

# Bradford County Telegraph

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146th year, 37th Issue — \$1

## Funeral for 'ultimate Tornado fan' to be held at BHS stadium

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
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Perhaps no one enjoyed football games at Bradford High School's David Hurse Stadium more than Cindy Futch. Therefore, it seems only fitting that Futch's Celebration-of-Life service will be held where she spent so many Friday nights cheering on her beloved Tornadoes.

Futch passed away at the age of 73 on March 25. Her service will be held Friday, April 10, at 7 p.m. at David Hurse Stadium. Those who attend are encouraged to wear Bradford High School's colors of scarlet and gray.

If anyone could really bleed those colors, it would've been Futch, who was the living embodiment of The Beach Boys song "Be True to Your School."

"Nobody loves the Tornadoes more than she did," BHS Principal Chris Coffey said. "A lot of people think



This Bradford High School yearbook photo by freshman Elaina Smith perfectly captures Cindy Futch's support of the Tornadoes and the joy she experienced cheering them on.

football immediately, but it wasn't just football. She was the first one who wanted to know about chorus concerts and band concerts. She would constantly ask me how we were doing academically. She just wanted us to be successful in every single thing that we did."

Jenna Hewett, who is the BHS sideline cheer coach, said, "Cindy Futch's Tornado spirit was truly unmatched. She showed up again and again for her Bradford family, rarely missing an opportunity to cheer on the Tornadoes. Whether it was under the Friday night lights or any event she could make it to, Cindy was full of pride, love and unwavering support."

Coffey said it baffled Futch whenever she heard of a BHS student transferring to another school.

"She would take it so personal," Coffey said. "Why would you leave?"

See FAN, page 4

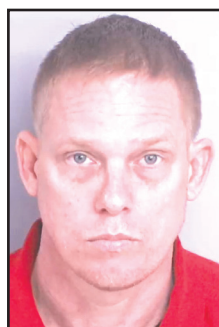
## Life sentence for love triangle stabbing-murder

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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A Bradford County jury found Gary Alvin Weeks Jr. guilty of first-degree murder on April 1 in the 2024 stabbing death of Emery Crews Jr., a killing rooted in a romantic rivalry over a mutual girlfriend.

Circuit Judge James Colaw sentenced Weeks, now 41, to life in prison.

Prosecutor Ryan King presented evidence that Weeks, then 39, stabbed Crews on April 23, 2024, after learning that Crews was in a sexual relationship with Stephanie Brunson, 41, with whom Weeks was also



Gary Alvin Weeks

Borland, 41, the man accused of driving Weeks to the crime scene,

romantically involved. Crews, 41, was found at HCA Florida Starke Emergency that afternoon with a stab wound to the torso and later died.

Text messages found on the phone of Thomas

showed Weeks telling Borland he planned to kill both Crews and Brunson. Borland responded: "Just don't tell them (we're) coming." Borland was arrested along with Weeks on first-degree murder charges following the April 2024 incident. He is now awaiting trial for tampering with evidence and conspiracy to commit first-degree murder.

Three others were arrested in connection with the case on charges of tampering with evidence in a criminal proceeding, accused of cleaning the vehicle in which Crews was stabbed and discarding his bloody clothing.

Of those four, Joshua Ward, 34, received the stiffest punishment.

Ward, who had been on probation, pleaded no contest to the tampering charge and the probation violation. He was sentenced on May 14, 2025, to 10 years in state prison with credit for 207 days served.

Dianne Chamberlin, 68, also entered a no-contest plea to the tampering count. Judge Colaw withheld adjudication and placed her on three years' probation, with credit for 169 days in the county jail.

Charges against Brunson were dropped after she underwent a mental health evaluation. Even though Colaw ruled that she was competent to proceed, the state dropped charges against her.

## State declares Union school district in financial emergency

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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The Florida State Board of Education declared the Union County and Glades County school districts in a state of financial emergency during an emergency meeting on Tuesday, March 31, voting unanimously to appoint a three-member oversight board to guide both districts toward recovery.

Deputy Commissioner of Education for Finance and Operations Suzanne Pridgen told the board that both districts had reported fund balances that had fallen below 2% of revenues and projected those balances would remain below 2% through the end of the current fiscal year.

Under Florida law, those conditions trigger a determination of financial emergency.

"I've reviewed both districts' recovery plans," Pridgen said. "However, the districts' financial conditions have continued to deteriorate."

Florida law requires the State Board of Education to appoint a Financial Emergency Board when a district reaches that threshold. The oversight board is charged with reviewing each district's operations, management and finances, and making recommendations for financial recovery.

Pridgen nominated three volunteers to serve on the board: Vicki DePratter, Randy Beach and Kathy Sneeds. DePratter agreed to serve as chair, subject to the board's approval.

DePratter is a Live Oak-based certified public accountant and served for 16 years as the chief financial officer for the Suwannee County School District.

Beach is in his 25th year as the chief financial officer of the Wakulla County School District.

Sneeds is the director of finance for the Jackson

County School District, a position she has held for over 29 years.

Board members are unpaid volunteers, though their travel expenses will be covered, Pridgen noted.

The board voted unanimously to appoint DePratter as chair and Beach and Sneeds as members.

In a letter to parents and guardians, Superintendent of Schools Mike Ripplinger framed the declaration as a positive step.

"While this designation reflects the seriousness of our situation, it is also a necessary step to access state assistance," he wrote. "As a result, the district will be able to receive funding to provide financial stability for the remainder of this year."

In a subsequent interview with the Union County Times, Ripplinger said that Sen. Jennifer Bradley had filed a request for \$2 million in state assistance for both the Union and Glades County school districts. However, the funding did not make it into the House budget, and lawmakers failed to approve a spending plan before the session ended on March 13.

Ripplinger said the expected aid should replace roughly \$1.4 million lost when the state's third FTE calculation, a funding formula tied to student enrollment, came in lower than projected in late January, wiping out months of financial progress.

"It was devastating," he said of receiving that third calculation. "I mean, it broke me. All the work that we had done, we could see we're going to reach the goals that we had at the end of this year, was just washed away like a sandcastle at the beach."

The district's adjusted operating budget currently sits at approximately \$18.2 million, down from roughly \$21 million the prior year. Ripplinger said he has directed his finance staff to plan around an \$18 million operational budget for next year until

Tallahassee produces hard numbers.

"I don't want to just sit here and wait," he said. "Let's go ahead and be doing our homework until we see hard numbers."

A separate \$29.5 million in state funding for a new Lake Butler Elementary School is not affected by the budget standoff, Ripplinger said, because those capital funds wouldn't be released until October or November, regardless of when the governor signs the budget. Architects and builders remain on schedule.

### School reorganization and staff reductions

The district has already received state approval to consolidate its grade structure for the 2025-26 school year. Fifth grade will move from Lake Butler Middle School to the elementary school, while the remaining middle school grades will be combined with the high school.

Ripplinger said the district will need to cut at least \$2 million heading into next year, with staff reductions as a necessary component. He emphasized a conservative approach, planning for fewer positions up front and adding staff if enrollment demands it, rather than budgeting for positions that may not be needed.

"It's easier to add staff later than go ahead and say, 'Well, we think we may need them,'" he said.

He noted that classroom teacher positions are relatively straightforward to calculate based on student-to-teacher ratios, but non-instructional support roles are harder to forecast — and those

See SCHOOLS, page 6

## Lake Area Ministries raises \$4,378 during Sunrise Service

BY JENN SAMSEL  
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The Lake Region Kiwanis Club and the Lake Area Ministries hosted the 25th Annual Easter Sunrise Service at Keystone Heights Beach, attracting a large crowd and supporting Lake Area Ministries in its efforts to raise funds to feed hungry families.

The event took place on Sunday, April 5th, at Keystone Heights Beach.

During the service, Lake Area Ministries raised \$4,378, which will help provide food for families in need. As inflation and gas prices continue to rise, more families are struggling to



Pastor JT Taylor of KH Methodist Church delivered the message.

afford food.

According to Lake Area Ministries, they feed approximately 7,980 families each year. So far this year, they have fed 1,931 families, including 91 new to the Lake Area region.

"Thank you so much for coming out and giving to the Lake Area Ministries," said Scott Standland, the President of the Lake Area Ministries.

"We are so very thankful for the community's support of this Easter service and the donations to LAM. The number of volunteers from each of the sponsoring churches is wonderful," said Karen Lake, Kiwanian Member, Lake Region Kiwanis Club.



Scott Standland, President of Lake Area Ministries



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**WORTH NOTING**

### UF/IFAS Master Gardener Plant Sale

Join Bradford County's Master Gardeners for a plant sale on Saturday, April 18, from 9 a.m. to noon, or until plants run out. The sale will be held at the Bradford County Fairgrounds in the Cattle Barn. Over 500 edible fruit trees and ornamental natives and Florida-Friendly plants available, including citrus, blueberries, blackberries, grapes, bananas, firebush, coral honeysuckle, salvia, daylilies, bromeliad, butterfly bush and more.

### Mossman Hall hosts 2nd Annual BBQ Brawl

Get your grills ready! Mossman Hall will host second annual BBQ Brawl fundraiser on April 18, at 301 State Rd 26 in Melrose. Grill masters are invited to compete for the title of 4Corners Grand Champion and cash prizes totaling over \$1,000. Competition categories include pulled pork, chicken, baby back ribs and beef brisket.

A \$35 wristband will get you all the barbecue you can eat until it's gone. The event also features local vendors, an auction, a car show and live music. The Azalea City Cruisers Classic Car Crawl is at Heritage Park from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Vendors open at 2 p.m. with live music, food and more. The live auction is at 3 p.m., followed by the awards ceremony at 7 p.m.

### Woman's Club Bingo Night

Come play bingo with the Woman's Club of Starke on Tuesday, April 21, at 6 p.m. Doors open at 5:30 at the clubhouse located at 201 N. Walnut St. in Starke. Play 30 cards for \$20. Snacks provided.

### VFW community yard sale

Lake Butler Veterans of Foreign Wars is hosting a community yard sale on Saturday, April 11, from 8 a.m. to noon. The yard sale will be at the post off Hwy 231. Everyone is invited to set up a table in exchange for a donation. Please contact Barbara Fischer at 904-263-0647 to reserve your table.

### Health and Wellness Fair

The Woman's Club of Starke will host a Health and Wellness Fair on Wednesday, April 15, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. A variety of community health providers and vendors will set up in the clubhouse located at 201 N. Walnut St. in Starke. Healthy lunch options will be available. Everyone is invited to this free event.



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### Testimonial:

#### 1. Can you tell me why you love your job?

*I love my job as an Air Transportation Logistics Specialist in the Florida Air National Guard because it has afforded me the opportunity to learn many new skills, push myself mentally and physically, travel, meet many kinds of people who are now stationed around the world, and even allowed me to take on an instrumental role in instructing my fellow Airmen as a TCCC instructor for my unit. The comradery of the 202d RED HORSE is unparalleled; there is always someone helpful willing to lend a hand or give advice when needed. Our supervisors strive toward the goal of attaining every advancement available to their airmen. Leadership feels it important to ensure everyone gets not only the required training, but additional trainings the airmen desire as well.*

#### 2. Can you tell me what benefits from the Florida Air National Guard have helped you the most?

*The National Park Pass, as well as EDD, Education Dollars for Duty, are the programs I have utilized most since joining the Florida Air National Guard. The ability to employ EDD funds, which cover the full cost of tuition and fees for any public college in the state of Florida, gave me the opportunity to complete my Office Specialist Certificate as well as currently enroll in an AS Accounting program. Next fall semester I plan on transferring to a FL university complete a bachelor's degree, where EDD will continue to cover tuition and fees. While on TDY in Montana, we were allotted some time over the weekend and a group of us were able to visit Yellowstone National Park. It was breathtakingly beautiful, truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, which I would not have had if it weren't for joining the Florida Air National Guard.*

#### 3. Can you talk about some of the new skills you have learned in the Florida Air National Guard that have helped you in the civilian work force?

*Working in the Florida Air National Guard, I have developed numerous skills in the areas of inventory tracking, cargo palletization, C-17 load configurations, and even k-span construction. However, by far the most beneficial capability that has been of service to me in the civilian work force has to be the leadership skills I have gained. I would say I was somewhat effective as a leader before joining, but the Guard has given me a fresh perspective and my mentors in the unit have been remarkable in demonstrating better ways to lead my fellow Airmen.*



Respectfully,  
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of free nicotine patches, gum or lozenges.

This group more than doubles your chance of quitting for good. Preregistration is required. Our next group is Thursday, April 30, from 1-3 p.m. at The Bradford Community Partners Health and Wellness Resource Hub at 721 Old Lawtey Road in Starke (formerly known as the Starke Church of God by Faith Community Center). Virtual

options are also available on the computer or over the phone. Call 866-341-2730 to reserve your spot.

## Food distribution at True Vine

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Farm Share and True Vine Ministry will take place Tuesday, April 14 and 28, at 10 a.m. at True Vine Outreach Ministry in Starke.

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



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<b>SATURDAY 4/11</b> THE SUPER MARIO GALAXY MOVIE- 4:00 & 7:00 YOU, ME, & TUSCANY- 4:00 & 7:00	<b>SUNDAY 4/12</b> THE SUPER MARIO GALAXY MOVIE- 4:00 & 6:45 YOU, ME, & TUSCANY- 4:00 & 7:00

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# Bradford open to other options for Douglas property

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Bradford County Commissioners are keeping their minds open on the future use of the Douglas Building as alternatives to an ICE detention center are proposed.

Commissioners Tuesday were asked to consider leasing the property to Sheriff Gordon Smith, who has been exploring the use of the site as an immigrant detention center to generate jobs and revenue for the county. Real Estate Agent Marty Shaw approached the board offering another option to lease the property while a private business considers its use of the property.

Shaw has submitted a letter of intent on behalf of OM Imports, which he said has been in Starke 10 years producing granite. Their property on Southeast 44th Avenue (Steel Mill Road) is contiguous to the Douglas property, which has frontage on U.S. 301, and the business is interested in expanding into an industrial park.

With marketing, Shaw was hopeful there could be additional development opportunities for this new industrial park.

“Over the last three years, we really haven’t had a chance to do any marketing on the property at



A full house demonstrates how it will emote support instead of applauding each speaker during Tuesday’s county commission meeting.

all,” he said. With OM Imports support, the property could be shared through commercial platforms worldwide to find interested companies. Commissioner Chris Dougherty has also had a conversation about an alternative use for the property.

“I just think that we have not explored other options for this property properly. So, this would be a chance for us to spend somebody else’s money to do all the marketing, and you all would get see the results and approve of whatever the alternative uses

would be,” Shaw said.

Questioned about the contamination, he said all available information would be disclosed and anyone using the property would have to address the impact of development. The contamination is monitored by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, which has unfettered access to the property, according to County Manager Scott Kornegay.

“Our initial intent was for it to be an industrial site, which opens it up for lots of business attraction,” Commission

Chairwoman Carolyn Spooner said.

Shaw said the existing warehouse was built in the late 1950s or early 1960s and issues like lack of fire suppression or sewer and water service are hurdles to be jumped.

“But I think without at least pursuing the opportunity, you know, I think we’re being a little short sighted,” he said.

Shaw said the proposal was for three years, \$50,000 per year. That would provide the county revenue while commercial options for the property are

explored.

The consensus of the board was to be open to all options.

“I know sometimes our residents, our community think we don’t listen, but we do, and we take to heart on what is what is said. But the other thing is looking really deeply at the future of that area and what it could be used for, and there’s lots of potential for that, and I think it’s worthy to be explored,” Spooner said.

That may come as some relief to the two dozen or so speakers — some new, some return — who continue to stand in opposition to developing the site as an immigrant detention center.

Ryan Harris said they were there because despite multiple meetings with unanimous public opposition, the ICE proposal was still on the table. He and other criticized the idea of leasing the property to Sheriff Smith. Kristin Ruben with the Sierra Club questioned the delegation of negotiating authority and the transparency of the process under that scenario. Harris said signing a lease with the sheriff would invite a permanent, disruptive protest into the heart of the town.

Elder Ophelia Hines preached to the commission for a moment. “First of all, we have more

than our share of confinement facilities in this area. Secondly, it will do more harm than good — a burden to the cost of its operation for both the city and the county. Many offenders relocate to our community after being released from incarceration. This causes our small community to be noticeable in population for ex-offenders within it, making us unattractive for growth and mobility, not to mention a high risk for criminal activity. I strongly urge you to deny this proposal for further consideration,” she said.

“It hurts my heart to think anyone is even thinking about putting an ICE detention center in my community,” Robin Frazer said. “This isn’t a right or left issue. This is a right or wrong issue. I have spoken with people on both sides of the political arena. This goes beyond politics. This is a moral issue. We cannot sell our souls for any amount of money. Bradford County is too precious a commodity to earn income on the backs of immigrants just trying to make a better life for themselves. Please don’t soil our county with an ICE detention center, whatever the benefits.”

# What eliminating property taxes could mean to the county

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
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Bradford County’s budget workshop Tuesday included a “doomsday” look at what losing a third of its property tax revenue could mean.

From shuttering the library to cutting jobs and salaries nothing discussed is set in stone. All, however, were presented as possible consequences voters are given the choice to eliminate taxes on homestead properties.

“We want to show the board in public what a loss in \$5.4 million of tax revenue would mean to the Board of County Commissioners,” County Manager Scott Kornegay said.

Multiple scenarios were floated in Tallahassee, but the version of a proposed constitutional amendment approved by the Florida House (but not in the Senate) included eliminating non-school property taxes on homestead properties. The caveat was that public safety budgets, including law enforcement and fire rescue, could not be reduced as a result — at least not right away.

That leaves counties to chip away at other services, and Kornegay was clear that this was much more serious for rural counties with a higher percentage of homestead property value.

“We are in no way suggesting that this is what needs to be done or even can be done. Neither is it an attempt to influence people on how to vote in November should

this measure make the ballot. This is purely informational, like I said, not only for our board, but also for the voting public. We believe they have a right to know what they’re voting on and what their vote will mean practically to them as citizens of Bradford County.

Based on tax collection information, the county collects \$15.5 million in property taxes. Eliminating the taxes on homestead properties would cut \$5.4 million from the budget. Kornegay said this means reduced access to services for seniors and families, and deferred infrastructure maintenance, which could lead to even higher cost solutions in the future. It could impact quality of life, he said, and disrupt the county’s current opportunities for growth.

Road construction and maintenance schedules could be delayed, as would stormwater drainage improvements and responses to potholes and public safety concerns. Outside of state grants, public works, receives \$3.7 million from the board. Supervisory positions could be cut from four to two, two additional positions could be cut, the number of graders leased out from three to two, and mowing could be cut in half.

That eliminates \$1.2 million from the budget.

Closing the library could end many positive programs but save the board \$415,000. Cutting veterans affairs would save another \$250,000, and the senior

center \$76,000. Everything could be removed from recreation, which this year included \$16,000 for park maintenance and \$150,000 for Bradford Sports United. All contributions to third-party organizations could be cut, saving \$171,000.

Planning and zoning could lose its recently hired director for a savings of \$85,000, plus increased prices for contracted application processing and review. Eliminating mosquito control reduces the solid waste budget \$67,000, which is already \$500,000 short.

Further cuts could include eliminating the UF/IFAS Extension Office saving \$272,000, and 50%, or \$200,000, from the board’s IT budget.

Even with those cuts, that would leave \$2.62 million of the \$5.4 million loss in property taxes to contend with by cutting employee salaries and benefits.

“That’s the only thing left to cut. If you went through an across-the-board salary reduction, we have to do the math

options for reducing health insurance costs, but only eliminating the benefit entirely could close the funding deficit, and that is not an option under federal law.

If faced with forced reductions in property tax revenue, there are other options for raising revenue. One is fully funding the fire assessment, which is currently funded at 50%. The solid waste assessment could also increase from \$125 to \$175 annually. Kornegay said the commission could pursue additional assessments as well, such as emergency medical

services or road construction and maintenance. They could also approach electric utilities again about a franchise fee. That is worth an estimated \$1.5 million but only Florida Power and Light, not Clay Electric, has been willing to proceed.

Lawmakers are expected back in Tallahassee this month for a special session on redistricting. It is unknown when they will revisit the budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27 or the property tax issue.

The county’s next budget workshop is May 21 at 5:30 p.m.

## Make your flowerpot a work of art

Beginners, learn simple folk-art techniques to decorate your flowerpots. At the April 16 meeting of the Alligator Creek Garden Club, Master Gardener Tracy Meadows will show you how to spruce up terra cotta pots to make them more attractive. Bring your own flowerpot or purchase a new one (under \$3). Other materials will be furnished. Experienced artists are also welcome, or you may just come and watch.

Join the club, April 16, at 2 p.m. at the Bradford County Senior Center, located at 1805 N. Temple Ave. (North 301 in front of the health department). If you have any questions, call Tracy Meadows at 904-586-6692.

## Thursday food distributions

Starke Church of God by Faith and Farm Share distribute food on the first and third Thursdays of the month. The next distribution is April 16 from 9-11 a.m. at 730 Old Lawley Road in Starke. This is a drive-thru only giveaway.

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**“We believe they have a right to know what they’re voting on and what their vote will mean practically to them as citizens of Bradford County.”**  
—County Manager Scott Kornegay

— 10%, 15%, 20% — whatever the case may be, you’re looking at serious staffing shortages. We have no idea who would stay and who would go if we were to cut salaries like that,” Kornegay said.

Lori Thompson shared some

**Bradford High Class of 1964**  
Will meet at Cedar River Restaurant (Starke) on Thursday, April 16th, at 1 PM.  
All graduates & spouses are invited.  
Please let Jerome Kelly 352.538.0741 OR Eugenia Whitehead at 352.745.1828 know if you plan to attend so we can let the restaurant know how many. **BE THERE!**

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## Hope Christian hosts annual STEM Fair

BY VIRGINIA DENMARK  
Hope Christian Academy

On March 3, Hope Christian Academy's seventh-12th grade students competed in the eighth annual HCA STEM Fair. Within seven divisions — plus a Fan Favorite category — 80 students displayed their research in the campus gym, had their work reviewed by an official panel of judges, and presented their findings to other staff and all K5-12 students.

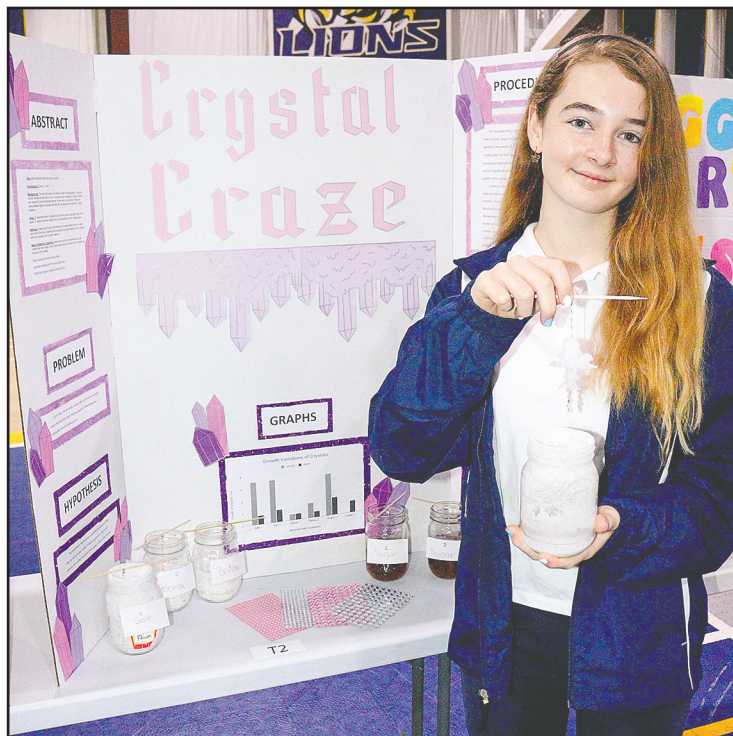
Earning first place out of a possible 5.0 perfect score was Grace Amis with a 4.75. Ryan Langieri and Rory Foster tied for second and third position, each scoring 4.63. A special ribbon was presented to Colton Bagwell who participated as a volunteer and entered an engineering project that fascinated many students.

Fan Favorite winners selected by event guests were: Grace Amis first, Colton Bagwell second and Mathias Reyes third.

Stem Fair Coordinator Adina Leon said the fair highlighted projects from life science, earth science, physical science, biology, and anatomy and physiology classes. "Students researched their given topics, designed experiments to test their theories, and presented the collected data both to their classmates and to our judging panel," she said.

Teaching these STEM classes were Latoya Foster, life science; Holli Molina, anatomy and physiology; and Adina Leon, technology, earth science, physical science and biology.

Additional 4.33-5.0 medal winners were Chloe Hostetler, Keagan Leukel, Wyatt Munroe, Payton Hutchins, Alex Sudak,



Taking overall first place with a 4.75 score and also winning the People's Choice top place was Grace Amis with her project titled, "Crystal Craze." Photos: Virginia Denmark.

Trinity Depoe, Kinsley Bagwell, Abbygail Adkins and Ali Mackey.

Excellent ribbons were awarded to students earning scores 3.77-4.25: Gabby Lankford, Tripp Dugat, Ethan Miller, Aubri Bradshaw, Kirra Reiss, Wyatt McLendon, Kaideen Sudak, Morgan Cass, Grace Beaty, Mathias Reyes, Briley Parrish, Bree Odom, Peyton Starling, Kylie Icard, Shyla McClain, Kinsley Lofton, Joanne Abbott, Lylah Sudak, Krislyn VanZant, Paige Tolley, Dawson McNeese, Brycen Goble, Lilliana Drew, Bri Bradshaw, Lily Snyder and Noah León.

Achievement ribbons were

awarded to students earning scores 3.0-3.75: Malachi Veith, Katie Justus, Maddie McCloud, Mythias Weis, Caden Hartzog, Brentley Hudson, Kiersten Bagwell, Leeland McNeese, Addaleigh Langsford, Anna Strickland, Alexander O'Reilly, Griffin McCloud, Leannah Scott, Landon Faulk, Trinity Casielles, Ryder Black, Kass Dugat, Riggs Johnson, Alex Adkins, Brook-Lynn Cephas, Hope Mishoe, Lesly Salvidez, Rainey Norman, Jace Griffis, Liam Fisher, Wayne Dowling, Kylee Wright, Jonathan Williams, Addyson Wilson and Brice Flint.

Other students received participation ribbons.



Ryan Langieri explains his project, Light vs. Human Behavior, to one of the judges Lydia Morgan.



Rory Foster's project, "DNA Extraction of a Banana," helped him tie with Langieri for second/third place. They each earned a 4.63 out of a perfect 5.0 score.



Hope Christian Academy first grader Oliver Shaffer enjoyed Colton Bagwell's engineering submission. Bagwell participated as a volunteer and earned a special ribbon and also second choice as Fan Favorite.

## FAN

Continued from page 1

She just could not understand why anyone would not want to be a Tornado."

Bradford County Superintendent of Schools Will Hartley said, "She understood that being a Tornado means more and goes beyond Friday nights. Mrs. Cindy ate, drank and lived Tornado spirit. She was Tornado spirit. She is Tornado spirit."

"Cindy wasn't just a fan, she was part of the heartbeat of this community," Hewett said. "Her presence brought energy, encouragement and a sense of togetherness that will never be forgotten."

### Go, Big Red!

Futch was a cheerleader as a BHS student, but she never stopped being a cheerleader.

"Her passion over the years just continued to grow and grow and grow and grow," Coffey said. "No one took more pride in being a Tornado and supporting the Tornadoes than her."

If you were at a BHS football game, you heard Futch's voice, no matter how many other people were in attendance.

"Mrs. Cindy was the epitome



Cindy Futch, as described by Bradford Athletic Director Sampson Jackson, was the "ultimate Tornado." She never missed an opportunity to show off her Tornado spirit.

of a true Tornado fan," Hartley said. "Rain or shine, home or away, good season or bad, regardless of the coach. It didn't matter if we were up by 20 or down by 20, you could always hear her screaming, 'Sack that quarterback! Let's go, Red!'"

"Year after year, she set the tone for our bleachers. She was the lead cheerleader. She set the standard."

David Rodgers, who provides the play by play on WEAG's broadcasts of BHS football games, recalled an incident at P.K. Yonge in which he and color commentator Byron Bagwell had to call the game from the stands. Chuck Kramer, who was the WEAG owner/general manager at the time, remarked that Futch's voice was so loud it was hard to hear Rodgers and Bagwell, telling them, "She's yelling and screaming and shaking that cowbell."

Rodgers said he informed Futch of the situation, but she gave him a look that said she was not dampening her spirit for her beloved Tornadoes.

"She embodied what it is to be a big fan and a cheerleader for Bradford Tornado football," Rodgers said.

Terry Vaughan, the former play by play commentator for WEAG broadcasts, said "the poor guy who had season tickets directly behind her knew he might as well stand up from the opening kickoff."

Vaughan's wife, Jennifer, said if you were a BHS fan and you wore a Florida Gators shirt of a Florida State Seminoles shirt, Futch would "call you out," saying, "Florida's not playing tonight. Florida State's not playing tonight. Bradford's playing tonight. Where's your Tornado stuff?"

Jennifer Vaughan recalled the time she, Futch and Melba Johnson traveled to Macclenny together to watch Bradford play Baker County. As they were entering the stadium, a local TV journalist asked if they'd like to say anything on camera about the game. Futch, displaying exactly how she felt about Bradford's big rival, said, "I hate Baker County! We're going to kill them tonight!"

Futch, Johnson and Vaughan stopped at a Baker County restaurant before returning home after the game. The restaurant had a TV, which aired Futch's comments. Vaughan said she remembered thinking, "I don't know if we're getting out of here alive."

"It was so funny," Vaughan said. "Cindy was the perfect person (for the TV journalist) to approach. Of course, Cindy gave her honest opinion."

What else would you expect from "the ultimate Tornado fan?" That's how Bradford Athletic Director Sampson Jackson described Futch, adding that "if it was something to do with the Tornadoes, she was going to be there," regardless of the distance or the weather.

"She loved the Tornadoes," Jackson said. "It didn't matter what sport it was. She had high expectations and high standards." Jackson joked that he talked

to Futch more than he talked to his wife this past January. BHS was in the midst of finding a new football coach, which, of course, was a big concern of Futch's. Jackson said she offered to help with the search.

"She was an important part of what we did and will always be an important part of what we do," Jackson said, adding, "She showed how much she was a Tornado fan in multiple aspects."

Coffey said Futch would always ask when BHS was going to have a head football coach who lived in Bradford County, which the Tornadoes now currently have in their new head coach, Ross Baker.

"I'm happy and proud that we were able to give that to her at the end, to have Coach Baker living here in Bradford County," Coffey said. "She was just thrilled that we finally had a coach who would live here in Bradford County."

Futch's love wasn't just for BHS football, BHS athletics or BHS as a school. It was also for Bradford County as whole. Starke City Clerk Chrissy Allen Thompson, who was in a group of friends with Futch they called Sparkle Girls, said Futch was "probably the county's biggest and best cheerleader for all the years that I've known her."

"I guess it's because this is where she grew up," Thompson said. "This was her home. She never let that be forgotten."

### Big shoes to fill

The Tornadoes will still have many supporters at football games, whether they're home or away, but the absence of Futch is sure to be noticeable.

"I've already kind of thought about this," Coffey said. "It's going to be different looking up in the crowd and not seeing her there."

Rodgers said, "She is going to really, really be missed at Bradford Tornado football games this season, adding, "She loved her school and loved everything about Bradford. She was one of a kind."

Jackson will miss seeing her and talking to her.

"I would always look for her, and we would always make jokes and have so many personal things that we always talked about. She meant a lot. She was special. Looking up there at the beginning of the fourth quarter and not seeing her jump around — it's going to be different."

Just as players step up to fill the shoes of those who've

graduated, BHS fans can do the same, displaying the kind of support that would make Futch smile.

"Mrs. Cindy was a Tornado treasure, and our stands will feel her absence this football season," Hartley said, "but I hope her spirit will live on in all of us, and we will make her proud every Friday night."

Still, it will be hard to think of a Starke and a Bradford County without Futch.

"She definitely loved the kids, loved the school and loved our community," Thompson said. "She will be missed so greatly."

### A perfect tribute

When Futch's husband, Steve, inquired about having the funeral service at David Hurse Stadium, the answer was obvious.

"That was a no-brainer," Coffey said. "There's no better place than to have it here, to honor her in this stadium. I don't think there's anywhere she would rather it be, even if it was in The Swamp in Gainesville. I think she would rather it be here."

Thompson said her initial thought was that it would be a great idea for the service to be held in the BHS auditorium with the BHS cheerleaders present. Then, when she heard the service would be in the stadium, she admitted that was even better.

"It's just a perfect place," Thompson said. "A perfect remembrance. A perfect honor. That's exactly where she would want to be."

Hewett said, "There is no more fitting place to celebrate her life than David Hurse Stadium — the place where so many memories were made and where her spirit shone so brightly. As we gather there, we'll honor not just the biggest Tornado fan, but a woman who loved deeply, gave freely and will forever be part of the Bradford legacy."

Thompson believes that Futch will be observing the service, saying, "I think she'll be looking down from heaven with pom-poms and with a 'Go, Big Red' shirt on. She's going to be extremely happy and proud that she was given the honor that she deserves."

Terry Vaughan, who described Futch as "a true patron saint of all things scarlet and gray," said, "Bradford's all-time greatest cheerleader is now making new Tornado fans in heaven. Somehow, I suspect she refused to pass through the gate until Saint Peter agreed to put on a Tornado cap."

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# Lake Region

## KH Rotary brings in 65 cars at the 2nd annual Spring Fling

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

Despite the windy weather, the 2nd Annual Spring Fling and Rotary Car Show attracted a great turnout.

The Friends of Keystone Heights, alongside the Rotary Club of Keystone Heights, hosted the 2nd Annual Spring Fling Event. It took place on Saturday, March 28th, at the Keystone Heights Airport.

This car show featured 65 participants, and the Spring Fling brought in 30 vendors, along with bounce houses, music, face painting, axe throwing, the Fantastic Fire Brigade, Clay County Fire Rescue, and the Clay County Sheriff's Office.

"It was a great event, we had lots of people stop by the booths, and the food trucks did great,

as well as the car show. We are looking forward to next year being even bigger and better," said Ginger Lee, President of the Friends of Keystone Heights.

The event was free and aimed at giving back to the community, made possible by the Friends of Keystone Heights

sponsors. The funds raised will go towards scholarships.

Keystone Heights Rotary raised funds during its car show. The proceeds will go towards a \$1,000 scholarship for a local high school student, with additional funds benefiting the JROTC program and potentially a local athletic program—continuing Rotary's commitment to investing in the future of the community.

"The Rotary Club extends its sincere appreciation to all participants and car owners who helped make this event a success. Every vehicle on



Heather, Ginger, Shelly, Besty, Keystone Heights Rotary Members

display showcased outstanding craftsmanship and pride. We thank everyone for their support and look forward to seeing you again next year," said Todd Beals, Keystone Heights Rotary Club President.

The winners for the car show were:

- 1st Place: 1967 Ford Mustang GT-500
- 2nd Place: 1946 Chevy Pickup Truck
- 3rd Place: 1968 Chevy Nova



Rick and Bev White

## Clay County Fair marks anniversary with '80s theme and chance to say "I do"

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

The Clay County Fair is celebrating its 40th anniversary with an '80s theme and is offering one couple the opportunity to get married on its fairgrounds. The grand opening of the fair took place on April 2 at the Clay County Fairgrounds.

During a press conference on Tuesday, March 31, Sheriff Cook mentioned that the Clay County Fair is a significant event for families and children, as it holds many cherished memories.

Agency representatives and fair staff highlighted the importance of taking a photo of your child at the fairgrounds in the event they become separated. The photo can assist fire rescue, law enforcement, and fair personnel in locating the missing child. Additionally, attendees were reminded to stay safe, stay hydrated, and download SaferWatch and monitor for changing weather conditions.

Not only that, this year, Clay County has finally opened two ramps at the First Coast Expressway (State Road 23) and State Road 16, making it easier to access the fair. However, the Sheriff noted that the main access to the fair is still via a two-lane road.

"Leave early if you have a concert or a specific time that you want to get here, and pack your patience and listen to the deputies that are out on the roads working. The safer watch app will be our primary tool for communicating with our community regarding traffic situations or any other issues that may come up with the fair," said Sheriff Cook

"I'm going to go over a few safety tips for a quick second. Please make sure that you're checking the weather before you come in for the fair, and make sure that you're signing up not only with SaferWatch, but also with alert.claycountygov.com. That is where another way that we will be sending out any alerts or weather alerts for the event and throughout the year and Remember when you arrive at the fair to make sure to take a picture of your child in the instance that you lose your child while in the fair with the crowds, you know exactly what they look for," said Kayla Futch, Clay County Emergency Management.

"We look forward to a great fair this year, fire rescue assets. We're going to have plenty of personnel out here. Please hydrate before you come to the fair, wear sunscreen (big deal,

please), especially for children, and wear comfortable shoes. We treat a lot of injuries for blisters and things of this nature for shoes," said Battalion Chief David Kuykendall, Clay County Fire Rescue.

**What is happening at the fair?**

There is much to do this year. Rides, food, vendors, games, livestock, contests, the Early Florida Village, art, and more.

To commemorate the 40th anniversary, the Clay County Fair is celebrating on Sunday, April 12, by offering one couple the chance to get married at the fairgrounds.

The contest prize includes a full wedding package featuring a ceremony in the Early Florida Village, a \$500 jewelry gift card, and \$100 toward marriage license fees.

To enter the contest, participants must interact with the official Clay County Fair - Florida social media page. Requirements include following the page, liking the announcement post, and commenting with a description of why they want to get married at the fair while tagging their partner. Participants must be at least 18 years old and be available on the scheduled wedding date.

## Immokalee dedicates waterfront to lifer

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

YMCA Camp Immokalee has dedicated its waterfront area in honor of Mo Eaton, who served the Y for 40 years. The Waterfront will be named "Mo's Landing."

The ribbon-cutting ceremony and unveiling of a dedicated Mo's Landing sign were held on Sunday, March 29, at the YMCA facility on Immokalee Road.

Mo has been a part of the Y of Florida's First Coast for over four decades. Her dedication and passion for working with children have made her beloved in the community.

For about 10 years, she served as the camp director at Camp Immokalee.

"She is just so well-beloved that we wanted to honor her by naming our waterfront after her. We have invited a bunch of her family and friends and people that know and adore her from the Y to celebrate this momentous occasion," said Jennifer Keyworth, Camp Director.

"She made it the great place that it is today, instituted a lot of new traditions, and got the kids and counselors excited about overnight camps. We have people here who were counselors back when Mo was here, and they



(L-R) Kerry, Jennifer Keyworth, Mo Eaton, Serena Rodgers, Samantha Key, Roland Murwin and Allison Krabill — YMCA Camp Immokalee staff members.

are now bringing their children to camp, just because she has created that family atmosphere."

"She is Ms. Mo, the camp director for many campers who have gone on and have children on their own, and brought their children back to Mo for the second generation of campers. She also taught a countless number of children how to swim, including my own and soon my new granddaughter," said Penny Zuber, Executive VP, COO-CFO, YMCA Camp Immokalee. Mo's Landing has expanded

its dock, which features a new water obstacle course with a climbing wall and a slide. This area will also offer wakeboard, canoe, kayak, boat, and jet ski rentals every day throughout the summer.

Although Mo is retired, she continues to play an active role by teaching lifeguard classes to new lifeguards and staff.

The YMCA will run a 10-week summer camp and, throughout the year, host retreats and offer weekend group rentals.

## Nutrition Retreat Smoothie changes owners

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

FaithFuel Nutrition has recently acquired the Nutrition Retreat Smoothie Shop in Keystone Heights.

On Saturday, March 28th, FaithFuel Nutrition held its grand opening.

The shop was acquired in February, and the location was remodeled.

In 2021, owner Ashley Hickey visited the Nutrition Retreat Smoothie Shop and fell in love with it. She quickly realized that she wanted to run a store like it.

At the time, she and her husband were missionaries in Ukraine, but they eventually moved back home. Unfortunately, the timing wasn't right for them to open a nutrition shop.

Ashley has a background in the restaurant industry alongside her degree and is passionate about her faith.

"I was a server throughout my college years and late high school years, but in the nutrition aspect, I actually have my degree in applied physiology and kinesiology, so I have a little bit of a background in that as well," said Hickey.

The business offers meal-replacement shakes and clean energy drinks, all of which contain essential vitamins.



Owner Ashley Hickey, co-owner Christian Hickey, Brittany Barrs, McKenzie Guy and Aubrianna Clark — FaithFuel Nutrition, Keystone Heights.

"We also have things to help with immunity, digestion, something called our best defense, which helps keep your immune system high so that you don't catch anything, and so many various things that help with keeping your body fueled."

In addition to smoothies, they offer a range of specialty teas and protein snacks.

In the future, they plan to expand by adding seating and introducing new grab-and-go products such as protein parfaits and overnight oats.

Their hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 7:00 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. and Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

## KHHS student awarded Clay County Fair Volunteer of the Year Award

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

Each year, the Clay County Fair nominates a Volunteer of the Year. This year, Carter Doss, a student at Keystone Heights Junior Senior High School, was awarded the title of Clay County Fair Volunteer of the Year.

During his free time, he assisted two elderly individuals, who left an outstanding review for him on the Clay County Fair website.

Carter absolutely loves volunteering and helping others.

"There are some perks with it, but I enjoy helping the community out and helping people. Just keep on working and following your dreams," said Carter Doss



Clay County Fair Volunteer of the Year Carter Doss

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# UNION COUNTY

## Union officials approve mitigation plan, generator contract, insurance broker

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

The Union County Board of County Commissioners approved several measures at its April 6 regular meeting, including adopting a countywide hazard mitigation strategy, awarding a school emergency generator contract to a new vendor and retaining Brown & Brown as the county's health insurance broker.

The board also authorized County Coordinator Jimmy Williams to pursue a surplus fire truck from Jacksonville Fire Rescue and approved a pay raise for EMS Director Brent Allen.

### Hazard mitigation plan adopted

Commissioners voted unanimously to adopt Resolution 2026-04, renewing the county's Local Mitigation Strategy, a federally required disaster preparedness plan covering natural hazards including floods, hurricanes, sinkholes, wildfires, drought and tornadoes.

The Florida Division of Emergency Management notified the county in March that its updated mitigation plan had been reviewed and found compliant with federal standards. Final federal approval through FEMA requires adoption resolutions from all participating jurisdictions, which include unincorporated Union County, the City of Lake Butler, the Town of Worthington Springs and the Town of Raiford.

### Generator contract goes to second bidder

The board approved a contract with Zabatt Power Systems to install a generator at Union County High School as part of an evacuation center project.

Williams told commissioners the original contractor had declined the contract, citing problems with scheduling and availability. Zabatt was the next vendor in line on the state-approved bid list.

### Brown & Brown retained as health insurance broker

Following a recommendation

from the county's insurance committee, commissioners voted to retain Brown & Brown as the county's health insurance broker under a new three-year agreement.

Two firms submitted proposals, Brown & Brown and the Florida Sheriffs' Association. Commissioner Donna Jackson, who served on the review committee, said both presentations were strong and scores were close. She said switching brokers would carry a financial cost because leaving the current consortium arrangement would require the county to purchase stop-loss coverage for outstanding claims.

Jackson noted that Brown & Brown's resources, including administrative tools already in use by the county, were a significant factor in the recommendation.

Williams clarified that retaining Brown & Brown as broker does not lock the county into its current insurance carrier. The broker can be directed to seek quotes from any provider.

### County eyes surplus fire truck from Jacksonville

Williams briefed the board on a surplus fire truck available from Jacksonville Fire Rescue, which recently added Union County to its mutual aid list.

He said the truck, which would cost approximately \$1.2 million to purchase new, could be acquired for \$25,000 through a letter of intent. The county is in the final stages of completing the Providence Fire Station, and Williams said the truck could be placed into service there.

Fire Chief Mark Hamlin urged the board not to commit without a mechanical inspection first, noting that a pump failure alone could cost \$20,000 to repair.

The board voted unanimously to authorize Williams to submit a letter of intent, contingent on inspection, with the right to withdraw the offer if the truck does not pass review.

### EMS director pay raise approved

Jackson raised concerns that Allen, the county's EMS director, was being paid less than some employees he supervises. She

said research into comparable counties found that Franklin County's EMS director earns \$88,337, and the upper range of their pay scale, while Allen's current salary is \$78,600. She added that Franklin County's population is comparable to Union's. Jackson said four EMS staff members earned more than Allen during the fourth quarter of 2025, largely due to overtime, and one employee outpaced him by roughly \$7,000 in a single quarter.

She recommended raising Allen's annualized salary to \$89,000, effective on his June anniversary date, with the remainder of the fiscal year prorated. The board approved the raise unanimously.

### Other business

Commissioners approved a budget amendment to cover a \$7,700 repair to a submersible well pump at O.J. Phillips Park near the middle school field. The well, described as about 25 years old, failed during a youth sports tournament.

The board also approved sending a time-extension request to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for an ongoing agricultural facility grant project, noting that sheetrock installation had begun and remaining work — painting, flooring, plumbing, and HVAC — was expected to be completed within 90 days.

Williams updated commissioners on two additional ongoing projects: the Providence Fire Station, where electrical work is complete and sheetrock is next, and a Florida Recreation Assistance Program grant project at a county ballfield, where concrete work for ADA-compliant sidewalks, dugouts and bleacher pads was scheduled for mid-week.

The board also approved using Axiom, a vendor on the county's continued services list, to conduct a 16-hour Maintenance of Traffic certification course for approximately 23 road department and solid waste employees at \$290 per student. Williams said the training is required by law for workers who close lanes or shoulders on public roads, and that most current certifications have lapsed.

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## Union director responds to animal abuse claims

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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The director of Union County's solid waste and animal control operations has pushed back against a formal complaint filed with state officials alleging animal cruelty, statutory violations and leadership failures at the county's animal control facility.

Lamar E. Griffis, who oversees Union County Animal Control as part of his duties as Solid Waste Director, submitted a memo to county commissioners March 4 responding to allegations that had been sent the previous month to Gov. Ron DeSantis, Attorney General James Uthmeier and Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson.

The original complaint, dated Feb. 16 and signed by more than 50 people including rescue volunteers, animal welfare advocates and adopters, accused Union County Animal Control of leaving dogs in outdoor kennels during sub-freezing temperatures in late January, failing to provide basic veterinary care, repeatedly violating Florida's spay-and-sterilize statutes, and operating without a properly certified animal control officer.

The complaint was spearheaded by Florida Urgent Rescue, a rescue organization that has worked with the facility for years, and its director, Mike Merrill.

In his memo, Griffis denied the allegations and characterized them as driven by personal grievance rather than genuine concern for animal welfare.

"At no time have animals in our care been subjected to cruelty or neglect," Griffis wrote, adding that the only complaints his agency had ever received came from Merrill and Florida Urgent Rescue. He said Merrill had visited the facility only "a handful of times" over the past two years and that his allegations were "based on his opinion, not facts."

Griffis also noted that Union County Sheriff's personnel had visited the facility on multiple occasions without lodging complaints, and that the agency had cooperated with the Sheriff's Office and the ASPCA on investigations.

### The freeze dispute

The most serious allegations in the original complaint centered on a late January cold snap that brought sub-freezing overnight temperatures and dangerous wind chills to northeast Florida. The complaint alleged that Griffis and his staff ignored repeated warnings from Florida Urgent Rescue beginning Jan. 14, refused to allow the rescue to remove dogs before temperatures dropped, and left animals outside with only tarps and pine needle

mulch for protection.

The complaint cited an email sent to Griffis at 8:06 a.m. on Jan. 26 by Merrill, outlining three options for protecting the dogs — temporary indoor housing in a county warehouse, an emergency foster appeal, or transport to boarding — and alleged Griffis never responded. A second email on Jan. 30, warning that another dog had been placed outside ahead of an even colder stretch, also went unanswered, the complaint said.

Griffis offered a different account. He said the cold event had been forecast 10 days in advance, giving Merrill "ample time to make arrangements to pick up the dogs." He said Florida Urgent Rescue had a pattern of waiting until late in the day or on weekends to pull dogs, requiring his Animal Control Tech to work overtime. He said the agency "had already made provisions to ensure the dogs were protected for the night" and that rescuers could begin picking them up the following morning.

On the question of outdoor kennels, Griffis said Florida statutes and ASPCA standards permit their use and that his agency met or exceeded those standards. He said the agency tarps all four sides of each kennel and provides straw bedding. The original complaint alleged the tarps had gaps, that wind blew through the enclosures, and that pine needles rather than straw had been placed in the kennels when dogs were released to FUR custody.

### Statutory violations disputed

The original complaint accused the agency of repeatedly adopting out unsterilized animals without collecting mandatory deposits or ensuring follow-up compliance under Florida Statute 823.15, failing to maintain complete intake and disposition records, and operating without a properly certified animal control officer as required by Florida Statute 828.27.

Griffis disputed each point. He argued that Statute 823.15 does not require mandatory spay or neuter by the facility itself, but allows for written agreements with adopters guaranteeing sterilization within 30 days. On record-keeping, he said the agency complies with all requirements under section 828.15(2)(A). On the certification question, he said he had attached copies of his Animal Control Tech's training certificates to demonstrate statutory compliance.

Regarding kennel sanitation and exercise, the complaint alleged dogs were routinely confined for extended periods without exercise, particularly on weekends when staff presence

was described as roughly 10 to 15 minutes per day. Griffis said dogs are given out-of-kennel time in an adjoining play yard on a regular basis and that he had personally cleaned kennels on weekends and never found conditions to be unacceptable.

### Competing narratives on the relationship

Both sides offered sharply different accounts of the working relationship between the agency and Florida Urgent Rescue.

The original complaint described more than a decade of collaboration, with Friends of Union County Animals contributing roughly \$20,000 annually in veterinary care and FUR pulling more than 400 dogs from the facility — including nearly all emergency and major medical cases — and spending more than \$250,000 on veterinary costs. The complaint said that cooperation deteriorated after a change in UCAC leadership in 2024.

Griffis countered that Merrill had never called him directly to raise concerns, either before or during the most recent incident, and characterized the campaign as an attempt to force a change in administration. "It is painfully clear to me that Mr. Merrill's allegations are directed to effect a change in administration and very little to do with the wellbeing of the dogs in our care," he wrote.

He also questioned why, if conditions were as bad as alleged, Merrill continued to allow dogs to remain at the facility after being notified they were available for adoption. At the time of the memo, Griffis said, five dogs were in the agency's care and FUR had not yet picked them up.

### Facility upgrade requested

In closing, Griffis used the memo to request that commissioners begin the process of upgrading the animal control facility to include an indoor space with additional kennels. He said the current 12-kennel outdoor facility reaches capacity several times a year, forcing the agency to close to new intakes.

The state complaint was copied to State Attorney Brian S. Kramer, U.S. Senators Ashley Moody and Rick Scott, U.S. Rep. Kat Cammack and State Rep. Chuck Brannan, State Sen. Jennifer Bradley, and all five Union County commissioners.

It was not immediately clear whether any of the state offices had initiated a formal review.

## Clay County school board eyes millage renewal for school safety, teacher pay

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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The Clay County School Board moved closer on Thursday, April 2 to placing a millage renewal on the ballot, signaling consensus around proposed language that would fund school safety officers in every school and competitive pay for teachers and staff.

The board met in a workshop on March 24 and held its April meeting one week later to discuss the renewal, the district's 2025-26 staffing plan, results from a school start times community survey, and updates on bus driver recruitment.

Voters first approved the one-mill surcharge in 2022 "to fund safety and security for district

public school students and staff, and to provide operating expenses of the district, beginning July 1, 2023, and ending on June 30, 2027."

However, the renewal referendum adds language that would allow the one-mill to be used for teacher salaries.

Go to [BcTelegraph.com](http://BcTelegraph.com) for the complete story

## SCHOOLS

Continued from page 1

cuts carry real consequences for the services that support both students and teachers.

### Staff morale and misinformation

Ripplinger described staff morale as a rollercoaster, initially rattled in August when he first briefed employees on the district's finances, badly shaken in February after news of the third calculation hit, and now cautiously relieved following the state aid announcement.

"There was a lot of relief," he said after informing faculty and staff of the incoming assistance. "At least for now, for the end of the year, we can begin to breathe and people not worry."

Apprehension about next year's jobs remains, he acknowledged. With roughly 300 positions, significant layoffs are not anticipated, though attrition will reduce some of the necessary cuts.

On the question of

misinformation circulating in the community, Ripplinger was direct. He said some of it stems from misunderstanding, but some is intentional, and what troubles him most is when people choose not to seek answers.

"There has not been an email that I have received, a phone call that I have gotten, a message that I needed to call back in which I have not taken the time to (return and) explain," he said. "What bothers me is when people choose not to seek answers and just continue to push forward the misinformation."

### Enrollment decline and school choice

Ripplinger identified declining enrollment as the root cause of the district's financial pressure. He said the district has responded by amplifying its public presence through social media, school newsletters, and community outreach to showcase what Union County schools offer.

But he was candid about the limits of that effort in the face of Florida's school choice scholarship programs, which

now provide state-funded reimbursements for private school tuition and homeschool materials, incentives that were not available to families in prior years.

"I can't force anybody to come to school," he said. "We can just give reasons why we believe this is the best option. But at the end of the day, it's the parents that are going to make the decision."

He said Union County is in some ways catching up to neighboring school districts that have been managing declining enrollment and school consolidations for years, a trend compounding the financial strain for one of the state's smallest districts.

The Union County Teachers Organization has remained cooperative throughout the crisis, Ripplinger said, calling the relationship a strength in a landscape where labor-management tensions have roiled other districts.

"Kudos to them," he said of the organization that represents Union County teachers, "where in many other districts, that is a very, very contentious relationship."



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# Crime

## Recent arrests in Bradford, Union and Clay

The following individuals were recently arrested 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

Kallie-Jo Cifarelli, 34, of Hawthorne, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 1 for a probation violation.

Joey Daugherty, 42, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 1 for withholding support.

Brayden Eaton, 18, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 30 for an out-of-county warrant.

Bruce Gordon, 71, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 29 for a probation violation.

Cornelius Henderson, 35, of Tallahassee, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 2 for a moving traffic violation.

Torelle Henderson, 32, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 2 for possession of drugs and possession of drug equipment.

Brandon Johnson, 31, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 30 for a moving traffic violation and an out-of-county warrant.

Jason McNair, 42, of Perry, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 2 for battery.

Paulina Mendenhall, 42, of Macclenny, was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 30 for trafficking in heroin, possession of cocaine, and possession of drug equipment.

Christopher Mitchell, 35, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 3 for battery.

Katheryn Morabito, 37, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 1 for a probation violation.

## Teamed up to shoplift

Keala Olin, 18, of Starke, and Wynter Olin, 21, of Starke, were arrested by Bradford deputies on April 1 for larceny.

According to the arrest report, Sgt. Joseph Shiller responded to the Walmart at 2451 Commercial Drive after store personnel reported a shoplifting in progress. A loss prevention employee told deputies she had observed a white female, later identified as Keala Olin, placing large quantities of merchandise into a shopping cart.

Olin was observed meeting with a second woman, later identified as Wynter Sparkel Olin, 21, who was also selecting and concealing merchandise in reusable bags. At approximately 6 p.m., both subjects exited the store through all points of sale without paying for the items, according to the report.

A review of store surveillance video confirmed the identities of both subjects. The store's asset protection officer conducted a scan of the unpaid merchandise, which consisted of miscellaneous clothing and other items. The total value was \$1,289.91.

Robert Pittman, 56, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 3 for DUI.

Latina Slocum, 40, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 1 for a moving traffic violation.

Joseph Trowell, 21, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 30 for an out-of-county warrant.

Susan Whitlock, 64, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Bradford deputies on March 30 for DUI.

### Union

Jessie Montrail Jenkins, 28, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on March 31 for trespassing.

Printis Lynn Jefferson, 46, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on April 2 for possession of cocaine and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Lamont Rashad White, 35, of Gainesville, was arrested by Union deputies on April 3 for a probation violation.

### Clay

Gary Edward Boyd, 45, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on April 1 for

violating a domestic violence injunction.

Justin Michael Buchler, 42, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on April 1 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Brayden Nicholas Eaton, 18, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on March 31 for causing a child to commit an act of delinquency.

## Forced his way into a camper with hatchet

Duncan James Lloyd, 23, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on March 31 for armed trespass on property.

According to the arrest report, Lloyd had forced his way into an RV camper on a High Ridge Estates property and locked himself in the bathroom.

The camper was occupied at the time by a couple, who were inside with their three young children. One told deputies she heard knocking at the camper door and opened it, believing it to be the property owner. Lloyd then pushed past her into the trailer and locked himself in the bathroom. The mother took the children and retreated to the main residence on the property, where the owner lived.

The other occupant, who told investigators he recognized Lloyd from the area, said he had previously told Lloyd to stop coming to the property approximately a year and a half ago, citing concerns about his associations and drug use. The resident confirmed Lloyd had never been permitted to stay at the camper.

The property owner told deputies she entered the camper and spoke with Lloyd in an attempt to get him to leave. She said she asked him directly whether he had any weapons. Lloyd told her he had an axe. The landlord was eventually able to persuade Lloyd to exit the bathroom and turn over the hatchet to her. The weapon was later collected and booked into evidence.

While deputies were responding, Lloyd was spotted in the backyard near the trailer. Deputy Colton Harris drew his service weapon and gave Lloyd commands to get on the ground. Lloyd eventually complied and was detained in handcuffs without further incident.

Megan Joan Stanek, 41, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on April 2 for simple battery.

## Appeals DUI conviction in crash that cost victim his leg

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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A Starke man convicted of driving drunk and leaving the scene of a crash that cost a 19-year-old pedestrian his leg has appealed a Bradford County judge's refusal to throw out his convictions, court records show.

Zachary Michael Lindgren, 32, filed a notice of appeal on April 1 with the First District Court of Appeal, challenging Circuit Judge James M. Colaw's March 3 order denying his motion for post-conviction relief. Lindgren's attorneys had argued his trial counsel was ineffective.

The case stems from a July 23, 2021, crash on County Road 230A in Bradford County. According to a Florida Highway Patrol arrest report, Lindgren's southbound Ford truck struck the pedestrian, who was standing on the roadside, then continued driving before being stopped by a Bradford County Sheriff's deputy about a quarter mile from the crash scene.

FHP Trooper K.W. Frost, who investigated the crash, reported that Lindgren showed signs of impairment, including bloodshot and watery eyes, a flushed face, slurred speech and an unsteady gait, along with a strong odor of alcohol. Lindgren declined field sobriety exercises twice and refused a breath test. A search warrant was obtained for a blood draw, which was sent to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for analysis.

Lindgren told troopers he had been uncertain what he

had struck but admitted seeing pedestrians in the roadway. He said he became frightened and drove away without calling 911.

The victim was transported to UF Health in Gainesville with serious injuries. He later lost his left leg and underwent at least seven to nine surgeries, he told the court at sentencing. He said the pain in the amputated limb never stops.

Lindgren was charged with DUI with serious bodily injury and leaving the scene of a crash involving serious bodily injury, both felonies. He entered an open no contest plea in May 2022, on the morning jury selection was set to begin, telling Judge Colaw he wanted to take responsibility and resolve the case.

At a June 2022 sentencing hearing, the victim appeared in court and showed Lindgren his amputated leg. The victim's grandmother and a witness to the crash also gave statements. The witness had been standing with the victim when the truck struck him; she said she barely had time to jump out of the way and described watching the 19-year-old's body fold over the front of the truck before he hit the pavement.

The state sought more than 10 years in prison and at least \$500,000 in restitution, noting that the victim's medical bills alone exceeded \$300,000. The defendant's attorney argued for a lesser prison term so Lindgren could work and pay restitution, noting he had no prior record and had accepted responsibility.

Colaw sentenced Lindgren to 10 years in the Department of Corrections on the leaving-the-scene count, followed by two years of community control and three years of drug offender probation. The DUI count ran concurrently with the supervision

portion of that sentence. Lindgren received credit for 37 days already served. Colaw also ordered \$500,000 in restitution, a three-year driver's license revocation, 120 hours of community service and completion of a DUI school and substance abuse evaluation.

Lindgren did not appeal at that time. In January 2026, he filed a motion for postconviction relief, claiming his trial counsel was ineffective for failing to investigate defenses to the leaving-the-scene charge — specifically a lack-of-willful-intent argument and a necessity defense — and for failing to present mitigation at sentencing.

Colaw denied both claims in his March 3 order. On the first, he found that trial counsel had in fact investigated both defenses and intended to raise them at trial, but that Lindgren chose to plead rather than proceed. The judge also noted that the state's evidence would have shown Lindgren drove past his own home after the crash, never called 911 and was still under the influence when stopped, making it unlikely he would have gone to trial regardless.

On the mitigation claim, Colaw found that a presentence investigation had been conducted, that Lindgren's remorse and willingness to pay restitution were already presented to the court, and that no additional character evidence would have outweighed the severity of the offense, particularly given that the victim lost his leg and that his family and friends who witnessed the crash suffered lasting trauma. The judge concluded Lindgren failed to show either attorney error or prejudice on either ground.

Lindgren's appeal was filed within the 30-day window allowed by the order.

## Attacked two women from kitchen counter

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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A Starke man with a history of battery convictions was sentenced last month to 80 days in the Bradford County Jail, followed by three years of supervised release, after pleading no contest to two counts of felony battery stemming from a domestic violence incident at a Starke residence in January.

Jonathan Ray Burns, 31, entered the plea on March 23 in Bradford County Circuit Court.

Bradford deputies arrested Burns on Jan. 5 after responding

to a battery complaint at a Southeast 21st Avenue residence. According to the arrest report, a deputy arrived to find a woman who said she had heard a commotion in the kitchen and had sent her grandson to investigate. The boy reported that his father, Burns, was standing on the kitchen counter.

When the woman confronted Burns and told him to get down and leave, he ran toward her, pushed her onto a couch, and began striking her in the head and face, the report states. Another woman in the home ran in and yelled at Burns to stop, then tried to use a handheld taser to intervene. Burns struck that woman with a closed fist to her left eye while she and Burns were fighting, according to the report. One of the victims was treated on scene for a small laceration

above her left eye.

Under the terms of the plea agreement, Burns is prohibited from hostile contact with the victims and must have no weapons, no alcohol or illegal drugs, and must submit to random drug screens. He is also required to resume treatment at Meridian Healthcare and must take all prescribed mental health medications.

Court records show Burns has an extensive prior record, including convictions for possession of controlled substances, carrying a concealed firearm, sale of cannabis, and resisting an officer without violence, among others. His criminal punishment scoresheet showed 27 total sentence points, below the 44-point threshold that would require a state prison sentence.

## Appealing sentence for burning down Lawtey hotel

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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A Duval County man serving 20 years in state prison for burning down a Lawtey hotel and attacking law enforcement officers has filed an appeal with the First District Court of Appeal, court records show.

Christian Lee Singleton, 45, of Atlantic Beach, entered a no contest plea in Bradford County Circuit Court in April 2023 on charges of first-degree arson, making a false bomb report, resisting an officer with violence and battery on a law enforcement officer. Circuit Judge James M. Colaw sentenced him the following month to 20 years in the Department of Corrections.

Singleton is currently housed at Marion Correctional Institution in Lowell. He filed the appeal himself, without an attorney, in late March 2026, challenging a February ruling by Judge Colaw that denied his motion for post-conviction relief.

### The May 2021 incident

According to the Bradford County Sheriff's Office arrest report, deputies responded May 20, 2021, to 23702 U.S. Highway 301 in Lawtey after reports of a fire and a suspicious individual.

Prosecutors said at sentencing that Singleton had checked into room 120 of the Economy Inn — owned by Sagar and Kirti Patel, an immigrant couple who lived at the property with their

two children — the night before the fire. In the early morning hours, surveillance footage from a store across the street captured Singleton going to a nearby gas station with a gas can before returning to the hotel. He then walked to the Lawtey Community Store, where he told the clerk he was not going to pay for a pack of cigarettes and said, "Call the police. I just blew up the building next door."

When Lawtey Police Sgt. Gillick arrived, he found the hotel fully engulfed. After locating Singleton at the store, the defendant initially surrendered, raising his hands as the officer pulled up. But while being transported, Singleton lunged from the patrol vehicle at officers, biting one officer, kicking another in the face and struggling violently with multiple deputies and Lawtey officers. Several law enforcement personnel were injured.

The 45-year-old also told officers he had a bomb in his backpack. The Alachua County bomb squad responded and detonated the bag in a controlled explosion in the store parking lot. No explosives were found. The hotel was a total loss. The Alachua County bomb squad, FDLE crime lab, Bradford County Sheriff's Office, Lawtey and Starke police, and Clay County Fire and Rescue were called to the scene.

The Patels received an insurance payment but said it was not enough to restart their business. They subsequently

moved to Biloxi, Mississippi, where they manage a hotel owned by a friend. About 30 to 40 other guests who were staying at the hotel were also displaced.

## Mental health history

Both the prosecution and defense agreed at sentencing that severe mental illness was a central factor in the case. Defense attorney Susan Ward, an assistant public defender, told Judge Colaw that Singleton had been experiencing escalating paranoid schizophrenia in the months leading up to the fire, believing, among other things, that his phone company was surveilling him. His former partner, with whom he had a child, had tried repeatedly to get him involuntary mental health treatment through the Duval County Sheriff's Office, fearing he was becoming dangerous.

Ward said that after Singleton was jailed, he spent about 18 months at a state hospital, where he was stabilized, diagnosed and placed on medication. She argued for the 10-year minimum under the plea agreement, saying the crimes would not have occurred but for the mental health break. Prosecutor Mark Dobo countered that the sequence of events: the gas can, the surveillance footage, the boast to the store clerk, showed deliberate planning.

Colaw sentenced Singleton to 20 years on the first-degree arson count and 15 years on the bomb threat count, with all sentences

## 15 years for child sexual abuse material

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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A Bradford County man was sentenced to 15 years with the Department of Corrections after pleading on March 25 to 13 counts of possession of child sexual abuse material.

According to a Florida Department of Law Enforcement news release, Roby Emory Catrett, Jr., 56, of Starke, was

arrested in July 2025 on 13 counts of possession of child sexual abuse material and one count of unlawful use of a two-way communication device. The agency said the arrest was the result of FDLE's statewide initiative to locate and arrest criminals targeting children and sharing files depicting the sexual abuse of children.

"FDLE's investigation began in May when agents received multiple Internet Crimes Against Children cybertips from an electronic service provider about an account user uploading and sharing multiple files depicting

the sexual abuse of children," the agency stated. "The investigation revealed Catrett, Jr. as the individual uploading the files. On July 15, FDLE agents arrested Catrett, Jr. at his place of employment, and he was transported to the Duval County Jail. Following his arrest, FDLE served a search warrant at his residence and seized multiple electronic devices for digital forensic analysis."

The Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) INTERCEPT Task Force and the Bradford County Sheriff's Office assisted with the search warrant.

running concurrently. Singleton received 728 days of credit for time served.

## Post-conviction filings

In December 2025, Singleton filed a pro se motion for post-conviction relief, arguing prosecutorial misconduct, ineffective assistance of counsel,


and that he was not competent when he entered his plea.

Colaw denied the motion Feb. 3, 2026. In the order, ruling that the prosecutorial misconduct claim was procedurally barred because it should have been raised on direct appeal; that the ineffective assistance claim was contradicted by Singleton's own sworn statements during his plea colloquy, in which he said his plea was freely and voluntarily

made; and that the competency claim failed to rise above a conclusory allegation.

The judge also noted that during the plea hearing, Singleton had clearly understood the charges and the consequences of his plea, and that defendants are bound by their sworn statements.

The case is now pending before the First District Court of Appeal.



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## BHS baseball team shut out by Baker Co.

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
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Bradford High School was coming off two big wins in baseball, but couldn't get its third win in a row, losing 7-0 to host Baker County on April 3.

Ryland Rike batted 2 for 3 for the Tornadoes (8-12), but the rest of the team went a combined 3 for 22.

The week for Bradford began with a 16-2 win at St. John Lutheran on March 31.

Kyler Hall and Rike hit a two-run double and a one-run double, respectively, as part of a four-run second inning, while an eighth-run seventh included two-run singles from Ben Bridges and Kandan Crawford, a two-run double from Avery Burgin and a one-run single from Tucker Roberts.

Rike finished 4 for 5 with a double, a triple and three RBI, while Kaedan Parks batted 3 for 5. Roberts and Thompson each went 2 for 3, with Roberts driving in a run and Thompson hitting a double, while Breion Johnson went 2 for 4 with a double and an RBI.

Bridges, Burgin, Crawford and Hall each finished with two RBI, with Burgin and Hall each hitting a double.

Jackson Parenter, who hit a double, had one RBI.

Starting pitcher Rike went six innings, allowing one run, two hits and one walk, while striking out 11.

On April 2, Bradford got four RBI from Patrick Pendarvis in a 10-1 win over host Covenant School of Jacksonville.

Pendarvis hit a two-run double as part of a four-run third inning that also included an RBI triple from Parks and a sacrifice-fly RBI from Rike.

A five-run fourth saw Pendarvis hit his second two-run double. Cannon Sapp also drove in two runs in the inning on a

single, while Hall drove in one run on a single.

Sapp went 3 for 4 with two RBI, while Pendarvis and Rike each batted 2 for 3. Rike, who hit a double, had one RBI.

Johnson and Jaxson Carter each went 2 for 4, with Carter hitting a triple.

Hall finished with two RBI, while Parks had one.

Starting pitcher Lucas White gave up one unearned run and five hits in 6.2 innings, striking out six.

The Tornadoes played Middleburg this past Tuesday and will travel to play Menendez on Thursday, April 9, at 6 p.m. Bradford then ends the regular season with a road game against Crescent City on Friday, April 10, at 6:30 p.m.

## Lee sets school record for BHS at Tiger Invite

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
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Bradford High School's Parviele "P.J." Lee broke the school record in the shot put at the April 3 Columbia High School Tiger Invite.

Lee won the shot put with a distance of 47 feet, 11.25 inches. He had one of two wins for the boys team, which had a first-place time of 43.56 seconds in the 4x100m relay. The relay team was composed of Jordan Cason, Damarion Dodd, Jarell Harris and Elijah Lawrence.

The 4x400m team of Cason, Dodd, Brilan Clifflin and Kendrick Munnerlyn had a third-place time of 3:52.25, while the 4x800m team of Munnerlyn, Brendan George, Liam Reaves and Bryheem Thomas had a fifth-place time of 10:39.84.

Lawrence and Cason were third and eighth, respectively, in the 100m with times of 11.30 and 11.62, while Lawrence was also



**P.J. Lee set a new Bradford High School record in the shot put at the April 3 Columbia High School Tiger Invite.**

fourth in the 200m with a time of 22.60.

Fourth-place finishes were earned by Dodd, who had a time of 19.67 in the 110m hurdles, and Chase Smalls, who had a distance of 37-7.25 in the triple jump. Ruise had a fifth-place distance of 35-8.75 in the triple jump.

Munnerlyn and George earned sixth-place finishes in the 400m and 1600m, respectively, with times of 54.24 and 5:42.07.

Raimond Pedro had a seventh-place distance of 37-1 in the shot put, while William Aldridge had a seventh-place distance of 95-3 in the discus.

Just missing out on scoring with ninth-place finishes were Jy'Quez Cason, who had a time of 23.62 in the 200m, and Dylan Ruise, who had a distance of 18-5.25 in the long jump.

Girls team member Ny'asia Lopey earned a pair of third-place finishes with distances of 16-5.25 in the long jump and 32-5.75 in the triple jump.

Prior to the meet, Bradford competed in the Clay High School Blue Devil Invite on March 31, with Lawrence winning two events.

Lawrence ran first-place times of 11.0 and 22.92 in the 100m and 200m. He also teamed up with Dodd, Harris and Jordan Cason in the 4x100m relay,

which the Tornadoes won with a time of 43.60.

Harris and Jordan Cason were third and fourth, respectively, in the 100m with times of 11.33 and 11.41, while Jy'Quez Cason had a seventh-place time of 11.70.

In the 200m, Harris and Jy'Quez Cason were second and third, respectively, with times of 23.23 and 23.79. Jordan Cason had a sixth-place time of 24.25, while Clifflin had an eighth-place time of 24.34.

Munnerlyn placed third in the 400m with a time of 54.08.

Dodd was ninth in the 100m and 200m with times of 11.79 and 24.39.

## KHHS baseball team shut out by Columbia

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
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Keystone Heights High School's baseball team was held to two hits in a 10-0, five-inning loss to host Columbia on April 6.

Columbia (13-9) entered the game as the fifth-ranked team in Class 5A.

The Class 2A Indians (7-14) went 3-3 in their previous six games, beginning with a 13-0, five-inning loss to seventh-ranked Class 3A North Marion on March 24 in Keystone.

On March 26, Keystone lost 6-5 to visiting Class 5A Middleburg.

The Indians attempted a two-out rally in the seventh. Jake Peak was hit by a pitch, while Ryland Matuschke walked. Anthony Peak then hit an RBI single, followed by a Brock Screen walk that loaded the bases. A ground ball to short ended the game.

Destin Harnage batted 3 for 4. He, Cason Burton and Anthony Peak each had one RBI.

Visiting Class 3A Palatka overcame an early deficit to defeat the Indians 8-5 on March 27.

Keystone scored runs the game's first runs in the first inning on an error and a Cooper Barry ground out, but Palatka scored five runs over the next three innings and held a six-run lead before Keystone scored three runs in the final inning.

Burton batted 2 for 4 with two RBI, while Barry and Ryder Trull each finished with one RBI.

The Indians scored three runs in the top of the seventh to defeat Class 4A Baker County 6-4 on March 31.

Trull reached on an error to start the final inning and scored on a two-out single by Barry. Matuschke singled, while Anthony Peak walked to load the bases. Screen reached on an error, allowing one run to score. Harnage then drew a bases-loaded walk to force a run in.

Harnage and Screen each went 2 for 4 with two RBI, while Barry finished with one RBI.

Trull pitched a complete game to earn the win, allowing nine hits and just two walks.

On April 1, Harnage hit a two-run single as part of a five-run fifth as the Indians built a 9-0 lead in an eventual 9-1 win over visiting Interlachen.

Harnage and Screen, who hit a two-run homer, each finished with two RBI. Burton, Matuschke and Jake Peak each had one RBI, with Matuschke hitting a double.

Gavin Eubanks batted 2 for 2. Starting pitcher Anthony Peak threw five innings, allowing no runs, no walks and two hits, while striking out five.

Keystone hosted Class 5A Orange Park on April 2, with Jake Peak hitting a walk-off single in a 6-5 win.

The Indians tied the score at 5-5 in the sixth. Jake Peak walked, while Barry singled. An error on a ball put into play by Screen with two outs scored a run, while another run was brought home on a single by Harnage.

Trull hit a double to lead

off the bottom of the seventh. He advanced to third on Ethan Franklin's sacrifice bunt before scoring on Jake Peak's single.

Jake Peak and Trull went 2 for 3 and 2 for 4, respectively. Peak finished with two RBI.

Matuschke batted 3 for 4, while Burton and Harnage each had one RBI.

Starting pitcher Franklin went six innings, giving up five runs (three earned) and six hits, while striking out 11.

Keystone played Oakleaf this past Tuesday and will conclude the regular season with a home game against Clay on Thursday, April 9, at 7 p.m.

## BHS softball team scores early, but loses to Newberry

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School's softball team led for the first four innings, but host Newberry rallied and eventually won with a three-run sixth inning, defeating the Tornadoes 11-9 on April 2.

The Tornadoes (2-9) scored five runs in the top of the first. Kingslee Phillips singled and scored on a Taryn Flowers triple. Two runs later scored on errors. Bradford had the bases loaded when Kendra Griffis drew a walk to force a run in. Toni Flynt was then hit by a pitch to bring another runner home.

Bradford led 6-5 before a three-run fourth. Flowers and Regan Adams hit back-to-back doubles, with Flowers scoring on Adams' hit. Lila Sutton and Emalyn Crawford then hit back-to-back RBI singles.

Newberry (7-5) scored six unanswered runs, with a three-run sixth proving to be the difference.

Crawford and Flowers each

See BHS, page 10

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# SHOP LOCAL!

# BHS welcomes new members of Technical Honor Society



**New National Technical Honor Society members (L-r) Jaydin Williams, Sevon Smart, Kadence Simmons, Natasha Roberts.**

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School held its 2025-2026 National Technical Honor Society induction ceremony on March 19, welcoming 13 new members to Chapter 5123 and installing officers for the coming school year.

Science teacher Camara Casson, one of the chapter's faculty advisors, opened the ceremony by noting that NTHS has recognized more than 1 million members since its founding in 1984 and awards nearly \$300,000 in scholarships annually.

Computer science teacher and chapter advisor Steven Djavaheri presided over the officer installation.

Officers installed were: President Irene Jaimes; Vice President Camron Newman; Student Engagement Officer Kadence Simmons; Treasurers Natasha and Nakayla Roberts; Governor Miranda Jaimes; and Historians Elizabeth Wagner, Christine Reaves, Kiersten Grace, Vayne Marable, and Sevon Smart.

The chapter's historians presented a history of the organization before the ceremony's candle-lighting portion, during which the chapter's seven core attributes, knowledge, skill, honesty, service, responsibility, scholarship, citizenship, and leadership, were recognized.

"The National Technical Honor Society began as a way to spotlight the talents of students in technical and career-focused education, helping those often-overlooked skills," said historian Sevon Smart. "Originally formed by educators who saw the need to celebrate excellence and experience, the organization has run a nationwide program partnering with schools and industries to recognize students, not just for academic success, but for their character, work ethic, and commitment to learning hands-on skills that keep our communities running."



**Science teacher Camara Casson, and computer science teacher and chapter advisor Steven Djavaheri presided over the ceremony.**

"At the heart of NTHS lies the dedication to fostering academic excellence, leadership and service among its members," added historian Vayne Marable.

Marable also stated that the significance of the organization extends beyond just recognition. It serves as a starting point for progress in an ever-evolving society by supporting its members' talents and skills.

Inductees recited the NTHS pledge before Djavaheri declared them official members. The following students were inducted:

Jaydin Williams, Sevon Smart, Kadence Simmons, Natasha Roberts, Nakayla Roberts,

Makayla Pernel, Vayne Marable, Aurora Marable, Ka'darius Holley, Kiersten Grace, Abigail Bryzinszki, Takayla Barnes and Ja'nyla Anderson.

NTHS membership is open to students who demonstrate exemplary performance in career and technical education. The organization supports students pursuing fields including healthcare, criminal justice, culinary arts, digital design and information technology.

"This is an honor that you will be able to carry with you throughout your education and your career," Casson told the new members.

**Nakayla Roberts, Makayla Pernel, Vayne Marable, Aurora Marable.**



**Ka'darius Holley, Kiersten Grace, Abigail Bryzinszki, Takayla Barnes, Ja'nyla Anderson**



## Cambridge award winners from BHS

Bradford High School students (l-r) Trevor Clements, Laila Hill and Alixyah Nicolas received Cambridge International Education Scholar Awards. The awards recognize high-achieving students who've demonstrated exceptional performance on Cambridge exams.

## Arc of Bradford has new mental-escape walking trail

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Sometimes you just need to take a break from it all, finding a quiet place to relax and reflect.

The people served by the Arc of Bradford (known as consumers) are no different.

With that in mind, Mental Health Services Program Manager Edrick Hamilton worked to create a mental-escape walking trail on the grounds of the Arc facilities at the former Hampton Elementary School.

Hamilton did the bulk of the work on what used to be the school's playground area, but he was also assisted by members of the mentoring group he created at the Arc: 12G at the Arc, which complements the 12G Mentoring group he leads that consists of school children. Members did such things as make bird



**Hilary Farrell stands by the entrance to the Arc of Bradford's new mental-escape walking trail.**



**Stephen Garfield takes a seat by some plants on the grounds of the mental-escape walking trail.**

## April 11 WEAG yard sale to help purchase vests for sheriff's office

WEAG 106.3-FM of Starke is having a yard sale at the station (1421 S. Water St.) from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., with proceeds going toward the purchase of active-shooter vests for the Bradford County Sheriff's Office.

Items at the sale will include office furniture, retail display racks, office equipment,

electronics, a virtually brand-new NEC phone system and a jukebox.

The Bradford County Sheriff's Office will have a booth at the event.

Purchases can be made with cash or check.

Donations toward the purchase of the vests will also be accepted.

## Shining Stars of the Week!

Recognizing the following outstanding students for their amazing character and academic achievements!



**Alyse Wilkes**  
3rd Grade  
Providence Christian  
Alyse is a good student, always ready to help her teacher or friends.



**Kolbie Hunsicker**  
5th Grade  
Starke Elementary  
Kolbie is a hardworking student that comes to class prepared to work, putting forth his best effort in every academic course. In addition to being an attentive and diligent student, Kolbie is also a kind-hearted friend. He is always willing to help classmates practice and apply newly learned concepts, he also aids and consoles younger students when they are in need of assistance. We are extremely proud to have Kolbie Hunsicker as The Shining Star of the Week.



**Ryker Johnson**  
2nd Grade  
Bradford Elementary  
Ryker always tries her best and works hard no matter what! She brings positive energy in our classroom!



**Sebastian Flore**  
4th Grade  
Light Christian  
Sebastian has had a very successful 4th grade year! He has made honor roll all three quarters, and we are expecting him to have honor roll in the fourth quarter as well. He was able to compete with our school at Junior Student Convention and at C.G.A.C.S academic bowl! He represent our school well at these events! We are hoping he has a great rest of the year, and we are proud of him!



**Atlas Nanez**  
K5  
Hope Christian  
Atlas Nanez has an amazing attitude and brings joy to the classroom everyday!

**Thank you... to our sponsors!**

# Obituaries

## Lena Adler

Mrs. Lena Ward Adler, 96, of Keystone Heights went to her heavenly home on Sunday, April 5, 2026, at HCA in Gainesville. She was born Oct. 27, 1929, in Slocumb, Alabama, to Crevie and Daisy (Quattlebaum) Ward. Prior to retirement, she worked as a service representative in the car insurance industry. She was a longtime and faithful member of Fresh Start Fellowship and enjoyed reading, playing board and card games, watching Perry Mason, and especially spending time with family and friends. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her siblings, Mae Bishop, Mary Glass, Fred C. Ward, Ted Ward. Left behind to cherish her memory are her loving and devoted husband of 70 years, Kenneth J. Adler, and their two children, Robin Adler Garvey and James Daniel Adler. She was lovingly called "Nana" by four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Also left behind is a host of extended family members and friends who will miss her loving smile.



Family will receive friends on Saturday, April 11, beginning at 10:30 a.m. at Fresh Start Fellowship Church. Funeral services will begin at 11 a.m. with Pastor Steve Conner officiating. Interment will be at Arlington Park in Jacksonville at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested memorial donations be made to Robert Jeffress Jr. at [www.firstdallas.tpsdb.com/Give/firstdallas](http://www.firstdallas.tpsdb.com/Give/firstdallas) or to David Jeremiah, Turning Point Ministries, [www.davidjeremiah.org/donate/pure-gift?origin=site-desk-topnav](http://www.davidjeremiah.org/donate/pure-gift?origin=site-desk-topnav). Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 340 E. Walker Drive, Keystone Heights 32656. 352-473-3176. [www.jonesgallagherfh.com](http://www.jonesgallagherfh.com)

PAID OBITUARY

## Nevaeh Blye

Nevaeh Lael Blye entered this world Thursday, March 26, 2026, at 12:44 p.m. and peacefully gained her wings later that same day at 6:45 p.m., surrounded by the love of her family. Though her time on earth was brief, Nevaeh was deeply cherished and will forever remain in the hearts of those who love her. She is the beloved daughter of Darrin and Courtney Blye and a precious sister to Mckenzi Blye and Josiah Blye. Nevaeh is lovingly remembered by her maternal grandparents, Paul and Tabatha Higginbotham; and her paternal grandparents, Andra Blye and Eugene (Nichi) Blye III. She is also cherished by her maternal great-grandmother, Juanita Willingham; and her paternal great-grandparents, Eugene Blye Jr., Earnestine Williams, Legertha Hampton, and Jerome Turner. She leaves behind a loving circle of family including her aunts, Eunece Blye and Alexis Blye; her uncles, Eugene Blye IV, Elijah (Aarika) Higginbotham, Joshua Higginbotham, and John Tyson Jr.; her devoted godfather, Shawn Lehigh; and her dear cousins, Drea, Tg, Tugg, Tristan, Baby John, Judah, Tamir, Kendall, and Taylor. She was preceded in death by her great-grandparents, Wesley Willingham, Toria Higginbotham, and Elijah Higginbotham, who now welcome her with open arms.



A service to honor Nevaeh's life was held Saturday, April 4, at Raiford Calvary Temple, Raiford. Nevaeh was laid to rest immediately following the service at Peetsville Memorial Cemetery in Lawley. Though Nevaeh's life was measured in hours, the love she gave and received will last a lifetime. She will always be remembered as a beautiful blessing, forever loved and never forgotten.

Archer-Milton Funeral Home is honored to serve Nevaeh's family during this great time of loss. 386-496-2008 [www.archerfuneralhome.com](http://www.archerfuneralhome.com)

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If you have an In Memory or Card of Thanks you'd like to publish, please email to [socials@bctelegraph.com](mailto:socials@bctelegraph.com) or call 904-964-6305.

## Curtis A. "Lex" Sanders Attorney at Law



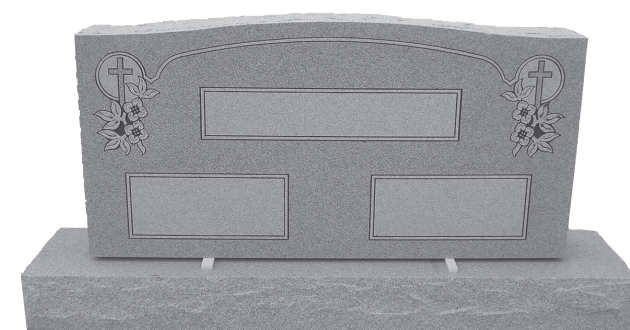
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## Leon Dicandio Jr.

Leonardo "Leon" "Junior" Veto Dicandio Jr., 85, of Starke passed away Sunday, April 5, 2026, at Custead Care Center in Orange Park. Leon was born in Starke, Sept. 2, 1940, to the late Leonardo Veto Dicandio Sr. and Margaret Mary Higginbotham Dicandio. As a lifelong resident, he held a deep love for his community and took great pride in the place he called home. On Oct. 27, 1960, he married the love of his life, Thelma June Boatwright. Together they shared 57 wonderful years of marriage and built a legacy that includes three beloved children, 12 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter. Family was at the heart of everything he did. He took immense pride in his roles as a husband, father, grandfather, and provider. Nothing brought him greater joy than gathering with loved ones and creating lasting memories together. From a young age, he demonstrated a strong work ethic that carried him through a lifetime of dedication and entrepreneurship. He began his career in the concrete industry, later serving as a manager at Krystal and working with Southern Bakery. Driven by ambition and a strong desire to serve his community, he went on to own and operate Leon's Snack Bar and Sinclair Gas Station for several years. He was affectionately known as the "Bread Man," delivering bread for Flowers Baking Company, a role through which he became a familiar and friendly face throughout the area. He later concluded his working years as the owner and operator of Starke Video in Middleburg. In his free time, he found peace and happiness outdoors. He enjoyed fishing, farming, riding his golf cart, and working with his hands, always staying busy and productive. Above all, he treasured family reunions and any opportunity to be surrounded by those he loved. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Thelma June Dicandio; parents; and siblings, Lawrence Rogers, Addie Reynolds, Mary Geiger, Josephine Corillo, James Nelson, Bertia Faircloth, Michelo Dicandio, Thelma Denmark, Selma Jones, Angelina Eddings, and Millie Rose Dicandio.



He is survived by his children, Denise (John) Lewis of Keystone Heights, Leonardo Veto "Buddy" (Alison) Dicandio III of Fleming Island, and April (Jason) Pilcher of Starke; brother, Joseph (Lynda) Dicandio of Tennessee; sister, Virginia Jones of Tampa; grandchildren, Brandi (Chris) Crawford, John (Haley) Lewis, Stephen Lewis, Jason (Keri) Lewis, Katie Lewis, Leonardo Veto "Leo" Dicandio IV, Hiram Dicandio, Mathew (Nathan Adams) Larson, Kenneth (Cynthia) Larson, Ashlyn (Blake) Hall, Amberlyn Pilcher, and Aniston Pilcher; 20 great-grandchildren with one more on the way; one great-great-granddaughter; along with several extended family members and dear friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held Monday, April 13, at 11 a.m. at Northside Baptist Church with Pastor Chris Davis officiating. Interment will follow at Pine Grove Congregational Methodist Church Cemetery in Raiford. The family will receive friends on Monday, April 13, at 10 a.m., an hour prior to the service at the church.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services and Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel, Starke 32091, 904-964-5757. Visit [www.ferreirafuneralservices.com](http://www.ferreirafuneralservices.com) to sign the family's guest book.

PAID OBITUARY

## Cindy Futch

Mrs. Cynthia "Cindy" Elizabeth Strickland Futch, 73, of Starke died Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at HCA North Florida Hospital in Gainesville. Survivors are her husband, P. Steven "Steve" Futch of Starke; daughters, Elizabeth Rowell (Mark) Lee and Stephanie Futch Todd; granddaughter, Sydney Elizabeth Todd; and siblings, Elaine (Donnie) Thornton, Gloria (John) Valinski, Stuart (Carol) Strickland and Steve Strickland; and extended family.

A Celebration of Life will be held Friday, April 10, at 7 p.m. at David Hurse Football Stadium, 515 W. Adkins St., Starke at Bradford High School. Please wear Bradford Tornado colors. Pastor Josh Reinken will officiate the service.

Arrangements are with Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home of Starke, 904-964-6200 [www.jonesgallagherfh.com](http://www.jonesgallagherfh.com)

## Lucy Holman

Mrs. Lucy Ann Holman, 85, of Keystone Heights died Wednesday, April 1, 2026. She was a homemaker and a member of Cookeville Baptist Church. She was preceded in death by her husband, Francis "Homer" Holman; and brother, Roy Everett Holland Jr.

Survivors are four children, Melissa Dempsey, Lucinda Murphy, Carolyn (Troy) Alderman, and Jay (Ashley) Dempsey Jr.; brother, Joseph (Martha) Holland; and extended family.

A graveside service was held Monday, April 6, with Rev. Bobby Epps officiating. Interment was at Fellowship Cemetery, Ft. Lonesome.

Arrangements were under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 340 E. Walker Drive, Keystone Heights 32656

## Celebration of Life

Mrs. Cindy Futch

Friday, April 10  
7 p.m.

David Hurse Stadium  
515 W. Adkins St., Starke  
Bradford High School  
Please wear Bradford  
Tornado colors!



## Patsy Johnson

Patsy Lee Johnson, a cherished and devoted member of her family and community, passed away Friday, April 3, 2026. Born on May 14, 1945, in Kentucky, Patsy lived a life marked by warmth, dedication, and a spirited sense of humor that left an indelible mark on everyone she encountered. Throughout her career, she worked effortlessly as a caring, certified nursing assistant, a role that reflected her nurturing nature and commitment to the well-being of others. Her professional life was an extension of her personality, loving, attentive, and filled with a lively, playful sass that endeared her to colleagues and patients alike. She was a woman of many interests who found joy in the simple pleasures of life. She had a passion for shopping, loved to read, and treasured spending time with her family. Among her greatest delights were moments shared with her great-grandchildren, playing cards, and tending lovingly to her flowers, activities that brought her immense happiness and fulfillment. Her proudest accomplishments were being a loving grandmother and great-grandmother. She is survived by a large and loving family, including her sons, Bruce (Betty) Johnson, William "Jr." (Vicki) Johnson, and Anthony "Twan" (Audrey) Johnson; daughters Melinda "Joy" Johnson, Janet (Paul) Webb, and Vickie Johnson; brother, Ricky Good; grandchildren Andy, Josh, Jessica, Brandi, Tyler, Casey, Cody, Ethan, Clay, Casper, and Atlas; and 25 great-grandchildren. Their lives were enriched profoundly by her love and presence.



Patsy was preceded in death by her husband of 33 years, William "Luther" Johnson Sr.; and her siblings, Danny Good, Margie Lawless, and Charlotte Bureau. Their memories are cherished and carry forward her legacy of love.

A visitation will be held Saturday, April 11, from 1:30 p.m. until 2 p.m., followed by a celebration of life at 2 p.m. with Pastor Paul Osteen officiating. Both at Sardis Baptist Church, 3915 Main St., Worthington Springs, 32697. These services offer a time for family, friends, and community members to gather in remembrance of Patsy's life and the impact she made on all who knew her. Her life was a testament to love, care, and spirited joy. She will be deeply missed but forever remembered with respect and affection by all who were fortunate to share in her journey.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## Carolyn Shadd

Carolyn S. Shadd, 81, passed away peacefully Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at Haven Hospice in Lake City after an extended illness. Born Dec. 31, 1944, in Medina, Ohio, Carolyn was a spirited and straightforward woman known for her independent nature and outspoken personality. Her professional journey began in food service and she later became a deli manager at Spire's IGA. Her commitment to public service then led her to spend a decade with the Bradford County Sheriff's Office, followed by another 10 years serving the Department of Corrections. Each position showcased her tenacity and unwavering dedication to her community. Beyond her work, her true pride came from her family. She was the beloved wife of 34 years to Leslie Shadd. Carolyn was mother to her sons Rick McKinley, Jerry Feltner, Larry (Ruth) Feltner, and George Hostetler. Her extended family included stepchildren, Bonnie Smith, Lori (Harold) Archer, Jeff (Marsha) Shadd, and Becky (Eddie) Lee; along with her siblings, Ed (Bernice) Smith and Libby Bard. Her heart overflowed with pride for her grandchildren, Trevor (Hayley) McKinley, Billy Hostetler, James (Jessica) Feltner, Skyler (Ronnie) Norse, Ashley (Rodney) Cayton, and Jacob Swaggerty, who brought immeasurable joy to her days. And if that wasn't enough to keep her busy and smiling, there were her great-grandchildren: Brodie, Madelyn, Camber, Emerson, Tailynn, Easton, Gunner, Sadie, Jase, Kolt, Emorie, Whitley, Kingsley, Bryar, and Ilya, each of whom shared a special place in her heart. Carolyn was also known to enjoy the simple pleasures of life, shopping excursions that allowed her to find a good bargain, baking cookies at Christmas, and savoring her daily rituals of coffee and cigarettes. These small joys were a hallmark of her personality, reflecting a woman who relished her independence and spoke her mind without hesitation. Though she faced life's challenges head-on, those who knew her remember her for her straightforwardness and clear sense of what she wanted, qualities that made her a memorable character in any room. Her passing follows the loss of her parents, Paul and Margaret Smith; and brothers Charles and George Smith.



A funeral service to honor her life was held Saturday, April 4, at Archer-Milton Funeral Home. She was laid to rest immediately following the service at Dekle Cemetery.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## Gertrude Wetherington

Gertrude Anne Wetherington of Keystone Heights passed away Tuesday, March 24, 2026. She was born Sept. 27, 1936, in Clara City, Minnesota to the late Harm and Catherine (Schipper) Peters. She retired from the United States Postal Service after 20 years as a clerk. She was a life member of Amvets Auxiliary. Gert loved spending her time playing golf. She was preceded in death by her first husband, Joseph J. Tomas; second husband, Bobby Wetherington; four brothers, Herman Peters, Edwin Peters, Albert Peters and Claus Peters; and two sisters, Gesina Ufkes and Martha Tomes.



She is survived by many nieces and nephews; as well as her friend and caretaker, Dana Sampsel.

Gertrude was laid to rest at Keystone Heights Cemetery. Funeral arrangements were taken care of by Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 340 E Walker Drive, Keystone Heights 32656. 352-473-3176. [www.jonesgallagherfh.com](http://www.jonesgallagherfh.com)

PAID OBITUARY

## BHS

### Continued from page 8

batted 2 for 4 with an RBI.

The Tornadoes also got one RBI each from Adams, Flynt, Griffis and Kelsey Padgett.

It was the fourth straight loss for Class 2A Bradford — a streak that began with a 16-7 loss to Class 6A Bartram Trail on March 26 in Starke.

Bradford trailed 5-2 before scoring two runs in the third. Raelynn Alexander hit a double

and scored on an Adams double. Griffis then hit an RBI single.

The Bears scored 10 runs in the next two innings.

Adams finished with three RBI, batting 2 for 4 with two doubles.

Flowers went 3 for 4 with two doubles and an RBI, while Alexander and Griffis each batted 2 for 4 with an RBI.

On March 30, the Tornadoes played the top overall team in the Florida High School Athletic Association/MaxPreps power rankings, losing 17-1 to host Baker County in four innings.

The Class 4A Wildcats scored nine runs in the first two innings before pushing another eight across in the fourth. A three-

run homer by Matti Minshew ended the game and kept Baker undefeated.

Bradford was held to two hits, with its lone run coming on a Regan Adams single.

The Tornadoes managed just one hit in their next outing, losing 10-0 to Class 4A Clay on March 31.

Bradford played Trinity Christian this past Tuesday and will travel to play Eagle's View on Friday, April 10, at 6 p.m. The Tornadoes then travel to play Toccoa Creek on Tuesday, April 14, at 7 p.m. before returning home to play Newberry on Wednesday, April 15, at 6:30 p.m.

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Sharon Oxendine (left) pets a chicken held by Edrick Hamilton.



James Spoon enjoys observing chickens while also operating an RC car.



Hilary Farrell (left) and Jon Farrell apply peanut butter to pinecones as they make bird feeders.



Greg Smith works on the welcome sign for the mental-escape walking trail.

## ARC

Continued from page 9

feeders with pinecones, peanut butter and bird seed and paint birdhouses.

"I want them to see that they had a part in it," Hamilton said. The birdhouses and bird feeders — as well as wind chimes — are hung from the old playground equipment. Hamilton plans to hang a porch swing from the swing set.

What used to be see-saws have been transformed into benches, which will provide just some of the seating as chairs and picnic tables are also available.

"I just want everything to be soothing and relaxing — just a peaceful environment they can enjoy," Hamilton said.

Some of the trees have faces on them.

"We call those the hugging trees," Hamilton said. "We've got a few here who need hugs to kind of help calm them down."

Hamilton plans to create a fruit-and-vegetable garden and has already planted muscadine grapes.

The area also has a chicken coop that contains some of Hamilton's chickens. He said he'll also bring some other animals.

"I'm debating between two ducks or two rabbits," he said. "I think it may be a little easier with the rabbits. The rabbits, I think, I can get a little more docile so they can pet them. The ducks probably won't want to be petted, but they may come up and eat out of their hands."

Arc consumer Greg Smith enjoys radio-controlled cars, so Hamilton created an RC area.

Smith also enjoys art. He created the "Welcome to our Mental Escape Walking Trail" sign and also helped in creating the design on the 12G at the Arc T-shirts.

The walking trail and the area it surrounds are in use now, but Hamilton can't wait to see what it eventually looks like.

"Later in the spring, it'll look more alive with the plants starting to grow," he said.

Hamilton, who used to be a teacher/administrator in the public-school setting, has led his children's mentoring group for 10 years. The mentoring group at the Arc is in its first year. Hamilton began working there in August 2025.

His current position is less hectic than what he was used to when he worked in schools, Hamilton said, describing how he was "putting out multiple fires and being busy all day, all the time."

"Here, it's more relaxed," he said.

However, that's not to say it's the same routine day in and day out.

"Every day is different," Hamilton said. "Every 10 minutes may be different."



The 12G at the Arc mentoring group: (front, l-r) Sharon Oxendine, Mikey Deyot, Jessica Genosa, Edrick Hamilton, (back, l-r) Stephen Garfield, Shneec Bullard, Tyler Williams, Hilary Farrell, Jon Farrell and Terri Smith.



Faces adorn several of what are called "hugging trees."

Hamilton has witnessed transformations through his work at the Arc, just like he has with his children's mentoring group. Jon Farrell, who's in the 12G at the Arc group, used to not talk much, but you would never know that if you're around him now. He'll also accept physical contact from others now.

"He'll ask for a hug," Hamilton said, "but he'll tell you to do it slowly."

Sharon Oxendine, another 12G at the Arc member, says, "No," a lot. If Hamilton tries to get her to participate in an activity everyone else is involved in, that's the word he'll often hear. What has changed, though, is that though she says, "No," she'll often then do the very thing she said she wouldn't.

"She's talking more, too," Hamilton said.

Those are the kinds of things that warm Hamilton's heart.

"Just to see those changes — I just enjoy it," he said.

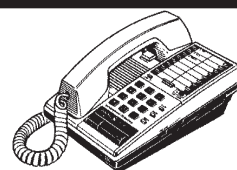


Jessica Genosa (left) points out a spot for Edrick Hamilton to hang a birdhouse from.



Jon Farrell (left) assists Edrick Hamilton as he hangs birdhouses from the old Hampton Elementary monkey bars.

# Classified Ads - 904-964-6305



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Class Ads for week April 9, 2026

40 Notices

**EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY.** All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 in which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people

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53B Keystone Yard Sales

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### Open Position

The Union County Housing Authority is seeking a reliable, courteous and detail-oriented Office Assistant to support daily administrative operations. Responsibilities include reception/clerical duties, maintaining records, data entry, assisting staff as needed and other general office duties. The ideal candidate is detail-oriented, professional and proficient with basic office software. Experience is preferred. Resumes may be submitted in person or by mail at 715 West Main Street, Lake Butler, FL 32054, or email to housing@uchaff.com, on or before April 30, 2026, by 5pm.

### SPACE FOR LEASE

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**Garage yard sale. Fri. & Sat. April 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>. 8am-2:30pm. 5500 SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Keystone Heights. Just off SR 100 by Texaco**

**gas station. Antiques, collectibles, household, lots of jewelry. Mostly from local estates. Something for everybody.**

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**Tri-County Classifieds**  
Bradford County **Telegraph** Lake Region **Monitor** Union County **TIMES**

**INDEX**

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

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classads@bctelegraph.com

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VISA MASTERCARD AMERICAN EXPRESS

## Union Co. has 3 winners at CHS track, field meet

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Amia Bethea and Melinda Mabrey each won an event for the girls team, while Matthew Rogers had a win for the boys team as Union County High School competed at Columbia High School's Tiger Invitational on April 3.

Bethea crossed the finish line first in the 200m with a time of 25.53 seconds. She ran the race after competing earlier that same day at the Pepsi Florida Relays at the University of Florida, where she placed seventh in the 100m with a personal-record time of 11.81.

Mabrey won the discus with a distance of 152 feet, 5 inches and also earned points in the shot put with a fourth-place distance of 27-5.25.

The girls 4x100m relay team of Latoya Hampton, Jayden Johnson, Susan McLeod and Brianna Taylor had a third-place time of 55.28.

Jamie Webb fell one spot shy of scoring with a ninth-place distance of 64-9 in the discus.

Rogers won the boys discus with a throw of 132-10, while teammate Edward Durant was runner-up with a distance of 110-7.

Union was sixth in the boys 4x100m relay with a time of 48.93. The team was composed of Caleb Hall, C.J. Ivey, Zane

Mott and Zayden Williams.

Julian Braithwaite took seventh in the 110m hurdles with a time of 22.58.

Durant just missed scoring in the shot put with a ninth-place distance of 35-10.75.

## Indians fall in extra innings to Trinity Catholic

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

A pitchers' duel between Keystone Heights High School's Kadence Massey and Trinity Catholic's Caylee Barbe went the way of the visiting Celtics, who defeated the Indians 2-1 in nine innings on April 6.

The Indians (8-10) went up 1-0 in the third when Bella Cumbo reached on an error and scored on an Amber Wagner double.

Trinity (11-9) tied the score on two two-out singles in the fifth.

Lourdes Ornelas hit a double to score the Celtics' winning run in the top of the ninth.

Massey gave up five hits and struck out nine in a complete-game effort.

Barbe also went the distance, allowing three hits and striking out 17.

Keystone entered the game off a 2-2 outing in the annual Roger Jones Kissimmee Classic, which was played April 2-4.

The Class 2A Indians defeated Class 3A West Nassau 1-0 on the tournament's first day, with Cadie Bowles driving in the lone run on a sacrifice fly in the sixth

inning.

Massey pitched a complete game, allowing three hits and striking out six.

West Nassau's Kelsea Bass also went the distance, giving up one hit.

On April 3, Keystone again got a stellar effort from Massey in defeating fifth-ranked, Class 4A Lake Wales 4-0.

Massey allowed four hits in a complete-game performance.

The Indians scored all but one of their runs in the first inning, which began with Bowles getting hit by a pitch. After Wagner walked, Massey drove in a run when she hit into a fielder's choice. Wagner scored on a passed ball, while Taylor Buchanan drove in a run on a ground out.

The Indians had only one hit off Lake Wales pitcher Zamirya McBurrows.

Keystone played two games on April 4, beginning with a 10-2 loss to Class 6A Dwyer.

The Indians trailed by just one run after Massey singled and scored on a passed ball in the top of the fourth, but Dwyer then scored seven unanswered runs.

Bowles drove in a run with an RBI double in the third. That was one of only five hits for Keystone.

Keystone wrapped up tournament play with a 4-3 loss to Class 6A Viera in eight innings.

A two-run fourth in which both runs scored on errors allowed the Indians to take a 3-2 lead, but Viera hit three consecutive singles in the top of the seventh to tie the score and send the game into extra innings.

Viera's Caroline Nelson drove in the winning run on a double.

The Indians were held to three hits by pitchers Alivia Roszkowiak and Shea Young.

Massey pitched a complete game, allowing eight hits and striking out eight.

Keystone, which was scheduled to host Toco Creek on Wednesday, April 8, at 7:30 p.m., will travel to play Ridgeview on Monday, April 13, at 6:30 p.m.

## KHHS 4x800 teams break school records at April 4 meet

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School's track and field teams competed at the April 4 Don Hall Meet in Orange Park, with the boys and girls 4x800m relay teams both setting new school records.

The team of Jason Parales, Hunter Sheppard, Ryder Thomas and Ryeland Wahl placed first in the boys 4x800m with a time of 8:41.28, while Tessa Gray, Olivia Griffin, Ryleigh Thomas and Melody Tyre teamed up for a runner-up finish in the girls event with a time of 10:26.89.

Ryder Thomas and Ryleigh Thomas, who are siblings, placed second in their respective 1600m events. Ryder Thomas ran a season-best time of 4:45.41, while Ryleigh Thomas established a new personal record with a time of 5:37.52.

Tyre scored in two events as

an individual for the girls team, running a fifth-place time of 5:59 in the 1600m and an eighth-place time of 2:38.47 in the 800m.

Kaylee Park placed fifth in the 100m hurdles with a time of 16.41, while the 4x100m relay team of Park, Laila Briseno, Adalyn Phillips and Akyria Wilson ran a seventh-place time of 56.04.

Phillips scored in the 400m hurdles with an eighth-place time of 1:14.38.

Griffin just missed out on scoring in the 800m with a ninth-place time of 2:44.15.

The boys team got fifth-place finishes from Baylor Ford, who had a time of 1:01.44 in the 400m hurdles, and Luke Lewis, who had a distance of 129-3 in the javelin.

Hunter Gray finished seventh in the 3200m with a time of 11:03.06.

Sheppard and Wahl each fell one spot shy of scoring with ninth-place finishes. Sheppard's was in the 1600m with a time of 4:55.14, while Wahl's was in the 800m with a time of 2:13.19.

The Indians entered the meet off the March 31 Clay Blue Devil Invite, with the boys and girls teams each having two winners.

Gray crossed the finish line first in the 800m with a time of 2:51.13, while Park won the 100m hurdles with a time of 16.50. Rave Bastin was runner-up to Park in the hurdles event with a time of 20.13.

Park teamed up with Briseno, Elli Gillim and Sarah Izaguirre to run a second-place time of 56.18 in the 4x100m relay.

Phillips was the runner-up in the 400m hurdles with a time of

1:15.55. Park and Bastin were fourth and fifth, respectively, in the event with times of 1:20.26 and 1:21.60.

Keystone took the fourth-through eighth-place spots in the 400m. Gillim had a time of 1:10.84, followed by Izaguirre at 1:13.89, Esmerelda Alonzo at 1:13.96 and Molly Bryson at 1:20.

Melissa Williams and Annabella Briley placed fourth in the 200m and 800m, respectively, with times of 29.78 and 2:59.50. Izaguirre had a sixth-place time of 30.24 in the 200m.

Briseno also scored for the girls team with a seventh-place time of 14.28 in the 100m.

Bailee Morris just missed scoring in the 1600m with a ninth-place time of 7:25.26.

The boys team got wins from Ford, who had a time of 1:01.01 in the 400m hurdles, and Sheppard, who had a time of 11:03.23 in the 3200m.

Wahl had a second-place time of 53.53 in the 400m, while Mason Clark and De'Shawn Williams were third and fifth, respectively, in the 110m hurdles with times of 18.14 and 19.31.

Fourth-place finishes were earned by Ford with a time of 23.84 in the 200m and Parales with a time of 13:02.38 in the 3200m.

Keystone had three sixth-place finishes: Ford with a time of 11.61 in the 100m, Tucker Price with a time of 2:16.82 in the 800m and Gray, Mason Gray, Gavin Morford and Lucas Pettee with a time of 11:03.96 in the 4x800m.

# Legal Notices

Legals for the week of April 9, 2026

## BRADFORD

NOTICE OF ACTION  
Bradford (County)  
BEFORE THE BOARD OF NURSING  
IN RE: The license to practice  
Certified Nursing Assistant  
Nikita S. Reed, C.N.A.  
4798 Oakmont Drive Apt.403  
Starke, FL 32091  
CASE NO.: 2025-45898  
LICENSE NO.: CNA114133  
The Department of Health has  
filed an Administrative Complaint  
against you, a copy of which may be  
obtained by contacting, Jonathan S.  
Groat, Assistant General Counsel,  
Prosecution Services Unit, 4052 Bald  
Cypress Way, Bin #C65, Tallahassee  
Florida 32399-3265, (850) 558-9825.  
If no contact has been made by you  
concerning the above by April 30,  
2026, the matter of the Administrative  
Complaint will be presented at an  
ensuing meeting of the Board of  
Nursing in an informal proceeding.  
In accordance with the Americans  
with Disabilities Act, persons  
needing a special accommodation to  
participate in this proceeding should  
contact the individual or agency  
sending this notice not later than  
seven days prior to the proceeding  
at the address given on the notice.  
Telephone: (850) 245-4640, 1-800-  
955-8771 (TDD) or 1-800-955-8770  
(V), via Florida Relay Service.  
3/19 4tchg 4/9-BCT

Suwannee River Water Management  
District Declaration of Phase II Water  
Shortage

The Suwannee River Water  
Management District (District) has  
issued a Phase II Water Shortage  
Order, WSO 26-002 for water uses  
within all Counties located in the  
District, including all locations in  
Alachua and Levy counties, excluding  
the cities of Gainesville, Micanopy,  
and Hawthorne located in Alachua  
County.

To learn more or to view WSO  
26-002, visit our website at  
www.suwanneeriver.com.  
PUBLISH: no later than March 20,  
2026 /tm  
3/19 1tchg Until Further Notice BCT

### LEGAL NOTICE:

The Bradford County Local Mitigation  
Strategy (LMS) Planning Committee/  
Workgroup will meet Thursday, April  
16th, 2026 at 3:00 PM in the Bradford  
County Emergency Operations Center  
(EOC) located in the Bradford County  
Sheriff's Office at 945B North Temple  
Avenue, Starke, FL 32091. Bradford  
County Emergency Management  
encourages any interested citizens  
and business owners to attend and

provide input. The Committee guides  
the preparation and contents of the  
Bradford County Local Mitigation  
Strategy which serves as the plan  
submitted to the Florida Division of  
Emergency Management to reduce  
the community's long-term risk for  
protecting people and property from  
the effects of natural disasters and to  
build a safer and stronger community.  
This public meeting is being conducted  
in a handicapped accessible location.  
Any handicapped person wanting  
to attend the meeting and requires  
assistance with accessibility and/  
or interpretation should contact the  
Bradford County Sheriff's Office,  
Emergency Management Division at  
(904) 966-6336 at least 5 calendar  
days prior to the meeting date. Any  
person wishing to provide comments  
who cannot attend the meeting may  
do so by submitting written comments  
via email to bcoem@bradfordsheriff.  
org at least 5 calendar days prior  
to the meeting date. The meeting  
agenda may be obtained within 5  
days of the meeting date via email  
request as well, or by visiting  
www.bradfordsheriff.org/emergency-  
management/lms/.  
Please contact the Bradford  
County Sheriff's Office, Emergency  
Management Division at (904) 966-  
6336 for more information.

A FAIR HOUSING/EQUAL  
OPPORTUNITY/HANDICAPPED  
ACCESSIBLE JURISDICTION  
4/2 2tchg 4/9-BCT

COMMISSION MEETING  
THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED  
that the Bradford County Board  
of County Commissioners will  
have a board meeting on April 16,  
2026, at 6:30 PM inside the county  
commission meeting room, located  
in the north wing section of the  
Bradford County Courthouse, 945  
N. Temple, Avenue, Starke, FL. A  
copy of the meeting agenda may be  
obtained from the Bradford County  
website: www.bradfordcountyfl.gov.  
Said meeting location is secured – no  
firearms or weapons are permitted.  
4/9 1tchg-BCT

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

CASE NO.: 63-2025-CA-0053  
TD BANK, N. A., a national banking  
association,  
Plaintiff,

vs.  
LINDA ANDREWS SCOTT (A/K/A  
LINDA P. SCOTT); UNKNOWN  
SPOUSE OF LINDA ANDREWS  
SCOTT (A/K/A LINDA P. SCOTT),  
IF ANY; JEFFREY ANDREWS;  
KIMBERLY ANDREWS; TENANT  
and UNKNOWN TENANT(S) IN  
POSSESSION, IF ANY,  
Defendants.

NOTICE OF SALE  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN  
pursuant to the Order Rescheduling

Foreclosure Sale dated February  
24, 2026 and Final Judgment of  
Foreclosure dated January 12, 2026,  
and entered in Case No. 63-2025-  
CA-0053 of the Circuit Court of the  
Eighth Judicial Circuit in and for  
Union County, Florida wherein TD  
Bank, N.A., is Plaintiff, and Linda  
Andrews Scott (a/k/a Linda P. Scott),  
et al., are Defendants. The Clerk of  
this Court shall sell to the highest  
and best bidder at in the lobby of  
the Union County Courthouse at 55  
West Main Street on April 23, 2026,  
at 11:00 a.m., the following described  
property as set forth in said Final  
Judgment of Foreclosure, to wit:  
A PARCEL OF LAND LYING, BEING  
AND SITUATE IN SECTION 31,  
TOWNSHIP 5 SOUTH, RANGE 18  
EAST, UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA,  
BEING MORE PARTICULARLY  
DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:  
COMMENCE AT THE NORTHWEST  
CORNER OF THE WEST 1/2 OF  
EAST 1/2 OF SAID SECTION 31,  
AND RUN SOUTH 89 DEGREES  
34 MINUTES 48 SECONDS EAST,  
ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID  
WEST 1/2 OF EAST 1/2 OF SECTION  
31, A DISTANCE OF 426.28 FEET  
TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF  
THE HEREINAFTER DESCRIBED  
PARCEL OF LAND: THENCE  
CONTINUE RUNNING SOUTH  
89 DEGREES 34 MINUTES 48  
SECONDS EAST, CONTINUING  
ALONG SAID NORTH LINE OF THE  
WEST 1/2 OF EAST 1/2 OF SECTION  
31, A DISTANCE OF 828.50 FEET  
TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF  
SAID WEST 1/2 OF EAST 1/2 OF  
SECTION 31; THENCE RUN SOUTH  
01 DEGREE 12 MINUTES 10  
SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE EAST  
LINE OF SAID WEST 1/2 OF EAST  
1/2 OF SECTION 31, A DISTANCE  
OF 302.53 FEET; THENCE RUN  
NORTH 85 DEGREES 55 MINUTES  
45 SECONDS WEST, A DISTANCE  
OF 832.29 FEET; THENCE RUN  
NORTH 01 DEGREE 03 MINUTES  
51 SECONDS WEST A DISTANCE  
OF 249.50 FEET TO THE POINT OF  
BEGINNING.

TOGETHER WITH A NON-  
EXCLUSIVE PERPETUAL 30.00  
FOOT EASEMENT FOR INGRESS,  
EGRESS AND UTILITIES, LYING,  
BEING AND SITUATE IN SECTION  
31, TOWNSHIP 5 SOUTH, RANGE  
18 EAST, UNION COUNTY,  
FLORIDA, MORE PARTICULARLY  
DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:  
COMMENCE AT THE SOUTHEAST  
CORNER OF SAID SECTION 31  
AND RUN SOUTH 89 DEGREES  
55 MINUTES 09 SECONDS WEST,  
ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF  
SAID SECTION 31, A DISTANCE  
OF 1293.53 FEET; THENCE  
RUN NORTH 00 DEGREES 06  
MINUTES 25 SECONDS EAST, A  
DISTANCE OF 37.92 FEET TO THE  
INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTH  
RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF STATE  
ROAD NUMBER 238; THENCE RUN  
NORTH 89 DEGREES 53 MINUTES  
35 SECONDS WEST, ALONG SAID  
NORTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF

STATE ROAD NUMBER 238, A  
DISTANCE OF 180.00 FEET TO  
THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF  
THE HEREINAFTER DESCRIBED  
30.00 FOOT EASEMENT, SAID  
30.00 FOOT EASEMENT BEING  
PARALLEL WITH AND LYING 30.00  
FEET TO THE LEFT (WESTERLY,  
NORTHERLY AND SOUTHERLY),  
OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED  
LINE (AT CHANGES OF  
DIRECTION RIGHT-OF-WAY LINES  
SHALL BE SHORTENED OR  
LENGTHENED TO FORM POINTS  
OF INTERSECTION): THENCE RUN  
NORTH 00 DEGREES 06 MINUTES  
25 SECONDS EAST A DISTANCE  
OF 217.20 FEET; THENCE  
RUN SOUTH 89 DEGREES 53  
MINUTES 35 SECONDS EAST  
A DISTANCE OF 137.85 FEET  
TO THE INTERSECTION WITH  
THE SOUTHERLY EXTENSION  
OF THE WEST LINE OF LOT  
15, "PROVIDENCE NORTH",  
ACCORDING TO PLAT THEREOF  
RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 1, PAGE  
24, PUBLIC RECORDS OF UNION  
COUNTY, FLORIDA; THENCE RUN  
NORTH 01 DEGREE 19 MINUTES  
31 SECONDS WEST, ALONG  
SAID SOUTHERLY EXTENSION,  
A DISTANCE OF 223.04 FEET  
TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER  
OF SAID LOT 15, "PROVIDENCE  
NORTH"; THENCE CONTINUE  
RUNNING NORTH 0 1 DEGREE  
19 MINUTES 31 SECONDS WEST,  
ALONG THE WEST LINE OF  
SAID "PROVIDENCE NORTH",  
A DISTANCE OF 2158.31 FEET  
TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER  
OF SAID "PROVIDENCE NORTH";  
THENCE RUN SOUTH 89 DEGREES  
51 MINUTES 20 SECONDS EAST,  
ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF  
SAID "PROVIDENCE NORTH",  
A DISTANCE OF 69.00 FEET;  
THENCE RUN NORTH 01 DEGREE  
11 MINUTES 51 SECONDS WEST,  
ALONG THE WEST LINE OF  
SAID "PROVIDENCE NORTH",  
A DISTANCE OF 15.50 FEET TO  
THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF  
THE NORTH 1/2 OF WEST 1/2 OF  
EAST 1/2 OF SAID SECTION 31;  
THENCE RUN NORTH 01 DEGREE  
12 MINUTES 10 SECONDS WEST,  
ALONG THE EAST LINE OF  
SAID NORTH 1/2 OF WEST 1/2  
OF EAST 1/2 OF SECTION 31,  
A DISTANCE OF 2650.78 FEET  
TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER  
OF SAID WEST 1/2 OF EAST 1/2  
OF SECTION 31; THENCE RUN  
NORTH 89 DEGREES 34 MINUTES  
48 SECONDS WEST, ALONG THE  
NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION  
31, A DISTANCE OF 303.79 FEET  
TO THE END OF SAID 30.00 FOOT  
EASEMENT (LEFT (SOUTHERLY)  
RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE TO BE  
SHORTENED OR LENGTHENED TO  
TERMINATE ON A  
LINE WHICH BEARS SOUTH  
00 DEGREES 25 MINUTES 12  
SECONDS WEST FROM SAID  
PARCEL IDENTIFICATION  
NUMBER: 31-05-18-00-000-0101-2

Property Address: 9534 NW 44th  
Lane, Lake Butler, FL 32054  
IF YOU ARE A SUBORDINATE  
LIENHOLDER 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 FUNDS AS UNCLAIMED.  
IF YOU FAIL TO FILE A CLAIM, YOU  
WILL NOT BE ENTITLED TO ANY  
REMAINING FUNDS.  
DATED 31st day of March, 2026.  
KELLIE HENDRICKS RHOADES,  
CPA  
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
By: C. Hollingsworth,  
Deputy Clerk  
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFFS:  
Danielle Rundlett Burns, Esq.  
Duane Morris LLP  
5100 Town Center Circle, Suite 400  
Boca Raton, FL 33486  
Email: DRBurns@duanemorris.com  
The above is to be published in the  
Union County Times  
4/9 2tchg 4/16-BCT

### NOTICE OF SALE

T & M Towing gives notice of lien and  
intent to sell this vehicle on April 27th,  
2026, at 9:00 a.m. at T & M Towing  
storage yard located at 3687 Ambient  
Air Rd., Starke, FL 32091.  
T & M Towing reserves the right to  
accept or reject any and all bids.  
1998 Ford  
Vin # 1FAPF47VXWF224760  
4/9 2tchg 4/16-BCT

SANTA FE CEMETERY  
ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL MEETING/ELECTION OF  
TRUSTEES  
MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2026, 6:00 P.M.  
Hampton City Hall, Hampton, FL  
4/9 2tchg 4/16-BCT

## UNION

Suwannee River Water Management  
District Declaration of Phase II Water  
Shortage

The Suwannee River Water  
Management District (District) has  
issued a Phase II Water Shortage  
Order, WSO 26-002 for water uses  
within all Counties located in the  
District, including all locations in  
Alachua and Levy counties, excluding  
the cities of Gainesville, Micanopy,  
and Hawthorne located in Alachua  
County.  
To learn more or to view WSO  
26-002, visit our website at  
www.suwanneeriver.com.  
3/19 1tchg Till Further Notice – UCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE  
8TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND  
FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA  
PROBATE DIVISION:  
File Number: 63-2025-CP-000038-

CPAM  
IN RE: ESTATE OF STEPHEN  
BROWN

Deceased.  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS  
The administration of the estate  
of STEPHEN BROWN, deceased,  
whose date of death was January  
28, 2023, and whose social security  
number is xxx-xx-1068, is pending in  
the Circuit Court for Union County,  
Florida, Probate Division, the address  
of which is 55 West Main Street,  
Lake Butler, FL 32054. The names  
and addresses of the personal  
representative and the personal  
representative's attorney are set forth  
below. The Estate is Intestate.  
All creditors of the decedent and  
other persons having claims or  
demands against decedent's estate,  
including unmatured, contingent or  
unliquidated claims, on whom a copy  
of this notice is served must file their  
claims with this court WITHIN THE  
LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE  
DATE OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS  
AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE  
OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON  
THEM.

All creditors of the decedent and  
other persons having claims or  
demands against decedent's estate,  
including unmatured, contingent,  
or unliquidated claims, must file  
their claims with this court WITHIN  
3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF  
THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS  
NOTICE.  
ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN  
THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH  
IN SECTION 733.302 OF THE  
FLORIDA PROBATE CODE WILL BE  
FOREVER BARRED.  
NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME  
PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY  
CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR  
MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S  
DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of the first publication of this  
notice is April 2, 2026.  
Personal Representative  
Anthony M. Barbuto  
612 Cypress Green Circle  
Wellington, FL 33414  
Attorney for Personal Representative  
Anthony M. Barbuto, Esq.  
FL Bar No: 035280  
Barbuto Law Firm, P.A.  
12773 Forest Hill Blvd., Ste. 101  
Wellington, FL 33414  
561-798-2907  
abarbuto@barbutolaw.com  
4/2 2tchg 4/9-UCT

## LAKE REGION

PUBLIC AUCTION  
An auction pursuant to statute  
#713.78 to be held April 24, 2026 at  
10:00am at 6841 Apache Junction,  
Keystone Heights, FL 32656 for the  
following vehicle:  
5TETX4CN3AZ726136 2010 Toyota  
Tacoma  
4/9 1tchg-LRM

## Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700

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Phone: 964-6305 • P.O. Drawer A • Starke, FL 32091

John Miller, Publisher



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Sports Editor: Cliff Smelley  
Advertising: John R. Tillman  
Typesetting: Mary Goode  
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Bookkeeping Asst: Mary Goode  
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USPS 114-170

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John Miller, Publisher

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Sports Editor: Cliff Smelley  
Advertising: John R. Tillman  
Typesetting: Mary Goode  
Advertising & Newspaper Prod.: Macie Hamilton  
Bookkeeping & Classified Adverts: Heather Wheeler  
Bookkeeping Asst: Mary Goode  
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## UNION COUNTY TIMES

USPS 648-200

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131 W. Call Street • Starke, FL 32091  
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904-964-6305 • fax 904-964-8628



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Front



Jasen Sullivan drove in two runs in each of the Tigers' last two wins.

## UCHS baseball team has big 4th inning in win over Baker

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School's baseball team scored the game's first 12 runs in defeating host Baker County 13-7 on April 2.

The Tigers (16-6) had eight runs in the fourth to go up 11-0. Evan Christmas singled, while Jasen Sullivan and Brezdyn Browning reached on an error and a walk, respectively, to load the bases. Westyn Miller drew a walk to force a run in before Jeffrey Brugh hit a two-run single. Nate Robertson was hit by a pitch to load the bases again. Kendall Carter walked to force a run in, while an error on a ball put into play by Erick Lasseter allowed another two to score. Sullivan drove in the inning's final two runs on a single.

Browning finished 2 for 2 with an RBI, while Brugh and Wesley Crockett each batted 2 for 4, with Brugh driving in two runs.

Christmas went 2 for 5, while Carter hit a double and had three RBI.

Lasseter and Sullivan each finished with two RBI, while Miller and Robertson each had one.

Ayden Androlevich earned

the win, allowing five runs (two earned), five hits and one walk in five innings. He had three strikeouts.

Union entered the game off a 10-8 win over visiting Williston on March 31.

The game was tied at 3-3 before the Tigers scored six runs in the fourth. Browning hit a three-run single, while Brugh and Sullivan each drove in one run on a single. Christmas was also hit by a pitch with the bases loaded to force a run in.

Williston threatened to overtake the Tigers in the sixth. The Red Devils scored three runs to make it 9-8 in favor of Union and had two runners in scoring position with one out. Browning struck out a batter for the second out, while the Tigers got out of the inning on a ground out to third.

Sullivan and Carter batted 3 for 4 and 2 for 3, respectively, with Sullivan driving in two runs.

Browning and Christmas each finished with three RBI, while Brugh and Lasseter each had one.

Starting pitcher Brady Tetstone earned the win, allowing three runs (one earned) and four hits in four innings.

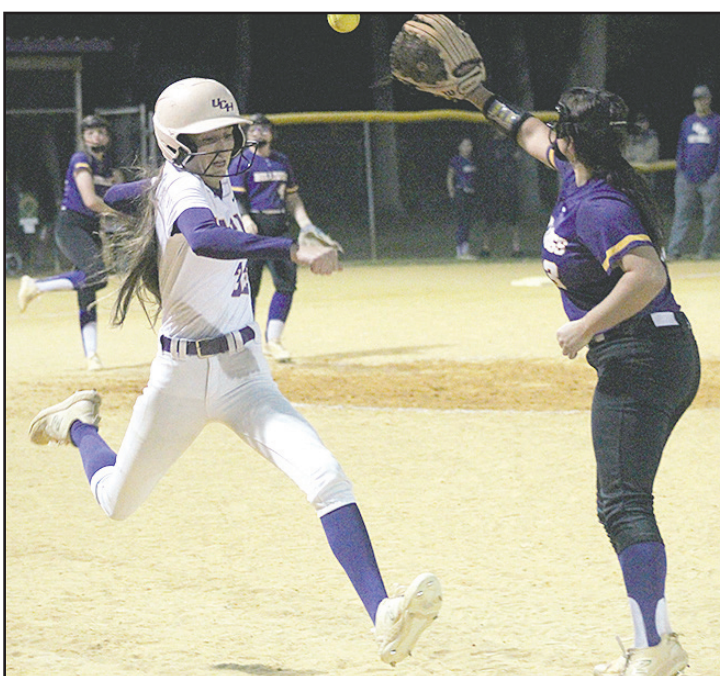
The Tigers played Trinity Catholic this past Tuesday and were scheduled to end the regular season with a home game against Trenton on Wednesday, April 8, at 6 p.m.

## Tigers are runners-up at Prospect Select tourney

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School's baseball team played for the championship of the Prospect Select Spring Classic in Viera on March 25, losing 14-3 to Doral Academy, which is fifth in the Florida High School Athletic Association/MaxPreps Class 6A power rankings.

The Tigers, who are the top team in the Rural Class



Jaydin Alvarez (left) reaches on a bunt single in the Tigers' win over Bell.

power rankings, went up 2-0 in the bottom of the first. Nate Robertson was hit by a pitch with one out, while Erick Lasseter walked with two outs. Robertson scored on an Evan Christmas single. After Jasen Sullivan singled to load the bases, Westyn Miller walked to force a run in.

Doral scored three runs off a double and a single in the top of the second, but Union evened the score at 3-3 with a run in the bottom of the inning. With two outs and no one on, Robertson and Kendall Carter both singled, with an error on Carter's hit allowing Robertson to score.

Union was held to one hit in the final five innings.

Christmas was the only batter for the Tigers with multiple hits, going 2 for 4.

Doral, a regional finalist from last season that lost to eventual 6A state champ St. Thomas Aquinas 2-1, scored three runs each in the fourth, fifth and sixth innings before adding another two runs in the seventh.

The Tigers reached the championship game by defeating Miami Southridge 8-3 on March 24. Southridge entered the game ranked 10th in Class 6A.

Union scored five runs in the first inning. Robertson and

Carter both walked. Lasseter ground into a fielder's choice to score one run, while an error on a Christmas single scored another. After Sullivan hit a two-run double, the fifth run scored on a passed ball.

Christmas and Sullivan each went 2 for 3, with Sullivan driving in two runs.

Miller also had two RBI, while Lasseter had one.

Lasseter started on the mound, allowing three runs (two earned) and three hits, while striking out three in 5.2 innings.

Carter finished it off, giving up no hits.

## UCHS softball team defeats Bell for 3rd straight win

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Emma Handley drove in three runs and earned the win in the circle as the Union County High School softball team defeated visiting Bell 15-5 in six innings on April 6.

The Tigers (11-6) fell behind 3-0, but took a lead they never relinquished with a six-run

second. The inning began with three consecutive singles from Makayla Orton, Brooke Hunt and Jaydin Alvarez. Courtney Manning hit a one-out RBI single, while Lillyenne Mayhew drove in a run on a sacrifice fly. Leanne Dicks singled to load the bases, while a single by Handley plated two runs. Addyson Hinds then hit a single to drive in another run to make the score 6-3.

Bell (5-9) was able to cut its deficit to one run, but the Tigers expanded their lead with a four-run fifth. Alvarez, Mia Kent and Manning all singled to load the bases with one out. Alvarez was put out at home when Mayhew hit into a fielder's choice, but an error on a fly ball hit by Dicks allowed two runs to score. Handley then drove in her third run of the game with a single, putting Union up 10-5.

Kent hit an RBI single as part of a five-run sixth, with the other four runs scoring on two errors.

Alvarez and Kent each batted 3 for 4, while Handley and Manning each went 2 for 3. Hinds and Hunt each batted 2 for 4, while Dicks went 2 for 5.

Hinds finished with two RBI, while Kent, Manning and Mayhew each had one.

Handley pitched all six innings, allowing seven hits and striking out seven.

It was the third straight win for the Tigers. The streak began with a 13-11 win over visiting Chiefland on March 31.

Union broke a 9-9 tie with a three-run fifth, getting RBI singles from Hinds and Orton, while Hunt drove in a run on a ground out.

Hinds finished with five RBI, going 3 for 4. Dicks went 2 for 5 with three RBI, while Orton went 2 for 3 with two RBI.

Hunt and Mayhew had two and one RBI, respectively, while Handley batted 2 for 4.

Dicks earned the win, giving up two runs, four hits and no walks in the final 4.1 innings.

On April 2, the Tigers got four RBI from Hinds in a 7-0 win over visiting Fort White.



Emma Handley drove in three runs in the 15-5 win over Bell.



Courtney Manning is fired up after scoring a run in the second inning against Bell.

Hinds and Handley each batted 2 for 3, with Handley driving in one run.

Orton had one RBI, while Mayhew went 3 for 4.

Handley earned the win, allowing three hits, while striking out seven.

The Tigers played Branford this past Tuesday and will travel to play Lafayette on Thursday, April 9, at 7 p.m. Union then travels to play Newberry on Friday, April 10, at 7 p.m. before returning home to play Hilliard on Monday, April 13, at 7 p.m.

## Dr. Benjamin Franklin Recognition Day Scholarship Fund Celebration



Sunday  
April 26, 2026  
4 p.m.

Philadelphia Missionary Baptist Church

1191 Middleburg Road  
Lawtey, Florida 32058

Rev. Charles Green, Pastor

Rev. Kevin McBride M.D.  
Guest Speaker

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@momentsbymjh  
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# Tornadoes fall to unbeaten Buchholz 26-7 in flag football

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School's flag football team turned the ball over four times — including twice on goal-to-go opportunities — and was hurt by several times on deep passes by visiting Buchholz in a 26-7 loss on April 2.

The Class 2A Tornadoes (4-4) led for most of the first half, but

the Class 3A Bobcats (10-0) went ahead with approximately three minutes remaining in the first half and then outscored Bradford 14-0 in the second half.

Ar'Nayshia Griffin's 21-yard pass to Ny'asia Lopey gave the Tornadoes a first down past midfield on the game's opening series. After a 6-yard pass from Griffin to Kah'myra

Hankerson later set up third-and-7, Hankerson carried the ball for 9-yard gain for first-and-goal from the Buchholz 18. A 5-yard pass from Cayson Hampton to Kailyn Teal and a penalty moved Bradford to the 8, but the Bobcats' Taylor Booth intercepted a pass in the end zone to end the scoring threat.

Buchholz picked up a first down on its first drive on an 18-yard pass play. That left the Bobcats 5 yards shy of midfield and another first down, but they wound up turning the ball over on downs.

The Tornadoes struck on the first play following the change of possession, with Lopey catching a pass from Riley Shuford for a 33-yard touchdown with 2:36 to play in the first quarter. Bradford's successful conversion attempt — a pass from Shuford to Teal — gave the Tornadoes a 7-0 lead.

Buchholz proved it could score quickly, too, as the Bobcats needed just one play on their next series. Alessia Torres hauled in a 76-yard touchdown pass from Isabella Alexander, but the Bobcats were unsuccessful on the conversion attempt, with Griffin breaking up a pass to keep Bradford ahead by one point.

Griffin later intercepted a pass to stop a potential Buchholz scoring threat, but the Tornadoes couldn't do anything offensively, punting the ball away for the second straight series.

Alexander again connected on a deep ball, hitting a receiver for a 44-yard gain to the Bradford 10. The Bobcats quarterback threw a touchdown pass on the next play to give Buchholz a 12-7 lead late in the first half. The pass attempt on the conversion attempt was incomplete.

Bradford got a big play on its ensuing possession, with Lopey catching a 22-yard pass from Shuford. Shuford then connected with Teal for an 8-yard gain that put the Tornadoes 3 yards past midfield. The Bobcats' Jewel Alexander then picked off a pass.

The Bobcats had time to move downfield. Isabella Alexander, who finished 12 of 25 for 263 yards, hit passes of 12 and 19 yards as Buchholz had first-and-goal 16 yards from the end zone. After an incomplete pass on first down, Bradford's Tatyanna Brown sacked Alexander for a 7-yard loss. The Bobcats picked up the lost yardage on a third-down pass play, but Alexander's pass into the end zone on fourth down was broken up by Shuford and Kamari Haygood.

Buchholz went three-and-out to open the second half, with Shuford returning the punt approximately 10 yards to give her team the ball 5 yards past midfield. After an incomplete pass on first down, the Tornadoes got runs of 6 yards from Hankerson and 8 yards from Griffin, setting up a fourth-and-1 play. Hampton picked up the first down on a 2-yard run to set up goal to go. A personal-foul penalty helped the Tornadoes advance to the 6-yard line, but the Bobcats Torres intercepted a pass.

Two plays after the turnover, Buchholz increased its lead on Torres' 50-yard touchdown reception. The Bobcats had a successful conversion, making the score 19-7.

Buchholz added a late score when the Tornadoes, with time winding down in the fourth quarter, were unsuccessful on a fourth-down play at their own 19. That led to Alexander's fourth touchdown pass of the game — a 3-yard completion to Torres.

The Bobcats then picked off a pass for the fourth time on Bradford's final offensive series.

Shuford completed 9 of 20 passes for 100 yards, while Griffin went 3 of 6 for 37 yards.

Lopey caught three passes for 76 yards, but had no receptions in the second half.

Hankerson finished with three catches for 32 yards, while Teal had three for 23 yards.

Bradford played Oakleaf this

RIGHT: Ny'asia Lopey (left) eludes a Buchholz defender on her way to a touchdown. BELOW: Ar'Nayshia Griffin (far left) runs upfield after intercepting a pass. Kah'myra Hankerson (far right) is also pictured.



## LBMS baseball season ends in with 6-0 loss in SMAC tourney

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Lake Butler Middle School's baseball team was held to four hits in a 6-0 loss to third seed Baker County in the semifinals of the Suwannee Middle Athletic Conference on March 31.

The second seed Tigers (8-4) had runners in scoring position in all but one of the five innings.

Braxton Griffis led off the bottom of the first with a single. With one out, Eastyn Miller reached on an error, while K.D. Green walked to load the bases. A ground ball, though, led to an inning-ending double play.

Cal Collins and Logan Miller both walked with one out in the second. After a sacrifice bunt by Carter Fitzpatrick, a pop-up to short ended the inning.

The third inning got off to a good start with Gabe McNeal hitting a single, but Baker then turned its second double play of the game.

Lake Butler had two batters walk with two outs in the fourth, but one was caught stealing to end the inning.

With one out in the fifth, McNeal reached on an error, while Eastyn Miller singled. Dalen Paige singled to load the bases with two outs before a fly out ended the game.

The Tigers committed five

errors as Baker had only one earned run.

Griffis started on the mound, allowing five runs (one earned) and four hits in 3.1 innings.

Eastyn Miller pitched the remainder of the game, giving up on unearned run and two hits.

## LBMS softball team rallies late, but loses in SMAC semis

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Lake Butler Middle School rallied late, but couldn't overtake third seed Baker County, which defeated the second seed Tigers 10-7 in the semifinals of the Suwannee Middle Athletic Conference tournament.

The Tigers (10-5) trailed 9-2 before scoring three runs in the sixth. Katelynn Bennett drove in a run on a single, while an error and a passed ball allowed the other two to score.

Lake Butler put another two runs on the board in the seventh. Bryleigh Prevatt doubled, while Peyton Howard reached on an error. Kennedy Arnold and Lea Elixson hit back-to-back RBI singles with one out to leave the Tigers trailing by three, but a fly out and a ground out to second ended the game.

Elixson finished 3 for 4 with an RBI, while Katelynn Bennett batted 2 for 3 with an RBI.

Arnold and Howard each had one RBI, with Arnold batting 2 for 4.

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