



Opening day
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District champs!
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THE BAKER COUNTY PRESS

\$1.00

VOLUME 47

MARCH 15, 2018

AT A GLANCE

THINGS TO DO

MARCH 15

Elder Abuse Training
8:30 a.m. - 10 a.m.
Baker County Sheriff's Office

Elder Abuse Training is a monthly class with the next one being held Thursday, March 15. Free breakfast at 8:30. Free training from 9:00 - 10:00. This project supported by a grant from the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida and presented by the Women's Center of Jacksonville. Public is welcome. Training room has seating for up to 40 people. Call (904) 722-3000 to register.

BCMS Bobcat baseball vs Lake Butler
4 p.m.
Baker County High School

BCMS Lady Bobcat softball vs Lake Butler
4 p.m.
Baker County Middle School

BCHS Lady Wildcat softball vs Bolles
5:30 p.m.
Baker County High School

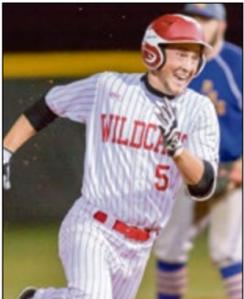
The Lady Cats host Bolles in the District 3-5A clash.

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MORE INSIDE



First Coast Spelling Bee
See page 9



Cats win sixth straight
See page 17

Flag lot housing plan OK'd in Glen

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PHOTOS BY JOEL ADDINGTON

Kites up at WES

Some kites were flying high in the sky, held up by a brisk breeze or a youngster dashing back and forth across the field, while others flew lower to the ground or were dragged across it during the annual kite day activity involving students, their families and teachers at Westside Elementary March 9. Pictured are (clockwise from above) Allison Elledge, Jakiyah Givens and Karsen Newmans.



Arrest for multiple death threats

JON SHUMAKE

A Macclenny man was arrested in the early morning hours of March 10 after he allegedly told his girlfriend he was either going to kill himself, her or a St. George, GA man.

Brian Nixon, 27, who was uncooperative with police as they took him into custody just before 3 a.m.,

was additionally charged with aggravated assault after a six-inch fixed blade was found on the driver's seat of his Nissan Altima parked at Stephanie Nixon's Taft Road property.

Cpl. Marc Heath responded to the residence after learning Ms.



Brian Nixon

Nixon called police because Mr. Nixon was sitting in the vehicle in her front yard and had made statements that "someone would definitely die tonight."

Samantha Crawford, 28, of Lake Butler had previously called for a well-being

check on Mr. Nixon, who she later said was intoxicated. She said he had made the same statements to her, including that either he, Ms. Crawford, Andrew Perry or two others would die that evening.

After he was confronted by deputies, Mr. Nixon yelled obscenities and

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SOUTHERN STATES SHOOTING

Victim, shooter accused of past violence

JOEL ADDINGTON
MANAGING EDITOR
reporter@bakercountypress.com

The two men at the center of the fatal shooting at Southern States Nursery in early February — victim Dominic Jermone "D.J." Broadus II, 31, of Jacksonville and shooter Gardner "Gar" Kent Fraser, 29, of Macclenny — have faced allegations of violence in recent months.

Mr. Fraser resigned from Northeast Florida State Hospital in early January after a state investigation found evidence he abused a patient under his care last September, hospital employment records obtained by *The Press* late last week show.

Mr. Broadus, meanwhile, was the target of a temporary injunction for protection against domestic violence ordered by a Duval County judge in early January after his roommate, Daniel J. Combs, alleged he was threatened and struck in the face for confronting the deceased about smoking and selling marijuana at their condo on Atlantic Boulevard.

Mr. Combs requested the court dismiss the injunction a few weeks later, court records show.

Mr. Broadus faced other allegations of violence more than six years ago in Duval County. Back in October, 2011 a judge there approved a petition for injunction for protection against repeat violence from Janice B. Smith on behalf of herself and her children.

Ms. Smith claimed Mr. Broadus threw bricks through her home and car windows, set fire to her vehicle and threatened to kill her, her children and her dog, the petition reads.

The following year he was arrested for selling marijuana to an undercover detective in Jacksonville and sentenced to one year in jail followed by two years of probation.

According to Mr. Fraser's employment records from the state hospital, witnesses reported he en-

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Don't forget to go vote ...

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37% Yes

42% No

21% Maybe

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BAKER COUNTY COMMISSION

Scaled down subdivision OK'd

MIKE ANDERSON
PRESS STAFF

Plans for a new residential subdivision on Odys Yarborough Road near Glen St. Mary, comprising eight 1-acre lots in front and four "flag lots" averaging 6.57 acres each in the rear, were approved by the county commission last week.

The proposed development – Shoals Park Unit 3 – is a scaled-down version of a 90-acre plan that was withdrawn several months ago after commissioners rejected a request to allow the owner, Long Branch Farms, LLC, to build on lots smaller than a full acre.

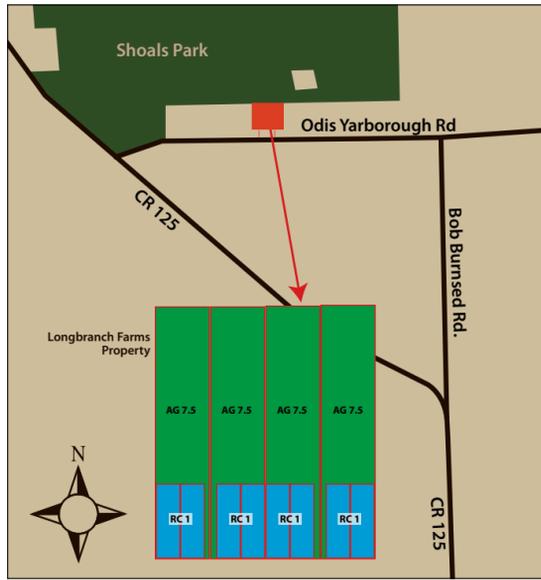
Chris Milton, director of the county's community development department, presented the plans with a favorable recommendation at a commission meeting on March 6.

"Other developers have obtained similar flag lot development approval in the immediate vicinity," Mr. Milton said. "We're not aware of any adverse issues related to these developments which have been in existence for years."

Furthermore, he said, the proposal satisfies nine of 11 elements on a flag lot criteria list that requires the county commission's consent before any development can proceed using the unusual lot layout.

The other two criteria refer to avoiding flag lots that are next to each other, Mr. Milton said, adding that "if the proposed development specifically adhered to that requirement there would be additional access points (driveways) created, which is exactly what the flag lot ordinance attempts to avoid."

Flag lots are so named because of the long, slender strips of land – driveway



Above map shows the location of the property and the layout of the proposed lots and shared six driveways.

easements resembling flag poles – that extend from the typically rectangular main sections of these lots, or the "flags," out to the street.

In Shoals Park Unit 3, two pairs of flag lots side by side will share adjoining driveways in the middle and each pair of 1-acre lots will share a common driveway. Instead of 12 driveways leading out to the street the development will have only six, which will enhance public safety, said Mr. Milton.

"We're trying to avoid multiple dangerous driveway connections," he said.

The developer will be responsible for installing drainage culverts under each driveway easement and paving them with "durable slag material to county standards," Mr. Milton said.

Something else that should please surrounding neighbors is a provision barring mobile homes and prohibiting the owner of the flag lots from dividing those parcels into 1-acre family lots,

both of which would be permissible under the present zoning.

"With the platting of the proposed subdivision," Mr. Milton explained, "the zoned lots would be restricted to site-built homes and would not be eligible for further divisions through the family lot provision."

The development received unanimous approval after Commissioner James Bennett spoke in its favor, pointing out that the owner had brought back a plan that addressed all previous objections, particularly those related to concerns about mobile homes or houses being built on lots as small as half an acre.

Mr. Bennett noted that the developer's original 90-acre proposal, which was based on meeting a net density of one-acre though some lots would be smaller and others larger, attracted "a lot of community pushback."

The current proposal, he said, is a good compromise

and is consistent with what the county has already permitted in other subdivisions along the same corridor.

"I don't know what more the applicant can do because he's met every objection," Mr. Bennett said moments before the issue came to a vote. "At this point we have an opportunity to move forward with the development here that now creates only residential dwellings, no mobile homes. That is consistent with what the community wants."

"The only difference is flag lots. All we're talking about is two driveways to serve about 25 acres behind it."

Neighbors also won't have to worry about anybody moving trailers onto the property or carving the flag lots up into 1-acre segments for family members, Mr. Bennett said.

"I'm more than happy to put forth a motion to approve this so it can move forward," he said, followed seconds later by a round of ayes voiced by all five board members.

No further approvals or public hearings by the county are required for the subdivision plans to move forward.

"The current zoning and future land uses are already in existence," Mr. Milton said. "The property was rezoned in 2004 for this type of layout. The current zoning is very typical and compatible with the surrounding area."

The last step in the process is for Richard M. Davis, owner of Long Branch Farms, to submit an official subdivision plat and engineered plans before construction can begin.

Man resists arrest after death threats

From page 1

turned around several times despite being told to walk backward toward the officers. He also refused to get in the patrol car once restrained, and continued being disruptive once in the car. Cpl. Heath informed him he was being arrested for resisting without violence and disorderly conduct.

Mr. Nixon banged his head and began to yell and cuss louder after Ms. Crawford arrived at the scene, causing a deputy to use pepper spray on him.

Ms. Crawford said the suspect called to give her the choice of who was going to die. She chose herself and he told her "come get killed," according to the officer's report. She then hung up the phone and called police. Mr. Perry, 30, gave a similar account about overhearing their conversation.

Ms. Nixon said she was at the 121 Club when Mr. Nixon made the threat about somebody dying. She said she and her daughter left the bar and returned home, but the suspect followed them, parked his vehicle in her yard and yelled and cursed at them.

In another incident, a

Jacksonville man was arrested the night of March 10 for battery after allegedly biting a female co-worker's hand during an argument at McDonald's in Macclenny.

Brittany Robinson of Sanderson said she was standing outside the South Sixth Street restaurant where she and suspect Quinton Lee, 26, are employed. She told Deputy John Murphy that Mr. Lee confronted her about her saying she was going to get others to beat him up. She said the two had never been involved in a confrontation.

Ms. Robinson said she walked through the McDonald's and out the front door, and Mr. Lee followed her and confronted her again. He got in her face, she told police, so she put her left hand in front of his face to stop him, at which point he bit the palm of her hand before leaving in his vehicle.

Deputy Murphy noted the victim had a clear bite mark where her skin was broken and she was bleeding.

Mr. Lee returned to the restaurant and gave a similar account of the incident. He was deemed the primary aggressor and was taken to county jail.



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The Baker County Press Weather

Five Day Forecast

Thursday
Sunny
High: 69 Low: 41

Friday
Mostly Sunny
High: 72 Low: 49

Saturday
Mostly Cloudy
High: 77 Low: 54

Sunday
Mostly Cloudy
High: 79 Low: 59

Monday
Few Showers
High: 80 Low: 60

Tuesday
Sunny
High: 85 Low: 65

Wednesday
Sunny
High: 80 Low: 60

Today's High & Low Temperatures

Last Week's Local Almanac

Day	High	Low	Normals	Precip
Tue, 3/6	75	41	75/46	0.00"
Wed, 3/7	68	45	75/46	0.11"
Thu, 3/8	59	34	76/47	0.00"
Fri, 3/9	68	28	76/47	0.00"
Sat, 3/10	72	32	76/48	0.00"
Sun, 3/11	79	41	77/48	0.12"
Mon, 3/12	66	37	77/48	0.02"

Data as reported from Cecil Field Airport

Sun/Moon Chart This Week

Day	Sunrise	Sunset
Thursday	7:38 a.m.	7:36 p.m.
Friday	7:37 a.m.	7:37 p.m.
Saturday	7:35 a.m.	7:38 p.m.
Sunday	7:34 a.m.	7:38 p.m.
Monday	7:33 a.m.	7:39 p.m.
Tuesday	7:32 a.m.	7:39 p.m.
Wednesday	7:31 a.m.	7:40 p.m.

St. Mary's River Levels

Location	Now	Change
Moniac, GA	5.80 ft.	+0.21 ft.
Macclenny	3.81 ft.	+0.00 ft.

Hunting/Fishing Times

Day	AM	PM
Thu	--	11:18-1:18
Fri	11:41-1:41	12:04-2:04
Sat	12:27-2:27	12:51-2:51
Sun	1:14-3:14	1:37-3:37
Mon	2:01-4:01	2:25-4:25
Tue	2:50-4:50	3:15-5:15
Wed	3:41-5:41	4:07-6:07

Weather History

March 15, 1988 - More than one hundred hours of continuous snow finally came to an end at Marquette, Mich., during which time the city was buried under 43 inches of snow. Unseasonably cold weather prevailed in the southeastern U.S., with forty-one cities reporting record lows for the date.

www.WhatsOurWeather.com

THINGS TO DO
From page 1

MARCH 16
Community Expo
12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Heritage Park Village
Lowder St., Macclenny

Community Expo 2018 will be held on Friday, March 16 with live music, bounce house, games, prizes, photo booth, sno-cones, cotton candy and raffles. Available for purchase: Walking Taco, drink & cookie-\$4, \$3 admission ticket includes bounce house, games and 3 tickets for popcorn, sno-cone & cotton candy. Free transportation for age 60+ & disabled. For more information call (904) 259-9315.

Amplified phone giveaway
12 p.m.-6 p.m.
Heritage Park Village - Community Expo

Visit the Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. (FTRI) booth at Heritage Park and see a display of amplified phone equipment available to qualified Florida residents. During the event, FTRI staff will distribute phones and provide training on them. Bring your Florida ID, your hearing aids and cell phone if you have them. FTRI offers a variety of amplified telephones to meet the need of persons with a mild, moderate, or severe hearing loss.

Movie in the Park: 'Justice League'
6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Heritage Park Village

The Baker Prevention Coalition is sponsoring a free movie in the park March 16 to screen "Justice League" (2017) at Heritage Park. Gates open at 5 p.m. with the movie starting at 6 p.m.

Sex assault survivors support group
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Family Service Center

Women's Center of Jacksonville will be hosting a quarterly, trauma-focused support group for survivors of sexual assault. The group will be held at the Family Service Center (located at 418 S 8th Street in Macclenny) on March 16, 2018 from 3pm-4pm. You must be 18 years or older to attend. The Rape Recovery Team at the Women's Center of Jacksonville supports survivors of sexual assault in Baker, Duval, and Nassau counties. If you need to speak to an advocate, please call our 24-hour Rape Crisis Hotline...

BCHS Lady Wildcat softball vs Suwannee
5:00 pm
Baker County High School

The Lady Cats host Suwannee in District 3-5A competition. The JV game is scheduled for 5 p.m. and the varsity contest follows at 7.

PRESS CLASSIFIEDS:
\$7.00
for 20 words
Deadline Monday at 5:00
THE BAKER COUNTY PRESS

Threatens to kill and eat body

JON SHUMAKE

A Macclenny man was taken into custody the night of March 5 after his mother told police he threatened to kill her, steal her car and then chop off his girlfriend's head and eat her body, according to police.

Wilma Tate of Macclenny told Cpl. Marc Heath on March 5 that her son Brett Sapp, 41, was at her North Lowder Street residence the previous day and was possibly experiencing withdrawals from meth. She said he became aggressive and punched holes in her walls and at one point threatened suicide with a "sawed-off" shotgun before calming down for the night.

Ms. Tate said her son began his aggressive behavior again on the reporting date, which is when he made the threats. She said she became fearful because of the threats and Mr. Sapp's possession of several firearms and called police after relocating to her sister's Klein Road residence.

Sheriff Scotty Rhoden and several other deputies responded to the Lowder residence. The sheriff made contact with the suspect via phone and

was speaking with him at a fence in the front yard. Cpl. Marc Heath noted he observed Mr. Sapp, who was unarmed, push the fence aggressively and appear to walk toward the residence.

The corporal positioned himself between the residence and the suspect, and commanded Mr. Sapp to stop and place his hands in the air while pointing a taser at him. Mr. Sapp complied and was handcuffed by Deputy Jeffrey Higginbotham.

Mr. Sapp said there was a shotgun in his closet and two handguns under the pillow in his bedroom. Cpl. Heath collected a Mossberg 12 gauge pistol grip shotgun, a Glock 27 .40 caliber and a Smith and Wesson .38 caliber revolver. All three firearms were loaded with ammunition.

Mr. Sapp was arrested for aggravated assault, a third-degree felony.

In an unrelated arrest, a Sanderson man was jailed the afternoon of March 8 for domestic battery after he allegedly struck his girlfriend in the jaw, chest and back.

Deputy Shane Dickens reported he saw a man later identified as Jerry Davis Jr., 36, flee into the wood line adja-

cent to the roadway upon his arrival to the North CR 127 residence. K-9 officer Vader tracked Mr. Davis to his Bertie Davis Circle residence, where he was inside sweating profusely and in different clothing than he had been wearing earlier, according to the deputy's account.

The suspect denied striking victim Tiffany Brassart and running from police.

Ms. Brassart, who was standing at the edge of the roadway crying when Deputy Dickens first arrived at the scene, was taken to the Fraser emergency room for her injuries. She said in an interview at the hospital that Mr. Davis had been acting strangely lately and she believed he was on narcotics.

She said her boyfriend became irate and struck her several times, and Deputy Dickens noted swelling and bruising to her jaw consistent with her statements.

Ms. Brassart declined to provide a written statement and said she didn't want to prosecute Mr. Davis.

The suspect was additionally arrested on a count of resisting police without violence.

Prior grad scholarships

The Baker County Education Foundation is pleased to offer four scholarships worth between \$500 and \$1000 for prior graduates of Baker County High School.

Applicants must be current residents of the county, and each scholarship has specific guidelines Applications and more details are available at the school superintendent's office at 270 South Blvd. in Macclenny.

The application deadline is Friday, April 13 at 3 p.m. for submittal to the office. Call Shirley Crawford at 259-0428 for more information.

Women's Center of Jax
24-HOUR
RAPE CRISIS
HOTLINE:
904.721.7273

Shooting: Alleged assaults

From page 1

tered a patient's room on September 7, 2017, to give him medication about 6 p.m. and then exited the room upset and saying the patient spit on him.

At 6:15 p.m. the patient was found with a black eye and swollen face and later diagnosed with a "broken right orbital fracture and fracture of the right nasal bone," states a notice of intent to dismiss Mr. Fraser from early December.

The notice came after a three-month investigation by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), which oversees the state hospital. Mr. Fraser, reported by a witness to be the only person to enter the injured patient's room between 6-6:15 p.m., was barred from patient contact during the inquiry.

He denied abusing the patient during a conference with hospital lawyers and staff, calling the allegation that he injured the patient speculation and suggesting the patient injured himself.

Still, Mr. Fraser resigned rather than face termination in early January. He was a registered nurse at the facility since February, 2016.

The only apparent witness to the alleged abuse was the patient, who records show only identified his attacker as a white male.

The notice of intent to

dismiss Mr. Fraser shows he was charged with "misconduct ... which, though not illegal or inappropriate for a state employee generally, is inappropriate for a person in the employee's particular position."

Mr. Fraser was never charged criminally in the case.

DCF spokesman David Frady said his agency "notified the Baker County Sheriff's Office of the findings in this case immediately after the adult protective investigation was complete."

However, Sheriff Scotty Rhoden said the case was closed following an investigation by Detective Tracie Benton that failed to find enough evidence to support a complaint against Mr. Fraser for the alleged abuse and that he's reluctant to forward weak cases to the state attorney's office for prosecution.

Sheriff Rhoden and Det. Benton say evidence collection in the case was hindered by DCF waiting until months after the incident to report the allegations to law enforcement and the state attorney's office.

The detective added that the victim would not communicate with her despite his ability to do so and hospital staff urging him to speak.

Furthermore, she said, documents from DCF re-

garding its investigation did not show any attempt by the agency to have the patient positively identify Mr. Fraser as his attacker. She said there were also conflicting witness statements and activity logs from the day of the alleged abuse that differed from some of the statements.

Even so, the sheriff said, most cases involving patients at the state hospital are eventually dropped because patients are not competent to stand trial or serve as reliable witnesses.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) — which has been investigating the fatal shooting of Mr. Broadus by Mr. Fraser on February 3 — has yet to complete its probe and report findings to the sheriff's department or the state attorney's office, Sheriff Rhoden said.

FDLE is investigating the shooting because Mr. Fraser's father, Ryan Fraser, is a recently retired sheriff's office employee.

The state law enforcement agency served a search warrant at the Southern States Nursery property last week, though it declined to release the warrant citing the ongoing investigation.

The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office dive team searched a pond at the property the same day.

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Baker County **COA** "Friendship Center"

MOVIE IN THE PARK
Justice League at 6 pm sponsored by BPCI

BAKER COUNTY COMMISSION

Struggling to fill open BCDC board seat

MIKE ANDERSON
PRESS STAFF

The troubled past of the Baker Correctional Development Corporation and the financial challenges ahead appears to be hindering the county commission's effort to find a willing and capable candidate to fill a vacancy on the county jail owner's board of directors.

So far, there have been no takers for the opportunity to help direct the future of the nonprofit organization's main mission: refinancing a mountain of high-interest bond debt and establishing a consistently positive cash flow.

County commissioners said at a board meeting March 6 that they had failed in their attempts to find someone to replace Chris Gazes, who abruptly resigned on February 8, leaving a fifth seat on the BCDC

board empty.

Mr. Gazes of Glen St. Mary, a former banking executive and owner of a Jacksonville-based real estate development company, left the board after serving less than 10 months of a two-year term as board treasurer.

Fellow board member Mark Broughton, whose one-year term was scheduled to become a four-year term on May 2, offered to serve the remaining 14 months in Mrs. Gazes' seat but said he would not be willing to continue beyond that time.

In a brief letter of resignation Mr. Gazes simply said that "recent board action has made me aware that I can no longer be a productive member." He has not provided any further details about his reasons for stepping down.

Mr. Gazes was one of the county commission's five appointees to replace the

old BCDC board, which was fired by the commission following years of political bickering over high county jail inmate costs and years of financial turmoil linked to high-interest bonded indebtedness and a run-in with the Internal Revenue Service.

Now, it appears as though the vacated seat may have to remain empty for some time to come.

"So far I haven't received any suggestions from any of the board members," County Manager Kennie Downing said when the issue arose on the agenda last week for further discussion.

Commissioner James Bennett was the first board member to speak on the matter but he had little to report.

"I had reached out to a couple of folks in the last few weeks and, uh, well, nobody jumped up and said, 'Please let me. Please let me,'" said Mr. Bennett.

He said if none of the other commissioners had any viable candidates to offer, either, he "would suggest that we continue to pursue looking for the right person."

"At the end of the day we need more than just a warm body," he said. "We need somebody that can make certain contributions to the goals and objectives of what we're trying to accomplish there."

He said the remaining four BCDC directors make up "a good team" and they are working hard to solve the organization's problems. The vacancy should be filled by someone who can be a contributing member of the board and "not just because a name pops up."

"Unfortunately, tonight I don't have anybody at the moment that's willing to serve. They're either too busy

or aren't willing to jump into this particular challenge."

Commissioner Cathy Rhoden said that she, too, had "reached out to three very capable people and they all are into other things or too busy or whatever. I figure three strikes and you're out but I'm not going to quit on them."

Commissioner Jimmy Anderson said he, too, got little or no response from people he had approached about the BCDC vacancy.

"I've actually asked four people," he said. "Two of them turned me flat down and the other two would never call me back. So, I kind of got the hint ... I haven't called them back."

"I think we need to keep pursuing it. I don't want to just put somebody on the board because we need somebody on the board. We need to put somebody on the board that's going to be an advantage to the board that we already have."

"We have a good board right now," Mr. Anderson said. "We need to give them somebody that can work with them. I say we keep asking, begging and pleading until the right person comes along."

Commissioner James Croft, who had nominated Mr. Gazes for the board seat last year and received his resignation in an email on February 8, had a similar experience as his fellow board members and agreed with the suggestion to keep searching for a replacement.

"I, too, have spoken with folks," he said, before continuing on in a more facetious tone: "This board (BCDC) is so popular that people are just (slight chuckle) jumping up and down at the possibility."

"I know it's a tough posi-

tion. I think it's one of those positions that just because there's an empty seat it doesn't mean we stick someone in it. I think the prudent and wise thing to do is to wait until we have the prospect that is what is needed that can bring something to the team."

Until the vacancy is filled Mr. Croft said he didn't think the BCDC board would run into any situations where a tie vote could cause a problem because it is so "unified and united" about its mission. He said he couldn't recall the current board ever having a split vote on anything.

"I don't think it's going to create any kind of conflict by only having four members," he said. "So, I'm very much in tune with waiting until we see the right candidate come along."

Commission Chairman Bobby Steele said his efforts to find a suitable candidate had also fallen flat.

"I haven't had the luckiest draw yet, either," he said, adding that he was still waiting to hear back from one person he had contacted and expressed the same sentiment as the others that the search should continue for a fifth BCDC board member to help "finish the road we're trying to pave."

At Commissioner Bennett's suggestion the issue will remain an "action item" on all future commission agendas in case any board member or the county manager has a potential candidate for consideration.

"My biggest focus," Mr. Bennett said, is that while the BCDC board has made progress "there's a lot of work that needs to be done. We're clearly not out of the woods yet."

Said to interfere with teen custody

An Orange Park man is charged with interfering with custody by harboring a Baker County juvenile at a St. Augustine hotel for at least two days last week.

Jeffrey Lewis, 53, was taken into custody there on March 10 after the mother of the 17-year-old boy traced his cellphone to the Hilton Bayfront, and St. Augustine police succeeded in locating both him and the youth, along with the suspect's vehicle.

The mother, 42, first contacted the sheriff's department on March 9 concerned that she had no contact with her son since they argued on March 7. She also gave Deputy Jeffrey Higginbotham the name of Mr. Lewis as the person she believed he was with.

The deputy made initial contact with the boy, who confirmed he was with an adult and refused to return home. He also spoke with Mr. Lewis and warned him he could be charged with the custody offense, a third-degree felony.

Mr. Lewis then hung up the phone, according to the deputy. The BCSO report did not indicate the nature of the relationship between the youth and suspect.

St. Augustine police soon learned that Mr. Lewis had rented a room, and they only recently had checked out. They kept a watch on the suspect's vehicle and soon notified local detectives they were in custody. By that time, a warrant had been signed naming Mr. Lewis.

The juvenile, said to be in good health, was brought back to Macclenny where he was released to his mother.



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Caught with drug equipment after a high-speed chase

Police took a Jacksonville woman into custody in the early hours of March 8 after she led a deputy on a high-speed chase north of Cuyler.

Paige Gresham, 22, told Deputy Chad Montean she did so because she did not have a driver's license. She was booked at county jail for felony fleeing an officer with lights and siren engaged, having no license and possession of drug paraphernalia including three syringes, a marijuana pipe and a glass pipe with steel wool.

Deputy Montean said he responded to complaints of a vehicle driving up into private yards, and first spotted the 2002 Jeep driven by the suspect southbound on CR 125 north in the Osceola National Forest. Ms. Gresham accelerated to 100-plus miles an hour continuing south to Noah Raulerson Road, where it headed to O.C. Horne Road and eventually stopped near Holland Road in soft sand.

The driver also claimed she fled believing a vehicle was chasing her due to an altercation she had earlier in Baldwin. Four male passengers from Sanderson and Jacksonville were not charged.

In another traffic-related arrest, Cody Miller, 22, of Sanderson was charged with DUI after he was found passed out at the wheel of a 1998 Dodge pickup in the parking lot of Country Boys store in Glen St. Mary.

Detective Jeremiah Combs summoned Trooper J.E. Farley of the highway patrol shortly after 1 a.m. on March 3, and Mr. Miller had the odor of alcohol and other signs of impairment, including inability to complete field sobriety tests.

His blood-alcohol level measured .104 at county jail. Jeremy Bunton, 29, of Bryceville was charged early on March 10 with reckless driving on U.S. 90 in Macclenny after Deputy Jeffrey Davis spotting his westbound 2011 Chevrolet truck with one headlight out.

The deputy said Mr. Bunton twice signaled he was turning off 90 but did not, and at one point swerved out of his lane and struck the curb, nearly hitting several street signs. He was ticketed also for the equipment violation and failure to stay in a single lane.



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USDA loan may not ease financial woes

Past due bills, drop in inmates loom large

JOEL ADDINGTON
MANAGING EDITOR

reporter@bakercountypress.com

Ed Barber, chairman of the now four-member board of directors of the Baker Correctional Development Corporation, or BCDC, is confident the nonprofit owner of the jail will be able to re-finance its \$30-plus-million bond debt with a low-interest direct loan from the federal government, perhaps by the end of summer.

But that's only one part of a three-pronged approach to get BCDC and its major asset, the county jail, on solid financial footing.

It appears more cuts in spending are needed at the facility to both boost cash flow in the near term and plan for any large declines in the inmate population in the long term.

Mr. Barber says even after refinancing the current debt through a USDA loan — which could cut the current interest rate of 8.5 percent by roughly half to save BCDC more than \$1 million a year — the nonprofit will need to plan for the possibility that federal inmate numbers will drop and with them the majority of BCDC's revenue and its ability to repay the debt.

Plus, the chairman says, BCDC needs to get current on past due bills, which may not happen until the refinancing is finalized.

Historically the nonprofit has fallen behind on payments to a number of vendors including the construction company that built the facility, the firm who supplied its telecommunications system, its medical services provider and the Baker County Sheriff's Office, which manages the facility.

Nearly a decade after startup, BCDC is still behind on payments to the latter two vendors.

According to a presentation by BCDC and sheriff's office finance manager Jeffery Cox during the board's meeting March 7, the sheriff's office was owed \$422,278 as of the previous day, while the medical provider, Armor Correctional

Health Services, was due \$675,092.

The outstanding amount payable to all vendors totaled some \$1.2 million, he said.

To ease a cash crisis last month, Armor agreed to accept a \$30,000 per month reduction in payments from the nonprofit starting this month and continuing for five more months.

When questioned by BCDC treasurer Mark Broughton about whether the reduction represented real savings, or whether the six-month total, \$180,000, would be billed at a later date, Mr. Cox said he wasn't sure but would check with the company.

"I need to verify that," he said.

Still, the most pressing need now is the USDA loan that could free up substantial cash to reduce those unpaid balances.

Mr. Barber opened the meeting last week with an update on the refinancing, saying the pre-application for the loan is nearly complete. The final piece remaining is what kind of commitment the Baker County Commission will make to support the loan.

The commission's attorney Rich Komando, who also works for BCDC, said county officials met earlier that day to discuss draft language of a commitment that could satisfy both the commissioners and the federal agency.

Much of the paperwork for the full loan application to be sent from the state USDA office in Gainesville to federal officials in Washington, D.C. is already complete, Mr. Barber said, save a feasibility study on loan repayment that needs to be updated with the latest information regarding BCDC's finances.

Mr. Barber said Congress has passed a budget and that associated appropriations bills could be approved next month.

USDA officials in Gainesville "think we stand a pretty good chance," Mr. Barber told the board. A final approval letter from USDA could come in August or September, he said.

"Until then we'll be muddling on with everything basically like it is right now with the bonds like they are now," he said, alluding to the \$45 million bond debt issued in 2008 to build and open the county jail.

The interest on the debt has risen over time to 8.5 percent but will not go any

higher, said Mr. Cox this week, citing comments from the bond trustee.

More federal inmates needed fast

Further hampering BCDC's cash flow in recent months has been the falling number of federal detainees, what BCDC consulting accountant Michael Givens dubbed "per diem" prisoners because federal agencies are billed for each day each prisoner spends in detention. In contrast, county inmates are held for a flat annual rate regardless of how many are inside the facility.

The county pays \$2.8 million per year divided into 12 equal payments that arrive at the beginning of each month.

Mr. Givens said the average number of per diem inmates went from 354 last December to 348 in January and then 337 last month, which he said was "not encouraging."

The three-month average from December to February was 346, which is 19 less than the 365 identified by Mr. Givens as the "break-even" number needed to fund normal operations.

He said BCDC has housed more than the break-even mark in just eight of the last 24 months.

According to Mr. Givens' projections, the decrease in federal inmates during that period means BCDC will have operating deficits of about \$43,000 for March and some \$101,000 in April.

It may not be until May that the deficits start to turn around. That's when cash for March housing is anticipated to arrive.

"On a positive note the sheriff has spoken with the deputy U.S. Marshal for the northern district of the state of Florida and we had a small increase [this month]," said Mr. Cox.

Sheriff Rhoden added the increase in U.S. Marshal detainees was about 20 inmates this month. They've averaged 77 in the last five months and stood at 81 in February. Last week the figure stood at about 100.

"When we look at March we should see the turnaround," Mr. Cox told the board.

Cash crisis could persist

The decline in inmate counts for the first five months of the fiscal year, which began in October, was unsettling for Mr. Barber,

the board chairman.

"So where's the money coming from?" he asked Mr. Cox.

"The money to pay the bills?" the finance manager clarified. "They're just not getting paid timely. There's no extra money coming in."

Mr. Barber pointed out that for nearly the first half of the year, the nonprofit has not met revenue projections in the budget, which were off by 5 percent through January or some \$250,000 short, according to Mr. Cox's figures.

Total operating expenses, meanwhile, were 3 percent over budget, or some \$102,000 more than allocated.

"So we're losing money on the first-half-of-the-year basis, even if we pick up some prisoners and balance in March ...," commented Mr. Barber.

Previously he questioned whether in 30 days BCDC would be in another cash crisis similar to the one faced at the beginning of February when there wasn't enough money to both make a bi-annual bond payment and cover operating expenses, namely payroll, which has led to the large sum now owed to the sheriff's office.

That pattern may continue into April.

"Things are going to be really tight within 30 days ...," said Mr. Cox, particularly if federal agencies return to their typical 30-day turnaround time between when they're billed for housing and when payments arrive. "It puts us in a tough situation in terms of cash flow if they do that ..."

Mr. Cox said a few times a year the payments arrive sooner, which occurred in late February for payments for January housing. He said Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the U.S. Marshals Service paid faster than normal — within 10 to 15 days of being invoiced — but he couldn't explain why.

The Bureau of Prisons owed about \$8000 for January housing as of the meeting date. The three federal agencies account for all federal inmates held at the county jail.

"Based on the past, they'll get back on their cycle. So on March 10th or 12th, when we send our invoices for February housing, we probably won't get those [payments] until April 10th to 12th. So it will put a strain on us to get through that time," said Mr.

Cox.

Board member Mark Broughton suggested tapping a bond reserve fund with some \$2.4 million to ease the cash crunch, but Mr. Cox said he doesn't expect bondholders, who control the bond reserve, to allow that.

Should the federal loan come through, BCDC will pay off the bonds and then gain control over the reserve fund, added Mr. Barber.

Another suggestion from Mr. Broughton to make partial bond payments was met by resistance, too.

Mr. Komando said it could lead to a default declaration and put the facility in receivership as well as put the USDA loan at risk.

"I'd be concerned ...," said Mr. Givens about shorting bond payments. "We've qualified for their best loan program and we shouldn't jeopardize that."

A conference call with bondholders is scheduled for March 28 and the board appointed BCDC member Jack Baker Jr. to broach the topic of using a portion of the reserve now.

"That's the only big thing we can tap," said Mr. Barber.

The board also agreed to begin budget talks for about an hour at the start of its next meeting in April.

Board members intend to use a zero-based budgeting format, which uses actual expenses from the prior year as the starting point to project needs for the coming year, rather than using current year budget figures.



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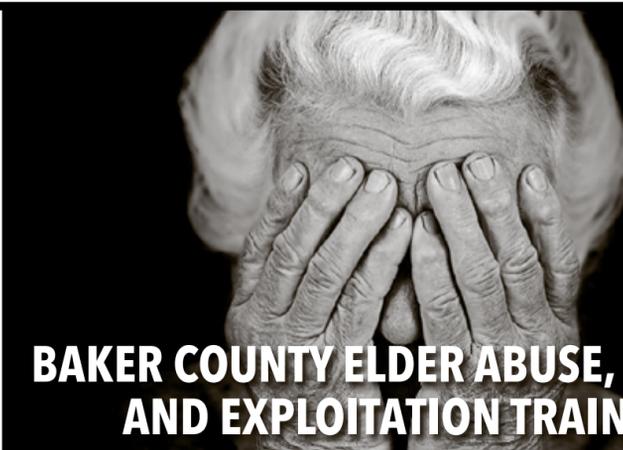


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Plethora of felony drug arrests

Sheriff's department deputies made numerous drug-related arrests, all of them for felony offenses and the result of seven traffic stops during a six-day period starting on March 5.

• Dalton Perry, 20, of Glen St. Mary was arrested late on March 10 for having 18 small baggies of marijuana with a total weight of 29 grams in the 2010 Ford pickup he was driving when stopped for speeding off Jessie Yarbrough Road.

Deputy Jeffrey Higginbotham said he clocked the vehicle at 61 mph in a 45 zone about 11 p.m. He also noted that Mr. Perry and passenger Kaden Miller, 18, of Macclenny had beer in the truck, but did not indicate they were charged with underage possession.

• Less than an hour earlier, Sgt. Patrick McGauley arrested Dustin Parker, 30, and Jessica Maryea, 26, both of Jacksonville for having multiple used syringes and capsules with cocaine.

He stopped their 1997 Toyota for swerving off southbound SR 125 north of Glen.

• A traffic stop in the pre-dawn hours of March 7 resulted in the arrest of Donald Holland, 18, of Macclenny for having meth and a cut straw in a 2005 Chevrolet pulled over as a suspicious vehicle.

Cpl. Marc Heath said he first noticed the car in the parking lot of NAPA Auto Parts about 4 a.m., and watched as it

drove off after one of the occupants apparently walked toward the closed business.

The car was driven by Marian Baker, 22, of Macclenny, who the deputy saw switch places with Mr. Holland because he didn't have a license. He was charged with resisting police.

• Deputy Jeffrey Davis arrested James Tooley, 38, of Jacksonville Beach just before 2 a.m. on March 7 after he was found sleeping in his 1997 Dodge van in a parking lot near Starbucks off SR 228.

Mr. Tooley, a convicted felon, was found with a box of ammunition, THC wax and 11 syringes including one with meth residue. He was also wanted for an unspecified offense in Marion County.

Deputy Davis noted the presence of numerous tools in the van that could be used in burglaries.

• Sgt. McGauley arrested Jeremy Miller, 45, of Ormond Beach late the evening of March 6 for having a glass vial containing meth inside the 2005 Hyundai he was driving on Mud Lake Road with a non-assigned license tag. He also had a suspended West Virginia license.

• The same day, Deputy Higginbotham charged Kevin Wilson, 43, of White Springs with having meth in a cigarette pack after the officer drove up on his 2008 Ford stopped on CR 127 with its

hatch open and bags of tools strewn on the ground.

The deputy learned Mr. Wilson was deemed a violent felony offender, and charged him with possession of 50 rounds of ammunition the suspect claimed were in the vehicle when he purchased it five days earlier.

The Ford was registered to a Jacksonville resident.

• Detectives David Mancini and Jeff Betros arrested Brandon Geiger, 22, of Sanderson the late morning of March 5 after he drove up to a residence on Clet Harvey Road. He appeared to be high on a substance, and was found to have two baggies of meth, a weighing scale and cut straw in the 2010 Volkswagen.

He will be charged also with violating probation and driving without a license. Mr. Geiger admitted he would be unlikely to pass a drug test because he smoked marijuana while a recent county jail inmate.

Sherri Mann, 38, of Macclenny and Grady Ellis, 71, were arrested March 6 at the same Sanderson address on Charlie's Place on warrants for past drug sales.

Detective Thomas Dyal said Ms. Mann sold meth to an informant in Macclenny in late November, and Mr. Ellis sold the synthetic drug Hydromorphone in February 12.

Inmate charged for electricity theft

JON SHUMAKE

A Glen St. Mary man who was already in county jail for stealing livestock from his mother was additionally charged with felony theft after illegally obtaining more than \$900 worth of electrical power at his mother's residence.

Victim Lou Davis, 72, told police on February 28 that the electricity at her Mallie Davis Road residence had been illegally diverted since she had been staying at Macclenny Nursing and Rehab, reported Detective David Mancini, who met with the

victim that day in reference to the theft of the livestock. She said Clay Electric sent her correspondence saying she owed \$918.98.

She said she believed William (Clay) Davis, 47, was responsible due to the theft occurring while she was temporarily away from the home.

She also gave the deputy emails from Clay Electric, which included photographs by a meter reader who wanted to show the company how the electricity had been diverted by connecting two pieces of metal to different components within the box.

The emails also stated the power to the residence was disconnected on January 31, but was found to be turned on illegally on February 7 and 21, Deputy Mancini noted.

The deputy spoke with Mr. Davis' girlfriend Selena Roberts, 45, of Macclenny by phone on March 5. She said she and Mr. Davis had been staying at the property despite being trespassed from it, and that the suspect had turned on the power illegally after it had been disconnected. She said she didn't know how he managed to activate the electricity, but said he told her "I took care of it."

Deputy Mancini reviewed

a phone call between Ms. Roberts and Mr. Davis, who was incarcerated at BCDC following his arrest for grand theft on March 2, about the deputy's investigation into the stolen utilities. Mr. Davis said he "only done it one time and the man don't even know I done it" during the call, the officer noted.

In an interview with police on March 7, Mr. Davis admitted to diverting the power on one occasion, and said he knew who illegally turned it on the second time but refused to name the other person. Mr. Davis said he used two pieces of metal to connect certain points inside the meter box.

In a misdemeanor shoplifting incident, a Macclenny man was jailed for petty theft the evening of March 7 after he was caught wearing \$36.83 worth of clothing and electronics taken from Walmart.

Demetrius Burnett, 19, was taken into custody after he admitted to wearing a shirt, socks, shorts and ear buds belonging to the store on SR 228 after Deputy Justin Yingling located him on Barber Road.

The officer initially reported to the store after learning of a man who just left the area after selecting

a backpack from the shelf and placing items into it. He left the backpack near the restroom area and left the store, according to store security.

Mr. Burnett admitted he was at Walmart but said he didn't steal anything since he left it all at the store, according to Deputy Yingling. The suspect confessed to wearing clothes from Walmart after Deputy Yingling contacted Sgt. Ben Anderson, who said he reviewed the surveillance footage and the shorts Mr. Burnett was wearing belonged to the store.

The backpack was located with several more clothing items and personal paperwork with the suspect's name found inside.

• A criminal complaint filed by Detective Charles Ross on March 6 alleged that Timothy Hance, 32, of Macclenny used an unauthorized credit card to pay for two nights at the local Travelodge last month.

Mr. Hance stayed there February 26 and 27, three days after he was fired from T.B. Landmark Construction in Jacksonville. The card belonged to his former employer and was charged \$193.

COUNTY COURT

Dispositions from March 7

The following case dispositions were ordered by Judge Joey Williams during regular county court session on March 7:

• Crystal Baker, petty theft (two counts); 26 days in jail, 12-month probation.

• John Bryan, driving on a suspended license (DWLS); failed to appear, warrant issued.

• Demetrius Burnett, loitering, giving false name to law enforcement; 16 days in jail.

• Christian Capers III, possession of marijuana and paraphernalia; six-month probation, attend group addiction meetings, Give Back to Baker (GBB) community service.

• Blade Cook, marijuana possession; failed to appear, warrant issued.

• Ian Dowling, possession of drug paraphernalia; six-month probation, GBB, attend group addiction meetings, abstain from alcohol.

• Jason Dupree, domestic battery; 30 days in jail, 12-month probation, batterer's intervention, abstain from alcohol.

• Debra Gainey, sale and possession with intent to sell suboxone; 45 days in jail, 12-month probation, parenting class, obtain GED, attend group addiction meetings, no intoxicants.

• Michael Lee Graham,

battery; failed to appear, warrant issued.

• Brantley Hartley, sell tobacco to minor; deferred prosecution.

• Samantha Hunter, petty theft; failed to appear, warrant issued.

• Amanda Kennedy, possession of marijuana and paraphernalia; six-month probation, attend group addiction meetings, GBB, abstain from alcohol.

• Connor McLean, non-assigned license tag (two counts) DWLS; 27 days in jail.

• Kenneth Miller, domestic battery; failed to appear, warrant issued.

• Anthony Straughter, possession of paraphernalia; six-month probation.

• Stacy Thomas, DWLS; failed to appear, warrant issued.

• Robert Trueblood, DWLS; charge dropped.

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Photos by Joel Addington

Rep. Lawson farm forum is March 24

U.S. Rep. Al Lawson, a Democrat representing District 5 and Baker County, will host a forum for area farmers, agriculture industry representatives and the general public on Saturday, March 24 from 2-4 p.m. at Tallahassee Community College Center for Workforce Development (Grant Banquet Hall), 444 Appleyard Drive.

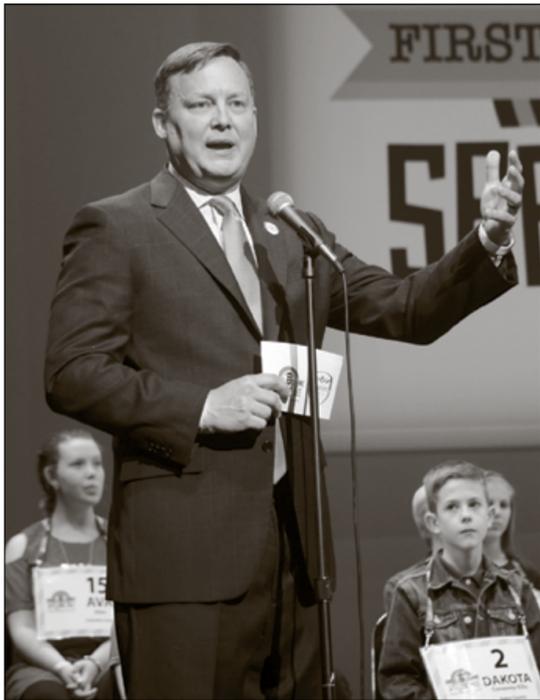
The House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Collin C. Peterson (MN-07) will also be in attendance to discuss the Farm Bill, a critical piece of legislation framed to ensure farmers and ranchers have the tools they need to remain productive.

This is the second farmers round table hosted by Rep. Lawson, who serves on the House Agriculture Committee. Last year, he met with more than 60 growers, extension agents and academics in Monticello, Fla. to discuss proposed changes to the rural development program within the United States Department of Agriculture.

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Local is eliminated from regional bee after four rounds

BCMS sixth-grader Dakota Conaway-Ellis (above) made it to the fourth round of the regional spelling bee in Jacksonville last week by correctly spelling "dejected," "Newton" and "biopsy" before missing on "aria," the Italian and Latin word for an elaborate melody sung solo, which he spelled "a-r-e-a." At that point there were 16 of the original 24 competitors left in the 73rd annual First Coast Spelling Bee held at the Florida Theatre the evening of March 9 and sponsored by the Jax Sports Council and several Jacksonville-based businesses. It was moderated by WJXT/News4Jax anchor Melanie Lawson-Minor. The bee featured 500 words, 300 provided to the spellers before the competition, plus another 200 "surprise" words, said Alan Verlander (left), CEO of Jax Sports Council, who offered the welcome that evening. Mr. Ellis' mother, Debora Ellis-Bailey, said her son was confident heading into the contest. "He was like, 'I got this,'" she said during a break in the bee, which was aired live for the first time on WJXT. Duval County eighth-grader, Saachi Sharma won the bee by correctly spelling "methodically" and will represent the area at the national bee in late May.

Garden fest set for April 7th

The tenth annual Spring Garden Festival will be held again this year at the Ag Center in west Macclenny on Saturday, April 7. It runs from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

The event features a plant sale, gardening exhibits, local vendors and Florida-friendly landscaping advice. It is sponsored by the extension office and local master gardeners.

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OPINION

Daunting first year for Sheriff Rhoden

It's a good thing Sheriff Scotty Rhoden is a praying man because I can think of few elected officials who have been more "beset on all sides by the inequities of the selfish and the tyranny of evil men," to quote the faux Bible verse from the cult classic *Pulp Fiction*, than Sheriff Rhoden.

On Point In Print

Joel Addington

Perhaps the President, but I won't go there this week.

I've been reflecting on the events of last 14 months or so as they relate to the county jail and the sheriff's office more broadly and it's hard to believe how much misfortune has befallen the seasoned lawman since the night he celebrated his victory over long-time under sheriff and his former boss, Gerald Gonzalez, who had the support of a five-term retiring sheriff behind him.

Let's start at the beginning, shall we?

Sheriff Rhoden inherited an agency in chaos.

Bitter feelings remained within the agency after the race, which got pretty nasty and saw the creation of fake social media accounts to leak damaging information

about the former regime, not to mention leaks to this newspaper.

Not only did he have a morale problem on his hands, Sheriff Rhoden had much more serious issues from day one.

He and his management staff found poor inventory records, making it difficult to figure out what the agency had

and who was responsible for what.

There were missing guns — 11 to be exact that included an M16 rifle on loan from the federal government.

There were military-style vehicles and equipment stashed in the woods to rust away. There were agency vehicles being used for personal business. There were

"honorary sheriff" badges floating around in the hands of private citizens being used as "get out of jail free" cards.

I'm sure there's more to the list of ills Sheriff Rhoden inherited, but you get the picture.

Beyond the internal challenges the sheriff's office has faced in the last year or so, he's also had plenty to deal with on the outside, too.

About six months into his first year on the job Baker County had its first murder case in eight years when a young man was killed in Margaretta.

Next came a murder-suicide in Cuyler last August that took the lives of a couple married for 40 years.

Fast forward to early February when another young black man was shot and killed at Southern States Nursery and you have to wonder whether the stars

are aligned against the first-time public official.

But wait, there's more.

Sheriff Rhoden also inherited the massive collective headache for many elected county officials, and some not elected, in BCDC, the nonprofit owner of the county jail, and its crushing financial woes.

While it appears BCDC is nearing some light at the end of that tunnel with a re-financing deal seemingly on course to be finalized later this year to free up operating capital for the jail, that's only one of the challenges that lay ahead.

As BCDC board chair and president Ed Barber has pointed out, more spending cuts could be coming for the jail in the coming months to bridge the financial gap until the refinancing is complete, and hopefully end the long-time arrangement that

has the sheriff's office, and by extension the county and its taxpayers, financing the jail's payroll at zero interest until such time as BCDC coffers are full enough to pay some or all of it back.

Without additional spending cuts, the only other option appears to be securing more federal detainees to bring in more revenue for jail operations.

Getting federal agencies to do anything they're not already doing is a pretty heavy lift all by itself.

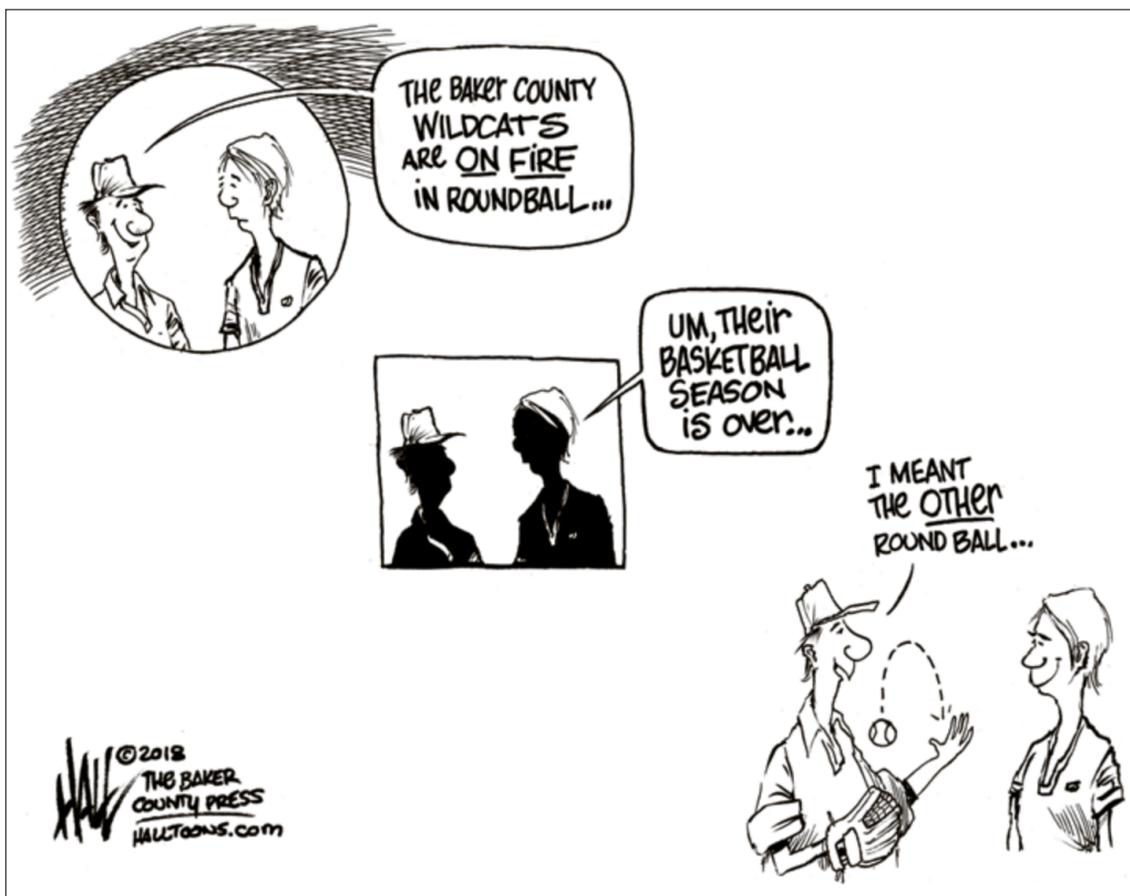
Doing it as a first-time sheriff from a small county in one of the largest states in the country seems like a daunting task, to say the least.

Nonetheless, it's now squarely on Sheriff Rhoden's shoulders. The silver lining, if there is one, is that there's only one way to go from here — up.

Corrections

The image on page one of last week's edition contained the incorrect photo for Antonio Lee, sentenced to 40 years for second degree murder. It was that of his brother Leonard Lee, sentenced a week earlier in the same case.

• A page four article on the trial and sentencing of Joshua Haygood stated erroneously he had turned 18 before his trial on March 1. He was still 17 and charged as a juvenile, not an adult.



Letting random thoughts escape

Here are some random jottings that have been wandering around my brain looking for a way out.

- If women really wanted to catch a man, they wouldn't bother investing in expensive perfumes. They would just dab bacon grease behind their ears. Men would follow them around all day long.

- The government has never ever come for my guns, but every year about this time they confiscate an hour of my sleep. Not a fan of daylight savings time.

- Which is the most narcissistic, taking dozens of selfies on your phone, or taking school pictures and then handing them out to people you think want one?

- President Trump is supposed to meet with President Kim of North Korea at some point to discuss North Korea stopping nuclear testing. I have a suggestion for what takes place at this meeting. Both men strip down to their boxers and wrestle in the oval office. If President Trump wins, the Koreans give up their nuclear weapons. If Kim Jong Un wins then he gets Trump's barber, Steve Bannon and Don Jr. If he wins within two minutes he also gets Stormy Daniels.

- The more I listen to the news from the White House, the more I'm convinced that we're living through an episode of Jerry Springer.

- If Oprah does run for president can we please have Jerry Seinfeld as vice president.

- What's the big deal with illegal im-

migration? If we had a Native American president, we'd all be deported.

- Every year I wonder why it is that I don't watch a single college basketball game all season long and am suddenly addicted to the NCAA Tournament. When they call it March Madness, they might actually be right. I go a little crazy and fill out brackets with teams I've never even heard of (UMBC — which I finally figured out stands for University of Maryland Baltimore City, and TXSO — Texas Southern) and arrange my view schedule to catch Long Island versus Radford. I don't want to miss any of it in case 16th seed UMBC knocks off No. 1 seed Virginia. Could happen.

- If Space X founder Elon Musk is actually planning to launch rockets to Mars by 2019, do you think he'd let me submit a list of people I think should be on it?

- Since the *Black Panther* movie has surpassed \$1 billion in worldwide sales, don't you think the Black Panther Party from the 1960s is a bit hacked off about that? "Hey, man. Marvel stole our name. We need a cut." Actually, before I get disgruntled comic book types sending me nasty Facebook posts — yeah, I know that the comic book came first. I was just ... forget it.

- Xi Jinping, the president of China, has declared himself "President for Life." What a terrible idea. I wouldn't want to be president for a week, let alone life. There are too many respon-

sibilities and not enough perks. Sure, Donald Trump gets to eat cheeseburgers in bed. I can do that too. Well ... if I wait until Kelley's asleep. And eat really quietly. Besides, cheeseburgers in bed aren't worth having to decide to bomb somebody. Keep the job. I don't want it.

- Is it just me, or does anyone else think that Melania Trump has a first class ticket back to Slovenia in her purse? "One more Playboy model. Just one more, and I'm out of here. Not to mention those crumbs on my side of the bed."

- What happens to all those candied apples after the county fair leaves? Do you think that they come back next year?

- Does the "five second rule" actually work?

- I wonder what my house plants actually think of my house? "Man, that dude really needs to pick up his dirty underwear." "That picture on the wall is crooked and is driving me crazy. How can he not see that? What an idiot. I should have stayed at the store."

- Do turtles think slowly? When I miss feeding my turtle for a day or so does he think it's been two years? Or two minutes? "He's feeding me again? I'm not even hungry? I'm gonna get too fat for my shell."

- Do little dogs think fast? When I leave the house to go to the store and come back and the dog goes crazy is it because he thinks I've been gone for two weeks. "He's back. He's *baaacck*? I thought you'd moved away. I'm sooo happy."

Yeah. I think about stuff like that.

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cheyennehoff I see no point in growing up if you can't act like a little kid every now and then.



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mamaslittleboys This little fella of ours has waited patiently for his turn on the field! He's been hauled to and from his brothers games for years! But, today the spotlight was on him. Super proud of him and his little teammates! I don't know who was more excited, Rigdon or his big brothers. #BaseballForDays #Brothers #MakingMamaProud #BrotherlyLove #LastFirstGameEverForMama #BaseballBrothers #MamasBabyMan #AllMaketsBoys



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traceymahall Opening Day & 1st game of the season w #gownwedgies #mysoftballgirl



Liked by jordygriffis, juliaarch and 51 others
hctsmesapril Better late than never



16 likes
kim_bur_lee Pure joy! #secretsmaromabeach #secretsmaroma #canunimexico #almosttime #ourhappyeverafter
corytag @kim_bur_lee so pretty love that dress - can't wait to see more pictures



Liked by mikayla04, mamaslittleboys and 71 others
dailygrowth He's still admiring his medal. Said this is his first silver medal. Great job Jordan Johnson on placing second in one of the hardest regions in the state of Florida. @bf_30 thanks for the pic and post!

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Q&A with stars of *Music Man*

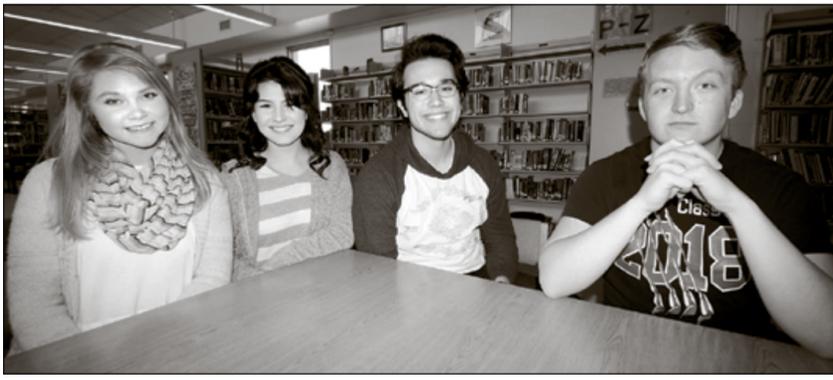
The four leads in this week's production of *Music Man* spoke with *The Press* on March 8 about their hopes for the musical, catching the acting bug and how they've approached their respective roles portraying the reluctant romance between Harold Hill (played by Jackson Helms, 16, and Lucas Kish, 18, both of Macclenny) and Marian Paroo (played by Loriann Bliss, 17, of Macclenny and Blayne Fraser, 17, of Glen St. Mary) in a small town much like Baker County. What follows is a partial transcript of the interview. Visit www.bakercounty-press.com to listen to full unedited 20-minute talk.

Press: How long have you been doing theatre and what kept you coming back for more?

Loriann Bliss: I've been in theatre now for six years ... The reason I do it is I love making people happy and I love making them laugh. I think in the entertainment industry there are a lot of negative influences out there now and if I were to ever make it bigger beyond the walls of Baker County High School I would want to be one of the positive influences to make people happy."

Blayne Fraser: I started because when I was little I was really shy. I loved to sing so my grandma put me in these shows to bring me out of my shell. And I think it really brings the best out of you in what you do ... You overcome your fears of being on stage ... Like public speaking I could never talk in front of anyone before. But now I get on stage and I can talk in front of hundreds of people.

Jackson Helms: I've been doing theatre three years, going on four. I started doing it because my family, my mom especially, she loves theatre, and my whole



The leads in *Music Man*: (l-r) Loriann Bliss, Blayne Fraser, Jackson Helms and Lucas Kish.

life I've listened to Broadway shows. When I was 3 or 4 I was belting Phantom of Opera at my house. I always really loved it growing up and my cousin Sydney Raulerson was in drama for a long time ... She finally convinced me to go and audition. And I did and I got a song. It meant so much to me ...

Lucas Kish: I saw an ad in the paper in third grade that Bobby G (Bob Gerard) put into *The Press* and I auditioned and here we are now, nine-ish years later ... I was not good at sports. My dad and brother are good at sports naturally and I was not ... So I did gymnastics and all these expand-your-world sort of things and I ended up here on stage. I like being on stage and I like being silly. Just being silly, it's as simple as that ...

Press: What drew you to the role?

LB: Marian Paroo is a mid-20s woman living in this small town in Iowa. She teaches piano and she's also the local librarian. She doesn't have the best reputation among the small town of a bunch of gossiping women, so when Harold Hill, who is this con man who claims to know so much about music ... she's the only one who sees right through him. Everyone else kind of falls under his spell.

She's an interesting character because she changes so much by the end of the production. She has against her own will and his, fallen in love with [Hill]. She realizes there's so much more to him than just this con man.

BF: Coming into the show this was not the role I was hoping for ... I'm very glad I got the role. It's very fun. Obviously you want the lead role but there were other characters who were just as great. I like Marian because she knows who she is and doesn't care what other people think about her.

JH: Harold is a really cool character because he's this traveling salesman ... which I don't think even exist anymore. But he's a smooth-talking really charming guy who's just getting this whole entire town on his side ... I thought I'd enjoy playing that charming character, singing these big songs like *Ya Got Trouble* ...

Press: Do you see any of yourself in the character?

JH: I'd like to see some of him ... I don't want to be a con man or anything like that, but I'd like to be as charming as him.

LK: I like the character because there's an incredible depth to him that you don't realize until you have to learn the lines and the mannerisms and all that. As you watch the movie, seeing Robert Preston doing it, you're like it seems like I can do it. Then you get on stage and you can't do it. But that's why I like the part. One it's the lead or whatever, but to be able to try to create a character, and I still haven't figured it out I don't think ... But the process of finding the character is for me the best part of being an actor. It's not being on stage getting all the attention, it's making your mindset into a whole different person.

Press: How are you preparing beyond studying the lines?

LB: Like Lucas, I love

the process of figuring out a new character ... You can watch the movie or as many renditions of the production as you want, but it's how much of yourself you want to put into this character and how much you want to take out ... The way I prepare is I just think about what Marian Paroo would do in this sort of situation, taking what you know and applying it to her decision-making process, her mannerisms and such.

BF: You have to have a wonderful understanding of who the character is and how you want to portray it. I guess I try to read the script and get how they're feeling.

LK: I would like to say we put in a lot of work outside of rehearsal but Mr. Gerard would say probably not. Especially for the main characters, it's important but the majority of learning comes from doing it on stage with your stage partners and the rest of the cast, seeing what works or doesn't work.

BF: You play like you practice.

JH: I think most of us have our lines down but we're not super confident yet.

LK: We'll get there.
JH: We'll have it. But I think to me right now these last couple days when we have these big run throughs ... this is when you get the actual depth of the character. You have the lines. You know what you're going to say, but it's about how you say it and what you mean when you say it ... I think in this last week, this is game time.

Press: What are you hopes for the show?

LB: I think this show is something a lot of people in Baker County can definitely relate to. It's about a small town and how everyone is influenced by this one thing. I think everyone can really relate to that.

Scholarship dinner to be held Tuesday, March 27

Veteran school administrators and longtime employees Gail Brown and LuAnne Williams are the honorees at this year's annual "Leaving a Legacy" scholarship dinner set for Tuesday, March 27.

It will be held in the Family Life Center at First Baptist Church of Macclenny starting at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$30 each and must be purchased prior to the event. Call the superintendent's office at 259-0401.

Both the honorees have



Gail Brown



LuAnne Williams

retired from the Baker County system, Ms. Brown after 30 years as a teacher, dean of students, vice-principal and principal.

She continues on as a trainer for substitute and beginning teachers.

Mrs. Williams spent 35 years in the district as a kindergarten teacher and principal of both elementary schools. Following retirement, she taught adult ed.

This will be the eighth annual scholarship dinner.

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OBITUARIES

'Skillet' Broughman of Sanderson

Arnold "Skillet" McKinley Broughman III, 54, of Sanderson died on March 6, 2018 at his residence with his loving family by his side. Skillet was born in Jacksonville on March 26, 1963 to Arnold McKinley Broughman Jr. and Rita Charlene Pinkston (Ed) Butner. He was a resident of Baker County for the past 13 years after relocating from Jacksonville. He enjoyed his career as a construction foreman and partner with Sharon Dugger at S & S Mobile Home Services for five years. When he wasn't working, Skillet was spending his time outside. He thoroughly loved being outdoors hunting, fishing and riding motorcycles. He also enjoyed playing music as he was a talented musician along with attending Woodland Acres Community Church where he was a longtime member.



Arnold Broughman III

Besides his loving parents, Mr. Broughman is survived by children Robert Wayne Broughman and Tara Ann Broughman of Orlando; brother Donald (Talena) Wayne Broughman of Glen St. Mary, half-brother William Allen Broughman and sister Ingra Renee Broughman Ross, both of Jacksonville.

A celebration of Skillet's Life will be held Friday, March 16 at 1 p.m. at Taylor Cemetery. The family will receive friends on Friday from 11 a.m.-noon at Ferreira Funeral Services in Macclenny.

Memorial at Ag Center for Linda Collett

Linda Diane Collett, 64, of Macclenny died on March 8, 2018. She was born on April 16, 1953 in Jacksonville.

Mrs. Collett is survived by her husband James Collett; son Dayno MacSwain and daughter Marlayna MacSwain; seven grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held on Sunday, March 18 at 4 p.m. at the Ag Center in Macclenny.

Minnie Crews, 89, dies March 11th

Minnie Prevatt Crews, 89, of Glen St. Mary died Sunday, March 11, 2018 at W. Frank Wells Nursing Home in Macclenny following a long illness. Mrs. Crews was born in Glen St. Mary and resided there her entire life. She was a homemaker and attended the Dinkins New Congregational Methodist Church in Sanderson. She enjoyed fishing, hunting with her husband, singing, listening to gospel music and her grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband Earl Crews and parents James Paul and Lovie Starling Prevatt.



Minnie Crews

Mrs. Crews is survived by her children Carolyn (Larry) Crews, Dwight (Nancy) Crews and Jimmy Crews, all of Glen St. Mary; six grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

A funeral service to honor the life of Mrs. Crews will be held at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, March 14 at the First Baptist Church in Macclenny. Guerry Funeral Home of Macclenny is in charge of arrangements.

Service Friday for Mrs. Heimbach

Leslie G. Heimbach, 47, of St. George, GA died on Wednesday, March 7, 2018. Born in Ohio to the late Bus and Cherry Green, she was a lifelong resident of St. George. Mrs. Heimbach was a homemaker who enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren. She was an avid fan of the Florida Gators and the Ohio State Buckeyes. An avid Disney fan, she collected Mickey Mouse memorabilia. She also collected Coca-Cola memorabilia and shot glasses. Mrs. Heimbach enjoyed classic country music and Elvis Presley.



Leslie Heimbach

She is survived by her husband of 30 years, Darrell Heimbach; sons Darrell (Naidee) Heimbach Jr. of St. George, Charles Heimbach of Macclenny, John Thompson (Elizabeth Cannon) of St. George and James (Jamie) Heimbach of Jacksonville; daughters Sabrina (Jeremy) Crews of Folkston, Elizabeth (Dwayne) Miller of Acworth, GA, and Mary (Jeremy) McDowell of Brunswick, GA; brother Bobby (Robin) Miley of Ohio; sisters Kerry Jones (Cody Haynes) and Carol Kosick, all of Kingland, Billie Jo (Merritt) Whitley of Waynesville, GA, and Jodie (Joe) Shivar of Riverview, Florida; 20 grandchildren; friend of 20 years Mike Privette of St. George. She was preceded in death by her parents and infant siblings Laura and Kevin.

A celebration of Mrs. Heimbach's life was held 2 p.m. on Friday, March 9 in the chapel of Forbes Funeral Home in Macclenny.

Colby Hodges, 19, dies on March 11

Colby Chase Hodges, 19, of Macclenny died peacefully in his home on March 11, 2018 with his family by his side. He was born June 19, 1998 in Jacksonville to James Richard Hodges II and Adrienne Michelle Lord. Colby was a life long resident of Baker County and a member of Taylor Church. He also attended Christian Fellowship Temple and Glen Baptist Church. He graduated Baker County High School in 2016. Colby's passion was baseball — he watched it, played and coached the Baker Outlaws and taught pitching lessons. He was well known and respected as a mentor for the youth of Baker County. He also enjoyed music, playing his guitar and hanging out with friends.



Colby Hodges

Colby is survived by his parents Rick (Jenny) Hodges of Glen St. Mary and Michelle (Brian Perry) Hodges of Macclenny; maternal grandparents Earl (Valerie) Lord Sr. of Glen St. Mary and Sherry (Damon) Agostino of Baldwin; paternal grandparents Richard and Deborah Hodges of Glen St. Mary; sisters Shelby Lynne (Nathan) Rollins, Abby Leigh Hodges and Ada James Hodges; step-brothers Hampton Reed, Corbin Perry and Cameryn Perry; niece Saylor Grace Rollins and girlfriend Nadleigh Norman.

A celebration of Colby's life will be held on Wednesday, March 14 at 4 p.m. at Taylor Church with pastors Elmer Crews and Mark Woods officiating. Interment will follow at Taylor Cemetery. V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services of Macclenny is in charge of arrangements.

Graveside service for Ella Dority

Ella Louise Crews Dority, 86, of St. George, GA died Monday, March 5 in Jacksonville. She was born January 20, 1932 in St. George to the late Dave Anderson Crews and Emmie Crews. She loved bluegrass music and cooking for family. She retired from Northeast Florida State Hospital in Macclenny after 25 years of service. Along with her parents, she was preceded in death by her daughter Brenda Ann Dority and nine siblings.



Ella Dority

Mrs. Dority is survived by her children Tony (Joan) Dority, Kathy (Keith) Canaday, Debbie (David) Waters and Linda (Eric) Byrd; brother David (Cindy) Crews; grandchildren Brenda Lloyd, Anthony Dority, John (Andrea) Canaday, Becky Lynn (Matthew) Conner, Colleen (Robert) Haddock, Jamie (Cori) Waters, Daniel (Erin) Waters, David (Cassandra) Byrd and Darryl Byrd; 23 great grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren.

A graveside funeral service for Mrs. Dority was held on March 10 at 10 a.m. at Boones Creek Cemetery with Rev. James Connor officiating. Shepard-Roberson Funeral Home of Folkston, GA was in charge of arrangements.

Emma Mizell, 77, of St. George

Emma Louise Mizell, 77, of St. George, Georgia died on Friday, March 9, 2018 at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Jacksonville with her loving family by her side. Emma was born in Jacksonville on August 31, 1940 to the late Marvin Gilbert Austin and Daisy Hicks Austin. She was raised in Jacksonville and graduated from Paxton High School in 1958. Shortly after graduation, on August 29, 1958, she married the love of her life, Thomas Raymond Mizell. Emma loved her family and enjoyed being a wife, mother and grandmother. She loved being a homemaker, raising her children, cooking, fishing and tending to her flower garden. She also enjoyed attending Grace Baptist Fellowship where she was a longtime member. Mostly, Emma was a God-fearing woman who loved her Lord and Savior. She was preceded in death by her parents, brother Ernest "Junior" Hartsfield Jr. and grandson Kenny Rhoden.



Emma Mizell

Other than her loving husband of 59 years, Mrs. Mizell is survived by children Judy (George) Denton, Thomas (Bridget) Mizell Jr. and Bo (Pepper) Mizell, all of St. George; brother Edward (Norma Jean) Hartsfield of St. George; sisters Mary Ellen Barber (Jim) Weise of Jacksonville, Betty Hartsfield and Angie (Noel) Crawford of St. George; grandchildren Shannon (Brad) Martens, Robyn (Kyle) Hamlin, Sarah (Cody) Sheffield, Amy Sweat, Kris Combs, Chase Combs, Shayne Mizell, Stacy Rhoden, Jennifer Rhoden, Heather Croker, and Sabrina (David) Prater; 10 great grandchildren.

A celebration of Emma's life was held on Tuesday, March 13 at 10 a.m. at V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services chapel in Macclenny with Pastor Gene Burnsed officiating. Interment followed at St. George Cemetery.

Eddie Oden, 84, of Lake Butler

James Edward (Eddie) Oden, 84, of Lake Butler died peacefully at home on March 8, 2018 with Marie, his wife of 63 years, and family by his side. Eddie was born in Jacksonville to James G. (Buck) and Lorraine Oden. He graduated from Landon High School and served in the Army 2nd Armored Division as part of the occupation forces in Germany during the Korean War. After return to Jacksonville he worked as an electrician with IBEW #177 and retired from Paxson Electric after 42 years. He loved the Lord and enjoyed helping establish churches. He was a charter member of Englewood Christian, Mandarin Christian and Swiss Cove Christian churches.



James Oden

In 1985 Eddie and Marie moved to Lake Butler and began raising cattle and harvesting hay. While a member of First Christian Church of Lake Butler they helped establish First Christian Church of Macclenny. Eddie was a member of Clayno Hunt Club, Bradford-Union Cattleman's Association and American Legion Post 153.

Other than his wife, Mr. Oden is survived by sons Buck (Charlotte) and Chuck (Vicki); sister Carmen and brother Wayne; grandchildren Haley Thomas, Kendall Oden, Stefanie Craig and Kerrie Lynch; five great-grandchildren.

The funeral for Mr. Oden was held at 2 p.m. on Monday, March 12 at First Christian Church of Lake Butler and interment was at Ben Sapp Cemetery. The family suggests donations in his memory to Haven Hospice of Lake City.

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Morning Worship 11:00 am
Sunday Evening Worship 6:00 pm
Wed. Evening Prayer Serv. 7:30 pm
Pastor: Oral E. Lyons

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Time on Sunday is 6 p.m., and Monday through Wednesday the service begins at 7 p.m. Call 386-697-7501 for more details.

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7:00 Youth Services

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Wednesday
Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.
Associate Pastor: Shane Conner

Community Full Gospel Church
12664 Mud Lake Rd.
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Sunday Morning 11:00 am
Sunday Evening 6:00 pm
Tuesday Evening 7:30 pm
Pastor Tommy Richardson | 904-275-2949

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 Online at www.bakercountypress.com or email editor@bakercountypress.com



**In loving memory of
Elouise Ford**

11/24/1940-3/14/2016

Two birthdays, two Thanksgiving dinners and two Christmas get togethers have come and gone since you left this earth. The food hasn't been the same, nor have the days felt the same without you. But we find peace in talking to you in spirit, and thinking about all the joy you brought to our lives. We truly mean it when we say there will never be another like you. We may still grieve everyday over our loss, but we've become stronger as a family because of you. We love and miss you dearly.

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Free amplified phones will be available for those with hearing loss at the Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. (FTRI) booth at Heritage Park, 102 South Lowder St., on March 16 for the upcoming community expo.

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UF plant expert visits county's garden club

**JOEL ADDINGTON
MANAGING EDITOR**
reporter@bakercountypress.com

The Baker County Garden Club hosted botanist Marc S. Frank from the University of Florida Herbarium, a museum with roughly half-a-million dried and pressed plants, on March 8 for a presentation on invasive, exotic and noxious plants in North Florida.

The herbarium represents "the oldest, the largest and most comprehensive collection of plant specimens in the state and one of the largest in the southeast," Mr. Frank told the group of about 20 or so club members gathered at the Mathis House at the Glen Nursery property that morning.

The collection includes about 280,000 vascular plants, 160,000 mosses and liverworts, 56,500 fungi, 15,300 wood samples and a library of more than 16,000 books, journals, maps, illustrations and other educational materials.

It's growing at about 2500 specimens per year.

"We have specimens from every continent except Antarctica, but we definitely have a focus to our growth and that's all the areas surrounding the Caribbean basin ... Florida, the West Indies, Mexico, Central America and the northern part of South America," said Mr. Frank.

The collection is used for research, both by the university and researchers from around the globe, public education and exhibitions as part of the Florida Museum of Natural History.

"I'm basically a reference librarian on plants for all the IFAS (UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Science) extension people throughout the state of Florida," he said.

A lot of his job entails helping extension agents identify plants for the general public and their origins and characteristics.

"... If it's a weed, how do I control it? Is it invasive? My friend told me I could eat it, is it eatable? Is it poisonous?" he said, referencing some common questions he answers. "So I'm basically a resource person providing information on plants."

He says Florida is home to many invasive plants, ex-



Botanist Marc Frank speaks to the county garden club last week at the Mathis House.

otic or non-native plants and those regulated or outlawed by law, also known as noxious weeds or plants.

There are a number of associated lists available, too, via IFAS, the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council, or FLEPPC, and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which maintains a list of noxious plants.

"It's very confusing," said the botanist.

He covered some of the most common invasive plants in North Florida as well as what makes a plant a weed, invasive or noxious.

"Weed is a subjective term. It's like that old saying, one man's trash is another man's treasure," Mr. Frank said.

Essentially, a weed is any plant that grows where someone doesn't want it.

Determining whether a plant is native or exotic is less clear-cut because tracing a plant's heritage can get complicated.

For botanists, Mr. Frank said, plants native to Florida are those that were present in the state when European settlers arrived between the 1400s-1600s.

"We don't always know

what was here at the time of European contact so we have to rely on the writings and herbarium specimens that were pressed by the very first people who were exploring for plants," he said, citing William Bartram as an example.

"So there are certain things we don't have good records for and botanists can't always agree if they're native or not," said Mr. Frank.

"We don't even know what those crazy Siberians may have brought across the land bridge," added the club's Kyle Brown, who helped add to the UF herbarium collection after the meeting.

There are also cases in which plants were transplanted from the Caribbean by natural processes — winds and birds for instance — which some botanists consider native but others do not.

"Native versus exotic is a little tricky," said Mr. Frank. "... It's not always clear-cut."

Then there are plants that may be native to certain parts of Florida but not others, like the purple coneflower, also known by its scientific name *echinacea*.

Mr. Frank said it's only

native to Gadsden County in Florida.

"Nativity is a matter of scale," he said. "... If you're someone who is really concerned about having native plants in your yard you need to pay more attention to that scale and actually get things that are truly native to this region and not necessarily things native to Central Florida ..."

He recommends checking an online resource for state plants known as the Atlas of Florida Plants maintained by the University of South Florida.

"It's a list of all plants that occur in Florida, not cultivated plants, but native plants or things that have escaped in the wild," said Mr. Frank.

Invasive plants, on the other hand, are those that displace native plants or alter the ecology of an area, similar to invasive animals species like reticulated pythons in the Everglades and

Cuban tree frogs now found throughout Florida that have displaced native tree frogs.

New to the state is the invasive brown marmorated stinkbug that's making its way into Florida from states to the north.

The stinkbug is largely a threat to crops but can still be a nuisance when they invade homes.

"The stinkbug eats basically everything we grow in the continental United States," he said.

Noxious plants or weeds are those prohibited or regulated by law either at the national, state or county level. Examples growing in North Florida include air potato, Brazilian pepper, cogon grass and tropical soda apple.

They are plants that have the potential to cause economic damage in the state.

"It's about money and economic impacts," said Mr. Frank.

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Photo by Joel Addington

Fabulous Footwork receives Top Studio Award at regional dance competition

Fabulous Footwork Dance Studio's competition dance team brought a host of top prizes back to Baker County March 3 with its incredible outing at the Encore DCS Regional Competition in Orange Park, which featured 10 studios from North Florida and South Georgia. The Fabulous Allstars captured nine overall first place awards, eight highest scores of the day in division awards and a Judge's Choice Award. The group also earned the Top Studio Award, which is "awarded to the studio with the highest score average based on their top 5 scoring routines," wrote Fabulous Footwork owner Phoebe Nipper in an email on March 8. "As a studio Fabulous Footwork has come so incredibly far," she wrote. "The Top Studio Award was one that the students, staff and parents have always dreamed of but never thought would be possible but they did it. The amount of work the girls put in is immeasurable and hard work truly pays off." She described it as the biggest win in the studio's history.

FORMER CATS

Rafuse leads team to school record

JON SHUMAKE
SPORTS EDITOR

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Former BCHS Wildcat baseball and softball stars had a busy week on the field, including one pitcher who helped his team set a school record.

• Junior pitcher Zach Rafuse pitched seven innings of three-hit ball with 14 strikeouts on March 9, and his South Carolina Aiken Pacers won 8-2 over visiting North Georgia in Peach Belt Conference action. He was one of three pitchers to take the mound that night to combine for a school-record 20 strikeouts as he improved to 3-1 on the season.

The Pacers (15-7, 6-3)

split the final two games of the series, losing 9-3 on March 10 before winning 3-2 on March 11.

• The No. 15 Middle Georgia State Knights snapped a three-game losing streak on March 10 with a 14-2 win at No. 8 William Carey University in Southern States Athletic Conference competition. Senior Mikal Flores batted 2 for 5 with an RBI and two runs scored as the Knights improved to 18-9 overall and 2-4 in conference play.

The Knights lost both games of the doubleheader on March 9 at William Carey University 5-4 and 10-4 to open the series. Senior pitcher Jared Crews threw 6 2-3

innings and six strikeouts in the first game, allowing one hit, four runs and two walks. Flores didn't record a hit in either game, but scored a run in the latter contest.

Flores drew two walks and scored a run in Middle Georgia State's 14-13 loss at Toccoa Falls College on March 7.

• Sophomore pitcher Dylan Hall threw 3 1-3 hitless innings on March 9, helping his FSCJ BlueWave top visiting Daytona State 9-7. He had five strikeouts with two walks as he improved to 2-1 on the season. The BlueWave (11-14) lost 11-1 at Daytona State the following day.

• Junior Landon Boyette's

Thomas Night Hawks won three out of their five games in the Warner Classic over the weekend, including their final two over Nebraska's Bellevue and Michigan's Siena Heights.

Boyette went 2 for 3 with two RBIs, a run and a walk on March 10 as Thomas (14-14) closed the tournament with a 7-2 win over Siena Heights. He went 1 for 3 with a stolen base on March 9 in his team's 3-2 win over Bellevue. The win came after Thomas lost 8-0 to Ohio's Lourdes University earlier in the day, during which the former Cat went 1 for 3.

Boyette was held hitless in the two games on March 8 as Thomas lost 4-1 to Michigan's Spring Arbor before winning 10-9 over Illinois' Saint Francis.

• Senior catcher Kylie Holton's Morehead State Lady Eagles swept Canisius in a doubleheader on March 9 as part of the Morehead State Classic. She went 0 for 2 in the second game as the Lady Eagles (15-4) won 5-2 after winning the opening game 5-3. Morehead State's game scheduled for March 10 against IUPUI was canceled.

• Freshman Madison Kennedy's 15th-ranked Florida State Lady Seminoles swept hosting North Florida in a doubleheader on March 10. FSU (18-6) won 13-0 and 9-6. The Lady Seminoles rolled 12-0 over Penn on March 8.

• The Tallahassee Community College Lady Eagles, featuring sophomores Brandie Callaway and Callie Paine, split a doubleheader against Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College on March 7 to move to 9-17-1 on the season. Callaway combined to bat 2 for 6 with a double and two runs scored as TCC lost 3-1 before bouncing back 7-2.

BAKER COUNTY BASSMASTERS

Baker County Bassmasters at Santa Fe Lake results
March 10

- 1st - Matt Anderson & Timmy Anderson - 19.6 lbs, Big bass 8.59 lbs
- 2nd - Justin Bennett and Johnny Key - 11.12 lbs
- 3rd - Steve Holman and James Cooper - 10.63 lbs

Lady B-Cats stay undefeated, B-Cats lose three in a row

JON SHUMAKE
SPORTS EDITOR

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The games have gotten closer, but the end result has remained the same: the BCMS Lady Bobcats continue to win.

The softball program improved to 8-0 on the season with three road wins in four days at Lake Asbury, Suwannee and Green Cove. After not allowing a run through their first five games, which they won by an average of 14.4 runs, the Lady B-Cats won their last three games by a combined 12 runs, with a chunk of the margin coming from their 5-0 shutout over Green Cove on March 9.

Pitcher Madison Lagle threw 10 strikeouts and combined with Taylor Mann for the team's sixth shutout win of the season.

Brooklyn Kennedy went 3 for 3 with a third-inning RBI single and fifth-inning two-run double to lead the offense. Emily Griffin batted 2 for 2 with a double in the game.

Kyleigh Brown padded the team's lead with a sixth-inning RBI single.

The shutout win came one day after the Lady B-Cats were forced to come from behind for the first time this season. Griffin and Lagle both hit two-RBI doubles in the top of the sixth inning, lifting Baker County to a back-and-forth 8-5 win at Suwannee on March 8.

The team's four-run sixth inning came after Suwannee tied the game in the bottom of the fifth inning with a single.

Lagle went 2 for 4 with a pair of doubles. Trailing 4-3, her fifth-inning RBI double equalized the score.

Emily McCabe had three hits, including a two-run single that gave the Lady B-Cats a 2-0 first-inning advantage. Griffin also had three hits in four at bats.

Lagle threw a complete game with 13 strikeouts on March 6, and the Lady B-Cats topped Lake Asbury 9-5.

Abby Courson and Kara Davis both had two hits and drove in multiple runs. Davis had three RBIs, including two on a second-inning base hit, and Courson connected on a two-RBI single during the team's six-run fourth inning.

Lake Asbury didn't score until Baker County already had a 9-0 lead, but the home team almost stunned the Lady B-Cats in the first inning.

Lake Asbury loaded the bases with one out in the first inning, but Lagle held it without a run by forcing a pop fly and a strikeout.

Baker County was scheduled to visit Charlton County on March 13 in its final road game of the season. The team's five-game season-ending home stand is scheduled to begin on March 15 against Lake Butler and continue March 20 against Wilkinson.

B-Cats lose three straight

The BCMS Bobcat baseball team has lost three straight close games by a combined five runs, including two straight one-run losses after coming back from deficits.

Baker County (5-5) overcame a five-run deficit on March 9, but couldn't hang on in an 11-10 loss at Trinity. The team scored six runs in the top of the fourth inning to erase the hole and pull ahead 10-9, answering back after Trinity scored seven runs in the third inning to take the commanding lead.

Easton Stevens hit a two-run single and Brady Chauncey, who went 3 for 3, added an RBI single in the high-scoring inning.

But Trinity regained the lead in the bottom half of the frame, scoring on a passed ball and single to escape with the win in the back-and-forth four-inning affair.

Ethan Wilford went 2 for 3 with a first-inning sacrifice fly and second-inning RBI single. Jase Knabb, who had two RBIs, padded the lead to 4-2 with a third-inning RBI ground out.

Trinity's seven-run inning came when they loaded the bases with no outs after three straight walks. Trinity plated runs on three errors, two singles and a ground out in the frame.

Baker County's three-run fifth inning tied hosting Green Cove on March 9, but the home team scored on a game-ending bases-loaded walk in the bottom of the sixth inning to steal a 4-3 outcome.

Jacob Miller, who went 2 for 3 with a double, and Chauncey combined for the team's only three hits. Miller's double led off the three-run fifth inning, in which Chauncey hit an RBI single and then scored the game-tying run on Tyce Moore's sacrifice fly. Knabb also reached home on an error in the inning.

Green Cove pulled ahead with a first-inning sacrifice fly, and then added cushion in the fourth inning by scoring on a fielder's choice and a bases-loaded walk.

The B-Cats also only managed three hits in their 5-2 loss on March 8 at Suwannee, which snapped the team's three-game winning streak. Stevens' sixth-inning two-run single accounted for the team's only score of the game.

Suwannee took the lead with a three-run first inning, and added another two in the bottom of the fourth.

Moore went 2 for 3 with five RBIs on March 6, leading Baker County to a 14-3 win over Lake Asbury in a run-rule shortened five-inning contest. He also pitched two shutout innings with four strikeouts and two hits allowed.

The B-Cats scored 10 runs in the second inning to put the game out of reach. Wilford hit an RBI triple and Miller added an RBI double in the explosive frame.

Chauncey plated a pair of runs in the game, Knabb added two hits and Jamil Jones doubled.

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Miss Shannon-Mr. Jemison

February vows

Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Shannon of Macclenny have the honor of announcing the upcoming marriage of their daughter Tammy Michele to Brad Jemison of Daphne, AL.

The groom is the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. David Jemison.

The couple will wed in Maui, Hawaii on February 19, 2018 and reside in Daphne.

'Music Man' starts two-week run Thursday

Music Man is one of those classic American musicals guaranteed to get your feet tapping and leave a smile on your face. It's full of big production numbers, touching ballads, comedy and drama.

The show opens this Thursday at the BCHS auditorium and runs Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. It also runs the following weekend.

Reserved tickets in the first four rows are available by calling 259-6286 and general admission tickets are on sale at the door. The show is a co-production of BCHS Drama and Baker County Community Theatre.

In *Music Man*, Harold Hill is a con man who gets off the train in a sleepy Iowa town in 1912 determined to sell the people band instruments and uniforms. The fact that he knows nothing at all about music is beside the point. He intends to grab the money and go. But along the way he discovers true love and manages to change the entire town.

Music Man won multiple Oscars and Tony Awards and is considered one of the real classics of the American stage. It has great songs like *76 Trombones*, *Till There Was You*, *The Wells Fargo Wagon*, *Pick-a-Little*, *Talk-a-Little*, and *Gary, Indiana*.

Lucas Kish and Jackson Helms share the role of Harold Hill, Mr. Kish in the second week and Mr. Helms in the first week.

Blayne Fraser and Lorrann Bliss will split the weeks as Marian Paroo with Ms. Bliss on stage for the opening week.

Carole Ann Spivey and Allie England are Mrs. Paroo. Denny Wells is Mayor Shinn and Staci Heath Staples is his wife Eulalie.

Other leading players include Jeff Rowe, Lucas Cox, Joel Griffis, Tucker Kinghorn, Gregory Barrios, Elizabeth Reagan, Abby Hodges, Harper Archambault, Hannah Davis, Will Griffis, Audrey England, Kenzie Norrell, Mackenzie Crews, Terri Collins, Kim Griffis, Shelly Neri, Alexis Garner, Brett Taylor, Dawson Tetstone, Claire Collins, River Neri, Aybree Gonzalez, Riley Katsikas, Eden Crews, Addisyn Boatright, Addison Staples, Cheyenne Dunnam, Bree McDonald, Charlie Rowland, Jackson Hodges and Presley Turner.

Kaylan Davis is lead choreographer and assistant director.

BCHS superlatives react to new titles

JOEL ADDINGTON
MANAGING EDITOR
reporter@bakercountypress.com

Seniors and the faculty, staff and administrators at the high school recently voted for the 2018 class superlatives — both the standard titles like most athletic or best dressed, but also some sillier ones determined solely by seniors, like most likely to borrow a dollar or survive a zombie apocalypse.

The teachers voted for their favorite students — the Titan 12 — and a handful of other honors like most intellectual and best all-around.

The results were as follows:

Standard titles

- Most athletic: Tori Richardson and Seth Paige
- Friendliest: Elizabeth Reagan and Reggie Thomas

"I think it comes naturally," said Ms. Reagan when asked why she thinks she won titles like friendliest, class favorite and best to bring home to mom. "I've always been a very likable person because of my outgoing and friendly personality. I try to be nice to everyone and share a smile when I can. You never know when someone needs a kind word to brighten their day."

Her advice to for others who want to be well-liked: "I think the most important quality is how you treat others. If I am only nice to some people, and not all, I'm not having a very Christ-like attitude. I want to be someone that people can depend on to stay the same in every situation, regardless of who I'm around."

- Most school spirit: Camryn Payne and Reggie Thomas
- Best smile: Elizabeth Reagan,

- Cheyenne Ball and Josh Haygood
- Best dressed: Lake Lewis and Zac Gregory
- Wittiest: Ryah Davis and Hunter Hicks
- Class favorite: Elizabeth Reagan and Cooper Hodges
- Most likely to succeed: Kyrie Holman and Nick Howell
- Class beauties: Selena Gonzalez, Skyler Cales and Olivia Crews
- Class handsome: Devon Cole, Blane Griffis, Tucker Kinghorn
- Most talented non-athletic: Jaclyn Adkinson & Caleb Crews

Silly titles

- Most likely to lose the winning lottery ticket: Brysen Dopson and Lacey Bell
- Most iconic duo: Kyrie Holman and Amber Simmons

"Amber and I became friends in 2007 when we both started twirling at a local baton studio. However, in middle school, we became super close and basically attracted at the hip. I think the reason our friendship is so strong is because we don't demand each other's attention. We completely understand that we're busy people.

"When we are together we don't have to do anything extravagant, we're happiest at the beach or just hanging out watching Food Network. I believe we were voted most iconic duo because we have one of the friendships that have really lasted. We've had ups and downs and disagreements, but through everything we've remained best friends. At school, you usually don't see one without the other and often times we say the same things at the same time. We just have one of those rare friendships that hasn't gotten torn apart by teenage drama."

- Most changed since freshman year: Jackie Donker and Cooper Hodges
- Most likely to travel the world: Kyrie Holman and Collin Ambrose

"Winning this superlative actually

made me smile," said Ms. Holman, who admits she hasn't traveled a lot but would like to.

Last summer she visited California and Virginia to tour universities and see the sites. She hit Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, home to California Polytechnic and the University of Richmond.

"My favorite was California," she said. "I wouldn't call it a culture shock, but it was definitely different than the East Coast lifestyle. In the future, I plan to travel as much as possible. I would love to go on mission trips, study abroad trips or just general vacations. My perfect travel adventure would be museum hopping through Europe, seeing the architecture and art that set the stage for our modern lifestyle would be wonderful."

- Most likely to be a reality TV star: Mackenzie Rhoden and Caleb Crews
- Best to bring home to Mom: Dale Jean Hodges and Elizabeth Reagan
- Most trusted with the aux chord: Hailee Rodgers and Seth Paige
- Most likely to survive the zombie apocalypse: Sarah Crews and Klint Griffis

"Why do I think I won most likely to survive the zombie apocalypse?" said Griffis. "It has to be that I'm the biggest 'Walking Dead' fan at the high school. And also I'm the best Fortnite player in Baker so my shooting skills are on point."

And why does he love hit AMC zombie series?

"The show has everything you need. You have great actors! It shows what could happen to the world if [a zombie apocalypse] did happen. And the storyline of how the

people keep moving on through good and bad," he said.

Ms. Crews, meanwhile, is known for her love the outdoors.

"I assume they think I am cut out to survive ... My daddy taught me well enough. I can handle my own with any gun," she said.

- Most contagious laugh: Alison Bechtel and Devontae Brown
- Most likely to knock over an entire row of books in the library: Keona Adkins and Dawson Beasley
- Most likely to ask to borrow a dollar: Kali Faulk, William Bloodsaw and Savoy Jefferson
- Most likely to secretly attend Hogwarts: Jaclyn Adkinson and Devontae Brown

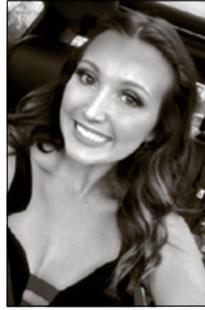
"I am a big Harry Potter fan," says Ms. Adkinson, adding that getting the title was a big surprise. "I love how magical everything is. It is just a world of wonder. My favorite book would have to be the third book, which is 'The Prisoner of Azkaban.'" She said it contains her favorite character Sirius Black and its when Harry discovers his "patronus." "There was also a griffin, and who doesn't love a griffin? They are absolutely amazing," she said.

Titan 12

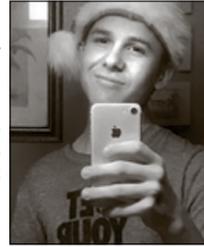
- Christopher Hill
- Seth Paige
- Reginald Thomas
- Elizabeth Reagan
- Kyrie Holman
- Leah Kerce
- Cooper Hodges
- Tucker Kinghorn
- Camryn Payne
- Braeden Sanders
- Nick Howell
- Elizabeth Ambrose
- Teacher superlatives
- Most dependable: Camryn Payne and Nick Howell
- Most intellectual: Kelly Colston and Nick Howell
- Best all-around: Elizabeth Reagan and Cooper Hodges



Elizabeth Reagan



Kyrie Holman



Klint Griffis



Sarah Crews



Photo courtesy of Pamela Robinson

MES raises \$2338 for heart charity

Macclenny Elementary School donated \$2338 to the American Heart Association with money it raised during February's annual Jump Rope for Heart. Third-grader Michael Graves (pictured) of Krista Trippett's class was the top collector by raising \$500, Pamela Robinson wrote in an email on March 13.



"SOMETIMES MY HUMAN DOESN'T WEAR PANTS AT HOME. IT'S A RIOT."

-COLBY
adopted 06-18-11

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theshalterproject.org

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8981 S. SR 228, Macclenny
Meeting Monday at 6:30 pm
93 N. 5th St., Macclenny

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

DEADLINE

Ads must be placed and paid for by
MONDAY at 5:00 P.M.

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

Sawmills from only \$4397. Make and save money with your own bandmill. Cut lumber any dimension. In stock ready to ship. Free Info/DVD: www.NorwoodSawmills.com 1-800-578-1363 Ext.300N
3/15p

John Deere riding mower, automatic transmission, serviced and ready to go, \$1099. Leaf bagger, \$50. New Holland manure spreader, large capacity, \$1499 OBO. 904-259-2393. 3/15p

Harley Davidson Road King Classic, loaded, 19,000 miles, 1450 cc engine with all upgrades. 904-259-2393, \$8900. Husqvarna, 46" cut, AT, 21 HP, \$1099. 3/15p

Plant sale: Fruit trees, blueberries, landscape and flowering plants. We take orders. Sands Daylily Farm, 6698 Sands Dale Road, Macclenny, FL 32063, 904-303-1501, 904-259-6891. Saturdays we are located at P&R Electric on Lowder Street. 3/8-4/12c

Jazzy wheelchair/scooter, \$600. Cherry dining room table with four chairs, \$100. Like new twin size single mattress, \$40. Sony touch screen computer, like new, desktop or laptop, \$300. 904-259-2271, 904-408-1598. 3/8-3/15p

30' Concession trailer, for details and photos go to www.redneck-products.biz. 904-704-9568.
3/15c

2013 Heartland Pioneer pull behind camper with slide out, great for family fun. Sleeps 8, queen bed and bunks, bathroom with tub, clean, like new, winter cover, plus extras, \$2500 cash and take over payments of \$146.75/month with bank, firm. Call 904-219-7134, serious inquiries only. 3/15p

Live & Online Public Auction. Tuesday, March 20th at 12:00 PM, 321 Loans Inc. Receivership Case, 1410 SW 3 Street, Pompano Beach, FL 33069. Sale will consist of luxury vehicles including: 2014 Tesla Model S, P85+ (miles: 47,678), 2015 BMW i8, 1.3L L3 Hybrid Super Car (miles: 15,632), 2015 Land Rover Range Rover Autobiography Edition (miles: 28,271), 2006 International 3000 Custom Luxury School Bus (upgraded and equipped) and 2003 Blue Bird Body Co. Custom Luxury School Bus (upgraded and equipped). Catalog and photos available at www.moeckerauctions.com. Receivership Case #0:17-60907-CIV-FAM. Preview: Day of sale 9 AM to Noon - 6%-18% BP - \$500 refundable cash deposit to register. (800) 840-BIDS - info@moeckerauctions.com. AB-

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Call Independent Associate Ron Spencer at 1-800-397-1752

1098 AU-3219, Eric Rubin. 3/15p

MISCELLANEOUS

Alterations: basic hemming, zipper repair, and basic alterations, next day service on most items. Marva Williams, 904-868-8604, 904-275-2770. 3/8-3/29p

We install 6" seamless gutters, pressure washing. 259-7335. 8/11tfc

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings Monday - Saturday at 8 pm. Call Wanda at 904-994-7750.

ANIMALS

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

Use Happy Jack® Mitex® and Ear Canker powder to treat yeast infections. Glen Cash Store, 904-259-2381, kennelvax.com. 3/15-4/5p

AUTOMOBILES

2014 Leprechaun by Coachmen, 50th Anniversary Edition 319 DS, 32', 2 slides, 11,000 miles, clean and well maintained, too many extras to list, \$75,000 OBO. Call, 904-536-1844. 3/8-3/22p

HELP WANTED

Notice to readers:

The newspaper often publishes classified advertising on subjects like work-at-home, weight loss products, health products. While the newspaper uses reasonable discretion in deciding on publication of such ads, it takes no responsibility as to the truthfulness of claims. Respondents should use caution and common sense before sending any money or making other commitments based on statements and/or promises; demand specifics in writing. You can also call the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-FTC-HELP to find out how to spot fraudulent solicitations. Remember: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. - The Baker County Press

Aviation Grads work with JetBlue, United, Delta and others. Start here with hands on training for FAA certification. Financial aid if qualified. Call Aviation Institute of Maintenance, 888-242-2649. 3/15p

Job Fair: CDL-A Drivers and Owner Operators. Sign-on bonus, C/D \$2500 and O/O \$5000. Comfort Inn: 3440 Southwest 40th Blvd, Gainesville, FL 32608, March 15 & 16, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm. Marshall, 855-259-3747, MSass@universal-logistics.com 3/15p

Okefenoke Rural Electric Membership Corporation is now accepting applications for the following position: (1) Crew Leader (Lineman) - Hilliard office. Residency requirement: South Charlton or Baker County area, applications can be printed out from the website (OREMC.com) or picked up at any of our offices Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm. Applications will be accepted until Monday, March 26th at 5:00 pm at any of our offices or emailed to customer.service@oremc.com, the Co-op reserves the right to cancel any and all bids. Okefenoke REMC is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Drug Free Workplace. 3/15-3/22c

Full time oil change and tire technician., experience helpful. Apply in person at Jimmy's Auto Repair, 959 West Macclenny Avenue, Macclenny. Monday - Friday, 8 am - 6 pm., Drug-Free workplace. 3/8-3/29p

Wanted: Full-time make-up consultant, and full-time hair stylist. Great location, established business and clientele. Call, 904-885-1969. 3/8-3/15p

28 year established contracting firm with full benefits is now accepting applications for qualified applicants. Gateway Contracting, Inc. offers health insurance, vacation, paid holidays and 401k benefits, and provides stability, training, and growth for our employees. We are growing and have the need to

fill the following positions. If you are interested and qualify, please apply online at www.gatewaycontractinginc.com. Full-time positions available: LEAD CARPENTER, must be able to perform journeyman level work as a carpenter in a commercial and industrial setting. This position requires a full range of both rough and finish skilled carpentry work, including the ability to work from drawings, specifications, and instructions to build, remodel and repair various types of facilities and structures. PLUMBER PIPEFITTER, pipe welding experience. Experienced in commercial and industrial work. Plumber's HELPER. Qualified applicants must have good driving record and pass background check. DFWP Call (904) 388-4799. 3/1-3/22c

Macclenny Nursing & Rehab is seeking RNs & LPNs full/part time. Day and Night shifts available. CNAs full/part time. Shifts available for 3-11 and 11-7. New wage scale! Must pass a criminal background check! Apply in person at 755 South 5th Street, Macclenny or call 904-259-4873 or email Masdc@southernltc.com. EE/AA/Employer/M/F/V/D. 11/16tfc

Local drivers needed. Class A & B CDL, home every night. Clean driving record, good pay. 904-259-4375. 12/28tfc

HELP WANTED-Accepting applications for electrician and AC duct installer. Must have experience and valid driver's license. Apply in person at Dependable located at 203 E. Macclenny Avenue. 904-259-6546 or submit application on our website at dependeableacandelectric.com. 1/21tfc

Experienced painters needed. Peacock Painting. Call 904-259-5877. 2/21tfc

Wayne Frier Macclenny. Looking for service repair man. Mobile Homes. Vehicle/Driver's License required. Jared, 904-259-4663, jm_martin23@yahoo.com. 1/18tfc

Wayne Frier Macclenny. Need T&T Contractors. Mud / Paint / Trim. Jared, 904-259-4663, jm_martin23@yahoo.com. 1/18tfc

Field Finish Drywall and Molding Contractors Needed; Live Oak Homes one of the leading producers of manufactured homes in the South East is seeking to hire qualified and quality Field Finish Drywall Finishers and Traditional Plant Service contractors. Great pay and steady work available in your LOCAL area. jm_martin23@yahoo.com, kstreat@liveoakhomes.org, 904-287-0774. 1/18tfc

BUSINESS OPPORT.

Lawn Maintenance Company for sale: 23 years in business. All local accounts, commercial and residential. Asking \$60,000 with equipment, or \$85,000 with equipment and truck. 904-412-6450. 3/15-3/22p

REAL ESTATE

Notice to Readers

All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination, call HUD toll free at 1-800-669-9777. The toll free telephone number for the im-

I BUY USED MOBILE HOMES
\$\$ CASH PAID \$\$
IMMEDIATELY
904.259.4663

paired is 1-800-927-9275.

Land in Georgia: 1 to 20 acre tracts, high and dry, off of Highway 185, \$5000 per acre, owner financing available. 912-281-9053, 912-550-4563. 3/8-3/15p

Wayne Frier Macclenny, I buy land. Cash paid immediately. Call 904-259-4663. 3/9tfc

FOR RENT

Efficiency Apartment, electric, water, sewer, trash, and lawn service included, first/last/\$300/deposit, \$550/month. 904-259-7335. 3/15tfc

1 BR, 1 BA apartment located in Macclenny, 491 E. Michigan Avenue # 1. Water, sewer and garbage included. First/last/\$400 security deposit required to move in, \$600/month. Service pets only. Call 904-259-8444 or email vtf-propertymanagement@yahoo.com for more information or to get an application. 3/15tfc

1BR, 1 BA apartment located in Macclenny, 491 E. Michigan Ave. # 4. Water, sewer and garbage included. First/last/\$400 security deposit is required to move in, \$600/month Service pets only. Call 904-259-8444 or email vtf-propertymanagement@yahoo.com for more information or to get an application. 3/15tfc

2 BR, 1 BA apartment located in Macclenny, 205 S. 3rd Street. First/ last/\$400 security deposit is required to move in, \$650/month. Service pets only. Call 904-259-8444 or email vtf-propertymanagement@yahoo.com for more information or to get an application. 3/15tfc

2 BR, 1 BA house in Taylor, large yard, bring your horses, large barn, front and back porch, newly renovated, first/last and security, \$950/month. 904-707-4697, 904-525-9025. 3/8-3/15p

Rooms for rent in Macclenny. First and deposit required. Call, 904-408-8085. 3/15p

2-3 BR mobile homes available. \$525-\$660 month. Half-acre, garage, water, sewer, lawn care provided, family neighborhood. 912-843-8118. 7/27tfc

Lot for rent. Ready for a mobile home. Call 904-259-6735. 2/9tfc

COMMERCIAL FR

Commercial office or retail space, 1800 sq. ft., CHA, new paint and flooring, rent well below market value, no first/last required. 904-259-6271, 904-591-8200. 1/18tfc

MOBILE HOMES

3 BR, 2 BA homes starting at \$38,900. Includes delivery, set-up, skirting, central heat/air conditioning. Call Pat 904-225-0884. 8/19tfc

Lot model sale! \$1000 in free furniture included. Huge 4 bedroom. \$69,900. Many homes to choose from, waynefriermacclenny.com 904-259-4663. 3/8-3/29c

Brand new 2018, 2 BR home. \$37,900 with free thermal windows. waynefriermacclenny.com 904-259-4663. 3/8-3/29c

No money down! Use your land. 3 BR, \$399/month. 4 BR, \$499/month. waynefriermacclenny.com 904-259-4663. 3/8-3/29c

500 DOLLARS & DEED

is all you need to move into your new Manufactured & Modular Home



CALL PAT
904-225-0884

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.



Friday, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm, 3698 Pete Johnson Road, Macclenny. Furniture, pictures, home decor, horse tack, clothing, exercise equipment, bikes, too many items to list.

Friday & Saturday, 8:00 am - 3:00 pm, end of Glynn Allyn off 125 South, between Woodlawn and Mud Lake Road. Baby bed, furniture, and a lot more.

Friday & Saturday, 8:00 am - 12:00 noon, 445 Ivy Street. Multi-family sale.

Friday & Saturday, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm, 6091 Sands Pointe Drive, Macclenny. Moving sale: Everything must go.

Saturday, 8:30 am - ?, 267 South College Street, Macclenny. Multi-family sale: a little bit of everything.

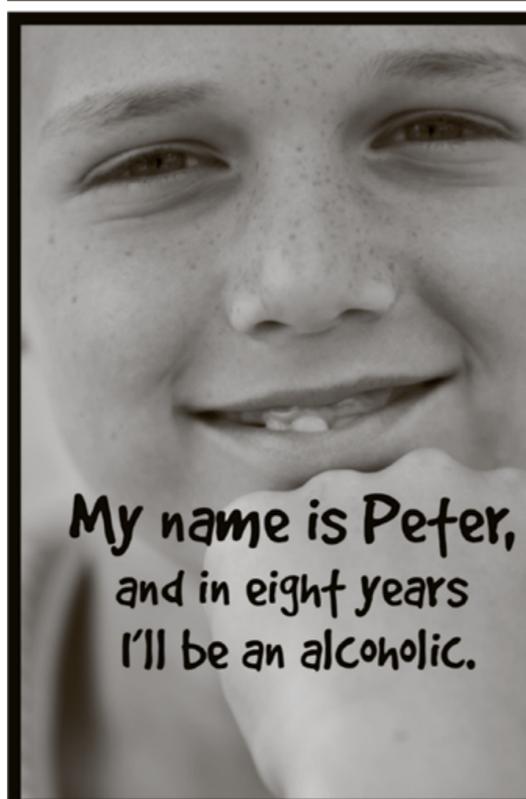
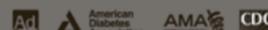
Saturday, 8:00 am - ?, 447 3rd Street South. A little bit of everything.

Saturday, 8:00 am - 12:00 noon, 4556 Raintree Drive, Macclenny II Subdivision. Clothes, shoes, housewares, etc. No early birds please. Rain cancels.

86 MILLION AMERICANS MAYBE EVEN YOU, HAVE PREDIABETES. PERSON-ABOUT-TO-FACT-CHECK-THIS-FACT.

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Text KNOW to 97779



My name is Peter, and in eight years I'll be an alcoholic.

Kids who drink before age 15 are 5 times more likely to have alcohol problems when they're adults.

START TALKING BEFORE THEY START DRINKING

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov



LEGAL NOTICES



IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA
Case No.: 02-2018-DR-44

In Re: The Marriage of SRINIVAS RANGU, Husband, and SARAH ANN BROWN, Wife.

NOTICE OF ACTION

TO: SARAH ANN BROWN

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action for Dissolution of Marriage, including claims for dissolution of real and personal property, and for payments of support, has been filed against you. You are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to this action on HUGH D. FISH, JR., Petitioner's attorney, whose address is P.O. Box 531, Macclenny, FL 32063, on or before March 14, 2018, and file the original with the clerk of this court at Baker County Courthouse, 339 E. Macclenny Avenue, Macclenny, Florida 32063, either before service on Petitioner's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the petition.

WARNING: Rule 12.285, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, requires certain automatic disclosure of documents and information. Failure to comply can result in sanctions, including dismissal or striking of pleadings.

DATED this 14th day of February, 2018.

Clerk Of The Circuit Court
By: Mellisa Haines
Deputy Clerk

Hugh D. Fish, Jr.
Florida Bar No. 0242861
P.O. Box 531
Macclenny, FL 32063
(904) 259-6606
hughfish@setel.net
3/1-3/22c

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA
Case No.: 02-2018-DR-0076

In Re: The Marriage of WILLIE KIRK JACKSON, Husband, and CAROLYN WHEATON JACKSON, Wife.

NOTICE OF ACTION

TO: CAROLYN WHEATON JACKSON

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that a Petition for Dissolution of Marriage has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on FRANK E. MALONEY, JR., P.A., Attorney, whose address is 445 East Macclenny Avenue, Macclenny, Florida 32063; (904) 259-3155, within thirty (30) days after the first publication of the notice and on or before the 26th day of March, 2018, and to file the original with the Clerk of this Court either before service on FRANK E. MALONEY, JR., P.A., attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint or Petition.

WITNESS my hand and seal of this Court on this 23rd day of February, 2018.

Stacie D. Harvey
Clerk Of Court

By: Melissa Haines
Deputy Clerk

Frank E. Maloney, Jr., P.A.
445 East Macclenny Avenue
Macclenny, Florida 32063
legalmail@frankmaloney.us
3/1-3/22c

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA
JUVENILE DIVISION
Case No.: 02-2016-DP-133

IN THE INTEREST OF:
A.D.B (M) DOB: 07/08/2001
T.D.B (M) DOB: 09/05/2006
E.B.B (M) DOB: 12/01/2010
Minor Children.

Alias SUMMONS AND NOTICE OF PETITION FOR TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS AND FOR PERMANENT COMMITMENT FOR SUBSEQUENT ADOPTION

THE STATE OF FLORIDA

TO: Candice Bryant, whereabouts unknown

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that a petition under oath, a copy of which is available at the Clerk of Courts Office, has been filed in the above-styled Court for the termination of your parental rights to the above children and for permanent commitment of the children to the Department of Children and Families for subsequent adoption. You are hereby commanded to be and appear before the General Magistrate in the Baker County Courthouse in Macclenny, Florida, on Tuesday, April 10, 2018 at 10:20 a.m., for a Continued Advisory Hearing. You must personally appear at the hearing on the date and at the time specified.

FAILURE TO PERSONALLY APPEAR AT THIS HEARING CONSTITUTES CONSENT TO THE TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS OF THE CHILDREN. IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR ON THE DATE AND TIME SPECIFIED, YOU MAY LOSE ALL LEGAL RIGHTS AS A PARENT TO THE CHILDREN NAMED IN THE PETITION ATTACHED TO THIS NOTICE.

You are entitled to have an attorney present to represent you in this matter. If you want an attorney but are unable to afford one, you must notify the court and the court will appoint an attorney to represent you.

WITNESS MY HAND as the clerk of said Court and the Seal therefore, 5th day of March, 2018.

Clerk of Circuit Court
By: Sherri Dugger
Deputy Clerk

Lindsay Hanson, Esq. / FBN:18373
1389 West US Highway 90, Suite 110
Lake City, FL 32055
Tel. (386) 243-6037/Fax: (386)758-1170
Primary E-mail Address:
Lindsay.Hanson@myffamilies.com
Secondary E-mail Addresses:
Michaell.Hulongbayang@myffamilies.com
Michaell.Frampton@myffamilies.com
3/8-3/29c

PUBLIC NOTICE

Call for Request for Proposals (RFP) Landfill Gas-to-Energy Project RFP # 18-01

The New River Solid Waste Association (NRSWA) is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) for developing a landfill gas to compressed natural gas (LFG-to-CNG) project at the New River Regional Landfill (NRRL), an active municipal solid waste landfill in Union County, Florida. The Vendor shall be qualified to convert landfill gas to CNG. The selected Vendor shall be required to assume full responsibility for all services offered in their proposal. A pre-proposal meeting and site tour will be held on **Wednesday, March 28, 2018, at 10:00 a.m. (Eastern Time)** at the NRRL. Attendance is strongly encouraged but not mandatory.

NRRL is located 2.5 miles north of Raiford, Florida on State Road 121 in Union County, Florida. RFP packages can be picked up at the NRRL Administration Office located at 24276 NE 157th Street, Raiford, Florida 32083 or can be distributed upon request via email. Completed RFP packages shall be mailed to the NRSWA, P.O. Box 647, Raiford, Florida 32083-0647 or delivered to the NRRL Administration Office. After the RFP opening, the packages will be examined for completeness and preserved in the custody of the Executive Director. The NRSWA reserves the right to reject any or all RFP responses or a portion thereof for any reason. Any RFP responses received after the specified time and date will not be considered. Contact the NRSWA office at 386-431-1000 for questions concerning the RFP submission. The RFP submission **DEADLINE is Wednesday, April 25, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. (Eastern Time).**

3/8-3/15c

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

ElderSource, the Area Agency on Aging and Aging & Disability Resource Center for Northeast Florida, announces a public hearing to which all persons are invited.

Wednesday, March 28, 2018
2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Baker County Transportation Building
9264 Buck Starling Road
MacClenny, FL 32063

GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED: This is a public hearing to provide an opportunity for input on the Direct Service Waiver Application for ElderSource to provide the following evidence-based direct services: A Matter of Balance, Active Living Every Day, Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, Diabetes Self-Management Program, Stress Busting Program for Family Caregivers, Walk with Ease, Healthy IDEAS as well as Intake. Recommendations will be incorporated into the Area Plan on Aging update for 2019.

If you are unable to attend and would like to submit comments, please email us at nan-cy.tufts@myeldersource.org.

NOTE: Pursuant to the provisions of the American's with Disabilities Act, any persons requiring special accommodations to participate in this meeting are asked to advise ElderSource at least 48 hours before the meeting by contacting: Nancy Tufts, 904-391-6621. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact ElderSource by calling 904-391-6600.

3/15c

ON-GOING PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYING AND MAPPING SERVICES BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS BAKER COUNTY, FLORIDA

The Baker County Board of County Commissioners is soliciting Statements of Qualifications from professional firms, registered in the State of Florida, pursuant to Section 287.055, Florida Statutes, known as the Consultant Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA), to provide Land Surveying and Mapping Services for Baker County. The County seeks to award a three (3) year contract with an option to renew the contract on a year to year basis for two additional years.

Services will include, but not limited to, Boundary Surveys, Topographic Surveys, Hydrographic Surveys, As-built and Record Surveys, Construction layout, Quantity Surveys, Right-Of-Way maps, preparation of property descriptions and other services as needed. Work products will comply with the Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Codes that pertain to Land Surveying and mapping and Baker County codes, policies, and procedures.

Work to be performed by the consultant shall be on an assignment-by-assignment basis. Work assignments (Work Orders) shall be made by the Road Superintendent, Community Development Director, County Manager, or their designee. Prior to any work assignments being made, based on mutual discussions between the County and the consultant, the consultant shall be required to prepare a detailed scope of work and schedule for the assignment which shall include a not to exceed budget amount for the assignment. The consultant shall not perform work under the contract without written authorization from the County. The consultant shall waive any claim for compensation for any work performed without written authorization.

There is no guarantee, expressed or implied, that a selected firm will receive a work order(s) in any given period.

The County will request a scope of work from the selected firm and negotiate a scope and fee for the proposed services for a particular project under the terms of the Master Agreement.

An original and four (4) copies of the complete proposal plus one (1) electronic copy of the complete proposal shall be sealed and clearly marked on the outside: **"Request for Qualifications - For On-Going Land Surveying and Mapping Services, RFP# 2018-05"**.

Proposals must be in writing, and may be submitted by the Proposer in person, by courier or overnight to:

Baker County Board of County Commissioners
55 N 3rd Street
Macclenny, FL 32063

Proposals must be received no later than 3:00 PM April 12, 2018. Facsimile proposals are not acceptable. Any proposals received after this date and time will be rejected and returned un-opened to the proposer. Proposals will be opened at the County Administration office on **April 12, 2018 at 3:05 PM.**

In addition to the information as stated above to be marked on the outside of the envelope, it should also provide the date and time of opening and company name and address.

3/15-3/22c

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL RFP 2018-04 GRANT WRITING AND ADMINISTRATION SERVICES

The Baker County Board of County Commissioners, Florida (County) will receive sealed proposals until **5:00 p.m.** local time, on **April 5, 2018** at the County Administration Office located at 55 N. Third Street, Macclenny, Florida 32063. Proposals delivered to any other location will not be considered received by the Administration Office. Any proposals received after the above time will not be accepted under any circumstances. Any uncertainty regarding the time will be resolved against the Proposer. Proposals will not be accepted via e-mail or fax.

A clearly marked original, five (5) copies and one (1) digital copy must be sealed in an envelope and clearly marked **"RFP 2018-04 Grant Writing and Administration Services"** on the exterior of the package submitted.

Request for additional information or clarifications must be made in writing to the Administration Office. Facsimile or e-mail questions are acceptable. The Administration Office will issue replies to inquiries and additional information or amendments deemed necessary in written addenda, which will be issued prior to the deadline for responding to this Request for Proposal. Questions must be received no later than **3:00 p.m. on April 2, 2018.**

Baker County Board of County Commissioners
Administration Office
55 N. Third Street
Macclenny, Florida 32063
kennie.downing@bakercountyfl.org
904-259-3613

It will be the sole responsibility of the Proposer to contact the Administration Office prior to submitting a response to determine if any addenda have been issued, to obtain such addenda, and to acknowledge addenda with their proposal.

Respondents to this solicitation or persons acting on their behalf may not contact, between the release of the solicitation and the end of the 72-hour period following the agency posting the notice of intended award, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and County holidays, any employee or officer of the executive or legislative branch concerning any aspect of this solicitation, except in writing to the Administration Office or as provided in the solicitation documents. Violation of this provision may be grounds for rejecting a response.

The Baker County Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any informalities or irregularities in any proposals received, to re-advertise for proposals, or take any similar actions that may be deemed to be in the best interest of the County.

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Scott R Austin
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You are hereby notified that your eligibility to vote is in question. You are required to contact the Supervisor of Elections, in Macclenny, Florida, no later than thirty (30) days after the date of this publishing. Failure to respond will result in a determination of ineligibility by the Supervisor and your name will be removed from the statewide voter registration system. If further assistance is needed, contact the Supervisor of Elections at the below listed address or call 904-259-6339.

Nita D. Crawford
Baker County Supervisor of Elections
P.O. BOX 505
Macclenny, Florida, 32063

3/15c

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Shelley R Brantley
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Nita D. Crawford
Baker County Supervisor of Elections
P.O. BOX 505
Macclenny, Florida, 32063

3/15c

PUBLIC NOTICE

SPECIAL MAGISTRATE SERVICES

The Baker County Board of County Commissioners, Florida (County) will receive sealed proposals until **3:00 p.m.** local time, on **April 12, 2018** at the County Administration Office located at 55 N. Third Street, Macclenny, Florida 32063. Responses delivered to any other location will not be considered received by the Administration Office. Any proposal received after the above time will not be accepted under any circumstances. Any uncertainty regarding the time will be resolved against the Proposer. Proposals will not be accepted via fax. Shortly after the due time has expired, the proposals will be publicly opened and announced.

A clearly marked original and five (5) copies must be sealed in an envelope and clearly marked **"RFP 2018-06Special Magistrate Services"** on the exterior of the package submitted.

Request for additional information or clarifications must be made in writing to the Administration Office. Facsimile or e-mail questions are acceptable. The Administration Office will issue replies to inquiries and additional information or amendments deemed necessary in written addenda, which will be posted on the County's website prior to the deadline for responding to this Request For Proposals. Questions must be received no later than **5:00 P.M.** April 9, 2018.

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Administration Office
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Macclenny, Florida 32063
kennie.downing@bakercountyfl.org
904-259-3613

It will be the sole responsibility of the Bidder to check the County's website prior to submitting a response to determine if any addenda have been issued, to obtain such addenda, and to acknowledge addenda with their bid. Website: www.bakercountyfl.org/purchasing.php

Contractors to this solicitation or persons acting on their behalf may not contact, between the release of the solicitation and the end of the 72-hour period following the agency posting the notice of intended award, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and County holidays, any employee or officer of the executive or legislative branch concerning any aspect of this solicitation, except in writing to the Administration Office or as provided in the solicitation documents. Violation of this provision may be grounds for rejecting a response.

The Baker County Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any informalities or irregularities in any bids received, to re-advertise for bids, or take any similar actions that may be deemed to be in the best interest of the County.

3/15-3/22c

TOWN OF GLEN ST. MARY, FLORIDA ORDINANCE NO. 2018-01

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF GLEN ST. MARY, FLORIDA PROHIBITING MEDICAL MARIJUANA TREATMENT CENTER DISPENSING FACILITIES WITHIN THE MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES OF THE TOWN AS AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 381.986, FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION, MORATORIUM CONTINGENCY, SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Any support or objections may be heard at a public hearing to be held at the Glen St. Mary Town Hall on Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Any person with a disability requiring reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this meeting should call (904) 259-3777 or fax a written request to (904) 259-5464. If you are hearing impaired and require the services of an interpreter, please call at least one week prior to the meeting and the Town will arrange to provide that service for you.

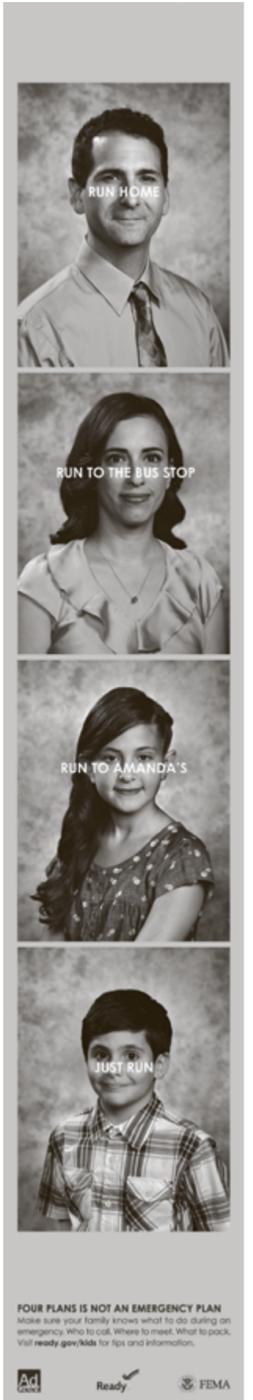
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SPORTS



Charles Ruise Jr. dribbles the ball down the court in Central State's conference tournament game against Benedict.

Ruise shines at Central State Needed 'fresh start'

JON SHUMAKE | SPORTS EDITOR
sports@bakercountypress.com

Charles Ruise Jr. needed a fresh start.

After two largely unproductive seasons with sporadic playing time at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, he announced his departure from the program in April, 2017, before returning home to Sanderson.

The former BCHS Wildcat basketball star planned to remain nearby and play for St. Augustine's Flagler College beginning in the current spring semester. But the persistence of a college coach from a university more than 800 miles away lured him away from home, and ultimately reignited his love of the game.

"I was tired of being home and sitting around and not doing nothing," Ruise said March 7 following his junior season at Ohio's Central State University. "Coach [Joseph] Price stayed on my trail. ... He didn't stop recruiting me. That really made me excited."

He joined the university, located in Wilberforce, Ohio, at the beginning of the spring semester, but had to wait to get cleared before he could take the court.

"I sat out maybe two weeks before I could even shoot a shot even in the gym," he said. "... Coach kind of gave me a heads up that he was going to need me right away as soon as I said I was ready to go. I feel like the coaches really depended on me to lead the team and help the leaders to bring them together as a group."

And Ruise made an immediate impact as soon as he was given the opportunity.

His arrival reinvigorated the previously struggling Marauders, who had lost 10 of their previous 12 games before Ruise received his first playing time on January 27. He scored eight points with a rebound in 12 minutes on the court, his second lowest playing time of the year, as Central State won 76-62 at Lemoyne-Owen College.

It was a sign of things to come.

Central State won eight of its 10 games with Ruise in the playing rotation, and ended the regular season on a seven-game winning streak.

"I wanted to put a spark in them. They had talent. I don't know what it was," he said. "I came in wanting to give them a spark. ... We just went to rolling."

Ruise averaged 14.5 points and 4.1 rebounds per game during his abbreviated first season with Central State, which ended February 28 with a 70-66 overtime loss to Benedict College in the quarterfinals of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference tournament.

Close games were nothing new to the Marauders, though. In fact, they thrived in one-possession games with Ruise.

Five of the team's wins after his arrival came by three points or fewer, including a pair of one-possession wins in three days over conference rival Kentucky State.

Ruise scored a season-high 27 points on February 10, and hit the game-winning jumper in the closing seconds of overtime to lift Central State 97-95 at Kentucky State. He took over in the second half, scoring 24 points after halftime, including nine in the five-minute overtime period.

His high-scoring outburst followed a productive 10-point game in his team's 84-81 home win over Kentucky State on February 8. The two games earned him the conference's Newcomer of the Week award announced on February 13.

"It was exciting to play in close games and get my love of the game back to play in those type of games," said Ruise, who plans to graduate in 2019 with a business management degree.

Central State's 14 wins was the program's most since the its 18-12 campaign in 2014-15, and Ruise hopes its a building block for more success in his senior year.

"Next year's going to be really exciting," he said. "... I'm not going to put no high hopes on us right now because anything can happen, but it's going to be really exciting."

Ladies fall in close district game

JON SHUMAKE
SPORTS EDITOR
sports@bakercountypress.com

For the second straight Friday, the BCHS Lady Wildcat softball team lost on a walk-off play with two outs.

This time, however, it came against a District 3-5A rival.

Suwannee's Caleigh Croft connected with a two-out single to left field in the bottom of the seventh inning, scoring Tieraney Hollon from third base and lifting the Lady Bulldogs 5-4 over the visiting Lady Cats on March 9. Hollon, who batted 3 for 4 with a double and the third-inning game-tying single, reached on a base hit in the seventh inning and advanced to third on a pair of fielder's choices.

The loss dropped Baker County to 6-4 overall and 1-1 in district play, and marked the team's third one-run road loss of the season. The Lady Cats also fell 5-4 to Clay in February's season debut and 2-1 on a walk-off play at West Nassau on March 2.

Senior first baseman Emma Gipson hit a three-run home run to center field, giving the Lady Cats a 4-3 lead in the bottom of the third inning. The long ball, her team-leading third of the season, extended her hit streak to seven games, during which she has five doubles, two home runs and 15 RBIs.

"When other teams look at us they consider her our power hitter," first-year head coach Kylee Canaday said March 8 following the team's 10-5 home win over Atlantic Coast. "She's got potential to go yard every time. She's just doing a great job of being that senior leader and stepping up when we need her."

But the lead didn't last long.

Hollon's single to left field equalized the game at 4-all in the bottom of the third inning and marked the final score by either team before Croft's walk-off hit.

The two teams traded the lead in the early innings before going quiet until the seventh inning.

Skyler Redish's two-run homer to center field gave the Lady Bulldogs a 2-1 lead in the bottom of the first inning after Taylor Dyal scored on an error in the top-half of the frame. Dyal batted 3 for 4 with a double and two runs scored.

Hollon extended Suwannee's lead in the second inning by scoring on an error before Gipson's home run briefly regained Baker County's advantage.



Liz McGovern pitches in the team's home win over Atlantic Coast.

Sara Keves hit two two-run doubles, Gipson batted 2 for 4 with a double and four RBIs, and the Lady Cats rolled 10-5 over visiting Atlantic Coast on March 8 for their second home win of the week.

Baker County tied its season high with 10 hits as a team, including doubles from KiKi Carter and Dyal in addition to Gipson and Keves' extra-base hits.

"I think just our approach at the plate and our kids are really buying into what we're telling them and what they're doing," coach Canaday said. "They're making the adjustments when they need to and coming in with some big clutch hits tonight. The kids are just stepping up to the plate."

The Lady Cats built a commanding 5-1 lead through the first two innings. Keves hit her first two-run double to left field in the bottom of the second inning, and Gipson also had a pair of RBIs in the opening innings.

Pitcher Liz McGovern, who threw six strikeouts with five hits and three earned runs in five innings, drove in Keves for the go-ahead score on a first-inning fielder's choice.

"We've been talking about we haven't really jumped on anybody in the beginning of the game and that's what we've been preaching at practice ...," coach Canaday said. "Tonight that's what we did."

But it almost didn't happen.

The Lady Stingrays led 1-0 in the top of the first inning with runners at second and third base with one out, and were in position to open an early advantage. But McGovern navigated out of the jam with a strikeout and fly ball to right field, which ended Atlantic Coast's best

chance to score until it pushed across two runs in the fifth inning after the Lady Cats had built a seven-run lead.

"Liz shows a lot of confidence in her defense and the team behind her. She knows as long as she keeps it in the park the kids are going to make the plays and get her out," coach Canaday said. "She has a great presence on the mound. Nothing seems to rattle her. Nothing will. That's just her nature, her character."

Gipson's two-run double and Carter's RBI double off the center field wall gave Baker County an 8-1 lead in the fourth inning. Atlantic Coast scored a pair in the fifth and sixth innings, but never threatened to get back into the game.

Keves' two-run fifth inning double to center field effectively put the game out of reach.

"She hit really well for us and that kid deserved it," coach Canaday said of Keves. "She's been working hard in practice, and it's coming to show in the games."

Coming off a loss at Suwannee, the Lady Cats won't have to wait long to get their revenge. Baker County hosts Bolles and Suwannee in District 3-5A games on back-to-back nights beginning March 15. The team also plays Clay at home on March 17 and welcomes Ridgeview on March 20.

The extended stretch of home games comes after the Lady Cats were scheduled to visit Ponte Vedra March 13.

JV ladies blow out Suwannee

The JV Lady Wildcats scored eight runs in the first inning on March 9, catapulting them to a 16-0 four-inning victory over Suwannee.

Baker County (4-1) scored on three errors in the opening frame to take the early commanding lead.

Alyssa Taylor led the offense, going 2 for 4 with a double, three RBIs and three runs scored. Kaitleigh Combs had three hits with a double and three runs scored, and Taylor Crews doubled as she and Harlee Williams both went 2 for 3.

Cassie Turner drove in a pair of runs. Emily Lee pitched all four shutout innings, allowing four hits with one strikeout.

The JV Lady Cats were scheduled to host March 14 to begin a four-game home stand. The team is also set to play Suwannee on March 16, Trinity on March 19 and Ridgeview on March 20.

3 football stars sign to play in college

JON SHUMAKE
SPORTS EDITOR
sports@bakercountypress.com

Three more members of Baker County's Class 5A runner-up football team signed to play college football on March 9.

Cornerback Jamon Jones inked his letter of intent to Webber International, while defensive tackles Brian West and Tay Reed both signed to continue their playing careers together at Edward Waters College. The three defensive players joined offensive counterparts Cooper Hodges and Seth Paige — who signed to Appalachian State and Georgia State, respectively, on February's National Signing Day — in making the next step of their playing careers and education official.

"All three of these guys are great kids. We're going to miss them," Wildcat head coach Jamie Rodgers said during the ceremony. "... I'm blessed to have coached them. I know how coach (Brock) Canaday feels about them. Just really proud of them and the opportunity that they're getting to go play college football and to go earn a degree."

The trio signed in front of a packed crowd of friends, family, teammates, coaches and faculty at the high school's library. Each player thanked everyone who supported them in their journey toward becoming collegiate athletes before signing their letters of intent.

"It was a great experi-



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Left to right: Brian West, Jamon Jones and Tay Reed sign their letters of intent on March 9.

Photo by Jon Shumake

ence," West said. "... It was good. I wasn't expecting a crowd. It got to me a little bit. It was great."

He and Reed, who both plan to major in criminal justice, were stalwarts who anchored the middle of Baker County's stingy defensive line.

The duo aims to bring the same level of dominance when they remain together at Edward Waters College.

"I think what really makes us a good pair together [is] we hang together a lot. We consider each other brothers," Reed said. "It feels great. It feels like we can go to the next level and dominate knowing I got him beside me still and do our thing."

He added: "Me and Brian we're going to go out and represent for Baker County. They got real great players coming in."

But it was the distance from home of Reed's actual brother that helped him choose the Jacksonville college. His brother Travion Clayton is currently a fresh-

man at Southern Miss, and Reed said he wanted to remain nearby for his family.

"I had another offer from (Virginia's) Bluefield (College), but I ain't really want to take my momma through that because I've got a brother in Mississippi," he explained. "This was a great, close school to the house that's going to treat me well."

For Jones, Webber International felt like home. He visited the campus in Babson Park, FL, earlier this year, where he toured the campus and football facility.

"It felt like somewhere I could be safe and live out the next four years of my college career at," Jones said.

Both school's compete at the NAIA's Division I level in the Mid-South Conference's Sun Division. Edward Waters College is coming off a 1-10 season in its first season in the Mid-South Conference, while Webber International has been at least .500 every season since 2013, including a 6-4 mark last year.

The Sun Division also includes programs featur-

ing former Wildcat stars in Southeastern's Jacob Carter and Kenny Hall and Warner's Dalton Thomas.

All three players are excited to take the field against the players they lined up beside for so long.

"It's going to be different because I've been playing with them since I was real little and played county football," said Jones, who plans to pursue a degree in sports business management. "It's going to be a different thing to play against them now. I mean, hey, they're still my friends. After the game we'll still be able to talk about it and stuff."

He also had advice for Baker County teammates who want to play football at the next level: Put the same effort into classwork as you do on the football field.

"First of all do it in the classroom. Get your grades up so then coaches when they're asking about your grades it's not a problem," Jones said. "... Second, on the field just work hard every day in practice."



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Cats top 7 classes to win another district title

JON SHUMAKE

SPORTS EDITOR

sports@bakercountypress.com

The BCHS Wildcat weightlifting team wanted to be selfish with the District 6-1A championship trophy, and they got their wish in dominant fashion on March 10 at Clay.

Baker County won seven of the meet's 10 weight classes to capture its third straight District 6-1A title, remaining the only program to hoist the district trophy. Fifteen lifters qualified for the Region 3-1A later this month by finishing in the top six of their respective weight classes, which helped the team score 80 points and more than double runner-up Ridgeview's 38.

"Bottom line is we went and we showed what we can do and we showed what we have been doing," head coach Scott McDonald said. "For these guys to come in here four, five and sometimes six days a week when we had meets during the season it's phenomenal because that is their payoff. That's their payday: To get up there and hoist that district championship trophy and come together as a team and be proud of that experience they had in high school."

The Cats swept first and second place in three weight classes and had multiple lifters score in two others. The team powered its way atop six divisions by at least 50 pounds, including three by 90 pounds or more.

Defending Class 1A state champion Dalton Simon had the largest margin of victory at the meet as he set personal and school records. His 365-pound bench press and 300 clean and jerk boosted him to a school-record 665 total in the 169 class, and he topped the class by 105 pounds.

William Bloodsaw's productive season continued with a second-place outing in the class. His 560 total (305 bench, 255 clean and jerk) was 40 pounds ahead of the third-place competitor.

But a second straight state championship isn't the only achievement Simon could be closing in on.

"It's crazy because in his weight class the state record total is 690. He hit 665 at the district meet, and I really do feel he had a lot left in the tank," coach McDonald said.



Purchase these photos at www.bakercountypress.com Photos by Jessica Prevatt
Marcus Dialo powers up the clean and jerk attempt en route to his first-place total in the 139 class.



Purchase this photo at www.bakercountypress.com Photo by Kimberlin Hall
The BCHS Wildcat weightlifting team and coaches pose with the ribbons and District 6-1A championship trophy to celebrate the team's third straight district title.

Heavyweight Cooper Hodges was the meet's only other lifter to hit at least a 300 pound clean and jerk. His 330 clean and jerk was the best at the meet, and combined with his 365 bench press gave him a first-place 695 total in his division. Tyler Burnsed took

second place with a 635 total (340 bench, 295 clean and jerk).

Josh Dialo and DJ Duran also finished one-two, respectively, in the 129. Dialo topped the class with a 405 total (225 bench, 180 clean and jerk), and Duran posted a 375 total with a 190 bench

and 185 clean and jerk.

Kyle Griffis' 615 total was the best in the 238 class by 90 pounds despite only hitting one clean and jerk. His 355 bench was best in the class by 65 pounds and he posted a 260 clean and jerk on his first attempt.

Wesley Hall finished third

in the same division. His 520 total was only five pounds behind Orange Park's second-place lifter Charles Kendy. Hall's 290 bench press was only behind Griffis', but his 230 clean and jerk was 20 pounds behind Kendy's. Hall attempted to catapult into second place in his final clean and jerk attempt, but was unable to complete the 240-pound lift.

In the 139, Marcus Dialo out-muscled second-place Gilbert Sencere of Clay by 95 pounds to win the district with a school record 500-pound total. Dialo's 260 bench and 240 clean and jerk were both the best in his class by 50 pounds.

Landon Prevatt qualified for the regional meet and scored points with a fifth-place finish in the 139 with a 340 total (185 bench, 155 clean and jerk).

Carson Padgett's 375 total was the highest in the 119 class by 60 pounds, and John Green won the 154 class by 50 pounds with a 490 total. Padgett hit a 200 bench and 175 clean and jerk, and Green had a 265 bench and 225 clean and jerk.

Coach McDonald said the large margins of victories were a product of the team's hard work.

"It comes down to basically what we do here and the work ethic that we have

for second place by five pounds. Brandon Combs' 575 total was second only to Orange Park's David Araujo's 580 total in the 199 class.

Combs hit a 300 bench and 275 clean and jerk, but it was the one lift he missed that kept him from reaching first place. He was unable to hit his final bench press of 315 pounds, which would have put him 10 pounds ahead of Araujo, who matched Combs' clean and jerk after a 305 bench.

Body weight dropped Ben Anderson to third place in the 219 class after he and Ridgeview's Tyler Huff tied for second with a 515 total. Anderson's 270 bench was 20 pounds better than Huff's, but the Ridgeview lifter's 265 clean and jerk was 20 pounds heavier than Anderson's to erase the gap. Anderson could have gained sole control of second place, however, but missed his final 280-pound bench attempt.

Seth Paige also earned a spot in the regional meet as he scored with a sixth-place finish in the 183. His 550 total (290 bench, 260 clean and jerk) was five pounds behind Orange Park's Zykeim Simmons and Clay's Wilguens Dorvilos.

Simmons finished fifth based on body weight as all six scoring lifters were separated by just 30 pounds.

Baker County will try to repeat as Region 3-1A champion when it hosts the meet on March 24. Tickets are \$7 and the first lifts are set for 11:45 a.m., according to FH-SAA.org.

The weightlifting team is also selling chicken and rice dinners to raise money for transportation to April's Class 1A state meet in Panama City Beach. Contact a weightlifter before March 16 to order a dinner, which can be picked up during the regional meet, coach McDonald said.

After an undefeated regular season, a dominant outing in the district meet only helped the team's confidence as the state meet grows closer, the coach said.

"Definitely keep the confidence level up," he said. "Keep the confidence level up that, hey, we're still doing the right things. We're still getting the job done and we're still a force to be reckoned with."

Baker County nearly had an eighth district championship, but he was forced to set-

Baseball team honors Hodges before sixth straight win

JON SHUMAKE

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With Baker County and Palatka lining the baselines before the national anthem on March 12, the Wildcat baseball team held a moment of silence in remembrance of Colby Hodges, a former pitcher who passed away the previous night following a battle with cancer.

"Colby Hodges, a 2016 graduate, passed away after a lengthy, courageous battle with cancer," PA announcer Darrell Rodgers read from a statement before the moment of silence. "Colby was a dedicated Wildcat pitcher and was a fighter to the end. All Wildcats share in the thought that Colby will be missed."

Hodges' initials and No. 14 jersey number were painted on the back of the pitcher's mound he once pitched from, and his Wildcat jersey hung in the dugout in his honor.

"Whenever you have a young man like that it's tough to see him, especially with what he went through and stuff and as hard as he fought," head coach Jarrell Rodgers said after the Cats run-ruled Palatka 10-0 in five innings. "These guys wanted to really play for him tonight and I think they did a good job. I think Colby would be proud of these guys."

And it was another pitcher who shares Hodges' first name — Colby Kennedy — who pitched a gem and led the Cats to their sixth straight win. The victory extended the team's longest winning streak

under Rodgers, who is in his second season, and tied the program's longest winning streak since 2015, the year in which Baker County last won the district championship and advanced to the Region 1-5A finals.

Kennedy threw a five-inning one-hitter as Baker County (6-3) won its second straight game via the mercy rule. He struck out eight batters, and helped turn a 1-5-3 double play with Zac Gregory and Clayt Smith to end the top of the third inning.

Four of his strikeouts came after falling behind early in the count, including one that ended the top of the second inning after battling from a 3-0 count.

"Colby fell behind quite a bit tonight but he was able to get back in there and fall into a groove and get back and have some good pitches on the mound," coach Rodgers said.

But the Panthers nearly clawed back into the game in the top of the fifth inning. With the Cats leading 7-0, Palatka loaded the bases with one out and a chance to put a major dent in Baker County's advantage.

After a mound visit from coach Rodgers, Kennedy got out of the jam without allowing a run. His eighth strikeout sent Tristin Glover to the dugout for the second out, and he forced Josh Reynolds to fly out to center fielder Jordan Vanvactor to end the inning.

"He's an experienced guy on the mound," coach Rodgers said. "Obviously we feel tremendously confident in him no matter what."

With Kennedy shutting down



PHOTO BY JUD JOHNSON
Conner Moore slides into third base.

Palatka, Baker County continued its hot streak at the plate. The team scored at least eight runs for the fifth straight game, and its 14 hits marked the fourth time in five games it has totaled at least 12 hits.

Casen Milton went 3 for 3 with an RBI and Smith batted 1 for 3 with a double and two RBIs as they both extended their hit streaks to six games.

Conner Moore's successful freshman season continued with a 3 for 4 outing with a double and RBI. Travis Neal went 2 for 3 with a two-run fifth-inning triple, which gave the Cats a 9-0 lead. He later score the game-ending run on a wild pitch during Wade Johnson's at bat.

Neal is 8 of 11 at the plate since Baker County's win at Oakleaf with a double and two triples during that span.

"We know guys are going to be behind at the beginning of the season," coach Rodgers said. "Now we're starting to see more pitches at the plate, getting ourselves in better

counts at the plate and not swinging at things out of the zone, and that's made a tremendous impact."

Crews shines as Cats blank Fort White

Caleb Crews did a little bit of everything — on the mound and in the batter's box — on March 9 as Baker County rolled 10-0 over visiting Fort White in six innings.

He threw a one-hitter with seven strikeouts, and helped himself at the plate by batting 3 for 3 with a double and an RBI. Including the win over Palatka, Crews is 5 for 5 in the team's two most recent games.

"He was tremendous. He was pounding the zone," coach Rodgers said. "He went right after the guys. He didn't try to do anything special, he just went right after them. He knew he was better than them and he wasn't backing down. That's the kind of mentality we want our guys to have on the mound."

The Cats needed Crews' strong outing as both teams were scoreless through three innings before Baker County broke through late.

The team scored five runs in the fifth inning and four in the sixth after Milton's go-ahead sacrifice fly scored the lone run in the fourth. Vanvactor batted 3 for 4 with the RBI single that sparked Baker County's fifth inning, which also saw an RBI base hit from Smith and a two-run single from Neal, who also tripled in the game.

Crews' RBI single and Moore's run-scoring double padded the cushion in the bottom of the sixth

before Milton sealed the run-rule victory with an RBI single.

The Cats were scheduled to visit Bradford on March 13 in a rematch of the season-opener, which the Tornadoes won 3-1 in eight innings. The program is also set to visit Charlton County on March 15 and Columbia March 20.

The team's first District 3-5A series is scheduled for March 22 and 23 against Suwannee with Baker County hosting the first contest.

"I don't think we've peaked yet," coach Rodgers said. "I think we're still trending up. There's a lot of guys who haven't produced yet that we're counting on producing. Once they start producing good things are going happen."

JV Cats mount two comeback wins

The BCHS JV Wildcat baseball team overcame a pair of early 4-0 deficits to scrape out back-to-back home wins over Yulee and Palatka.

Timmy Seymour hit a go-ahead bases-clearing double on March 12, lifting the JV Cats 7-4 over Palatka. The JV Panthers took a 4-0 advantage through the first two innings, but the JV Cats pulled back within one run in the fifth.

Pitchers Seymour and Carter Kennedy shut down Yulee following its four-run first inning on March 8, and allowed Baker County to prevail 8-4.

"The guys seem to find a way to win here lately," JV head coach Brad Stone said.

League begins its 50th season

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The Baker County Little League celebrated its 50th anniversary the morning of March 10 with an opening ceremony at the Knabb Sports Complex to begin its season.

Henry Crews, who was a member of the county's first little league team, spoke of the league's beginnings in the late 1960s. He said the league started with one team in 1967, but didn't officially join the little league until the following year.

"I can't say enough about Mr. Earl Knabb and Mr. Billy [Knabb]. Without Mr. Earl starting this league a lot of us kids wouldn't have had the opportunity to play," Mr. Crews said. "... All these kids, it's amazing to see how little league has come this far. I want to say thank you Trey [Knabb] for carrying on your grandpa's legacy. He would be more than proud of you."

League president Trey Knabb also presented a plaque to his father Earl Knabb Jr. for the contributions of Earl and Billy Knabb. Earl Knabb Jr. also threw the ceremonial first pitch to begin the season.

From that one team a half-century ago, Baker County Little League has grown to 47 teams and 650 players. Emcee Mike Crews introduced every team, 14 softball teams and 33 baseball teams, which included 12 tee-ball squads.

Mike Crews also recognized the 2017 Major League softball all-star team, which finished third in the state after winning the District 11 and Section 3 championships.

Baker County Little League introduced its board members and announced the winners of the fund raisers and raffles.



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The Braves stand along the infield during Saturday's opening ceremony.

Photos by Jon Shumake



Top left: Jamey Hodges speaks to the crowd. Bottom left: Henry Crews talks about his memories of the league's early years. Left, above and below: Players during the opening ceremony.



President Trey Knabb presents his father Earl Knabb Jr. with a plaque commemorating the league's 50th anniversary.





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