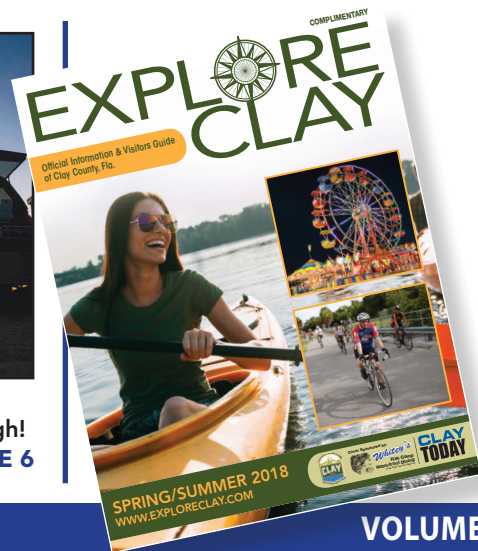


CLAY TODAY



STARLIGHT NIGHT
Stargazers unite at Lake Asbury Junior High!
-PAGE 6



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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2018

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VOLUME 52, NO. 05 75¢

Middleburg man charged in beating

By Eric Cravey
Managing Editor

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Clay County Sheriff's Office arrested a Middleburg man last week who is wanted in Virginia in connection with beating a man after the "Unite the Right" rally that gained national attention.

Authorities arrested Tyler Watkins Davis, 49, of Middleburg on Jan. 24 at his home in the 1100 block of Buggy Whip Trail.

Davis, who is a member of the pro-Southern secession-



Tyler Davis

ist group League of the South, is the fourth person charged with beating DeAndre Harris, 20, after the rally turned violent.

According to the Montgomery, Ala.-based Southern Poverty Law Center, the League of the South was founded in 1994 with the sole mission of finishing what the Civil War could not accomplish – Southern secession.

He joins three other men who are

charged with beating Harris – Jacob Scott Goodwin, Daniel Patrick Borden, 18, and Alex Michael Ramos, 33, who have all pleaded not guilty to one count each of malicious wounding.

According to published reports, police said Harris was attacked by a group of white supremacists in a parking garage and beaten with pipes, wooden slabs and

SEE BEATING, 18



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX WILSON

Erik Williams, 10, a fifth grader at St. Johns Cocuntry Day School, center, won the 2018 Clay County Spelling Bee on Jan. 30. He is joined, from left, by School Superintendent Addison Davis, School Board Vice Chair Betsy Condon, board members Ashley Gilhousen, Mary Bolla, Janice Kerekes and Board Chair Carol Studdard.

Spelling Bee goes 59 rounds

By Alex Wilson
For Clay Today

OAKLEAF – Beneath the glow of fluorescent lights in an elementary school cafeteria, two students battled each other valiantly Tuesday night, not with weapons, but with words.

The 2018 Clay County Spelling Bee began with 36 students, but in one of the longest county spelling bees in recent memory, a total of 59 rounds played out. The night concluded with the final 23 rounds featuring a rapid-fire duel between Erik Williams, 10, of St. Johns Country Day School and Josiah Ilagan of Lakeside Junior High.

The third finalist, Alexis Grimm of Oakleaf Junior High, lasted until round 26, but was eliminated after misspelling "keelhaul." In the final round, Ilagan misspelled

SEE BEE, 13

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Clay County Memories



By Mary Jo McTammany tamctammany@comcast.net

Town celebrates the arrival of electricity

It officially all started back in November of 1922.

Moosehaven presented a proposal to the commissioners of Orange Park to pay one third of the \$150 per month to be guaranteed by the town to the city of Jacksonville's electric company. In exchange, the company would install main lines erected and ready for connection at residences or stores and maintain thereafter. They accepted the proposal.

No mention can be found in official town records although electricity coming to town was probably part of every conversation residents shared. And it's pretty well certain that most everyone wanted



A ladies marching drill troop, in town for a Loyal Order of Moose Annual Convention, joined the parade celebrating the 1924 arrival of electricity in Orange Park. They stole the show.

electricity but not necessarily did they agree on the details.

Wisely, it was decided to call a special meeting at the town hall to discuss "complaints and grievances." Most were concerned about the location and placement of the substation and the poles. By the time everyone was talked out and satisfied it was almost daylight.

The substation would be at the foot of Valesca Street near the Duval County line. (Valesca seems to have been lost in the construction of the Buckman Bridge.) Poles were located on the west side of River Boulevard to avoid losing them into

SEE POWER, 12

BCC single-member districts to stay put

By Debra W. Buehn
Correspondent

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Don't look for changes to the structure or make-up of the Clay County Board of County Commissioners anytime soon.

At its Jan. 30 meeting, the county's Charter Review Commission voted against placing on the November general ballot to allow county voters to decide anything concerning changing how many commissioners there are and whether they should be single-member district representatives or at-large representatives – or a combination of both. Rather, by a vote of 8-3, members of the CRC decided to leave the five commissioners, single-member districts intact.

Eleven members of the CRC were present at the meeting while four of the 15-member group were absent.

Basically, as was said more than once, the old saying "if it ain't broke, don't fix it," came to the front, especially since several CRC members said they hadn't heard any complaints about the current system or desire for change from the voters.

"I haven't talked to anyone that has any interest in either going to at-large or increasing it (the size of the county commis-

sion), said Larry Kirkman.

Ronnie Coleman echoed Kirkman, saying that since the single-member district model was implemented, there have been six elections and he hadn't heard any complaints about them or the several commissioners who have been elected since then.

"I don't think we need it," he said of making a change to at-large commissioners or a different number of commissioners.

The discussion came about because it was on a list of items CRC members submitted at the beginning of their term back in the fall of 2017. The chairwoman the CRC members had chosen to lead them, Amy Pope-Wells, asked each member to submit a few items they would like to see studied by the CRC during its 2017-2018 term. A discussion of single member district representation versus at-large representation was mentioned by a few people.

The Charter Review Commission meets every four years to review the county's charter and determine if there are issues that need to be brought before county voters to be revised or amended. The CRC cannot make any changes on its own.

Fifteen members of the community, nominated by the Board of County Com-

missioners, sit on the committee. Five alternates are also nominated.

Clay County is one of 20 of the 67 counties in the state that are charter counties. Clay County's decision to become a charter county became effective Jan. 1, 1991, and is governed by what it known as "home rule." That's where the county's charter comes into play as well as the need to review it. The other 47 counties are known as "constitutional counties" and are ruled by state statute.

The single-single member versus at-large districts was named by a few CRC members – one who has since resigned and been replaced – as something to be looked at. Single-member districts have representatives who are elected from the district in which a voter lives. That voter can only vote for the BCC candidate within his or her district. While whoever is elected is considered the first "go-to commissioner" if a person has a problem, the voter can still speak with any other commissioner as well.

The commissioner, who must live in the same district as the voter, and while the commissioner has a special relationship with fellow residents, the commissioner is responsible for the well-being of the whole

county and is expected to consider that in each vote taken by the BCC.

CRC members Art Hooker was one member who put the representation item of single district versus at-large on his discussion list. And while he said at Monday's meeting he still thought the idea of at-large representation was a good one, it wasn't getting the response from county residents he thought it might.

In talking with a "good," "diverse cross section of voters," he had to explain what each type was to some and ended up getting about a 50-50 response.

"Most people weren't overly passionate about it either way," he said, adding later, "It's something that I'm not getting the kind of passionate feedback in the community that I thought I would," he said.

He also said he sensed that there wasn't a strong support for the idea or any commission change within the CRC itself. But Hooker, who was one of the three who voted against the motion, was joined by CRC Vice Chairman Charles "Scotty" R. Taylor Jr. in the vote.

Taylor said that while, with the current single-member district, the commissioner can vote to set taxes and create legislation,

SEE REVIEW, 13

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New principals, same principles

Clay Principal of the Year to lead new school

By Alex Wilson
For Clay Today

OAKLEAF – After a two-month search, School Superintendent Addison Davis discovered what he believes is the perfect candidate for Clay County’s newest school.

Tracy McLaughlin, former principal of Ridgeview Elementary and Clay County School District 2017 Principal of the Year, will be the first principal of Discovery Oaks Elementary School. The \$25 million school is currently under construction in the Eagle Landing area of Oakleaf and is on track to open this coming August.

“I’m extremely excited and honored to represent the district and open a new school,” McLaughlin said. “As it’s becoming more and more apparent, it’s a big responsibility. We’re making a lot of decisions, not only what we are going to put in the classroom, but what curriculum are we going to lead with.”

Discovery Oaks is the first new school

SEE SCHOOL, 15

Discovery Oaks by the Numbers:



33.3
acre campus

862
student capacity

114,000+
square feet

46
classrooms

\$25 Million
construction cost

Pre-K - 6th
Serving Pre-K through
6th grade

Source: Clay County School District



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX WILSON

Discovery Oaks Elementary Principal Tracy McLaughlin, right, discusses school construction progress Jan. 30 with Bryce Ellis, left, project manager for the Clay County School District.



CLAY COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SEEKING CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT POSITION

Our Mission... The Clay County Chamber of Commerce, Inc. will lead, advocate and promote opportunity, education, growth, networking and best practices that will serve the membership in the best way possible.

The Clay County Chamber of Commerce serves as the unified voice of business. Through leadership and advocacy on community, regional and national issues of relevance to our members, we contribute to the creation of a favorable business climate, promote opportunity, economic health and vitality long term. Moreover, by developing, executing, and implementing programs to retain, attract, and grow value-added businesses in Clay County, the economic base and future sustainability of our communities are strengthened and diversified. Core Values: Excellence Integrity Innovation Proactive catalyst for change

The Chief Executive and Administrative officer of the Chamber is primarily responsible for the full range of chamber activities, the overall planning, administration, and evaluation of programs, policies, and activities in operation of the Chamber. The President will have a strong external and strategic focus, serving as a primary spokesperson and an advocate for the business community and will lead the future vitality, relevance and impact of the Chamber. Reports directly to the Chair, Board of Directors and serves at the pleasure of the Board of Directors as outlined in the Chamber Bylaws

Primary Areas of Responsibility:

- Strategic Planning
- Board Relations
- Member Relations, Development & Retention
- Budget and Finance
- Spokesperson/Media Voice
- Program & Services Development
- Community and External Relations
- Staff Administration
- Policy Development, Implementation & Interpretation
- Long-range planning

Education and Experience Requirements:

- Bachelor’s degree in business administration, public administration, marketing or related field required. Master’s in business administration preferred. Specialized education in sales, marketing, public relations or advertising is helpful. Professional Chamber or Economic Development certification is welcomed. Directly related equivalent experience may be considered in lieu of degree.
- Previous Chamber of Commerce executive experience or experience in senior management position with a chamber is preferred.
- At least five years as a successful business leader with business acumen and the proven ability to manage complex budgets and staff of 5+.
- Demonstrated successful leadership experience, team management and relationship management in an organization is desirable.
- A stellar communicator, both oral and written.
- A motivator, visionary and advocate with genuine interest and passion for business issues and opportunities within Clay County.
- Successful candidate will be required to reside in Clay County.

Interested applicants should submit Cover Letter, Resume and a minimum of three (3) references to ChamberPresidentSearch@gmail.com

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 “THIS MAGIC MOMENT” * “WALKIN’ IN THE RAIN”
 “LET’S LOCK THE DOOR (AND THROW AWAY THE KEY)”
 “ONLY IN AMERICA” * “SOME ENCHANTED EVENING”

THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE

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 “HEY BABY! THEY’RE PLAYING OUR SONG”
 “SUSAN” * “MERCY, MERCY, MERCY”

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Marsy's Law brings fairness to criminal justice system

By Tim Cerio
FloridaPolitics.com

As a member of Florida's legal community, I take very seriously any proposed changes to our state's constitution.

In my role as a member of the Florida Constitution Revision Commission, I will carefully weigh any proposal before us based on the need to have these proposals embedded in our state's most powerful legal document.

While amending our constitution is not something I take lightly, I do feel strongly about a proposed constitutional amendment I put forward called Marsy's Law for Florida and it's CRC Proposal 96. This measure would ensure that victims and their families are provided with the same level of rights and protections as those given to the accused and convicted.



Tim Cerio

Marsy's Law for Florida is a pro-victims' rights proposal, but to me, it is more about bringing equity to the criminal justice process.

The United States Constitution enumerates 20 distinct rights to those accused or convicted of crimes. The victims or the family members they leave behind when a tragic loss of life has occurred have absolutely no rights. While those who are accused or convicted have 20 different rights, the victims and their families – Floridians who were thrust into the criminal justice system by the acts of others – have none. There is no equity in that.

I want to be very clear that the accused are entitled to their rights, as they should be. They deserve to have every single right currently provided to them under federal and state law. Nothing should change there at all.

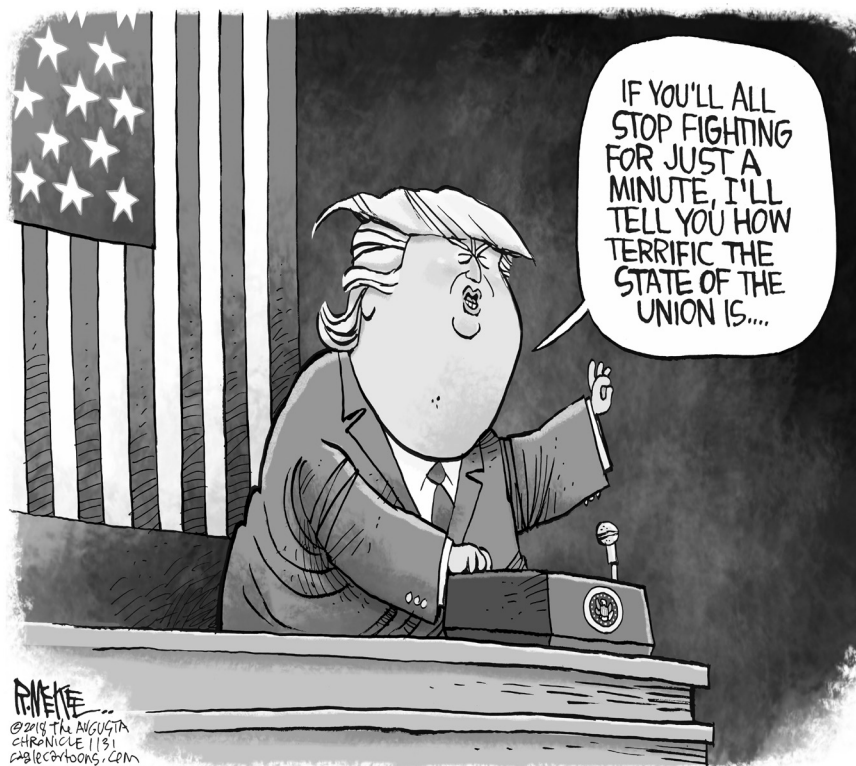
What should change is that victims should have the same level of rights and protections too.

The U.S. Constitution is silent on victims' rights. Our state constitution does not have to be.

Individual states have the power to include victims' rights and protections in their constitutions. Most states have already done so. Florida is one of only 15 states that does not provide constitutional-level protections for victims of crimes. As the third largest state in the nation, we should be leading the way on the issues facing our society, including victims' rights, not lagging behind.

Marsy's Law for Florida is the answer. This measure would provide victims of crime and their families with clear, enforceable constitutional protections – just

SEE LAW, 5



Darwin and dog whistles

By Eric Cravey

The dog whistle has been blown, the genie is out of the bottle, the horse has left the barn – we've heard these clichés before.

However, this particular dog whistle happened to be an item pulled from the Clay County School Board's January meeting agenda concerning science textbook adoptions for the district.

In preparation for this month's Feb. 1 meeting, school board members are being bombarded with thousands of emails from residents crying fowl over the issue of Darwin's Theory of Evolution being taught in the schools. Well, guess what it's been taught for many decades, meaning that it not just all of a sudden pulled out of a dusty filing cabinet.

Look for this week's meeting to look very similar to meetings held in the run-up to the 2012 election. Remember those days?

Those were the days that one school board member turned the entire school board meeting room into kabuki theatre, thoroughly derailling the scope and purpose of what a school board meeting is supposed to be about – the care and education of our students.

The only difference this time is that it's not Charlie Van Zant Jr., but board member Ashley Gilhousen. At the January board meeting, Gilhousen used cloaked language to basically say that Darwin's groundbreaking discoveries about the origin of species were



Eric Cravey

flawed and is 'just a theory.'

Could it be a surprise that this posturing comes up in the year she is running for re-election? She's asking that the Clay County School District add 'other theories' to the science standards to go above and beyond the state standards. Pish posh. The bottom line is that she wants 'creationism' taught as if it were science while it's never been proven to be science. Proponents of creationism began using the term 'intelligent design' in the early part of the 2000s to cloak it even further and present it as if it were some sort of new science. Sarah Palin said you can put lipstick on a pig, but it's still a pig.

At the January meeting, Gilhousen also questioned the manner in which the age of the earth is calculated and then went on to tie in dubious language about climate change. Let's go for a grand slam while we're at it, huh?

In 2016, Clay County voters woke up and decided to re-focus on children by going to the voting booth and electing an educator to lead the school district. In his short tenure, Superintendent Addison Davis has worked to develop more transparency and rapport than ever within the district and among the school board.

However, all it takes is a wedge like Evolution – and one board member to seek attention like this – to come in and begin to cast doubt on all of it. Let's create some division, so I can get some ink and TV airtime so I can get re-elected. The sad part about the Gilhousen publicity stunt is that the voters whose ears have already perked up to the dog whistles don't

SEE WHISTLE, 5

Word of the week

Word of the Week is a feature that aims to help readers boost their vocabulary in a meaningful way that has practical application. Each week, our editorial staff presents a word, its definition and its use in a sentence.

Erudite: An adjective meaning "having or showing great knowledge or learning."

"The room was full of erudite scholars who made the discussion on astronomy fun and interesting."

Letters to the Editor

Reader concerned about Black Creek Water Project

The St. Johns River Water Management District appears to be trying to put lipstick on a hog in its video about the Black Creek Water Resource Development Project posted on the SJRWMD Facebook page on September 24, 2018.

This project will not provide any significant benefits to Keystone Heights lake levels or reduce flooding on Black Creek. The Black Creek Project has the potential to cause significant damage to the South Prong of Black Creek. The Black Creek Project will waste over \$40 million of Amendment One resources which in my view qualifies it as a resource hog.

The SJRWMD claims in the video that excess water will be withdrawn and pumped to Keystone Heights but they fail to indicate when there is excess water in Black Creek at Penney Farms. There is no Minimum Flow or Level set for Black Creek so we have no way of knowing what, if any, excess flow exists. Recreational use of the South Prong of Black Creek and the endangered Black Creek Crayfish may determine what flows are excess flows.

It is reasonable to assume that excess flows might occur when the flow is above the average flow. The SJRWMD video indicated the average flow in Black Creek at Penney Farms was 155 million gallons per day in 2017. What the video did not say was that for over half of 2017 the flows in Black Creek were below 155 mgd.

If you use the 155 mgd to determine excess flow, during 2017 there would have been no excess flow to be pumped for over half of 2017. To spend over \$40 million to build a system that could not be used over half the time is not good planning.

In the long run, the Black Creek Project may prevent Keystone lakes from getting the water they need. Once the \$40

SEE LETTER, 5

Letter

from page 4

million is spent and no significant recovery in lake levels occur, future legislators may be reluctant to fund any more projects to address Keystone lake levels.

The Water Supply Plan referenced in the SJRWMD had several projects that would have added water directly to the Keystone lakes at a much lower cost. The SJRWMD just chose the wrong project. It is not too late to change the approach and get more water into the Keystone lakes. The SJRWMD just has to be willing to admit it may have made a mistake in recommending the Black Creek Project and cancel the current contract for developing the plans for the Black Creek Project.

One clear alternative project would be to take the Chemours discharges that cause flooding in Bradford County and move those discharges into a system that would carry the discharged water to the Keystone lakes.

*Paul Still
Starke*

Sen. Bradley urged to support anti-fracking bill

As residents of an area in the state continually threatened by mining and other industrial polluters, we commend Senator Rob Bradley for leading the fight to protect our springs and natural resources here in Northern Florida. What is concerning, though, is that he hasn't moved forward on supporting one of the biggest threats to Florida's environment and economy: fracking.

The activists who gathered in Orange Park on January 11 calling on Bradley to be a hero on this issue hit the nail on the head. As an environmental champion, it is astonishing that Senator Bradley has not pushed forward this critical piece of legislation to protect his constituents and Floridians statewide. In fact, just last week Senator Bradley was cited by Politico as having chosen not to have a hearing on the bill in his panel because he doesn't think it had a chance to pass in the House. However, the bill is believed to have enough votes to pass in the Senate to which he belongs.

We are hoping Bradley will become the hero the activists in Orange Park summoned. Heroes don't recoil because of roadblocks. Heroes fight because it is the right thing to do. By stalling on the fracking ban bill in his committee, Senator Bradley is bowing to the already too powerful State House. Bradley has shown his strength and resolve in getting legislation passed in his Forever Florida fight and an important Everglades restoration bill. We hope he steps up to the plate and proves to be the powerhouse that we know he is by ensuring the fracking ban bill gets to the Senate floor.

*Indivisible Clay County
Sandy Goldman, Fleming Island
Jeff Allstadt, Fleming Island
David Johnson, Orange Park*

Letter to the Editor

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 Eric Cravey at eric@opefla.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Law

from page 4

the same as those afforded to the accused and convicted. Nothing more and nothing less. By giving victims and their families co-equal rights to the convicted and accused, we will empower them to take an active role in their case and guarantee that they, at least, have the ability to be heard.

Marsy's Law is gaining momentum across the country. It has already been enacted in six other states. Most recently, in November, Marsy's Law passed in Ohio with 83 percent of Ohioans voting in favor of it. We know there is overwhelming support for Marsy's Law here in Florida.

According to a poll conducted in October, 87 percent of likely Florida voters believe victims should have, at the very least, the same level of protections in the state constitution as those given to those accused of committing crimes.

I appreciate the support of Floridians and the support of my fellow CRC members

Patricia Levesque, Darlene Jordan, Fred Karlinsky, Jeanette Nuñez, Brecht Heuchan and Sen. Darryl Rouson who are co-sponsoring my proposal.

Today, Marsy's Law for Florida will be put to a vote by the CRC Declaration of Rights committee. I urge the members of that committee to vote in favor of Marsy's Law for Florida so voters will have a chance to decide for themselves if victims and the accused and convicted should be on equal footing in the criminal justice process.

We have a unique, once-in-20-year opportunity to ensure Floridians who are victimized, and their families, are treated fairly following a crime. Let's bring equity to our criminal justice system. Let's pass Marsy's Law for Florida.

Tim Cerio is a member of the 2017-2018 Florida Constitution Revision Commission and an attorney who practices law in Tallahassee. His column appears courtesy of FloridaPolitics.com.

Whistle

from page 4

even know they're being played. It's easier to get people riled up than it is to bring people together.

Elected officials in Clay County keep saying they want economic development and businesses to locate here and grow.

They also say they want high-wage jobs here to lower the number of people who commute to Jacksonville and elsewhere for work. Well, that is never going to happen without science.

No school board member should be allowed to force their personal religious agenda on to the community, their fellow school board members and, most of all, our students.



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Lake Asbury Junior High School students and other participants wait in line to look through a \$15,000 telescope Thursday evening at the school during their first Starlight Night event.

STAFF PHOTOS BY KILE BREWER

Northeast Florida Astronomical Society President Greg Sauve monitors the waning daylight before attempting to align his telescope during the Lake Asbury Junior High School Starlight Night event last Thursday.

'Starlight Night' excites students about science

By Kile Brewer
Staff Writer

LAKE ASBURY – Through science, Thomas and Desiree Webber hope to lead Clay County students away from the distractions of modern society and into a future of discovery and real-world interaction.

After hosting a school-wide eclipse

viewing event at Lake Asbury Junior High, where Desiree teaches, in 2017, the Webbers formed a plan to host a more inclusive event at the school that could lure stargazers from the entire county and beyond. That event came to be known as Starlight Night, hosted behind the school on Jan. 25

and featured an array of science-themed learning for those of all ages.

"A lot of our kids today don't look up, they're looking down at their cell phones," Desiree said. "We wanted to show them that there's a lot more out there."

Thomas Webber was able to secure a

partnership with the Northeast Florida Astronomical Society who brought a variety of telescopes to offer kids a better view of the cosmos than they had ever experienced.

SEE STAR, 17



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New program IDs kids at risk of dropping out

By Wesley LeBlanc
Staff Writer

ORANGE PARK – Students at risk of dropping out have a new resource for times of need.

Motivational Coaches of America is a nationwide organization based in Tampa that places motivational coaches in schools whose students are at risk of dropping out, or being Baker Acted, as a result of mental, behavioral and emotional health issues. On Wednesday, Clay County Superintendent

Addison Davis announced the launch of a partnership with MCUSA to place motivational coaches in Clay County junior high schools.

The program will begin with coaches being placed at Wilkinson Junior High, Orange Park Junior High and Green Cove Springs Junior High.

MCUSA's goal, according to its president, Julio Avel, is to assess the needs of an individual seeking help, set them

SEE STUDENT, 11



Orange Park Jr. High Principal Al DeJesus, left, Julio Avel of MCUSA, Clay School Superintendent Addison Davis and Terry Connor, chief of secondary schools, at Tuesday's announcement of the new program to help at-risk students stay in school and succeed.

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Community Briefs

Foundation to host "A Drug Free Day in Clay"

ORANGE PARK – A nonprofit foundation that educates the public about drug addiction has teamed up with the organization City Streets to Student Athletes to present a symposium about the opioid crisis.

The Derek Hatcher Foundation will host the free event on Feb. 3 from 3:30-5 p.m. at the Thrasher-Horne Center. The event will feature real life stories, door prizes and interactive discussions about working together to keep the community safe. The foundation will also give a presentation about college scholarship opportunities for Clay County students at the event.

"As you may have heard, we are in the middle of an opiate epidemic and Clay County is not an exception. Deaths from opioids have been rising sharply for years, and drug overdoses already kill more Americans under age 50 than anything else, and it is predicted to get worse before it gets better," states Debbie Rizer, president of the Derek Hatcher Foundation, in a press release. Rizer is also Hatcher's mother.

During his senior year at Ridgeview High, Derek Hatcher threw more than 2,300 yards and 18 touchdowns and, as a freshman, walked on as a punter at the University of Arkansas. He died at the age of 24 in February 2016 from a drug over-

dose. A video about Hatcher's story will be shown at this event.

Farmer's market to accept SNAP

ORANGE PARK – Clay County residents who receive aid from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program will now be able to use that benefit at the Orange Park Farmer's & Arts Market.

Beginning Feb. 4, the Town of Orange Park will start participating in the SNAP, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. SNAP offers nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income individuals and families, allowing them to stretch their food dollars and eat healthy. The Orange Park Farmer's & Arts Market is the first market in Clay County to accept SNAP benefits.

SNAP participants will use their Electronic Benefit Transfer cards to purchase tokens, worth \$1 each, from the Market information booth. These tokens can be used to purchase fresh produce, local honey, fresh meats and eggs, homemade breads and pasta, and many other eligible food items.

"We know we have veterans, elderly and young families struggling to get access to fresh, healthy, local food and are excited to be able to offer this at our market," said Council member Connie Thomas.

The Orange Park Farmer's & Arts Mar-

ket is open at Town Hall Park on the first and third Sunday of each month from September through June with exceptions in October and March when the Town of Orange Park hosts other major events. Market hours are 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the corner of Kingsley and Park avenues.

Jacksonville Symphony musicians to celebrate diversity here

JACKSONVILLE – Two ensembles comprised of Jacksonville Symphony musicians will perform at Island View Baptist Church on Park Avenue in Orange Park on Feb. 4 as part of a concert celebrating the theme of diversity and inclusion.

The concert is in recognition of Black History Month and the unique diversity of the greater Jacksonville community. This event is free and open to the public with limited seating available in Island View Baptist Church.

The concert will feature a brass quintet and a string quartet and will also feature choral music performed by a community choir composed of singers from across the Jacksonville area.

If you are interested in being a part of the Island View Baptist Church community choir, call (904)562-8409 or (904)264-6411 or email gentlemenatheart3@gmail.com. Choir rehearsals will be conducted at Island View Baptist Church.

Scholarship from the Clay County Cruzers.

Applicants must be graduating from the Clay County School System. Students are eligible if they are going to attend any post-secondary program of study including colleges, universities or vocational or technical schools.

Applicants are requested to write an essay of approximately 150 words and complete a short application form. Scholarship applications must be received by Clay County Cruzers on or before the application deadline of March 31.

The scholarship documents will be provided to each high school guidance office. The instructions and application form provide all relevant information a student needs to apply. These forms are also available on the Clay County Cruzers website at www.claycountycruzers.com.

Selected candidates will be asked to attend a Clay County Cruiser meeting to introduce themselves and describe their plans.

Applications and essays should be mailed to Clay County Cruzers, P.O. Box 65010-9998, Orange Park, FL 32065-9998. Each applicant will be notified once their application is received and winners will be announced in April.

Calling all artists for a T-shirt design contest

MIDDLEBURG – Would-be artists have a chance to get some notoriety and help out a growing Clay County nonprofit at the same time.

The Black Creek Bowl Association of Middleburg is holding its annual T-shirt cover design contest. Art can be hand-drawn or computer generated. Designs will not be returned and they become the sole property of Association.

The design will be used in advertising sales and promotions for the 2018 Black Creek 5K, which raises scholarship funds for students who attend Middleburg High School.


This year's theme is "Running Through Historic Middleburg." The winner will receive

SEE BRIEFS, 9

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2018 Clay County Cruzers Scholarships Available

ORANGE PARK – Clay County students who are graduating this year are eligible and encouraged to apply for a \$1,500

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Obituaries

George Howard Jones

George Howard Jones, 71, of Middleburg, Fla., passed away Jan. 28, 2018
Broadus Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL (904) 284-4000



John Paul McAleer

John Paul McAleer, Jr., 88, of Jacksonville, Fla., passed away Jan. 28, 2018.
Broadus Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL (904) 284-4000.



Beverly J. Mears

Beverly J. Mears, 75, of Orange Park, Fla., passed away Jan. 23, 2018.
Broadus Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL (904) 284-4000.



Charles "Kenneth" Hildebrandt

Charles "Kenneth" Hildebrandt, 81, of Jacksonville, Fla., passed way Jan. 24, 2018.
Broadus Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL (904) 284-4000.



Lila L. Williams

Lila L. Williams, 88, of Orange Park, Fla., passed away Jan. 27, 2018
Broadus Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL (904) 284-4000



Roger Dale Hall

Roger Dale Hall, 63 of Green Cove Springs, Fla. passed away Jan. 25, 2018
Russell Haven of Rest. Cemetery, Funeral Home and Cremation Center 2335 Sandridge Road Green Cove Springs, FL 32043 904-284-7720 www.RHRFH.com.



Richard John Brown

Richard John Brown, 62 of Middleburg, Fla. passed away Jan. 23, 2018.
Russell Haven of Rest Cemetery, Funeral Home and Cremation Center 2335 Sandridge Road.
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043 904-284-7720 www.RHRFH.com.



Briefs

from page 8

four run entries of the race of their choice and an article in the local newspaper featuring the artist & design. Hand-drawn designs should measure 11-inches by 8.5-inches and be submitted on unlined white paper. Artwork must be produced with black ink using markers, paint, pencils or ink. Computer designs can be submitted in full color vector format on CD, flash drive or email. All designs must include the phrases "7th Annual," "Black Creek 5K/10K," and "October 20, 2018." No other company logos or names may appear in the design. Designs can be mailed to BCBA, P.O. Box 2096, Middleburg, FL 32050. Designs can be emailed to info@blackcreekbowl.com or hand-delivered to April Martin at Middleburg High School no later than Feb. 28. An entry form must be provided with each submission. Do not sign the artwork.

Orange Park entrepreneur appointed to state board

TALLAHASSEE – Gov. Rick Scott appointed an Orange Park business owner to serve on the state Rehabilitation Council for the Blind.

Rose Conry, 58, of Orange Park, joins two other Scott appointees to the board, which reviews, analyzes and advises on the policy decisions and evaluates the effectiveness of the Florida Division of Blind Services. Scott appointed Paul Kurtz, 65, of Jacksonville, is a retired computer specialist with Fleet Readiness Center, to serve from Jan. 26 to August 31, 2019. He also appointed Denise Valkema, 56, of Miami, is the current president of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida, to serve from Jan. 26 to August 31, 2020.

Conry is the chief executive officer of StaffTime Jacksonville and also serves as a board member on Career-Source Florida.

Law enforcement officers graduate from Leadership Academy

TALLAHASSEE – Two law enforcement officers from Clay County recently graduated from the Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute's Florida Leadership Academy.

John Guzman of the Green Cove Springs Police Department and Chad Ricks of the Clay County Sheriff's Office were among 36 first-line supervisors representing 22 criminal justice

agencies throughout the state.

The graduates met for four week-long sessions at the Walton County Sheriff's Office in Miramar Beach where they learned skills necessary to support the needs of their agencies and their communities as they prepare for future challenges. The goal of the Florida Leadership Academy is to prepare first-line supervisors in criminal justice organizations to exemplify the character and integrity expected of criminal justice professionals and to examine the various components necessary to being an efficient leader.

New hours for garbage drop-off sites

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Clay County Department of Environmental Services announces new hours for the Clay Hill, Doctors Inlet, Keystone Heights and Long Bay Environmental Convenience Centers.

Effective Feb. 8, the new hours for all Clay County ECCs will be 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Thursday through Saturday. This is a slight change to the centers' current hours. They will open and close 30 minutes earlier than the current schedule. Please call (904) 284-6374 for more information.

Robotics teams need community help

ORANGE PARK – Help a student learn science and team-building by sponsoring your very own robotics team.

The robotics team OneClay A.R.M.O.R.Y., which stands for Advancing Robotics Making Our Reality Yours from the Clay County School District will be competing in an International FRC Competition March 7-10 in Orlando. The team is seeking funds and non-monetary support. All contributions go directly to the team to fund robotic building materials, team shirts and travel expenses, such as lodging, food and transportation.

This worldwide competition combines the excitement of sport with the rigors of science and technology. Under strict rules, limited resources, and an intense six-week time limit, teams of students are challenged to raise funds, design a team "brand," hone teamwork skills and build and program industrial-size robots to play a difficult field game against like-minded global competitors.

Donors can make checks payable to CCSD: ONECLAY ARMORY Robotics. Checks can be mailed to OneClay A.R.M.O.R.Y., Leslee Bryan, STEM Curriculum Specialist, Clay County School District, 2306 Kingsley Ave., Building 16, Orange Park, FL 32073 or call (904) 336-6594 for more information.

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Coalition puts finishing touches on Annual Drug-Free Calendar

By **Kile Brewer**
Staff Writer

ORANGE PARK – Every fall elementary-age students across Clay County grab paper and crayons in the fight against drugs in schools, doing what they can to help convince middle school and high school kids to stay drug free.

This year, the Clay Action Coalition received about 300 entries from students in first through sixth grade, representing almost every elementary school in the county for its annual drug-free calendar contest. Of those 300, 42 were chosen as finalists and brought to the January Coalition board meeting, where members voted to choose the 14 illustrations that will go into this year's 17th annual Calendar for Drug Free Schools.

"Each year during Red Ribbon Week, we go to the schools and ask art classes to participate," said Stephanie Geoghagan, CAC program coordinator. "The winners get a certificate of recognition and a monetary award."

The awards are handed out at the May meeting of the Clay County School Board, with 14 students' art being chosen to fill each month on the calendar, in addition to illustrations chosen for the front and inside covers. Since Drug Abuse Resistance Education was phased out of schools about three years ago, elementary schools aren't receiving any drug resistance education.

Some education programs continue in middle and high schools on a limited basis by Clay Behavioral Health, but there is not enough funding to provide the level of programming that D.A.R.E. had provided through designated school resource officers.

"The elementary schools aren't getting it at all anymore," said Donna Wethington, Coalition executive director "What we need is not all just drug education, but also teaching what happens when you put drugs in your body. Kids need to learn the health risks as well as just learning to respect the laws [that make drugs illegal.]"

Wethington said that since the cessation of state funded drug education programming, there has been a noticeable increase in drug use in middle schools and even elementary schools, with cases of sixth grade students in Clay County being caught smuggling marijuana in emptied-out highlighters.

With the CAC waiting on updated results from a student survey, they are expecting the numbers to have increased since the last survey was given in 2016. That survey showed Clay County students ages 10-17 were using prescription painkillers and stimulants at a higher percentage than the state average, averaging between 2 percent and 7 percent in that category. A category highlighted the stats deals with the 15-to-17-year-old age bracket where



STAFF PHOTO BY KILE BREWER

Entries from almost all schools, grades Kindergarten through sixth, were narrowed down to 42 finalists who were voted on at the Clay Action Coalition's January meeting for use in this year's Drug Free Schools Calendar that will come out at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year.

7.2 percent of Clay students reported using prescription painkillers during their lifetime, which was well above the state average that hovers between 5-6 percent.

"We've seen a definite increase [in prescription drug abuse] because of ease of access," Wethington said. "We have to get

to the adults and teach them not to leave their meds sitting around the house."

The Coalition is currently writing grants and appealing to the school district and sheriff's office for advice on how to proceed and get more support for drug education and prevention lectures in elementary schools.

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Student

from page 7

up with a coach who will work to address those needs and in turn, prepare that student for a path to success in academics and behavior, that otherwise, might have never happened.

At a media event held in Orange Park Junior High on Jan. 31, Alvael and Davis spoke about the challenges Florida faces, and more specifically Clay County, and how MCUSA is here to help.

According to a report released by Mental Health America, a nonprofit dedicated to addressing and promoting the overall health of all Americans, Florida currently ranks 41st in the nation for youth mental, behavioral and emotional health and 38th in access to appropriate care.

Clay County has one of the highest increases in rates – 38 percent – in the region for children who were Baker Acted within a five-year span, according to a report released last year from the Florida Department of Children and Families. Furthermore, 1 in 4 of those Baker Acted in Clay County was a child, which is one of the highest ratios nationwide.

“As superintendent, I can no longer continue to sit on the sidelines,” Davis said. “As we continue to focus on academics, instruction and performance outcomes, we now have to go deeper and focus on the behavior and mental health of our youth.

“We continue to focus on academics but we have to focus on developing the whole child, and eventually developing the whole family and as we do that, we will continue to make sure that every learner has every opportunity to be successful,” Davis said.

Alvael said MCUSA is looking forward to the results he and Davis believe the new program will produce in Clay County.

“We think this is a trailblazing opportunity for this school district and we are honored just to be a part of it,” Alvael said.

The program comes at no cost to the school district because of MCUSA’s private sponsors and donations, which provide funding for the program, according to Alvael.

Alvael said that in the last five years, not a single child in their care has been Baker Acted, which has led to a savings of \$15 million as a result of the Baker Act reductions alone. The success of MCUSA comes from collaboration, according to Alvael.

“It’s a collaborative process that exists between the superintendent’s office, the cabinet, the district personnel, the principal and of course, faculty on staff,” Alvael said. “If the child is demonstrating specific

criteria associated with admission into the program, we will sit with the child, identify to the child advantages of the program and speak with the family members about admission into the program.”

“From there, if the family and the child would like to receive these services, a form of consent is provided and from there, an assessment and diagnostic occurs,” Alvael continued. “We identify behavior we can improve and set up a goal plan.

Orange Park Junior High School Principal Al DeJesus, whose school has already had a motivational coach on campus full-time for a few months, can already see the effects of MCUSA on the students of the school.

“We’ve had this program for maybe a few months now and from our standpoint, and my principal standpoint, the attitude has changed and the behavior has changed,” DeJesus said. “I think that once kids know that there is an adult who is not

going to throw any bias on them – they’re here to listen and give help on how to deal with certain situations. It opens up the doors so much more for these kids to feel more comfortable, especially at this age in their life.”

DeJesus said his goal as principal is to make junior high a positive experience for students.

“MCUSA is another layer, another tier of support for our kids, to help make that happen,” DeJesus said.

David said the launch of MCUSA in Clay County schools is another step in his initiative to continue the growth of a more positive and safe learning environment for students, their parents and the staff of each school. He expects to have MCUSA coaches in every junior high by the 2018-19 school year, and is looking into ways MCUSA can help students in the educational years before and after junior high as well.

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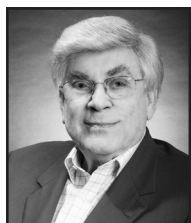
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Loving Jesus

One morning, Simon Peter and six of the other Apostles, decided to go fishing. Jesus had risen from the dead and He had appeared to them twice. He had appeared to Peter in a one-on-one encounter. Now, He appeared to these men for the third time.

In the very early morning, they saw Jesus standing on the beach. When they recognized Him, Peter jumped in the water and swam to Him. The others brought the boat to shore and they all gathered around the fire Jesus had started. Then they saw that Jesus, always a servant, had cooked breakfast for them.

When they had eaten, Jesus spoke to Peter. "Do you love me, Simon?" He asked. Simon Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, I love you." Again Jesus asked Peter, "Simon, do you love me?" Once more He answered, "Yes, Lord, I love you." Jesus asked him a third time, "Do you love me, Simon?" Peter answered a third time and said, "Lord, you know that I love you."

Each time Peter answered "Yes," and each time Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." Jesus was directing Peter to demonstrate his love by serving His people.

Jesus taught a very clear way of demonstrating our love for Him. He said, "Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me." (John 14:21)

Regardless of how many times we say we love Him, the only way we can truly declare it is by keeping His Word. If we love Him, we are serving Him. It is not enough to simply say we love the Lord. The real evidence of our love is our keeping His word.

John wrote, "And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands." (2 John 1:6 NIV)

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Power

from page 2

the river from the bank washing out as it frequently did.

When it was announced in October 1924, that the Kingsley Avenue, giant oaks in the center were to be removed and replaced with light poles a second airing of complaints and grievances was required. It was decided to place the poles six feet north of the center of the middle row of trees. But the commissioners caved when Jacksonville Electric Company agreed to pay for tree removal.

On January 7, 1924, it was time for another special meeting, this time to plan the celebration. Enthusiasm was high. Seems like, everyone in town volunteered themselves and someone else for a job. The whole town was proud and deter-

mined to be sure everyone south of Waycross, Georgia knew it. As it turned out, guests arrived from Illinois and almost every state in the Union because that weekend coincided with a Loyal Order of Moose Regents gathering at Moosehaven. Come the big day, on February 28, 1924, Orange Park's population swelled from almost 700 to a little over 2,000.

The speakers were impressive and included the father of state representative Arthur M. Milam of Jacksonville, who was represented by Frank Owen commissioner of public utilities and the chairman of Duval County board of commissioners, R.H. Carswell. The Green Cove board of trade was represented by Rev. G.R. Wilson. Rounding out the movers and shakers were U.S. Secretary of Labor E.J. Hennings and Rodney H. Brandon supreme secretary of the Loyal Order of Moose.

The parade included bands, Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls and a special marching routine by a Loyal Order of Moose women's drill team.

An impressive oyster roast was served at 5 p.m. Then, as the light was leaving the western sky, Anna Marson, 85-years-old and the longest resident of Orange Park, threw the switch in the community hall and officially lit the town's street lights down Plainfield Avenue.

Dancing ensued into the wee hours provided with music by a popular Jacksonville orchestra, The Aggravators. At 1 a.m., they began playing Home Sweet Home to exhausted dancers and children sleeping on quilts and coats in the corners.

All in all, a good time was had by all. But, evidently another airing of grievances was required because the center row of oaks remained intact.

This Week in History

5 years ago, 2013

A Clay County jury convicted a Jacksonville man for a 2011 shooting at Club Christopher's nightclub on Wells Road. Antonio Morales, 24, was found guilty of one count of attempted murder in the first degree for the shooting of Kevelin Holmes, which occurred in the parking lot.

Green Cove Springs Police in have identified the body of John Butler, 69, who was last seen Jan. 28 by patrons of a nearby restaurant located at a golf course on State Road 16 by employees of the Green Cove Marina at Reynolds Park.



Navy wives Allison Lyon, Tracy Vitali, Denise Steffensen, Amy Cook and Sarah Kribs, all Fleming Island residents, whose husbands served at Naval Air Station Jacksonville were invited to appear on the daytime TV talk show "Live with Kelly and Michael."

10 years ago, 2008

Kim Miskowski, media specialist at Coppergate Elementary School, was named 2009 Teacher of the Year for Clay County, while Christy Fields, a nurse at Orange Park Elementary, was named School-Related Employee of the Year.

Nicholas DeLeon of Green Cove Springs Junior High won the Clay County Spelling Bee and would go on to the regional spelling bee in Jacksonville.

The community mourned the passing of Lillian "Tigger" Megonegal, 78, of Green Cove Springs, who had served as the secretary of the Clay County Republican Executive Committee for 14 years, as well as volunteered in multiple community organizations, including the Village Improvement Association in Green Cove Springs.

20 years ago, 1998

Durwood Smith, president of the newly-formed Moody Avenue Residents Association, told a standing room-only crowd of county officials and residents that he would volunteer to stop speeding on Moody. He and others opposed a county proposal to boost the speed limit to 40 miles per hour.

Master Masons of Cabul Lodge No. 116, F&AM in Green Cove Springs removed the cornerstone from its building at Walnut Street and Palmetto Avenue and found a time capsule placed there in 1909. The only recognizable item was a copy of the Bible.

Officials from the St. Johns River Water Management District and members of the J.P. Hall Sr. family joined in to celebrate the renaming of the Bayard Conservation Area as the J.P. Hall, Sr. Tract Bayard Conservation Area keeping his promise that this pristine riverfront property would remain forever open and protected.

30 years ago, 1988

After spending \$27,000 on new furni-

ture for the sheriff's office without following competitive bidding procedures, the Board of County Commissioners, on a 2-3 vote, rejected a recommendation to force county agencies use competitive bidding on purchases of \$5,000 or more.

Carol Studdard, owner of Florida Greeting Service, Ken O'Leary, a real estate developer and builder and Nancy Ulrich, president and owner of Ulrich Research Services, were named finalists for Clay County Business Person of the Year by the Clay Chamber of Commerce.

Orange Park High Raiderette Dance Team members Stephanie Ross and Lara Willis were selected to perform in "A Salute to America's Super Star, Bob Hope" as part of the Super Bowl XXII pregame show.

40 years ago, 1978

Citing growth and need, the Salvation Army's Jacksonville office announced it would expand to Clay County and establish offices in Orange Park. Plans called for a Corps Community Center that would offer youth and family activities, a senior citizens' drop-in program and Family Welfare Department.

A group of Maxville residents known as the Committee of 12 called for a grand jury investigation and the abolishment of the Clay County Development Authority after the economic development agency announced plans to bring an animal rendering plant to their community.

Hundreds of Clay residents turned out to oppose a coal-fired power generating plant that the Jacksonville Electric Authority proposed building in Clay County. The agency had identified three Clay County sites to build the plant.

Bee

from page 1

“kuruma” and Williams went on to secure the championship by correctly spelling “oleo.”

While this was Williams’ first county spelling bee, Ilagan is a repeat competitor who won the County Spelling Bee in 2016 by correctly spelling “powwow.”

“I definitely feel great about winning, but all the contestants did great,” Williams said. “There were some really hard words tonight.”

Throughout the night, students correctly spelled words such as “cupolas,” “cice-



Josiah Ilagan of Lakeside Junior High, left, Erik Williams of St. Johns Country Day and Alexis Grimm of Oakleaf Junior High join Clay County School Superintendent Addison Davis after the Clay County Spelling Bee on Jan. 30. Williams won by spelling “oleo” to topple Ilagan.

rone,” and “oologist,” sometimes eliciting audible reactions from impressed onlookers. Other words such as “copis,” “verdigre,” and “cabochon” stumped students and knocked them out of the competition.

The spelling bee, held at Plantation Oaks Elementary, was scheduled to go until 9 p.m., but it ultimately ran about

30 minutes longer than intended. School Board Chairman Carol Studdard, who’s served on the Clay County School Board for 25 years, said this was one of the longest spelling bees she can remember.

“It was exciting,” Studdard said. “There were many words I’ve never heard before. I was very, very impressed with all of our

spellers.”

Students used a variety of techniques to improve their chances of spelling each word. Several students, including Williams and Ilagan, visualized their words by using imaginary pens to write on their hands. Other students had different techniques. Grimm, for example, used a number system to help her spell.

“Every letter has a number, so every word has this kind of combination,” Grimm said. “So, as I was spelling, if I could remember the combination to a word, then I could be sure I was spelling it right.”

All three finalists emphasized how hard they prepared for the spelling bee, with some studying up to three hours a day.

“You have to really want something to get this far,” Ilagan said.

To determine who competes in the Clay County Spelling Bee, students must first compete in their school spelling bee.

Both Grimm and Ilagan are in eighth grade, so this was their last year they are eligible to compete. Williams, who is in fifth grade, will go on to the Regional Spelling Bee on March 9 at the Florida Theatre in Jacksonville.

Review

from page 2

Taylor can only vote for one of the five.

“I have no say, or vote, with who the representatives are in four of the other commission districts,” he said.

Glo Smith, another CRC member, also voted “no” on the motion, saying she was worried about the growth coming to Clay County and the potential need for more commissioners to help handle the load.

“If we’re going to think about the growth of Clay County, we’ve got to be proactive and prepared,” she said.

While discussion was originally supposed to focus on single-member and at-large districts, it eventually added the number of commissioners and even districts to the mix, due to concerns over growth predicted, especially when the First Coast Expressway opens.

But figures presented by both the CRC’s attorney Wade Vose and Clay County Supervisor of Elections Chris Chambless showed that even though growth is predicted, Clay would still be on the low end of population among similar and nearby counties.

Right now, Clay is at about 203,000 with another 100,000 predicted to come in the next 10 or so years, leaving it on the “low end of the high numbers within the charter counties,” Chambless said.

Citing those types of numbers, CRC member Kim Knapp, who made the motion, said, “Yes, growth is coming. I’m watching it just like everybody else.” But she added, “I’m not sure if we’re in a strategic position to project what might be needed.”

Kirkman took issue with growing government to solve the problem.

“I just don’t equate better government with higher numbers of commissioners. I think that should be based on work load,” he said.

Some were worried about having at-large commissioners because of the higher cost of running an election and the possibility of “special interests” getting involved.

“Not only does it take a lot of money but you’ve got all these big organizations coming to you wanting you to support this and support this and they’ll give you X amount of money,” Coleman said.

The Charter Review Commission will meet next at 7 p.m. Feb. 22.



Roger A. Suggs, CFA, AAS, CCF Clay County Property Appraiser

Announces to Clay County Citizens:
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• General List of Ad Valorem Property Tax Exemptions and Reductions •

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Additional Homestead Exemption for Persons 65 and Older With at Least 25 Years of Residency – Available Only to Residents of the Town of Orange Park and the City of Green Cove Springs (annual application and income verification)

Totally and Permanently Disabled Persons Exemption (annual income verification required)

\$500 Exemption for Widows, Widowers, Blind Persons, and Totally and Permanently Disabled Persons

Conservation Exemption

Reduction in Assessment for Living Quarters of Parents or Grandparents

First Responder or Veteran Service-Connected Total and Permanent Disability Exemption or Surviving Spouse

\$5,000 Exemption for Disabled Ex-Servicemember or Surviving Spouse

Exemption for Surviving Spouse of Military Veteran who Died from Service-Connected Causes While on Active Duty or First Responder who Died in the Line of Duty and who was a Permanent Resident of Florida as of January 1 of the Year the Veteran or First Responder Died

Ad Valorem Tax Credit for Deployed Military Personnel (with Homestead Exemption)

Homestead Property Tax Discount for Veterans Age 65 and Older With a Combat-Related Disability

Exemption for Disabled Veterans Confined to Wheelchairs

Agricultural Classification

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School

from page 3

to be built in Clay County since Oakleaf High opened on August 26, 2010 for the 2010-11 school year. The school will help ease crowding at other Oakleaf area elementary schools, including Plantation Oaks and Oakleaf Village.

McLaughlin, who has spent the last four years as Ridgeview Elementary's principal, is a seasoned educator with 25 years in education, with 12 of those years being in Clay County. She started her career in Clay as the assistant principal of Montclair Elementary and was then promoted to serve as principal of Swimming Pen Creek Elementary School where she was for four years. She started her career teaching high school English and ESE in Maine. When she started looking for a job in Florida, McLaughlin felt she could make a bigger difference as an administrator.



Heather Roche

cant impact on a group of about 25 to 30 kiddos a year," McLaughlin said. "I knew for myself that I always liked the bigger picture and the bigger vision. I felt that I had the skill set and the knowledge and experience to offer more."

McLaughlin's performance after settling in Clay proved that this was more than just a feeling. For example, during her time at Ridgeview, she led the way for the school to improve from a C to an A in one year.

Superintendent Addison Davis said McLaughlin's ability to impact school culture, as well as create and envision goals, separated her from the other candidates.

"We're fortunate to have a veteran principal," Davis said. "She'll use those tools to create one of the best elementary schools in the state."

The current vision calls for developing Discovery Oaks as a STEAM school where Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Math are the driving force behind curriculum. McLaughlin believes she has a strong vision for Discovery Oaks, but her main concern is creating an environment conducive to learning.

"Building a positive culture is really important," McLaughlin said. "Leadership is about inspiring others to follow. You can't lead people if they don't believe in your



McLaughlin and Ellis survey a hall under construction at Discovery Oaks Elementary.

message. I think that building a positive culture has always been really important to me."

As McLaughlin gears up to make the transition to Discovery Oaks, she leaves Ridgeview Elementary in equally capable hands. Heather Roche, a Florida native with 12 years of experience in Clay County Schools, is already on the job as Ridgeview's principal.

"I'm fortunate to be taking over [as

principal] mid-year when the wheels are already in motion," Roche said. "Things are running smoothly here, so right now my focus is to build relationships with the community."

Roche previously served as Coppergate Elementary School's assistant principal, but she started her career in at Tynes Elementary, where she served as a reading coach before moving into administration.

Like McLaughlin, Roche strives to create a positive learning environment and is grateful for McLaughlin's work.

"What Ridgeview is doing and has been doing is working well," Roche said. "One [goal] is to maintain a positive morale and culture here for the staff and the students. I want it to be a positive place to learn and where student achievement is a high priority."

Davis said the district used the same process to find candidates for McLaughlin's replacement as they did for finding the new principal for Discovery Oaks.

"[Roche's] knowledge of how to work as an instructional coach allowed her to build the capacity of her staff members while also building a culture of care," said Davis, adding that Roche will continue McLaughlin's work.

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Wednesday OP	6:00 pm Holiday Inn
Wednesday Flem Island	7:15 a.m. Talons
Wednesday Keystone	8 a.m. Park of Palms
Friday OP Sunrise	7:15 am Club Continental

ROTARY:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE

Weekly Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12	
13								14					
15							16	17	18			19	
20						21					22		
23						24				25			
26			27	28	29				30				
			31						32				
			33						34				
35	36	37					38						
39						40					41	42	43
44					45						46		
47				48							49		
50			51						52	53	54		
55		56							57				
58									59				

CLUES ACROSS

1. Warm-blooded vertebrates
8. Semitic peoples
13. Supervise
14. Historical German territory
15. Sweat
19. The Wolverine State
20. China
21. Violent disturbances
22. A way to commemorate the dead
23. Midway between east and southeast
24. Bird genus
25. Trim
26. Disparaged
30. More coherent
31. Abnormal rattling sounds
32. Healthy appetizers
33. Partner to OshockedO
34. French pianist Pascal
35. Jokes
38. Marks to omit print
39. Tall
40. Coverage
44. OA Death in the FamilyO author
45. Role of highlights
46. Fixed-radio access

CLUES DOWN

1. Wiped up
2. Opposed to
3. Macon, GA, university
4. Wife
5. Small viper
6. Polynesia garland of flowers
7. Saw-like
8. Maltese-Italian composer Girolamo
9. Moved faster than walking
10. Commercial
11. Covered with mud
12. Marksmen
16. Buenos __
17. Tailless amphibian
18. Belonging to a thing

22. Mars crater
25. Most fair
27. Citrus fruit
28. Awkward
29. Brews
30. Beloved late broadcaster Craig
32. All alone
34. Copies
35. Poster
36. Symmetrical
37. Grew older
38. Makes tractors
40. Not the front
41. State as fact
42. Long, narrow cut
43. Worked hard for
45. Indicates position in a box score
48. Tax
51. OLookout WeekendO singer Debbie
52. Unhealthy
53. Imam name __ Khan
54. A woolen cap of Scottish origin (abbr.)
56. The Golden State

Big box retailer offers Clay shoppers new choice

By Wesley LeBlanc
Staff Writer

JACKSONVILLE – Oakleaf and Argyle residents will have another warehouse retailer to choose from beginning next week.

On Feb. 8, a brand-new 154,568 square foot Costco Wholesale will open in West Jacksonville on Parramore Road near Collins Road at Interstate 295.

Described as a membership warehouse, this Costco is the second in Jacksonville with the original store being more than 20 miles away near the St. Johns Town Center. The westside store is the retailers' 26th in Florida, its 519th in the U.S. and its 747th worldwide.

This new location is not only bringing name-brand groceries, electronics and its many different private label items, it's also creating 135 jobs.

"We hired 135 off the street and we will open with a staff of about 225 to 235," said Jason Zook, general manager.

Costco began planning for the store last May and broke ground last August. The company bought the 16-acre site for \$3.44 million and total construction costs were

\$12.6 million.

Along with shopping for groceries, Clay County commuters have access to a new tire center, an optometrist, a hearing aid facility, a pharmacy, a deli, a bakery and a food court. One difference between this Costco and the one near the St. Johns Town Center is that this one has a gas station to accommodate 16 vehicles at one time.

Zook said, while every household is different, Costco works hard to make it a family's one-stop shop. Costco now gets to compete with Sam's Wholesale Club on Youngerman Circle and BJ's Wholesale Club about six miles south on Blanding Boulevard.

Because it's a warehouse concept, Costco is different from such retailers as Walmart, Winn Dixie, Publix or Aldi. Regional Marketing Manager Kelly Frasure said the company's difference is quality.

"We are known for quality," Frasure said. "We really work hard with our vendors, and we are pretty demanding, but we are always looking at how can we make something better and drive down the price.

"We work to achieve the highest quality



Chas Riggleman, marketing manager for the new Costco store, and Kelly Frasure, right, Costco retail marketing manager, are all smiles Jan. 25 at a media tour of the new store off Collins Road.



STAFF PHOTOS BY WESLEY LEBLANC

Costco Wholesale offers Clay County shoppers a third alternative warehouse-style shopping experience with BJ's Wholesale Club and Sam's Club within two-to-six miles from the store.

at the lowest price," Frasure said.

According to Zook, Costco, at any time, carries around 4,000 products – which is considerably less Walmart – but because of that lower number, each product is the best in its category.

"Everything that we sell, or most of what we sell, is in pallet quantity and they have to be the top item in that category for it to justify taking a space," Zook said.

Costco has its own brand of products, Kirkland Signature, a brand created in an effort to maximize quality in Costco products.

"We are very finicky about [Kirkland Signature]," Frasure said. "It has to be equal with or better than the competition. We are trying to maintain the highest quality while keeping it at the cheapest price possible."

Zook calls Kirkland Signature the highest quality product in the wholesale store. He also says that Costco employees are also of the highest quality and he attributes that to the company's ability to keep turnover rates low.

"After the first year, there's not a lot of turnover," Zook said, who has been with Costco for 33 years. "We have the best em-

ployees on the market."

Frasure said employees start at \$13 an hour, and regardless of employment status, be it part-time or full-time, every employee has access to benefits.

Last year, Forbes magazine named Costco "America's Best Employer," a title previously held by Google.

Chas Riggleman, the marketing manager for the new store, began his time with Costco a few years back. When tragedy in his family occurred, Costco did something that sticks with him still today.

"My wife's grandmother passed away and I showed up to work, because that's what you do, and somehow upper management found out," Riggleman said. "They called me into the office and sent me home with three day's pay and it stuck there.

"I work for an amazing company," Riggleman said. "I didn't go looking for it and I didn't ask about it but they took care of me."

Basic memberships for Costco start at \$60, which gives the customers access to everything in the store, as well as the gas pump. For \$120, there is the executive membership, which provides 2 percent on most purchases.



First things First

To commemorate this first day of February, why not talk about what is the first best thing you can do for your vehicle. At the risk of repeating myself...the easiest, and hands down best thing you can do is to change oil regularly. It is one of the most cost efficient things you can do that rewards you with long term benefits for your vehicle. As well, ensure you use a good oil, one that can add life to your engine like Dexos 1 - formulated with high performance base stocks and excellent additive technology to help provide protection for today's modern engines. Stop by or call for an appointment today.

Jim Beaudry, Director



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Star

from page 6

The society's president Greg Sauve, brought his personal telescope, a setup worth around \$15,000, to provide students with a look at the incredible detail the 50-pound lens is able to pull from space.

"This is a great chance for parents to see their kids learning, and maybe they can learn something too," Desiree said. "This is what school campuses should be like – fun, educational and a part of the community."

Along with the huge telescopes, Thom-



STAFF PHOTOS BY KILE BREWER

A chunk of meteorite was displayed as one of several science demonstrations in the Lake Asbury Junior High School cafetorium Thursday during their Starlight Night event. Oakleaf High School AP Physics students worked the booths, showing off the experiments and scientific artifacts like this meteorite to event participants.

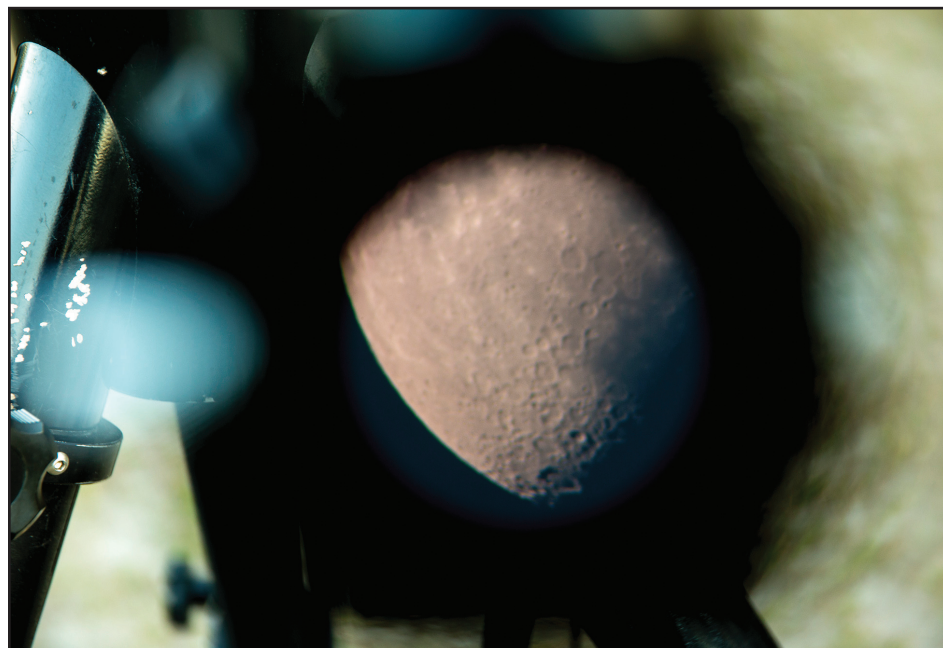
as' students from his AP Physics II class at Oakleaf High School worked booths inside the LAJH cafeteria that introduced event participants to several interesting scientific theories and laws using real world applications. Participants could interact with electricity, see first-hand the expanding and contracting caused by heating metal, and touch an actual meteorite, among other activities.

"I'm thrilled, this is what it's supposed to be like," Thomas said, while watching his students interact with community members while teaching them about science. "I do sincerely think that people have an interest in physics and astronomy."

Since starting out the school year at Oakleaf, Webber has found a thrilling new career path in sharing his love of science with his students. One thing seems common among the young lives he has influenced, his students all seem to respect and look up to Webber, and he seems to have given them direction at a time when students in middle school begin worrying about their future.

"I was sort of floating until seventh grade," said Soffia Bandril, a junior at Oakleaf High School who is in Webber's AP Physics II class. "Science was the first class I did kind of well in, I just kinda got everything, so I liked it."

Bandril is now enrolled in senior-level science classes as a junior, and plans to take as many science classes as she can before graduation. Since studying physics, she is set on a career in biophysics or as-



The moon, seen through a several-thousand dollar telescope, is much more than a big glowing sphere in the night's sky. Through telescopes provided and set up by members of the Northeast Florida Astronomical Society, participants in the Lake Asbury Junior High School Starlight Night event could see the craters and lava feature that are can be seen on the moon's surface.

trophysics. While planning the event, the Webbers weren't sure what kind of turnout they could expect, so they put together a website and a video to market the event and the word got around. Hundreds of people filtered through the school, wandering around the booths before heading outside to check out the telescope viewing after the sun completely set.

LAJH Principal Becky Murphy attended, and about halfway through, once

guests had really started to move through the school, she stood in the cafeteria smiling as she watched students pour through, happy and laughing, all while learning about science.

"It puts a big smile on my face to see kids learning and loving the solar system and space," Murphy said. "I told Mrs. Webber that if this goes well we would try to do it again and I would say it's going very well."



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Police Briefs

Pedestrian killed in Blanding crash

ORANGE PARK – The Florida Highway Patrol reports that a Bushnell, Florida woman died last weekend while trying to walk across Blanding Boulevard near the intersection of Jefferson Avenue.

FHP said Taylor Nicole Johnson, 19, was walking outside of the crosswalk on Jan. 27 at 6:34 p.m. when she was struck and killed by a 2003 Ford Escort driven by Taylor Renee Burnham, 19, of Middleburg.

According to the FHP report, Burnham was traveling north in the center lane and failed to notice Johnson in the roadway.

Police said Burnham came to a complete stop after her car struck Johnson and pulled into the gas station at the corner of Blanding and Jefferson.

FHP said charges are pending due to the outcome of the investigation.

\$35K bond in elder abuse arrest

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The Clay County Sheriff's Office reports that a former Clay County resident turned herself in last week to face charges of exploiting the elderly and grand theft.

Officers charged Pamela Williams Denton, 50, of Thomsville, North Carolina, with stealing at least \$15,783 from her 81-year-old former Clay County neighbor.

According to the warrant, the victim's



Pamela Denton

wife called the CCSO on November 1, 2017 after reviewing the family bank statements for their credit cards.

The woman said Denton assisted the victim with daily tasks, such as transporting him to medical appointments and doing his grocery shopping.

"The defendant had access to the victim's home and was trusted by the victim and his 78-year-old wife...[redaction on warrant]," states the warrant.

According to the warrant, Denton allegedly wrote at least one check from the victim's account for \$900.

At press time, Denton remained in the Clay County Jail where her bond is set at \$35,006. She faces one count each of exploitation of the elderly valued less than \$10,000 and grand theft valued at \$300-\$4,999.

Bannerman student charged with false report of crime

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – A school fight has led authorities to file a probation violation charge against a Bannerman Learning Center student.

On Jan. 25, the Clay County Sheriff's Office charged Ryan Allen Musick, 19, of Green Cove Springs, with violating terms of a 2016 probation agreement. During that arrest, he was charged with falsely reporting the use of firearms in a violent manner.



Ryan Musick

According to the October 25, 2016 arrest report, Musick allegedly said that "someone should come shoot up this stupid school." He was given the probation violation charge due to a new charge he was handed on Jan. 22 this month. CCSO charged Musick with simple battery for allegedly grabbing a fellow student by the neck and hitting him in the face on Jan. 22 at the school. At press time, Musick remained the Clay County Jail without bond.

Man charged with pointing gun at mother-in-law's head

FLEMING ISLAND – A Fleming Island man faces one count of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon following an investigation by the Clay County Sheriff's Office.

Police arrested Matthew Keith George Byatt, 42, on Jan. 24 at 2:48 a.m. at his home on Sunnycreek Drive.

According to the police report, Byatt "entered his home in a rage yelling and screaming" and accused his 65-year-old mother-in-law of saying he was having an affair.

Police said Byatt went into the mother-in-law's room to confront her and yelled and pointed his finger in her face. He went on to allegedly pull out a handgun and pointed directly in the woman's forehead.

When Byatt realized police had been called, he fled the home and went to his place of employment in the Industrial Loop



Matthew Byatt

near Orange Park. Police arrived on the scene having obtained a warrant from Clay County Judge Kristina Mobley and called the business to tell Byatt he should surrender, when he did peacefully.

Since his arrest, Byatt has been released from the Clay County Jail where his bond had been \$75,000.

High schooler killed in train crash

ORANGE PARK – Authorities investigated a fatal train crash the morning of Jan. 26 that claimed the life of a Fleming Island High student.

The Clay County Sheriff's Office and Florida Highway Patrol had officers on the scene of the crash at the intersection of Doctors Lake and Parkside drives. While the name of the student, who was struck at 7:59 a.m. while walking on the tracks, has not been released, the Clay County School District released a statement about her death.

"Clay County District Schools is deeply saddened by the sudden loss of a Fleming Island High School student involved in a train crash this morning. Our hearts are heavy and our condolences go out to the family, friends, and the community. To support the well-being of students and staff, mental health counselors will be available today and as needed during this difficult time," states the school district.

None of the 329 Amtrak Train passengers were injured in the crash, but train service was temporarily suspended while the investigation got underway. The train was heading south to Sanford, Florida when the crash occurred.

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Beating

from page 1

poles. Images of Davis, who is heavily tattooed, was captured in a video of the Harris beating. Police said Davis was wearing a "Boonie Hat" and all-black clothing showing the League of the South logo.

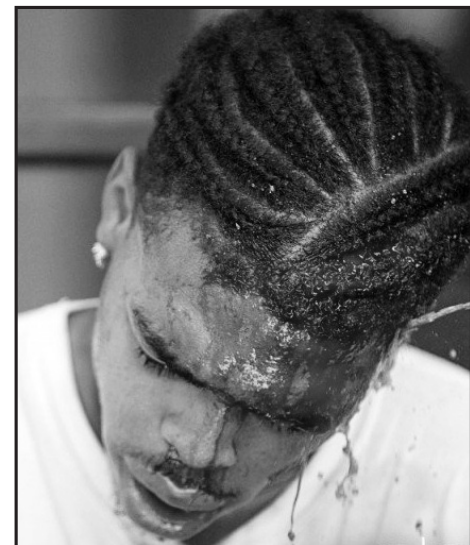
Davis is a charter member of the "DB Coleman Chapter of the Florida League of the South" based in Middleburg.

As of press time, Davis remained in the Clay County Jail pending extradition to Virginia. His arrest came three days before the League of the South scheduled a Jan. 27 rally at the state capitol in Tallahassee.

The League, a neo-confederate organization, seeks to create a white, Christian ethno-state in the Southeastern U.S., didn't reveal a theme for the Tallahassee gathering.

After League of the South members learned of Davis' arrest, Michael Tubbs, the Florida LOS national chief of staff, took to the alt-right social media platform called Gab to plead for help for Davis.

"This is our boy," Tubbs posted. "He and



DeAndre Harris

his family will need our help."

The Unite the Right rally also saw the arrest of 20-year-old James Alex Fields Jr., who is charged with the murder of 32-year-old Heather Heyer. Police said Fields rammed his car into a crowd and killed Heyer.

Arrests & Bookings

Tuesday, January 30

Beau Garrett Yarbrough, 22, Fleming Island, FTA-Possession of Drug Paraphernalia, FTA-Drug Possession

Arthur Benjamin Powers Blanco, 25, Orange Park, Disorderly Intoxication

Jeffrey Avander Baril, 25, Orange Park, Simple Battery

Tenisha Lorelle Gordy, 28, Orange Park, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis, Resisting an Officer, DWLSR

Theresa Ann Burke, 51, Green Cove Springs, Failure to Appear for Court

David Christopher Fortney, 34, Green Cove Springs, Non-support

Natasha Marie Gonzalez, 22, Green Cove Springs, Transport Court Order

Natalie Gonzalez, 29, Orange Park, Petit Theft

Kandi Marie Gantt, 35, Orange Park, Drug Equipment Possession, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis

Matthew Justin Gilchrist, 22, Green Cove Springs, Transport Court Order

Candice Lee Kile, 35, Oakleaf, Domestic Battery

Jacob Dylan Loper, 36, Keystone Heights, Violating an Injunction of Protection

Jimmy Joe Joe Dales, 23, Green Cove Springs, Drug Equipment Possession, Two Counts of Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis

Tiffany Desire'e Georgsson, 22, Green Cove Springs, Failure to Appear for Court

James Joseph Woody, 26, Orange Park, Possession of Heroin, Drug Equipment Possession, DWLSR

Nicole Frances Bauer, 45, Fleming Island, Violence on an Officer Firefighter or EMT, Simple Battery, Resisting an Officer

Lauren Elizabeth Rowe, 22, Orange Park, Illegally Obtaining Property Under \$20,000

John D. Spang, 39, Orange Park, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis, Possession of a Controlled Substance Without a Prescription, Drug Equipment Possession

Donald Lee Welcker, 26, Fleming Island, Possession of Heroin, Drug Equipment Possession

Joshua Phoenix Shenker, 19, Oakleaf, In-County Warrant Served

Kristinia Elizabeth Furman, 30, Orange Park, Drug Equipment Possession, Habitual Traffic Offender, No Vehicle Registration

Monday, January 29

Oshea Lhieanne Beaver, 25, Doctors Inlet, FTA-Resisting an Officer With Violence

Brandy Michelle Rowland, 33, Orange Park, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis, DWLSR

Staffonz Emmanuel Rollins, 29, Orange Park, Simple Battery

Rachael Noel Johnson, 22, Orange Park, Drug Equipment Possession

Jose Luis Rios Rosa, 33, Middleburg, Refusal to Submit to a Balance Test, DUI

Sunday, January 28

Victoria Lane Rutherford, 19, Fleming Island, Four Out-of-County Warrants

Restricted Arrest, charge Producing Schedule III or IV Drugs, Drug Equipment Possession

Kyle Anthony Cowart, 33, Oakleaf, Felony Battery, Domestic Battery by Strangulation

Michael Eddie Lundy, 57, Fleming Island, Petit Theft

Johnathon Paul Nugent, 35, Keystone Heights, Falsely Identify Self as a Contractor

Oriana Ashley Broadus, 23, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR

Saturday, January 27

Bryan Jeffery Rader, 28, Orange Park, DUI .15 or Higher

James Evin Metcalf, 22, Green Cove Springs, Battery

Michael Dewayne Norris, 40, Middleburg, Out-of-County Warrant

Robert Vernard Reddick, 55, Orange Park, Simple Domestic Battery

Shaina Pearl Katz, 23, Middleburg, Petit Theft

George Ronald Hager, 56, Fleming Island, Violence on an Officer Firefighter or EMT, Resisting Officer With Violence, DWLSR

Stephanie Monis, 31, Middleburg, Habitual Traffic Offender

Friday, January 26

Christine Elizabeth Carlson, 34, Middleburg, Simple Domestic Battery

Patricia Lee Bennett, 52, Middleburg, FTA-DWLSR, FTA-No Motor Vehicle Registration

Savonta Bontrez Mitchem, 37, Green Cove Springs, Failure to Appear for Court

Jason Allen Delaney, 42, Green Cove Springs, Non-support

Mason Edward Cornish, 39, Orange Park, FTA-Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon, FTA-Possession of Cocaine, FTA-Possession of Drug Paraphernalia

Pamela Williams Denton, 50, Green Cove Springs, Grand Theft \$300-4,999, Exploitation of Elderly Less Than \$10,000

Michelle Nichole Lynn Brailey, 27, Green Cove Springs, Out-of-county Warrant

Rachel Riley Summerlyn, 23, Fleming Island, Petit Theft

Teresa Aline Thornton, 41, Green Cove Springs, Fraudulent Use of Credit Card

Tara Louise Frisbee, 34, Orange Park, Out-of-County Warrant

Eric Rashaun Layton, 36, Orange Park, Disorderly Intoxication

Tammi Lee Lovelle, 38, Green Cove Springs, Petit Theft

Thursday, January 25

Michael Shane Sorrells, 32, Middleburg, Drug Equipment Possession

Gregory Randall, 40, Keystone Heights, Two Counts of Simple Domestic

Battery

Alanna Yvonne Cohen, 44, Orange Park, Violation of Injunction Against Domestic Battery

Nancy Lynn Smith, 32, Green Cove Springs, Out-of-County Warrant

Tonnetta Green Robinson, 38, Green Cove Springs, Failure to Appear for Court

Tawanna Louise Daniel McKennie, 32, Green Cove Springs, VOP-Petit Theft

Adriann Jerome Hendon, 44, Green Cove Springs, Non-Support

Robert Craig Hill, 49, Green Cove Springs, Failure to Appear for Court

Ryan Allen Musick, 19, Green Cove Springs, VOP-False Report of Bomb Explosion or Weapon of Mass Destruction or Arson

Michael Richard Sheehan, 48, Green Cove Springs, Felony Battery, VOP-Tampering With a Witness or Victim

Rebecca Dawn Witters, 38, Middleburg, Non-support

William Michael Lamb, 60, Keystone Heights, Possession of a Firearm or Ammo by a Convicted Felon, Violating Injunction for Domestic Violence

Steven Raine Cery, 30, Middleburg, VOP-Battery, VOP-Throwing a Missile Into an Occupied Vehicle

Gregory Steven Rasmussen, 41, Middleburg, DWLSR

Steve L. Lindsey, 28, Middleburg, Possession of a Controlled Substance Without a Valid Prescription, Drug Equipment Possession

James David Howell, 28, Middleburg, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis, Drug Equipment Possession

Restricted Arrest, DUI With Property

Damage

Clayton Bryce Arledge, 32, Middleburg, Possession of a Controlled Substance Without a Valid Prescription

Joshua Andrew Elliott, 28, Keystone Heights, Simple Domestic Battery

Brooke Anne Farrell, 20, Orange Park, Two Counts of Possession of a Controlled Substance Without a Valid Prescription,

Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis

Janet Neke Lamar, 25, Orange Park, Possession of a Controlled Substance Without a Valid Prescription, Drug Equipment Possession

Wednesday, January 24

Matthew Keith George Byatt, 42, Fleming Island, Aggravated Assault With Intent to Commit a Felony

Mollie Kay Herd, 23, Orange Park, Simple Domestic Battery

Gary Allen Brock, 31, Green Cove Springs, Court Order Transport

Howard Maxwell Mullis, 25, Green Cove Springs, Court Order Transport

Tyler Watkins Davis, 49, Middleburg, Fugitive From Justice

Skyler Allen White, 22, Keystone Heights, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis, Drug Equipment Possession

Thomas John Mitchell, 24, Middleburg, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis, Drug Equipment Possession

Elizabeth Rene Leach, 23, Orange Park, Possession of Cocaine

Loren Ashley Rhodes, 23, Middleburg, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis

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Limit your lime

By **Wayne Hobbs**
Environmental Horticulture Agent

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – How many times in your gardening experience have you been told to add lime. Whether it is to the lawn, landscape, or in your vegetable garden, it seems that some people believe that lime is the answer to plant health. However, this practice can cause long-lasting damage to your soils ability to provide for your plants.



Wayne Hobbs

Why do we use lime?

For this, we have to start with pH. Potential of hydrogen, or pH, is the measure of how acidic or alkaline (basic) your soil is and is measured on a scale of 1-14, with 1 being highly acidic, 14 being highly alkaline, and 7 being neutral. Plants tend to thrive in a slightly acidic soil, with some exemptions of between 5.5 and 6.0 and can often do well enough a bit out of their preferred range.

Liming comes into play when soils are too acidic for the plant you want to grow. Lime is mostly calcium carbonate and re-

acts by neutralizing the acidity in the soil, therefore, raising the pH. It also does provide calcium, which is an essential plant nutrient. Depending on your site, fertilization, plantings and past liming practices, pH can vary quite a bit within the county, making the sweeping generalization to apply lime to your garden yearly an absolute falsehood.

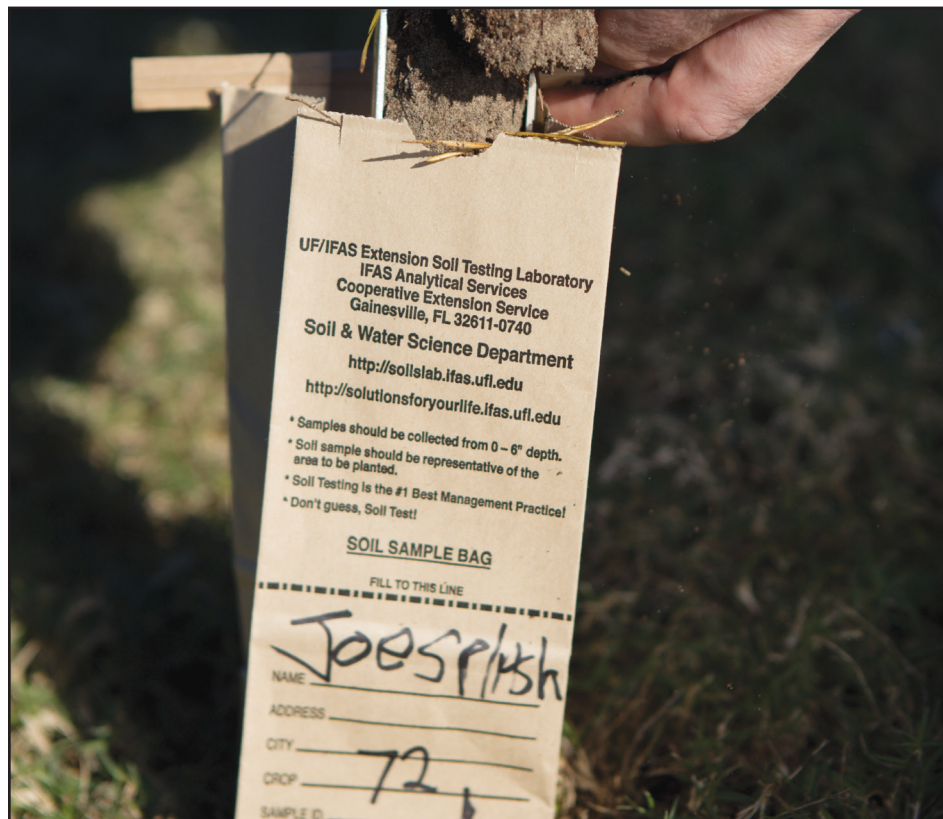
The key to getting this right is to only apply lime after a soil pH test is performed. We offer free soil testing in our office and can tell you how to correct any issues you may have with pH.

Too much of a good thing.

So, what happens if you apply lime to raise the pH, but the lime really isn't needed?

It keeps raising the pH, and this can have severe effects on your lawn and garden. As pH becomes more and more alkaline, most plants lose their ability to pull some essential nutrients from the soil leading to loss of vigor, less flowering and fruiting, yellowing leaves and overall decline.

Add into this issue that many soils in Clay County are already neutral to alkaline due to the amount of limestone – which is natural calcium carbonate – in our soil and water, getting a soil test is vital. Correcting for a soil that is alkaline is also very diffi-



Before applying lime, contact your local UF/IFAS Extension office about soil testing. Source: UF/IFAS

cult and can take a very long time.

Keys to Proper Lime Use

As stated before: "Don't Guess, Get a Soil Test." Never apply lime without knowing your current soil pH and only apply enough lime as recommended to correct the issue. For more information on your

soil's pH, visit <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ss480>.

If you have any horticultural, agricultural, 4-H, or family and consumer science questions, contact the University of Florida/IFAS Clay County Extension Office online at <http://www.clay.ifas.ufl.edu> or call by phone at (904) 284-6355.

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Bar Association president honored for service

ORANGE PARK – The gavel is passed to begin the new year. Clay County Bar Association President Geraldine Hartin, left, an attorney with Drawdy & Hartin in Orange Park, presented the "outgoing award" to 2017 president Billie Davie, at right, at a recent bar association luncheon.

TODAY'S Sports

Clay Today | Thursday, February 1, 2018 | claytodayonline.com

\$20,000
Orange Park Derby



Qualifying Races: January 15, 19, 22, 27
Final Race: Saturday, February 3



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Fleming Island High goalie Omar Zermeno eyes Fletcher High forward James Schaefer, No. 10, as he tries to sneak a ball past Zermeno and defender Noah Hamlett in final moments of Golden Eagles 2-2 tie Jan. 26. Both teams remained unbeaten with district tournaments set for this week. **See story on page 25**

'Tussle of Muscle' set for Feb. 8

Clay, Fleming grapplers on collision course

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

FLAGLER PALM COAST – Fleming Island and Clay high wrestling showed off some tournament-winning muscle this past weekend with the Golden Eagles trouncing the 30 team field at Olympics Heights High School while Clay ventured half the distance south to squeeze out a tough win at Flagler Palm Coast High School.

Both teams are destined to clash February 8 at the annual "Tussle of Muscle." This time the classic dual meet extravaganza is to be at Clay High School.

At Flagler Palm Coast High's Flagler Rotary Invitational, Clay did not come home with an individual champion, but did gain enough points, 259, to outlast runner-up Springstead High at 221 and Winter Springs at 214. Host Flagler Palm Coast finished fourth at 175.5 with 1A-Wakulla

SEE GRAPPLERS, 24



GIRLS WEIGHTLIFTING

Perez vs. Pena:

Round II goes to Perez

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

SPRUCE CREEK – After a tension-filled district weightlifting showdown a week ago, Oakleaf High weightlifter Lexi Perez and Middleburg High weightlifter Jay Pena again put up staggering numbers at the region 3-2A championships on January 20 at Spruce Creek High.

Area lifters will be heading to Arnold High School on Feb. 2-3 for the state weightlifting championships.

In Class 1A, Clay will send three lifters; Brooke Berger, Carlie Mcrae and Sabrina

Oakleaf High senior weightlifter Lexi Perez readies for bench press at district meet two weeks ago, Perez is second ranked at 154 for state meet scheduled Feb. 2-3 in Panama City.

Huete, that are currently ranked in the top five for the state while Ridgeview sends sophomore Aysia Hill.

In Class 2A, Perez and Pena are joined by Fleming Island's Jaeden Fernandez at 169, the sixth seed. Fernandez finished second to Flagler Palm Coast's Anisa Zwolinski in the region 3-2A championships.

Perez and Pena staged a 1-2 duel at the district meet a week ago and continued the battle to a second/third finish behind a 10-pound winning total from New Smyrna Beach's Hannah Goodrich in the 154 pound division. Goodrich was second last year at 139 with a 345 total.

With Goodrich out-lifting Pena on the bench press segment by 10 pounds with a

SEE LIFT, 29



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Green Cove Springs Junior High 102-pound wrestler Maverick Rainwater puts down shoulder blades of Bolles' Jacob Witt to win NE Florida championship match Jan. 27 at Middleburg High School. Lake Asbury won team title.



Green Cove Springs Junior High 128-pound wrestler Jhoel Robinson lifts and tosses Lakeside's Hunter Williams in NE Florida Championship match won 3-0 by Robinson.

Tigers win wrestling title

Lake Asbury gets three golds

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

MIDDLEBURG – Lake Asbury Junior High raced out to a huge pre-finals lead at Saturday's Northeast Florida Middle School Wrestling Championships at Middleburg High School, then powered through to hold off a surge by Suwannee High School to win to keep the lead.

Lake Asbury, up by nearly 40 points with 213 points over a host of teams including Wilkinson, Suwannee, Green Cove Springs and Lakeside; all locked in around 150 points, before the Tigers took three individual titles to score just 40 more points at 251 and fend off Suwannee Middle Schools finals' surge; to 178 points, to take the team title. Green Cove Springs took third with 171 with Wilkinson fourth

at 170 and Lakeside fifth at 164. Oakleaf finished ninth with 84 points with Orange Park 13th with 15.5. There were 15 teams competing.

For the Tigers, winning gold were Andrew McGovern at 134 pounds who 6-3 over Michael Jean-Francois of Lakeside for that title; Chris Stiltner at 140 who beat Trevion Sermons of Lakeside by pin and Julian Mitchell at 184 who won by major decision 11-2 over Julias Moreland of Lake City Middle School.

Suwannee, with seven finalists, made their move with wins at 222, 115, 82 and 87 pounds.

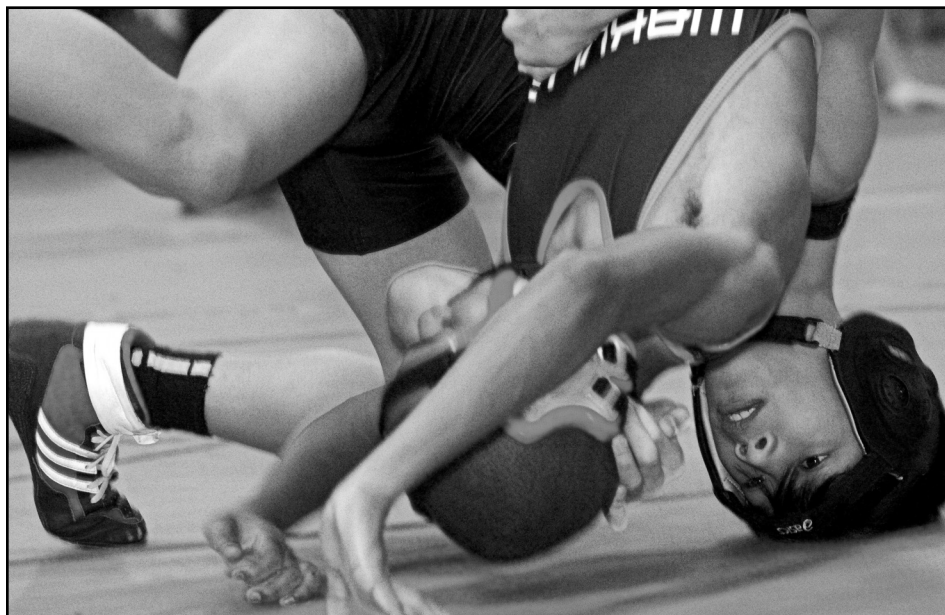
Area winners were Egan Gustillo of Oakleaf, who pinned to win at 92; Ronald Conkle of Wilkinson who won 13-8 over Joey Gomery of Lake Asbury at 97; Maverick Rainwater of Green Cove Springs, who pinned Jacob Witt of Bolles at 102; Jhoel Robinson of Green Cove Springs who



Lake Asbury Junior High 134-pound wrestler Andrew McGowan rolls over on top of Lakeside's Michael Jean-Francois in their NE Florida Championship match won 6-3 by McGowan.

won 3-0 over Hunter Williams of Lakeside at 128; Drew McDaniel of Lakeside who pinned Ethan Larsen of Wilkinson at 162;

Ethan Hofstetter of Lakeside who won by injury over Garris Reed of Suwannee at 197.



Oakleaf Junior High 92-pound wrestler Egan Gustillo topples over top of Wakulla's Julian Harvey before winning his NE Florida Championship title with a pin.



Wilkinson Junior High wrestling coaches celebrate 13-8 win by their 97 pound wrestler Ronald Conkles after he won tough match with Lake Asbury's Joey Gomez in their NE Florida Championship final Saturday afternoon at Middleburg High School.

Eagles hold off Broncos

Districts next, Feb. 5-9

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

MIDDLEBURG – Middleburg High girls basketball rolled to an early first quarter lead against 8A-Fleming Island, but could not hold the pace as the Golden Eagles exacted their precision outside shooting behind freshman Emma Richard's 10 points to win 61-50 in a non-district clash of two area hoops playoff hopefuls Jan. 25.

Fleming Island, a Final Four team last year, holds a 22-4 overall record with a 7-1 district 4-8A record putting the Golden Eagles atop of the district ahead of Oakleaf High School (19-4, 6-2) with Bartram Trail (12-10, 5-3) on the bubble. Creekside, the district runner-up to Fleming Island last

year, sits at 0-6 in district play along with Buchholz. Fleming Island lost in the Class 8A semifinal to South Broward, the state runner-up to Winter Haven.

Middleburg, in district 3-7A, 17-7, 6-2 in district play, must find a way to knock off top-seeded Nease (20-3, 7-0) who were the defending district runners-up to Middleburg last year, but upended the Broncos in the region semifinal before losing in the region final to Fort Walton Beach. Nease has beaten Middleburg twice this year. Fort Walton Beach was Class 7A runner-up to Fort Myers High School.

Ironically, Nease defeated Fleming Island 56-52 two days later with Molly Ragle top scorer with 14 points (3-3-Ptrs) and Tia Robinson held to just 13 points.

District tournaments run Feb. 5-9.

SEE EAGLES, 26



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Fleming Island High freshman Emma Richards lets sail with three pointer in front of Middleburg defender Macie Faucett in Golden Eagles' 61-50 non-district win on Jan. 25.



CORRESPONDENT PHOTO BY RAY DIMONDA

Orange Park High guard Ty McBride slices past Baker County defense for layup in Raiders' district win Jan. 26 under the RaiderDome.

Raiders defeat Wildcats unbeaten in district

'We haven't played our best game yet'

By Ray DiMonda
Correspondent

ORANGE PARK – Friday night, Orange Park High School's boys' basketball sent a clear message to the rest of District 4-6.

"It's nice... undefeated in the district! We have come a long way in four years," said Raiders' Head Coach Derek Kurnitsky. "Four years ago when we started this journey, we only won a couple district games, so we've come a long way. It's all them!"

As the last hurdle to an undefeated

District 4-6A slate came into the Raiderdome with visiting Baker County, the Raiders used their trademark smothering defense and a near unstoppable inside offensive attack to send notice they are ready for post season as they closed out an unbeaten district run by easily handling the Wildcats with an impressive 72-53 beatdown in front of the home crowd.

It wasn't all Orange Park from minute one as the Raiders needed the first quarter to settle in.

"It seems like we just always have those first quarter jitters. I don't know what it is?" said Kurnitsky.

SEE RAIDERS, 28



Ridgeview High guard Hannah Foster lets fly with jumper in Lady Panthers' 41-36 win over Clay High Monday night at Ridgeview High. Ridgeview was led in scoring by quad Trenity Guilford who led all scorers with 20 points. Ridgeview improved to 6-11, 3-5 in district play.



Orange Park guard Naelyi Williams breaks from Keystone Heights defender Destiny Bright in Lady Raiders' 53-25 non-district win Monday night in the RaiderDome. Orange Park is top seed in district 4-6A with 8-0 district record. District tournaments are set for Feb. 5-9.

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ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



Lexi Perez

Senior
Oakleaf High

Oakleaf High senior Lexi Perez will head to the Class 2A weightlifting championships in Panama City Feb. 2-3 as a district champion and, most recently, as a region runnerup just 10 pounds shy of the number one seed. At districts two weeks ago, Perez hit her best clean and jerk at 205 pounds to win the 154-pound district title.

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Grapplers

from page 21

fifth at 139.50. Oakleaf High gained one champion with Ryan Rosano taking gold at 120.

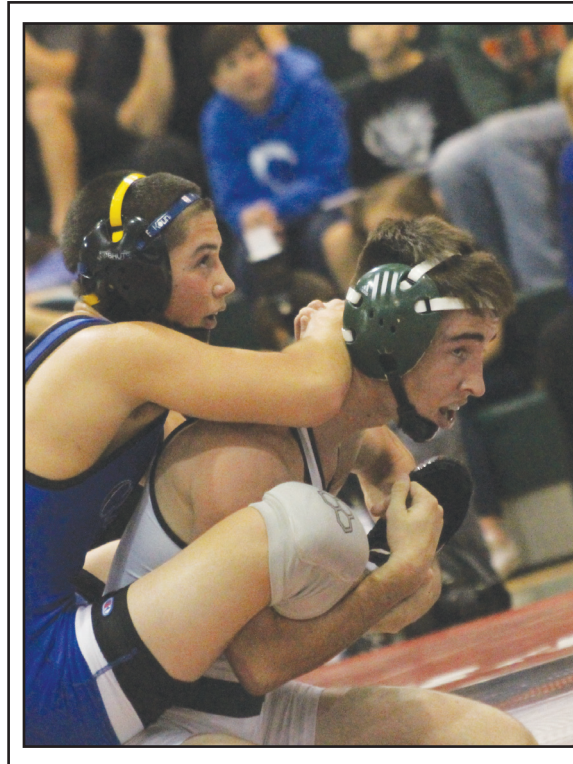
Amongst the top six teams behind Clay (2nd in 1A in 2017) at Flagler were Springstead (12th in 2A in 2017, Winter Springs (5th in 3A in 2017), Flagler (10th in 3A in 2017),) and Wakulla (8th in 1A in 2017).

In heavy contrast at Olympic Heights' Tri-County Invitational, featuring a host of Class 3A teams, the Golden Eagles powered through that 30-team lineup with four individual titleists to blow out the field with 282.5 team points, nearly 100 points on runnerup Columbus High of Miami's 182.5 and Southwest Miami's 178 points. Southwest Miami had three titleists seven schools sharing the remaining seven titles.

Fleming Island was second in 3A last year behind South Dade with Columbus 31st in 3A, Southwest Miami 4th in 3A, Hagerty ninth in 3A and Wellington 12th in 3A.

For Clay at Flagler, 10 semifinalists produced no champions, but did get runnerup finishes from Peyton Hughes, at 138, who lost his first match of the season in the final to Chris Morales of Springstead. Hughes' loss comes off a state duals semifinal win over Lake Highland Prep's Noah Castillo, a two-time state champion.

More Clay runnerups came from Dylan Taylor at 152 who lost to Charles Roches of Springstead; Conor Green, at 152, who lost to Jared Fleitas of Fort Pierce, and Kurt Jackson, at 195 who lost to Jessiah Con-



Tussle of Muscle Feb. 8 at Clay

STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

In the 2017 'Tussle of Muscle' 106 pound match featuring Fleming Island's Briar Jackson, front, and Clay's Lou Gagliardo, left, Jackson won match as Fleming Island defeated Clay in annual rivalry contest.

In 2018, Gagliardo, now at Fleming Island at 106 pounds, will add fuel to the rivalry as his former teammates host the Golden Eagles for the Tussle of Muscle on Feb. 8. Jackson now wrestles at 113 pounds.

treras of Winter Springs.

Oakleaf High's Ryan Rosano, a state qualifier in Class 3A last year, won 5-4 over Clay's Steven Chopek, a 1A runnerup for Yulee last year, in the 120 pound semifinal at Flagler before grabbing a 5-4 championship win over Jayden Bradshaw of 3A-Boone.

At 138, Hughes beat Oakleaf's Ethan Gustillo via pin. Gustillo finished fourth with Middleburg's Storm Mercado taking fifth, also at 138. Middleburg got Chris Burch, at 132, to the semifinal where he faced off with Flagler's defending state champion Avery Holder and lost 16-0 be-

fore finishing sixth. Oakleaf finished 12th. Middleburg finished 19th.

Also medaling for Clay were, in third place, Justin Byler at 106; Daniel Porter at 113; Chopek at 120 and Abbott Taylor at 182. In fourth was Carson Yost at 170. In fifth were Grant Stanish at 145 and Ryan Rivers at 285.

For Fleming Island at Olympics Heights, gold medals went to Lou Gagliardo at 106, Briar Jackson at 113, Paul Detwiler, still unbeaten at 170 and Ryan Smenda, at 220 at also unbeaten. Smenda is 12-0 with a late start from a region playoff football season.

Gagliardo, third in 1A last year with Clay, took out Ryan Rowland of Hagerty with a 3-2 win. Rowland was state runnerup to South Dade's Bretli Reyna last year.

Jackson, third in 3A last year, beat Justin Valdes of Columbus 4-1, with Detwiler going three periods to beat state qualifier Michael Fernandez of Southwest Miami 7-2. Detwiler, third in 3A last year, has a 45-0 record with 30 first period pins.

Smenda, who smashed for double blast pins last week at the state duals championships that Fleming Island got second to South Dade, continued his scorched Earth attack with a 10 second pin in his opening match before register two more, winning 8-3 in his semifinal and 5-3 in his final against Cole Schwartzberg of Mater Lake. Schwartzberg was fourth in Class 1A last year. Smenda was fifth in 3A at 195 with a third in 2016.

Also medaling for Fleming Island were Jaquan English, second at 132; Albie Snedaker, third at 120; Jacob Sandoval, third at 126; Tyler Williams, sixth at 138; Vincent Hauser, second at 145; Luke Chop, fifth at 152; Trace Insalaco, second at 160 and Anthony Breeden, sixth at 182.

Fleming Island travels to Southeastern University for a dual meet challenge to 1A superpower Lake Highland Prep then continues south to Brandon High for the Ippolito Memorial Tournament chock full of state power wrestling teams.



In a clash of titans at the Flagler Rotary Invitational on Sat., Jan. 27, Oakleaf High's Ryan Rosano took a 5-4 win over Clay High's Steven Chopek, who just one loss for the season, in the 120 pound semifinals en route to his 5-4 championship win over Jayden Bradshaw of Boone High.



STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

Fleming Island High midfielder Dylan Bartel, in green, fights for ball with a Fletcher High player in Golden Eagles' 2-2 tie. Both teams remained unbeaten in regular season play as districts begin this week; Fleming Island is in district 4-4A, while Fletcher is in district 3-4A.

Fleming Island, Fletcher stay unbeaten

Soccer showdown stalls 2-2

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

NEPTUNE BEACH – The much-ballyhooed clash of titans; undefeated Fleming Island and Fletcher high school boys soccer squads, turned into two halves of attack, scrum and “just-misses” with Golden Eagle goalie Omar Zermeno thwarting a Fletcher surge in the final minutes to preserve a 2-2 non-district tie.

“We couldn’t clear the ball in the first half and that left us vulnerable in front of the goal,” said Fleming Island coach Mike Green, who finishes his rookie season as Golden Eagle coach at 17-0-3. “We needed to generate more offense if they were going to be able to get close to our goal.”

Fletcher, unbeaten in district 3-4A at 5-0-0 and 18-0-2 overall, struck fast and furious in the first half after the first 10 minutes of play saw Fleming Island getting forwards Reed Davis and Lucas Hauth in the goal box of the Senators but unable to get a ball past 6-foot-6 goalie Matthew Doyle-Sochan.

Fletcher played a patient midfield game awaiting for an opening and, after the 20 minute water break, the Senators were knocking on the goal door with two free kicks and a pair of corner kicks putting pressure on Zermeno and the Golden Eagle defense.

At the 17 minute mark, Fletcher got the ball in front of Zermeno in a scrum that saw the ball ping-pong through a maze of players before forward James Schaefer found himself alone in front of Zermeno with about eight feet to the goal. Zermeno eyeballed Schaefer for a moment before

Schaefer buried the ball in the left side of the goal.

“He has to grab those loose balls and clear the front,” said Green.

Two minutes later, Fletcher again found themselves in a scrum in front of the goal after a Zermeno save and the Senators again took advantage of the loose ball for the second goal of the half.

With a push to score with near 11 minutes to the half, Fleming Island got a yellow card to Davis on a zealous sideline interaction to give the Golden Eagles a desperate look as the half loomed.

Davis had one final opportunity to put Fleming Island on the scoreboard as Doyle-Sochan misplayed a free ball just outside the 18 yard line, whiffed on a clearing kick and left Davis alone in front of the goal, but past the loose ball.

With four minutes to halftime, defender Noah Hamlett punched a free kick deep into a player gathering in front of Doyle-Sochan, but the Golden Eagles could not get a foot on the ball despite three headers that kept the ball in play for what seemed an eternity.

After the halftime break, extended because of Fletcher’s senior night festivities, Fleming Island roared downfield with just three minutes off the clock with Hauth taking a center pass from Garret Godfrey that he spun and pounded toward Doyle-Sochan. Doyle-Sochan made the save but did not catch the ball. Davis, trailing the play, picked up the loose ball and buried it into the net for his 52nd goal of the season to put the game at 2-1 with just under 38 minutes to go.

“We knew we were knocking on the door

SEE SOCCER, 27

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STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

Middleburg High forward Brittany Range and Fleming Island High center Skylar Baltezgar eye loose ball in Golden Eagles 61-50 win Jan. 25 at Middleburg High School.

Eagles

from page 23

Against Middleburg, Fleming Island fell behind off the opening whistle by as much as 15-10 as the Golden Eagles' shooters could not find their rhythm causing Fleming Island coach Joey Williams to call a time out to regroup.

Regroup meant putting in Richards, just her ninth game of the year, as a shooting guard and that helped produce a 6-0 run with Richards nailing the first of her two three-pointers giving Fleming Island a 16-15 lead with 3:48 left in the half.

From there, Fleming Island kept the pressure on the Bronco defense with Richards hitting her second three-pointer at 2:43 to stretch the lead to 22-17.

Fleming Island guard Tia Robinson, the top scorer with 25 points, took charge from that point with a layup, two free throws and a diving retrieval off a block shot by Aubrey Burke as Fleming Island entered the lockers up 27-19.

The third quarter, a historically a slow starter for both teams, turned into a Flem-



Fleming Island High guard Tia Robinson and Middleburg High guard Mallory Roney will be key figures in next week's district tournaments with both teams defending district champions.

Final games

OPHS: Jan. 29 vs. Keystone Heights; Jan. 30 at University Christian; Feb. 2 at Oakleaf

OHS: Jan. 30 vs. Wolfson; Feb. 2 vs. OPHS

RHS: Jan. 29 vs. Clay; Feb. 1 at Nease; Feb. 2 at MHS

MHS: Jan. 30 at Flagler Palm Coast; Feb. 2 vs. RHS

FIHS: NONE

KHHS: Jan. 29 at OPHS; Jan. 30 vs. Cedar Key; Feb. 2 vs. West Nassau

SJCDS: Jan. 30 vs. Florida Deaf; Feb. 1 vs. Eagle's View

District 4-8A (FIHS, OHS):

at Fleming Island

District 3-7A (MHS): at Nease

District 4-6A (OPHS, RHS): at Wolfson (No. 1-OPHS 8-0, No. 2-Westside (2-2), No. 3-RHS (3-5))

District 5-6A (CHS): at Ponte Vedra (No. 1-Ponte Vedra (8-0), No. 2-Menendez (6-2), No. 3-Clay (0-4))

District 4-5A (KHHS): at Bradford (No. 1-Newberry (7-0), No. 5 KHHS (3-7))

District 2-3A (SJCDS): at SJCDS (No. 1 Trinity (12-8), No. 2-SJCDS (8-7))

ing Island surge to a 41-28 lead behind sharpshooting from Burke, with 15 points on the night, who hit a three-pointer at 2:05 then got a key offensive rebound and assist to a Richards' jumper. Junior Hope Rozier popped a final jumper at the buzzer to end the quarter.

Senior guard Molly Ragle got the hot hand as the fourth quarter started with a banked three-pointer, a steal and a three-pointer at 6:05 to push the lead to 49-33 as Middleburg answered with just a jumper from forward Brittany Range and two free throws from Mallory Roney.

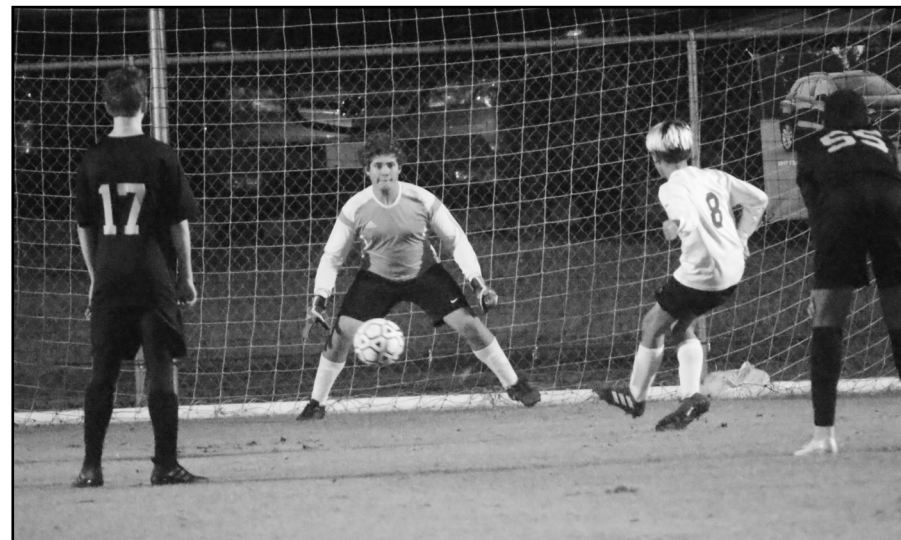
With Range fouling out with three minutes left in the game, Fleming Island reconfigured their defense to pressure Roney, the Broncos top scorer with 16 points, as the Golden Eagles cruised to the 61-50 final score.

Lady Gators, Cougars win soccer titles

The Lakeside Junior High Lady Gators girls soccer team, led by a first half goal from forward Tori Hauth, defeated the Green Cove Springs Junior High Lady Cougars 1-0 to win the Northeast Florida Athletic Conference Middle School Soccer Championship on Jan. 25 at the Clay

County Soccer Complex.

In the boys game, also on Jan. 25, Green Cove Springs got two late first half goals; one from Aaron Montoya and one from Noah Eaton on a penalty kick, to hold off Oakleaf Junior High 3-1 to win the boys title.



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Green Cove Springs forward Noah Eaton, No. 8 in white, powers penalty kick past Oakleaf goalie Isaiah Shevchuck that gave Cougars 3-1 win in NE Florida Middle School title.



Lakeside Junior High forward Tori Hauth is a step ahead of Green Cove Springs defender Grace Adams as she gets set to score lone goal for Lady Gators in their 1-0 win Thursday in the championship game of the NE Florida Middle School Championships held at Clay County Soccer.



Lakeside Junior High's girls soccer team show off their trophy after winning the NE Florida Middle School Soccer championships in a 1-0 win over Green Cove Springs. Tori Hauth, holding trophy score first half that was eventual gamewinner for Lady Gators.



Fleming Island High defender Bradley McMahon and the Golden Eagles soccer team have a district 4-4A rematch with county rival Oakleaf High on Jan. 31. Fleming Island beat Oakleaf 6-1 earlier in season and are the defending district, region and Class 4A champions.

Soccer

from page 25

with the missed opportunities in the first half," said Green. "They came out a little flat, probably from the halftime stuff, and we got a break."

Just two minutes later, Hauth again found the mark in front of the Fletcher goal and this time found the net to tie the game at 2-2 with 35 minutes to go.

Ten minutes later, Davis again got a seam and launch a hard shot that caromed off the cross bar in a near miss. Godfrey was able to force a corner kick on the rebound.

Fleming Island could not convert on the corner, but earned three more in the next two minutes to keep the ball in Fletcher territory despite not being able to get a goal.

With three minutes left in the game, Fletcher made the final surge to get a gamewinner, but Zermeno cleared one of two cornerkicks and got a key save on a close encounter right in front of the net with a minute to go.

Fleming Island got a final breakaway with Davis finding Godfrey downfield, but Godfrey's shot went wide left.

Both teams will be hosting their respective district tournaments this week with a possible rematch in the region semifinals in two weeks.

District 4-4A At Bartram Trail

1. Fleming Island, 2. Bartram Trail, 3. Creekside, 4. Oakleaf, 5. Nease, 6. St. Augustine, 7. Middleburg.

Monday, Nease at Oakleaf, (OHS 7-0); St. Augustine at Creekside, 6 p.m.; Middleburg at Bartram Trail, 6 p.m.; Wednesday, Fleming Island vs. Nease-Oakleaf winner, TBD; St. Augustine-Creekside winner vs. Middleburg-Bartram Trail winner, TBD; Friday, championship, 7 p.m. District 4-3A

At Ridgeview

1. Ridgeview, 2. Ponte Vedra, 3. Orange Park, 4. Menendez, 5. Palatka, 6. Matanzas, 7. Clay.

Monday, Palatka at Menendez, 6 p.m.; Matanzas at Orange Park, (MHS wins 6-1); Clay at Ponte Vedra, (PV wins 8-0); Wednesday, Matanzas-Orange Park winner vs. Clay-Ponte Vedra winner, 5:30 p.m.; Palatka-Menendez winner at Ridgeview, 7 p.m.; Friday, championship, 7 p.m.

At Keystone Heights

1. Alachua Santa Fe, 2. Crescent City, 3. Newberry, 4. Keystone Heights, 5. Interlachen, 6. Fort White, 7. PK. Yonge.

Monday, Crescent City vs. PK. Yonge, 5 p.m.; Newberry vs. Fort White, 7 p.m.; Tuesday, Interlachen at Keystone Heights, 7 p.m.; Wednesday, Crescent City-PK. Yonge winner vs. Newberry-Fort White winner, 5 p.m.; Alachua Santa Fe vs. Interlachen-Keystone Heights winner, 7 p.m.; Friday, championship, 7 p.m.

District 2-1A At St. Johns Country Day

1. Christ's Church, 2. St. Johns Country Day, 3. St. Joseph, 4. University Christian, 5. Gainesville Oak Hall, 6. Gainesville St. Francis, 7. Hamilton County.

Monday, Oak Hall at University Christian, 6 p.m.; St. Francis at St. Joseph, 6 p.m.; Hamilton County at St. Johns Country Day, (SJCDs wins.); Wednesday, Oak Hall-University Christian vs. Christ's Church, 5 p.m.; St. Francis-St. Joseph winner vs. Hamilton County-St. Johns Country Day winner, 7 p.m.; Friday, championship, 7 p.m.

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Raiders

from page 23

Raiders center Davontai Crutch would finally break the ice with Orange Park's first point with a free throw almost two minutes into the game. The Raiders went punch for punch with the Wildcats until Baker County put seven points on the board. Then Orange Park hit a snag missing five shots in a row, as Baker County came down with the rebounds and put points up with a 13-6 lead. With 1:55 left in the first, Kurnitsky knew enough was enough and called a full time out.

"During the time out, we just talked about our game plan, execute," said Kurnitsky. "Sometimes we lose focus on what our game plan is. So I just said let's refocus, let's stick with it, it's okay, and just stick with it."

Once the Raiders took a nice cleansing breath, back on the court it was like a different team. In the rest of the quarter, the Wildcats couldn't buy a basket as the Raiders closed down shop. At the other end of the court, it was back to pushing inside, scoring baskets and drawing fouls. While still down 13-12, the momentum shift was obvious. Raider basketball was checking in.

"We have a lot of experience- we've been here before," said Kurnitsky

Early in the second, it was another Crutch basket to break through as the Raiders took the lead 14-13 and never



CORRESPONDENT PHOTO BY RAY DIMONDA

Orange Park High boys basketball coach Derek Kurnitsky, with assistants John Conley and Lee Merrill, right, will be defending the Raiders' district 4-6A title in a week with district tournaments set to start Feb. 13.

looked back. Crutch would rack up 14 points on the night, six of eight on free throws. After the first period time out and recalibration, the Raiders got back to the original game plan and stuck with it. The drives inside worked almost every time as the Raider defense just couldn't be answered by Baker County's offense. The Wildcats couldn't find any answers to the Raider hard press defense. By bringing the defense to the Wildcats before half court, and most times right from the throw-in; Orange Park never went easy on the Wildcats and Baker County had nothing for them.

Baker County tried shutting down

Raider John Abate, holding him to only two points in each quarter of the first half. Being the gamesman he is, Abate used that to draw the heat, leaving his teammates open. Ty McBride sensed the opportunity, seized it and added another six points for his team in the quarter. McBride ended the night with a team high 20 points and two 3-pointers. The Raiders used the 15 point quarter to go into the locker room with 27 points on the board, up 27-19.

Out of the locker room in the third, Abate caught on fire as he drove hard inside for a couple, drew two fouls and capped the quarter off with a 3-pointer. Abate accounted for nine third quarter points on

his own. On the night, Abate finished with 15 points, 2 of 3 on free throws, and one 3-pointer.

Defensively, Orange Park guard Keneth Monterola smothered the Wildcats, cashing in on several takeaways. The poise and confidence were evident as the Raiders recovered a rebound late in the quarter. With 40 seconds left in the third quarter, they worked the ball around to burn off time and put the ball into Monterola's hands. Waiting for the clock to run down, with only four seconds left, he broke inside, hit a perfect layup, and put another two points on the pile as the buzzer sounded on the 23 point Raider third quarter. The defensive effort held Baker to 14 third quarter points for a 50-33 lead.

In the fourth, it was more of the same as Orange Park kept the tempo high and racked up points while throwing a defensive blanket over Baker County. Every time the Wildcats drove and were foiled, Orange Park came down with the rebound and pushed the ball up court for more points.

"I thought we really improved on the boards! We've gone with a little bigger of a line up and I feel we did real well tonight," said Kurnitsky.

With the comfortable lead, the Raiders used the opportunity to get some play time for the non-starters. By time the clock hit zeros, eight different Raiders scored in the fourth quarter, 22 point effort. The Wildcats were held to 20 fourth quarter points on the way to their 72-55 defeat.

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Lift
from page 21

190 press, Perez, who benched just 150, again, had to go to her clean and jerk prowess for a shot at the gold medal.

Perez, who defeated Pena at districts with a 205 clean and jerk, was successful on 200 with Goodrich good at 175. Goodrich totaled 360 to Perez' 350 with Pena at 335 with a 155 clean and jerk. Goodrich, Perez and Pena are the top three lifters at 154 pounds in the state meet rankings.

On the Class 2A rankings list, Middleburg's Makita Esdale, fourth at region 3-2A, advances at 110 pounds with a top 20 state finish. Oakleaf's Hadassah Davis, third at regions at 139, is 16th ranked. Fleming Island's Tanzania McKay, fourth at regions in Unlimited, is 14th ranked with Middleburg's Payton Mahon, third at regions, ranked 12th.

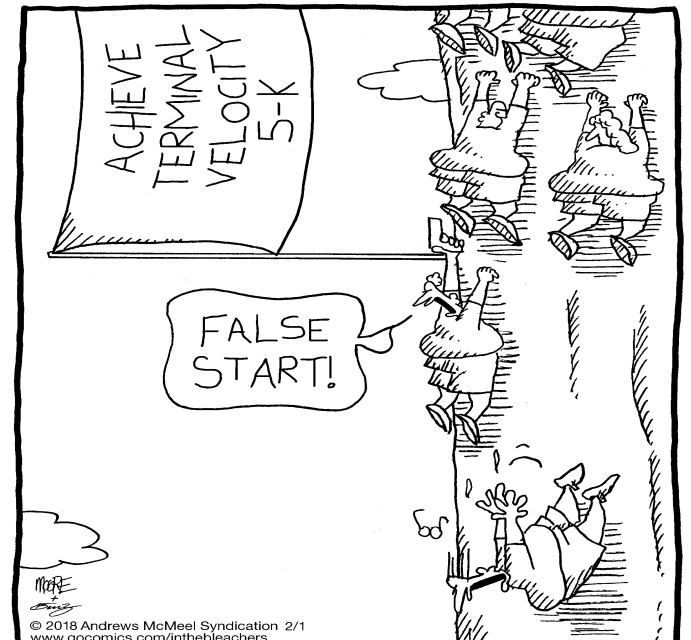
On the Class 1A rankings list, Clay's Sereniti Forkey, second in region 3-1A, is ranked 17th at 101 pounds. At 110 pounds, Clay's Hannah Forbes, second at region 3-1A, is ranked ninth. Joining Hill at 119, Clay has two lifters; Kameran Peters and Katie James, ranked sixth and seventh, respectively, with Peters third and James fourth in region 3-1A.

Fun AND Humor

Flying McCoys



In the Bleachers



129

At 129, Brooke Berger, the district champion, finished as region champion ahead of Ridgeview's Crystal Hunter, and is ranked fourth with Hunter 13th.

Mcrae, returning to the state meet, won the region title at 139 and is ranked third in the state.

154

At 154, Clay has two lifters; Sabrina Huete, the region champion, and Jade Berger, second to Huete. Huete is ranked fifth with Berger seventh on the state list.

169

At 169, Ridgeview's Sidney Davis is ranked sixth in 1A after winning the region title.

199

At 199, Ridgeview's Grier Burrows, second at regions, is ranked seventh.

In the Unlimited class, Ridgeview's Naja Hall returns to state ranked 13th after a third place region finish.

District 7-1A

In district 7-1A, where Keystone Heights competes, the Lady Indians did not advance lifters to state, but did have top finishes of second and third in 110 from Hannah Forshee and Kamrey Dowdy; fourth in 119 from Zoe Dearborn; third in 129 from Isabella Hanna; fourth in 154 from Kayley Dailey; third in 169 from Isabella Woodell; fourth and fifth at 199 from Kayla Goodin and Makayla Smith.

At region 4-1A, Hannah Forshee was sixth at 110.

Non-Sequitur



Ziggy



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JOIN US

Talk with a Doc

Common symptoms of knee arthritis

Join us for a free presentation, lunch, and discussion with **Dr. Phillip Bell**, orthopedic surgeon with Jacksonville Orthopaedic Institute, as he discusses the symptoms of knee arthritis and your options for treatment.

Friday, Feb. 9, 2018
Noon – 1 pm

Baptist Clay Medical Campus
Conference Room at the
Emergency Center
1771 Baptist Clay Dr.
Fleming Island, FL 32003

No cost to attend • Lunch will be provided
Seating is limited, reserve your space today!

Please register by visiting
claydoctalk-bell.eventbrite.com
or calling **904.202.4980** and referencing
the *Clay Talk with a Doc*.

Phillip Bell, MD,
is the newest
fellowship-trained
orthopedic surgeon
at JOI's Baptist South
and Clay locations.



Hip or knee pain?

5 symptoms you shouldn't ignore

You like to stay active, but sometimes hip or knee pain gets in the way. How do you know when it's time to see a doctor?

If you have any of these symptoms, you could be making your hip or knee worse by waiting:

- 1 Unable to maintain an active lifestyle
- 2 Pain that gets worse at night and interferes with sleep
- 3 Catching, popping or locking
- 4 Difficulty putting on shoes and socks
- 5 Swelling

The experts at Jacksonville Orthopaedic Institute (JOI) offer **innovative new options** to relieve your pain and get you back to doing the things you love.

Why live with hip or knee pain?
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904.JOI.2000 (564-2000)



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