

# Easter

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UC SEEKS FUNDING FOR COST OF PRISONS | PG 6  
TIGERS SOUNDLY DEFEAT KHHS | PG 10

BROOKER SCHOOL HAS A NEW PRINCIPAL | PG 4  
BHS FLAG FOOTBALL ROLLS TO MORE WINS | PG 13

*The Sweetest Strawberries this side of Heaven*

# Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700 — Starke, Florida

Thursday, April 6, 2023

144th year, 32nd Issue — \$1

## Huggins wins Lake Butler seat by narrow margin

BY TRACY LEE TATE  
Times Staff Writer

LAKE BUTLER — With a 26% voter turnout and a total of 288 votes cast, Rondoll Huggins squeaked by, with a margin of only 6 votes, to become the newest member of the Lake Butler City Commission.

After the polling place closed at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, the action moved to the office of the Union County Supervisor of Elections for the duties of the canvassing board and the hand-counting of the votes. A total of 238 ballots were cast on election day, with 50 vote-by-mail ballots completed earlier.

The canvassing board was made up of Lake Butler City Attorney John Maines, Union County Supervisor of Elections Debbie Osborne, Tammy Rodenberry, Ramona Dewees and Jenna Box, with Karleigh White



Lake Butler Comission Seat 2 winner Rondoll Huggins and his opponenet, Joe Stephenson, shake hands after the results of the election was announced.

serving as an assistant.

The total number of paper ballots were counted several times and each selection was called out so members of the public in attendance could keep their own count. Among those in attendance were past City Manager Dave Mecusker, current interim City Manager Richard Tillis and acting Mayor Annette Redman.

Vote-by-mail ballots were counted first, with 13 votes for Rondoll Huggins and 37 votes for Joe Stephenson. Next the election day ballots were counted several times with the result — 134 for Huggins and 104 for Stephenson. When the vote-by-mail numbers were added the final tally was 147 votes for Huggins and 141 for Stephenson.

Huggins will be sworn into Seat 2 on the commission on April 5, at a special meeting called for the purpose.

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## WORTH NOTING

### 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.

### Collection site closings

Bradford County solid waste collection sites will close on Friday, April 7, and Sunday, April 9, for Good Friday and Easter. The sites will be open on Monday, April 10, at 10 a.m.

### 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.

### Food distribution announced

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Feeding Northeast Florida and True Vine Ministry will take place Wednesday, April 12, at 8:30 a.m. at the RJE complex in Starke.

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

## Gun bill sponsored by locals signed into law

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE — Gov. Ron DeSantis signed into law a permitless carry bill sponsored by local legislators Bobby Payne and Chuck Brannan.

Brannan represents Bradford and Union counties in Florida's House of Representatives. Payne represents southern Clay County, including Keystone Heights.

The new law allows most citizens to carry a concealed weapon after June 30 without a permit, along with the training and the \$97 fee the current permit requires.

Last week the House voted down eight amendments to the House version of the bill.

Democrats offered amendments to HB 543 that would have created sales tax exemptions for the sale of

firearm safes, lockboxes or trigger locks; limited the number of guns a person could carry at a time to one and capped the bullets they could possess to 16; created a community violence task force; required training for individuals carrying concealed weapons; mandated that all gun sales go through licensed gun dealers and allowed people to take weapons into Florida's Capitol.

In addition to allowing permitless carry, the new law also expands the state's current school guardian program to private schools and requires the Office of Safe Schools to create a standard behavioral threat assessment process.

It also creates the Florida Safe Schools Canine Program, allowing firearms detection dogs in participating schools.

## Starke Holiday Inn Express accepting guest reservations

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — According to its website, the new Holiday Inn Express just south of Starke is set to begin hosting guests on April 20.

The site says the hotel is accepting reservations. According to the chamber of commerce, some have scheduled stays, although they could not confirm the opening date.

Calls to the hotel's local number were not answered.

The 80-room hotel required a variance to construct a fourth story, but county commissioners didn't stand in the way of the development. At the time the estimated assessed property value for a new commercial development this size was \$2.5 million, which was said would generate \$40,000 in additional tax revenue for the county. In addition, the city of Starke will benefit from water and wastewater utility revenue,

and the new beds will generate additional tourist tax revenue. Project advocates also pointed to the benefits to local retail businesses, service stations and restaurants.

The entire hotel is smoke-free. It features King rooms with one bed and Queen rooms with two. King rooms range from \$142 to \$149, according to Booking.com, depending on whether you pay upfront. Queen rooms are \$159 to \$179 depending on prepayment and the number of guests. Free cancellation is available up to a specific time before your scheduled stay.

According to the website, there is a full breakfast bar, the cost of which is

included in the price of the room. There is also an Express Shop for snacks. There is a business center as well as a fitness center. Groups wishing to meet at the hotel can reserve a boardroom. Holiday Inn Express is an IGH

hotel, whose hotels also include Holiday Inn, Regent, Crowne Plaza, Candlewood Suites and others. The company 18 hotel brands in more than 6,000 destinations around the world.



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### Youth services uphold future leaders

April is Youth Month at Greater Bethlehem Free Will Baptist Church with 11 a.m. Sunday services featuring Pastor

Michael McDuffie on April 9, Hyden Knights on April 16 and Elder Malcolm Dixon on April 23. Friday programs at 7:30 p.m. will feature ministers Gwen Williams on April 14 and Shantell Campbell on April 21. Come out and support our future leaders.

### Scholarship available for medical study

The Shirley Ann Brown Livingstone Scholarship is available for the 2023-24 school year. Students must apply by

April 30, 2023, to be considered for the upcoming fall and spring semesters.

This scholarship is for students entering any field of study related to medicine, such as nursing, medical research, cancer research, etc. The scholarship is provided in memory of the late Shirley Ann Brown Livingstone,

a registered nurse who died from breast cancer.

Applications are available at the Santa Fe College Andrews Center in Starke, Bradford High School guidance office, North Florida Technical College or and Starke City Hall.

For further information, you may contact Carolyn Brown

Spooner at 904-964-5807.



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Or call 904 - 966 - 6764

### Last Supper at Good Friday Service

The First Presbyterian Church will have a special Good Friday service at 7 p.m. on April 7 at 921 E. Call St. in Starke. There will be a dramatic reenactment of The Last Supper, and the community is invited to attend.

The special Easter Sunday service April 9 at 9 a.m. will be on the grounds (weather permitting). Plant to attend for an inspiring service.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### Easter service and luncheon in Raiford

Magnolia Missionary Baptist Church in Raiford will be having a Easter Resurrection Service on Sunday, April 9, after the morning worship starting at 11 a.m. The speaker for the hour will be the Rev. Keith Canady from Zion Fair Missionary Baptist Church of Jacksonville. An egg hunt and luncheon will follow after morning service.

### 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.

# Starke wastewater plant under new management

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — Management of Starke's wastewater treatment plant is going in a new direction as the city proceeds with reconstruction.

City Manager Drew Mullins said engineering firm Woodward and Curran provided the revised design of the new plant and understands how the current and future plants function. The firm has also help secure funding for improvements.

Mullins said he began thinking about the challenge of running one plant while another was being constructed. He knew the engineering firm was both capable and experienced in doing so. The firm manages the city of Groveland, for example.

Starke will retain ownership and ultimate responsibility for

the wastewater treatment plant. Woodward and Curran will oversee daily operations and maintenance and serve as liaison to regulatory agencies. This covers routine operations but not emergency operations due to natural disaster, fire, disruption of electric service or equipment failure resulting from the city's failure to adequately invest in the plant.

But Woodward and Curran would assist, if possible, for additional compensation. It would also rely on the city's security devises and public safety staff to secure the plant.

The city will continue to be responsible for all capital expenditures; fines for violations of wastewater treatment standards; property, flood and fire insurance; salaries and benefits; overhead, the cost of chemicals, residuals management, testing

and supplies; and other miscellaneous costs. This includes unbudgeted repair and maintenance costs.

For the first 12 months of the contract, Starke will pay Woodward and Curran more than \$912,000 in 12 equal installments, plus 8% of the reimbursable costs based upon the city's annual budget. Based on the current budget, that amounts to nearly \$73,000. Starke and Woodward and Curran will negotiate annual facility budgets moving forward.

The contract also calls for a \$64,000 transition fee, payable over three years — the term of this initial agreement. In all, the budget for year one totals just over \$1 million.

Mullins said the city will see a slight cost savings through the arrangement. It is not anticipated to lose existing staff members,

who are well qualified and will be in a position for even further training in operating the new plant.

"The first thing we sat down and talked to (Woodward and Curran) about is how can we take care of our employees, because we don't want them to lose jobs. (They're) highly qualified," he said. They will have the opportunity to transfer to Woodward and Curran.

The firm also has operators on staff to call upon if needed, which Starke has already taken advantage of. Mullins said that's important because wastewater plant operators are becoming harder to find.

According to the city manager, construction of the new plant will take 18 to 20 months during which there will be a lot of switching back and forth between systems, followed by year one

operation of a new plant and any issues that come up. Woodward and Curran's experience with the existing plant and design of the new plant can get the city through the transition, he said.

The city and engineering firm will 'work together to develop and execute future capital upgrade projects to reduce operations and maintenance costs or to improve operations control, productivity and compliance. Improvements will be suggested alongside funding options.

The contract approved last month passed without public discussion from the board. Mullins said commissioners were instead given the opportunity to meet with him and an operator from Woodward and Curran with 40 years' experience to familiarize them with the proposal and answer any questions.

# Proposal targeting tourist tax revenue likely dead

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
Telegraph Editor

Some are now reporting that a proposed bill targeting county-raised tourist tax dollars is dead.

The Florida Association of Counties, chambers of commerce, and tourism groups like the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association and the Florida Attractions Association were quick to rally against a proposed committee bill that would have taken locally generated tourist tax revenue for three years and placed the future collection up for vote.

Bradford County levies a 4% tax — often called a bed tax — on hotel and other overnight accommodations. Under the new bill, half of that revenue would have gone to fund Visit Florida, the state's official tourism marketing corporation. And while rural counties would give up 2%, larger counties that generate millions of dollars to support their tourism goals would give up 5%. (The highest levy in the state is 6%.)

All to support a state corporation that counties already pay to be a part of, according to North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce President Pam Whittle.

"So does that mean we will no longer pay to be members?" she asked.

Bradford's Tourist Development Council accepts applications for grants paid for by the bed tax revenue to widely

publicize local events and draw people to the county — "to put heads in beds." Just this week, the county commission approved a grant application to market the Florida State Championship shooting competition at Bradford Sportsmen's Farm.

The bill would also require all tourist development tax levies to be reauthorized by local referendum every six years, with 60% of the vote required for approval, placing any future funding in jeopardy. Prior to a referendum, counties would have to submit a six-year plan for the use of the tax revenue.

Meanwhile, the bill would prevent any future state appropriations to Visit Florida.

It wasn't immediately clear how counties would request funds or how Visit Florida would determine how to distribute them. Under the bill, Visit Florida would be required to match what counties contribute, but counties would not be allowed to use the portion of the bed tax they keep to fund their portion. The corporation is also required to ensure that 75% of expenditures benefit state parks, forest and rural counties, but Whittle had her doubts.

"It's a crappy bill. I mean, somebody from a big county wrote it and figured out a way they can get their money and then turn around and write something to visit Florida and get our money too," she said.

According to Destinations

Florida, which works on behalf of tourist marketing organizations, the committee bill would destroy Visit Florida by reducing it to a shell of its current form, which has been highly successful, providing a \$3.27 return on investment of tax revenue for every dollar spent.

If the tax dollars collected are directed away from the state's largest tourist destination, Visit Florida would be limited in serving as the statewide brand, according to Destinations Florida. They say industry members in non-rural counties are not going to participate in Visit Florida if they cannot benefit from its programming. More than 90 percent of all tourism businesses in the state would be served by less than 25 percent of Visit Florida's budget, according to their press release. Tourism in areas like central Florida already provides millions in sales tax revenue to the state.

The outcry of these groups may have been successful. According to some, including WFTV in Orlando and the Orlando Business Journal, the bill passed the Florida House Regulatory Reform & Economic Development Subcommittee, but it lacks support to move further in the Legislature.

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But wait He's dead, it's a sad, sad hour,  
He must arise and show His power.  
Very early the first day of the week,  
The women came their Lord to seek.  
The stone is rolled away up the hill,  
Inside the tomb the angels fill.  
He's not here — He arose!  
He's not here as ye suppose.  
Why seek ye the living among the dead?  
He's alive as He said.  
Go and tell the disciples so they can see,  
Their Lord lives, Oh thankful be.  
Search the scriptures they tell of Me,  
May the Word a comfort be.  
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All glory to the Lord of old.*

*by Henry Hodges  
Lawtey, FL*

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# Brooker Community School recruits students, staff with career fair

BY CAROL MOSLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

BROOKER — Saturday was a celebratory recruitment day for Brooker Community School. The goal was to recruit both staff and students for the August grand opening. The new principal, Dr. Felecia Moss, was interviewing prospective staff in a quiet room while future students signed the roster, rung the bell, and took a photo in front of the “Pit Stop” replica made of balloons.

The theme of the day was “Touch a Truck,” and the lot was filled with giant machines of every kind for the kids to explore. John Propes, co-founder of the Funtastic Fire Brigade, let the kids sit in the fire truck cab as pretend firefighters, equipped, of course, with a little fire cap. He also distributed safety and anti-bullying educational coloring books. The sheriff’s office sent a special operations truck to tour. About a dozen local companies provided trucks that wowed the kids, including enormous tractors, haulers and diggers, many with tires taller than the children. Meanwhile, food trucks kept attendees fed and hydrated.

Other participants included Bradford County Fire Rescue, Bob Dyal, T.J. Mann, Hoyer’s Express Tree Service, Hamilton Custom Services, Hamilton Environmental Services, Circle H Ranch, Clay Electric, Division of Forestry, Vette Set, Danielle’s Delicious Country Cooking, Kettle Creations, Snowie Gator and the Balloon Booth Company.

Why try to keep an elementary school in Brooker when the brand-new school will be opening in Starke? Board Secretary Jerome Kelley said it is important to have a community school and pointed out that studies show students get a better education in a small setting. Others pointed



Charlotte, Kyrie and Ari Jones enjoy cotton candy.



Kevin Troup makes a Pit Stop after registering to attend third grade at Brooker Community School.



Some of Brooker Community School’s Governing Board with their new principal: Jerome Kelley, William Harrell, Dr. Felecia Moss, Randy Starling, Gail Cook and Suzanne McCree.



Hudson Howard of Lake Butler thinks about his message in a truck bucket. Hudson’s shirt says, “I like big trucks, and I can’t even drive yet.”

to the distance from Starke since Brooker is located at the western edge of the county.

A prospective teacher and mother with a fourth-grade daughter, Freya Shelton, said these are little kids and that is

too far to travel by bus. Sheriff Gordon Smith pointed out that a community school is the “life blood” of a community, and Principal Moss called community schools “vital” to a community.

“We don’t want to be the forgotten end of the county,” said active volunteer Patsy Pullen.

The day was deemed to be a great success with a good selection of candidates applying

as teachers and other staff. And a whole lot of kids signed up, excited to start at the community charter school as a new option or returning to a familiar space that’s now reopening with new possibilities.

For instructions on how to enroll a student or apply for a staff position visit [www.brookercommunityschool.com](http://www.brookercommunityschool.com).

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## Brooker charter school names principal

BY CAROL MOSLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

BROOKER — Brooker Community School is getting all the details in place for a fall opening. In addition to holding a workshop on security resources and a registration and recruitment

event, the Board of Directors of the charter school has selected Dr. Felecia F. Moss as principal.

Moss comes with stellar credentials and 37 years’ experience in education. Coming from the small town of Jasper, she has a personal appreciation of the importance of small town education, to both the students and the community at large. Her K-12 experience in education has ranged from founding principal of a private Christian school



Dr. Felecia F. Moss

to “turnaround principal” of some challenging public schools.

Moss is a Gator graduate of UF from bachelor’s degree to doctorate. She loves a challenge and said she is excited to be a part of making Brooker Community School one that other schools will talk about as a shining example. Moss supports project-based learning along with STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) instruction.

## School workshops safety resources

BY CAROL MOSLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

BROOKER — Brooker Community School is preparing for the safety of students and staff. About 30 residents gathered for the recent workshop on safety resources, along with the school’s board and the new principal, Dr. Felecia Moss, to hear from Sheriff Gordon Smith.

Board Secretary Jerome Kelley, expressed that “security is paramount.” This meeting offered the chance to identify all the safety factors to consider and present a realistic picture of the physical and financial challenges in meeting those needs.

Sheriff Smith assured everyone that safety will be a top priority, and he guaranteed they’ll have a resource officer assigned by the time the doors open to students. But he let them know that it will be important to recruit school guardians to be always on site. If a resource officer is on a call or all the way in Starke, it is a long way to get to Brooker.

Smith pointed out that is often the guardians who are the ones that put an end to an incident.

The school should have three guardians in addition to an assigned resource officer. The school would need to expect a salary of about \$70,000 per year,

including insurance and benefits, for a deputy resource officer.

Guardians, on the other hand, are made up of school staff, including teachers, who volunteer. Their identity is kept secret. Guardians must undergo a three-week process of preparation, including training and a psychological evaluation. The next session begins on June 6.

The sheriff’s office provides a \$1 million liability insurance policy for each guardian and provides the training and the weapons. But Sheriff Smith pointed out that passive security measures such as securely locked doors, steel doors without glass, doorbell locks and alert systems are also important deterrents to have in place.

That reality check was sobering, but not insurmountable. The school will receive a fee per student from the state, amounting to \$17,800 for 116 students. Smith pointed out that the board of county commissioners covers 72% of the deputies’ salaries. He suggested residents appeal to their district commissioner as well as the others since it takes three out of five votes to approve.

He said they are generally apt to fund requests for the benefit of children.

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# Lake Region



The fair's oldest volunteer Lemmie Kirkland, 95, cut the ribbon at the front gate to officially open the 11-day event. Assisting Kirkland is (right) Fair Chairman of the Board Bob Olson. Photo: Clay County Agricultural Fair.

## Clay County Fair opens

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Telegraph Staff Writer

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS— Officials opened the Clay County Agricultural Fair on Thursday, March 30.

The festivities included the entry of the fair board of directors on a parade float and appearances by the Clay High drum line and sheriff's office color guard.

Fair Manager Tasha Hyder said this year's edition of the

event features five new rides and 12 more food options than the 2022 fair.

The fair's oldest volunteer Lemmie Kirkland, 95, cut the ribbon at the front gate to officially open the 11-day event. Kirkland volunteers in the Early Florida Village, which features a soap-making exhibit, sawmill, outhouse, general store and the Penny Farms jailhouse and schoolhouse.



Fair board members entered the opening ceremony aboard a parade float. Photo: Dan Hildebran, Telegraph Staff Writer.

## Traffic jams, inadequate parking plague fair

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Telegraph Staff Writer

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS— Some motors seeking to park at the Clay County Fair Sunday afternoon abandoned their cars on the shoulder of State Road 16 in favor of waiting to get into the event's facilities.

The sheriff's office and fire rescue said the parking lots at the

fairgrounds were full and urged motorists to stay in their vehicles until fair officials could find additional parking.

The sheriff's office also rebutted rumors that the wait time in cars on State Road 16 was between three and four hours.

Fair board member Bruce Butler said the organization ran six-seat trams and four-seat golf carts transporting patrons from parking lots to the front gate. "It was like drinking from a large firehose on a hot day," he said of the event's transportation operations. "It was a record-breaking day."

Even before the week-and-a-

half fair began, officials warned of long lines of cars on State Road 16 and asked motorists to be patient.

"I will tell you right now that traffic will be slow on 16, but we will keep traffic moving," Sheriff Michelle Cook said in a news conference before the fair opened. "This is an 11-day event, and we are going to have estimates of over 120,000 people coming through the gates over the next 11 days."

The sheriff was joined by Emergency Manager John Ward and Fair Manager Tasha Hyder in the news briefing to discuss the March 30 through April 9 event.

Cook said officials have extensively prepared for the fair. "We've trained for everything from injuries to missing people and everything in between," the sheriff said. "So, we are prepared when it comes to your safety and security."

Cook asked residents to download the agency's Safer Watch phone app to get traffic and other updates. She also advised parents to take a photo of their children before entering the gates, so that if a child gets lost, officials can easier locate the missing person with the photo.

## Inmate welfare bills advancing

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE— Two bills making their way through the Florida Legislature would expand the Department of Corrections' inmate Welfare Trust Fund. The department's leadership said it wants to use the money to finance inmate education, substance abuse and other programs.

The fund, which receives revenue from canteen sales, vending machines, hobby shops and commissions on inmate telephone calls, has been capped at \$2.5 million a year since 2020, even though canteen and telephone commissions have reached up to \$33 million a year.

An FDC vendor charges families up to 13.5 cents a minute for families to talk to inmates on the phone, in addition to other fees.

Between 2003 and 2020, all the revenue from those sources went straight to the state's general revenue fund.

Deputy Secretary of Corrections Richard Comerford told a Senate committee earlier this year that programming like G.E.D. and college courses, vocational training and voluntary programming like Bible, parenting and literacy courses reduce violence, gang activity and contraband within

institutions.

He said the department wants to expand the inmate welfare trust fund to pay for additional programming.

Comerford said the programming also reduces recidivism by providing inmates with basic education, job training, substance abuse prevention classes and anger management courses.

"Most individuals sentenced to prison will be released back into our communities," he said, "approximately 83% based on current estimates. We want to help these inmates released be better than they came to us so that we can reduce victimization in our communities and prevent further incarceration."

Inmates can earn G.E.D. diplomas, associate of arts, and bachelor's degrees while serving time.

The deputy secretary added, however, that because of a lack of resources limiting course seats, only 17% of inmates are enrolled in programming.

### Paying for porn

Prior to 2003, the state's Inmate Welfare Trust Fund collected tens of millions of dollars and spent that money on inmate programs.

However, a 1996 report by the Auditor General criticized the lack of control over the money and pointed out expenditures for sports gear, fast food, televisions and other buys designed to pacify inmates rather than to educate them.

In 2003 Sen. Victor Crist sponsored a bill eliminating the fund and directing the money into the state's general fund, according to a Sarasota Herald-Tribune analysis: Wasted Minds.

The Tampa Republican claimed some of the inmate welfare trust money was used to purchase pornography to placate inmates.

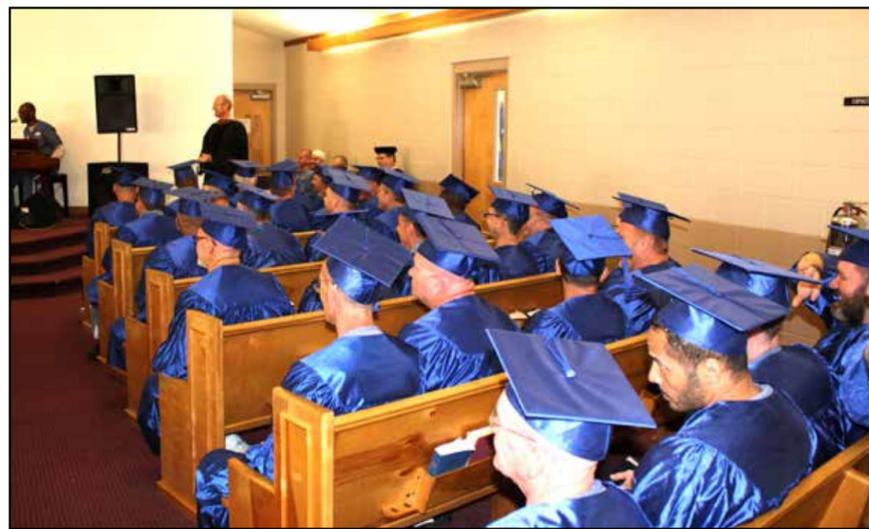
"They were showing porno in the prisons," Crist told the newspaper. "We just wanted to fix the problem."

In 2020, FDC Secretary Mark Inch lobbied to get the fund reinstated. Still, lawmakers capped it at \$2.5 million a year, less than eight percent of the revenues generated by inmates and their families.

### More than just a bus ticket and \$50

Now, Corrections Secretary Ricky Dixon is seeking to restore the fund to its original purpose.

He said that 90% of Florida's inmates will eventually wind



Last year the Department of Corrections celebrated 55 GED graduates at Hardee Correctional Institution. The department wants to expand educational programming within Florida prisons by expanding the Inmate Welfare Trust Fund. Photo: Florida Department of Corrections.

up on the streets and that if his department does not adequately address inmate education and recidivism, it is not fully addressing its public safety mission.

"Each year, about 24,000 (inmates) are released from our system," Dixon told a Tallahassee talk show host.

"Our public safety mission goes far beyond just the period of time that individuals are in

our custody," Dixon said on The Morning Show with Preston Scott. "It extends to their success upon release, and when they're not successful, if they're part of the 24% that recidivates: that comes back to prison within three years... there's usually a victim or more victims associated with that return."

Dixon said he wants the department to give inmates re-entering society a fighting

chance and give them more than just a bus ticket and \$50.

At press time, Senate Bill 7018 had cleared all committees and was scheduled for a second reading on the Senate floor. It would cap contributions to the Inmate Welfare Trust Fund at \$32 million a year. House Bill 1219, scheduled for a third reading on the House floor, would raise the annual cap to \$12.5 million.

## Spring Fling and plant sale April 15

The Garden Club of the Lakes invites everyone to its annual, spring plant sale. The club will be joined by several other local growers. There will be a variety of lovely houseplants and landscape plants for sale. They are proud to be able to offer "Heritage Roses" from the Rose Petal Nursery once again.

The Garden Club will also have a table with free activities for children of all ages.

Join the Spring Fling at Faith Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Women of Faith Church will have their Thrift Shop open, and the church will have all kinds of treats and games for the children. Also, Rob from Faith Church will be cooking his famous barbecue pork again, which sold out last time he made

it, so come early because it is awesome!

The Farmers Market located at the church is featuring fresh vegetables, homegrown honey, meat, eggs, baked goods and crafts.

If you are a vendor or nonprofit organization and want to show off your products or programs, please call Jackie Host at 352-235-0722. Artists and others who have commodities to sell are especially encouraged to set up a table. There is no fee for setting up, but a donation is asked for at the end of the day.

All the proceeds from Garden Club sales are used to support the club and its civic gardening projects, educational and youth horticulture programs. The plant sale will be held at the Faith Presbyterian Church, located at 2738 SE S.R. 21 at Midway between Keystone Heights and Melrose, on Saturday, April 15, from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

The Garden Club of the Lakes has served the Lake Region over 60 years and is composed of members from Alachua, Bradford, Clay and Polk counties.

## Feel better by being creative

Bradford County Public Library and Department of Health will mark National Minority Health Month with Feel Good Art: Creations for Self-care and Joy. They will be joined by Meridian Behavioral Health. Discover how being creative can help you.

The program will take place at the Community Health and Wellness Resource Hub, 721 Old Lawtey Road in Starke, on Friday, April 21, at 10 a.m. Seating is limited. You can sign up at the Community Resource Hub or call the library at 904-368-3911 and ask for Kathy.

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# UNION COUNTY

## County seeks funds from state for lost tax revenue and costs from prisons

BY TRACY LEE TATE  
Times Staff Writer

LAKE BUTLER — Local governments across the state are suffering from the downturn in the economy as are most of their citizens. Counties must provide services to their citizens such as courts, public safety, roads, waste management and many services related to the government itself, including election administration, schools, and offices which support the functioning of the county (offices such as that of the property appraiser, clerk of court, tax collector and finance). Most of this is funded through the assessment of ad valorem taxes and other specific special assessments. Every year, county residents must pay their taxes on their homes and land as a matter of course, but not all the land in the county is subject to being taxed and in smaller counties that can create a problem.

Union County is the smallest county in the state in terms of land area and is third smallest in the state when population is considered (of course that is greatly affected by the large number of Department of Corrections (DOC) inmates who are counted, as they technically “live” in the county — 33% of the county’s population). There are

many homes in the county, but a significant percentage of the area is zoned for agricultural use (taxed at a lower rate), including lands used for raising livestock, growing crops and trees. Added to this are the various lands on which no tax is paid at all — including church property, property owned by charitable organizations, schools, properties owned by persons with certain disabilities and 100% disabled veterans and most cemeteries.

Also exempt are all lands owned by the county itself, any municipalities in the county, the state of Florida and the Federal government. It is the state-owned properties that present the largest loss of ad valorem revenue for Union County, most notably the large tracts of land owned by the Florida Department of Corrections (FDOC) that serve to hold the prisons that call the county home.

In the original agreement between the county and FDOC, the county agreed to deed land owned by the county to the state to allow the construction of correctional institutions in exchange for inmate labor for local government needs. The agreement was that the county would have access to 49 inmates to be utilized in its work crews for such services as mowing and assisting the various departments

such as solid waste and the road department.

The idea was that the use of the inmates would reduce county expenses as they would be doing work that would otherwise require paid employees. Then work camps closed and vocational training was implemented for inmates and the number of inmates made available to the county was reduced by half (causing the county to remove two inmate supervisor positions).

Meanwhile, FDOC now owns 29 properties in Union County, with staff housing having been added as an employment incentive outside the scope of the agreement, which have a combined assessed value of a little under \$68.1 million which, if taxed as other properties in the county, would produce estimated annual taxes of \$1.15 million.

Besides the large areas of land used for the Regional Medical Center and its work camp and West Unit and the Union Correctional Institution and its work camp, FDOC also provides a total of 247 housing units for correctional personnel, including 171 homes, 59 mobile homes and 16 apartments.

The county with the next highest number of housing units provides only about 40 units. This means that the county and school

district are missing out on about \$320,000 in estimated annual ad valorem taxes. In addition, these properties pay no special assessments for emergency medical services, fire services, solid waste management or local law enforcement through the Union County Sheriff’s Office, but they still receive these services.

In the period from May 2021 to May 2022, UCSO responded to 197 calls for service from DOC property via 911 dispatch, EMS responded to 175 calls and fire services responded to two calls. Since response to 911 emergency calls in mandated by state law, these calls cost Union County taxpayers about \$200,000 for the one-year period. In addition, Union taxpayers pay an estimated annual cost for waste management services for these properties of \$16,598, mostly in tipping fees.

FDOC is the largest employer in Union County and provides jobs for many people in the surrounding area as well. Staff housing is provided at competitive rates to employees, but they still pay rent for the housing. FDOC collects this as revenue. The upside is that families can have an affordable place to live, and the institutions have a reserve of employees on-site should an emergency occur

requiring people to be called in to work on short notice.

The county, on the other hand, loses about \$1.4 million per year due to the lack of ad valorem income and the cost to the county of the services it is required to provide. In a larger county such a financial hit might be easier to work around, but in a county the size of Union it is a serious matter.

County Coordinator Jimmy Williams is working to get the state legislature to provide the county with an annual Payment in Lieu of Taxes of \$300,000 to help offset these expenses (made more critical due to the decrease in the number of inmates available for work crews — causing a payroll increase for work that still must be done). He has been working with state representatives to make and follow-up on the request and reports that the appropriation is in the state’s preliminary budget for the coming fiscal year currently.

Williams is also pursuing the full funding of an existing, recurring allocation designed to provide small counties with disproportionate impact from state prison facilities with funds. The money to earmarked to mitigate the economic impact large prison populations (7% of county population or more) have

on the surrounding communities. Some areas in which counties may see these effects include road wear-and-tear, traffic issues (more accidents) and the aforementioned costs to the county for state mandated services.

The funding was originally based on the percentage of the population of the county made up of inmates. For Union County, according to the full formula approved by the legislature, should be receiving \$289,632 annually but is only receiving \$73,533 due to a reduction on the funding of this program and the addition of another paid from the appropriated funds. This is affecting all counties in the program, not just Union County.

Williams said the request was also included in the state’s preliminary budget for the coming fiscal year.

“The combination of the two funding sources will make up the difference in ad valorem income and the costs of services provided to the prisons at the taxpayer’s expense,” Williams said.

Williams is also working with FDOC to investigate the possibility of reinstating the original allotment of inmate labor and possibly re-opening a work-camp.



Sheriff Brad Whitehead (center) with Lake Butler Elementary students and UCSO deputies. Photo: Union County Sheriff’s Office.

## Sheriff’s office meets LB Elementary students

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE—The Union County Sheriff’s Office said its deputies participated in Lake

Butler Elementary’s career day, speaking to students about the importance of law enforcement and when and why to call 911 for emergencies.

The interaction also included

hands-on demonstrations with law enforcement equipment.

“All the kids had lots of questions, and it is always a fun time talking to them about what we do,” the office said. “We

also participate in career days at our middle and high Schools throughout the year.”

## Inmate climbs tower

BY TRACY LEE TATE  
Times Staff Writer

LAKE BUTLER — Early in the afternoon on Monday, April 3, a work release inmate at the Florida Department of Corrections Regional Medical Center, in Lake Butler, managed to approach the facilities water tower and climb it.

The unnamed inmate climbed 200 feet up the tower ladder, then began threatening to jump. Correctional officers and other prison staff worked at calming the man and talking him into coming down the ladders and, after about two hours he did so. The inmate was taken to the RMC medical unit to be checked out after his descent.

The inmate never posed any

sort of threat to anyone other than himself and was never off prison grounds. There were no injuries resulting from the incident. Inmate work crews out in the community were recalled due to the incident as is the policy for any unusual situation. The inmates name and the reasons for his misbehavior have not been disclosed as of press time.

Oddly enough, a Google search for the term “inmate climbs water tower” produced reports of several incidents in the past 15-20 years, from all over the world, of inmates accomplishing this feat. No opinions on the origin of the idea or the motive behind it is not given in any of the articles.

## Cost of water outage in city tallied and paid by Synergy

BY TRACY LEE TATE  
Times Staff Writer

LAKE BUTLER — The numbers are in for the cost of the water main breaks that left the city of Lake Butler without water for 24 hours last January and the bill has been paid in full by the company causing the break.

The break occurred near the intersection of Southeast Fourth Street and Southeast Sixth Avenue early in the afternoon on Jan. 12. The Synergy Company was digging a pit in the area to set up for directional drilling using a mini excavator. They reported to city workers that when they

reached the water main that “it just came apart. Tooth marks from the machine were visible on the pipe.

City public works employees reported to the scene almost immediately. After many hours (three workers stayed working on the problem through the night, ending up working nearly 30 hours straight) an outside contractor was called in to help finish the job. Materials had to be sent for because the department does not normally keep the necessary 10-inch pipe for the repair. Parts were also necessary to repair a second break in an undamaged pipe which burst by the pressure when the water was turned back on.

The final cost of the mishap was \$17,161.71, including \$3,723.66 in employee wages, materials from two sources at a total cost of \$4,843.06 and subcontracting services from W.W. Gay and Newsome Well & Septic at \$8,595.

Synergy accepted responsibility for the accident and sent the city a check for the full amount later in the month.

## Development authority considering its future

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — While the governor and Disney continue to Duke it out over the former Reedy Creek Development District, perhaps for years to come, Bradford’s affected district is looking to move on.

An unintended consequence of Gov. Ron DeSantis’ move to dissolve Reedy Creek is that other special districts, including the Bradford County Development Authority would also be dissolved.

BCDA President Patricia Evans said even prior to the governor’s actions, the development authority was already considering how it could have a more effective and wider — more regional — impact on economic development without some of the restrictions of being a special district.

DeSantis just added a sense of urgency to their discussions. BCDA received a grant from the International Economic Development Corporation to study the existing structure of the authority, look at pros and cons, and suggest actions.

“After much review and consideration of the findings of this study, the current BCDA board voted to continue going through the dissolution process and reorganize as a regional economic development entity with a board comprised of a mix of public and private individuals,” Evans wrote in a letter to board members and other stakeholders. “The new entity will also be able to encourage and accept interested parties as paid ‘investors’ for a membership base. The new entity has the intentions of, in the future, being able to hire a paid economic development director.”

BCDA was scheduled to meet Wednesday afternoon for informal discussions and a review of the draft bylaws for the regional development group.

Evans wrote: “This regional economic development group is not forming to compete with any existing economic development agencies or individuals. This group is forming to support and add value to our region that already has momentum growing as the value of our rural communities is recognized.”

## Public comments on flood maps due April 30

The Suwannee River Water Management District wants to remind residents in the Santa Fe Watershed of the extended timeframe for public feedback.

Residents have until April 30 to provide feedback on potential flood zone changes. The April 30 deadline is an extension from the original deadline of late March.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, in coordination with the district, hosted a series of meetings in February for citizens to provide feedback on proposed flood zones changes to their property. For those who could not attend, a public comment period was authorized for additional feedback.

Those with requested changes and feedback on the existing maps should utilize this critical time to provide written comments. Changes requested after April 30 may require engineering studies and other formal analysis.

Map changes based on feedback are not guaranteed,

but data or photos from recent flood events are encouraged to be submitted for consideration. Preliminary maps are expected to be available early next year, with the new flood maps going into effect in 2025.

Additional information, including the presentations made during the meeting and flood zone designation status, can be found by visiting [www.SRWMDfloodreport.com/virtual](http://www.SRWMDfloodreport.com/virtual).

The mission of the Suwannee River Water Management District is to protect and manage water resources using science-based solutions to support natural systems and the needs of the public. The district holds true to the belief of water for nature, water for people. Headquartered in Live Oak, Florida, the district serves 15 surrounding north-central Florida counties.

For more information about the district, visit [www.MySuwanneeRiver.com](http://www.MySuwanneeRiver.com).



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# Rotary Beast Feast raises money for Dr. Gianas scholarship

**BY MARCIA MILLER**  
Special to the Telegraph-Times-Monitor

Community members from three counties attended the Rotary Club's Beast Feast Saturday night, enjoying delicious food while raising money for a great cause.

Proceeds from the big evening went to the Dr. Pete Gianas Scholarship Fund. "The scholarship fund will be available to any Bradford County student who wants to continue their educational journey," said Starke Rotary President Matt Dyal. "This event is doing a great job of moving us toward our goal."

The event included a giant all-you-can-eat buffet with a wide variety of foods including elk, gator, venison, a whole roast pig, ribs, chicken, fish, shrimp and a whole lot more. Homemade desserts capped the expansive meal while a live band provided entertainment.

A large number of attendees walked off with prizes. Everyone received free tickets they could place in buckets designated for door prizes which included luxury gift baskets, insulated tumblers, supplies for outside activities like tether ball, hunting accessories like special binoculars, barbecue supplies, and many more. Everyone placed one or more of their tickets in the bucket which corresponded to the prize they would like to receive. Everyone was given enough free tickets to try for a number of the prizes. At the end of the evening, one ticket was drawn from each bucket and the person who held the other half of the ticket received the prize to take home.

A silent auction was held for some of the more valuable prizes. Prize-drawing games were played for a fee that allowed the winners to receive a chance at some of the grand prizes – like a vacation getaway to a cabin in North Carolina or a weekend getaway to Cedar Key.

A live auction – hosted by auctioneer and Starke Police Chief Jeff Johnson – was held to determine the winners of a 9mm handgun and a 1911 rifle.

Allen Parrish, with UF Health ShandsCair and UF Health Shands, worked in emergency services in this area for many years. He spoke to the crowd about the legacy Dr. Gianas left to the people in this area.

Dr. Gianas was involved in emergency medicine and acted as medical consultant for emergency medical services (EMS) in this area for many years. Parrish worked directly with him for many of those years and became a lifelong friend. "Dr. Gianas is a man who had an insatiable appetite for learning," Parrish said. "It was not unusual to receive a call, e-mail or text from him at 3 a.m. as he shared something he had just learned that would benefit us."

Parrish said that when Dr. Gianas was in high school, he used to get up at 5 a.m. to do his homework before he went to school. It was not unusual for Gianas to spend his Friday and Saturday evenings in the



**Allen Parrish speaks to the crowd about Dr. Pete Gianas, his dedication to learning and assisting others with their educations.**



**Auctioneer Jeff Johnson sells one of the firearms that were auctioned off.**



**The food was delicious as Shawn Jenkins and Tony Veliz (at left), among many others, can attest.**



**Rotary President Matt Dyal steadies the drawing tumbler while Ellie Mindli draws out the winner of the cabin vacation in Murphy, North Carolina, which was one of the big prizes. Brad Bishop and Rachel Brown are in the background.**



**(L-R) Preston Nazworth, David Church (drums) and Ben Carter warm up in preparation of supplying live music for the event.**



**Gordon Smith and Brandi Noegel were catching up on news while enjoying the event.**



**(L-R) Matt Bryant and Brad Bishop deal the cards for one of the prize-drawing games which were featured at the event.**

library studying. "He truly loved learning," said Parrish.

Parrish said throughout Dr. Gianas' career he had encouraged others to continue their education. Parrish said Dr. Gianas spoke to him when Parrish

was 17. Dr. Gianas told him that he would pay for Parrish's education if Parrish would return to this area to work and serve the community. He said Dr. Gianas did that for many other people as well, some of whom

were in attendance at the Beast Feast. Those people went on to become healthcare professionals, educators and financial advisors, to name a few of the professions Dr. Gianas impacted.

"It is very fitting that Rotary

has taken it upon themselves to fund an educational scholarship in his name," said Parrish. "Dr. Gianas had a desire to make sure everyone had the opportunity to get an education."

Parris said Dr. Gianas would

probably be upset that his name was on the scholarship, because Gianas was never a person who sought public acclaim. "But he would be very proud to leave a legacy that will continue to help people obtain an education."



**Scouts from Troop 146 and Troop 9187 helped out at the fundraiser. (L-R, seated) Amber VanWie, Keturah Helme, Felix Helme and Nolan Gets. (L-R, standing) Heather VanWie, Ryan Gets, Wendy Helme and Tobias Hartner.**

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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

Stephen Jay Cowart, 67, of Starke was arrested by Starke police on March 28 for a probation violation.

Kenneth Warren Davis, 57, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 29 for lewd and lascivious behavior.

Deangelo, Lamar Farmer, 23, of Glen St. Mary was arrested on March 29 for possession of marijuana and driving with a suspended or revoked license.

### Threatened road workers

Bradford deputies arrested a 46-year-old Lawtey man after they say he threatened workers repairing a road in front of his home because they made too much noise.

Martin Robert Benjamin Gallion was arrested for improper exhibition of a firearm, aggravated assault and possession of a firearm or ammunition by a felon.

According to an arrest report, workers from FDOT contractor Bold City Bucket Works were trying to free a vehicle stuck in the sand near the defendant's home on Northwest 271st Way, when Gallion exited his residence and complained about the noise they were making.

The business owner said he saw the defendant go back to his house and return to the workers, pointing a silver-colored handgun at them.

Gallion told deputies he did not point a gun at the workers but rather a remote-control device.

Ernesto Manuel Gonzalez Garcia, 23, of Jacksonville was arrested on March 25 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

### Parents arrested after kids found in parking lot

Starke police arrested the parents of two toddlers after the children were found wandering in the parking lot of the Bradford Motel and Campground.

Joshua Lee Hall, 27, and Melody Ray Jordan, 21 were arrested for child neglect.

According to an arrest report, a Bradford deputy told police that the deputy was flagged down by a witness who saw two children roaming the parking lot unattended.

"Once on scene," wrote reporting officer Moses C. Bellamy, "I observed two young children under the age of 5 who appeared to be filthy, covered in dirt and feces and one was complaining about a cut underneath her foot."

The officer added that Bradford EMS transported the children to a hospital for evaluation.

Bellamy reported that the parents told him they fell asleep thinking another adult was supervising the toddlers.

Edward Joseph Harkin, 33, of Brooker was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 26 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

### Threw woman into alligator-infested waters

Bradford deputies arrested a 48-year-old Hampton man after he threw a woman off the dock near the Hampton Lake boat ramp.

According to an arrest warrant affidavit, on March 17 the drenched victim told Deputy Lakeisha Lewis that she was sitting on the dock when Weston Christopher Hiam walked up to her saying he wanted to say goodbye.

"As (the victim) was trying to come to her feet, Hiam bear-hugged her and then threw her into the water," wrote Lewis, adding, "this water is known to have alligators and water

moccasins."

The victim said that Hiam also fell into the lake and then fled the scene.

The victim said she was holding her cell phone and keys at the time of the incident and that her phone was significantly damaged.

Lewis added that Hiam was previously arrested for aggravated battery against the victim for causing a gash to her head, beating her and destroying her home. He is also on felony probation with an order to not have contact with the victim.

Carl Douglas Hunter, 35, was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 29 for an out-of-county warrant and vehicle theft.

Megan Elizabeth Lambert, 37, of Starke was arrested on March 26 for an out-of-county warrant.

Torrance Terrell Lee, 38, of Gainesville was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 29 for a probation violation.

Tiffany Ann Mixson, 43, was arrested by Starke police on March 26 for possession of drugs, possession of drug equipment, possession of marijuana and possession of a controlled substance without a prescription.

William John Ben Parrish, 39, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 27 for DUI.

### Grandmother and mom arm themselves because of harassing neighbor

Starke police arrested a 46-year-old Starke man after his backyard neighbor claimed he repeatedly harassed and threatened her.

Michael David Patrick was arrested for disturbing the peace and stalking.

Reporting officer Jarred Altman wrote in an arrest report that during the morning of Thursday, March 30, the defendant threatened her while she, her two grandchildren and their mother were in the victim's backyard.

"(The victim) stated that she has had ongoing issues with

Michael coming to the property line and making verbal threats towards her and her family members," wrote Altman in an arrest report. "Michael also has a current trespass warning from the (West Madison Street) residence...due to ongoing issues."

The victim told Altman that she is afraid to go outside due to the defendant's behavior and threats.

"She stated that she feels the need to carry a gun outside with her for protection due to being in fear that Michael will harm her," wrote the officer. "Michael willfully comes outside when he sees (the victim) walk out of her residence for the sole purpose of confronting (the victim) about the 'voices in his head' and yells and screams profanities at her."

The mother of the two children told Altman she obtained a concealed weapons permit and a firearm because of the defendant's ongoing threats.

Becky Lynn Reddish, 57, of Lawtey was arrested by Bradford deputies and Lawtey police on March 30 for DUI, hit and run and aggravated assault.

Alexander Xavier Rentz, 36, of Gainesville was arrested on March 27 for an out-of-county warrant.

### Spat in correctional officer's face

Bradford deputies arrested a 41-year-old Florida State Prison inmate after the Department of Corrections said the inmate spat in a correctional officer's face.

Christopher Sanders was booked for battery of a facility employee by throwing, tossing or expelling fluids.

According to a FDC inspector general's probable cause affidavit, on April 22, 2022, a lieutenant was using chemical force on the inmate after Sanders refused to submit to handcuffing procedures for the purpose of being placed on property restriction.

"Inmate Sanders was being placed on property restriction due to the disturbance he was causing on the wing," wrote Inspector Carlton Milton in the affidavit. "Inmate Sanders is a 40-year-old black male who is serving a 27-year sentence for sexual battery and a 1-year sentence for throwing fluids at correctional staff."

Troy Lee Sturgis, 53, was arrested on March 27 for trespassing.

### Took \$24K to replace dock, failed to complete job

Bradford deputies arrested a 52-year-old Starke man after he took \$24,600 from a Sampson Lake resident to replace a dock, then failed to complete the work.

Joseph Stefan Wheeler was arrested for larceny.

According to an arrest warrant affidavit, the victim paid the defendant, operating under the trade name of Wheeler Custom Framing, \$9,000 to start the job on March 9, 2021, \$4,500 on April 23, 2021, \$6,100 on June 9, 2021, and \$5,000 on July 21, 2021.

"Mr. Wheeler stated in a text to (the victim) back in February 2022 that he would have the job completed by May 1, 2022, however, the dock is still incomplete, and no work has been done," wrote Deputy Lekiesha Lewis in the affidavit. "(The victim) also stated that Mr. Wheeler does come by the home on occasion but fails to complete any work on the dock. Mr. Wheeler continues to ask for money but has failed to complete the agreement on the new dock."

Clay

### Union

Ira Lynn Holmes, 40, of Lake Butler was arrested by Union deputies on March 28 for burglary.

Randall Fitzhugh Howard, 25, of Lake Butler was arrested by Union deputies on March 28 for sexual assault on a victim 18 years or older.

Paul Alan Mosely, 53, of Raiford was arrested by Union deputies on March 28 for a conditional release violation.

Tommy J. Vasquez, 31, was arrested by Union deputies on March 29 for aggravated battery by a person detained in a prison, robbery and criminal conspiracy.

### Deputies capture escapee

The Bradford County Sheriff's Office said the Bradford-Union Drug Task Force arrested an inmate that had escaped from the Florida Department of Corrections.

The agency said on a social media post: On March 29th, 2023, at approximately (11:15 p.m.), the Bradford/Union Drug task force received intel that Barry Warren Jr. was staying at a residence in Lake Butler Florida. The office added that the Bradford/Union SWAT team conducted a surround and call out

of the residence where Warren was located. He was taken into custody and turned over to the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Warren is serving a 1-year, 3-month sentence for possession of methamphetamine, possession of a controlled substance and felony fleeing and eluding.

He was scheduled to be released in November 2023, but walked away from the Bridges of Santa Fe Community Release Center in Gainesville on March 19.

The center provides intensive substance abuse treatment services to men with a remaining sentence of 24 to 36 months.

### Clay

Charles Ray Accordino, 36, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 29 for possession of not more than 20 grams of marijuana and possession of drug equipment.

Janice M. Blumenstein, 66, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 26 for DUI and possession of not more than 20 grams of marijuana.

Carrie Lynn Collier, 38, of Melrose was arrested by Clay deputies on March 30 for battery.

Katrina Ann Daniels, 20, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 30 for possession of methamphetamine, possession of not more than 20 grams of marijuana and possession of drug equipment.

Roy Christopher Martin, 58, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 25 for felony domestic battery by strangulation and resisting an officer with violence.

Christopher Clark Pheil, 33, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 25 for possession of not more than 20 grams of marijuana.

Joshua Caleb Reed, 35, of Melrose was arrested by Clay deputies on March 29 for domestic battery.

Kenneth John Waters, 38, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 30 for possession of methamphetamine, trafficking in four grams or more of fentanyl, possession of suboxone and possession of drug equipment.

Yoniseider Gonzalez-Alvarez, 21, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on March 30 for retail grand theft and resisting an officer without violence.



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## County scrubs fishing tournament

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Telegraph Staff Writer

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS—Clay County commissioners amended their contract with a national promoter of kayak bass

fishing, deleting the promoter's role in producing a fishing tournament in Clay County and requiring him only to promote the sport within the county.

When announcing the tournament last November at Whitey's Fish Camp in Fleming Island, County Commissioner Mike Cella said tourism impacts the county more than most people realize.

"In 2019, the last pre-pandemic year, visitors spent \$218.7 million here in Clay County," he said. "They paid \$46.8 million in federal, state, and local taxes. They supported nearly 3,500 jobs."

Cella added that if all the 3,500 Clay jobs supported by tourism were within one organization, that business would be one of the top five largest employers in the county.

The county's contract for the tournament was with Chad Hoover, whom Cella said invented the sport of kayak bass fishing.

"Chad founded Kayak Bass Fishing back in 2009, and since that time, KBF has set the pace for the kayak fishing industry and has brought thousands of anglers into the sport," Cella said, "hosting competitors from Mexico, Canada, and every place in between, all across every American state."

During the news conference announcing the tournament, Hoover said Clay County was perfect for the type of tournament he organizes.

"You're not sitting in an hour-and-a-half of traffic to get to the fishing spot," he said. "You're not fighting with 500 people at the boat ramp."

Hoover added that the

northerly flowing St. Johns River turns from brackish to salty around the Buckman Bridge, near the Duval-Clay County line.

"So, it's that perfect sweet spot to do a little bit of fresh, a little bit of salt or as we call fresh water: sweet water. So, it's a little bit salty; it's a little bit sweet."

After the county changed its contract with Hoover eliminating the tournament and reducing his fee from \$170,000 to \$50,000, County Commission Chair Betsy Condon said that after reviewing the county's fishing assets, Hoover advised that the county's infrastructure was not sufficient to handle the tournament he had envisioned.

Cella, who also chairs the county's Tourist Development Council, said he was disappointed. However, he added that he would rather cancel the tournament at this point than have an unsuccessful event.

## 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 Stalnaker.

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.

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# Business Section

## Helping Small Businesses' Dreams Become A Reality

### The Benefits of Volunteering!



Seventh Day Adventist Church of Starke Food Pantry members getting food ready.

With most of us leading super busy lives, the idea of volunteering – giving your time and energy to a cause without financial reward – may seem an impossible task. I mean, how can we fit anything else into our already jam-packed schedules? However, volunteering is important for many reasons and doesn't have to take up too much time. And, in fact, the benefits of volunteering are vast for the volunteer – not just the community, individual or organization receiving their assistance.

Indeed, it's these benefits that could partly explain the rise in popularity of volunteering over the past few years. During 2012-13, 29 per cent of adults in England, UK, said they had formally volunteered at least once a month. The figure in the United States is not far off, at around 25 per cent (with slightly more women volunteering than men).

Promisingly, an increasing number of these people are young adults. In the UK, figures show that 2.9 million people in the 16 to 25-year-old age group volunteered during 2015, compared to 1.8 million in 2010: that's a whopping 50 per cent increase.

So, why the interest in volunteering? The Greek philosopher Aristotle once said that the essence of life is "to serve others and do good," and it seems an increasing number of us are starting to wake up and see why volunteering is important. People are starting to understand how serving and helping each other and different communities benefits not just others but ourselves, too.

#### Why is volunteering important?

Volunteering is important as it offers essential help to worthwhile causes, people in need, and the wider community. Indeed, many organizations and charities rely on

the generosity of volunteers as often they're only part-funded through government or local councils, and cannot afford to pay salaries for all their staff. In fact, many companies depend almost solely upon teams of volunteers to help them thrive and do their work.

#### So, what are the benefits of volunteering?

Of course, the benefits of volunteering for those receiving help are clear. Whether it's providing kids in a Third World country with free English classes or litter picking at your local beach, the benefits to the receiver and the wider community are usually part of the reason why you decide to volunteer in the first place. But did you realise just how important volunteering could be for the person doing it? In fact, volunteering is beneficial to the doer for a whole host of reasons, including stress reduction, combating depression and providing a sense of purpose.

*"Volunteering is important as it offers essential help to worthwhile causes, people in need, and the wider community."*

And while studies do show that the more you volunteer, the more benefits you'll experience, volunteering doesn't have to involve a long-term commitment. Even giving in simple ways can help those in need and improve your overall health and happiness.

So, let's take a closer look at just why volunteering is important with seven key benefits of this altruistic act.

#### 1. Volunteering connects you with others

If you're feeling lonely, isolated, or simply want to widen your social circle, volunteering in your local community is an important – and often fun – way to meet new people. In fact, one of the best ways to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships is to commit to a shared activity together, and volunteering lets you do just that.

If you've recently moved to a new city or country, volunteering is an important and easy way to meet new people and it also strengthens your ties to that local community and broadens your support network. Furthermore, it connects you to people who have common interests and passions and who could go on to become great friends. In fact,

volunteering is an important and interesting way to meet people who you might not normally connect with: people from different age groups, ethnicities or social groups. Because volunteering is open to everyone, it allows you to meet a wide variety of people from all sorts of walks of life, something that can only open your eyes further.

#### 2. Volunteering builds self-confidence and self-esteem

Doing good for others and the community helps to create a natural sense of accomplishment. And working as a volunteer can also give you a sense of pride and identity, helping to boost your self-confidence further by taking you out of your natural comfort zone and environment. Indeed, volunteering helps you to feel better about yourself, which you can then take back to your 'regular' routine, hopefully creating a more positive view of your own life and future goals. If you're shy or fearful of new experiences, cultures and travel, volunteering overseas could be an important and insightful way to help you build self-confidence in this area too (not forgetting the other benefit of this type of volunteering – a chance to see a bit of the world at the same time!)

Research shows that volunteering could be particularly useful and important in boosting the self-esteem and confidence of adolescents who are just starting out on their life journey. A 2017 study from the University of Missouri and Brigham Young University that included almost 700 11- to 14-year-olds examined how sharing, helping and comforting others affected self-confidence. The study found that altruistic behaviors may indeed raise teens' feelings of self-worth and that adolescents who assisted strangers reported higher self-esteem one year later.

*"If you're feeling lonely or simply want to widen your social circle, volunteering in your local community is an important – and fun – way to meet new people."*

And a National Youth Agency report seemed to corroborate this evidence. In it, young people aged 11 to 25 "repeatedly stressed that volunteering had increased their self-confidence, self-esteem and self-belief." This self-confidence boost was shown to be strongly linked to improved communication skills, especially amongst young volunteers who were previously nervous about meeting new people.

#### 3. Volunteering is important for physical health...

Interestingly, volunteering has distinct health

and – perhaps more surprisingly – physical health. Indeed, a growing body of evidence suggests that people who give their time to others might benefit from lower blood pressure and a longer lifespan. A 1999 study showed that 'high volunteers' (helping out at two or more organizations) had a 63 per cent lower mortality rate than non-volunteers. And more recent research (2013) from Carnegie Mellon University found that adults over 50 who volunteered regularly were less likely to develop high blood pressure (hypertension) compare to non-volunteers. Hypertension is an important indicator of health as it contributes to stroke, heart disease and premature death. Lead study author Rodlescia Sneed said that carrying out volunteer work could increase physical activity among those who aren't normally very active, and that it could also reduce stress: "Many people find volunteer work to be helpful with respect to stress reduction, and we know that stress is very strongly linked to health outcomes." Importantly, volunteers seem to notice these health benefits too. Indeed, a 2013 study from UnitedHealth Group and the Optum Institute of over 3,300 U.S. adults revealed that 76 per cent of those in the United States who volunteer said it makes them feel physically healthier. Also, around 25 per cent said that volunteering had been important in helping them manage a chronic health condition.

#### 4. ...and mental health

When it comes to volunteering being important for mental health, the benefits are clear. It can help counteract the effects of stress, depression and anxiety. Indeed, the social contact aspect of helping others can have a profound effect on your overall psychological well-being. Volunteering keeps you in regular contact with others and helps you develop a solid support system, which in turn combats against feelings of loneliness and depression. Volunteering with animals has also been shown to improve mood while reducing stress and anxiety. Finally, volunteering boosts mental health simply because carrying out an altruistic act makes you happier; the so-called 'helper's high'. Human beings are hard-wired to give to others, and by measuring so-called brain activity and happiness hormones, researchers have found that being helpful to others can deliver great pleasure. A 2008 study from the London School of Economics examined the relationship between volunteering and happiness in a large group of American adults. The researchers found that the more

Compared with people who never volunteered, the odds of being 'very happy' rose seven per cent among those who volunteer monthly and 12 per cent for those who volunteer every two to four weeks<sup>5</sup>. *Volunteering is important for a sense of purpose*

Because volunteering means choosing to work without receiving monetary compensation, people often choose to give their time to issues or organisations they feel are important or have a special connection to. For example, if you're a big animal lover you may want to volunteer at a pet shelter. Or, perhaps you've living with or have recovered from an illness and want to dedicate some of your spare time to a charity that helps others living with the same condition. Volunteering like this helps address a social problem that is meaningful to you and in turn helps to build a sense of purpose, which furthermore boosts your own happiness.

*"When it comes to volunteering being important for mental health, the benefits are clear. It can help counteract the effects of stress, depression and anxiety."*

You can try volunteering at any age to help build a sense of purpose, but it's often particularly common in older adults – those that have retired or maybe lost a partner or friends. Whatever your age of life story, volunteering can be an important technique to help give your life new meaning and direction!

**6. Volunteering helps you forget your own problems** One other benefit of volunteering is that focusing on others can give us a deeper sense of perspective and help distract us from negative thoughts and help stop rumination. Volunteering often involves helping those in need and can be useful in showing us that, in fact, our own lives are not as bad as we thought they were.

**7. Volunteering is important for your career** In an increasingly competitive job market, volunteering experience can be incredibly useful. It shows potential employers that you can take initiative and that you're willing to give your own time to improve the world for other people. Furthermore, volunteering gives you the opportunity to practice important common skills used in the workplace, such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, planning and organization. Indeed, if you haven't had a full-time job before then volunteering is an essential way to prove your skills when you do go for work interviews. Also, if you've just graduated or looking for your first job, volunteering is an important and relatively easy way to get a foot in the door of a company you'd like to work with. Even if there's no immediate chance of employment afterwards, volunteering can help you to make connections for the future. Alternatively, if you've already had jobs and are considering a change of direction, volunteering is an important and fun way to try out different career options, especially if you're not quite sure of where you want to go next. Indeed, volunteering offers you the chance to try out a new career without making a long-term commitment!

#### Conclusions: the importance of volunteering

It's clear the benefits of volunteering are huge – improved physical and mental health, new friends and avoiding loneliness, a sense of purpose and deeper self-confidence. In turn, all of these things will help to boost your overall happiness: a win-win situation for all involved. If you're considering volunteering, ask yourself a few questions before taking the plunge. *Firstly*, really think about which causes you're passionate about – it means you're more likely to enjoy and stay committed to the work. *Secondly*, are you looking for regular volunteering opportunities or would you prefer a one-off project? *Thirdly*, what skill set can you offer and what can you hope to gain from volunteering? Good luck when you finally get going, and make sure you have fun – volunteering is important – the benefits are clear – but it's important to enjoy it too!

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Keystone captured the District 7-1A team championship trophies in both the Olympic and traditional competitions. The Indians won every weight class but one in each competition, with six individuals winning both Olympic and traditional titles. Photo by Cliff Smelley.

## Indians win Olympic, traditional district titles

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Keystone Heights High School won every weight class but one in the Olympic and traditional events to earn the District 7-1A championships in both on March 29 in Keystone.

Tyler Anthony-Rozier, Tyler Duncan, Landon Hovsepian, Trey Jeffries, Bo Overton and Sam Ulsch won their weight classes in both events. Duncan, Jeffries and Overton won their Olympic championships by more than 50 pounds. Anthony-Rozier and Overton won their traditional championships by 120 and 135 pounds, respectively, while Jeffries and Ulsch won theirs by more than 70 pounds.

The eight champions in each event automatically qualified for the Region 2 meet, which will be hosted by Suwannee High School on Friday, April 7, at 10 a.m.

Every other Keystone lifter qualified as well, receiving at-large berths. The Indians will have a total of 19 in each competition at the Region 2 finals.

### Olympic

Keystone had 19 earn points

for placing first through sixth in the Olympic event, earning the Indians 104 points. That put them well ahead of runner-up Palatka, which had 52 points.

Individual champions were Jed Tisdale, who had a 260 total (110 snatch, 150 clean and jerk) in the 119 class, Wyatt Van Zant, who had a 405 total (165, 240) in the 139 class, Ulsch, who had a 420 total (170, 250) in the 154 class, Overton, who had a 505 total (215, 290) in the 169 class, Hovsepian, who had a 510 total (210, 300) in the 183 class, Bryson Wester, who had a 425 total (170, 255) in the 199 class, Jeffries, who had a 535 total (235, 300) in the 219 class, Anthony-Rozier, who had a 480 total (185, 295) in the 238 class and Duncan, who had a 450 total (180, 270) in the unlimited class.

Jeffries finished in first by pounds, while Duncan and Overton were each 50 pounds better than their nearest competitors.

Reid Begue tied with Van Zant at the top of the 139 class, but Van Zant earned the championship due to the weigh-in tiebreaker. (Less than a pound separated the lifters.) Begue had the exact same snatch and clean-and-jerk totals.

Four other lifters took

second place behind their own teammates: Colton Hollingsworth with a 250 total (100, 150) in the 119 class, Talan Messina with a 355 total (145, 210) in the 169 class, Bryar Schenck with a 505 total (215, 290) in the 183 class and Jackson Herman with a 445 total (185, 260) in the 238 class.

Three lifters took third place: Davin Adams with a 355 total (145, 210) in the 154 class, Dakota Roper with a 370 total (135, 235) in the 199 class and Jayden Goodman with a 475 total (200, 275) in the 219 class.

Declan Shine and Brayden McCall placed fourth and sixth, respectively, in the 129 class. Shine had a 310 total (125, 185), while McCall had a 230 total (95, 135).

### Traditional

As in the Olympic event, Keystone had 19 earn points in the traditional event for another dominant win in the team standings. The Indians had 103 points, while runner-up Palatka had 35.

Individual champions were Hollingsworth, who had a 320 total (170 bench press, 150 clean and jerk), Begue, who had a 500 total (260, 240), Ulsch, who had

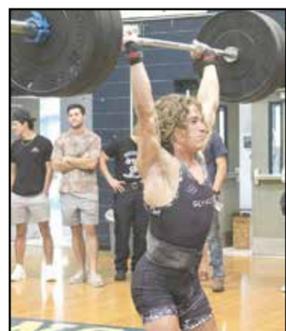
a 525 total (275, 250), Overton, who had a 590 total (300, 290), Hovsepian, who had a 620 total (320, 300), Roper, who had a 570 total (335, 235), Jeffries, who had a 650 total (350, 300), Anthony-Rozier, who had a 650 total (355, 295) and Duncan, who had a 570 total (300, 270).

Overton and Anthony-Rozier finished 135 pounds and 120 pounds, respectively, ahead of their nearest competitors. Jeffries held an 85-pound advantage, while Ulsch won his class by 75 pounds.

Four classes had Keystone taking the top-two spots. The following placed second: Tisdale with a 305 total (155, 150), Van Zant with a 460 total (220, 240), Schenck with a 565 total (275, 290) and Wester with a 565 total (310, 255).

Four lifters placed third: Shine with a 400 total (215, 185), Vernell Jackson with a 445 total (245, 200) in the 169 class, Goodman with a 560 total (285, 275) and Brayden Wester with a 530 total (275, 255) in the 238 class.

Damien Dunlap was fourth in the 154 class with a 385 total (210, 175), while McCall took sixth in his class with a 270 total (135, 135).



Christian Simmons competes in the clean and jerk in the 129 class. He won the championships in the Olympic and traditional competitions. Photo by Cliff Smelley.

## Simmons wins 2 district titles for Union Co.

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Union County High School's Christian Simmons won his weight class in both the Olympic and traditional competitions at the District 7-1A boys weightlifting meet, which was held March 29 at Keystone Heights High School.

Simmons, who won a district championship for the third straight year, automatically qualified for the Region 2 meet, which will be hosted by Suwannee High School on Friday, April 7, at 10 a.m.

Nine other Union lifters will also advance after earning at-large berths.

Besides winning two titles, Simmons, who lifts in the 129 class, was also determined to be the event's top pound-for-pound lifter in both the Olympic and

traditional events.

Simmons had a snatch of 185 and a clean and jerk of 245 to finish with a 430 total in the Olympic competition. That put him 40 pounds ahead of second-place finisher Zack Warner of Eagle's View.

A bench press of 265, when paired with his clean-and-jerk total, gave Simmons a total of 510 in the traditional competition. He finished in first by 70 pounds, again beating out Warner of Eagle's View.

Union placed third as a team in the traditional event with 32 points, which left the Tigers trailing champion Keystone (103) and runner-up Palatka (35).

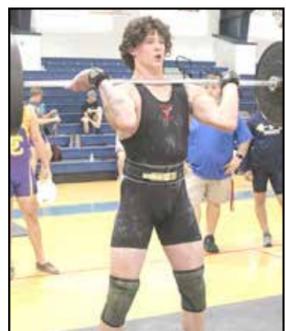
Rodney Barnett and Thomas Williams earned third-place finishes and received at-large Region 2 bids. Barnett had a 390 total (205 bench press, 185 clean and jerk) in the 154 class, while Williams had a 540 total (315, 225) in the 199 class.

Four lifters, who all received at-large bids, earned fourth-place finishes: Brycen Boney with a 410 total (225, 185) in the 169 class, Clifton Ivey with a 465 total (250, 215) in the 183 class, Maddox Wheeler with a 510 total (275, 235) in the 219 class and Connor Breesee with a 470 total (245, 225) in the 238 class.

Eric Seager and Jacob Jenkins each placed fifth, with Seager compiling a 480 total (265, 215) in the 219 class and Jenkins compiling a 450 total (255, 195) in the unlimited class.

Seager earned the right to advance to the Region 2 meet.

Wyatt Elixson placed sixth in the 139 class with a 315 total (195, 120), while Jimmy Cox placed seventh in the 199 class with a 470 total (235, 235). Both were at-large Region 2 qualifiers.



Chason Clark earned the highest finish out of four Bradford lifters who had official results, placing fourth in the 199 class at the District 7-1A meet. Photo by Cliff Smelley.

## 3 from BHS will compete at Region 2 meet

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Chason Clark and Cayden Carter earned points for Bradford High School and were two of three who earned the right to advance to the next round at the District 7-1A weightlifting meet, which was held March 29 at Keystone Heights High School.

Clark placed fourth in the 199 class with a 510 total (305 bench press, 205 clean and jerk), while Carter was sixth in the 238 class with a 450 total (265, 185).

Jacob Ferguson just missed out on earning points for Bradford, placing seventh in the unlimited class with a 425 total (240, 185).

Clark and Carter were at-large qualifiers for the Region 2 finals, which will be held Friday, April 7, at 10 a.m. at Suwannee High School.

Reese Wainwright also received an at-large berth after finishing ninth in the 199 class with a 410 total (225, 185).

## BHS baseball team drops 2-0 game against Baker County

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Baker County pitchers Tucker Kennedy and Lucas Davis combined to throw a no-hitter as the host Bradford High School baseball team lost 2-0 on March 30.

The Tornadoes (6-8) had solid pitching of their own. Starter Mattox Burgin gave up two runs on four hits and two walks through five innings. Cason Pilcher, in two innings of relief, allowed one hit and no walks, while striking out three.

Bradford entered the game off its fifth win in six games, defeating host Fort White 6-5 on March 29.

The Tornadoes scored the game's first runs in the fourth inning. They loaded the bases on a Matthew Stafford walk and singles by Kevin Crawford and Ryder Thompson. Ryland Rike drew a bases-loaded walk, followed by an RBI single hit by Pilcher. Luke Stucky then drove another two runs in on a single, putting Bradford ahead 4-0.

Bradford led 6-1 after scoring two runs in the fifth. Crawford, who went 2 for 4, had an RBI double, while Thompson, who reached on a fielder's choice, advanced around the base paths and scored what would eventually prove to be the winning run on a series of wild pitches.

Stafford earned the win, giving up nine hits and two walks through 6.1 innings. Blake Wynn had the save, recording the final two outs.

The Tornadoes played Keystone Heights this past Tuesday (April 4) and will host Fort White on Thursday, April 6, at 6 p.m. Bradford then hosts Suwannee on Tuesday, April 11, at 7 p.m.

## Tigers go deep 4 times in 12-0 win over Indians

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Tucker Hardee hit two of his team's four home runs, while starting pitcher Tre' Von Lee gave up two hits in the Union County High School baseball team's 12-0, five-inning win over visiting Keystone Heights on April 3.

Hardee finished with five RBI for the Tigers, who improved to 10-4 and were ranked sixth in Class 1A in the Florida High School Athletic Association's first power poll this season.

It was the second loss in a row for the Indians (9-4) following a five-game win streak. Keystone was ranked 11th in Class 3A in the FHSAA power poll.

Keystone had two runners on with two outs in the top of the first, with Connor Guy hitting a single into right field and Noah Branch reaching on an error. Lee recorded a strikeout to get out of the inning.

Lee finished with four strikeouts in all and gave up no walks through four innings.

With one out in the bottom of the first, Ayden Elixson reached on a single. Hardee then stepped to the plate and fell behind 0-2 in the count before launching a pitch over the fence in center field for a 2-0 Union lead. Blake Agner followed with a single. Bryson Huggins entered to run for Agner, stealing second and then scoring on a Preston Bonsall single.

The Tigers weren't done. After Lee drew a walk, Erick Lasseter sent the first pitch he saw over the fence in right field for a three-run homer and a 6-0 lead.

Keystone's Austin Musgrove reached on a double with one out in the top of the second, but a pop-up to second baseman Jake Walker and a strikeout ended the inning.

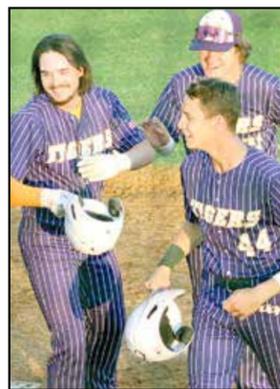
The bottom of the second began with consecutive singles from Jeremy Miller and Elixson. It was then Hardee's turn at bat. He didn't fall behind in the count this time, but the result was the same as he hit the first pitch he saw for another homer to center field, putting Union ahead 9-0.

Union's Devin Diggs drew a walk to lead off the bottom of the third, followed by Miller getting hit by a pitch. Elixson then hit a 1-0 pitch over the fence in right field for a three-run homer, making the score 12-0.

Elixson finished 3 for 3, while Hardee went 2 for 3.

Baler Waters pitched the final inning for the Tigers, giving up one hit and striking out one.

Union hosted Trinity Catholic this past Tuesday (April 4) and will travel to play Dunnellon on Friday, April 7, at 6:30 p.m. The Tigers host Suwannee on Monday, April 10, at 7



Tucker Hardee (left) celebrates with teammates Ayden Elixson and Erick Lasseter (background) after hitting his first of two home runs in the Tigers' 12-0 win over Keystone. Photos by Cliff Smelley.

p.m. before traveling to play University Christian on Tuesday, April 11, at 7 p.m.

Keystone played Bradford on April 4 and will travel to play Baker County on Thursday, April 6, at 7 p.m. The Indians play at Palatka on Tuesday, April 11, at 7 p.m.

The Tigers went 1-1 in their previous two games, including a 5-2 loss to sixth-ranked, Class 6A Oakleaf on March 29 in Lake Butler.

Union fell behind 4-0 before Diggs and Miller each drove in a run in the second.

The Tigers had two runners in scoring position with one out in the fifth, but failed to score.

Union finished with just three hits, one of which was a double by Jake Walker.

Starting pitcher Ethan Moody gave up the five runs (three earned) on eight hits and no walks through five innings. He had four strikeouts.

Carson Rogers and Clayton Poppell combined to give up no hits in the final two innings.

On March 30, Huggins scored on an error in the top of the seventh, which proved to be the difference in the Tigers' 6-5 win over 13th-ranked, Class 3A Trinity Catholic in Ocala.

Walker, who went 2 for 2 with two RBI, hit a two-run single as part of a three-run second that put Union ahead 4-0. An RBI double by Miller, who went 2 for 3, put the Tigers up 5-0 in the fourth.

It was a 5-3 game in favor of Union entering the seventh. Agner drew a leadoff walk. Bonsall bunted and reached on an error, which allowed courtesy runner Huggins to score.

A leadoff double and a home run allowed the Celtics to pull to within 6-5 in the bottom of

See TIGERS, page 11

## Clark earns 2 wins for UCHS girls track team

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Leah Clark won two events for the Union County High School girls track and field team, which won four events in all at the Coach Hunt Classic on April 1 at Jacksonville's Episcopal School.

Clark won the 100m and 200m with times of 12.84 and 25.85. Teammate Amia Bethea was second in the 100m with a time of 13.38, while Ny'asia Jones was third in the 200m with a time of 28.72.

Emma Jeffers won the 1600m with a time of 6:19, while the 4x400m team of Taliyah Harper, Mia Odum, Aliyah Smith and Daina Smith ran a first-place time of 5:06.

The 4x100m team of Bethea, Jones, Holly Halfacre and Daina Smith finished as runner-up with a time of 53.20, while Taleyah Smith took third in the shot put

with a distance of 21-1.25.

Jeffers was seventh in the 800m (2:43), while Harper was eighth in the long jump (13-2.25). The Tigers got three ninth-place finishes from Odum in the 400m (1:10) and long jump (13-1.25) and Halfacre in the 100m hurdles (20.92).

Union also had the following results: 100m — Halfacre 14.28, Alleah Stitt 15.17; 200m — Daina Smith 36.29; 400m — Halfacre 1:18, Daina Smith 1:31; and long jump — Halfacre 12-10.

The boys team had two wins, with Deonte Jones running a time of 54.07 in the 400m and the 4x100m team of Davien Pressley, Dayquan Diston, Rayvon Durant and Auntrell Ross ran a time of 44.61.

Ross earned a pair of second-

See TRACK, page 14

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## 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.

## I AM STEM camp set for June 20-July 21 in Starke

An I AM STEM "Black Panther Wakanda Forever" summer camp will be held in Starke for students in second-eighth grades.

The camp, which is offered by Starke's 12G Mentoring, will run from June 20 through July 21, 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. each weekday. It'll consist of coding, experiments, gaming and more.

The weekly fee is \$100, with a \$75 nonrefundable registration fee.

Scholarships as well as sibling discounts are available.

Register at iamstemcamps.com. You may also call 904-364-0868 or send email to 12gibt.12gip@gmail.com.

## 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 pre-season 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.

# Obituaries

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## Christine Brooker

Christine Roberts Brooker passed away peacefully at The Plaza Health and Rehab on Wednesday, March 29, 2023. She was born in Lake Butler to the late Oscar and Myrtle Dukes Roberts on Jan. 8, 1939. She was a God-fearing woman who put her family above all else. In 1958, she married James "Jimmy" Brooker and they spent 63 wonderful years together until his passing in 2021. Having grown up in a house with all brothers and raising four boys of her own, she was a tough woman. However, this did not have any effect on her homemaking skills. She would sew, tend to the house, and cook the best fried chicken and biscuits you've ever tasted. She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, James "Jimmy" Brooker; and brother, Doyle Roberts.



She is survived by her sons, Ricky (Monica) Brooker of Tallapoosa, Georgia, Wayne (Joyce) Brooker of High Springs, Jeff (Josie) Brooker of Gainesville, and Donny (Patsy) Brooker of Lake Butler; grandchildren, Scott, Josh, Kelsey, Brody, D.J., Daniel, and Rachel; great-grandchildren, Audrey, Keegan, and Ireland; brothers, Charles (Priscilla) Roberts of Brooker, Larry (Linda) Roberts of Brooker, Terry (Jackie) Roberts, and Tim Roberts of Brooker; and a host of extended family also survive.

A graveside service was held on Monday, April 3, at Elzey Chapel Cemetery, officiated by Terry Elixon. The Brooker Family extends many thanks to the staff at the Plaza Health and Rehabilitation Center for their care and compassion in caring for our parents these past 2 1/2 years. A special "Thank You" to nurses Poonam and Taiesha for their compassion and care. We extend our gratitude to the staff at Hospice.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## Wanda Compton

Wanda June Compton, 79, of Florahome died Sunday, April 2, 2023. She was a member of the American Legion Post 202 and Amvets Post 86 in Keystone Heights. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband of 54 years, Richard Compton.

Survivors are her son, Richard Compton of Perry, Iowa; several grandchildren; and many additional family members and friends.

There are currently no scheduled services.

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

## Dr. Harold Green



Dr. Harold Frederic Green went home to be with his Lord and Savior on Friday, March 31, 2023, at the age of 90. He was born July 22, 1932, in Jacksonville to the late Jacob and Jenny Green. After high school, he joined the United States Air Force and proudly served for four years. He spent the majority of his life on the west coast, only back to Union County about 15 years ago. He had a passion for preaching the Word of God and was a member of First Baptist Church of Starke. He spoke seven languages and had multiple doctorate degrees. In his spare time, he enjoyed wood carving and reading. He was preceded in death by his parents; his brother, R.A. Green; and niece, Tammy McCollum.

He is survived by his wife, Toni Crawford Green of Lake Butler; his children, Jonathan and Hannah Green, both of Winter Garden; step-children, Jeremy Crawford of Ponte Vedra and Christy (John) Strickland of Raiford; his sister, Margaret Butler; grandchildren, Faith (Jeremy) McDermet, Cade Crawford and Jade Crawford; nephews, Chester A. (Gail) Butler, III and Ronnie (Mary) Green; and nieces, Kelli (Art) Micheel, Leesa (Ron) Gilliard, and Kris (Butch) Wyke.

A service to honor him was held on Wednesday, April 5, at First Baptist Church of Starke. He was laid to rest at New River Baptist Church Cemetery in Brooker with military honors and Masonic Rites. Services were officiated by Pastor Matthew Page and his nephew, Chester Butler.

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

PAID OBITUARY

Do you have an In Memory or Card of Thanks to submit? Please email [socials@bctelegraph.com](mailto:socials@bctelegraph.com).

## TIGERS

Continued from page 10

the inning. They then loaded the bases with one out, but a bunt to Hardee at third kept the runners in place and resulted in the second out. A fly out to Elixon in right ended the game.

Hardee had an RBI, while Lasseter went 2 for 4.

Starting pitcher Diggs gave up no runs through four innings, allowing one hit and striking out six.

Like Union, Keystone also went 1-1 in its previous two games, including a 5-0 win at Orange Park on March 29 that saw Musgrove pitch a complete game, giving up five hits and one walk, while striking out three.

The Indians scored all the runs they'd need in a three-run third, which included an RBI single by Branch, a sacrifice-fly RBI by Ryan Jones and a run scored on an error.

Branch, Jones and Musgrove each finished with one RBI, as did Andru Siemer, who went 2 for 4 with an RBI single in the seventh.

On March 31, visiting Newberry scored three runs on back-to-back homers in the sixth inning in handing the Indians a 7-6 loss.



Union starting pitcher Tre'Von Lee gave up two hits through four innings.

Keystone took a 4-3 lead with a two-run third. Andrew Wilson hit into a fielder's choice with the bases loaded to score one run, while Siemer drew a bases-loaded walk to score another.

The Indians scored another two runs in the fourth to go up 6-3. Guy hit a triple, with an error on the play allowing him to score. Jones, Branch and Wilson then drew three straight walks, with Jones scoring on a Gage Smith single.

Branch, Siemer, Smith, Wilson and Chase Packham each had one RBI, with Branch going 2 for 3 and Packham going 2 for 4.

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# Obituaries

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

## Doyce Griffis

Doyce Albert Griffis, 81, of Starke passed away Saturday, March 25, 2023, in Gainesville following a brief illness. He was born Feb. 1, 1942, in Bradford County to Albert and Mildred (Morrell) Griffis and graduated from Bradford High School in 1960. He was employed in the survey field right out of high school with Mr. McMillan. He later began his 32-year career at Camp Blanding as a Federal Civil Service worker as a general mechanic and was dual employed with the Florida Army National Guard until his retirement. He was of the Baptist faith and enjoyed spending time on his small farm, tinkering on his many projects, working his land and his cows. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his loving wife of 60 years, Anita Griffis.

Left behind are his children, Doyce Dean Griffis of Starke, Tyffany Griffis Wishart of Hampton, Polly Griffis (Richie) Smith of Steinhatchee, and Amy Beth Griffis of Starke. Also left behind are five grandchildren, Houston McClain, BriAnn Wishart-Thomas (Brandon), Daniel Wishart, Briar Smith, and Jozee Smith; and five great-grandchildren, Bryson McClain, Braycen Thomas, Cameron McClain, Bayler Thomas, and Banx Thomas.

Viewing will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 15, at Grace Baptist Church. Funeral services will begin at 11 a.m. with Pastor Russ Hale officiating. A private interment will be at Kingsley Lake 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



## Marjorie Lewis

Marjorie Eva Lewis passed away peacefully on Tuesday, March 28, 2023, at the tender age of 96. She was born July 5, 1926, in Lacon, Illinois, to the late Edward Trauband Eva Fuson Crowl. After moving to Florida to work with the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad, they moved her to Lake Butler. She met her husband, Malcolm Lewis, they married, and established their home in Brookier. She was the dedicated matriarch of her family and generously tended to the needs of her loved ones. She was sassy, funny, and always a joy to be around. She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband of 48 years, Malcolm Lewis; her son, John D. Lewis; brothers, Edward Traub, Vernon Traub, Louis Griffin, George "Jiggs" Griffin; and her twin sister, Mary Traub.

She is survived by her children, Eddie Lewis, Kathy Lewis, and Martha Wallace; her grandchildren, John Lewis, Cecil Stanley, Josh Lewis, Shondae Vanzant, Abi Thompson, Savannah Hunsinger, Mason Jones, and Giomni Holmes; numerous grand and great-grandchildren; and a host of extended family and friends.

A funeral service was held on Thursday, March 30, at Archer-Milton Funeral Home, Lake Butler. She was laid to rest immediately following the service in Dedan Cemetery.

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

PAID OBITUARY



## Sandra Milikin

Sandra Anita Milikin, 83, of Melrose died at her home Thursday, March 23, 2023. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband of 64 years, Marvin "Bud" Milikin.

Survivors are two sons, Randy Milikin and Doug (Tamara) Milikin, all of Melrose; three grandchildren and many cousins and additional family members.

A memorial service will be announced at a later date.

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

## Ernest Peacock

Ernest Robert Peacock was born Oct. 16, 1944, in Lake City, to Edwin and Aurelia Peacock. He passed peacefully Wednesday, March 29, 2023, in Palm Coast, where he lived the past eight years. He spent his early years working in his family's chicken houses, climbing trees, and getting in trouble with friends. He graduated from Columbia County High School, then briefly attended Lake City Junior College Forest Ranger School. At age 19, he served a two-year church mission to share his testimony of Jesus Christ in the area of Calgary, Alberta Canada. Afterward, he pursued his education at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, where he earned a bachelor's degree in animal science. Upon graduation he returned home, where he met the love of his life, Gail Ward of Lake Butler. They were married 51 years and enjoyed a lifetime of family gatherings, church service, fishing, boiled peanuts, and homemade ice cream. He was a faithful member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, where he served in several church callings; including Bishop and Stake President during the formation of the Lake City Stake. In his later years he served alongside his wife on a church mission in Houston, Texas. He was also an avid sports fan. He coached Pop Warner football and loved attending his children's sporting events; basketball, baseball, and tennis matches. He rooted for the Florida Gators and in his later years, the Clemson Tigers. He knew stats, recruits, and game times like the back of his hand. If he enjoyed something, he wanted you to enjoy it too, whether that was a food he was eating or a game he was watching. He had a generous heart, almost to a fault. He was always willing to help those in need. He was a joy to be around and a positive influence on all who knew him. He will be greatly missed, but he has five beautiful children to carry on his legacy of love of family, Christ-like service, and Chinese buffets. He was preceded in death by his parents, Edwin and Aurelia Peacock.

He is survived by his wife, Gail Peacock and their five children: Lance, Steve, Clay, Jeff, and Jill, as well as 15 cherished grandchildren.

Services will be held at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Lake Butler, on Saturday, April 15. A visitation will begin at 10 a.m. with a memorial service to follow at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, we ask that you donate at your local blood bank. During Ernest's relatively short illness, he received about 30 pints of blood. (The average body contains about 10 pints.) From our experience we acquired a new awareness for the need of blood donations. We also encourage you to consider sending donations to help fund a center for at risk youth in Union County. This effort is spearheaded by the Victory Christian Center in Lake Butler. Donations can be sent to Impact Center, PO Box 363, Lake Butler, 32054.

PAID OBITUARY



## Betty Jean Knight

Betty Jean Williams Knight passed away peacefully surrounded by her family at the age of 92 on Thursday, March 30, 2023, at Lake City Medical Center. She was born Dec. 24, 1930, to Thelma Williams in Chipley. Her childhood was spent in Chipley. However, she called Lake City home until the 1970s, when she married Toby Knight and they moved to Raiford. She was a member of the Raiford City Council for many years as well as on the Board of Directors for the Union County Housing Authority. She enjoyed collecting antiques and cooking meals for her family and friends. She was always ensuring that everyone was well taken care of and she loved her family above all else. She was preceded in death by her mother, Thelma Williams; her grandparents, Newton and Ester Williams; first husband and father of her children, Tommy L. Phillips Sr.; daughter-in-law, Sandy Phillips; and grandchildren, Cindy Dixon and James Dixon Jr.

She is survived by her husband of 49 years, Toby L. Knight of Raiford; children, Ronald «Bubba» (Patricia) Phillips of Mayo, Juana Jean (Joe) Gillyard of Lake City, Tommy L. Phillips Jr. of Lake City, and Paula Phillips of Lake Butler; her grandchildren, Chad (Elizabeth) Phillips, Darin Phillips, James Dixon, Mandy (Earl) Phillips, Alisha (Richard) Collins, Jacob McCall (Kyle), Josh McCall, Harli Combee, and Kyle Combee; 16 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren; special cousin, Gloria Jean Coleman of Chipley; and a host of extended family and friends. In lieu of flowers the family is asking for donations to be made to Haven Hospice of Lake City in memory of Betty Knight.

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

PAID OBITUARY



## Ethlyn Martin

Ethlyn Chapman Martin, 82, of Graham passed away peacefully on Sunday, March 26, 2023, at her home. She was born on Aug. 31, 1940, in Hartsfield, South Carolina, to Samuel and Lillie Chapman. She grew up and spent many years in South Carolina before moving to Florida in 1985. She worked as a data entry specialist for many years. Outside is where she enjoyed being the most; push mowing her grass, working in the yard, and taking her beloved dog, Buster, on long walks. She was a longtime member of Madison Street Baptist Church in Starke. She was preceded in death by both parents; her husband, William Martin; her sons, Paul Richard Martin and Christopher Alan Martin; and a granddaughter, Hannah Noel Martin.

She is survived by her granddaughters, Farah (Greg) Swan of New Port Richey and Erica Martin of Baldwin; great-grandchildren, Alexia (Austin) Cutler, Gavin Swan, Halle Swan, and Corbin Rittinghouse; and sister, Pamela Marshall of Goose Creek, South Carolina. Numerous extended family also survive.

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

PAID OBITUARY



## Maria McLain

Maria Teresa Marquez McLain, 75, of Keystone Heights, passed away Thursday, March 23, 2023, in Gainesville. She was born June 30, 1947, to Benjamin and Mary (Perea) Marquez, in Farmington, New Mexico. She was a homemaker, a Christian, and enjoyed being around people. She loved her family and friends and had a generous and loving spirit. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Brian McLain; daughter, Desert Dawn Kaye; and brothers, Ben, Freddy, Ray, and Geno Marquez.

She is survived by her sons, Gene Kaye (Jennifer Austin), and Allan Kaye; a daughter, Michelle Hodgins; along with a brother, Victor Marquez. She was lovingly called "Grandma" by grandsons, Dylan and Austin Kaye; Victor, Benjamin, and James Hodgins; a granddaughter, Hope Hodgins; along with three great-grandkids. Also left behind are many nieces, nephews, extended family members, and a host of friends that will miss her dearly.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, April 15, at 12 p.m. at 310 SR 26 Melrose, 32666, with Dylan Gene Kaye officiating the ceremony. A reception will follow, and the location will be announced at the services.

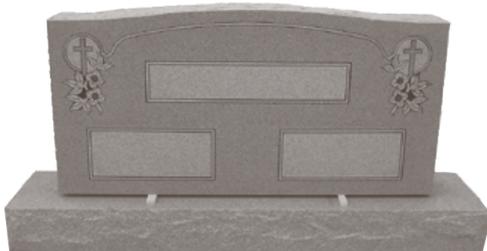
Arrangements are by Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home 340 E. Walker Drive, Keystone Heights, 32656. 352-473-3176. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

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# BHS keeps rolling in flag football with 38-0, 32-14 victories

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Ar'Naysia Griffin ran for three touchdowns and passed for another two, while the defense came up with three interceptions in the Bradford High School girls flag football team's 38-0 win over visiting Florida High on March 30.

It was Bradford's seventh shutout of the season.

The Tornadoes, who are ranked 17th in the Florida High School Athletic Association's Class 1A power poll, had the ball first, putting together a 13-play scoring drive. A fourth-down run by Griffin and a 15-yard reception by Kimber Woods resulted in first downs, as did a 10-yard catch by Nichelle Brown. Griffin would find the end zone from a yard out to make the score 6-0. Her pass on the conversion attempt was incomplete.

Florida High turned the ball over after just running two plays when Dariah Gilmore came up with Bradford's first interception. That gave Bradford a goal-to-go opportunity from approximately 17 yards out. Most of that yardage was gained on a run by Brown, which set Griffin up for a 1-yard touchdown run. Griffin then completed a pass to Jada Hankerson on the conversion attempt for a 13-0 lead.

The teams exchanged punts before Griffin came up with Bradford's second interception. Then, taking her position at quarterback on offense, she promptly completed a 13-yard pass to Brown to set up first-and-goal. A second Griffin-to-Brown connection resulted in the Tornadoes' third touchdown to make the score 19-0. The conversion attempt was no good.

Florida High's first offensive



**Khamyra Hankerson and the Tornadoes are ranked 17th in the FHSAA Class 1A power poll. File photo by Cliff Smelley.**

play following the score was a pass that was intercepted by Brown and returned more than 15 yards for a touchdown and a 25-0 Bradford lead.

The Seminoles' first play on the ensuing series was another interception — this time by

Alexi Berry. That set up first-and-goal with 17 yards to reach the end zone. After receptions by Hankerson and Woods and a run by Brown, Griffin scored on a fourth-down play as time in the first half expired. Brown's run on the conversion attempt made the score 32-0.

Bradford's defense continued its strong play as the second half began. Hankerson made two tackles for no gain on the Seminoles' first series, which ended in a turnover on downs after Ajjiah Jackson sacked the quarterback on fourth down.

Florida High finally began moving the ball and set itself up with first-and-goal. Jackson came up with another sack, followed by Khamyra Hankerson batting a pass incomplete. Hankerson then sacked the quarterback herself to set up fourth down. The Seminoles managed to

complete a long pass, but a tackle was made 1 yard shy of the end zone, preserving the Tornadoes' shutout.

The Tornadoes added the final score on the ensuing series when Jada Hankerson caught a pass 15 yards downfield, got past the nearest defender and outran everyone else to the end zone.

With that play, Hankerson finished with five catches for 135 yards. Brown added five catches for 105 yards.

Griffin completed 15 of 20 passes for 265 yards and rushed for 20 yards on four carries.

Brown had 40 yards on four carries.

Bradford improved to 10-0 on April 3 with a 32-14 win at Florida School for the Deaf and Blind, which saw Griffin throw for three touchdowns and rush for another two.

Griffin completed 17 of 22

passes for 240 yards, with all three scoring tosses going to Brown.

Brown finished with eight catches for 140 yards, while Woods added five receptions for 65 yards. Khamyra Hankerson and Jada Hankerson had 20 yards and 15 yards, respectively, on two catches each.

Griffin led the team in rushing with 65 yards on eight carries. Brown had two carries for 25 yards, while Izarriah DeSue had one carry for 20 yards.

Defensively, Brown, Griffin and Gilmore each had an interception.

The Tornadoes, who've now outscored their opposition 370-34, played Columbia this past Tuesday (April 4) and will host Keystone Heights on Thursday, April 6, at 6 p.m. Bradford travels to play Oakleaf on Wednesday, April 12, at 6 p.m.

## Legal Notices

Legals for the week of April 6, 2023

### BRADFORD

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING A SPECIAL EXCEPTION AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE BRADFORD COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS BY THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT OF BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT, PURSUANT TO THE BRADFORD COUNTY Land Development Regulations, as amended, hereinafter referred to as the Land Development Regulations, objections, recommendations and comments concerning a special exception, as described below, will be heard by the Board of Adjustment of Bradford County, Florida, at a public hearing on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, at the County Commission Meeting Room, North Wing, County Courthouse, located at 954 N. Temple Avenue in Starke, Florida.**

SE 23-01, an application petition by Rhonda Wilson, to request a Special Exception be granted as provided for in Section 4.8 "RSF" Residential Single Family, Section 4.8.5 # 13 of the Bradford County Land Development Regulations to allow for a Guest House with separate utility meter from primary structure to be located at the property being described as follows:

p/o the SW 1/4 of Section 26, Township 6 South, Range 22 East, Bradford County, Florida, lying West of NE 17<sup>th</sup> Ave (Flume Road). Being Bradford County Parcel Number 02818-0-0040.

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

Copies of the material are available for public inspection at the Office of the Director of Zoning, Planning, and Building, County Courthouse located at 945 North Temple Avenue, North Wing, Starke, Florida, during regular business hours. All persons are advised that if they decide to appeal any decision made at the above referenced public hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Monday, April 10, 2023, 6:00 p.m.  
Hampton City Hall, Hampton Fl.  
4/6 1tchg-BCT

### NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED

Notice is hereby given that MID-FLORIDA DEVELOPMENT LLC the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and names in which it was assessed are as follows:

Certificate Number: 858  
Year of Issuance: 2020  
Parcel Number: 03820-0-00000 Case Number: 04-2023-TD-0004  
Description of Property:  
Legal Description: Township 6 South, Range 22 East  
Section 29: Begin at the NE corner of the NE 1/4 of SE 1/4 of NE 1/4 of Section 29, Township 6 South, Range 22 East, run West 100 feet, thence run South 15 feet, thence run West 50 feet to a POINT OF BEGINNING, thence run South 100 feet, thence run West 50 feet, thence run North 100 feet, thence  
Run East 50 feet, to the POINT OF BEGINNING. Bradford County, Florida  
Name in Which Assessed: DIANA LYNNE HALEY  
Name on last tax roll, if different:  
All of said property being in the County of Bradford, State of Florida. Unless such certificate or certificates shall be redeemed according to law the property described in such certificate or certificates will be sold to the highest bidder at the BRADFORD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, STARKE, FL on 06/14/2023, at 11:00 AM, or any subsequently scheduled sale date.

Denny Thompson,  
Clerk Of The Circuit Court  
Bradford County, Florida  
BY: LISA BRANNON, Deputy Clerk  
DATED: March 28, 2023  
DATE OF PUBLICATION: APRIL 6 2023; APRIL 13 2023; APRIL 20 2023; APRIL 27 2023

### IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 8TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA

CIVIL DIVISION:  
CASE NO.: 2022-CA-0377  
VILLAGE CAPITAL & INVESTMENT, LLC,  
Plaintiff,  
vs.  
ROBERT L. BAUGH; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF ROBERT L. BAUGH; UNKNOWN TENANT IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY,  
Defendants.  
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to In Rem Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of March 2023, and entered in Case No. 2022-CA-0377, of the Circuit Court of the 8TH Judicial Circuit in and for

BRADFORD County, Florida, wherein VILLAGE CAPITAL & INVESTMENT, LLC is the Plaintiff and UNKNOWN HEIRS, BENEFICIARIES, DEVISEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, CREDITORS, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHERS WHO MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST IN THE ESTATE OF ROBERT L. BAUGH UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF ROBERT L. BAUGH LEAH A. BAUGH ISALIAH BAUGH ROBERT LEWIS BAUGH, JR.; and UNKNOWN TENANT IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY are defendants. DENNY THOMPSON as the Clerk of the Circuit Court shall sell to the highest and best bidder for cash at the east front door of the Bradford County courthouse, 945 North Temple Ave, Starke, FL., 11:00 AM on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of May 2023 the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment, to wit:

A PARCEL OF LAND LYING IN THE SOUTHEAST 1/4 OF SOUTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION 27, TOWNSHIP 6 SOUTH, RANGE 20 EAST, BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA; SAID PARCEL BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCE AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID SOUTHEAST 1/4 OF SOUTHWEST 1/4 FOR THE POINT OF BEGINNING AND RUN SOUTH 00 DEGREES 55 MINUTES 28 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE EASTERLY BOUNDARY THEREOF; 270.19 FEET TO THE IRON ROD FOUND ON THE NORTHERLY BOUNDARY OF THE RIGHT OF WAY OF COUNTY ROAD 235, SAID IRON ROD BEING ON A CURVE CONCAVE TO THE NORTH AND HAVING A RADIUS OF 5679.58 FEET; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY, ALONG SAID NORTHERLY BOUNDARY AND ALONG THE ARC OF SAID CURVE, 500.26 FEET AS MEASURED ALONG A CHORD HAVING A BEARING OF SOUTH 74 DEGREES 57 MINUTES 17 SECONDS WEST; TO A CONCRETE MONUMENT AT THE END OF SAID CURVE; THENCE SOUTH 77 DEGREES NORTH 28 MINUTES 19 SECONDS WEST, ALONG SAID NORTHERLY BOUNDARY, 371.91 FEET TO AN IRON ROD; THENCE NORTH 12 DEGREES 58 MINUTES 40 SECONDS WEST, 465.65 FEET TO AN IRON ROD LOCATED ON THE NORTHERLY BOUNDARY OF SAID SOUTHEAST 1/4 OF SOUTHWEST 1/4; THENCE NORTH 88 DEGREES 22 MINUTES 11 SECONDS EAST, ALONG LAST SAID NORTHERLY BOUNDARY, 946.76 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

IF YOU ARE A PERSON CLAIMING A RIGHT TO FUNDS REMAINING AFTER THE SALE, YOU MUST FILE A CLAIM WITH THE CLERK NO LATER THAN THE DATE THAT THE CLERK REPORTS THE FUNDS AS UNCLAIMED. IF YOU FAIL TO FILE A CLAIM, YOU WILL NOT BE ENTITLED TO ANY REMAINING FUNDS. AFTER THE FUNDS ARE REPORTED AS UNCLAIMED, ONLY THE OWNER OF RECORD AS OF THE DATE OF THE LIS PENDENS MAY CLAIM THE SURPLUS. If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in

order to participate in a proceeding, you are entitled to be provided with certain assistance at no cost to you. Please contact the ADA Coordinator, Alachua County Family and Civil Justice Center, 201 East University Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32601 (352) 337-6237 at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days. If you are hearing or voice impaired, call 1-800-955-8770 via Florida Relay Service. Dated this 27 day of March, 2023. DENNY THOMPSON Clerk Of The Circuit Court By: L. Brannon Deputy Clerk Submitted by: De Cubas & Lewis, P.A. P.O. Box 771270 Coral Springs, FL 33077 Telephone: (954) 453-0365 Facsimile: (954) 771-6052 Toll Free: 1-800-441-2438 DESIGNATED PRIMARY E-MAIL FOR SERVICE PURSUANT TO FLA. R. JUD. ADMIN 2.516 eservice@decubaslewis.com 4/6 2tchg 4/13-BCT

### UNION

IN THE COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA JUVENILE DIVISION  
CASE NO.: 63-2021-DP-000031  
IN THE INTEREST OF:  
W. F. (F) DOB: 1/30/2018  
W. D. (F) DOB: 6/21/2022  
Minor Children

NOTICE OF SUIT FOR TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS AND PLACEMENT FOR ADOPTION THE STATE OF FLORIDA  
TO: Amber William  
ADDRESS UNKNOWN  
You are hereby notified that a petition under oath has been filed in the above-styled Court for the termination of your parental rights to F. W., a female child, born in Alachua County, Florida, on 1/30/2018; D. W., a female child, born in Bay County, Florida, on 6/21/2022, and for permanent commitment of the children to the Department of Children and Families, (the Department), for subsequent adoption. You are hereby commanded to be present and personally appear for an Advisory Hearing on the Petition for Termination of Parental Rights and for Permanent Commitment for Subsequent Adoption filed by the Department before, the Honorable Bridget Baker, a Magistrate of the Circuit Court, at the Union County Courthouse, 55 W Main ST, Lake Butler, Florida on WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2023 at 9:40 A.M., or as soon thereafter that counsel may be heard. FAILURE TO PERSONALLY APPEAR AT THIS ADVISORY CONSTITUTES CONSENT TO THE TERMINATION OF YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AS TO THESE CHILDREN. IF YOU FAIL TO PERSONALLY APPEAR ON THE DATE AND TIME SPECIFIED YOU SHALL LOSE ALL LEGAL RIGHTS

AS A PARENT TO THE CHILDREN NAMED IN THE PETITION, YOU ARE ENTITLED TO HAVE AN ATTORNEY PRESENT TO REPRESENT YOU IN THIS MATTER. IF YOU WANT AN ATTORNEY BUT ARE UNABLE TO AFFORD ONE YOU MUST NOTIFY THE COURT AND THE COURT WILL APPOINT AN ATTORNEY TO REPRESENT YOU. Under the American with Disabilities Act, if you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator at (352) 337-6237, at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance. If you are hearing or voice impaired, please call 711. If you are deaf or hard of hearing and require an ASL interpreter or an assisted listening device to participate in a proceeding, please contact Court Interpreter at interpreter@circu18.org. This notice shall be published once a week for four consecutive weeks in The Bradford County Telegraph newspaper of Starke, Florida. WITNESS my hand as the clerk of said Court and the Seal therefore, March 23, 2023. J. K. "Jess" Irby, Esq. Clerk of Circuit Court BY T. Dukes Deputy Clerk 3/30 4tchg 4/20-UCT

COUNTY COMMISSION MEETINGS The Union County Board of County Commissioners will have a workshop at 5:00 P.M. on April 17<sup>th</sup> and will meet as the Planning & Zoning Board at 5:55 P.M. followed by the Regular Meeting at 6:00 P.M. 4/6 1tchg-UCT

### Emergency Food and Shelter Program Advertisement

The Union County EFSP/FEMA Phase 40 Local Board has been awarded \$5,220 in federal funds made available through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program. The selection was made by a National Board that is chaired by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and consists of representatives from American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA; The Jewish Federations of North America; The Salvation Army; and, United Way Worldwide. The Local Board was charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country. A Local Board made up of representatives of various community agencies will determine how the \$5,220 awarded to Union County are to be distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local service agencies in the area. The Local Board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive

### NOTICE OF SELF STORAGE SALE

Please take notice Lake Butler Mini Storage, located at 1015 SW 3rd St. Lake Butler, FL, 32054 intends to hold an auction of goods stored in the following units in default for non-payment of rent on Lockerfox.com. The sale will occur on April 27, 2023 at 11:00 am on Lockerfox.com. Unless stated otherwise the description of the contents are household goods and furnishings. Units #43 W. Henderson, #76 A. Strickland, #31 R. Carbone, and #35 K. Little All property is being stored at the above self-storage facility. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice. See manager for details. 4/6 2tchg 4/13-UCT

### LAKE REGION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE Personal property of the following tenants will be sold for cash or otherwise disposed of to satisfy rental liens in accordance with Florida Statutes, Self Storage Facility Act, Sections 83.806-83.807. Auction will be held on April 15, 2023 at 10:00 am at Melrose Mini Storage, 827 N. SR21, Melrose, FL 32666. Phone (352) 475-5000. All items may not be available on the date of the sale. TENANT NAME Sarah Carrier UNIT# 28 DESCRIPTION Household Items 3/30 2tchg 4/6 LRM

Notice of Public Auction Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Florida Self Storage Facility Act Statutes (Section 83.801, 83.809), Lake Area Storage, LLC, will sell the following items to the highest and best bidder on Monday, April 10, 2023 at 9:00 A.M. (EST) at 7101 SR 21, Keystone Heights, Florida 32656; Unit# 239, containing misc. household items. 3/30 2tchg 4/6-LRM

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# Keystone girls drop just 1 match in win over Union County

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Keystone Heights High School hosted Union County in girls tennis on April 3, with the Indians winning 6-1 and improving their record to 6-2.

The Indians swept doubles play, with the number-one team of Tara Tarvit and Whitnee Buchanan defeating Jordan Hendricks and Bailey Handley 8-4, while the number-two team of Shaylyn Williams and Raegan Feldpausch defeated Morgyn Kirby and Madison Starling 8-1.

Tarvit earned an 8-5 win over Hendricks at number-one singles, while the Tigers' Kirby took an 8-5 win over Williams at the number-two spot.



**Tara Tarvit earned a win at number-one singles and teamed up with Whitnee Buchanan for a win at number-one doubles. Photos by Cliff Smelley.**



**Raegan Feldpausch earned a win for Keystone at number-four singles and teamed up with Shaylyn Williams for a win at number-two doubles.**



**Morgyn Kirby earned the lone win for Union at number-two singles. She also played at number-two doubles, teaming up with Madison Starling.**



**Jordan Hendricks lost a close 8-5 match at number-one singles and also teamed up with Bailey Handley at number-one doubles.**

Parrish 8-0 and Sarah Siebert defeating Jewel Dekle 8-1.

The Indians entered the match

off a 7-0 win over Middleburg on March 30.

In singles play, Tarvit won 8-3,

Williams won 8-2 and Buchanan, Feldpausch and Siebert each won

8-0.

Tarvit and Buchanan won in doubles 8-1, while Williams and

Feldpausch teamed up for an 8-0

win.

Union entered the match off a 5-2 loss to Columbia on March 30. Both win came in singles, with Hendricks topping her opponent 8-4 and Kirby coming out on top 8-3.

Prior to playing Columbia, the Tigers earned a 5-2 win over Newberry on March 16.

Union came out on top in the number-one and number-two singles matchups, with Hendricks winning 8-1 and Kirby winning 8-2. Parrish won 8-2 at the number-five spot.

Handley lost a close one at number-three singles, falling 9-8, while Dekle dropped an 8-3 match at the number-four spot.

The Tigers swept doubles play, with Hendricks and Handley teaming up for an 8-3 win and Kirby and Starling recording an 8-2 win.

## 3 from KHHS earn 1st-team All-Clay Co. recognition

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Clay County Coaches All-County teams were recently named for winter sports, with three from Keystone Heights High School earning first-team honors.

Kiersten Shaw was a first-team pick in girls soccer after scoring 71 goals, which ranked her second in the state. She also had 19 assists.

The team also had a second-team pick in Ella Hutchins, who had 31 goals and 20 assists, while Kendall Gagnon earned honorable mention after scoring six goals.

Logan Spence was a first-team selection in boys soccer after recording 21 goals and 14 assists. Skylar Kedgley, who had 21 goals and 10 assists, and Carson

Eatmon, who made 154 saves as goalie, were second-team picks, while Aaron Wiley, who had 15 goals and 10 assists, earned honorable mention.

Dezaray Bright made the first team in girls basketball after averaging 12.5 points per game and 14 rebounds per game. Kiley Channell, who averaged 13.2 points, 7.1 rebounds, 3.9 steals and 3.1 assists, was a second-team selection.

In boys basketball, Seth Gagnon was a second-team pick, while Zeke Pelham earned honorable mention. (The Telegraph-Times-Monitor didn't have season stats at its disposal.)

Kaylee Wright was a second-team girls weightlifting in both Olympic and traditional. She competed in the 169-pound class and placed third in the traditional competition at state and fourth in the Olympic competition.

Wright was the Region 2-1A champion in the Olympic and traditional events, the District 6 Olympic champion and the District 6 traditional runner-up.

## KHHS' Griffin earns win at Running of the Jackets meet

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Tyler Griffin won an event for Keystone Heights High School at St. Augustine High School's Running of the Jackets track event, which was held March 30.

Griffin won the 800m with a time of 2:08, while teammate Shepherd Rozier was third with a time of 2:12.

Boys team member Jaden Park placed seventh in the 1600m with a time of 5:20, while Rozier ran a 10th-place time of 25.22 in the 200m.

The girls team got an 11th-place finish from Laila Briseno in the 400m with a time of 1:16. Grade Fisher was 12th with a time of 1:17.

In the 200m, Briseno ran a 13th-place time of 32.89, while Fisher ran a 19th-place time of 35.46.

## Indians defeat Tigers 7-0 in boys tennis

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Keystone Heights High School hosted Union County in a boys tennis match on March 27, winning 7-0.

In singles, from number one through number five, the Indians had the following results: Evan Booth 8-1 over Parker Johnson, Ethan Teague 8-0 over Jack Wells, Curran Capper 8-1 over Austin Douglas, Will Begue 8-0 over Case Denson and Beckett Capper 8-3 over Patrick Maxwell.

Keystone's number-one doubles team of Booth and Dalton Moore defeated Johnson and Wells 8-2, while at the number-two spot, Begue and Beckett Capper defeated Douglas and Denson 8-1.

## KHHS softball team goes 1-3 in Kissimmee tournament

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Telegraph Staff Writer

Keystone Heights High School lost 6-2 to Lake Wales on April 1, wrapping up a 1-3 outing in the Kissimmee Classic softball tournament.

A solo home run by Kiley Channell and a sacrifice-fly RBI by Kadence Massey gave the Indians (4-10) a 2-0 lead over the eighth-ranked, Class 4A team in the Florida High School Athletic Association's inaugural power poll.

Lake Wales scored three runs each in the fifth and sixth innings. Starting pitcher Massey gave up three runs through five innings, allowing six hits and two walks, while striking out five.

The Indians opened the tournament on March 30 with a 3-2 loss to Bartow, the number-one team in Class 6A.

Channell hit a two-run single with the bases loaded to put Keystone up 2-0 in the third inning.

Massey held Bartow scoreless until the fifth inning, when the Yellow Jackets tied the score on an error with two outs.

Bartow scored the winning run on a two-out single in the sixth.

Channell had Keystone's only hits, going 2 for 3.

Massey allowed five hits and two walks in a complete-game effort.

Abbie Roach and Amber Wager each drove in three runs in the Indians' 15-6 win over Class 6A Cooper City on March 31.

Roach, who went 2 for 4, hit a two-run single as part of a three-run second inning that also featured an RBI single by Lorelei Booth.

The Indians went up 6-0 with a three-run third, which consisted of a solo homer by Channell and

a two-run homer by Wagner.

A four-run fourth inning consisted of a two-RBI single by Massey, an RBI double by Channell and an RBI single by Wagner.

Wagner finished 3 for 4, while Channell went 2 for 5 with two RBIs.

Keystone scored four runs on two errors in the fifth.

Starting pitcher Caitlin Frampton gave up five runs (three earned) through three innings, allowing four hits and two walks.

Ashley Nugent pitched three innings, giving up one run, three hits and two walks. She struck out two.

The Indians played another game on March 31, losing 5-3 in eight innings to ninth-ranked, Class 6A Viera.

A two-run homer by Channell pulled her team to within 3-2 in the sixth. Alaina Kinsall hit an RBI double with two outs in the seventh to force extra innings.

Viera hit a two-run homer in the top of the eighth that would prove to be the difference.

Kinsall finished 3 for 4, while Nugent went 2 for 4.

Massey gave up seven hits and no walks in a complete-game performance.

Keystone played West Nassau this past Tuesday (April 4) and will travel to play Oakleaf on Thursday, April 6, at 7 p.m. The Indians return home to play Santa Fe on Monday, April 10, at 7 p.m.

## TRACK

Continued from page 10

place finishes with a time of 11.23 in the 100m and a time of 22.90 in the 200m. He was also

third in the long jump with a distance of 19-0.75.

Blake McCoy was runner-up in the triple jump (37-11.5) and fourth in the 400m (56.23).

Thomas Williams placed seventh in the long jump (17-2.25).

Other boys results: 100m — Durant 11.89, Diston 12.31, Jabari Young 12.56, Treyjan Tyson 12.61; 200m — Jones 24.61, Williams 24.91; and 400m — Wyatt Boehne 1:00, Tyson 1:01.



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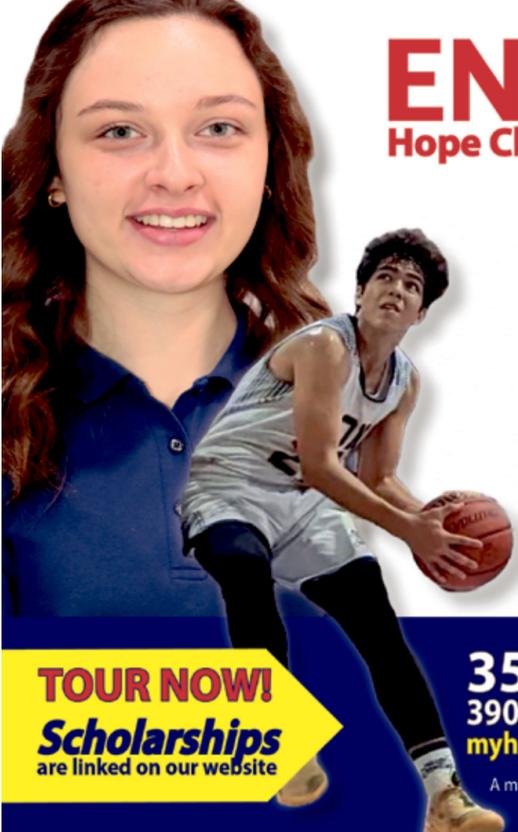
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