



County chairman marks goals for Keystone Heights

New Club outlines goals



Melrose Fire Department hands out awards



Lake Region Monitor

USPS 114-170 — Keystone Heights, Florida Thursday, Dec. 28, 2017

45th Year — 34th Issue — 75 CENTS

Body found in Spring Lake *Believed to be that of missing Navy veteran*



Members of the Clay County Sheriff's Office recover a body from Spring Lake Tuesday afternoon

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Monitor Editor

A volunteer armed with sonar discovered the body of a man believed to be that of Sean Leverette, reported missing since last Friday.

Leverette, a Navy veteran who served in Afghanistan, was last seen swimming in the same area of Spring Lake where the body was found. Spring Lake is near the intersection of S.R. 21 and C.R. 352, about two miles north of the Brooklyn Lake bridge.

Dan McKinney, an amateur sonar operator, said he drove to the lake Tuesday morning from Jacksonville after following Leverette's story last week in the media.

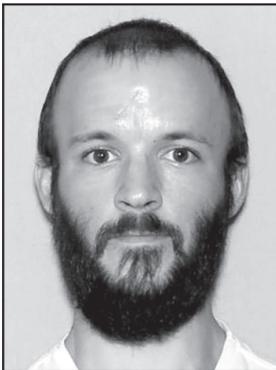
McKinney said he launched his canoe around 11 a.m., and

was using sonar to search under the water's surface. About an hour into his search, turning away from the sonar screen, he saw something in the grass out of the corner of his eye. It turned out to be a body floating on the surface of the lake.

About 150 yards from McKinney, a Clay County Sheriff's deputy was also searching, and McKinney called out to the officer telling him about his discovery. About 30 seconds later, the officer shouted back to McKinney saying the dive team was on its way.

A few hours later, the dive team completed recovery of the body.

The sheriff's office said it could not confirm that the body was that of Leverette. However,



Leverette

a Jacksonville television station reported that one of the man's family members confirmed the

See MISSING, 3A

Number of birds double in Christmas bird count



Carol Meyer (left) and Laura Berkelman watch for birds from the Keystone Heights Beach Pavilion. Photo: Santa Fe Audubon.

On Dec. 16, 44 participants from the Santa Fe, Alachua and Duval Audubon societies, in addition to other volunteers, fanned out in boats, cars, and on foot to survey all the birds that could be seen and heard for the 26th Annual Melrose Christmas Bird Count. The Melrose bird count covers a 15-mile-diameter circle centered at the intersection of S.R. 21 and S.R. 100 that encompasses parts of Clay, Putnam, Alachua, and Bradford Counties. This dedicated effort resulted in locating 113 species of birds.

Many bird-rich natural areas occur in this circle and include Lake Santa Fe, Santa Fe Swamp, Gold Head Branch State Park, the Ordway

Preserve, and numerous lakes and forests. Participants said they were grateful to generous landowners who welcomed the volunteers on their property to count.

Several species had unexpected high totals: tree swallows, 5,590; ring-bill gulls, 1500; sand hill cranes, 1,030; American robins, 1,570. New species for the count were painted bunting, Wilson's warbler, and blue grosbeak. Uncommon for the count were American woodcock and Wilson's snipe.

More individual birds were seen this year — over 16,000 — than last year's total of 7,484. The 2015 count totaled 9,265 individual birds.

At the end of the day-long

survey, participants met at Betty's Pizza in Melrose to tally the results, share stories of the day's birding highlights and feast on the local cuisine. Laura Berkelman, Santa Fe Audubon president, compiled the list of birds that were surveyed by twelve birding teams.

The Melrose Christmas Bird Count was started in 1990 by Jan and Bill Bolte of Melrose.

Begun 118 years ago in New York City's Central Park, Christmas bird counts provide important insight into the health of the environment. Since birds are the most visible wildlife and the easiest to survey, bird survey data

See COUNT, 4A

Two arrested for theft and purchase of gravesite memorials

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
Telegraph Editor

Items stolen from gravesites in Bradford County were sold to feed a drug addiction, according to the Bradford County Sheriff's Office.

For weeks, the sheriff's office has been receiving complaints about such thefts. On Dec. 4, a Lake City woman told the sheriff's office that someone had stolen around \$200 in decorative items from her parents' gravesite in Crosby Lake Cemetery. Two days later, the sheriff's office received complaints of multiple thefts in Connor Cemetery, including Christmas decorations valued around \$400.

The complaints kept coming in. On Dec. 14, items in excess of \$250 were stolen from Crosby Lake Cemetery and a grave left damaged. On Dec. 15 and 16, hundreds of dollars' worth of decorations were reported stolen from multiple

graves at Crosby Lake.

Another victim at Brown's Cemetery who had posted on social media about theft from her brother's gravesite reported that she had received one of those items back, a small grill, from Earnest Steven Varnes.

On Dec. 20, Varnes' girlfriend, Amanda Renee Thornton, was arrested at Walmart on a warrant for grand theft, and that's when



Hudkins



Crawford

See ARRESTS, 4A

Library favorite: Clyde the wonder dog dies



Clyde the wonder dog with Melrose Library Branch Manager Sheree Sims, during the library's Paws to Read program.

The Melrose Library said last week that Clyde "the wonder dog" Morse died due to complications with his spleen.

Clyde was an eight-and-a-half-year-old Leonberger, a breed with a life expectancy of between eight and nine years.

"A trained therapy dog, Clyde traveled around Florida with his 'parents' Bill and Kathy, bringing cuddles and appropriate-sized kisses to kids and adults of all ages," the library said in a news release. "Clyde was described by some to be the size of a small

bear or a horse, and he could seat about four children comfortably. Kids and adults would lay on the floor with Clyde and snuggle up in his tufts of fur. Some were afraid of Clyde's size at first, but

See CLYDE, 3A

New Year's Day Weather: 50-50 rain chance

Thursday - A 40 percent chance of showers. Cloudy, with a high near 60. Northeast wind around 9 mph.

Thursday Night - A 20 percent chance of showers. Cloudy, with a low around 43. North wind 6 to 10 mph.

Friday - Partly sunny, with a high near 58.

Friday Night - Mostly clear, with a low around 40.

Saturday - Sunny, with a high near 64.

Saturday Night - Mostly clear, with a low around 40.

Sunday - Sunny, with a high near 61.

Sunday Night - A 40 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 46.

New Year's Day - A 50 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Cloudy, with a high near 59.

Monday Night - A 40 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 37.

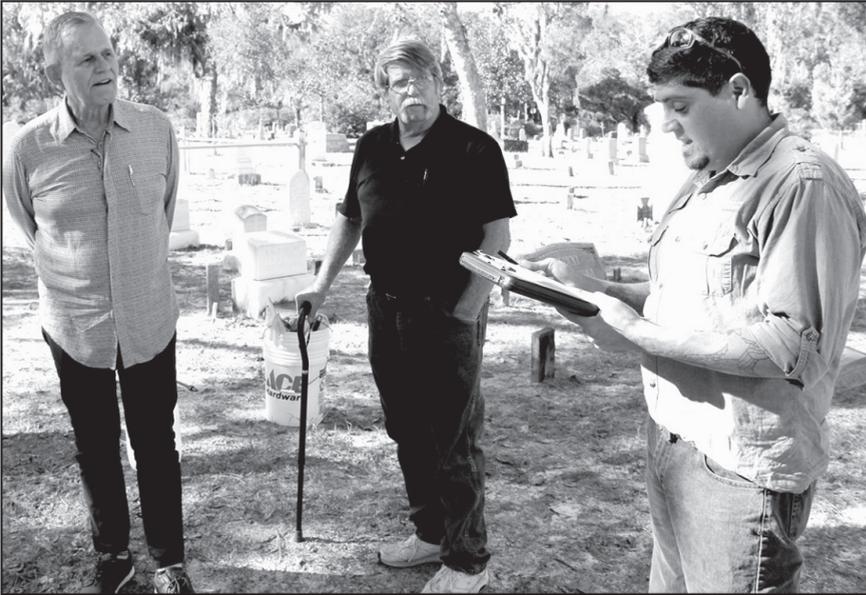
Tuesday - Mostly sunny, with a high near 52.

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Historic group hosts archeological training



Amateur historians throughout northeast Florida met in Melrose on Dec. 1 for a seminar on cemetery archeology. Hosted by Historic Melrose and taught by the Florida Public Archeology Network, the seminar trained participants in how to protect resources within graveyards.

Nigel Rudolph of the Florida Public Archeology Network said the seminar went over techniques for maintaining landscaping and stones in historic cemeteries, in addition to how to register historic cemeteries with the State of Florida's master site file.

Historic Melrose President Keith Bollum said that after Florida Public Archeology Network members assisted the group with a dig near the Melrose United Methodist Church in November, the network offered to lead the class in Melrose. Representatives from around a half dozen cemeteries attended the class.

Pictured are (l-r) Historic Melrose President Keith Bollum, Marty Sanders of St. Augustine and Nigel Rudolph of the Florida Public Archeology Network.

County commission chairman reviews Lake Region issues

The newly-elected chairman of the Clay County Commission gave a Keystone Heights civic group a rundown of wins for the Keystone Heights area during the Dec 20 meeting of the Keystone Heights Rotary Club.

Gavin Rollins, who represents western Clay County, including the Lake Region, said lakes issues continue to remain his top priority.

"I live on a lake: Keystone Lake," he said. "So, the lakes is not just a political issue, it's a personal issue for me, and it's an issue that is vital for this region."

Minimum Flows and levels

Rollins said that his first act as a county commissioner three years ago was to push a resolution through the commission that opposed any changes to minimum flows and levels for Keystone Heights-area lakes.

The St. Johns River Water Management District establishes MFLs for water bodies under its jurisdiction. MFLs define the limits at which further water withdrawals would significantly be harmful to the water resources or ecology of an area.

Rollins told the Rotary Club that the district planned on lowering the standards because Lakes Brooklyn and Geneva failed to reach MFLs for many years.

"Basically, the water management district had said: 'For years, we weren't able to get the lakes where we wanted to so we're just going to adjust the levels they have to be at by law,'" Rollins said of the district's plan to lower the standards in 2013. "We opposed any changes to that as a board and that unified effort helped the water management district push those (MFL changes) off a few years and gave us some time to work on another project.

Alligator Creek cleanup

Rollins also reviewed the county's efforts to clean



Gavin Rollins speaks to the Rotary Club of Keystone Heights.

Alligator Creek.

"Alligator Creek, as most of you know is the critical life blood of water flowing into the Lake Region," he told the Rotarians. "It flows into Brooklyn and Brooklyn spills into Keystone and Keystone into Geneva, but it also affects the ground water for the whole region."

Rollins said that with water management district funding, county workers cleaned out the creek within Camp Blanding to increase water flow from Magnolia Lake into Lake Brooklyn.

Black Creek

Lake Region Monitor
USPS 114-170

Published each Thursday and entered as Periodical Postage at Keystone Heights, Florida under Act of March 3, 1879.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
Lake Region Monitor
P.O. Drawer A - Starke, FL 32091
7382 SR 21 - Keystone Heights, FL 32656
Phone: (352) 473-2210 • (352) 473-6721

<p>Subscription Rate in Trade Area \$39.00 per year; \$20.00 six months Outside Trade Area: \$39.00 per year; \$20.00 six months</p>	<p>John M. Miller, Publisher</p> <p>Editor: Dan Hildebran Sports Editor: Cliff Smelley Advertising: Kevin Miller Typesetting: Eileen Gilmore Advertising & Newspaper Prod.: C. Hurston Bookkeeping & Classified Adverts: Heather Wheeler Bookkeeping Asst: Linda Lacombe Front office Asst: Beth Tillman</p>
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Water Resource Project

Rollins also said the county supported Sen. Rob Bradley's efforts to fund the Black Creek Water Resource Project: a \$35

million plan to pump up to 10 million gallons of water a day from the south prong of Black Creek near Penny Farms to an area between lakes Magnolia and Brooklyn.

Some Black Creek residents have opposed the plan, saying it will damage the creek.

"I have said publicly and will continue to say that I am

not in favor of anything that will have a negative impact on Black Creek," Rollins said. "Multiple, independent, private engineering firms, separate from the water management district, have said that Black Creek has excess water about 70 percent of the time."

He said the county commission recently granted an easement to the water management district to move the project forward. He also said the intake area near

Reconstituted Lions Club working to provide children eye glasses



The Lake Region's new Lions Club is working to provide eyewear to Keystone Heights and Melrose-area children.

The Lake Region previously hosted a Lions Club, but the organization sold its clubhouse on Orchid Avenue in 2015, donated the sale proceeds of over \$90,000 to area charities and disbanded.

Former president Mack Wheeler said the club boasted a membership roll of over 50 in the 1980s, but membership steadily dwindled down to under 10 in the year the group disbanded.

A new group formed earlier this year in Keystone Heights, and was awarded a new charter in July.

Lions Clubs International is the largest service club in the world with over 1.4 million members in over 45,000 clubs, organizers said in a news release.

Lions Clubs provide eye examinations, eye glasses and eye surgeries to the less fortunate, plus support projects that improve education, assist the disabled and improve the safety of the community. Each local club determines the projects that the members feel will benefit their community the most.

The local group meets on the first Tuesday of each month at Keystone Insurance, 7388 S. R. 21.

Pictured is Carl Harrell of the Palatka New Vision Lions Club, presenting President Barbara Franklin with the group's charter earlier this year.

Penny Farms will include a kayak and canoe launch.

Fire station

Rollins also said the county commission recently awarded a \$2.4 million contract for the construction of a new fire station on S.R. 21, north of Keystone Heights.

Roads

Rollins also discussed the county's system for prioritizing road construction and resurfacing. He said that before he came onto the commission, prioritizing road projects was a haphazard and politically-based process.

"It didn't make a lot of sense," he said. "Usually the roads that got worked on were the roads in the district with the loudest county commissioner."

He said that now, the county

uses an order of merit ranking system, similar to what he saw during his military service.

Now, the county's public works department ranks each road project according to use, road condition and other objective criteria. The county commission then funds the projects based on the ranking.

Other issues

Rollins also told the club about a newly-opened county boat ramp south of Keystone Heights and his efforts to improve communication between the county commission and the public.

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MISSING

Continued from 1A

body was that of the missing person.

McKinney said he timed his trip to the lake, knowing that if a body was in the water, it would float to the surface within a few days. However, he delayed his trip to Keystone Heights until after Christmas.

McKinney also credited the sheriff's office for its efforts.

"They didn't give up," he said, adding that officers would have found the body if he had not.

Ryan Gilstrap, who lives on Spring Lake where Leverette went missing and where the body was recovered, was the last person to see the Navy veteran before he went missing last week.

Gilstrap recalled that last Friday evening, he waded out in the lake to fish when Leverette arrived with his dog to go swimming.

"Him and the dog were swimming around," Gilstrap recalled. "Then something spooked the dog and it ran out of the water and up to one of the houses."

Gilstrap said he and his roommate walked up the hill to catch the dog and bring it back to shore. When they returned, Leverette was missing. The pair did not know if the 27-year-old was still in the water, had walked on shore or had left the area.

"We started calling out to him," Gilstrap said, "and when he didn't respond we called out more, threatening to call the sheriff's office if he didn't show himself."

After around 30 minutes, the pair called 911.

Melrose Fire Department recognizes members

The Melrose Volunteer Fire Department: Station 24, held its annual Christmas banquet and awards ceremony on Dec. 14.



Chief Kevin Mobley (right) presents the Firefighter of the year award to James Nixon. All photos: Melrose Volunteer Fire Department.



Clyde the wonder dog with a library patron.

CLYDE

Continued from 1A

eventually, everyone succumbed to his big brown eyes and propensity for treats... everyone except the moose and cats he liked to chase."

Clyde visited the library almost every month for over three years for his Paws to Read program.

"Clyde, Bill and Kathy became family," the library said, "and his visits were anticipated by all of the library staff and volunteers, almost more so than the kids. Everyone knew how to show off

his tricks and how to help his parents answer questions about Clyde's likes and dislikes."

"Everyone had their moments with Clyde," the library continued. "He picked people out in the room that he knew needed a moment with him. He made every single person feel so special. With this loss comes great sadness to those who've been touched by Clyde."

Library staff members said that after they started sharing the news about Clyde's diagnosis, a statue of the dog appeared in the library's memorial butterfly garden.

The library is collecting memories of Clyde and

condolences, which will be handed over to the dog's owners. The library is located at 312 Wynwood Ave.

Legals

LRM Legals 12/28/17

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Florida Self Storage Facility Act Statutes (Section 83.801, 83.809), Lake Area Storage, LLC, will sell the following items to the highest and best bidder on Wednesday, January 10, 2017 at 9:00 A.M. (EST) at 7101 SR 21, Keystone Heights, Florida 32656: Unit# 207, containing misc. household items.

12/28 2tchg 1/4-LRM

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION



Rookie of the Year Kirk Hersey (left). Also pictured is Mobley and President Bobby Brown (right).



Top Responder and New EMT Josh Florence.



Chief's Choice Award: Trey Chun.



Support Member of the Year Tyler Baker.



Biggest Squirrel Award: Mare McCullough.

Peace and Joy to all

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Above: (L-r) Jan Bolte, Tom Prevost, Peggy Prevost, Jill McGuire and Andi Blount on Lake Santa Fe. Photo: Kris Davis.

Right: Red-shouldered Hawk. Photo: Ida Little.

COUNT

Continued from 1A

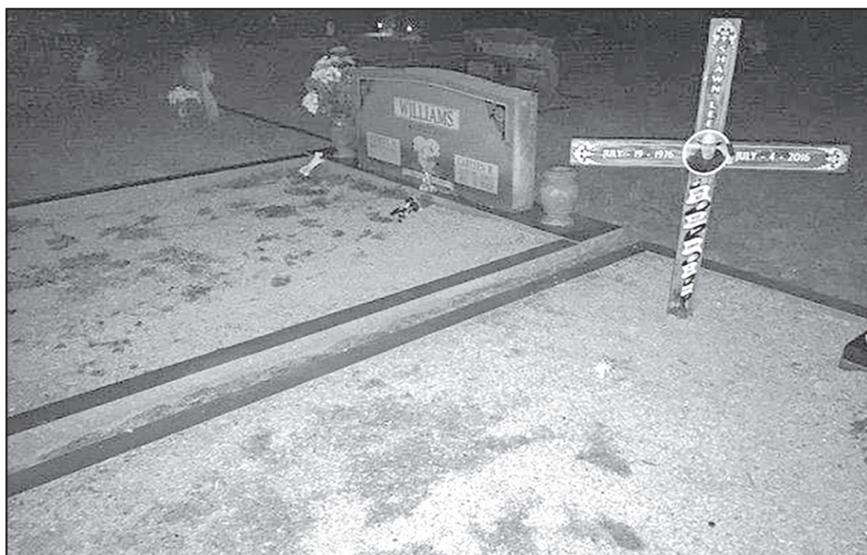
provide an indication of the overall health of less visible wildlife species. An abundant and diverse avian community can reflect healthy ecological habitats, while declining bird populations can signify disturbing trends in land development patterns and their detrimental effects

to natural areas. Changes in the range of some bird species have implications in assessing results of climate change. National Audubon has identified 314 species of birds in the U.S. that will be affected by climate change.

Results from the Melrose Christmas Bird Count combined with data from hundreds of other Christmas bird count surveys throughout the world allow ornithologists to assess bird trends on a



national and international scale. A complete list of birds seen on the Melrose Christmas Bird Count may be obtained by emailing Joyceking2635@gmail.com or lberkelman@windstream.net.



Gravesites were stripped of monuments and keepsakes, distressing those who had left them there in memory of their loved ones.

ARRESTS

Continued from 1A

the sheriff's office learned the alleged identity of the gravesite thief.

According to Thornton, her friend Jenni Marie Hudkins was stealing the items and selling them to a thrift store owner in exchange for the money to feed her methamphetamine addiction. Thornton said the thrift store belongs to her boyfriend Varnes' mother, Janice Crawford, and that most of the plundered items were still located at Crawford's house where both she and Varnes live.

The sheriff's office reached Crawford at her residence where she supposedly admitted

to purchasing three carloads of items from Hudkins on three separate occasions. Crawford said she was told the merchandise was from Hudkins' mother's house.

After a consensual search, most of the stolen items were discovered at the residence and a warrant was obtained for Hudkins' arrest.

The sheriff's office received information in the early morning of Dec. 25 and Hudkins was found in a wooded area off of Northwest County Road 200B in the Lawtey area where she was taken into custody without incident.

Hudkins, 34, is facing multiple charges of criminal mischief for removing a monument from a gravesite and for dealing in stolen property.

Bond was set at \$700,000 and she remains in custody as of press time.

The sheriff's office also arrested Crawford for dealing in stolen property, saying that she decided to hide the items when she found out they were stolen instead of coming forward. She was released on Dec. 24 after posting a \$25,000 bond.

The case is not closed. Gravesite thefts are still under investigation and there could be further arrests or charges for those already implicated.

Additional victims of theft can contact Detective Dan Cassini at 904-966-6161.

Union County Commission Considers Mining in Three Meetings

BY TRACY LEE TATE
Times Editor

The Union County Board of County Commissioners met Dec. 18 in its capacity as the county's Planning and Zoning Board to consider the extension of the current mining moratorium ordinance, which will expire Feb. 15.

The board heard County Attorney Russ Wade read a resolution (by title), which would serve as a recommendation by the planning and zoning board that the county commission approve an ordinance extending the moratorium. The ordinance will extend the existing moratorium on the acceptance of applications and processing of applications for mining, special permits and issuance of mining special permits for a period of one year, in this case Feb. 15, 2018, through Feb. 15, 2019.

Prior to voting on whether to recommend that the county approve the ordinance, the planning and zoning board heard comments from members of the public, both for and against the proposed mining.

Louella Whitford traveled from Mulberry to relate the problems she said have affected her family as a result of phosphate mining (Mulberry is the hub of phosphate mining in the state and the home of Mosaic Corporation.)

"All of you should come down to Polk County and see the devastation. We have sickness, poverty and all of the areas that were once available for outdoor recreation are gone," Whitford said. "I have seen my family dying around me, 16-year-olds dying of cancer, property taxes plummeting and businesses closing. You don't want your children to have to worry about the effects on their children."

Congressional candidate Tom Wells agreed with Whitford's concerns.

"I believe in property rights, but I think they apply to everyone, not just the miners but also to neighbors and those affected," Wells said. "Property rights are a part of the birthright of our children. Things like good health, clean air and water are what we all want to leave for our children."

James Phillips told the commission that he grew up on reclaimed phosphate mining land in Polk County. He said he grew up on a cattle ranch, where the cows could only graze on the land for about five years before their teeth became too rotten for them to continue to feed.

Representatives from Save Our Santa Fe River, the Sierra

Club and Save Our Lakes also spoke against allowing the mining and complimented the commissioners on their steadfastness in working to keep Union County safe for its residents.

John Harris Mauer from Hopping, Green and Sams, the law firm representing HPS Enterprises II, spoke to the board, stating his clients' objection to the extension of the moratorium. He also said HPS was opposed to the proposed amendments to the county's land-use plans and reminded the board that the company had offered to pay the bill for the commission to hire trained consultants to assist them in assessing any applications or other mining-related documents.

Motion was made by commissioner Jimmy Tallman to recommend the ordinance to the county commission for approval, with commissioner Tommy Nettles seconding the motion. The motion passed the board 5-0 and the resolution recommending the commission approve the ordinance moved forward for consideration at the following regular meeting of the county commissioners.

Also approved by the Planning and Zoning Board was a resolution to recommend the board of commissioners approve an ordinance to amend the county land-use plans to comply with state mandated rules (see below). The resolution passed 5-0.

Following the Planning and Zoning Board meeting, the commission convened a public workshop to discuss the proposed changes to the county land-use plans. After hearing public comment, the commission passed on first reading an ordinance to amend the county land-use regulations in order to comply with state requirements. Motion was made by Tallman to accept the ordinance and the motion passed 5-0. Also considered at the workshop were two options presented by the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council to amend the Future Land Use element of the county's comprehensive plan to address possible mining in the county.

Scott Coons, a director with NCFRPC, and an associate presented the county with two options for the desired changes. Option One would replace the current mining-areas map with one which included areas of concern, such as Lake Butler, Swift Pond Creek and Lake Palestine. The change would limit mining activity in the amended areas. Option Two would remove the map entirely

and prohibit mining operations in wetlands and adjacent to lakes, rivers, streams and creeks. Both options would regulate extraction activities to prevent adverse effects on the quality of the air, groundwater, surface water and wildlife in the county.

Two of the commissioners expressed their inclination toward Option Two in the board discussion, but the board agreed to take time to consider both options and to make a decision at its January meeting.

At its regular meeting, the county commission heard a

first reading of the ordinance to extend the mining moratorium and approved it 5-0.

Also under consideration by the board were a number of changes to the land-use regulations. The board passed an amendment package of what are called "Evaluation Amendments." These are required by the state to update Union County's land-use code. Wade answered questions from citizens about the evaluation amendments.

"These amendments were a victim of unfortunate timing,"

Wade said. "They have nothing to do with agricultural land use - they don't affect any farmers' rights to dig a pond or farm their land. They just update the county code to match current state requirements. Somehow the rumor mill has made these into something they are not. These should not be controversial."

Mauer, speaking to the board once again on behalf of HPS, said the company was opposed to both options.

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The Clay County Property Appraiser's Office (CCPAO) will be accepting applications for property tax exemptions, assessment reductions and classifications at the following locations:

County Administration Bldg. (Green Cove Springs) Accepted Year-Round	477 Houston Street 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Tax Collector's Office - Park Central Plaza (O.P.) Accepted Year-Round	1518 Park Avenue 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Tax Collector's Office (Keystone Heights) January 2nd, 16th, & 30th February 13th & 20th	7380 State Road 100 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Fleming Island Library January 24th February 21st	1895 Town Center Boulevard 2:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Oakleaf Athletic Center January 11th & 25th February 8th	370 Oakleaf Village Parkway 2:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Florida law provides for a number of ad valorem property tax exemptions, classifications and assessment reductions which will reduce the taxable value of a property. The property owner must qualify as of January 1 of the current assessment year. **The statutory deadline for filing a timely application is Thursday, March 1, 2018.** For more information contact an Exemptions Specialist at (904) 284-6305 or www.ccpao.com.

REGIONAL NEWS

NEWS FROM BRADFORD COUNTY, UNION COUNTY AND THE LAKE REGION

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Cherishing lost loved ones' memories

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Staff Writer

"Our love for you is unwavering. It will never fade or simply slip away."
The words were part of a poem

written by Wayne Wetherington, who, unfortunately, knows what it's like to experience the death of a child. He and his wife, Bernie, remembered their daughter, Amanda, as part of a worldwide event on Dec. 10 in

which parents lighted candles in honor of their lost sons and daughters, grieving their deaths, but also cherishing the time they had together.

The second Sunday of every December is when the support group The Compassionate Friends holds its candle-lighting ceremony. It's a night when members share hugs, shed tears and even smile as they light five candles symbolizing their feelings before then lighting candles in memory of those children who've passed.

"Tonight, we are here to celebrate and remember our children," said Mary Kramer, who, with her husband, Chuck, leads the Lake Area-Keystone Heights chapter of The Compassionate Friends. "Of course, it's still going to be tough maybe, but we're here to remember them and celebrate them and remember the good times about them."

The Kramers joined the Lake Area-Keystone Heights chapter, which is one of approximately 600 local chapters, after they lost

their daughter Danielle in 2007.

The Dec. 10 ceremony was held at First United Methodist Church in Starke. Chuck Kramer opened the event by reading The Compassionate Friends credo, which ends with, "We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends."

That's what The Compassionate Friends is about. Parents who've lost their children don't have to be alone.

See MEMORY, 2B



Donna and Bobby Huff light a candle during The Compassionate Friends' worldwide ceremony.

Kiwanis Club hoops it up for holidays



The Kiwanis Club of Starke hosted its annual Lake Area McDonald's Holiday Basketball Tournament at Bradford High School Dec. 21-23. ABOVE: Kiwanis members Chery Canova and Warren Carver work the admissions table. RIGHT: Mike Ruszkowski puts salads away in the hospitality room, which was stocked by McDonald's for coaches, officials and media. Tournament coverage begins on page 4B.



ABOVE RIGHT: Mary Kramer delivers opening remarks during the worldwide annual event. RIGHT: Bernie Wetherington lights a candle that symbolizes the grief parents experience with the death of a child.



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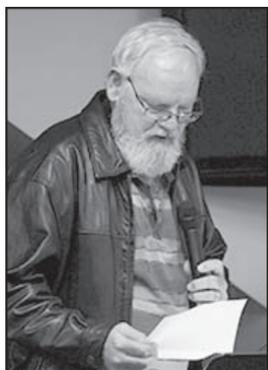
Lyn Veliz (photo at left) reads a poem in honor of her sister, Danielle, while Wayne Wetherington (photo at below left) reads a poem in honor of his daughter, Amanda.



Alice Watts (left) and Mary Nelson are pictured with candles aglow in memory of lost loved ones. Chapter leader Mary Kramer said, "They're with us, and they love us just as much as we love them."



Student Andrew Lingold looks on as Bradford ag teacher Kaitlin Van Heusen talks to her class about cows' teeth.



Fosser said, "This candle we light in your memory — for the times we laughed, the times we cried, the times we were angry with each other, the silly things you did, the caring and joy you gave us."

Of the fourth candle, which was lit by Ruth McCourt, the mother of Diane, Fosser said, "This candle we light for our love. We light this candle so that your light will always shine as we share this night of remembrance with our family and friends."

The fifth candle was lit by Sandy Northway, the mother of Robert.

"We cherish the special place in our hearts that will always be reserved for you," Fosser said. "We thank you for the gift your living brought to each of us. We love you, and we remember you."

Chuck Kramer then performed the roll call, reciting the names of the lost sons and daughters of everyone who has participated in

the Lake Area-Keystone Heights chapter of The Compassionate Friends at some point. More than 100 names were read.

Parents and other family members who were present lit small votive candles when the names of their children were called.

Once the roll call was completed, Mary Kramer said, "At this time, I'd like to ask everyone to close their eyes and think of happy thoughts of your child. Think of something that always makes you smile when you think of your son or your daughter or your granddaughter or your grandson." Then, following the moment of silence, Kramer said, "How about we raise our candles to our children? They're with us, and they love us just as much as we love them." Earlier in the ceremony, Lyn

Veliz and Alice Watts joined Wetherington in reciting poems. It was an especially emotional moment for Watts. She read the Elizabeth Dent poem "Talking is Releasing" in honor of her daughter, Debbie, on the two-year anniversary of the death of her husband, Jay:

"Go ahead and mention my child, the one who died, you know;

Don't worry about hurting me further, the depth of my pain doesn't show;

Don't worry about me crying, I'm always crying inside; Help me to heal by releasing, the tears that I try to hide; I'm hurt when you just keep silent, pretending he or she didn't exist;

I'd rather you mention my child, knowing that he or she has been missed;

You ask me how I'm doing, I'm doing pretty good or fine; But healing is something ongoing, I feel it takes a lifetime."

Alice and Jay Watts were instrumental in getting the Lake Area-Keystone Heights chapter of The Compassionate Friends started.

"We wouldn't all be here tonight if it wasn't for them," Mary Kramer said.

Veliz read the poem "The Way I Feel" in honor of her sister:

"They say there is a reason, they say that time will heal; But neither time nor reason will change the way I feel; No one knows the heartache that lies behind my smile; No one knows how many times I've broken down and cried;

I want to tell you something, so there won't be any doubt; You're so wonderful to think of, but so hard to be without"

The Lake Area-Keystone Heights chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets the second Sunday of every month except December at the Potter House behind Trinity Baptist Church in Keystone at 7 p.m. The second Sunday of December is reserved for the candle-lighting ceremony.

MEMORY

Continued from 1B

They have a place they can go where they can be with others who are just like them.

"We all know what we're going through," Mary Kramer said. "Nobody understands it unless you've gone through it."

Kramer said The Compassionate Friends is for people who've lost children at any age, whether a couple of days old, 20 years old like her daughter, Danielle, or 75 years old.

"We know a lady in her 90s who lost her daughter at 75," Kramer said. "They're all our babies still."

Anne Fosser and her husband, John, lost a daughter named Susan. Fosser explained the significance of the five candles that were lit by various group members. The first candle was lit by Bernie Wetherington, with Fosser saying, "This candle represents our grief. The pain of losing you is intense. It reminds us of the depth of our love for you."

Melissa Hughes, the mother of Caitlen, lit the second candle.

"This candle represents our courage to confront our sorrow, to comfort each other, to change our lives," Fosser said.

As James Hughes, Caitlen's father, lit the third candle,



LEFT: Melissa Hughes lights a candle symbolizing the courage parents need to confront their sorrow, comfort each other and to change their lives. RIGHT: Lynn Schwartz lights candles in honor of her sons, Aaron and Jesse.



LEFT: Ruth McCourt lights a candle representing the deceased one's love. RIGHT: Paul Dobbins lights a candle in honor of his son Christopher.



Save Our Lakes president to speak at Jan. 8 DAR meeting

The Col. Samuel Elbert Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution will hold its regular meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 8, at IHOP in Starke.

The program will be presented by Vivian Katz, president of Keystone's Save Our Lakes Organization Inc. Sue Plaster will be the hostess for the meeting.

Do you have a Revolutionary War-era patriot in your family tree? If you would like to find out, we can help with DAR's amazing genealogical resources.

Any woman 18 years or older, regardless of race, religion or ethnic background, who can prove direct descent from a person who aided in achieving American independence between April 19, 1775, and Nov. 26, 1783, is eligible for DAR membership.

Please contact Leslie Harper at 352-475-5090 or June Keefe at 386-431-1830 for more information.

ARRESTS

Bradford

Michael John Field, 51, of Milton, was arrested by Bradford Deputies on Dec. 25 for disorderly intoxication. No bond was set and he was expected to be released Dec. 26.

Justin Daniel Smith, 23, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford Deputies on Dec. 26 for a moving traffic violation, possession of marijuana and two counts of possession of drug equipment. Bond was set at \$73,000.

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The Weekly Paw Print:
The new year is right around the corner. This is the time of year I drive my family nuts with my planning and resolutions for the next 365 days. My staff is well aware of my penchant for change on a regular basis. So while I make my lists to conquer next year here are some suggestions your dog may be considering.

- I will eat less and exercise more
- I will beg less
- I will recognize the difference between furniture and fire hydrants
- I'll stay out of the cat's litter box
- I won't bite the vet anymore
- I won't steal food as much
- I'll introduce myself in more appropriate ways
- I'll do better "holding it" until morning
- I'll bark at the mail carrier less
- I'll tolerate those homemade bandannas more

If your pet hasn't been to see the doctor in a while, make a plan to get them scheduled for a visit and get caught up. The best way to start the new year and accomplish those resolutions is to be healthy.

I hope you are having a good day back and Happy New Year!
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Tigers' Maurice Strong signs with South Alabama

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Staff Writer

Union County High School senior Maurice Strong had already made his mind up, so he was ready to take advantage of college football's new early signing period. The 6-2, 285-pound defensive tackle, seated between his parents, Maurice Sr. and Angela, signed his letter of intent to play for the University of South Alabama during a Dec. 20 ceremony in the UCHS field house.

"It feels amazing. It feels great," Strong said. "This is a dream come true."

Union head coach Ronny Pruitt said Strong received interest from many schools, including those he'd classify as bigger than South Alabama, which is a member of the Sun Belt Conference. Pruitt said a lot of kids are all about signing with the biggest school without looking at the big picture. Strong did, though, opting for the school that he thought was the best fit for him.

"You don't find that very often in the kids today," Pruitt said.

Strong said South Alabama coaches were always there for him unlike other schools' coaches throughout the recruiting process. He appreciated that.

"Nobody showed me love like that," he said. "When I got there (for a campus visit), they showed me even more love. I was like, 'Wow. This is the place for me.' I loved the atmosphere and how everything was."

When asked what especially stood out about his visit, Strong



Maurice Strong Jr. (center) prepares to put on a University of South Alabama hat as he signs a letter of intent to play for the Jaguars. Strong is joined by his parents, Angela and Maurice Strong Sr.

laughed and said, "They fed me good. I loved it when they fed me."

He may have a sense of humor, but he is a mature, young man. Pruitt has watched that maturation occur the last two years. He described the freshman version of Strong as a kid who was hyper, like most ninth-graders, and "one of those guys you had to lasso."

Strong became a leader who worked hard and played with class.

"We coach because we love this game," Pruitt said, "but we also coach because we love these kids. When you see one accomplish one of his dreams, it makes your heart feel good."

Strong said Miami was the first school to ever contact him. That occurred when he was a

sophomore and spurred him on to doing whatever was necessary to make sure he got that opportunity to sign with somebody.

"At that point in time, I was like, 'Let me get my mind right.' I started grinding, grinding, grinding," Strong said.

Pruitt said what Strong brings to the field are a quick first step and strength.

"I can't wait to see how strong he can get," Pruitt said. "He's strong now for high school and class."

Strong is just a good on the offensive line as he is on the defensive line and can play effectively at any weight ranging from 260 to 320, Pruitt said.

"I'm anxious to see what they mold him into and how they use him," Pruitt said, adding, "He's got the hands and feet that you

need to play at the next level — on both sides of the ball — and the mental toughness."

Pruitt said if you ask him 10 years from now what really stood out about Strong, his answer would be that Strong was someone who just loved the game. Pruitt admitted he and his coaches were hard on Strong, but it never deterred him. Whereas some kids might've gotten frustrated and quit playing, Pruitt said Strong's thinking was, "I'm going to play this game. Nothing you're going to do is going to steer me in any other direction."

As a sophomore, Strong recorded 38 tackles (20 solo), with three sacks, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery. He made 28 tackles (15 solo) and had seven sacks, one fumble recovery and a blocked punt as a junior. This past season, Strong made 31 tackles (19 solo), with 14 occurring behind the line of scrimmage. He had eight sacks and nine quarterback hurries as well as three forced fumbles, one fumble recovery and one interception.

As he prepares to transition to college, Strong said all he needs to do is get back into shape.

"I've been chilling, so I need to get back right," he said. "Other than that, I think I'm pretty much ready. I'm ready to get there. This is something I've been waiting on all my life."

During the ceremony, Principal Mike Ripplinger challenged Strong to take advantage of the opportunities he's earned. Ripplinger said the community loves Strong and wants to see

him return to Union County, but not until he's earned his college diploma.

"That is the diploma that will carry you many years down the road, providing for your family and providing for yourself," Ripplinger said. "That's our ultimate goal. Education doesn't just stop when you're 18 and get a high school diploma. Education happens every single day of your life. South Alabama has afforded you that opportunity. We just hope and pray that you use that

to the best of your abilities and honor your commitments, honor your family and honor Union County."

"You have been a great testimony and a great representative for Union County and the Union County school system over these last four years. We appreciate all the hard work you've invested, and we're very proud of you."

Pruitt added, "You're going to be a Jaguar, but you'll always be a Tiger."

Winners of the Telegraph-Times-Monitor Christmas coloring contest:
Davin Williams, 6
Mya Smith, 11
Caraline Douglas, 16

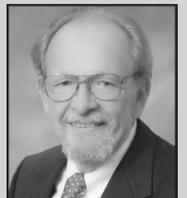
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KHHS' Cruz scores 6 goals in 2 wins over Ft. White

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Staff Writer

District 5-2A opponent Fort White brought out the best in Keystone Heights High School boys soccer player Alex Cruz, who scored three goals each in a pair of wins on consecutive nights.

Cruz did all the scoring in a 3-0 win over Fort White on Dec. 18 in Fort White, with Peyton Box, Chris Truman and Matt White each recording an assist. Goalie Caleb Cushman made six

saves.

On Dec. 19, the Indians hosted Fort White, with Cruz scoring three goals and Jacob Hopkins scoring one in a 4-1 win. Dean Hogg had two assists, while Box and Jay Payne each had one. Cushman made five saves.

Prior to those matches, the Indians (7-6-2, 3-4-1) hosted district opponent Crescent City on Dec. 12, losing 3-2, before splitting a pair of non-district matches against Fernandina Beach and Palatka.

The Indians got a goal each

from Cruz and Andrew Oxley against Crescent City. Cruz and Kaleb Dockery each had an assist, while Cushman made 17 saves.

On Dec. 14, Keystone hosted Fernandina Beach, getting four goals from Cruz in a 7-3 win.

Cushman, Oxley and Henry Alozie each had a goal, while the following had one assist each: Cruz, Hogg, Hopkins, Oxley, Landon Ricketts and Ryan Turner.

Cushman, whose goal came off a penalty kick, made 16 saves.

On Dec. 15, Hopkins, off a Colby Townsend assist, had the lone goal in a 4-1 road loss to Palatka. Cushman made 11 saves.

Keystone will return to action with a home match against Orange Park on Thursday, Jan. 4, at 7 p.m. The Indians then host district opponent P.K. Yonge on Friday, Jan. 5, at 7 p.m. before traveling to play district opponent Santa Fe on Tuesday, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m.



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SPRING CLASS SCHEDULE 2017-2018

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DAY CLASSES

Course	Instructor	Registration	Course Dates	Day	Hours	Program Hours
Adult General Education, GED, and Applied Academics	Rudoï	Call Now	January 4th - May 25, 2018	M - F	9AM - 12PM	Vary
Automotive Maintenance and Light Repair Technician	Rensberger	Call Now	January 4th - May 25, 2018	M - F	9AM - 3:30PM	600
Automotive Service Technology (AST), AST 1, and AST 2	Rensberger	Closed	January 4th - May 25, 2018	M - F	9AM - 3:30PM	1800, 750, 1050
Commercial Foods and Culinary Arts	Crews	Call Now	January 4th - May 25, 2018	M - F	M,T,W,F: 9AM - 3:30PM R: 9AM - 7:30PM	1200
Commercial Vehicle Driving A & B	Abercrombie	Call Now	January 8th - March 1, 2018	M - R	7AM - 5PM	320 & 150
Commercial Vehicle Driving A & B	Abercrombie	Call Now	March 12 - May 3, 2018	M - R	7AM - 5PM	320 & 150
Computer Systems and Information Technology	Ledger	Call Now	January 4th - May 25, 2018	M - F	9AM - 3:30PM	900
Cosmetology	Kirkpatrick	Call Now	January 4th - May 25, 2018	M - F	M,T,W,F: 9AM - 3:30PM R: 9AM - 7:30PM	1200
Diesel Maintenance Technician	Rensberger	Call Now	January 4th - May 25, 2018	M - F	9AM - 3:30PM	600
Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN)	Pusateri	Course In Progress. Visit www.butc.edu for 2018 application.		M - R	M & T: 8AM - 4:30PM W & R: 7AM - 5PM	1350
Medical Assisting	Harvey	Course In Progress. Visit www.butc.edu for 2018 application.		M - R	8AM - 4:30PM	1300
Welding Technology	Geiger	Call Now	January 4th - May 25, 2018	M - F	9AM - 3:30PM	1050
Welding Technology, Advanced	Geiger	Call Now	January 4th - May 25, 2018	M - F	9AM - 3:30PM	750

EVENING CLASSES

Adult General Education, GED, and Applied Academics	Rudoï	January 4, 2018	January 4th - May 25, 2018	M, T, R	6PM - 9PM	Vary
Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN)	Pusateri	Course In Progress. Visit www.butc.edu for 2018 application.		M - R	5PM - 10PM	1350
Nursing Assistant - Long Term Care	Harvey	January 8, 2018	January 8th - May 1, 2018	M & T	5PM - 9PM	120

COMMUNITY EDUCATION CLASSES

Hunter Education Call Mr. Davidson at (904) 813-0008 with course questions.	Davidson	Open	Contact School	R	6PM - 9PM	3
Spinning (Indoor Cycling)	Miller	Open	January 4th - May 25, 2018	M & W	4PM - 5PM	Vary
Spinning (Indoor Cycling)	Bridgman	Open	January 4th - May 25, 2018	T & R	5PM - 6:20PM	Vary
Pilates/Yoga/Tai Chi Call Ben Bridgman at 904-509-2828 with questions.	Bridgman	Open	January 4th - May 25, 2018	T & R	6:30PM - 7:15PM	Vary

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Tornadoes can't keep up with GHS, lose 75-55 in Kiwanis finale



Bradford's Tavi'en Young, who earned All-Tournament honors, soars to the basket in the Tornadoes' 75-55 loss to Gainesville in the Lake Area McDonald's-Kiwanis of Starke Holiday Tournament championship game.

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Staff Writer

Christian Miller-Cardwell and Dallas Tealer combined for 29 points in the second half as Gainesville outshot and pulled away from the Bradford High School boys' basketball team to win the Lake Area McDonald's-Kiwanis of Starke Holiday Tournament by a score of 75-55 to conclude the three-day event on Dec. 23.

It was the first loss for the Tornadoes (7-2) since they dropped their season-opener to Bolles. Bradford trailed by eight to start the second half, but got only eight field goals compared to 15 for Gainesville (8-2). Tavi'en Young, who was named to The Prep Zone All-Tournament Team, did his part to help the Tornadoes, making three three-pointers in the second half and finishing the game with a team-high 19 points.

The Hurricanes, though, pulled away with Miller-Cardwell making three three-pointers in the third quarter and Tealer making four shots from beyond the arc in the third and fourth quarters. Both were named to

the all-tournament team, with Miller-Cardwell earning MVP honors.

Young scored on a layup to spark a 7-0 run to close out the first quarter and give the Tornadoes a 19-15 lead. Chris Cummings made 1-of-2 free throws after being fouled on a drive to the basket, while Matthew Crawford rebounded a missed three-pointer by Gainesville and fired a long pass downcourt to Jordan Lee, who converted a layup. Gainesville's K.J. Bradley went 0-of-2 at the foul line, with Cummings rebounding the second miss. Cummings pushed the ball upcourt and sank a pull-up jumper in the lane to send Bradford into the second quarter leading by four.

Gainesville opened the second quarter with a 14-2 run. After Bradford's Young scored off a Taz Curry steal, Tealer knocked down back-to-back three-pointers to put the Hurricanes in the lead. Consecutive baskets by Young later in the quarter had Bradford trailing by four, but the Hurricanes were able to go into



Chris Cummings (left) goes in strong for a shot against Gainesville.

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Tigers lose big despite Hill's hot shooting

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Staff Writer

Corey Hill made six three-pointers and finished with 25 points, but it was nowhere near enough for the Union County High School boys' basketball team, which lost 98-75 to South Carolina's Landrum on Dec. 23 to finish in last place in the Lake Area McDonald's-Kiwanis of Starke Holiday Tournament at Bradford High School.

After Nate Norman made a three-pointer that left the Tigers (3-8) trailing 6-5 early in the first quarter, Landrum scored 11 of the next 15 points in building a double-digit lead it would hold for most of the game.

Keyshawn Young did his part to try to keep Union in it. He scored off a turnover forced by Hill and later added two free throws after he was fouled on a drive to the basket to make it 22-13 late in the first quarter. Early in the second quarter, Young hit a pull-up jumper to make it 24-15.

A three-pointer and a foul-line jumper by Hill kept the Tigers within 11, but Landrum (8-2) closed the half on a 14-5 run to go into the break leading 49-29.

It was almost a one-man show for the Tigers in the third quarter. Landrum outscored Union 27-22, with Hill scoring all but eight of the Tigers' points. He made four

three-pointers in the quarter, but Landrum increased its lead to 25 points entering the final quarter.

Young scored seven points in the fourth quarter to finish with 15. Caden Cox and Jaquez Hendrieth scored 11 and 10 points, respectively, while Norman added nine. Agelu Nunu and Hunter Dang had three and two points respectively.

Union began play in the Hitchcock's Challenge against Eastside on Wednesday, Dec. 27, at Legacy Park in Alachua. If the Tigers won, they will play Trinity Catholic or Puerto Rico's Academia Cristo Rey on Thursday, Dec. 28, at 2:30 p.m. If they lost to Eastside, the Tigers will play Trinity Catholic or Academia Cristo Rey at 10 a.m. on Dec. 28.

Action continues on Friday, Dec. 29, before concluding on Saturday, Dec. 30.

Union loses to Stanton on 2nd day of tournament

Much like its final game of the tournament, the Tigers saw an opponent start pulling away in the first quarter of their second-day game, which resulted in a 67-47 loss to Stanton Prep on Dec. 22.

Stanton (1-8) scored the first five points before Norman made



The Tigers' Keyshawn Young (center) drives into the lane between two Landrum players. Union's Caden Cox is pictured in the background.

a three-pointer for the Tigers. A layup by Nunu off a Hendrieth assist and a subsequent free throw left Union trailing 8-6. A three-pointer later by Young kept the Tigers within three points, but Stanton closed the first quarter by outscoring Union 6-2.

The Blue Devils opened the second quarter with a 9-2 run. Four points by Hendrieth and a three-pointer by Quinton Mitchell helped Union remain within 12, but a Stanton basket off a Union turnover in the final 20 seconds sent the Devils into halftime leading by 14.

Young scored seven points in the third quarter, but the rest of his teammates scored a combined five points as Stanton increased its lead by one.

Stanton essentially put the game away when it opened the fourth quarter with a 10-2 run. Colby Cummings scored consecutive baskets off turnovers

to put the Devils ahead 61-38.

Hendrieth and Young led the Tigers with 14 and 12 points, respectively. Mitchell and Nunu each had five points, while Hill had four. Norman had three points, with Cox and Dang each adding two.



Union's Corey Hill (left) drives past a Landrum defender on the perimeter in the Tigers' 98-75 loss in the seventh-place game of the Lake Area McDonald's-Kiwanis of Starke Holiday tournament.

Curtis A. "Lex" Sanders Attorney at Law



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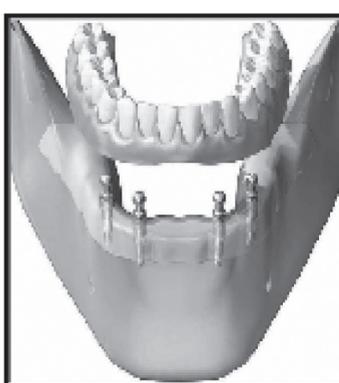


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OBITUARIES

Pamela Brown

WALDO/STARKE— Pamela Shont'e Brown, 41, died on Monday, Dec. 18, 2017 at Vitas Innovative Hospice Care Center in Stockbridge, GA. She was educated in Clifford J. Scott High School, East Orange, NJ and Eastside High School, Gainesville. She continued her education with a degree in Nursing. She was employed by North Side

Hospital. She is survived by: son, Damon C. Johns; sister, Patricia Daye; and many other family members. Life Celebration will be held 11:00 a.m. on Dec. 30 at Philadelphia Baptist Church, Waldo. Interment will be held at Fairmont Cemetery, Newark, NJ. Visitation will be held from 4-7:00 p.m. on Friday at J. Hadley Funeral Home, Starke. Funeral Services are entrusted to J. Hadley Funeral Home.

Farmer; five sons, Trace McMillan, Jordan McMillan, Jaden Williams, Pat Farmer, Jr., and Cameron Farmer; a daughter, Kimberly Miller; mother, Judy Pierce Soileau; a brother, Sonny Cudd; and five grandchildren, Logan McMillan, Raylan McMillan, Rayna Miller, Waylon Miller, and Maysin Miller. No services are planned at this time. Memorial donations may be made to Masters Funeral Home, 3015 Crill Ave., Palatka, FL 32177. Messages of encouragement or sympathy may be expressed on her online guestbook at www.themastersfuneralhomes@hotmail.com. Masters Funeral Home of Palatka is in charge of arrangements. PAID OBITUARY

Timothy Meek

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS— Timothy "Earl" Curtis Meek, 58, of Keystone Heights died Thursday, Nov. 9, 2017. He was born Nov. 6, 1959 in Tampa to the late Billy and Gloria Meek and moved to Belmore at age four. He attended schools in Keystone Heights. He was a driver for an oil company and a mechanic. He was preceded in death by: his brother, Jack Meek.

Survivors are: children, Katie (Shawn) Burgin of Starke, T.J. Meek and Justin (Jessica) Meek all of Melrose; three sisters, Becki Smith of Starke, Theresa (Woody) Long of Keystone Heights, and Charity Emmons of Melrose. Also left behind are six grandchildren and many other family members.

A Time of Remembrance will be held Saturday, Dec. 30 from 3-5:00 p.m. at Chiappini's, Melrose. Arrangements under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, Keystone Heights.

loving daughters, Linda (Brett) Perry of Keystone Heights and Susan Wyman of St. Augustine along with two sisters. She was "Mawmaw" to four grandchildren, Shannon (Lil Rock) Sheffield, A.J. (Anne) Sheffield, Dustin (Paige) Perry and Cori (Will) Houston and five great-grandchildren, Rochelle, Annabelle, Steel, Austin and Riley. A celebration of life for Polly will be announced at a later date. In lieu of flowers donations can be made to Haven Hospice, 4200 NW 90th Blvd, Gainesville, FL 32606. Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, Starke. (904) 964-6200. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

PAID OBITUARY



Mickle Smith

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS— Mickle T. (Big Mike) Smith, age 58, of Keystone Heights passed away at his home on Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2017. Born in Live Oak and raised in Jasper, he lived most of his life in Starke and Keystone Heights. He was preceded in death by his father, Cody Smith; and brother, Randy Smith.

Mike is survived by: his wife of 23 years, Shari Smith; son, Michael Smith; and daughter, Ashley Smith; his four grandchildren, Karsen Smith, Kyle Cirerol, Karlie Cirerol, and Kody Cole; and the mother of his children Susan Smith.

A celebration of Mike's life will be at a later date. PAID OBITUARY



James Rowe

LAWTEY—James Lee Rowe, 78, of Lawtey died Monday, Dec. 18, 2017 at the V.A Medical Center Lake City. Born in Greenville, he was a member of Macedonia Freewill Baptist Church of Lawtey. He attended the local schools of Greenville and completed his education with an Associate Degree. He served in the United States Navy.

He is survived by: daughters, Lisa Rowe Lewis, Sidra Rowe and Tonya Rowe; sons, Michael Rowe, Anthony Duhart and John Berry; sister, Alberta Lewis; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and many other family members.

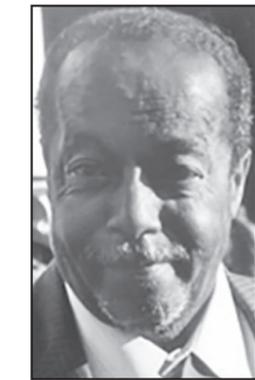
Funeral Services will be held Saturday, Dec. 30 at Mt. Zion AME Church, Lawtey at 11:00 a.m. with Pastor Sinclair Rowe conducting the services. Interment will be held at Peetsville Cemetery. Arrangements under the direction of Haile Funeral Home Inc., Starke. The Cortège will form at the residence of Rowe, 2462 East Lake Street, Lawtey at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday. Visitation will be held on Friday at Mt. Zion AME Church from 3-6:30 p.m.



Polly Morrow

STARKE—Polly Morrow, age 79, of Starke passed away, Monday, Dec. 25, 2017 at Haven Hospice in Gainesville following an extended illness. She was born in Eufaula, AL on Jan. 6, 1938 to the late Mack and Mary (Phillips) Williams. Polly was a resident of Starke for over 30 years and had owned and operated Polly's September Home. She was a member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church and always enjoyed taking care of those in need. She enjoyed nature, watching birds, gardening and flowers. Polly also enjoyed music, dancing, and shopping. She was definitely a people person, but most of all, she loved her family. The father of her two daughters, John Jourdan had preceded her in death along her a son-in-law, Barry Wyman; a brother and two sisters.

Polly is survived by: her two



Roy Holmes

LAKE BUTLER—Roy Holmes, 74, of Lake Butler died Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2017 at his residence. He was a member of Hopewell Church of God By Faith. He attended and graduated from the local schools of Union County. He was self-employed.

He is survived by: children, Andropolis Mitchell Sr. and Sarah Holmes; sisters, Dorothy Grimage, Fannie Riggins, Minnie Holmes, Janie Jones and Ruth Holmes; brothers, Albert Holmes, Rubin Morris, Clyde Holmes, Wesley Holmes and Otto Holmes; and many other family members.

Funeral Services will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday Dec. 30 in the Hopewell Church Of God By Faith in Providence with Elder Jeremiah Lee conducting the services. Interment will be held in Little Rock Cemetery Lake Butler. Arrangements are under the direction of Haile Funeral Home Inc., Starke. Visitation will be held on Friday at the Carl D Haile Memorial Chapel for Friends 3-6:00 p.m. The Cortège will form at the church at Hopewell Church of God By Faith at 10:45 p.m. on Saturday.

Mary McCormick-Jacobs

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS—Mary L. McCormick-Jacobs, 93, of Keystone Heights died Thursday, Dec. 21, 2017 at Palm Garden of Gainesville. She was born in Hawthorne on May 30, 1924 to the late Henry and Jewell (Putnel) Paullin. She had been a lifelong resident of the Hawthorne and Keystone Heights area graduating from Hawthorne High School with the class of 1942. She was a homemaker and a member of First Baptist Church of Keystone Heights. She was preceded in death by: her husband, Henry "Mac" McCormick; son, Eddie St. John; and sister, Earnestine Miller.

Survivors are: children, Susan (Doug) Voliva of Wears Valley, TN, John (Kellye) McCormick and David (Kelly) McCormick all of Keystone Heights, and Jimmy McCormick of Gainesville; sister, Sara McGuire of Gainesville; seven grandchildren; and one great-granddaughter; and two great great-grandchildren.

The viewing will be held prior to graveside services beginning at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, Dec. 27 with Pastor Clay Robinson officiating. Interment will be at Hawthorne Cemetery in Hawthorne. In lieu of flowers donations can be made to First Baptist Church, 550 East Walker Drive, Keystone Heights, FL 32656 or Haven Hospice, 4200 NW 90th Blvd, Gainesville, FL 32606. Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, Keystone Heights.



Kaitlin Van Heusen uses a cow skull as a teaching tool as students (l-r) Dakota Betterson-Smith, Maudrey Tenly and Judson Hicks look on.

AWARD

Continued from 2B

Amanda Ellis of Silver Sands Middle School in DeLand each received \$250.

Carol Roe, chairman of the Florida Agriculture in the Classroom board of directors, said, "Our grants committee selected these educators because they are passionate about Florida agriculture and share that passion with their students."

Though Van Heusen laughed about not having enough years in teaching "to show that I actually know what I'm doing," her application obviously proved

otherwise. It was a lengthy process, she said, that involved having to show what she taught, how she includes certain standards in her teaching and the awards her students receive.

Van Heusen teaches five different prep areas, so she had to include a lot in her application. She said that probably made her application stand out.

"Because I cover so many different areas, I think that was what set me apart," she said.

Van Heusen is excited about attending the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference. It'll give her the opportunity to share ideas with

teachers from throughout the U.S. and to get some pointers as well. She especially wants to learn how teachers in urban areas approach agriculture.

"I'm looking forward to going to see how these teachers across the United States do that and take pointers from them, especially teachers that have been teaching for a while, and learning from what they do and how I can improve my side of teaching it," Van Heusen said.

It's a way of getting better as an educator and better preparing students for their futures.

"Teachers always learn from each other," Van Heusen said.

Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, a Gainesville-based nonprofit organization, funds programs like the Florida Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Awards with the proceeds it receives from the sales of the agriculture specialty license plate. Its mission is to increase agricultural literacy through K-12 education, which it does by providing curriculum, workshops, farm tours, award programs, grants and the Florida Agriculture Literacy Day elementary reading program.

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BHS opens Kiwanis tournament with 75-45 win over UCHS



Union's Keyshawn Young (left) and Bradford's D.J. Mackey battle for a rebound.

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
Staff Writer

Chris Cummings scored 11 points in the second quarter to help the Bradford High School boys' basketball team start pulling away from Union County and win 75-45 to conclude action on the first day of the Lake Area McDonald's-Kiwanis Club of Starke Holiday Tournament on Dec. 21 at BHS.

In the day's three previous games, Santa Fe defeated Stanton Prep 61-32, Gainesville defeated Madison County 68-44 and Creekside defeated Landrum (South Carolina) 69-62.

The Tornadoes got off to a quick start, scoring the first six points. It was 4-0 when Matthew Crawford went to the foul line to shoot two free throws for Bradford. He missed both attempts, but D.J. Mackey rebounded the second miss. The Tornadoes' Tavi'en Young would then attempt a three-pointer, which was no good, but Mackey rebounded the miss and scored for a 6-0 lead. It was the second straight basket for Mackey, who later added two free throws to make the score 8-2.

Union rallied to make it a tie game going into the second quarter. Keyshawn Young made consecutive baskets, one of

which was a three-pointer, to pull the Tigers to within 8-7. Bradford scored off Tavi'en Young's rebound putback to make it 10-7, but Jaquez Hendrieth made a three-pointer to tie the score.

Hendrieth opened the second quarter with a score off an offensive rebound, but Bradford tied the score when Tarrin Jackson's steal led to a Cummings layup. The Tornadoes then took the lead again with a Cummings three-pointer.

Baskets by Corey Hill and Hendrieth put the Tigers back on top 16-15, but it would be their last lead as Bradford closed the quarter with a 12-2 run. Cummings made two free throws to give the Tornadoes the lead for good. Taz Curry then hit a turn-around jumper in the lane before coming up with a steal that led to a basket by Young. A Young steal led to an eventual score by Cummings, while Curry scored down low off a Tally Chandler assist.

After Hendrieth scored for the Tigers, Bradford closed the half with a Cummings dunk following a Curry steal, sending the Tornadoes into halftime leading 27-18.

Curry and Cummings each

See KIWANIS, 7B



Bradford's Taz Curry (foreground) prepares to put up a shot as Union players Keyshawn Young, Caden Cox, Jaquez Hendrieth and (background) Corey Hill look on.

FINALE

Continued from 4B

halftime leading 34-26, getting baskets from Diamond Smith and Jeremiah Tisme as well as a free throw from Miller-Cardwell.

The second half began with a 10-1 Gainesville run, with Tealer hitting two three-pointers and the Hurricanes scoring four points following Bradford turnovers. Bradford couldn't make a dent in the lead, thanks to Miller-Cardwell. A Young three-pointer was followed by Miller-Cardwell's own downtown shot. Two free throws by Curry were followed by another Miller-Cardwell trey. Then, after Young scored on a scoop shot in the lane, Miller-Cardwell did it again, sinking a shot from beyond the arc to put the Hurricanes up 53-34.

Cummings scored six of the first eight points of the fourth quarter, going 4-of-5 from the foul line, as he finished with 15 points. He and Young had 36 and 35 points, respectively, in all three tournament games.

Curry and Lee finished with six and four points, respectively, while Crawford, J'cobi Harris and Jaleen Lane each had three. D.J. Mackey added two points.

The tournament's final day also saw last year's champion Creekside (9-1) defeat Santa Fe (3-5) 58-40 in the consolation championship, Madison County (5-2) defeat Stanton Prep (1-8) 72-48 for fifth place and Landrum (8-2) defeating Union County (3-8) 98-75 for seventh place.

Creekside's Noah Lippy and Madison County's Travis Jay were also named to the all-tournament team.

Bradford began play in the Hitchcock's Challenge at Alachua's Legacy Park on Wednesday, Dec. 27, against Doral Academy. If the Tornadoes

won, they will play Hawthorne or Saint Francis on Thursday, Dec. 28, at 5:30 p.m. If they lost to Doral Academy, they will play Hawthorne or Saint Francis at 1 p.m. on Dec. 28.

The tournament also features action on Friday, Dec. 29, before concluding on Saturday, Dec. 30.

BHS defeats Santa Fe to advance to championship

Six points each from Young and Tally Chandler in the third quarter helped Bradford create some separation in a 58-49 win over Santa Fe during the second day of action in the Lake Area McDonald's-Kiwanis of Starke Holiday Tournament on Dec. 22.

A jumper by Jordan Hill sent the Tornadoes into the second quarter leading 17-16. A rebound tip-in by Santa Fe's Deshaun Odem put the Raiders ahead by one to start the second quarter, but a three-pointer by Chandler put Bradford back on top.

A basket by Harris sparked a late 10-5 run to close the half. Cummings made a three-pointer following a Santa Fe turnover, while a steal by Lee led to his own dunk and a 30-20 lead. Saveon Webster made a three-pointer for the Raiders, but Cummings answered with a long-distance shot of his own to help Bradford go into the break leading 33-25.

Santa Fe pulled to within 45-41 late in the third quarter on a three-pointer by Webster, but the Tornadoes responded with a 6-0 run. Young scored on a drive to the basket, while Mackey grabbed a defensive rebound and fired a pass downcourt to Chandler, who was all alone for a layup. A steal by Curry led to a layup by Crawford as Bradford entered the fourth quarter leading 51-41.

Bradford held onto its lead despite a shaky performance from the foul line and multiple turnovers in the final quarter.

Lee finished with 10 points, while Chandler and Young each

had nine. Mackey and Cummings had seven and six, respectively, with Crawford adding five.

Curry and Harris each had four

points, while Hill and Dequan Hankerson each had two.

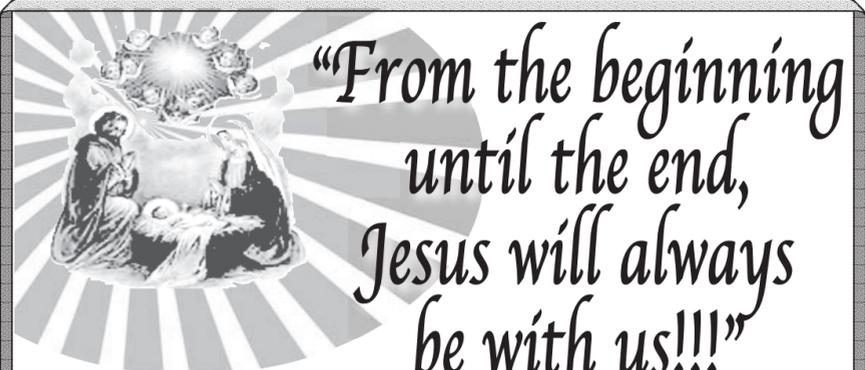
In other action on the second day, Gainesville defeated

Creekside 69-58, Stanton Prep defeated Union County 67-47 and Madison County defeated Landrum 75-70.

Members of The Prep Zone All-Tournament Team (l-r): Bradford's Tavi'en Young, Gainesville's Dallas Tealer and Gainesville's Christian Miller-Cardwell (MVP), Creekside's Noah Lippy and Madison County's Travis Jay were also members.



The Tornadoes' Jordan Lee (right) contends with two Gainesville defenders.



I thank God every day for the friends, who love and care for my family, our staff and myself! 2016 has passed by so fast and this year was not a good year for many of us. But I want to say, what would we do without the loving friends that are there when we need them most.

We want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and may the New Year 2018 bring us all the things we need, and the happiness we all long for: God is Always there when we need him, all we have to do is Pray. Sometimes our prayers are not answered right away, but sooner or later things will come through.

We want to let you all know how much we appreciate you all for letting us take care of your loved one's for the last time here on earth, we treat everyone as if they were our own Family.

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Bradford's Matthew Crawford (left) looks to drive past Union's Hunter Dang.

featured a combined 16 points from Union's Hendrieth and Young.

Jalen Williams scored six points early in the fourth quarter, including two consecutive baskets when he scored off his own steal as well as a steal by Jordan Lee. Those baskets

increased Bradford's lead to 22.

Cummings led Bradford with 15 points, while Mackey and Curry scored 12 and 10, respectively. Crawford and Williams each had eight points, while Young had seven. Jordan Hill added four points, while the following each had three:



Union's Jaquez Hendrieth (left) tries to find a way around Bradford's Tally Chandler.



Union's Corey Hill (right) is closely guarded by Bradford's Tarrin Jackson.

Chandler, Lee and J'cobi Harris. also got 11 points from Young, Jaleen Lane had two points, while Hill and Caden Cox had six Union's Hendrieth led all and four, respectively. Quinton Mitchel added two points.

KIWANIS

Continued from 6B

scored off his own steal to open the second half and give the Tornados a double-digit lead. A three-pointer by Keyshawn Young cut Bradford's lead to

single digits, but Chandler answered with a trey of his own. Then, following a Union turnover, Matthew Crawford sank one from long range, putting Bradford ahead 40-25.

Crawford and Cummings combined to score 10 points in the third quarter, which also

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HELP WANTED: UNION COUNTY POSITION: Director, Union County Emergency Medical Services JOB DUTIES/DESCRIPTION: As the UCEMS Director he/she must oversee and manage an advanced life support (ALS) EMS Service that treats a population of over 15,500 citizens, utilizes 4 ALS equipped ambulances, and employees twenty-five plus EMT's and paramedics

on a 24 hour basis. He/She will be responsible and accountable for a 1.8 million dollar budget, patient billing, in-house budgeting, fleet management, state records organization, medical direction updates, progressive ALS and BLS training, employee scheduling, with emphasis on supervisory oversight on all administrative and operational details pertaining to all pre-hospital care of patients both non-emergent and emergent. QUALIFICATIONS: Minimum of 4 years of field experience as a Certified EMT-B or Certified EMT-P. Must be proficient in all EMS operations to include: Staff scheduling, budget preparation, EMS supervisory skills, Florida Administration Code 64J, Incident Command Structure (ICS), National Incident Management System, Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), grant writing skills, and strong communication skills. Applications must be submitted to the Union County Board of County Commissioners. The office is located at 15 NE 1st Street, Lake Butler, Florida 32054. Union County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Veteran Preference. Deadline for submitting applications will be December 13, 2017.

TEMPORARY FARM Labor: Selby Honey, Poplarville, MS, has 4 positions with 3 mo. exp. required as beekeeper with references; raise honeybees & maintain colony health,

caging queens, install queen cells, assemble and transport hives; maintain & repair buildings & equipment; long periods of standing, bending & must lift 75 pounds; obtain driver's license within 30 days of hire with clean MVR; no bee, pollen, or honey related allergies; once hired, workers may be required to take employer paid random drug tests; testing positive/failure to comply may result in immediate termination; employer provides free tools, equipment, housing and daily trans; trans & subsistence expenses reimb.; \$10.38/hr, may increase based on experience, may work nights, weekends, holidays & asked but not required to work Sabbath; 75% work period guaranteed from 2/15/18 - 5/15/18. Review ETA790 requirements and apply at nearest FL Workforce Office with Job Order MS239385 or call 850-245-7105.

TEMPORARY FARM Labor: JF Phillips Farms, Yazoo City, MS, has 4 positions, 3 mo. exp. w/GPS for cultivating, tilling, fertilizing, planting, harvesting & transporting grain & oilseed crops to storage, grain bin, auger & fan operation & maint., irrigation maint.; clean & maintain building, equip & vehicles; long periods of standing, bending & able to lift 75#; must be able to obtain driver's license with clean MVR within 30 days; once

hired, workers may be required to take employer paid random drug tests; testing positive/failure to comply may result in immediate termination from employment; employer provides free tools, equipment, housing and daily trans; trans & subsistence expenses reimb.; \$10.38/hr, increase based on exp., may work nights, weekends, holidays & asked but not required to work Sabbath; 75% work period guaranteed from 2/15/18 - 12/01/18. Review ETA790 requirements and apply with JO# MS240346 at nearest FL Workforce Office or call 850-245-7105.

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HELP WANTED UNION COUNTY

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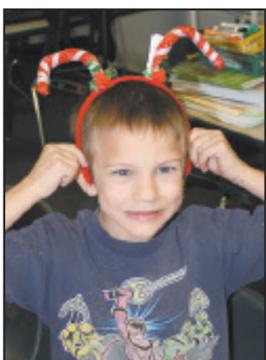
Merry Christmas from American Legion Post 56



Members of Starke's American Legion Post 56 have been reading to the classrooms of Southside Elementary School teachers Ronda Crawford (first grade), Stephanie Gunter (kindergarten) and Jennifer McClellan (kindergarten), so they decided to give those students a little Christmas joy as well, delivering stockings full of goodies on Dec. 18. Post 56 Commander Raymond Hunt is pictured above with Stephanie Gunter's class, which consists of (not all students are pictured): Gabriella Arnett, Taelynn Brazell, Hunter Brekke, Caleb Davis, Serenity Fernett, Kensen Hankerson, Ma'Kenzie Hankerson, Ethan Henderson, Elijah Hodge, Cole Jackson, Macey Kearse, Landon Lewis, Macie McCoy, Wyatt McLendon, Angel Norman, Dalton Nugent, Aiden Rigdon, Raegan Robinson and Aubrianna Thomas.



TOP LEFT: Kelsey Padgett of Ronda Crawford's first-grade class checks out her stocking. ABOVE: Post 56 member Mel Koski gives a stocking to Tekiyah Young in Crawford's first-grade class. LEFT: Landon Lewis of Stephanie Gunter's kindergarten class does some Christmas coloring.



HOW DO I LOOK? Trying on their candy-cane headgear, courtesy of the American Legion Post 56, are (top photo) Gabriella Arnett of Stephanie Gunter's kindergarten class and C.J. Palmer of Ronda Crawford's first-grade class.

ABOVE: Christmas buddies Nick Jamison and Savannah Scott of Ronda Crawford's first-grade class. RIGHT: American Legion Post 56 members like Mel Koski did more than just pass out stockings. Here, Koski, in Crawford's class, helps Tyler Sanford with his Christmas-themed adornment.



HO-HO OR HA-HA? Raymond Hunt shares a laugh with Brendan Staats in Ronda Crawford's first-grade class.



Kylie Olive, a student in Ronda Crawford's first-grade class, has a pair of Santa heads atop her head, complementing her Christmas pajamas. Dec. 18 was Pajama Day at Southside as well as the day American Legion Post 56 members gave out gifts.



Raymond Hunt is pictured with students in Jennifer McClellan's kindergarten class. The class consists of (not all students are pictured): Jayshawn Alston, Daejahria Beard, Jacob Bernard, Hayden Dickerson, McKenna Ferrer, Dakota Gray, Amiya Green, Bentley Griffis, Khalid Hankerson, James Harper, Leelan Harper, Embriel Isler, Ashlynn Lamb, Danielle McClenaghan, Gariel Rosado, Jensen Shuford, Paislee Stephens, Harmoni Thomas and A'Shariah Williams.

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