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## Turning 100

Bonnie Sturchio of Sopchoppy talks about a century of living

By LINDA ANN McDONALD Correspondent

Turning 100 marks a major milestone. This is when Bonnie Sturchio can say to the world, "I've done my part," and the fun begins.

Bonnie Sturchio was born Bonnie Colleen Burg in Algoma, Wisconsin, a small town near Green Bay on July 6, 1923. Born to a dairy farming family where Sturchio proudly pointed out the fact "where the milk went to the cheese factory" – which was later processed into renowned Wisconsin cheese." Sturchio also shared that her birthplace was so close to Lake Michigan that "you can look out your window and see the lake."

"We grew up in a home that did not have running water, with one pump in the kitchen. We had no electricity and milked the cows by hand. We had to crank cars by hand, and we had a tele-

**Bonnie Sturchio** 

Solar energy is an alternative solution to energy independence and cost reduction for home and business owners. By investing in solar energy, you can reduce your dependence on the energy company to provide your electricity, as well as add value to your home.





Turn to Page 5

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More than \$1 million has been raised through the sale of Florida Realtors "Support Homeownership for All" specialty license plates, which help fund affordable housing programs across Florida. The goal is to provide housing assistance to teachers, nurses and others unable to afford a



home. Ninety percent of the proceeds from the sale of the "Support Homeownership for All" license plate goes to support affordable housing programs. Just 10 percent of the funds go toward marketing the plate.

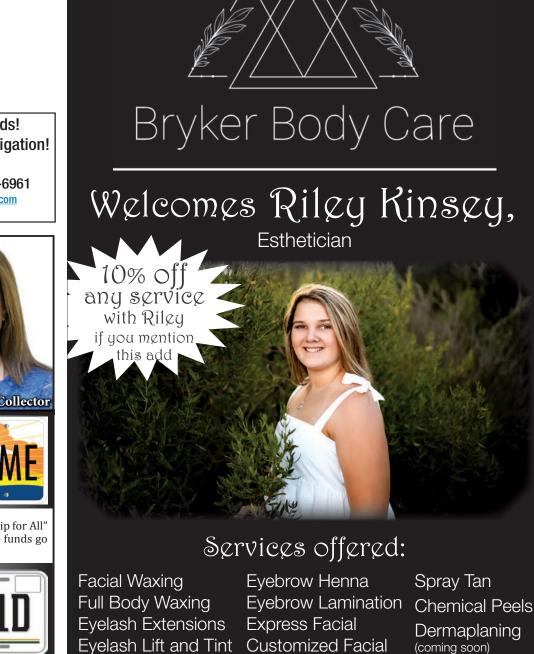
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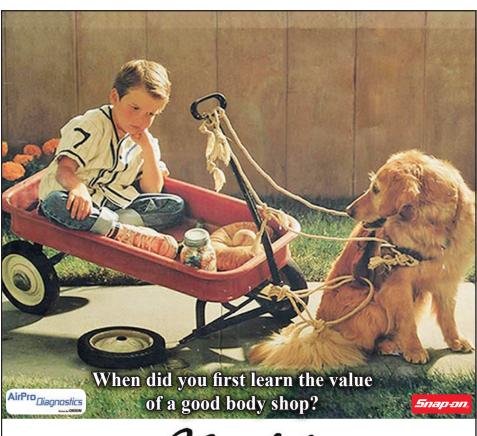
The annual use fees are distributed to the Florida Sheriffs Association to develop and provide important training for members of local sheriff's offices as well as deputies across the state.

Accountability. Since 1893, the Florida Sheriffs Association has been the voice of Florida's sheriffs, 67

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## Make sure your pet has an ID

#### By JOANN SANDERS

The unusually stormy spring we've had is a good reason to remind everyone of how important pet ID tags are.

Many animals have storm anxiety and can/will run away if anxiety-producing the opportunity arises, but they can be returned home quickly and safely if wearing more animals end up an ID tag.

Our summer thunderstorms and hurricane season are just one reason why a collar with tags is important. Let's not forget about the fun but



holidays that summer brings, like July 4th!

Due to fireworks, at the shelter on this holiday than any other, which again emphasizes the need for all domestic animals to wear some sort of identification.

A well-fitting collar



tification increases ID tag. the odds that your pet will be returned to Care Animal Rescue, you, safe and sound. (CCAR), for donating It doesn't have to be the supplies needed fancy!

Even just writing will work!

PORTANT!

Wakulla Animal Services will have a tag with a phone number attached.

claim a lost dog will Animal Services. also have the oppor-

with the proper iden- tunity to acquire an

Thanks to Cauzican to make this happen!

Wakulla Animal your phone number Services is always on your pet's collar ready to assist you with a black Sharpie with any domestic animal related emergen-ID TAGS ARE IM- cies. Shelter hours are Tuesday through At this time, all Friday from 10 a.m. dogs adopted from to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Joann Sanders is a Owners who re-volunteer for Wakulla

## **Protecting your business from** the loss of a key person



By BRIAN ENGLISH

Charles de Gaulle once remarked, "The graveyards are full of indispensable men." While we know that life goes on regardless of the loss of any "indispensable" person, for a small business, the loss of a key person is not only a human tragedy, but it can also represent the potential for significant financial loss.

Though business owners cannot protect themselves from the unexpected and sudden loss of a key employee, they may be able to protect themselves from the financial consequences of such a loss through the purchase of what is called "key person insurance."

#### WHO'S KEY?

There is no legal definition for who a key person is, but he or she is someone whose loss, due to death or disability, would cause a material financial setback to the business.

For example, a key person may be a top

whose salesperson production would considerable time to replace. Or perhaps it's someone who is guaranteeing the business access to needed future cap-

Key person insurance is a standard insurance policy that is usually owned by the business and whose premiums are paid by the business.

These premiums are generally non-deductible. The benefits of the policy are paid to the business in the event that the insured key person dies or becomes disabled. (Coverage for death and disability are separate policies.)1

#### CALCULATING COSTS

When considering should first calculate the financial impact of the loss of a key person. The next step is to ascertain the cost of insurance for that amount. With that information, the business owner will then be able to make a decision that balances his or her protection needs with what the business can afford.

The proceeds may be used in any manner deemed appropriate. For example, the proceeds may be needed to meet dayto-day expenses, pay off debts, or recruit new talent to the organization.

For most businesses, their most important asset is their people. Yet, while they insure their other assets - such as buildings and cars - they often overlook the wisdom of doing the same for those individuals who are critical to their success.

1. Several factors

will affect the cost and availability of life insurance, including age, health, and the type and amount of insurance purchased. Life insurance policies have expenses, including mortality and other charges. If a policy is surrendered prematurely, the policyholder also may pay surrender charges and have income tax implications. You should consider dethe coverage amount, termining whether fered through Secuthe business owner you are insurable rities America Advibefore implementing a strategy involving life insurance. Any guarantees associated with a policy are dependent on the ability of the issuing insurance company to continue making claim payments.

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tion regarding your individual situation. This material was developed and produced by FMG Suite to provide information on a topic that may be of interest. FMG Suite is not affiliated with the named broker-dealer, state- or SEC-registered investment advisory firm. The opinions expressed and material provided are for general information, and should not be considered a solicitation for the purchase or sale of any security. Copyright 2023 FMG Suite.

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## Don't drink and drive



By JARED MILLER Wakulla Sheriff

As we all know Wakulla County offers many ways to relax and recharge from our many wonderful restaurants to the numerous outdoor activities offered by our county. That's not to mention simpler activities such as merely gathering with family and friends for a barbe-

This month I wanted to take the time to remind everyone that as you go through your summer and enjoy it in whatever way you see fit, please remember to never drive a car if your plans have included al-

I choose to use the phrase drinking and driving instead of "drunk driving" because "drunk" often publicly is a hard term to define. Please know that it is never a good idea to drink alcohol and get behind the wheel of a car, no matter the amount you have consumed.

Even after one drink your sense of coordination, response time, and decision-making skills can become impaired. Most adults with driver's licenses are very comfortable behind the wheel of a car, it's easy to forget the level of concentration and coordi-

nation required to drive a car. Failing to react to the car stopping in front of you, or the pedestrian walking down the road can have dire consequences for everyone involved. Accidents sometimes cannot be avoided. However, you can reduce being involved in one by making sure not to drink and drive, and to have a designated driver.

There are a lot of people who believe to get cited or arrested for a DUI, your blood alcohol level would need to be above a certain point. This quite frankly, is untrue. One of the reasons I choose to talk about drinking and driving versus "drunk" driving is that it is possible to get in trouble without believing yourself to be drunk or having a low blood alcohol level. If a law enforcement officer contacts you while driving - if you have been drinking and show signs of impairment - you can be arrested no matter what your blood alcohol level is.

Yyou have too much to lose by drinking and driving. Getting caught behind the wheel of a car after you have been drinking could cost you thousands of dollars, your driver's license, or the loss of your life or someone vou love.

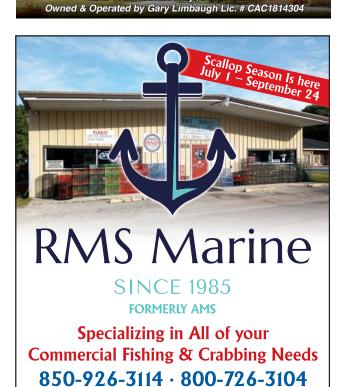
Please while enjoying your summer this year, if you choose to drink make sure you have a sober driver.

Please remember the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office is always here if you need us, and to always report suspicious or criminal activity. 850-745-7100, or 911 for emergencies.









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PHOTO BY TYLER JONES, UF/IFAS

Always cook meat and poultry to the proper internal cooking temperature to ensure it is safe to eat. The minimum internal cooking temperature of chicken is 165 degrees F.

## **Grill safely this summer**



By SAMANTHA **KENNEDY** 

July is National Grilling Month, and there's nothing quite like the aroma of delicious food sizzling on the grill.

However, it is important to prioritize safety when it comes to outdoor cooking to avoid any accidents or mishaps. Whether you are a seasoned grill master or a novice, here are six essential grilling safety tips to keep in mind for a worry-free barbecue experience.

1. Choose the right location. Selecting the appropriate location for grill setup is crucial to ensure the safety of people and property. Place the grill on a stable, non-flammable surface, such as concrete or bricks, and ensure it is a safe distance away from any flammable objects like trees, fences, or wooden structures. Avoid grilling in enclosed spaces, such as garages or covered patios, as it can lead to carbon monoxide buildup. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause death if inhaled in a large enough quantity. Grilling in open spaces will allow this gas to dissipate to safe levels.

2. Keep a safe zone. Establish a designated "safety zone" around the grill to prevent accidents and injuries. Create a clear area of at least three feet in all directions, free from children, pets, and any foot traffic. This zone will provide a buffer between the hot grill and any potential hazards, reducing the risk of burns or accidental contact.

3.Practice proper handling of propane. When using a gas propane grill, it is essential to handle the propane cylinder with care. Alwavs inspect the cvldamage, rust, or leaks before connecting it to the grill. When transporting or storing propane cylinders, ensure they are in an upright position and never place them in hot or enclosed spaces. When connecting or disconnecting the cylinder, make sure all burners are turned off, and never smoke or place any other open flames (such as citronella candles) near the grill.

4. Follow proper

food safety practices. Safe food preparation practices are just as important as the grilling process itself. Avoid cross-contamination by using separate cutting boards, utensils, and plates for raw and cooked foods. Keep perishable items refrigerated until they are ready to be cooked, and don't let them sit out in the heat for too long. In hot summer temperatures, food should not sit out longer than two hours. Use a food thermometer to ensure that meats such as poultry are cooked thoroughly and reach the appropriate internal temperature to prevent foodborne illnesses. Contact the inder for any signs of Extension office for a list of proper internal cooking temperatures for different food types.

> 5. Monitor the grill. Never leave the grill unattended while it is in

use. Grilling requires constant attention to avoid accidents and flare-ups. Stay vigilant and keep a close eye on the grill at all times. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby, ideally a Class B or multipurpose one, and know how to use it effectively. In case of a grease fire, never use water to extinguish it, as it can cause the flames to spread. Instead, use baking soda or a fire extinguisher specifically designed for grease fires.

6. Clean the grill. Maintaining a clean grill is not only essential for food safety but also for preventing flare-ups and extending the life of the grill. After each use, scrub the grates with a grill brush to remove any residue. Additionally, periodically inspect and clean the burner tubes and ports to prevent clogs and ensure proper gas flow.

By following these six grilling safety tips, outdoor cooking can be safe and fun.

For more information about grilling safety, please call Samantha Kennedy at (850) 926-



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## Turning 100

From Front Page

the neighbors, all on the same telephone line, so if you pick up the phone, you probably can hear someone else talking."

Attending school in Wisconsin within a one-room schoolhouse with one teacher from kindergarten to the 8th grade, then next on to high school, Bonnie said about her friends, "There is one sure thing about going to a one room school, you make friends and they have stayed my friends my whole life."

When discussing school back in the 1920s as compared to attending school now - "Back then it worked well in a one room school; I don't think it would work now," she says.

"I walked one and a half miles, maybe more, to school every day, it was fine in the spring, summer and fall, but in the winter, it was bitter," she says. "Although, I did enjoy the walks, I was able to see my friends."

When reminiscing about her childhood on the farm, she shares that "We had neighbors on both sides with kids, one side had four boys and one girl, the other side had four boys and one girl, and my family had five girls and one

"Us girls worked just as hard as any of the boys did," she says. "Although we had one boy in our family, he was the baby boy and there was a 20-year age gap between us girls and him so he could not do much.

"The hard work phone we shared with taught me that you must work no matter what" she says. "We were up at 5 a.m. before dawn milking cows, feeding cattle, chickens, pigs, horses. We tended a big garden that the family lived off and our family made fresh bread in big batches with many loaves at a time. We worked so hard there was not much time to see friends, so when we did get the opportunity, it was really enjoyable."

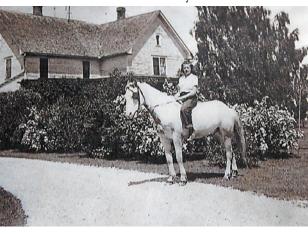
> After high school, she the U.S. Marine Corps where she also fell in love and married her husband Gene of 57 years in Wilmington, North Carolina. The couple was stationed in Camp Le-Jeune, North Carolina on the base.

Later, Gene Sturchio's job is what brought the Sturchio family to south Florida. After relocating to Florida around 1984, the family was traveling in an RV to visit family in places such as California, Texas and Arkansas and happened upon Sopchoppy and stayed, moving into a house off Argyle Street.

Unbeknownst to the Sturchio family, Gene's college and close friend George Mooney lived in Sopchoppy off Gertie Brown Road. Printed in Wakulla's local paper at that time was an Editorial Note signed by Gene Sturchio, which was soon seen by George Mooney. The newspaper note quickly reunited the friends both residing in Sopchoppy. Upon reuniting, George



Bonnie and Gene Sturchio, above, were married for 57 years. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps. Below, young Bonnie on her horse Mickey in Wisconsin.



Mooney said about the Editorial Note, "There can only be one Gene Sturchio" - which encouraged Mooney to seek out his friend.

After visiting Mooney on Gertie Brown Road, the Sturchio family saw for- sale signs on the current house Bonnie Sturchio lives in now.

"We saw the for-sale signs on the house

and fell in love with was meant to be."

Living on the river

the house." she says. "As fate will have you, the real estate lady went to our church at the Sopchoppy Methodist Church and we bought the house; it

in Sopchoppy, Bonnie says she has a connection with river by "always being aware of the low and high tides

the river has. I like to watch the boats go by and enjoy the birds." She laughs and adds: "No one likes yellow flies."

Bonnie's daughter Carmen said a friend shared with her that "The only thing that makes the ground fertile in Sopchoppy is all the swatted yellow flies."

During the holidays in Sopchoppy, Bonnie recalls, "We used to enjoy watching Sam and Sandy Tedder at the church and we visited family with my daughter Carmen in west Sopchoppy."

The memories of Wakulla Springs only get better with age for Bonnie.

"I found Wakulla Springs enjoyable and when Pat visited, we would get waffles and strawberries and whipped cream."

"I really like Wakulla County, I like small towns," she says. "Wakulla has a natural beauty to it. I remember when the entire county did not have any lights and every one knew each

"One thing that has changed in Wakulla is the landscape, the wide-open spaces have been built up by subdivisions, it is disappointing to me," says Bonnie.

Besides Peggy Lee, Perry Como and Frank Sinatra, Bonnie says that "Kenny Rogers is my favorite singer, he looks like my son. Wherever my son goes, wherever my son travels, he gets asked for his autograph."

Sturchio is also an avid reader reading over 100 books a year. She jokes that "I still read many books but I am not as fast as I used to be."

It isn't every day someone can turn a century old, so when asked what's the secret to 100 years, Bonnie answered, "Working hard everyday on the farm, our bodies got strong, being a vegetarian for 45 years and drinking lots of liquids, lots of fresh fruit and fresh vegetables.

"Exercise is important, keep things moving and walk a lot."

A surprise birthday wish from Bonnie's daughter Carmen is, "Happy Birthday, Mom. One of my favorite memories of you is seeing you watching Chip and Frances walk in unannounced as a Christmas surprise many years ago. I hope you have a lovely day with most of your family with you. Happy 100th!"



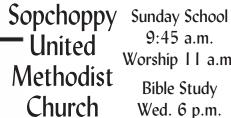
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#### LORD TAKE NOT MY THORN

Lord, take not my thorn Let it be mounted in my side Keep me humbled, O'Lord in my heart, Delivered from foolish pride!

Crucified from self will, seeking your hand to guide, Not falling in the ditches, where the blind lead the blind

Let me learn thy ways from Paul, the things he did endure

Let your gospel to my soul, Remain crisp, fresh and pure!

Yet of myself, now I forbear For The Lord Jesus; will I glory No boasting in my infirmities, For Jesus; He is my story!

For Christ sake, let me not be exalted above measure, Nor waste my wisdom, and revelations, For any foreign gains or pleasure

Ship wrecked and imprisoned, in perils of the heathen Though in my weakness; by him am I strengthened!

In my lowest estate, I kept myself content, and kept myself abased

My infirmities taught me, of Gods sufficient grace

I prayed thrice, for the thorn to depart "But had God answered" I would of missed the mark!

Then my testimony could not edify, nor have it's place Nor would you see, Christ in me The Author and finisher of my faith!

> Tony Duncan -All Glory Given to Jesus

### Wakulla Senior Center update

By CHRIS RUSSELL

July Greetings Neighbors,

Can you believe the temperatures we are having these days? The dog days of summer are definitely upon us.

But, just like the old mantra of the U.S. Postal Service, your Wakulla Senior Center continues to deliver for Wakulla's seniors no matter the weather situation.

As we celebrate Independence Day for our great nation this month, we are reminded that unfortunately as we age, we all experience losing some type of independence. That's why the Staff and Board of your Wakulla Senior

Center are so committed to operating the best Senior Center possible for our local Seniors!

One of the highlights of this past month's activities at the Senior Center was the Father's Day Celebration put on by the Senior Center staff. All of the participants and their families had a great time.

Additionally, last month the seniors continued to enjoy many of the activities offered at the Senior Center, including the Monday Movie Days, the arts and crafts activities, cake raffle. transportation services, special presentations, and the daily lunch program.

As you may recall from last month's Lunch Program. For

update, the Senior Lunch Program experienced a budgetary loss due to changes in the food grant program the Center receives. However, the Senior Center's staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers have been working very hard to offset this loss via the implementation of the "Sponsor a Senior's Lunch Pro-

Keep on reading below to find out about a very fun and entertaining way in which you can help us to support the Senior Lunch Program.

gram."

On July 28th, from 6 to 9 p.m., the Senior Center will be hosting a "Christmas After Dark" social to help fund the Senior

those who attended last year's event, you know how much fun and entertaining these events are and this year will be no different.

Event sponsorship opportunities available, as well as individual tickets that can be purchased for just \$60 (the price to feed a Senior for one month). Please contact Jennifer Miller at (850) 888-1016 or Sandi McDaniel at (850) 888-1015 for more information.

While you speaking to Jennifer, ask her about Wakulla Transportation Services and how you (and every citizen in Wakulla County) can utilize Wakulla Transportation to get to appointments,

stores, etc.

ALSO.....be and ask Jennifer about the program whereby Veterans in need can ride for free. That's right: every citizen in Wakulla County can utilize Wakulla Transportation and Veterans in need can utilize this resource absolutely

The winds change are amongst us at the Wakulla Senior Center and next month we will be highlighting our new in-coming Executive Director. Don't worry, Ms. Sandi isn't going anywhere right now, she's fully committed to the seniors and wants to make sure there is a smooth transition before she sets sail for her new

adventures.

If you'd like to find out about the happenings at the Wakul-Senior Center, please check out the Wakulla Senior Center Facebook page and for those needing transportation vices, check out the Wakulla Transportation Facebook page as well.

Or if you'd like, contact the Senior Center directly at (850) 888-1015.

Until next time, be safe and try to stay

Chris Russell is a Board Member of the Wakulla Senior Cen-

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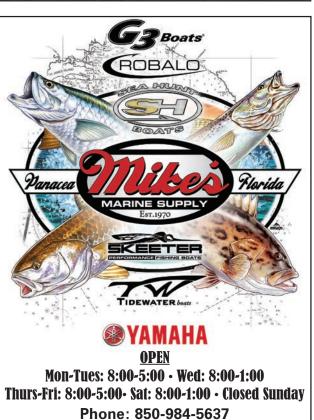
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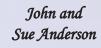












Nelson Nichols Fishing Charter

Petra Shuff

John and





## Real life attributes for the struggle of life



**Bv GREG GAST** 

Holiday Ryan wrote the following, the phrase "As in war, so is life." about, because life is at times like a battle.

As humans we fight to survive on a our survival. As inagainst impulses, we fight to be the person we want and aspire to be.

So what are the to act anyway. attributes needed winning strategies:

- **Discipline:** The ability to control a mental activity. The ability to control yourself or other people in difficult situations.
- It's worth thinking bravery needed when dealing with pain or long period
- **Courage:** It is not deeds for others. planet indifferent to just physical brav-

our goals, we fight injustice or taking a for the sake of a bet- efficiently. financial risk to follow a dream. Courage means feeling afraid, yet choosing

- Clearheadedto win these many **ness:** Having full use wars? Here are the of one's mind and control over one's actions. Being able to think in a clear and sensible way, especially in a difficult situation.
- **Selflessness**: Is expressing concern • **Fortitude:** The and giving help, love time, or knowledge to others. It means difficulty, esp. over a getting out of our ego and doing good
- Sacrifice: Is a ery; it can also mean loss or something

ter cause.

utes are:

- Cowardice: Is the lack of courage. It is excessive fear that prevents one from taking risks or facing danger. It is the failure of character in the face a challenge.
- Rashness: Is a kind of carelessness, a failure to think about how your ac- ing concerned extions might harm yourself or someone
- Disorganization: Is a lack of welfare regardless of proper planning and control. It is the inability to plan one's are

dividuals we fight for speaking out against you give up, usually activities or affairs mult-layered,

- Overconfidence: The losing attib- Is subjective confidence in one's judgements greater than the actual accuracy of one's abilities. It is a miscalibration of one ability.
  - Weakness: A deficiency or failing of one's character. It can be a self-indulgent liking or fondness of something.
  - Selfishness: Bepressively or exclusively, for oneself or one's own advantage, pleasure, or other.

We as humans muti-faceted,

complex.

The war to be our best can be a baffle at times.

Let me know what you think...

Send your questions to Real Life Counseling, 3295 Crawfordville Hwy., suite #4, Crawfordville FL 32327 in care of Gregory E. Gast, MS, LMHC, NCC. Your name will be changed and the answer to your question will appear in an upcoming issue of The Wakulla Sun.



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## On the Horizon The monthly calendar of events

#### Monday, July 3

- The Wakulla County Commission will meet at 5 p.m. in the Commission Chambers.
- 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 every Monday.
- Hatha yoga at 9 a.m. and Restorative Yoga at 6 p.m with Zoe, every Monday at New Posh on 3079 Crawfordville Hwy. RSVP to newposh3079@gmail.com or text/ call at (850) 528-5838.

#### Tuesday, July 4

• HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!

#### Wednesday, July 5

- Muffins with Moms Prenatal Support Group will meet at 9 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 10 a.m. at the Wakulla County Health Department. Contact Liz Neighbors at 850-888-6078 or elizabeth.neighbors@flhealth. gov for more information.
- A Line Dance class will be held at 1 p.m. at the Wakulla Senior Center every Wednesday.

#### Thursday, July 6

- St. Marks City Commission meets at City Hall at 6 p.m.
- The Sopchoppy Depot Committee meeting will be held at the Depot, 34 Railroad Avenue at 5 p.m.
- The VFW Auxiliary Bingo Night will be held at 7 p.m. at 475 Arran Road in Crawfordville, every Thursday. There will be concessions and raffles.
- The Rotary Club of Wakulla County holds its weekly meeting at the TCC Wakulla Center at 8:30 a.m.
- • Hatha Yoga at 9 a.m. and Restorative Yoga at 6 p.m. with Zoe every Thursday. Classes are \$12, at New Posh on 3079 Crawfordville Hwy. RSVP to newposh3079@ gmail.com or text/call at (850) 528-5838.

#### Friday, July 7

• Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and 8 p.m. every Friday at the American Legion, 54 Ochlockonees St.

#### Saturday, July 8

- Panacea Farmers Market will be held in Downtown Panacea next to the Panacea fire department from 9 a.m. to noon. Local vendors will be selling homemade and homegrown items and food vendors will be there.
- The Wakulla Caregiver Support Group will meet at the Wakulla County Public Library at 10 a.m.

#### Monday, July 10

- The Wakulla County Planning Commission Meeting will be held at 6 p.m. in the County Commission Chambers.
- The Sopchoppy City Commission meeting will be held at Sopchoppy City Hall at 6:30

#### Tuesday, July 11

- The Wakulla County Charter Review Commission will hold a public meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Marks Room at the Wakulla County Community Center.
- Sopchoppy Community Dinner is held every week on Tuesday 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, every Tuesday.

#### Thursday, July 13

• St. Marks City Commission meets at City Hall at 6 p.m.

#### Friday, July 14

• FELEIPE AND JORDAN FRANKS DAY in Wakulla County, by resolution of the Wakulla County Commission. • The Franks brothers, who both played football for the

Wakulla War Eagles, played

college ball and in the NFL, will hold a free football camp at Wakulla High School from 9 a.m. to noon. Drinks and lunch included. To register go to Eventbrite Franks camp.

#### Monday, July 17

- The Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners will meet at 5 p.m. in the Commission Chambers.
- The Wakulla County School Board meets in the school administration building at 5:45 p.m.
- The American Legion Post 114 will be meeting at the Wakulla County Public Library at 6:30 p.m.

#### Thursday, July 20

• The Wakulla County Cancer Support Group will meet in the Education Center of the Crawfordville United Methodist Church at 7 p.m. This group meeting is for men and women, regardless of the type of cancer. Spouses, caregivers,

and friends are welcome. For more information, call 850-926-6050.

#### Monday, July 24

• The Sopchoppy Lions Club meets the 4th Monday of each month at the Historic Sopchoppy High School at 6:30 p.m.

#### Friday, July 28

• Christmas After Dark, a fundraiser for the Wakulla Senior Center, is from 6 to 9 p.m. at the senior center. Tickets are \$60 each.

#### Saturday, July 29

• Sopchoppy Opry will celebrate its 23rd anniversary

with a show featuring Todd Allen. The show is held at the Historic Sopchoppy High School Auditorium starting at 7 p.m. Individual show tickets are \$15 each.

• St. Marks Community Market, sponsored by Discover St. Marks, will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 815 Port Leon Drive.



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## Think voles not moles for damage to plant roots



By ERIK LOVESTRAND

I was first introduced to voles as a youngster on one of my uncle's dairy farms while riding atop the hay bales in the hay wagon. From there, it was easy to see the "field mice" scattering as the hay was collected by the baling machine. We called them field mice back then, but I know them now as eastern meadow voles (Microtus pennsylvanicus). Voles are closely related to mice but have significantly shorter ears and tails, and slightly smaller eves. Some species spend most of their time above ground, while others venture topside only rarely. They are primarily herbivorous but supplement their diet with insects as well. Moles, on the other hand, are classified as

insectivores. When you see a lot of moles tunneling in your yard it is a good sign that you have an issue with white grubs or mole crickets. Get ready for armadillos next! Moles will also eat earthworms, but moles are not the culprits if you are seeing damage to your plants.

Recently, I was reintroduced to voles through an encounter with a species that I was not familiar with. While digging up my potato patch, I came across several tubers had been partially eaten from below ground. Feeding damage showed distinctive teeth marks that looked like a very small rodent's, but I didn't know of any local mice that burrowed that deeply. Several weeks later, the mystery was solved by our dog when she showed up with a small, slobbery, reddish-brown rodent in her mouth. The short tail and ears set me on the right track to learning about the pine vole, aka the woodland vole (Microtus pinetorum). Pine voles are much smaller than most other voles, averaging about 3.5 inches. Their bur-



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The pine vole (aka woodland vole) lives primarily underground.

rows are only about as wide as my thumb. I remembered seeing a small hole like this in the garden previously and knew it was too big for a mole cricket but too small for a mole. I had no idea we had voles in Wakulla County at the time. Pine voles are widely distributed in the Eastern half of the U.S. with a narrow sliver of their range extending into North Florida.

In addition to being a major pest in fruit orchards, pine voles can do substantial damage in the home landscape or garden plot, on occasion. They will eat bulbs, tubers, tree roots, seedlings and plant stems. So far, I have sustained minor damage to potato tubers and occasionally

at ground level. I recently talked to someone else who was losing their carrots to these crafty tunnelers. Pine voles occupy tunnel systems built by family groups, consisting typically of a breeding pair, along with a few non-breeding helpers. Even though they only have a reproductive lifespan of about 18 months, females may produce up to 4 litters with as many as 6 young each time so numbers can grow rapidly.

Honestly though, it does not seem like pine voles are a big problem in our area. However, if you tend to plant a small garden each year and you get a group of voles working your plot, you might beg to differ. The subterranean nature of our vole makes

the potato bush stems it quite difficult to control since you cannot trap them or exclude them with barriers conveniently. I have no idea if those electromagnetic or ultrasonic devices on the market would have any effect. My suggestion for small plots that are continually plagued by this issue would be to go to raised beds. If your beds are on the ground, you would need to put down a layer of gravel in the bottom or use hardware cloth to keep them from tunnelling in. Otherwise, just plant a little more than you need and give the voles their due. They really are cute little buggers.

> Erik Lovestrand is a UF/IFAS regional Sea Grant agent in Wakulla, Franklin and Gulf coun-





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17. Willis and Robert are

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22. It shows who you are

25. The First State (abbr.)

16. Fungal disease

26. Get older

34. Brew

family

43. Scads

weather

burned

45. Morning

36. Leader

27. Associations

29. Woman (French)

31. Sunscreen rating

37. Plants in the legume

38. Burn with a hot liquid

48. Length of a line (abbr.)

53. Worn by exposure to the

57. Word element meaning

40. Junior's father

50. Double curve

54. Mars crater

55. Humanities

58. To the \_\_ degree 59. Residue of something

61. It cools your home

51. Small, thin person

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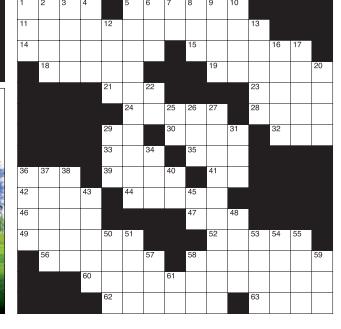
#### **CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Absence of difficulty
- 14. The act of coming to-
- 15. More cushy
- 18. Visionaries
- 21. Indicates near

- 32. Thyrotrophic hormone
- 33. Can't be found
- 35. Electronic data process-
- 36. Passports and licenses are two
- 39. Snake-like fishes
- 41. Air Force
- 42. Popular computers
- stage
- 47. Used in combination
- 52. Jewelled headdress 56. Slow

- 63. Hyphen

- 3. Expel large quantities
- 4. Sea eagle
- 5. Genetically distinct varieties
- 6. Dialect of Chinese
- 8. Consumed
- 10. Menace to yards
- 12. Ireland
- 13. Palm trees



Raw Wildflower honey

- 5. Preserve a dead body
- 11. Gratitude
- gether again
- 19. Large, fish-eating bird
- 23. NY Mets legend Tommie 24. Icelandic books
- 28. Pop
- 29. Hammer is one
- 30. Sense of self-importance

- 44. Intermediate ecological
- 46. Wings
- 49. Laid back
- 58. Famous Falls
- 60. Reassertions 62. Periods of time

#### **CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Body part
- 2. Mimics

- 7. Famous Mr. T character
- 9. Chinese dynasty

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