

Bradford County Telegraph

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Starke puts Crosby on administrative leave

Milner wants chief administrative officer fired

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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Starke City Commissioner Bob Milner asked his colleagues to terminate the contract of the city's Chief Administrative Officer, Jimmy Crosby, after accusing the former city clerk of creating a hostile work environment, not informing council members of his role in organizing a recreational advisory board, and falsifying election documents when he first registered to vote and when he qualified to run for city clerk.

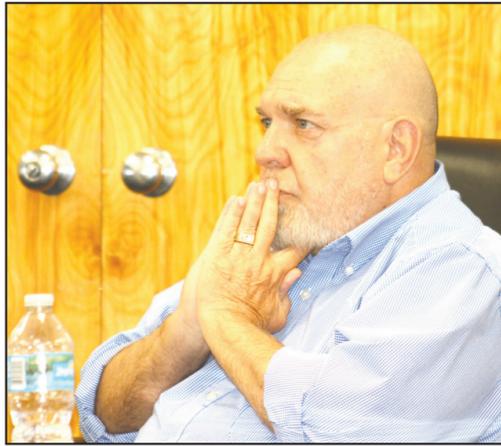
Mayor Andy Redding and Commissioner Danny Nugent appeared ready to go along with Milner at the end of the commission's Tuesday, May 6, meeting. However, City Attorney Danielle Adams advised Redding that their actions could create a financial liability for the municipality.

At Redding's urging, Milner amended his motion to put Crosby on administrative leave until the lawyer had a chance to review Crosby's contract and applicable city ordinances.

Milner, reading from a prepared statement during commissioners'



City Commissioner Bob Milner listens to reactions by other city officials to his motion to terminate Jimmy Crosby's contract.



City of Starke Chief Administrative Officer Jimmy Crosby looks at City Commissioner Bob Milner as Milner accuses him of creating a hostile work environment, not properly informing council members of his actions, and falsifying election records.

presentations on topics of their choice, described Crosby as his 55-year good friend.

"We sang in the youth choir together, and recently, he and his brother provided me the honor of leading the music at the home-going service of their wonderful mother, Mrs. Helen Crosby," Milner told his

colleagues. "I appreciated that and the many good things Mr. Crosby has either initiated, some of which we've heard tonight, or been a major part of while representing the city the last couple of years. I believe most of his actions were well-intended. However, I do believe his management style has created a hostile work environment

for many city employees. He's been selective in what he shares with all commissioners versus a few, and unfortunately, he confessed to committing two criminal offenses by falsifying his voter registration application form and the qualification documents to run for city clerk."

See LEAVE, page 3

Sheriff on fair board: 'They had a scheme in place'

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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The transfer of assets by the former Bradford Fair Association Board in private to a related nonprofit while Bradford County was settling the association's debt and acquiring the fairgrounds property has led to disappointment and anger.

One citizen, Vyunda Strong, said the fair board had been playing in commissioners' faces. But Sheriff Gordon Smith went much further, saying it could amount to a scheme to defraud the county commission.

Smith said he is pursuing a criminal investigation. With the county commission's blessing, he will also be pursuing civil action if necessary against former fair board members involved in the "scheme."

On top of the 8 acres of land south of the fairgrounds and the equipment transferred to the Friends of the Bradford Agricultural Fair and Youth Shows during the fair board's last meeting in early April, the board may have transferred thousands of dollars from the fair association's bank account to the nonprofit.

Smith said he heard about the

money from someone at the fair board meeting, but now that the county has access to the bank accounts, they should soon know more about any alleged transfers.

"It pisses me off," he told county commissioners Tuesday morning, saying in the flood of questions coming to him, he has been on a fact-finding mission and speaking with authorities that include the Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson.

"At the end of this, I hope they find it in their heart to do the right thing and return what wasn't theirs. I truly do, but if not, I want to support this commission to seek every legal avenue possible, whether it be civil, criminal or both," the sheriff said.

Looking at both state law and the fair association's charter, Smith claims he discovered multiple examples where the former fair board members didn't follow the rules. Among them was the failure to operate in public in compliance with the Sunshine Law. According to Smith, fair board meetings should have been noticed and the public allowed to attend. Had that been the case, recent revelations wouldn't have been a surprise — or allowed to occur at all.

Further, Smith said the fair association charter states there should be a minimum of 20 board members. He said that means the board didn't have a quorum to hold a meeting, let alone vote on business. The charter also caps the association's liability at \$100,000, far below the \$1.5 million borrowed to complete the arena and emergency operations shelter — the debt commissioners paid to secure the future of the fairgrounds and save it from foreclosure.

Even though the 8 acres across the street is not a part of the fairgrounds, it was fair association property and like all its property, was used to secure the loan with the bank as well as the private investor who previously stepped up to prevent the bank foreclosure.

While the county still hasn't seen minutes from the fair board's April 7 meeting, Smith said the board supposedly transferred that land, a tractor, a Scag mower and money from the fair association to the Friends of the Fair nonprofit, which shared many of the same board members. That was just days before signing an agreement with the county over the fairground's ownership and future governance.

"I don't call that being friends,"

Smith said. "They set out to pull a fast one on y'all. They didn't tell us in negotiations they were planning on cutting out eight acres of property and taking equipment and possibly cash."

Smith said they are still collecting records, including financial information.

"I'm asking for your support going forward on the civil side," he told commissioners. "I'm gladly going forward with everything I can do if there's anything criminal. But even if there's not, what they did was not right."

Smith called it an "act of vengeance," retaliation for public criticism of fair management from Clerk of Courts Denny Thompson. He also said commissioners would certainly have objected to these property transfers had they known of the fair board's plans.

But the property deed transferring the 8 acres to the Friends nonprofit was signed a week after the existing fair board was dissolved through its agreement with the county, calling the legitimacy of the deed into question.

See FAIR, page 3

Bradford, Brooker discuss fire station and assessment

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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All eyes were on Brooker during Bradford County's third fire assessment workshop May 6.

Word came that morning that Brooker's request for fire department funding would not be in the state's next budget. The town previously received half of its original funding requests and was counting on the second half to move forward.

Commissioner Diane Andrews said in speaking with Rep. Chuck Brannan, she was embarrassed to learn that it was because no progress was made with the previous allocation that no additional money was awarded.

This led to discussion of how best to proceed but also questions about Brooker's commitment to help funding firefighting.

No one present seemed to disagree about the need. Fire Chief Ben Carter said response time is 26 minutes from Starke, and even the closest station in Sampson City could take 12 to 14 minutes to get to Brooker.

But once the state funds are

exhausted and the new station is built, it must be staffed, and that's a recurring cost. Carter said two employees would staff each shift at this adaptive response station, ready to respond with an ambulance, fire engine or brush truck, depending upon the nature of the call. With three shifts to cover, that would be a total of six new employees.

While Carter hasn't built that additional staff into his budget yet, the numbers were included when a consultant calculated the cost of the fire assessment.

While the county commission is not considering fully funding the fire department budget through the fire assessment, it has been looking at 50% cost recovery. That amounts to \$167 per residential unit, 11 cents per square foot for nonresidential buildings and \$47 for vacant parcels, except for unimproved agricultural parcels, which the state exempts from assessment. Additionally, exemptions are likely for churches and nonprofits, 100% disabled veterans and any household living at or below the poverty level.

Brooker Mayor Gene Melvin has said he has spoken to residents who said the annual fee would be a hardship. He would like the county to start lower, at 25% cost recovery, and raise it over time.

Commissioner Carolyn Spooner said the county had extended its timeline so the municipal boards would have time to vote whether to opt in to their citizens paying the fire assessment. The county hasn't decided on an amount, so cities don't know what they are opting into.

Commissioner Danny Riddick reiterated his support for 50% funding, and while he said Brooker would have a fire station, he said it would be hard to staff it if Brooker doesn't opt on. Asked by Brooker Councilwoman Breann Garbas if that would be a consequence of opting out, Riddick asked how he could vote to staff it if Brooker won't help pay the assessment.

Brooker's population — 322 residents and 146 households according to the 2020 census — might not contribute much to the salaries and benefits of six firefighter-paramedics.

But Riddick spoke about what is right for the entire county.

"We have to represent all the people. And I'm not trying to be mean or harsh. I know there's people with hardships that won't be able to pay. Ben has opened it up. There's a telephone number they can call, you know, to take care of it and help them. But I'm just saying. I'm only one vote, but for me, it would be very hard for me to vote to staff a station where they're not participating in the fire assessment. It would be because that's not right for the, what, 26,000 residents in Bradford County. And again, if we go lower than 50%, we're going to go broke," he said.

Chief Deputy Clerk of Court Rachel Rhoden pointed out they had talked about breaking ground on a new fire station without know if an assessment would be in place to help pay for the staffing. She said the county needs to know that Brooker is on board with the assessment.

See FIRE, page 9



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WORTH NOTING

Food distribution at RJE

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Feeding Northeast Florida and True Vine Ministry will take place Wednesday, May 14, at 8:30 a.m. at the RJE Complex on Pine Street in Starke.

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

Mother's Day Breakfast

The New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church Women's Ministry will be hosting its annual Mother's Day Breakfast on Saturday, May 10, at 9 a.m. Breakfast will be held in the New Bethel fellowship hall at 901 N. Keller St. in Starke for a donation of \$15 per person. Come and bring your mother for a heartwarming breakfast and Mother's Day message.

Honoring all mothers

The First Presbyterian Church in Starke is having a special Mother's Day service on Sunday, May 11, at 11 a.m. Please join the congregation as members pay tribute to the women in their lives. Following the service, there will be a lunch in the fellowship hall honoring all mothers.

Wildflowers at the Senior Center

Alligator Creek Garden Club has plans to plant a wildflower garden. The proposed location is at the Bradford County Senior Center on U.S. 301 in Starke. Paul Still has identified several species of wildflowers already growing on the grounds. These will be preserved when adding more native plants.

If you would like to hear more about this project, or just meet other gardening people, come to the next meeting. Still will talk about the wildflower garden and take attendees out to see the plants he has identified. The talk is free and open to the public.

The next meeting is Thursday, May 15, at 2 p.m. at the Bradford County Senior Center, 1805 N. Temple Ave., in front of the health department. There will be refreshments and a plant exchange. For more information, contact Tracy Meadows at 904-586-6692 or Paul Still at 904-368-0291.



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BHS Class of 1975 reunion planned

The Bradford County High School Class of 1975 will hold its 50th anniversary reunion on Saturday, June 21, 2025, at the

Starke Woman's Club. Social will begin at 5 p.m. followed by dinner at 6 p.m. Price for the reunion is \$50 per person, payable by check or money order only. Make payment to BHS Class of 1975 and mail to Donna Solze, BCREC, P.O. Box 213, Starke, FL 32091. Please include your full name and the name of

any guests. Deadline for payment is June 1, 2025. Organizers also need your help in locating classmates. So spread the word. For more information, please contact Joy Tetstone at 352-745-6672 or Randy Martin at 352-235-6410.

Happy Mother's Day to all Mothers, including our Grand Nan Fran, Frances Duty




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Agencies honor fallen officers

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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The Union County Sheriff's Office, Lawtey Police, the Florida Department of Corrections, the Florida Highway Patrol, and the Bradford County Sheriff's Office honored the 34 local officers who died in the line of duty between 1885 and 2021.

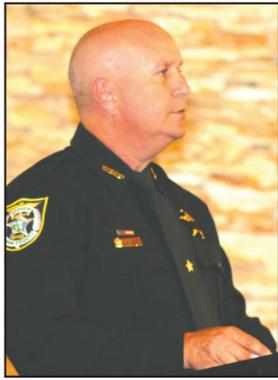
During the May 1 ceremony at Lake Butler's First Christian Church, the names of the eight Florida law enforcement officers who died over the past year were also read to the audience.

Keynote speaker Union County Sheriff Brad Whitehead said the heroism of the fallen officers could be seen, not only in their time of crisis, but also in their day-to-day duties.

"Whether it's the long hours they spent on patrol," Whitehead said, "the thousands of steps they took inside the facility, or the effort to build trust and support with the community, every act of service they gave counted."

Survivor families escorted

The event began with an escort of survivor family members from the church's fellowship hall to the auditorium. It was followed by an invocation by Pastor Shane Collins, the Bradford County Sheriff's Office Explorers presentation of the colors, and the National Anthem by Keeley Durrance. After Whitehead's



Union County Sheriff Brad Whitehead said that people can honor fallen officers in everyday actions and how they treat others.

comments, representatives from several law enforcement agencies read the names of the fallen officers. Collins concluded the ceremony with a benediction, following a moment of radio silence by the Union County Emergency Operations Center, a three-gun volley by the Florida Department of Corrections Honor Guard, and Taps by Inspector Rodney Clayton.

Profound responsibility comes with the badge

Whitehead told the audience that the fallen officers were not only public officials, but

also fathers, brothers, mothers, daughters, sisters, and spouses.

"This is a day of remembrance, reflection, and deep gratitude," he said. "Let us take the time to reflect on the profound responsibility that comes with the badge. Being an officer or deputy is more than a profession. It's a cause that many have answered. It is about to protect, serve, and defend, often at a great personal cost. The commitment to stand in harm's way, to confront danger, and to make split-second decisions under pressure is a testament to their courage and devotion."

The sheriff said that people can honor the memory of fallen officers by upholding the values they cherished, like honor, integrity, service, and justice.

He told surviving family members that they are not alone. "We are family," he said, "bound by the shared commitment to protecting and serving your loved ones."

Their spirits live on

Whitehead also said the spirits of the honorees live on in the actions of those who serve today.

"They may no longer walk among us," he said, "but their spirit lives on in every officer who continues to serve, and in every family member who continues to love, and in every community that benefits from the work that they did."



The event began with an escort of survivor family members from the church's fellowship hall to the auditorium.



Bradford County Sheriff Maj. George Konkel Jr. reads the names of local fallen officers.



Lawtey Police Chief Jerry Feltner reads the names of local fallen officers.

Whitehead then addressed the 34 officers who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

"Thank you for your service," he said. "You'll never be forgotten. We will uphold the values you represented, and we will ensure that your sacrifice is commemorated."

Whitehead also said that people can honor the fallen officers in how they treat others.

"Let us remind each other," he said, "the greatest tribute we can offer is to carry their legacy forward with honor, compassion, and dedication."

LEAVE

Continued from page 1

The final straw

Regarding the last accusation, Milner recounted a Florida Department of Law Enforcement raid on City Hall in February 2024. He said the raid and related investigation were launched by claims Crosby lied on qualifying documents before he was elected clerk, by falsely stating that he was not a convicted felon.

Milner said his accusations of a hostile work environment came from Starke employees who approached him confidentially, for fear of retribution from Crosby.

"I've been contacted by several city employees, not one or two but several over the last few months regarding their perception of Mr. Crosby's management style," said Milner. "These employees report that many city employees are walking on eggshells every day just to try and perform their duties because of what they consider harassing, intimidating and, in some cases, threatening behavior by Mr. Crosby."

Milner said the final straw for him was when employees told him Crosby instructed other workers to delay work in certain districts until after candidate

qualifying time or until after the August city elections.

Redding, looking directly at Crosby, told the chief administrative officer that he had heard the same things from employees Milner had reported.

"That is a violation of the Whistleblower Act and a violation for us to protect our employees," Redding told Crosby. "We cannot operate that way."

Ashamed and embarrassed

Commissioner Janice Mortimer came to Crosby's defense and launched her own attack on Milner.

"You have questioned this board and previous boards for ... no apparent reason other than you just want people to think that you're the smartest person here," Mortimer told Milner. "And you have constantly, during every opportunity to speak at some point, reminded all of us of what you used to do as sheriff — 'When I was sheriff and when I was city manager' — which has no bearing on what we were facing or whatever the issue might be at the time."

Mortimer asked Milner why he had not brought up the accusations earlier, even before he was elected to the city

commission.

"You could have brought it before the board at that time," she said, "but you chose to wait and sit here on your pedestal and grandstand, and I think that speaks volumes to the kind of person that you are, and I'm ashamed and embarrassed to be serving on the board with you."

Mortimer then praised Crosby's work performance, comparing the condition of the municipality's operations favorably to when Milner was the city manager.

Mortimer also criticized Milner for not asking Crosby about the allegations before springing them on council members.

Crosby reiterated that complaint at the end of the meeting.

"No commissioner or person has discussed any of that with me prior to this meeting," Crosby said of Milner's accusations. "So, I want it on the record that my good friend would not even have the courtesy to come by and say, look, I've got a problem here."

Nugent joined Redding and Milner in suspending Crosby. Mortimer and Scott Roberts voted against the action, arguing that the motion deprived Crosby of due process.

FAIR

Continued from page 1

"This board and I, we all entered into an agreement with the expectation of integrity," Commissioner Carolyn Spooner said. "We did it for the love of our community and so that we will have something to share with the community that we are accustomed to having. So, I am very disappointed at the actions that were taken, and I think it's important that we proceed with all Godspeed to remedy the situation and correct what was done and to return all properties to the appropriate ownership for this community."

"I think that all of us are shocked," Commissioner Diane Andrews said. "I think we're sad because we did this with goodness in our hearts to save the fair for the county and for our families. ... To take money that was generated at the fair, it just doesn't make sense, and so I think we're all deeply hurt by it."

Andrews, echoing Spooner, said they now have a responsibility they cannot shun.

The sheriff agreed. "Take the gloves off and let's get at it full force," he said.

Attorney Rob Bradley agreed with Andrews, saying the

situation was sad, but "there is a light at the end of the tunnel." The fair board will be reconstituted, and the county commission will name a majority of the board members.

Bradley also said of the actions and alleged actions taken by former board members, those members should begin undoing it "immediately."

Fair board applications will be reviewed early next week, and the commissioners will be voting on their selections at the May 15 meeting.

Bob Milner, who served as president of the fair board, made the following statement after the commission meeting:

"I can't respond to the many spurious, ludicrous and unsupported inferences and allegations made by the sheriff or any other speaker. Suffice it to say all of our bank statements

are open for inspection as are the minutes of every meeting we've ever had. Ironically, the county commission, nor any of their representatives, have ever requested either, or they would've received them.

"The Fair Association has had year-end financial reviews every single year by an outside CPA firm. Also, every grant received through the Florida Department of Agriculture is also audited by the state. In my five years on the board, we have never received a negative finding of any kind.

"Other than that, I must leave all responses to our legal counsel who will be responding at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner."

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Arc of Bradford bringing brewery to Starke

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

The CEO of the Arc of Bradford County told two groups on Wednesday, May 1, that his organization is raising money to open a brewery at its L.M. Gaines Blvd. location within Starke's industrial park.

John Williams told a chamber of commerce group and the Starke Rotary Club that Access Brewing Co. would be a for-profit entity that would create inclusive employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Williams added that the drink-in establishment would foster a community-centered environment and change perceptions about people with disabilities in the workforce.

Now, the Arc operates a woodshop at its L.M. Gaines Blvd. and State Road 100 location that produces survey stakes, pallets, picnic tables, and other products. However, the shop provides minimal interaction between the public and Arc consumers. Access Brewing Co. would enable more face-to-face contact between the brewery's patrons and Arc consumers.

"I know DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) is a bad word right now," Williams said. "But the reality is, The ARC is about inclusion. Our whole mission is connecting people with disabilities to the community."

During the presentation to the chamber group, Arc board member Chrissy Allen said, "Just because you have a disability does not mean that you are socially awkward... They want to contribute, and they want to do different things. So, we want to engage them and have them be in our community and serve people. They love talking and they love talking to people."

Williams said his group has moved most of its support services, like the computer lab, resource hub, food distribution, day program, and thrift store, to the former Hampton Elementary School. The group's administrative offices and woodshop remain in Starke. The Arc plans to use the administrative space for the brewery and move more offices to Hampton. The Starke location's current meeting area will be the taproom, where customers can sit down.

Williams said the brewery would not sell food but would offer delivery and invite food trucks onto the property.

No one else is doing this

The nonprofit leader said he modeled the concept for Access Brewing on Bitty and Beau's, a coffee shop chain with locations throughout the southeast and a site in Jacksonville's San Marco



Arc CEO John Williams said Access Brewing Co. would be a for-profit entity that would create inclusive employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

neighborhood.

The chain describes itself as a human rights movement disguised as a coffee shop that employs people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. With 18 stores in 11 states, Bitty and Beau's employs over 450 people.

Williams explained to the chamber group, "I said to the

board, why don't we do this? But instead of opening a coffee company, why don't we open a brewery that is mission-focused and that employs individuals with intellectual developmental disabilities? So that's what we're doing. Our tagline is 'Raise a Glass to Inclusion.'"

Williams said Access Brewing will be the first of its kind.

"No one else is doing this," he said. "We have the Bitty and Beau's model, but as far as brewing goes, no one is doing this."

Williams said two widespread misconceptions about the concept are that people with disabilities cannot work in a brewery and cannot drink alcohol.

He added that one person asked him if it was safe for his consumers to work in a brewery.

"I'm like, well, we operate a woodshop, and they're using saws, so..."

The Arc CEO said Access Brewing has hired a brewmaster to direct the operations of the business.

Must find other funding sources

Williams said the new enterprise would also help his organization meet the increasingly difficult challenges of funding The Arc of Bradford County.

"For The Arc to remain viable," he said, "we must find other funding resources to support our mission."

The CEO added that when he agreed to lead The Arc three years ago, the organization faced existential financial challenges.

"When I got here," Williams recalled, "I told the board, I said, listen, I can get you through the year, I can get you through three

years if we do tax credits, but we've got to change how we do business because we're not going to survive as an agency if we don't do something different."

He added that with his agency's reliance on Medicaid funding and the federal government's current focus on budget cuts, finding alternative funding sources is imperative.

The non-profit is asking the public to help launch the project through a crowdfunding effort from The Arc website. Recommended donations range from \$5 to \$10,000.

Williams said the goal is to raise \$150,000 over the next 60 days and to open the brewery on July 18, one day after the nonprofit's gala.

'This isn't going to work'

Williams said The Arc has a track record of innovation and of trying new ideas that sometimes work and sometimes don't. He added that he has a message for the naysayers, doubters, haters, and critics of the new business idea.

"We've been here for 50 years," he said. "And a lot of times we are doing something new, and people tell us: 'This isn't going to work.' And we're like, 'Well, we're doing it anyway.'"

Strategic plan is a five-year blueprint for growth in Bradford County

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
mark@bctelegraph.com

"So, this has been a journey." Those were the words of Amber Shepherd with the Northeast Florida Economic Development Corporation when she recently delivered a grant-funded roadmap for growth to Bradford County Commissioners.

County Manager Scott Kornegay previously shared "Welcome to Bradford County," a two-and-a-half-minute video produced with portion of the \$75,000 technical assistance

grant. It can be viewed at the EDC's website (www.nefedc.com) along with other key information to entice people to come to Bradford County. It can also be viewed on the county's YouTube page.

Shepherd has now submitted the 78-page Bradford County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan funded by the grant. Like Shepherd's presentation, the plan opens discussing Bradford County's journey — this "pivotal moment in its economic journey."

"With its rich heritage,

strategic location, and commitment to enhancing the quality of life for its residents, the county is poised for significant growth," it reads. "The Bradford County Economic Development Strategic Plan has been crafted to serve as a guiding framework for driving sustainable economic development, fostering innovation, and ensuring the long-term prosperity of the region."

Through addressing opportunities and challenges, the plan's goals over the next five years include attracting new businesses in key sectors like manufacturing, logistics and agribusiness; supporting expansion of existing businesses by providing resources, improving infrastructure and approving business-friendly policies; enhancing the workforce through educational and training partnerships; and fostering community engagement so economic growth aligns with values and goals of residents. The strategic plan represents collaboration with stakeholders in business, government, education as well as the public, according to the report.

Short-term goals include increasing business

retention efforts, developing an economic marketing campaign, enhancing public-private partnerships, completing infrastructure assessments and planning, and increasing workforce and education training programs. In the long-term, Bradford would be established as a regional economic hub, "a key player in Northeast Florida's economy, attracting major industries and fostering diverse business growth to create a resilient and balanced economic ecosystem."

The long-term goals also include expanding access to water, sewer, transportation and broadband internet; new workforce programs to make the county a leader in workforce development; promoting sustainable economic growth that conserves Bradford's natural resources and rural character; and diversifying the local economy by targeting high-value industries including advanced manufacturing, logistics, agriculture and technology.

All of that is just the opening pages of the plan, which continues with a current economic overview of infrastructure, quality of life, active projects, available properties, assets and more. Strategic objectives are set for the next 12 months and the next five years. Key milestones and deliverables for that period include:

Short-Term Milestones (0–12 months):

- Submission of USDA and EDA grant applications for water and sewer infrastructure.
- Implementation of impact fees for residential and commercial developments.
- Add one or two new properties quarterly to the GIS Planning platform.
- Attend high-profile conferences, including CES

and SpaceCom, to attract key industries.

• Launch marketing campaigns showcasing Bradford County's business-friendly environment.

• Improve Bradford County School District ratings by leveraging revamped education systems and focusing on early intervention strategies.

Mid-Term Milestones (13–60 months):

- Completion of water and sewer infrastructure projects for priority areas like the Starke bypass.
- Initiation of the Douglas Property business park, with infrastructure development underway.
- Establish workforce certification programs aligned with industry needs.

Long-Term Milestones (61+ months):

- Full operational capacity of business parks with anchor tenants.
- Creation of public transportation and workforce housing initiatives to support sustainable growth.
- Ongoing infrastructure expansion to position Bradford County as a competitive economic hub.

Multiple entities will play multiple roles in the work to come. The EDC says its role will be overseeing the overall implementation of these plans, management of partnerships, attracting new businesses and providing strategic support to existing businesses. Progress will be measured through several metrics, including grant approval, job creation, business investment and retention, population growth and housing development, and that it will be measured as they go.

"This is going to be a

living document that we will maintain," Shepherd said of the strategic plan. "I'm committed to coming quarterly and giving the commission updates on things that are going on, and I do think that we should, update the strategic plan annually — because things do change, priorities do change — and make sure that we're all singing from the same choir book."

Commissioners thanked Shepherd for her work on developing the plan, with Commissioner Diane Andrews saying it was obvious she had a heart for seeing Bradford County grow.

Comparing her work to a plate spinner, Shepherd said, "Eventually it's going to kick off, and I'm excited to be a part of this. I'm looking forward to the growth."

Hospital launches program for people 55+

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Union deputies and EMTs rescue man near burning car

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Union County Sheriff Brad Whitehead recognized two of his deputies for their lifesaving efforts in pulling an injured man from a burning vehicle as ammunition was exploding in the car nearby.

Deputy Scott R. Word wrote in an incident report that after being dispatched to a vehicle crash in the Raiford area, just after 10 p.m. on July 22, 2024, he found no sign of the reported incident.

“So, I BOLO the area until I noticed a fire in the distance,” the deputy reported, “about 50 Yards into a heavily wooded area. At this point, I parked my patrol car on the side of the road and exited my vehicle.”

Word added that as he tried to approach the vehicle, he heard screams for help from the area.

“I then looked for a way into

the thick brush, and I finally found the entry where the vehicle had exited the roadway and entered the woods,” the officer wrote. “While climbing over branches and vines, I could see the vehicle completely engulfed in flames.”

Word wrote that he called out to the person yelling for help, and while he was looking for the victim, Christopher Ledford of Union County Rescue 6 arrived along with Deputy Eli Rogers.

“As we all got closer to the vehicle, we could hear and see the evidence of projectiles flying from the fire. During this time, the screams for help were getting louder, but still no sign of the victims.”

Word reported that he found the victim around seven feet from the vehicle, under a pile of brush.

“The victim was a Hispanic male age 20-30 with cuts and

bruises, and by observation, both legs were broken. Worried the car was going to explode due to the immense heat, I, D/S Rogers and EMT Ledford lifted the victim to carry him to a safe location away from the fire.”

Word said the victim did not speak English but could communicate that no other people were in the vehicle.

Word added that rescue worker Bobby Wells brought a backboard to the scene, and the first responders carried the injured man to the ambulance. The victim was then transported to the Raiford Community Center, where a helicopter flew him to the nearest trauma center.

Whitehead praised his two deputies’ persistence and speed.

“Due to their quick thinking and actions,” the sheriff said, “these two worked to save this man’s life.”



(L-R) Union County Deputy Sheriff Eli Rogers, Sheriff Brad Whitehead and Deputy Scott Word.



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Call Street's Zoo House holds ribbon cutting

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Zoo House, LLC, celebrated its first anniversary on Thursday, May 1, with a ribbon cutting sponsored by the North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Owner Rebecca Uribe said she launched her business as an e-commerce enterprise during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

"It was a big flop," she said of the internet-based shop. "But I kept at it and kept at it and kept at it and kept at it. And I was like, I just want to be my own boss. I want to be a brick-and-mortar owner."

The business owner said her biggest challenge was getting the word out about her business.

"It was tough and it's still tough," she said. "I don't have a budget for advertising, and just for a billboard in Starke, they wanted over \$2,000 for four weeks. I'm like, no, we can't do that. That's almost as much as the rent we pay here."

Uribe said that besides her love for animals, she has an equal passion for seeing happy customers walk through her doors.

"I love customer service," she said. "I love what animals do for me, and I know what they can do for other people. And there are other people like me who are fanatics about it. So, I'm not the only one, but it's a service I want to provide to Starke instead of driving all the way to Middleburg or different counties."



Rebecca Uribe cuts the ribbon on her one-year-old business on West Call Street, Zoo House, LLC.



Lukas Marroletti feeds a banana to Dora, a Kinkajou, a species related to raccoons. Also pictured are (l-r) April and Layna Fishburn.

Heritage Commission hosts 4th graders

BY JENN SAMSEL
Special to the Monitor

On Thursday, April 24, the Keystone Heights Heritage Commission welcomed fourth graders to its 3rd Annual Keystone History Field Trip.

The students explored four unique educational platforms, each offering insights into the area's history. Over 100 students, teachers, and chaperones gathered at the Beach Pavilion, where Mayor Rodenroth welcomed them to the event.

Agenda items included Chautauqua, Fort 11, Andy-The Whooping Crane, and the Natural Gazebo Park's history. The lessons were presented during 20-minute rotations.

The students also toured City Hall, where Mayor Rodenroth, Council members Dave Welch, Elston "Speedy"



Students learn about the city's Moon Stree, an American Sycamore grown from seeds carried to the moon by astronaut Stuart Roosa during his Apollo 14 flight in 1971.

Kussler, and Ryan Knight held a "mock" council meeting.

The Council performed a role play demonstrating how decisions are made to support its citizens.

"I am very proud that

we can partner with the elementary school and share our amazing history with such a unique learning experience. Our bonus was sharing the municipality governing and how it works for Keystone

Heights. They really loved hitting the Gavel," said Nina Rodenroth, City of Keystone Heights Mayor.

Students asked questions and, ultimately, received a proclamation from the Mayor.

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Union JROTC awards cadets

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

The Union County High School's JROTC program conducted its annual awards ceremony on Thursday, April 12.

This ceremony consists of several outside agencies presenting awards to qualified cadets. It also included many significant internal awards that demonstrated excellence for the school year in a variety of categories, such as the Academic Achievement Award and the Academic Excellence Award.

The Academic Achievement Award is presented to each cadet who has earned an "A" in JROTC and at least a "B" in every other subject all year.

The Academic Excellence Award recognizes the cadets with the highest GPA for the school year by their Leadership, Education, and Training (LET) level. Several other awards were presented to deserving cadets.

Lt. Col. (Retired) Kevin Steverson, UCHS JROTC Sr. Army instructor, provided reporting and photos for this story.



Winners of the JROTC Academic Achievement Award with instructors and administrators, (l-r) Bottom Row: Ronni Castelberry, Phoenix Forbes, Chloe Harris, Savannah Thompson, Lillie Lane. Back Row: Mr. Zeke Scaff, UCHS Assistant Principal, Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Retired) Derek Brown, JROTC Army Instructor, Ayden Beckham, John Boyette, Cason Forbes, Carson Moss, Keegan Shuler, Noah Visel, Donald West, Mr. Mike Ripplinger, Union County School Superintendent, and Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Kevin Steverson, JROTC Sr.



Academic Excellence Award winners with instructors and administrators (l-r) Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Retired) Derek Brown, UCHS JROTC Army Instructor, Savannah Thompson (LET 4), Chloe Harris (LET 3), Carson Moss (LET 2), and Noah Visel (LET 1), Mr. Mike Ripplinger, Union County School Superintendent, Mr. Zeke Scaff, UCHS Assistant Principal, and Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Steverson, UCHS JROTC Sr. Army Instructor. Carson Moss also earned the Distinguished Cadet for Scholastic Excellence Award, which goes to the cadet with the highest overall GPA in the JROTC program.



JROTC seniors and instructors, (l-r) Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Kevin Steverson, UCHS JROTC Sr. Army Instructor, Cason Forbes, Tiger Battalion Commander, Natalie Piggott, Tiger Battalion Command Sergeant Major, Savannah Thompson, Tiger Battalion Executive Officer, Alexia Staffieri, Tiger Battalion Personnel Officer, Carli Trent, Tiger Battalion Public Affairs Officer, and Chief Warrant Officer 4 (Retired) Derek Brown, UCHS JROTC Army Instructor.

Brooker native helping seniors

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School graduate Justin Hanson returned to Lake Butler on Tuesday, April 22, to give the Rotary Club an overview of how his company helps seniors with daily tasks.

Hanson is the operating director for the Gainesville office of Cornerstone Caregiving, a Waco, Texas-based in-home care company, launched in 2020. He said Cornerstone provides non-medical assistance to seniors.

"We might come in and help Mom or Dad with getting a shower," he said, "helping meal preparation, maybe just having a light meal, light housekeeping. We can provide transportation."

Accelerated growth

Hanson said his employer has experienced explosive growth in the Sunshine State over the last eight months.

"When I started my office on

July 1 of last year," he said, "we had three offices in the state of Florida. "Just two weeks ago, we started to hire for our 14th office. In less than a year, we've gone from 147 offices nationwide to the goal by the end of this December (to) have over 350 offices. From my understanding of what we've been told from corporate, we're the fastest-growing private in-home care company in the nation."

Hanson's Gainesville office serves 11 counties, including Union and Bradford, but not Clay. He said the firm is not yet licensed by the state to operate there.

Hanson said his caregivers can remind their clients to take medications but may not assist them in taking the drugs.

"We can't put on a band-aid," he said. "We can't do any type of wound care."

No minimums, fast response

Hanson said the feature that differentiates his company from competitors like Concierge, Ovation, and Amedisys is that Cornerstone does not require minimum hours each week.

"Those companies will require a family to spend X amount of time weekly or daily in their house," he said. "With my company, we don't. "Our seniors, especially in our rural communities...most of the time what I have run into is, 'Hey, Mom and Dad need some help, but we can't afford 20 hours.'"

Hanson said that another strength of his company is a fast response time.

"I will guarantee 24 hours from the time you call me and say you need something or need services to the time we get the agreement signed, we can go ahead and start within 24 hours," he said. "That's my guarantee."

The fastest time we've ever been able to do is 47 minutes."

Hanson added that one problem in in-home care is missed shifts.

"I will also guarantee that we're not going to miss a shift," he said. "I might have to bump a shift back a little bit. Myself, as well as one of my other managers, have gone through all the state requirements to provide the same service that my caregivers can provide, so if I have to fill in, I've personally done that. We don't miss shifts whatsoever."

He added that consistency is important to clients, especially those in cognitive decline, like those with dementia.

'Go even further for our veterans'

Hanson said many of the clients his company serves in Alachua and surrounding counties are veterans, because Cornerstone



Union County High School graduate Justin Hanson returned to Lake Butler on Tuesday, April 22, to give the Rotary Club an overview of how his company helps seniors with daily tasks.

is Veterans Administration contracted, and the VA pays for in-home services.

The Brooker native said that as a military brat and the grandson of a 32-year Air Force veteran, service members have a special place in his heart.

"I go above and beyond for all of our clients," he said, "but I would not be a hundred percent truthful if I said I didn't go even further for our veterans. In this community, in the rural areas... the majority of our care is to our veterans."

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May Day 2025 blossoms in Starke

BY AMBER J. CRAFT
Special to the Telegraph

Concerned Citizens of Bradford County held its May Day Celebration on Saturday, May 3.

The event opened on a reverent note with a prayer, followed by the singing of "God Bless America."

Children played in the Kids' Corner bounce house, seniors gathered for games and conversation in their own dedicated space, and colorful ribbons wrapped their way around the maypole during the tradition of plaiting it.

A Festival with Purpose

"This event is to help fund our summer day care program," said Alica McMillian, President of Concerned Citizens of Bradford County. "Sponsorships and funds have been coming in and helping our existing programs,

and we would like it to continue so we can continue to help the community."

Established in 1978, Concerned Citizens is a nonprofit organization built on the foundations of community service, character development, and educational support. Its mission is simple: to lend a helping hand in all positive aspects of life. From mentoring youth to modeling positive behavior, their work uplifts Bradford County.

McMillian added a thank you to the community for its ongoing generosity and support, noting how the organization depends on the spirit of giving and the shared desire to build something greater together.

A Celebration Rooted in History

While the local May Day celebration is a staple in Starke, the roots of May Day stretch back centuries. Initially, an



Plaiting the maypole.

ancient pagan festival marking the halfway point between the spring equinox and the summer solstice, May Day celebrated fertility, renewal, and the return of warmth and light. In medieval Europe, people would gather flowers, dance around the maypole, and crown a May Queen—rituals still echoed today in events like Saturday's plaiting of the maypole.

But May Day has also evolved. In the late 19th century, it gained new meaning as International Workers' Day, a

date labor movements chose to commemorate the Haymarket affair in Chicago in 1886 and advocate for fair labor practices worldwide.

Faith, Fellowship, and Fun

This year's event also partnered with a Community Health and Wellness Resource Fair, highlighting the importance of not just celebrating the season but embracing health and vitality in all forms. Local vendors

and organizations provided information, screenings, and resources to help attendees take steps toward better health in mind, body, and spirit.

Trucks and local vendors lined the field, offering food, gifts, and community information. Music filled the air, culminating in a Gospel Fest.

A Celebration Worth Supporting

The funds raised from the event will go directly toward

the Concerned Citizens' Summer Day Care Program, which provides vital support for local families and enriching experiences for children in Bradford County. And for those who missed the event but still want to contribute, there are still opportunities to give.

For more information on donations or sponsorships, please call 904-966-1100 or email ccbc_inc@yahoo.com.



Bradford County Commissioner Carolyn Spooner and Bradford County School Board Chairperson Sheila Cummings representing the Shirley Ann Brown Livingstone Scholarship that donates five \$1,000 scholarships.



Milton and Judy Sumpter selling ice cream and sweet treats.



Shauntae Carter, Jalaiah Carter, Kaylen James, Florence Jenkins, Malaiah Dodd spend time together while selling jewelry.



Zriyah Davis, Sklyer Jones and Myra McCray enjoy selling peanuts.



Mike McDuffy owner with family: Harley McDuffy, Michael McDuffy, Jomai Lee, Khamari Wilson, Tory Lamar and Caleb McDuffy.

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to all the Moms!

IGA

Spires IGA

610 SW 1st St.
Lake Butler

386-496-3361

Crime

Recent arrests in Bradford, Union and Clay

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

Bradford

Kimberly Baker, 61, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 30 for larceny.

David Browning, 59, of Jacksonville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 26 for trespassing.

Laquanteris Butler, 27, of Raiford, was arrested by Bradford deputies on May 1 for arson.

Malachi Davis, 21, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 27 for possession of marijuana.

Tyler Douglas, 32, of Jacksonville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 27 for an out-of-county warrant and driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Ryan Gaskins, 44, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 29 for withholding support and possession of drugs.

Roger Hall, 59, of Brooker, was arrested by Lawtey Police on April 28 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Kenneth Hester, 42, of Tampa, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 30 for fraud-impersonation, driving with a suspended or revoked license,

and an out-of-county warrant.

Joseph Lariscey, 44, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 28 for possession of drug equipment.

Denario Lewis-Martin, 31, of Orlando, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 29 for out-of-county warrants.

Joseph Morrison, 38, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 28 for a probation violation.

Trudy Randolph, 51, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 30 for a probation violation.

Troy Tetstone, 36, of Brooker, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 29 for failure to appear and an out-of-county warrant.

Samantha Truman, 48, of Hampton, was arrested by FHP troopers on April 28 for fleeing and eluding, DUI, possession of drug equipment, driving with a suspended or revoked license, and reckless driving.

Derrick Turner, 44, of Clermont, was arrested by Bradford deputies on May 1 for a probation violation.

Wesley White, 32, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 26 for a probation violation.

Corey Williams, 42, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on May 1 for fleeing and eluding, possession of marijuana, and destroying evidence.

Tara Woodham, 28, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 26 for possession of marijuana.

Union

Colt Bennett, 32, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on May 3 for possession of drug equipment and possession

of cocaine.

Brandon Croft, 41, of Lake City, was arrested by Union deputies on April 29 for driving with a suspended or revoked license, failure to register a motor vehicle, and resisting an officer without violence.

Colby Craft, 27, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on May 4 for felony battery, resisting an officer, and battery on an officer, firefighter, or EMT.

Samantha Dover, 26, of Lake City, was arrested by Union deputies on April 29 for larceny.

Clay

Virginia Bennett, 54, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on April 27 for a probation violation.

David Bollinger, 58, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on May 2 for probation violations.

Nathaniel Cercy, 18, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on April 26 for aggravated assault.

Dustin Edmund, 29, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on April 27 for DUI.

James Hack, 26, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on April 26 for failure to appear.

Joseph Robson, 65, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on April 29 for domestic battery and hindering communication of a 911 call.

Amy Sims, 47, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on May 2 for DUI.

Kayla Turner, 32, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on April 26 for simple battery.



Keegan Yowell (second from left) and Kallie Yowell (second from right) signed letters of intent to play softball at Cuthbert, Georgia's Andrew College. They are seated between their parents, Paula and Paul.

BHS' softball twins will play at Andrew College

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School senior softball players Kallie Yowell and Keegan Yowell signed their letters of intent to play at Cuthbert, Georgia's Andrew College during a May 2 ceremony in the BHS media center.

"I'm really excited and just ready to start a new chapter," Keegan said.

Kallie, who is Keegan's twin sister, said, "I'm stressed about the next journey, but it is very exciting because of all the work I've put in."

Playing college ball is, as you might imagine, a dream come true. So, too, is being able to do it together.

"We've always wanted to stay together," Keegan said, while Kallie added, "I'm really excited because I get to stick with someone I know already. We've

grown together."

Keegan said she likes the community that Andrew College is located in, while Kallie said she likes the fact that the school has a good nursing program and that it's not a big school, allowing for teachers to "fully focus on you in class."

Kallie also added, "The softball coach is super nice and willing to help you learn as you go. They're really nice people."

This past season, Kallie, who played third base, batted .333 for the Tornadoes, scoring 17 runs and finishing third on the team in RBI with 16. She was second on the team in doubles with five.

Keegan, who played shortstop, batted .246 and scored a team-high 23 runs. She had 13 RBI, was third on the team in doubles with four and led the team in stolen bases with eight.

The sisters each had two home runs.

When it comes to their bats as they prepare to adapt to the collegiate level, Kallie said adjusting to the pitching will be a key, while Keegan said she needs to remain positive and "don't stress as much when you're up there."

As for playing in the field, Keegan said her focus is to "give it your all," while Kallie said her key will be to be able to put bad plays behind her.

"If I make an error, don't focus so much on the error and just move on and always know there are more plays," Kallie said.

Kallie admitted it'll probably be a little stressful the first time she steps onto the field as a college player. Keegan said the moment will be "amazing," and believes she won't be nervous, thanks to having Kallie with her.

"I'm not going to be as stressed because I'll have her at my side," Keegan said.



Trenton Klein (second from left) signs his letter of intent to play football at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi. He is seated between his parents, Heather and Danny. His brother, Ayden, is also pictured.

3 UCHS athletes sign in football, cross country

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School celebrated three student-athletes, who truly embodied what it means to be a student-athlete during a signing ceremony for seniors Joseph Harris, Trenton Klein and Ashton Newsome on April 24 in the school's media center.

Harris will go to Lake City's Florida Gateway College to run cross country, while Klein and Newsome will play football at Jackson, Mississippi's Millsaps College and Babson Park, Florida's Webber International University, respectively.

"All three of these young men will graduate with outstanding honors — the highest of honors at UCHS — because they all have a weighted GPA of 4.0 or above," UCHS Principal Julie Denson said.

Athletic Director/Head Football Coach Andrew Thomas added, "They're just a great example of what a student athlete is — to be able to put their grades first and do those kinds of things to prep themselves for the next level."

Track and Field Coach Scott McDaniel spoke highly of all three as well, saying, "As a coach and as a teacher, all of my interactions with each of them, regardless of the situation, have been wholly positive. It's always been, 'Yes, sir. No, sir. How can I help, sir?'"

Denson reminded the students that they didn't make their journey toward being college student-athletes alone.

"You had coaches, you had

your family, you had friends and you had teachers," Denson said. "Think about those people as you travel along to the next place, and remember: Once a Tiger, always a Tiger. You're always welcome back here."

TK: UCHS Tiger to Millsaps Major

Klein, who's known simply as "TK" to many, said he was unsure of his future, but thanks to a recruiting fair, he became connected with Millsaps and felt right at home. He said he's grateful for the opportunity, adding, "I'd definitely say I'm excited."

He's going to play linebacker, which was one of two starting positions for him at UCHS. Klein was also the Tigers' starting quarterback. He, of course, relayed the play calls from coaches on offense, but he also did the same on defense.

"I don't know if a lot of people understand the intestinal fortitude you have to have to go out and play every snap at quarterback and middle linebacker — the mental toll it takes on you to make all the calls on offense and defense," UCHS Assistant Coach Riley Reed said.

Reed said coaches needed to tell Klein something only once.

"He's a coach's dream," Reed said, adding, "He made me look good for the past couple of years."

Klein was only listed as 5-11, 188 pounds on UCHS' 2024 roster, but his size didn't dictate how well he played. He completed more than 60 percent

of his passes as a senior, throwing for 24 touchdowns and 1,400-plus yards. He also averaged 9.5 yards per rushing attempt, which led the team.

On defense, he led the Tigers with more than 80 tackles.

He was the team's leading tackler his junior season as well.

"What TK was able to do the past two years was really kind of unbelievable," Thomas said. "He's not this freakish athlete, by any means. He's not the fastest guy or the strongest guy or the biggest guy on the field, but he's so smart and plays so hard."

Klein admitted how he stacked up compared to other players never crossed his mind when he was on the field.

"I don't really think a whole lot when I'm out there," he said. "I get the call and just do what I have to do."

Regarding his play at linebacker, he said, "My thought right before the play is, 'Don't let that guy beat you. Be the guy.'"

It paid off for the Tigers, with Thomas saying, "We went as far as Trenton wanted to take us. We had a lot of success with him the last few years."

Klein's play not only helped the Tigers, but helped him become the 10th football player in UCHS history to earn first-team All-State honors twice. That puts him on a list with such greats as C.J. Spiller, Gerard Warren and Andrew Zow.

"I feel like I played to the best of my ability," Klein said. "Just hearing the names (that came) before me really means a lot. It

See SIGN, page 11

FIRE

Continued from page 1

A commitment from Brooker would convince the county to get started on the fire station, Carter said, since that is what the town was waiting for. There must be mutual agreement, he said.

Brooker's next meeting and chance to decide is May 13.

With an earlier legislative session beginning in the fall, making fast progress on the station could convince legislators to provide the additional funding for the station, or so the county hopes.

"My desire is that we start as soon as possible with the \$500,000 that we have to make sure that they understand that we're serious about building this fire station," said Commissioner Andrews, appealing to the rest of the board for support. "I would like to see a foundation. I would like to see walls put up by time they go back in session."

Carter indicated plans for the station had already been scaled back. Riddick suggested they begin with the living quarters and wait to build a station with bays for the trucks until full funding is secured. A pole barn could be used to keep them partially covered in the meantime. That won't help the insurance ratings for the town or surrounding area, but it would provide them a faster emergency response.

The county's first public hearing during which it will set the rate for the fire assessment will be July 1.

RJE summer camp applications

Applications for the Concerned Citizens of Bradford County's Summer Day Camp are available May 5 through June 5. Applications may be picked up from Starke City Hall, the public library, Meridian and the RJE Complex (Monday and Tuesday, 4-6 p.m. only at RJE). Limited scholarships are available to all who are eligible on a first come, first serve basis.

The camp runs June 9 to July 3 for kids in kindergarten through eighth grade from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day. In addition to free breakfast and lunch, there will be math and language labs, arts and crafts, healthy cooking and baking classes, athletics, and more.

Please contact one of the listed CCBC members for more information: Sherry Williams at 352-278-3540, Alica McMillian at 904-966-1100 or Glenda Ruise 904-769-1691.

Farmers, ranchers, producers invited to conservation working group

Calling all Bradford and Union farmers, ranchers and producers. The USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service wants to hear from you. Join Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District and NRCS to provide input on Bradford and Union county funding priorities at the Local Working Group meeting on Wednesday, May 14, at 6 p.m. at the Bradford County Extension Office, 2266 N. Temple Ave. in Starke.

No one knows the community's needs better than locals attuned to the land, water and natural resources they manage. Agricultural producers, forest landowners, agribusinesses, natural resource managers and anyone interested in conservation practices is invited to provide input.

Local Working Groups help NRCS prioritize natural resource concerns and criteria for conservation activities and programs. All are welcome in-person, and a zoom link is available by emailing a.morie.BSWCD@gmail.com.



Russ WADE
Attorney at Law

620 East Main Street
Lake Butler, FL 32054
(Across from Subway Plaza)

386-496-9656

Probate • Family • Wills • Adoption • Litigation • Corporate

Legal Notices

Legals for the week of May 8, 2025

BRADFORD

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA CASE NUMBER: 04-2025-CA-162 DALE R. BRIDWELL, Plaintiff,

Vs. UNKNOWN HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, CREDITORS, TRUSTEES, BENEFICIARIES, AND ANY OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER, OR AGAINST JOHN EDWARD ADAMS, deceased, Defendants.

NOTICE OF ACTION
TO ABOVE NAMED DEFENDANTS: YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED OF THE filing of a Complaint against you to quiet title to the following described property in Bradford County, Florida: Lots One (1), Two (2) and Three (3) of Block "A" of Block Eight (8) of Temple's Addition to the Town of Starke, being in the Northwest Quarter (NW 1/4) of Northeast Quarter (NE 1/4) and Northeast Quarter (NE 1/4) of Northwest Quarter (NW 1/4) of Section 28, Township 6 South, Range 22 East, Bradford County, Florida. TPN: 03604-0-0000

You are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, on M. Aaron Dukes, the Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is Post Office Box 328, Lake Butler, Florida 32054, on or before the 5th day of June, 2025, and file the original with the Clerk of this Court either immediately before service on Plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint. DATED this 23rd day of April, 2025.

DENNY THOMPSON
Clerk of the Circuit Court
By: KANETRA JENKINS
Deputy Clerk

Published in: Bradford County Telegraph On (dates): May 1, 2025, May 8, 2025, May 15, 2025, & May 22, 2025

5/1 4tchg 5/22-BCT

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA CASE NO. 2024 CC 000496 FLORIDA CREDIT UNION, Plaintiff,

vs. JOHN JOHNS, ZENAIDA JOHNS, AND LNVV FUNDING, LLC., Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE
Notice is hereby given that the Bradford County Clerk of Court will on June 26, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. EST, at the Bradford County Courthouse, 945 North Temple Avenue, Starke, Florida 32091 offer for sale and sell at public outcry, one by one, to the highest bidder for cash, the property located in Bradford County, Florida, as follows:

A parcel of land lying in the NW1/4 of the SW1/4 of Section 12, Township 6 South, Range 20 East, Bradford County, Florida; said parcel being more particularly described as follows:

Commence at the Southwest corner of said NW1/4 of SW1/4 and run North 86 degrees 49 minutes 51 seconds East, along the Southerly boundary thereof, 95.45 feet to a concrete monument found at an intersection with the Easterly boundary of the right of way of SW 132nd Avenue (a county graded road) for the POINT OF BEGINNING. From the Point of Beginning thus described, run North 02 degrees 30 minutes 22 seconds West, along said Easterly boundary, 208.71 feet to a set iron rod; thence North 84 degrees 47 minutes 25 seconds East, 229.17 feet to a set iron rod; thence South 02 degrees 30 minutes 22 seconds East, 216.87 feet to an iron rod set on said Southerly boundary; thence South 86 degrees 49 minutes 51 seconds West, along said Southerly boundary, 228.93 feet to the Point of Beginning.

Together with a 2001 Mobile Home ID# FLHML2B155724907A and FLHML2B155724907B which is permanently affixed to the lands above described and a such is deemed to be a fixture and a part of the real estate.

pursuant to the Final Judgment of Foreclosure entered on April 17, 2025, in the above-styled cause, pending in said Court.

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the lis pendens must file a claim with the Clerk no later than the date the Clerk reports the funds as unclaimed.

s/ Stephen Orsillo
Stephen Orsillo (FL Bar # 89377) of Sorenson Van Leuven, PLLC
Post Office Box 3637
Tallahassee, Florida 32315-3637
Telephone (850) 388-0500/Facsimile (850) 391-6800
creservice@svllaw.com (E-Service E-Mail Address)
Attorneys for Plaintiff

5/8 2tchg 5/15-BCT

NOTICE OF SALE
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Florida Self Storage Facility Act Statutes (Section 83.801 - 83.809); Santa Fe Storage of Waldo. Will sell for CASH to the highest bidder on **Storageauctions.net**

For location at 15540 NE HWY 301, Waldo, County of Alachua, Florida; ending at **2:00 PM on Wednesday, the 21st day of May, 2025**, and continuing day to day thereafter until sold: the household goods and misc. contents of the following:
0B048 James Stanton Perry

5/8 2tchg 5/15-BCT

NOTICE OF SALE
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Florida Self Storage Facility Act Statutes (Section 83.801 - 83.809); Santa Fe Storage of Starke will sell for cash to the highest bidder on **storageauctions.net** for location at 1630 North Temple Ave, Starke, County of Bradford, FL, at **2:00 pm on Wednesday, the 21st day of May, 2025** and continuing day to day thereafter until sold: the household goods and misc. contents of the following:
OD004 Justin Scott
0J040 Earnest Fowler

5/8 2tchg 5/15-BCT

NOTICE OF ENACTMENT OF AN ORDINANCE BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STARKE, FLORIDA

The City of Starke Florida will hold a City Commission Meeting on May 20, 2025 at 5:30 pm at City Hall, 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida 32091 during which the second reading and a vote will occur for the following ordinance:

ORDINANCE NUMBER 2025-08 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STARKE, FLORIDA, REPEALING SECTION 2-92 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, RELATING TO PER DIEM AND TRAVEL EXPENSES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

This ordinance is available for public inspection at City Hall, 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida 32091. Interested parties may appear and have an opportunity to be heard at the meeting with respect to the proposed ordinance.

5/8 1tchg-BCT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING A SPECIAL EXCEPTION AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE CITY OF STARKE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD OF THE CITY OF STARKE, FLORIDA, SERVING AS THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT OF THE CITY OF STARKE, FLORIDA, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT, pursuant to the City of Starke Land Development Code as amended, hereinafter referred to as the Land Development Code, objections, recommendations and comments concerning the special exception, as described below, will be heard by the Planning and Zoning Board of the City of Starke, Florida, serving as the Board of Adjustment of the City of Starke, Florida, at a public hearing on May 19, 2025 at 5:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, in the City Commission Meeting Room, City Hall located at 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida, SE 25-01, a petition by William Jason Buell, to request a special exception be granted as provided for in Section 4-105.B.3(b) of the Land Development Code, to permit a mobile home within an AGRICULTURAL (AGR) zoning district, in accordance with an application dated October 23, 2024 and site plan dated April 21, 2025, to

be located on property described, as follows:

A parcel of land lying in the NE 1/4 of NW 1/4 of Section 29, Township 6 South, Range 22 East, in the City of Starke, Bradford County, Florida; said parcel being more particularly described as follows: Commence at a found axle at the Northeast corner of said Section 29 and run South 87 degrees 57 minutes 24 seconds West, along the Northerly boundary thereof, 668.26 feet; thence South 39 degrees 19 minutes 15 seconds West, 999.21 feet to a found 1/2" iron rod (LB 4012); thence South 00 degrees 26 minutes 14 seconds East, 385.89 feet to a set 1/2" iron rod (LB 4012) for the Point of Beginning. From Point of Beginning thus described run North 86 degrees 34 minutes 58 seconds East, 473.00 feet to a set 1/2" iron rod (LB 4012); thence North 00 degrees 41 minutes 12 seconds West, 18.00 feet to a set 1/2" iron rod (LB 4012); thence North 86 degrees 35 minutes 22 seconds East, 438.35 feet to a set 1/2" iron rod (LB 4012); thence South 01 degree 44 minutes 45 seconds East, 247.88 feet to a found 3/4" iron pipe (NO ID); thence South 86 degrees 35 minutes 20 seconds West, 916.93 feet to a found 1/2" iron rod (LB 4012); thence North 00 degrees 26 minutes 14 seconds West, 230.00 feet to the Point of Beginning.

Containing 5.00 acres, more or less. TOGETHER WITH

30' INGRESS, EGRESS AND UTILITY EASEMENT. A strip of land 30 feet in width in the NE 1/4 of NW 1/4 of Section 29, Township 6 South, Range 22 East, in the City of Starke, Bradford County, Florida; lying within 15 feet on each side of the following described centerline: Commence at a found axle at the Northeast corner of said Section 29 and run South 01 degree 35 minutes 28 seconds East, along the Easterly boundary thereof, 552.69 feet to the Point of Beginning of the centerline of the herein described centerline; thence South 52 degrees 17 minutes 48 seconds, 114.37 feet; thence South 43 degrees 42 minutes 36 seconds West, 118.58 feet; thence South 63 degrees 17 minutes 55 seconds West, 480.34 feet; thence South 57 degrees 24 minutes 56 seconds, 115.58 feet; thence South 70 degrees 16 minutes 11 seconds West, 168.54 feet; thence South 00 degrees 41 minutes 12 seconds East, 112.29 feet to the point of terminus of the herein described centerline. Containing 0.76 acres, more or less. All said lands containing 5.76 acres.

At the aforementioned public hearing, all interested parties may appear to be heard with respect to the petition. Copies of the petition are available for public inspection at the City of Starke Zoning Department, located at 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida, during regular business hours.

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

Persons with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact the Office of the City Clerk at 904.964.5027 or via the Florida Relay Service 800.955.8770 (voice) or 800.955.8771 (TTY) at least 48 hours prior to the date of the public hearing.

5/8 1tchg-BCT

The City of Starke Commission will hold a workshop with the Downtown Merchants on May 20, 2025 at 4:30 pm. The workshop will be held at 209 North Thompson Street in the Commission Room. Public participation is welcomed.

5/8 1tchg-BCT

NOTICE OF ENACTMENT OF AN ORDINANCE BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STARKE, FLORIDA

The City of Starke Florida will hold a City Commission Meeting on May 20, 2025 at 5:30 pm at City Hall, 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida 32091 during which the second reading and a vote will occur for the following ordinance:

ORDINANCE NUMBER 2025-09 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STARKE, FLORIDA, REVISING CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE III, DIVISION

4, SECTION 2-169 SALARY OF THE CITY CLERK; AMENDING THE ANNUAL SALARY OF THE CITY CLERK; ALLOWING THE FUTURE SALARY OF THE CITY CLERK TO BE AMENDED VIA RESOLUTION; PROVIDING DIRECTION FOR CODIFICATION OF THIS ORDINANCE; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

This ordinance is available for public inspection at City Hall, 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida 32091. Interested parties may appear and have an opportunity to be heard at the meeting with respect to the proposed ordinance.

5/8 1tchg-BCT

COMMISSION MEETING
THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Bradford County Board of County Commissioners will have a board meeting on May 15, 2025, 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.

5/8 1tchg-BCT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CITY OF STARKE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD OF THE CITY OF STARKE, FLORIDA, SERVING ALSO AS THE LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY OF THE CITY OF STARKE, FLORIDA, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT, pursuant to the City of Starke Land Development Code, as amended, hereinafter referred to as the Land Development Code, objections, recommendations and comments concerning an amendment, as described below, will be heard by the Planning and Zoning Board of City of Starke, Florida, serving also as the Local Planning Agency of City of Starke, Florida, at a public hearing to be held on May 19, 2025 at 5:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard in the City Commission Meeting Room, City Hall located at 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida.

Z 25-02, an application by the Bradford County Board of County Commissioners, to amend the Zoning Map of the Land Development Code 1by changing the zoning district from AGRICULTURAL (AGR) to HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (B-3) on the property described, as follows:

A parcel of land lying in Section 21, Township 6 South, Range 22 East, Bradford County, Florida. Being more particularly described as follows: Commence at the Northeast corner of said Section 21; thence South 31°24'00" West 950.00 feet to the centerline of the West track of the Seaboard Airline Railway; thence South 18°00'00" West 1,320.00 feet, along the West track of said Seaboard Airline Railway; thence North 72°00'00" West 1,039.00 feet to the West right-of-way line of U.S. Highway 301 (State Road 200) for the Point of Beginning; thence North 73°26'34" West feet 1,260.00; thence North 16°29'51" East 660.03 feet; thence South 73°28'24" East 660.14 feet; thence South 16°37'26" West 345.25 feet; thence South 73°24'06" East 596.22 feet; thence South 16°35'09" West 314.70 feet to the Point of Beginning.

Containing 14.30 acres, more or less. LESS AND EXCEPT

A parcel of land lying in Section 21, Township 6 South, Range 22 East, Bradford County, Florida. Being more particularly described as follows: Commence at the Northeast corner of said Section 21; thence South 31°24'00" West 950.00 feet to the centerline of the West track of the Seaboard Airline Railway; thence South 18°00'00" West 1,320.00 feet, along the West track of said Seaboard Airline Railway; thence North 72°00'00" West 1,039.00 feet to the West right-of-way line of U.S. Highway 301 (State Road 200) for the Point of Beginning; thence North 73°26'34" West 363.80 feet; thence North 16°35'09" East approximately 314.70 feet; thence South 73°24'06" East 363.80 feet; thence South 16°35'09" West 314.70 feet to the Point of Beginning. Containing 2.63 acres, more or less.

All said lands containing 11.67 acres, more or less.

At the aforementioned public hearing, all interested parties may appear to be heard with respect to the amendment.

Copies of the amendment are available for public inspection at the City Building and Zoning Department, located at 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida, during regular business hours.

5/8 1tchg-BCT

CITY VISIONING PLAN
All residents, businesses, and interested parties are invited to attend an introductory presentation and participate in an open house workshop on the City's Visioning Plan to be held on Wednesday, May 21, 2025, from 11am-1pm at City Hall, located at 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, FL 32091. The City Visioning Plan will develop a framework for the City's long-term goals, set priorities, and outline the steps needed to achieve the vision. This meeting will be an opportunity to discuss your vision for Starke with an additional focus on exploring the opportunities for business vitality and activating the Downtown, following the completion of the 301 Bypass, to create an Arts, Culture, and Entertainment District. This plan is a critical step in setting our priorities to unlock future State and Federal funding opportunities. Your input is vital in shaping the direction of this Visioning Plan and ensuring it meets the needs of the community. The meeting location is accessible.

5/8 1tchg-BCT

UNION

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

CIVIL DIVISION
CASE NO.: 24000047CAAXMX
PHH MORTGAGE CORPORATION
PLAINTIFF,

VS.
REBECCA M. NETTLES, AGNES R. HODGES A/K/A AGNUS RUTH HODGES A/K/A AGNUS RUTH SAPP F/K/A AGNES R. COMBS, ROBIN CAPRICE JOHNS ET AL., DEFENDANTS.

RE-NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

(Please publish in Union County Times)
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Order Rescheduling Foreclosure Sale dated the 22nd day of April, 2025, and entered in Case No. 24000047CAAXMX, of the Circuit Court of the Eighth Judicial Circuit in and for Union County, Florida, wherein PHH Mortgage Corporation is the Plaintiff and AGNES R. HODGES A/K/A AGNUS RUTH HODGES A/K/A AGNUS RUTH SAPP F/K/A AGNES R. COMBS, REBECCA M. NETTLES, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF REBECCA M. NETTLES, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF ROBIN CAPRICE JOHNS, ROBIN CAPRICE JOHNS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON BEHALF OF THE SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND UNKNOWN TENANT IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY N/K/A LORETTA MERRITT are defendants. Kelly Hendricks Rhoades as the Clerk of the Circuit Court shall sell to the highest and best bidder for cash in the lobby of the Union County Courthouse, 55 West Main Street, Lake Butler, FL 32054 at 11:00 A.M on the **26th day of June, 2025**, the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment, to wit: Part of the South 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 15, Township 5 South, Range 20 East, Union County, Florida, containing one-acre, more or less, as defined by four concrete monuments. These monuments are located as follows: Running Southerly along the supposed East boundary of the above 20 acre tract to a monument said to be the Southeast corner thereof, run right through a deflection angle of 86°15'; Thence 163.33 feet to a point, at which turn right through a deflection angle of 48°05'; Thence Northwesterly along this course a distance of 512.00 feet, to a monument, this monument being the East corner monument of the one-acre tract herein described, thence run left through a deflection angle of 89°59'; Thence along this line, being a boundary of the one-acre tract herein described for a distance of 209.00 feet to a monument, being the Southern corner of the one-acre tract herein described, thence turning right through a deflection angle of 90°03'; Thence along this course being a boundary of the one-acre tract herein described, a distance of 210.00 feet to a monument, being the West corner of the aforesaid one-acre tract, thence turning right through a deflection angle of 89°50';

Thence along this course, being a boundary of the one-acre tract herein described, a distance of 210.00 feet to a monument, being the North corner of the aforesaid one-acre tract, and thence turning right through a deflection angle of 90°07'; Thence along this course, being a boundary of the aforesaid one-acre tract, a distance of 210.00 feet to a monument, being the East corner previously mentioned; It being specifically understood the aforesaid monuments are and remain the boundaries of the parcel herein described. AND Commence at the Northwest corner of the South 1/2 of Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4, Section 15, Township 5 South, Range 20 East, Union County, Florida, and run North 84° 30' 27" East along the North line of said South 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4, 146.89 feet, thence South 44° 32' 28" East, 420.69 feet to the point of beginning, thence South 42° 52' 17" West 122.00 feet, thence South 47° 08' 43" East, 210.00 feet, thence North 42° 52' 17" East, 210.00 feet, thence North 47° 08' 43" West 210.00 feet, thence South 42° 52' 17" West, 88.00 feet to the Point of Beginning. IF YOU ARE A PERSON CLAIMING A RIGHT TO FUNDS REMAINING AFTER THE SALE, YOU MUST FILE A CLAIM WITH THE CLERK NO LATER THAN THE DATE THAT THE CLERK REPORTS THE FUNDS AS UNCLAIMED. IF YOU FAIL TO FILE A CLAIM, YOU WILL NOT BE ENTITLED TO ANY REMAINING FUNDS. AFTER THE FUNDS ARE REPORTED AS UNCLAIMED, ONLY THE OWNER OF RECORD AS OF THE DATE OF THE LIS PENDENS MAY CLAIM THE SURPLUS.

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Persons with a disability who need any accommodation in order to participate should call Jan Phillips, ADA Coordinator, Alachua County Courthouse, 201 E. University Ave., Gainesville, FL 32601 at (352) 337-6237 within two (2) working days of your receipt of this notice; if you are hearing impaired call (800) 955-8771; if you are voice impaired, call (800) 955-8770.

Dated this 24th day of April, 2025. Kelly Hendricks Rhoades
Clerk of The Circuit Court
By: C. HOLLINGSWORTH
Deputy Clerk
Submitted by:
Miller, George & Suggs, PLLC
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF
210 N. University Drive, Suite 900
Coral Springs, FL 33071
DESIGNATED PRIMARY E-MAIL
PURSUANT TO FLA. R. JUD. ADMIN
2.516
ESERVICE@MGS-LEGAL.COM

5/1 2tchg 5/8-UCT

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO REGISTER FICTITIOUS NAME
Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes, notice is hereby given that the undersigned: TIFFANY DICKS 9835 SW 150th Run, Lake Butler, FL 32054, SOLE owner, doing business under the firm name of: CURIOUS SCHOLARS, 9835 SW 150th Run, Lake Butler, FL 32054 intends to register fictitious name under the aforesaid statute. Dated this 1st day of MAY A.D., 2025, in UNION COUNTY.

5/8 1tchg-BCT

30 Day Notice of Abandoned Property

Attention Heirs of VICTOR ARTHUR DONNELL (hereafter referred to as "tenant"), of , or any and all other tenants of one or more abandoned residential property owned by IVAN FOWLER 6349 SW CR 241 Lake Butler, Florida 32054. When tenant died and vacated the leased premises at 6349 SW CR 241 Lake Butler, Florida 32054, some or all of the tenant's personal property remained. If you own any of this property, you may claim it 6349 SW CR 241 Lake Butler, Florida 32054.

This Property is believed to be worth less than \$500, and accordingly, it may be kept, sold, or destroyed without further notice if you fail to reclaim it by June 9, 2025. Unless you pay the reasonable cost of storage and advertising, if any, and take possession of the property to which you are entitled to, the property may be disposed of pursuant to §715.109. The property will be disposed of starting June 9, 2025.

To make arrangements, please contact IVAN FOWLER c/o attorney M. Aaron Dukes, Esq. 352-225-1654 or aaron@dukeslegal.com

5/8 2tchg 5/15-UCT

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Guage Barry (third from right) signed a letter of intent to play baseball at Florida State College at Jacksonville. Pictured to his right are his brother, Cooper, his stepmother Missy and his father, Jesse. To his left are his mother, Cindy, and stepmother Aimee Kalb.

KHHS' Barry signs to play at FSCJ

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School senior Guage Barry signed a letter of intent to play baseball at Florida State College at Jacksonville during a May 2 ceremony in the KHHS cafeteria.

"It's just surreal," said Barry, adding, "I'm just ready to get to work."

He's already been working, putting himself into a position to pitch at the next level. Keystone Head Coach Chris Roach said the team didn't really need Barry in the batting order two years ago, so Barry primarily pitched only.

Barry said that upset him at first, but he knew he had a job to do, so he went out and did it.

He did it pretty well. As a junior, he had a 7-1 record, pitching a team-high 51.1 innings and finishing second on the team in ERA (2.18) and strikeouts (47).

"I realized some (college) coaches started getting interested in what I could do," Barry said. "I realized I could throw the ball quite hard. I was like, 'I might as well make (pitching in college) a goal.'"

This past season, Barry had a 4-3 record, leading the team in innings pitched (52.1) and strikeouts (54). His ERA of 2.54 was second best on the team.

Roach said Barry has a good fastball and changeup and added that though he does have a curveball, further development of a third pitch will be necessary

at the next level.

The KHHS coach said if Barry can get his velocity into the upper 80s, he'll have a chance to play at a four-year school after FSCJ.

"He's got the tools for it," Roach said.

Barry showed he's more than a pitcher this past season because the Indians did need his bat in the lineup. All Barry did was bat a team-high .420 with 19 RBI. He also earned All-Clay County honors as an outfielder.

"It's a testament to his work," Roach said. "Last year might have been bad coaching on my part not putting him in the outfield."

Though he possesses a strong work ethic, Barry doesn't forget about the joy of playing. In Roach's words, "He's the lefty

who has fun on the mound."

"When the game is intense, he's intense," Roach said, "but he still needs to have fun to be as good as he is. That's why he's going somewhere."

That somewhere turned out to be FSCJ, though he was also looking at such Jacksonville schools as Edward Waters College and Trinity Baptist College.

"I kind of had a love for FSCJ," said Barry, who added that he likes the fact that a former teammate is there in pitcher Austin Musgrove, a 2024 KHHS graduate.

With the way Barry approaches the game, FSCJ seems to be a good fit.

See BARRY, page 12

Indians rally late, but fall 4-3 to Newberry in district final

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

A two-run seventh inning by the Keystone Heights High School softball team tied it up, but the Indians lost 4-3 to top seed Newberry on a bases-loaded hit batter in the bottom of the eighth in the District 5-2A championship game on May 1 in Keystone.

The second seed Indians (9-16) didn't earn the automatic postseason berth that comes with winning a district title, but did receive an at-large bid and will be the seventh-seeded team out of eight in Region 2. Keystone was scheduled to play second seed Trinity Catholic (19-8) in a quarterfinal game on Wednesday, May 7, at 7 p.m. at Trinity. If Keystone won, it will travel to play third seed Melbourne Central Catholic (19-3) or sixth seed Windermere Prep (15-5) in a semifinal game on Tuesday, May 13, at 7 p.m.

Keystone scored the first run in the District 5 title game in the top of the third. Kadence Massey hit a one-out double and scored on a single hit by Amber Wagner. A pop-up to first and a fly out to right left Wagner stranded at second.

Massey, who pitched a complete game, didn't allow a hit in the first three innings, but the Panthers began the fourth with a triple by Gracie Mattson. Malana



Kadence Massey hit a two-run double in the seventh that tied the score and forced an extra inning.

Kennard followed with a double that scored Mattson and evened it up at 1-1.

The inning continued for Newberry, with Kennard advancing to third on a sacrifice bunt by Tristan Layfield and then scoring on a Chloe Jones single. An error allowed Jones to advance to third, setting her up to score on a bunt by Sarah Priestler, putting the Panthers up 3-1.

Massey, who struck out nine, wouldn't allow another hit.

Keystone, which finished with six hits, would have only two in the final four innings, though one was a double by Massey in the seventh that tied the score.

Madi Glinski was hit by a pitch to lead off that inning. After a foul pop-up to the

See KHHS, page 12



Ashton Newsom signs his letter of intent to play football at Webber International University in Babson Park. He is seated between his parents, Ashley and Colleen.

SIGN

Continued from page 9

shows that I can play."

Klein said he'll be going to Millsaps with the mindset that he's going to play, but he knows he's got to continue to make improvements as he transitions to playing at the next level.

"I'm definitely going to have to get in the weight room and get some size on, get a little faster and just study," he said. "Get the play book and know every little thing I can and know every position, just in case they want to move me around."

Klein said it was "awesome" to be able to sign alongside Newsom. The two have played together since they were in Pop Warner.

"Seeing him succeed and the both of us having a chance to play at the next level — it's a great thing," Klein said.

Klein said he and Newsom also helped each other make their dream of playing college football come true.

"I feel like we're always pushing each other in the classroom and on the football field to be better," Klein said.

Now, he's ready to make strides for the Millsaps Majors.

"I'm really excited for it," Klein said.

Newsom to stay in state and become a Webber Warrior

Like Klein, Newsom is set to play linebacker for a college program, taking his talents to Webber International University, which is in Polk County.

"It's unreal," Newsom said. "I've wanted to do this since I was a little kid. Now, finally being here, it's just a big accomplishment. I really enjoyed the process of working every day. It's just a huge sense of accomplishment."

"Work" is a key word when it comes to Newsom.

"I don't know that anybody worked harder than Ashton," Thomas said. "He was an extremely hard worker in the



Joseph Harris signs his letter of intent to run cross country at Florida Gateway College. He is seated between his mother, Patricia, and sister, Rachel.

weight room and, obviously, in the classroom. Probably over four years, I heard about 50 words come out of his mouth. He's one of those leaders whose actions spoke a lot more than his words."

According to Reed, you wouldn't have expected those few words that Newsom spoke to be negative in any way regarding what he was being asked to do by coaches.

"A guy who never complained, never moaned about anything," Reed said. "He'd just put his head down and keep banging."

Newsom is ready to employ that work ethic in an attempt to keep improving and putting himself in position to make an impact at Webber. A lot of that work, he said, needs to happen in the weight room.

"That's what really sets you apart from everybody else," Newsom said. "Some people don't take pride in it, but I really do. I think it's a huge steppingstone in getting to the next level."

That work resulted in Newsom being the Tigers' second-leading tackler this past season behind Klein.

Newsom credited Klein with helping him get the chance to sign with a college, saying, "He's always going to push you to do the best you can. He's my best friend. I love him. He's just a really great guy."

As you can imagine, Newsom was excited to see his friend also

get the chance to play in college.

"I love it," Newsom said. "He really deserves this. He probably works harder than me or just as hard as me."

When asked what it'll feel like when he steps onto the field for the first time as a Webber Warrior, Newsom said, "It's going to be very exciting. I've already watched their spring that, and that was a great experience. I'm really excited."

Harris to run with the FGC Wolves

Even though UCHS doesn't have a cross-country program, Harris is the fourth UCHS student-athlete in the last three years to get a cross-country opportunity in college. He's been a member of the track and field team, running the 800m and 1600m and also competing as a member of the 4x800m relay team.

"I'm excited. I love to run track," Harris said. "Being able to go (to college) for cross country — that's definitely going to be an experience. I'll just love to be able to continue to run in a collegiate program."

It was an opportunity he didn't know he was going to have until approximately a month ago.

"This, overall, has been a very cool experience that I didn't think was ever going to happen," Harris said.

Harris has been running since

he was in fifth grade. As for being a distance runner, he said, "I just wasn't fast. The longer I ran, the faster I got. That's where I fit in. That's what I was best at."

Running long distance is tough, Harris said, describing how in some races he wishes the race was just over.

"After a while, everything kind of goes numb," he said. "I kind of just lock in and get after

it."

McDaniel has seen Harris "get after it" in the latter stages of his races.

"Joseph's last 150 meters — he is emptying the tank," McDaniel said.

Harris said he needs to learn to adapt to running cross country and also "step up his game" against others good enough to earn their chance to run for

Florida Gateway.

McDaniel believes Harris will succeed because of the effort he puts forth.

"I believe that if you try really hard at something, you have to hide from success," McDaniel told Harris, adding, "You better have good camouflage because it's going to find you because of your effort."



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Obituaries

Gilles Clavet

In Loving Memory of Gilles Clavet, Sept. 24, 1941 – April 23, 2025, Gilles Clavet, 83, of Keystone Heights passed away peacefully at his home on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. He was the devoted husband of Angella (Lagasse) Clavet, with whom he shared 62 beautiful years of marriage. Born on Sept. 24, 1941, in St. Basile, New Brunswick, Canada, he was the beloved son of the late Emile and Ida (Cyr) Clavet. He was preceded in death by brothers, Adrian, Thaddeus, and Conrad Clavet; and sisters, Leann, Jeannine, Madeleine, and Claudette. He is also rejoined with his favorite Pomeranian, Coco.

He is survived by his sister, Yolande Plourde; and brother Roland (Germaine Clavet). He leaves behind a family that brought him endless joy: his daughter, Kathy (Jack) Mitsou; and son, Gilles (Karen) Clavet Jr. He was the cherished grandfather of Christina (Joseph) Sipala, Tharanee Mitsou, Jessica Beach, Brittany DeSanto and Tyler DeSanto; and nine great-grandchildren he was proud of. He also leaves behind many loving nieces and nephews; as well as his dear brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, who were like siblings to him, and shared many wonderful memories over the years. A loving husband and a fun, joking grandfather, he brought laughter and warmth into every room. He had a deep love for nature, especially deer and birds which were his favorite animals, and found joy in playing the guitar and listening to bluegrass music. He shared countless bingo nights with the love of his life, Angie, and enjoyed scratch-off tickets and cheering on his favorite wrestling matches. A true sports enthusiast, baseball and hockey held special places in his heart. He was especially proud that his great-grandson, Santo, was playing a sport he loved. He had hoped to one day see him play hockey in person. Gilles left his homeland of Canada at the age of 19 to make a life and living in Connecticut. He lived in Meriden, Connecticut for eight years, East Hartford, Connecticut for 34 years, and then spent the last 19 years enjoying the peaceful life in Keystone Heights. He was a devout Catholic, serving as parishioner and usher at St. Rose Church in East Hartford for 25 years. After moving to Florida, he continued his faithful service as a devoted parishioner at St. William Parish in Keystone Heights. He was also a long-term member of the Knights of Columbus. He served as a 3rd Degree Knights of Columbus for over 30 years in the Connecticut and Florida chapters. For 33 years, he worked as a proud and hardworking truck driver. He was the kind of man who would give the shirt off his back to help someone in need, and his generous spirit earned him many friends over the years. His faith, loyalty, and love for his family defined who he was. In his final days, he was in the wonderful care of his hospice nurses, whose compassion and support brought comfort and peace to him and his family.

Gilles will be remembered for his unwavering love, playful spirit, and big heart. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him. A Memorial Mass will be held at 11 a.m., Monday, May 12, at St. William Catholic Church with Father Jason Xaviour presiding.

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



PAID OBITUARY

Lester L. Griffis

Lester Louis Griffis, 78, of Macclenny passed away Sunday, April 20, 2025, at Haven Hospice in Lake City following a brief illness. He was born Aug. 5, 1947, in Starke to the late Percy and Rosa Griffis. He graduated from Union County High School and honorably served in the United States Navy. He then worked at the Northeast Florida State Hospital in Macclenny until his retirement. He loved animals, especially his little dog "Rusty." Lester is survived by his sister, Mary Juanita Anderson; and a host of nieces and nephews.

His wishes were to be cremated. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

Archer-Milton Funeral Home of Lake Butler has been entrusted with his final arrangements. 386-496-2008. www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY



Trenton Jones

Trent was born on Dec. 25, 1979. He passed away suddenly on Monday, April 28, 2025. He was a beloved husband, father, son, brother, and friend.

He is survived by his wife, Leslie; and his daughters, Shelby and Amber. He is also survived by his mother, Catherine McGrath Souliere; his father, Wayne Jones, and his wife, Teresa; his sister, Carri Jones, and her children, Kyle, Cheyenne, and Joshua; his brother, Gary Jones, his wife, Morgan, and their daughter, Millie; and numerous uncles, aunts, cousins, and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held at The Barn at Double Run, 9400 SE Ninth Ave., Starke, 32091, at 3 p.m. on Sunday, May 18. All family and friends are welcome to attend this celebration.

PAID OBITUARY



Carolyn Mann

On Thursday, April 24, 2025, Carolyn Mann, 83, of Starke passed away at North Florida Regional Hospital. She was born on March 17, 1942, in Bradford County to Warren W. and Regena Pearce Kelly. In her young, adult life, she was talented in cutting and styling hair. She enjoyed traveling and camping with her husband and son. She lived in many places in her lifetime, but in her later years, she returned to Bradford County. She was a hard worker, whether working on her homes or in her yards. As a CNA since 1978, she provided personal care for people at a facility or in their homes. She loved caring for elderly people. She was preceded in death by her parents; ex-husband, Alvin Mann; daughter-in-law, Kathy Mann; brother, Doyle Kelly; brother and sister-in-law, J.B. and Gola Mae Kelly; sister and brother-in-law, Vonziel and Benton Futch; and brother-in-law, Billy Pruitt.

She is survived by her son, Kenneth Mann; granddaughter, Kasey (Shelby) Adkins; three great-grandchildren; sister, Shirley Pruitt; her caregiver niece, Stephanie Pruitt; and several other nephews and nieces.

Interment will be private at Crosby Lake Cemetery at a later date. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to Haven Hospice, 4200 N.W. 90th Blvd., Gainesville 32606.

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



PAID OBITUARY

John Gillenwaters

John Wesley Gillenwaters, 30, of Jacksonville went to his heavenly home on Sunday, May 4, 2025, with his loving family by his side after a tough battle with brain cancer. He was born in Gainesville on March 3, 1995, to Todd Gillenwaters and Melissa Rae Reddish. He attended and graduated from Bradford High School in 2013. After graduation, he moved to Jacksonville, where he worked for Merrill Lynch Management and Financial Services for several years before starting his career in fitness. He always had a passion for fitness and decided to go after his dream of being a personal trainer. He found his love and community at Titan Up Fitness in Nocatee, where he worked for four years. John Wesley was a true treasure, lived life to the fullest, was deeply loved and will be forever missed by all who knew him. He was preceded in death by his paternal grandparents, Frank and Gloria Gillenwaters; and maternal grandparents, Steve and Cathy Backus.

John Wesley is survived by his parents, Todd (Missy) Gillenwaters of Interlachen and Melissa (Barry) Reddish, of Starke; siblings, Lane (Heather) Gillenwaters of Starke, Grant Gillenwaters of Starke, Ryan Patrick of Starke, Jackson (Samantha) Reddish of Starke, Avery Reddish of Starke, Colby Reddish of Starke, Kaylen Chitty (Ryan German) of Dunedin, and Kenly Chitty of Interlachen; nephew, Hudson Gillenwaters; his favorite aunt, Elizabeth Nazworth; along with many extended family members and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Tuesday, May 6, at 2 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Starke with Brother Harry Hatcher, Brother Lane Gillenwaters, Mrs. Elizabeth Nazworth, Mr. Dustin Swain and Mrs. Meredith Franco speaking. The family will receive friends 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. 904-964-5757. Visit www.ferreirafuneralservices.com to sign the family's guest book.



KHHS

Continued from page 11

catcher, Glinski advanced to second on a passed ball before Taylor Buchanan reached on an error. An infield pop-up resulted in the second out before Massey

stepped to the plate and drove an 0-1 pitch into center field to score both Glinski and Buchanan and make it a 3-3 game.

Massey retired the three batters she faced in the bottom of the seventh on a fly out and two straight strikeouts.

In extra innings, the batting

team starts with a runner placed on second. After a strikeout to begin the top of the eighth, Keystone's Wagner, who was on second, was able to move to third on a ground out by Audrey Cisco. An infield pop-up, though, ended the inning.

Newberry began the bottom

of the eighth with a ground out, but a walk drawn by Kennard and a ground ball hit by Layfield loaded the bases. Jones was hit by a pitch on a 1-1 count to force the winning run home.

Massey, Wagner and Bella Cumbo had all of the Indians' hits, with each going 2 for 4.

BARRY

Continued from page 11

"They're a really good ball team, and they're going to

compete no matter what," he said.

That's exactly what Barry is looking forward to. He may be a little nervous when he first steps onto the mound as a college

pitcher, but he'll settle down and do what needs to be done.

"I think I'll have butterflies (at first)," Barry said. "I feel like everybody would, but I'll be out there ready to compete and ready to work."

As he prepares to join a new program, Barry leaves behind one that's had a pretty solid senior class for two straight years. The Indians had two college signees in 2024, while two (and possibly three) other members of this year's senior class will sign to

play at the next level.

Barry said he and his teammates have helped each other get these opportunities.

"We've just always pushed each other, knowing that we all want to go to the next level," he said.

Roach said the two signees in 2024 ended a four-year drought for the KHHS program.

"That's a testament not to the coaches; that's a testament to these guys," Roach said. "It's the work they put in."

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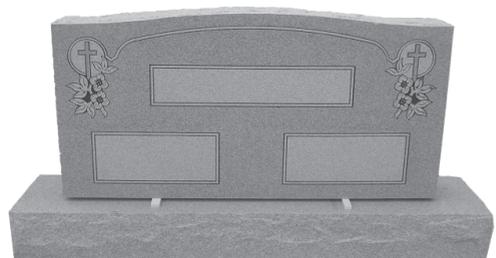
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Tigers swept in region-final series

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School's baseball team saw its season come to an end against Lafayette for the third straight year as the host and top seed Hornets defeated the second seed Tigers 2-1 in the second game of the best-of-three Region 3-Rural championship series on May 6.

The Tigers, who lost 7-2 in the series' first game on May 6, have now lost in the regional finals for the fourth straight season.

Lafayette (24-2) advances to the state semifinals, which will be played on Wednesday, May 14.

Union (14-16) put a runner on with one out when Devin Diggs was hit by a pitch. Diggs, however, was caught stealing second, followed by a strikeout that ended the inning.

The Hornets' Hyatt Richardson led off the bottom of the first by reaching on an error. Brayden Richardson walked before Garrett Taylor hit into a fielder's choice. Brayden Richardson was put out at second, leaving runners at the corners. Taylor was then caught stealing by Union catcher Kacen Thomassen for the inning's second out.

Lafayette, though, would put a run on the board when Ethan Tuten hit a 3-0 pitch into right field for a single that brought Hyatt Richardson home. The Hornets put another runner on when Trevor Byrd was hit by a pitch, but the Tigers got out of the damage without any more damage when Thomassen caught a foul pop-up.

Trenton Klein drew a walk to lead off the Tigers' half of the



Brezdyn Browning drove in two of the Tigers' three runs in the two Region 3-Rural championship games.

second, but a Kendall Carter ground ball turned into a double and reached on an error. Ayden Androlewich then singled into center field, but a fly out left the

The Tigers had two outs and no one on in the fifth when Jake Walker hit a ground ball and reached on an error. Ayden Androlewich then singled into center field, but a fly out left the

See REGION, page 15

RIGHT: Amia Bethea set school records in winning the 100m and placing second in the 200m at the Region 1-2A meet. BELOW: The 4x100m team of Brianna Taylor, Amia Bethea, Holly Halfacre and Faith Sirmones set a school record and placed 10th.



UCHS' Amia Bethea is Region 1-2A 100m champ, qualifies for state in 2 total events

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School's Amia Bethea won the 100m championship and qualified for state in two events at the Region 1-2A track and field meet, which was held May 2 at Pensacola's Pine Forest High School.

The top two finishers in each event automatically qualified for the state finals, which will be held at Jacksonville's University of North Florida Hodges Stadium. At-large state berths will be announced later.

Bethea crossed the finish line in the 100m in 11.93 seconds, which broke her previous school record and put her ahead of Paxon's Jaida Callahan, who had a time of 12.20. Jackson's Danielle Hagans was third at 12.21.

The Bethea-Callahan-Hagans trio took the top three spots in the 200m as well. Hagans won the race with a time of 24.70, while Bethea was runner-up at 24.85 — another UCHS record.

Callahan ran a third-place time of 25.02.

Bethea will run the 100m at state at approximately 11 a.m., while the 200m race will take place at approximately 12:50 p.m.

This will mark Bethea's second straight year competing at state. She qualified last year in the 100m.

Bethea's Region 1 time in the 100m is the eighth-fastest time recorded in all of Class 2A this season.

Bethea teamed up with Holly Halfacre, Faith Sirmones and Brianna Taylor to run the 4x100m relay at the Region 1 meet, with the team posting a 10th-place time of 51.17, which broke the school record of 51.40 set in 2008.

Halfacre earned a 10th-place finish as an individual with a distance of 33 feet, one-quarter of an inch in the triple jump. She also competed in the long jump, finishing 18th with a distance of 15-2.

UCHS softball team earns at-large berth in Region 3-Rural

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

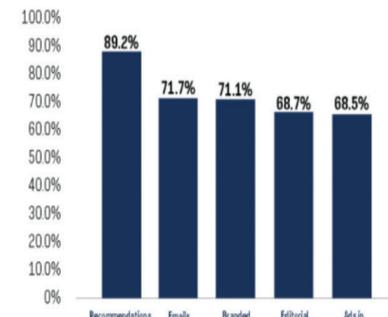
Union County High School will continue its softball season after receiving at-large postseason berths in Region 3-Rural.

The Tigers (15-8) earned the fourth seed and will travel to play top seed Madison County (18-1) in a semifinal game on Thursday, May 8, at 7 p.m. If Union wins, it'll travel to play second seed Branford (18-6) or third seed Fort White (17-6) for the Region 3 championship on Tuesday, May 13, at 7 p.m.

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

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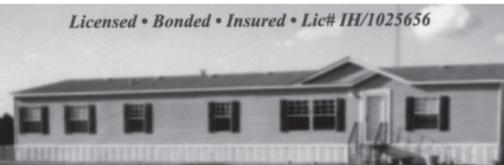
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Bradford flag football and track and field seasons end at regional level

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School's flag football team made history in its last two games, but couldn't do so in another, losing 14-0 to host and top seed Florida High in the Region 1-1A championship game on May 1 in Tallahassee.

Florida High's Danielle White rushed for one score and had two interceptions on defense to help

put the Seminoles (15-3) in the state semifinals, where they'll play Edison, the top seed from Region 4.

The Tornados (14-3) had never won a region-level playoff game prior to this season. As the third seed in Region 1, they defeated sixth seed Keystone Heights 37-9 in a quarterfinal game and then defeated undefeated, second seed University Christian 18-7 in the semifinals.

Bradford was attempting to not only win its first regional title, but also to avenge a 13-7 regular-season loss to Florida High.

Parviele Lee participated in the shot put at the May 2 Region 1-2A track and field meet at Pensacola's Pine Forest High School, finishing 16th with a

distance of 41 feet, 3 inches.

KHHS' Park earns top-10 finish at region

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights track and field athletes competed at the May 2 Region 1-2A meet at Pensacola's Pine Forest High School, with Kaylee Park placing in the top 10 in the 100m hurdles.

Park ran a ninth-place time of 16.72 seconds, giving the Indians their highest finish. She was also a member of the 4x400m relay team, running a 14th-place

time of 4:27.20 with Christine Djavaheri, Olivia Griffin and Ashly McCarthy.

Ryder Thomas finished 12th in the boys 3200m with a time of 10:14.24. He and Hunter Sheppard both ran the 1600m, with Sheppard placing 15th with a time of 4:48.92 and Thomas placing 18th with a time of 4:53.17.

Keystone got two 15th-place finishes, with Griffin running the 800m in 2:32.27 and Baylor Ford getting a distance of 19 feet, 6.75 inches in the long jump.

Xana Briley had a 16th-place distance of 78-4 in the girls javelin, while the Indians got two 20th-place finishes in boys events: Luke Lewis with a distance of 114-11 in the javelin

and Jamari Turner clearing 5-3.75 in the high jump.

BHS football red-seat info

Reserved red seats for Bradford High School's home football games may now be renewed by current seat holders and will go on sale to everyone else beginning on June 3.

Those wishing to renew their red seats may do so through Wednesday, May 14. If renewed before May 14, you will receive free admission to the Tornados' Thursday, May 15, spring game.

New red-seat purchases will take place June 3-Aug. 21. Tickets will be sold at the BHS

front office from 8:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. The cost for the season is \$85.

Starke Kiwanis poker tourney set for May 9

The Kiwanis Club of Starke's next Patsy Welch Memorial Poker Tournament will be held Friday, May 9, at The Downtown Grill. Registration begins at 6 p.m., followed by play at 6:30 p.m.

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2025

KHHS' Conant receives DAR's Betty Warren Scholarship

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School senior Erabelle Conant is this year's recipient of the Betty Warren Memorial Scholarship, presented by the Col. Samuel Elbert Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

Conant, who received \$1,500, has a career goal of becoming a criminal lawyer or diplomatic agent.

The scholarship is named after Betty Eileen Dye Warren, a longtime resident of Starke who was active in First Baptist Church of Starke, the hospital auxiliary and the Col. Samuel Elbert Chapter, NSDAR. She passed away in 2003.

Warren was born in 1924 to Cyril and Rena Warren. She lived in West Virginia with her parents and five sisters. She attended West Virginia University for a

short time before leaving to join the wartime workforce with the FBI in Washington, D.C.

She never had an opportunity to return to school, but she cherished and encouraged lifelong learning.

Warren and her husband, Joseph, moved to Starke, where they started their own family. Warren's son Jeff is a donor to the scholarship fund, as is Lynda Warren Perez, who was married to Warren's son John, who's now deceased.

Jeff Warren attended the May 5 DAR meeting at Keystone Heights' city hall at which Conant was presented as this year's scholarship recipient. He said his mother never enjoyed being the focus of attention, so she probably wouldn't enjoy being in the spotlight every May when the scholarship in her name is presented.

"But we're going to continue

to do it because this was so near and dear to her heart, to help people further their education," Warren said.

Virginia Walkup, the chair of the scholarship committee, said the Col. Samuel Elbert Chapter received seven applicants this year, which she credited scholarship committee member Carole Montgomery for.

"She went around to all the schools," Walkup said. "She's the one who really got us seven applicants by going to the counselors, taking the applications and following up."

Walkup said scholarship committee member Patti Priest created a system in which applicants were scored in the areas of GPA, community service, extracurricular activities, honors and career objectives.

"The scores were very close," Walkup said, "but one applicant — Erabelle Conant — came out



Erabelle Conant is this year's recipient of the Betty Warren Memorial Scholarship, presented by the Col. Samuel Elbert Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. Pictured (l-r) are scholarship committee members Carole Montgomery, Susan Lucas, Leslie Harper, Virginia Walkup and Anne Smoak, Betty Warren's son Jeff, Conant, and scholarship committee members Patti Priest and Judy Jull.

above the rest."

Walkup thanked scholarship committee members

Montgomery, Priest, Leslie Harper, Judy Jull, Susan Lucas and Anne Smoak, saying, "They

spent a lot of time going over the applications. I appreciate it so much."

REGION

Continued from page 13

runners stranded.

Lafayette scored what would be the deciding run in the bottom of the fifth. Lathan Garrard walked and stole second before advancing to third on a Hyatt Richardson single. Brayden Richardson walked to load the bases for Taylor, who ground into a fielder's choice that resulted in the Tigers recording the force out at home. Tuten then stepped to the plate and hit a sacrifice fly to score Hyatt Richardson and make it 2-0.

The top of the sixth again saw the Tigers facing two outs with no one on. Diggs walked after falling behind 0-2 in the count

and then scored on an Erick Lasseter single. A lineup ended the inning, leaving Union trailing 2-1.

A ground out started the top of the seventh, but Union's Jake Walker followed with a line-drive single into center field. Androlevich, after working the count to 2-2, fouled off two straight pitches before taking two straight balls to draw a walk.

That put an end to the night for Lafayette starting pitcher Hyatt Richardson, who allowed four hits and struck out seven. Taylor took to the mound and threw just one pitch, which resulted in a ground ball that led to a game-ending double play.

Diggs started on the mound for the Tigers, giving up just three hits through four innings.

Carter allowed no hits in two innings of relief.

In game one of the series, the Tigers trailed by just one before Lafayette scored four runs in the bottom of the sixth to win 7-2.

Union, which scored both of its runs in the fourth inning, squandered scoring opportunities in the final two innings, putting two on with no outs in the sixth and loading the bases with no outs in the seventh.

Lafayette took a 3-0 lead in the second. After pitcher Lasseter struck out the leadoff batter, the Hornets' Jordan Murphy and Garrard hit back-to-back singles. Murphy tagged up and advanced to third on a fly out to right by Tywan Williamson before Hyatt Richardson hit the first pitch he saw into left for a run-scoring

single. Brayden Richardson and Taylor followed with run-scoring singles before Union got out of the inning on a ground out.

Hornets pitcher Tuten struck out the first two batters in the top of the third, but the Tigers put two on, with Jeffrey Brugh and Lasseter each hitting a single. A fly out to right ended the inning.

The Tigers got on the board in the next inning. With one out and no one on, Carter hit a single. Diggs then drove a 2-1 pitch into right for a double. After a strikeout for the second out, Brezdyn Browning hit a 1-2 pitch into right for a single that scored Carter and Diggs, making it a 3-2 game. The inning ended on a strikeout.

Klein led off the Tigers' half of the sixth with a double into

right field. Carter then took four straight pitches and walked. However, after a fly out, Tuten struck out two straight batters to end the scoring threat.

Tuten, who pitched six innings, finished with seven strikeouts.

Lafayette's Murphy led off the bottom of the sixth and was down 1-2 in the count before taking three straight pitches for balls and reaching on a walk. Dawson Cannon was hit by a pitch before Williamson bunted and reached on an error, which allowed two runs to score. Williamson advanced all the way to third on the play.

The inning continued with Hyatt Richardson hitting an RBI single, but Richardson was later picked off at first by relief pitcher Browning. After

Brayden Richardson hit a fly ball and reached on an error, Union recorded the second out on a fly ball to center fielder Brugh. Tuten was then hit by a pitch to keep the inning going for Trevor Byrd. Byrd fell behind 0-2 in the count before hitting a run-scoring single into center field, putting the Hornets up 7-2.

Evan Roberts was hit by a pitch to lead off the top of the seventh. Brugh and Lasseter both walked to load the bases. Union's next two batters were put out on a foul pop-up to first and a lineup at second, while the third struck out to end the game and leaving all three baserunners stranded.

Lasseter was the only Union batter with multiple hits, going 2 for 3.



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Bradford High awards Golden B awards to 21 seniors

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School presented 21 seniors as this year's Golden B recipients during an April 24 ceremony that also recognized 57 seniors (including those who received the Golden B) as Principal's Achievement honorees.

Golden B awards, which are presented to 10 percent of the graduating class, are determined by a points system based on weighted GPA, number of referrals, daily attendance

percentage, dual-enrollment courses completed, industry certifications achieved, number of extracurricular activities and number of years enrolled at BHS as well as a teacher ranking system based on respect, responsibility and productivity.

Students must be nominated by at least two faculty or staff members.

This year's recipients were Carolyn Adams, Jessica Brown, Kelsey Burgin, Madison Casey, Kendall Cook, Jakiyah Dean, Anaria Early, Nivaiah Foster, Mauriye Hankerson, Desirae

Jones, Carlton Kelliebrew, Hayden Kilby, August Lefevers, Carson McKenzie, Jeremiah McKenzie, Alissa Reddish, Dayton Roberts, Owen Roberts, Caleb Rodriguez, Zaevion Small and Matthew Stafford.

To earn Principal's Achievement, students must have a minimum, weighted GPA of at least 3.5 and be on track to graduate and exemplify the five pillars at BHS: Present, Respectful, Responsible, Productive and Safe. Number of discipline referrals is also taken into account.

Besides the Golden B recipients, those who earned Principal's Achievement were Daniel Banda, Drake Benjam, Skyla Buonacore, Lorali Cantu, Cayden Carter, Seth Clemons, Jake Degeus, Kaylee Devore, Leah Durbin, Jaleel Easley, Jacob Ferguson, Ella Hense, Katira Hinson, Mabel Karinen, Trace Kite, Jillian Lee, Allie McFarland, Jalisia McMillian, Jordan Norman, Alysia Rentz,



Bradford High School's 2024-25 Golden B recipients are: (front, l-r) Carolyn Adams, Nivaiah Foster, Jakiyah Dean, Matthew Stafford, Desirae Jones, Alissa Reddish, Madison Casey, Kelsey Burgin, (middle, l-r) Hayden Kilby, Kendall Cook, Caleb Rodriguez, Carson McKenzie, Carlton Kelliebrew, August Lefevers, (back, l-r) Mauriye Hankerson, Dayton Roberts, Jeremiah McKenzie, Owen Roberts, Zaevion Small, Jessica Brown and Anaria Early.



D'on Jeffers, a Golden B recipient in 2010, shared her life story and encouraged students to discover God's purpose for their lives.

Garrison Ritch, Journie Keegan Yowell.

Bradford County Superintendent of Schools Will Hartley congratulated students on their honors and challenged them to continue striving to do their best.

"Just remember: They won't be giving you extra credit in

college for those (awards)," Hartley said. "Your boss won't be giving you a Golden B bonus, but the attributes that brought you here today in receiving those awards are the things that will make you successful in life."

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4 receive Dr. Benjamin Franklin Recognition Day scholarships

Keirston Brooks, Kendall Cook, Charnissa McCray and Alysia Rentz were this year's recipients of Dr. Benjamin Franklin Recognition Day Scholarships, which were awarded by Lawtey's Philadelphia Missionary Baptist Church on April 27.

Franklin, the scholarship fund's namesake, was a member of Philadelphia Missionary Baptist Church.

The scholarships are awarded to students with an interest in medical/health professions.

Applicants were required to write an essay on their goals, objectives and need for financial assistance.

Keirston Brooks

Brooks, a freshman at Florida State College at Jacksonville who plans to eventually transfer

to Jacksonville's University of North Florida to earn a degree in Biomedical Science, wrote in her essay that "financial support is crucial in helping me achieve my dreams."

"My mother, a strong and inspirational woman, has always done her best to provide for me and my siblings as a single parent," Brooks wrote. "However, the financial burden of college is challenging. Despite working to contribute to my education, I often fall short, struggling to cover the costs from one semester to the next. Receiving this scholarship would not only ease that burden, but also allow me to stay focused on my studies and continue striving toward my goal of becoming a trauma surgeon."

Her career goal was inspired by reading Maya Angelou's "Phenomenal Women" at the

age of 14, which taught her to always hold her head high and that her goals would be reached by following her heart.

"Angelou's words taught me that being phenomenal is not about fitting into societal expectations, but about embracing one's uniqueness, strength and determination," Brooks wrote. "As a young, Black woman with dreams of entering the medical field, I have often faced doubts — both external and internal — about my ability to succeed in such a challenging profession. However, 'Phenomenal Women' reminded me that my confidence, my perseverance and my passion are what make me extraordinary. If I believe in myself, I can achieve anything."

"Maya Angelou's life story also serves as a powerful example of resilience. Despite



Keirston Brooks



Kendall Cook



Alysia Rentz

facing adversity, she never allowed circumstances to define her future. Her work as a writer, poet and activist broke barriers and empowered countless individuals, including me. Like Angelou, I have learned to hold my head high, recognizing that my dreams are valid and attainable. Her message of self-worth and determination has fueled my ambition to become a trauma surgeon."

The desire to become a trauma surgeon is rooted in Brooks' passion for helping others in their most-vulnerable moments.

"I want to be the person who provides life-saving care, who offers hope in moments of despair and who makes a tangible difference in people's lives," Brooks wrote.

Brooks also wants to inspire others to pursue their dreams, just as Angelou inspired — and continues to inspire — her.

"Maya Angelou once said, 'If you're always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be.' I refuse to be limited by expectations," Brooks wrote. "I am determined to push boundaries, overcome obstacles and achieve greatness. I am a phenomenal woman, and I am ready to make my mark in the world of medicine."

Kendall Cook

Cook, who will graduate this month from Bradford High School, has been working and saving money for college. She plans to continue to work while in college and wrote that the Dr. Benjamin Franklin Recognition Day Scholarship will help her toward her goal of not owing money after college.

"I plan to work one or two jobs full-time to hopefully cover most, if not all, of my tuition," Cook wrote. "The loans I take out to help fund my college I will try to pay off within six months of graduation, so they don't accumulate interest. For this, I have to be disciplined and maintain self-control in the ways that I spend my money."

Her plan to earn a degree in Radiology at Santa Fe College was inspired by an injury she sustained as a cheerleader. She described the physical pain as "significant," but added that "the emotional and mental toll this would take on me was more remarkable."

"I was scared of what the outcome would be and what the recovery process would look like," Cook wrote. "This led to me getting my first X-ray and MRI. Seeing the big machines and quiet, dark rooms was intimidating, but to the radiology staff, this was their safe space, where they could use their knowledge and technology to provide the most detailed insights that were crucial to my recovery.

To me, I thought I would just be another patient, but to them, I was a priority and treated with the utmost care.

"During this time of pain and uncertainty, it was refreshing to have such positivity and kindness surrounding me. This sparked an interest in me."

Cook realized radiology is more than capturing images and examining them; it's about "providing patients with the care they need in their hardest times."

"Through what I thought was one of the most challenging periods of my life was actually the inspiration that fed my desire to help others," she wrote. "Going to college means more than just getting a paycheck to me. It means continuing my education and living my passion of helping others. With this scholarship, it will not only help fund my education, but help lift the weight of financial burden off of me so I can put more toward my education."

Charnissa McCray

McCray, who is balancing work, school and a family, described the opportunity to apply for the Dr. Benjamin Franklin Recognition Day Scholarship as "a blessing."

"I am a wife and mother of five children," she wrote. "I'm currently employed full-time as a certified nursing assistant and in school full-time. My schedule is currently full, with no days off since school started, but I won't complain. The wait is almost over. I'll be praising God through the process until I get to the finish line of completing the nursing program."

McCray is currently working toward becoming a licensed practical nurse and would like to continue going to school and become a registered nurse.

Through her journey, she plans to learn as much as she can about the profession and about the people who'll be in her care.

"My student nursing objectives are to expand my knowledge of all different cultures and healthcare systems, enabling me to provide culturally competent care to diverse patient populations," McCray wrote. "I would like to develop my ability to work effectively as part of a multidisciplinary team, collaborating with the physicians, therapists and other healthcare professionals. I would like to improve my time-management and organizational skills, ensuring efficient and effective patient care."

McCray has been working extra shifts to support her household, but added that limits the amount of time she can devote to her studies and sleep.

"I've been praying for financial support so I can pull back from working extra shifts, so I could

put more focus on my studies and passing exams to have a greater opportunity of getting through the nursing program," McCray wrote. "Financial assistance would be a blessing for me and my family."

Prayer is something she's done throughout her educational journey, and she plans to continue to rely upon God.

"I constantly have to remind myself that to whom much is given, much is required, keeping my mind on Christ Jesus to keep my mind and heart balanced in these seasons of my life," McCray wrote.

Alysia Rentz

Rentz will graduate this month from Bradford High School and wants to "set a standard that my younger siblings will look up to." The oldest of three children said the Dr. Benjamin Franklin Recognition Day Scholarship would help her do that.

"Being selected for this scholarship would be a financial blessing and would take away the financial burden that exists from paying for college," Rentz wrote. "One of my long-term goals is to graduate college without having to take out student loans. Being knowledgeable about financial decisions is a key strategy for being successful in life and would prevent hardship in the future."

Rentz's current goal is to earn a bachelor's degree in Nursing, with the first step toward that goal occurring as a student at Santa Fe College.

Her family served as the inspiration to take this particular journey.

"Having the determination and drive to pursue a degree in the health field stems from my background of growing up in a family that always looked out for the well-being of not only family members, but everyone that one encounters," Rentz wrote. "I have witnessed empathy shown to others, resilience, where I have personally learned how to manage stressful situations, advocacy of knowing when to speak up for myself and others and compassion, knowing when individuals just need to know that they genuinely matter to someone."

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Bradford High School seniors who earned Principal's Achievement were (alphabetical order) Carolyn Adams, Daniel Banda, Drake Benejam, Jessica Brown, Skyla Buonacore, Kelsey Burgin, Lorali Cantu, Cayden Carter, Madison Casey, Seth Clemons, Kendall Cook, Jakiyah Dean, Jake Degeus, Kaylee Devore, Leah Durbin, Anaria Early, Jaleel Easley, Jacob Ferguson, Nivaiah Foster, Mauriye Hankerson, Ella Hense, Katira Hinson, Desirae Jones, Mabel Karinen, Carlton Kelliebrew, Hayden Kilby, Trace Kite, Jillian Lee, August Lefevers, Allie McFarland, Carson McKenzie, Jeremiah McKenzie, Jalisia McMillian, Jordan Norman, Alissa Reddish, Alysia Rentz, Garrison Ritch, Dayton Roberts, Owen Roberts, Caleb Rodriguez, Journie Sampson, Zaevion Small, Blakeleigh Smith, Brayden Smyth, Cody Spratlin, Matthew Stafford, Brooklyn Stephens, Chadsity Stevens, Summer Sutton, Saniya Thompson, Savanna Trollinger, Kaylah Vargas, Reese Wainwright, Daniece Westberry, Amber Wynn, Kallie Yowell and Keegan Yowell.

HONORS

Continued from page 16

"Continue to be you. Do all the things that got you here today, and you will be extremely successful."

Hartley also took the time to recognize parents, grandparents, guardians and anyone else who helped support the day's honorees.

"The thing we see so often in education is our students who are successful have people behind them who really hold them accountable, who are there for them when they need them and who push them to be their best," Hartley said.

Bradford County Education Foundation President Cheryl Canova offered some advice to the students, saying, "Find something you love to do and are passionate about and figure out a way to make a living doing it. This will bring you true happiness. I promise."

The Bradford County Education Foundation, an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization that supports the county's schools, sponsors the annual Golden B/Principal's Achievement ceremony and reception.

Find your purpose to experience success

D'on Jeffers, a 2010 BHS graduate and Golden B recipient, shared her life story as the event's featured speaker. She began by directing the students and everyone else in attendance to refer to the back of the programs they received, upon which the following was printed: Blessed is the person, indeed, who in this life can find a purpose that can fill their days and goals to fill their mind; this is your day — a world to win, great purpose to achieve; accept the challenge of your goals, and in yourself believe

Jeffers, who then proclaimed that Jesus Christ is first in her life, receiving a round of applause in the process, shared the Bible verse Jeremiah 29:11 (New Living Translation): For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

"I can stand here confidently this morning and tell you I am not who I am without Christ," Jeffers said.

What Jeffers needed to do was find out who Christ wanted her to be. She said she saw herself being in a type of ministry, but admitted, "I didn't know exactly how God wanted to use me. I struggled with the idea of going to college because I was like, 'I don't know if there's any college that can provide me with the tools necessary for me to fulfill whatever it was that God was giving me.'"

However, Jeffers said she knew she had to do something, so she enrolled at Santa Fe College. She later transferred to Tallahassee Community College.

"I wanted to kind of spread my wings, do something different in a new city," she said.

Jeffers said she found herself



Carolyn Adams, who earned a Golden B along with Principal's Achievement, sang the national anthem and led the crowd in the pledge of allegiance.

at a crossroads because, as she put it, "Life will life."

In other words, life happens, and what happened in Jeffers' life was a pregnancy that resulted in the birth of her son, Josiah. Jeffers admitted she was embarrassed at first about getting pregnant and stopped going to classes.

"I didn't know what to do," she said. "I was stuck. I ended up coming back home so I could care for my infant."

Jeffers knew she needed a job to care for her son and take care of life's other responsibilities, so she went to work for Walmart. Eventually, she went to work as the receptionist at Bradford Middle School after her mother, who works in the school system, inquired if there were any openings.

The BMS job was one Jeffers held for seven years. During that time, she went back to school, taking classes at night, while her mother cared for Josiah, and earning her AA degree at Santa Fe.

"I was incredibly proud, and I was so done," Jeffers said. "Again, God had other plans."

Those plans were to continue going to school. Jeffers took advantage of a program offered through the North East Florida Educational Consortium to earn a bachelor's degree online from the University of Florida — all while still working full-time and fulfilling the commitments of a mother.

"Please be advised that this was not an easy journey," Jeffers said. "This was not easy, but I knew that the opportunity that afforded to me — I had to take it, and I had to change the trajectory of my life for my son."

She earned her degree in Education and began teaching at BMS.

It was another step on the way to reaching God's purpose in her life.

Jeffers took a job as an academic coach in Santa Fe College's Upward Bound program. Also, she returned to school again, though she thought for sure she was done after earning her bachelor's degree. She's now taking classes for free through an opportunity for Santa Fe employees and is in the midst of working toward her master's degree.

"Now, I know it sounds crazy to do all this as a single parent," Jeffers said. "It absolutely is, but I assure you that it is nothing but the grace of God, and it is

nothing but His purpose for my life."

Jeffers told the assembled students that everything and everyone made by God has a purpose.

"You have to find what you are purposed for," Jeffers said. "Everybody's purpose is going to be different."

Success, Jeffers said, will be defined by that purpose and not necessarily by accomplishments. She explained that accomplishments mean nothing if you're not a good person.

"We have many people who have degrees...but they don't have character," she said. "They don't have integrity. They step on people to get to the top. That's not success."

Jeffers encouraged students to "wake up every day and be a great person" and to "give back to the world."

"Be a great person," Jeffers said. "Be a person worthy of being followed. Set the example. Set the standard."



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