

# CLAY TODAY

The Dream Lives On

Page 14

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AUGUST 28, 1963



THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2022

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The Morocco Shrine Center will relocate from its current location off St. Johns Bluff Road to 560 Wells Road in Orange Park. The Shriner's bought the building for \$2.2 million.

## Shriners trade Southside for Wells Road facility

By Nick Blank  
nick@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK -- Although the Shriners have met at the Morocco Shrine Center in Jacksonville for years, but they now have downsized and will be moving to Clay County.

But to club members, it's more than lowering expenses.

They've moved to a new location on Wells Road, but their mission remains the same: raising money for Shriners Hospitals For Children. The 560 Wells Road property, which contains 17,653 square feet, sold for more than \$2.2 million.

Facility manager Gary Thigpen said Orange Park is more community-oriented and the Shriners are making minor improvements to the building's interior.

"It's the start of a new chapter," Thigpen said. "We're happy to be there and



At 24,320-square-feet, the current center in Jacksonville was considered to be too large for the group's needs.

we're pretty excited."

He said the 24,320 square-foot Jacksonville facility -- which hosted shows, festivals and then-presidential candidate Marco Rubio in 2016 -- was too large for

SEE SHRINERS, 14

## From Hell House to eternity



STAFF PHOTO BY DON COBLE

Adam Hartle, left, meets with one of his new neighbors, Chuck Stable, on the lot that once held Hell House. Hartle wants to keep the lot untouched to honor Lynyrd Skynyrd.

## Man buys famous Lynyrd Skynyrd site to preserve band's legacy

By Don Coble  
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS -- Adam Hartle remembered riding his jet ski along Peter's Creek not long ago and making an impromptu stop at a vacant lot with a rickey dock.

He strolled among the moss-draped oaks and tried to imagine what it must have been like to be there more than 40 years ago when the thundering sounds of

Lynyrd Skynyrd used to echo through the swampy wilderness.

When he returned months later, he saw tractor-trailer loads of lumber stacked on newly-paved streets and the basic outline of new homes being created by center blocks.

The more the land was being transformed into the Edgewater Landing subdivision, the more determined he became to keep the lot where Hell House served as crude rehearsal studio like it was back in the early 1970s -- raw and unforgiving.

"It's nature, and it's history," Hartle said. "The band did so many good things

SEE LEGACY, 11



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# School District recognizes high graduation rate, backs teacher and staff increases



The Clay County School Board learned, despite dealing with COVID-19, it had the second-highest graduation rate in District history. With 92.7% of its students earning degrees, Clay ranks 14th in the state.

By Nick Blank  
nick@claytodayonline.com

FLEMING ISLAND – The Clay County School District has secured its second-highest graduation rate in its history, 92.7%, besting the state average by 2.6 percentage points.

Overall, Clay County ranked 14th out of the state's 67 school districts.

There's a lot to be proud of, Superintendent David Broskie told Clay County School district board members at last week's meeting. The district surpassed state averages for subgroups such as African-American, Hispanic or low socioeconomic students, as well as English language learners and students with disabilities.

"I think the subgroups are a particularly impressive data point," Broskie added.

The three highest graduation rates among county schools are Fleming Island High with 99.1%, Ridgeview High with 97.8% and Oakleaf High with 97.4%. Orange Park High and Clay High secured a 95.4% and 94.9% graduation rate, respectively, while Middleburg High, 92.3% and Keystone Heights Junior-Senior Highs, 86.7%, rounded out the district.

The graduation rate of 92.7% is a slight dip from the district's highest-ever total, which was 93.4% graduation rate recorded last year. However, the district has steadily improved over the past several years after an 83.7% graduation rate posted for the 2014-2015 school year and 74.4% graduation rate for the 2010-2011 school year.

"Given all the things that have happened over the past two years and where we're at, I'm pretty darn proud of our district and how we've done with our graduation rate," Broskie said.

In other business, board members welcomed back teachers and staff for the second semester by approving amendments to its contracts with teachers and staff.

Clay County Education Association President Vicki Kidwell said the union encouraged the ratification of \$8.8 million for teacher pay from the district and the American Rescue Plan Act, later approved by board members 5-0, to get teacher salaries to \$47,500 and give bonuses to veteran teachers. For staff, the salary increase is an estimated \$5.9 million between the district and ARPA.

Kidwell said teacher shortages harmed students and the district has had 86 teacher positions vacated from August to December.

"The reality of that is, that's 506 years of experience lost in Clay County," Kidwell said. Toward the end of the meeting, Board Member Beth Clark said teachers have been overburdened and she wished teachers could make more money.

"We've got a long way to go, unfortunately, we're short in every industry, cosmetology to contracting," Clark said. "It's a problem just getting help to get our schools maintained and built on time. We're just going to have to be patient and push ahead as much as we can."

## School district continues its COVID-19 strategies

By Nick Blank  
nick@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – Arriving back from the winter break, teachers and students are now in their third school year and fifth school semester impacted by COVID-19.

At last week's board meeting, Superintendent David Broskie reflected on the district's safety procedures and how far it has come.

"I was hoping we would come back in a

different situation than where we are. I'm very proud of the decision-making of the board applied to Covid policy," Broskie said. "I think we've applied a rational, common-sense approach to attempt to get back to some form of normal in our school system."

He said the Omicron variant is spreading fast and is a serious concern. Broskie said



David Broskie

the district has to set reasonable expectations and be upfront with its stakeholders, so he wouldn't be surprised if students and staff test positive.

It's already been close to two years of the pandemic, he said, but the district has to move forward.

"I'm sick of giving the reminders. I quite frankly can't wait for the day where this isn't a part of what we do on a daily basis," he said. "Until that time happens, we need to continue to provide calm, rational decision-making relative to this."

In addition, the district is continuing to use isolation rooms for Covid exposures,

seating charts, recommending face coverings indoors and spraying classrooms and common areas to mitigate the virus.

According to district protocol, a person testing positive can return to school with a negative test, with a doctor's note or a 10-day quarantine after symptoms are over. Teachers, staff and students are urged not to come to school if they are awaiting test results, have tested positive or have been exposed to someone exhibiting symptoms at home.

"The state of Florida is looking at that and it's always fluid when it comes to these rules," Broskie said.



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Blanding Boulevard is the most-used roadways in the county. With additional traffic comes more growth, construction and, of course, serious accidents.

## Bumper to bumper: Clay County runs along congested Blanding Boulevard

By Nick Blank  
nick@claytodayonline.com

CLAY COUNTY – State Road 21 is a monster of a road, spanning the entire county and passing through several urban centers and economic areas.

While it impacts businesses and residents, it is also dangerous, and work on the road to accommodate the county's rapid growth is as extensive as it is cumbersome. It cuts diagonally southwest from Orange Park to Keystone Heights via Middleburg, before ending near east of Hawthorne in Putnam County.

The state Department of Transportation is widening a 4.1-mile stretch of State Road 21 from Allie Murray Road to the north fork of Black Creek with a cost of \$19 million. In a \$16.4 million project, the agency is also in the process of widening and resurfacing roughly a mile of State Road 21 and County Road 218, from Black Creek's south fork to Palmetto Street.

Both projects are expected to be completed this spring, FDOT spokeswoman Sarah Pleasants said. Blanding is also the launch point for the next leg of the First Coast Expressway to State Road 16, which is expected to be completed in 2025.

"Definitely, Clay County is growing and these projects are adding capacity to a road that's congested," Pleasants said. "A lot of it is to make room in the county for the growth throughout the region."

The county has two bonded transportation program projects close to Blanding slated for this summer.

At \$21.1 million, the county aims to complete County Road 218 road widening from Cosmos Avenue to Pine Tree Lane, and road widening on County Road 220

from Baxley Road to Henley Road for \$13.1 million.

At Tuesday's Board of County Commissioners, commissioners received an update on the design and permitting process for both. Commissioner Betsy Condon later asked if there were mitigation measures, like nighttime construction, for the County Road 218 project.

"Each one of the projects has their own intricacies," Bonded Transportation Program Administrator Edwin Dendor told commissioners. "I won't tell you we're doing every (project) at night. It's not one size fits all, but we will bring each one of the defined projects for each defined area and have a plan for you."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, from 2009 to 2019, there were 49 fatalities on State Road 21 in Clay County, with two in Melrose and eight in the Bradford County portion. In that 10-year period, there were also six fatalities on the Duval County portion of Blanding from the county line, near the Ortega River, to Interstate 295.

Betsy Condon, whose district encompasses most of Blanding, told the Clay Today that residents she talked to are concerned about safety and ongoing roadwork.

"For people already living there, safety is a concern," Condon said. "From the sheriff's office, we've heard crime is down and accidents are up."

It's not sensitive to people who have to commute, she added, and the area around Blanding will only continue to grow.

"Obviously, it's one of our main arteries just like Highway 17," Condon said. "We know progress is coming with the widening and making it safer for residents."

## Clay Health officer offers optimism amid Omicron surge

By Nick Blank  
nick@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Commissioners received a status update about the amount and severity of the county's Omicron COVID-19 cases at Tuesday's Board of County Commissioners meeting.

Clay's Department of Health Administrator Heather Huffman said there were 2,462 cases of the Omicron variant in Clay County last week. From Saturday to Tuesday, the county was close to adding another 2,000 cases. However, Huffman said, the outcome was much different from last summer's wave of the Delta variant.

"Subjectively, listening to interviews with some of the cases, it's like having a bad cold," Huffman said. "That's what we're hearing over and over again, most people are not in the hospitals."

Huffman said half of Clay County's 708 covid-related deaths since March 2020 came during last summer's Delta wave. She said this is the peak season for cold and flu, and health officials are not seeing a surge for hospital admissions and for beds like last summer.

"We're not seeing the deaths that are going along with it," Huffman said. "That's really good news."

Huffman said experts are seeing patterns within Omicron similar to an endemic stage of a virus, meaning its symptoms resemble flu-like symptoms. The idea is that COVID-19 is something that continues to mutate year-to-year and is tracked, with boosters released

periodically. "I'm not going to say there's not going to be different waves of different variants, but this is typical of a virus cycle especially during a pandemic as it goes into an endemic phase," she added.

The best way to monitor and prevent current cases is testing and vaccines respectively, she said. Due to supply chain issues, the county and nearby counties are out of rapid tests. While the Clay Department of Health can still provide a test result in 24 to 48 hours, the county has the capability to administer 2,000 tests a day due to its community partners.

County Commissioner Jim Renninger asked about availability of rapid tests and emphasized the need from local governments like Penney Farms.

"They're in dire need of rapid tests," he said.

With rapid tests, Huffman said expiration dates change and neighboring counties are also struggling to acquire them.

"We're feeling the supply chain issues," Huffman said.

Vaccines remain the primary way to prevent severe illness and death. Huffman said the Delta variant wave created a large demand for the vaccine, but Omicron hasn't done the same. She wanted to improve the county's booster rate, though she could understand if there was some fatigue. "The boosters are still important at this time," she said.

The booster is available at major grocery stores like Walgreens, CVS, Publix and Winn-Dixie.

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## Florida film rebate legislation up for Senate committee vote

By Jacob Ogles  
For FloridaPolitics.com

Georgia just closed a blockbuster 2021 where \$4 billion in direct spending on movie and television productions poured into the state's economy. But for Florida's film industry, this isn't the ending anyone had in their script.

"As the top state for business for an unprecedented eighth year in a row, the jobs, economic development, and investment in film and other supporting industries are a key part of Georgia's success story," said Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp in a recent news release. That's good news for Atlanta camera shops and caterers, fans of Marvel movie lovers, and those who can't get enough of seeing zombies wander around the greater Macon area.

Florida in 2010 put a film incentive program in place that was supposed to make the Sunshine State the Hollywood of the South. And for a while, it seemed to do just that. Shows like "Ballers" and "Burn Notice" beamed images of South Florida into homes across the country, and movies like "Spring Breakers" turned Sarasota college campuses into movie sets for buzzy films. Since the program expired in 2016, those sorts of projects have found their way to Georgia, Louisiana and North Carolina.

But could things turn around for the industry?

Sen. Joe Gruters has tried to reignite some type of film program for several years. He crafted legislation this Session (SB 946) that replaces an incentives model with a rebate system instead. That bill will be heard on Monday, ahead of the 2022 Legislative Session, by the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee.

The bill would create a Targeted High Wage Production Program, housed within the Department of Economic Opportunity and managed by the Commissioner of Film and Entertainment. It would give tax credits to tourism-promoting and family-friendly productions shot in Florida.

A project could receive a tax credit award of up to 23% of its qualified expenditures or \$2 million, whichever is less.

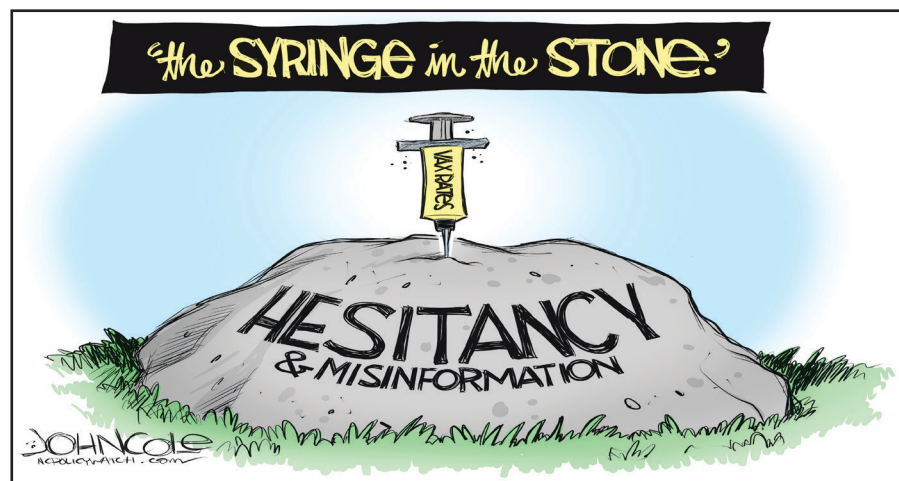
Gruters said the move could help restore much of the loss felt by Florida film in the past five years.

"I get so many calls from constituents, from former film studio workers, that have been displaced, from former Floridians who want to come back to Florida," the Sarasota Republican said. All want more movies made in Florida so they can live their lives in the picturesque state.

John Lux, executive director for Film

SEE FILM, 5

## OPINIONS



## Jennifer Bradley sheds the light on her solar power bill

By Don Coble  
Managing Editor

Jennifer Bradley has a problem with some of the shady reporting about her bill to end solar power payback programs.

The State Senator (R-District 5) from Fleming Island was criticized for proposing a bill to end the practice of residents with rooftop solar power units being allowed to sell back unused electricity at retail prices.



Don Coble

Some media outlets who've been critical of Florida Power and Light drew Bradley into their investigation after her political action committee received a \$10,000 donation from FPL's parent company NextEra Energy.

The connection, she said, is misleading.

Bradley said power companies initially offered incentives to jumpstart solar energy by buying back electricity from the grid for those who supplement their needs with rooftop panels.

Millions of residents took advantage of the program – not only for the financial benefits but to become more energy efficient.

However, most states have ended the program because it shifts operational costs to those who can't or don't have solar power.

"What people don't understand is 70% of the costs don't involve electricity," Bradley said as she prepared this week for the new legislative session.

Operational costs include construction, equipment, salaries and everything

needed to create, collect and deliver electricity.

Florida is one of the few states that still allow net metering. If a customer uses 100 watts and their solar power unit was responsible for 40 watts, they can sell back 60 watts back to FPL at retail prices.

The difference then is absorbed by other customers who don't have solar panels, Bradley said.

"A lot of the people this affects live in District 5," she said. "We're paying for the people who have solar power who live on the beach."

Bradley said thousands of customers, especially those who live in multi-family units, apartments, condominiums and those with low incomes, aren't able to install solar power panels. According to roofingcalc.com, the average cost to install a system in Florida ranges from \$18,800 to \$23,600.

Many states, including California and Nevada, allow customers with rooftop solar power systems to pay for power taken from the grid, minus power created by solar. While those customers pay less, they aren't able to sell electricity back to the companies.

Most electric companies, however, offer rebates to offset the costs. Companies that serve municipalities and operate as a cooperative already have done away with their buyback programs. That includes Clay Electric, Green Cove Springs and JEA. Other companies, particularly FPL, now want to stop the practice of buying back electricity.

FPL delivered draft language to Bradley's office and she used some of that information to introduce Senate Bill 1024 which would eliminate an arrangement known as net metering. Some argued the

SEE SOLAR, 5

## Word OF THE WEEK

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.

**Unbosom:** (un-BUHZ-um) a verb that means to disclose one's thoughts or secrets.

*"School counselors are used to students who unbosom their secrets."*

## This Week in History

### Five years ago, 2016

- Calvin Siegers, 70, completes a Florida Medical Association class to become certified to give access to medical marijuana to county patients.
- Three dozen animals are rescued from a Middleburg home after the home owner called the county's Animal Control and Care department for help.
- Final touches of being done of the restoration of Spring Park in Green Cove Springs.

### 10 years ago, 2012

- After months of debate, county commissioners approved two ordinances to regulate electronic gaming centers and adult arcades.
- The Cay County School District learns all of its high schools, with the exception of Orange Park, earned 'A' grades by the Florida Department of Education. Orange Park earned a 'B.'

### 20 years ago, 2002

- Elnora "Granny" Layfield, 72, was arrested in Green Cove Springs following a month-long investigation that she sold marijuana to students at nearby Clay High.
- County attorney Mark Scruby tells the Board of County Commissioners it needs to abolish the county's hospital authority because it's been inactive.
- Former Orange Park High and current Middleburg boys basketball coach Daryl Lauderdale misses his return to the RaiderDome after he was suspended for two games after being ejected with two technical fouls at the Keystone Heights tournament.

### Send us a letter ...

We'd like to hear from you. Perhaps you are concerned about the county commission, the school board or your city council or commission, sit down and take a few moments to write us a letter. All we ask is that you keep it civil, no name-calling and write no more than 600 words. All we ask is that you stick to local issues, be clear and make a point. We reserve the right to edit for AP Stylebook errors, grammar and spelling. In your email, type Letter to the Editor in your subject and send it to Managing Editor Don Coble at don@claytodayonline.com

### Opinions ...

The views and opinions expressed on this page are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Clay Today.

# Rep. Sam Garrison Shares Priority Issues for Florida's Legislative Session

By Sam Garrison

Florida Representative, District 18

Florida's 2022 Legislative Session began Tuesday. It is a true honor to be a voice in Tallahassee for our families, friends, and neighbors in Clay County.

Much was accomplished in 2021, including laws protecting local businesses and the jobs they provide, keeping schools open, and supporting our teachers, first responders and health care professionals on the frontlines of COVID-19.



Sam Garrison

Gov. Ron DeSantis, House Speaker Chris Sprowls (R-Palm Harbor), and Sen-

ate President Wilton Simpson (R-Tribby) have boldly led our state through these unprecedented times by insisting on conservative policies that protect the vulnerable, preserve personal freedoms and support strong families.

This upcoming Session promises a continuation of common sense, conservative vision that Republicans have delivered Floridians since taking the House majority in 1996 for the first time since Reconstruction. My personal commitment to the citizens of District 18 is to focus on the fundamentals: a strong economy, safe streets, quality schools, low taxes and a balanced budget. It's your money, and we should never forget that.

One bill I am especially proud to file this year is House Bill 287. This legislation increases criminal penalties for tampering with or fabricating evidence in the inves-

tigation of capital crimes. Before joining the legislature, I was a homicide and sex crimes prosecutor and know firsthand the frustration of watching a murder investigation fall apart because critical evidence is destroyed. In these matters of life and death, judges, juries, prosecutors, defense attorneys, police, defendants, victims and their families all share a common interest in just outcomes based on truth. Individuals who try to prevent that from happening by destroying evidence deserve appropriate punishment.

Additionally, I am proud to support Gov. DeSantis' goal of attracting our country's best and brightest police officers to Florida. We all want to work where we are appreciated and the men and women in uniform are no exception. Backing the blue isn't just a slogan in Florida. It's who we are.

For all the pain and loss we have endured together as a result of COVID-19, Florida has planted our flag in support of protecting the vulnerable while ensuring public safety and personal freedom. The result is a growing economy and a way of life that has become the envy of the nation.

As always, thank you for the honor of serving the citizens of Clay County in the Florida House.

Rep. Sam Garrison (R-Fleming Island) represents Clay County in House District 18 and was first elected to office in 2020. He serves on the House Health & Human Services Committee, the Civil Justice & Property Rights Subcommittee, the Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee, and others. Rep. Garrison is slated to become House Speaker in 2026.

## Film

from page 4

Florida, said it's helpful having Gruters championing the cause, and said he was "extremely pleased that someone with the stature of the Chair of the Republican Party of Florida supports the industry enough to file a bill in support."

"The bill is excellent and would do a lot to bring high-paying jobs to Florida for our residents," Lux said. "The bill has great minimums for required spending and Floridians hired along with a minimum for veterans being part of the cast and crew. Those points are the same as in previous years."

Rep. Dana Trabulsy, a Fort Pierce Republican, sponsored a companion bill in the House (HB 217) that is now in the House Tourism, Infrastructure & Energy Subcommittee.

Gruters sees benefits to film that could last for years, such as the tourist benefits of fans of films coming to see locations from productions.

But he also represents the Ringling College of Art & Design, one of the best film schools in the country. He graduated from Florida State University, which houses another beloved film program. Beside that, Florida also has Full Sail University and film communities in Orlando and Miami. If nothing else, boosting film jobs in this state will keep more graduates of education programs and products of the industry in Florida and out of Georgia.

Jacob Ogles has covered politics in Florida since 2000 for regional outlets including SRQ Magazine in Sarasota, The News-Press in Fort Myers and The Daily Commercial in Leesburg. His work has appeared nationally in The Advocate, Wired and other publications. Events like SRQ's Where The Votes Are workshops made Ogles one of Southwest Florida's most respected political analysts, and outlets like WWSB ABC 7 and WSRQ Sarasota have featured his insights. He can be reached at jacobogles@hotmail.com.

## Solar

from page 4

bill would stop the incentives for homeowners to install solar power systems.

That's not so, she said. If a customer uses 40 watts from solar panels and 60 watts from the grid, their bill would be 20 watts. It simply stops the practice of them profiting from their 40-watt usage.

Some outlets then connected a political donation to Bradley's PAC, Women Building the Future, suggesting the company was paying for her support.

"I'd be glad to get draft language from the solar power industry, too," Bradley said.

According to opensecrets.org, FPL has been very active in making campaign contributions. Records show the company doles out support across the board.

FPL has given \$93,000 to Democrats

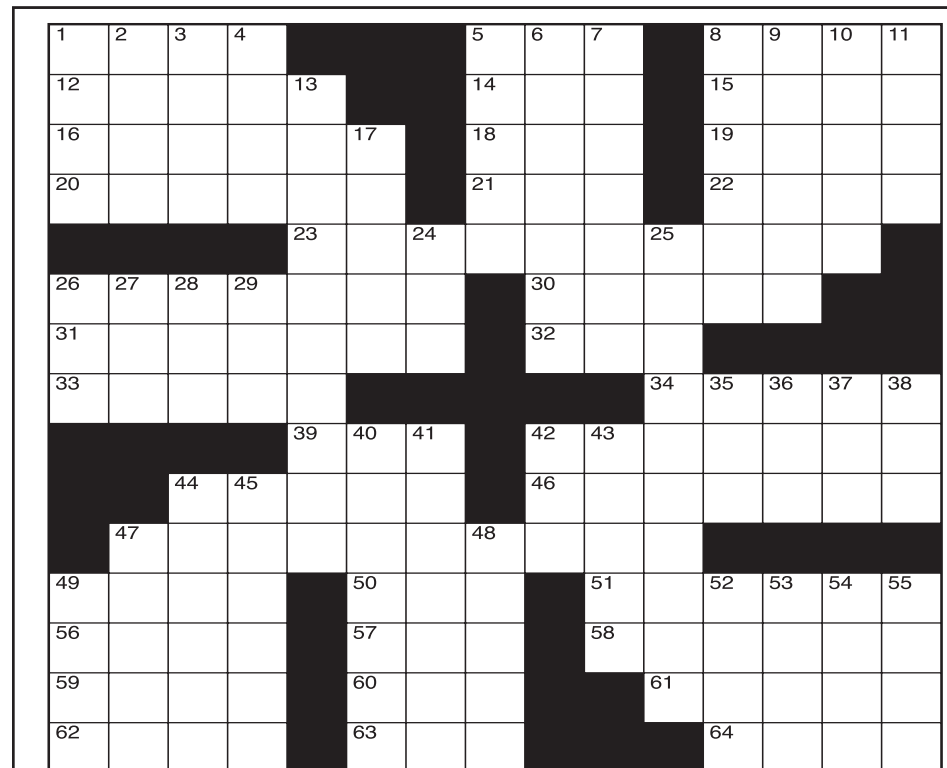
for the upcoming election cycle, according to openrecords.org, and \$91,500 for Republicans.

Records also show FPL has donated to 166 campaigns in Florida.

"(FPL) is engaged in Florida candidates," Bradley said. "The idea they gave our PAC money to support them, that's silly. I care about the needs of the constituents in District 5."

FPL's \$10,000 contribution to Bradley's group is small compared to her overall re-election fund. She won the election to replace her husband, Rob Bradley, in 2020 with nearly 75% of the vote. Her campaign already has taken in about \$500,000 and she is expected to easily win re-election. (So far, she is running unopposed.)

Her district includes all of Clay, Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lafayette, Levy, Suwannee and Union counties, and a portion of Marion County.



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Requests
- 5. Calendar month
- 8. Invests in little enterprises
- 12. Bird sound
- 14. S. American plant cultivated for tubers
- 15. Car
- 16. Bullfighter
- 18. Hill (Celtic)
- 19. Strong criticism
- 20. Detector
- 21. When you hope to get there
- 22. Having the skill to do something
- 23. Legendary MLB broadcaster
- 26. Vulcanite
- 30. C. Asian mountain range
- 31. In a way, healed
- 32. Midway between east and southeast
- 33. Small appendages of insects
- 34. \_\_\_ Greene, "Bonanza" actor
- 39. A place to bathe
- 42. Postal worker accessory
- 44. Classical music
- 46. A way of wrecking
- 47. Terminator
- 49. You eat three a day
- 50. Pointed end of a pen
- 51. NATO official (abbr.)
- 56. Genus of clams
- 57. Boxing's "G.O.A.T."
- 58. A colorless, odorless gas used as fuel
- 59. Covered thinly with gold paint
- 60. Bachelor of Laws
- 61. Red fluorescent dye
- 62. Engineering group
- 63. Female sibling
- 64. Adjacent

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. What a thespian does
- 2. Footwear
- 3. Adjust spacing between
- 4. Witnesses
- 5. Who shows excessive fondness
- 6. Distinct form of a plant
- 7. National capital
- 8. Hunting expedition
- 9. Related to medulla oblongata
- 10. European country
- 11. Cola
- 13. Excluded from use or mention
- 17. Speak
- 24. Bloodshot
- 25. Make better
- 26. Keyboard key
- 27. Type of degree
- 28. Paddle
- 29. Peacock network
- 35. Not young
- 36. Baseball stat
- 37. One's grandmother
- 38. Breakfast food
- 40. Bathroom features
- 41. Disease-causing bacterium
- 42. NY ballplayer
- 43. Got up
- 44. Prophet
- 45. Part of the mouth
- 47. Unnatural
- 48. Acronym for brain science study
- 49. Three are famous
- 52. Languages spoken in Patagonia
- 53. Freedom from difficulty
- 54. Widely used OS
- 55. Many people pay it

# Middleburg graduate returns home to deliver new Clay hospital



Middleburg High graduate Jeb McLendon, left, credits his high school's CTE program for creating a path into construction. McLendon the project manager at the Baptist Clay build, is joined by hospital president Darin Roark as Haskell Co. prepares to complete the job by end of year.

## Jeb McLendon keeping Baptist Clay Hospital on track, budget

By Don Coble  
don@claytodayonline.com

FLEMING ISLAND – Jeb McLendon always wanted to wear a hard hat.

As a student at Middleburg High, he embraced his Career and Technical Education classes, knowing he was destined to drive nails and cut boards.

Eleven years later, McLendon is doing exactly that as the project manager for the \$350 million construction of a new 100-bed hospital on the Baptist Clay Medical Campus and the renovation of the old VyStar Credit Union building into an 85,000-square-foot healthy living center.

"I call it full circle," McLendon said.

As a student at Middleburg, CTE teacher Bob Warner left a delibe impact on McLendon. After graduating in 2011, he went to college and was hired by Jacksonville-based Haskell Company.

Now he's one of the young bosses of the construction giant.

And he's quick to give the CTE program a lot of the credit.

CTE programs provide important pathways to success for high school students to personalize their education toward skill-based careers, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

As the project manager, McLendon is in charge of making sure the building will be delivered on time and within budget. The progress, according to the Baptist Clay President Darin Roark, has been astounding.

"Jeb is an intelligent mechanical engineer that I have ever interacted with," Roark said. "He is extremely professional. He is a tremendous leader and has done a great job keeping our hospital project under budget and on time."

While McLendon is in charge of putting all the pieces in place, he said it's the 300 workers – many who came from similar CTE construction programs – who make the difference.

"We oversee the financial aspect of the job and how it ties from the owner to the subcontractors and with the general con-

tractors. We hire the teams that do the work, we manage the installation of the work. We see it through from cradle to grave," he said.

"We're the people who manage the work. We manage the project seven days a week on a day-to-day basis. The way we get things done is we manage the process, but it's due to the 300-plus trade workers that show up every day that we're able to find success."

McLendon will entertain CTE students from Ridgeview, Middleburg, Orange Park and Clay highs during a Northeast Florida Builders Association-sponsored field trip at the worksite on Feb. 3. He hopes many of the students will understand there is a need – and a pathway – for a career in construction.

"Coming from a construction program where in high school you think maybe it's a little less than it can be one day, but it all led me back to help build a hospital that ultimately will provide care for people,"

McLendon said.

"We're going to talk to them about the industry and how important it is to make the world stay moving. A lot of these students that come out are industry-tech level students who don't take the college route. We want to make sure they don't have to take the same path I did by going to school."

McLendon has managed major builds throughout the Southeast, but this is his first assignment in Clay County.

"It's nice to be back home," he said.

An important aspect of the construction staying on track was Baptist and Haskell's long-range planning to stay ahead of the supply chain crisis. They stockpiled materials months in advance of groundbreaking, filling storage units around the county, Roark said.

"It's going really well. We're going to deliver this at the end of 2022," McLendon said. "Right now, in the last quarter of that year patients will be seen before the end of the year. It's all on schedule."



## Groundbreaking planned for Life Storage facility at Branan Field

MIDDLEBURG – Paradigm Commercial Capital will break ground for a new Life Storage self-storage facility. The storage facility is the first phase of the overall Clay County Town Center development project which will include office condos, a medical office building, an extended-stay hotel, and mixed-use retail and restaurants. Life Storage will be built on Jacobs Crossing.



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## School district aims for state funding for Career and Technical Education

By Nick Blank  
nick@claytodayonline.com

FLEMING ISLAND— With education always being a key topic for legislators in Tallahassee, Clay County School District board members are asking for funds to improve Career and Technical Education teacher salaries and to expand programs at Fleming Island and Ridgeview highs.

At last week's board meeting, the district asked for a \$65,000 industry standard salary for CTE compared to the \$47,500 beginning teacher salary.

According to the district, CTE teachers on a district-issued teaching certificate must have six years of experience in their field. The district also asked for increased funding for CTE programs, including internships and work-based learning.

Board member Tina Bullock asked if CTE teachers potentially coming in at a higher salary is a bargaining issue. Superintendent David Broskie emphasized the difficulty of finding the teachers with industry skill sets.

"I think it's just to highlight the fact that people in the industry world have very unique skills and it would be very difficult to hire them at that current (beginning salary)," Broskie said.

Due to bargaining concerns, Board Member Janice Kerekes wanted language added to the priorities list to say the dollar amounts are examples. She asked how it was determined the district wanted \$450,000 for a construction program at Fleming Island and \$200,000 for a health science program at Ridgeview.

CTE Supervisor Alice Paulk said both programs have been on the district's list for years, but funding was an issue. The need of for programs derives from an assessment completed by the district, she said.

The health science program at Ridgeview could limit CTE students zoned for the school from leaving for similar programs at other schools.

"Anything in health care is what Northeast Florida needs right now," Paulk said.

For FIHS, she said students didn't have a lot of hands-on opportunities.

"We felt like that was a good spot and a good program," Paulk said. "They needed something new there."

Later in the meeting, Kerekes asked about CTE possibilities at Orange Park High due to the influx of rezoned students it will receive soon. Board Member Ashley Gilhousen said she has been asked about a cosmetology program at the school.

Paulk replied that OPHS' Teaching and Learning Center on campus was initially discussed about housing a cosmetology program. She said high-skill, high-wage job programs are viewed favorably by the state for funding, so the idea was put on hold.

"We would have a hard time finding funding to support those programs," she added. "That's not the direction, from the things that are coming out of the (state) CTE Department of Education, that they would look to support, but it's definitely something we can look at."

The priorities list was approved by board members unanimously.

## Leading area eye surgery services Clay County market

By Nick Blank  
nick@claytodayonline.com

ORANGE PARK— A new ophthalmology office is boosting the availability of specialty eye services like cataract surgery, minimally invasive glaucoma treatment and laser vision correction.

Prior to its Kingsley Avenue office opening in December, Florida Eye Specialists had nine offices in Northeast Florida. Dr. Steven Maier will be the primary board-certified ophthalmologist serving the Clay County practice.

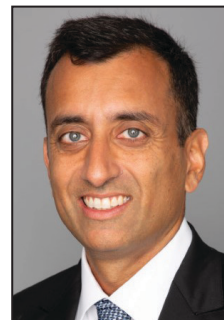
Ophthalmologists are specialty eye surgeons, whereas optometrists provide general eyecare and diagnoses. Dr. Amit Chokshi, an eye surgeon for 19 years who is affiliated with Florida Eye Specialists, said the practice noticed several patients coming from Clay County.

"Really the closest (office) we had was in Riverside," Chokshi said. "It made a lot of sense to really follow our patients, so they wouldn't necessarily have to travel as far for the specialty care we provide. It became pretty obvious to us we needed a presence there."

He said there's a need for specialty eyecare in Clay as the area grows, especially among older residents. He felt the Northeast Florida eyecare market wasn't saturated and it needed more professionals.



Steven Maier



Amit Chokshi

"Really the closest (office) we had was in Riverside. It made a lot of sense to really follow our patients, so they wouldn't necessarily have to travel as far for the specialty care we provide. It became pretty obvious to us we needed a presence there."

— Dr. Amit Chokshi

"A certain percentage of people are going to need eyecare. In this area, there's an influx just underneath the Medicare population age and that population needs even more eyecare," Chokshi said. "What we're seeing is, all of our doctors are busy. We don't see the growth slowing down. What's harder is getting specialty doctors."

Chokshi said Florida Eye Specialists' presence on the west side of the St. Johns River was lacking, so they made it a point to entrench themselves in Orange Park and County Road 210 in St. Johns County.

"We're fortunate to have every area covered and now we can bring that to Clay County as well," he added. "What is driving this, is the overall population growth of the greater Jacksonville area. It's really been unprecedented."

Florida Eye Specialists CEO and managing partner Dr. Rajesh Shetty said access to specialty eye care is essential for local patients and emphasized Clay residents having an office nearby.

"Patients with severe eye conditions may not be able to drive safely to our Jacksonville locations for the advanced treatments they need," Shetty said. "... This new office will give Orange Park residents a safe and easy way to access top specialists."

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# Obituaries

## William 'Billy' Lloyd Arras

William "Billy" Lloyd Arras of Fredericktown, Missouri, passed away November 30, 2021 at the age of 58. He was born to William and Darlene Arras on October 15, 1963 in St. Louis, Missouri.

Billy is survived by his wife Nancy; they spent twenty-one beautiful and exciting years together. They had three children: William "Will" Arras, Adam (Carly) Chevalier, and Aimee Chevalier. He left behind his beloved dog, Daisy.



William Lloyd Arras

He is also survived by his brother Steven Arras (Tracy), his sister Debbie (Jim) Wormhoudt, and his Godchildren Justin and Whitney Hastings.

After Billy graduated from Orange Park High School in 1982, he went on to attend Culinary Art School in New York. He then took his talents and showcased them in the Middle East where he catered to the royal family. He later worked as an Executive Chef in Florida and Missouri. Although cooking was his specialty, his passion was spending time with his family outdoors. He had a heart of gold and was the ultimate adventurer. He loved nature and fishing, but also loved following and playing sports with his kids. He will be forever known as having the best jokes, always keeping friends and family on their toes.

He was "The Man, The Myth, The Legend" and will be missed dearly.

Services were held at 1 p.m. on December 11, 2021, at Trinity Lutheran Church, 601 Kingsbury Blvd. in Fredericktown, Missouri. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Trinity Lutheran Church.

## Avery Camille Blevins

Avery Camille Blevins, 12 years old, was born in Honolulu, Hawaii on November 18, 2009 to parents, Steven C. Blevins and Tammy T. Blevins. She passed away on December 29, 2021, in Green Cove Springs, FL. Avery attended Asbury Day

School for Pre-K in Lafayette, LA; Lake Asbury Elementary in Green Cove Springs for Kindergarten and second-sixth grade; St. Pius Catholic School in Norfolk, VA for first grade.

Avery loved painting and drawing, making slime, gymnastics, riding her ATV, target shooting, watching Seinfeld, making Tic-Toks, Fortnite, Roblox, make-up, Pop-its, and most of all, time spent with family and friends. She had a magnetic personality that brightened everywhere she was! Avery was sweet and kind, not afraid to have her own beliefs and stand up for herself. Such a compassionate, strong, and beautiful child that fought so hard against her illness.

She was preceded in death by her Aunt Dawn M. Nickmeyer (9/14/2018) and her dog brother Koda (5/13/2021).

Avery is survived by her parents Steven C. and Tammy T. Blevins (Green Cove Springs, FL.), older siblings twins Chelsie T. Smith (Orange Park, FL.) and Emilee B. Lively, brother-in-law Dallas E. Lively (Crawfordville, FL.), Wm. Fletcher Cornwell, gf-in-law Daniela F. Puentes (Ray City, Ga), and Parker L. Cornwell, Dog sisters Gemma and Mazikeen Blevins. Grandparents Michael W. and Tracy L. Blevins (Harker Heights, Tx), Robert L. Menser Jr. (Jax., FL.), Elizabeth A. Ginsburg (Jax., FL.), Great Aunt Judy C. Staudermann (Jax., FL.), Aunt and Uncles, Kimberly R. and Aaron Allmond (Orange Park, FL.), Michael W. II and Brianne Blevins (Austin, TX). Nieces and nephews, Remington G. Cornwell, Madilyn G. Lively, Karson D. Lively, Paislie S. Smith, Kinslee C. Lively, and Biscuit. Other special cousins and friends, Emory T. Nickmeyer, Travis W. Garner, Jace Kennett, Milia D. and Marcel D. Allen-Nickmeyer., Bella Daniels, Courtney McClain, R. Preston and Ashley C. Allmond, Isa Belle and Areli M. Blevins, Riley, Ethan, and Carter Staudermann, and Bailey C. Turner.

A memorial service was held at 3 pm, Monday, January 10, 2022 in the Broad-



Avery Camille Blevins

us-Raines Chapel with Pastor James "Pop" Williams officiating.

Following the memorial service there was a Procession Parade to reception at Hampton's Rescue Farm.

Arrangements under the care of Broadus-Raines Funeral Home  
501 Spring Street Green Cove Springs, FL 32043 (904) 284-4000  
www.broadusraines.com



## Carol Ann Kyle

Mrs. Carol Ann Kyle, 80 of Green Cove Springs, passed away Tuesday, December 28, 2021 in Jacksonville. Mrs. Kyle was born March 28, 1941 in Steger, Illinois to parents Charles and Lila (Ritzman) Jaris. Carol held 2 Master's Degrees in Mathematics and Public Administration. She was a much-loved math teacher at Alameda County High School for 42 years. In addition, she taught Summer school, Saturday school for over a decade and tutored hundreds of young people. She was very active in the teacher's union for well over 30 years. A dedicated teacher, she constantly encouraged her pupils to reach their full potential and helped many to achieve their goals. In her free time, Carol enjoyed math puzzles and was a very avid reader. She was also a member of the Women's Club at Magnolia Point. Her parents preceded her in death. Survivors are her husband Thomas Kyle of Green Cove Springs and her daughter Jeanne (Kyle) Jardine of Scotland, brother-in-law, James Kyle of Bay Area, California, sister-in-law, Ginny (Kyle) McNerny of Bay Area, California, and grandchildren, Ewan Jardine and Alek Jardine of Scotland. She is also survived by nieces, Paula (Jarvis) Urhausen of Chicago, Rachel Jaris of Bay Area, California, Susy (McNerny) May of Bay Area, California; nephews, Charles Jaris, Jr. of Chicago, Sean Kyle of Baja California



Carol Ann Kyle

and Jim Kyle of Bay Area, California and many great-nieces and nephews. She will be missed by all who knew her. There will be no services held at this time.

Arrangements under the care of Helm-Gallagher Funeral Home & Cremation Services, 1811 Idlewild Avenue, SR 16, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. 904-284-9696. www.helmgallagherfh.com



## William O. Chastain

William O. Chastain, 85, of Green Cove Springs, FL passed away on January 6, 2022. Please sign the family's online guestbook at www.broadusraines.com

Arrangements are under the care of Broadus-Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. (904) 284-4000



## Lynn I. Kidd

Lynn I. Kidd of Orange Park, FL, departed this earth surrounded by family on January 7, 2022.

Born in Denver, CO on January 18, 1945, he proudly served in the United States Navy, retiring after twenty-two years as a Master Chief Petty Officer of VP 24. After retirement, he enjoyed spending his time working on cars and home projects for his family and friends.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Lawrence and Georgia (Armbrust) Kidd; brothers, Norman Kidd and Clayton Kidd; nephews, Randy Kidd, Lawrence Kidd, Norman Kidd Jr, Daniel Kidd,



Lynn I. Kidd

SEE OBITUARIES, 9

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# Obituaries

from page 8

and Joseph Kidd.

Love and cherished by many, Lynn Kidd is survived by his loving wife of 51 years, Jeannette (Carter) Kidd; daughters, Tonya (Stan) Whitley, Sandra Kidd Blodgett and Cynthia Kidd Eberhardt; nine grandchildren, Jessica Whitley, Erin (Steven) Lewis, Dylan Whitley, Brooklynn Eberhardt, Caleigh Eberhardt, Tara Blodgett, Noah Eberhardt, Olivia Blodgett and Wyatt Blodgett; five great-grandchildren, Patrick Lewis, Alyssa Minor, Caleb Minor, Audrey Whitley and Adalynn Lewis; sister, Lorraine Hudson; brother, Eugene (Carolyn) Kidd; two nieces, Lynne (Timothy) McMahon and Angela (Daniel) Hansford; nephews, Robert Kidd and Clayton Kidd Jr., several great nephews and nieces, and godson, Ray (Vena) McCall, who were all very dear to his heart.

Following a private memorial service, Lynn Kidd will be interred in the Jacksonville National Cemetery, 4083 Lannie Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32218

Please sign the family's online guestbook at [www.broadusraines.com](http://www.broadusraines.com)

Arrangements are under the care of Broadus-Raines Funeral Home, 501 Spring St., Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. (904) 284-4000.



## Linda Delores Colman

ALPHARETTA—Linda D. Colman, 75, died peacefully on January 4, 2022, at a Pruitt Marietta Georgia Nursing Home. She was born July 12, 1946, in Fayetteville, North Carolina, daughter of Ralph D. and Sara D (Fields) Parks. Linda graduated from James Island High School, Class of 1964.

Following graduation, she married Hubie Colman not long after they met in 1964 on Folly Beach. As a devoted Navy wife, Linda was no ordinary woman. She operated for months at a time without the companionship or assistance of Hubie; she routinely overcame challenges that would give the average spouse a nervous breakdown. Linda was part Doctor, part Teacher, and part Sleuth; lovingly cared for David when he was sick, helped Dan with his Algebra homework, and tracked down Debby after she snuck out of the house. With thirty minutes' notice of Hubie, she served breakfast, lunch, or dinner to fourteen hungry Sailors and still somehow balanced her family's meager grocery budget. Linda pressed a set of

dress whites to inspection standards, tied a perfect square knot in a military neckerchief, and packed a seabag in the cold hours before dawn. For months at a time, Linda settled for numbered letters instead of kisses, tape recordings in place of hugs, and long-distance phone calls in place of her Hubie's touch. She managed a smile when Hubie was at sea for the birth of Debby. Linda was a patriot. She was the sort of citizen that all of us should be, but so few of us are. She lived with sacrifice because she believed in the rights and ideals that Hubie defended. Linda and Hubie celebrated 57 years of marriage in July 2021. Linda was an active Red Hatter in the early 2000s, where she was the Red Hat Queen of her group, the Sassy Red Hats. Linda also loved quilting. She made over 200 beautiful quilts which she gave to family and friends. In addition to Linda's parents, she was predeceased by a sister, Patsy. Surviving in addition to her husband, Hubie, are her sons, Dan and his wife, Stephanie, of Burke, VA; David and his wife, Kristen, of Mandeville, LA; daughter, Debby (Colman) Martinko of Holly Springs, GA; nine grandchildren, Justin, Matthew, Tyler, Hailey, Kayce, Kaylin, Leah, Kiley and Elizabeth; six great-grandchildren, Camden, McKenna, Grayson Wyatt, Marlowe and Cora; two brothers, Ralph D Parks, and Richard Parks; and one sister, Barbie; many nieces and nephews.

A viewing will be held at 2-4p.m. on Saturday, January 15 at Poole Funeral Home, 1970 Eagle Drive, Woodstock, GA 30189. Followed by a celebration of Linda's Life at Tuscany Italian restaurant Woodstock GA 30189.



To submit an obituary for publication email:

[obits@claytodayonline.com](mailto:obits@claytodayonline.com)



Last year's award winners were (front, from left) Esther Lee – Lifetime Achievement Award, Doris Wellner and Margo Hay – Women of the Year and (back, from left) Ernie Cohen - Emcee, Elmer Posick and Mike Youngblood – Men of the Year, Suzanne Tower – Shepherd's Center's Volunteer of the Year.

## Golden Years Gala accepting nominations for annual awards

### For Clay Today

ORANGE PARK – The Golden Years Gala is celebrating its 15 year of honoring senior leaders in the county. At this event, seniors in Clay County are honored for their commitment to volunteerism in three categories: Man of the Year, Woman of the Year and the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Shepherd's Center has been honored to have Ernie Cohen act as an emcee, participate on Gala Committee, and support the Shepherd's Center for the past several years. The 2022 Golden Years Gala Committee is overjoyed to announce the renaming of the Lifetime Achievement Award to the "Ernie Cohen Lifetime Achievement Award". Ernie's gifts to the non-profit community are numerous, so much so that Ernie was awarded the Golden Years Gala Man of the Year Award in 2020. The Shepherd's Center is honored to memorialize Ernie's vast accomplishments with the renaming of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Gala Committee is currently accepting nominations for the 2022 Gala. What a wonderful way to say, "Thank You!" by nominating someone you know for his/her extraordinary efforts. The 2021 categories are as follows: Volunteer Senior Man of the Year, Volunteer

Senior Woman of the Year, and the Ernie Cohen Lifetime Achievement Award. Senior adults are important to the community. They are a generation with high values, strong work ethic, commitment, integrity, generosity, and loyalty. Seniors are a wonderful example to all, showing that true contentment is to share their time and talents through serving. Nominees must be 60 years of age and volunteer in Clay County.

The deadline is Jan. 31. For nomination forms, either go to <https://www.tscoop.org/golden-years-gala/>, email [info@tscoop.org](mailto:info@tscoop.org) or call (904) 269-5315.

This year's Golden Years Gala will be held at Sullivan Hall at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 7190 U.S. Highway 17 on Fleming Island, on Wednesday, May 25 at 8:30 a.m. with live and silent auctions.

The awards program will follow the auction. Proceeds from the Gala benefit The Shepherd's Center of Orange Park, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, which provides services to improve the quality of life and longer independence of hundreds of senior adults in Clay County through award-winning educational programming and events focused on health and wellness.



The Art Guild of Orange Park, which created this colorful portrait on the town's water tank, will have its art on display at the courthouse through April 15.

## Art in the Courthouse debut underway

For Clay Today

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The debut of a new community outreach program, Art in the Courthouse, is underway at the Clay County Courthouse, 825 N. Orange Ave.

Thousands of people conduct business inside the courthouse each year and, regardless of the reason for their visit, Clerk of Court and Comptroller Tara S. Green was the building to be an inviting venue.

The goal is to make citizens and employees feel more at ease when conducting business at our courthouse by providing a display of locally created artwork for their enjoyment.

The new program is a partnership involving the Clerk/Comptroller's Office, Clay County judiciary, artists from local art groups, Clay County government, civic organizations, school system and more.

All are welcome to view the debut of the artwork throughout the year.

The art will include a 26-foot gallery wall designated as space for the display of community artwork for the public and

courthouse staff to enjoy. While done at other courthouses around our state and country, this is a first for the Clay courthouse in regards to a permanent space for continuous display of community art.

New displays will rotate into the gallery every three-to-five.

The clerk's public website ([www.clay-clerk.com](http://www.clay-clerk.com)) provides information about each organization and the artists.

The clerk's office's vision is to add artwork to other areas of the courthouse in the future.

Artists from the following groups will be featured in 2022/2023:

- Now through April 15 – Art Guild of Orange Park (AGOP)
- April 15 – July 15 – First Coast Plein Air Painters
- July 15 – Nov. 18 – Clay County Women's Clubs (OPWC and VIA)
- Nov. 18 – Jan. 31 – Holiday Season Children's Art from the Augusta Savage Community Center and from Clay Guardian Ad Litem Families

## Ridgeview's Gracie McCann wins 'I Voted' sticker contest

For Clay Today

CLAY COUNTY – The county Supervisor of Elections Office is pleased to announce the winner of the "I Voted" Sticker Design Contest is Gracie McCann of Ridgeview High School.

Clay County students in 9-12 grades were asked to submit their unique artwork reflecting the theme of democracy. McCann said she wanted her design to be "simplistic yet meaningful" and to "create a powerful and positive mindset." The goal of the



Gracie McCann

competition was to engage high school students in the voting process, as they are the next generation of voters.

"I believe that voting is something that should be taken seriously... As citizens, our interests and beliefs are very important and should be respectfully supported by our political leaders," she said.

Gracie's design will be handed out during the upcoming Primary and General Elections. She'll also receive several prizes from our local community partners including VyStar Credit Union, Gordon Chevrolet and Clay Today. Thank you to the students who participated, and to the local businesses who donated prizes.

If you have questions, or need more information, visit [ClayElections.gov](http://ClayElections.gov) or call the office at (904) 269-6350.

## Four \$1,200 scholarships available through Florida Supervisors of Elections

For Clay Today

CLAY COUNTY – The Florida Supervisor of Elections, a professional organization representing all 67 Supervisors of Elections in the state, will be awarding four \$1,200 scholarships to local college students majoring in Political Science, Public or Business Administration or Journalism/Mass Communications.

Last year, Emily McCarthy of Clay County of one of the

four statewide recipients. Clay County Supervisor of Elections Chris Chambliss hopes to continue the trend and encourages all eligible students to apply.

The scholarships are open to Clay County registered voters who have enrolled or who have been accepted to a Florida college or university as a full-time student who has finished two years of junior college or undergraduate work. Applicants also must maintain a "C" or better average and have been a Florida resident in the past two years.

Completed applicants must be submitted to the Clay County Elections Office by March 11. The full guidelines and application are available online at [ClayElection.gov](http://ClayElection.gov) or they may be picked up at the Elections Office at 500 N. Orange Ave. in Green Cove Springs.

For more information, visit [ClayElections.gov](http://ClayElections.gov) or call (904) 269-6350.



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# Legacy

from page 1

good things here, I don't think Jacksonville gives Skynyrd enough credit. I didn't want to see some house go up here, become some lady's back yard and see them tear up the dock. I didn't want to see the history get torn up."

So he bought it.

His plans for the .6-acre lot are simple: he's going to leave it alone.

While the rest of the neighborhood becomes a gated community of two- and three-car garages, HOA and CDD fees and half-million-dollar mortgages, the only thing Hartle wants for his property is to preserve an appreciation for all the songs



Standup comedian and stock market expert Adam Hartle finds solace standing on "Ronnie's dock" along Peter's Creek.

that were created in the steamy one-room shack.

The band decided to work on their songs in the woods instead of their homes in the Westside of Jacksonville. They weren't distracted by anything other than their music or the occasional screech of an owl, and they weren't bothered by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office for playing too loud.

Hell House had a tin roof, toilet and no air conditioning. Conditions were brutal – hence the name – but it's where the group wrote their first three albums and perfected hits like "Free Bird," "Gimme Three Steps," "Simple Man," "Saturday Night Special" and "Sweet Home Alabama."

Band founder and lead singer Ronnie Van Zant paid \$50 a month for rent in the early 1970s. The band eventually moved



STAFF PHOTO BY DON COBLE

From Peter's Creek, the lot that helped launch the Southern rock movement remains pristine. Although there are houses on either side, the lot will remain exempt from construction, new owner Adam Hartle said.



The one-room shack on a Green Cove Springs farm is where many of Lynyrd Skynyrd wrote and perfected their iconic setlist. Although Hell House burned down more than 20 years ago, a St. Johns County man bought the lot to keep progress "from covering up the history of the place."

out and the shack was destroyed more than 20 years later by an electrical fire.

But the significance – and the sanctity – of the land can never be erased as long as there's still one fan still changing, "Turn it Up!"

"I came here all the time in the last few years just to hang out. I'd ride my jet ski up to the dock," he said. "I live on the other side of the (St. Johns) river, so I'd just buzz up here and hang out. This was before there were any houses here. This was all land. I'm a Skynyrd fan. As more and more houses started going up, I kept thinking it would be a shame if somebody built a house right here.

"It was expensive. Everybody told me I was crazy. My wife told me I was crazy. She said, "You're wasting your money." It's not an investment. I'll never see that money back. I'm never going to sell this land,

but it's all right. I'm happy to do it because I was in a financial situation where I could do it. It means a lot to me; it means a lot to other people as well."

With the help of author Bob Kealing, the land also will be embraced by the state. Kealing and Hartle's application to have the property designated a Florida Heritage Site early this month was approved last week.

"There was some great synergy on this," Kealing said. "The more I researched it, the more I realized that's a pretty amazing place up there in the woods. They were using Hell House the same time Petty was doing his thing (in Gainesville).

"I saw where they were building a housing development there and they even had streets like Free Bird Loop, which was amazing to me. People outside of Florida think there's no history or culture here,

and they couldn't be more wrong."

Keating also was the driving force to have the Jacksonville house on Riverside Avenue where the Allman Brothers wrote most of the songs for their first album, "The Allman Brothers Band" designated a Florida Heritage Site.

Since Hartle used his 501(c)(3) charity, The Great Church, Inc., to buy the land, and with the heritage description, it means the land will remain pristine from progress for the next generations of Skynyrd fans.

"The cool thing is they did this at mom and dad's house. They made it a historical



A sold sign means only 184 of 185 planned lots at Edgewater Landing will have houses. Adam Hartle said he won't build on the same land that once was home to Hell House.

site, so they can't tear it down. That's pretty cool, pretty cool," said Johnny Van Zant, the younger brother who took the microphone after his older brother Ronnie was killed in a 1977 plane crash.

"It is a special place and we can't tell you what it means to everyone who's part of the Skynyrd family. We're amazed by it all. It's nice they're going to keep the memory of Hell House alive and he won't allow anyone to cover up the history of the place."

The band still draws massive crowds and will embark on its 2022 tour in a couple of months. As they continue to make music, Hartle wants the old lot to remain quiet – and sacred.

"There's enough money-grabbing in this world," Hartle said. "Sometimes you've got to keep things the way they are."

Which many consider to be real progress.

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# Police Briefs

## Man recovered from Lake Asbury retention pond

LAKE ASBURY – Friends and family started looking for a man early Monday after he was last seen on Sunday. They found him in his yellow Corvette submerged in a retention pond on Henley Road.

According to the Florida Highway Patrol, a 58-year-old man died in a single-car crash. His car was upside-down on the west side of the roadway after it appeared he drove from Russell Road, crossed Henley and continued into the pond.

Friends were looking for the man and someone noticed a street sign was knocked down at the intersection. They also noticed small car parts on the side of the road.

The Clay County Sheriff's Office dive team recovered the body Monday afternoon.

FHP doesn't release the names of anyone involved in car accidents, citing Marcy's Law, which was created to protect the identities of victims of child, sexual and domestic abuse.

## Sexual predator found with more child pornography

ORANGE PARK – A man being arrested for not registering his email and four social media addresses, car and telephone number as a sexual predator also was caught with two videos of children engaging in sexual conduct.

According to the Clay County Sheriff's Office, Chad Clinton Kyle, 39, of Orange Park, was arrested on Jan. 7 after the

SEE POLICE, 13



# Arrests & Bookings

(Name, age, location of arrest, charges). Key: FTA-Failure to Appear; DWLSR-Driving Without a License-Suspended or Revoked; DUI-Driving Under the Influence; VOP-Violation of Probation; BAL-blood alcohol level. There are no assumptions or representations about guilt or innocence. Anyone arrested or booked is presumed innocent.

### Tuesday, Jan. 11

Shawn A. Sieling, 48, Keystone Heights, simple domestic battery  
 Dylan M. Jarvis, 30, Orange Park, possession-short-barreled gun/rifle/machine gun, disorderly intoxication, consumption of alcohol within 300 feet of package store  
 Zachary L. Morgan, 23, Oakleaf, DUI, refusal to submit to BAL test, DWLSR  
 Angel A. Quintana, 40, Green Cove Springs, VOP-battery  
 Anthony R. Billups, 55, Middleburg, burglary  
 Brian O. Coleman, 45, Fleming Island, DWLSR, failure to register vehicle, license tag not assigned to vehicle  
 Joshua Gardner, 29, Green Cove Springs, two counts FTA-failure to redeliver hired/leased property  
 Rodney S.P. Roberts, 32, Orange Park, possession-cocaine  
 Sherri R. Curry, 54, Orange Park, possession-fentanyl, possession-fentanyl  
 Jared B. Wagner, 46, Orange Park, possession-methamphetamine, possession-drug paraphernalia

### Monday, Jan. 10

Edward C. Fleck, 36, Middleburg, battery on police/firefighter/EMT, resisting arrest with violence, child abuse  
 Travis A. Wright, 36, Keystone Heights, three counts violation of injunction for protection against domestic violence, two counts resist/obstruct/oppose police  
 Sandra N. Nobles, 51, Middleburg, simple domestic battery  
 Sarah A. Miller, 43, Middleburg, trafficking controlled substance, alter/destroy/conceal/removed physical evidence  
 Chad M. Collins, 50, Orange Park, armed robbery

Wesley M. Morgan, 35, Orange Park, FTA-DUI  
 Lisa R. Hunt, 34, Keystone Heights, three counts VOP-community control  
 Primitivo S. Torres, 45, Green Cove Springs, FTA-DWLSR  
 Gary E. Boyd, 41, Keystone Heights, violation of injunction for protection against domestic violence  
 Kashayla Y. Johnson, 22, Middleburg, DWLSR resulting in death/serious bodily injury, child neglect, battery on police/firefighter/EMT, careless driving

### Sunday, Jan. 9

Jonathan C. Reeves, 35, Fleming Island, possession-unlicensed firearm, violation of injunction to surrender firearm/ammunition  
 Dymond J. Williams, 21, Orange Park, DWLSR (Duval)  
 Andrew D. Nighswander, 34, Orange Park, possession-methamphetamine  
 Sean N. Washington, 20, Orange Park, possession-marijuana  
 Michael A. Wilkerson, 22, Green Cove Springs, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia  
 Ashley N. Boatwright, 27, Green Cove Springs, simple battery  
 Ashley A. Prosser, 38, Keystone Heights, aggravated battery with deadly weapon  
 Robert L. Marks, 41, Orange Park, VOP-community control  
 Terry W. Martin, 62, Middleburg, shoplifting  
 Tracy L. Meador, 55, Green Cove Springs, DWLSR-habitual offender  
 Allen M. Smith, 25, Orange Park, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia  
 Amanda S. Ash, 37, Middleburg, possession-drug paraphernalia, possession-burglary tools  
 Jason A. Boyd, 40, Middleburg, DWLSR, possession-burglary tools  
 Annie L. Richardson, 27, Orange Park, trespassing  
 Joshua L. Williams, 37, Orange Park, FTA  
 Donna L. Pierce, 56, Middleburg, DUI

### Saturday, Jan. 8

Garrett A. Brinkmeier, 24, Middleburg,

simple battery, vandalism  
 James E. Holloway, 38, Orange Park, possession-methamphetamine, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia  
 Brandon M. Sparks, 36, Orange Park, inhale/ingest harmful chemicals, driving without valid license  
 Rickey E. Hinneburg, 58, Middleburg, resist/obstruct/oppose police, DUI, leaving scene of accident with property damage  
 Ernando A. Tavares, 42, Fleming Island, DUI

### Friday, Jan. 7

Josie E. Woodworth, 25, Green Cove Springs, destruction of evidence, possession-fentanyl  
 William R. Boone, 51, Orange Park, possession-methamphetamine, possession-drug paraphernalia, DWLSR  
 Megan N. Pleasant, 27, Green Cove Springs, DWLSR (Volusia)  
 Shawn C. Taylor, 40, Orange Park, DWLSR  
 Ronald O. Kuncce, 85, Orange Park, FTA-driving an unregistered vehicle  
 Michelle L. Swafford, 37, Middleburg, shoplifting, trespassing  
 Thomas Sigretto, 31, Orange Park, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia, DWLSR  
 Brookleigh K. Fitzgerald, 43, Orange Park, fraudulent use of credit card  
 Brandon V. Diaz, 19, Green Cove Springs, lewd/lascivious battery, soliciting a child via computer, traveling to meet minor to do unlawful acts, unlawful use of two-way communication device  
 Adam D. Dukes, 47, Green Cove Springs, VOP-resisting an officer  
 Chad C. Kite, 38, Orange Park, two counts possession/control/view depiction of child sex conduct, five counts failure to report email address, two counts failure to register as sexual predator  
 Angela N. Caperton, 37, Middleburg, possession-cocaine, possession-drug paraphernalia, possession-controlled substance

### Thursday, Jan. 6

Morency Cherfrere, 42, Orange Park, FTA

Lauryn A. Creel, 22, Green Cove Springs, FTA-boating citation  
 Samuel T. Bell, 43, Middleburg, domestic battery of person 65 or older, tampering in a noncriminal proceeding  
 Jason Miller, 53, Orange Park, two counts sexual battery of child younger than 12  
 Jaren B. Wagner, 46, Middleburg, FTA-DWLSR  
 Shaleena A. Marks, 21, Keystone Heights, simple domestic battery  
 Virginia M. Swanson, 28, Green Cove Springs, FTA-possession-fentanyl, FTA-possession-Alprazolam, FTA-possession-marijuana, FTA-possession-drug paraphernalia, FTA-giving false ID to police  
 Rion W. Houston, 19, Orange Park, petit theft  
 Norman Nichelson, 47, Fleming Island, grand theft, resist/obstruct/oppose police

### Wednesday, Jan. 5

Sean M. McDonald, 49, Middleburg, DUI  
 Jacqueline N. Rivers, 23, Orange Park, shoplifting  
 Joshua A. Brunke, 37, Orange Park, committing first-degree felony with a weapon, two counts grand theft auto, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia, possession-firearm/ammunition by convicted felon  
 Demetris J. Beth'A, 18, Orange Park, grand theft auto  
 Mario S. Fuller, 39, Green Cove Springs, FTA-possession-drug paraphernalia  
 Kelly M. Ford, 44, Green Cove Springs, VOP-no personal owning or harboring any horse/cow/pig/sheep  
 Mark A. Vankirk, 54, Green Cove Springs, FTA-lewd/lascivious behavior on child  
 Noah C. Hawlk, 20, Green Cove Springs, VOP-12 counts of criminal mischief  
 Bethany J. Decker, 31, Green Cove Springs, FTA-petit theft  
 Nicholas R. Brailey, 27, Green Cove Springs, FTA  
 Arthur Rogers, 61, Middleburg, FTA-DWLSR  
 Kenneth G. Oliver, 28, Middleburg, resist/obstruct/oppose police, disorderly intoxication

# Police

from page 12

agency received two cyber tips from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children about child pornography being downloaded at Kyle's house.



Chad Kyle

Kyle was arrested on April 6, 2009, in Martin County for sending harmful material to someone he believed to be a child, according to the arrest report. He was

ordered in 2010 to register as a sexual predator in Clay County. That order mandated he report any changes to his physical, telephone or social media addresses within 48 hours. Kyle told deputies he bought a new car more than 10 days earlier after obtaining a month ago.

Kirk remains in the Clay County Jail with a \$450,027 bond

## Man caught having relationship, electronically setting up dates with 14-year-old

CLAY COUNTY – A St. Augustine man was arrested for having a sexual relationship with a 14-year-old Clay County girl and using his cellphone or computer to set up dates with the minor.

Brandon Vincent Diaz, 19, was charged with lewd and lascivious battery, traveling to meet a minor to do unlawful acts, soliciting a child via a computer and

unlawful use of a two-way communication device.

A warrant was issued on Jan. 6 following an investigation that dated back to Sept. 5-8, 2020, after investigators with the Clay County Sheriff's Office Crimes Against Children Unit and Homeland Security learned Diaz sent the girl a cellphone to set up a date for a sexual encounter. When presented with those facts, Diaz turned himself at the Clay County Jail on Jan. 7, according to the arrest report.

Diaz's bond was set at \$175,012.

## Habitual felon caught with stolen truck, rifle, drugs

ORANGE PARK – Clay County Sheriff's Office deputies stopped a truck that was reported stolen in Jacksonville on Jan. 5, and in the process wound up discovering drugs, paraphernalia and an illegal weapon.

Joshua Aaron Brunke, 37, of Jacksonville was taken to the Clay County Jail with a \$232,525 bond after being charged with two counts of grand theft auto, committing a felony with a weapon, possession of marijuana, methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia, two counts of possession of a weapon or ammo by a convicted felon and being a habitual offender of driving with a suspended license.

According to the arrest report, deputies were alerted of a stolen pickup and trail-



Joshua Brunke



## Man drowns in Green Cove Springs

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Officers with the Green Cove Springs Police Department were at the Green Cove Marina Tuesday where a male's body was been recovered from the river. The man was a resident of one of the vessels. At this point, the death does not appear to be suspicious but the investigation is still ongoing.

er in the Wells Road-Blanding Boulevard area. They stopped the vehicle at Blanding and Kettering Way.

After the driver and passenger were detained for the stolen truck, deputies found a syringe loaded with methamphetamine and a bag of meth in Brunke's right-front pocket. Two K-9 dogs were used to detect more methamphetamine and marijuana inside the truck. Deputies also found a rifle, ammo, scale, grinder, metal spoon, mirror and two syringes already filled with methamphetamine inside the truck.

The passenger was released without being charged. A check confirmed Brunke is a seven-time convicted felon. Brunke's next court appearance is scheduled for Jan. 31.

## Man finally to get sentenced for 2019 child molestation

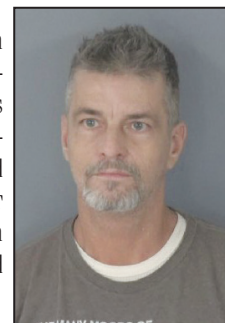
GREEN COVE SPRINGS – A man charged with molesting a 13-year-old child in 2019 was transported from Putnam County to face charges in Clay County.

Mark Allen Vankirk, 54, of Keystone Heights, was booked for an unlawful act of lewd and lascivious behavior on a child between the ages of 12 and 15.

Vankirk was romantically involved to the guardian of the victim, according to the Clay County Sheriff's Office. In the final two months of 2019, the victim was molested five times. The inappropriate behavior usually started with play-wrestling or snuggling and ended with him groping her.

Vankirk was arrested on May 22, 2020, but he was released after posting a \$50,003 bond. Vankirk pled guilty to the crime on Oct. 5, 2021, but a warrant for his arrest was issued on Nov. 18, 2021, after he failed to appear for court sentencing. He was arrested in Putnam County on the Clay warrant.

Vankirk's bond was revoked.



Mark Vankirk

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### Never quit

One of the most famous quotes attributed to Winston Churchill is, “Never, never, never, never give up.” He said this in a speech in the early days of WORLD WAR II. He was speaking, of course, of never giving up the fight for freedom against oppressors who wanted defeat, dominate and destroy the freedom loving nations of the world. How good is this advice?

First, there are things to always give up. “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.” So the sin that hinders us is something we should give up. In fact, our instructions are to throw it away and get rid of it. Or give up that sin completely! And then, when we are free from the things that load us down, we can take a stand for righteousness. That is the position from which we should never retreat.

Following this first step, “let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” All this is in Hebrews 12:1. (NIV)

Numerous times in the Scriptures, our Christian life is referred to as a race. It is a perfect analogy to speak to us about our calling to serve the Lord faithfully when He has called us to live our lives for Him. In the verse we are analyzing (Hebrews 12:1), the “race” is not won by speed but by endurance.

We are back to our original thought. There are matters in our lives that call for perseverance. We win because we do not quit!

Paul, the Apostle’s, stand on “never quit” is made amazingly clear when he writes to the churches in Galatia and saying, ‘Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.’ (Galatians 6:9)

Do not give up the fight. Go forward into battle every day. Let nothing deter you from continuing toward your final goal. If you do not become weary and quit, you will finish the race and when you cross that final finish line, YOU WIN! Never quit!

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# Community Briefs

## Keystone Heights Amvets conducting fundraiser for Lake Area Ministries

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Amvets Post 86 will host a fundraiser and food drive this month for Lake Area Ministries.

The fundraiser is scheduled for Jan. 22 while the food drive will run from Sunday through Jan. 22. The Post, located at 6685 Brooklyn Bay Road, will be offering a raffle during the food drive, with winning tickets being selected during the Jan. 22 dinner.

For more information, contact Cindy Lee at (352) 478-9338.

## Orange Park man wins \$1 million with scratch-off ticket

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Lottery announced that Brandon Thomas, 36, of Orange Park, claimed a \$1 million top prize from THE FASTEST ROAD TO \$1,000,000 Scratch-Off game at the Lottery’s Jacksonville District Office. He chose to receive his winnings as a one-time, lump-sum payment of \$790,000. Thomas, who is self-employed with Green Thumb Landscaping, purchased his winning ticket from Prime Time Food Store, located at 188 Arora Blvd. in Orange Park. The retailer will receive a \$2,000 bonus commission for selling the winning Scratch-Off ticket.

The \$30 game, The Fastes Road To \$1,000,000, was launched in February 2020 and featured 155 top prizes of \$1 million and more than \$948 million in cash prizes. The game’s overall odds of winning are 1-in-2.79.

## Grant applications available for Art Ventures

CLAY COUNTY – Applications are now open for individual artists in Northeast Florida to apply for an Art Ventures grant of \$3,500. Interested artists who reside in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns County are encouraged to apply for funding to help them develop the next level of their artistic careers. Applications are due by 5 p.m. on Feb. 15.

Black artists have additional opportunities this year with the recently created Delores Barr Weaver Black



## Martin Luther King Day celebrated in Green Cove Springs

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – A ceremony celebrating the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. and his impact on the city’s community will be held on Monday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Vera Francis Hall Park, 1503 Martin Luther King Blvd. The keynote speaker will be Sadie Durham, the vice president of nursing at Ascension St. Vincent’s Clay.

Artists Endowment. This will specifically fund three Black artists each year. These will be additive to the Art Ventures cohort of grantees which has always supported Black artists and has made grants from the Independent Life Minority Arts Fund. Applications will be judged on the applicants’ artistic accomplishments, their proposal to use the funds to advance their work, and the extent to which their artistic practice is rooted in Northeast Florida.

## Extension Office’s ‘From the Ground Up’ program set for Jan. 28

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – January is a wonderful time to walk around our homes and think about our landscapes and consider the possibilities. Maybe this is the year you are going to lessen the maintenance in your landscape, or try for fewer annuals and more perennials, or replace some of the lawn with flower beds, or add plants to bring more color into your winter landscape. So many possibilities!

Why not, spend the day with master

gardeners learning about Northeast Florida gardening, and getting ideas to improve your own landscape.

Attendees are sure to see a plant or design idea just waiting to be implemented in their own gardens.

Florida Clay County Master Gardeners host a day of education, “From the Ground Up”, for the public Friday, Jan. 28 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Extension Office 2463 State Road 16 West in Green Cove Springs (next to the Fairgrounds).

Bring a soil sample, about ½ cup of soil in a paper or plastic container, for pH testing and receive the results within seven to 10 days. Get your questions answered by the master gardeners during the course of the day. Morning and afternoon refreshments are provided with lunch on your own.

Capacity is limited, register early, select your workshops, and pay a \$15 fee before Jan. 20 at clayextension.eventbrite.com, call the Extension Office and speak with Michelle Alters at (904) 284-6355 or visit the office.

## Shriners

from page 1

the Shriners’ needs.

“That will not become a rental venue over there on Wells Road, it will just be a Shriner facility,” Thigpen said. “The main purpose is to support those hospitals through our own fundraising.”

The organization’s nearest hospital is in Tampa. It recently opened a clinic in

Gainesville.

“Downsizing to a building like the one in Orange Park is more appropriate, so we can focus on these children,” he added.

Before moving to Southside Jacksonville in the mid-1980s, the group called a Jacksonville landmark home. Built in the 1910s, the Morocco Temple on Newnan Street hosted celebrities and dignitaries in its storied history.

“There’s a lot of memories in that

building,” Thigpen said of the Morocco Shrine Center. “It’s the same way that people probably speak fondly of the downtown Jacksonville building as well.”

Thigpen said the new building can better accommodate club members on the west side of the St. Johns River.

“The bulk of our membership lives in places like Live Oak, Gainesville and Ocala,” Thigpen said. “It goes all the way across to Palm Coast.”

# TODAY'S Sports

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## Fleming Island crushes Keystone Memorial Invite

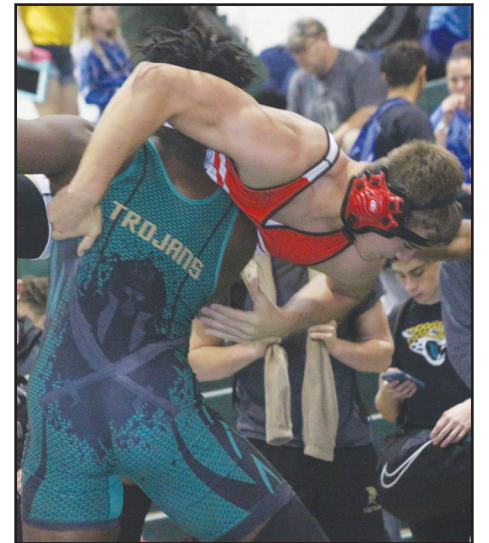
Clay wins duals title/2nd at Somerset  
Oakleaf second in 3A districts

By Randy Lefko  
Sports Editor

FLEMING ISLAND - At their own home gym, the Fleming Island High wrestling team answered some questions about their fitness into Class 2A with a resounding 437 team point victory at the Keystone Memorial Invitational with runnerup Heritage second at a distant 275 points and Doral Academy third at 274. Class 2A power Tallahassee Lincoln, 15th in 2A last year, was third at 269 in the tight pack of chasers for second place.

"We have wrestled in the same region as Fleming Island in the way back past," said Lincoln head coach Mike Crowder,

**SEE INVITE, 20**



Middleburg High wrestler Tucker Cody goes for a ride with Lincoln High's Omarion LaRoach in the 220 championship match at the Keystone Memorial Invitational held at Fleming Island High on Saturday.

## Raiders rock Knights, push Jackson to brink

Missed frees at :06.9 vs. Tigers

By Randy Lefko  
Sports Editor

OAKLEAF - Orange Park High ended a gauntlet week of playing; a first loss to Providence, a strong rebound win over Ed White, a rivalry win over Oakleaf and a thrilling, but unsuccessful comeback against Andrew Jackson to set up the Raiders as a battle-tested team primed for a deep playoff run.

"Who's the dumb coach who set up this week?" said Raider head coach Derek

**SEE RAIDER, 17**



Oakleaf High center Keshawn Riley, left, and Orange Park's Deandre Dickerson battle for loose ball under the basket in rivalry win by Raiders at Oakleaf on Friday.



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Wilkinson High wrestler Lilly Bradshaw muscles up prior to her second round matchup against Mathew Thaxton of Riversprings Middle School in the 90 pound division of the Toughman Invitational Wrestling Tournament sponsored by Wilkinson Junior High at Middleburg High School on Saturday. Bradshaw finished fourth on the day. *See more coverage, page 18*

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# Good Night, Knights!



CORRESPONDENT PHOTO BY RAY DIMONDA

Fleming Island High goalie Peyton French awaits shot on goal in Golden Eagles 2-1 win over previously unbeaten Oakleaf High.

## Fleming Island downs two Knights in season surge

Early goals doom Oakleaf's streak

By Mike Zima  
Correspondent

FLEMING ISLAND - Noah Eaton and Matthew Male scored first half goals and host Fleming Island withstood furious pressure in the final minutes to edge rival Oakleaf 2-1 on Wed., Jan. 5 at Fleming Island High School.

The Class 6A Golden Eagles improved to 7-5 while handing Class 7A Oakleaf its first loss of the season after nine victories.

Many of the players on both teams have played on the same club teams at Clay County Youth Soccer growing up, and the rivalry is immense. The effort expended caused cramps for players on both sides.

"These are the types of game you want to play," said Oakleaf head coach Brett

SEE SOCCER, 21



CORRESPONDENT PHOTO BY RIELLY HURLEY/FIHS STUDENT

Fleming Island High forward Noah Eaton rounds the field after scoring goal against Creekside in second major win of week for Golden Eagles. Creekside was 9-1-1 before the game.

## Second Knights' win for Eagles

By Mike Zima  
Correspondent

FLEMING ISLAND - With two Knights visiting Fleming Island High School for boys soccer, Fleming Island High's boys soccer answered the call with a simple "Good night, Knights" as both Oakleaf and Creekside, ironically the Knights, fell prey to championship pedigree installed at Fleming Island over a history of deep playoff runs and state championships.

Fleming Island High soccer forward Noah Eaton scored two goals and Peyton French made nine saves to lift host

Fleming Island to a 4-3 win over Creekside on Fri., Jan. 7.

"For the last three years, Creekside has basically owned us," said Fleming Island coach Michael Green. "We finally played with confidence against a good team, and for the most part, we dominated."

Creekside High's Knights was the second consecutive Goliath slayed by the Class 6A Golden Eagles, who improved to 8-5 on the season.

Oakleaf had been unbeaten before Fleming Island defeated the Knights two nights earlier, but the win against Creekside may have been even more impressive. The Creekside Knights entered Friday's contest with an 8-1-1 record, ranked eighth in Class 7A by Maxpreps.com, and on a six-game winning streak during which they had outscored their opponents 34-2. In previous years, Creekside and Fleming Island had been in the same classification, and none of the Fleming Island players who played Friday had ever defeated the Knights.

Fleming Island led 4-1 before the Knights scored two late goals, one with only one minute to play, to narrow the final margin.

After nearly a half hour without a goal, the teams combined for four goals in the next eight minutes. Fleming Island scored first. A corner kick was headed out to the top right corner of the 18-yard box by Creekside's Zachary Bender. Eaton gained control and sent the ball back to the middle, where teammate Nathan Ernst had just enough space to send a low ball through traffic toward the left side. The perfect shot hit the left goal post and bounced into the goal.

SEE EAGLES, 24

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# Raider

from page 15

Kurnitsky, after his 66-55 win over county rival Oakleaf on Friday. "We get Jackson tomorrow (Sat., Jan. 8), a top three Class 4A school then Oakleaf again and Fleming Island later in the schedule."

Kurnitsky recovered from Friday night's clash in the Oakleaf Dungeon with little sleep before having to turn on the jets Saturday afternoon against Jackson (14-2) who entered ranked third in Class 4A with a win over previously unbeaten Fleming Island over the Christmas holiday.

"Bigger and as fast, we knew what we were getting with this one," said Kurnitsky, after seeing his bench; notably junior Sherard Adams and senior William Mosbach, answer the call in the fourth quarter when fouls became an issue on both teams. "We had the bench step up and found some guys with guts out there. That will only make us better for the future."

Against Oakleaf, the Raiders opened with senior forward Josiah Sabino slam dunking his first shot on goal to ignite the crowd off the tipoff.

Sabino amped up his game to hit the first eight points of the night en route to his 31 points for the night as the Raiders high-octane attack put the Knights quickly on their heels.

"After Providence, we had to get our thinking on the next game which was Ed White and move forward," said Kurnitsky. "Learn from it and get better is our mentality. The loss stung, but it kind of woke us up."

Oakleaf answered with defense, with Cameron Coachman rejecting a Sabino drive and Keshawn Riley ejecting a Jeremiah Gabriel shot attempt. Oakleaf guard David Compere hit a jumper to 8-7 as Oakleaf closed the score to 17-15 by the end of the first quarter. "I think we opened with too much energy because of the rivalry, but I told them they would have to settle down," said Kurnitsky. "We were wasting a lot of energy on the court instead of playing ball."

In the second quarter, Dylan Lewis canned a three on his first shot to put the Knights up 18-17, but Orange Park responded with turnovers to buckets with Jeremiah Gabriel going baseline for a layup plus a free throw to put Orange Park up 26-19. Coachman canned a three to 26-22 as the Knights tried to stay the pace.

"Jeremy is our high-energy guy," said Kurnitsky. "We flow with his game."

As the halftime break crept closer, both teams fumbled away opportunities in the defensive frenzy with Gabriel and Riley battling the boards with buckets off rebounds to put Orange Park up 30-24.

Riley followed a Compere drive with a bucket to 32-26 with 1:55 left in the half before Faucett hit a corner three pointer to 35-26.

Faucett ended the half with a jumper to 39-30.

Orange Park built the lead to 62-46 with 4:16 left in the game with the Knights unable to close the gap.



Orange Park forward Jeremiah Gabriel grimaces after missing free throws in final seconds of Raiders loss to Andrew Jackson. Gabriel was key player in close score of game with his battle with Jackson's much taller front line.

"Our full court press kept wearing them down; Chuck and Duck," said Kurnitsky. "That's been our M.O all season."

Against Jackson on Saturday, the Raiders fended off their own fatigue from the Oakleaf game, but got a slow start against the Tigers.

Andrew Jackson featured 6'-9" center Stephon Payne and a 6'-7" forward James Morrow to battle the boards with Gabriel and clog Sabino's drives to the basket and the plan was effective for most of the first three quarters.

At 13-8 just before the end of the third, Orange Park got a four point play from Deandre Dickerson with a three pointer swishing and Dickerson getting floored on the shot to put Orange Park in the hunt at 13-12 with 15 seconds with momentum into the second quarter. Near the end of the second quarter, Sabino hit two free throws to 24-20 as Jackson was able to keep the Raiders an arms length away.

Out of the lockers, Jackson hit a three pointer and jumper to surge to a 27-20 before Gabriel dropped an alley oop break-away pass on Sabino to get the Raiders to within one, 27-26.

Orange Park held steady to a 38-34 gap after three to set up a dramatic fourth quarter for both teams as team fouls and foul shots started to play into strategy.

"I wish we got a few calls on the floor, but that's the breaks on the road," said Kurnitsky. "We had a lot of turnovers and missed plays, but we competed at a high level. Even with Josiah fouling out late in the game, the young guys stayed in the game."

Sabino opened the fourth with a jumper to 38-36 as Orange Park's fourth quarter presence was hopefully going to slow the Tiger attack with the bucket the lone score for nearly two minutes.

"With our bench guys playing great, we got to switch guys out and keep the pressure on them," said Kurnitsky.

Off a time out, Jackson got a jumper but



Orange Park guard Nick Gallegos goes up against Oakleaf defender Caleb Joyner in Raiders rivalry win on Friday.

STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Avorie Grayson, another junior forward for Kurnitsky, came off the bench to get a three point play on an offensive rebound to score the game 40-39 with 6:13 to go.

With Mosbach manning the paint, Kurnitsky tried to fill the lane with bodies to counter the height advantage of Jackson on the glass.

Faucett enticed a foul off a three point shot and canned two of three freebies to put the Raiders within one, 42-41, at 5:19.

With fresh legs in with Grayson, Adams and Mosbach, Kurnitsky felt the need to turn up the pressure and create some buckets as both teams were over the seven team fouls limit with eight apiece.

"That was our shot," said Kurnitsky, using a zone attack defense. "Both teams were tired."

At 43-42, Kurnitsky did another wholesale lineup change to keep fresh legs on the court with Kevin Monterola and Archieve Triggs called to duty as Nick Gallegos and Sabino both had four fouls.

At 3:42, Gallegos had free throws to sway the game with his first tying the game at 43-43, his second, giving the Raiders the lead 44-43 with 3:42 to go.

With the stuffed paint defense strategy and both teams hitting the 10 team foul double shot scenario, Kurnitsky and Jackson coach James Collins started a chess game of personnel to finish the game.

Two free throws put Jackson up 45-44 with Faucett nailing a three to 47-45 at 2:29.

Jackson asserted their own full court press to answer the Raider surge with 2:13

to go with Gabriel missing on a three and Sabino on the rebound getting called on his fifth foul under the boards at 2:02. Jackson guard Jaden Brill hit one of his two frees to score the game 47-46.

Kurnitsky employed a Harlem Globetrotter type shuffle to burn some clock with Gabriel getting two frees; 48-46, with a miss on shot two.

Brill tied the game, 48-48, with a drive, before Mosbach got hammered under the boards for two free throws; 49-48 to 50-48 with 1:05 left.

Collins kept sending Brill on slashes into the paint to get foul shots but it was a missed three and rebound put Jackson on the free throw line; 50-49, with 50 seconds.

Another jump ball rebound fracas went to Jackson with Gabriel winning his own jump ball fracas with Payne on the ensuing play giving the Raiders possession.

With Adams trapped at halfcourt, Kurnitsky attempted a save with a quick time out with the Raiders getting a halfcourt throwin with 37 seconds to go.

Jackson continued to stuff the Raiders' in bound attempts until a steal and layup put the Tigers up 51-50 with 32 seconds to go.

Orange Park had Faucett, Dickerson, Gabriel and Adams on the floor for the final surge with Gabriel getting fouled for two free throws at 6.9 seconds to go; missing both, to make the game even more tense.

Jackson would end the game 54-50 with three final free throws as Gabriel fouled out a 1.3 seconds.



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Green Cove Springs 145 pound wrestler Cohen Cioffi puts final touches of pin over Wilkinson's Owen Wilson at Toughman Invitational at Middleburg High School.



Green Cove Springs' Cooper Beck evades Oakleaf's Sebastian Bonochea in early round action at Toughman Invite.



Wilkinson's 160 pounder Travis Pinkard holds tight to Oakleaf's Jamal Alfred to hear pin slap of referee.



Two key cogs of St. Johns Country Day School girls soccer plans are Lauren Mateo, left, and Julia Buenaventura as Lady Spartans have been hit with three losses (9-3-0) en route to possible 11th straight state title. Spartans have losses to 7A-Flagler Palm Coast (2-1, ends 44 game win streak for St. Johns), IND-Monteverde Academy (2-0, Montverde 9-3), and 7A-Bartram Trail (2-1, Bartram Trail 12-0).



**Spartan Action**

Left: Sydney Schmidt, No. 14, pops shot on goal; Sophia Pontieri, No. 24, left center, eyes ball sent downfield; Bella Pontiere, No. 10, chases ball down sideline in 3-0 win over Atlantic Coast.



Bella Pontieri applies pressure defense in front of Atlantic Coast High goalie in 3-0 Spartans win. Spartans, 9-3, also won a 1-0 game over Nease after Atlantic Coast win.

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# Moritz returns to take Eagles 5K title

By Randy Lefko  
Sports Editor

FLEMING ISLAND - Former Clay High track state champion and former Fleming Island High track coach Karen Moritz returned to the Fleming Island High track to take first place at the Fleming Island Eagles 5K race on Saturday. The race day also featured a Maddi Mile fun run as a remembrance of former Golden Eagle freshman running standout Maddi Stevenson, who committed suicide in 2018.

Moritz, now 37 and with a couple of young children under her tutelage, romped through the field with a 19 minute, 55 second win with Shelly Allen, 58, a Fleming Island masters stalwart, second at 21:22. Angie Enyedi, 42, finished as the third



Former Clay High state track champion Karen Moritz, also a former Fleming Island High track coach, took the win at the Fleming Island Eagle 5k on Saturday.



The Maddi Mile kids one mile fun run is in honor of former Fleming Island High freshman cross country runner Maddi Stevenson, who tragically committed suicide in 2018.

place finisher in 21:33 as age and wisdom seemed to up youth and vigor for the annual event that benefits suicide helplines.

Moritz, as a senior for Clay, ran a 19:17 split for a three mile trek at the Class 3A cross country championships for fifth place in 2002. On the mens side, Keystone Heights High junior cross country ace Tyler Griffin, 15, outpaced veteran John Webb, 51, for the mens title in 17:51. Webb finished in 18:39 with Noel Reforma, 42, third in 18:53.

Enyedi and Hall Hunt, 40, were masters female and male champions.

All results came be found on 1stplacesports.com.



Nine year old Jack Rountree, far left, blasts from start of Fleming Island Eagles 5K race with 10-year-old Jack Wert, No. 372, and Fleming Island High runner Luke Melson, 15, giving chase.



CORRESPONDENT PHOTO BY RAY DIMONDA

Fleming Island guard Antoine Sandy goes up in traffic for bucket in Eagles win over Fletcher.

## Golden Eagles, Zapp rally to trip the Senators

McDuffie suspension ongoing

By Mike Zima  
Correspondent

NEPTUNE BEACH—Fleming Island High senior point guard Colton Zapp scored 13 points, including the go-ahead three-pointer with less than two minutes remaining, as Fleming Island rallied to edge Neptune Beach Fletcher 52-51 in a Class 6A showdown on January 5.

It was not always pretty and it certainly was not easy, but the Golden Eagles' third consecutive win runs their record to 16-1. The Senators fall to 10-4.

"We made some uncharacteristic mistakes, but we have a resilient group and in the fourth [quarter] we were able to hit some timely shots that put us over the hump," said Fleming Island head coach Travis Chandler.

Fleming Island played its eighth consecutive game without senior point guard Bennie McDuffie, who transferred from Mandarin High School over the summer. The Florida High School Athletic Administration is investigating McDuffie's eligibility to play at Fleming Island. Chandler

hopes to have McDuffie back with the Golden Eagles when they return to action on January 13, hosting First Coast.

"He [McDuffie] is our leader," Chandler said, who noted McDuffie is still attending classes. "His speed changes the game, so he is the key to what we do."

Note: Clay County Superintendent David Broskie, Clay County Athletic Director John Sgromolo and Fleming Island High Principal Tom Pittman have all been contacted about the process of student eligibility with Sgromolo and Pittman offering no comment responses and Broskie sending a digital application to Clay Today Sports Editor Randy Lefko who is attempting to review the review process of incoming transfers. A meeting with FHSAA was ongoing on Tuesday about the situation.

After 12 straight wins to open the season, Fleming Island was in jeopardy of suffering its second loss in four games when the Senators' LaJae Jones hit a stepback jumper to give Fletcher a 47-45 lead with 1:55 remaining. The Golden

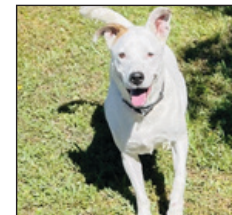
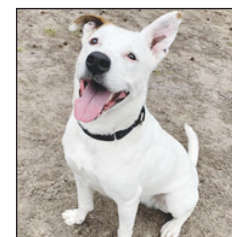
SEE FLETCHER, 22

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# Invite

from page 15

who is joined by Fleming Island in the region 1-2A tournament. "Them returning to 2A only raised the bar for us as far as preparation. Coach P.J. Cobbert and I are long time friends and we coached some national teams together so it will be challenging for the second half of the season."

Cobbert, who has corraled a young bunch of new faces for the race to the Class 2A summit, called the meet a good look at what they may face.



Fleming Island 170 wrestler Joshua Sandoval goes backward to attempt pin in finals match at Keystone Memorial Invitational. Sandoval won 8-7 despite losing contact lens.

"It's a grind, a meet like this especially with our district duals tournament the day before," said Cobbert, who incidentally, won his district duals title the previous day also at the Fleming Island gym. "We want to see how the young pups do under pressure and a little beat up and wore out. I think we did well."

District 2-2A is Fleming Island, Middleburg, Orange Park, Ridgeview, Chiles, Lin-



Clay High's Luca Finnaca, right, tries to maneuver opponent in Blue Devils district duals championship win at Clay High.



Clay High's Luke Boree gets his nose smushed in District Duals title run for Blue Devils. Orange Park's 160 Trevion Sermons lets fly with Fleming Island's Ronan Bozeman in championship match at Keystone. Bozeman won match 4-2.



Fleming Island's Jhoel Robinson stretches out Heritage's Vicente Angel Ramirez-Ellis in 182 championship won by Robinson.

coln, Columbia and Leon. Fleming Island beat Chiles on Friday to advance both teams with Chiles upsetting Lincoln in their Friday match. Lincoln lost to Pace High in the region 1-2A Duals semifinal last year. Pace will host the 2022 Duals regions on Thurs., Jan. 13 with Fleming Island wrestling Gulf Breeze and Pace wrestling Chiles with the winners to square off the same night to advance to the region final at Osceola High on January 21.

At Clay High, the Blue Devils ran the table to their fifth duals district title with resounding wins over Bolles, Florida Deaf, Union County and Baker County.

Clay will face Episcopal at their region 1-1A duals regions at Yulee High on Thurs.,



title forcing Oakleaf to beat Bartram Trail for the second place finish to advance into the regions. Oakleaf beat Mandarin 42-39 to advance to the championship match.

At the Fleming Island High Keystone Invitational, Fleming Island had champions with Jayce Paridon at 113 pinning Suwannee's 28-1 Topher Peason; Kaden Schaefer at 138 winning 6-2 over Doral's Enrique Sanchez (19-4), Matthew Kotler at 145 beating Suwannee's Tyson Musgrove (27-3), 4-3, Ronan Bozeman at 160 beating Orange Park's Trevion Sermons 4-2, Joshua Sandoval at 170 beating Columbia's Joseph Rice



Figure this one out, but Clay High's KJ Rheume is in the middle of this knotted mess at Blue Devils District duals championship.

8-7 despite losing a contact lens, and Jhoel Robinson at 182 winning by injury default over Heritages' Vicente Angel Ramirez-Ellis after rifling through his lineup with three pins; one at 25 seconds. Sandoval also had a 25 second pin his quarterfinal against Lincoln's Keller Shea. Paridon had four pins in four matches; one also at 25 second.

Middleburg and Oakleaf finished 10th and 11th at Keystone with Ridgeview 15th and Orange Park 18th.

The Broncos had finalists in Wyatt Leduc at 120, lost to Julian Montero of Doral and Tucker Cody at 220, losing to Lincoln's Omarion LaRoach by pin.

Oakleaf's Keon Barrientos was fourth at 126 for the Knights' highest finisher. The Knights also finished second to Creekside in the district duals tournament on Thursday and will travel to Creekside for the region 1-3A tournament.

Trevion Sermons was Orange Park's highest finisher losing in the 160 final to Fleming Island's Ronan Bozeman, 4-2.

Ridgeview heavyweight Derrick Mosley was a finalist losing by pin to Bolles' Jack Pyburn. Lincoln had two champions; LaRoach over Cody of Middleburg and Cayden Bevis at 195 with a tech fall over Shawn Raggins of Columbia.

Doral had champions at 106 with Christian Vazquez pinning Fleming Island's Shane Duhaylungsod, Julian Montero at 120 beating Wyatt Leduc of Middleburg 5-3, and Jose Gutierrez at 126 beating Chiles' Garret Marschka 7-2.

The rest of the champions were Kevin Kerns of Deltona who beat Austin McKinney of Suwannee 9-7 at 132 and Jacob Lutz of Nease who beat Connor Edwards of Lincoln 10-3.

Jan. 13. Baker County will face Yulee in the other semifinal with Suwannee vs. South Walton and Rocky Bayou vs. Wakulla in the upper bracket. Teams will head to Osceola High on Jan. 21-22 for the region finals, duals Final Four and championship matches.

Note: Keystone Heights finished fifth at Clay. Also for Clay, a road trip to Class 1A defending champion Somerset Academy's annual Shuffle tournament yielded a half point win, 339-338.5, for the hosts as the Blue Devils put a little muscle on the road after winning their duals. 3A-Cypress Bay was third at 270. Clay was 10th in Class 1A last year.

Oakleaf High, in district 1-3A with former 2A Creekside, finished second to Creekside after beating Bartram Trail in the second place match.

Creekside beat Oakleaf 45-26 for the



Oakleaf's Keon Barrientos finished fourth for Knights.



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Oakleaf High forward Drew Ammon tries to get ball from Fleming Island's Aaron Montoya in midfield action.



Matthew Male, No. 5, goes shiish! after goal against Creekside.

## Soccer

from page 16

Rountree. "The intensity of this game is a playoff-type game, as far as atmosphere and the quality of the game."

Eaton put it more succinctly: "This is literally the only game we care about."

Although Oakleaf enjoyed a 7-2 advantage in corner kicks in the first half, Fleming Island took the early lead. At the 19:00 mark, Golden Eagles midfielder Aaron Montoya launched a throw-in from the left sideline into the 18-yard box, where Oakleaf defender Drew Ammon rose above a scrum to head the ball away from the goal. The ball bounced toward Eaton standing alone beyond the right side of the box, and the senior stepped up and launched a shot that sailed above and to the right of Knights' keeper Peyton Gbelayan, just under the crossbar.

"The ball started bouncing out to me," explained Eaton. "It was my weak foot, but I just decided, 'Why not?' and aimed for the top corner."

Eaton missed all of last season with a torn anterior cruciate ligament.

Thirteen minutes later, Male gained control of a loose ball near midfield, dribbled down the right side, deftly evaded a defender at the top of the box and drove a hard roller past a diving Gbelayan.



Anthony Zaneola goes head to head with Oakleaf defender with loose ball in Golden Eagles' win.

Fleming Island rode its momentum into more second half opportunities, but Gbelayan made several difficult saves to keep the Eagles from widening their lead. Meanwhile, the Knights cashed in at the 32:23 mark when Braden Hill dribbled down the left alley, beat a Golden Eagles defender inside the box and lifted a shot to the far post that eluded Fleming Island keeper Peyton French. The Golden Eagles survived several scares in the final 20 minutes as the Knights pressed for the equalizer. Two Oak-

leaf crossing passes sailed through the box untouched within a minute of each other. A Hill free kick from the upper corner of the box was headed out by Golden Eagles defender Shepherd Eason, and French made a diving save off of the ensuing throw-in.

Oakleaf's best chance to tie the game came with 4:56 remaining when Fleming Island was called for a foul inside the box. Hill's penalty kick sailed over the goal, clanging hard off the football goalpost behind it.

A final Knights shot was headed back out by Fleming Island's Logan Dailey.

The win is the Golden Eagles' second in a row after a four-game losing streak that began with a 7-0 drubbing at the hands of Class 7A power Mandarin on November 30. The turnaround may be attributable to a change to the Fleming Island lineup made by head coach Michael Green. Male and William Kennedy, the Eagles' two fastest players, became outside midfielders after playing the first 10 games as front strikers.

"The switch allows us not only to attack faster, but also to get back on defense," Green explained. "We kept losing loose balls."

Green is optimistic that Fleming Island will build off of the win and make a run in the playoffs.

"We are very talented, but after that loss to Mandarin, we lost our fire and our fight," said Green. "This win may have given it back."

Oakleaf's Jay Parkerurban saw his first action since having a pacemaker implanted after a cardiac arrest last summer. The senior provided an emotional lift for the Knights, who scored their only goal shortly after he entered the game.

"We had not been in a knockdown, drag-out game like this yet," said Rountree. "Two evenly matched teams, and they just made one more play than us."

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# Fletcher

from page 19

Eagles worked the ball inside to Demarion Valmyr, who avoided a double-team by finding Zapp on the right wing. The senior, who had made just two of seven three-point attempts to that point, calmly released a jumper from beyond the arc that swished through the net, drawing a loud roar from the Golden Eagles student section behind him. The one-point advantage was Fleming Island's first since leading 13-11 at the end of the first quarter.

Valmyr converted a feed from Ahman Greenidge on Fleming Island's next possession, and when Antoine Sandy made a pair of free throws to increase the hosts' lead to 52-47 with 28 seconds remaining, the win looked secure. But Fletcher's Marquis Ghee cut the deficit to three off an offensive rebound with four seconds left, and the Senators forced a five-second violation. Fleming Island basketball coach Traavis Chandler has to coach his top rated basketball team while awaiting FHSAA decision on guard Bennie McDuffie's school status.

SEE FLETCHER, 23



## PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City of Green Cove Springs proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

### ORDINANCE NO. O-01-2022

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 101 OF THE CITY CODE TO ADD DEFINITIONS FOR MICROBREWERY AND BREWPUB; AMENDING CHAPTER 117 OF THE CITY CODE TO REVISE THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONING DISTRICT, REVISING THE GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES IN SEC. 117-442, THE LIST OF PERMITTED USES SET FORTH IN SECTION 117-443 AND SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS SET FORTH IN SECTION 117-444; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

The following public hearings have been scheduled and will be held in the City Council Chambers, 321 Walnut Street, Green Cove Springs, to hear comments, if any, regarding said Ordinance:

- Planning and Zoning: Tuesday, January 25, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;
- City Council: Tuesday, February 15th, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;
- City Council: Tuesday, March 1st, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;

Please be advised that if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Council with respect to any matter considered at these scheduled public hearings, they will need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in this matter should contact City Hall at (904) 297-7500 at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. Hearing impaired persons may access through Florida Relay – Dial 7-1-1.

Said Ordinance is available at City Hall for review during the hours of 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday.

All interested individuals are invited to attend this public hearing.

City of Green Cove Springs  
Heather Glisson, Planning Technician  
321 Walnut Street  
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043  
Steve Kennedy, City Manager

## PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City of Green Cove Springs proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

### ORDINANCE NO. O-02-2022

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 117, ARTICLE I, SEC. 117-2 TO REVISE THE LAND USE DISTRICTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ADOPTED FUTURE LAND USE MAP; AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING COMPATIBILITY TABLE TO REFLECT THE REVISED LAND USE DISTRICTS AND THEIR COMPATIBLE ZONING DISTRICTS; AMEND ALL OF THE ZONING DISTRICTS TO REMOVE ALL REFERENCES TO THE ELIMINATED FUTURE LAND USE DISTRICTS PURSUANT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL IN FEBRUARY 2022; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

The following public hearings have been scheduled and will be held in the City Council Chambers, 321 Walnut Street, Green Cove Springs, to hear comments, if any, regarding said Ordinance:

- Planning & Zoning Board: Tuesday, January 25, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter;
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City of Green Cove Springs  
Heather Glisson, Planning Technician  
321 Walnut Street  
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043  
Steve Kennedy, City Manager

# Fletcher

from page 22

on the ensuing inbounds pass to give themselves a chance to tie. Jones, who led all players with 19 points, lofted a three-point attempt from the baseline that danced softly along the rim before falling off. The Senators' Seth Allen tipped in Jones' miss at the buzzer, leaving Fletcher one point short.

"He is a good shooter," Chandler said of Zapp, who was shooting 46% on three-point attempts entering the game and is the Golden Eagles' leading scorer. "I am glad he hit the big one down the stretch."

The final three-pointer was just the fifth make on 30 attempts from beyond the arc for the Golden Eagles, who began the contest converting 35 percent of their shots from long range. Normally reliable shooters Gavin Rayes and Gavin Goldblatt combined to make just one of 14 three-point attempts. The first half was particularly frustrating for Fleming Island, which made just two of 18 long-range attempts in the first two quarters.

Fleming Island's full-court, man-to-man defense saved them. The Golden Eagles forced 11 Fletcher turnovers in the first half, or else their 26-21 halftime deficit could have been worse.

"We kind of hang our hat on our defense," said Chandler. "I challenged them at halftime on toughness and asked them to stop being tender."

Chandler calls the Golden Eagles' brand of pressure the "run and jump," since defenders away from the ball have the freedom to "jump it," or come off of their man and double team the man with the ball.

"It's all anticipation," said Chandler. The Golden Eagles scoring was well-balanced. Valmyr and Greenidge scored 12 points apiece, while Sandy chipped in with nine. Valmyr had seven rebounds, and Zapp had a game-high four steals.

# PUZZLE FUN

	5				2	4		1
	4				1			3
	1			5		6	9	2
4				7				
9				1		3	4	5
5				3			2	
	6		8		7			
8						7	5	
3	2	7	5	9		8		4

Level: Beginner

**CRYPTO FUN**

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to food service.  
Each number corresponds to a letter.  
(Hint: 2 = E)

**A. 25 14 21 4 2 12**  
Clue: Places to sit

**B. 12 2 10 6 2 10**  
Clue: Waiter or waitress

**C. 10 2 12 25 14 24 10 14 8 25**  
Clue: Food establishment

**D. 21 22 4 4**  
Clue: Tab

Answers: A. tables B. server C. restaurant D. bill

**WORD SCRAMBLE**

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to restaurants.

**R S D K I N**

Answer: Drinks

*Guess Who?*

I am a singer born in England on January 20, 1971. I was inspired by the band Depeche Mode, and found myself in a successful 90's pop group. I have been a judge on "The X Factor UK" and serve as a songwriter for many artists.

Answer: Gary Barlow

6	5	3	9	8	2	4	7	1
2	4	9	7	6	1	5	8	3
7	1	8	3	5	4	6	9	2
4	3	1	2	7	5	9	6	8
9	7	2	6	1	8	3	4	5
5	8	6	4	3	9	1	2	7
1	6	5	8	4	7	2	3	9
8	9	4	1	2	3	7	5	6
3	2	7	5	9	6	8	1	4

A	S	K	S		D	E	C		S	B	I	C				
C	H	E	E	P	O	C	A		A	U	T	O				
T	O	R	E	R	O	T	O	R	F	L	A	K				
S	E	N	S	O	R	E	T	A	A	B	L	E				
				H	A	R	R	Y	C	A	R	A	Y			
E	B	O	N	I	T	E		P	A	M	I	R				
S	C	A	B	B	E	D		E	S	E						
C	E	R	C	I					L	O	R	N	E			
				T	U	B			M	A	I	L	B	A	G	
				O	P	E	R	A		E	R	O	D	I	N	G
				E	R	A	D	I	C	A	T	O	R			
M	E	A	L		N	I	B		S	A	C	E	U	R		
A	R	C	A		A	L	I		E	T	H	A	N	E		
G	I	L	T		L	L	B		E	O	S	I	N			
I	E	E	E		S	I	S			N	E	X	T			

## FINE DINING WORD SEARCH

P	O	W	O	R	L	A	L	D	E	N	T	E	E	S	A	L	T	N	Z
R	A	D	C	E	S	I	S	I	D	E	S	G	B	C	N	H	T	E	I
G	O	I	E	R	I	E	G	V	U	D	Z	M	B	N	I	S	G	G	P
F	N	D	R	C	Z	R	I	N	H	C	O	N	F	I	T	V	N	S	E
B	I	I	A	I	O	G	E	L	X	B	F	X	O	X	F	D	R	C	H
R	E	T	N	U	N	N	N	T	A	U	E	U	H	L	O	Z	N	E	V
V	H	C	S	I	M	G	S	A	U	E	B	X	S	E	E	E	E	R	S
G	M	A	H	E	D	A	E	T	S	C	D	X	L	I	I	L	E	U	O
P	P	P	H	A	G	U	M	L	R	G	R	F	M	R	O	S	H	S	D
M	H	E	T	W	M	I	F	I	F	U	P	A	E	S	T	N	R	B	M
A	X	R	N	M	I	E	D	I	E	T	C	P	H	A	A	E	U	Z	F
O	I	I	R	A	U	N	L	S	T	P	X	T	U	C	I	P	T	X	W
T	O	T	U	U	P	D	E	I	L	E	F	R	E	L	S	B	A	A	S
S	S	I	V	P	G	P	O	B	L	B	A	E	E	D	D	F	I	T	G
A	F	F	R	H	L	P	E	B	V	N	A	M	F	Z	L	S	T	T	N
P	G	G	P	B	H	R	U	T	T	B	M	P	X	G	I	V	G	V	G
I	N	A	S	I	T	R	A	S	I	O	N	E	X	I	F	X	I	R	P
T	I	B	A	T	T	X	S	F	S	Z	O	A	Z	D	C	H	X	S	B
N	O	L	E	E	R	T	N	E	D	B	E	R	X	Z	D	O	H	X	P
A	A	I	O	L	I	X	C	V	X	A	V	R	D	F	F	C	B	T	D

**Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.**

**WORDS**

- AIOLI
- AL DENTE
- ANTIPASTO
- APERITIF
- APPETIZER
- ARTISAN
- BECHAMEL
- CHARCUTERIE
- CONFIT
- DECONSTRUCTED
- DIGESTIF
- DINING
- ENTREE
- EXPERIENCE
- FUSION
- PAIRING
- PRIX FIXE
- RESTAURANT
- SERVICE
- SIDES
- SOMMELIER
- TAPAS
- UMAMI
- WINE

Mornings with Michelle Corum:  
*Morning Edition*  
 & *First Coast Connect*  
 with Melissa Ross

# WJCT News

**89.9**

**WEEKDAYS  
 5AM TO 10AM**

**wjct | PUBLIC MEDIA**



PHOTO BY RIELLY HURLEY FIHS STUDENT

Fleming Island midfielder Andrew Rooney deflects ball back to Creekside side of field in Golden Eagles win

## **Eagles** from page 16

Creekside tied the game five minutes later. French came out of the box to play a loose ball, but his clearing attempt went right into the chest of Knights leading scorer Joey Mueller. Mueller corralled the loose ball and sent a shot into the unprotected goal.

The Golden Eagles regained the lead 43 seconds after Mueller's score. Eaton was fouled inside the box while driving toward the goal, resulting in a penalty kick that defender Logan Dailey splashed into the upper right corner of the net.

The highlight of the first half came when Eaton delivered a left-footed volley from 35 yards away. The high, arching ball came down just under the crossbar, leaving Creekside keeper Gunnar Lanham no chance to reach it. The goal gave Fleming Island a 3-1 edge at the 7:20 mark.

"That was probably one of the best goals of his life," Green said of Eaton's bomb. "He is a very skilled player, he hit it great, and that thing just dropped into the goal."

For his part, Eaton had noticed something that he wanted to take advantage of.

"I saw that the goalie was off his line," said Eaton. "I thought, 'the first time I get the ball, I am shooting it, I don't care how far away it is.'"

French made three saves, including two punch saves to deflect balls over the crossbar, in a 60-second frenzy at the 3:00 mark that allowed the Golden Eagles to carry their two-goal advantage into the intermission.

"He saved our butts," Green said of

French. "He has a tremendously competitive nature, and he has been lights out."

The turning point came at the 35:00 mark of the second half when Creekside missed out on a golden opportunity to pull within one. French made a save but could not control the rebound, leaving Mueller all alone with the ball right in front of the goal. A Fleming defender fouled Mueller. On the ensuing penalty kick, the normally lethal Mueller missed wide left. French had guessed that Mueller would kick the ball in the other direction, leaving the net wide open where Mueller was aiming.

The Golden Eagles extended their lead at the 28:45 mark with a counterattack. French gathered in a Creekside shot and sent a punt down the middle of the field. Eaton overtook a Creekside defender, wrested control of the bouncing ball away and dribbled toward the goal. The senior faked a shot as Lanham stepped out to meet him. With Lanham sprawled on the ground, Eaton took one last dribble and tapped the ball across the goal line.

Creekside sophomore Aidan Mark scored off of a long throw-in at the 15 minute mark, and Mueller scored his second goal of the night on a breakaway with 1:01 remaining.

The win is the Golden Eagles' third in a row after a four-game losing streak. Green hopes that Fleming Island's rugged schedule, which has included only three teams with losing records among the 13 opponents so far, will prepare them for a playoff run at the end of January.

"I made the schedule as tough as I could make it," said Green. "You want to play tough teams so that when you get to the playoffs, you are not shell-shocked."



STAFF PHOTO BY RANDY LEFKO

Keystone Heights High boys soccer moved to 8-5-4 for the season with a thrilling 3-3 tie with Williston on Tuesday. Pictured is Logan Spence clearing a ball on the Indians defense. Williston visited Keystone Heights with a 12-1-1 record. Keystone Heights broke a 2-2 tied the game at 2-2 with a Chris Anderson penalty kick just before the halftime break. The Indians took a 3-2 lead with a breakaway goal by Spence after the second half break. Williston scored off penalty kick to tie the game with less than five minutes left in the game.





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