

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS HERALD

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Many people use the new year to make resolutions to get into shape and eat healthier. Keystone Herald's reporter Kylie Cordell talked with experts who provided tips for staying on course.

Set realistic goals to get into – and staying – in shape

By Kylie Cordell
For The Herald

CLAY COUNTY – The New Year often means starting a weight loss plan, eating a more nutritious diet and building healthier habits. However, 80% of resolutions fail within the first few months. Why is that? Many set unrealistic goals, and their confidence takes a huge hit when they fail to reach them. Others become overwhelmed when they set out to make big changes in their life and fail to live up to their high expectations.

The consequences of setting unrealistic goals are big. They can lower your self-esteem, cause unnecessary stress, and cause further health problems. So here are a few ways to get into shape and optimize your health without making yourself miserable.

Start small. Create a personalized workout routine that fits your schedule.

"Small incremental goals are key. Don't start with unreachable goals. Just focus on one thing and make small incremental changes on a daily basis," said Workout Anytime Fitness manager and personal trainer, Mallory Diamond. "And set specific goals with a manageable timeline."

Workout Anytime is a 24-hour operation with gyms in Orange Park, Lake Asbury,

Oakleaf Plantation and Penney Farms.

"It's an environment that really is for everyone from your silver sneakers that comes from our medical care program to pro athletes and everyone in between," said Fitness Director, Carl Boothby.

"I have seen everything from watching who suffered a stroke who could barely shuffle, let alone walk, become very active. We have a trainer who is wheelchair-bound, and he's highly successful. We had a 16-year-old whose pediatrician told her that she was morbidly obese.

We created a personalized workout routine, and she's starting to feel better, and more confident about herself. These stories, these are why we do what we do," he said.

Diamond agreed. "We guide them through the health and fitness lifestyle. My oldest client is 89. He couldn't reach up and get something in his cupboard because his shoulder range of motion was so bad. He trained with me, and now he can reach and pick up the heaviest bowl pain-free. I've had multiple patients who have gotten off diabetic, high cholesterol, and high blood sugar medication. It's life-changing for them," she said.

"It's not just about getting into shape, but shaping people's lives."



PHOTO BY KYLIE CORDELL

From left, Anytime Fitness Director Carl Boothby, manager Dez Payton and personal trainer Mallory Diamond said the key to sticking with a fitness plan is to set realistic goals.

During gym orientation, clients can meet with Workout Anytime staff members to address their fitness goals, whether they are trying to lose weight, gain weight, or gain muscle. "We feature what is called cardio equipment – everything from stair masters, treadmills, ellipticals, and then we have things that are more adaptive to people who are recovering from injuries."

They also offer group fitness.

"We find that for many of our members, that's where they feel most comfortable.

There's group motivation. There's a bit of peer pressure to show up. We also have group yoga classes. We also have virtual trainers, as well," said Boothby. "We have people who work out three days a week on-site and three days virtually. It really just depends on the person, their budgets and time constraints."

However, the easiest, most effective way to build healthier habits starts in the kitchen,

SEE GOALS, 9



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Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12
13						14				15			
16						17				18			
19					20					21			
			22						23			24	
25	26	27		28				29			30		
31			32		33		34					35	
36				37		38				39			40
	41				42				43		44		
		45						46		47		48	
49	50		51				52			53			
54		55				56					57	58	59
60					61					62			
63					64					65			
66					67					68			

- CLUES ACROSS

1. Take weapons away from

6. Soviet Socialist Republic

9. Most ancient Hindu scriptures

13. Actress Lathan

14. Baseball's strikeout king

15. British codebreaker Turing

16. One who lives by disreputable dealings

17. Tropical American plant

18. Opposite of right

19. Importance

21. Monetary units

22. Lawmen

23. Cool!

24. Affirmative answer

25. Thrust horse power (abbr.)

28. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!

29. Muslim nobleman

31. About aviation

33. Scientific instrument

36. Protests strongly

38. Not polished

39. Grab

41. Alias

44. Large wrestler

45. Relative quantities

46. One who is big and awkward

48. Sunscreen rating

49. Atomic #90
51. Mock

52. Whales

54. Peoples

56. A state of being unclothed

60. Ottoman military commanders

61. Gatherer of fallen leaves

62. Norse personification of old age

63. Muslim mystic

64. German river

65. Measuring instrument

66. Have witnessed

67. Disallow

68. Proverb
20. Instant replay in soccer

21. Less polished

23. Popular pickup truck model

25. Slang for a cigarette

26. Large pile

27. Solid geometric figure

29. One from the Big Apple

30. Male admirers

32. Balsam is one

34. Local area network

35. Canadian law enforcers

37. Koran chapters

40. Cooperstown, NY museum (abbr.)

42. Certificate (abbr.)

43. An official who carries a mace of office

47. Briefly in fashion

49. Volcanic ash

50. Dutch city

52. Made of wood

53. Legendary golfer

55. Restaurant

56. None

57. Spanish city

58. Stony waste matter

59. Father

61. Confederate soldier

65. The ancient Egyptian sun god

- CLUES DOWN
1. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
2. The back side of the neck
3. A type of imine
4. Black bird
5. Partner to ÕPaÕ
6. Puts together in time
7. Lucid
8. Transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm
9. Demonstrates the truth of
10. Ancient Greek City
11. Nishi language
12. Slang for fidgety
14. Southwestern farmers
17. Metric weight unit



Now 92, Sue Plaster still has fond stories of her parents, pilots Alfred and Natalie Ellis. Both were in World War II.

Still going at 92, women shares stories of parents in World War II

By Natalie Gilstrap
For The Herald

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Sue Plaster was only 11 when Pearl Harbor was attacked. “My 11th birthday was three days before Pearl Harbor,” she said. At a young age, she became interested in the war after realizing the significance of the event. “I remember thinking that I’ll be the only one to remember all this. So, I was taking it in,” she said. Her interest in World War II also stemmed from the fact her parents were pilots during the war.

Her father, Alfred Ellis, enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps the day after Pearl Harbor. “My father was flying all over the world,” she said. Eventually, he was stationed in Africa where he remained there until the war ended. Unfortunately, he died not long after the war concluded when his plane’s engines failed over the ocean while transporting a group of women in the WAC, also known as the Women’s Army Corps. “There were 20 WACs in there. They were taking them to a larger base to put them on a big plane to send them back home,” she said. Plaster was 14 when he died, but

remembers him as someone who was fun and had a love for aerobatics. Her mother, Natalie, was a pilot like her husband before the war started. She taught classes on packing parachutes at the beginning of WWII. “She was the fourth woman in the world to get a license packing parachutes. She didn’t want someone else to pack her parachute,” Plaster said. “She wanted to do her own.” A few months later, she moved the family from Iowa to Texas after joining the newly formed Women Airforce Service Pilots or WASP. “There were only 1,200 that made the WASP. They had 4,000 go through. Some of them didn’t make it. They were very tough on them,” she said. During her time as a WASP pilot, her mother ferried aircraft from their factories to their designated bases. After the war, she remarried and never pursued flying again. Plaster, now 92, continues to share the memory of her parents and World War II. In addition, she is active at Trinity Baptist Church and plays bridge twice a week. She is also an active member of the Daughters of American Revolution, the Woman’s Club in Melrose and Keystone Heights and a member of the Forever Sisters of Lakes. Lastly, she is a realtor for CB Isaac Realty and has nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.



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C.J. Acres Animal Rescue Farm dedicated to ending animal suffering



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LEE SACKETT
Ashley and Hemmingway the pig enjoy hanging out together.

Rescue shelter teaches compassion, responsible stewardship

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Welcome to C.J. Acres Animal Rescue Farm: a non-profit, all-volunteer farm that exists to reduce animal suffering by rescuing, rehabilitating, and reintroducing animals while also promoting compassionate consumption and responsible animal stewardship.

The nonprofit serves as a haven for approximately 100 total part-time and full-time

residents, and all creatures have an inspiring story to tell.

Animal species include anything from horses to cows, goats, feral cats, sheep, chickens, pigs and ducks, many ranging from areas well outside the state lines of Florida, including Georgia, North Carolina, Iowa, Indiana, North Carolina, South Carolina and Canada.

Residents escape the harshest of circumstances, which can include natural disasters such as hurricanes, fires, and floods or worse, and unfortunate human-created circumstances, such as abuse, neglect, abandonment, and other mistreatments.

Despite a dark past for many residents of the farm, an ultimate saving grace is established within the fences. The fact that the animals now have a haven. Both part-time and full-time animals take up residency at the farm. If other arrangements cannot be made, those who enter the property are more than welcome to stay for life.

“That’s the thing. The animals that are here kind of won the lottery because there are literally billions of animals that don’t have that golden ticket,” founder Lee Sackett said.

It’s a fact that should especially be considered important when one reviews the life expectancy of three species on the property.

SEE ANIMAL, 11

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10 health resolutions doctors encourage you to make today

By StatePoint Media
For The Herald

The New Year represents a fresh start and is the perfect time to invest in your health. However, you may be unsure what resolutions will have the biggest impact. Doctors say that the easy, tangible actions you take are some of the most important.

“Many people kick off the start of each new year with big-picture health resolutions,” says Jack Resneck, Jr., M.D., president of the American Medical Association. “The good news is that small, positive health choices made right now can have long-lasting effects.”

Want to get started today? Here are the 10 resolutions the AMA recommends top your list this year:

- Exercise is essential for your physical and mental health, so get moving today. A good rule of thumb for adults is at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity.
- Vaccination is the best protection against several serious illnesses. To protect yourself and your family, get up to date on your vaccines, including the annual flu shot and the COVID-19 vaccine for everyone 6 months and older. Your doctor can let you know if you’re due for a COVID booster. If you have questions, speak with your physician and review trusted resources, including getvaccineanswers.org.
- Get screened. Estimates based on statistical models show that since April 2020, millions of screenings for breast, colorectal, and prostate cancer diagnoses may have been missed due to pandemic-related care disruptions. Check in with your physician. If you’re due for preventive care, tests or screenings, make an appointment. These measures are designed to keep you healthy and help your doctor spot certain condi-

SEE HEALTH, 5

OPINION



No more excuses or resolutions: I want to be better, healthier person

By Don Coble
Managing Editor

It’s that time of year when we all make resolutions to improve our lives. We make self-promises to lose weight, exercise and read more books.

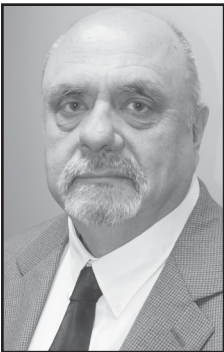
We resolve to serve more hours as volunteers, attend church more frequently and be a little nicer.

I’ve made resolutions every year. I start with good intentions. But I still haven’t lost any weight. I still don’t exercise regularly. I don’t have time to read books. I’m not proud of my lack of progress, but I have lots of excuses – some of them good – for why they didn’t work out for me. I guess we all have our reasons.

This year, I’m not going to make another blueprint to be healthier and happier, because I may fall back into my old routine. Instead, I vow to understand why things happen around me. Unnecessary thoughts lead to distractions.

From this point forward, I want to understand ...

- Since I came down with COVID three days before Christmas, I can’t stop wondering why you can’t smell or taste anything when you’re sick except cold medicine. When I was sick, I couldn’t taste food for a week. I made prime rib for Christmas dinner, and I was told it was the best-tasting meal I couldn’t taste. I have to take everyone else’s word for it.



Don Coble



I refuse to eat beef liver, sushi and okra, but my senses are so challenged right now, it’s possible to sneak them past me if I keep my eyes closed.

But put a blindfold on me, I can identify every brand of daytime/nighttime cold medicine.

- Why does anyone waste time trying to figure out cryptocurrency? Nobody has been able to tell me exactly what cryptocurrency is, and with the creator of FTX, Sam Bankman-Fried, about to join the prison league pickleball team of disgraced investor Bernie Madoff, WorldCom’s Bernie Ebbers, Enron’s Kenneth Lay and Adelpia’s John Rigas, I don’t want to know. Besides, at my age, I’m going to stay away from anything with the word “crypt” in it.
- I can’t figure out why very few drivers will stop to let you pull out of a parking space. It’s hard enough when you’re trying to leave the grocery and you’ve got a testosterone-dripping pickup truck on one side and an SUV on the other. It’s like trying to pull out of a canyon with a blindfold. As a favor, don’t weave around me when I’m halfway out of my space. Please.

SEE RESOLUTION, 5

Word OF THE MONTH

Word of the Week is a feature that aims to help readers boost their vocabulary in a meaningful way that has practical application. Each week, our editorial staff presents a word, its definition and its use in a sentence.

Syllabub: a noun that means a whipped cream dessert flavored with wine or sherry.

“We sampled syllabub for the first time while we were on a cruise.”

THIS MONTH in History

Five years ago, 2018

- The Charter Review Commission recommends a pay hike for county commissioners.
- A building at Kings Tree Apartments on Kingsley Avenue is destroyed by fire, displacing 15 families.
- Attendance boundaries are set for Discovery Oaks Elementary that’s under construction.

10 years ago, 2013

- The county commission votes to approve digital billboards, but rejects a plan for electronic gambling.
- The battle over a toxic waste site in Middleburg enters its fourth year after a man accepted 16,000 tons of toxic coal ash on his 30-acre property.
- Following the resignation of Debbie Ricks, the Green Cove Springs votes to fill a vacant seat on the city council with Ray Braly.

20 years ago, 2003

- One hundred forty-two members of the Clay County Sheriff’s Office donate \$30 each to Quigley House as part of its “Beards and Blossoms” program.
- Nine students at St. Johns Country Day School are selected for Cum Laude Society.
- Bono’s Bar-B-Q opens on Fleming Island.

30 years ago, 1993

- The BCC rejects a plan to create the Clay Utility Board.
- The Orange Park High wrestling team dominates Ed White with a 52-27 win.
- Three county churches combine to open Annunciation Catholic School in Middleburg – the first Catholic school in the county.

40 years ago, 1983

- Dorothy I. Hatcher retires after driving a \Clay County District Schools bus for 35 years.

Send us a letter ...

We’d like to hear from you. Perhaps you are concerned about the county commission, the school board or your city council or commission, sit down and take a few moments to write us

a letter. All we ask is that you keep it civil, no name-calling and write no more than 600 words. All we ask is that you stick to local issues, be clear and make a point. We reserve the right to edit for AP Stylebook errors, grammar and spelling. In your

email, type Letter to the Editor in your subject and send it to Managing Editor Don Coble at don@claytodayonline.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Opinions ...

The views and opinions expressed on this page are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Clay Today.

Loud and proud

Local guitarist Paul Wane rocks national anthem ahead of Jaguars game

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline

CLAY COUNTY – Paul Wane’s 47-year music career came down to a 90-second performance last Saturday in the final regular season game for the Jacksonville Jaguars.

And the guitarist from the Duval County Line Band absolutely rocked TIAA Bank Field.

His rendition of “The Star-Spangled Banner” not only put nearly 70,000 fans in a deafening frenzy, but it also sent shock waves around the country. Social media responded quickly with praise for the local musician, including nearly 112,000 likes on YouTube in one day.

Wearing biker boots, sunglasses and a No. 23 Jacksonville jersey, Wane put a distinctive Southern Rock spin on the song that represents the nation.

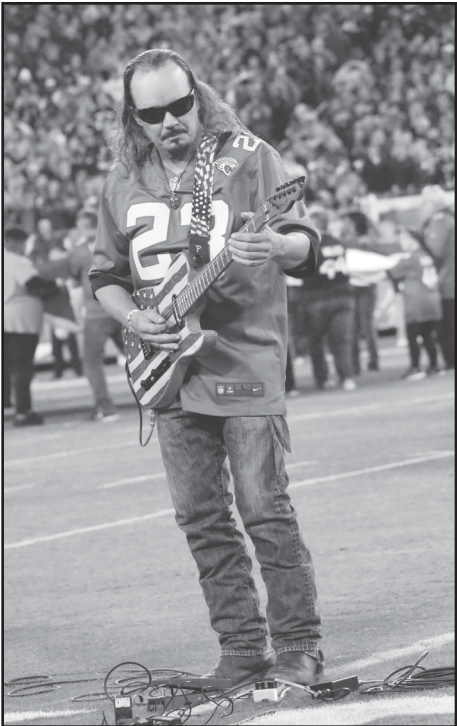
“It’s been way more than I expected,” Wane said of the overwhelming response. “It’s been a whirlwind. I’m doing my best to keep up with it, but it’s not easy. My phone has been going crazy.”

The pregame song was a solo act that shook the stadium. When he finished his final lick, the crowd erupted in approval, and national media outlets who are more accustomed to long-winded versions of the song were impressed.

“They had a story in USA Today. Guitar World did a story. Everybody wants an interview,” Wane said.

The story in Guitar World said Wane “melted thousands of faces” before the game. The headline read: “Florida man serves up uber-patriotic, shred-heavy rendition of the national anthem at Jaguars vs Titans game.”

Oddly enough, nobody in Duval County Line lives in Jacksonville. Most of the band is located in Clay County. Wane lives in nearby Putnam County, but he performs regularly in restaurants and saloons around



Paul Wane electrified Jacksonville Jaguars fans with his stunning performance of “The Star-Spangled Banner” before the regular season finale on Jan. 7 against Tennessee.

the county.

“We were on our way to our first show and we passed a sign as we got into Jacksonville,” Wane said. “It said Duval County Line and we agreed that was our new name.”

The process for the Jaguars game started with Wane’s Guitars for Kids Foundation’s Rising Star program. Wane takes donated guitars and has them refurbished before he gives them away to children. The foundation was created to provide children with the option of music instead of drugs and alcohol.

One of the guitars went to a boy whose father works security at TIAA Bank Field. He told fellow workers and word eventually



“It’s been way more than I expected,” Wane said of the overwhelming response. “It’s been a whirlwind. I’m doing my best to keep up with it, but it’s not easy. My phone has been going crazy.”

– Paul Wane

reached the Jaguars brass.

“I was in the studio when I got an email from the Jaguars asking if I could send them a tape,” Wane said. “We did it right then and sent it. Before I got home, they already emailed me back and said they wanted me.”

Wane said most of the apprehension disappeared once he tore into the song.

“Sure I was a little nervous, especially at first,” he said. “There was a little more excitement than what I was used to. You have to be a little more excited when ESPN puts you around the world and there are 70,000 fans in the stands.

“And when it was over, I couldn’t believe the crowd. They were so loud. What an honor.”

To see a replay of his performance,

visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=noCr2-VmHXL.

Wane’s phone and Facebook page have been deluged by people who want to donate to his foundation. Others are asking about getting guitars and clubs from Northeast Florida and Southern Georgia are trying to book dates.

“That’s a good thing, especially for the Rising Star foundation,” he said.

Instead of entertaining millions, Wane now will go back to working in smaller venues. He has regular weekly gigs in Crescent City and the Howlin Wolf in Melrose.

And if Jacksonville wants to get in another rockin’ mood before a game, Wane is just a call away.

“Anytime,” he said

Resolutions

from page 4

• Why I’m so afraid of my SmartWatch. Maybe it’s because minutes after I bought it, it sent me an alert I was 22 minutes away from my favorite sports bar. How did my watch know I was going there? I just put it

on. I never mentioned the place. Was it following me before I bought it? What scared me the most is that’s exactly where I was going. Talk about artificial intelligence.

• Why anybody cares about Prince Harry and Megan Markle or their documentary on Netflix. If the subscription on-demand service is serious about stopping viewers from sharing login information, it should offer the

series for free. Suddenly, network programming won’t seem so bad.

• Cellphone conversations in public. It used to be easy to see who had mental challenges in public. They were the people walking around talking to themselves. Now it’s hard to separate them from people with their earbuds. While we’re at it, don’t talk on speakerphone when you’re in a public place.

I don’t care what time Regina’s “old man” came home last night.

In reality, there aren’t a lot of pressing issues keeping me from making goals – and achieving them. Cellphone calls and a snotty nose won’t keep me from trying to be a better person.

Wish me luck.

Health

from page 4

tions before they become more serious.

4. High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, can increase your risk of heart attack or stroke, and it affects millions of Americans. Visit [ManageYourBP.org](https://www.ManageYourBP.org) to understand what your blood pressure numbers mean and what you can do to get your blood pressure under control.

5. One in three American adults has pre-diabetes, a condition that can lead to type 2 diabetes if left unmanaged. However, there are steps you can take that can help delay or

even prevent the onset of Type-2 diabetes. Learn your risk by taking a simple 2-minute self-screening test at [DoIHavePrediabetes.org](https://www.DoIHavePrediabetes.org). This resource also features helpful lifestyle tips that can help you reverse prediabetes.

6. Whenever possible, drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages and replace processed foods – especially those with added sodium and sugar – with nutritious, whole foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, herbs and spices.

7. If consuming alcohol, drink only in moderation. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans defines that as up to one drink per day for women and two drinks a day for

men, and only by adults of legal drinking age.

8. Speak with your doctor or health care professional about quitting tobacco and nicotine use. Declare your home and car smoke-free to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure.

9. Follow your doctor’s instructions when taking prescription drugs – especially opioids.

Always store and dispose of these medications safely to prevent misuse. Whenever prescribed antibiotics, take them exactly as directed. Not taking the full course can lead to antibiotic resistance, a serious public health problem, and will not make you feel

better if you have a virus, such as a cold or flu.

10. Invest in your mental health by managing stress, getting sufficient sleep, exercising, and seeking help from a mental health professional when you need it.

If you don’t have health insurance, the AMA encourages you to sign up for coverage at [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov), which has new, affordable options. The enrollment deadline for 2023 coverage is Jan. 15. Find more health resources at [ama-assn.org](https://www.ama-assn.org). For a healthy 2023 and beyond, invest in your wellness with these doctor-recommended New Year’s resolutions.

Clay County Agriculture Fair wants to know ...
Are you a super fan?

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The Clay County Agriculture Fair wants its fans to put down



ally met their greatest fair fan, and he just won me over like. I don't think I've ever met anyone that loves fairs as much as this guy. "So I was like, we have got to bring this to Clay County because as we all know, everybody loves the Clay County Fair." To be nominated, fans must go to clay-countyfair.org and click the Participate tab to find the Greatest Fair Fan section. From there, fair organizers want to know of candidates who are "passionate and enthusiastic about the Fair but actively promotes and shares their love with family, friends and the community."

Nominations, which will be accepted until Feb. 1, also must include a short essay along with contact information, photos, posters and collateral materials. Nominations can be submitted through the website. The winner will be notified by March 1. "It's going to be a huge honor," Hyder said. "They're going to get a shirt, a pin and bragging honors. The whole red carpet will be rolled out for them." This year's fair will run from March 30 through April 9.

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the giant turkey legs, jumbo Teddy bears and deep-fried sticks of butter and grab a pen to nominate this year's "Greatest Fair Fan." The new promotion not only will include special recognition during opening ceremonies, but the zealous fan also will get free access to the Clay County Fairgrounds for all 11 days. "We actually borrowed that from our trip up to the Erie County Fair in New York," said Fair Executive Director Tasha Hyder. "They do that contest up there, and I actu-

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Clay County Fair finds happy note with this year’s music lineup

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – The good news is the severity of COVID-19 has been dramatically reduced in the past year. While that should help drive ticket sales for the Clay County Agriculture Fair, it created a lot of challenges for the organization to create its seven-night music lineup.

Restrictions have been reduced or eliminated in most countries, and that’s pushed headlining bands on tours of Europe, Fair Executive Director Tasha Hyder said. And now that people are eager



Niko Moon

to leave their lockdowns, many bands also have significantly hiked their fees.

“Difficult is an understatement,” Hyder said. “The world is opening up after

SEE MUSIC, 8



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Mercy Villages to offer housing support, life skills for those in need

By Kylie Cordell
For The Herald

MIDDLEBURG – Mercy is developing an apartment-style campus offering provisional housing to those in need. The village will comprise 65 units that will house their Family and Student Self-Sufficiency program. The project will break ground this spring, said Board Chair Dr. Robert Cowie.

“We don’t deal with chronically homeless,” said Cowie. “We deal with situationally homeless. We have a call center here where people can call our number. Our call center gets hundreds of calls monthly, and we have over 200 resources to help them connect.”

The Call Center Care Agents take calls from Clay County residents seeking help in many areas, including utilities, rent, mortgage, medical needs, food, clothing, evictions, veterans assistance and more.

“What attracted me to Mercy is that we have a self-sufficiency plan. It’s not a hand-out; it’s a hand-up. We want to get people to a level of self-sufficiency,” he said.

The original self-sufficiency program was designed to be completed in 90-120 days. “But the social workers have discovered that it takes much longer. We realized that they needed long-term help.”

Households can participate in a permanent supportive housing program in

Clay County. The Housing Choice Voucher Program helps households pay their rent by providing a “rent subsidy” directly to their landlord; however, the problem isn’t just paying rent but finding affordable housing.

“We have people who qualify, but there are not enough facilities; there are no apartments. No homes to rent,” Cowie said.

“To make a profit, houses have to be at least \$25,000, but that’s not affordable for most people. We see all of these beautiful houses going up, but they are not accessible to teachers, first responders, police or nurses. They can’t afford to live here.”

When real estate prices go up, it pushes people out. Some are commuting in from outlying districts an hour and a half away. Others are forced to live out of their car.

According to Cowie, 10% of Clay County residents live below the federal poverty line, and another 22% below ALICE – Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed. However, with the help of generous donors, Mercy Villages can provide individuals and families with the support they need to get back on their feet.

The program will be organized in “tiers.” Tier 1 will be the entry-level for clients as it is now. As clients progress with the life skills they need to achieve total self-sufficiency – employment, financial stability, transportation, spiritual health – they will



Officials with Mercy Villages are eager to break ground on a 65-unit apartment-style campus to help those who are “situationally” homeless – particularly children. The development is located on College Drive in Middleburg.

move up the ladder until they reach Tier 4. At that level, they will be able to move into their own house or apartment.

As an additional benefit of having the entire Village available, Mercy Village will have the opportunity to provide additional help for unaccompanied high school students after they graduate. They also help students apply to St. Johns River College, a local vocational school, or seek employment.

“We have a common area and four bedrooms around it. It’s set up that each two bedrooms will share a bathroom facility,” said Cowie. “The first room will be a community room. The second and third floors will have dorm-style rooms, one for boys and one for girls, and the RA (resident advisor).”

Mercy Support Services will also partner with Project Reach, a program designed to help children experiencing housing transition issues with school-related services, as well as collaborate with Community Partners to offer assistance with issues outside of the school environment.

“A lot of times, these students go under the radar,” said Carolina Thompson, Project REACH Coordinator for Clay County District Schools. “People don’t realize they qualify for services. Identifying families is so important, as well as helping them get the resources they need.”

Thompson said that affordable housing is a huge need.

According to the U.S. Interagency on Homelessness, Florida has the fourth-highest number of homeless students – more than 90,000. Project REACH has identified 730 students this school year. Meaning they

do not have fixed, regular or adequate nighttime residences.

“We’ve noticed that people come to our county thinking it will be better, but it’s not. The people that are already here can’t afford to live here. There’s no available housing,” she said. “We’re seeing a lot of families being evicted so they can raise the rent for those properties. We’re seeing families doubling up with other families so they can have someplace to live and stay in the community they know. We have a lot of families that live in hotels, as well as domestic violence shelters or transition shelters.”

“So we’re seeing this affect many populations of people, including children,” she said. “Housing is so desperately needed.”

Mercy Villages has received nearly \$2 million in donations and commitments. However, they estimate the project will cost around \$5 million.

“We are at a point where get the \$200,000 from the county, we are just about ready to break ground and do the site work,” said Cowie. “We will build one building at a time as money comes in.”

The organization works with foundations, nonprofits, individuals, and the state government. They also have several local churches that give donations. “I think we’re on the cusp of getting our first 1 million dollar donation, and then hopefully, others will follow suit,” he said.

Cowie estimates that the initial ground development will take six months. The site will be ready to go vertical this time next year.

“I think this is going to happen, but it’s hard work,” he said.



Music

from page 7

COVID. Bands that used to be available

during our fair are now on tours.”

Hyder still is pleased with this year’s lineup. Niko Moon returns after a successful appearance last year, while Tracy Lawrence with Cumberland, Casting Crowns, Shane Profitt, Ashley McBryde and Brotherly Love also highlight the schedule.

Fair organizers asked their fans to suggest acts they wanted to see, and from that, Lily Rose and Cooper Alan were added to the lineup.

Cooper will open for Niko Moon on March 31; Rose will play with McBryde on April 4.

The fair opens on March 30 and runs through April 9.

“We really do listen to feedback,” Hyder said. “People don’t think we do but we really do. If you’re going to ask you need to listen because they’re telling you what they want. We can’t always fulfill all the requests and make everyone happy, but we do try to try to listen, the best we can.”

Hyder said that also means offering a variety of genres. She shifted from a country music-heavy showcase to acts that feature rap, rock, country and Christian music a few years ago.

“The lineup was very challenging, but we’re very proud of what we were able to come up with,” Hyder said.

“We have our Christian act. We have X AMBASSADORS. We have old country, new country. So yeah, we’re still hanging tight with our diverse lineup and some of them we did this year,” Hyder said.

VIP packages are available for as many as 350 fans for every show. The price of a ticket also is good for main gate admission to the fairgrounds.

To see the complete schedule and buy tickets, visit claycountyfair.org.

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Goals

from page 1

said Cinet integrative nutritionist Linda Brown.

"What I look at is, what is the simplest thing that can be changed?" Brown asked. What is the simplest thing that can be changed to get their condition better or help them manage their condition better, and what is the person actually able to do?"

That starts with a balanced diet.

"If you were to ask me, what is the one thing you can do to eat more healthily and decrease your chance of disease, it's to cook

"If you were to ask me, what is the one thing you can do to eat more healthily and decrease your chance of disease, it's to cook at home from scratch. Bottom line. If you get something from the store in a box, it's processed. You don't want that."

— Linda Brown

at home from scratch. Bottom line. If you get something from the store in a box, it's processed. You don't want that."

"If people cooked at home from scratch, that would improve the quality of what they eat tremendously," she said. "Then the question becomes, I don't know how or I don't want to take the time. There's a misconception that eating healthy is time-consuming, but that's not true. You can cook a well-bal-

anced meal in less than 30 minutes."

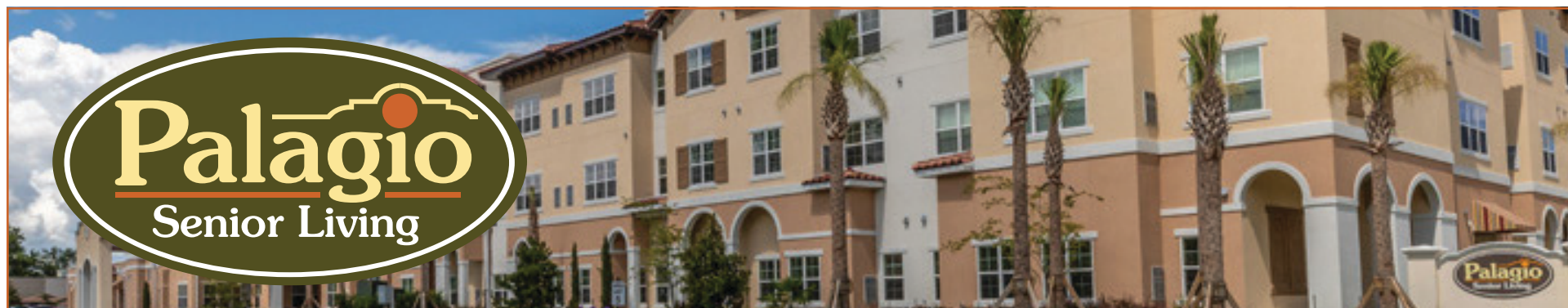
However, if you don't have time to go to a grocery store, try a grocery delivery service. Local Fare is a farm-to-home, organic grocery delivery service on Blanding Blv. that offers customizable farm bags in four different sizes, from single meals to family style. Another option is HelloFresh. Delivered through a subscription service, meal kits provide pre-measured ingredients and

easy-to-follow recipes to cook at home.

A home-cooked meal contributes to a healthier diet, reduces calorie consumption and gives us more control over what we put in our bodies.

"If you want to start cooking on your own, we have a grocery list, as well. We have the meal plan. We have the software where I can calculate how many calories you need, then you can put in what kinds of foods you like, and then it generates up to 30 days of menus. You can even tell it how many days of leftovers you want," Brown said.

"If you set a goal to eat healthier, most people can find a way to do it, but we can definitely help with that," she said.



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All aboard!

Penney Train Club takes visitors on a whimsical ride of fantasy, nostalgia

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

PENNEY FARMS – There's a hiding gem at the Penney Farms Retirement Community – the Penney Train Club.

The club holds a special place in the heart of the residents, as the model trains invoke a multitude of nostalgic memories from their childhood.

"This brings back lots and lots of memories to our folks that live here, and it's a great place to bring the grandkids because they seem to really like (the trains) as well," said club president, Jon Nelson.

Nelson has served as the president of the club since 2020, which is when took over for former president, Jim Archibald.

"Two years ago, I came in and moved to Penney Farms, and I walked in. And of course, a couple of guys were here that wanted me to introduce myself, and the trains came up. 'I said, yeah, I've got a small collection of vinyl trains, and a layout.' As I'm showing them the pictures, they said, 'Well, you're going to be the president,'" Archibald said.

With video games, television and social media now gaining so much popularity with children from Generation Z and Generation Alpha, the club is dedicated to educating the younger generation about the impact that the toys had on their grandparents.

The true magic happens when the grandchildren put down the video games and social media and visit the site alongside their grandparents. They can hear old stories of when model trains dominated the toy market.

When this happens, an unbreakable bond between young and old is created.

"Grandparents always played with trains, and they talk about it. And when they can bring their grandkids in here, the (children) can actually see it, and they can tell them 'Well, I used to have this train as a kid. Then, they can really start to bond, and in the end, the young child can understand what their grandfather or grandmother was talking about,'" he said.



Children and families aren't the only ones that enjoy a space that includes seven exhibits.

"We have a lot of missionaries here, and those from Germany and Japan enjoy the bullet train," Nelson said.

Similar to Santa's workshop, plenty of helpers are needed to maintain a well-oiled machine otherwise known as the Penney Train Club.

Those helpers will need to have a keen eye for the finest of details.

Volunteers are responsible for completing a myriad of tasks, many of which require great skill and attention to detail.

An electrician changes the little lights on a tiny model building on one of the tables. Replacing new train tracks from old, painting model trains and creating a landscape littered with anything from small shrubs to trees and pathways are just a few of the tasks that must be completed on a large to-do list.

Sixteen volunteers report to Nelson to



STAFF PHOTOS BY LEE WARDLAW

Left: Jon Nelson is the president of the Penney Train Club. The seven-track exhibits are highly detailed, with sets built to mirror old western towns and Penney Farms. Included in the details are all kinds of landscapes, with two levels of elevation – plains and mountains.

receive instruction, but those that participate are ready and willing to get to work while pursuing a passion that brings them back to the heyday of the model trains from the 1940s, 1950s and earlier.

Seven tables depict elaborate scenes mirroring Penney Farms and other small towns, which are created to scale. The model trains sit still when the shop is closed, but when Nelson and his volunteers host a tour group, it only takes the flip of a switch or press of a button via a smartphone application to torpedo the trains back into action, traveling through a realistic wild west-style landscape and tunnels cut through the walls of the shop.

The application can operate the train's horn, bells, speed, lights and the power of the new technology will allow the Penney Train Club to expand their tracks later this year, as they will be able to free up more space that is now taken up by the electric operating equipment.

Public showings at the Penney Train Club were extremely busy during the December holiday season and are still popular after the new year.

Nelson estimates that he hosted up to 40 guests at one public showing off the sleek sets. The club's president offers a peek inside of the building to anyone interested on Wednesday and Saturday mornings.

Upon entering the doors, visitors have the opportunity to see several diverse display sizes, models and brands of toy trains, which should provide an excellent variety that all model train lovers should enjoy.

"It's very unusual to have seven different sizes of trains in one building, but we're very fortunate," Nelson said.

"We've had a lot of private showings, and that's really where I like to get the family in here and see where they want to go in the building," he said.

The club was kickstarted in 1999 when the community asked Archibald to relocate his scale toy train setup from his former home in Maryland to his new home at the retirement community.

Archibald served as a long-time member and president of the club before he passed away in 2022.

However, his legacy will be remembered at the club and the community.

You can book an appointment to visit the Penney Train Club by calling Nelson's cellphone at (912) 409-6581. To access the building, simply visit The Penney Retirement Community at 3495 Hoffman St. The exterior of the building is adorned with a railroad crossing sign and is located across the street from Penney Retirement Community's headquarters dining hall. You can't miss it.

Community Briefs

Mission of the Dirt Road offers free showers

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Adults can sign up for free showers on Tuesdays and Fridays at the Mission of the Dirt Road, 7790 State Road 100. Adults can utilize the services from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays and from 9 a.m. to noon on Fridays. Families with children can get free showers on Tuesdays from 4-6 p.m. Showers are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Residents are required to sign up during the day of the shower. To make a reservation, call or text (601) 568-3473.

Clay Town Center to open soon in Middleburg

MIDDLEBURG – With an easily accessible location, the Clay Town Center will provide convenience for your patients and customers with proximity to a new medical complex, dining, storage and long term stay options.

As rapid growth has already started with the expansion of the new expressway, establishing a business in this growing community, at a centralized location will provide all the resources a business needs to successfully serve the Clay County region. That along with the unique heritage of the nearby historical World War II, Branan Air Field, Clay Town Center is an ideal location

to establish a business in an up-and-coming area.

Clay Town Center is expected to open in the next few months.

Organist Ray Cornils to play a Commemorative Concert at Penney Memorial

PENNEY FARMS – On Sunday, Jan. 22 at 7 p.m., organist Ray Cornils of Portland, Maine will present an interesting and varied program of classical and modern music on the Holtkamp Organ at Penney Memorial Church, to which new voices have been added.

Cornils has been a featured recitalist for the American Guild of Organists, and he

also performs regularly with the Portland Symphony Orchestra. The church is located off State Road 16 at 4465 Poling Blvd.

All commemorative concerts are open to the public and are free. Parking is plentiful on residential streets around the church building.

Oscar Mayer Wienermobile coming to Diamond D Ranch

MAXVILLE – The Oscar Mayer Wienermobile, the iconic 27-foot-long hot dog-shaped car used to showcase the company's line of hot dogs, will be featured at the Family Farm Fun Day on Feb. 4 at the Diamond



The Green Cove Springs Police Department Color Guard salute during ceremonies renaming the agency's headquarters after Chief Derek S. Asdot, who died in 2021 of COVID-19. The event attracted law enforcement, city and county officials, as well as family and friends to the popular chief of police.

Chief Derek S. Asdot Memorial Building honors late GCSPD chief



Police headquarters named for 20-year veteran who died in 2021 of COVID-19

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – On a sunny, beautiful morning on Jan. 5, city, county, law enforcement, friends and family smiled on the late Chief Derek Asdot by re-naming Green Cove Springs Police Department Headquarters after him.

After hearing from Mayor Matt Johnson, former Mayor Mitch Timberlake and Police Chief John Guzman, the blue banner adorning the top of the building was hiding a late Christmas present – signage that read: Chief Derek S. Asdot Memorial Building.

“Everybody that knew Derek knew he took immense pride in this building,” Guzman said.

The ceremony included a host of dignitaries, including sheriffs Michelle Cook

of Clay County, H.D. “Gator” DeLoach of Putnam and Robert Hardwick of St. Johns County, as well as Orange Park Police Chief Gary Goble and Clay County District Schools Police Chief Kenneth Wagner. Members of the city and county councils also attended, as well State Attorney Melissa Nelson, Clerk of County Court Tara Green. Tax Collector Diane Hutchings, County Manager Howard Wanamaker and Property Appraiser Tracy Drake.

“We are overwhelmed with the support of the other law enforcement agencies who were here today. It just shows how much Chief Asdot meant to the entire law enforcement community,” Johnson said. “I think it means a lot for them to take the time out of their busy day to be here to honor Chief Asdot. He really had a profound effect not only on Green Cove Springs, but Clay County, and all of Northeast Florida.”

The mayor said that Asdot served as an inspiration to the department.



Asdot died Sept. 28, 2021, from complications of COVID-19.

“He was very innovative, always leaning forward on how the police department can improve by getting out in the community and getting out ahead of crime by building a rapport in the community. That was Chief Asdot,” Johnson said.

Animal from page 3

Donkeys can range up to 45 years old, with other long-lasting creatures including horses (which can live 30 years) and cows (20).

Every visitor is generally greeted by several friendly faces upon arrival.

George is an American Quarter Horse that has lived his entire life at C.J. Acres. Formerly abandoned in North Carolina, he has now lived the vast majority of his 23-year life at the farm. He's part of the cast of several real-life characters depicted in the nonprofit's logo, which are illustrated to mirror actual animals at the rescue. Now, the stallion is ever-engraved into the farm's legacy.

Then, there's Moo-Dini, a cow that used Houdini-like instincts to escape a slaughter-

house in Orlando.

Volunteers can capture the warm, fuzzy feeling of connecting with the creatures and find value in the hard work that is required to keep the animals fully fed and as happy as possible as they continue to recover from harsh prior circumstances. Here's how it works: The volunteer organizational structure is divided into four categories, with each name selected in a salute to the wild world of horses.

Sackett is known as the lead mare, heading the nonprofit's operation.

It's a term that can be misleading at times, with the word's definition denoting a female horse leading a herd of horses.

“In the horse world, everyone thinks it's the stallions that are in charge, but it's actually a lead mare. It's a girl who is considered the top boss,” he said.

Those closely following Sackett's lead at the top of the chain of command, such as the vice president, is known as lead mares.

But there's more.

Adult male volunteers are called “stallions,” while adult females are known as “mares.” Then, for those that are 21 or younger years of age or younger, males are “colts” and females are “fillies.”

Regardless of status, there are plenty of duties that must be fulfilled for those serving the best interests of a myriad of creatures living on the “animal farm.”

This includes several fun-yet-essential items such as feeding, grooming, healthcare, training, maintenance and socialization.

To maintain its mission, C.J. Acres instills proper education about animal intelligence and feelings.

“It's about people understanding that all

of these animals, whether that be a cow, cat, dog or hog, who want to live, seek joy, fear death and want to be loved and treated well. They do like getting their bellies rubbed. So, getting people to interact with the animals and see that firsthand teaches that compassion,” Sackett said.

The 501(c)(3) nonprofit was founded in 1997 in Raleigh, North Carolina where Sackett soon moved the organization to Clay County in 2003 at 5728 Jones Creek Road.

With several jobs to satisfy the animals on the farm, new volunteers at the organization are always in need. Tours are also available. To get in touch with C.J. Acres, please reach out via telephone at (904) 600-7676, email at info@cjacres.org, or visit the farm's website at CJAcres.org or Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CJAcresAnimal-RescueFarm.

Nutritionists: Healthier lifestyles start in the kitchen

By Kylie Cordell
For The Herald

CLAY COUNTY – The New Year often starts with resolutions to be healthier. But many set unrealistic goals, and their confidence takes a huge hit when they fail to reach them. Others become overwhelmed when they set out to make significant changes.

However, getting into shape doesn't mean hitting the gym seven days a week.

The easiest, most effective way to build healthier habits starts in the kitchen, said Cinet Integrative nutritionist Linda Brown.



One way to count calories is to prepare your own food.

"What I look at is, what is the simplest thing that can be changed? What is the simplest thing that can be changed to get their condition better or help them manage their condition better, and what is the person actually able to do?"

That starts with a balanced diet.

"If you were to ask me, what is the one thing you can do to eat more healthily and decrease your chance of disease, it's to cook at home from scratch. Bottom line: if you get something from the store in a box, it's processed. You don't want that."

Try a grocery delivery service if you don't have time to go to a grocery store. Local Fare is a farm-to-home, organic grocery delivery service on Blanding Boulevard that offers customizable farm bags in four different sizes, from single meals to family style.

Delivered through a subscription service, meal kits provide pre-measured ingredients and easy-to-follow recipes to cook at home.

A home-cooked meal contributes to a healthier diet, reduces calorie consumption

and gives us more control over what we put in our bodies.

"And notice, I don't say eating out of a box or at a fast food restaurant," Brown said. "Every day, I get three to four referrals for people with Type-2 diabetes. Every single day. And that's just the referrals coming into my office. There's been a huge increase, primarily because of fast food restaurants and junk foods."

Junk foods are high in trans and saturated fats, which can raise triglycerides, a type of fat in the blood. High levels of triglycerides increase the risk of developing Type-2 diabetes.

"If you want to start cooking on your own, we also have a grocery list. We have the meal plan. We have the software where I can calculate how many calories you need, then you can put in what kinds of foods you like, and then it generates up to 30 days of menus. You can even tell it how many days of leftovers you want," Brown said

SEE HEALTHIER, 13

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Healthier

from page xx

“If you set a goal to eat healthier, most people can find a way to do it, but we can definitely help with that.”

If delivery services don’t fit your budget, there are ways to access fresh fruits and vegetables for little to no cost. Feeding Northeast Florida has distributed 2.7 million pounds of food in Clay County alone.

The organization’s new warehouse will be located on Old Kings Road in Jacksonville, according to President Susan King. The organization announced its purchase and planned renovations of a 121,000-square-foot building that will serve as the new home of the food bank.

“We will be a more efficient organization. Food insecurity in all eight counties that we serve is a huge issue. It’s been a significant issue. We’ve seen a twenty-five percent increase in people requesting food assistance for the first time. More than 23,000 in Clay County are food insecure,” said King.

“In terms of serving the community, we have a lot of programs around health and



nutrition. Suppose you can help eliminate the need for high blood pressure medicine or insulin for diabetes or any other number of things that might be a requirement for that budget. In that case, we can help eliminate them by teaching them better eating habits and using fresh fruits and vegetables. If we can do that, we have helped a family

or individual escape that cycle of poverty.

“A lot of people are starting from a very limited information base. We think people understand how to cook and eat well, but generationally, some people don’t know how to cook. So, we have to approach this problem at a very basic level.”

Additionally, The University of Florida/IFAS Extension provides the public with free and low-cost educational programs to create healthy people, a healthy environment, and a healthy economy in Clay County. These programs include various health and wellness programs offered at the Extension office. Programs on healthy eating/weight management are offered in partnership with employers such as Clay County Schools and Clay County Government.

Also, seniors at each of the four Aging True Senior Centers receive monthly nutrition education lessons.

For more information on how you can participate in a health and wellness program offered by UF/IFAS Extension please contact Annie Wallau at (904) 284-6355.



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Motorcycle cops gang up to enforce traffic laws, public safety

Submitted by the
Clay County Sheriff's Office
For Clay Today
CLAY COUNTY – Long before Officers Baker and Poncherello raced around southern California on the hit TV show of the 70s, motorcycle cops were the subject of comic strips, jokes, and blockbuster movies. When you think of motorcycles officers (or motors as they are often called), you may picture a deputy hiding in the woods, waiting for an unaware motorist to come racing by in hopes of ruining the driver's day and issuing a ticket for an obscene amount of money. However, the Clay County deputies who are riding these motorcycles for traffic control are anything but the typical comedy punch line.

On this day, we spent time with Deputies Nathaniel Baumgartner and Joshua Borchardt as they met in the Middleburg substation before hitting the road. Fresh off a successful round at the Space Coast Police Motorcycle Skills Event where six Clay County Sheriff's Office deputies competed against nearly 70 other officers from across the country, Baumgartner and Borchardt talked about some of the benefits and challenges of being a motorcycle cop. Certainly, these types of competitions rank at the top of one of the highlights of being a motorcycle deputy. What a civilian might perceive to be dozens of randomly laid out cones is an intricate course meant to challenge the experience and skills of even the most qualified rider.

Although the course layout is posted 30 days in advance of an event, these deputies are training continually to sharpen their skills and improve their ability to navigate even the most treacherous situation. Typically, CCSO motor deputies train one day each month and complete a full re-certification every six months. Their training includes bike management skills and addressing unexpected events, including how to right a fallen 1,000-pound bike without assistance. Because of the intensity of the competition courses, these events also count towards training hours.

Beyond conducting regular traffic control, motors are often used for funeral escorts, dignitary escorts and special event protection. Because of their versatility,



these powerful vehicles can even navigate through sandy and wooded paths that would be unreachable by standard law enforcement vehicles. The unique opportunities presented to this elite group of riders certainly keep things interesting and enjoyable for the deputies. Baumgartner smiled when he said. "(It's) what I love to do; I actually get paid for." Borchardt agreed as he spoke of the freedom of riding with the wind in his face. When pressed about the challenges of being on the motors, both deputies agreed that the heat of summer can make the job a little difficult.

"It can be tough to cool off with all of the gear that we are wearing, but we work through it," Baumgartner said. More concerning than the heat, though, is the constant threat of traffic congestion and



distracted drivers. "We have to constantly be watching for those who may not be watching for us," the deputies said.

The conversation turned briefly to the tragic accident in 2018 that resulted in the death of motorcycle Deputy Ben Zirbel – a heartbreaking event that is always in the thoughts of those who ride.

When not running radar from a stationary position, the CCSO motors are watching for infractions, assisting drivers, working school zone, and addressing complaints of excessive speed within the numerous neighborhoods of Clay County. Because the motors don't operate within specific zones, they are free to roam throughout the entire county and can respond quickly when needed. They are also tasked to address tips from the SaferWatch App that more Clay

County residents are utilizing. The deputies revealed some of the violations they look for.

"Seatbelt infractions," Borchardt said, "definitely seatbelts. 'Also when a child is not properly belted within the vehicle,'" Baumgartner said.

We followed the deputies to a commercial driveway just off of a busy section of Blanding Boulevard where the motors staged while conducting speed detection with their portable laser devices. Most of the time, deputies don't hide in a tree line hoping to surprise drivers. They usually are sitting off the right-of-way of a major artery through the county. Not only were the deputies completely visible, but they were positioned close enough to the road that drivers should be paying attention to them – just as a driver should be paying attention if a child were this close to the road.

Instead, we watched as some drivers chose to race by, seemingly unaware of the presence of law enforcement. Borchardt and Baumgartner raced from their parking spot as they each chased down the speeding drivers. Upon their return, we spoke about the ultimate goals and mindset behind these traffic stops.

"Look, we know that patience is sometimes thin out there," Baumgartner said. "Everyone has somewhere to be, and everyone gets frustrated at times. We always try to use a traffic stop as a teaching moment, and we try to give some leeway when we can, but..." Baumgartner's voice trails off as a vehicle races by well above the posted speed limit. He activated his lights and siren as he pulled onto the roadway to pursue the driver.

Another vehicle, with a driver seemingly oblivious to the well-lit motor, nearly clipped the deputy as he accelerated. In that one moment, the training, skills and experience came into full view as he navigated the dangerous moment, and pulled the speeding driver over. More importantly, he lived to ride another day.

As our time with the deputies came to an end, the words of Borchardt were ever present: "We just want people to make it safely to where they are going, and we want to make it safely home at the end of the day."

Veterans' forum to provide insight into healthcare, benefits expansion

For The Herald

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – Certain military veterans may have been exposed to toxic chemicals during their service overseas, and Clay County Veterans' Services is holding a forum to explain a large healthcare and benefits expansion that could benefit them.

The Clay County Veteran's Services Office is holding a free Veteran's Services Forum on Friday, Jan. 27, from 6-8 p.m. in the Board of County Commissioners' Meeting Room on the fourth floor of the Clay County Administration Building at 477 Houston St. Veterans can learn important

information about the largest healthcare and benefits expansion in VA history under the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act.

If you have served in the following locations during the time frames below, this forum applies to you.

Served after August 2, 1990, in:

- Bahrain
- Kuwait
- Qatar
- Somalia
- Iraq
- Oman
- Saudi Arabia
- United Arab Emirates

Served after Sept. 11, 2001, in:

- Afghanistan
- Egypt
- Djibouti
- Jordan

- Lebanon
- Yemen
- Philippines
- Syria
- Uzbekistan

This new law greatly expands eligibility for VA healthcare for veterans who served in Vietnam, Desert Storm, Iraq and Afghanistan, or any veteran exposed to Agent Orange or burn pits by adding to the list of health conditions that the VA presumes are caused by exposure to these substances. The Act also adds more than 20 presumptive conditions for burn pits, Agent Orange and other toxic exposures and includes more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation.

Veterans' Services Officers Keith Bran-

don and Cherie Korn will explain how the PACT Act can help Clay County veterans. They can also help veterans navigate the VA healthcare system to submit claims and receive the compensation they have earned for injuries or illnesses sustained during their service.

There is no cost to attend this educational forum. Please register in advance with Eventbrite at www.eventbrite.com/e/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits-tickets-486897031127.

For more information, please call (904) 529-4256 or visit www.claycountygov.com/community/veterans-services.

Managing bee population a balance between nature, responsible planning

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS – While some county beekeepers have noticed a typical colony decrease that comes with a winter adour, local bees have been spared starvation felt by other areas in the country.

“Backyard beekeepers won’t be nearly as impacted by this type of event as commercial beekeepers who make a living beekeeping, and a 20% reduction is much larger to a commercial beekeeper,” said Cassidy Dossin, Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent at the University of Florida-Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension.

Dave Sieruta, who serves as president of the Clay County Beekeepers Association, said there are three types of beekeepers in the state of Florida: backyard beekeepers who maintain one-to-40 colonies, sideliners with 41-to-100 and commercial that maintain 100 or more.

There are no commercial beekeepers in the county, so the losses fell within a typical season trend, both Dossin and Sieruta said.

An adour is an event that occurs twice annually in the form of two seasonal cycles when flowers, fruits, and other plants are going through a period of reduced blooming.

The first adour occurs following the original spring honey flow between July 1 through the middle of September as summer heat starts to subside in late fall. Then, after a second fall bloom, the first freeze initiates the second sequence.

One way to segment a potential colony population decrease is to leave surplus honey behind and only harvest the sweet nectar during the spring season.

If you’re running low on honey, go ahead there and supplement the supply with sugar water. There are several simple syrups to choose from. Whatever you pick, just make



sure to make it with one part water and one part sugar.

“That’s pretty close to what nectar actually is,” said Sieruta.

The veteran and longtime beekeeper took up a passion for beekeeping from 1982-1990 in Brunswick, Maine, before returning to Florida with his wife in 2010.

The bees need two resources to create the ever-valuable resource.

“One is nectar and the other is pollen,” Sieruta said.

The insects are extremely intelligent, according to the association’s president.

“The worker bees actually go in there and dictate to the queen bee on how many eggs she can lay based on the availability of those two resources, nectar and pollen,” Sieruta said.

After communication between the worker bees and the queen, the beekeeper takes over.

“Usually we’re all done extracting the



Dave Sieruta, president of the Clay County Beekeepers Association, poses with a bee hive replica at the 2022 Orange Park Fall Festival.

spring honey at the end of June, and you’re supposed to leave enough honey for them to go ahead and survive in the fall time. If they have enough nectar and pollen available, they will survive, and the reason they starve out is that they don’t have the resources,” Sieruta said.

One reason for the successful habitat preservation in Clay is the lack of commercial farming. But the only true reason that a strong contingent of the bee population survives today is the residents that care for them. While development is an ever-pressing issue in the town, those moving into them are the ones that still keep the tradition alive.

“These people that are going into the developments are going in there and planting flowers and fruit trees, so that might be contributing to it. The county is growing and more and more people are getting into gardening and flowers and stuff,” he said.

Beekeepers in Florida are required to register their colonies.

More than 5,000 participate, with 85% falling under the backyard category and 15% being a combination of the sideline

and commercial beekeepers, according to Sieruta.

The introduction of vermella mites and small hive beetles is a new issue that Sieruta didn’t face in Maine.

The mites can be managed by oxalic acid, which Sieruta prefers to take care of by vaporizing in the summer, fall and spring seasons. He then attacks the small hive beetles with a potion created with vegetable shorting, honey, sugar and wintergreen oil.

The passion for beekeeping is continually growing in Clay, and as long as folks move forward with an increased level of interest, the practice and population should both survive and thrive.

Beekeeping provides those who participate with the soul-soothing effect of nature along with the help benefits of producing raw honey.

“(Producing the raw honey may be one reason why people are doing the beekeeping,” Sieruta said. “There’s a lot of people that are getting into having vegetable gardens and fruit trees where they need the bees to do the pollination for those plants.”

County Commission workshop assesses priorities submitted to state legislatures

By Lee Wardlaw
lee@claytodayonline.com

GREEN COVE SPRINGS- There are many things to contemplate for the future in Clay County and several of those focus issues were dissected during the Clay County Board of County Commissioners 2023 legislative priorities workshop meeting on Friday, Jan. 6.

An appropriation to add 100 beds to prevent exceeding capacity and improve the health and safety conditions for inmates and staff at the Clay County Jail was one of the top items on the list. Removing non-essential, non-security functions at the jail and transporting them to the county sheriff’s office, and removing storage items from cells that are currently being used for that purpose are also on the table for the plan.

Combining state and grant monies,

allocations of the project would total \$8 million, with the timeline for the expansion expected to last between five-to-seven years.

BCC representatives agreed that a longer-term answer could be to build a prison farm within county lines, which could stymie the overcrowding problem at the county jail and provide non-violent criminals with a productive task for the community such as growing food that could then be donated to the food bank.

One blueprint for that model could include James I. Montgomery Correctional Center in Jacksonville, a large, 640-acre prison sitting on lush, fertile agricultural land that also serves as a pea farm.

Another potential option could be housing criminals at state or federal prisons outside of the county. Understaffing and negative effects on the local economy include other issues associated with the

jail, BCC members said at the meeting.

Designing and constructing the Northeast Greenway Trail from the Duval County line at Veterans Park through the Jennings State Forest at the Live Oak Lane Trail Head to the Putnam County line was a major topic for the BCC, which is seeking to gain additional funding for parks, greenways and trails in the light of hoping to expand the oft-discussed industry of ecotourism, which includes can’t miss activities like paddleboarding, kayak bass fishing, hiking, and biking.

Other important appropriations discussed included infrastructure projects like county roadways and water and drainage projects, fairgrounds and parks and broadband initiatives.

The BCC also will seek funding for infrastructure allowing for county residents to more easily access the First Coast Expressway, as an appropriation is on the

table to widen State Road 16 to four lanes from the First Coast Expressway east to South Oakridge Avenue and make operational improvements to the intersection of State Road 21 (Blanding Boulevard) and Wells Road.

Infrastructure isn’t limited to roads, as the county bordered to the east by the St. John’s River will continue to keep a focused eye on the effects of higher rivers, stronger storms and more frequent flooding by investing in water and drainage projects.

The workshop loomed especially large since day-to-day business must be taken care of during regular BCC meetings. Officials gathered their thoughts and reprioritized what items they would like to see funded by the state.

“We have a lot of needs when asking for something from the state delegation when (seeking) to benefit the taxpayers,” said Commissioner Mike Cella.



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Brief

from page 10

D Ranch. The Weinermobile will be at the ranch from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 5903 Solomon Road.

'Cruisin for Boozer' cancer run to benefit bike shop owner's family

ORANGE PARK – Friends of Robert Boozer will meet at Locals Pub on Feb. 19 and make three stops as part of "Cruisin For Boozer." The popular motorcycle shop operator recently closed on Wells Road after he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. The four-saloon poker run will start at 10:30 a.m. and make stops at Saloon 17 in Green Cove Springs, Renegades Bar and Grill in Crescent City and wind up at Boogerville Hideout in Green Cove Springs. Cost is \$20 a rider and \$10 a passenger. The event will include live music, raffles, auction and a 50/50 raffle. Breakfast will be served by Locals Pub.

Money raised will help Boozer's family with transportation and care costs.

To donate or for more information, call (904) 994-4956.

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Brief
from page 10

Entries being accepted for
RiverFest contest

FORT WHITE – RiverFest is an Our Santa Fe River Inc. annual fundraising event. Part of the RiverFest Celebration features the 11th Annual Singer/Songwriter Contest.

Entries are now being accepted and OSFR is inviting amateur and professional singer/songwriting musicians, of all ages and genres, to enter their original song about the Santa Fe River.

Contestants must submit their song's entry form, lyric sheet, and mp3 audio recording online by midnight March 1 to: oursantaferiver.org/riverfest/osfr-song-contest-entry-form/.

The song contest will be held Sunday, March 26 from 1:45 p.m. to 4 p.m. on the RUM 138 Stage at 2070 SW County Road 138. On the day of the event, selected contestants will perform in front of a live audience and compete for first, second and third place cash prizes of \$300, \$150, and

\$50, respectively. A panel of three judges will determine the prizes based on specific judging criteria which can be viewed online at: <https://oursantaferiver.org/riverfest/singer-songwriter-contest-judging-criteria/>.

The Our Santa Fe RiverFest Song Contest brings local and regional singer/songwriters and music lovers to celebrate and learn about North Florida's special beloved spring-fed river. The song contestants are a joyful part of giving the Santa Fe River a voice, a song and a legacy.

DAR offering \$1,000 scholarship

CLAY COUNTY – The Daughters of the American Revolution are encouraging 2023 graduating seniors to apply for a \$1,000 Sophia Fleming Scholarship, sponsored by Sophia Fleming Chapter, NSDAR.

Applicants must be graduating from either the Clay County Public School System, St. Johns Country Day School or who are home-schooled in Clay County. Students are eligible if they are going to attend any post-secondary program of study, including colleges, universities or vocational and technical schools. No GPA information is re-

quired. Applicants are requested to write an essay and provide a list of their awards and recognitions and two letters of recommendation. Scholarship applications are due back to Lynda Lewis, Sophia Fleming Scholarship Chairman, on or before the deadline of Feb. 17.

The scholarship documents have been provided to all public high school guidance offices in Clay County and St. Johns Country Day School. The instruction sheet and application form provide all of the information a student needs to apply. They are also available by clicking on Sophia Fleming Scholarship at <http://www.sophiaflemingchapter.org/>. The winner will be notified the week of March 20. Please don't mail applications by certified or registered mail.

Mail the application documents to Lynda Lewis, Chairman, Sophia Fleming Scholarship Committee, Sophia Fleming Chapter, NSDAR, 316 Scenic Point Lane Fleming Island, 32003.

Management team to speak at Chamber's Lunch and Learn

ORANGE PARK – Residents and Clay Chamber members are urged to meet the

Clay County Assistant County Management Team on Jan. 19 at 11:30 a.m. at Haven-Custead Hospice Care Center at 745 Blanding Blvd. The event is sponsored by SouthState Bank.

Selected by County Manager Howard Wannamaker, ACM team members include Assistant County Manager Chereese Stewart, Deputy Director of Emergency Management Troy Nagle, Assistant County Manager Charlie Latham and Acting Fire Chief David Motes. They work daily with the county manager to implement and execute the policies, ordinances, and budgets adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and oversee the management and operations of Clay County. During the panel discussion, they will share vital information on their jobs, the development of their new ACM roles, and their duties and responsibilities.

Made up of 644 square miles, Clay County is home to more than 219,000 residents and 1,400 people are employed by the county.

To register for the event, visit claycountychamberofcommerce.growthzoneapp.com.

Police Briefs

Keystone Heights man charged with molesting 14-year-old girl

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – A two-year investigation led to the arrest of a 30-year-old man on Jan. 5 for custodial sexual battery of a 14-year-old girl.

Scott Cameron Morris is being held at the Clay County Jail with a \$250,000 bond.

According to the affidavit for arrest, the girl said Morris assaulted her between Nov. 1, 2021, and Nov. 15, 2021. Detectives with the Clay County Sheriff's Office Special Victim's Unit were called to Keystone Heights High on Nov. 15 after the girl told a school official she was assaulted. Investigators also interviewed one of the



Scott Cameron Morris

girl's classmates. Morris' next court appearance is scheduled for Jan. 31.

Sexual predator pleads guilty to receiving child sex abuse images

JACKSONVILLE – U.S. Attorney Roger B. Handberg announced Dennis William Sheffield, Jr., 52, of Keystone Heights, pleaded guilty to receipt of child sex abuse images. Sheffield faces a minimum mandatory penalty of 15 years, and as many as 40 years, in federal prison. He also agreed to pay restitution to the victims of his offenses and he also faces a potential life term of supervised release. The court previously ordered Sheffield detained pending the completed proceedings in this case.

According to the plea agreement, last February, Homeland Security Investigations began investigating Sheffield as part of its investigation into a CyberTip from the National Center for Missing and Exploited

Children. The CyberTip indicated child sex abuse images had been uploaded to a search engine.

An Internet Protocol address for the individual who had uploaded the materials was traced to Sheffield. Law enforcement learned that Sheffield was listed as a predator on the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Sexual Offenders and Predators registry as a result of two prior convictions in 1996 for attempted sexual battery on a child under the age of 12.

In March, based on the CyberTip and the identification of Sheffield as the subject of the CyberTip, law enforcement obtained a federal search warrant for Sheffield's residence.

The following day, law enforcement executed the search warrant and encountered Sheffield, who was holding a cellphone in his hand. A preliminary examination of the phone revealed multiple files depicting the sexual abuse of children on the phone. Sheffield admitted to law enforcement that he had a problem and that he liked looking at

child sex abuse images, which he admitted to having viewed as recently as a couple of days earlier. Sheffield also admitted to saving some of the images on his phone.

The case was investigated by the Clay County Sheriff's Office and Homeland Security Investigations. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ashley Washington. The forfeiture is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Mai Tran.

This is another case brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who sexually exploit children, and to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.justice.gov/psc.

Arrests & Bookings

(Name, age, location of arrest, charges).
Key: FTA-Failure to Appear; DWLSR-Driving Without a License-Suspended or Revoked; DUI-Driving Under the Influence; VOP-Violation of Probation; BAL-blood alcohol level. There are no assumptions or representations about guilt or innocence. Anyone arrested or booked is presumed innocent.

Saturday, Jan. 7
Scott G. Balloum, 34, Keystone Heights, trespassing

Thursday, Jan. 5
Scott C. Morris, 30, Keystone Heights, sexual battery on child
Matthew V. Baron, 20, Keystone Heights, battery

Wednesday, Jan. 4
Gregory W. McDaniel, 54, Keystone Heights, DWSLR

Sunday, Jan. 1
Bryan T. Way, 31, Keystone Heights, possession-unlicensed firearm, possession-marijuana

Friday, Dec. 30
Charles W. Holland, 35, Keystone Heights, grand theft auto

Tuesday, Dec. 27
Michael V. Moreland, 21, Keystone Heights, leaving scene of accident with property damage

Saturday, Dec. 24
Nathan A. Bevan, 36, Keystone Heights,

DWSLR

Thursday, Dec. 22
Nicholas S. Barnhardt, 54, Camp Blanding, video voyeurism

Wednesday, Dec. 21
Scott G. Ballou, 34, Keystone Heights, trespassing
India M. Johns, 24, Keystone Heights, possession-marijuana, possession-drug paraphernalia

Dec. 20
Heather M. Dunton, 19, Keystone Heights, battery

Dec. 19
John A. Valenzuela, 27, Keystone Heights,

vandalism

Saturday, Dec. 17
Melissa S. Piper, 36, Keystone Heights, FTA

Thursday, Dec. 15
Christopher C. Fuller, 31, Keystone Heights, uttering forged instrument, petit theft

Tuesday, Dec. 13
Jessica A. Curtis, 20, Keystone Heights, domestic battery

Wednesday, Dec. 7
Scott E. Bowen, 55, Keystone Heights, battery on law enforcement/firefighter/EMT, vandalism
Marco A. Parra, 26, Keystone Heights, driving without valid license

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SPORTS

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS



Keystone heights Indians football will have former defensive coordinator Steve Reynolds at the helm next year as Reynolds takes over for long time coach Chuck Dickinson in 2023. Reynolds has been defensive coordinator for the Indians for the past three years.

Reynolds tabbed to lead Indian football 2023

“Little school to big school to medium school”

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS - Keystone Heights High School football has named a familiar face to lead the Indians football program with defensive coordinator Steven Reynolds being named to head the program after long-time coach Chuck Dickinson stepped down after the 2022 season.

“I’ve gone from a small school to a big school to now a medium school,” said Reynolds, who has been on the Keystone Heights

High School football sidelines the past three years as well as part of the boys weightlifting teams that have won two consecutive state titles. “It’s ironic how life goes full circle for you and you wind up in a place you have always cherished.”

Reynolds, a former head coach at Bradford County High, then Oakleaf High School for four years, left Oakleaf after being replaced by another Bradford County former coach, Derek Chipoletti. Chipoletti and

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Shaw goes 54, 55, 56

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS - Keystone Heights High soccer forward Kiersten Shaw added to her immense season flurry of goals with three blasts to fuel a 3-1 win over Williston on Monday night.

Shaw, just a sophomore, has been the driving force for the now 13-4 Lady Indians in a strategy simply put by coach Roger Laurent.

“I tell the team to keep the ball moving forward and, at some point, find Kiersten,” said Laurent, head coach since 2006 for Keystone Heights. “She is a track star with great speed and also a great soccer player that knows how to get the ball in the net.”

Shaw, with her three goals on Monday, lifted her area smashing total to 56 goals for the season with six games or more still on the Keystone Heights schedule; not counting district tournament games and possible region playoff games.

“I don’t think about it,” said Shaw, who has six game with five or more goals. “I just

run to the ball then head to the goal.”

For Laurent, the impending playoffs will offer a challenge to his team as defensive strategies will look to corral Shaw’s speed to the goal.

“We are developing her teammates to answer her speed and become as much of a threat to the defense as she is,” said Laurent. “Ella Hutchins is our assist leader (16) and also has 20 goals with senior Kendall Gagnon on a sideline position able to run with Kiersten into the goal area becoming a second offensive weapon.”

Keystone Heights sits in second position in the district 4-3A lineup with P.K. Yonge (8-3-1, 3-0) on top and Williston (5-5-1) third. P.K. Yonge knocked Keystone Heights out of the 2022 region playoffs last year with an 8-0 win in the district championship game. P.K. Yonge lost in the region final to Final Four finisher Providence 3-2.

In the boys game against Williston (11-1-1), the Keystone Heights boys lost a 4-1 match to fall to 7-4-2. The Indians are led by Logan Spence with 18 goals and Skyler Kedgley with 15 scores.



Keystone heights sophomore soccer forward Kiersten Shaw rattled off three goals in a 5-1 win over Williston to get close to the 60 goals season mark with five games remaining in the regular season.

May the New Year bring you happiness, peace, and prosperity. Wishing you a joyous 2023!

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Going strong

Three of the Keystone Heights girls weightlifting team. from left, Ashlyn Brown, Kenly Chitty and Raegan Lee, will be a strong contingency for first year coach Kelly Cook. Area weightlifting teams will compete in their respective district championship tournaments next week with Keystone Heights competing in district 6-1A at St. Johns Country Day School on Jan. 25, 2023 at 11 a.m. Keystone Heights finished sixth in the Clay County Championship meet held last week at Oakleaf High School.

Coach
from page 19

Reynolds both teamed together a second time for two years at St. Johns Country Day School.

“I can’t stress enough the caliber of not just football here at Keystone Heights, but in all the athletes here,” said Reynolds. “What coach Dickinson leaves, as well as Wesley Dicks, who coached before Dickinson, is a core value of working hard, rewarding through toil and hard work, the principles of serving others and being a family type of team. The lasting friendships of Keystone Heights athletes is a big part of all the sports here.”

Reynolds came to Keystone Heights as an offensive coordinator at Bradford under

the Chipoletti coaching staff; Neil and Derek, father and son, plus another Oakleaf coaching alum, Dana Arthur, now in Georgia, that rebuilt the very intense rivalry between the two schools.

“I played at Bradford County and have been on this field a hundred times and have always seen great players on this field,” said Reynolds, with three boys and wife Lauren Elizabeth. “Both schools have had great success in a lot of sports in the last few decades.”

Reynolds recalled games against Keystone Heights.

“Kids were always tough here,” said Reynolds, who was part of a 23-8 won loss run (2-8 last year with a massive graduation class) for the Indians with an unbeaten season two years ago and a deep region run. “It was a region driven rivalry.”

Reynolds has not yet completed his coaching staff if any new faces will join him,

but emphasized that the coaching staff at Keystone Heights with him under Dickinson was top of the line and he hoped coaches like Lantz Lowery, who has been here as long as coach Dickinson, and young guys like Ken Mudge and Jacob Alvarez.

“Mudge is solid, Alvarez is young and both of those guys are good, young coaches that want to learn the craft,” said Reynolds.

In the Indians unbeaten region playoff run on two years ago, with a region semi-final loss to The Villages, Reynolds noted that Keystone Heights’ region football lineup has always been power packed.

“Keystone Heights has always had the toughest region slate when the playoffs got going,” said Reynolds. “Against The Villages, a few plays made a big difference, but the next game would have been Cocoa High. This school has always run into the state’s best teams in our class in the playoffs.”

Reynolds planned on inviting the alum players of the Keystone Heights for the upcoming seasons to add a little bit of the history of the program for the new kids.

“There were players like Jimmy Brumbaugh, Matt Teague, Greg Story all have great stories of their playing days that the kids would marvel at,” said Reynolds. “Jack Taylor was another great one. I’d like to see them to our pregame meals and tell the kids about the history of this place.”

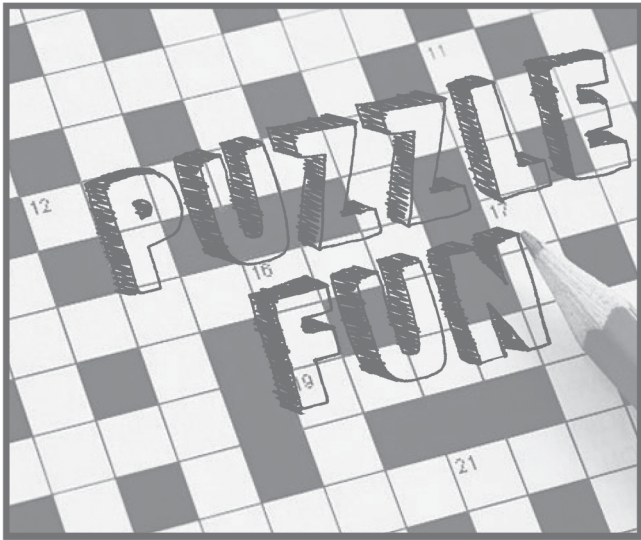
Quarterback Jack Taylor once talked to the Keystone Heights locker room and Reynolds recalled the message.

“He came here and told them that everything he accomplished in his life, everything he has done he owes to the Keystone Heights community,” said Reynolds. “He told them that what they learn here is the first building block to do whatever they want to do in life.”



U	N	A	R	M		S	S	R		V	E	D	A
S	A	N	A	A		R	Y		A	N		A	L
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R	E	L	E	V	A	N	C	E		R	I	A	L
			N	A	R	C	S		R	A	D		A
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A	E	R	O		T	E	L	E	M	E	T	E	R
R	A	I	L	S		R	A	W		R	E	A	C
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3	8	2	9	4	7	6	1	5
5	4	7	6	3	1	2	9	8
1	9	6	2	5	8	7	3	4
8	6	3	1	7	9	5	4	2
4	2	5	3	8	6	1	7	9
9	7	1	4	2	5	3	8	6
6	1	4	7	9	2	8	5	3
7	3	8	5	6	4	9	2	1
2	5	9	8	1	3	4	6	7



3	8		9				1	
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6		4			2		5	3
7				6	4	9	2	
		9			3		6	

Level: Beginner

WORD SCRAMBLE

TRABIB

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Answer: Rabbit

Guess Who?

I am a singer born in Nashville on January 8, 2000. I began my career on the show “Doc” when I was only 3. I also starred with my older sister on a popular Disney TV show. I released a solo album in 2016 and was nominated for a Grammy in 2021.

Answer: Noah Cyrus

LUNAR NEW YEAR WORD SEARCH

B	S	W	S	P	N	N	W	F	I	R	E	W	O	R	K	S	L	Y	P
O	I	U	O	F	N	F	R	Z	W	O	G	Y	B	C	L	C	W	E	V
I	D	F	O	H	G	N	F	H	C	S	E	R	U	T	U	O	A	A	R
B	Y	I	F	R	F	N	O	K	S	U	R	S	K	P	B	O	O	R	T
O	R	A	O	S	E	S	H	I	W	N	C	A	L	E	N	D	A	R	W
R	P	P	B	O	N	P	R	C	N	L	U	N	I	S	O	A	R	V	O
K	D	W	O	N	S	E	S	G	I	E	P	S	Y	K	C	H	V	A	S
V	U	Y	H	P	I	H	I	O	R	B	A	W	A	B	R	I	F	A	P
Y	K	A	U	T	W	N	W	C	Y	P	A	R	I	U	I	U	I	S	P
S	L	A	L	E	B	R	D	I	I	C	N	I	T	V	S	O	F	I	R
R	C	E	L	P	K	R	A	T	I	O	E	R	I	N	R	N	S	A	I
V	N	T	G	I	L	Z	G	A	T	H	G	H	I	H	G	K	E	B	N
S	T	H	S	K	D	E	F	V	C	A	G	E	Z	S	B	C	P	R	T
R	B	L	N	L	O	V	D	C	R	D	T	Z	R	N	G	E	O	S	O
V	G	B	O	L	E	V	N	D	I	W	F	L	E	R	E	H	C	S	P
S	E	P	N	T	E	R	N	E	Y	G	C	W	K	E	T	D	S	O	N
W	L	A	I	F	O	F	C	S	I	D	O	Z	H	K	P	B	R	K	E
U	I	N	V	I	T	S	E	A	U	Z	N	N	N	W	U	Z	O	L	O
G	L	A	V	T	R	H	Z	Z	S	Z	O	F	N	U	A	G	H	G	S

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

- AFRESH
ASIA
CALENDAR
CELEBRATION
CLEANING
CULTURES
DECORATE
ENVELOPES
FESTIVAL
FIREWORKS
GATHERING
HOROSCOPE
LANTERNS
LIGHTS
LION
LUNISOLAR
NEW
PROSPEROUS
RED
REUNION
RITUALS
SPRING
YEAR
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