

Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700 — Starke, Florida

Thursday, January 12, 2023

144th year, 20th Issue — \$1



It's time to order the signs.

Bradford Elementary — The school has a name

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — Monday night, the school board voted unanimously to name the district's new school Bradford Elementary.

Among a few suggestions, Bradford Elementary was the most submitted, according to Superintendent Will Hartley. It was also the option preferred by the board.

School Board Member Sheila Cummings did say her top choice after speaking with members of the

community was to continue with the name Southside Elementary. It is familiar, she said. Bradford Elementary was her second choice.

School Board Member Lynn Melvin said with a new school comes a new beginning — one school staff members are anticipating. The school also reflects the consolidation of three schools of which Southside is just one.

"I'm in favor of Bradford Elementary. I think that includes everyone, represents every child in our county," she said.

Members Cheryl Canova and Candace Osteen agreed. Osteen said, "I think it's something that would be very meaningful to the entire community to move forward with a new name that represents all of us."

School Board Chairwoman Gayle Nicula announced that was her preference as well.

Among the submissions were names of former school personnel. Alligator Creek Elementary was also suggested, as were Temple Elementary and Flatwoods Elementary. Temple

Avenue is U.S. 301 and Temple's Mills is a little-known area from an 1800s map of Bradford County. Flatwoods represents the forest area where the school is being constructed.

Some tried combining the names of the consolidated schools — Southside, Brooker and Hampton — to develop something new like Hambrook South or South Hambrook Elementary, and South Brampton Elementary.

The school, which is still under construction, is scheduled to open in the fall.



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WORTH NOTING

Call Street detour Jan. 13-16

Call Street (State Road 230) between U.S. 301 and St. Clair Street will be closed for resurfacing from 6:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 13, to 6 a.m. Monday, Jan. 16.

Please plan for alternate parking as on-street parking along Call Street will not be available during resurfacing operations. This will primarily affect diners and movie-goers. Parking is available downtown, including the parking lot across from Starke City Hall on Thompson Street, Santa Fe College and First Baptist Church.

For more on this and future detours, see inside.

MLK events announced

In honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Concerned Citizens of Bradford County is sponsoring the following events:

—Saturday, Jan. 14, is the annual Service Awards Banquet at The Woman's Club of Starke, 201 N. Walnut St. The banquet begins at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$35 for adults and \$15 for children 8 to 17.

—Monday, Jan. 16, is the annual MLK Celebration. This year the event will begin at 11 a.m. at the Florida National Guard Armory, 720 Edwards Road in Starke. Brunch will immediately follow the program.

For more information, please call the office at 904-964-2298 or 904-966-1100.

Food distribution at fairgrounds

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Feeding Northeast Florida and True Vine Ministry will take place Tuesday, Jan. 17, at 9 a.m. at the Bradford County Fairgrounds.

Food boxes often include fresh produce, deli and bakery items, dairy and some meats. Inventory is subject to availability. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

More questions about Lake Butler spending

BY TRACY LEE TATE
Times Staff Writer

LAKE BUTLER — In a special meeting on Jan. 9, the Lake Butler City Commission discussed several issues concerning budget overruns and spending, much of which had never been brought before the commission for approval.

The meeting was held at the request of Commissioner Melissa Hendrix who, at the regular commission meeting in December, had pointed out at several financial issues about which she had questions.

At that time the questions were related to current city monthly financial statements and the fact that some of the budgeted line items were already depleted or in which the balance of available funds was depleted more than would be expected for only the second month of the city's fiscal year (i.e., line items in which the balance was depleted by as much as 80% when the expected expenditures would be around 17%).

Since that time, Hendrix has delved deeper into city finances, not only reviewing monthly financial statements but also reviewing the statements for city credit card purchases. She related some interesting numbers to her fellow commissioners.

Hendrix started her presentation by noting that the city ended the 2021-22 fiscal year over-budget in several areas and in the negative overall. She noted several line items where city (taxpayer) funds were spent in items that were never included in the original budget for the year and that were never brought before the commission for approval. One was the erection of a privacy fence at the Dekle Cemetery in the city and the largest for "grass cleanup" at the lake for which the city paid about \$20,000.

Also noted by Hendrix were the raises being given to employees recently by City Manager Dale Walker as merit raises.

"The salaries we are paying now are way over the amount budgeted for them," Hendrix said. "Some employees have received increases of up to 30%, while others have increased by 15% or 12%. One person's salary has already exceeded the cap for that position. This year's raises are costing the city \$62,000 for 14 employees. When the commission approved the last personnel policy, they gave the matter of merit raises into the hands of the city manager, the public works director and the finance director without oversight by the commission."

She also noted that, in addition to their salaries, employees were receiving funds in their paychecks for other items as well.

"The city has a shoe policy, that was created before I was elected, that gave employees \$100 for the purchase of shoes for work. I believe the original policy was for workers who required special shoes (such as steel-toed boots for public works employees) to keep them safe on the job. But now, all the employees are getting that \$100 annually, even Mr. Walker. There are also issues with the uniform policy (see below) and the \$8,000 per year stipend given to all city employees to cover hospitalization expenses, which is set to be increased to \$8,500 in the proposed personnel policy that is awaiting commission approval."

Hendrix said she had requested copies of past personnel policies, as well as the city's credit card policy but has not yet received either.

Hendrix did request and received copies of the credit card statements for past months and said she found

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SWAT team members breach the front door to put a gas canister into the home. Photo: Bradford County Sheriff's Office.

'Joke' leads to standoff

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

MELROSE — An encounter with a Domino's Pizza delivery driver escalated into a confrontation with deputies and a standoff with a SWAT team in Melrose.

Bradford County Sheriff Gordon Smith said deputies eventually resorted to tear gas to force Ryan Cain Newell from his Midway-area home on Thursday, January 5.

Deputies arrested the 36-year-old for aggravated assault, resisting an officer, false imprisonment, and an Alachua County arrest warrant for a probation violation.

According to an arrest report, a Domino's Pizza delivery driver told deputies that she drove to the Southeast 28th Way home with an order from the business's mobile app.

When she arrived at the house around 10 p.m. on Wednesday, the porch light was not on, and when Newell opened the front door, he got into "a shooting stance."

"(The driver) advised Newell was approximately five yards from (her)," wrote arresting officer T. Lovell in



Newell

the report. "(The driver) observed an object that appeared to be a gun and was in fear that she was going to be shot. (While the driver) was backing away out of fear for her safety, Newell stated, 'it's a fake gun.'"

When deputies went to the home to

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Reynolds hired as new KHHS football coach

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Keystone Heights High School has announced the hiring of Steve Reynolds as its new head varsity football coach.

Reynolds, who's served as an assistant football and assistant boys weightlifting coach the past three seasons at KHHS and is currently the school's dean of students, steps in for Chuck Dickinson, the current athletic director, who resigned after 24 seasons. He has head-coaching experience at Bradford (2012-13) and Oakleaf (2016-17).

"It's an exciting opportunity to build off of what has been done here," Reynolds said, mentioning those who held the position before him.

"You've seen a lot of good coaches come through here," he said. "It's a good place." Principal Laurie Burke said approximately 20 applied for the position. She said one reason Reynolds is the right person to lead the program is the fact that he's already been a part of the program, not just specifically coaching football, but also helping to build the foundation for football success as a weightlifting coach.

"He is passionate about Keystone," Burke said. "He's



Steve Reynolds has been named the new head football coach at Keystone Heights High School. He had previous head-coaching stints at Bradford High School (his alma mater) and Oakleaf and has been an assistant coach at KHHS the past three years. Photo by Cliff Smelley.

worked so closely with the boys the last three years."

Burke said she likes the fact that Reynolds also has roots in Keystone. He's lived there for approximately 10 years. He and his wife, Lauren, have three sons: Dylan, 11, Henry 4, and Tyler, 2.

"He's a Keystone family man," Burke said, adding, "He's

dedicated to Keystone."

Reynolds, who grew up in Bradford County and is a 2004 Bradford High School graduate, said he wanted to have another opportunity to be a head coach, but he wasn't actively pursuing any opportunity that was available. A big part of that was because he didn't want to leave what is now home.

"This is where I live. This is where my kids live," Reynolds said. "I'm excited about coaching a couple of blocks away from my house."

Being a part of the community goes a long way in making the football program part of your family, which is what Reynolds wants.

"Keeping my football family close and involved with my family is very important to me," Reynolds said. "We've done pool parties. We've done cookouts. We did Super Bowl parties the last few years.

"That's become really important to me. The thing I've learned the most is this life is not about you. It's about the relationships you can create and the impact you can make on people around you."

Reynolds, an offensive lineman, played at Jacksonville University, graduating in 2008.

He returned to Bradford High and coached one year as an assistant under Steve Hoad. He then coached as a graduate assistant at Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota, in 2009.

The son of Steve and Brenda Reynolds returned to BHS and coached two years as an assistant under Derek Chipoletti. He was hired as head coach when Chipoletti resigned following the 2011 season.

Reynolds went 10-11 (including an 0-1 record in the playoffs) at BHS before resigning after the 2013 season. He worked under Chipoletti again for two years at Oakleaf and was hired as the Knights' head coach when Chipoletti resigned after the 2015 season.

Oakleaf went 9-11 under Reynolds before the school decided to make a change at the position.

Reynolds also worked at Buchholz under Head Coach Mark Whittemore and was an assistant under Chipoletti again at St. Johns Country Day.

"My relationship with (Chipoletti) is priceless," Reynolds said. "Every stop he's ever been a head coach at, I worked with him at some point. He really taught me a lot about

how to see the game and about trying to get the best out of your players."

Reynolds added that the knowledge of the game he gained from working with Chipoletti has been valuable.

Before going to KHHS, Reynolds already had a relationship with Dickinson. He said the two often communicated when he was at Oakleaf, describing them as like-minded coaches working in the same county.

"He's been a close friend for many years," Reynolds said.

Dickinson believes Reynolds has what it takes to lead the program.

"He's very knowledgeable. He knows the game," Dickinson said, adding, "I'm expecting some good things from him."

Having had the chance to work alongside Dickinson has shown Reynolds how important it is and how rewarding it is to build relationships with the players you coach.

"In my time with Chuck here, I've learned a lot about really rewarding the kids and loving the kids," Reynolds said. "Relationships are huge with Chuck."

And they're now huge with Reynolds. Yes, he wants to win

games, but as he's matured as a person, he's learned that football is about so much more. He wants to encourage players to serve God and to strive to have a positive impact on others. He also wants to help teach them how to handle adversity in life.

"Our goals for our players are to become incredibly productive citizens in our community and to understand that tough times never last, but tough people do," Reynolds said. "We want them to become great servant leaders. Football is just a segue to push that message."

Reynolds said he'd like to incorporate more football-specific training in the offseason, such as participation in seven-on-seven events. He'd also like to start having events that bring KHHS football alumni together.

As for what happens on the field, the new head coach just wants to build off past success.

"I want to take this thing and keep moving it forward," Reynolds said. "We won our first-ever playoff game in 2021. Let's take the next step."

Burke believes Reynolds is the coach to do that.

"He has a lot of ideas, dreams, goals and plans for our program that we believe will be very successful," she said.

New year, new council, old issues in Lawtey

BY MELISSA PYLE
Telegraph Staff Writer

LAWTEY — The city of Lawtey convened its first meeting of 2023 on Jan. 3, and almost every seat was full at the meeting, with many residents there eager to see the two new council members sworn in later in the evening.

Mayor Jimmie Scott opened the floor to questions and one resident, Vyunda Strong, stood up, and confronted the council for neglecting to show up at the recent Bradford County Legislative Delegation Meeting on Dec. 19.

Strong said when she realized no one from Lawtey's council was there to represent, she stood up for representation of Lawtey when the city was called.

Strong was openly frustrated with the lack of representation because the city of Lawtey has been in a long process of securing funds for much needed infrastructure projects.

With the topic of money at the forefront, Councilwoman Emily Hoffman spoke up and voiced her concerns over transparency in the billing and bookkeeping of the city. There was a lot of mumbling amongst the crowd when Hoffman began to speak



Virginia Warner sworn in as Lawtey City Councilwoman by Judge Tatum Davis.

on these issues and there were some accusations directed towards the job of the city and its bookkeeping practices.

This prompted Mayor Scott to request to schedule another meeting for Jan. 23 where these personal issues and complaints can be handled amongst the employees and the council members and he insisted there

was no point in wasting any more time at the public meeting in progress.

Councilman Tim Maulkey stated that an ad had been placed for a new maintenance man, but there were some who disagreed over the best place to advertise for this job. Councilwoman Hoffman asked the crowd if they had any suggestions for better advertising and no one had any suggestions.

Mulkey also said that the grant for new water meters was in the works and this should be moving forward soon. Scott said this has been several years in the making and the city is still in the process of securing all funds needed for the project.

City Clerk Lisa Harley said that many of the grants are needed just to secure funds for design and engineering fees for these projects.

Police Chief Jerry Feltner presented Nathan Blom with the keys to the new police truck. Feltner also discussed a new ordinance that will impose violations for semi-trucks who use "jake brakes" unnecessarily.

This prompted City Councilwoman Debra Norman to ask if this fine would be for any time a loud brake is used and stated there are times when a large truck has to quickly make stops. Chief Feltner assured her that was not the case, but that tickets and fines would be for unnecessary use, and only if the driver is caught by a law enforcement officer would a fine be issued.

Ben Carter of Lawtey's Fire and Rescue Department reported that in the months of November and December there were 426 calls, 11 structure fires, two brush fires, and 295 medical calls. Also



Amy Blom recites the oath of office.

mentioned was the flooding issue at the firehouse had been resolved since the completion of a new drainage pipe.

Councilwoman Debra Norman used much of her allotted time to give what she called, "a heartfelt speech" to the citizens of Lawtey. She stated that she would love to see a nice welcome sign installed for Lawtey, see the community work together to help others, have a city website built, and address the stray animal problem.

Councilwoman Sabrina Roberts was absent due to illness, but it was announced that there will be a Recreation Department meeting on Jan. 9.

The regular meeting was adjourned and a new meeting began with the swearing in of two new Lawtey Councilwomen, Amy Blom and Virginia Warner. As the first order of business,

the two new council members began their positions by taking part in the re-election of Mayor Jimmie Scott. The new council also voted Virginia Warner to be the new vice mayor. Aaron Dukes was the only candidate for city attorney and he agreed to stay on in this position.

Mayor Scott moved on to the appointment of city departments. Those appointments are as follows: Scott—finance; Warner—water and sewer; Blom—streets and sanitation; Norman—recreation; Hoffman—fire department.

As the meeting was coming to a close, the booking issues were brought up again by Norman. She questioned the credentials of the bookkeeper and after a few heated moments, said she would be airing her concerns at the special scheduled meeting on Jan. 23.

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More repeat findings in Starke audit could lead to state action

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — Starke's financial audit for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2021, has been delivered, and several material weaknesses continue to be identified.

There were nine material weaknesses identified in internal controls, eight of which were previously revealed. Most of those weaknesses have now been identified three years in a row, which could invite state involvement.

According to Florida Statutes, the state's auditor general shall notify the Legislative Auditing Committee of any audit report indicating that an audited entity has failed to take full corrective action in response to a recommendation that was included in the two preceding audit reports.

The committee could direct the city to provide a written statement about why corrections weren't made and whether they will be. If the committee isn't satisfied with the explanation, the mayor and other city officials could be required to appear at a committee hearing. If the committee finds there is no justifiable reason for not correcting the material weaknesses, there may be further investigation and possibly sanctions like revenue withholding.

CPA James Halleran with James Moore said these weaknesses could lead to a material misstatement in the city's financial statements which might not be detected in a timely manner by the current processes and controls.

Among the eight previously identified weaknesses was the reconciliation of account balances. Several accounts required adjustments, and capital asset and long-term debt had not been recorded. These balances need to be reviewed monthly.

The city also needs a process to perform and document a review of manual journal entries to guard against unauthorized entries.

The city needs to review user account access as well to ensure access is restricted to authorized employees. The system needs to enforce password complexity and lock out access after multiple failed attempts to log in.

Utility billing review was mentioned again because of the utility clerk's ability to enter rates and complete write-offs without a formal process. A review was also recommended when it was discovered that a couple of older accounts were not paying the current rates.

Auditors again recommended that accounting policies and procedures be established and maintained after the loss of

multiple experienced upper management positions.

Each of the above weaknesses has now been documented three times.

For the second time, auditors found inaccuracies in the city's schedule of expenditures for federal awards related to money received for sewer rehabilitation. Auditors found some grant amounts had been improperly excluded and recommended staff familiarize themselves with the process. The city needs to review the documents before submitting them to auditors. State and federal awards above \$750,000 require a separate audit, the scope of which is determined by the documentation provided by the city.

Auditors again found the city was not fully following the documentation requirements of its cash disbursement policy, including obtaining an approved materials requisition and purchase order for purchases under \$1,000.

The final material weakness was documented when auditors tested the city's accrued annual leave and sick time policy. The policy does not define if the city should payout annual leave for employees who leave the city. The policy indicates that sick leave be paid out upon retirement, however, but does not define what qualifies as retirement.

Auditors found the city is paying out all employees who leave, not just retired employees. They recommended the city review and update the policy.

The weaknesses above relate to internal controls, but the auditors have also made recommendations related to the city's financial condition and management that have not been addressed. These include lacking a policy specifying what percentage unassigned and unrestricted funds should be within the general fund. There are also completely depreciated assets that have not been removed.

Checks are always written out of the utility fund instead of the fund the expenditure relates to. Activity in those other funds is recorded separately. Auditors have recommended a pooled cash system that allows payments to be made directly from the proper fund.

These are also repeat recommendations found in two prior audits.

Last, there was a comment on budgetary noncompliance. Auditors noticed the general fund had expenditures/transfers in excess of what was budgeted. Expenditures need to be tracked more closely and budget amendments made when necessary.

Within the city's response,

management agreed with each of the auditor's findings and offered a brief response on how each is being addressed. This included regular review of general ledger account balances and manual journal entry transactions. As the city migrates to a new software system this year, management assured staff would be trained. Policies and procedures will be developed through the transition to assist with workflow and training. The personnel policy will be updated to deal with leave and sick time payouts. The city will also follow the recommendations to establish pooled cash funds and monitor spending more closely.

Among the financial highlights were reports on the city's net position and fund balance.

Net position is all the city's assets and deferred outflows minus its liabilities and deferred inflows. Starke's net position increased almost 6% over last year to nearly \$29.7 million. Nearly \$4.87 million of that is unrestricted, while the remainder represents capital assets and assets restricted or assigned to a particular purpose. Capital assets (land, buildings, infrastructure, vehicles, equipment) account for 81% of all city assets.

The net position increase for 2021 was, however, nearly \$2 million less than the net position increase reported in 2020.

Auditors further explained that 2020's net position had to be restated because it was based on incorrect figures related to accruals for accounts payable and construction in progress.

The more familiar fund balance increased slightly in 2021. The combined ending fund balance was nearly \$3.6 million, up \$122,040 from 2020. Of that amount, \$722,542 was unassigned and available to spend.

Singling out the general fund, there was a slight drop from \$1.36 to \$1.15 million. Combining the assigned and unassigned funds within the general fund shows the city could cover more than two months' worth of expenditures with cash on hand. A minimum of two months is recommended.

The utility fund grew from nearly \$22.8 million to almost \$24.5 million. Around \$21 million of that represents infrastructure, but \$3.7 million is unrestricted and available to spend.

The city paid down outstanding loans and notes payable (including vehicle loans and loans from state and federal agencies) by \$212,404 but incurred additional debt of \$122,073. Overall, the decrease of \$90,331 was a decrease of 5.5% of all debt.

SPENDING Continued from page 1

several alarming expenditures. The city has a few VISA and gas cards, some with high credit lines.

"Dale Walker has two VISA cards, one with a \$15,000 credit line and the other with a \$7,500 credit line," Hendrix reported to the commission. "In addition, the public works director, the deputy city clerk and the assistant public works director all have cards with a \$7,500 credit line."

In looking over the statements, Hendrix said she found charges on Walker's cards for purchases from Kirkland's, Hobby Lobby, Michaels, the listing fee for Walker on the Top 100 Registry, a cup of coffee at the recent boat races, several lunches with employees and a \$1,700 purchase of chairs (not brought before the council for approval of the expenditure). She said there was a charge for \$242 for "dinner with a former employee" during the time Walker was in Austin, Texas, for a conference.

In the public works department, the workers are allowed to wear jeans as part of their work uniforms. Hendrix said she found charges in the card assigned to the public works director for jeans ranging in price

between \$69.95-76.95 per pair and that six pairs were purchased at one time at the mall. She also noted public works employee purchases on a city credit card for jeans in excess of \$50 per pair. The public works director also made purchases at Dunkin Donuts, Chick-fil-a and for smoothie drinks on the city card assigned to him.

In city hall, the accounts payable specialist's card showed purchases for \$40-60 in candy monthly, book club expenses for several employees, the purchase of Happy Belly Tea, snacks and 84-count packages of coffee. Also on the card was a monthly expenditure of almost \$300 a month for Centel Internet, which Hendrix questioned since the city gets internet service from Windstream. When asked, Walker said it was for security, but Hendrix countered that the city already paid for internet security services from another company. Another recent purchase was for a new computer printer costing \$400. Hendrix asked Walker if the item had been added to the inventory of city assets and he said he did not know. Finance Director John Sapp said there was no such running inventory being kept and Hendrix countered that if that was so items could "just disappear."

Hendrix asked Walker whether he reviewed the credit card

statements and he responded that he did not do so every month.

Other questionable spending reported to the commission by Hendrix included \$211 for 50 Christmas cards sent to employees, commission members and others, the fact that city workers were paying sales tax on purchases at stores like Home Depot and Lowes despite the fact that the city is tax exempt (accounts were never set up to allow this), the doubling of employee longevity awards in January, and a stipend for every city employee towards the cost and service for their cell phones.

The other city commissioners listened to Hendrix's report with little comment, but Fred Sirmones seemed shocked by what he was hearing and on two occasions asked how it was going to be addressed.

City Attorney John Maines was asked about dealing with the situation, and he said the first thing would be to freeze the merit raises until it could be decided how to deal with them and to collect the credit cards and put a moratorium on their use until the city could establish a policy governing it. Until then, he said the city would have to pre-approve expenditures using a purchase order system. The commission voted unanimously on motions from Hendrix to take both measures.

One of the main problems with the finances of the city, according to Hendrix was that most of the checks and balances on spending had been removed from the city processes, greatly reducing the city's transparency. She noted the lack of a city procurement (purchasing) officer. The last one in place with the city was fired during the first few months of Walker's hiring and never replaced, with Walker taking on the duties of the position. Maines said the commission could approve the reinstatement of the position and make that person answerable to the commission, giving monthly reports at its meetings.

Hendrix also commented on the fact that there seemed to be no 1099 forms for Walker's fringe benefits, most notably that the city paid both his rent and provided him with a vehicle (he does not own a personal vehicle). She said that he put an average of 1,000 miles per month on the vehicle (in a two square-mile town) and that the gas receipts

would seem to indicate that the city was paying for most, if not all, the fuel.

The commission agreed that there was a need to look more closely at the city's financial position and spending and decided that they would set the time and date for another workshop on the issue at their next regular meeting on Jan. 16.

In comments from citizens at the end of the meeting, the discontent of citizens concerning the property swap with Welch's Auto Repair, with him trading his business property on Main Street for the public works property behind the fire station. Both local Pastor Patrick Maxwell and city resident Rondall Huggins questioned the transaction, which was approved by the commission. Both noted that the difference in value would likely be significant and asked if the city desired to liquidate the public works property why there were no bids. (According to the Union County Property Appraisers Office the property on Main Street has an

assessed value of \$57,190, while the old public works location has an assessed value of \$135,544.)

The trade is costing the city taxpayers as much as \$100,000 for the construction of a new public works building and yard, the cost of which included the purchase of property. The city borrowed \$80,000 from its surplus/reserve funds to help finance the purchase of the property and construction, leaving those funds depleted, but with the agreement that the funds would be paid back into the fund over time, with interest.

As to the old location of Welch's Automotive, the city now owns it and plans to make use of a Brownfield grant to clean up any contamination issues and then attempt to sell the property. The location next door was leased by Welch for his tire business and that will move from Main Street to his new location soon.

Call Street detoured Jan. 13 through 16

STARKE — As part of the Florida Department of Transportation's Starke Railroad Overpass Interchange Improvements project, Call Street (State Road 230) between U.S. 301 and St. Clair Street will be closed for resurfacing from 6:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 13, to 6 a.m. Monday, Jan. 16.

Please plan for alternate parking as on-street parking along Call Street will not be available during resurfacing operations. This will primarily affect diners and movie-goers. Parking is available downtown, including the parking lot across from Starke City Hall on Thompson Street, Santa Fe College and First Baptist Church.

Traffic will be detoured during the closure as follows:

—Westbound Call Street traffic will turn left onto Water Street, right onto State Road 100, right onto U.S. 301 and proceed to Call Street.

—Eastbound Call Street traffic will turn right onto southbound U.S. 301, left onto S.R. 100, left onto Water Street and right onto Call Street.

—There will be a single lane closure on Call Street from Water Street to St. Clair Street with flaggers present to direct traffic.

—A large vehicle detour will remain in place for eastbound State Road 100 from U.S. 301 to Water Street. Eastbound S.R. 100 large vehicle traffic will turn right onto southbound U.S. 301, then turn left onto SE 144th Avenue (Hazen Street) and continue onto SE 144th Street to S.R. 100.

In coming weeks, downtown will experience additional lane closures, each lasting two to three weeks, while work is completed on Walnut and Thompson streets and their intersections with Call Street.

—Beginning at 7 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 23, traffic

on eastbound Call Street, northbound and southbound Thompson Street, and northbound Walnut street will be detoured for two to three weeks.

—After, traffic on westbound Call Street and southbound Thompson and Walnut street will be detoured for two to three weeks.

You can see the full flyer with images and detours at <http://shorturl.at/abcK0>.

Completion of the \$23.6 million overpass project is expected this summer.

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Spire's IGA named among nation's top IGA stores

BY TRACY LEE TATE
Times Staff Writer

LAKE BUTLER — Lake Butler's own Spire's IGA has been named one of eight stores in the U.S. (from about 1,600 stores) as a Retailer of the Year for the very first time. As a 2023 national winner, the store is in the running for Retailer of the Year on the international level at a competition in Las Vegas in February. This competition will put the American winners in contest with the international winners, chosen from about 6,000 stores.

The award is based on business history, reputation and community service/involvement with stores being nominated by their distributors. It comes with national recognition in the chain, a framed certificate commemorating the honor and a \$500 check for a celebration with the store's employees. IGA President John Ross visited Spire's in Lake Butler personally on Jan. 8 to tour the store, meet the owners and employees and



Mike Spire's with the certificate acknowledging the recognition of his store as one of eight IGA National Retailers of the Year, along with the sign letting his customers know the good news.

present the award certificate and check. "I'm excited and happy about

receiving this award, but I'm not really the type that wants to draw attention," said Spire's owner

Mike Spire's. "Think about the history — my great-grandfather, my grandfather and my dad.

My wife, Sharlene, and I have worked really hard over the years to make things right and we are still working to keep things as they should be."

Spire's treats his employees like family and believes that happy employees project their satisfaction while working. The store has very little turnover of employees and has served as a first job for many local young people.

He also believes in treating his customers and community well, offering "a good product at a good price" and supporting the local community through sponsorships and donations, many which enrich the lives of local youth. That loyalty to the community is returned every day.

"Since the COVID-19 problems, when we stayed open and did all we could to keep the shelves stocked with what people needed our business has been steadily increasing," Spire's said. "The whole dynamic has changed. We got people what they needed and they remember

that." IGA is the largest independent grocers in the world. The letters stand for International Grocery Alliance. Spire's Market, which has carried several names and had several locations in the years since it was founded in 1926 by G.W. Spire's, became an IGA market in the late 1960's in its present location. The store has seen four generations of ownership by the Spire's family, first G.W. Spire's, then Fernie, then Tommy and now Mike.

Mike and Sharlene are looking forward to their upcoming trip to Las Vegas in February, not only attending the international competition but also the convention of the National Grocery Association on the same weekend. Mike said they look forward to meeting grocers from all over the world to see different perspectives on the business from different countries. Spire's employees are looking forward to seeing the family return from Las Vegas, with the promised party set for a few days after their return.

Library says goodbye to two dedicated employees

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — Bradford Library Director Robert Perone said it was a privilege to recognize two longtime county employees on the occasion of their retirement.

Mary Robbins brought the library to the community as its outreach specialist and bookmobile driver for 21 years. This included carrying materials to people who could not leave their homes and delivering materials in braille to the blind. According to Perone, no one ever had to worry about the bookmobile being on time, or even its maintenance. She also handled some of the library's book collections, he said.

"She did that for 21 years, and did an excellent job," Perone said, tipping his hat to her unique sense of humor and style. Her Halloween costumes earned her the nickname "Scary Mary"

among her colleagues.

It was 44 years ago — Dec. 11, 1978 — that Cyndy Weeks began working at the library. She served the people, but the library staff as well. She is the one they went to with their questions, and if she didn't know the answer, she knew who to call, Perone said.

Weeks oversaw and supervised technical services — including ordering and processing books and materials — the children's department and circulation. She welcomed many to the library to participate popular programs.

Perone said when he became director in 2008, he didn't know what he was doing. Weeks, who had years of experience working with multiple directors and even served as interim director more than once, taught him the ropes.

As grateful as he was for that, it was his friendship with Weeks and Robbins that choked him up as he spoke to the county

commission Jan. 3. The entire library staff was there for the presentation, and Perone said it had to be so, in recognition of the friendship they all share and to see their departing friends honored in this way.

Perone said he had no more words to describe what Robbins and Weeks have meant to the library and the community.

"I will tell you they will be greatly missed, and there's a huge hole in our staff right now that we're trying to fill," he said. "If you come in the library and things are a little off kilter, please be patient with us."

As a former supervisor who knows the value of finding dedicated employees who love their job, Commission Chairwoman Diane Andrews concurred Robbins and Weeks will be greatly missed, and she thanked them for their years of service.



Library Director Robert Perone made a presentation to two longtime employees, Cyndy Weeks and Mary Robbins.

Speech contest Saturday

The 87th Annual American Legion National High School

Oratorical Contest will be held this Saturday, Jan. 14, at the American Legion Post located at 715 Edwards Road in Starke. The Contest begins at 10 A.M. Two candidates will participate

this year. Their subject is the United States Constitution, and they are competing to advance to the state and national contests, with financial prizes of up to \$2,500 at state and \$25,000 at

nationals. High school students are encouraged to attend this event if they are interested in public speaking and to support our candidates. Home-schooled and

charter school students are also encouraged to attend.

The district contest will follow the local on Jan. 28 in Crystal River, and then the northern area contest will precede the state competition. Those who make it to the national contest will receive an all-expenses paid trip for two to Indianapolis.

that the museum will be open on Fridays now, as well as Tuesdays. Jean Brannen will be keeping the museum open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Friday. On Tuesdays, Peggy Cason, Dave Mecusker and Bob Driggers will open the museum from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The sale of the book "Celebrating 100 Years of Union County Florida" has gone very well. There are 23 books left. If you would like one they are \$40 and can be purchased with cash or check on Tuesday or Friday at the museum location, 410 W. Main St. in Lake Butler.

Union County Museum hours announced

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Valerie Vanessa McCutchen

Second defendant pleads in murder conspiracy case

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
 Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE— The second of three defendants in a plot to kill a witness in a murder trial has pled to a lesser charge, leaving her son as the sole defendant in the case.

Valerie Vanessa McCutchen, 60, of Starke pleaded no contest to unlawful use of a two-way communications device. The State dropped the charge of conspiracy to commit first-degree murder.

Under her plea agreement, the defendant was sentenced to three years in prison, followed by three years probation.

Starke police arrested Valerie McCutchen on March 10, 2022, along with her son Demetrius Dewayne Wilson and her daughter N'Crisha T. McCutchen, for conspiracy to commit murder.

Police accused the trio of plotting to kill Tremika Presley of Alachua, a key witness scheduled to testify in Demetrius Dewayne Wilson's April trial.

During that trial, Wilson, 28, was found guilty of

manslaughter and conspiracy to commit first-degree murder for his involvement in the shooting death of 19-year-old Blake Williams on July 10, 2020. He was sentenced to 45 years in prison.

Starke Police Lt. Michael Rooney wrote in a report that after Presley testified in the trial of Marcus Whitfield, the trigger man in Williams's murder, he believed the witness was being pressured not to testify in Wilson's trial, whom police said paid Whitfield to shoot Williams.

Rooney wrote in a sworn complaint that while monitoring calls between Wilson and his mother, the two discussed the witness and the fact that if Presley could not be located, the state had no case against Wilson.

Rooney added that Wilson and Valerie McCutchen talked about an Orlando man named "unc."

The officer documented further communications between Wilson, Valerie McCutchen, and Wilson's sister. Rooney wrote that he believed the family was hiring "unc" to kill Presley.

In a press release, Starke police said officers stopped the McCutchens as the two women drove to Orlando to meet with the hit man.

In December, N'Crisha T. McCutchen reached a similar deal with prosecutors as her mother. However, N'Crisha was sentenced to one year and one day in prison, followed by four years probation.

Both women agreed to assist prosecutors in their case against Demetrius Dewayne Wilson. His trial is scheduled for January.

Food distribution at Church of God

There will be a food distribution at Starke Church of God by Faith, 730 Old Lawtey Road, on Thursday, Jan. 19, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Drive-thru only. Distribution may begin earlier, depending on the arrival time of the Farm Share delivery truck.

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Crime

Recent arrests in Bradford, Union and Clay

The following individuals were arrested recently by local law enforcement officers in Bradford, Union or Clay (Keystone Heights-area) counties. All defendants are considered innocent until convicted in a court or until pleading guilty or no contest. Information in this report is from law enforcement agencies and court documents, which are public records.

Bradford

Hid bullet within bra

Precious Monique Aikens, 22, of Cross City was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 1 for smuggling contraband into a prison.

According to an arrest report, the defendant was visiting an inmate at Lawtey Correctional Institution when she was subjected to a search by Department of Corrections personnel.

"Precious was asked to shake her bra for any loose items, at which point a 9-millimeter bullet fell out of Precious's chest area," wrote reporting officer Wyatt Konkol.

Konkol added that Aikens claimed the bullet was in her bra by accident and asked the DC officer searching her not to report the discovery.

Abused elderly man

Amanda Nichole Breaux, 33, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 5 for aggravated abuse of an elderly person or disabled adult.

According to an arrest report, video showed the defendant trying to persuade an elderly person to get up and sit in a chair. The video showed Breaux aggressively yelling at the victim and grabbing him by the shirt in an attempt to get him to stand up.

"Amanda continued to yell for (the victim) to get up at which point she gets aggravated and goes into another room to grab a belt," wrote reporting officer Wyatt Konkol. "She then used the belt to place around (the victim's) neck and started

choking him. Amanda starts yelling for him to get up and then strikes him with the belt on the top of his head multiple times."

The victim was transported to UF Health Shands due to his inability to move. A medical worker said he had a bruise on his arm and a mark on his forehead.

Konkel added that the defendant accounted for her actions by saying she had reached her breaking point with the victim.

Dorian Lamar Council, 38, of Cartersville, Georgia was arrested on Jan. 1 for DUI and driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Found cigarettes in unlocked car

Gretchin Dianna Crews, 47, of Hampton was arrested by Starke police on Jan. 4 for burglary and larceny.

According to an arrest report, citizens reported a female running through traffic on U.S. 301 between McDonald's and Bradford Square. A Bradford deputy said he saw the defendant nearly struck by a vehicle as she crossed the road.

Reporting officer Frank Krol wrote in an arrest report that the deputy saw Crews enter a vehicle parked near Harbor Freight, grab a pack of cigarettes within the car and then try to start the vehicle.

"Crews stated spontaneously that she just got into the vehicle because she saw it was unlocked," wrote Krol. "I made contact with the vehicle owner who advised he did not give anyone permission to be inside his vehicle and he does not know the female."

Left traffic crash because he was scared

Devin Wayne Fladung, 21, of Jacksonville was arrested by Bradford deputies and Starke police on Dec. 31 for DUI and hit and run.

According to an arrest report, Starke police responded to a traffic crash at U.S. 301 and Washington Street, where the owner of a blue Toyota Corolla said she was slowing for a red traffic signal when she was struck from behind. The collision

forced the Toyota into the rear of a gray Mini Cooper that was stopped at the intersection.

The owner of the Toyota said the vehicle that struck her then drove through the parking lot of Verizon Wireless and fled west on Washington Street.

The drivers of the Toyota and Mini Cooper reported no injuries. Reporting officer Jarred Altman wrote that while interviewing the victims at the intersection, Bradford Deputy Trinton Lovell reported that he had stopped a gray Chevrolet Malibu with heavy body damage to the front of the vehicle at Northwest 55th Avenue and Northwest County Road 229.

"Deputy Lovell stated he made contact with the driver, Devin Fladung who admitted to leaving the scene of the accident because he was scared," wrote Altman.

Altman added that Lovell arrested the defendant for DUI.

Victim tracks down stolen ring

Hannah Marie Ford, 43, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 3 for possession of drug equipment, possession of marijuana, larceny, fraud and dealing in stolen property.

According to an arrest report, an acquaintance of the defendant told deputies she allowed Ford to stay with her and later discovered two rings missing from her vehicle. She suspected Ford stole the jewelry and found one ring at Lightning Pawn in Keystone Heights.

Reporting officer Cody Wells wrote that a worker at Lightning Pawn suggested he try Lending Bear in Starke to find the second ring.

Wells reported that he found the second item: a 14-carat, gold marquise-cut diamond ring at the Starke pawn shop.

The deputy added that the defendant's fingerprints were on the receipts for both transactions and Lightning Pawn had a video of Ford selling the ring to the Keystone Heights store.

Wishes victim Merry Christmas, then steals car

Trenton Scott Foreman, 23, of Hampton was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 2

for disorderly intoxication and vehicle theft.

According to a warrant affidavit, the victim told Bradford deputies Foreman arrived at her house on Dec. 23 on a bicycle and wished her Merry Christmas.

The victim added that after she fed Foreman grits on her porch, he asked for a ride to Sampson City.

"(The victim) told Foreman she would give him a ride but needed to put warmer clothes on," wrote reporting officer Lekiesha Lewis. "Foreman was in the vehicle waiting for (the victim). When (the victim) went outside to take Foreman to Sampson City, she noticed the vehicle was gone."

The victim added that she was concerned because when Foreman arrived at her house on the bicycle, he was consuming a beer.

Deputies later arrested the defendant at the Bradford Motel and Campground on Temple Avenue.

Elijah Franklin Gainey, 30, of Hampton was arrested on Jan. 6 for withholding support.

Discharged from hospital, broke into nurse's car

Landon Dale Green, 19, of Starke was arrested by Starke police on Dec. 31 for burglary.

According to an arrest report, a security officer at HCA Florida Starke Emergency pointed out the defendant to police when officers responded to a burglary call.

Reporting officer Johnathon Guinn wrote that Green was in possession of a flashlight and \$4 when he put the defendant into the back of his patrol car.

"I asked Landon if he had been in any vehicles," wrote Guinn. "Landon stated he did get into a vehicle; however, he did not take anything."

A nurse told Guinn that as she was walking to her car after her shift, she noticed the vehicle's doors open. When she got closer, she saw someone in the car with a flashlight and recognized Green as someone she had just discharged from the hospital.

The victim told Guinn she could see nothing missing from her car.

Another nurse at the facility

told the officer that Green may have been in another vehicle, adding that as she drove up to the facility, she saw the doors of a truck open, with someone inside the vehicle.

"I was informed the owner of the truck had been transported out of county and is intubated with a tube," wrote Guinn. "Due to this, I am unable to make contact with the person and inform him of the burglary. I am also unable to know if anything is missing from the truck."

Amy Nicole Hall, 45, of Hampton was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 3 for possession of marijuana.

Robert Jackson, 39, of Lawtey was arrested on Jan. 5 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Lavern Lenard Marks, 40, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 5 for contempt of court, sexual assault, aggravated assault, battery and out-of-county warrants.

According to court papers, in August 2021, the victim told deputies the defendant sexually battered her after accusing her of cheating.

Joseph Henry Marone, 44, of Hernando was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 6 for vehicle theft.

Michael Rodney McCarter, 24, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 3 for failure to appear.

Brandolen Devon Miller, 31, of Havana was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 3 for arson.

Simon Leonard Mitchell, 54, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 4 for possession of cocaine.

Ryan Cain Newell, 36, of Melrose was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 5 for aggravated assault, resisting an officer, false imprisonment and out-of-county warrants.

Jered Jerome Nichols, 43, of Orange Park was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 6 for possession of cocaine and selling cocaine.

Erica Shyan Redding, 32, of

Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on Jan. 3 for possession of marijuana and possession of drug equipment.

Walter Derek Watts, 33, of Starke was arrested by Starke police on Jan. 1 for a probation violation.

Kimberly Lynn Williams, 36, of Middleburg was arrested on Jan. 3 for DUI and vehicle theft.

Tajh Oneal Williams, 32, of Starke was arrested on Jan. 6 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Union

Jonathan Christopher Culverson, 30, of Raiford was arrested by Union deputies on Jan. 8 for battery.

Alexandria Mariana Mihelic, 27, of Gainesville was arrested by Union deputies on Jan. 6 for larceny.

Galven Wynn Parrish, 43, of Lake Butler was arrested by Union deputies on Jan. 5 for a probation violation.

Joseph W. Wooten, 32, was arrested by Union deputies on Jan. 9 for smuggling contraband into a prison.

Clay

Matthew Vincent Barron, 20, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on Jan. 5 for battery.

Gregory Wayne McDaniel, 54, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on Jan. 4 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Scott Cameron Morris, 30, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on Jan. 5 for sexual battery on a person at least 12 years of age and under 18 years of age.

Bryan Tanner Way, 31, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on Jan. 1 for possession of not more than 20 grams of marijuana.

STANDOFF

Continued from page 1

investigate the driver's claims, Newell opened the door, then immediately shut it. Moments later, a family member opened the door and told the lawmen that Newell's actions were just a joke.

"When asked if Newell was exiting the residence, (the family member said) he would not come out and said he did nothing wrong," wrote Lovell.

Another resident of the house told a deputy through a rear glass door that Newell was preventing anyone from leaving the residence and that the defendant was using one occupant as a shield.

Smith later identified the human shield as a 14-year-old child.

Deputies persuaded Newell to release the three occupants, leaving the defendant in the home alone.

Officers then deployed a chemical agent into the residence to force the defendant from the house.

The gas eventually forced Newell out. Smith said he ran out of the house screaming and refused commands to get down on his knees.

A beanbag round from a shotgun halted the defendant's advance.

Smith said a family member told him the defendant refused to leave the home because of past experiences with law enforcement.

"In speaking with her," Smith said, "he's been incarcerated several times. Looking at his criminal history, he's had a lot of violence: assaults, battery, those types of things."

Smith said he and his officers proceeded cautiously to avoid a

gun battle in the neighborhood with other homes nearby.

"We spent quite a bit of time trying to negotiate to get him to come out," the sheriff said. "Then we deployed tear gas, negotiated again, deployed some more gas, negotiated again, and finally, that worked."

The relative told Smith that Newell had recently been released from a Michigan prison.

"Him, knowing that he had the warrants," Smith said, "I don't know what was in his mind. Did he think we were going to go away? Who knows what he was thinking. To this day, he hasn't told us what he was thinking, but he wasn't coming out."

Conservation board meeting

The Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District will meet at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 17, at the Bradford County Extension Office. The agenda will include a discussion of the Cypress Run Boat Ramp and the Edwards Bottomlands Mitigation site located along Alligator Creek at the Edwards Road Park, and other BSWCD projects.

These meetings are open to the public. Contact Paul Still at 904-368-0291 or email stillpe@aol.com for more information.

Training for caregivers

Savvy Caregiver is a free seven-week course designed for caregivers who assist family members or friends with Dementia or Alzheimer's Disease.

The Savvy Caregiver Program is a unique approach to family caregiver education. The

program offers ideas gathered from many disciplines and sources. Throughout the series, caregivers are urged to learn, develop and modify approaches they can use to lessen their own stress and improve their particular caregiver situation.

The program will take place on Wednesdays from Feb. 18 to March 1, 1:30-3:30 p.m., at the Bradford County Senior Center. Call 904-368-3955 for more information or to sign up.



Russ WADE
Attorney at Law

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PD BY CSTF

Southside STEM teacher Chappell receives \$10K grant

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

You could say a Bradford County teacher was over the moon when she learned she was selected to receive a \$10,000 McDonald's Golden Grant to fund her Fly Me to the Moon and Beyond project.

Lilly Chappell, who's the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) teacher at Southside Elementary School was one of four \$10,000 recipients. The Golden Grants, which are presented by McDonald's stores in Florida and South Georgia, also presented seven \$5,000 grants, 12 \$2,500 grants and five \$1,000 grants.

In sharing the news as the guest speaker at the Kiwanis Club of Starke's Dec. 20, 2022, meeting, Chappell said she received an email telling her that she hadn't been selected to receive a grant. One day later, she was confused.

"The next day, I'm cooking dinner," she said. "While I'm waiting, I'm scrolling through my emails. This email pops up that says, 'Congratulations.' I



Ryleigh Gardner, a fourth-grader, looks at her robot while thinking over a problem. Photo by Cliff Smelley.

looked at my husband and said, 'I think I'm being punked.'"

Actually, it was just an honest mistake as the first email Chappell received had been sent in error. She had indeed been selected to receive a grant.

Some of the things Chappell will purchase with the grant

money include drones, a 3D printer and materials, and a LEGO Education SPIKE set, which incorporates LEGO building with technology and coding.

As part of her grant application, Chappell, who's in her second year of teaching Southside's STEM program, wrote that the project would build upon what her students have already been learning as well as helping to prepare them for career opportunities.

"Fly Me to the Moon and Beyond will continue my students' education in coding, building and creating tools to solve real-world problems," Chappell wrote. "Students 5-K will participate in rocketry, building different models of flight as well as learning to fly drones.

"Florida is the home of the (Kennedy) Space Center, and I am opening their experiences to promote their role as citizens and their future possibilities of careers in the space-exploration field. My students are a part of the generation that will see a human on the moon as well as on Mars."

Elementary wide STEM education

Every grade at Southside takes Chappell's STEM classes — she teaches approximately 130 students. Chappell said that's a big deal in a community where many families don't have the economic resources to enroll their children in extracurricular STEM camps and activities.

"The biggest thing is getting them involved in kindergarten, building those skills as they go," Chappell told the Kiwanis Club of Starke. "My goal is one day they have something at the middle school here in the next few years as well as carrying it over to the high school."



Southside Elementary School STEM teacher Lilly Chappell is presented with a \$10,000 McDonald's Golden Grant. Pictured (l-r) are Bradford Superintendent of Schools Will Hartley, Southside Assistant Principal Laurén Morgan, Chappell, Southside Principal Cassie Melvin and Mike Potapow of McDonald's.

Don't think that kindergarteners are too young to pick up on the concepts Chappell is teaching. She shared a story with the Kiwanis Club about a video a parent posted on Facebook of their kindergarten student explaining to her family the concepts of gravity while on a trampoline.

"She walked over to her younger sister, who's 3, and shoved her down," Chappell said. "She looked at her and said, 'That's gravity.'"

As the laughter subsided, Chappell said, "You never know what's going to stick with them."

Besides exposing children to STEM concepts at a young age, Chappell wants to encourage girls to continue to embrace and excel in science. She said girls tend to be good in science at the elementary age, only to go to middle school and discover "it's

not cool to be smart." Chappell careers in science. has posters in her room of women who've made successful

See STEM, page 12



Jonah Chiadikobi loads a program into his Ozobot in Lilly Chappell's fourth-grade STEM class at Southside Elementary. Photo by Cliff Smelley.



Fourth-grade students Landon Parker and Jayden Goodman work on finding the bugs in a program. Photo by Cliff Smelley.

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Jim Mitzel 904-263-9448
jamesmitzel57@gmail.com

UCHS boys cap 2-0 week in hoops with win over Baker Co.

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Thomas Williams scored eight of his 13 points in the fourth quarter as the Union County High School boys basketball team was able to hold off visiting Baker County for a 57-46 win on Jan. 7.

The Tigers (6-4) got off to a fast start, scoring 12 of the game's first 15 points. Gavin Jenkins hit a jumper off a Cole Andersen-Davis assist, followed by Johnthe' Nichols scoring off his own steal to put Union up 4-0. Jenkins later scored when he rebounded a missed three-pointer by the Wildcats and drove the length of the court for a dunk, while Williams made a pull-up jumper to make it 8-3. After a basket by Andersen-Davis, Jenkins scored off a Nichols steal for a 12-3 lead.

Union maintained at least a 10-point lead for most of the second quarter, but after Kam Paytee made a three-pointer to make the score 23-12, the Tigers committed turnovers on their final six possessions of the half. Baker failed to capitalize on most of those, but the Wildcats did cut Union's lead to seven entering halftime.

The Tigers put their struggles behind them as they began the second half with a 12-2 run.



Auntrell Ross corrals an offensive rebound in the Tigers' 57-46 win over Baker County. Photos by Cliff Smelley.

After Dee Williams made a free throw, Jenkins scored off his own steal. Andersen-Davis scored following another turnover and then added another basket after Baker's Jeremiah Mitchell made two free throws, making it a 30-18 game. Thomas Williams knocked down a three-pointer to push the lead to 15, while Dee Williams scored off his own steal

to make the score 35-18. Consecutive baskets by Jenkins helped the Tigers build a 22-point lead, but the Wildcats closed the third quarter with a 12-2 run, making the score 45-33 going into the fourth quarter. Thomas Williams' points in the final quarter were crucial

See UCHS, page 13



Union County went 2-0 before defeating Baker County to win the District 4-1A duals wrestling championship on Jan. 3.

Tigers win duals district title

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Union County High School had six wrestlers go 3-0 (including wins by forfeiture) in defeating Bishop Snyder, Beachside and finally Baker County to capture the District 4-1A duals championship on Jan. 3 in Lake Butler.

The Tigers began the tournament with an 82-0 win over Bishop Snyder, with six wrestlers winning their weight classes by pinning their opponents: Kale Waters (113 class), Jonathan Howard (120), Braden Adams (126), Rodney Barnett (145), Dante Johnson (152) and Colin Hadlock (160).

Danny Thornton (195) won by a 16-3 major decision, while the following earned wins due to Bishop Snyder forfeiting weight classes: Aidan Hancock (106), Ian Halfacre (132), Ethan Shea (138), Trenton Klein (170), Alexander Cortese (182), Dylan Lane (220) and Ephriam Frometa (285).

Union defeated Beachside 58-21 to advance to the championship match. The following accounted for 42 points by virtue of pinning their opponents: Waters, Halfacre, Johnson, Hadlock, Thornton, Lane and Frometa.

Howard defeated his opponent by an 11-3 major decision, while Shea and Klein earned wins by forfeitures.

The Tigers captured the championship trophy with a 48-34 win over Baker County. The following all won by pinning their opponents: Howard, Halfacre, Shea, Barnett, Cortese, Thornton, Lane and Frometa.

4 place at Joe Bees Battle of the Border

Halfacre was the runner-up in his weight class, while three of his teammates also placed at the Jan. 6-7 Joe Bees Memorial Battle of the Border at Yulee High School. Halfacre had a first-round bye. He pinned Booker's Jinkal Barot in 26 seconds and advanced to the championship match off a forfeit. There, he came up just short, losing 9-8 to The Villages' Blaise Nelson.

Barnett placed third. After a first-round bye, he pinned Columbia's Carlee Morrison in 29 seconds. Barnett was put into the consolation bracket when he was pinned in 2:12 by Bishop Kenny's Jack Raynor. After advancing by forfeit, he pinned Yulee's Andrew Watkins in 1:55 and then pinned Booker's Michael Arthur in 4:00. In the third-place match, Barnett pinned Mandarin's Antonio Ramos in 2:38.

Thornton also earned a third-place finish. He started by pinning Cocoa's Matthew Watters in 2:43. After advancing

by an injury default, he was pinned in 1:02 by Yulee's Alex Smith. Thornton pinned Bishop Kenny's Max Thallemer in 4:44 to reach the third-place match, where he pinned First Coast's Dean Marshall in 2:55.

Waters placed fourth. After a first-round bye, he pinned Toco Creek's Alessandro Bazan in 29 seconds. Waters was then pinned in 2:56 by Baker County's Jareb Lauramore. He bounced back with a sudden victory over teammate Jonathan Howard before getting pinned in 3:32 in the third-place match by Cocoa's Aaron Horr.

Three Union wrestlers were one win away from the third-place matches in their classes. Elijah Roberts (152) went 2-1 before being pinned in 2:59 by Baker County's Cedrick Larry, while Cortese went 2-1 before being pinned in 3:18 by Yulee's Phoenix Barbour-Yerka. Lane, coming off of pins of 1:11 and 1:32, was pinned in 1:26 by Booker's Jacquez King to finish with a 3-2 record.

Howard and Hadlock each went 2-2, while Shea and Klein each went 1-2.

5 Keystone wrestlers place at Marine Corps Challenge

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Phoenix Contes and Luke Graves finished as runners-up, while three of their Keystone Heights High School wrestling teammates also placed at the Jan. 7 Marine Corps Challenge at Jacksonville's Riverside High School.

Contes (132-pound class), after a first-round bye, pinned Beachside's Elijah Morvarid in 3:10 and then pinned Wolfson's Kai Molla in 1:48. In the championship match, he was pinned in 3:31 by Matanzas' Michael Fries.

Graves (145), after a first-round bye, pinned Riverside's Deshon Williams in 29 seconds and then pinned Matanzas' Mason Obama in 54 seconds. He was pinned in 1:39 in the championship match by Beachside's Grady Smith.

Joshua Dowling (285) placed third. After a first-round bye, he was pinned in 36 seconds by

Centennial's Jayden Jackson. Dowling then pinned four straight opponents: Godby's Amari Litchfield in 1:49, Matanzas' Carmine Lania in 2:07, Godby's Raheem Barge in 1:45 and Beachside's Caleb Barnes in 2:38.

Riley McGorty (120) placed fourth. After a first-round bye, he pinned Paxon's Ava Pinson in 33 seconds. McGorty was then pinned in 48 seconds by Paxon's Kyle Brown, but bounced back by pinning Wolfson's Cooper Mans in 1:19. He was pinned in 49 seconds in the third-place match by Stanton's Leonardo Torres.

Marcellus Beem (152) also earned a fourth-place finish. He had byes the first two rounds before getting pinned in 1:48 by Matanzas' Andrew Sanchez. Beem then advanced by forfeit before getting pinned in 1:47 by Godby's Tony Howie.

Jagger Lancaster (138), Talon Lybarger (160) and Huntley

Dennis (182) each went 2-2, while Rayne Pace (138), Seth Fernandez (160) and Damian Hill (170) each went 1-2.

Prior to the Marine Corps Challenge, Keystone went 1-2 at the District 4-1A duals tournament on Jan. 3 at Union County High School.

The Indians opened the tournament with a 40-18 loss to Toco Creek. Steven Raab won the 220-pound class with a pin, while Graves and Dowling each won by forfeiture.

Keystone won its first consolation-round match by defeating Palatka 36-30. Contes, Graves, Raab and Dowling all won by pinning their opponents. Fernandez and Atreyu Contes (106) each won by forfeiture.

In a 48-30 loss to Beachside, McGorty, Raab and Dowling won their classes by pinning their opponents. Pace and Henry Carhuayo (170) won by forfeit.

Curtis A. "Lex" Sanders Attorney at Law



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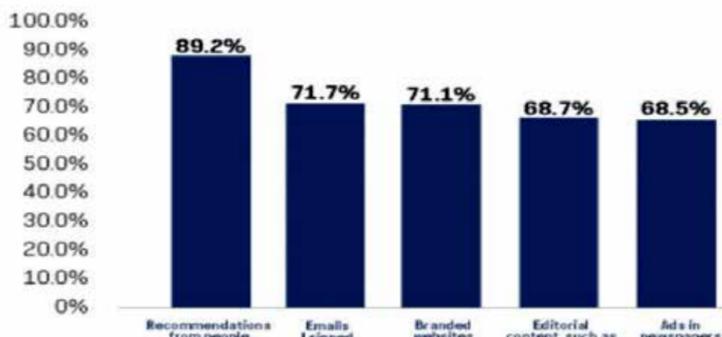
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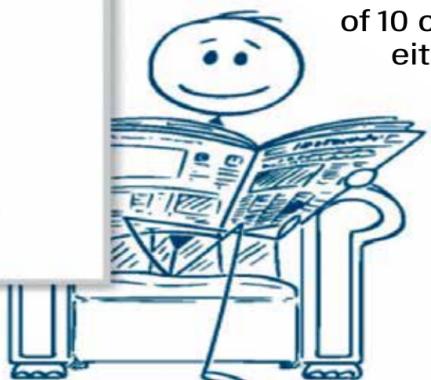
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Legal Notices

Legals for the week of Jan. 12, 2023

BRADFORD

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION
File No: 04-2022-CP-000126
IN RE: ESTATE OF LOUISE H. SLAWINSKI
Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The administration of the estate of LOUISE H. SLAWINSKI, deceased, whose date of death was June 1, 2022, is pending in the Circuit Court for BRADFORD County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 945 N. Temple Avenue, Starke, Florida 32091. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is January 5, 2023.

Attorney for Personal Representative: Marilyn A. Cangro Belo

Attorney for Marilyn A. Cangro Belo
Florida Bar Number: 22390
5745 SW 75th Street #363
Gainesville, Florida 32608
Telephone: (352) 448-4500
Fax: (352) 448-4510
E-Mail: lynn@mcbelolaw.com
Secondary E-Mail: eservice@mcbelolaw.com

Personal Representative: Marilyn A. Cangro Belo

5745 S.W. 75th Street, #363
Gainesville, Florida 32608

1/5 2tchg 1/12-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA CIVIL DIVISION
CASE NO. 22000423CAAXMX

WILMINGTON SAVINGS FUND SOCIETY, FSB, AS TRUSTEE OF STANWICH MORTGAGE LOAN TRUST F, Plaintiff,

vs. NELDA S. NEAL a/k/a NELDA SUE NEAL a/k/a NELDA NEAL, et. al. Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF ACTION
UNKNOWN HEIRS, DEVISEES, BENEFICIARIES, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, CREDITORS, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHER UNKNOWN PERSONS OR SPOUSES CLAIMING BY THROUGH, UNDER, OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF SILLAR J. ANDERSON a/k/a SILLAR JANE ANDERSON, DECEASED

Last Known Address: N/A
Current Address: N/A
Previous Address: N/A

TO: All other unknown parties claiming interests by through, under, and against THE HEREIN named defendant(s) who are not known to be dead or alive, whether same unknown parties may claim an interest as spouses, heirs, devisees, grantees, or other claimants

whose residence is unknown if he/she/they be living; and if he/she/they be dead, the unknown defendants who may be spouses, heirs, devisees, grantees, assignees, lienors, creditors, trustees, and all parties claiming an interest by through, under or against the Defendants, who are not known to be dead or alive, and all parties having or claiming to have any right, title or interest in the property described in the mortgage being foreclosed herein

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage has been filed against you, in regard to the following property in BRADFORD County, Florida, legally described as:

THE SOUTH 262.38 FEET OF THE EAST 1/2 OF THE NORTHWEST 1/4 OF THE NORTHEAST 1/4 OF SECTION 16, TOWNSHIP 6 SOUTH, RANGE 22 EAST, BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA, LESS THE EAST 166.02 FEET THEREOF; AND LESS AND EXCEPT ANY PART LYING WITHIN GRADED COUNTY ROAD, ALONG THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY THEREOF.

TOGETHER WITH THAT CERTAIN 2002 FLEETWOOD, CARRIAGE MANOR, MOBILE HOME BEARING IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS: GAFL175A73184CD21 & GAFL175B73184CD21.

This property is located at the street address of: 3365 Northwest 182nd Street, Starke, FL 32091

YOU ARE REQUIRED to serve a copy of your written defenses on or before _____ a date which is within 30 days after the first publication, if any, on McMichael Taylor Gray, LLC, Plaintiff's Attorney, whose address is 3275 W. Hillsboro Blvd., Suite 312, Deerfield Beach, Florida 33442, and file the original with this Court either before service on Plaintiff's Attorney, or immediately thereafter; otherwise, a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint or Petition.

This Notice shall be published once a week for two consecutive weeks in the

1/5 2tchg 1/12-BCT

BRADFORD COUNTY TELEGRAPH WITNESS my hand and the seal of the court on December 29, 2022.

DENNY THOMPSON
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
BY: K. Jenkins
Attorney for Plaintiff:
Annaliese Hayes DeLuca, Esq.
Audrey J. Dixon, Esq.
Ashley Elmore Draw, Esq.
MCMICHAEL TAYLOR GRAY, LLC
Attorney for Plaintiff
3550 Engineering Drive, Suite 260
Peachtree Corners, GA 30092
Phone: 404.474.7149
Email: ServiceFL@mtglaw.com

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, if you are an individual with a disability who needs an accommodation in order to participate in a court proceeding or other court service, program, or activity, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Requests for accommodations may be presented on this form: <https://circuit8.org/wp-content/uploads/ADA-Request-Form.pdf> in another written format, or orally. Requests may be submitted by using the form available; via email to ada@circuit8.org; by mail to ADA Coordinator, Alachua County Courthouse, 201 East University Avenue, Room 410, Gainesville, Florida 32601; or orally by phone at 352-337-6237. Please make request as far in advance as possible, but preferably at least seven (7) days before your scheduled court appearance or other court activity. If you are hearing or voice impaired please call 711.

1/5/23 2tchg 1/12-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO. 2022-CA-473

MARIAN L. BRIGHT, a/k/a MARIAN H. BRIGHT, Plaintiff,

VS. DEMOND STOKES, SR., a/k/a DEMOND L. STOKES, SR., Defendant.

NOTICE OF ACTION
TO: DEMOND STOKES, SR. a/k/a DEMOND L. STOKES, SR. Residence(s): Unknown
Last Known mailing address: 3880 Morning Glory Road Jacksonville, Florida 32210

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to quiet title on the following property in Bradford County, Florida:

The North 102.53 feet of the South 334.53 feet of the West 1/2 of the SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Section 25, Township 5 South, Range 22 East, Bradford County, Florida, said parcel being more particularly described as follows:

Commence at the Iron Pipe at the Southwest corner of said Section 25 and run N 01 deg 23 min 59 sec W, along the West line of said Section 25, a distance of 232.05 feet to an Iron Rod for the Point of Beginning; thence continue N 01 deg 23 min 59 sec W, along last said West line, 102.53 feet to an Iron Rod; thence run N 89 deg 46 min 25 sec E, 270.00 feet to an Iron Rod; thence run S 01 deg 23 min 59 sec E, 102.53 feet to an Iron Rod; thence run S 89 deg 46 min 25 sec W, 270.00 feet to the Point of beginning.

TOGETHER WITH a 30 foot wide Easement for Ingress, Egress and Access being in the SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of Section 26, Township 5 South, Range 22 East, Bradford County, Florida, lying 30 feet to the left of and parallel to the following described line and being more particularly described as follows:

Commence at an Iron Pipe at the Southeast corner of said Section 26 (also being the Southwest corner of Section 25) and run N 01 deg 23 min 59 sec W, along the East line of said Section 26, a distance of 232.05 feet to an Iron Rod for the Point of Beginning of said Easement; thence continue N 01 deg 23 min 59 sec W, along last said East line, 337 feet, more or less, to an existing fence post at the NE corner of the SE 1/4 of SE 1/4 of SE 1/4; thence run S 89 deg 29 min 35 sec W, along the North line of said SE 1/4 of SE 1/4 of SE 1/4, a distance of 150 feet, more or less, to a point; thence run N 01 22 min 58 sec W, 671 feet, more or less, to the Southerly R/W line of County Road N.E. 216th Street, and the End of said Easement Line together with that certain mobile home situate thereon. has been filed against you, and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on BERNARD SCHUMER, ESQUIRE, Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is: 480 Busch Drive, Jacksonville, Florida 32218, on or before _____ 2022 or within 35 days of the first date of publication of this notice, and file the original with the Clerk of this Court either before service on Plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise, a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint or petition.

WITNESS my hand and the seal of this Court on the 29th day of December, 2022.

Clerk of the Court
By: K. Jenkins
Deputy Clerk

1/12/23 4tchg 2/2-BCT

COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Bradford County Board of County Commissioners will have a board meeting on January 19, 2023 at 6:30 PM inside the county commission meeting room, located in the north wing section of the Bradford County Courthouse, 945 N. Temple Avenue, Starke, FL. A copy of the meeting agenda may be obtained from the Bradford County website: www.bradfordcountyfl.gov. Said meeting location is secured - no firearms or weapons are permitted.

1/12 1tchg-BCT

Notice is hereby given:
Michael A. Hoechst
Last known address of: 12769 SW 83rd Ave Starke FL 32091

You are hereby notified that your eligibility to vote is in question. You are

required to contact the Supervisor of Elections, in Starke, Florida, no later than thirty (30) days after the date of this publishing. Failure to respond will result in a determination of ineligibility by the Supervisor and your name will be removed from the statewide voter registration system.

Published one time in the Bradford County Telegraph
Amanda Seyfang
Bradford County Supervisor of Elections
P. O. Box 58
945 N. Temple Ave., Suite C
Starke, FL 32091
Date: January 9, 2023
1/12 1tchg-BCT

Notice is hereby given:
Joshua D. Padgett
Last known address of: 9707 US Highway 301S Hampton FL 32044

You are hereby notified that your eligibility to vote is in question. You are required to contact the Supervisor of Elections, in Starke, Florida, no later than thirty (30) days after the date of this publishing. Failure to respond will result in a determination of ineligibility by the Supervisor and your name will be removed from the statewide voter registration system.

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Amanda Seyfang
Bradford County Supervisor of Elections
P. O. Box 58
945 N. Temple Ave., Suite C
Starke, FL 32091
Date: January 9, 2023
1/12 1tchg-BCT

Notice is hereby given:
Makayia DM. Harris
Last known address of: 8439 SW County Road 225 Starke FL 32091

You are hereby notified that your eligibility to vote is in question. You are required to contact the Supervisor of Elections, in Starke, Florida, no later than thirty (30) days after the date of this publishing. Failure to respond will result in a determination of ineligibility by the Supervisor and your name will be removed from the statewide voter registration system.

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Bradford County Supervisor of Elections
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Published one time in the Bradford County Telegraph
Amanda Seyfang
Bradford County Supervisor of Elections
P. O. Box 58
945 N. Temple Ave., Suite C
Starke, FL 32091
Date: January 9, 2023
1/12 1tchg-BCT

Notice is hereby given:
Makayia DM. Harris
Last known address of: 8439 SW County Road 225 Starke FL 32091

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KHHS girls win, boys lose in soccer doubleheader

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Keystone Heights High School hosted Williston in a soccer doubleheader on Jan. 9, with the girls team winning 3-1 and the boys team losing 4-1.

The girls team fell behind 1-0 when Williston scored a goal in the 22nd minute. The Red Devils just missed on a goal attempt in the 35th minute that would've put them up 2-0.

Keystone's Kiersten Shaw was successful on a penalty kick in the 37th minute to even the score.

Shaw almost scored early in the second half when she corralled a rebound off an Alea Horton shot attempt, but instead, the score remained tied until the 56th minute when Lizzie Waughon scored to put the Indians ahead.

The final goal was scored by Shaw in the 70th minute. Shaw now has 53 goals on the season, which puts her at second in the state among players whose stats are recorded on MaxPreps.

Horton had an assist on one of the goals, while goalkeepers Aspen Krohn and Miranda Yow made five and three saves, respectively.

It was the fifth win in a row for Keystone (13-4), which is now 3-0 after the Christmas break with home wins over Suwannee on Jan. 3 and Menendez on Jan. 5.

Shaw scored five goals in a 6-1 win over Suwannee, which also featured Krohn and Yow making seven and three saves, respectively.

Waughon scored a goal as well, while the following recorded one assist each: Horton, Carly Rogers and Schiley Starling.

Shaw put the ball in the net five times again in a 9-1 win over Menendez. She also had three assists.

Ella Hutchins scored three goals, while Horton scored one. Each player had an assist.

Dallas Decrosta recorded two assists, while Waughon had one.

Yow and Krohn made five and two saves, respectively.

Keystone played Fort White this past Tuesday (Jan. 10) and will host Middleburg on Thursday, Jan. 12, at 7:20 p.m. The Indians host Newberry on Friday, Jan. 13, at 5 p.m. and Baker County on Tuesday, Jan. 17, at 7:20 p.m.

The boys team played a Williston team whose only loss occurred in November. Keystone was able to go into halftime tied

at 1-1, but the Red Devils scored three goals in the second half to improve to 11-1-1.

Keystone (7-4-2) got a couple of nice saves from goalkeeper Carson Eatmon in keeping it a scoreless match. Logan Spence just missed on an attempt on goal that would've put the Indians ahead 1-0. Instead, it was Williston that scored first, taking advantage of a corner kick.

The Indians' Skylar Kedgley was able to even it up with a goal off a Spence assist. Less than a minute later, the Williston goalkeeper made a save on a solid attempt by Aaron Wiley to prevent Keystone from taking a 2-1 lead.

It was Keystone's first loss since play resumed



Dallas Decrosta (right) and a Williston player converge on the ball. Photos by Cliff Smelley.

ABOVE RIGHT: Alea Horton receives a throw-in in the Indians' 3-1 win over Williston. It was Keystone's fifth win in a row. RIGHT: Ella Hutchins (left) fights for control of the ball.



Jaden Park passes the ball in the boys team's 4-1 loss to Williston.

after the Christmas break.

On Jan. 3, the Indians got three goals from Spence and two from Wiley in a 6-0 win over host Baker County. Each player also had one assist.

Kedgley had one goal and one assist, while the following had one assist each: Bryce Huntley, Pelayo Martinez and Micah Wiley.

In an 8-0 win over host Interlachen on Jan. 5, Spence had four goals and one assist, while Kedgley had two goals and two assists.

Martinez and Aaron Wiley each had one goal. Wiley and Luke

Brunt each recorded two assists.

The Indians played Fort White this past Tuesday (Jan. 10) and will host Newberry on Friday, Jan. 13, at 7 p.m. Keystone hosts Interlachen on Monday, Jan. 16, at 7 p.m. and Baker County on Tuesday, Jan. 17, at 5:30 p.m.



ABOVE RIGHT: Kiersten Shaw (left) and a Williston player battle for control of a throw-in. Shaw scored two goals in the win and has a total of 12 goals in three matches since the Christmas break. RIGHT: Lizzie Waughon (right) goes on the attack.



ABOVE: Liam Callahan (left) heads the ball. LEFT: Logan Spence (foreground) looks to make a play on the ball. In the Indians' first two matches since the Christmas break, Spence scored a total of seven goals in wins over Baker County and Interlachen.



Gabe Buchanan looks to gain possession of the ball.

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Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6"

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Obituaries

Harold Colston Jr.



Harold (Hal) I. Colston Jr., 57, passed away unexpectedly at his home, Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. He was born June 13, 1964, in Rome, Georgia (Floyd County) to Harold Sr. and Alberta (Bert) Colston. His father was in the military. He resided in several states, with the longest residency in Rome, Georgia and Key West. In 1975, his dad retired from the Navy and, at the age of 12, he and his family moved from NAS Jacksonville to Starke. He attended Bradford Middle and Bradford High. After graduation he became a CNA, working in a local nursing facility. In later years he worked as a CNA in Orange County Hospital. His career, however, was in the Department of Corrections in Starke. After a sudden illness, he stayed in Starke, and he was an active member of First Baptist Church of Starke from the age of 12 to his 20s, when he moved. His passion during those years was with the Puppet Ministry, Youth and Adult Choirs; and as a part of the WTLG Radio Ministry. Since his return to Starke his passion was ministering online to veterans and law enforcement members with PTSD; encouraging and sharing scriptures with promise of help. He was preceded in death by his father, Harold I. Colston Sr.; and his grandparents, Albert and Minnie Payne and Ernest and Sara Colston.

He is survived by his sisters, Connie Colston Varnes of Starke, and Debbie Jett of California; a brother, Curtis (Curt) Colston of St. Petersburg; nieces Madyson Varnes of Graceville and Amber (Russell) Boulding of St. Petersburg; and nephew, Jesse (Crystal) Colston of Jacksonville; and his mother, Alberta (Bert) Colston of Starke.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, Jan. 14, at 2 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Starke, with Pastor Justin Durrance officiating. Interment will follow at Crosby Lake Cemetery. The family will receive friends an hour prior to the service at the church.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services and Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel, Starke, 904-964-5757. Visit www.ferreirafuneralservices.com to sign the family's guest book.

PAID OBITUARY

Tasco Gunter

Tasco "Wayne" Gunter, 73, of Starke went to be with his savior, Jesus, on Thursday, Jan. 5, 2023, after an extended illness. He was born Oct. 21, 1949, in Starke to the late David and Eunice (Starling) Gunter. He graduated from BHS in July 1968 and joined the US Air Force in September 1968. In the Air Force, he worked as an aircraft electrician, served one year in Vietnam, was stationed at Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka, Kansas and served temporary duty in several countries in Europe. His obligation was completed after four years with the rank of Staff Sergeant. He was employed at the Lawtey and New River Correctional Institutions for 30 years as a vocational electronics teacher; retiring in November 2007. He was a member of Air Park Baptist Church. He enjoyed restoring tube-type radios, DIY projects and fixing anything broken. He married his loving wife, Frances, in November 1979.

Survivors include his wife, Frances (Varnes) Gunter; brothers, Glenn Gunter and Gary Gunter; and a sister, Deborah Patterson, all of Starke. Also left behind are his stepchildren, John Stapleton of Claxton, Georgia, Charlene Short of Starke and Mary Sikes of Lake Butler. He was lovingly called "Papa" by several stepgrandchildren and great-grandchildren; along with many nieces and nephews.

A viewing was held on Tuesday, Jan. 10. Funeral services were held at the DeWitt C. Jones Chapel Wednesday, Jan. 11, Pastor Author Masters officiating. Interment followed at Santa Fe Cemetery.

Arrangements were under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 620 E. Nona St., Starke, 32091. 904-964-6200. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

PAID OBITUARY

Michael McFarland



Michael "Mike" Timothy McFarland, 65, of Starke passed away at his home on Saturday, Jan. 7, 2023. He was born Aug. 4, 1957, in Knoxville, Tennessee, but he has called Bradford County home since he was a child. He held several different jobs in his lifetime; his favorite was being camp host at Camp Blanding. He served for 11 years, greeting campers and making sure their needs were met. He was a patient, compassionate man who never met a stranger. He loved to laugh and make others laugh. He enjoyed watching the Florida Gator football team, finding a deal at the flea market, and spending time on his boat or jet skis on the lake. His passion was being "Papa Mike" or "Poppy." His grandchildren were his world, and he loved every minute of it. He was preceded in death by his parents, Fate and Mary Ann Harper; his son, Jimmy Watkins; and brother, Donald Dewey Grundy.

He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Dianne McFarland of Starke; children, Christopher (Christy) McFarland of Lawtey, Jennifer (Roy) Highland of Starke, Nichole (Will) Walker of Lakeland, Michelle Lovell (Randy Faile) of Starke, Deena (Rod) Crawford of Lawtey, Renee (Leroy) Griffis of Starke, Karen Parker of Lawtey, and Hunter Smith of Starke; 19 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and a host of extended family and friends.

A visitation will be held at Archer-Milton Funeral Home, Lake Butler on Thursday, Jan. 12, from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of Archer-Milton Funeral Home, Lake Butler. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY

Jonell Norman



Jonell Norman of Lawtey passed away peacefully at her home surrounded by her daughters on Monday, Jan. 2, 2023. She was born in Clay Hill on Feb. 9, 1938, to the late Albert and Maybell Norman. She has called Lawtey home for the past 60-plus years. She enjoyed being outdoors tending to her yard and flowers. She was an avid fisherwoman and also enjoyed a trip to the beach. She was an excellent cook who loved cooking for her family and friends. In 1954, she married Vernon W. Griffis, and together they had four daughters. She was preceded in death by her parents, Albert and Maybell Norman; the father of her children, Vernon W. Griffis; grandson, Jeremy Griffis; brother, Eugene Norman; and sister, Carol Coleman.

She is survived by her daughters, Renae (Jim) Freeman, Rita (Ace) Acevedo, Rose (Richard) Odom, and Regina (John) Rizer; her grandchildren, Michelle (Chip) Evernden, Jonathan (Christy) Rizer, Amanda Rizer, Chad (Crystal) Griffis, Jared Freeman, and Kayla (Channing) Dobbs; 15 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren; her siblings, Betty Starling, Paul (Janet) Norman, and Robert (Debbie) Norman; and a host of nieces, nephews, and extended family.

A celebration of life was held Tuesday, Jan. 10, at Pine Grove Congregational Methodist Church.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of Archer-Milton Funeral Home, Lake Butler. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY

Benjamin Padgett



Benjamin "Ben" Padgett was an avid outdoorsman; his favorite saying was, "Huntin', fishin', and lovin' every minute." If he wasn't in the woods with his favorite hunting partner, his wife, Bunky, he loved being on the tractor helping friends bale hay. With such a big heart and always willing to lend a hand, the word "No" just wasn't in his vocabulary. He was known for his smoked meat. He would volunteer to grill for all sorts of events, church functions, large family gatherings, and he also spent years volunteering his time smoking mullet for the Lawtey Community School. He was a lifelong resident of Bradford County and worked for over 30 years for Dupont until he retired in 2006. He was a faithful member of the Logo Church in Lawtey. He loved his family with everything he had and lived life to the fullest. On Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023, God called him home at the age of 67. He was preceded in death by his parents, John Thomas and Alma Crews Padgett; and his siblings, Thomas Alvin Padgett, Charles David Padgett, and Mary Jane Johnson.

He leaves behind to cherish his memories, his loving wife of 19 years, Elizabeth "Bunky" Padgett of Lawtey; his children, Donna (David) Harris of Raiford, Wendy Padgett of Gainesville, Vanessa (Allen) Thompson of Lawtey, Dusty (Daniele) Sapp of Waldo, and Austin Deese of Lawtey; grandchildren, Shelby, Ashley, Lake, Payton, and Ryder; sisters, Betty (Jerry) Fishburn and Tammy (William) Hankerson; and a host of extended family and friends.

A graveside service was held at Sapp Cemetery in Raiford on Wednesday, Jan. 4, with Pastor Kris Elkins officiating the service.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of Archer-Milton Funeral Home, Lake Butler. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY

Patricia Parrish



Patricia Parrish, 66, passed away peacefully at her home on Monday, Jan. 2, 2023, surrounded by her family. She was born Feb. 12, 1956, in Lake Butler to the late Ervin and Pauline Taylor. She worked for many years with the Department of Corrections and as a medical assistant for Dr. Perez. In 1973, she married the love of her life, Don Parrish. Together they built an amazing family that meant the world to her. Her passion was her kids and grandkids. She enjoyed every moment spent with them. She instilled in them family values and traditions. In her alone time, she would tend to her flowers. Her home was always beautifully surrounded by them. She was also a member of Johnstown Baptist Church. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ervin and Pauline Taylor; and her brother, Jerry Taylor.

She is survived by her husband of nearly 50 years, Don Parrish of Providence; her children, Denise Parrish of Ellisville, Andy (Melanie) Parrish of Lake Butler, Donald (Morganne) Parrish of Providence, and Dustin Parrish of Providence; 13 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; her siblings, Katie Feagle, Faye (Gary) Luke, Gary (Rosemary) Taylor, Gail (Steve) Poole, Greg (Debbie) Taylor, Yvonne (Keith) Osborne, Ronald (Mary Ann) Taylor, and Teresa (Charles) Tomlinson; and numerous nieces, nephews and extended family.

A funeral service was held on Thursday, Jan. 5, at Johnstown Baptist Church in Raiford. She will be laid to rest immediately following the funeral at Mt. Zion/Swift Creek Cemetery. Pastor Danny Fouraker will officiate the services.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of Archer-Milton Funeral Home, Lake Butler. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY

Laura Shepherd

Laura Frances Shepherd, 82, of Melrose, passed away on Saturday, Dec. 24, 2022. She was born in Gainesville and graduated from Gainesville High School. She was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, sister and aunt with a giving heart. She supported her husband in his ministry for many years. They ministered where the Lord led them; spending a year each in Guyana, Barbados, North Dakota, and Alaska. She made multiple trips to Haiti to work with the children of El Shaddai.

She is survived by her loving husband of 60 years, Bill Shepherd; her sister, Margaret Marlow; daughters, Lori Shepherd, Priscilla (Mike) LaBounty; and grandchildren, Michael, Dustin and Amanda. There are also numerous nieces, nephews, family and friends who loved her dearly.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, Jan. 21, at 10 a.m. at First Baptist Church, Keystone Heights. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to: El Shaddai Central Ministries, P.O. Box 735, Frederick, Colorado 80530.

PAID OBITUARY

Bettye Zowarka



Bettye Zowarka of Keystone Heights went home to be with the Lord on Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2022. She was 93. Born in Lebanon, Tennessee to Edna Luck (Rose) McMichael and Phocian Ward Luck. Her four great passions in life were her membership in the Episcopal Church, her missions to Episcopal Churches in Cuba, bringing hospice to the Keystone/Melrose areas in the early years before hospice services were ubiquitous, and, with her husband, Jim, as a dedicated Gator Booster for over 50 years. The mayor of Keystone Heights pronounced April 28 "Bettye Zowarka Day" to honor her work in these areas and in the community at large. She traveled several times to Cuba on a religious visa to take medicines, clothing, and gifts to Episcopal Church members across Cuba that were adopted as "sister" churches by various Episcopal Churches in Florida. She was particularly fond of churches deep in the countryside in the provinces of Matanzas and Camaguey, Cuba. She served as a Haven Hospice Volunteer Liaison for over 30 years beginning in 1984. Haven Hospice in Palatka recently honored her in a ceremony adding the title "Bettye Zowarka Hospice Volunteer of the Year" to their award recognizing excellence in service among their volunteers. Her family would like to thank the nurses and volunteers of Haven Hospice Palatka, and her personal caregivers for the excellent and compassionate care provided to her. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Haven Hospice in her memory. She was preceded in death by her husbands, Samuel I. "Buddy" Rogers Jr. and James G. "Jim" Zowarka, both Navy pilots, assuring an angel's escort to heaven; stepfather, Frank W. "Chicken" McMichael, her grandson, Benjamin Zowarka; and great-grandson, Jonah Orr.

She is survived by her children, Chris (Jennifer), Tish (Tim) Ganey, Suzanne VanHatten, Michael (Tricia); nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

A memorial service honoring her will be held on Saturday, Jan. 21, at 2 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church in Melrose with a reception and celebration immediately afterward at the Zowarka home in Keystone Heights.

PAID OBITUARY

STEM

Continued from page 8

Important concepts

Chappell, in responding to a question from a Kiwanis member about the importance of STEM education, said children are learning concepts that, of course, will help them obtain jobs in the future. STEM activities are also a good way to get children to think a problem through in trying to figure it out, while also getting them to do so as part of a group.

"They work as a team, which is a big thing with businesses," Chappell said, adding, "It's a skill of learning to be cooperative with one another, thinking through the problem, creating a plan and actually fulfilling that plan by doing it and then analyzing it. Do we need to go back and change anything? Did it work right the first time?"

Chappell said her students are learning that it's OK if something doesn't work right the first time. It's how we learn and get better at something.

"I tell my students that failure is the number-one thing you need to look at," Chappell said. "It tells you where your weak spot is. You're not always going to be correct."

"Failure builds. We build off that failure to figure out, 'How can I fix this so I can get to this point?'"

Great support

Chappell said two summers ago, as a new STEM teacher, she put a wish list on Facebook to help provide her classroom with materials. People responded.

"I was blessed by a lot of people in our community who helped put stuff in our STEM room," Chappell said.

Chappell thanked Kiwanis club members Cheryl Canova and Pat Mundorff for their help in her obtaining grant money. The North East Florida Educational Consortium also came through in a big way.

"They have supported our program," Chappell said of NEFEC. "In fact, they have bought me different robots. The first year, I had \$6,000 worth of robots delivered to us. The kids absolutely adore them. This last year, they bought me another \$3,000 worth of robots that handle kindergarten and first grade."

The second- through fifth-grade students work with Ozobots, which at 1 inch in diameter, are billed as the smallest educational robots in the world.

Chappell said kindergartners and first-graders don't need to work with robots or anything that's that small. Instead, they work with Bee-Bots, which are approximately 5 inches long, 4 inches wide and 3 inches high.

"Bee-Bots are these great, big bees," Chappell said. "They're adorable."

What better way to get young children buzzing with excitement about science, technology, engineering and mathematics? And, yes, the children are excited. Chappell has seen how much the kindergartners who took her classes in 2021-22 have changed as first-graders this school year.

"They're not as standoffish in trying something," Chappell said. "They're willing to jump in. In fact, I have to tell them, 'Put your hands in your lap until I get done with directions.' As soon as I say, 'Go,' they're there. There's no hesitation. They try."



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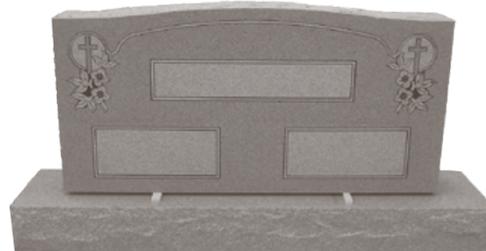
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Starke Kiwanis Club to host poker tourney on Jan. 20

The Kiwanis Club of Starke's next scheduled Patsy Welch Memorial Poker Tournament is Friday, Jan. 20, at The Downtown Grill. Registration begins at 6 p.m., followed by play at 6:30 p.m.

Buy-in is \$60, which includes high hand.

Cash prizes are awarded for first, second and third places.

Proceeds will go toward the STEM program at Southside Elementary School.

Registration now under way for Bradford Youth Athletics spring ball

Bradford Youth Athletics Inc. is hosting online sign-ups for spring baseball, softball and T-ball and will host in-person sign-ups on Saturday, Jan. 28, from 9 a.m. until noon at the main concessions stand at Edwards Road Sports Complex.

To register online, visit starke-bradford-babe-ruth-league.sportngin.com. The final day for online registration is Friday, Jan. 27.

Registration costs are \$120 for baseball, \$120 for softball and \$110 for T-ball. A multi-kid discount of \$10 per child is available.

To keep up with Bradford Youth Athletics Inc., visit the website or follow the group on Facebook.

Bradford Youth Athletics to hold drawing for Morgan Wallen concert tickets

Bradford Youth Athletics is selling tickets to enter a drawing for two tickets to see Morgan Wallen in concert on May 4 in Jacksonville.

Tickets to enter are 1 for \$25 or five for \$100. They may be purchased at Southern Roots Salon or from a Bradford Youth Athletics board member.

Please send text messages to Meghan at 904-364-8788 for more information.



Jamie Rodgers

Rodgers, Thomas earn votes for Coach of the Year in their classes

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Jamie Rodgers and Andrew Thomas, the head football coaches at Bradford and Union County high schools, respectively, each placed third after votes were tallied for Florida Dairy Farmers Coach of the Year honors in their respective classes.

Cocoa's Ryan Schneider was Coach of the Year in Class 2S with 176 votes. Jarrod Hickman of state runner-up Florida HIGH had 102 votes, followed by Rodgers, who had 82. Bishop Verot's Richie Rode and South Sumter's Ty Lawrence had 54 and 15 votes, respectively.

Cornelius Ingram, the coach of state champ Hawthorne, was Coach of the Year in Class 1R



Andrew Thomas

with 187 votes. Wes Summerford of state runner-up Northview had 108 votes, followed by Thomas with 45. Former UCHS coach Robby Pruitt, who's now Williston's head coach, collected 31 votes, while Sneads' Bill Thomas had 22.

Rodgers, in his first season at BHS, guided the Tornados to the state semifinals and a 12-2 record after a 31-21 loss to Cocoa.

It was Bradford's first appearance in the state semifinals since 2017 and just its fourth appearance in 19 years.

The Tornados were dominant defensively, giving up a total of 79 points and setting a school record for shutouts in a season with nine.

Thomas, who has coached Union for three years, led the Tigers to their first state-semifinal berth since 2011. The Tigers finished 8-3 after a 21-11 loss to Northview.

The Tigers have won at least eight games in each of Thomas' three years at the helm.

Union played state champ Hawthorne during the regular season, losing 28-21 when the Hornets scored on a 35-yard pass play with 5 seconds remaining. The Tigers held a 21-0 lead at one point.

The only other loss suffered by the Tigers during the regular season came against a University Christian team that advanced to the state semifinals in Class 1M.

One of Union's wins this season came against Class 3S state semifinalist Columbia.

KHHS girls win 3rd straight in basketball

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Keystone Heights High School defeated visiting Middleburg 46-11 on Jan. 6 to improve to 12-5 in girls basketball.

Yasmin Bryant led the Indians with 14 points, while Kiley Channell and Dezaray Bright had 13 and 11, respectively. Channell also had four assists and four steals, while Bright had



Yasmin Bryant scored 14 points in Keystone's 46-11 win over Middleburg. File photo by Cliff Smelley.

three steals.

Keystone, which won its third straight game, also got two points each Alana Anderson, Kaitlin Brown, Bryanna Channell and McKinlee Kirkland.

The Indians entered the game off a 43-22 win at Clay on Jan. 5. Bright and Bryant scored 12 and 10 points, respectively, with Bright also grabbing 14 rebounds. Bryant added three assists.

Keystone got six points each from Brown and Jaynell Hill, five points from Kiley Channell and two points each from Anderson and Kadence Massey. Brown and Channell each grabbed 10 rebounds, while Channell also had five steals.

Hill had three steals.

The Indians travel to play Bradford on Thursday, Jan. 12, at 6 p.m. and then travel to play St. Augustine on Friday, Jan. 13, at 7 p.m.

Keystone plays Fleming Island in an MLK tournament at Orange Park High School on Monday, Jan. 16, at 6 p.m.

BHS basketball teams fall to Hawthorne

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Bradford High School's girls and boys basketball teams each lost to Hawthorne in a Jan. 6 double-header in Starke.

The girls team had a chance to defeat the Hornets, but simply couldn't overcome approximately 40 turnovers in losing 39-35.

Bradford (8-5) fell behind 8-2 in the first quarter, but then outscored Hawthorne 7-1 to tie the score going into the second quarter. Nichelle Brown got the run started, scoring on a break opportunity and adding a subsequent free throw. Armayshia Griffin and Jada Hankerson each had a basket to make the score 9-9.

The Tornados found themselves trailing by seven before outscoring the Hornets 4-2 to close out the first half. A basket by Griffin made it 19-14, while Brown was able to score on a drive to the basket before the buzzer to send Bradford into the locker room trailing 21-16.

Hawthorne opened the third quarter with an 8-2 run and was able to take an 11-point lead into the fourth quarter.

A steal by Hankerson and an offensive rebound by Ajayah Jackson led to baskets that helped the Tornados pull to within 35-29. A Griffin basket later made it 37-31. Griffin then forced a backcourt turnover, which eventually led to Ayanna Pringle scoring off an offensive rebound and making it a 37-33 game with less than a minute remaining.

That was as close as Bradford would get as the Tornados committed turnovers on two straight possessions before Griffin scored on a layup before the final buzzer.

Griffin led the team with 14 points, while Pringle had eight points. Hankerson and Brown scored six and five points, respectively, while Jackson, who reached double digits in rebounds, added two points.

The loss snapped a two-game winning streak. Bradford entered the game off a 41-28 win over Ferguson and a 50-26 win over Fleming Island.

Bradford played Palatka this past Tuesday (Jan. 10) and will host Keystone Heights on Thursday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m.

Taking care of the ball was an issue for the Bradford boys team as well, with the Tornados committing more than 30 turnovers in a 58-24 loss to

Hawthorne.

Bradford was able to stay close in the first quarter, with Breion Johnson making two free throws and Damarion Hankerson madding two field goals — one of which was a three-pointer. It was a 10-7 game before Hawthorne outscored the Tornados 10-2 in the second quarter.

The Hornets' shooting woes (38 percent in the first half) prevented them from taking a bigger lead.

Hankerson made two three-pointers in the third quarter, while Mattox Burgin had one, but those baskets accounted for all of Bradford's points in the quarter as Hawthorne built a 26-point lead.

Larry Ardley made two three-pointers for Bradford's only points in the fourth quarter.

Hankerson led the Tornados with 13 points, while Ardley finished with six. Burgin and Johnson scored three and two points, respectively.

Bradford (1-10) suffered another two losses after playing Hawthorne: 59-36 at Fort White on Jan. 7 and 57-43 at Trenton on Jan. 9.

The Tornados were scheduled to host Eastside on Wednesday, Jan. 11, at 7:30 p.m. and will travel to play Madison County on Saturday, Jan. 14, at 7:30 p.m. Bradford returns home to play West Nassau on Tuesday, Jan. 17, at 7:30 p.m. and Fort White on Wednesday, Jan. 18, at 7:30 p.m.



Ajyah Jackson looks to score underneath the basket in Bradford's 39-35 loss to Hawthorne. Photo by Cliff Smelley.

UCHS

Continued from page 9

as the rest of the team scored only four points. The Tigers also struggled at the foul line in the quarter, making 2 of 10 free-throw attempts, including missing the front ends of two one-and-one opportunities.

Baker scored seven of the first

10 points in the fourth quarter to make it an eight-point game, but the Wildcats missed five of their final seven field-goal attempts as the Tigers were able to hang onto their lead.

Jenkins led Union with 14 points, while Andersen-Davis had 12. The Tigers also got six points from Nichols, five points from Paytee, four points from Dee Williams, two points from

Jayce Puni and one point from Preston Bonsall.

The Tigers entered the game off a 58-57 win over visiting Fort White on Jan. 6. Union outscored the Indians 18-4 in the final quarter, which featured 12 points from Jenkins.

Fort White's Najeeb Smith scored 14 points in the first half as the Indians built a 38-25 lead, but he had only two points in the

second half.

Jenkins led all scorers with 22 points, while Deonte Jones and Nichols had 10 and nine, respectively. Union also got six points from Andersen-Davis, five points from Paytee and two points each from Puni, Dee Williams and Thomas Williams.

The Tigers played Branford this past Monday (Jan. 9) and will host Dixie County on Thursday,

Jan. 12, at 7:30 p.m. Union travels to play Fort White on Friday, Jan. 13, at 7:30 p.m. and then travels to play Interlachen on Tuesday, Jan. 17, at 7:30 p.m.

Union's junior varsity team, which defeated both Fort White and Baker County, plays at 4:30 p.m. in the Jan. 12 home game against Dixie County and at 6 p.m. prior to both the Fort White and Interlachen games.

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Starke Kiwanis Club provides dictionaries for 17th year

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

How do you define “success?” Third-grade students in Bradford County receive the tools every year to be able to look it up, thanks to the Kiwanis

Club of Starke, which offers up an example of success with its annual dictionary project.

For the 17th year, club members visited Bradford schools to present a dictionary to each third-grade student.

The project began in 2006. Cheryl Canova, who was then the club president, attended leadership training when the idea of such a project was put forth by the then Florida Kiwanis governor. The Starke club was the first in the state to participate.

“I am thankful that our club still does this project,” Canova said. “It is one of my favorite projects that we do every year.”

Canova said it was decided at that time to give the dictionaries to third-grade students as that was when students first took the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test.

Each dictionary bears a Kiwanis label inside the front cover on which the student’s name is handwritten.



Starke Elementary student Milynn Jones is happy after receiving her dictionary.



Kaye Neufeld’s third-grade students at Hope Christian Academy show off the dictionaries they received from the Kiwanis Club of Starke. Pictured are: (front, l-r) Aaron Bradshaw, Connor Gibbs, Trace Hagan, Brayden Goble, Colton Price, Danielle Shortes, (middle, l-r) Bella Coina, Kyndlei Soulsby, Ally Bradshaw, Adelaide Kimbrell, Jayce Foley, (back, l-r) Kiwanis Club of Starke President David Kniseley, Maci Charron, Rayne Bowe, Neufeld, Harmony Jewell, Madison Tillett and Kiwanis Club of Starke member Cheryl Canova. Photos by Cliff Smelley except where noted.



Starke Elementary student Tadeo Perez-Chaves is enjoying looking at the back of his dictionary, which contains a variety of information besides words and their definitions.

“It is a lot of work, but putting the stickers with the children’s names in each book seems to make the kids even happier,” Canova said.

The dictionaries the Kiwanis Club of Starke purchased this year — “A Student’s Dictionary and Animal Gazetteer” — are more than dictionaries. They contain such things as punctuation, weights and measures, periodic table of elements, multiplication table, the 50 United States, maps of the world, sign language and information about animals and habitats.

One of the pages in the dictionaries contains the longest word in the English language

(a scientific formula), which amazes students when Kiwanis Club members point it out to them.

Like Canova, club member Cliff Smelley said presenting dictionaries to students is one of his favorite Kiwanis activities.

“It’s amazing to watch the children immediately begin to look through their dictionaries as soon as they receive them,” said Smelley, who has helped deliver dictionaries most every year since the project’s inception. “Sometimes, we even get hugs after passing out the dictionaries. The children are so visibly excited that it just makes your day.”

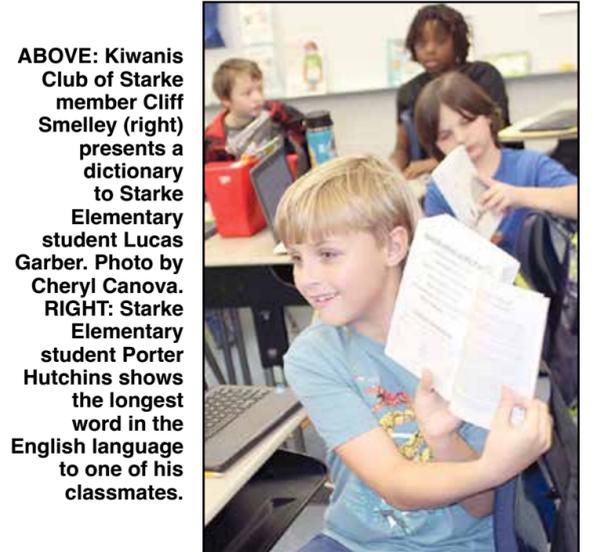


ABOVE: Kiwanis Club of Starke member Cliff Smelley (right) presents a dictionary to Starke Elementary student Lucas Garber. Photo by Cheryl Canova. RIGHT: Starke Elementary student Porter Hutchins shows the longest word in the English language to one of his classmates.

Starke Elementary student Audrey Frank checks out the inside front cover of her dictionary, which bears a label with her name on it. Each dictionary is personalized with a student’s name.



Kiwanis Club of Starke member Cheryl Canova (right) points out some of the features of the dictionary to Hope Christian Academy student Aaron Bradshaw. Jayce Foley is pictured in the background.



LEFT: Starke Elementary student Carly Johns practices sign language — one of the many features found in the dictionaries provided by the Kiwanis Club of Starke. RIGHT: Starke Elementary student Nailah Davis checks out her dictionary.

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