



Brunch and auction attendance sagging, but raises nearly \$1500 for BCHS arts

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Boys remain unbeaten after three games, Ruise has hot hand

See page 13



75¢

DECEMBER 6, 2012 THURSDAY

THE BAKER COUNTY PRESS

83rd Year, Vol. 33 | Winner of 5 state awards for journalism excellence in 2011

‘Pill doc’ employee gets 3 yr. probation

JOEL ADDINGTON
NEWS EDITOR
reporter@bakercountypress.com

Though she originally faced eight felony drug counts, Veronica L. Alford of Macclenny pleaded guilty this week to two counts of fraudulently obtaining prescription medication in exchange for three years on drug offender probation.

Circuit Judge Phyllis Rosier approved the 42-year-old wife, mother and grandmother’s plea agreement the morning of December 4, calling it “very generous.”

Ms. Alford’s probation prohibits her from consuming alcohol and drugs, or frequenting bars and other establishments that sell alcohol, among other restrictions.

Assistant State Attorney Ralph Yazdiya dropped four of the initial charges made by police — three for drugs sales and one for writing a prescription for money — about a year ago.

He said at this week’s change of plea hearing he would not prosecute the defendant for two trafficking in illegal drugs counts, either.

That left two counts of obtaining a controlled substance by fraud, which in this case was the painkiller hydrocodone, Mr. Yazdiya said.

Ms. Alford had no criminal history prior to her arrest in September, 2011 after state and local investigators served a search warrant at Dr. Charles Scarborough’s Macclenny clinic where Ms. Alford was employed.

The doctor’s office was allegedly rife with prescription drug fraud, according to police, and Dr. Scarborough now faces more than 800 counts of insurance fraud.

He was arrested in Clay County in late October, about a year after the Florida Department of Health yanked his medical license.

Dr. Scarborough is being prosecuted by the Florida Attorney General’s Office of Statewide Prosecution in the Third Judicial Circuit in Lake City.

Prior to the warrant search of the physician’s office, sheriff’s office investigators visited

See page 2

12-year-old threatens deputy responding to phone theft

See Page 4



Students bow their heads in prayer at the Baker County High School flag pole before school on December 3.

PHOTO BY JUD JOHNSON



Jordan Sommise

JOEL ADDINGTON
NEWS EDITOR
reporter@bakercountypress.com

More than 100 students in the Baker High School courtyard the morning of December 3 mourned the death of a 14-year-old girl and prayed for two other teens who were in a pickup truck that flipped in the north county less than two days before.

Driver Austin Kight and passenger

Flipping truck kills teen BCHS seniors injured, one seriously

Cory Craig, both 17 and from Macclenny, were injured in the crash that killed Jordan Alex Sommise of Jacksonville.

Word of the vigil at the BCHS flag pole spread quickly when friends of the victims announced the gathering on Facebook the previous day.

“It was very touching. I was most impressed,” high school principal Tom Hill said of the “100 percent” student led and organized event.

He said Ms. Sommise attended Baker County Middle School in the past but was being home schooled this year. Mr. Kight and

Mr. Craig were seniors at the high school. Mr. Hill estimated 150 students attended the prayer vigil.

“It was very touching. I was most impressed.”

—Tom Hill
Baker County High School principal on the student organized prayer vigil for the victims of last weekend’s accident.

He said Mr. Kight attempted to pass another vehicle, drove onto the west shoulder and into a ditch before steering the truck out

of the ditch and losing control. The truck began to rotate as it crossed over the road and overturned, landing in the woods on the east side of the road.

The driver’s injuries were not considered serious. Mr. Craig’s condition was said to have improved slightly after lengthy surgery on Monday, but he remained in critical condition with extensive back and leg injuries.

The trooper noted none of the occupants had their seat belts fastened and all were ejected from the pickup, which sustained an estimated \$5000 in damage.

Mr. Kight and Mr. Craig were transported to Fraser Hospital and Shands Jacksonville, respectively, for treatment. Ms. Sommise was dead at the scene.

Charges are pending and FHP trooper

See page 2

Christmas parade, festival hits downtown



PHOTOS BY JUD JOHNSON AND JOEL ADDINGTON
Picture from the annual festival and Lighted Christmas Parade in Macclenny are (from left) Holden Blume, 2, with Justin Burnham, assistant band director; the Grinch in the parade, visitors perusing booths and one of the many children from the parade that evening. See page 14 for more parade photos and visit bakercountypress.com for video of the festival.



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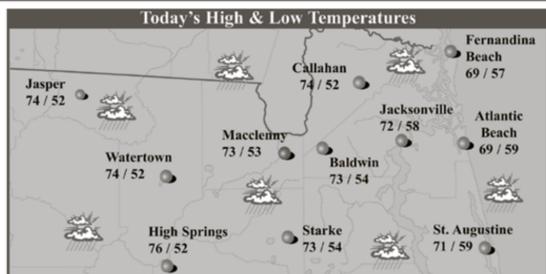
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The Baker County Press Weather

Seven Day Forecast table with columns for day, weather, high, and low temperatures from Thursday to Wednesday.



Last Week's Local Almanac table with columns for Day, High, Low, Normals, and Precip, listing data for the week of Dec 11/27 to 12/3.

Sun/Moon Chart This Week table showing moon phases (Last 12/6, New 12/13) and sunrise/sunset times for Thursday through Wednesday.

St. Mary's River Levels and Hunting/Fishing Times table with columns for location, current level, change, and peak times for AM and PM.

Weather History section starting with 'Dec. 6, 1886 - A great snowstorm hit the southern Appalachian Mountains...' and mentioning a record 11 inches of snow in Montgomery, Ala.

COMMENT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters are welcome, but must contain the signature of the writer, a telephone number and city of residence. Letters must reflect opinions and statements on issues of current interest to the general public.

CONTACT US

By phone at 904.259.2400 or by fax at 904.259.6502. You can stop by our office located at 104 S. Fifth Street, Macclenny, FL or mail your submission to PO Box 598, Macclenny, FL 32063.

Ironing: it just ain't a 'manly' thing...

"You can't wear that," said my wife as I walked out into the living room. "Why? It looks like it matches my pants."

MY SIDE OF THE MATTER ROBERT GERARD

I looked down at my purple shirt. "It's not that bad." "Yes it is. You look like a prune. Go run an iron over it."

all of a sudden there are flashing barricades. Buttons are flashing barricades. Zippers are like concrete road dividers. Of course, I never worry too terribly about ironing because I happen to be one of those people who naturally attracts wrinkles.

One year in college when I didn't have any wrapping paper, I wrapped all my Christmas presents in the Sunday comics. The thing is, it didn't look any worse than when I use expensive wrapping paper.

Voila! The paper drapes over and doesn't leave any annoying gaps. I'm home free! Wrong. I get almost finished and there are eight inches of fold over on each end. Eight inches of fold over on a two-inch box. How did this happen?

I had a life changing experience Saturday night. It's a long story but suffice to say I am so glad I live in Baker County and we have a fantastic set of deputies and firemen working here.

Kudos to all those who saved her sanity

JESSICA PREVATT | STAFF

I had a life changing experience Saturday night. It's a long story but suffice to say I am so glad I live in Baker County and we have a fantastic set of deputies and firemen working here.



BCSO: shooting near Keller, arrests unrelated

JOEL ADDINGTON NEWS EDITOR

Early this week the sheriff's office was still investigating a shooting in the vicinity of Keller Intermediate School on November 27, but announced a day later the arrest of two men believed to be involved in the shooting on unrelated drug charges.

Probation for 'pill doc' employee

From page 1

the clinic on multiple occasions for interviews and reviews of patient records. The investigation led to the arrest of four other individuals: Melissa D. Bedsole, 43, Kayla P. Dampier, 21, and Aaron T. Devereaux, 23, all of Callahan.

obtaining drugs by fraud. However, Judge Rosier recently granted motions by the trio's attorneys to dismiss evidence against them because it was obtained by inspecting patient records without a warrant or the patient's consent.

SHARE YOUR JOY & RECORD YOUR FAMILY HISTORY! Submit births, weddings & 50th+ anniversaries via email to editor@bakercountypress.com

Flipping truck kills teen...

From page 1

ers were back at the scene early this week conducting a forensic investigation. Many who knew Ms. Sommise and others who didn't have been conveying their condolences through Facebook in the days following the accident. A memorial page was created titled "In Memory of Jordan Sommise."

Mr. Craig struck a tree after he was ejected, and sustained extensive back trauma that may paralyze him below the waist, the page's administrator stated. According to an update posted about 11:30 am on December 3, the teen was able to squeeze family members' hands, smile and give a thumbs up motion to communicate. The following day he was able to raise his arms and open his eyes for a time, another update said.

raffle to raise money for both the Sommise and Craig families. They plan to sell tickets at the high school later this week to win an autographed book by Betty Trimble, a former Glen St. Mary resident and mother of country star Tim McGraw.

'Breakfast with Santa' band benefit this Saturday

The annual Breakfast with Santa event by Baker County Friends of the Instrumental Arts will take place the morning of December 8 beginning at 8 am at Baker County Middle School. Admission to a hot breakfast and concerts by the high school and middle school bands beginning at 10 am is \$7 at the door or \$5 prior to the event.

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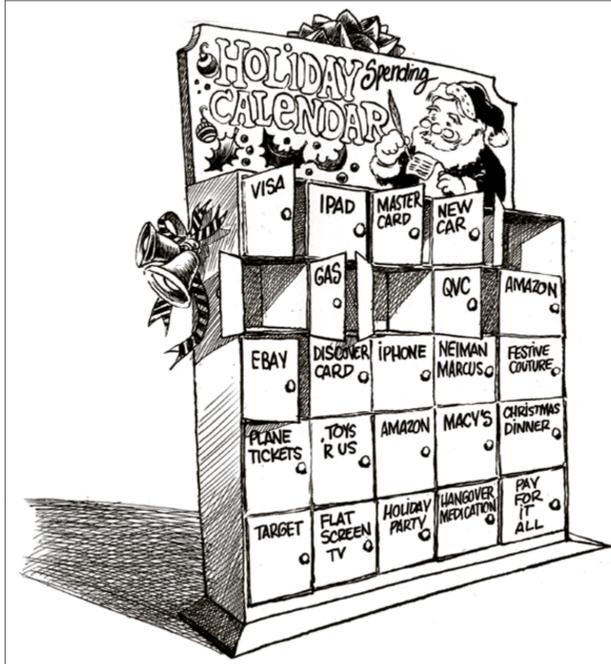
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Free surplus food

Surplus USDA food commodities will be distributed on a first come-first served basis on Tuesday, December 11 starting at 9 am at the Northeast Florida Community Action Agency office in Macclenny.



FRUITCAKES. NEED A GIFT FOR THE PERSON WITH EVERYTHING? Want homemade goodies for your holiday party but don't have the time to bake them? Homemade Fruitcakes Full of pineapples, cherries & pecans. Visit our booth this Thursday & Friday in front of Save-A-Lot from 10 am - 2 pm. 5 LB. CAKE \$37 • 3 LB. CAKE \$25 • MUFFINS \$10. New Life Church of God.



Reader Sparked

I recently heard a rumor there is consideration for developing a casino and hotel complex at the site of the former Cedar Creek development in Glen St. Mary. After considerable thought, I realize this would be an excellent idea. A casino would certainly help the pitiful employment, economy and housing situation in Baker County.

You be the spark, we'll fan the flames and everyone will be enlightened. I'd rather have Baker County known for an excellent casino hotel complex than medical waste incinerator.

We took this question to the county Planning and Zoning department, which could not confirm the rumor. Planning director Ed Preston said further he has no knowledge of such a project or any plans for something like it.

THE BAKER COUNTY PRESS. USPS 040-280. Post Office Box 598 Macclenny, FL 32063 (904) 259-2400. Mr. Preston also said the Cedar Creek site has been reverts to its former agricultural zoning and there are no current applications or plans afoot for the site.

Facebook fans 'What you had to say...'

- With the annual Lighted Christmas Parade right around the corner, we asked our Facebook faithful for their favorite spots to watch the festivities. Here's a look at the prime real estate onlookers like to stakeout: Kimberly Barton: Caddy corner to the fire department, every year since I can remember. Laura Williams: Calendars Pizzeria is a great location. Hot, flavored coffee and great food at your fingertips is a plus, too.

COPIES Black & white/Full color THE OFFICE MART 110 South Fifth St.

Housing market begins to stir

Some large commercial tracts back on market

JOEL ADDINGTON
NEWS EDITOR
reporter@bakercountypress.com

It's nothing like the boom days of the mid-2000s, but the real estate market here is showing modest signs of improvement, however small.

Building permits are on pace to meet or exceed last year's totals, large landowners appear to be marketing their properties more aggressively and inquiries at local government planning offices are on the upswing.

According to two Macclenny realtors, business is much better than it has been in recent years.

Cindy Oglesby, a real estate broker in Macclenny for the last 10 years working mostly with residential properties, said thanks to low prices and attractive financing through the USDA, for which anyone in Baker County is eligible, the market here has improved.

"I would say real estate is more busy than it has been in the past five years," she said. "This past half of the year, there has been a lot of activity. My office has been much busier."

That activity, she said, has come largely from first-time home buyers and a lot of investor purchases.

"To me our county is holding its own in real estate," said Ms. Oglesby.

Carol Sellers, who also links home buyers with sellers in Macclenny, agreed.

"Home sales are really going great out here as well as in west Jacksonville," said Ms. Sellers, adding that lately many of her clients are buying non-investment properties with cash.

"The business has been really great; more than I anticipated," she said.

Her sales here have been in the \$150,000 to \$200,000 range, but higher closer to Jacksonville. She said the low cost of living and taxes in Baker County, as well as the country lifestyle, draw buyers here.

The market for new homes has been less active, but there are some positive signs. Home building permits, at least in Macclenny, appear to show an upward trend in the market.

The City of Macclenny has issued 14 residential permits so far this year compared to eight during all of 2011, city records show.

The most active builder in the city has been Drees Homes of Florida, Inc., which pulled eight permits this year and three last year, all in the Rolling Meadows subdivision south of the county fairgrounds.



Construction crews are back at work in Rolling Meadows subdivision.

Commercial construction in the city, meanwhile, has seen little change from a year ago, when two commercial permits were issued versus two thus far in 2012.

Outside the city, the pace of construction has remained level both for residential and commercial projects. According to tallies from the county building department, there were 69 residential and one commercial permit issued last year compared to 62 residential and one commercial so far this year.

Much of the county's undeveloped land that exists has large tracts of timberland.

County planning director Ed Preston said the signs popping up on tracts already zoned for commercial or industrial uses could mean their owners are eager to re-enter the market.

He said his office has also seen more inquiries this year and than in the previous two years.

"There's no active applications for development, so we have not emerged or come out of the recession yet in terms of land development," said Mr. Preston. "But we assume from the new signs, it seems like early interest

is growing. It seems like people are trying to start things up again. But we're not out of the depths yet."

The inquiries have been preliminary in nature, the planner said, including someone checking on land for multi-family housing, for instance.

"They spoke to us and to the City of Macclenny," he said. "They were optimistic about multi-family housing here."

"We get people calling up with things like that or asking about industrial development and raw land, but all they're doing is asking," he said, adding they are usually people involved with the early stages of property development like realtors and appraisers.

Though a trio of development plans for a medical waste incinerator and two sand mining operations have received the most attention in 2012, what the county's seen the most of, Mr. Preston says, are individuals seeking new zoning or changes for single-lot projects.

He recalled only one subdivision at the former Navona Creek project site north of Glen St. Mary on the west side of CR 125.

Once totaling some 3600 acres, the project has been scaled way down to four subdivisions with 10, 1-acre lots, Mr. Preston said.

The planning director anticipates similar residential subdivisions next year, along with larger industrial and commercial "job-creation" projects at the Baker County Development Commission's two parks, Enterprise East near the Walmart Distribution Center and Enterprise West near the Sanderson Pipe plant.

"In these kind of times, they are desperately trying to get things rolling again," he said. "I expect to see a project or two from them, like the incinerator and the sand mining projects. Not necessarily those projects, but more job-creation projects."

Mr. Preston also expects the pace of development to increase gradually in the coming years and eventually return to the robust growth of the past.

"We're heading up but it will continue to be a slow climb," he said.

A review of last year's land sales and those logged so far this year at the courthouse show little change in the number of property transfers or the total value of those sales.

Last year there were 290 sales of more than \$20,000 compared to 251 so far this year.

The total value of those properties was roughly \$35.1 million in 2011 and \$28.4 million through 11 months of 2012, court records show.

Boy threatens a deputy; suspect in theft of phone

A 12-year-old boy named in a complaint last month for attacking his mother was arrested the morning of November 30 after he cursed and threatened a county deputy investigating him as a suspect in the theft of a cell phone from a neighbor.

The boy's mother, 43, called police about 7:20 that morning after her son, who was awaiting a school bus, entered her vehicle at their residence on CR 23A north and retrieved the phone valued at \$250.

The phone had been stolen earlier from a 75-year-old woman who lives nearby, and when the mother attempted to take it away from her son about 10 days earlier it triggered a physical attack.

The mother told Deputy Jeremiah Combs the boy was admitted for mental health treatment under the state's Baker Act, then returned home November 29.

When he refused to yield up the phone after taking it from her vehicle the next morning, she called police.

The boy told the officer he took the phone "because it is broken and she don't need it."

The officer then advised the youth to hand it over, to which he replied, "If you try to take this phone I will kick your teeth in like I did the last cop that messed with me."

Deputy Combs said he and Cpl. Shawn Bishara then handcuffed the suspect without incident.

He was booked at county jail for petty theft and assault on a law officer for making the threat. Deputy Combs said the boy also refused to calm himself and continually yelled and cursed at his mother during questioning.

In other recent incidents, one woman was arrested and a complaint for battery filed on a second suspect following a fight at the Winn-Dixie on South 6th in Macclenny the afternoon of December 2.

A witness confirmed to Deputy Michael Clark that Lisa Meister, 36, of Macclenny was the primary aggressor when she walked up to Heather McDonald, also 36, shortly after 4 pm and repeatedly struck her.

A surveillance camera appeared to verify that and Ms. Meister was charged with battery. A complaint for a similar charge was filed on Ms. McDonald, also from Macclenny. The report does not mention a reason for the attack.

A complaint for battery was filed December 2 naming a 21-year-old female patient at Northeast Florida State Hospital for an attack on a second female patient, age 24.

The victim told Deputy Jeremiah Johnson the incident took place in a day room the previous evening just before 8 o'clock.

DUI charge in May wreck

Vehicle ran off road, injuring 3

A Sanderson man faces multiple drunk driving charges in connection with an accident that occurred in the north county 26 months ago.

Jonathan Dugard, 26, was arrested November 26 on a warrant issued after results of a blood sample drawn following the accident on Turner Cemetery Rd. showed his blood alcohol content at .149, nearly twice the legal limit for intoxication.

The results were not submitted to the state attorney's office until recently.

He is charged with drunk driving, DUI resulting in bodily injury and DUI resulting in property damage.

A report by FHP Trooper Alex Cummings indicated Mr. Dugard was at the wheel of a 1998 Volkswagen when it went out of control about 4 am on May 6 and overturned before striking a fence.

All three occupants, including vehicle owner Jennifer Burned, 31, of Macclenny, were ejected.

The defendant, who also lists a Glen St. Mary address, was released on \$15,000 bond following a first appearance the day he was arrested.

In other, more recent, arrests for DUI, two Jacksonville motorists were arrested within minutes of each other and at nearly the same location early No-

vember 30.

Erica Fielder, 31, was stopped shortly after 1 am after her vehicle ran a stop sign in the south parking lot of the South 5th Street Walmart in Macclenny.

Deputy Robert Aberly observed her 1996 Oldsmobile after answering a call from Walmart of an intoxicated female inside the store about 1 am. The officer saw Ms. Fielder back out of a parking space and followed her.

She failed field sobriety testing and her blood alcohol level later at county jail measured .193, more than twice the legal limit.

Nearby at the westbound on ramp from South 5th onto Interstate 10, Deputy Daryl Mobley stopped a 2000 Nissan driven by Joshua Touchton, 22, after following it from west Macclenny and observing the vehicle cross both the center line and shoulder line several times.

The officer said Mr. Touchton also ran through the stop sign at US 90 and West Boulevard at 1:18 am.

He failed field sobriety tests and refused to submit to a breath test at county jail, which triggers a drunk driving charge.



Jonathan Dugard

Violated sex offender rules

A convicted sex offender who has been out of prison less than three months was in county jail this week charged with violating the state law that requires him to notify authorities when he changes address.

Investigator Tracie Benton, who handles sex crimes for the sheriff's department, arrested Lance E. Rayburn, 46, at an address in the Woodlawn Park Place trailer park on November 26.

She had earlier gone to an address on Adams Rd., also off Woodlawn Rd., and was told that Mr. Rayburn was not there and was residing with girlfriend Jodie Ezell, 26, at the trailer park.

The investigator said she had been in contact with Mr. Rayburn earlier after he unsuccessfully tried to move to the St. George, GA area. She had also discussed with him the fact that the Adams St. location was with-

in 2500 feet of school bus stops, and thus he is banned via local ordinance from residing there.

Ms. Benton indicated she temporarily registered the offender on Adams St. with the understanding he would seek an alternative address. Her last contact with him before last week was on October 31.

On November 26, the investigator said she confirmed with the trailer owner Rodger Siemering that Mr. Rayburn and Ms. Ezell had been living there since mid-November.

The statute requires that offenders notify local authorities within 48 hours of an address change. When Mr. Rayburn was released from prison, he declared himself "homeless" and indicated he would be living in Jacksonville.

Florida Department of Corrections records indicated that he has three times been in prison for failure to comply with sex offender registration rules.

Mr. Rayburn was convicted in Baker County of sexual battery on a child less than 18 and placed on the FDLE sexual offender site in 1988.



Lance Rayburn

License had four suspensions for not paying child support

A Lake Butler man who was driving on a suspended license faces multiple charges after his vehicle was stopped the evening of November 29 in Macclenny because he was not wearing a seat belt.

Deron Palmer, 41, had four prior suspensions for failure to pay child support, and Deputy Daryl Mobley also learned via a computer check that he was wanted in Georgia for the same offense.

The officer stopped Mr. Palmer near the intersection of South 6th and Lowder about 8:30. He was on probation for past offenses, and one of the conditions was that he refrain from driving.

He also had the wrong tag on his 1998 Oldsmobile, and the decal on it had been stolen in the Gainesville area.

Mr. Palmer was not jailed due to a medical condition. The complaints also include unlawful alteration of a license tag and dealing in stolen property due to the decal.

Police re-arrested three others on outstanding warrants the past week. All were already in county jail.

They include Matthew McMahan, 33, of Sanderson, arrested November 30 on an Alachua County warrant for failure to appear in court for driving on a suspended or revoked license; Harley Raulerson, 26, of Jacksonville, arrested November 28 on a Clay County warrant for burglary and grand theft; and Carl Rhoden, 30, of Baxter, arrested December 1 on a Charlton County, GA warrant for larceny.

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Jewelry and coins are stolen

Burglaries and attempted burglaries to both residences and vehicles were reported to the sheriff's department the past week, including one during the afternoon on November 28 at an address on Deerfield Circle in southeast Baker County.

Curtis Bennett told police his sister left the unlocked residence about 2:30 for a half hour, and returned to find that a gold chain, earrings and \$10 in coins had been taken. The jewelry was valued at \$120.

The same date about 2 am, Lila Gedvilas heard noises outside her residence on Mud Lake Rd. and discovered the next day

that screens had been removed from windows on the east and north side, and from a rear door.

The home was not entered, and the victim gave Deputy Earl Lord the name of a former resident as a suspect.

Dawn Shepherd of Macclenny reported on November 24 that her cell phone was taken while she was away from her table briefly about 12:45 am at the Country Club Lounge on South 6th in Macclenny.

James Williams Jr. of Glen St. Mary said his backpack and contents were taken from a vehicle parked outside Winn Dixie in Macclenny about 3 pm on No-

vember 26. The contents included a cell phone valued at \$400, identification, medication and a knife.

Two electrical cords were taken from an RV trailer parked outside the residence of William Walker on Westside St. near Glen between November 25-27.

A 1992 Honda belonging to Richard Green was vandalized while parked outside his W. Railroad St. residence in Macclenny the morning of December 2.

The driver's side and left rear windows were smashed, but nothing was reported stolen. The vandalism occurred between 3-9 am.

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THANK YOU!
The Baker County Chamber of Commerce would like to thank the following businesses for candy donations given to the children during the Christmas parade.

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- Baker County Health Department
- Baker Manor
- Burkins Chevrolet
- Collins Realty Group
- Country Federal Credit Union
- Destiny People Worship Center
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Admission: New toy or \$7 donation-12 & under: FREE

MAIN EVENT- SOUTHERN HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP
JAKE SLATER CHAMPION vs Kyle Blizzard 6'6" 276 LBS.

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One year, a day for sale of pills to undercover buyer

A Macclenny man was sentenced in circuit court on November 27 to one year and a day in prison after pleading no contest to selling prescription pills to an undercover buyer in September, 2011.

Dustin Flick, 22, pleaded to twin counts of sale of controlled drugs and the state dropping a trafficking charge in the plea agreement. His actual remaining time is relatively short because he gets credit for 202 days in county jail.

Judge Phyllis Rosier ordered him onto probation with drug offender sanctions for 18 months following release. He is also liable for a \$375 investigative fee.

Court records show Mr. Flick and a female co-defendant sold \$75 worth of pills to a buyer working for the sheriff's department at a residence on Sylvester Manning Rd. near Macclenny.

In other cases, Phillip Bennett III entered a similar plea to sale and possession of marijuana, and possession of paraphernalia and drew a 330-day county jail sentence, less 85 days already in jail. Three companion charges were dropped.

Judge Rosier ordered him to get a GED high school degree. • Dedric Jones has already served all but 10 days of a 120-day jail term for breaking into both Baker County Middle School and the district school bus garage in November, 2010.

The state agreed to drop 10 related counts in the plea agreement that also calls for Mr. Jones to pay \$7300 restitution for property damage. He will be on probation for three years following release.

The time he was in county jail will count as punishment for a petty theft charge.

• Michael McNeill drew two years on drug offender probation after pleading to twin counts of trafficking in stolen property.

• Judge Rosier ordered counseling in addition to two years on probation for Austin Thomas in return for his plea to aggravated assault with intent to commit a felony.

• Five defendants were given county jail sentences after entering pleas in circuit court during a November 6 session.

They include Marlin Mette, six months followed by six months on probation for violation of a protection injunction; Casey Woolf, 90 days for possession of a controlled drug and disorderly intoxication; Felicity Crawford, a year for child abuse and revoked a previous probation; Adam Hunter, eight months for grand theft; Brandon Taylor, eight months followed by 38 months on probation for burglary, grand theft and forgery.

• Four defendants were placed on house arrest, some with drug offender sanctions. They include Christopher Schantz, one year for violating probation for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon; Richard Eddins, two years followed by a two-year probation for sale of a controlled drug (plus \$700 for investigative costs); Shirley Patton, six months for violating probation, followed by another year and a half probation.

Derrick Holliman will be on probation 18 months for introducing contraband into a state prison, and James Slattery one year for carrying a concealed firearm, in addition to a \$500 fine.

Council favorable to lease for Vystar ATM

The Glen St. Mary Town Council appears willing to enter into a lease with Vystar Credit Union to place an automated teller on property the town owns on US 90 just west of the post office.

Three members of the board present during a special meeting the evening of December 3 authorized Mayor Juanita Padgett to present a rough draft of a pact to the Jacksonville-based Vystar, which the mayor said first approached her last summer.

Ms. Padgett made an oblique mention of a potential lease during the town's November meeting, but declined to reveal the interested entity. She called this week's special meeting to brief the board after *The Baker County Press* obtained past correspondence with Vystar, citing Florida's Public Records Act.

Council members Dickie Foster was absent due to a death in his family) appeared to favor an agreement in which Vystar fronts paving and other costs on the southeast corner of the lot, and the town holds off collecting an estimated \$5000 annual lease fee for two years.

He also suggested Vystar pay lighting costs in addition to utilities it will already pay for operation of the ATM. The existing "letter of intent" sent to Mayor Padgett on November 19 obligates the credit union for cost of the unit and the pad that it sits on.

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LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA
CIVIL DIVISION
Case No.: 02-2012-CA-000064
FREDDOM MORTGAGE CORPORATION Plaintiff,

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA
PROBATE DIVISION
File No. 02-2012-CP-032
Division
IN RE: ESTATE OF THOMAS M. DEVINE, Deceased.
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The administration of the estate of THOMAS M. DEVINE, deceased, whose date of death was January 24, 2012; File Number 02-2012-CP-032, is pending in the Circuit Court for Baker County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 339 East Macclenny Avenue #113, Macclenny, FL 32063. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA
CIVIL ACTION
Case No.: 02-2012-CA-000046
WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A., Plaintiff,
vs.
ERMAN COPHER, KAREN COPHER, ET AL Defendants

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Final Summary Judgment dated November 21, 2012, entered in Civil Case No.: 02-2012-CA-000064 of the Circuit Court of the Eighth Judicial Circuit in and for Baker County, Florida, wherein FREDDOM MORTGAGE CORPORATION is Plaintiff, and KENNETH ROLAND AKKA KENNETH K. ROLAND, DARLENE DICE, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF KENNETH ROLAND AKKA KENNETH K. ROLAND, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF DARLENE DICE, STATE OF FLORIDA, DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, AUTOREST, LLC, CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT, BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA; MICHELLE E. ROLAND, ROLLING MEADOWS OF MACCLENNY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.; UNKNOWN TENANT #2; ALL OTHER UNKNOWN PARTIES CLAIMING INTERESTS BY THROUGH UNDER AND AGAINST A NAMED DEFENDANT(S) WHO ARE NOT KNOWN TO BE DEAD OR ALIVE, WHETHER SAID UNKNOWN PARTIES MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST AS SPOUSES, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, OR OTHER CLAIMANTS, Defendants.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA
CIVIL ACTION
Case No.: 02-2012-CA-000054
DIVISION:
WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A., Plaintiff,
vs.
DANIEL H. RISPOLI, et al., Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Final Summary Judgment dated November 21, 2012, entered in Civil Case No.: 02-2012-CA-000064 of the Circuit Court of the Eighth Judicial Circuit in and for Baker County, Florida, wherein FREDDOM MORTGAGE CORPORATION is Plaintiff, and KENNETH ROLAND AKKA KENNETH K. ROLAND, DARLENE DICE, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF KENNETH ROLAND AKKA KENNETH K. ROLAND, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF DARLENE DICE, STATE OF FLORIDA, DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, AUTOREST, LLC, CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT, BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA; MICHELLE E. ROLAND, ROLLING MEADOWS OF MACCLENNY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.; UNKNOWN TENANT #1; UNKNOWN TENANT #2; ALL OTHER UNKNOWN PARTIES CLAIMING INTERESTS BY THROUGH UNDER AND AGAINST A NAMED DEFENDANT(S) WHO ARE NOT KNOWN TO BE DEAD OR ALIVE, WHETHER SAID UNKNOWN PARTIES MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST AS SPOUSES, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, OR OTHER CLAIMANTS, are Defendants.

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA
CIVIL ACTION
Case No.: 02-2010-CA-00097
TO BANK, N.A., as substituted Plaintiff,
Plaintiff,
vs.
SCOTT S. PALMER, et al., Defendants.

NOTICE OF SALE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated August 30, 2010 entered in Civil Case No. 02-2010-CA-00097 of the Circuit Court of the Eighth Judicial Circuit in and for Baker County, Florida, wherein TO BANK, N.A. is Plaintiff and SCOTT S. PALMER, et al., are Defendants.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA IN AND FOR BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA
Case No. 02-2010-CA-00097
TO BANK, N.A., as substituted Plaintiff,
Plaintiff,
vs.
SCOTT S. PALMER, et al., Defendants.

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BAKER COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Non-teachers will see bonuses, too

MIKE ANDERSON
PRESS STAFF

Baker County school employees — from custodians and bus drivers to clerical workers and administrators — should have a little more joy in their hearts and jingle in their pockets this gift-giving holiday season.

Pay raises and bonuses are on the way.

All non-instructional employees who are eligible for a step increase on the salary schedule will receive it and an additional one-time payment of \$300. The \$300 bonus also will be given to new employees still at step zero on the pay scale.

Additionally, a \$500 one-time gift will go to those who have reached the top of the pay scale and are no longer eligible for another step increase.

The monetary rewards were part of a new 3-year contract with the Baker County School Related (non-instructional) Personnel Association, which was ratified by union members just hours before the school board approved the measure on November 20.

Superintendent Sherrie Raulerson expressed appreciation for management and union negotiators working together "in a spirit of cooperation" to reach a mutually beneficial agreement.

David Davis, executive director of teaching and learning, also praised both sides for their many hours at the negotiating table hammering out details in a 42-page collective bargaining agreement, which also addresses numerous other issues including grievance procedures, working conditions, vacation and sick leave and other employee benefits.

Mr. Davis also offered a theory as to why the official vote was not quite unanimous.

"The vote was 182 yeases to one 'no,'" Mr. Davis said during the board meeting. "We think the one 'no' vote might have been accidentally checked off."

"The contract offers monetary rewards for longevity and incentives to those still in the early stages of their career, such as \$500 added to the base salary of employees beginning their 20th year of service and continuing through the 25th year of service.

Those who have completed 25 years of non-instructional employment are eligible to receive an additional \$900 as part of their base salary in years 26 through 30. The same additional \$900 is available to those who have completed 30 years of service up to a maximum of five years.

The non-instructional union represents just about every school district worker other than

classroom teachers and school administrators. Membership includes cafeteria workers, bus drivers, building maintenance workers, custodians, mechanics and clerks.

In addition to non-instructional personnel, the school board approved higher pay for administrative secretaries and other personnel classified as "confidential employees" because they deal with information considered confidential.

They were approved for step pay increases and a one-time payment of \$300, or \$500 for those who have topped out and are no longer eligible for a step advancement.

Finally, the board approved step increases for all individual school and district-wide administrators who are eligible for a salary bump, as well as a one-time payment of \$450 for those on steps 1 to 25.

Board members indicated that higher raises and bonuses might be forthcoming in the future if the economy improves and state education dollars become more plentiful.

"When times get better we'll do better," said Dwight Crews, who recently won reelection after 28 years on the board. "We ap-

preciate all of our employees and their hard work and willingness to cooperate with the board."

Board member Patricia Weeks, who also won reelection this fall, said that school district employees work hard for their money and deserve even more than the board was able to pay them.

"We'll never be able to give you what you're worth," she said. "We thank you."

The new contract with non-instructional personnel is effective from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2015. Board members said they were just glad the raises and bonuses were able to be approved in time to help employees with their Christmas shopping.

In other business matters, the board:

• Elected Dean Griffis to serve a second year as chairman and Mrs. Weeks to a second year as vice chair.

• Approved a plan that officials hope will increase the percentage of Baker High students who continue their education in college after graduation. The board approved a deal with the College Board, which administers college entrance exams like the SAT and ACT.

Under the agreement, which Principal Tom Hill worked out with the New York City testing authority, the College Board will administer the SAT to some 300 juniors in February free of charge. "This agreement is the first for

story, this edition). Though that's still less than the state's 74.5 percent average graduation rate, it's up significantly from 65 percent in 2010-11.

"Baker County school district is 10th in the state with our graduation rate," Mrs. Raulerson said. "We are getting our students college-ready."

School Board Chairman Dean Griffis said he hopes the economy will improve enough over the next few years to free up additional state education money.

As an afterthought, Mr. Griffis noted that he found it somewhat disturbing that state lawmakers would impose such a controversial and costly program on districts, "but yet they attached no additional money for it."

Mr. Davis said the project is voluntary and that teachers can choose not to have their compensation based on student achievement during the pilot program. Even so, he said, all teachers will benefit from the professional development training "regardless of whether they're in the performance pay part or not."

Mr. Davis said district administrators "will be working closely with the (teachers') union on this project," adding that union president Angela Callahan was pleased that it was voluntary.

Mrs. Callahan said during the regular board meeting that union members "don't necessarily support it, but we don't

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Schoolboard member on future board

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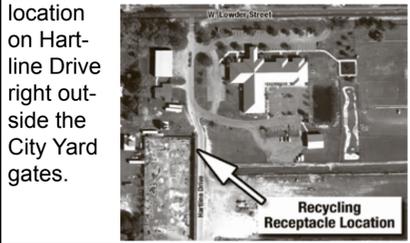
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City of Macclenny Public Notice

Recycling receptacles/bins have been moved from the Minger Baseball Field location at North 6th Street (SR-121 North) and North Blvd West to the new location on Hartline Drive right outside the City Yard gates.



OBITUARIES

Page 8
DECEMBER 6, 2012

CHURCH AND OBITUARY NOTICE INFORMATION

Obituaries must be submitted in a timely fashion and have a local connection. Pictures are printed with obituaries free of charge. The newspaper reserves the right to publish photos based on quality. It is requested that all news items be typed or emailed to insure accuracy in print.

CONTACT US

By phone at 904.259.2400 or by fax at 904.259.6502. You can stop by our office located at 104 S. Fifth Street, Macclenny, FL or mail your submission to PO Box 598, Macclenny, FL 32063. We are available online at www.bakercountypress.com

Floy Lee Foster, 77, of Glen dies

Floy Lee Foster, 77, of Glen St. Mary, Florida died on December 1, 2012 at W. Frank Wells Nursing Home with family by her side. She was born in Macclenny on November 9, 1935 to the late James Morris Johnson and Mittie Dugger Johnson. Floy was a lifelong resident of Baker County, Florida and attended the Christian Fellowship Temple. For many years she was a homemaker and caretaker who enjoyed playing Bingo, garage selling and tending to her grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her loving husband of more than 50 years, Richard Dexter Foster, and her sister Eloise Bryant.



Floy Foster

Mrs. Foster is survived by her loving children Dickie (Debbie) Foster of Glen St. Mary and Nancy (Robert) Sikes of Macclenny; grandchildren Melissa (Mark) Taylor, Robbie (Stephanie) Foster, Michael (Carrie) Sikes and Shawn Sikes; great-grandchildren, Morrissa, Masey, Lani, Gavan, Markayla, Dexter and Ty. The funeral service for Mrs. Foster was held on Wednesday, December 5 at 11 am at V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services chapel in Macclenny with pastors David and Timmy Thomas officiating. Interment followed at Cedar Creek Cemetery.

Jordan Sommise, victim of accident

Jordan Alexis Sommise, 14, a lifelong resident of Jacksonville, died in a vehicle accident in Baker County on December 1, 2012.

Jordan was originally from Glen St. Mary and a member of Normandy Park Baptist Church, where she was active in the youth group. She loved country music, mud bogging and was a social butterfly who loved spending time with family and friends. She was loved by so many people.



Jordan Sommise

Survivors include her mother Cynthia Griner; father Duane Sommise (Wendy); maternal grandmother Caroline Speer; paternal grandparents David and Peggy Brown; brothers Daniel and Michael Sommise; sisters Robbyn Kilpatrick (Adam), Stephanie Griner; step-sister Lynn Marie Peek; niece Kariigan Kilpatrick; numerous friends.

The funeral service for Ms. Sommise will be held on Saturday, December 8 at 11 am at the First Baptist Church of Glen St. Mary with Pastor Mike Ragland officiating. The family will receive friends on Friday, December 7 from 5-8 pm at Fraser Funeral Home.

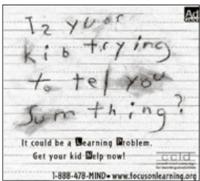
Wanda King, 70, dies November 29

Wanda Irene King of Perry, FL, 70, died on Thursday, November 29, 2012 at Shands Gainesville. Mrs. King was born in Havana, FL, on June 24, 1942, to the late Homer Turk and the former Ruby Irene Keene. She lived in Macclenny before moving to Perry in 2005, and enjoyed flower gardening and attending her church.

Mrs. King was preceded in death by her parents and a brother Gene Turk.

She is survived by sons Doyle King of Perry and Darrell (Heather) King of Live Oak; daughters Anelia Futch of Cross City and Brenda (Dan) Hodges of St. George, GA.; brothers Herman Turk of Virginia Beach, Va., Kenneth Turk of Macclenny and Larry Turk of Glen St. Mary; sister-in-law Jeanette Turk of Denham, LA; 11 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

The funeral service for Mrs. King was held at Salem Baptist Purity on Sunday, December 2 at 3 pm with Bro. Bobby Joe Hires officiating. Interment was in the church cemetery. Joe P. Burns Funeral Home of Perry was in charge of arrangements.



The Road to Calvary
Corner of Madison & Stoddard
Glen St. Mary
Rev. Tommy & Doris Anderson
Youth Director Rebecca Lauramore
Phone: 904-259-2213
Sunday School: 10:00 am
Sunday Morning Service: 11:00 am
Sunday Evening Service: 6:00 pm
Wednesday Night: 7:30 pm

Castile Williams, dies November 29

Castile Williams, 91, of Margaretta died at her residence on November 28, 2012. She was the widow of Deacon Luther Farmer and, later, of Elder Lucious Williams, and was also preceded in death by Samuel Farmer, Lucille Young and Clinton Farmer.

LOVE,
MOM, DAD, NANA,
BAY BAY, KOREY

Welcome
First Baptist Church
of Sanderson
CR 229 S., Sanderson FL
Sunday School 10:00 am
Morning Worship 11:00 am
Sunday Evening Worship 6:00 pm
Wed. Evening Prayer Serv. 7:30 pm
Pastor: Oral E. Lyons

New Hope Church, Inc.
23-A to Lauramore Rd.
& Fairgrounds Rd.
Sunday
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Children's Church 11:00 a.m.
Evening Services 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday
Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Sanderson Congregational Holiness Church
CR 127 N., Sanderson, FL
Sunday School 10:00 am
Morning Worship 11:00 am
Sunday Evening Worship 6:00 pm
Wed. Evening Prayer Serv. 7:30 pm
Pastor: Oral E. Lyons

Christian Fellowship Temple
Connecting > Growing > Serving
David Thomas-Senior Pastor Tim Thomas-Associate Pastor
Gary Crumme-Youth Pastor
Looking for a place to plug in?
Join us this week!
There's something for every age!
Sundays
Sunday School- 10:00 am
Sunday Worship- 11:00 am
Evening Worship- 6:00 pm
Wednesdays
Wednesday Worship- 7:00 pm
We're located at 251 W. Ohio Ave.
Macclenny, FL
Office: 904-259-3548
Check us out on the web!
www.christianfellowshiptemple.com



In loving memory of Kyle E. Newmans
12/05/1989-10/05/2008
Happy Birthday in Heaven My Son
09/02/1985-12/06/2010

When you see a pink and purple sky, think of me and do not cry. I am in Heaven above, shining down on you with goodness and love. You may think I'm gone but do not weep, for I am with you; I do not sleep. I watch over you day and night. You are never out of my sight. Do not regret for I'm not mad. Only love here now, no more sad ... LCR. Lauren, we miss your beautiful smile every day.

YOUR LOVING FAMILY AND FRIENDS

COPIES
Black & white/Full color
THE OFFICE MART
110 South Fifth St.

MACCLENNY CHURCH OF CHRIST
573 S. 5th St. 259-6059
Sunday Bible Study 9:45 am
Fellowship 10:30 am - 11:00 am
Worship Services 11:00 am
Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm
Minister Sam E. Kitching



Calvary Baptist Church
Pastor Donnie E. Williams, Sr.
Sunday School 10:00 am
Preaching Service 11:00 am
Sunday Night Service 6:00 pm
Wednesday Service 7:00 pm

GUERRY FUNERAL HOME
56 years of experience you can trust!
J.D. Tyre, L.F.D. 11 years
Bill Guerry, L.F.D. 45 years
420 E. Macclenny Ave., Macclenny 904-259-2211
www.guerryfuneralhome.net



In loving memory of Jerry R. Moran
11/22/1935-12/03/2011
We love you and miss you!
YOUR WIFE AND CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN AND GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN

Online - COMMUNITY CALENDAR
Let people know what's going on - post your special event online
bakercountypress.com

DINKINS NEW CONGREGATIONAL METHODIST CHURCH
CR 127 N. of Sanderson
Sunday School 10:00 am
Sunday Morning Service 11:00 am
Sunday Night Service 6:00 pm
Wed. Night Service 7:30 pm
Pastor Allen Crews
Assistant Pastor Timothy Alford

THE LORD'S CHURCH
Intersection of CR 125 & 250 in Taylor • 259-8353
Sunday school ~ 10:00 am
Sunday service ~ 11:00 am
Wednesday night Bible Study ~ 6:30 pm
Family style dinner ~ 1st Sunday of the month following service
'A church alive is worth the drive!'
Pastor Bobby & Faye Griffin

Press Advertising Deadline Monday 5:00 PM

Saint Peter's in the Glen
ANGELICAN CHURCH
9:00 am Adult Sunday School
10:00 am Sunday Worship/Holy Communion
7:00 pm Wednesday Study/Holy Communion
Glen St. Mary, Florida
1/2 mile South of I-10 on CR 125, right on Nursery Road the historic Budder Mathis House

Mt. Zion N.C. Methodist Church
121 North † 259-4461
Macclenny, FL
Pastor Tim Chesbire
Sunday School 9:45 am
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 am
Sunday Evening Worship 6:00 pm
Wednesday Prayer Service 7:00 pm

Jesus answered, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." John 3:5



In loving memory of Maranda (McMe) Merrett
05/14/1986-11/26/2008

A million times I've needed you, a million times I've cried. If love alone could have saved you, you never would have died. In life I loved you dearly, in death I love you still. In my heart you hold a place no one else can ever fill. It broke my heart to lose you, but you didn't go alone. Part of me went with you, the day God took you home.

JADA, MOMA, DADDY, GRANDMA, PAPPY, GRANNY, SISTERS AND FAMILY

Dawkins Lodge meeting Dec. 11th

Dawkins Lodge #60 will meet on Tuesday, December 11 to determine the future of the Masonic Lodge on US 90 in Macclenny. Dinner will be at 6:30 pm, followed by a meeting an hour later. All members have been notified along with their dues notice, and are urged to be mindful of their masonic obligations.

Please attend this important

Volunteer guardian training

BY LYNN DEEN

During the holidays, we are all busy with places to go and family to see. What if you were a child who had been taken away from their parents due to neglect, abuse or abandonment and were in a home with strangers with no place to go and no family to see?

This is the time of year for thanksgiving and a chance to make the choice to clear a few hours a month from your schedule to advocate for these children. Become a Guardian ad Litem volunteer. Be the person for the children who desperately need someone to stand up for them, to be there for them and to believe that they have something to offer the world.

Be by their side not only to advocate for their best interest in court, but to support them through lonely and distressing circumstances that no one should face alone. Your input to the courts can help find these children safe and permanent homes.

Guardian volunteers are ordinary people doing extraordinary work. The program offers free training, legal and staff assistance. Volunteers commit to at least one year and about 10 hours per month.

The next classes starts January 14. Sign up before the holidays. Be moved to make time to be there for the child. Be moved to share your blessings. Call 904-966-6237 or go to www.gal.alachua.fl.us for more information.

Out of town & miss your local newspaper?
Read our classified ads, select articles, and take polls!
www.bakercountypress.com

Christmas songs galore at BCHS

It's time to get into the holiday spirit and there is no better way to do it than *A Broadway in Baker Christmas*, the BCHS Drama Department's annual celebration of the season in music and song. *A Broadway in Baker Christmas* runs December 6, 7, 8 at 7 pm and December 9 at 2 pm in the BCHS auditorium.

The show features a variety of traditional songs and is done in conjunction with the Baker County Community Theatre, so there are a mixture of older and newer performers.

The large cast singers include Ana Tomas, Derrica and Trey Orberg, Jeff Rowe, Kristie Shook, Jacob Cranford, Harli Livingstone, Eden and Bella Crews, Maci McDuffie, Alesha Howard, Re-

bekah McNeil, Megan Crawford, Abigail Carpenter, Darian Carter, Seth Clarkson, Riann Perkins, Cindi Fisher, Corlis Raulerson, Amanda Rhoden, Cameron Kirby, Caitlin Crawford, Colton Butcher, Jesse Lambright, Dalton Alligood, Allison Wagstaff, Jillian Hodges, Elena Tomas, Hunter Williams, Megan Powell, Bobbi Fisher, Shelby Hodges, Emily Kukkucka, Alyssa Rawlins, Markayla Taylor, Lauren Fiser, Joel Griffis, Kylie Carter, Sydney Raulerson, Marci Davis, Blayne Fraser, Rachel Mechum, Loriann Bliss and Stephanie Rawlins.

Reserved seats in the first four rows are available by calling 259-6286. General admission seating is on sale at the door.

Class forming for master gardeners

ALICIA LAMBORN HORTICULTURE AGENT BAKER COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE

The master gardener program is a national network of volunteers who help the Extension Service by extending unbiased, research-based horticultural information to people in our community. This is a great opportunity for anyone who enjoys helping others and wants to volunteer their time.

In Baker County, master gardener volunteers work in the extension office answering homeowner questions, creating educational materials, and planning educational programs. Volunteers also help plant and maintain demonstration gardens at the office and help conduct gardening programs for adults and youth.

Not a gardener? No problem - gardening knowledge and experience are not a requirement for acceptance into the program. We will teach you all about gardening, but most importantly, we will give you the training you need to assist the community that relies on our services. We are currently looking for volunteers who can dedicate approximately six hours of their time each month.

Those with computer skills are needed to staff the master gardener office, researching answers to people's questions with the option of writing gardening articles for our newsletter and/or creating educational materials for programs and events. For those without computer skills, we are in need of volunteers to

help maintain the teaching gardens around the office. There are many volunteer positions available, and regardless of which one is right for you, training is provided for all of them.

The master gardener volunteer training will take place at the Baker County Extension Office in Macclenny starting February 5 through March 2 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 am to 1 pm. The cost of the training is \$50 (\$60 for couples). There is no cost for returning volunteers who completed the training in previous years. Please refer to the updated Baker County master gardener application packet for full program details and requirements.

For an application packet, visit the Master Gardener page on our website at http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu or stop by the Baker County Extension Office located at 1025 W. Macclenny Ave (Hwy 90) in Macclenny. The telephone number is 259-3520.

Graduation rate jumps Improving, but still below average

JOEL ADDINGTON NEWS EDITOR
reporter@bakercountypress.com

Baker County High School's graduation rate jumped this year by nearly 8 percent, giving the district the tenth highest year-over-year increase in the state.

The Florida Department of Education released graduation rates for the 2011-12 school year last week. They show gains in most Florida counties and in the region.

"This school, its students and its teachers rock!" said BCHS principal Tom Hill in an e-mail to his faculty last week. "We are district champs on the playing field and in academia! Hold your heads high and be proud of your work!"

Last spring the high school graduated 72.8 percent of the freshmen who entered the school in 2007-08, excluding GED and special diplomas recipients not longer included in the graduation rate calculation.

The local graduation rate is below the state average of 74.5 percent, but it's also the third highest in the region behind Nassau (89 percent) and St. Johns (86 percent) counties.

Nassau County posted the highest graduation rate among

all public high schools in Florida. Duval, Clay, Union, Bradford, Columbia, Suwannee and Putnam counties all posted lower rates than Baker County.

"Even though we were below the state average, we out-performed the vast majority of districts around us," Mr. Hill said during a telephone interview early this week.

Another county's graduation rate intrigued the principal, however, that of Dixie County, which rose by 24.6 percent, partly due to a dismal rate from the previous year.

Dixie County graduated 52.5 percent of its four-year students in 2010-11 before boosting the share to 77.1 percent for 2011-12.

Mr. Hill said he was very interested in what Dixie County may be doing, considering the size of the increase. "It was an incredible change," he said. "They're a small school district similar to us and they showed tremendous growth."

The state also tracks drop-out rates, both for the high school's full student body during a single year and for the group of students who began the ninth grade four years prior.

Baker County's single-year dropout rate spiked in 2009-10 to 3.8 percent but has since de-

clined to 1.9 percent for 2011-12, which is on par with the state's single-year rate.

The rates above reflect students in 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades who dropped out during the last school year.

Among the 356 students who started BCHS in 2007-08 and didn't get held back or receive a GED or special diploma, the drop-out rate was higher at 8.1 percent versus 4.9 percent state-wide.

State data also shows that black and hispanic students continue to be more likely to drop out than white students.

Here the single-year drop-out rate for blacks in 2011-12 was 4.6 percent compared to 3.6 percent for hispanics and 1.4 percent among whites.

Given the new data, Mr. Hill said he expects the high school to either retain its 'B' letter grade from the state or fall to a 'C' grade.

He said school grades should be released next month, but he's uncertain which label the school will get. However, the principal said, "the information we're seeing is so close to what we've seen previously, it's probably not going to change very much."

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with coupons, sales & classified ads, and insert papers
Dr. Nancy E. Davie
Licensed Mental Health Counselor
259-1758 — 117 S. Fifth St.
Marital - Stress - Depression - Anxiety
Trauma - ADHD - Eating Disorders
Addiction - Behavioral - Relationships

CITY OF MACCLENNY NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING REVISIONS TO THE INDUSTRIAL, WAREHOUSE ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS

The City Commission of the City of Macclenny, Florida shall consider first reading of Ordinance No. 13-08, "A BILL TO BE ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 4-78 OF THE UNIFIED LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS OF THE CITY OF MACCLENNY, FLORIDA; TO REVISE SECTIONS 4-78(B)(1) AND (3) AFFECTING THE LIST OF PERMITTED USES AND STRUCTURES AS WELL AS THE LIST OF PERMITTED USES BY SPECIAL EXCEPTION IN THE INDUSTRIAL, WAREHOUSE (IW) ZONING DISTRICT; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

The Industrial, Warehouse (IW) zoning district allows for a variety of storage, warehousing and light industrial operations. The existing land development regulations for the IW zoning district contain certain permitted uses which would be more appropriate if controlled as to the number, area, location or relation to the surrounding neighborhood. The City Commission will be considering revisions that would cause certain uses to still be permitted in the IW zoning district, but only by special exception. Uses and structures permitted by special exception are approved by the City Commission after they insist upon conditions that assure the use is most compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

A public hearing on first reading of the proposed Ordinance will be held on **Tuesday, December 11, 2012** in the City Commission Chambers at City Hall, 118 East Macclenny Avenue, Macclenny, Florida. The City Commission meeting will begin at **6:00 p.m.** and the public hearing will be held shortly after the meeting is called to order. There shall be no vote by the City Commission regarding this Ordinance at this meeting. A public hearing requiring City Commission action on the proposed Ordinance will be held on **Tuesday, January 8, 2013** in the City Commission Chambers. Interested persons may appear at the hearings and be heard regarding the adoption of the proposed revisions.

The proposed Ordinance may be obtained from the office of the City Clerk at City Hall on Monday through Friday during regular business hours. Should any person decide to appeal any decision made as a result of this hearing, such person will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record of these proceedings is made. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation or an interpreter to participate in this proceeding should contact the City Manager at (904) 259-0972 at least 48 hours prior to the time of the hearing.

LADYBUG CONSIGNMENT
28 RAILROAD AVE., in MIDTOWN CENTER MACCLENNY | 904-300-7251
Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri. & Sat. 11 am - 7:30 pm
Wed. 11 am - 5 pm
www.facebook.com/LadyBugConsignment | find us on Facebook
Clothes, lots of plus-size clothes, furniture & so much more!
We specialize in prom/pageant dresses!
Accepting Consignments

New Life Church presents
Christmas comes to Detroit Louie
Saturday, Dec. 8 at 6 pm
14271 N. SR 121, Macclenny | 259-6360

The Baker County Press

Classifieds

TO PLACE AN AD...

BY PHONE

Call 904-259-2400

Hours to place, correct or cancel ads: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

BY E-MAIL

classifieds@bakercountypress.com

BY MAIL

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING
The Baker County Press
P.O. Box 598, Macclenny, FL 32063

BY WEBSITE

www.bakercountypress.com

DEADLINES

Placement, correction or cancellation of classified ads may be done by phone, e-mail or in person anytime before Monday at 5 p.m. for publication on the following Thursday.

Classified ads and notices must be paid in advance, and be in our office no later than 4:00 pm the Monday preceding publication, unless otherwise arranged in advance. Ads can be mailed provided they are accompanied by payment and instructions. They should be mailed to: Classified Ads, The Baker County Press, P.O. Box 598, Macclenny, FL 32063. We cannot assume responsibility for accuracy of ads or notices given over the telephone. Liability for errors in all advertising will be limited to the first publication only. If after that time, the ad continues to run without notification of error by the person or agency for whom it was published, then that party assumes full payment responsibility. The Baker County Press reserves the right to refuse advertising or any other material which in the opinion of the publisher does not meet standards of publication.

FOR SALE

China cabinet, \$100, 259-7997 or 904-655-6221. 12/6p

Hoyer lift with 2 slings. Used 2 months. \$150. 904-945-9330. 12/6p

2004 Honda Shadow. 11,000 miles, always garage kept. Custom pipes, bars and motor upgrades. \$4000 OBO. Call 904-477-7713. 12/6-13p

1966 Ford Galaxy. 2 door, hardtop; very nice inside and out, new tires, new engine. \$5500. 904-653-2172. 12/6p

Extended holiday hours at the Franklin Mercantile. Now open Thursdays through Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Plenty of adorable handcrafted ornaments, ready to personalize while you shop. Railroad crossing in Glen. 259-60440. 11/29tc

Artists. Oils, acrylics, water colors, Canvas, drawing pads and much more. On sale now. The Office Mart, 110 S. Fifth Street, 259-3737. 12/6p
Green microcuede sofa and loveseat. \$600 for both OBO; electrical adjustable bed base, queen, \$450; food sealer, \$50; chocolate fountain, \$40; Hitachi 1080 PSI 57" HDTV, \$500, Casio keyboard with bench, \$135; new telescope, computerized, \$150. 904-502-5654 or 904-397-0277. 11/29-12/6p

Hand-made headstones, double and single, \$150-\$250; China cabinet, \$150; 52" TV \$200. 904-874-7860. 12/6p
Camille Beckman hand cream. Root candies, unique gift items. Southern Charm 110 S. 5th Street. 259-4140. 4/26tc

Horse bedding material, shavings and saw dust, dry. Delivery available. 259-2900. 3/22tc

Office Supplies, printer and fax cartridges, rubber stamps and much more. We specialize in hard to find items. The Office Mart, 110 S. 5th Street. 259-3737. 4/26tc
Seasoned firewood, \$80, 1/2 cord. Delivered and stacked. Call Bruce 904-838-3130. 11/1-12/27p

We install 6" seamless gutters. Pressure washing. 259-7335. 9/11tc
Broynhill dark cherry table and 4 chairs and China cabinet. \$300. 904-271-1392. 12/6p

MISCELLANEOUS

Alcoholics anonymous meetings Monday and Friday at 8 pm. Call Wanda 904-994-7750. 209 Macclenny Ave. 3/1-12/27p
Irene's Cleaning Service. Residential or commercial. 259-9541 or 210-605-8111. 12/6p

Wanted: reasonably priced motor home pull behind or camper. 904-502-5654 or 904-397-0277. 11/29-12/6p
Affordable housecleaning. Free estimates; trustworthy and dependable. References available. Samantha 904-424-5339. 12/6-13p

AUTOMOBILES

2004 Toyota Tundra, 4 door, sprayed-in bed liner, running boards, sun roof, 150,000 miles. One owner; good condition, non-smoker. 904-237-7703. 12/6-13p
1996 Mercury Grand Marquis. 91,000 miles; good running car. \$3500. Call 259-7559. 12/6p
1998 Dodge Ram 1500. 4 wheel drive; 113,000 miles. \$3750. 386-234-0029. 12/6-27p

ANIMALS

Dogs: all types from puppies to adults. Animal Control, \$65 adoption fees will apply. 259-6786. 11/20tc

LOST

LOST: Black and tan long hair German Shepard; missing from Mudlake Road Saturday. If you have seen, contact Brenda 904-400-8247 or 904-275-2584. 12/6p

HELP WANTED

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Artists. Oils, acrylics, water colors, Canvas, drawing pads and much more. On sale now. The Office Mart, 110 S. Fifth Street, 259-3737. 12/6p
Green microcuede sofa and loveseat. \$600 for both OBO; electrical adjustable bed base, queen, \$450; food sealer, \$50; chocolate fountain, \$40; Hitachi 1080 PSI 57" HDTV, \$500, Casio keyboard with bench, \$135; new telescope, computerized, \$150. 904-502-5654 or 904-397-0277. 11/29-12/6p

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Green microcuede sofa and loveseat. \$600 for both OBO; electrical adjustable bed base, queen, \$450; food sealer, \$50; chocolate fountain, \$40; Hitachi 1080 PSI 57" HDTV, \$500, Casio keyboard with bench, \$135; new telescope, computerized, \$150. 904-502-5654 or 904-397-0277. 11/29-12/6p

Hand-made headstones, double and single, \$150-\$250; China cabinet, \$150; 52" TV \$200. 904-874-7860. 12/6p
Camille Beckman hand cream. Root candies, unique gift items. Southern Charm 110 S. 5th Street. 259-4140. 4/26tc

Horse bedding material, shavings and saw dust, dry. Delivery available. 259-2900. 3/22tc

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Seasoned firewood, \$80, 1/2 cord. Delivered and stacked. Call Bruce 904-838-3130. 11/1-12/27p

We install 6" seamless gutters. Pressure washing. 259-7335. 9/11tc
Broynhill dark cherry table and 4 chairs and China cabinet. \$300. 904-271-1392. 12/6p

MISCELLANEOUS

Alcoholics anonymous meetings Monday and Friday at 8 pm. Call Wanda 904-994-7750. 209 Macclenny Ave. 3/1-12/27p
Irene's Cleaning Service. Residential or commercial. 259-9541 or 210-605-8111. 12/6p

Wanted: reasonably priced motor home pull behind or camper. 904-502-5654 or 904-397-0277. 11/29-12/6p
Affordable housecleaning. Free estimates; trustworthy and dependable. References available. Samantha 904-424-5339. 12/6-13p

AUTOMOBILES

2004 Toyota Tundra, 4 door, sprayed-in bed liner, running boards, sun roof, 150,000 miles. One owner; good condition, non-smoker. 904-237-7703. 12/6-13p
1996 Mercury Grand Marquis. 91,000 miles; good running car. \$3500. Call 259-7559. 12/6p
1998 Dodge Ram 1500. 4 wheel drive; 113,000 miles. \$3750. 386-234-0029. 12/6-27p

ANIMALS

Dogs: all types from puppies to adults. Animal Control, \$65 adoption fees will apply. 259-6786. 11/20tc

LOST

LOST: Black and tan long hair German Shepard; missing from Mudlake Road Saturday. If you have seen, contact Brenda 904-400-8247 or 904-275-2584. 12/6p

HELP WANTED

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FOR SALE

China cabinet, \$100, 259-7997 or 904-655-6221. 12/6p

Hoyer lift with 2 slings. Used 2 months. \$150. 904-945-9330. 12/6p

2004 Honda Shadow. 11,000 miles, always garage kept. Custom pipes, bars and motor upgrades. \$4000 OBO. Call 904-477-7713. 12/6-13p

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SOCIAL NOTICE SUBMISSION INFORMATION
 Birth announcements, wedding notices and social events (military service notes and school graduations) must be submitted within four weeks of the event. All news and advertising must be submitted to the newspaper office prior to 5:00 p.m. on the Monday prior to publication, unless otherwise noted or arranged. It is requested that all news items be typed or emailed to insure accuracy in print.

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 By phone at 904.259.2400 or by fax at 904.259.6502. You can stop by our office located at 104 S. Fifth Street, Macclenny, FL or mail your submission to PO Box 598, Macclenny, FL 32063. We are available online at www.bakercountypress.com



PHOTO BY JOEL ADDINGTON
 MES assistant principal Douglas Register auctions off a painting titled "Meat or Milk" by BCHS fine arts teacher Tiffany Armoreda at the annual brunch and art auction December 1.

BCHS fine arts auction nets \$1492

JOEL ADDINGTON
 NEWS EDITOR
 reporter@bakercountypress.com

The sixth annual brunch and art auction at the high school December 1 raised nearly \$1500 for the school's fine arts department. Department head Tiffany Armoreda said she was pleased with the event, especially the rhythm and atmosphere of the meal and auction, but hoped more buyers



PHOTO BY JOEL ADDINGTON
 Devon Burns' sunflower rocker above took the highest bid, \$150.

would've attended to make the bidding more competitive. She estimated there were some 20 fewer bidders this year than last year and attributed the drop off to a struggling economy. "It was great for the buyers," she said. "They got wonderful prices."

The most expensive piece — a light green sunflower rocking chair painted by student Devon Burns — was bought by Larry

Me Alister for \$150. "I liked the color and my grand babies will love climbing up into it," he said.

Douglas Register, assistant principal at Macclenny Elementary School, served as the auctioneer. "He may not know much about art, but he's really good at auctioneering. He's just a joy to work with," Ms. Armoreda said.

She also thanked the high school's FFA director Greg Johnson and Scott Register, who made wooden Christmas trees for students to decorate and sell at the auction.

Brunch came courtesy of the school's culinary arts program led by Brittnie Johnson. "That made the event run very smoothly," said Ms. Armoreda.

There were not as many donations for the auction this year, either.

Faith Fly, a teacher at BCHS, provided tables, two chairs and a book case for students to paint and sell. Ms. Armoreda said there's usually more items do-

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PHOTO BY JOEL ADDINGTON
 Karen Rambo and her purchase, an FSU door ornament.

nated. "I was pleased overall," she said. "With the economy the way it is, I think we did good."

Adult basic skills tests December 14

An adult basic skills test will be given on December 14 at the Baker County school district's Career and Adult Ed Center on West Minnesota Ave. in Macclenny.

Registration opens at 8:45 am and the testing will be from 9 am to 1 pm. There is a \$20 fee and a valid photo ID is required at registration.

Please bring the exact amount of money. For other details, contact Becky Satterwhite at 259-0403.

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Cats jump out to 3-0 behind Ruise shooting

BOB GERARD | SPORTS

The BCHS Wildcat basketball team got a pair of high-scoring wins this week over Newberry and Baldwin. The Cats remain undefeated in the early season with a 3-0 record.

Charles Ruise Jr. lit up the basket for 34 points as BCHS defeated Newberry 60-43 at home on November 27. After scoring 10 points in the first half, Ruise exploded for 24 in the second half as the Wildcats blew open the game.

Early on, the long ball was giving BCHS the most joy. Ruise, Jesse Gardner, Kaylyn Holmes and Cameron Mack all nailed three point shots as BCHS outscored Newberry 21-10.

Newberry couldn't manage to dig out of the first quarter hole and BCHS led by 31-20 at the halftime break. They extended the lead in the third period as Ruise heated up to a 47-30 edge and cruised to the end.

Ruise led all scorers. Johnny Lamb had 10 points on the inside and Gardner had 7 to lead BCHS.

Both teams were burning up the floor on Thursday night as BCHS beat Baldwin 79-73 in an exciting home game November 29. Ruise had 25 points and Brandon Lewis, Gardner and Mack were in double figures for BCHS in a game that flipped back and forth on the scoreboard.

Baldwin led early and was up by a point at the end of the first period, but BCHS went out in front early in the second period and took a commanding 37-25 lead into halftime.

In the second half it was run and gun with both teams trading baskets at a furious pace. The Indians chipped away at the Wildcat lead but the home team held them at arms length with key shooting from Ruise and Lewis in the third and fourth periods.

Ruise again led all scorers with 25 points. Lewis had his best scoring night with 14 points. Mack had 13 and Gardner 12 points for the Cats.

The Cats have a couple of home games this week, hosting West Nassau on Thursday, December 6 and Clay on Saturday night in the BCHS gym.

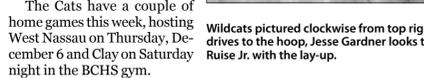


PHOTO BY JOEL ADDINGTON
 Wildcats pictured clockwise from top right: Cameron Mack drives to the hoop, Jesse Gardner looks to pass and Charles Ruise Jr. with the lay-up.

Lady Cats are out of gate at 5-2

BOB GERARD | SPORTS

The Lady Wildcat basketball team is off to a good start this season, running up a 5-2 record overall and 3-1 in the district. Freshman Delicia Washington has been lighting up the basket and Coach Chris Chisholm is pleased with their progress.

"The girls are mixing well and showing composure when the going gets tough," said Chisholm.

The Lady Cats started strong and finished strong on Monday, December 3 at West Nassau, defeating the Lady Warriors 71-61. Washington had 27 points and



PHOTO BY JOEL ADDINGTON
 Candace Clack gets the rebound.

Paige 25 points to lead the Cats. BCHS jumped out to an early 6 point lead and went into the half up 22-18.

In the second half they swapped basket for basket with West Nassau but the defense would not let the Warriors gain any ground.

The Cats got a big 48-34 win over Stanton Prep at home on November 16 behind 26 points from Washington. "She's an all around athlete," commented Chisholm about his freshman guard. Shanice Paige threw in 11 versus Stanton.

The Lady Cats fell to a very experienced Bishop Kenny squad at home on November 20 56-37. Washington and Paige led BCHS with 16 and 13 points, respectively.

Their second loss came to

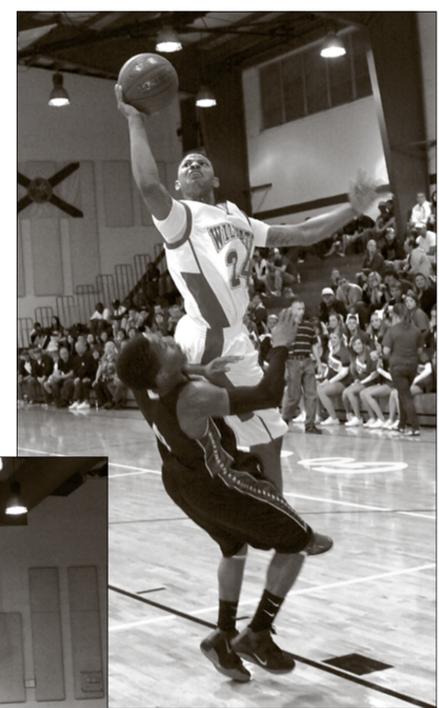


PHOTO BY JOEL ADDINGTON
 Candace Clack gets the rebound.

beating Suwannee 43-32 in a game Chisholm characterized as "very physical" on the road in Live Oak November 30. The Cats defense led the way with Candace Clack and Joshlynn Brown pulling down valuable rebounds.

Football team produced a new slate of records

BOB GERARD | SPORTS

For the Wildcat football team this was a season to remember. Coach Ryan Sulkowski's team started the season as a question mark after losing the opener 50-0 in Lake City versus Columbia High. But after that debacle, the team tightened up its chin straps and marched to a district championship and an opening round playoff win.

It was a special season and Sulkowski uses that word to describe his players. "Anytime you have to out-coach, out-play and out-effort people to win a championship it makes it a special group. No one expected much out of this bunch but that is what makes a district championship and a play-off victory so special and gratifying. These kids bought in this season and I really feel like we took a step in the right direction as a district wide football program. I was proud of our seniors and the way they led and am also excited about our youth at certain positions who will return for the 2013 season."

Along the way the team posted a suitcase full of records and accomplishments, too many to name specifically. Below is a listing of some of the records to note for this season's Wildcat football team.

- Sacks in a season:** CeCe Jefferson (14.5 sacks in 2012). The old record was 12 held by Rock Rhoden in 1991 and Bo Clayton in 2004.
- Team records in a single game:**
 - Points scored:** 73 vs. Duval Charter in 2012 (old record was 65 vs. St. Paul Academy in 2010);
 - Touchdowns scored:** 10 vs. Duval Charter in 2012 (old record was 9 vs. St. Paul Academy in 2010, 9 vs. Terry Parker in 2011 and 9 vs. Paxon in 2011);
 - Margin of Victory:** 73 points vs. Duval Charter in 2012 (old record was 65 vs. St. Paul Academy in 2010);
 - Least yards allowed rushing-(minus) 71 yards vs. Duval Charter (old record was (minus) 54 yards vs. Jefferson County in 1992); and**
 - Least yards allowed in a game: (minus) 58 vs. Duval Charter (old record was 22 yards vs. Crescent City in 2010).**
- Team records in a season:**
 - Most TDs scored in a season:** Tied at 59 touchdowns (old record was in 2001);
 - Total Offense in a season:** 5200 yards of offense (old record was 5003 in 2007);

Here's a look at the team and individual offensive and defensive stats for the 2012 campaign.

- Team rushing:** 3748 yards on 466 carries; **team rushing touchdowns:** 43; **team passing:** 1452 yards on 101/160; **team passing touchdowns:** 16; **total offense:** 5200 yards on 626 total plays; **total touchdowns:** 59;
- Passing leaders:** Corey Lawler 90/140 for 1280 yards/16 TDs/4 INTs; Jacob Carter 11/20 for 172 yards/0 TDs/1 INT.
- Rushing leaders:** Falon Lee 223 carries for 2073 yards/25 TDs; Corey Lawler 154 carries for 1069 yards/10 TDs; Dalton Dyal 36 carries for 251 yards/3 TDs; Mike Boone 34 carries for 222 yards/4 TDs.
- Receiving leaders:** Mike Boone 46 for 802 yards/10 TDs; Logan Fox 18 for 211 yards; Drew Rogers 13 for 204 yards/4 TDs; Brandon Miller 17 for 150 yards/1 TD; Falon Lee 5 for 58 yards/1 TD.

And individual defensive stats:

- Tackles:** Rashood Hadley 118; Jared Crews 58; Blayne Merchant 55; Daruis Green 54; Ruger Rautlerson 49.
- Tackles for loss:** CeCe Jefferson 22.5.
- Sacks:** CeCe Jefferson 14 and Elisha Lee 12.5.
- Interceptions:** Mike Boone 3; Falon Lee 2; Blayne Merchant 2; Jared Crews 2.
- Fumble recoveries:** Marquise Williams 3; Rashood Hadley 2; Elisha Lee 2.
- Blocked punts:** CeCe Jefferson 3.

Upcoming events at the Baker County Family YMCA

YMCA

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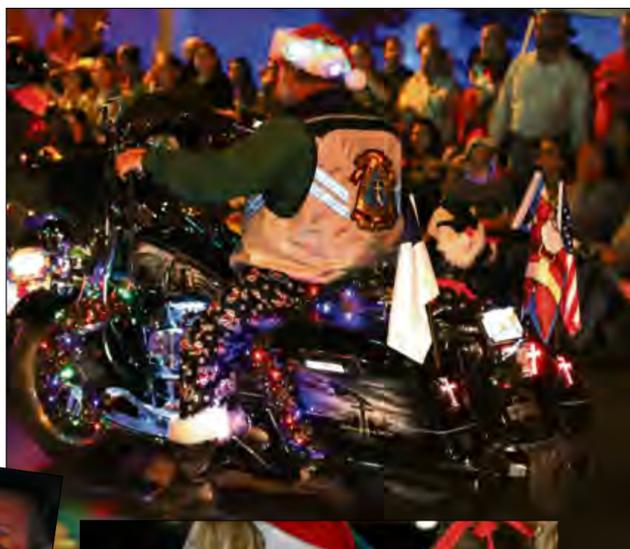
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PHOTOS BY JUD JOHNSON

These images were captured during the Lighted Christmas Parade on December 1. For video from the day's festivities, please visit the video section at www.bakercountypress.com.

Travesty of the BCS

FAT LADY

ROBERT GERARD

You're kidding me, right? Northern Illinois University is really better than Oklahoma, Georgia, Texas A&M, South Carolina, Clemson, Michigan, LSU and on and on? By virtue of a win over Kent State – that's right, Kent State – to win the Mid-America Conference, the Huskies will be facing FSU in the Orange Bowl.

Once again, the travesty that is the BCS bowl system has reared its ugly head. Based on the convoluted way that the BCS figures the power rankings in college football, the #15 Huskies made their way into one of the top five bowls while the teams listed above did not.

The BCS allows only two teams per the "automatically qualifying conference" to play in the top bowls – Fiesta, Rose, Sugar, Orange and the national title game. If a team from the non-automatically qualifying (AQ) conferences – Big 10, Pac 12, Big 12, SEC, ACC, Big East, finishes above an AQ champion in the polls they get in.

This year it happened. Undeclared Ohio State and 9-2 Penn State are on sanctions and can't compete in the Rose Bowl. That meant that third place Wisconsin won the Big Ten and NIU made it in on the grounds of a higher ranking.

In the past it has been undefeated and highly ranked teams like Boise State and TCU that have been the BCS busters and created all the controversy. There were legitimate reasons those teams should be there. Not so for the Huskies.

My wife asked the obvious question on Sunday night. "Why can't number 1 play 2 and 3 play 4 and 5 play 6?"

Heavens no, that would be way too easy and wouldn't also mean that a non-AQ conference could be represented regularly. There's a lot of money involved for these conferences locked into major bowls. The ACC champion, for example is locked into the Orange Bowl, just like the SEC champ goes to the Sugar and the Big Ten and Pac 10 to the Rose. Unless they are playing for the national title.

Then all bets are off. Notre Dame and Alabama are both deserving of a national title game – although Georgia made a real run for it. But, except for sanctions and a tragedy things would be very different.

Undefeated Ohio State would be playing Notre Dame for the national title and 9-2 Penn State would be in the Rose Bowl versus Stanford. Alabama would be in the Sugar Bowl versus Florida.

One thing is certain. With the tragedy surrounding Penn State regarding the Jerry Sandusky horror story, Lions coach Bill O'Brien has worked wonders with that team. O'Brien should be the national Coach of the Year, hands down.

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