COMING NEXT WEEK The 45 day application period for inclusion in the drawing for 5 new quota liquor licenses begins Dec. 27

Sports 1B
Suwannee beats defending state champs Rickards

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INSIDE:

Suwannee Democrat

127th YEAR, NO. 18 | 2 SECTIONS, 24 PAGES **Friday Edition — December 16, 2011** 50 CENTS

Serving Suwannee County since 1884, including Live Oak, Wellborn, Dowling Park, Branford, McAlpin and O'Brien

Little River Spring in southern Suwannee County, above, and Falmouth Spring in western Suwannee County, below. Both photos were taken last week. - Photos: Mark Long

SRWMD approves more than 5 million gallons of water to be pumped each day

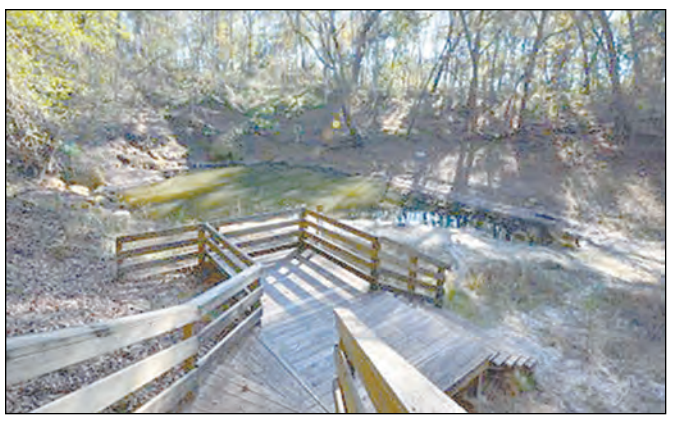
By Misty A. Ward
misty.ward@gaflnews.com

The Suwannee River Water Management District on Tuesday approved four permits that will allow the withdrawal of about 5.5 million more gallons of water per day from the Floridan Aquifer.

This comes after a joint meeting between three neighboring counties, including Suwannee, to discuss ways to try to stop a water consumption permit from the St. Johns River Water Management District to allow the JEA to pump up to 155 million gallons of water per day.

However, SRWMD Executive Director David

SEE SRWMD, PAGE 8A



Accreditation agency suggests impact study

School Board to analyze configuration of schools

By Jeffry Boatright
jeffry.boatright@gaflnews.com

The accrediting agency for the Suwannee County School District recently completed a four day review of its schools and has suggested the board analyze the impact of class configuration.

The board was given the preliminary results of its findings at a Dec. 7 meeting.

Even though the District won't receive the detailed report of its findings for about 30 days, a proposal to reconfigure the three elementary schools in Live Oak so that each offers Pre-K through fifth grades was introduced at a Dec. 13 workshop by the

SEE ACCREDITATION, PAGE 12A

First of three murder suspects to stand trial in Raulerson murder

Edward Antonio Hines Jr. will face a jury beginning Monday in the November 2010 death of Manuel Raulerson, 64

By Jeffry Boatright
jeffry.boatright@gaflnews.com

Edward Hines Jr.

One of three men arrested for their involvement in the murder of 64-year-old Manuel Raulerson of Live Oak in November 2010 is scheduled to stand trial in a Suwannee

SEE FIRST, PAGE 12A

CITY COUNCIL BRIEFLY

Heritage Park and Gardens

By Misty A. Ward

Florida Community Trust is in the process of scheduling a closing date for the Heritage Park and Gardens in Live Oak, City Administrator Bob Farley said.

CSX Corporation has owned the property easement by eminent domain

SEE HERITAGE, PAGE 8A

City Council going electronic

By Misty A. Ward

Councilman Adam Prins made a motion to the Council to purchase electronic tablets in lieu of paper Council packets. He cited the approximate annual cost of the paper, ink and labor required for the Council packets being in excess of $4,000.

SEE CITY COUNCIL, PAGE 8A

6th St. gets added moniker

By Misty A. Ward

The Council voted unanimously on Tuesday to rename 6th St. and add Rev. H. Smith to the signs.

The signs from Houston to Johnson will now read Rev. H. Smith/6th Street.

Elsa Smith Garner approached Councilman Bennie Thomas on the subject,

SEE 6th St., PAGE 8A

Special magistrate to replace code enforcement board

By Misty A. Ward
misty.ward@gaflnews.com

The Live Oak City Council approved abolishing the code enforcement board Tuesday night and replacing it instead with a special magistrate.

Councilman Bennie Thomas made the motion because he thinks there is not enough being done in the current structure. Coun-

SEE SPECIAL, PAGE 8A

City to complete 6th and Green stormwater project

By Misty A. Ward
misty.ward@gaflnews.com

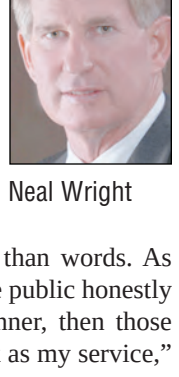
Residents on 6th Street and Green Avenue in Live Oak can expect completion on the stormwater project that has been in the process for about two years.

The Live Oak City Council voted 4-1 against staff recommendation to place

SEE CITY TO, PAGE 8A

Wright announces candidacy for property appraiser

By Misty Ward


Neal Wright

Live Oak native William Neal Wright has announced his candidacy for Suwannee County property appraiser.

"Actions to me speak louder than words. As long as I serve the public honestly and in a fair manner, then those actions will speak as my service," Wright said.

Wright has a background in real estate including property management, property investor and mortgage broker. He has been a broker since 1989.

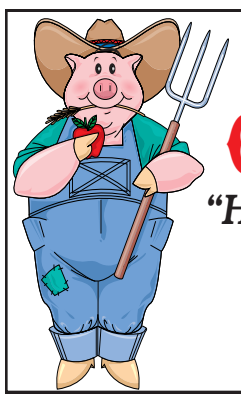
"I have handled appraisals through all my endeavors,"

SEE WRIGHT, PAGE 8A

The Old Dog Says, "Give if you can."

6 97113 07520 1

FEATURED INSIDE:



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ON THE FLIPSIDE

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Serving Suwannee County Since 1884

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Open Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Letters, comments and opinions on the Viewpoint & Opinions page are not necessarily those of the management/ownership of the Suwannee Democrat.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters may be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to our office. All letters are read. Not all letters are published. Letters may be edited to fit available space. The editor should not alter the writer's point of view. Well written letters require less editing. Keep it to the point, an ideal range is 150 to 200 words. Please include your name, address and day and evening phone numbers for verification. Letters MUST be signed. Letters to the editor can be limited to one letter per quarter per individual.

RANT & RAVE HOTLINE

Here's your chance to tell everyone what you think! Callers may dial 208-8314 and leave a message to express their thoughts, good or bad, 24/7 about issues and politics, but not about private individuals or businesses.If you prefer, you may e-mail your comments to jeff.waters@gaflnews.com. Your name is not required, but you must adhere to no more than 200 words.

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709936jbV

Arrest Record

Editor's note: The Suwannee Democrat prints the entire arrest record each week. If your name appears here and you are later found not guilty or the charges are dropped, we will be happy to make note of this in the newspaper when judicial proof is presented to us by you or the authorities.

The following abbreviations are used below:

SCSO-Suwannee County Sheriff's Office

LOPD-Live Oak Police Department

FDLE-Florida Department of Law Enforcement

FHP-Florida Highway Patrol

FWC-Florida Wildlife Commission

DOT-Department of Transportation

OALE-Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement

P & P-Probation and Parole

USMS-US Marshals Service

ATF-Department of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

DOC-Department of Corrections

December 13, Samantha Lynn Simmons, 20, 3949 Nw 53rd Ave, Jennings, FL, grand theft III, deal in stolen prop/traff: SCSO-T. Ford

December 13, Jason Linwood Hewett, 35, 21493 Us 129, O'Brien, FL, fleeing & eluding, dwls/r, resisting w/o violence, fleeing & eluding, dwls/r: SCSO-B. Mincks

December 14, Sheila Hurley Bowers, 47, 365 Nw Rowan Rd, Mayo, FL, vop o/c dwls/r, vop o/c resis w/o viol: SCSO-D.Falgout

December 14, Amanda R Gregoris, 29, 817 East 7th St, Pahokee, FL, fta petit theft: SCSO-D.Falgoiut

December 14, Michelle Kutina, 42, 115 South Oak St, Lantana, FL, vop o/c resis w/viol: SCSO-D.Falgout

ASK DR. MANTOOTH

PULP CAPPING

Q: What is involved in capping a tooth's pulp?

A: The pulp is, literally, the tooth's nerve center. Inside the enamel and dentin, the pulp holds the nerves, blood vessels and connective tissue. If decay pierces the enamel and dentin and threatens the pulp, it will not only be very painful, it can also kill the nerve, often making root canal therapy necessary to save the tooth.

But your dentist may choose to try to save the nerve with a pulp cap. Direct capping is used when removal of decay actually exposes the pulp. The dentist puts a protective layer of calcium hydroxide over the pulp, then perhaps a sedative layer of material over that, and then a filling. If the procedure is successful, the nerve will pull away from the calcium hydroxide, leaving space for new dentin. A similar procedure, called indirect pulp capping, is used if the decay has not gone all the way through the dentin to the pulp. A cap can give the dentin time to regenerate. In either case, when the dentist can determine, after weeks or months, if the procedure was succesful, he'll apply a permanent filing.

Practice good oral hygiene at home and visit your dentist regularly so you'll never need to find out first hand what pulp capping is really like.

Presented as a service to the community by

HERBERT C. MANTOOTH, D.D.S., P.A.
602 Railroad Ave.
Live Oak, FL
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(800) 829-6506
708294jrv

SCFR calls for service from 12/05/2011 @ midnight to 12/11/2011 @midnight

Total calls for service: 78
Medical Calls 70
Cardiac: 11
Trauma: 12
Motor vehicle crash: 6
Miscellaneous medical call: 16
Altered mental status: 2
Respiratory: 6
Diabetic: 4
Weakness: 3
Abdominal pain: 5
Seizure: 3
Overdose: 23Allergic Reaction: 0
Standby 0
Standby @ Football Game: 0
Cva: 1
Death: 1
OB: 1
Med Alarm: 2
Fire Calls 8
Brush fire: 1
Motor vehicle crash: 4
Medical assist: 0
Smoke Inv: 0
Fire Alarm: 1
Fire Inv.:0
MVC w/ Extrication: 0
Vehicle Fire: 0
Structure Fire: 0
Shed Fire: 0
Power line down: 2
Volunteer Fire Responses: 2

LOTTERY RESULTS
Florida

CASH 3
12/14/11..4,2,6

PLAY 4
12/14/11 .0,4,6,5

FANTASY 5
12/14/11. 2,3,5,6,30
MEGA MONEY . 16,27,29,42,MB7
LOTTO. 1,3,4,9,33,38,x5
POWERBALL. 2,24,46,52,56,
. . . . . PB19, x5

Addiction Support Group:

Greater Visions faith-based addictions support group meets weekly in two locations. Meetings are held on Tuesday nights at 7:00 PM in Lake City at the Christ Central Church building on Sister's Welcome Road. The group also meets Thursday mornings at 9:30 AM in Live Oak at the Suwannee Coalition office located at 208 North Ohio Avenue. This group provides spiritual and emotional support in a non-judgmental setting. Come experience the freedom from addictions that is found in Christ. Greater Visions is an outreach of Christ Central but open to anyone. For more information contact 208-1345.

Now taking applications for
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Deadline to apply is April 20th by 4:00
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DQ presents $700 to Suwannee Primary School for a benefit held in November.

Pictured left to right: Marsha Tedder, Assistant Principal, Amy Boggus, Principal and Suzanne Guercio Dunn, DQ Co-owner.

Suwannee County's Kimberly Joseph stars in NFCC Community Theater production

Taking a bow at the end of the NFCC Community Theater production "A Slice of the Blarney" are, left to right, Carmina Ketring (Taylor County), Della Webb (Madison County), Edie Hotchkiss (Hamilton County), Kimberly Joseph (Suwannee County), Ryan Quiros (Madison County), Johnathan Cooks (Madison County), Kent Jones (Taylor County) and Moe Cooks (Madison County).

Courtesy photos

North Florida Community College student Kimberly Joseph, right, is Arlene O'Leary in the NFCC Community Theater production of "A Slice of the Blarney" at Van H. Priest Auditorium on Dec. 3. Joseph is pictured with, left to right, Johnathan Cooks (Douglas O'Leary) and Ryan Quiros (Shannon O'Leary). Joseph is a resident of Suwannee County. She plans to continue her education at the University of Central Florida. This was her first role in an NFCC production.

CJBAT tests

Monday - Thursday

Monday - Thursday at 5 p.m. (by appointment): CJBAT (Criminal Justice Basic Abilities Test) at NFCC Testing Center (Bldg. #16), Madison. CJBAT is required for acceptance into Corrections & Law Enforcement programs. Photo ID required. Pre-registration & scheduling time and date are required. To register please call 850-973-9451.

College Placement Tests

Monday - Thursday

Monday Thursday at 5 p.m. (by appointment): College Placement Test (CPT), NFCC Testing Center (Bldg. #16), 5 p.m., Madison. Register in NFCC Student Services 24 hours before test. For information please call 850-973-9451.

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Holiday Fire Safety Tips from Suwannee County Fire/Rescue

The Christmas Season is upon us, Suwannee County Fire/Rescue would like to urge you to look for and eliminate potential dangers from holiday lights and decorations that may lead to fires or injuries.

Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 8,100 people for injuries such as falls, cuts and electrical shock related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees. In addition, Christmas trees are involved in more than 400 fires annually, resulting in 30 deaths, 90 injuries and an average of $17 million in property loss and damage.

To ensure a safe and happy holiday season follow these safety tips:

Turkey Fryers

The majority of reported incidents occurred while the oil was being heated prior to adding the turkey. For this reason, it is very important consumers monitor the temperature of the oil closely. For proper use, follow these safety guidelines:

· Locate the fryer at least 15 feet from a structure and never utilize indoors.

· Have an ABC-rated fire extinguisher available.

· Keep the fryer in full view while the burner is on.

· Place the fryer in an open area away from walls, fences or other structures.

· Never use in a garage, breezeway, carport, porch.

· Make sure the turkey is completely thawed before placing in oil.

· Raise and lower food slowly to reduce splatter and avoid burns.

· Cover bare skin when adding or removing food.

· Check the oil temperature frequently.

· If a fire occurs, immediately call 911. Do not attempt to extinguish the fire with water.

· If smoke is noticed coming from a heating pot of oil, turn off the burner immediately because the oil is overheating.

Trees

Imitation trees are preferred, but if you choose a living tree please follow these safety guidelines:

· Tree selection must emphasize freshness to minimize fire hazard. While selecting a tree slightly shake, if the needles fall excessively select a fresher tree.

· Before placing tree in the home, cut its base so it can absorb water and check the water level daily.

· Place the tree away from fireplaces and other heat sources.

· Use only lights that are UL approved. Before placing them on the tree, make sure there are no frayed wires, loose plugs or broken bulbs.

· Use flame-resistant trimmings.

· Do not overload electrical outlets or run electrical cords under rugs or in traffic areas.

· Before leaving the house or going to bed, turn Holiday lights off.

Holiday Decorating

· Indoor or outdoor: Use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory which indicates compliance with safety standards. Use only lights that have fused plugs.

· Check each set of lights, new or used, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets. Always replace burned-out bulbs promptly with the same wattage bulbs.

· Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord. Make sure the extension cord is rated for the intended use.

· Before using lights outdoors, check labels to ensure they have been certified for outdoor use.

· Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights form wind damage. Use only insulated staples to hold strings in place, never use nails or tacks.

· Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the home.

· Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters

· If applicable use UL approved surge protector where needed.

· Do not overload outlets.

· Suwannee county Fire/ Rescue discourages the use of open flame candles but if they must be used make sure to leave a clear distance from other objects and extinguish the candle before you leave the home or before going to bed.

· Due to the increased fire potential during the holiday season, check your smoke detectors for proper operation and placement.

For more Fire Safety tips contact Charlie L. Conner Public Safety Director or Capt. James E. Sommers 386-364-3404 or visit www.suwanneefirerescue.com.

Third Judicial Circuit Guardian ad Litem program receives national certification

GAL Guardian ad Litem A POWERFUL VOICE FOR FLORIDA'S CHILDREN FLORIDA GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROGRAM

The quality of its work for abused and neglected children was reason

The Third Judicial Circuit Guardian ad Litem Program was recently awarded certification by the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association. This certification recognizes that the Guardian ad Litem Program is in compliance with national CASA's high standards for quality child advocacy.

According to Michael Piraino, CEO of the National CASA Association, "The National CASA quality assurance process is very rigorous, and reflects our commitment to ensure every child we serve has the most powerful volunteer advocate working on their behalf. This certification says that the Third Judicial Circuit Guardian ad Litem Program has demonstrated to us a strong capacity to provide excellent services to the abused and neglected children within their community."

The Guardian ad Litem program is a network of professional staff and community advocates partnering to provide a strong voice in court and positive systemic change on behalf of Florida's abused, neglected, and abandoned children. The Program advocates for the best interests of children who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned and who are involved in court proceedings. Simply stated, we become familiar with the child and the child's case and make recommendations to the court to help ensure a safe, caring, stable and permanent environment. Currently, the Third Judicial Circuit Guardian ad Litem Program advocates in the best interest of 462 children in Columbia, Suwannee, Taylor, Hamilton, Madison, Dixie and Lafayette counties because of abuse, neglect and/or abandonment.

The Guardian ad Litem Program is committed to giving every one of Florida's abused and neglected child a voice in court. The GAL Program has set a goal statewide to have a group of 10,000 staff and volunteers of all types, 10,000 strong, to be working together in partnership for the best interests of children by Dec. 31, 2012. This vision, 10,000 Voices Project, will ensure 100 percent representation of Florida's abused and neglected children.

If you are interested in becoming a voice for an abused, abandoned, and/or neglected child or would like to know how you can support the Guardian ad Litem Program in our community, please contact Niki Crawson, Volunteer Recruiter, for the Third Judicial Circuit, at (386) 364-7720, Ext. 103 or by email at nicole.crawson@gal.fl.gov

Lordy, Lordy Thomas is 40!!!

Happy Birthday!
We love you!
Cheri, Brooke, Anna and Family!

714815jrv

Santa Claus is coming to town

Santa Claus will be at Winn-Dixie in Live Oak this Saturday, Dec. 17, from 2-5 p.m.

"Operation Snack Fairy' at Local Schools Started by First Federal Bank

Heather Thompson (far left), First Federal Financial Manager and Stephanie McClendon (far right), First Federal Regional Manager deliver snacks to Suwannee Primary School Assistant Principal Marsha Tedder.

Live Oak, Florida, *December 13, 2011* —First Federal Bank of Florida recently partnered with Suwannee Primary School to start "Operation Snack Fairy", which will provide snacks to students who go without. First Federal employees in Live Oak and Dowling Park recently learned that many students go without snacks during the day and plan to purchase snacks each month to give to the SPS. Snacks will then be given to teachers that have students in need of a snack. Altrusa International of Live Oak has come on board and will begin purchasing snacks for students at the other elementary schools. If your organization would like to participate, please contact Stephanie McClendon at 362-3433.

Suwannee Health & Fitness

Now Offering:
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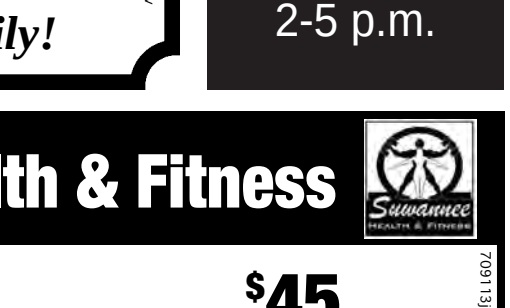

Classes start January 24th

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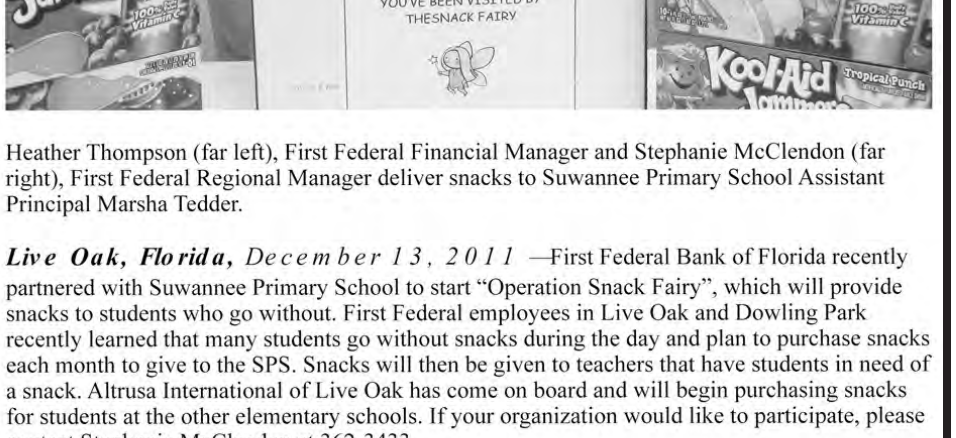
Now THAT'S Something To Smile About!



Ryan Newham is a Merry Christmas worker at the Rotary Christmas party at Advent Christian Village.

714666dtv

Thank you for submitting this week's SMILE photograph!

Submit your photo for publication to:
Suwannee Democrat
P.O. Box 370, Live Oak, FL 32064

Death Notices

Eddy Gaddy

Eddy Gaddy, 61, Live Oak, Fla., passed away on Friday, Dec. 9, 2011.

Daniels Funeral Homes & Crematory, Inc. Live Oak & Branford, Fl.

George E. Lewis
Dec. 13, 2011

George E. Lewis, 96, Dowling Park, Fla., passed away on Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2011.

Daniels Funeral Homes & Crematory, Inc. Live Oak & Branford, Fl.

Christian Mission
in Action Ministry
Annual Christmas Dinner
Dec. 17, 2011 from
11 a.m. until 2 p.m.
Suwannee Coliseum
Exhibition #2
1302 11th St. SW in Live Oak
There will be gifts for the
children and senior citizens
Come join us for this
joyous event
Everyone is welcome

Obituary

Dorothy Marie Dorsey
Feb. 28, 1921
Dec. 14, 2011

Dorothy Marie Dorsey, 90, Live Oak, Fla. passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2011 after a short illness and was a life long resident of Live Oak.

She is survived by her two daughters: Barbara Garrison, Live Oak, Fla., Martha Sue Cranford, Live Oak, Fla.; one brother: Dewey Rogers, Live Oak, Fla.; four grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

Services will be held 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 17 at Daniels Memorial Chapel with Dr. David Teems officiating. Interment will follow in the Live Oak Cemetery.

Daniels Funeral Homes & Crematory, Inc., of Live Oak and Branford, FL in charge of arrangements.

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

On your child's first, or next visit to the dentist

By Mary Ward

When it comes to a visit to the dentist, like most other times in your and your child's life, the things you don't say in words may be louder than the things you do say. Try to be encouraging to your child and positive, too. You'll do much more to encourage a positive experience with positive statements like “they'll clean your teeth today and take some special pictures of them,” or “when you get your cavity fixed, your teeth will feel better.” Negative statements like “don't be afraid,” or “it won't hurt,” do very little to actually help your child. Young children, especially, will focus on the words “afraid,” and “hurt.” Think for a moment about bringing a young child to a perfectly neutral place like a grocery store for the first time and saying in the car on the way there, “don't be afraid; it won't hurt.” In general, children can hear what you mean better than what you say and anxiety in your voice or in your body language and facial expressions will be very well read by even very young children.

Older siblings and even some parents find it cute or amusing to tease young ones prior to their early dental visits with comments like “they're going to pull all your teeth out,” or “they're going to use a needle this long.” This is not harmless teasing and there is nothing at all funny about instilling fear like this. Children that are made too anxious or fearful to be treated in a general dental office often need to be referred to out-of-town specialists.

Your dentist and staff will work hard to make your child's visits as pleasant and comfortable as possible. You can help the dental staff and help your young one a great deal by giving your son or daughter encouragement and comfort before and during dental visits, and this will make your day easier in the end, too!

The Suwannee County Health Department now has a dental clinic serving Medicaid-eligible children between the ages of 4 and 21. Please call 386.362.2708 ext 251 to schedule your child's checkup visit today and don’t forget to be positive about it when talking with your child!

Sunbelt Car Show

Car show Saturday at Sunbelt-Chrysler-Jeep-Dodge-Ram on US 90 West in Lake City.

Sunbelt Chrysler-Jeep-Dodge-Ram will hold its annual Christmas Benefit Car Show tomorrow (sat) from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

The dealership, located on US90 West in Lake City, will have 20 different classes of competition.

There will also be dealers choice ad best of show.

Registration is from 10 a.m. until noon. Entry costs are $20 or $10 plus a new unwrapped toy or gift.

All proceeds and gifts go to the needy veterans and children.

Food will be served by Ken’s Hot Rod Diner.

All toys and gifts for kids will be donated to the Christmas Dream Machine in Lake City.

There will be door prizes, 50/50 and trivia contest. For more information call 386-755-2094 or 386-463-8904.

Viewpoints/Opinions

Suwannee Democrat

MYRA C. REGAN
Publisher

JEFF WATERS
Editor

Members of the Suwannee Democrat editorial board are Myra C. Regan, publisher, and Jeff Waters, editor. Our View is formed by that board.

Editorial objectives for 2011

☑ 1. End prohibition on liquor
2. Install a County Manager
☑ 3. Take public control of Dowling House
4. Reduce duplication of effort by city/county offices and agencies
5. Continue progress on Perimeter Road

OUR VIEW
Suwannee Democrat

A lot of joy to spread around

This time of year we see a lot of generous people that take time out of their busy schedules to help bring the joy of Christmas to a child or family in need.

We can't express to you how many right here in our area are in need. And good people like those at the Live Oak Fire Department are doing what they can to make sure some of those needs are filled. Close to 400 kids are on Sparky's Toys for Kids list. Each child on the list will receive a bag of toys on Dec. 21.

Elizabeth Starling at the Jiffy Store at the corner of North Ohio Avenue and Duval Street in Live Oak is doing what she can to help. For years now Starling has held a raffle at the store to raise money to buy toys to give to the LOFD. She also has a box in the store for toys to be donated.

Down in the south part of the county, Roger Burnside is steady at work with Toys for Kids +. He has more than 70 names on his list.

If you would like to help Roger, give him a call at 386-935-3343. The Live Oak Fire Department is located on East Duval Street in Live Oak.

When you're thinking of those on your list, don't forget the ones who are really in need.

Spend that extra $5 or $10 you would on something useless on a toy to be donated.

BIBLE VERSE

"But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."" **Luke 1:30-33 NIV**

Please address letters to: Letters to the editor, Suwannee Democrat, PO Box 370, Live Oak, FL 32064.
Please include your full name, address and daytime phone number. We ask this so we can verify your letter and discuss any questions about it with you.

Rant&Rave

Want to vent? Our hotline is open 24/7.

Callers to 386-208-8314 may express their thoughts, good or bad, 24/7, about community issues and politics. Private individuals or businesses are excluded from comments and will not be published. If you prefer, you may email your comments to nf.editorial@gaflnews.com. Or, simply visit our website at www.suwanneedemocrat.com, click on the Rant & Rave tab on the left and submit your thoughts there. You don't have to give your name. Phone submissions must be no more than one minute long, or exceed 200 words. The same word count holds true for written submissions, such as email messages. Anything over will be discarded. If the constraints are not enough, write a letter to the editor (guidelines for letters appear below).

In my opinion , The trees downtown are going to look awesome when the tops fill out. I love driving through downtown, it has much charm . I am from Palm Beach County and let me say to the residents of Live Oak... You do not know how lucky you are to live here. The streets are clean,You can show up to watch a Christmas parade and be safe.Traffic here is a dream come true.Your teachers care.. It is not just a paycheck.You do not have hoards of homeless ppeople on every corner,under every overpass,If I need something late I can run to Walmart without fear of my purse getting snatched. Every town has its faults,but I think all in all the people of Live Oak should be proud, It truly is a very nice place to call Home. And yes " Merry Christmas" To All.

I was honored to attend the Suwannee Primary Christmas Program this past week. While the children and Mr. Crews as well as Ms. Baker did an absolutely wonderful job, the parents should have taken a lesson from the children they were there to see and hear. I was unable to hear most of the songs because of the loud conversation going on around me. It is a shame that they all work so hard and there was not enough respect to simply listen rather than talk.

Dear 3 River Resident,
I know someone who received a report of a stolen air conditioner and is still conducting the investigation. If you feel it is so easy to find the thieves, I am sure they will welcome your tip.

I agree with you that it is disgraceful we cannot live in society without predators always lurking in the shadows. How about instead of ranting, take the time to form a neighborhood watch, and assist the local law enforcement that you "Pay". I am proud of our Deputies and the hard work they perform, and I feel we have got a bargain considering what we pay them. You do realize that a Grader Driver makes more than a Deputy, and has better hours.

Suwannee County Schools- Why is it that the football, volleyball, soccer, softball, baseball players that play for the school district can be excused on game days from Physical Education classes BUT the kids that play sports for Rec Dept or do other activities are not excused?? This is not right...they get to sit and watch the other kids do exercises and run. I think they should have to participate just like the other kids do!!

Once again King Jesse wastes the tax payer's time and resources badgering Randy Harris in a public meeting. It's almost as if King Jesse has too much time on his hands. The County has a solid Public Works Director in Randy Harris and Jesse simply needs to get out of his way and let him do his job!

Let me get this straight.
SRWMD groundwater is being depleted by many users. The groundwater is 30+/- feet below its needed elevation to feed our now-dead springs.
SRWMD has issued orders requiring residential users to water only 1-day per week, from 4 p. m. to 10 a. m. the next morning. Since most wells pump only 10 gallons per minute, the landowner could only use 10,800 for the entire week. And, since most don't water, it might be a good bet to see if the total residential usage for the week amounts to what the SRWMD just permitted in the next paragraph.
Now, SRWMD members have just voted unanimously to issue new water-use permits to 4 farms for them to use 5.5 mgd ... apparently at any time during the day and could wind-up using 38,500,000 gallons per week.
Well, you know what? I don't believe I am really under any legal or moral requirement to follow the demands of the SRWMD under their policies. I do believe the Governor should fire the SRWMD board and replace them with people who will take the necessary steps for our aquifer to recover!
Governor, Legislature - are you listening?

OPINION

MAYOR'S CORNER

BY SONNY NOBLES

I hope everyone had a peaceful and happy Thanksgiving. Hopefully each took a moment to give thanks for the abundance we enjoy in this country. There are many that are struggling in our nation. Each of us have an opportunity to share our good fortune with those less fortunate than we are. The Christmas season, a time of giving, is upon us. The Scriptures tell us, "What goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee". Food reserves are short in area food closets and toy collections are underway for youngsters in our community. We have an opportunity to share with those in need. Food and toys can be dropped off at the Live Oak Fire Station. Alan is feverishly collecting toys for Sparky's Kids. Some area churches and organizations such as Love INC are also collecting food for distribution.

Writing of giving thanks, I thank Suwannee Valley Electric for putting up the Christmas decorations again this year. My goal is to have them put up before Thanksgiving each year. I appreciate John Martz for agreeing to put up the lights and banners for the City. Thanks to Craig Ragen and his crew for working into the night to make it happen. Thank you for your help each year.

Also, I recognize Councilman Ed Rewis for his efforts in getting the Mussey Street railroad crossing rebuilt. It was not constructed properly to start. He has worked with CSX, to no avail, for well over a year. Councilman Rewis was relentless in his attempt to get the crossing repaired. He contacted Congressman Steve Southerland for help. With the Congressman's assistance, the crossing has been repaired. A big THANK YOU goes out to Councilman Ed Rewis and Congressman Southerland for their efforts. It's good to know we have elected representatives that are responsive to our needs.

Christmas On The Square and the Christmas Parade were great successes again this year. I really enjoyed the parade. It was great. Thanks to the Chamber membership and especially Susan Hillhouse for their efforts. Live Oak Lights was also successful. The entertainment was great. We had some local talent that performed on a professional level. The highlight of the evening was the lighting of the city Christmas tree and of course Santa. Thanks to all that worked hard to make the event a success. Thanks to the Live Oak Partnership for the cookies and chocolate.

Two important projects were stared last week in the city. The palms trees are in and look nice. There was some opposition to the palms but I have had nothing but complements, to my face anyway, about them. Some find fault and are against anything and everything. The trees will look great in the spring when they start "heading out". They look a little "stickish" because they had to be trimmed to ensure survivability.

SEE MAYOR'S CORNER, PAGE 8A

FROM OUR READERS

Dear Editor,

The other day my family and I like so many others these days found ourselves in court as some big finance company took our home away from us. Now it's not much of house, just an eight-year-old double wide but we called it home. And the heartlessness of the finance company was no surprise to us as we have been belittled by them now for the last few years every since a heart attack stopped me from being able to work. As their high dollar attorney who did his job over the phone from the comfort of his big office somewhere, said all the right things as attorneys go to school to learn how to do. We tried to explain that my health was the reason we fell behind and that I had just started to collect S.S.I. and if the finance company had not raised our payments from $585 a month to over $800 we could have made the payments out of the minim wage my wife made.

I watched the judge's face. I was not thinking about being homeless just before Christmas or how hard my life has been working as humble carpenter. I found myself thinking how hard it must be to have his job. I knew his hands were tied and that he was as a judge doing what he had to as the laws said he must. But as my poor wife started to cry I saw a small tear in the corner of his eye. Now I know one small tear does not mean a lot to most people but it did to me that day. It meant there may still be some hope for mankind. Maybe not for me nor for our once great country but that somehow if even someone who's heart has been so harden by their job as I'm sure his must have been still cared even that much just maybe mankind still has a chance.

God bless all who reads this and God bless you Judge, for faith is getting hard to come by these days.

The Rev. Robert M. Viola

ONLINE OPPORTUNITY

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Are you worried about the future water supply in our area?

❑ Yes ❑ No

Poll Results (12-09-11)

What are your holiday plans?

Staying home -- 59%
Visiting friends/family -- 30%
Going on vacation -- 7%
Other -- 4%

This poll is not scientific and reflects the opinions of only those Internet users who have chosen to participate. The results cannot be assumed to represent the opinions of Internet users in general, nor the public as a whole. **www.suwanneedemocrat.com**

Hamilton dominates Bucs, remains undefeated in district - SPORTS 1B

Branford News

Serving southern Suwannee County, including Branford, O'Brien and McAlpin

Branford Rotary gives back to those in need

Branford Rotarians John Lacquey and Larry Geiger work together wrapping a Christmas present for the family they are sponsoring for Christmas.

By Misty A. Ward
misty.ward@gaflnews.com

One of the mottos for Rotary is "Service above self," according to Rotary International and that is what the Branford club did this Christmas season by sponsoring a family of 10, club president Braxton Koon said.

"The Lord blessed us--it is our responsibility to bless others," Rotarian John Lacquey said.

The club purchased presents for the family of 10. Branford Rotary also donated a $100 gift card for Scaff's to the family. The Rotarians wrapped about 35 presents on Tuesday afternoon. Lacquey said the club purchased more than 50 items for the family.

This is an annual event for the club. They get referrals from people in the Branford area that know of others in need during the Christmas season. Once the club has families to choose from, they vote in a club meeting to choose the family.

Branford Rotary's newest member Jennifer Williamson and Larry Geiger meticulously wrap Christmas presents on Tuesday afternoon.

Branford Rotary club president Braxton Koon helps wrap the Christmas presents the club purchased for a family of 10, that live in the Branford area. - Photos: Misty A. Ward

Branford Library to host Zumba dance party

By Misty A. Ward
misty.ward@gaflnews.com

The Branford Library is hosting its final family activity of the year on Monday night at 6 p.m.

It is a Zumba dance party with special guest Zumba instructor, Haley Hyde. The participants will also do Zumba dance to the Xbox on Dec. 19.

The Branford Library is hosting bi-monthly events for the whole family. One of the two events monthly is a craft project while the other ranges from movies to exercise.

All classes are on Monday nights from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Children are welcome as long as they are accompanied by an adult. On craft night, it is one craft per family.

Activities will resume in January.

Beachville's Got Talent

By Misty A. Ward
misty.ward@gaflnews.com

Area residents are invited to the Beachville Advent Christian Church for a talent contest, at 6 p.m., on Dec. 17.

The contest is open to anyone and spectators are welcome. The church will be collecting clothing and toy donations for Toys for Kids +.

According to Pastor Bruce Arnold, the winner will get bragging rights.

For more information or to register, please call the church at 935-0723. The church is located at the corner of CR 49 and 247.

O'BRIEN AND OUR NEIGHBORS

"Bits & Pieces"

Ana Smith

By Ana Smith

I had planned to include photos of the Branford parade, but unfortunately the photos I took came out too dark to print. While waiting for the parade to start I met up with Shirley Hatch, and enjoyed a little time talking with her. Shirley, Sheriff Tony Cameron and the owner of Cuzzin's Café were the judges for the winners of the parade. Despite a dreary day, there were plenty of folks waiting along the parade route to enjoy the end of a busy day in Branford.

On behalf of the Toys For Kids + project, thanks to everyone who has helped Roger Burnside put smiles on the faces of families this year, but it's not over yet. He'll need your help right up to Christmas, so please call him at 386-935-3343 for information on what is still needed or to volunteer to help. Drop-off places for donations are Branford Town Hall, O'Brien Feed Depot, and Roger's home. And please remember, no donation is too small. The current need is for cars and trucks for little boys and dolls for little girls.

One last note, as you drive along US 129 in the evening, take note of the semi tractor & trailer parked in the lot of C&D Motors just at the north end of McAlpin. The entire "rig" is decorated for Christmas and really stands out as much as any decorated yard. The decorations are the work of the owner's wife, and as a former trucker who traveled in that line of work with my husband for almost three years, I thought I had seen it all when it came to decorated trucks, but this one is spectacular. Good job! As with the parade, the photos I tried to take of this truck did not come out good enough to post with my article.

I hope everyone is having a good time getting ready for Christmas. This article is short, but I'm hoping to have more to report on next week. Enjoy what promises to be good weather for the weekend, and I hope everyone will be with family this year to celebrate the "Reason For The Season". There are plenty of places to visit and enjoy the decorations in our local communities!

God bless!

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PAGE 2B

Follow us on FACEBOOK

SRWMD approves more than 5 million gallons of water to be pumped each day

Continued From Page 1A

Still said the permits were approved based on statutory requirements.

"We base our decisions on statutes, regulations and scientific evidence," Still said. "We have a job to do and that is to follow regulations. Staff makes a recommendation to the board and the board can either accept or reject that recommendation."

According to District board member at large and O'Brien resident Carl Meece, the District had no reason to deny the permits.

"If we didn't approve them for no valid reason that leaves us vulnerable to legal action," Meece said by phone Wednesday.

The concern of one local conservation group has is regarding the minimum flow levels and the numbers currently being used for the SRWMD are "outdated", Annette Long of Save Our Suwannee said.

"We haven't had 'normal' rain here in Florida for decades and we are in an established 13 plus year drought. Knowing that, you are still permitting withdrawals of our water resources with historical levels built into the model," Long said in a presentation to the board on Tuesday.

Still said by phone Wednesday that minimum flow levels are a continual process.

"When we get new data we look at it," he said.

He said that the SRWMD is currently working on new MFLs for the District's rivers and springs and they will be released between 2012 and 2016. The MFL for the lower Santa Fe River is expected sometime in the beginning of 2012 Still said.

The MFLs are implemented statutorily by the Legislature and it is the District's responsibility to follow them, Still said.

Three of the approved permits are for farms in Gilchrist County. Loncala Dairies, owned by Alliance Grazing Group, was approved to pump 3.8 million gallons per day. That permit was applied for on Sept. 15. Piedmont Dairy, a company of Alliance Grazing Group, will pump an additional 900,000 more gallons and William Douberly Farm will pump an additional 500,000 gallons.

Coggins Acres in Madison County will pump an additional 300,000 gallons a day.

City to complete 6th and Green stormwater project

Continued From Page 1A

such projects on hold until enough money was generated from the stormwater utility fund to complete them.

Councilman David Burch voted against it.

Public Works Director Brent Whitman approached the Council to learn the board's wishes for the projects, listed in priority from the 2005 Storm Water Master Plan. Meadow and Myrtle, which is designed and permitted and estimated to cost $45,260; Old Madison Highway, which is still in the preliminary design stage and estimated to cost $207,600; Winderweedle Phase II, which is designed and permitted and estimated to cost $102,600; and 6th and Green which is estimated to cost $87,630.

Whitman also said that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection contacted him to find out if the city was going to use the remaining $215,000 from the DEP stormwater grant loan.

City Administrator Bob Farley said that the message he received from the Council at all the previous budget meetings was "no more debt," which is why he and staff recommended to place all the projects on hold until revenue was generated.

City Finance Director Jan Parkhurst said the fund generates about $100,000 annually.

The amount the city pays bi-annually to DEP already includes the $215,000. Staff recommended to Council to return the money to DEP, which would recalculate and decrease the loan amount. The city would also receive a credit for the interest that has already been paid on the amount.

According to Parkhurst, it would save the city about $10,000 annually, plus interest.

Councilman Bennie Thomas made a motion to use $87,630 out of the remaining loan money to complete the project on 6th and Green. Councilman John Yulee made the second.

Councilor Adam Prins suggested the board send the balance to DEP.

Thomas questioned Prins' reasoning.

"My reason for reducing the debt is to lighten the burden on tax payers," Prins said.

The vote passed 4-1, with Thomas voting against.

Special magistrate to replace code enforcement board

Continued From Page 1A

cilman John Yulee made the second. The vote passed 4-1, with Councilman Adam Prins voting against.

According to City Attorney Erny Sellers, it may be a few months before this could happen because an ordinance would have to be written.

"I would just like to say that back in April this was brought up, it was put in committee, it died in committee, and then was brought to full Council anyway," said Prins. "It got tabled until May, and it was brought back and killed with three votes, my vote, councilman Yulee's vote and councilman Thomas' vote."

Prins said that the argument before was that installing a special magistrate would take the "human element out of it" and would be basically putting a judge in place of a board.

"On the record, I think this is a mistake," he said.

Wright announces candidacy for property appraiser

Continued From Page 1A

Wright said.

Wright said that if he is elected one of his goals would be to relieve some of the small business owners and farmers of high tax rates.

Wright said his pledges are to serve the public, be honest and truthful, have an open door policy and to solve problems right away.

Wright is also an investor in real estate property and a property manager.

"I know how to work with people," he said.

His influences are his parents, George T. "Pete" Wright and Inez Jefferson Wright, who were also born and raised in the area.

"The honesty my mother and father have, is the same honesty I have," Wright said. "I want to serve the public here in Suwannee County which is my hometown. I want to be used in my hometown in a way to reflect truthfulness and honesty."

6th St. gets added moniker

Continued From Page 1A

which he then brought to the board.

Garner cited to the board that she felt her father should have his name added to the street because he made the suggestion to the city to redirect stormwater to a retention pond to solve the flooding problems in that area back in the 60s. According to Garner, the area has not flooded since. He also founded the Mount Moriah Baptist Church on the street and also built the first house on Beverly Hill.

Heritage Park and Gardens

Continued From Page 1A

for more than 100 years, City Attorney Erny Sellers said. The Council agreed to move forward with scheduling a closing date for the Heritage Park and Gardens property without the easement.

According to the status report presented to the City Council on Tuesday, "Since FCT will not purchase the CSX property because CSX cannot provide title insurance, the city on its own, may negotiate with CSX for the purchase of the existing right-of-way."

City Council going electronic

Continued From Page 1A

The Council, at minimum, has a regularly scheduled meeting on the third Tuesday each month. At every meeting each Council member is provided a packet. On Tuesday, the Council's packet was 216 pages.

The vote was unanimous to have City Administrator Bob Farley purchase seven tablets, not to exceed $440 each, or roughly $3,080.

Farley said he is looking to purchase the Motorola Xoom.

Mayor's Corner

Continued From Page 6A

Also, Music Construction is full speed ahead on the parking lot on Warren Street. The lot will provide some 52 paved parking spaces for use by county employees, visitors and shoppers. These two projects are my two "babies" as I call them. I have worked on them for nearly two years. It is satisfying to see these projects happening. My Grandson Brandon works for the Madison County EMS. He tells me people over there brag on Live Oak and say "they have it together over here."Other projects are in the works for Live Oak. I look forward to getting them started soon.

The new water system should go on line next week. There were a lot of bugs to be worked out. One bug that has been satisfied, at least for the moment, is the threat to this new water system from the proposed dump. It was rather ironic that a program on landfills was aired on TV Sunday night. A main point I got from the program was the view that it is not a matter if landfills will contaminate public and private water supplies, but when. Some propose that the liners will never leak. Nothing lasts forever. It is inevitable that these liners will fail one day. It is too late then when 60 feet of garbage stacked on top. One city, that derived about half of its city budget from accepting garbage from New York 400 miles away, baulked when the company wanted to put radioactive ash in the dump. Even though the city enjoyed the money, there was still that level of uncertainty in their minds about the future effects on their environment. I commend the many, and there were many, that played a role in getting this situation squashed. I find it necessary to recognize Mr. Ernest Sellers for his "bulldoggish" attention to this matter. Mr. Sellers has always been recognized as an expert in agricultural matters, now he is an expert in matters concerning landfills. Another big THANK YOU goes out to the many that played important roles in getting the situation taken care of.

Frequently I am contacted for information from people doing research on family trees and family connections. I am able to help in some cases but most of the time I refer them to the Suwannee Valley Genealogy Society. This group provides very valuable information to those searching for family history. I am a member of the Society and get a quarterly newsletter. I find the birth and death notices very interesting, especially the obituaries. The obits are very wordy and flowery. I find it interesting to read how many died as results of auto or train accidents.

As a lifelong resident of Live Oak, it is very interesting to see the family connections. You had to be careful years ago or you might end up marrying your cousin. It's well worth the $30 single or $100 corporate membership, just to get the newsletter. If you are interested in becoming a member, contact them at SVGS, P.O. Box 967, Live Oak or call 386-330-0110. The office hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 9 – 12 and 1 -5. It's in the old band building behind Mizell's feed store. Ha ha, if you have not lived here long, you don't know where these two places are. Learn more about your community and its people by joining the Society.

"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord". Do I need to write anything more about Christmas? Christmas without Jesus would be an empty holiday. It would be like eating Oreos without a glass of milk. I wish everyone a blessed and joyous Christmas season.

Trash for Monday, Dec. 26 will be picked up on Tuesday the 27th, Tuesday as scheduled.

Trash for Monday, Jan. 2 will be picked up on Tuesday the 3rd, Tuesday as scheduled.

Be safe in your travels and as always, wear your seatbelt. God bless and protect each of you.

Branford Church Directory

Hatch Bend Apostolic Church
Pastor Steve Boyd
Church 935-2806 Hm. 935-0125
Sunday Worship....10:00 a.m.
Wednesday....7:30 p.m.
644294-F

Branford United Methodist Church
Lerbie Alligood
935-1653
Sunday
Sunday School....9:30 a.m.
Church Service....10:45 a.m.
Wednesday
Bible Study....5:30 p.m.
644295-F

Burlington Santa Fe Church of Christ
Evangelist Ken Campbell
935-1532
Bible School....10:00 a.m.
Worship Service....11:00 a.m.
Bible Hour....5:00 p.m.
Worship Service....6:00 p.m.
Wed.-Bible Study....7:00 p.m.
644296-F

Living Springs Family Worship Center
Pastor Charles Istre
Church 935-1713
www.livingspringsfwc@windstream.net
Sunday School....9:30 a.m.
Morning Service....10:30 a.m.
Wed. Family Night & OPEN Youth Ministries
Service....7:00 p.m.
644297-F

First Baptist Church
Dan Main, Pastor
Church 935-1363
Sunday School....9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship....10:15 a.m.
Youth Discipliship....5:00 p.m.
Sunday Evening....6:00 p.m.
Wed.-Prayer Meeting....6:30 p.m.
681299-F

Peace Baptist Church S.B.C.
John R. York
935-4681 • 7794 E. US Hwy 27
Services Each Sunday
Bible Study....10:00 a.m.
Worship....11:00 a.m.
Worship....7:00 p.m.
Wednesday
Prayer & Bible Study....7:00 p.m.
668449-F

San Juan Catholic Mission
Reverand Sebastian George
For information call
935-2632
Sunday Mass....9:30 a.m.
Wednesday Mass....6:00 p.m.
644298-F

Give Thanks unto the Lord

This space could be your church listing or business, for more information call Jennifer at 386-362-1734

Ken Campbell, Evangelist
Burlington Santa Fe Church of Christ

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

As a Christian we must examine ourselves and ask ourselves some tough questions:

1) Am I Growing in My Knowledge Of God?

Looking at the acceptance of sin to the world today (even in many churches) folks are becoming more and more distant from God's word, Hosea 1:6 *"MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE.''*

2) Am I More Inward Focused Or Outward-Focused?

Does our vision include reaching those who are not right with God? Are we trying to reach out to them? Jesus said. *"THOSE WHO ARE WELL HAVE NO NEED FOR A PHYSICIAN.'' Matt. 9:12*

3) Are we Influencing The World More Than The World is Influencing Us?

There are those who refuse to take a stand for Biblical truths today! Paul warned Timothy. "THE TIME WILL COME WHEN MEN WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE.'' He added that they will, "TURN AWAY FROM THE TRUTH.'' II Tim. 4:3-4.

Ken Campbell, Evangelist

709922bgv

CLASSIFIED for Branford

Suwannee Housing Authority
is accepting
Housing applications.
Call 1-800-664-5197, EHO
Equal Housing Opportunity
642362-F

To place your classified ad here call 386-362-1734

700834dtv

The Christmas season is upon us, and, for many, it is a time of "hustle and bustle". Many people are very busy this time of year with an array of social obligations.

During this festive Yuletide, I am thinking about the wonderful area in which we live. Some of my most precious memories are wrapped up in the bounties of nature with which our beloved Suwannee River Valley is blessed. I have spent a lot of time in the woods along the upper Suwannee, especially this time of year, breaking pine boughs, magnolia branches and clipping holly to "deck the halls" at the farm and at home. I still love "decking the halls" with native greenery and, often, I pull my now reluctant teenaged niece away from her iPhone, and iPad long enough to ride with me along the banks of the old dark stream in search of holiday greenery. We have a good time listening to music, and she indulges me by pretending to listen to my stories of the "olden days" about Papa Wade and Uncle Warren.

The pine, magnolia, and holly still abound in the woods in and around White Springs, and for that, I am truly thankful. This year, I am not going to ask Santa Claus for more vibrant holiday greens. I may ask him for a little more time with my niece. But what I am going to ask him for is the rebirth of some of our area's most precious natural resources - our area springs.

I am going to ask Santa to speak with some of our area politicians and discuss with them the importance of our area rivers, streams and springs. Maybe over a cup of coffee he can convince them of their importance to us and to future generations. I sure hope so. I hope they feel that a gem like Suwannee Springs is worth restoring and preserving for posterity. I really hope Santa can convince them.

I would love to take my niece on our holiday jaunt in search of holiday greens to see the historic White Springs in our hometown of White Springs, Florida, rushing into the Suwannee River the way it did during the years of my childhood. I would love to say to her: "Look Laura Leigh, the old spring is not missing a beat. It is rushing into the breast of the old Suwannee at a rate of 22,500 gallons a minute." But, sadly, I can't say that to her.

I can take her to the state of Florida's replica of the spring house and I can point to the boil and tell her that I learned to love swimming there with my childhood friends. I can tell her how my first cousin, Leann and I spent countless hours there during the days of our childhood, but I cannot show her the spring. It is gone, no longer "running", no longer there. Just a hole with some brown river water where once there was a vibrant spring.

I can't tell her the reason the spring ceased flowing. There are many suppositions. I am not a hydrologist, I don't know. I don't think a lot of them know either. I can just tell her what used to be. I can advise her, along with all the young people of her generation, to take a more active role in being good stewards of their area's precious natural treasures such as Suwannee Springs, White Springs and our beloved Suwannee River. I can also advise her to make certain that elected officials answer to those who elected them and are good stewards of all that is precious to our area. I will ask her to stay informed about what her local water management district board is doing to preserve and protect all that is good and right about so many of our area's natural treasures, and I can ask her to join me in writing a letter to Santa Claus. Maybe we'll both sign our names at the bottom of the letter. Our letter to Santa may go something like this:

Dear Santa:

We are so thankful to live in a beautiful part of the state of Florida. We love our beloved Suwannee River Valley, and we know you love flying over our historic Suwannee River with all of your reindeer. Our river is a little low right now Santa, but we're sure it will still provide you with a good path, as you fly through our beloved north Florida home.

You may notice some of our natural springs along the way Santa. Some of them are not flowing quite the way they once did and that makes us a little sad. We are hoping you will work hard to bring us a special Christmas gift this year, Santa. We would like for you to leave a little reminder to all the good boys and girls throughout our area to be good stewards of our natural jewels such as Suwannee Springs, White Springs and our beloved Suwannee River. We hope, Santa, that you will leave a note for some of our area citizens. We hope that in the note you will express how much you've always loved the rivers, lakes, creeks, branches and springs of our area. We hope you will ask our area citizens to be better and more informed about what is happening to water in our area. We hope you will ask them to help preserve our area's natural and beautiful "jewels" for future generations.

Thanks again, Santa. We love you, and we love our Suwannee River Valley. God Bless you, Santa. We know many others in our area feel the same way. We've both been pretty good this year and hope you will bring this gift to us. We know we are asking a lot of you. We are counting on you Santa.

With love to you

To all of my readers, I wish each of you a very Merry Christmas, and I hope many of you will write your own letters to Santa Claus.

From the Eight Mile Still, on the Woodpecker Route, north of White Springs, I wish each of you joy, peace, and, above all, lots of love and laughter. So blessed to be in the number one more time.

Life and times of Live Oak

Brought to you by the Suwannee Valley Genealogy Society

LOP&G train at the tobacco warehouse in Live Oak, date unknown. The Live Oak Perry & Gulf Railroad (LOP&G) was a short line railroad running west from Live Oak to Perry and Scanlon, 64 miles and then westward to Flintrock, Florida. During its heyday (1920s-1950s) the LOP&G was a profitable hauler of logs and wood products and had many lumber mills along it's lines which were surrounded by cypress and southern pines. As lumber products phased out the roads traffic in cotton, tobacco, corn and watermelons continued. Photo is courtesy of the Suwannee Valley Genealogical Society. SVGS is located at 215 Wilbur St. SW, Live Oak. Its library is open 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday. Go to svgsoc.org for more information. Days Gone By was compiled by Live Oak Publications. Copies are still available at the Suwannee Democrat located at 211 Howard St. East.

Once again, the McAlpin Community Club is participating in the "Toys for Kids" program to help spread Christmas cheer this season. So in the spirit of giving, let us remind everyone to bring in either new or gently used toys, blankets, shoes, ETC., for needy children in the Branford and McAlpin areas. They are also in dire need of food donations.

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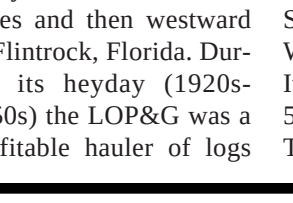

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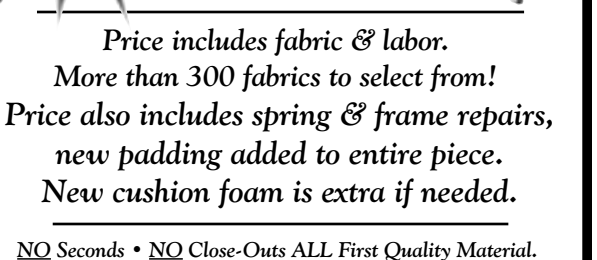

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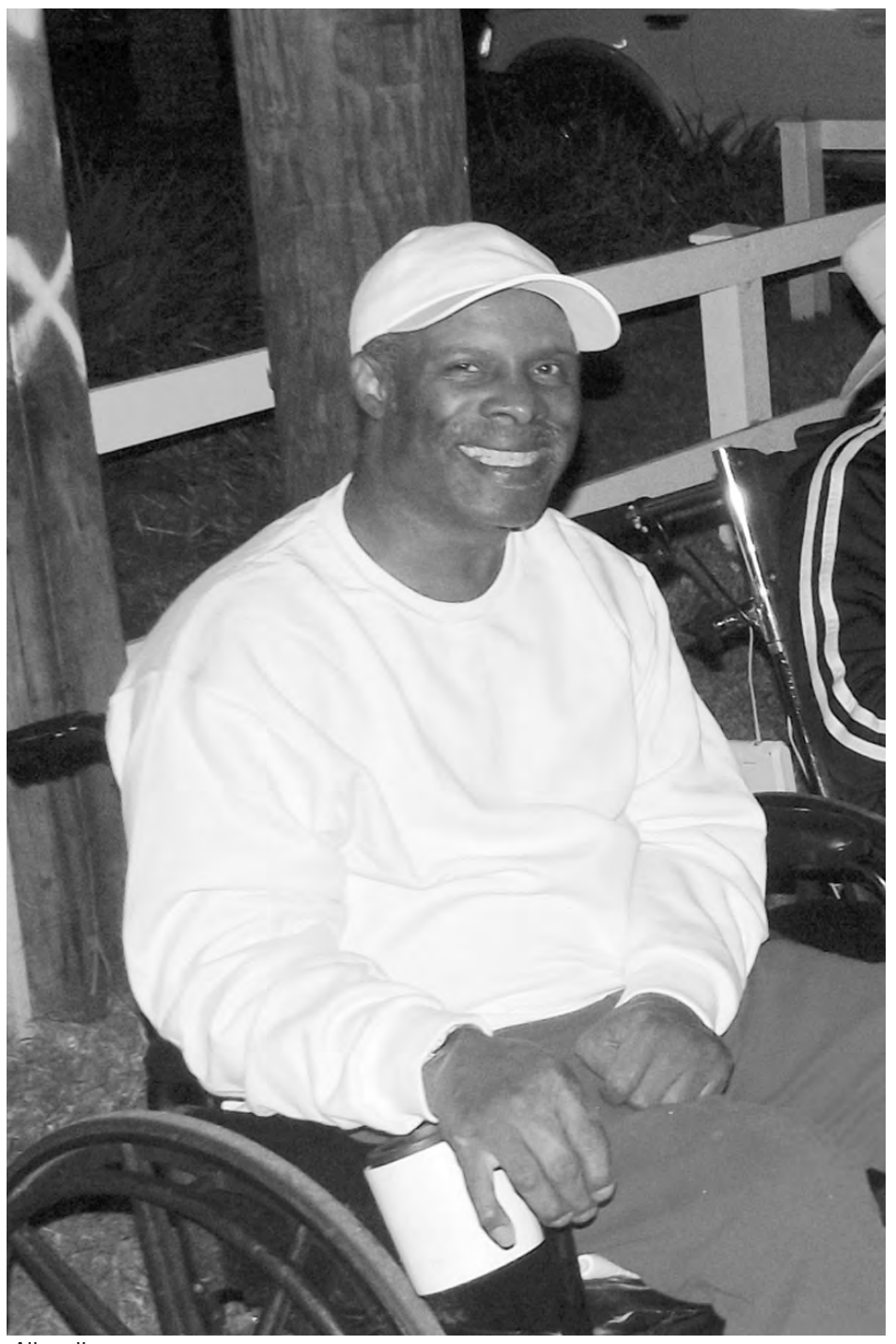
Spending a night out.



All smiles.

Enjoying a local Christmas parade.

These two residents enjoy a local Christmas parade together.

Courtesy photos

Accreditation agency suggests impact study

Continued From Page 1A

District's director of special programs to take effect during the 2013-14 school year.

Suwannee County School Board Chairperson Julie Ulmer took issue with the proposal stating that reconfiguration was already defeated by the board once and that the Quality Assurance Review Team (QAR2) only told the District to evaluate the impact of grade configuration, not to reconfigure altogether.

The schools are Suwannee Primary School, which currently offers Pre-K through first grade; Suwannee Elementary School, grades 2-3; and Suwannee Intermediate School, grades 4-5.

Superintendent of Schools Jerry Scarborough said he was the one that wanted to look into reconfiguring the three schools.

Ulmer was quick to note that the superintendent did not have that authority.

"I take exception to jumping the authority of the board on an item that has already been defeated," Ulmer stated.

The last time reconfiguration was discussed was in May 2009 but was voted against. One of the reasons for the reconfiguration proposal then was the failure of SIS to meet Annual Yearly Progress five years in a row. Annual Yearly Progress is a component of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Another reason was that the District's accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), reported in 2007 that there was a lack of communication between the three elementary schools, thus creating a learning gap when students graduate to higher levels.

The QAR Team visits the District every five years to monitor the schools and departments and to report findings that the District must fix in order to retain accreditation.

"It is huge to maintain accreditation as a district for the second time," Ulmer said. "We were first accredited five years ago and I hope the community understands the hard work and dedication that has gone into this accreditation."

Ulmer said the current configuration of schools had proven to offer the best results in student achievement but noted that an evaluation of grade configuration was needed but that does not necessarily mean reconfiguration is essential just yet.

School Board member Jerry Taylor expressed interest in reconfiguration and said he thinks it is needed.

"I think they (the accrediting agency) feel strongly about it," Taylor said. "Just the word impact speaks volumes to me."

Board Member J.M. Holtzclaw showed restraint in reconfiguration and suggested such a measure would need to be evaluated.

"I don't think we need to change anything until we evaluate where we are now," Hotlzclaw said.

According to Scarborough, the committee suggested the District evaluate the impact of grade configuration and the District plans to evaluate that impact as required by the committee.

"We hope to have the evaluation for our March or April board workshop," Scarborough said.

During the review, team members interviewed 216 stakeholders in the District. Those interviewed were all five board members, 25 administrators, 59 teachers, 31 support staff members, 56 parents and members of the community and 40 students.

SACS Lead Evaluator Dr. Denise Jennings said that only a percentage of the schools have applied and received District accreditation.

"Many schools seek accreditation for secondary schools only," Ulmer stated.

After receipt of the detailed report, the District is expected to review and communicate the findings, address the required actions, monitor standards and improvement efforts and submit an accreditation progress report.

Other required actions in the committee's preliminary report states the District needs to revise its strategic planning process, identify systemic practices and priorities and align District staff responsibilities with District priorities.

The District received commendations such as shared vision and nurturing, caring culture; strong leadership; effective communication and customer service; recognition of fiscal responsibility and business and community partnerships.

First of three murder suspects to stand trial in Raulerson murder

Continued From Page 1A

County courtroom next week, court records show.

Edward Antonio Hines Jr., 19, will stand trial for attempted robbery with a firearm and capital first degree murder.

The trial is scheduled for Dec. 19 through Dec. 22 with jury selection set to begin Monday.

According to records from the Suwannee County Sheriff's Office, Hines was arrested on Nov. 24, 2010 just two weeks after a relative of Raulerson discovered his body on the front porch of his 76th St. home on Nov. 10, 2010. Authorities say he was fatally shot in the heart days before.

Also arrested in connection with the murder were Juan Fizzaro Gainer Jr., 24, and Charles Edward Hines, 21, who is a cousin to Edward Hines Jr., authorities say.

Gainer and Charles Edward Hines remain in the Suwannee County Jail awaiting trial for their involvement in the murder. Their trials could come as soon as January 2012, according to the Suwannee County Clerk of the Circuit Court.

Since his arrest, Edward Antonio Hines Jr. was sentenced on March 29 on unrelated crimes and placed into the custody of the Florida Department of Corrections. He is currently serving six 10 year prison sentences that include armed burglary, according to the Florida Department of Corrections. His current release date is Nov. 19, 2020.

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Sweet and Savory Holiday Bites

FAMILY FEATURES

A festive party calls for a lively variety of delectable edibles. These recipes give you some sweet and savory choices that will help spread the holiday cheer.

Scrumptious bites start with simple, flavorful ingredients — golden Calimyrna and dark purple Mission figs from California and Jarlsberg cheese. They also make great house gifts, wrapped in a colorful box or presented on a pretty serving dish.

Sweet, mouthwatering figs are not only packed with great taste, they're full of fiber and essential nutrients, making them as good for you as they are good to eat.

The versatile taste and texture of Jarlsberg cheese is ideal for these appetizers. Jarlsberg's mild, nutty-sweet flavor and buttery creaminess makes it a perfect partner to figs and, along with its excellent melting properties, adaptable to many sweet or savory dishes.

You can combine both ingredients in one easy sure-to-please appetizer: Make a slit in a fig and stuff with a piece of Jarlsberg. Wrap with partially-cooked bacon (it should be a bit limp) and heat at 400°F just until bacon is crispy and cheese begins to melt.

Get more sweet and savory holiday recipes at www.ValleyFig.com and www.JarlsbergUSA.com.

Fig Cranberry Bars with Caramel Drizzle

Cut into 32 bars

- **1 cup cranberries, fresh or frozen**
- **2 tablespoons plus 1/2 cup granulated sugar, divided**
- **2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour, divided**
- **2 cups old fashioned oats**
- **1/2 cup packed light brown sugar**
- **1/2 teaspoon baking soda**
- **1 cup butter, melted**
- **1 1/2 cups chopped Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Figs**
- **3/4 cup chopped, toasted walnuts**
- **1 cup caramel ice cream topping**

In small bowl combine cranberries and 2 tablespoons granulated sugar; set aside.

In medium bowl stir together 2 cups flour, oats, brown sugar, remaining granulated sugar and baking soda. Stir in butter. Reserve 1 cup crumb mixture.

Press remaining crumb mixture in bottom of 13 x 9-inch baking pan. Bake in 350°F oven for 15 minutes.

Stir figs and walnuts into cranberries and sprinkle evenly over crust. Stir together caramel topping and remaining 1/3 cup flour; drizzle over fruits and nuts. Sprinkle with reserved crumb mixture.

Bake for additional 20 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool in pan on wire rack.

Chocolate-Dipped Stuffed Figs

Makes 15 figs

- **15 Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Figs**
- **3/4 cup granulated sugar**
- **3/4 cup water**
- **1/2 cup brandy (or 1/2 cup water mixed with 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract)**
- **15 to 30 small pieces candied ginger, toasted nuts or chocolate**
- **5 to 6 ounces semisweet, bittersweet or premium white chocolate, chopped**

With sharp knife, cut small slit in bottom of each fig.

In small saucepan, heat sugar and water over medium heat until sugar dissolves. Stir in brandy and figs. Bring to a boil over high heat then reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes. Drain figs, cool and dry thoroughly.

Stuff one or two pieces of ginger, nuts and/or chocolate into each fig.

Place chopped chocolate in 1-cup glass measuring cup or small microwave-safe bowl. Heat on medium/50 percent power until almost melted, stirring after every 1 to 1 1/2 minutes. Remove from oven and stir until melted.

Hold stem of each fig and dip in melted chocolate. Place figs, stems up, on wax paper-lined tray until chocolate sets. Decorate with white chocolate or nuts, as desired.

Store in airtight container in refrigerator.

Savory Jarlsberg Thumbprints with Fig-Pepper Jelly

Makes 40 cookies

- **1 cup butter, softened**
- **2 large egg yolks**
- **2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **3 cups (12 ounces) shredded Jarlsberg cheese**
- **1 cup grated fresh Parmesan cheese**
- **1 1/2 cups finely chopped, toasted pecans or unblanched almonds**
- **3/4 cup finely chopped, stemmed Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Figs**
- **1/2 cup hot pepper jelly (red or green)**

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Place butter in large bowl. Beat with electric mixer on medium speed until creamy. Beat in egg yolks. On low speed, gradually beat in flour. Stir in Jarlsberg, Parmesan and nuts.

Divide dough into 4 equal portions. Wrap 3 in wax paper or plastic wrap and chill. On work surface, form remaining portion of dough into 10 (1 1/2-inch) balls.

Place balls, 1 1/2 inches apart, on ungreased baking sheet. With thumb or back of wooden spoon, make 1/2-inch indentation in center of each cookie. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until light golden brown. If needed, press back of teaspoon into cookies to re-form indentations. Remove cookies to wire rack to cool.

Repeat shaping and baking with remaining dough.

To serve, in small bowl, stir together figs and jelly. Fill each cookie with about 1 teaspoon fig-pepper jelly.

Make ahead note: Dough can be prepared 1 to 2 days ahead. Form dough into 1 1/2-inch cylinder, wrap airtight and chill or freeze for longer storage. Baked cookies can be stored unfilled, in airtight container for 2 days or frozen. To re-crisp, place on baking sheet in 350°F oven for 2 to 4 minutes.Cool. Fill with fig-pepper jelly as directed.

Jarlsberg, Ham and Herb Swirls

Makes about 26 swirls

- **1 sheet frozen puff pastry (half of 17.3-ounce package), thawed**
- **1 egg, lightly beaten**
- **2 teaspoons Dijon mustard (optional)**
- **3 tablespoons thinly sliced green onion**
- **1 tablespoon dried basil or thyme leaves**
- **1 cup (4 ounces) finely shredded Jarlsberg cheese**
- **4 ounces thinly sliced Black Forest or other lean ham**

Unfold pastry onto lightly floured board; cut in half, lengthwise, to form two pieces. Brush beaten egg on entire surface of each piece.

Leaving a 1/2-inch border around each pastry, top with the following, dividing evenly: Dijon mustard, green onion, basil and Jarlsberg. Top each with sliced ham, cutting to fit in a single layer within border.

Starting at the long ends, carefully roll up each pastry. Gently pinch ends to seal pastry rolls. Wrap each in plastic wrap. Chill rolls, seam side down, for 2 hours or up to 2 days.

To serve, preheat oven to 400°F. Unwrap rolls and cut each roll crosswise into 1/2-inch slices. Place, 1 inch apart, on 2 greased baking sheets.

Bake one sheet at a time for 14 to 16 minutes or until golden. Place on wire rack to cool slightly. Serve warm.

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Suwannee Democrat
Section B
Friday, December 16, 2011

SPORTS

Suwannee beats defending state champs Rickards

Tony Frierson (15) in action. The Bulldogs beat the defending state champs Rickards Raiders Tuesday night.

De'Andre Devore (22).

- Photos: Paul Buchanan (SuwanneeSports.com)

Submitted

The Suwannee High School varsity boys basketball team beat defending state champs Rickards High School in Tallahassee Tuesday night.

The final score was 58-45.

The game was moved to Tallahassee due to a scheduling discrepancy.

Both offenses were slow initially and the Rickards Raiders were up by two at the end of the first quarter (8-10). Suwannee came out strong at the beginning of the second and pulled ahead 14-10, but Rickards answered with a string of three pointers and quickly regained the lead 16-24 with 1:45 left in the half. Suwannee senior Tony Frierson hit a two-point field goal from the elbow to bring the Bulldogs within six going into halftime (18-24).

Suwannee opened the second half with teamwork and energy, and used a combination of defensive rebounding by De'Andre Devore, offensive put backs by Kevarrius Hayes and more intense defensive pressure by the Bulldogs which led to missed shots and turnovers for the Raiders.

The 'Dogs tied the game at 28-28 and Devore stole and converted a layup to give Suwannee the lead. Junior guard Jimmie Taylor III turned up the heat and began to get on the offensive boards late in the third, ending the quarter with Suwannee up by five (39-34).

The 'Dogs built momentum and held Rickards to six points for most of the fourth quarter, as defensive players off the bench for Suwannee gave a strong performance including Hampton, Ross, Cooks-Anderson and Smith. Guards Taylor and Frierson led the fourth-quar-

SEE SUWANNEE, PAGE 2B

Hamilton dominates Bucs, remains undefeated in districts

By Misty A. Ward
misty.ward@gaflnews.com

Branford varsity boys basketball team (2-4, 1-2) was defeated by Hamilton County (3-3, 3-0) on Tuesday night in Branford, 67-30.

"Hamilton is a very fast and athletic team, in my opinion one of the best in the district," head coach Perry Davis wrote in an email to the *Democrat.* "The sportsmanship their players exhibited was awesome."

Three of Branford's starting players were out on Tuesday night. Clifford Register, the team leader in scoring, was out with an ankle injury from last weeks game against Dixie County. Jose Barron and Tyler Lynch were also out injured.

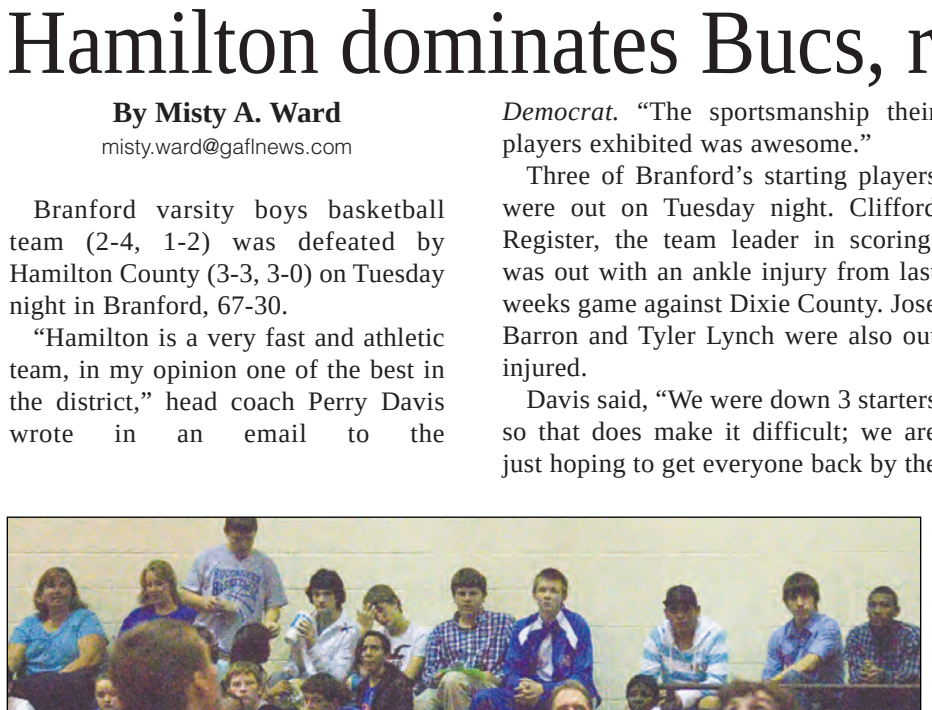
Davis said, "We were down 3 starters so that does make it difficult; we are just hoping to get everyone back by the District Tournament."

The Bucs had nine points in the first quarter to HCHS's 23. The Trojan's outscored in the remaining periods, 20 to three, 17 to 12 and seven to six, respectively, finishing the game 67-30.

"We are just not at that level yet, but we have a few players taking steps to help us improve," Davis said. "Junior Patrick Smith did a great job on the floor and went two for two from the free throw line."

Branford Stats

CJ Bradow led Branford with 11 points and seven rebounds. Shequille Williams had two points, three rebounds and two assists. Joey Stillwell had five points on the board with one rebound. Robert Morris had five points and six rebounds. Patrick Smith and Lazro Hernandez both contributed two for the score and two rebounds each. Vincent Ruiz put three points on the board.



The Bucs' defense looks on anticipating the rebound, in a game against Lafayette High School earlier this season. - Photo by Richard Wright

NFC is state champs in football

The North Florida Christian Eagles shutout the Admiral Farragut Blue Jackets 69 to 0 in the Florida Citrus Bowl to finish the season undefeated and win the Class 2A state football championship. Tony Fields, pictured far right, is the grandson of Jimmy and Peggy Cherry and finished his sophomore season at NFC with five interceptions, 110 tackles, one sack and one touchdown. Congratulations to the NFC Eagles. Pictured from left is Taylor Williams (special teams), Matt Dobson (QB) and Fields (safety). Courtesy photo

SPORTS

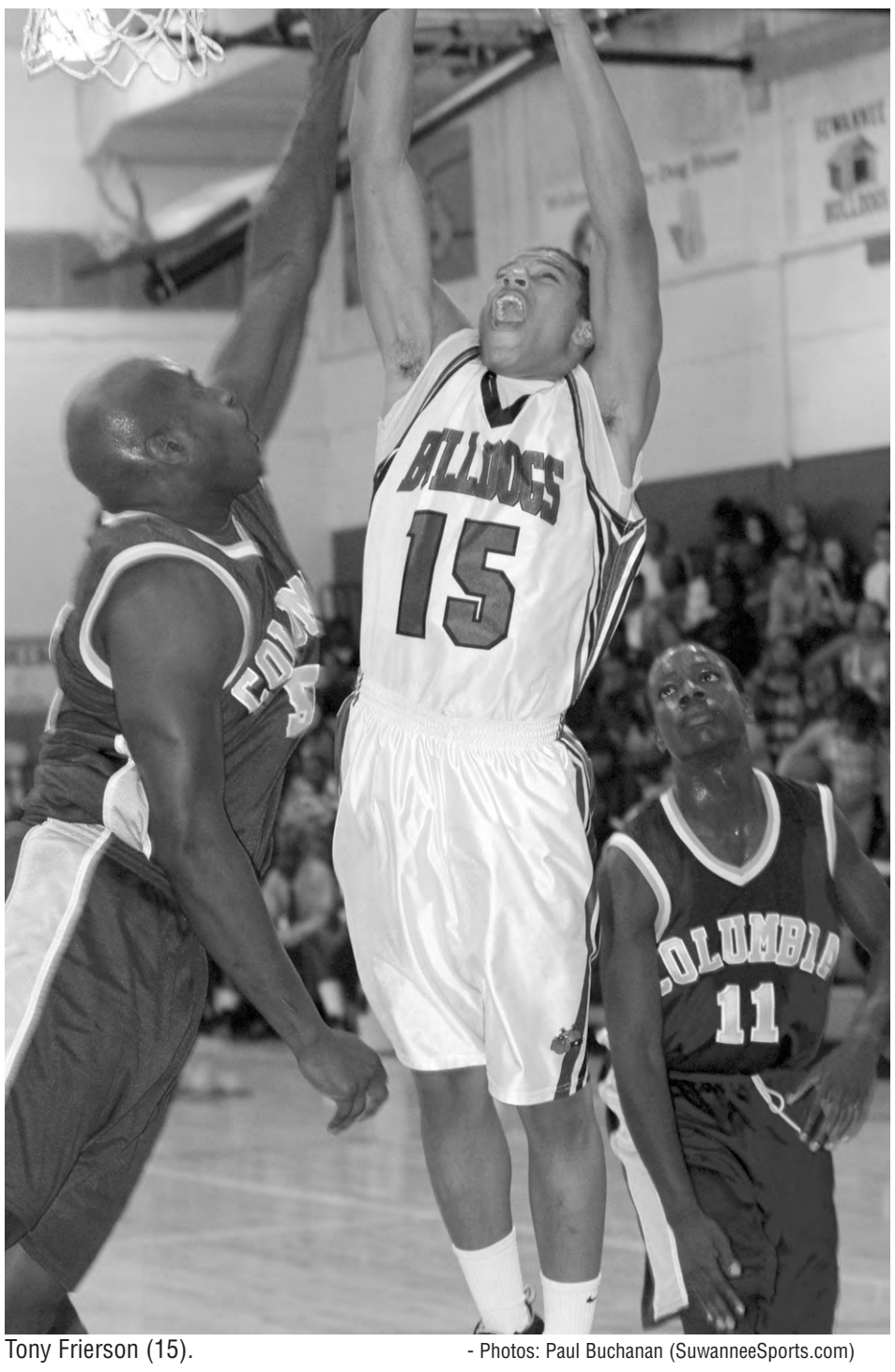
Suwannee beats defending state champs Rickards

Continued From Page 1B

ter scoring run for Suwannee and junior Deangelo Ross hit a corner three. The 'Dogs lead was 50-38 with 2:59 left in the game, but Rickards sank two late three-point shots for a final score of 58-45.

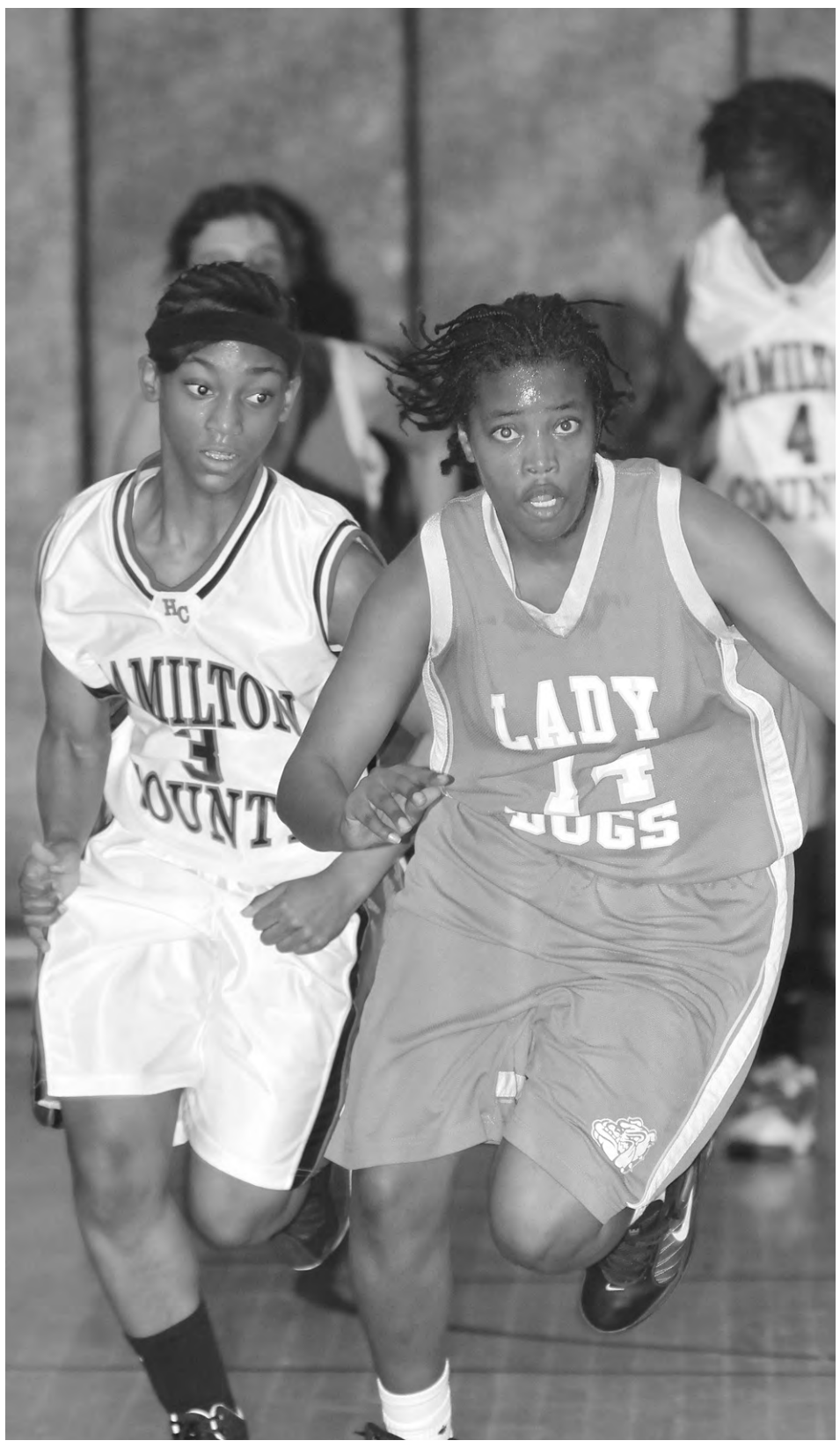
Team scoring was led by Taylor, who again had a strong passing game with six assists, seven rebounds, two steals, two blocks, and nine of 12 free throws. Frierson shot 70 percent from the field and ended the night with 17 points, four rebounds, and two steals. Devore led the team in rebounding (12) and steals (4) and added seven points in the game. Freshman Kevarrius Hayes had eight points, two blocks, six rebounds (four offensive), and one steal.

Suwannee travels next to Madison County on Dec. 17, 2011. The game with Wakulla County on Dec. 16 was recently cancelled and rescheduled to Dec. 22 in Live Oak.



Tony Frierson (15). - Photos: Paul Buchanan (SuwanneeSports.com)

Lady Bulldogs take on Madison County Saturday



The Suwannee High School girls basketball team will host Madison County Saturday. This is the last game for 2011 for the girls. Come out and support them. The game will played at the SHS gym. - Photo: Paul Buchanan (SuwanneeSports.com)

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JV Lady 'Dogs beat Hamilton County Tie it up with Stanton

By Doug Mabey

The JV Lady Bulldogs soccer team had a match on Thursday, Dec. 8 against Hamilton County in Jasper and it was cold. The Lady 'Dogs warmed up quickly as they scored three goals in less then eight minutes and at the half, they were up 4-0. In the second half, the scoring was a little more spread out and ended in an 8-0 mercy with just over four minutes left in the game.

Sierra Waddy had four goals, Riley Walczak had one, other scorers were Captain Caroline Croft with her first of the season, Leigh Durden used her face instead of her head to score a goal and Captain Maggie Lewis scored the final goal with some help from the opposition.

The JV team played on Friday, Dec. 9 at home in a District match against Stanton College Preparatory School of Jacksonville. Both teams appeared to be evenly matched based on their records and that's the way the game played out. It was a defensive battle for most of the game but Stanton managed to get off 15 shots on goal. The good news in this one is that Lady 'Dogs freshmen keeper Amanda Mabey stopped every one of them and the game ended in a 0-0 tie.

Stanton's defense only allowed five shots on goal and they were by Sierra Waddy, two by Riley Walczak and two by Captain Maggie Lewis.

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Today's Weather

Local 5-Day Forecast

Fri 12/16	Sat 12/17	Sun 12/18	Mon 12/19	Tue 12/20
77/55	76/47	72/47	77/55	80/54
Plenty of sun. Highs in the upper 70s and lows in the mid 50s.	Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 70s and lows in the upper 40s.	Sunny. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the upper 40s.	Mix of sun and clouds. Highs in the upper 70s and lows in the mid 50s.	Slight chance of a thunder-storm.
Sunrise: 7:21 AM Sunset: 5:34 PM	Sunrise: 7:22 AM Sunset: 5:34 PM	Sunrise: 7:22 AM Sunset: 5:34 PM	Sunrise: 7:23 AM Sunset: 5:35 PM	Sunrise: 7:24 AM Sunset: 5:35 PM

American Profile — We Celebrate Hometown Life. Stories for and about hometowns just like yours. Look for us each week in this paper.

Florida At A Glance

SPORTS

2011 Winter sports scoreboard

Branford High School Varsity Boys Basketball

Nov. 21	@ Trenton, 7 p.m.	46-37
Nov. 29	@ Melody Christian	35-64
Dec. 6	vs Dixie County, 7 p.m.	30-52
Dec. 8	@ Bell	20-58
Dec. 9	vs Lafayette, 8 p.m.	29-53
Dec. 13	vs Hamilton County	
Dec. 15	vs Cedar Key	
Jan. 5	@ Aucilla Christian Academy	
Jan. 6	vs Jefferson County	
Jan. 12	vs Melody Christian	
Jan. 17	@ Hamilton County	
Jan. 19	vs Bell	
Jan. 20	@ Lafayette	
Jan. 24	vs Trenton	
Jan. 26	@ Dixie County	
Jan. 27	@ Cedar Key	
Jan. 31	vs Aucilla Christian	

BHS Varsity Girls Basketball

Nov. 15	@ Fort White	31-42
Nov. 17	vs Madison County	38-33
Nov. 21	@ Trenton, 5:30 p.m.	57-48
Dec. 6	vs Dixie County, 5:30 pm	42-31
Dec. 8	@ Bell	44-54
Dec. 9	vs Lafayette, 6:30 p.m.	28-50
Dec. 13	vs Hamilton County	
Dec. 15	vs Cedar Key	
Dec. 29	@ Melody Christian	
Jan. 5	@ Madison County	
Jan. 6	vs Jefferson County	
Jan. 10	vs Ft. White	
Jan. 12	vs Melody Christian	
Jan. 17	@ Hamilton County	
Jan. 19	vs Bell	
Jan. 20	@ Lafayette	
Jan. 24	vs Trenton	
Jan. 26	@ Dixie County	
Jan. 27	@ Cedar Key	

Suwannee High School Varsity Boys Soccer

Nov. 7	vs P.K. Yonge	4-3
Nov. 9	@ Lincoln	1-2
Nov. 10	vs Atlantic	2-1
Nov. 14	vs Columbia, 7 p.m.	1-0
Nov. 15	@Samuel W. Wolfson	0-2
Nov. 17	vs Forrest, 7 p.m.	9-1
Nov. 29	vs Gainesville High	5-0
Dec. 1	@ Paxon	6-1
Dec. 5	vs. Lafayette	5-2
Dec. 6	@ Terry Parker	5-0
Dec. 9	@ Hamilton County	4-0
Dec. 13	vs Hamilton County	
Dec. 15	@ Lafayette	
Jan. 3	@ P.K. Yonge	
Jan. 5	vs Stanton College Preparatory	
Jan. 6	@ Eastside	
Jan. 10	vs Bishop Kenny	
Jan. 12	@ Santa Fe	
Jan. 14	vs Creekside	
Jan. 17	@ Columbia	
Jan. 19	vs Wakulla	
Jan. 20	vs Santa Fe	

SHS Varsity Girls Soccer

Nov. 3	@ Columbia	2-1
Nov. 7	@ RHS	0-4
Nov. 9	vs Paxon	2-2 tie
Nov. 10	@ Buchholz	0-0 tie
Nov. 15	vs Samuel W. Wolfson	8-0
Nov. 17	vs Forrest, 5 p.m.	8-0
Nov. 18	vs RHS, 7 p.m.	0-0 tie
Nov. 30	@ Atlantic Coast	2-5
Dec. 2	vs Bishop Kenny	1-2
Dec. 6	@Terry Parker	8-0
Dec. 8	@ Hamilton County	8-0
Dec. 9	vs Stanton College Preparatory	2-6
Dec. 12	vs Columbia	7-2
Dec. 13	vs F.W. Buchholz	
Jan. 3	vs Hamilton County	
Jan. 4	vs Gainesville	
Jan. 6	@ Eastside	

SHS Varsity Boys Basketball

Nov. 29	vs F.W. Buchholz	47-57
Dec. 2	@ Eastside	62-67
Dec. 3	vs Columbia High School	60-44
Dec. 6	@Taylor County	42-39
Dec. 10	@ Hamilton	72-51
Dec. 13	@ Rickards	58-45
Dec. 17	vs Madison	
Dec. 20	@ Santa Fe	
Dec. 22	vs Wakulla	
Dec. 23	@ West Gadsden	
Dec. 27	@ Hitchcock's Challenge	
Dec. 28	@ Hitchcock's Challenge	
Dec. 29	@ Hitchcock's Challenge	
Jan. 3	vs Santa Fe	
Jan. 6	vs Hamilton County	
Jan. 7	@ Columbia	
Jan. 13	@ Wakulla	
Jan. 17	vs Rickards	
Jan. 25	@ Oakleaf	
Jan. 27	@ Madison	
Feb. 3	vs Taylor County	

SHS Varsity Girls Basketball

Nov. 15	@ Taylor County	21-31
Nov. 21	@ Godby, 7:30 p.m.	22-58
Nov. 22	vs Columbia	38-47
Nov. 28	vs Newberry	14-68
Dec. 2	vs Rickards	14-72
Dec. 9	vs Wakulla	19-54
Dec. 10	@ Hamilton County	34-39
Dec. 17	vs Madison County	
Jan. 3	@ Newberry	
Jan. 6	vs Hamilton County	
Jan. 9	@ Rickards	
Jan. 10	@ Columbia	
Jan. 13	vs. Amos P. Godby	
Jan. 16	vs Taylor County	
Jan. 20	@ Wakulla	
Jan. 27	@ Madison County	

Melody Christian Academy Varsity Boys Basketball

Nov. 22	vs Chiefland	47-62
Nov. 29	vs Branford	64-35
Dec. 12	@ Espirit de Corps Center	
Dec. 15	@ Dixie County	
Dec. 21	@ MACOHI Holiday Invite	

Melody Christian Academy Varsity Girls Basketball

Dec. 15	@ Dixie County
Jan. 3	@ Columbia
Jan. 5	vs Dixie County
Jan. 6	@ Lafayette
Jan. 9	vs Taylor County

Suwannee Middle School boys basketball remain undefeated

The Suwannee Middle School boys basketball eam went to 7-0 on the season after defeating conference rival Lake City Middle 44-39 on Monday night.

Suwannee used a pressing defense and a high octane offense to put away the Falcons in the final minutes, winning for the first time in Lake City in 13 years.

The Bullpups have outscored their opponents by an average of 47-30 on the year and seem to be running on all cylinders towards the playoffs. The Pups will played again on Thursday night in Live Oak against Baker County to continue their quest for a perfect season and their first Florida Crown Conference Championship.

Please come out and support these future 'Dogs as 4 out of 5 of their final games will be played in the friendly confines of the Suwannee Middle School gym. Tipoff for the girls begins at 5 p.m. with boys game following.

SUWANNEE MIDDLE SCHOOL BASKETBALL SCHEDULE 2011 – 2012

DATE	DAY	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME	RESULTS
Nov. 15	TUES.	MADISON	A	5:00/6:15	(43-31) W
17	THUR.	*BAKER	A	5:00/6:15	(41-12) W
29	TUES.	*LCM	H	5:00/6:15	(56-46) W
DEC. 1	THUR.	*RICHARDSON	A	5:00/6:15	(45-28) W
5	MON.	*HAMILTON	A	5:00/6:15	(46-33) W
9	FRI.	TAYLOR	H	1:00/2:15	(51-21) W
12	MON.	*LCM	A	5:00/6:15	(44-39) W
15	THUR.	*BAKER	H	5:00/6:15	
JAN. 5	THUR.	*HAMILTON	H	5:00/6:15	
6	FRI.	TAYLOR	A	1:00/2:15	
9	MON.	MADISON	H	5:00/:15	
12	THUR.	*RICHARDSON	H	5:00/6:15	
19	THUR.	FSC CHAMPIONSHIP	TBA	TBA	

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FIRST ADVENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH
699 Pinewood Drive
(386) 362-1802
Rev. Tim Carver, Pastor

SUNDAY
Sunday School.....9:30 am
Worship Service.....10:30 am
WEDNESDAY
Bible Study.....10:30 am
Youth Group & Sword Seekers Group following school
644888-F

BIXLER MEMORIAL ADVENT CHRISTIAN
Advent Christian Village, Dowling Park
Dr. Timothy Setzer &
Rev. Rosemary Humbles & Rev. John Harper
Youth Pastor Rev. Randy Lamb

SUNDAY
Morning Worship.....9:45 a.m.
Christian Education Hour.....11:00 a.m.
Evening Worship and Youth Group.....6:00 p.m.
644889-F

Don't let bad feelings fester

Human relations are complicated by the fact that we all have different styles of interacting with each other. Most of us want to be liked and to get along with our fellow humans. Therefore, when problems arise between us, we should do our best to communicate them in a considerate way and try to work them out. How best to do that often requires sensitivity and good judgment, but it is almost always better to address the problems or the hurt feelings than to let them fester. Sometimes we don't address the problem because we want to avoid conflict or we fear that we will appear petty if we tell someone that we are offended by something they said or did, but failing to address the problem rarely makes it go away, and our hurt feelings will only grow. If there is something that needs to be discussed, we should choose a time when both of us can talk, and we should also try to raise the issue in a friendly, sensitive way. Often the best way to start these conversations is by telling the person that we value their relationship and therefore we want to address something that has been bothering us, at which point the person should be more receptive to our message.

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.
Ephesians 4:25-26

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Post Office Box 129-McAlpin, Florida
(386) 362-5634 Email: Info4pbc@gmail.com
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Worship and Fellowship Opportunities of the Week

SUNDAY
Bible School.....9:45 am
Morning Worship.....11:00 am
Ladies Prayer Group.....5:00 pm
Evening Worship.....6:30 pm
WEDNESDAY
Family Night Supper.....5:30 pm
AWANA Club.....6:00 pm
Prayer Meeting.....6:30 pm

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together… but encouraging one another.
Hebrews 10:25
714098-F

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
401 West Howard Street • Live Oak, FL 32064
Phone: 386-362-1583 • Fax 386-364-6478
Email: firstbaptistchurch@fbcliveoak.org
www.fbcliveoak.org

Rev. Phillip Herrington, Pastor
Rev. Steve Sweitzer, Pastoral Care/Administration
Rev. Alan Lott, Music and Worship
Rev. Ryan Vermilyea, Students

SUNDAY
Early Worship.....8:30 am
Sunday School.....9:45 am
Morning Worship.....11:00 am
Discipleship Training.....6:00 pm
Evening Worship.....7:00 pm
WEDNESDAY
AWANA.....6:00-8:00 pm
RUSH - Youth.....6:00-8:00 pm
Adult Small Group.....6:00-8:00 pm
Midweek Prayer.....6:30-7:30 pm
700957-F

WELLBORN BAPTIST CHURCH
Dr. Donald Minshew, Senior Pastor
Mr. Tim Scott, Worship Leader
Mrs. Debi O'hearn, Director of Students
U.S. 90 West & Lowe Lake Rd., Wellborn
Church Phone 963-2231
wellbornbaptist@windstream.net

SUNDAY
Sunday School.....9:15 am
(Classes for all ages)
Morning Worship Service.....10:30 am
Children's Church (Grades K-4th)
Adult Choir.....5:00 pm
Children's/Middle School Choir.....5:00 pm
Youth Drama and Missions.....5:00 pm
Family Worship.....6:00 pm
WEDNESDAY
Family Supper.....5:00 pm
Mission Friends, CIA.....6:30 pm
Middle/High School Youth.....6:30 pm
Prayer Meeting.....6:30 pm
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666850-F

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SUNDAY
Sunday School.....9:45 am
Morning Worship.....11:00 am
Evening Worship.....5:00 pm
Choir Practice.....4:00 pm
WEDNESDAY
Prayer service.....6:00 pm
Team Kid Club.....6:00 pm
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SUNDAY
Sunday School.....9:45 am
Worship.....11:00 am
Church Training.....6:00 pm
Evening Worship.....7:00 pm
WEDNESDAY
AWANA Club (Ages 3-12 grades)....6:25 pm
Prayer & Bible Study.....7:00 pm
644894-F

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SUNDAY
Bible Study (Sunday School).....9:45 am
Celebration Worship.....11:00 am
Evening Worship.....6:00 pm
Depth (Student Bible Study).....6:00 pm
WEDNESDAY
Family Supper.....5:00 pm
Kidz Club.....6:00 pm
Discipleship Classes for Adults.....6:30 pm
Flood Student Worship.....6:30 pm
644892-F

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THURSDAY
Eucharist.....7:00 am
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Eucharist.....9:00 am
Sunday School.....9:45 am
Eucharist.....11:00 am
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Pastor: Dr. David Teems
14364 140th St., Live Oak, FL 32060
386-776-1010 or 386-776-1418
email address: Suwannee baptasso@alltel.net

SUNDAY SERVICES
Sunday Morning Bible Study.....9:45 am
Worship Service.....11:00 am
(Children's Church during Morning Worship)
Discipleship Training.....6:00 pm
(Women's Bible Study, Men's Bible Study, Youth Discipleship, Youth Choir, Children's Choir
Evening Worship.....7:00 pm
WEDNESDAY SERVICES
Wednesday Evening Supper.....5:45 pm
Awanas.....6:30 pm
Bible Study & Prayer Time.....7:00 pm
Nursery available during all services
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WESTWOOD BAPTIST
920 11th Street, SW (Newbern Road)
362-1120
Dr. Jimmy Deas, Pastor
Rev. Jim McCoy, Minister of Music and Senior Adults
Rev. Jonathan Rodriquez, Minister of Student

SUNDAY
Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship & Childrens Church 10:50 a.m.
Evening Worship Service.....6:30 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Mid-Week Service.....6:30 p.m.
Youth & Children Ministries.....6:30 p.m.
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Sunday School.....9:30 am
Worship Service.....10:45 am
Evening Bible Exploration Services.....6:00 pm
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WEDNESDAY
Mid Week Prayer Service.....6:30 pm
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662886-F

ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH
5203 County Road 795
362-3101 - Church
Rev. David McKeithen

SUNDAY
Sunday School.....9:45 am
Morning Worship.....11:00 am
Evening Worship.....6:00 pm
WEDNESDAY
Prayer Service.....7:00 pm
644857-F

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH
792-2275
Pastor: Steve Shaw
Sunday
Sunday School.....10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship.....11:00 a.m.
Children's Church.....11:00 a.m.
Church Training.....6:00 p.m.
Evening Worship.....7:00 p.m.
Wednesday
Prayer Meeting.....7:00 p.m.
Youth Ignited/Youth Ministry……7:00 p.m.
682421

WESTSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH
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Live Oak, FL 32060
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For information call Charles Walker
386-364-4601

SUNDAY
Sunday School.....9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship .....11:00 a.m.
Children's Church.....11:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Prayer Meeting.....7:00 p.m.
697413-F

INTERDENOMINATIONAL

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Children's Ministry-Youth Ministry-Adults Services:
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Wednesday 6:30 pm
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682440F

CHRIST CENTRAL MINISTRIES
15445 US Highway 129 S.
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Sunday Morning Service.....10:30 a.m.
Wednesday Dinner, open to public.....5:15 p.m.
Wednesday Night Service.....7:00 p.m.
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644868-F

NAZARENE

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SUNDAY
Sunday School.....9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship.....8:45 & 11:00 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.
Spanish Service.....7:00 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Evening Prayer Meeting.....7:00 p.m.
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(386) 362-1085 (386) 209-1614
www.liveoakchristian.org

SUNDAY
Sunday School.....9:30 am
Family Worship.....10:30 am
WEDNESDAY
Bible Study.....7:00 pm
Weekly video of morning sermons can be viewed @ www.liveoakchristian.org
681207F

CATHOLIC

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH (Live Oak)
928 East Howard St. U.S. 90 East
Live Oak, Florida 32060
(386) 364-1108
Father Andrzej Mitera

Saturday (Vigil) Mass.....6:00 pm
Sunday Mass.....9:00 am
Sunday (Spanish) Mass.....11:30 am

Mission Churches

St. Therese of the Child Jesus (Jasper)
Saturday (Vigil) Mass.....4:00 pm

Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe (Mayo)
Sunday.....1:30 pm
644859-F

PENTECOSTAL

LIVE OAK FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD
13793 76th St. (Mitchell Rd.), Live Oak, FL
Rev. Mike Townsend
362-2189
SUNDAY
Sunday School.....9:30 am
Children's Church.....10:30 am
Morning Worship.....10:30 am
Evening Worship.....6:00 pm
Wednesday Night.....7:30 pm
644883-F

LIVE OAK CHURCH OF GOD
9828 US Hwy 129 South
Lead Pastor Carl Thomas, III 362-2483
Web: www.liveoakchurchofgod.com

SUNDAY
Sunday School.....9:45 am
Morning Worship.....10:40 am
Children's Church.....10:40 am
Childrens Choir.....5:30 pm
Evening Worship.....6:30 pm
WEDNESDAY
Family Training Hour.....7:00 pm
Preschool Classes, Boys Clubs, Girls Clubs, V.I.B.E. Youth Church, Young Adults Class and Sanctuary Bible Class
FRIDAY
Prayer at the Gates of the City.....7:00 - 8:15 am
706885-F

PRESBYTERIAN (PCA)

COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
830 Pinewood Street, Live Oak, FL
(386) 362-2323
SUNDAY
9:45 AM Sunday School for children, youth and adults
Prelude of praise 10:45 AM
11:00 AM Morning Worship
WEDNESDAY
5:45 PM Family Fellowship Meal
6:30 PM Kingdom Kids Children, Partners in Christ Youth, and Adult Bible Study
7:30 PM Choir Practice
Randy Wilding, Pastor; Scott Creel, Youth Pastor
A Christ-centered, Gospel-proclaiming, People-loving, Family Church
690592-F

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

LIVE OAK SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
Pastor Ryan Wiggan
11239 SR 51, Live Oak, FL 32071
364-0717 English; 330-2575 Spanish
SATURDAY SERVICES
Sabbath School.....9:15 am
Devine.....11:00 am
TUESDAY
Worship & Tuesday Night Prayer Meting.....7:00 p.m.
644886-F

UNITED METHODIST

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
311 S. Ohio Avenue, Live Oak • 362-2047
Pastor: Dr. William Finnin
"COME WORSHIP WITH US"

SUNDAY
Contemporary Worship.....9:00 am
Sunday School.....10:00 am
Morning Worship.....11:00 am
WEDNESDAY
Youth Meeting.....6:00 pm
Adult Handbells.....6:00 pm
Men's Crusaders.....7:00 pm
Chancel Choir.....7:30 pm
Nursery available Sunday 9:00 and 11:00 services
644896-F

NEW HARMONY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
160th St. (Go south on 51 to 160th, turn right)
Pastor: Stan Posey
Phone (386) 776-1806
SUNDAY
Sunday Worship.....9:30 am
Bible Study.....10:30 am
WEDNESDAY
Women's Bible Study.....10 am
644898-F

PINE GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
5300 CR 136A, Live Oak
Phone (386) 362-5595
Pastor George Swearengin
SUNDAY
Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Choir Practice.....5:00 p.m.
Traditional Service.....11:00 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service.....6:00 p.m.
MONDAY
Prayer Service.....7:00 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Youth Group Service.....5:00 p.m.
Praise Team Rehearsal .....6:00 p.m.
Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.
"Enter to Worship …. Depart to Service"
644897-F

WELLBORN UNITED METHODIST
12005 CR 137
963-2154 • 963-3071
Pastor James Messer
Music: Geiger Family

SUNDAY
Sunday School.....10:00 am
Worship Service.....11:00 am
Evening Service.....6:00 pm
@ Huntsville UMC, Lake Jeffery Road
Youth Meeting.....3:00 pm
TUESDAY
Prayer Intercession at the Alter
7:00 am, Noon and at 7:00 pm
Church is opened all day, Everyone is welcome

McLeran Memorial Public Library
Tuesday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Saturday 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
WEDNESDAY
Bible Study.....7:00 pm
696031-F

RELIGION

Doctrinal views expressed on our Religion pages are those of the individual authors and not of the *Suwannee Democrat*.

Heart Matters

God makes room for you
By Angie Land

Angie Land

Have you noticed how every single holiday commercial promises that this is “most wonderful time of the year?” Now, don’t get me wrong, I love the holidays, but rarely does the real world always live up to those promises. What about those years we must face Christmas without a loved one because of death, conflicting schedules, unresolved conflict or even divorce, or maybe just too many miles. Any of these can leave us feeling discouraged and wondering how in the world to cope. I think Mary and Joseph knew a little bit about that….

“So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her first-born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Luke 2:4-7

About that first labor pain, Mary had to be thinking, “This is not how it was supposed to be!” Those pretty Nativity scenes we set up each year are wonderful decorations, but the real deal was dirty and smelly! Surely Mary didn’t have this in mind…instead of a soft, clean bed, she gave birth on the floor of a stable. Instead of her mother and other women tending to her, she was alone with Joseph, who was no doubt as overwhelmed as she was! Instead of a cradle to lay her son, she placed him in a feed trough…

But do you remember those shepherds who came to see the baby Jesus? Consider the fact that if Mary and Joseph had been anywhere else, they would have missed it. Shepherds were not exactly high on the social ladder, but God chose them be the first witnesses of the birth of his Son! Who better to understand the amazing truth that God had just provided the perfect “Lamb” that would one day be the sacrifice to take away the sins of the world?

Could it be that when we feel like there is no room for us someplace, it is because God has made room for us somewhere else? Try this perspective when dealing with holiday plans for your family: if someone can’t be there, for whatever reason, look around and see who that makes room for…and if something causes you to miss family celebrations, look around to see where God is making room for you. Celebration is ultimately up to us, and the attitude we choose to take. Our plans may not work out exactly like we hoped…but it could be that God has something extra special in mind this year…

Because Your Heart Matters…

Angie

Heart Matters is a weekly column written by Angie Land, Director of the Family Life Ministries of the Lafayette Baptist Association. Contact Angie with questions or comments at angieland3@windstream.net

Christmas fruitcake always gets a bad rap

Rev. James L. Snyder

Many reasons exist why a person should love and embrace the Christmas season. I hear of those who attack the Christmas season and I take no notice to them at all. The thing that keeps buffoons energized his attention paid to them. If they were really serious about their so-called beliefs, they would leave the country during the Christmas season and go somewhere where it is not celebrated.

My recommendation is the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

Ignoring the holiday buffoons, I snuggle down and enjoy the Christmas festivities. So much about the season to savor and enjoy.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage has our home all decorated for the Christmas season. In the evening, we sit down in the living room among all of the decorations, sip our hot cocoa and have a healthy slice of Christmas fruitcake.

When it comes to decorating things, I don't even have a thumb. During this time, I envy those who are all thumbs. My decorating expertise is simply to enjoy the work done. And that I do.

I love everything about the Christmas season, except maybe shopping in the mall. I think there should be some kind of a law restricting shopping in the mall. It is not that I hate going to the mall… well, I guess if I am truthful, I really do hate going to the mall. If they had a nice good used bookstore, I might see my way to the mall more often and deliberately.

Apart from the mall, the Christmas season is a terrific time to be alive.

I love the Christmas trees. Go ahead and call it a "Holiday Tree" if you do not mind letting other people know how stupid you really sound. Solomon, in the Old Testament, had some of these people in mind when he wrote, "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding." (Proverbs 17:28 KJV). If it is a "Holiday Tree," which holiday does it represent?

I love all the decorations associated with this time of year. Throughout the year, everything seems to be rather drab, but when Christmas comes along things begin to brighten up.

I love all the stories associated with Christmas. Yes, I know some of them are just stories made up; but every once in a while it is good to listen to a story. The fact that somebody has accused Santa's reindeer's of bullying poor little Rudolph only indicate that some people do not know the difference between fact and fiction.

Do not let this get out, but, Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer does not even exist. He is just a made-up character in a Christmas story. I know that will come as a shock to many people, but the truth is the truth no matter whom it hurts.

I love the music of Christmas. Particularly, because 90 percent of the Christmas music is religious. Go figure? Nothing is more inspiring than listening to a choir sing Handel's Messiah. Of course, there is a danger that the wrong people will get a hold of this great piece of music and want to change the title. I am looking for someone to protest this and insist we call it, "Handel’s Person."

The music of Christmas is uplifting and inspiring despite all the naysayers that seem to come out of the ground during this time of the year. I wish they would stay underground and celebrate whatever they celebrate with Punxsutawney Phil.

Dare I mention the food of Christmas? I'm going to anyway. The best thing about the food at Christmas time is that nobody, and when I am talking about nobody, I am referring of course to my wife, says, "You shouldn't be eating that." The beauty of Christmas food is that you can eat it whenever and as much as you like.

When I come back for my second slice of fruitcake and somebody looks at me I always say, "I'm starting my diet next month." And I get away with it.

Speaking of fruitcake, it is the best part of the Christmas food frenzy. My biggest concern in this area is that the fruitcake has gotten a very bad rap by people who do not understand this delicacy. It is a very wonderful way for a person to get their daily portion of fruit. How nice of it to be mixed in with cake. After all, if the word "fruit," is associated with it, it must be good, right? Everybody knows fruit is good for a person.

I take my portion of vegetables in carrot cake and my portion of fruit in fruitcake. This is the cuisine of the gods.

There is a very practical side to this fruitcake business. As I am picking up my fifth slice of fruitcake, I begin thinking about the New Year and how I need to add more fruit to my diet. As I slowly chew on the fruitcake, every aspect of my being is energized with glorious delight and goodwill toward men. After a few slices of fruitcake, I am in such a good mood that even the "Holiday Tree" people do not bother me so much. Nothing comes between my fruitcake and me.

Christmas is the season to rejoice in God's love for the world so much that he sent his only son, Jesus Christ.

The Rev. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, PO Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with his wife, Martha, in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 352-687-4240 or e-mail jamessnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.whatafellowship.com

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in Christ Church

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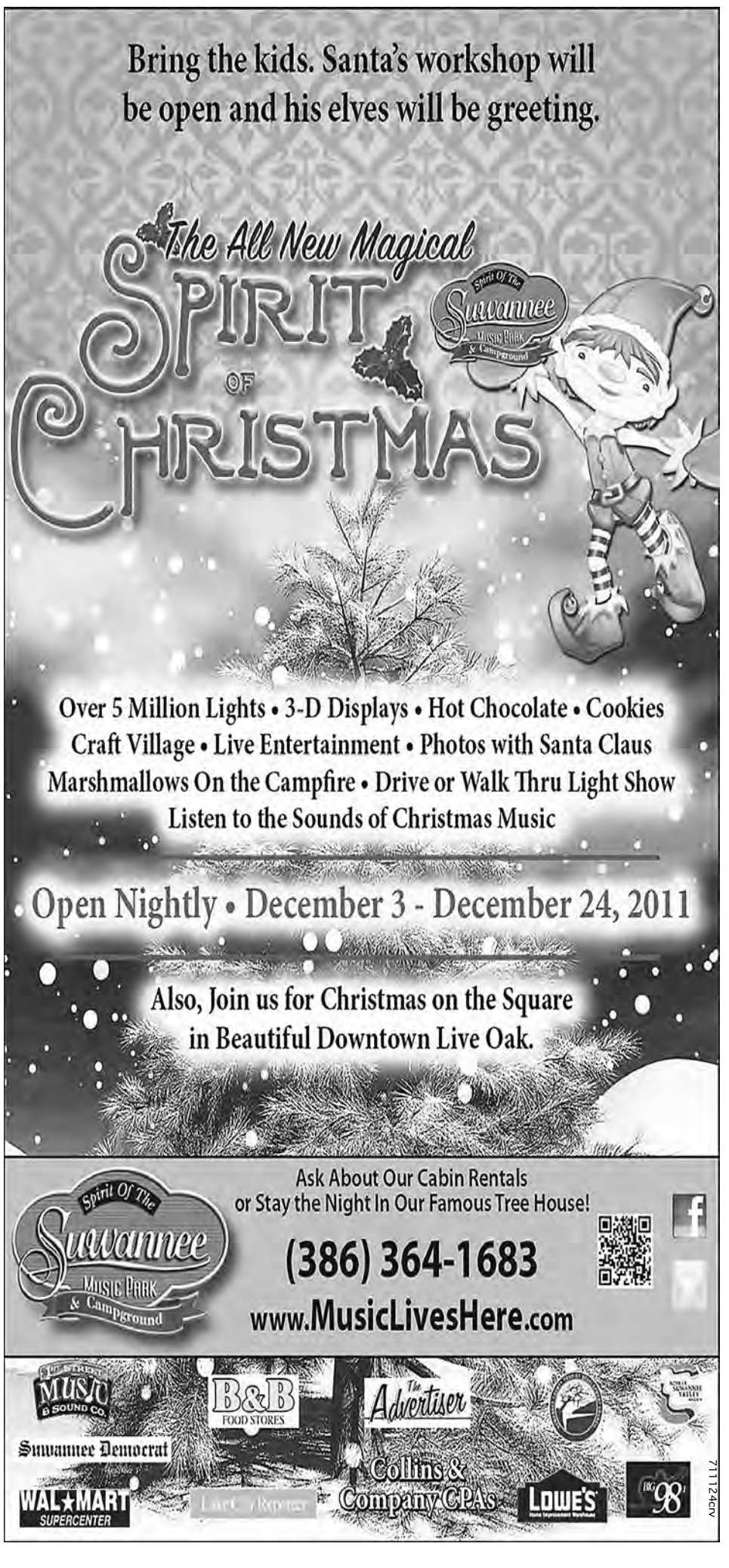

Photo courtesy of Getty Images

NURTURING YOUNG Nature Lovers

FAMILY FEATURES

Whether you're a parent, a classroom teacher, or a homeschool instructor, you know that students learn best when they can interact with their subject. It can be fun and inspirational to explore and experience an educational concept first hand.

The sample project featured here comes from a new, free resource that's helping to inspire an appreciation of botany in elementary-aged students across the country. The educator website MyBotanicPlanet.com is a creative collaboration between TruGreen, the nation's largest professional lawn, tree and shrub care service provider, and the Memphis Botanic Garden.

U.S. standardized lesson plans in botany and related activities available on MyBotanicPlanet.com were created by professional curriculum developers to help grades K–5 teachers and students explore the diverse plant world. Through online and hands-on experiences, this creative educator resource lets students customize an avatar to explore colorful plant environments and interactive games as they learn. My Botanic Planet visitors can interact with educational guides Flavor Flores on an adventure in the origin of plant flavors, and with Inspector Nectar on a flower mystery investigation.

TruGreen's MyBotanicPlanet.com guide Flavor Flores helps K–5 students enjoy learning about the origin of flavors from plants.

My Botanic Planet

Flower Investigation

There's no better way for students to investigate the parts of a flower than by dissecting real ones.

What you need

- Enough real flowers for pairs or groups to work together. Alstroemerias and gladiolus work well and are available year round in supermarket floral departments. Azaleas or any member of the lily family could also be used because the parts are well-defined and easy to see.
- Plastic knives and tweezers could be used for dissecting equipment.
- A magnifying glass would allow for closer inspection.

Getting started

- Open up the flower. This is easily done by first locating the base of the flower and slicing or splitting it in half. Use a dissection tool or even a fingernail.
- Next, slice or pinch off the petals. Remind students to be careful with all of the tiny pieces. It's easy to damage or brush away some of the most important parts.

Review the parts of the flower

- **Petal:** This is the colorful part of the flower that attracts the attention of birds, bees and butterflies, letting them know that there is food inside the flower. Have students record how many petals their flower has and what they look like.
- **Stamen:** This is where the pollen is made. For older students, you could also point out that the top part that holds the pollen is the anther and the stem part is called the filament. Students should record how many stamens their flower has. If it has six petals, it will also have six stamens. If they have an extra piece, then one should look a little bit different, and is actually part of the pistil.
- **Pistil:** This is where the seeds are made. The pistil is made of three different parts. The very top of the pistil is called the stigma. The stigma is where the pollen falls when a pollinator brings it in. The pollen travels down the tube (style) and goes down to the bottom (ovary) where the seeds will form. Split the pistil lengthwise to look inside. You should see unfertilized beginnings of seeds. The seed pattern inside will be the same pattern of seeds within the fruit later. If you cut an apple in half horizontally and see the five seeds in a star pattern, you will know that the flower's pistil had five compartments.
- **Sepal:** These are the tiny leaves on the lower part of the flower that protect it before it begins to bloom. Every flowering bud is hidden safely behind these two little leaves until the flower is fully developed. When the bloom begins to grow, the sepal will split open and the petals can break out.

Next steps

For Grades K–2

- Fold a piece of paper in half twice, creating four smaller panels. Go on a school discovery where kids draw pictures of various flowering plants. Have kids take home papers and draw flowers they see at home or in their neighborhood. Collect all of the images and sort the flowers according to color, type, where they were seen, etc. Then create a "Students in Bloom" bulletin board where the pictures are showcased.

For Grades 3–5

- Pollinator Power: Ask students to research a specific pollinator, such as bees, butterflies or moths, and find out where they live, how much nectar they eat, how many plants they visit in a day, etc., and report back to the class. For example, hummingbirds can visit up to 1,500 flowers a day and consume almost twice their body weight in nectar daily.

Extension lesson

Every fruit began as a flower. In an apple, for example, the petals withered away and the ovary grew containing the seeds, but there are other parts still there, like the sepal and flower stem. Bring in various fruits to "dissect" and examine the seeds and other parts. Chart their similarities and differences.

Visit TruGreen's www.MyBotanicPlanet.com with your student to explore some of the flowers in our environment. The website reinforces concepts featured in this sample activity in botany with an interactive glossary and games.

The holiday shopping season is here. So are the best holiday offers.

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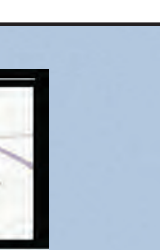

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