Fire station sites purchased

MIKE ANDERSON PRESS STAFF

The Baker County Commission last week approved the purchase of two separate parcels of land for new fire and rescue stations in Glen St. Mary and Sunnyside. The purchases, funded by the county's current millage, cost a total of $104,500. The 2.9-acre site in Glen St. Mary is a triangular-shaped parcel bordered on the north by Florida Power and Light transmission lines and extending down to a point where CR 127 South and George Taber Boulevard converge. The owners, Ted, Libby G. Cris and Margaret Neff Greene, were paid $60,500.

Located on a major county corridor, about half a mile north of I-10 and roughly the same distance south of U.S. 90, the site should offer firefighters quick access to properties within a five-mile radius. “The land is in a prime location and is very feasible for building a public safety building,” said Fire-Rescue Chief Trevor Nelson in a memo to commissioners on July 2. “There will be quick access to properties within a five-mile radius.”

Construction is expected to begin first on the Glen St. Mary station, which is a short distance south of the town’s existing fire station, because that’s the only project that has funding immediately available.

The new state budget for the fiscal year 2019-20, which began July 1, included $81,000 for the building, which will include three vehicle bays and sleeping quarters to house up to six fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) employees.

State Rep. Chuck Brannan, R-Macclenny, in his first year as a state lawmaker, represented Baker and four other counties, sponsored the funding bill in the House. He was joined at the meeting last week by Senate Appropriations Committee chairman Rob Brad
den and one of his colleagues, State Rep. Kara Imm. The Baker County commissioners voted 3-2 last week to keep County Manager Kennie Downing in his current position for up to another year.

The vote came at the end of a somewhat contentious hearing the evening of July 2, during which half a dozen or more supporters spoke highly of Mrs. Downing’s management and leadership skills and urged the board to retain her. Ironically, Commissioner Jimmy Anderson had given Mrs. Downing the highest ratings on her only performance evaluation in 2017, yet he recommended the board not renew her contract.

Claudia are the service areas for new county stations and the properties purchased for two of them.

Supporters spoke up for Downing

Go vote... Which water vacation do you prefer?

Three are running to become Glen mayor

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Efforts to build larger and more modern fire stations throughout the county to replace antiquated, inade- quate structures are part of the county’s grand plan to gradually transition from an all-volunteer fire agency to a professional fire department, incorporating fire and EMS personnel together.

The adoption of higher annual fire assessments countywide last year has opened a much larger funding source for future im-provements, such as the re- quest approval of more than $1 million to add three new fire engines and a new tank- er to an aging fleet comprised of vehicles averaging 13 years old.

Chief Nelson was on vaca-tion and unable to attend last week’s meeting, so the land acquisition petitions presented by Fire Chief Sheve Martingale as one of his last official duties. He had previ- ously submitted his resigna-tion, effective July 1 to take a similar job with the City of Jacksonville, presenting a cer-tificate of appreciation for six years as fire chief.

Lacking driver’s licenses

MARK J. YOUNG

Mark J. Young, 42, of Glen St. Mary was arrest-ed on July 3 after Deputy Arturo Young was also issued a citation for a tag that expired over Mr. Young for an expired license, which resulted in a license that had not been issued. After communication with the driver, it was discovered that the driver had no valid license. Additional research discovered that he had previously been convicted of driving with an expired license. Mr. Young was also issued a citation for a traffic violation and has since been determined to be a fair price, stated Chief Nelson.

As Sweat Road.

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From page 1

Commissioner Rhoden said, adding that, “if there’s any heat because of the budget, it’sKen Downing who deserves it. We made that decision.”

Earlier in the meeting, Larry Person, leader of the veterans council, recounted many community services the organization had carried out in recent years, including improvements at public parks and neighborhood community centers, as well as building numerous wheelchair ramps for elderly or disabled veterans or their relatives.

But, he said, when he spoke with Mrs. Downing about possibly getting extra awards for participation, Mrs. Downing said they were already being awarded by other civic organizations, so she refused.

Although he has had disagreements with the county manager, Commissioner Bennett said, he always discussed those disagreements with her in private and felt that she was willing to listen to constructive criticism and ideas.

“I feel liberal? Absolutely not,” he said. “I know she didn’t come out of the ager age when we hired her.”

He said Mrs. Downing, whom he described as “quirky yet competitive,” described her personality as “strong enough, yet flexible, to make it work.”

Commissioner Bennett said he would continue for at least one more year and give her a year to win all our support. “I think she’s doing a good job,” he said. “I want to work with her and not against her.”

In addition to his support, the board had been giving Mrs. Downing $3,000 per month for insurance.

“She’s educated, fluent, listens to employee concerns and requests? No, I can’t answer questions. But I can give you a lot of feedback.”

Mrs. Downing, who came to the county in 2017, is known for carrying out policies set by the board. “Her leadership has been impeccable. Give them all.”

Greg Hoppe, another member of the LPA board, also spoke on Mrs. Downing’s behalf, praising her for all she has accomplished since coming to Baker County.

“Kennie Downing has been an incredible leader,” Mrs. Hoppe said. “She has brought a lot of integrity and positive change to the community. I support her in her position.”

Most of her support came from women and members of the animal rescue groups. Mrs. Downing helped formulate policies that allowed animals from the county shelter, increase adoptions, substantially reduce the number of animals euthanized, and seek grants to help accomplish those goals.

Cathy Hooper of Glen St. Mary, a member of the animal advisory panel and a retired officer of the Baker County Sheriff’s Office, disagreed with Commissioner Bennett’s stated reasons for wanting to remove Mrs. Downing from office without giving any specific reasons or naming her accusers.

“We have a good person here,” Mrs. Hooper said. “She’s educated, fluent, listens to concerns and has the ability to work with people on different levels.”

One of the strongest advocates in the county manager’s corner may have been Mrs. Downing herself. She read a prepared statement before the discussion began expressing shock that her job was in jeopardy and reiterating major achievements through the Baker County government during her tenure.

“Who was I hired?” she stated. “I was directed to make sure the employees are accountable for their actions, evaluate employees’ comments and requests, make sure employees understand that some actions have consequences.”

“Do I listen to employees’ comments and requests? I do. I grant all of their requests? No, I can’t answer questions. But I can give you a lot of feedback.”

I have a good person here,” Mrs. Hooper said. “She’s educated, fluent, listens to employee concerns and requests? No, I can’t answer questions. But I can give you a lot of feedback.”

“I want to keep winning elections,” Mrs. Hooper said. “She has a sense of humor and sometimes it looks like dogs more than people.”

“I cannot answer questions. But I can give you a lot of feedback.”

“I am passionate about improving the government of Baker County for the benefit of its citizens,” she said. “I am passionate about making employees become better versions of themselves while they have some uncertainty in the presidential arena.”

“I can help you improve the quality of life of Baker County residents, guiding employees to be braver, greener, safer, get them in better shape and modernize policies that are out of date or unknown and unfamiliar.”

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Projected budget shows 1.8% increase

Health cost drop helps

MIKE ANDERSON
PRESS STAFF

The latest estimates for county expenditures next year, presented and briefly discussed at a county commission meeting July 2, were projected to be about 1.8 percent higher — $23,314,686 — than the current yearwide budget of $241.4 million.

The increase would be greater, however, if employee health insurance rates had gone up as high as anticipated. The original budget included a 15 percent increase in premiums, but Florida Blue’s rate hike recently came in at a relatively low 3 percent.

Rewis said spending projections last week’s budget projections included a 7.2 percent increase for law enforcement operations, while the fire and rescue department’s budget would jump 15.5 percent from $278,431 in the current year to $984,291 next year.

But the fire department’s proposed increase is mild compared to its 60 percent budget jump last year, from $297,640 in 2019-20 to $875,920 in 2020-21, following passage of higher annual fire assessments for all residents and commercial properties to fund new equipment purchases, fire station repairs and other improvements.

Mrs. Rewis told commissioners last week that she had not re-ceived the most recent state revenue projections for next year and may not get them until next month.

The commission must adopt the tentative property tax rate, or millage, for next year at its meeting July 9. Mrs. Rewis told the board, likely at the July 23 meeting, that the tentative millage, commissioners may lower it. They cannot increase it.

In other business last week, the commission approved an emergency expenditure of $11,883 authorized last month by the county manager for spray foam insulation on the county administration office building, a metal frame floor with brick overlay, for better acoustics and comfort on extremely hot afternoons.

In a memo to the board, Mrs. Downing said a significant increase in humidity, temperature, and heat stress has occurred in the building, and a new roof was installed in early June.

The prior metal roof had old spray-type insulation on the bottom of the roof deck. After the removal of the building lacks sufficient insula-

tion,” she said in her memo. “As you may be aware, during a rainstorm it is nearly impossible to hear voices during the building of County Commission meetings.”

She said she obtained quotes from several area insulation compa-
nies and the lowest bid came from Florida Insulation in the amount of $11,183 for a 2-inch closed cell spray foam “for the entirety of the build-
ing.”

Noting her “serious concern regarding heat, humidity, moisture, and the over-entertainment of air conditioning systems,” she said she had authorized Moran Insulation to proceed with the project as quoted for a 2-inch spray foam project.

Commissioners unanimously con-

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Training to stop suicides
Meriden offers day-long tutorial

JOEL ADDINGTON
MANAGING EDITOR

The Baker Prevention Coalition, a nonprofit organization focused on combatting substance abuse among Baker County youth, is now focusing on teen suicide prevention.

To that end, the coalition and Meriden Behavioral Healthcare, the county’s only assessed mental health agency, have teamed up to train youth mental health first-aid training for school personnel at the health department.

“It’s offered for people who work or have regular contact with juveniles to deter them when they’re facing mental health problems and how to help. Participants who complete the free eight-hour course thereafter receive a mental health first-aid certification,” said coalition director Lee Rhoden.

Nationally, suicide is the third leading cause of death among those age 14-24, said coalition executive director Lee Rhoden. “Our desire is to help landowers on the south, and to help professional biological services. One of the south’s impassioned people is said Jim Marlin, State For- eigner and Director of the Florida Forest Service. “Our desire is to help landowners take preventative action now, significantly reducing the risk and impacts associated with the southern pine forest, including the health and productivity of our pine forests.”

The last major southern pine beetle outbreaks occurred between 1999 and 2002, resulting in an estimated $59 million in timber losses. Since its in- cept in 2005, the South ern Pine Beetle Assistance and Prevention Program has helped approximately 2,600 landowners remove 187,000 acres.

A circuit judge recently sentenced a Sanderson man to 12 years in jail for violating terms of his proba- tion stemming from drug charges in 2018.

Christopher Cook, 27, will get credit for more than 200 days of confinement at county jail. Court records in- dicate he violated probation by possessing wearables and not observing the court- ordered parole.

The planned sale had been set up by an uncoor- dinator. Mr. Hyatt drew an 18-month prison term in the plea deal with prosecutors, and he will be on drug of- fender probation for two years following his release.

• Connor McLean, 28, of Glen St. Mary will serve 15 months for violating proba- tion for burglary and grand theft in 2018. Court records indicate he fled a drug test. Mr. McLean has already served the bun- nel of the sentence in county jail.

Other defendants sen- tenced during court sessions on June 25 and July 2:

• Brandon Willey, VOP child neglect; 90 days in jail, 90-day probation (10th drug-related case pending).

• Terry Deas, VOP possession of controlled; one-year probation, sale of opiates or deriv- ative, sale and possession controlled drugs.

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provincial, scores released this week by the state late last month show.

Eighty-three percent of third graders scored proficient on the FSA math exam — up from about 77 percent last year. by two points to 62 percent.

The proficiency rate for Baker County third graders tied that of Nassau County’s and beat St. John’s County’s by 5 percent. The only school with a higher proficiency rate was the laboratory school at Florida State University, which had 88 percent of its third graders score a level 3 or better.

“The grade-level ELA scores followed the release of English Language Arts (ELA) results in early June that showed local third graders placed third among their peers statewide on that test, too.

The 1-5 scale.

The FSA results show that Macclenny Elementar y School third graders had the highest passing rate at 89 percent and eighth graders posted the lowest rate at 34 percent.

The Florida Department of Education released many more FSA results recently for all grades and subject areas.

Among all students taking the math FSA — which is administered to third-through-eighth graders — middle schoolers bumped their proficiency rate up three points to 56 percent this year, while the elementary school grades (third through fifth) saw their late- spring passing rates barely change by two points to 62 percent.

The FSA math scores fell short of the 65 percent mark in two ways: Twenty-two percent of middle schoolers who took the test last spring when 90 percent scored a level 3 or higher.

Another area of substantial gain was on the civics EOC where middle schoolers boosted their proficiency rate from 58 percent last year to 79 percent this year or roughly equal to the state rate.

Seventy percent of BCHS ninth and tenth graders also scored proficient on the administration of the biology EOC, a small increase from last year.

On the science FSA taken by fifth and eighth graders the passing rate was 34 percent.

The BCCPRD included their 2019 Baker County Value Adjustment Board (VAB) is seeking resumes from private legal counsel for appointment to represent the VAB as its legal counsel. Compensation for the appointed VAB private legal counsel must be submitted to the Office of the Clerk of the Courts, 339 E. Macclenny A venue, Macclenny, Florida by 5:00 pm July 31, 2019.

ATTENTION PARENTS: Is your child in need of shots for school or college? Bring them to the Baker County Health Department FREE IMMUNIZATIONS Ages 4-18 Kindergarten - School Entrance Immunization 7th grade/Adolescent Immunizations College Entry Immunizations Bring photo ID & insurance card. Available 7 am - 4 pm Appointments are encouraged.
Case dispositions from July 3 session

COUNTY COURT

The following case dispositions were ordered by Judge Roy Williams during the Thursday, July 11, 2019 session of the Baker County Court.

• Jessica W. Gunter, 31, of Macclenny was convicted of petit theft and battery, 180 days in jail, six-month probation, 29 days in jail (probation violation), no contact with children, six-month probation, no alcohol.

• Marcus Fennell, three counts on suspend- ed license (DWLS); 29 days in jail; 12-month probation, no alcohol.

• Ronny Wolfe, petit theft class, license, license class, obtain driver license, $1,000 fine.

• Jessica W. Gunter, 31, of Macclenny was convicted of petit theft; 30 days in jail, six-month probation, no alcohol.

• Emily A. Dougherty, 18, of Macclenny was convicted of petit theft, class, license, obtain driver license.

• Deidre K. Murphy, 23, of Macclenny was cited to the front door by only seconds, seen escaping in the parking lot and running toward the store lot and parking in the Murphy’s Oil lot.

• Marcus A. Crews, 49, of Macclenny was charged with domestic battery, resisting arrest and misdemeanor property damage following an encounter with his estranged wife.

A Walmart Supercenter employee spotted the suspect at a nearby residence, spotting the suspect at a nearby residence and striking her husband several times.

• Marcus A. Crews, 49, of Macclenny was charged with domestic battery, resisting arrest and misdemeanor property damage following an encounter with his estranged wife.

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Brian Croft and my wife were doing some laundry in our yard when we saw the fireworks last Wednesday night. The fireworks were lit up so brightly that they could be seen from our house, and we decided to grab some popcorn and settle in to enjoy the show.

Since we live in a suburban area, we were able to see the fireworks without any obstructions. The display was set off by a group of neighbors who live just across the street, and it was quite the spectacle. We could see the lights from our kitchen window and even from our bedroom.

The fireworks were synchronized to music, and we were impressed by the variety of colors and shapes that they created in the sky. The show lasted for about 20 minutes, and it was a lot of fun to watch.

In the end, we were both impressed by the display and the effort put into it by our neighbors. It was a great way to spend an evening together and enjoy some family time.
Flashbacks
BY: PUBLISHER JIM McGAULEY

Looking back at 2004

Here’s a look at some of the top stories in The Press 15 year ago this month — 2004: 

• The Florida Cabinet granted downtown and ordered the release from prison of James Meghrodt, then-46, of Cal- gary, after he served five years plus ten years for the shooting death of his wife’s ex-husband Darrell Norman of Tabor on a downtown Mac- cleery street in October, 1997. Mr. Meghrodt was re- leased in June. He was con- victed of shooting the victim seven times amid alleged re- peated threats to the wife.

• A teacher union negoti- ator released results of a De- partment of Education survey that determined Baker Coun- ty teacher pay and benefits ranked tenth from the bottom among Florida’s 67 counties. The $42,651 average fell below the nearly $47,000 average, ac- cording to the study.

Later that month, the school board approved a 12 percent pay raise. Local teach- ers, for the first time, were re- quired to obtain photo identi- fication as a security measure, as were other employees.

• Former county commis- sioner Cliff Barton found him- self with the same super-majority in the 2004 election as Gordon Higginbotham, then 46, of Cal- gary, who had run for clemency and ordered the shooting death of his wife’s ex-husband, Darrell Norman of Tabor on a downtown Mac- cleery street in October 1997. Mr. Barton was re- leased in June. He was con- victed of shooting the victim seven times amid alleged re- peated threats to the wife.

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Thursday, July 11, 2019

THE BAKER COUNTY PRESS

Page 9
OBITUARIES

Pete Alford, 83, of Sanderson
Clothene “Pete” Alford, 83, of Sanderson passed away on Saturday, July 6, 2019, at her residence following a long illness. She was born in Brooksville, NC and lived in Sanderson for 79 years. Mrs. Alford held several jobs during the years, but her favorite was working as a licensed nurse with the V.A. Medical Center in Lake City for over four years. She was a member of the Primary Nurses of Congregational Methodist Church of Sanderson. She loved helping babies and older people, seeing and being with her grandchildren. She was preceded in death by parents Frank and Ruth Wheeler; niece Mark Tatsum; sisters Steannie Gregg and Gertrude Case; brother Sumi Pink. Mrs. Alford was survived by her husband Warner Alford of Sanderson; daughter Joey (Joe) Thrift of Macclenny; sons Ricky (Terri) Thrift and High Price, NC, Robert (Rhonda) Tatsum and David Boyette, both of Sanderson, and Jessie (Debra) Tatsum of Baldwin; step-sons Tommy (Maria) Alford of Sanderson and Zane (Jeanne) Alford of Glen St. Mary; sister Pat Frankem; many great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and cousins.

Jack Blackburn, L.F.D.
William Stuckey “Stan” Boggs Sr., 72, of Macclenny passed away on Sunday, June 30, 2019, at St. Vincent’s Medical Center Riverilies in Jacksonville. He was born in Lacinia, FL on November 4, 1947 to the late Solon Hill Boggs Sr. and Florence Maddox Geiger Boggs. Stan was a lifelong resident of Macclenny where he became a member of the St. John Baptist Church of God. He graduated from LaGrange High School and the University of Georgia. Stan enjoyed playing football as a defensive end for the Georgia Bulldogs and also teaching people how to ski at the Callaway Gardens Ski Resort while in college. He earned a bachelor’s degree in business and started his first career as a recreation director for the City of Easton, GA. Stan first became a business owner and was a car Pro franchise, a dry cleaning company, Hirschson Milling Company, and Weight Loss and Wellness clinics in Douglas and Valdosta, GA. He also worked as a service manager for Fleetwood Homes for 20 years. Stan was very active, running three miles daily and enjoying working. He was an avid Georgia Bulldog football fan who also enjoyed golfing, playing tennis, and recreational wildlife on his 65-acre farm. He loved animals and especially loved his family and friends. Stan was preceded in death by his wife of 24 years, Suzanne McLain Boggs.

Mr. Boggs is survived by his loving wife of 14 years, Juliana “Julie” Brentwood Boggs of Macclenny; children William (Cynde) Boggs Jr. of Atlanta, GA, and Charity (Wilm) O’Berry of Douglas, GA; step-daughter Kaitlyn Johnson (Ghilad); brother Steven Hill Boggs Jr. of LaGrange, Jerome Buel (Peggy) Boggs of Augusta, GA, and Cato Boggs Sr. of Franklin, GA, sister Juanita Boggs of LaGrange; grandchildren Will Boggs, Kayt O’Berry, Jacob Boggs and Tristan O’Berry.

A visitation of his Life was held on July 7 at Calvary Christian Church in Douglas, GA. Arrangements were under the direction of V. Todd Funeral Services of Macclenny.

Bud Davis, 84, of Glen St. Mary
Lindsey Harvey (Bud) Davis, 84, of Glen St. Mary passed away at St. Vincent’s Riverside in Jacksonville on Tuesday, July 2, 2019. Bud was born on March 20, 1935 in Glen St. Mary to the late McKinley and Gladys Williams Davis. He was a resident of Glen St. Mary for 47 years and served in the United States Army Bell Telephone Company until his retirement in 1992. He served our country in the Korean War. Bud was a born-again believer who cherished planting vegetables and tending to his garden for 35 years. He was preceded in death by his lovely wife Clarice Wheeler Davis; brothers Everett, Ralph, Ora, Mallie and James Davis; and parents McKinley and Gladys Williams Davis.

Bud is survived by his sons Jason (Tami) Davis and Scott (Brenda) Davis of Jacksonville; grandchildren Brittney and Kendy Davis; great-grandson Trenton.

A private service for Mr. Davis was held on July 8 at South普丝 Cemetery in Sanderson with Brother Tommy Richardson officiating. Guerry Funeral Home of Macclenny was in charge of arrangements.

Family grateful

The Haskow/Little Family would like to thank the entire family and friends of our son and brother, Al- exander Karagiannopoulos for their outpouring of words of love and support during this time of grief. God bless you all.

OBITUARIES

Ethel Ford, 68, of Macclenny
Ethel Jewell Ford, 68, of Macclenny passed away on Monday, July 8, 2019. She attended Baker County High School. She retired from Northeast Florida State Hospital after 25 years. She enjoyed cooking, spending time with her children and grandchildren. Ethel was a member of Faith Bible Church. She was preceded in death by her parents RayFuller and Mrs. Bernice Reed; daughter Sabrina Ford Evans; grandson Jordan Reed; sister Patricia Reed; mother Jennie Boggus.

Mr. Boggus is survived by daughters Carla (Lonnie) Jones and Tressa Reed; grandson Eloise Singleton; sons Reginald Reed, Carlos Ford and Alphonze (Whitney) Green; sisters Emma Reed, Virginia (Alex) Wilson and Aline Reed; brothers Henry Reed Sr., Stan James (Reid) Reed; 23 grandchildren; 8 great grandchildren; Godson Jason Davis and a host of friends.

Visitation will be July 12 from 6-8 p.m. at the church. Funeral services will be held Saturday, July 13 at 11 a.m. at the church with her pastor officiating. Interment will follow in the Hill Homes Memorial Cemetery. Commemorative Service will be held at the Lower Lakes Camp on Saturday, July 13.

Tunk Farm, 43, of Glen St Mary
Michael “Mike” Tunk, 43, of Glen St Mary passed away Monday, July 1, 2019. He was born in Jacksonville, FL on October 28, 1975 to the late Ruby Tinkle and Maryann Sportman Tunk. Mike was a resident of Tryon, NC and was attending Manchester University. Mike was an avid gardener who also enjoyed riding his motorcycles. Mike also loved hanging out with family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his mother Ivorii Mosley.

Mr. Tunk is survived by his loving wife of 20 years, Tomyra of Glen St Mary; children Christopher and Tyler Mosley of Lake City and Keki of Glen St Mary; brothers Mark (Jacqueline) Stoddard of Glen St Mary, Lee (Christa) Stoddard of Jacksonville, FL; sisters Misty (Steven) Schedlbauer and Danita Staats both of Or- ange Park; grandchildren Brighten and Michelle Mosley; numerous nieces, nephews, and friends.

A graveside service will be held on July 8 at Oak Grove Cemetery. Arrangements were under the direction of V. Todd Funeral Services of Macclenny.
Ronald Hudgens Sr., 74, of Sanderson passed away Monday, July 1, 2019 at home. Services will be held on Saturday, July 6, 2019 at the Bible Place Church with Rev. Chip Davis officiating. Mr. Hudgens is survived by his mother and stepfather Ronald "Jitter-Bug" Eugene Har-...
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- 2/14tfc

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to the mark. Ms. Hodges said the four-day event included whitewater rafting, a tour of the Biltmore House, and more, all for the new building. After the move we will be back on track. If anyone would be interested in joining our crew, volunteer family or to make donations [for the store] come see us,” she said.

Meet Eve Ciotti: New county forestor

Eve Ciotti, 22, of Gainesville was recently named the Palm Beach Gardens native aims to “get people connected with forestry,” said Ms. Rockefeller. “They were a lovely couple,” she said. That steer is nothing to be ashamed of,“ she added. “I know that she's been able to give more than $22,000 back,” she said, referencing the store period

The group white rafting in North Carolina.

to mark the occasion. Ms. Hodges said the four-day event included whitewater rafting, a tour of the Biltmore House, and more, all for the new building. After the move we will be back on track. If anyone would be interested in joining our crew, volunteer family or to make donations [for the store] come see us,” she said.

The group white rafting in North Carolina.
All-stars earn third in the state

BRIANNA BARTLETT
SPORTS EDITOR

Baker County High School defeated Tampa Catholic 6-1 in the final two games of the tournament, defeating Tampa Catholic 6-1 in the final two games of the tournament, making this my last coaching session,” said Staples.

Jennifer Rosepiler, the staff first invited the parents of children who have special needs children to sign up for swim lessons. “We are happy to be third in the state,” said Staples. “We are happy to be third in the state,” said Staples.

Over the past three weeks a local special needs child, who has special swim lessons from the YMCA with the hopes of improving his swimming skills and to raise awareness for the importance of early intervention for children with disabilities.

Michael Curry, who has autism, began swim lessons with the staff. Shanann Curry, who is the father of Michael, said she made a deal that the group and she would explore offering special needs swim lessons.

“I jumped on the opportunity to be here,” said Ms. Wilds. “I have worked with, and I have worked with,” said Ms. Wilds. “I have worked with, and I have worked with,” said Ms. Wilds. “I have worked with, and for Michael, Ms. Wilds is his best companion.

However, for Michael, Ms. Wilds is his best companion.

“Michael is one of the sweetest kids I have ever worked with,” said Ms. Wilds. “I look forward to seeing him and his family every week.”

Mrs. Curry explained that special needs children can react differently to instructors, teachers involved in the special needs program.

“Ms. Rosepiler commended a YMCA in Texas that has a special needs program for not only children, but also adults. That program is what she is looking to implement into our community.

“Here at the Y we do not want any child that can learn to swim, not learn to swim,” said Mrs. Rosepiler. “We offer lessons to all children, all ages, all disabilities and all ethnicities.”

While swim lessons do come at a cost, that is something Mrs. Rosepiler feels should not deter families. The YMCA offers financial assistance for anyone. It is more about “finishing it off” and trying to help them build their endurance to get faster times and meet their goals, Mrs. Rosepiler explained.

She expects her coaching style will be “less about, less about, less about, less about the techniques and how they can go.”

She says the greatest difference in coaching young children compared to high schoolers is the goals she has for them and her coaching style.

For high schoolers who have already developed basic skills it’s more about “finishing it off” and trying to help them build their endurance to get faster times and meet their goals, the coach said.

When developing strokes, little kids have to work from the ground up while the high school team has to work more methodically to perfect their technique and focus on their hand placement and timing, Richmond explained.

She expects her coaching style with the Wildcats to be “less about correcting them and more of encouraging them,” she said.

In preparing for the coming season, the Cats have been in the BHS weight room to build up their strength. In the pool, the team utilizes GoPro to watch their proficiency under the water, which helps to see how far they’re dropping their hands and hips in the water and how their arm movements and turns as well as Extensions.

In addition to being certified swim instructors, tutors involved in the special needs program research new methods to improve the practice.

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According to Richmond, athletes are still encouraged to join the un- formally every week.

Mrs. Curry explained that special needs children can react differently to different people. She says just because Ms. Wilds was right for one child, it didn’t mean she would be for someone else.

In addition to being certified swim instructors, tutors involved in the special needs program research new methods to improve the practice.

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Richmond expressed her excitement for the challenge of coaching both teams and for the new experience of working with high schoolers.

She looks forward to the sense of community that the sport brings among the student athletes and their families.

“Not just about swimming, it’s also about the sportsmanship,” said coach Richmond. “Making friends, and en- joying each other’s company in a happy and healthy way.”

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Wildcats season kicks off on Friday night with a home game at the YAC.

The Wildcats season kicks off on Friday night with a home game at the YAC.

For information call 295-0345.
Barracudas finish second with 21 first place

BRIANNA BARTLETT
SPORTS EDITOR

With 21 first place finishes and 22 top three finishes in the YMCA Barracudas took second place in an away swim meet on June 29. The team totaled 409 points in the tri-meet against the Duval Dolphins and the Ponte Vedra Piranhas. Top scorers for Baker included Isaiah Katsacos and Logan Thomas at 27 points each.

Isaiah Katsacos swam the 25-yard freestyle event in 26.72 seconds to take first place in the seven to eight age category. Katsacos also earned first place in the 25-yard breaststroke and another freestyle event. In the 50-yard backstroke event Logan Thomas dominated his opponents with a fourth second gap between him and second place. Thomas also swam in the 50-yard breaststroke and 50-yard freestyle for first place.

Thomas was also apart of the Barracudas 200-yard relay team that earned first place. Collins Richmond, William Nickles and Jack Putney were the other members of the relay event.

Savannah Powell kicked off the swim meet with a first place finish in the 25-yard breaststroke and another freestyle event. Powell reached the wall nearly 35 seconds before Ponte Vedra’s second place finish.

In the 200-yard freestyle Haydon Bridges defeated teammates Collins Richmond and Jack Putney for first place. Richmond and Putney finished in second and third to give the Barracudas a total of three more points. Collette Swanger swam the 100-yard freestyle in 44 seconds for first place compared to the Duval Dolphins swimmer who finished in one minute and 15 seconds.

Swimming the 50-yard freestyle in one minute and three seconds Noah Putney got first place in the eight and under category. Putney swam second in the 100-yard freestyle relay along with teammates Savannah Powell and Rhyanne Ropsepler.

Garrett McIntosh, Christopher McFadden and Isaiah Katsacos for first place, Putney also earned a top three finish in the 25-yard breaststroke event with a time of 54 seconds.

Natalie Taylor took first place in the girls open 100-yard backstroke event. Taylor also beat out teammates Savannah Powell and Rhyanne Ropsepler in the 25-yard freestyle event to take first place. Powell and Ropsepler finished closely behind taking second and third place.

Kate Putney had one individual first place finish and two top three finishes in the meet. Putney earned first place over fellow Barracuda Meghan Thomas who took second place, in the girls open 100-yard backstroke event.

Putney also aided in the Barracuda’s first place finish in the 200-yard freestyle relay for ages 11 to 12. She was joined by Peyton Ropsepler, Isabella Gray and Natalie Taylor.

Weston Thomas defeated a Ponte Vedra Piranha in the 50-yard backstroke event by more than six seconds for first place. Another Baker swimmer, Lanie Taylor finished the race in the third place.

Thomas and teammate Nathan Katsacos also earned top three finishes in the 50-yard freestyle and 50-yard butterfly for ages nine through ten. Nathan Katsacos not only finished in the top three in two events, but he also took first place in the 50-yard breaststroke.

Collin Richmond shared the spot of first place in the 100-yard breaststroke with a swimmer from the Duval Dolphins with a time of one minute and 40 seconds. In addition to the first place finish, Richmond took second in the 200-yard freestyle and in the 100-yard backstroke.

The Barracuda’s final first place finish was by Ashlyn Thomas in the 25-yard freestyle event. Her teammate Peyton Thomas took third place in the same event.

Baker will host its next meet on July 13 against the Duval Dolphins, warm-ups begin at 8 a.m. and events will kick off at 9 a.m.
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OR

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Marquette

Rocking Chair

34” Pellet Smoker Elite

Traeger

Reg. $799.95
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For use on dark colored backgrounds

For use on light colored backgrounds

$598
REG. $799.95
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