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Oakleaf High marching band drum major Nazareth Torrez smiles big after the Oakleaf High marching band won the first place trophy at the Fleming Island Classic on Saturday. Oakleaf was also voted best percussion. See more photos page xx

STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

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# Bandtastic

## Oakleaf High band wins Golden Eagle Classic

By **Randy Lefko**  
*randy@claytodayonline.com*

FLEMING ISLAND - Eight area high school marching bands got a chance to tighten up their routines and showmanship on Saturday as Fleming Island High School staged the Golden Eagle Classic, a Florida Marching Band Association event.

After a day of music and pageantry, Oakleaf, led by drum major Nazareth Torrez, won the top team trophy of the eight teams competing, with a score of 81.55. The Knights also earning the best percussion of the night, led by Julie Mann on the marching triple drum.

For the scores, Tallahassee Lincoln finished as runnerup with 80.70 points with Orange Park, led by drum majors Brandon Napier and Tara Lealie, finished third with 79.45 points.

### Fleming Island Golden Classic results

- Oakleaf: 81.55
- Lincoln: 80.70
- Orange Park: 79.45
- Gainesville: 74.8
- Buchholz: 73.4
- PK Yonge: 72.6
- Santa Fe: 71.35
- Providence: 68.4



Oakleaf High's marching band percussion section, led by Julie Mann with her triple drum, was voted best percussion at the Fleming Island Classic held Saturday at Fleming Island High School. Oakleaf also won the team title as top band.



# Got trash?

By Kyla Woodard  
kyla@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY - Much to some residents' displeasure, FCC Environmental Services began its run in the county more than two weeks ago.

Serving more than 73,000 households during that time, there were still 771 missed pick-up reports, which FCC said were less than 1% of the services provided.

Unlike Waste Management, the new service has stricter guidelines. Below are six important tips to remember to ensure your trash gets picked up on time.

## Where to place your trash.

Remember to place your cans no more

## What to remember about Clay's new garbage collection service

than three feet from the paved road edge by 6 a.m. on your scheduled day. If you live on an unpaved road, your can must be placed no more than six feet from the travelway. Make sure to turn the can with the lid opening facing the road and the wheels and handle toward your house. The lid must be closed.

The county offers a "side door service" for disabled residents who cannot get their can to the curb. The service costs \$10 a month.

## Overflow trash

Only trash in the can will be picked up. So, any overflow bags must weigh no more than 40 pounds and face the road. They must also have an overflow sticker

attached. Stickers can be picked up for \$4 at all five county libraries, Rosemary-Hill Landfill, Hagan Ace Hardware and the FCC facility.

Residents can also bring extra trash to any of the Environmental Convenience Centers (Clay Hill, 5869 County Road 218, Middleburg; Doctors Inlet, 288 Sleepy Hollow Road; or Keystone Heights, 5505 County Road 214) or the Rosemary Hill Solid Waste Facility.

## No Recycling

FCC will not be offering recycling services, however residents can drop off clean, flat corrugated cardboard at all four of the Environmental Convenience Centers and Rosemary Hill.

## Need another can?


Starting on Nov. 1, the county will begin sign-ups for a second can. The county lease fee for a 95-gallon can is \$66, and for a 65-gallon can, it is \$61. FCC will also charge a quarterly collection service fee of \$15.33. Payments should be made via an online portal. Can delivery could take up to several weeks.

## Don't have a new can?

For residents who have still not received a can, please contact askclay@clay-county.gov. In the meantime, you can still put your trash in your old containers for pickup until your new can is delivered.

## Pickup day

To find your scheduled pickup day, visit claycounty.gov or call (904) 490-9996.




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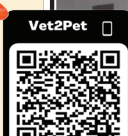
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## Oakleaf High brings mystery with

# SCOOPY-DOO!

## and the Ethereal Theatre Thriller

### Theater students shine at first Fall production

By Kyla Woodard  
kyla@claytodayonline.com

OAKLEAF - The high school's theater department brought nostalgia and laughter to their opening performance on Saturday evening.

Oakleaf High's first fall production, "Scooby-Doo! and the Ethereal Theatre Thriller," left the audience with applause and laughter.

The production followed the usual gang—Fred, Daphne, Shaggy, Velma and

Scooby—as they tackled the first five villains from the franchise on the same stage. With twists and turns leading to the show's final scene, the audience was left fully enthralled.

With funny one-liners, comedic bits and the reimagining of iconic characters, the show broke the fourth wall and brought the gang and "The Mystery Machine" to life.

"We've kept the spirit of Scooby-Doo through the chases and the love of sandwiches and all that kind of stuff," said theater teacher Cameron Renfrow.



STAFF PHOTOS BY KYLA WOODARD

It was some of the students first time performing.

Renfrow said the piece was student-directed and co-student-written. With students onstage, backstage and behind the keyboard, Renfrow helped with microphones and sound. She said she only came in to clean things up; her students took the ropes. "I work really hard with all of the students throughout their time at Oakleaf to get them to know all the different

aspects of theater," she said. Planning for the show began last year when Renfrow and a student suggested incorporating the classic franchise into their usual theater lineup.

"We both love Scooby-Doo and were talking about how nostalgic it was," she said. "And, decided that it would be a lot of fun to write a Scooby-Doo piece together."

Renfrow said that, with a mix of all grade



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Thursday, October 31, 2024

levels, it was even some of the students' first time performing.

Coming up, Renfrow said the department will be putting on Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in November. In March, they will have their fourth annual Disney dinner, which Renfrow said the community looks forward to each year.

Their last show, "The Addams Family," will be in May. Renfrow said the department is excited about what's in store.

"Hopefully, people like what they see and come to see us again later in the year," she said.



In the production, the iconic group tackles the first five villains shown in the franchise.

Theater teacher Cameron Renfrow said the department is excited about what they have in store for the future.

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# Upcoming Clay County bond referendum, Florida amendments explained

By Don Coble  
don@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – Early voting is continues through Nov. 2 with polls open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and the General Election is Nov. 5, which means registered voters have time to study the issues before casting their ballots.

In addition to voting for candidates, from the president to community development district representatives, residents will have other important issues that will affect their lives to consider.

The ballot has one county bond referendum and six statewide amendments. Because they are often written confusingly, here are all the amendments with simplified explanations to help voters make more informed decisions.

State amendments must pass by at least 60% of the vote, while the county amendment needs 50% plus 1.

## County Charter Bond Referendum

CLAY COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION REFERENDUM TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY, WILDLIFE HABITAT, FORESTS AND FARMS

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**The skinny:** It's pretty much what it says. Are you willing to spend 20 cents for every \$1,000 of the assessed value of your home to pay up to \$45 million in the next 20 years to protect the waterways and natural areas in the county?

## Florida Constitutional Amendments

**AMENDMENT 1:** Establishing School Board Elections as Partisan Ballot Language

Proposing amendments to the State Constitution to require district school board members to be elected in a partisan rather than a nonpartisan election and to specify that the amendment only applies to elections held on or after the November 2026 general election. However, partisan primary elections may occur before the 2026 general election to nominate political party candidates to that office for placement on the 2026 general election ballot.

**The skinny:** proposed by the Florida

State Legislature, for years, parents believed it was more important for school board members to be more focused on children, not politics. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent book ban debates exposed many board members' political biases, prompting the legislature to ask voters if they want to know about their school representatives.

**AMENDMENT 2:** Establishing a State Constitutional Right to Hunt and Fish Ballot Language

Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to preserve fishing and hunting forever, including using traditional methods, as a public right and preferred means of responsibly managing and controlling fish and wildlife. Specifies that the amendment does not limit the authority granted to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission under Section 9 of Article IV of the State Constitution.

**The skinny:** as proposed by the Florida Legislature, hunting and fishing would be enshrined as the preferred methods of managing wildlife in Florida, not science.

**AMENDMENT 3:** Recreational Marijuana Legalization Ballot Language

Allows adults 21 years or older to possess, purchase, or use marijuana products and marijuana accessories for non-medical personal consumption by smoking, ingestion, or otherwise; allows Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers and other state-licensed entities to acquire, cultivate, process, manufacture, sell, and distribute such products and accessories.

**The skinny:** the citizen-initiated amendment would allow anyone 21 or older to possess up to three ounces of leafy marijuana or five ounces of THC concentrate. The state will issue licenses to businesses where marijuana and THC concentrate can be purchased. Buying from a non-licensed seller is illegal. The bill also failed to define use limitations, such as time, place, or manner, like alcohol or cigarettes.

**AMENDMENT 4:** Right to Abortion Ballot Language

No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's health-care provider. This amendment does not change the Legislature's constitutional authority to require notification to a parent or guardian before a minor has an abortion.

**The skinny:** the citizen-initiated amendment has featured a lot of misinformation in television commercials. If passed, abortions would be allowed to the point where the fetus/baby could survive outside the womb, generally considered 24 weeks. It would also allow an abortion to protect the mother or baby's life, as determined by the health care provider. If the mother is a minor, parents would be notified.

**AMENDMENT 5:** Homestead Exemption Inflation Adjustment Ballot Language

Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to require an annual adjustment for inflation to the value of current or future homestead exemptions that apply solely to levies other than school district levies and for which every person who has legal or equitable title to real estate and maintains thereon the permanent residence of the owner, or another person legally or naturally dependent upon the owner is eligible. This amendment takes effect January 1, 2025.

**The skinny:** The Florida State Legislature's proposed amendment would reduce non-school government property taxes by adjusting for inflation.

**AMENDMENT 6:** Repeal of Public Campaign Financing Ballot Language

Proposing the repeal of the provision in the State Constitution, which requires public financing for campaigns of candidates for elective statewide office who agree to campaign spending limits.

**The skinny:** the Florida State Legislature proposed amendment would eliminate public funding for campaigns for governor and lieutenant governor, attorney general, chief financial officer and agricultural commissioner.

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# Drew Kohn's vigil sought to bring 'justice without malice' to open case

By Kyla Woodard  
kyla@claytodayonline.com

ARGYLE FOREST - After months of questions, the family of Oakleaf's Drew Kohn is still searching for answers in his case.

Last July 26, Drew was killed in a hit-and-run incident while walking along Collins Road in the early morning hours.

Seven years earlier, he was severely injured in a motorcycle accident, nearly ending his life. After awakening from a 244-day coma, Drew was on his way to recovery, known as a "walking miracle."

The family hosted a prayer vigil on Saturday at Argyle Church of Christ. The service was packed with many members of the local community.

Listening to some of Drew's favorite worship songs and reciting prayers filled with peace, humility and forgiveness comforted everyone in attendance.

His mother, Yolanda Osborne-Kohn, said the droves of people who showed up left a huge impression on the family.

"I'm so impressed by what people got out of Drew's life and that they really can see that the accident does not diminish who he was," Osborne-Kohn said. "And I think that's really important, and that is the reason why we want to keep his name out there."

Drew's case is still open and under investigation by police.

With the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office continuing to investigate released surveillance footage, Osborne-Kohn said it's



been a very tedious process. But the family appreciates their due diligence.

"You can't rush something, and it's not the right person, and they have a valid story," Osborne-Kohn.

Osborne-Kohn said the family had obtained video of Drew walking on the sidewalk for more than 20 minutes before he was struck and killed.

She said that JSO is ruling out tips and leads that have come from Crime Stoppers and their non-emergency line.

Amid the family's desperate search for justice, she said she is content with the peace they have gotten out of the situation. She hopes those in attendance also realize that they don't have to be stuck in grief.

"I just want to show, hopefully, that there is another way to do it. And, I'm not even saying my way is the best. I'm not even saying it's the perfect way," she said. "But, there is a way to get past what we think is just completely crushing."



STAFF PHOTO BY KYLA WOODARD

At Drew's vigil on Saturday, Yolanda Osborne-Kohn spoke about the importance of keeping her son's story alive.

Osborne-Kohn said she plans to hold many more vigils in the future to spread the word about her son's case. Overall, her family is searching for justice without malice. "We want justice, and we want the person to come forward. And, if they don't, we may never know. They may never be able to find who that is," she said. "But, I don't have any revenge in my heart or

anger."

If you have any information, tips or video surveillance of what happened on Collins Road, you are asked to call the JSO non-emergency number at (904) 630-0500. Tips directed to First Coast Crime Stoppers at (866) 845-TIPS may receive a possible reward of up to \$3,000.

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# SPORT SHORTS *with Randy*

## Knights' football continues roll

By Randy Lefko  
*randy@claytodayonline.com*

OAKLEAF - With a pending district 2-6A championship game slated for Friday, October 25 and depending on press deadlines, the Oakleaf High football team will have played in one of the biggest games since the Knights fantastic finish a few years ago against Atlantic Coast High that propelled the then-Derek Chipoletti coached Knights to a first district title, a first two home region playoff wins and a region final finish.

For 2024, present coach Chris Foy has his plate full of firepower to repeat the district title run and a possible state Final Four run as the high-octane football boys, led by a quarterback Jack McKissock (1808 passing yards, 18 TDs), running back Chris Foy (1077 Yds rushing, 11TDs), wide



receivers Michael Conner (27 catches, 3TDs) and Carlos Witherup (37 catches, 5TDs), defensive stalwarts Amare Thomas (71 tackles, 13.5 for losses) and Bryan Copeland (89 tackles). Foy's best kept secret is that he has a lot of guys doing a lot of things right; Aiden Justillien (65 yard TD pass play against ED White), Jordin Price (interceptions, runs, catches all over the field, big TD versus Bolles in second half), Andrew McDaid, kicker that rarely misses, an offensive line (Mykel Mayo, Reggie Houston, Chris Jules, and a somewhat new name in Fareed Coleman emerging as a second threat in a volatile backfield.

The Knights have had their share of drama with two fourth quarter losses to state powerhouses Hawthorne (Two time state champions) and Bolles, but have remained focused on the prize as Mandarin comes to town with an identical record, 6-2, and identical two heartbreak games



and a history of previous deep playoff runs including a state title.

"I have been preaching all summer that this program needs to win games against teams like Hawthorne and Bolles and Mandarin to be put in the same category as those guys," said Foy, in early season comments. "We have to finish. After Bolles, I think we have a better atmosphere."

Foy definitely has a region playoff berth on the table, now a district title makes the Oakleaf High School home field advantage a possible realm and a first-time state Final Four berth well within reach but with bumps coming from plenty of north Florida schools; Nease, Buchholz, Pace,



Mandarin and Oakleaf all top 10 ranked in Class 6A with Bartram Trail, Evans, Oviedo and Fletcher all in the second 10 mix. Nothing gets easier.

## Cross Country

In cross country, coach Sharronda Harris has percolated her boys team, led by Jack Strombeck, but fortified by freshman Luke Janke, who has crept closer and closer to finish right behind the front running Strombeck in recent races. Harris and



wingman Shay Mensie have quietly made the running Knights a force and with their 3-4-5 guys getting faster, the Knights could bring home some hardware in post season racing which starts next week.



## Volleyball

For the volleyball team, coach Jamie Reed has fortified the steel of her team with two heartbreaking losses; a 3-2 district tournament thriller to Bartram Trail last week and a 3-2 loss in early September to Trinity Christian Academy that has pushed the Knights aura up a level in 2024, led by Gabrielle Humbles on the net and Jiyanna Rivera in the backcourt. With just two seniors leaving, Reed looks good for 2025.



## Swimming

Oakleaf swimmers will be attacking districts and regions the next two weeks with coach Jack Powers against having a handful of state meet prospects led by Brylee Wood and Peyton Loving.



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# Don't risk it

## Simple steps to reduce your risk of breast cancer

At Baptist Health, we understand how busy you are. But taking a few minutes each day to care for yourself can pay off. Here are some tips that could help to reduce your risk of breast cancer.

### Get moving

Maintain a healthy weight.

### Avoid alcohol

Alcohol increases the risk of breast cancer. If you do drink, limit yourself to one alcoholic drink per day.

### Make that mammogram appointment

If you are 40 or older, schedule your annual mammogram. You may need to get screened earlier if you have a family history of breast cancer or other risk factors.

### Monitor for changes in your breasts

If you notice a lump or other change in your breasts, talk to your doctor.

Baptist Health has eight screening locations, including one at Baptist Medical Center Clay. To schedule your mammogram, please call **904.202.2222** or visit [baptistjax.com/3Dmammo](http://baptistjax.com/3Dmammo).

