

Bradford County Telegraph

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Milner denies wrongdoing as fair investigation drags on

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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Bob Milner, former president of the Bradford County Fair Association and a related nonprofit, is finally responding to reports of an investigation launched against him, former fair manager Dale Woodruff and the board they worked with.

In May, Sheriff Gordon Smith leveled allegations with the realization that in the final days of their leadership, assets including land and money were transferred from the fair association to the Friends of the Bradford Agricultural Fair and Youth Shows, a nonprofit set up to support livestock organizations and offer scholarships. In doing so, the former fair board allegedly deprived the county of those assets, which was settling the organization's more than \$1.7 million debt in exchange for fairgrounds ownership, assuring the land and facilities would not go up for sale.

At the time Smith called it a scheme to defraud the county. "They set out to pull a fast one on y'all. They didn't tell us in negotiations they were planning on cutting out eight acres of property and taking equipment and possibly cash," he said. The sheriff said information they were collecting would be turned over to the state agriculture commissioner and Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

On Aug. 25, Milner, who has since retired from leadership of both fair-related boards, reached out to the Telegraph, saying FDLE had never launched an investigation into the allegations presented to the county commission and providing the name of an agent to contact. That agent pointed the Telegraph to the agency's public information office. To date, there has been no response to a request for information about the investigation.

Asked this week what he knew about the status of the investigation, Sheriff Smith said it is ongoing, with his office doing the legwork and feeding information to FDLE.

"FDLE is giving us some assistance, but they have been swamped out of our region with all of this stuff going on," he said, which, according to him, included undocumented immigrants. They have also recently met with the state attorney, who has requested additional documentation. The sheriff said minutes from the fair board meetings have not been turned over, repeating claims they operated out of the sunshine and outside the requirements of the fair association's



Bob Milner

charter. "Whether it's unlawful or not, it's still awful," said Smith, who added that he has encouraged the commission to pursue a civil case.

"Civilly, I think it's pretty cut and dry as a case to win civilly, but we're just making sure there's no criminal acts in regard to it," Smith said. "FDLE didn't open an investigation yet until we get what we think may be there, and if it's not, it's not. We're not going to make something up."

Milner said it's not there, speaking out about what has been said publicly and the lack of due diligence by those "investigating." He called out the unnecessary subpoenas issued for records from himself, Woodruff and former fair treasurer Chuck Kramer. These would have been provided willingly and, according to him, were already available on a computer seized from the fair office. He said the same was true of bank records, but even if not, the sheriff's office could have gotten the records by subpoenaing the bank instead of freezing an account. Milner said this last action placed a board member in danger of a civil suit

when a check written to a Splash Bash vendor could not be cashed. It took a meeting between an attorney and the sheriff to get that straightened out, he said.

"I have no idea why they felt it necessary, other than I think it was a form of intimidation," Milner said. "Number two, I think it was saving face for certain personnel in the county, including the sheriff and sheriff's office, just to show that they could subpoena, that they had subpoena power. The problem with it is, there's nothing there. They have absolutely nothing criminal. Never was, never will be. Nothing illegal, immoral or unethical."

"The fact is, the county, some officials within county, to include the sheriff and a couple of commissioners, still can't get over the fact they didn't get that additional eight acres across Market Road, which was never included in the Gissy note," Milner said. (James Gissy was the private benefactor who saved the fairgrounds from foreclosure the first time.)

The county and its attorneys "weren't smart enough" to figure this out on their own, he said. The attorney who represented the fair association during that time had to clear it up when the county demanded the eight acres be signed back over to the fair association.

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Hospital takes over Lake Butler Badcock

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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Lake Butler Hospital is redeveloping the Main Street building that formerly housed furniture retailer Badcock.

In a news release, the hospital said its new professional center will host hospital office staff, creating more space on the main campus for patient care and medical services.

In addition, the new facility will become a hub for health programs, community events, and wellness resources aimed at helping residents live healthier, fuller lives.

Hospital leaders say the move is just the first step in a series of changes planned to expand access and strengthen care close to home.

Lake Butler Hospital's Director of Public Relations, Reid Carswell, stated that once renovations at both the main campus and the professional center are complete, approximately half of the professional center will be offices, and the remaining space will be available for meetings.

"It will be available to do more events with the public," he said. "I think the overall goal here is to create a more educated, healthier and happier Union County and push our services deeper into the community."



Once renovations at both the main campus and the professional center are complete, approximately half of the professional center will be offices, and the remaining space will be available for meetings.

Keystone Heights man facing DUI manslaughter charge

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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A Keystone Heights man is facing charges, including DUI manslaughter, after a crash in June that claimed the life of his passenger, according to a report from the Florida Highway Patrol.



William Russell Gatlin, III

Investigators allege that William Russell Gatlin, III, then 37, was intoxicated while driving a 2001 Chevrolet Silverado on State Road 100 at approximately 2:37 a.m. on June 15. The passenger, 36-year-old Laryn Tabatha Bradley, who was the registered owner of the truck, was pronounced dead at the scene.

The crash occurred near the Starke city limit on the state highway, as the pickup was heading toward Keystone Heights.

According to an arrest report, which was corroborated by video surveillance from KLC Floors and More, a business located at the corner of the state highway and Starke's L.M. Gaines Boulevard, Gatlin was traveling eastbound on State Road 100 when the truck veered onto the grass shoulder for over 250 feet. Gatlin then overcorrected, causing the

vehicle to spin across both lanes of traffic before crashing into a ditch and striking several trees.

A Florida Department of Law Enforcement crime lab in Jacksonville recovered an event recorder from the truck, which revealed that the pickup was traveling 57 mph in a 45-mph zone five seconds before the crash.

According to the arrest report, after the collision, Gatlin called his ex-girlfriend, telling her he had been in a "bad accident" and believed Bradley was dead. When law enforcement arrived, they found Bradley deceased in the passenger seat. Gatlin was located shortly after, lying face down in a ditch approximately 90 feet from the crash site.

Corporal M. Leroux wrote in the report that rescue personnel noted a "heavy" smell of alcohol coming from the wrecked truck. Gatlin admitted to drinking and told first responders he believed he was the driver. At UF Health Shands Hospital, investigators observed that Gatlin had slurred speech and bloodshot, watery eyes. A hospital blood test showed his blood alcohol concentration was .223, nearly three times the legal limit of .08 in Florida. A separate toxicology test by FDLE resulted in a blood alcohol concentration of .182.

Leroux wrote that during an interview at the hospital, Gatlin said he knew his blood alcohol concentration was over the legal limit when he got into the truck.

"Defendant was remorseful throughout the interview and advised he wished it would have been him," the investigator wrote.

Video surveillance from the Whiskey River Saloon in Starke confirmed that Gatlin and Bradley were there shortly before the crash. The video shows Gatlin getting into the driver's side of the truck before it pulls away. Investigators also noted he left without paying his bar tab, which listed several alcoholic drinks.

While the FHP report refers to the victim as Laryn Tabatha Bradley, an obituary and a roadside memorial across State Road 100 from the Bradford ARC call her Laryn Tabatha McNeill.

The 35-year-old Interlachen woman had six children, and her family said in an obituary that her life revolved around them.

The FDLE lab reported that a mixed DNA profile from the truck's steering wheel was approximately 610,000 times more likely to have come from Gatlin and two other individuals than from three unrelated people.

The FHP arrest report concludes that Gatlin's impairment made him unable to operate a vehicle safely and



While the FHP report refers to the victim as Laryn Tabatha Bradley, an obituary and a roadside memorial across State Road 100 from the Bradford ARC call her Laryn Tabatha McNeill.

that he is "solely responsible for the death of Laryn Tabatha Bradley."

At the time of the crash, the defendant's driver's license was suspended, and he had previous convictions for DUI and driving with a suspended license.

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WORTH NOTING

'Drinking Habits' returns to Starke stage

The comedy "Drinking Habits" will return to the local stage this month with three performances at the Woman's Club of Starke, 201 N. Walnut St.

Dinner theater shows are set for Friday and Saturday, Sept. 19-20, with seatings at 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tickets are \$35.

A Sunday matinee on Sept. 21 will feature popcorn and a drink for \$15.

Get your tickets at Julia's Florist, 326 S. Water St. in Starke, 904-964-7711.

UCHS Homecoming Parade entry

The 2025 Union County High School Homecoming Parade on Friday, Oct. 3, begins at noon following lineup at Sprinkle Field where the parade will begin and end. Application entry forms and requirements are available at the school. The entry fee is \$20. A copy of driver's licenses, vehicle registration and insurance cards must also be presented to Dawn Rizer at the school's front desk.

The deadline is Friday, Sept. 26.

Magnolia Baptist anniversary

Magnolia Missionary Baptist Church in Raiford, led by Pastor Oscar Griffith Jr., will celebrate its 122nd church anniversary at 3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 21. The guest speaker will be Pastor Parnell Ponder of Atlanta. All are welcome.

Bradford Democrats to meet Sept. 22

The Bradford County Democratic Party will meet on Monday, Sept. 22, at 7 p.m., welcoming special guest speaker Pamela Castellana, the Florida Democratic Party's vice chair for political engagement. She is past chair of the Brevard County Democrats, who accomplished record-breaking turnout in 2024, and record-breaking election of local Democrats.

All registered Democrats are welcome and encouraged to attend. Meetings are in the conference room at Capital City Bank, 350 N. Temple Ave. in Starke. For more information, email bradfordcodec@gmail.com.

Revival at Johnstown

Johnstown Baptist Church will host its annual revival Sept. 24-27.

Services will begin at 6:30 p.m. each evening with Bro. Caleb Lindsey preaching. On Saturday, services will start at 5 p.m. with a meal.

The revival will also feature singing and fellowship, and the community is invited to attend.



City breaks ground on new Starke Square stage

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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Officials from Scherer Construction and the city of Starke kicked off the construction of a new stage at Starke Square during a groundbreaking ceremony on Sept. 4.

In comments preceding the shooting of photographs, Scherer Marketing Manager Shelly Vickers introduced Project Manager Adam Steenbeke and Superintendent Kevin Murie, who serves as the project's on-site manager.

Starke Mayor Andy Redding thanked Scherer representatives for working with the city to move the planned location of the stage from the northwest

corner of the one-acre parcel to the opposite side of the square, which had housed Starke's electric generating station until it was decommissioned and demolished.

Redding said he hoped the project would be completed before Christmas so that the city could host holiday events at the square.

The mayor acknowledged the nearly \$1 million price tag for the project as "a lot of money for something like this," but added, "it will be good for our community. In addition to accommodating ambitions for what we have going for Veterans Park, as we move into the future, long-term, this will help tie everything together."

Commissioner Bob Milner stated that although the new stage was approved and funded by a grant prior to his term, he supports the project.

"I think a lot of people may not realize that this stage was



Community leaders celebrate the groundbreaking of a new stage at the Starke Square. Front, gripping a shovel, Starke Mayor Andy Redding, City Commissioner Danny Nugent, North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce President Pam Whittle, City Commissioner-elect Dimple Overstreet, Starke Grants Coordinator Becky May, City Clerk-elect Chrissy Thompson, City Commissioner Janice Mortimer, Starke Director of Operations Stephanie Mann, and Bradford County Manager Scott Kornegay. Back: Starke City Manager Drew Mullins, Scherer Construction Project Superintendent Kevin Murie, City Commissioner Bob Milner, Starke Executive Assistant Lisa Heeder and Scherer Construction Project Manager Adam Steenbeke.

aging, the structure itself, and unfortunately, as you know, we were not able to prove structurally, going forward, if it would support what was planned here."

Milner pointed to the success of similar venues in towns the size of Starke or smaller, particularly Heritage Park and Gardens in Live Oak.

"We want to bring as many events as possible back downtown," he added. "There are some that will have to be

at the fairgrounds and perhaps even another venue, like the Strawberry Festival. It just got too big. It had nothing to do, so much, with the city square and the stage, as it did with parking."

Both Redding and incoming City Clerk Chrissy Thompson underscored the new stage's role in supporting events at the Charles J. Schaeffer Veterans Memorial Park.

Redding said the park will be relocated from its current location, fronting Call Street,

to an area behind the stage. The stage will feature an apron facing the park, serving as an auxiliary stage for park events.

Thompson added, "It will definitely aid Veterans Park for all of the things that the American Legion and the city do together. So, I just think it's an overall great project."

Commissioner Danny Nugent said he hoped the stage and the square would unify the city.

"It's going to be a way of bringing the community

together," he said. "We will be able to use it for veterans. We will be able to use it for Christmas events, any event, and people can also rent it, without really renting it, use it, unless they use power."

Vice Mayor Janice Mortimer said the square will showcase Starke's downtown area and should generate revenue for city businesses. She characterized the stage project as fantastic, progressive, and in the best interest of the city.

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

I would say that the education benefits have been the most helpful. Prior to enlisting I was having trouble finding somewhere I could study and get Certifications without spending vast amount of money. Since enlisting I've been able to take several classes and I am preparing to take multiple certifications and commence my first year on college.

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

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Florida CFO Blaise Ingoglia

CFO serves red meat to Starke Republican crowd

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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Florida CFO Blaise Ingoglia put aside his government official hat at the Bradford Republican Patriots Dinner on Aug. 29. Instead, he reverted to his posture of leading Florida Republicans as their chair, a post he held from 2015 to 2019 before his appointment by Gov. Ron DeSantis to the state's CFO in July.

In 2023, the Spring Hill state senator tried to eliminate the Democratic Party by filing a bill that would have outlawed any party in Florida that previously supported slavery.

During the GOP Patriots Dinner, he advocated burying the opposition party through the ballot box rather than through legislation.

"Democrats have one foot in the grave here in the state of Florida," he told the crowd at the Gov. Charley E. Johns Conference Center. "Our job is to put the final nail in the coffin of the party of pronouns, high taxes, porn in schools and boys playing in girls' sports."

"Leftist Democrats are freaking idiots," he continued. "Now, the good news is that leftist ideology is built on a foundation of crap, and it is buckling under the weight of its own ridiculousness. The bad news is that we, as Republicans, need to do a better job of taking the fight to them and taking the fight to the liberal media."

The New York native and homebuilder announced that he had just become a grandfather. He then offered rules for his party's success in the upcoming election cycle.

Rules for success

— Never Be Number 2: Success requires relentless effort. "Second place is not good enough," he said, urging activists to work tirelessly, knock on doors, and break down barriers to deliver the conservative message.

— Be True to Yourself: He criticized politicians who campaign conservatively but govern differently, succumbing to campaign donations. "Govern the way you campaign," he insisted.

— Protect Florida's Constitution: Ingoglia warned of Democratic attempts to "buy" the state constitution through voter fraud and vague ballot language, citing last year's abortion amendment as a near-disaster that could have led to late-term abortion clinics.

— Be an Optimist: Focus on possibilities, not problems. He likened America's opportunities to a "refillable glass," encouraging Republicans to seize opportunities for growth and innovation.

— Don't New York Our Florida: Ingoglia cautioned against importing liberal policies from high-tax, high-regulation

states, urging voters to reject candidates who bring leftist ideologies to Florida.

— Never Apologize for Faith: He advocated for prayer in schools, support for Israel, and rejecting antisemitism, emphasizing America's Christian roots and the need to reclaim them.

— Protect the Taxpayer: Stressing that government money belongs to citizens, he called for property tax relief in 2026 and urged leaders to trust their instincts over bureaucratic advice.

— Go Unapologetically on Offense: Ingoglia demanded Republicans aggressively challenge Democrats, whose policies he called ridiculous, to deliver the final nail in their political coffin.

— Be Real with People: He emphasized straightforward communication, avoiding political correctness to connect authentically with voters.

— Actively Engage: Ingoglia urged activists to move beyond social media and take action, as "the world is changed by your example, not your opinion."

A warning against complacency

Ingoglia cautioned that Republican success, epitomized by Gov. Ron DeSantis' transformation of Florida into a red state, risks breeding complacency.

He highlighted the danger of Democrats switching parties to run as Republicans, hiding their true intentions.

"We don't need Republicans who actually are Democrats," he said. "Just because they have an R next to their name does not necessarily mean they believe what we believe. So be careful who you trust, because salt and sugar look the same."

Ingoglia exhorted Bradford Republicans to hold the ground won by his political benefactor and keep Florida free, a reputation solidified by DeSantis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Average is the enemy," he declared. "Never give up. Never back down. Fight until you can no longer fight, because Florida is worth fighting for. This state is unlike any other state in the nation. We'd like to keep it that way."

Attorney general recaps first 6 months in office

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier told Bradford County Republicans that he will "fight evil every day" and uphold constitutional principles, even in the face of legal challenges.

The 37-year-old told the crowd at the Gov. Charley E. Johns Conference Center during the GOP Patriots Dinner about his start in politics, stating that while running cross country at the University of Florida, he was offered his first political job after playing catch with Marco Rubio before a Gators football game.

Gov. Ron DeSantis appointed Uthmeier, his former chief of staff, as Florida's top law enforcement officer in February.

Uthmeier said his role as attorney general is the most fulfilling job he's ever had, driven by a daily mission to "do what's right."

He said that in his first six months, his office has arrested over 90 child predators and rescued 25 missing children who endured horrific abuse, achievements he credited to partnerships with Florida's top-tier law enforcement.

"Our children are our most precious gift," he said, urging parents to monitor their kids' social media activity, particularly on apps like Snapchat, which he identified as a primary tool for predators due to its disappearing content.

He said that Tallahassee lawmakers passed laws to restrict apps from targeting children's data, and tech companies pushed back, claiming First Amendment rights. He vowed to fight them in court to retain the intent of the new laws.

Lawsuits filed in first two days

The attorney general said that on his first day in office, he filed a Supreme Court lawsuit to defend President Donald Trump's authority to fire uncooperative executive branch officials, challenging judicial limits on executive power.

"The Constitution says the executive power shall be vested in the president, not some judge nobody elected," he asserted, celebrating recent court victories that have allowed Trump to reduce what he called the administrative state.

Uthmeier said that on day two, his office sued Target over its transgender children's clothing line, arguing it violated the company's fiduciary duties to shareholders, including Florida's pension fund, which lost significantly on Target stock.

"The case is going well," he told the audience, "and I have a feeling we're going to take Target to the cleaners on this one. But the bigger point is that

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Community Dance returns Sept. 20

The fifth annual Lakes Area Community Dance fundraiser is set for Saturday, Sept. 20. Doors open at 7 p.m. at the Keystone Heights Woman's Club, 6747 Woman's Club Drive, off Highway 21. This year, Raftus Brown and the Melrose Horns will perform live, playing popular music from Americana to the 1970s and 1980s. The band has performed at venues in Melrose, Gainesville and the One Love Café.

The Woman's Club provides a welcoming atmosphere, and many people return each year for the fun. For more information, contact robin.frazier@yahoo.com.

Light refreshments, beer and wine will be available for a donation to cover costs. Tickets are \$25 and available at the door; each ticket includes one free drink. Proceeds benefit children in need by providing Christmas gifts for families struggling financially.

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~ By Henry Hodges
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Christians Need to Think Right, Part 4

We have been discussing the fact that Christians need to think right. We are, of course, talking about thinking in line with God's Word. The mind of the Christian is the battlefield. The mind is the place where wars are fought every day. We battle against our own soul suggestions or the fiery darts of Satan. These natural, carnal thoughts for the most part oppose the truth of God's Word. That is why it is so very important to renew your mind with the scriptures. A scripture we ended with last week is 1 Timothy 6:12, "fight the good fight of faith..." which indicates that at times that we will find ourselves in a war. The war that we must fight and win is in the arena of the mind. Most Christians think on the negative side of life. When you begin discussing the mind and the thought life of the Christian some will say this kind of teaching sounds like Christian Science. No, it is not Christian Science, it is Christian sense. Many people constantly think on the problems they are facing and the cares of this life. Many Christians are influenced more by the news media or social media than by the Word of God. These sources of information are usually negative, not in line with the Bible and fuel doubt and unbelief in the heart. There are a lot of Christians who struggle with anxiety, worry, depression and fear. These things are real and dealing with these problems are very challenging. In all honesty, the reason for the struggle is because of the way people think. They do not think according to the Bible so they rarely experience a life of peace. Some people believe worrying and having anxiety is normal. That is wrong thinking, thinking contrary to the Bible. For instance, in Jeremiah 26:3, "You will keep him/her in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, because he/she trusts in you."

First of all, as I have already stated, the reason people worry, fret, and are anxious and depressed is because they are not thinking on the right things. Their mind is programmed contrary to the Word of God. Someone has said, "I can't help but think this way." Well, that is not true. God has told us how to think and what we should think on. If it were impossible for us to think according to the Word of God then God would be unjust. God will never ask His children to do something that they are incapable of doing. In the verse we just read, there are some key things I would like to point out. First, "God will keep you in perfect peace." This implies that this peace is the peace of God and that this peace comes from Him, so it is supernatural peace. Jesus made the same statement in St. John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, MY peace I give unto you..." This is not will power or mind over matter but the supernatural peace that comes from God Himself. The second thing we see in Jeremiah 26:3 is, "Whose mind is stayed on You (God)." The key to walking in the peace that Jesus has provided is to keep your mind on Him, keep your mind on the Lord. You can think on the things of God the same way you think on things that bother you and cause you to worry, fret, and become fearful. Well, someone asked, "how can I think about God and keep my mind on Him?" You do that by thinking on what God said in His Word. Think on the Truth and not the lies of the devil and the negative side of life. I will go into more detail on this point next week. The last thing we see is, if we want to walk in peace we must put our trust in God completely. The end of verse 3 says, "Because he/she trusts in YOU (God)!" We will continue next week. Until then, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

-Pastor Rick

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Reviewing plan and cost of getting sewer to the bypass

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
mark@bctelegraph.com

Starke is moving forward with a less costly plan to run sewer

lines out to the bypass, as well as seek funds from developers to help with the investment.

The city asked Woodward and Curran to evaluate alternatives to extending wastewater service west down State Road 16 (Raiford Road) to serve a forthcoming multiuse development expected to consist of hundreds of homes and commercial space.

The city has also committed to

getting drinking water out to the development.

The first alternative presented by Justin deMello, professional engineer and vice president at Woodward and Curran, involved running 12-inch force main down Raiford Road, upsizing mains on Weldon Road and Todd Road, and upsizing or replacing the Saratoga Heights lift station, which would pump

the wastewater through new 12-inch lines to the treatment plant. With a total force main extension of 22,500 linear feet, deMello called it a “very big project.” It would also replace recently completed work on Weldon and Todd roads in 2024.

“We just upsized those pipes to what they are, but in order to accommodate development to the north or further out and going that direction through Saratoga, it would require those pipes to be replaced and upsized again because of the size of the development potential out at the bypass,” he said.

The estimated cost is between \$8 and \$11.8 million, which includes money for design, permitting, construction, administration and \$2 million in contingency just in case. Money is also built in to cover the search for supplemental funding and legal costs.

The second alternative runs down Raiford Road to Orange Street via Weldon, which provides a more direct route to the treatment plant. It allows the reuse of previous investments, deMello said, and rehabilitation of the Saratoga Heights lift station instead of replacement. That alone cuts \$1 million from the project.

“Instead of upgrading it and making it bigger and making it kind of the central cog that moves wastewater further, you’re now able to just rehabilitate it and then use the same force main down Todd and pump it back the other direction. And then it allows you to abandon the 1950s force main that is from Saratoga back to the treatment plant that runs through neighborhoods and 30 years of tree growth easements. It was a very difficult route to run the Saratoga heights force main back to the treatment plant,” he said.

This plan reduces linear footage to 16,175 and cuts the cost to \$8.26 million. Disruption to Orange Street, which has been recently paved, would be avoided with directional drilling, which would also be required at the railroad crossing.

This would be the preferred alternative, deMello said. Moving forward with the design would require amending the city’s memorandum of understanding with the county. The county has supported the project, committing \$4 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding. Starke has also received

a total of \$4.5 million in funding from the legislature to extend water and wastewater lines to the bypass.

The city will also need to secure additional funding through grants and other alternatives, as well as through developer agreements.

“How do you guys help contribute to this partnership as well? We’re extending utilities. We’re building, upgrading force mains. We’re upgrading lift stations. Help us help you, right? So having those discussions as well,” he said.

The time frame for the wastewater project is 12 months for design and 12 months for construction, and the project could be split into two phases, with construction down S.R. 16 taking place alongside the installation of new drinking water lines.

Wastewater plant nears final completion

Woodward & Curran Vice President and professional engineer Justin deMello announced Aug. 26 the Starke wastewater treatment plant has reached substantial completion.

This follows the commission’s decision earlier last month to pursue liquidated damages again Weiss Construction.

DeMello said the construction contractor is working on a punch list of final items, including the demolition of old facilities. But despite the delayed completion, the project has been a success, he said.

Equipment and material delays stemming from the Covid pandemic contributed to the delay. There have, however, been no unforeseen changes that pushed the cost above the \$23 million bid. The only changes to the contract were deductive, which is almost unheard of, deMello said.

Woodward & Curran assumed operation of the new treatment components in May, and all systems have been running well.

“We thank you for allowing us the keys to your new Chevy,” deMello told the commission.

During a prior meeting the commission voted to pursue liquidated damages for the

delayed completion, and there were questions about why the commission hadn’t been kept up to date. DeMello reminded them he had appeared before them in May and told them of a six-month delay during an otherwise positive update.

He then touched on Woodward & Curran’s history as construction administrator for the project. The original contract covered February 2023 when construction began through December 2023. In July, the city amended its contract with the engineer to cover payment for its 13 months of service from December 2023-January 2025.

Last week, amendments were requested to cover the period from January to October 2025 when final completion is now expected to occur.

Unlike construction costs, the engineer’s administrative costs have grown since final completion extended from 20 months to 33 months.

“We want to seamlessly continue to perform a very high level of construction administration services to manage this contract and continue to make it a successful project. We do have a lot of outstanding items to close out with the contractor,” deMello said.

Five percent of the construction contract funding from USDA has been held in retainer, amounting to around \$1 million. DeMello said that was more than enough to finish up the punch list, even if the contractor walked off the project and they had to bring in someone else.

“I understand that at the last meeting a discussion came up around liquidated damages, right? Really, this is a tool to get the contractor to move, right? We are saying, ‘Look, enough is enough. Finish the job,’” he said. “We are working tirelessly to close out amicably with this contractor, and that’s why we’re holding the money that we’re holding and making sure the city is protected through that punch list and close out.”

The July amendments to the Woodward & Curran contract totaling \$649,400 have been sent to USDA. The final amendments approved last week totaled \$264,500. The original contract amount and previously approved amendments total \$1.8 million.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED TAX INCREASE

The City of Lawtey has tentatively adopted a measure to increase its property tax levy.

Last year’s property tax levy

A. Initially proposed tax levy **\$46,178**

B. Less tax reductions due to Value Adjustment Board And other assessment changes **(\$4,503)**

C. Actual property tax levy **\$50,681**

This year’s proposed tax levy \$53,711

All concerned citizens are invited to attend a public hearing on the tax increase to be held on:

DATE: SEPTEMBER 23, 2025

TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE: LAWTEY CITY HALL

TOWN: LAWTEY, FL.

A FINAL DECISION on the proposed tax increase and the budget will be made at this hearing.

FAIR

Continued from page 1

“We said, no, no, no, no, no, and had to point out what they

either knew or should have known if they had done their homework,” Milner said.

He said the fact is, unlike what was stated in a public meeting, the fair association never ceased to exist. The previous board was intact when they met and voted to transfer the assets to the Friends nonprofit. They continued meeting until early May, taking care of minor business like paying the bills. Its incorporation remained active with the state and the former board members are still listed as officers.

Milner also denied they had violated the charter by having a board of fewer than 20 members, as Smith told the commission. The board had eight officers and directors of the eight to 12 required by the bylaws, which were rewritten years ago, Milner said. Fair association “members” are not board members but anyone who pays the annual dues and in exchange receives a pass to the fair and other events, he said.

“But Gordon gave bad information, unfortunately, the (commission) bought it without doing any research. And that’s when they began scrambling and saying we can’t appoint five members like we agreed to do initially. We’ve got to appoint up to 20, which, of course, is ludicrous,” Milner said.

“It’s a shame. None of this should have ever happened. I honestly feel the seizing of the bank account, the requiring of us by subpoenas to turn in information that was already available to them for free — all of that was unnecessary. I just believe it’s a bit of a witch hunt on the part of certain county officials, personnel, because they got to find something that the fair did wrong. Well, they’re not going to just because they didn’t like our decisions to donate the money to the 501c3, and they didn’t like the fact that they were

not smart enough to realize the Gissy mortgage did not include the eight acres.”

Milner was angry that FDLE never shared what he was told: that a criminal case was never opened.

“That’s exactly what the agent in charge told me flat out, that they never even opened it. They reviewed the information sent to them by the sheriff’s office, determined there was nothing of criminal nature that they could see, and they sent it back to the sheriff and told him that. And they told my (unnamed) attorney the same thing,” he said.

“Gordon didn’t get his facts straight, and so they’re trying to dig up facts to see if they can find something to support the inferences and accusations made that day, and the unfortunate thing is, they’re not there. They’re just flat not there, and it’s going to be embarrassing to the sheriff’s office if they go much further with it,” Milner said.

If they continue pursuing it, he said the next step will be a case-in-chief where they have the burden of proof, presenting everything they have to a judge and showing cause why the case should not be dismissed altogether.

“That’s the next step if they continue pursuing, and the sheriff has been advised of this. Not that he’s scared of it, but listen, if you want to be embarrassed publicly, that’s going to do it,” Milner said. A good investigator or law enforcement officer should have realized this shouldn’t have taken more than a couple of weeks, he said, but this has gone on for months.

As for a possible civil case, Milner said, “I’m not worried about it one bit. I’ll be glad to let a court of competent jurisdiction decide if there was anything civilly or criminally wrong the fair board did, because I know for a fact we didn’t.”

BUDGET SUMMARY

CITY OF LAWTEY

FISCAL YEAR OCTOBER 1, 2025 THRU SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

ESTIMATED REVENUES	GENERAL FUND	WATER/SEWER FUND	TOTAL
Taxes:			
Ad Valorem taxes 2.2512	\$ 53,711	\$ -	\$ 53,711
Franchise Fees	\$ 43,000	\$ -	\$ 43,000
Licenses and Permits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$ 274,804	\$ -	\$ 274,804
Public Safety Fund	\$ 581,000		\$ 581,000
Charges for Services	\$ -	\$ 344,120	\$ 344,120
Fines and Forfeitures	\$ 158,000	\$ -	\$ 158,000
Misc. Funds	\$ 3,383,314	\$ 1,399,450	\$ 4,782,764
Fund Balance		\$ 19,810	\$ 19,810
Total Revenues & Balances	\$ 4,493,829	\$ 1,763,380	\$ 6,257,209
EXPENDITURES			
General Government	\$ 244,418	\$ -	\$ 244,418
Public Safety	\$ 723,039	\$ -	\$ 723,039
Physical Safety	\$ -	\$ 1,653,919	\$ 1,653,919
Transportation	\$ 3,459,405		\$ 3,459,405
Culture & Recreation	\$ 13,500	\$ -	\$ 13,500
Debt Services	\$ -	\$ 109,461	\$ 109,461
Economic Environmental	\$ -		\$ -
Total Expenditures	\$ 4,440,362	\$ 1,763,380	\$ 6,203,742
Fund Balance/Reserves/Net Assets	\$ 53,467		\$ 53,467
TOTAL APPROPRIATED EXPENDITURES,	\$ 4,493,829	\$ 1,763,380	\$ 6,257,209
RESERVES AND BALANCES			

THE TENTATIVE, ADOPTED, AND/OR FINAL BUDGET ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED TAXING AUTHORITY AS A PUBLIC RECORD.

RJE Alumni celebrate reunion with laughter and nostalgia

The RJE Alumni gathered for their biannual reunion from Aug. 29-31. The festivities began Friday evening with a lively meet-and-greet at the Tigers Place, formerly known as Reno Rec. Alumni enjoyed an evening filled with laughter, reminiscing

and old-school music. On Saturday, the Purple and Gold Banquet took place at Camp Blanding Armory. The event started with a social hour at 6 p.m., attended by approximately 130 alumni, family and friends. Notably, Ruth Dell Holland, a member of the eldest class of 1950, was in attendance. Elvis Williams provided a catered dinner, and DJ Eric Cruger played music throughout the evening. Henry Wade served as emcee, and Christian comedian Simon Merriex provided entertainment. The reunion concluded Sunday with a church service

at Ebenezer Baptist Church, including a memorial to honor past administrators, staff and students. The Rev. Ronald Strong delivered a powerful message, and a lunch followed at the Tigers Place. President Joann Jackson and the executive committee extended their thanks to everyone who contributed to making the reunion a success. The alumni committee meets monthly on the third Tuesday at 6 p.m. at the Tigers Place, welcoming all interested individuals.



Class of 1969 members Donnie Jackson, Mazella Smith, Norma Robinson, Tyrone Blye, Joann Jackson, Esther Kelly, Mary Williams and Patrick Williams.

AG Continued from page 3

after we filed that lawsuit, every large corporation in the country was lined up outside my office trying to show me how they had eliminated DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion). They got rid of their ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance), and they're showing me, literally, pictures of the exhibits in their stores."

Uthmeier also highlighted Florida's leadership in immigration enforcement, detaining three times more individuals than Texas, despite not being a border state.

He highlighted "Alligator Alcatraz," a detention facility at an abandoned South Florida airport surrounded by the Everglades, approved and opened within days with President Trump's support.

He noted, however, that a federal judge recently ordered its closure for environmental reasons and held Uthmeier in contempt for defying a prior ruling against enforcing a blocked immigration law.

Unfazed, Uthmeier vowed to uphold his oath to enforce the law, even if it means personal consequences, humorously requesting a toothbrush if jailed.

The AG emphasized that the facility houses serious criminals, including traffickers and murderers, and dismissed Democratic criticisms as out of touch.



(L-R) Bradford GOP Committeeman Tom Germano and Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier.



Bradford GOP Chair Richard Solze and State Committeewoman Donna Solze.

Parental rights and education

Uthmeier touted Florida's Parental Rights in Education legislation, the first of its kind, which he said ensures parents control their children's education and protects against inappropriate content in schools.

His office established a parental rights division to serve as a "law firm" for parents handling complaints about pornographic books and invasive surveys.

In June, Uthmeier warned the Alachua County School Board about a complaint he had received, alleging that two biological boys were allowed

to stay in a second-grade girls' cabin at Camp Crystal Lake, a summer camp located between Starke and Keystone Heights, operated by the school district.

"This is nuts," he told the Starke audience, decrying such policies and affirming Florida's commitment to two God-given sexes and protecting women's spaces. He said his office remains undefeated in related legal actions, encouraging residents to report concerns.

Running in 2026

Uthmeier gave the audience a preview of his 2026 reelection

campaign, positioning himself as a fighter who locks up "bad guys" and backs law enforcement 110%.

He said his opponents would likely favor plea deals or leniency for illegal immigrants.

He urged attendees to pursue truth and fight complacency, citing a recent Iowa Democratic win as a warning.

"We've already won the battle," he said, referencing a spiritual conviction, "but we have to keep fighting for what's right."



Trinity Christian Academy Vice Principal Martin Hersey, Treasure Island City Manager Charlie Van Zant, Brenda Kniseley and Senior Orange Bowl Committee Member and Perry Roofing Contractors Commercial Business Developer David Kniseley.



NOTICE

The 2025 Union County Value Adjustment Board will hold its Organizational Meeting Monday, September 29, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. In County Commission Room No 101 55 West Main Street Lake Butler, FL

HEARINGS

Hearings for Petitions filed with the Union County Value Adjustment Board Monday, October 6, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Alternate Hearing Date for Petitions filed will be Held Wednesday, October 8, 2025 @ 2:00 p.m.

All hearings will be held in County Commission Room 101 55 West Main Street Lake Butler, FL 32054



Class of 1970 members Willie Mae Ford, Betty Aaron, Carolyn Spooner, Alphonso Robinson, Emma Davis, Linda Hampton and Mary Mosley.

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Lake Region

Stress relief, fun in the Dirty Palette's Splatter Lab



Dirty Palette co-owner Charles Gilhousen in the studio's Splatter Lab.

played at a volume they prefer. He recalled a Valentine's Day session with a couple in their late 60s and early 70s who blasted heavy metal while creating their masterpieces.

"It's about fun and stress relief," Charles said. "We had two nine-year-olds who were running around in the studio doing some painting and stuff, and they came over and started looking at the couple through the window, and then they started interacting. They were throwing paint on the windows and everything else. They had a blast."

In addition to the Splatter Lab, the Dirty Palette offers classes and walk-in opportunities in ceramics, canvas painting, resin overlay and other art.

Darlene Gilhousen said the studio also offers classes in stoneware and hand-building with clay.

While I interviewed Charles about the Splatter Lab, two people were working on glass fusion projects, in which pieces of glass are fused to make a single work of art.

Roger Maggert and Kim Pierce said they've made the trip from Jacksonville several times to visit the South Lawrence Street art studio.

Pierce, the produce manager at the Middleburg Publix, said her son lives in the Lake Region.

Maggert added that during one stop in Keystone Heights, the pair were walking out of Keystone Gifts and Guns when they spotted the studio across the street.

He added that they walked across the boulevard, signed up for a class, and have been returning to the studio ever since.

Clay budget boosts public safety, cuts parks, libraries

Year over Year - General Fund Expenses

	FY24/25	FY25/26	YOY \$	YOY %
Administrative Services	\$ 19,978,995	\$ 17,001,153	\$ (2,977,842)	-15%
Aid to Others	\$ 5,344,260	\$ 6,206,455	\$ 862,195	16%
Constitutional Offices	\$ 18,508,812	\$ 20,071,299	\$ 1,562,487	8%
CRAs	\$ 147,357	\$ 173,790	\$ 26,433	18%
Construction\Facility\Maintenance	\$ 14,007,324	\$ 10,638,398	\$ (3,368,925)	-24%
Grant Spending	\$ 2,064,058	\$ 2,332,494	\$ 268,436	13%
Health Department	\$ 1,076,497	\$ 1,076,497	\$ -	0%
Services Provided by Others	\$ 2,142,892	\$ 2,383,320	\$ 240,428	11%
Emergency Management\Communications	\$ 6,336,853	\$ 5,664,321	\$ (672,533)	-11%
Quality of Life	\$ 17,109,849	\$ 12,995,281	\$ (4,114,568)	-24%
Management and Information Services	\$ 8,238,611	\$ 7,498,648	\$ (739,963)	-9%
Fleet and Fuel	\$ 4,246,987	\$ 3,929,261	\$ (317,726)	-7%

The county's construction and facility maintenance budget, which covers buildings, roads, vehicles, and maintenance, was slashed by 24%, and quality-of-life budget line items, such as libraries and parks, also took a 24% hit.

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

by approximately 8.7%, or \$8.5 million.

Clay County Commissioners passed a tentative \$779 million budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year after a public hearing on September 9. The spending plan boosts overall expenses by 11% while also decreasing the general fund and slightly reducing reserve levels.

The proposed budget is balanced as required by state law. While the total budget is \$779 million, the operational budget without reserves stands at \$594 million, representing an 8.3% decrease in year-over-year expenses. A key priority outlined in the budget was public safety, with law enforcement and related services accounting for \$168 million in operating costs. In contrast, the general fund is projected to decrease

Assistant County Manager Troy Nagle told commissioners that the spending plan boosts the sheriff's budget by 11.8% over the previous year and increases other public safety programs like fire rescue by 5.9%.

Commissioners noted that the county's financial health remains stable, with over \$22 million held in general fund reserves, meeting the standard recommended by the Government Finance Officers Association. However, this reserve level is about \$1.5 million less than the previous

year. However, the county's

See BUDGET, page 9

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

One of the Lake Region's newest enterprises is giving residents the opportunity to cut loose and have fun in what it calls the Splatter Lab.

Darlene and Charles Gilhousen opened the Dirty Palette on South Lawrence Boulevard in

February.

Soon after, they launched the Splatter Lab, where guests don protective gear—raincoats, booties, and goggles—and are let loose with canvases and six cups of vibrant paint.

Charles Gilhousen said the experience is tailored to the customer's choice of music,



Roger Maggert and Kim Pierce work on glass fusion projects.



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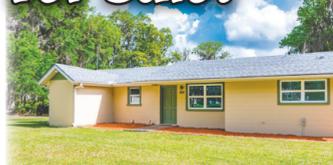
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UNION COUNTY

Football coach emphasizes character and community

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Lamar Waters, a Union County native and the head football coach for the Union County High School Fightin' Tigers, spoke to the Lake Butler Rotary Club on September 16.

Waters, who previously coached baseball and served as an assistant football coach at Union County, expressed his deep connection to the community and his commitment to developing not only athletes but also responsible young men.

Waters, the youngest of seven children, spent part of his childhood in Union County but graduated from Dunnellon High School and the University of Florida.

He returned to Union County in March 2025 after serving as athletic director and assistant coach at Williston High School. This marks his third stint with the Union County School District, having coached football under both Robby and Ronny Pruitt and led the Tigers' baseball team. Waters is married to Erin Waters, a staffing specialist at Union County High School, and their three sons are active in local sports.

Speaking to the Rotarians, Waters emphasized the importance of Union County schools as the heart of the community.

"This has always been home for me," he said, highlighting his family's ties to the area and his pride in raising his children in the same school district where he and his wife work.

He noted the unique role of the high school as the community's focal point, citing packed stands at Pop Warner games and the vibrant atmosphere of Friday

night football games, complete with the band, cheerleaders, and



Lamar Waters, a Union County native and the head football coach for the Union County High School Fightin' Tigers, spoke to the Lake Butler Rotary Club on September 16.

ROTC.

Waters leads a young Tigers team, with 47 players, 27 of whom are in their first year of high school football.

The program had fewer than 20 players when he took the reins of the program last Spring.

Despite their inexperience, he praised their effort and positive attitude, sharing anecdotes about teaching moments on the field, such as a player running the wrong way or a punter unaware of taking a knee.

"Some days it's like Groundhog Day," he said, "but these are Union County kids, and they give me everything they've got."

Beyond football, Waters stressed character development, aiming to teach his players to

be "good husbands, fathers, and community leaders."

He credited former coach Robby Pruitt's philosophy: "You make good people; you'll make good ballplayers."

Waters also enforces academic accountability, requiring weekly progress reports and addressing issues directly, even with his own son, whom he disciplined for falling short academically.

"Kids want discipline. They want somebody to love them," he said, emphasizing actions over words.

The program's youth presents challenges, with 13 seniors, eight of whom have prior experience, and many players new to varsity-level play.

Waters recounted humorous missteps, like a senior unaware that clipping was illegal, but expressed optimism about their growth.

He also highlighted the school's efforts to showcase students, noting a new pregame tradition where the band performs on the field alongside the team, cheerleaders, and color guard, a collaborative effort with school administrators to highlight student talents.

The Rotarians praised Waters' approach, with one attendee noting his impact extends to the classroom. After a teacher reported issues with football players, Waters visited the class to address behavior, demonstrating his commitment to accountability.

With a focus on loyalty to Union County and a distaste for transfer trends in high school athletics, Waters aims to build a program rooted in local pride and tradition, continuing the legacy of the purple and gold.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED TAX INCREASE

The Bradford County Board of County Commissioners has tentatively adopted a measure to increase its property tax levy.

Last year's property tax levy

A. Initially proposed tax levy\$ 14,045,335

B. Less tax reductions due to Value Adjustment Board And other assessment changes\$ (408,452)

C. Actual property tax levy\$ 14,453,787

This year's proposed tax levy\$ 15,516,590

All concerned citizens are invited to attend a public hearing on the tax increase to be held on:

Tuesday, September 23, 2025
5:30PM

in the County Commission Chambers
Bradford County Courthouse- North Wing
945 N. North Temple Avenue
Starke, FL 32091

A FINAL DECISION on the proposed tax increase and the budget will be made at this hearing.

Brannan delivers check for school



Chuck Brannan, who has represented Union County since redistricting in 2022, highlighted the elementary school project as a top priority, noting it was ranked number one among school construction projects statewide.

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

During the September 9 Union County School Board meeting, State Representative Chuck Brannan displayed a ceremonial check for \$29.5 million for the first phase of a new elementary school in Lake Butler.

The funding is part of a broader \$55.9 million secured for Union County over the past two and a half years. Brannan's district includes Union, Bradford, Baker, Columbia, and half of Alachua County.

Brannan, who has represented Union County since redistricting in 2022, highlighted the elementary school project as a top priority, noting it was ranked number one among school construction projects statewide.

"We're only funding two schools in the whole state this year, and I said, 'I'm going with my number one ranked school, Lake Butler Elementary,'" he recalled. The \$29.5 million allocation for phase one will kickstart construction, with plans for additional phases to complete the project. The lawmaker referenced a similar school project in Baker County, initially budgeted at \$29 million but completed at \$40 million due to cost increases during the COVID-19 period.

In addition to the school funding, Brannan detailed other recent allocations for Union County, including nearly \$7

million in 2023 and another \$7 million in 2024 for Phases 2 and 3 of the public safety complex, which includes the county jail and 911 center. He noted his long-standing collaboration with the Union County Sheriff's Office, recalling his time delivering a prisoner to the county jail in 1986 as a U.S. Marshal Service employee and joking, "Y'all needed a new jail in 1986. I'm sorry it took so long to help you."

Other funded projects include \$305,000 for fire rescue equipment, \$190,000 for ball fields, \$375,000 for courthouse restoration, and \$50,000 for the Townsend Building in Lake Butler.

Brannan also secured a recurring \$300,000 annual payment in lieu of taxes from the Department of Corrections to offset costs for county services like fire and police response in areas with state facilities.

For 2025, an additional \$750,000 was allocated to complete the public safety complex, and \$850,000 was designated for further courthouse renovations.

The county also receives \$454,552 annually for sheriff's office salary enhancements.

Brannan's district, the second-largest geographically in Florida, secured \$223.5 million in 2025 across five counties, contributing to a total of \$625 million since he took office.

He attributed this success to strategic advocacy in a competitive legislative environment, where 31 of his 41 proposed projects passed the House and Senate, and four were vetoed by the governor, three in Alachua County and one in Bradford.

"A blind hog finds an acorn every once in a while, and I root around hard," the legislator quipped, emphasizing his efforts to prioritize rural counties.

See CHECK, page 9

BUDGET SUMMARY

Bradford County Board of County Commissioners - Fiscal Year 2025-2026

THE PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET EXPENDITURES OF BRADFORD COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ARE 4.6% MORE THAN LAST YEARS TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES.

GENERAL FUND 10.0000
SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS 0.0000

	GENERAL	SPECIAL	CAPITAL	TOTAL ALL
ESTIMATED REVENUES:	FUND	REVENUE	PROJECTS	FUNDS
Taxes: Millage Per \$1000				
Ad Valorem Taxes 10.0000	15,516,590.00	-	-	15,516,590.00
Sales & Use Taxes	4,010,000.00	1,865,000.00	-	5,875,000.00
Licenses & Permits	228,583.00	1,143,300.00	-	1,371,883.00
Intergovernmental Revenue	5,749,050.00	15,362,412.00	-	21,111,462.00
Charges for Services	41,000.00	5,011,609.00	-	5,052,609.00
Miscellaneous Revenues	159,100.00	140,530.00	-	299,630.00
Fines & Forfeitures	64,000.00	23,300.00	-	87,300.00
Other Sources	29,000.00	-	-	29,000.00
Less Reduction	(1,246,516.00)	(544,406.00)	-	(1,790,922.00)
TOTAL SOURCES	\$ 24,550,807.00	\$ 23,001,745.00	\$ -	\$ 47,552,552.00
Transfers In	\$ -	\$ 16,239,711.00	-	16,239,711.00
Fund Balances/Reserves/Net Assets	\$ 14,897,336.00	\$ 10,851,435.00	\$ -	\$ 25,748,771.00
TOTAL REVENUES, TRANSFERS & BALANCES	\$ 39,448,143.00	\$ 50,092,891.00	\$ -	\$ 89,541,034.00
EXPENDITURES				
General Government	\$ 17,222,827.00	\$ 366,361.00	\$ -	17,589,188.00
Public Safety	94,351.00	12,844,445.00	-	12,938,796.00
Physical Environment	1,268,391.00	6,470,578.00	-	7,738,969.00
Transportation	714,054.00	16,853,557.00	-	17,567,611.00
Economic Environment	208,559.00	2,701,109.00	-	2,909,668.00
Culture/Recreation	610,426.00	1,577,089.00	-	2,187,515.00
Human Services	927,003.00	-	-	927,003.00
Other	-	-	-	-
Court Related	45,335.00	792,890.00	-	838,225.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 21,090,946.00	\$ 41,606,029.00	\$ -	\$ 62,696,975.00
Transfers Out	\$ 18,357,197.00	\$ 8,486,862.00	\$ -	26,844,059.00
Fund Balances/Reserves/Net Assets				
TOTAL APPROPRIATED EXPENDITURES				
TRANSFERS, RESERVES & BALANCES	\$ 39,448,143.00	\$ 50,092,891.00	\$ -	\$ 89,541,034.00

THE TENTATIVE, ADOPTED, AND/OR FINAL BUDGETS ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED TAXING AUTHORITY AS A PUBLIC RECORD.

City manager speaks at business association meeting

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

At a recent community meeting, Interim City Manager Jamie Booth introduced himself and shared updates on Keystone Heights' ongoing and upcoming initiatives, emphasizing community engagement, infrastructure improvements, and events to boost local commerce and tourism.

Booth, a Lake Region native and retired Army Corps of Engineers colonel, has served as interim city manager since July 2025, following a transitional period as an independent contractor.

Booth, who grew up near Crystal Lake and graduated from Keystone Heights High School, highlighted his 27-year military career, including three combat tours and leadership of coastal protection and water management projects across Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. He returned to Keystone Heights after retiring in May 2025 and has been working to strengthen ties between the city's 1.2-square-mile jurisdiction and the broader community.

The city official talked about one key initiative: "Coffee and Commerce" program, spearheaded by city staff member Drew Bell, which fosters collaboration with local businesses. Recent events were held at the city pavilion in July and at Dirty Palette earlier this week, with plans for monthly or bimonthly gatherings. Booth encouraged businesses to host or sponsor these events, noting opportunities for advertising through booths, sponsorships, or flyers at city events.

Booth then reviewed upcoming events, including the Fall Festival on September 20, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., featuring a ribbon-cutting for the resurfaced basketball courts and a three-on-three basketball tournament organized by local resident Sherry Anthony.

The tournament welcomes both adults and children, with businesses encouraged to donate gift cards for prizes.

Other events include a Veterans Breakfast on November 7, a Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11, the Parade of Trees on November 29, and a Christmas Market on December 13, which will feature a tennis court ribbon-cutting, vendors, and a cookie decorating contest. Sponsorship opportunities are available for all events, with recognition on banners and by event emcees.

Booth outlined infrastructure projects, including a \$30,000 demolition of a property in the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) to facilitate a Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) right-hand turn lane onto Highway 100. The project, funded by CRA dollars, will consume most of the parcel and include a pedestrian island. Additional efforts include sidewalk repairs to meet ADA standards, repairs to the Nightingale Culvert on Nightingale Street, and upgrades to the Geneva Jungle Pool, pickleball courts, and Moon Tree display.

A significant long-term project is a sewer conversion initiative, supported by a \$1 million grant application to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The grant aims to



Keystone Lake Region Business Association officer Todd Beals reviewed upcoming events for the organization.



Jamie Booth, a Lake Region native and retired Army Corps of Engineers colonel, has served as interim city manager since July 2025, following a transitional period as an independent contractor.



KLRBA members (l-r) Phil Jones of Elite Web Design Pros, Rob Shackelford of Three Shacks Capital Partners, and Todd and Debbie Beals of Team Beals Realty.

fund connections for homes near existing sewer mains, reducing reliance on septic systems that impact the environment. Booth noted that state law requires homeowners within connectable distance to hook up to sewer systems if their septic fails, with connection costs averaging \$30,000 per household. The grant would alleviate this burden, particularly for fixed-income residents, though it may cover only about 27 connections.

The city's strategic plan, adopted in March or April 2025, guides these efforts, focusing on commerce, tourism, and maintaining Keystone Heights' small-town charm. Mayor Karen Lake is leading a "business blitz" to visit businesses along Lawrence Boulevard, sharing the plan and gathering input. A mural project, expected to be completed by mid-October, will also enhance the downtown area.

Booth emphasized the need for volunteers, particularly high school students needing service hours, to support the city's 12 annual events, as Bell is the only full-time events coordinator. Businesses and organizations interested in sponsoring, hosting, or volunteering can contact Bell for details. The city's website

features a community calendar with event information, and Booth encouraged residents to stay engaged as Keystone Heights continues to grow and improve.

Union school board eyes electric bus contract

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

The Union County School Board discussed a preliminary agreement for leasing electric school buses during its September 9 meeting, focusing on a mileage restriction clause that raised concerns.

The board, led by Superintendent Mike Ripplinger, reviewed the proposal with input from Transportation Director Tony Raish and a representative from the bus provider to evaluate its feasibility for the district's rural routes.

The proposed agreement includes a mileage cap of 11,300 miles per bus per year, with a \$3-per-mile fee for exceeding this limit.

Ripplinger noted that three of Union County's five bus routes exceed this threshold based on average annual mileage, prompting concerns about potential costs.

"Once you start charging \$3 per mile over that, it's going to get expensive very quickly,"

Ripplinger said.

He said that after discussions, the provider expressed flexibility, indicating the mileage limit could be adjusted, potentially averaged over two years, and that the clause is rarely enforced.

Ripplinger cited Dixie and Glades counties, which operate electric buses under similar programs and have not faced overage charges, despite their larger geographic areas compared to Union County, Florida's smallest county at 246 square miles.

The lease, part of a federal funding program exceeding \$750,000, would require the district to trade in five older buses for electric models.

Ripplinger emphasized the need for spare buses, noting that if electric buses reach their mileage limit, the district could revert to existing diesel buses, which average 15 years old, with some from 2009. The lease term is flexible, ranging from 10 to 15 years, with an option to purchase the buses at the end or continue

leasing newer models.

A representative of the electric bus provider assured that battery replacements, a significant cost concern, would be covered under warranty even near the lease's end, addressing board member Tarra Johnson's worries about post-lease expenses.

Ripplinger highlighted the program's benefits, referencing Dixie County's satisfaction in their second year of electric bus use, where issues like battery cooling were promptly resolved under warranty. "All their buses have air conditioning, and they're brand new across the board," he said, noting the potential for modernized transportation in Union County.

However, the board remained cautious, seeking to clarify mileage terms and ensure financial viability before finalizing the agreement.

The board plans to revisit the proposal later, with Ripplinger encouraging members to raise any additional concerns.

Airport board approves hangar project, FIRM lawsuit going to mediation

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

The Keystone Heights Airport Authority Board approved contracts to proceed with a new bulk hangar project during its September 9, 2025, meeting, committing to cover a \$119,115 funding shortfall using airport resources or loans.

The decision came amid discussions on audits, board vacancies, and economic development opportunities, highlighting the airport's push for growth despite financial challenges.

Interim City Manager Jamie Booth provided updates, noting delays in audits due to staffing issues at Reddish and White, with additional support expected by September 22.

Booth emphasized compliance with Florida's Sunshine Law, referencing recent violations at St. Augustine's airport that led to board resignations.

He also reported progress on the city's budget, incorporating the airport's, with tentative approval scheduled for September 18 and final on September 29.

A key agenda item was a temporary construction easement for Clay County to access a neglected retention pond on airport property at the end of Crystal Lake Road. The pond, overgrown and unmaintained for decades, requires cleanup to address drainage issues. Booth assured the board the easement would be reviewed by the city attorney and presented to the city council on September 18 if no objections arise.

AECOM representative Bill Prange detailed a bulk hangar project, designed to match recent specifications and located near existing facilities. Bids ranged from \$888,120 to higher, with JH Construction as the low bidder. Funding includes \$735,000 from FAA grants and \$38,000 from FDOT, but a \$119,115 gap emerged after FDOT declined additional support due to a statewide policy shift away from hangar projects. Prange noted value engineering options, like reducing insulation or paint quality, could save up to \$30,000 but compromise quality.

The board unanimously voted to proceed, awarding

the \$888,120 contract to JH Construction and \$46,764 for AECOM's construction phase services.

Members discussed financing the shortfall, estimating a 10-year loan at 5-6% interest would cost about \$1,300 monthly, offset by anticipated \$2,000 monthly hangar revenue from six to eight tenants.

"This is a lot more value for the money," said board member David Kirkland, comparing it to alternative projects like additional tie-down spaces.

Attorney Jim Taylor, appearing via phone, updated on the ongoing litigation with the Florida International Motorsports Park, scheduling a mediation for October 9 ahead of an October 17 court hearing. A shade meeting was set for September 18 at 1 p.m. to discuss settlement strategies privately, complying with Sunshine Law. The board will designate a representative for mediation.

Chairman Jim Eifert reported growing interest in airport properties, including from Aerial Information Systems Corporation seeking 50 acres for UAS (unmanned aerial systems) facilities and Arisha Group from India for large-scale development.

BUDGET SUMMARY City of Hampton Fiscal Year 2025-2026

	GENERAL FUND	WATER FUND	TOTAL
CASH RESERVE CARRY FORWARD	\$ 633,420.00	\$ 64,896.00	\$ 698,316.00
ESTIMATED REVENUES			
TAXES MILLAGE RATE AD VALOREM @ 2.250 (Per \$1000)	\$ 34,211.40		\$ 34,211.40
CHARGES FOR SERVICES		\$ 120,000.00	\$ 120,000.00
GRANTS	\$ 100,250.00	\$ 1,124,493.00	\$ 1,224,743.00
INTERGOVERNMENTAL	\$ 230,260.20		\$ 230,260.20
LICENSES & FEES	\$ 30,300.00		\$ 30,300.00
FINES & FORFEITURES	\$ 600.00		\$ 600.00
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	\$ 5,292.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 5,592.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES	\$ 400,913.60	\$ 1,244,793.00	\$ 1,645,706.60
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES AND RESERVES	\$ 1,034,333.60	\$ 1,309,689.00	\$ 2,344,022.60
ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES			
GENERAL GOVERNMENT	\$ 182,688.00	\$ 75,444.00	\$ 258,132.00
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	\$ 71,568.00	\$ 64,800.00	\$ 136,668.00
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 58,800.00		\$ 58,800.00
CULTURE AND RECREATION	\$ 10,800.00		\$ 10,800.00
GRANTS	\$ 100,250.00	\$ 1,124,493.00	\$ 1,224,743.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES	\$ 424,106.00	\$ 1,264,737.00	\$ 1,688,843.00
CONTINGENCY RESERVES	\$ 610,227.60	\$ 44,952.00	\$ 655,179.60
TOTAL EXPENDITURES AND RESERVES	\$ 1,034,333.60	\$ 1,309,689.00	\$ 2,344,022.60

THE TENTATIVE, ADOPTED, AND/OR FINAL BUDGET ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED TAXING AUTHORITY AS A PUBLIC RECORD.



KLRBA members (l-r) Clay Electric's Pat Mundorf, and Dakota and Cali Acker of Dakota's Pest Pros.

Lake Butler proclaims pharmacy month



(L-R) Lake Butler Vice Mayor Rondoll L. Huggins, William Garst of the Florida Pharmacy Association, Lake Butler Commissioner Joe Stephenson, Dr. Vithia An, the new director of pharmacy at Lake Butler Hospital, Lake Butler Mayor Melissa Hendrix, and Commissioner Fred Sirmones.

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

The Lake Butler City Commission unanimously approved a proclamation on September 16, designating October 2025 as American Pharmacist Month, recognizing the vital role pharmacists play in community health.

The proclamation, requested by William Garst of the Florida Pharmacy Association, was endorsed by Mayor Melissa Hendrix and the commission, urging residents to acknowledge pharmacists' contributions to safe, accessible, and effective patient care.

Garst, a retired VA pharmacist and staff pharmacist at Lake Butler Hospital, highlighted pharmacists' accessibility as the most readily available healthcare providers, delivering critical services such as medication therapy

management, chronic disease support, and public health emergency responses.

He emphasized their frontline role during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing testing, treatment, and vaccinations, with community pharmacies within five miles of nearly all Americans.

"Pharmacists ensure optimal medication outcomes and advocate for patient health," Garst said, noting the presence of over 300,000 licensed pharmacists nationwide.

The proclamation, supported by the American Pharmacists Association and the Alachua County Area Association of Pharmacists, recognizes both visible pharmacists at local pharmacies like Lake Butler Pharmacy, CVS, and Walgreens, and "invisible" pharmacists working in hospitals, nursing homes, and specialized fields like

infectious diseases, oncology, and infusion therapy.

Garst introduced Dr. Vithia An, the new director of pharmacy at Lake Butler Hospital since March 2025, who briefly spoke about the hospital's commitment to treating patients like family, supporting rehabilitation, and serving the community through its emergency department.

Garst thanked the commission for their service and the recognition of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, emphasizing their role in enhancing community health.

"The decisions you make are weighty, and we appreciate your support," he said.

The commission expressed gratitude for the pharmacists' contributions, with Mayor Hendrix noting their importance to Lake Butler's well-being.

Brannan visits White House

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

State Representative Chuck Brannan spent 10 hours over two days with President Donald Trump and other officials at the White House.

As the chair of the House Judiciary Committee, the former Chief Detective of the Baker County Sheriff's Office and Deputy U.S. Marshal was invited to Washington, along with other Florida House leaders.

Brannan said the group first met with Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, who has ties to Brannan's district. The daughter of NFL player and broadcaster Pat Summerall, Wiles was raised in Lake City.

After meeting with the chief of staff and other officials, the delegation moved on to the Oval Office for a meeting with the chief executive.

Brannan said the President then took the group on a tour of the White House residence.

Brannan said he was impressed by Trump's detailed knowledge of the building's structural components, attributing it to the President's former career as a New York developer.

"He pointed out the grout in the bathroom and talked about it in detail," recalled the state representative.

Brannan said the delegation also spent time with Vice President J.D. Vance, Small Business Administrator Kelly Loeffler, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, Scott Bessent, the Secretary of the Treasury, Brooke Rollins, Secretary of Agriculture, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, and Chris Wright, Secretary of Energy.

Brannan said he was particularly impressed with Vance, who came across as down-to-earth.

The Tallahassee lawmaker, who represents Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Union, and part of Alachua County, said the officials asked the delegation about the most important issues facing the Sunshine State.

Trump and other officials also briefed the group on their priorities.

BUDGET

Continued from page 6

construction and facility maintenance budget, which covers buildings, roads, vehicles, and maintenance, was slashed by 24%, and quality-of-life budget line items, such as libraries and parks, also took a 24% hit.

Commissioner Jim Renninger called the cuts to construction and facility maintenance, as well as quality-of-life budget items, as unsustainable.

"You can do that for a year or two, but you're really going to suffer," he said of the cuts. "These are the roofs that leak now... Same way with quality of life. I mean, that's your boat ramps, libraries...those are the type—maintenance things, quality of life, that we're reducing next year's budget by 24%."

"This is a lean budget," Nagle told commissioners. "I mean, no one's going to tell you that this isn't a lean budget."

CHECK

Continued from page 7

The representative also addressed fiscal challenges ahead, noting a projected state budget surplus for 2026 but deficits of \$1.5 billion and \$6.6 billion in the following two years, according to a recent economic outlook. To mitigate future cuts, the legislature has built record reserves, a strategy informed by the 2008 economic downturn. Brannan urged Union County to expedite the elementary school project to avoid funding uncertainties, particularly as discussions about eliminating property taxes loom.



President Donald Trump speaks with members of the Florida House Republican Leadership on the West Colonnade, Thursday, September 4, 2025. Also pictured is State Rep. Chuck Brannan. (Official White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian)



President Donald Trump speaks with members of the Florida House Republican Leadership in the newly-renovated Palm Room, Thursday, September 4, 2025. State Rep. Chuck Brannan is second from right. (Official White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian)



Brannan said he was particularly impressed with Vice President J.D. Vance, who came across as down-to-earth.



President Donald Trump gives State Rep. Chuck Brannan a gift during his visit to the White House on Thursday, September 4, 2025. (Official White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian)

NOTICE OF PROPOSED TAX INCREASE

The City of Hampton has tentatively adopted a measure to increase its property tax levy.

Last year's property tax levy

- A. Initially proposed tax levy\$26,851.00
- B. Less tax reductions due to Value Adjustment Board And other assessment changes(\$1,727.00)
- C. Actual property tax levy\$28,578.00

This year's proposed tax levy.....\$36,012.00

All concerned citizens are invited to attend a public hearing on the tax increase to be held on:

**Tuesday, September 23, 2025
7:00PM
at
City Hall
5784 Navarre Avenue
Hampton, FL 32044**

A FINAL DECISION on the proposed tax increase and the budget will be made at this hearing.

When he said 'I love you' in his sleep, she knew he was the one

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Brandon and Chelsey Funderburk were married at the Belle Oaks Wedding Chapel on Friday, September 12.

The bride is the daughter of Lisa Sasser and Rex Collins, who died in 2014. The bride's stepfather, Jason Sasser, walked her down the aisle. The groom's parents are Paul Funderburk, Jr. and Marlana Funderburk.

The bride's brother, Clint Collins, carried triple duty during the wedding, officiating the ceremony, escorting the bride's mother down the aisle, and serving as "flower dude," tossing imitation petals as he walked Mrs. Sasser to the front row.

The bride and groom knew of each other in high school, graduating from Bradford in



The bride's brother, Clint Collins, (center) carried triple duty during the wedding, officiating the ceremony, escorting the bride's mother down the aisle, and serving as "flower dude," tossing imitation petals as he walked Mrs. Sasser to the front row.

the breakup and everything, and I figured it'd be nice to tell her to come out, come ride with us," he recalled.

The couple continued to meet in group settings until Brandon invited her on their first date at a Mexican restaurant in Orange Park.

One thing Chelsey remembers about the night is that Salsas in Orange Park did not serve the Cali-Mex food she was used to in San Diego.

The other thing she remembers is her appreciation for Brandon, making her feel special.

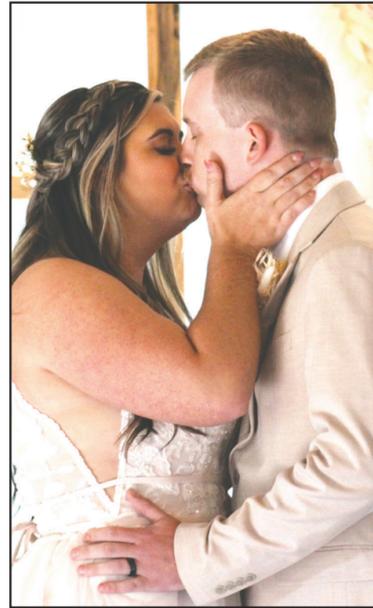
Chelsey describes herself as an airhead with a poor track record in relationships. Due to her past experiences with men, she was very cautious with Brandon.

He had some work to do, getting past the self-preservation walls Chelsey had

erected to protect herself from the pain she had experienced in the past.

She said he did it with patience, kindness, and paying attention. Little by little, her apprehension gave way to excitement.

On September 12, 2020, Chelsey was with her cousin Karen Clark, soon to be Karen Hall, at a bachelorette outing in Nashville. Brandon reached Chelsey by phone, and the couple had what Chelsey described as an intense talk about their relationship and her past relationship.



Chelsey remembers that while he was sleeping, he uttered "I love you," between breaths. When he later woke up, she asked him if he remembered what he had said. "I know what I said," he responded. "Right then," she recalled. "I knew he was the one."

2014, but did not interact much. "We had almost every class together," remembered Chelsey. "We just never talked to one another."

After graduation, Chelsey married another Bradford student, moved with him to California in 2015, and returned to Florida in 2019 alone, after things did not work out.

One of Brandon's buddies told him Chelsey was back in town. He contacted her through Instagram and invited her to a group side-by-side outing in the Sampson Lake area.

"She was going through



The newlyweds welcome one of Chelsey's cousins to their table at a reception in the Starke Woman's Club.



Russ WADE
Attorney at Law

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

386-496-9656

Probate • Family • Wills • Adoption • Litigation • Corporate

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.



Dylan Parker



Jonathan Sullivan



Traver Tetstone



Gordon Miller

came home from work and became angry because she did not clean the house.

"(The victim) advised that they began to argue," wrote the officer. "(She) stated she was trying to call her friends on her phone to try to find somewhere to stay for the night, when Dylan took her phone from her and wouldn't give it back."

The woman added that Parker then choked her, struck her in the face with a closed fist, and shoved her against a wall.

"I observed a bruise under (the victim's) left eye, bruising on the right side of her neck, a bruise on her right forearm, and a bruise on her left thigh," wrote Mazingo.

The deputy added that Parker claimed his wife started the argument, complaining that he did not help around the house enough.

"Dylan stated that (his wife) was angry, and he decided to wrap his arms around her in order to calm her down," reported Mazingo. "Dylan advised that she then began to punch him and fight him in an effort to get away. Dylan stated that he did not punch her and only blocked her punches."

The defendant also denied choking the victim but admitted to taking her phone because "he did not want her to go anywhere."

A witness in the home told Mazingo he saw Parker choking the victim, throwing her around, and preventing her from getting away.

Rebecca Sellers, 44, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on September 9 for a probation violation.

Chloe Sabourin, 19, of Ocala, was arrested by FHP troopers on September 10 for an out-of-county warrant.

Rebecca Sellers, 44, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on September 9 for a probation violation.

Not wearing seatbelt, busted for drugs

Jonathan Sullivan, 23, of Green Cove Springs, was arrested by Lawtey police on September 8 for possession of drugs, possession of drug equipment, and an out-of-county warrant.

According to an arrest report, an officer saw Sullivan driving past Thompson's Garage southbound on U.S. 301 without wearing a restraint.

"I made contact with the driver/suspect, Jonathan Sullivan, and asked for his driver's license," wrote Officer J. Mallard. "Sullivan stated he did not have his driver's license in his possession. While speaking with Sullivan, I observed his hands were shaking and he had rapid breathing."

After confirming with dispatch that the defendant had a Duval County warrant for stalking, Mallard instructed Sullivan to exit the vehicle.

"I asked if anything was illegal inside," reported the officer. "Sullivan stated there was 'Ice' under the driver's side seat."

The officer located one gram of methamphetamine under the seat, along with straws and tin foil, which he

Clay

Gary Boyd, 45, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on September 6 for possession of a controlled substance without a prescription.

Clinton Helmer, 41, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on September 11 for a probation violation.

Michael Scott, 60, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on September 6 for domestic battery.

wrote are commonly used to ingest drugs.

Dallas Sylvester, 51, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on September 10 for hit and run and driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Hit Dad while arguing with girlfriend

Traver Tetstone, 33, of Brooker, was arrested by Bradford deputies on September 11 for battery.

According to an arrest report, a resident in the Dedan Road area told deputies he heard his son, Tetstone, and Tetstone's girlfriend arguing and went to intervene.

"Travor battered him by striking him in his head, causing injury," wrote Deputy Zachary Jones in the report. "I observed blood on (the victim's) right cheek."

Travis Westberry, 34, was arrested by probation and parole officers on September 8 for a probation violation.

Union

Kairi Francis, 44, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on September 9 for battery.

Charles Futch, III, 39, of Palatka, was arrested by Union deputies on September 9 for probation violations.

James Goff, 38, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on September 11 for resisting an officer and out-of-county warrants.

Paris Michaels, 58, of Macclenny, was arrested by Union deputies on September 13 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Aaron Smith, 31, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on September 8 for conditional release violations.

Allan Padgett, 57, of Hawthorne, was arrested by Union deputies on September 12 for an out-of-county warrant.

Bonnie Padgett, 39, of Jacksonville, was arrested by Union deputies on September 9 for a probation violation.

Robert Wilkerson, 51, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on September 9 for an out-of-county warrant.

Casey Williams, 49, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on September 11 for failure to appear.

Brooks earns win for KHHS girls on Sept. 4

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Aubrey Brooks led the Keystone Heights High School girls golf team with an overall first-place finish in a Sept. 4 match against host Oakleaf at Orange Park's Eagle Landing Golf Club.

Oakleaf won as a team with a score of 226, while the Indians had a score of 244.

Brooks made par on one hole in finishing with a score of 51, which put her one stroke ahead of runner-up Angeline Hawkins of Oakleaf.

Keystone's Rebecca Binet finished four strokes behind Brooks, making par on one hole and shooting a fourth-place score of 55.

Amber Wagner had an eighth-place score of 67, while Bryley Lee and Ila Miller placed ninth

and 10th, respectively, with scores of 71 and 72. Wagner and Miller each made par on one hole.

Emily Cunningham shot an 11th-place score of 73.

KHHS, UCHS girls tie for 2nd

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights and Union

County tied for second behind Columbia in a Sept. 9 girls golf match at Lake City's Quail Heights Country Club.

The Indians and the Tigers each had a team score of 237, with Columbia winning the match with a score of 168.

Keystone's Aubrey Brooks and Union's Katelyn Seay finished tied for fifth. Each made par on one hole to finish with a score of 51.

The Tigers' Kerissa Seay shot a seventh-place score of 52,

while the Indians' Rebecca Binet shot an eighth-place score of 57. Each made par on one hole.

Keystone's Bryley Lee and Union's Sophia Elixson each had a score of 64 to finish tied for 10th.

Also competing for the Indians were Amber Wagner (65), Jasmine Walls (70) and Evelyn Bardier (76).

Union's Sierra Bell and Summer Shaw had scores of 70 and 73, respectively.

Will Begue is medalist as KHHS wins 3-team match

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School won a boys golf match on

See GOLF, page 21

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Bradford County Telegraph Lake Region Monitor UNION COUNTY TIMES

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Obituaries

Albert Andrews

Albert Jefferson Andrews, 79, was called home Saturday, Sept. 13, 2025. Born and raised in Lake Butler, he embarked on a journey that would see him wear many hats. A man of many talents, he dedicated himself to many ventures, ranging from chicken houses to owning and operating a bar and even establishing a tree-service business. Each endeavor bore the hallmark of his unwavering work ethic and tenacity, attributes that served him well through a life lived fully and passionately. In 1965, he distinguished himself by joining the Army, serving as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne for two years, embodying bravery and commitment that reflected his extraordinary character. He was a man of the land and an ardent lover of horses. Whether he was riding or enjoying the exhilarating rush of barrel racing, each time on a horse captivated his heart. He took great pride in helping children who sought to learn the art of riding, nurturing their dreams with the same generosity of spirit that characterized his entire life. His big heart and willingness to assist anyone in need earned him the admiration of many as he seamlessly wove compassion into the very fabric of his existence. His ventures did not overshadow a sense of adventure found in the great outdoors, where Albert relished hog and deer hunting.



He is survived by his devoted sons, Albert, (Cindy) Andrews Jr., Brent Andrews, Bart (Danielle) Andrews, and Don (Jennifer) Andrews; along with his grandsons, Luke (Brittany) Andrews, Tristan (Sonya) Andrews, Clint Andrews, and Houston Andrews. He also leaves behind his brother, Alvin (Lorine) Andrews; and sister, Betty Zimmerman.

Though he leaves behind a profound legacy, we also remember those who predeceased him, including parents, James and Ida Mae Andrews; siblings, Mildred King, Amelia Morgan, James Andrews, Frank Andrews, Bobbie Andrews, R.L. Moore, Neva Andrews, Andy Andrews, Perry Andrews, and Ken Andrews; and granddaughter, Amberly Andrews.

A visitation was on Wednesday, Sept. 17, from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. at Archer-Milton Funeral Home in Lake Butler, where family and friends will gather to honor and celebrate the life of this remarkable man.

PAID OBITUARY

Sara Gordon

Sara Lynn Gordon, 62, of Orange Park died Wednesday, Aug. 27, 2025. She was born Jan. 2, 1963, in Jacksonville to the late Perry and Wanda (McLamore) Nall.

Survivors are her husband, Keith Wade; children, Michael (Wilinda) Gordon and Misty Gordon (Tom Platt); stepson, Kevin (Sarah) Gordon; brother, Kenneth (Janet) Nall; and extended family.

She wanted to be cremated, and a service held at a later date. Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 620 E. Nona St., Starke 32091. 904-964-6200. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

Martha Powell

Martha Jule Armstrong Powell passed away peacefully at home Monday, Sept. 15, 2025, surrounded by friends and family. She was a retired schoolteacher and a longtime community leader who influenced generations of Union Countians. She was born May 2, 1933, in Montgomery, Alabama. She was preceded in death by her parents, James and Bernice Armstrong; brother, Jimmy Armstrong; sister, Mary Tom Kleiderer; and daughter Carol Suzanne.



She is survived by her sons, Jonathan (Linda) and David (Lisa); daughter, Nancy Bivins; three grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. "Ms. Martha" or "Miss Mommy" was a devout Christian and a member of Lake Butler Church of Christ since 1962. Once her children were older, she returned to school and earned bachelor's and master's degrees in education from the University of North Florida. She taught for many years in the Union County school system. She was a well-known storyteller and delighted in dressing up in costume and entertaining audiences with her tales. She was an avid reader and enjoyed watching old movies and PBS shows. She loved the mountains and took a number of memorable trips to see them. She was active in a number of community organizations, including the Lake Butler Woman's Club, Union County Historical Society and Union County library.

Archer Milton Funeral home is handling funeral arrangements with services to be held 10 a.m. Friday, Sept. 19, at Lake Butler Church of Christ. The family will receive visitors from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 18 at the church. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to be made to Florida Bible Camp, 2087 SE Bible Camp St., High Springs 32643.

PAID OBITUARY

Dorothy Simmons

Dorothy Lee Simmons, 96, passed away Wednesday, Sept. 10, 2025, at her residence. She was born in Lake Butler and attended the schools of Union County. She was a member of Hopewell Church of God by Faith, Providence. She was a supervisor at Alachua County Courthouse, Gainesville.

Survivors are her sisters, Fannie Grimmage, Minnie Lee Holmes, Ruth Holmes and Janie Lee Walker; and brothers, Ruben M. Holmes, Otto Holmes, John Wesley Holmes, and Clyde Holmes; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and sorrowing friends.

The viewing will be Saturday, Sept. 20, from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. at Hopewell Church of God by Faith, 6948 SW County Road 241, Lake Butler (Providence). The Cortège will form Saturday, Sept. 20, at 10:45 a.m. at the residence of Dorothy Simmons, 6869 SW 71st Ave., Lake Butler (Providence). Funeral services will be Saturday, Sept. 20, at Hopewell Church of God by Faith with Elder Walter Patrick, officiating.

Arrangements are by Haile Funeral Home Inc., 802 Oak St., Starke, 32091. 904-964-7905.

PAID OBITUARY

Leon Triest

Leon "Peewee" Triest, 73, of Gainesville and formerly a longtime resident of Keystone Heights unexpectedly passed away Friday, Sept. 12, 2025. He was born March 12, 1952, in Palatka to Thomas S. and Inez (Pribble) Triest. He graduated with the Class of 1970 from KHHS and then earned his BA degree in fine arts from Florida Southern College in Lakeland. He has been a longtime member of North Central Baptist Church in Gainesville and was definitely an AVID Florida Gator fan. He enjoyed artwork, calligraphy, reading, and most importantly, he loved his relationship with his Lord. You would never see him without a smile, which was extremely contagious. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, Thomas "Tommy" Triest; and sister, Ann Klein.



Left behind to cherish his memory are his children, Amanda Schmieder and Jon Triest; sister Brenda (Jimmy) Nooney; sister-in-law, Janel Triest; grandchildren, Gabriel Triest and Giovanni Triest, and a host of nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends that will miss him dearly.

A memorial service will be held Thursday, Sept. 18, beginning at 2 p.m. at Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home Chapel. Wear your Gator gear with pride as we remember and celebrate Leon. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the United Cerebral Palsy Association of America.

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

PAID OBITUARY

In Memory

In Memory of
Cindy Sammons

Born Sept. 16, 1971

We Miss You

Cousin Jeremy

Faith and Melanie



Starke Kiwanians learn how Pace for Girls impacts lives

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Kiwanis Club of Starke members heard about a nonprofit organization that supports girls ages 12-17 and is interested in serving Bradford County.

Erica Wotherly, Reach Program manager for Pace Center for Girls, Clay, was the guest speaker at the Kiwanis Club's Aug. 19 meeting. Pace Center, which provides services in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

"Our mission is to provide girls and young women with an opportunity for a better future through education, counseling, training and advocacy," Wotherly said.

Pace offers day programs in which girls attend school and receive mental-health support, life-skills training and college/career prep. Those are provided

at Pace centers, with the closest centers to Bradford County being in Gainesville, Jacksonville and Middleburg. School services at a Pace center are aligned with the curriculum of the school districts in which they're located and adhere to Florida Department of Education requirements.

The Reach Program consists of therapists who support girls in their local schools, within their communities or in their homes.

Wotherly said the goal right now is to possibly have a therapist who would work in Bradford County.

When asked by a Kiwanis member how girls would be referred to the therapist, Wotherly said, "On the website, there is a way for families to fill out forms. They can be referred through the website. They also have a form that can be shared with school counselors. If the school counselors identify

someone, or school social workers identify someone, then they can be sent to me. I typically am the one who shares the information with the therapist."

Wotherly said part of the reason for Pace Center for Girls being created was that a lot of similar organizations existed to serve boys.

"The founder's desire was to have something more specifically that catered to girls and girls' needs," she said.

Vicki Burke founded Pace in 1985, with the first center launched with 10 girls in Jacksonville. It was a way of reaching girls with trauma-induced behaviors who were entering the juvenile-justice system.

"Over the last 40 years, we've impacted the lives of more than 40,000 girls and young women, providing them with the tools and the opportunities they need to overcome adversity and achieve their dreams," Wotherly said. "At Pace, we believe everyone deserves a path to success."

Wotherly said though she hated to use the term "baggage," she said that's what girls bring with them to Pace. Girls served by Pace may have been abused verbally, physically or sexually. They may have parents who are on drugs, in prison or deceased. They may be in foster care.

At Pace, unlike some other environments, the focus is on the girl and not the baggage, Wotherly said, adding, "We really wrap our arms around them and show them a different way of living, where they can be successful, where they can become mentors and where they can be role models for other young people."

Pace operates under nine values and guiding principles:

honor the female spirit, focus on strengths, act with integrity and positive intent, embrace growth and change, value the wisdom of time, exhibit courage, seek excellence, create partnerships, and invest in the future.

Wotherly shared some stats, including the fact that seven in 10 girls attending Pace improved academically (measured by Florida STAR testing). Eight in 10 girls were failing school six months prior to attending Pace.

"We had one young lady this past spring who was at Pace for two years and graduated at 16 years old and was able to be admitted to and got a scholarship from (Jacksonville University)," Wotherly said.

Wotherly said eight out of 10 girls demonstrate disturbing behavior related to juvenile delinquency before Pace. Afterward, eight out of 10 become more confident in themselves and believe they can accomplish goals and succeed in life.

Regarding the Reach Program specifically, five out of 10 girls feel sad and hopeless and have thoughts of self-harm before Pace, Wotherly said. Afterward, eight out of 10 improve in healthy social relationships with their family and peers. Wotherly added that girls also become more engaged in school and their community.

"When properly supported, all girls have the power to achieve their own vision of success, leading to positive outcomes for themselves, their families and their communities," Wotherly said.

The family is not taken out of the equation that hopefully leads to success. Monthly meetings are scheduled with one or both parents of a girl in the Day



Kiwanis Club of Starke President George Konkol is pictured with Erica Wotherly, Reach Program manager for Pace Center for Girls, Clay.

Program or the Reach program.

"We do family sessions in addition to individual sessions so that the families can find better, healthier ways to communicate and understand their youth's mental-health challenges and what may be going on socially, relationally and with some of the behaviors they're experiencing so that the parents have a better idea of understanding versus reacting," Wotherly said. "A lot of youth are reacting because parents are also reacting."

Wotherly talked of a girl whose mother went to prison. She moved from the state she was living in to live with her father. The girl talked of "co-existing" with her father. They lived in the same house, but didn't do any activities together

or even get along.

After the father attended meetings with Pace personnel, the relationship he had with his daughter improved, with both of them involved together in such activities as going to the gym and attending concerts.

"They're actually working to get to know each other and having conversations versus just kind of passing each other in the home," Wotherly said.

Wotherly said Pace is always looking for volunteers to fulfill its goal of improving young lives.

"It's a heavy lift for one person," Wotherly said, "but as a community, with all of us doing the same thing, the girls become much more confident."

If you'd like to learn more about Pace, please visit pacecenter.org.

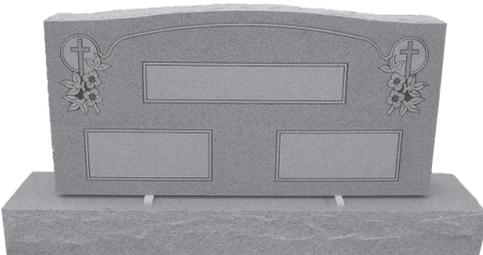
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Telegraph: a celebration of news coverage since 1879

The first issue of the Bradford County Telegraph, which began as the Florida Telegraph, was published July 26, 1879.

With the paper's birthday just recently occurring, we present a look back at some news items that were featured 130 years ago, 100 years ago, 90 years ago, 80 years ago, 70 years ago and 60 years ago.

1895: A harrowing experience

Mr. J.M. York, the Starke Drug Company's courteous, young clerk, had an experience Sunday evening that came near terminating serious. He had driven into the country, and just after he crossed the bridge near the cemetery on his return to town about 8 p.m., a man rose up from the palmettoes and yelled to him to halt.

This gave fright to the fiery steed which he was driving, and it started on a run. York turned his entire attention to the horse, but



Evelyn Ritch (left) and Jeanette Young are pictured at Starke's first library, which opened in 1935 and was located in the Woman's Club. Young donated a large number of books to get the library started and served as librarian for many years.

had only gone a short way when one of the lines broke, and he went headlong out of the buggy. The horse then soon disengaged itself from the buggy by breaking the shafts and proceeded to town.

York was rendered unconscious by the fall and remained in the road for some time when he came to himself and walked to town.

The strange part of the affair is that York was not molested while he lay unconscious in the road by the person who had attempted to hold him up. It is evident by this

that robbery was not the motive of the man in ambush and that York was not the person he was looking for.

Mr. U.S. Adams passed the bridge about an hour after York's experience and says that a man rose up from the palmettoes and gave his horse a fright, but it is not certain whether the mysterious figure said anything to him or not. Adams thought it was only someone passing and took no notice of him.

1925: Makes record with flock of hens

Mrs. George A. Gardiner is not a specialist in the poultry business, unless a specialist is classed as one who allows the flock to attend to its own affairs, but during the year just closed, she secured 19,464 eggs from a flock of 150 hens.

The hens are mixed strains, mostly Anconas and Black Minorcas. They are given free range of the farm and are fed almost entirely on what is raised on the place. Outside of providing a shelter for the flock, very little attention is given them. The matter of shelter does not seem to be appreciated by the hens, they take to the limbs of convenient trees, as nature probably intended them to do, and as a result of this care, or lack of care, as some will say, the flock stays entirely free of the diseases so common among the flocks in modern poultry plants.

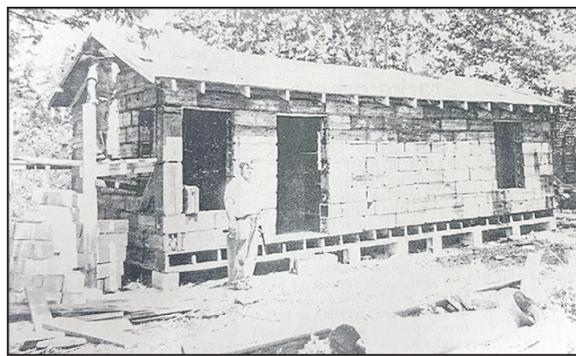
For the year 1924, each hen averaged 130 eggs. Out of this number, 1,374 dozen were sold, bringing a total of \$532.32, or nearly \$1.50 a day for every day of the year. Mrs. Gardiner keeps a daily record of her chicken business and finds it profitable.

1935: Bookworms get library in Starke

Starke has the luck of having good things thrust upon her without effort of the general citizenry. The latest boon to come our way is a public library, which fills a long-felt want to many, both natives and tourists, and it has come to stay if the patronage justifies it. The library is located in the Woman's Club building and is presided over by Mrs. H.H. Young, well known as our erstwhile postmistress, who deserves much praise for its establishment.

The library is something unique, and one is surprised to find such a galaxy of high-class books in a city of Starke's size. Best-sellers, with their tawdry covers and questionable contents, are conspicuous only by their absence, but nearly all the standard works of English literature — history, travel, fiction, philosophy and poetry, all the way from "Paradise Lost" to "John Brown's Body" — are present. Of reference works, there are a set of "Encyclopedia Britanica," "Webster's International Dictionary" and others.

There are works galore on religious subjects, including the Koran, Confucius and the Book of Mormon. The student, the general reader and the small boy and girl all can find interesting reading here. Even a confirmed



This house was built out of old ammunition boxes during the Camp Blanding boom days in Starke. The housing shortage was so severe that whole families paid rent to live in one room. Every available garage, storage shed and hut was a viable rental property.

bookworm could browse with ecstasy among the many volumes of forgotten lore, now out of print, with leaves of handmade paper and artistically bound and gilded by skilled craftsmen.

The library is open daily from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Tell Mrs. Young what class of books you wish to read, and she will take you to that particular department, where you can take your choice. She will be glad to have you come. You may stay there until closing time and look over books and magazines and maps, or take a book home and read it — free. This institution is a valuable one for our city, and your appreciation should be shown by making use of it. If you are not already a reader, get the habit.

Books should not be handled carelessly. Have your hands clean. Keep the books out of the sun. Don't mark passages with pencil. Don't turn down the corners of pages; use a bookmark. Don't keep a book too long; return it in good shape.

1935: Tobacco crop brings money to Brooker farmers

A self-supporting community is like a good man — neither can be kept down.

Brooker, about 18 miles southwest of Starke, is proud to bear the name of a Bradford County town that is definitely on an upgrade. Farmers of that section have placed Old Man Depression behind them and are glorifying their little town without the frequently sought government aid. Tobacco growers there last year netted large profits from their crops, and improvements to the town's business houses and general improvement and renovations to farm homes speak for it.

On the high, rolling land in the immediate vicinity of Brooker, 100 acres of tobacco netted farmer growers about \$15,024 this year, and an even better harvest is anticipated at the close of next season. Old-time farmers of the Brooker section refer to their community as "the garden spot of Bradford," and they are rightfully gaining their place in the sun. They have turned to tobacco growing as a money crop, and much enthusiasm is being yearly aroused as the acreage steadily increases.

The largest single acreage devoted entirely to tobacco in the area this year was that of G.W. Hazen, who harvested from 55 acres approximately 44,000 pounds of good-grade tobacco. Other smaller crops were grown by H.P. and L.R. Gainey, Guy and M.O. Harrel and other farmers in the immediate vicinity. Due to ideal soil and generally favorable seasons, growers say that even more of the crop will very likely be planted during 1935-36.

1935: 2 young Starke girls were popular in movies and radio

Two tiny, curly haired girls just entering their teens returned to Starke for a visit last week. It was five years ago since they left there — five crowded years during which the dark-eyed, little ladies had made a name for themselves on the radio, in motion pictures and on phonograph recordings.

They were Clementine and Virginia Torruella, and they were here to visit their parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. Torruella, who operate a filling station on the east edge of town. Clementine, 14, and Virginia, 11, are NBC radio stars in their own right and are heard each Sunday morning at 9 a.m. over station WJZ, under the sponsorship of the White



T.C. Hazen, who served as Starke postmaster, served in World War II.



John Torode, who owned a Shell station in Starke, is pictured in uniform in the 1940s.

Rabbit Bus Line.

The program, called "From Coast to Coast on the Bus," has frequently been heard by local listeners with short-wave receiving sets. Clementine plays the guitar and piano; Virginia the mandolin. They sing songs — mostly semi-classical — in French, Italian, Spanish and English.

The girls, with their mother, spent a year and a half in Hollywood, where they were under contract with Fox Pictures and were featured in the motion pictures "Forbidden Melody," "King of the Gypsies," "Six Hours to Live" and "Wild Girl." With her delightful Spanish accent, Mrs. Torruella tells how her gifted daughters were just about to renew a long-term contract with the movies when "one of those earthquakes" came along, and the mother decided to bundle up Clementine and Virginia and take them back to New York City to continue their radio career amid nothing more disturbing than the roar of subway trains.

Her daughters have used several stage names for their different appearances. Mrs. Torruella says. At the present time, Clementine is making a series of 39 RCA recordings for the Post-Toasties Company, and she will use the name of "Patsy."

Mrs. Torruella, who always accompanies her daughters on their personal-appearance tours, is spending several months here with her husband. She describes the girls' break into radio as one of those things that just couldn't happen, but did.

"Soon after we left here and got settled in New York," the mother says, "I went out to buy some groceries one day, leaving Clementine alone. She was only 7 at the time. When I returned from the store, she told me that she had called up the National Broadcasting Company and that they had given her an appointment for the next afternoon."

Mrs. Torruella chuckles. "I called her a crazy, little girl and scolded her for having too much imagination, but the next afternoon, I was surprised to see her getting dressed to go out. She finally convinced me that she really had an appointment with NBC, so I dressed and went with

See HISTORY, page 15

NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING

The Suwannee River Water Management District has tentatively adopted a budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

This notice is applicable to the following counties:

All of: Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor, Union
Parts of: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Jefferson, Levy, Putnam

A public hearing to make a FINAL DECISION on the budget AND TAXES will be held on:

Monday, September 22, 2025 at 5:05PM
at: 9225 CR 49, Live Oak, FL 32060
<https://www.mysuwanneeriver.com/>

For view only, this meeting may be attended through electronic media by the following instructions at the following link:
www.youtube.com/@SRWMD

BUDGET SUMMARY Suwannee River Water Management District Fiscal Year 2025-2026

THE PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET EXPENDITURES OF THE SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT ARE 4.6% MORE THAN LAST YEARS TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES.

I. ESTIMATED REVENUES AND BALANCES	MILLAGE PER \$1,000	GENERAL FUND	SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	TOTAL BUDGET
ESTIMATED REVENUES				
AD VALOREM TAXES (Rolled-back rate)	0.2812	\$ 7,179,527	\$ 128,097	\$ 7,307,624
OTHER REVENUES				
Federal Revenue			6,151,500	6,151,500
State Revenue		6,375,000	48,943,210	55,318,210
District Revenue		90,000	750,000	840,000
Permit and License Fees		250,000	-	250,000
Investment Income		300,000	-	300,000
Timber Sales			1,200,000	1,200,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES		14,194,527	57,172,807	71,367,334
TRANSFERS IN/(OUT)				-
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE/RESERVE PROJECTED		16,547,548	13,086,702	29,634,250
TOTAL REVENUES, TRANSFERS & FUND BALANCE		\$ 30,742,075	\$ 70,259,509	\$ 101,001,584
II. EXPENDITURES				
WATER RESOURCES PLANNING & MONITORING		\$ 7,698,282	4,139,897	\$ 11,838,179
ACQUISITION, RESTORATION & PUBLIC WORKS		1,810,210	55,449,444	57,259,654
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF LANDS & WORKS		3,693,655	5,989,903	9,683,558
REGULATION		2,507,619	-	2,507,619
OUTREACH		291,126	-	291,126
ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONS SUPPORT		2,049,189	-	2,049,189
TOTAL APPROPRIATED EXPENDITURES		\$ 18,050,081	\$ 65,579,244	\$ 83,629,325
ENDING FUND BALANCES/RESERVES		12,691,994	4,680,265	17,372,259
TOTAL APPROPRIATED EXPENDITURES, TRANSFERS AND FUND BALANCE		\$ 30,742,075	\$ 70,259,509	\$ 101,001,584

THE TENTATIVE, ADOPTED, AND/OR FINAL BUDGETS ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED TAXING AUTHORITY AS A PUBLIC RECORD.

HISTORY

Continued from page 14

her. “Not being familiar with the city, we wound up at the Columbia Broadcasting offices instead of National. However, they gave my little girl an audition and liked her. Later, we discovered our mistake and succeeded in getting an audition at the National. They liked Clementine, too, and she made broadcasts for both companies for a number of years.”

The talented youngster is now under contract to only NBC and has been joined in her work by her younger sister, Virginia, who was born in Starke.

As for the future, Mrs. Torruella observes — and quite rightly — that no one knows what it holds in store for her daughters. Clementine is saving her money and plans to go abroad next year to study dramatics in Milan, Italy. All that the little entertainers now know of music or acting either comes natural to them or has been learned from their mother.

It was a happy group that gathered at the Torruella home last Sunday night, for it was Clementine’s 14th birthday. A number of her former school chums were invited, as well as older friends of the family. The sisters entertained with some of their songs and dances.

1935: Telegraph goes daily for 4 days

The Telegraph is proud to announce that Starke will have its first daily newspaper during the Strawberry Festival here April 17-20.

The paper will be eight or more pages of tabloid size and will carry up-to-the-minute news of goings-on at the festival grounds and other important news throughout the county. It will have a free distribution of 600 copies per day during the four-day period, and each issue will be printed on a different-colored paper so that it may be easily distinguished.

The “Strawberry Festival News,” as the paper will be named, is made possible only through the patronage of local advertisers, and even at this early date, a large amount of space has already been contracted for.

1945: Call Street quiet on V-E Day

Tuesday, May 8, 1945, was officially proclaimed Victory in Europe Day.

There was thanksgiving, yes, but no revelry, no celebrating. All too obvious was the task that still lies ahead — the knowledge that only the halfway mark has been reached.

With President Truman’s official announcement at 9 a.m. Tuesday of Germany’s unconditional surrender, Mayor Charles A. Darby made the rounds of the business district, requesting stores to close for the remainder of the day. Camp Blanding officials had already announced that MPs would close all places selling beer and see that they remained closed throughout the day.

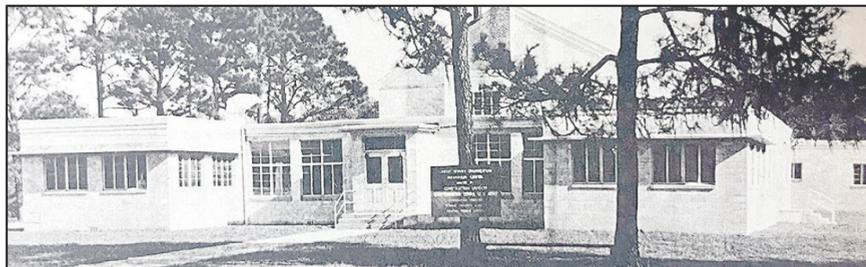
Call Street was almost deserted as it usually is on holidays, and intermittent showers and overcast skies added further to the somber atmosphere.

Some inconvenience was occasioned to Army wives and others occupying rooms without cooking facilities due to the fact that practically all restaurants closed for the day. One or two hamburger joints remained open and did a land-office business as long as supplies held out.

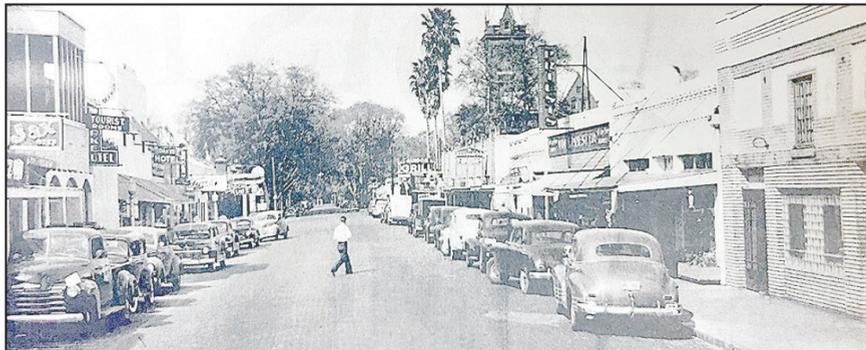
The bank, which used to observe holidays that no one else thought of, remained open because there was no specific law authorizing its closing.

All Army personnel were restricted to Camp Blanding for the day and could not come to town, even after working hours. Call Street was more void of khaki Tuesday night than it has been since the establishment of Camp Blanding. The only unauthorized GI observed in town probably wished he hadn’t come, for he was kept busy dodging MPs all evening.

Police officers reported the



The USO, located at U.S. 301 and Washington Street, was a place for military men to gather and enjoy meals, dancing, card and board games and a wide variety of other activities. It was staffed by church and civic group



A view of Call Street in the 1940s. It was reported as a quiet scene on Victory in Europe Day but then described as “wacky” when World War II ended with Japan’s surrender.

day as being unusually quiet. One drunk was placed in the care of Jailer Ben Rowe, but it is not known whether he was celebrating V-E Day or just celebrating.

1925: Call Street wacky as peace is announced

At 7 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 14, Assistant Fire Chief Edwin St. John heard President Truman’s voice come on the air. He waited a few minutes to be sure this was the real McCoy, then joyfully gave the five one-minute blasts on the fire siren that told Starke the great news — Japan had accepted terms of unconditional surrender, putting an end to World War II.

Eager to believe, yet wary of hoaxes, Call-Streeters stopped dead in their tracks for a breathless moment, then proceeded, along with the rest of the United States, to go stark, staring mad.

Mae Sisson, Irish soft drink-stand proprietress, paused at her evening chore of shutting up shop and said, “You know what I want to do? I want to cry. Isn’t it silly?”

Sam Samra, sandwich-vending proprietor of the White House Café across the street, began breaking open paper-wrapped rolls of coins, showering them on the pavement like confetti. When his change was gone, he started throwing packages of cigarettes. Next came cigars. Happy GIs scrambled in the street for the manna from this mid-August Santa Claus.

Soon came the honking hordes of automobiles, turning the intersection of Call and Walnut streets into a fair replica of Broadway and 42nd in the after-theater hour. Frequently disregarding red lights, autos careened around corners, causing a philosopher to remark, “The Lord takes care of children and drunks and peace celebrators.” Someone bumped into the back of Sheriff Oscar Andreu’s car, but the sheriff took it like a sport, and the gleeful driver honked off in all directions, blissfully unaware that he’d bumped the law.

It was such a show as Call Street had never staged before. Jack and Bea Berg raided their novelty shop stock of serpentine confetti and noisemakers and rode up and down Call Street, tossing them into the hands of eagerly snatching merrymakers. Soon, gay paper streamers swirled from everyone — from the WAC in the convertible coupe, who whizzed by, sitting on the lap of her GI escort, and from the four soldiers who commandeered a dilapidated pickup truck and rode by, guzzling upturned bottles of beer — a kind of tableau of revelry.

One block away, the lights went on in the Methodist church, and soon the pews were filled by those eager to show their gratitude, not by honking a horn, but by bowing in prayer. Soon, the voices were raised. “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow” mingled with the tumult in the street. Never had those words had more meaning, and never before had they been sung with

fever.

Back on the street corner, a soldier stood transfixed, his face wreathed in smiles. “Gosh,” he said to nobody in particular. “Just think how it’ll feel to drive into a service station, have ‘em fill it up with gas and get your windshield wiped.” We know what he meant. Our windshield hasn’t been wiped in four years now.

Suddenly, it was 9:30 p.m., and MPs began circulating quietly but firmly. They had orders from headquarters. GI buses had arrived to take all soldiers back to camp except those who live in town. Even the USO was not immune, and festivities there were stopped, and the building closed.

“Too bad we won the war,” one GI grumbled, but he went along quietly with the rest.

Without its khaki friends to set the pace, Call Street soon calmed down, and by 10 p.m., all was quiet once more. Here and there a telltale sign remained to indicate its uninhibited hour. A pair of GI shoes reposed in unmilitary disorder on the awning of Col. D.E. Knight’s law office, tossed there, perhaps, by some rejoicing infantryman.

On the whole, it was very orderly disorder.

“Two extra policemen were on duty, but we didn’t need ‘em,” remarked Night Patrolman W.E. Thornton.

1945: German prisoner found in hideout near

Alligator Creek

Bruno Balzer found a nice place to hide out during his stay in Starke — a circular spot of high ground under a large oak tree, liberally sprinkled with pine needles and almost completely surrounded with dense, jungle-like growth. Within a stone’s throw was a field of yellow corn, while orange trees and peach trees supplied the necessary variety for his diet. There was even running water.

Balzer was a German prisoner of war, one of five who escaped from Camp Blanding last week and the last to be recaptured.

He probably thought he was pretty smart to find such an ideal setup for his hideout purposes,

but as is usually the case, no matter how smart a fellow might be, there is always someone just a little bit smarter.

In this instance, that someone was busy housewife Ruby Johns, who saw from her kitchen window about 5 p.m. last Thursday puffs of blue-gray smoke coming from the woods beyond the field that separates her house from the undergrowth.

Ever since she can remember, small boys have used this spot — described as “the island” because it is above water, even when the banks of nearby Alligator Creek overflow — as an outdoor cooking spot, so Johns thought not so much of the smoke itself, but she feared the fact that the fire might spread in the dry undergrowth.

Putting down her kitchen mop, she started across the powder-dry field, stooped under a strand of barbed wire and stopped at the first dense undergrowth, not more than 100 yards from her house. Through a small opening in the bushes, she could see a man in the circular, open area, stirring something in a pan, which was resting on two bricks over a small fire.

She saw instantly that this was no mere Boy Scout. The man was of medium height and build and had dark hair over a balding, high forehead. It had not yet occurred to her that he might be an escaped German prisoner.

“Put that fire out when you get through cooking so it won’t spread,” Johns said.

The man was startled. He stepped behind a screening grape vine and did not reply.

“I said put that fire out when you get through cooking,” Johns repeated.

Just at that moment, her 5-year-old nephew, Wayne Mundorff, who had followed her from the house across the field, called out, “How did you get through the



July 6, 1945, Telegraph photo: Starke’s Albert Hartman (above) and his son, Eddie, work at Camp Blanding’s Ordnance Armament Shop. Hartman operates the machine he invented for making metal loops servicemen use to carry 60mm mortars. A 20-minute blacksmithing job is done in 30 seconds with Hartman’s invention.

fence, Aunt Ruby?”

Hearing another voice, the man slumped to the ground, “kind of like an accordion folding up,” Johns said, and started slipping deeper into the undergrowth. It was then that Johns realized who he was.

Hurrying back to the house, she called one of her roomers — a Camp Blanding sergeant of German extraction — and asked, “How would you like to capture a German prisoner?”

The sergeant armed himself and rushed to the spot, but the escaped POW had vanished. The only telltale bit of evidence left behind was a German-English dictionary in which Balzer had scrawled in English, “Keep camouflage simple.”

The sergeant went to the nearest telephone office and called the MPs. Five men from the MP office in the city hall

See MORE, page 18

NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING

The Town of Brooker has tentatively adopted a budget for 2025-2026.

A public hearing to make a **FINAL DECISION** on the budget **AND TAXES** will be held on:

Tuesday, September 23, 2025

7:00PM

at:

Brooker Town Hall/Community Center
17435 Tetstone Avenue
Brooker, FL 32622

BUDGET SUMMARY

Town of Brooker - Fiscal Year 2025-2026

	GENERAL FUND	WATER FUND	TOTAL
Cash Carryover brought forward	\$10,000.	\$4,900.	\$14,900.
ESTIMATED REVENUES:			
Taxes: Millage per \$1000.			
Ad Valorem Taxes 0.2370	3,261.		3,261.
Charges for Service	3,000.	98,800.	101,800.
Intergovernmental	161,400.		161,400.
License & Fees	356.		356.
Fines & Forfeitures	267.		267.
Interest Earned/Other	15,123.	17,800.	32,923.
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES	183,407.	116,600.	300,007.
TOTAL Estimated Revenues/Reserves	193,407.	121,500.	314,907.
ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES:			
Personal Service		68,200.	68,200.
Physical Environment	16,000.		16,000.
Transfer to General		11,400.	11,400.
General Government	135,407.	37,000.	172,407.
Culture & Recreation	13,200.		13,200.
Transportation	18,800.		18,800.
TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES	183,407.	116,600.	300,007.
RESERVE FOR CONTINGENCIES	10,000.	4,900.	14,900.
TOTAL Estimated Expenditures/Reserves	193,407.	121,500.	314,907.

THE TENTATIVE, ADOPTED, AND/OR FINAL BUDGET IS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED TAXING AUTHORITY AS A PUBLIC RECORD.

Newberry tops Keystone 51-7 in game between winless teams

BY MELANIE CRABTREE
Special to the Telegraph-Times-Monitor

The Keystone Heights Indians varsity football team was defeated by the Newberry Panthers 51-7 on Sept. 12.

Newberry running backs Jamarus Wimberly and Kaleb Woods led the Panthers in scoring, with both players reaching the end zone three times.

Passes by quarterback Kobe Johnson to receivers Wimberly, Woods and Zaden Wilcox accounted for three TDs.

Newberry (1-3) racked up another touchdown with Hernando Garvin scoring by returning a punt.

The Panthers led 38-0 at halftime.

In the second half, the Indians (0-3) worked their way down the field, pushing quarterback Hunter Crumpton into the end zone for their sole touchdown, with kicker Ryder Thomas adding the extra point.

Newberry scored twice more, with kicker Kaiden Bush adding the PATs.

Keystone Head Coach Steve



Michael Gamble (left) is on the run, trying to break away from the Panthers defense.

Reynolds said he appreciated the spark his team displayed by scoring in the second half.

He added that despite the score, he is seeing improvement.

"These boys come to work every day ready to get better," Reynolds said.

The coach added that he was proud of the team's second-half effort in the face of a discouraging score.

Crumpton led the offense with 56 rushing yards on 16 carries. Running back and receiver Cole Crabtree ran for 6 yards on five carries and had one reception for

3 yards. Crabtree, playing cornerback, led the defense with five solo tackles, one assist and one pass deflection.

Pete Bostic, Luke Bacorn and Micha Screen had two solo tackles each. Bacorn, Logan Madden-Moore and Bostic each deflected one of Newberry's field-goal attempts.

Keystone travels to play Dixie County on Friday, Sept. 19, at 7:30 p.m. The Bears (0-4) are coming off a 68-13 loss to Belleview.

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GAME ON 2025 8 FOOTBALL CONTEST

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IN THE WEEKLY TELEGRAPH/TIMES/MONITOR

FOOTBALL CONTEST



PAGE 2

SEE ENTRY FORM ON PREVIOUS PAGE

<p>9 North Carolina Tar Heels vs. UCF Knights DURRANCE PUMP 864 N Temple Ave. • Starke (904) 964-7061</p>	<p>10 Purdue Boilermakers vs. Notre Dame Fighting Irish PIPELINE CONSTRUCTORS INC. Site & Utility Contractor 2117 N Temple Ave Starke, FL 32091 (904) 964-2019</p>	<p>11 Illinois Fighting Illini vs. Indiana Hoosiers BMS Tornadoes of the Week J'QUEZ CASON #1 (LEFT) CY CUBBEDGE #15 (RIGHT) titanchevy.com (904) 964-3200</p>	<p>12 Texas Tech Red Raiders vs. Utah Utes TEAL TILE 131 N. Cherry St. Starke, FL 904-964-7423</p>
<p>13 Michigan Wolverines vs. Nebraska Cornhuskers STARKE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB (904) 964-5441 15501 NE 14th Ave • Starke, FL</p> <p>OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK! GREENS FEE: \$10 CART RENTAL: \$20</p>	<p>14 N.C. St. Wolfpack vs. Duke Blue Devils DLP BANK STARKE, FL • (904) 964-7830 LAKE BUTLER, FL • (386) 496-3333</p> <p>DLPbank DURABLE AND TOUGH PLAYERS OF THE WEEK</p>	<p>15 Oregon St. Beavers vs. Oregon Ducks Jackson Building Supply JACKSON BUILDING SUPPLY Starke Lake Butler 904-964-6078 386-496-3079</p>	<p>16 Syracuse Orange vs. Clemson Tigers NORTH FLORIDA PHARMACY 405 S. Lawrence Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-478-2057</p>
<p>17 Houston Texans vs. Jacksonville Jaguars LAKE AREA TITLE Keystone Hts Location 7404 State Road 21 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 (352) 473-9009</p> <p>Lake Butler Location 25 East Main Street Lake Butler, FL 32054 (386) 496-8238</p>	<p>18 N.Y. Jets vs. Tampa Bay Buccaneers A NAME YOU HAVE COME TO KNOW AND TRUST V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services 386-496-1400</p> <p>WE'RE HERE FOR YOU www.ferreirafuneralservices.com</p>	<p>19 Cincinnati Bengals vs. Minnesota Vikings THORNTON & CO REALTY 50 West Main Street Lake Butler, FL 904-364-6890</p>	<p>20 Atlanta Falcons vs. Carolina Panthers QUALITY PLUMBING (352) 377-1009 Quality-Plumbing.com</p>
<p>21 Green Bay Packers vs. Cleveland Browns HOMETOWN INSURANCE 904-964-3375 hometowninsurance.com</p>	<p>22 L.A. Rams vs. Philadelphia Eagles HANDI HOUSE OF STARKE (904) 964-3330 1670 S Walnut St • Starke, FL</p>		

* CONTEST RULES 1. Anyone (except Telegraph/Times/Monitor employees and their immediate family members) is welcome to enter. One entry per person per week please. Persons winning one week are not eligible to win again for at least three weeks. 2. When picking up winnings, the winner will have their photograph taken for the paper. 3. Entry must be on an official form from the BCT/UCT/LRM and submitted to one of our drop off locations: BC Telegraph, 131 W. Call St., Starke; Spires Market in Lake Butler; Capital City Bank in Keystone Heights OR *** email a photo/scan of your official entry form to csmelley@BCTELEGRAH.COM — ALL entries due before 5 p.m. on Fridays. Entrants consent to be added to our email list and having photo taken for paper. Fill in all the blanks with the name of the team you think will win, matching the biz & card numbers. The person who picks the most games correctly will win \$50 cash from the pool of BCT/UCT/LRM entries. 4. **In case of a tie, the total points scored in the GATORS' game this week is the tie breaker. Please fill in the points you think will be scored by the GATORS and their opponent, combined, in the tie breaker blank. (For instance, if the score of the game was GATORS 19, opponent 7, the correct tie-breaker score is 26 points). 5. Decision of the judges is final. A second, follow up tie-breaker will be used if necessary. Results will be tabulated on Monday and winners notified by telephone. Don't forget to list a phone number where you can be reached. INFO: 904-964-6305. [GATORS WILL BE USED FOR TIEBREAKER.]

Tigers struggle offensively in 28-0 loss to Baldwin

BY LISA HOLTZENDORF
Special to the Telegraph-Times-Monitor

Union County High School's football team had two touchdowns negated by penalties as the Tigers lost 28-0 to Class 2A Baldwin on Sept. 12.

The Tigers (1-2) gave up only two scores defensively, with Baldwin scoring touchdowns on an interception return and a kickoff return.

Offensively, it was a struggle for Union, which gained just 115 yards. Leading rusher Drew Simmons was held to 35 yards on 16 carries.

Interim Head Coach Lamar Waters offered encouragement during a somber postgame huddle and challenged his team, saying the players had 24 hours to shake off the loss and move forward in preparing for the next opponent. Union travels to play Fort White on Friday, Sept. 19, at 7:30 p.m.

The evening began with a celebration of Pop Warner, as that organization's players, cheerleaders and coaches took the field alongside the Tigers. The young players ran stride for stride with the older players as they ran out of the tunnel and onto the field. The high school



Phoenix Bryant (left) and C.J. Ivey (background, left) team up to sack Baldwin quarterback Stephen Screws.

cheerleaders assisted the Pop Warner cheerleaders with cheers and stunts each quarter in front of the packed house at The Jungle.

Jeffrey Brugh, Wyatt Elixson, C.J. Ivey and Alec McClellon represented the Tigers during the coin toss, which was won by Baldwin. The Indians (4-0) deferred their option to the second half.

A short kickoff to open the game was fielded by Union's Parker Parrish at his own 45. Despite the good field position, the Tigers were unable to gain a first down and punted.

Union's defense likewise held Baldwin's offense in check,

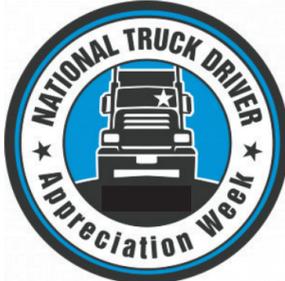
forcing the Indians to go three-and-out as well.

The teams traded possessions throughout the first quarter, failing to gain first downs until the Indians broke the ice when quarterback Stephen Screws completed a pass to Harrison Farnum to keep a drive alive. The Indians continued to drive down the field on a reception by Jaden Barnett that resulted in a first down. Union's defense would put a halt to the drive and force Baldwin to turn the ball over on downs.

Union's offense gained some

See UCHS, page 21

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<p>3 Union County Tigers vs. Fort White Indians SPIRES IGA 610 SW 1st Street Lake Butler 386-496-3361</p> 	<p>4 South Carolina Gamecocks vs. Missouri Tigers EVAN DOUGLAS CONSTRUCTION, INC. 352-745-0935</p> 
<p>5 Kent State Golden Flashes vs. FSU Seminoles REDDISH & WHITE, CPAs 134 E. Call St. Starke, FL 904-964-7555</p> 	<p>6 Florida Gators vs. Miami Hurricanes CLYATT WELL DRILLING 5941 SW State Rd 121 • Lake Butler, FL 386-496-2488</p> 
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PAGE 1

TELEGRAPH/TIMES/MONITOR WEEKLY FOOTBALL CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Pick the Week's Winners Win \$50 Cash

ENTER one TEAM Winner in space for each of GAMES OF THE WEEK:
Deadline: 5 pm 9/12/25*

Biz 1 _____	Biz 8 _____	Biz 15 _____
Biz 2 _____	Biz 9 _____	Biz 16 _____
Biz 3 _____	Biz 10 _____	Biz 17 _____
Biz 4 _____	Biz 11 _____	Biz 18 _____
Biz 5 _____	Biz 12 _____	Biz 19 _____
Biz 6 _____	Biz 13 _____	Biz 20 _____
Biz 7 _____	Biz 14 _____	Biz 21 _____
		Biz 22 _____

DROP BY OR EMAIL US YOUR ENTRY
see rules below***

**Tiebreaker Score: _____
Total points scored by both teams in the
GATORS game

This Week's Winner:

Laney Griffis
missed 5



ENTRANT INFO:

Name _____
Email _____
Phone# _____

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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MORE

Continued from page 15

rushed to the Johns home, and two radio cars, with another 10 men, were sent from Camp Blanding. Spreading out from the point where Balzer was camping, the men combed the woods southwest toward the railroad tracks. Near the trestle, a mile or so below town, they found Balzer two hours later, perched precariously in a small oak tree.

Back at the German's camping ground, a dozen or so dry corn cobs and several piles of orange peelings and pulp told the story of how he fought off hunger pangs during the two or three days he is believed to have hidden in this spot. By fortunate circumstance (for him), a water faucet had been installed by Mr. and Mrs. Johns at the lower end of the field for irrigation purposes, so Balzer had running water at his

campsite.

Also left behind at the spot were two empty Coca-Cola bottles — one still cool when the MPs arrived.

The \$64 question remains: Where did Balzer get the Coca-Colas?

1955: Home mail delivery serves 2,500

A day to go down as a major event in the annals of Starke history passed quietly and without serious incident on Tuesday as the long-awaited home mail delivery became a reality.

It was a simple start, as Postmaster Henry T. Godwin and Theodore Young stepped off post office steps with bag loads of mail.

With home mail, Starke acquired two foot routes, a motor route, inauguration of parcel-post truck service and five large

mail receptacles.

Postmaster G.J. McGriff Jr. said the new postal service, serving 2,500 patrons, was inaugurated with only minor difficulty.

Home mail climaxes a large number of related events, which were aimed to bring the postman to the door.

A number of civic and professional groups, including ladies' organizations, spurred the project on. The city council went to a great deal of trouble, which involved numbering all businesses and residents and renaming some 50 city streets.

Much credit goes to the Zoning Adjustment Committee, which ironed out many of the knots. The committee consisted of Mrs. Edward Hall, Arch Thomas Sr., Cliff Hazen, S.G. Denmark and John Torode.

"This thing is new, and we're still feeling our way around," McGriff said. "We expect the volume of mail to pick up

because of the new service."

1955: 613 students given polio vaccine

Hailing the mass immunization of 613 school children with Salk vaccine last Thursday at the health department as "a beautiful example of how the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and the promotion of mental and physical health can be achieved through organized, community effort," Dr. A.Y. Covington, director of the Bradford County Health Department, reported that the operation went off smoothly and efficiently.

He said that all but 22 of the children who were signed up for the anti-polio vaccine were given the initial treatment, and that of these, five had moved away, while the others, who were absent because of minor illnesses, will be treated later.

There were no harmful reactions to the immunization treatments, Covington said, with many parents reporting that days later, they could not even notice the spot where the shot had been given.

The only untoward event of the whole affair happened when a boy with a kick like a mule put Bradford County Health Department's Jack Trawick out of action temporarily.

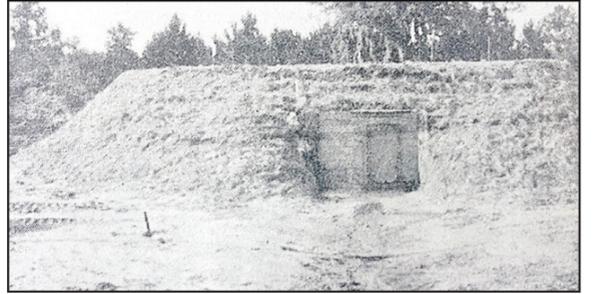
1965: Nuclear-fallout shelters inadequate

A lack of adequate fallout-shelter facilities, an inadequate warning system and a poor communications system for Bradford County were brought to light at a meeting of county, city and civil-defense officials held Tuesday night.

These conditions were disclosed as civic-defense personnel held a STEP 4 (readiness) operation, which presumes that a state of readiness has been announced and that only 12 days are available to prepare for an attack.



July 8, 1955, Telegraph photo: It's moving day for the old J.M. "Gid" Alvarez home, which took a mile-long stroll down Madison Avenue to make way for a new Lovett's building. Guy Andrews, who will erect the new structure and lease it to the grocery chain, said the old home was probably built around 1875.



The threat of nuclear attack was something people took seriously in the 1960s. Pictured is a fallout shelter built by Hollis Knight.

The meeting, held in civic-defense headquarters, was attended by Retired Army Maj. Walter Murphy, director of the North Florida Defense Area, who warned, "In the event of an emergency, you can expect no outside help and instead may have to take care of perhaps 15,000 refugees from Jacksonville, which is an assumed target."

Summing up, Murphy said, "Your main problem here is a lack of shelter facilities. In many cases, your best hope will be to dig a hole on high land, drive your car over it and crawl under."

Bill Shiner, Bradford County assistant defense director, said that only two buildings in Starke — the courthouse and the Florida Bank building — will provide good fallout protection and only two private shelters have been built. He said the siren in Starke is not loud enough to be heard

throughout the city and that in an emergency, communications will be limited to the telephone system, the Florida Highway Patrol and the city and county radio hookups.

Discussion revealed that inadequate steps have been taken to ensure a supply of food and water during an emergency period. Shiner cited the example of last fall when Hurricane Dora caused the city to be cut off from the outside world because long-distance telephone communications were out.

County Civic-Defense Director Carl Roberts said that some of the deficiencies will be corrected in the near future.

"We will get a new radio station at CD headquarters, and if plans go through for our emergency operations center, we will have a fine control center," Roberts said.

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KHHS teams place 3rd at Indian Cross Country Invite

Bradford runners are part of the annual event as well

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School placed third as a team in both the boys and girls varsity races at the third annual Indian Cross

Country Invite, which was held Sept. 13 at Melrose's Trinity Youth Camp.

The Indians had a team score of 59 in the boys race, placing behind Middleburg (25) and Baker County (58) and finishing ahead of Clay (118), Crescent City (123) and Ridgeview (145).

Keystone's Noah Yara placed second out of 59 runners, crossing the line in 18:45.

Middleburg's Daniel Johnson posted the winning time of 18:19.

The Indians' Ryder Thomas was fourth at 18:56, while Hunter Gray finished 12th at 20:04.

Bradford's Steven Carter ran a 17th-place time of 20:35.

Ryeland Wahl and Gavin Morford earned 24th- and 28th-place finishes for Keystone with times of 21:23 and 21:42. Also running for the Indians

were Jason Parales 21:51, Eli Rabe 22:46, Alex Mahaffey 23:43, Hunter Sheppard 23:45 and Adam Bell 24:43.

Joining Carter from Bradford were Kayden Lee 24:54, Liam Reeves 25:03 and Kolson Lee 28:18.

On the girls side, the Indians' score of 69 put them behind Middleburg (50) and Interlachen (62). Placing behind Keystone were Trinity Christian (72), Baker County (120) and Crescent City (125).

In the field of 56 individuals, Keystone's Ryleigh Thomas and Olivia Griffin placed seventh and ninth, respectively, with times of 23:02 and 24:06. The Indians' Melody Tyre had a 10th-place time of 24:14, while teammate Tessa Gray was 24th with a time of 26:57.

Bradford was led by Anna Adkins, who had a 29th-place time of 27:25.

Also running for the Tornadoes was Mia Olesen, who had a time of 29:53.

Additional Keystone results were Clara Beth Robinson 31:04, Bailee Morris 31:18, Kirsten Lavin 31:29, Raina Daniel 36:26, Baily Roberts 38:12 and Schiley Starling 39:43.

A junior varsity race consisted of 44 boys and girls runners. Keystone's Mason Gray and Oliver Miller placed fifth and sixth, respectively, with times of 23:55 and 25:04.

Virginia Hancock led three Bradford runners with a 30th-place time of 32:36.

The Tornadoes' Kayleigh Dyal and Caden Eison finished with times of 32:57 and 33:56, respectively.



Keystone's Noah Yara (left) runs ahead of Middleburg's Adam Ruoss. Yara would take second in the 59-runner field.



Keystone's Ryder Thomas (left) runs alongside Middleburg's Daniel Johnson, who would win the race. Thomas placed fourth.



Bradford's Steven Carter prepares to cross the finish line, placing 17th.



Keystone's Hunter Gray (foreground) and Trinity Christian's Lucas Warden approach the finish line. Gray placed 12th.



Keystone's Ryleigh Thomas placed seventh in the race. She was one of three KHHS girls to place in the top 10.



Keystone's Olivia Griffin took the ninth-place spot in the varsity girls race.



Keystone's Melody Tyre prepares to cross the finish line in 10th place.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED TAX INCREASE

The City of Starke has tentatively adopted a measure to increase its property tax levy.

Last year's property tax levy

A. Initially proposed tax levy\$ 1,222,340

B. Less tax reductions due to Value Adjustment Board And other assessment changes\$ (32,609)

C. Actual property tax levy\$ 1,254,949

This year's proposed tax levy.....\$ 1,330,607

All concerned citizens are invited to attend a public hearing on the tax increase to be held on:

Tuesday, September 23, 2025
5:01PM
at
Commission Chambers, City Hall
209 N Thompson Street
Starke, FL 32091

A FINAL DECISION on the proposed tax increase and the budget will be made at this hearing.

BUDGET SUMMARY

City of Starke - Fiscal Year 10/1/25 - 9/30/26

THE PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF STARKE ARE 24.9% MORE THAN LAST YEARS TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES.

GENERAL FUND 4.3879

ESTIMATED REVENUES	GENERAL FUND	SPECIAL REVENUE	ENTERPRISE FUND	TOTAL ALL FUNDS
Taxes: Millage per \$1000				
Ad Valorem Taxes 4.3879	\$ 1,264,077			\$ 1,264,077
Local Option, Use, & Fuel Taxes	\$ 921,490	\$ 471,562		\$ 1,393,052
Utility Services Taxes	\$ 604,961			\$ 604,961
Communication Services Taxes	\$ 239,240			\$ 239,240
Local Business Taxes	\$ 36,276			\$ 36,276
Permits, Fees, and Special Assessments	\$ 341,532			\$ 341,532
Intergovernmental Revenues	\$ 682,529		\$ 25,405,352	\$ 26,087,881
Charges For Services	\$ -		\$ 13,568,327	\$ 13,568,327
Judgements, Fines, And Forfeits	\$ 14,119			\$ 14,119
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 240,624	\$ 131,104	\$ 32,923	\$ 404,652
Other Sources			\$ 136,758	\$ 136,758
TOTAL SOURCES	\$ 4,344,848	\$ 602,666	\$ 39,143,360	\$ 44,090,873
Transfers In	\$ -			\$ -
Fund Balances/Reserves/Net Assets	\$ 4,245,780	\$ 1,278,031	\$ 4,480,578	\$ 10,004,389
TOTAL REVENUES, TRANSFERS & BALANCES	\$ 8,590,628	\$ 1,880,697	\$ 43,623,937	\$ 54,095,262
EXPENDITURES				
General Government	\$ 2,903,993			\$ 2,903,993
Public Safety	\$ 2,190,183			\$ 2,175,183
Physical Environment			\$ 40,576,008	\$ 40,576,008
Transportation		\$ 477,457		\$ 477,457
Culture/Recreation	\$ 393,206			\$ 393,206
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 5,487,382	\$ 477,457	\$ 40,576,008	\$ 46,540,847
Transfers Out				\$ -
Fund Balances/Reserves/Net Assets	\$ 3,103,246	\$ 1,403,240	\$ 3,047,929	\$ 7,554,415
TOTAL APPROPRIATED EXPENDITURES	\$ 8,590,628	\$ 1,880,697	\$ 43,623,937	\$ 54,095,262
TRANSFERS, RESERVES & BALANCES				

THE TENTATIVE, ADOPTED, AND/OR FINAL BUDGETS ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE ABOVE REFERENCED TAXING AUTHORITY AS A PUBLIC RECORD.

BMS and BHS sports schedules

Sept. 18

—BHS girls golf vs. Palatka at Palatka Golf and Country Club, 3:30 p.m.
 —BHS JV football, home vs. Specially Fit Academy, 6 p.m.
 —BMS volleyball at Lake Butler, 6 p.m./7 p.m.
 —BHS JV/varsity volleyball, home vs. Hawthorne, 6 p.m./7 p.m.

Sept. 19

—BHS varsity football, home vs. Eastside, 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 20

—BMS/BHS cross country at Columbia High Tiger Run, 7 a.m.

Sept. 23

—BHS boys golf, home vs. Keystone, 4 p.m.
 —BMS volleyball A team, home vs. Palatka, 6 p.m.
 —BMS football, home vs. Baker County, 6 p.m.

KHHS jr. high, JV, varsity sports schedules

Sept. 18

—Girls golf vs. Trinity Catholic at Ocala Golf and Equestrian Club, 4 p.m.
 —JV/varsity volleyball, home vs. Ridgeview, 6 p.m./7 p.m.
 —JV football at Fort White, 6 p.m.

Sept. 19

—Varsity football at Dixie County, 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 20

—Cross country at Columbia High Tiger Run, 7 a.m.
 —JV volleyball at tournament at Alachua's Legacy Park

Sept. 22

—Boys golf vs. Clay at Green Cove Springs' Magnolia Point Golf and Country Club, 3:30 p.m.
 —JV/varsity volleyball, home vs. Clay, 6 p.m./7 p.m.

Sept. 23

—Girls golf vs. Branford at Lake City's Quail Heights Country Club, 3:30 p.m.
 —Boys golf vs. Bradford at Starke Golf and Country Club, 4 p.m.
 —Jr. high football at Lakeside, 6 p.m.
 —JV/varsity volleyball, home vs. Orange Park, 6 p.m./7 p.m.

Sept. 24

—Jr. high volleyball at Green Cove Springs, 5:30 p.m./6:45 p.m.

LBMS and UCHS sports schedules

Sept. 18

—UCHS boys golf vs. Branford at Lake City's Quail Heights Country Club, 3:30 p.m.
 —LBMS volleyball, home vs. Bradford, 6 p.m./7 p.m.
 —UCHS JV/varsity volleyball at Lafayette, 5:30 p.m./6:30 p.m.

Sept. 19

—UCHS varsity football at Fort White, 7:30 p.m.
 —UCHS JV volleyball at tournament at Alachua's Legacy Park

Sept. 22

—LBMS golf vs. Branford at Lake City's Quail Heights Country Club, 4 p.m.
 —LBMS volleyball at Baker County, 6 p.m./7 p.m.
 —UCHS JV/varsity volleyball at Branford, 5:30 p.m./6:30 p.m.

Sept. 23

—UCHS boys golf vs. Taylor County at Perry Golf and Country Club, 3:30 p.m.
 —UCHS JV/varsity volleyball, home vs. Suwannee, 5:30 p.m./6:30 p.m.

Sept. 24

—UCHS girls swim vs. Buchholz, Eastside and Santa Fe at Gainesville's Dwight H. Hunter Northeast Pool

Correction

The Lake Butler Middle School football team's record after its Sept. 9 loss to Bradford was 3-1. It was incorrectly reported otherwise in the Sept. 11 print issue of the Telegraph-Times-Monitor.
 We apologize for the error.

Big plays hurt BHS in loss to Mandarin

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
 cliff@bctelegraph.com

Mandarin lost the turnover battle and had 95 more yards in penalties, but the host Mustangs had Brysen Wright — the top recruit in Rivals' Class of 2028 rankings — who scored twice on plays of 80-plus yards as the host Mustangs defeated the Bradford High School football team 14-7 on Sept. 12.

The Class 2A Tornadoes (3-1), who host Eastside on Friday, Sept. 19, at 7:30 p.m., defeated Class 6A Mandarin (4-0) last season in Starke, but this year's meeting saw the Bradford offense struggle for most of the first half and come away empty on two of three red-zone possessions in the second half.

"They're like us," Bradford Head Coach Jamie Rodgers said. "They're a really good defense." Still, it was an admirable performance against a larger school that was scoring an average of 46 points per game. Plus, it was the only loss in a string of three straight road games against good teams — all in larger classifications.

"These have been tough football games," Rodgers said, adding, "I'm super proud of the guys. They played so hard."

Mandarin's Wright, who plays receiver and defensive back, put the first score on the board when he fielded a punt at his own 15, eluded at least five tackle attempts as he made his way down the Bradford sideline, somehow staying in bounds and then reversing field before crossing the goal line with 2:04 remaining in the first quarter. The Mustangs were successful on the extra-point kick to go up 7-0.

The Tornadoes got the chance to start an offensive series past midfield in the second quarter, when a personal-foul penalty on a punt return resulted in a first down at the Mandarin 46-yard line. Runs by Jarell Harris and quarterback Cy Cubbedge set up third-and-3, but the Tornadoes turned the ball over when Mustangs corner Brody Jennings intercepted a pass.

Mandarin attempted to put itself in position to score more points before halftime on a drive that began at its own 27 with 35 seconds on the clock. Knox Annis completed passes of 13, 6 and 10 yards as the Mustangs moved to the Bradford 44. The Tornadoes' Peyton Jones put a stop to the drive by intercepting a pass inside the 30-yard line.

The Mustangs' defense came up with a big play at the start of the second half when linebacker Keisean Douglas intercepted a pass, giving Mandarin the ball at the Bradford 43.

Wright caught passes of 22

and 7 yards to help the Mustangs drive to the 11-yard line. The Tornadoes then came away with their own turnover as Jy'Quez Cason recovered a fumble at the 8-yard line.

Despite being backed up deep in their own territory, the Tornadoes put together their best drive up to that point. Cubbedge completed passes of 17 and 9 yards to Chase Phillips to pick up first downs, while a pass interference penalty resulted in a first down at the Mandarin 43. Kamontae Nixon later had a 26-yard reception for a first down at the 16-yard line.

The promising drive then imploded. After running back Keshawn Kennedy was dropped for a 2-yard loss, Cubbedge was sacked for a 14-yard loss. A fumble on third down resulted in a 9-yard loss, forcing Bradford to punt on fourth-and-35.

Cubbedge's punt pinned the Mustangs at their 10-yard line. After a 3-yard run on first down, Annis hit a wide-open Wright in stride along the home team's sideline for an 87-yard touchdown. With the successful PAT, Mandarin led 14-0 with 3:54 to play in the third quarter.

"A punt return for a touchdown and a busted coverage," Rodgers said. "That's 14 points. That's usually how teams beat us. We don't give up many drives."

Wright finished the night with 134 yards on five receptions.

Bradford, beginning the ensuing series at its own 25, picked up a first down on a personal-foul penalty, while a 9-yard reception by Phillips and a 4-yard run by Kennedy helped the Tornadoes gain another first down at the Mandarin 32. A pass-interference penalty later moved Bradford to the 17-yard line. Two incompletions and a 5-yard reception by Jordan Cason set up fourth-and-5. The Tornadoes went for it, with another incompleting ending the drive.

The Tornadoes got the ball back seven plays later when Cohen Cioffi recovered a fumble. An unsportsmanlike-conduct penalty on the Mustangs after the play gave Bradford a first down at the Mandarin 19-yard line. One play was all the Tornadoes needed to finally get on the board as Nixon caught a pass from Cubbedge for a touchdown with 5:55 remaining in the game. Tyler Sapp kicked the extra point to make the score 14-7.

Bradford needed a stop on defense and almost got it when Parviele Lee sacked Annis and caused a fumble. The Mandarin quarterback, though, fell on the loose ball.

On the next play after the fumble, Annis completed a 15-yard pass for a first down at their own 47. Foster then had three



Danny Torres (far left) fights his way into the backfield to pressure Mandarin quarterback Knox Annis.

straight carries for almost 10 yards, setting up a fourth-and-inches play from the Bradford 43. The Mustangs went for it and turned to Foster again. He fumbled the ball, but recovered it past the line to gain, giving Mandarin the first down and the chance to take three straight kneel downs to end the game.

The Tornadoes, who were without injured running back Iyen Addison, struggled to get a rushing attack going, gaining just 50 yards on 27 carries.

Cubbedge had 115 yards passing, but completed only 10

of 27 attempts.

Nixon finished with three receptions for 56 yards, while Phillips had 43 yards on four catches.

Bradford finally gets to play at home again when it faces the Class 3A Eastside Rams, who are 3-1 after a 33-17 win over Trinity Catholic. Eastside's only loss was 29-19 against Class 6A Buchholz.

"It'll be exciting to be back at home," Rodgers said. "That'll give us a little juice, but we're beaten and bruised. We've got to get back healthy."



A Lion on the attack

Brie Bradshaw goes up for the attack after getting a set from Lorlai Green (background) in Hope Christian's 2-0 (25-23, 25-21) varsity win over First Christian on Sept. 11. The Lions played Northside Christian this past Tuesday and will host Corinth Christian on Friday, Sept. 19, at 5:30 p.m., following a junior varsity match at 4 p.m. Hope travels to play First Assembly Christian on Monday, Sept. 22, at 5:30 p.m. The JV teams will play at 4:30 p.m. Photo by Chris Amis.



Parker Parrish (far left) and Edward Durant (center) bring pressure against Baldwin quarterback Stephen Screws.

UCHS

Continued from page 17

momentum on an 8-yard run by Bryce Lawton and a long run by McClellon, giving the Tigers a first down at the Baldwin 36. Simmons then had a touchdown run, but it was called back on a holding penalty. Adding insult to injury, a Brugh pass on third down was intercepted by Baldwin's Taylor Davenport, who returned it 75 yards for a touchdown. Demar Richards added the extra point to make it 7-0 with 10:50 remaining in the second quarter.

The Indians attempted an onside kick after the score, recovering the ball at their own 45-yard line. Baldwin tested the Union defense by completing a

pass for one first down and then gaining another first down on a quarterback keeper. Just when it looked as if the Indians were on track for another score, the Tigers' Edward Durant literally took the ball away from Screws and took it the distance for a touchdown. However, that score was called back as well as Union was penalized for an illegal block.

Baldwin's Barnett fielded the second-half kickoff, taking it 80 yards for a touchdown and putting the Indians up 13-0. The PAT was no good.

Union, trying to get something going on offense, utilized direct snaps to its running backs. That resulted in a few good carries by Simmons and Ivey, who had a powerful run in which he carried several Indians on his back.

However, after two penalties, the Tigers eventually turned the ball over on downs.

The Indians began the ensuing drive at their own 45. Three plays later, Nashawn Jacobs turned on the jets and burst up the middle for a 35-yard touchdown run. Henry Harris' run on the two-point conversion made the score 21-0 with 2:33 remaining in the third quarter.

Jacobs scored the Indians' final touchdown in the fourth quarter, with Baldwin adding the extra point for the 28-0 final.

The Tigers will play a fellow Rural Class team for the first time this season when they travel to play Fort White. Fort White (2-2) is coming off a 28-27 loss to Fernandina Beach.

In last season's meeting, Union defeated Fort White 46-19.



Jordan Cason (right) attempts to haul in a catch along the Mandarin sideline in the first quarter.

GOLF

Continued from page 12

Sept. 11 at Green Cove Springs' Magnolia Point Golf and Country Club, with Will Begue placing first individually with a score of 38.

The Indians finished with a team score of 174 to place ahead of Mandarin (176) and St. Johns Classical (215).

Begue had a birdie and made par on six holes as he finished two strokes ahead of Mandarin's Beckett Brown.

Nate Bardier, who made par on four holes, finished in a two-way tie for fourth with a score of 43.

Sammy Wacha and Jackson McDaniel were sixth and seventh, respectively, with scores of 46 and 47. McDaniel made par on four holes, while Wacha made par on three.

Landon Spence and Luke Lewis each made par on one hole, with Spence shooting a ninth-place score of 49 and Lewis shooting a 10th-place score of 52.

Keystone played P.K. Yonge this past Tuesday and will play host Clay at Magnolia Point Golf and Country Club on Monday, Sept. 22, at 3:30 p.m. The Indians will travel to play Starke on Tuesday, Sept. 23 at 4 p.m.

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Tigers keep streak intact with win over Tornadoes

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
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A couple of hot volleyball teams met in Starke on Sept. 11, with host Bradford High School having won four in a row and Union County having won six in a row.

Only one could leave with its streak intact, and that was Union, which bounced back after dropping the first set to defeat Bradford 3-1 (25-27, 25-20, 25-19, 25-18).

The Tigers led 9-8 in the first set before the Tornadoes scored three straight points with Lakelyn Sheppard serving. The brief run included an ace and a block by Ar'Nayshia Griffin.

Bradford would maintain its lead until Union scored four points with Indi Knox serving. An ace and a Morgan Smith kill helped the Tigers take an 18-16 lead.

It was 22-18 in favor of Union when the Tornadoes scored three points with Shelby Cole serving to make it a one-point game. Bradford's Autumn DeKorver later had an ace to tie it up at 23-23.

Bradford would retake the lead, getting an ace from Sheppard and a kill from Ky'lee Johnson. The Tornadoes closed it out with a Griffin kill off a Kingslee Phillips assist to win 27-25.

Neither team held more than a three-point lead for most of the second set. It was 20-19 in favor of the Tigers when they scored three points with Mallory Waugh serving. Two points came off Knox kills, while the other point was scored on a Jailyn Simmons



LEFT: Mallory Waugh (right) and Shaley Maloney (background, right) prepare for attack opportunities off a set by Abby Williams. BELOW: Union's Bella Johns gets low to receive a serve as Bayley Staier looks on.

kill. A Bradford attack error with Knox serving gave the Tigers a 25-20 win.

The Tigers held a 12-9 lead in the third set before going on a 6-0 run with Bailey Staier serving. Four of those points were scored by Simmons off three kills and a block.

Johnson had three kills to help the Tornadoes whittle their deficit to five, but Bradford couldn't overtake the Tigers. A Bella Johns ace put Union up 23-17 before a Griffin kill forced side-out. The Tornadoes' Tatum Burkhalter had a kill off a Phillips assist to make it 23-19, but a side-out gave the serve to Union's Waugh, who recorded an ace for the winning point.

Bradford scored the first four points of the fourth set with Phillips serving. Phillips had assists on two of those points — kills by Burkhalter and Griffin. Griffin also scored points on a tip and a block.

The Tigers trailed 6-3 before scoring four points with Abby Williams serving. Williams recorded two aces during the span, which also included a Simmons kill off a Williams assist.

It was 14-13 in favor of Union when a Waugh ace and a Simmons kill off a Waugh assist put the Tigers up by four.

A 5-0 run with Williams serving that included a Smith block and a Williams tip gave Union 24-16 lead.

The Tornadoes forced side-out and scored one point with Manduo Wei serving before an



error gave the Tigers the 25-18 win to end the match.

Union entered the match off a 3-1 (26-24, 21-25, 25-21, 27-25) win over host Dixie County on Sept. 9, with Simmons and Waugh tallying 14 and 11 kills, respectively. Waugh also had 11 digs, while Simmons had eight.

Johns led the team in digs with 15, while Knox and Williams each had 10. Staier added eight digs.

Knox and Smith had nine and kills, respectively, while Williams had 27 assists. Waugh added eight assists.

The Sept. 11 issue of the Telegraph-Times-Monitor reported the scores of Union's Sept. 2 win over Newberry and Sept. 4 win over Oak Hall, but did not have stats by deadline.

Against host Newberry — a 3-0 (25-13, 25-23, 25-23) win — Simmons had 13 kills, while Smith and Waugh had seven and six, respectively. Simmons also had five blocks, while Waugh added 10 assists and 10 digs.

Williams, who had nine digs, led the team in assists with 16, while Johns and Knox had 15 and 14 digs, respectively. Knox added seven aces.

Lydia Waugh had two blocks. In the 3-0 (25-17, 25-17, 25-21) win over visiting Oak Hall, Simmons had 10 kills, eight digs, five aces and three blocks.

Knox and Mallory Waugh each had seven kills, with Knox adding eight digs and two blocks and Waugh adding seven assists and two blocks.

Williams had 15 assists, while Johns had 16 digs.

Staier added seven digs, while Lydia Waugh had two blocks.



ABOVE LEFT: Ar'Nayshia Griffin goes up for an attack for Bradford. LEFT: Bradford's Jordyne Goddard (left) and Union's Ivy Wilson try to make plays for their teams at the net.

a 9-1 lead.

Brown and Hughes later added kills to help the Tornadoes close out the set and match win.

Bradford played Interlachen this past Tuesday and will host Hawthorne on Thursday, Sept. 18, at 6 p.m.

The Tigers played Branford this past Tuesday and will travel

to play Lafayette on Thursday, Sept. 18, at 5:30 p.m.

After playing in a tournament at Alachua's Legacy Park on Saturday, Sept. 20, Union will play at Branford on Monday, Sept. 22, at 5:30 p.m.

On Tuesday, Sept. 23, the Tigers host Suwannee at 5:30 p.m.

Indians win division at tournament

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
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Keystone Heights High School went 4-1 and own its division at the Sept. 12-13 Wawa Jacksonville Juniors Volleyball Association River City High School Classic.

The Indians (10-5) began play with a 2-0 (25-13, 25-14) win over North Marion, getting 10 kills each from Kadence Massey and Mia Rivera. Massey also had six digs and three service aces, while Rivera added five digs.

Bella Cumbo led the team in digs with eight, while Kaleigh Marquart recorded 21 assists and five aces.

Mackenzie Castlevecchi had two blocks.

Keystone got eight kills from Rivera and seven kills from Massey in defeating Eastside 2-0 (25-14, 25-14).

Marquart had 18 assists, while Cumbo and Rivera had six and five digs, respectively.

The Indians lost 2-1 (25-20, 22-25, 16-14) to Bishop Snyder, with Rivera recording eight kills and six digs.

Massey and Bralee-Kate Chester each had six kills, with Massey also recording 10 digs.

Marquart had 24 assists, while Rachel Blank had six digs.

Keystone bounced back from the loss, defeating St. Johns Country Day 2-0 (25-22, 25-13). Marquart had 20 assists, while Rivera and Massey had seven and six kills, respectively. Massey led the team in digs with nine, while Rivera added five.

The Indians played Bishop Snyder again, this time defeating the Cardinals 2-0 (25-23, 25-13).

Massey had eight kills and eight digs, while Rivera had seven kills and five digs.

Marquart had 15 assists, while Castlevecchi had two blocks.

Prior to the tournament, the Indians played Interlachen, defeating the host Rams 3-1 (25-20, 15-25, 27-25, 25-19) on Sept. 9.

Rivera and Massey had 11 and seven kills, respectively, with Massey also recording six digs and six aces.

Cumbo had a team-high 14 digs, while Marquart had 29 assists.

Chester had four blocks.

Keystone played St. Johns Country Day this past Tuesday and will host Ridgeview on Thursday, Sept. 18, at 7 p.m., following a junior varsity match at 6:30 p.m.

The Indians host Clay on Monday, Sept. 22, and Orange Park on Tuesday, Sept. 23. Both matches are 7 p.m., with the JV teams playing at 6 p.m.

UCHS earns 3rd place at tournament

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
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Union County High School's volleyball team went 4-1 — all against larger schools — and placed third in its division at the Sept. 12-13 Wawa Jacksonville Juniors Volleyball Association River City High School Classic.

The Tigers (12-3) defeated Class 5A Vanguard 2-0 (25-18, 25-17) to start play in the tournament. Union then recorded two more sweeps, defeating Class 5A St. Augustine 2-0 (25-12, 25-15) and Class 5A Clay 2-0. (25-16, 25-20).

Union suffered its only loss against Class 6A East River by a score of 2-0 (25-23, 25-21). The Tigers bounced back, ending the tournament with a 2-1 (25-16, 20-25, 15-13) win over Class 2A The Master's Academy.

In the tournament opening win over Vanguard, the Tigers got nine kills from Jailyn Simmons and seven kills from Morgan Smith.

Mallory Waugh had 12 assists, six digs and five service aces, while Abby Williams had 11 assists.

Stats from the other matches weren't available by deadline.

Union played Branford this past Tuesday and will travel to play Lafayette on Thursday, Sept. 18, at 6:30 p.m., following a junior varsity match at 5:30 p.m.

The Tigers then travel to play Branford on Monday, Sept. 22, before returning home to play Suwannee on Tuesday, Sept. 23. JV and varsity matches are 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

NCA volleyball team is 5-4

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
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Northside Christian Academy's volleyball team has won four of five matches, giving the Eagles a 5-4 record heading into this past Tuesday's match against Hope Christian.

The Eagles defeated Westwood Christian 2-0 on Sept. 4 and Crossroads Christian 3-1 on Sept. 5 before dropping a 2-0 match to First Christian on Sept. 9.

Northside has since won two in a row with a 2-0 win over First Assembly on Sept. 11 and a 2-1 win over Corinth Christian on Sept. 12.

The Eagles travel to play Gainesville Christian Community on Thursday, Sept. 18, at 5:30 p.m. On Tuesday, Sept. 23, Northside travels to play Cedar Key at 4:30 p.m.

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