be the beginning of a long and successful cooking career. He wants to start by owning a food truck, and from there, he wants to earn Michelin stars at several prominent locations around the country.

"I want to open a food truck and go to festivals and stuff," he said. "Hopefully, I can make enough money and open a restaurant by the time I'm 19. I want to have Michelin-star restaurants in every major city."

Whatever happens, CAMO will be close by. The iguana from the 1997 Beanie Baby line is always with him at the stove. He had a small chef's hat on the stuffed animal during taping, and it often was on his shoulder while he created gourmet dishes.

"This is my sous chef, CAMO," Landon said. "He's a big part of the show. He's always cooking with me. Gordon Ramsay said a lot of funny stuff about CAMO."

MasterChef Junior is open to children between 8 and 13. The judges were Ramsay, his daughter Tilly Ramsay, Daphne Oz and Aaron Sanchez. The young cooks had to prepare seasonal delights with Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Lunar New Year themes.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MASTERCHEF

Gordon Ramsay, his daughter Tilly Ramsay, Daphne Oz and Aaron Sanchez were the MasterChef Junior: Home for the Holidays cooking competition judges. The show, including Oakleaf Village Elementary fourth-grader Landon Brown, featured nine aspiring chefs in a competition. The winner will receive the ultimate holiday gift: a \$25,000 grand prize, a Viking Kitchen-related prize and a one-of-a-kind MasterChef snow globe trophy.



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Raise

from page 2

short by three officers. Other losses could be catastrophic.

"If we do not raise our starting pay to be equatable to surrounding agencies, we will undoubtedly lose more great people. Eventually, we won't have enough officers to cover these streets safely, and we won't be able to (properly) protect the citizens of Orange Park," she said.

Bargaining began 30 days ago. The

council has been able to look at the details twice, Anderson said.

"We know we have the best police department in Clay County. The (town) council, we do hear you, and we are going to take action. We will take care of you," he said.

Jeff Yager, President of the Fraternal Order of Police's Orange Park Lodge No. 144, updated the ongoing negotiations.

"We're waiting for them to respond. We have no idea when they will get back. We trust the process and have a good relationship with the town," he said.

Bikes

from page 1

From a clutter of rusted wheels, metal frames or bent handlebars, there are spare parts that can be repurposed into a safe, perfectly sound bike any child would be thrilled to ride away on.

Seven volunteers from Green Cove Springs and the James Boys from Orange Park Methodist Church have been working tirelessly all year so that any child can take a bicycle home from the J.P. Hall Children's Charities Christmas Party on Dec. 16.

Last year, the two groups delivered 740 bikes to the Clay County Fairgrounds for the toy giveaway. Every child who wanted a bike got one.

The volunteers reached out across the county. Bicycles came from Orange Park and Green Cove Springs police departments, Clay County and Jacksonville sheriff's offices, residents and NAS Jacksonville. Some repairs are as simple as a new tire or brakes. Others are more labor intensive. The ones battered beyond repair are cannibalized for spare parts.

"Why do this? Because it gives children who would not otherwise have a bicycle, a bicycle," Richard Knoff said.

"When you think about it, when you were a kid, what was the best thing you got for Christmas? It was a bicycle, and a lot of these poor families can't afford to buy a kid a new bicycle, especially now. I've done



Boy Scout Dyland Carey lends a hand as the Christmas Party approaches.

this for 35 years, and it's been the same over time."

Fred Phelps helps in Green Cove Springs. He started because he didn't want to sit at home with nothing to do. Through volunteering, he found camaraderie and fulfillment.

"We don't have a name for our group," he said while chuckling. "Maybe we need a name. We should just name it 'Richard' because he gets so involved with everything he falls into. You can hardly say no to that man."

Fixing as many as 400 bikes a year takes a lot of dealing-making. Knoff gets



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

Richard Knoff has been repairing bicycles for needy families for 35 years. He's part of a group of volunteers who turn what many could consider to be junk into working bicycles that will bring joy to a child at Christmas time. Last year, the group from Green Cove Springs and the James Boys from Orange Park Methodist Church combined to provide 740 bicycles to the J.P. Hall Children's Charities Christmas Party.

grants and donations from nonprofit groups, and that money buys new parts. Knoff said that higher-end bicycles are often sold because the money for one bike can buy enough parts to fix five more.

Bikes in unsalvageable condition are sold for scrap metal.

"Every dollar goes back into this," he said.

Both groups will start delivering their bicycles to the fairgrounds on Dec. 14. Newly refurbished bikes in Green Cove Springs are stored at Fox Manufacturing on the second floor of a World War II aircraft hanger. Knoff and Phelps said work will continue until the Christmas party. Every bike that gets refurbished is another opportunity to make a child smile.

"We're going to try and fix up as many of these as we have here," Knoff said while pointing to a menagerie of bikes of all shapes, forms and conditions. "So, we give away all the bikes that we can, starting with the best bikes that we pulled out of all

this mess. And when I say the best bikes, the easiest stuff to fix before Dec. 16."

Phelps said all bikes are mechanically sound when they leave their shop. Most have new or barely used tires. All have reflectors and working gears and brakes. Rust has been removed, and the moving parts will be fully lubricated.

Knoff said the goal is to deliver a bike that will last at least two years.

"The last thing you want is to have it break down because if it does, they probably can't afford to get it fixed," he said.

Anyone who has an unwanted bicycle can drop it off at any Clay County Fire Rescue station.

"Or they can call me," Knoff said. "I'll come get it."

His number is (904) 699-1072. Imagine how, for hundreds of children, the favorite gift they could ever unwrap for Christmas is right now collecting dust in a garage or shed. Richard Knoff and Fred Phelps think about it every day.



Julian Marcy volunteers to refurbish discarded bikes. Once fixed, they will be given away on Dec. 16 at the Clay County Fairgrounds.

Part-Time Custodian Needed

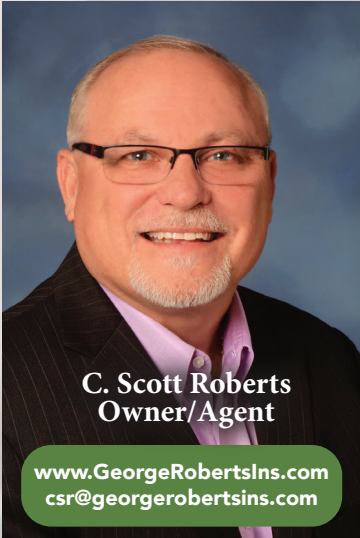
Principal Duties: Daily scheduled duties as required to include vacuuming, sweeping, dusting, mopping, emptying trash and cleaning bathrooms. Other scheduled duties include strip and wax floors and clean ceiling fans and detailed bathroom and kitchen cleaning.

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

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 spotlighteventscenter.com.

- Keystone Heights Festival of Trees will be on display at Keystone Heights Natural Park at 555 S. Lawrence Blvd.

Friday, Dec. 8

- A Country Christmas will be at Elrod Acres, 3679 Thunder Road in Green Cove Springs, from 5-9 p.m. 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.

mas.org.

- The Hometown Holiday in the Park will be at the Clarke House, 1039 Kingsley Ave. in Orange Park. The historic 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 at 5900 U.S. Highway 17 on Fleming Island from 5:30-9:30 p.m., where guests can tour nativity exhibits.

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.

- A Country Christmas will be at Elrod Acres, 3679 Thunder Road in Green Cove Springs, from noon to 9 p.m. 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.

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

- 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



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's what's happening:

All month

- Green Cove Springs Parade of Trees will be at Spring Park through Dec. 31. A record 225 civic, non-profits, 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



STAFF PHOTO BY LEE WARDLAW

Orange Park turns lights on the Christmas holidays

ORANGE PARK – The town held its annual ceremony Christmas tree lighting at Town Hall Park, with a more than an hour ceremony featuring free hot cocoa, cookies, and carols from children. With the flip of a switch, the tree and an array of other fluorescent, holiday-themed lights were turned on in honor of the season. The tree stands tall to the right of the pavilion between two live natural trees on Kingsley Avenue. The Christmas tree and the other lights will remain until the new year.

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.

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.

Kiwanis Club's Christmas Gala will be at 2 p.m. at Faith Presbyterian Church, 2738 State Road 21 in Melrose. The Kiwanis Keystone Community Band and Faith Choir singing Hope by Joel Raney will perform, as well as nativities from around the world and finger foods.

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.



Parade in golf carts kicks off Christmas season at Lake Asbury

STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

LAKE ASBURY – The parade route for last Saturday’s Christmas Parade started at the Community Center, traveled around local streets and circled Lake Asbury and South Lake Asbury. The distance was made easier because participating residents used their golf carts as parade floats. More than 50 carts road along Branscomb and Wesley Roads and then onto Lake Asbury Drive. Santa Claus and The Grinch joined in, as well as the Clay County District Schools Police Department and Clay County Fire Rescue Station 15.



Bell

from page 1

assistance and the Angel Tree program.

“I was once an Angel Tree kid,” said Julie, referring to the program dedicated to making children’s wish lists for Christmas gifts come true.

“I know what it means for families. I know how much it means personally for kids who aren’t expecting anything to receive a gift. My dad was supposed to return home for Christmas, but his orders changed. I was overjoyed to receive a jumbo-sized coloring book and a 64-pack of crayons that Christmas.”

The Chamberlains spent their 19th wedding anniversary ringing the bell at Publix on Fleming Island, where they brought instruments and their ringing bells. Julie plays the baritone and ukelele. Mike plays the cornet, which is like a small trumpet. They enjoy performing “Joy to the World,” “White Christmas” and “As with Gladness Men of Old.”

“It’s in a good key for me,” said Mike.

“For those saying, ‘Oh it’s not for me...’ Just try it. Many of our volunteers felt the same way, and they now enjoy it every year. I’ve heard so many great, life-changing stories from our volunteers. Bring your instruments, bring your pets, come in groups and come with Christmas cheer,” said Julie.

The Salvation Army depends on the fundraiser for the holiday season and for charity and community programs throughout the year. The charity is thankful for its donors: Fields Automotive, Eagle Landing, Penney Farms Retirement Community and

Russell Baptist Church, among many others.

Mike said that the charity is especially thankful for all the bell ringers, who have already donated 3,200 hours. The goal is 10,000 hours for the season.

Alex Lemen is a testament to the positive impact just one bell ringer can have on the community. His mother, Suzi Lemen, drops him off at a Sam’s Club in Argyle Forest. Alex will be out there nearly every day from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. As someone normally nonverbal on the autism spectrum, he finds tremendous joy in smiling and greeting the passing shoppers. He rings his bell, he smiles, he dances and he sings. He’s been doing so every Christmas season for the past 10 years.

“He is the No. 1 bell ringer in the county,” said Suzi. “He’s reliable and hardworking. No matter the weather, he’ll be out there eight to nine hours a day.”

Alex looks forward to the Red Kettle Campaign every year. He enjoys the friendly faces at Sam’s Club.

When asked how he planned to celebrate his 10th anniversary as a bell ringer, “Christmas” was his response. When asked what he enjoys most about volunteering, “10 to 8” was his response – his entire shift from morning to night. When asked if he planned to volunteer again next year, “Yes” was his resounding response.

“He’s happy when the bucket is heavy. Sometimes, there will even be \$10 or \$20 bills. More important is where that money is going. (The Salvation Army) is so valuable to the community,” said Suzi.

The Chamberlains said that pocket change, loose bills and electronic payments totaled about \$100,000 through-



Dinglebells Pickleball tourney raises \$5,700 for Clay High scholarships

PHOTOS BY GREEN COVE SPRINGS ROTARY CLUB

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The Rotary Club’s Dinglebells Pickleball tournament attracted 118 players during the three-day Thomas Hogan Memorial Gym event. But more importantly, the event raised \$5,700 for college scholarships for Clay High seniors. Winners were crowned in the Men’s, Women’s, Mixed Doubles and Doubles divisions.



out the county last year. To sponsor more outreach programs, the goal this season is \$150,000.

“I’ll grab it, and it’s heavy,” Mike said, referring to Alex’s collection kettle. “The store managers will ask me, ‘Is Alex coming back?’ Absolutely. You can bet on it.”

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Christmas comes early to Green Cove Springs

Christmas on Walnut, Parade of Trees attracts record crowd

By Jack Randall
jack@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The Christmas on Walnut Street Parade strutted through town last Saturday to the enjoyment of more than 10,000 onlookers in holly, jolly spirits. Organized by the Green Cove Springs Business League, the parade featured a dazzling display of 75 floats featuring scenes of the Nativity and focused on this year's theme: Christmas Movie Magic. Bands marched along to the beat of the drumline. Children jumped up and down for falling "snow" as floats passed. The end of the procession brought onlookers to Springs Park, where they met food trucks, craft tents and a grove of 225 decorated Christmas trees, as well as the official lighting of the City's Tree. The Parade of Trees will run through Dec. 31. It allows organizations and families to reserve trees – many to commemorate fallen armed service workers and beloved family members who passed away. The parade award winners were First Coast Miata Club for Best Vehicle; Boy Scout Troop 482 for Best Scout Troop; Clay High Blue Devil Brigade for Best Marching Band; Inline Lawn and Fence for Best Float; and TNT Concrete Supply for Best Use of Theme.



STAFF PHOTOS BY JACK RANDALL



PHOTO BY CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS



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Sheriff's office prepared for heavy traffic events Saturday

Agency will have 150 on duty to 'keep Clay County safe'

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – In what promises to be one of the busiest, if not the busiest, days challenging law enforcement, Sheriff Michelle Cook said she's confident her agency is ready to handle the crush of people and traffic expected at more than a dozen events on Saturday, Dec. 9.

Officials admitted they were caught off guard when organizers scheduled five parades, four exhibits, a circus and a play on the same day. Nobody was more surprised – and anxious – than Cook.

So, she called a press conference on Tuesday to assure CCSO was prepared to handle every event.

"Clay County is knee-deep into the holiday spirit and holiday festivities, and we wanted to come to you all today to give you an update on the large number of special events that are going to be happening this Saturday," she said.

"We will have at least 12 major events occurring and over 150 and Clay County Sheriff's Office personnel working. Our goal is to ensure the safety and security of all the attendees. Despite the heightened activity surrounding these events, the CCSO remains committed to maintaining

the safety and security of the entire community."

The busy day starts with a Christmas parade in Penney Farms. What follows will stretch the county's resources.

Additional parades in Keystone Heights, Middleburg, Whitey's Fish Camp and Oakleaf present logistical challenges, but added with holiday exhibits, festivals and Nativity scenes at Elrod Acres and Snitkaw Farms in Green Cove Springs, Clarke House in Orange Park, the festival of Christmas trees in Green Cove Springs and Keystone Heights, Circus Delman at the Orange Park Mall and a performance of "The Nutcracker" at the Thrasher-Horne Center exasperates the need for law enforcement.

Cook said agencies from Fire Rescue, Emergency Management, Green Cove Springs and Orange Park police departments and the sheriff's office have worked together to formulate a plan to cover every event.

"Regular calls for service will be answered promptly, ensuring that essential law enforcement functions continue without interruption," she said.

The county will activate the emergency management office to monitor traffic cameras and the varied radio frequencies.

One of the greatest concerns is the inaugural parade in Oakleaf. Cook said parking on the restricted route would require



STAFF PHOTO BY DON COBLE

From left, Orange Park Police Department Lt. Cody Monroe, Fire Rescue Acting Chief David Motes, Green Cove Springs Police Department Chief E.J. Guzman, Sheriff's Office Lt. Mike Lane, Sheriff Michelle Cook, CCSO Chief of Special Operations Jeff Johnson and CCSO Patrol and Community Affairs Director David Barnes provided details on Tuesday of how law enforcement will handle traffic and public safety with more than a dozen holiday events on Saturday.

portions of Oakleaf Plantation Parkway and Plantation Oaks Boulevard to be closed during the parade. To make sure there is access for emergency and local traffic, access to Cambridge, Coventry, Whitfield and Willowbrook at Oakleaf Plantation and Milestone Village Condominiums will be restricted, Cook said.

The sheriff also said her agency has worked with parade organizers to emphasize safety protocols, like asking people on floats not to throw candy and trinkets to the crowd because younger children may walk into traffic to retrieve the gifts.

Despite being stretched, Cook said she

is confident everyone will have a good – and safe – time.

"We will have plenty of law enforcement resources out there," she said. "We will not tolerate fights or fighting or any sort of violence. That's why we have 150 people working that night. We will keep Clay County safe. We will continue to keep Clay County safe."

"I'm confident that on Dec. 9, after the festivities have ended, there'll be thousands and thousands of very happy little kids and happy people who truly enjoyed themselves at one of these great events."

What GTA VI means for Florida

By Jack Randall
jack@claytodayonline.com

When the trailer for the highly anticipated sequel in the Grand Theft Auto franchise leaked earlier this week, Rockstar Games shrugged their shoulders and responded by posting the official trailer on YouTube, which instantly became the No. 1 trending video on the site.

I had heard rumors that the newest installment would be set in Florida. However, nothing could prepare me for what I was about to witness.

I was mesmerized by the trailer, completely starstruck by the stunning depictions of sandy beaches, tropical coastlines, dazzling neon lights, high-rise skyscrapers, palm trees, pools, supercars and alligators – all to the theme of Tom Petty's "Love Is A Long Road."

The one-and-a-half-minute trailer, which is more of a teaser than anything, is quintessentially Floridian; the comparisons to Miami, the Everglades, and the Keys hit the bullseye. Rockstar Games is acclaimed for its attention to detail, and it truly humbling to witness the state I have called home for more than a decade captured vibrantly in HD graphics as an explorable open world.

Grand Theft Auto, a billion-dollar franchise known for its depiction of violence and explicit adult content, doesn't just pick any setting for its games: New York City (Liberty City), San Francisco (San Andreas), Los Angeles (Los Santos), Las Vegas (Las Venturas) and, once again, Miami (Vice City). However, from the trailer, it is safe to say that the whole state of Florida is "fair game." From anonymously leaked maps, I anticipate gamers will be free to traverse through fictionalized renditions of the Everglades, the Keys, Tampa Bay, Lake Okeechobee, West Palm Beach, Orlando and Disney World.

The game is a huge cultural win for our state. Rockstar's desire to choose Florida, not merely Miami, as the setting for GTA VI is indicative of the state's growing prominence in the United States and on the world stage.

Those unfamiliar with the game's content are going to be offended by the countless depictions of gun violence, sexual content, foul language and presumed glorification of criminal culture – if GTA VI will be anything like its predecessor. By doing so, I am afraid they are going to miss the game's message.

Grand Theft Auto VI will satirize and



PHOTO RETRIEVED FROM ROCKSTAR GAMES

critique many of our state's shortcomings. But it will also celebrate our state's culture, scenery and the numerous quirks we pride ourselves on. In 2025, Florida will be home to millions of gamers worldwide.

As heartbreaking as it is to admit, I couldn't find any leaks that point to the Jacksonville metropolitan area, specifically Clay County, being included in the game. I truly believe that this is a short-sighted de-

velopment. For better or for worse, Duval and Clay counties did not capture the attention of the Grand Theft Auto development team.

Hopefully, North Florida will be included as DLC (downloadable content) in the future. There's a certain red light in Orange Park that I want to run through without any worries about getting a ticket.



SCHOOL NEWS

HAPPENINGS FROM OUR CLAY COUNTY SCHOOLS

DECEMBER 2023

Middleburg High, Wilkinson Junior High to offer AICE, Pre-AICE programs

AICE program now offered in all county district schools

By Jack Randall
jack@claytodayonline.com

MIDDLEBURG – The AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education) program developed by the University of Cambridge in England will be offered at Middleburg High next fall. Completion of the accelerated course load and passing the AICE examinations grants hardworking students an AICE diploma upon graduation, which automatically guarantees the Bright Futures Scholarship.

The AICE diploma is a ticket to higher education as much as it is a testament to dedication in the classroom. Principal Martin Aftuck at Middleburg High is proud of what the implementation of AICE means for his school.

“We already offer dual enrollment (DE) and advanced placement (AP) programs, but now, with AICE, we’re offering another opportunity for prospective students,” he said.

He cited his daughter, who went through the AICE program at Fleming Island High, as evidence of the program’s success. He was thankful for how well she resonated with the program.

The principal is anticipating 90 students from the 9th-grade cohort to enroll next fall. The AICE program is an opportunity for more resources for high school students, such as dedicated learning environ-



Nate Warmouth



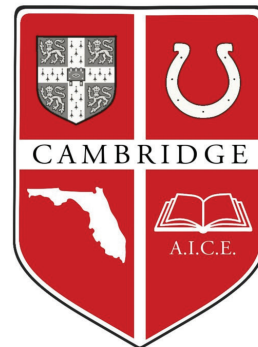
Martin Aftuck

ments. Aftuck is confident in his teachers’ abilities to transition to the AICE classroom and for his students to succeed. He wanted to emphasize that the challenging program would be a fruitful endeavor.

“It’s going to be a great opportunity for students to get some experience at the college level,” he said. “Just because it is AICE, kids will have the opportunity to still be kids. There’s going to be homework, but they won’t be drowning in it. They’ll still have the ability to be involved in the (extracurriculars) they’re interested in.”

Principal Nate Warmouth of Wilkinson Junior High shared Aftuck’s enthusiasm. Warmouth is eagerly anticipating the implementation of Pre-AICE programs at Wilkinson Junior High, the primary feeder school to Middleburg High.

“Clay County does school choice. In the past, we’ve lost members of our student



Middleburg High School

Advanced International Certificate of Education

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body who were zoned for Wilkson that opted instead to pursue opportunities at other district schools,” Warmouth said.

The principal is dedicated to providing the best educational opportunities for his students, and he sees the Pre-AICE program at Wilkinson Junior High in conjunction with AICE at Middleburg High as just one more step forward.

“Wilkinson has climbed academically from bottom three to top three in the county,” he said. “Academically, we are moving the needle. The decisions we make must continue to be made in the student’s best

interests. We want to give each student the opportunity and academic advantage we can.”

He continued.

“This means getting their feet wet in the ‘Cambridge experience,’ getting them acclimated to accelerated learning and setting them up for success in Middleburg High.”

Aftuck invites all incoming, interested 9th-grade students to reach out to him with any questions at martin.aftuck@myo-neclay.net

“Go, Broncos!” Aftuck said.



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Congratulations

CLAY COUNTY SCHOOL-RELATED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR SEMIFINALISTS 2023-2024





Farm City Week at Doctors Inlet Elementary School
The University of Florida Clay County Extension Office helped celebrate Farm-City Week with Doctors Inlet Elementary. Students learned about fresh Florida grown mini cucumbers and did a Florida Veggie Crunch taste test.



Students in for a Reality Check at Keystone Heights Junior High

By **Natalie Gilstrap**
For School News

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 few years," Morford said.

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



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.

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.

Fleming Island leads Clay success at state band competitions

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

Senior tuba player Seth Massey celebrated the success of Fleming Island High's second-place finish last Saturday instead of ruminating about not finishing first.

"We gave 100%, and that's all you can ask for," Massey said. "We were very pleased with our finish. It will make them work twice as hard (in the future)."

Fleming Island earned 87.1 points after being judged for music and visual effects in three categories – ensemble, individual and general effects. Orlando's Timber Creek was awarded 90.85 points. According to Assistant Director of Bands Alexander Buck: "The icing on the cake was the Best Individual Visual Caption award, recognizing the students' exceptional mastery in maneuvering and handling their bodies while marching."

Long-time Band Director Mara Rose said this year's championship ended her career on a high note.

"I am so proud that this group of students got to be my last," she said.

Fleming Island was one of five Clay County schools to finish among the top nine in their classifications. Oakleaf was fourth in Class 5A, while Orange Park was fourth to Pembroke Fines Somerset Academy in 3A; Ridgeview was seventh to Hialeah Gardens in 2A and Middleburg was ninth to Wesley Chapel Wiregrass Ranch in 1A. "We were very satisfied with our show because we did the best we could do," said Chau Tran, drum major for Fleming Island. "I'm proud of our medals. It was really interesting to see the ideas other schools came up with."

The Eagle Band One's season isn't over. After marching in the New Year's Day parade in London to kick off the year and finishing second in the state competition,



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY FLEMING ISLAND HIGH

Fleming Island started working on its routine for the Florida Marching Band Championships months ago, and its "This Human Heart" earned Eagle Band One a runner-up finish the Class 5A competition last Saturday in St. Petersburg. Oakleaf finished fourth in 5A, while Orange Park was fourth in 3A, Ridgeview was seventh in 2A, and Middleburg was ninth in 1A.



Fleming Island will march on to one of the most famous stages in the world. The school will play at Carnegie Hall in New York City in April.



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- ★ Graduation rate is 95% for the District's seven traditional high schools.
- ★ School Resource Officer at every school and increased security measures to keep students and staff safe.
- ★ Named 2022 Academically High Performing School District by the Florida Department of Education.
- ★ CCDS offers 34+ Career and Technical Education programs.
- ★ Ranked 5th Best School District in Florida by Niche in 2023.
- ★ Expanded School Choice options including Montessori and Pre-AICE programs.
- ★ All students have digital access through Chromebooks and Wi-Fi at every school.
- ★ All high schools have accelerated programs.
- ★ Opened 43rd school, Spring Park Elementary in August 2023.
- ★ Fleming Island Elementary recognized as a 2022-2023 Purple Star of Distinction school for supporting our military families.

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Six Clay County school earn Purple Star School of Distinction awards

For School News

CLAY COUNTY – The Purple Star School of Distinction Designation established by the Florida Legislature and signed into law in June 2021, recognizes schools that support the unique needs of military families. This school year, six Clay County schools have now been designated by the Florida Department of Education as a Purple Star School of Distinction. To earn the Florida Purple Star School of Distinction Designation, schools are required to maintain the following:

- A school military point of contact to serve as the central liaison for military families.
 - A school webpage for military students and families that includes resources like academic planning, transition planning and educational opportunities.
 - A student-led transition program to assist military students coming into the school.
 - Staff professional development to identify and respond to the needs of military families.
 - Five percent percent open enrollment seats for military students and families.
 - Three additional activities to support military families such as participating in a service project to connect the school with the military community, hosting an annual military recognition event or offering a JROTC program, among others.
- Last year, Fleming Island Elementary received the honor, and the district announced the distinction for the following



- six schools for this year:
- Discovery Oaks Elementary
 - Doctors Inlet Elementary
 - Oakleaf High
 - Plantation Oaks Elementary
 - Robert M. Paterson Elementary
 - Tynes Elementary
- “Clay County District Schools is committed to being a military-friendly school system and providing military students and families support and I am proud of how our schools serve our military communities,” Superintendent David Broskie said.



STAFF PHOTOS BY JACK RANDALL

R.M.Paterson Elementary faculty, staff and students show their support for veterans and their families.



Paterson Elementary honors veterans during ceremony


By Jack Randall
jack@claytodayonline.com

FLEMING ISLAND – Veterans and their families were honored at the Veterans Day ceremony at R.M. Paterson Elementary on Thursday, Nov. 9. Principal John O’Brian expressed gratitude during opening remarks on a pleasant, sunny morning.


Four students read from their handwritten, heartfelt essays that expressed admiration and appreciation for the country. Veterans of all branches were

in attendance, and each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces was honored with its official marchpast during an Armed Forces Medley. “The Army Goes Rolling Along” was played for the Army; “Anchors Aweigh” for the Navy; “The Marines’ Hymn” and “The Wild Blue Yonder” represented the Air Force, and “Semper Paratus” was played for the Coast Guard. Afterward, a bright orange Coast Guard helicopter circled overhead, with Guardsmen waving to cheering students and their families.

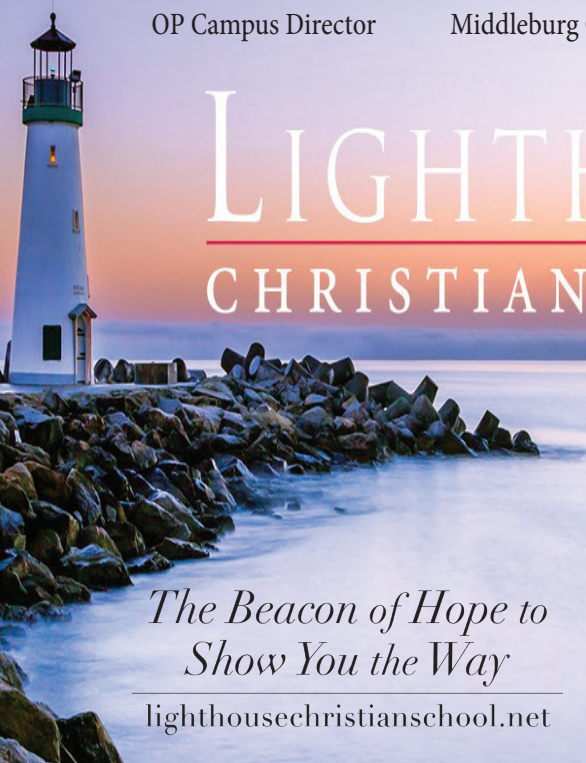




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News4JAX selects Ridgeview's MCPO Sha'Reff Rashad as its Hyundai Hometown Hero

Naval Science Instructor presented with a new car during Wednesday's ceremony

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 attention. 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, 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 included 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



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.

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 com-

munity 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 Tucson 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.

Clay Today Creative Arts Contest

Accepting submissions for fiction, poetry, photography, art

By Jack Randall
jack@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – Are you creative in writing, storytelling or designing? Are you a high school student excited to get a jumpstart in developing a published portfolio? Do you have a big imagination and a deep desire to share your passion with your community?

How about winning \$100 for your creative work?

Clay Today is reaching out to its readership and the county school system to invite students to submit fiction, poetry, photography and digital artwork for the inaugural Clay Today Creative Arts Contest.

Throughout the year, one finalist from each category will be chosen each month on a rolling acceptance basis. The chosen finalists for each month will have their fiction, poetry, photography or digital artwork published on our website and in the monthly print issue of "School News."

From among the twelve finalists for each category, chosen from each month of the year, the readership of Clay Today will vote for the best work of fiction, poetry, photography and digital artwork for 2024. The entry that wins the most votes for each category will be published in "Best of Clay," and the four winners will be gifted a grand prize of \$100 for their contribution and recognition. The four winners will also win a year's subscription to Clay Today.

All students living or enrolled in Clay County are welcome to apply. High school students interested in careers in fine art or publishing are encouraged. The submission guidelines are as follows:

For submissions in each category, submit an accompanying cover letter with a brief bio (name, grade, the school enrolled) or intention to be published anonymously. You are welcome to share briefly what the piece means to you and the journey of its creation. The content of the cover letter will not influence the judging process.

For fiction, following the cover letter, submit a 1000-to-5000-word narrative in a .doc or .docx format. Work will only be considered in Times New Roman, Calibri, or another professional font. The editorial team will look for work demonstrating a creative command of language, captivating characters and alluring themes. Genre fiction is acceptable, but we are looking for exceptional storytelling ability that leaves a unique impression. If a story is meaningful to write, it will be meaningful to read.

For poetry, following the cover letter, submit one to three independent poems, each on a separate page in a .doc or .docx format. Up to three poems can be included, but only one will be chosen. The editorial team is looking for work containing colorful imagery, powerful emotion, purposeful syntax, and a unique perspective or voice.

For photography, following the cover letter, submit a high-resolution image in a .pdf format. The photograph can feature a landscape, portrait, still life, abstract, macro or any other scene. However, it must be captured with a camera and the photograph must be taken in a setting within Clay County.

For digital art, following the cover letter, submit a high-resolution image in a .pdf format. The editorial team is keeping the guidelines open. Digital paintings, digital sketches, and 2D or 3D graphics are all acceptable formats. The artwork must be original. The use of artificial intelligence is not allowed.

There is no prompt for each of the four categories. The only stipulation is that photography must feature a setting in Clay County. Students can send work for each category, but only one submission for each. Any evidence of using artificial intelligence for any step in the creative process will result in immediate disqualification. We welcome interpretations and commentary on mature themes and topics. However, explicit pornographic material will be rejected. Finalists throughout the year will be chosen each month on a rolling acceptance basis.

Send your submissions with your cover letter and work attached to jack@claytodayonline.com

Reach out with any questions. Let your voice be heard. Leave your mark on the world. Best of luck to our contestants!

Judging will begin in January 2024.



COUNTY OF CHAMPIONS

By Randy Lefko
School News

Both Middleburg and Fleming Island highs had astounding sports performances last weekend with the Lady Broncos winning the Class 5A volleyball title in Winter Haven with a dominating 3-0 win over Barron Collier High.

A day later, Fleming Island's boys golf team was winning its first team title and the first golf championship in Clay County history behind the front-running play of sophomore Tyler Mawhinney, who scorched the Mission Inn Resort Golf Course in Howie-in-the-Hills to win the individual state title as well.

Just an hour west, in Ocala, Fleming

Island senior swim freestyle sprinter Maryn McDade was winning her third straight 50 freestyle state title while finally capturing her first 100 freestyle state title.

Also for Fleming Island girls golf, the Lady Golden Eagles bettered last year's 12th place finish with a sixth place behind strong rounds from seniors Cambree Hodge and Kalia Polete.

If that wasn't enough, Fleming Island junior diver Ava Brinkman, the defending 3A champion, finished second in the state championships by a minuscule .95 points.

For the Broncos, first-year volleyball coach Forkum took the reins from iconic coach Carrie Prewitt and her four decades of leading the Lady Broncos – and six Final Fours, two finals, but no titles – to the gold medal ceremony with a strong upfront presence from senior Connor Rahn, a University of Tampa commit, who smashed for 25 scoring strikes in a battle with one of the best hitters in the state.



CORRESPONDENT PHOTO BY NOAH WYATT

Middleburg High setter Olivia Callipo and hitter Connor Rahn embrace in a championship hug after the Lady Broncos beat last year's Class 5A runnerup Barron Collier High, 3-0, to win the Class 5A volleyball championship Thursday in Winter Haven. The title was the first volleyball title for Middleburg.

Rahn-led Broncos win 5A volleyball state title

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

WINTER HAVEN - Everyone kind of figured that the Class 5A title game would feature three of the best hitters in Florida all patrolling above the net creating fireworks and drama, but it was Middleburg High's three-man frontal attack; Connor Rahn

(2nd in 5A, 425 Kills), Brooke Forkum (4th in 5A, 373 Kills) and Camden Rahn (three double-digit kill games in playoffs), that neutralized the threat and gave first-year head coach Meredith Forkum the Class 5A title over Barron Collier High out of Naples Thursday afternoon in Winter Haven.

Barron Collier, last year's runner-up to Jensen Beach, got the better of Jensen

Beach in their semifinal to advance while Middleburg handled a game Merrit Island team, 3-1, to advance.

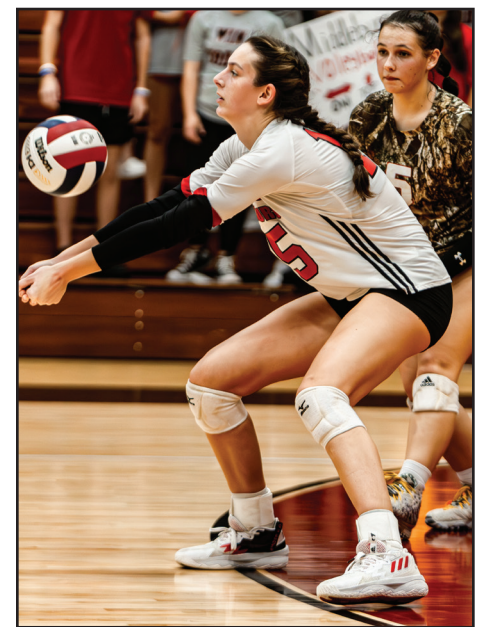
"We were well aware of their girl upfront; senior hitter Aisha Keric (3rd in 5A, 413 Kills), and that she would be formidable," said Bronco first-year head coach Meredith Forkum, who followed a 40-year career of mentor Carrie Prewitt on the Bronco sideline in getting that elusive title despite Prewitt's six trips to the Final Four with two championship runner-up finishes. "Our approach was to play our game, move the ball around quickly and try to defend her the best we could."

With her three-man wrecking crew up front delivering 25, 14 and 10 scoring bolts in the 3-0 win (25-23, 25-17, 25-23) Forkum's strategy proved fateful to Keric's game-leading 27 scoring kills. The difference was Barron Collier's second and third hitters only delivered four and three kills to supplement Keric's efforts.

"The key to our strategy was setter Olivia Callipo who was reading their defense and putting the ball in play to the best hitter in position," said Forkum, with assistants Kory Camp and Tony Valentin. "She had a great game at the net and Kate Lowery had a great game blocking or deterring much of Keric's attack."

Forkum's first season proved magnified by the aura of former coach Carrie Prewitt's contribution to the program's strong history.

"I got lucky with the right group of kids, a good schedule of matchups and a little luck," said Forkum. "Coach Prewitt set the standard but had some bad luck in some of her Final Fours (food poisoning in 2003 finals). I talked to Coach Prewitt and she was overjoyed. She told me she was at peace and happy for the whole team and



CORRESPONDENT PHOTOS BY NOAH WYATT

Middleburg senior Connor Rahn will be a candidate for best player in Florida after her outstanding final season with a state title and a top five hitter in the state finish.

where the program is going."

Forkum gave kudos to the Middleburg softball team that had followed the volleyball team throughout the journey.

"They were like our biggest fans," said Forkum. "Ashley (Houston, softball coach, first team state title for Middleburg) knows the value of a team spirit and her girls were awesome."

Against Merritt Island, won 25-20, 25-17, 16-25 and 25-20, Forkum got some bench inspiration help from sophomore libero Morgan Padgett who noticed the team's face were a little mopey after the

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McDade lands third title, elusive 100

Brinkman; second by 0.95

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

Ocala - Fleming Island High senior swim freestyle specialist and twice the Class 3A 50 free champion Maryn McDade did what she does in her event with a dominating post-season culminating in an astounding third 50 free title, but, more interesting, was her journey to capture the swim double with the elusive 100 free title up for grabs just a few minutes later.

"I had about 15-20 minutes between the finals of the 50 and the 100, just the 100 butterfly between the two finals," said McDade, who recently signed her letter of intent to continue her swimming at Florida State University. "I hit a 22.99 in the prelims and swam almost a perfect race, but my finals were not good."

Not good, but good enough for the gold medal and a third title.

"I missed on my flip turn," said McDade. "I just did not panic and put my head down to get back in the game. There was a lot of pressure for the third title, but not as much direct competition."

McDade's main rival, Ponte Vedra's Penelope Zarczynski, had chosen to compete in the 200 free (Fourth).

"She swam well, but I wished she was next to me because she was my biggest competition," said McDade. "Now the 100, that was a different story."

In the 50 free final, McDade won with a 23.18-second split with Maya Golubovic of Seminole High and a Texas A&M commit, second at 23.31 and Ponte Vedra sophomore Sophie Fox third at 23.44.

"With the 100 just minutes to start, I was dead after the 50," said McDade. "I had to really reach in to get through the 100."

In the 100, there is a little leeway as far as little mistakes along the way said McDade, but her strategy was to take the first 50 super fast and hold on.

"I have to take it out fast or I won't have a chance," said McDade. "I'm serious, that last 25, I could not feel my arms or legs."

In the 100, where McDade was second in district to Nease junior Olivia Moore, McDade had competition on both sides of her for the final 50 with Golubovic and Moore in her peripheral.

"I could see them on both sides and they were right there," said McDade. "My first 50 in the 100 was about a 23 and when I turned, I saw that they were both right there. I just said to myself, 'Put your head down and go.' I normally take a breath every stroke in the 100 which is not optimum, but I had to win that one."

In the 100, McDade won in 50.49 with a 23.98 opening 50 with Golubovic second in 50.64 with an opening 50 in 24.29 and Moore third at 50.93 with a 24.45 opening 50. In the diving competition, where Fleming Island junior Ava Brinkman was the defending 3A champion, the final tally came down to the tuck of a chin as Brinkman finished second by just 0.95 points;



Fleming Island Junior diver Ava Brinkman shows off some spins and moves en route to her silver metal finish at the class 3A swimming and diving championships in Ocala. Brinkman was the defending 3A champion and lost by 0.95 points to earn her silver medal.

483.60-482.65, in one of the tightest diving competitions in Florida history.

"I think it came down to the last dive and me not tucking my chin before my entry," said Brinkman. "By not doing that, it made my entry long and the judges caught it."

Brinkman finished second to Hadley Futch of Winter Springs, a long-time rival, with Sadie Dempz of Viera High third at a distant 442.75. Fleming Island also had freshman Carolina Croce in the diving competition with an 11th-place finish with 329.75 points. Ironically, as a freshman, Brinkman had a record-setting district championship effort and was thought to be a lock for a state title in her first foray, but a season-ending injury did not allow her to compete at that regionals. As a sophomore, she recovered from injury to win the gold medal. Also in the 3A championship meet, Fleming Island distance swimmer Elizabeth Loehse, a sophomore, finished 10th in the 500 free (5:09.89, winner at 4:54.27) and 11th in the 200 free (1:55.85, winner at 1:49.10) with freshman William Shoesmith finishing a strong seventh in the 500 free in 4:45.03 with the winner's time at 4:19.89 (Ethan Ekk, a junior at Chiles). Shoesmith was 12th in the 200 in 1:44.54 with the winner at 1:36.72.

Fleming Island's girl's relays got an eighth in the 200 free relay and

For Oakleaf, senior Peyton Loving was 20th in the 50 free in 25.62 and 14th in the 100 breaststroke in 1:08.43.

For Orange Park, Sebastian Lopez finished 16th in the 100 breast in 1:01.36 and 12th in the 100 free in a very fast 47.79 with the winner at 45.29.

"Class 3A is the fastest class in the state," said Orange Park coach Susan Johnson.



Fleming Island senior freestyle swimmer Maryn McDade shows off her two gold medals; one for the 50 free and one for the 100 free; after the FHSAA class 3A swimming and diving championships in Ocala on Saturday. McDade is now a three-time 50 free state champ and 100 freeway was her first gold medal in that event.

Volleyball

from page 6

third game loss.

"Morgan, who has played lights out the second half of the season, noticed and said something that they were not smiling and having fun out there," said Forkum. "Sometimes the team tends to think too much about the game at hand and the fun of it all gets away from them. She made a pretty good statement about it and the team responded. I just let it happen because I could not have said it better."

After their third game loss, 25-16, Middleburg responded with a 25-20 final game to propel themselves into the final.

Rahn led the attack with 15 kills, but Forkum was equally formidable with 14 kills on her left hand. Camden Rahn added seven. "Merrit Island was the hardest serving team we have ever seen," said Forkum. "We had a little trouble getting the ball to the net, but we figured it out."

Barron Collier, 26-7, got up by as much as 17-13 in game one to put a slight pause in the Bronco enthusiasm, but a double-edged sword of attack from Padgett serves and two blocks from Callipo flipped the momentum to Middleburg and the game got tied at 20-20 before a huge block by Camden Rahn ignited a five-point winning swing to 25-23 with Forkum delivering the final blow.

"They were staying close to us in all three games and we just had to settle down after that game one to get into our game," said Forkum. "We got to a point where we were just tipping the ball and I told them we need to start swinging away."

In the second game, Barron Collier kept pushing Keric to the net, but it was laser-like serves from Kendyl Wahl that backed

up the Barron Collier defense and kept Keric a foot or two away from her spot at the net.

"Kendyl has been our momentum shift most of the season with her serves to control the pace of the game," said Forkum. "Because their girl was six foot tall, she would have had more strikes if she was closer to the net. Kendyl's serves forced them to set up a foot or two off her mark and we had the defense set up waiting for her."

With Middleburg holding a two-point edge most of the game; at least to a 14-14 tie, Connor Rahn took over the domination end of the Bronco attack with a seven scores in 10-point swing from above the net.

"Hey, she's the top hitter out there and she wanted to assert herself," said Forkum. "I think she took the signing for a scholarship the night before (to the University of Tampa) as a big proving point for her game."

Rahn's A-10-like scorching of Barron Collier's defense pushed the game to a 25-17 win.

In game three, Rahn opened with a massive swing to open up the contest then Middleburg shifted to Camden Rahn getting shots on the opposite end of the net to put the Broncos up 14-9 and cause Barron Collier to take a time-out and catch their breath.

"I had to settle them in to finish the game and not look ahead to the celebration," said Forkum. "I don't think they wanted to play a fourth game, but we still had to finish."

Barron Collier got as close as 23-22 and caused some heartburn for Forkum, but the match ended 25-23.

Mawhinney rocks 3A state golf title

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

HOWEY IN THE HILLS - Behind a sizzling first round at the Mission Inn Resort Golf Course, Fleming Island sophomore Tyler Mawhinney had a hole-in-one and an eagle enroute of a first-round 4-under-par 68. He fired an even-par 72 on Saturday to win the individual title by three shots and lead the Golden Eagles to its first team championship.

"I think we are the only Clay County team to ever win a state golf team championship with the Middleburg guy (Cody Carroll) the last individual champion a few years ago," said Fleming Island golf coach Bruce Cloud, noting Mawhinney was seventh last year as a sophomore in a one round championship (73) due to weather. "To say this was a challenging finish of the season is an understatement, but the boys got their heads right and played a great weekend of golf." Along with the Fleming Island boys, the Fleming Island girls golf team improved from 12th last year to sixth behind team champion Lake Mary, the defending 3A champions, with seniors Cambree Hodge and Kalia Polete scoring the top two finishes; Hodge 16th with a 152 total (75, 77), Polete 34th with a 158 total (80, 78). Fleming Island's finish is impressive as top golfer Alyzabeth Morgan (second state finisher last year tied with Hodge at 62nd behind Polete at 46th) missed the entire season with knee injury rehabilitation from an injury suffered at last year's state tournament.

"The girls told themselves that Alyzabeth was not going to be able to join the team this year and I think they took it upon

themselves to practice with a little more diligence to get back to state," said Fleming Island girls golf coach Brian Nedrich. "We



STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

Fleming Island sophomore golfer Tyler Mawhinney scored the top score in the Class 3A golf championship tournament in round one then held his lead to win the individual title as well as lead the Golden Eagles' boys team to a first school and Clay County title.

were two or three putts per girls away from a solid top three finish out there, but that course is very tough."

Kathleen High junior Darby Hancock (7th last year) won with a 141 total ahead of Buchholz' Braydn Smith, last year's runner-up, who finished at 144. Lake Mary totaled 600 to Doral Academy at 653 (5th last year) and Niceville at 655 (2nd last year). Fleming Island, 12th last year,



Fleming Islands boys golf team shows off their Class 3A championship trophy with individual gold medalist Tyler Mawhinney holding trophy.

finished at 666.

"Everyone knew Lake Mary was lights out the best team out there and we were all shooting for second place," said Nedrich.

In the boys tournament run up, Cloud's reference to a challenging finish was that his team nearly did not qualify to even arrive in Howey in the Hills as they finished a disturbing third in their region tournament.

"We finished as undefeated in stroke play for the regular season, a strong district championship tournament, then a disastrous region finish," said Cloud. "We got the at-large bid to come here probably because of our regular season finish and record finish at districts, but talk about stress."

Adding to Cloud's stress level before the tournament event started was a flu attack on golfer Dylan Frein.

"He was just not feeling right and we figured a flu, we pulled him and he was very gracious about it, not being at full strength, and sophomore Carson Moore stepped in and did a nice job," said Cloud. "Dylan did what was best for the team and it may have put the other guys on notice to up their game a bit."

For Mawhinney, who has been the top striker for Cloud for most of the season, round one was about as good a round as a state championship round could get.

"The first nine holes of the Campeon course are very difficult and he opened with four pars and a double bogie," said Cloud. "He stayed calm like he does, made some adjustments then hit three more pars and a birdie to finish just one over (36, par 72 course). From there, he was on fire."

Mawhinney regrouped with his eagle three on a par five 10th hole; 562 yards, a bogie and par, then two birdies; 335 and 524 yard holes, before spinning in a hole in one on a par three 139 yarder.

"I knew what I had to do and my dad; assistant coach Joey Mawhinney, kept telling me to stay calm and play my game," said Mawhinney. "The second nine of the course was a little easier than the first nine. My driver is the key to my end game."

Mawhinney finished with three pars to close at 68 and lead the field with a first nine of 36 and a second nine at 32.

Mawhinney's two main challengers, junior Anthony Monteleone of Winter Haven

(45th last year) and junior Parker Severs of Lakewood Ranch (seventh last year), both second at 143 to Mawhinney's winning 140 total (68, 72), could not keep pace with Mawhinney's total game with Severs rolling through a 33 first nine holes, but going par for a 70 off the final nine holes to finish at 70 (2-under par).

Severs momentarily took the tournament lead over Mawhinney in round two, but went 36 (three bogies) and 37 (two bogies) for a 73 (1-over) final round.

"I was in one of the last groups to go out and all the golfers in front of me were making their moves to catch up," said Mawhinney. "I just wanted to play my game, make pars and let them chase me. I knew the second half was going to be where I could get back in the lead. I had some trouble on four (bogie), but kept playing par and got three birdies to finish."

Monteleone opened with a 34, 36 combo in round one with four bogies and seven birdies to stay within two strokes of Mawhinney, but round two saw Monteleone crumble in the first nine with three bogies and a disastrous double bogie to a 39. Monteleone recovered with three birdies and pars to finish, but Mawhinney stayed focus with two birdies, six pars and one bogie.

"We had a substantial lead in the team scores and I told the team to stay with pars for the win," said Cloud. "We didn't need to risk shots for birdies and we wanted the team title. Tyler was going to do Tyler and finish strong which he did."

Behind Mawhinney, also having astounding rounds of golf to supplement Mawhinney's front running pace were senior Jaylen Abbas at fourth in a tie with a 145 (75, 70) total and junior Emmet Kuhlenkamp in sixth at 146 (74, 72). "All of these guys were talking before the season that they were going to win the state title and do what it takes to get there," said Cloud. "For the whole season, they kind of watched out for each other and got on to each other when the intensity went down. If one of them missed a practice, he got the talk about letting the team down. I was pretty lucky to have a strong team; mentally tough and focused."

The rest of the scoring came from Ryan Houck, a sophomore, with a 152 total and Moore at 160.

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Fire Rescue saves Middleburg man from burning home

For Clay Today

MIDDLEBURG – According to Clay County Fire Rescue, firefighters rescued a man from a burning home this morning. A neighbor heard the smoke alarms and called 911. Within moments of arriving at the home on Oak Point Terrace in Middleburg, firefighters located and removed an elderly man from the heavily involved home.

The man was immediately treated and transported to a local hospital while responding units quickly brought the fire under control. The home is considered a complete loss, and no one else was inside. The State Fire Marshal's Office responded to the scene and is investigating.

The same firefighters were doing routine training in search and rescue only

hours before this call. They were able to quickly utilize that training to locate and remove the man from the burning home within minutes of their arrival.

The agency said it was proud and grateful for the skilled men and women we have at Clay County Fire Rescue, and its thoughts and prayers go to this man and his family.

PHOTO BY CCFR

Clay County Fire Rescue pulled an elderly man from a burning home on Oak Point Terrace on Nov. 30. The home was destroyed. The man was treated at the scene and transported to a local hospital.

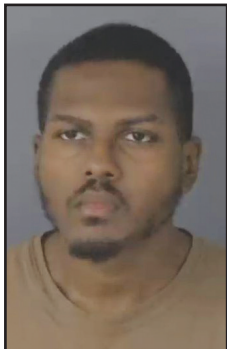


Police Briefs claytodayonline.com

Argument leads to attempted murder charges against sailor

ORANGE PARK – According to the Clay County Sheriff's Office, an arrest was made in the shooting investigation on Nov. 30 on Woodglan Drive.

Bruce Henry Johnson, 25, of Middleburg, was charged with attempted second-degree murder after he argued with a man in Jacksonville. The dispute moved to Orange Park, where another man suffered non-life-threatening gunshot wounds.



Bruce Henry Johnson

The agency said after the two got to Orange Park, Johnson is suspected of firing a gun. Johnson returned to his home in the Orange Park South Subdivision, and CCSO collected evidence that led to his arrest.

According to the arrest report, Johnson is in the U.S. Navy.

His bond was set at \$750,003.

CCSO Deputy arrested for suspicion of DUI while on duty

MIDDLEBURG – According to the Clay County Sheriff's Office, a deputy was arrested on Friday, Dec. 1, on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol.

Deputy Austin Leonard Wisner was involved in a rear-end vehicle collision around 4:15 p.m. at the intersection of County Road 218 and Blanding Boulevard. At the time of the accident, Wisner was on duty and was driving his assigned agency vehicle.

Following the collision, an on-duty CCSO supervisor responded to the scene. The supervisor became concerned about

possible signs of impairment and immediately contacted the Florida Highway Patrol to conduct an impartial investigation. FHP responded to the scene to manage the accident and the DUI investigation.

Following his arrest, Wisner was booked at the Clay County Jail for driving under the influence. Sheriff Michelle Cook said that Deputy Wisner, a seven-year veteran of the Clay County Sheriff's Office, has been terminated.

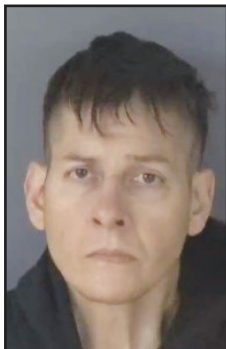
"The Clay County Sheriff's Office holds its personnel to the highest standards, and any violation of the law is taken seriously," Cook said. "We are committed to maintaining the trust of our community, and appropriate action will be taken following the conclusion of the investigation."

Inmate faces additional charges for trafficking methamphetamine

ORANGE PARK – A man already in the Clay County Jail now faces new charges of trafficking more than 14 grams of methamphetamine and selling fentanyl from his home on Aries Drive.

According to the arrest report, Erik Keith Blackburn, 45, of Orange Park, now faces additional charges after a confidential source working with the Clay County Sheriff's Office made a controlled purchase on Oct. 31.

The sheriff's office apparently had Blackburn under surveillance. "Erik Keith Blackburn is believed to be consistently distributing methamphetamine and fentanyl on a weekly basis," was noted in the



Erik Keith Blackburn

arrest report. His bond is \$175,006. His next court appearance will be on Jan. 2.

Man arrested after material taken from construction site

MIDDLEBURG – A man was arrested after an owner of a construction site reported materials were taken from an area on County Road 218 with "Warning: Designated Construction Site. Trespassers will be prosecuted to the full extent



Andres Arado Gonzalez

of the law." When deputies arrived, they found sand and a shovel in trailer of a pickup truck driven by Andres Arado Gonzalez, 41, of Middleburg. He eventually was charged with grand theft and trespassing on a construction site.

The owner of the site said the site had been robbed before, so he wanted to press charges. The case is still being investigated. Arado Gonzalez's bond was set at \$650,009.

Orange Park man gets two years in prison for wire fraud

JACKSONVILLE – U.S. District Judge Harvey E. Schlesinger sentenced Brian Roy Lozito, 54, of Orange Park, to two years

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Police

from page 29

and two months in federal prison for conspiracy to commit wire fraud. As part of his sentence, the court ordered Lozito to pay restitution to the victims he defrauded and also entered an order of forfeiture in the amount of \$164,193.84, the proceeds of the fraud. Lozito had pleaded guilty on July 28, 2023. He was arraigned on the indictment on Jan. 11, 2021, and initially released on bond. The court revoked his bond on Nov. 18, 2022, and subsequently detained him.

According to court documents, Lozito owned and managed American Investigative Services. AIS purported to offer consumers mortgage auditing services in

exchange for a fee. Lozito and his conspirators solicited customers nationwide through mailings and telephone calls. In these solicitations, Lozito and AIS employees, under Lozito's direction, made false and fraudulent representations to consumers, including that AIS would perform "forensic audits" of mortgage documents to uncover evidence of deficiencies in the mortgage documents. Lozito claimed AIS would obtain quitclaim deeds and other remedies so the mortgage holders would be relieved of their mortgage debt and own their properties freely and clearly. If AIS could not help the consumer, Lozito promised to refund their money. In reality, AIS did not perform the services paid for by consumers and did not refund money to consumers. Funds collected from consumers went to bank accounts controlled by

Lozito who then used the funds to keep AIS operating and for personal expenses.

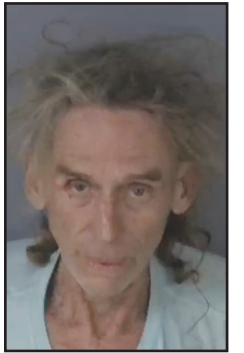
This case was investigated by U.S. Secret Service - Jacksonville Field the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General with valuable assistance from the Clay County Sheriff's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin C. Frein prosecuted it. The asset forfeiture was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Mai Tran and Jennifer M. Harrington.

CCSO arrests a man for being intoxicated while hunting

LAKE ASBURY – According to the Clay County Sheriff's Office, 58-year-old man was arrested on Dec. 3 for being drunk while hunting on private property.

Robert Francis Ayers, of Middleburg,

was charged with using a firearm while intoxicated, possession of a firearm and ammo by a convicted felon and armed trespassing after he emerged from the woods on land owned by the Reinhold Corporation near Shadowlawn Elementary.



Robert Francis Ayers

Ayers complied with the deputy's order to put his rifle on the ground. Deputies smelled a strong odor of alcohol and asked him to submit to a blood alcohol test. It measured at .193 – more than twice the legal limit to drive a vehicle.

His bond is \$77,508.

Arrests & Bookings

(Name, age, location of arrest, charges). Key: FTA-Failure to Appear; DWLSR-Driving Without a License-Suspended or Revoked; DUI-Driving Under the Influence; VOP-Violation of Probation; BAL-blood alcohol level. There are no assumptions or representations about guilt or innocence. Anyone arrested or booked is presumed innocent.

Tuesday, Dec. 5

Tonya J. Brobst, 45, Orange Park, possession-methamphetamine, possession-drug paraphernalia

Santiago O. Espinoza, 21, Orange Park, possession-cocaine, possession-marijuana

George A. Fountain, 60, Green Cove Springs, possession-methamphetamine, possession-drug paraphernalia

Ashley N. Stacy, 35, Green Cove Springs, possession-methamphetamine, possession-fentanyl, possession-Xanax, possession-drug paraphernalia

Brandon A.E. Goodin, 20, Keystone Heights, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, DUI, operating motorcycle without valid license

Krystal G. Sonsoucie, 31, Middleburg, possession-marijuana, possession-controlled substance, possession-drug paraphernalia

Patricia M. Phillips, 34, Fleming Island, child abuse

Ricardo L. Thomas, 44, Green Cove Springs, FTA-battery

Ashley M. Owen, 39, Green Cove Springs, battery in jail

Dejerrick D. Gillum, 19, Green Cove Springs, violation of jail rules

Timothy M. Castle, 52, Middleburg, VOP-battery

Monday, Dec. 4

Christopher A. Minorics, 48, Middleburg, follow/harass/cyberstalking

Timothy R. Kearnes, 31, Middleburg, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Angela B. Sawyer, 52, Green Cove Springs, FTA-petit theft

Saaverda Solanly-Paipa, 36, Middleburg, driving without valid license

Ronald Holloway, 58, Middleburg, shoplifting

Justin D. Ray, 37, Green Cove Springs, VOP-stalking

Tammy L. Taylor, 52, Green Cove Springs, VOP-DUI, VOP-refusal to submit to BAL test with DWLSR, VOP-hit and run with property damage/injury

Courtney N. Gallagher, 40, Middleburg, possession-drug paraphernalia, DUI, failure to register vehicle, DWLSR

Wayne A. Brown, 41, Orange Park, domestic battery

Nickol O. Crawford, 45, Green Cove Springs, aggravated battery with deadly weapon

Sunday, Dec. 3

Rolundus D. Rice, 25, Orange Park, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia

Abigail H. Battleson, 18, Oakleaf, domestic battery

Quashay L. Frazier, 19, Orange Park, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, under age possession alcohol beverage

Robert F. Ayers, 58, Green Cove Springs, use of firearm while under influence of alcohol, possession-ammo/firearm by convicted felon, armed trespassing

Harouna Anne, 50, Green Cove Springs, DWLSR

Andres A. Gonzalez, 41, Middleburg, grand theft from construction site, trespassing on construction site

Jordan T.V. Wingerden, 21, Fleming Island, batter, tampering in proceeding

Shanese M.L. Boutard, 30, Orange Park, FTA-DWLSR

Renasia T. Lewis, 40, Oakleaf, DUI

Saturday, Dec. 2

Omar A. Giraldo, 39, Middleburg, possession-cocaine, possession-drug paraphernalia

Sharon D. Graves, 54, Middleburg, FTA-petit theft

Dasean J. Johnson, 39, Fleming Island, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, trespassing

Silvana Merritt, 35, Orange Park, shoplifting

Justin K. Fussell, 38, Orange Park, trespassing

Tammy S. Scott, 58, Green Cove Springs, FTA

Anthony B. Musgrove, 39, Middleburg, possession-drug paraphernalia, trafficking-amphetamine/methamphetamine

Julio V. Blanco, 69, Middleburg, DUI with property damage/injury, DUI with BAL .15 or greater

Mary E. Johnson, 48, Middleburg, possession-methocarbamol PIS, possession-fentanyl, possession-drug paraphernalia

Gary A. Brock, 37, Green Cove Springs, VOP-community control

Ryan D. Daly, 39, Middleburg, possession-methamphetamine, possession-drug paraphernalia, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Jayson D.Q. Ocasio, 32, Orange Park, DUI, DWLSR

David L. Hanson, 21, Middleburg, DUI, DWLSR

Jared A. Lee, 25, Fleming Island, DUI with BAL .15 or greater, DUI with passenger younger than 18

Austin L. Wiser, Middleburg, DUI, DUI with property damage

Dec. 1

Ira M. Weltzbarker, 39, Orange Park, disorderly intoxication

Harlin B. Mosley, 20, Orange Park, shoplifting

James L. Dunker, 41, Green Cove Springs, DUI with BAL .15 or higher, DUI with property damage/injuries

Kristi L. Milam, 26, Middleburg, grand theft auto, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

William F. Kutch, 21, Middleburg, grand theft auto, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement

Ashley M. Owen, 39, Orange Park, shop-

lifting, trespassing

Travis S. Turner, 35, Middleburg, domestic battery

Mary C. Ekelund, 58, Maxville, domestic battery of person 65 or older

Bruce H. Johnson, 25, Orange Park, attempted second-degree murder

Victor J. Hall, 3, Middleburg, domestic battery

Nov. 30

Luis E. Vizcarrondo-Fargas El, 54, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Yesica H. Jimenez, 21, Middleburg, DWLSR

Rasheed N. Najim, 21, Green Cove Springs, violation of jail rules

Angel L. Coakley, 40, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic violence

Erik K. Blackburg, 45, Orange Park, selling-fentanyl, trafficking-methamphetamine

Alexander M. Replogle, 25, Jacksonville, VOP-grand theft auto

Christopher S. Fitch, 39, Orange Park, VOP-community control

Nov. 29

Armando Rodriguez, 31, Middleburg, driving without valid license

James L. Taylor, 33, Fleming Island, violation of injunction for protection against domestic violence

Crystal G. Henderson, 42, Green Cove Springs, possession-ammo/firearm by convicted felon

Ya'Lik J. Shealey, 26, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR, FTA-failure to register vehicle

Elijah C. Zawacky, 23, Green Cove Springs, FTA-battery

Charles L. Griffith, 24, Green Cove Springs, violation of jail rules

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New and returning Rising Stars join Rockin' For Stockins' jam session

Popular Christmas program continues to give children a musical option

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – As soon as the band CBD, which stands for Could Be Different, played their last note during the second Rockin' For Stockins,' Duval County Line's Travis Bryan joined the four band members for a bow like no other.

They leaped over the railing to the open grassy area in front of the stage, a drop of nearly five feet.

Since the musicians were young current or recent graduates of Keystone Heights High, they effortlessly bounced to their feet and were quickly embraced by family and fans who loved their songs and energy.

Paul Wane stood beside the stage. His eyes squinted, and he shook his head. The set was more than a young band creating their unique sound; the performance validated Wane and his wife, Lisa, and their commitment to fostering music for the county's youth.

"It's so much better to see them play music than watching them playing (with a video game remote)," Wane said. "To see what this has become is unbelievable."

Austin "AJ" James got his first guitar a year ago. Now 14, he tore through guitar riffs like a veteran with a lifetime of stage presence. In addition to playing several original songs, AJ and fellow guitarist Henry Carter tore through a spotless 10-minute "Free Bird" guitar solo. Along with bass player Matthew Hallowell and drummer Luke Parsons, CBD is finding its footing.

"We played at the Howlin' Moon once and at Matt's apartment," AJ said. "This is our biggest event yet. That was incredible."

Hallowell played drums in the Indians' march band. He picked up the bass three months ago but didn't miss a lick at the second-annual fundraiser for Wane's Rising Star: Guitars for Kids program.



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE, LEESA TILLMAN
CBD, which stands for Could Be Different, was formed in Keystone Heights after two of the band members got their first instruments from The Rising Star: Guitars for Kids program. In addition to hearing music sets from returning stars, founders Paul and Lisa Wane gave away more instruments to future stars, including a Keith Urban-signed guitar to a 13-year-old girl at Sunday's Rockin' For Stockins'.



The daylong festival at Boogerville Hideout provided children a safe haven to play, receive Christmas gifts and instruments and eat, including a game of tag by host Paul Wane. CBD members (from left) drummer Luke Parsons, guitarists and singers Austin "AJ" James and Henry Carter and bassist Matthew Hallowell get photobombed by Rockin' For Stockins' organizer Paul Wane after the band from Keystone Heights finished their set Sunday.

Wane has donated nearly 300 instruments. He wants children and teens to get off their computers and cellphones to find a creative outlet for their energy. And like all of his events, he used Rockin' For Stockins' to gift more instruments to unsuspecting youngsters.

Keystone Heights' Jared Goetzman got a guitar and amplifier, while Leigha Crowe, 13, of Raiford, was shocked to receive a special guitar from Wane.

Wane called Leigha to the stage between bands.

"I asked her, 'So, what kind of guitar do you want? She said a regular one.' That means you want a country western guitar," he said. Wane reached into a cloth carry bag for an acoustic guitar.

"Have you heard of Keith Urban?" he asked. "This is one of his guitars. Look, it's signed by him."

Then Wane gave her the same welcome

others have heard for years:

"Remember what I said: There's only two ears on the planet like yours, and they're attached to your head. Don't let anyone tell you you're not playing it right. They don't hear what you hear. You play your song, all right?"

"You are a Rising Star. Welcome to the family."

Bags of toys, gifts and instruments were distributed to 150 children. There were games, food, face-painting, bounce houses and music. Wane also played tag with some children before some younger children got bicycles.

But it was, and always will be, about the music.

"We gave them a guitar and a platform to showcase their talents," Wane said. "They did the rest. Hopefully, their dreams will come true like mine have."



*Celebrate
Clay
History*

The Big Chill

By Archives Supervisor Vishi Garig, a Service of Tara S. Green, Clay County Clerk of Court and Comptroller's Office

One of the most infamous series of winter weather events in 19th Century Clay County was the freezes of 1894 and 1895. They were devastating to our county's economy as one of the prime attractions to our area at that time was the belief that citrus could be grown here. Orange Park was named after this hope, as were other Florida towns such as Mandarin, Orange Mills, Fruit Cove, and Satsuma.

Northerners, wanting to enjoy the warmth of Florida as tourists and as yeoman farmers, bought up lots all over the county with dreams of thriving citrus trees and high returns on the dollar. "Orange fever" gripped the land as groves large and small were planted all over Florida, including here in Clay County. The citrus tree, perennially green and ornamental, still graces many yards here.

The Christmas season of 1894 was warm, but it was not to last. Oranges and other citrus fruit dangled ripe from the trees. A howling cold front and deep freeze then descended over Clay County and the surrounding areas. The temperature was recorded as 16 degrees in Jacksonville. Fruit dropped, ruined, onto the ground. The trees lost their leaves, but they were not dead. It got warm again for 6 weeks, and the trees sprouted new growth. Growers breathed a sigh of relief, looking forward to next year's crop.

February 1895 brought weather that, like icicles into the grower's hearts, dashed those hopes. This time, the freeze was a killer. Sap froze, and the tender regrowth was burned by the cold. The freeze lasted for up to 30 hours in some areas. The trunks of the trees split open as the frozen sap expanded, and the trees were killed to



Frozen citrus grove, Clay County, 1894.



the ground. It was so cold that even peach trees were killed. This extreme freeze affected fruit trees all the way to Palm Beach. This wiped out the majority of further attempts at growing oranges in North Florida. Afterward, Florida growers only produced a mere 100,000 boxes of fruit a year, which was down from a high of six million boxes annually before. Land value plummeted in growing areas from \$1,000 per acre to as little as \$10 per acre.

Here in Clay County, farmers turned

their groves into fields for other crops like potatoes and melons. Further south, below the frost line, groves were replanted. Today, they again produce millions of boxes of citrus a year. One town further south, boasting of its ability to dodge a freeze, was even renamed Frostproof.

The hard freezes likely also influenced tourists to use the new railroads to travel further south, forsaking the Green Cove Springs hotels. The hotel era rapidly declined here as railroads took tourists be-

yond Clay County to Flagler's jewels of hotels in St. Augustine, Miami, and Tampa. His railroad led to Palm Beach, which is still a wealthy snowbird hot spot.

Devastating as the 1894 and 1895 freezes were, they were not the first time Clay County and North Florida experienced devastating cold. There were freezes in the past that were much worse and freezes to come that were just as bad.

The earliest officially recorded freeze was January 2, 1766, during the time of British rule. British indigo plantations graced the shores of Doctor's Lake and Black Creek. The temperature sank to 26 degrees, and it snowed. Inhabitants called it "white rain." Indigo, grown year-round, was a tender plant, and those crops were devastated, causing a major economic loss. John Bartram, the botanist wrote that "it was a fatal night that destroyed the lime, citron, and banana trees...the morning of the 3rd was clear and cold...the ground was frozen an inch thick on the banks of the river."

The Spaniards called the freeze a "judgment on the place for having become the property of heretics," as they had not experienced anything like that freeze in their homeland.

There was also a snowstorm in 1744 and additional freezes in 1799 and 1828. Clay County, Florida, set its snowfall record 106 years ago. On Dec 30, 1917, the county received 0.1 inches of snow over 24 hours.

The mother of all freezes came February 7-8, 1835. It was a mere 7 degrees above zero. The St. Johns River froze from its banks to several rods out into the water. That freeze killed the trees that the Spanish planted during the Second Spanish Period. There were more freezes to come (a doozy in 1886), but for the next sixty years or so, citrus was planted again, and all was well—until the freezes of 1894 and 1895.

TODAY'S Sports

Clay Today | December 7, 2023 | claytodayonline.com

District 4-2A Wrestling Fleming Island's depth top challenge for the opposition

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

FLEMING ISLAND - A quick trip to Camden County High School with some of his "young pups" gave Fleming Island High wrestling coach P.J. Cobbert a quick look at how his new faces on the mat will fare up against the tough competition that the Golden Eagles traditional schedule up. Camden County is an eight-time big school Georgia state champion.

"Our depth is going to make us a question mark when we show up to tournaments in anticipation of the January, February breakout," said Cobbert. "Coaches can scout us, but our lineup will be different every time we go somewhere. Our room is that deep."

One of Fleming Island's main chas-



Clay High's Jacob Bucci, in white, battles upside down with Fleming Island's Matthew Newman in 2023 action. Both Bucci and Newman will be key athletes for their respective teams as area grapplers ramp up their seasons.

ers for 2024 will be 10 miles away in Jim Reape at Clay High his 31 years of coaching expertise as he has a handful of state qualifiers and state placers from last year that will fortify his lineup and that recently placed third at the rugged Border Wars XI in south Walton with Jacob Bucci, at 120, winning an individual title and four Blue

Devils getting to the tournament finals; Rylan Herrera at 132 (lost to Jesuit state sixth placer), Landon Martin at 157 (lost to Holy Cross 152 state runner-up), William Kelley at 215 and Jaden Bell at 285 (lost to Jesuit state champion). Clay scored 273 team points

SEE WRESTLING, 41



PHOTO COURTESY OF FURMAN ATHLETICS

Former Fleming Island High linebacker Alex Maier, now a linebacker for Furman University, snatched a fourth quarter interception for the Paladins in their FCS national playoff tournament win over Chattanooga. Maier's interception led to a field goal. See story on page 34.



Fleming Island High boys golf team coach Bruce Cloud holds up his Class 3A trophy with his team behind him including sophomore Tyler Mawhinney. Mawhinney, the Class 3A individual champion, and Cloud were named Dairy Farmer golf player of the year and coach of the year.



Cloud, Mawhinney get Dairy Farmer best golf

For Clay Today

GAINESVILLE – Sophomore Tyler Mawhinney of Fleming Island and junior Mi Li of The First Academy have been named the 2023 Florida Dairy Farmers Mr. Golf and Miss Golf in a vote of the state's district golf chairmen.


Florida Atlantic High coach Cherene Castillo and Fleming Island coach Bruce Cloud were named girls' and boys' Golf Coaches-of-the-Year after leading their teams to state championships.

Cloud was named Boys' Coach-of-the-


Year after leading his Fleming Island squad to its first state title, winning the Class 3A state championship by 17 strokes over Lakewood Ranch with a 7-over-par score of 583. Mickey Leapley of Ponte Vedra (2A) who led his school to its seventh straight team title and Toby Harbeck of The Benjamin School (1A), which won its first state title since 2009, were named Coaches-of-the-Year in the other boys' classifications.

Mawhinney, with a hole in one on his first round, led his team to the Class 3A team title with a 4-under par score of 140.

SEE FARMER, 42


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Huff returns; Furman in playoff quarterfinals

Courtesy of Furman Athletics

GREENVILLE, S.C. -- Furman University running back Dominic Roberto scored two touchdowns and Furman rode its stout defense to a 26-7 win over Chattanooga in FCS second round playoff action Saturday afternoon at Paladin Stadium.

"I told the guys before the game that whichever team ran the ball best would probably win," said Furman coach Clay Hendrix. "Having Tyler (Huff) back after missing him for a month made a difference. He might be a little sore tomorrow."

The victory advances No. 7 Furman (10-2) into the playoff quarterfinal round to face No. 2 Montana (11-1), a 49-19 winner against Delaware. Montana's lone loss was September 23, a 28-14 loss to Northern Arizona (5-6).

Furman's advancing to the quarterfinals will mark the Paladins' first quarterfinal round playoff appearance since 2005 and ninth overall appearance in the playoff final eight. The game will be televised on ESPN2 at 9 p.m. on Fri., Dec. 8.

On the defensive side, former Fleming Island linebacker Alex Maier intercepted a Chattanooga pass in the fourth quarter with a 12 yard return to the UTC seven yard line that set up a 20 yard field goal for the final score of the contest. Maier was also in on three tackles.

Roberto's one-yard touchdown plunge early in the second quarter tied the game

at 7-7, and his two-yard scoring run following a 29-yard Travis Blackshear third quarter interception return to the UTC 2 gave Furman a 17-7 advantage.

Chattanooga (8-5), which grabbed a 7-0 lead with an 11-play, 81-yard drive on its first possession of the game, struggled against Furman's defense the rest of the way, finishing the contest with only 200 total yards.

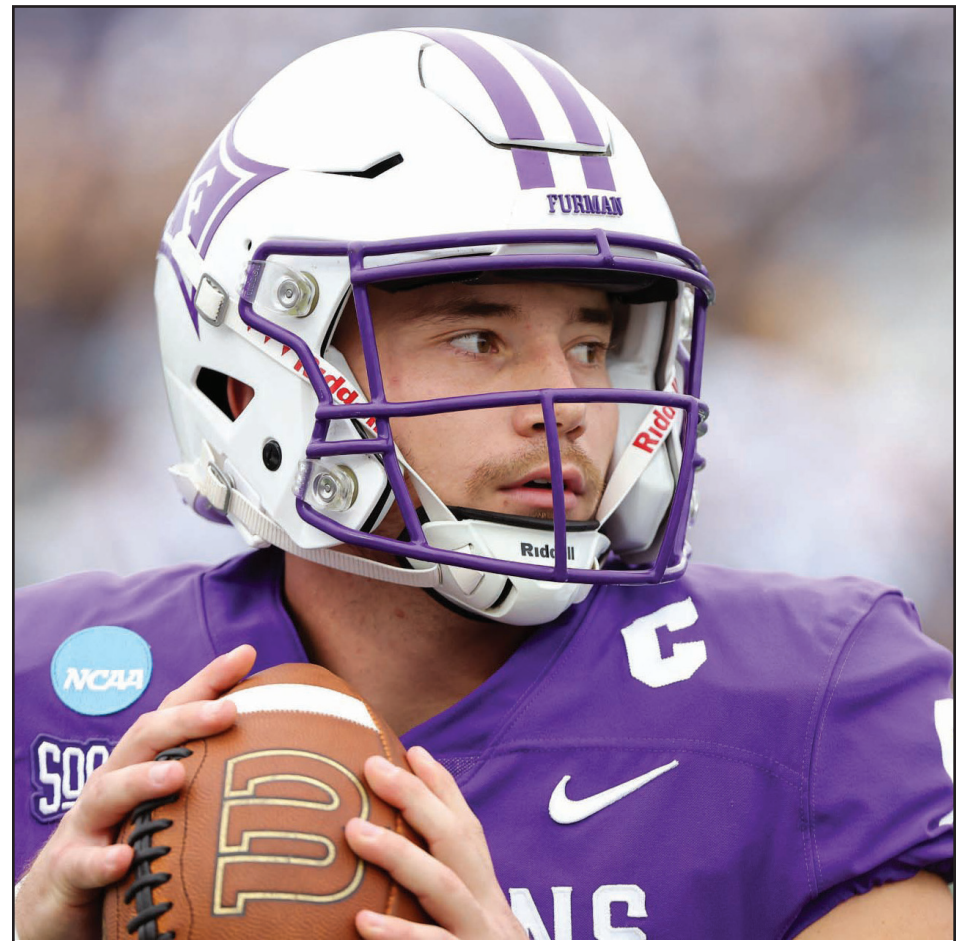
The Paladins registered 12 of their 26 points on four Ian Williams field goals covering 44, 31, 37, and 20 yards.

Furman quarterback Tyler Huff, a Ridgeview High graduate, who sustained a shoulder injury in the second quarter of the Paladins' 17-14 road win over Chattanooga on Nov. 4 and missed Furman's final two regular season games, returned to action to complete 18-of-29 passes for 192 yards, while also rushing seven times for 32 yards. Huff was intercepted on his first series, but regrouped and engineered the Furman run game.

"Bad decision, bad throw, but the guys rallied around me, told me they would get it back," said Huff. "We are into the quarterfinals. We're excited."

Furman improved to 19-3 overall, 18-1 versus the FCS, and 14-0 against Southern Conference foes in games started by Huff, the league's offensive player of the year.

Furman's balanced, 383-yard attack featured 191 rushing yards and 192 yards through the air. Grant Robinson, seeing his



Furman graduate quarterback Tyler Huff returned from a two week hiatus for an injury to lead the Paladins to a 26-7 FCS playoff win over Chattanooga. Furman will travel to play Montana on Friday in the FCS quarterfinals. The game will be televised at 9 p.m. EST on ESPN2.

first action since suffering an injury versus South Carolina on Sept. 9, ran 13 times for 62 yards, and Roberto, who sat out the regular season finale versus Wofford, added 51 yards on 15 carries.

The Paladins took the lead for good just before the end of the first half, covering 44 yards in eight plays to set up Williams' first

field goal of the contest, from 44 yards with 25 seconds to go for a 10-7 advantage.

Blackshear's fourth interception of the season — and 12th of his career — on a pass by UTC quarterback Luke Schomburg set up Roberto's second score of the contest and 29th rushing tally of his career.

McDade wins Class 3A swimmer of the year

GAINESVILLE – With a third consecutive 50 freestyle state title in Class 3A and a bonus gold medal in the 100 free in 2023, Fleming Island High senior swimmer Maryn McDade has been named the Class 3A swimmer of the year by Florida Dairy Farmers High School Sports Awards program.

McDade, a recent commit to Florida State University, has been dominant in the 50 free and a top-three finisher in the 100 free for the past three years with her final season getting the 100 free gold.

Junior Kaii Winkler of South Florida HEAT and senior Gracie Weyant of Sarasota Riverview High School have been named the 2023 Florida Dairy Farmers Mr. and Miss Swimming following voting by a state-wide panel of prep swim coaches.

In addition, Andrew Eckhart of Sarasota High School and Peter Verhoef of The

Bolles School have been named the state boys' and girls' swimming coaches of the year.

Winkler, who was named the 2022 Mr. Swimming, and was earlier named the 2023 Class 1A Boys' Swimmer of the Year, won the 200-yard freestyle in a state record time of 1:32.68, breaking his mark of 1:34.18 set last year. The time also broke the national high school record of 1:32.85 set by Aaron Shackell of Carmel, Ind. last February. Winkler also won the 100-yard butterfly title with an All-American qualifying time of 46.33. He has committed to North Carolina State University.

The other swimmers of the year in each class included Ryan Erisman of Windermere (4A), Logan Robinson of Pensacola Washington (3A), and Brody Singley of West Nassau (2A).

Weyant, who repeated as the Class



4A Girls' Swimmer-of-the-Year, won her fourth straight state title in the 100-yard breaststroke (1:02.41) and added her third straight 200 Individual Medley title (1:58.64), with both her winning times earning automatic All-America status. She has committed to the University of Florida.

The other class winners included Maryn McDade of Fleming Island (3A), Brooke Beede of the Academy of Holy Names (2A),

and Erika Pelaez of South Florida HEAT (Class 1A).

Eckhart won the top boys' coaching honor by leading his Sarasota squad to its fourth straight Class 4A state title with 289 points.

Verhoef won the top girls' coaching honor after winning his fifth straight Class 1A title, and the program's 36th consecutive state championship, with 628 points.



CORRESPONDENT PHOTOS BY RAY DIMONDA

Clay High point guard Teaghan Moses has been top scorer for Lady Blue Devils looking to improve on a 3-20 first season under coach Doug Deters.

Clay doubleheader:

Hoop win two!

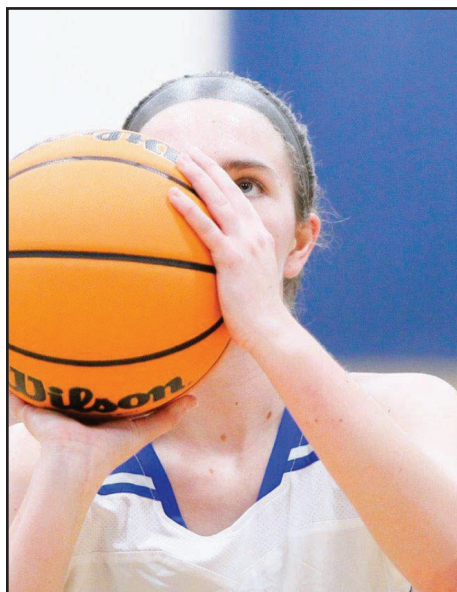
First quarter surge fuels Clay girls win

By Ray Dimonda
Correspondent

GREEN COVE SPRINGS - The Clay High girls basketball squad, led by 10 points apiece from Teaghan Moses and Aiyana Haynes, used an exciting first quarter run putting up eight unanswered points, while keeping a defensive blanket in place to pull ahead of the visiting Baldwin Indians and never looking back, keeping the foot on the accelerator for a 45-21 win Friday night. The win hands the Indians their fourth consecutive loss as the Lady Blue Devils move to 3-2 on the early winter season.

"As far as this season goes, we've already matched our win total from a year ago," said an elated Doug Deters, Lady Blue Devils Head Coach. "Our goal is to be the most improved team in Clay County. I thought we took a lot of good steps tonight to get to 3-2 that will help us with the next few games we have. We are starting to hit our stride with a lot of home games and a lot of winnable games to bring that total up as far as we can."

The "Stride" Deters referred to was a balance of 10 or more points in each quar-



Clay guard Teaghan Moses keeps her eye on the ball for a free throw.

ter along with some outstanding defensive play which held the Indians to a total seven points in the entire second half.

After Baldwin mistakes pushed the Blue Devil lead out to 17-11, Moses went to the corner to put up a three-pointer which lit her team on fire. The Lady Blue Devils would put up five more points going into the halftime break with a 25-14 score and a mountain of momentum.

"Our offensive key to the game was to drive hard to the basket and get them to foul us," said Teaghan Moses on her effort on the win. Moses drew three fouls on the evening earning four of her 10 points from the line.

The third and fourth quarters were defensive clinics.

Julia Weaver was a beast inside the paint coming down with the rebounds to set up Moses and Haynes on their drives. "Watching our fouls, staying up, making sure we weren't too aggressive were the keys to our defense," said Weaver. "They are always going to push, and we have to push back. You just have to make sure you are clean about it."



Clay High forward Aiyana Haynes leaps to shoot jumper in win over Baldwin.

Clay knocks down 11-point gap for thrilling victory

By Ray Dimonda
Correspondent

GREEN COVE SPRINGS - The Clay High boys basketball team spotted The First Academy Royals a five minute second quarter break as the Blue Devils went on a scoring drought which allowed the Royals to build a seemingly insurmountable 11-point lead into the third period.

"Honestly at that point, I was probably the calmest I was all night," said Clay Head Coach Jared Moses, who pulled out a thrilling 40-37 fourth quarter comeback win. "I told them at the time out, we still have time, we are still in this. They were getting opportunities. Missing the point-blank ones, I just couldn't help them. I told them just stay the course, it will go down. You just have to believe."

With 2:24 to play in the game, the Blue Devils pulled it within two points with Alexander Brown going to the line for two free throws.

"All I remember was my Mom just told me turn it on," said Brown. "That's all they told me was turn it on. That's all they told me."

Sinking both and tying the game 37-37, it was a heavy defensive stand and some favor from Lady Luck as the Royals had no less than five foul shots to try and gain points and missed on all the attempts in the last two minutes. Clay's Xavier Longmire was fouled twice hitting three of four attempts from the line to get Clay a 40-37 lead which held on for the final 5.7 seconds for the dramatic Friday night win.

"Hey- the pressure is just on me," said Longmire. "I got the pressure of my team, my family, it was all on me. Coach told me just bend your knees and I just threw it up."

With a final throw-in by the Royals with the score at 40-37, Clay was called for a foul as the Royals threw up from outside the three-point line. All three foul shot attempts bounced out to keep the win.



Clay guard D.J. Swilley fights for loose ball against The First Academy.



CORRESPONDENT PHOTOS BY RAY DIMONDA

Clay High guard Xavier Longmire fights to get jumper off against First Academy defenders.



Clay center Merrick Rapoza rises for jumper in the paint.

Four scorers in double figures in Raiders' win over Knights

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

ORANGE PARK - Orange Park senior sharpshooter Hailey Revak hit three consecutive three-pointers from dead man's corner as the Lady Raiders ran away with a 60-44 win over Oakleaf on Friday night. The win keeps the Lady Raiders unbeaten at 4-0 with Oakleaf, a Final Four finisher last season, dropping to 0-5.

Orange Park's multi-faceted attack had four players in double figures in scoring with Piera "Ice" Alexander landing 14 points, Revak finishing with 13 and Au-

tumn Nesmith and Parker finishing with 10. Parker also had 11 rebounds with Alexander snaring seven off the boards with four assists.

Outside, the Lady Raiders soccer team got a jolt of scoring lightning from the sister combination of Rylynn and Ryanne Robinson after both were put back on the field against Paxon after the first-half water break. Both blasted the Paxon goal with Ryanne with two and Rylynn with one to put the Lady Raiders up 3-2 at the half en route to a 5-2 win. The Raiders improve to 5-1 with Ridgeview on Thursday.



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

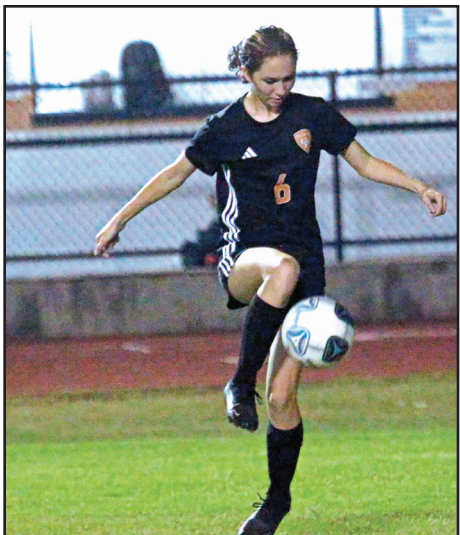
Orange Park soccer forward Heily Davila gets control of loose ball in 5-2 win over Paxon.



Orange Park center forward Ryanne Robinson kicks up ball moments before second of two first half goals in Raiders 5-2 win over Paxon.



Orange Park's second half of the sister combination of soccer scoring machines, Rylynn Robinson, sprints to a goal against Paxon.



Orange Park defender Maya Vasquez acrobatically stops a loose ball. Orange Park senior guard Hailey Revak fires off second of three consecutive three pointers in win over Oakleaf.



Left: Orange Park senior guard Piera "Ice" Alexander has been driving force for the unbeaten Lady Raiders. Right: Rylynn Robinson looks to punch in deflected ball in front of Paxon goal after goalie save on first shot.

Busy Thursday for Broncos ends in 3 wins and 1 loss

MHS girls and boys hoops win, boys soccer wins, girls soccer loses

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

MIDDLEBURG – On Thursday, November 28, the Middleburg High girl’s basketball team kept their unbeaten season-opening streak moving with a 34-20 win over Trinity Christian Academy while, outside, the boys soccer team got two goals apiece from Brandon Anderson and Xavier Abuhl to beat Paxton 4-2.

The wins moved the girl’s basketball team, led by steals and dishes from Cheyenne Jenkins and Ruby Owen to 2-0, but the Bronco’s good luck went south for the weekend with three losses in two days; 35-30 to Keystone Heights, 50-27 to Nease and 56-27 to St. Johns Country Day School, all at the Keystone Heights High Invitational to

fall to 2-3.

The boy’s soccer improved to 3-1 with the win, but Ridgeview shut out the Broncos 2-0 to drop the Broncos to 3-2.

Middleburg High’s boy’s basketball team won a loud and boisterous 79-52 win over Ridgeview in a Friday night double-header on their home court. The Broncos scored their second consecutive 70-plus points game after a 75-37 win over Baldwin a week ago but lost 70-61 on Friday to P.K. Yonge for their first loss of the season.

Outside, on the Middleburg High football field, the Broncos girl’s soccer team was battling with cross-town rival Clay High but lost an 8-2 contest to fall to 2-3 under new head coach Joy Rosano. Middleburg had beaten Paxton 6-0 early in the week.



Middleburg’s Thomas Witt, in dark shirt, battles with Paxton defender for ball close to Paxton goal.

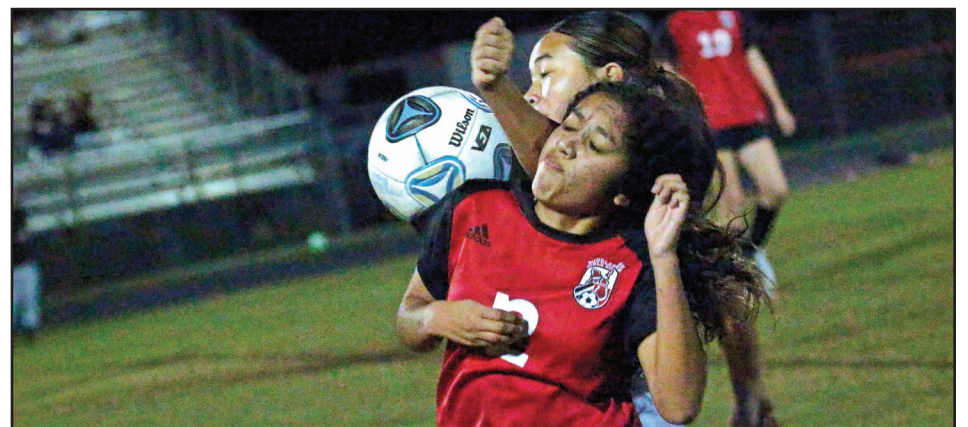


Middleburg point guard Ruby Owen breaks with steal for layup in win over Trinity Christian.



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Middleburg struck first with Brandon Anderson slamming first goal of 4-2 win over Paxton.



Middleburg High’s Isabella Munoz gets faceful of soccer ball in battle with Clay defender in Clay 8-2 win at Middleburg High School.

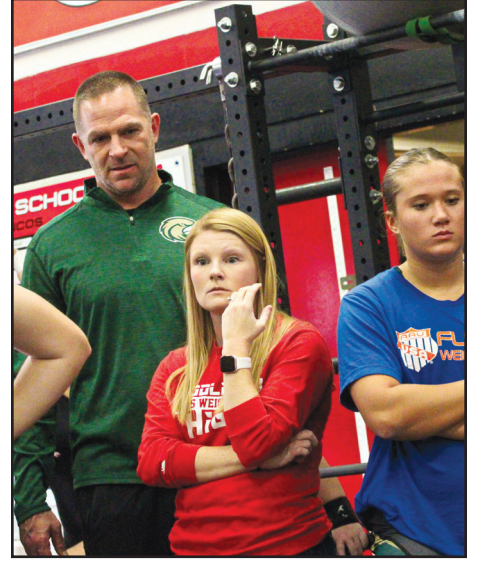
Below: Middleburg forward Maycie Bader powers through Clay High defense.



Middleburg forward Aiden Farber breaks downcourt with ball in win over Ridgeview.



Weightlifting action



District 4-1A:

Indians and Spartans to battle Baker County

By Brant Parson
Kabra Wrestling.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS - Baker County, in district 4-1A, went two decades between district titles, but they likely won't have to wait that long again.

The Wildcats are positioned to compete again for the top honors in this district with Union County giving chase

as well as a more experienced Keystone Heights High team and a brand new St. Johns Country Day School team with a familiar name as head coach.

Baker County narrowly edged Union County by five points for the school's first district crown in 20 years after Union County won the district duals title earlier in the season.



Fleming Island's Chris Chop is top senior middle weight wrestler for coach P.J. Cobbert.



Clay High's Brady Glavin battles with Middleburg's Dylan Johns.



Joe Forte brings some strength to light weights for Golden Eagles.



Laird Duhaylungsod and brother Shane Duhaylungso, below, are a 1-2 punch for Golden Eagles with both being state qualifiers.

Keystone Heights Indians

Coach: Shaun Goetzman
Recent district results: 2023:8; 2022:6; 2021:4-1A5; 2020:4-1A5; 2019:3-1A5
Notable losses (Graduation/Transfer): Steven Raab, 23-9, RQ, D2.
Potential notable returning wrestlers: Autrey Contes, 8th, 2-8, RQ, D5; Riley McGorty, Fr., 5-16, RQ, D4; Alyx Nichols, Jr., RQ, D4.

St. Johns Country Day School

Coach: Hunter Hill, former Clay High assistant and head coach

Recent district results: 2023:11
Notable losses (Graduation/Transfer): Matthew Braddock, Fr., 24-7, RQ, D2 (Transfer to Fleming Island)
Notable returning wrestlers: None
New wrestler: Colton Hill
Outlook: It's the second year for the program and Hill is looking to build.

Dec. 8-9: Westside Kiwanis at Bishop Snyder

Dec. 29-30: Ships and Duels at Palm Bay

Feb. 2-3: Clay Rotary



Oakleaf's Ion Hortinela arches against Fleming Island's Laird Duhaylungsod, two dynamic wrestlers for both schools.



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Left: Middleburg's Tucker Cody and Clay's Will Kelley will ultimately be two dominant big men in the Class 2A ranks. Right: Middleburg's Cheyenne Cruce returned to the mat with a pinning championship last week at the Lady Clash of the Titans in Orlando and brings an unbeaten streak into the 2023 season.



Broncos aim for noise in District 3-2A wrestling

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

GAINESVILLE - In what could be one of the more intriguing wrestling district targets locally, Middleburg and Oakleaf will tango in District 3-2A to earn a title that will only get tougher wrestling in a week with a region shot at the Fleming Island/Clay District 4-2A champion.

Also in the district are Orange Park with new coach Josh Wilson replacing long-time coach Justin Daniels and Rid-

geview with coach Steven Inman looking to fill his lineup.

For Middleburg coach Coll Robertson, who shipped his guys off to Gainesville for a first look at the Bobcat Invitational, the increased numbers in his room are room for optimism.

"The boys looked tough and they got a good test from a strong Palm Harbor team," said Robertson. "We came out with a 45-33 win. Our girl's team finished third at the Lady Clash of Titans with Cheyenne Cruce, our state champion, pinning at 190 in just

41 seconds to win an individual title."

For the Lady Broncos, third to South Dade and Flagler Palm Coast, Skyla Fisher lost in the 105 final, Memphis Moses was third at 115, and Sarah Walsh was fourth at 125.

Also at the Lady Clash of Titans, Oakleaf High's Kailani Barrientos at 135 pinned in the third period to win her weight class gold medal with Jayla Harrison winning the 170 weight division with a first-period pin.

Harrison pinned in the first period of all

three of her matches. Barrientos pinned all three of her matches to win.

Noting Barrientos was without sister Adrianna Barrientos, second at 105 last year, Oakleaf coach Mark DeToro noted his girl's team will be formidable still.

"Adrianna is also a great Jiu Jitsu competitor and is pursuing that, but KK (Kailani) and our 170, Jayla Harrison (35-5, third last year) will be a strength to the team. The success of both the girl's and boys teams has given the program a boost in the hallways at Oakleaf High.

2A-3 Preview: Middleburg looks to return to the top spot for the first time since 2016

BY BRANT PARSONS
KarmaWrestling.com

MIDDLEBURG— Coach Coll Robertson enters his third season in charge of the program and with six years of coaching under his belt, he's ready for a district title.

It would be the Broncos first since 2016. "In my classroom, I'm looking at our back-to-back district runners-up trophies and then a region runner-up trophy and it's embarrassing," Robertson said. "I hate to be like that, but come on, we could do better. Now, last year, district runner-up and region runner-up to the eventual team state champs, that's nothing to be too upset about. But you know, runner-up is just... we don't want that, we want more."

They'll need to outscore last year's district champion Oakleaf to add a champion trophy to the mix.

Last season: Oakleaf's depth was the difference as 12 wrestlers placed in the 16.5 district championship victory.

Wrestlers to watch: Wyatt Leduc (Middleburg), Sebastian Bonochea (Oakleaf), Tucker Cody (Middleburg), Walter Woodard (Middleburg), Anthony Kearney (Riverside), Eddie Craig (Beachside), Ion Hortinela (Oakleaf), Porter Loveland (Middleburg), Keon Barrientos (Oakleaf)

The favorite: is Oakleaf. They do have seven region qualifiers possibly coming back, but this race should be tight.

Team to watch: Middleburg. Last year's district duals champion placed third in the IBT and they're still upset about that performance.

Middleburg Broncos (#20 IBT | #11 Dual)

Coach: Coll Robertson (3rd season at school/6th overall), assistant Jamie Harrison

22-23 dual record: 17-4

Recent district results: 2023:3; 2022:5-2A2; 2021:3-2A2; 2020:6-2A2; 2019:5; 2018:3; 2017:2; 2016:1; 2015:2; 2014:2; 2013:5; 2012:6

Notable losses (Graduation/Transfer): Logan Moore, 42-11, 5th, R3, DC; Bryce Meldrum, 15-16, RQ, D4; Bryan Davis, So., 24-7 (Transfer to South Carolina);

Notable returning wrestlers: #5-150 Wyatt Leduc, Jr., 42-8, SQ, R3, DC; #6-120 Walter Woodard, Sr., 42-12, SQ, R2, DC; #6-215 Tucker Cody, Sr., 40-10, SQ, R2, DC; #9-190 Porter Loveland, So., 33-13; #15-138 Parker Richards, So.; #19-144 Sean Blouin, So.; Dylan Johns, Sr., 23-19, RQ, D2; Daniel Raines, So., 19-18, RQ-BR, D2.

New wrestler: #11-106 Gavin Fisher; Benjamin Mitts; Dawson Brown; Nathan Harvey; Jacob Bishop

Coll Robertson: This team is hungry from top to bottom with wrestlers who just missed out on placing at state last season and making it to state, and there's

a group of incoming freshmen eager to make their way into the starting lineup.

Oakleaf High Wrestling

Coach: Mark DeToro

Recent district results: 2023:1; 2022:1-3A1; 2021:3-3A1; 2020:2-3A1; 2019:5-3A1; 2018:4-3A1; 2017:6-3A1; 2016:6-3A1; 2015:3; 2014:3; 2013:7; 2012:10

Notable losses (Graduation/Transfer): Caleb Pope, 38-16, RQ, D3; Roman Polinsky, 31-20, RQ, D2; Jacob Dewald, RQ, D2; Isaiah Shevchook, 39-7, 3rd, R2, DC.

Potential notable returning wrestlers: #5-126 Sebastian Bonochea, So., 32-9, 5th, R3, DC; #9-120 Ion Hortinela, Jr., 34-20, SQ, R4, D2; #10-144 Keon Barrientos, Sr., 22-9, SQ, R4, D2; #14-126 Angel Rodriguez, Jr., 16-3; Connor Barnes, So., 25-18, RQ, D3; Anthony Dees Jr, Sr., RQ, D4; Jeremiah Baker, Jr., RQ, D3; Evan Brown, So., RQ, D3.

Outlook: Last year's district champions should be on the hunt again this year if they have a full collection of returners from a year ago.

Ridgeview

Coach: Steve Inman

Recent district results: 2023:2; 2022:4-2A2; 2021:3-1A4; 2020:3-1A4; 2019:3; 2018:1; 2017:3; 2016:4; 2015:5; 2014:4; 2013:6; 2012:3

Last state champion: Matthew Rodriguez, 2021 (132)

Notable losses (Graduation/Transfer):

Kaiden Tibbetts, 30-10, RQ, D3; Christian Garcia, 32-15, RQ-BR, DC; Tanner Tague, 26-19, RQ, D3; Trenton Manis, 22-16, RQ, D5.

Potential notable returning wrestlers:

#10-106 Jason Barrett, Jr., 23-9, RQ-BR, DC; #13-190 Rayhn Hutchinson, Sr., 35-18, RQ, D4; #16-175 James Laycock, Sr., 24-14, RQ, DC; #18-215 Raymond Goforth, Sr., 32-14, RQ-BR, D2; Connor Carroll, Jr., 5-5; Daniel Nguyen, Jr., 20-20, RQ, D3; Sean Davis, So., 24-16, RQ, D4; Bailen Culver, Jr., 14-3.

Outlook: Last year's district runner-up graduated four region qualifiers but could have six back in the room this year.

Orange Park

Coach: Josh Wilson, first year

Recent district results: 2023:8; 2022:7-2A2; 2021:6-2A2; 2020:4-2A2; 2019:1; 2018:2; 2017:1; 2016:2; 2015:1; 2014:1; 2013:1; 2012:8

Last state champion: Corey Van Dorn, 2013 (182)

Potential notable returning wrestlers: Elijah Grant, So., RQ, D2; Jonathan Garland, Sr., RQ, D3.

Outlook: The Raiders could return two region qualifiers from a year ago including district finalist Grant.



Two more big athletes that will be contending for Class 2A rankings are Middleburg Porter Loveland, left, and Clay's Aaron Stacy. Below: Middleburg's Aiden Thornton is seasoned middle weight while, right, Middleburg's girls team should be contending for top three state finish.



Oakleaf High wrestling coach Mark DeToro has district titles on his resume and thinks with a bevy of returners that a third title is forthcoming.

Wrestling

from page 33

points behind team champion and defending Louisiana state champion Jesuit High's 360 points and St. Paul of Louisiana's 301. St. Paul's was fifth in Louisiana last year. Holy Cross, fourth in Louisiana, was fourth at 233.5.

"I liked what I saw and we wrestled hard the whole two days," said Reape. "We have to improve the most in our middle-weight classes; Kelly (285 state qualifier) will go to 190 and Aaron Stacy was not at the meet. He will be at our tournament in Manatee this weekend."

Reape, who has been Fleming Island's local nemesis, sees his team as needing

some more bodies to take on the Golden Eagle lineup.

"We were two guys down with weight and that kept us from finishing second and we lost a guy to injury," said Reape. "We have a few new young guys that, with some mat time, can add points for us. Fleming Island has the numbers for sure."

For now, Reape likes Bucci to repeat as a state medalist (third at 106 last year) with his veterans capable of returning, but with a few new names that could surprise.

"Jackson Hornbeck, Vonte Burke, Drew Holmquist (113 state qualifier), and Landon Martin are all young guys," said Reape. "Landon is very savvy. I'm sure his big brother, Dominic (7th last year), has rolled around with him on the living room rug."

2A-4 Preview: Reloaded Fleming Island ready to compete for top spot again

BY BRANT PARSONS
Kabra Wrestling.com

Note: Brant Parsons is the premiere Florida high school wrestling pollster and rankings writer.

Last season: Fleming Island, second in Class 2A to Lake Gibson, outscored runner-up Clay, 15th in 2A, by 106 points to win its eighth straight district title.

District Wrestlers to watch: Timothy McLean (Matanzas), Jacob Bucci (Clay), Matthew Kotler (Fleming Island), Sawyer VanRider (New Smyrna Beach), Kaden Schaefer (Fleming Island), Jordan Mills (Matanzas), Christopher Chop (Fleming Island), Jonathan Bruner (New Smyrna Beach), Matthew Newman (Fleming Island), Laird Duhaylungsod (Fleming Island), Braden Glavin (Clay), Aidan Sutton (New Smyrna Beach), William Kelly (Clay), Matthew Braddock (Fleming Island), Rylan Herrera (Clay)

The favorite: Fleming Island. Five state placers from a year ago are gone, but there is still a lot of talent in this lineup.

Team to watch: New Smyrna Beach. The key for the Barracudas will be staying healthy because they have the experience coming back.

Kabra Says: Fleming Island is still the team to beat in the district, even having filled the holes left by five state placers.

Fleming Island Golden Eagles (#4 IBT | #3 Dual)

Coach: PJ Cobbert (15th season, District champions 11 times; second 2015), assistant coach Angelo Lizza

Last state champion: Jayce Paridon, 2023 (132), now at Lake Highland Prep

Notable losses (Graduation/Transfer): Ronan Bozeman, 42-9, 5th, RC, DC; Joshua Sandoval, 47-6, 4th, RC, DC; Jhoel Robinson, 42-1, 3rd, RC, DC; Ethan Hoffstetter, 27-11, 4th, RC, DC; Jayce Paridon, Jr., 48-2, SC, RC, DC (Transfer to Lake Highland Prep)

Notable returning wrestlers: #3-150 Matthew Kotler, Sr., 29-9, 6th, R2, DC; #3-175 Christopher Chop, Sr., 35-10, 5th, RC, DC; #4-144 Kaden Schaefer, Sr., 34-2, 3rd, RC, DC; #6-113

Matthew Newman, Sr., 42-6, 4th, R2, DC; #6-132 Laird Duhaylungsod, Jr., 43-6, SQ, RC, DC; #11-120 Jordan Mukaddam, Sr., 17-8; #11-215 Walter Poe, Jr., 34-12, RQ, DC; #13-126 Shane Duhaylungsod, Jr., 40-9, SQ, R2, D2; #14-150 Dylan Beck, Jr., 24-14, RQ, D2; #19-215 Ladarius Jackson, Sr., 17-7; Cooper Beck, So., 17-17.

New wrestlers: #8-106 Matthew Braddock, Fr., 24-7, RQ, D2 (Transfer from St. John Country Day); Kevin Reyes, Jr. (FHSAA state weightlifting champion 2023)

Outlook: Fleming Island may not be as loaded as they were last season, but the Golden Eagles still have the strongest and deepest team in the district.

Clay Blue Devils (#18 IBT | #13 Dual)

Coach: James Reape (28th season, 31 st at Clay), assistants Hunter Hill, Luke Frame, Elijah Gonzalez

22-23 dual record: 20-8, District champion from 2012 to 2022 in Class 1A, Second in 2A in 2023

Last state champion: Robert Tyre, 2022 (220)

Notable losses (Graduation/Transfer): Landen Solomon, 25-8, RQ-BR, D3; Dominic Martin, 28-10, 7th, R2, D2; Kedric Wilbourn, 45-13, 8th, R4, D3.

Notable returning wrestlers: #2-113 Jacob Bucci, Jr., 57-2, 3rd, RC, D2; #7-138 Braden Glavin, Jr., 38-13, SQ, R2, D2; #9-126 Rylan Herrera, Jr.; #9-215 William Kelly, Sr., 40-18, SQ, R3, D3; #14-120 Drew Holmquist, So., 47-20, SQ, R4, D3; Vonte Burke, Jr., 24-13, RQ, DC; Aaron Stacey, Jr., 24-11, RQ, D3

New wrestlers: Jackson Hornbeck, Jr. (Transfer from Middleburg); Ajax Sgro, So., 23-13 (Transfer from Middleburg); Landon Martin, Fr.; Jayshawn McCloud, Fr.

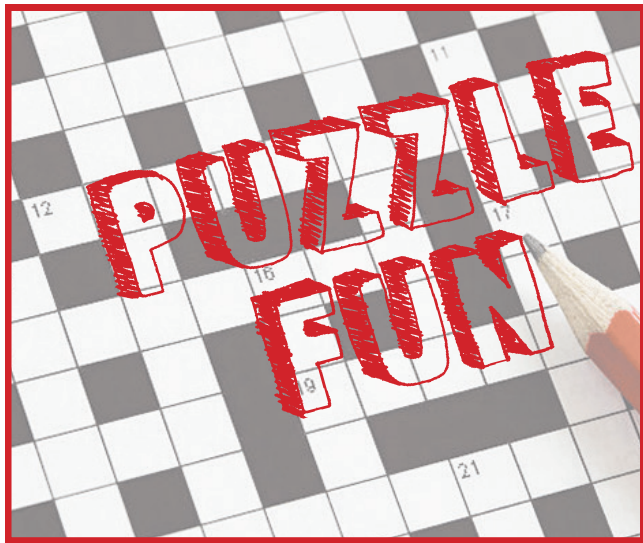
Fast fact: Clay has had 128 state-place winners and has finished as the team runner-up eight times.

Jim Reape: "We are hopefully a scrappy bunch. We will be very good down low, and pretty solid up top, how fast we develop in the middleweights will decide our fate."

Outlook: The Blue Devils have four state placers back this season, led by state placer Bucci.



Clay's Vonte Burke is super acrobatic wrestler that excites the Blue Devil lineup.



			6	7		8		
						3	1	6
	4							
6			8			2		
	8	5	7					
3		9						7
	9						4	
2		7	9		5			
		8	1					

Level: Intermediate

Farmer

from page 33

the low score among all three classes, to win the individual championship.

Li repeated as Miss Golf after winning the Class 1A girls' state championship for the second straight year, shooting an 8-under par score of 136 over 36 holes, the lowest score among all competitors in the three classifications.

The other girls' finalists were Darby Hancock, a junior from Lakeland Kathleen, who won the Class 3A state title and Katherine Schaefer, a senior from American Heritage, who captured the Class 2A state title. On the boys' side, Loranzo Rodriguez Jr., a junior from Belen Jesuit who was the Class 2A state champ, and Alexander Weinberg, a junior from Pine Crest, who won the Class 1A state title, were the other finalists for Mr. Golf.

Castillo led FAU to its first state title with a 2-over par score of 578, good for a seven-stroke victory over 2022 champion The First Academy. Dennis Burchill of 3A state champion Lake Mary, which won its third straight title, and McKenzie Parks of 2A state champion Beachside were named girls' Coaches-of-the-Year in their classifications.

The Florida Dairy Farmers High School Sports Awards program exemplifies Florida Dairy Farmers' commitment to the state's youth. This marks the 32nd year of these unique awards as we honor the state's top athletes and coaches in all 30 FHSAA sanctioned and recognized sports. The program also emphasizes to young people the importance of keeping dairy products a primary part of their diet in their overall nutrition plan.

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CRYPTO FUN

☼ ☽ ☿ ♁ ♃ ♅ ♇ ♉ ♋ ♍ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓ ♔ ♕ ♖ ♗ ♘ ♙ ♚ ♛ ♜ ♝ ♞ ♟ ♠ ♡ ♢ ♣ ♤ ♥ ♦ ♧ ♨ ♩ ♪ ♫ ♬ ♭ ♮ ♯ ♰ ♱ ♲ ♳ ♴ ♵ ♶ ♷ ♸ ♹ ♺ ♻ ♼ ♽ ♾ ♿

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to caregiving.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 23 = I)

- A. 7 4 12 11 22 23 2 11 12**
Clue: Tends to someone
- B. 6 4 7 23 15 23 3 19**
Clue: Building or place of business
- C. 4 7 3 23 2 23 3 19**
Clue: Keeps you busy
- D. 3 20 11 12 4 26 19**
Clue: Remediates a health problem

Answers: A. caregiver B. facility C. activity D. therapy

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to caregiving.

RWEKLA

--	--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Walker

Guess Who?

I am an actor born in California on November 11, 1974. An agent suggested I use a different name as my stage name. I am known for many big films, including one that really launched my career, despite the subject matter being about a titanic disaster.

Answer: Leonardo DiCaprio

CAREGIVING WORD SEARCH

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

WORDS

- ACUTE
- AGE IN PLACE
- AGING
- CAREGIVER
- COMPASSION
- CONTINUING
- COORDINATOR
- DAYCARE
- EQUIPMENT
- FAMILY
- GERIATRIC
- HOME HEALTH AIDE
- HOSPICE
- ILLNESS
- MEMORY
- NURSE
- NURSING HOME
- PALLIATIVE
- PROXY
- RESPIRE
- SKILLED
- THERAPY
- VOLUNTEER

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

9	3	1	6	7	2	8	5	4
7	5	2	4	9	8	3	1	6
8	4	6	3	5	1	9	7	2
6	7	4	8	1	3	2	9	5
1	8	5	7	2	9	4	6	3
3	2	9	5	6	4	1	8	7
5	9	3	2	8	6	7	4	1
2	1	7	9	4	5	6	3	8
4	6	8	1	3	7	5	2	9

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

CLAY COUNTY LEGAL NOTICES

tation the respondent must be registered on Clay County's Public Portal. For information concerning procedures for responding to this Bid, contact Jessica Loos in the Purchasing Department by email: purchasing@claycountygov.com. Bidders are prohibited from contacting, by any means, whether orally, telephonically, electronically or in writing, any member of the Board, any County employee, including the County Manager, the County Attorney or the Commission Auditor, any member of the designated Evaluation Committee or any agent of the County regarding the Request for bids in any respect during the Request for Bid Period. The Request for Bid Period during which no contact may occur commences from the date of publication of the notice of a Request for Bids and ends upon a Bid Decision becoming final, i.e. after the notice of bid protest period of 72 hours has expired. However, in the event of a notice of protest, the no contact rule continues in place during the Protest Period and does not end until a resolution of the protest has occurred and become final. The following exceptions exist to the no-contact rule:

- Inquiries may be submitted to the Purchasing Department if specifically provided
- Pre-bid conferences provided for in the Request for Bids; and
- Formal presentations by Bidders to the designated Evaluation Committee or to the Board or any committee thereof specifically contemplated in the Request for Bids.

The Board reserves the right and power to reject any and all Bids without cause and to waive technical and non-technical or non-material defects in the Request for Bids or submittal of any Bid, and in its discretion to re-advertise the Request for Bids. The Board reserves the right to award Bids, quotes, or Proposals which would be in the Best Interest of the County. Interested vendors are advised that the Clay County Board of County Commissioners has a local preference policy and Buy American policy. The complete policy for both can be viewed at: <https://www.claycountygov.com/government/purchasing/vendor-information>.

A PERSON OR AFFILIATE WHO HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE CONVICTED VENDOR LIST FOLLOWING A CONVICTION FOR A PUBLIC ENTITY CRIME MAY NOT SUBMIT A BID ON A CONTRACT TO PROVIDE ANY GOODS OR SERVICES TO A PUBLIC ENTITY, MAY NOT SUBMIT A BID ON A CONTRACT WITH A PUBLIC ENTITY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OR REPAIR OF A PUBLIC BUILDING OR PUBLIC WORK, MAY NOT SUBMIT BIDS ON LEASES OF REAL PROPERTY TO A PUBLIC ENTITY, MAY NOT BE AWARDED OR PERFORM WORK AS A CONTRACTOR, SUPPLIER, SUBCONTRACTOR, OR CONSULTANT UNDER A CONTRACT WITH ANY PUBLIC ENTITY AND MAY NOT TRANSACT BUSINESS WITH ANY PUBLIC ENTITY IN EXCESS OF THE THRESHOLD AMOUNT PROVIDED IN SECTION 287.017, FLORIDA STATUTES, FOR CATEGORY TWO FOR A PERIOD OF 36 MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF BEING PLACED ON THE CONVICTED VENDOR LIST.

Legal 93650 Published 12/7/2023 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:

918 Blanding Blvd. Orange Park FL, 32065

December 26th, 2023 at 9:30 am
Richard Moore – Household Goods/Furniture

Richard Moore - Household Goods/Furniture, TV/Stereo Equipment, Tools/Appliances
Tarlann Pons – Household Goods/Furniture

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 proper

Legal 93649 Published 12/7/2023 and 12/14/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Board of County Commissioners (the Board) of Clay County, Florida (the County), will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, at 5:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard; in the Board's Meeting Room, 4th Floor, Clay County Administration Building, 477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs, Florida, for the purpose of considering entry into a Purchase and Sale Agreement for the purchase by the County of a portion of a certain parcel of real property being particularly described as follows: **A portion of Tax Parcel No. 28-05-26-014366-000-00, consisting of approximately 1.764 square feet.**

This notice is given pursuant to Section 125.355, Florida Statutes, and Clay County Ordinance 99-65. A copy of the Agreement is available for public inspection between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, exclusive of legal holidays, in the Office of the County Attorney located on the 2nd Floor of the Clay County Administration Building at the foregoing address.

All interested parties are invited to attend the public hearing and be heard. Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, any person who desires to appeal any decision with respect to any matter considered at the public hearing or at any subsequent meeting to which the Board has continued its deliberations will need a record of the proceedings, and may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made to include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing 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 93648 Published 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

Notice of Regular Meeting Fleming Island Plantation Community Development District

The Board of Supervisors of the Fleming Island Plantation Community Development District will hold their Regular Meeting on Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., at the Splash Park, located at 1510 Calming Water Drive, Fleming Island, Florida.

The meeting is open to the public and will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Florida law for Community Development Districts. This meeting may be continued to a date, time, and location to be specified on the record at the meeting without further publication of notice.

A copy of the agenda may be obtained seven (7) days in advance of the meeting by accessing the District's website or by contacting the District Manager at Janice.Davis@inframark.com. Any person requiring special accommodations at this meeting because of a disability or physical impairment should contact the District Office at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Service at 7-1-1 or 800-955-8771 (TTY)/800-955-8770 (Voice), for aid in contacting the District Office.

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

Janice Eggleton Davis
District Manager
Legal 93647 Published 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

FICTITIOUS NAME

Notice Under Fictitious Name Law Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of

Bare Beauty Studio, located at 4465 Highway 17, Suite 114, in the County of Clay, in the City of Fleming Island, Florida 32003 intends to register the said name with the Division of Corporations of the Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida.

Dated at Fleming Island, Florida, this 1st day of December 2023.

Amanda Thompson
Legal 93489 Published 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT IN AND FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA
PROBATE DIVISION
FILE NO.: 2023-CP-000600
IN RE: THE ESTATE OF
CHERYL HELFERT WELSH,
also known as CHERYL H. WELSH.

Deceased.
The administration of the estate of Cheryl Helfert Welsh, also known as Cheryl H. Welsh, whose date of death was October 24, 2023, and whose Social Security Number is ***-**-0118, is pending in the Circuit Court for Clay County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is Clay County Courthouse, 825 N Orange Avenue, Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043. The name and address of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this Court WITHIN THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this Court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE. ALL CLAIMS NOT SO FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702 OF THE FLORIDA PROBATE CODE WILL BE FOREVER

BARRED.
NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIOD SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of the first publication of this Notice is December 7, 2023.

Personal Representative:
Michele A. Graff
13295 SW 106th Street
Dunnellon, Florida 34432
Attorneys for Personal Representative:
TAYLOR ARRUBLA HARDWICK P.A.
By /s/Jennifer T. Arrubla
James J. Taylor Jr.
Jennifer T. Arrubla
Florida Bar No. 334057

352-473-8088 (telephone)
352-473-8161 (facsimile)
Legal 93483 Published 12/7/2023 and 12/14/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA
PROBATE DIVISION
File No. 2023-CP-000378
IN RE: ESTATE OF
CLIFFORD THOMAS RINGER,
Deceased.

The administration of the estate of CLIFFORD THOMAS RINGER, deceased, whose date of death was JANUARY 27, 2023, is pending in the Circuit Court for CLAY County,

Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 825 N. ORANGE AVE. #308, GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL 32043. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against

decedent's estate, on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served, must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.
NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIOD SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is December 7, 2023.

Signed on this 30th day of November, 2023.

MATTHEW MCCONNELL, Esq.
Florida Bar No. 126161
Attorney for Personal Representative
Dickman Law Firm
Post Office Box 111868
Naples, FL 34108
T: 239-434-0840 / F : 239-434-0940
matthew@dickmanlawfirm.org

BARBARA RINGER
Personal Representative
3349 WILDERNESS CIR.
MIDDLEBURG, FL 32068

Legal 93482 Published 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: 4653 US 17, Fleming Island, FL 32003 December 26, 2023, at 10:00am.

Roxanne Van hof house hold
Deleah Liles
dinette set, coffe table, side table, boxes
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 93481 Published 12/7/2023 and 12/14/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Notice is hereby given that on dates below these vehicles will be sold at public sale on the date listed below at 10AM for monies owed on vehicle repair and storage cost pursuant to Florida Statutes 713.585 or Florida Statutes 713.78. Please note, parties claiming interest have right to a hearing prior to the date of sale with the Clerk of Courts as reflected in the notice. The owner has the right to recover pos-

session of the vehicle without judicial proceedings as pursuant to Florida Statute 559.917. Any proceeds recovered from the sale of the vehicle over the amount of the lien will be deposited with the clerk of the court for disposition upon court order. "No Title Guaranteed, A Buyer Fee May Apply" at
JANUARY 8, 2024
First Stop Car Center, 1282 Blanding Blvd, Orange Park, FL
2021 BMW 5UJXTY3C04M9F11104 \$23,681.13
Legal 93418 Published 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

A-1 TOWING AND RECOVERY gives notice that on 01/03/2024 at 09:00 AM the following vehicles(s) may be sold by public sale at 3052 JOE JOHNS RD MID-DLEBURG, FL 32068 to satisfy the lien for the amount owed on each vehicle for any recovery, towing, or storage services charges and administrative fees allowed pursuant to Florida statute 713.78.
U15GLA55912 1976 FORD
1FTNW20L31ED18421 2001 FORD
2LMHJ5AT8BBJ51272 2011 LINC
Legal 93370 Published 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

FICTITIOUS NAME

Notice Under Fictitious Name Law Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of **Black Creek Marina and Bait Shop**, located at 1472 River Ln, in the County of Clay, in the City of Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043 intends to register the said name with the Division of Corporations of the Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida.

Dated at Green Cove Springs, Florida, this 29th day of November 2023.

Black Creek Marina, LLC
Legal 93369 Published 12/7/2023 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:

1709 Blanding Blvd, Middleburg, FL 32068, Tuesday, December 26, 2023 @ 12:00 PM.

Dawn Rourk: 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 93311 Published 12/7/2023 and 12/14/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

PUBLIC NOTICE

Clay County Towing gives notice of lien and intent to sell the following vehicles at 2864 Blanding Blvd., Middleburg, FL 32068 at date and time listed below.

CLAY COUNTY TOWING & RECOVERY AUCTION: December 30, 2023 @ 10:00 AM

2001 GMC. VIN #. 1GTGC13U21F188772 Pursuant to subsection 713-78 of the FL Statute, Clay County Towing reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids.

Legal 93310 Published 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR CLAY, FLORIDA
PROBATE DIVISION
FILE NO.: 2023-CP-000603
DIVISION B
IN RE: ESTATE OF PAMELA SUE ALDERMAN,
Deceased

The administration of the estate of PAMELA SUE ALDERMAN, deceased, whose date of death was September 29, 2023, is pending in the Circuit Court for Clay County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 825 North Orange Avenue, Green Cove Springs, Florida, 32043. The name and address of the Personal Representative and the Personal Representative's attorney are set forth below.

THE ESTATE IS INTESTATE.
All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court WITHIN THE LATER OF THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR THIRTY (30) DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE. ALL CLAIMS AND DEMANDS NOT SO FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702 OF THE FLORIDA PROBATE CODE WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.
NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM

FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of the first publication of this Notice is December 7, 2023.

Attorney for Personal Representative:
GERALDINE C. HARTIN, Esquire
Florida Bar 15201
3168 U. S. Highway 17, Suite A
Fleming Island, FL .32003
904-278-3888

geraldine.hartin@gmail.com
Personal Representative:
RACHEL K. LANNIN
2510 Maybrook Court
Murfreesboro, TN 37128

Legal 93303 Published 12/7/2023 and 12/14/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

INVITATION TO BID

Individual sealed bids for the **Gladliolus Ave, St. Frances Dr, Clover Ave, and Freckles Ct Utility, Underdrain and Roadway Improvements** in Orange Park, Florida will be received by the **Town Clerk, the Town of Orange Park, 2042 Park Avenue, Orange Park, Florida until 10:00 a.m., local time, Thursday January 11, 2024.**

Envelopes must be clearly marked with the project title, time, and date of bid opening. If mailed, bids must be addressed to the Town Clerk at the above address. Bids must be submitted in the format as outlined in the specifications.

Gladliolus Ave and St. Frances Dr Utility & Roadway Improvements

The Project is located on Gladliolus Ave and St. Frances Dr. The Project consists of approximately 1320 L.F. of Roadway, Curbing, Utility, Underdrain, and concrete work. The Project limits on St Frances Dr are from the intersection with Dolphin St to the intersection with Bellair Blvd and on Gladliolus Ave are from the intersection with Dolphin St to the intersection with St. Frances Dr. The major work elements include, but are not limited to, the following:

Base Bid:
a. Replace existing 4 & 6-inch (4" & 6") water main with new PVC water main.
b. Replace existing water services and meters with new water services and meters.

c. Replace existing fire hydrants with new fire hydrants.

d. Abandoned in place existing 4 & 6-inch (4" & 6") water main by grout filling.

e. Pavement removal and reconstruction.
f. Remove existing and construct new curb and gutter.

g. Remove and replace residential concrete driveway aprons in ROW and designated sidewalks.

h. Install new 6-inch (6") PVC underdrain at back of curb.

i. Adjust four existing manhole rings and covers to grade elevations.

Clover Ave and Freckles Court Utility & Roadway Improvements

The Project is located on Clover Ave and Freckles Ct. The Project consists of approximately 875 L.F. of Roadway, Curbing, Utility, and concrete work. The Project limits on Clover Ave are from the intersection with Dolphin St to the intersection with Bellair Blvd and on Freckles Ct to the cul-de-sac. The major work elements include, but are not limited to, the following:

Base Bid:
j. Replace existing 4 & 6-inch (4" & 6") water main with new PVC water main.

k. Replace existing water services and meters with new water services and meters.

l. Replace existing fire hydrants with new fire hydrants.

m. Abandoned in place existing 4 & 6-inch (4" & 6") water main by grout filling.

n. Pavement removal and reconstruction.

o. Remove existing and construct new curb and gutter.

p. Remove and replace residential concrete driveway aprons in ROW and designated sidewalks.

q. Install new 6-inch (6") PVC underdrain at back of curb.

r. Adjust three existing manhole rings and covers to grade elevations.

Bid documents will be made available by **11:00 a.m., Tuesday, December 5, 2023,** at Crawford, Murphy, and Tilly, Inc., 7400 Baymeadows Way, Suite 220, Jacksonville, Florida 32256, (904) 448-5300. The cost of the plans and specifications from CMT is **\$150.00** (non-refundable) and will be provided electronically in PDF format.

Arrangements for payment and delivery of files should be directed to Eric Sanders at esanders@cmtengr.com. The project will also be available directly from the Town of Orange Park on their Demand Star site for digital download.

Bidders must submit with the Bid, documentation that they have constructed similar type work completed during the past five years with references. Each bidder must include a resume and qualifications for their proposed on-site supervision superintendent. Said Superintendent shall have maintained continuous employment with bidder for a minimum of three years.

The bidders will be required to submit a Bid Bond equal to 5% of the bid with their Proposal. The successful bidder will be required, upon award, to furnish a 100% Performance and Payment Bond, with a Surety acceptable to Owner. Each bid proposal shall remain binding for at least 90 days after the scheduled bid date.

The Owner shall have the right to reject any or all bids or to reject bids, which are in any way incomplete or irregular. The Owner reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to reject all bids and re-advertise, or to reject all bids without further action, in the Owner's best interest. Any questions regarding the bid documents shall be in writing and directed to the Engineer of Record, Paul Ina, at email pina@cmtengr.com.

By: Sarah Campbell
Town Manager
Legal 93302 Published 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA
PROBATE DIVISION
File No. 2023-CP-000194
Division A
IN RE: ESTATE OF
BILLY W. MCFARLAND
Deceased.

The administration of the estate of Billy W. McFarland, deceased, whose date of death was December 21, 2022, is pending in the Circuit Court for Clay County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 825 N Orange Ave. # 308, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR THIRTY (30) DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE. ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702 OF THE FLORIDA PROBATE CODE WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is December 7, 2023.

Attorney for Personal Representative:
STEVEN L. ZAKROCKI, P.L.

/s/ Steven L. Zakrocki
Steven L. Zakrocki
Florida Bar No. 55056

1510 N. Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite B
St. Augustine, Florida 32084
Telephone: (904) 201-4149

Email: steve@zakrockilaw.com
Personal Representative:
Tracey Anne Williamson
943 Evans Road
Nashville, TN 37204

Legal 93301 Published 12/7/2023 and 12/14/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

FICTITIOUS NAME

Notice Under Fictitious Name Law Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of

CS COLLECTIBLES, located at PO Box 261, in the County of Clay, in the City of Penney Farms, Florida 32079-0261 intends to register the said name with the Division of Corporations of the Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida. Dated at Penney Farms, Florida, this 27th day of November, 2023.

SCHWARZ JR CHARLES LOUIS
Legal 93232 published 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

FICTITIOUS NAME

Notice Under Fictitious Name Law Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of **STONE'S IRISH PUB**, located at 323 NE Commercial Cir, in the County of Clay, in the City of Keystone Heights, Florida 32656-7114 intends to register the said name with the Division of Corporations of the Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida.

Dated at Keystone Heights, Florida, this 27th day of November, 2023.

BB& A OF KEYSTONE, INC
Legal 93231 Published 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

FICTITIOUS NAME

Notice Under Fictitious Name Law Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of

CURED & CRAFTED, located at 3209 Timbertrail Ct, in the County of Clay, in the City of Orange Park, Florida 32065-2226 intends to register the said name with the Division of Corporations of the Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida. Dated at Orange Park, Florida, this 27th day of November, 2023.

DRAKE HALEY ELIZABETH
Legal 93230 Published 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

825 North Orange Avenue, Green Cove Springs, FL, 32043. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court WITHIN THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702 OF THE FLORIDA PROBATE CODE WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER TIME DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of publication of this notice is December 7, 2023.

Attorney of Personal Representative: FRANKLIN D. FIELDS, ESQ.

Fla. Bar #0723691

Law Office of Franklin D. Fields

311 State Road 26

Melrose, FL 32666

Telephone: (352) 475-1176

Personal Representatives: Jeffrey Taylor

6765 Benson Ave.

Cocoa, FL 32927

Legal 93229 Published 12/7/2023 and 12/14/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 45

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA 2023 CA 000938 NEWREZ LLC D/B/A SHELLPOINT MORTGAGE SERVICING, Plaintiff,

VS. KAREN RICHARDSON; SHARON MARIE CONAWAY; MICHAEL D. RICHARDSON; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF SHARON MARIE CONAWAY N/K/A WILLIAM CONAWAY; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA-DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; ANY AND ALL UNKNOWN PARTIES CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER AND AGAINST THE HEREIN NAMED INDIVIDUAL DEFENDANT(S) WHO ARE NOT KNOWN TO BE DEAD OR ALIVE, WHETHER SAID UNKNOWN PARTIES MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST AS SPOUSES, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEEES, OR OTHER CLAIMANTS Defendant(s).

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that sale will be made pursuant to an Order or Final Judgment. Final Judgment was awarded on September 27, 2023 in Civil Case No. 2023 CA 000938, of the Circuit Court of the FOURTH Judicial Circuit in and for Clay County, Florida, wherein, NEWREZ LLC D/B/A SHELLPOINT MORTGAGE SERVICING is the Plaintiff, and KAREN RICHARDSON; SHARON MARIE CONAWAY; MICHAEL D. RICHARDSON; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF SHARON MARIE CONAWAY N/K/A WILLIAM CONAWAY; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA-DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; ANY AND ALL UNKNOWN PARTIES CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER AND AGAINST THE HEREIN NAMED INDIVIDUAL DEFENDANT(S) WHO ARE NOT KNOWN TO BE DEAD OR ALIVE, WHETHER SAID UNKNOWN PARTIES MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST AS SPOUSES, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEEES, OR OTHER CLAIMANTS are Defendants.

The Clerk of the Court, Tara S. Green will sell to the highest bidder for cash at www.clay.realforeclose.com on January 17, 2024 at 10:00:00 AM EST the following described real property as set forth in said Final Judgment, to wit: **A PORTION OF LOT 27-A, WEST BIG BRANCH UNIT 2, ACCORDING TO AN UNRECORDED PLAT THEREOF PREPARED BY LOUIS H. MCKEE, REGISTERED SURVEYOR NO. 1221, ON JULY 22, 1969, SAID LOT BEING A PORTION OF SECTION 25, TOWNSHIP 4 SOUTH, RANGE 23 EAST, CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA AND BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENCE AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SECTION 25, TOWNSHIP 4 SOUTH, RANGE 23 EAST; THENCE EASTERLY ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION 25, S. 88°18'35" E, 3957.46 FEET TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 27-A; THENCE S. 00°12'00" E, ALONG THE EAST LINE OF SAID LOT, 954.93 FEET TO THE SOUTHEASTLY CORNER OF THAT LAND AS DESCRIBED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 2963, PAGE 1077 OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF SAID COUNTY, SAID POINT BEING THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE LAND TO BE DESCRIBED; THENCE CONTINUE S. 00°12'00" E, ALONG LAST SAID EAST LINE, 425.69 FEET TO THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF MAV, ERICK ROAD; THENCE S. 89°32'01" W, ALONG SAID NORTHERLY RIGHT OF WAY LINE, 165.04 FEET TO THE SOUTHEASTLY CORNER OF THAT LAND AS DESCRIBED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 2431, PAGE 276 OF SAID PUBLIC RECORDS; THENCE N. 00°08'35" W, ALONG THE EASTERLY LINE OF SAID OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 2431, PAGE 276 AND**

A PORTION OF THE EASTERLY LINE OF THAT LAND DESCRIBED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 3267, PAGE 1810 OF SAID PUBLIC RECORDS, 428.67 FEET TO THE SOUTHWESTERLY CORNER OF SAID LAND DESCRIBED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 2963, PAGE 1077; THENCE S. 89°25'48" E, ALONG THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF LAST SAID LAND, 164.63 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the lis pendens must file a claim before the clerk reports the surplus as unclaimed. WITNESS my hand and the seal of the court on November 27, 2023. CLERK OF THE COURT

Tara S. Green

Rebecca Crews

Deputy Clerk

IMPORTANT

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled to no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator for the circuit court system at crtntrp@coj.net or (904) 630-2564 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.

Legal 93224 Published 11/30/2023 and 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

PUBLIC NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned intends to sell the personal property described below to enforce a lien imposed on said property under The Florida Self Storage Facility Act Statutes (Section 83.801 - 83.809). The undersigned will sell by competitive bidding at lockerfox.com on Tuesday the 19th day of December, 2023 at 12:00 PM. Said property is SecurCare Self Storage, 996 Blanding Blvd, Orange Park, FL, 32065 Webb, Michael 605 Office, Chair, Vacuum Parts, Shelving, Trash can, Fan, Misc Items, Insulation, Popcorn maker, Boxes, Computer Tower, Washington, Jackie 711 Totes, Misc items, Bags, Hangers, Boxes, Clothes, Misc Totes, Perry Argie 428 Two hutches, Boxes, Totes, MiscItems, DVD's, DVD Rack, Picture Frames, Clothes, Tool Boxes, Watson, Lamar 513 Mattress, Boxspring, Head board, Couch, Cooler, Shelf, Microwave, Wall Decor, Plastic Bags, Clothes, Desk, Bar Stools, Dishes. All purchased items are sold as is, where is, and must be removed within 48 hours of the sale. A refundable \$100 cash deposit for each unit won is required. Purchases must be paid for at the time of purchase by cash or credit/debit card per facility policy. Sale subject to cancellation in the event of settlement between owner and obligated party.

Legal 93223 Published 11/30/2023 and 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

REQUEST FOR BID NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN sealed bids will be received until 4:00 P.M., Monday, January 8, 2024, for the following: **BID NO. 23/24-25, CR 218 FROM COSMOS AVENUE TO PINE TREE LANE ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS - BOND-ED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM** Bids will be opened at 9:00 A.M., or as soon thereafter, on Tuesday, January 9, 2024 in the Clay County Administration Building, Conference Room "B", Fourth Floor, 477 Houston St, Green Cove Springs, Florida and through the County's electronic bidding system as well. Bids will not be valid unless received by the bid deadline.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid meeting is scheduled at 2:30 PM, December 20, 2023 at the Clay County Administration Building, Conference Room, "B" Fourth Floor, 477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043.

Proposals require a five (5%) percent bid bond and may not be withdrawn after the scheduled opening time for a period of thirty (30) days. The term bid bond shall include bonds or cashier or certified checks payable to the County.

The solicitation package is available at: [HTTPS://PROCUREMENT.OPENGOV.COM/PORTAL/CLAYCOUNTY?STATUS=ALL](https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/claycounty?STATUS=ALL).

In order to submit a response to this solicitation the respondent must be registered on Clay County's Public Portal.

For information concerning procedures for responding to this Bid, contact Donna Fish in the Purchasing Department at (904) 278-3761 or by email: purchasing@claycountygov.com.

Bidders are prohibited from contacting, by any means, whether orally, telephonically, electronically or in writing, any member of the Board, any County employee, including the County Manager, the County Attorney or the Commission Auditor, any member of the designated Evaluation Committee or any agent of the County regarding the Request for bids in any respect during the Request for Bid Period. The Request for Bid Period during which no contact may occur commences from the date of publication of the notice of a Request for Bids and ends upon a Bid Decision becoming final, i.e. after the notice of bid protest period of 72 hours has expired. However, in the event of a notice of protest, the no contact rule continues in place during the Protest Period and does not end until a resolution of the protest has occurred and become final. The following exceptions exist to the no-contact rule:

a. Inquiries may be submitted to the Pur-

chasing Department if specifically provided in the Request for Bids; b. Pre-bid conferences provided for in the Request for Bids; and c. Formal presentations by Bidders to the designated Evaluation Committee or to the Board or any committee thereof specifically contemplated in the Request for Bids.

The Board reserves the right and power to reject any and all Bids without cause and to waive technical and non-technical or non-material defects in the Request for Bids or submittal of any Bid, and in its discretion to re-advertise the Request for Bids. The Board reserves the right to award Bids, quotes, or Proposals which would be in the Best Interest of the County. Interested vendors are advised that the Clay County Board of County Commissioners has a local preference policy and Buy American policy. The complete policy for both can be viewed at: <https://www.claycountygov.com/government/purchasing/vendor-information>.

A PERSON OR AFFILIATE WHO HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE CONVICTED VENDOR LIST FOLLOWING A CONVICTION FOR A PUBLIC ENTITY CRIME MAY NOT SUBMIT A BID ON A CONTRACT TO PROVIDE ANY GOODS OR SERVICES TO A PUBLIC ENTITY, MAY NOT SUBMIT A BID ON A CONTRACT WITH A PUBLIC ENTITY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OR REPAIR OF A PUBLIC BUILDING OR PUBLIC WORK, MAY NOT SUBMIT BIDS ON LEASES OF REAL PROPERTY TO A PUBLIC ENTITY, MAY NOT BE AWARDED OR PERFORM WORK AS A CONTRACTOR, SUPPLIER, SUBCONTRACTOR, OR CONSULTANT UNDER A CONTRACT WITH ANY PUBLIC ENTITY, AND MAY NOT TRANSACT BUSINESS WITH ANY PUBLIC ENTITY IN EXCESS OF THE THRESHOLD AMOUNT PROVIDED IN SECTION 287.017, FLORIDA STATUTES, FOR CATEGORY TWO FOR A PERIOD OF 36 MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF BEING PLACED ON THE CONVICTED VENDOR LIST.

Legal 93222 Published 11/30/2023 and 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

PUBLIC SALE

We Stor of Middleburg, LLC will conduct a public sale to the highest bidder. The sale will take place online at selfstorageauction.com in enforcement of Florida Statutes section 83.806 ending Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 4:30pm on the following units. The company reserves the right to reject any bid and withdraw any items from the sale. All units contain household goods unless otherwise noted: Brian Blanton, Frank Morabito, and Sandra Waters.

Legal 93221 Published 11/30/2023 and 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: ROBERT W OTT-RLOVERLAND LLC, the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:

Certificate No: 923/2020
Legal Description: LOT 9 BLK 102 HIGHRIDGE ESTATE AS REC O R 2492 PG 254

Parcel ID No.: 160823-004356-000-00
Opening Bid Amount: \$1,869.26
Physical Address: 6209 OLGETHORPE AVE, KEYSTONE HEIGHTS

Classification: VACANT RESIDENTIAL
Name in which assessed: EARL & TATIANA NELSON, TATIANA NELSON

Said property being in the County of Clay, State of Florida.

Unless said certificate shall be redeemed according to law, the property described in such certificate shall be sold to the highest bidder online on the 10th day of January, 2024 at 9:30 A.M at www.clay.realtaxdeed.com.

Dated this 27th day of November, 2023
TARA S . GREEN
Clay County Clerk & Comptroller
Clay County, Florida
By: Christina Spadea
Deputy Clerk

Legal 93220 Published 11/30/2023, 12/7/2023, 12/14/2023 and 12/21/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF ACTION - CONSTRUCTIVE SERVICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION CASE NO. 2023CA001320 FREEDOM MORTGAGE CORPORATION, Plaintiff,

vs. KYLE EDWARD DAVIS AND MICHELLE FRANCES DAVIS, et. al.

TO: KYLE EDWARD DAVIS, whose residence is unknown and all parties having or claiming to have any right, title or interest in the property described in the mortgage being foreclosed herein. YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage on the following property: **LOT 4, BLOCK 75, BORDEN PLACE, ACCORDING TO THE MAP OR PLAT THEREOF, AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 2, PAGE(S) 25, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA.**

has been filed against you and you are re-

quired to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on counsel for Plaintiff, whose address is 6409 Congress Avenue, Suite 100, Boca Raton, Florida 33487 on or before (30 days from Date of First Publication of this Notice) and file the original with the clerk of this court either before service on Plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint or petition filed herein. WITNESS my hand and the seal of this Court at County, Florida, this 22nd day of November, 2023

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

BY: Chelsey Mason

DEPUTY CLERK

Legal 92926 Published 11/30/2023 and 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA IN AND FOR CLAY COUNTY GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION CASE NO. 10-2021-CA-000860 SUN WEST MORTGAGE COMPANY INC, Plaintiff,

vs. ANY AND ALL UNKNOWN PARTIES CLAIMING BY THROUGH, UNDER, AND AGAINST LAWRENCE L. HILL, A/K/A LAWRENCE LESLIE HILL, WHETHER SAID UNKNOWN PARTIES MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST AS SPOUSES, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEEES, OR OTHER CLAIMANTS, et. al., Defendant.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Summary Final Judgment of Foreclosure filed **November 8, 2023** entered in Civil Case No. 10-2021-CA-000860 of the Circuit Court of the Fourth Judicial Circuit Judicial Circuit in and for Clay County, Jacksonville, Florida, the Clerk of Court. Clerk of Court Duval County, will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash at www.Clay.RealForeclose.com in accordance with Chapter 45, Florida Statutes on the 10th day of January, 2024 at or on the following described property as set forth in said Summary Final Judgment, to-wit: Begin at the Southeast corner of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 34, Township 6 South, Range 26 East, and run thence due West 630 feet to a point; thence Northwest and parallel to State Highway No. 3 (also U.S. Highway No. 17) a distance of 550 feet more or less to an iron pipe at the Southeast corner of property deeded to Joe Stiltner by F.F. Hadscock; thence run Easterly along the South side of Bellamy Road 200 feet to the point and place of beginning; thence continue along said South side of Bellamy Road 65 feet to a point; thence turn and run Southerly and parallel to U.S. Highway No. 17 a distance of 284 feet; thence turn and run Westerly and parallel to Bellamy Road 65 feet; thence turn and run Northerly parallel to U.S. Highway No. 17 a distance of 284 feet; and being a plot 65 feet by 284 feet, and part of the lands described in Deed recorded in Deed Book 108, Page 212, of the Public Records of Clay County, Florida, Parcel Number: 34-06-26-015686-000-00

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the lis pendens, must file a claim before the clerk reports the surplus as unclaimed. Dated this 17th day of November, 2023. CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT As Clerk of the Court BY: Jennifer Brosky Deputy Clerk

If you are a person with a disability who needs an accommodation in order to access court facilities or participate in a court proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. To request such an accommodation, please contact Court Administration at least three business days prior to the required service by using one of the following methods: Phone - (904) 630-2564; Fax - (904) 630-1146; TTD/TTY - (800) 955-8770 (Florida Relay Service). E-Mail - crtntrp@coj.net.

Legal 92923 Published 11/30/2023 and 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION FILE NO. #2023CP000520 IN RE: ESTATE OF KENNETH WADE CARPENTER SR Deceased.

The administration of the estate of Kenneth Wade Carpenter Sr, deceased, whose date of death was June 25, 2023, is pending in the Circuit Court for Clay County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 825 N. Orange Ave., Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is November 30, 2023.

Attorney for Personal Representative: Paula F. Montoya

Paula F. Montoya, Esq., Attorney

Florida Bar Number: 103104

7345 W Sand Lake Rd. Suite 318

Orlando, FL 32819

Telephone: (407) 906-9126

Fax: (407) 906-9126

E-Mail: Paula@paulamontoyalaw.com

Secondary E-Mail: Info@paulamontoyalaw.com

Personal Representative: Paula Ann McKinney

Legal 92918 Published 11/30/2023 and 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

SUMMONS AND NOTICE OF ACTION BY PUBLICATION

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA CASE NO.: 10-2022-DP-000064 DIVISION: JV-E

IN THE INTEREST OF:

P.I.

DOB: 01/26/2022

MINOR CHILD

THE STATE OF FLORIDA

TO:

Robert Imler, FATHER

Address Unknown

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that a Petition has been filed in the above-styled Court by the FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES for termination of parental rights and permanent commitment for subsequent adoption of the above-named child, P.I., born January 6, 2022. You are hereby commanded to appear before **Honorable Angela M. Cox**, at the Clay County Courthouse, Juvenile Dependency Courtroom, 825 North Orange Avenue, Green Cove Springs, Florida at the hour of **2:00 p.m. o'clock on January 5, 2024 A.D.** You must appear at the hearing on the date and time specified.

FAILURE TO PERSONALLY APPEAR AT THIS ADVISORY HEARING CONSTITUTES CONSENT TO THE TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS TO THIS R.S. AND YOU MAY LOSE ALL LEGAL RIGHTS AS A PARENT TO THIS CHILD.

Pursuant to Sections 39.804(4)(d) and 63.082(6)(g), Florida Statutes, you are hereby informed of the availability of private placement with an adoption entity, as defined in Section 63.032(3), Florida Statutes.

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the Court ADA Coordinator at (904) 255-1695 or crtntrp@coj.net at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled court appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

WITNESS my hand as clerk of said Court and the Seal thereof, this 2nd day of November 2023.

Tara S. Green

Clerk of Said Court

By: Tammy Rosenbaum

Deputy Clerk

Legal 92805 Published 11/30/2023, 12/7/2023, 12/14/2023 and 12/21/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION FILE NUMBER: 2023-CP-000597 DIVISION: B

IN RE: ESTATE OF DOROTHY HIBBS ATTEBERRY, Deceased.

The administration of the estate of DOROTHY HIBBS ATTEBERRY, deceased, whose date of death was August 6, 2023, is pending in the Circuit Court for Clay County, Florida, Probate Division, the address

of which is Clay County Circuit Court, Probate Division, 825 North Orange Avenue, Green Cove Springs, Florida, 32043.

The name and address of the Personal Representative and the Personal Representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR THIRTY (30) DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE. ALL CLAIMS AND DEMANDS NOT SO FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702 OF THE FLORIDA PROBATE CODE WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of the first publication of this Notice is November 30, 2023.

Attorney for Personal Representative:

GERALDINE C. HARTIN, Esquire

Florida Bar 15201

3168 Highway 17, Suite A

Fleming Island, FL 32003

904-278-3888

geraldine.hartin@gmail.com

Personal Representative: THOMAS EARL ATTEBERRY

120 Birchwood Drive

Monroe, Louisiana, 71203

Legal 92804 Published 11/30/2023 and 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA CASE NO.: 2023-CP-000579 DIVISION: PROBATE

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF ANNA MARIE MISNER Deceased.

The administration of the estate of ANNA MARIE MISNER, deceased, is pending in the Circuit Court for Clay County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is the Clay County Courthouse, 825 North Orange Ave., Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. The names and addresses of the petitioner and the petitioner's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the Decedent and other persons having claims or demands against Decedent's estate, including unmatred, contingent or unliquidated claims, on whom a copy of this notice is served must file their claims with this court WITHIN THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBL

WITH THE CLERK NO LATER THAN THE DATE THAT THE CLERK REPORTS THE FUNDS AS UNCLAIMED. IF YOU FAIL TO FILE A CLAIM, YOU WILL NOT BE ENTITLED TO ANY REMAINING FUNDS. AFTER THE FUNDS ARE REPORTED AS UNCLAIMED, ONLY THE OWNER OF RECORD AS OF THE DATE OF THE LIS PENDENS MAY CLAIM THE SURPLUS.

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator at 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

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

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: RAM TAX LIEN FUND LP the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:
Certificate No.: 1268/2021
Legal Description: PT OF SW1/4 S5T5R24 A/K/A LOT 4 MIMOSA WOODS UNREC AS REC O R 1848 PG 1421
Parcel ID No.: 050524-005931-003-04
Opening Bid Amount: \$4,928.57
Physical Address: 101 PLANKTON AVE, MIDDLEBURG

Classification: MOBILE HOME
Name in which assessed: JOHN L & PATRICIA L HILLS, PATRICIA L HILLIS
Said property being in the County of Clay, State of Florida.

Unless said certificate shall be redeemed according to law, the property described in such certificate shall be sold to the highest bidder online on the 10th day of January, 2024 at 9:30 A.M. at www.clay.realtaxdeed.com.
Dated this 17th day of November, 2023
TARA S. GREEN
Clay County Clerk & Comptroller
Clay County, Florida
By: Christina Spadea
Deputy Clerk
Legal 92539 Published 11/23/2023, 11/30/2023, 12/7/2023 and 12/14/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF INTENT TO USE UNIFORM METHOD OF COLLECTING NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENTS

The City of Green Cove Springs, Florida (the "City") here by provides notice, pursuant to section 197.3632(3)(a), Florida Statutes, of its intent to use the uniform method of collecting non-ad valorem special assessments to be levied within the incorporated area of the City, for the cost of providing utility, roadways, stormwater, and other public infrastructure services, facilities, and programs for the Reynolds Park/Clay County Port within the incorporated area of the City commencing for the Fiscal Year beginning on October 1, 2024 and continuing until discontinued by the City. The City will consider the adoption of a resolution electing to use the uniform method of collecting such assessments authorized by section 197.3632, Florida Statutes, at a public hearing to be held at 7:00 p.m. on December 19, 2023 in City Hall, 321 Walnut Street, Green Cove Springs, Florida. Such resolution will state

the need for the levy and will contain a legal description of the boundaries of the real property subject to the levy. Copies of the proposed form of resolution, which contains the legal description of the real property subject to the levy, are on file at the City Manager's office in City Hall, located at 321 Walnut Street, Green Cove Springs, Florida. All interested persons are invited to attend.

In the event any person decides to appeal any decision by the City with respect to any matter relating to the consideration of the resolution at the above-referenced public hearing, a record of the proceeding may be needed and in such an event, such person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the public hearing is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence on which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation or an interpreter to participate in this proceeding should contact the City Clerk's Office at (904) 297-7500, ext. 3307, at least two days prior to the date of the hearing.

If you have any questions, please contact the City at (904) 297-7500, Monday through Thursday between 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
City of Green Cove Springs
Erin West, City Clerk
321 Walnut Street
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
L. Steve Kennedy, City Manager
Legal 92470 Published 11/23/2023, 11/30/2023, 12/7/2023 and 12/14/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

SUMMONS AND NOTICE OF ACTION BY PUBLICATION

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO.: 10-2021-DP-000065
DIVISION: JV - E
IN THE INTEREST OF:

J.M.
DOB: 03/30/2015
A MINOR CHILD
THE STATE OF FLORIDA
TO:

Johathan McConnell, FATHER
Address Unknown

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that a Petition has been filed in the above-styled Court by the FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES for termination of parental rights and permanent commitment for subsequent adoption of the above-named child, J.M. born March 30, 2015. You are hereby commanded to appear before Honorable Angela M. Cox, at the Clay County Courthouse, Juvenile Dependency Courtroom, 825 North Orange Avenue, Green Cove Springs, Florida at the hour of 2:00 p.m. o'clock on December 19, 2023, A.D. You must appear at the hearing on the date and time specified.

FAILURE TO PERSONALLY APPEAR AT THIS ADVISORY HEARING CONSTITUTES CONSENT TO THE TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS TO THIS CHILD. IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR ON THE DATE AND TIME SPECIFIED YOU MAY LOSE ALL LEGAL RIGHTS TO THE CHILD NAMED IN THE PETITION ATTACHED TO THIS NOTICE.

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the Court ADA Coordinator at (904) 255-1695 or crtntrp@coj.net at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately

upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled court appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

WITNESS my hand as clerk of said Court and the Seal thereof, this 14th day of November 2023.
Tara S. Green
as Clerk of Said Court
By: Tammy Rosenbaum
Legal 92251 Published 11/23/2023, 11/30/2023, 12/7/2023 and 12/14/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

The online bidding and auction for Storage Rentals of America, 369 Blanding Blvd. will be held online at lockerfox.com through December 21, 2023, at 11:00AM.

The entire contents of the following units will be sold to satisfy a lien and other charges according to FL Statutes 83.801.

PERSONAL PROPERTY/HOUSEHOLD ITEMS:

- Unit # Tenant or Business Name
 - A28 Michele Monical
 - A64 Jenna Montalbano
 - A67 Shanelle Sillon
 - C29 John Caballero
 - D33 Dana Banks
 - D74 Jerry Dunn
 - E23 John Caballero
 - F24 Steven Alvarez
 - G05 Susan Silas
 - H30 Reece Rowling
 - H31 Harrelle Boatwright
 - I21 Jack Gable
 - I64 Aina Robinson
 - I85 Jerry Dunn
 - J09 Thomas Tyson
 - J11 Samantha Odum
 - K08 Marla Jimenez-Rosa
 - M06 Jeff Carbonell
 - M30 Martha Jones
 - Total Units: 19
- Sale being held to satisfy Landlords' lien. The seller reserves the right to reject any/all bids and to withdraw any unit from sale. CASH ONLY. Contents to be removed within 48 hours.
Storage Rentals of America
369 Blanding Blvd.
Orange Park, FL 32073
904-977-6400

Legal 91831 Published 11/30/2023 and 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper.

REQUEST FOR BID NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN sealed bids will be received until 4:00 P.M., Thursday, January 11, 2024, for the following:
RFB NO. 23/24-005, INSTALLATION OF IRRIGATION COMPONENTS AND SOD AT NEPTUNE SPORTS COMPLEX

Bids will be opened at 9:00 A.M., or as soon thereafter, on Friday, January 12, 2024 in the Clay County Administration Building, Conference Room "B" Fourth Floor, 477 Houston St, Green Cove Springs, Florida and through the County's electronic bidding system as well. Bids will not be valid unless received by the bid deadline.

Proposals require a five (5%) percent bid bond and may not be withdrawn after the scheduled opening time for a period of thirty (30) days. The term bid bond shall include bonds or cashier or certified checks payable to the County. The solicitation package is available at: [HTTPS://PROCUREMENT.OPENGOV.COM/PORTAL/](https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/)

CLAYCOUNTY?STATUS=ALL. In order to submit a response to this solicitation the respondent must be registered on Clay County's Public Portal.

For information concerning procedures for responding to this Bid, contact Stephanie Puhalla in the Purchasing Department at (904) 284-6388 or by email: purchasing@claycountygov.com.

Bidders are prohibited from contacting, by any means, whether orally, telephonically, electronically or in writing, any member of the Board, any County employee, including the County Manager, the County Attorney or the Commission Auditor, any member of the designated Evaluation Committee or any agent of the County regarding the Request for bids in any respect during the Request for Bid Period. The Request for Bid Period during which no contact may occur commences from the date of publication of the notice of a Request for Bids and ends upon a Bid Decision becoming final, i.e. after the notice of bid protest period of 72 hours has expired. However, in the event of a notice of protest, the no contact rule continues in place during the Protest Period and does not end until a resolution of the protest has occurred and become final. The following exceptions exist to the no-contact rule:

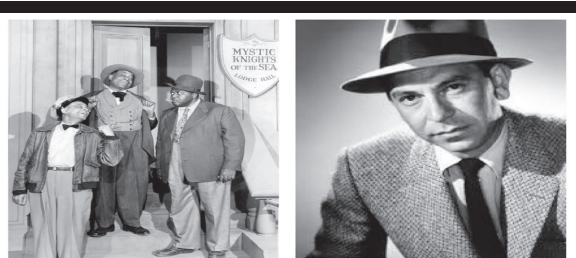
- a. Inquiries may be submitted to the Purchasing Department if specifically provided in the Request for Bids;
- b. Pre-bid conferences provided for in the Request for Bids; and
- c. Formal presentations by Bidders to the designated Evaluation Committee or to the Board or any committee thereof specifically contemplated in the Request for Bids.

The Board reserves the right and power to reject any and all Bids without cause and to waive technical and non-technical or non-material defects in the Request for Bids or submittal of any Bid, and in its discretion to re-advertise the Request for Bids. The Board reserves the right to award Bids, quotes, or Proposals which would be in the Best Interest of the County. Interested vendors are advised that the Clay County Board of County Commissioners has a local preference policy and Buy American policy. The complete policy for both can be viewed at: <https://www.claycountygov.com/government/purchasing/vendor-information>.

A PERSON OR AFFILIATE WHO HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE CONVICTED VENDOR LIST FOLLOWING A CONVICTION FOR A PUBLIC ENTITY CRIME MAY NOT SUBMIT A BID ON A CONTRACT TO PROVIDE ANY GOODS OR SERVICES TO A PUBLIC ENTITY, MAY NOT SUBMIT A BID ON A CONTRACT WITH A PUBLIC ENTITY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OR REPAIR OF A PUBLIC BUILDING OR PUBLIC WORK, MAY NOT SUBMIT BIDS ON LEASES OF REAL PROPERTY TO A PUBLIC ENTITY, MAY NOT BE AWARDED OR PERFORM WORK AS A CONTRACTOR, SUPPLIER, SUBCONTRACTOR, OR CONSULTANT UNDER A CONTRACT WITH ANY PUBLIC ENTITY, AND MAY NOT TRANSACT BUSINESS WITH ANY PUBLIC ENTITY IN EXCESS OF THE THRESHOLD AMOUNT PROVIDED IN SECTION 287.017, FLORIDA STATUTES, FOR CATEGORY TWO FOR A PERIOD OF 36 MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF BEING PLACED ON THE CONVICTED VENDOR LIST.

Legal 93687 Published 12/7/2023 in Clay County's Clay Today newspaper

NOTICE OF ACTION FOR DISSOLUTION



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Order By Mail: Send a Check or Money

Order To: CED Direct, PO Box 389, Yazoo City, MS 39194

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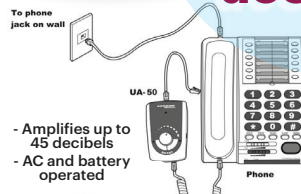
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Apply Online: www.ftri.org/products/serene-ua-50



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local laws. We are not responsible for ad content. Ads are subject to approval by the publisher.

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All line ads are 4 lines, 20-25 characters per line. Additional lines may be purchased. All rates are NET.

PRIVATE PARTY	COMMERCIAL
1 week \$14.50 \$23	1 week
2 week \$24 \$40	2 week
3 week \$32 \$56	3 week
4 week \$40 \$72	4 week

Cost includes online at:
claytodayonline.com

EMPLOYMENT SPOTLIGHT
Ads are \$27 per column inch with a minimum of 2"
ESTATE & GARAGE SALES
\$21
BUSINESS & SERVICE DIRECTORY
1.5" x 2" \$80 for 4 weeks
1.5" x 4" \$160 for 4 weeks

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www.Cash4audio.com

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LOW COST HEALTH INSURANCE. Government subsidies available for families earning \$111,000 or less a year. See if you qualify. Call for your free quote! 1-888-966-2298

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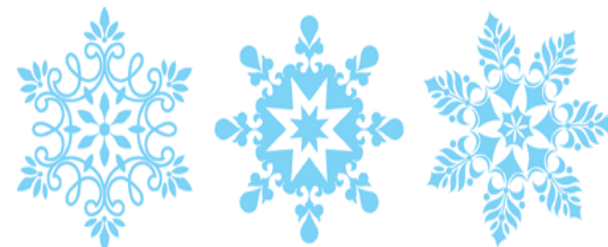
PROTECT YOUR HOME from pests safely and affordably. Roaches, Bed Bugs, Rodent, Termite, Spiders and other pests. Locally owned

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NANI

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- **VIAGRA and CIALIS USERS!** 50 Generic Pills SPECIAL \$99.00. 100% guaranteed. 24/7 CALL NOW! 888-445-5928 Hablamos Español
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- **Water damage cleanup & restoration:** A small amount of water can lead to major damage and mold growth in your home. Our trusted professionals do complete repairs to protect your family and your home's value! Call 24/7: 1-888-872-2809

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- **Prepare for power outages today** with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a FREE 7-Year warranty with qualifying purchase* Call 1-855-948-6176 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move.
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- **BATH & SHOWER UPDATES** in as little as ONE DAY! Affordable prices- No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & Military Discounts available. Call: 855-761-1725
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REACH 20 MILLION HOMES
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Get back in the game

Playing football with an injury usually makes it worse. It's the same when you ignore a hernia, but the signs are easy to miss. Here are some hernia symptoms that often go unrecognized:

- Pain in the pelvic area
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fever
- Constipation
- Feeling full and bloated
- Heartburn
- Weakness and muscle fatigue in the upper leg or groin
- Pain when lifting or coughing

If left untreated, your hernia could grow, get more painful, or even become dangerous at some point. And a hernia won't go away on its own. The good news is today's minimally invasive hernia treatment options, including robotic-assisted surgery, can offer you fast recovery.

Tackle your hernia like a pro!

For more information or to request an appointment:

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