

# Lake Region Monitor

USPS 114-170 – KEYSTONE HEIGHTS, FLORIDA

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41<sup>ST</sup> YEAR – 36<sup>TH</sup> ISSUE – 75 CENTS

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## Lake Geneva gunfire rattles residents

'We pretty much feel like we are hostages in our own houses.'

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

Mayor Mary Lou Hildreth said during a Jan. 6 city council meeting that she has received many complaints about barrages of gunfire around Lake Geneva occurring in the morning and evening hours throughout November and December.

Hildreth said that based on shell casings her neighbors recovered on the dry lakebed, the gunfire is much too close to homes and poses a public safety

hazard.

Lake Geneva homeowner Lana Ross said the problem began in 2012.

"Last year, during deer season, we witnessed people riding around in the backs of pickup trucks firing at deer," she said.

However, on Nov. 23, 2013, duck hunters unleashed an unprecedented amount of gunfire around the lake.

"The first day of duck season," said Ross, "you would have thought we were in the middle

of Afghanistan. Everybody got out of bed at 7:00 in the morning because there was so much gunfire going on."

Ross said that throughout November and December, residents endured daily, constant weapons discharges that paled to last year's deer season.

"It (last year) wasn't everyday by any means," Ross said. "This year, for two solid months practically, it was every single day, day and night."

Hildreth said she thinks

much of the gunfire has nothing to do with hunting. She said individuals are using the lakebed for target practice or just to discharge weapons. She said one night, after midnight, she heard five rifle shots that she thought were within the city limits. She added that one neighbor discovered the remains of a propane tank someone shot and blew up in the lakebed.

Ross said she also has seen evidence of shooting instead of hunting, particularly on Nov. 23.

"Mostly that was high school kids with their camo and their pickups and everything," she said. "We would stand here and watch them; they would get bored looking for ducks and then started throwing things up in the air and shooting at them."

Hildreth said she has asked Sheriff Rick Beseler and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission officials for help. She said both agencies

See GUNS, 4A

## High School's teacher of the year developing tomorrow's leaders

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

Keystone Heights High School student Shawn Fuller said it does not take long for students to see a difference in history teacher Chris Wester.

"At the beginning of the year, he always asks us how we want to learn and he will input that into his teaching," Fuller said. "It helps."

"He shows us videos and has activities that we can all interact in," Fuller added. "We use group work a lot."

Fuller said he likes history. Another student, however, Sarah Samons, said she has no interest in the subject.

"I don't like history at all," she said, "but Mr. Wester makes it interesting. I get it. It is more than just memorizing."

This year Wester was selected as Keystone Heights High



Keystone Heights High School teacher of the year Chris Wester (right) attends a city council meeting with members of his Youth Advisory Council (l-r) Jake Williams, Sarah Samons, Shaw Fuller and Jason Dillard.

School's teacher of the year.

Wester said many family members, including his mother are, or were teachers. He added

that his passion for history started during family vacations, with his father, Chip, instilling an interest in history at an early

age.

"When we would take family trips throughout the southeast, my father would stop at every

historical landmark, regardless of how mundane and ridiculous

See TEACHER, 4A

## Scouts restore historic Melrose sites to earn Eagle badges



Lake Beck



Logan Curtis

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

Two Lake Region Boy Scouts recently earned Eagle Scout badges by restoring a pair of Melrose-area historic sites.

Lake Beck's project revitalized the area of the grist mill at the site of Banana, Fla., about a mile south of Melrose on Etoniah Creek.

The Banana settlement was the forerunner of Melrose. It disappeared sometime after World War I. The town had a post office, general store and a two-story grist mill. The settlement also had a bridge that crossed the creek, which was part of the Starke to Orange Springs Highway, the precursor of S.R. 21.

The owner of the Banana Mill property, Fremont Tolles, donated the 4.9-acre site to

Historic Melrose Inc.

Beck organized the site's clean up. He and his team brought in two picnic tables, restored the front gate entry area and removed 21 semi-truck tires and other debris that had been discarded in Etoniah Creek. The project took around 150 hours.

The Banana site is now in a condition to be used by Historic Melrose members. James Peffley, Historic Melrose's vice president said the organization is developing a long-term vision for the site.

The second scout, Logan Curtis, restored the exterior of the Homemakers Club on Park Street. The structure housed a drug store around 1906.

Curtis and his team cleared brush, removed and transplanted

See SCOUTS, 4A

## Clay County wins grant for 21 new firefighters

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security awarded Clay County a \$2,170,725 grant to fund 21 firefighting positions. The award covers two years and the county's estimated costs for the additional personnel is \$124,488.

Homeland Security awarded the money under its Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Program. It allocated \$320 million for the initiative in 2013.

During a Jan. 6 meeting, in which Clay County Commissioners voted to accept the funding, Fire Chief Lorin Mock said he first considered the federal grant soon after becoming Clay County's chief in 2009.

"At that time," he said, "that grant had a requirement that you had two years of staffing from the federal government and the county had to commit to one additional year."

Mock said the county commission backed away from the grant because of the requirement that the county fund the third year. He added that in 2013, Homeland Security took away the third year, local commitment, and the commission approved the application. He said the only costs the county will incur for the new firefighters will be for uniforms and equipment.

Commissioner Ronnie Robinson said he was opposed to applying for the grant earlier this year because he did not want the county to be in a position to have

to lay off the new firefighters if commissioners could not find additional funding after the two-year grant period.

He said he changed his mind after Mock told him reductions in overtime pay would offset much of the costs for the additional firefighters.

"Overtime is a constant factor in a 24-hour operation," Mock told commissioners. "I don't want to leave the impression with anyone today, that by adding firefighters we are going to reduce that totally, but the growth that we have seen with that will be stemmed."

Four additional Florida agencies obtained grants through the program: Orange County (\$6.5 million), Miami-Dade (\$11.4 million), Gainesville (\$2.2 million) and Alachua County (\$2.2 million).

In other county commission news:

### Commissioner attends first meeting after stroke

The Jan. 6 meeting was the first session Robinson attended after suffering a stroke before Christmas. During the meeting, Robinson said he was still recovering and was experiencing some shortness of breath.

Robinson wrote on a Facebook page that doctors first wanted him to take three months off from his commission duties, but later agreed to allow him to continue working if he reduced his working hours over the next

## Pedestrian struck, killed in McRae

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

The Clay County Sheriff's Office said a pedestrian was struck by a vehicle and killed as she walked along C.R. 315C Friday night.

According to a sheriff's office email, Christine Hengl, 48, of Keystone Heights was walking along the 6700 block of C.R. 315C, which is in the area of McRae Elementary School.

Just before 8 p.m., a northbound vehicle driven by Stephanie Wainwright, 29, of Middleburg struck Hengl.

Mary Justino, public information coordinator for the sheriff's office, wrote that Hengl was wearing dark clothing in an area without streetlights, and that poor visibility may have been a factor in the crash.

She added that investigators do not suspect Wainwright was speeding. Nor do they think the driver was under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Justino wrote that according to witnesses, the victim was walking home from a local bar when the accident occurred.

three months.

County Manager Stephanie Kopelousos said that even while recuperating from his home, Robinson stayed active in conducting county business.

"He didn't slow down one

See COUNTY, 3A

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## J.D. Power recognizes Clay Electric as customer service champion

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

J.D. Power said Keystone Heights-based Clay Electric Cooperative is one of its 50 customer service champions for 2014, according to a co-op press release.

"Clay Electric Cooperative is among an elite group of 50 brands across nine industries that deliver excellence by focusing on key customer touch points," J. D. Power President Finbarr J. O'Neill wrote in a letter to co-op General Manager and

Chief Executive Officer Ricky Davis. O'Neill also wrote that J. D. Power's customer service champions will be featured in Fortune Magazine's upcoming March 17 issue.

"We're most appreciative of this surprise recognition by the prestigious J. D. Power organization," Davis said. "J. D. Power's independent analysis of our efforts to provide our members with excellent service and competitively priced electricity reaffirms for us that our members appreciate our

service and rates."

Last summer, J.D. Power listed Clay Electric as the third-best utility for customer satisfaction on a list of 30 mid-sized utilities in the southern United States.

The co-op serves 165,000 accounts in 14 North Florida counties.

Brands named as J.D. Power customer service champions in prior years include Lexus, Southwest Airlines, The Ritz-Carlton and Publix Pharmacy.

## Clay utility executive retires

The first executive director of the Clay County Utility Authority ended a 40-year career in the utilities industry at the end of 2013.

Ray O. Avery ran CUA since 1995, one year after the Florida legislature created the organization.

According to a CUA statement, Avery purchased the water utility Diversified Utility Services/Mid-Clay Service Company in 1986, which he operated until 1995 when he merged it into the newly created CUA.

During Avery's tenure, Clay County's population grew from around 120,000 to over 194,000. He oversaw CUA's growth and according to the utility, it has become one of the largest residential reclaimed water systems in Northeast Florida. The reclaimed water program now conserves approximately 1.46 billion gallons of water annually.

Avery also managed CUA's expansion into the Keystone-Heights area. Last year, the utility added to its southwestern Clay assets by laying a water main from its Postmaster Village well to the Salvation Army camp at Crystal Lake.

Avery is also a former board member of the Clay County Development Authority, a current YMCA board member and a 38-year member of Middleburg's First Baptist Church.

CUA Supervisor Greg Clary said Avery's time at the utility should be judged by the state of the organization he oversaw.

"It is very difficult to create an organization this size with the character and integrity, and the culture of honesty, hard work and representing the public the way it is permeated all the way through," he said. "It is so apparent to me. It is astounding. Many organizations our size have problems and struggles and obviously you and your leadership have created an organization that this public and this county should be extremely proud of."

Developer and former CUA supervisor Jerry Agresti said he and Avery go back to pre-CCUA days when Kingsley Services operated a private water company in Orange Park.

Agresti recalled that in the 1990s he could see that the future of Kingsley Services was in doubt and he was concerned about the future of water service in Clay County because rates in St. Johns County were 300 percent higher than those in Clay.

Agresti added that community leaders successfully lobbied the legislature to create the public utility authority.

"Then there was a battle over who was going to run this place and in my mind there was only

one guy qualified to do it and that was Ray," he said. "He ended up with that job to the betterment of Clay County."

Avery tried to share the credit for the utility's success during his nearly 19-year run as its executive.

"It's been a team effort all the way: the staff and with my board," said Avery. "We have brought projects to the board that we thought were good for Clay County and 99 times out of 100 the board has believed in those projects and has allowed us to go forward with them. We have just tried to execute what they have allowed us to do. We appreciate the support of the board. We appreciate the support of the staff over the years. It's been a real pleasure."

## 4 Rivers Smokehouse closes on Orange Park building

An affiliate of 4 Rivers Smokehouse closed on a 1.2-acre parcel and building near the intersection of Park Avenue and Old Orange Park Road on Dec. 27.

The Orlando barbecue favorite has three Central Florida locations in addition to an Archer Road restaurant in Gainesville and a Baymeadows Road address in Jacksonville.

Shortly after closing on the Orange Park property, the company announced it also plans to open its first location outside Florida, in Birmingham, Ala.

Chef and CEO John Rivers also released his first cookbook in November.

Rivers, a Jacksonville native and Bishop Kenny High School graduate, spent his first 20 years in business in the pharmaceutical industry, with stints at Johnson and Johnson, Sherwood Medical

and Express Scripts.

In 2009, he opened his first restaurant in Winter Park. Orlando Business Journal readers voted his company their favorite barbecue eatery in 2013 and Rivers was also a finalist for the Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

Synovus Bank recorded a \$3.45 million mortgage on the company's newly acquired Orange Park property, financing the \$1.35 million purchase from Park Properties Inc., easements from the owner of a Rodeway Inn just south of the property and improvements to the building, formally operated as Danny's Bar and Grill.

## Alachua County's wage theft ordinance takes effect

Alachua County's wage theft ordinance went into effect Jan. 1.

According to a local citizens' group, the Wage Theft Task Force, wage theft most commonly occurs when employers illegally withhold earnings from employees (typically by refusing to hand over the final paycheck), force employees to work off the clock and fail to pay workers time-and-a-half for overtime.

The new law creates a means for employees to file wage theft complaints with the county's equal opportunity office, prescribes that the county facilitate a conciliation process between the worker and the employer, and authorizes the county to appoint the case to a hearing officer if the conciliation process fails.

Violating employers could be liable for double any back wages

See WAGES, 4A

## Water management district pays \$3.2 million for conservation easement



The St. Johns River Water Management District paid \$3,178,123 for a 2,428-acre conservation easement from

Highbrighton Partners West LLC of Jacksonville on Dec. 31.

The easement cover two, non-contiguous parcels, the first on the eastern border of Belmore State Forest south of Sharon Road (C.R. 315). The first parcel also lies on the northern border of the Nochaway Mitigation Bank.

The second parcel lies on the northwest corner of the intersection of Hogarth Road and Georges Lake Road, east of the Nochaway Mitigation Bank, and north of the Clay-Putnam County line.

The easement allows

Highbrighton Partners to retain

a fee simple interest in the

property, with the ability to

See LAND, 4A

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# COUNTY

Continued from 1A

bit," she said. "My phone kept ringing."

## Chief explains concerns about Obamacare for volunteers

Mock said that he continues to monitor the possibility that the Affordable Care Act will require the county to purchase health insurance for volunteer firefighters.

He said that the new law contained an inference that organizations utilizing more than 50 volunteers might have to carry health insurance for the unpaid workers.

Mock added that several professional organizations, including the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association are now monitoring the application of the new law. He also said some members of Congress have prepared legislation to relieve fire departments from the requirement if regulators interpret the law in a way that requires volunteer coverage.

"While we use volunteers

Clay County," he said, "for the majority of the fire service in the country, that is their sole source of fire service provision. In areas where they have more than 50 members, that could be very damaging...if that took place."

## Commissioner wants accounting for Big League Dreams costs

Robinson said that during the Jan. 14 commission meeting, he wants an update on the negotiations the commission is undertaking with the Clay County Development Authority about the proposed Big League Dreams complex on Branan Field Road.

Robinson also said he wants an accounting of any additional attorney's fees the county may be accruing while negotiations continue.

Commissioner Wendell Davis, the county's negotiator for the project, said he has not met with development authority officials since he last updated the commission on the project. Davis added that he did meet with Big League Dreams officials when they visited the area before Christmas, but did

not discuss negotiations with them.

Kopelousos told Robinson that the county's outside counsel for the Big League Dreams project, Foley and Lardner, will discuss any additional fees with the commission after negotiations are complete. The Commission agreed to pay the Jacksonville firm according to various billing rates for Foley and Lardner professionals, and remitted a \$50,000 payment to cover the county's anticipated total cost.

Robinson said he is concerned about the escalating costs of the project. He added that if the deal falls through, and the development authority loses a \$450,000 licensing fee they paid Big League Dreams, then the authority may request that the county cover the cost of the fee.

## County to amend flood ordinance

The commission's Budget, Finance and Human Services Committee sent a new floodplain ordinance to the county planning commission.

Planning and Zoning Director Mike Kloehn told the committee that the existing ordinance has been on the books since 1981. He added that after FEMA updated flood maps in 2012, the county received over 1,000 telephone calls about the changes.

The new map and ordinance, which must be enacted by March 17, is part of the 2012 Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act. The law requires FEMA to make the federal government's flood insurance program more financially stable. It reduces federal subsidies for flood insurance, and increases premiums for most policyholders.

Many Clay County residents are complaining that the new law has doubled or tripled existing flood insurance premiums.

Before Christmas, Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and other legislators tried to pass a measure that would delay the premium increases. However, lawmakers from states that have few flood insurance policies rebuffed those efforts.

The National Flood Insurance Program is \$24 Billion in debt, and 40 percent of the program's policies are in Florida.

Kloehn told the committee that the new maps made few changes in the existing floodplain.

He added that the model ordinance, drafted by Florida officials and amended by his department, is a 30-page document that goes into detail about the county's responsibilities for managing floodplain construction.

He said the new law increases recordkeeping requirements for the county and also expands the responsibilities of the county's floodplain administrator.

The county planning

# Keystone Methodists finish 2013 with Watch Night service

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

Around three dozen people met at Keystone's United Methodist Church on New Year's Eve to observe a 258-year-old tradition started by Methodism's founder.

Former Pastor Tom Farmer told the crowd that the Wesleyan Covenant Service was important to John Wesley.

"It is a ritual that was precious to his heart," said Farmer. "He made his preachers, and encouraged them with their congregations, to make a covenant: a cleansing, a prayer for cleansing of sin and a prayer for rededication of life as the year closes out."

The service centered on a covenant prayer the attendees read together from the event's program. In it they promised to renounce idols, serve Christ, participate in his sufferings, and submit to God's laws.

Pastor Craig Moore preached a sermon from Jeremiah 31:31-34 entitled "Understanding the Covenant."

31 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the



Craig Moore, pastor of Keystone United Methodist Church, spoke to around 40 congregants New Year's Eve, during the church's Wesleyan Covenant Watch Night service.

*And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I*

"I've known Christians that live their whole lives as dos and don'ts," he said. "This is a different way of living. This is...where God gives us the supernatural ability to follow his will."

At the conclusion of the service, the congregation took communion.

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commission will hold a public hearing about the new ordinance, and if enacted, it will only affect unincorporated Clay County. Municipalities within the county, including Keystone Heights, are also updating their own flood ordinances.

## Transportation group appoints Clay members

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

The North Florida Transportation Organization appointed Clay County Commissioner Diane Hutchings as its treasurer during its Dec. 12 meeting.

Commissioner Doug Conkey also serves on the TPO board of directors. He was the board's chair in 2010 and 2011.

During the December meeting, the board chose St. Augustine Vice Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline as chair and Jacksonville City Council member Doyle Carter as vice chair.

The TPO plans transportation needs for Duval, Clay, Nassau and St. Johns counties by maintaining a unified work program, transportation improvement program and a long range transportation program.

The organization's primary role is to prioritize road projects in the region, directing hundreds of millions of dollars in federal and state transportation funds.

A technical coordinating committee and citizens advisory committee support the TPO's work.

Clay County Director of Engineering and Public Works Jeff Beck is chair of the technical coordinating committee. Other Clay members on the committee include County Planning and Zoning Director Mike Kloehn,



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Green Cove Springs Public Works Director Mike Null, CCUA Supervisor Tom Morris and County Public Works Coordinator Stanley H. Kramer Jr.

Orange Park resident Frank Riner is vice chair of the citizens advisory committee. Other Clay County residents on the committee are Richard Darby, Arden Brey and Dale Traylor.

## Clay lawmakers: expand ban on sex offenders possessing porn

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

Two Clay County House members are co-sponsoring a bill that would prohibit sexual offenders from possessing pornography. House Bill 73, co-sponsored by Keystone Heights Republican Charles E. Van Zant and Orange Park Republican Travis Cummings would broaden an already-existing ban on pornography by sexual offenders.

Now, Florida law states that sexual offenders on probation or community control may not view, own or possess sexually stimulating material that "is relevant to the offender's deviant behavior pattern."

In a 2008 decision, the Florida Supreme Court said the language in the statute was ambiguous and that the qualifier, "relevant to the offender's deviant behavior pattern" was susceptible to multiple and irreconcilable interpretations.

The court said that because the statute was unclear, it ruled that a Miami man that was convicted of three counts of lewd and lascivious assault on a victim under 16 did not violate community control when probation officers found

pornography at his home. HB73 removes the phrase "is relevant to the offender's deviant behavior" from the statute, making possession of any pornography by a sexual offender on probation or community control a violation.

An identical bill, SB182, passed the Senate's criminal justice committee on Dec. 9. All six members on the panel, including Sen. Rob Bradley, who represents Clay, Bradford and Alachua counties and Sen. Charlie Dean, who represents Union County, voted for the measure.

## Yoho explains vote on budget amendment

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

Congressman Ted Yoho explained why he voted for a Dec. 12 budget amendment, even though the agreement cut cost of living adjustments for working-age military retirees.

Both the Senate and House passed the budget agreement, negotiated by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), before going on Christmas break.

The amendment restores some sequester cuts to the Department of Defense budget. It also reduces the cost of living adjustment for military retirees.

Yoho said in an email that he voted for the budget amendment because it breaks the pattern of crisis management and stop-gap measures Congress has used to appropriate federal spending.

"This budget agreement was the first product in a while that, rather than perpetuating the near-sighted and often expensive status quo, offered a tangible plan to reduce the deficit and tackle mandatory spending," he said.

Yoho added that he did not

See YOHO, 4A

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## YOHO

Continued from 3A

like the part of the deal that cut veterans' pensions, and is co-sponsoring a bill that would restore the cost of living adjustments. The bill, HR3788, would restore the pension COLA cuts made under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 and replace the cuts with a requirement that taxpayers who receive a child tax credit have a valid social security number.

## Yoho: repeal Obamacare

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

Congressman Ted Yoho introduced legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act if 7 million people are not enrolled in insurance policies sold through health insurance exchanges by the end of the 2014 open enrollment period.

Yoho, whose district includes Bradford, Clay and Union counties, said the Obama Administration projected 7 million people would purchase policies by the March 31 deadline. He added that if the target is not met, taxpayers will take on additional costs because of the new law.

In a press release Yoho said, "The Obama Administration likes to claim that this healthcare law is hugely popular and is wanted by the American people. I disagree. If the Administration can't even make their own target numbers then the American taxpayer should not be further burdened by this terrible law. This commonsense bill simply holds the Administration accountable to those numbers, and if they are not met the Affordable Care Act is fully repealed."

Yoho is also a cosponsor of two alternative proposals to the Affordable Care Act.

## LAND

Continued from 2A

sell or mortgage it. However, the district has the right of first refusal. The grantor also retained hunting rights and timber rights, and may subdivide the two parcels into no more than six subdivisions and may construct residential improvements of no more than 50,000 square feet.

The Florida Department of Transportation provided funding for the transaction. The easement provides wetlands mitigation for 13 DOT projects, some associated with the First Coast Expressway.

In a memorandum to the district's governing board, SJRWMD Division of

Operations and Land Resources Director Robert A. Christianson wrote that the easement will "protect and preserve an upperland buffer to the creek systems associated with the headwaters of Rice Creek and Black Creek, and add to the nearly continuous corridor of public lands stretching from Belmore State Forest north to Interstate 10 in Duval County."

## WAGES

Continued from 2A

due to workers.

Miami-Dade and Broward counties have similar laws.

The Alachua County Commission passed its ordinance in April.

During the 2013 legislative session, Sen. Rob Bradley of Fleming Island filed a bill that would have nullified Alachua County's ordinance, and would have created a statewide system for handling wage theft complaints. The bill failed to make it out of the Senate. A similar measure passed the House.

Before the local ordinance took effect, the only recourse for victims of wage theft was to file a complaint with the U.S. Labor Department.

However, the task force said that because of federal budget cuts and understaffing, labor department investigations can take up to eight months to initiate after a complaint is filed.

According to a Florida International University study, Alachua County employees filed 1,805 wage theft complaints with the U.S. Department of Labor from September 2008 to January 2012. Employees in the healthcare and homecare, construction, restaurant, retail and childcare industries filed most of the complaints.

## SCOUTS

Continued from 1A

old-growth Azaleas. Working from a landscape design by Richard Berry and Mark Barrow, the team planted 30 native plants including Camellias, Azaleas and Needle Palms. The team also restored and painted a white picket fence facing the property's south side, installed two picnic tables and painted and restored the building's front door and railing.

Community groups and merchants provided funding for both projects. The men's ministry of Keystone United Methodist Church provided primary support. The church hosts Troop 146, the home troop of both Beck and Curtis.

## TEACHER

Continued from 1A

they were, just so we would get an idea of historical impacts on local communities."

"I loved history," he continued. "I gravitated toward it. When I was in school it was always my best subject, so it was in my bones in a very early age."

However, Wester's first career was in broadcasting. After graduating with a broadcast communications degree from the University of South Florida in 2000, he spent the next three years working as a weekend sports anchor and weekday reporter for television stations in Texas, North Carolina and Tampa.

Wester said that while working in Tampa in 2003, he realized that his favorite part of reporting was teaching and informing his audience. Teaching always interested him so in 2003 he enrolled in the graduate education program at USF. While obtaining a Master's degree, he also taught at a private school in Largo.

Soon after his parents moved from Pinellas County to the Lake Region, Wester followed

See STUDENTS, 8A

## GUNS

Continued from 1A

responded by saying there is not much they can do about hunting or discharging firearms because neither activity is illegal on state land.

When asked about Hildreth's claims, Mary Justino, the sheriff's public information coordinator, wrote in an email that the wildlife conservation commission has primary jurisdiction over hunting matters.

"The Sheriff spoke to game commission Maj. Andy Krause and asked his agency to contact the mayor regarding that issue as it falls under that agency's jurisdiction," Justino wrote. "It is illegal to hunt at night with a light and to kill (poach) certain types of deer (i.e. doe) out of season."

Krause is on leave and his acting commander did not immediately return a phone call for this story.

Justino wrote that there is not much the sheriff can do about the gunfire.

"In regards to gunfire and noise, there are no county ordinances governing firearm use and the noise ordinance doesn't apply to firearms as gunfire is not considered amplified sound," she wrote. "The use of guns on the dry lakebed area of Keystone only becomes an issue for the CCSO if there are people shooting into or across residents' private property or shooting at people."

Justino also said that after discussing the situation with Krause, he directed night-shift patrol deputies to be on the lookout for hunters entering the



Mayor Mary Lou Hildreth displays shell casings found near Lake Geneva homes.

lakebed and to alert wildlife conservation commission officials if they spotted any.

Ross said that lakebed shooters may feel they can act with impunity.

"They think, 'Well, nobody is going to do anything about it. We can kind of go out on that property and do anything we want,'" she said.

Ross said that the gunfire has ruined many of the activities lake residents love.

"This is so disturbing to the quality of life of the people who live on and use this lake," she said. "People take their families to walk through the woods and they take their dogs walking; they pick up their fishing pole and go down to the lake to fish. People are afraid to anymore because they are afraid they (shooters) won't see them and

they will get shot by somebody that is just shooting a gun out in the woods somewhere."

Hildreth said she no longer walks her dog around the lake because of the weapons discharges.

City Council member Marion Kelly said the gunfire disrupts her life even when she stays inside.

"It is very annoying," she said. "Six, six-thirty in the morning, you are fast asleep and you hear these loud guns going off, and they do it for probably close to an hour. My dog gets real upset."

Kelly added, "Anybody that lives on this lake hates the guns going off. Everybody hates them."

Ross said, "We pretty much feel like we are hostages in our own houses."

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# The Lake Region Monitor's top stories for 2013

Jan. 31

## County spelling champ credits prayer, no TV for win

DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

Earlier this month, Keystone Heights Junior High School student, Brandon Ludwig sat in a chair at Plantation Oaks Elementary in Orange Park. The seventh-grader was there to compete in Clay County's spelling bee, after having won his own school's title.

When the moderator of the Clay County spelling bee started calling out the names of the contestants, the butterflies in the seventh-grader's stomach took flight.

Ludwig said he has a real problem getting nervous during pressure situations, so much so that the condition can hinder his performance if he does not get a handle on it.

Ludwig said he has a cure for the nerves that has always worked and it worked again in Orange Park. The seventh-grader started to pray.

"When the lady called my name," he recalled, "I stood up and felt great. It was exciting to be up there."

Ludwig handled his first word without a flaw and 25 rounds later was crowned spelling champion of Clay County.

On Feb. 23, he will travel to Jacksonville for his next challenge, a regional bee at the downtown library.

Between now and then, he is reviewing around 2,000 words, covering 15 pages to prepare.

Ludwig said his approach to study is light, fast and broad.

Rather than camping out on a single word, trying to hammer it into his memory, he goes with a light touch.

"I say the word," he said. "I spell it, say it again and then move on to the next one."

He said he then circles back around to the same word later on for reinforcement.

Until recently, he did most of his studying in a spare room but lately, he has carried his 15-page list with him in the car during shopping trips and errands with his family.

"Any free time I have during the week," he said, "I practice."

He has more time to study than most students his age because about a year ago, his parents disconnected cable TV.

"We all pretty much agreed that it was taking away from our studies and that we needed to get rid of it," he recalled.

Ludwig's father Robert, a firefighter, confirmed that he and his wife Suzi cut the cable.

"You probably think we are crazy," he said when asked about the decision. "We got so busy. About two months went by and we realized we had not watched any TV, so we got rid of it."

Brandon said the support he has gotten from his parents, in addition to Ms. Yeldell, the spelling bee coordinator at the school has been another vital factor in his success.

When asked if he could attribute his wins to anything or anyone else, he once again recalled the relief he found at the beginning of the spelling bee at Plantation Oaks.

"I would like to thank Christ," he said.

"I would not have won without prayer because I was so nervous and it just took the nervousness away."

March 14

## Emily Peoples crowned 49th Miss KHHS

DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

Emily Peoples was crowned the 49th Miss Keystone Heights High School at the school March 9.

Peoples' fellow contestants also voted her the congeniality and the judges gave her the most talented award.

First runner up Emily Frampton was also a double category award winner. She won the interview award and the scholastic award.

Second runner-up Taylor Jewett also won the Indian spirit leadership prize.

The third runner-up was Delaina McEwen. Corbin Frakes rounded out the top five.

The contestants began the evening by performing an opening number, "Masquerade" from the Phantom of the Opera. The Gaston Leroux novel, later adapted by Andrew Lloyd Webber into a 1986 musical was the theme for the pageant.

Contestants also competed in street wear and eveningwear during the March 9 pageant. The previous Saturday the contestants displayed their talents, which ranged from reading to puppeteering and from singing and dancing to reciting poetry.

Peoples impress the judges with her rendition of "On my Own from "Les Miserables."

The five finalists also fielded questions based on biographical sketches they submitted for the competition.

The reigning Miss KHHS, Kelsey Waters asked each finalist one question. She asked Peoples about her ambition to become an occupational therapist with a focus on pediatric patients.

Peoples told the audience about her 13-year-old sister Dana, who was born with Down's syndrome and later diagnosed with Autism. Peoples added that as she witnessed the benefits that physical, occupational and speech therapy gave to her sibling, she found a calling for her own life.

"I have seen the impact this has made on her life and on the lives of others," she said, "and I hope to do that for other children someday."

Peoples is the daughter of James and Jeannie Peoples of Keystone Heights.

She is a member of Trinity Baptist Church, the church's student ministry, and student praise team. She also is a member of the National Honor Society, Students for Christ and is dual-enrolled at Santa Fe College.

After the competition, Peoples said she was extremely nervous as the runner ups were being announced. She added however, that she finally left the final results to Providence.

"I am very proud to be a part of this beautiful group of ladies," she said, "and I am so excited to win the title."

March 21

## Water district to pump 200 million gallons from Lake Lowry toward Brooklyn

DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

The St. Johns River Water Management District's governing board, March 12 approved a plan to jumpstart a study of water's movement through the Alligator Creek system with a short-term, one-time project to pump a limited amount of water from Lake Lowry into the creek.

The water from Lake Lowry will allow the district to collect data for a pilot test to evaluate hydrologic and water quality effects of introducing additional water into the Alligator Creek system in southwest Clay County.

The district plans to pump approximately 200 million gallons of water over 50 to 60 days from Lake Lowry into Alligator Creek to test the response of the downstream hydrologic system. The water level on Lake Lowry will be reduced temporarily by less than six inches, which will be refilled by rainfall.

"The pilot test will show us how water moves through the creek system and area lakes and how it is lost through evaporation, runoff and seepage," said District Governing Board Chairman Lad Daniels of Jacksonville. "We are eager to get started on the scientific data collection so that

we can identify feasible solutions to replenish the aquifer, which also should ultimately benefit the lakes in the Keystone Heights area."

In March 2012, the district approved a plan to pump water from the lower Floridan aquifer to the surface of Camp Blanding with that water eventually flowing through Alligator Creek to Lake Brooklyn. The district planned to use that well water to evaluate leakage, evaporation and other variables as the ground water flowed from the well toward Lake Brooklyn.

However, in February, Bradford County resident Paul Still and the Bradford County Soil and Water Conservation District filed objections with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection on the district's test well permit.

Instead of delaying the test until the well is permitted and completed, the district will be able to use the surface water from Lowry to collect data on the more downstream portion of the watershed, which might not have seen additional water during the duration of the original test.

The project is not intended to refill the lakes but instead is intended to measure the effectiveness of possible future projects.

In another unrelated project, the Clay County Utilities Authority is conducting a \$400,000 study to evaluate the yield and possible environmental damage of a plan to move surface water from northern Clay County to the Camp Blanding, Keystone Heights aquifer recharge area.

April 18

## Keystone fire department out of business

DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

Clay County stopped dispatching the Keystone Heights Volunteer Fire department to calls April 16 and barred the non-profit organization from rendering the emergency services it has given to Keystone Heights residents for over 80 years.

Instead, the county will dispatch its own career firefighters from a station across the street from the volunteer fire department.

The leadership of the volunteers pledged to carry on operations and even scheduled a training session for April 16. However, it will not respond to calls for service.

The Keystone Heights City Council, April 11, turned down a request by the town's volunteer fire department that the city take over the organization.

The department's request came after Clay County Commissioners demanded the fire department, an independent, nonprofit organization, sign a service agreement with the county by April 15. That agreement redefined the

relationship between the county and department, forcing the volunteers to abandon their own recruitment, training and command structures and submitting to county systems. It also cut the nonprofit's reimbursement from the county for expenses and nullified a 15-year lease the county had previously signed with the department.

County commissioners said if the organization did not sign the document, the county would prohibit it from responding to calls for service.

Keystone Fire Chief Kevin Mobley appeared before the council April 11 after Mayor Mary Lou Hildreth called a special meeting to address the fire department's request.

Mobley presented the city panel with a proposed budget, in addition to other information about the department.

Council member Paul Yates, who heads the city's budget and finance committee, quizzed Mobley on some of the numbers in the financial projection. He said that in the short term, the organization appeared financially sound. He added however, that he believed the need to replace equipment would require the city to contribute financially to the organization within the next few years.

"They've got sufficient resources to maintain their operations for three to five years," he said to the council. Then turning to Mobley, he added, "But after that time, you are going to have some problems and we may not be able to help you."

Hildreth, who even before the meeting began, expressed doubt about the department's request, repeated her skepticism for the proposal.

During the meeting, she focused on a similar request the department made to the city several years ago.

"Part of the problem I have as well is that we had this conversation two years ago," she said, "and we asked for information and everybody just kind of went away. Then all of the sudden this agreement comes up. It is my understanding that the county has been working on it and at the eleventh hour you guys come to us and say 'save it.'"

Hildreth added that the central question in her mind was whether the city wanted to be in the fire department business. She added that the city could not take on the additional budget uncertainties such a commitment would bring.

"We can't even get the sidewalks done," she said.

In an interview with the Monitor before the April 11 meeting, Mobley explained that the department did make a similar proposal to the city two years ago after county officials moved to restrict the independence of the department. However, while those talks were underway, the officials backed off their proposed restrictions

See DEPT., 6A

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# The Lake Region Monitor's top stories for 2013

## DEPT.

Continued from 5A  
for the Keystone firefighters and the volunteers terminated discussions with the city.

Council member Brian Wilson tried to explore several options with the department, including a referendum.

Hildreth said Wilson's proposals were not practical.

"With all due respect Brian, this has been going on for a very long time," she said. "These are good ideas but not feasible given the current situation that we are in and that the county is in."

"There are so many other things to consider that this city may or may not need aside from taking on a fire department," Hildreth added. "Whether it be a pool or roads or full-time personnel for (city manager) Mr. Suggs, there are a variety of things the city needs to run as a municipality. We could say we want a police department too, but all these things cost money."

Hildreth also criticized Wilson's proposal for a referendum.

"We are a representative form of government," she said. "It is our duty to make the choices and not put the ad valorem tax out to vote to the residents."

Council member Tony Brown, himself a member of the department for over three decades, also came down against the firefighters' proposal.

"Even though I have spent 35 years down at that department and actually more than that when my Dad was a volunteer fireman," he said, "it is hard to say this, but as a city councilman my responsibility is the safety of the citizens that put me here in this seat."

"I know that the volunteer fire department is going to be there," he added, "but you are still volunteers. We are still volunteers. As a citizen, I would like to see you guys sign the contract and work out your differences (with the county)."

Brown went onto introduce a motion that the council reject the department's proposal. That motion passed 3-2 with Wilson and Marion Kelly voting no.

## May 2

### Shuttle fuel tank leaves Kennedy Space Center for Keystone Airport

By DAN HILDEBRAN  
*Monitor Editor*

A prototype of the external fuel tanks used in NASA space shuttle missions left the Kennedy Space Center April 24 en route to the Wings of Dreams Aviation Museum at the Keystone Airport.

The 154-foot long tank departed Central Florida on a 200-foot long barge. Pulled by two tugboats, the cargo was expected to arrive in Green Cove Springs April 27. After that, the tank will have to travel overland another 55 miles on U.S. Highway 17 and S.R. 100 through the Palatka area to the museum.

The tank destined for Keystone was one of the first built. NASA used it for testing, but it never flew in a mission.

During shuttle missions, the enormous orange tube dwarfed the other elements of the launch vehicle, including the orbiter which housed the astronauts, and the two solid rocket boosters which propelled the vehicle into orbit. Both the external tank and boosters were jettisoned from the orbiter minutes after launch. NASA recovered the solid rocket boosters for reuse, but the external tanks broke up during reentry into the atmosphere.

Bob Oehl, executive director of Wings of Dreams said that a shorter route of 38 miles on S.R. 16 is not available for the trek because of the size of the tank. He added that the overland segment of the trip will entail the temporary removal of dozens of power lines, railroad crossings and other obstacles along the route.

The timetable for the trip from Green Cove Springs to

Keystone Heights has not yet been determined.

## May 23

### School district sliding toward financial emergency

By DAN HILDEBRAN  
*Monitor Editor*

The Clay County School District assistant superintendent for business affairs told the school board Thursday night that the board's fund balance will likely fall to under 3 percent of its revenues at the end of the current fiscal year, requiring the superintendent to notify the state that the district is approaching a financial emergency. He added that the financial outlook for the system next year is even more dismal.

Dr. George Copeland said that the district's revenue in the 2013-2014 school year will be \$5.5 million less than the 2011-2012 year. He said funding from the state will drop because school enrollment decreased by 600 students this year. He also blamed declining property values and an increase in the required contribution the district must make to the state's retirement system for a projected drop in the district's fund balance.

According to state law, if the district's fund balance falls to under 3 percent of revenues, the superintendent must notify the Florida Department of Education of the low reserve. If the fund balance falls to below 2 percent of revenues, the state commissioner of education could declare a state of emergency and appoint a financial emergency board to oversee the district's financial operations.

Copeland said that at the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year, the district's fund balance was 7.44 percent of revenues. That ratio dropped to 3.92 percent at the beginning of the current year.

He said with six weeks still left in the school year he could not predict where the fund balance would be but, he did warn that the account will likely pass the 3 percent benchmark and will come close to the 2 percent level which could trigger state oversight.

"If we can be at two-and-a-half percent, I think we ought to be happy and take it," he said.

Board chair Carol Studdard said the financial outlook was a serious challenge.

"This looks worse than anything I have seen in 20 years," she said.

## June 23

### Keystone man lost at sea

By DAN HILDEBRAN  
*Monitor Editor*

The Coast Guard said it suspended its search in the Gulf of Mexico for two missing boaters at 2 p.m. Sunday.

Missing are Glenn Harris, 70 of Keystone Heights and Tom Morrison, 65 of Jacksonville.

Harris was a retired forester for a timber company and was well known for putting on educational displays and seminars about forestry at north Florida events and schools. He was also a member of the Keystone Heights Rotary Club and on the board of the Keystone Airpark Authority.

According to the Coast Guard, the pair, along with Frank DiPaula, 78 of Keystone Heights and Tom Grant, 67, left Horseshoe Beach in a 21-foot boat at around 8:30 a.m. Saturday.

The Dixie County Sheriff's Office, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, a Coast Guard HC-Hercules aircraft, a MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter and a Coast Guard cutter searched 2,537 square miles for 13 hours looking for the missing vessel.

On Sunday, the crew from the Hercules aircraft spotted the capsized boat. The crew directed FWC agents to the site who rescued DiPaula and Grant.

According to the federal

agency, the two survivors were exhausted and disoriented.

Grant said that Harris slipped below the surface less than a minute after the boat capsized.

Around 8:30 Saturday night, Morrison told Grant and DiPaula he was giving up. Soon he was also lost.

A memorial service for Harris is scheduled for 11 a.m., Saturday, June 22 at the Keystone United Methodist Church.

## June 23

### Boating accident survivor describes struggle to live

By DAN HILDEBRAN  
*Monitor Editor*

Tuesday morning marked the third day of Tom Grant's new lease on life. Within the previous four days, he had witnessed the death of a close friend, the passing of a new acquaintance and had resigned himself to the likelihood that he too would perish in the Gulf of Mexico.

Grant, along with longtime friends Glenn Harris and Frank DiPaula, joined Jacksonville resident Tom Morrison for a June 15 fishing trip off Horseshoe Beach that turned to disaster less than two hours into the voyage.

As he sat at his dining room table Tuesday, Grant recalled his nearly 24 hours at sea and how one agonizing decision he made will haunt him the rest of his life.

Grant had always wanted to catch a lot of fish, so he organized the fishing expedition, with each participant chipping in \$50.

Over the years, Grant had gotten to know DiPaula, but only knew him as "Frank the baker." DiPaula owned a boat and knew a retired chief petty officer from Jacksonville, Morrison, who frequently captained the vessel during fishing trips in the Gulf.

Grant needed one more person to complete the trip and had a little trouble coming up with the last person. One friend, Tom Lazaro, could not go. Finally, one of Grant's longtime friends, Harris, said he would go. Harris was an avid hunter with a reputation for bagging larges number of turkeys.

The trio left Keystone Heights Friday evening in DiPaula's pickup, hauling the 21-foot Wellcraft powered by a 150-horsepower Johnson outboard.

When they arrived in Cross City, they met Morrison who owned a three-bedroom mobile home in the area. The four men chowed down on fried chicken, slaw and rolls from Harvey's Grocery before bunking down for the night.

During the meal, Morrison laid out his plan for the next day. He told the men they were going after Pink Mouth Grunts, also known as Florida snapper. Although relatively small, this fish was not limited by state regulations, and they made for excellent meals. Morrison added that the party would first try a spot 14 miles out, then continue out to 27 miles to another spot before returning home.

Grant took a seat near the bow of the vessel as it made its way west. There was a strong east wind that propelled the vessel through increasingly larger waves. Grant recalled that the ride out was jolting.

The crew had almost reached their first destination when Morrison said things were getting too rough. They were going back in.

About 11 miles from shore, the waves seemed to intensify. Grant said he has been whitewater rafting on the Colorado River, and the trip back to Horseshoe Beach was turning out to be more thrilling than the Colorado.

He was oblivious to the danger he and his friends were getting into. Since he was seated near the front of the vessel and was looking forward, he did not see the buildup of water inside the craft. Each wave crashing into the vessel left more and more of the Gulf in the boat.

He heard DiPaula and Morrison talk about a bilge pump. Then DiPaula handed him a life jacket. It was too small. Grant was barely able to

fasten the front of the device by angling it diagonally across his chest.

The boat then hit three or four consecutive waves that deluged the vessel with water. Grant heard Morrison shout, "Grab a bucket." Grant turned around and was stunned to see the hull almost full of water. He glanced down at Harris, who also had a lifejacket. But Harris had only slipped an arm through the preserver. Grant later said he did not know if the jacket was too small or if an old shoulder injury prevented his friend from putting on the device.

Morrison grabbed the radio and shouted, "Mayday," three times. Another wave hit the vessel, and Grant could feel the hull start to roll. He jumped. Seconds later all four men were in the water, and the vessel's keel was in the air.

Grant found Harris, who told him his foot was caught on something. Grant went below the surface to free Harris. Seconds later, waves had separated the two from the capsized craft. Grant held onto Harris with one hand and tried to get back to the boat with the other. He heard Harris plead, "Help me." Waves continued to keep the pair away from the vessel. Grant realized they had to get back to the boat to have any chance of surviving. He then noticed that Harris stopped moving and had rolled over onto his back. DiPaula shouted from the hull, "He's gone."

Grant said he then made a decision that he has replayed over and over and will continue to think about for the rest of his life. He could not make it back to the hull with Harris. He did not know if Harris was unconscious, unresponsive or dead. Grant let go.

He now estimates that the time between the capsize and the point he let Harris go was 30 seconds. He said it all happened very quickly.

After Grant made his way back to the boat, the three men found a rope with one end tied to the bow. Morrison ordered DiPaula and Grant to fasten the other end to the stern, creating a lifeline running the length of the vessel along the keel.

Grant said that one decision saved his life. He said there is no way he could have endured the relentless beating from the swells without the assistance of that rope.

He soon discovered that with the vessel upside down, its gunwale, the top edge of the hull, protruded several inches away from the boat, giving Grant enough room to stand on the edge of the vessel. That is how he spent the next 23 hours, standing on the gunwale, gripping the lifeline, while waves crashed into him hour after hour. Morrison took a position on the opposite side of the bow, hanging onto the line from the other direction.

DiPaula meanwhile found a folding chair attached to the stern that, even with the vessel upside down he could sit on. From his position, DiPaula became the steward of the lifeline, taking up slack and reattaching the rope to the stern when it broke away.

Since Grant was near the bow and DiPaula found a place near the stern, the two men did not communicate much during the ordeal. Grant had a much better opportunity to talk to Morrison. But the former chief petty officer was not in the mood to talk. Grant could tell the captain was struggling. The 63-year-old wore a back brace and had a heart condition. Because he was shorter than Grant, the waves that broke across the Keystone man's chest hit Morrison in the head. Grant heard him take in water, then cough it up. Grant could tell the man was weakening.

Occasionally, throughout the afternoon, Morrison would announce that he was giving up. Grant responded by trying to engage him.

"Let's talk about something else," the Keystone man replied.

Grant asked Morrison about his family. He asked him if he was going back to work on Monday. At one point, Grant led the two men in prayer.

Morrison contributed to the prayer, asking God to forgive him of his sins and saying that he loved his wife.

Later, he spoke up again: "I wish I would have turned around sooner."

As Grant was watching the sunset, Morrison told him he was giving up.

"Don't try to stop me," Morrison added. "I have a pacemaker, and it may shock you."

With one hand, Morrison took his hat off and handed it over to Grant. With the other, he let go of the lifeline and slipped off the keel.

DiPaula grabbed Morrison as the Jacksonville man passed by the stern.

"Don't give up," he implored.

"I'm ready to go," Morrison replied. "Don't stop me." Seconds later he was gone.

Back on shore a friend of Morrison's who had also been on the Gulf that day noticed that DiPaula's truck was still in the parking lot at the boat ramp.

Brett Selph had passed the party about 11 miles from shore. After seeing the boat and trailer in the parking lot he boarded his vessel to search for the men. He only got two miles out before the waves forced him back to shore. He then called the Coast Guard, but did not have a lot of information about the missing vessel and its passengers. In addition, the Coast Guard told him their hands were full. His call was the 10th the agency had received that evening about boats in distress.

Grant's wife, Michele, a retired history teacher at Keystone Heights High School, was expecting a call from her husband around 10 p.m. When it did not come, she started calling him and got her husband's voicemail. She called the Coast Guard, which relayed to her what Selph had told the agency. Soon, she was on the phone with Alice Harris, Glenn Harris' wife.

After the sun set, a quarter moon provided some light for the two survivors, but soon it, too, slipped under the horizon.

Throughout the night, DiPaula occasionally checked up on his friend.

"Tom, how are you?"

The pair checked on each other with short exchanges, but could not talk at length because they were stuck on opposite ends of the boat and both had lost some hearing over the years.

Grant fixated on his four-week-old grandson, Chase, who lived in Tallahassee. He told himself that seeing his grandson grow up was worth the pain he felt in his foot, the rope burns on his hands, the exhaustion and the relentless punishment from the waves.

He prayed. He made promises to God. He tried to recall comforting passages of scripture. He recalled a story in the Bible when the disciples were caught in a storm. They were saved when Jesus walked on the water and calmed the sea. Grant concluded he was unlikely to be rescued in a similar manner.

He started thinking about his funeral. Who would give the eulogy? Would anyone have anything nice to say about him? A lot of people would have a lot of nice things to say about Glenn. Glenn spent a lifetime investing his life into others. Grant has a photograph of himself and Harris coaching a little league baseball team.

He wondered if his life insurance would pay double since he died in an accident. Would Michele be able to make it on the income? He was thankful that he had taken the time to arrange paperwork for her in the event of his passing.

Sometime during the night a helicopter hovered nearby and flashed a searchlight into the water. The light hit the boat, and the men thought they were saved. But soon the aircraft flew off.

About 30 minutes before sunrise, DiPaula said he saw two shrimpboats in the distance. The two men shouted and waved their arms, but it was hopeless. The swells masked their location.

Around 8:30 Sunday morning the men saw a Coast Guard C-130 aircraft. It flew by, then circled around and dropped a life raft. The float was too far away for the men to reach, but they knew they would be saved. Grant started to cry.

Thirty minutes later, the pair saw a boat approaching them. It

was a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission boat. Two game wardens on the boat hauled Grant and DiPaula into the vessel. Their ordeal was over.

During the trip back, the waves continued to rock the rescue vessel. Grant started to worry a little when he saw water accumulating in the boat. One of the wardens assured him the boat could handle the weather.

Grant reflected on how he survived. The little things mattered. His pair of New Balance shoes sustained his feet while he stood for nearly 24 hours. The Florida Lottery strap that held his Ray-bans around his neck kept the sunglasses within reach to protect his eyes from the sun and salt water. The life jacket DiPaula gave him right before the capsize was critical. As the boat approached the boat ramp, Grant could make out two women in the distance. He had never seen them before.

Morrison's wife and daughter were waiting as the FWC boat arrived back at the launch. The pair had heard Coast Guard radio transmissions that two survivors were found, but they did not know which of the men made it through the night.

As the boat neared the landing, Morrison's daughter mistakenly thought Grant was her own father. As the two women walked closer, they realized it was not Tom Morrison in the boat but Tom Grant. Morrison's wife made her way to the vessel, found Grant and asked, "Where's my Tom?"

Grant looked at her and shook his head. She broke down weeping.

## July 4

### Keystone principal wins over school board

By DAN HILDEBRAN  
*Monitor Editor*

Keystone Heights High School Principal Susan Sailor drove into Fleming Island June 20 and won over a skeptical school board that earlier questioned administrators' tactics for securing a National Defense Cadet Corps at the school.

During a June 6 workshop, board Chair Carol Studdard asked Superintendent Charlie Van Zant how the district could advertise a job opening for an Army cadet instructor in Keystone Heights when the board made no allocation for such a teacher and never budgeted a cadet program at the school.

Van Zant, in addition to Deputy Superintendent Denise Adams and Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Diane Kornegay, explained to board members how the JROTC-like program came about at the school without the board's knowledge or approval. They said the rapid chain of events that led to the program's inception prevented them from briefing the board. They also said the process they went through to make room for the cadet instructor and to get the program off the ground were routine steps that did not ordinarily require board approval.

However, Studdard, in addition to board member Janice Kerekes, remained skeptical. Studdard said the assertions made by Van Zant and his staff about the program's potential costs did not line up with her own independent research.

During the June 20 board meeting, Van Zant brought in Sailor and Michael Wingate, director of secondary education to give board members a full account of how the cadet program came about.

Wingate told the board he has tried to persuade the military branches to launch JROTC programs at both Keystone and Oakleaf high schools. Those two campuses are the only Clay County high schools without such programs.

He said when Oakleaf was opening in 2010, he asked the Air Force and Navy about establishing a JROTC program at the school.

# The Lake Region Monitor's top stories for 2013

## SCHOOL

Continued from 6A

"We were told flat out, due to the economic times that no JROTC programs were being added anywhere," he recalled.

Wingate added that both branches told him he could expect a wait of up to five years.

He said in March, when Sailor asked him about a JROTC program for her campus, he asked the Navy and Army about the likelihood of them setting up at Keystone. He said their response was similar to the military's answer to his earlier requests for Oakleaf.

Wingate said he, along with Sailor and other administrators considered diverting some JROTC assets from Clay High School to Keystone. He said it became apparent that the logistics of that idea were unworkable. He also said such an arrangement might place the Clay High program in jeopardy because of the Army's reaction to the diversion of resources.

Sailor then explained to board members how the idea of a JROTC program became a top priority for her.

She told board members that the school has been on a waiting list for a Navy JROTC program for 10 years.

"You think that after you've been on a waiting list for 10 years," she said, "you might as well just pass, just give up, just go onto something else."

Sailor said the JROTC issue came back to the forefront when the school received a "B" grade from the state department of education in December. She explained that even though the school had enough points for an "A," it did not qualify for the grade because its dropout rate for at-risk students was too high. If only three more at-risk students had graduated instead of getting a GED certificate, the school would have gotten its "A."

Sailor described how stunned she was when she read across the scoresheet of her school's points total seeing the school had enough points for an "A" and then seeing the final grade of "B."

"You are just shocked," Sailor recalled. "You just can't imagine. This is a school that has a very good academic history. We are proud of being an 'A' school all the years that we have been an 'A' school."

Sailor said that after the Christmas break, her leadership team took a hard look at the school's programs to improve its at-risk graduation rate.

She said she and her staff compared Keystone Heights to the county's other high schools, noting that with only one career academy, the Keystone campus lagged behind other schools.

"We have one academy," she said. "The agriscience academy. Other high schools, albeit they are larger than we are, have four, five, more academies."

Sailor told the board her school does a great job preparing students for college, noting that of the 170 graduates this year, 22 had also earned an associate of arts college degree through dual enrollment.

"We had to pick up the pace on the other end," she said.

Sailor said she then asked her students what the school could do to keep undergraduates enrolled.

"We polled our student body," she said. "Our poll consisted of listing the academy programs at all of the other high schools in the county. We put those academy choices out there. We said, 'What interests you? What could there have been that we could have offered that might have made three more students stay in school?'"

Sailor said that through the survey, students told administrators their top two choices were a criminal justice academy and a JROTC program. She then met with district administrators to find a way to implement one of those student preferences.

She said that budget constraints eliminated the criminal justice academy option. She added that a JROTC program, in which the military and the school board share the cost of the instructors, had already been vetoed by the military branches. Her

remaining option was a National Defense Cadet Program, which is identical to JROTC except that the district pays all the costs of the program instead of sharing the load with the federal government.

Sailor said that the thrust of getting an NDCC program for the school was to better serve at-risk students.

"We need to help our at-risk students because they can help us get an A again. Not getting that A cost us \$130,000 that would have been nice to have in a lean budget year.

She added that the military program will go far beyond serving at-risk pupils. She said college-bound students will also benefit from the curriculum.

Both Studdard and Kerekes said Sailor's presentation satisfied them that the school needed the program.

Board member Lisa Graham added that the principal's efforts to bring the cadet corps to her school were exemplary.

"You have really gone above, and beyond to do what you are supposed to do to help kids," she said. "It's not every day that a principal goes to such lengths to do stuff that their students really would like to have. I really commend you for that, and I know it has taken a lot of extra time and hours that you and Mr. Wingate have put in."

## July 11

### Keystone farmers market in limbo after manager resigns

By DAN HILDEBRAN  
*Monitor Editor*

The Keystone Heights Farmers Market was thrown into turmoil last weekend after a verbal dispute between the mayor and the market manager resulted in the manager's resignation and farmers market vendors were told the venue would close for the summer.

According to Market Manager Cheryl Owen, who was also the chair of the city's Community Redevelopment Advisory Board, she was selling tickets to the city's fireworks display on July 4 when several people told her they did not know the city was charging a \$1 access fee. Owen said that faced with the prospect of turning away children from the event, she called Mayor Mary Lou Hildreth for advice. When Hildreth's phone went to voice mail, she then asked fellow CRAB member Maria Gall to phone Hildreth.

"When the mayor got to me, she was very agitated," recalled Owen, "and she was yelling at me, not about anything I had done relative to the ticket sales or the events of the day. She was yelling at me about the fact that I had asked Maria where she was."

"And then she began to yell at me about anything and everything that I had done or not done about the (farmers) market or anything else," Owen added, "and she was swearing."

Stunned by Hildreth's allegations, Owen said she tried to get to the basis of the mayor's widespread complaints by asking Hildreth questions.

"And then I lost my temper and I began yelling back at her," she said. "So here we are in front of everybody yelling at each other."

Owen said she could not recall everything she said during the exchange but admitted she came to regret what she did remember.

Owen said that at one point during the argument, Hildreth demanded Owen's resignation from the CRAB. Owen said she later terminated the heated conversation by telling Hildreth she was quitting both the advisory board and the farmers market.

She said she later sent an email to Hildreth saying she would drop off a resignation letter at city hall. However, she never delivered the letter.

Owen said the following day she regretted the decision to resign from the farmer's market and tried to rescind her resignation.

Hildreth did not respond. Saturday morning, vendors at

the city's farmers market were without a market manager.

Hildreth said she stopped the market on her way out of town for vacation and discussed the situation with one of the vendors, Rhonda Miller.

Hildreth said she asked Miller to open the restrooms and to collect booth rents from the vendors.

Miller also informed some vendors about Owen's situation and told vendors that because of the manager vacancy the market would close for the summer.

Several vendors said they were upset that no city official briefed them about the situation. Some emailed the mayor and City Manager Terry Suggs asking for an explanation and seeking an alternative to closing for the summer.

Some vendors also telephoned Melrose Farmers Market Manager Bob Bird, asking for his help. Bird soon announced he would move his market from Friday afternoon to Saturday in order to help the Keystone vendors and to fill an important Saturday morning time slot.

However, during the June 10 meeting of the Melrose Business and Community Association, Suggs announced that the Keystone market was not closing and that he would temporarily manage the event.

During a telephone interview, Hildreth said she did not demand Owen's resignation during the July 4 argument with her.

She added that her disagreements with the market manager stretched well before the July 4 fight and that even before Independence Day she had planned on asking Owen to resign later in July.

Hildreth said Owen had job performance shortcomings in her role as market manager. She added that one vendor had left the venue and told Hildreth he would only return if Owen was replaced.

The mayor added that at times, Owen displayed erratic behavior and made inappropriate public comments that embarrassed the city.

She cited one recent trip she made with Owen to a Jacksonville community redevelopment agency training session.

Hildreth said during a luncheon for the event, Owen complained loudly about the preferential treatment the mayor gave to Gall over Owen. Hildreth added that her friendship with Gall appeared to irritate the market manager and that Owen had complained that Gall, a member of the advisory board had more influence on the mayor than Owen, who was the chair.

Another person who went to Jacksonville with Hildreth and Owen backed up Hildreth's account of Owen's behavior.

"We had professional people from all over Northeast Florida at this training session," said the source who asked not to be identified, "and Cheryl was an embarrassment to Keystone Heights. I like Cheryl but she has no filter. You just can't say whatever comes into your mind."

Owen admitted that she had complained to Hildreth and Gall about her own lack of access to the mayor.

She also said that when she called Hildreth on July 4 and got her voicemail, it was a reminder of her limited access to Hildreth. Perhaps she said something to Gall that expressed that frustration and that is what set Hildreth off.

That is exactly what happened, according to Hildreth. She was tired of Owen's complaints about Gall and she was angry. Like Owen, Hildreth said she regretted some things she said during the altercation. However, she disputed Owen's claim that she demanded Owen's resignation during the exchange.

Owen said she is still trying to figure out what happened. She loved her job as market manager and from her point of view she has done a good job. The number of vendors at the event has been increasing. The CRAB, which oversees the farmers market, had recently recommended a raise for Owen.

Now, she is out of a job she enjoyed and the market's vendors are facing uncertainty about the venue's future.

She said she does not believe that anything she has done in the past justified Hildreth's angry response to her attempts to reach the mayor on July 4.

"All I wanted to do was ask a question."

## July 18

### Keystone braces for lake level battle

By DAN HILDEBRAN  
*Monitor Editor*

Keystone Heights lake advocates are bracing for an anticipated battle with the St. Johns River Water Management District over minimum flows and levels.

Water districts throughout the state publish rules that prescribe water levels for lakes and flow levels for rivers and streams. When those levels drop below the MFLs, water management districts are required to take remedial action.

According to minutes of some SJRWMD committees, the district's staff is considering recommending to the district board that it lower MFLs for Lakes Geneva and Brooklyn.

That move would relieve the SJRWMD of legal responsibilities to take remedial action to restore lake levels to predetermine numbers.

The Keystone Heights City Council passed a resolution during its July meeting requesting that the district not revise MFLs but instead implement regional, long-term and sustainable water supply and nourishment projects.

The resolution states that recovery should be successfully implemented using current MFLs with a long-term plan in place in order to give the lakes maximum protection and the opportunity to achieve recovery or prevention.

"Adopting new significantly lower MFLs that are less protective, promoting longer periods of low water levels when the lakes are already endangered due to low water, appears to be absent public interest consideration," the resolution reads.

The Keystone council also said in the document that the district's issuance of water use permits in Northeast Florida is hurting lake levels in Keystone.

The resolution also cites a Jacksonville Electric Authority permit application where the utility admitted that a well it wanted to drill for the city's water supply would "materially contribute to groundwater declines affecting water levels only in Cowpen Lake and Lakes Geneva and Brooklyn."

In order to lower the MFLs, the SJWMD would first have to publish a public notice and hold a public hearing. The district has not yet taken those steps.

## July 25

### Fire destroys Camp Keystone dining hall

By DAN HILDEBRAN  
*Monitor Editor*

A predawn fire raced through the attic of a Salvation Army Camp building Saturday gutting the 16,000-square foot structure and forcing the evacuation of some of the camp's 300 occupants from their cabins.

Around 2 a.m. a Bradford County Sheriff's deputy on special detail at the Bedford Lake facility discovered the fire in the laundry room of the camp's dining hall.

The lawman, along with some camp personnel, tried to stop the blaze as it made its way into the attic. Firefighters from nearby Theressa soon arrived and were followed by personnel from Bradford and Clay counties, as far away as Doctors Inlet.

The structure sustained heavy damage, but no one was injured in the fire.

At press time, the State Fire Marshal's Office was investigating the fire.

### Deputy thought he saw fog, then smelled burning rubber

At 2 a.m., Bradford County Deputy Chris Adams was almost halfway through an 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. special detail at the camp.

As part of his duties, Adams rides a golf cart around the grounds every hour, making sure no campers are outside. The deputy had just completed a patrol of the campgrounds and ducked into the arts and crafts pavilion for a break. When exiting the building a few minutes later, he saw what he first thought was fog near the northwest corner of the dining hall, about 75 feet away from the pavilion.

Adams said he then smelled burning rubber and walked over to the dining hall to investigate. Peering through some grating which led into the building's laundry room, Adams said he saw flames progressing up a wall approximately 3 feet high and 4 feet wide.

After calling a county dispatcher and the camp captain, the deputy ran around the building shouting to verify no one was inside the structure.

Adams tried to stop the flames with a fire extinguisher and later with a garden hose, teaming up with the camp's maintenance man. However he was hindered by the fact that he had to work through the upward-angled grating, which limited his access to the flames.

Soon Camp Manager Tony Bellis and Capt. Marion Platt, the Salvation Army's Florida divisional youth secretary arrived with more fire extinguishers and attacked the flames through busted-out windows.

However the four were unable to stop the flames which quickly reached the attic and then broke through the roof.

Platt said by the time Theressa firefighters arrived, about five minutes after he did the laundry room was fully engulfed, and flames were entering the kitchen area.

He added that the camp's housekeeping staff uses commercial washers and dryers in the laundry room to clean linens.

In addition to the laundry room, kitchen and main dining hall which can seat 500, the building also has a staff lounge and a smaller dining room.

Bellis said the dining hall was originally constructed in the 1960s but has undergone numerous additions and renovations since then.

Later Saturday morning, after firefighters gained control over the blaze, Platt said around 300 campers and staff were on the site. Participants from a music camp were staying at the facility, in addition to students in a community camp, which draws teenagers from around the state for a week of fresh air.

### 45 firefighters from 11 stations in two counties fought the blaze

Theressa's fire chief, one of the first firefighters to arrive at the S.E. 9th Avenue facility, said his men encountered difficulties in battling the blaze, including live wires and the hardwood ceilings which made access to the attic more difficult.

Percy Sullivan said he along with four other volunteers in the station's tanker were the first to respond to the blaze.

He said his initial plan was to contain the fire to the laundry room. However, neither he nor his crew entered the structure because they saw electrical arcing inside the room and were forced to wait for a Clay Electric Co-op worker to cut power to the building before going inside. Sullivan said that had he been able to enter the structure immediately upon arrival, he would have had a better chance of slowing the flames.

The chief said that once the flames reached the attic, they spread quickly to other parts of the building. He added that part of the structure's 1960s-era hardwood ceilings made access to the attic much harder than if

the ceilings had been constructed with sheetrock as most ceilings are today.

According to John Ward, Clay County's deputy director of emergency management, personnel from Bradford County stations four (Heilbron Springs), seven (Hampton), nine (Sampson City) and one (Starke) joined Theressa's station two, in addition to Bradford County emergency medical personnel.

Ward also said Clay County firefighters from stations 11 (Keystone Heights), 23 (McRae), 25 (Camp Blanding), 14 (Middleburg), 17 (Doctors Inlet) and 20 (Green Cove Springs) also battled the blaze. In total, the five Bradford and six Clay stations supplied 45 firefighters plus support staff to the scene.

### New hydrants helped firefighters

Michael Heeder, Bradford County's emergency management public information officer said newly installed fire hydrants at the facility helped firefighters battle the blaze and possibly kept the fire from spreading to additional structures.

Heeder said three cabins east of the dining hall could have been in danger without the water supply from the Clay County Utilities Authority.

The fire hydrants and accompanying water service from CCUA was part of a \$7 million construction project the Salvation Army completed on June 8. The non-profit paid CCUA \$1 million to bury a main from the utility's Postmasters Village well site on the east side of Lake Geneva to the camp, a distance of around seven miles.

The project also included 13 new cabins, each able to sleep 26 campers and four counselors.

## Nov. 28

### Business leaders appeal for school board unity

By DAN HILDEBRAN  
*Monitor Editor*

Two officers of Clay County's Economic Development Council and a former Florida Education Commissioner told the Clay County School board that its poor public image may hinder further advances in the area's education and economic development.

Jerry Agresti, chair of the Clay County Economic Development Council, Bill Garrison, CEO of the same organization, and Jim Horne, former state senator and Florida Education Commissioner, made the comments at a Nov. 19 organizational school board meeting. The board held the special meeting to elect a chair and vice chair.

Horne recalled going to Tallahassee as the first state senator from Clay County in over 40 years. He said a key achievement while in the capital was closing the educational funding disparity between south and north Florida school districts, adding that when he arrived in Tallahassee, south Florida school districts received \$1,000 per student more in state funding than north Florida districts.

Horne said that Clay County leaders' success in closing that gap, as well as other improvements to local public education, depended on unity, a quality he found lacking in today's leaders.

"Times sure have changed," he said. "Now all the talk around town is about the petty politics of the Clay County School Board."

"Clay Countians are concerned about it," he added. "They are disturbed by it. The creation of this divisiveness on the school board and the toxic environment that seems to surround it is on everybody's mind, and they are talking about it."

Agresti went one step beyond Horne, telling the board that who they chose as chair would set the stage for the board's actions over the coming year.

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## BOARD

Continued from 7A

"Please, please pick somebody that will unite, instead of divide the board," he said, "because the business community has its ears up and you are making our job in ED (economic development) much harder than it should be."

Retired educator and Crystal Lake resident Ted W. Geiger had even harsher comments for the panel.

"I have never witnessed a board as uncivil and self-serving as this present board," he said. "It would be greatly appreciated if this board would see fit to leave their ideological ideologies, their condescending attitudes and their selfish, overzealous egos at home and do the job that they were sworn to do."

Garrison said Superintendent Charlie Van Zant should also share the blame for the board's poor public image.

"Honestly, there are six folks sitting up here," he said. "There is enough blame for everybody."

Garrison told the panel about a recent trip to purchase glasses and an exchange he had with an optometrist.

"I go in," he recalled, "put down that I am with the chamber of commerce, and the doctor that is doing the exam says, 'Well at least you are not tied up with that silly school board. It is an embarrassment. They are acting like clowns.'"

Garrison also asked the board to focus on students.

In two separate votes following public comments, the board reelected Carol Studdard as chair and chose Janice Kerekes as vice chair. In both votes, Studdard, Kerekes and Tina Bullock favored the selections while Lisa Graham and Johnna McKinnon voted against them.

After the votes, Kerekes presented Studdard with a gavel and plaque, commemorating the completion of Studdard's second term as chair.

"Thank you for two in a row," said Kerekes. "We appreciate it,

and this will make three, so it will be a true hat trick."

"You do a great job," she continued. "You've had a tough year and we greatly appreciate it."

Studdard defended the board and promised to focus on students' needs in the upcoming year.

"This is a good school district and this board is a good school board," she told the audience. "We are going to have a good year this year. I'm counting on your help and support to make this the best school board we can be. What is important is, just like Mr. Garrison said, we've got to think about the kids. That is the number-one priority and I pledge to you that is my number-one priority."

Nov. 28

## Wings of Dreams delivers Hubble simulator to Keystone airport

By DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

Wings of Dreams Aviation Museum board members delivered a piece of the Hubble Telescope simulator to the Keystone Airport on Nov. 20.

The team, consisting of Susan King, Wes Hoy, and Greg Ashley left Houston at 9 a.m. on Nov. 19 and arrived at the airport around 6 p.m. the following day.

King drove one of the escort vehicles and obtained a license specifically for the project. Hoy also drove an escort vehicle and Ashley piloted the semi that carried the Hubble.

The museum's executive director, Bob Oehl, who flew the board members to Houston, said the aft shroud is the largest Hubble artifact the museum has

acquired. NASA used it to train astronauts to repair and upgrade the telescope.

"This is the piece that had the mirrors and the computers in it that they corrected on the Hubble Telescope to get the visual images that we get today," he said.

Oehl said he plans to combine the shroud with other Hubble mockup pieces to construct a full-scale replica of the telescope. The Hubble measures 43 feet in length.

Wings of Dreams previously acquired mockups of the telescope's solar array, equipment bays and the handling devices which lowered the mockups into NASA's neutral buoyancy lab in Houston.

NASA launched the Hubble into orbit in 1990. It is named after astronomer Edwin Hubble. Between 1993 and 2009, five NASA missions either upgraded or repaired the telescope. Its service life is projected to end between 2016 and 2020, and the James Webb Space Telescope is scheduled to succeed it in 2018.

Researchers have used the instrument to find evidence that the expansion of the universe is accelerating instead of slowing down, as earlier thought. The telescope has also found evidence of black holes at the center of galaxies.

Oehl said the shroud's arrival at the Keystone Airport will complete Wings of Dreams' NASA acquisitions. He added that the organization's leadership will now focus on construction of the museum's permanent facilities.

"This closes a chapter for us," he said. "From here, we go forward to buildings."

Dec. 12

## Lakes recovery plan takes shape

By DAN HILDEBRAN  
Monitor Editor

A St. Johns River Water Management staff member presented several initiatives to the district's governing board on Dec. 10 that are designed to restore water levels to Keystone Heights-area lakes.

Hal Wilkening, with the district's division of strategic deliverables, said the initiatives are the result of two work groups that have been looking at alternatives to restore water levels to Lakes Brooklyn, Geneva, Grandin and Cowpen since February, 2009.

He said the two key strategies for the plan were to increase recharge to surficial aquifers around the lakes and to reduce upper Florida Aquifer withdrawals.

One project Wilkening said was already in process was a lake level management program promoted by Save Our Lakes President Vivian Katz. Under the plan, water levels for Lake Lowry in Camp Blanding would be set at a predetermined level and any excess water would be pumped to Alligator Creek.

Last summer, the district pumped 194 million gallons from Lake Lowry toward Keystone Heights to measure the effectiveness of such an approach. Lake advocates credited the experiment with pushing water levels on Lake Brooklyn to a two-year high.

Wilkening also proposed expanding the service area of Clay County Utilities Authority in the Keystone Heights-area. He said that CCUA's new well at Postmaster's Village draws water from the lower Floridan Aquifer while private wells in the area draw either from the upper Floridan or surficial aquifers. Hooking more customers up to CCUA would convert their upper Florida and surficial draws to draws from the lower aquifer.

Another concept Wilkening explained was pumping water from the lower Floridan to the Upper Floridan, which would raise the upper aquifer and along with it, Keystone area lakes.

Wilkening also outlined a

regional project, proposing the construction of a transmission system or pipeline from the Middleburg area to a rapid infiltration basin at the southern tip of Camp Blanding. The transmission system could move reclaimed water from CCUA's mid-clay reservoir, now under development. The system could also move storm water from the First Coast Expressway.

Wilkening said that partnering with the Department of Transportation to dispose of excess storm water had the advantage of using road funding for the project. He cited a SJRWMD project in Altamonte Springs to dispose of storm water along interstate 4 as an example of using DOT money to accomplish water resource objectives.

Wilkening told the governing board that several of the initiatives are already in the planning stages and the staff intends to move forward with the proposals regardless of the results of the district's re-evaluation of MFLs for Lakes Geneva and Brooklyn scheduled for next year.

Board members Fred N. Roberts Jr. and Chuck Drake complemented Wilkening for moving forward with the initiatives before the new MFLs were set.

However, several lake advocates said that while they agreed with the initiatives Wilkening presented, they were concerned that re-evaluated MFLs would take away the district's motivation for implementing the projects.

Save Our Lakes board member Chandler Rozear and Vice president Webb Farber said the proposed re-evaluated MFLs would render most of Lake Brooklyn dry.

## STUDENTS

Continued from 4A

and landed a job at the high school in 2007.

Wester said that getting students to identify their own strengths is a key part of his methodology.

"With all the different types of learners we have today and all the different mediums and technologies," he said, "it is really important for the kids to identify for themselves what type of learners they are."

Wester says he tailors lessons and curriculum around the students' learning strengths.

Another important part of his strategy is getting students involved in community affairs. Earlier in the school year, he took a group of students to the Wings of Dreams Museum to introduce them to the organization and to hopefully establish a permanent relationship with the Keystone Airport-based non-profit. On Jan. 6, he accompanied members of his youth advisory council to a Keystone Heights City Council meeting. He said he hopes the small group of leaders, who were elected by their peers, will serve as an example to other students.

He said his students will be at the farmers market on Saturday, at community events, and at the Wings of Dreams Museum. "I told them that this is not a Mickey Mouse, feel good about yourself-type program," he said. "This is a program in which you will be enacting real change in your community."

He said that if the council functions as he hopes, the Lake Region will benefit. "At a young age, if they can get involved in community affairs, they will be our future leaders and that is really what we are trying to do."



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# REGIONAL NEWS

NEWS FROM BRADFORD COUNTY, UNION COUNTY AND THE LAKE REGION

FEATURES  
CRIME  
SOCIALS  
OBITUARIES  
EDITORIAL

## Buster Rahn's story: a lifetime of experiences

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
Staff Writer

Buster Rahn put in 30 years at the Bradford County Telegraph, covering government meetings and sharing his two cents' worth as an editorial writer.

That would be a full career for many people, but it was merely the latest in a line of various jobs over the years for Rahn, who will celebrate his 96<sup>th</sup> birthday in February.

Rahn seems to have made the most of life—a life that saw him graduate from high school at the age of 16 and go from working on the family farm in Worthington Springs to working in retail, the automobile industry and the Department of Corrections. He still writes occasionally for the Telegraph, and though he gave up playing golf at the age of 92, he believes he's still enjoying the benefits of the activity.

"I played golf five days a week for 30 years," Rahn said. "I give golf credit for my longevity and being in good physical condition."

Rahn and his family have long been a part of Bradford and Union counties, but the beginning of the story actually occurs in a "cattle town" down south.

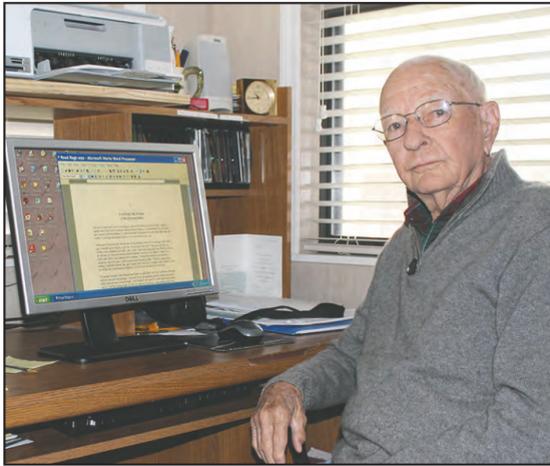
of Huguenots who were driven out of France by the Catholics because they were Presbyterian. They made their way to America before the Rahn family.

Rahn's parents were raised in Florida.

"My father was raised around Lake Park, Fla., just south of Valdosta—right on the Georgia line, actually," said Rahn, who had three brothers and one sister. "My mother was born in Columbia County, but raised in Worthington Springs.

Rahn's father worked in phosphate mines in Dunnellon, but the mines closed during World War I. Rahn's parents moved to LaBelle, which Rahn described as a "cattle town" on the north edge of the Everglades. His father was involved in an Everglades construction project.

"When the war was over, they returned to Dunnellon," Rahn said. "The phosphate vein was mined out, and my father switched over in 1921 or 1922 to limerock mining and spent the rest of his career in Marion County. There were several limerock mines in Marion County, and he worked in all of them at one time or another."



Buster Rahn sits at his computer, upon which he still composes editorials from time to time for the Bradford County Telegraph.

Limerock was mined strictly on contract and never stockpiled, Rahn said. Florida consumed a lot of limerock in a surge of road building that followed the war. The Depression, though, put an end to that.

"In 1932, we moved to Union County," Rahn said. "Mama had inherited some acreage in Union County, so we moved there and

started farming."

By that time, Rahn had already completed the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, having gone through first and second grade in his first year of school and later completing seventh and eighth grade in one year.

He attended Union County High School his junior and senior years.

"I graduated high school at

age 16—16 years and 15 days. I just had turned 16," Rahn said. "I weighed 95 pounds when I finished high school. I was a runt. I was the smallest in my group—not only the smallest, but the youngest in my group. I may have set a record for my age. I don't know."

He was too little to get a job, Rahn said, so he stayed on the family's "little one-horse farm and plowed a mule." He eventually wound up driving a truck, delivering produce from Worthington Springs to various markets, including even making a few trips to New York.

### 1<sup>st</sup> full-time job, war and marriage

In 1939, Rahn got his first full-time job at the age of 21. He worked at Harrison's Store in Brooker.

"That job at Brooker was a good job," Rahn said. "I really enjoyed it. It was long hours, but provided income. I bought my first car—a 1936 Ford. I was making \$9 a week in keep."

Rahn experienced a jump in salary when he took a job as a

timekeeper at Camp Blanding as it was being constructed. That job brought in \$35 a week.

"I'd never seen so much money in my life," Rahn said. "That was big money in those days."

Rahn was part of a group of five that carpooled to Camp Blanding. Traffic eastbound on S.R. 16 toward Camp Blanding was bumper to bumper. Rahn said if you pulled out into the left lane, no one wanted to let your back into the right lane.

"If you met a car while you were trying to pass somebody, the only way you could get back in was to pick out somebody with a brand new car and run at his front fender," Rahn said. "He'd stop for you."

When construction was completed at Camp Blanding, Rahn got a job driving a truck for the Eli Witt Cigar and Candy Company. Then, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Rahn enlisted in the Army Air Corps, though unsuccessfully at first because of health reasons.

"I had a hernia," Rahn said.

See RAHN, 9B

### From mining to farming

The story really begins outside of the United States. The Rahn family was part of the Salzburgers, a group of Lutherans driven out of Austria by the Catholics. Rahn said that side of his family made its way to America in 1721, settling around Savannah, Ga.

Rahn's mother was a DuBose. That side of the family consisted

Buster Rahn is pictured with his first wife, Atalyne, in the 1940s. They were married 50 years before Atalyne's death in 1993.



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# A look back: big storm hit Bradford in the 1890s

*Editor's note: With the area experiencing some really cold weather this week, we present a look back at a devastating freeze that occurred in Bradford County in 1894.*

On Christmas day of 1894, everyone in Starke was full of turkey and good cheer, and no one gave a thought to the weather, with the temperature sitting on a comfortable 55 degrees. Those with orange groves—and there were 6,000 bearing trees within the corporate limits of Starke—dozed in their chairs by the fire, dreaming of profits from their citrus harvest, which would help pay the Christmas bills.

Three days later, the Telegraph

was carrying stories of a great blizzard sweeping the Northeast, with readings of 20 below zero in Michigan, and snow falling as far south as Louisiana and Alabama.

The blast of arctic air rushed into Florida and settled down like a cat on its helpless prey. Anxiously watched thermometers skidded to all-time lows: 14 degrees in Starke, Gainesville and Jacksonville; 15 in Daytona; 21 in St. Petersburg. There was frost in Key West, and one man froze to death in Lake City.

There had been severe freezes in Florida before—one in 1835, which struck hard at the infant citrus industry, given birth

during the Spanish occupation, with seed from oranges brought over from Spain. Another freeze in 1886, when Jack Frost returned with a vengeance, and oranges were frozen solid on the morning of Jan. 12.

The orange industry was thriving in Starke and the vicinity, as well as elsewhere in the county. There had been an infusion of new blood in the 1800s when well-to-do Northerners began to come to the area and invest their money in orange groves, from which they expected a rich return. A few years before, the Telegraph had predicted that every man with a grove would soon become rich, and the industry looked

promising. An 1884 map of Starke showed every vacant lot in town dotted with neat rows of orange trees.

The 1894 catastrophe arrived at a time when most of the orange crop still hung on the trees. After the freeze, fruit lay on the ground, often a foot thick, spoiling, smelling and attracting droves of flies. Estimates placed the number of boxes of Florida fruit yet unharvested at 2.5 million. Some said 25 percent might be saved.

The biggest worry was about the trees themselves. Smaller trees, in many cases, had burst open, and even the larger ones appeared scorched. It takes 24 hours of below-freezing weather

to make an orange as hard as a billiard ball, but a few hours of temperatures below 20 degrees can kill a tender tree down to its roots. This two-day freeze lasted 41 hours, but it was still too soon to assess permanent damage to the trees.

The plight of the railroads, as well as the shippers and sellers, was just as grave. Hundreds of cars and boats were left idle for want of fruit to fill them, and thousands of men were out of work.

Feb. 2 newspapers carried accounts that the damage everywhere was not as bad as

See FREEZE, 6B



Valerie Eddins

## Eddins graduates from UF

Paula Seabrook announces the graduation of her daughter Valerie Seabrook Eddins from the University of Florida on Dec. 14, 2013 with a Masters degree in Occupational Therapy. Valerie received both her Bachelor and Masters degree from the University of Florida and maintained a 3.8 GPA while obtaining her Masters degree. Valerie was a 2008 graduate from Keystone Heights High School.

Valerie will begin her career in the Orlando area specializing in pediatrics in the local school district.



Carter Pruss

## Pruss graduates from basic training

Army PFC Carter Pruss graduated from basic military training at Fort Jackson, Columbia, SC. PFC Pruss successfully completed an intensive nine-week program with the 1st Platoon of Delta Company 2/39. His training included military discipline and courtesy, physical fitness, instruction in basic combat skills, military weapons, chemical warfare, drill and ceremony, basic first aid, and field training exercises.

Following two weeks home on leave, PFC Pruss will report to Fort Gordon in Augusta, Ga. for military occupation school. He is the son of Bill and Karen Pruss of Melrose, and a 2013 graduate of Keystone Heights High School.

## Talent Fest Showdown is Jan. 25

The annual Bradford Fest Talent Fest Showdown is scheduled for Jan. 25, 2014, at 6 p.m. at the Bradford High School auditorium.

Admission is \$7 for adults and \$5 for 17 and under. Children 5 and under are admitted free.

Prizes for contestants are as follows: \$1,000 for first place, \$300 for second place and \$200 for third place. In addition, the top three will participate in final auditions April 18 for a chance to perform at the 2014 Suwannee River Jam as well as receiving a radio opportunity with WEAG. The first-place individual will also be invited to perform at a May 17 Santa Fe College concert.

The deadline for participants to enter is Jan. 15.

For more information on entry fees and requirements, please contact Cheryl Canova at the Santa Fe College Andrews Center at [cheryl.canova@sfcollge.edu](mailto:cheryl.canova@sfcollge.edu) or 352-395-4410.

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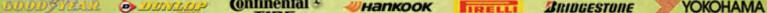
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**LEGALS**

The New River Community Health Center Board of Directors will meet January 15, 2014 at the Union County Library, located at 250 SE 5th Ave, Lake Butler, FL 32054 from 12:30 - 1:30 pm.

**CRIME**

**Confused shoplifter arrested**

Timothy Jerome Stewart, 21, of Starke was arrested Dec. 31 by Starke police for larceny and for two charges of resisting an officer.

According to the arrest report, Stewart was at the Kangaroo convenience store on the corner of U.S. 301 and S.R. 16 in Starke when he first put items on the counter to purchase, but told the clerk he didn't have any money to pay for them. Stewart left the store, but re-entered it several minutes later and proceeded to do the same thing, placing several items on the counter, then telling the clerk he had no money after she rang them up. The clerk warned Stewart she would call the police if he tried the same stunt again, and he left the store.

Approximately an hour later, Stewart came back into the store with several items (observed on the store's surveillance video), placed them on the counter, grabbed several other items off a shelf and placed them on the counter, then told the clerk he had purchased them earlier and wanted a refund. After the clerk told him several times he hadn't bought anything at the store earlier, Stewart became aggravated and finally walked out of the store with several items without paying for them.

Starke police were called and were able to locate Stewart a few minutes later on Thompson Street. According to the arrest report, Stewart had a strong odor of alcohol on him and had slurred speech. After refusing to cooperate with the officer and giving false information about his identity, Stewart was charged for shoplifting, resisting without violence and resisting/obstruction by a disguised person. Bond was set at \$1,000.

**High-speed chase leads to arrest of 3**

Three people from Jacksonville were arrested Jan. 5 after speeding through Starke at close to 90 mph before being stopped outside Lawtey with the use of stop sticks by Bradford deputies.

According to the arrest report, a deputy was headed south on U.S. 301 in front of Bradford Square in Starke (across from McDonald's) when he observed a vehicle coming north at a high rate of speed. The deputy clocked the vehicle with his radar at 89 mph in a 30 mph zone, weaving in and out of traffic and traveling in the turn lane through the usually busy area at 2 a.m.

The deputy turned around to follow the vehicle and radioed for help to other law enforcement. Another Bradford deputy was able to put out stop sticks near Lawtey at Northwest 219<sup>th</sup> Street. The sticks punctured the tires, but the vehicle continued another 3 miles before stopping at Northwest 241<sup>st</sup> Street north of Lawtey.

Deputies were able to place

the three occupants under arrest without incident, and a search of the vehicle turned up marijuana, a marijuana grinder and four small rocks of methamphetamine.

The driver of the vehicle was Sheena Maria Reddick, 30, of Jacksonville. She was charged with fleeing/eluding police at a high rate of speed, operating a vehicle without a valid license, selling amphetamine and possession of drug equipment. Bond was set at \$22,500.

Passenger Demetreous Anthony Reece, 30, of Jacksonville was charged with selling amphetamine, possession of marijuana and possession of drug equipment. Bond was set at \$15,000.

The other passenger, Dodray Dedon Ross, 20, of Jacksonville was charged with selling amphetamine and possession of drug equipment. Bond was set at \$10,000.

**Recent arrests in Bradford, Clay or Union**

The following individuals were arrested recently by local law enforcement officers in Bradford, Union or Clay (Keystone Heights area) counties:

**Bradford**

Curtis G. Bennett, 49, of Macclenny was arrested Jan. 2 by Bradford deputies for driving while license suspended or revoked.

Cordarly Antonio Booker, 26, of Gainesville was arrested Jan. 2 by Bradford deputies for probation violation.

Pedro Alvon Carter, 43, of Starke was arrested Jan. 4 by Bradford deputies for probation violation and for three charges of withholding child support.

Michael Allen Dunn, 39, of Jacksonville was arrested Dec. 31 by Starke police for disorderly intoxication. According to the arrest report, police were called about a man walking in traffic and kicking at vehicles on U.S. 301 north in Starke, near Aaron's Rentals. When the officer arrived, Dunn's mother was there, and she stated she had picked him up in Orange Heights and was heading back to Georgia when they got into a verbal argument. Fearing for her safety, she pulled over, and Dunn got out and started walking into traffic. The police officer noted he could smell alcohol on Dunn, and his mother stated he suffers from schizophrenia and has a severe drinking problem. Bond was set at \$5,000.

Gregory Garth Fieseler, 35, of Starke was arrested Jan. 2 by Starke police for larceny. According to the arrest report, Fieseler was at CVS in Starke when he went into the bathroom with several packages of cologne. A CVS employee confronted Fieseler about opening one of the packages in the bathroom, which he denied. When told the police were coming, he fled the store and was located later by the police on Lafayette Street and arrested for shoplifting. Bond was set at \$2,000.

Lee Verne Frazier, 51, of

Starke was arrested Dec. 31 by Bradford deputies for battery. According to the arrest report, Frazier was observed by several people kicking a female victim (his girlfriend) and dragging her down the street. When police arrived, the victim declined to file a complaint, and Frazier claimed someone hit his girlfriend and then ran in the woods. Frazier was arrested, and bond was set at \$5,000.

Levi Zebulon Gaylord, 33, of Starke was arrested Jan. 1 by Starke police for failure to appear.

Jeffrey Carl Goodman, 26, of Starke was arrested Dec. 31 by Starke police for assault and for resisting an officer.

Joshua Brian Gunter, 21, of Lake Butler was arrested Jan. 4 by Bradford deputies for probation violation.

Linda Hankerson, 33, of Lawtey was arrested Jan. 5 by Starke police for trespassing at Orange Wood Apartments.

Jennifer Nicole Hazen, 28, of Brooker was arrested Jan. 1 by Bradford deputies for driving while license suspended or revoked.

Tareva C. McCray, 27, of Orange Park was arrested Jan. 2 by Starke police for two charges of larceny. According to the arrest report, McCray placed a queen-sized mattress cover and several baby monitors in a shopping cart at Walmart, and then attempted to walk out the store without paying. A Walmart security person asked McCray to come back to the front of the store with him, which she did for a few steps before turning and running out of the store. She was apprehended by the security person and detained until the police arrived and arrested her. Bond was set at \$2,000.

Bobbijoe Lynn Melton, 43, of Starke was arrested Dec. 30 by Bradford deputies for aggravated battery. According to the arrest report, Melton spit in the victim's face before punching her and knocking her down. Melton then grabbed a broomstick and hit the victim in the back and the arm with the stick, possibly breaking the victim's arm. Bond was set at \$500.

Jeannetta Quantana Merriweather, was arrested Dec. 31 by Starke police for aggravated battery, burglary, cruelty toward a child and resisting an officer. According to the arrest report, the charges stem from an early November attack on neighbors after Merriweather and her boyfriend were asked to keep the noise down at their home. The victims came out of their home to the front porch on Nov. 6 to ask Merriweather and boyfriend Jonathan Bass to quiet down, as they had awoken the victim's child. According to the report, Bass and Merriweather came over, and Bass started attacking the male victim. While the men were engaged outside, Merriweather kicked the front door open, and started attacking the female neighbor after throwing the child out of the way. Both males entered the house, and fighting ensued until Merriweather and Bass fled the home. Police were not able to locate Merriweather and Bass

that day, so warrant affidavits (sworn complaints) were forwarded to the State Attorney's Office for the charges. A warrant was issued for Merriweather's arrest at the end of December. The warrant affidavit for Bass for battery charges is still under review. Bond was set at \$46,000 for Merriweather.

George Anthony Padgett, 51, of Lake Butler was arrested Jan. 1 by Bradford deputies for two charges of probation violation.

Jeffery Gerald Sellers, 33, of Lawtey was arrested Jan. 3 by Bradford deputies for shoplifting. According to the arrest report, Sellers was at Harvey's supermarket between Melrose and Keystone Heights when a store employee stopped him to question him about abnormal bulges in the waistline of his shirt. Sellers took off running and left in a vehicle from the store. Deputies were able to trace the vehicle back to Sellers, and he was arrested after the store employee positively identified him. Store video revealed Sellers had stolen two packages of steaks valued at \$45-\$60. Bond was set at \$5,000.

Brandy Nicole Snyder, 28, of Lake Butler was arrested Dec. 31 by Bradford deputies for driving while license suspended or revoked and for possession of marijuana.

John Henry Thornton, 32, of Starke was arrested Jan. 3 by Bradford deputies for failure to appear and for withholding child support.

**Keystone/Melrose**

Michael Able, 29, of Melrose was arrested Jan. 1 by Clay deputies for resisting an officer and trespassing.

Grant Harris, 24, of Keystone Heights was arrested Jan. 6 by Clay deputies for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

Evan Keller, 21, of Keystone Heights was arrested Dec. 31 by Clay deputies for grand theft and dealing in stolen property.

**Union**

Ryhome Keonte Smith, 18, of Lyons, Ga., was arrested Dec. 31 by Union deputies for battery, assault and resisting an officer. According to the arrest report, a deputy was called to a disturbance involving Smith and his mother, a resident of Lake Butler. Smith had been asked

to leave his mother's residence after staying there for several weeks. Smith became abusive when packing his things, coming into physical contact several times with his mother. When the deputy arrived, he also had to be physically restrained and threatened with a Taser to cooperate with the deputy.

Timothy Steven Cox, 21, of Lake Butler was arrested Dec. 31 by Union deputies for felony probation violation after being arrested in Columbia County on Nov. 23, 2013, and charged with attempted burglary of an occupied residence.

Djaoun Devonte Paige, 21, of Lake Butler was arrested Dec. 31 by Union deputies on a warrant from Alachua County for lewd and lascivious charges.

Cori McSpadden Redding, 25, of Lake Butler was arrested Jan. 4 by Union deputies for a warrant out of Alachua County for fraud and false ID to law enforcement.

Eric Ian Darby, 30, of Starke was arrested Jan. 5 by Union deputies for driving under the influence and for a warrant out of Flagler County for failure to appear for a traffic offense.

Jacquan Marie Edwards, 23,

was arrested Jan. 4 by Union deputies for driving while license suspended or revoked. According to the arrest report, Edwards was pulled over for running a stop sign. A strong smell of marijuana was coming from the vehicle and from her person, according to the report. Later, after conducting a search of Edwards at the jail and not finding any drugs, she admitted that she had eaten a marijuana joint when she was pulled over by the deputy, before he reached the vehicle. She was then charged with tampering with and destroying evidence, according to the arrest report.

Latisha Diane Parker, 36, of Lake Butler was arrested Dec. 30 by Union deputies for failure to appear.

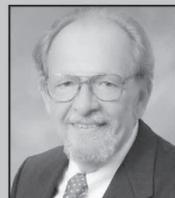
Ethan Etienne Anderson, 33, of Raiford was arrested Dec. 31 by Union deputies for possession of narcotic equipment and disorderly intoxication. According to the arrest report, Anderson was disturbing the residents of an apartment at the Union Housing Authority by knocking repeatedly on the front door. After being arrested by a deputy, a metal pipe and other drug paraphernalia were discovered in the back seat of the patrol car Anderson was transported in.

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# EDITORIAL/OPINION

BRADFORD COUNTY TELEGRAPH • UNION COUNTY TIMES • LAKE REGION MONITOR

## Road rage: the scourge of the motoring public

The term "road rage" is of recent vintage, coined by the motoring public to reflect anger at another driver for a real or imagined driving offense, leading to a confrontation that sometimes goes beyond a verbal harangue to a physical assault. Newspapers and newscasts often report the results of road rage that end in tragedy. It is to be avoided at all costs.

Oftentimes, we are unaware that we have set up conditions that lead to road rage. Some years ago, I was driving in Orlando—a city that I do not know very well. It was late in the day, as workers were returning home after a hard day's work, and a light rain was falling. I was driving slowly in the left lane of a four-lane, heavily traveled highway, looking for an address. I stopped for a traffic light when a man appeared at my window. I lowered the window to ascertain his intentions, only to hear a verbal assault on "blocking traffic."

While he continued his ranting, I raised the window, the light changed and I moved on. I certainly didn't intend to incur his wrath, and I understood his frustration, but, obviously, the man had a short fuse.

On another occasion, I was driving from Starke to Lake Butler on S.R. 100 in the late afternoon, with the sun about an hour high. I was early for an appointment and was poking about at 30 mph, lost in thought. I was startled by the sound of a siren, and looking in the mirror, I saw the flashing lights of a Florida Highway Patrolman.

I immediately pulled over, wondering why I was being stopped. The officer came to my door, asking, "May I see your driver's license and registration?" I asked him, "Why did you stop me?" He replied, "Man, you're impeding traffic." Sure enough, there was a long string of cars behind me that couldn't get by. Lost in thought, I had neglected to check my rearview mirror.

The officer told me to proceed, but to pick up my speed to 45 mph and pay attention to my driving.

There was no road rage involved in this encounter, but I had certainly sowed the seeds for a possible confrontation and learned a lesson about paying attention to my driving.

A recent event in Jacksonville may be another version of road rage—a man shot and killed a teenager for playing his stereo too loud in a parking lot. I'm not sure of the outcome of the trial—the offender was tried for manslaughter—

but it was a high price to pay for being offended by loud music.

Because road rage isn't an everyday occurrence, we tend to place it in the out-of-sight-out-of-mind category and fail to remember the seriousness of infringing on the motoring rights of others, such as driving in the left lane of a four-lane highway and forcing faster vehicles to pass on the right side.

I was not sure of the traffic laws regarding driving in the left lane, so I visited with Bradford County Sheriff's Office Capt. Brad Smith. He referred to his manual and reported that the left lane is the passing lane and reserved for passing only, although people driving at or above the speed limit may use the left lane.

Keep in mind that driving in the left lane invites motorists with short fuses to reciprocate—at times with serious results.

Smith said one of his pet peeves is a driver that doesn't use his or her turn signal. It is difficult to understand why owners of expensive vehicles do not utilize their turn signals since doing so not only protects their vehicles, but also their physical well-being.

The best thing about turn signals is that it costs nothing to activate them, and their use may save a driver a tidy amount of hard cash. Courtesy to others and the avoidance of an accident is reason enough to cultivate the habit of activating the equipment.

Prior to 1900, there were a small number of prototype vehicles built and functioning, but the forerunner of the modern automobile had its genesis in the years immediately following the turn of the century. While dozens of nameplates have been produced, the names of Ford and Buick are among the very few that have survived into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The cost in human lives because of automobiles is horrendous, but mankind isn't going to give them up. Manufacturers will continue to make vehicles safer as models change each year.

There was a popular slogan concerning safety a few years ago. It was short-lived, but very effective. It simply stated: "The life you save may be your own."

Keep it in mind while driving.

Buster Rahn  
Telegraph editorialist

## LETTERS

EDITOR@BCTELEGRAPH.COM

### Thanks to all for help after house fire

Dear Editor,

On Christmas Day, our lives were forever changed by an electrical fire that destroyed our home. Although we lost material things, we were very blessed that we, nor our beloved pets were injured. We are extremely grateful to all our neighbors and even their Christmas guests who ensured our safety, offered warm clothes and coffee, and even welcomed us into their homes.

We offer sincere gratitude to everyone who responded to our 911 call—the ambulance, Starke Fire Department's Engine 1, Heilbron Springs VFD, and Lawley VFD. While we aren't happy that you had to work and be away from your families on Christmas Day, we are certainly thankful you were there for us. We want to especially thank the fire fighters who went above and beyond to save our Christmas gifts that were on our screened porch. To everyone, there are too many to name—who have helped us since Wednesday, we thank you sincerely from the bottom of our hearts.

Mary Kathy Long

### The 'other side of the fence'

Dear Editor:

On Christmas Day 2013, tragedy struck our lives. Words cannot describe the emotional devastation. Everything we owned was destroyed, most importantly, our medications and our pet's medications were also lost in the fire.

The Red Cross jumped in with assistance and were able to acquire meds for one of us. Apparently there was an issue with my script. So they were unsuccessful in acquiring replacement meds for me. In desperation, I called the local facility responsible for my scripts. To my dismay, I was told that I had to wait until

Monday for help. I requested to speak to the main office. To my surprise and horror, the main office rep informed me that she was only available for "new patients." Needless to say, I am still appalled that I couldn't get my med that, ironically, I desperately needed. Also, to my dismay, I was unable to acquire replacement meds for my pets. The vet office rep refused to sell me a replacement box even though I had just purchased it the week before and was destroyed in the fire.

Both of these issues have since been resolved. I am sharing these incidents publicly so local employers will hopefully educate their staff on how to treat customers who ask for assistance after a tragedy.

Thank you for allowing me to share these negative experiences along side the caring, loving experiences "On The Other side of the Fence."

Kathy Wainwright DeVoe

### Union County needs to change its ways and leadership

Dear Editor:

We in Union County recently lost our Sheriff, Jerry Whitehead. He was a good man, well respected and loved by many, he will be surely missed. The Governor will appoint a temporary Sheriff till the next election, then the voters of Union County will elect a new Sheriff. After some 61 years of the name Whitehead being in the position of Sheriff in Union County, we need some new blood, so to speak. We need to do in Union County what we are going to do in Washington DC, clean it out and clean it up. The "good

old boy" attitude needs to end, and the people of Union County need to start with the position of Sheriff. Elect someone new with new and fresh ideas, someone who will clean up this County. Enough is enough.

Albert J. Andrews Sr.

### Thanks to Bradford paramedics

Dear Editor:

Thank you for allowing me to express my grateful appreciation to the Bradford County Rescue Unit located in Starke.

One week ago while visiting my sister I had to make a decision that was very hard for me to make. My sister was ill and needed medical attention. After a few minutes I made the decision to have my great niece call rescue. That decision was certainly one of the best I have ever made. The three young men on rescue not only made my sister comfortable and restful as they prepared to transport her to U.F. Hospital in Gainesville they also did the same for me. I have never seen the concern and care from anyone that is "just doing their job" as I did from these three gentlemen. Not only did they give me peace at her home before transporting her, they also came into her room at the ER long after her arrival. Perhaps they were on another run and out of their kindness checked on us after they got their other patient comfortable with ER.

I could never thank these guys enough but I did want to share with the residents of Bradford County the love and respect I have for their Paramedic's. Way to go Bradford County Rescue Units.

Sincerely,  
Vera Clayton  
Kings Ferry

## LETTERS

EDITOR@BCTELEGRAPH.COM

### The holidays have come and gone

Dear Editor:

What a beautiful Main Street, Lake Butler, had from East to West, light poles decorated with Christmas colors, it really made a beautiful ride from one end of "OUR TOWN" to the other. Every car, truck, Motor Home, bicycle, Motor Cycle, just anyone walking or riding on this SPECIAL, BEAUTIFUL STREET, enjoyed every shining, glowing light. Also driving all around our beautiful town of Lake Butler, bright colored lights all over many homes; some dripping icicles from roof of one home with beautiful colored lights in the shrubbery and trees, everyone knew, "Santa Clause was Coming to Town" He really came, in a big way, giving candy, cookies, toys TO CHILDREN OF "OUR TOWN", UNION COUNTY AND OTHER PLACES! Thanks are to given to "THE CITY FATHERS" and all their helpers, making this a very

SPECIAL event when "SANTA CLAUS CAME TO TOWN" He made a list, copied it twice; He came to visit everyone, Who had been happy and nice He really came to "OUR TOWN."

During all the "HUSTLE AND BUSTLE" getting ready for a big celebration- The birth of our Lord and Savior, the baby, Jesus Christ, who was born in a stable, where cows and other animals lived; He became the LORD and SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST" wishing for each one of us to be in "HIS HOUSE" to worship him on Sunday, the first day of the week. "HAPPY 2014 TO ALL UNION COUNTIANS"

One of the saddest days of our county was the passing of our special sheriff, Jerry Whitehead, for his many years of service to the smallest county in the state of Florida. He was known throughout the state by many sheriffs. And Gov. Rick Scott attended his funeral at First Christian Church. Our prayers are with the family and friends of Sheriff Jerry Whitehead.

Marjorie M. Driggers  
Historian

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# OBITUARIES

## Philomena Adkinson

STARKE—Philomena Yolanda Chiachiarre Adkinson, 90, of Starke died Saturday, Dec. 28, 2013 at Bradford Terrace Nursing Home. She was born April 24, 1923 in Schenectady, N.Y. to the late Francesco and Maria Michela (Costantino) Chiachiarre. She served in the United States Navy. She has been a resident of Bradford County since 1965 moving from Blountstown, and retiring from the Bradford County School System as an elementary school teacher. She was a member of St. Edward's Catholic Church; American Legion Post in Starke, U.S. Navy WAVES Association, National Retired Teachers Association, and the Florida Retired Education Association.

She is survived by: her husband of 64 years, Warney M. Adkinson; daughter, Dianne A. (Johann Meyer) Williams of Valdosta, Ga.; sister, Angelina C. DiNicola of Pittsfield, Mass.; three grandchildren; and four great grandchildren. There are no scheduled services at this time. Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home of Starke.

best deviled eggs. Her favorite time was Thanksgiving because it gave her the opportunity to do two of her favorite things, cook and spend time with her family. Hope was always willing to help someone in need and her generosity extended to those outside of her family. Hope worked tirelessly to provide a loving home to her son and three daughters. Hope was of the Baptist faith and was a member of the Church of Christ in Keystone Heights.

Hope is survived by: one son, Steven "Steve" Latham of Tallahassee; three daughters, Angela Baretela of Atlanta, Lauren Latham of New York, N.Y. and Rachel Toole of Atlanta; three grandchildren, Hailey Timian of Atlanta, Valarie Latham and Gabby Latham, both of Tallahassee; her mother, Shirley Carroll of Keystone Heights; and three sisters, Lynn Tison of Jacksonville, Debbie Goolsby, and Chrissy Hengl both of Keystone Heights.

Funeral services were held Jan. 3, 2014 in the Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home Chapel with Mr. Robert Bell officiating. In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to the American Heart Association at <http://www.heart.org>. Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home of Starke.

PAID OBITUARY



Judith Delmoral

## Judith Delmoral

STARKE—Judith "Judy" Kowes Delmoral, age 59, of Starke, passed away at her residence on Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2013. She was born in Fort Lauderdale on June 10, 1954 to the late Gerald Kowes and Eileen Bourne-Kowes. Judy, originally from South Florida, worked at Florida Pest Control for seven years. Judy was an avid Miami Dolphins fan and enjoyed visiting friends in New Smyrna Beach during her spare time. Judy is preceded in death by the love of her life, her husband of 16 years, Ralph Delmoral and her nephew, Bryan Thomas McCarthy.

Judy is survived by: her siblings, Lynda (Tom) McCarthy of Starke, and her brother, Jeff (Susan) Kowes of Woodland, Calif.; her niece, Michele (Jon) Dow; her nephews, Don (Danielle) McCarthy, Eric (Jennifer) Kowes, and Greg (Kim) Kowes; her great-niece, Mileena McCarthy and numerous other great nieces and nephews.

Memorial services will be held at a later date. Arrangements are under the care and direction of Archie Tanner Funeral Services, Starke. 904-964-5757. Visit [www.archietannerfuneralservices.com](http://www.archietannerfuneralservices.com) to sign the family's guest book.

PAID OBITUARY

## Garnet Dukes Jr.

TALLAHASSEE—Garnet Lavan Dukes Jr., 67, died Saturday, Jan. 4, 2014, at home, following an extended illness. He was born Sept. 17, 1946, to the late Garnet Lavan Dukes, Sr., and Frances Taylor Dukes.

He is survived by: his son, Joseph Sheehy Dukes of Tallahassee; his long-time partner, Linda Champion; and brother, Terry M. (Debi) Dukes.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 1700 N. Meridian Road, Tallahassee, Florida 32303, or Worthington Springs United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 2, Worthington Springs, Florida 32697.

Funeral services were held on Jan. 7, at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. Burial was held on Jan. 8, at Elzey Chapel Cemetery in Worthington Springs. Archer Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements at graveside.

## Boyd Hall

STARKE—Boyd Wilmot Hall, 67, of Starke died at Bradford Terrace in Starke Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2014 after an extended illness. He was born in Palatka and lived most of his life in Starke. He was a Baptist. He was preceded in death by: his parents, Calvin and Doris Brown Hall; and brothers, Lamar, Kenny, and Loyd Hall.

He is survived by: sisters, Darlene Evans of Starke and Marion (Claude) Thompson of Gainesville, brothers, Leon (Barbara) Hall of California, James (Mary) Hall of Lawtey, Wayne (Marilyn) Hall of Tennessee.

Funeral services were held Jan. 4 in the Chapel of Archer Funeral Home of Lake Butler with Bro. Ricky Griffis officiating. Burial followed at Hope Cemetery of Theresa. Archer Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

## Christine Hengl

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS—Christine June "Chrissy" Hengl, 48, of Keystone Heights died Friday, Jan. 3, 2014. She was born on Sept. 22, 1965 in Jacksonville and was a retired hairdresser. She was of the Baptist faith and was preceded in death by: daughter, Jessica Carroll; father, Charles "Charlie" Carroll; and sister, Patricia "Hope" Carroll.

She is survived by: daughters, Denise Hengl of Marathon and Danielle Hengl of Keystone Heights; mother, Shirley (Williams) Carroll of Florahome; sisters, Debbie Goolsby of Florahome and Lynn Tison of Jacksonville; and one granddaughter.

Funeral services will be held on Friday, Jan. 10, at 2:00 p.m. in the Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home Chapel with Mr. Robert Bell officiating. The family will begin receiving friends at 1:00 p.m. Burial will follow at Paran Cemetery. Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home of Keystone Heights.



Judith Jewell

## Judith Jewell

HAMPTON—Judith Kay Jewell, 59, of Hampton passed away Friday, Nov. 29, 2013. She was born Jan. 21, 1954 in Lima, Ohio, the daughter of Chester Jewell and Helen Tankersley Jewell. Judy loved life to the fullest. She was very fond of dancing, bowling, playing with her Barbie dolls, her Elvis movie collections, coloring, her many cds, and playing Wii and PlayStation, her membership at Green Cove Springs Church of Christ, and most importantly her family. She touched others deeply with her genuine concern for them. She was preceded in death by her parents; sister, Betty Fox; brother in laws, Roger Hollenbacher, and Mike Young; and nephew, Chris Young.

Judy is survived by: her sisters, Joyce Ann Hollenbacher, Sandra Helen Young, and Carol Sue (Dale) Miller; her brother, Danny Lee (Mary) Jewell; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Special thanks to Grannies Restaurant and Pam for loving Judy and giving her the opportunity to work for her for five years. Judy would always say "I love my job." And she surely did.

A special thanks to my niece, Amy, and husband, Johnny Webb who helped care for Judy and loved her dearly. And also my friend and confidante, Maureen Delois Wooten, who was more than my friend, who helped for Judy in our time of need. Delois, Always remember "who me?" To her sisters, Joyce Hollenbacher and Sandy Young who also helped to care for her through the years. Thanks to

all those that took time to ask about and love Judy. To all her doctors and nurses. Thank you to The Shands Homecare Team. To Gainesville Hospice and a special thanks to the Hospice team, Valorie, Kristina, Dr. Bichier and Brittany. Thank you for all the love and concern you gave to Judy while she was in your care. You are an awesome group.

To know Judy was to know love. She was a blessing to all of us. Always remember the smiles, laughter, and the tears Judy gave us.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Gainesville Hospice in honor of Judy. Be blessed always and when you see a butterfly, think of Judy. Judy, I love you and I miss you deeply and always will!!!

Carol Miller and Family.

PAID OBITUARY

## Sarah Malone

ORANGE PARK—Sarah Pearl Hendrix Malone, 95, died on Monday, Dec. 30, 2013. She was born to James and Ada Hendrix in Bulloch County, Ga. on July 20, 1918. She was a member of the First Christian Church of Lake Butler.

She was preceded in death by: son, Morrill E. Malone, Jr.; and brothers, Joseph, John, and Louis; and sister, Ruth Brandt.

She is survived by: two grandsons; four great-grandchildren; and sister, Grace Muzzy. During her life she resided in Georgia, Jacksonville, Miami, Lake Butler, and recently, Orange Park. She was retired from Eastern Air Lines.

Funeral services were held on Jan. 4, 2014 at Archer Funeral Home of Lake Butler.

## Annie McLellan

DARLINGTON, S.C.—Annie Maude Dowling McLellan, a resident of Bethea Baptist Home, died Friday, Jan. 3, 2014.

Born Dec. 24, 1918, she was the daughter of the late John Rance Dowling, Sr. and Debbie Browning Dowling. Mrs. McLellan earned her BA from the University of Florida and received her Masters of Education at Francis Marion University. She taught fifth grade for many years at Harlee Elementary in Florence and at Pate Elementary in Darlington. She enjoyed her grandchildren, gardening, and traveling. Mrs. McLellan was a member of Central Baptist Church. She was preceded in death by: her husband, S.C. (Sam) McLellan; and a grandson, Nick Chrisley.

Surviving are her children: Carol (Wade) Jordan, Nancy (Paul) Vivian, Marsha (Darrell) Johnson, Eddie (Jean) McLellan, Pat (Dana) Chrisley; grandchildren, Wade Jordan III, Scott Jordan, Matthew Vivian, Walker Vivian, Lucy (Kevin) Steele, Lacy (Rick) Manship, Elizabeth (Dylan) Royal, Sam McLellan, Dana Chrisley; great-grandchildren, Simon Perkins, Luke Manship and Brody King.

A funeral service was held Jan. 5 at Central Baptist Church in Darlington, S.C. Burial followed in Florence Memorial Gardens, directed by Belk Funeral Home.

The family expresses their gratitude to the staff and administration of Bethea Baptist Home and Hospice.

A guestbook is available on line at [www.belkfuneralhome.com](http://www.belkfuneralhome.com)

PAID OBITUARY

## Lee Outlaw, Jr.

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS—Lee Wylie Outlaw, Jr., 83, of Keystone Heights died in Palatka on Monday, Jan. 6, 2014. He was born on June 19, 1930 in Wrightsville, Ga. to the late Lee Wylie and Emma (Wilcher) Outlaw, Sr. He worked as an automobile paint and body repairman, and has been a resident of Keystone Heights since 1984. He was a member of the Christ Independent Methodist Church of Palatka. His wife of 62 years, Shirley Outlaw preceded him in death March of 2013.

He is survived by: children, Lee Wylie (Kathy) Outlaw, III of Texas, Shirley Deborah (George) Newcomb, Pamela Outlaw (Brian David) Mellone, and Rebecca Outlaw (Mark) Wagoner all of Keystone Heights; eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held on

Thursday, Jan. 9, at 10:00 a.m. in the Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home chapel with Pastor Michael Hudson officiating. Viewing will begin one hour to services beginning. Burial will follow at the Keystone Heights Cemetery. Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home of Keystone Heights.

## Nanazee Pinkston

LAKE BUTLER—Nanazee Thomas Pinkston 85, of Lake Butler died Friday, Jan. 3, 2014 at the Suwannee Haven Hospice with family by her side. She was born in Lacrosse, living most of her life in Union County. She was the daughter of the late Rex D. Thomas and Kate Parker Thomas. She was also preceded in death by her husband, Henry Pinkston; son, Rex Tommy Pinkston; daughter, June Pinkston; and a brother and sister. She was a member of the Salem Primitive Baptist Church in Lake City.

She is survived by: daughters, Nancy Hodgson of Gainesville, Terrie (Angus) Rimes of Worthington Springs, Jean (John) Hampton of Macclenny; sons, Henry Roger (Kay) Pinkston of Lake Butler, Danny L. Pinkston of Lake Butler, Timmy (Patricia) Pinkston of Lake Butler; sister, Ann Pinkston of Worthington Springs; four grandchildren; and four great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Jan. 7, in the Archer Funeral Home Chapel with Elder Herman Griffin officiating. Burial followed in Old Providence Cemetery. Archer Funeral Home of Lake Butler is in charge of arrangements.

## Betty Rosenberry

LAWTEY—Betty Marie Crawford Rosenberry, 80, of Lawtey died Monday, Dec. 30, 2013 at Windsor Manor Nursing Home. She was born on July 22, 1933 in Starke to the late Jack and Lettie (Edwards) Crawford and moved to Lawtey in 1997 from Jacksonville. Betty was a homemaker and member of Grace United Methodist Church in Lawtey. She was preceded in death by her husband Lester James Rosenberry.

She is survived by: sisters, Gloria Shuford of Lawtey, Hazel (Erwin) Muse of Lawtey, Vivian Scott of Starke; brothers, Jack Merrill (Ann) Crawford of Starke and Leo Darold (Dale) Crawford of Douglasville, Ga. Funeral services were held on Jan. 3 in the Dewitt C. Jones Chapel. Interment followed services in Dyal Cemetery with Reverend Geary Rowell officiating. Arrangements are by Jones-Gallagher funeral Home of Starke.



Bryan Sheffield Jr.

## Bryan Sheffield Jr.

STARKE—Bryan Keith Sheffield, Jr., 30, of Starke suddenly died Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2013. He was born on Aug. 10, 1983 in Gainesville and was a butcher's aide in a meat market.

He is survived by his parents Patricia Ann Jordan of Starke and Bryan Keith Sheffield, Sr.

Memorial services were held on Jan. 4 in the First Christian Church of Starke. Arrangements are by Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home of Starke.



Patricia Carroll

## Patricia Carroll

Keystone Heights—Ms. Patricia Hope Carroll (Hope), 55, of Keystone Heights passed away Saturday, Dec. 28, 2013. Hope was born April 21, 1958 in Jacksonville to Shirley Carroll and the late Charles "Charlie" Carroll. Prior to moving to Keystone Heights, Hope had resided in Lawrenceville, Ga. for over 25 years. During her professional career Hope held the position of Executive Vice President for several IT companies. She enjoyed throwing parties, spending time with her family and baking. She was a passionate and excellent cook and arguably made the world's

### In Memory

Hattie M. Loggins  
August 18, 1930 –  
January 10, 2011

Dear Mama,

Three years since that sad day, you were called away,  
God took you home it's his will, within our hearts you'll stay.

Sad within our memories; lonely our hearts today, One we loved dearly has forever been called away.

Gone, the face we loved so dear, silent the voice we loved to hear

Too far away for sight or speech, not too far for thoughts to reach.

You'll never be forgotten; here you're no more

In our hearts still with us as you were before.

Deep in our hearts a picture, a loved one laid to rest

In memory's frame we'll keep, you are the best.

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Children/Grands

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# OBITUARIES

## Fred Stanley

LAKE BUTLER—Fred Van Stanley, 70, of Lake Butler died at the Orange Park Medical Center Thursday, Jan. 2, 2014 after an extended illness. He was born in Crestview and lived most of his life in Bonifay before moving to Lake Butler 14 years ago. He was a lieutenant for the Florida Department of Corrections before retiring in 2005. He was the son of the late Ruby and Zirlene Cox Stanley. He is preceded in death by his wife, Christine Stanley.

He is survived by: daughters, Lisa Stanley of Denver, Colo., Melissa (John) Johns of Lake Butler; son, Marvin Stanley of Lake Butler; brothers, Joe Stanley and Tim Stanley, both of Baker; Ted Stanley of Freeport; and four grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Jan. 5, in the Chapel of Archer Funeral Home of Lake Butler with Pastor Jason Johns officiating. Burial followed at Dekle Cemetery of Lake Butler. Archer Funeral Home of Lake Butler is in charge of arrangements.



Michael Waldron

## Michael Waldron

LAKE BUTLER—Michael Hilton Waldron, age 61, of Lake Butler, passed away Dec. 28, 2013 at his daughter's residence. He was born in Fort Pierce on April 19, 1952 to the late Hilton Waldron and Gloria Jean Waldron. Michael was raised in Bradford County and he graduated from Bradford High School. After High School, Michael joined the United States Army where he served for eight years. He spent many years operating heavy equipment and landscaping golf courses. Michael enjoyed fishing and spending time with his grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents; his stepmother, Sandra Waldron; and his sister, Wanda Midett.

Michael is survived by: his wife of 24 years, April Hunt Waldron of Lake Butler; his loving children, Jason (Kelly) Hunt, Michael Waldron, and Nicole (Chaz) Crawford all of Lake Butler; his brothers, Charles (Lori) Waldron, Vernon Waldron and Jimmy Goff; and his six grandchildren, Jordyn, Hayley, Brooke, Emily, Karsyn, and Kaylee.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the funeral home assist with funeral arrangements. Services are currently pending at this time. Arrangements are under the care and direction of Archie Tanner Funeral Services, Starke. 904-964-5757. Visit [www.archietannerfuneralservices.com](http://www.archietannerfuneralservices.com) to sign the family's guest book.

PAID OBITUARY

## Barbara Wood

ALACHUA—Barbara Mizell Wood, 80, died Monday, Dec. 30, 2013 at E.T. York Haven Hospice in Gainesville, following an extended illness. She was born in Jacksonville, on Dec. 13, 1933. She was the daughter of the late Leroy and Alma Mizell. She attended Union County Schools and Florida Southern College. She and her husband at one point owned a crafts shop in Lake Butler. She was a member of Haque United Methodist Church. She was preceded in death by one son, John Wood.

She is survived by: her husband, Bill; daughter, Janet of Alachua; sons, Kerry B. (Desni) of Atlanta, Bill R. (Laurie) of Columbus, Ohio, and David A. (Mar Jo) of St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands; seven grandchildren; brother, Donald (Doris) Mizell of Daytona Beach.

Funeral services were conducted Jan. 4 at Goad Funeral Home in Scottsville, Ky. In lieu of flowers, the family asks to make donations to E.T. York Haven Hospice, 4200 Northwest 90th Blvd., Gainesville, Florida 32606 Archer Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements. 386-496-2008

## FREEZE

Continued from 2B

had been suspected. There was even some budding out in most groves.

That optimistic viewpoint would soon be lost.

Weather-conscious townfolk began watching the skies again when the Telegraph brought news, early in February, of the coldest weather in years up north, with temperatures of 30 below throughout the East. In Wisconsin, it was 59 below on Feb. 7.

The following morning saw almost every Florida record broken. The mercury had plunged from afternoon readings in the 50s to 20 degrees by midnight. Sunrise sent it to almost out of sight, down to 8 degrees at Lake City. Palatka recorded 11, and Starke 13.

In Lake City, the water mains had burst, and children were skating in the streets. Atlanta was blanketed with 9 inches of snow.

Most citrus growers were leaving the few oranges that had survived the December freeze on their trees until the fear of frozen fruit on the market had passed. Others turned to vegetables in hopes of breaking even for the season—but this second freeze took all.

In the few weeks of unseasonably warm weather between freezes, the sap had risen, and orange trees were budding and blooming. Now they split wide open, dripped sap and froze again.

Most of the trees in those early years of the industry were towering beauties, resembling young oaks in stature. They had been started from seedlings—not the budding process that produces the short, bushy trees of today. Many of the early trees stood over 20 feet tall, and one giant—the famous tree at Fort Harlee, southwest of Hampton Lake—was reported to bear 10,000 oranges in a season.

When spring finally came, and the countryside began turning green again, the outlines of dead orange trees stood bleak against the sky—the barren branches of the once promising orange industry reaching its arms toward heaven. In spite of advice from the newspaper to leave trees standing long enough to be sure they were dead, most growers cut them down and deserted their groves.

Newspapers were filled with classified ads offering farms and groves for sale at giveaway prices, and Starke wasn't the only town in the county to be thrown into a financial tailspin by the freeze—every section of the county had groves, especially around the lakes. A state business directory for 1881 said there were 10,000 bearing trees in Bradford at that time; 200,000 more "in position," but not yet bearing; and several hundred thousand nursery stock. The fine Sundell Grove on the south side of Kingsley Lake was gone with the rest.

Some growers, who too hastily cut down their trees and sold them for firewood, found to their regret that some were still green and might have lived if left in the

ground.

And Jack Frost was not through yet. Four years later, on Valentine's Day, 1899, he made a final 19th-century assault on the orange lands of north-central Florida.

The Jacksonville Times-Union and Citizen of Feb. 13 reported a sleet storm reaching the city about dusk the night before, gradually turning to snow as the temperature fell lower during the night. Driven by strong northwesterly winds, the flurry settled down to a heavy fall of white flakes that covered the ground, several inches deep, by morning. It was Florida's share of one of the worst blizzards in history, which swept the East in 1899.

Traces of snow were seen as far south as Fort Myers, Avon Park and Titusville. The heaviest snowfall of 4 inches was recorded at Lake Butler. Lake City reported 2 inches, and Starke reported about the same.

The bitter cold—2 below 0 at Tallahassee, and 10 above in the Jacksonville area—caused the snow to stay unmelted on the ground for several days.

Most of the orange crop had already been harvested, and many of the trees were past the blooming stage. Actual damage was negligible because there was nothing left to hurt; but the freeze of '99 served to warn the few remaining growers that the orange tree was better off farther south.

Today, small groves of trees may still be found in this area around the lakes of the Keystone-Melrose area, and many homes have a few cold-resistant varieties in the backyard. But the orange tree, as a moneymaking crop for the Starke area, has moved south for the winter, probably never to

Col. Comer L. Peek, Starke realtor and promoter, is the man on the sawhorse showing the height of a pre-freeze orange tree. The colonel is holding a fine bunch of fruit, just plucked from the tree.



return.

But something always moves in to fill a vacuum, and new cash crops appeared on the horizon. The Florida Advocate, a contemporary of the Telegraph at the turn of the century, had

this philosophical comment on the freeze: "Bradford's orange moon has set, but another has taken its place. It is the tobacco moon, and is full and shining brightly."



Jacqueline Starnes

## Jacqueline Starnes

MELROSE—Jacqueline "Jackie" Starnes, age 75, of Melrose passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, Nov. 3, 2013 in Virginia. Mrs. Starnes was born May 7, 1938 in Lynchburg, Va. to the late Bob and Vera (Johnson) Culler and has resided in Melrose since 1985. Jackie was a graduate of The University of North Carolina, and while she was a big Gator fan, the Tar Heels remained forever her team. Jackie's career took her to both coasts, and she served as an Editor at Mademoiselle Magazine, the Director of Advertising and Promotion for Wig Fiber Group of Monsanto Textile Corporation and the Advertising and Promotion Director for a major retailer. Locally, Jackie served as a hospice volunteer. Above all, Jackie was a teacher. She mentored many young people, guiding them to successful careers and lives. Jackie taught at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and the University of Florida.

She is survived by: her husband of 31 years, Milton Starnes; her aunt Rose Karam of Charlotte, N.C., and a group of 1st cousins and their children with whom she had very close and special relationships.

A memorial service will be held Sunday, Jan. 19, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. in the Keystone United Methodist Church with Dr. Craig Moore officiating. The family will receive friends following the service. Jackie's family would like to thank the many medical professionals who helped extend her life after a liver transplant 12 years ago. In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to either of the following: St. Jude Children Hospital 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105-1942; Haven Hospice, 6400 St. Johns Ave. Palatka, FL 32177; or to the charity of your choice. Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 340 E. Walker Dr. Keystone Heights, FL 32656. 352-473-3176. Online condolences may be sent to the family by visiting [www.jonesgallagherfh.com](http://www.jonesgallagherfh.com)

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# FINS, FUR & TAILS

## Hunters today may find doves of several types

Hunters generally do not have any difficulty identifying their game birds. Quail hunters look for quail, and when they find them, they find a covey, because birds of a feather generally flock together.

That has become more of a challenge, however. Since the passenger pigeon was killed out during the early 1900s, the morning dove has been the primary target for dove hunters. That story is at least becoming more complicated in some ways.

Today, dove hunters are likely to find some doves with a lateral, white strip across the shoulder of their wings. These birds are actually a different sub-species of the morning dove known as the white wing dove. The birds actually originated in Central

Roger Chilson took this photograph of an Eurasian collard dove near his home in Keystone Heights.



America and migrated into the United States by way of Texas.

Additionally, in 1959, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission imported a large number of the birds in hopes of providing bird hunters more quality and quantity for wing hunting. The birds were subsequently re-caught and transported north as far as Gainesville. The birds did take hold and subsequently spread throughout Florida and into other southeastern states.

Today, these birds are treated by FWC the same as morning doves. A bag limit of doves might include both birds, but the limit is still the same.

The birds-of-a-feather issue

continues to change with the inclusion of a new invasive species, the Eurasian collard dove. These birds were originally imported into the Bahamas and subsequently made their way to the Florida mainland. From there, they spread faster than any previous invasive species, moving west and north all the way to Alaska. The only United States location not holding populations of the new birds is the northeastern.

The issue of the collard doves has not been addressed by FWC, but Idaho has labeled the birds as invasive, and hunters are allowed to hunt them year round without any limits. The potential threat of the birds is also

undetermined. They are larger than the morning and white wing doves and appear to be lighter in color. As per their name, the black collar that runs part of the way around their necks can also identify them.

Roger Chilson, who photographs and studies birds as a hobby, provided the attached photograph and much of the preceding information. He posts many of his photographs on his website, [www.skyblue43.wordpress.com](http://www.skyblue43.wordpress.com).

Okeechobee, anticipates that the cooler weather will turn the bite up a notch after they relocate.

Randy Harris tells us that the cold weather tends to run the inshore reds to the deeper inland and river holes, which should hold true for both the east and west coasts.

Noel Kuhn suggests that the surf bite will most likely turn off totally if the water cools any more. The pompano have already moved south, leaving whiting as the main surf attraction

Overall, the east coast inshore action has slowed, and the catch size for most species is small. The one exception is sheephead, which currently seem to be the biggest inshore attraction on the east; consequently, many east coast bait shops are selling record numbers of fiddler crabs. The number and size of the east coast sheephead catches are currently described with many euphemistic adjectives.

Deer and other wildlife have been alerted to the point that they have honed their avoidance skills to a fine edge.

The mild winter had not been sufficient to herd robins from their northern locations into our area.

Before long, the crappie bite

will wane, and the bass bite will be resurrected. There are already some reports of bass fanning where the spring runs pour into Lake George. Of course, the spring water is somewhat warmer than the lake and river water, and maintains a consistent temperature of 72 degrees.

Watch out for the onset of spring, because it is right around the corner.

Tight lines, safe hunting, a happy new year.

## Outdoors calendar

- Jan. 12, second phase of Florida's dove season ends;
- Jan. 15, deer season ends in south Georgia;
- Jan. 19, antlered deer season ends in Florida's Zone C;
- Year round, rabbits and wild hogs.

*If you have a story, idea or photo to share, please contact Mickey Agner via email at [mka@maoutdoors.com](mailto:mka@maoutdoors.com), or by phone at 904-964-1488. Photos may also be submitted in person at the Bradford County Telegraph, Union County Times or Lake Region Monitor.*

## Tornadoes pull out 2-point district win over Santa Fe

Joquez Ivey and Caleb Jones scored 13 and 11 points, respectively, as the Bradford High School boys' basketball team defeated visiting District 5-4A opponent Santa Fe 49-47 on Jan. 4.

The Tornadoes (4-9, 3-2 in District 5 prior to Jan. 7) outscored the Raiders 12-3 in the fourth quarter to force overtime. Bradford held an 8-6 advantage in overtime.

Kearis Ardley and Alex Mejias each added nine points for Bradford, with Ardley also blocking four shots. Kenny Dinkins, who had four rebounds

and three assists, scored five points, while Oliver Griffin added two points.

Bradford played district opponent Fort White this past Tuesday and will travel to play district opponent P.K. Yonge on Thursday, Jan. 9, at 7:30 p.m. The Tornadoes host Union County on Saturday, Jan. 11, at 7:30 p.m. before hosting district opponent Interlachen on Tuesday, Jan. 14, at 7:30 p.m.

## KHHS girls defeat visiting Panthers

Caiylen Gonzales scored 11 points for the Keystone Heights High School girls' basketball team, which defeated visiting Ridgeview 32-20 on Jan. 6.

The Indians (8-11 prior to Jan. 7) were coming off of an 0-2 performance in the second annual Blue Devil Holiday Classic, losing 47-28 to Paxon and 55-27 to White. Against Ridgeview, Keystone outscored the Panthers 22-5 in the second and third quarters.

Caroline McCormick and Bailey Zinkel each scored seven points against Ridgeview, while Sierra Moore and Alexa Born had four and three points, respectively.

It was the second time the Indians defeated Ridgeview this season, with a 40-31 win occurring on Dec. 19 in Orange Park. Moore led all scorers with 14 points, while Born had 11 points and 13 rebounds. Gonzales and Karla Casas each scored five points, while Abbigail Winters and McCormick scored three and

two points, respectively.

Keystone, which played District 5-4A opponent Santa Fe this past Tuesday, will travel to Starke on Friday, Jan. 10, to play district opponent Starke at 7:30 p.m. On Tuesday, Jan. 14, the Indians host district opponent Fort White at 7 p.m.

## KHHS boys' soccer team beats Palatka, girls play to tie

The Keystone Heights High School soccer teams traveled for a double-header against Palatka on Jan. 4, with the boys' team winning 10-2 and the girls' team settling for a 1-1 tie.

For the boys' team, Wyatt

Graziano and Cory Hedding scored three and two goals, respectively, as the Indians (16-1-1 prior to Jan. 7) won their 16<sup>th</sup> straight match. Graziano scored off of assists from Hedding, Juan Grimaldo and Nachol Grimaldo, while Hedding scored off of assists from Juan Grimaldo and Zac Holman.

Holman, who had an unassisted goal, had three assists in all as he also set up goals for Juan Grimaldo and Ben Jones.

Michael Carroll scored off of a Hedding assist, while Ray Trimble scored off of a Zac Fairbanks assist.

In the girls' matchup that preceded the boys' match, Keystone avoided a 1-0 loss when Cheyenne Riddling scored off a Hanna Crane assist in the 66<sup>th</sup> minute.

On Thursday, Jan. 9, the Keystone boys' team will

host District 5-2A opponent Newberry at 7 p.m., then travel to play Nease on Friday, Jan. 10, at 5 p.m. The boys return home for 6 p.m. matches against Fernandina Beach on Monday, Jan. 13, and Palatka on Tuesday, Jan. 14.

The Keystone girls will cap the regular season with a road match against Nease on Friday, Jan. 10, at 7:20 p.m.

Keystone is the number-two seed in the girls' District 5-2A tournament, which will be played at Citizens Field in Gainesville. The Indians will play seventh seed Newberry on Monday, Jan. 13, at 5 p.m. If they win, the will play the Jan. 14 winner between third seed Eastside and sixth seed Crescent City on Thursday, Jan. 16, at 7 p.m.

The championship match is scheduled for Friday, Jan. 17, at 7 p.m.

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2008	Mazda	Miata	Nicest in Florida! Reduced for Winter!.....	\$14,800

# RAHN

Continued from 1B

"Of course, they told me to go home and have it repaired, but I didn't have any money. I just waited and went back. The next doctor passed me. I was shipped to MacDill (Air Force Base) in Tampa. They called me out, sent me to the hospital and repaired my hernia."

In March 1943, Rahn was promoted to buck sergeant and assigned to the 27<sup>th</sup> Air Base Group's photo lab as a photographer and dark room technician.

It was also during that month that Rahn returned home and married his fiancée, Atalyne Taylor, whose father was the Union County tax collector.

Rahn was transferred from Tampa to Venice, Fla., before then moving to Augusta, Ga., and San Antonio in preparation for overseas duty. He boarded a ship for Naples, Italy, in April 1945. His son, Charles, was born in the midst of Rahn shipping out.

"It was kind of mixed feelings," Rahn said. "I wanted to go overseas. I wanted to see what was going on over there, but I hated to leave my family right at that time. It was an inopportune time for leaving them, but they made it fine. (Charles) was 8 months old when I got back to the States."

A week after arriving in Naples, Rahn's group moved to Foggia, Italy, and what had once been an old German airbase. Old German planes were pushed out of the way by bulldozers and robbed of gas lines and valves. Fuel was used to heat the servicemen's huts, Rahn said.

Rahn was eventually assigned to a B-17 bomber group,

installing cameras on planes and processing photos of raids.

"When I was assigned to my squadron, I was assigned to a headquarters squadron," Rahn said. "I found a young photo officer—Capt. Dan McCormick—who was my age and came from Jacksonville. We had a great deal in common, and he was very good to me. As a matter of fact, he turned a photo vehicle over to me, and I had transportation the whole time I was over there. I was stationed about 7 or 8 miles outside of Foggia."

Rahn returned home in December 1945 and was discharged from Camp Blanding on Dec. 8.

## A varied post-war career

In 1946, he opened a store in Brooker—something he had envisioned doing ever since working at Harrison's Store. His wife, though, never acclimated to Brooker, Rahn said, and he closed the store in 1949 and eventually went to Cottonwood, Ala., to meet an old Army friend and his wife—Joe and Miriam Christmas. Joe Christmas was in a partnership with a Pontiac GMC dealership in Malone, Ala.

"They offered me a job as office manager," Rahn said. "I spent the next six years in the automobile business."

He enjoyed some of the aspects of the automotive business, but Rahn watched production catch up with public demand, which caused small dealers in small towns to go out of business.

Rahn moved from the automotive business to insurance, working for Gulf Life until 1960, when his brother told him there was an accounting position open at Florida State Prison. He applied and was hired



**Buster Rahn is pictured on a beach along the Adriatic Sea with a K-20 aerial camera. Rahn shipped to Italy in April 1945 and was eventually assigned to a B-17 bomber group, installing cameras on planes and processing photos of raids.**

as an industries accountant.

"Eighteen months later, the chief accountant accepted a position with Baptist Hospital, and I was promoted to chief accountant of Florida State Prison," Rahn said.

At that time, FSP was what is now Union Correctional Institution. The present-day FSP was constructed in 1961, with the business office at the old FSP handling transactions for both FSP and what would become UCI. Rahn said when the legislature approved full staffing for FSP, he transferred there as business manager.

Raymond Massey was the new institution's first full-time superintendent. He transferred to UCI to assume the same position and asked Rahn to assume the business manager's position at UCI. Rahn worked there until he retired in 1980.

"Working at the prison was one of the most satisfying jobs I ever had, but I only came in contact with a handful of the inmates," Rahn said, adding, "I don't think

I could've handled prison work down inside the institution."

In 1981, Rahn attended a meeting at the Starke Golf and Country Club and asked to see a financial statement. No such statement existed, so Rahn said he offered to take over the club's record keeping and manage the pro shop, which he did for a year and a half.

While at the Starke Golf and Country Club, Rahn also took on the responsibility of writing a monthly newsletter for country club members. Writing was nothing new for Rahn. He did a lot of as a Department of Corrections employee. Part of his responsibility at the prison was preparing annual budgets he received from 25-30 department heads. Each department head had to write a budget justification.

"While they were specialists in their field, their budget-writing talents were limited," Rahn said. "Essentially, I had to rewrite justifications for budgets. That whetted whatever ability I had for writing."

What Rahn did at the Starke Golf and Country Club was enough to impress Bobby Ferguson, a former publisher of the Bradford County Telegraph. Rahn went to the newspaper office one day to place an ad when Ferguson asked him if he would be interested in writing for the paper.

Thus, in 1982, Rahn's Telegraph career began.

"I covered all the commission meetings for Starke, Lawtey and Brooker for 10 or 12 years,"

Rahn said.

It was in the late 1990s, he believes, that he began writing editorials. Rahn said he told current Telegraph publisher John Miller, "I've got a lot of opinions. I don't mind writing them."

Sharing one's opinion in a small, close-knit community, may not sound like an ideal thing to do, but Rahn said it never got him into much trouble.

"On occasion, I had people disagree with me," he said. "We'd have long telephone conversations about it, but as far as I know, I never made anybody mad enough to threaten me or anything of that sort."

"My columns, overall, I think, were well received."

## Family life and travel

Rahn and his wife, Atalyne, had three children: Charles, Cynthia and Carol. All graduated from Union County High School. Charles is retired from the Orlando Police Department, having put in 20 years of service, while Cynthia is retired from Rinker Materials/CEMEX. (CEMEX acquired Rinker in 2007.) Carol is a teacher in the Orange County school system and has three years until retirement.

Though the majority of his life has been spent in this area, Rahn—who has five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren—has taken the time to travel elsewhere. In 1969, he bought his first travel trailer, and he owned an RV of some kind for the next 30 years. In 1985, he, his wife and other couples formed the New River Ramblers camping club, which disbanded a couple of years ago. It consisted of approximately 45 couples, who ventured out once a month to various places, such as the Carolinas. Club members even went to Nova Scotia one summer.

"That's a lot of fun—to be 700 or 800 miles from home and with 40 or 50 of your best friends," Rahn said.

Rahn and his wife enjoyed 50 years of marriage until, unfortunately, Atalyne was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in the spring of 1993. She died less than a year later in January 1994.

In 1995, Rahn married Atalyne's sister, Ruth Mizelle. Ruth died in 1999.

Then, things came full circle, if you will. Back in 1939, Rahn had dated Mary Edwards Mixon, but Mary eventually moved to Jacksonville to attend business school.

"That ended our romance, such as it was," Rahn said.

However, in December 2005, Rahn gave Mary a call and asked her out on a date. (Mary's husband, Rex, had died in 2003.) She accepted the offer.

The romance that began and ended when Rahn was in the midst of working his first full-time job was rekindled, with the couple marrying in June 2006. They are still married some seven and a half years later.

It has certainly been a full life, one consisting of various work experiences, military service and loved ones. Rahn experienced some health problems with his kidneys in 2013, but in discussing his health for this interview, which took place in December, he said, "I have the benefit of the best medical care available. My health is better now that it was earlier in the year."

Looking at Rahn, it can be difficult to believe he will soon turn 96. Whether or not it was all those years of walking the golf course, he does appear fit.

In other words, though it has been a full life, it appears as if Rahn's not done adding to it.

At the very least, maybe he's got another opinion or two he'd still like to share with Telegraph readers.

## Parents association to host Jan. 10 softball, baseball meeting

The Bradford Parents Athletic Association will hold its 2014 Starke recreation baseball and softball coaches meeting on Friday, Jan. 10, at the Thomas Street office at 6:30 p.m.

There are new requirements related to background checks, so please make plans to attend this important meeting.

The association's 2013 financials and 2014 budget will also be discussed.

## Miss Bradford Fest postponed until Feb. 8

The Santa Fe College Miss Bradford Fest, which was originally scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 18, will now be held Feb. 8 at the Bradford High School auditorium at 7 p.m.

Contestants will compete in Western wear, talent, party dress, evening wear, photogenic and on-stage question categories in the following age divisions: 4-7 (Little Miss), 8-12 (Junior Miss), 13-17 (Teen Miss) and graduating high school seniors-22 years old (Miss). The winner of the Miss division could win a two-year Santa Fe College scholarship. (Must meet eligibility requirements for college enrollment.)

An orientation will be held Tuesday, Jan. 28, at 7 p.m. at the Starke Golf and Country Club.

The deadline to enter the pageant is Friday, Jan. 24. Entry forms may be obtained via email. Please send email requests to thorn99@embarqmail.com.

For more information, please call Lisa Tatum at 904-966-1514 or Brenda Thornton at 904-364-8266.

more info  
Preview 2/2/2014 at 4:00- Classes start 2/16- First United Methodist Church-Starke  
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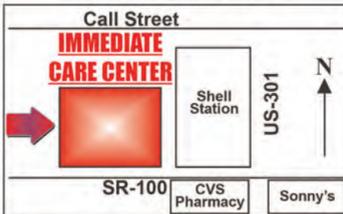


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- Pakistan - 2002 Earthquake Medical Relief Supervision of Primary Care to Women and Children Marine Corp.
- Afghanistan - 2009 Physician for Camp of 450 Army Infantry Soldiers at Mazar-e-Shariff, Northern Regional Hospital
- Okinawa Japan - Family Practice with credentials in Women's Healthcare, Colposcopy, Newborns and Pediatric
- Associate Professor Uniformed Services University of Healthsciences 2010



**Jessica Miller, M.D.**



**Kimberly Beers Castillo, A.R.N.P.**

**Kimberly Beers Castillo, A.R.N.P.**  
Medical Bio

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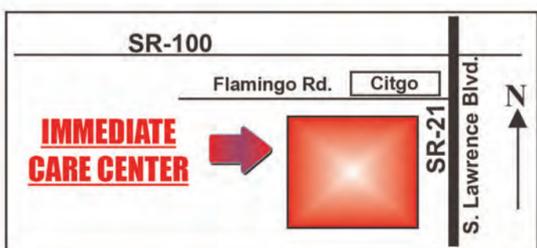
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