

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS HERALD

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KRAWL'N FOR THE FALLEN

Continues to honor fallen responders

**Survivors embrace organization's
commitment to never forget**

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Lynn Harwell tried to straighten her hair that was frazzled by riding through miles of open trails and wooded scrubs in a convertible Jeep.

Her eyes were wide with excitement. She jumped from the dirt-caked off-road vehicle like a child on a sugar high who just experienced their first roller-coaster ride.

The enjoyable part of the Survivor Ride at Krawl'n for the Fallen was the ride through the trails. It allowed Harwell to be pampered and enjoy simple pleasures she never knew existed.

SEE KRAWL'N, 14



Lynn Harwell scribes her fiance's information on the side of a Jeep following the Survivor's Ride last Saturday at the Keystone Airport.



This Jeep driver thought it would be easy to drive over this car. He was wrong.

STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE

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PUZZLE FUN

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

There are four differences between Picture A and Picture B.



Answers:
1. Dip has become shredded cheese 2. Missing pretzel 3. Extra bottle cap
4. Missing faces on football

GUESS WHO?

I am a singer/rapper born in Tennessee on December 4, 1984. As a youth, I got into trouble often and was arrested several times. However, I turned my life around with the help of my music career, which started by selling mixtapes out of my car. I'm now a CMT Music Awards winner for Male Video of the Year.

Answer: Jelly Roll (Jason DeFord)

	1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11	12	
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	69							70						

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Schoolhouse tool
- 7. Martens
- 13. Slags
- 14. One who scrapes
- 16. Centiliter
- 17. White wine
- 19. Of I
- 20. Former Syracuse great Warrick
- 22. Relating to the ear
- 23. Sandwich shops
- 25. Victories
- 26. White (French)
- 28. Self-immolation by fire ritual
- 29. Genus of parrots
- 30. Unhappy
- 31. Talk incessantly
- 33. Type of Squad
- 34. Unit of perceived loudness
- 36. Violent seizure of property
- 38. Agave
- 40. Sound units
- 41. Removes from record
- 43. Partner to Mama
- 44. Mythological bird
- 45. Dash
- 47. Hair product
- 48. Two-year-old sheep
- 51. Signs a deal
- 53. Conifer

- 55. Autonomous republic in NW Russia
- 56. Wife of Muhammed
- 58. British Air Aces
- 59. Ears or ear-like appendages
- 61. Deep-bodied sea dweller
- 64. Rural delivery
- 65. Feeling
- 67. Study of relations of organisms to one another
- 69. Room to argue
- 70. Question

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Cream puff
- 2. Road open
- 3. Stressed syllable
- 4. Thailand's former name
- 5. Cologne
- 6. Recounted
- 7. Garment of cloth
- 8. Airborne (abbr.)
- 9. Reproduced
- 10. Emits coherent radiation
- 11. "Westworld" actor Harris
- 12. Smallest interval in Western music
- 13. Unstressed central vowel
- 15. Lives in

- 18. When you expect to get somewhere
- 21. Storage bags
- 24. One who covers with plastic
- 26. Cast out
- 27. Automobile
- 30. Repaired shoe
- 32. Belonging to the bottom layer
- 35. Possesses
- 37. Soda
- 38. Programs
- 39. In an unexpected way
- 42. A bag-like structure in a plant or animal
- 43. For each
- 46. Unbelief
- 47. Seized or impaled
- 49. Arrive on the scene
- 50. Especially happy
- 52. Classic western film
- 54. Split pulses
- 55. Frida __: Painter
- 57. Start again
- 59. Employee stock ownership plan
- 62. Young women's association
- 63. Frozen water
- 66. "The First State"
- 68. Computers need one

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS HERALD

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OPINIONS & VIEWPOINTS

Class of 1975

Sideburns, 8-tracks, encyclopedias and normal senior pressures

By **Don Coble**
Managing Editor

I drove a Ford Pinto to school on the first day of my senior year. To understand the significance of that, the Class of 2025 can learn the dangers of owning a Pinto. The design of their fuel tank and the position of the rear axle made them susceptible to exploding in a fire during a rear-end collision by using Google on their cellphones.



Don Coble

In 1975, my classmates and I didn't have Google or cellphones. If we needed to look up something that happened recently, we had to go to the library and peer

through newspaper clips or microfiche. If it was more than 10 years old, we looked it up in encyclopedias. Most of us got our encyclopedias from the grocery stores, where they were sold one letter a week. If our moms forgot one week, we had holes in our collection. We were missing the "K" and "T" volumes.

We didn't have satellite radios or MP3s. We had 8-tracks. After you played them several times, two tracks played over each other, so you had to wedge a piece of cardboard to play only one track. Ask your parents. Or your grandparents.

We had sideburns, plaid bellbottom pants, cheesy mustaches and mood rings. Boys didn't have tattoos or earrings. And if we misbehaved in school, we got paddled. In my school, they were called "licks." The physical education coaches knew how to swing up to catch the lower part of your bottom cheeks to lift you onto your toes. I have firsthand knowledge of that.

Our prom theme was Chicago's "Just

You and Me." During slow dances, chaperones made sure the boy's hands didn't creep below the small of the girl's back. There were no metal detectors at the door, no off-duty police officers and no threats.

We had dances, plays and concerts. We didn't send texts to each other. We talked face-to-face. We created friendships and relationships, not acquaintances and contact lists.

This may be difficult to believe, but for \$10 and a note from a parent, a student could buy a smoking card. There was a small section outside between buildings that was roped off—literally; it was an area 12-foot by 12-foot with four poles and a single rope—where students could step inside the ropes for a quick smoke between classes or during lunch.

I trust the Class of 2025 is more intelligent than that.

My generation turned off the news. We

SEE 1975, 5

Class of 2025:

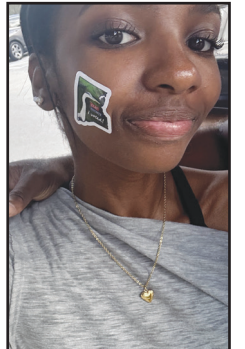
Plaid pajama pants, Crocs, Google Docs and traditional senior pressures

By **Zuri Martin**
For The Herald

On July 31st, the clock read 11:59:59. This date symbolizes my last second devoid of stressors. Not that my junior year summer wasn't filled with plenty, but with Common Application now being issued as "opened," the term stressor to define my senior year would be an understatement.

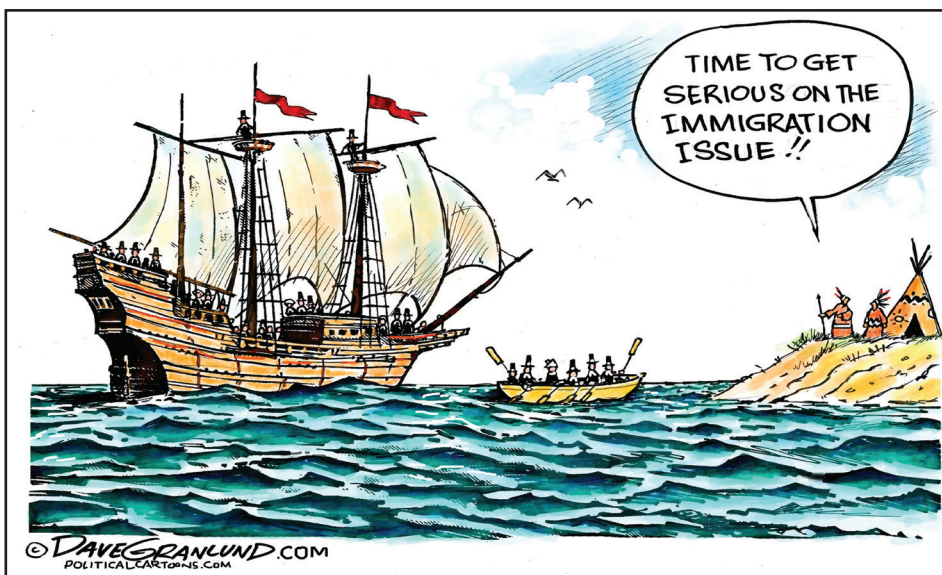
As of Nov. 1, the personal 650-word essay inhabiting Google Docs is vacant. Not being able to use my time to conjure up a redundant trauma dump of the last 18 years of my life, I instead utilize those hours writing 1,000-word papers for Dual Enrollment English and spending my Tuesday afternoons in a conference room discussing the intricacies of Homecoming.

Preceding my last year of traditional school, I was a 12-year-old girl replete with anxiety disguised as an optimistic look into the future. I remember the rigorous to-do lists crumbled across my room and pictures of UCLA and NYC spread across the carpeted floor that previously belonged to my now dismantled vision board before me changing my mind as to what I want to be when I grow up — the question that booms in every child's ear. Although I have yet to conclude, I knew that my inner perfectionist and my obscure dream needed to be fed with hard work.



Zuri Martin

SEE 2025, 5



Word OF THE MONTH

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.

Supersedence: (soo-per-SEED-nz) a noun that means an act of taking the place of a person or thing previously in authority.

"Gasoline-powered cars face supersedence by the rising popularity of electric vehicles."

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email, type Letter to the Editor in your subject and send it to Managing Editor Don Coble at don@claytodayonline.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

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.

1975

from page 4

watched the U.S. military, including my father, fight in Vietnam on the nightly news for years. It was watching how sausage is made. The war officially ended on April 30, 1975 – one month before we graduated. President Nixon also resigned in disgrace during my senior year. The real world was too exhausting, so we turned it off. I imagine it still feels that way.

Two months before I got my diploma, two of my friends and I drove to Lakeland to see our first big concert. First, everyone around us smoked something that smelled like somebody's dirty sock was on fire. Then the lights dimmed, the stage exploded, confetti shot from cannons, and the speakers were so loud they knocked us out of our seats.

Four rockers with tall platformed shoes walked on stage dressed like the leather interior of my father's Ford Thunderbird. They, indeed, were the hottest band in the

land: KISS.

Looking back, my senior seemed like simpler times. Back then, the biggest worry was getting \$5 to buy enough gas to drive to Disney World for the week to work (where I made \$82 a week to empty garbage cans.)

We had the same challenges 50 years ago as this year's graduating class. What does history hold for us? Is college the right move? Do I want to take a year off to play?

My favorite bands now were the biggest bands of the 1970s, like Yes, Chicago, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Led Zeppelin, Earth, Wind and Fire,

KISS, Pink Floyd, the Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, ZZ Top, Steely Dan, Foghat, The Outlaws, Blood, Sweat and Tears and Aerosmith.

I was only 17 during my freshman year at UCF (for the first two years, it was Florida Technological University). And back then, college was \$300 a quarter, plus books. Now, counting a parking sticker, you can go to college for less than \$1,800 a year.

I miss the more superficial, happier life of high school. My biggest worry was making a \$63 car payment for my Ford Pinto, which, thankfully, never exploded.

This Month in History

Five years ago, 2019

- The Clay County Solid Waste Management Facility reports residents recycled 7,967 tons in 2018, reducing the amount of space used at the landfill, which means the county won't have to pay other counties to use their landfills to dump trash.

- The Florida Department of Transportation tells Clay County that the construction of the new Shands Bridge as part of the First Coast Expressway will start in fiscal year 2022.

- Former Superintendent of Schools Charlie Van Zant files to run for his old job on the 2020 ballot.

10 years ago, 2014

- The Board of County Commissioners approved building a mega-sports complex with a portion of \$20 million in unspent bond money.

- Fleming Island's Mary Hunstein credited Baptist Clay and Wolfson Children's Hospital with their quick reaction to saving the life of her son, Phillip, who stopped breathing with an apparent attack of Sudden Infant Syndrome.

- St. Johns River State College's Work Ready Program, funded by CareerSource of Northeast Florida, provides mentoring and tutoring to teach general skills so students can immediately enter the workforce after high school.

20 years ago, 2004

- Sheriff Rick Bessler selected Maj. Craig Aldrich as his director of operations, Maj. Terry LaCasse as director of administration, Maj. Carl Crossley as director of communications, Capt. Mike Hardee as chief detective, Charlene Cox as executive assistant, and Sherry Salerno as secretary.

- Officials with the Florida Department of Environment Protection held a public hearing in Middleburg on a proposal regarding DuPont's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit and its impact on the Black Creek watershed.

30 years ago, 1994

- Fellow Clay County Commissioners voted for Patrick D. McGovern to be the chairman for one year.

- The BCC floated a proposal on how to handle solid waste considering the filled

Rosemary Hill Landfill. Members are considering transferring trash to Nassau County.

- Despite losing his BCC race, Democrat Ronnie Coleman vows to remain active in Clay County politics and run for another office at the next election.

40 years ago, 1984

- Political newcomer Ann Wiggins shocks longtime incumbent Superintendent Jesse Tynes.

- The Florida Highway Patrol is investigating a fatal motorcycle accident that left Christopher Allen Miller of Orange Park dead.

- Scott Alan Decker, 21, is arrested in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and will be extradited to Clay County following a string of armed robberies.

2025

from page 25

Recently, I decided to rummage through Orange Park High's yearbook from 25 years ago. As I looked at pictures of Homecoming Court and the days surrounding our annual "Raider Roar," I took in the carefree smiles. Instead, I misapprehended it as a feeling of insouciance. I contemplated the variety of former students who looked like they had it more manageable, and I wondered if the burden was me. We're both seniors on the way to college, so why couldn't my exasperation during the Senior activities make for that effect?

As the anticipation and excitement for Homecoming grew even more prominent, I was instead strained with planning the

night, as I proposed the Homecoming theme should be set to pay homage to the theme chosen 25 years ago — Hawaiian — to commemorate the Class of 2025.

Today's attire consists of traditional plaid pajama pants paired with Crocs. If we're lucky, the perforated shoes are adorned with charms. This style and critiques regarding it are not something students are blind to; however, the need to be shod in jeans and lace-up shoes at 7 a.m. is not something the student body finds necessary.

Themes like "Dress like your student's day" or "teacher-student swap day" became popular themes during Homecoming Week in their satirical regard to this style. But because of its popularity and constant recycling every year, the student government, where I serve as our "25 Historian," wished to

try something different. This included Luau Day, which we decided to incorporate as a Spirit Day instead of the dance theme, and Throwback Day, where each class dressed as their decade, which was assigned by our charge.

Getting the opportunity to become a representative for my peers is not something I could have imagined during my four years spent homeschooling up to my junior year. To make up for the time lost, I decided to participate in various clubs assisting with accumulating community service hours and the worries of a humdrum resume. As I sit writing this and my ears ringing with the clanked sound of typing, my dream that I unknowingly spent my years working toward has come true. The pressures of not getting into universities noted with

a 3% acceptance rate and the worries of a mediocre college essay have now faded as I realize that the surface ideas that come with being a senior have a heavyweight — only because I had made no attempts to lighten it and remove the fears brought upon by life after high school.

With the limited leisure time I have, I now spend my time writing, which reflects my future career as a journalist.

Attempting to put myself into categories until I found the best fit was how I spent my high school tenure. Still, I now choose to spend the remainder of my senior year understanding that I will end up where I'm supposed to be and that my hard work has not gone to waste as I sit here now, countering the process and the journey that led me to an understanding of myself.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ERICK SAKS

Operation Lifeline Founder/Executive Director Erick Saks installs one of 540 AEDs kits at a county park.

First 37 of 540 AEDs installed throughout Clay County

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY—Even with some community partners volunteering in hurricane-ravaged Southwest Florida and Northwest North Carolina, others worked with Clay County Fire Rescue Paramedicine officials to install 37 Automated External Defibrillators and Narcan kits around the county last Friday.

Operation Lifeline and Team Rubicon members worked with CCFR's Paramedicine to install kits at selected county parks and sports complexes, building exteriors and boat ramps at the first of several installation sessions. In all, nearly 540 kits will be in-

stalled in public places. The AEDs were purchased with federal funds from the National Opioids Settlement, which the Lutheran Services of Florida Manages, and distributed to Clay County.

"It was fantastic. We had so much going on, honestly, because of the holidays," said Operation Lifeline Founder/Executive Director Erick Saks. "We did a Trunk or Treat (with the Green Cove Springs Police Department) that evening, so we were racing to get everything done."

The installation was broken into three teams. The original schedule called for the work to be completed on Friday and Saturday, but the teams finished on Friday.

SEE AED, 18

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Historic groups share future ideas to preserve their past

By Don Coble
don@claytononline.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Historic and Heritage clubs throughout Northeast Florida face the same challenges of sustaining interest and constant sources of revenues, so they huddled Saturday to share ideas at the Keystone Pavillion ahead of that city's Centennial.

Representatives of the Keystone Heights Heritage Commission, Waldo Area Historical Society, Middleburg Museum, Orange Park Historical Society and the Historic Melrose District discussed their business practices, and each learned a different approach to finding money, resources and space to preserve their communities' legacies.

None were more interested than Keystone's Christine Arnold and Deirdre Murphy.

The city will celebrate its 100th birthday in 2025, and in preparation, it created The Friends of Keystone Heights to promote the city's historic, cultural and natural heritage for current and future generations.

One of the first big events will be the Heritage Commission's Museum and Chautauqua Event in May. The Chautauqua Movement was a significant period in the area's growth. Artists, speakers and musicians from the Chautauqua circuit in New York stayed at the Keystone Inn because many businesses needed young women to wait tables. Soon, others from the New England area moved to the Lake Region as the inn became one of the most popular destinations in

Florida until it burned down in 1954.

The Movement also had a religious component that focused on art and literature. A large city sinkhole was once used as a 5,000-seat theater for Chautauqua shows.

The Chautauqua Event also includes a pop-up museum because the Heritage Commission doesn't have a home for its artifacts.

"The city council said it can't build a museum," Arnold said. "We hope there are ways around that. When we do our pop-up museum, we hope to get enough signatures to take to the council to get some traction and persuade them."

Arnold said the city's historic pieces are scattered throughout the area.

"Right now, nobody knows we have the stuff," she said. "I think what we have to do is show up and have a lot of things on display (at the Pavillion). Right now, things are stuffed in drawers, at the airport, in city hall, all over the place. We need to find a home for everything."

The clubs had varied ways of financing their organizations. Some received tax dollars, some relied on sponsorships and donations, and Melrose volunteers paid to keep their doors open.

Murphy emphasized the need to utilize social media and target a younger audience.

"This was a good idea to get together and share ideas," she said. "I think we all made good connections. Let's make sure we do this at least once a year. I know other groups planned to be here, but they had something else going on. I think we can all help each other."



Keystone Hights Heritage Commission members Deirdre Murphy, left, and Christine Murphy hosted the meeting and were interested in ideas ahead of the city's Centennial Celebration in 2025.



Historic and Heritage groups from Keystone Heights, Waldo, Middleburg, Orange Park and Melrose met on Saturday, Nov. 2, to share ideas on increasing interest and fundraising.

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Black Creek Restoration Project two months from being done

By Don Coble

don@claytodayonline.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – After campaigning relentlessly for decades to rescue the aquifer recharge and replenish lakes Brooklyn and Geneva, the Save our Lakes Organization can only hurry up and wait for the final few pieces of the Black Creek Restoration Project to be completed.

There are a few pieces for the filtration pieces that remain on back order and there's about a quarter-of-a-mile of pipe to be fitted before they can flip the switch and start siphoning as much as 10 million gallons of water a day from the South Prong of the Black Creek and pushing it through 17 miles of piping to Alligator Creek, into a drain field and then to the lakes.



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, which would replenish lakes Brooklyn and Geneva in Keystone Heights.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHELLE COOK

From left, SOLO President Vivian Katz-James, County Commission Betsy Condon, former Florida Sen. Rob Bradley, former Keystone Heights City Manager and current Bradford County Manager Scott Kornegay and St. Johns River Water Management District Executive Director Michael A. Register were acknowledged for their contributions toward the completion of the Black Creek Restoration Project.

“As far as the pumps, the pump station, that’s all done,” said SOLO President Vivian Katz-James. “The filtration fields are ready. Some of the material that goes into the filtration field are running a little behind as far as delivery, which will probably push the flow back into the first of the year.”

After spending nearly 40 years trying to save the lakes, Katz-James said she can wait another two months.

The Save Our Lakes Organization the Keystone Heights Kiwanis hosted a Black

SEE LAKES, 9

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Lakes

from page 8

Creek Restoration Project celebration last Friday, Oct. 25, at the YMCA Camp Immokalee. Officials from Keystone Heights and Starke joined the St. Johns River Water Management District in recognizing the people who pulled the project together.

Former Florida Sen. Rob Bradley unified several organizations and approached the water management district and he and Florida Rep. Bobby Payne finally got the support necessary to push it across the finish line by focusing more on the aquifer recharge.

Scott Kornegay said the SOLO had campaigned since the 1980s to save the lakes in Keystone Heights. The group attended every SJRWMD meeting and never relinquished

their commitment.

“The journey started way before I got to be the City Manager in Keystone Heights,” Kornegay said. “Then right after I started, in 2016 we put together the water summit. We all met there in City Hall in Keystone Heights and that was where this project was born.

“Sen. Bradley was the one that did that. He took the ball, and he went over to the Water Management District Office and sat down with the folks over there and said, ‘I need a project that’ll recharge the aquifer and fill up the lakes in Keystone Heights as a result.’ That’s what he did.”

Like others, Kornegay is eager to see the water flow into the drain field and then into the lakes.

“We can see the finish line,” he said. “It took a lot of relentless people, one relentless group (SOLO). And if it wasn’t for Vivian



Katz-James, it probably wouldn’t have happened. She wouldn’t let it go.”

Katz-James was at Camp Immokalee for a celebration Friday, but the real party won’t start until the first drop passes from the

Black Creek to Keystone Heights.

“This celebration has been a long time coming,” she said. “I can’t wait to say ‘Hallelujah’ when we get to the finish line.”

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PRADA or nada?

Expert Erica Burks details how to tell if your designer handbags are real or fake

By Kyla Woodard
kyla@claytodayonline.com

your belongings are not what they may seem.

FLEMING ISLAND - In a world of scams and schemes, there is always a chance that

With the growth of online marketplaces such as Amazon, Poshmark, The RealReal, Etsy and eBay, the ability to sell and pur-



STAFF PHOTOS BY KYLA WOODARD

Burks takes pictures of specific parts of the bag to give the device a clear view of what it is looking at.



Nikita Narvab
Client Experience Manager



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chase counterfeit products is rising.

Handbag expert and owner of Lux Upscale Resale Boutique Erica Burks said most of the time, victims aren't even aware their items are not authentic, prompting a necessary conversation on proper shopping.

"We work hard for our money," she said. "It's stripping of your dignity whenever you've found that you spent \$500 on something that wasn't real."

Running one of multiple local consignment shops prized for offering luxury brand handbags, such as Michael Kors, Chanel, and Louis Vuitton, Burks's mission is to ensure her customers get what they pay.

In a

partnership with Entrupy, an AI-powered luxury authenticator, Burks said Lux is the only shop in the county to offer this proof of designer goods.

She takes the device, a simple iPod Touch, and selects the supposed brand type and style.

Taking pictures of each section, from logos and date codes to the leather coating and zipper, allows the device to get a clear view of what it is looking at.

Hitting the submit button, Burks said it could take up to 30 minutes for results. But, usually, she is quickly brought to a screen,

deeming the purse authentic or inauthentic. Authentic results come with an official certificate. Burks said she provides the service to her customers, hoping to save them from fraudulent scams.

"That's why I'd rather offer it to the community so they can come in and come to a source and know that it's always going to be authentic," Burks said.

Even without the use of technology,



SEE NADA, 11



Although similar print and color, one of these Louis Vuitton bags is not authentic. Can you tell which?

number one," she said. "Ninety-nine percent chance it's not an authentic piece."

Beware of outlet goods

Burks said that outlet bags tend to be of cheaper quality than those sold in boutiques. For Coach bags specifically, the inside tag on the purse will start with the letter F, indicating a "factory" product.

Although technically authentic, she said if you want better quality products, always ask for the "boutique" table in an outlet.



Nada

from page 10

Burks said there are still other ways to tell off the bat if your handbag is genuine.

Here are some additional tips and tricks she said are essential to look out for.

Pay attention to detail

Most designer bags use leather instead of a coated canvas. Burks also warns against AAA quality replicas, which use cheaper leather and are sold at high prices. In the long run, luxury bags are also more likely to last longer due to the quality material used to create them. If your bag is falling apart or peeling easily, Burks said it's probably not real.

Also, many brands are only made in certain countries. Check the tag on your purses to see where your wallet was manufactured. It may not be legitimate.

Hidden codes

On Louis Vuitton purses, specifically, there is also an alphabetic code for the country in which the purse was made. Although Burks said older, authentic styles won't have a code. Due to the influx of fake products, the company frequently changed the codes and even recently switched to using microchips instead, which she said is a vital sign. "If someone was to bring this to me and there was no date code, that's a red flag

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Krawl'n

from page 1

Her driver took a towel and cleaned a dusty section of the rear quarter panel. He handed her a blue paint pen to complete an essential formality of the three-day event. She sighed, then signed the Jeep:

“Det. Terry Melancon”
 “Baton Rouge Police Dept.”
 “E.O.W. August 10, 2005”
 “John 3:16 ❤️”

Her fiancé was serving a warrant 19 years ago when he and two fellow Baton Rouge, Louisiana, officers were shot by the suspect. Melancon and the suspect were killed. The other officers were seriously injured, but they eventually recovered.

Time has helped Harwell move past



STAFF PHOTOS BY DON COBLE
 This off-road vehicle makes a run through the woods during Krawl'n for the Fallen.



Krawl'n for the Fallen Founder Christine Johnson.

some of the pain but not the memories. Events like Krawl'n for the Fallen help because they are dedicated to helping survivors of first responders, including K-9 deputies, killed in the line of duty.

The nonprofit was started in 2015 by Christine Johnson, whose brother-in-law, Vermont State Police Sgt. Michael W. Johnson was killed in 2003 during a traffic stop by a suspect who was trying to drive around spike sticks that Johnson had just deployed.

The three-day event at the Florida International Rally Motorsports Park at Keystone Airport attracted hundreds of off-road vehicles, campers, vendors, and trail and obstacle course riders.

“The trails are awesome,” Johnson said. “The FIRM does a great job with letting everybody kind of do what they want to do out there, so it's been fun.”

Johnson said two Florida hurricanes affected this year's goal. Still, more than \$50,000 was collected last weekend.

“Our goal is to get everyone to understand the survivors are our biggest, most important thing,” Johnson said.

Another popular program was a 45-minute presentation by one of the Clay County Sheriff's Office's K-9s. They demonstrated how the dog recognized cocaine hidden in the fender of a deputy's car.

Not only was this the first time Harwell'd been to Krawl'n for the Fallen, but it was the first time she'd been in a Jeep.

Harwell said survivors also gained strength by sharing their stories.

“It's amazing to know that our officers are still honored, forever remembered,” Harwell said. “Their sacrifice is not forgotten. I met other survivors. We were sharing stories. I've attended tons of events through the years, and this was my first time for the Krawl'n event, and it's amazing.”

Harwell said events like Krawl'n for the Fallen don't ease the pain of losing her fiancé, but it does help her cope.

“I wouldn't trade that time with my fiancé for anything, no matter how much it hurts,” she said. “Events like this make me feel good, to know they're still honored, still remembered.”



It was fun to take off-road vehicles through the miles of trails at the Keystone Airport's Florida International Rally Motorsports Park.



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Deadline for property tax exemptions is March 1

ORANGE PARK - Clay County Property Appraiser Tracy Scott Drake announced to the citizens of Clay County that the statutory deadline to apply for property tax exemptions is March 1.

Homestead exemption applicants must have legal or equitable title to the property as of Jan. 1. Applicants must also provide at least two documents to establish proof of permanent residency (i.e., updated driver's license or identification card, voter registration card, vehicle registration, utility bill, etc.); all applicants' social security number (including spouses) is required.

Applicants not U.S. citizens must provide a copy of their permanent resident (green) card. Applicants without permanent residence status should contact our office for eligibility details. Manufactured (mobile) homeowners should also bring the title(s) or registration(s) to the home.

Applications may be filed at our main office in Green Cove Springs (located on the 2nd floor of the Administration Building), at our Orange Park branch office located at 1518 Park Avenue (Park Central Plaza), or at the Tax Collector's branch office located at 7380 State Road 100, Keystone Heights

(visit our website for a detailed schedule), or by email to exemptiononline@ccpao.com. Before emailing an application, visit the office website at www.ccpao.com or contact the office for the list of supporting documentation required to complete the application, as incomplete applications will be subject to denial. Appointments are not needed or necessary.

Once the initial application has been filed, granted exemptions will be displayed on the office's website (property search function). Additionally, granted homestead exemptions will be automatically renewed

each January, and a renewal notice will be mailed. It is the property owners' responsibility to notify the Property Appraiser if eligibility for exemptions has changed.

Florida law provides for a number of ad valorem property tax exemptions, agricultural classifications, and assessment reductions that will reduce the taxable value of property. The property owner must qualify as of January 1 of the current assessment year. For more information, please visit www.ccpao.com or contact our office at (904) 284-6305, ext. 1, to speak with an Exemptions Specialist.



Office of the Clay County Property Appraiser Tracy Scott Drake, CFA, CAE, ASA, RES, AAS

2025 TAX YEAR

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION APPLICATION SCHEDULE

Florida law provides for a number of ad valorem property tax exemptions, classifications and assessment reductions. Property owners must qualify as of **January 1, 2025** and file a 2025 tax year application by the statutory deadline of **March 1, 2025**. For more information contact the Property Appraiser's Office at (904) 284-6305, ext. 1 or visit www.ccpao.com. Applications may be filed at the following locations:

<p>Main Office: Green Cove Springs Clay County Administration Building, 2nd Floor 477 Houston Street</p>	<p>Year Round Monday - Friday 8 AM - 4:30 PM</p>
<p>Satellite Office: Orange Park Park Central Plaza (Inside the Clay County Tax Collector's Office) 1518 Park Avenue</p>	<p>Year Round Mon. Tues. Thurs. Fri. 8 AM - 5 PM Closed on Wednesdays</p>
<p>Satellite Location: Keystone Heights Keystone Village Square (Inside the Clay County Tax Collector's Office) 7380 State Road 100, Suite 10, (Located by Hitchcock's) (If a holiday falls on a scheduled Tuesday, we will be available the following Tuesday)</p>	<p>Tuesdays: December - February December 3, 10, 17, 31 January 7, 14, 21, 28 February 4</p> <p>First Tuesday of the Month: March 4, April 1, May 6, June 3, July 1, Aug 5, Sept 2, Oct 7, Nov 4</p> <p>8 AM - 4:30 PM (closed 1 PM - 2 PM)</p>

The Collective Kitchen

Local space provides new opportunity for aspiring food entrepreneurs

By Kyla Woodard
kyla@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS - Whether you're an aspiring entrepreneur or already operating your thriving franchise, it remains the same: running a business is not easy.

Zach and Ashley Elkins know this firsthand. The duo owns Lean Impact Nutrition, a local meal-prepping company that delivers fresh food options to doorsteps every Sunday.

Building their business from scratch in 2017 began at their home, where they prepared simple meals for friends. But, as with many other business owners, Zach said the two decided they wanted to go further.

With more clients, they grew to use local commissaries.

Before finding a place to call their own, the two said they dealt with expensive building costs, shared kitchen scheduling conflicts and the mistakes of trying to start a business.

That's why they want to make it easier for others. Recently, the two opened their space into the county's first turnkey kitchen.

With the help of The Collective Kitchen, local food entrepreneurs can now rent a

state-of-the-art space whenever they need it. With 24/7 access, they said this opportunity allows entrepreneurs to grow their businesses without the high cost of maintaining a private kitchen.

"They have access to all of the equipment. Prep tables, cutting boards, knives, cooking equipment, everything," Zach said. "So, you can just bring in your food and your labor and start your own food business right here."

With Lean Impact Nutrition only producing food on the weekends, their space, located on North Orange Avenue, remains empty throughout the week. So, they wanted to make use of it.

"We decided a better way to use this as a resource was to help other businesses as a platform for them to start their own food business," Zach said. "And eventually grow, like we did, out of a commissary space into their own restaurant or food truck."

Ashley said the space also works as a solution for those who don't necessarily want to expand their business to those heights just yet.

This is true for Paemisa Wentz, a new food entrepreneur who recently passed her State of Florida inspection. She said Misa's Thai Street Cuisine will be ready to begin officially operating in the kitchen within a few weeks.

Originally from Thailand, Wentz is putting a unique spin on traditional Thai dishes. Because of this, she said starting small is the best option.

"The food I'm introducing is not the regular food you'd see at a Thai restaurant," Wentz said. "So, it's kind of scary. So, I want to start with a very safe approach; the catering approach is the safest one for me now."

Holly Rowan has been running her local baking business, Life's a Batch, from her home for over three years. She spends the



STAFF PHOTOS BY KYLA WOODARD

Zach and Ashley Elkins recently opened the county's first turnkey kitchen.

majority of her days baking cakes, cookies and other sweet treats, but her business has grown to the point that it's now harder for her to handle.

"I'm only able to have one stove here," Rowan said. "So, my baking shifts...go up to 24 hours ... there are weeks that I make over 2,000 cookies, not including cakes or

anything else. So, [with] one oven, that's how long it takes."

Since hearing about the new kitchen, Rowan said it may just solve her problem.

"If I could have an actual place where it's a little bit more organized, easier to get to

SEE KITCHEN, 17



Since 2017, the Elkins' have been using the space for Lean Impact Nutrition, their meal prepping business. However, they recently decided to open the space to all aspiring food entrepreneurs.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLY ROWAN
Holly Rowan, the owner of Life's a Batch, said using the kitchen will give her insight on what it's like to have a brick-and-mortar location.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAEMISA WENTZ
Paemisa Wentz, the owner of Misa's Thai Street Cuisine, said she is excited to begin using the kitchen and further grow her new business.



Kitchen

from page 16

[and] more ovens, that would cut my baking shifts, I'm sure, in half, if not more," she said.

Rowan added that the idea of opening her own shop is nerve-wracking. She said the kitchen could also give her and others in the same boat an idea of what that would

look like in the long term.

Zach said those selling any protein do have to be licensed, insured, and inspected by the state to use the kitchen, which he said they would help with.

The Elkins said they will also provide their entrepreneurs with other resources, including business development workshops and marketing assistance, for whatever they may need.

All in all, they said they want to see other

small businesses get started and thrive.

"With us starting the same way, I think allowing them to grow their business is fascinating. And we would love to see people outgrow this space and become a really big business," Ashley said. "Or, just stay in this space and do what they love."

For pricing and more information, visit thecollectivekitchen.com or call (904) 602-6001.

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Caeleb Dressel to appear at GCS' Christmas on Walnut Dec. 7

For The Herald

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The city is thrilled to honor resident and Clay High graduate Caeleb Dressel when he makes a special appearance at this year's Christmas on Walnut Street.

The celebration will take place on Saturday, Dec. 7, from noon to 9 p.m. and promises to be a festive and unforgettable day.

The highlight of the evening is the Green Cove Springs Christmas Parade, which starts at 6 p.m. and is organized by the Green Cove Springs Business League in partnership with the City of Green Cove Springs. This year's theme, "A Vintage Christmas," will light up downtown with more than 70 floats sparkling with lights as they make their way along a mile stretch of Orange Avenue/U.S. Highway 17.

As part of the parade, Dressel will be named "Hometown Hero" and ride on a specially decorated float, embodying the spirit of the season and the pride of our community.

Dressel graduated with seven national high school records. He went on to win nine Olympic gold medals, 10 overall, spanning the last three Summer Games.

Dressel's appearance comes during the city's yearlong 150th anniversary celebration.

The festivities at Spring Park will feature more than 50 craft booths and food



trucks, along with free photos with Santa at the pool pavilion hosted by GCS Elks Lodge 1892.

Spring Park and City Hall will shine with the festive glow of more than 250 beautifully decorated Christmas Trees as part of its Parade of Trees program, highlighted by the magnificent 45-foot City tree, which will be lit up that evening.

"We are absolutely thrilled to announce that Caeleb Dressel will be joining us for this year's Christmas on Walnut Street event," City Manager Steve Kennedy said. "Celebrating his remarkable achievements and acknowledging his incredible positive impact on our community and the world is truly an honor. This year's event promises to be unforgettable."

Residents and visitors are encouraged to join in the festivities and celebrate the holiday season with the city.



Operation Lifeline Project Manager David Black, left, listens to Clay County Paramedicine Bureau Chief Jairo Mureauch and County Risk Manager Brian DeMaio before heading out to install AEDs and Narcan kits in the county.

AED from page 6

Clay County Risk Manager Brian DiMaio said he hoped to get 20 installed on the first day.

"It was fantastic," Saks said. "We were thrilled to be part of it. It's not exactly aligned with our mission, which generally focuses on veteran and underserved community housing, but still, it's supporting the entire community, which is always exciting for us. Whenever we have an opportunity, we will take that chance to help people out."

Operation Lifeline is a veteran-led nonprofit based in Green Cove Springs

that helps veterans find safe and accessible housing.

Team Rubicon, a veteran-led humanitarian organization specializing in disaster response, also assisted. One of the volunteers returned from being deployed in Southwest Florida a day earlier.

The AED has instructions to defibrillate somebody in cardiac arrest. According to the National Institutes of Health, if someone receives an electrical shock in the first minute of a collapse, a person has a 90% chance of survival.

All AEDs are connected to PulsePoint, the county's notification system.

Narcan is a nasal spray that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. It is harmless if applied to someone who's not suffering from an opioid overdose.

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Florida DOE recognizes 11 Clay schools for excellence

District 2's Mary Bolla says a heartfelt goodbye to school board

By Kyla Woodard
kyla@claytodayonline.com

FLEMING ISLAND—At Thursday's school board meeting, 11 elementary, junior and high schools were selected as "schools of excellence."

The prestigious honor is given to schools that score in the 80th state percentile for two of the last three years.

Out of 4,230 schools in Florida, only 774 schools have designated the title in 2024, with the award calling around 25% of Clay County schools home.

Discovery Oaks Elementary and Lake Asbury Elementary scored 13 and 17 points above the state average, respectively, in math proficiency, while Fleming Island Elementary scored 90%.

Keystone Heights Elementary's math proficiency was 8% above the state average, while Thunderbolt's was 84%.

Both Orange Park Elementary and R.M. Paterson Elementary ranked as Florida's top

elementary schools, with Paterson receiving number 10 and Orange Park number one. Shadowlawn Elementary's third-grade ELA students ranked 88% proficiency, above the state's 55% average.

For the junior high schools, Green Cove Springs showed 88% proficiency in Civics. Lakeside Junior High Civics students achieved 23 points above the state average. Fleming Island High also graced the list with 91% proficiency in Biology.

In other news, Thursday also marked Mary Bolla's last meeting. The district two board member is set to retire her seat to the newly elected Robert Alvero.

In a tearful presentation, Bolla, superintendent David Broskie and board members reflected on her time there.

"Thank you to all of you who are truly passionate about our children and their futures," Bolla said, "I appreciate you all. Thank you so much."

Alvero is set to be sworn in on Nov. 19.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ONE CLAY

Eleven Clay County schools were designated "schools of excellence" by the FDOE at Thursday's school board meeting.



District two board member Mary Bolla said a tearful goodbye at her last meeting. Bolla's seat will be now be the newly-elected Robert Alvero.



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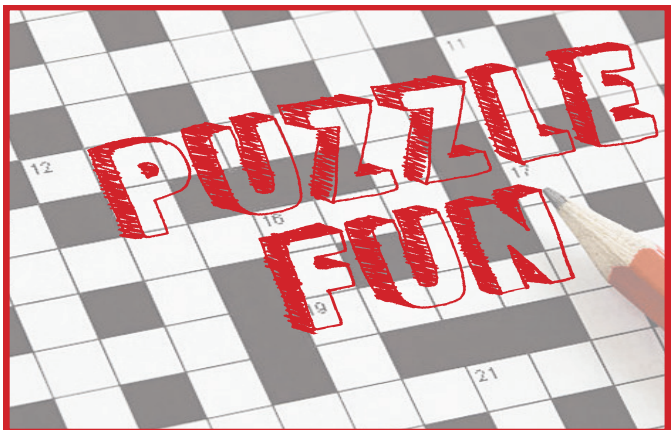
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8			7	5				

Level: Advanced

Annual Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Sweater Drive underway

CLAY COUNTY – WJCT Public Media is partnering with VyStar Credit Union, Sud-dath, and Tom Bush Family of Dealerships to present the 22nd annual Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Sweater Drive. Cold-weather clothing and items — such as new or gently used sweaters, jackets, socks and blankets — will be collected through Nov. 30. The items will be distributed at the Clara White Mission and City Rescue Mission on Monday, Dec. 9.

Public media organizations across the United States have collected sweaters in honor of Fred Rogers, host of the popular PBS series "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" for two decades. Last year, WJCT Public Media's drive collected and distributed more than 9,200 pounds of cold-weather necessities to Northeast Florida residents.

"The Mister Rogers Sweater Drive is a great example of WJCT Public Media's ability to be a catalyst in making good things happen by working with partners, each bringing our unique strengths to enable the generosity of this community to shine through," said David McGowan, President/CEO of WJCT Public Media.

VyStar locations in Clay County are at:

• 1755 Eagle Harbor Pkwy

Fleming Island

• 601 N. Orange Ave.

Green Cove Springs

• 1768 Blanding Blvd.

Middleburg

• 2762 Blanding Blvd. • 182 Blanding Blvd.

Orange Park

• 180 Arora Blvd

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to home decorating.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 22 = I)

A. 22 14 10 6 23 22 12 23
Clue: Inside

B. 9 6 13 12 23 16 10 6
Clue: Make something more festive

C. 21 16 10 6 23 22 16 7 8
Clue: Items used to create something

D. 22 14 8 24 22 23 22 14 17
Clue: Giving someone creative feelings

Answers: A. Interior B. decorate C. materials D. inspiring

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to decorating.

I S A D E

Answer: Ideas

GUESS WHO ?

I am a drummer for a pop punk band born in California, on November 14, 1975. I dreamed of becoming a pro surfer and skateboarder, but started playing the drums at age 4. I'm well known for my mohawk and lots of tattoos.

Answer: Travis Barker

HOME DECOR WORD SEARCH

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

WORDS

ALCOVE
 ARMOIRE
 BACKSPASH
 BALUSTRADE
 BANQUETTE
 BROCADE
 CHEVRON
 COFFERED
 CONSOLE
 CORNICE
 DESIGN
 KICKBOARD
 LAMINATE
 LINOLEUM
 PATINA
 RUNNER
 SCALE
 SCONCE
 SECTIONAL
 SHIPLAP
 TREATMENTS
 UPHOLSTERY
 VANITY
 WAINSCOTING

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

E	R	A	S	E	R	S	A	B	L	E	S			
S	C	O	R	I	A	E	A	B	R	A	D	E	R	
C	L	K	S	A	U	T	E	R	N	E	S	M	E	
H	A	K	I	M	O	T	O	D	E	L	I	S		
W	I	N	S	B	L	A	N	C	D	E	S	A	T	I
A	R	A	S	A	D	G	A	B	M	O	D			
P	H	O	N				R	A	P	I	N	E		
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I	N	K	S	C	E	D	A	R	K	O	M	I		
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6	8	1	2	3	7	4	9	5
7	5	2	8	9	4	3	6	1
1	7	9	3	2	8	6	5	4
4	3	8	6	7	5	1	2	9
2	6	5	4	1	9	7	8	3
5	1	7	9	4	2	8	3	6
9	2	6	1	8	3	5	4	7
8	4	3	7	5	6	9	1	2

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National flag football raids Clay County

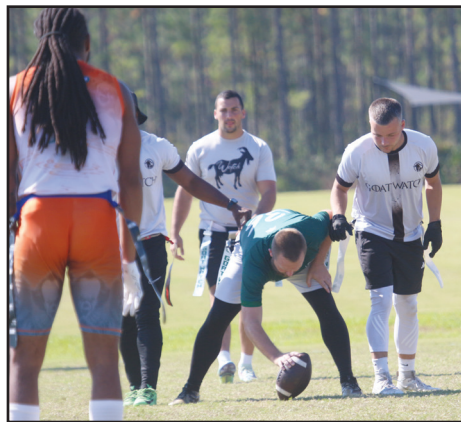
By Randy Lefko
randy@claytodayonline.com

MIDDLEBURG – Football fans who didn't get enough of Friday night lights got a second dose of fast football on Saturday at the Clay County Regional Recreation Park when the United Flag Football League showcased their athletes with a day of 4 v 4 and 5 v 5 clashes.

"When we challenged the NFL pros to play our UFFL guys, we had to entice them with a \$10,000 challenge before they agreed," said UFFL Director Norm McLean, a former coach at powerhouse Cocoa High in south Florida and a former NFL player himself. "Our guys (UFFL) are great flag football players and the NFL guys have their own skill sets that are not near what our guys can do. It's a different game. We beat the NFL guys four times."

For McLean, who ushered in the UFFL, teams from Jacksonville, Orlando, Citrus, and South Florida traveled to Clay County to compete.

"We got athletes out here that played or still play semi-pro, pro football, ex-Olympians, and college football players," said McLean, noting another tournament going on in Tempe, Arizona with a national championship tournament coming to Kissimmee.



Two Clay County grad flag footballers; quarterback Ethan Kay (CHS) and Chris D'Iaddorio (OHS) set up for play while, below, former Oakleaf basketballer Sean Jones tosses pass for GOAT Watch team at UFFL event Saturday.

"The national championships in January will have 450 teams at the Northeast Regional Park in Davenport."

McLean commented that the draw to play flag football comes from the underlying instinct to still want to play football.

"I played in college, played some NFL, started playing flag football which led to

SEE FLAG, 22



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Clay County athletes playing United Flag Football League now including, from left, Sean Jones, Oakleaf basketball; Chris D'Iaddorio, Oakleaf baseball and Ethan Kay, Clay football, all on the GOAT Watch football squad.

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Flag

from page 21

coaching, then refereeing and now this, being tournament director around the country since 2008 it has grown that big and very quickly," said McLean, who was part of getting girls flag football in Florida. "Florida and Texas dominate as far as state talent. We have a USA men's national team and are



Left: Oakleaf High baseball grad Chris D'Iaddorio breaks for play that ended with GOAT Watch touchdown in UFFL action while, right, former Sandalwood track ace Laval Davis breaks for big play in colorful uniform.

working on making it an Olympic sport. The girls have an Olympic squad."

Two national team players; Velton Brown, 28, from Lake Nona High Orlando, and Jamie Kennedy, 27, from Blanche Ely High in Pompano Beach, were two Florida players who have played UFFL ball for nearly a decade.

"This is the place to be," said Brown. "We love football and this is a much safer, faster game."



Three members of the 2024 USA Mens' National Team who competed in Clay County on Saturday were, from left, Norm McLean, UFFL director, Velton Brown, from Orlando; Laval Davis, from Sandalwood High School, and Jamie Kennedy, from Pompano Beach.

The differences between the NFL game and the UFFL game come down to the pure athleticism on the field of the flag football athletes.

"You get a guy who plays flag football, he has to be fast on his feet, have great body control in close quarters and still have the ball skills of an NFL guy," said Brown. "And you don't get hit. It's a much faster game."

On the field, a few local athletes were competing including Ethan Kay, 30, foot-

ball at Clay High; Sean Jones, 28, Oakleaf basketball, and Chris D'Iaddorio, Oakleaf baseball, plus, from Sandalwood, track and football star, and now a Team USA member Laval Davis. "I'm the quarterback with Sean and Chris catching passes," said Kay, who got himself, Jones and D'Iaddorio together in 2013. "It's great exercise, outside in the sun, fellowship with athletes and some good traveling. We've been to Texas, Charlotte and Chicago, all over."



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