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Lake Butler votes April 4

BY TRACY LEE TATE
Times Staff Writer

LAKE BUTLER — Voters need to remember that the city election to fill the vacant Seat 2 on the Lake Butler City Commission will be held Tuesday, April 4, at the Hal Y. Maines Lake Butler Community Center from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m.

Two candidates are running for the seat — Rondoll Huggins and Joe Stephenson.

Voters must be registered voters in Union County and should bring a current photo ID with them to the voting site.

The canvassing board for the election and the swearing in of the winner will take place in the Lake Butler City Hall Commission Meeting Room on April 5, at 2 p.m.

As the Union County Supervisor of Elections Office will be conducting the election, any questions may be directed to that office, either by dropping by its location at 175 W. Main St. in Lake Butler, or by calling the office at 386-496-2236.

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WORTH NOTING

Touch a Truck enrollment event at Brooker Community School

Brooker Community School, a charter school that is a free school choice for children K-5th grade residing in Bradford or neighboring communities, will be hosting a Touch a Truck enrollment event on Saturday, April 1, from 3 to 7 p.m. This is a free event that will have farm equipment, first responder vehicles, fire trucks, sports vehicles and more along with food trucks for the evening meal.

The location is 18551 Charlotte Ave. in Brooker.

Yard sale at Legion post

American Legion Post 56 will host a public yard sale on Saturday, April 1, at the post home, 715 Edwards Road in Starke, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Booth rentals are \$15, and all proceeds benefit veterans in Bradford County.

Easter Eggstravaganza

Melrose is holding an Easter Eggstravaganza Saturday, April 1, from noon to 2 p.m. There will be an egg hunt, a free Easter basket raffle, egg relay races, three-legged races, face painting, arts and crafts, and free strawberry ice cream.

Mossman Hall is located at 301 S.R. 26.

Local lawmakers split on school choice bill

Bradley, Payne support measure, Brannan does not vote

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE— Sen. Jennifer Bradley and Rep. Bobby Payne both voted for a new law signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis that makes the state's school voucher program available to all Florida students.

Payne represents all of Putnam County and parts of Marion, St. Johns and Clay counties, including the Keystone Heights area.

Bradley represents Clay, Bradford, Union, Baker, Columbia, and Gilchrist Counties, in addition to northern Alachua County.

Rep. Chuck Brannan of MacClenny,

who represents Bradford and Union counties in the state's lower chamber, in addition to Baker, Columbia, and part of Alachua, did not vote on the bill.

DeSantis signed the legislation into law Monday.

"Florida is number one when it comes to education freedom and education choice, and today's bill signing represents the largest expansion of education choice in the history of these United States," said the governor. "When you combine private scholarships, charter schools, and district choice programs, Florida already has 1.3 million students attending a school of their choosing."

The Sunshine State joins Arkansas, Arizona, Iowa, Utah, and West Virginia in offering school vouchers to all students.

Supporters of the bill said the

measure would increase competition in education.

"Universal school choice means that every school has a chance to compete for students, and their parents can decide the best fit," Senate President Kathleen Passidomo, R-Naples, said in a statement.

Price tag disagreements

The bill will allow any student in the state to spend up to \$8,000 a year at the school of their family's choice.

Currently, 177,000 students receive state aid at a cost of \$1.3 billion a year to attend private schools. However, those students qualified for the assistance because of their families' low-income status.

The state forecasts that an additional 80,000 students will take advantage

of the program's expansion, raising the cost of school vouchers by \$646 million to a total of nearly \$2 billion.

The nonprofit Florida Policy Institute estimates a much higher price tag, claiming that if all students currently enrolled in private schools take advantage of the program's expansion, the cost would be an additional \$1.9 billion, tripling the state's forecast.

Democrats have also pointed to Arizona Gov. Katy Hobbs's statement that she wants to repeal that state's universal voucher system, citing unexpected higher costs. Originally estimated at \$33 million annually, those estimates have grown by a factor of 10.

The sponsor of the House's version of the bill, Kaylee Tuck, R-Lake

See **CHOICE**, page 6

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Spring Festival at Victory

Victory Baptist Church in Hampton invites you to a Spring Festival on Sunday, April 2, at 3 p.m. There will be free food, crafts, games for kids, a cakewalk and an egg hunt. Everyone is welcome!

Easter Eggcitement

Believer's Worship Center will hold a Glow in the Dark Easter Eggcitement event on Friday, April 7, at 7:30 p.m. There will be free candy, music and door prizes. The church is located at 8736 S.R. 21 in Melrose.

Melrose Art Walk

Mossman Hall will feature in-house artists Sade Law and MaryAnn Clawson during the First Friday Art Walk and Food Truck Rally in Melrose on Friday, April 7. Food service begins at 5 p.m. and the Art Walk begins at 6 p.m.

Sunrise service in Brooker

Brooker Baptist Church will hold a Community Easter Sunrise Service at Belle Oaks Barn on Sunday, April 9, at 7:30 a.m. A hot breakfast will be served, and there will be an Easter egg

hunt for kids in fifth grade and younger.

The venue is located at 11800 SW 157th Lane in Brooker.

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Redistricting moves toward adoption

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — During a workshop on redistricting Monday, county commissioners and school board members agreed on a map that — with a few tweaks — should soon be ready for adoption.

The map narrows the deviation in voting population among the districts while maintaining District 1 as a majority minority district.

The map was prepared by the ACLU based on an original map submitted by law student Colson Douglas. Douglas has been active for more than a year, encouraging leaders to take up the constitutional duty to redistrict so that people can be more fairly represented. He's made presentations to the commission and school board, and spent time work with leaders on map proposals.

To ensure a majority minority district in this version, District 1 will wrap around District 3, taking in voters to the west and south of Starke.

Responding to concerns from

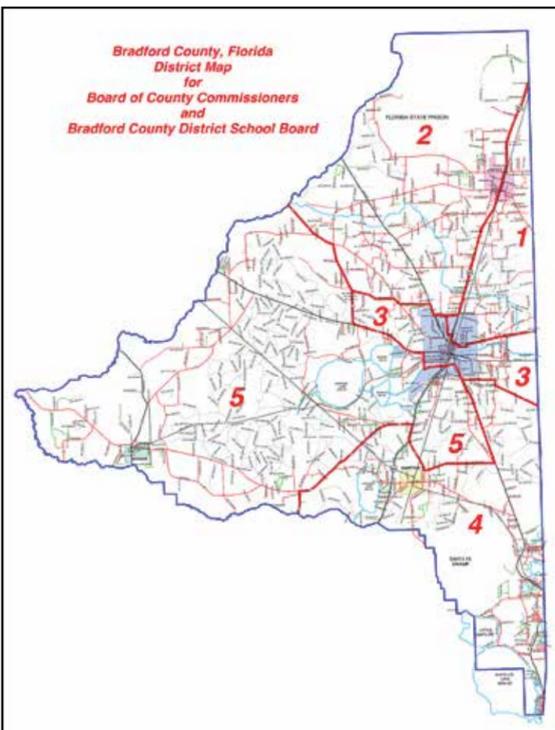
District 4 and 5 representatives about the impact to the Hampton and Hampton Lake area, shifts are planned to avoid splitting those communities.

Nick Ward from the ACLU said its submission cleaned up some of the lines on a previous version and utilized the boards' discretion to split census blocks and use other boundaries to keep communities together.

Census blocks use visible features such as roads, railroads and water bodies to divide the voting population. It is a combination of census blocks that make up a voting district. Sticking to those blocks alone, however, made it difficult to preserve the larger minority population in District 1 and keep the district reasonably compact.

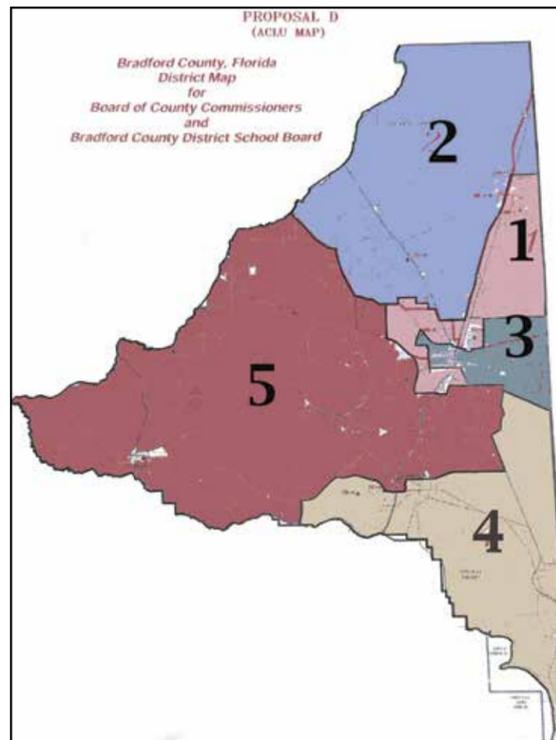
Ward said the ACLU map splits just six census blocks using property lines. Voter addresses were used to estimate how much of the voting population lives on either side of the line.

On the fly, and with assistance from Matt Barksdale from the elections office, Ward was able to make some changes that



The current district map for the county commission and school board. At right, is a proposed version that — with a few tweaks — could replace it.

See DISTRICT, page 6



Board offers help with flood maps

The Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District will meet at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4, at the Bradford County Extension Office.

Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District can provide information including property maps about the new Flood Risk Assessment Maps being developed by the Suwannee River Water Management District. Bradford County residents

have until April 30 to point out any issues with the flood areas shown on the maps for their property.

These meetings are open to the public. Contact Paul Still

at 904-368-0291 or email stillpe@aol.com for more information.

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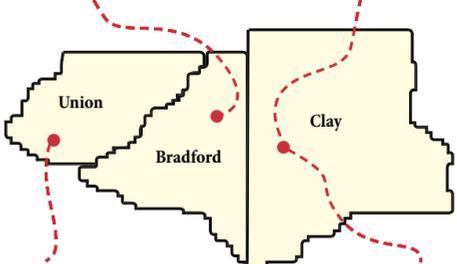
Sandra Kamhoot, FNP-C



Jessica Cummings-Nigh, APRN, FNP-BC

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Gloria Niquette, APRN



**Janna Caines, APRN
Mondays in Starke**



**Alicia Greendeer Dollison
APRN-FNP-C**



**Justin Harrington
APRN-FNP-wC**

Lake Region

Clay County breaks ground on sports complex

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS — Clay County Commissioners broke ground Tuesday morning on the county's \$6 million Phase 1 of a regional sports park.

The facility is one mile north of Camp Blanding on State Road 21.

County Commission Chair and Crystal Lake resident Betsy Condon said the facility will be the first of its kind in northeast Florida.

"With eight multipurpose sports fields, it will be a high-demand sports destination and an incredible asset to our community that will bring families and young people outdoors and onto the field," she said. "It's truly a great investment for Clay County residents and visitors."

Sports tourism is big business

Condon added that the park would allow the county to compete in the growing sports tourism industry, which she said is big business in northeast Florida and throughout the state.

"Amateur and leisure sports have contributed more than \$113 billion to Florida's economy and generated more than \$10 billion in state and local taxes in fiscal

years 2020 and 2021," she said. "Clay County tourism generated more than \$23 million in state and local taxes in 2021 and saved our residents nearly \$300 annually in their property taxes."

Condon said that in addition to the 250 acres the fully built-out park will occupy, an additional 800 acres of forest is owned by the North Florida Land Trust adjacent to the park's south side, running almost to State Road 16.

"This is just so exciting because it's over a thousand acres of conservation in Clay County, one of the fastest growing places in the state."

Condon added that the land trust has agreed to let the county build hiking trails on the trust's 800 acres.

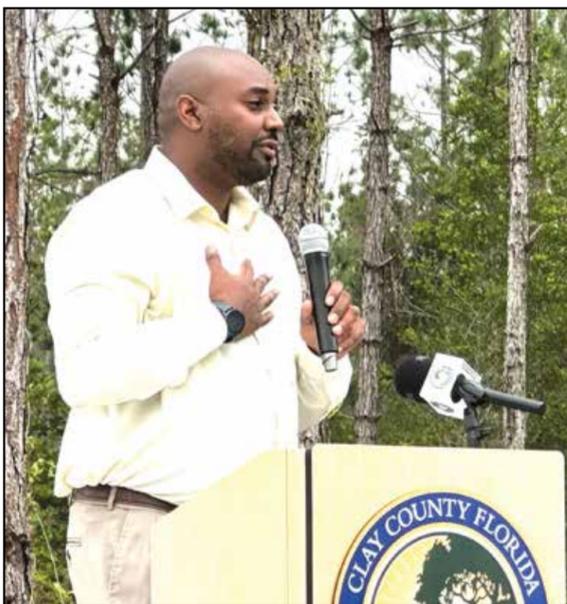
Completed in November

Justin Pierce, the county's parks and recreation director, said Phase 1 of the project would include eight multipurpose fields, a restroom facility, shade structures, ponds, a driveway, 350-plus parking spaces and a three-quarters of a mile walking trail.

"And at a later date," Pierce added, "you will see a nice monument sign as you come into the park. We've overcome early design issues to modify



Officials break ground on Clay County's regional sports complex. (L-R) County Manager Howard Wanamaker, Project Manager Jeb McClellan, Tourist Development Council member Debbie Beals, Parks and Recreation Director Justin Pierce, County Commissioners Jim Renninger, Mike Cella, Betsy Condon and Alexandra Compere, St. Johns River Water Management District Chair and former State Senator Rob Bradley, Tourist Development Council members Neal Porter and Kim Evans and Carlton Construction Founder and President Matt Carlton. Photo: Dan Hildebran, Telegraph Staff Writer.



Justin Pierce, the county's parks and recreation director, said Phase 1 of the project will include eight multipurpose fields, a restroom facility, shade structures, ponds, a driveway, 350-plus parking spaces and a three-quarters of a mile walking trail.



County Manager Howard Wanamaker said the park will be a game-changing facility for both the county and region.

the accommodations of the site conditions, maximize the use of the dirt on site and minimize impact with wetlands."

Pierce said Phase 1 will be completed in November, and the park will be available for use in early 2024.

Game changer

County Manager Howard Wanamaker thanked former Sen. Rob Bradley and former State Representative Travis Cummings for securing the \$3 million state matching grant that funded one-half of Phase 1.

Wanamaker noted that the grant escaped Gov. Ron DeSantis's line-item veto after Bradley and Cummings got the project into the state's budget.

"This (project) is on (the governor's) radar," the county manager said, "so we look forward to when we have the ribbon cutting and inviting him here."

Wanamaker added that the park is a game-changing facility for both the county and region.



County Commission Chair and Crystal Lake resident Betsy Condon said the facility would be the first of its kind in northeast Florida.

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His great agony was my gain,
My safety was His pain.
For God so loved the world that He sent His Son to die for you and me.*

by Henry Hodges
Lawtey, FL

Peetsville Cemetery cleanup

A community cleanup of Peetsville Memorial Cemetery is planned on Saturday, April 1, from 9 to 11 a.m. All are welcome to participate. Put on your work clothes and bring a weed eater or whatever lawn equipment you have to work with. Bring bags, bring gloves, but most of all bring a heart to work.

The cemetery is located in Lawtey at 21180 NE C.R. 200B.

April sobriety checkpoints announced

During the month of April, the Bradford County Sheriff's Office will be conducting sobriety checkpoints in one or more of the following locations: U.S. Highway 301 and Market Road, S.R. 100 West, S.R. 100 East and Southeast 109th Street, Southeast S.R. 21, S.R. 16 and Southwest S.R. 231.

Clay Electric holds 85th annual meeting

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

My Clay Electric and capital credits

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS — Clay Electric Cooperative held its 85th annual meeting at the Keystone Heights High School football stadium Saturday morning.

Trustee President Carl Malphers paid tribute to former trustee Carl Hagglund who died last October. “He served the cooperative as an employee for 49 years from 1958 to 2007 and driven by his commitment and love for Clay Electric, he returned as a board member in 2013,” Malphers said. “Carl’s legacy at the co-op will always be remembered.”

Malphers also announced the results of the co-op’s trustee elections, in which he said over 13,000 members voted by mail or the internet.

First-time candidate Cindy Loose of Keystone Heights was elected to the District 1 seat. Incumbent Kelley Smith of Palatka retained the District 2 seat. Malphers of Alachua held onto the District 4 seat and co-op retiree and current District 6 trustee Jimmy Wilson was also reelected.

Malphers highlighted upgrades to the co-op’s mobile app and online internet portal: My Clay Electric.

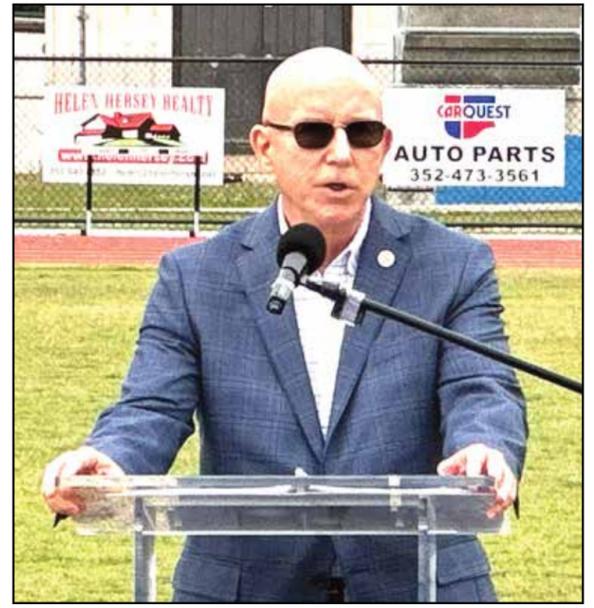
“Last summer, we began sending proactive outage communication messages to all of our members who are registered with the My Clay Electric app,” Malphers said. “This means anytime there is a system outage, registered members will receive an email or text message notifying them that we know their power is out.”

Malphers added that the notification includes an estimated time for when the power will be restored.

The trustee board president also pointed out other features of the My Clay Electric mobile app, including members looking up their power usage, viewing bill statements, paying bills and voting for trustees.

Malphers also reminded the crowd of another benefit of co-op membership: capital credit refunds.

“If you look on your bill statement this month, you will see a credit based on the amount you were billed for electricity



during a certain set of years,” he said. “Your board of trustees approved a \$12 million capital credit return for this year. This refund is available to members because Clay Electric is a not-for-profit organization.”

New meeting format and power cost adjustments

The utility’s CEO and General Manager Ricky Davis began his

report by noting that the annual meeting was being held for the second time at the high school stadium.

“Last March was the first year Clay Electric successfully held a newly formatted annual meeting at this location on a Saturday,” he said. “This was new for the employees. It was new for the members, but through collaborative efforts the event was successful.”

Davis said the change in meeting format is one way his

organization is learning new ways to do things and embracing change as it adapts to a changing world.

Davis also addressed the co-op’s changing power cost adjustment, which it raised last year due to increasing natural gas prices.

He added that those same prices are now falling, and the co-op is responding by lowering the power cost adjustment portion of its bills to members.

He announced that members

would see a decrease in rates in their March bills, followed by a second decrease in April.

“Power costs will be reduced from \$146 per thousand-kilowatt hours this month to \$130 per thousand-kilowatt hours in April,” Davis said. “This rate will again be one of the lowest rates in the state.”

Davis said the co-op is focused on providing reliable power to its members, adding that crews

See CO-OP, page 7



Event organizer Hector Ramirez said the box competitors may perform maneuvers in roughly aligns with the airport’s three runways. Photo: Dan Hildebran, Telegraph Staff Writer.



An aerobatics competitor (right) practices his maneuvers for the unknown sequence on the airport’s ramp. Competitors call this the ramp dance. Photo: Dan Hildebran, Telegraph Staff Writer.

Aerobatics competition held at Keystone airport

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS—The Ocala chapter of the International Aerobatics Club held its Snowbird Classic Aerobatics competition at the Keystone Heights Airport over the weekend.

Five categories of difficulty, from Primary through Unlimited, were flown.

The contest culminated on Saturday with unknown sequences and the unlimited four-minute freestyle flight. No Lake Region residents competed in the event. However, pilots from Gainesville and St. Augustine did.

Chapter President Hector Ramirez said his group had produced seven of the events over the last 10 years at area airports like Dunnellon and Williston. This was the first time the competition was held in Keystone Heights.

Resembles figure skating rather than an air show

“Aerobatics is not like an air show where you’re out to thrill the crowd,” he said, and it’s very strictly regimented.”

Ramirez said the format of the competition resembles that of competitive figure skating, adding that pilots are first judged on a series of compulsory maneuvers.

“There are usually five to seven judges on the line with their assistants that are scoring

them,” Ramirez said, “and if they make a certain percentage, they can continue on to fly the rest of the venue.”

Pilots who make it through the approximately 12 compulsory maneuvers, labeled as the known sequence, then move on to a freestyle competition.

Finally, pilots are presented with a previously unknown sequence of maneuvers that they are required to fly.

Ramirez said that for the unknown sequence, pilots have flown all the figures, but they have likely yet to fly them in the same arrangement prescribed by event organizers.

“And so, there are a lot of things they need to think about,” he added, “such as how to structure their flying, what speeds to go into the figures, what altitudes.”

The event organizer said pilots have around 12 hours to prepare for the unknown sequence.

“They’re given the sequence one day, and they’re expected to fly it the next day,” he said. “Of course, there’s no practicing. All they can do is practice it in their mind. So, a lot of times, you’ll see the pilots out on the ramp doing this funny walk, which is basically going through a mental exercise of going through their sequence in their minds and using their bodies to mimic the airplane’s movements. We call that the ramp dance.”

Ramirez said the aerobatics box that pilots may perform

maneuvers in roughly aligns with the airport’s three runways.

He said pilots competing in the lower-difficulty categories may fly as low as 1,500 feet, with the unlimited pilots allowed to descend to 326 feet.

Like the upper black belt in karate

Ramirez said the Keystone Heights competition attracted 25 competitors, two in the unlimited division, which is the most difficult. He added that there are only around 20 unlimited pilots in the U.S., and around 12 compete in national competitions.

“It’s kind of like the upper black belt in karate,” he said.

One of the Snowbird Classic unlimited competitors was Jim Burke, coach of the U.S. advanced team, which competes internationally.

Ramirez said the sport attracts a wide range of pilots.

“We have flight instructors, we have airline pilots, we have crop dusters, we have the whole spectrum of pilots in our group,” he said, “but this is the only time that they can compete by going upside down and knife edge and spinning the airplane and that sort of thing.”

Ramirez said competing in the sport is expensive, but some competitors combine resources to purchase and maintain a plane, making the cost to each individual around the cost of buying a car.

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UNION COUNTY

Commission, manager sorting numerous issues

BY TRACY LEE TATE
Times Staff Writer

LAKE BUTLER — The Lake Butler City Commission heard the first reports concerning the city's financial position from Interim City Manager Richard Tillis at its regular March 21 meeting.

In his report to the commission Tillis said he was starting to make sense of the financial reports and working on locating the various moneys in the current budget document.

"I have been chasing numbers ever since I got here," Tillis said, "as well as looking closely at all expenditures in an effort to save money. Everything is all mixed together in the budget. I believe that all grant moneys need to go in their own special funds, not mixed in with other types of funds and balances. Right now all of the funds are mixed together in the operating budget. That inflates the budget, making the bottom line hard to determine and keep a clear picture of costs and how much has been spent. I am working on separating the

grant monies out into their own funds, based on source and type as appropriate."

Tillis said he has been working with City Finance Director John Sapp on tracking various income streams and accounting for expenses. He has also met with city engineers from Mittauer and auditors from Powell and Jones. Tillis said that the city is lucky to have both of these firms as resources and he plans on working closely with them in the future.

On the subject of utility bills, Tillis said he is working on several issues that will take care of many of the current problems and increase citizen satisfaction with the city services.

One procedure he has implemented is to do a test run on the month's billing several days before the bills are generated. If a customer's projected bill is overly large the city will send someone out to check the meter, including comparing the physical reading with the amount transmitted to city hall, and then, if a difference is found, check that the transmitter is functioning

properly, as the transmitters are known to go out sporadically. If meter work is needed, the customer may receive a bill that is an average of the charges for the past six months, rather than a large bill in error.

Tillis noted that one of the problems with the current rate structure on water bills is the fact that there is no allotment of water to go along with a customer's minimum monthly bill payment.

"The city used to have an allotment of 2,000 gallons as part of a customer's minimum bill," Tillis said. "The new rates do not include an allotment. Now, customers are paying for water from the first gallon used as well as the minimum bill associated with having an active account."

Acting Mayor Annette Redman told the board that she had been talking with Tillis about adjusting the rates and was told that he hoped to have a new proposed rate structure to commissioners by the May meeting.

"The current system is making things difficult for many of our residents," Redman said. "We

have quite a few residents on fixed and limited incomes and the fluctuations and increases in bills are making it really hard on them to budget for the monthly bills in advance and to pay them month to month."

Tillis said that his current priority is determining the city's cash position in all of its funds so the board will know where it stands financially and can formulate a plan for getting things back on track. He hopes to have both the special forensic audit requested by the city and the regular annual audit completed by the auditors and ready for presentation to the board at its regular April meeting.

"Once we have all the numbers straightened out we will know where we are," Tillis said. "It won't be pleasant. It took a couple of years to get where we are now, and it is going to take some time to understand but we need to get there so we can realistically know what we can do and what we need to do. There will be some budget amendments in May to get us back where we need to be for the fiscal year."

In other business, Tillis requested that the commission vote to hire an interim public works director to handle the department on a temporary basis in light of the resignation of the previous director, Cody Banks. He requested the board to approve the hiring of the previous director, Mike Banks, at an hourly rate with no benefits to get the department back on track and assist him (Tillis) with the financial morass connected with the new public works building. The board approved the request unanimously.

Tillis also asked the board to approve a one-time mowing of the spray field to allow him time to look into a more permanent solution to the issue and bring it before the board, which was also unanimously approved.

He said he was still working on tracking the ARPA funds the city had earmarked for lift station construction and, while he said he did not yet have all the figures he could tell the board that "a good bit" had been spent — more specific details to be ready by May.

As Interim City Manager, Tillis is also dealing with issues concerning animal control, uniforms for city workers, and locating paperwork for various contracts entered into for work that in some cases were never brought before the board, and in others, seem to never have been written down but were of a verbal nature.

He has also created a procedure in which all purchasing must be done with a purchase order approved by him, and is working to eliminate all payments made by the city through electronic fund transfers.

Tillis admitted to the board that there was still a great deal to be done before the city will know with any surety where it stands financially and what can be done to remediate any problems. He said that he and city staff were working hard to figure things out, but that the problems have to be identified before any solutions could even begin to be formulated.



Union County Animal Control said dogs scheduled for euthanization were saved after three were adopted, and rescue organizations accepted two. Photo: Union County Animal Control.

Union County says dogs saved from euthanization

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE—Union County Animal Control said several dogs were saved from euthanasia after residents responded to the county agency's urgent pleas.

On March 17, the department

posted photos of four dogs with the message: "These 4 pups need saving. They are due to be euthanized at 2 p.m. today if no one can help. We have picked up 8 dogs within the past 2 days. We are FULL. We are closed to intake as we try to move some of

these dogs!"

Later, the agency said that the dogs scheduled to be put down: Milo, Tully, and Molly were adopted while two more: Harlow and Maggie, were to be sent to a rescue organization.

Church of God food distribution

Starke Church of God by Faith and Farm Share plan a food distribution on Thursday, April 6 and 20, from 10–11:30 a.m. The church is located at 730 Old Lawtey Road in Starke. This is a drive-thru giveaway.

Easter egg hunt and games

Bradford County Faith Community Center and Starke Church of God By Faith are hosting an Easter egg hunt and games for kids of all ages on Saturday, April 8, from 2 to 5 p.m. at 721 Old Lawtey Road in Starke.

There will be free food, live music, fun games, face painting

and prizes for those who find a golden egg.

Foster, adoption classes

Looking to make a difference in the community? Call Partnership for Strong Families today at 352-213-7219 to enroll in a foster and adoption class for parents.

VFW hosts Easter egg hunt

VFW Post 10082 Auxiliary is its annual Community Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 1, beginning at 11 a.m. Lunch will be served. The VFW address is 16483 SE 83rd Terrace in Lake Butler. If you have any questions, please call Auxiliary President Barbara Fischer at 904-263-0647.

Poem presented to Historical Society

The Union County Historical Society is planning a meeting on Tuesday, April 4, at 6:30 p.m., 410 W. Main St. in Lake Butler. The program will be a presentation of a poem written by Peggy Cason's mom, Mrs Vera

Clyatt, and will be presented in the costume of the year of 1908. The poem was written about the marriage and beginning years of Peggy's grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Clyatt, on the Fort Call Cemetery Road in southwestern Union County.

If you have stories or poems or other writings by your Union County family members, you are welcome to come and share also.

Faith and Family Ag Festival April 22

Promised Land Family Ministries' annual Faith and Family Ag Festival will take place Saturday, April 22. The festival is designed for K-12 kids and their families. Registration and check-in begins at 9 a.m.

The day will include free games and activities, educational stations, lunch and prizes. Preregistration is encouraged

at PromisedLandFM.org. Onsite registration is subject to availability.

Interested in volunteer or sponsorship opportunities? Contact Rebecca Hall at RHall@PromisedLandFM.org

Woman's Club offers scholarship

The Lake Butler Woman's Club is offering a \$1,000 scholarship for a female resident of Union County to attend an accredited college or university in the state of Florida. Scholarship applications may be picked up at Union County High School in the Guidance Counselor's Office from Amy Addison Stalaker.

All applications should be received by or on Friday, April 28, 2023. Late applications will not be accepted. For questions contact Bobbie Morgan at 386-867-0781.

CHOICE Continued from page 1

Placid, said that currently, 70% of Florida students qualify for the vouchers and that the state does not expect an exponential jump in participation.

"We have not seen this money run out in past years," Tuck said.

Retired teacher and former teacher's union officer Constance Higginbotham told the Clay County School Board that now, only one percent of the county's 42,000 students use state vouchers. She added, before DeSantis signed the bill, that if the new measure became law, it would deplete the school district's annual budget by \$3.36 million.

Giveaway to billionaires

During debate in both chambers, Democrats argued that the new measure is a giveaway to wealthy families who already have their children in private schools.

"The parents of these students will just get a rebate for the private-school tuition that they are already paying for," said Rep. Tracie Davis, D-Jacksonville, "and that means the funds we have to pay for public schools will be reduced by the number of students accepting the voucher."

Different rules for different schools

Higginbotham also repeated a theme expressed by other bill opponents, saying that public schools are at a competitive disadvantage because of the state regulations they must adhere to, while private schools do not have to comply with state rules.

"Private schools do not have to accept children with disabilities or children who are speakers of other languages...or those with discipline issues," she said.

The new law contains a provision that the state's Department of Education would be directed to develop recommendations to reduce regulations in public schools.

DISTRICT Continued from page 3

shifting his original numbers, reducing District 2 and 5 and increasing the number of voters in District 4 by returning area around Hampton.

District 1—4,825
District 2—4,877
District 3—4,706
District 4—5,138
District 5—4,946

The minority population of District 1 is 51.8% on this map, but Ward said courts require more than population numbers when determining whether minority voters are given an opportunity to elect a candidate they prefer as the Voting Rights Act requires. The ACLU performed a functional analysis that determined all three proposed maps based on Douglas' work

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met the requirement.

"That looks at past election results, how much crossover voting there is from other portions of the electorate in supporting candidates that are preferred by Black voters, voter registration actions in recent elections," Ward said.

He said the ACLU would also provide the legal boundary descriptions for the elections office.

Asked whether the boards could legally approve a map with District 1's proposed boundaries — as odd as they seem — Ward said they could since the basis is compliance with the Voting Rights Act.

"That'd be my advice, yes, it is. Because that's not only a permissible goal, but a mandatory one," he said.

Ward said his strategy was to add a little bit to District 1 from the other districts instead of having a large impact in one area.

The county commission and school board will workshop the map one more time at 5 p.m. on Monday, April 10. Based on that the county commission may adopt the new districts later in April and the school board would adopt them in May.



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Crime

Recent arrests in Bradford, Union and Clay

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

Bradford

Hector Manuel Aviles, 37, of Hampton was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 21 for driving with a suspended or revoked license, possession of drugs and a probation violation.

Ryan Christopher Barth, 34, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 21 for a probation violation and for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Zachariah Alan Boley, 30, was arrested on March 24 for an out-of-county warrant and for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Phone video leads to child cruelty arrest

Janice Lee Crawford, 66, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 18 for child cruelty.

According to an arrest report, Deputy Lakiesha Lewis responded to a juvenile complaint and on scene encountered a boy crying but unable to speak because of emotional distress. A second person then walked up to the officer and told Lewis that the defendant always abuses them. The second individual then showed Lewis a video allegedly taken on Feb. 28 that shows the defendant striking the victim with a closed fist several times.

Lewis wrote that Crawford then came out of the home, complaining that the victim "was mad and cussing everyone out and threw a piece of wood outside the home." Lewis responded that the victim broke no laws and proceeded to arrest Crawford based on the video.

Arlene Lynette Davis, 48, of Orange Park was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 19 for DUI.

Travis Theodore Davis, 45, of Titusville was arrested by Starke police on March 22 for resisting an officer and for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Brandon Michael Dickson, 30, of Callahan was arrested on March 24 for an out-of-county warrant.

Woman shared marijuana with minor

Samantha Dawn Dover, 24, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 21 for contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Bradford Sheriff's detective Andrew Johnson wrote in an arrest report that after seeing an unbuckled passenger in a white Ford SUV, he pulled behind the vehicle and noticed suspicious activity.

"While directly behind the Ford SUV," Johnson wrote in an arrest report, "I observed the front passenger put an object in her mouth, remove the object,

then hand the object to the rear passenger. As the front passenger handed the rear passenger the object, a large amount of smoke came from the front passenger's mouth."

Johnson added that the rear passenger repeated the front passenger's behavior. "It was at this time I noticed a pungent odor of marijuana enter the A/C vents of my vehicle," the detective wrote.

During a subsequent traffic stop, Johnson verified that the rear passenger was under 18 and that the defendant knew the age of the minor.

After the Ford pulled over into the Starke Winn Dixie parking lot, Dover told the lawman his timing could not have been worse. "I'm on my way to probation," Dover said according to Johnson. "Am I under arrest?"

Joe Louis Felton, 46, of Lawtey was arrested on March 18 for an out-of-county warrant.

Kelvin Hamm, 59, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 24 for a probation violation.

Austin Taylor Koepfer, 26, of Middleburg was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 20 for resisting an officer, possession of drug equipment and for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Calvin William Lane, 31, of Lake Butler was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 23 for withholding support.

Michael Rodney McCarter, 24, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Starke police on March 24 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

William Christopher Means, 45, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 22 for manufacturing synthetic narcotics.

Joseph Lee Mitchell, 54, of Starke was arrested by Starke police on March 19 for withholding support.

Morgan Gene Nooney, 23, of Keystone Heights was arrested on March 25 for an out-of-county warrant.

Jennifer Lynn Pelham, 34, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 21 for a probation violation.

Samuel Nelson Rogers, 20, of Live Oak was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 21 for a probation violation.

Allen David Schmitt, 33, of Starke was arrested on March 24 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Ashley Nicole Smith, 39, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 22 for possession of drug equipment.

Brent Antonio Young, 34, of Green Cove Springs was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 20 for possession of drugs, possession of marijuana, possession of drug equipment and driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Union

Daniele Elizabeth Elliott, 23, of Worthington Springs was arrested by Union deputies on March 24 for an out-of-county warrant.

Gloria Morales, 24, of Lake Butler was arrested by Union deputies on March 23 for failure

to appear.

Paul Alan Mosley, 53, of Raiford was arrested by Union deputies on March 26 for aggravated assault, contempt of court and violating a domestic violence injunction.

Clay

Genara Deshun Davis, 42, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 23 for domestic battery.

Norma Christian Edenfield, 36, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 23 for domestic battery.

Justus Ferrell Prince, 43, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 22 for resisting an officer.

Jon Paul Shaver, 57, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 18 for domestic battery.

Matthew Logan Terrell, 21, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 24 for possession of not more than 20 grams of marijuana and possession of drug equipment.

Joshua Matthew Ward, 33, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 22 for animal cruelty and animal abandonment.

Michael Shawn Yetman, 34, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 21 for being a fugitive from justice.



Voiles

Starke man guilty of sexual battery

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE — A Bradford County jury on Thursday, March 23, convicted a 20-year-old Starke man for sexual battery by a person under 18 on a person 12 or older.

According to an April 2020 Starke police report, Jaycob Thomas Voiles, then 17, and a friend took the victim to Voiles's room at the Bradford Motel and Campground. The victim and a witness told police that after the other people in their group left the room, the victim felt tired and laid down on one of the room's beds. The victim added that Voiles then sexually battered her. Voiles's account of the incident agreed with the victim's to the point where the other people in the room left the pair alone. The defendant claimed the victim kissed him and "things escalated," but the pair did not engage in sexual intercourse, and the victim did not tell him "no."

The 20-year-old will be sentenced in April.

Development still faces opposition

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — City commissioners postponed action on a site plan submitted for the Sandcastles Pines housing development so they can review testimony presented at their March 21 meeting.

Since last year when the commission rejected a rezoning request for the development, the project has changed, reducing the number of new homes from 25 to 22 on six acres at the end of North Westmoreland Street, behind the school bus barn. Rezoning in no longer necessary to support smaller lot sizes. Now the developer is seeking approval of the site plan.

According to Sandcastles Foundation Board Chairman Christopher Crowder, they would spend \$7.5 million in mostly state housing funds to construct 4-bedroom rental homes for working professionals who met median income requirements, including teachers and correctional officers.

Attorney Robert Williams presented the site plan on behalf of the developer. He said the planned neighborhood and its homes are compatible with the other houses in the area.

"It's just another neighborhood that's going to be nestled right in there where the other neighborhood exists right now," Williams said. They, and city staff, have worked hard to make sure that everything that needs to be on the site plan is there. They have met all of the requirements

of the land development regulations, he said.

"We're not asking for variances, we're not asking for allowances, we're not asking for anything that you haven't required us to put in under the code," he said. "We have met our burden of showing to this commission that, in fact, all of those things are done."

Kevin Powell in the city's planning and zoning department concurred that, after several rounds, the developer has addressed comments from the city's engineer with the exception of one relating to the drawdown of the retention pond. All other requirements have been met, he said, presenting the concurrency report from the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council.

Traffic concurrency was the only issue raised in the report, and that was contradicted by a traffic study on Pratt and Westmoreland streets funded by the commission. Traffic in the concurrency report is based on the segments of U.S. 301 between State Road 100 and State Road 16, which is already below the level of service standard set in the city's Comprehensive Plan.

Residents in the neighborhood once again shared their concerns about the development with the commission. Terry Qualls said the plan contemplates placing 22 homes on six acres where the current road ends. It is the only way in or out. If each home has two vehicles, that's 44 more on the street.

"That's still a big concern to me, that we're going to have all these cars on a 20-foot path," he said. People, including elderly individuals, walk on the road, which has a 90-degree bend and speeding traffic.

Drainage has been another concern expressed. Mark Sanders said water drains to the acreage in question. When it is built up, they fear it will be headed back in their direction. He also said the construction traffic will destroy the already ailing street.

Deana Frazier said talked about enduring the construction and additional traffic.

"Our neighborhood doesn't have any sidewalks, so we are sharing those roads with the cars. And with the turns they were talking about, they don't see you until they're on you, and if you're a kid in the street and not another car coming, you're not going to win that game of chicken," she said.

Brady Lockwood said the neighborhood is full of children, and his yard is proof that vehicles end up in yards.

Much of the information presented was been seen by commissioners for the first time. They decided to take some time to digest it, and with their first meeting in April canceled, a vote will be scheduled on the board's April 18 agenda.

The commission has also scheduled a meeting on April 11 at 5:30 p.m. to work on the budget.

Students will receive K-12 career planning

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — A new program coming to public schools will help students know more about themselves, what they enjoy and how that can help shape their future.

During a workshop retreat earlier this month, Bradford Assistant Superintendent Karen Clarke introduced school board members to Xello, the state's official K-12 career planning and work-based learning coordination provider.

Middle school students are required to take a class that includes career planning, and Bradford County has been providing that through social studies with a computer-based program. Xello will be fully rolled out to schools for all students in the fall.

According to the Florida Department of Education, "Xello empowers every student to design a personalized plan

for the future by providing a high-quality career development experience that's modern and visually appealing, interactive, and age-appropriate."

According to Xello, their model connects self-knowledge to future success. That includes defining interests, personality and learning styles, skills, preferences and aspirations so students explore the opportunities that are right for them.

Through the content, they learn about career possibilities and the educational pathways that get them there. They explore careers, schools and major courses of study. These include college, vocational and military options. They learn how to fund post-secondary education. They also learn about employers, including local companies where they can get on-the-job experience.

The goal is for students to develop a plan with steps they can work toward. The further they go the more time they will

spend learning about themselves and reassessing their plans when necessary.

Along the way, they develop a storyboard to collect their favorite photos, videos, links and files, both to express themselves and visually capture their goals.

Clarke said when they have a better look at the program, they will know more about how to incorporate it in each grade level. School board members were happy with what they heard. Board Member Lynn Melvin said she would like to see some tracking of student interests beginning in middle school so electives appealing to those interests are offered.

"So many kids graduate, and they don't know what they want to do. The other thing is they really don't know what they're good at," she said. "I think this would definitely give them that advantage."

CO-OP Continued from page 5

performed 784 inspections of the co-op's 52 substations last year. He also said the organization completed a five-year distribution work project schedule for its entire system.

Davis added that the co-op took on around 6,000 new accounts in 2022. "Thirty-two years ago, Clay Electric billed 100,000 accounts," Davis said, "and today, we are billing over 190,000 accounts."

Employee accomplishments

The co-op's CEO said supply chain challenges created by the COVID-19 Pandemic remain in 2023.

"We have had a hard time getting transformers, poles, wire, and vehicles, not to mention the cost of these items are three and four times what they were just a couple of years ago," he said. "With shortages like these, our employees have had to come up with alternative construction solutions to address these issues."

Davis said co-op line workers participated in the state lineman competition in February 2022 and scored several top-place finishes.

"Earlier this month, crews participated in the event for 2023 and brought home six trophies," he said. "This shows the skill and expertise of our line workers."

The general manager said that after Hurricane Ian barreled

through southwestern and central Florida in October 2022, 18 Clay Electric employees traveled to southwest Florida to help the Lee County Electric Cooperative restore power to its members.

Davis added that co-op employees participated in the Strides Against Cancer Event in Gainesville, the third-largest fundraising team out of the event's 97 teams.

He added that co-op employees continued their 20-year tradition of participating in Holiday Helpers, which assists co-op members in need during the holiday season.

"In late November and early December of 2022," he added, "three Clay Electric employees volunteered to participate in Power Guatemala. This was an inaugural NRECA international trip sponsored by Florida co-ops, and its purpose was to bring electricity to a village in Guatemala."

Davis also highlighted the co-op's Operation Roundup program, which he said donated \$892,000 to 92 organizations last year and over \$5.3 million since its inception in 2017.

Davis said 26 apprentices graduated last year from the co-op's job training program.

"This included 24 apprentice line workers, one tree trimmer and one power system operator," he said. "These graduates are the future of Clay Electric."

Davis concluded by emphasizing that while the utility is constantly undergoing change and is far different from the vision its founder initially saw in 1937, the organization will

continue to focus on its founding principles: working safer, putting the member first and providing excellent customer service.

Note veterans service office schedule

The Bradford County Veteran Service Office will be closed Thursday and Friday, March 30 and 31, and Monday, April 3. It will reopen on April 4.

Normal hours are Monday and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Wednesday from 2-6 p.m., and Friday from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesday hours vary. Call Barbara Fischer at 904-966-6385 or 904-263-0647 for an appointment.

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Quitting tobacco isn't easy. Finding help should be. If you're ready to quit, join the next Tools to Quit Tobacco group. Virtual options by computer and phone are also available.

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Sweetest Strawberries you know the line

Madison sold berries with a smile at the 2023 Bradford County Strawberry Festival!



Stephanie and Pierce Nash thought it was a sweet treat to meet the one and only Brad Ford Berry!



North Florida local, Sara, with her granddaughter Kinsley shared the festival favorite: Strawberry shortcake!



Young Brooker resident, Anthony, along with his family, loved riding the ponies at the festival.



Little Journey from Interlachen embraced the festival spirit. She was sporting a strawberry dress, enjoyed getting her face painted, and to top it all off, posed with a basket of berries!



The Strawberry Festival Car Show gives proud owners a chance to spotlight their creations and restorations. Ronal Regar and his father built this 1923 Ford T Bucket from a kit. It was a family project that took a few years to complete.



Every truck has a story, and Gary Peacock of Kingsley Lake is no different. He was at the festival to show his '74 Chevy Truck and enjoy some time with his other S.L.A.C.A.R.S. (Stricklands Landing Automobile Club and Restorations Society). Peacock started the club because he wanted to share his love of old cars while enjoying his retirement.



Young local designer, owner, and operator, Sadie Tew (right) of SadieAnn Designs, with mom Holly, sold her unique earring designs to festival shoppers.



Michigan resident and festival goer, Brad, came for the star of the show: the delicious strawberries! King's and Norman's produce sold many flats to locals and visitors.

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Couch in his 1st year as Bradford Middle band director

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Steve Couch did most of the work that would lead to a degree in mechanical engineering, but in the end, he decided to go in a different direction.

He wanted to do something he really enjoyed, which ultimately led to him going to Bradford Middle School, where he serves as band director.

Couch talked of an internship he did at Jacobs Engineering, where his grandfather worked and retired after a 40-year career. He worked as a data-entry person.

A desk job where he couldn't see the sun except when he was traveling to and from work didn't appeal to him. Neither did having to go through five levels of security to enter and exit the Jacobs building.

"I wasn't a fan of that," Couch said. "I was like, 'I'd rather do something fun.'"

He had one more semester's worth of work to earn his engineering degree. At 21 years of age, he joined the University of Florida drum corps for what was his age-out summer — the last year he'd be eligible to participate. After four months of that, he admitted to getting depressed.

"I missed music. I wasn't

playing," he said. "I was just doing math."

Couch said he took a year off from school and worked on his skills in bass, an instrument he began playing at the age of 7.

"I auditioned for the School of Music and started doing Music Ed from there," he said.

He joined the BMS band program as an assistant during the latter part of the 2021-22 year and became director this year. It's his first formal teaching job, but he has prior experience at P.K. Yonge and Titusville High School.

Couch grew up in Melbourne along Florida's Space Coast.

"I got to see the Space Shuttle program go. That was fun," Couch said.

He credits his interest in music to his family. His mother played tuba. His grandmother played baritone.

"We had a piano growing up, so they would just show me things," Couch said.

When he was set to begin middle school, Couch said his mother suggested he join band and try his hand at playing the tuba.

Being in band created many lifelong memories that he can still remember "clear as day." Those memories and the ones his students are creating now don't have so much to do with

music. Instead, they're about the experiences and the personal interactions.

It makes Couch think of something a mentor told him.

"The thing is, these kids aren't going to remember their performances," he said. "They're never going to remember the music they played, but they're going to remember the bus rides home with their friends."

Goals for BMS

Couch said one of his goals is to work with BMS students on the fundamentals of music and to get them to understand the benefit of having a strong work ethic.

Another goal is to prepare students for band at Bradford High School and hopefully grow that program.

"What we're trying to do here is at least get the kids situated enough to where they're ready to go into marching band," Couch said. "Not to go to a full competitive level, but to make Bradford where it used to be, I guess, about 20 years ago, which is just to have as many kids as possible and to make it as big and as good as possible."

Couch, who currently teaches six classes of approximately 120 students, said he has been working with administration



Steve Couch joined the Bradford Middle School band program as assistant director in the latter part of last school year and is now director. Photo by Cliff Smelley.

on opportunities to increase the program's visibility on campus.

"The administration and I are working out a few plans to start a middle school pep band for big games next year," Couch said.

Perhaps more students will want to be involved in band as a consequence.

"The eventual plan is to get the band program big enough that we have to hire a second band director for here specifically," Couch said.

One of the issues facing the program is space — specifically a lack of it. Couch said students don't have any place where

they feel they can store their instruments safely. Brandyn Barksdale, one of the program's boosters, said her daughter once had her instrument go missing until it was located three days later in the corner of a back room.

Couch said he and others tore down the band room's old library and made a shelf for trombones to sit on at least, but the ideal situation would be to have lockers for instruments.

Those cost quite a bit. Couch said trombone lockers cost more than \$6,000. The program, he said, could use two or three of those.

For now, though, he's been working to clean up and remove as much clutter as possible to free up more space that can be utilized.

"If the kids come into a place, and it's clean, and it's tidy, and it looks professional, they're going to treat it (professionally) and act (professionally)," Couch said.

Couch said the program benefitted by receiving three filing cabinets that came from one of the recently closed elementary schools in the county. Those provide a much better way of storing the program's music, some of which, Couch said, has been out of print for 60 years and can fetch up to \$3,000 on ebay.

Those pieces of music had been stored in cardboard boxes.

"We've been shifting everything toward cataloging it in a filing-cabinet system."

The fact the program has a lot of music that's out of print addresses another issue.

"We need new music," Couch said, adding, "Our music library hasn't been updated for a very long time. A new piece of music is anywhere from \$50 to \$80."

If you'd like to know more about the band program or how to support it, please call Bradford Middle School at 904-966-6701 or send email to bradfordmsmusic@gmail.com or boostersbmsband@gmail.com.

Making a difference

The BMS band program has needs, but the school does have one of the nicest band rooms in North Florida, Couch said.

It also benefits from a strong support system in its band boosters. Couch remembers the latter part of the 2021-22 year when he was informed about the program's end-of-year banquet, which he knew nothing about. The boosters told him they'd take care of everything.

"Our boosters help out so much," Couch said.

The boosters' involvement can in turn influence other parents to

See COUCH, page 12

BHS baseball team defeats Raiders for 4th win in 5 games

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Cason Pilcher drew a bases-loaded walk in the bottom of the seventh as the Bradford High School baseball team defeated visiting Crescent City 9-8 on March 20.

Bradford (5-7) took the early lead with a three-run third. Breion Johnson and Ryder Thompson each drew a walk, while Jeffrey Brugh singled, loading the bases with one out. Ryland Rike drove in one run with a single, while a balk allowed another run to score. Kacen Thomassen drove in the third run on a sacrifice fly.

It was 7-4 in favor of Crescent City when the Tornadoes scored four in the sixth. Mattox Burgin

drew a walk, while Johnson was hit by a pitch. Blake Wynn then hit a single to load the bases. With two outs, Brugh cleared the bases with a triple, tying it at 7-7. Brugh later stole home to make it an 8-7 game.

The Raiders took advantage of a double, a walk and a sacrifice fly to tie the score at 8-8 in the top of the seventh.

Thomassen led off the bottom of the seventh with a walk. Luke Stucky hit a single, followed by Burgin getting hit by a pitch to load the bases. Pilcher then stepped to the plate and took four straight balls to force the winning run in.

Brugh and Stucky each went 2 for 4, with Brugh finishing with

three RBI.

Pilcher, Rike, Thomassen and Wynn each had one RBI.

It was the fourth win in five games for Bradford, which began a three-game winning streak with a 14-4, five inning win over visiting Hamilton County on March 14.

Bradford led 2-1 before scoring seven runs in the third, which included RBI singles by Pilcher, Rike and Kevin Crawford. Burgin and Matthew Stafford each drew a bases-loaded walk, while Burgin and Crawford both scored on wild pitches.

Brugh hit a two-run single as part of a five-run fifth that ended the game early. Johnson drove in a run on a sacrifice fly in the

inning, which also saw Crawford draw a bases-loaded walk and Pilcher score on a wild pitch.

Brugh, Crawford and Stafford each finished with two RBI, while Burgin, Johnson, Pilcher and Rike each had one.

Starting pitcher Stucky gave up three runs through four innings on six hits. Thompson pitched the fifth, giving up one run on one hit.

On March 15, the Tornadoes literally put the "walk" in walk-off as Crawford drew a walk with the bases loaded in the bottom of the seventh for a 6-5 win over visiting Belleview.

Bradford scored two runs in the second inning, which began with Burgin reaching on a walk

and later stealing second. One out later, Crawford walked. An error on an attempt to catch Crawford stealing resulted in Burgin scoring and Crawford advancing to third. An error on a ground ball hit by Wynn allowed Crawford to score.

The Rattlers put two on with one out in the top of the third, but the Tornadoes got out of the inning with a double play. Starting pitcher Burgin fielded a bunt and threw to catcher Thomassen, who was able to tag out a runner trying to score. Thomassen then fired the ball to third baseman Rike to complete the play.

In the bottom of the inning, Bradford pushed another two

runs across. Rike drew a leadoff walk, stole second and scored when Belleview committed an error on a Thomassen ground ball. Brayden Smyth, who entered to run for Thomassen, scored on a Pilcher ground ball.

Belleview tied the score with four runs in the fourth. Three came on a home run by Eric McLaughlin.

The Rattlers took a 5-4 lead in the sixth, but Bradford tied the score with a run in the bottom of the inning. Brugh hit a two-out single, advanced to second and third on wild pitches and then scored on a steal of home.

Thomassen led off the bottom

See BHS, page 15

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Southside classes enjoy Field Day



Southside Elementary School classes competed by grade against each other in recent Field Day events. ABOVE: Fourth-grader Avery Wulf-Vanderpuije, her cape flowing behind her, competes in a sprint. LEFT: Fifth-graders Keniyah Munnerlyn, Aubri Thomas and Alexis Rogers compete to see who can sweep up the most balls.



Fifth-grader Braxton Tetstone gives this snowcone a thumbs up. BELOW: In a fourth-grade race, Trenton Raley crosses the finish line first ahead of Brayden Seymour and Braxton Smith.



ABOVE: Fifth-graders Ryder Detweiler (left) and Brayden Hart compete in the clean-up game. RIGHT: Easton Fulmer (left) and Conner Daly pass items down the line in a race.



Students weren't the only ones taking part in the fun. They had the chance to cheer for either Jaquan Bryant (left) or Edrick Hamilton, who decided they'd race each other. Bryant issued the challenge, but Hamilton crossed the line first. All photos by Cliff Smelley.



Fifth-graders Swade Britt and Easton Fulmer are running neck and neck while leading the field.



Ma'Kenzie Hankerson crosses the finish line first in a fourth-grade race. In the background (l-r) are Hunter Robertson and Kiley Smith.



Think taking part in a race while balancing a plastic egg on a plastic plate on a windy day is easy? It's not, but fifth-graders Emma Phillips (foreground) and Keniyah Munnerlyn seem to be doing a pretty good job.



Fourth-grader Austin Kilby puts forth some speed.



ABOVE LEFT: Fifth-grader Samaria DeSue is enjoying the egg race despite the windy conditions. ABOVE RIGHT: Fifth-grader Brayton Nugent concentrates on keeping his plate from blowing off his hand.



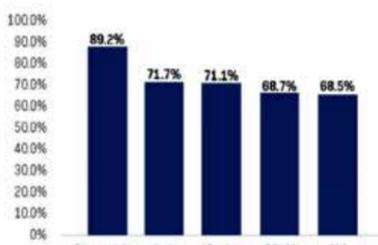
Fifth-grader Harmony Stokes competes in a race.



LEFT: Rosalinda Fleming sprints ahead of A'Shiyah Smith during a fourth-grade competition.

CONSUMERS TRUST NEWSPAPERS

Top trusted advertising channels among U.S. consumers



Special note: The Relevance Project thanks The Nielsen Co., a global leader in audience, measurement, data, and analytics, for this excerpt from its Trust in Advertising Study. Nielsen used 23 channels, a term to distinguish where ads show up or are referenced, in the study.

Here's further proof that advertisers and marketers seeking a trusted media should hire newspapers. Newspapers show up as two of the Top 5 "trusted advertising channels" rated by U.S. Consumers in Nielsen's 2021 Trust in Advertising Study. Seven out of 10 consumers said they either trust completely or trust somewhat four of the channels that included newspapers or products they offer advertisers. The top channel applies also to newspapers because their readers are informed consumers.



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Indians lift at Clay Co. meet, win 2 titles

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Prior to beginning its run toward a possible third straight state title at the March 29 District 7-1A meet, the Keystone Heights High School boys weightlifting team won both the traditional and Olympic events at the Clay County Championships, which were held March 21 at Oakleaf High School.

The Indians had five individuals win their weight classes in the Olympic event (snatch and clean and jerk): Jed Tisdale (119-pound class) with a 250 total, Reid Begue (139) with a 390 total, Bryar Schenck (183) with a 510 total, Trey Jeffries (219) with a 575 total and Tyler Anthony-Rozier (238) with a 470 total.

Bo Overton and Landon Hovsepian took second and third, respectively, in the 169 class with totals of 490 and 465.

Four other lifters besides Hovsepian placed third: Declan Shine (129) with a 300 total, Wyatt Van Zant (139) with a 380 total, Davin Adams (154) with a 330 total and Brayden Wester (238) with a 415 total.

Bryson Wester (199) earned a fourth-place finish with a 395 total, while the following placed fifth: Elijah Mize (119) with a 220 total, Damien Dunalp (154) with a 310 total and Tyler Duncan (unlimited) with a 425 total.

Three earned sixth-place finishes: Talon Messina (183) with a 335 total, Dakota Roper (199) with a 370 total and Jackson Herman (unlimited) with a 420 total.

Begue, Jeffries and Anthony-Rozier also won championships in the traditional event (bench press and clean and jerk). Begue had a 490 total, while Jeffries and Anthony-Rozier had totals of 700 and 650, respectively.

The traditional event saw three finish as runners-up in their classes: Hovsepian with a 580 total, Schenck with a 550 total and Roper with a 560 total.

Placing third were Shine with a 390 total, Van Zant with a 425 total, Overton with a 575 total and Brayden Wester with a 535 total.

Colton Hollingsworth placed fourth in the 119 class with a 315 total, while the following earned fifth-place finishes: Tisdale with a 285 total and Bryson Wester with a 540 total.

KHHS girls tennis team defeats BHS

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Keystone Heights High School improved its record to 4-2 in girls tennis with a 4-3 win over host Bradford on March 21.

The Indians earned three wins in singles: Tara Tarvit defeated Lexie Wells 8-2 at the number-one spot, Whitnee Buchanan defeated Brooklynn Reddish 8-3 at number three and Sarah Siebert defeated Maya Moss 8-0 at number five.

Bradford's Reagan Harris and Caitlyn Jackson earned wins at the number-two and number-four spots, respectively. Harris defeated Shaylyn Williams 9-7, while Jackson defeated Raegan Feldpausch 8-1.

At number-one doubles, Tarvit and Buchanan teamed up for an 8-1 win over Wells and Harris, while Bradford's Reddish and Jackson defeated Williams and Feldpausch 8-3 at the number-two spot.

The Tornados (5-6) entered the match off a 4-3 win over visiting West Nassau on March 16.

Reddish won 8-4 at number-three singles, while Jackson won 9-7 at number four. Wells lost 8-5 at number one, while Harris and Kasey Thompson each lost 8-3 at number two and number five, respectively.

Bradford won both doubles matches, with Wells and Harris teaming up for an 8-5 win and Reddish and Jackson getting an 8-6 win.

BHS defeats West Nassau for 7th win in boys tennis

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Bradford High School improved to 7-2 in boys tennis with a 5-2 win over visiting West Nassau on March 16.

Gideon Jordan suffered a close 8-6 loss at number-one singles, but the Tornados came out on top in the rest of the matches in singles play, with Calum Butler winning 8-1 at the number-two slot, Troy Smith winning 8-6 at number three and Hayden Knight and Nikolas Vargas each winning 8-2 at number four and number five, respectively.

Smith and Knight teamed up for an 8-3 win at number-two doubles. The number-one team of Jordan and Butler lost 8-3.

KHHS baseball team defeats Baker Co. 3-0

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Gage Smith pitched a complete-game shutout in the Keystone Heights High School baseball team's 3-0 win over visiting Baker County on March 24.

Smith gave up four hits as the Indians (8-2) won their fourth straight.

Wil Rogel and Andru Siemer each drove in a run in the fifth

inning, while Ryan Jones hit a two-out single in the sixth and eventually scored on a passed ball.

Baker pitcher Tucker Kennedy, who went the distance, gave up only five hits, with Keystone's Noah Branch going 2 for 3.

The Indians' week began with a 14-0, five-inning win at Fort White on March 20.

Jones hit a two-run triple as part of a 10-run first inning, which also included RBI doubles by Connor Guy and Chase Packham and RBI singles by Branch, Siemer and Andrew Wilson. Errors and a dropped third strike allowed another three runs to score.

Jones and Packham each finished with two RBI, while Branch, Guy, Siemer, Austin Musgrove, Ty Mitzel and Jesse Stanley each had one.

Branch and Stanley each hit a double, going 2 for 3 and 2 for 2, respectively.

Keystone threw a different pitcher each inning. Smith started, giving up two hits and no walks, while striking out one. Stanley gave up one hit and no walks, while striking out two in the second, Seth Gagnon and Ben Goforth gave up no hits and no walks in their innings of work, with Goforth striking out one. Guy closed it out, giving up two hits and no walks, while striking out two.

On March 23, Wilson hit a walkoff double as the Indians defeated visiting Palatka 4-3.

Jones had two RBI in the first inning, but the Panthers would take a 3-2 lead after scoring two runs in the top of the seventh.

Guy drew a one-out walk in the bottom of the seventh and advanced to second on a passed ball. With two outs, Branch reached on an error, which allowed Guy to score and tie it up at 3-3. Wilson fell behind 0-2 in the count, but then ripped a hit into left field.

Wilson and Smith each finished 2 for 3.

Starting pitcher Goforth gave up one run on three hits through five innings. He had five strikeouts.

Musgrove pitched the final two innings, giving up four hits and striking out three.

Keystone played Orange Park this past Tuesday (March 28) and will host Newberry on Friday, March 31, at 7 p.m. The Indians

then travel to play Union County on Monday, April 3, at 7 p.m. before returning home to play Bradford on Tuesday, April 4, at 7 p.m.

BHS softball team ends skid with 15-4 win

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Rylie Blankenship and Summer Sutton each drove in three runs for the Bradford High School softball team, which snapped a three-game losing streak with a 15-4 win over host Hawthorne on March 27.

The Tornados (3-5) scored six runs in the first inning, with Blankenship, Kirsten Hodges and Kallie Yowell all drawing bases-loaded walks to force three runs in. Addyson Hinds hit an RBI single, while Amber Wynn drove in a run on a sacrifice fly. An error also allowed a run to score.

Blankenship, who went 3 for 4, also had an RBI single and an RBI double in later innings, while Sutton hit a two-run double as part of a three-run sixth.

Wynn finished with two RBI, while Masey Padgett had one.

Takeirra Bakken went 2 for 3. Starting pitcher Keegan Yowell gave up three runs on three hits through two innings, striking out two.

Blankenship and Kolee Lemire each pitched two innings as well. Lemire gave up one run on not hits, while striking out two. Blankenship gave up no runs and two hits, striking out two.

It was Bradford's first game since a 5-3 loss to visiting Yulee on March 16, prior to spring break.

Bakken and Padgett each had an RBI single in the fifth as Bradford was able to tie the score at 3-3, but the Hornets took advantage of two walks and two singles to score two runs in the final inning.

Bakken, who went 3 for 4, reached on a two-out double in the bottom of the seventh, but a strikeout ended the game.

The only other Bradford player with multiple hits was Madison Highland, who went 2 for 3. Bradford played Trinity

Catholic this past Tuesday (March 28) and will travel to play Bishop Snyder on Tuesday, April 4, at 6:30 p.m.

UCHS baseball team goes 1-2 in tournament

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Union County High School's baseball team dropped two of three games in a March 20-22 tournament in Melbourne.

The Tigers (8-3) came close to winning their first game, but Potomac School of McLean, Virginia, scored four runs in the bottom of the eighth inning to defeat Union 11-10 on March 20.

Union scored three runs in the top of the seventh to tie it at 6-6. Devin Diggs drew a leadoff walk and scored on a Jeremy Miller double. The Tigers loaded the bases after an Ayden Elixson single and a Tre'Von Lee walk. Tucker Hardee then pushed two

runs across with a single.

The Tigers took a 10-6 lead in the top of the eighth. With one out, Diggs and Miller were both hit by pitches. Diggs scored on an Elixson double, while Miller later scored on a passed ball. After Lee drew a walk, Hardee hit another two-run single.

Potomac hit two straight singles to start the bottom of the eighth and loaded the bases when a batter was hit by a pitch. A single plated two runs. A walk loaded the bases again before a hit batter forced a run in, to make the score 10-9. The Panthers then hit another two-run single to win it.

Hardee finished 2 for 5 with four RBI, while Elixson went 3 for 5 with two RBI. Miller hit a double and a triple and finished with one RBI. Blake Agner, who hit a double, had one RBI as well.

Preston Bonsall went 2 for 4.

On March 21, the Tigers scored three runs in the bottom of the sixth to defeat Vero Beach's Class 2A Master's Academy 6-3.

It was 2-2 going into the

See UCHS, page 15

Tri-County Classifieds

Bradford County Telegraph Lake Region Monitor UNION COUNTY TIMES

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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Obituaries

Era "Faye" Beyer

Era "Faye" McIntosh Beyer, 98 of Keystone Heights, passed away on the night of Saturday, March 25, 2023, at St Vincent's Hospital in Middleburg, after a brief illness. She went peacefully, surrounded by family, with her last words being, "I love you." She was born Oct. 6, 1924, to the late Otis L. McIntosh Sr. and Margaret (Maggie) Nelson McIntosh in Jacksonville. She grew up on a farm during the depression and learned the value of hard work at a young age. She carried that work ethic throughout her life and put it in practice, often by serving others. She married Thomas James Beyer on Sept. 2, 1944, in Folkston, Georgia. They spent the majority of their married life in Jacksonville, but held two other Florida cities near to their hearts: Hilliard, where they maintained a garden for years on family property, and Keystone Heights, where they had a lake house next to her brother before moving there permanently in 1995. She enjoyed gardening, eating her freshly grown vegetables and grapes and tending to her citrus trees. She could shell a bushel of peas "in nothing flat!" She was primarily a housewife, but also was employed at J.C. Penney, which she affectionately referred to as "Penneys." After her husband's retirement, they spent about 20 years traveling the United States in their motor home, visiting all 50 states and Canada. They were members of the Allegro 49'ers Camping Club along with her brother Mac and his wife, Glenda. Their family joined them on a few of their adventures, but they eventually required the grandchildren to come one at a time, so they didn't have to referee. She loved her family and friends and enjoyed any chance she got to visit with them. You could frequently find her sitting on her porch swing, watching the birds, squirrels and neighborhood cats and enjoying the warm weather and nice breeze from White Sands Lake. She loved to play card games like Rummy, Skip-Bo, and UNO, even with her grandchildren, who didn't dare go easy on her and made her earn all her wins! She also enjoyed fishing, watching CBS soap operas and reality TV shows, getting her hair done (which her husband referred to as "Mission Impossible") and getting mail. For her 90th birthday, she received around 180 cards! She was an excellent cook, known for her famous turkey dressing and chocolate-covered nuts. She was a previous member of Murray Hill Baptist Church in Jacksonville and current member of Trinity Baptist Church in Keystone Heights. She absolutely loved her church, Sunday school class and all her friends, who were so kind to her until the very end. In the self-written obituary notes, she left for her family back in 2010, her final words were, "I will see you in heaven." She was preceded in death by her husband of almost 65 years, Thomas James Beyer Sr.; son, Donald Craig Beyer; sisters, Bertha Collins and Lucille Rich; and brothers, Charles McIntosh, Eddie McIntosh, Otis "Mac" McIntosh, and Harold McIntosh.

She is survived by her son Thomas James "T.J." (Karon) Beyer Jr. of Tallahassee; four grandchildren, Ann Marie Beyer of Woodstock, Georgia, Ginny Beyer of Atlanta, Georgia, Daniel (Miranda) Beyer of Melrose, and Bryan Beyer; one sister, Laverne Dubose; and one great-granddaughter on the way, due in July.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at 10 a.m. on Friday, March 30, at Trinity Baptist Church in Keystone Heights. The funeral will follow at 11 a.m. at Trinity Baptist Church with Pastor Scott Stanland officiating. Burial will be at Keystone Heights Cemetery.

Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 340 E. Walker Drive, Keystone Heights, 32656. 352-473-3176. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

PAID OBITUARY



Susan Forsyth

Susan Ann Forsyth, 62, of Lake Butler passed away at her home on Wednesday, March 15, 2023. She was born June 29, 1960, in Palatka to the late Tyra and Geraldine Douglas Powell. She has been a resident of Lake Butler and even lived at the same address since the age of 10. She worked for many years for the Union County School Board. She touched numerous children's hearts throughout the years and was tenderly known as "Nanny" or "Aunt Susie" to many. She loved her family and friends dearly. Graciously, she cared for many family members, including her grandfather, both parents and siblings until their passing. She was preceded in death by her parents, Tyra and Geraldine Powell; her brothers, Tommy and Wayne Powell; and her former husband, James Forsyth.

She is survived by her daughter, Christie (Carlos) Phillips of Jacksonville; grandchildren, Aliya Perry, Alonzo Perry, and Jaquez Hendrieth; great-grandchildren, Mali'ki, Major and Lovette Vega, Kaliah Hendrieth, Ezaryah and Zyrh Perry; brothers, Mitchell (Eva) Powell and Terry (Tammy) Powell; and a host of extended family.

We would love to celebrate her life at her home on Saturday, April 1, at 1 p.m. In her memory, commune and fellowship with her family. If she touched your life in any way, we would love to see you there.

PAID OBITUARY



Carolyn Griffis

Carolyn Young Griffis, 79, of Lake City, passed away at HCA-North Florida Hospital in Gainesville on Saturday, March 25, 2023. She was born in Union County on June 23, 1943 and lived all of her life in the Union County area until she moved to Lake City a little over three years ago. She worked as a correctional officer for the Florida Department of Corrections for a little over 15 years before retiring. She was a loving mother and grandmother, who enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren. In her spare time, she enjoyed going to casinos and playing slot machines. She was preceded in death by her first husband, J. D. Griffis; her second husband, Chuck Roberts; and her sister, Lucille Norman.

She is survived by her two sons, Greg (Michelle) Griffis of Gainesville and Rick (Winnie) Griffis of Jacksonville; five grandchildren, Dalton (Alisa) Griffis, Haylie (Allen) Lee, Edward Gregory Griffis, Casey Griffis and Chelsea Whitehead; and 10 great-grandchildren.

A funeral service will be conducted on Thursday, April 6, at 1:30 p.m. at Watertown Congregational Methodist Church with Pastor Randy Ogburn officiating. Interment will follow in the Sapp Cemetery in Raiford. The family will receive friends for a time of visitation beginning at 1 p.m. prior to the service.

Arrangements are under the direction and care of Gateway-Forest Lawn Funeral Home, 3596 S. US HWY 441, Lake City, 32025, 386-752-1954. Please leave words of comfort for the family at www.gatewayforestlawn.com.

PAID OBITUARY



Laura Lamb

Laura Elizabeth Lamb died Friday, March 24, 2023, after a brief illness. She was born Nov. 24, 1963, and lived in Lake Butler most of her life. She was preceded in death by her father and mother, Thomas and Virginia Waters Lamb; and a brother, Thomas Randall Lamb.

Survivors are her son, Joshua Lamb; a granddaughter, Elizabeth Lamb; siblings, Richard Eugene (Donna) Lamb, Lulamae (David) Bridgman, and Romana Lamb (Dwayne) Crawford.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 1, at Morning Star Baptist, 11250 W. C.R. 18, Lake Butler, 32054.



Lori Magyari

Lori A Magyari, 59, of Arlington Gardens died Saturday, Feb. 25, 2023. She was born March 29, 1963, in Miami to the late Jackie E. Magyari and Florence Ann Morris.

Survivors include her aunt, Shelia Evans; her uncle, Ronald Magyari; and many cousins and other family members.

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

Marvin Manning

Marvin Manning, 89, died peacefully at home on Monday, March 13, 2023. He was a veteran of the United States Air Force. He was preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Edna Manning; and three sons.

He is survived by two daughters, Mary (Mike) Stokely and Margaret (Rich) Talaga; and one son, Dennis (Cindy) Manning.

Leslie Prevatt Jr.

Leslie Travis "T.J." Prevatt Jr., 37, of Lawtey passed away Wednesday, March 22, 2023, at Shands Hospital following a brief illness. He was born April 19, 1985, in Gainesville and worked as a permit technician for Paragon Pools. He grew up Catholic and enjoyed being outside fishing, grilling and working in the yard. He also enjoyed playing video games and taking trips with his children, and he was an avid Florida Gators fan. He loved talking to friends on the phone, but most of all, he loved spending time with his family.

He leaves behind his loving wife and best friend, Shirley (Fisher) Prevatt; three children Hayden Prevatt (16), Gunner Prevatt (9), and Seren Prevatt (7); along with his parents, Leslie and Anne (Page) Prevatt Sr., all of Lawtey. Also left behind is his mother-in-law, Alicia Fisher and father-in-law, Ronnie Tyler, both of Starke; in addition to multiple family members and friends that will miss him dearly.

Visitation will begin at 10 a.m., Friday, March 31, at DeWitt C. Jones Chapel. Funeral services will begin at 11 a.m. with Pastor Daniel Tyler officiating. Interment will immediately follow at Evergreen Baptist Cemetery.

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

PAID OBITUARY



In Memory

In loving memory of Al Coston Jr.
Aug. 10, 1946-March 29, 2016

Death leaves a heartache
no one can heal.

Love leaves a memory
no one can steal.

Your life was a blessing,
your memory a treasure,

You are loved beyond words and
missed beyond measure.



Linda Kay Harn

Linda Kay Harn, 65, of Lake Butler went home to be with the Lord on Sunday, March 26, 2023, at home.

She leaves behind her husband of 33 years, John H. Harn Jr. of Lake Butler; three children, DaNita (Derrick) Dowdy of Starke, John Paul (Janet) Harn of Lake Butler, and Lori (Preston) Boyette of Lake Butler; and three grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. Arrangements under the care of Archer-Milton Funeral Home. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com



Card of Thanks

Words cannot express the amount of love and support shown to us from the county and community during the loss of our daddy, husband and Papa.

Thank you all so much!

The Family of Sammy Eunice

COUCH

Continued from page 9

be boosters in the future.

"I'm fortunate in that what they're doing is leading by example," Couch said. "Whenever we start getting more parents involved, they'll want to help out as much as possible, too."

Barksdale said it means a lot to children when their parents are involved in their activities. She said a lack of involvement by her parents is one reason why she quit band when she was in school.

"I get it. I had a bunch of

younger siblings," Barksdale said, adding, "I swore that when I had kids, whatever they wanted to do, I was going to be there and let them know. 'If this is important to you, this is important to me.'"

Speaking of important, that's just what band or any arts program is for youth. Barksdale and fellow booster/parent Nicole Canipe have witnessed that in their own children. Canipe has a son with autism in the eighth grade. After one semester of band, he said, "You know, I never thought I would fit in anywhere."

"It gives him a sense of accomplishment and some place that he can go and be himself, and nobody judges him," Canipe said.

Barksdale has a son with autism, too, who began taking band in high school.

"By the time he finished that first year of just one band class a day, just to see the advancement and development in his brain was phenomenal," Barksdale said.

Music is a great outlet for her children, Barksdale said. She's seen her daughter feel like her "brain's going to explode" from working on school assignments and ask if she can take a break to practice her instrument. Barksdale said 10-15 minutes of that, and her daughter has her focus back and is ready to return to her assignments.

"It really helps in so many parts of your life," Barksdale said.

Couch said music and other such classes offer youth a vital creative freedom.

"If we're not allowing kids to be creative or express themselves in a way that they understand, that helps them to come to terms with anything, then we're kind of doing them a disservice," he said.

Curtis A. "Lex" Sanders Attorney at Law



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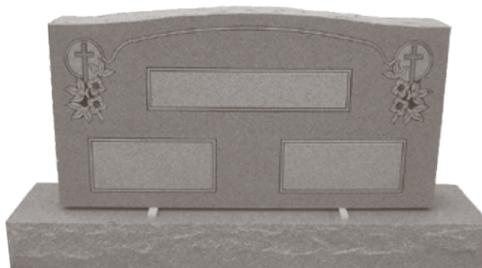
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Game of unbeatens goes BHS' way with 52-0 win over KHHS

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Bradford High School's girls flag football team has been proving itself to be as dominant as the school's football team was, as the Tornadoes just recorded their sixth shutout, defeating host — and previously unbeaten — Keystone Heights 52-0 on March 28 to improve to 8-0.

The boys football team scored an average of 29 points per game, while allowing an average of six. The girls flag football team is scoring an average of 38 points, while allowing an average of three.

When the Tornadoes played Keystone, quarterback Ar'Nayshia Griffin had a game that would've fit right in with the Fun 'n' Gun offense that used to operate right down the road at the

University of Florida. She threw five touchdown passes, including three to Khamyra Hankerson.

Bradford's first score, though, came on a Griffin run. She then completed a pass to Hankerson on the conversion attempt for a 7-0 lead.

Griffin then made her mark on defense, intercepting a pass. That set up her touchdown pass to Nichelle Brown, making the score 13-0.

On the Indians' ensuing possession, Bradford's Ajjiah Jackson recorded sacks on two straight plays.

Keystone's defense made a play the next time the Bradford offense had the ball. Alec Horton intercepted a pass in her own end zone as the Tornadoes threatened to score.

The Indians (5-1) got strong

defensive play from Ella Hutchins on Bradford's next offensive series. She made a tackle for a loss and pressured Griffin into throwing an incompletion on a third-down play.

Bradford's offense would eventually get back on track, thanks to its defense.

A Brown interception led to a Hankerson touchdown reception and a 19-0 Bradford lead, while an Alexis Berry interception set the Tornadoes up for a Griffin touchdown run. Brown caught Griffin's pass on the conversion attempt.

Brown then came up with her second interception of the second quarter. That led to a Hankerson touchdown reception. Keystone's Kendall Gagnon broke up the pass play on the conversion attempt, but the Tornadoes took a 32-0 lead into halftime.

Hutchins made a touchdown-saving tackle when Brown hauled in a long pass on the first series of the second half. The Tornadoes would eventually find the end zone, with Griffin tossing a touchdown pass to Hankerson. The extra-point attempt was no good, as Lake Hovsepian tackled Griffin.

Bradford got a sack from Jada Hankerson, which forced Keystone to punt on its opening series of the half. Brown returned the punt for a touchdown. Griffin then hit Jada Hankerson with a pass on the conversion attempt, making the score 45-0.

The Indians finally began moving the ball, with Horton and Dezaray Bright each completing a pass to Whitney Buchanan. Bright also completed a pass to Alana Anderson, which set up first-and-goal, but Keystone would eventually turn the ball over on downs.

Three plays later, Brown caught a long pass from Griffin and scored the final touchdown of the night. Talaysia Jackson



Keystone's Ella Hutchins (left) chases after Bradford's Nichelle Brown on a punt return.

had a successful run on the conversion attempt to end the scoring.

Bradford's previous outing was a 47-0 win over visiting Baker County on March 14.

Griffin threw six touchdown passes, completing 19 of 22 attempts for 265 yards.

Brown had three of those touchdown receptions as she finished the night with seven catches in all for 120 yards.

Brown and Griffin even switched places, with Brown completing all three of her pass attempts for 40 yards, with Griffin catching two of those passes for 20 yards.

Kimber Woods had two touchdown receptions and finished with seven catches for 60 yards. Khamyra Hankerson caught one touchdown pass and had two catches in all for 50 yards.

Jada Hankerson caught three passes for 35 yards.

The Tornadoes didn't have many rushing attempts, but Brown and Griffin continued to prove they can pick up big chunks of yardage. Brown gained 40 yards on four carries, while Griffin had 30 yards on three carries.

Brown and Griffin had an impact on defense as well, with each intercepting a pass.

Destiny Crum also had an interception.

Brown was a factor on special teams, too, as she returned a punt 65 yards for a touchdown.

Bradford will host Florida High on Thursday, March 30, at 5 p.m. The Tornadoes then travel to Tallahassee for the annual Capital City Classic, which will be played over two days at the FSU Rec SportsPlex. Bradford begins play in the classic with a 5 p.m. matchup against Windmere on Friday, March 31.

The Tornadoes travel to St. Augustine to play Florida School for the Deaf and Blind on Monday, April 3, at 6 p.m.

Keystone will host Orange Park on Thursday, March 30, at 6 p.m. and Palatka on Tuesday, April 4, at 6 p.m.



Alexis Berry returns an interception for Bradford.



Keystone's Alec Horton intercepts a pass.



ABOVE LEFT: Bradford quarterback Ar'Nayshia Griffin prepares to pass.

RIGHT: Dezaray Bright (left) catches a pass for Keystone, while Bradford's Alexis Berry comes up to make the tackle. Photos by Cliff Smelley.



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Indians entered BHS game off 18-0 win over Interlachen

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Ella Hutchins rushed for three touchdowns in the Keystone Heights High School girls flag football team's 18-0 win over visiting Interlachen on March 23.

Hutchins gained 140 yards on just five carries, while Kendall Gagnon had 20 yards on one carry.

Gagnon also completed 1 of 5 passes for 20 yards, while Dezaray Bright completed 1 of 8 passes for 70 yards.

Teilah Hall caught two passes for 40 yards, while Mackenzie Castlevecchi caught two for 30 yards.

Hall led the defense with six tackles, while Lizzie Vaughan

had four.

Keystone opened the season with a 13-0 win at Palatka on Feb. 28. Hutchins rushed for 162 yards and one touchdown on 12 carries, while Bright completed 8 of 13 passes for 78 yards and one touchdown. Alec Horton caught Bright's scoring pass and finished with three receptions for 45 yards.

The rushing effort also included Gagnon gaining 30 yards on two carries, Bright gaining 25 yards on five carries and Horton gaining 23 yards on two carries.

Aiyana James had five sacks in leading the team with seven tackles. Horton and Rexi Lewis each made four tackles.

On March 2, Bright completed

10 of 13 passes for 131 yards as the Indians defeated host Orange Park 19-13.

Gagnon was the leading receiver with six catches for 90 yards. Miranda Yow caught one pass for 25 yards, while Alana Anderson caught two for 22 yards.

Hutchins rushed for 70 yards on eight carries, while Horton added 23 yards on four carries.

Bright and James each made an interception for the defense, which got four tackles from Madison Woodward.

Keystone pulled out a 13-12 win over visiting Middleburg on March 9, with Bright throwing a touchdown to Gagnon and

See KHHS, page 16

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Union's Clark wins sprint at Santa Fe meet

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Union County High School senior Leah Clark ran two races at the March 23 Santa Fe Raider Mini Meet #2, coming out on top in the 200m.

Clark crossed the line in 26.88 seconds in the 200m to finish ahead of Eastside's Arielle Livingston, who had a time of 26.98.

In the 100m, Clark ran a fourth-place time of 12.65 seconds, which left her trailing Gainesville's Kalani Vreen (12.59), Santa Fe's Destiny McBroom (12.62) and West Oaks' Tabrea Miller (12.63).

Griffin, Rozier earn top-10 finishes at Santa Fe meet

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Keystone Heights High School boys track and field team members Tyler Griffin and Shepherd Rozier had top-10 finishes at the March 23 Santa Fe Raider Mini Meet #2. Griffin established a new

personal record in placing seventh in the 800m with a time of 2:06, while Rozier placed 10th in the 400m with a time of 53.69.

Rozier came close to earning a second top-10 finish, running a 12th-place time of 24.08 in the 200m.

Jaden Park set PRs in the 200m and 1600m with times of 25.11 and 5:16. He fell three spots shy of the top 10 in the 1600m.

Also establishing new PRs were Josh Blank in the shot put (27-2.5), Bryce Miller in the 100m (12.26), Hunter Chamberlain in the 100m (13.82) and Ayden Graff in the 1600m (5:26).

Keystone also had the following boys results: 200m — Miller 25.53; 400m — Josiah Durrenberger 1:00, Tyler Sapp 1:03; 800m — Hunter Sheppard 2:24, Jacob Stahman 2:25, Durrenberger 2:31; and 1600m — Sheppard 5:18.

Ashly McCarthy had a PR for the girls team with a time of 29.26 in the 200m.

KHHS softball team falls 5-1

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Kiley Channell's solo homer in the top of the fourth was the only hit for the Keystone Heights High School softball team, which lost 5-1 to host Eustis (a Class 4A regional finalist in 2022) on March 24.

Pitcher Kadence Massey gave up two runs on five hits and one walk in four innings of relief, striking out four.

It was the third straight loss for the Class 3A Indians (4-7).

On March 21, Keystone held a 3-1 lead before eventually losing 7-4 to visiting Oakleaf (a Class 7A regional finalist in 2022).

Keystone scored three runs in the first. Leadoff batter Abbie Roach hit a single, followed by Amber Wagner getting hit by a pitch. Channell then stepped to the plate. After falling behind 1-2, she worked the count to 3-2 before hitting a home run over the fence in center field.

Oakleaf took a 5-3 lead before the Indians scored their final run in the third. Channell hit a leadoff double and scored on a Massey single.

Channell finished 2 for 3. The rest of the team combined for two hits.

Hits were also hard to come by in the Indians' next outing as host Ridgeview handed them an 8-0 loss on March 23.

Keystone begins play in the annual Kissimmee Klassic on Thursday, March 30, with a game against Bartow at 2 p.m. If the Indians win, they'll play either Eustis or Cooper City on Friday, March 31, at 8 p.m. If they lose to Bartow, the Indians will play at noon on March 31.

Keystone is one of 16 teams in the tournament's Blue Bracket.

The tournament runs through Saturday, April 1.

UCHS falls to 2-7 in softball

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Visiting Williston hit two home runs in the first inning en route to defeating the Union County High School softball team 5-1 on March 17.

The Tigers (2-7) drew eight walks against pitchers N Hayes

and M Boyd, but only managed four hits.

Union loaded the bases with one out in the bottom of the first, with Tamia Young, Leah Clark and Hayley Burke all drawing walks. Two straight strikeouts ended the inning.

In the bottom of the second, the Tigers again loaded the bases with one out, with Shyla Crowe drawing a walk and Hannah Rivera and Young both getting hit by pitches. A strikeout and

a ground out ended that scoring threat.

The Tigers scored their only run in the third. Leigh Ann Dicks reached on a single, advanced to second when Hailey Rivera walked and scored on a single by Crowe.

Union played Bell this past Tuesday (March 28) and will host Santa Fe on Tuesday, April 4, at 6:30 p.m.

UCHS

Continued from page 11

bottom of the fifth. Union loaded the bases with two outs before an error on a ground ball hit by Diggs allowed a run to score.

Master's Academy took advantage of a double and a two-out single to tie the score at 3-3 in the top of the sixth. In the bottom of the inning, Agner drew a leadoff walk, followed by an Erick Lasseter single. Miller bunted into a double play, but Agner scored. Elixson walked, stole second and advanced to

third on an error before scoring on a passed ball to make it 5-3. Union then loaded the bases, with Lee, Hardee and Bonsall all drawing walks. Diggs was then hit by a pitch to force a run in.

Diggs, Lee and Miller each finished with one RBI. Lee hit a double, while Bonsall went 2 for 2.

Starting pitcher Ethan Moody gave up three runs on eight hits and no walks through six innings.

Agner closed it out, giving up no hits and striking out one in the final inning.

The Tigers played Miami's Class 7A Coral Reef on March 22, falling behind 5-0 after the

first two innings of an 8-2 loss.

It was 7-0 before Union scored two runs in the bottom of the fifth. Miller drew a leadoff walk and scored when Coral Reef committed an error on an Elixson single. Lee drove in the second run on a ground out.

Lasseter and Agner went 2 for 3 and 2 for 4, respectively.

The Tigers played Columbia this past Tuesday (March 28) and will travel to Ocala to play Trinity Catholic on Thursday, March 30, at 6:30 p.m. Union returns home to play Keystone Heights on Monday, April 3, at 7 p.m. and Trinity Catholic on Tuesday, April 4, at 6:30 p.m.

BHS

Continued from page 9

of the seventh with a walk. Courtesy runner Smyth advanced on a Stucky sacrifice bunt before Bellevue intentionally walked Burgin and Pilcher. Crawford stepped to the plate and took a first-ball strike before taking four straight balls for the win.

Burgin gave up five hits through five innings, striking out five and allowing just one walk. Brugh gave up one hit in pitching the sixth, while Pilcher struck out all three batters he faced in the seventh.

The Tornadoes hosted Middleburg on March 16, scoring five runs in the fourth inning en route to a 6-2 win.

Bradford got solid outings from pitchers Pilcher and Stafford. Stafford threw the first two innings, giving up one run on one hit and no walks, while Pilcher finished it out, giving up one run on four hits and two walks. Pilcher struck out five.

Stucky drove in the game's first run to put Bradford ahead 1-0 after one inning.

Middleburg held a 2-1 lead going into the bottom of the fourth. The Tornadoes loaded the bases on singles by Pilcher and Johnson and a walk drawn by Crawford. Thompson and Brugh each drew a walk to force a run in before Thomassen hit an RBI single. Stucky hit a ground ball that the Broncos would eventually turn into a double play to get out of the inning, but not before an error allowed two

runs to score.

The Tornadoes traveled to Lake City on March 17, losing 12-3 to Columbia.

Bradford took an early lead with two runs in the top of the first. Rike reached on an error and scored on a two-out double by Stucky. Stucky then scored on a Bugin single to make it 2-0.

Columbia scored five runs in the bottom of the inning.

Burgin and Stucky each went 2 for 3 with an RBI, while Thomassen went 2 for 4 with an RBI.

The Tornadoes played Fort White this past Tuesday (March 28) and will host Baker County on Thursday, March 30, at 7 p.m. Bradford then travels to play Keystone Heights on Tuesday, April 4, at 7 p.m.

THIS WEEKEND!

APRIL 1-2, 2023



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Bradford Red Seat renewals begin April 3

The renewal period for current Red Seat ticket holders for Bradford High School varsity football begins Monday, April 3, and runs through Friday, April 28.

Red Seats will be available for purchase by the general public from Monday, May 1, through Wednesday, May 31.

The cost is \$80, which gets you reserved seating for all regular-season home games.

Purchase a seat by Monday, May 22, and receive free

admission to the spring game and, if it's played at home, the preseason kickoff classic.

Cash or credit card is accepted. Drop by the BHS front office or call 904-966-6075.

Office hours are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Local DAR chapter to next meet on April 3

The Col. Samuel Elbert Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, will meet on Monday, April 3, at 10:30 a.m. in

the fellowship hall of Keystone United Methodist Church (4004 S.R. 21).

Light refreshments will be 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 Romeo at 352-478-3544 for more information.

BHS Class of 1973 to hold May 6 reunion

Bradford High School's Class of 1973, as voted on by 18 of its members, will hold its 50-year reunion on May 6 at 6 p.m. at the Kingsley Lake Civic Center (6109 Kingsley Lake Drive).

A meal of either barbecue chicken or beef brisket, with a choice of several sides, iced tea and dessert, is \$25 per person.

For more information, please text or call Carl Riherd at 386-365-3207.

License-free freshwater fishing takes place April 1-2

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission invites Florida residents and visitors to go freshwater fishing during the two license-free days on Saturday and Sunday, April 1-2.

License-free freshwater fishing days provide an excellent opportunity for those new to fishing without needing to first purchase a license. On these days, the fishing license requirement is waived for all recreational anglers, including residents and non-residents. All other rules, including seasons, bag and size limits, still apply.

For more information on freshwater fishing, visit MyFWC.com.

Anderson had two receptions for 24 yards.

The defense got five tackles from Hutchins and four from Waughon.

Keystone visited Interlachen on March 21, winning 28-0. Bright completed 4 of 6 passes for 53 yards, while Horton completed 2 of 5 passes for 45 yards.

Yow caught on pass for 40 yards, while Gagnon caught two for 35 yards. Anderson had two

receptions for 23 yards. Hutchins was the leading ground gainer with 53 yards on four carries, while Horton added 40 yards on three carries.

Woodward and Tatum Hall each made four tackles for the defense, which also got two sacks by Hutchins.

James picked off two passes, while Anderson had one interception.

KHHS

Continued from page 14

Hutchins rushing for another score.

Hutchins finished with 81 yards on four carries, while Bright completed 7 of 13 passes for 105 yards. Gagnon caught three passes for 81 yards, while

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Thank you all for taking care of our communities!