

# Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700 — Starke, Florida

Thursday, Dec. 12, 2024

146th year, 22nd Issue — \$1

## Winter wonderland at Bradford Library



Kaymoni (above rights) is walking in the winter wonderland provided by the Funtastic Fire Brigade at the Bradford Public Library's annual Winter Christmas Carnival. Photos by Melissa Pyle. For more from the event, see inside.



## WORTH NOTING

### Fairgrounds food distribution

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Feeding Northeast Florida and True Vine Ministry will take Tuesday, Dec. 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.

### Toy drive for Christmas party

Concerned Citizens of Bradford County is requesting donations of new, unwrapped toys for ages 6 months to 14 years old. These will be given to children in need during the organization's annual Christmas party on Dec. 21, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the RJE Complex on Pine Street in Starke.

Drop-off location for donations include Starke City Hall, Bradford County Sheriff's Office, Murray Ford Superstore, the Downtown Grill and Danielle's Car Salon on Brownlee Street.

### Walk through Bethlehem

Walk through Bethlehem and witness a live nativity at Morning-Star Baptist Church on County Road 18 in Worthington Springs. This biblical account of the Christmas story will feature live characters and animals, including camels. Come join the Jewish pilgrims on their way to Bethlehem, visiting several market shops and ending at the nativity.

The walk will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday through Sunday, Dec. 13-15. Please contact Robert Worrell for more information at 352-339-4291 or 352-496-2390.

### Christmas service announced

Magnolia Missionary Baptist Church in Raiford will hold its annual Christmas worship service on Sunday, Dec. 15, at 11 a.m. Everyone is welcome.

## KH gang member sentenced to 11 years

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida said a Keystone Heights man associated with a white supremacist gang was sentenced to 11 years on drug and weapons charges.

Danny Ray Boree, 39, pleaded guilty in July to possession with intent to distribute five grams or more of methamphetamine and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

"According to court documents and proceedings," the office said in a news release, "Boree is a member of the Unforgiven, a violent white supremacy gang."

The office added that on June 8, 2023, a Clay County Sheriff's Office deputy pulled over a vehicle for a stop sign violation in Keystone Heights.

"Upon approaching the car, the deputy observed Boree in the passenger seat with a meat cleaver/hatchet directly in front of him and a knife in a sheath by his feet," said the attorney's office. "For his safety, the deputy directed Boree to step out of the car. As Boree exited the vehicle, the deputy observed part of a clear baggie in the waistline of Boree's shorts. During a pat down of Boree, the deputy removed the baggie, which contained a large amount of methamphetamine."

During a subsequent search of the car, deputies located a Raven Arms pistol and additional methamphetamine.

According to the news release, at the time of the traffic stop, the 39-year-old had previously been convicted in Florida state court of 10 felonies, including battery on a law enforcement officer, resisting an officer with violence, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

"As a convicted felon," the office added, "Boree is prohibited from possessing a firearm under federal law."

The Keystone Heights man was released from the Florida Department



Boree

of Corrections in January 2023 for his last firearm conviction.

## Vote on fire fee scheduled

The resolution imposes no fee yet

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Bradford County Commissioners are preparing to launch the fire assessment process again, scheduling a vote on the first resolution at its Dec. 19 meeting.

The vote will not impose any new fee. Its passage is the first step in the process of notifying the public of the board's intent to pursue a non-ad valorem special assessment beginning with the tax bills mailed in November 2025.

The special assessment would raise revenue to fund the county's fire department. A study released earlier this year when commissioners were considering a fire assessment placed the maximum cost at more than \$300 per household, while nonresidential buildings would have been charged based on square footage. Vacant parcels would have also paid a small amount. Vacant agricultural land would have been the exception as it — including the large swaths for

forest land in Bradford County — would have been exempt under this assessment method.

Commissioners were never in favor of levying the maximum amount, but last September, they couldn't agree on any amount or a timeline for moving forward. There were also questions from commissioners and the public about other possible assessment methodologies, how the figures were calculated and how to provide relief to those on limited incomes. There were also qualms about the penalties for nonpayment, including property liens and foreclosure.

Rather than moving forward, commissioners decided to step back and continue the discussions with public workshops on the assessment as well as the county's overall budget.

Of the county's four municipalities, only Starke — which has its own fire department — was unwilling to allow the county to collect the fire assessment from its citizens. The commission never addressed the question after rejecting a prior offer to merge the county and city fire department.

See FEE, page 5



## Home destroyed by fire

BY JENN SAMSEL  
Special to the Monitor

On Sunday, December 8th, around 10:25 a.m., a residential fire broke out on Pembroke Street in the High Ridge Estates neighborhood of Keystone Heights.

No people or animals were injured in the incident.

According to a witness, the battalion chief on duty said a pot on the stove caused the fire.

Shortly after Clay County Fire Rescue extinguished the blaze, the agency said the homeowners had not been reached.

The structure was completely destroyed in the fire.

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# Clerk question could be answered prior to election

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Starke will have two or three seats open for election in 2025, depending on the outcome of a mail referendum in the spring.

Seats two and four on the city commission — currently held by commissioners Janice Mortimer and Scott Roberts — will be open for election. So will the currently vacant office of city clerk, unless voters choose to remove the position from the city charter.

That question will be asked via a mail-only referendum, with ballots sent directly to eligible voters. The dates for the mailout were uncertain, but ballots will be mailed and due back at the supervisor of elections office by

April 8, which is prior to election qualifying in June.

This won't be the first time voters have been asked about removing an elected city clerk from the charter. The prior vote in 2017 failed by just six votes.

Since that time, however, some things have changed. Starke voters just chose to remove references to an elected police chief and police department from the charter. Prior to that, the commission eliminated funding for the police department, offering to pay the Bradford County Sheriff's Office for those services instead. Police Chief Jeff Johnson subsequently retired, and the commission moved to make police chief a ceremonial position with a \$1

salary pending the outcome of the charter referendum.

In the past, those who felt the city clerk should be hired instead of elected preferred having someone with guaranteed accounting credentials. Most municipal clerk or finance officers are hired, they argue, not elected.

Three out of the four commissioners present voted in favor of holding the referendum by mail. Commissioner Bob Milner, who was away at another board meeting, has also supported changing the charter. Only Commissioner Danny Nugent has advocated for voters to continue electing a clerk.

The future of a clerk in the city depends on enough voters

agreeing with Nugent. Someone must also be willing to run for the office if it remains.

With satisfaction expressed for Starke's current administrative setup, it is unlikely the commission would even request applications for the post if it is removed from the charter. Drew Mullins briefly took on the role of interim clerk in his position as city manager when Jimmy Crosby resigned the office. Now, with Crosby hired to oversee the city's general operations, including finance, and with Mullins overseeing utilities, the role of a city clerk appears obsolete.

Mortimer said many strides have been made since politics was removed from the equation.

In the past, some have observed a divided city hall, with a commission-appointed manager struggling to cooperate with an elected clerk.

Starke commissioners will take up the language for the clerk referendum during its next two meetings. It must also be approved by the state. It will likely mirror the question asked voters for the police chief referendum. Responding to Nugent's question about public input, Mayor Andy Redding said those upcoming meetings would be the time for citizens to voice their opinion.

"They also voice their opinion by their vote. That's the ultimate decision, because we don't change that. The citizens make

that change," he said.

If the referendum fails, Roberts observed, then the election year moves forward as normal, with the clerk's office being up for election.

There will at least be two commissioner positions on the ballot for Starke's 2025 election, which will take place on Aug. 19. Qualifying for the election will take place June 9-13. Visit city hall or call 904-964-5027 for more information.

Commissioners have also discussed the need for a full charter review to modernize the charter to reflect current operations.

The next commission meeting is Dec. 17 at 5:30 p.m.

# Grant to provide first look at downtown improvements

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Expect the nebulous plans regarding Starke's downtown revitalization to receive greater definition thanks to the help of a new grant.

Staff at Woodward and Curran, Starke's engineering consultant, assisted the city in obtaining a \$58,500 Florida Commerce Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant. The project is now in Woodward and Curran's hands, with the city providing input and review as it moves forward.

The nonmatching grant requires no cost from the city for the consultants to create a vision for a "downtown entertainment district," as Starke Chief Administrative Officer Jimmy Crosby described it.

Crosby said the city has targeted several grants to work on downtown revitalization, but its success in obtaining those grants could hinge on having some plans already on the drawing board. That is what the community planning grant will

help provide — a vision that will earn the city more points toward future grants.

"If you don't have a plan, they don't want to talk to you. So, we're getting prepared for our next leap," he said.

Crosby expressed appreciation to Justin deMello and Woodward and Curran for their assistance. Their close work with the city will help guide the project.

In addition to the accolades, the consultant will be paid through the grant proceeds. Broken down into four tasks, their goals include meeting with stakeholders about the project and preparing a draft plan for the commission's review. That work is due by Dec. 31.

The city will have three to four weeks to provide comments on the draft as Woodward and Curran works on the final draft, which is to be complete Feb. 28. Then, by May 30, the city will receive four visual renderings depicting the revitalized downtown area.

Woodward and Curran described the project background like this:

"The city has experienced a decline in visitors to the downtown district since the completion of the FDOT 301 Bypass. To promote the economic output of the city's downtown area while simultaneously meeting the needs of the rural community and increasing tax revenue for the city and state, the city of Starke desires to create a Downtown Entertainment District Visioning Plan.

"The project will address the needed recovery from the loss of pass-thru and foot traffic occasioned by the Route 301 Bypass by developing a public facing and pedestrian friendly entertainment district that connects key downtown destinations, unique programming, recreation opportunities, and ecological networks.

"The project will integrate stormwater management and urban heat island mitigation to address associated climate resiliency challenges to ensure sustainable revitalization.

"The resulting visioning



From September, architect Paul Stressing discusses the design and budget for amphitheater concept at the Downtown Square.

plan will serve as a downtown revitalization plan appropriate for the city commission to adopt, implement, and add to its comprehensive plan."

Crosby described an expanded vision of downtown that crossed U.S. 301, incorporating more of West Call Street and the Madison Street corridor. It also includes the 301 commercial corridor through town.

Crosby also said the Florida Department of Transportation would be visiting the city in

January to take another look at the 301 corridor improvements.

"This is one more piece of the puzzle of how we make the bypass continue to be a positive, not a negative that we were all afraid of 10 years ago when they first started talking about it, and I think we're seeing that happen. So, this is just another step in that direction," he said.

City commissioners unanimously passed the resolution approving the agreement with Woodward and

Curran.

In September, the commission approved a conceptual plan from architect Paul Stressing for the design of a new amphitheater at the Downtown Square. Recent land use changes approved by the board have also allowed the 45-townhome development known as CityWalk to advance to an application for a planned unit development just east of the Downtown Square.

# Christmas on Call Street this weekend

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
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The streets have been decked out and the tree has been lit, which can only mean it's Christmastime in downtown Starke again.

The annual Christmas on Call Street event is Saturday, Dec. 14. Streets will close at 10 a.m., and a variety of street vendors will be open for business at 11 a.m. alongside the many shops and restaurants that bring back this fun for the family event every year. Come and browse what they have to offer, finish up your shopping list and treat yourself to a great meal, then walk it off at the car show, which begins at 2 p.m.

Spend the day soaking up the holiday vibes, but stick around for the main event. Starke's annual Christmas Parade will light up downtown. The parade begins at 6 p.m. by the Starke ER and will make its way down Call Street with floats and vehicles draped in holiday lights and baubles—your friends and neighbors wishing you and yours a merry Christmas.

Wave to Santa and Mrs. Claus as they ride into town, and meet them for a family photo after the parade at the North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce, which organizes the parade every year. Remember, stations along the parade route will be gifting candy for the kiddos as well. Space is limited and reservations are required for the 8:30 a.m. Sunday morning Breakfast with Santa at the Downtown Grill. Be sure to secure your spot by calling 904-964-9253.



Santa and Mrs. Claus ride into town. Photo courtesy of Starke Downtown Merchants.

# 'Home for the Holidays' at BHS

The Bradford High School Scarlet Singers and the Bradford Middle School Storm Singers will present "Home of the Holidays" at the BHS auditorium on Friday, Dec. 13. The performance begins at 6:30 p.m. and admission is free.

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# Adventure comes to life at Winter Christmas Carnival



Families like the O'Neals (Molly, Kylee and Mason) lined up to see Santa at the library's Winter Christmas Carnival. This year marked the third year in a row the library has hosted this event with almost 500 in attendance.

BY MELISSA PYLE  
Special to the Telegraph

The excitement of the holiday season leaped from the pages of the books and into the parking lot at the Bradford County Public Library's third annual Winter Christmas Carnival. The free event entertained almost 500 residents on Thursday evening, showering families with "snow," games, prizes, train rides and Santa!

Director Kimberly Crawford praised the efforts of her team who worked diligently to set up the event and worked to partner

with more than 20 local businesses to make the night memorable. Businesses either donated money, gift card prizes, or sent team members to host game booths. Members of Altrusa of Starke also volunteered, providing and grilling the hotdogs. Crawford also wanted to recognize the help from some special "elves" from VOLT, Voice of Library Teens. The group members set up interactive games for children in attendance.

This event has already made some of the four legged members of the community have a merrier

Christmas, with three successful pet adoptions. The library has been partnering with the Sheriff's Office and Animal Control to have available pets at events. The adoption fees are waived for anyone adopting at a library event.

Each year the Winter Christmas Carnival gets bigger and is quickly becoming a local staple of the holiday season. The Bradford County Library is not just a place to learn but to share in community and as Crawford stated, "The library is community."



New River Library Director Tricia Wylie and Angela Quinn hosted a booth — just a few of the library team members who worked hard to make the event a success.



VOLT members Sophia and Raekwon were enthusiastic hosts at their game booth.



Officer Milligan from the BCSO Animal Rescue helped pets find their forever families at the library's Winter Christmas Carnival.



Like many others, the Alvers family enjoyed an evening train ride together at the winter carnival.



Shannon Ford and Gina Jones from Starke's Tractor Supply were just one of many vendors providing giveaways and holiday cheer.



Capital City was banking on a festive time at their carnival booth!

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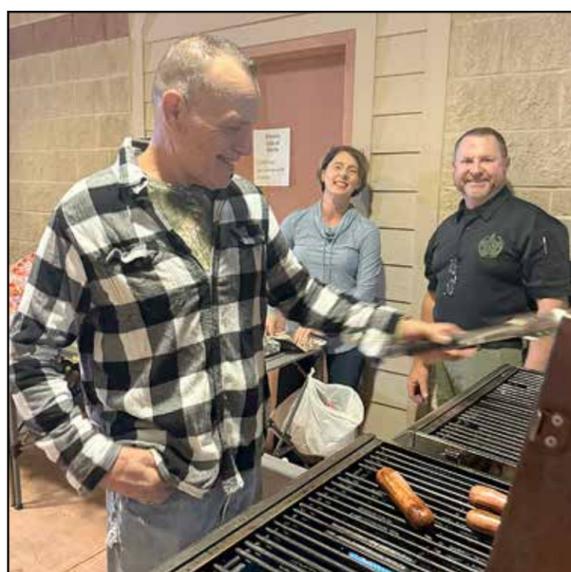
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Kiwanis Members John Reagan, Patricia Evans and Major George Konkel served up grilled hotdogs for the library's holiday event.



Bradford County Library Director Kimberly Crawford thanked Santa for a fantastic evening at the Winter Christmas Carnival.

## Starke's First Presbyterian celebrates its 140th year

Starke's First Presbyterian Church (921 E. Call St.) will celebrate its 140th birthday on Sunday, Dec. 15, with an 11 a.m. service and cantata.

The church was organized in December 1884 with 23 charter members. The

congregation met in the local Methodist church building for two years while planning and building its own sanctuary on North Cherry Street. The site was donated by Mr. and Mrs. J.M. Truby, Mr. and Mrs. G.C. Livingston and Angeline

Weller. The sanctuary was completed and dedicated in December 1886.

In December 1978, due to inadequate parking space and the need for additional buildings, the historic building was moved to its current site.

New buildings were erected for Sunday school rooms, kindergarten and social functions — all designed to blend with the architecture of the 1886 building.

# Union school officials clarify proposed budget cuts

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Union County Superintendent Mike Ripplinger and school board members continued discussing possible budget cuts during a Dec. 9 workshop, focusing on a hiring freeze the district has already implemented as well as reducing summer school and summer hours for district staff, cutting a cell phone reimbursement and contract completion supplement, closing the district's preschool or turning it over to a private operator, and reducing other employee benefits.

## Hiring freeze

Ripplinger told board members that the district had implemented hiring freezes several times in the past, and whenever it was executed, the hiring freeze had the desired effect.

"I'll remind the board and everyone in attendance if there is a mission-critical position, we are definitely filling those,"

Ripplinger said, adding that some job tasks may be moved to other positions or shared with other employees.

"Some positions are being filled as fast as possible," he said. "Others, we're kind of holding off."

The superintendent said the hiring freeze will save the district around \$150,000 this year.

## Summer school and hours

Ripplinger said the board would decide on summer school and summer hours for district employees in the Spring when the board usually allocates positions for summer school. The superintendent added that he planned on offering only state-required classes for summer school and that the changes to summer school and summer hours should save the district around \$100,000 in the current year.

Ripplinger also said that changing state standards for

credit recovery has increased the time it takes for students to make up lost credits.

He added that the new standards and the new platform the district is using for credit recovery make completing the work on campus in a three-week session difficult. He said students working with Florida Virtual School throughout the entire summer is a better solution.

"So, instead of being pigeonholed for three weeks during this particular time of the summer, they actually would have all summer long to work on a Florida Virtual class no matter where they are," he said. "So, if they failed a course, they could retake that during the summer just like they would during summer school but have a lot more flexibility and abilities to do that."

## Cell phone reimbursement

Board members consented to put a vote to end the district's

cell phone reimbursement on the agenda for the next board meeting. Ripplinger said cutting the reimbursement would save \$10,000 for the remainder of the current year and \$20,000 a year after that.

## Contract completion supplement

The district is in its third year providing a contract completion supplement to relieve payroll compression due to the required minimum wage and beginning teacher salary increases. The supplement costs the district around \$173,000 a year.

## Tiger's Den

Ripplinger emphasized that if the board chose to close the district's preschool, which is losing \$10,000 a month, parents and staff would have ample time to prepare for the closure.

"Please listen to what I'm

saying," the superintendent implored. "If the decision is made to close Tiger's Den, nothing is going to change in the immediate future of Tiger's Den. There is no way in the world that we can vote on this, let's say on December 17, and if the vote is to close Tiger's Den, we are not going to turn off the lights when we go home on December 20...The operations of Tiger's Den will have to continue to run through January, through February through March, quite possibly. It may run for the rest of the year for the rest of the fiscal year."

The superintendent then repeated his earlier statements that he would prefer a private operator take over the preschool rather than the building going dark.

He also said that if the district did close the daycare, administrators would try to find other jobs within the district for displaced employees.

"We're not trying to cut people," he said. "We're trying to

do things to provide the services to our students and our staff and still try to maintain as many people as possible, preferably everyone."

## Other employee benefits

The board also discussed other employee benefits, including a district-paid Union Direct Primary Care membership, life insurance, and long-term disability insurance.

"These benefits...are not going anywhere..." said the superintendent. "The question is: Who absorbs the cost for that? UDPC has been a marvelous service since we entered into an agreement with them, and they do great service. We have no problem with UDPC or anything such as that. But when you're looking at that, the question is: Who absorbs the cost of that benefit?"

# Melrose grocery may close

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

A cashier at Williamson's Grocery confirmed a social media post stating that the store's operator, Bruce Williamson, is retiring and that the grocery will likely close.

"Bruce has decided to retire and spend time with his granddaughter (she is adorable and full of personality) and family," reads the Facebook post. "As of now, there is not a specific timeframe for the possible closure of the store. However, it is on the market, and there is a probability it will not remain a grocery store."

The business celebrated its 50th anniversary two years ago.

Romie Williamson and his wife Twila opened Williamson's Food Store in 1972, and the couple worked at the store daily, except Sunday, until Romie died in 2016.

The couple's son Brian managed the business for a few years until his retirement, and now the grocery is run by the older son Bruce.

The same year the founder died, Dollar General announced it would build a discount outlet across the street from Williamson's.

In an earlier story reporting the anniversary, 37-year

Williamson's meat cutter Paul Seay said that although the new competition did not impact his store's meat sales, Dollar General did dent the traditional grocer's paper products and packaged goods revenues.

He added that customers often bought meat from Williamson's and then drove across the street for other groceries.

The meat cutter added that the trend away from traditional family meals and the fact that many Melrose residents work in Gainesville and purchase their groceries in Alachua County on the way home from work also impacted the Melrose grocery.

## FEE

Continued from page 1

Starke's nonparticipation would leave a significant number of households and much of the business community exempt from paying the assessment.

The other city boards were willing to move forward with the county, until county commissioners once again backed down from imposing the assessment.

Now the process begins again with the Dec. 19 vote. Again, it is just a declaration of intention to use tax bills to collect a fire assessment. The resolution does

not impose any assessment amount. That would take place later, and based on what commissioners have indicated, only after more discussion about the cost and how to apportion it among those expected to pay.

A special assessment is not a fee that can be avoided by rejecting the service. Like taxes, special assessments are mandatory. Once imposed, all affected property owners are responsible for paying them. But special assessments are different from taxes in that the revenue is earmarked for a specific purpose and cannot be used for anything else, as is the case with the county's garbage assessment.

The resolution before board

on Dec. 19 will serve as notice that the board intends to collect the assessments on the upcoming tax bill. Nothing, however, is finalized until the commission votes on the assessment amounts. Before that happens, every affected property owner will be notified by mail of a final public hearing, after which the commission will finalize its decision.

The Dec. 19 meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the commission meeting room at the Bradford County Courthouse. It can also be viewed on the commission's YouTube channel, @bradfordcountyfloridabocc9431.

# Bradford Democrats to meet Dec. 16

Because of the holidays, the Bradford County Democratic Party will meet early this month, on Monday, Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. They will elect new

officers at this meeting.

All registered Democrats are welcome and encouraged to attend. The meeting will be held at Capital City

Bank, U.S. 301 North, in the conference room. For further information, please contact bradfordcodec@gmail.com.

# Merry Melrose Christmas Parade

The Melrose Business and Community Association invites you to enjoy its Saturday morning Christmas Parade on Dec. 14 at 10 a.m. This year's theme is "A Storybook Christmas."

You can start the day at Melrose Elementary School for Pancakes with Santa from 8-9 a.m., then line the sidewalks of downtown Melrose for the parade. The QI

Roberts Marching Band will participate, as well as the Smooth Flava Line Dancers, always a hit. The Grand Marshal this year is Virginia Walkup, president of the Melrose Library Association.

Kids can join in the parade by riding the train or riding on Santa's sled. They are also welcome to ride their bikes behind Santa.

After the parade, about 11 a.m., the Heritage Park Christmas festival will begin, with vendor booths and train rides around the park. Also at 11 a.m., there will be line dancing at the Melrose Center, led by Smooth Flava.

Floats and marchers should email joerushmd@gmail.com or apply at Ameris Bank.



Front: Keystone Heights Mayor Nina Rodenroth (right) presents a key to the city to Barbara Sullivan during the City Council's November 25 meeting. Back: (l-r) City Council members Elston "Speedy" Kussler, Dan Lewandowski, Tony Brown, and Vice Mayor Christine Thompson.

# Sullivan awarded key to the city

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights Mayor Nina Rodenroth awarded Barbara Sullivan, a retired teacher and volunteer, a key to the city during the city council meeting on Monday, November 25.

After the mayor read the award citation, a large contingent from Community Church, the recipient's home congregation, cheered her on.

Rodenroth recognized Sullivan's role at the church,

including her leadership in the once-a-year school supplies giveaway in which hundreds of children received free shoes, backpacks, hygiene items, and other supplies.

"You were a Clay County school teacher at Keystone Heights Junior-Senior High School from 1972 to 2004, with an additional three years in other places," the mayor said. "You've also worked with the Answers Resource Center, formally located in our city, to help guide

young people in the critical moments of life."

Rodenroth also said Sullivan had volunteered at Lake Area Ministries.

"The key to the city is a symbol of our deepest gratitude for your tireless efforts," the mayor told Sullivan. "It is a token of our sincere appreciation of your vision, your leadership, and your unwavering commitment to the City of Keystone Heights."

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	<p><b>Village Doctors</b> Starke, FL Monthly Visitors Over <b>2,100</b></p>
	<p><b>Johnnys BBQ</b> Keystone Heights, FL Monthly Visitors Over <b>15,225</b></p>
	<p><b>Bryan's Ace Hardware</b> Keystone Heights, FL Monthly Visitors Over <b>20,608</b></p>

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# Santa comes for breakfast at Brooker Community School



The McRee family feels blessed to be together this Christmas with Brooker School Chair Suzanne McRee, grandchildren Johanna, Gus and Hattie, and daughter Emily McRee.



The Shumpert family has breakfast with Santa and kids Christopher, Nora and Leilah.

## Lawtey Christmas Parade

Lawtey's Christmas Parade will take place Saturday, Dec. 21,

beginning at 10 a.m. Come enjoy the lineup of classic cars, church and community floats, horses, Santa and more. The parade travels from Lawtey Elementary School, east down Lake Street (C.R. 225) and turns around at Walk by Faith Ministries.

There will be a gathering at the home of Ben and Emma Strong with free food and drinks while they last. For more information, contact Ben Strong at 904-782-3130 or Cynthia Ross at 904-782-3107.

**BY CAROL MOSLEY**  
*Special to the Telegraph*

Santa and Grandma Claus, along with the Grinch and an elf helper, came to Brooker to collect requests for Christmas presents. Students and parents shared a breakfast of pancakes and sausages and then made their way to visit with Santa.

The Claus family makes a tradition of bringing Christmas cheer to the area. Lonnie Norman does it in honor of his father. Each year the family puts on a public winter wonderland display in Lake Butler at their home. And, the family thrills the local children by bringing Santa to the schools. This year Lonnie Norman's mother was there as Grandma Claus, along with his Grinch nephew Tristen Whitehead and niece Raegan Rooney as Snowy the Elf.

Jordan Fletcher is a third grade

student, who is having a great time in her first year attending this school. She asked Santa for a trampoline because hers turned into mangled metal in the hurricane.

Stephen Ogden loves his first grade subjects of reading and math. He had "a whole list" of things he'd like to get, but especially wants a whole bunch of little Army men.

The Schumpert family are frequent attendees of events held by the school. Leilah wants a bike with training wheels and a car seat, complete with seat belt, for her doll. Christopher wants Pokeman cards and baby Nora is expected to get two dolls, according to her siblings.

Hattie McRee has the meaning of Christmas in her heart and said she wants good for her family. When pressed if there is anything she hopes my come

just for her at Christmas, she said she wants "more Bible stuff." Johanna McRee would love to have a playhouse that she could go inside to play with small scale furniture and pretend to cook in a little kitchen. Gus wants a big tractor and he'll be set.

The community charter school is a hub activity for the small town of Brooker, located at the most western point of the triangle-shaped Bradford County. The school only exists because the community came together to make it happen. Local families catch up with each other at events put on by the school, such as the fall festival. They share meals at the school to celebrate holidays. Local donors step up to see that the classrooms are stocked and the students are all fed, even though the public charter school is free and open to students from anywhere.



Jordan Fletcher wants a new trampoline.



Stephen Ogden is hoping for a bunch of little Army men.

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## Clay school board turning cams off

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Clay County School Board members, during their December 2 workshop, agreed to turn off their video cameras for public comments unrelated to an agenda item for school board meetings.

Board member Beth Clark said that during school board meetings, the district already segregates public comments about agenda items from other public comments.

"I think it's something that we could try for a while, to put the general comments at the end (of the meeting)," she said. "That way, we can converse with the public, we can turn off the cameras, we can allow staff to go home, those that want to."

Toward the end of the discussion, a district staff member said the staff would not leave the meeting while the public expressed concerns over school board matters.

Clark, who represents the area south of Wells Road and north of Doctors Inlet, said other school board districts had a similar policy. She specifically cited Pasco County as an example.

Board member Michele Hanson added that although state law requires the board to allow

public comments, the statute does not require those comments to be recorded and broadcast over the district's YouTube channel or other media.

Board members also debated their current policy of not responding to public comments during school board meetings.

Hanson noted that Superintendent David Broski sometimes responds to what she characterized as "blatant misconceptions."

### Board's action unconstitutional

Over the past three years, school board meetings across the country have been charged with public comments criticizing pandemic-related restrictions, gender policies, critical race theory, and library books.

In Clay County, library books dominated much of the discussion throughout 2024.

Bruce Friedman started the debate in October 2023 when he started reading what he termed obscene material from a school library book.

School Board Attorney Bruce Bickner stopped Friedman, saying that since the meeting was being broadcast, it would

be illegal to allow Friedman to read the obscene material during the public forum. After Friedman refused to stop, school board police removed the speaker from the meeting.

In October 2024, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit said a similar action by the Brevard County School Board violated the speaker's constitutional rights by prohibiting free speech.

The lawsuit, brought by the conservative group Moms for Liberty, claimed the Brevard district's policy of barring "abusive" speech was arbitrary.

"If the only ideas that can be communicated are views that everyone already finds acceptable," wrote Judge Britt C. Grant in the majority opinion, "why have the school board meetings in the first place?"

Regarding an incident similar to Friedman's in which a speaker in Brevard was prohibited from reading from a school library book, Grant wrote, "It is remarkable for the Board to suggest that this speech can be prohibited in a school board meeting because it is inappropriate for children when it came directly from a book that is available to children in their elementary school library."

# 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

Kimberly Baker, 61, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 4 for larceny.

Gerald Brown, 65, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 2 for hit and run, driving with a suspended or revoked license and an out-of-county warrant.

James Carney, 33, of Gainesville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 6 for probation violations.

A'nyah Carroll, 20, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 6 for failure to appear.

Jerome Chavers, 42, of Gainesville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 4 for fraud and vehicle theft.

Erika Culverson, 39, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 30 for DUI.

Jerry Davis, 43, of Sanderson, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 4 for a probation violation.

Derek Dean, 54, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 30 for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and

firing a weapon.

Adam Glover, 19, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 6 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Chasity Hannah, 41, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 4 for aggravated battery.

Lanorris Jackson, 50, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 5 for a probation violation.

Michael Robinson, 60, of Melrose, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 30 for homicide.

Monte Seabrook, 30, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 2 for larceny.

William Smith, 30, of Brooker, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 4 for an out-of-county warrant.

Troy Tetstone, 36, of Brooker, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 30 for an out-of-county warrant.

Christopher Watson, 59, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 5 for battery.

Bobby Willingham, 56, of Lecanto, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 6 for an out-of-county warrant.

### Union

Johnnie Alexander, 58, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on December 7 for probation violations.

Donald Gordon, 32, of Orlando, was arrested by Union deputies on December 6 for an out-of-county warrant.

Keith Jones, 64, of High Springs, was arrested by Union

deputies on December 5 for an out-of-county warrant.

Brandon King, 38, of Tallahassee, was arrested by Union deputies on December 8 for resisting an officer with violence and disturbing the peace.

Shannon Miley, 38, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on December 5 for a probation violation and resisting an officer.

Anthony Robertson, 17, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on December 3 for possession of over 20 grams of marijuana.

### Clay

Keith Jones, 32, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on December 5 for domestic battery.

## Two dead in Lake Butler motorcycle crash

BY JENN SAMSEL  
Special to the Times

Two motorcyclists are dead after losing control of the Yamaha they were on and colliding with the median on State Roads 100 and 121 in Union County.

According to the Florida Highway Patrol, a 42-year-old male driver riding a Yamaha motorcycle was traveling westbound with a 20-year-old female passenger when he lost control of the vehicle.

The motorcycle struck the raised center median curb with its front end, causing it to rotate clockwise and eject both riders.

FHP reported that both the driver and the passenger died at the scene. They were both wearing helmets, and the case is currently being investigated.

## The worst thing you can say to a person with dementia

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

The program manager for Alzheimer's Association's Central and North Florida Chapter told a Lake Region civic group that the worst thing you can say to a person with dementia is to ask the person to come out of their reality.

Donna Lee spoke to the Keystone Heights Rotary Club about her organization's services, including a 1-800 hotline, caregiver support, and training for first responders to deal with people with cognitive decline.

Lee said that many times, the adult children of dementia patients are the caregivers for the patient and that when the patient talks like they are living years or decades ago, family members erroneously try to correct the patient.

She said that one example is a father with dementia who asks where his deceased wife is during the Thanksgiving family gathering.

"When he asks about his wife, who passed away six years ago, they say, 'I'm sorry, Dad. She



Donna Lee spoke to the Keystone Heights Rotary Club about her organization's services, including a 1-800 hotline, caregiver support, and training for first responders to deal with people with cognitive decline.

passed away," Lee said. "Now he has to relive that tragedy again."

Lee said if her father had Alzheimer's or dementia and asked where his deceased wife was, Lee would tell him, "She's

not here right now."

"I'm not lying to him," the program manager added. "She's not here right now, but I'm also not traumatizing him."

Lee also recounted some advice she gave to the wife of a retired traveling salesman experiencing cognitive decline.

The spouse told Lee that even though her husband had been retired for two decades, he expected a packed suitcase and airline tickets by the front door when he woke up in the morning.

"Now, even though he's been retired for 20 years," Lee said, recalling the situation, "he wakes up, he's still looking for a suitcase and plane tickets, so when it's not there, he's angry, starts throwing things and fighting with her because he thinks he's living 20 years prior, still working."

Lee said she advised the wife to pack a suitcase and leave it by the front door. The program manager then found a website where she could print authentic-looking plane tickets that the spouse could put on top of the luggage.

"Three days later, she calls me back and says, you just solved

our whole problem," recalled Lee. "She said, I took those tickets and put them on top of that suitcase. I put in shoes, a change of clothes, and toiletries, things he would recognize if he opened the suitcase. Put it by

the door, put the plane tickets on top."

Lee added that, according to the wife, her husband woke up, went to the front door, picked up the fake tickets, put them back on the suitcase, and asked, "What's

for breakfast?"

"She said, 'This is the first morning in, like, five years I have not woke up to a fight.'"

## National collection week concludes for Christmas boxes

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Three box truckloads of Christmas gift shoeboxes left Trinity Baptist Church last week during Operation Christmas Child's National Collection Week.

The church serves as a drop-off point for other churches and nonprofits participating in the annual event.

Operation Christmas Child, a ministry of Samaritan's Purse, has delivered over 220 million boxes to children in over 170 countries and territories since 1993. The boxes contain toys, personal hygiene items, and a booklet that explains the Gospel.

Brittany from Woodlawn Baptist Church in Johnson delivered a carload of boxes in

her back seat and trunk to the Lake Region church.

She described her church, located about 15 miles south of Keystone Heights, as a small and friendly congregation of which she has been a member for 21 years.

Brittany said she took over her church's Operation Christmas Child program after the previous coordinator moved away six years ago.

"This year, we started doing a year-round collection," she said. "So, we started just asking for specific items every month, and then we distributed boxes, collected money, and then had a packing party, which increased the number of boxes."

Trinity's project leader, Diane Michel, said she expected over 5,800 shoeboxes to leave her

church's parking lot before the end of National Collection Week.



A volunteer unloads Christmas gift shoeboxes from Woodlawn Baptist Church in Johnson.

# Russ WADE

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# BHS' Ferguson, McKenzie sign to play college football

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School seniors Jacob Ferguson and Jeremiah McKenzie are the latest Tornados who'll have football opportunities at the Division-I level, with Ferguson signing a letter of intent to play for Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, and McKenzie signing to play for Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant.

The players participated in a signing ceremony in the BHS auditorium on the first day of early signing (Dec. 4).

"It's very exciting," said Ferguson, a 6-4, 285-pound offensive lineman. "I've been working hard for it. It feels like everything paid off."

McKenzie, a 6-2, 195-pound linebacker, said, "I've always wanted to (sign to play college ball) as a kid. This is great to finally have the opportunity."

Bradford's soon-to-be-graduating class and its last four graduating classes have now had 26 players (including one preferred walk-on) earn college opportunities, with 14 of those coming at the Division-I level.

During Jamie Rodgers' three years as head coach, 14 have received college opportunities. Ferguson and McKenzie are the

ninth and 10th players under Rodgers who are going to Division-I schools.

Rodgers said more players from this year's class will eventually have signing ceremonies.

"It's really simple. Teams that are good usually have guys sitting on a stage at the end of the year. That's not a coincidence," said Rodgers, whose teams have a combined three-year record of 35-5.

Ferguson said, "If you're starting on a team like we had, then you've got a chance (to play in college)."

Rodgers said Ferguson put in the work to start for Bradford and give himself an opportunity at the next level.

"He turned himself into the biggest he could be and the strongest he could be by what he did in the weight room and on his off time," Rodgers said. "He didn't mind going out there and running extra. He didn't mind lifting extra. He never minded any of that stuff."

"That's really what did it for him. That's the reason he got the opportunity, because of his self-motivation and his drive."

Ferguson said Old Dominion was the only school he considered late in the recruiting process.

"I like the culture. It's a cool

place, and I like the coaches," Ferguson said, adding, "Everything there is really nice."

Bradford rushed for an average of more than 200 yards in each of the past two seasons. Ferguson was a big part of that.

"I'd say my strong suit is probably the run game — down blocking and stuff like that," Ferguson said. "I can definitely improve in the pass game and improve my balance and maybe my flexibility a little bit."

Rodgers agreed that Ferguson needs to work on pass protection, but he said the lineman will be a good fit at Old Dominion, which employs a run-zone scheme.

Whether his team is running the ball or throwing it, one thing you can count on, according to Rodgers, is that Ferguson will play to the whistle and be aggressive in doing so.

"He likes the violence that is football," Rodgers said. "A lot of people don't like that, but he does. It makes a lot of people get out of football, but he enjoys it."

Whatever strides Ferguson makes on the field will be complemented by being part of a college's strength and nutrition programs. Rodgers said Ferguson will go from moving well from side to side at 285 pounds to doing the same at 305 pounds.

"He's not monitoring what



Jeremiah McKenzie, seated between parents Robert McKenzie and Deandra Robinson, announces his intent to play football at Central Michigan during a Dec. 4 signing ceremony.

he eats every day right now as far as nutrition goes. No high-school kid does," Rodgers said, adding, "When he goes off to a Division-I program, he's going to eat 7,000, 8,000 calories a day. His nutrition is going to be super high. His level of lifting is going to be super high."

"He doesn't have to be self-motivated anymore. Even though he will be, they're going to motivate him."

Another highly motivated individual is McKenzie. If you want proof, simply look at what he has done at BHS. Rodgers referenced the scene in the movie "Friday Night Lights" in which L.V. Miles is talking about everything his nephew Boobie Miles can do on the field.

"He's describing Jeremiah and what he was for us — a Swiss Army Knife," Rodgers said. "He can play safety. He can play linebacker. He could walk up at defensive end and rush the passer if we needed him to."

"Running back. Quarterback. He blocked punts for touchdowns. He averaged 35-plus yards over two years punting and had never punted a ball before (that)."

"His athleticism is super impressive."

That athleticism helped him receive at least 10 offers from colleges, but in the end,

McKenzie said he had only one choice to make.

"Central Michigan just showed me the most attention since we started talking."

McKenzie is going to Central Michigan as a linebacker, which is where the majority of his playing time has been the last two seasons. He was Bradford's leading tackler this past year.

Though he said he does enjoy running the ball on offense, McKenzie said he likes playing defense better.

Rodgers said McKenzie will be good wherever he plays, but he envisions him as a Star linebacker in a 4-2-5 scheme or an outside linebacker in a 3-4 defense.

"He can come up and make open-field tackles because of his athleticism, but then, he can cover backs out of the backfield on swing passes," Rodgers said. "He can cover the flats. He doesn't have a problem backpedaling. He changes direction so fast."

"Just everything that you look for in a defensive athlete that can be one of those hybrid linebacker-safety type guys. That's what he is."

When asked what he needs to improve in to transition to the next level, McKenzie said, "Definitely get stronger, faster, bigger — pretty much all of

those aspects it takes to play at the next level."

Rodgers said McKenzie needs to all of those things that all the "talented guys" have to do when going to college.

"He's got to get bigger, he's got to get stronger and he's got to get faster to compete and go where he wants to go," Rodgers said. "He wants to be the best."

McKenzie and Ferguson both enjoyed being able to share the spotlight during the Dec. 4 signing ceremony. In fact, it was important for Ferguson to sign alongside at least one of his teammates.

"If (McKenzie) wasn't going to sign today, I would've waited," Ferguson said.

Their days of suiting up for the Tornados are over. Next, they'll don the uniforms of their respective college teams.

Ferguson said it'll be a new experience when he steps onto the field as an Old Dominion Monarch, but also a continuation of what he's been doing at BHS.

"I think it'll feel very different," he said, "but you've still got to go out and do the same exact thing — go out and execute."

McKenzie is ready to become a Central Michigan Chippewa.

"I'm going to love it," he said. "I can't wait."



Jake Ferguson, seated between parents Jacob Ferguson and Katrina Bennett, participates in a signing ceremony on Dec. 4. He'll play football at Old Dominion.

## Legal Notices

Legals for the week of Dec. 12, 2024

### BRADFORD

NOTICE OF INTENT TO USE UNIFORM METHOD OF COLLECTING NON-AD VALOREM SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Board of County Commissioners (the "Board") of Bradford County, Florida (the "County") hereby provides notice, pursuant to Section 197.3632(3)(a), Florida Statutes, of its intent to use the uniform method of collecting non-ad valorem assessments for more than one year to fund annual costs incurred by the County in providing fire protection and emergency medical services. The uniform method allows for the collection of non-ad valorem assessments, sometimes referred to as special assessments, on the annual property tax bill mailed each November by the county tax collector. The Board will consider the adoption of a resolution electing to use the uniform collection method, commencing in November 2025, at a public hearing to be held at 6:30 p.m. on December 19, 2024, at the County Commission Chambers located at 945 North Temple Avenue, Starke, Florida 32091.

Such resolution will state the need for the levy and will contain a legal description of the boundaries of the real property subject to the levy. The non-ad valorem assessments may be levied within the entire County; provided, however, that the imposition and collection of non-ad valorem assessments from any incorporated area of the County shall be subject to the consent by ordinance of the governing body of the affected municipality as required by section 125.01(1)(g), Florida Statutes. The resolution does not impose any assessments, it only preserves the County's ability to collect assessments on the annual property tax bill beginning in November 2025, if the Board takes additional steps before then to impose fire protection assessments. Such additional steps include public hearing and mailed notice at least twenty (20) days before

the public hearing to all owners of real property subject to the assessments. Copies of the proposed form of resolution are on file at the office of the County Manager, 945 North Temple Avenue, Starke, Florida 32091. All interested persons are invited to attend the public hearing. In the event any person decides to appeal any decision by the Board with respect to any matter relating to the consideration of the resolution at the referenced public hearing, a record of the proceeding may be needed and in such an event, such person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the public hearing is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence on which the appeal is to be based.

In accordance with the American with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation of an interpreter to participate in these proceedings should contact the County Manager at (904) 966-6327, at least 48 hours prior to the time of the hearing. Board of County Commissioners of Bradford County, Florida. Publish on the following dates: November 21, 2024, November 28, 2024, December 5, 2024, December 12, 2024

11/21 4tchg 12/12-BCT

### UNION

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA. CASE NUMBER: 63-2024-CA-0015 BULLARD-DENUENE INVESTMENT CO., a Florida corporation, Plaintiff,

vs. LUBOV BOGOPOLSKAYA, and THE COMMONS LANDOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC., a Florida non-profit corporation, Defendants. AMENDED CLERK'S NOTICE OF SALE UNDER F.S. CHAPTER 45 NOTICE IS GIVEN that, in accordance with the Summary Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated October 28, 2024, and Amended Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated October 31, 2024, in the above styled cause, I will sell to

the highest and best bidder for cash on the Courthouse steps, Union County Courthouse, 55 West Main Street, Lake Butler, Union County, Florida, at 11:00 A.M. on January 23, 2025, the following described property:

Lot 4, PALMETTO COMMONS, a subdivision according to the plat thereof as recorded in Plat Book 3, Page 4, on file in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court in and for Union County, Florida. Tax Parcel Identification Number: 01-05-18-1L-000-0040-0. ANY PERSON CLAIMING AN INTEREST IN THE SURPLUS FROM THE SALE, IF ANY, OTHER THAN THE PROPERTY OWNER AS OF THE DATE OF THE LIS PENDENS FILED HEREIN MUST FILE A CLAIM WITH THIS COURT WITHIN SIXTY (60) DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF THE SALE.

Dated this 20th day of November, 2024. KELLIE HENDRICKS RHOADES, Clerk of Courts. BY: Crystal Hollingsworth, Deputy Clerk.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been furnished by United States Mail, or electronic mail on this 20th of November, 2024, to the following: LUBOV BOGOPOLSKAYA 1317 EDGEWATER DR STE 1917 ORLANDO, FL 32804 THE COMMONS LANDOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC., 1826 SW SR 47 LAKE CITY, FL 32025 Bonnie S. Green, Esquire, attorney for Plaintiff, @ bonniegreen@darbypeele.com and deloresbrannen@darbypeele.com. BY: C. Hollingsworth, Deputy Clerk 11/28 2tchg 12/5-UCT

The Union County Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) Planning Committee is to meet on Thursday, December 17, 2024, at 10a (EST) via Teams. The County encourages any interested citizens and business owners to attend and provide input. The Committee guides the preparation of the Union County LMS, which serves as a plan to reduce the community's long-term risk for

protecting people and property from the effects of natural disasters and to build a safer and stronger community. Please contact Tim Allen at allentc@unionsheriff.us for a Teams invite if interested.

12/5 2tchg 12/12-UCT

City of Lake Butler Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Engineering Services,

Florida Boating Improvement Program

The City of Lake Butler is seeking to enter into an engineering services contract with a state-registered engineer for one grant-funded project. Scope of Work — The project is being funded by a Florida Boating Improvement Program grant (Grant #24073). The engineering services contract will include the design, permitting, testing surveying, Geotech, and preparation of biddable plans and specifications for improvements to the boat ramp at Lakeside Park. Evaluative Criteria: Please address the following evaluative criteria in your response to this RFQ:

1. Experience: provide a description of your engineering experience to include a list of past local government clients and the types of projects that were completed for them. 2. Capacity to perform the requested services: provide the resumes of the staff that will or may be assigned to this project. 3. Ability to perform the requested services: describe the proposed tasks for this project that will be initiated to address the scope of work. Also, include a copy of your current certificate of insurance for professional liability. Ranking Criteria - The statements of qualifications that are received will be ranked according to the following criteria: 1. Engineering experience: 60 points; 2. Capacity to perform the requested services: 25 points; 3. Ability to perform the requested services: 15 points; Total Points: 100. For this RFQ, the highest ranked respondent will be recommended for contract award, subject to negotiation of fair and reasonable compensation. Deadline for Submission - The deadline for submitting proposals is 2:00 p.m. on December 26, 2024 at the following address: Lake Butler City Hall

(Attention: City Manager), 200 SW 'st Street, Lake Butler, FL 32054. Please limit your submittal to 35 pages or less and submit six copies of your statement of qualifications and write "Sealed statement of qualifications for FBIP engineering services" on the outside of the envelope. Also, please note that this notice constitutes the entire RFQ for this project (there is no need to request an RFQ document because this notice is the RFQ). The engineering services contract will be subject to grant award and release of funds by the funding agency. In accordance with Chapter 287.133(2) (a), Florida Statutes, a person or affiliate who has been placed on the convicted vendor list following a conviction for a public entity crime may not submit a proposal. MBE/WBE firms are encouraged to submit proposals.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AFFIRMATIVE ACTION 12/12 1tchg-UCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR UNION COUNTY, STATE OF FLORIDA

CASE NO: 63-2020-DR-0136-FMXX-MA DIVISION:

IN RE: THE MATTER OF: WILLIAM CHAD ANDERSON, Petitioner, and BRITTANY HAIRE, Respondent.

To: William Chad Anderson 4534 S.W. 84th Trail Lake Butler, FL 32054

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action for Supplemental Petition for Modification of Timesharing and Child Support has been filed against you and that you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on Maria Aguilu, Esq., Attorney for Petitioner at 2318 Park Street, Jacksonville, Florida 32204 email: maguilu@immigrationlawfla.com, phone: 904-385-9377 on or before January 1, 2025, and file the original with the clerk of this court at: Union County Courthouse, 55 West Main Street, Room 103, Lake Butler, FL 32054 before service on Respondent or immediately thereafter. If you fail

to do so, a default may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the petition.

Copies of all court documents in this case, including orders, are available at the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office. You may review these documents upon request. You must keep the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office notified of your current address. (You may file Designation of Current Mailing and E-Mail Address, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.915.) Future papers in this lawsuit will be mailed or e-mailed to the address(es) on record at the clerk's office.

WARNING: Rule 12.285, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, requires certain automatic disclosure of documents and information. Failure to comply can result in sanctions, including dismissal or striking of pleadings.

Dated: December 4, 2024. CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT BY: C. HOLLINGSWORTH DEPUTY CLERK 12/12 4tchg -01/02/2025 UCT

### LAKE REGION

Notice of Public Auction Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Florida Self Storage Facility Act Statutes (Section 83.801, 83.809), Lake Area Storage, LLC, will sell the following items to the highest and best bidder on Monday, December 30th, 2024 at 9:00 A.M. (EST) at 7101 SR 21, Keystone Heights, Florida 32656. Unit# 234, containing misc. household items. 12/12 2tchg 12/19-LRM

Notice of Public Auction Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Florida Self Storage Facility Act Statutes (Section 83.801, 83.809), Lake Area Storage, LLC, will sell the following items to the highest and best bidder on Monday, December 30th, 2024 at 9:00 A.M. (EST) at 7101 SR 21, Keystone Heights, Florida 32656. Unit# 304, containing misc. household items. 12/12 2tchg 12/19-LRM

### Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700

Published each Thursday and entered as Periodical Postage Paid at Starke, Florida under Act of March 3, 1879.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Bradford County Telegraph 131 West Call Street • Starke, Florida 32091 Phone: 964-6305 • P.O. Drawer A • Starke, FL 32091

John Miller, Publisher

Editor: Mark J. Crawford Sports Editor: Cliff Smelley Advertising: John R. Tillman Typesetting: Mary Goode Advertising & Newspaper Prod: C. Hurston Bookkeeping & Classified Adverts: Macie Hamilton Heather Wheeler Bookkeeping Asst: Mary Goode Front office Asst:

Subscription Rate in Trade Area \$52.00 per year: \$26.00 six months Outside Trade Area: \$52.00 per year: \$26.00 six months

### Lake Region Monitor

USPS 114-170

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John Miller, Publisher

Editor: Dan Hildebran Sports Editor: Cliff Smelley Advertising: John R. Tillman Typesetting: Mary Goode Advertising & Newspaper Prod: C. Hurston Bookkeeping & Classified Adverts: Macie Hamilton Heather Wheeler Bookkeeping Asst: Mary Goode Front office Asst:

Subscription Rate in Trade Area \$52.00 per year: \$26.00 six months Outside Trade Area: \$52.00 per year: \$26.00 six months

### UNION COUNTY TIMES

USPS 648-200

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: UNION COUNTY TIMES 131 W. Call Street • Starke, FL 32091 uctimeseditor@gmail.com 904-964-6305 • fax 904-964-8628

John Miller, Publisher

Editor: Mark J. Crawford Advertising: John R. Tillman Typesetting: Mary Goode Advertising & Newspaper Prod: C. Hurston Bookkeeping & Classified Adverts: Macie Hamilton Heather Wheeler Bookkeeping Asst: Mary Goode Front office Asst:

Subscription Rate in Trade Area \$52.00 per year: \$26.00 six months Outside Trade Area: \$52.00 per year: \$26.00 six months

# UCHS student-athletes sign to play baseball, football

## Jenkins to play football at South Florida

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County Head Football Coach Andrew Thomas has seen players rely on talent alone, but senior Gavin Jenkins has proven to him that he has talent and a strong work ethic, both of which combined have given him an opportunity to play Division-I ball.

Jenkins signed a letter of intent to play at Tampa's University of South Florida during a signing ceremony on Dec. 4 in the UCHS auditorium.

"It's exciting. I feel great right now," said Jenkins, who plays corner. "All glory to God for giving me this ability to play football and go to the next level."

Thomas said Jenkins changed his approach to work in the weight room about a year and a half ago. He also saw Jenkins devote time on his own to working on the



Gavin Jenkins (second from right) is pictured at his Dec. 4 signing ceremony. He'll play football at the University of South Florida. Jenkins is seated between his mother, April Jenkins, and Latonya McCray. His godfather, Alvin Merriex is also pictured.

field and improving his game. "There are some guys I've seen — they don't work real hard, and they're naturals," Thomas said.

"(Jenkins) kind of understood how to grind and train himself — they're naturals," Thomas said. See JENKINS, page 13

## Devin Diggs to play baseball at North Florida

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School senior Devin Diggs, according to his coach, made the decision to do whatever was necessary to play at the next level. It worked, as Diggs put himself in rare company, signing a letter of intent to play baseball at Jacksonville's University of North Florida.

"I'm excited to see what UNF has in store for me," Diggs said following his signing ceremony, which was held Dec. 4 in the UCHS auditorium. "It looks like I have a promising future there."

Diggs said two key factors led to UNF being the right school for him. One was that the school is close to home. The other was that he felt like he was a part of something special at UNF.

"They treated me like family," Diggs said. See DIGGS, page 11



Devin Diggs (second from left) is pictured at his Dec. 4 signing ceremony. He's going to the University of North Florida to play baseball. Diggs is pictured with (l-r) his sister, Mariah Cheevers, and parents Tracy and Dalton Diggs.

UCHS Head Coach Jiwan James said less than 2 percent of high-school senior baseball players (an average of 130,000 per year) receive scholarships from Division-I schools. See DIGGS, page 11

# Highly Rated Local Businesses!

<p><b>JBS Jackson Building Supply</b> "Serving Our Community For Over 60 Years"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LUMBER &amp; BUILDING MATERIALS</li> <li>PAINT, LADDERS &amp; SUPPLIES</li> <li>ELECTRICAL &amp; PLUMBING SUPPLIES</li> <li>METAL ROOFING &amp; SHINGLES</li> <li>DOORS &amp; WINDOWS</li> <li>HAND &amp; POWER TOOLS</li> <li>HOME &amp; FARM HARDWARE</li> <li>BATHROOM VANITIES</li> <li>HOT WATER HEATERS</li> <li>LAWN &amp; GARDEN</li> </ul> <p>STARKE US-301S 964-6078 LAKE BUTLER 145 SW 6th Ave. 496-3079</p> <p><i>Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6</i></p>	<p><b>Phillip McDonald Plumbing</b> 740 S Orange St, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 964-3737</p>  <p>"I would definitely use this company again in the future. They showed up on time. Zach was very respectful and went over everything that needed to be done."</p>	<p><b>Teal Tile Carpet One</b> 131 N Cherry St, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 964-7423</p>  <p>"High quality in every way!!!! Product was great. Workmanship was great. Pleasant staff. Just a pleasure to work with. Highly recommend!"</p>
<p><b>Miller HVAC Services, Inc.</b> (904) 626-0963 Serving Northeast FL</p>  <p>"I have used Miller's HVAC services for many years, one of the only companies that you call and they actually answer the phone and show up and do what they said they would do. They have fair prices and their service is phenomenal. I highly recommend them."</p>	<p><b>CHRIST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH</b> 3760 State Rd 21, Keystone Heights, FL 32656 (352) 875-6079</p> <p><b>10:00 AM - Adult Bible Class</b> <b>11:00 AM - Worship Service</b></p>	<p><b>Turners Automotive &amp; Transmission</b> 135 Commercial Cir, Keystone Heights, FL 32656 (352) 473-3404</p>  <p>"Best mechanic around. These guys always do top quality work, and if they can find a cheaper solution that is just as viable, they won't hesitate to save you money. They did for me."</p>
<p><b>DLP Bank</b> 811 S Walnut St, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 964-7830</p>  <p>"Very welcoming bank. They learn and know you by name and will not stop until they have helped with whatever your needs may be. I love this bank."</p>	<p><b>Stor-Mor of Starke</b> 12046 US-301, Hampton, FL 32044 (386) 339-7543</p>  <p>"Great customer service! The owner is very confident in Stor-Mor sheds and is well knowledgeable about all the different kinds that they sell!"</p>	<p><b>The Struggle Bus Mobile I.V.</b> strugglebusventures.com</p>  <p>"I have been feeling so run down lately so I had the immunity blend and it has really helped me! Feeling great overall and especially felt my energy levels increase after my IV. The staff were knowledgeable and so friendly!"</p> <p><b>Definitely recommend!</b></p>
<p><b>Hearing Aids Today</b> 450 S Lawrence Blvd, Keystone Heights, FL 32656 (352) 877-4471</p>  <p>"They are very specific people. When asked to do something they do it. I love the people at Hearing Aids Today. They have really helped me! If you need an adjustment they get you in immediately. Great people."</p>	<p><b>Robert's Insurance</b> 986 N Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 452-7784</p>  <p>"The insurance agency helps keep the insurance prices down." "Always a great place to visit and get help!"</p>	<p><b>Andrews Site Prep</b> (386) 867-0572 Services 20 different counties!</p>  <p>"A wonderful company! They get the job done right and they get the job done fast. Thank you Andrews Site Prep for always being somebody that we can count on!"</p>
<p><b>Craig Falstreaux Heating &amp; Air, Inc</b> 228 S Walnut St, Starke, FL 32091 (352) 792-4426</p>  <p>"Our AC quit blowing last night and Danny came out first thing today and had the issue found and fixed within an hour! Fair price and extremely nice! Could not recommend them more! Thanks so much!"</p>	<p><b>Bradford County Sheriffs Office</b> 945-B N Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 966-6161</p>  <p>"I need to take a minute to recognize my jail command team, the people I'm surrounded by. Each unique and strong in their own areas. There is nothing anyone asks of them they don't do and almost always with a smile. They take care of business and take care of people at the same time."</p>	<p><b>The Chiropractic &amp; Injury Clinic of Starke</b> 601 E Call St, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 964-8018</p>  <p>"I love this place! They make me feel like family here! Karen is my bestie, she's great. You'll love the two assistants in the back. They're so nice and very funny too! Dr. Lowry does awesome adjustments and is very friendly and welcoming. I always feel like a new person when I leave. No joke when I say this is the kindest medical staff I've ever dealt with. 10/10 recommend."</p>
<p><b>Durrance Pump</b> 864 N Temple Ave STE C, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 964-7061</p>  <p>"The guys at Durrance came out and drilled a well and installed the pump at my new house and I couldn't be happier. They even came back after hours to correct a slight sulfur smell in the water."</p>	<p><b>C &amp; S Site Prep</b> 22787 NW 34th Ave, Lawtey, FL 32058 (352) 235-1210</p>  <p>Land Clearing, Driveway, Culverts, Excavation, Ponds, House Pads, Drainage, Grading, Erosion Control, Dirt, Lime Rock, Asphalt, Sand, Crushed Concrete, 57 Stone</p>	<p><b>T.E.S. Rentals</b> 2000 N Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 452-0888</p>  <p>"These guys do great business, highly recommend! Truly outstanding customer service and very fair pricing."</p>

**Bradford County Eye Center**  
292 Lafayette St, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 964-8076



"I saw Dr Jenn. She and the staff were very friendly & professional. They listened to my questions and answered them without looking disinterested. I am grateful."

**Hometown Health & Wellness**  
110 Nightingale St, Keystone Heights, FL 32656  
(352) 664-7702



"I have gone here multiple times to see both Jen and Bryan. I love that the location is close to home, they are open various hours to fit your schedule but most of all I love the small town feel when you walk in the door! You are welcomed and made to feel at home. I am very happy with all services I have received and am so thankful."



The Union County High School marching band consists of: (front row, l-r) Lacy Fipps, Malik Hendricks, Madison Andrews, Kara Bagley, Reese Harrison, Taylor Hunsinger, Preston Flick, Nadia Norman, Matthew Walin, Andrea Smith, Estrella Hernandez, (second row, l-r) Mckenzie Flick, Josie Regar, Carmyn Barringer, Zulma Gomez-Gomez, Aubree McDowell, Alexis Morris, Arabella Gaultney, Abigail Fishburn, Sommer Mckenzie, Farrin Mercer, Haley Zachary, Delani Harden, (third row, l-r) Codi Huntley, Kerri Miller, Kyle Jo Harrison, Kaelyn Hanna, Genevieve Symonette, Adrian Tucker, Marlee Trowell, Charliann Burroughs, Lillian Jacobi, Rebecca Langkau, Natalie Campbell, Chloe Gartman, Riddhi Patel, Rani Bell, (fourth row, l-r) Mckenzie Huggins, Kaylee Jewell, Brodie Garmon, Allaya Blocker, Gabrielle Bradley, Maggie Wade, Princess Maxwell, Barry Andersen-Davis, Emily Hann, William Wilkerson, Aubree Gay, (fifth row, l-r) Miley Wilson, Eli Hendricks, Evan Jones, Irmarih Green, Nathan Hart, Braden Adams, Nolan Bieghley, Alexis Wills, Kynley Tomlinson, (sixth row, l-r) Brianna Elixson, Grace Miller, Alex Wade, Farrah Summers, Dawson Ellis, Matthew Ring, Delana Barton, Kendyl Brannen, Lilly Kelley, (back row, l-r) Riley McDowell, Madeline Snow, Addison Barlow, Donald West, Lilly Gaskin, Simmone Hassie, Tifton Roseke, Jenna Beilling, Melanie Elixson and Alexia Staffieri.

## Tigers do it again: overall Superior

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School's Marching Tigers continue to perform at the highest level, earning an overall Superior rating at the fall Music Performance Assessment, which was held Nov. 2 at Alachua's Santa Fe High School.

The Marching Tigers, composed of 80 members, earned Superior in each category: Music (two judges), Visual Performance/Marching and Maneuvering, General Effect and Auxiliary.

It was the second straight year Union earned straight Superiors and the fourth time in five years the Marching Tigers have accomplished it.

The performance came on the heels of traveling for the football team's game in Chiefland on Nov. 1.

"I was so proud of them," UCHS Director Kelly Dorsey said. "We were like, 'Whew.' Those poor babies were tired after that away game the night before. They still pulled it out."

Union was one of 19 bands competing at the District 4 event and one of 12 that earned an overall Superior rating, joining Baker County, Bell, Buchholz, Fort White, Gainesville, Newberry, P.K. Yonge, Q.I. Roberts, Santa Fe, Trenton and Williston.

Despite being in the class size for smallest student population, the Marching Tigers had the third-largest band in terms of numbers competing at the event. Buchholz had 132 members, while Gainesville had 111 members.

Bradford, Columbia, Eastside, Interlachen and Suwannee achieved overall ratings of Excellent, while Dixie County and Palatka earned Good ratings.

Some outside the program simply assume this is going to be the outcome for the Marching Tigers every year. After all, you probably have to go back to the early 1980s to find a UCHS band that didn't earn an overall Superior at the fall MPA.

Dorsey said while that result is expected every year, it doesn't mean it's going to happen.

"It's a different group every year with different challenges," Dorsey said, adding, "We've taught them that it's not just a given. You have to earn it. I always tell them, 'Yesterday's home run doesn't win today's game.'"

As Dorsey likes to tell other band directors, her program starts at the same place as theirs at the start of every year. Sometimes, she said, her band starts "at more of a deficit" than other programs. "We just work hard every single year," Dorsey said. "Every year, we just roll up the sleeves."

Dorsey said her brass players made some of the biggest strides from the beginning of the year. She described them as sounding quiet, saying, "Just getting air into the horn was big."

Plus, they were a small group. "We don't have a lot of brass on the field," Dorsey said. "We have a lot of woodwinds, so they're outnumbered. Brass has had to work exceptionally hard."

Dorsey said her band sounds like it has more than two French horn players, but that's all the Marching Tigers have. One of

the horn players is a senior, while the other is a freshman. Dorsey said the senior has embraced being a mentor to the freshman, while the freshman has been eager to learn everything he's teaching her.

"They play really well together," Dorsey said. Another group Dorsey praised was the drumline, which is made up mostly of sophomores.

"The drumline worked really hard. They don't sound like tennis shoes in a dryer anymore," Dorsey said, adding, "We've gotten lots of compliments on how they sound out there."

The relationship Dorsey described between her senior and freshman French horn players can really describe this year's whole band. Dorsey said the push this year has been for leaders to be positive influences on the younger members. What has resulted is a supportive, nurturing environment.

"Our leaders don't get the power trip," Dorsey said. "They have a servant's attitude. We

See UCHS, page 12

## BHS band earns Excellent at MPA

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Disbelief was followed by excitement.

Bradford High School's Scarlet Storm marching band earned two Superior ratings as part of an overall rating of Excellent at the Nov. 2 District 4 Music Performance Assessment at Alachua's Santa Fe High School.

Bands receive six ratings in five categories, with the Music category consisting of two judges' ratings. Superior is the highest rating, followed by Excellent, Good and Fair.

Bradford had four Excellent ratings to complement its two Superior ratings — one year after receiving an overall rating of Good.

"It was like night and day compared to last year," BHS Director Melanie Riley-

Gonzalez. "I was really pleased with them."

The Scarlet Storm received its two Superior ratings in Music and Percussion. The second Music judge awarded a rating of Excellent, which Bradford also earned in the categories of Visual Performance/Marching and Maneuvering, General Effect and Auxiliary.

"We were expecting to not get any Superiors," Riley-Gonzalez said. "We went in and were like, 'Let's do an honest evaluation of ourselves. We're not there, and that's OK.'"

With that honest assessment, it was, of course, a pleasant surprise to hear that the band did earn Superior ratings. When the first one was announced, Riley-Gonzalez said the band students all looked at each other and asked, "Is this for real?"

It was indeed for real, and the students were happy. In



Bradford High School marching band members are: (front row, l-r) Adan Urrutia, Kyson Richardson, Allyson McCoy, Miranda Lindsey, (second row, l-r) Wyatt Canipe, Sklya Smart, Josie Canipe, Nolan Dicandio, Kayla Hipps, James Johnson, (third row, l-r) Wyatt Acevedo, Zach Wells, Jordan Desue, Logan Steed, (fourth row, l-r) Ginny Haeseler, Gemma Rodriguez, Leskai Padilla, Lily Barksdale, Jazlyn Hamilton, Sevon Smart, Cana Mitchell, Ryleigh Hagan, Maison McKensie, Drake Benejam, Kwasa Holland and (back row, l-r) Nick Salazar, Darren Lewis and Kylie Boulris.

describing the atmosphere on the boys bus on the trip back to Starke, Riley-Gonzalez said, "They were singing and having a grand, old time on the way back. It just made me smile. I was like, 'They're proud of themselves.' That's what I wanted."

As Riley-Gonzalez describes it to her students, a Fair rating is basically just a thank you for showing up and competing. Good means you still have work to do, Excellent means you're on the right path and Superior is stating that "you've got your stuff together."

So, the Scarlet Storm is on the right track. Riley-Gonzalez said a director of one of the competing bands also told her as much.

"She said, 'I can see the difference. They have improved so much.' That, to me, was the biggest compliment," Riley-Gonzalez said.

Entering the 2023-24 school year, Bradford's band was coming off two straight years with overall ratings of Excellent at the fall marching-band MPA (and a Superior rating in 2020-21).

The 2023-24 year was the first with Riley-Gonzalez at the helm. "Last year, we didn't have that focus because they were trying to get to know me, and I was trying to get to know them," Riley-Gonzalez said.

See BHS, page 12

# Obituaries

## Randy Bryant

Randy James Bryant, 51, of Lake Butler, went to be with the Lord on Monday, Dec. 9, 2024. Born Sept. 5, 1973, in Gainesville, he was known for his vibrant spirit and deep passion for the small joys that life had to offer. Despite living with disabilities, Randy approached each day with a sense of optimism that inspired those around him. He had a remarkable ability to find happiness in simple pastimes, such as watching his favorite shows, specifically anything featuring Ernest. His curiosity led him to a love for collecting odds and ends, and he delighted in the process of taking things apart, exploring how they worked inside. These hobbies brought him immense joy and provided a glimpse into his imaginative world.



He is survived by his devoted parents, James "Jimmy" and Deborah Johnson Bryant, who provided him with unwavering love and support throughout his life. He leaves behind his loving siblings, Gerald, Regina, and Timothy Bryant, who carry with them fond memories of a brother who brought laughter and warmth into their lives. Additionally, he will be remembered by numerous aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews. He is reunited in eternal peace with his grandparents, Earl and Geraldine Johnson, and Wilma and Randolph Bryant, who embraced him as he crossed to the other side.

Visitation will be held Thursday, Dec. 12, from 1 p.m. until 2 p.m. at Archer-Milton Funeral Home. This will be followed by a funeral service beginning at 2 p.m., where friends and family can gather to honor and celebrate the remarkable life Randy led. His final disposition will be by cremation under the care and direction of Archer-Milton Funeral Home 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY

## Joe Gray III

Joe Gray III, 71, passed away peacefully at his home on Monday, Dec. 9, 2024, after an extended illness. Born in Macclenny on Feb. 23, 1953, to the late Joe Jr. and Edith Davis Gray, he touched the lives of many with his warm spirit and unwavering dedication. He spent his career working in heavy construction, where he not only honed his skills but also developed lifelong friendships. He was known for his incredible work ethic, always taking pride in the tasks he undertook. Outside of his professional life, he found joy in a variety of hobbies that reflected his love for the outdoors and passion for adventure. He spent countless weekends fishing in tournaments, where he sought the thrill of the catch. Additionally, he was an avid horseman, often trail riding, barrel racing, and roping. His dedication to equestrian activities led him to become a valued member of the MBHA District 2, where he found a community that mirrored his enthusiasm and spirit. In addition to his outdoor pursuits, he was a talented saddler, adept at both repairing and creating saddles. This skill demonstrated not only his craftsmanship but also his deep appreciation for the equine world. He was preceded in death by his parents, Joe Jr. and Edith Davis Young; as well as his siblings, Monroe Gray and Martha Gray.



He leaves behind a loving family who will forever hold his memory close to their hearts. He is survived by the love of his life, Bambi Gray of Lake Butler; stepdaughter, Patty Altman of Lake Butler; daughter, Dana Barton of Macclenny; son, Dane Gray of Douglas, Georgia; and brother, Tim Gray of Sanderson.

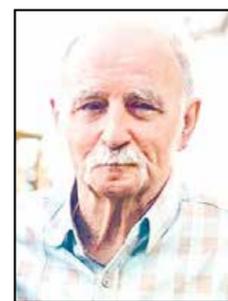
The family invites friends and loved ones to celebrate his remarkable life during the visitation on Thursday, Dec. 12, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. at Archer-Milton Funeral Home in Lake Butler. A graveside service will take place at Cedar Creek Cemetery in Sanderson on Friday, Dec. 13, at 11 a.m., where he will be laid to rest.

Archer-Milton Funeral Home is honored to serve Joe's family during this time. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY

## Thomas Harding Jr.

Thomas "Tommy" A. Harding Jr., 83, passed away on Monday, Nov. 25, 2024, at Riverwood Health and Rehab in Starke. He was born Jan. 14, 1941, in Lake City, where he was a lifelong resident until moving to Raiford in 1983. He worked diligently for 16 years on the road crew for the city of Starke, until his well-deserved retirement. His commitment to his work showcased his unwavering dedication and love for the job. Outside of his profession, he had a deep love for hunting, a pursuit that provided him with much happiness and time spent in nature. When he wasn't in the woods hunting, he was talking about it to anyone who would listen.



He is survived by his beloved wife, Nellie Jean Harding; his two children, Greg Harding and Lisa Harding; as well as numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He also leaves behind a nephew, Dale Townsend; and niece, Cathy Richards of Lake City.

A visitation was held on Monday, Dec. 2, at Archer-Milton Funeral Home in Lake Butler followed by a funeral service where friends and family gathered to celebrate Tommy's life and share their cherished memories. He was laid to rest immediately following the service at Conner Cemetery.

Archer-Milton Funeral Home was honored to serve the Harding family. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY

## Leroy Jackson

Hinton "Roy" Leroy Jackson, 91, of Starke, passed away Friday, Dec. 6, 2024, at Shands UF. Roy was born Nov. 5, 1933, in Lee to the late William Hinton and Evelyn Louise (Bass) Jackson. He was a longtime resident of Bradford County. He was a member of Bayless Highway Baptist Church and the owner/operator of Roy's Market for 64 years. In his spare time, he enjoyed fishing and making both cane syrup and hog head cheese. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sister, Barbara Ann Norman; and grandchildren, Megan Jackson and Luke Andrews.



Survivors are his wife of 68 years, Clifford Marie (Welch) Jackson of Starke; children, Karen Gaskins of Starke, Rodney Leroy (Bessie) Jackson of Starke, and Kyle Lewis (Karen) Jackson of Starke; and his sister, Joyce Evelyn Melton of Starke. Also left are his grandchildren, Kara (Drew) Wainwright, Ashleigh Jackson, Cammi Jackson, Lane Sanford and Hunter Jackson; along with great-grandchildren, Logan, Reese, Kate, Kayden, Sayla, and Kaise.

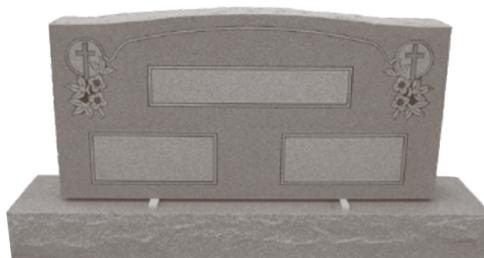
The family will receive friends at the DeWitt C. Jones Chapel of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home on Wednesday, Dec. 11, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. Funeral services will be Thursday, Dec. 12, at 11 a.m. at Bayless Highway Baptist Church with Pastor Mike Conner Jr. and Rev. Alvin Greene officiating. Interment will follow at Crosby Lake Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Bayless Highway Baptist Church Building Fund, 11798 NW CR 225, Starke, 32091.

Arrangements are by Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home of Starke 904-964-6200 www.jonesgallagherfh.com.

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# Obituaries

## Joseph Jackson



Joseph Wendell Jackson of Alachua passed away gently at his home on Saturday, Dec. 7, 2024, at the age of 81. Born in Lee on Nov. 19, 1943, his journey took him through the sun-soaked orange groves of Leesburg and across highways as a truck driver, but it was his spirit and devotion to family that defined his legacy. His career began modestly after marrying his beloved wife, Wanda, in 1963. They moved to Leesburg for a brief period, where he toiled in the orange groves, earning a mere 53 cents an hour. However, his tenacity and determination soon caught the eye of an employer, earning him a promotion to operate a trimmer machine, which brought him a better wage at 93 cents an hour. By the time he was 21, he had embraced the adventurous life of a truck driver, starting out with Hercules in Starke, then with Shadd Trucking for many years and ending his driving career with Whitehead Brothers in Starke. After which, he took on the role of over-the-road truck driver, a vocation he cherished with Wanda until finally parking his semi in 2008, turning his concentration to his family. Beyond the steering wheel, he pursued a plethora of hobbies which gave his life joy. He reveled in the thrill of hog hunting and the tranquility of fishing. Saltwater fishing, in particular, stirred his heart. Despite never mastering the art of swimming, he found exhilaration in water skiing, daringly balancing on one foot. His love for the great outdoors extended to horseback riding and barrel racing, where he proudly served as the president of the Baker County Riding Club. Wendell's green thumb shone brightly as he dedicated time to planting gardens that yielded fresh vegetables, which he lovingly canned. He raised cows and pigs, ensuring his family's table was filled with nourishment from his own hands. He was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph B. "Tobe" and Bessie W. Jackson; love of his life, Wanda A. Jackson; son, Brian Jackson; and sister, Josephine Glover.

He leaves behind a warm and loving family who carry forth his legacy. His children, Joseph (Martha) Jackson of Lake Butler, Gwendolyn (Steve) Bailey of Inverness, and Wendy (Charlie) Eatmon of Santa Fe; grandchildren, Joshua (Ashley) Davis, Joey (Kacie) Jackson, Justin Waters, Jordan (Cheyanne) Cazee, Katelynn (Brianna) Bailey, Ryan (Lauren) Lee, and Summer Eatmon, will pass down stories of his adventures to future generations. His great-grandchildren, Allie, Jaye, C.J., Korbin, Madison, Tripp, Asher, Callie, Colten, Jessa, and India, will surely come to know the legacy of love he left behind. Wendell's heartfelt connection to family does not stop there. He was cherished by his sister, Betty (Glynn) Morgan of Hawthorne; and had a caretaker, son, and friend in Robert Black Jr. of Santa Fe, who shared in the warmth of his life during his later years.

On Wednesday, Dec. 11, friends and family were invited to celebrate his life during visitation at Archer-Milton Funeral Home in Lake Butler. A graveside service followed at Oak Grove Cemetery, where he was laid to rest next to the love of his life, Wanda.

Archer-Milton Funeral Home is honored to serve the Jackson family during this difficult time. 386-496-2008 [www.archerfuneralhome.com](http://www.archerfuneralhome.com)

PAID OBITUARY

## William Manning

William Gerald Manning, 31, of Starke, died Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2024. He attended Bradford County High School. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Survivors are his father; Ted E. Manning Jr.; mother, Connie Smith; brother, Antonio Manning; son, Grayson Manning; and extended family members

Arrangements are under the care and direction of V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services Starke, 904-964-5757

## Donald Osteen



Donald Osteen, a devoted husband, beloved family member, and cherished friend, passed away on Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024, at Ascension St. Vincent's Middleburg. Born Dec. 28, 1955, in Starke, he lived a life filled with purpose, joy, and the warmth of family and community. For 38 years, he dedicated his professional life to Miller Brewing Company, where he was admired not only for his strong work ethic but also for the camaraderie he shared with his colleagues. He had a passion for the outdoors, which was evident in his love for fishing and hunting. He started his fishing journey in fresh waters, but later found great joy in saltwater fishing, embracing every moment spent on the water. As a devoted fan of Florida State University, he took immense pride in supporting his team. His 1965 Chevy truck was another of his passions, as he enjoyed working on it in his spare time. He also relished the freedom of riding Harleys, creating unforgettable memories during these excursions. Always wanting to make others laugh, he loved demonstrating a spirited representation of Santa Claus, a role he embraced with delight each year, bringing laughter and joy to both his workplace and family gatherings. Above all, his greatest joy came from being with his family, a bond he held dear. He was preceded in death by his parents, James and Beatrice Manning Osteen; and his brother, Jimmie Osteen.

He is survived by his loving wife, Terri Osteen, with whom he shared 43 wonderful years of marriage. He is also survived by his sisters-in-law, Cherri Dyer, Tillie Wright, and Judy Osteen; brother-in-law, Tommy Dyer; and numerous nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews who will forever cherish his memory.

The family will receive friends during a visitation on Monday, Dec. 16, at Evergreen Baptist Church from 1 p.m. until 2 p.m. followed by a funeral service at 2 p.m. He will be laid to rest immediately following the service at South Prong Cemetery.

Donald Osteen will be remembered as a man who brought joy and laughter to all who knew him. His spirit and legacy will live on through the countless lives he touched.

Archer-Milton Funeral Home is honored to serve Mrs. Terri and the rest of the Osteen family during this time. 386-496-2008 [www.archerfuneralhome.com](http://www.archerfuneralhome.com)

PAID OBITUARY

## Joann Shadd



Joann Shadd, a beloved mother, grandmother, and sister passed away peacefully at her home on Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2024, at the age of 75. Born on July 3, 1949, in Starke, she was known for her vibrant spirit and her unique personality. She was truly one of a kind; her boldness and willingness to speak her mind made her a cherished presence to all who had the pleasure of knowing her. She dedicated 22 years of her professional life working as a licensed practical nurse at Macclenny Nursing Home. Her compassion and dedication to her patients were evident in everything she did, leaving a lasting impact on both her colleagues and those she cared for. It was a career that suited her nurturing spirit and highlighted her desire to help those around her. Family was at the heart of Joann's world. She cherished the moments spent with her children, Billy Horne, Amy (Jason) Hunter, and Kayla (Daniel) Cubbedge; and stepchildren, Donna (Jesse) Harvey, and Jennifer (Don) Andrews. Joann took great joy in guiding her granddaughters as they baked together, sharing her love for food, even though cooking was not her favorite pastime. Her grandchildren, Payton (Carleigh) Parker, Pierce Parker, Baylie Cubbedge, Danni Cubbedge, Chase Shadd, and Taylor Andrews, were her pride and joy, and she adored creating memories with them. She was also a loving sister, leaving behind her siblings, Linda Lewis, Faye (Jeff) Mullinax, and Donnie (D.K.) Bennett. She shared a bond with her family that was rooted in love, laughter, and very heartfelt moments. She also leaves behind her former husband, Bill Horne. In her leisure time, she found joy in the simple pleasures of life, whether it was indulging in a good meal, always preferring to enjoy others' cooking, or getting lost in the thrill of murder mystery movies. Her passions reflected her spirited nature and her zest for life, and these interests were woven into the very fabric of her family's traditions and gatherings. She was preceded in death by her parents, Cecil and Alice Leach; her husband of 40 years, Allison Shadd; brother, Cecil Leach Jr.; and her sister, Marie Green.

A graveside service was held Friday, Nov. 29, at Kingsley Lake Cemetery in Starke. The service was officiated by Pastor Randall A. Griffis Sr. Joann's warmth, laughter, and fierce love will never be forgotten, and she will always be remembered as the extraordinary woman who deeply touched the lives of those around her.

Archer-Milton Funeral Home was honored to once again serve Joann's family. 386-496-2008 [www.archerfuneralhome.com](http://www.archerfuneralhome.com)

PAID OBITUARY

## DIGGS Continued from page 9

"That's a big accomplishment for him," James said.

James said Diggs became part of that small percentage by having the mindset that he was going to play in college. That included his approach to the weight room, which changed about a year and a half ago, James said, describing it as Diggs wanting to get something out of it rather than just going through the motions so he could get out as fast as he could.

"I think he made his mind up that he wanted to go and play at the next level," James said. "He started taking it seriously."

After Diggs plays his last season for UCHS, James will miss the steady presence his team has had in the middle infield.

"He's been my starting shortstop for three years now," James said. "I'm going to have to fill that hole. We've got some young guys coming behind him, but it's easy to write a line-up when you know you've got your shortstop there every single night."

Diggs had a .914 fielding percentage last year, improving upon his .887 percentage as a sophomore. James said what stands out the most about Diggs at shortstop is his athleticism, which was the first things coaches and scouts noticed.

"They all talked about his athleticism," James said.

Diggs is going to UNF as a two-way player as he has also helped the Tigers as a member of their pitching staff. He led the team in strikeouts the last two seasons with 43 in 2023 and 48 in 2024. As a sophomore, he had the third-most innings pitched (27.2), going 3-0 with an ERA of 3.80. Diggs was third in innings pitched (28.1) last season as well, going 1-2 with an ERA of 2.47, which was second-best on the team.

"My best attribute is probably my fastball," Diggs said, "but I'm really working on my changeup, trying to get it a little bit slower. It's a little bit too fast right now."

James said he hopes Diggs can continue to play in the field and pitch at UNF, but it's OK if he eventually winds up focusing on one position.

"I just want to see him out on the field," James said.

Diggs batted .209 with 18 RBI

as a junior. He had seven extra-base hits, including three home runs that James described as "no-doubters."

"A lot of people don't see it in his body frame," James said of the 5-11 Diggs, "but there's a lot of untapped power in there."

James said an important part of Diggs' transitioning to the college game will be altering his body.

"He needs to learn to eat and gain about 20, 25 pounds," James said. "That's probably the biggest thing — continue to add strength and muscle to his body frame."

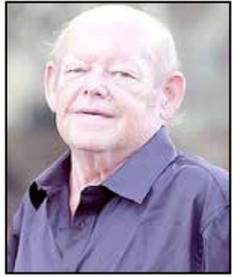
James said Diggs' work ethic and mindset, along with parents who've been a tremendous support to him, will help Diggs succeed in whatever he does after high school.

"He'll be prepared for it," James said. "He's got a good head on his shoulders."

Diggs said he'll feel a sense of relief when he finally steps onto the field as a UNF Osprey. He'll have made a dream become a reality.

"For a while, I didn't think I was going to get there," he said. "(It'll be) major relief."

## Wayne Williams



Wayne Williams, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend, was born on Oct. 20, 1955, in Jacksonville. He went home to be with his Lord and Savior on Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024, in Raiford, leaving a profound legacy defined by love, humility, and devotion. A proud graduate of Baker County High School's Class of 1974, he was an integral part of the school's football team, playing as a running back with a competitive spirit that would last throughout his life. He dedicated nearly 22 years of service to the Department of Corrections, where he rose to the rank of sergeant before his well-earned retirement. His commitment to his work reflected the integrity and discipline that characterized his every endeavor. He was a humble man, whose heart was as big as his competitive nature. He cherished his family deeply and devoted himself to studying the teachings of the Bible, which guided him through life's challenges. He found joy in gathering his loved ones together for what they fondly called the "Williams Olympics," a testament to his spirit of fun and camaraderie. Wayne joins in eternal rest with those who preceded him, including his beloved parents, Willie Williams and Ella Mae Williams; and his brothers, Billy, Bobby, David Grubbs, and Tommy King; along with his father-in-law, Bobby Anderson.

He is survived by his loving wife, Margret Ann Williams of Raiford; and his cherished children, Chana (Robert) Sharpe and Jamie Wayne Williams all of Raiford. Wayne was especially proud of his grandchildren, Haynes (Sara) Sharpe and Madison "Hot Dig" McKenzie, who brought immense joy and pride into his life. He is also survived by his mother-in-law, Geraldine Anderson; his sister Janice Grubbs; his second daughter, Stasi McKenzie; along with brothers-in-law, Mitchel (Shirley) and Randy (Melanie) Anderson; sister-in-law, Diane Anderson Williams; and a dear friend he considered a brother, Neil (Betty) Griffis. The impact of his love and guidance will continue to resonate within the hearts of all who knew him.

Family and friends are invited to pay their respects during visitation at Crossroads to Victory Church in Lawtey on Thursday, Dec. 12, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. A funeral service celebrating his remarkable life will be held Friday, Dec. 13, at 2 p.m. in the same location.

Wayne will be remembered not just for his roles as a husband, father, and friend, but for the incredible example he set for those around him. His legacy of love, faith, and family will continue to shine brightly in the lives he touched. He will be dearly missed but forever cherished in the hearts of those who loved him.

Archer-Milton Funeral Home is honored to once again serve the Williams family. 386-496-2008 [www.archerfuneralhome.com](http://www.archerfuneralhome.com)

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**BHS**

Continued from page 10

Riley-Gonzalez said it seemed that some of last year's students weren't fully committed to band. "I feel like everybody who's here (this year) wants to be here," she said, adding, "This year, the camaraderie was a lot better." In fact, this year's group was confident heading into the MPA. They wanted to achieve an overall Superior rating. Riley-Gonzalez said she was honest with her students, saying she didn't see that happening. She based that assessment on the fact that weather limited the Scarlet Storm's performances this fall and also because Bradford

doesn't have the coaching that other programs have. "When you're looking at all the different schools, they have coaches for everything," Riley-Gonzalez said. "They have a brass coach. They have a woodwinds coach. They have two percussion coaches. Usually, they have someone for drumline and usually someone for what we call the pit (stationary percussion ensemble). They have a color guard and auxiliary coach. "Well, (at BHS) it's just me and Ms. Kim (Smith), who does the majorettes. That's it. That's our staff." Riley-Gonzalez told her students she thought they could get an overall Excellent rating, which they did, making for a nice

turnaround from last year and giving the program a positive outlook for the future. "My hope is that it inspires them to continue to work hard," Riley-Gonzalez said. This latest MPA is preparation for the spring MPA. The spring MPA is preparation for the fall MPA. In the Scarlet Storm director's words, "We're constantly pushing ourselves forward." "Our hope is that as we head in (to the MPA), the kids really have a good time so they want to do it again next year and that we get the next generation coming up excited as well," Riley-Gonzalez said. Bradford was one of 19 bands competing at the District 4 event.

Columbia, Eastside, Interlachen and Suwannee achieved overall ratings of Excellent, while Baker County, Bell, Buchholz, Fort White, Gainesville, Newberry, P.K. Yonge, Q.I. Roberts, Santa Fe, Trenton, Union County and Williston achieved Superior. Dixie County and Palatka earned Good ratings. Bradford was one of four CC class programs (school population of 1,251-1,875), joining Newberry, Santa Fe and Suwannee. The Scarlet Storm was the smallest band compared to those programs with 31 members. Newberry had 34 members, while Santa Fe and Suwannee had 50 and 68, respectively.

**UCHS**

Continued from page 10

celebrate each other every day in class. Somebody plays something, and everybody's like, 'Yeah!' The kids are thriving on that." Dorsey described this year's band as a "consistently hard-working group." That includes students who've been involved since the covid year. It was up to them to be the backbone of the program when students were able to return to school after the pandemic, even though they were young at that time. "Back then, we just couldn't get the upper classmen to re-engage," Dorsey said. "They've

kind of had to be the leaders all the way through. Now, they're really getting to enjoy that ride. I couldn't be more thrilled for them." The MPA performance was later celebrated with a movie night. "We had popcorn and pizza. All the families were invited. It was a nice night," Dorsey said. "We had a good time." It was a well-earned celebration. It's not easy to perform at a high level year after year, but this year's group did it, much like so many bands that came before them. "They have a legacy to live up to," Dorsey said, adding, "The history of the program is really important to me."



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Equipment. Applicant must be able to communicate effectively both written and orally, will be responsible for delegating assignments to other personnel, training in the area of Human Resources is essential and should have some knowledge of Computer Fleet programs and able to perform data entry. Applicant must pass pre-employment Drug Screen and Physical. Applications along with a job description may be obtained from the Bradford County Road Department, 812 B North Grand St. in Starke or from the County's website at www.bradfordcounty-fl.gov The deadline for

accepting applications is December 19, 2024, before the close business. Bradford County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. For questions, please call, (904) 966-6243.

The Bradford County Road Department is currently accepting applications for a full time, qualified Heavy Equipment Operator at a pay rate to be determined by level of experience. Applicants must possess a High School Diploma or G.E.D. and a valid current Class B Florida Driver's License is preferred. Applicants must complete and pass a field test to be considered for hire. Applications along with a

job description may be obtained from the Bradford County Road Department, 812 B North Grand St. in Starke or from the County's website at www.bradfordcountyfl.gov The deadline for accepting applications is December 19, 2024, before the close of business. Bradford County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. For questions, please call, (904) 966-6243.

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Steven Carter had consecutive baskets during a 15-1 second-quarter run and led BHS with 13 points in a win over Ridgeview.

## BHS boys even record with win over Ridgeview

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School had runs of 11-1 and 15-1 in the first half, building a 21-point halftime lead and defeating Class 5A Ridgeview 69-45 on Dec. 6 in Starke.

The Class 3A Tornadoes (1-1) trailed 7-6 after the Panthers made a three-pointer, but then put together an 11-1 run that started with a free throw by K.J. Taylor. Maliki Cobarris scored on a drive to the basket, while Taylor sank a three-pointer to put Bradford up 12-7. After a free throw by Ridgeview, the Tornadoes got a basket from Breion Johnson.

Steven Carter capped the run when he made a three-pointer following a steal by Jy'Quez Cason, putting Bradford ahead 17-8.

Cason finished with a game-high eight steals.

The second quarter was almost all Bradford, which outscored the Panthers 17-3. The Tornadoes scored 15 of the half's final 16 points, getting five points each from Carter and Cobarris during that span.

Carter got the second-quarter run started when he scored off his own steal. Cason then drew a charge on Ridgeview's Gavin Stechschulte on the defensive end, followed by Carter making his second three-pointer of the half. Marlin Haywood added a three-pointer of his own as Bradford built a 31-16 lead.

The eight first-half points by Carter helped him finish with a team-high 13.

After Cobarris made one of his five steals, Jonathan Andrews scored on a rebound putback. A Johnson steal led to a Taylor layup off a Carter assist.

Johnson blocked a shot on the defensive end. Cobarris then scored on a drive to the basket, picking up a foul and making the awarded free throw, concluding the first-half scoring for Bradford, which took a 38-17 lead into the break.

Cobarris had nine points in the half, which helped him finish with 11.

Bradford was outscored 11-5 to start the second half and struggled throughout the third quarter with only three field goals. Jordan Cason had two of

See HOOPS, page 14

## Griffin scores 33 in BHS girls' win over P.K.

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Nichelle Brown and Ar'Nayshia Griffin combined to score 57 points, with Griffin pouring in 33 in the Bradford High School girls basketball team's 76-44 win over P.K. Yonge on Dec. 6 in Gainesville.

Griffin, who is averaging 20 points per game, also reached double digits in rebounds with 10. She has double-doubles in points and rebounds in all but one of the Tornadoes' five games and is averaging 12 boards per game.

It was an efficient night for Griffin and Brown. Griffin was 12 of 18 from the field and 8 of 9 from the foul line, while Brown earned her 24 points off 10-of-13 shooting and a 3-of-3 performance at the foul line.

Brown led the team in blocked shots with nine, steals with six and assists with four. She also grabbed five rebounds.

Griffin and Kailyn Teal each had three steals.

The Tornadoes (3-2) also got eight points from Kahmyra Hankerson, five points from Ky'lee Johnson, four points from Teal and two points from Nyasia Lopey. Hankerson and Johnson had seven and six rebounds, respectively.

Bradford played Episcopal this past Tuesday and will travel to play District 3-3A Palatka on Thursday, Dec. 12, at 6:30 p.m. The Tornadoes host Suwannee on Friday, Dec. 13, at 7 p.m.



Ar'Nayshia Griffin scored 33 points as part of her fourth double-double this season in Bradford's 76-44 win over P.K. Yonge.

before going on the road again to play Fort White on Monday, Dec. 16, at 7 p.m.

On Wednesday, Dec. 18, Bradford hosts Hawthorne at 7 p.m.

Editor's note: The story on Bradford's 53-44 home win over Columbia on Dec. 3 had point totals only. Some other stat highlights included Griffin with a team-high 13 rebounds and a team-high six assists, Hankerson with seven rebounds and three steals and Brown with four assists.

## UCHS boys defeat Hornets twice as part of a 3-0 start

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School, which is off to a 3-0 start in boys basketball, defeated Lafayette for the second time this season, winning 60-39 on Dec. 9 in Mayo.

Jeppson Dang and Gavin Jenkins scored 15 and 13 points, respectively, while Isaiah Folaji and Jamie McGhee each had 10 points. The Tigers also got four points each from Erick Lasseter and R.J. Odom and two points each from Adrian Manns and Jacques McKenzie.

Manns grabbed a team-high 10 rebounds, while Folaji had a team-best five assists.

Jenkins led the team in steals with six.

The Tigers opened the season with a 42-36 home win over

Lafayette on Dec. 3, getting 16 points and six rebounds from Dang.

Jenkins added 12 points, while the Tigers also had the following scorers: McGhee with seven, Odom with three and Manns and McKenzie with two each.

McKenzie added six rebounds to his totals, while McGhee had four steals.

In between the wins over Lafayette, Union defeated Hamilton County 65-56 on Dec. 6 in Jasper.

Union hosts Palatka on Friday, Dec. 13, and travels to play Trenton on Tuesday, Dec. 17. Both games have 7:30 p.m. tip-off times.

## Win streak comes to end for KHHS girls soccer team

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Host Fernandina Beach put an end to the Keystone Heights High School girls soccer team's four-match winning streak, defeating the Indians 6-1 on Dec. 6.

The Indians (7-3-1) had few scoring opportunities, with Halea Lam scoring the only goal. Fernandina, meanwhile, took 19 shots on goal and 31 shots overall.

Keystone goalie Whitnee Buchanan made six saves.

The Indians entered the match off a 1-0 win at Suwannee on Dec. 4. Tayler Buchanan scored the lone goal off a Lam assist.

Goalie Aspen Krohn made four saves.

Keystone played Middleburg this past Tuesday and will travel to Jacksonville to play Trinity Christian on Thursday, Dec. 12, at 5:30 p.m. The Indians then travel to Ocala to play Trinity Catholic on Friday, Dec. 13, at 6 p.m.

On Monday, Dec. 16, Keystone travels to play District 4-3A opponent Interlachen at 5 p.m.

## KHHS boys soccer team in midst of 3-match skid

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School played the first of just two home matches it'll play in December prior to the Christmas/



Kipton Spence prepares to make a play on a throw-in as A.J. Nilsen looks on in the Class 3A Indians' 1-0 loss to 5A Columbia.

New Year's break, with visiting Columbia winning 1-0 on Dec. 4.

Goalie Sammy Wachua made several saves in the 12th, 13th and 14th minutes. Teammate Aaron Wiley got a good look at the goal in the 15th minute, with the Columbia goalie making a save.

Both teams' goalies made saves after the water break as the match remained scoreless at halftime.

Columbia, a Class 5A school, found the net in the 41st minute, which would be the only goal it needed to defeat the Class 3A Indians.

The Indians (5-4-1) followed the match with a 2-1 loss at fellow 3A school Fernandina Beach on Dec. 6.

It was Keystone's third loss in a row.

Noah Jaramillo scored the Indians' lone goal off a Trenton Noble assist.

Keystone travels to Jacksonville to play Trinity Christian on Thursday, Dec. 12, at 7:20 p.m. and then travels to play District 4 opponent Palatka on Friday, Dec. 13, at 7 p.m.

On Monday, Dec. 16, the Indians travel to play district opponent Interlachen at 7 p.m.

## 5 from KHHS earn 2nd-team All-Clay recognition

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School had five student-athletes receive second-team honors and eight receive honorable mention with the release of the All-Clay County teams for fall sports.

Boys cross-country runners Ryder Thomas and Noah Yara and girls runner Olivia Griffin were second-team selections. All three advanced from the district level to the regional level.

Thomas placed 20th out of 159 at the District 2-2A meet, while Yara was 31st. Griffin was 35th out of 136 in the girls race.

At the Region 1 meet, Thomas placed 25th out of 114, while Yara was 41st. Griffin placed 66th out of 108.

Girls cross-country runner earned All-Clay honorable mention.

The KHHS football team had a second-team selection in defensive lineman Jackson Herman, while running back Zane Leger, offensive linemen Pete Bostic and Luke Bacorn, corner Andrew Wilson and safety Colton Hollingsworth earned honorable mention.

In boys golf, the Indians' Ty Mitzel was named to the second team after tying for third at the inaugural Florida 1A Public School Championship and tying for sixth at the District 5-1A finals. He went on to tie for 59th at the Region 2 finals.

Boys golfer Jacob Beach earned honorable mention.

Keystone volleyball's Kaleigh Marquart, a setter, earned honorable mention after leading the Indians in assists with 441 and aces with 64.

## JENKINS Continued from page 9

in how to do it right. He's really matured in that, which I think is going to help him become successful."

Jenkins said that when he began receiving offers from colleges, he made it a point to work outside of practices and take the weight room "even more seriously."

"It showed under the lights," Jenkins said, adding, "It really showed how much I love the game."

Jenkins looked toward the future in explaining why USF was the school for him.

"The head coach (Alex Golesh) is building something great," he said. "They're getting a new facility. Coach DVD (DeMarcus Van Dyke) — my DB coach — is putting in some good stuff for us and producing NFL products."

Jenkins, who has seven interceptions the last three years and has been in on more than 20 pass breakups, was a two-way player at UCHS. He was the Tigers' leading receiver his junior and senior seasons.

He was recruited to play defense at USF, but said he'd be happy on either side of the ball.

"It really doesn't matter to me," Jenkins said. "I've got good lung capacity, so I feel like I can play both sides of the ball."

Thomas believes Jenkins has a high ceiling and will benefit from spending all his time on defense.

"He'll definitely blossom more when he just focuses on that," Thomas said.

As of now, one of Jenkins'

greatest attributes is his length, Thomas said, alluding to the player's 6-2 frame. He'll add to that with the help of the USF strength and nutrition programs.

"He's going to put on some weight when he eats better and those kinds of things," Thomas said.

Thomas said he could even envision Jenkins, with weight gain on top of his length, moving to safety.

"That's great for him, to be able to have those skills and that

length to be able to give options to himself, to be able to play different positions," Thomas said.

When it came to putting himself in the best position to play at the next level, Jenkins also put in the necessary work academically.

"He really had to make up some ground in the classroom," Thomas said. "He really turned it on and has done really well academically here in the past couple of years to be able to put

himself in this situation. You can have the talent, but if you put in the work and not do what you need to do in the classroom, you're not going to get this opportunity."

Jenkins has his opportunity. He's ready to run with it. When he was asked what it would feel like the first time he stepped onto the field as a USF Bull, he said he didn't think there would be "too much nervousness."

"I'm going to be ready to play," he said.

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### Democratic Women's Club meets Dec. 19

The Democratic Women's Club of the Lakes Area will meet early this month due to the holidays on Thursday, Dec. 19. This is their annual Christmas

party, with gift wrapping for selected children from families in need. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. with doors opening at 6:30. All Democrats are welcome. Meetings are held at the Melrose Center, 309 S.R. 26, Melrose, FL 32666. For further information, please contact 352-235-4161 or Info@dwc-la.org.

### Soil and water conservation board meets

The Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District will meet at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 17, at the Bradford County

Extension Office, 2266 N. Temple Ave. in Starke. The Lake Sampson workshop will be discussed.

Meetings are open to the public and can be attended in person or by Zoom. Contact Paul Still at 904-368-0291 or stillpe@aol.com for more information and the Zoom link.

### Food distribution at True Vine

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Farm Share and True Vine Ministry

will take place Tuesday, Dec. 24, at 10 a.m. at True Vine Outreach Ministry in Starke.

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



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### Lawtey Community Christmas Program is set for Dec. 15

The public is invited to this year's Lawtey Community Christmas Program, which is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 15, at 4 p.m. at Lawtey's Grace Methodist Church.

### HOOPS

Continued from page 13

those baskets and finished with four second-half field goals overall, giving him 12 total points.

Haywood also finished in double digits with 11 points, while Taylor had nine points.

The Tornados also got seven points from Johnson, four points from Jy'Quez Cason and two points from Andrews.

Johnson and Jordan Cason led

the team in rebounds with five apiece.

Haywood added four assists and four steals to his totals.

Bradford entered the game off an 84-56 season-opening loss to Class 5A Fleming Island on Dec. 5 in Orange Park.

Jordan Cason led the Tornados with 12 points, while Cobarris and Johnson each had 11. Bradford also got nine points from Jy'Quez Cason, eight points from Haywood, three points from Taylor and two points from Carter.

Haywood and Taylor shared the team high in assists with four each, while Haywood also led Bradford in rebounds with four.

The Tornados host District 3 opponent Interlachen on Thursday, Dec. 12, at 7:30 p.m. and play at home again on Friday, Dec. 13, when they host fellow 3A school Crescent City at 6 p.m.

Bradford travels to play Class 5A Belleview on Monday, Dec. 16, at 7:30 p.m. and then travels to play 2A P.K. Yonge on Wednesday, Dec. 18, at 7:30 p.m.

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<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">SATURDAY 12/14</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER- 4:00 &amp; 7:00 (Downstairs) MOANA 2- 4:00 &amp; 7:00 (Upstairs)</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">SUNDAY 12/15</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER- 4:00 &amp; 7:00 (Downstairs) MOANA 2- 4:00 &amp; 7:00 (Upstairs)</p>

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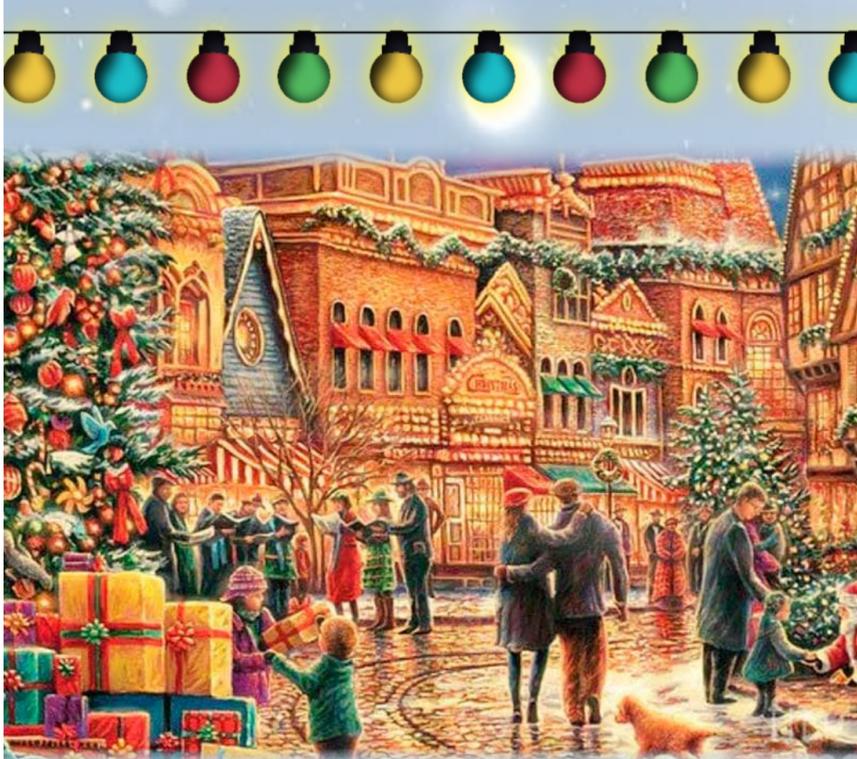
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