

School board holds workshop on budget



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The Wakulla Sun

"It's a New Day"

Locally Owned & Operated

Our 2nd Year 3rd Issue
Thursday, January 19, 2023

WeatherSTEM
Weather forecast from Wakulla High School

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Showers	Partly Cloudy	PM Showers
Hi: 76° Lo: 50° 53%	Hi: 70° Lo: 48° 4%	Hi: 64° Lo: 51° 42%
Sunrise 7:33 AM Sunset 6:03 PM	Sunrise 7:33 AM Sunset 6:04 PM	Sunrise 7:32 AM Sunset 6:05 PM



\$1
One Section

Cave explorers

Steve Cox and Blake Wilson share the thrill of finding the cave connection

By **WILLIAM SNOWDEN**
Editor

On this chilly Saturday morning at Turner Sink, divers Steve Cox and Blake Wilson talked about their excitement of finding the tunnel that links Chip's Hole, a sinkhole north of Bloxham Cutoff near U.S. Highway 319, with Wakulla Springs.

The two cave explorers with the Woodville Karst Plain Project, which has been exploring and mapping Wakulla's underground cave system for decades, found a marker left by a previous dive team, confirming the link.

"When I first found it, I didn't believe it at first,"



PHOTO BY LAUREN WILSON/WKPP

Divers Steve Cox and Blake Wilson in Turner Sink cave system on Saturday, Jan. 14.

Cox said. "I thought we had further to go."

He noted that locating the connection between Chip's Hole and Wakulla

Springs has been a goal for them for 10 years, and for the whole WKPP team for 30 years.

When he realized the

discovery, he motioned to Wilson, who began yelling with joy in the cavern. Cox laughed, recounting: "I could hear him yelling!" – underwater in the underground cavern.

When they made it back to the sinkhole, Wilson popped up from the water and told the waiting team member to get her camera, and he went back into the water to finish decompressing. The team member knew something big had happened.

On Saturday, Jan. 14, the two divers were getting ready to dive again in Turner Sink to get photos to document the find, and to plant a

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CITY OF ST. MARKS

Ryder Rudd resigns from city commission

Cites law that forbids city officials from lobbying – and his day job is working as a lobbyist

By **WILLIAM SNOWDEN**
Editor

Ryder Rudd was supposed to be sworn-in on Thursday as a St. Marks City Commissioner. Instead, he submitted his resignation.

As he explained to the standing-room only crowd at City Hall on Thursday, Rudd explained that a recent state constitutional amendment intended to prohibit legislators from lobbying had the unintended consequence of not allowing him to take office as a city commissioner – or else stop his job as a lobbyist.

Rudd noted there is a pending lawsuit in federal court in south Florida challenging the law, and hoped there would be a decision in a couple of months.

He added that he was committed to serving his community.

After that, the sitting city commission took up a motion from Commissioner Richard Chichetti to appoint Gail Gilman to fill the seat left vacant by Rudd's resignation, and it was seconded by Commissioner Steve

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Ryder Rudd at the meeting.

MLK DAY



The Wakulla County Christian Coalition held its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Service on the courthouse grounds on Monday, Jan. 16 to commemorate the life of the slain civil rights leader. About 40 people attended. The speaker was Joe Morgan, Wakulla County Supervisor of Elections, who noted a part of King's legacy is the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Morgan also said King would

support the motto of "Service Above Self," saying: "When brothers and sisters are down, instead of looking down on them, give them a hand up." In the photo, Pastor Samuel Hayes of Mount Olive Primitive Baptist Church #2 leads the crowd in a rendition of "This Little Light of Mine." (Photo by William Snowden)

MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 14



City Attorney Ron Mowrey swears in new city commissioners Paula Bell and Dan Alberts last week.

Murder trial set this week

Chad Westerlund is accused of killing girlfriend Chelsea Bramblett in January 2020

By **WILLIAM SNOWDEN**
Editor

Jury selection was scheduled to get underway on Tuesday this week in the murder trial of Chad Westerlund, who is charged with killing his girlfriend and the mother of his children Chelsea Bramblett on Jan. 25, 2020.

The case is being prosecuted by Wakulla Chief Prosecutor Jon Fuchs. Westerlund is represented by attorney Joe Bodiford.

No final decision had been made by Wakulla Circuit Judge Layne Smith on whether the trial would be a pick-and-go, meaning it would start on Tuesday as soon as a jury was chosen, or whether the case would start on Wednesday.

According to the re-



Chad Westerlund, above, is charged with killing Chelsea Bramblett, right in a photo from Facebook, with her children.



ports at the time, Bramblett and Westerlund were arguing at their King Bee Drive home. Westerlund was heavily intoxicated and went outside to calm down. He came back inside, saw a shotgun, and on impulse allegedly picked it up and fired at her, hitting her in

the head and killing her. She was reportedly nursing a baby when she was shot, though the child was unharmed.

Westerlund reportedly called the sheriff's office to report the incident and was arrested by responding deputies. He had a blood alcohol

level of .1 when taken into custody. A level of .08 is considered legally intoxicated.

Westerlund faces charges of first degree murder and one count of child endangerment.

The trial is expected to last two to three days when it begins. It is not a death penalty case.

'Spring Creek is most dangerous road'

Community Traffic Safety Team notes more fatalities there than any other road in Wakulla County

By **WILLIAM SNOWDEN**
Editor

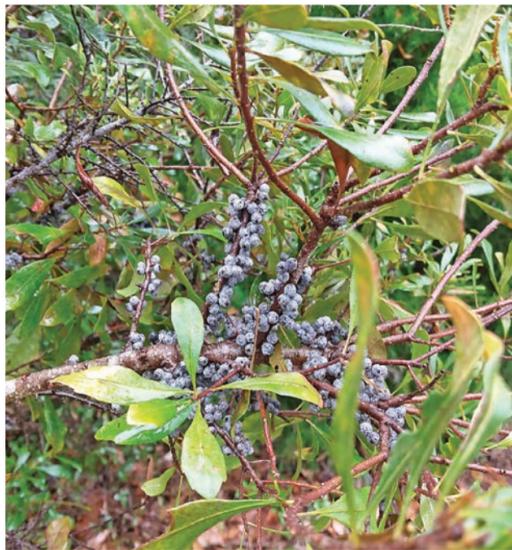
Members of the Community Traffic Safety Team noted at their meeting last week that Spring Creek is the most dangerous road in Wakulla County.

At the meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 10, CTST Chair Andrew Riddle made the observation, and noted two recent fatalities in a crash at the intersection of Spring Creek at U.S. Highway 98. There was some discussion of whether the Florida Department of Transportation could look at a traffic light for the intersection, despite it not having enough car traffic.

Data at the meeting indicated there were 729 crashes in all of Wakulla County in 2022, with 6 fatalities. Most crashes, 567 crashes, had no injuries. It was noted there were five crashes in front of the new Crawfordville Publix, three of which were rear-ends.

Flower of the Week at Sopchoppy Depot Park Wax Myrtle

By LYNN ARTZ and SANDY TEDDER



Wax myrtle (*Morella cerifera* formerly *Myrica cerifera*) is a common evergreen shrub or small tree that is native to all of Florida. Also called southern bayberry, the aromatic, waxy, gray fruits on female plants were used by colonists to make fragrant bayberry candles, soaps, and sealing wax. Migrating birds eat the fruits and value the winter cover. The leaves feed the caterpillars of the banded hairstreak and the red-banded hairstreak butterflies. Underused in home landscapes, wax myrtle grows 10-20 feet tall and makes an excellent screen or "living fence." With lower limbs removed, it can be an attractive, multi-trunked, small tree. Wax myrtle is drought, wind, and salt tolerant. It helps to form the east and west borders of the north gardens at Sopchoppy Depot Park.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The wrong text ran with the photo last week, so we're re-running Wax Myrtle.

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Student of the Week

Savannah Bates, 2nd grader at Riversink Elementary

Principal: Catherine Cutchen

Savannah is an excellent student at Riversink Elementary. She is always respectful, responsible, and ready to learn. Savannah's favorite memory of school is watching students play together on the playground. Her favorite subject is math. Savannah loves to be outside riding her bike. When she grows up she hopes to be a teacher. Savannah finds joy in making her friends smile. Her teacher, Mrs. Bussey, states that "Savannah has excellent work habits and is a role model for all students."



STUDENT OF THE WEEK FEATURES A DIFFERENT SCHOOL EACH WEEK.

Wakulla County Tax Collectors Office

SPECIALTY TAGS

\$20 - \$30 additional to cost of tag.

Lisa Craze, CFC
Wakulla County Tax Collector

ISSUED IN 2008.

HORSE COUNTRY - Annual use fee is distributed to PCMI Properties, Inc., to fund programs involved in the rehabilitation of at-risk youth to provide educational materials, athletic equipment, transportation, food, medical services, counseling, scholarships, and other direct administrative and program expenses.

REDESIGNED 2015.

Protect our Oceans - Annual use fee - a portion of the yearly plate registration supports the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation (GHOF).



SCAN ME for an electronic edition of this



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School board holds workshop on budget

By **WILLIAM SNOWDEN**
Editor

The Wakulla County School Board held an informal workshop on the budget and issues facing new board members last week to give them a briefing on some issues they may face.

The workshop, held Thursday, Jan. 12, at the transportation office, was mostly led by district Chief Financial Officer Randy Beach and mostly looked at some financial issues.

School Board Chair Melisa Taylor attended, as did newly elected members Laura Lawhon and Eddie Hand. Josh Brown, who has served for two years, also attended and asked questions.

Among the issues dis-



Above, district HR Director Lori Sandgren, Superintendent Bobby Pearce and Assistant Superintendent Sunny Chancy; at right, school board members Laura Lawhon, Josh Brown and Eddie Hand.

cussed were the ongoing teacher shortage – currently the district has 25 openings for teachers. Beach and HR Director Lori Sandgren discussed steps the district is pursuing to fill the jobs, including using a teacher exchange to bring in foreign teachers.

Also an upcoming is-

sue is free meals: staff will recommend to the school board in a coming meeting that free meals end at the middle schools and high school, and have them at elementary schools, Wakulla Education Center, and the Wakulla Institute. The only schools that qualify for free meals are Medart



Elementary, WEC and WI. Staff will recommend that the other elementary schools be funded using reserves from food service.

Superintendent Bobby Pearce countered some Facebook posters by pointing out that Wakulla schools are not seeing growth. And

he discussed the lack of need for a new high school – especially when the new 57,000 square foot career academy is built in the next year or so, and the front of the high school is replaced in 2025, there will be plenty of student stations.

Brown, who is own-

er of Waypoint Realty, noted that 65% of real estate sales in the past few years have been to people 50 or older, with grown children. He posited that the rising cost of houses had priced young couples out.

There was also a discussion about rising health insurance costs.

Obituaries



Shirley J. Carter

Shirley Jean Carter, 81, of Crawfordville, passed away at home with her loving family, Jan. 15, 2023.

She was a native of Tallahassee and had lived in Crawfordville most of her life, where she raised her family. Shirley retired as an Administrator from the Florida Highway Patrol, served alongside her husband Myers Carter ministering to the residents at Eden Springs Nursing Facility and was a member of Friendship Primi-

tive Baptist Church. Shirley always had a sweet smile and tender heart, she loved helping others; her greatest love was her family, children and grandchildren.

Shirley was predeceased by her husband of 56 years, Myers Carter; and her granddaughter Rebecca Gray.

She leaves behind her loving family, children Kenny Carter and wife Linda; Tammy Peltier and husband Chuck; and Kathy Gray and husband Derricke; sister Debbie Presnell; brother Frank Presnell and wife Linda; five grandchildren, Josh & Brittany, Chelsea & Zach, Charlie & Shelby, Chad & Michelle and Micah & Jami; and nine great-grandchildren, Ella Kate, Gracely, Carter, Anna Grace, Carly, Levi Myers, Cooper, Jonah, and Lacy Jo.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023, from 1 to 2 p.m. at Friendship Primitive Baptist Church and Funeral Service will begin at 2 p.m. Interment will follow at Friendship Memorial Gardens.

Skip & Trey Young along with Paula and Kimberly are assisting the family with their arrangements. Family Funeral Home at Harvey Young Chapel. 850-926-5919 Familyfhc.com



James G. Gerrell Jr.

James Gordon Gerrell Jr., 68, of Crawfordville, died very unexpectedly on Saturday, Jan. 14, 2023 peacefully at home.

Gordon was a native and lifelong resident of this area who started working with Wakulla LP Gas when he was 16 years old. His career lasted well over 40 years when he retired just a few years ago. Gordon coached both his daughters in sports for

years, loved playing softball and was always at the park or field watching his grandchildren. NASCAR was another joy of his, cherishing the time spent camping with his brothers at Daytona and Talladega to watch the races. Gordon was an avid music lover of various styles; you never knew what song would come on next. On Wednesday nights, you could always find him with friends playing a friendly game of poker.

Gordon is survived by his mother, Betty Mullins; his daughters, Alena Crawford (Kyle Crawford) and Lesley Gerrell; his brothers Randall (Michelle) and Ted (Dianne); his sister Sharon Young (Mike Dallman); four grandsons that he dearly loved, Connor, Jackson, Gavin and Maddux; and many nieces and nephews.

Gordon's family will be receiving friends to celebrate his life at Family Funeral Home in Harvey Young Chapel on Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023, from 5 to 7 p.m.

Skip & Trey Young along with Paula and Kimberly are assisting the family with their arrangements. Family Funeral Home at Harvey Young Chapel. 850-926-5919 Familyfhc.com



Donna L.M. Kendrick

Donna Louise Means Kendrick, 72, passed away on Dec. 26, 2022 in Tallahassee.

She was predeceased by her parents, Ernest E. Means and Miriam Garman Means and brother, David Means.

She is survived by her husband, Larry Kendrick of Tallahassee; brother, Phil Means (Kim) of Fort Lauderdale; and sister-in-law Sue Means of New Hampshire; her children, Jeff Kendrick of Crawfordville (Sherry),

Jeana Millender of Crawfordville, and Phillip Kendrick of Crawfordville (Sarah); her grandchildren, Brooke Millender, Lynley Kendrick, Seth Kendrick, and Wyatt Kendrick and a host of nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews in New Hampshire.

Donna dedicated her life to teaching Kindergarten at Shadeville Elementary for 44 years, from 1973 to 2017. She enjoyed spending time with family, especially her grandkids, and having lunch and get-togethers with the "Chicken Salad Chicks." She loved anything frogs and visiting her extended family at Newfound Lake in New Hampshire.

A Celebration of Life and Teaching will be held on Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Wakulla Community Center (322 Shadeville Hwy. Crawfordville 32327).

In lieu of flowers, tax-deductible donations can be made to Wakulla Academic Boosters, Inc. for the Donna Kendrick Memorial Scholarship at wakullaacademicboosters.org. Checks can be mailed to P.O. Box 448 Crawfordville FL 32326.

Thank you everyone for the calls, texts, cards, hugs, and kind words. You have no idea how much your support means to us. Mom was one of a kind! We love you, Mother Goose!

DEATH NOTICES

- **Lisa Lynn Scott**, 60, of Crawfordville, died January 11, 2023. Family Funeral Home at Harvey Young Chapel. 850-926-5919 Familyfhc.com



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PUBLIC NOTICES:

For our readers' convenience, The Wakulla Sun provides this Public Notice Section for all Public Notices not published in the Legal Notice section of the newspaper.



WAKULLA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD PRE-QUALIFICATION NOTICE

The School Board of Wakulla County is requesting Proposals for Pre-Qualifying for Construction Services for Wakulla County School Board projects for the 2023 year.

Pre-Qualification packets are available at the School Board Office.

**WAKULLA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
FACILITIES OFFICE**

126 High Drive

Crawfordville, Florida 32327

Telephone Number: 850-926-0065

Interested parties may pick up packets between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Completed packets and a Public Entity Crime Statement must be returned to the office of Robert Pearce, Superintendent, Wakulla County School Board, 69 Arran Road, Crawfordville, Florida 32327.

Attention: Michael Barwick by 2:00 pm February 7, 2023.

There will be a pre-qualification meeting at 2:00 p.m. January 31, 2023 in the Wakulla County School Boardroom.

January 12, 19, 2023

FOLLOW THE SUN.



THE CITY OF ST. MARKS WILL HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING TO FILL VACANCY ON CITY COMMISSION

Date: January 19, 2023 at 6:00 pm

Location: 788 Port Leon Drive, St. Marks FL 32355

The City of St. Marks located at 788 Port Leon Drive, 9 AM to 4:30 PM M/F; Phone (850) 925-6224. Persons needing special access considerations should call the City Office at least 24 hours before the date for scheduling purposes. The Board Office may be contacted at (850) 925-6224.

January 19, 2023

Opinions

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Local Republican Party supports law enforcement



By **MIKE WATKINS**
Party Chair

On January 9, the Wakulla County Republican Executive Committee of

Wakulla County (WREC) issued a statement in recognition and appreciation of law enforcement officers and agencies across America, coinciding with National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day.

The statement reads, “The Wakulla County Republican Executive Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation to the efforts of law enforcement officers, staff, and agencies

in our county, our state, and across the nation. At a time when law enforcement has endured unprecedented risks and challenges, we wish to reinforce our acknowledgment and understanding of the difficult job they do every day to keep American citizens safe. We are grateful for the men and women who put their lives on the line every day to do their job, often without thanks or praise.”

Mike Watkins, Chairman added, “The Republican Party is proud of Sheriff Jared F. Miller and the entire Wakulla Sheriff’s Office team. We commend their extraordinary efforts and sacrifices to make sure Wakulla and Florida are Free.”

According to NationalToday.com, “National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day was created by multiple organizations in 2015 to express

their gratitude for officers in the United States. In support of their services citizens are encouraged to do their part in thanking the law enforcers on this day. One of the main organizations to take the lead in this is C.O.P.S – Concerns of Police Survivors. With over 900,000 officers in the United States, the organization believes it is essential to support law enforcers during difficult times, and a holi-

day dedicated to them does just that. The day also raises awareness on the importance of understanding that the difficult decisions taken by police officers are in the best interest of citizens and the law.”

Mike Watkins is chair of the Wakulla Republican Executive Committee. More information on the committee is available at wakullagop.com.

From the Chamber desk



By **HEATHER BRYAN**
Of the Chamber

I’m just as amazed now as I am each year on how quickly the year has gone by. In December, we did an interview with Electric Training Academy and Sunrays Spa, we had a wonderful Ribbon Cutting / Grand Opening with Blackfoot Roofing and Construction at their beautiful new location!

As we concluded the Business Bingo portion of our Shop Local campaign all receipts were tallied for what shops/local business

were shopped at. This year players shopped at 80 local businesses! That is an impressive number considering each business was only counted once.

Thank you to all who played and another special thank you to the committee for all the work that went into making it such a fun part of the Shop Local campaign.

December wasn’t busy with Chamber event happenings but as we get rolling in the new year there will be plenty. Below are what we have on the books so far.

Things to look forward to:

- January 19th – Installation Banquet for 2023 Chamber Officers and Directors
 - January 25th – 1st Networking Luncheon of the year
 - February 2nd – Ribbon Cutting for St. Joe Gas Company
- On the Chamber

website you can find times and locations for these events at wakullacountychamber.com/event/

As always, a list of our members, services and products they provide is on our website at wakullacountychamber.com.

Our 2022 Wakulla County Chamber Business Directory was released in May and is available at several Chamber businesses and at the Chamber office. Call the Chamber office at (850) 926-1848 or send an email to info@wakullacountychamber.com to get your paper or electronic copy today.

We also want to thank all of our sponsors who made the directory possible this year.

Heather Bryan is director of the Wakulla County Chamber of Commerce.

LETTERS FROM READERS

More questions about FWC

Editor, The Sun:

To my knowledge, the following is the greatest legal cover-up in Florida’s history.

As a constitutional conservative whose livelihood is governed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), I must take issue with our great governor, Ron DeSantis, declaring our state a “free state.”

In 1998, Amendment 5 placed the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission into Article IV, Section 9 of the Florida Constitution. At no point did the ballot summary inform the voter that they would be forfeiting their “due process” to seven unelected bureaucrats, but for 24 years, that is exactly what has occurred.

Article IV, Section 9 clearly states the FWC was granted “executive and regulatory” rulemaking powers, which are “statutory,” not “constitutional.” Furthermore, Article IV, Section 9 states that the FWC must provide “adequate due process” to those affected by their duties. The difference is “statutory” rules can be challenged in a court of law and “constitutional” rules can’t. Furthermore, the FWC has refused to establish the mandated “adequate due process” to those affected by their rulemaking authority.

In 1999, the legislature made a grievous error when they passed Florida Statute 370.025(4), stating, “Pursuant to S. 9, Art. IV of the State Constitution, the commission has full constitutional rulemaking authority over marine life.” NOTICE that the statute starts out, “Pursuant to.” There is no “constitutional” rulemaking authority to be found in Article IV, Section 9.

In court case after court case we have been told that we don’t have the right to question the FWC’s “wisdom.” In one of our court cases, an FWC rule was forcing fishermen to unnecessarily kill and waste a proven 98% of their catch (bycatch) under an amendment whose sole purpose was to “stop unnecessary killing, waste and overharvest,” when the FWC had the ability to reduce the bycatch to 2%.

Without fear, FWC attorney, Jonathon Glogau stated that the FWC knew that the nets allowed by the FWC would catch mostly illegal fish (98% illegal in the tests) and the nets denied

would have caught legal fish (97% legal in the tests). Without a logical reason to defend such stupidity, FWC Attorney Jonathon Glogau arrogantly told the 1st DCA that it’s not up to the courts to question the wisdom of the FWC. 1st Chief Judge Edwin Browning Jr. asked Glogau, “Who would vote for this?” (FWC unquestionable authority) The answer is no one did, but due to the legislative error in 1999, we’ve been living under FWC tyranny without the ability to save the environment, economy and citizens lives for the last 24 years.

To make the 24-year quest for “adequate due process” short, after petitioning the legislature in 2007, the House and Senate voted 155 to 1 to repeal the statute FS 370.025(4). After that vote, Sen. Al Lawson assured me that the FWC would have to obey the will of the legislature and would provide adequate due process from that date forward. I assured him that they would never relinquish their imperious power.

It’s 16 years later and with the recent brief written by our State Attorney General Ashley Moody, co-signed by the Solicitor General and Deputy Solicitor General of Florida, the FWC still can claim to be imperious because the Supreme Court simply sent a one word response to our case, “DENIED.”

Isn’t it nice to know people we voted for to uphold the constitution work against our most basic and sacred rights in this “free state?”

During this journey, the FWC threatened to take away a federal grant from Mississippi Sea Grant for helping me research the due process issue, threatened a nearby university if they helped us with net tests, struck the testimony of a NOAA official that claimed their rules were wrong, dealt in “bad faith” at every meeting I attended, lied to stakeholders, attempted to cause trouble at the job I just retired from at the Florida Department of Agriculture and far more.

We have spent tens of thousands of hours fighting to acquire the constitutional due process supposedly guaranteed by our state and U.S. Constitution for 24 years... 24 years Gov. DeSantis. Isn’t it well past time to set us “free?”

David Grix
Boynton Beach

Big Bend Hospice needs Ensure

Big Bend Hospice in need of Ensure donations. The patient census has gone up again, therefore we are going through the Ensure we had on hand rather quickly. We rely solely on donations of these products for our patients, so we are reaching out to the community for assistance. Any donations can be brought to BBH’s Crawfordville office at 2889 Crawfordville Highway, Suite C or at The Wakulla Sun, 12 Arran Road.

The organization can also arrange pick ups in Franklin County, if needed.

There is no specific flavor, but the primary chocolate, vanilla and strawberry are popular.

Editor’s Note:

Because of training at the Wakulla County Sheriff’s Office, the weekly Sheriff’s Report was unavailable last week and this week. The report should resume next week.

SUPPORT COMMUNITY JOURNALISM

You can support The Wakulla Sun with a tax-deductible donation to help us cover the stories that matter to you.

By donating, you help us keep citizens informed, hold officials accountable and cover the most important topics in our community.

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That means:

- More reporters on the street
- More local news about our community
- More local content on the environment and local businesses

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We would very much appreciate your contribution.

William Snowden
Editor & Publisher
The Wakulla Sun

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We accept donations by card or check. If by check, payment must be made to the Florida Press Foundation and write in the check memo line that you want the donation to go to The Wakulla Sun.

Send it to Florida Press Foundation at 336 East College Avenue, Suite 304, Tallahassee FL 32301

“It’s A New Day!”

The Wakulla Sun

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Out of State - \$60/yr. - \$35/6 mo.

◀ Question of The Week ▶

– Compiled by Lynda Kinsey

Polled at Palaver Tree Theater's MLK Celebration: What is your favorite Martin Luther King Jr. quote?



JENESS JONES
MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”



TYLER REVEIRE
CYBER SECURITY

“I have a dream.”



KENNEDY DONALDSON
WAKULLA SCHOOL BOARD

“Love is the one force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.”



TESSIE HOUSE
RETIRED NURSE

“I've been to the mountain top.”



CHERYL RANDOLPH
FLORIDA LEGISLATURE

“If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”

COMMUNITY NEWS

Wakulla Station News

By **VERNA BROCK**

It is Martin Luther King Jr. Day as I write this. I find myself thinking of how far we have come as a nation, and how far we need to go. The ideals upon which the country was founded, extolling the equality of all our citizens, are still to be met, but the dream lives on. My grandchildren were telling me all about the meaning of this holiday, with an appropriate outrage that people

were ever denied equal rights and basic human kindness. Long live the dream, amen and AMEN!

It has been an interesting road to the Super Bowl this year. Nail-biters abound, and white-knuckle moments are happening in every game. I am relieved that Damar Hamlin seems firmly on the road to recovery. But the “mom” in me worries about the dangers of such a rough game, however entertaining. It really is a conundrum. I don't see football

and the NFL going anywhere, any time soon. Thank goodness folks have recognized the inherent dangers of grown men plowing into each other and instituted more safety regulations.

Condolences to the Roddenberry family on the loss of their beloved wife, mother, sister, Kimberly Strickland Roddenberry. Rise in glory Kim! This has been a long season of loss and sadness for so many families, and each one welcomes your prayers for comfort and solace. Prayer is a powerful force in this world, don't ever doubt it.

We celebrated the life of Sheryl Grace Grimes this past Saturday, with laughter and tears. There was sharing of memories of her many talents, her wit and her incredible warmth and love. What a joy knowing she and Don are reunited, and we will all meet again someday. However much we miss them, that helps to ease the pain of our present loss.

Please continue to prayerfully lift up Clem Bunker who is gaining strength from her recent bout with pneumonia, as well as Linda Dunwoody, and Louis Hernandez..

Library News – Jan. 19

Thursday, January 19

Veteran's Meetup 11am
Sphero Chariot Challenge 5pm
Wakulla Amateur Radio Club 7pm

Friday, January 20

Quilting Guild 9:30am

Saturday, January 21

TMH READ Therapy Dogs 10am

Monday, January 23

No Programs Today

Tuesday, January 24

Book Bunch 10am

Wednesday, January 25

Book Babies 10am

Knitting Group 4pm

3D Printing Class 5pm

Thursday, January 26

Sphero Chariot Challenge Sign Up 5pm

AFTER HOURS SPEAKER SERIES

Our exciting new speaker series is set to start at the end of this month! All programs will take place at the Library at 6:30 p.m.

- Wednesday, January 25th – Carlos R. Villa from the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory will discuss how the MagLab makes the world's strongest magnets and how research with these magnets will improve technology in the future.
- Wednesday, February 8th – Lisa

Keith-Lucas from Camp Gordon Johnston presents “WWII African American Amphibious Truck Companies at Camp Gordon Johnston”

- Monday, February 13th – Michelle Hearn, Senior Curator for the Museum of Florida History, presents “The Florida Highwaymen – African American Landscape Painters”
- Wednesday, February 22nd – Michelle Hearn, Senior Curator for the Museum of Florida History, presents “Civil Rights in the Sunshine State”

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY ANNUAL MARDI GRAS FUNDRAISER BALL

The Annual Friends of the Library Mardi Gras Fundraiser Ball will take

place on February 18, 2023 from 6pm to 9pm at the Wakulla County Community Center. This year's ball will feature catering by Harry's Seafood, live music provided by the Thursday Night Music Club, and amazing cocktails served up by the Yard Bar.

Tickets are \$50 per person and tables are available for sponsorship at different funding levels. Special Date Night two top tables which will include prime seating, a bottle of champagne, and two souvenir champagne flutes will be available for \$150.

Tickets and tables can be purchased at the Wakulla County Public Library via cash or check.

On the Horizon

Calendar of upcoming events for the week of Jan. 19

Thursday, January 19

- The Installation Banquet for the 2023 Wakulla Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors will be held at Sherlock Springs at 5:30 p.m.
- The St. Marks City Commission will hold a special meeting to appoint a city commissioner at St. Marks City Hall at 6 p.m.
- The Rotary Club of Wakulla County meets at the TCC Wakulla Center at 8:30 a.m.
- Hatha Yoga with Zoe at 9 a.m. and Yin Yoga with Nellie at 6 p.m. Classes are \$12, packages available at New Posh on 3079 Crawfordville Hwy. Please RSVP email at newposh3079@gmail.com or text/call at (850) 528-5838.
- The VFW Auxiliary Bingo Night will be held at 7 p.m. at 475 Arran Road in Crawfordville. There will be concessions and raffles.

Friday, January 20

- The Wakulla County Tourist Development Council will host a special public meeting in the Crawfordville Room at the Wakulla County Community Center at 9 a.m.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and 8 p.m. every Friday at the American Legion, 54 Ochlockonee St.

Saturday, January 21

- The Arbor Day drive-thru tree giveaway will be held outside the Wakulla County Extension Office from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- The Wakulla Caregiver Support Group will meet at the Wakulla County Public Library at 10 a.m.
- Intro to Tai Chi held at the Community Center from 9 to 10 a.m. All ability levels are welcome; please wear comfortable clothing. For questions call Rich or Terri Bushman at 850-228-9214.
- The Wakulla County Horseman's Association will hold a show on every third Saturday until May 20. Exhibitions will begin at 11 a.m. and the jackpot will begin at noon.

- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion, 54 Ochlockonee St.

Sunday, January 22

- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 10 a.m. and at 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion, 54 Ochlockonee St.

Monday, January 23

- Intro to Tai Chi held at the Community Center from 9 to 10 a.m. All ability levels are welcome; please wear comfortable clothing. For questions call Rich or Terri Bushman at 850-228-9214.
- The Wakulla Respite Program will be available for anyone with memory impairment at no cost from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Lake Ellen Baptist Church.
- Rise and Shine Yoga with Lacey at 6 a.m. Hatha yoga at 9 a.m. and Restorative Yoga at 6 p.m. with Zoe. Classes are \$12, packages available at New Posh on 3079 Crawfordville Hwy. Please RSVP email at newposh3079@gmail.com or text/call at (850) 528-5838.
- The Wakulla County Historic Preservation Committee will hold a public meeting in the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners Administration Conference Room at 4 p.m.
- The Wakulla County Recreation Advisory Committee will hold at public meeting in the Sopchoppy Room at the Wakulla County Community Center at 4 p.m.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion, 54 Ochlockonee St.

Tuesday, January 24

- Sopchoppy Community Dinner is held every week at the Towles House at 6:30 p.m.
- Yin Yoga at 10:30 a.m. and Flow Yoga at 6 p.m. with Nellie. Classes are \$12, packages available at New Posh on 3079 Crawfordville Hwy. Please RSVP email at newposh3079@gmail.com or text/call at (850) 528-5838.

- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion, 54 Ochlockonee St.

Wednesday, January 25

- Intro to Tai Chi held at the Community Center from 9 to 10 a.m. All ability levels are welcome; please wear comfortable clothing. For questions call Rich or Terri Bushman at 850-228-9214.
- The Wakulla County Chamber of Commerce's 1st Member Networking Luncheon of 2023 will be held at Sherlock Springs at noon.
- A Line Dance class will be held at 1 p.m. at the Wakulla Senior Center.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and at 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion, 54 Ochlockonee St.

Kiersten Smith

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Outdoors

outdoor sports

HOME ON THE RANGE

Reflecting on guns and end of innocence



By MARJ LAW

Times have changed. In the early to late middle 1900s, guns were part of our way of life. Children had handmade guns, pop guns, cap guns, elastic, nerf and water guns. We'd play "cops and robbers." If we didn't have a play gun handy, our thumbs and index fingers worked just as well.

"Bang! Bang! You're dead!"

"No, I'm not! I shot you first!"

Guess the resolution mostly depended on the eldest person's index finger.

On TV's Andy Griffith Show, Don Knotts was allowed to carry only one round because he was too eager on the trigger. Back then, that was amusing.

And not so long ago, you'd see rifles hanging in the rear windows of trucks. It was legal to do so.

Kids would even take their guns to school so that they could go hunting when the final bell rang. That was OK too.

Back in the 1960s, Joe brought a long gun to school for "show and tell." He described its parts, its history, how to care for it and how to shoot it. That was legal.

And why not? James M. Volo, of American Military University, writes: "Most American households from colonial times were required to have a firearm (musket or rifle). It was part of the militia law of many communities."

Laura Ingalls Wilder, writing her "Little House" books of life in the 1800s, remembers helping her father make bullets and load his rifle.

"First he melted the bits of lead in the big spoon held in the coals. When the lead was melted, he poured it carefully from the spoon into the little hole in the bullet-mold. He waited a minute, then he opened the mold, and out dropped a bright new bullet onto the hearth.

"Now he was ready to load the gun again, and Laura and Mary must help him..."

"The gun was always loaded, and always above the door so that Pa could get it quickly and easily, any time he needed a gun."

Back then, there was no question if Laura or her siblings would climb on a chair, take the gun down, and play with it.

And back then, Laura's father depended on his gun to provide food for his family.

Times have changed. Now it has become necessary to keep children away from firearms. Laura's father would be taught to make sure his loaded gun was locked safely away.

And if Joe were to bring his rifle to school today, he'd be suspended.

School children cannot own guns and can certainly not bring them on a school campus anymore.

Watching Don Knotts mishandle a firearm even on a set is no longer amusing.

If you hear "Bang! Bang," you'll most likely listen carefully to make sure you're hearing a child just pretending he has a gun.

Too many toy guns appear alarmingly realistic.

This is a problem because of the upswing of misuse of firearms. The age of innocence is over.

However, even though some people have harmed or killed others using



Old Toy Guns

firearms, our constitutional "unalienable" Bill of Rights allows American citizens (who are not felons) the ability to bear arms through the 2nd Amendment.

"Unalienable" rights are not dependent on laws or customs of a particular culture or government. They supersede governmental laws and cultural norms. "Legal" rights are those acknowledged and protected by government. "They can be changed, suspended or revoked as new laws are deemed necessary or more appropriate," advises Legal Dictionary.

So, when some people advocate restricting certain guns or their parts, this causes a problem.

The Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep

and Bear Arms (CCRKBA) blasted recent public opinion polls showing support for bans on so-called "semiautomatic weapons," noting that constitutionally protected rights are not subject to what amounts to popularity contests.

"Fundamental rights, including the right to keep and bear arms, must never be determined by the whims of survey respondents," said CCRKBA Chairman Alan Gottlieb. "We don't have popularity contests to determine the rights of free speech or the press. We would hardly allow a public opinion poll to dictate whether people should worship in a church, mosque or synagogue. So, why would we think it's allowable for a survey to tell us whether

we should ban a whole class of firearms, when the 2nd Amendment has protected the rights of gun owners for more than two centuries?"

He goes on to state: "Anyone who honestly believes a survey should justify the erosion of any right guaranteed by our constitution needs a refresher course in high school civics," Gottlieb observed. "Rights are special. We don't need government permission to exercise them, nor do we need the blessing of a vocal minority, because in this country, citizens do not answer to the wishes of a mob."

A. E. Samaan clarifies this: "Nowhere in the Bill of Rights are the words 'unless inconvenient' to be found."

Some groups are trying to limit or ban American's ability to own guns because some people have terribly badly misused them.

America's age of innocence about guns is over. We are left with figuring out how to adhere to our Bill of Rights and yet keep our people safe.

On Wednesdays, when we meet others at the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office range, gun owners work together and with newbies to learn gun safety.

The times, they are a-changing.

Marj Law is the former director of Keep Wakulla County Beautiful who has become an avid shooter in retirement.

BIRDING AT THE REFUGE

Winter ducks are still here

By DON MORROW

When I reached the outer levee at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge it was almost first light and there was a half-moon hanging in a lonely starless sky. Across the salt marsh, the receding edge of last night's front formed a low gray border on the Eastern horizon. A light cream-colored band separated it from the pure pale blue of the morning sky.

It was cold, just 50 degrees. I walked north on the levee into a brisk wind until I reached the "Closed Wildlife Area" sign, set up my scope and began to scan Mounds Pool III. A large flock of Snowy Egrets was flying off to begin a day of foraging and, as the sun rose, it burned red holes in the clouds hugging the marsh.

The south end of Mounds Pool III is a good spot for Mallards, Northern Pintails and my target bird, the American Black Duck. St. Marks is the only reliable place in Florida for them and they can usually be found associated with Mallards. I found only one mixed in with thirty-one Mallards. It's likely that there are more out there, hidden by the marsh grasses.

I moved on and birded my way back to my car, finding the usual winter woodland species: Gray Catbird, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Ruby-crowned King-



A young Bald Eagle trying to grab a Redhead duck.

let. Then, I drove down to the Lighthouse parking lot.

At first, I just sat in my car. It was getting colder and the wind was howling as it came across the water. My car was relatively warm and I didn't want to leave. Nearshore birds were flying: Brown Pelicans, Ring-billed Gulls, Double-crested Cormorants and a single Royal Tern. Out on the surface of the Apalachee Bay, I could see ducks, Bufflehead, Redhead, scaup and a few Red-breasted Mergansers.

Then, from my left birds started flying, mostly a big flock of Redheads, but including other ducks, cormorants and gulls. Something had disturbed them. I stepped out into the cold to get a better look and saw a hovering Bald Eagle. It was a young bird, dark with scattered white feathering on its belly and underwing. Probably, a 3-year-old. It dropped toward the water and then

flew back up, flapping against the strong morning wind to stay in place.

When the eagle had attacked, one bird out of the group of birds on the water, had chosen to dive rather than fly. The eagle was now staying above it. Every time it surfaced for air, the eagle dropped to try to grab it. On its fifth attempt, the young eagle settled into the water. It sat for a moment and then with great and labored effort, lifted off.

As it rose off the water, I could see that it was grasping a Redhead by the head and neck. The Redhead started flapping. It wasn't giving up. The eagle dropped it, flew up and swung around, but the duck had disappeared. The eagle flew over and landed on the old boathouse pilings. It waited a moment and then flew off.

I pulled my scope out of the car and scanned the water, looking for the duck. I found it sitting on the water looking around

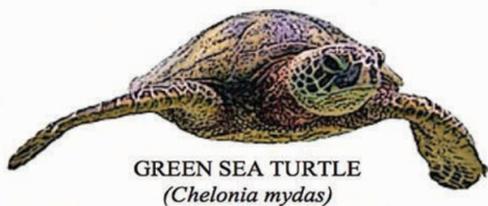
nervously. It didn't show any obvious signs of damage. I watched it for about 20 minutes as it slowly swam out into deeper water. It flapped its wings, once, but never flew.

Wintering eagles at St. Marks rely heavily on coots, ducks and gallinules, but are opportunistic and will take fish, herons and small mammals. Their hunting success varies on any individual attempt, but there are enough opportunities available to them to keep them well fed.

There's a lot happening at the refuge, right now. A Long-tailed Duck and a Surf Scoter are being seen in the mouth of the St. Marks River. A wintering Nashville Warbler is lurking along the roadside adjacent to Lighthouse Pool and the long-running American Flamingo can be found on Lighthouse Pool or on offshore bars.

St. Marks winter ducks are still here, but if you want to see them, come down soon. The Red Maples along East River have begun to flower and the Great Wheel of the Seasons has started to shift. By early February, our ducks will start to leave and the refuge's first spring migrants, Purple Martins and Northern Parulas will begin to arrive.

Don Morrow can be contacted at donaldmorrow@gmail.com.



GREEN SEA TURTLE
(*Chelonia mydas*)

Green sea turtles adults graze on the vast sea grass beds of the tropics. Florida's coastal waters are an important feeding grounds. Juveniles hunt crabs jellyfish and sponge. Each year they will swim thousands of miles to return to their birthplace to mate and lay eggs. Artificial lights on beaches confuse them and prevent them from laying eggs. Sea walls block their path. This turtle is called "green" because it was favored for soup and the fat is greenish. Hunting for the turtle meat and eggs and habitat destruction means this turtle is now endangered. This is the one of the largest of the living sea turtles and can grow to 700 pounds.

Eukaryota, Amalia, Chordata, Reptilia, Testudinidae, Cheloniidae

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Water Ways

a peek into life on and under the water

Local writers share their experiences

Thursday 19

Sun rise/set: 7:32AM 5:28AM
6:02PM 3:35PM

Moon Illumination 8%

Friday 20

Sun rise/set: 7:32AM 6:36AM
6:03PM 4:42PM

Moon Illumination 3%

Saturday 21

Sun rise/set: 7:32AM 7:37AM
6:04PM 5:57PM

Moon Illumination 0%

Sunday 22

Sun rise/set: 7:31AM 8:29AM
6:04PM 7:12PM

Moon Illumination 1%

Monday 23

Sun rise/set: 7:31AM 9:14AM
6:05PM 8:24PM

Moon Illumination 4%

Tuesday 24

Sun rise/set: 7:31AM 9:52AM
6:06PM 9:33PM

Moon Illumination 10%

Wednesday 25

Sun rise/set: 7:30AM 10:25AM
6:07PM 10:37PM

Moon Illumination 18%

Gulf Coast Weekly Almanac

Jan. 19 - Jan. 25

Tide charts by tides4fishing.com

Best fishing days this month
January 21-31

First Jan. 28 Full Feb. 5 Last Feb. 13 New Jan. 21

For tides at the following points add to Dog Island Listings:

	High Tide	Low Tide
Carrabelle	28 Min.	25 Min.
Apalachicola	1 Hr., 53 Min.	2 Hrs., 38 Min.
Cat Point	1 Hr., 13 Min.	2 Hrs., 31 Min.
Lower Anchorage	1 Hr., 36 Min.	2 Hrs., 3 Min.
West Pass	1 Hr., 26 Min.	2 Hrs., 39 Min.

St. Marks River Entrance

Th	7:27 am ▼ -1.1 ft	1:53 pm ▲ 2.7 ft	7:07 pm ▼ 1.5 ft
Fr	12:18 am ▲ 3.1 ft	8:18 am ▼ -1.4 ft	2:38 pm ▲ 2.8 ft
Sa	1:15 am ▲ 3.3 ft	9:06 am ▼ -1.5 ft	3:18 pm ▲ 2.9 ft
Su	2:08 am ▲ 3.4 ft	9:50 am ▼ -1.4 ft	3:54 pm ▲ 2.8 ft
Mo	2:59 am ▲ 3.4 ft	10:31 am ▼ -1.2 ft	4:27 pm ▲ 2.8 ft
Tu	3:49 am ▲ 3.3 ft	11:08 am ▼ -0.8 ft	4:58 pm ▲ 2.8 ft
We	4:40 am ▲ 3.0 ft	11:42 am ▼ -0.3 ft	5:26 pm ▲ 2.7 ft

City of St. Marks

Th	6:46 am ▼ -1.3 ft	1:37 pm ▲ 2.8 ft	6:13 pm ▼ 1.6 ft
Fr	7:40 am ▼ -1.5 ft	2:23 pm ▲ 2.9 ft	7:11 pm ▼ 1.5 ft
Sa	12:56 am ▲ 3.5 ft	8:29 am ▼ -1.7 ft	3:05 pm ▲ 3.0 ft
Su	1:51 am ▲ 3.7 ft	9:14 am ▼ -1.7 ft	3:43 pm ▲ 3.0 ft
Mo	2:44 am ▲ 3.7 ft	9:56 am ▼ -1.4 ft	4:19 pm ▲ 3.0 ft
Tu	3:35 am ▲ 3.5 ft	10:34 am ▼ -1.1 ft	4:51 pm ▲ 3.0 ft
We	4:26 am ▲ 3.3 ft	11:08 am ▼ -0.6 ft	5:22 pm ▲ 3.0 ft

Shell Point, Spring Creek

Th	6:34 am ▼ -0.9 ft	1:09 pm ▲ 2.2 ft	6:14 pm ▼ 1.2 ft
Fr	7:25 am ▼ -1.1 ft	1:54 pm ▲ 2.3 ft	7:06 pm ▼ 1.1 ft
Sa	12:31 am ▲ 2.6 ft	8:13 am ▼ -1.2 ft	2:34 pm ▲ 2.3 ft
Su	1:24 am ▲ 2.7 ft	8:57 am ▼ -1.1 ft	3:10 pm ▲ 2.3 ft
Mo	2:15 am ▲ 2.6 ft	9:38 am ▼ -0.9 ft	3:43 pm ▲ 2.3 ft
Tu	3:05 am ▲ 2.6 ft	10:15 am ▼ -0.6 ft	4:14 pm ▲ 2.2 ft
We	3:56 am ▲ 2.4 ft	10:49 am ▼ -0.2 ft	4:42 pm ▲ 2.2 ft

Alligator Point, Ochlockonee Bay

Th	6:34 am ▼ -0.9 ft	1:09 pm ▲ 2.2 ft	6:14 pm ▼ 1.2 ft
Fr	7:25 am ▼ -1.1 ft	1:54 pm ▲ 2.3 ft	7:06 pm ▼ 1.1 ft
Sa	12:31 am ▲ 2.6 ft	8:13 am ▼ -1.2 ft	2:34 pm ▲ 2.3 ft
Su	1:24 am ▲ 2.7 ft	8:57 am ▼ -1.1 ft	3:10 pm ▲ 2.3 ft
Mo	2:15 am ▲ 2.6 ft	9:38 am ▼ -0.9 ft	3:43 pm ▲ 2.3 ft
Tu	3:05 am ▲ 2.6 ft	10:15 am ▼ -0.6 ft	4:14 pm ▲ 2.2 ft
We	3:56 am ▲ 2.4 ft	10:49 am ▼ -0.2 ft	4:42 pm ▲ 2.2 ft

St. Teresa, Turkey Pt.

Th	6:17 am ▼ -1.2 ft	1:49 pm ▲ 2.0 ft	5:55 pm ▼ 1.5 ft
Fr	7:09 am ▼ -1.4 ft	2:31 pm ▲ 2.0 ft	6:44 pm ▼ 1.4 ft
Sa	12:12 am ▲ 2.7 ft	7:58 am ▼ -1.5 ft	3:09 pm ▲ 2.0 ft
Su	1:09 am ▲ 2.8 ft	8:45 am ▼ -1.5 ft	3:42 pm ▲ 2.0 ft
Mo	2:07 am ▲ 2.8 ft	9:29 am ▼ -1.3 ft	4:13 pm ▲ 2.0 ft
Tu	3:06 am ▲ 2.6 ft	10:11 am ▼ -0.9 ft	4:42 pm ▲ 2.0 ft
We	4:06 am ▲ 2.4 ft	10:50 am ▼ -0.5 ft	5:11 pm ▲ 2.1 ft

Dog Island West End

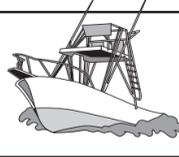
Th	6:48 am ▼ -1.3 ft	2:56 pm ▲ 1.8 ft	6:37 pm ▼ 1.5 ft
Fr	7:36 am ▼ -1.5 ft	3:28 pm ▲ 1.8 ft	7:23 pm ▼ 1.4 ft
Sa	12:29 am ▲ 2.4 ft	8:20 am ▼ -1.5 ft	3:58 pm ▲ 1.8 ft
Su	1:29 am ▲ 2.4 ft	9:04 am ▼ -1.4 ft	4:24 pm ▲ 1.8 ft
Mo	2:25 am ▲ 2.4 ft	9:49 am ▼ -1.2 ft	4:48 pm ▲ 1.8 ft
Tu	3:21 am ▲ 2.2 ft	10:31 am ▼ -0.8 ft	5:09 pm ▲ 1.8 ft
We	4:19 am ▲ 1.9 ft	11:08 am ▼ -0.4 ft	5:30 pm ▲ 1.8 ft

Best hunting and fishing based on solunar times: MAJOR feeding periods are 2 hours long, centered on the solunar time. MINOR feeding periods are only 1 hour long, again centered on the solunar time.



Coast Guard Auxiliary Reports

By Carolyn Brown Treadon



The following information was shared from Bob Currie, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Recreational Boating Safety Specialist, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Station Galveston Flotilla. It is also available on the US Coast Guard Heartland Safe Boating Site.

When we talk about Recreational Boating Safety, some people may think that the target audience is only boat owners. Well, boat owners are in the target audience, but there is another target audience: the recreational boating passenger. You do not have to be a boat owner to enjoy recreational boating. Being invited to be a passenger can be quite enjoyable in itself, but you can increase that enjoyment by becoming a well-trained passenger. Let's look at how you can accomplish that title.

BOATER EDUCATION COURSE

The most important step you can take to becoming a well-trained passenger is to take a Boater Education Course. All members of the Coast Guard are required to take such a course. A course that meets any state boating requirement will do. Boat operators born after August 31, 1993 (except for certain small boats with limited power) are required to take a Boater Education Course. There are Coast Guard Auxiliary flotillas who put on such courses, and you can also take the course online at BoatUS.com. The online course at BoatUS.com is free to members, and you can take it at your convenience.

CHOOSE YOUR SKIPPER WISELY

While a three-hour

Boating Emergencies

Coast Guard Station

Panama City (850) 234-4228

Coast Guard Station

Yankeetown (352) 447-6900

Coast Guard Auxiliary

Apalachee Bay (Flotilla 12) (850) 942-7500
or (850) 284-1166

tour on a boat sounds inviting, things can go bad when the weather starts getting rough and the tiny ship you are on is tossed. You need to know that your skipper has experience with his boat, experience in the waters in which he intends to sail, and, if you are a paying passenger, that the skipper and all crew are properly licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard. If you are not a paying passenger, you should at least determine that the skipper is fit and has a well-outfitted boat. One good indication that the boat is properly outfitted with required safety equipment is a current Coast Guard Vessel Safety Check sticker on the port (left) side of the boat. That means the boat has passed a safety inspection and has the required amount of life jackets, visual distress signals (flares, flags, etc.), navigation lights, horn, and emergency kill switch lanyard, among other requirements.

FILE A FLOAT PLAN

A float plan is a detailed description of the proposed trip, including who will be aboard, where you will launch, when you will launch, where you plan to go, and when you plan to return, among other information. The Coast Guard Safety app has an entire section devoted to filing a float plan. Passengers may also

file a float plan. You fill in the information in the plan and send it to up to three people via email. The app takes care of the emailing for you. The more people you have looking out for you the better.

DRESS FOR THE WEATHER

You should always wear a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Flip flops are okay. No they aren't! Wear some boat shoes. Good fitting tennis shoes will work. You do not want to fall overboard because your feet slipped in your flip flops. This happened just recently, dockside, and it resulted in a fatality. At the dock. When it starts cooling down you need to dress for immersion, meaning wear layers of non-cotton clothing.

HOLD A JOB BRIEFING

You don't want to surprise your captain with your newfound knowledge by taking over a job without first having a job briefing. The job briefing should entail where important equipment, such as the anchor, first aid kit, boat lines, marine radio, docking fenders, visual distress signals, and other important equipment are located. You need to relay what knowledge and experience you may have to the captain, and then let him decide which

jobs he wishes to assign you, if any. It may take some time before the captain decides to allow you to take on any responsibilities.

FOLLOW THE CAPTAIN'S INSTRUCTIONS

The best passengers are those who follow the important instructions given by the captain. This includes sitting where they tell you to sit, and not moving about the boat while it is underway unless instructed to by the captain. Don't take on any chores without being asked to or without express permission. Moving about the boat, especially in close quarters to other boats or to the dock, can alter the intended course of the boat and could cause an unintended collision.

If you would like to learn more about vessel safety checks, please contact Steve Hults, Staff Officer for Vessel Examinations at steve.hults@uscgaux.net.

Please contact us for more information about our safe boating classes or learning more about getting involved in the Auxiliary, check out our website at www.uscgaux.net follow us on FaceBook @ Apalachee Bay Flotilla 12 or contact our Flotilla Commander Phil Hill at pnkhill2000@yahoo.com.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed civilian volunteer component of the U.S. Coast Guard and supports the Coast Guard in nearly all mission areas. The Auxiliary was created by Congress in 1939. For more information, please visit www.cgaux.org.

Underwater Wakulla

By Rusty Miller

Instructor and training.

In this article I would like to talk to you about being a scuba diving instructor. I know in several past articles I have shared with you about open water, advanced, rescue, and dive master scuba divers certification. I'm going to give you some insight that I have gotten over the more than 30 years as a scuba diving instructor.

All instructors are not the same, even though we teach pretty much the same standards from several different agencies. I will not go into the different agencies, whether one is better than the other, which would be a fool's errand. What I can say to you is that no matter what agency you have used or want to use; they all have the same standards we teach to. There are no federal or state agencies that regulate the scuba diving industry other than DOT - which regulates the standards for the high pressure scuba tank and its transportation.

I have been a certified instructor with several different agencies over the years. For one reason or another, I have changed agencies based on my likes or dislikes of the internal workings or I just don't agree with their leadership on changing the standards just to make a profit or the elimination of a standard just because the leadership doesn't like it. Pretty much most instructors have had several instructor certs from various agencies over the years.

I'm what you would call old school when it comes to diving instruction but I'm also a practical instructor when I teach. I have set in stone priorities that I will not compromise on. My biggest one is the student's safety. To me I will not allow any student to do just enough to pass a skill but do it over and over until they are comfortable with it and I am confident they can do it well. The student has to know that I am truly concerned with their safety, comfort, and the ability to have fun and enjoy their new found sport of scuba diving.

I have seen many instructors over the years that treat their students like a dollar sign and don't really give attention to the different pace that people learn new skills. They try to put as many students as they can through a course and are not too concerned about the overall safety after their certification is complete. Those types of instructors usually never stay in the business too long. It's the instructors that have a passion for the sport and the individual they teach. Being an instructor in this sport is a lot of responsibility and you have to understand that you are responsible for the safety of the folks you teach.

Through the years I have seen a lot of improvement in the type of scuba gear versus what was used 30 years ago. The gear has become more reliable and safer to use. This certainly does not take away the responsibility of the instructor for the safety of the students. Let's look at dive computers as an example. Dive computers have gotten very advanced over the years, so much so that certain scuba agencies have pretty much stopped teaching the use of dive tables. I too have gotten used to my dive computer because it not only gives me the contact pressure reading in my scuba tank, it calculates during my dive my air consumption and lets me know that if I stay at depth how long my air will last and my nitrogen and oxygen saturation will be.

Does this mean I stop teaching the dive tables? NO. I still go through the tables because not everyone can afford an expensive computer plus if something happens and that computer dies while you are diving, what then?

I tell my students that when I dive I keep a set of dive tables in my BC pocket, an extra submersible pressure gauge on my regulator, a depth gauge on my BC, and an analog type dive watch on my other wrist. If my computer dies I will know what depth, time and air pressure I have so I look at my dive tables and figure how much longer I can stay down.

It is a very redundant system but I owe it to my students to be prepared for the unknown possibilities under water. Next article I will give you my impressions on the modern BCDs.

Until then keep making bubbles.

Russell Miller #59999

Would you defend me if my life were threatened?

By **SHERYL H. BOLDT**

If I saw someone threatening your life, I'd want to do whatever was necessary to fight for your right to live. I believe you'd do the same for me. We'd fight as if we

were defending our own lives – because the fight to live is innately placed in us.

In a similar way (from my vantage point), abortion is like seeing a mother beating her child. I'd have to run to that baby's defense. I suspect you would, too.

I realize abortion is a fiery issue that has the power to arouse strong emotions.

For those who are pro-choice, I respectfully ask that you hear me out. I'm praying for the right words because I honestly don't want to put even more distance between

the two sides.

Let's pretend that time travel were possible, and you, as a baby developing in your mother's womb, had the ability to reason. What would you have thought if someone told your mom you were just a glob of tissue? Wouldn't you have been relieved to hear one of those pesky pro-lifers explain that your heart was already beating by the time she was five weeks pregnant?

What if you could go back in time to when your mother's friend was driving her to the abortion clinic? Would

you, as a preborn baby, have supported your mom's right to choose? Or would you have been screaming, "I want to live! I want a chance to blow out birthday candles, play hide-and-seek and go to my first day of kindergarten!"

Even as a staunch pro-choicer, aren't you glad your mother chose life? You've had some hardships, but maybe you've had a chance to see your children grow up, to play hide-and-seek with them, to see them experience their first day of kindergarten. If you don't have

children, maybe you've experienced other joys – marriage, friendship, etc.

If reading this week's column adds to the pain you feel because you profoundly regret having an abortion, I'm so sorry. I don't wish the pain you experience on anyone. I pray you'll embrace God's forgiveness and find healing. Many crisis pregnancy centers offer free, nonjudgmental counseling for post-abortion women.

If you're a pro-lifer, please pray for every woman who's had an abortion, for every dad (and grandparent) who

has lost a child through abortion, and for every "mother with child" who's considering an abortion.

And to those who believe in a woman's right to choose – and took the time to read my column – thank you. I appreciate the respect you've shown me.

I don't take your kindness lightly.

Sheryl H. Boldt is a sales executive for Wave 94 and author of the blog, www.TodayCanBeDifferent.net. Connect with her at SherylHBoldt.Wave94@gmail.com.

Journey to your star

By **CHERYL CRUCE**

On Jan. 8th, the church celebrated Epiphany Sunday, the day when the Magi followed the star of Bethlehem. There are many messages about the Magi (Wisemen) and the gifts they brought. Many sermons cover the horror of Herod's slaughter of the innocent after his encounter with the Magi from the east.

Even though these are essential homilies, they cannot overshadow

the journey to find the King of the Jews. Nor can we neglect the Magi's journey when they returned home.

The Magi were seekers, looking beyond their existence for something more significant than themselves. The vision of the star stirred the depths of their soul, causing them to travel 1,400 miles seeking its purpose. Scripture teaches that their journey ended at the home of Joseph and Mary. Upon seeing the child, Jesus, they fell before the Lord and presented Him gifts of frankincense, myrrh, and gold. Then, being instructed in a dream, the travelers returned home by a different route.

I witnessed my

"epiphany star" at the age of 8. Granted, I did not make a 1,400-mile journey; nonetheless, the distance from the pew to the altar seemed miles away.

At that moment, I encountered Jesus as the pastor prayed for me. Even though I did not understand the magnitude of my decision, I knew I felt God's call on my life.

Early in my faith walk, I greatly desired to preach the Word of God. However, I could not see myself as a pastor due to the teachings of my youth. The church of my childhood strongly believed that the men were the decision-makers in the church while the women remained silent. Because of this, I suppressed any yearning I

might have had.

It wasn't until my walk through cancer that I felt the fullness of Christ's love and the meaning of my epiphany. His healing touch re-defined me as His, erasing all doubt I might have experienced. Something about being helplessly in His care brought me full circle to my life's purpose. I had followed the star; it was now time to follow the one beneath the star.

The journey of the Magi is intriguing, for it is a journey we all must take. At some point in each life, there is a revelation of the birth and redemptive power of Jesus. The choice belongs to the individual. Do you follow the star or gaze at it from a distance? If

you choose to follow, know that whether you turn to the left or right, you will hear a voice behind you saying, "This is the way; walk in it (Isaiah 30:21)."

The world's rulers and naysayers will attempt to sway you from your journey. However, the Lord has called us out of the darkness and into a Holy life. This is not because of any acts on our part but because of His purpose and grace (2 Timothy 1:10). The wise men did not stay beneath the star; they grasped what they had received within their hearts and journeyed on, following the instructions of God.

I encourage you to seek out the Lord as the Magi did, find the grace beneath your

star, and walk in the teachings of the Lord as He redefines you as His.

Matthew 2:11-12 Entering the house where the baby and Mary, his mother, were, they threw themselves down before him, worshipping. Then they opened their presents and gave him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But when they returned to their land, they didn't go through Jerusalem to report to Herod, for God had warned them in a dream to go home another way.

Cheryl Mixon-Cruce is Pastor of Ochlockonee Bay United Methodist Church and Sopchoppy United Methodist Church.

OUT TO PASTOR

I screamed for ice cream and got in trouble

By **JAMES SNYDER**

Trouble is not my middle name, although it sure could be; just ask The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

If I could remember some of the trouble I've been in it probably could help me keep out of some new trouble. But of course, my "new trouble" is something I've done before, many times, according to someone in our house.

Sometimes, according to my experience, trouble is worth it.

Well, sometimes it's worth it.

One of my routines at night is to have a nice cold bowl of ice cream. I don't care what flavor it is because I've never had any ice cream that I didn't like. The one I like best is the one I'm eating at the time.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is very good at buying my ice cream and is always looking for coupons or BOGO, for which she is

rather famous.

At the one store where she usually gets groceries, she found, much to her surprise, ice cream that was buy one and get two free. Of course, that sure made her day, but it also made my day as well.

I wonder if that was a mistake, but if it was, she took advantage of that ice cream sale.

She's very cautious with how much ice cream I should eat. When she came home with this bargain, I tried to explain that this meant I could have twice the amount of ice cream as before.

When I said that, the smile on her face quickly evaporated, and looking at me, she said, "It does not mean anything of the sort. You will eat what ice cream I give you, and that's all."

Well, you can't fault me for trying. If you don't try, how do you know something isn't going to work?

I was happy that we had a nice supply of ice cream just in case of any emergency. One emergency that I was thinking of was an overwhelming hunger for ice cream. According to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, this is not an emergency.

I am banking on the fact that because we have

so many boxes of ice cream, I could sneak a bowl while she wasn't home, and she wouldn't know about it. After all, with all those boxes, how in the world can you keep count?

One day while she was away for the day, I broke into the freezer and got a nice cold bowl of ice cream. It was one of the most delicious bowls of ice cream I've had in a long time.

Of course, I washed the dish and put it back into the cupboard to avoid leaving any evidence.

I was in my office doing a little bit of work when she came home, and within 10 minutes, I heard her yelling, "Did you sneak any ice cream from the freezer today?"

How she found out, I do not know. After all these years of marriage, I'm beginning to think she has a little ghost in

the house keeping track of my movements. I can't prove it, but I'm starting to feel it.

Every night around 8 o'clock, she gets ice cream for the both of us. Mine in a bowl and hers in a cone. I wouldn't have it any other way.

One night after supper, I sat in the living room watching a little TV. I noticed the clock said 8 o'clock, the time for the ice cream. So I waited a few minutes, and still, no ice cream showed up.

She was busy in her craft room with some crafts, and I just thought she had forgotten what time it was. That always happens to me, but it rarely happens to her. She knows what time it is a half-hour before the time. Figure that out.

Thinking I could solve the problem, which was a ridiculous ploy on my part, I decided to tell her what time it was.

With my strongest outdoor voice, I yelled, "It's ice cream time. Yes, I'll have ice cream."

She came to the living room, looked at me, and said, "Did you hear that terrible noise just a few moments ago?"

Shaking her head she then turned around and walked back to her craft room, and to my disappointment, there was no ice cream that night. So I was tempted to go to the freezer and get my ice cream, but I wasn't sure what kind of trouble I was in that night.

David seemed to understand this when he wrote, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

No matter what my trouble is, because God is my refuge I have nothing to worry about.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamesnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamesnyderministries.com.

Workshop on abortion set

Special to The Sun

A workshop on Abortion will be held at Mount Olive P.B. Church #2 on Saturday, Jan. 21, at 10 a.m. There will be refreshments. Everyone is invited.



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Use the News

1. Mother and Son

It's not unusual for a parent to encourage a child to go to college and get a degree. It is unusual for a child to encourage a parent to go to college — when the child is in kindergarten! Yet that is what Immanuel Patton did when he was 5 years old riding to school with his mother Carolyn Patton in Linthicum, Maryland. “My mom was always talking about other people getting college degrees, and I told her that I’d make sure she got a degree at the same time I got mine,” Immanuel recalled in an interview with the Washington Post newspaper. Nearly 20 years later, the Pattons, mother and son, achieved that unusual goal. Last month they received degrees from the University of Maryland Global Campus and walked down the aisle together at their graduation ceremony. Immanuel, who is 23, and his mom, who is 63, earned their bachelor’s degrees in an online program and helped each other step by step. “My son encouraged me the entire way and wouldn’t let me give up on days when it seemed like too much and I wanted to stop,” she said. “It was such a huge reward to see the smile on my mother’s face,” Immanuel said. “I always knew that she could do it.” Family members support each other in many ways. In the newspaper or online, find and closely read a story about family members doing this. Use what you read to write a letter to a member of your family telling how support is more valuable when it comes from a family member.

Goals: Writing informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly; citing specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions.

2. Day of Service

This week the nation honors the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. with the Martin Luther King Day holiday and day of service. Dr. King, who would have turned 94 on January 15, was America’s most respected civil rights leader. He spent his life serving others and working for equal treatment and justice for people of all races. After his death in 1968, the nation created a national holiday to honor his life and years of service. On this day, school children, families and adults of all ages volunteer to help improve their communities. In the newspaper or online, find and closely read stories about ways people joined together to help their neighborhoods and community in honor of the holiday celebrated on Monday this

week. Use what you read to brainstorm a way you, your class or your family could do things to help your community. Share with the class and discuss.

Goals: Reading closely what a text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarizing points of agreement and disagreement.

3. Sleep Tight, Black Bear

Black bears are the most common bear in the United States and North America, but they are not seen as much in the winter months when they hibernate to conserve energy in cold weather. They like to build “nests” in caves or cozy places where they can sleep and keep warm. In a town in the state of Connecticut, a black bear found a cozy place that has made him a furry neighbor to one family. A male black bear curled up in a crawl space under a deck of a

home in the town of Plainville, and the family has decided to let him stay. The bear, which could be as big as 600 pounds, was discovered by the Dashukewich family when their dog started barking next to the deck. Wildlife officials said the family could either make a lot of noise to force the bear to move out, or let him sleep until spring. “He hasn’t bothered us at all,” said Tyler Dashukewich, 28. “So we feel like there’s no reason to move him.” People often have to deal with wildlife living nearby. In the newspaper or online, find and closely read a story about people doing this. Use what you read to write a letter to the editor outlining the benefits of having wildlife living nearby and risks or problems that could occur.

Goals: Citing specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions; writing opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

4. NFL Playoffs

The NFL playoffs are under way, and fans all over the country are watching to see which teams will advance to pro football’s Super Bowl. In many years there are surprises — teams that do better than expected, players who become unexpected heroes or just plain odd or wacky events. This year, the Philadelphia Eagles and the Kansas City Chiefs are the top-ranked teams in the playoffs, having each won 14 games in the regular season while losing just 3. Yet top teams have often been upset by lower-ranked teams in the playoffs, and the Eagles and Chiefs coaches are sure to be reminding their players that they have to guard against surprises from opponents. Under the NFL format, a single loss knocks a team out of the playoff picture, and last year both top-ranked teams failed to reach the Super Bowl. In the newspaper or online, find and read stories about the NFL playoffs this week. Keep a log or journal of interesting, unexpected or wacky

things that happen in games or practices. Think like a sportswriter and use your journal to write a column titled “Playoff Surprises.” Your column may be serious or humorous.

Goals: Producing clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to the task; citing textual or visual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions.

5. Speed Travel

Many people dream of traveling around the world. Two men from the Asian nation India have actually done it, and in just over three days! In the process, Dr. Ali Irani and Sujoy Kumar Mitra set a new Guinness World Record for the fastest time traveling to all seven of the world’s continents with the exact time of 3 days, 1 hour, 5 minutes, and 4 seconds. Traveling by plane, the duo started their journey on the continent of Antarctica near the Earth’s South Pole and touched down in South America, North America, Europe, Asia and Africa,

before finishing their 73-hour journey in Australia, NDTV News reported. The previous speed record traveling to all seven continents was 3 days, 14 hours, 46 minutes and 48 seconds and was set in 2020. “Today we might be successful in breaking a record, but tomorrow someone else will break our record,” the duo said. The United States is located in North America, but many Americans would like to travel to another continent. In the newspaper or online, find and closely read a story about another continent you might like to visit. Find this continent on a world map and design a poster showing things or countries you would like to visit. Use pictures from the newspaper or Internet for your poster and write a complete sentence explaining each picture you use.

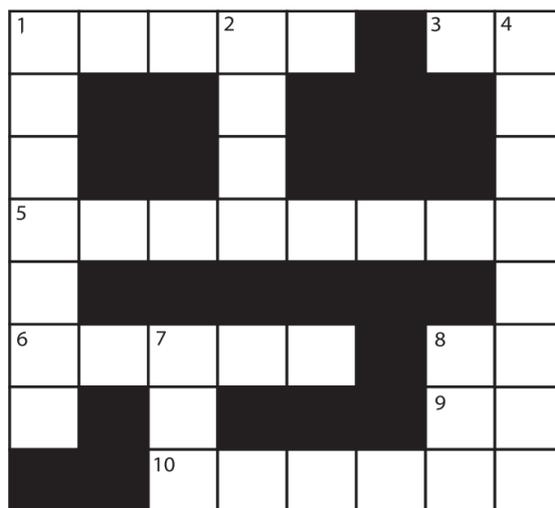
Goals: Conducting short research projects that build knowledge about a topic; using drawings or visual displays when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or points.



PHILATELY IS ANOTHER NAME FOR THIS POPULAR HOBBY.

ANSWER: STAMP COLLECTING

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- Place to live
- Short for “hello”
- Pans
- Like to do
- Taylor Swift song
- Word used in comparisons
- Natural aptitude

DOWN

- Fun interests
- Exchange of goods
- Something enjoyed
- Stick out
- Male

Answers:
Across
1. House 3. Hi 5. Bakeaware 6. Enjoy 8. Me
Down
1. Hobbies 2. Sale 4. Interest 7. Put 8. Man

THIS DAY IN...



- ### HISTORY
- **1901:** QUEEN VICTORIA IS STRICKEN WITH PARALYSIS. SHE DIES THREE DAYS LATER.
 - **1920:** THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION IS FOUNDED.
 - **1983:** THE APPLE LISA, THE FIRST COMMERCIAL PERSONAL COMPUTER FROM APPLE COMPUTER TO HAVE A GRAPHICAL USER INTERFACE AND A COMPUTER MOUSE, IS ANNOUNCED.



HOBBY

a regular activity that is done for enjoyment



- ENGLISH:** Art
- SPANISH:** Arte
- ITALIAN:** Arte
- FRENCH:** Art
- GERMAN:** Kunst



READING, TRAVELING AND FISHING ARE SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR HOBBIES AROUND THE WORLD.



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: DRONE

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Please Recycle

CROSSWORD

- CLUES ACROSS**
- Not invited
 - Whale ship captain
 - One point south of southwest
 - Small cavity in a rock
 - Recidivists
 - City of Angels hoopster
 - A way to mark with one's signature
 - OJ trial judge
 - Rice cooked in broth
 - One point east of due south
 - One point east of southeast
 - Complements an entree
 - Grouped by twos
 - Disfigure
 - Woods
 - Political action committee
 - Longer of 2 bones in the forearm
 - Kin groups
 - Philippine Island
 - Contrary to
 - Bluish-gray fur
 - Comprehend the written word
 - Natural depressions
 - Felines
 - Breathe noisily
 - Taxi
 - Pancake made from buckwheat flour
 - Swiss river
 - Foot (Latin)
 - Have surgery
 - Formal withdrawal
 - Monetary units of Peru
 - Greek war god
 - 2,000 lbs.
 - High points
- CLUES DOWN**
- Green and yellow citrus fruit
 - A bright color
 - Thicket
 - Journalist Tarbell
 - A place to work or relax
 - Sharp mountain ridge
 - Helicopter
 - Mimic
 - Suggests
 - More musty
 - Large, flightless rail
 - Make beer
 - Soviet Socialist Republic
 - People who can account for you
 - Taunt
 - South Dakota
 - Cover the entirety of
 - Kids' favorite visitor
 - A way to save for retirement
 - Fencing swords
 - C. China mountain range
 - Type of sandwich
 - Team
 - Paddle
 - Partly digested food
 - Most cagey
 - Shoppers make one
 - Cathode-ray tube
 - Food supplies
 - Backbones
 - Concern
 - Blood group
 - Broadway songwriter Sammy
 - Dutch colonist
 - Full-grown pike fish
 - Deity of a monotheistic cult
 - Type of bread

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Arbor Day tree giveaway is Saturday, Jan. 21

By LYNN ARTZ
Special to The Sun

To celebrate Florida Arbor Day, a drive-thru tree giveaway will take place on Saturday, January 21st from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This year's event will be outside the Wakulla County Extension Office at 84 Cedar Avenue. Each vehicle will receive 2 young trees in pots for free.

The 19th annual Crawfordville Arbor Day celebration hopes to find homes for more than 1,000 native trees. Eleven kinds of trees will be offered: arrowwood viburnum, chinquapin, dahoon holly, hop tree, overcup oak, parsley haw, red cedar, red maple, sand live oak, sweet bay magnolia, and yellow poplar. All are suited to Wakulla County.

The Florida Forest Service is providing red cedars and sweet bay magnolias. Other trees were purchased as bare-root saplings with funds from the National Wildlife Federation's Trees for Wildlife program. Members of the Wakulla County Garden Club and the Sarracenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society planted the bare-root trees into 1-gallon pots last winter and Just Fruits & Exotics Nursery watered them for a year.

To get two free trees, drive north on Ochlockonee St. from Arran Road (at the county courthouse) to get in line. After passing Hudson Park, turn left onto Cedar Ave.

Each vehicle will receive an order form, tree information, and an ed-



John Alcorn loading a tree at a past Arbor Day event.

ucational packet. Complete the order form and exchange it for two tree tickets at the ticket station. Continue around the circle drive to the 11 tree stations. Turn in tickets at matching

stations and trees will be loaded into your vehicle. Vehicle occupants are asked to bring a pen or pencil and stay in their vehicles.

Master gardeners and other experts will be

on site to help people choose trees. Be prepared to choose alternatives to your preferred trees as some species run out quickly. Small quantities of different trees will be offered at a

12th station after most other trees have run out. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Lynn Artz at lynn_artz@hotmail.com; or call 850-320-2158.

Union Home Mortgage acquires Amerifirst

Special to The Sun

Union Home Mortgage (UHM), a full-service retail, wholesale and consumer direct independent mortgage banking company, announced today its acquisition of Kalamazoo-based Amerifirst Home Mortgage. The combination will expand UHM's national reach in key markets and bring together two leading USDA mortgage lenders.

In 2001, Cynthia and Ralph Thomas opened the Crawfordville office. It was Amerifirst's first branch in Florida. Cynthia and Ralph will continue to operate the branch for Union Home

Mortgage in the same location with the same contact information.

"On behalf of all our Partners, I am excited to welcome the wonderful mortgage professionals of Amerifirst to the world-class platform of growth at UHM," said Bill Cosgrove, President & CEO of Union Home Mortgage. "Our company lives by the mantra of 'Promises Kept,' which includes promises to our customers, communities and colleague Partners. Today, I am thrilled to expand the reach of that promise further."

Amerifirst was founded in 1983 by Mark Jones and David Gahm.



Ralph Thomas of Amerifirst, now Union Home Mortgage. He and wife Cynthia opened an Amerifirst office in Crawfordville in 2001.

The company has grown from a single branch in Kalamazoo, Michigan to more than 300 licensed loan consultants across the country with concentrations in Florida, Michigan, Ohio, North Carolina and California.

"We founded this company to make a meaningful difference in the lives of customers, team members and our communities. This partnership gives us the scale and ability to make an impact like never before," said Jones and Gahm. "UHM has built a platform that is really unique and powerful in our industry. Coming together made all the

sense in the world." UHM is a nationally recognized top 50 mortgage lender with more than \$13 billion in responsible lending each year. Amerifirst will add to this total; the company originated \$2.8 billion in 2021 and \$3.3 billion in 2020.

The combined company will have unique expertise and scale with the USDA Rural Devel-

opment Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program, which provides eligible applicants mortgage options requiring no money down when purchasing a primary residence. UHM has been the top-ranked USDA home lender in its home state of Ohio for three straight years. Amerifirst is the number one ranked lender in Michigan.

Ryder Rudd resigns

From Front Page

Remke. That drew murmurs of concern from the crowd, and resident Ronnie Day called out that there should be a special election. City Attorney Ron Mowrey responded that there was no provision in the city charter for a special election, instead it specified the city commission shall fill vacancies. If not done within 10 days, it would go to the governor to make an appointment. Commissioner Paul Shedd said he didn't know why the agenda had been set as it had - he expected the two new commissioners to be sworn-in and then take up the appointment. (The meeting was Gilman's and Chichetti's last as city commissioners. Paula Bell and Dan Alberts were elected to fill the seats and took the oath of office later in the meeting.)

When the matter was called for a vote, it failed on a tie 2-2, with Gilman

and Chichetti voting for it and Shedd and Remke voting against. Remke commented that he didn't "see why we can't wait a week."

After Bell and Alberts were sworn in and took their seats at the dais, the city commission voted to set a special meeting for this Thursday, Jan. 19, at 6 p.m. at City Hall to appoint someone to fill Rudd's seat.

As part of the reorganization, Shedd was chosen to serve as Mayor of St. Marks, and Remke was selected as Treasurer.

In other matters: • Businessman David McQuary spoke to city commissioners about a proposal to build an RV Park on some 68 acres of property on Port Leon Drive. He appeared to be looking for an expression of support from the board, but was told he needed to follow the city's procedures for submitting development projects. McQuary expressed frustration that it wasn't

clear what the city's process is. Commissioner Remke gave him a several-page printout of the steps to take.

• Remke said he wanted the city to come out in opposition to the state's proposal to remove islands of dredge along the St. Marks River as part of a salt marsh restoration project. State environmental officials held a workshop to get public input a couple of months ago, and most of the people who spoke on it were outraged by it, seeing it as a huge waste of money.

At the St. Marks meeting, Chuck Shields noted that most of the dredged material was taken from the river 60 years ago, from 1961 to '63. "Mother Nature has done its job on what its gonna do" with the material, Shields said.

Billy Bishop suggested that local businesses also be allowed to sign on the city's letter of opposition as well.

VARIETY SHOW

Fundraiser

Saturday, FEB 11th

Sopchoppy Auditorium
164 Yellow Jacket Ave. Sopchoppy FL

Wakulla

COMMUNITY

Theater

Food Trucks 5p.m. • Show Starts 7p.m.

Featuring

Local Singers ~ Musicians ~ Dancers ~ Comedian
Drama by Wakulla High Theater Group
Ventriloquism ... and more!

Tickets: Available now at McIvers Flooring & Capital City Bank In Crawfordville - \$15.00

\$20.00 At the door

READ THE ROAD.

AND YOU WON'T NEED AS MANY NEW PARTS.

MOTORCYCLE CRASHES DON'T ALWAYS INVOLVE ANOTHER VEHICLE. SLICK SURFACES AND ROAD DEBRIS CAN LEAD TO BROKEN BIKES, AND BROKEN BONES. RIDE AT A SPEED THAT GIVES YOU TIME TO REACT. CHECK OUR WEBSITE BELOW FOR MORE CYCLE SAFETY TIPS.

VISIT ORTHONINFO.ORG/CYCLESAFETY

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FOLLOW THE SUN.
THE WAKULLA SUN

Cave explorers



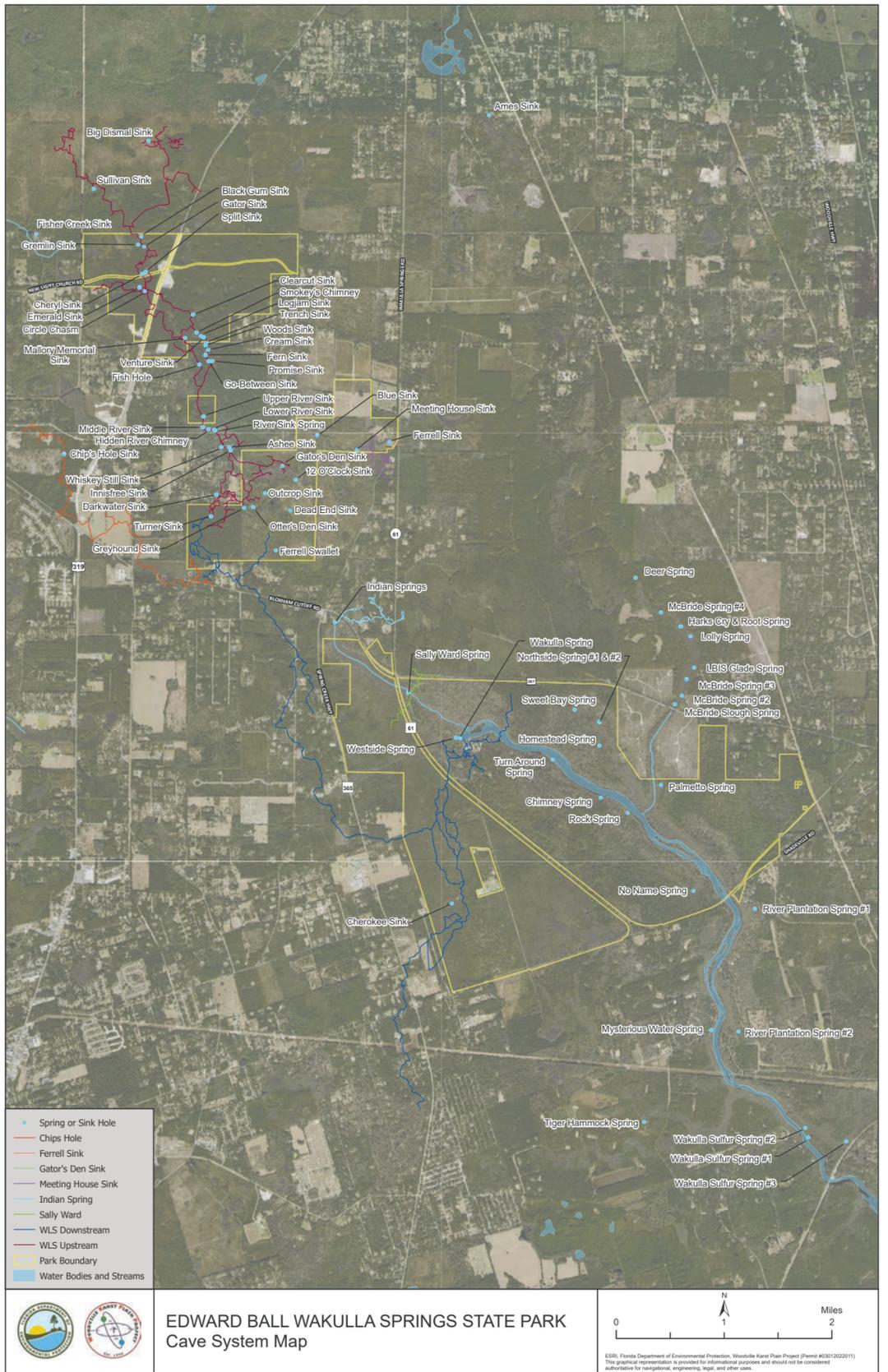
Steve Cox and Blake Wilson being interviewed at Turner Sink.



Divers Steve Cox and Blake Wilson after their dive two weeks ago confirming the underground cave connection.



Casey McKinlay with the transmitter divers were placing.



A map of the Wakulla underground cave system prior to the discovery of the Chip's Hole connection.

From Front Page
radio transmitter to correct an error in the cave system – the current map of the 20,000 foot long tunnel is off about 600 feet. The GPS correction was successful. Talking about the underground cave system, the two divers note some of the underground rooms are massive, big enough for a 10 story building, Wilson says.

The cave system headed south from Leon Sinks is huge and deep, they say, while the Chip's Hole system is smaller and not as deep. The Leon Sinks system is pretty consistent at a depth of around 270 feet, while the Chip's Hole system varies between 50 and 150 feet. Which was the issue in trying to locate the connecting tunnel – it wasn't as deep.

The pair, both of whom live in Gainesville, have been diving in Wakulla's cave every weekend since October – except Christmas and New Year's – because the dry conditions have left the caverns clear. (Rainy weather brings in tannins from runoff and turn the water dark.) Casey McKinlay, WKPP project director, noted the success the team had in 2007 link-

ing Leon Sinks system to Wakulla Springs – a cave system 38 miles long with 28 entrances. The team started on the Chip's Hole system 12 years ago, and the 7-mile system with two entrances has been added to the map. Asked about the controversy over the proposal last year to locate a

gas station on Bloxham Cutoff over a known cave system that flows to Wakulla Springs, McKinlay says the role of WKPP as scientists and researchers is to provide elected officials with the best data. He noted that Wakulla County's GIS (geographic information system) person is in the loop so

that WKPP's mapping of the cave system is available. "Our distribution list keeps expanding," McKinlay says. The next issue, McKinlay says, is to look at the possible purchase of the Chip's Hole land – owned by a private entity – to the state or some governmental agency in order to protect it.

San Marcos

Mexican Grill & Cantina

Six different flavors of GREAT Margarita!
GREAT Food...GREAT people...GREAT Fun!

MARGARITAS

Lunch Specials • Monday – Friday 11:00 – 3:00 p.m. *Indoor & Outdoor seating*

<p>1. Fajitas.....11.50 Chicken or steak with rice, beans, lettuce, sour cream, guacamole, pico de gallo & tortillas.</p> <p>2. Speedy Gonzales..... 7.50 Enchilada, taco, rice & beans.</p> <p>3. Burrito, Tostada, & Taco.....8.29</p> <p>4. Burrito, Enchilada, & Taco..... 8.99</p> <p>5. Beef Tostada, Tamal, & Rice..... 8.20</p> <p>6. Burrito, Rice, & Beans..... 7.50</p> <p>7. Taco, Rice, & Beans..... 7.50</p> <p>8. Burrito, Chile con Carne, & Rice..... 8.50</p> <p>9. Burrito, Flauta, & Taco.....8.99</p> <p>10. Chile Pablano, Guacamole Salad, & Beans..... 8.99</p> <p>11. Burrito with Enchilada Sauce, Taco, & Tamal..... 8.50</p> <p>12. Burrito Supreme..... 8.50 <i>Beef & Beef Burrito, topped with Cheese & Salsa. Served with lettuce, guacamole, & sour cream.</i></p> <p>13. Two Enchiladas, Rice & Beans..... 9.25</p> <p>14. Quesadilla, Rice, & Beans..... 7.50</p> <p>15. San Marcos Salad..... 7.50 Lettuce, ground beef or chicken, cheese, guacamole, sour cream, & tomatoes in a crispy shell.</p> <p>16. Your Choice of Eggs..... 9.25 Huevos rancheros, eggs, with chorizo or Mexican style, served with rice, beans and tortilla.</p> <p>17. Chimichanga..... 7.50 Beef or chicken chimichanga, topped with cheese dip, served with lettuce, guacamole, sour cream, & tomatoes.</p>	<p>18. Burrito, Enchilada, Tostada, & Taco.....10.25</p> <p>19. Quesadilla, Tostada, & Taco..... 8.50</p> <p>20. Chile Poblano, Flauta, and Taco..... 8.99</p> <p>21. Quesadilla Suprema..... 8.99 Beef or chicken, topped with lettuce, guacamole, sour cream, & tomatoes</p> <p>22. Tostada, Chile Poblano, & Flauta..... 8.50</p> <p>23. Grilled Chicken Salad.....10.25 Grilled Chicken Breast. Served on a bed of lettuce, & shredded cheese with pico de gallo</p> <p>24. Steak Burrito.....10.25 Served with rice, beans, lettuce, guacamole, sour cream, pico de gallo.</p> <p>25. Grilled Chicken Breast.....10.25 Served with rice or fries.</p> <p>26. Taco Salad..... 8.50 Steak or grilled chicken, with lettuce, guacamole, tomatoes, sour cream, & cheese in a crispy shell.</p> <p>27. Chicken Fingers & Fries..... 9.99</p> <p>28. Carnitas.....10.25 Fried pork chunks with onions, and Mexican pieces. Served with rice, beans, & tortillas.</p> <p>29. Chilaquiles Served with rice and beans, or two eggs.</p>
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Go to : <https://www.toasttab.com/sanmarcoscrawfordville/v3>
To see kids menu, Salads, Vegetarian, sides and full menu!

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19th Annual

Free Trees!

CRAWFORDVILLE

ARBOR DAY

DAY

Saturday, January 21st
10:00 am - 1:00 pm

84 Cedar Avenue

Wakulla County Extension Office
Rain or Shine

Hundreds of young trees
(in pots) will be given away!

Parsley Haw, Arrowwood Viburnum,
Hop Tree, Yellow Poplar, Red Maple,
Sand Live Oak, Overcup Oak,
Dahoon Holly, Chinquapin, & more.

Drive-Thru Giveaway
2 Trees per Vehicle

From Courthouse (Arran Rd.), drive north on Ochlockonee St.,
pass Hudson Park on right, turn left onto Cedar Ave.,
follow signs, turn right onto circle drive at Extension Office.

Wakulla County Garden Club, Florida Forest Service,
Sarracenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society,
UF/IFAS Extension & Master Gardeners, & National Wildlife Federation
with Florida Wildlife Federation, Just Fruits & Exotics, The Wakulla News & The Wakulla Sun.

MLK Day Observed



After the ceremony at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial at the courthouse, breakfast was held at the Palaver Tree Theater.



Wakulla Supervisor of Elections Joe Morgan was the speaker at the courthouse ceremony.

Historian Dale Cox talks about the Fort at Prospect Bluff

The Wakulla Historical Society presented historian Dale Cox in a program last week on the Fort at Prospect Bluff, or the Negro Fort. Cox presented artwork generated by UCLA students on what the fort may have looked like. The fort was built by the British on the

Apalachicola River during the War of 1812. The fort was destroyed in 1816 by American forces during a bombardment that caused the gunpowder stores to explode, killing a large number of escaped slaves inside. The blast was felt in Pensacola.



Members of the Buckhorn Masonic Lodge cooking breakfast at Palaver Tree.



Historian Dale Cox at the public library last week.

SOPCHOPPY OPRY

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Saturday, January 28 • 7 p.m.

Historic Sopchoppy High School Auditorium
Presents

SOUTHBOUND BAND & FRIENDS

FEATURING:
JILLIAN CRYMES, BILLY BLACKMAN, JOAN COX & GLENDA BRADLEY

Call (850) 962-3711 for Tickets \$15

Sponsored by : SHS Alumni

Tickets
available
at the
door





24th Annual





Valentine's Day Festival & Parade

AT AZALEA PARK
SATURDAY, FEB. 11, 2023

Want to participate
in the parade?
Registration is **FREE!**

Line-Up 9 a.m.
starts at 10 a.m.

Cash Prize awarded
for 1st Place \$200.00
2nd Place \$150.00
3rd Place \$100.00

Does your business want to participate in our Valentine's Day Festival? Go to www.wakullarotary.org/Valentines for all forms to participate.

Color Fun Run – 7:30 a.m.

The Wak-Color run is a 1 mile Color Run for suicide awareness and prevention!

New this year, a color run will take place at 7:30 AM! The Wak-Color run is a suicide awareness campaign that is entirely free to the community! Prior to the run, we will gather to listen to a presentation from The Jason Foundation, an organization whose mission is suicide awareness/prevention! Due to the nature of this conversation, it is recommended all participants are aged 12+ and all underage attendees must have an adult present.

All participants must register. Tickets are limited to 250. All participants will be provided with a WakColor Run t-shirt, sunglasses and a bandana, while supplies last.

By Wakulla County FL Department of Health

Vendors Needed!

WakullaRotary@yahoo.com

Want a great way to advertise your business? You can get your business name out there by sponsoring the Valentine's Festival!

All proceeds to benefit High School Scholarships the Rotary Club of Wakulla Provides!