

Bradford County Telegraph

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Shooting suspect at pop-up party arrested

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

LAKE BUTLER — The Union County Sheriff's Office said it has identified the man who shot an attendee of a June 3 pop-up party at Lakeside Park, and the defendant is now in the Union County jail.

The agency said Troy Carter Goodman II, 18, of Chiefland fired multiple rounds at the victim, causing injuries to the victim's abdomen and buttocks. Since the shooting, the victim has undergone two surgeries and remains hospitalized as of press time.

The defendant was arrested for aggravated battery with a deadly weapon.

Investigators tracked the Chiefland resident to a Madison

County construction site.

Union Sheriff's Capt. Lyn Williams said good investigative work led to the defendant's capture.

"We had it narrowed down to four counties, and we just kept at it," Williams said. "We pulled him off the job site. That's why he is wearing the reflective vest in the photo."

Williams said Goodman and the victim argued at a football game, and the dispute carried over to the June 3 shooting. The Capt. said he did not know the date or place of the original argument.

Williams added that more arrests are coming from the gathering of more than 1,000 people, mainly from Alachua County.



Goodman. Photo: Union County Sheriff's Office

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WORTH NOTING

Church of God food distribution

Starke Church of God by Faith and Farm Share plan a food distribution on Thursday, June 15, from 10-11:30 a.m. The church is located at 730 Old Lawley Road in Starke. This distribution is open to Bradford County residents on the first and third Thursday of the month.

Starke police sergeant resigns, officer suspended

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE—A Starke police sergeant resigned, and an officer has been suspended as the department investigates the pair's actions in a March arrest.

Police Major Barry Warren said Sgt. Moses Bellamy resigned on Friday, June 9, and Patrolman Jay Raulerson was put on administrative leave after a lawyer for James Baxley complained about the officer's actions.

James Alfred Baxley, 34, of Sparr, was arrested by Starke police on March 5 for aggravated battery and assault.

According to an arrest report, reporting Officer Raulerson drove to the Bradford County Sheriff's office due to a report of a disturbance.

Raulerson wrote that when he arrived at the sheriff's office, the defendant was screaming in front of the building.

According to a body camera recording, Bellamy put the defendant in the back of Raulerson's vehicle, and the pair spoke to Baxley's mother.

The defendant's mother told the officers that although her son claimed in a 911 call that he threatened her, he did not. She added, however, that if the assault charge would assist police in getting her son medical attention, she would attest to it.

"Do you think he's on something?" Bellamy asked the mother.

"I know he's on something," she replied. He's got to be. He's on drugs. I know that."

Raulerson wrote that he then attempted to talk to the defendant.

"At this time, while the rear door was open, James Baxley stated that he wanted to go to jail," wrote the officer. "I advised him that he wasn't under arrest because he hadn't committed a crime. At this, James Baxley then spit in my face. I then closed the door to my patrol vehicle."

Raulerson reported that the defendant spat toward him a second time, but the officer did not know if he had been hit.

"James Baxley continued to scream obscenities and threaten both myself and Sgt. Bellamy," the officer wrote. "James Baxley also was banging his head on my rear passenger window in an attempt to break it."

The recording shows that up to the time of the battery, Bellamy appeared to be arranging to transport the defendant to Meridian Behavioral in Gainesville.

According to the video, Bellamy called a lieutenant to ask about the charges. During the conversation, the officers concluded Baxley committed a felony when spitting on Raulerson, and that instead of driving him to Gainesville, police would arrest him and have a jail nurse evaluate him.

After Baxley spat on Raulerson, the demeanor of both officers changed, with Bellamy responding

to the defendant's comments, using profanity.

At one point the sergeant threatened to spray Baxley with a chemical agent.

Raulerson drove the defendant inside the jail's sallyport, where the two officers, Bradford Sheriff's Sgt. Scott Konkel and a detention deputy extracted Baxley from the vehicle.

After the defendant resisted the officers, Raulerson tased him several times.

Warren said that the department initiated an internal affairs investigation over the officers' statements and the language they used to interact with the defendant.

He added that the administrative, non-criminal investigation centers on allegations that the two officers engaged in unprofessional and inappropriate conduct.

The State Attorney's Office dropped the charges against Baxley on Friday.

Food distribution announced

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Feeding Northeast Florida and True Vine Ministry will take place Tuesday, June 20, at 9 a.m. at the Bradford County Fairgrounds 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.

Fish dinners for youth

The Diamonds in the Rough ministry of New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church will be selling fish dinners for a youth summer outing on Saturday, June 16, from noon-until. The church is located at 901 Keller St. in Starke. Please call 904-966-1100 for more information.

Father's Day service

Magnolia Missionary Baptist Church in Raiford will be having a Father's Day Recognition Service on Sunday, June 18, after morning service. Everyone is invited.

School board meeting moved

The Bradford School Board meeting has been moved to Monday, June 19, and will include a workshop on policy revisions at 5:30 p.m. The regular monthly board meeting will follow.

The meetings take place in the boardroom at the district office, 501 W. Washington St. in Starke. They are open to the public.

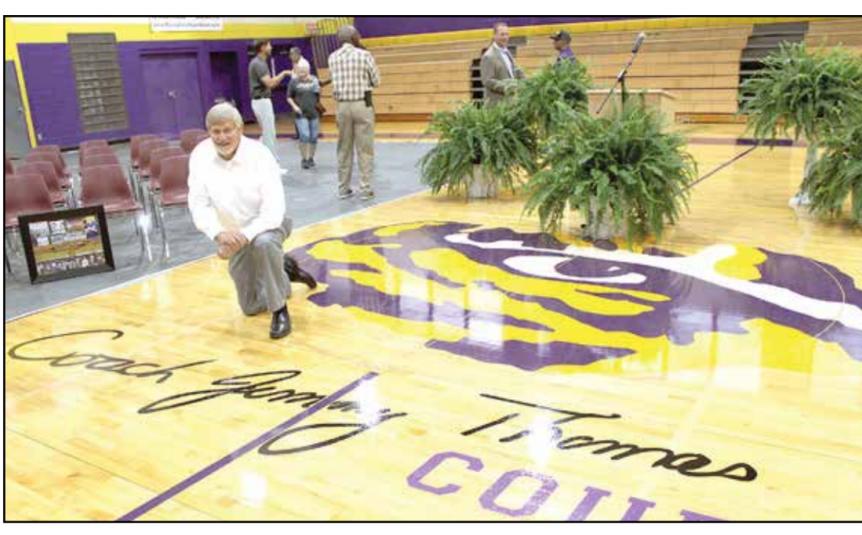
Youth basketball camp

In collaboration with BHS coaches Sampson Jackson and Michael McMillian, the Concerned Citizens of Bradford County are co-sponsoring a two-day youth skills basketball camp on June 29 and 30 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the BHS gymnasium.

For more information please call 386-266-3063, 904-769-1194 or 904-966-1100.

Court of Honor

Union County High School's basketball court is now named Coach Jimmy Thomas Court in honor of the boys basketball program's all-time winningest coach, who guided the Tigers to Final-Four appearances in 1975 and 1994. Thomas, joined by family, friends and former players, attended a dedication ceremony on June 9. See page 10 for more. Photo by Cliff Smelley.



Veterans oppose, commissioner defends park move

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — Veterans and their supporters let commissioners know they oppose plans to move their memorial park from Call Street to Edwards Road.

They spoke mostly with their presence at the June 6 meeting, but a few did rise to speak directly to the commission.

Ethythe Robinson Hill said those who live here and come to town enjoy Charles J. Schaefer Sr. Veterans Memorial Park where it has been for

40 years.

"I know you are probably considering it for financial reasons, but there are more important reasons than that. ... There are too many people and a lot of veterans here in the audience that really like it where it's at," she said.

Alvin Hunter said it was appropriate to have this discussion on the 79th anniversary of the Normandy landing. He criticized leaders who didn't attend the American Legion Memorial Day ceremony, and while he appreciated the ceremony, he said it turned into a political rally about the monument.

"There's a time and place for everything, and I'm all for people speaking their opinion. That is one of the reasons why I spent 20 years serving this country — to preserve those freedoms. ... I went there to honor the dead — my friends, my neighbors, my family — and it turned into a fiasco afterwards," he said.

However, Hunter said he had changed his mind about moving the monument now that he knows more about its history — specifically that the land was donated to establish a veterans memorial there and donations were raised to build it.

Hunter called on the commission to rescind its April 18 resolution to relocate the park to Edwards Road.

Mitchell Gunter talked about family members listed on Starke's monument and the multifamily housing that could possibly be built on an adjacent parcel. If space is needed for parking, it can be located underneath the townhouses, he said. As the city grows, there are opportunities to take "eyesores" around town and transform them into something better. Moving the

See PARK, page 3



Foundation donates \$90K to education groups

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS
—The Clay Electric Foundation said it donated \$90,400 to nonprofits focused on education during the foundation's May grant cycle.

The Bradford County Education Foundation, Union County 4-H Association, and Alachua 4-H Association each received \$20,000 from the co-op's charitable arm.

The Bradford group will use the funds to purchase classroom books. Union 4-H will use its grant to support the Head, Heart, Hands and Health Program, which consists of learning projects to develop youth. The Alachua 4-H grant will go toward purchasing a passenger van to transport local youth to state and national programs.

Also receiving funding were the College of Central Florida Foundation in Ocala: \$10,000, the Clay Education Foundation: \$12,900; Junior

Achievement of North Florida in Clay County: \$2,500 and the Volusia County 4-H Association: \$5,000.

The foundation awarded additional grants to:

—\$20,000 to Happy House in Columbia County to purchase a shuttle bus for its after-school program;

—\$20,000 to Epic-cure in Putnam County to purchase a forklift and power pallet jack;

—\$15,000 to Created Gainesville for mental, dental, and counseling services for victims of sex trafficking and exploitation; —\$5,000 to the Pregnancy Crisis Center in Columbia County to support its mobile unit expansion project;

—\$10,000 to Gainesville Thrives for subscriptions to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library;

—\$3,000 to the Trinity Foundation of Florida for application and counseling services for veterans and family members who qualify



Cheryl Canova and Paula Register hold a check presented to the Bradford County Education Foundation by the Clay Electric Foundation. Also pictured (l-r) are Brenda Donaldson, Lila Sellars, Chrissy Thompson, Will Hartley, Pat Mundorf of Clay Electric, Lisa Gault, Vorease Jones, Eugenia Whitehead, Sheryl Dixon, and Brenda Thornton. Photo: Clay Electric Cooperative.

for benefits.

—\$11,000 to Lake Butler Masonic Lodge #52 F&AM for repairs to the Masonic Lodge building;

—\$1,000 to R3 Special Operations Response Corp. in Alachua County for the rescue and recovery of victims of sex

trafficking;

—\$5,000 to the Nehemiah Project in Putnam County for the nonprofit's educational and programming costs. The group helps individuals and families faced with mental health and substance use challenges.

—\$14,000 to the Hawthorne

Area Resource Center for food pantry provisions and supplies as well as social services support to families in crisis;

—\$5,000 to the Garden Club of Baker County for developing educational slide

presentations and purchasing annual Christmas flowers for Meals-on-Wheels clients.

The Clay Electric Foundation receives its funding from the co-op's members who voluntarily round their utility bills up to the nearest whole dollar.

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PARK Continued from page 1

veterans memorial near a kids' hangout, however, places it in danger of vandalism.

"I do not want the monument of my kin people desecrated because we want to build apartments downtown," Gunter said.

Commissioner Andy Redding was ready with a prepared statement responding to the decision to move, expand and update the park. He said his work arose out of a conversation with his 9-year-old daughter about the members of their family who were represented at the memorial and who wasn't — her grandfather who served 37 years and fought in Afghanistan.

The only conflicts represented at the memorial are the two World Wars, Korea and Vietnam. Redding said millions who have served dating back to the American Revolution have no presence in the park. Likewise, there is nothing there honoring the service of women or people of color, he said.

"Yet there's a monument there that honors canines, horses, pigeons and dolphins," he said.

Redding said the park also lacks parking, with only six

spaces immediately adjacent to the park and less than 30 in the wider area. There is no easy access for those with disabilities. The constant flow of traffic is also a safety concern, he said, and the overpass construction has made the area more congested.

The size of the current park is only four-tenths of an acre, Redding said, and the elevation and construction of a new St. Clair Street extension has made it even more flood prone. Nor is the park exempt from vandalism, he said, as the American flag there was recently replaced with a Confederate flag.

Turning to the positive, Redding said the city commission has committed at least \$100,000 to provide a safe and accessible park on a 300% larger parcel on Edwards Road. There will be on-site parking, including handicapped spaces, as well as overflow parking across the street and a dedicated crosswalk. The property, which will be monitored by security cameras, is 1,200 feet from the American Legion post and 800 feet from the Army National Guard Armory.

"This will present endless opportunities for events that honor all veterans, active soldiers, events at the Legion and events at the sports

complex," Redding said.

Far from out of the way, the park would be across the road from that sports complex, which draws thousands of kids and their families.

"Our future soldiers, our future nurses, our future firefighters, law enforcement officers and the list goes on — these are the future leaders of our community, Florida and America. We have to invest in them and ingrain in them what it is to be an American patriot, not keep it to ourselves just because we say so. This is accomplished by showing the youth, our citizens, our community and beyond that we honor and cherish all veterans," he said.

Redding said that despite sharing his information, no one had contacted him to discuss the park or the city's plans to move it.

Commissioner Danny Nugent said he agrees with the American Legion's position, saying there is room to expand at the current location.

"If someone wanted to donate, I'm sure they could add more statues or more monuments," he said.

Nugent, a past commander of Post 56, said if others were more involved and knew the history, they would understand the pride the Legion has in the park and those it memorializes.

Juneteenth Pageant showcases youth

The Juneteenth Pageant Gala 2023 will celebrate the Juneteenth holiday with a pageant to showcase some of our finest area youth. Juneteenth is a federal holiday to commemorate the emancipation of enslaved people in the U.S.

The Master of Ceremony is Starke native and recently elected Jacksonville City Councilman, Rahman Johnson. He will weave personal stories and historical anecdotes while introducing the contestants vying for the title of Miss Juneteenth.

The event will be held on Saturday, June 17, at 5 p.m.

at Bradford Fairgrounds Building 3. This will be an after-five affair and will include food and drinks during the reception at 5 p.m. The pageant/program will begin promptly at 6:15 p.m.

During the reception you will enjoy food and drinks while experiencing African drumming. The program will be lively with storytellers, poetry and entertainment. The pageant spotlights young ladies from ages 11-18. They will all be awarded various awards and recognitions. Finally, Miss Juneteenth 2023-2024, Doers and Dreamers, will be crowned.

All are invited to attend this community event for a donation of \$25 for adults and \$12 for children ages 6-12. Tickets are on sale now on Eventbrite and area churches.

The host hotel for the Miss

Juneteenth Pageant is the Holiday Inn Express, 904-263-5430. You can make reservations using the code Juneteenth.

This event is sponsored by the Shirley Ann Brown Livingstone Foundation, a local foundation giving back to our youth through educational scholarships. The Juneteenth Committee are community volunteers whose mission is to support and empower future generations through education, opportunities and experiences that prepare our youth for success, against all odds, while embracing resilience, perseverance and dedication. Your support, participation and sponsorship for this community event is appreciated. Donations will be used to provide scholarships, gifts and prizes to all candidates.

Conservation board meets

The Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District will meet at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 20, at the Bradford County Extension Office.

The meeting is open to the public. Contact Paul Still at 904-368-0291 or email stillpe@aol.com for more information.

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Lake Region

KH council discusses pop-up parties

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS — During its June 5 meeting, the city council discussed the pop-up party in Lake Butler on June 3 that resulted in one person shot, seven arrests, and traffic tie-ups in the Union County seat that lasted nearly five hours.

Council member Tony Brown asked Jeremy Clark, the Clay County Sheriff's Office assistant chief of Patrol South, if the city needed to prepare for a similar event in the Lake Region.

Clark said he did not think the city needed any special preparations for the contingency.

"It's new in the sense that it hasn't happened in this region to any great degree," Clark told council members.

He said that the agency's leadership had discussed the trouble in Union County but is still gathering information about the June 3 incident. He added the Clay County Sheriff's Office deals with similar situations at the Orange Park Mall when large crowds of teenagers occasionally rampage through the facility.

Clark said the city's leadership should pay attention to what is going on in the community and watch social media for indications that events could develop into large disturbances.

"If you see something that indicates that there is a big event planned at the beach, then take it seriously and get us involved," he said.

Council member Steve Hart said it is his understanding

that when Clay County Sheriff Michelle Cook was with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, her specialty was dealing with crowd control and crowd management.

"She's had, I guess, substantial experience in that area," Hart said. "Whether or not that would cross over to this type of event, I don't know, but it would seem to be similar."

Clark responded that he had not talked to Cook yet about the Lake Butler incident but would bring the subject up during an administrative meeting later in the week.

City Manager Lynn Rutkowski added that, particularly on holiday weekends, she is in contact with the sheriff's office and emergency management about potential incidents.



School board member Mary Bolla (left) questioned the need for the new policy and objected to the penalties outlined in the rule. Erin Skipper (right) called the new policy a commonsense rule that protects students, regardless of their gender identity. Photo: Clay County Public Schools.

Council approves \$3M airport financing

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS — The city council approved a \$3 million bridge loan with Capital City Bank to assist the airport with improvements to the facility's taxiways, lighting, and signs.

Federal Aviation Administration and Florida Department of Transportation grants are funding the improvements.

Airport board chair David Kirkland told the council that the financing would help the airport manage its cash flow between the times it receives invoices from contractors and is reimbursed by the federal and state agencies.

"A contractor gives us an invoice for, let's say, paving that's three hundred, four hundred thousand dollars," he

said. "We, in turn, give that to Capital City and say we need three hundred thousand dollars out of the bridge gap fund to go into our checking account. From there, our accountant writes a check to pay that invoice, and that documentation then is sent to the FAA or FDOT... Within 48 hours, they're reimbursing us for that money that we then put right back into the bank, into the bridge loan, so there's never a liability, if you will, to the city."

Vice mayor Chris Thompson said she preferred to vote on the resolution after Mayor Nina Rodenroth returned from vacation. However, after Kirkland explained that the parties wanted to close the deal the day after the council meeting and added that large invoices were expected from contractors the following week, Thompson voted in favor of the resolution.

Kirkland reminded the

council that bank, airport, and city staff have discussed the loan agreement terms over the past several weeks.

"Please keep in mind that the FAA and FDOT fully back these projects, so they're fully funded already, and we've already paid out a lot because we could pay out-of-pocket," he said.

Council member Steve Hart requested several changes to the loan agreement, which he described as "tidying up language."

Those changes included pledging as security the airport's net fuel sales instead of gross fuel sales, excluding non-airport city revenues from securing the loan, changing the title of a city officer in loan documents from Deputy Mayor to Vice Mayor, and clarifying that city staff members are not personally liable under the loan agreement.

Students must use 'birthsex' restrooms

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS — Clay County School Board members adopted a policy during its June 1 meeting requiring students to use restrooms, locker rooms, and dressing rooms according to each student's biological sex.

"An individual student's 'biological sex' is defined as the sex assigned to that student at birth, hereinafter, 'birthsex,'" the policy reads.

The new policy adds that any student or parent may ask for an exception to the rule and that any student may use any of the district's gender-neutral facilities.

Board member Mary Bolla

questioned the need for the new policy, noting that Superintendent David Broskie told her that in his 34 years in public education, he had never heard of a problem or issue relating to a bathroom.

She also said the policy reflects the district's current general practices and questioned the need to codify the procedures, particularly imposing penalties on violators.

"We are punishing some of our most vulnerable students," she said. "These vulnerable students have gone through a lot in their lives. They've not had the support that a lot of our daughters and sons have had, and it concerns me."

Board member Erin Skipper called the new policy a commonsense rule that protects students, regardless of their gender identity.

She added that the need for the new policy is in response to the country's changing culture.

"Most teachers will say this was not a major cultural issue several years ago," she told Bolla. "I know from a medical perspective this was classified differently."

Board member Michele Hanson said she and her colleagues had no choice but to approve the policy because of a state law passed by lawmakers earlier this year.

Clay emergency manager retires

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS — Clay County's Emergency Management Director announced his retirement, and the county said his deputy will move into the top job.

John Ward said in an email that it is time to move on.

"It is with both excitement and sadness that I would like to announce that I have decided to retire," he wrote. "As I look to the next chapter, I reflect on the amazing journey the past 25+ years has been. The partnerships and relationships we have built are second to none, as have been proven many times, especially during COVID. We have managed many incidents, deployments, and special events with the processes that you all have assisted in building. Over time we have been able to build a great team that will move Clay County forward into the future for Clay County Emergency Management."

During a Keystone Heights Rotary meeting last year, County Commissioner Betsy Condon said Ward, a former Keystone Heights resident who now lives in Clay Hill, often leads statewide seminars on emergency management and has turned down many offers to work in larger communities.

She added that his role after Irma in coordinating the \$10



Clay County Emergency Management Director John Ward speaks to the Keystone Heights Rotary Club on Wednesday, July 27, 2022. Photo: Dan Hildebran, Telegraph Staff Writer.

million pickup of yard waste generated by the storm was an unheralded but massive achievement.

During that same meeting, Ward said that his time in Clay County government would soon be ending.

"It's always a pleasure to come down here," he told the Rotarians. "I miss the Keystone Heights area, but as you know, in the next year or two years, hopefully, I'll

be moving on and letting the younger generation come in."

After Hurricane Ian passed south of the area last September, Ward's deputy, Mike Ladd, appeared in the department's videos instead of Ward.

Ladd's videos guided county residents through Tropical Storm Nicole in November. He now takes over as the director.

Clay taxable values up 13%

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

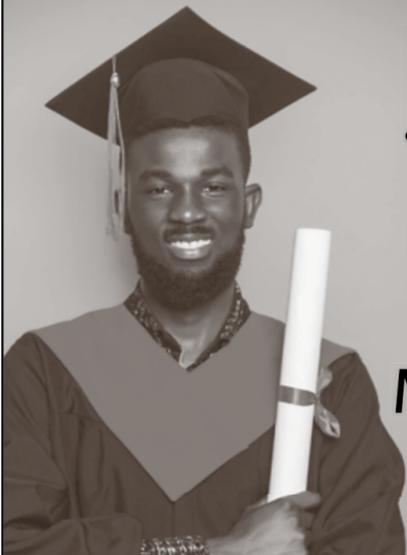
KEYSTONE HEIGHTS — Clay County Property Appraiser Tracy Drake said the 2023 taxable value of all properties in the county is estimated at approximately \$16.5 billion - an annual increase of more than \$1.9 billion, or 13% from the 2022 assessment roll.

"The statutory date for the 2023 assessment roll is January 1, 2023," Drake said in a news release. "Therefore, the overall increase in value is a reflection of the upward direction the real estate market has taken during 2022."

The appraiser added that although market values have increased to record levels, the assessed values of properties

with an existing homestead exemption will be limited to a 3 percent increase (excluding any additions or improvements), and non-homestead residential and commercial properties will be limited to a 10% increase due to constitutional amendments passed by voters in 1992 and 2008, respectively.

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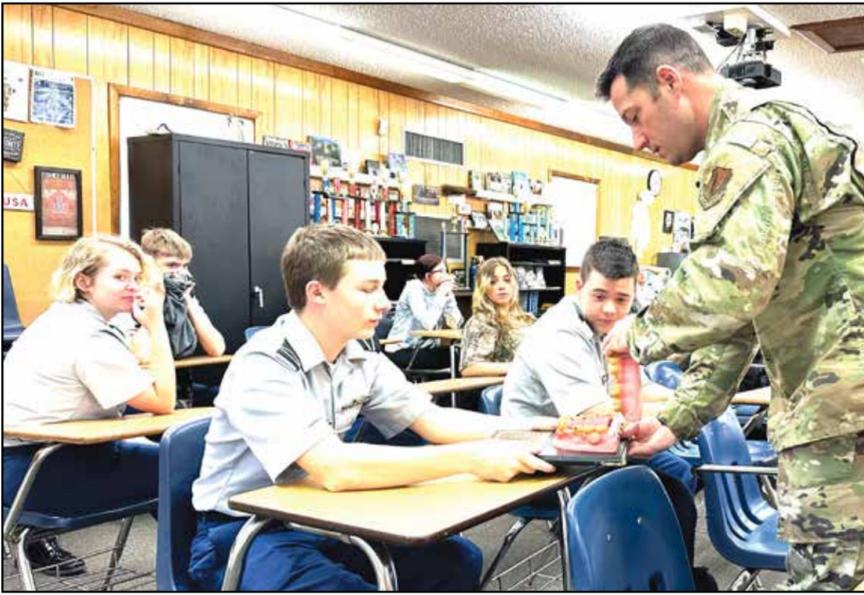
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Air National Guard Technical Sergeant Rob George demonstrates the long-term effects of smoking and vaping by showing students a dental model that simulated the impact of tobacco.

Students: Smoking out, vaping in

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS — A class of JROTC cadets told a visiting speaker at Keystone Heights High School that they rarely see cigarettes on campus but that vaping at the school is common.

Air National Guard Technical Sergeant Rob George presented an anti-drug demonstration to the students, warning them against the dangers of alcohol, marijuana, prescription pills and vaping.

George said his presentation was part of the Army and Air Force's joint counter-drug program.

The sergeant warned students about the dangers of gateway drugs like tobacco, alcohol and prescription pills that could lead to more dangerous and addictive narcotics.

Several students tried walking with goggles that simulated the vision a person would have under the influence of alcohol.

Cadet First Sgt. William Wooden seemed unaffected by the goggles. However, other students stumbled around to their classmates' amusement.

"It's funny but serious at the same time," George said. "So, what do you imagine would happen if a police officer sees you trying to walk like that?"

George spent more time on vaping, telling students that as water boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, some vapes reach 300 degrees.

"That heat being pumped in there, that's you burning the nerves in your mouth," he said. "So, when you guys have people that do it constantly, and you don't have a sore throat anymore, right? It's because you burnt every nerve in your mouth."

The serviceman also said vapes contain many chemicals, including acetone which he said is used in rat poisoning.

George warned the students that one vaping cartridge can contain as much nicotine as several packs of cigarettes.

He also described the condition, commonly known as popcorn lung, in which the lungs of vape users are covered in scar tissue, and the only treatment for the condition is a lung transplant.

George demonstrated the long-term effects of smoking and vaping by showing the students



TSGt. George demonstrated the impact of vaping by comparing a healthy pig lung to one destroyed by tobacco.



Cadet First Sgt. William Wooden seemed unaffected by the goggles that simulate vision while intoxicated. However, other students stumbled around to their classmates' amusement.

a dental model that simulated the impact of tobacco. He also used an air pump to blow up two pig lungs, one unaffected by smoking and the other destroyed by tobacco.

After the drug presentation, George took questions from the cadets about military life, and

their interest in his presentation suddenly spiked.

However, he tried to steer the discussion back to drugs, telling the cadets about airmen he has seen struggling with physical fitness and shortness of breath because of smoking and vaping.



County Commission Chair Betsy Condon said that in addition to the 250 acres the fully built-out park will occupy, an additional 800 acres of forest is owned by the North Florida Land Trust adjacent to the park's south side, running almost to State Road 16. Also pictured are (l-r) County Manager Howard Wanamaker, Project Manager Job McClellan, Parks and Recreation Director Justin Pierce and Carlton Construction Founder and President Matt Carlton. Photo: Dan Hildebran, Telegraph Staff Writer.

Sports complex called budget turkey

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS — Florida TaxWatch said a \$1 million state appropriation for a regional sports complex in Clay County is a budget turkey.

The watchdog group said the park, under construction now near Camp Blanding, is one of 30 housing and community development projects totaling \$41 million that should not have been funded through the state's budget.

"These are projects that a local community would love to have," TaxWatch said in its 2023 Budget Turkey Watch Report, "but it is questionable as to whether the state should be funding them at all."

The report added that at least most of the projects have other avenues for funding

assistance from the state and federal governments.

In addition to Clay's regional sports park, the list also includes \$9 million for Phase 2 of the Inverness Airport Business Park in Citrus County, \$5 million for the Cox Science Center and Aquarium expansion in Palm Beach County and \$4.8 million for the Collier Housing Resilience Project.

At a groundbreaking ceremony for the park in March, County Manager Howard Wanamaker said Phase 1 of the park is being funded by a \$3 million matching grant from the state and \$3 million in county funds. The state grant was secured several years ago.

The 2023, \$1 million appropriation would be to finance additional project

phases.

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

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

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

Pastor anniversary at New Covenant

New Covenant Baptist Ministries will be celebrating Pastor Jeffrey T. and Sister Daffany Jones' seventh anniversary on June 25, 2023 at

11 a.m. Minister Dwayne Bailey of Philadelphia Missionary Baptist Church in Lake City will be the speaker. Dinner will be served. The public is invited.

About It Club every third Thursday of each month at 11 a.m. at Macedonia Free Will Baptist Church, 2496 Lake St. in Lawtey. Mark your calendar for the next gathering. Everyone is invited.

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Publication date: **JUNE 27, 2023**

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NEW HOURS STARTING JULY 5TH:

Your Bradford County Tax Collector's Office Hours are Changing at the Courthouse

We will be closing our lobby starting July 5th at 4:30pm, Monday - Friday and will open at our regular time: 8:00 am, Monday - Friday.

Our office will be closed in Observance of Independence Day, Monday, July 3rd & Tuesday, July 4th

Have a safe and Happy Holiday.

Teresa G. Phillips, CFC

UNION COUNTY

Students encourage smoke-free parks in Union

BY ROBERT THOMPSON
Tobacco Free Union

Every person in Union County should be free to enjoy the great outdoors without exposure to toxic smoke and litter. Thanks to recent legislation, counties and municipalities can now restrict smoking and vaping in local public parks and beaches.

There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, the majority (61.4%) of youth in the Union County report being exposed to it. Both cigarettes and vape products contain lead, formaldehyde and other cancer-causing substances and secondhand smoke is associated with thousands of deaths each year.

These products are a health and safety threat to kids. In 2020 alone, U.S. poison control centers reported more than 9,500 cases involving children under 6 years of age consumed or were exposed to tobacco or nicotine products.

Not only do tobacco products devastate the human body, but they also cause havoc on the environment, ending up in our waterways and in our parks. Cigarette butts account for an extraordinary amount of waste. Cigarettes are the most common form of litter, and an estimated 766,571 metric tons of cigarette butts make their way into the environment every year. Only 10 percent of cigarette butts are properly deposited in ash receptacles.

Tobacco Free Union would like to acknowledge the great work in Union County. On April 18, five SWAT youth from the Lake Butler Middle School spoke to Lake Butler city commissioners to encourage tobacco free park policies. These policies would benefit all parks located in Lake Butler. SWAT youth focused their education on the benefits of tobacco free parks policies. These benefits include, but are not limited to, a decrease of tobacco litter and less exposure

to secondhand smoke.

"I like it because people can be extra safe. I think it's fair to both smokers and nonsmokers without harming others. The environment in our parks needs to be safe and smoke-free for everyone. We feel this policy would help prevent smoking and vaping in our parks," said seventh grade LBMS student Javian Smith.

"It was a good experience to reach out for our community in order to help them and the next generation," eighth grader Jiyah Palmer said.

According to the 2022 Florida Youth Tobacco Survey, 34.9% of Union County middle and high school students have reported they used an electronic vapor product while the state average is 29%. This issue requires unwavering attention. For more information on how Tobacco Free Union is addressing this issue and how you can get involved, please contact Jenna Hewett at 904-769-9647.



Members of Lake Butler Middle School SWAT students Javian Smith, Rebecca Langkau, Jiyah Palmer, Deion Givens and Eric Hall.

Union County Fire under new leadership

BY TRACY LEE TATE
Times Staff Writer

LAKE BUTLER — About six months ago a new fire coordinator/chief was hired to oversee the Union County Fire Department and he has been working hard to improve equipment and facility maintenance and fire service in the county.

Paul McDavid has had a long career as a firefighting professional. He said that, when he was in high school, he had his heart set on becoming a game warden. That was until a friend, who was a volunteer at Heilbronn Springs, asked him if he wanted to go to a class. By the end of the class, he was hooked. His first paid

job was with the city of Ocala when he was 19.

In the past 34 years McDavid has worked in Jacksonville (20 of those years), Brooker, LaCrosse Suwannee County and, most recently, Taylor County. He was hired, in part, because his situation in Taylor County was very similar to the one in Union County — one paid firefighter and several volunteers.

"I was familiar with him and his work and because of his role in Taylor County I thought he was perfect for this job," said EMS Director Toby Witt. "Paul is a hard worker and wears many hats. He can function as a plumber, an electrician and a mechanic. A person with these skills is

necessary as we do not have the resources of a large county for work that needs to be done, so we needed someone to fill many rolls."

McDavid is replacing previous Chief Mark Hughes, who continues to work part time for Union County Emergency Management and as a paramedic out-of-county.

Since taking the job, McDavid said he had all the fleet running and operational (for the first time in a long time) and the department is providing round the clock coverage, with one paid firefighter and McDavid covering the calls 24/7. He is also recruiting more volunteers and said the department is improving

greatly and running smoothly.

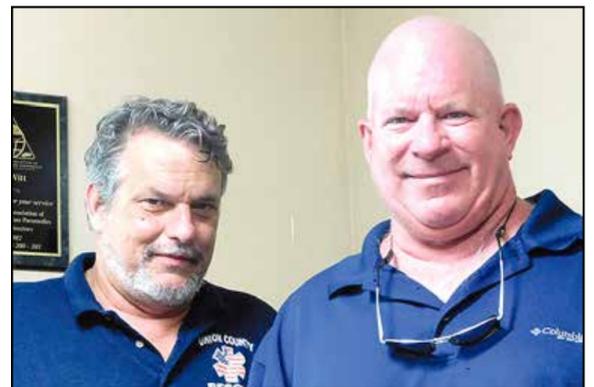
McDavid said he just "sort of fell into" the administrative end of the business when he served for three years as chief in LaCrosse. Before ever becoming a chief, however, McDavid said he had gone through hundreds of hours of training. He has earned his state fire officer certification and certifications as a fire safety officer and a health and safety officer. His years of experience also make him able to do his job.

"I learned from many chiefs, some good, some not so good," McDavid said. "Sometimes you learn what to do and sometimes what not to do, but it makes you better either way."

Now, in his time off, McDavid teaches at a fire training academy, passing on the knowledge he has accumulated over the years.

McDavid is dedicated to his role in protecting the community and expects the same from his men.

"My responsibility is to make sure to be honest with the public about our capability," McDavid said. "We are below



Union County EMS Director Toby Witt and Fire Coordinator/Chief Paul McDavid.

adequate right now — we have 10 good volunteers, but only half are usually available when we need them. We need to provide adequate or better, and I am working on getting us there. Until then we will just cross our fingers and call mutual aid. I am not going to try and sell people a lemonade stand that sells urine."

McDavid said the department has good safety gear and all the apparatus are in running condition, but he is disappointed that there are no ongoing fire inspections or fire safety programs. But he is pleased that the department will soon have three paid

firefighters and several well-trained volunteers. Right now, he said he and the staff were keeping busy, fixing the things that can be fixed, in house. He understands the budget constraints he faces in the department and is working to stay between the lines.

"This is a good little place," McDavid said. "If I was going to move from Bradford County this is where I would go. There are a lot of good people here and a good community. These are the sort of people that it is a pleasure to serve."

Emergency Supply Checklist

Emergencies can happen at any time. Whether it's a fire, hurricane, flood or some other disaster, if you take the time to prepare an emergency supply kit, you and your family will be better prepared. The supplies can be kept in a plastic container, suitcase, backpack or other container. For more information, visit www.ready.gov or www.floridadisaster.org.

- Water - one gallon per person per day for drinking and sanitation (3-day supply)
- Ready-to-eat food, canned juices, comfort/stress foods (3-day supply)
- Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio and a NOAA weather radio, and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Non-prescription drugs, such as pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medication, antacid and/or laxative.
- Prescription medications, contact lenses and supplies, denture needs
- Whistle or mirror to signal for help
- Infant formula and diapers (if you have an infant)
- Water and pet food (if you have a pet)
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Dust mask or cotton T-shirt to filter the air
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to make a shelter
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food
- Aluminum foil
- A jacket or coat, hat and gloves
- A complete change of clothing including long pants, long-sleeve shirt and sturdy shoes (stored in a waterproof container)
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Rain gear
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Paper towels
- Tent
- Compass
- Matches in water container
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Personal hygiene items
- Soap
- Disinfectant and household chlorine bleach
- Important family documents, such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container
- Passport, bank account numbers, credit card, account numbers and companies
- Books, games, puzzles, portable music device
- Have children create their own personal checklist with familiar things that will keep them comfortable during an emergency, such as a book, stuffed animal or blanket.

NOTE: It is recommended that you update the food in your kit every six months and rethink your needs once a year.



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Economic development work changing hands

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
Telegraph Editor

STARKE – A new Economic Development Corporation is replacing the Bradford County Development Authority, which will dissolve on June 30.

The loss of the development authority was the unintended consequence of the state's dissolving the Reedy Creek Improvement District, which oversaw land use and other local government functions like firefighting and utilities around Disney World.

Taking over the development authority's promotion of real

estate and economic development in Bradford County will be a new independent Economic Development Corporation whose board members already include Bradford County contractor Evan Douglas, Union County businessman Avery Roberts and Clay County commercial real estate agent Sandra Kahle.

Attorney Clay Martin shared the timeline for the new corporation during a June 1 workshop of the development authority. Within 30 days of the June 30 dissolution, a potential list of five to nine board members will be created in time for the corporation's first meeting. The

board will be in place within 60 days, a structure for investment/membership will be created, and potential investors/members will be identified.

The board will engage a website designer to update the site and the search for an economic development director will begin in earnest.

Withing six months, they want the director in place and in an office suitable for meetings and operations.

By the end of the first year, reports on activities and results will identify the needs and accomplishments of the organization.

Areas of focus will be business retention and expansion with initiatives like a business visitation program. The corporation will market itself and Bradford County at special events and conventions and through public relations and publications.

One of the final actions of the development authority was a letter to Bradford County. Because of the dissolution, around \$175,000 of the authority's money must be turned over to the county. The development authority board has asked that the county commission consider investing that money in the new Economic

Development Authority.

In much the same way the commission approves expenditures of tourist tax dollars by the Tourist Development Authority, the commission could do the same when the Economic Development Corporation has a plan for the use of those funds.

Members of the Bradford County Development authority have recently included Patricia Evans as chair, Dr. Virgil Berry, Dean Weaver, Bob Milner, Jeff Oody and Martin Shaw. During the workshop, Evans remarked on the hours of effort that have gone into wrapping up their work and planning for this next phase.



Patty Farley

Past president to address Lake Area Democrats

The Democratic Women's Club of the Lakes Area will host Patty Farley, a former president of the Democratic Women's Club of Florida, at their regular meeting on Thursday, June 22. Farley will discuss the Equal Rights Amendment, which Florida has not yet ratified.

Farley also served as first VP, region chair, convention chair and labor chair of the DWCF. She represents the National Federation as the Southern Region Lead to the ERA Legislative Subcommittee and the ERA Coalition. Farley is also the president of the Democratic Labor Caucus of Florida and secretary of the Spacecoast Labor Council, where she has represented Brevard teachers for many years. She has been an active member on the executive board of the DWCF, and a precinct captain for her local DEC for over 15 years. She was a teacher in Florida public schools for 32 years.

The meeting is held at the Melrose Historic Homemakers Club, 25728 Park St. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and the speaker begins at 7. For further information, please contact 352-235-4161 or Info@dwc-la.org. All Democrats are welcome to attend.

Conservation board addresses trespass complaint

BY CAROL MOSLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE – The June 6 meeting of the Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District began with old business, but the new business garnered the most interaction when it addressed an incident at Chemours with Board Supervisor Paul Still.

Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District's mission is to provide the administration of programs to conserve soil and improve water quality and quantity on private lands in Bradford County. The board consists of five elected supervisors, all unpaid, representing the five districts.

The first order of old business was a report on the status of Chemours' Trail Ridge Industrial Wastewater renewal permit application and the reclamation along C.R. 225 south of Lawtey. Still showed slides of the site in 2013 and what it looks like now. He commented on the importance of getting the iron "humate" out of the system and had high praise for how the reclamation is going. He also noted that the FDEP appears to be doing a good job of overseeing the project.

Still said he stumbled on a report that Chemours submitted to FDEP indicating detection of nearly twice the allowable amount of radioactive radium 126/128 during a recent release from the Trail Ridge South mine. Chemours' report said barium is being used to neutralize the radium.

Still said occasionally they hit a pocket of radium or other element of concern and may not hit another pocket for some time. He said since Chemours has not discharged since the discovery, the radium and barium remain in the system and could be discharged later if a rain event occurs. He said barium is troubling and perhaps another

substance, such as zeolite, could achieve the same results yet pose less concern than barium.

The Chemours letter from Environmental Manager Connie Henderson dated May 23 to the FDEP, states that, "A discharge was initiated on April 12 through 28, 2023. The monthly radium sample was taken on April 19. Results of the radium sample became available on May 16, 2023. No discharge has occurred since April 28, 2023." It further notes that, "Two internal RA-228 samples were taken prior to the discharge to estimate the Ra 226/228 values and did not contain elevated levels."

Chemours says it will also conduct a "root cause analysis" on the occurrence. The soil and water board said they will be looking forward to finding the results from that analysis.

Still said local environmental groups Sierra Club and Our Santa Fe River are hoping to tour the area of Chemours mining. Still would take the group along the culverts and roadways and not enter any private property, especially considering his recent incident while taking water samples. The groups should contact Chemours directly for access to an onsite tour.

Final discussion was the complaint and incident report filed against Still during a turbidity and iron content water sampling expedition. He and his wife, Kathy, parked at the North Florida Land Trust gate and he walked inside to get his water samples. According to Still, he noticed a Chemours employee parked across the street in a white truck, so he returned to his car, placing his water samples inside.

Sheriff Gordon Smith showed up and told the Stills to wait at their car because a deputy would come to take their statement. The deputy arrived and took Still's



Ribbon cut at new CareerSource office

CareerSource North Central Florida has a new home in Starke in the annex building next to the Bradford County Courthouse. There they will continue their work on behalf of businesses and jobseekers as well as those in need of benefits. The agency serves Alachua and Bradford County. In February, it was announced it will merge with CareerSource Florida Crown, which serves Colombia, Dixie, Gilchrist and Union counties. The merger is expected to take more than a year to complete.

license and then went to speak with the Chemours employee. After about 45 minutes of delay, the deputy returned to the car, gave Still his license, then turned to leave. Still asked the deputy if he was going to take his statement. The deputy replied, "No, I have everything I need."

Sheriff Smith said an incident report would be given to the State Attorney's office and they would decide whether to press charges or not. Still said he believes he was on land owned by North Florida Land Trust and that he has a long-standing agreement with them to take water samples and look for invasive species of plants.

Rianna Elliot of NFLT said she was notified by the hunt club, who has the lease, of a trespass on the property. She was unable to locate any "formal

agreement" between the two agencies nor between the Land Trust and Still. Still has emails originating from 2016 granting him permission and had a recent conversation with another NFLT representative who was aware of Still's ongoing sampling on behalf of soil and water board. Elliott said that person was not authorized to grant permissions.

Still said that ownership and delineation of the Chemours property is unclear and that he only took the route of the tracks due to water in the ditches. He said he does not believe he was trespassing, though Elliott said she was given photos showing him on Chemours and CSX property, not NFLT land. It is not clear to Still who sent her the photos, and Still said he had not seen them. He said the area is not posted or fenced and is a noted ATV route.

The board said they want to respect property rights while assuring they are still able to conduct their work. A more formal agreement than email conversations will be drawn up and submitted to NFLT legal department for approval or revisions. It was suggested that future sampling on potentially private lands should have clear permission and possibly even be accompanied by an owner's representative. Still agreed that some specific agreement and protocol would be a benefit to avoid future problems.

Still met with the State Attorney to offer his statement that had not been taken by the deputy. He produced the email chain that he believes granted him access for board purposes over the years.

Commissioner wants more for fire

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
Telegraph Editor

STARKE – Starke Commissioner Danny Nugent has requested more funding for Starke's fire department in next year's budget.

The topic was not on the June 6 meeting agenda for discussion or a vote, and so the request went nowhere. Nugent asked that the fire department budget be on the agenda for June 20, a meeting he first said he couldn't attend before realizing he would be there.

Nugent wants the commission to take \$250,000 out of its reserve funding and place it in the Starke Fire Rescue budget, allowing the department to retain some of its manpower in the face of imminent cuts.

Starke City Manager Drew Andrews recommended cutting the firefighting budget from \$1.59 to \$1.04 million next year.

Nugent was one of the three votes to move forward with a budget that prioritizes utility

infrastructure improvements by reducing the amount of utility revenue transferred to general government and cutting the budgets for both the police and fire departments.

Mayor Scott Roberts pointed out the discussion and recommended action were not on the agenda and placing it on the agenda for June 20 would add more to an already busy meeting.

June 20 is the date city commissioners invited Sheriff Gordon Smith and County Manager Scott Kornegay to present information on potentially consolidating the police department with the sheriff's office and the fire department with Bradford County Fire Rescue.

Roberts said June 20 was chosen so everyone would be in attendance.

Nugent then suggested the "budget amendment" be handled as an emergency item, with the commission voting to add it as an emergency item to the agenda and then acting.

Roberts said he didn't know what to do with the request considering it was being brought up under commissioners' comments and not "the appropriate time."

"I think on the 20th, we're going to take in a whole lot of considerations on a whole lot of things," Roberts said, before Nugent tried turn his comment period over to Fire Chief Gary Wise.

The mayor told Nugent he had placed the entire board in an awkward position.

"I don't appreciate that. It makes it look like I don't want to discuss it," Roberts said. "I think we've at a lot of discussion, and I think the chief is going to have a whole lot of time to talk on the 20th."

Roberts told Nugent his comments were heard. Nugent said he just wanted to provide everyone with "food for thought" and "get the fire department straight."

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Crime

Recent arrests in Bradford, Union and Clay

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

Bradford

Nicole Lynn Baker, 42, of Hampton was arrested by Bradford deputies on June 7 for burglary.

Damarcus Emmanuel Brown, 19, of Starke was arrested by Starke police on June 8 for battery.

Jessica Doreen Caudill, 33, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on June 6 for contempt of court.

Donald Manning Cribbs, 62, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on June 8 for a probation violation.

Priscilla Lynn Curtis, 32, of Starke was arrested on June 7 for burglary.

Justin Riley Curtner, 24, of White Oak, Georgia was arrested by Bradford deputies on June 9 for a probation violation.

Charles Edward Drew, 44, of Starke was arrested by Starke police on June 7 for withholding support.

Jonathan L. Heidt, 30, of Orange Park, was arrested on June 7 for failure to appear.

Madrid Octavio Herrera, 27, was arrested by Lawtey police on June 5 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Sara Elizabeth Holbrooks, 24, of Jacksonville was arrested on June 5 for an out-of-county warrant.

Warren Mitriese Lee, 32, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on June 9 for driving with a suspended or revoked license, possession of cocaine, possession of a weapon by a felon and larceny.

Christopher Emilio Neri, 33, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on June 4 for lewd and lascivious behavior.

Charity Michelle Pennigsdorf, 20, of Keystone Heights was arrested on June 6 for failure to appear.

Gilberto E. Reyes Fermin, 27, of Roselle Park, New Jersey, was arrested on June 9 for larceny.

Michaela Sue Richey, 25, of St. Petersburg was arrested on June 5 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Leonardo Soto, 25, of Salisbury, North Carolina was arrested by Lawtey Police on June 7 for driving with a suspended or revoked license and fraud-impersonation.

Joshua Lee Michael Terrel, 28, was arrested on June 7 for an out-of-county warrant.

Jeffrey Tyson, 23, was arrested by Bradford deputies on June 3 for failure to appear.

Marion Hershel Waldren, 47, of Starke was arrested by Bradford deputies on June 5 for battery.

Jasonia Abrille Yazzmee Wallace, 25, of Gainesville was arrested on June 7 for driving with a suspended or revoked license and possession of drugs.

Union

Frankie Levone Davis, 30, of Gainesville was arrested by Union deputies on June 8 for a probation violation.

Cyle Brantley Harden, 28, of Lake City was arrested by Union deputies on June 8 for a probation violation.

Richard Edward Casper, 61, of Lake Butler was arrested

by Union deputies on June 9 for failure to register as a sex offender.

Kyle Mitchell McSpadden, 31, of Lake Butler was arrested by Union deputies on June 10 for possession of a weapon or ammunition by a felon.

Clay

Melissa Sue Piper, 37, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on June 7 for failure to appear.

Judith Huffman Northrup, 80, of Lawtey was arrested by Clay deputies on June 7 for DUI.

Stetson Lee Garnett, 30, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on June 8 for possession of fentanyl without a prescription.

Charlotte Ann Adams, 39, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on June 8 for possession of a controlled substance without a prescription, possession of not more than 20 grams of marijuana and possession of drug equipment.

Danny Ray Boree, 37, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on June 8 for trafficking in methamphetamine, possession of cocaine and possession of a weapon or ammunition by a felon.

Angela Denee Lynch, 47, of Keystone Heights was arrested by Clay deputies on June 8 for trafficking in methamphetamine.

Dirt bike deal gone bad

Buyer accused of kidnapping sellers at gunpoint

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE — A 20-year-old Waldo man is behind bars after two people accused him of kidnapping them while the victims were selling two dirt bikes.

Aaron Tyler Higgins was

arrested for robbery with a firearm, kidnapping, and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

According to an arrest warrant affidavit, the two victims told Bradford Detective Joseph Shiller that Higgins and another man were buying two dirt bikes from the victims when the buyers pulled a black handgun on them.

“(The suspects) told both victims to get in the back of (Higgins’) truck and drove off with both victims in the truck against their will,” Shiller wrote. Higgins and an unknown suspect dropped the two victims off at SE CR (230)A and SE CR 100A.”

The detective added that the suspects told both victims they would kill them if they called police.

The victims provided Shiller with Higgins’ phone number and a description of the decals on the defendant’s truck.

4 years for selling meth

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE — A Hampton woman was sentenced to four years in prison after pleading to a variety of drug charges.

Lorene Malia Aguilar, 45, pleaded to the Jan. 24 offense of selling methamphetamine. As part of a plea agreement, the state dropped additional charges of possessing a controlled substance with intent to sell and using a two-way communications device to facilitate a felony.

According to an arrest report, detectives with the Bradford Drug Task Force used a confidential source to buy four grams of the drug for \$100 from the defendant’s Durden Street home.

The buyer and seller facilitated the transaction through text messages.

The following day, deputies were parked on County Road 18 in Hampton when they saw a tan Nissan SUV run a stop sign at Central Avenue.

Reporting officer Detective Andrew Johnson wrote in an arrest report that Aguilar was a passenger in the SUV. When officers approached the vehicle, the 45-year-old was reaching underneath the passenger front seat.

A vehicle search yielded several bags of methamphetamine

with a total package weight of 43 grams.

Deputies also found a digital scale, a glass pipe, two metal spoons, and two pills, later identified as Clonazepam.

The state charged the defendant with trafficking in methamphetamine, evidence tampering, possession of a controlled substance without a prescription and possession of drug paraphernalia.

The sentence issued by Circuit Judge James M. Colaw included Florida’s minimum mandatory terms for trafficking in methamphetamine, which for possession of the drug between 14 and 28 grams carries a minimum sentence of three years.

The defendant’s prior convictions include driving with a suspended or revoked license, burglary of an unoccupied structure, felony petit theft, dealing in stolen property, use or possession of drug paraphernalia, expired tag registration over six months, trespassing and obtaining property by issuing a worthless check.

Charges dropped for man who threatened restaurant manager

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE — The State Attorney’s Office in Bradford County notified a judge on June 6 that it had withdrawn charges against a Starke man accused of threatening an IHOP manager with a chair.

State Attorney Brian Kramer’s office entered a nolle prosequi notice for Ronald Eugene Willis Sr., 56, who on Feb. 6, 2022, was arrested for aggravated assault, resisting an officer, and simple assault.

According to an arrest report, an IHOP manager told police that Willis was creating a disturbance within the restaurant. When the manager asked him to leave, the defendant picked up a chair as if he would strike the employee with the furniture piece.

Starke police described the defendant as angry when they encountered him, adding that

Willis declared that he was not going to jail, and he resisted their attempts to handcuff him.

Three months after the defendant’s arrest, his case was transferred to mental health court, and a treatment plan was filed with the court. Since then, he has made monthly appearances before County Judge D. Tatum Davis to review the status of his treatment.

Charges dropped for 8

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE — The State Attorney’s Office announced it had dropped misdemeanor charges against eight defendants on June 6.

Edward Lincoln Davis, 47, Rachel Gonzalez Garcia, 36, Dianna Renee Hankerson, 49, Debra Lynn Julius, 60, Luis Lopez-Parra, 42, and Traci Denise Mays, 29, all had pending charges related to driving with a suspended or revoked driver’s license or driving without a valid license.

Prosecutors also dropped charges against Daniel Powers Sadler Jr., 25, who was cited on April 10 for attaching a tag not assigned, and Ashley Nicole Eden Stone, 29, who was cited on March 28 for leaving the scene of an accident with property damage more than \$50 without giving information.

Starke man killed in Newberry crash

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Telegraph Staff Writer

STARKE — The Florida Highway Patrol said a Starke man died when his vehicle left the road, hit a gate, and overturned in Newberry on Thursday, June 8.

According to an FHP news release, the driver was traveling south at 3:35 p.m. on Southwest 298th Street when his vehicle left the road, went onto a grass shoulder, struck a gate, and overturned into a tree line.

According to the report, the driver was pronounced dead at the scene and was not wearing a seatbelt.

Faith Presbyterian Women’s Luncheon

BY GAYLE ANNE BONE
Faith Presbyterian Church

On May 20, Faith Presbyterian Church had its annual Presbyterian Women’s Luncheon. Forty-six women attended the event. There was a spring theme, and each table hostess decorated her table around a specific theme such as dragonflies, blue flowers, nautical theme, etc.

Entertainment was provided by Two Parts Harmony, One Part Grace a musical duo from Faith (Gayle Bone and Leatha Davis) as well as a singalong with Faith Choir Director Laurel Lamme.

The buffet included various salads and quiche, and the dessert cart had three delicious selections. There was a silent auction to raise money for the various missions the Presbyterian Women support such as Lake Area Ministries (in Keystone Heights), Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center (located just outside Keystone



Gayle Bone and Leatha Davis (Two Parts Harmony, One Part Grace) pictured entertaining at the luncheon.

Heights on S.R. 100), Mission of the Dirt Road (on S.R. 100 going toward Palatka), See You at the Top at Keystone Heights High School, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Days for Girls Intl. and many more.

The Boy Scouts were a big help. As one of their service projects, they bussed tables and

served desserts at the luncheon. It was so nice to be served, and their youthful exuberance lent an air of joy to the event. Everyone seemed to enjoy their afternoon and the event brought in \$1,400 for the various missions.

Raises and grants on Hampton agenda

Water rates up 5%

BY CAROL MOSLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

HAMPTON — The “old business” of the Hampton City Council meeting for May addressed the accomplishments since the April meeting.

Wayne Hilton of Josh Davis Swamp Cutters said that 100 yards of specialized new mulch was added along with reshaping of the ballpark. To the delight of the council, Dar Pro Solutions delivered and installed two new bleachers, instead of the one that was anticipated as a donation, and even poured a new pad for them to sit on. The new security system has also been installed to prevent the kinds of destructive activity that have taken place in the past.

Hilton said there is an issue with four-wheelers causing damage and suggested that a rail fence might be a deterrent. The council approved an expense of up to \$5,000 for materials so that Hilton can get started on

construction. If the fence doesn’t work as a deterrent, the hope is that identifying the violators using the new security system will put an end to the problem.

The new business began with Clerk Mary Lou Hildreth relating the results of the water rate study, which resulted in the Council agreeing that a 5% increase in water bills is reasonable. The increase will take effect on Aug. 1.

Next was a presentation and request for salary increase from city bookkeeper Merri Lee Hornick. She informed the council that she has been very conservative in requesting raises over the eight years of managing the financial books for the city. Hornick said she spends about 38 hours per month keeping the accounts in order and working closely with the clerk to produce informative reports.

She asked for a \$2 per hour raise from \$32 per hour to \$34. She also requested one hour of personal time for every 20 hours worked. The council expressed appreciation for Hornick’s work

and approved the increase as requested.

Hildreth approached the podium to address the Council and pointed out that she wears many hats in her position and is much more than just the clerk. She addressed her additional responsibilities as administrator and, in fact, also serves as grant writer for the city. Hildreth produced a list of grants received since 2014 along with some that are currently pending.

She said she is dedicated to the successful management and future potential of Hampton. Hildreth works about 25-30 hours per week and now makes \$33 per hour. She requested an increase of \$5, raising her salary to \$38 per hour.

The council agreed that Hildreth fills numerous important roles and that her grant writing skills have been crucial to accomplishing the city’s goals. They also expressed appreciation for her management of the general city business. Her request was approved by all members in attendance.

June sobriety checkpoints announced

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

4-H offering Summer Day Camp

The Bradford County 4-H program is offering a Discover 4-H Summer Day Camp for youth ages 7-12 who live in Bradford County on July 25 and 26. Camp times are 8:30 am. to 3 p.m. each day and will take place at the Ag Extension office located at 2266 N. Temple Ave. in Starke.

Participants will explore a variety of the project areas offered in 4-H including animals,

plants, sewing, cooking and art. Hands-on activities and field trips will be a part of the fun. Cost is \$20 per child, and registration is limited to 20 youth. The camp is open to current 4-H members and those who have an interest in finding out more about the youth development program. (Non-members must register for 4-H before attending.)

4-H and event registration can be found at v2.4honline.com. Call the Bradford County Extension Office at 904-966-6224 for further information.



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Keystone's Answers in search of new location

Relocating won't affect services, which are still provided for women in crisis as well as men

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Answers Health and Resource Facility has been a fixture at 115 N.E. Commercial Circle in Keystone Heights for 10 years, but will be seeking a new location from which to provide its services as its final day at its current location is Aug. 15.

JoAnna Weldon, Answers CEC/founder, said she was informed that Clay County has decided to use the building for another agency. Answers rents the building from the county.

"Before we occupied this building, this building was

vacant for a number of years. It just sat empty," Weldon said.

Though she admitted she was surprised that another agency could be viewed as providing services more important than what Answers is doing, Weldon said she and her team can be nothing but grateful for what the county has done for Answers.

"We are very thankful that the county has provided for us as many years as they have at this location," she said.

Answers does have a Starke office (512 W. Weldon St.), which is open on Wednesdays. Weldon said that office may be used to a greater extent during this time of transition.

"Starke has always been so welcoming to us," Weldon said. "I think there's a really special opportunity to serve Starke more thoroughly because we're only there one day a week."

Still, Weldon would love for Answers to find another location in Keystone, saying, "I do not



Answers Health and Resource Facility CEO/ Founder JoAnna Weldon (far right) is pictured at the Keystone office at 115 N.E. Commercial Circle. Weldon is pictured with (l-r) employees Kevin Green and Samantha Putnam and Answers Administrator Shannon Southam. Putnam is a part of the GROW (Generating Real Opportunities for Women) program. Photo by Cliff Smelley.

want our clients to feel like we have abandoned them."

No one will be abandoned. In fact, Weldon said this period of

transition will not put a temporary halt to Answers' work.

"There will not be a lapse in services," she said.

Helping women still part of wider scope

Answers began with the mission of helping young women who became pregnant, inspired by Weldon's personal experience with teen pregnancy. Services were eventually expanded to meet other needs, such as providing help to single mothers struggling to raise their children or to assist women who are experiencing domestic violence.

The expansion of services, in turn, led to focusing efforts on crisis prevention so that women didn't find themselves in such situations. Answers also devoted efforts to helping women post-crisis, such as with a life-skills curriculum, consisting of such topics as Depression and Suicide, Home Health, The Monster of Debt, Credit Scores, Successful Family Living and Finding a Job.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Answers

found itself serving a broader clientele. For example, the organization temporarily took over the daily operations of Lake Area Ministries' food distribution since Lake Area Ministries' directors were elderly and instructed to stay home due to health concerns.

Weldon said Answers basically got put on the map as a place for community members to go to for help. During that time, a lot of people needed help, which is how Answers began working with — and continues to work with — male clientele.

"It took us a little bit of time to figure out how to effectively minister to men because that's not something we had ever done before," Weldon said.

One of the ways in which Answers assists men is with its Volunteer Internship Program. Men volunteer to work at the Answers office, providing

See ANSWERS, page 12

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UCHS unveils Coach Jimmy Thomas Court

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Jimmy Thomas coached the Union County High School boys basketball program to a number of championships, including two at the regional level that propelled the 1975 and 1994 teams to the Final Four, so it seemed only fitting that the basketball court be named after the program's all-time winningest coach.

Coach Jimmy Thomas Court was dedicated during a June 9 ceremony in which Thomas was surrounded by family, friends and former players.

"Tonight, we gather to dedicate this basketball court to a man who has given much over the years in the pursuit of building boys into young men through the game of basketball," Superintendent of Schools Mike Ripplinger said.

Alving Merriex, the current UCHS head coach, and Artha "Rerun" Reeves, who played on Thomas' 1994 Final Four team, lifted the cloth to reveal the name of the court underneath, with Thomas' name being a replica of his signature.

"If you ask me, it's probably about 12 years too late, but we're here now," said Reeves, who graduated from UCHS in 1996.

Thomas, who went 278-224 during three different stints at UCHS and has more than 400 career wins, thanked everyone for being in attendance and talked about how special Union County is to him.

"You don't know what it means to me," Thomas said. "It's a great place. You people, you players, faculty and staff, our cheerleaders and our students — everybody has made this a great place. One of the best places in my lifetime."

Thomas, a 1965 UCHS graduate who was a standout athlete (he went on to play football at the University of Tennessee), added, "I'm so honored by all this."

A special moment was even more so because of the fact the UCHS gym is already named after T.S. Thomas — Thomas' grandfather who served 36 years as Union superintendent of schools.

Current Superintendent Mike Ripplinger said it was fitting considering the "many years of dedication and service to Union County" given by Thomas and his grandfather, adding that it was an example of how much the Thomas family loves Union County and its people.



Union County Head Coach Alving Merriex (left) and Artha "Rerun" Reeves, who played on Jimmy Thomas' 1994 Final Four team, unveil the name of the court. Jimmy Thomas and his wife, Teena, are also pictured (background, left), as is Superintendent of Schools Mike Ripplinger (background, center). Photos by Cliff Smelley.

Thomas coaching stints at UCHS were 1972-78, 1988-94 and 2019-22. When Thomas returned for the third time, Ripplinger said he asked one of the players how things were going with the new coach. The response was, "Mr. Rip, I've never worked so hard in my life." "For those who played for Coach, they understand more than the rest of us how

competitive he is and how he wanted his players to be the best they could be," Ripplinger said. "He did not like mediocrity and wanted his teams to compete and play like champions each time they hit the floor."

Thomas also had coaching stops at Bradford, Citrus, Clay, Dunnellon, Keystone Heights and Lecanto.

When Thomas went to Citrus (in Inverness), the program hadn't had a winning season in 10 years.

"Needless to say, that trend was not acceptable," Ripplinger said. "After taking over the program, he turned it around, and over a stretch of six seasons, they won 98 games, two district championships and advanced to the regional finals. They won three conference championships, and in a two-year period totaled 49 wins, with only six losses."

One of Thomas' Citrus teams went 26-3, which is the best season in program history.

During the coach's final stint at UCHS, Ripplinger said he observed how Thomas was doing more than teaching his players the game of basketball. He said

the coach was preparing them for the game of life.

Reeves agreed with that, saying the most important things he learned from Thomas was to be committed and to give your best effort. During tough times in his life, Reeves said he could hear Thomas' voice in his head, saying, "Keep going. Don't stop."

He passes on the same advice and lessons he received from Thomas to his children, Reeves said.

"All I can say to you is without you, I wouldn't be who I am today," Reeves said. "I wouldn't be where I'm at today."

Merriex had family members who played for Thomas, so he knew what Thomas was like as a coach before he joined his staff as an assistant.

"Even if you didn't touch the floor, it was still expected of you to give all you had," Merriex said.

Merriex had joined the coaching ranks, working with the UCHS girls program. He admitted his passion for coaching was in a decline when he stepped down and decided to focus

solely on his son and his athletic pursuits.

Then, when Thomas returned to UCHS for his third stint, he asked Merriex if he'd like to be his assistant coach. Merriex said he didn't hesitate to say yes. In his mind, he had always viewed Thomas as "the coach god." It was his opportunity to learn from the best. He even told his wife that he was going to forget everything he knew about basketball and take in everything he could from Thomas.

When the two men met to go over the expectations of the assistant coach, Merriex was ready to pick Thomas' brain about the Xs and Os of the game. He asked Thomas the key to being a successful coach. Thomas' answer had nothing to do with the sport: "Whatever you do, keep your family involved. The most important thing you can ever do is not lose your family to sports. Your family is the most important thing."

Merriex said Thomas did give him some coaching advice, but it had nothing to do with great

See COURT, page 13



Jimmy Thomas (center) is pictured with three players from his two Final Four teams: his son David (second from left), Joe Maxwell (second from right) and Artha "Rerun" Reeves (far right). Abraham Perry (far left) didn't get to play on the 1975 Final Four team, but he was a senior on the 1974 team that missed advancing with a one-point loss in the regional finals.

2 Thomas-coached teams reached state semifinals

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Jimmy Thomas led the Union County High School boys basketball team to the Final Four twice, with the first time occurring in just his third season as the Tigers' head coach.

Thomas, who was recently honored with UCHS naming its basketball court after him

(see related story), coached the Tigers to their first-ever district championship in 1973-74 — his second season as coach. That team went on to lose the Region 2-2A championship game 57-56 to Hawthorne, ending its season with a 20-6 record and one win short of the state semifinals.

The Tigers weren't denied a trip to state the following season.

First, they won the District 6-2A championship, defeating Episcopal 63-44 in the semifinals and then Hamilton County 60-58 for the title.

Boyzie Perry and Gerry White each scored 16 points in the semifinal win. Joe Maxwell also scored in double figures with 11 points.

"They were bigger than we

were, but they were slow," Thomas said of Episcopal.

In the championship game, Walter Brooks scored eight points in the first quarter, while Perry had 10 in the second quarter, helping Union take a 34-20 halftime lead. Hamilton County outscored the Tigers 38-26 in the second half. Hamilton's Earl Speigth scored 14 of his 26



Walter Brooks scored in double figures in the Tigers' district championship and two regional playoff games in 1975. He poured in 20 in a regional semifinal win over Santa Fe.

points in the fourth quarter.

It was a tie game when Maxwell sank a jump shot in the final seconds to give the Tigers the win.

Maxwell finished with 19 points, 10 of which occurred in the final quarter. He also had 14 rebounds.

Perry and Brooks scored 17 and 14 points, respectively, while White and David Banks each scored four. Banks also had 12 rebounds.

Steve Stoutamire added two points.

It was then on to the Region 2 tournament, where the Tigers' first opponent would be Santa Fe. The teams split two games in the regular season. Before the game, Thomas was quoted as saying, "If we beat Santa Fe, I think we will the tournament." He added, "We are going to try to pressure them because they are bigger than we are, but I look for us to control the boards."

Perry and Brooks scored 20 and 17 points, respectively, as Union won 72-61.

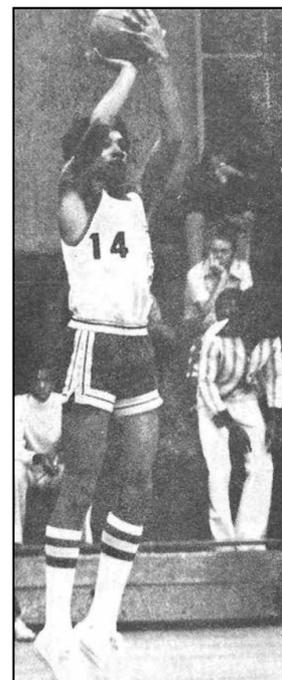
That put the Tigers in the Region 2 championship game against Palm Coast. Maxwell led four players in double-digit scoring in a 68-61 win.

Maxwell, who had 19 points, scored 13 of his team's 15 first-quarter points. Stoutamire, who had 13 points, scored eight straight in the second quarter as the Tigers were able to into halftime leading 34-29.

Brooks scored 12 points and grabbed 12 rebounds, while White had 10 points. Banks and Perry added eight and six points, respectively.

Thomas said his team played "inspired ball," adding, "I think

See TEAMS, page 14



Joe Maxwell scored 26 points in the Tigers' state semifinal loss to Lake Weir in 1975. He scored 19 points in each of the team's district and regional championship games.

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Donations fully fund BHS football locker room renovation

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Bradford High School's varsity football program got its first win of the season early this year in the form of a renovated locker room that came about because of the generosity of individuals and businesses.

The project involved the installation of new, wood lockers as well as new flooring and carpeting.

Most players were kept out of the locker room as work was being done so that they could be surprised by the finished product, though several contributed their labor to the project and saw it progress. All players were allowed to see the finished project on April 28.

"There are a lot of people who love football, there are a lot of people who love this community, and there are a lot of people who love you all," Head Coach Jamie Rodgers told his players. "This is the evidence of that."

Jimmie Clark, the president of the Tornado Touchdown Club, said the project — which he estimated would've cost approximately \$300,000 — was totally funded through donations. Bradford County



Tyler Berry takes photos of the renovated locker room. Photos by Cliff Smelley.

Superintendent of Schools Will Hartley spoke to the players before they saw the finished locker, saying, "Guys, in a small town that's budget-strapped, this kind of stuff does not happen. This is a community pouring into you. They believe in you. They love you."

The lockers were purchased from and installed by List Industries. Thanks to the company's Al Sanchez, who is the father of BHS football player Aldon Sanchez, the lockers were purchased at a discount.

"If you like your locker today, make sure you hug his neck and

tell him thank you," Clark said to the players.

Miracle Automotive and Towing made a monetary donation toward the project and transported the lockers to the school. Teal Tile Carpet One donated flooring and its installation, Jackson Building Supply donated additional materials and Drew Wainwright donated in the form of labor.

Andrews Septic and Well (also known as Andrews Site Prep) contributed money late in the project which helped it to be fully funded through donations.

Clark recognized each donor in a meeting with the players before they saw the renovated locker room, but also made sure they realized that Andrews Septic and Well is a business located in Union County.

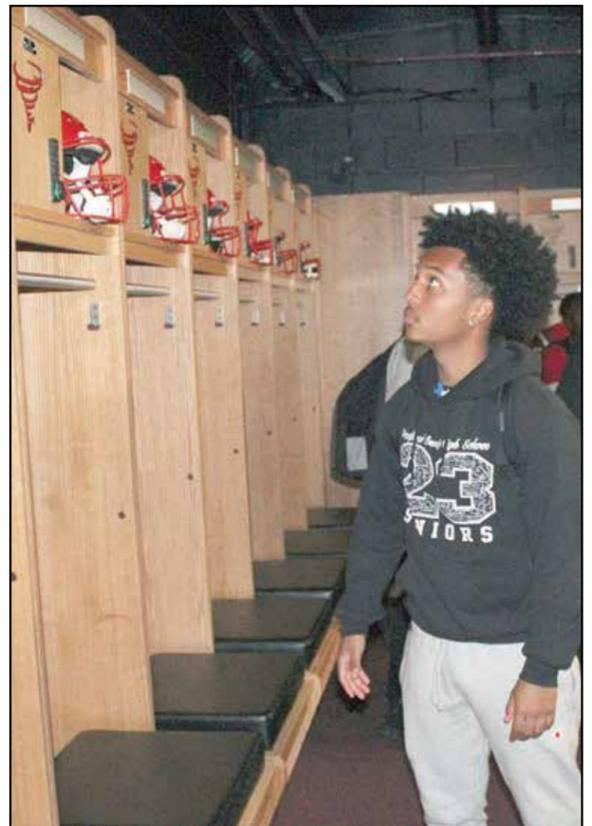
It's not the first business outside of Bradford County to support the BHS football program in some way.

"We've got people outside of Starke showing love," Clark said. "They're doing it for two reasons. One, because sometimes you just have to ask. Number two, because you are doing

See BHS, page 15



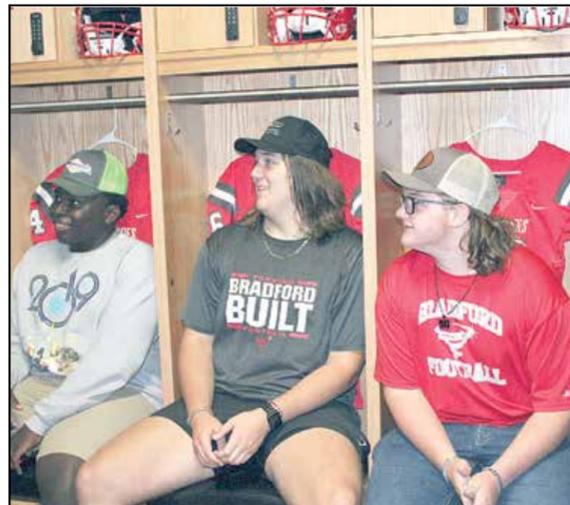
Barron Walden checks out the security compartment of one of the new varsity football lockers.



Marcus Hewitt takes a look at a locker's top shelf, which includes a security compartment and a place for a helmet.



Athletic Director Sampson Jackson (left) points out some of the locker features to Elijah Lawrence.



Players (l-r) Jaden Hankerson, Jacob Ferguson and Ridge Bradley enjoy a seat as they look around.

McFarland earns all-conference softball honors at Dakota State

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Telegraph Staff Writer

Hannah McFarland, a 2022 Bradford High School graduate, earned North Star Athletic Association All-Conference softball honors during her freshman season at Dakota State University.

McFarland played in all 49 games for the Madison, South Dakota, school, batting .338, which ranked her sixth on her team. She hit two triples and eight doubles, driving in 25 runs and scoring the second-most runs on the team with 45. Her on-base percentage of .418 was fourth best on the team.

Defensively, McFarland played in the outfield. She recorded 111 put-outs and had a fielding percentage of .943 — second-best on the team.



Hannah McFarland recently completed her freshman season at Dakota State, where she earned second-team North Star All-Conference accolades. File photo by Cliff Smelley.

One of McFarland's best games occurred in a 16-12 win over Presentation on April 8. She went 4 for 4 with two RBI and three runs scored. It was one of two games in which McFarland had four hits. She went 4 for 6 with three doubles, three RBI and four runs in a 27-20 win over Viterbo on April 16.

McFarland had four other games in which she had at least two RBI: a 16-7 win over Waldorf on March 24 (4 for 5 with a double, two RBI and three runs), a 9-5 loss to Waldorf on March 24 (2 for 4 with a double and two RBI), a 16-10 win over Viterbo on April 16 (two RBI, two runs) and an 18-16 loss to Bellevue on April 27 (three RBI, run).

In all, McFarland had multiple hits in 14 games.

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Obituaries

Samuel Allison Sr.

Samuel "Sam" Allard Allison Sr., 70, of Starke, died Thursday, June 8, 2023, in Newberry.

Survivors are his children, Samuel (Jolene) Allison Jr., Tanya Royal and Ayden Allison; four brothers; three sisters; and many extended family members and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, June 17, at 12 p.m. at Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel. Visitation will be from 11 a.m. until 12 p.m. at the funeral home prior to the service.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services and Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel, Starke, 904-964-5757.

Jack Chitwood

Jack M. Chitwood, 79, of Keystone Heights passed away at his home Monday, May 29, 2023, following an extended illness. He was born Aug. 19, 1943, to the late Jackson "Herman" and Jennie (Wilson) Chitwood in Columbia, South Carolina. He grew up in Denver, Colorado. He worked in the publishing field for many years and was a licensed series 7 stockbroker. At the age of 79, he turned his life over to God and became a member of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Sampson City. He was a sports fan and enjoyed watching golf and, especially, the Florida Gators and SEC Football. He also enjoyed following and debating politics. He loved living in Keystone Heights. He enjoyed his pets tremendously and he enjoyed music of all kinds. Andrea Bocelli was his favorite singer. Most of all, he loved being with his family and friends.

He leaves behind his loving and dedicated wife of many years, Sallie Anne Slora; their two daughters, Michele (Thomas) Lundeen of North Palm Beach and Melanie Joy Chitwood of Santa Monica, California; along with cousins in South Carolina, Louisiana, and an uncle in Texas.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, June 25, at Cornerstone Baptist Church with Pastor Joey Hay officiating. In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate memorial gifts to be made to the Cornerstone Baptist Church Building Fund, 13797 S.W. C.R. 227, Starke, 32091.

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



PAID OBITUARY

Evelyn Griffis

"Well done my good and faithful servant" were the words said to Evelyn Norman Griffis in the early morning of Tuesday, June 6, 2023, surrounded by her loving family. She was born on Aug. 24, 1935, in Clay Hill to Leonard and Sara Padgett Norman. She was a dedicated secretary for Prudential Insurance company for many years as she helped manage the office and keep everything running smoothly. In her free time, she pursued her passion for music, especially bluegrass and gospel genres. She played the double bass with great skill and enjoyed sharing her gift with others. She was devout in faith and a God-fearing woman who loved the Lord dearly. She taught Sunday school and led countless songs at church. Her passion for music extended beyond the church walls, as she often participated in local events and festivals that celebrated traditional American music. She cared deeply for her family and took every opportunity to spend time with them. She had a tender heart, which she extended effortlessly toward everyone she encountered, making an indelible mark on their lives. Preceding her in death were her parents, Leonard and Sara Norman; her husbands, Vernon W. Griffis, Frederick Prescott, and Charles Mosley; brother, Carl Norman; and her grandson, Jeremy Griffis.

She is survived by her daughters, Renae (Jim) Freeman, Rita (Ace) Acevedo, Rose (Richard) Odom, and Regina (John) Rizer; grandchildren, Michelle (Chip) Evernden, Jonathan (Christy) Rizer, Amanda Rizer, Chad (Crystal) Griffis, Jared Freeman, and Kayla (Channing) Dobbs, 15 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren: siblings, Floyd "Bud" (Beadie Mae) Norman, Rachael Prescott, John Norman; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

A service to honor her life was held Monday, June 12, at Pine Grove Congregational Methodist Church, Raiford. She was laid to rest immediately following the service at Long Branch Cemetery, Maxville.

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

PAID OBITUARY



Betty Lou Halle

Betty Lou Halle, passed away at the age of 95 in her home, surrounded by her loving family on Tuesday, May 30, 2023. She was born on March 16, 1928, in Ashland, Ohio to the late Laurence and Camelia Herbrand. She spent most of her life serving various institutions in different capacities and was devoted to her hobbies and interests. She dedicated several years of her life to working for the sheriff's office in Daytona Beach. Later she worked for the State Board of Accountancy in Gainesville. Her final calling was at the Union County Public Library, where she thrived in her role. When she wasn't working, she loved nothing more than curling up at home with a good book or two. Her love for reading seemed endless, and any recommendation from her was always worth taking up. Her passing has left a void that will be felt deeply by all who knew her. However, everyone who knew and loved her can also attest to the fact that she lived a full life bursting with friendships, accomplishments, and little victories over hurdles along the way.

Those who were closest to her included daughters, Nancy Purdy of Holly Hill and Sandra Brown of Alachua; son, William "Larry" (Darlene) Kelly Sr. of Lake Butler; and grandchildren, Samantha, Sabrina, William Jr., Martin, and Damaryce.

The family would like to offer a special thank you to the staff of the Union County Public Library for their love and support. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the library in her honor.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Archer-Milton Funeral Home. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com



PAID OBITUARY

Harold Kelly

Harold Kelly, of Lake Butler, passed away on Monday, June 5, 2023, in Gainesville. He was born on Jan. 28, 1934, in Richmond, Kentucky to the late Cleve and Betty Kelly. He served his country with honor by enlisting in the US Army and serving for three years. He was highly respected for his commitment to serving and protecting the community during his many years with the Department of Corrections. In his free time, he enjoyed working in his barn and playing with his beloved dog. He was preceded in death by his parents; his daughter, Kathy Anderson; and stepson Steve Thornton.

A man who valued family above all else, he leaves behind a wife of 42 years, Evelyn Kelly; and six stepchildren: Stanley Thornton of Lake Butler, Shirley Godwin of Parrish, Shelton "Huey" (Pauline) Thornton of Jasper, Roger (Cara) Thornton of Ozark, Missouri, Rita (Bobby) Douglass of Lake Butler and Selena Thornton of Lake Butler. Additionally, he is survived by his siblings, Shelby (Janet) Kelly, Louise Young and Donna (Al) Wolfe; as well as 15 grandchildren; and numerous great-grandchildren.

Family and friends gathered to pay their respects at Lake Butler Church of God, located at 480 SW Third St. in Lake Butler on Friday, June 9, for a funeral service.

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

PAID OBITUARY



Walter Schneider III

Walter "Wally" Edward Schneider III, of Keystone Heights, passed away on Friday, June 9, 2023, at the age of 50. He was born on June 11, 1973, in Jacksonville to Walter E. Schneider Jr. and Carrie Clemons. He was a gentle giant with a kind heart. He had a quick wit and loved telling jokes that would light up any room he entered. He had a generosity that knew no bounds and he was always willing to lend a helping hand to those in need. He loved his family dearly and spent as much time with them as he could. He will be remembered by those who knew him as a mama's boy who never hesitated to show his love for her. Wally lived life to the fullest, enjoying every moment of it. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. He was preceded in death by his father, Walter Edward Schneider Jr.; and his nephew, Lance Thompson.

He is survived by his mother, Carrie Proctor of St. George, Georgia; his son, Wes (Brittany) Schneider of Lake Asbury; along with grandsons, Chase and Silas Schneider; his sister, Tina (Rodney) Thompson of St. George, Georgia; brother, Darrell (Lena) Schneider; nieces and nephews, Heather Hunter, Hodges Ethan Hunter, Kalee (Daniel) Gould, Palina Schneider, Taia Schneider; great-nieces and nephews, Hadlee Gould, Brantley Graham, and Gavin Graham.

Services will be held on Saturday, June 17, at Archer-Milton Funeral Home in Lake Butler. The visitation will begin at 11 a.m. followed by a Celebration of Life service at 12 p.m. Interment will take place at New Hope Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery in Alachua immediately following the service. The family would like to invite everyone to join them at Ronnie and Joann Denmark's barn to celebrate Wally's life following the service, 5488 N.W. C.R. 229, Starke.

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

PAID OBITUARY



ANSWERS

Continued from page 9

custodial, maintenance and landscaping services. During that time, Answers staff can teach men the skills necessary to be a good employee — showing up on time, doing a good job, etc.

Weldon said men who reach a "satisfactory point" then transition into doing community service under the leadership of Frank Bondurant.

"He does umpteen things around the community," Weldon said. "He's always building a wheelchair ramp or doing some repair on someone's home. He's been willing to take that man and basically allow him to work in a volunteer position for him out in the community."

Weldon said when Bondurant "deems them responsible and ready," Answers will then provide job references for those men.

"We can do that confidently, which is so great," Weldon said. "It's a win-win for our businesses and for the men who are needing jobs."

Apparently, there has been talk in the community that Answers has been neglecting its services to women while assisting men, but that is far from true. Answers had 5,175 client contacts in 2022, with 78 percent of those clients being female.

"We're still doing our pregnancy testing, our ultrasounds — nothing has really changed except for the expansion of serving men and women," Weldon said.

In fact, Weldon said Answers is helping women even more now, since every woman has a male in her family, whether he's a spouse/partner, son or father.

"As we're helping women, if we're also helping the man in that relationship, then we know that we're actually doing a better job now — a more thorough job — because it's the whole family unit that is being helped."

One of the programs Answers has for women goes by the acronym of GROW, which stands for Generating Real Opportunities for Women.

"That's when we have clients who we just see a lot of potential in," Weldon said. "Really, the only things they're lacking are some of the skills they need to be a good employee. They need a resume and just some experience, so we bring them on as an actual employee here and do kind of on-the-job training to get them ready for that next step in their life."

Samantha Putnam has been working at Answers as part of GROW for approximately a year. She was no stranger to Answers, having been a client in the past. Putnam said Weldon asked her about becoming part of GROW several times before she finally said to herself she was ready to do something different with her life.

"It's been great," Putnam said. "I worked in a gas station. I was good with people, but I had no real skills. I had no office or career skills at all. I feel like I have gained a good handful of especially office skills and refined a lot of my people skills."

Weldon has seen a difference in Putnam, saying, "I just see a grace and a confidence in Samantha that was cultivated in this culture of being able to be who you are and also having room to figure out who you are. We're always figuring that out along the way."

What GROW has done for

Putnam is help her grow into a strong woman, Weldon said. Putnam said that wouldn't have come about if not for Weldon and the other women she's surrounded by at Answers.

"It has been great being around strong, brilliant women," Putnam said.

Whether it's women or men, the bottom line is a lot of people are in need in the community that Answers serves. In 2019, the number of Answers' client contacts was 825. That number has increased to 1,858 in 2020 and 2,601 in 2021 before eclipsing the 5,000 mark last year.

Relationships

If the team at Answers can help someone overcome a crisis or to get their life moving in a positive direction, it's a great feeling. Weldon said the greater feeling is when she and her Answers team really get to know clients and have their own lives enriched in the process.

"What I've learned is as you build relationships with each individual, they have so much to pour into us as people," Weldon said. "Their life experiences, their compassion because of what they've been through, their humanity because of whatever their situation is — they're teaching us to be better humans."

Weldon said to think about how many people you pass and never talk to during a day. However, when you do take that step to talk to someone, Weldon said you may find yourself saying, "Wow. I'm so glad I met that person."

"That's how we feel about the people we meet through this ministry," Weldon said.

And "ministry" is the right word. Answers is a faith-based ministry. Weldon said by her and her team being bold in their faith, they can help people in crisis lose their fear.

"There aren't a whole lot of resources around to help you," Weldon said, "but if you can at least go home and lay your head down on your pillow at night and know you have a secure relationship with God, then you're going to be OK. You're going to have peace. You're going to have comfort."

With the increase in client numbers comes an increase in the opportunities to share the love of Christ, Weldon said, adding, "When you have that many people walking through the door, and they're hurting, and they're broken, there's a vulnerability there. They just want hope. That's something that we can give them. Even if we can't pay an electric bill, or we can't help with a financial need, our clients don't leave here without being prayed for and hugged and just encouraged on their way out the door."

A team effort

In light of the fact that some people seem to think Answers is no longer serving women, Weldon stressed that she is available to talk to people about their concerns and answer any questions they have.

"I would hope our friends in the community would just come," Weldon said. "We'll have lunch. We'll have a meeting. We'll have time together. Ask any question you want. We'll do our very best to explain where Answers is and how we're doing what we're doing."

Weldon encourages people to take a close look at what Answers is doing. More importantly, by doing so, she hopes people will believe that Answers is worth supporting.

Feedback is always welcome. In fact, it can help Answers as it strives to improve every day.

"We're always going to need that input, and we're always going to have room to grow and to do a better job," Weldon said, adding, "We're a team. We need our community to support us and to help us do this work. We can't do it all on our own. The more people we have who join forces with Answers, the more people we're going to be able to help. That is the goal."

To contact Answers, call 352-473-1000. The Keystone office is open Mondays and Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. The Starke office is open Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

You can also visit findanswersnow.org for more information.

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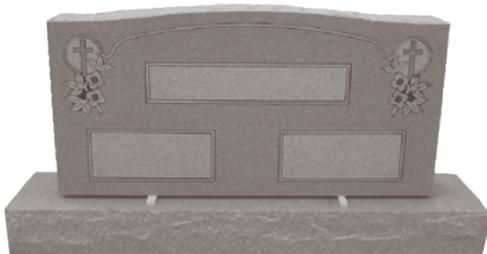
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Jimmy Thomas shares some of his memories. He had three stints coaching the Tigers, totaling 16 years: 1972-78, 1999-94 and 2019-22.

you that you can be.”
“I appreciate you, Coach. It’s such a great honor to walk and come behind you,” Merriex said.

Reliving memories

After the court’s new name was unveiled, Thomas took his turn to say a few words. He said what was characteristic of all the teams he coached was the players’ willingness to buy into what he was asking of them.

Thomas said that what also stood out about most of his teams was that they consisted of multiple players who could end up being the leading scorer on any given night. That was a good thing for a coach who believed in team unity and that every player was important.

“Everybody is a part of the team. Everybody contributes. Everybody is important,” Thomas said.

In Thomas’ second season during his first stint at UCHS, the Tigers went 20-6, winning their first district title in 10 years. Union fell one game shy of advancing to the Final Four, losing 57-56 to Hawthorne in the Region 2-2A final.

“That was a really great ball club,” Thomas said.

The 1975 team was only 1-4 at the Christmas break. Thomas said he lost a lot of players from the 1974 team and believed he was moving too fast with the ’75 team.

“I think with that group, I really was going too fast putting things in,” Thomas said. “We



Artha “Rerun” Reeves told Thomas, “Without you, I wouldn’t be who I am today. I wouldn’t be where I’m at today.”

stopped, and we went through everything again.”

Union went on to win 18 of its next 22 games. The Tigers won their second straight district title as well as the Region 2 championship, defeating Flagler Palm Coast 68-61 to go to the Final Four.

The team that awaited the Tigers in the state semifinals was a Lake Weir team that was 32-0, ranked number one in the state and was nationally ranked as well. Thomas recalled how a coach said to him that the Region 2 final didn’t matter because the winner was only going to go on to lose to Lake Weir in the state semifinals. Thomas said he asked the coach if he had ever been to the Final Four. After the coach said he hadn’t, Thomas said, “Me either, but I want to go.”

Union faced a Lake Weir team that had players who were 6-8,

6-6 and 6-5. Lake Weir had two guards who eventually played professionally.

The Tigers’ Joe Maxwell, who would normally be a guard, played center that year since he was the team’s tallest player. He was 6-1 or 6-2.

Thomas said he gave his team two choices: They could try to slow the game down or play their normal game, which got to them to that point, and “see what happens.”

It wound up being a 99-63 loss for the Tigers. Thomas quipped that his team did slow the ball down at the end to keep Lake Weir from reaching 100.

Still, from a 1-4 start to the Final Four equated to a special season.

“They had the biggest hearts,” Thomas said. “They played so well together and worked like a dog.”

Thomas guided the Tigers to the Final Four again during the final season in his second stint at UCHS. He said two seasons prior to that postseason run, he had a team composed of just one senior, four sophomores and one freshman. That 1991-92 team went 6-20, but improved to 17-11 in the following season.

Then, came the best record in school history as the 1993-94 team went 27-8, defeating Clay 66-52 to win a district title and defeating P.K. Yonge 52-44 for a regional championship and a trip to the Final Four. The Tigers lost 78-57 in the state semifinals.

“That team had five players

average double figures (in scoring),” Thomas said. “We had some come off the bench and score eight or nine. We could score, but we played really, really great defense.”

Thomas said he had the blessing of coaching his son David on that team. He also mentioned such players as Reeves, Kia Bethea, Darren DeLoach, Maurice Griffin and Andrew Zow. Thomas said Griffin “might be the best guard who’s ever come through here,” despite being small in stature.

Thomas’ third stint began with an 11-10 record in 2018-19, followed by a 2-22 record in 2019-20. Thomas said the Tigers struggled with various issues in that two-win season.

“It’s hard,” he said of coaching a team during a losing season. “It’s also sad when you see the kids giving everything, and they just can’t pull it off.”

The Tigers bounced back in 2020-21, taking a 12-6 record into the district tournament. The team entered that tournament having dealt with late-season COVID issues among players. Union lost 73-62 to Trenton.

“We got down by 20 points and cut it to one,” Thomas said.

“We ended up losing. We kind of ran out of gas.”

During Thomas’ final season, Union got off to a rough start, but then won six straight before losing in the first round of the district tournament to finish 11-12. Thomas said the six-game winning streak included a win



Current UCHS Head Coach Alvin Merriex said he relished his opportunity to learn from “the coach god” and that it was an honor to succeed Thomas after his final season.

over an Inerlachen team that had won 10 straight and a win over Middleburg in which the Tigers held the Broncos to two points in the third quarter and no baskets in the fourth quarter.

His third stint also included the opportunity to coach Corey Hill, who already was a good offensive player before also becoming a great defensive player. The 2019 graduate was selected to play in the North-South All-Star game — the first UCHS player to do so in 25 years.

In closing Thomas again expressed how much it meant for him to see those who attended the ceremony in his honor.

“I appreciate each and every one of you for coming and some of you for making a long trip,” he said. “Thanks for being here.”

COURT

Continued from page 10

plays he had drawn up on the sideline during his long career. Thomas told Merriex, “Learn how to connect with your players. They don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care. Make sure that they know that you love them and that you’re in this for the right reason.”

Another bit of advice Merriex said he received from Thomas was to simplify the game.

Merriex said when he was given the opportunity to take over as head coach when Thomas stepped down, he told Thomas that he had big shoes to fill. He said Thomas told him, “Don’t try to fill my shoes. Walk in your own shoes. Be you. Be the best

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Tri-County Classifieds

Bradford County *Telegraph* Lake Region *Monitor* UNION COUNTY *TIMES*

Classified

INDEX

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

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40 Notices

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY. All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 in which makes it illegal to advertise “any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.” Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate in which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination, call HUD toll-free at 1-800-669-9777, the toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275. For further information call Florida

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Starke, FL 32091
904-964-6216
TDD 771

This Institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider

Commission on Human Relations, Lisa Sutherland 850-488-7082 ext. #1005

47 Commercial Property (Rent, Lease, Sale)

RENTAL SPACE on Walnut Street near Post Office. \$675/mo. 1st, last & security. Call 904-364-9022 for appt to see.

50 For Rent

WE HAVE 2 OR 3 bedroom MH, clean, close to prison. Call 352-468-1323

NEWLY RENOVATED 2BR/2BA SW, 3BR/2BA DW. 18 acres for sale. Starke-Lake Butler.

1-678-438-6828

ROOMS for rent. Apply in person at Magonia Hotel, located on Walnut Street, Starke.

53 A Yard Sales

HUGE YARD Sale-Juniors, womens, mens clothing, household items. Friday 8am. 22512 NW CR 200 A, Lawley. Next to Tatum Bros. Sawmill.

57 For Sale

BABY Ducks...\$5 each. Pick up in Starke. Text for pictures or more info. 904-796-0781

Kirby Vacuum Cleaner with complete Carpet Shampoo System.

Works great and comes with all accessories and manual. \$75 pick up in Starke. Text for pictures or more info. 904-796-0781

CENTRAL pneumatic 110 lb abrasive blaster with soda blast kit \$100. Vertical blasting cabinet with abrasive material \$100. Both never used. Call 386-496-1299 and leave message.

FREE WOOD master woodworking multi tool 5 in 1. Needs some work, must pick up. Call 386-496-1299 leave a message.

65 Help Wanted

SIDE JOB w/flexible hours. House cleaning & errands. Ref. required. Apply by phone only between 9am-6pm. 352-281-0260

of the Director of Public Works. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: General knowledge of tools and equipment used in building and grounds maintenance. Ability to drive and operate equipment. Excellent customer service skills and work with the public in a courteous manner. Ability to hold a Department of Corrections Certification is

mandatory. Occupational hazards and standard safety precautions to comply with local, state, and federal regulations and procedures. Educational Requirements: High School diploma is required as a minimum. Drug test, physical exam, criminal history background, ability to be Department of Corrections certified must be passed. Florida driver’s license is required. Physical demands: Stand, walk, climb, stoop, kneel, crawl, reach, and bend. Lift 50 pounds. Hours of work will be 30 hours typically Monday through Thursday. Please submit applications no later than June 23, 2023 at 5PM. Submit a letter of interest, application, and resume to: City Manager 200 SW 1st Street Lake Butler, Florida 32054.

ONLINE AUCTION ONLY

Truck, Trailers and Heavy Equipment Premier Home Investments, LLC Assignment for the Benefit of Creditors Case No.23-CA-01734 Auction ends: Tues, June 20, 2023 at 10:00 A.M. Assets located in: Ocala, FL 34473 Featuring: 2019 Ford F-450 Super Duty STX Crew Cab 4WD Pickup Truck, 2019 Kubota KX080-4SR3A Mini Excavator, 2020 Big Tex 22BN HD 25' Tandem Axle Dual Wheel Gose-neck Trailer, 2018 Big Tex 16TL 22' Super Duty Tilt Bed Tandem Axle Equipment Trailer, 2020 Big Tex 70CH 20' Tandem Axle Car Hauler, 2018 Load Trail 14' Tandem Axle Dump Trailer, 2019 Load Trail 14' Tandem Axle Dump Trailer, 2018 Barrentine 8' Single Axle Utility Trailer and more. Registration, catalog, photos and terms available at www.moeckeructions.com Photos: 06/19 by appointment. Call for details (954) 252-2887 (800) 840-BIDS <https://moeckeructions.com/2023/06/05/truck-trailers-and-heavy-equipment/>(No onsite attendance) AB-1098 AU-3219, Eric Rubin

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Call 904-964-7295
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Jimmy Thomas is pictured with his 1994 team, which consisted of Kia Bethea, Adam Jonas, Sylvester Warren, Artha "Rerun" Reeves, Darren DeLoach, David Thomas, Michael Williams, Andrew Zow, Prince Alexander and Maurice Griffin.

TEAMS

Continued from page 10

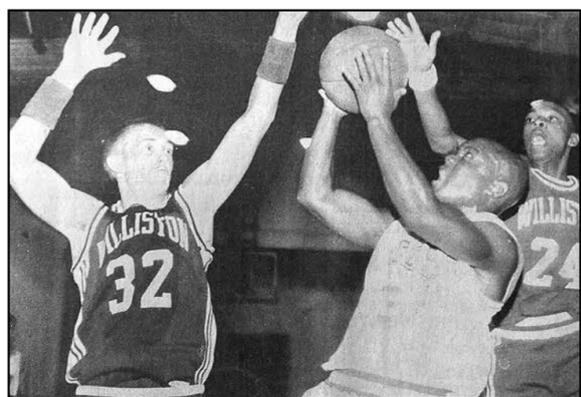
we had a great team effort. Every kid on the team was mentally ready to win, and they wanted to prove themselves."

The win sent the Tigers to the Final Four, where their state-semifinal opponent would be the

state's number-one team — Lake Weir. Lake Weir, which was also nationally ranked, had a 32-0 record.

Maxwell had an outstanding game with 26 points and 10 rebounds, but the Tigers lost 99-63.

"They were just better than we were talent-wise, but very few people thought we were going to amount to anything,"



Kia Bethea (center) scored 21 points in the Tigers' district championship win over Clay in 1994.

Thomas said. "Getting to state is something our players can be proud of."

It was an incredible season after the Tigers entered the Christmas break with a record of 1-4. They then won 18 of 22 games to finish 19-8.

Lake Weir would go on to defeat St. Thomas Aquinas 51-35 to win the state title.

The following season saw Union win its third straight district title and again play for a regional championship. The Tigers couldn't make it to the Final Four two years in a row, losing 76-70 to Santa Fe in overtime. Union finished with a 15-12 record.

Tigers set wins record on 1994 run to state tourney

After the 1975-76 team won the program's third straight district championship, the Tigers went through a bit of a drought. It wasn't until 1993-94 that Union won another district title.

That happened to be the sixth and final season of Thomas' second stint at the school.

It was quite a way to go out as the Tigers made a run to the Final Four for the first time since 1974-75 and put together a 27-8 season that still stands as a program best.

The Tigers advanced to the regional playoffs off a 66-52 win over Clay in the District 8-2A championship game. Union trailed by one point before outscoring the Blue Devils 24-9 in the fourth quarter.

Kia Bethea scored 10 points in the fourth quarter and finished with 21. Also scoring in double figures were Artha "Rerun" Reeves, 17, David Thomas, 15, and Maurice Griffin, 11. Griffin

also had six assists, while Reeves had eight rebounds.

Union's opponent in the first round of the regional playoffs was a Trinity Christian team that was 5-15. The Conquerors, who lost twice to the Tigers in the regular season, played tough, but Union ultimately won 64-57.

"It's hard to beat a team three times in one season," Thomas said. "They made us play ball tonight."

Trinity took a 14-5 lead into the second quarter, but was outscored 25-8 in the second quarter. Thomas made two three-pointers in the second quarter, which also featured a number of rebound putbacks by Reeves as the Tigers led 30-22 at the half.

Thomas, who made four three-pointers in all, finished with 21 points. Reeves and Griffin had 14 and 13 points, respectively, while Bethea had 12.

Union kept advancing with a 62-50 win over Lafayette. Bethea and Griffin scored 16 and 15 points, respectively, while Reeves had 10. Thomas just missed reaching double figures with eight points.

That win put the Tigers in the regional championship game, which they won by defeating P.K. Yonge 52-44.

Thomas put the 6-7 Reeves and the 6-6 Darren DeLoach on the court at the same time, which he said paid dividends. DeLoach usually came off the bench to give Reeves a breather.

The Tigers made 7 of 10 free throws down the stretch to seal the deal.

Union got 15 points from Thomas, 11 points from Griffin and 10 points from DeLoach. Bethea and Reeves each had eight points.

The Tigers returned to the Final Four, losing 78-57 to Port St. Joe in the state semifinals.

Union led 19-18 going into the second quarter, but was outscored



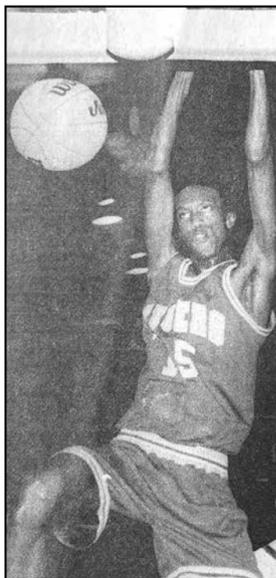
Jimmy Thomas works the sideline during the 1993-94 season. The team's 27 wins is still a school record.

17-13 in the second quarter and 19-15 in the third quarter.

"Then, we just ran out of gas in the last quarter," Thomas said, alluding to Port St. Joe's depth. The Sharks went seven deep on their bench.

The Tigers were led by Thomas' 15 points — all of which came from beyond the three-point arc. Bethea and Griffin each had 12 points and five rebounds. Andrew Zow and Reeves scored eight and six points, respectively.

Port St. Joe went on to beat Cardinal Newman 67-61 for the first of five state championships the Sharks won over a six-year span.



Artha "Rerun" Reeves scored 17 points in the Tigers' district championship win in 1994. He scored a total of 32 points in Union's three regional playoff games.

Legal Notices

Legals for the week of June 15, 2023

BRADFORD

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY CASE NO.: 2022-CP-000015 PROBATE DIVISION IN RE: THE ESTATE OF FREDERICK R. PHILLIPS, DECEASED.

FORMAL NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The administration of the estate of FREDERICK R. PHILLIPS deceased, whose date of death was August 20, 2021, is pending in the Circuit Court For Bradford County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 4779 SE 109th Street, Starke, FL 32091 to-wit:

A parcel of land containing 1.08 acres, more or less, and lying in the SE 1/4 of Section 20, Township South, Range 22 East, Bradford County, Florida, said parcel being more particularly described in Exhibit A attached. Parcel Indication Number: 04943-0-00405.

The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below:

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

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

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is April 27, 2023.
CHARLES DANIEL SIKES
817 W. MacMahon Street
Starke, Florida 32091
Email: dan.sikes30@gmail.com
(904) 964-2020
Florida Bar No: 0886858
Attorney for Petitioner
Tina Phillips
Personal Representative
4/27 12tchg 7/13-BCT

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED

Notice is hereby given that FIG 20, LLC the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and names in which it was assessed are as follows:
Certificate Number: 156
Year of Issuance: 2021
Parcel Number: 00832-0-00207
Case Number: 04-2023-TD-0009
Description of Property: Legal Description: Lot 7 Deerfoot Trail A parcel of land situated in Fractional Section 3, Township 7-South, Range 21 East, Bradford County, Florida; said parcel being Lot 7 of an unrecorded map of Deerfoot Trail as surveyed by Joseph G. Knapp, Registered Land Surveyor and being more particularly described as follows:

Commence at a concrete monument at the Intersection of the Northerly right of way line of the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad right of way, with the West line of said Section 3 and run N 00 deg 27 min 29 sec W, along the West line of said Section 3 a distance of 281.57 feet to the North right of way line of Edmonds Drive; thence run S 71 deg 18 min 56 sec E, along said North right of way line 555.68 feet to the point of curve; thence run Southeasterly along said Northerly right of way line with a curve concave Southwesterly, said curve having a central angle of 41 deg 11 min 31 sec, a radius of 437.05 feet and an arc length of 314.21 feet to the point of reverse curve; thence run Southeasterly along said North right of way line with a curve concave Northeasterly, said curve having a central angle of .41 deg 11 min 31 sec, a radius of 371.05 feet and an arc length of 266.76 feet to the point of tangency; thence run S 71 deg 18 min 56 sec E, along said Northerly right of way line 727.64 feet to the point of curve; thence run Easterly along said Northerly right of way line with a curve concave Northerly, said curve having a central angle of 22 deg 40 min 00 sec, a radius of 1147.09 feet, an arc length of 453.80 feet and a chord bearing and distance of S 82 deg 38 min 56 sec E, 450.84 feet; thence run N 86 deg 01 min 04 sec E, along said Northerly right of way line 94.36 feet to an iron pipe; thence run S 00 deg 13 min 40 sec W, along said Northerly right of way line 16.04 feet to an iron pipe; thence run N 86 deg 01 min 04 sec E, along said Northerly right of way line, 963.92 feet to an iron pipe and the point of beginning; thence continue N 86 deg 01 min 04 sec E along said Northerly right of way line, 115.00 feet to an iron pipe; thence run N 03 deg 58 min 56 sec W, 195.13 to the waters of

Lake Sampson; thence run S 82 deg 59 min 17 sec W, along said waters, 115.16 feet to a point bearing N 03 deg 58 min 56 sec W, from the point of beginning; thence run S 03 deg 53 min 56 sec E, 189.04 feet to the point of beginning

Also any lands lying between the above described Lot and the waters of Lake Sampson/ Together with all riparian and littoral rights thereunto appertaining. Name in Which Assessed: WILLIAM L SUMMERLIN & YVONNE I SUMMERLIN
Name on last tax roll, if different: YVONNE I SUMMERLIN
All of said property being in the County of Bradford, State of Florida. Unless such certificate or certificates shall be redeemed according to law the property described in such certificate or certificates will be sold to the highest bidder at the BRADFORD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, STARKE, FL on 07/12/2023, at 11:00 AM, or any subsequently scheduled sale date.

Denny Thompson, Clerk Of The Circuit Court Bradford County, Florida BY: Kanetra Jenkins Kanetra Jenkins, Deputy Clerk Contact the Tax Deed Office at 904-966-6280 to obtain the amount necessary to redeem.
DATED: May 31, 2023
DATE OF PUBLICATION: JUNE 8, 2023; JUNE 15, 2023; JUNE 22, 2023, June 29, 2023
6/8 4tchg 6/29-BCT

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED

Notice is hereby given that ATCF II FLORIDA - A LLC the holder of the following certificate, has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and names in which it was assessed are as follows:
Certificate Number: 11
Year of Issuance: 2019
Parcel Number: 00084-0-00000
Case Number: 04-2023-TD-008
Description of Property: That portion of the following described property which lies South of State Road No. 100:
A strip of land on the West Side of the East half of Southeast Quarter Eight Hundred Ten Feet wide at North end and Three Hundred Twenty Five feet wide at the South end, the Eastern boundary line of which strip of land runs from the half section line running East and West of said Section Two in a Southwestern direction to the South boundary line of said section, all of said land lying and being in Section Two, Township Six South, Range

Twenty East.
Name in Which Assessed: CREIGHTON STANLEY PADGETT AS LIFE ESTATE & SUSAN RAY Name on last tax roll, if different: RAY SUSAN (DEC) ET AL
All of said property being in the County of Bradford, State of Florida. Unless such certificate or certificates shall be redeemed according to law the property described in such certificate or certificates will be sold to the highest bidder at the BRADFORD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, STARKE, FL on 08/02/2023, at 11:00 AM, or any subsequently scheduled sale date.
Denny Thompson, Clerk Of The Circuit Court Bradford County, Florida BY: LISA BRANNON, DATED: June 8, 2023
DATE OF PUBLICATION: June 15, 2023, June 22, 2023, June 29, 2023, and July 6, 2023.
6/15 4tchg 7/6-BCT

Notice is hereby given:

Willie Berry JR
Last known address of:
2364 Lake St
Lawtley FL 32058
You are hereby notified that your eligibility to vote is in question. You are required to contact the Supervisor of Elections, in Starke, Florida, no later than thirty (30) days after the date of this publishing. Failure to respond will result in a determination of ineligibility by the Supervisor and your name will be removed from the statewide voter registration system.
Published one time in the Bradford County Telegraph
Amanda Seyfang
Bradford County Supervisor of Elections
P. O. Box 58
945 N. Temple Ave., Suite C
Starke, FL 32091
Date: June 12, 2023
6/15 1tchg-BCT

UNION

The City of Lake Butler is offering to sell a partially completed steel building on 11 +/- acres located off SR-121-S within the city limit. The exterior is complete. The survey, description and location may be viewed on the City of Lake Butler web page at cityoflakebutler.com. Building utilities are served by a deep well and septic system. It will be necessary to share a common driveway with the City of Lake Butler. The building interior contains a total of 5,200 sq. ft., of which 4,151 sq. ft. is located on the ground floor. Zoning is currently C I, commercial Intensive, but can be changed to suit the buyer if necessary. The City has established

a minimum bid of \$400,000. Photos of the exterior and interior can be found on the City's Web page. Sealed bids will be received until 10:30 AM on June 20, 2023, when they will be opened and read aloud. Any bids received beyond this time and date will be returned unopened. The City reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids for any reason.
6/8 2tchg 6/15-UCT

NOTICE OF SELF STORAGE SALE
Please take notice Lake Butler Mini Storage, located at 1015 SW 3rd St. Lake Butler, FL, 32054 intends to hold an auction of goods stored in the following units in default for non-payment of rent on Lockerfox.com. The sale will occur on June 29, 2023 at 11:59 am on Lockerfox.com. Unless stated otherwise the description of the contents are household goods and furnishings.
Units #54 Kiara Randolph
All property is being stored at the above self-storage facility. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice. See manager for details.
6/8 2tchg 6/15-UCT

PUBLIC NOTICE

Suwannee River Economic Council, Inc. announces the availability of \$350,000 of State Housing Initiative Program Plan funds for Union County, FL for the fiscal year 2023/2024. Application packets are available on our website at www.srecinc.org/ programs, or you may contact our SHIP Administration office via email at sbarrington@suwanneec.net to have an application emailed to you. Applications will be accepted beginning August 1, 2023 and will continue to be accepted until June 30, 2024 or until funds have been exhausted. For additional information please contact Stephanie Barrington, SHIP Director, 386-362-4115 extension *242, or sbarrington@suwanneec.net
6/15 1tchg-UCT

CITY COMMISSION MEETING

The City of Lake Butler City Commission will hold their regular commission meeting on Tuesday, June 20, 2023 at 6pm at the City Commission Chambers located in City Hall at 200 SW 1st Street Lake Butler, FL 32054.
6/15 1tchg-UCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA CASE NO.: 2023-CA-51

ARTHUR WAYNE ROBERTS, PLAINTIFF,
VS.
GEORGE SPIRES, ZONA SPIRES, ETTYE ANDREWS, ANNIE CROFT

ROBERTS, S. R. ROBERTS, D. R. ROBERTS, INA C. ROBERTS, AND UNKNOWN TENANTS, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, CREDITORS, TRUSTEES, AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING ANY ESTATE, RIGHT, TITLE, OR INTEREST BY, THROUGH, OR AGAINST GEORGE SPIRES, ZONA SPIRES, ETTYE ANDREWS, ANNIE CROFT ROBERTS, S. R. ROBERTS, D. R. ROBERTS, INA C. ROBERTS, OR IN THE REAL PROPERTY HEREIN DESCRIBED, DEFENDANTS.

NOTICE OF ACTION

TO: GEORGE SPIRES, ZONA SPIRES, ETTYE ANDREWS, ANNIE CROFT ROBERTS, S. R. ROBERTS, D. R. ROBERTS, INA C. ROBERTS, AND UNKNOWN TENANTS, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, CREDITORS, TRUSTEES, AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING ANY ESTATE, RIGHT, TITLE, OR INTEREST BY, THROUGH, OR AGAINST GEORGE SPIRES, ZONA SPIRES, ETTYE ANDREWS, ANNIE CROFT ROBERTS, S. R. ROBERTS, D. R. ROBERTS, INA C. ROBERTS, OR IN THE REAL PROPERTY HEREIN DESCRIBED.

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to quiet title to real property has been filed for the real property specifically described as:
Part of the SE 1/4 of NE 1/4 of section 32, Tp. 5 S. R. 19 E., Bradford County, Florida, beginning at the SW corner of the SE 1/4 of the NE 1/4, of said section thence N. 0 degrees 30' W. 423 ft. to post #3, thence N. 89 degrees 45' E. 777 ft. to post #2 thence S. 0 degrees 30' E. 423 ft. to post #1, thence S. 89 degrees 45' W. 777 ft. to beginning, containing 7.5 acres more or less.

A copy of the COMPLAINT is located in the Court file. You are required to serve a copy of your written defenses/ response, if any, to it on VERONICA R. OWENS, ESQ., attorney for the PLAINTIFF, whose address is 189 S Lawrence Blvd, Keystone Heights, FL 32656, on or before July 8, 2023 (30 days from the date of first publication), and file the original with the Clerk this Court, 55 W. Main Street, Lake Butler, FL 32054, before service on the PLAINTIFF or immediately thereafter. If you fail to do so, a default may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. Copies of all court documents in this case, including orders, are available at the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office. You may review these documents upon request.
Dated: June 9, 2023
Kellie H. Rhoades
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
BY: C. Norman
Deputy Clerk
6/15 4tchg 7/6-UCT

Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700

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Advertising: John R. Tillman
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Interim agent helping run BC Extension office

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
Telegraph Editor

STARKE — The UF/IFAS Bradford County extension office is stabilizing after an unsuccessful search for a new 4-H agent and the departure of the previous director.

Cindy Sanders has taken over for Samara Purvis as interim director of the Bradford County office. Sanders is a livestock agent and the director of the Alachua County Extension Office.

Sanders has been in the Alachua County office for 22 years, but she told county commissioners last week that she

is not exactly new to Bradford County. She served as interim director in 2019-20 as well, helping to get the office fully staffed.

Sanders said that is the priority once again. The application period for two staff positions closed at the beginning of June, and Sanders said they would start interviewing as soon as possible. With 20 applicants for each post, she said they should have a good pool to choose from. The search for a new agent will follow.

“Thank you all for having me. We’re going to try to get back on track,” Sanders said, discussing the importance of the relationship between the university extension and the county.

“That’s one thing I believe in as an extension agent and director is that relationship with the county, because we know you are very important to make an extension a successful program in each and

every county,” she said.

There is an extension program in all 67 Florida counties. Sanders, who grew up in 4-H, said the extension program is in her blood. For every dollar a county invests, the return is \$10 to \$15 to the citizens of the county, she said.

She acknowledged the work of Luke Harlow, the county’s horticulture and small farms agent, and Lizzie Whitehead, the agriculture and natural resources and livestock agent. Their work over the summer includes participation in summer camps, including the 4-H day camp they will put on in July.

A meeting for 4-H volunteers has been scheduled for the end of June, and while they don’t have a full-time 4-H agent on board, they are working together to keep the program running.

“You all have a strong 4-H program and two good agents,

fairly new agents in the county, that can do great things,” Sanders said.

For more information, please call 904-964-6224.

New area code will change dialing procedure

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
Telegraph Editor

A new area code that will be assigned beginning next year will not affect existing numbers but will affect how those numbers are dialed.

According to a letter from CenturyLink, the area code 324 will be overlaid in the same northeast Florida region covered by the 904 area code, which

includes all or part of Nassau, Duval, Baker, Bradford, Clay, St. Johns and Union counties.

Because two area codes will serve the same geographic area, a new 10-digit dialing procedure will be required. Dialing all 10 digits of the phone number will be necessary to complete a call. The area code, once unnecessary when making a “local call,” will now be essential.

Beginning July 31, CenturyLink said callers should begin using all 10 digits, although there will be a grace period during which calls will still be completed when dialing seven numbers.

However, beginning Jan. 29, 2024, callers must dial all 10 digits, even when making calls in the same area code. If you dial seven numbers, a recording will instruct you to hang up and dial again using the area code.

This will all take place in advance of numbers being issued with the new 324 area code. New lines will be assigned that area code beginning Feb. 26, 2024.

Please note that the new dialing procedure may require some automatic dialing technology to be updated. Examples include life safety systems, security systems, call forwarding settings, voice mail services, etc., if they are currently programmed to dial a seven-digit telephone number.

Note:
—your telephone number, including your current area code, will not change.

—the price of a call will not change due to the overlay.

—a local call will remain a local call regardless of the number of digits dialed.

—you can still dial services like 911 using three digits.

BHS

Continued from page 11

special things. People know who Bradford County football is right

now.”

It was important to Clark that those who donated to the project were in attendance. He wanted the players to see who they were and to remember them for what

they did.

“Every time you see them, I just want you to say thank you,” Clark said. “When I was your age, I didn’t think about things like that. That’s what we’re all

trying to accomplish — to build up good, young men who think about things as they’re happening to them.”

Hartley told the players that showing their appreciation isn’t

limited to just a verbal thank you.

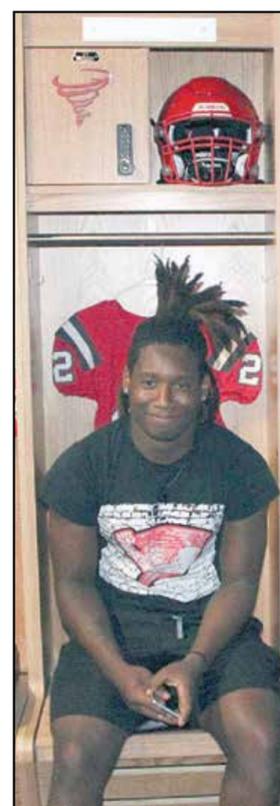
“With all the money and time and stuff that was put into that (locker room) for you, I truly hope that you show these people here how grateful you are by taking care of that,” Hartley said. “What they all want in return is a team that plays hard and respectfully. So, please, make sure you show them that gratitude by taking care of this because this does not happen in every small town. I promise.”

Rodgers made sure he recognized Clark for having the vision of such a project.

“He probably doesn’t want me to say this, but I’m not sure we would’ve pulled this off without Jimmie,” Rodgers said.

Clark said the players could thank him by caring for others the way he cares about them.

“You all know that I love you,” Clark said. “Just do me a favor. You don’t have to love the locker room like I love you, but choose somebody in your life to love just like I love you guys. You do that, and the world will be a better place because you’ll put something into it instead of just taking from it.”



Brian Clifflin takes a seat at one of the new lockers.



A view of some of the new lockers, along with a TV, last year’s district and regional championship trophies and the team’s Chucky doll. The project, which also consisted of painting and installing new flooring and carpeting was fully funded by donations of money and labor.

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Ea.

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THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED
15	16	17	18	19	20	21



From the Desk Of . . .
Dale Woodruff
Fair Manager

The 2023 Bradford County Fair was a success thanks to so many different people and organizations. Without everyone pulling together this 2023 event would not have been possible.

There were many challenges to overcome but with the help of the Associations (*Cattle and Swine*) and volunteers we were able to conquer the ground curve ball that was thrown at us to stage the midway in the parking lot!

I would like to encourage the active participation of community members in YOUR Fair Association - attend the Annual Meeting and have a voice in YOUR Fair Association. While no board members are being elected this year there are exciting announcements to be made!

I also encourage the Seniors from Bradford and Union Counties that participated in the 2023 Fair to apply for one of the Bradford Agricultural Fair Scholarships. Pick up your application TODAY, time is very limited, see below.

Respectfully,
Dale Woodruff



SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PICK-UP AT THE FAIR OFFICE, BRADFORD & UNION IFAS OFFICES - DEADLINE TO TURN THEM IN IS July 1st

**Bradford County Fair Association, Inc.
d/b/a Bradford Agricultural Fair**

ANNUAL MEETING

**Fairgrounds, Building 1, 6:00 PM, Wednesday,
June 21, 2023. Annual dues will be collected.
Open to All! Call 904-964-5252 for Reservations,
with the number attending the dinner!**

Thank you!

<p>Your 2023-2024 Board of Directors</p>			
Bob Milner President	James Balkcom Vice-President	Tammie Woodard Secretary	Chuck Kramer Treasurer
Warren Carver Board Member	Christopher Page Board Member		Roxane Rosier Board Member
Tommy Crosby Board Member			

WITH SINCERE APPRECIATION THE BRADFORD AGRICULTURAL FAIR THANKS THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THE 2023 BRADFORD AGRICULTURAL FAIR - WITHOUT THEM IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE SUCCESS THAT IT WAS.

- | | |
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Rep. Charles Brannan
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Bradford County Board of County Commissioners
Bradford County EMS
Bradford County Sheriff's Office and Explorers
Bradford County Telegraph
Bradford County Tourist Development Council
Bradford Cowboys Athletic Assoc.
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