



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

Construction crews have stayed on schedule building a pump station and drain field at South Fork of Black Creek in Green Cove Springs and installing 17 miles of pipes that will siphon as much as 10 million gallons from the creek, through a 12-acre treatment cell and into Alligator Creek, which would replenish lakes Brooklyn and Geneva in Keystone Heights.

Construction of Black Creek Restoration Project flowing smoothly

Work to replenish lakes Geneva, Brooklyn in Keystone Heights expected to conclude next year

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – The throaty sound of a crane is often muffled by the constant whir of traffic 30 yards away along State Road 21. But with each burst of power and belch of diesel smoke, another 15 feet of the Black Creek Restoration Project is completed.

There haven't been any significant setbacks. Soon, the \$118 million project will be operational to send as much as 10 million gallons of excess water daily 17 miles

from the South Fork of Black Creek to Alligator Creek and into lakes Brooklyn and Geneva. At the current pace, the lakes, once considered luxurious weekend playgrounds for affluent Jacksonville families, will finally lap what used to be their natural shorelines.

"I'm very pleased with the progress that they're making," said Save Our Lakes Organization President Vivian Katz-James. "I think later this year, they'll have the filtration system. They're going to do some testing once they get all the pipes down. We're probably looking at getting the water flowing into Alligator Creek next year. If so, that would be incredible."

SEE WATER, 8



So, you want to be a cop?

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – The biggest fear of any police officer is silence, especially following a physical confrontation with a suspect who's considered violent.

When Clay County Sheriff's Office and Jacksonville Sheriff's Office deputies jumped into the murky waters of Little Black Creek on a Sunday afternoon after chasing a man suspected of an armed carjacking and home invasion, the law enforcement agencies finally wrestled control of the 19-year-old in the chest-deep creek.

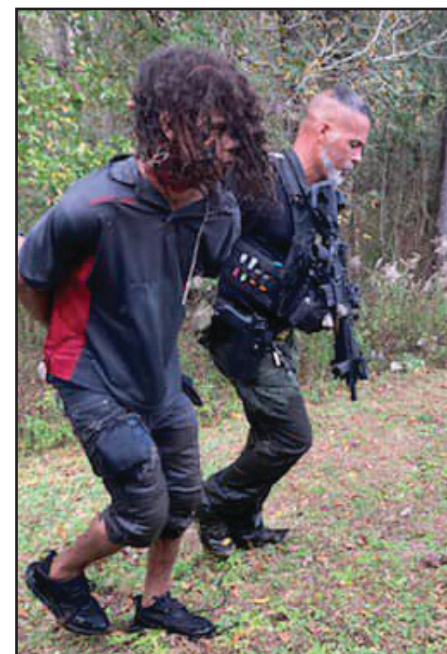
One deputy didn't immediately answer when the command tried to account for everyone. They knew he went into the water, but they didn't see or hear from him for more than a minute after Carlos Matute was drug away in handcuffs. Just as confusion turned to fear, the deputy finally keyed his microphone and said he was wet and cold, but all right.

Not knowing is the biggest challenge of being in law enforcement.

"It's never what you want to hear," said Sheriff Michelle Cook.

Every day, the men and women of law enforcement face some of the worst society has to offer. The job is both rewarding and complicated. There are sights and skirmishes the public doesn't know.

Being a cop isn't limited to a 10-second cellphone video on the local news.



Clay County Sheriff's Office deputy Ricardo Valdes leaves the Little Black Creek soaked and muddy after capturing a 19-year-old armed carjacking and armed home invasion suspect, Carlos Matute, following a several-hour manhunt along Henley Road to County Road 220 on Dec. 10 that included K-9 and helicopter support in Middleburg. Deputies wrestled with the suspect for minutes in the creek before finally subduing him.

It's patience and restraint. It's compassion and compliance. It's a high-five from an elementary student walking home

SEE LAW, 3



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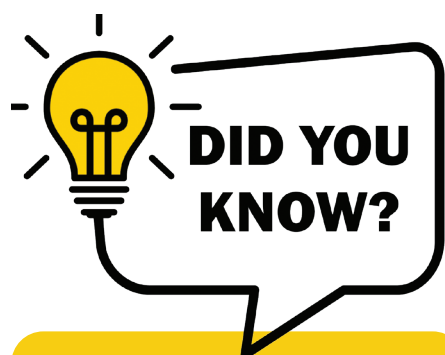
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Every week, Clay Today will test or enlighten your knowledge on a variety of topics. This week, the Rat Pack and ending segregation in Las Vegas.



While the Super Bowl and Las Vegas are fresh on everyone's minds, few know the famed Rat Pack – Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Dean Martin, Peter Lawford and Joey Bishop – played a significant role in ending racial segregation in Las Vegas. Sinatra once refused to play at the segregated Sands Hotel unless they gave Davis a room, and a year later, Davis performed with Sinatra at the Sands. No hotel wanted to be known for turning away members of the Rat Pack who refused to enter a property if they banned Davis. The legendary performer, affectionately known as Mr. Entertainment, became so revered in Las Vegas that casinos along Las Vegas Boulevard dimmed their lights for one minute when he died in 1990 of throat cancer.

Cheers! White Claw now legal for large parties on public property

Ordinance adopted to permit ready-to-drink beverages for events

By Jack Randall
jack@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – With the Northeast Florida Scottish Highland Games & Festival and the Clay County Agricultural Fair just around the corner, the Board of County Commissioners decided to raise their glasses – figuratively.

In a 5-0 vote, the BCC officially adopted a resolution that would amend a county-wide ordinance to permit “ready-to-drink” beverages for large events on county-owned property.

Previously, the ordinance only permitted beer and wine to be sold or consumed for public or private events with 500 or more guests. While hard liquor is still prohibited, the resolution now lets Clay County festival-goers enjoy hard seltzers and other ready-to-drink alcoholic beverages.

Some famous picks are White Claw, Truly, Vizzy, High Noon and Happy Dad.

One infamous pick is Four Loko, which no longer contains caffeine or taurine.

Ready-to-drink beverages have equivalent or sometimes less alcohol by volume, said County Attorney Courtney Grimm during the meeting. She informed the BCC that upcoming events in the county have expressed interest in serving them. She said these beverages would have a positive economic effect on business at the fairgrounds.

Commissioner Betsy Condon found no issue with adding ready-to-drink beverages to the existing ordinance, considering the similar alcoholic content.

“I guess it’s become trendy. To my understanding, the most popular brand of this is ‘White Claw’... I don’t know what it is. I don’t need to know what it is, but like I said, it fits within our ordinance.”

“(At events) we get more problems with heat exhaustion than the actual alcohol,” said Vice-Chair Mike Cella.

“(These beverages) are already sold at the counter at convenience stores. They come in cans – not that I’ve tested it – but I did look at the ingredients,

and they do have a lesser percentage of alcohol than some wines, actually.”

Cella acknowledged the potential positive impact of “ready-to-drink” beverages, especially for nonprofits hosting fundraising events.

The BCC meets at 4 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month at the County Administration Building, 477 Houston St. in Green Cove Springs.



Scottish Games return

The 29th Annual Northeast Florida Scottish Games and Festival return to the Clay County Fair Grounds on Saturday, February 24 from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Rep. Aaron Bean backs Alejandro Mayorkas’ impeachment

Clay Today staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rep. Aaron Bean voted to impeach Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas on Feb. 13 for the “willful and systemic refusal to comply with the law.”

Following an unsuccessful impeachment vote a week prior, the second impeachment trial passed by a single vote, 214–213. Mayorkas is the second Cabinet

member to be impeached in U.S. history.

The congressman released the following statement:

“I have visited our southern border twice now, and I can say without a shadow of a doubt, it is a



Aaron Bean

turnstile for crime, cartels, and drugs. Secretary Mayorkas doesn’t want to end the mayhem at the border. Rather he blatantly supports and is forcibly pushing for this madness. That’s why over 8 million illegal



Alejandro Mayorkas

immigrants have crossed our border,” said Bean, who represents Clay Clay as part of Congressional District 4.

“When it comes to the border crisis, Americans are looking for leadership – not denials, deflections and distractions. Secretary Mayorkas’ actions cannot go unanswered, nor can his failures be unaccounted for. The American people deserve better.”

CLAY TODAY

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Law

from page 1

home from school and a hug from someone whose problem was quickly resolved.

It's also chasing criminals through parking lots. It's listening to lies and fake stories. It's the combative driver who's had too much to drink. It's the overwhelming sense of helplessness and urgency when a child goes missing.

"Being a cop isn't a job," said Orange Park Police Lt. Cody Monroe. "Being a cop is a calling."

Statistics show that in the last 30 years, at least 40% of law enforcement officers quit in the first five years, Sheriff Michelle Cook said.

"The workforce is dwindling," she said. "You can train somebody for what they're going to see, smell or hear on the job. We're like companies who have to do more with less."

Cook said 70% of her deputies have less than five years of experience.

Agencies rely on technology to keep pace with criminal ingenuity and fill the void. Traffic cameras and license plate readers are installed throughout the county. Green Cove Springs and Orange Park have red-light cameras. Many businesses and some residents can link their surveillance to the sheriff's office's Connect Clay County program, allowing dispatchers to get real-time information when a crime has occurred.



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY CCSO

Sgt. Zach Cox displays the wear and tear a deputy endures during the simplest of assignments. He worked the parking lot during the 2022 Clay County Agricultural Fair and wound up covered in mud after he helped people get out of the parking lot following a torrential storm.

Two other vital tools are cellphones and doorbell cameras. Cellphones can be tracked, and home cameras often catch a suspect committing and leaving a crime.

But the most effective tool is a deputy or police officer on the beat, where they can create relationships and garner valuable intelligence. It also puts them face-to-face with bad people.

"If we're involved in a situation where we have to go hands-on with somebody to

place them under arrest, emotions can seem to be high or high-strung, or a kind of no-nonsense type attitude," CCSO Sgt. Zach Cox said. "You never know what (a deputy) has dealt with in the past. Seven hours earlier, they could have been on a death scene. They could have been to a traffic fatality crash, and their range of emotions is just all over the place. Then you get the one person who has a warrant and doesn't want to put their hands behind their back, and they're amped up.

"It takes a special person, a special demeanor, to be a deputy," Cox said.

Clay Today poured through the arrest reports during a three-week timeframe, starting on Jan. 23 and ending on Feb. 13. The numbers tell just how difficult their jobs can be – five counts of attempted second-degree murder of sheriff's office deputies, 15 cases of resisting, obstructing or opposing arrest, four counts of felony fleeing with lights and sirens active, three counts of aggravated assault against law enforcement and one count of battery to a jail deputy. Those who get past the first five years said the job is rewarding. The challenge is building experience, expanding training, learning tolerance and learning to be numb to man's indiscretions.

"There are few other professions out there that give you the opportunity to make such a difference in the world," Monroe said. "You'll never be rich. You'll not likely be famous. But I promise you, when you prepare to leave this world and move on to the next, you'll never have to worry about

whether you made a difference."

Sheriff's Office Sgt. Ed Kroh said veteran officers become immune to horrific scenes. It's why few talk about the details of their shifts. And most need an hour or two to "de-compress," another deputy said.

Kroh said he found a child who had been severely mauled by a pit bull on his first day on the job. Others have seen the results of a suicide or traffic accident.

And most, if not all, have had to use their training in a "hands-on" situation.

"I mean, you graduate the police academy with a certain demeanor," Cox said. "After the police academy, you're just excited to put on the uniform, so it takes time, years of service, to grasp a different demeanor and a way to put it into effect in a good way."

Even when the suspect is armed and on the loose. Matute broke into a couple's home at 3 a.m. armed with a handgun on Dec. 3. He then stole the couple's car, according to JSO, before starting an intensive search that lasted 12 hours and involved JSO, CCSO and the Florida Highway Patrol. Matute abandoned his car at a storage facility on Blanding near Henley Road before running through backyards along Henley Road for nearly two hours. He fought with deputies and K-9s before being taken into custody.

"It turned out OK," Cook said. "That's the way we want it to end. Everybody got to go home that night."

Only to get up the next morning and do it all over again.

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Proposed Senate bill would pull plug on some electric car parking spaces

By Jacob Ogles
FloridaPolitics.com

An agriculture package in the Senate now has language leaving it to a state agency where to cap charging spots.

An agriculture bill includes provisions that could prohibit developers from dedicating too many parking spaces for electric vehicles.

Language in legislation advanced by the Senate would preempt local governments from requiring more parking lot spaces to be reserved for electric vehicles. Instead, state regulations would be the only threshold imposed.

But during committee discussion, Sen. Jay Collins, a Tampa Republican carrying the bill, made clear the measure would outlaw extra spaces even if developers want to put them in. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer

“The Department percentage will be the cap,” Collins said. “That’s what this is. If they went above that, they would not be in concert with this law. That’s just so people can have parking spots. You can’t park in an electric car space if you are not in an electric car. It’s about percentages of people on the road.”

Services will control the threshold setting.

“The Department percentage will be the cap,” Collins said. “That’s what this is. If they went above that, they would not be in concert with this law. That’s just so people can have parking spots. You can’t park in an electric car space if you are not in an electric car. It’s about percentages of people on the road.”

That appeared to surprise Sen. Tina Polsky, a Boca Raton Democrat, who thought the legislation would only preempt local governments putting regulations in excess of state requirements.

“I thought this was just a preemption,” she said. “Like if my city of Boca Raton said any new buildings had to have five electric parking vehicle spots, and you’re saying they can’t put that requirement on. But it sounds like you are also saying if a development voluntarily puts six spots on and the Department of Ag says the max is five, they can’t do that.”

Collins said the state would cap spots, though he stressed that would be based on the percentage of spaces in lots, not setting a number of spaces.

“We’re going to have up to a

SEE PARKING, 5

OPINIONS



Let’s celebrate Black contributions, successes during all 12 months

By Don Coble
Managing Editor

While I grew up listening to bands like Lynyrd Skynyrd, Yes, Grand Funk Railroad, Chicago and Bruce Springsteen, I found the Super Bowl halftime show featuring Usher to be really entertaining. I was impressed with his masterful delivery of song, dance and energy. I had to look it up, but I can understand why he’s sold 80 million albums worldwide.



Don Coble

I was also very disappointed with the National Football League’s decision to feature “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” also known as the Black National Anthem.

That observation has nothing to do with race. It’s because we allow politicians, big businesses and activists from both sides of the aisle to keep us divided because it’s good for business and elections. If we found a middle ground on important issues and used reasonable debate to solve other problems, professional antagonists who make a living on creating unrest would go out of business.

The song was written in 1900 by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson, and a segregated chorus from Stanton School in Jacksonville was the first to perform it.

We shouldn’t have a white national

anthem. Or a Black national anthem. We have one national anthem for all Americans. Whether you’re a man, a woman, straight, gay, conservative, progressive or indifferent, we are one people, not defined by labels, who should be united for the common good.

We can’t keep allowing ourselves to be subdivided into categories or distracted by pacification. When we do, as one side succeeds, the other feels like it came at its expense. Actually, it comes at society’s expense because it pushes deeper into our foxholes.

Now, we are midway through Black History Month. It was a noble gesture that started in 1976 because our nation was slowly moving away from our ugly past, which made the Civil Rights Movement necessary.

There was so much racial hatred in this country for nearly 100 years, spawned and perpetuated by Jim Crow laws. But as we evolved and moved forward, we held onto those divisional old labels – “white” and “Black.”

Black History Month is a time to celebrate and honor Black contributions that were essential pillars of the country’s growth. Those celebrations should be part of our everyday life because I respect, appreciate and admire Blacks who’ve played roles in our country’s development.

And I do it every day. Of every week. Of every month. Such reverence shouldn’t be limited to a single month in an appointment book.

My father once told me to be careful of someone patting you on the back because they may have their other hand

SEE CONTRIBUTIONS, 5

Word

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.

Maladroit: (uh-KWIZ-uh-tiv) an adjective meaning “incompetent” or “very awkward.” It is usually used in formal speech and writing and often describes people who lack skill in handling situations.

“The governor has been criticized for his maladroit handling of the budget crisis.”

This Week in History

Five years ago, 2019

- One year after the Marjory Stoneman Douglass shooting, the Clay County School Board voted to create and staff its own police department. This was a move that was initially supported, but high cost and poor performance resulted in the School Board rescinding the decision in 2023. Currently, negotiations are ongoing to put the CCDS police under the management of the Clay County Sheriff’s Office.

- St. Luke’s Catholic Church hosted the inaugural “A Night to Shine,” a formal cotillion for those with special needs. The event was organized by the Tim Tebow Foundation.

- Save Our Lakes Organization members praised the effects of the Black Creek Restoration project, which takes water from the oft-flooded Black Creek and shifts it to depleted Keystone Heights lakes.

10 years ago, 2014

- After pleas from many Middleburg residents, the Board of County Commissioners sent another petition to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection regarding the dubious road fill product EZ Base, which is known to contain arsenic and other toxins.

- The St. Johns River Water Management District approved spending up to \$100,000 to remove obstructions in Alligator Creek that may be hindering water flow downstream to the Keystone Heights lakes in Clay County.

20 years ago, 2004

- Clay County School Superintendent David Owens announced plans to run for

SEE HISTORY, 5

Send us a letter ...

We’d like to hear from you. Perhaps you are concerned about the county commission, the school board or your city council or commission, sit down and take a few moments to write us a letter. All we ask is that you keep it civil, no name-calling and write no more than 600 words. All we ask is that you stick to local issues, be clear and make a point. We reserve the right to edit for AP Stylebook errors, grammar and spelling. In your email, type Letter to the Editor in your subject and send it to Managing Editor Don Coble at don@claytodayonline.com

Opinions ...

The views and opinions expressed on this page are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Clay Today.

History

from page 4

re-election, which Owens would eventually win. In total, Owens served as superintendent for 12 years.

- About 248 residents attended a Florida Department of Transportation forum to voice their opposition to a plan to build a four-lane connector road on Argyle Forest Boulevard and Wells Road on the west side of Blanding Boulevard. Residents spoke against plundering area wetlands and the taking of homes as reasons not to build the road.

30 years ago, 1994

- Orange Park Mayor Ted Coleman was set to square off against challenger Earle Theus for a seat on Orange Park Town Council.
- Volunteers from Mothers Against Drunk Driving erected a heart along Park

Avenue in front of Orange Park Town Hall to raise awareness about drunk driving

40 years ago, 1984

- E. Wayne Geiger, Clay County Tax Collector for 32 years, announced he would not seek re-election in 1984. He said after enduring seven unopposed elections since 1952, Geiger said it was time for someone younger to run for the office.

- Jesse B. Tynes Jr., Clay County School Superintendent, announced plans to run for re-election. He was first elected in 1964.

- J.C. Cribbs garnered front page coverage in Clay Today for starting a craze. He is credited as the man who created the first "Pray for me, I drive on Blanding" bumper sticker.

50 years ago, 1974

- Robert Gay Construction Company of Jacksonville was awarded a \$928,000 contract to build Lakeside Elementary School for the Clay County School District.

Letter to the Editor

Bruce Friedman replies to recent Letter to Editor

On Jan. 18, Clay Today posted a Letter to the Editor written by Hank A. Vitani, who had questions about the Clay County District Schools policies on challenging and removing books from libraries. Middleburg's Bruce Friedman, who has challenged hundreds of titles, responded to Vitani's letter.

Dear Mr. Vitani (and the CCDS community):

The decision to let a minor child read adult content belongs to the child's parents and not the child itself, or the librarians. Parental rights outweigh the child's desires and the librarian's. If you want to provide adult literature to your child, nobody will stop you. There are public libraries for such moments. Also, there's online sources; various vendors sell these books, none are "banned."

Many parents don't want "spicy" adult content in our schools. I'm one of them.

Bruce Friedman
Orange Park

You also implied I threatened members of the board and admin. They know I am a man of my word. It was a promise, not a threat.

I've already delivered on it. Their names are mentioned in my reports, and more than before, the community is discussing book content rather than little old me. Exactly as I wanted.

As they had doxed me ("accidentally" released my home address and phone number...), I know that can be uncomfortable. I chose to not be that aggressive. FYI, they've also "accidentally" doxed everyone that ever challenged a book. Accordingly, I feel the process of challenging a book should be paperless and anonymous - we could fix things quicker that way.

Regarding political parties: Let's just help each other protect America's children. Afterwards, everyone can vote as per their heart's desire. Free country.

more EV stations and they do get approved to it, now you've got to cut the concrete to get the pipe laid," she said.

Jacob Ogles has covered politics in Florida since 2000 for regional outlets, including SRQ Magazine in Sarasota, The News-Press in Fort Myers and The Daily Commercial in Leesburg. His work has appeared nationally in The Advocate, Wired and other publications. Events like SRQ's Where The Votes Are workshops made Ogles one of South-west Florida's most respected political analysts, and outlets like WWSB ABC 7 and WSRQ Sarasota have featured his insights. He can be reached at jacobogles@hotmail.com.

Parking

from page 4

percentage," Collins said. "You can't say we're going to have 40% at all of our hotels will be electric parking. That max number will be the limitation on this."

That drew concerns from contractors. Theresa King, President of the Florida Building and Construction Trades Council, said the new language getting lumped into an agriculture package sounded alarms. At the least, she said the matter should be discussed in an individual bill.

"If you are going to look at the dollars and you are worried about subdivisions or complexes or strip malls, and all of a sudden, they grow in popularity and they need

Contributions

from page 4

lifting your wallet from your back pocket. It took me a long time to realize he was saying don't be distracted by a real issue, like the man behind the curtain pulling levers and igniting flames in "The Wizzard of Oz."

Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan said removing the Tribute to the Women of the Southern Confederacy monument in December was necessary because "Symbols matter. We signal a belief in our shared humanity."

Does it change what happened before, during and after the Civil War? No. Will it help the city wash away the historic memories of our sullied past? No. Should it remind us of a past we should never revisit? Yes.

Moreover, did it solve any of the city's real problems? The day the monument was taken down, two men were murdered in separate incidents in Jacksonville.

According to Wallet Hub, Jacksonville had the second-highest murder rate in Florida in 2023 and the 27th-highest in the United States. But if you're focusing on monuments instead of issues that affect everyone, you have one hand patting your back and another in your back pocket.

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CLUES ACROSS

- Golf scores
- Shock therapy
- Ballplayer's tool
- Quench one's thirst
- Female relatives of American war vets (abbr.)
- Every one of two or more things
- Member of Muslim people
- Play
- Type of cheese
- Type of lounge chair
- ___ King Cole, musician
- Fellows
- North, Central and South
- In an early way
- Foes
- Georgia rockers
- Cryptocurrency
- Narrow path along a slope
- Disallow
- Joyousness
- Inaccessible
- Evoke emotions
- Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- Boston Celtic punk rockers (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

- Pacific Standard Time
- Protruding ridge on nematodes
- Indian king
- Type of milk
- One who brings home the bacon
- More comprehensible
- Connected with sense of touch
- Red mineral
- Breezed through
- Therefore
- Supplement with difficulty
- Early kingdom of Syria
- Satisfy

- They confuse doctors (abbr.)
- Brass instrument
- Domesticated animal
- Ribonucleic acid
- Snakelike fish
- Woman (French)
- Economically-minded aircraft
- When you hope to get somewhere
- Tease
- Actress Gretchen
- Midway between northeast and east
- Inoffensive
- Yellowish cotton cloth
- Consume
- Does not tell the truth
- Improved something
- Spiritual leader
- Abba ___, Israeli politician
- Fix
- Evergreen tree genus
- Swiss river
- Prejudice
- Major C. European river
- Long, narrow strap
- Male parent

Robin Campbell wins Teacher of the Year

Philip Turturro selected top School-Related employee; Allison Sanders honored as Rookie Teacher of the Year

By Jack Randall
jack@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – The Clay Education Foundation and Clay County District Schools honored its best of the best Thursday night at the annual Apple Awards at the Thrasher-Horne Center.

Robin Campbell, the science department head at Wilkinson Junior High, was overwhelmed with emotion upon winning

Clay Education Foundation’s Teacher of the Year in front of hundreds of attendees from across the school district.

“I am incredibly grateful. We have an incredible student body and administration. I am in shock. It is such an amazing night,” Campbell said.

When Superintendent David Broskie read her name on stage, the section in the audience comprised of Campbell’s fans –



Students, faculty, families and friends cheered and waved banners to support their favorite teachers.



STAFF PHOTOS BY JACK RANDALL

Superintendent David Broskie (left) and School Board member Beth Clark (right) congratulated Campbell for her dedication.



Robin Campbell, a science teacher at Wilkinson Junior High, was selected as the Teacher of the Year by Clay Education Foundation, while Doctors Inlet Elementary ISS liaison Philip Turturro won the School-Related Employee of the Year at the annual Apple Awards on Nov. 8 at the Thrasher-Horne Center.

coworkers, colleagues, students, family and friends – clapped and cheered along with the rest of the student body.

It was an award that was well deserved. Campbell was described as someone with an innate ability to infuse enthusiasm and curiosity into every scientific concept she introduced. She makes complex subjects accessible, fostering an environment where questions are encouraged and celebrated. Her interactive teaching methods, from captivating experiments to engaging discussions, turn the classroom into a discovery laboratory. Campbell truly believes that every student can and will achieve higher levels of success when they leave her class compared to when they entered. She inspires her students to reach higher and higher levels of achievement and never sets a limit to how high they can go.

In recognition of her dedication and enthusiasm, Campbell was gifted a new, fully paid 2024 Chevy Trax, courtesy of Garber Automall in Green Cove Springs.

Philip Turturro won School-Related Employee of the Year.

Turturro serves as the Internal School Suspension liaison at Doctors Inlet Elementary. When he first arrived at Doctors Inlet Elementary a few years ago, Turturro set a goal to remove the stigma of ISS being a place of “punishment” and replace it with a place of social, emotional, and educational growth. In addition to his ISS responsibilities, Turturro created a three-part school-wide mentoring program. The premise is to foster and build positive relationships with students outside of the standard classroom setting.

Turturro swelled with emotion. “I had the opportunity to meet all the finalists. I thought, ‘I don’t know how the county is going to narrow it down.’ Everyone is so amazing and professional and a tremendous asset to the county. I’m so thankful. Everyone is so overqualified and

SEE TEACHER, 7

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Campbell was gifted a new, fully paid 2024 Chevy Trax courtesy of Garber Automall in Green Cove Springs.

Teacher

from page 6

deserving," he said.

Allison Sanders won Rookie Teacher of the Year.

Sanders began her educational career at Keystone Heights Elementary as a paraprofessional before becoming a behavioral health assistant. She completed her bachelor's

degree in education and was hired as an EBD Self-Contained Teacher in December of 2022. Sanders has embraced every professional development opportunity and internalizes feedback provided during administrative classroom visits. Her colleagues describe her as "having a strong work ethic, committed to her students, engaging, adaptable, passionate, creative and dedicated."

Rookie of the year Allison Sanders

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Allison Sanders never hesitated when asked about the significance of being selected as the Rookie Teacher of the Year during the Apple Awards presented by the Clay Education Foundation.

"My sixth graders are great," she said. She teaches math and science to students from third through sixth grade.

That affinity is why principal Elizabeth Turbeville nominated her.

"She has very strong relationships with students, and she has helped each of them make tremendous progress," Turbeville said. "Her data is outstanding. She's just an all-around amazing teacher and individual."

Sanders was honored with the Teacher and School-Related Employee of the Year during the Apple Award ceremonies on Feb. 8 at the Thrasher-Horne Center. This is the first time the foundation has offered the rookie category.

She was picked ahead of two other finalists before the awards.

Sanders is a self-contained teacher for students with emotional behavioral disorders. She has a demonstrative style to capture her students' attention and keep them engaged.



Allison Sanders, Keystone Heights Elementary was selected as the Rookie Teacher of the Year.

"Even though the numbers (of students) are low, it takes a good bit to make them want to be there and pull something from it," Sanders said.

"I nominated her and felt very compelled to do so," Turbeville said. "Every principal in the district had the opportunity to nominate someone they felt strongly about a strong first- or second-year teacher. I feel like she is among the best at our school, even our veteran teachers."

SEE ROOKIE, 9



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Water

from page 1

The restoration project seemed like a pipe dream for nearly 40 years, but it's quickly becoming a reality as crews wrap up construction of a massive pump station at Black Creek and State Road 16. Simultaneously, other workers are installing 17 miles of underground pipes along SR 16 and SR 21 to channel water to a 21-acre drain treatment filtration field northwest of Keystone Heights. That facility will filter tannins and phosphorus from the brownish waters of Black Creek before going into Alligator Creek, which feeds into both lakes Brooklyn and Geneva.

St. Johns River Management District Executive Director Michael Register gave "an update on one of our favorite projects, the Black Creek site," during the district's monthly meeting on Feb. 13 in Palatka. He said workers completed installing concrete collars and contractors are now backfilling the rest of the station. Also, a micro tunnel to the creek has been completed, so the next step is receiving the pumps in three weeks.

The Lake Region was founded by resi-

dents from the Northeast who wanted a vacation home that offered a mild climate, fishing, boating and swimming.

Residents around lakes Brooklyn and Geneva have fought for two generations to restore the water in the lakes, which dwindled to historic lows in the past 20 years. Once a vibrant source of water-related activities, years of below-average rainfall, a limestone base that allows water to seep into the Florida aquifer and earthen dams along Alligator Creek kept water from flowing into the lakes.

The Lake Brooklyn Association fought to have the obstructions removed from Alligator Creek, but nearby sand mines, Camp Blanding and development had also affected the lake levels.

In 2022, SJRWMD, Save Our Lakes Organization, officials from the State, County and Keystone Heights, Clay County Utility Authority, Gainesville Regional Utilities, St. Johns Utilities and JEA all worked to complete the Black Creek Water Resource Development Project.

Three days after the announcement, crews started clearing land for the pump station and work hasn't slowed since.

Once completed, the levels at both lakes Brooklyn and Geneva are expected to



Work on the pump station for the Black Creek Restoration Project is moving along without any major setbacks. At the current pace, water should start flowing from the South Fork of the Black Creek into lakes Brooklyn and Geneva this time next year.

rise by at least 10 feet. The pumping project will also increase water to the Upper Florida aquifer by percolating through the lake's bottom.

"Everybody is getting very helpful that the Keystone community will be able to shepherd the growth so that it still has that Florida feel," Katz-James said. "That's what I'm hoping for the future."



Crews have installed the underground pumps and a micro tunnel near the South Fork of Little Black Creek. The pumps have arrived at the warehouse and will be delivered to the site in the next three weeks.

Obituary

claytodayonline.com

John Ronald Zuback

John Ronald Zuback, better known as "Ron" passed away on Feb. 2 2024 at the age of 85. He resided in Middleburg, Florida along with his wife Barbara. Ron attended Connellsville High School in Pennsylvania and graduated in 1956. After graduation, he joined the U.S.

Air Force and served proudly. Later, his finance career took him and his family to Chattanooga, TN where he was employed by Associates Finance and Ryder Commercial Truck Finance where he excelled and became a vice president of both companies until he retired. Ron is pre-



John Ronald Zuback

ceded in death by his father John Zuback and mother Rose Zuback. He is survived by his loving wife Barbara of 45 years, his former wife Barbara Hall Zuback and his 3 children Tania Zuback, Jack Zuback and Lisa (Darrell) Wright, his grandchildren, Tony Zuback, Kayla (Andrew) Barrera, Alexandria Zuback and Matthew Wright. Also surviving are his siblings, Darlene Zuback Peta, Carol Zuback Alexander, Tony Zuback and Joe Zuback, and many nieces and nephews. Ron loved to fish, golf, shoot pool and was always on the go. He had a great sense of humor and would captivate anyone he met. Ron was a devout Catholic and a member of St Luke's church in Middleburg Florida. He was a long-standing member of the Connellsville Elks Lodge, Slovak Club, American Legion, and the VFW. Ron was one of a kind, loved his family, faith, and country. He will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him. A private service will be held at a later date.

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College Briefs

Fleming Island's Marley Magee graduates from Tampa

TAMPA – Marley Magee, of Fleming Island, recently graduated from The University of Tampa. Magee received a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science BS.

The commencement ceremony honored 1,015 undergraduate and graduate candidates. It included remarks by President Ronald Vaughn, Stephanie Thomason, professor of management and associate director of the TECO Energy Center for Leadership, and the student challenge speaker.

Burnsed on Dean's List at Palmer College

DAVENPORT, Iowa – Alan Burnsed of Orange Park made the fall Dean's List at Palmer College of Chiropractic's Florida Campus in Port Orange.

Palmer College of Chiropractic, the first and largest college in the chiropractic profession, has campuses in Davenport, Iowa; San Jose, California; and Port Orange.

Hudson, Hodges roll to spot on Alabama academic's lists

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. – A total of 13,950 students enrolled during Fall Semester at The University of Alabama made the President's and Dean's lists. Lilly Hudspen of Fleming Island was on the President's List with a grade point average of 4.0.

Chloe Hodges, also from Fleming Island, made the Dean's List with at least a 3.5 grade point average.

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Katy Smith on Dean's List at Anderson University

ANDERSON, S.C. – Fleming Island's Katy Smith qualified for the Dean's List at Anderson University for the fall semester. To be named to the Dean's List, students must maintain a 3.5 grade point average or higher for the semester.

Three make President's List at Flagler College

ST. AUGUSTINE – A distinguished group of students gathered in the Flagler Room to celebrate their academic success during the President's List Ceremony.

President John Delaney welcomed the honorees and acknowledged students' difficulty in qualifying for this award. Delaney said the challenge of achieving an untattered GPA requires incredibly hard work.

Those attending included Kaleb Searcy of Orange Park, Jennifer Paziuk of Middleburg and David Purcell of Green Cove Springs. The President's List is compiled in recognition of students achieving a certain standard of academic excellence and is distributed by the Office of Academic Affairs. Students with a 4.0 GPA with at least 12 semester hours of graded credit are named to the President's List.

In his ceremonial remarks, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Art Vanden Houten, congratulated students on what he considers a remarkably hard-earned accomplishment.

Hundreds walk the aisles at Clay Bridal Spectacular

STAFF PHOTOS BY JILL MCLEOD

ORANGE PARK – The Clay Bridal Spectacular at the Thrasher-Horne Center not only continues to inspire brides-to-be, but it continues to grow. Nearly 300 guests were treated to suggestions and ideas from a record 41 vendors at the sixth annual event last Sunday. In addition to gowns, music, cakes and venues, vendors provided information on honeymoons, kitchen, insurance, home sales, photographers and jewelry.



Rookie from page 7

She started at Keystone Heights in 2019 as a paralegal. She then became a behavioral health assistant while earning her bachelor's degree. She became a teacher 14 months ago.

Turbeville said teachers in their first or second years were eligible for the award.

School and district staff approached Sanders and assistant Pam Saxon at the same time to say they were finalists. Saxon was one of five in the school-related category.

"I feel very honored and humbled that my principal chose me to nominate out of the other people at the school who would have been in that category as well," Sanders said.

"Becoming a teacher and coming full circle has been pretty amazing. I had a lot of a lot of determination. There was definitely a lot of sticking to it, that's for sure."



STAFF PHOTO BY DON COBLE

Keystone Heights Elementary teacher Allison Sanders uses a lot of demonstrative gestures to attract – and keep – the attention of her EBD students.

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Henrietta Francis pointed to a photograph of herself as Ms. Dunbar.



Past alumni and family reminisce on the legacy of Dunbar High and how it has continuously shaped the development of Green Cove Springs.

Dunbar High continues to foster achievement against adversity

By Jack Randall
jack@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – During segregation, Dunbar High was Clay County’s only “Black” high school, and it was built upon land donated by renowned sculptor Augusta Savage.

Celebration of Cultural Expressions

Friends of Augusta Savage and the VIA Women’s Club will continue Black History Month with “A Celebration of Cultural Expressions” fashion show this Saturday, Feb. 17, at 4 p.m. The event will be at the Green Cove Springs VIA Clubhouse, 17 Palmetto Ave.

Because of the Civil Rights Act and the desegregation of public schools, the last graduating class was in 1967. Since then, alumni and faculty have always remembered the not-too-distant past in the community’s history.

During the Dunbar High Open House, former students tapped in and shared memories from the classrooms, their challenges, and their triumphs. Some of the most important lessons ever learned came not merely from the hand-me-down books, which were sometimes the only books available, but from the wisdom of their



Henrietta Francis honors past alumni and current students at the Augusta Savage Arts and Community Center.

teachers.

“They did so much with so little,” said Dr. Larry Richardson, an alumnus at Dunbar.

STAFF PHOTOS BY JACK RANDALL

The teachers at Dunbar did the best with what they could to set their students up for success, Richardson said.

The legacy of Dunbar continues to be a shining example of achievement in the face of adversity. The campus has been renovated and repurposed as the Augusta Savage Arts and Community Center, which serves Green Cove Springs as a museum, tutoring and mentoring center for students of all ages.

Last Saturday’s open house ceremony displayed the Legacy Wall to the public for the first time. Walking through the front doors of the Community Center, visitors are now able to see a timeline of notable historical moments of Dunbar High and of



Vice Mayor Steven Kelley participates in an art class at the Community Center and transcribes “Cove Life” using cuneiform, a written language developed in ancient Mesopotamia.

Augusta Savage, who contributed to the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s.

One interesting fact is Dunbar was the first school in the county to bring home a state championship. The Lady Panthers Basketball team won the state championship in 1964, and the boys’ basketball team finished runner-up that same year.

Mrs. Wilhelmenia James, one of Dunbar’s last living teachers, had the honor of being the first to see the Legacy Wall.

Friends of Augusta Savage and the VIA Women’s Club will continue Black History Month with “A Celebration of Cultural Expressions” fashion show this Saturday, Feb. 17, at 4 p.m. The event will be at the Green Cove Springs VIA Clubhouse, 17 Palmetto Ave.

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Keystone Heights culinary students (from left) Logan Neeld, Jacob Bacorn and Shelby Carroll and Ridgeview students (from left) Elijah Barry, Damian Tolbert and Andres Williamson helped the Clay County District Schools bring home two awards from the Universal Handheld Food Competition in Orlando.

Ridgeview, Keystone Heights win Culinary Awards in Orlando

Schools get \$500 each from UCF during final round of Universal Orlando Handheld Food Competition

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – Culinary students from Ridgeview and Keystone Heights highs served some winning dishes at last week's Universal Orlando Handheld Food Competition.

After advancing to the finals, both teams won \$500 from the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management and Universal Orlando. The competition started on Dec. 5, with the top 10 teams advancing to the second round. Ridgeview and Keystone Heights were two of the three teams selected for the Feb. 5 finals.

Ridgeview's team included Elijah Barry, Damian Tolbert and Andres Williamson, while Keystone Heights was represented by Logan Neeld, Jacob Bacorn and Shelby Carroll.

"Each one of these students worked hard to perfect their portion of the handheld dish," KHHS Culinary Arts Teacher Laura Leach said.

"They researched, costed their menu and practiced their dish several times over the course of six months. They worked as a team to sharpen their skills, and I was extremely proud that they were willing to participate and compete at this level. They did a great job," she said.

Florida ProStart organized the competition. Students had to develop a menu of dishes that could be eaten by hand or without utensils.

"We're absolutely thrilled by the incredible performance of our culinary team and their amazing teacher, Ms. (Amy) LaPierre," Ridgeview Principal Becky Murphy said.



"They came so close to victory, with just a mere .08 points difference. Their mouth-watering chicken avocado burger was an absolute delight, but what truly made this competition unforgettable was the incredible experience they had along the way," she said.

The students are enrolled in the District's Career and Technical Education programs that offer students a variety of career paths to prepare for college and their careers.

"I am so proud of these students because they are a great example of how a strong commitment to learning these skills over several years can lead them to earn this type of success," Keystone Heights Principal Laurie Burke said.

"Things like this do not just happen in life. You have to surround yourself with others who bring out the best in you and have the determination to see it through. These students have all of the right ingredients for success. Their hard work paid off, and KHHS is proud of them."

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Book Review

Bruce Friedman's book club

Review of "Imaginary Friend"

By Jack Randall
Reporter/News Editor

Bruce Friedman leads the nation in submitting book challenges. At a school board meeting in January, he issued a challenge of a new kind.

"If you don't address (the most egregious books still in circulation) promptly, I'm going to do them one book (at) a time by calling the press. And I'll put all of your names in the story, and the title, and the author, and we'll let the community decide," Friedman said.

This edition discusses the content of "Imaginary Friends," the trajectory of the proposed media policy in Clay County, and the current lawsuit in Escambia County.

"Imaginary Friend" is an adult psychological horror novel by Stephen Chbosky, although you may know Chbosky better for his previous novel "The Perks of Being a Wallflower."

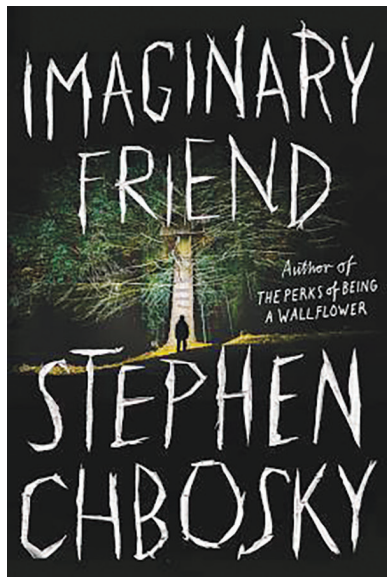


Jack Randall

In any case, "Imaginary Friend" follows the experience of Christopher, a middle schooler on the run from an abusive household. In his new home in a small town, he forms a relationship with an imaginary friend, who turns out not merely to be so imaginary after all.

"Imaginary Friend" tops the stack of Bruce Friedman's newest wave of book challenges. According to Destiny, the database for books in Clay County District Schools, "Imaginary Friend," is on the shelves at Ridgeview High, and it is currently unavailable (either checked out or removed).

In this edition of Bruce Friedman's Book Club, we will walk the challenge process together based on the newly proposed media policy presented by School Board



Member Michele Hanson on Jan. 23.

Cracking the book open, I was immediately absorbed by the unsettling allure of "the nice man," Christopher's imaginary friend. I'm pretty sure I flew through the first 200 pages in a single sitting. There were plenty of wonderfully unnerving scenes. The Bad Cat cartoon is talking to Christopher from the TV. The crying baby carriage left by the front door in the middle of the night. Most especially, the deer (which I now have a phobia of).

It felt like Chbosky tried making this generation's "It" by Steven King, with apocryphal apocalyptic religious fantasy sprinkled in.

Sprinkled in too much, in my opinion. Unfortunately, the narrative of "Imaginary Friend" spirals out of control completely following the plot twist, and the pacing becomes arrhythmic. The last act is a sludge of repetitive plot points, gratuitous violence and unanswered questions (similar to this editorial series, ha-ha).

"Imaginary Friend" is a thrilling rollercoaster ride that, by the last page, crawls to a stop.

There was a lot of angst, Nietzsche-esque commentary that was bold in some moments and bland in others. "God is a murderer" was such a jarring acquisition, and I was compelled to keep reading. But comparing the Eucharist to Styrofoam was

SEE REVIEW, 15

Business Briefs



Compiled by Clay Today

Innovative Crossroads Christian Bookstore coming to Keystone Heights

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Crossroads Christian Bookstore and Café will open its doors on Feb. 28 at 330 S. Lawrence Blvd. The business is between Genesis Fitness and Volume Hair Salon.

Crossroads Christian Bookstore and Cafe promises to be an industry game-changer, providing an extensive collection of more than 3,000 books covering a wide range of genres. Customers can expect to find Christian living titles, Christian fiction, classic novels, books on theology, biblical leadership, devotionals and Bibles.

In addition to the diverse book selection, the bookstore will feature an assortment of Christian-themed gifts, custom merchandise and toys. The cafe section will offer a delightful range of fresh-ground coffee and soft-serve ice cream. Store hours will be Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

The store boasts a Micro-Movie Theater, hosting weekly family movie events every Friday night from 6-8 p.m. Additionally, the store will offer video-driven Bible study experiences every Thursday night from 6-7 p.m. And on the last Wednesday night of every month, from 6-7:30 p.m., Crossroads will host "Worship Wednesdays" with FREE live acoustic Christian concerts.

"We are thrilled to open our doors and provide Keystone Heights and the surrounding community with a place where they can explore their faith, discover great books, and connect with one another," said owner Rob and Heather Ham. "We have carefully curated our collection to cater to a wide range of interests and ages, and we believe our cafe and com-

munity events will foster meaningful connections."

An exciting evening on Feb. 28 from 6-8 p.m. is planned to celebrate the grand opening, featuring live acoustic worship music from the Christian band "Dayz to Come" For more information, visit cbooks.net.



State Farm donates \$70,000 to JA's Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurial Experiences

CLAY COUNTY – The Junior Achievement of Florida Foundation has announced it has received a \$70,000 grant from State Farm. The statewide initiative will support Junior Achievement learning experiences in eight localities throughout Florida, including Clay County, enabling thousands of young people to participate in JA's nationally recognized financial literacy and career readiness learning experiences. State Farm has supported Junior Achievement in Florida for the past eight years, with contributions to their programs totaling over \$440,000 to fund financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurial-focused learning experiences for youths.

"Financial literacy education is critical to inspiring and preparing our next generation of leaders in order to help them build stronger and more resilient communities," said Jose Soto, State Farm Corporate Responsibility Analyst. "We are proud to support Junior Achievement K-12 financial literacy and career readiness program across Florida."

JA of North Florida will use the support to advance the learning experiences most needed in their region to provide personal finance, introducing high school students to the relationship between today's financial decisions and future financial freedom.

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Room 0

a sci-fi film self-contained in a single room

By Jack Randall
jack@claytodayonline.com

JACKSONVILLE – “Room 0” is the first full-length feature film directed by Richard Kodai. The sci-fi drama has an interesting premise – it is a self-contained story that takes place entirely in a motel room.

For film lovers who are patient and open-minded, “Room 0” is a cozy, introspective adventure.

A young woman is trafficking a mysterious device that has the power to rewind time. The temporal device inadvertently triggers and traps her in her



Richard Kodai

motel room. Any time she tries to leave, the device rewinds her to when she first enters the room.

It’s like “Ground Hog Day” in a motel.

Outside of her prison, the woman learns that a crime boss is hunting her for the temporal device. She must learn how to use the device to break out of the motel, but luckily, she has all the time in the world.

The one-room movie allows Kodai to



craft a thought-provoking story because, unfortunately, he did not have a massive Hollywood budget to do so.

“As a filmmaker, I knew I wanted to make a feature film – which is not cheap. I was chasing bigger budgets for years. What is the cheapest setting we can do? One person, one room. I can raise money for that. I only need a few grand. What can I bring out of that concept? I can’t play with space, but I can play with time. So, what



does that give me?” said Kodai.

Time-loops inspired the indie filmmaker in sci-fi movies, the cinematography in other one-room movies, “save states” in video games and choose your adventure novels.

“We shot (“Room 0”) over five days in a Jacksonville motel. It was challenging. It was a lot of fun. It’s always fun to be on set. If it’s not fun, you’re not doing filmmaking right.”

I am impressed with Kodai’s commitment to his vision. I think “Room 0” is a unique, systematic viewing experience.

What “Room 0” does best is letting the viewer’s imagination run wild. If you are suddenly trapped in a motel room with a device to reset time to fight a gangster threatening your family armed with a cell phone and a time machine, what would you do?

Thrasher-Horne Happenings

Dancing with the Stars Live tour making stop on Feb. 22

ORANGE PARK – America’s favorite dance tour is returning in 2024 at the Thrasher-Horne Center.

Dancing with the Stars: Live will feature the ballroom brought to life in this brand-new production featuring your favorite Dancing with the Stars pros, plus special guest stars. With dazzling routines in every style, jaw-dropping talent, and non-stop entertainment, it’s sure to be an unforgettable night full of the TV show’s magic and more. Tickets, which start at \$39, are available at the box office or at thcenter.org.

STARSHIP to land at Thrasher-Horne for one-night show

ORANGE PARK – Mickey Thomas owns the soaring voice that propelled STARSHIP through the decade of the 80’s. With his soulful and compelling vocals, Thomas has become one of Rock Music’s most recognizable stars. The iconic band will play at the Thrasher-Horne Center on March 9 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets start at \$29 and are available at the box office or thcenter.org.

Thomas made his mark in 1976 as lead

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

The group was renamed STARSHIP in 1985 and went on to record three No. 1 hit songs, including “We Built This City,” “Sara,” and “Nothing’s Gonna Stop Us Now,” from the film, “Mannequin,” which also

was an Academy Award nominee. Their hit “It’s Not Over ‘Til It’s Over” became Major League Baseball’s theme in 1987. Thomas’s stellar voice and video charisma on STARSHIP’s video classics such as “We Built This City” and “Sara” became staples on MTV and VH1. One can expect to hear hits from STARSHIP and Jefferson Starship at STARSHIP’s live performances and a few selections from Jefferson Airplane as a nod to both band’s beginnings.

Mamma Mia! Almost ABBA Tribute headed to Thrasher-Horne

ORANGE PARK – Almost ABBA, the No. 1 tribute to Swedish supergroup ABBA, will

be at the Thrasher-Horne Center on March 15 at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets, which start at \$29, are available at the box office or at thcenter.org.



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Works from Art Guild of Orange Park, First Coast Plein Air Painters on display

ORANGE PARK – An array of paintings now adorn the walls of the Thrasher-Horne Center Gallery on the St. Johns River State College campus. The collaboration by the Art Guild of Orange Park and the First Coast Plein Air Painters will be displayed during box office hours, Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The exhibit

will be available until June 30. Admission is free.

The Art Guild of Orange Park has worked to ensure that it provides arts education and support to our member artists, including supporting emerging artists through mentorship and its scholarship program.



The First Coast Plein Air Painters defines its style of painting as being produced outdoors in natural light, following the tradition of many artists from the 19th century. Work on display included the

first-place pieces from Plein Air's Christopher Flagg and William Gura from The Art Guild of Orange Park. Betty McKee's "Copper Kettle with Peaches" won Best in Show for Orange Park.

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GENERAC

Review

from page 12

such a blatantly shallow comment. I had to roll my eyes.

Like the last entry in Bruce Friedman's Book Club, "Imaginary Friend" shared some criticisms of the Catholic Church. (I should be flattered that there are so many Catholic perspectives in contemporary literature, but is the caricature of "Catholic guilt" really how others perceive my religion?)

But poor pacing is not the reason why Friedman has submitted his challenge.

Friedman cites clear, vividly descriptive sexual content in his challenge form. Mary Katherine is swayed by temptation and overwhelmed by a supernatural force. She is unable to stop herself from escalating her sexual advances toward her boyfriend, Doug. This is explicit, not implicit, sexual content.

The challenge form also provides a screenshot from the Destiny Library Catalog, specifically a summary provided by the publisher. The summary lists the novel as "adult" and shares its themes and setting, but it does not warn of the sexual content or gratuitous violence in the pages.

"No mention of sex content whatsoever," Friedman writes. "Ergo, don't trust the publisher!"

The challenge form Friedman filled out asked a question:

"Is there any value in this material?"

"Not to me," was Friedman's response.

Really? None? Listen, I have my qualms with the text, but I can appreciate a horror story, albeit flawed. I can understand why Friedman was disturbed by the passage he cited and why he is objectionable to it. But I had to know if that was extended for the entirety of the novel. I asked Friedman if he truly meant what he said or if it was said to make a point that art depicting explicit sex or violence is valueless.

"NO VALUE – unless you are one of Satan's minions. You and I have both read MUCH better books in our lives. I would not lower the bar for America's children. If I found and browsed this book on my seat on an airplane – I'd throw it away," he said.

This demonstrates the difference between Friedman's viewpoint and the viewpoint I hold, and from what I believe the author tries to make, there is an ontological difference between "thinking" and "doing" something. Ideas hold weight but are only as powerful as the actions that follow.

Similarly, there is a difference between "reading" and "approving" of what is written.

We will see if Clay County District Schools "approves" the book since this is a recent, ongoing book challenge. In the meantime, I wanted to use "Imaginary Friend" to test-run School Board Member Michele Hanson's proposed media policy.

Step 1 – is it pornographic?

If "Imaginary Friend" violates FS 847, it should be pulled immediately, and the debate ends there.

Is "Imaginary Friend" disturbing? Yes. Is there sexual content? Yes. Is "Imaginary Friend" pornographic? Friedman says yes. Does it violate FS 847? I say no, based on terms we defined during a previous Bruce Friedman Book Club: pornography: printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings.

FS 847: Sexual content is harmful to minors when taken as a whole. It is without serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

The passage Friedman cited is central to Mary Katherine's character arc, and she spends the rest of the novel reconciling that act. Her act, which she is remorseful for, is used as an avenue for religious and interpersonal reflection throughout the narrative.

Not to discount the sexual content in the book – because it's there – but to say it's there without literary purpose is misleading. "Imaginary Friend" is an "adult book" because it analyzes and discusses mature topics, not because it is pornographic.

Step 2 – the principal's desk.

Since "Imaginary Friend" is offered at Ridgeview High, the challenge would be delivered here, and Principal Becky Murphy would review the challenge, meet with Friedman, and decide.

Step 3 – the School Curriculum Council.

If the book is kept, the principal meets with the School Curriculum Council. Friedman is allowed to make a statement. The council must decide within 30 days.

Step 4 – the District Curriculum Council.

If the book is kept, Friedman has 10 days to appeal to the district level. The District Curriculum Council has 20 days to schedule a meeting. If it's a close vote, "Imaginary Friend" is placed in "Parental Advisory." If the council is adamant the book does not violate policy, the challenge form moves down to the Supervisor of Instructional Resource.

Step 5 – the School Board

The recommendation goes to the School Board within 14 days. The buck stops here. The Board will review all sides and evidence of "Imaginary Friend," and the decision made at the public School Board meeting is final.

Obviously, I simplified the process, and the proposal is subject to change. But I do find it interesting – all these walls erected to stop the will of one man. I asked Friedman if he felt he was being targeted or if this was a good compromise. He shared some thoughts.

"I used to share your optimism. Twelve years in this fight has tempered me like a waitress that's been pinched too many times. Proof is to be found rarely in the pudding. The status quo is harder to change than stupid people. We shall see," he said.

"Good should not compromise with evil," he concluded.

Overshadowing all of this is a federal lawsuit in Escambia County, the newest front-runner in book challenges and re-

movals. Escambia County has been cited as an example during the last School Board Workshop of what to do and what not to do in designing a media policy. PEN America and Penguin Random House filed the lawsuit in May 2023, but it picked up traction in the courtroom in January 2024 when Judge Wetherell allowed the lawsuit to continue.

Unsurprisingly, Escambia County Public Schools had no comment for me, but I was able to reach out to PEN America.

"The lawsuit says the Escambia County School District and School Board violated the First Amendment rights by removing books based on ideological objections ... The books targeted for removal disproportionately addressed themes and messages related to race and LGBTQ+ identity," said Katie Blankenship from PEN.

"We hope to secure an injunction from the court returning these books to the shelves, and we hope for a declaratory judgment clarifying how Escambia County School Board's actions violated the First Amendment for viewpoint discrimination. We also hope that this lawsuit will pave the way for other Floridians to seek redress and fight against the ongoing educational censorship across the state, especially the book bans occurring under HB 1069," she said.

I asked Blankenship if the proposed decentralized book challenge process is good.

"No. PEN America has tracked the way in which vague language is ill-applied in censoring certain types of books, histories, identities and stories. Our concern is that this will happen here, too."

I asked Blankenship if PEN has ever

considered bringing forth litigation against Clay County District Schools.

"PEN America is considering other options for litigation in Florida and elsewhere but cannot disclose more at this time."

So how does this pertain to "Imaginary Friend" by Stephen Chbosky? Based on the proposed policy, I believe it will likely end up in the "Parental Advisory" section, which I would agree with. The book is not pornographic but is decidedly written for a mature audience. I think a parental advisory section is a good compromise to keep mature narratives in circulation while reducing the legal liability of the school district.

In the last edition of Bruce Friedman's Book Club, I was against doing so for "At the End of Everything," and I explained my reasoning. I am against doing so for "Heroine" as well. However, there is a noticeable step up in content and subject matter in "Imaginary Friend," which should be acknowledged.

My concern is keeping this book accessible in a way that absolves the school district of legal liability.

On next month's Bruce Friedman's Book Club, we will examine a novel that would be hard to place even in a parental advisory section. It would be "NC-17," although I disagree with using movie-style ratings for books. The author is well known for his previous novel "Fight Club." The book has been challenged and removed from circulation without much fanfare. Just glancing at Friedman's challenge form, it is easy to see why. The book is "Choke" by Chuck Palahniuk.

Community Briefs

claytodayonline.com

Ridgeview Drama Club to stage production of "Grease"

ORANGE PARK – The Ridgeview Drama Club will perform "Grease" on Thursday, Feb. 29-March 2, at the school's cafeteria. The doors open at 6:30 p.m., and the show starts at 7 p.m. Student tickets are \$5 for the March 2 show. General admission is \$7, and tickets are available at gofan.co. The show has a PG-13 rating.

Free tax preparation services

ORANGE PARK –The United Way and RealSense have partnered to offer free

income tax preparation on weekdays at Mercy Support Services and Saturdays at St. Johns River State College.

The program is offered at Mercy on Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at 515 College Dr. RealSense will prepare returns in room T115 at the Orange Park campus at 283 College Dr. from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Make sure to bring social security cards, a copy of last year's return (if available), all W-2s, unemployment and compensation benefits, att 1099s, forms showing federal taxes paid, dependent care provider number, and any 1098 forms that show college fees and tuitions.



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Thunderous applause for Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder

Legendary performers combine nostalgia, energy at Thrasher-Horne

By Jack Randall
jack@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – “A life full of music. That’s the story of Ricky Skaggs.” The 15-time GRAMMY award winner returned to the Thrasher-Horne Center last Friday with his talented bluegrass band, the Kentucky Thunder, for a nostalgic and energetic performance.

From the foothills of Kentucky, where he was born, Skaggs’s music career has taken him around the world and through a variety of sounds and genres – bluegrass, country, gospel, and bluegrass again. It is rare for a musician to achieve such critical acclaim across multiple genres. There are few artists with similar versatility or such a diverse discography.

Skaggs had his musical upbringing with bluegrass music, which has been reminisced during his recent nationwide tour. Skaggs’ performance at Thrasher-Horne paid homage to bluegrass classics – some of which Skaggs grew up with, some of which he had a hand in producing.

During an interview a few days before the performance, Skaggs playfully recounted how genre purists were unimpressed with his “flip-flopping” from bluegrass to country to bluegrass again. He said some of them took it wrong: country fans felt like he was leaving them behind, and bluegrass



Dennis Parker joined Ricky Skaggs on mandolin.

fans felt like he was crawling back.

It was neither, Skaggs said. It was about coming home to the sound from how he began his musical journey.

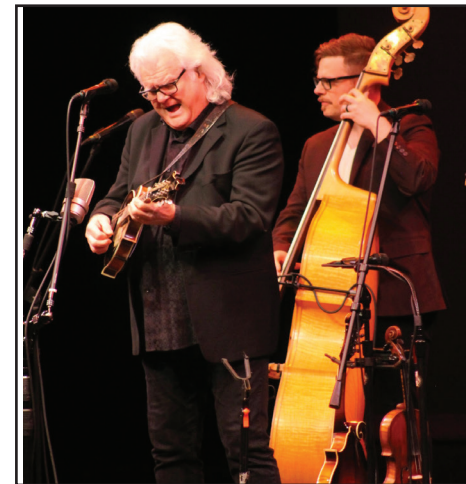
Skaggs’ determination admired me, his persistence to evolve as a musician and his insistence on playing the sort of music that he wanted to.

The performance was a coming home moment for me as well. My grandfather was a bluegrass musician, but he had arthritis and dementia. While I remember my

grandfather fondly, I never had the chance to hear him play. I told Skaggs I had never been to a bluegrass concert, either. Skaggs shared why he’s continuously drawn to the bluegrass rhythms and melodies 60 years after he struck his first chords on a mandolin.

“There’s something powerful about bluegrass music. It is impossible not to be tapping your foot,” Skaggs said.

He was right. The crowd clapped along with the pizzicato of the fiddle and sang



STAFF PHOTOS BY JACK RANDALL
Ricky Skaggs and bassist Gavin Kelso of Kentucky Thunder got a rousing response from a Thrasher-Horne Center crowd Friday night.

along with the lyrics. As Ricky Skaggs & The Kentucky Thunder tuned their instruments in between sets (“We tune because we care,” Skaggs said), shouts of “I love you, Ricky!” rang out throughout the auditorium.

The Kentucky Thunder had a melodic, electric performance. It was impossible not to be tapping your foot. It was impossible not to think about home, wherever that may be for you.

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Combined Animal Sciences

- 1st Bryson Poudrier CHS
- 2nd Zerek Migliore CHS
- 3rd Chloe St. Peter LAJ

Combined Behavioral & Social Sciences

- 1st Zoey Fishman LAJ
- 2nd Ellaynah Santiago MHS

Junior Cellular/ Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, & Biomedical Science

- 1st Sophie Aranaga OPJ
- 2nd Hallie Sweeney WJH
- 3rd Hailey Potter LAJ

Senior Cellular/ Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, & Biomedical Science

- 1st Gracelynn Beckham CHS
- 2nd Joseph Fryman & James Fryman CHS

Junior Chemistry

- 1st Lathan Termer LAJ
- 2nd Gabriel Nejaty LAJ
- 3rd Caitlin Wilson LAJ

Senior Chemistry A

- 1st Benjamin Kollasch RHS
- 2nd Jessica Bracken & Izabel Rodriguez MHS

Senior Chemistry B

- 1st Joshua Phillips CHS
- 2nd Reed Bouchat CHS

Junior Earth & Environmental Sciences

- 1st Emma Roop LAJ
- 2nd Jaeden Sims LAJ

Senior Earth & Environmental Sciences A

- 1st Gabriel Ryan, Hayden Skrzypczak, & Matthew Zou RHS
- 2nd Anna Backlund & Andrew Caudill CHS

Senior Earth & Environmental Sciences B

- 1st Leilani Jackson & Antonio Almojera RHS
- 2nd Riya Patel & Brenna Finnegan RHS

Junior Engineering

- 1st Alley Winsor LAJ

Senior Engineering & Environmental Engineering A

- 1st Lillian Michel & Tristan Simon RHS
- 2nd Ivan Grela-Corona & Donald Stepp RHS

Senior Engineering & Environmental Engineering B

- 1st Saige Bialek, Emily McCrea, & Ciera Neal RHS
- 2nd Joshua Chun & Ricky Huang RHS

Combined Mathematics, Intelligent Machines, Robotics, & Systems Software

- 1st Alex Gordon RHS
- 2nd Eli Jordan CHS

Combined Microbiology

- 1st Ashley White CHS
- 2nd Jennifer Garcia OPJ
- 3rd Elijah Rusu & Julian Kelley CHS



Junior Physics & Astronomy

- 1st Zoe Dunomes WJH
- 2nd Donald Boland WJH
- 3rd Mackenna Mack LAJ

Senior Physics & Astronomy

- 1st Austin Hallett CHS

Combined Plant Science

- 1st Scarlet Glover LAJ
- 2nd Cuyler Monroe LAJ
- 3rd Malia Gallarde CHS

Special Award Winners

American Psychological Association
Maryella Alger CHS

Association for Women Geoscientists
Sophia Santiago
Emily Turner RHS

Florida Association of Science Teachers
Abigail Turner CHS
Zoe Dunomes WJH

Lemelson Early Inventor Prize
Sophie Aranaga OPJ

NASA Earth System Science Award
Anna Backlund CHS
Andrew Caudill CHS

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Abigail Turner CHS

Regeneron Biomedical Science Award
Gracelynn Beckham CHS

Ricoh USA, Inc.
Lillian Michel RHS
Tristan Simon RHS

Sherman O'Brien Excellence in Physics Award
Jasper Yarley LAJ
Austin Hallett CHS

Society for In Vitro Biology
Pamela Hernon CHS
Sebastian Morales CHS
Maria Pesina CHS

Thermo Fischer Scientific JIC
Scarlet Glover LAJ
Zoey Fishman LAJ
Sophie Aranaga OPJ

Thermo Fischer Scientific JIC
Zoe Dunomes WJH
Chloe St. Peter LAJ

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Arianna BryL RHS
Jazmin Caraballo RHS

U.S. Metric Association
Gabriel Ryan CHS
Hayden Skrzypczak CHS
Matthew Zou CHS

United States Air Force
Donald Boland WJH
Alley Winsor LAJ
Alexander Gordon RHS
Eli Jordan CHS

Yale Science and Engineering Association
Angel Zheng RHS

State Science Fair Nominees

Austin Hallett– CHS
Sophie Aranaga– OPJ
Gracelynn Beckham –CHS
Scarlet Glover– LAJ
James Fryman & Joseph Fryman– CHS
Abigail Turner– CHS
Angel Zheng– RHS
Joshua Chun & Ricky Huang– RHS
Alexander Gordon– RHS
Natalia Blanco– CHS
Saige Bialek, Emily McCrea, & Ciera Neal– RHS

International Science Fair Nominees

Alexander Gordon – RHS
Austin Hallett– CHS



Gwendolyn Harvey wins 'I Voted' sticker redesign contest

For Clay Today

The Clay County Supervisor of Elections Office is pleased to announce the winner of its 2024 "I Voted" Sticker Design Contest is Gwendolyn Harvey from Middleburg.

Clay County residents, 14 years old and older, were asked to submit their artwork for a new "I Voted" sticker design involving the themes of Clay County and democracy. The goal of the competition was to further encourage our community to engage in the voting process in a fun and creative way.

The picture of the Great Blue Heron, against a vibrant backdrop of water and trees, was snapped by Ms. Harvey. She then edited it to add the words "Clay County" and "I voted!" to it. As she explained "I think these wading birds represent the natural beauty our county has to offer."

Originally, the sticker templates were either a circular or rectangular shape, but Supervisor of Elections Chris H. Chambless thought printing them in the shape of Clay County would add a personalized twist to the overall design.

The new stickers will be handed out to voters during Early Voting and Election



Day for the Presidential Preference Primary on March 19, 2024, as well as the Primary and General Elections later this year. Thank you to everyone who submitted designs!

If you have questions, or need more information, call our office at (904) 269-6350 or visit ClayElections.gov your source for verified election information.



Deadline for Presidential Primary is Feb. 20

For Clay Today

CLAY COUNTY – Supervisor of Elections, Chris H. Chambless, reminds Clay County residents that Tuesday, Feb. 20, is the deadline to register to vote in the March 19 Presidential Preference Primary Election.

This is also the deadline to change your political party affiliation. Florida is a Closed Primary state, and voters are limited to choosing candidates from their party. Only the Republican Party will participate in the Presidential Preference Primary since the Democratic Party already selected its candidate.

Registering to vote, change your party,

or update your signature at RegisterToVoteFlorida.gov is easier than ever. Registration forms are available to download at ClayElections.gov or pick one up at the Elections Office, 500 N. Orange Ave. in Green Cove Springs. They're also available at all public libraries, most government agencies, post offices and public assistance offices.

All voters are encouraged to review and update their information before Election Day. If you have questions, or need more information, call (904) 269-6350 or visit ClayElections.gov for verified election information.



Florida TaxWatch selected W.E. Cherry Principal Angela Whiddon for one of its five statewide Principal Leadership Awards during a ceremony Thursday at the school.

W.E. Cherry Elementary's principal, 6th-grader Seker win state awards

Pair selected for Florida TaxWatch's Principal Leadership, Florida Prepaid College Scholarship

By Don Coble

don@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – Moments after Arya Seker and her parents accepted the paperwork from Florida TaxWatch for a two-year college scholarship, the sixth-grader quickly and quietly slipped away from the W.E. Cherry Elementary media center to rejoin her classmates.

Her tears said more than enough.

Florida TaxWatch, a nonpartisan, nonprofit and taxpayer research institute, was at the school Thursday to honor Angela Whiddon with one of five Principal Leadership Awards for elementary schools.

"My name is on the plaque, but if it weren't for all of you, we wouldn't be recognized," Whiddon said.

One of the dividends of the award was Whiddon's ability to select a student for a Florida Prepaid College Scholarship.

She said Arya was an easy choice.

Whiddon said Arya's family came from Turkey in 2018, and no one spoke English. She struggled to learn the language and customs but quickly adjusted and won a spot on the Student Council and the girls' basketball team. She was also the only student in the district to have a perfect score on the state-mandated Progress Monitoring 1 Florida Assessment of Student Thinking test at the beginning of the school year. The test is given to pre-kindergarten through 10th-grade students to gauge their progress at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Arya was already at the end-of-the-year level when school started.

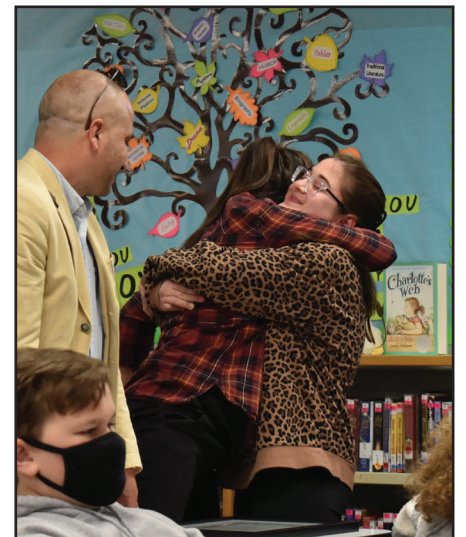
"When she got here, she struggled like anyone who doesn't speak English," Whiddon said. "She also helps other students catch up on their work if they miss school. She's always trying to help."

Arya fought between tears and nerves when she accepted her award.

"Thank you," she said modestly. "I am grateful."

She left the podium to get an extended hug from her mother, Songul.

Superintendent David Broskie had an



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

Arya Seker, a sixth grader at W.E. Cherry Elementary, got a hug from her mother, Songul, after she was one of five elementary students statewide to win a two-year scholarship from Florida TaxWatch.

excellent reason to be thrilled. Middleburg Elementary Principal Becky Wilkerson won the award last year, and she selected Kimberlee Dimorier for the scholarship. Middleburg was one of three elementary schools chosen in the state.

"I sure don't get to do a lot of glamorous things, but this is one," he said. "What a story. (Whiddon) is different than many people. She's an out-of-the-box thinker. W.E. Cherry is a great place for kids. It ain't broke, so we ain't going to change it."

Arya was also one of Broskie's picks for October's Super Student of the Month.

Florida TaxWatch uses data-driven information for high-risk students, not nominations, in its selection process. The Clay district has won two of eight awards in the last two years.

"This is huge," said School Board Member Mary Bolla said. "This means so much to our district. I wasn't a bit surprised (Whiddon) got the award. She changed the dynamics of this school."

Bolla then turned to Arya and asked her to return to Cherry Elementary after her graduation.

Arya smiled and nodded her head.

Baptist Medical Center Clay earns Primary Stroke Center designation

JACKSONVILLE – Baptist Health’s newest hospital, Baptist Medical Center Clay, has earned Primary Stroke Center designation from The Joint Commission and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. This specialist certification signifies excellence in the care of stroke patients and demonstrates Baptist Health’s commitment to provide timely access to high-quality stroke care. Every 40 seconds, someone in the U.S. has a stroke. It is the leading causes of disability in the country and the fifth leading cause of death. A stroke occurs when blood vessels carrying oxygen and nutrients to the brain become blocked or rupture. Deprived of blood and oxygen, brain cells quickly die. Early stroke detection and prompt treatment are key to saving lives and minimizing or avoiding disabilities. Improving access to high-quality stroke care To receive the certification, Baptist Clay participated in a rigorous application process that involved providing data on stroke admissions, treatment plans and patient outcomes as well as having an on-site evaluation to demonstrate an elevated level of care, including:

- An acute stroke team available 24/7
- A neurologist accessible 24/7
- Designated beds for stroke patients
- The ability to provide IV medications to help reduce the stroke’s impact



certification underscores Baptist Health’s steadfast commitment to increasing access to top-quality stroke care in Clay County,” said the president of Baptist Clay, Ed Hubel, FACHE. “In 2016, Baptist Clay became the first freestanding emergency center in Florida to receive acute stroke-

ready hospital certification from The Joint Commission. We are now proud to be able to offer our patients the next level of stroke care.”

Acute stroke-ready hospitals provide immediate stroke care and then transfer patients to a hospital for an elevated level of care. As a Primary Stroke Center, patients can now stay at Baptist Clay. Part of a comprehensive stroke network This new Primary Stroke Center designation for Baptist Clay comes as Baptist Health celebrates the tenth anniversary of the opening of its state-of-the-art Stroke & Cerebrovascular Center at Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville. The facility is a certified Comprehensive Stroke Center—a designation shared by just 4% of all hospitals in the U.S.—and a vital component of Baptist Health’s renowned stroke network. Clay County patients can receive lifesaving treatment closer to home while still benefiting from access to this comprehensive stroke network, which serves Northeast Florida and Southeast Georgia through multiple sites and specialized services. In addition to the Stroke & Cerebrovascular Center, the growing network includes:

- Two other Primary Stroke Centers at Baptist Medical Center Beaches and Baptist Medical Center South.

- Acute stroke-ready facilities at Baptist Medical Center Nassau, Baptist & Wolfson Oakleaf Emergency Room, Baptist & Wolfson Town Center Emergency Room and Baptist & Wolfson North Emergency Room.

- Access to world-class care for brain aneurysms and other cerebrovascular diseases.

- Baptist Health’s Tele-Stroke Program, providing expert stroke consultation virtually to 14 health care facilities within a 160-mile radius of downtown Jacksonville. “At Baptist Health, we’re passionate about elevating the standard of stroke care not only in our community but also for health systems across the country through education, research and innovation,” said Ricardo Hanel, MD, PhD, neurosurgeon and co-medical director of the Stroke & Cerebrovascular Center. “As we say, ‘time is brain,’ and our specially trained teams are ready 24/7 so that stroke patients can receive prompt treatment for the best possible outcomes. But the first step is for patients to know the signs and symptoms of stroke and seek care in the first place!” In addition to Baptist Health’s participation in stroke education initiatives at various community outreach events, information and resources on strokes can be found on our website at baptistjax.com/stroke.

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Grand Funk Good Singin', Good Playin' at Thrasher-Horne

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK – They promised to come to town and help us party down, and that's exactly what Grand Funk did in a 14-song set last Saturday night at the Thrasher-Horne Center.

With two of three original members – drummer Don Brewer and bassist Mel Schacher – still rocking, the group from Flint, Michigan, tore through their repertoire of classic hits with the same kind of energy that made them one of my favorite bands during the 1970s.

Brewer led the band on stage and saluted the crowd before taking a seat behind his drums. A moment later, guitarists Mark Chatfield and Max Carl got the concert started with "Rock 'n Roll Soul."

The 10th song brought everyone to their feet when the band played "The Star-Spangled Banner." Very few sat down after that



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

Grand Funk brought its "Footstompin' Music" to the Thrasher-Horne Center last Saturday night in a wildly entertaining show that included many of the band's iconic songs.

as they went into a much calmer take of their psychedelic hit "Inside Looking Out." From there, they finished with "Some Kind of Wonderful," "I'm Your Captain (Closer to Home)" and "We're an American Band." The crowd got loud and knew every word

when they got a chance to sing a portion of "Some Kind of Wonderful."

One fan said, "It's always a blast when you see that the band is having as much fun as the crowd!"

Indeed.

Calendar

WILLIE NELSON AND FAMILY: will perform on Feb. 15 at 7:30 p.m. at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre, 1340C A1A South. For tickets, visit the box office or ticketmaster.com.

FLORIDA REP. BOBBY PAYNE: will hold office hours on Feb. 15 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Keystone Heights City Hall, 555 S. Lawrence Blvd. For more information, contact Tammy Still at (352) 732-1244 or tammy.still@myfloridahouse.gov.s

BLUEGREEN VACATIONS DUELS: qualifying races to set the field for the Daytona 500 will be on Feb. 15 at 7 p.m. at the Daytona International Speedway, 1801 W. International Speedway Blvd. For tickets, visit daytonainternationalspeedway.com.

FREE HEALTH SERVICES: provided by Comprehensive Health Center of Orlando and Clay County Fire Rescue's Community Paramedicine Program will be on Feb. 15 from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Paramedicine Office at 2110 Blanding Blvd, Suite 8, in the Grande Ole Plaza in Middleburg. Residents can get free rapid testing and treatment, free health care insurance (must meet qualifications) and giveaways.

RUMOURS ATL: will play on Feb. 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the Thrasher-Horne Center, 283 College Dr. in Orange Park. Tickets to hear the Fleetwood Mac tribute band are available at the box office or thcenter.org.

JOHN WAITE: will be at the Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St. in Jacksonville, on Feb. 16, at 8 p.m. Visit floridatheatre.com for tickets.

JACKSONVILLE ICEMEN VS. FLORIDA EVERBLADES: hockey game will be Feb. 16 at 7 p.m. at the VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena, 300 A. Philip Randolph Blvd. in Jacksonville. Tickets are available at ticketmaster.com.

FRESH FROM FLORIDA 250 CRAFTSMAN SERIES TRUCK RACE: will be on Feb. 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the Daytona International Speedway, 1801 W. International Speedway Blvd. For tickets, visit daytonainternationalspeedway.com.

CLAY COUNTY ELEMENTARY TRACK MEET: will be on Feb. 17 from 8 a.m.-noon at Middleburg High, 3750 County Road 220.

THE KITCHEN OF CLAY COUNTY: will provide free meals on Feb. 17 at the Orange Park Senior Center, 414 Stowe St., Sacred Heart Mission Church Branch, 207 Palmetto St. in Green Cove Springs and Black Creek Methodist Church, 3925 Main St. in Middleburg (drive-through), from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. All are welcome.

THE KITCHEN OF CLAY COUNTY: will provide free meals on Feb. 17 at the Orange Park Senior Center, 414 Stowe St., Sacred Heart Mission Church Branch, 207

Palmetto St. in Green Cove Springs and Black Creek Methodist Church, 3925 Main St. in Middleburg (drive-through), from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. All are welcome.

TOOL LENDING LIBRARY: offered by Mission of the Dirt Road will be open for free tool loans on Feb. 17 from 9 a.m.-noon at 7790 State Road 100 in Keystone Heights. For more information, call (352) 478-8050.

GREEN COVE SPRINGS MARKET IN THE PARK: will be on Feb. 17 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Walnut Street. Vendors will have their handcrafted goods, clothes and snacks on sale.

BRANDT 200 ARCA MENARDS SERIES RACE: will be on Feb. 17 at 1:30 p.m. at the Daytona International Speedway, 1801 W. International Speedway Blvd. For tickets, visit daytonainternationalspeedway.com.

UNITED RENTALS 300 XFINITY SERIES RACE: will be on Feb. 17 at 5 p.m. at the Daytona International Speedway, 1801 W. International Speedway Blvd. For tickets, visit daytonainternationalspeedway.com.

ROD STEWART: will play on Feb. 17 at 8 p.m. at Daily's Place, 1 Daily's Place adjacent to EverBank Stadium in Jacksonville. Tickets are available at ticketmaster.com.

CODY JOHNSON: THE LEATHER TOUR: will be at the VyStar Veteran's Memorial Arena, 300 A. Philip Randolph Blvd., Jacksonville, on Feb. 17 at 7:30 p.m. For tickets, visit ticketmaster.com.

DAYTONA 500: will be on Feb. 18 at 2:30 p.m. at the Daytona International Speedway, 1801 W. International Speedway Blvd. For tickets, visit daytonainternationalspeedway.com.



Faith Walk

by Pastor Billy Register
True Life Church
Clay County

David: A Man After God's Own Heart

The story of David, one of the most beloved figures in the Bible, is the story of a young shepherd who rose to become a mighty warrior and a king with a heart devoted to God. His life is a testament to courage, faith, and the enduring connection with our Heavenly Father.

David's journey begins in the book of 1 Samuel when he is introduced as a humble shepherd in the fields of Bethlehem. Although he was the youngest of Jesse's sons, God saw something special in David that set him apart. When the prophet Samuel anointed him as the future king of Israel, it marked the beginning of a remarkable odyssey.

David's faith in God is exemplified in his famous encounter with the giant Goliath. When the Philistine champion taunted the armies of Israel, it was young David, armed only with a sling and a stone, who stepped forward to face the giant. With unwavering trust in God, he defeated Goliath and secured a remarkable victory for Israel. (1 Samuel Chapter 17)

Throughout his life, David experienced trials and tribulations. He was pursued by King Saul, who was jealous of David's popularity and the divine favor he carried. Yet, David never wavered in his trust in God. He wrote numerous Psalms during these times, pouring out his emotions and seeking solace in his Creator.

One of the most famous Psalms, Psalm 23, captures David's profound faith and reliance on God: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." This Psalm has provided comfort and strength to countless individuals throughout history.

David's life was marked by moments of triumph, as well as moments of moral failure, most notably his affair with Bathsheba and the subsequent murder of her husband, Uriah. (2 Samuel Chapters 11-12) Yet, even in his failings, David repented and sought God's forgiveness. (2 Samuel 12:13) His story teaches us the importance of humility, repentance, and the ever-present opportunity for redemption.

The story of David continues to inspire believers and non-believers alike. His unwavering faith, courage, and devotion to God serve as a powerful reminder that even in our humanity, we can strive to be people after God's own heart. His life is a testament to the possibility of transformation and redemption, no matter the circumstances, and a reminder that with faith, anything is possible.

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CLAY TODAY ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

February 16 - 22, 2024

Paula Newsome and Ariana Guerra star in season 3 of in "CSI: Vegas"



Investigators fight to prove the innocence of Josh Folsom (Matt Lauria) in the season premiere of "CSI" Vegas," airing Sunday, Feb. 18, on CBS.

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“The Walking Dead: The Ones Who Live” - Season 1 (AMC/AMC+ — Feb. 25, Series Premiere)

Adding to the ever-expanding TWD universe, this new horror drama spinoff series follows the love story between Rick (Andrew Lincoln) and Michonne (Danai Gurira), changed by a world that is constantly shifting. Will they find themselves in a war against the living? Or will they discover that they, too, are The Walking Dead? Pollyanna McIntosh, Frankie Quinones and Lesley-Ann Brandt also star.

Back to the lab: ‘CSI: Vegas’ returns to prove one of their own’s innocence



Sarah Gilman in season 3 of “CSI: Vegas”

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When a famed forensics lab drops everything to prove your innocence, your days being held in custody for murder are numbered, right? That’s what lead investigator Josh Folsom (Matt Lauria, “Kingdom”) is hoping for in the season premiere of “CSI” Vegas,” airing Sunday, Feb. 18, on CBS. After Folsom’s mother’s killer was found dead in last season’s finale episode, the investigator was dragged away, suspected to be responsible for the death.

The whodunnit cliffhanger has kept audiences on their toes for months in the extended break between seasons of “CSI: Vegas,” affected by the strikes last year. It doesn’t seem like the killer’s identity and Folsom’s fate will be a mystery for very

long, per the premiere episode description from CBS, as the new season opens with “the CSI team [combing] through every crumb of forensic evidence to determine his innocence or guilt.”

Paula Newsome (“Barry”) leads the team as Maxine Roby, head of the crime lab, supported by Mandeep Dhillon (“Avoidance”) as investigator Allie Rajan, Ariana Guerra (“Promised Land”) as Det. Serena Chavez, Jay Lee (“Looking for Alaska”) as investigator Chris Park, Lex Medlin (“Drop Dead Diva”) as investigator Beau Finado, Sara Amini (“Lucky Hank”) as chief medical examiner Sonya Nikolayevich, Sarah Gilman (“Those Who Can’t”) as rookie investigator Penny Gill, and reprising her role as investigator Catherine Willows from the hit establishing series “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation,” Marg Helgenberger (“All Rise”), the only original series cast member to appear in more than one season of the “Vegas” reboot.

Ahead of her first appearance last season, Helgenberger spoke with Entertainment Weekly about her return to the franchise, praising the new cast.

“They couldn’t have been more welcoming. But it was interesting because I had played Catherine Willows for so many years, It’s like a part of me,” said Helgenberger. “In terms of establishing a camaraderie or an instant chemistry, it was pretty natural, I have to say, and I think it’s because I played this character for so long.”

Meanwhile, Folsom’s fate is in the hands of the CSI team, but it’s not just work for

some members of the lab. Det. Chavez herself may just be a little too close to Folsom to help build a case for his innocence — the pair have established a romantic relationship when they are off the clock. Complicating matters more, Allie, in addition to being a senior investigator in the lab, is Folsom’s ex. Bolstering a former boyfriend’s innocence is all in a day’s work.

It’s no secret that salacious, outlandish cases are part of the DNA of any “CSI” series, and “Vegas” is no exception. The procedural has a habit of using comedy to create some levity over gory crime scenes and graphic medical examinations. Suspicious deaths at a clown hotel, a secret sex dungeon and a masquerade party are just a few examples of the cases that have ended up in the lab over the course of the show’s first two seasons, not to mention more than one elaborate frame up. Nothing less could be expected from the crimes of Las Vegas.

“CSI: Vegas” moves from Thursday nights to a coveted Sunday prime time spot on CBS, alongside action drama “The Equalizer,” returning for its fourth season, and the brand new series “Tracker,” starring Justin Hartley (“This Is Us”). The second season of “CSI: Vegas” upped the episode order from its first season’s 10 episodes to a whopping 21 episodes, however this season is back to a tight 10. Many network procedurals have premiered abridged seasons of 10 to 13 episodes given the work stoppage during the writers and screen actors guild strikes.

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SCAN ME

Tournament of Taste: 'TOC' Season 5 sees biggest champs yet

The fire is on and Fieri is back: Season 5 of "Tournament of Champions" kicks off Sunday, Feb. 18, on Food Network.

"The skills and abilities of 32 of the most talented chefs from the East and West coast, including all four previous champions, will be pushed to the limit," said Food Network of the series. "The pressure is intense, and emotions are high as the elite chefs do not know who their opponents will be and what challenges the randomizer will dish out, getting progressively harder and harder in each round."

As with previous years, the competition features "blind judging by some of the biggest names in the food world," asking this season's chefs to take on eight weeks and 31 challenges worth of head-to-head battles in order to find the next "TOC" champion — a cook who will take home the coveted Tournament of Champions belt and the largest cash prize in the show's history, totaling \$150,000.

Fieri himself is incredibly excited for this upcoming round of competition.

"As the wildest, most anticipated culinary competition year after year, you know that

we had to go big for Season 5," Fieri said. "So here's the deal. In order to win, you've gotta either be a past champ or take down a champ, as all the winners from previous seasons are back to defend their titles. We're cranking up the already fierce competition with heated culinary rivalries, wild cards and, of course, off-the-charts flavor."

This season, the chefs representing the East Coast are: Eric Adjepong ("Alex vs. America"), Karen Akunowicz ("Guy's Grocery Games: All-Star Invitational"), Kelsey Barnard Clark ("NFL Tailgate Takedown"), Maneet Chauhan (Season 2 champion, "TOC"), Tobias Dorzon ("Guy's Grocery Games"), Tiffani Faison (Season 3 champion, "TOC"), Amanda Freitag ("Chopped After Hours"), Jose Garces ("Iron Chef America"), Stephanie Izard ("Top Chef"), Marc Murphy ("Best.Ever."), Britt Rescigno ("Chopped"), Jonathon Sawyer ("Bobby's Triple Threat") and Dale Talde ("Top Chef Amateurs").

And, from the West Coast, the competitors are: Carlos Anthony ("Cutthroat Kitchen"), Shirley Chung ("Top Chef Amateurs"), Mei Lin (Season 4 champion, "TOC"), Antonia



Guy Fieri hosts "Tournament of Champions"

Lofaso ("Top Chef"), Crista Luedtke ("Beat Bobby Flay"), Brian Malarkey ("The Taste"), Shota Nakajima ("Guy's Grocery Games: All-Star Invitational"), Joe Sasto ("Outchefs'd"), Adam Sobel ("Donut Showdown"), Casey

busy lives with three kids. However, everything is turned upside down when Zach is rushed to the hospital for emergency surgery."

Fans suspect that the drama won't stop there, however, as Zach and his father, Matt, have been locked in an ongoing disagreement over the future of Roloff Farm. Back in 2022, the Roloff patriarch announced publicly that part of the farm would be put for sale (for a whopping \$4 million), but later retracted his statement and shared that the same section of farmland would instead be developed and later used for an Airbnb property, where "LPBW" fans can come experience a pumpkin season of their own.

While an exciting idea for some, People magazine has previously reported that Zach Roloff had expressed a vested interest in buying said section of the farm with his wife and discussed his plans to continue the Roloff legacy with his father long before the property ever went on the market.

Thompson ("Top Chef"), Jet Tila ("Kitchen Lab"), Michael Voltaggio ("Battle of the Brothers"), Brooke Williamson (Season 1 champion, "TOC") and Lee Anne Wong ("Chef's Story").

lifestyle

BY CAROLINE COLLACUTT

Roloff redux: 'Little People, Big World' returns, Roloff Farm in flux

Big problems arise on Roloff Farm during an all-new season of "Little People, Big World," premiering Tuesday, Feb. 20, on TLC.

Having followed the Roloff family since 2006, this documentary-meets-reality series is now revving up for its 25th season, this time switching gears as it turns away from focusing on parents Matt and Amy Roloff (who divorced in May 2016), instead focusing on the couple's adult son, Zach, 33, his wife Tori, 32, and their three children: Jackson, Josiah and Lilah.

In a news release for the upcoming season, TLC shared: "Just as the Roloffs settle into a rhythm, family surprises and continued tension give rise to

new struggles and questions. After an unexpected proposal, Matt and Caryn excitedly look to the future while building their dream home on the farm, but the constant strain on the family makes them wonder what that future will look like."

Their description continues: "While Amy continues to enjoy married life with Chris [the couple wed in 2021], she remains unsettled by the family strife. To help bring the family together and support a cause near and dear to her, she decides to throw a fundraiser and enlists Chris, Matt and Caryn's help. But it doesn't take long before the stress rises to the surface. Meanwhile, Zach and Tori are enjoying their



Tori and Zach Roloff with their children in "Little People, Big World"

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Sports

BOXING

FRIDAY

9 p.m. **ESPN Boxing O'Shaquie Foster vs. Abraham Nova.** From Madison Square Garden in New York. (Live)

FOOTBALL

FRIDAY

11:20 p.m. **WJXT (4.1) Teal the Show** Insider stories and analysis from yesterday's Jaguars game.

SUNDAY

- 9 a.m. **NFL Super Bowl Classics** Complete re-airs of the greatest Super Bowls in NFL history.
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- 3 p.m. **NFL Super Bowl Classics** Complete re-airs of the greatest Super Bowls in NFL history.
- 6 p.m. **NFL Super Bowl Classics** Complete re-airs of the greatest Super Bowls in NFL history.
- 9 p.m. **NFL Super Bowl Classics** Complete re-airs of the greatest Super Bowls in NFL history.

MONDAY

11:20 p.m. **WJXT (4.1) Teal the Show** Insider stories and analysis from yesterday's Jaguars game.

GOLF

FRIDAY

- 9 a.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, First Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif.
- 12 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Champions Golf Chubb Classic, First Round.** From Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Fla. (Live)
- 4 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, Second Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif. (Live)
- 9 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, Second Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif.

SATURDAY

- 9:30 a.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, Second Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif.
- 1 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, Third Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif. (Live)
- 3 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Champions Golf Chubb Classic, Second Round.** From Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Fla. (Live)
- WJAX (47.1) PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, Third Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif. (Live)
- 8 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, Third Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif.

SUNDAY

- 8:30 a.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, Third Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif.
- 1 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, Final Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif. (Live)
- 3 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Champions Golf 2024 Chubb Classic, Final Round.** From Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Fla. (Live)
- WJAX (47.1) PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, Final Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif. (Live)
- 7:30 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, Final Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif.

MONDAY

- 9 a.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, Final Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif.
- 9 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf The Genesis Invitational, Final Round.** From Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif.

TUESDAY

9:30 a.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Champions Golf 2024 Chubb Classic, Final Round.** From Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Fla.

WEDNESDAY

10 p.m. **GOLF LPGA Tour Golf Honda LPGA Thailand, First Round.** From Siam Country Club in Pattaya, Chon Buri, Thailand. (Live)

THURSDAY

- 8 a.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Champions Golf Trophy Hassan II, First Round.** From Royal Golf Dar Es Salam in Rabat, Morocco. (Live)
- 11 a.m. **GOLF LPGA Tour Golf Honda LPGA Thailand, First Round.** From Siam Country Club in Pattaya, Chon Buri, Thailand.
- 1 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Champions Golf Trophy Hassan II, First Round.** From Royal Golf Dar Es Salam in Rabat, Morocco.
- 4 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf Mexico Open, First Round.** From Vidanta Nuevo Vallarta in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico. (Live)
- 8 p.m. **GOLF PGA Tour Golf Mexico Open, First Round.** From Vidanta Nuevo Vallarta in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico.
- 10 p.m. **GOLF LPGA Tour Golf Honda LPGA Thailand, Second Round.** From Siam Country Club in Pattaya, Chon Buri, Thailand. (Live)

HOCKEY

SATURDAY

- 12:30 p.m. **WJXX (25.1) Los Angeles Kings at Boston Bruins.** From TD Garden in Boston. (Live)
- 3 p.m. **WJXX (25.1) Edmonton Oilers at Dallas Stars.** From American Airlines Center in Dallas. (Live)
- 8 p.m. **WJXX (25.1) Philadelphia Flyers vs. New Jersey Devils.** From MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. (Live)

SUNDAY

3 p.m. **WJXX (25.1) New York Rangers vs. New York Islanders.** From MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. (Live)

MONDAY

- 1 p.m. **ESPN Toronto Maple Leafs at St. Louis Blues.** From Enterprise Center in Saint Louis, Mo. (Live)
- 3:30 p.m. **ESPN Detroit Red Wings at Seattle Kraken.** From Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle. (Live)

WEDNESDAY

- 7:30 p.m. **TNT Philadelphia Flyers at Chicago Blackhawks.** From the United Center in Chicago. (Live)
- 10 p.m. **TNT Boston Bruins at Edmonton Oilers.** From Rogers Place in Edmonton, Alberta. (Live)

THURSDAY

7 p.m. **ESPN Washington Capitals at Tampa Bay Lightning.** From Amalie Arena in Tampa, Fla. (Live)

HORSE RACING

MONDAY

4:30 p.m. **FS1 Horse Racing America's Day At the Races.** The best racehorses square off in the premiere races from across the country. (Live)

SKIING

SUNDAY

- 3 p.m. **WTLV (12.1) FIS Freestyle Skiing World Cup Deer Valley - Men's & Women's Dual Moguls Finals.**
- 4 p.m. **WTLV (12.1) FIS Cross-Country Skiing World Cup Minneapolis - Men's 10km Freestyle.** Coverage of the annual cross-country skiing competition.

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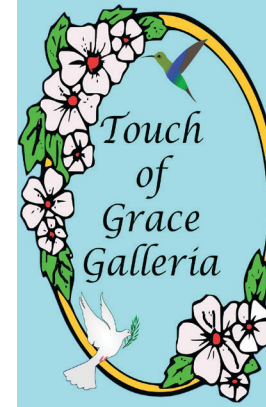
SATURDAY

- 7:30 a.m. **USA Premier League Soccer Brentford vs. Liverpool.** Brentford is up against Liverpool at Gtech Community Stadium in matchround 25 of the Premier League. (Live)
- 10 a.m. **USA Premier League Soccer Burnley vs. Arsenal.** Burnley is up against Arsenal at Turf Moor in matchround 25 of the 2023-2024 Premier League. (Live)
- 12:30 p.m. **WTLV (12.1) Premier League Soccer Manchester City vs. Chelsea.** Manchester City is up against Chelsea at Etihad Stadium in matchround 25 of the Premier League. (Live)

SUNDAY

- 9 a.m. **USA Premier League Soccer Sheffield United vs. Brighton & Hove Albion.** Sheffield United contests Brighton & Hove Albion at Bramall Lane in Premier League matchround 25. (Live)
- 11:30 a.m. **USA Premier League Soccer Luton Town vs. Manchester United.** Luton Town takes on Manchester United at

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Kenilworth Road in matchround 25 of the Premier League. (Live)

MONDAY

3 p.m. **USA Premier League Soccer Everton vs. Crystal Palace.** Everton is up against Crystal Palace at Goodison Park in matchround 25 of the Premier League. (Live)

TUESDAY

- 2:30 p.m. **USA Premier League Soccer Manchester City vs. Brentford.** From Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England, United Kingdom. (Live)
- 3 p.m. **WJAX (47.1) UEFA Champions League Soccer Inter Milan vs. Atlético Madrid.** Round of 16, 1st Leg. (Live)

WEDNESDAY

3 p.m. **WJAX (47.1) UEFA Champions League Soccer Napoli vs. Barcelona.** Round of 16, 1st Leg. (Live)

Word Search Solution Puzzle on Page 7



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“Shogun” (FX/Hulu — Feb. 27, Miniseries Premiere)

An original adaptation of James Clavell's bestselling novel, this FX series is set in Japan in the year 1600 at the dawn of a century-defining civil war. Lord Yoshii Toranaga (Hiroyuki Sanada) is fighting for his life as his enemies on the Council of Regents unite against him. When a marooned European ship is found in a nearby fishing village, its English pilot, John Blackthorne (Cosmo Jarvis), comes bearing secrets that could help Toranaga tip the scales of power in his favor.



“Elsbeth” (Paramount+ — March 1, Series Premiere)

Carrie Preston stars in this drama series as Elsbeth Tascioni (based on the character from “The Good Wife”), an astute but unconventional attorney who utilizes her singular point of view to make unique observations and corner brilliant criminals alongside the NYPD. After leaving her successful legal career in Chicago to tackle a new investigative role in New York City, Elsbeth finds herself jockeying with the toast of the NYPD, Captain C.W. Wagner (Wendell Pierce), a charismatic and revered leader. Carra Patterson also stars.



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In this high-stakes season premiere, Robyn McCall (Queen Latifah) attempts to save her team, the group currently held captive by Venezuelan rebels thanks to McCall's former best friend and CIA colleague, Michelle Chambers (Ilfenesh Hadera), who was previously thought to be dead. Season 6 of “The Equalizer” begins its perilous journey Sunday, Feb. 18, on CBS. Need to catch up? Find Season 5 streaming at [cbs.com/shows/the-equalizer/](https://www.cbs.com/shows/the-equalizer/)

Grey's Anatomy

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ALANA	CARINA	IZZIE	MIRANDA	STEPHANIE
ALEX	CATHERINE	LEAH	NATHAN	STEVE
AMELIA	CHARLES	LEXIE	NICO	TARYN
ANDREW	CRISTINA	LINK	NORMAN	TEDDY
APRIL	DENNY	MAGGIE	OWEN	TOM
ARIZONA	DEREK	MARK	PRESTON	TUCKER
	GEORGE	MATTHEW	REED	

Solution on page 5

CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT

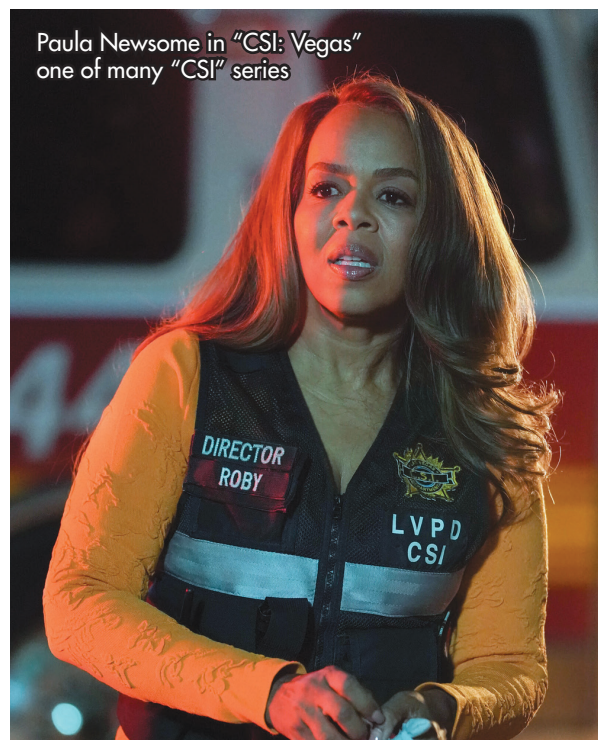
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Paula Newsome in “CSI: Vegas” one of many “CSI” series

triviaquiz

Step inside the CSI-verse

BY STAFF WRITERS

Questions:

- 1) How many TV series make up the CSI franchise?
- 2) Which of those series wasn't a direct spinoff of “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation”?
- 3) Which “True Blood” actor appeared in “CSI,” “CSI: Miami” and “CSI: NY,” but played a different role in each series?
- 4) Which “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation” character led the search for a lost girl in the franchise's only three-part crossover (aka “CSI Trilogy”)?
- 5) In addition to “Who Are You,” what songs by The Who serve as opening themes for CSI series?
- 6) Which character said “because the dead can't speak for themselves” when asked why they are a CSI?
- 7) Matt Lauria stars as Josh Folsom in “CSI: Vegas,” but what other “CSI” character has he played?
- 8) How many Emmy nominations has Marg Helgenberger received for her work as forensic sleuth Catherine Willows?
- 9) Name the famous singer whose first big acting role was a guest appearance on “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation.”
- 10) True or false: Despite their titles, “CSI” shows were/are filmed primarily in California.

- 1) five
2) “CSI: NY” (it was a spinoff of “CSI: Miami”)
3) Joe Manganiello
4) Raymond Langston (played by Laurence Fishburne)
5) “Wont Get Fooled Again,” “Baba O'Riley” and “I Can See for Miles”
6) Gill Grissom
7) Agent Matthew Pratt
8) 2
9) Taylor Swift
10) true

Answers:

gametime

crossword fun



Across

1. Laugh sound
4. Detective's assignment
8. Settle a debt
11. Online cousin of "just saying"
12. Security for a debt
13. Diamond stat
14. Mild cheese
17. Gut reaction?
18. "Better Call Saul" channel
19. Auto dealer's abbr.
21. Bit of sweat
24. Nervous speaker's sound
25. To one side
26. Depart

Down

27. Happen
28. In the mail
30. Use the library
32. "How awful!"
34. Quandary
35. Admitted one's mistake
41. Bird of myth
42. Nettle
43. Previously
44. Flock member
45. Info
46. Paddle

Down

1. Self starter?
2. Music genre
3. Accept
4. Musical sign
5. Lungful
6. Date

7. "Orinoco Flow" singer
8. Christmas wish
9. Rainbow's shape
10. Jabber
15. Dynamite
16. "Peter Pan" author
19. Acts clownishly
20. Loafer, e.g.
22. "Mamma Mia!" band
23. Turned blue, maybe
29. Meena Harris, to Kamala
31. An American in Paris, say
33. Many a Kirkuk resident
34. Dog biter
35. "Blessed _____ the pure in heart"
36. Pull
37. Soccer standout Hamm
38. Deli order
39. Supermarket chain inits.
40. Extended period

Solution:
Tomestone



weblinks

Judges Simon Cowell, Heidi Klum, Howie Mandel and Mel B have faced a roller coaster of emotions throughout this special season of "AGT," battling it out as they face the twists, turns and surprises involved in the big leagues. Thankfully, the end is nigh, as a winner will be crowned in the season finale of "America's Got Talent: Fantasy League," airing Monday, Feb. 19, on NBC. Before the final curtain call, see the season's best moments by visiting nbc.com/americas-got-talent-fantasy-league

"Rookie" officer John Nolan (Nathan Fillion) of the LAPD is back and better than ever, and now he's got a new partner to train. Enthusiastic about meeting the team — and solving the disappearance of her sister — Officer Celina Juarez (Lisseth Chavez) joins the Mid-Wilshire Patrol Division in the Season 6 premiere of "The Rookie," airing Tuesday, Feb. 20, on ABC. Get a glimpse of what's to come in the

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weblinks

Ready, set, soufflé! Guy Fieri challenges the food truck families with a grocery shopping relay race, then asking the two winning teams to create their signature dishes with a few twists, all determined by the spin of a wheel. This brand-new episode of "Guy's Grocery Games" will get your culinary wheels turning when it premieres Wednesday, Feb. 21, on Food Network. See who's heading into Fieri's fire, with this season's competitors listed at foodnetwork.com/shows/guys-grocery-games/photos/Guys-Grocery-Games-Flavor-town-Academy-Meet-the-Competitors

Alongside her contractor husband, Mike Jackson, real estate broker and interior designer Egypt Sherrrod helps clients find and curate dream homes in neighborhoods perfectly suited to their needs — but even for the "pros," busy careers and big ideas can make it difficult to stay on time and budget. Egypt and Mike make it work in Season 3 of "Married to Real Estate," premiering Thursday, Feb. 22, on HGTV. For a glimpse of what's to come, fans can read more at hgtv.com/shows/married-to-real-estate/articles/hgtv-renews-married-to-real-estate-for-a-third-season

Welcome Pastor Larry Grunden

Pastor Larry is a graduate of Wright State University and a 2015 graduate of Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. A second career pastor, Larry was reared in the suburbs of Cincinnati and has lived in the greater Dayton area since 1996. His previous life experience was in home remodeling and his undergraduate degree was in vocal music.



Pastor Larry is passionate about youth ministry, music ministry, and missional ministry. He and his wife Angela live with their cats Ellie Mae and Katy. Together they enjoy traveling, cooking and eating gourmet meals, festivals, gardening and hosting dinners for friends and family. Pastor Larry also enjoys woodworking, fishing, bicycling, playing guitar and many other activities.

Pastor Larry believes that "discipleship" is a verb. To believe in Christ is to be in motion in our churches, in our communities, and in our world. In addition to the Sacraments, one of the most powerful activities in which we can participate is prayer. It is here that we connect with God and become closer to our Creator. It is also through our hands that we experience Jesus Christ as we use them to help others in need. He believes that together we can make a difference in the world! **Please join us! All are welcome! Sunday Worship: 8am and 10:30am**

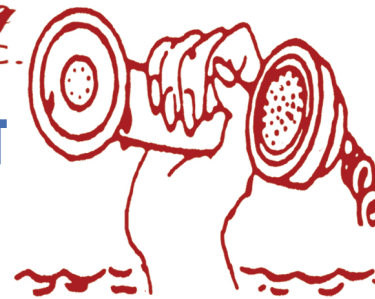
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	9			1			5
	4		2		5	1	
	1				7	3	6
		2					
	7	5		8		6	9
4	8						5
				4		8	
		3	7		8		

To complete this puzzle, place the numbers 1-9 in the empty cells, so that every row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold outline) contains all nine digits.

Each number 1-9 may appear only once in each row, column and 3-by-3 box.

Solution on page 4

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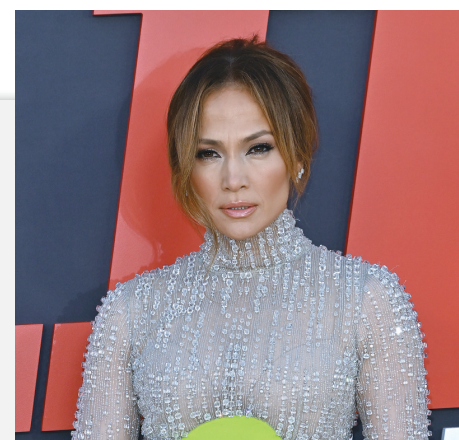
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celebrityfacts

Jennifer Lopez of "This Is Me...Now: A Love Story" on Prime Video:

She was one of the dancing Fly Girls in "In Living Color" from 1991 to 1993, and she left that sketch show to focus her ambitions on an acting career.



infocus

"The Completely Made-up Adventures of Dick Turpin" - Season 1 (Apple TV+ — March 1, Series Premiere)

This comedy series, set in the 18th century, follows Dick Turpin (Noel Fielding) as he sets out on a journey of wildly absurd escapades when he's made the reluctant leader of a band of outlaws — and tasked with out-witting corrupt lawman and self-appointed thief-taker Jonathan Wilde (Hugh Bonneville). Turpin is the most famous but least likely of highway robbers, whose success is defined mostly by his charm, showmanship and great hair. Together with his gang of lovable rogues, Turpin rides the highs and lows of his new endeavours.



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celebrityfacts

Justin Hartley of "Tracker" on CBS:

He had major roles in two daytime serials, "Passions" and "The Young and the Restless," also playing the recurring role of Green Arrow in "Smallville" in prime time in-between them.



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WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 16

In the grid below, twenty answers can be found that fit the category for today. Circle each answer that you find and list it in the space provided at the right of the grid. Answers can be found in all directions—forward, backward, horizontally, vertically and diagonally. An example is given to get you started. Can you find the twenty answers in today's puzzle?

Today's Category: Fish

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

- Anchovy
- _____
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- _____
- _____



Glenn Close of "The New Look" on Apple TV+:

First nominated for a Tony Award for "Barnum," she has won three of those Broadway honors (to date) for "The Real Thing," "Death and the Maiden" and "Sunset Boulevard."



Bridget Moynahan of "Blue Bloods" on CBS:

She had the recurring role of Natasha, who was a contender opposite Carrie Bradshaw (Sarah Jessica Parker) for the heart of "Mr. Big" (Chris Noth), in "Sex and the City."

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Crossword Solution Puzzle on Page 11

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

Bingo Solution Puzzle on Page 16

Bingo — Solution

	P	S	B	L	M
Characters in "Family Guy"	Peter	Stewie	Brian	Lois	Meg
NHL Teams	Panthers/Penguins	Sharks/Stars	Blues/Blackhawks/Blue Jackets/Bruins	Lightning	Maple Leafs
Footwear	Pumps	Slippers	Boots	Loafers	Moccasins
Oceans/Seas	Pacific	Baltic	Sargasso	Ligurian	Mediterranean
Band names with misspellings	Phish	Staind	The Byrds	Limp Bizkit	The Monkees

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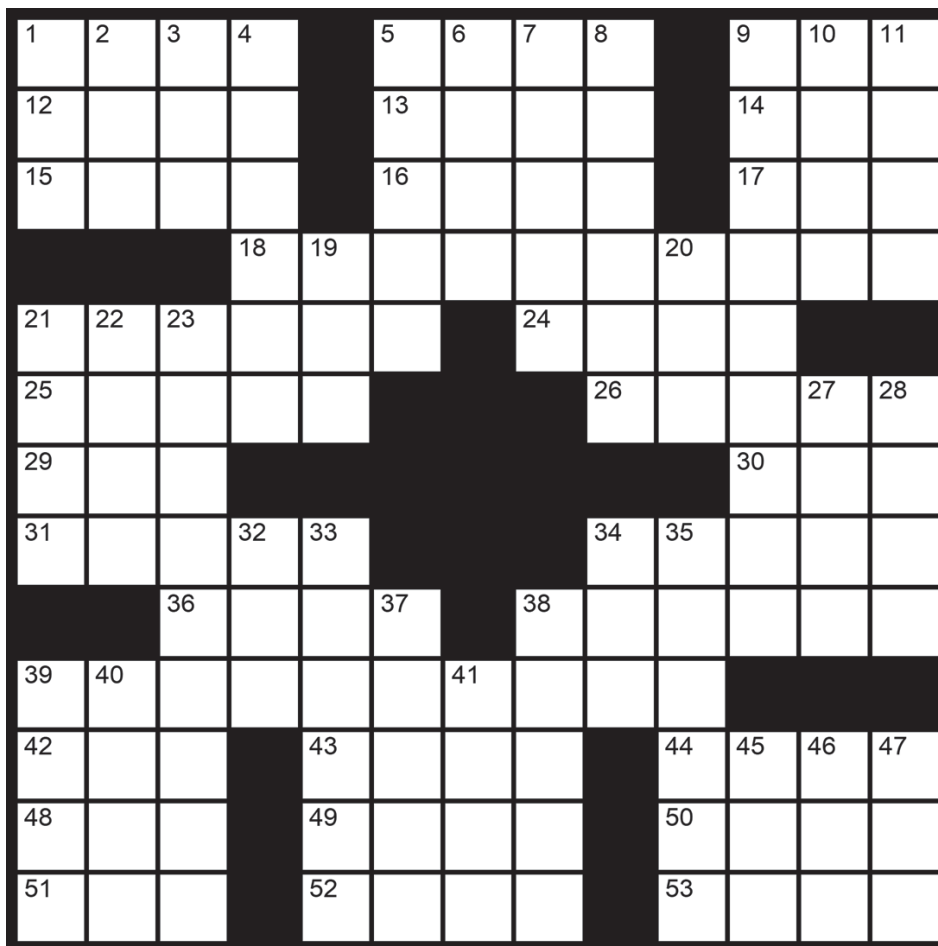
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gametime
crossword fun

Solution on page 10



Across

- 1. Markers
- 5. Voting "no"
- 9. Draft org.?
- 12. Get-up-and-go
- 13. "The ___ Martin Show"
- 14. N.H.L. Hall-of-Famer since 1979
- 15. Department
- 16. "Trinity" author Leon

- 17. Obedience school command
- 18. Isla Fisher Netflix series
- 21. Spotted wildcat
- 24. Aerobic bit
- 25. Guns N' Roses guitarist
- 26. State of the ___
- 29. Drunk
- 30. Lamb's mother
- 31. Eyeball benders
- 34. Drinking and gambling
- 36. Ending with hard or soft
- 38. "America's Got ___"
- 39. 2024 Jeff Daniels series
- 42. Set down
- 43. Mary Kay rival
- 44. ___ of Man
- 48. Itinerary word
- 49. Horror film staple
- 50. Hit hard
- 51. Tiny toiler
- 52. Regarded
- 53. Particular
- 2. "___ Flag Means Death"
- 3. Operate
- 4. Prayer coverings
- 5. ___ Swim (Cartoon Network)
- 6. Toy ball material
- 7. Flip side?
- 8. Unmoved
- 9. It spans the bridge
- 10. Fedora feature
- 11. Museo offering
- 19. "I'm impressed!"
- 20. Ryan Gosling 2023 role
- 21. Capital on a fjord
- 22. YouTube selection
- 23. Erode
- 27. John Irving's "A Prayer for ___ Meany"
- 28. Hatching place
- 32. Printed
- 33. Medical prioritizing
- 34. Kilmer of "The Saint"
- 35. "Fighting" athletes
- 37. Representative
- 38. Ready to be played
- 39. Thomas ___ Edison
- 40. Chief
- 41. Driver's warning
- 45. College-entry hurdle
- 46. Tell it like it isn't
- 47. Street shader

Down

- 1. Microbrew choice, for short

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First 'Sex and the City' movie carries the premise along

As feature-film spinoffs of television series go, 'Sex and the City' is a textbook example of giving people what they want.

The popularity of the frank comedy about four female New York friends made it a game-changer for HBO, which presents the first movie (released in 2008) Tuesday, Feb. 20. The company had to know that going the film route with the franchise would be a smart business decision ... particularly after the original show ended, since its devotees likely would leap at more adventures of Carrie, Samantha, Miranda and Charlotte (played again by Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Cynthia Nixon and Kristin Davis).

And leap they did, though returning writer-director Michael Patrick King was also wise enough to make allowances for those unfamiliar with the series, largely accomplishing that through an opening-credit voiceover by Parker that quickly brings the stories of all four women up to date (for that time, anyway). Those involve the men in their

lives, with Chris Noth, Jason Lewis, David Eigenberg and Evan Handler also reprising their TV roles.

Remaining first among equals is the story of Carrie (Parker) and her wealthy beau known as "Mr. Big" (Noth). True love did not run smooth for them in the original version, nor does it here, even as they're headed for the altar. A case of cold feet is a major factor in what happens, resulting in a great display of what always has been a principal theme of "Sex and the City": sisterhood.

With the way the other women rally around Carrie, it's no surprise that fans took this movie to heart as they did. The fact that the actresses knew the characters and their relationships so well by then added an extra layer of authenticity that was everything in terms of this story, making the picture a smash hit — even at a length of 2-1/2 hours, which still wasn't enough for many people.

In fact, "Sex and the City 2" followed, but its plot that took the ladies to Abu Dhabi was a bit of a stretch. Sticking to the simple, yet emotionally complicated, basics was the best path here, confirmed by the fact that the first movie sometimes is included in televised marathons of the original show, being such a logical and comfortable extension of it.

Among cast additions here, Jennifer Hudson is the clear standout as Carrie's personal assistant and frequent sounding board, ultimately providing the key that brings the movie to its hugely satisfying conclusion.



Kristin Davis, Cynthia Nixon, Sarah Jessica Parker and Kim Cattrall in "Sex and the City"

- Salt ★★★ (2010) A CIA officer (Angelina Jolie) goes on the run after a defector accuses her of being a Russian spy. SYFY Wed. 5:29 p.m., Thu. 2:58 p.m.
Sandpiper, The ★★★ (1965) A free-spirited artist meets the administrator of the parochial school that her young son attends. TCM Mon. 1:45 p.m.
Shawshank Redemption, The ★★★★★ (1994) An innocent man (Tim Robbins) goes to a Maine penitentiary for life in 1947. AMC Sun. 6 p.m., Sun. 10:31 p.m.
She Wore a Yellow Ribbon ★★★ (1949) A cavalry captain (John Wayne) completes one last mission in the heart of Indian territory. TCM Thu. 8 p.m.
Shrek ★★★ (2001) A monster (Mike Myers) and a donkey (Eddie Murphy) make a deal with a mean lord. BRAVO Sat. 2 p.m., Sat. 6 p.m.
Shrek 2 ★★★ (2004) A green ogre (Mike Myers) must meet his wife's (Cameron Diaz) parents. BRAVO Sat. 4 p.m., Sat. 8 p.m.
Simple Favor, A ★★★ (2018) A vlogger tries to uncover the truth behind her best friend's sudden and mysterious disappearance. VH1 Tue. 11 p.m., Wed. 8 p.m.
Sing ★★★ (2016) A pig, a mouse, a porcupine, a gorilla, an elephant and other animals enter a singing competition. NICK Sun. 6:30 p.m., Mon. 2 p.m.
Spellbound ★★★ (1945) A psychiatrist (Ingrid Bergman) interprets a murder suspect's (Gregory Peck) dream. TCM Tue. 10:30 p.m.
Spider-Man: No Way Home ★★★ (2021) The stakes become dangerous when Peter Parker discovers what it truly means to be Spider-Man. FX Sat. 7 p.m., Sat. 10 p.m., Thu. 5 p.m.
Starship Troopers ★★★ (1997) Earth's space fleet (Casper Van Dien, Dina Meyer, Denise Richards) battles gigantic insects. BBCA Thu. 8 p.m., nextThu. 1 a.m.
Thomas Crown Affair, The ★★★ (1968) A bank-caper genius (Steve McQueen) falls for the sleuth (Faye Dunaway) on his trail. TCM Mon. 10:15 p.m.
Thor ★★★ (2011) After his reckless actions reignite an ancient war, the Norse god is banished to Earth. USA Fri. 8 p.m., SYFY Wed. 7:30 p.m.

- Tombstone ★★★ (1993) Doc Holliday (Val Kilmer) joins Wyatt Earp (Kurt Russell) for the OK Corral showdown. AMC Fri. 5 p.m.
Topkapi ★★★★★ (1964) Lovers (Melina Mercouri, Maximilian Schell) try to steal a dagger in Istanbul. TCM Sun. 8 p.m.
Total Recall ★★★★★ (1990) An earthman (Arnold Schwarzenegger) of the future goes to Mars, driven by nightmares of his past. AMC Mon. 12 p.m.
Toy Story ★★★★★ (1995) An action hero's arrival creates upset in a group of toys that comes to life when people are absent. FREE Tue. 6 p.m.
Toy Story 2 ★★★★★ (1999) When a toy collector kidnaps Woody, Buzz Lightyear and the others band together to bring him home. FREE Tue. 8 p.m.
Toy Story 3 ★★★ (2010) When Andy leaves for college, Woody, Buzz and the rest of the toys wind up at a day-care center. DISN Sun. 8 p.m., FREE Wed. 5 p.m.
Toy Story 4 ★★★ (2019) A toy road trip leads to an unexpected reunion between Woody and his long-lost friend Bo Peep. FREE Wed. 7:30 p.m.

- U
Up ★★★ (2009) A crotchety balloon salesman (Ed Asner) discovers a stowaway aboard his flying house. FREE Sun. 9:20 p.m.
W
Wanted ★★★ (2008) An office drone (James McAvoy) becomes part of a secret society of assassins. SYFY Wed. 11 p.m.
When We Were Kings ★★★★★ (1996) Filmmaker Leon Gast chronicles the 1974 Muhammad Ali/George Foreman championship bout in Zaire. TCM Wed. 4:30 p.m.
Winged Migration ★★★ (2001) Filmmaker Jacques Perrin follows migratory birds as they fly thousands of miles away, then return. TCM Wed. 6:15 p.m.
World War Z ★★★ (2013) A former U.N. investigator is forced back into service to find the source of a zombie pandemic. PARMT Wed. 8 p.m., Wed. 1:30 a.m.
Z
Zootopia ★★★ (2016) Police rabbit Judy Hopps works with a wily fox to solve a mystery in the metropolis of Zootopia. FREE Mon. 4 p.m.

SUNDAY EVENING

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MOVIES SPORTS KIDS

FEBRUARY 18, 2024

Table with columns for channel (C), time slot (AT, DN, DTV), and program titles for 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, and 11:30. Includes programs like Last Man Standing, The Big Bang Theory, and The Shawshank Redemption.

MONDAY EVENING

C=COMCAST AT=AT&T UVERSE DN=DISH NETWORK DTV=DIRECTV

MOVIES

SPORTS

KIDS

FEBRUARY 19, 2024

Table with columns for Channel (C), Air Time (AT), Day (DN), Time (DTV), and Program Details for Monday Evening. Programs include Last Man Standing, The Big Bang Theory, Antiques Roadshow, and various news and entertainment shows.

TUESDAY EVENING

C=COMCAST AT=AT&T UVERSE DN=DISH NETWORK DTV=DIRECTV

MOVIES

SPORTS

KIDS

FEBRUARY 20, 2024

Table with columns for Channel (C), Air Time (AT), Day (DN), Time (DTV), and Program Details for Tuesday Evening. Programs include Last Man Standing, The Big Bang Theory, Finding Your Roots, and various news and entertainment shows.

WEDNESDAY EVENING

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MOVIES

SPORTS

KIDS

FEBRUARY 21, 2024

Table with columns for channel (C), time (AT, DN, DTV), and program details for Wednesday evening. Includes shows like Last Man Standing, The Big Bang Theory, and various news programs.

THURSDAY EVENING

C=COMCAST AT=AT&T UVERSE DN=DISH NETWORK DTV=DIRECTV

MOVIES

SPORTS

KIDS

FEBRUARY 22, 2024

Table with columns for channel (C), time (AT, DN, DTV), and program details for Thursday evening. Includes shows like Last Man Standing, The Big Bang Theory, and various news programs.

BINGO

Fill in each box of the BINGO grid below with an answer that begins with the letter above each column and belongs to the category listed before each row. List one answer for each box, although there is more than one acceptable answer for many of the boxes.

	P	S	B	L	M
Characters in "Family Guy"					
NHL Teams					
Footwear					
Oceans/ Seas					
Band names with misspellings					

celebritypipeline

BY JAY BOBBIN

Tracing an award winner's Field of TV dreams

Q: I recently saw the movie "The Way West" on cable, and the opening credits said, "Introducing Sally Field." Hadn't she done a TV series before that? - Victor Smith, Orlando, Fla.

A: The then-future Oscar and Primetime Emmy winner had the title role in ABC's series version of "Gidget" during the 1965-66 season, and she had a recurring part in the NBC sitcom "Hey, Landlord" early in 1967. "The Way West," released in the spring of 1967, was Field's first major movie credit (after an uncredited appearance in the 1962 Disney feature "Moon Pilot").

Sally Field in "Gidget"



In fact, 1967 was quite an active year for Field. That fall, she began her three-season run in ABC's "The Flying Nun," and she then stayed largely with TV work by upping her drama cred with parts on other series and in TV-movies. However, she also did another sitcom, NBC's "The Girl With Something Extra" (1973-74). As it happens, that show and "Gidget" are included in a weekend-long Catchy Comedy marathon of Field's television efforts that continues Sunday, Feb. 18.

Feature-film employment increased for Field after "Stay Hungry" (1976) and the enormously successful "Smokey and the Bandit" (1977), and she stayed principally in that venue until she returned to TV in a recurring role in NBC's "ER" and a starring part in ABC's "Brothers & Sisters." She also was featured later in the Netflix drama "Maniac."

Q: I enjoyed Barry Manilow's Christmas special. Will he be doing another special soon? - Kim Bright, via e-mail

A: No plans had been announced for that as of this writing, but the ever-popular music superstar is sure to keep popping up on various programs from time to time, as he did recently on NBC's "Christmas in Rockefeller Center," the syndicated "The Kelly Clarkson Show" and ABC's "The View." It's also likely that his "A Very Barry Christmas" special for NBC will get repeats in future holiday seasons.

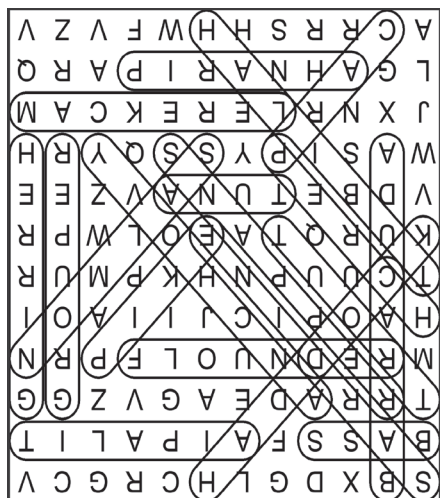
As Manilow told us at the time of that latter show's first airing, he basically delivered it ready-made to NBC, since it was a slightly condensed version of the performance he presents in live appearances during the holiday period each year. However, he added his belief that the lighting and extra decor for the TV version made it that much more special.

Q: Why is "The Conners" running on The CW now when it's still on ABC? - Elizabeth Crane, via e-mail

A: It's definitely a rare arrangement for two American broadcast networks to be running the same series at the same time, but the CW episodes of the "Roseanne" spinoff are repeats from its first five seasons, whereas the sixth-year ABC episodes are new. Presumably, the series was acquired for a price that worked within The CW's parameters for programming, which also has involved the acquisition of a number of Canadian-produced shows that already were running on networks there.

For a show run to concurrently on one broadcast network and also on cable outlets is much more common these days, a couple of examples being "FBI" (CBS, Paramount+, ION Television, Pop) and "9-1-1" (ABC - to happen soon, after the show's move from FOX - plus USA Network and WE: Women's Entertainment, as well as in syndication to local stations).

Send questions of general interest via email to tvtpipeline@gmail.com. Writers must include their names, cities and states. Personal replies cannot be sent.



- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 10. Herring | 1. Anchovy |
| 9. Halibut | 2. Barracuda |
| 8. Haddock | 3. Bass |
| 7. Grouper | 4. Carp |
| 6. Flounder | 5. Cod |
| 5. Cod | 6. Flounder |
| 4. Carp | 7. Grouper |
| 3. Bass | 8. Haddock |
| 2. Barracuda | 9. Halibut |
| 1. Anchovy | 10. Herring |
| 11. Mackerel | 11. Mackerel |
| 12. Perch | 12. Perch |
| 13. Pike | 13. Pike |
| 14. Piranha | 14. Piranha |
| 15. Salmon | 15. Salmon |
| 16. Sardine | 16. Sardine |
| 17. Snapper | 17. Snapper |
| 18. Tilapia | 18. Tilapia |
| 19. Trout | 19. Trout |
| 20. Tuna | 20. Tuna |



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No injuries after car runs into retention pond

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY CCSO

FLEMING ISLAND – Nobody was injured after a car ran into a retention pond at the entrance to Pace Island Monday night. The dive team from the Clay County Sheriff’s Office joined Fire Rescue in pulling the car from the pond.

Police Briefs claytodayonline.com

Compiled by Don Coble

Man, 51, charged with serving alcohol to underaged guests at house party

MIDDLEBURG – A man hosting a party on Feb. 11 wound up going to jail when Clay County Sheriff’s Office deputies determined as many as three dozen underaged guests were drinking alcohol.

Steven Howard Freytag, 51, of Middleburg, was charged with allowing minors to consume alcohol at an open house party after deputies responded to noise complaints at the 2100 block of Spinnaker Court around 2 a.m. When they arrived, they saw several young guests throwing bottles of alcohol into an adjacent wooded area. Deputies counted as many as 20 guests, and most of them appeared to be younger than 21.

Deputies found several cans of twisted tea, cans of alcohol and red Solo cups throughout the house. The underaged participants were released to the custody of their parents and guardians.

Freytag pleaded no contest at his bond hearing on Feb. 12, and the case was closed after Circuit Judge Gary L. Wilkinson fined him \$388 in fees and gave him credit for spending two days in jail.

Inmate returns to Clay County with hopes of earning trade skills certification

ORANGE PARK – An inmate at the Raiford Prison Work Camp returned to Clay County on Feb. 9 to face a 2020 marijuana, burglary and grand theft charges, a step necessary to remove restrictions to continue earning his special skill trade certification.

Eric Patrick Mosely, 36, of Jacksonville, was sentenced to three years in prison for robberies in Duval and Clay County. He said he agreed to a plea agreement in

2022 that allowed the sentences from both counties to be served concurrently. Three weeks later, Clay County revoked his bond and charged him with failure to appear after he was arrested in Duval for two counts of burglary. That detainer restricts Mosely from leaving prison property to earn his certification.

Mosely sent a two-page letter to the Clay Court on Jan. 17 asking to appear in front of a Clay County judge to have the detainer removed.

In the letter, Mosely wrote: “I’m trying to utilize the term I have to serve productively, so that I can become a more productive citizen in society once I’m released.”

Mosely was to appear for a review on Feb. 12, but it was continued until March 11.

Woman charged with hit and run after man struck riding his bike on Old Jennings Road

MIDDLEBURG – A Middleburg woman was arrested on Feb. 9 for hit and run after a man riding his bicycle was struck by a car on Old Jennings Road.

Amie Nicole Hiter, 42, was charged with failure to immediately report a crash, driving with a suspended license and leaving the scene of an accident with an injury without rendering aid after a man was knocked off his bike and thrown into a



Eric Patrick Mosely



Michael Wayne Lominick



Amie Nicole Hiter

FUGITIVE FRIDAY

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ditch shortly after 7 a.m.

Deputies found the right side mirror and shards of glass at the scene. Four witnesses described the truck as a green F-150. A patrol unit stopped a truck on Blanding Boulevard without a passenger mirror that also matched the truck’s description. Hiter was then arrested.

The victim was “alert” and “conscious,” but he was admitted to HCA Florida Orange Park Hospital for treatment.

Hiter’s bond was set at \$82,507.

Orange Park man jailed after young girl claims repeated sexual abuse

ORANGE PARK – A 61-year-old man was charged on Feb. 8 with capital sexual battery of a child younger than 12 after a girl said he had been abusing her “over the course of a few years,” the Clay County Sheriff’s Office said.

Michael Wayne Lominick, of Orange Park, is at the Clay County Jail without bond.

According to the affidavit for an arrest warrant, the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office was investigating adults after the girl said she had been repeatedly abused in Clay County. JSO identified Lominick as the suspect. She was younger than 12 during the last reported incident on March 18, 2022.

The First Coast Child Protection Team did a forensic interview on March 20, 2022. Lominick invoked his rights to remain silent, but further investigation by the sheriff’s office determined there was enough probable cause to charge him. An arrest warrant was issued on Feb. 8.

Lominick’s next court appearance will be on March 5.

Green Cove’s Carl Smith sentenced for sending child pornography

JACKSONVILLE – U.S. Attorney Roger B. Handberg announces that Carl Stephen Smith Jr., 33, of Green Cove Springs,

pleaded guilty to distributing child sexual abuse materials using the internet. In federal prison, Smith faces a minimum mandatory penalty of five years, up to 20 years. Smith was arrested on Jan. 31 and has been in jail since.

According to court documents, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received a CyberTipline report in July 2022 from an online social media application indicating three child sexual abuse videos had been uploaded on the app by a user named “daddysir142.” The internet protocol address used to upload the materials was traced to an internet service provider in Green Cove Springs. An investigation by the Clay County Sheriff’s Office revealed numerous other CyberTipline reports submitted by online social media apps for IP addresses linked to Smith and his residence.

Agents from Homeland Security Investigations and other law enforcement personnel executed a federal search warrant on Jan. 31 at Smith’s residence. During an interview with law enforcement, Smith admitted that he communicated with minors on social media and that he used social media apps to search for child sexual abuse materials.

HSI agents seized a cellphone belonging to Smith. A forensic review of this device revealed it contained at least 22 videos and 37 photos depicting minors engaging in sexually explicit conduct. The device contained online conversations between Smith and other users in which Smith distributed materials depicting the sexual abuse of young children.

The Clay County Sheriff’s Office, the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, the Putnam County Sheriff’s Office, and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and Homeland Security Investigations investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney D. Rodney Brown is prosecuting it.

It is another case brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and

Arrests & Bookings

Compiled by Don Coble

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

Tuesday, Feb. 13

Mitchell R. Callahan, 46, Middleburg, FTA
Reynaldo E. Grey, 25, Orange Park, battery, possession-cocaine, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement
Teresa L. Bland, 42, Orange Park, possession-methamphetamine, possession-drug paraphernalia
Jacob I. Wiard, 22, Fleming Island, two counts attempting to flee/elude law enforcement with lights/siren active
John R. Huffman, 27, Keystone Heights, aggravated battery with deadly weapon
Trayvone E. French, 26, Green Cove Springs, VOP-robbery
Sheron J. Banks, 29, Orange Park, grand theft auto
Allen L. Bryant, 32, Orange Park, grand theft auto, DWLSR
Erica L. Bain, 46, Green Cove Springs, FTA-tag not attached, FTA-DWLSR
Amy C. Stainbrook, 47, Green Cove Springs, FTA-petit theft
Mark E. Orbe, 53, Green Cove Springs, resisting law enforcement with violence, battery on law enforcement/firefighter/EMT, two counts VOP-community control
Katelyn D. Doran, 28, Middleburg, attempting to flee/elude law enforcement with lights/siren active, reckless driving
Bert G. Jackson, 49, Orange Park, possession-fentanyl, possession-methamphetamine, possession-drug paraphernalia

Monday, Feb. 12

Joseph A. Taylor, 32, Orange Park, shoplifting

Timothy C. Adams, 31, Orange Park, DUI, DWLSR
Eugene P. Bordner, 32, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR
Jeremy S. Kay, 47, Green Cove Springs, VOP-battery
Matthew K.G. Byatt, 49, Fleming Island, battery
Laurence D. Franklin, 44, Green Cove Springs, two counts FTA-petit theft

Sunday, Feb. 11

Victor L. Perez, 36, Middleburg, DUI with property damage
Micheal R. Haner, 37, Orange Park, domestic battery
Araz Y. Guiragossian, 63, Fleming Island, DUI, refusal to submit to BAL test
Andrew R. Sepper, 43, Fleming Island, shoplifting
Aaliyah S.L. Nelson, 19, Orange Park, DWLSR
Caitlyn E. Brand, 30, Fleming Island, DUI with BAL of .15 or greater with passenger younger than 18
Christopher S. Johns, 32, Middleburg, disorderly intoxication, false fire alarm
Joel D.V. Caez, 43, Orange Park, two counts domestic battery
Steven H. Freytag, 51, Middleburg, allowing minors to consume alcohol at open house party

Saturday, Feb. 10

Robert J. Wilson, 34, Orange Park, grand theft auto, possession-methamphetamine, possession-cocaine, possession-drug paraphernalia
Justin D. Smith, 29, Orange Park, possession-methamphetamine, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia
Kenshayla D. Davis, 38, Orange Park, disorderly intoxication
Adam D. Smith, 34, Orange Park, disorderly intoxication
Marcus T. Bass, 29, Orange Park, domestic battery, vandalism
Michael L. Barfield, 36, Orange Park, shoplifting

Torance L. Collins, 51, Green Cove Springs, possession-marijuana, possession-ammunition/firearm convicted felon
Erving B. Carroway, 40, Fleming Island, assault
Justin M. Lackey, 30, Middleburg, FTA-domestic battery
Crystal D. Wood, 41, Orange Park, possession-methamphetamine
Ceirra S. Williams, 24, Middleburg, DUI
Anthony L. Ford, 70, Maxville, DUI

Friday, Feb. 9

David A. Qualls, 50, Green Cove Springs, domestic battery
Tialy Saintbert, 24, Orange Park, battery, hindering communication to law enforcement/judge
Trayon O. Fussell-Dumas, 27, Green Cove Springs, VOP-uttering fraudulent bank note/bill
Eric P. Mosely, 36, Orange Park, grand theft, three counts FTA-burglary, FTA-possession-marijuana, FTA-possession-drug paraphernalia
Austin T. Leek, 25, Oakleaf, domestic battery
Erik K. Blackburn, 45, Orange Park, trafficking-fentanyl
Isaiah K Toliver, 23, Green Cove Springs, FTA-burglary
Reggie L. Glover, 36, Green Cove Springs, FTA-battery
Amie N. Hiter, 42, Orange Park, failure to report crash, DWLSR, leaving scene of accident without rendering aid to injured
Omari G. Smith, 26, Fleming Island, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia
Alexis A. Munguia-Rosales, 25, Middleburg, driving without valid license
Marie L. Tucker-Carter, 63, Middleburg, DUI
Arnold F. Reuter, 65, Middleburg, DUI

Thursday, Feb. 8

Matthew E. Powell, 47, Green Cove Springs, violation of pretrial release conditions for protection against domestic

violence

Matthew R. Puent, 51, Orange Park, resist/obstruct/oppose law enforcement, DUI, refusal to submit to BAL test
James D. Lewis, 29, Keystone Heights, violation of injunction for protection against domestic violence
Raymond C. Leathers, 49, Green Cove Springs, VOP-violation of injunction for protection against domestic violence, VOP-aggravated stalking/harassing/cyberstalking
Drexel T. Kellogg, 58, Green Cove Springs, VOP-criminal mischief
Christopher S. Parks, 53, Green Cove Springs, two counts VOP-felony battery
Wallace A. Mills, 34, Green Cove Springs, FTA-possession-cocaine, FTA-possession-marijuana, FTA-possession-drug paraphernalia, FTA-provide false name/ID
Joshua L. Wilmot, 36, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR
Jakarie L. Jones, 25, Green Cove Springs, VOP-domestic violence

Wednesday, Feb. 7

Stephanie K. Pickett, 38, Middleburg, two counts possession-controlled substance, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia
Michael W. Lominick, 63, Green Cove Springs, sexual battery of child younger than 18
Ashley D. Almon, 37, Orange Park, uttering false bank note/check/draft
Scott E. Bowen, 56, Keystone Heights, burglary
Tanisha N. Barnwell, 20, Green Cove Springs, battery on law enforcement/firefighter/EMT, resisting law enforcement with violence
Justus A. Harper, 23, Middleburg, possession-methamphetamine, possession-marijuana

Police

from page 37

local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who sexually exploit children and to identify and rescue child victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit justice.gov/psc.

CCSO helps U.S. Attorney get guilty plea from woman filming monkeys being crushed

JACKSONVILLE – U.S. Attorney Roger B. Handberg announced Nicole Danielle Devilbiss, 35, of Jacksonville, today pleaded guilty to conspiracy to create and distribute animal crush videos. Devilbiss faces a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison. A sentencing date has not yet been set.

Animal crushing is defined under federal criminal law as “actual conduct in which one or more living non-human mammals, birds, reptiles, or amphibians, is purposely crushed, burned, drowned, suffocated, impaled, or otherwise subjected to serious bodily injury.”

The Clay County, St. Johns and Jacksonville sheriff’s offices and Homeland Security Investigations investigated the case.

According to the plea agreement, in September 2023, Homeland Security Investigations in Jacksonville received information regarding an individual residing in Jacksonville, who was identified as an administrator of a social media application group chat that was dedicated to the abuse, torture and death of various-aged monkeys.

The HSI investigation revealed that numerous people involved in the group exchanged hundreds of messages about the abuse and torture of monkeys, as well as

videos depicting the abuse and torture of monkeys.

The purpose of the group was to fund, view, distribute, and promote animal crush videos that depicted the torture, murder, and sadistic mutilation of animals, specifically baby and adult monkeys. The co-conspirators agreed to create animal crush videos using videographers and animals in other countries, to include Indonesia, which would then be sent to the United States.

The name of the group changed multiple times to innocuous names that were inconsistent with the goals and interests of the group, which appeared to be to avoid detection by law enforcement.

This investigation led to the identification of Devilbiss as a group member. Law enforcement obtained some of those messages and videos that were exchanged involving her.

Devilbiss and her co-conspirators col-

lectively funded the creation of animal crush videos using online payment applications. Co-conspirators outside the United States received this funding and used it to create animal crush videos. Between April 14, 2022, and continuing through May 23, 2023, Devilbiss sent at least three payments to her co-conspirators using an online payment application to fund the creation of animal crush videos. The IP addresses from the Devilbiss’s transactions were tied to her internet account at her residence.

A federal search warrant was executed at her residence, and numerous electronic devices were seized. Devilbiss’s devices were reviewed and analyzed. Law enforcement found numerous videos depicting the torture of monkeys.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ashley Washington and Elisibeth Adams are prosecuting it.

TODAY'S Sports

Clay Today | February 15, 2024 | claytodayonline.com



PHOTO BY MATT DEX

Clay High ROTC member Ryan Shoenfelt speeds around corner of Homestead Speedway in recent Superbike 400 race.

Clay High rider 'Super' on bikes

By Randy Lefko
randy@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS - One would not see Clay High senior Ryan Shoenfelt and think, world class athlete, but the Clay ROTC member is quite the contrary.

"Not many people know what I do on most weekends," said Shoenfelt, 16 with 17 years right around the corner. "It has been a passion for quite some time from when I used to ride a street bike on the tracks with friends when my friend Tommy Supparano told me I looked pretty good on the track. That's how it kind of started and I went a bought a 400 with my Papa Murphy money."

Shoenfelt, once geared up in his Ironman-looking safety suit and helmet to change his normal high school boy look, is a part of a SuperBike 400 SuperBike 300 motorcycle racing circuit; Pan American Superbike racing, that provides road race scenarios for fast-moving motorcycles.

"The Pan American Superbike circuit starts with the small bike 300s, the 400s that I compete in and the bigger 600 bikes meaning 300, 400, 600 cubic inches of engine," said Shoenfelt, who donned a Team Rhino shirt; rhino being his kid nickname for always crashing into things. "The top end speed

SEE MOTO, 46

Lady Spartans target return to title



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

St. Johns Country Day School sophomore soccer ace Sydney Schmidt has ramped up her scoring prowess with fives games of two or three goals per game as Lady Spartans sit one game from returning the Class 2A Final Four championship tournament with bid to return to state champion status.

Knights get bit by Sharks

Region: Orange Park at Gainesville

By Randy Lefko
randy@claytodayonline.com

PONTE VEDRA - Oakleaf High guard Aaron Rivers opened the scoring of the district 3-6A championship game at the very loud Ponte Vedra High gym and Jelani Wright hit three straight threes to end the first half, but the theatrics went cold in the third period as the Sharks bit Oakleaf with their own three-point prowess to win a classic 79-73 final

SEE KNIGHTS, 47



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Braden Cunningham	Football– Florida Atlantic Univ.
Haeddon Compton	Football –Jacksonville Athletic Academy
Joey Couch	Football– Jacksonville Athletic Academy
Brayden Mackey	Football–Webber University
Devaen Boykin	Football–St. Thomas University
Taylor Tamares	Soccer–UNF
Rauly Eason	Volleyball –Harding University
Ella Vigue	Volleyball –Webber University
Leeann Maysonet	Volleyball– Maryville College
Keegan Leckband	Baseball–Flagler College
Jonah Friedman	Baseball–Middle Georgia
Cambree Hodge	Golf– Daytona State
Kalia Polete	Golf– Daytona State
Joshua White	CC/Track–Florida Southern
Sydney Fallin	CC/Track–USC Aiken
Brady Goldblatt	Lacrosse–North Greenville Univ.
Riley Heimes	Lacrosse–Young Harris College
Cade Dailey	Soccer–Merchant Marine Academy
Maryn McDade	Swimming – Florida State University

FLEMING ISLAND

Eagles' 19 signees led by McDade

By Randy Lefko
Randy@claytodayonline.com

FLEMING ISLAND - In one of the biggest signees' class in recent history, the Fleming Island High sports programs put 19 of their athletes into college play on Wed., Feb. 7; National Signing Day, led by three-time Class 3A 50 freestyle champion Maryn McDade.

"It's pretty exciting to be here today among all the other athletes that are signing today; here and in the county," said McDade. "Being the only swimmer, I'm a little more excited, but the work that everyone did for this day is the key. You have to practice everyday."

McDade, headed to Florida State University, has been the most prolific athlete for her four year span with three straight state titles and a fourth title; in the 100 free, accomplished in her senior season.

"Keeping focused to win the 50 free three times is just staying in the grind," said McDade. "Getting the 100 was definitely a plus for my final season."

McDade commented that, now as a future Seminole among other swimmers of the same stature, she understands that she had to keep her work ethic very high.

"It's definitely a new step, and think I will be able to work my back up and show them 'I'm boss'," said McDade.

In football, with Fleming Island signing five players, mammoth offensive tackle Braden Cunningham; 6'-5", 305 pounds, garnered the biggest prize with a ticket to NCAA Div. 1 Florida Atlantic University in south Florida.

"I fell in love with the area and atmosphere as soon as I got there," said Cunningham. "Plus, it's 1.8 miles from the beach. That was a factor."

Cunningham, reknowned for his overall fitness on the field, credited Jason Smith of Rise and Grind Fitness in Orange Park.

"Coach Jason helped a ton in getting me ready for the fast pace of college ball," said Cunningham. "They have me slated to arrive May 28 and to play center."

Cunningham quipped that dad Travis, the athletic director and a former stand-out offensive lineman at The Citadel, put a little effort into getting Braden to at least



look at his alma mater.

"He joked about it every now and then," said Cunningham. "He left it up to me."

Cunningham liked the football schematic at FAU with offensive line coach Ed Warriner the draw.

"He's put a lot of guys in the NFL from there and from Notre Dame, Michigan, Army, Ohio State," said Cunningham. "Their scheme is very similar to what we did here at Fleming Island."

Two athletes who will go out as college teammates after a stellar career as high school teammates are golfers Cambree Hodges and Kalia Polete, both headed to Daytona State College.

"We had a good run here for the girls golf program with two state tournaments; first time in 10 years to finish as high as we did (sixth in Class 3A)," said Polete. "We've had some great golfers get scholarships along the way; Lauren Waidner (University of Florida) and Sarah May (Stetson), but the team we had was pretty good all around."

Hodges, who led the state run with a 16th place finish, credited the loose approach to the very technical part of golf as coach Brian Nedrich's strength.

"He keeps it fun and he's an Uber," said Polete, who finished 34th at the Class 3A championship just six strokes off Hodges'

score. "He drives us around all the time, but he is very good at the mental side of the game. Whatever the shot; good or bad, he gets us to forget that shot and move to the next one."

One quip that both girls simultaneously cited was Nedrich's use of the goldfish memory tactic; very short memory to keep the game going.

"Look it up, goldfish have a very short memory and basically forget something right when they do," said Polete. "Golf is a game of emotions, but he kept us from thinking too much about bad shots."

Nedrich neither confirmed nor denied the goldfish memory story.



Kaleb Robison Football- North Carolina Central
 Micah George Football- St. Thomas
 Gage Isbell Football- Point
 Austin Cruce Football- William Penn U
 Braydan Street Football- Kentucky Christian
 Trent Robinson Football- Mount Union
 Lucas Walhstrom Golf - Florida College
 Jarren Rosier Football- William Penn U
 Jaydan Jenkins Football- Iowa Western
 Errick Fryer Football- Shorter or St. Thomas
 Grady Woodard Wrestling- Coker College
 Ariana Seibel Softball- Milwaukee School of Engineering
 Morgan Beckham Softball- Bowling Green State University
 Alyssa Prather Softball- Lees McRae College
 Carly Johnson Softball- Florida State College of Jacksonville
 Madison Wesley Softball- Mississippi Valley State University
 Connor Rahn Volleyball- University of Tampa
 Gianni DiGiovanni Cheer- Missouri Valley College



MIDDLEBURG @Horsepower moving 17 to college ranks

By Randy Lefko
 Randy@claytodayonline.com

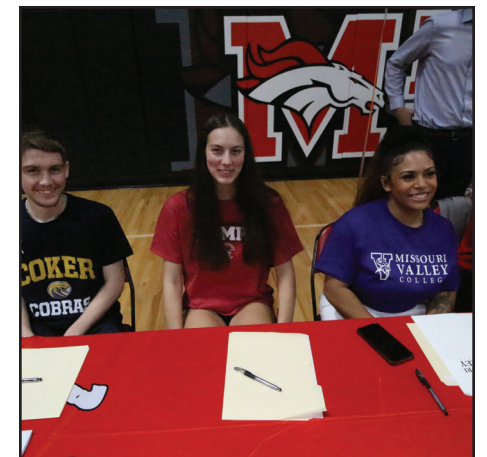
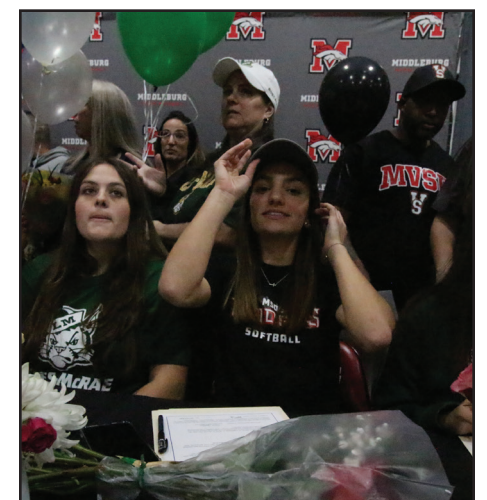
MIDDLEBURG - With arguably the most versatile class of college signees in recent history, Middleburg High School signed 17 athletes to join the college ranks with athletes from four sports inking scholarships on Wed., Feb. 7; National Signing Day.

“Look around here and look at the type of athletes that are around you,” said Middleburg Athletic Director Casey Thompson. “Each program represented here has built up from the success from their classmates who excel in other sports.”

Middleburg’s volleyball team led the way for a second team state title in recent years with senior hitter Connor Rahn the catalyst for first year coach Meredith Forcum’s debut season. Rahn, the Class 5A Dairy Farmers player of the year, will head to NCAA Div. II University of Tampa, 32-2 last year and the top seed of the NCAA Div II championship tournament last year. Tampa lost in the tournament semifinals last year.

Rahn’s success and the success of the volleyball team, followed the path of Middleburg’s softball team that won the first team state title for Middleburg two seasons ago under coach Ashley Houston, then in her second season.

From Houston’s squad this year, senior pitcher Morgan Beckham is the heir apparent to all stater Mallory Forrester from that title team. Beckham, heading to Bowling Green University, and Houston, with five signees at the table and a handful of underclass verbal commits, look to put the Lady Broncos back in the state title chase behind a young cadre of players that held that state title trophy two years ago.



With nine football players signing off under coach Ryan Wolfe, Middleburg sends off a core of hard-working athletes that, under immense pressure to play against one of the toughest schedules in all of Florida.

“These guys are probably one of my biggest groups of players since I’ve been coaching,” said Wolfe, who had previous large football signing classes at Clay and Oakleaf high schools in his history in Clay

County. “They are definitely battle tested.” Top signee for NCAA Div. I-FCS North Carolina Central (9-3 last year, lost in first round of FCS tournament) was kicker Kaleb Robison who was nearly flawless all season with kickoff touchbacks, boomer punts and even spectacularly placed punts inside the five yard line.

Wolfe’s high-energy schemes on both offense and defense lended itself to high-profile plays on the field from the likes of

linebacker Austin Cruce (William Penn) and quarterback Jaydan Jenkins (Iowa Western).

Among the other sports signed Grady Woodard will wrestle at Coker College, Lucas Wahlstrom will play golf at Florida College in Tampa, Tera McKenzie will run cross country at Florida State College in Jacksonville, and cheerleader Gianni Digiovanni who heads to Missouri Valley College.



Ava Banks –Volleyball- FSCJ
 Angel Morales –Volleyball- Penn State-Abington
 Brianna Adams –Volleyball/Softball- Webber International University
 Kennedy Baugh –Volleyball- Central State University
 Harper Herring –Volleyball- Missouri Valley College
 Haley Robinson –Volleyball- Wright State
 Mariah Bostic-Jones Volleyball- Central Methodist University
 Braylon Hawkins –Football- Central Methodist University
 Rayhn Hutchinson–Football- Community Christian College Jacksonville
 Jairus Moore –Football- Presbyterian College
 Nia Blocton –Basketball- Florida Southern
 Haylee Mcrae –Softball-Eastern Florida State College
 Hannah Crosby –Softball- Pensacola State College



RIDGEVIEW

Ridgeview volleyball dominates signing day

By Randy Lefko
 randy@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK - Ridgeview High's girls volleyball team was the top draw for the National Signing Day celebrations on February 7 with coach Steven Henry sending off seven of his players to the next level of college play led by center hitter Haley Robinson.

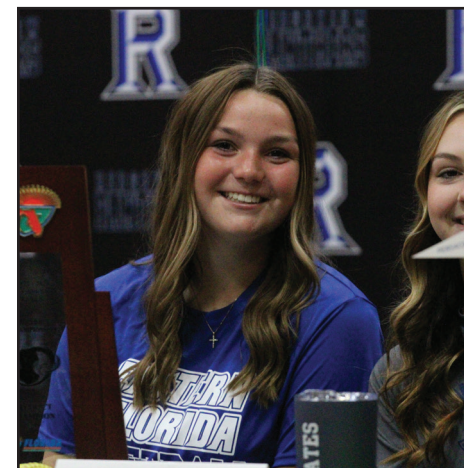
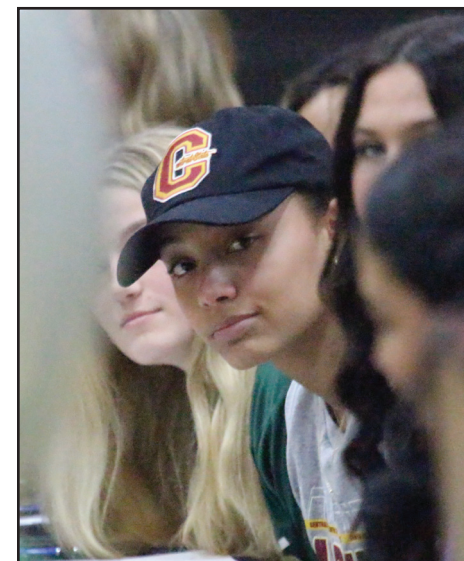
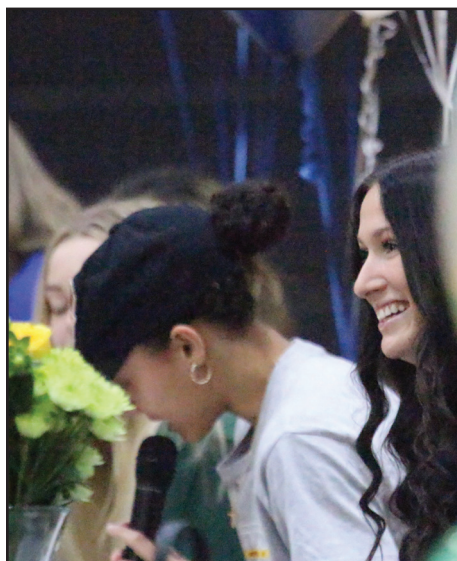
Robinson, one of the more dominant players in Ridgeview history with her explosive spikes and her uncanny blocking ability at the net, heads to Wright State University in Ohio.

Wright State, 21-11 last year, won a second Horizon League Conference title; their third title in the last four years, bowed out of the NCAA Div. I tournament in the first round.

Robinson was joined on the stage by teammates Angel Morales (Penn State-Abington), Brianna Adams (Webber International University), Kennedy Baugh (Central State University), Harper Herring (Missouri Valley College) and Mariah Bostic Jones (Central Methodist University).

Football got three players; running back Rayhn Hutchinson, tight end Jairus Moore and fullback Braylon Hawkins into the ranks with softball sending excitable Haylee McCrae to Easter Florida State College and Hannah Crosby heading to Pensacola State College, two power junior college programs in Florida.

Cross country coach Paul Grybb returned to Ridgeview and was able to get Ava Banks into the college ranks at Florida State College in Jacksonville under coach Joseph Hale. FSCJ competed in the NCJ-



CAA national championship race last year and returns the core of that team.

From girls basketball, Nia Blocton, center, heading to Florida Southern, could be the first of three Bloctons to get college sendoffs in the next two years with sister Nacoya and Narissa on the Panthers team.



Orange Park trio headed to university programs

Orange Park High sports signed off three athletic scholarships on Wed., Feb. 7; National Signing Day, with, from left, volleyball player Hailey Revak headed to Penn State. Abington, swimmer Gavin Dobson heading to Millikin University and cheerleader Savannah Claro heading to North Greenville University. With the trio is Orange Park Athletic Director Destiny Brightman.

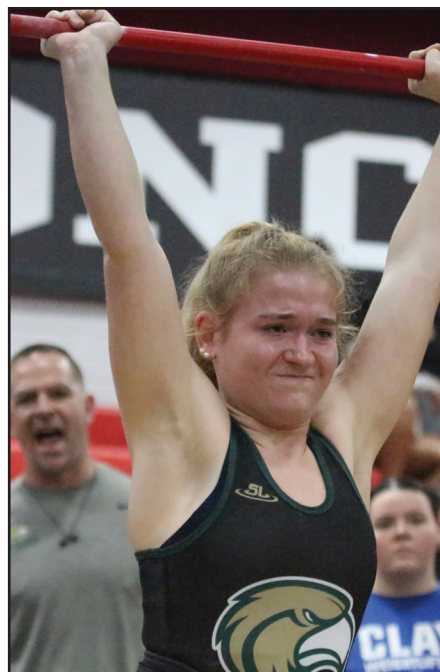


Fleming Island girls lacrosse will open their season Thursday, Feb. 15 with a home game against Gainesville and will have senior St. Leo University commit Chloe Perry in the action up front while, the boy's team will have their season opener on Tues., Feb. 13 against Nease.



Flag football heads to Everbank Stadium

Area flag football teams will head to Everbank Stadium, home to the NFL Jacksonville Jaguars, to compete in the Jags Girls Flag Football Preseason Classic on Fri.-Sat., Feb. 16-17. Pictured are flag standouts Nacoya Blocton of Ridgeview and Fleming Island defender Gabi Musa. Fleming Island (16-1) lost in the Class 1A championship game last year to Alonso High.



Off to state

STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Three area high school weightlifters looking to return home with gold medals will be Bradi Johnson (above) of Fleming Island, Emma Heck (right) of Clay and Addison Frisbee (left) of St. Johns Country Day School, left, pictured with dad coach Justin Frisbee and sister Ayla. Heck and Frisbee will be defending state titles; Heck, pictured with Johnson left and Ridgeview state qualifier Ania Haber, has two consecutive seasons finishing as state champion, Frisbee with one. Johnson, under coach Sean Coultis, could be the second state title for Coultis in two seasons.



Pickett revving up the Spartans soccer machine

By Randy Lefko
randy@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK - St. Johns Country Day School girls soccer tipped their toes (soccer pun) back into the River of State Championships with a fourth 8-0 playoff win in a row.

"I'm still juggling the lineup a little here and there, but we are finally, I think, finding the right combinations on the field to execute our game plan," said St. Johns head coach Mike Pickett, now 14-2-5, who is looking to possible restart another decades-long win streak at the state title level after having his 11-titles in a row streak snapped last year. "Our tough schedule in regular season play has prepared us to do this now."

"Do this" means Pickett expected to put together a win streak to the state title game complete with a four-in-a-row streak of 8-0 playoff wins that started in the district tournament and should go to five in the Wed., Feb. 14 region 1-2A championship against Christ's Church Academy (10-5-1).

A win against Christ's Church, whom St. Johns beat 8-0 in the district 3-2A championship game a week ago, puts the Lady Spartans just two games away; state semifinal and final, from Pickett getting his streak to restart.

"We will see some better-prepared teams to counter our offense and with our serving struggling now, we have to get better there," said Pickett, noting his outside midfielders are getting runs deep to the corners of the opposition end of the field, but missing on crossover passes in front of the goal that normally ends up in goals. "We're getting to the corner, but we are not getting past that first defender. We hit that



Sophomore Reygan Ropero pops a head ball off a corner kick in region win over University Christian.

first defender seven times and their goalie was great tonight."

In Friday's region semifinal against University Christian; the fourth team put away 8-0 with St. Joseph's Academy and Christ's Church Academy the other two victims of the Spartan wrath, the Spartans were quick and decisive as is historical with sophomore sensation Sydney Schmidt showcasing her immense talent above the goalie box with three goals. Five other Spartans had goals; Isabella DeLeon, Camila Adams, Kaitlyn Sunderhaus, Cece Nowicki and Reygan Ropero in Pickett's effort to stretch his offense.

Schmidt understood her role in the



St. Johns top goal scorer Sydney Schmidt, center, is among teammates after 8-0 win in region semifinal over University Christian. Spartans are poised to play Wed., Feb. 14 for region title and ticket to Class 2A Final Four.



Left: Mia Johnson, a junior, is versatile centerback geared for assists while, right, freshman Bree Barry's speed on the corners is key to set up Spartan scoring opportunities.



Freshman Camila Adame has emerged as strong power back on corner runs muscling past opposing defenders.

Spartan plan with her past five games putting up goal totals of 2, 3, 2, 2, and 3; two in a 3-1 regular season win over Lakewood Ranch and the final four in the 8-0 streak.

"My movement in the middle is the biggest part of it and it's up to me to get open for them to find me or the open player," said Schmidt. "In the long run, our wings are getting better and better at finding someone in front of the goal. We have a lot of goal scorers up front."

Schmidt's prowess as a player is immense foot talent to keep the ball moving while her teammates formulate around her.

"We have so many talented players that when I get double and triple marked, I can drop it off to any one of them and they can finish the run," said Schmidt, recently added to the US 16-Under national team roster. "I can hold the ball and wait for them to get up to me or take it myself and attack

the goalie."

In other region championship brackets around the state, Lakeland Christian (20-3-1), who snapped the Spartan title streak in last year's final, will host Geneva (15-2-0); True North Classical (12-2-2) will host South Florida HEAT (23-2-2) and Shorecrest Prep (8-3-3) will host First Baptist Academy (13-5-1).

In Class 5A, Orange Park will travel to Clay; both with a set of high-profile goal scorers; the Robinson sisters for the Lady Raiders and Brooke Bunton and Kirra Dodson for Clay, on Tues., Feb. 13 to play in the the region 1-5A opener. Clay and Orange Park both lost in their respective district championship games and have impressive season records; 12-2-1 for Clay; and 14-2-0 for Orange Park. The winner will advance to the region semifinal on Fri., Feb. 16 to play the winner of Vanguard vs. Beachside.

Spartans baseball hopes to grab championship trophy

By Randy Lefko

randy@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK - Former University of Alabama legend football coach Nick Saban once quipped that a preseason number one ranking is not as good as it seems because the only place to go is down.

For St. Johns Country Day School baseball, that epic forecast is a bit of the intrigue for the 2024 baseball season as area teams start to crank up with pre-season games this week and regular season games next.

"The plan is to win that final game," said St. Johns senior Kody Daneault, a .500 hitter according to Spartan coach Tom Lucas. "That's our focus."

For Lucas, who lost 5-2 in the Class 2A championship game to Lakeland Christian, ironically, the same school that ended the St. Johns girls soccer team's 11-title streak last year, the roster for 2024 is loaded with some batting firepower and a wicked fast senior pitcher that hit some 95-97 miles per hour clockings in a Saturday team scrimmage amidst a cadre of national baseball scouts with radar guns.

"I don't think so much that they have a chip on their shoulders because we lost that game and the one two years ago, but I think they think mostly that they would like to get beat playing their best," said Lucas, who also lost 5-3 two years ago to Out-of-Door Academy in the Class 2A final. "Twice that we got there and we haven't played our best in the final game."

On the Spartan's starting rotation, Lucas has the unenviable task of melding a team of 10 college signees to grab that championship trophy in May.

"Ten signees this year and a lot of talent," said Lucas. "Between the University of North Florida and Flagler College, we have a bunch of guys going to both schools."

Lucas' roster has top-tier names on it like Kyle Boylston, Daneault, Jack Ensell, Connor O' Steen, Trevor Bradley, Kolt Myers, James Gilson, Collin Briggs and Seth Alford as a senior strong list, but the latest addition is a senior pitcher, Schyuler Sandford, from Bartram Trail.

"He was a homeschooler the past three years and played at Bartram Trail and has been ranked number two in the country," said Lucas. "He's been around 95-97 miles per hour on the mound so far."

At Saturday's scrimmage, Sandford was wowing scouts with his speed as Lucas' strong batting lineup challenged the hurler.

"Our bats will be strong led by Daneault, Boylston of course, with Myers with Seth Alford and George to follow," said Lucas. "We got probably eight in a row that can crush the boys. Hunter Rodgers, a sophomore, will take over at catcher so George can play first base."

Lucas mentioned that former Spartan Brad Hodges, who played for Virginia in the College World Series last year, will be in the area with a series of games at the



James Gilson heads to second with double in team scrimmage on Saturday.



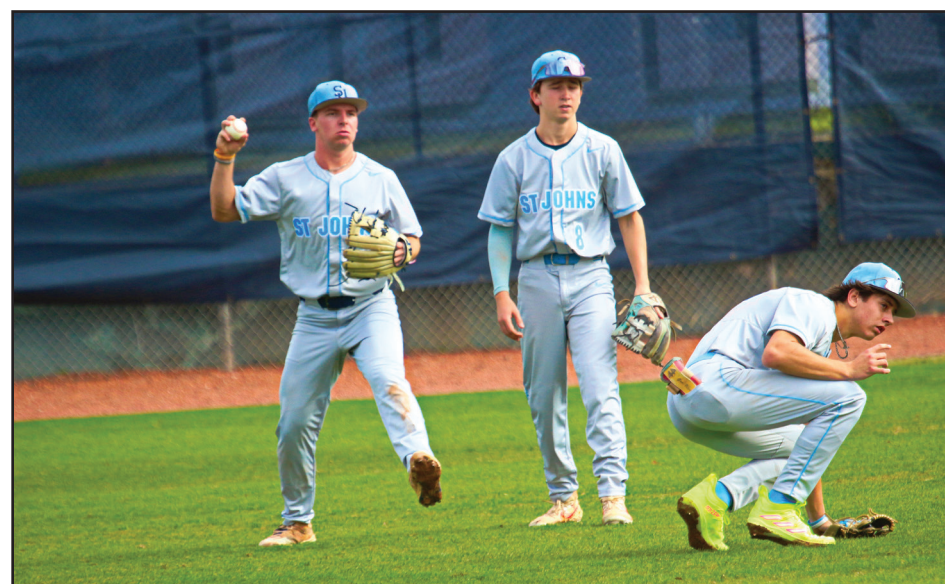
Senior pitcher Schyuler Sandford is power hurler at 95-plus miles per hour that will be force to reckon with for opposing batters.



Sophomore Hunter Rodgers is a young bat and stellar catcher behind home plate on senior-laden lineup.



St. Johns second base is manned by senior James Gilson while Gilson, photo left, is one of a handful of big bats for coach Tom Lucas.



Right fielder Collin Briggs is one of a strong band of seniors set to return to Class 2A championship game.



Junior Nick Bowden, on first base, checks out pitcher Schyuler Sandford before sprinting away for base steal attempt.

Jax College Baseball Classic on Feb. 23-24 at 121 Financial Ballpark (Home of Jumbo Shrimp) with Virginia set to play Wichita State at 2 p.m. on Fri. Feb. 23 and Iowa

on Sat., Feb. 24 at 4 p.m. Virginia will end the tourney with a Sunday game against Auburn at 4 p.m.



STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

Clay High senior Ryan Shoefelt has strong support team with parents Dale and Dianne on his racing team.



PHOTO BY GINNY STEPHENS

Ryan Shoefelt with some hardware from recent second place finish in Homestead. Shoefelt is currently ranked fifth in Superbike 400. Below: Ryan Shoefelt with gal friend Angelica Polk, also a Clay High student.

Moto

from page 39

end speed is about 115 miles per hour on a Grand Prix type course about 2.5 to three miles around."

Shoefelt, who is ranked fifth on the circuit, recently finished second at the Homestead Miami Speedway track; same as NASCAR cars use, finishing second by 50 points. The Pan American circuit is an eight-race series around the southeastern United States with the trio heading to New Orleans for the their next race.

"The races accrue points over the series that ranks the riders as the season progresses; much like NASCAR points,"

said Shoefelt. "In the races, it's very fast, very close with some bumping with most races separated by less than seconds."

For Schoefelt, his secret sauce is to "read" the track first, then execute accelerations at the right time.

"Just get on the gas, brake later and go," said Shoefelt. "You want to keep both wheels on the ground unlike the videos people might see with wheels up. You lose some time with one wheel off the ground."

For Dale Shoefelt, son Ryans' passion has lead to five motorcycles at up to \$10,000 fully geared up with mom, Dianne, the cheerleader and fingernail chewer.

"One thing he is good at is taking calculated risks and not getting in dangerous situations," said Dianne Shoefelt. "The



objective is to finish the race and he hasn't had any mishaps except a mechanical failure."

The family interest in motorcycles may have transcended for Dale's early interest his renewed interest with his son.

"Dad started racing recently, adding to the budget," said Ryan Shoefelt. "Sponsorships are not big at the level I'm at, but we hope soon."

The prize money, at the amateur level, is not prolific enough to make a living from it. Dad, a U.S. Army retiree, is working locally in I.T., and Mom is support with Ryan in starting a new job.

"The weekends have a two or three-day trip with practice runs, we check out the course, then race," said Ryan Shoefelt. "The prize money right now is about enough to cover the entry fees to race."

Shoefelt trains and workouts to keep himself able to hold on to the fast-moving projectile he sits on as well as deal with the heating element of the sports, but he admittedly thinks he was just built for the sport.

"We have a sitting pedal bike at home, but I somehow have the genetics that I can just hop on and go," said Shoefelt. "At this stage, that works, but the future is bigger bikes, longer races and more bumping in races that will need some physical shape. This is my first year and I'm learning as I go."

Shoefelt felt that his ability to "read" the track has been his primary edge in strategy.

"When I was young, the tracks I went to had markers before the turns to give the rider information on upcoming turns and I learned from that," said Shoefelt. "When we got to race tracks, I may get a map, but you have to get on the track to see what's out there."

Shoefelt's season runs from February through September with races upcoming in May in New Orleans, May 19 in South Carolina, June 17 in Georgia, July 1 in Alabama, August 5 in Homestead, August 26 in Georgia and the season finale in September 16 at the Talladega Gran Prix Raceway.



Clay High's cheerleaders ventured to Orlando for the UCA National Cheerleader Championships and came home with a third in nation in Medium Co-Ed Gameday and fifth in Division I Small Co-Ed Tradition trophies. It was Clay's first trip to nationals. Clay finished third behind Broken Arrow HS out of Oklahoma and McDowell HS out of Pennsylvania. Fleming Island finished 13th in the semifinals of Medium Varsity Co-Ed. Middleburg was 14th in pre-lims in Small Varsity Co-Ed Division I.

Knights

from page 39

Saturday night.

"In the middle part of the third quarter, we had a matchup issue and they got inside getting some layups," said Oakleaf High coach Jason Price, who turned the tables on Ponte Vedra in last year's final with a 48-47 thriller. "Bottom line is we get to the state playoffs and last year, they went to the state final (Class 6A) from this game. Maybe, we will get that shot."

After last year's thriller, Oakleaf (19-6) got bumped 47-42 by Gainesville in the Class 6A region semifinals. Oakleaf was selected as an at-large bid in the region 1-6A playoffs and will travel to Gainesville (17-11) on Thurs., Feb. 15. Ponte Vedra (20-7) will host Lincoln (18-6) in the other half of the bracket.

In the upper bracket, Ocala Forest (20-6) travels to Buchholz (17-10) and Wiregrass Ranch (24-3), the top seed, hosts Milton (20-6).

In the first half, where Oakleaf went blow by blow with the fast-moving Shark offensive weave, the Sharks got just one three-pointer in the first quarter with both teams battling in the paint to estab-



Junior point guard Jelani Wright hit four threes; three in a row just before half, to ignite the Knights offense.

lish some inside tactical advantage as the stanza ended 15-12 for Ponte Vedra with senior guard Sam Ritchie canning the lone three-pointer.

In the second period, Wright got hot

from outside the circle with a first three to open the second quarter and three straight in the final three minutes to put Oakleaf at 32-32 at the whistle. Ponte Vedra stalled near the three-minute mark to let Oakleaf creep closer and even take a short 32-26 lead at the two-minute mark, but Ponte Vedra answered with their back-to-back threes from Ritchie and sophomore Ryan Speace for the tie.

After the half, Rivers opened with a steal and layup to hopefully jump-start the Knights' attack with both teams cold from the perimeter but inside games from Oakleaf's twin shooters; Travis Knox, Jr., and Austin Davenport answering the same attack from Ponte Vedra's Maddox Palmer and Track Westercamp to keep the game at a two or three point gap before Ponte Vedra's lefty forward Westercamp sunk a three to a 46-42 lead at 2:46 that was followed by a 10-4 run by the Sharks to the quarter's end. Westercamp hit a second three that ignited the Shark fan base, but Rivers quickly squelched the excitement with a three at the buzzer to 58-47.

With Ponte Vedra attempting to slow the game to the final whistle, Oakleaf got as close as 71-63 with threes from Rivers and Knox with about a minute on the clock.

With the game turning into a frenzied

District finishes

District 3-6A

Fleming Island over Orange Park 55-53, Oakleaf over Fletcher 58-56
Semifinals: Ponte Vedra over Fleming Island 72-52, Oakleaf over Nease 53-45
Ponte Vedra over Oakleaf 79-73

District 3-2A

St. Johns Country Day School over Christ's Church Academy 68-45
Semifinal: University Christian over SJCDs 76-35; Impact Christian over St. Joseph Academy 76-34
Final: Impact over University Christian 59-54

District 4-4A

North Marion over Keystone Heights 77-63
Final: Palatka over North Marion 72-54

District 2-5A

Middleburg over Baker County 59-57; Clay over Ridgeview 66-22
Semifinals: Rickards over MHS 57-33; Columbia over Clay 65-34
Final: Rickards over Columbia 49-33

blur of bodies flying up and down the court; Ponte Vedra was satisfied with free throws, Oakleaf surged a bit with Joseph Dorvilus and Rivers hitting threes, but Ponte Vedra held to the 79-73 final.



Ridgeview High's girls basketball team, under returning coach Gussie Solomon, got their ticket to the region playoffs with a district runnerup finish; a loss to Tallahassee Rickards. The Lady Panthers, under coach Tyler Miller, now at St. Johns Country Day School, got to the region final last year losing to eventual 5A champion Daytona Beach Mainland. Ridgeview opens their region playoffs with a road game at St. Augustine on Wednesday, Feb. 14.



St. Johns Country Day School, 19-7 under first year head coach Tyler Miller, also got a ticket to return to the Class 2A region playoffs and a shot to return to the Class 2A Final Four with a district runnerup finish to St. Joseph's Academy. The Lady Spartans open their region playoffs against St. Joseph's Academy on Wednesday, Feb. 14.



KHHS cousin battle today

The Keystone Heights High softball team will be showcased on Tues., Feb. 13 when two of its more prolific graduates, cousins Kiley and Savannah Channell will be playing against each other in a clash between University of North Florida; Savannah shortstop, and Florida Atlantic University; Kiley shortstop, in Boca Raton. Savannah Channell, a senior power-hitter the past two seasons at UNF, just hit her first homer of the season on Sat., Feb. 10 in a 10-5 win over Ball State while in Boca Raton, cousin Kiley, a freshman, blasted a leadoff triple in an 8-0 win for FAU over Ohio.



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