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SEE PAGE 16 INFO



**VERDICT IN JOHN  
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# Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700 — Starke, Florida

Thursday, March 3, 2022

142nd year, 29th Issue — \$1



The Feb. 26 Miss Bradford Fest-Santa Fe College Scholarship Pageant crowned winners in four age divisions (l-r): Teen Miss Bradford Fest Kierston Clemons, Junior Miss Bradford Fest Brynli Raulerson, Miss Bradford Fest Kylee Davis and Petite Miss Bradford Fest Amelia Coiana. Photo submitted courtesy of Katelyn Sims.



Crowned at the 60th anniversary Miss Bradford-Union Strawberry Pageant were Strawberry Shortcake Ansley Crews, Strawberry Princess MacKenna Freeman and Strawberry Queen Jocelyn Torres. Freeman also won the talent award, while Torres took the awards for evening gown and casual wear. Photo courtesy of the Strawberry Pageant.



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**Upcoming food  
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A communitywide food distribution hosted by Feeding Northeast Florida and True Vine Ministry will take place Wednesday, March 9, at 8:30 a.m. at the RJE Complex.

Food boxes often include fresh produce, deli and bakery items, dairy and some meats. The inventory is subject to change based on availability. Tell a friend or a neighbor. The distribution is free and open to the public. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

**Get help quitting**

Quitting tobacco isn't easy. Finding help should be. If you're ready to quit, join the next Tools to Quit Tobacco group Thursday, March 10, from 3-5 p.m. at the Bradford County Health Department. Virtual options by computer and phone are also available.

This free, one-time two-hour group will give you tips on how to deal with triggers and withdrawal symptoms and how to prevent relapse. You'll also receive up to four weeks of free nicotine patches, gum or lozenges.

This group more than doubles your chance of quitting for good.

Pre-registration is required. Call 866-341-2730 to reserve your spot.

**Bingo**

American Legion Post 56 is hosting bingo games every Monday evening. Early bird games start at 6:30 p.m. and regular games at 7 p.m. Proceeds aid veterans in need. Post 56 is located at 715 Edwards Road in Starke, across from National Guard Armory.

## Man guilty of murder

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

STARKE — A Bradford County jury convicted a Starke man for the July 2020 murder of 19-year-old Blake Reed Williams. The shooting took place on Old Lawtey Road near State Road 16.

Marcus Tereual Whitfield, 33, was found guilty of second-degree murder and conspiracy to commit first-degree murder for the July 10 killing.

Starke police Lt. Michael Rooney wrote in a warrant affidavit that after arriving on the scene of the shooting, around 9:45 p.m., he found two, 9mm shell casings near the victim.

"It should be noted that while at the scene, numerous people were yelling at law enforcement that Marcus Whitfield shot Williams," wrote Rooney.

Rooney added that security cameras from the Church of God by Faith captured the shooting on video.

"At approximately (9:28 p.m.), according to the time stamp, two subjects can be seen walking south on Old Lawtey Road," Rooney wrote. "You see a flash consistent with a muzzle flash and observe the one subject fall. I then observed the other



Whitfield

subject, believed to be the shooter, run west through the grassy area fleeing the scene,"

Rooney wrote that after midnight, he interviewed the 911 caller that first reported the shooting. The caller said that while driving south on Old

See MURDER, page 5

## Public: 'No more taxes and fees'

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — The public said a resounding "no" to electric franchise fees or any new form of tax to bail Bradford County out of its budgetary shortfall.

The special meeting began with a letter from Chairman Chris Dougherty, who was not present because of a prior work commitment — something a few people took exception to.

In his letter, he explained the history of county franchise fees as well as the rationale for reinstating them, including the fact that they are already being paid in the county's municipalities.

Dougherty wrote, "The recent hike in the millage rate was not something I wanted to do, nor do I believe any board member wanted to do. It simply became a necessity due to the increased expenditures and the lack of revenue coming into Bradford County. Inflation not only impacts the private sector, but also the public sector. Increases in costs for fuel vehicles and

equipment, maintenance, insurance, wages, materials, etc., continue to go up while our sources of revenue remain close to or at the same as they have been for the past decade. Other than collecting ad valorem taxes, gas tax, sales tax, and the solid waste assessment, the county has no other revenue sources to be able to continue to provide the level of service the citizens of Bradford County expect."

According to Dougherty, the county has and will continue to make cuts. He said public safety and roads should be the county's priority, and all other services seen as nonessential. Cuts would be aimed there.

"Some examples could be the closing or limiting hours of other operations such as mowing and ditch cleanout, trash collection sites, library programs, senior citizens activities, recreation, and other services that are not considered essential. Calling 911 with the expectation of the police, rescue or fire protection showing up should be considered essential," he

See FEES, page 2

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Edward Sigmund further questions commissioners during a special meeting on electric franchise fees.

wrote.

According to Dougherty, the public shouldn't see franchise fees as a revenue stream for essential services but an opportunity to fund other programs and services they feel are important. In the meantime, the county and city will partner on economic development, including extending utility lines out to the bypass to serve new businesses.

"Florida continues to grow, and we cannot be an island trying to isolate ourselves from progress. If we do this, this board and future boards will continue to ask the taxpaying people at Bradford County for more taxes and additional fees just so we can

operate and provide the necessary services. So, whether you're for or against the proposed franchise fee paid by all, consider this an investment in the future of Bradford County," he wrote.

Charles McKinney began public comments by questioning how many electric polls were even standing on county property versus private property or state right of way.

"You ought to have learned from your parents as you were growing up how to manage a budget. You don't spend more than you make. Keep it under wraps where you can afford to buy groceries and get back and forth to church," he said, adding he has put up with all he can

stand. "If the taxes continue to go up, I'll find me another county to live in. That's all there is to it. I just can't understand why people can't figure out that you can't spend money you ain't got."

Michelle and Edward Sigmund had multiple questions, including why propose this now at such a difficult time?

"I haven't got a pay raise in three years, and I work for the railroad, a billion-dollar company," he said. Despite that, they are still managing to pay their bills, while the county is looking to raise more tax revenue to pay its bills.

"That tells me that something needs to be budgeted better if we can pay our bills and continue, like everybody else, with all the grocery prices going up and everything else," he said.

"Who am I going to turn to for somebody to help me?" Larry Thornton asked. "I mean, you all want money to buy this, buy that, the fire department. I don't have anybody. I have to live within my budget. ... Have you noticed everything's gone up? I can't understand why we want to put something else on to burden. ... I've been living here a long time. These things you want, we've never had. Why all of a sudden do we go to have it now?"

Eric Nogel said the public didn't choose to start a professional fire department.

"It started off small and all of a sudden, we got all these employees overnight, fully furnished firehouses. Now we've got to pay them 3% a year extra, every year. OK, where's that 3% coming from? And guess what? When \$15 an hour hits, now guess what happens? Those salaries aren't going to be \$3

million; they're going to be about \$5 million," he said.

Comments proceeded for the better part of an hour. While occasionally spicy, they were civil enough. What they all had in common was opposition to any new fees or taxes.

Just as things were wrapping up and commissioners were offering their final comments, things took a turn. The commission took exception to a suggestion from the vice chair, the clerk of courts strongly countered the assertion that he was responsible for creating the commission's budget, and the public hadn't had their say either.

Commissioner Diane Andrews repeated a move from a prior meeting to have Clerk Denny Thompson and the finance department present the board with a balanced budget, saying only that office has the information and knowledge to do so.

Clerk Thompson said constitutionally the board is mandated to prepare its own budget just as he and the other constitutional officers are mandated to prepare their budgets.

Andrews asked how she could do that without the information, and the clerk denied that.

"Yes, you do. You know your \$2.5 million deficit every year," he said.

Commissioner Kenny Thompson intervened.

"Number one, it's our responsibility to stay within our means. Have we failed? Yes, we have, and it's time to get it right," he said to audience applause.

Commissioner Thompson thanked everyone for expressing their feelings. Instead of



Sheriff Gordon Smith takes his turn addressing taxation and spending in Bradford County.

continuing to tax citizens for more revenue, he said the county needs to listen to what was said and downsize.

Commissioner Carolyn Spooner said last year was the first time they had requested detailed budgets from the constitutional officers as well as the board's department. It was a beginning to look at things in greater detail and start slimming them down. Without those details, they are operating in the dark, she said.

Sheriff Gordon Smith rose to say only one commissioner has ever come to his office to inquire about his budget. Reading a quote like the day's scripture, he said, "Any action taken to resolve a short-term crisis will inevitably worsen the long-term problem."

The sheriff compared law enforcement to fire rescue, saying his department's per capita spending was much lower. It comes down to management, he said.

"I took on the fire department when there wasn't a fire department, and I managed it. But see, it's like everything else you've taken back from the sheriff's office, it's always cost you more," he said.

He went on to say constitutional officer employees weren't receiving raises when other county employees were, and he blamed the fire rescue workers union for strongarming county commissioners.

"We don't need a union in Bradford County!" he said to applause.

Citizens continued their questions and comments from their seated or standing positions around the room, interacting with both commissioners and each other until Andrews closed the meeting.

Listen to the meeting in full at BCTelegraph.com.

## Commission hopes budget workshops will educate

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — After a reality check from Clerk Denny Thompson earlier this month, Bradford County commissioners are ready to begin budget workshops for the next fiscal year.

They want the process to be an informed and educational one, for themselves and the public.

After hearing from Thompson and meeting with the finance department, Commissioner

Diane Andrews said she was shocked.

"I had to come to a realization that even though this has been going on for a while, it's up to us to try to stop it and correct the problem," she said, during a meeting on Feb. 17.

Her solution found no favor, however. Noting the difficulty of the task and saying that none of the commissioners are accountants, Andrews wanted the clerk's office to build a budget for them based on how much they have to spend.

She supported having budget workshops in which to "train" the commissioners, but she wanted to leave the heavy lifting to the "professionals," she said.

"I think that we will be much better off with letting the clerk and you guys (finance) clean this up. Bring to us a budget that we can, we can live by."

Andrews said it's likely the board would insist on changes, but she said it would make for a much better start.

"I want you to have the workshops, but I think we can

only take in so much. And I think that in order for us to do this, this is about the only way that we're going to be able to. So, I'd like to make a motion, that we allow that to be done, that the clerk bring us a budget that we can live in," she said.

Seeking clarification, Deputy Clerk Rachel Rhoden said, "Are you asking the clerk to prepare the budget for each of the departments as well? Because I would have to say that has got to come from you all, as far as what you want to see those departments, how you want to see those operate."

Rhoden said they are striving to do an even better job of helping the commission understand how much revenue it has and where it is coming from. It is not up to the clerk or finance department

to tell the board how to spend it. "I think the clerk can help tell us what we can afford," attorney Will Sexton told commissioners. "It's going to be incumbent upon the board once you find out what that is to prioritize what you want to spend."

Commission Chairman Chris Dougherty said a simple approach might be to start with those priorities, beginning with public safety (law enforcement and fire rescue) and then roads. Other services may not make the cut.

He agreed with Andrews they need all the information they can receive from finance.

"I think that if we all just work together, and work hard, that we can make it this year," Andrews said.

But the board needs to be more

disciplined as well, Dougherty said, offering a couple of examples, including giving pay raises, approving a grant application for new fire rescue employees that will increase personnel and operational costs, and the purchase of road paving equipment.

Commissioner Danny Riddick defended the last example, saying the road paving machine was "an excellent purchase," using accumulated gas tax revenue that can only be spent on road improvement. Doing the work in house will save money and allow the county to resurface many of the roads they receive complaints about, he said. Public Works Director Jason Dodds emphasized they were talking about spending gas tax revenue, not raising the cost of the road department budget.

Sexton said an advantage of budget workshops is the opportunity to look at things from a fresh perspective and touch on things people may not understand, including the county's obligation to pay for things like indigent health care, medical examiner's office fees and landfill tipping fees, which, along with collection site costs, are covered by the annual solid waste assessment.

The commission set its first budget workshop for March 1, but it was postponed to allow more time for advertisement.

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# Cooper not guilty in stock deal

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

STARKE — A Bradford County jury deliberated less than 30 minutes to acquit former Bradford County Commissioner, school board attorney and Starke lawyer Johnie Steven Cooper on grand theft charges.

Cooper is already serving a 21-month sentence for failing to refund \$53,098 in trust account funds to the owner of a self-storage facility, after a sale of the property fell through.

During a one-day trial at the Bradford County Courthouse on Feb. 24, retired legal assistant Kathleen Clifton testified that Cooper took \$75,000 of her money, promising to invest the funds in Canopy Communications Group. She added that after she began to feel uneasy about the investment, she asked for her money back and Cooper refused.

An investigation by the Bradford County Sheriff's Office said Cooper deposited Clifton's \$75,000 cashier's check into his trust account and then withdrew the funds the following day.

Canopy Communications Group holds patents on technology that it says can deploy broadband internet to rural areas. At one time, Cooper served as chairman of the board for the company. He still owns 50,000 shares of the company's stock.

In 2018, representatives of Canopy offered to help the City of Starke build its own high speed internet network within the municipality. City officials later decided not to proceed with the project.

## No shares ever purchased

During the trial Assistant State Attorney Lua Lepianka focused on the fact that even though a contract between Cooper and Clifton stated he would purchase shares for her, he never made the buy. Her witnesses told jurors that because of an existing shareholders' agreement, Cooper could not sell shares to Clifton without first offering the stock to the company or to other shareholders. Lepianka entered into evidence a stock transfer ledger which showed no shares being transferred to Clifton.

"He took the money, and he didn't give her anything back," Lepianka said in closing arguments. "He willfully misstated reality when he told Kathleen Clifton that he would purchase those shares for her. He agreed to make a sale. He agreed to transfer or assign shares. He agreed to hold things in trust."

Cooper's lawyer Dan Sikes said that at the time Cooper drafted the contract with Clifton, one of the shareholders wanted to sell his shares to the other stockholders. However, before Cooper could act, two other shareholders: Robert Elliot and Stuart Kaufman scooped up the available stock, making the shares unavailable to Cooper. Therefore, Cooper simply designated 5,000 of his own 50,000 shares to Clifton.

"You'll find out that in the contract here, he's responsible for providing her (with 5,000 shares)," Sikes said during opening arguments. "Now what that means is whether he gets it from the other shareholders or not, he owes her 5,000 shares of stock and he has 50,000 (shares)."

Sikes added that even though the agreement states that Cooper would purchase shares for Clifton, the bottom line is that Cooper owes Clifton 5,000 shares of Canopy stock.

"Because these shares at about that time got snapped up by Robert Elliott and by Stuart Kaufman, he couldn't get it," Sikes told jurors, "so because he did this transaction, he still owes her the beneficial issue of these 5,000 shares of stock."

Sikes insisted that the agreement between Cooper and Clifton is valid and still in force. He added that the only events preventing Clifton from cashing out is Canopy's further development and an eventual initial public offering, which Sikes said was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sikes reinforced his claim that Canopy is still on track for an IPO by putting one of the company's founders on the witness stand: David Orshan.

Orshan told jurors that Canopy already has contracts in place, and is awaiting a deal with JEA, in which the Jacksonville utility will use Canopy's technology to

remotely read meters.

"Kathleen Clifton will get her money," Sikes told jurors. "There is no breach of this agreement. He's not guilty of a crime."

## Defense strategy

Leading up to the trial, Sikes took the unusual steps of invoking Cooper's right to a speedy trial and not demanding discovery evidence from prosecutors.

Virtually all defendants waive their rights to a speedy trial, which would require a trial within 175 days of a felony arrest.

Because he did not demand to participate in the prosecution's discovery, Sikes entered the trial somewhat blind, not knowing all the evidence prosecutors planned to present.

However, the maneuver also kept prosecutors from knowing what evidence Sikes planned to introduce.

After the verdict Sikes said he hoped to catch prosecutors off guard by the move.

The defense lawyer's strategy paid off when an unscheduled witness severely damaged the state's case.

## Former sheriff testifies

During his opening argument, Sikes revealed that former Bradford County Sheriff Bob Milner also invested in Canopy through Cooper, following Milner's retirement as Starke city manager.

Prosecutors later put Milner on the witness stand, where he told jurors that after he retired, he asked Cooper if there was any way he could invest in Canopy.

"He advised me that I could not buy actual shares in Canopy," Milner said of his discussions with Cooper, "that only owners and the original people (could do that)."

Milner added that after reviewing the company's prospectus and reading about Canopy's patents and research and development, he approached Cooper a second time about investing in the firm.

"He (Cooper) said you cannot buy shares," Milner recalled. "(Cooper said) I can arrange a legal document wherein I can assign an equivalent amount of shares that I own, and you will be investing in me. In the event that an initial public offering is subsequently made by Canopy, in hopes that there would be more money than you put in, then we can do that."

Milner said that he gave \$50,000 to Cooper for 5,000 shares.

The former sheriff explained his deal with Cooper in exactly the way Sikes wanted the jury to see Cooper's deal with Clifton: no actual purchase of stock, no legal assignment of shares, no entry in Canopy's stock transfer ledger, a simple understanding that Cooper owed Milner—and Clifton—an equivalent value

of 5,000 shares of Canopy stock when the company went public.

Lepianka tried to point out that Milner, and another investor Danny Wolfe, got better pricing than Clifton, but by then the damage had been done.

With Milner the jury saw a level-headed investor who was willing to take a risk and tolerate illiquidity while the company developed, in exchange for the chance of extraordinary returns. And they saw an investor who didn't run to the sheriff's office when his timeline for the payout didn't go according to plan.

Because Sikes did not demand participation in discovery, prosecutors were unaware of Milner's and Wolfe's contracts until opening arguments. They couldn't challenge or verify Milner's testimony. They couldn't depose the witness before the trial, and they couldn't subpoena Milner's or Wolfe's agreements with Cooper.

Prosecutors also violated a cardinal rule practiced by virtually all trial lawyers: never put a witness on the stand unless you know in advance what that witness is going to say. This principle was particularly applicable to a witness like Milner, who was clearly in the courtroom to support his friend John Cooper. Before the trial, and even after the proceedings began, Milner sat in a chair directly behind the defense table in front of the bar—an area normally restricted to parties of the proceedings and their lawyers.

In her closing arguments, Lepianka tried to tag Milner and Wolfe as two additional victims in Cooper's schemes. However, neither man portrayed himself as a victim on the witness stand, but rather willing participants in a high-risk investment, and as investors who still see a payout in the future.

## More legal trouble

Prosecutors still have one case pending against the former lawyer. The personal representative of an estate told a Bradford sheriff's deputy that Cooper was hired in Sept. of 2018 to collect mortgage payments for the estate.

According to a warrant affidavit, over the next two years Cooper collected over \$25,000 for the estate, then billed the entity \$24,383.75 for his services.

On March 30, 2021, a circuit judge ruled that reasonable compensation for Cooper's legal services were \$3,000 and ordered Cooper to refund \$21,383.75 to the estate.

Corporal Logan Hough wrote in the warrant affidavit that based on the judge's ruling and the fact that the fees were not refunded, there was probable cause that Cooper committed grand theft.

A pretrial conference for that case is scheduled for March 2.

# Clay kills utility tax increase

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

GREEN COVE SPRINGS—After hearing from county staff about their options for increasing the county's utility tax from the current four-percent rate to up to 10%, Clay County commissioners said they were not interested in discussing the rate increase any further.

Commissioner Jim Renninger supported increasing the levy up to the maximum allowable 10%, citing his desire to shift the tax burden away from property owners toward renters, who do not pay property taxes.

However, Renninger found

little support for the proposal among his colleagues, and Chair Wayne Bolla directed county staff to cease all work on the project, during a Feb. 22 commission meeting.

## Condon pushes back on proposed business tax

Commissioners also discussed imposing a new county-wide business license fee during their Feb. 22 meeting.

The cities of Keystone Heights, Green Cove Springs and Orange Park already require businesses

to purchase a license to operate within their municipalities. Keystone Heights charges a flat \$25 per year to all enterprises operating within its city limits.

Commissioner Betsy Condon, who represents the Lake Region, questioned the value businesses would receive from the proposed levy. "If we're going to do this, it almost seems like a money grab from our businesses and I would say, for what?" she said.

Other commissioners said they tentatively supported the plan and instructed Assistant County Manager Troy Nagle to further develop the idea.

## Co-op announces big changes to annual meeting

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS—Clay Electric Cooperative said that for the first time in its history, its in-person annual meeting will not be held at the co-op's headquarters in Keystone Heights. Instead, the Saturday, March 26 meeting will take place at the football stadium at Keystone Heights Junior-Senior High School.

The starting time for the event has also been moved to the morning. Gates open at 8:30 a.m., with the business meeting beginning at 9:30. The co-op said the meeting will last around two-and-a-half hours.

The utility is also cutting the free lunches traditionally given away during the event. Instead, the co-op is providing a light breakfast, goody bags and a door prize ticket to all adults passing through the gates.

## COVID testing site opens at Little Rain Lake Park

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

GREEN COVE SPRINGS—Clay County officials said they have opened a new COVID-19 testing site at Little Rain Lake Park, north of Keystone Heights.

Testing is available Sunday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 6725 Little Rain Lake Road.

The site offers PCR and rapid testing, but not vaccinations.

County officials added that they have closed the testing and vaccinations site at the fairgrounds on State Road 16 due to the Scottish Highlands Games and Clay County Fair setup.

Testing and vaccinations are still available at the health department's Bear Run clinic between Orange Park and Middleburg and at the Oakleaf Athletic Association.

Testing only is being offered at Omega Park in Middleburg and at Little Rain Lake Park.

# UC Animal Control to raise fees

BY LARRY DUPEE  
Special to the Times

LAKE BUTLER — Union County Solid Waste Director Kim Hayes approached the Union County Board of County Commissioners with a proposed new fee schedule that would reflect changes in the expense of running the county operation.

Hayes, who also oversees Union County Animal Control, located next to the Road Department/Solid Waste building at the West Gate of the RMC, behind O. J. Phillips Park, said the cost of animal food has increased dramatically, as had the cost for the mandatory rabies shots the animals received in some cases. She said it was necessary to raise the fees so that the animals could continue to receive the level of care which the facility had been providing.

In the information given to the board, each fee was listed with both the current amount being charged and the proposed increased fees.

Two types of boarding fees are charged at the facility. The first is a daily fee which reflects the cost of keeping an animal after it has been picked up. The fee had been set at \$5 per day but was to increase to \$8 per day. Rabies boarding, the keeping of an animal that is suspected of being rabid, will also increase

from \$7 a day to \$10. Rabies vaccination, which must be done when an animal is reclaimed or adopted, shows an increase from \$10 to \$24.

When an animal is picked up and the owner come to Animal Control to retrieve it, they are charged a reclaim fee that increases each time the animal come in. This fee reflects the cost of the actual call response for a problem animal and the actual capture of a problem or stray animal that the county has been called to deal with. It is, in a way, a fine to the owner for not maintaining the animal in a correct manner.

First offense has been charged at \$30 per day and will increase to \$45. Second offense will increase from \$35 to \$55 and third offense (a situation that Hayes said seldom occurred) will increase from \$45 to \$75.

The fee to adopt an animal at the facility has been \$30 but will increase to \$50 under the new fee schedule. The surrender fee, charged when an owner no longer want, or can keep their pet, is increasing from \$30 to \$50.

The animal control is a small and does not receive any funding other than the operating funds from the county budget and the fees it collects.

In January, the facility brought in 12 animals, all dogs (as they

do not handle cats). Ten of these were collected by the animal control officer as strays or "at large" animals and two were surrendered or relinquished by their owners. All twelve of these dogs were either transferred to another facility, out of county, to be available for adoption in a busier shelter or dealt with in another way that did not require that they be euthanized. The department makes every attempt to avoid euthanizing healthy, adoptable animals and succeeded in doing so in January 2022, despite the fact that there were no adoptions. The departments income for the month was only \$70.

The board briefly discussed the matter with Hayes, then voted unanimously to approve her request for an increased fee schedule.

## Lake Butler text alerts

You can now receive text alerts from the city of Lake Butler about events and incidents that may affect you. Text the "Lake Butler" to 91896 to opt in.

You may also report issues to the city via text and even upload images of the problem. Text "Report" to 386-272-5227 about problems with streets, lighting and more.



Savannah Miller, Anna Ward, Josie Croft, Breanna Melton and Lauren Coleman, all members of the UCHS Interact Club, helped serve the meal and display the auction items to the bidders at the Lake Butler Rotary Luau.

## LB Rotary Luau makes comeback

BY LARRY DUPEE  
Special to the Times

LAKE BUTLER — After a two year COVID hiatus the Lake Butler Rotary Club's annual Hawaiian Luau fundraiser made a big comeback Friday, Feb. 25 with dinner, live music, a community favorite as guest of honor and silent and live auctions of donated items.

The Luau was held at the Hal Y. Maines Community Center in Lake Butler and was the thirteenth presentation of the annual (usually) event. This year the event was catered by Dos Mamas, from Gainesville. According to Rotary President

Brian Reagan, since the food was from Alachua County it naturally contained COVID inhibitors so everyone could feel safe. Just in case, Sapphire Disinfectants donated bottles of their product for each table, as well as having remote, motion sensing sanitizer stations located around the room.

A total of 258 people attended the event, ranging from elected officials to Rotary Club members to other community notables. Art Peterson was on hand, as were Lake Butler City Manager Dale Walker, the Honorable Bo Bayer (Senior Judge) and the Honorable Mitchell Bishop (County Judge), accompanied by their wives. The Guest of Honor

was Dr. Marvin Johnson, recently retired, accompanied by his wife, Jenny Reid and members of his family.

John was honored by the club for his year of service as a physician in the community with a plaque and a standing ovation from the crowd.

The meal was served, and the auction assisted by members of the Union County High School Interact Club, sponsored by the Rotary Club and under the care of Rotary Member and teacher Nancy Griffis.

The silent and public auctions

See LUAU, page 7

# Letters

## Let's talk about the facts

Dear Editor;

The recent county commissioners workshop was hosted to allow the commissioners to hear directly from the public on their feelings concerning our implementing an electric franchise fee, one of the several options counties are allowed to use in generating funds.

Raising taxes: Now let's talk about raising taxes: First of all, remember, I was the only county commissioner who voted against raising your property taxes by an additional two mills. The primary reason I did not vote for the millage increase is because our budgeting process does not allow us to see how the dollars are being spent once they are received. Since becoming one of the commissioners, I have asked for this information, and the response by some of the constitutional officers is for me to individually "come by my office and I'll answer any questions you have." In fact, this was actually said again at the last meeting. I don't think this should be done behind closed doors. The process needs to be open for the public to know exactly how their taxes are being spent, item by item. I'm certainly not going to vote to raise taxes until we first find out how every dime is being spent. This, again, is why I alone voted against the tax hike and have not taken a position of support on the franchise fee. Raising revenue cannot be considered in a vacuum. Taxes and spending must be considered together.

Balancing the county's budget: The board has the difficult

task of balancing a budget for the county, one that Clerk Denny Thompson advised has not been balanced for a very long time without using other funds such as CARES money. It is my goal, as well as the other commissioners, to work diligently to ensure we are "living within our means/budget." We are planning for budget workshops; the first being scheduled for March 1. As I had attempted to state in the meeting, the county commissioners are not a team of accountants. Therefore, we must work from the information that will be provided to us from Clerk Thompson and his finance team; they are the professionals with the knowledge and skills to make this happen. We, as a board, will take the information given to us during these workshops, and the budgets that will be submitted by the different departments and the constitutional officers. Once we have that information, we will start the task of ensuring that each budget is reviewed thoroughly, looking to see how last year's money was spent, and what it was spent on. It is one thing to operate within your budget, but we must be good stewards at managing the funds we are given and not practice wasteful spending. Once that has been done, we will either approve it or send it back for further review/information. Without fail, we must ensure that we have a balanced budget, operating solely from our recurring revenue.

Fire and rescue: About the time I came on the board (in fact, it was just before I was elected), that the county began moving from a volunteer fire department to a paid, full-time department. As you are aware, it began with Sheriff Smith agreeing to oversee the change and it is true that

he began with \$850,000. However, it wasn't long until the sheriff requested additional funding ranging from \$1.2 million, to \$1.6 million; the difference was based on the number of staff that would be hired. It was at that point he either gave it back to the commissioners, or the commissioners took it back. Who exactly did the giving and taking has never really been clear. The sheriff understands the need for fire and rescue and the cost for running the department. Since the sheriff is no longer running the fire department, his opinion should not be a factor in our consideration of funding. Now, do I believe the Brooker area is in need of better fire response? I most certainly do. It is something the commissioners should consider as we look at our many needs. I also realize the public support and creative management may need to be part of the conversation.

Commissioners' goals: Your county commissioners are working very hard to ensure the budget is balanced, and we are hoping that all departments will work together to cut unnecessary costs and assist in making this happen. I encourage each of you that have questions about actions the board takes, call your county commissioner and ask. Talk to them about your concerns and perhaps ideas that you may have that would help the county. We are all in this together!

Thank you and God bless.  
Diane Andrews  
Bradford County  
Commissioner

## Would like answers

Dear Editor;  
Why do county "responses" always lead to even more questions?

At the Feb. 7 BOCC meeting, I confronted the commissioners to provide an explanation for the misinformation they, and the public, have been told by the

county attorney regarding the phosphate mining plan. We were told our consultants have been waiting more than two years for a response from HPSII to a Request for Additional Information (RAI) from hydrologist Schreuder that was "not reduced to writing." In frustration at trying to find out the contents of the undocumented request, I took it upon myself to write to Schreuder, who promptly confirmed he finished his review in January 2020 and is not waiting for anything. The public deserves truth and it shouldn't have to be me that provides it.

As a follow up to my comments, the Bradford Telegraph ran an article entitled "Why Are We Waiting?" that offered County Attorney Sexton a chance to clear the air. Unfortunately, it got more cloudy instead.

What Mr. Sexton offered are typically vague responses. He said the BOCC will be updated "in due course." It's been six years of waiting for HPS to prove their concept and two years of misinformation. I'd say "due course" has long ago become overdue! Why is the BOCC not demanding REAL answers?

I used to work for lawyers and I am familiar with the language of "lawyer speak" that's uses a lot of words that avoid facts. Mr. Sexton said staff has been working closely with "our" consultants, OEC, and with HPS "to ensure that the review of the materials... is thorough and complete."

If that's true, why am I the one to find out that Schreuder did NOT ask for more info and he's now retired? Why, in March 2021, did OEC's Hoyle and HPS' lawyer Riley both tell Mr. Sexton they are

waiting for HPS to answer Schreuder's questions? That doesn't sound like close communication. Did OEC fail to communicate with their own subcontractor? Or did they know but chose not to divulge?

Mr. Sexton said he wasn't in communication with the hydrologist and so couldn't "shed any more light on what [Schreuder] may have represented to Ms. Mosley, which led to her comments at this morning's meeting." I

notified the BOCC long before the meeting on the 7th, so Sexton could have contacted Schreuder himself to get a reality check if so desired. Schreuder answered me within days. If the county attorney, the contractor OEC, and the attorney for HPS have all been in the dark for two years, I would call that negligence rather than diligence, and no county commissioner took steps to make it right. They allowed public deception to continue despite my warnings of anomalies.

I fear our county could eventually find itself in a lawsuit with HPSII, which is suing Union County for hundreds of millions of dollars, if the BOCC are not careful. The last MMP submitted by HPS said they are ready for the hearing. There are laws that do not seem to be important to the county to follow, such as 125.022 which sets parameters for development orders. Or, F.S.119.0701, requiring records request information to be included in the contract compiled by OEC.

It is time to put this plan to rest. Does HPSII have a viable plan ready for review or was their submission six years ago premature, and intended as a place holder to keep the county from enacting a mining moratorium, rather than a plan ready to enact?

Only information presented at the hearing can be considered by the BOCC. All applicants naturally present their case in the most favorable light because their goal is a yes vote. The public counts on the commissioners performing due diligence so they know what questions to ask of the applicant. We need our BOCC to operate with eyes wide open so they can't continue to be kept in the dark.

Carol Mosley

## Good Wins Out

I never thought I could wear a mask into a bank and not be arrested but my understanding of the world is now being tested. I must prove that I've had my shot there are consequences if I have not

there are places I can go there are places I'm told no it's hard for me to sleep at night I no longer know what is right

but I'll see if I can bring an end to this awful thing by doing the best I can to somehow help my fellow man

and if I can lead the way toward a new and better day by doing the things that I should helping others and doing good

and yes we know with each new case it is something we must face but be prepared to give a shout 'cause end the end good wins out

By: Milt Starnes  
February, 2022

## Read Then Heed

Nothing ever remains the same now there's war in Ukraine everyone says not our fault we did what we ought

the whole world is filled with greed with little understanding of the need there's got to be a way to score short of starting a new war

but the leaders seem to balk rather than sit and talk this is not a one sum game all our goals are just the same

we don't need to fill just one cup it's better to raise all up when you have some give and take then it's progress that you make

so I pray we'll settle down and find some way around the greed and anger that 'caused this to start and have all deal from their heart

and you say this isn't real but it would be a better deal so my hope is some will read and maybe then some will heed

By: Milt Starnes  
February, 2022

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# Bradford Fair set to open March 8

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

The theme for the 72nd annual Bradford Agricultural Fair is “Your Field of Dreams,” and Manager Dale Woodruff has already had one dream come true.

“Onward and upward, and no COVID restrictions this year,” Woodruff said.

Last year’s fair took social distancing into account as booths were spaced farther apart (which also decreased the number of booths that could be set up) and establishing a limit as to how many people could be inside the livestock arena for shows and auctions as well as how many people could be in a booth at one time.

Those restrictions are gone for this year’s fair, which begins Tuesday, March 8, and runs through Sunday, March 13.

It’s back to normal in 2022. Sort of.

As it turns out, COVID-19 is still having an impact as Building 3 is currently being utilized by the Bradford County Health Department for testing and vaccinations.

“The biggest change this year is going to be that Building 3 will not be used for exiting to the midway,” Woodruff said, adding, “Before you get to Building 3 (from Building 2), there’s a hallway. That will go left out onto the midway.”

With Building 3 unavailable for the fair’s use, the 4-H, arts and crafts and home-division exhibits will be displayed in Building 2.

Another change is that the 4-H and FFA swine and steer awards and sales will be combined events. The combined auction will take place Friday, March 11, at 5 p.m., with the combined awards presentation is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 12.

In the past the swine awards and sale took place on Friday, while the steer awards and sale took place on Saturday.

Other scheduled animal events include:

—Bradford-Union Goat Show, Saturday, March 5, 10:30 a.m.

—4-H and FFA swine show, Tuesday, March 8, 6:30 p.m.

—4-H and FFA steer show and showmanship contest, Wednesday, March 9, 6 p.m.

—Bradford-Union Cattlemen Association 4-H and FFA beef breed show, Thursday, March 10, 6 p.m.

The fair opens at 5 p.m. March 8-1, 2 p.m. on March 12 and 1 p.m. on March 13.

The exhibit areas, which are open March 8-12, close at 10 p.m. each night.

Midway closing times are determined nightly by Deggeller Attractions.

General admission, which doesn’t cover the cost of rides, is \$7 for adults and \$6 for students. Children under 4 are admitted free.

Opening night (Tuesday, March 8) is Veterans Appreciation Night, with free admission for those with a military ID. It’s also American Pride Night, so wear your red, white and blue.

Admission on Sunday, March 13, when the midway only is open, is \$5. Non-riders under 3 are admitted free.

Weekly admission passes are available for \$30 each and may be purchased in advance until Monday, March 7, at the fair ticket office in Building 1, Community State Bank’s Starke and Lake Butler branches, North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce and Lawtey’s city hall.

Deggeller Attractions returns to provide the midway entertainment, which consists of 25-30 rides.

“I have made a request of Deggeller for a couple of rides for older kids,” Woodruff said. “It goes back to the same thing (every year). The attendance at the fair dictates the rides that can be brought in.

A common complaint Woodruff hears each year is that

most of the rides are for young children, but he said reality is that the majority of the midway visitors are young children.

Woodruff said people want to compare the Bradford fair to the one in Clay County in regard to the ride offerings, but he said that’s not an apples-to-apples comparison. Hundreds of thousands attend the Clay fair, he said, while the Bradford fair draws less than 50,000.

People who plan to enjoy the rides are encouraged by Woodruff to purchase \$15 unlimited-ride armband coupons in advance at Community State Bank’s Starke and Lake Butler locations, North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce and Lawtey’s city hall. The armbands cost less when purchasing in advance as opposed to buying them on the midway, with the exception of opening night (when they’re \$12 on the midway) and Sunday, March 13, when they’re available on the midway for the same price. An advance purchase represents a savings of \$7-\$10 if you’re planning to go on Friday, March 11, and Saturday, March 12.

Advance armband coupons, which can’t be used in conjunction with Buddy Night (Thursday, March 10), are available until Monday, March 7. Only one coupon can be redeemed per night.

Unlimited-ride armbands can be purchased on the midway for \$12 on opening night and for \$18 March 9-10. You can purchase two for a total of \$25 on March 10, which is Buddy Night. Both “buddies” must be present at time of purchase.

Ride armbands are \$22 on Friday, March 11, \$25 on Saturday, March 12, and \$15 on Sunday, March 13.

Ride tickets are available for purchase on the midway for \$1 each, with each ride requiring 2-6 tickets.

For more information, visit [bradfordcountyfair.com](http://bradfordcountyfair.com), or call 904-964-5252.



The Indian Battalion’s leadership team during a presentation to the Lake Region Kiwanis Club: (L-R) Cadet Lt. Col. Elizabeth Anderson, Cadet Major Owen Hunter, Cadet 2nd Lt. Brian Rutkowski, Cadet 2nd Lt. Elizabeth Carlson and Cadet 2nd Lt. Trista Harrison. Also pictured in the foreground is Lake Region Kiwanis President Patricia Hatch. Photo by Mary Ann Kyle of Lake Region Kiwanis

# JROTC molds future citizens

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

**KEYSTONE HEIGHTS** — Members of the Keystone Heights High School Indian Battalion told a civic group that the primary goal of JROTC, contrary to popular belief, is not to create future soldiers but rather to develop future citizens and leaders.

The battalion’s leadership team made a presentation to the Lake Region Kiwanis Club during the group’s Jan. 13 meeting at the Montgomery Center.

The battalion’s instructor Lt. Col. Richard Hall greeted the Kiwanians in Spanish and each cadet followed with a greeting in a different language. Hall then recited the JROTC instructor’s creed with the cadets reciting the cadet creed.

The leadership team consisted of the battalion’s commander: Cadet Lt. Col. Elizabeth Anderson, executive officer Cadet Major Owen Hunter, command sergeant Cadet 2nd Lt. Brian Rutkowski, operations and training officer 2nd Lt. Elizabeth Carlson and special projects officer Cadet 2nd Lt. Trista Harrison.

The students told the club that public service is a big part of their mission, with battalion members assisting with the local special Olympics competition,

food drives, a cleanup of Gold Head Branch State Park, events at Lake Region veterans’ organizations and participation in the Kiwanis Club’s own Easter Sunrise Service.

In an interview after the presentation, Hall said the JROTC program at Keystone is the only opportunity in the nation for students to dual enroll at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University for a course in homeland security.

“All of the other dual enrollment programs with Embry-Riddle focus on aviation

or unmanned aerial vehicles,” he said. “Ours is the only one that focuses on homeland security.”

Hall added that last year, the battalion earned a score of 98.5 out of a possible 100 points during its accreditation, with the US Army’s Cadet Command, Sixth Brigade designating the battalion as an honor unit with distinction. The designation entitled Indian Battalion members to wear gold stars on their uniforms.

Steve Hart of Lake Region Kiwanis provided reporting for this story.

# Get ready for the UCLA Agricultural Fair

BY LARRY DUPEE  
Special to the Times

**LAKE BUTLER** — It’s that time of year again! Spring is in the offing and it is time for the annual livestock shows and sales. Young people from all over the area, members of their local chapters of FFA and 4-H, are putting the finishing touches on their animals, getting ready to demonstrate their expertise in both raising and training the best possible animal they can.

In Union County an organization has been developed to allow county residents, and others, to have their own show and sale, rather than shows combined with nearby Bradford County, as had been done in past years. The Union County Livestock Association is prepped and ready for the coming show and both the people who have worked to raise their animals and those who will buy them are eagerly awaiting the event.

This year, the third for the UCLA event, the Union County

Fair will begin on March 14 and run through March 19, 2022. According to Luke Harlow, Union County IFAS Extension Agent, the entries are up this year from past shows. He said that about 136 exhibitors are expected who will show (and in some cases sell) about 178 animals.

The schedule for the week’s events will be as follows:

## March 14

Table Setting Contest – 4:30 p.m.  
Apple Pie Contest – 7 p.m.

## March 15

Weigh in – 4-7 p.m. (with exhibitor meeting to follow)  
Rabbits/Poultry Check In – 4-7 p.m. (Pre-registration is not required)

## March 16

Skill-a-thon – 10 a.m.

Cattle Breed Show – 6 p.m.

## March 17

Exhibitor Fun Day – 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. (lunch provided)  
Swine Show – 6 p.m.

## March 18

Livestock Judging Contest – Check in – 8 a.m.; Contest – 9 a.m.  
Steer Show – 6 p.m.

## March 19

Goat Show – Check-in – 8 a.m.; Show 9 a.m.  
Buyers’ Luncheon – 12 Noon  
Swine and Cattle Sale – 1 p.m.  
The event will be held at the Union County Agricultural Education Center, located across from the O.J. Phillips Recreational Center off SR-121. Questions about the events may be directed to the Union County IFAS Extension Office at (386) 496-2321.

# MURDER

Continued from page 1

Lawtey Road, he observed a person laying on the ground. The man said he stopped to investigate and realized the victim was his friend Blake Williams and that Williams had been shot in the head.

“The caller was asked if he knew why anyone would want to hurt Williams,” Rooney wrote, “and he stated that ‘Pete’, who he did not know his real name ordered a hit on Williams. (The caller) stated that the word going around the neighborhood was that Williams had stolen some money from ‘Pete’ and that Marcus Whitfield is supposedly the shooter.”

Rooney wrote he later interviewed the victim’s girlfriend and cousin, who both corroborated the caller’s claims.

The girlfriend identified ‘Pete’ as Wilson and told Rooney Wilson believed Williams stole a large amount of cash from him.

The girlfriend added that Williams told her that two days

before the shooting, Whitfield tried to stab Williams.

“The girlfriend stated that Williams wrote it off due to his belief that Whitfield was under the influence of narcotics at the time,” wrote Rooney.

The lieutenant also wrote that he recovered a black Motorola cellular phone near the victim.

A detective with the Clay County Sheriff’s office was able to turn on the device.

“The home screen image that I observed is an image of Marcus Whitfield that is the same image of the Facebook account ‘Polo Pressley’ which belongs to Marcus Whitfield,” he wrote.

Wilson is awaiting trial for conspiracy to commit murder. At press time a pre-trial conference was scheduled for Wilson on March 2.

# SAVE OUR LAKES MEETING!!!

TUESDAY, MARCH 8

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at the

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**Hwy. 100 just East of Hwy 21**

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<p><b>REACH TENS OF THOUSANDS of LOCAL CUSTOMERS in OUR TRI-COUNTY REGION EVERY WEEK • COST EFFECTIVE</b></p> <p>Call Beth or John Ryan at 904-964-6305</p>	<p><b>DOUGLAS BATTERY OF STARKE</b></p> <p>We rebuild starters, alternators, generators.</p> <p>Auto • Marine • Cycle Batteries</p> <p>407 N. Temple • 964-7911</p>	<p><b>Norton Telecom/A+ Alarms</b></p> <p>904-964-4580</p> <p>004 N Temple Ave   Starke State Lic # EG3000304</p> <p>PLEASE DRIVE BY TO SEE THE NEW HOME OF HIS CROSS</p>

# Crime

## Recent arrests in Bradford, Union and Clay

Feb. 19 through Feb. 25

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

Triniti H. Allen, 18, of Starke was arrested by Starke police on Feb. 21 for failure to appear.

Andy William Anderson, 33, of Hilliard was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 21 for a probation violation.

Dawn Rancee Bowling, 49, was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 22 for a probation violation.

Jamie Lynn Brooks, 39 of Gainesville was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 21 for disorderly intoxication and possession of drugs.

Stephanie Antoinette Brunson, 38, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 24 for a probation violation.

Angel Omar Criado Delgado, 36, of Homosassa was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 22 for a probation violation.

Dylan Craig Hurt, 22, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 22 for possession of a controlled substance without a prescription and possession of drug equipment.

Jason Aaron Kagey, 22, of Melrose was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 20 for an out-of-county warrant.

Christopher Richard Kimbrell, 22, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 19 for trespassing.

Dawn Noel MacCleod, 34, of Lawtey was arrested by Lawtey police on Feb. 19 for a conditional release violation.

Trevor Seth Richardson, 24, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 20 for a probation violation.

Dakota Lee Rogers, 24, of Starke was arrested by Starke police on Feb. 23 for larceny.

Dalton James Russell, 25, of Hampton was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 21 for

criminal mischief with property damage and burglary.

Erica Sawn Scritchfield, 48, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 19 for an out-of-county warrant.

Robert Earl Terrell, 52, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 21 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Don Miguel Thomas, 41, of White Springs was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 25 for an out-of-county warrant.

ChIPLEY Robert Turner, 28, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 25 for possession of drugs.

Cody Lamar Varnes, 25, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 21 for DUI and attaching a tag not assigned to a vehicle.

Tasha Lanette Williams, 41, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on Feb. 25 for a probation violation and driving with a suspended or revoked license.

### Union

Christopher Blake Bennett, 37, of Orlando was arrested by Union deputies on Feb. 20 for failure to appear.

## Sheriffs seek tougher penalties for selling drugs

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

STARKE—Bradford County Sheriff Gordon Smith said that during the winter conference of the Florida Sheriff's Association, sheriffs discussed seeking tougher penalties for those selling opioids and amphetamines.

He added that sheriffs are seeking changes in state statute that would impose manslaughter penalties to those who sell the drugs to overdose victims.

Smith said accreditation was also discussed during the conference, with the association offering to assist local agencies

in achieving accreditation.

## Teens being blackmailed after sending 'nudes'

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

GREEN COVE SPRINGS—The Clay County Sheriff's Office is pointing out a little-known and under-reported crime that victimizes children, some under 13 years of age.

The agency said that one common scheme of online criminals is sextortion: persuading a minor to send nude images online and then using the images to blackmail the sender for sex or money.

In one survey, one in six

youths between the ages of nine and 17 said they have sent nude images of themselves to another person online and half of those said they didn't care if they knew the recipient in real life.

The sheriff's office said that parents should talk to their kids about sexting and sextortion, telling them that they should never create, request or send inappropriate images. "Remember that one in four children report that they haven't shared a nude image," the agency said in an infographic. "One in four victims of sextortion were 13 or younger when threatened."

The office also said that 60% of sextortion victims knew the perpetrator, 51% of victims did not report the crimes to family or friends and only 13% of the incidents were reported to law enforcement.

The agency's Internet Crimes

Against Children Task Force investigates sextortion and other cases of child sexual exploitation. Recent task force arrests include that of an Orange Park private school swim coach who solicited sex from a girl online and that of a New York man who tried to persuade a 13-year-old Clay County girl to send him nude photos.

## Melrose park celebration

The 20th anniversary celebration of Heritage Park in Melrose is postponed to Sunday, March 20, at 1 p.m. at the park.

Come enjoy free cake, lemonade, snacks and other drinks. A brief program is planned to thank the Parks and Recreation Department and celebrate the hard work that went into purchasing and developing Heritage Park.

You may also contribute small mementos to the time capsule.

## Melrose Art Walk

Mossman hall will host a special exhibition from the First Coast Plein Air Painters group The Sky's the Limit during the art walk on Friday, March 4, at 6 p.m. Dr. Douglas Johnson is the featured speaker, and drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

call regarding the defendant, this time from a Lake Butler grocery store in which the defendant had also received a previous trespass warning.

"I was able to locate Mr. Warren walking at a swift pace south on County Road 231," wrote Stock, away from (the grocery store) and back toward (the convenience store)."

Alfriele Veddia Watkins, 23, of Cross City was arrested by Union deputies on Feb. 26 for battery.

### Clay

Sarah Ann Baker, 30, was arrested by Clay deputies in Keystone Heights on Feb. 25 for aggravated assault without intent to kill.

Noah Devonte Barnett, 24, was arrested by Clay deputies in Keystone Heights on Feb. 24 for leaving the scene of a crash involving property damage.

Heather Marie Crews, 33, was arrested by Clay deputies in Keystone Heights on Feb. 25 for driving with a revoked or suspended license.

Archie Donovan Damon, 34, was arrested by Clay deputies in Keystone Heights on Feb. 24 for failure to appear.

Richard Lawrence Rawlins, 48, was arrested by Clay deputies in Keystone Heights on Feb. 20

for failure to appear.

Stephen Michael Troy, 43, was arrested by Clay deputies in Keystone Heights on Feb. 20 for battery on a law enforcement officer, resisting an officer with violence, possession of over 20 grams of marijuana and driving with a suspended or revoked license.

According to an arrest report, Clay deputies responded to a Bradford County vehicle pursuit. Clay Deputy Cody Crews located the defendant's vehicle and followed it to the Circle K at State Road 100 and County Road 214 (also known as the Gizmo).

Deputies parked in front of and behind the defendant, blocking his escape.

Troy rammed the patrol vehicle parked in front of him with Deputy Justin Robert Palmer in the vehicle's door jam. Deputies then forced their way into the defendant's vehicle and detained him.

Antonio Roneildo Walker, 58, was arrested by Clay deputies in Keystone Heights on Feb. 24 for leaving the scene of a crash involving property damage.

Archie Donovan White, 34, was arrested by Clay deputies in Keystone Heights on Feb. 24 for failure to appear.

## New Lake Region subdivision approved

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — Bradford County commissioners have approved a new subdivision in the south end of the county.

Unlike other subdivisions approved in the recent past, this will be a major subdivision containing 32 half-acre lots.

Known as Indian Lake Ranch Phase II, the subdivision is located off Southeast Eighth Avenue, near the Wounded Warriors Indian Lake Ranch, according to Zoning Director Randy Andrews.

"There will be no infrastructure as far as the development of properties is concerned other than sidewalks after the units have been given a certificate of completion," he said.

Roads are not proposed as part of the project. The dwellings will be served by Clay Electric Cooperative and have private wells and septic tanks.

According to Commissioner Danny Riddick, another 22-unit subdivision is also being proposed in the area. He said conversations with Clay County Utility Authority about serving the subdivisions with water and sewer were unsuccessful.

"It makes me sick that we couldn't work out something with CCUA to get the water and sewer run down that road before all these houses went in," he said.

Even though the authority would be collecting the fees, he said they wanted Bradford County to pay for the extensions.

## Clay Electric wins J.D. Power award

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS — Clay Electric Cooperative said it was awarded J.D. Power's "Highest in Customer Satisfaction with Residential Electric Service among Cooperatives," according to the J.D. Power 2021 Electric Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study.

The co-op has won other awards from the market research company in the past, but this is the first time it has received top honors in the annual national ranking.

"Clay Electric employees are the best of the best, and make a true difference for our members," said Clay Electric General Manager/CEO Ricky Davis in a news release. "This J.D. Power award is a tangible representation of how our members feel about the cooperative as a whole. I am grateful and humbled by their praise and goodwill."

The study is based on responses from 100,999 online interviews conducted from January 2021 through November 2021 among residential customers of the 145 largest electric utility brands across the United States, which represent more than 101 million households. Clay Electric is the 10th largest distribution electric cooperative in the country.

The co-op said utility performance in the study was

measured in six areas and Clay Electric ranked first in four of the six factors: price, billing and payment, communications and customer care. The other areas studied were corporate citizenship and power quality and reliability.

The co-op said that during the COVID-19 pandemic, it lowered the cost of power three times, paused disconnects on past-due accounts and donated \$50,000 to local food banks.

"Utility customers want to hear about these efforts and, when they do, overall satisfaction is higher," said John Hazen, managing director of the utility practice at J.D. Power.

Clay Electric's score increased 48 points to 822 out of a maximum of 1,000 in 2021 compared to the previous year's J.D. Power study.

Clay Electric Board of Trustees President Jimmy Wilson credited the co-op's employees for the strong performance in the study.

"Excellent customer service and member satisfaction is our mission at Clay Electric," Wilson said. "On behalf of the board, I extend my deepest appreciation and thanks to the employees for their dedication to our members and the cooperative. We couldn't be prouder of you and your accomplishments."



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# LUAU

## Continued from page 4

of about 50 donated items from individuals and businesses rounded out the evening. Local auctioneers Jason Stalnaker and Hunter Williams took to the microphone to handle the sales and entertain the crowd with the traditional banter.

According to Reagan, the event raised about \$15,000 for the club, all of which will be used for local community events (such as the annual Fourth of

July celebration at the lake) and causes, as well as the charitable works undertaken by Rotary International in its work in the U.S. and other nations. The total was made up of ticket sales, donations and the proceeds from the auction.

Reagan said that the club members were pleased to be able to bring the event back for the community after a two-year absence and said that it would continue to be one of the main community social events for the foreseeable future.



**Luuu Guest of Honor, Dr. Marvin Johnson and his wife, Jenny Reid, have a little fun posing in front of a tropical background at the Luau.**



**Josie Croft and Breanna Melton took the auction items to the bidders so that they could get a closer look.**

# Legal Notices

## Bradford

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE**  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned Starke 301 U-Stor LLC, pursuant to SECTION 83.801-809 Florida Statutes "Storage Facility Act" will sell to the highest bidder the contents of the following storage units located at 1650 S. Walnut Street, Starke, Florida 32091. Said contents consisting of personal property, household and other goods, furniture, etc., or as otherwise indicated. Sale will take place March 12th, 2022 @ 11:00am. This sale is being made to satisfy a statutory lien. Registration will begin at 10:15am.  
A60- James Humphrey  
A75- Rodney Puckett  
Entire contents of the following units will be sold to satisfy a lien & other charges according to Florida Statutes 83.806. Seller reserves the right to reject any bids and to withdraw any unit from this sale. Open bids only. CASH PAYMENTS ONLY All Sales Are Final. 10% Buyers Premium. Contents must be removed by close of business 3/12/2022. For any winning bid the buyer must present a \$50.00 cleaning fee for each winning unit and is refundable upon returning the unit broom swept by close of business 3/12/2022.

2/24 2tchg 3/3-BCT

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION**  
File No. 2200009CPAXMX  
IN RE: ESTATE OF JOSEPH DAVID LUKE  
Deceased.

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
The administration of the estate of JOSEPH DAVID LUKE, deceased, whose date of death was April 11, 2021, is pending in the Circuit Court for Bradford County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 945 N Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

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

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

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

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.  
The date of first publication of this notice is 24 February 2022.  
Attorney for Personal Representative: /s/ Bradley J. Busbin  
Bradley J. Busbin, Esquire  
Florida Bar No. 0127504  
Busbin Law Firm, P.A.  
2295 S. Hiwassee Rd., Ste. 207  
Orlando, FL 32835  
Email: Brad@BusbinLaw.com  
Telephone: (407) 955-4595  
Fax: (407) 627-0318  
Personal Representative: /s/ Deborah Luke  
Deborah Luke  
1817 Truman Dr, Lawtey, FL 32058

2/24 2tchg 3/3-BCT

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE:**  
MIRACLE AUTOMOTIVE & TRUCK SERVICE CENTER INC. gives notice that on 03/18/2022 at 12:00 PM the following vehicle(s) will be sold by public sale at 620 N. THOMPSON ST. STARKE FL, 32091 to satisfy the lien for the amount owed on each vehicle for any recovery, towing, or storage services charges and administrative fees allowed pursuant to Florida statute 713.78.  
1FMF175XSLA59015 2005 FORD

3/3 1tchg-BCT

**NOTICE OF AGENCY ACTION**  
TAKEN BY THE SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
Notice is given that the following permit was issued on January 28, 2022:  
CR 18 Trail Segment 5  
Florida Department of Transportation, District 2, 1109 South Marion Avenue, Lake City FL 32025 Permit# ERP-007-240605-1. The project is located in Bradford County, Sections 27, 28, & 34; 35; 2, 11, & 12 Township 7; 7; 8 South, Ranges 22; 21; 22 East. The permit authorizes a surface water management system on 12.47 acres for construction of a multi-use trail known as CR 18 Trail Segment 5.

The receiving water body is the Sante Fe River. A person whose substantial interests are or may be affected has the right to request an administrative hearing by filing a written petition with the Suwannee River Water Management District (District). Pursuant to Chapter 28-106 and Rule 40BB-1.1010, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), the petition must be filed (received) either by delivery

at the office of the Resource Management Business Resource Specialist at District Headquarters, 9225 CR 49, Live Oak FL 32060 or by e-mail to tjm@srwmd.org, within twenty-one (21) days of newspaper publication of the notice of intended District decision (for those persons to whom the District does not mail or email actual notice). A petition must comply with Sections 120.54(5)(b)4. And 120.569(2)(c), Florida Statutes (F.S.), and Chapter 28106, F.A.C. The District will not accept a petition sent by facsimile (fax). Mediation pursuant to Section 120.573, F.S., is not available.

A petition for an administrative hearing is deemed filed upon receipt of the complete petition by the District Clerk at the District Headquarters in Live Oak, FL during the District's regular business hours. The District's regular business hours are 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., excluding weekends and District holidays. Petitions received by the District Clerk after the District's regular business hours shall be deemed filed as of 8 a.m. on the next regular District business day.

The right to an administrative hearing and the relevant procedures to be followed are governed by Chapter 120, Florida Statutes, Chapter 28-106, Florida Administrative Code, and Rule 40B-1.1010, Florida Administrative Code. Because the administrative hearing process is designed to formulate final agency action, the filing of a petition means the District's final action may be different from the position taken by it in this notice. Failure to file a petition for an administrative hearing within the requisite time frame shall constitute a waiver of the right to an administrative hearing. (Rule 28-106.111, F.A.C.)

If you wish to do so, you may request the Notice of Rights for this permit by contacting the Business Resource Specialist in the Division of Resource Management (RM), 9225 CR 49, Live Oak, FL 32060, or by phone at 386.362.1001.

3/3 1tchg-BCT

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING A VARIANCE AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE BRADFORD COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

BY THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT OF BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to the Bradford County Land Development Regulations, as amended, hereinafter referred to as the Land Development Regulations, objections, recommendations and comments concerning a variance, as described below, will be heard by the Board of Adjustment of Bradford County, Florida, at a public hearing on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 6:00 pm, or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, at the County Commission Meeting Room, North Wing, County Courthouse located at 945 North Temple Avenue, Starke, Florida. V 22-05, an application by John C. Beckham, to request a Variance be granted as provided for in Section 4.7 "RE" Residential Estate, Section 4.7.7 Minimum Yard Requirement of the Bradford County Land Development Regulations from a required Thirty (30) feet in Front to a requested Ten (10) feet and a required Ten (10) feet on the North Side property line to a requested Four (4) feet of the property being described as follows: Lot 6 of Seminole Ridge, Unit 2, unrecorded subdivision of lands located in Section 12, Township 9 South, Range 22 East, Bradford County, Florida and being Bradford County Parcel Number 06230-B-00600

The public hearing may be continued to one or more future dates. Any interested party shall be advised that the date, time and place of any continuation of the public hearing shall be announced during the public hearing and that no further notice concerning the matter will be published, unless said continuation exceeds six calendar weeks from the date of the above referenced public hearing.

At the aforementioned public hearing, all interested parties may appear to be heard with respect to the variance. Copies of the variance application are available for public inspection at the Office of the Director of Zoning, Planning, and Building, County Courthouse located at 945 North Temple Avenue, North Wing, Starke, Florida, during regular business hours.

All persons are advised that if they decide to appeal any decision made at the above referenced public hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

3/3 1tchg-BCT

**FICTITIOUS NAME**  
Notice is hereby given that MICHAEL ANDREW WATMOUGH, OWNER, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of 3M TRANSPORT located at 855 N.E. STATE ROAD 16, STARKE, FLORIDA 32091 intends to register the said name in BRADFORD county with the Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State, pursuant to section 865.09 of the Florida

Statutes.  
3/3 1tchg-BCT

**NOTICE OF ENACTMENT OF ORDINANCE BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF**

THE CITY OF STARKE, FLORIDA  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the ordinance, who's title hereinafter appears, will be considered for enactment by the City Commission of the City of Starke, Florida, hereinafter referred to as the City Commission, at a public hearing on March 15, 2022 at 5:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, in City Hall located at 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida. Copies of said ordinance may be inspected by any member of the public at the Office of the City Clerk, City Hall, located at 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida, during regular business hours. On the date, time and place first above mentioned, all interested parties may appear and be heard with respect to the ordinance. The title of said ordinance reads, as follows:  
ORDINANCE NO. 2022-02  
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF STARKE, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR DATES DURING WHICH CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE SHALL QUALIFY TO RUN FOR OFFICE; PROVIDING FOR A DATE FOR CONDUCTING PRIMARY MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS; PROVIDING DIRECTION FOR THE CODIFICATION OF THIS ORDINANCE; REPEALING ALL PRIOR ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

3/3 1tchg-BCT

**PUBLIC MEETING**  
THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Board of County Commissioners of Bradford County, Florida will hold a meeting on March 7, 2022 at 9:30 AM at the Bradford County Courthouse, located at 945 N. Temple Avenue, Starke, Florida. The public is encouraged to visit www.bradfordcountyfl.gov/meetings or to call the Office of the County Manager at (904) 966-6327 to obtain a copy of the agenda for this meeting.

3/3 1tchg-BCT

**NOTICE OF WORKSHOP**  
The Lawtey City Council will be conducting a workshop to discuss City Ordinances on Monday, March 7, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at Lawtey City Hall, 2793 Lake St. Lawtey, FL 32058. All interested parties are invited to attend. The regularly scheduled monthly council meeting will follow at 7 p.m.

3/3 1tchg-BCT

**NOTICE OF SALE**  
The City of Lawtey will be accepting sealed bids on a 2008 Ford Crown Victoria and a 2007 Ford Crown Victoria as is. A minimum bid of \$2,000 is required for each vehicle. The highest bidder receives the vehicle. Bids will be accepted at Lawtey City Hall, 2793 Lake St., Lawtey, FL, until Friday March 18, 2022, at 4 p.m. Anyone wishing to view the vehicles may do so at Lawtey City Hall between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

3/3 1tchg-BCT

**NOTICE OF WORKSHOP**  
The Lawtey City Council will be conducting a workshop to discuss City Ordinances on Monday, March 7, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at Lawtey City Hall, 2793 Lake St. Lawtey, FL 32058. All interested parties are invited to attend. The regularly scheduled monthly council meeting will follow at 7 p.m.

3/3 1tchg-BCT

## Union

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 8TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA.**

CASE NO. 21000056CAAXMX  
**REVERSE MORTGAGE FUNDING LLC, Plaintiff**

vs.  
**UNKNOWN SPOUSE, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, CREDITOR, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING AN INTEREST BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF ROBERT C. BAKER A/K/A ROBERT CHARLES BAKER, DECEASED, et al., Defendants**

**NOTICE OF ACTION**  
TO: UNKNOWN SPOUSE, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, CREDITOR, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING AN INTEREST BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF ROBERT C. BAKER A/K/A ROBERT CHARLES BAKER, DECEASED  
9242 SW 149TH LN  
LAKE BUTLER, FL 32054  
YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage on the following described property located in Union County, Florida: LOT 2, QUAIL HOLLOW, A SUBDIVISION ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 2, PAGE 3, PUBLIC RECORDS OF UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA,

has been filed against you, and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to this action, on Greenspoon Marder, LLP, Default Department, Attorneys for Plaintiff, whose address is Trade Centre South, Suite 700, 100 West Cypress Creek Road, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309, and file the original with the Clerk within 30 days after the first publication of this notice in THE UNION COUNTY TIMES, on or

before March 10, 2022; otherwise a default and a judgment may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint. WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL OF SAID COURT on this 2nd day of February.

By: Kellie Hendricks-Rhoads  
As Clerk of said Court  
By: Crystal Norman  
As Deputy Clerk  
Prepared by: Greenspoon Marder, LLP

(954) 491-1120; gmforeclosure@gmlaw.com  
In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing a reasonable accommodation to participate in this proceeding should, no later than seven (7) days prior, contact the Clerk of the Court's disability coordinator at ADA Coordinator, (352) 337-6237. If hearing or voice impaired, contact (TDD) (800) 955-8771 via Florida Relay System.

2/10 4tchg 3/3-UCT

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION**

File No. 63-2021-CP-000020  
IN RE: ESTATE OF Celestino Anthony Japngie, Sr. a/k/a Celestino A. Japngie a/k/a Celestino Japngie, Deceased.

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
The administration of the estate of Celestino Anthony Japngie, Sr. a/k/a Celestino A. Japngie a/k/a Celestino Japngie, deceased, whose date of death was October 11th, 2020, is pending in the Circuit Court for Union County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is Union County Courthouse, 55 West Main Street, Room 103, Lake Butler, FL 32054. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below. All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE. ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 WILL BE FOREVER BARRED. NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED. The date of first publication of this notice is 24 February 2022.  
SPIRA LAW GROUP, P.A.  
Attorneys for Personal Representative  
4865 N. WICKHAM ROAD, SUITE 106  
MELBOURNE, FL 32940  
Telephone: (321) 610-3001  
Florida Bar No. 492061  
Email Addresses: steve@spirallawgroup.com  
spirallawgroup.com  
steveadmin@spirallawgroup.com  
DIANA JAPNGIE  
370 Commack Road  
Commack, NY 11725

2/24 2tchg 3/3-UCT

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA**  
CASE NO. 21000045CAAXMX  
**CITIMORTGAGE, INC., Plaintiff**

vs.  
**UNKNOWN HEIRS, BENEFICIARIES, DEVISEES, SURVIVING SPOUSE, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEE, LIENORS, CREDITORS, TRUSTEES, AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING AN INTEREST BY THROUGH UNDER OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF HENRY W. FILER, DECEASED; et al., Defendant(s).**

**NOTICE OF ACTION**  
TO: Unknown Heirs, Beneficiaries, Devisees, Surviving Spouse, Grantees, Assignee, Lienors, Creditors, Trustees, and all other parties claiming an interest by through under or against the estate of Henry W. Filer, deceased  
Last Known Residence: Unknown  
YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage on the following property in Union County, Florida: A PARCEL OF LAND CONTAINING A TOTAL AREA OF 1.2 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, LYING, BEING AND SITUATE IN THE NORTH 1/2 OF GOVERNMENT LOT 1, SECTION 31, TOWNSHIP 5 SOUTH, RANGE 20 EAST, CITY OF LAKE BUTLER, UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCE AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID NORTH 1/2 OF GOVERNMENT LOT 1, SECTION 31, AND RUN NORTH 01 DEGREE 45 MINUTES 29 SECONDS WEST, ALONG THE EAST LINE OF SAID SECTION 31, A DISTANCE OF 63.55 FEET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE CENTERLINE OF STATE ROAD NUMBER 121; THENCE CONTINUE

RUNNING NORTH 01 DEGREE 45 MINUTES 29 SECONDS WEST, CONTINUING ALONG SAID EAST LINE OF SECTION 31, A DISTANCE OF 143.19 FEET TO A POINT, SAID POINT BEING A DISTANCE OF 1174.66 FEET SOUTHERLY OF THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 31; THENCE RUN SOUTH 85 DEGREES 30 MINUTES 34 SECONDS WEST A DISTANCE OF 19.27 FEET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE WEST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SOUTHEAST 5TH AVENUE (ALSO KNOWN AS EPPERSON STREET) AND THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE HEREINAFTER DESCRIBED PARCEL OF LAND;

THENCE RUN SOUTH 00 DEGREES 49 MINUTES 12 SECONDS EAST, ALONG SAID WEST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SOUTHEAST 5TH AVENUE, A DISTANCE OF 88.35 FEET; THENCE RUN SOUTH 42 DEGREES 10 MINUTES 48 SECONDS WEST, CONTINUING ALONG SAID WEST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE, A DISTANCE OF 21.94 FEET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SAID STATE ROAD NUMBER 121; THENCE RUN SOUTH 85 DEGREES 10 MINUTES 48 SECONDS WEST, ALONG SAID NORTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF STATE ROAD NUMBER 121, A DISTANCE OF 69.06 FEET;

THENCE RUN NORTH 01 DEGREE 45 MINUTES 29 SECONDS WEST A DISTANCE OF 103.74 FEET; THENCE RUN SOUTH 85 DEGREES 30 MINUTES 34 SECONDS WEST A DISTANCE OF 315.00 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 01 DEGREE 45 MINUTES 29 SECONDS WEST A DISTANCE OF 105.00 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 85 DEGREES 30 MINUTES 34 SECONDS EAST A DISTANCE OF 402.45 FEET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH SAID WEST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SOUTHEAST 5TH AVENUE; THENCE RUN SOUTH 00 DEGREES 49 MINUTES 12 SECONDS EAST, ALONG SAID WEST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF SOUTHEAST 5TH AVENUE, A DISTANCE OF 105.10 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING

It has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on ALDRIDGE I PITE, LLP, Plaintiffs attorney, at 1615 South Congress Avenue, Suite 200, Delray Beach, FL 33445, on or before March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, and file the original with the clerk of this court either before service on Plaintiffs attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint or petition.  
Dated on February 24, 2022  
Kellie Hendricks Rhoads  
As Clerk of the Court  
By: Crystal Norman  
Deputy Clerk

3/3 4tchg 3/24-UCT

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION**

File No. 63-2022-CP-0008  
Division 4-D

IN RE: ESTATE OF RICHARD DYLAN DREW  
Deceased.

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
The administration of the estate of RICHARD DYLAN DREW, deceased, whose date of death was October 25, 2021, is pending in the Circuit Court for UNION County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 55 West Main Street, Lake Butler, Florida 32054. The names and addresses of the personal representatives and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

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

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE. ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 WILL BE FOREVER BARRED. NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED. The date of first publication of this notice is March 3, 2022.

Attorney for Personal Representatives:  
THOMAS M. DONAHO, JR.  
Florida Bar Number: 078530  
MICHELLE MEDINA  
Florida Bar Number: 772623  
Attorneys  
DONAHO & MCMENAMY, P.A.  
245 Riverside Avenue, Suite 150  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32202  
Telephone: (904) 354-8080  
Fax: (904) 791-9563  
E-Mail: eservice@dmjxlaw.com  
Personal Representatives:  
THOMAS DREW  
20217 SE 88th Trail

Lake Butler, Florida 32054  
JACLYN DREW  
20217 SE 88th Trail  
Lake Butler, Florida 32054

3/3 2tchg 3/10-UCT

**STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS**  
The Union County Board of County Commissioners is soliciting Statements of Qualifications from professional firms, registered in the State of Florida, pursuant to Section 287.055, Florida Statutes, known as the Consultant Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA), to provide Engineering Services for Union County.

The Scope of Services is intended to provide Engineering/Surveying Services for Widening and Resurfacing of CR 238N from from NE 111th Way to CR 229 N, as further described in Exhibit A, Project Description and Responsibilities. Funding being provided by Union County and the State of Florida Department of Transportation. Services under this contract may include any or all of the items listed under the "Consultant Scope of Services for Engineering Services". Please contact the Union County Board of County Commissioners Office 386-496-4241 for any additional information needed.

An original and seven (7) copies of the complete proposal plus one (1) electronic copy of the complete proposal shall be sealed and clearly marked on the outside: "Request for Qualifications - For Engineering/Design Services CR 238N, Project ID 44319-1-54-01-1-54-01. Deadline is April 5, 2022, 2:00 p.m.

3/3 4tchg 3/24-UCT

**STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS**  
The Union County Board of County Commissioners is soliciting Statements of Qualifications from professional firms, registered in the State of Florida, pursuant to Section 287.055, Florida Statutes, known as the Consultant Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA), to provide Engineering Services for Union County.

The Scope of Services is intended to provide Engineering/Surveying Services for Widening and Resurfacing of CR 18 from Columbia County Line to SR 121 in Union County, as further described in Exhibit A, Project Description and Responsibilities. Funding being provided by Union County and the State of Florida Department of Transportation. Services under this contract may include any or all of the items listed under the "Consultant Scope of Services for Engineering Services". Please contact the Union County Board Office 386-496-4241 for any additional information needed. An original and seven (7) copies of the complete proposal plus one (1) electronic copy of the complete proposal shall be sealed and clearly marked on the outside: "Request for Qualifications - For Engineering/Design Services CR 18, Project ID 441325-1-34-01. Deadline is April 5, 2022 2:00 p.m.

3/3 4tchg 3/24-UCT

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Board of County Commissioners of Union County Florida, at its duly held public hearing on February 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., in the County Commission Chambers, Union County Courthouse, 55 West Main Street, Lake Butler, Florida, adopted RESOLUTION NO. 2022-02 to vacate, abandon, renounce and disclaim any ownership rights of the County and public in and to the right of way of Jim Street (from SW 150<sup>th</sup> Loop to SW 150<sup>th</sup> Loop), more particularly described as follows: A PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED IN SECTION 01, TOWNSHIP 06 SOUTH, RANGE 19 EAST, UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENCE AT A 1/2" OPEN PIPE MARKING THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF LOT 21 OF "SANDREWS COUNTRY SUBDIVISION" AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 1, PAGE 18 OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA AND BEING THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE SOUTH 01 15'48" EAST, ALONG THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE SOUTH 01 15'48" EAST, ALONG THE ; THENCE SOUTH 01 15'48" EAST, ALONG THE EAST LINE OF LOTS 19 AND 21, A DISTANCE OF 155.95 FEET TO THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF LOT 19; THENCE NORTH 88°49'18" EAST, A DISTANCE OF 50.00 FEET TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF LOT 18; THENCE NORTH 01°15'48" WEST, ALONG THE WEST LINE OF LOT 18, A DISTANCE OF 155.95 FEET TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF LOT 18; THENCE SOUTH 88°49'18" WEST, A DISTANCE OF 50.00 FEET TOTHE POINT OF BEGINNING. CONTAINING 7,797.49 SQUARE FEET, MORE OR LESS.

AND, said Resolution hereby renounces any right of the County and the public in and to the aforesaid land. Petitioners: Church of Christ at Danville and Brenda L. Hardin BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA  
Kellie Hendricks Rhoads, Clerk

3/3 1tchg-UCT



Starke Fire Department purchased three battery powered rescue devices along with batteries and chargers, thanks to a Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation grant. Pictured (l-r) are Kevin Mock, Municipal Emergency Services Fire sales representative, Starke Commissioner Wilbur Waters, Firefighter/Paramedic Paul Jones, Firefighter/EMT Jacob Crary, Fire Chief Gary Wise, Fire Capt. Greg Starling, Fire Engineer Kelly Outlaw, Starke Commissioner Shannon Smith and Starke City Clerk Jimmy Crosby. Crosby is holding a new Hurst Jaws of Life eDraulic cutter. On the ground in front of the group are the department's new Hurst Jaws of Life spreader and new Hurst Jaws of Life ram. Photo by Cliff Smelley.

## Starke Fire Department receives \$33K grant from Firehouse Subs

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

The Starke Fire Department recently added to its inventory of rescue equipment, thanks to a grant in the amount of approximately \$33,000 from the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation.

This is the third Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation grant the Starke Fire Department has received in the last 8-10 years. The three grants totaled approximately \$100,000.

"We can't thank Firehouse Subs enough," Starke Fire Chief Gary Wise said.

This latest grant allowed the department to purchase, through MES (Municipal Emergency Services) Fire, three Hurst Jaws of Life eDraulic battery powered devices — a cutter, a spreader and a ram — six batteries and three battery chargers. The Jaws of Life devices are waterproof. Wise said they can operate in up to 11 feet of freshwater.

The Starke Fire Department now has two each of the Hurst eDraulic cutters, spreaders and rams, which will be of benefit

inside and outside the city limits as the department responds to calls throughout the county.

"It's benefitting the city of Starke, but it's also benefitting everybody in Bradford County," Wise said.

Wise said Bradford County Fire Rescue had applied for a Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation grant as well. He believes the county department has a good chance of receiving it.

"It's not that they don't look out for bigger departments," Wise said of the Firehouse Subs foundation, "but it really seems like they look out for the smaller departments and the financial burdens those smaller departments have in order to get equipment. It's expensive equipment."

Firehouse Subs founders Chris Sorensen and Robin Sorensen traveled to Mississippi in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, feeding first responders as well as survivors. That led to the idea of creating the nonprofit Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation, which exists to provide resources to first responders so that they are

better equipped to save lives.

The latest figures on the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation website show that the foundation has awarded 5,531 grants totaling more than \$65 million since 2005.

One of the ways in which money is raised for the foundation is through Firehouse Subs customers rounding up the totals of their purchases to the nearest dollar.

"I try to tell everybody, if they go to Firehouse, make sure they round up and support (the program)," Wise said.

The Starke Fire Department, since it was just awarded a grant, can apply again in two years.

Kevin Mock, a sales representative with MES Fire, was in Starke to inspect the new equipment, ensuring it wasn't damaged in shipping or during the manufacturing process.

"Somebody's life could depend on it," Mock said.

If you'd like to know about Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation, please visit [firehousesubsfoundation.org](http://firehousesubsfoundation.org).

## BHS' Davis, Jackson are tops in FACA Class 1A hoops honors

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Bradford High School's Shayne Davis and Sampson Jackson were named Class 1A Boys Basketball Player of the Year and Coach of the Year, respectively, with the release of the Florida Athletic Coaches Association District 6 awards.

Jackson has the 14-10 Tornados in the Final Four for the first time since 1974 and for just the second time in program history. Bradford won the District 6 championship and the Region 3 championship.

Davis, a junior, leads the team with a 10.7 points-per-game average. He scored 57 total points in the Tornados' two district tournament and two



Shayne Davis



Sampson Jackson

regional playoff games — a 14.3 average.

For the season, Davis has 182 total points in 17 games.

Besides Bradford, FACA District 6 includes 23 schools from Clay, Flagler, Putnam and St. John's counties. A Player of

the Year and Coach of the Year was named for each Florida High School Athletic Association classification (1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A and 6A) as well as for schools that play independently of the FHSAA.



The Northside Christian Academy girls basketball team won the Southeastern Christian Conference championship. Pictured are: (kneeling, in front) seniors Leah Smith, Haley Nugent, Caroline Smith and Sam Cowart, (back, l-r) coaches April Pilcher and Aniston Pilcher, Finley Poyner, Makayla Price, Karissa Lawrence, Harli Mosley, Chylee Kahakua, Tatiana Coleman, Rosalea Norman, Chloe Templeton and Coach Jason Pilcher. Photo submitted courtesy of the Pilcher family.

## NCA Lady Eagles soar back to the top of their conference

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Caroline Smith's rebound putback at the buzzer gave the Northside Christian Academy girls basketball team a 14-12 win over Open Bible (Valdosta, Georgia) in an eight-minute playoff quarter at the Southeastern Christian Conference tournament on Feb. 19 in Waycross, Georgia.

It concluded a 17-4 season and gave the Eagles their fifth championship in eight years. Northside won four straight titles from 2015 through 2018 and then had a pair of third-place finishes in 2019 and 2020 before a second-place finish last season.

"Every run has to end sooner or later," Head Coach Jason Pilcher said, "but Northside is back where they belong — on top."

Northside won four games on Feb. 17 and Feb. 18 to reach the SECC final. Open Bible defeated the Eagles 44-40, but since that was the Eagles' first loss in the double-elimination tournament, an eight-minute quarter was played to determine the champion.

The score was knotted up at 12-12 when Smith, a senior, received an inbounds pass with 12 seconds left. She dribbled the length of the court, but missed a layup. She rebounded the miss

and put it in the basket before time expired.

"What a way to end your high-school career," Pilcher said.

Northside began tournament play with a 44-20 win over Faith Baptist (Ludowici, Georgia) on Feb. 17. The Eagles then played two games on Feb. 18, defeating Old Plank (Jacksonville) 48-23 and Open Bible 37-18.

Open Bible played its way out of the losers' bracket to reach the championship game.

That game proved to be frustrating for the Eagles. Pilcher said officials were calling fouls on his players that weren't being

See CHAMPS, page 12

## 15 from BHS, UCHS earn All-State football recognition

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Bradford and Union County high schools had 15 football players receive Class 1A All-State recognition, including six who earned first-team honors.

Tornadoes running back Manny Covey and quarterback Amari Jones were first-team picks on offense.

Covey, a junior who made the team as a utility player, rushed for 558 yards and seven touchdowns on 102 carries, while catching 27 passes for 399 yards and two touchdowns.

Jones, a senior who's going to FIU, completed 148 of 262 passes for 2,287 yards and 19 touchdowns. He also rushed for 371 yards and seven touchdowns on 67 carries.

Tigers kicker Jonathan Edwards was a first-team pick after connecting on 58 of 62 extra-point attempts as well as successfully connecting on all five of his field-goal attempts.

On defense, Union had two named to the first team: defensive back Daylyn Diston and linebacker Curran Webb.

Diston, a junior, made 36 tackles (22 solo) and six interceptions. He returned two interceptions for touchdowns in the same game, while his season

stats also included a forced fumble and six pass deflections.

Webb, a senior, made 99 tackles (52 solo and 31 for loss), 14 sacks, two forced fumbles and one fumble recovery.

Bradford linebacker Sincere Hankerson was a first-team pick also. The senior, who's going to Lenoir-Rhyne University, made 52 tackles (27 solo).

The Tornados had three earn second-team defensive honors: linebacker Trent Hankerson and defensive backs Chail Cummings and Jontez Williams.

Hankerson, a senior, made 51 tackles and had two forced fumbles and an interception.

Cummings, a sophomore, made 64 tackles (42 solo) and had two interceptions and two forced fumbles.

Williams, a senior who's going to Iowa State University, made the team as a utility player. He made 27 tackles (12 solo) and had three interceptions.

Tigers senior Trevor Holtzendorf was a second-team pick at linebacker after making 104 tackles (55 solo and 13.5 for loss) and five sacks. He also had two forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries.

Union placed two offensive players on the second team: junior running back Rayvon Durant and senior lineman Alex Dure. Durant rushed for 1,344 yards and 15 touchdowns on 112 carries.

The Tigers also had three juniors earn honorable mention: quarterback A.J. Cortese, defensive lineman Dayviontae "Bubba" Thompson and

offensive lineman Mikah Wilson.

Cortese, who missed five games due to injury, completed 20 of 35 passes for 343 yards and two touchdowns, while also rushing for 465 yards and eight touchdowns on 33 carries.

Thompson made 58 tackles (28 solo and 22 for loss) and 10 sacks. He also forced two fumbles.

## KHHS has 3 receive All-State honors

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Keystone Heights High School had two players receive second-team honors, while another earned honorable mention with the release of the Class 4A All-State teams.

Senior Dalton Hollingsworth was a second-team defensive pick as an athlete. He made 60 tackles (29 solo).

Hollingsworth was also a standout on offense, rushing for 1,324 yards and 21 touchdowns on 163 carries.

Senior tight end Caleb Moncrief earned second-team honors. He caught four passes for 89 yards and a touchdown, but was more important as part of an offensive line that helped power a rushing attack that amassed 4,007 yards.

Another component of that ground game was senior lineman Luke Snider, who received All-State honorable mention.



# Last Chance!

to bring your entries for the Home Division and Arts and Crafts Division to the Fairgrounds Main Entrance on MONDAY, MARCH 7th, 8:30 AM to 6:00 PM

If you have any questions please refer to the Bradford Agricultural Fair Premium Book inserted in this weeks Bradford County Telegraph and Union County Times

Entries are welcome from Bradford & Union Counties for a chance to win ribbons and/or cash prizes!

Advance Armband Coupons are available at the usual locations: \$15 at Community Banks in Starke and Lake Butler; North Florida Chamber of Commerce in Starke and the Lawley City Hall !!

# Tornadoes Got Talent



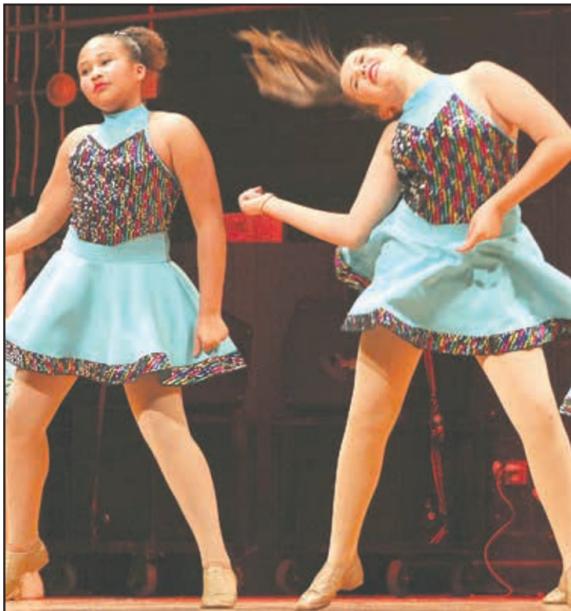
Bradford High School's Class of 2023 hosted the Tornadoes Got Talent show on Jan. 21. Shelby Rhoden was judged the winner, receiving a \$1,000 scholarship, courtesy of the Class of 2023 and Executive Board. The event also featured performances by Starke Academy of Dance. ABOVE LEFT: The five students who competed were (l-r) Jazlyn Hamilton, Alexander Roper, Shelby Rhoden, Dakota Tillman and Chayten Sanders. ABOVE RIGHT: Shelby Rhoden sings Whitney Houston's "I Have Nothing." Photos by Cliff Smelley.



Cadets (l-r) Tyler Shaffer, Brianna Isaacs, Leilani Santos and Andrew King conduct their color-guard inspection.



ABOVE: Dakota Tillman sings Lauren Diagle's "Rebel Heart." RIGHT: Chayten Sanders dances to Lil Tecca's "Lot of Me."



ABOVE: Starke Academy of Dance's Karmen Griffis (left) and McKynzie Stopka perform "Dynamite" to open the show. RIGHT: Starke Academy of Dance's Finley Rinehart (left) and Trinity Brown perform a routine called "Hope."



Jazlyn Hamilton (left) and Alexander Roper each chose to perform John Legend's "All of Me."



Kennedy Smith (left) and Jaimee Lin of Starke Academy of Dance perform a routine called "Beautiful World."

## Bradford JROTC is an Honor Unit with Distinction

After six years, Bradford High School's Army JROTC Tornado Battalion has regained its designation as Honor Unit with Distinction. BHS cadets, who put in a lot of work, were evaluated in the areas of Battalion Staff Continuous Improvement Briefing and Interview, Service-Learning and demonstrates exceptional performance in all areas of the Army JROTC program. In order to achieve this rating, a program must score at least 95 percent on the JROTC Program of Accreditation Inspection. BHS cadets, who put in a lot of work, were evaluated in the areas of Battalion Staff Continuous Improvement Briefing and Interview, Service-Learning and demonstrates exceptional performance in all areas of the Army JROTC program. In order to achieve this rating, a



Cadet Command 6th Brigade Representative William Smith (foreground) is pictured with cadets Nathaniel Woodcock, Andrew King and Michael Lizell.

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## Col. Samuel Elbert DAR Chapter meets on March 7

The Col. Samuel Elbert Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, will meet on Monday, March 7, at 10:30 a.m. at the Montgomery Conference Center (88 S.E. 75th St., Starke). A \$10 brunch (payable at the door) is available. Do you have a Revolutionary War-era patriot in your family tree? If you would like to find out, DAR can help with its genealogical resources. Any woman 18 years or older, regardless of race, religion or ethnic background, who can prove direct descent from a person who aided in achieving American independence between April 19, 1775, and Nov. 26, 1783, is eligible for membership. Please contact Registrar Jane Argo Romeo at 352-478-3544 for more information.



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# Obituaries

## Nellie Beilling

PROVIDENCE Nellie Estell Beilling, 88, of Providence, passed away peacefully at her home on Friday, Feb. 25, 2022. She was born March 29, 1933, in Fayette, Alabama to Denver and Iowa Watkins Campbell. She retired from the Union County School System after dedicating 29 years as a school bus driver. She was a wonderful cook and excellent at baking cakes. She also had a talent for quilting and sewing. To relax, she enjoyed bird watching and doing word searches. Most of all, she loved spending time with her family. She was preceded in death by her husband of 63 years, Ellis Beilling; father, Denver Campbell; mother, Iowa Campbell; stepmother, Claudie Campbell; brothers, Arley, Daniel, Raymond, Henry, and Stephen Campbell; sisters, Mildred Hill, Florence Campbell, and Alice Campbell; and great-granddaughter, Gracie Gill.

She is survived by her brother, Ernie Campbell; sisters, Dell Ponds and Edith Wroblewski; her daughters, Lisa (Bill) Eagleston, Peggy (Gene) Knageg, and Susan Beilling; grandchildren, Leslie Cannon, Amanda (Jason) Bradley, Brad (Cindy) Bryant, Misty (Adam) Graham, Nichole Bryant, Billy (Tara) Eagleston; great-grandchildren, Kiersten Lee, Kylie Eagleston, Gabrielle Bradley, Logan Cannon, Ian Bryant, Landyn Eagleston, Ella Bryant, and Preston Bradley; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A service to honor her was held Tuesday, March 1, at Providence Village Baptist Church. She was laid to rest next to her husband at Old Providence Cemetery immediately following the service. Arrangements were under the care and direction of Archer-Milton Funeral Home, Lake Butler. 386-496-2008 www.ArcherFuneralHome.com



PAID OBITUARY

## Clifford Clemons

STARKE Clifford "Lamar" Clemons, 71, of Starke, passed away Sunday, Feb. 27, 2022, at his home with his loving family by his side. He was born on July 11, 1950, in Starke to the late Walton and Marie (Knight) Clemons. He was a dedicated member of Evergreen Baptist Church where he enjoyed teaching Sunday school for many years. He also made his mark in the mineral sands mining business where he had the opportunity to travel and see the world. He was a loving father and beloved "Papa." He was preceded in death by his parents; and his brothers, Wayne Clemons and Dale Clemons.

He is survived by his loving wife, Jane (Hewett) Clemons; their children, Brian (Becky) Clemons, Jason (Marla) Clemons, Stephanie Clemons and Kerri Wilkes; nephew, Robert Hewett; 12 grandchildren, Justin, Kerissa, Kylee, Kaleb, Sydney, Seth, Abigail, Kinlyn, Annsley, Kaiden, Kolden, Alyse; four great-grandchildren, Auzrael, Auviel, Molly and Kentli; his sister, Joyce Thornton; his brother, John Clemons; as well as many extended family members and friends.

A service was held on Wednesday, March 2, at Evergreen Baptist Church in Lawtey. He was laid to rest at Conner Cemetery in Starke.

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



PAID OBITUARY

## Margaret Henderson

LAKE BUTLER Margaret Ann Henderson, 62, peacefully went home to be with the Lord on Monday, Feb. 21, 2022 while at Shands Hospital in Gainesville. She was the daughter of the late Ben and Jessie Henderson. She was an evangelist, a retired seamstress, and a 1977 graduate of Eastside High School in Gainesville. She was a member of the Body of Christ Assembly Church of God in Christ. She was preceded in death by her siblings, Woodrow Holmes, Ben Henderson, Claude Henderson, Willie Henderson, Leroy Henderson, Lillie Jones, Minnie Davis, Mable Green, Rosetta Warren, Thorsha Henderson, Mary Henderson, Everlena Henderson and Emma Henderson.

Endearing memories will linger with her siblings, Lizzie Jordan, Alma (Roy) Stephens, Grady (Patsy) Henderson, Clifford Henderson and Eddie Henderson; brother-in-law, Sylvester Warren; and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

The Homegoing Celebration will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 5, at Union County High School Auditorium in Lake Butler with Elder Alvin Merriex Jr. delivering the eulogy. The burial will follow at Fort Call Cemetery. Evangelist Henderson will be viewed beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the auditorium. The procession will form at 10 a.m. at the residence of her sister and brother-in-law, Roy and Alma Stephens, 230 SE 6 Ave, Lake Butler.

Arrangements entrusted to Duncan Brothers Funeral Home, 428 N.W. Eighth St., Gainesville.



## Jesse Jackson Sr.

LAKE BUTLER Jesse Bernard Jackson Sr., 71, passed away on Thursday, Feb. 24, 2022, at UF Health Shands in Gainesville. He was born Jan. 30, 1951, in Elwood, Indiana to George Jackson and Shirley Dickerson. He made a living as a contractor. In his spare time, he enjoyed his pugs, playing cards, watching wrestling, and listening to Elvis Presley. He was a proud member of the NRA and a big supporter of the Wounded Warrior Project and President Trump. He had a big heart and would give you the shirt off his back. He was preceded in death by his parents; and brothers, Danny and Joel Jackson.

He is survived by his wife, Edith Jackson; son, Jesse B. (Sara) Jackson Jr.; daughter, Carina Renee (Kevin) Douglas; stepdaughter, Kimberly Jenkins; grandchildren, Anya (Justin) Griffiths, Ariana Rix, Adyson Jackson, Aisley Jackson, Avin Douglas, and Michael; great-grandchildren, Jackson Griffiths, Waylon Griffiths, and Elliana Griffiths; brothers, David (Regina) Jackson, Brian (Jennifer) Jackson, and Kevin Jackson; sisters, Jenny (Danny) McGill, Mable (Robert) Heath, Francis Remy, Anna Jackson, and Wanita Mullins.

A service to honor him will be held at 11 a.m. on Monday, March 7, at Archer-Milton Funeral Home, Lake Butler. The family will receive friends for a visitation beginning at 10 a.m.

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



PAID OBITUARY

## Alberta Pape

STARKE Alberta "Ms. Berta" Theresa Pape, 96, of Starke died Friday, Feb. 25, 2022, at Windsor Manor Health and Rehabilitation. She was born in Pawnee, Illinois Nov. 16, 1925, to Richard and Bertha (Loveless) Smith. She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband of nearly 50 years Lewis H. "Louie" Pape; and their daughter Janet Gully.

Her survivors include three grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

An online celebration of her life will be held at a later date.

Arrangements are by Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 620 E. Nona St, Starke. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

## Fred Pendarvis

LAWTEY Fred Pendarvis, 80, of Lawtey, passed away on Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022, at his residence with his loving family by his side. He was born in Lawtey on Jan. 6, 1942, to the late William "Bill" Pendarvis and Iris VanZant. He was a lifelong resident of Lawtey and graduated from Bradford High School. Shortly after high school, he began his long career at DuPont as a head dry mill operator, where he worked until retiring in 2004. On April 27, 1963, he married the love of his life, Julia Gordon Pendarvis, and they spent 58 wonderful years together. He was a member of Highland First Baptist Church in Lawtey where he enjoyed attending and worshipping his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He was a generational farmer who was known for his delicious strawberries. He was passionate about farming; and growing many different vegetables to feed his family and many others. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and anything outdoors. He was a good man who would do anything for anyone. More than anything, he loved his family and he will be missed by all who knew him. He was preceded in death by his parents; and sister, Doris Minchew.

He is survived by his loving wife, Julia Pendarvis of Lawtey; children, Marie (Guy) Dyal of Lawtey, Clarence (Dana) Pendarvis of Lawtey, and Dale (Estella) Pendarvis of Lawtey; brother, Frank Pendarvis of Lawtey; sister, Delores (Rolland) Vanzant of Callahan; grandchildren, Matt (Jamie) Dyal, Robin (Ryan) Campbell, Jordan (Lindsay Clontz) Dyal, Tiffany (Levi) Johns, and Holly, Eric, Andrew and Patrick Pendarvis; great-grandchildren, Tymbryl and Titus Dyal, Dakota and Paisley Campbell, and Faith Johns.

A Celebration of Life was held on Saturday, Feb. 26, at Highland First Baptist Church with pastor Lester Austin officiating. Interment followed at Highland Cemetery.

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



PAID OBITUARY

## Kathleen Selvaggio

STARKE Kathleen "Kathy" Selvaggio, 80, of Starke, passed away peacefully on Sunday, Feb. 27, 2022, at Lake Butler Hospital with her loving family by her side. She was born in Newark, New Jersey on Feb. 25, 1942, to the late John G. Krause and Amelia Mealling Krause. She was raised in New Jersey, but graduated from Union High School in 1960. In 1965, she met the love of her life, Victor Joseph Selvaggio. They were happily married on May 6, 1967. In 1971, they relocated to Jacksonville. She had such a gift with children. She was the daycare director for Holy Cross Preschool and Childcare Center in Jacksonville for many years. She was instrumental in teaching and leading many little ones and loved watching them learn and grow. When not working, she was tending to her own family and three children who she loved dearly. She was a devoted wife, loving mother, grandmother, sister, and friend to so many. She was the PTA president, a Campfire Girl's Bluebird Troop Leader, T-ball coach, and she was an emergency medical first responder and firefighter at the New River Fire Department, Station 3. She and Victor made Starke their forever home in December of 2005 and they became members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. She was a gifted artist who loved making ceramics. She was honored to receive the Peggy Award, which is Popular Ceramic's highest award. She found much pleasure in being outside tending to her flower gardens and loved her weekly roses from Vic. Most of all, she enjoyed spending time with her family and friends, creating treasured memories, and making the most out of the time she was given. She was a blessing to those around her and left an impact in their lives. She was preceded in death by her parents; her twin brother, John "Johnny" Krause; and sister, Amy Raczynski.

She is survived by her loving husband of almost 55 years, Victor "Vic" Selvaggio of Starke; children, Linda (Mark) Miller of Starke, Betty (David) Tehrani of Orlando, and Joseph (Heather) Selvaggio of Fleming Island; sisters, Helen Rescigno and Susan Carr both of New Jersey; grandchildren, Justin Selvaggio, Savannah Trantham, Madison Selvaggio, Lexi Tehrani, Megan Selvaggio, Kate Tehrani, Shaynah Miller, and Zane Miller; many close cousins who she loved as siblings; along with numerous extended family and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 2 p.m. on Monday, March 7, at Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel. Interment will follow at Keystone Heights Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 1 p.m. until 2 p.m. prior to the funeral. Flowers are welcome or donations may be made to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Starke, 4900 N.W. 182nd Way, Starke, 32091.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## Shane Thornton

Shane Jaye Thornton, 57, passed away on Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022, at his home surrounded by his loving family after an extended illness. He was employed with Dupont/Chemours at the time of his passing. He had been a dedicated employee for the past 38 years and will be remembered as a hard worker who made lifelong friendships with his fellow employees. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, camping, playing the guitar, and listening to music. Above all, he enjoyed spending time with his grandkids. He was a kind, loving man who cared for his family and would go above and beyond to help. He was preceded in death by his father, Jimmy Thornton; and brother, Marlon Thornton.

He is survived by his wife of 35 years, Thessa Thornton; mother, Marie Hodge; children, Waylon Thornton and Wendy (Eric) Hall; grandchildren, Kyler, Dex, Lindsey, and Eric; sisters, Cindy Dowdy and Donna Miller; and a host of nieces and nephews.

A graveside service was held on Thursday, Feb. 24, at New River Baptist Church Cemetery in Brooker.

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

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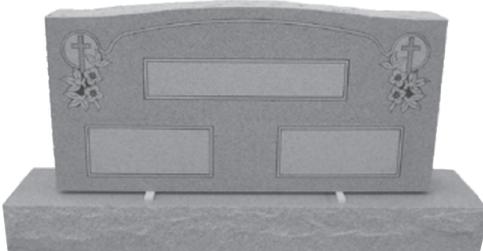
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The BMS girls basketball team at their banquet (l-r): Assistant Coach Arthur Burch, Alexis Kicklighter (in front of Burch), Manager Ja'nyiah Nichols, Sarah Rentz, Talaysia Cummings, Gemma Rodriguez, Tamani Cray, Manager Jessariah Hankerson, Zharianna Guion, Jada Childs, Takayla Barnes, Manager Tran'niq Thompson, Assistant Coach Justin Mealing and Head Coach Rick Barr. Not pictured: Destinee Covington, Izarriya Desue, Ar'nayshia Griffin, Kah'myra Hankerson, Jordyn Littles and Assistant Coach Jimmy Hankerson. Photo by Cliff Smelley.

## BMS girls basketball team enjoys 8-0 season

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

For the first time in 10 years, a Bradford Middle School girls basketball team put together a perfect season, going 8-0 and doing it in dominant fashion, for the most part.

Prior to the team's season-ending banquet on Feb. 19 in the BMS cafeteria, Head Coach Rick Barr said most victories were by margins of 25-30 points, adding, "We weren't trying to run the score up."

In fact, the goal was for every player to get on the scoreboard, but more importantly, the players rooted for each other to get their minutes and get their points. Barr said the team cohesion was impressive.

"These girls stuck together," he said.

When asked what stood out most, the team's offense or defense, Barr didn't hesitate in saying, "Our offense." Not two seconds went by, though, before he said, "I don't know." He then

asked player Tamani Cray what she thought. For her, it was the defense.

"Defense? That defense was sharp," Barr said. "OK. It was the defense."

Barr said a lot of credit for the team's success goes to the Concerned Citizens of Bradford County basketball league at the RJE gym, which Barr and BMS assistant coaches Jimmy Hankerson and Justin Mealing coached in.

"The majority of (the players) came through RJE first, so they've been playing since they were like this," Barr said, holding his hand at knee level. "That gives them a serious foundation. It really does. By the time they come over here — whoever's coaching, all they've got to do, really, is just put it together."

Barr and his coaching staff, which also consisted of Arthur Burch, made sure the players "put it together" in the classroom. If the BMS boys took to the court first on practice days, the girls

players would sit in the cafeteria studying and doing homework.

One of Bradford's opponents was affected by grades. The Tornadoes' final win was the result of the forfeit as the team they were supposed to play had nine of its 13 players ineligible to play due to their grade-point averages.

Barr said, "I tell them all the time, 'You're a student-athlete. You're a student first.'"

Besides enjoying more than enough food, the players who attended the banquet each received a trophy with her name on it. Barr and his staff also showed off a big trophy commemorating the undefeated season that will be put in the school's display case.

Barr told the family members in attendance that this year's eighth-graders, along with last year's eighth-graders, are going to do some big things at Bradford High School.

"We're going to be losing them, but (BHS) is going to be

gaining a state championship, if they keep those girls together," Barr said.

The coach also said he believes BMS can experience ongoing success in girls basketball if members of the community lend their support. Barr said several parents and "Papaws and Memaws" helped work with the girls this season.

"I think we can get a train going," Barr said, referring to a successful program, "but it's going to take the whole community."

Members of this year team were Takayla Barnes, Jada Childs, Destinee Covington, Tamani Cray, Talaysia Cummings, Izarriya Desue, Ar'nayshia Griffin, Zharianna Guion, Kah'myra Hankerson, Jashiyah Hendrieth, Alexis Kicklighter, Jordyn Littles, Sarah Rentz, Gemma Rodriguez and managers Jessariah Hankerson, Ja'nyiah Nichols and Tran'niq Thompson.

## Tigers' Cortese, Crawford fall just shy of advancing to state

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Union County High School wrestlers Alexander Cortese and Caleb Crawford each missed qualifying for the state finals by one win at the Feb. 25-26 Region 1-1A wrestling finals at Wakulla High School.

To advance to state, a wrestler had to place in the top four in his weight class.

Cortese and Crawford were two of eight UCHS wrestlers who participated. Four besides Cortese and Crawford earned at least one win in the double-elimination tournament.

Crawford (160-pound class) won his first two matches, which put him one win away from advancing to the championship match. He pinned Marianna's Trett Phillips in 1:43 and pinned Yulee's Samuel Sahrphillips in 1:54. Crawford then lost by a

17-1 technical fall to Fernandina Beach's Enzo Gamba. That pitted him against Bishop Kenny's Collin Hearn for the right to advance to the third-place match, with Hearn pinning Crawford in 2:18.

Cortese (182) suffered a close 11-10 loss to West Nassau's Nolan McKelvy in his first match. He then recorded two straight pins, defeating Bay's Joshua Fine in 2:11 and Marianna's Marquis Patterson-Rhode in 4:14. Cortese was one win away from advancing to the third-place match, but lost 6-4 to Suwannee's Dustin Wood.

Alec French (106), Kale Waters (113), Ian Halfacre (132) and Danny Thornton (195) each went 1-2.

French pinned Rocky Bayou Christian's Wyatt Moore in 1:19 before getting pinned twice,

See REGION, page 13

## UCHS has 20-run inning in softball win over Newberry

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Union County High School's softball team scored seven runs on bases-loaded walks as part of a 20-run second inning that propelled the Tigers to a 21-0 win over visiting Newberry in 2.5 innings on Feb. 24.

The Tigers (2-0) started the bottom of the second with four straight walks and had a stretch late in the inning where they drew four bases-loaded walks. Union batters, who collectively had only six hits, walked 16 times in all.

Leah Clark also delivered two big hits in the inning: a bases-loaded double that scored all three runners and a triple that scored the Tigers' final two runs.

The second inning also saw Angela Tucker drive in two runs on a single, while Hailey Rivera and Campbell Webb each had a one-run single. Hannah Rivera also pushed a run across on a sacrifice fly.

Clark, who went 2 for 3, finished with six RBI, while

Tucker, Hailey Rivera and Hannah Rivera each had two.

Seven batters had one RBI each: Webb, Brooke Burgess, Mackenzie Clemons, Karson Middleton, Mackenzie Orton, Maggie Thomas and Tamia Young.

Pitchers Lily Neal and Shyla Crowe allowed no hits and no walks.

Union was coming off a game that was a little more dramatic, with Hailey Rivera driving in the winning run in the bottom of the seventh as the Tigers defeated visiting Fort White 2-1 in their season opener.

The game was scoreless until Fort White scored off an error in the top of the sixth.

Clark reached on a bunt single with one out in the seventh. She stole second and then scored on Young's single into left field to tie it up.

Young advanced to second on the throw and later stole third. After a Nyasia Williams walk,

See TIGERS, page 13

## Bowden gets only win for KHHS at regionals

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Jason Bowden went 1-2 for Keystone Heights High School, which had a total of three competing at the Region 1-1A wrestling finals Feb. 25-26 at

Wakulla High School.

Bowden, competing in the 126-pound weight class, started off by getting pinned in 3:22 by Suwannee's Brody Boehm, but bounced back to pin North Bay Haven's Tristan Lé in 2:45. He then suffered his second

loss in the double-elimination tournament, getting pinned in 3:39 by Fernandina Beach's Caden Kubatzke.

The Indians' Alyx Nichols (160 class) and Matthew Delano (220) each went 0-2. Nichols was pinned in 3:46 by Suwannee's

Austin Howard before losing 9-6 to Rocky Bayou Christian's Jaden Scruggs. Delano was pinned in 47 seconds by Raines' Jamari Watson and then pinned in 1:48 by Wewahitchka's James Hardy.

## BHS softball team rallies late, but loses 12-11

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Bradford High School's softball team continued to produce runs, but still lost its first game on Feb. 28, falling 12-11 to visiting Yulee.

Yulee, which had plenty of baserunners, thanks to 14 walks, scored the first six runs.

The Tornadoes (3-1) finally got on the board in the bottom of the fifth. Rylie Blankenship, who singled, scored on a steal of home. Takeirra Bakken drove in a run with a single, while Allie Funderburk drove in one on a ground out.

Bradford never held the lead, but cut the margin to one in the sixth. After Yulee scored two runs in the top of the inning, the Tornadoes pushed four across. Taylor Reddish drove in the inning's first run on a single, while Bakken hit a double that scored two. Bakken later scored on an error to make the score 8-7.

Yulee increased its lead to 12-7, scoring four runs in the top of the seventh. The Hornets loaded the bases with three straight walks and then scored one run on a ground ball and three more on two consecutive doubles.

In the bottom of the inning, the Tornadoes put two on, with Cassidy Spratlin drawing a walk and Summer Sutton hitting a single. With one out, Blankenship and McFarland hit consecutive singles to score three runs. Bakken hit a single that scored another run with two outs before the game ended on a strikeout.

Bakken went 4 for 5 with four RBI. McFarland drove in two runs, going 2 for 3, while Blankenship, who was 3 for 5, and Funderburk each finished with one RBI.

Sutton went 2 for 4. The Tornadoes were coming off an opening week in which they won three games by mercy rule. After a 17-1 win over Lake Weir (which was covered in the Feb. 24 issues of the Telegraph-Times-Monitor), Bradford got four RBI from Bakken in defeating visiting Old Plank Christian Academy 11-1 in five innings on Feb. 22.

It was a 1-1 game before the Tornadoes scored three in the bottom of the third inning as Macey Padgett, Funderburk and Spratlin each drove in a run.

A two-run homer by Bakken and an RBI double by Funderburk (her second) put Bradford up 7-1 in the fourth.

Bakken, who went 2 for 3, drove in two runs with a single

as part of a four-run fifth inning. The other two runs scored on error.

Funderburk went 2 for 2 with two RBI, while McFarland went 3 for 4.

Padgett and Spratlin each had one RBI.

Spratlin started in the circle, giving up one run on one hit and two walks in three innings.

Blankenship threw the final two innings, giving up one hit and one walk.

On Feb. 25, Bakken homered for the second straight game, while Blankenship hit three RBI singles in the Tornadoes' 16-0, four-inning win over host Ed White.

Bradford took advantage of its base running early, with Blankenship, McFarland and Padgett all scoring on steals of home as part of a four-run first inning. Funderburk scored the fourth run on a wild pitch.

It was an 8-0 game when the Tornadoes scored eight runs

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Hope Christian Academy's boys basketball team finished as Southeastern Christian Conference runner-up for the fourth straight season. During that span, the Lions have lost only 10 regular-season conference games. Pictured (l-r) are Luke Drew, John Ford, Coach Aaron Morgan, Wyatt Gauthier, Eddie Marrero, Aiden Wilson, Kody Griffis, Tavian Frazier, Jude Hanson, Simon Hanson, Trey Matthews, Marcus Cheever, Roshad Jackson and Trayven Chandler. Photo by Malena Hanson.

## HCA boys are second at SECC tourney

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Hope Christian Academy came up just short of claiming the Southeastern Christian Conference boys basketball championship trophy after a 56-54 loss to Faith Baptist Christian Academy (Ludowici, Georgia) on Feb. 19 in Waycross, Georgia.

It was the fourth straight season the Lions (26-7) have finished as the Florida-Georgia conference's runner-up.

"It's a pretty big accomplishment," Head Coach Aaron Morgan said.

The Lions' only two losses in the double-elimination SECC tournament were to Faith Baptist. Hope lost 42-38 to the team from Ludowici in the quarterfinals, but then advanced out of the losers' bracket to reach

the championship game.

After scoring to make the margin two points in the championship game, the Lions tried to commit enough fouls to put the Crusaders on the free-throw line. Hope had played a clean game without committing many fouls. Plus, the game was played under Georgia rules, which meant teams' number of fouls are reset after each period.

"Unfortunately, we had too many fouls to give away at the end of the game," Morgan said, adding, "We fouled three times in the final 15 seconds, but there wasn't enough time left."

Simon Hanson scored 20 points in the loss. He and Roshad Jackson were named to the All-Tournament team, which is voted on by coaches.

Hanson and Jackson received

All-Conference honors as well, as did Hope girls players Brooke McCloud and Lydia Morgan.

Over the last four seasons, the Hope boys basketball team has gone 69-10 in regular-season conference games and has won four SECC Western Division championships. Morgan said he believes that makes the 2021-22 class the winningest in Hope history.

Besides their strong play in conference, the Lions defeated public school Branford this season. Morgan said that was huge as Branford most likely has more total seniors than all of Hope's high-school student population.

Hanson and Kody Griffis have been constants during the last four years, with Hanson having

started since his freshman year and Griffis starting the last two seasons. They are two of four graduating senior starters along with Jackson and Trey Matthews, each of whom have been Hope students the last two years.

"Just an incredible group of athletes," Morgan said. In speaking about the success those four players have helped the Lions experience, he added, "It just shows their work and dedication to the program."

Morgan said the four senior starters will be missed, but added that the Lions bring back a talented group of young athletes. Therefore, Hope's run of success could continue.

"There's still some history to be made," Morgan said.

## CHAMPS

Continued from page 8

called on Open Bible's. Smith and two other starters fouled out, while the other two starters had four fouls on them.

Pilcher said all he could tell his players was to keep playing their best. He was at a loss as to how they could play and not get fouls called on them.

"If we breathed on them, they called a foul," Pilcher said.

The Eagles led by 10 when Smith fouled out in the third quarter. Open Bible eventually made up ground at the foul line. The Eagles had their struggles when they did get to the line, missing six straight free throws during one stretch.

As Pilcher saw it, the one good thing was when the teams had to

play that eight-minute session to determine the champion, his team was basically fresh.

"Most of my starters had plenty of rest," he said.

Pilcher said Smith, senior Sam Cowart and junior Finley Poyner were his "big three" this year.

Smith put together an incredible season. During the regular season, she averaged 20.3 points, 11.5 rebounds, 5.1 steals, 2.9 blocks and 2.4 assists per game.

Pilcher coached Smith for eight years, thanks to the Southeastern Christian Conference's decision to allow fifth-graders to play at the middle-school level. Smith's also been playing travel ball outside of the school season.

"She does a lot of work on her own to make herself better," Pilcher said, adding, "When she gets out there, she gives it her all."

Cowart proved to be the Eagles' outside threat. Pilcher said she made multiple three-pointers during each of the team's tournament games. The Eagles held a 13-9 halftime lead in one game, but got off to a quick start in the third quarter, thanks to Cowart hitting consecutive three-pointers.

"That was big for us," Pilcher said.

Cowart was the team's third-leading scorer in the regular season (prior to the SECC tournament), having scored 67 points. She had the most three-pointers on the team with 12.

Pilcher said Poyner was an impactful player at center. Her contributions didn't always show in the stats, Pilcher said, adding that if Poyner didn't grab a rebound, she at least created an opportunity for a teammate to

"She was a big presence under

(the basket) as far as affecting people's shots, getting rebounds and knocking balls around," Pilcher said.

Poyner had the second-most rebounds on the team during the regular season with 75 (behind Smith's (173)), averaging 5 per game. She was second on the team in scoring with 77 points (behind Smith's 305).

Two other players scored more than 50 points during the regular season: junior Karissa Lawrence, who had 66, and sophomore Chylee Kahakua, who had 57.

The rest of the Eagles team consisted of seniors Haley Nugent and Leah Smith, and sophomores Tatiana Coleman, Harli Mosley, Rosalea Norman, Makayla Price and Chloe Templeton.

Pilcher's wife, April, and daughter Aniston served as assistant coaches.

## KHHS' Moncrief earns 1st, 2nd at Menendez track meet

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Caleb Moncrief earned a win and a runner-up finish for the Keystone Heights High School boys track and field team at the Feb. 25 Pedro Menendez Falcon Invite.

Moncrief won the discus with a throw of 41.98 meters, while placing second in the shot put with a distance of 13.44.

Tyler Griffin ran a fifth-place time of 4:56 in the 1600m and a sixth-place time of 11:17 in the 3200m.

Shepherd Rozier placed eighth in the 400m with a time of 55.80.

Keystone also had the following results: 100m — Garrett Roberson 15.41, Tristan Dukes 15.74; 200m — Rozier 25.37, Josiah Durrenberger 27.38, Roberson 31.15, Dukes 33.67; 400m — Durrenberger 1:03; 3200m — Ayden Graff 12:50; long jump — Rozier 5.33m; shot put — Jackson Herman 9.22, Tyler Duncan 8.81; discus — Herman 20.49, Duncan 13.26; and javelin — Adam Sapp 28.0.

On Feb. 22, the Indians earned six first- and second-place finishes at a meet hosted by Palatka.

Griffin won the 800m (2:13) and the 1600m (4:57), while three individuals were runners-up: Rozier in the 400m (56.92), Jaden Park in the 1600m (5:15) and Graff in the 3200m (12:16).

The 4x400m relay team of Durrenberger, Rozier, Park and Griffin had a second-place time of 4:48, while the 4x100m team of Dakota Leach, Jason Parales, Matthew Bright and Clark Byrnes placed third with a time of 58.70.

Rozier finished third in the 400m (24.99), while Damien King was fourth in the shot put (10.37).

The following earned fifth-place finishes: Park in the 200m (25.89), Durrenberger in the 400m (1:02), Gabriel Perry in the high jump (1.42) and Bryce Miller in the long jump (5.26).

Earning sixth-place finishes were Sapp in the 1600m (5:53) and James Thomas in the high

jump (1.42). Jacob Stahman placed seventh in the 800m (2:33), while King was eighth in the discus (21.70).

Other results were: 100m — Roberson 15.38, Dukes 15.79; 200 — Durrenberger 27.76, Roberson 31.62, Dukes 33.38; long jump — Leach 4.30; shot put — Bright 6.95; and discus — Bright 16.95, Parker Pescara 12.0.

In the middle-school finals of the event, Miller won the 110m hurdles (17.73) and placed third in the 100m (13.11), while the following earned second-place finishes: Garrett Jones in the 800m (2:48), Thomas in the 1600m (5:40) and Byrnes in the 110m hurdles (21.06).

Byrnes was also third in the 800m (2:57), while Pescara was third in the 110m hurdles (28.24). Will Begue was third in the 1600m (6:11), while the following placed third, fifth and seventh in the 400m: Acaden Nilsen (1:06), Perry (1:11) and Pescara (1:36).

In the 100m, Leach was fourth (13.43), Parales fifth (14.83) and Bright sixth (15.63). Leach also earned a sixth-place finish in the 200m (28.23).

## Gagnon earns win for KHHS at Menendez track meet

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Kendall Gagnon won one event and placed in another, while Kiersten Shaw placed in two events as well for the Keystone Heights High School girls track and field team at the Feb. 25 Pedro Menendez Falcon Alumni Invite.

Gagnon took first in the javelin with a distance of 26.38 meters, while she was third in the discus with a throw of 23.88.

Shaw was runner-up in the long jump with a distance of 4.88. She placed fourth in the high jump by clearing 1.38.

The 4x400m relay team of Shaw, Brianna Hogan, Elizabeth Hogan and Ella Hutchins ran a second-place time of 4:48.

Shaylyn Williams and Emily Weiner placed sixth and seventh, respectively, in the javelin with distances of 13.83 and 13.76.

Ella Hutchins placed seventh

See TRACK, page 15

Tri-County Classifieds  
Bradford County Lake Region UNION COUNTY  
Telegraph Monitor TIMES

Classified

INDEX

40 Notice	57 For Sale
41 Vehicles Accessories	58 Building Materials
42 Motor Vehicles	59 Personal Services
43 Rv's & Campers	60 Secretarial Services
44 Boats	61 Scriptures
45 Land for Sale	62 Vacation/Travel
46 Real Estate Out of Area	63 Love Lines
47 Commercial Property Rent, Lease, Sell	64 Business Opportunity
48 Homes for Sale	65 Help Wanted
49 Mobile Homes for Sale	66 Investment Opportunity
50 For Rent	67 Hunting Land for Rent
51 Lost/Found	68 Rent to Own
52 Animals & Pets	69 Food Supplements
53 Yard Sales	70 Money to Lend
54 Keystone Yard Sales	72 Sporting Goods
55 Wanted	74 Computers & Computer Accessories
56 Trade or Swap	

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# Indians' Mitzel, Rogel to play college softball

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Keystone Heights High School senior softball players Madi Mitzel and Emma Rogel work together on the field as pitcher and catcher respectively, so it seemed fitting that the two participated in a joint scholarship-signing ceremony on Feb. 28 in the school's cafeteria.

"She's been my best friend since like sixth grade, so it's awesome sharing this with her," Rogel said of Mitzel. "We've always played together. We've always dreamed about going to (college)."

Rogel, who'll be going to the College of Central Florida in Ocala, admitted to having a mixture of emotions about getting the chance to play collegiately.

"I always dreamed about it when I was little," she said. "It's excitement, but it's almost nerve-racking, too, because I want to do well when I get there."

Mitzel, who'll be going to Daytona State College, said, "I'm just very blessed and excited to have this opportunity to play (in college)."

Keystone Head Coach Jessica Marquart said Mitzel and Rogel are among the hardest workers she's ever had on her teams at KHHS.

"I'm glad they get to do this

because it's something that they love," Marquart said.

Mitzel is coming off a junior season in which she led the team in innings pitched (98.1), ERA (2.85) and strikeouts (64). She went 7-5 and had five saves in 22 appearances.

As a sophomore during the season that was canceled after 10 games due to the pandemic, Mitzel threw 31.1 innings, going 4-2 with an ERA of 2.68. She pitched 46.2 innings as a freshman, going 3-4 with an ERA of 3.00.

Mitzel said she's been playing ball since she was 8 and has been pitching since she was 10.

"I like being a leader on the field," she said. "I like controlling the tempo of the game."

Marquart said Mitzel has been a leader whether she's on the field or not.

"She always has a great attitude," Marquart said. "Even if she gets pulled or if someone else starts over her, she's cheering in the dugout."

Mitzel said she was considering other schools, but Daytona State was the first that showed interest in her.

"I went there on a visit," Mitzel said. "I just loved it. I just knew that was the place for me."

Mitzel said she enjoyed the school's environment, including the fact campus is close to the



Emma Rogel and her family share an amusing moment with KHHS Head Coach Jessica Marquart during Rogel's signing to play at the College of Central Florida. Pictured (l-r) are Rogel's brother, Wil, parents, Chris Roach and Joni Wilford, Rogel and Marquart.

beach, but she also looks forward to the opportunity to work with Head Coach Keli Harrell, a former pitcher who played at East Carolina University.

Making the successful transition to playing at the collegiate level will include continuing the hard work she already does at KHHS, Mitzel said, adding, "I know that whenever I get there, everyone's

going to be at about the same level of talent, if not better. I just have to keep working hard and outwork my competitors."

Rogel moved up to the KHHS varsity level as an eighth-grader late in the 2018 season. The Indians advanced to the Final Four that year.

"That was a pretty cool experience for her to be able to do that," Marquart said.

Rogel has played catcher most of the time she's played ball. It's a position she took to immediately after playing elsewhere briefly as a youth.

"I used to be an infielder, but I knew it wasn't for me. They put me behind the plate. It's just like golden," Rogel said, adding, "Always in charge. I like that. I just like being a leader on the field."

Marquart said, "She's just kind of the voice of the team. She gets back there, and she's the leader. Not so much vocally, but just by being out there and wanting to do her best."

Rogel batted .377 last season, which was second on the team. She had eight RBI, drew a team-high 10 walks and stole a team-high 18 bases.

In the shortened 2020 season,

she batted .200. Before that, as a freshman, she was second on the team with a .439 batting average. She had 11 RBI and stole 13 bases.

When she was moved up to varsity in 2018, she batted .500 in eight games.

Rogel had originally committed to Division II Converse College, which is located in Spartanburg, South Carolina. What that program's coach left, though, she took advantage of an invitation to visit the College of Central Florida.

"It just clicked," she said of that visit. "I liked how competitive they were, how good they were."

As for transitioning to playing collegiately, Rogel said she needs to continue to improve offensively and improve her chances of getting on base, which has proven to be a good thing for the Indians. Marquart said, "She gets on, she scores."

Marquart said she believes both players have the potential to play at a four-year college after two years at Daytona State and Central Florida if that's what they want to do. Mitzel said, "If that's in the cards for me, then yes," adding that her ultimate goal is to get into a good nursing

program.

Rogel, who's close to getting her AA degree, said, "If I am in college longer than I think I'll be, then I'll definitely go to a four-year school. If not, then in two years, I'll be done. I'll just graduate from college and go into the real world."

The "real world" for Rogel is a career in healthcare management.

For now, the playing focus is on the current KHHS season and then playing for Daytona State and Central Florida. The players will join their respective college teams with a drive to win, but not at the expense of enjoying the game.

"You can't teach competition," Marquart said. "They both have it. They want to win, but they have fun, too, while they're doing it."

Both players admit they'll probably be nervous prior to their first games in college, but those feelings will change once play begins.

"Then I'll be so excited," Rogel said. "I know that feeling has to be amazing."

Mitzel said it'll be "super exciting because my dream's becoming a reality."



Madi Mitzel (second from right) and her mother, Jessica Strickland (second from left) enjoy a laugh as she signs her letter of intent to play at Daytona State College. Also pictured are Mitzel's stepfather, J.D. Strickland (seated, far left), father, R.J. Mitzel (seated, far right) and brother, Ty Mitzel. Photos by Cliff Smelley.

## KHHS softball team hurt by mistakes in 5-3 loss to Raiders

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Host Santa Fe took advantage of miscues to hand the Keystone Heights High School softball team a 5-3 loss on Feb. 25.

The Indians (1-2) scored first when Emma Rogel led off the top of the first by reaching on an error. She stole second and third on passed balls before scoring on Kinley Carlton's sacrifice fly.

Santa Fe answered with four runs in the bottom of the inning — all scored as a result of two errors and two passed balls.

Keystone made it a one-run game when Rogel hit a two-run single in the second.

Rogel finished 3 for 4, while Abbie Roach was 2 for 3.

Starting pitcher Caitlin Frampton gave up two hits and two walks through four innings.

Madi Mitzel allowed no hits and one walk in the final two innings.

The Indians opened the season with a 7-3 loss at Baldwin on

Feb. 22.

Keystone trailed 7-0 before scoring all of its runs in the fifth inning. Roach drove in the first run on a sacrifice fly, while Kiley Channell drove in the second on a double. Channell later scored on a wild pitch.

Channell went 2 for 4 with two doubles.

Carlton and Frampton each hit a double as well.

Prior to playing Santa Fe, the Indians defeated visiting Baker County 4-3 on Feb. 24.

It was a 1-1 game until Keystone scored three in the third. Rogel drove in a run on a double, while Channell pushed

one across with a single. An error on a ground ball hit by Ashley Nugent scored what would be the deciding run.

The Indians had only four hits, with Rogel going 2 for 3.

Mitzel pitched a complete game, giving up nine hits and one walk. She struck out four.

Keystone played Nease and Toco Creek this past Tuesday and Wednesday and will host Eustis on Friday, March 4, at 7:30 p.m.

On Monday, March 7, the Indians host Fleming Island at 6 p.m. They then travel to play P.K. Yonge on Tuesday, March 8, at 6 p.m.

## REGION

Continued from page 11

losing to Suwannee's Tophar Pearson in 1:36 and Bay's David Drake in 1:31.

Waters was pinned in 1:48 by Wakulla's Conner Brown before bouncing back to pin Wewahitchka's Tyler Johnson in 41 seconds. He was then pinned in 3:49 by Bishop Kenny's Jacob Harless.

Halfacre, after getting pinned in 1:23 by Paxon's David Kang, pinned Marianna's Josh Mercer in 4:28. He was then pinned in 2:27 by Wakulla's Isaiah Wilson.

Thornton lost his first match, getting pinned in 2:25 by South Walton's Elijah Ramirez. He bounced back, pinning Florida High's Diego Duprey in 2:50 before losing 5-4 to Yulee's

Christopher Aud.

Union's Rodney Barnett (138) and Ethan Shea (145) also competed. Barnett was pinned in 1:47 by Rutherford's Romero Black and then pinned in 4:02 by

Episcopal's Christian Ryan. Shea was pinned in 3:02 by South Walton's Dylan Billingsley before getting pinned in 3:35 by Fernandina Beach's Cole Misciagna.

### IMPORTANT TAX FILING INFORMATION

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## TIGERS

Continued from page 11

Rivera hit a ball into left field that scored Young.

Rivera finished the game 2 for 3.

Neal started in the circle, giving up no runs in 3.1 innings on one hit and three walks.

Megan Sullivan gave up two hits and one walk in the final 3.2 innings.

The Tigers played Buchholz this past Tuesday and will travel to play Bell on Thursday, March 3, at 7 p.m. Union hosts Trenton on Friday, March 4, at 6:30 p.m. before traveling to play Santa Fe on Tuesday, March 8, at 7 p.m.

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# Take me out to the ball game

Bradford County Sports Inc. held its baseball and softball opening ceremony on Feb. 26  
LEFT: Cash Clemons of the Outlaws caught the ceremonial first pitches. Photos by Cliff Smelley.



Tornadoes Addilyn Wise, Tailyn McKinley and Karley Lemire walk onto the field as their Tornadoes team is introduced.



ABOVE: Chance Reed is eager to play ball as he's followed onto the field by Rage teammate Colton Thomas. LEFT: Taking to the field for the opening ceremony are Red Hots (front to back) Autumn Dekorver, Ella Hense and Regan Adams.



WHO'S EXCITED ABOUT OPENING DAY? Klayton Knipp (left) of the Braves and Gage Fischer of the Dirt Devils are, judging by their smiles.

LEFT: Cash Collins of the Diamondbacks throws out the first pitch for baseball. RIGHT: Rylee McCarthy of the Diamond Divas throws out the first pitch for softball.



Eagles pitcher Charles Morgan looks to retire an opposing batter.



Kaleb Dyal prepares to field a ground ball for the Braves.



Journey Reed (right) is in the process of recording an out at third base.



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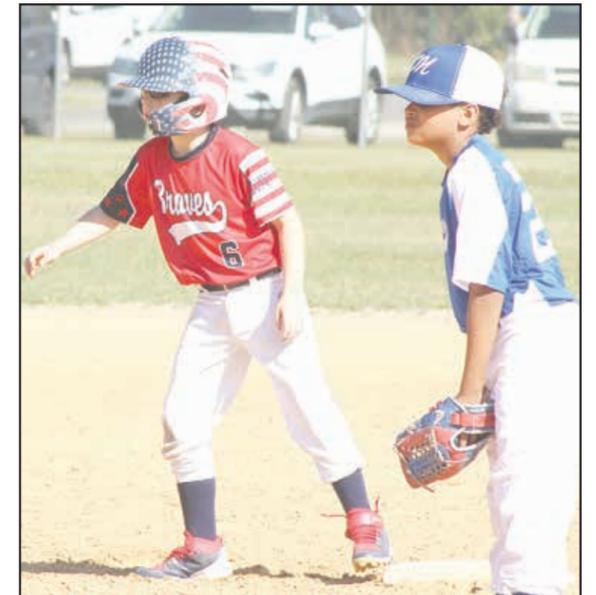
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Outlaws player Carter Reddish corrals a fly ball during warmups.



The Braves' Bryson Griffis (left) takes a lead at second.

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ABOVE: Harmony Reed watches a pitch come in during an early game at-bat for the Krusherz. RIGHT: Krusherz player Addison Griffis stands on third, awaiting an opportunity to go home.



## 9-run inning helps UCHS baseball team record 14-5 win

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Union County High School's baseball team got four run-scoring doubles as part of a nine-run fifth inning as the Tigers broke a 5-5 tie and defeated visiting Baldwin 14-5 on Feb. 23.

The Tigers (1-1) led 5-2 before Baldwin scored three runs in the top of the fifth on two doubles and two singles.

Quinten Rawls led off Union's half of the fifth with a single and then scored on Tre'von Lee's double. Jay Cohen, who hit a two-run homer in the first, was intentionally walked. Ayden Elixson then hit an RBI double to make the score 7-5.

Two outs later, Trevor Holtzendorf drew a walk to load the bases. Luke Johns then walked to force a run in. Jeff Cook was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded to force in another run before Rawls drove in two runs on a double. Two more runs scored when Lee reached on a dropped third strike. The Tigers then scored their final run when Elixson hit his second RBI double.

Rawls went 3 for 4 with three RBI, while Elixson went 2 for 3 with two RBI.

Cohen and Lee each finished with two RBI, while Cook, Johns and Eli Rimes each had one.

Lee, who got the start on the mound, gave up two runs in 3.2

innings on four hits and two walks. He had five strikeouts.

Rawls and Blake Agner combined to give up no runs in the final two innings, with Agner, striking out three of the four batters he faced in the seventh.

The Tigers entered the game off a season-opening 8-6 loss to visiting Dixie County on Feb. 22.

Dixie took a 5-3 lead, scoring all five runs in the fourth and fifth innings. Union tied it in the bottom of the fifth when Holtzendorf hit a two-run, two-out double.

In the bottom of the sixth, Jake Walker hit a leadoff single and scored on a Cohen double to put the Tigers ahead 6-5.

The Bears loaded the bases on an error and two singles with one out in the top of the seventh. Another single pushed a run across to tie the score, while an error allowed another run to score. One Dixie runner was thrown out at home trying to score, but another runner did score on a passed ball to make it an 8-6 game.

Union had the bases loaded with two outs in the bottom of the seventh. Agner and Walker each drew a walk, while Rawls was hit by a pitch.

Dixie ended the game with a strikeout.

Cohen went 2 for 3 with two RBI, while Jake O'Steen was 2 for 2 with a triple and two RBI.

Johns started on the mound, giving up two runs on three hits and one walk through four innings. He had four strikeouts.

The Tigers played Baker County this past Tuesday and will travel to play Fort White on Thursday, March 3, at 6 p.m. Union hosts Valdosta on

Saturday, March 5, at 1 p.m. before playing two straight road games: at Columbia on Monday, March 7, at 7 p.m. and at Oakleaf on Tuesday, March 8, at 6:30 p.m.

## Indians fall to 0-2 after loss to Santa Fe

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Hits were hard to come by, but host Santa Fe was able to score runs on two passed balls and an error in defeating the Keystone Heights High School baseball team 3-1 on Feb. 25.

Each team had only two hits, but the Raiders took a 2-0 lead in the second. After putting runners on with a walk and a single, Santa Fe scored on a passed ball and an error.

The Raiders took advantage of a walk and a passed ball to score again in the sixth.

Keystone (0-2) scored its lone run in the seventh. Noah Branch reached on an error and scored on a ground ball hit by Chase Packham.

Pitchers Gage Smith and Benjamin Goforth combined to give up two hits.

The Indians entered the game off a 6-2 season-opening loss at Clay on Feb. 22.

Keystone, which had only two hits, scored the first two runs. Alex Addington drew a bases-loaded walk in the second, while Jeremy Miller hit a single and scored on an error in the third.

In the bottom of the third, Clay scored five runs, taking advantage of two doubles, two

singles, a hit batter and an error.

The Indians played Middleburg this past Tuesday and will host Bradford on Thursday, March 3, at 7 p.m. Keystone then hosts Fort White on Tuesday, March 8, at 6 p.m. before traveling to play Bishop Snyder on Wednesday, March 9, at 6 p.m.

## BHS falls to 0-3 after 3-run loss

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Bradford High School's baseball team managed to score five runs off just two hits, but it wasn't enough in an 8-5 loss to visiting Orange Park on Feb. 25.

Orange Park scored four runs in the third inning, taking advantage of three errors, a hit batter and two walks. The Raiders increased their lead to 7-0 with a two-run fifth inning, which began with back-to-back doubles.

The Tornadoes (0-3) scored all of their runs in the bottom of the seventh. With two outs, Kacen Thomassen, Mattox Burgin and Jonathan Brugh walked to load the bases. Kevin Crawford drew a walk to force a run in, while another two scored on Carson Knight's single to left field. Bradford scored its final two runs on an error.

Besides driving in two runs, Knight also pitched the final two innings, giving up one run on no

hits and one walk. He had four strikeouts.

Bradford entered the game off a 14-0 loss to visiting Baker County on Feb. 22.

The Tornadoes had only two baserunners: Burgin and Trente Jenkins, who each walked. Baker pitchers Brady Chauncey and Eugene Houston combined to throw a no-hitter.

Baker scored 11 runs in the fifth inning, which saw Bradford pitchers give up nine walks — six with the bases loaded.

The Tornadoes traveled to play Keystone Heights on Thursday, March 3, at 7 p.m. Bradford travels to play P.K. Yonge on Friday, March 4, at 7 p.m. before traveling to play Branford on Tuesday, March 8, at 7 p.m.

## Celebrating Super Seniors and their accomplishments and entry into college, trade school, military, work force.



Super KHHS Senior Bryce Couey is graduating from Keystone Heights High School with a 4.63 GPA.

He has been accepted into USF, UF, UCF, & FSU. He has decided to attend Florida State University this fall.

We look forward to celebrating Tri-County area seniors and their accomplishments as they move into college/trade school, sports, the military, or new endeavors in the workforce.

Call John Ryan Tillman at 904-964-6305 or email him at johnryan@bctelegraph.com if you would like to celebrate your Super Senior or group of seniors.

Bryce is pictured with proud dad Kevin, right.

## TRACK

Continued from page 12

in the 400m (1:10), while Kinslee Burnaw placed eighth in the discus (17.66).

KHHS also had the following results: 100m — Brianna Hogan 15.59, Shantiriya Golden 15.66, Rebecca Lasca 17.25; 200m — Candace Jackson 32.24, Brianna Hogan 32.42, Elizabeth Hogan 33.32, Golden 34.98, Lasca 36.75; 800m — Dallas Decrosta 2:59, Taylor Goodin 3:30; 4x400 — Goodin, Jackson, Williams, Decrosta 5:35; shot put — Burnaw 5.41; and discus — Williams 14.93, Weiner 12.26.

On Feb. 22, Shaw won two events, while Gagnon won one at a meet hosted by Palatka.

Shaw took first in the high jump (1.47) and long jump (4.74), while also placing second in the 100m hurdles (19.17).

Gagon placed first in the javelin (22.57) as well as taking

second in the discus (23.70).

Decrosta won an event as well, running the 1600m in 6:26.

Weiner placed second in the javelin (17.82), while Alyssa Sanford was second in the high jump (1.42). The Indians also earned second in the 4x400m relay, with Parker Collins, Brook Graudons, Kherrington Norman and Madeline Sweezy teaming up to run a time of 5:30.

Alexis Taylor was third in the high jump (1.37), while Keystone had the following fourth-place finishes: Hutchins in the 400m (1:11), Teilah Hall in the shot put (6.90) and Kaylee Park, Jackson, Sanford and Brianna Hogan in the 4x100m (58.22).

Brianna Hogan and Jackson placed seventh and eighth, respectively, in the 100m with times of 14.95 and 15.03, while Hutchins and Hogan were seventh and eighth, respectively, in the 200m with times of 30.16 and 31.43.

In the shot put, Makenzi

Brinson was seventh (5.69), while Burnaw was eighth (4.91).

Hall placed eighth in the discus (17.10).

Other results were: 100m — Golden 16.0, Elizabeth Hogan 16.35; 200m — Jackson 32.11, Elizabeth Hogan 33.31, Weiner 35.05; long jump — Graudons 3.20, Madison Brinson 2.94; and discus — Burnaw 16.30, Makenzi Brinson 15.60, Weiner 12.10.

In the event's middle-school finals, Olivia Griffin won the 800m (2:56) and the 1600m (6:25). Norman won the 400m (1:15) and placed second in the 200m (34.13), while the following earned second-place finishes: Collins in the 400m (1:16), Taylor in the 800m (3:05) and Park in the 100m hurdles (20.31).

Sanford and Cali Chamberlain placed third and fifth, respectively, with times of 14.74 and 17.08, while Sweezy was third in the 800m (3:27).



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Available from the following locations starting February 7, 2022 until Monday March 7, 2022.

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Community State Bank, Lake Butler  
North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Starke  
City of Lawtey, City Hall

**The Fair Ticket Office** (in Building 1):  
All ticket types will be available.

Saturday, March 5, 2022: 10:00 am to 3:00 pm  
Monday, March 7, 2022: 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm  
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<p><b>WEDNESDAY   MARCH 9</b> Unlimited Ride Armbands: \$18</p>	<p><b>SATURDAY   MARCH 12</b> Unlimited Ride Armbands: \$25 2 PM to Closing</p>
<p><b>THURSDAY   MARCH 10</b> <b>BUDDY NIGHT!</b> Unlimited Ride Armbands: \$18 for One, \$25 for Two Both parties must be present to purchase Buddy Armbands. Advance armband coupons can be redeemed for only ONE armband, not Buddy Armbands.</p>	<p><b>SUNDAY   MARCH 13</b> <b>FAMILY FUN DAY</b> \$5 Admission (non-riders &amp; under 3 free, unless child is riding, then child &amp; accompanying adult need to purchase ticket/armband as some 2 &amp; 3 yr-olds are tall enough to ride.) Unlimited Ride Armbands: \$15 1 pm to Closing Sunday prices and closing hours are determined by Deggeller Attractions, NOT the Bradford Agricultural Fair.</p>

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# Traylor overcomes injuries, makes mark in weightlifting

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

The medal around her neck represented the fact that she proved herself to be one of the strongest lifters in the state, whereas the scars on her legs signified that her greatest strength occurred when she was a 10-year-old facing significant injuries and a grueling rehabilitation just to be able to walk again.

Bradford High School senior Jessica Traylor helped the Tornados win the Class 1A state championship in girls weightlifting — more than seven years after she was fortunate to survive the Sept. 29, 2014, incident in which a tractor-trailer rear-ended a school bus in Lawtey. She lost three units of blood and had to be freed from the wreckage by the Jaws of Life.

She certainly wouldn't have known it then, when the only thing on her mind was if she was going to survive, but the accident proved to be what ultimately led to her interest in weightlifting.

More importantly, though, Traylor learned to not take life or the people in it for granted.

"I'm thankful for the accident in a way," she said. "It really does make me look at life completely different. I appreciate things more and the people I do have in my life."

Traylor was one of seven students injured during the crash and one of 15 students on the bus overall. She remembers she was sitting in the back of the bus, laughing as she said, "That's where all the cool kids sat. When you're older, you sit in the back of the bus. The younger kids sit in the front."

When the tractor-trailer slammed into the back of the bus, the result felt like being on a roller coaster, Traylor said. She admitted to being calm in the immediate aftermath, wondering if everyone was OK. It was when her hands came back covered in blood when she reached down to feel her legs that she began to worry. Traylor, in fact, asked the bus driver to do something for her.

"I told her to tell my mom that I loved her because I thought those would be the last words I would say," Traylor said.

Traylor would've rather had her mother, Victoria Oakley, by her side, of course.

"I just wanted to hear her voice," she said. "I wanted to talk to her because I really thought I was going to die."

Due to her entrapment, Traylor was the last student off the bus.

"I sat there for what felt like forever," she said.

It wasn't until she was lifted



Bradford High School senior Jessica Traylor competes in the clean and jerk at the Class 1A state finals. File photo by Cliff Smelley.

to be placed upon a stretcher that she became aware of the pain. She suffered a compound fracture of her right leg and had deep lacerations that exposed bone on her left leg.

Those who were attending to her told her to keep talking to them. Her blood loss was a concern.

"I felt extremely tired," Traylor said. "I couldn't keep my eyes open. It was probably because I lost so much blood."

What followed was a month's stay in the hospital, which consisted of 10 surgeries. Doctors were concerned about Traylor possibly developing an infection in her right leg, which would require amputation. That never occurred, although she did experience a staph infection in her left leg.

Traylor wasn't aware of much during the early part of her hospital stay. She was in ICU for approximately a week.

"I didn't really know what was going on because they had me on drugs," she said. "I was basically out of it."

Getting to the point where she could walk again was one of the most difficult things she's ever done in her life, Traylor said. The physical therapy was tough, but so, too, was missing out on going to school.

"I was being home schooled," Traylor said. "That's the hardest thing I've ever done."

## Lifting weights

At that point in her life, Traylor never would've imagined that she'd become a competitor in weightlifting, but she began moving in that direction during her physical therapy at UF Health Rehab Center-Magnolia Parke. When her knees began giving out on her, her therapist — Josh — suggested lifting weights to strengthen her knees as well as her overall body.

"He built the base of everything," Traylor said of her therapist.

A woman who worked at the rehab center worked out at The Ark Fitness in Gainesville. She told Ark Founder Michael Espinosa about Traylor. Espinosa allowed Traylor to work out there for free following her stint in rehab.

It was Espinosa who got Traylor involved in weightlifting competitions. In 2018, she placed second in a competition in Orlando and competed in the USA Weightlifting Youth National Championships in Michigan.

As she made gains and watched the totals she was lifting increase, she became hooked.

"It was like, OK, this is something I want to do," Traylor said.

Traylor, who competed in the unlimited class, began lifting alongside the members of the BHS team while still in eighth grade. As a freshman, she placed

sixth at the district level with a 250-pound total (120 bench press, 130 clean and jerk) and went on to finish with a 275 total (140, 135) at the regional level.

In her sophomore season, Traylor placed fifth at the district level with a 295 total (150, 145). She was 5 pounds away from a sixth-place finish at the regional level, with a 310 total (155, 155).

She placed at regionals as a junior and earned her first trip to the state finals. First, Traylor placed second at the district level with a 345 total (175, 170). She then placed third at the regional level with a 350 total (180, 170) before going on to place fifth at state with a 360 total (180, 180).

Traylor said Coach Adrian "Ping" Mosley deserves a lot of credit for what she accomplished.

"I don't have a dad in my life," she said. "He was my father figure. He guided me and pushed me the hardest I had ever been pushed at that time."

She continued to be pushed her senior season when Bryan Griffis took over as BHS head coach. Traylor placed second at the district, regional and state levels, finishing behind teammate Mahailya Reeves at each event. She had a 405 total (220, 185) at the district finals and a 395 total (210, 185) at the regional finals, where a shoulder injury prevented her from attempting all of her lifts.

At state, Traylor won a perfect 6 of 6 (three attempts each in the bench press and clean and jerk), finishing with a 415 total (220, 195), which put her in second place by 30 pounds.

"In my mind, I wasn't there to max out," Traylor said. "I was there to get all my lifts. That was my goal, to go out perfect all the way across. That's what happened."

## Moving forward

Though she wrapped up her senior season at state on Feb. 12, Traylor doesn't want to leave weightlifting behind her. She'd love to remain involved with the sport by being a coach.

However, her main focus on her future is to continue going to school and become a registered nurse. She wants to work in pediatrics, a desire that stems from what she went through as a result of that 2014 crash. She believes that'll help her put children at ease, no matter what they're going through medically.

"I went through a lot of stuff," Traylor said. "Just to be able to be there and comfort (children) is something that I definitely want to be able to do."

Traylor obviously didn't go through "a lot of stuff" alone. She said she can never give enough thanks to her mother — not only for her support in the aftermath of the crash, but for what she did for Traylor and her older sister, Christina, as a single parent.

"She's always worked two times harder than other parents to make sure my sister and I had what we needed to be successful," Traylor said. "I'll always gratefully appreciate her."

If someone notices the scars on Traylor's legs and asks her about them, she's willing to share her story. She believes it's an inspiration to not give up.

"If you have that mindset, it will take you miles," Traylor said.

In her case, that mindset eventually took her to the second-place platform at state and played a part in the BHS girls weightlifting team winning its first state championship.

It was a moment that proved Traylor's strength in more ways than one.



Jessica Traylor suffered significant injuries to both her legs on Sept. 29, 2014, when a tractor-trailer slammed into the back of the school bus she was riding on. Photo provided courtesy of Traylor.



A view of the school bus in the aftermath of the crash. Traylor was seated in the back.