

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS HERALD

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VOL. 12 NO. 6 THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2025

Keystone Heights country club closed



PHOTO BY JENN SAMSEL

Keystone Heights Golf and Country Club has shut down.

By Jenn Samsel
For Clay Today

A cherished golf course that has been a community staple for 108 years closed its doors to pave the way for a planned residential community.

Was there any hope of saving the Keystone Heights Golf & Country Club?

The course closed in late March. While it marks the end of an era for the community's golfing experience, the closure may present financial challenges within the local economy.

Residents of Keystone Heights are expressing their frustration. This situation

has sparked concerns among them, demanding attention and action.

The golf course was not just a place for teeing off; it was a vibrant hub for generosity and support. Throughout the year, it hosted various scholarship events that unite the community, raising thousands of dollars to help students chase their dreams of higher education.

Brad Harvey, owner of Keystone Heights Golf Course, said, "I tried to sell it for three years. The cost of doing business is higher than the number of golfers walking in the door. It's been a financial setback and has been unable to recoup its funds. I have been working for free."

He explained, "I have builders coming into the area looking at potentially buying parcels of the golf course, making those sections into a development. We're going to sign a contract and put houses on it. I went to Bradford County and asked them what I could do about it. It's private property and zoned as a single-family dwelling; you can do whatever you want with it."

The City of Keystone Heights decided unanimously on March 3 not to purchase

the Golf Course or continue funding discussions.

Residents were upset about the circumstances. One resident wants to know whether Tallahassee would step in to purchase the course to save it.

"If the state could invest millions of dollars in taking our state parks and converting them into golf courses, then why couldn't they save a 108-year-old golf course?" asked Jim Skiles, a Keystone Heights resident.

"My suggestion would be for Tallahassee to consider if golfing was of interest to them, they look into the potential of buying this course."

Residents rallied together, passionately discussing the launch of a "Save Our Golf Course" initiative and emphasizing the golf course's invaluable sense of community and connection.

As March drew to a close, Keystone stood on the brink of losing a significant piece of its history — an event that could spell financial problems for the community and leave residents worried about the future.

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A

B

Answers: 1. Missing umbrella 2. Missing hair 3. Cat on ledge 4. Plain rain boot

GUESS WHO?

I am a comic/actor born in New York on April 3, 1961. I began performing stand-up comedy as a teenager, which led to a gig on "Saturday Night Live." I am a singer, director, actor, and comedian, and am best known for my comedic roles. I won a Golden Globe for a 2007 film.

Answer: Eddie Murphy

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Dark blacks
7. Construct a wall to confine
13. Most inappropriate
14. A type of board
16. Sacred Hindu syllable
17. Flatterer
19. The Granite State
20. Tears down
22. China's Chairman
23. Former Houston footballer
25. Periods of time
26. Expressed pleasure
28. World alliance
29. A Brit's mother
30. Television network
31. Brother or sister
33. Type of spirit
34. ___ Ladd, actor
36. A medium oversees it
38. One time province of British India
40. Wrong
41. The highest parts of something
43. Insect
44. Baseball stat
45. A way to use up
47. Where wrestlers compete

48. It helps elect politicians
51. As fast as can be done
53. Genus of legumes
55. Samoa's capital
56. Monument in Jakarta
58. Former French coin
59. Exploiters
60. College sports official
61. Uninterrupted in time
64. Stephen King story
65. Marked by no sound
67. Weathers
69. Denouncements
70. More beloved

CLUES DOWN

1. Winged nut
2. It cools a home
3. Kisses (French)
4. Oxford political economist
5. Keyboard key
6. Leaf pores
7. Agrees with publicly
8. Not around
9. Czech city
10. Muscle cell protein
11. Greek letter
12. Movements
13. Ned __, composer
15. Popular series Game of __

18. Exclamation that denotes disgust
21. Helper
24. Gift
26. Up in the air (abbr.)
27. Treat without respect
30. Trims
32. Slang for lovely
35. City of Angels hoopster (abbr.)
37. Guitarists' tool
38. Island nation
39. Delivered in installments
42. A baglike structure
43. Cooking vessel
46. Gets in front of
47. Wounded by scratching
49. More breathable
50. Medical dressings
52. Indiana hoopster
54. Married Marilyn
55. An ancient Assyrian city
57. Congressmen (abbr.)
59. Approves food
62. Ventura's first name
63. Between northeast and east
66. Atomic #71
68. Email designation

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS HERALD

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OPINIONS & VIEWPOINTS

Retreats and sweets at Clay County Agricultural Fair

“Half a mile from the county fair...”
– Sir Van Morrison

Although the great Irish songwriter’s “And It Stoned Me” lyric refers to one of his fishing experiences, it applies to my life in relation to the concurrent Clay County Agricultural Fair.

I reside roughly two miles from the fairgrounds in Green Cove Springs, not ideal for my daily commute to Clay Today but a convenient spot for major events around GCS.

The popular spectacle ended April 13 – and it had been a well-oiled machine, by most accounts. “Traffic has been smooth, and we’re having a great time out here,” said the fair’s Executive Director Tasha Hyder, whose account matters most.

Although attendance was slightly lower



Jim Luksic

than expected – chiefly due to the heat and humidity — during the first weekend, Hyder had positive thoughts after consulting with Mother Nature. “The weather outlook is in our favor,” she pointed out.

Professional duties required me to visit the fair twice; personal interest and curiosity led me back thrice.

Over the weekend, temperatures hovered around 90 degrees, but the early bird got the breeze: Before noon, the fair grounds felt comfortable.

Strolling and wandering around a county fair, it’s easy to take delight in things big and small. In my case, that meant a chair in the shade – a sight for sore eyes and a seat for sore feet.

Making the circumstances more pleasant: The mouth-watering doughnuts courtesy of Peachey’s Baking Co. As a hockey fan whose parents had sweet teeth (we kept dentists in business), I’m familiar with round, sugary wonders. If my taste buds are accurate, Sarasota-based Peachey’s warm confections are the gold standard.

Speaking of sweet treats, you’ll find a

historic one in leafy Early Florida Village, where Dustin Elrod was stirring the pot. A 60-gallon kettle, to be precise.

Walking through the fair’s hamlet is akin to time travel; the village looks and feels like one from a century ago. Fitting right in is Dustin and bundled stalks of sugar cane for the purpose of concocting syrup. If you’re used to maple syrup from trees, feast your eyes and nostrils on his old-school concoction.

Dustin will return to the fairgrounds village on Saturday. More often, he rolls up his sleeves at Elrod Acres on Thunder Road in Penney Farms, where his family hosts their annual “Cane Grinding” in late November. It’s also where they produce homemade jams and honey.

As a proverbial old soul who misses America’s halcyon days of yore, I’ve already penciled in the next Cane Grinding. Those who aren’t new to Clay County might be aware Elrod Acres Cracker House cracked open for public consumption in 2015.

I shall visit Dustin’s neck of the woods

SEE RETREATS AND SWEETS, 5

This Month in History


Five years ago in Clay Today:

- Food pantries are always an important part of their surrounding community but amidst the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, their importance for families in the area have risen to new heights.
- Mike Finnick stopped to check his watch last Friday, knowing his next truckload of groceries should be at the back door of his Winn-Dixie store in less than 10 minutes. Finnick can’t remember being so busy. And fulfilled.
- The Chamber of Commerce is all hands on-deck with local businesses and business owners try to navigate the waters of the coronavirus pandemic.

10 years ago:

- Residents of Clay County will have plenty of chances over the coming weeks to let their opinions be heard about what’s come to be known as the locational ordinance – the long awaited third and final segment of the county’s regulations geared to deal with adult entertainment businesses.
- When the First Coast Expressway is completed, county leaders expect a boom in business, housing, population and jobs within the local economy. Because part of the expressway will be built near Green Cove Springs, the county seat will likely see a population spike for which it is now planning.
- To avoid cutting town services, Orange Park residents began paying a new tax on their electricity bills on April 1. Town Manager Jim Hanson expects the tax to increase the average customer’s bill by 6.8 percent and generate just under \$759,000 per year. The tax is indefinite.





DID YOU KNOW?

Clay Today will test your knowledge weekly and provide interesting facts on various topics.

This week, our focus is Clay County District Schools by the numbers: They have 190 school buses, which have logged 3.2 million miles – enough to go around the globe 129 times; the district has served 5.6 million meals; its buildings cover 3.7 million square feet; 42,000 students have attended; it includes 16 A-rated schools; a 95% graduation rate (highest in county history); the district is ranked No. 1 in state civics, No. 2 in social studies and fourth in history; and it has 1,415 CTE industry certifications.

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 Jim Luksic at jim@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.



Dustin Elrod, of Elrod Acres in Penney Farms, crafts cane syrup in the Early Florida Village at the Clay County Agricultural Fair.

RETREATS AND SWEETS

from page 4

sooner than later. Much like Early Florida Village, its tradition and roots are right up my alley.

Before then, a fourth visit to the latest fair – given its proximity – was probable for me. In addition to syrup and doughnuts, there were more things to consume, such as pretzels. Don’t get it twisted.

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Keystone Heights Councilman Brown honored for service



Keystone Heights Mayor Nina Rodenroth and Councilman Tony Brown

By Jenn Samsel
For Clay Today

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS -- It was a bittersweet City Hall meeting in Keystone Heights on Monday, April 7. Councilman Tony Brown delivered his farewell speech and was awarded a plaque after 30 years of dedicated service and community involvement.

Brown received numerous accolades from various esteemed members, showcasing a well-deserved recognition of his achievements and contributions.

City Mayor Nina Rodenroth said, “On behalf of the City of Keystone Heights Council, staff, Public Works, Heritage Commission, Planning and Zoning, Airport Authority, and our county commissioner, I asked 31 of these citizens to give me one word that they think of when they think of Tony.

“As a memory’s sake,” she continued,

“on behalf of your servant leadership for our city, this is a family tree with all of our faces throughout many events. And it’s just to say ‘thank you’ from all of us for your servant leadership from 1996 to 2025.”

Miss Suzie Lubbock said, “I just wanted to take a minute to thank Tony for his many years of service to this community through the fire department, council and all the volunteering you’ve done.

Also on Monday: the Northeast Florida legal city resolution number 2255-B1, a resolution of the board of directors of the Northeast Florida legal cities honored Director Brown, the town of Keystone Heights, for his years of service on the board.

Brown gave his final farewell speech, ending with “To the citizens of Keystone Heights, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for trusting me as a councilman and as a mayor for all these years.”

Centennial Spring Fling delights with cars, planes and spirit

by Jenn Samsel
For Clay Today

Centennial Spring Fling Festival celebrated 100 years with planes, cars, vendors, music and festivities on Saturday, March 29.

Friends of Keystone Heights and Keystone Heights Rotary Club observed a century at Keystone Heights Airport in Bradford County with a car show comprising more than 50 participants.

The atmosphere included a vibrant crowd that filled the area, bustling around vendors and food trucks.

The Clay County Sheriff's Department and the Fantastic Fire Brigade were among the participants.

"Thank you to the Friends of Keystone Heights for putting on this great event and giving the Rotary Club of Keystone Heights the privilege to take part in the 100th Year Centennial Spring Fling," said Todd Beals, Rotary Club president.

"We had a great time coordinating our

first car show ever. "We felt it was a great success, having 53 cars in the event. The funds we raise go back into our community and will be contributed toward two \$1,000 scholarships for our graduating students. We look forward to making this an annual event and hope to see all our car show participants next year," he continued.

"I am so glad that our family fun day was a success. We had great volunteers, and everybody pitched in to make the day a wonderful day.

"The snowbird event made it even more exciting, as with the car show. They had a total of 53 cars."

"The Friends of Keystone Heights and community volunteers came together to make our Centennial Spring Fling a huge success for the community," said Ginger Lee, Friends of Keystone Heights president.

The event was considered a success, raising over \$1,000 for the Rotary Club.



COURTESY PHOTO BY JENN SAMSEL

Airplanes were among the attractions March 29 during the Centennial Spring Fling Festival at Keystone Heights Airport.



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School board acknowledges students, teachers



PHOTO COURTESY OF ONE CLAY

Tynes Elementary fifth grader Kei'Ani McQuown was recognized for her win of Gov. Ron DeSantis' annual Black History Month Essay Contest.

By Kyla Woodard
kyla@claytodayonline.com

FLEMING ISLAND— Thursday evening's School Board meeting saw many students, staff and citizens receive recognition for their commendable achievements.

Here are some highlights:

- Tynes Elementary School fifth grader Kei'Ani McQuown was recognized for her win of Gov. Ron DeSantis' annual Black History Month Essay Contest.



Keystone Heights High School's Michael Golden received Student Volunteer of the Year, Ridgeview Elementary School's Ada Podolski received Senior Volunteer of the Year and Middleburg Elementary School's Heather Smith took home the title of Adult Volunteer of the Year.

Students in fourth through 12th grade submitted essays focused on the contributions of African Americans to Florida's History, with the winners being recognized by Gov. DeSantis and the Florida Department of Education.

McQuown also received a two-year Florida PrePaid College Scholarship.

- Three students were recognized by the Clay County Education-Retired for winning their Black History Month Essay Contest. The contest is a continuation of the organization's year-long literacy program.

Orange Park Elementary student Maya Westfall received first place, Clay Hill Elementary student Lacey Swearingen earned second place and Orange Park Elementary student Michael Bellicourt received third place.

The student's received \$100, \$50 and \$25 along with a certificate.

- The following high school students were awarded for being National Merit Scholarship semifinalists, scoring in the top 1% of their state on the PSAT/NMSQT: Tristan Duke of Keystone Heights High School, Ezra Garrison of Fleming Island High School, Ramon Morales of Ridgeview High School, Nyhla Jones of Oakleaf High

School and Noe Navarro of Oakleaf High School.

- This year's State Thespians were recognized for their hard work. The Florida State Thespian Festival is an annual event where young theater students from across the state showcase their theatrical skills.

- The following students earned Superior ratings for their select performances, the highest they can receive: Lake Asbury Junior High School's Jaeden Sims, Mackenna Mack, Kai Abrams, Ella Alcott, Mya Johns, Bella Schock, Brinley Victory and Lara Peyton.

Fleming Island High School's Ashlynn Amburgey, Ellison Shipe, Cash Belcher, Kerry Hunter, Payten Tison and Riley Rendelman.

Ridgeview High School's Jillian McKinney, Lucy Bressley, Savannah Hudson and Monica Brice.

- Volunteers of the Year were also recognized. Keystone Heights High School's Michael Golden received Student Volunteer of the Year, Ridgeview Elementary School's Ada Podolski received Senior Volunteer of the Year and Middleburg Elementary School's Heather Smith took home the title of Adult Volunteer of the Year.



The following high school students were awarded for being National Merit Scholarship semifinalists: Tristan Duke of Keystone Heights High School, Ezra Garrison of Fleming Island High School, Ramon Morales of Ridgeview High School, Nyhla Jones of Oakleaf High School and Noe Navarro of Oakleaf High School.

**Calendar
of Events**
claytodayonline.com

Empty Bowls set for April 29

The Salvation Amry Women's Auxiliary will present Empty Bowls from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on April 29 at United Methodist Church Family Life Center in Orange Park.

The fundraiser includes soup and bread, a silent auction, bake sale and \$20 donation. Students from Oakleaf, Ridgview, OP, Lake Asbury and St. Johns schools handcrafted the bowls.

**CCAS and Petco Love
offer free vaccines**

Clay County Animal Services (CCAS) will provide free vaccinations for Clay County residents' pets. The no-cost vaccines are made possible through Petco Love's national vaccination initiative Vaccinated and Loved, which is providing an additional 1 million free pet vaccines for family pets to existing animal welfare partners, including CCAS.

Parvovirus and distemper in dogs and panleukopenia in cats — the most prevalent deadly diseases affecting pets — are preventable with a simple vaccine. An estimated 30% of pet parents do not take their pet to a veterinarian annually for preventative care. To ensure the health and wellness of our beloved pets and to address this critical need, Clay County Animal Services and Petco Love have partnered to

make pet vaccines free and accessible.

Clay County Animal Services aims to vaccinate 250-500 pets. For more information about vaccine distribution, visit claycountygov.com/community/animal-services.

OP Days Inn receives honor

Days Inn Orange Park by Wyndham at 4280 Eldridge Loop, was awarded the annual Best of Days Inn President's Award, which recognizes the brand's top-performing hotels and their staff.

In celebration of the achievement, Diane Gracey, the hotel's general manager, accepted the award from Days Inn and Wyndham Hotels & Resorts' leadership.

To be eligible for the award, hotels must have demonstrated exceptional guest

satisfaction, ensured that all staff members have completed Wyndham's required health and safety training, and maintained good standing with the brand over the past year.

**Bear and Butch 'Marine'
Dice Run hits road April 19**

MIDDLEBURG — Riders and children can have fun and help the Rising Stars: Guitars for Kids program on Saturday, April 19, at the Bear and Butch "The Marine" Dice Run that starts at VFW Post 8255. The day starts at 2296 Aster Ave. with breakfast from 8 to 10 a.m., followed by an Easter party, coloring contest and prize hunt from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Registration for the two-, three- and four-wheel poker run is at 9 a.m., with

SEE EVENTS, 17

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Elections: Welch, Stutts capture seats on city councils

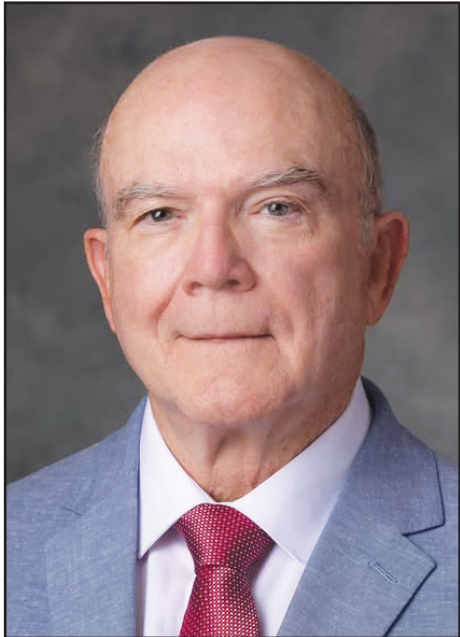


PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN D FLOYD

Dave Welch

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY — Despite receiving endorsements from former Keystone Heights Mayor Tony Brown, Clay County Commissioner Betsy Condon and Sheriff Michelle Cook, Vice Mayor Chris Thompson failed to win re-election to the Keystone Heights City Council during Municipal Super Tuesday elections.

According to preliminary tallies that Supervisor of Elections posted, Dave Welch beat Thompson, 79-74, to win Seat 2 on the council.

"Keystone Heights has a wonderful history and tradition, and I would like to recover some of that former glory," Welch said. "It wouldn't be practical to rebuild the city, so to speak, but I think we can recapture some of the flavor of a shaded old Florida community."

Welch said the city's three main cornerstones are its lakes, airport and downtown area. He said the lakes would be replenished by rain (and the Black Creek Restoration Project), the airport authority is doing a good job, and the city is working well with the FAA to improve the taxiways and runway lighting.

His focus will be on uniting the community to revitalize the downtown areas.

"I think getting people on board and try to encourage people to participate, maybe spend a little money on sprucing up their storefronts would be a start," Welch said. "It's going to be a community effort to make that happen, and I think we can get there. I think we can get people signed up and working toward that goal."

"Eventually, over months and years, we can get it done."

In Green Cove Springs, Darren Stutts earned 64.65% of the vote to win Seat 5 on the City Council to replace Steven Kelley, who was termed out. He beat challenger Dave Daigle, 331-181, in a race where nearly \$15,000 was raised.

"I'm a business owner (Darren's Custom and Restorations), and Job One for me is, I want to re-do planning and zoning," Stutts said from his victory celebration at the Village Improvement Association. "I want something to go through planning and zoning and revamp it where it's easier to come in here and open a business and pull a permit."

"My wife is the president of the V.I.A. Women's Club, and they wanted to put a new sign out front. It took them three



Darren Stutts

months to get a building permit to put up a new little sign for something that should have taken three minutes, because they have so much red tape."

Stutts will be sworn in before the May

20 meeting.

Stutts said he's been in business in Green Cove Springs for 37 years, and business has only gotten more difficult for the city.

"I'm tired of the process," he said.

Voters also rejected pay raises for city council members (271-237) and an increase in the city manager's spending authority from \$25,000 to \$50,000 (286-222).

Voters also approved the city manager's authority to issue a local state of emergency (334-175), but they voted down plans to allow the city attorney to live outside the city limits (330-182) and a requirement that the city council review the City Charter every 10 years (301-206).

Five candidates were unopposed countywide. In Green Cove Springs, Glee Glisson will replace Connie Butler, who termed out for Seat 3, and Michael Smith won a second term to represent Seat 4.

In Keystone Heights, Ryan Knight retained his position on Seat 1, while Kenneth Vogel (Seat 4) and Mayor Randy Anderson (Seat 5) both won re-elections in Orange Park.



COURTESY PHOTO BY JENN SAMSEL

Voters showed support for their favorite candidate on April 8.



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<div><p>\$350,000</p><p>LAKE SANTA FE</p><p>00 SE 5th Ave Melrose, FL</p></div>	<div><p>\$435,000</p><p>12 ACRES</p><p>5065 NE CR 219A Melrose, FL</p></div>	<div><p>\$370,000</p><p>NEW CONSTRUCTION</p><p>4435 SE 8th Ave Keystone Heights, FL</p></div>

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Charity upgrades Quigley House for pet-friendly survivors



PHOTO COURTESY OF QUIGLEY HOUSE

The almost two-week renovation included a large dog play yard, pet relief area, the repairing of existing kennels, upgrades to cat shelves and waterproof flooring.

By Kyla Woodard
kyla@claytodayonline.com

It is common for survivors of domestic and sexual assault to look at their pets as a source of peace.

According to national statistics, 91% of domestic survivors indicated that their pet's emotional support and physical protection are significant in their ability to

survive and heal.

At Quigley House, meeting the needs of survivors and their pets is key. Some big changes were made to help do that.

Recently, global nonprofit Greater Good Charities completed a project dedicated to revamping the organization's pet house

SEE QUIGLEY HOUSE, 15



Recently, global nonprofit Greater Good Charities completed a project dedicated to revamping the organization's pet house into a more comfortable and inviting environment.



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QUIGLEY HOUSE
from page 14

into a more comfortable and inviting environment. The almost two-week renovation included a large dog play yard, pet relief area, the repairing of existing kennels, upgrades to cat shelves, waterproof flooring, more storage space, new paint and furniture.

Additionally, the team also added privacy slats between kennels to give pets pri-

vacy and promote relaxation.

Since 2014, the charity has recruited over 6,000 volunteers from around the country to renovate 200 animal shelters, domestic violence shelters, wildlife facilities, veteran housing and housing for those unsheltered.

Tonya Freeland, Quigley House director of Domestic Violence Services, said that around 40% of calls they receive are from survivors looking to bring their pets with them. As Clay County's only dual certified

domestic and sexual assault center, Freeland said offering these services greatly sets them apart.

"I've had several people tell me, 'Oh my gosh, nobody else would allow me to bring my pet,'" Freeland said.

The center said the upgrades will amplify their work, providing quality housing and a comfortable space not only for the survivors but their furry companions.

Director of Development Jackie Krug said the center helps with food, cat litter

and works closely with Clay County Humane Society to provide vaccinations.

"More often than not, they refuse to leave their situation because they don't want to leave their pet behind," Freeland said. According to national statistics, this is true for over 70% of domestic violence survivors.

Quigley House said with the help of their newest developments, they are hoping to combat those concerns one person at a time.

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Old-fashioned fun down at Penney Farms



PHOTOS BY JIM LUKSIC

Out for a spin: Katie Dile chats on Saturday at the Penney Farms' Old-Fashioned Farm Day.

By Jim Luskic
jim@claytodayonline.com

PENNEY FARMS - The Town of Penney Farms' fourth Old-Fashioned Farm Day got underway on a peaceful, cloud-free Saturday morning as vendors and exhibitors greeted dozens — and gradually hundreds — of attendees.

David and Anita Cooper, the town's manager and clerk, respectively, helped oversee the five-hour affair, which was expected to bring in 400 to 500 visitors.

"We hope to build off of this," David said about the yearly event's impact on Penney Farms, nestled about 5 miles west as the crow flies from Clay County Fairgrounds.

"I love seeing everybody come out," said

Anita, who noted 15 local exhibitors and 45 vendors. "This is fun, old-timey stuff."

Old-Fashioned Farm Day — which stretched from the historical museum to Martina C. Kohler Park — comprised food and refreshments, arts and crafts, musical entertainment, the Easter Bunny, classic cars and a small petting zoo.

Among the faces in the crowd was Alan "Old Man" Powell and his hands-on toys. The retired fireman said he always loved to carve "just like his grandfather" and enjoys displaying the items.

About 50 yards away stood Keystone Heights resident Jeff Rehkopf, a former auto mechanics teacher. For the second time, he was at the festival showcasing



Retired teacher Jeff Rehkopf, of Keystone Heights, shows off antique radios at Old-Fashioned Farm Day.

classic radios, including a century-old antique. "I like showing off and talking to people," he explained.

Longtime Penney Farms resident Julie Collison, a London transplant with an intact British accent, greeted folks at one entrance while distributing a Farm Day schedule and town map.

Bill Caton, a first sergeant with the

Florida Youth ChalleNge Academy, accompanied at-risk uniformed teens during the event. As part of the program's community service, they participated in Farm Day's opening ceremony.

It wasn't long before the brisk morning gave way to a warm, sparkling afternoon.

"We got really lucky," Anita Cooper said of the idyllic conditions.



STAFF PHOTO BY JIM LUKSIC

Classic cars were the talk of the town.

EVENTS

from page 9

kickstands up at 10:30.

First stop is at the Howlin' Wolf in Melrose, then to VFW Interlachen for lunch, then the Boogerville Hideout in Green Cove Springs, before returning to VFW in Middleburg.

The event will include 50/50 drawings, raffles and food by Cht'z and Giggles. Live music from 4 to 8 p.m. will include sets from Shopping Mall Guerrillas, Branford Highway and Duval County Line.

Thrasher-Horne Center to celebrate 20 years

ORANGE PARK – The Thrasher-Horne Center's 20-year Celebration will be April 19 and feature a community event starting at 10 a.m.

The event will include 34 local vendors, free crafts for children, ticket contests, live entertainment, food, services, and a free showing of Disney's Moana with free popcorn at 11:30 a.m.

The Woodwind Quintet will perform at 2 p.m., followed by the Navy Band Southeast Fair Winds Woodwind Quintet at 2:30 p.m.

Safety Telecommunicators Week highlights first responders

National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week (April 13-19) is a time to spotlight the true "first" responders. Every day, dispatchers are the ones fielding emergency calls in real time as they unfold. But when dispatchers are in crisis, who is there for them?

LSF Health Systems' First Responder Peer Support Program provides critical mental health resources to support dispatchers and other first responders when they need help.

Statistically, first responders and dispatchers have high rates of relationship issues, alcohol/drug abuse and suicide attempts and completions. In fact, according to Blue H.E.L.P., more than 1,200 first responders in the U.S. have died by suicide since 2019.

Shelly Castellano, a 911 dispatcher in St. Johns County, said peer support is a necessary to stay level-headed call after call. "We need to stay healthy, for our jobs and our families, because they depend on

us," she said.

First responders or their family members can visit StayFitforDuty.org or call 211 for more information.

Led Zeppelin tribute to rock in September

Kashmir: The Spirit of Led Zeppelin Live featuring Jean Violet is slated to perform at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 20 at Thrasher-Horne Center on College Drive in Orange Park.

Tickets, which range from \$29 to \$59,

will be available at THcenter.org or by calling (904) 276-6815.

Musical comedy coming to Thrasher-Horne

On the heels of *Wednesday*, the third most-watched show on Netflix of all-time, Big-League Productions, Inc. presents *The Addams Family*, a devilish musical comedy.

Wednesday Addams, the ultimate princess of darkness, has grown up and fallen in love with a young man from a re-

spectable family. Gomez Addams must do something he's never done before – keep a secret from his beloved wife, Morticia. Everything will change for the whole family on the night they host a dinner for Wednesday's "normal" boyfriend and his parents.

The musical will be on the Thrasher-Horne Center stage at 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 30. Tickets, which start at \$39, are available at the box office or thcenter.org.

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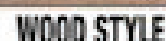
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FHSAA Boys Weightlifting

Indians own lone team title; MHS Craven gets 2A title

Keystone Heights with six 1A titles

By Randy Lefko
randy@claytodayonline.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS - Keystone Heights High's boys weightlifting has its own history of winning big on the big stage and Friday's Olympics region title emphasized the point with the Traditional title going to West Nassau by two points.

"This area is ripe for strong weightlifting programs because good coaches are getting good kids and the small schools like Keystone Heights, West Nassau and Williston are all on the bubble of being in the mix for a long time," said Keystone Heights coach Steve Reynolds. "The kids in areas like ours; small, farm areas with tough, hard working kids and then they get a good coach that can teach proper technique and strategy is a good start for great programs. You could see some surprises at state from some schools not normally in the hunt."

Keystone Heights, with champions Elijah Mize at 119, Colton Hollingsworth at 129, Kyle Perkins at 199 and Jackson Herman at Unlimited took the Olympics title with a 56-48 gap on Williston who had



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Keystone Heights 119 weightlifter Elijah Mize readies for lift at region championships won by Indians in Olympics with a second place in Traditional. Mize and teammate Colton Hollingsworth were both Olympics and Traditional individual champions as area teams head to state championships in Lakeland April 11-12.

three individual titles.

"This team has a lot of guys that have been lifting for five, six years together and that makes a difference from top to bottom," said Keystone Heights coach Steven

Reynolds. "The athletes here at Keystone Heights are just hard working grinders, in all the sports here."

In Traditional, Keystone Heights got titles from just Mize and Hollingsworth plus

top three finishes from Zane Leger and Perkins; 2-3, at 199, Brayden Wester at 238, third, and third at Unlimited by Herman to accrue enough points to chase West Nassau. West Nassau won just one title in Traditional, Rica Garrett at 199, who was five pounds up on Leger; 15 on Perkins.

Hollingsworth was fifth in 2024 in Traditional with Herman 10th at 238 in Olympics.

"We have a handful of guys that we were holding back at the regions because they didn't need a big number to get to state," said Reynolds. "We are in good position to add 10-15 pounds on some totals that will make for a solid team score."

In Region 1-2A, at 2024 defending 1A champion in Olympics and Traditional Suwannee, now back in 2A, hosting, it was 2024 2A runnerup in Olympics and 2A champion in Traditional Choctawhatchee turning the trick on the powerful Bulldog program with the wins in Traditional; 45-38 over Suwannee and, in Olympics, 62-52, again over Suwannee.

Keystone Heights beat Suwannee for the Traditional title in 2023 with a tie with

SEE FHSAA, 21



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Early touchdowns get Lady Indians 33-6 win

By Randy Lefko
randy@claytodayonline.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS - Two first half touchdown passes by quarterback Alea Horton and a fingertip interception by Hope Yarbrough were the highlights of a 33-6 final score for the Lady Indians flag football team over Interlachen on Tuesday. The win gives Keystone Heights an 8-7 final season record as district tournaments begin next week.

Horton, with 17 scores before the game, added to her total to lead the Indians with Ashlyn Brown and Aubre Miller latching end zone passes in the first half.

Miller's pass came off a deflection of a pass intended for Riley Shubert that Miller snagged in the back of the end zone.

Brown, the first score of the night, caught a quick out pass and barreled into the end zone in front of two Interlachen defenders. Horton stretched in for the PAT score.

On Monday, Fleming Island exacted their own 33-2 win over the Indians.



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO
Keystone Heights wide receiver Ashlyn Brown scored first touchdown with quick pass turn and run into end zone.



Keystone Heights defender Hope Yarbrough had nifty fingertip interception in first half and almost took return to the end zone.

KHHS Screen screams with homer, double

By Randy Lefko
randy@claytodayonline.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS - A two run homer and a double got three runs scored by Keystone Heights slugger Aiden Screen as the Indians returned to wins after a 12-3 loss to North Marion on Monday with a 10-0 drubbing of Eagle's View Academy on Tuesday. Keystone Heights improved to 17-6 for the season with a regular season final Thursday, April 10 at Clay High School. The Indians are ranked 23rd in Class 2A as district tournaments are set to start next week with Keystone Heights the district 4-2A top seed getting a BYE on April 14 with their semifinal on April 15.

Against Eagle's View, the Indians built a 4-0 lead into the sixth behind Screen's homer with Gage Barry on base in the fourth and a Gage Barry RBI single to score Andrew Wilson for a 3-0 lead and a double by Screen to 4-0 in the fifth.

In the sixth, singles by Tyler Brinson, Ty Mitzel, Wilson, Barry and Ryder Trull ended the game at 10-0.

Barry had seven strikeouts for the Indians.



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO
Keystone Heights batter Aiden Screen ripped a left field two run homer and an RBI double in Indians 10-0 win over Eagles View Academy on Tuesday, April 8.



Keystone Heights first baseman Austin Smith awaits throw from pitcher Gage Barry in pick off attempt in 10-0 win over Eagle's View Academy.

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FHSAA
from page 19

South Sumter in Olympics behind Suwannee. In 2024, the Indians were third behind Suwannee and South Sumter in 1A in Olympics and second to Suwannee in Traditional.

Clay County's lone individual 2A title went to Middleburg's Sam Craven, at 183 in Traditional who beat Fernandina Beach's Luke Twardy by five pounds.

"My mindset was to secure a spot at state first, then go for it all," said Craven. "I was first Middleburg guy out of state last year and have been working all year with coach Traywick to be a better lifter this year. I definitely have a lot left in the tank for state and may shock quite a few people."

In Olympics, Fleming Island, with Deh'mir Jackson, seventh last year at 219, second at 219, and Cohen Cioffi fourth at 238, finished sixth with 12 with Middleburg, with 11 points seventh behind a third by Wein Sulph at 183 with Sam Craven sixth in the same weight, and Charles Little at Unlimited finishing fourth with Bronco teammate Trent Pavlus sixth. Little was sixth last year in Olympics.

In Traditional, Middleburg and Clay finished ninth and 10th with scores of seven points apiece with Clay's Zerek Migliore at 139 taking second in a total tie with Fernandina Beach's Clay Hicks, but awarded second by body weight.

At 119, Clay's Wyatt Hickox was sixth while at Unlimited, Clay's Eli Oscoa was



Keystone Heights High 119 lifter Dylan Currington is new face in Indians lineup capable of bringing team points to Indians state title chase.



Keystone Heights High 199 lifter Kyle Perkins won a region Olympics title and is looking to chase down a state title for the Indians sixth.

Jammes Harris, 10th at 119 last year for Middleburg in Traditional and ninth in Olympics, finished 10th at 129 and fifth in Olympics at the region meet.

For Fleming Island, Cioffi was second but 80 pounds away from Choctawhatchee's Alex Urtecho, 650-570.

Middleburg got seventh place finishes from Caiden Thigpen at 154 and Danny Raines at 169 with Bronco teammate Mason Peevy ninth also at 169.



Keystone Heights High's boys weightlifting team shows off their Olympics region team title. Indians finished second in Traditional.

Tough Kissimmee week over;
Oakleaf visits Keystone Heights

By Randy Lefko
randy@claytodayonline.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS - After a tumultuous week of high-octane softball at the Kissimmee Classic, the Keystone Heights and Oakleaf high school softball teams, ironically, returned home on Sunday only to have a game against each other on Tuesday.

Down south in Kissimmee, speaking of gauntlet schedules, Oakleaf and Keystone Heights softball took a week to bash bats with the likes of Bartow (6A runnerup), Coral Reef (7A region semifinalist), Viera High (region loss to Bartow) and 4A-Eau Gallie High (11-6, region finalist 2024) for the Knights with the Lady Indians facing off Florida Christian (2A region semifinalist), Jensen Beach (4A region finalist), 7A-St. Cloud (13-5, region quarters) and, close to home, West Nassau (3A region semifinalist) at the annual Kissimmee Classic Invitational.

Oakleaf had losses to Bartow (6-0), Coral Reef (6-0), Viera (8-5) and Eau Gallie (14-2) while Keystone Heights had wins over Florida Christian (5-1) and Jensen Beach (3-2) to start with losses to St. Cloud (6-1) and a thriller to West Nassau (1-0).

For Keystone Heights, coach Jessica Marquart got her wins to start the tournament; 5-1 over Florida Christian and 3-2 over Jensen Beach before tough losses to St. Cloud (6-1) and a spinetingler against West Nassau (1-0), a frequent regional playoff foe for the Indians.

"I likened the team in Kissimmee as a good bonding experience that they learned to dig a little deeper for the teammate next to them," said Marquart. "I got to put some players in different positions to see how we would react in a different spot to give me some options in the playoffs."

For Oakleaf coach Heather Han, the schedule put in front of her team had its goods and its bads.

"We learned that we could hit against good pitching when we see it," said Han. "We also learned that little mistakes turn into tougher games and that, if we give away runs early against good teams, it's



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO
Keystone Heights pitcher Kadence Massey has strong game against tough Oakleaf batting lineup.

very hard to get them back." Ironically, Oakleaf traveled to Keystone Heights on Tuesday, April 8 and left with an 11-1 win that saw senior shortstop Jaydyn Beall bash two doubles to put her in position to score three runs.

Oakleaf got up quickly, as per Han's wishes in Kissimmee, with a 3-0 lead off Beall's first double with an error scoring Beall off a Ava Tolbert bunt. Singles by Oakleaf pitcher Charlotte Maddox and Zoe Schmehl scored two more to go to 3-0.

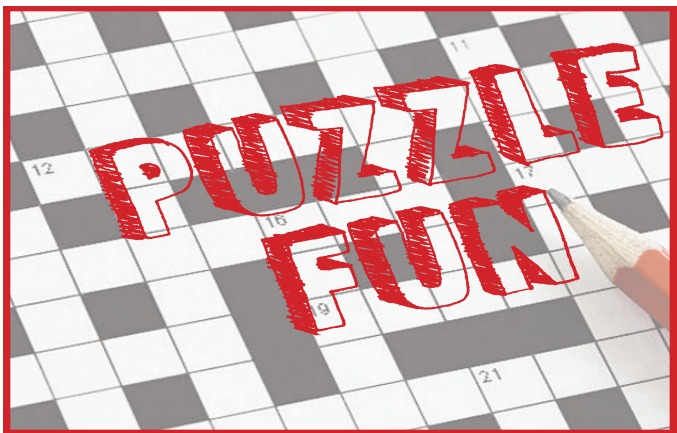
In the third, Keystone Heights got Chloe Still on base with a Maddox pitching hit, then an error to score the game 4-1.

In the sixth, Keystone Heights pitcher Kadence Massey, who finished with six strikeouts, got bumped up with singles and a Avery Garcia double to get the Knights to 11-1. Maddox finished with eight strikeouts for the Knights.

Keystone Heights gets no breather on their schedule as they finish up with Fleming Island (10-6), University Christian (13-3, No. 3 in 1A), Santa Fe (14-1, No. 4 in 3A), Bartram Trail (12-7), Eustis (11-3, No. 7 in 3A), Bradford (6-6) and Ridgeview (6-11) to finish regular season play.



Keystone Heights outfielder Chloe Still scoops up outfield ball in loss to Oakleaf.



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

Level: Intermediate



Solve the code to discover words related to the library.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 22 = E)

- A.

25 2 1 22 26

Clue: Peaceful
- B.

23 5 5 16 19 13 22 6 4 22 19

Clue: Stores volumes
- C.

6 22 18 8 1 18 21

Clue: Allowing to borrow
- D.

6 1 23 10 24 10 1 24 18

Clue: Library worker

Answers: A. quiet B. bookshelves C. lending D. librarian

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to the library.

NTIOIFC

Answer: Fiction

GUESS WHO ?

I am an actress born in Texas on April 17, 1972. I spent much of my childhood practicing ballet after an initial lesson at age 3. I've appeared in many TV shows and in a string of romantic comedies. Most people know me as a CIA secret agent as well as a sai-wielding assassin.

Answer: Jennifer Garner

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

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

WORDS

- ABSTRACT
- ALMANAC
- ARCHIVES
- AUTHOR
- BOOKS
- BROWSER
- CARD
- CATALOG
- CIRCULATION
- CITATION
- COURSE
- DESK
- EDITOR
- GLOSSARY
- INDEX
- JOURNAL
- KEYWORD
- LOAN
- MOVIES
- PERIODICAL
- REFERENCE
- RENEW
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A	D		C	E	A	S	E	L	E	S	S		I	T
S	I	L	E	N	C	E				E	N	D	U	R
	C	U	R	S	E	S				D	E	A	R	E

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

Classifieds

for Clay County

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3513 U.S. Hwy 17
Fleming Island, FL 32003

MESSAGE TO ADVERTISERS

All ads are non-refundable. Please check your ad copy the first week of publication. We will only apply credit for the first run and credits are subject to approval of the publisher. If ad is canceled prior to the first insertion cancellation must be made by classified deadline of Monday by noon. Ads must comply with Federal, State a

local laws. We are not responsible for ad content. Ads are subject to approval by the publisher.

DEADLINE MONDAY NOON

LINER ADS

All line ads are 4 lines, 20-25 characters per line. Additional lines may be purchased. All rates are NET.

PRIVATE PARTY COMMERCIAL

1 week \$14.50	1 week \$23
2 week \$24	2 week \$40
3 week \$32	3 week \$56
4 week \$40	4 week \$72

EMPLOYMENT SPOTLIGHT

Ads are \$27 per column inch with a minimum of 2"

ESTATE & GARAGE SALES

\$21

BUSINESS & SERVICE DIRECTORY

1.5" x 2" \$80 for 4 weeks
1.5" x 3" \$160 for 4 weeks

Cost includes online at:
claytodayonline.com

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We Buy Vintage Guitars! Looking for 1920-1980 Gibson, Martin, Fender, Gretsch, Epiphone, Guild, Mosrite, Rickenbacker, Prairie State, D'Angelico, Stromberg. And Gibson Mandolins / Banjos. These brands only! Call for a quote: 1-866-307-5421

Home Improvements

BATH & SHOWER UPDATES in as little as ONE DAY! Affordable prices - No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & Military Discounts available. Call: 1-855-315-1952

AGING ROOF? NEW HOMEOWNER? STORM DAMAGE? You need a local expert provider that proudly stands behind their work. Fast, free estimate. Financing available. Call 1-888-967-1158 Have zip code of property ready when calling!

PROTECT YOUR HOME from pests safely and affordably. Roaches, Bed Bugs, Rodent, Termite, Spiders and other pests. Locally owned and affordable. Call for a quote or inspection today 1-877-644-9799 Have zip code of property ready when calling!

WATER DAMAGE CLEANUP & RESTORATION: A small amount of water can lead to major damage in your home. Our trusted professionals do complete repairs to protect your family and your home's value! Call 24/7: 1-866-782-4060. Have zip code of service location ready when you call!

Don't Pay For Covered Home Repairs Again! Our home warranty covers ALL MAJOR SYSTEMS AND APPLIANCES. We stand by our service and if we can't fix it, we'll replace it! Pick the plan that fits your budget! Call: 1-888-521-2793

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1115

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Call today and receive a

FREE SHOWER PACKAGE

PLUS \$1600 OFF

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1-855-417-1306

With purchase of a new Safe Step Walk-In Tub. Not applicable with any previous walk-in tub purchase. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase. CSLB1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445

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After

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Inflation is at 40 year highs. Interest rates are way up. Credit cards. Medical bills. Car loans. Do you have \$10k or more in debt? Call National Debt Relief and find out how to pay off your debt for significantly less than what you owe! Free quote: Call 1-844-955-4930

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DIRECTV Stream - Carries the most local MLB Games! Choice Package \$89.99/mo for 12 mos Stream on 20 devices at once. HBO Max included for 3 mos (w/Choice Package or higher.) No contract or hidden fees! Some restrictions apply. Call IVS 1-866-859-0405

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Water damage cleanup & restoration: A small amount of water can lead to major damage in your home. Our trusted professionals do complete repairs to protect your family and your home's value! Call 24/7: 1-888-872-2809. Have zip code of service location ready when you call!

Bath & shower updates in as little as 1 day! Affordable prices - No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & military discounts available. 1-877-543-9189

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