



WRESTLING DEBUT
 Keystone Heights High competes in its first wrestling match as a team — **SPORTS**

Lake appointed mayor of Keystone Heights

By Kile Brewer
 KHHERald.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – After four months of searching, the Keystone Heights City Council voted unanimously to appoint Karen Lake as its mayor.

The Dec. 4 action came after former mayor Tony Brown stepped down in August, leading the city to open up the application process three times to find his replacement who would serve on a temporary basis until the Super Tuesday election in April when a permanent mayor will be elected.



Karen Lake

Lake was one of two original applicants whose application was passed over before the council opted to reopen the application process. After the two original application periods came to a close, the city received a third application from Planning and Zoning board member Bill Dixon, who resigned from his position on that board to throw his name into consideration.

When the council met in November, they opted to again open up the position to applications, and validated Dixon's application at the same time, which was turned in late. The month-long application period saw no additional residents apply to lead

SEE LAKE, 14

Veterans remembered during holidays



Staff photo by Eric Cravey
 Mary Justino of Lake Asbury presented Joan Jones, 90, of Keystone Heights, at right, a bouquet of roses and assorted flowers as a community thank gift for her 12 years of honoring veterans and coordinating different veterans' events at the Keystone Heights City Cemetery. Jones, a native of Australia, came to the U.S. at age 19 after meeting her husband during World War II.



By Eric Cravey
 KHHERald.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Some 650 wreaths now adorn the headstones of the military veterans buried at Keystone Heights City Cemetery as a reminder that their families will be thinking of them during this Christmas and New Year's holiday season.

"We are gathered as one nation to remember, honor and teach. We are all proud to be Americans that live in a free society made up of many people from many walks of life. The freedom we enjoy today has not come without a price," said Joan Jones, 90, of Keystone Heights, emcee and organizer of the Dec. 16 event.

The Keystone Heights cemetery joins in with the more 1,200 cemeteries nationwide taking part in National Wreaths Across America Day, which began in 1992. That year, Morrill Worcester, owner of Worcester Wreath Company of Harrington, Maine, found the company had a surplus of wreaths at the end of

SEE WREATHS, 13

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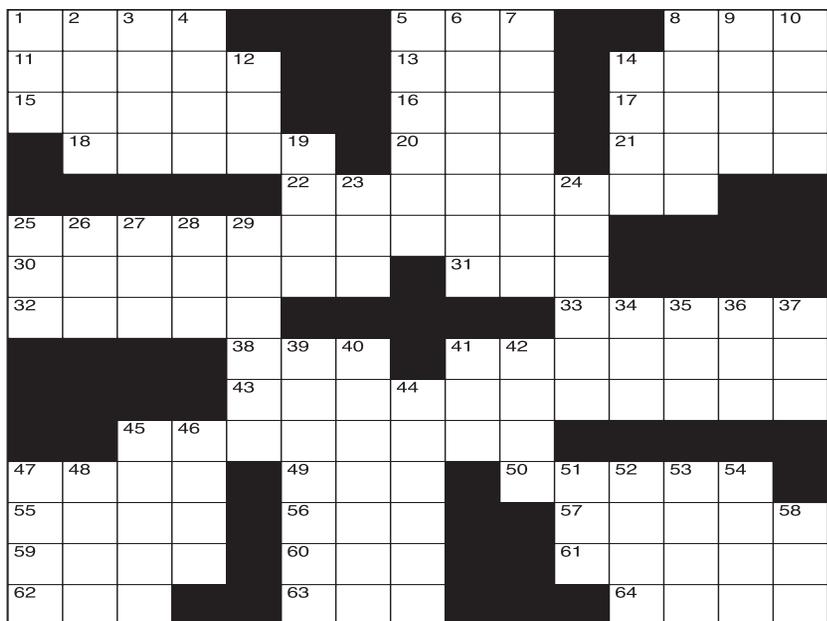
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Crossword Puzzle

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Member of a Semitic people
- 5. Certified public accountant
- 8. Residue
- 11. Sayings attributed to Christ
- 13. The products of human creativity
- 14. Listen to
- 15. Longed
- 16. No (Scottish)
- 17. Descriptor
- 18. Yankee's sensation Judge
- 20. Zero
- 21. Comics legend Lee
- 22. Honorary title holder
- 25. 'Uncle Joey'
- 30. Graceful and stylish
- 31. Pitching term
- 32. Former Mets outfielder Jones
- 33. One who avoids animal products
- 38. Quick to learn
- 41. Mechanism in an organ
- 43. Redo with new materials
- 45. Epics
- 47. Wings
- 49. Extrasensory perception
- 50. Cavalry sword

55. Bangladeshi monetary unit

- 56. Not the bottom
- 57. Afflicted
- 59. Bound
- 60. One who is highly skilled
- 61. Jewish spiritual leader
- 62. Tall, rounded vase
- 63. Liturgical language of Hinduism (abbr.)
- 64. Cheek

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Pie ___ mode
- 2. Portuguese cape
- 3. Ottoman military title
- 4. Movable frame used in burials
- 5. Type of coal
- 6. A treeless grassy plain
- 7. Artist's workshop
- 8. Assists
- 9. Protein-rich liquids
- 10. A song of praise to God
- 12. Much ___ about nothing
- 14. Japanese city
- 19. Atomic number 10
- 23. Egyptian goddess
- 24. Go places
- 25. Having ten
- 26. Complete
- 27. Automotive belt
- 28. Psyche
- 29. Melodious bird
- 34. Medical personnel
- 35. Acquired
- 36. Type of beverage
- 37. Neither
- 39. Spanish monetary units
- 40. Small area of grass
- 41. Your
- 42. Diana __, singer
- 44. Salt's partner
- 45. Made of wood
- 46. No longer alive
- 47. Alaskan island
- 48. Wild animal's resting place
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Partiality
- 53. 'Luther' actor Idris
- 54. UNLV's 'Runnin' ___
- 58. Criticize

89% County Commissioner pay hike sought

By Debra W. Buehn
KHHerald.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – They didn't ask for it, but Clay County Commissioners may be seeing an 89 percent bump in their pay scale in the coming months that would put them more in line with what most of the other county commissioners in the state are making.

The subject of salaries for members of the Board of County Commissioners in Clay County has proven to be one of the main topics of discussion for the county's 2017-2018 Charter Review Commission – so much so, that a subcommittee was set up to discuss the subject in detail and bring back a report to the full CRC focusing on a way of moving forward on the subject. That subcommittee met Dec. 7, and determined there should indeed be further discussion of the entire Charter Review Commission on the subject, and how to implement possible salary changes.

The subcommittee is made up of Larry Kirkman, who is acting as chairman, Ronald Stotler, Charles Cook and Charles R. "Scotty" Taylor Jr., who is the vice chairman of the entire CRC. Cook was unable to attend the Dec. 7 subcommittee meeting.

A Charter Review Commission is appointed every four years to look at the county's charter and determine if there are issues that need to be revised or amended. Fifteen members of the community, nominated by

the Board of County Commissioners (three nominees per commissioner) sit on the CRC. Five alternatives are also nominated.

Clay County is one of 20 charter counties in the state, which means it is governed under what is called "home rule." The other 47 counties are known as "constitutional" counties and are ruled by state statute.

The 2017-2018 Charter Review Commission began meeting Oct. 26, with one of its first charges being for each member to come up with a list of 3 to 5 items for possible discussion. Almost every member listed commissioners' salaries as a topic. The problem the CRC members saw was that Clay County commissioners fall near the bottom of the pay scale compared to the majority of other commissioners in the state.

Clay County Commissioners have been paid \$37,000 a year for about the last 10 years, putting their pay tens of thousands of dollars below many other commissioners in the state. Current Clay County Commissioner salaries were set by a voter-imitative that was held in the November 4, 2008 general election. By a vote of 69,602 yes votes, to 14,423 no votes, the electorate approved lowering BCC members' salaries to \$37,000 per year. Also, that year, voters approved a measure requiring a 60 percent vote to approve future county charter amendments. That vote, on what was called Amendment 2, was passed 65,054 yes votes, to 16,103 no votes.

SEE HIKE, 10

Mini 'trash mountains' aid in Irma cleanup

By Kile Brewer
KHHerald.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – For Clay County Emergency Management Director John Ward and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, roadside trash piles are a thing of beauty.

The sites, nine of which have been activated in Clay County, are currently acting as overflow sites where debris can be stored to prevent backups at the Rosemary Hill Solid Waste Management Facility. The sites also allow crews to focus on cleaning up residential streets and yards before moving all the debris to its final destination in a Georgia landfill. Clay County also has access to two additional sites in Bradford County.

Though most residents wouldn't welcome the sight of construction debris piled up alongside a stretch of rural highway, those directly involved in the post-Hurricane Irma trash frenzy see the sites as a sign of progress, a light at the end of the tunnel.

"People see mounds of trash piled up, but we want them to know that it's for the greater common good," said Russell Simpson, DEP ombudsman. "There is an end in sight."

Simpson said the DEP anticipates debris collection sites to close just after the start of the new year. At that things might finally start to go back to normal, following months of debris collection from one of the worst storms in Clay County history.

"After Matthew we picked up 110,000 cubic yards over about three months," Ward said. "[After Irma] we've collected about 280,000, and we've got about another 100,000 to go. It'll be more than triple the amount of debris."

The sites are opened on an as-needed basis and many opened immediately following the start of post-storm cleanup. However, the county has been forced to extend their efforts and continue opening collection sites as others fill up. One site, located adjacent

SEE TRASH, 6



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Women's organization expands to Starke

By **Kile Brewer**
KHHerald.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Bradford County women will soon have a resource to help them with some of life's most difficult questions as Joanna Weldon prepares to open a Starke branch of her Keystone Heights-based women's organization Answers.

Weldon's organization started up in 2011 after she decided to open the Answers headquarters in Keystone Heights. Since then, the organization has seen continued support from the community, and a continued need for the free services they offer, which include education programs, counseling, pregnancy testing, as well as abortion recovery support. With the addition of a medical director, Weldon's organization can now offer testing for sexually transmitted infections in addition to ultrasound for her clients at no cost.

Though the original branch is open to anyone regardless of where they call home, Weldon wants to bring her organization closer to Starke residents to make Answers more available to more people.

"The Bradford County community has been very receptive to the idea," Weldon said. "They have had a void for so long, they're grateful that anyone is here to help."

When Weldon left her career in insurance to answer the call to help women, she had been employed with a women's resource center based in Gainesville. While in that job, she saw them open up a branch of operations in Starke that eventually closed in 2009. Originally, Weldon wanted to open Answers in place of that center, but Keystone Heights provided her with a better starting point, though she kept Starke on her mind.

Earlier this year, her goal was met and she acquired a property near Bradford High School where she will set up shop in a second location. Since early in 2017, the property was ready, but waiting on permitting and probate. Finally, this April, she was able to begin construction and get things moving. Now, Weldon is anticipating a

grand opening sometime after the start of the new year.

Weldon said that most of the construction labor was donated, allowing them to fully outfit the 2,000 square foot facility with multiple exam rooms and a special room for the ultrasounds and medical testing.

"Most of the work was donated by local tradesmen," Weldon said. "We've had to come out of pocket very little, or we wouldn't have been able to do this."

In the meantime, Weldon is still operating the Keystone Heights facility and getting the word out around Bradford County through social media and fundraising events.

Local salon owner Amanda Hardee of Cut'n Up in Starke approached Weldon about doing a fundraiser after hearing about Answers and attending its annual banquet in February. Weldon loved the idea, and on Nov. 16 Hardee donated 100 percent of the day's proceeds from the salon to the organization. She also organized a bake sale through the salon. The local chapter of the nonprofit Modern Woodman climbed aboard as well offering to match the donation up to \$2,500.

"We had done a similar fundraiser a couple years ago and it went very well," Hardee said. "When I heard about them and what they had to offer to our community I wanted to get involved and help them with that."

Until the opening is announced, Weldon will keep busy planning for the new location and with the current location in Keystone Heights. The hours will remain the same for now, with doors opening from 9:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Mondays and 9:30 a.m. until 1, then 4-8 p.m. on Thursdays. Once the new Starke branch opens, the two locations will stagger days and each open two days a week at first until Weldon sees where the needs of each community lie and can adjust accordingly.

"Both locations will be one entity," Weldon said, "but we will cater to the needs of each community individually to provide the best service we can for women."



STAFF PHOTO BY KILE BREWER

Cutt'n Up hair salon owner Amanda Hardee styles a clients hair last Thursday during a fundraiser held to help the Keystone Heights-based Answers organization.



The front lobby in the new Starke location of the Keystone Heights-based Answers women's resource facility is nearing completion as the organization's director, Joanna Weldon, looks to have the doors open sometime in early 2018.

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Meet Wesley LeBlanc

When I was young, I wanted to be a writer. I didn't know what kind of writer, but I knew that I wanted to see words from my head in front of eyes that weren't mine. I constantly read, scouring pages for new words that I could regurgitate to my future audiences.

When I learned that books were actually typed and not written, I learned to type. After I learned to type, I practiced and practiced and practiced until I was proficient enough that in seventh grade, I finished the entire curriculum for my typing course within the class' first two weeks – my teacher let me play computer games the rest of the semester.

Then, something happened.

I finished eighth grade at Lake Asbury Junior High and began attending Clay High School. It was there that I was thrown completely off course, off the path I had carved for myself as far back as I can remember.

Writers don't make money, I was told. The chances of you making it, no matter how good, are so low that it's not even worth it, I was told. You can't support a family writing, I was told.

Freshmen Wesley took these words to heart. They struck fear into my bones, causing a complete tonal shift in my studies and future plans. All of a sudden, I was destined to be a neurosurgeon, or so I thought. With an average salary of \$400,000 in the U.S., I couldn't have picked a better job, or so I thought. You see, it's these thoughts that got in the way of what my future was always going to be.

When it was time for college, I realized that maybe I was aiming a bit high with neurosurgeon as a career choice. I had zero interest in the medical field and honestly, zero interest in having that much of a role in saving, or sadly not saving, someone's life. So, I majored in Mechanical Engineering. It didn't feel right to major in this but I'm pretty smart in the science and math fields, plus it would be way easier than neurosurgery and still yield into my life a lot of money.

Then, something happened, again.

I began making a pretty decent amount of money at my-then job, Spring Park Coffee. I was making more tips and getting raises in wage. I slowly realized, though, that the increases in money weren't making me happy. Sure, buying more things was nice but it wasn't yielding to me any true happiness. This led to an existential evaluation into my life, through a new set of lenses – lenses that showed me how pointless it is to pursue money if it means settling for something that was void of passion.

Then, the best thing I've ever done happened.

I dropped my mechanical engineering studies, only two years away from a degree, to pursue my lifelong passion – writing. I was years and years older than the Wesley



Wesley LeBlanc

SEE WESLEY, 5



FROM THE EDITOR

Lies in cast iron

Although he is best known for his 1995 book, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, author James Loewen's *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* is another highly-acclaimed book.

In researching both books, Loewen spent countless hours digging, searching, reading and finally finding the truth.

It took Loewen two years to comb through 12 leading American high school history textbooks and begin his book.

What he found was something described as "an embarrassing blend of bland optimism, blind nationalism, and plain misinformation." The works he read – all 888 pages – weighed almost five pounds.

Lies Across America teaches historic marker visitors to read between the lines and deconstruct the sculptures on monuments and memorials. He said, the lies and omissions across the countryside suggest times and ways that the United States went astray as a nation. The book covers more than a hundred historic sites in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. In his introduction, Loewen gives the reader a snap shot of some of the absurdity he encountered while researching and writing the book.

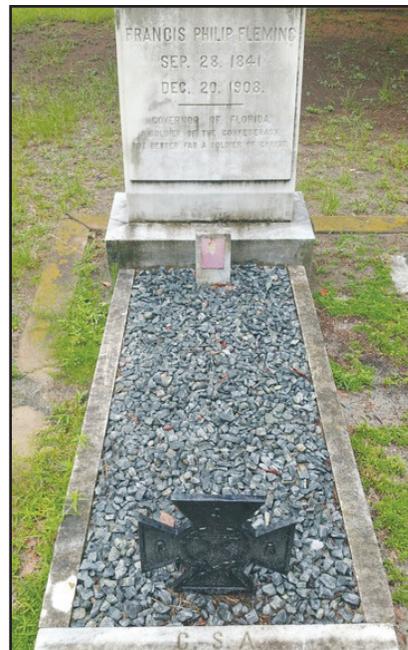
"Americans like to remember only the positive things, and communities like to publicize the great things that happened in them. One result is silliness: the first airplane was invented not by the Wright Brothers but by Rev. Burrell Cannon, and the first flight was not in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, but in Pittsburg, Texas. And markers in Brunswick, Georgia and Brunswick County, Virginia battle over where Brunswick stew was born."

While the only Florida chapter in the book surrounds the missing town of Rosewood, Florida, Clay County may have a marker to offer Loewen if he ever



Eric Cravey

SEE LIES, 5



Gov. Francis P. Fleming, whose was 1889-1893, is buried in the Old City Cemetery in Jacksonville, not on Fleming Island.

considers a volume two of his book.

On Sept. 30, local history buffs and others turned out for a ceremony to unveil Clay County's newest historic marker at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church on Fleming Island.

Despite a steady downpour that Saturday morning, the historic church was filled to capacity. During the ceremony, the Clay County Historic Preservation Board walked attendees through the church's history by having a former docent explain the meanings of the sanctuary's pristine stained-glass windows.

The event culminated with a rainy unveiling of the classic iron marker that sits just outside the picket fence of the church that was originally built in 1897 in coordination with Episcopal Bishop John F. Young and named after Saint Margaret of Scotland.

Descendants of the Fleming family traveled from as far away as Texas to take part in the festivities.

Within days after the unveiling, the chatter started. It seemed that everyone but us here at the paper knew there was an error on the new shiny object. We quickly learned that contrary to what



Word of the Week is a feature that aims to help readers boost their vocabulary in a meaningful way that has practical application. Each week, our editorial staff presents a word, its definition and its use in a sentence.

Hillock: A noun meaning "small hill or mound."

"The church was built on a hillock, which sloped down gently to the village."

Letter to the Editor

Black Creek Project is a waste of money

The Black Creek Project will provide little benefits to the Keystone Lakes and will waste over \$42 million of state resources that could be used to provide real benefits to the areas' water resources. The problem with the Black Creek Project is that for large parts of the year there will not be water that can be pumped from Black Creek at Penney Farms without causing significant harm to Black Creek. Before spending almost \$2 million this year on planning a pipeline that will have no water in it for parts of the year the St. Johns River Water Management District should look at its calculations again.

Any attempt to pump water from Black Creek when it is below its average flow of about 130 cubic feet per second would likely harm the ecology of the South Prong of Black Creek immediately above and below the point where the water is withdrawn. The impacts of withdrawals below the 130 cfs on the endangered Black Creek Crayfish should be a real concern. Recreational use of the South Prong of Black Creek will likely be impacted by withdrawals when flows are below 130 cfs.

Over the past 24 months, the flow at Penney Farms was below 130 cfs 77 percent of the time. Over the last 24 months only 1,680 million gallons of water could have been pumped for Black Creek if one considers flows over the average flow to be high flows. The SJRWMD indicates water will be withdrawn at high flows.

There is a less costly method of getting water to the Keystone Lakes that could start immediately. Over the last 24 months, Chemours has discharged much more than 1,680 million gallons of water into the Alligator Creek that flows through Starke. Those discharges added to the flooding that Irma caused in Starke and around Lakes Sampson and Crosby. Placing a 10 millions of gallons per day pump at the Chemours discharge point and pumping the water into the Old Dupont Mine Site would allow more water to flow to the Keystone Lakes than the proposed Black Creek Project.

SEE CREEK, 5

Wesley

from page 4

who gifted short stories to his family on Christmas and I had discovered that the world of writing had many, many paths I could embark on. One stood out, shinier, taller and far more exciting than the rest – journalism.

The writers I idolized were journalists. Greg Miller, Jason Schreiber, Patrick Keplek, to name a few. They are video game journalists, as in their writing focused on video games and the multi-billion-dollar industry surrounding it. As I dug deep into their histories, I discovered something they all had in common: they all started at their local newspaper. On podcasts, in essays, in features, they all discussed their beginnings and how the time spent at a newspaper was some of the most valuable time spent in journalism.

I don't know exactly where I plan to land one day – I too am leaning towards video game journalism (and by leaning, I mean barreling headfirst towards it), and now that I'm working as a full-time reporter for Clay Today, I feel that I'm finally doing what I've always wanted to do.

Having interned for Clay Today previously this year, I was already in love with this workplace and the journalism this paper pursues, so when Eric texted me one day asking me to come in for an interview, I jumped at the opportunity. Shortly after the pleasant interview, I was offered the job. Nervous at first, because taking the job meant leaving behind Spring Park Coffee, my workplace of five and a half years, I took Eric up on his offer. Now, days into the position, I couldn't be happier.

Money isn't an issue. My passion isn't being compromised. My fingers are typing words that others will read. This job marks the beginning of a future I've always kept in my back pocket, and despite forgetting about it for quite a few years, I'm ecstatic to let it flourish, courtesy of Clay Today.

Readers of Clay Today, I'm excited about many things – bringing you accurate, fair, unbiased news, fearing nobody in my pursuit of the next journalistic truth, and keeping you informed of the place we call home. But nothing has me more excited than knowing that I get to tell your story and that you get to help me do it.

Creek

from page 4

The Chemours option could start now with existing Chemours pumps. The cost to add the 10 mgd pump and the needed pipe might even be less than the \$2 million in this year's budget for just 60 percent of the cost of the Black Creek Project design. The big bonus for us Bradford County residents is the Chemours option would reduce flooding during future rain events like Irma.

**Paul Still
Starke**

This Month in History

5 years ago, 2012

The Clay County Sheriff's Office said tow-truck driver Napoleon Ballard III of Keystone Heights was killed when he became trapped under the front tire of a pick-up truck he towed to a home at 968 Sams Lane in Middleburg.

Fourth Judicial Circuit State Attorney Angela Corey began preparing for a re-trial of Michael Renard Jackson after the Florida Supreme Court struck down his 2010 death sentence for the rape and death of Andrea Boyer that occurred in the early morning of January 23, 2007 at Wells Road veterinary clinic.

With the help of the nonprofit Dreams Come True, Alexis Tato of Middleburg got to fly to New York City to see a New York Jets game and meet star quarterback Tim Tebow.

For the third year in a row, Middleburg-based rock band Red Jumpsuit Apparatus announced it would return home for an intimate, all-ages show at Prevatt's Sports Bar and Grill on Blanding Boulevard on Dec. 21.

10 years ago, 2007

Keystone Heights City Council entered contract negotiations with Kenneth Venables to become the city's first permanent full-time city manager.

Clay County Sheriff Rick Beseler presented a check for \$22,392.44 to Green Cove Springs Police Chief Robert Musco at a city council meeting for the city's role in helping in the war on drugs. The funds came from confiscated drug seizures.

After lengthy debate, the Board of County Commissioners voted 3-2 to approve the Highlands development of regional impact for the Clay Hill area, a plan that called for building 5,000 new homes.

The Keystone Heights City Council voted 4-0 (with council member Lyndel Hale absent) to hire Jacksonville resident John R. Schneider as the city's first-ever city manager.

20 years ago, 1997

The Clay County Sheriff's Office arrested John William Cardenas of Keystone Heights and charged him with three counts of armed robbery.

Authorities charged Ronald W. Wing II, 30, of Middleburg with DUI manslaughter in connection with a single-vehicle accident that killed Pamela K. Panek, 29, also of Middleburg. Panek was a passenger on Wing's motorcycle.

Clay County Animal Control issued a rabies quarantine in the Keystone Heights

SEE HISTORY, 9

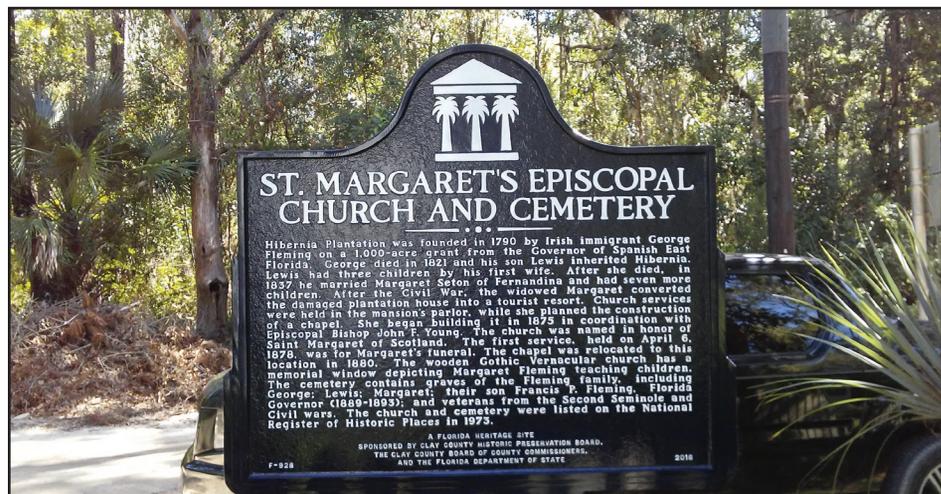
Lies

from page 4

the sign states, former Florida Governor Francis P. Fleming is not buried in the St. Margaret's cemetery on Fleming Island. A Google search could have avoided the \$1,900 error, the cost of an historical marker with the same text printed on both sides, according to the Florida Division of Historical Resources. Gov. Fleming is buried in the Jacksonville Old City Cemetery at the immediate right of the main entrance.

However, all hope is not lost. Two months and a week later, we've learned there is good news. Clay Today was able to confirm today for the first time that a fix is in the works. An official with the state historical archives said he is working with Clay County officials to correct the error that his department spokeswoman originally said did not exist. So, at least for now, Loewen can be held

The historical marker unveiled Sept. 30 at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church chapel has an error that is in the midst of being corrected.



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Trash

from page 1

to the Oak Grove Baptist Church on County Road 215, was opened after the closure of the County Road 218 bridge which prevented access to Rosemary Hill. The site is home to at least two large mountains of trash left in the wake of Irma. For Ward, his main concern is getting debris out of people's yards and off the streets as quickly as possible.

"I want my haulers to get picked up and turned around," Ward said. "We try to create enough sites so they can turn around quicker and get back out to get more debris picked up."

Though the number of sites has grown, it is not as simple as driving trash to a county-owned piece of land and starting a pile. There are tight DEP regulations that

must be followed in order to operate these temporary sites.

Brian Durden, an environmental consultant at DEP, explained that the county must meet certain guidelines before activating a temporary disposal area. Following their initial request to DEP, the county must provide information on what contractor or contractors will be operating at the site. The site must also be secured by fencing so that citizens cannot dump their trash or rifle through what has been dropped off. Durden said that once these boxes are checked, his organization will look at overhead maps to see if there are any obvious concerns for placing a waste collection site on the property.

According to DEP's rules for the sites, there are three types of collection areas allowed: construction, vegetative and mixed, which combines the other two. Construction debris is not allowed within 500 feet of



STAFF PHOTO BY KILE BREWER

Oak Grove Baptist Church sits next to a county-owned property where leftover storm debris is being stored temporarily on its way to a Georgia landfill. Crews are working to get everything off the street and into temporary storage areas as a means of cleaning up the community before transporting the waste elsewhere.

a potable water well, and within 200 feet of a wetland or body of water. The restrictions on vegetative debris are less, at 100 and 50 feet respectively, which allows more of those collection sites than construction or mixed.

Once these criteria are met and confirmed by DEP the site will be allowed to begin operation on a temporary basis, and will always see a field visit from a DEP inspector within the first couple weeks of operation to

make sure nothing has been overlooked and the site is continuing to run smoothly. The inspector will return after all the waste has been removed to do a closing inspection, ideally seeing that the contractor has left no traces of debris on the property. After DEP clears the site the county will be eligible to apply for reimbursement for cleanup costs from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.



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A temporary debris storage site is seen off county road 215 just south of Middleburg earlier this week. The site receives a mix of construction and vegetative debris while local removal contractors prepare to move everything to landfills in Georgia.

Youth Challenge Academy graduates new class

By Wesley LeBlanc
KHHerald.com

ORANGE PARK – Twenty-two weeks ago, Tiffany Colón had no intentions of graduating from high school.

Rather than paying attention to what the teacher was saying, Colón was using class time to sleep. Rather than asking a question about something she didn't understand, she would just give up, as in her mind, it wasn't worth it. She had no appreciation for how hard her teachers worked to keep her engaged, and more importantly, keep her in school, she said.

Because her father's habit of working late, Colón often found herself playing parent for her siblings at home in Clay County. This further detracted Colón's mind from school and instead of doing her homework, she was taking care of her brothers and sisters. No matter how hard her father or her teachers pushed her, Colón could not bring herself to care about school.

Colón was given one last option by her father five and half months ago. That option was the Florida Youth ChalleNGe Academy at Camp Blanding.

In 1991, the Joint Armed Service Committee directed the National Guard to develop a plan to provide education and self-discipline to youth using methods found commonly used in core military training. Two years later, this plan came into fruition and was officially named the ChalleNGe Program. (The NG is capitalized as a reminder of National Guard). Now, more than 20 years later, this program has had 121,000 students graduate across the nation, with the majority of these graduates receiving a high school diploma or GED.

Colón's morning routine drastically changed when she entered the Florida Youth ChalleNGe Academy. Instead of sleeping past the hours that high school starts, Colón was required to wake up at 4 a.m.

"It was really tough at first," Colón said. "I was determined, though."

Two weeks into the program, the academy members were given more time to sleep, having to wake up later in the morning at 5 a.m. instead.

Throughout the program, Colón found herself not only enduring physical trials



PHOTO BY WESLEY LEBLANC

Cadets from Class No. 33 at the Florida Youth Challenge Academy at Camp Blanding walked down the aisle on Dec. 12 at the Thrasher-Horne Center ending their 22-week long training program. The program is funded in part by the Florida National Guard, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Clay County School District, which provides the teachers for the program.

such as obstacle courses and wall climbing, but also physical fitness regimens similar to those a private might endure in boot camp. Most surprising to Colón, though, was her ability to continue her education through the academy's school credit recovery program.

"They taught us discipline, patience, appreciation, punctuality – if you were five minutes early, you were five minutes late," Colón said, laughing. "All of these values we learned helped me finish my education."

"Now, I'm going to graduate with my class," continued Colón, who graduated from the program Dec. 12 in a ceremony at the Thrasher Horne Center. "Before this, that never seemed possible."

More than 1,000 guests and friends and families attended the ceremony and were all thrilled to see their cadet graduate from the academy.

After montages of academy videos played, ranging from their take on Stephen King's *It* to "Camp Van Karaoke," the orchestra pit, previously unseen, began rising from

below. With it, nearly 20 academy cadets, stood still as statues. After a shout, not unlike what you might hear in the military, the cadets who have now risen to the seating level began a march.

A perfectly-timed cadence between the stomps of the cadets and the shouts of the cadet leading them brought the audience to shouts and cheers.

Shortly after, each platoon of cadets made their way forward in a similar fashion, each sporting their own take on a catchy marching shout. Once seated, the many members of the military present in the audience were introduced.

This included the members seated on stage, who each gave a small speech to the audience and cadets. It wasn't until Brig. Gen. Trey Chauncey took the mic that the shouts, hoots and hollers reappeared.

"It is not because you always exceeded but rather, because those around you helping you, you learned how to not be afraid to fail," said Chauncey, whose remarks were greeted with shouts of agreement.

"You learned to pick yourself up and do it again," Chauncey said. Again, the cadets shouted.

"And again," continued Chauncey. Once more, the cadets shouted.

"And if you failed again, you weren't afraid to pick yourself up and do it again," finished Chauncey. This time, he was met with a crescendo of shouts from every cadet in front of him.

As the ceremony proceeded, awards were given, including checks ranging from \$100 to \$300 for doing the most volunteer work, for having the best marks and more. Scholarships reaching \$4000 were given to the cadets that proved they deserved it, and promised to use it moving forward in their college education, a path they might have otherwise never considered.

Every cadet, all 158 of them, including Cadet Tiffany Colón, left this ceremony with a high school diploma signed and handed to them by the Clay County School Superintendent Addison Davis.

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Community Briefs

Black Creek water project on track

PALATKA – An easement on three acres of county-owned property on Black Creek was approved Nov. 28 by the Clay County Board of County Commissioners to implement the Black Creek Water Resource Development Project.

The project is considered a key component to meeting Northeast Florida's water supply needs. The easement also allows for the construction of a kayak and canoe launch site and connected parking for future public access to Black Creek.

"Many thanks to the Clay County BCC for unanimously recognizing the regional importance of this project to replenish the Floridan aquifer in Northeast Florida," said Ann Shortelle, executive director of the St. Johns River Water Management District. "The commissioners' approval is a major step toward acquiring the land rights for construction of the transmission system."

"This project will help with flooding and recharging the aquifer so future generations will have clean drinking water," said Gavin Rollins, BCC chairman. "It will also be a kayak launch for residents of the Middleburg area to enjoy the beauty of Black Creek."

The BCC unanimously approved granting a perpetual easement to the district over the county's property near the intersection of State Roads 16 and 21, encompassing a portion of Black Creek. The Black Creek WRD Project is one of several projects identified in the North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan to help meet future water supply demands while protecting natural resources. The plan was approved in January 2016 after three years of collaborative development in a public process.

This project, which will be built over four years in southwest Clay County between Penney Farms and Camp Blanding, focuses on providing recharge to the Upper Floridan Aquifer in the Keystone Heights region and Lower Santa Fe basin.

The project will capture up to 10 million gallons per day of flow from the Black Creek South Fork when water levels allow. The water will then be pumped through a transmission system toward Camp Blanding in the Keystone Heights area and

discharged to an Upper Floridan Aquifer recharge system adjacent to Alligator Creek.

The project is currently in the design and engineering phase.

Funding for the estimated \$41 million project includes \$5 million a year from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund, funded through Amendment One, the Florida Land and Conservation Initiative. The funds are part of a 2017 legislative appropriation championed by Sen. Rob Bradley (R-Fleming Island), Rep. Bobby Payne (R-Palatka) and Rep. Travis Cummings (R-Orange Park) and administered by the district.

Komando named partner

ORANGE PARK – Law firm Kopeloussos, Bradley, Garrison & Komando P.A. recently named Rich Komando its newest partner.

Komando has worked at the firm for more than four years where he specializes in criminal defense and municipal law, as well as working as a child advocate.

Prior to joining the firm, Komando served as a criminal prosecutor with the

State Attorney's Office for four years. While there, he served as a chief of the Special Prosecution Division and executive director for the Fourth Judicial Circuit in Clay, Duval and Nassau counties. He also built a private law practice and worked as the general counsel for the Guardian Ad Litem program for the Fourth Judicial Circuit.

Komando is the immediate past president of the Clay County Bar Association, chairman of Project Cold Case and president of Healing Hands of the First Coast.

He holds a bachelor's degree and Master of Business Administration from Florida State University, and he earned his law degree from Loyola University New Orleans, School of Law.

The firm's offices are at 1279 Kingsley Ave. in Orange Park.

Komando also serves as the city attorney

for the City of Keystone Heights.

Yesterdays Festival

coming to Gold Head park

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Clay County residents have a chance to "Take a Walk Back in Time" on January 27, 2018 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park.

There will be historic demonstrations, cast iron cooking, antique cars, steam engines, antique tractors, live music, re-enactors, park tram tours, canon firing and food concessions.

The Yesterdays Festival is free with paid park admission of \$5 per vehicle, for up to eight people. For more information, call (352)473-4701 or visit www.floridastateparks.org/mikeroess/.

The festival is sponsored by Friends of the Park/Gold Head Associates who use the proceeds to fund park improvements that are not fully covered by state budget allocations.

'Warriors' to reunite in Jacksonville

Fox Lake, Illinois - Veterans of the U.S. Army's renowned 2nd Infantry Division, "The Warriors," will hold its 97th Annual Reunion at the Crowne Plaza Airport Hotel in Jacksonville from September 19 - 23, 2018. The reunion will be conducted by the division's veterans' organization, the Second Indianhead Division Association.

The reunion will include an early bird dinner on Sept. 19, A Demilitarized Zone/Korea Cold War Veterans Meeting, an Auxiliary luncheon and auction on Sept. 21, a muster dinner on Sept. 21 and the annual memorial service at 2 p.m. on Sept. 22. There will always be a grand banquet on Sept. 22.

The group is seeking all current and former 2nd Infantry Division Warriors to attend any or all days of the reunion. Good times and camaraderie are had by all, as the veterans recount stories from World War II, the Korean War, the Korean Demilitarized Zone/Cold War era, Iraq and Afghanistan.

For more information, contact Mike Davino at (919)498-1910 or email at mail@charter.net.

Military Briefs

Bullington gets wings

MILTON, Fla. – U.S. Navy Lt. J.G. Joseph Bullington, a Bradford High School graduate and Lawtey and Bradford County, Florida, native serving at Helicopter Training Squadron (HT-18), received his "Wings of Gold" during a winging ceremony on Dec. 15, held at Naval Air Station Whiting Field in Milton, Florida.

Bullington, designated as an aviator, received his wings upon completion of flight school.

Winging ceremony is the pinnacle of flight officer training, which lasts approximately a year and a half. The curriculum includes air navigation, pre-flight indoctrination, and basic ground and engine systems. The rigorous curriculum forces pilots to retain vital flight operation information.



Joseph Bullington

Grimaldo completes Air Force training

SAN ANTONIO, Texas – U.S. Air Force National Guard Airman Jessica A. Grimaldo graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas.

The airman completed an intensive, eight-week program that included training in military discipline and studies, Air Force core values, physical fitness, and basic warfare principles and skills.

Airmen who complete basic training also earn four credits toward an associate in applied science degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

Grimaldo is the daughter of Ana N. Grimaldo of Keystone Heights.

She graduated in 2015 from Keystone Heights Junior/Senior High School and earned an associate degree in 2016 from Santa Fe College in Gainesville.



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STAFF PHOTO BY KILE BREWER

Members of the Clay County Board of County Commissioners voted Tuesday to extend library hours and reorganize staffing to promote library programming and the new hours.

Libraries hours extended

By **Kile Brewer**
KHHerald.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – In a unanimous decision, the Clay County Board of County Commissioners voted to restore library hours and move forward with a plan to reorganize library staffing to accommodate those hours.

The county's information services director, Troy Nagle, was tasked with creating a new plan to get library hours back where they were before the infamous budget cuts in 2009 which left library patrons sitting in their cars outside closed branches unsure of when the library would open.

"We did this as kind of a bottom up approach," Nagle said. "So that the staff that's currently there could use their expertise, and their knowledge of what we do [and help build this plan]."

Since the BCC's library workshop in August, Nagle has worked closely with librarians and branch managers, in addition to the county's library system director Pat Coffman to find a way to normalize hours across the system. What they came up with will reorganize library staff to bare bones for the day-to-day operations, while also creating a new position and a new approach to the library's programming, which had become time consuming for staff.

"I like to see a nice tight plan where we know we're getting our money's worth," said Commissioner Wayne Bolla. "I think this is a pretty well thought out piece of work here."

The new hours, effective Feb. 1, will be 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. at every library on Monday through Thursday, and 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. on

Friday and Saturday.

"This planning was about having more hours, but how do we do that?" said Commissioner Diane Hutchings.

Some staff will work 10-hour shifts to help things work, and floating staff members will fill in throughout the system when employees are sick or on vacation.

The newly created position is a volunteer coordinator whose sole duty will be training and organizing the library system's volunteers, who all fall into a different level of volunteer, with each level performing different tasks and volumes of work.

"As far as the volunteer training, and leveling, and staffing concept, it's really breathtaking to me," Bolla said. "To see that proposed in this county is great."

Programming at the branches will be carried out by a roving programming team, which will consist of four people, one of which will be required to be a librarian. The programming team will travel from library to library providing the same level of adult and children's programs Clay County residents have come to expect from their libraries.

"I do think that we need, as a board, to have more discussions, since we can't talk anywhere but here, about policies regarding the libraries and updating those," Hutchings said. Tuesday's vote only scratches the surface of the proposed library plan, which will be taken back up in January at the next library workshop. Commissioners discussed holding the workshop on a non-meeting week, either January 16 or 30 to discuss technology upgrades, meeting room policies and fine collection.

History

from page 5

area after a rabid raccoon was found on Gadara Road.

The City of Keystone Heights won the honor of "Florida's Outstanding Rural Community of the Year" for 1997 at the annual Florida Rural Development Conference held in Ocala.

30 years ago, 1987

Originally investigated as a murder-suicide, the Clay County Sheriff's Office said Elwood Ireland, 69, of Lake Geneva, had not been charged with his wife's death, but was recovering at University Hospital in Jacksonville after turning the shotgun on himself.



Jan-Michael Vincent, star of the television series "Airwolf," was in Clay County to spend two weeks training alongside National Guard members as part of "Warrior University."

Clay County Sheriff Jennings Murree said Margie Ireland and her husband Elwood died in an apparent murder-suicide at their Lake Geneva home.

The Clay County Sheriff's Office investigated a hunting accident on Camp Blanding that killed Curtis Wade Cantrell, 17, of Orange Park, who was shot in the head with a .30-30-caliber rifle.

40 years ago, 1977

Officials from the Jacksonville Electric Authority pitched the Clay Board of County Commissioners on three local tracts of land the power company was eyeing to build a new power plant.

Mary Thacker, John Ruffini and Susan Frazer were elected to serve on the Keystone Heights City Council in an election in which 186 voters cast ballots.

A group of county government and economic development officials toured the Southeast Recycling Plant in Miami in preparation for a public hearing to grant the company a special permit to build a similar plant in Clay Hill.

Keystone Heights Mayor Charles Head would be unopposed for the Dec. 6 city election, while five other candidates would compete for three open seats on city council.

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Hike

from page 1

Most of the other commissioners' salaries are set by a formula that is a state statute known as section 145.031, or "145" for short. If Clay County's commissioner salaries were determined by 145, they would be looking at a salary more in the \$70,000-plus range. For Kirkman, that discrepancy is something that needs to be dealt with.

"Why is it that we have decided in our wisdom that our county commissioners are only worth half of what the vast majority of county commissioners are being paid in 57 other counties," he asked.

According to County Auditor Mike Price, who works for the county commission, the reason has really nothing to do with the sitting commissioners, but goes back to a turbulent time in Clay County some 10 years ago. At that time, there were several "scandals" going on involving county government that resulted in Federal Bureau of Investigation and state attorney's office investigations, a grand jury being convened in 2006 and two senior management-level BCC employees being terminated. There was also the indictment and trials of an elected official and a senior manager, Price said in a memo to the CRC.

In addition, another scandal had occurred in 2004 that alleged an elected official had misused a county credit card, Price said.

"At the time the Charter Review Commission was meeting in 2006, the public considered the county government to be basically dishonest," Price said in his memo, adding that it was looking for ways to make county government more accountable.

One idea the Charter Review Commission came up with was to add two at-large county commissioners to the BCC, paying for the two new members by cutting the existing salaries of the other five members. The salaries would be 70 percent of the then-current salaries, which were prescribed by statute for non-charter county commissioners. The elected chair of the BCC would get 80 percent of the statutory amount, Price said.

But even though those amendments were passed by the voters on the November 2006 ballot, they never went into effect, even though two new members were indeed elected in November 2008. A lawsuit was filed and a judge threw out the election of the two additional county commission positions.

"The cumulative effect of these scandals

over time, however, was to motivate the creation of a number of citizen-driven political action committees, the most formidable of which was Clay County Citizens for Term Limits and Accountability Committee," Price said.

That group, which had opposed the November 2006 amendments, worked to overturn them by amending the charter through a citizen's initiative. It also proposed cutting commissioners' pay to \$37,000. Both items passed and have stayed the same.

To Price, the whole thing was a way to punish previous commissioners. Saying what was material to the discussion was really the "things that we ask people to be responsible and accountable for," Price said he thought those items "demand a lot more consideration than the \$37,000 somebody thought up 10 years ago to punish people that weren't even going to be there when this could take effect because state law says you can't reduce their (commissioners') pay during their term of office. So, it didn't even affect the people it wanted to punish. And that's all this was about, in my humble opinion, was strictly punishment."

For the members of the subcommittee, it was clear, they said, that there should be some sort of adjustment to the current county commissioners' salaries. The problem they worried about was how to present it properly to the public, so people would understand the situation and what had occurred. Trying to raise the salaries in one fell swoop might be too much for the public, Stotler said, because it could be more than \$30,000 per commissioner.

"The public's going to have a hard time voting for that much of a single pay raise," he said.

A phased-in approach, perhaps over five years, was also discussed.

In the end, the subcommittee unanimously approved presenting three recommendations to the entire CRC for consideration. One of those would be to adopt the whole constitutional pay scale for county commissioners and make it effective as soon as legally possible, presumably Jan. 1, 2019. The second option would be to do the same thing but do it over a period of five years. The third option would be a slight modification of option Number Two and would state that the CRC would not have to put salaries at 100 percent of the constitutional formula's amount, but could use any percentage of that formula it deemed proper.

The full Charter Review Commission is expected to take up the issue at its next meeting in early January.

Calling all student artists

ORANGE PARK – Budding student artists in Clay County have a unique opportunity to win a scholarship from one of Clay County's premier arts organizations.

Concert on the Green, the nonprofit that supports visual and performing arts in Clay County is now accepting entries for its 2018 Poster Contest.

Winning students not only receive a scholarship, they are recognized for their work and will have a copy of a juried piece for their portfolios.

Using the theme of "A Celebration of Symphonic Music in an Outdoor Setting," students have until March 2, 2018 to turn in their poster contest entries. There is not an entry fee for the contest and students can enter only one poster. The poster design must cover a 11-inch by 12-inch section of a 11-inch by 17-inch paper or canvas (saving five inches on the bottom). Any artistic medium can be used to create the poster.

When submitting a poster for our contest, make sure their art follows the theme and is sized properly. Students can ask their school art teacher for help or feedback when designing their posters.

The contest is open to any school-age student residing in Clay County, in grades 4-12. Students can attend a school outside Clay County as long as they reside in Clay County.

The purpose of the contest is to encourage Clay County students to seek and learn more about the finest forms of visual art and music.

All submitted artwork is released to Concert on the Green for the exclusive use of Concert on the Green. Students who need a copy for their portfolio, should take a picture beforehand.

Students must first register their poster in the concertonthegreen.com website, fill out the Contest Checklist Submission Form and attach the form to the backside of their poster art. Posters must be delivered to Orange Park Town Hall, 2042 Park venue, Orange Park. All entries must be turned in by March 2, 2018 by 5 p.m.

Judging will be based on the artwork that will make the best poster for the upcoming Concert on the Green event on Sunday, May 27, 2018. Judging



Shown here is the 2017 winning poster titled, "Musical World," which was created by Orange Park High School student Adrianna Horne, a student of art teacher Carrie Keene. Horne's was the official Concert on the Green poster and was printed on the front cover of the program for the 2017 outdoor concert held at St. Johns Country Day School.

will be performed by at least three judges chosen for their expertise in visual arts and printing. Winners will be announced on or before Friday, March 31, 2018 and the winning entries will be framed for display and for the use of Concert on the Green.

Prizes will be awarded in the Elementary Division for 4th-6th grades, the Junior Division for 7th and 8th grades and Senior Division for grades 9-12.

Awards range from cash to college or art camp scholarships. The grand prize winner's poster will be used as the official poster for the 2018 Concert on the Green event and will be used in all promotional materials for the event.

The Clay County school program responsible for producing the winning poster will receive a program grant, in addition to recognition via Concert on the Green press releases and news articles. All student winners will be recognized on the Concert on the Green website, at the Clay County Fair, and at the Memorial Day Weekend Concert on Sunday, May 27, 2018. For more information, contact Lauren Hoffman at lauren@concertonthegreen.com or (904) 505-3051.

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Veterans Day speaker: hopes 'peace breaks out soon'

By Kile Brewer
KHHerald.com

CAMP BLANDING – Veteran's Day is a solemn event.

It is not a holiday for celebration, it is a time to remember. Audience members clap with reservation, focus hard on the colors of the flag during the singing of the Star Spangled Banner, and take time to thank those who have served their country. Interactions take on a seriousness note at Veteran's Day events, civilians thank those who risked their life for the United States, while veterans remember the hardships of war on foreign soil.

"Often, those who have served will balk at accepting accolades and titles such as 'hero,' this is because war is an ugly thing," said Brig. Gen. Paul Chauncey III, the assistant adjutant general for the Florida National Guard during his speech at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center on Nov. 11. "[Veterans] do not serve to garner such titles for themselves by and large. Rather, most serve out of a sense of duty, and an instinctual understanding of the need to defend what they hold most dear."

Chauncey spoke to an audience made up of about half veterans and their family members, and half representing Fleming

Island-based Boy Scout Troop 892 just behind the Camp Blanding Museum in the base's memorial park. A cool fall breeze blew his words from the podium to the audience as he looked out at their faces from underneath his hat's brim.

"Our nation has been at war, or in a state of persistent conflict for more than 16 years," Chauncey said. "Our nation has once again come to experience what it means to send their sons and daughters into harm's way."

As he spoke it could be assumed that his mind wandered from the men seated to his left, all wearing hats emblazoned with Vietnam War or Korea, to the boys sitting to his right, suited up in their Boy Scout uniforms, a group that could see at least some of its members enter into the military after high school. Before digging deep into his pre-written speech, the Chauncey broke away from his script and thought back to a recent meeting in Washington, D.C. with other generals from around the country.

"We were discussing the Army's readiness for threats that may appear in the future," Chauncey said. "All while hoping – and praying – that peace soon breaks out."

Chauncey reflected on a trip he took to Mount Vernon while thinking over discussions he had heard in his meeting with the leaders of the nation's military. Admittedly,



STAFF PHOTO BY KILE BREWER

Brigadier General Paul Chauncey, assistant adjutant general for the Florida National Guard, spoke Saturday morning at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center during the base's observance of Veteran's Day.



Veterans and members of Boy Scout Troop 892 made up the crowd Nov. 11 for the Camp Blanding Joint Training Center Veteran's Day ceremony.

the meetings became arduous after a while, and his mind began to wander, so to pass the time he took a trip to the historic home. While there, he came to a conclusion while thinking about the life of a general, and first President of the United States, George Washington.

"If service is beneath you, leadership is beyond you," Chauncey said, making a point to note this revelation before heading into the first line of his speech, captivating the audience with a meticulously-crafted ode to those who answered the call to serve.

After his comments, Chauncey took his seat and Chaplain Michelle Lawson closed out the ceremony by paraphrasing a poem typically used for Mother's Day, reminding those present of the effects of war on every member of society.

"The bravest battle that was ever fought,

shall I tell you where and when?" she said. "On the maps of the world you'll find it not, it was fought by the mothers, spouses and families of our veterans."

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Commission reorganizes, takes up medical marijuana issue

By Debra W. Buehn
KHHerald.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The Board of County Commissioners BCC chose Gavin Rollins as its chairman for the next 12 months at its regular meeting on Nov. 28. The board reorganizes every year at the last meeting in November. Commissioner Mike Cella was named vice chairman.

Rollins was elected a county commissioner in 2014. He then served nearly a year with the Florida National Guard in the Horn of Africa, returning to his spot on the BCC at its March 14 meeting this year. He is a captain in the Guard and an intelligence officer.

Rollins has several goals he would like the BCC pursue while chairman – top among them is communication.

Rollins, 31, said he thought the commission had built on a strong past in the last few years by especially using workshops “where we all brainstormed.”

“Now we’ve got a priority list of things to do and I’d like to just continue in that effort and specifically focus on communication,” Rollins said. “I think the county staff and the county are doing a lot of good things but unfortunately sometimes people aren’t get-

ting that message or always realize what the county is doing and so, in that vein, I would love for feedback from you guys.”

Rollins said he would like to have BCC members bring back one short-term goal that perhaps can be accomplished in the next year and a long-term goal that can be talked about and worked on “down the road.” He mentioned the idea of a communications advisory committee where each BCC member would appoint two people to serve so that there would be a wide group of people who could give the BCC recommendations on ways to “better communicate to the public.”

In other action, the board struggled again with medical marijuana treatment center dispensing facilities. In January of this year, the BCC voted a one-year moratorium into place to let the state set up its own regulations that would help guide governing bodies into how to deal with the facilities. State voters passed what is known as Amendment 2 in November 2016, allowing the legalization of medical marijuana. Clay County was with the overwhelming number of state voters who voted for the amendment, with 70.6 percent of county voters approving it.

The problem for the BCC now is dealing with the county’s land development regulations and where – if anywhere – to allow the dispensaries before the moratorium expires on Jan. 24.

Ed Lehman, planning director for the county, said in a memo that according to the state, the county can put a ban on all such treatment centers; provide for medical

marijuana treatment centers in locations where pharmacies are currently zoned or revise the zoning regulations to “provide new or revised locations for pharmacies and medical marijuana treatment centers.”

Orange Park is the only government in the county to allow medical marijuana treatment centers within its boundaries. Clay County deals with the unincorporated areas.

The issue has been a struggle for the commission all along, although Commissioner Gayward Hendry said he doesn’t want the county’s zoning department to “rush out and start identifying spots that facilities could be permitted to dispense this.”

“I believe that those that need medical marijuana in the near future will have the opportunity to get it. We’ve got Orange Park coming on line, we have Gainesville, we have mail order (home delivery),” he said, adding he would support the idea of a ban “at least for now if we could set up on a 1-2-3 year review.”

“If the need’s out there, we’ll hear it and we can just review it from year to year as the needs progress,” Hendry said.

Bolla said he was “on the fence,” but added repeatedly he was against all-out bans.

“I have a hard time with all-out bans,” he said. “On the other hand, it’s not like we’re preventing people from getting marijuana,” he said, noting the other nearby places it is available.

Outgoing Vice Chairman Diane Hutchings, said she supports the idea of medical marijuana and people’s access to it, but has trouble with locations for dispensaries.

“When I think about the vote, the 70 percent, they weren’t voting for a location. They were voting for patient access and I freely support that myself,” she said.

Hutchings said she was worried about the coming of recreational marijuana in less than five years as some are projecting, as well as locations for the dispensaries.

“Our dilemma is where’s the right location,” she said, adding she would like to see more of how others are handling that before making a decision. Her idea would be for a ban that would sunset in 24 months, similar to Hendry’s idea.

Rollins, who said he believed residents here had access to the medical marijuana they might need, said he would agree with such a proposal. It would give the BCC time to see how things were working in other areas and what problems might come up.

“To me, this is an issue of where things go and how it’s rolled out, not should we implement it or not. Obviously, the state is implementing it,” Rollins said.

Cella, who said he had researched the subject in a variety of ways, including speaking with at least one doctor who is qualified to dispense, said it does not seem to be very widespread here, which could help the county.

“It may be a moot point in terms of what way we go because some of these growers may decide we’re not the big fish and they’re going to go north of us to Duval County where there’s a greater density of people and more opportunity,” Cella said.



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Wreaths

from page 1

the holiday season. With help from Maine Sen. Olympia Snowe, Worcester placed the surplus wreaths on gravesites in the oldest section of Arlington National Cemetery.

The program remained low key and local until 2005, when a photo of a veterans' headstone went viral over the internet and the movement began to grow from there.

"The United States of America was founded on the ideals of freedom, justice and equality. Our nation stands as a shining beacon of liberty and freedom to the world. We thank those who gave their lives to keep us free and we shall not forget you, we shall remember," Jones said.

Jones, a native of Australia, came to the U.S. at age 19 after meeting her husband during World War II. She said she owes her life to the United States of America.

"I'm an America Australian, not an Australian-American," she said smiling.

Sarah Meadows, 20, of Keystone Heights, joined her family to lay a wreath of the headstone of her father, Edwin Harris Meadows III, who was 47 when he died from cancer in 2008.

"This is important to me because I want to remember him and honor him during this holiday season. I think the wreath is a great way to let him know he is always in our hearts and we love and miss him," Meadows said.

Keynote speaker, Gayward Hendry, a retired U.S. Marine, told the approximately 200 guests that the event was to remember



Above: Service members place a wreath on a cross symbolically honoring and remembering those who served in the Merchant Marines.

Right: Scotland Bolan of the First Coast Highlanders played "Amazing Grace" and taps, the bugle call for "lights out," which is also sounded at military funerals, as well as each military branch's theme song during the Wreaths Across America event Dec. 16 in Keystone Heights.

Below: Gayward Hendry gives the keynote address.



the sacrifice each veteran made for this country.

"We come here to honor veterans from Clay County who literally gave their service and lives for us. These warriors are being honored not for what they received, but for what they gave," said Hendry, who also serves as a Clay County Commissioner.

Bagpiper Scotland Bolan of the First Coast Highlanders played "Amazing Grace" and taps, the bugle call for "lights out," which is also sounded at military funerals, as well as each military branch's theme song during the event. Different representatives from each branch of the military, merchant marines and POW/MIAs were represented with wreaths laid on crosses in their honor.

"Today, we show a united front of national unity all across the United State of America as we remember the fallen, honor those who have served, those serving today and teach our children the value of freedom," Jones said. The wreaths will be in place until Jan. 26.

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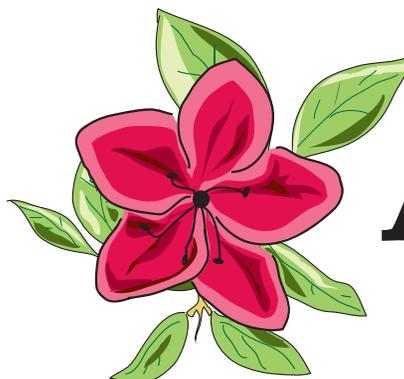
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Lake

from page 1

the city up to April. Dixon was present at Monday night's meeting to present his case for being chosen as mayor, and answered a set of questions the council used to screen Lake and Catherine Southard in October.

However, before the meeting began, Lake walked into the council chambers and presented a blue card to acting mayor Steve Hart. Once the meeting got underway, Hart invited Lake to the podium during the public comment portion of the meeting.

Lake said that by throwing out her application without giving it any consideration to begin with, and then asking her to reapply was redundant. She said the move also penalized her and Southard who had originally filed applications once the position was announced.

"If it had indeed been this council's objective to have a larger pool of applicants, the right thing to have done was to roll over the two timely-filed applications into round two, and, ultimately, this third round," Lake read from a prepared statement. "Why were [our applications] removed? We didn't request for them to be removed."

Lake said she had been hearing accusations throughout the city of sexism through the selection process, being that the two original applicants were both women.

"Immediately rejecting two female applicants, but accepting a late-filed male applicant speaks to me on gender discrimination," Lake said. "Whether it was intentional or not, this council is responsible for that message."

She went on to speak on a recent report from a local news channel that the city had thrown out two "unqualified" candidates. Lake felt that this misrepresented those candidates, and read the qualifications for mayoral candidacy, with all of which she is compliant, in the city into the record.

"If it had indeed been this council's objective to have a larger pool of applicants, the right thing to have done was to roll over the two timely-filed applications into round two, and, ultimately, this third round."

— Mayor Karen Lake

The agenda continued, and eventually the city reached the item that dealt with the mayor.

"If the council has no objection, if you want to go through the process again tonight, I don't see any reason why we couldn't do that for you," Hart said.

After hearing Dixon's presentation and interview, the council voted 4-0 to allow Lake to be, again, considered as a valid candidate for mayor before a brief discussion of the pros and cons of the candidates.

Hart asked for a motion to vote for Dixon as the new mayor. The vote hung at 2-2, and Dixon was not appointed to the position.

Next, Hart asked for a motion to accept Lake as mayor, Lewandowski made the motion with Hart and Marion Kelly voting yes immediately, Dan Lewandowski and Steve Brown, the two yes votes for Dixon, eventually spoke up and made the vote 4-0.

At the Oct. 2 council meeting, Lewandowski launched a lengthy discussion in which he asked for more time to get more applicants, effectively throwing out the August process and Lake's and Southard's who applied.

"I'll tell you right now, I'm going to vote no on both candidates," Lewandowski said Oct. 2, referring to Lake and Southard, the only two residents to apply to fill Brown's seat.

Mayor Karen Lake was sworn in immediately and asked Steve Hart to serve as her Vice Mayor before closing the meeting. Lake went on to lead the meeting until adjournment.

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The Beat is a look at some of the crime activity reported to the Clay County Sheriff's Office in the previous month. Included here are arrests, police briefs and crimes reported by and involving Lake Area residents in the past 30 days until press time.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Due to cessation of the Clay County Sheriff's Office's Daily Bookings report, The Beat's arrests & bookings look different. The cities listed below indicate where the individual was arrested, whereas in the past, the city indicated where the person lived. Culled from the CCSO website, this data also no longer lists the arresting agency or its abbreviation and individual cases are listed in chronological order for when they were arrested.

Tuesday, December 12

David Brian Frew, 57, Keystone Heights, Simple Domestic Battery

Saturday, December 9

Ryan Richard Moore, 33, Keystone Heights, Simple Domestic Battery

Friday, December 8

Russel Allen Suco, 64, Keystone Heights, Simple Battery

Wednesday, December 6

Joseph Allen Stathas, 59, Keystone Heights, Attempted Murder, Aggravated Domestic Battery With A Deadly Weapon

Saturday, December 2

Danny Ray Boree, 32, Keystone Heights, Driving Without a Valid License

Thursday, November 30

James Barnard Johnson, 36, Keystone Heights, Fugitive From Justice

Tuesday, November 28

Archie Willard Randall, 41, Keystone Heights, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis, Drug Equipment Possession, DWLSR

Wednesday, November 22

Desiree Jeanette Peacock, 48, Keystone Heights, Out of County Warrant

Sunday, November 19

Michael Shaun Winters, 36, Keystone Heights, VOP-DWLSR

Saturday, November 18

John Wayne Allen, 40, Keystone Heights, Simple Domestic Battery

Friday, November 17

Brian William Haugdahl, 19, Keystone Heights, Possession of Not More Than 20 g. Cannabis

Dental records used to confirm body ID

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Using dental records, the Duval County Medical Examiner's Office positively identified the body of Jordan Cooper, 25, of Keystone Heights.

Cooper, who has an intellectual disability, went missing on Nov. 25.

The Clay County Sheriff's Office reported Dec. 11 that Cooper's body was recovered inside the family residence on Payne Road.

Sheriff Darryl Daniels said Dec. 9 that foul play is suspected in Cooper's death, but did not comment further other than to say the case is an ongoing investigation.

"Our agency thanks everyone who has assisted (local, state, federal, volunteers and all others). We now continue our efforts and ask for continued support," states a CCSO post on social media.



Jordan Cooper

Attempted murder charge for Keystone man

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – What began as an argument involving a cellphone ended Dec. 6 in an attempted murder charge for a Keystone Heights man.

The Clay County Sheriff's Office arrested Joseph Allen Stathas, 59, at 12:36 a.m. after investigating the argument.

The victim – Stathas' live-in girlfriend of three years – told police that the

argument began when Stathas took her cellphone out of her hand and walked outside of the house where they live in the 5800 block of Campo Drive. Police said the woman then followed Stathas outside to get her phone back, and when she did, Stathas argued some more and then "struck the victim numerous times in the face with a closed fist."

The woman attempted to fight back to get away from Stathas, police said, and that's when he pulled out a handgun from his right front pants pocket. The woman said Stathas pointed the gun at her and fired one shot but missed her.

Police said the woman was able to break free, grab her car keys and flee to a neighbor's house to call police.

Police later apprehended Stathas who is charged with one count of attempted murder and one count of aggravated domestic battery with a deadly weapon.

At press time, Stathas was held in the Clay County Jail without bond.



Joseph Stathas

"Every day across Florida law enforcement officers at the state, local and federal levels work together to keep Florida citizens safe. Because of our partnerships Florida's citizens and visitors are the safest they've been in more than 46 years," said Rick Swearingen, FDLE commissioner.

"Each and every day, the brave men and women of Florida's law enforcement community selflessly work to keep our neighborhoods safe and as Florida's crime rate continues to drop, we're reminded of their important and life-saving work. Today, Floridians and visitors are the safest they've been in nearly a half-century and we will continue to fully support our law enforcement members as they work to make the Sunshine State the safest place to raise a family," Gov. Rick Scott said.

Attorney General Pam Bondi said the drop-in crime is a testament to the hard work, dedication and sacrifice of Florida's law enforcement community.

"I want to thank all of our law enforcement officers and our state prosecutors for their continued success fighting crime and protecting Floridians," Bondi said.

Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis said the declining crime rate is a reflection of law enforcement's commitment to safety.

"I offer my deepest appreciation for the sacrifices that the men and women in blue have made for the well-being of Florida's families, friends and neighbors," Patronis said.

The crimes of murder, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary and larceny were down in this report while the crimes of rape and motor vehicle theft increased. Domestic violence fell one percent, with domestic violence murder and aggravated assault down while rape and stalking

SEE CRIME, 16

Florida crime down in the first half of 2017

TALLAHASSEE – Crime continues to fall across Florida according to the 2017 Semi-Annual Uniform Crime Report published by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

The report shows Florida's crime volume dropped two percent or roughly 6,300 fewer reported index crimes compared to the first six months of 2016.

Wednesday, November 15

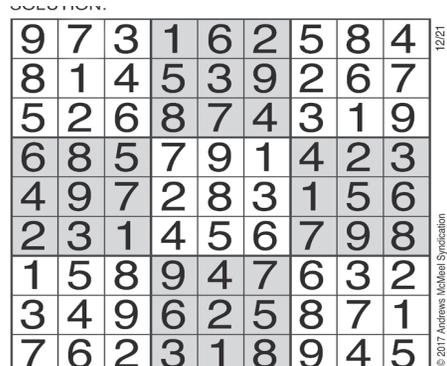
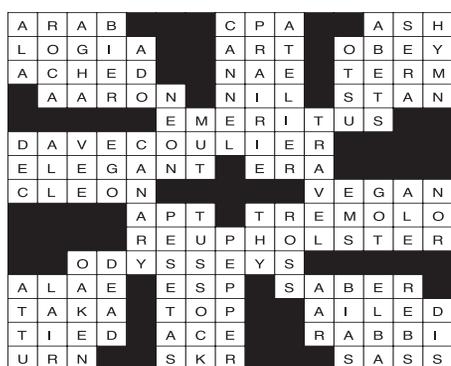
Arthur Alvin Letchworth, 65, Starke, Trafficking Methamphetamine 14 g. or More Grant Cole Harris, 28, Keystone Heights, Domestic Battery, Aggravated Assault With a Deadly Weapon, Armed Burglary, Violate Probation - Community Control

Monday, November 13

Kaylee Marie Fowler, 27, Keystone Heights, FTA-DWLSR

Thursday, November 9

Jason Travis Cross, 36, Keystone Heights, Out-of-County Warrant



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to your IRA and your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan. Within these accounts, you will need to devote a reasonable percentage of your investment dollars to growth-oriented vehicles.

One more suggestion: Keep a lid on your debt load. The lower your monthly debt payments, the more you can contribute to your retirement plans.

An early retirement isn't guaranteed even if you follow these steps – but they can give you a lot better chance of success.

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Crime

from page 15

were up. "The continued reduction in crime, throughout the state of Florida, is a direct result of the coordinated efforts of law enforcement, from the highest-ranking leadership to our patrol officers and deputies. From innovative task force operations to dedicated education and enforcement, we stay committed to ensuring the safety and security of our citizens," said Michael Adkinson, president of the Florida Sheriffs Association and Walton County Sheriff.

President of the Florida Police Chiefs Association and Miami Shores Police Chief Kevin Lystad said, "As Florida's crime continues to drop, I commend law enforcement leaders and officers across the state! Their unwavering dedication coupled with the laws we have in place to deter those bent on committing crime are clearly working. The Florida Police Chiefs throughout the state remain committed to working with our state and federal partners to keep Floridians safe." The Semi-Annual UCR calculates crime volume, the number of index crimes known to law enforcement. The report, including county-by-county breakdowns, can be found on FDLE's website at <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/FSAC/UCR-Reports.aspx>.

FDLE began tracking crime statistics in 1971.

Meth trafficking charge for Middleburg man

STARKE – A Middleburg man was arrested on Nov. 15 near the Bradford County line for allegedly trafficking methamphetamine after being stopped for speeding.

The Clay County Sheriff's Office arrested Arthur Alvin Letchworth, 65, after he was discovered to be driving with a large bag of methamphetamine in his vehicle.

According to the police report, a CCSO deputy observed Letchworth's car travelling at about 15 miles per hour in excess of the speed limit on State Road 230 and contacted another officer who was in the vehicle's direction of travel and that officer stopped the vehicle. After the stop, the officer was talking with Letchworth as a drug-sniffing dog arrived on the scene, resulting in the dog alerting deputies to the presence of narcotics in Letchworth's vehicle. A search revealed a box containing baggies of methamphetamine and a scale. The total weight of the meth was around 37 grams. The standard for trafficking is 14 grams. Letchworth was transported to Clay County Jail following his arrest and faces a felony for trafficking amphetamine. He is being held on \$150,000 bond and will appear in court on Dec. 13.



Arthur Letchworth

Man goes after couple with axe and machete

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – A Keystone Heights man was arrested on a warrant after being treated for a gunshot wound he received while allegedly threatening two people at their home. The Clay County Sheriff's Office arrested Grant Cole Harris, 28, on Nov. 15 on an outstanding warrant.

According to the warrant, Harris walked toward the home in Keystone Heights on Nov. 1 carrying an axe and a machete, according to one of the victims. After seeing Harris, the victim went inside with his wife to retrieve a pistol and a shotgun for protection from Harris.

The victim and his wife then watched as Harris destroyed part of their privacy fence and continued to the house, eventually breaking down the front door and entering the home. At this point the man told Harris he would shoot, and Harris continued to move toward the couple.

The man shot Harris with the pistol in Harris' stomach and held him at gunpoint until deputies arrived. Harris has had an active warrant for his arrest since breaking his probation agreement in mid-October, but as of Nov. 1 had not been arrested.



Grant Harris

Following the incident Harris was treated for his wounds at Shands Hospital in Gainesville and then cleared through Orange Park Medical Center prior to his transport to the Clay County Jail. Harris faces two additional felonies for the incident including aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and armed burglary.

Single vehicle crash kills two

ALACHUA – The Florida Highway Patrol reports that two men died as a result of a one-vehicle traffic accidents Dec. 11 in Alachua County.

FHP said Austin Yarbrough, 21, of Melrose, was driving a 2017 Volkswagen Jetta on County Road 225 near the intersection of 199th Lane when he lost control of the car. The vehicle went onto the north shoulder of the road and hit a culvert.

Momentum caused the Jetta to go airborne and hit a tree. The car then flipped over and landed on its roof.

Passenger Austin Tison, 25, of Starke, died on Monday, December 11 according to FHP.

Yarbrough was transported to UF Health Shands hospital in Gainesville for treatment and died from injuries on Tuesday, Dec. 12.



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Indians field first wrestling team

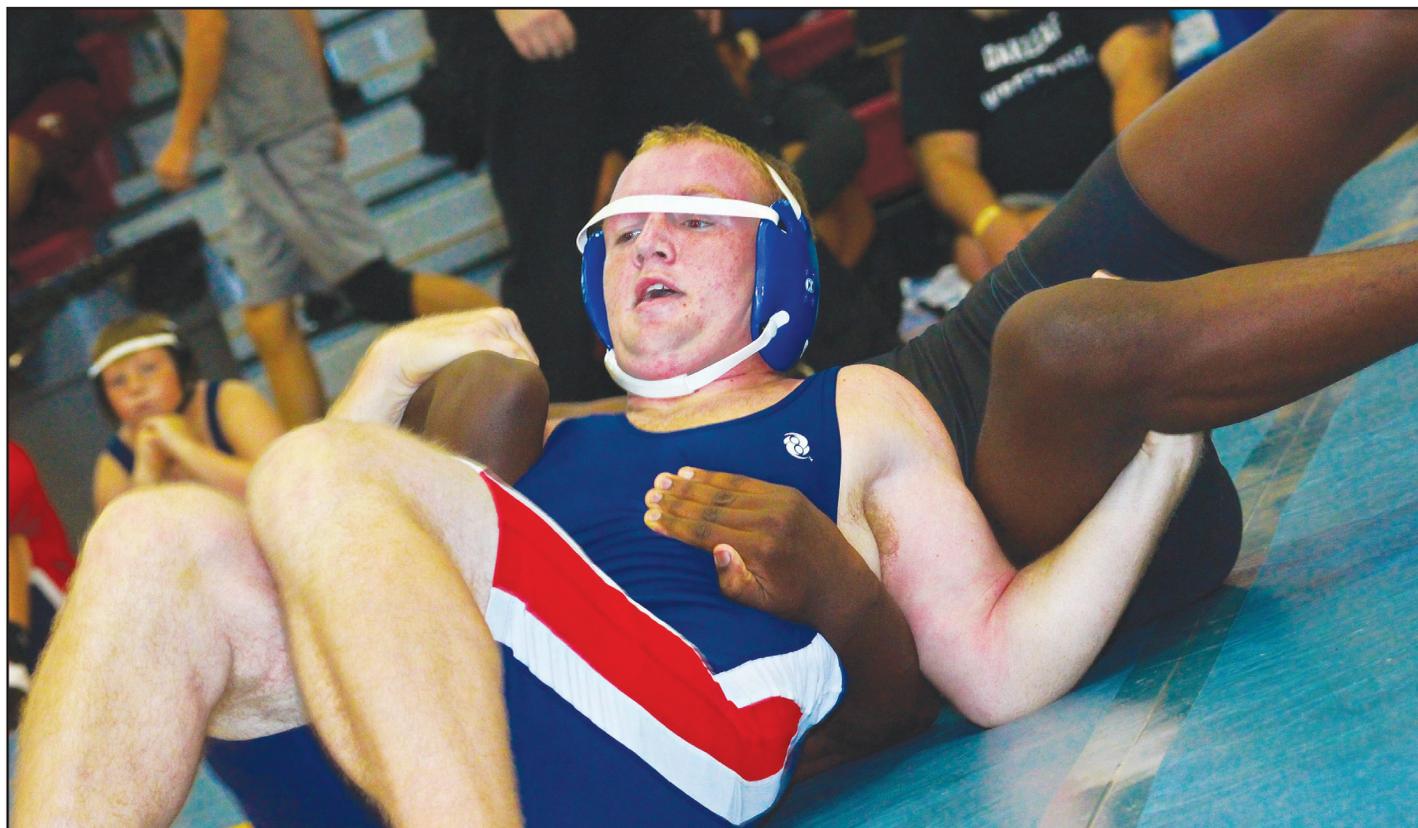
Brandon Spivey: 5 Pins

By Randy Lefko
KHHERald.com

JACKSONVILLE – Keystone Heights High School unveiled its first ever wrestling team at Saturday's North Florida Duals at Bishop Snyder High School, and, according to coach Richard Marshall, the team knew they were going to be competing at a disadvantage right from the beginning. Top performance came from 145 pounder Brandon Spivey who was 5-1 with five pins. Spivey was second in Class 1A in boys weightlifting last year.

"I call it a Baptism by Fire for us just to be here and compete against some of these teams," said Marshall, whose son Brandon, was a standout wrestler at Bishop Snyder High School while the Marshall family lived in Keystone Heights. "It has been about two years since I started generated interest in getting a high school team and here we are. The team did not what to expect when we got here."

According to Keystone Heights High School Athletic Director Chuck Dickinson, there was a club wrestling team in Keystone



Keystone Heights 220 pound wrestler Brandon Hoffmeyer holds on to Oakleaf High opponent in match at Bishop Snyder's North Florida Duals. Hoffmeyer wound up with pin for win to become first pin in Keystone Heights High School wrestling.

STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

SEE WRESTLE, 19

Keystone one goal short of Crescent City rematch

By Randy Lefko
KHHERald.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Keystone Heights High got goals from Andrew Oxley and Alex Cruz, but Crescent City nailed a gamewinner late in the second half to hold on to a 3-2 district 2-5A contest Tuesday night at Keystone Heights.

With the loss, Keystone Heights falls to 6-5-2 overall and 1-4-1 in district play while Crescent City, the defending district champions, improves to 7-4-0, 6-1-0 in district play. Santa Fe leads the district at 8-0-1, 6-0-0.

In girls soccer, Keystone Heights is at 6-5-1 overall, 2-0 in district play with a 4-4 tie at Crescent City on Tues., Dec. 13. Santa Fe leads the district 5-2A lineup at 9-0-0, 2-0-0 with Santa Fe, 8-5-0, 3-0-0 and Keystone Heights in second and third.

After finishing the first half tied at 0-0,

Keystone Heights scored first when Cruz sent a crossing pass in front of the Crescent City goal that found Oxley sliding in from his forward position to smash the first goal of the night near the four minute mark.

Cruz leads the scoring for the Indians with eight goals with Jacob Hopkins adding four, Landon Ricketts adding two and six players with one goal apiece. Ricketts leads assists with four.

"We don't have one big scoring guy like we have had in the past," said Keystone Heights Trevor Waters. "We have to kind of get the ball downfield and find open guys."

Crescent City had a free kick just two minutes later, but the kick went wide left of Indians' goalie Caleb Cushman. Cushman has played the goalie in all the game with six shutouts and a 10.7 saves per game average.

"He has some Division I schools already



Keystone Heights midfielder Chris Truman goes airborne trying to slow down Crescent City player in Indians' 3-2 loss Dec. 7 in Keystone Heights.

SEE SOCCER, 18



Keystone Heights' midfielder Steven Rodriguez is crowd in district match loss to Crescent City. Indians lost 3-2.

Soccer

from page 17

looking at him for college," said Waters. "He's just a smart player and very quick to the ball approaching his goal."

Crescent City got a header goal in front of Cushman on a long service pass from left to right to tie the game at 1-1 before the water break of the second half.

Cruz answered two more near-shots on goal by the Indians when a free kick ping-ponged in front of the Crescent City goal, found Oxley, found the goalie and, finally, found Cruz who punched in the loose ball for a 2-1 lead near the 19 minute mark.

Crescent City started pushing more players into Cushman's zone in front of the Keystone Heights goal, but the sophomore keeper kept his post clear for most of the second half. Crescent City tied the game off a corner kick out of the second half water break and caught Cushman leaning the wrong way.

Tied 2-2 with time clicking down, Keystone Heights had some trouble getting Crescent City out of their end of the field and the Raiders hit the go-ahead goal with a long ball breakaway with nine minutes left in the game.

Keystone Heights remaining schedule before Christmas includes Fernandina Beach at home on December 14, at Palatka

December 15, at Fort White December 18 and home against Fort White December 19.

Keystone Heights' wins are over Clay (1-0), Trinity Christian (7-0), St. Francis (1-0), West Nassau (5-0), Orange Park (2-1), Interlachen (2-0) with ties to P.K. Yonge (0-0) and Suwannee (1-1). Losses have been to Eastside (3-1), Santa Fe (5-0), Crescent City (5-0), Newberry (1-0) and Crescent City (3-2).



Keystone Heights forward Andrew Oxley scored one goal for Indians in 3-2 loss to Crescent City.

Nadler makes second U.S. Olympic Trials marathon

By Randy Lefko
KHerald.com

GAINESVILLE – Keystone Heights High graduate and stand-out track and cross country runner Enoch Nadler, now 33 years old, set forth a six month plan to earn the right to run in the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials race for a possible shot at the 2020 Summer Olympics Marathon in Tokyo.

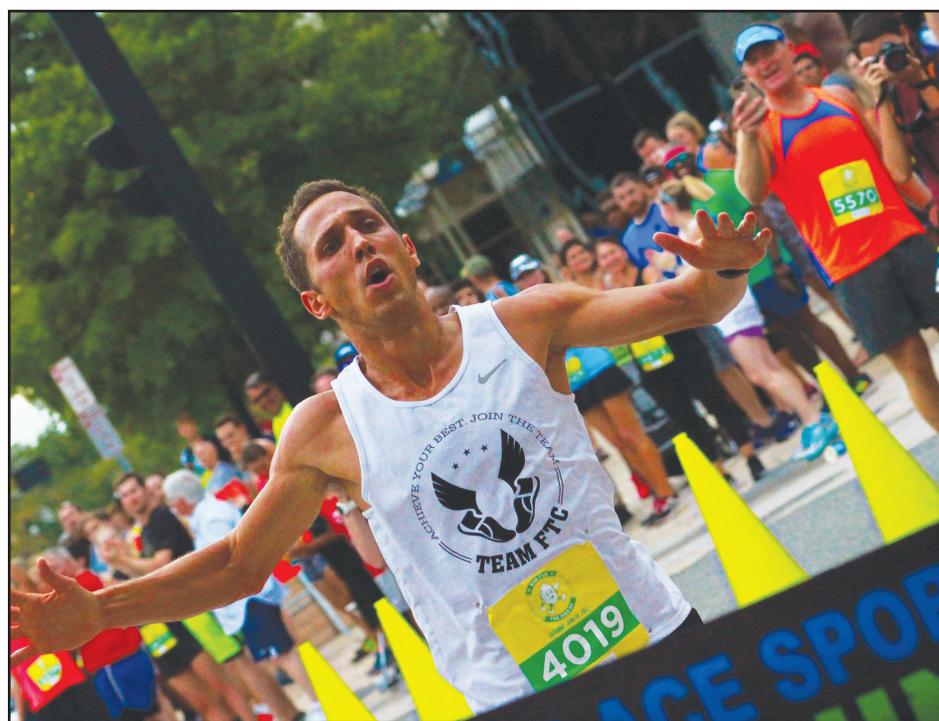
Nadler, a standout as a Keystone Heights High athlete, then a standout as a University of Florida runner and now, a standout as the elite team coach of the Florida Track Club in Gainesville, ran the 26.2 mile California International Marathon on Sun., Dec. 3 in two hours, 18 minutes and 17 seconds to get under the U.S. Olympics Trials Marathon "B" Standard of 2:19.00, thus earning a ticket to the U.S. Olympics Marathon Trials race, set for either late 2019 or January 2020.

In an emotional video response to his achieving the goal, Nadler noted that the challenge was far more difficult than he originally thought.

"I have a much deeper respect for marathoners and the marathon race itself after this effort," said Nadler, who qualified for the 2016 U.S. Olympic Trials Marathon with a half marathon qualifying time of 1:03.55 at 31 years of age, but did not compete in the Trials race while establishing his career. "The hills on the course made it very difficult."

Nadler noted that his preparation both physically and mentally helped him to maintain his pace for the qualifying standard.

"At about eight or nine miles, my legs were feeling all the hills and I was getting a little worried that things may go downhill from there," said Nadler. "I just thought about



Former Keystone Heights High track and cross country runner Enoch Nadler, now 33, has earned a second chance to run in the U.S. Olympic Trials Marathon.

all the people who have supported me to be in that moment and kept going. My hamstrings were really starting to give out."

Nadler persisted and finished in 33rd place overall of 7098 runners; seventh in his age group of 496 30-35 males and 33rd male of 3770 male runners.

Nadler had split times of 32:31 for the 10K (6.2 miles) mark, 1:08:32 for the half marathon split and 1:44:38 at 20 miles.

"I snuck in about 45 seconds under my

goal," said Nadler. "It was definitely tough and go at some points."

The winning time was 2:11:56 from Tim Ritchie, 30, of New Haven, CT with the runnerup, Tyler McCandless, 31, of Boulder, CO, at 2:12:28.

Note: Time is the only requirement for making it into the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials; a 2:19 for a marathon or 1:05 for a half marathon (male) or 2:45 or 1:15 (female) or faster on a sanctioned course.

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Wrestle

from page 17

Heights in the early 1990s but never an official team at the high school.

"There was a bunch of kids and some coaching and they competed at the club level," said Dickinson. "They competed throughout on their own all year long."

Brandon Marshall, now at medical school at University of Central Florida, has been the most celebrated wrestler out of Keystone Height with his second place finish as a senior at 182 pounds in Class 1A for Bishop Snyder. Marshall then wrestled at the Northern Michigan University where the U.S. Olympic Greco-Roman team trains. Marshall has competed worldwide in Austria and Panama as well as earned top 10 finishes at the Junior Nationals in Fargo, ND, and the Junior World Team Trials in Madison, WI. Marshall graduated North Michigan last year and now studies at UCF.

"Brandon's experiences around the world at the elite level has given us connections around the country and even around the world that should generate interest for the program," said Marshall. "He has visited the school a couple of times and talked to the kids. He may be on the mat with them over Christmas."

Keystone Heights, with 145 pounder Brandon Spivey going 5-1 in five matches; all with pins, finished with team losses to Oakleaf (66-12; pin by Brandon Hoffmeyer, Spivey lost by pin to Oakleaf's Trenton Carroll), Bishop Snyder (60-12; pin by Brandon Spivey), Battery Creek (42-24; pin by Brandon Spivey), Bolles (48-24; wins by pin by Brandon Spivey and Jeremy Givens), Baker County (39-18; 15-14 win by Brandon



Keystone Heights High wrestler shake hands after first official match finishes against Oakleaf High School at the Bishop Snyder North Florida Duals.

Hoffmeyer, pin by Spivey),

For Marshall, the two year journey to getting a sanctioned team at Keystone Heights, has been an interest since 2007.

"We're building," said Marshall. "We have cheerleader mats in our wrestling, unfortunately, and I have some donated mats from Clay High from about 1992."

In the hallways at Keystone Heights High School, where Marshall teaches, Marshall acknowledged that wrestling as a sport may go through a long indoctrination period.

"There is a lot of ambivalence because the Keystone kids don't think they want to wear leotards," said Marshall. "I think once they see some new uniforms and then five or six come out and then talk to other athletes, we'll get some guys out there."

Part of the intrigue for Marshall is to find

the athletes in the hallways and convince them of the benefits of a wrestling program.

"We have three from the football team; one is injured though and one did not make the body fat analysis, so it is a learning process to do the things necessary for wrestling," said Marshall. "We'll wrestle year round and hopefully generate interest."

Keystone Heights opened at the Bishop Snyder meet with a dual meet against Oakleaf High and got a pin at 220 from Brandon Hoffmeyer.

"That was the first win and first pin in the history of Keystone Heights High School wrestling," said Marshall. "When he came to me after, I said 'Good win, you did it in ugly fashion, you need to listen to me and not look at me, but good win.'"

The losses, though, were more emotional

than expected for Marshall.

"We have kids from seventh grade to 12th," said Marshall. "But, they are out there, working hard. We had one kid at 160 who cried after he lost. It's an emotional thing. I'm very proud of them."

Oakleaf finished at 5-0 with wins over Keystone Heights (66-12), Episcopal (72-12), Fernandina Beach (66-12), West Nassau (66-17) and Satellite (66-16).

The Knights, under coach Wes Champs, have handful of key returners with Ryan Rosano, a state qualifier at 113; Trenton Carroll at 145; Ethan Gustillo at 138; Dexter Moore at 195 and Brandon Bacalar at 120.

Orange Park finished at 5-0 with wins over Fernandina Beach (60-12), Satellite (66-9), Episcopal (66-12), West Nassau (66-18) and Westside (60-16).

"Matthew Poucher, Reed Danielson, Frank Sawyer, Jacob Campbell, Cameron Broughton, Davon Bailey, Dean Ganci, and Brandon Jordan all went undefeated," said Orange Park coach Justin Daniels. "That was a good tournament to build the confidence of our young kids."

Daniels and Orange Park traveled to Clay High for a dual meet on Wed., Nov. 29 with Clay winning that one.

"We did see some really good things out of Cameron Broughton and Jacob Campbell at the Clay dual that shined some light as to how much they have improved since last year," said Daniels, who hosts the Orange Park Duals on Friday. "Frank Sawyer at 106 is strong, healthy, and has a bit of a chip on his shoulder after a back injury hampered his season last year. Reed Danielson is working on gaining a rhythm and once he hits that stride he will be a wrecking ball."

Daniels also liked the work of freshman Brandon Jordan, a freshman at 170, and Jacob Moore, a sophomore at 182.



Keystone Heights center Eddie Thomas goes up strong against two Newberry defenders.

Boys hoops shows improvement

By Randy Lefko
KHHerald.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – A three-pointer by guard Garrett Stanley got the Keystone Heights High boys basketball team to within a point at halftime to Newberry, but a strong fourth quarter run spelled doom for the

Indians who lost 43-38 Tuesday night at Keystone Heights High School.

Keystone Heights record stands at 4-5 overall, 0-2 in district 4-5A play with Newberry leading at 3-4, 2-0 with the win. Bradford, Interlachen and Fort White are

SEE HOOPS, 20



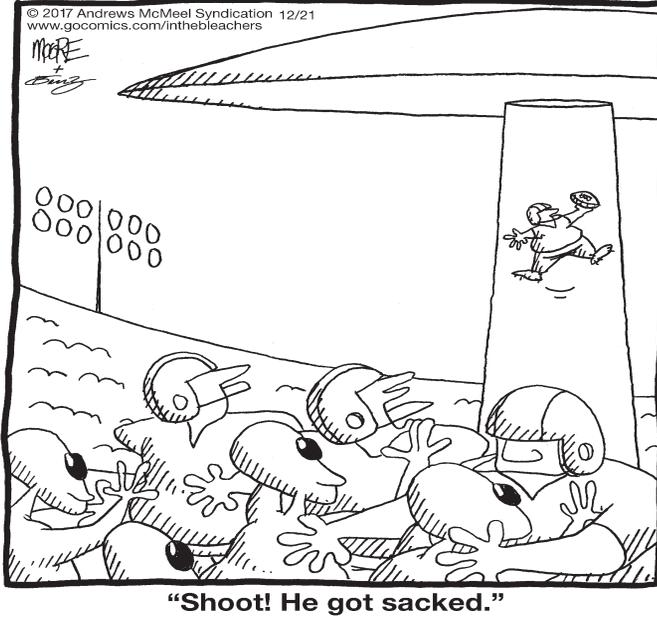
Keystone Heights guard Adrian Ciena flies to basket in loss to Newberry.

Fun AND Humor

Flying McCoys



In the Bleachers



Halftime action at Keystone Heights High School against Newberry include a scrimmage between local youth players, see below also.

Hoops

from page 19

ahead of Keystone Heights with Taylor 0-7, 0-2 in last place.

The Indians, led at guard by Jarian Woodland and Stanley, man the baseline with 6'-4" center Eddie Thomas and forwards Ray Kirkley, at 6'-3", and Sawyer Maxwell, at 6'-2".

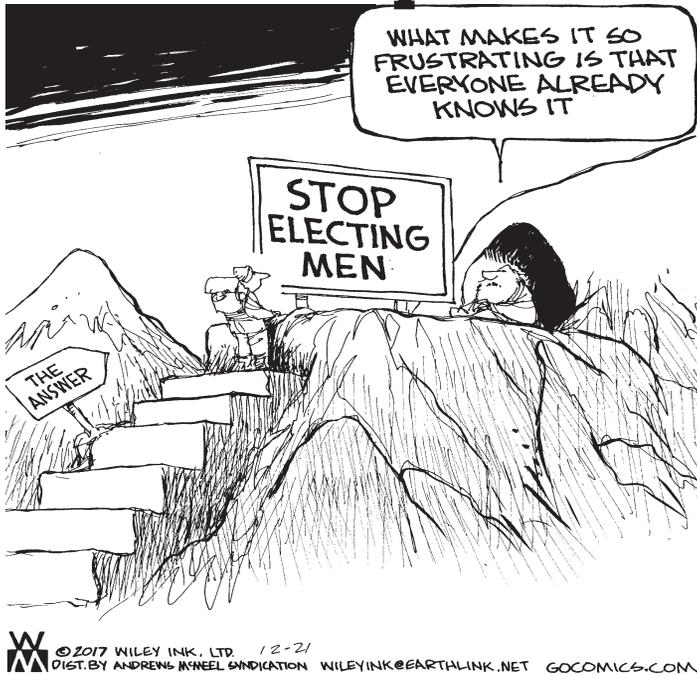
Junior Adrien Ciena comes off the bench at a guard position.

The Indians have wins over Ridgeview (71-53), First Coast Christian (51-17), Middleburg (52-50) and Trenton (54-38).

Keystone Heights has games on December 15 against Taylor and at Fort White on December 18 before the Christmas break.



Non-Sequitur



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(904) 282-1040 Worship services begin at 9 a.m. on Sundays</p> <p>THE ROCK BIBLE CHURCH Intersection of CR 209 and 220 Middleburg, FL 32068 (904)282-5048 & #13; Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship service 10:45 a.m.</p> <p>VINEYARD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP Ron Stephens P.O. Box 862 or 3114 CR 220 904-282-0310</p> <p>ORANGE PARK</p> <p>ABUNDANT LIFE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP 317 Blanding Blvd., Orange Park, FL 32073 298-3448 Sunday 10:30 AM 6:00 PM, Wed. 7:00 PM www.ALCFnow.org • www.prayforclay.org</p> <p>ABUNDANT JOY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP Pastor Rev. Donald F. Taylor 999 Blanding Blvd. 213-0048</p> <p>ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH 2156 Loch Rane Blvd. Pastor Jerry Nordsiek 272-6370</p> <p>ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF ORANGE PARK Rev. Carlos Otero Sunday Worship Sunday School 8:45 .m. Worship 10:00 a.m. 16 Colledge Dr. 272-0110 www.asburyop.com</p> <p>BAHA'I 1-800-22-UNITE Jacksonville Baha'i Center 5034 Greenland Road, Jacksonville 904-646-9813</p> <p>BE READY MINISTRIES First Christian-Jewish Fellowship Spirit and Truth Worship Center Across From Grove Park Elem on Miller & Gano 264-6791, 778-1869, 800-445-9955</p> <p>BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH Dr. Tom Neal 4459 U.S. Hwy. 17 S.</p> <p>BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH Dr. Paul Fowler, Pastor 3060 Moody Rd.</p> <p>BIBLE BELIEVERS Christian Fellowship Pastor Curtis A.Beckles Sr. 2106 Park Avenue • 269-2423</p> <p>BUCKLEBRIDGE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH http://www.bbuc.org P.O. Box 844, Orange Park, FL 32067 276-3739</p> <p>CALVARY ASSEMBLY OF GOD Pastor David Stocker 9 Knight Boxx Rd. 272-5774 Wednesday 7:00 p.m. Sunday 10 a.m.</p> <p>CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 112 Blanding Blvd. Pastor Esther Robinson - 272-4210</p> <p>CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH 942 Oak Lane Pastor Jerry N. Thrower 276-9099</p> <p>CELEBRATION CHURCH O.P. CAMPUS Pastor James Price Sundays 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m. Saturdays 6:00 904-737-1121 www.celebration.org</p> <p>CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER Meets Sunday at 2:00 at Wilson Inn on Collins Road</p> <p>CLAY COMMUNITY CHURCH 801-3 Blanding Blvd, Orange Park, FL 32065 Pastor David Thomasson Service 9:30 a.m. www.claycommunitychurch.org</p> <p>FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD Rev. Bill Register 6865 Pine Avenue, Fleming Island 904-284-3030</p> <p>FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH J.A. Jones, Pastor DeBarry & Gano - 264-7540</p> <p>FAITH MINISTRIES 406 Jefferson Ave. Orange Park, FL 32065 • 213-0629</p> <p>FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ORANGE PARK David Tarkington, Pastor 1140 Kingsley Ave. • 264-2351</p> <p>FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF ORANGE PARK Jim Joiner, Pastor 2876 Moody Rd. • 272-1250</p>	<p>GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH Rev. Kedron Nicholson 245 Kingsley Ave. Sunday: 8:00a.m. in the Chapel (with music) 10:30a.m. in the Church (with music) 264-9981</p> <p>HIGHPOINT COMMUNITY CHURCH Pastor Mike Hailey Pastor Tommie Darm 84 Knight Boxx Road 272-7949 Sundays 9:00 & 10:30 a.m. www.highpointccop.com</p> <p>ISLAND VIEW BAPTIST CHURCH 900 Park Avenue - www.ivbc.org Bible Study 9:15 & Worship 10:30</p> <p>JOURNEY CHURCH Lake Grey Boulevard 483-6881 Pastor Eric Jaffe www.journeychurch.org</p> <p>KINGSLEY AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST 1365 Kingsley Avenue, OP, FL 9:30 Bible Study, 10:30 Worship, 6:00 p.m. Worship and 7:00 p.m. Wednesday Service</p> <p>LAKESIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST Ryan Tuten, Minister Andy McDonald, Youth & Family Minister 2539 Moody Rd. 264-2463</p> <p>LIGHTHOUSE BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH Pastor Romeo Cerico Meets at New Life Fellowship 1045 Blanding Blvd., Ste. 209 Orange Park • 945-4712 • www.lbbcvjapwvbc.com</p> <p>NEW BEGINNINGS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP 1134 Blanding Boulevard, Orange Park; Sunday Adult Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Main Worship Service at 10:30 a.m., both with free nursery and child services.</p> <p>ORANGE PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Dr. Charles Lever, Pastor Worship: 8:00, 9:25, 11:00 • Youth: 6:30 2105 Park Avenue. • 264-2241</p> <p>ORANGE PARK CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE 3212 Moody Rd. • 269-5623</p> <p>ORANGE COVE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH New Pastor - Andre' Van Heerden Prayer meeting Wednesday at 7 p.m. Worship at 11:20 a.m. Saturday 4501 US Hwy 17 South • 269-2607</p> <p>ORANGE PARK PRESBYTERIAN Rev. John Diller Sunday School 9:30 a.m and 11:00am Worship 9:30 a.m. & 11 a.m. 1905 Park Avenue 264-0536 • www.oppresby.com</p> <p>RIDGEWOOD BAPTIST Rev. Michael Clifford 939 Blanding Blvd. 272-3791 9:30 a.m. Connection Groups/Bible Study 10:45 a.m. Worship Service</p> <p>ST. CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH Father Ignatius Plathanam, CMI, Pastor Weekend Mass Schedule Saturday Vigil Eucharist 5pm Sunday Eucharist 8am, 10am, 12pm, 5pm Sunday Eucharist (Spanish) 6:30pm 1649 Kingsley Ave. 264-0577</p> <p>ST. GILES PRESBYTERIAN Troy Lewis, Pastor 116 Foxridge Dr. 272-1244</p> <p>ST. JAMES AME CHURCH Alesia Scott-Ford, Pastor 504 McIntosh Ave. Sunday Service 11a.m. 278-7037</p> <p>ST. SIMON BAPTIST CHURCH 930 A.M. Sunday School 11:00 A.M. Traditional Worship Service 6:30 P.M. Wed, Prayer Service and Bible Study Rev. W.H. Randall, The Pastor 1331 Miller Street, Orange Park, FL. 32073 904-216-3300</p> <p>THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS 461 Blanding Boulevard, Orange Park, Fla. 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