



War Eagle Wrestling, see Page 12

The Wakulla Sun



Weather forecast from Wakulla High School

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly Cloudy Hi: 73° Lo: 50° 19% Sunrise 7:29 AM Sunset 5:41 PM	Sunny Hi: 66° Lo: 38° 5% Sunrise 7:29 AM Sunset 5:41 PM	Sunny Hi: 57° Lo: 35° 3% Sunrise 7:29 AM Sunset 5:41 PM

"It's a New Day"

Locally Owned & Operated

Our 3rd Year 52nd Issue
Thursday, December 26, 2024



\$1
One Section

Tough issues coming

School board faces two obsolete school properties, rezoning in January

By WILLIAM SNOWDEN
Editor

Superintendent of Schools Rick Myhre gave school board members a heads-up that he will bring a couple of potentially controversial issues at their January meeting: the transfer of obsolete properties, and school rezoning.

Myhre brought up the issues at the school board's Dec. 16 meeting.

The obsolete properties are the historic Sopchoppy School and the old Shadeville School, currently known as Wakulla Education Center.

Myhre has proposed letting the City of Sopchoppy have the old school there for free.

"If we can work out an agreement, it could be a win-win for both sides," he told school board members.

He indicated the Wakulla County Christian Coalition may be interested in taking over the Shadeville School site.

School board members: Laura Lawhon, whose parents work for



District Chief Financial Officer Randy Beach, center, has retired after 24 years at Wakulla. With him are school board members Angie Nichols, Laura Lawhon, Superintendent Rick Myhre, and school board members Cale Langston, Josh Brown, and Eddie Hand.

the City of Sopchoppy, said she had heard rumors about the city being offered the property and buildings – and expressed her concern about a developer getting the vacant block.

School board member Josh Brown, who attended elementary school at Sopchoppy, said the district cannot afford to maintain buildings that don't house students.

"The cost over the years to maintain has been astronomical." Brown said he wouldn't have a

problem with the sale of the city block and noted a hypothetical of the city selling the vacant property to pay for maintenance of the school building.

School board chair Cale Langston, who also attended elementary school there, suggested the possibility of turning over the buildings to the city while the district holds on to the vacant lot. "Definitely don't want it going to a developer," he said.

As for the rezoning, Myhre suggested designating new subdivisions

being built in Crawfordville as zoned for Medart Elementary. The new residents of those subdivisions would presumably not have kids in Wakulla schools, and so it would be less of a difficulty of moving students to different schools.

Myhre anticipated that this would allow the district to stave off the need for a real rezoning for a couple of years – until Wakulla High School is finished – and the district

Turn to Page 3

Local Realtor found guilty of tax evasion

Sedita Cayson failed to file income tax returns between 2017-2021

Special to The Sun

Sedita Charles Cayson, 59, of Panacea, was found guilty by a federal judge of five counts of willfully failing to file his income tax returns during a five-year period, spanning tax years 2017-2021. The guilty verdict returned at the conclusion of a day-and-a-half bench trial, was announced by Jason R. Coody, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida.

Trial testimony and evidence demonstrated that Cayson—a Florida real estate agent known as the "Land Man"—had been a serial non-filer of his income taxes for multiple years. Evidence showed that Cayson had a history of tax delinquencies with the Internal Revenue Service and that he was assessed liens for his federal income tax delinquencies for years 2004-2007 and 2011-2013.

Despite earning real estate sales commissions averaging over \$150,000 per year, Cayson willfully failed to file his income tax returns for tax years 2017-2021.

Further evidence indicated that beginning in 2017, Cayson instructed his real estate broker to split his commission checks into amounts that were less than \$10,000, the majority of which Cayson cashed at the bank immediately upon receiving them.

Cayson faces up to one year in federal prison and a \$25,000 fine for each count, followed by a term of up to one year of supervised release.

Sentencing is scheduled for Feb. 24, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., at the United States Courthouse in Tallahassee before U.S. District Judge Robert L. Hinkle.

The conviction was the result of an investigation by IRS Criminal Investigations. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Harley Ferguson and Justin M. Keen prosecuted the case.



Sedita Cayson

SPREADING HOLIDAY CHEER



Shop with a cop

Sheriff Jared Miller and School Resource Deputies from the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office Safe Schools Division had a wonderful evening of Christmas shopping with a great group of Wakulla's youth at Walmart in Crawford-

ville on Saturday, Dec. 14. A big thank you to the Crawfordville Walmart, which also partnered with Coca-Cola to provide snacks, candy, and refreshments for the youth, Deputies, and families. A great time was had by all. The sheriff's office thanks the families who participated and allowed them to spend this time together. (Photo by Wakulla County Sheriff's Office)

City moves forward with new business

St. Marks Prestress is looking to locate at the old refinery site

By WILLIAM SNOWDEN
Editor

The City of St. Marks is working to bring in a new company to the old St. Marks Refinery site.

The company, St. Marks Prestress, will develop a manufacturing, loading and barge shipping facility for prestress concrete components for use in constructing bridges.

On Thursday, Dec. 12,

the city commission held a meeting of its Local Planning Agency to look at the project and propose a small-scale map amendment to the city's Comprehensive Plan: half of the refinery site is zoned Agricultural, and the company is requesting the property be zoned Industrial.

The site is less than 50 acres.

The property has been designated as a brown-

field site due to extensive pollution when the refinery was in operation. The city has since obtained the property and the old storage tanks have been taken down.

But the property has sat unused for years.

The city adjourned as the LPA and, at their regular meeting, did a first reading of the proposed ordinance. It will get a second reading at a special meeting set for

Dec. 23.

In a related matter, a lawsuit filed by CDS Manufacturing, a sister company to St. Marks Prestress, dropped a lawsuit against former city commissioner Richard Chichetti after he and his wife drove to the company's Gadsden location to gather information.

CDS accused the Chichettis of trespassing and illegally photographing the site.

FWC suspends catch of Suwannee bass in Wakulla River

From FWC News

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will temporarily prohibit possession and harvest of Suwannee bass for no less than 24 months in the Wakulla River and its tributaries, effective immediately. This restriction includes the river's headwaters at Wakulla Springs and extends to its convergence with the St. Marks River, near the town of St. Marks.

Recent surveys by FWC biologists suggest that Suwannee bass are no longer present in the Wakulla River. The Wakulla River, once known for having the highest catch rates of Suwannee bass within the species' range, has seen a significant decline in their population.

The harvest restriction is intended to protect any remaining Suwannee bass and provide time for the FWC to gather additional data. The data collected during this period will help guide future conservation strategies for this species.

Suwannee bass are classified as a species of greatest conservation need by both the FWC and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Found in only six rivers in Florida and three shared rivers between Florida and Georgia, Suwannee bass have one of the smallest geographic distributions among black bass species.

For more information about the harvest suspension and Suwannee bass conservation efforts, visit the Executive Order at MyFWC.com.

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Lisa Craze, CFC
Wakulla County Tax Collector

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Revenue generated go to fund educational scholarships for the children of Florida residents who are members of the United States Armed Forces, the National Guard, and the United States Armed Forces Reserve and for the children of public safety employees who have died in the line of duty who are not covered by existing state law. Plus to other s. 501(c)(3) organizations that may apply for grants and scholarships and to provide educational grants to public and private schools to promote the historical and religious significance of American and Florida history. The In God We Trust Foundation, Inc., shall distribute the license plate annual use fees in the following manner: 1. The In God We Trust Foundation, Inc., shall retain all revenues from the sale of such plates until all startup costs for developing and establishing the plate have been recovered. 2. 10% of the funds shall be expended for administrative costs, promotion, and marketing of the license plate directly associated with the operations of the In God We Trust Foundation, Inc. 3. All remaining funds shall be expended by the In God We Trust Foundation, Inc., for programs.

Student of the Week

Diana Camara - Riversink Elementary School

Principal: Catherine Cutchen

Achievements/Reason for Nomination: Riversink Elementary School is proud to highlight Diana Camara as our Student of the Month. Diana is a ray of sunshine at Riversink Elementary School. She brings so much enthusiasm to school each day. Diana is an honor roll student and has excellent citizenship. Diana loves playing on the playground, especially if she gets to meet new friends. Her favorite thing to do is visit Disney World. She has gone "like 101 times." Diana loves spending time with her family. She really enjoys spending time with her little brother, Raker. Diana is an absolute joy to have on campus. She brightens every day!

STUDENT OF THE WEEK FEATURES A DIFFERENT SCHOOL EACH WEEK.

Flower of the Week at Sopchoppy Depot Park

Yaupon holly

By LYNN ARTZ, DAVID RODDENBERRY, and SANDY TEDDER

Berries often adorn holiday wreaths. During the holiday season, vibrant red berries also decorate our native yaupon holly (Ilex vomitoria) and provide vital food for many birds. Like other hollies, yaupons are either male or female with berries produced only on female plants though both sexes flower. The small oval leaves lack the spines of American holly and feed the caterpillars of Henry's Elfin and Holly Azure butterflies. This long-lived evergreen grows 10-20 feet tall in a wide range of conditions. It can withstand saltwater, hurricane winds, deer, drought, and aggressive pruning (e.g., bonsai, topiaries). It spreads vigorously through underground stems to form thickets that provide cover for wildlife. Yaupon hollies are displaying their festive translucent berries now along the east and west borders of Sopchoppy Depot Park.

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Joy-filled Christmas

A Joy-Filled Christmas for special needs kids was held Dec. 7 hosted at Wakulla Spring Lodge. Director Mary Wallace reported the kids had visits with Santa and JOY. Cookie decorating and hot chocolate along with Christmas crafts and facepainting by Nikki Facepainting and Crafty things. It was a great night, and all the kids left with a stocking filled with goodies and a free kids meal courtesy of Zaxby's which made them all so happy. The parents left with beautiful poinsettia courtesy of Sun-Blest Gardens. The whole night was low key and JOY-Filled for the amazing kids. (Photo special to The Sun)



Fields of Faith held at Wakulla High

By **ELLA WREN MOODY**
WHS Senior

Fields of Faith is a yearly event hosted by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), where everyone in the county is invited to come together and worship God in the WHS stadium. There's just something about that huge crowd all coming together to sing and pray that's powerful and special. The feeling at Fields of Faith is like no other.

Every year, Fields of Faith brings students, parents, and the whole community together to worship as one. Philippians 2:2 states, "... make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being in one spirit and of one mind." When I think of a verse to describe Fields of Faith, this is it.

Fields of Faith has a different theme every year, and this year's was "Living Word." Students lined up with their Bibles and took turns reading their favorite Bible verses or a verse that has helped them. Hearing these verses read aloud, one after another, really brings the message of God's Word to life. You



could feel the Holy Spirit as students shared their personal connections to scripture.

One of the best parts of Fields of Faith is how involved the students are. Many of them show up early to help set up and greet people, excited to serve and be part of the event. A band is assembled of students with various talents. They practice relentlessly to prepare for Fields of Faith. The night of the event, they lead us in worship

songs. That sense of togetherness and purpose is exactly what Fields of Faith is all about: bringing people together for a common cause—their faith.

The event always ends with an invitation. FCA youth ministers come down onto the field to offer prayers for the students, and many students choose to step forward to receive prayer. It's incredible to see how many students put aside their pride and show courage

by asking for prayers. With everything high schoolers face, it's inspiring to see them humble themselves in that way.

At the end of the night, it's clear that Fields of Faith is more than just an event; it's an experience. Every year, students and parents look forward to it, and FCA puts everything they have into making it an unforgettable night. Fields of Faith is truly one of the best nights of the year!

Tough issues coming

From Front Page

could potentially apply for state funds for a new wing for Crawfordville Elementary.

Currently, Crawfordville Elementary is two students away from capacity, and Shadeville is near capacity and facing HVAC repair projects that will limit school space.

Medart Elementary is not at capacity, and has plenty of space.

"I don't want to rezone when we may be able to build a new wing for additional capacity to alleviate the problem at Crawfordville, Myhre said.

Lawhon called it a "creative solution to the problem."

Langston anticipated that zoning new subdivisions won't be popular with developers, but said it is "absolutely necessary" for the district.



Mary Wallace with winners Home Sweet Home's Jen Botero and Sarah Smith with Heather Rybak.

Gingerbread House winner announced

Mary Wallace of Capital City Home Loans and Heather Rybak of Rybak Realty teamed up again this year with their Gingerbread House fundraiser to help with Operation Santa and to add some friendly competition in creating Gingerbread Houses. Seven houses were on display at Capital City Bank during the holiday season – and the winner was Home Sweet Home Property Management and Sales' Jen Botero and Sarah Smith. The fundraiser raised \$375 for Operation Santa.

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.



Theater With a Mission Bicentennial Bash

Special to The Sun

Theater with a Mission's Bicentennial Birthday Bash is a free, 3-day, family-friendly adventure in time travel. Nestled in the sweet spot between Christmas and New Year's Eve, this party 200 years in the making is tailor-made to feature fun for folks of all ages, face-to-face encounters with Florida's multicultural past, and a fresh take on Florida history, written into the world premiere of a brand-new play set in 1824 and called Tales from Florida's Log Cabin Capitol.

Young Floridians can have fun at the Bash's petting zoo, pony rides, dance parties, and craft sessions. Redemptive Love Farm is bringing a petting zoo stocked with chickens, ducks, bunnies, goats, and sheep – animals that Tallahassee settlers prized 200 years ago. Pony rides feature the small, gentle horses descended from Galiceño mustangs that Spanish Floridians imported and Florida Crackers rode for cattle drives.

Families can enjoy face-to-face encounters with Florida's richly diversified past, when storytellers from Native American, African, and Florida cracker heritages share stories full of laughter, wonder, music, and wisdom. Parades, processions, pageantry, plus opportunities to dress up and step into vintage dance parties also offer the excitement of traveling back in time to touch, taste, and talk



Murat Piff Paff Pouf.

with Tallahassee 200 years ago.

There's a Dance Through the Decades on Friday night, Dec. 27. There's a Native American stickball game on Saturday morning, Dec. 28. There's a Territorial Ball for All on Saturday evening, Dec. 28. And there are First Christmas reenactments on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 29. You can get free tickets (some activities are space-limited) for specific parts of this history-making party – and the whole weekend is leisurely scheduled to let you unwind, surrounded by the timeless beauty of Goodwood Museum & Gardens, an authentic territorial Tallahassee site dating back to the 1830s.

First-hand experience is the hallmark of this Bash. In the play "Tales from Florida's Log Cabin Capitol," Theater with a Mission invites you to become a legislator in the first legislature

ever to meet in Tallahassee. During "Las Posadas," you get to re-enact a First Christmas tradition that goes back to Spanish Mission times in middle Florida. At the birthday party that closes the Bash – a party with three cakes, baked from recipes popular in 1824, 1924, and 2024 – everyone celebrates Florida's Capital County on the actual 200th anniversary of the day that Leon County was incorporated, Dec. 29, 2024.

The whole event is free. More details and a portal for tickets are posted at www.theaterwithamission.com.

Come join the fun, enjoy the first-hand experiences, and witness the world premiere in the festival that's giving Tallahassee-Leon County's bicentennial year a grand finale – Theater with a Mission's Bicentennial Birthday Bash on Dec. 27-29.



Notice of Public Meeting:

The Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners will hold a Public Hearing on February 3, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, 29 Arran Rd, Crawfordville, FL, 32327

Purpose of Meeting:

To Consider a Purchase and Sale Agreement for the Acquisition of Property on Coastal Highway for the Purpose of a Potential Fire Station.

Legal Description

Commence at the Northwest corner of Section 36, Township 5 South, Range 2 West, Wakulla County, Florida; thence run along the Westerly boundary line of said Section 36 South 01 degrees 02 minutes 40 seconds West 500.00 feet to a found re-bar marking the POINT OF BEGINNING; thence leaving said POINT OF BEGINNING run South 89 degrees 01 minutes 03 seconds East 208.56 feet to a rod and cap #7160; thence South 89 degrees 08 minutes 11 seconds East 151.82 feet to a re-bar lying on the Westerly right of way line of a 200' wide right of way known as U.S. Highway #98; thence run along said Westerly right of way line North 17 degrees 20 minutes 43 seconds East 225.00 feet to a rod and cap; thence leaving said Westerly right of way line run North 89 degrees 06 minutes 46 seconds West 436.66 feet to a rod and cap; thence South 00 degrees 46 minutes 43 seconds West 215.52 feet to a rod and cap; thence South 89 degrees 13 minutes 17 seconds East 12.13 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING. Containing 2.00 acres more or less.

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the board, agency, or commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Persons with a disability needing a special accommodation should contact the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners Administration Office at least two (2) days prior to the meeting at (850) 926-0919; Hearing & Voice Impaired at 1-800-955-8771; or email at ADARrequest@mywakulla.com

Dec. 26, 2024

FOLLOW THE SUN.

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.”

LETTERS FROM READERS

Bonnie Staubitz, former animal control director, responds to leaving shelter

Editor, The Sun:

Good Morning Mr Snowden, I wanted to take this time to clarify some things for you.

This is my reason for leaving Wakulla Animal Services:

1) Back at the earlier part of the year my staff and I were told by David Edwards (County Administrator) the if we could not adopt or send to rescues then we need to send them to heaven those were his exact words and the we cannot have any emotions to do that job and if we do then we need to find another job.

2) Back in November 2023 I was sent an email by David Edwards (County Administrator) stating DO NOT SPEND MONEY WE DON'T HAVE IT TO SPEND.

3) When the citizens started complaining about how the shelter looked with all the rundown kennels and wanted something done as we looked bad to the public. And when David Edwards (County Administrator) made his way to see the shelter he stated the shelter looked like a junkyard. I explained to him it's all I have to work with and I'm doing the best I can. David Edwards the (County Administrator), the person that runs the county has shown his presence at the shelter approximately 3 times since I worked for the county.

Back to the way the shelter looked it was no fault of mine, I got quotes for new kennels from 3 different companies for the new budget upcoming and was denied both times. I was never allowed to be at the budget meeting as the fire chief's secretary took it in her control and I never was aware of what I could have or could

not have.

Somer Pell came on as the Assistant County Administrator to David Edwards. She started sending me pass aggressive emails about how to respond to the actuations, when I questioned her of what actuations she explained about me not using all my budget now mind you this was in August and I still had the whole month of September to go. She stated the I had \$36,000 left why was the shelter in such poor conditions, I EXPLAINED TO HER I still had the month of September to go, at the end of September I was then over my budget by a large sum.

4) I was given a written warning in reference to my purchasing card asking for credits for being overcharged for some invoices. And again for not offering an employee EAP which I did and was more or less called a liar even with the employee sending the county an email stating I offered it to her.

5) Somer Pell stated she wants all new faces for the county. She was constantly asking me what my plans were. I told her I was planning on leaving that I could not work where I had to be a killer and that was not my goal, my goal was to save lives as many as I can like I have been doing for the past 15 years, but when you have an employee that has been after your job from day one telling things that were not true on other staff members and myself.

Wanting me to keep the numbers low in the shelter. I was no longer able to post code red dogs or cats due to the new social media rules. And that I would never keep my NO KILL STATUS that we worked hard to

do. All the county wanted to see was happy tails and shelter life are not always happy tails.

At the end I offered to help for 30-plus days to help get someone in my place to help save lives and network the unwanted furry babies,

Somer Pell was happy for me to do that, and 2 hours later I was sent an email asking that I be in the HR office the next morning by 9:15 and was told I could go HR had all my paperwork ready to dismiss me with 30 day payout plus my time for sick and vacation.

The Wakulla Sun stated it was an

HR issue that was incorrect information it was never an HR issue it was a Somer Pell issue.

When I offer to help network with the staff ALL THE STAFF ARE UNDER GAG ORDERS NOT TO TALK TO ME.

Bonnie Staubitz

Editor's Note: To clarify, The Wakulla Sun quoted Somer Pell in the news story saying she couldn't comment on Staubitz's leaving because it was a personnel issue, not that Staubitz left because of an HR issue.

Happy days as Trump returns to office – what could go wrong?

Editor, The Sun:

Thanksgiving may have come and gone, but the blessings of liberty continue to flow.

In what has become known as the MAGA Miracle, American patriots overwhelmingly chose Donald Trump to carry forth their banner of truth, justice and the American way. It was both an election and an acquittal. The joyful anticipation resulting from this “Trump Effect” is creating an aura of prosperity, hope and optimism that is spreading like wildfire through the political landscape. Overjoyed constituents are seeing positive results, even before the inauguration.

Grocery prices already are starting to come down; interest rates are in a downward spiral. Inflation is under control; Black Friday and

Cyber Monday sales set records as consumer confidence skyrockets. With the open border problem being solved once and for all, no longer will we have to worry about our beloved pets being eaten by illegals. The J6 hostages will be set free in the first nine minutes of the Trump era allowing them to continue their crusade for free and fair elections. Tariffs will not only create thousands of new American jobs but will have the effect of lowering taxes as well.

Happy days are here again as our beloved President Trump along with his cabinet of brilliant intellectuals and DOGE advisors reign supreme.

What could possibly go wrong?

Palmer Carr
Crawfordville

Library News

By LINDA OAKS

Library News Dec. 26th- Jan. 1

Thursday, December 26th

• No Meetings

Friday, December 27th
• Quilting Guild 9:30am

• Closed

Saturday, December 28th
• No Programs

Monday, December 30th
• No Programs

Sunday, December 29th

December 31st & January 1st
• Closed for New Years Holiday

On the Horizon:

Calendar of events for the week of December 26

Thursday, December 26

- The VFW Auxiliary Bingo Night will be held at 7 p.m. at 475 Arran Road in Crawfordville, every Thursday. There are concessions and raffles.
- Yin Yoga at 6 p.m. with Nellie every Thursday. Classes are \$12, at New Posh on 3079 Crawfordville Hwy. RSVP to newposh3079@gmail.com or text/call at (850) 528-5838.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m. every Thursday at 54 Ochlockonee St.

Friday, December 27

- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon at

8 p.m. every Friday at 54 Ochlockonee St.

Saturday, December 28

- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m. every Saturday at 54 Ochlockonee St.

Monday, December 30

- 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.
- Yoga 101 with Nellie at 6 p.m. Classes are \$12, packages available at New Posh on 3079 Crawfordville Hwy. RSVP to new-

posh3079@gmail.com or text/call at (850) 528-5838.

- Gentle Yoga and Stretching Class, every Monday, 11 a.m. Wakulla Community Center. Bring a mat. Come early to sign in. Chair Yoga participants welcome. \$2 per class.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. at 54 Ochlockonee St.

Tuesday, December 31

- New Year's Eve
- Sopchoppy community dinner is held every week at the Towles House at 6:30 p.m.

Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m. at 54 Ochlockonee St.





- Yoga Flow with Nellie at 6 p.m. Classes are \$12, packages available at New Posh on 3079 Crawfordville Hwy. RSVP to newposh3079@gmail.com or text/call at (850) 528-5838.

Wednesday, January 1

- HAPPY NEW YEAR!
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and 6:30 p.m. every Wednesday at 54 Ochlockonee St.

"It's A New Day!"

The Wakulla Sun

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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

– Compiled by Lynda Kinsey

Polled at the Chamber's After Hours event held at The Shack of St. Marks: What would you like to change in your life in 2025?



KELSIE PACE
Diana Health

“Learn how to say no more often and not overload my schedule so much. That is my change for 2025.”



TAMIKA RICH
Marriage Refresh

“Being better about managing my time and to not procrastinate.”



SARA CLARK
Leadership Wakulla

“I want to eat better so that I can drink more Dr. Pepper.”



TINA NUNN
The Shack of St. Marks

“Have more of a focus on tailoring our services of our business to meet the needs of the people who stop in from the trail and from boating.”



SAM MORSE
Morse Construction

“I want dedicate more time to learn more skills and hobbies.”

Buckhorn News

By ETHEL SKIPPER

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas – and has a most wonderful, spiritual-filled New Year!

During this season of the year, it is a busy time, some people are busy trying to figure out what to buy their friends and grandchildren. I know how you feel – what is it they don't already have?

There is something we cannot get too much of, and it is the word for the season.

In the beginning was the word

and word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.

The word was in the beginning before anything, there was God and the word. Then the word was with God. The word was and is distinct from God, but it is also in close personal relationship with God. The word was God, the word is fully God.

He possesses the same divine nature as God and is one with God. All things were made by Him. The word had power to speak all things into being because in Him was life.

The word was referred to as a light – the light. In the Gospel, one finds that light of the Gospel, comprehending it not because they love darkness rather than the light.

Today the taks of making the light known through the church. While the church is called to witness to the Light, it is not the church's responsibility to ake believers of the Light. That is something only God can do, through the internal witness of the

Holy Spirit.

Let us be fatith to do what God has charged us to do ans ask Him to do what only He can do.

This Christmas pray for those who have not believed in Jesus as savior and Lord.

Our prayers and blessings go out to all the sick and shut-in, to those in need of help in all ways, those in the hospital, nursing home, prison, the homeless, and all in need of a blessing everywhere. Pray for our president of the United States and world leaders. Be thankful and bless the name of the Lord.

Sheriff's Report

This report is for activity Dec. 13-20. There were 1,358 total calls for service during the week.

FRIDAY, DEC. 13

• Christopher Hartsfield was arrested on Friendship Lane for a Wakulla County warrant for Failure to Appear by Deputy Gray. Christopher Hartsfield was transported to the Wakulla County Detention Facility.

• Deputies Munroe and Post responded to a residence on Joe Mack Street in Panacea in reference to a battery. An investigation revealed no battery occurred. Probable cause was not developed to make an arrest. Several independent witnesses claimed no battery occurred.

• Deputy Godwin responded to Pace Street in Crawfordville in reference to a vehicle burglary. Complainant reported while at the Ace Hardware in Crawfordville, she believes her purse was taken from her vehicle. Case has been forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division.

• Deputy Munroe responded to a structure fire at 92 Tower Road in Panacea. Upon arrival, he made contact with the complainant who reported he departed the residence about 15 minutes before calling 911, and when he returned, he saw smoke coming from the shed on the property where Clay Lawson and his girlfriend live. Complainant advised he attempted to open the door to the shed which was locked. Wakulla County Fire Rescue responded and extinguished the fire. The shed was a total loss. Investigation continuing.

Investigation continuing.

• Deputy Post responded to the State Probation office located at 3278 Crawfordville Hwy in reference to Clay Lawson cutting off his ankle monitor. After the earlier structure fire, a probation officer advised they discovered notice Lawson had cut off his ankle monitor. Criminal mischief investigation forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division.

SATURDAY, DEC. 14

• Deputy Surrette responded to an address on Beeler Road and made contact with the complainant who advised she moved out of the home recently and her roommate threw and gave away multiple belongings including an iPhone. Case has been forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division.

• Deputy Haddock conducted a traffic stop on Woodville Highway on a blue scooter without a license plate. Contact was made with the driver who did not possess a valid driver license and the VIN appeared to be altered. The scooter was towed to the impound yard, and case has been forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division.

• Deputy Sullivan and Lt. Paul responded to a disturbance on Meadowlark Drive. Upon arrival, Tre Allen McCullough obtained a fishing gaff and resisted several verbal commands to drop it. Ultimately, McCullough was taken into custody and charged with Resisting without Violence, and was transported to the Wakulla County Detention Facility.

lence, and was transported to the Wakulla County Detention Facility.

SUNDAY, DEC. 15

• Deputy Sullivan responded to 69 Family Circle and made contact with the resident who stated she walked out on her back porch to discover the shed, which her son lives in, fully engulfed with flames. Wakulla County Fire Rescue responded and extinguished the fire. The shed was deemed a total loss, with an estimated value of \$10,000.

• Deputy Surrette conducted a traffic stop on Bloxham Cutoff Road due to the registered owner not having a valid driver's license. Through his investigation, the deputy ultimately determined all the occupants of the vehicle were in possession of cocaine. The deputy seized a total of 7.8 grams of cocaine. Deputy Surrette charged Emerzon Isai Mejia Goff with possession of cocaine with intent to sell and drug equipment possession, Selvin Azariel Lizama Andino with possession of cocaine and drug equipment possession, and Jose Alfredo Perez Castaneda with possession of cocaine and drug equipment possession. All above individuals were transported to the Wakulla County Detention Facility.

• Deputy Gray responded to a residence on Ace High Stables Road in reference to credit card fraud. Complainant reported she has a power of attorney for her father and has recently discovered unauthorized withdrawals from her father's account. Investigation continuing.

MONDAY, DEC. 16

• Deputy Cordoba observed a blue VW Jetta cross the median cutting off a vehicle and driving into the opposing lane turning onto Whiddon Lake Road. The vehicle failed to stop when Deputy Cordoba engaged his lights and sirens, turning into a property on Whiddon Lake Road. Benjamin Delaney Millership exited the vehicle and was placed under arrest. Millership was searched and a small vial was located containing liquid fentanyl. Additionally, two syringes were discovered, one found to contain additional liquid fentanyl. Millership was charged with Opium or Derivative – Possess with Intent to Sell, Manufacture, Deliver, Flee Elude Law Enforcement, Driving While License Suspended/Revoked 2nd Offense, Drug Equipment Possession, Violation of Probation for Flee Elude Warrant, VOP for DWLSR warrants. Millership was transported to the Wakulla County Detention Facility.

• Deputy DeGuzman conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle on Lonnie Raker Road for traveling 60 MPH in a 35 MPH zone. Contact was made with the driver, Sebastiana Gomez Perez, found to not possess a valid driver license, and also had an active warrant out of Leon County for DWLSR. Perez was arrested and charged with Operate Motor Vehicle without Valid License and an Out of County Warrant and was transported to the Wakulla County Detention Facility.

TUESDAY, DEC. 17

• Deputy Kittrell responded to Walmart in reference to a theft. Upon arrival, contact was made with asset protection which advised had received notice of a theft in progress from a fellow co-worker. An unknown male and female appeared to be attempting to leave the store with grocery carts full of the store's merchandise. Employees attempted to make contact with the male half inside the store, but he quickly fled while passing all points of sale. When the female observed the male fleeing, she left her grocery cart near the self-checkout area of the business. The pair was then observed headed towards a black Nissan Rogue prior to fleeing northbound on Crawfordville Highway. Shortly after the incident, the Asset Protection Officer located the female subject's purse (along with her identification) in the shopping cart inside the business. Case forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 18

• Deputy Dill spoke with a citizen who reported someone stealing her credit card while she was shopping in Crawfordville Walmart. The citizen received a fraud alert text from American Express after the card was being used in stores in the Woodville area. A total loss of \$158.25 was stolen before American Express could freeze the credit card. Case forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division.

THURSDAY, DEC. 19

• Deputy Sullivan responded to Destiny Lane and made contact

with a resident who reported two unknown males took his electric scooter and he was able to recover it, but prior to recovering it, approximately \$50 in damage was sustained. Case forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Division.

• Deputy Munroe responded to Levy Bay Road and spoke with a resident who reported unauthorized charges on her bank account. The charges were for a security system she had cancelled but is still receiving charges.

FRIDAY, DEC. 20

• Deputy DeGuzman conducted a traffic stop on Lonnie Raker Lane. The driver, Mark Thomas Toole, was determined to have never been issued a valid license and was placed under arrest. The passenger, Jonathan Michael Carr, was determined to be in possession of methamphetamine and paraphernalia and was placed under arrest. Carr was charged with Possession of Methamphetamine and Possession of Paraphernalia, and Toole was charged with Operating a Motor Vehicle Without a Valid License. Both Carr and Toole were transported to the Wakulla County Detention Facility.

Please report suspicious or illegal activity at 850-745-7100, or call 911 for emergencies.



Please Recycle

Outdoors

outdoor sports

HOME ON THE RANGE

Newbie gets a gun for Christmas – now what?



By MARJ LAW

Lara sees a small, rectangular box with a big red bow under the Christmas tree.

“Did Mark really buy me that Equalizer I wanted?” she wonders. When he’s out of the house, she picks up the box and shakes it gently. No rattle. For a small box, it’s sort of heavy.

“It might be!” she continues thinking. “I wonder... The ribbon is put on kinda loosely. Will it slide off the box?”

“Hm. Let’s see.” With a gentle pull, the ribbon slides off.

“I wonder... There isn’t much tape on that end. Will it come off without tearing the wrapping?”

Lara uses her index fingernail to pry up the tape.

“That was easy. Now, I think I can unfold the paper on this end. Yes! It worked! Let’s see. It’s in some sort of a black plastic box. Yes! I’m almost sure that’s what Mark got me for Christmas! A Smith & Wesson Equalizer! Yay! Now, I need to act surprised

tomorrow morning!” And Lara happily folds the paper back, adds another piece of tape (‘Mark will never notice’) and slides the ribbon back on the box.

“Good thing I bought him that Kimber Mako. Even better, I packed it in the microwave box with lots of paper and a handful of marbles! He will never guess. He’ll be disappointed because he’ll think I didn’t purchase the Mako for him. Ha!”

Christmas morning, Lara opens her box and puts on a shocked face.

“Oh, Mark! My Equalizer! You bought it for me! I never thought you’d actually get it for me!” Lara opens her eyes wide, and puts both hands on both sides of her face. (She read that’s an expression of happy shock.)

“Thank you thank you thank you! Wow! What do I do now?”

“First, take it out of the box with the muzzle pointed at no person or anything you might not want to destroy,” instructs Mark.

“Well, Mark. You know it’s not loaded. Why should I be concerned about it being loaded?”

“From now on, for your gun or anyone’s gun, you have to consider it is always loaded.”

“I remember that from the range.”

“OK, if you remember, what are you supposed to do?”

“I’m supposed to drop the magazine.” Lara



What do you think is in the box?

presses the magazine release button and out shoots the empty magazine. Then she pulls back the slide to inspect the chamber, which is indeed empty

“Now what?” she asks as she pops the magazine back into the grip.

“Now you get to read the manual,” says Mark. “And after you read the manual, you need to clean the gun.”

“Mark, it’s a new gun. It hasn’t had a chance to get dirty.”

“Lara, a lot of times guns are shipped with a heavy coating of grease as a preservative. You need to get rid of excess grease. This is also a good opportunity to learn to take down your gun.”

“Can’t I wait until after I shoot, for when the gun is really dirty?”

“No, Lara. Excess grease can inhibit the slide from moving properly, and then the gun might foul. Besides, it’s a good time to learn the parts of your gun. Keep your manual out, and let’s see how it comes apart.

“OK. First, I’ll drop the magazine again. Now, the manual says to lock back the slide. Oh, here’s the slide lock lever. I’m pushing the slide back, and pressing the lever up to lock the slide so it stays back. Like patting your head and rubbing your tummy. Yes, now it is locked back.

Next, I push down the

take down lever. That wasn’t too hard. Now I’m supposed to be able to press the slide lock lever down while holding the slide. Then I’m able to move the slide off the gun. Hey, Mark! It worked!”

Mark inspects the parts with Lara.

“Smith & Wesson didn’t slather your gun with grease,” he showed her the insides of the slide and the frame. “But let’s clean out the rails on both the upper and lower. Then, we’ll coat both sides with a thin layer of grease.”

With a small square of t-shirt material, and something that looks like a dental pick, they clean out the slides. Then they take something that looks sort of like a syringe, but instead out comes a snake of grease. They squeeze, and a white layer of grease is now on both upper and lower rails.

“Isn’t that too much grease?” asks Lara.

“Yes,” replies Mark. “It’s way too much grease. I’ll take cotton swabs to remove the excess. See? Now the rails glisten, but you do not see any globs of grease.”

Lara insists on putting the two parts of the gun back together herself. She places the upper over the lower and aligns the slides. She pushes the slide all the way backward, and moves the slide lock lever up to lock it back. She flips the take down lever back up to its original position. Then, holding onto the slide, she pulls down the slide lock lever. The slide moves forward. She moves the slide back and forth to make sure the grease is distributed throughout the rails.

“Good work! Now, pull the trigger.”

Lara is surprised. “Why do I pull the trigger? You’re not supposed to dry-fire a gun.”

“It’s true that you don’t dry-fire most .22s. But this is a 9mm hand-

gun, and when you pull the trigger after putting it back together, it shows you have put the gun back together properly. You’ll hear a click when you pull the trigger, and that way you’ll know you did it right.”

Lara pulls the trigger and hears the click.

“It worked! I took the gun apart and put it back together again. So, what kind of ammunition did you get?”

“115-grain 9mm Luger full metal jacket.”

“Don’t we want a hollow point or a defensive load?”

“No. Right now, we are learning. We will target shoot at the Wakulla County Sheriff’s Office range. This ammunition is fine for target shooting. When you are comfortable with your gun, we can look at other loads.”

“OK. I’m glad you bought some already. As soon as the range re-opens after the holidays, we can try it out! And do we need batteries?”

“What for? Your gun doesn’t require batteries.”

Lara grins up at him. “It will, when we get my green red dot reflex sight!”

Mark pretends to groan, but he had seen a receipt for that Kimber Mako he liked. It came with a red dot sight.

When he opens his Christmas gift, he is going to act very surprised.

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



DWARF or PYGMY SEA HORSE
(*Hippocampus zosterae*)

The smallest of seahorse species lives in sea grass flats especially where eelgrass grows. Their color is usually unpatterned tan, but can be black to bright green. This seahorse was severely affected by the BP Gulf oil spill because its favored habitat where the population was greatest, was directly in the path of the oil. Its numbers are uncertain but it is becoming rare and may be in trouble. We can hope as the gulf, survivors from our area will repopulate the more western damaged habitats.

Eukaryota, Animalia, Chordata, Actinopterygii, Gasterosteiformes, Syngnathidae

Gulf Specimen Marine Laboratory
www.gulfspecimen.org

Column was cut off last week

Marj Law’s column last week was inadvertently cutoff rendering the final part of her story about a couple shopping for handgun accessories without an ending. It should have gone:

Mark catches up with her. “I see you have yet another bag,” he observes. “What did you buy this time?”

“Mark, you know I grew up in New Hampshire,” she replies. “The state motto is ‘Live Free or die.’”

“So?”

“I bought the T-shirt,” she grins.

Apologies to readers and to Marj.

BIRDING AT THE REFUGE

Has Pinky returned?

By DON MORROW

Recently, Wakulla resident Bruce Means went fishing and saw a large pink bird on an oyster bar off the St. Marks Lighthouse. He posted a picture of the flamingo to Facebook along with photos of several impressive fish that he had caught. The local birding community was impressed and not by the fish. Birders flocked to the refuge to look for the bird.

The flamingo was relocated several times on oyster bars near the mouth of the St. Marks River. It is now being seen on the interior ponds at St. Marks and the question has arisen, “Is this the return of Pinky?”

In late October of 2018, following the passage of Hurricane Michael, a flamingo showed up at the refuge and was promptly dubbed “Pinky.” Except for a few brief absences, Pinky stayed for five years. Last year Hurricane Idalia pushed large numbers of migrating flamingos north. At one point, there were seven flamingos at the refuge. Apparently caught up in this Pink Wave after Hurricane Idalia, Pinky disappeared when the Idalia flamingos left.

Hurricane associated flamingos are not new. St. Marks has a long history of Hurricane driven flamingos. In previous flamingo sightings at the refuge in the 1960s, ‘70s and

‘90s, birds had been discovered shortly after a hurricane made landfall. We are only three months past a close brush with Hurricane Helene and this flamingo could have arrived on that storm. Also, there are still occasional Florida sightings of leftover Idalia flamingos and one of them could have wandered up the coast.

A lot of people want to believe that this is the return of Pinky.

Now, Pinky was an odd flamingo and may have longed for the solitude that it found on the refuge. Rita, who runs the Nature Store at the refuge, tells me she noticed that this flamingo has the same pink birthmark that Pinky

had. However, Rita sells flamingo-themed gear at the nature store.

Flamingos are not rare. There are several hundred thousand of them, mainly in the Caribbean. It seems odd that of that number, a lone flamingo would decide to fly up to the northern Gulf coast. I have considerable doubt that this is the same flamingo that spent five years at the refuge. However, this flamingo is pink, just like Pinky was and it could be the same bird.

Come down to St. Marks and see what you think.

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

Wakulla Lawn Ranger

Gene Darby

850-251-9122



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Gulf Coast Weekly Almanac

Dec. 26 - Jan. 1



Tide charts by tides4fishing.com



Best fishing days this month December 30, 31

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.	

St. Marks River Entrance

Th	5:17 am ▼ 0.0 ft	12:00 pm ▲ 2.4 ft	4:39 pm ▼ 1.6 ft	10:37 pm ▲ 2.7 ft
Fr	6:03 am ▼ -0.3 ft	12:44 pm ▲ 2.6 ft	5:29 pm ▼ 1.6 ft	11:18 pm ▲ 2.8 ft
Sa	6:45 am ▼ -0.6 ft	1:24 pm ▲ 2.7 ft	6:13 pm ▼ 1.6 ft	11:57 pm ▲ 3.0 ft
Su	7:24 am ▼ -0.8 ft	2:01 pm ▲ 2.8 ft	6:53 pm ▼ 1.5 ft	
Mo	12:35 am ▲ 3.1 ft	8:01 am ▼ -0.9 ft	2:37 pm ▲ 2.9 ft	7:32 pm ▼ 1.4 ft
Tu	1:14 am ▲ 3.3 ft	8:37 am ▼ -1.0 ft	3:12 pm ▲ 3.0 ft	8:11 pm ▼ 1.2 ft
We	1:55 am ▲ 3.4 ft	9:12 am ▼ -1.1 ft	3:45 pm ▲ 3.0 ft	8:52 pm ▼ 1.1 ft

City of St. Marks

Th	6:21 am ▼ 0.0 ft	12:36 pm ▲ 2.2 ft	5:43 pm ▼ 1.5 ft	11:13 pm ▲ 2.5 ft
Fr	7:07 am ▼ -0.3 ft	1:20 pm ▲ 2.4 ft	6:33 pm ▼ 1.5 ft	11:54 pm ▲ 2.6 ft
Sa	7:49 am ▼ -0.5 ft	2:00 pm ▲ 2.5 ft	7:17 pm ▼ 1.4 ft	
Su	12:33 am ▲ 2.8 ft	8:28 am ▼ -0.7 ft	2:37 pm ▲ 2.6 ft	7:57 pm ▼ 1.3 ft
Mo	1:11 am ▲ 2.9 ft	9:05 am ▼ -0.8 ft	3:13 pm ▲ 2.7 ft	8:36 pm ▼ 1.3 ft
Tu	1:50 am ▲ 3.1 ft	9:41 am ▼ -0.9 ft	3:48 pm ▲ 2.7 ft	9:15 pm ▼ 1.1 ft
We	2:31 am ▲ 3.2 ft	10:16 am ▼ -1.0 ft	4:21 pm ▲ 2.8 ft	9:56 pm ▼ 1.0 ft

Shell Point, Spring Creek

Th	5:30 am ▼ -0.1 ft	12:08 pm ▲ 2.3 ft	4:45 pm ▼ 1.5 ft	10:46 pm ▲ 2.8 ft
Fr	6:20 am ▼ -0.4 ft	12:58 pm ▲ 2.5 ft	5:38 pm ▼ 1.5 ft	11:29 pm ▲ 2.9 ft
Sa	7:04 am ▼ -0.7 ft	1:42 pm ▲ 2.7 ft	6:25 pm ▼ 1.5 ft	
Su	12:09 am ▲ 3.0 ft	7:46 am ▼ -0.9 ft	2:23 pm ▲ 2.8 ft	7:09 pm ▼ 1.5 ft
Mo	12:50 am ▲ 3.1 ft	8:26 am ▼ -1.0 ft	3:02 pm ▲ 2.8 ft	7:50 pm ▼ 1.5 ft
Tu	1:30 am ▲ 3.3 ft	9:05 am ▼ -1.1 ft	3:40 pm ▲ 2.9 ft	8:32 pm ▼ 1.3 ft
We	2:12 am ▲ 3.4 ft	9:41 am ▼ -1.2 ft	4:15 pm ▲ 2.9 ft	9:15 pm ▼ 1.2 ft

Alligator Point, Ochlockonee Bay

Th	5:28 am ▼ 0.0 ft	11:52 am ▲ 1.8 ft	4:50 pm ▼ 1.2 ft	10:29 pm ▲ 2.0 ft
Fr	6:14 am ▼ -0.2 ft	12:36 pm ▲ 1.9 ft	5:40 pm ▼ 1.2 ft	11:10 pm ▲ 2.1 ft
Sa	6:56 am ▼ -0.4 ft	1:16 pm ▲ 2.0 ft	6:24 pm ▼ 1.1 ft	11:49 pm ▲ 2.2 ft
Su	7:35 am ▼ -0.6 ft	1:53 pm ▲ 2.1 ft	7:04 pm ▼ 1.1 ft	
Mo	12:27 am ▲ 2.3 ft	8:12 am ▼ -0.7 ft	2:29 pm ▲ 2.2 ft	7:43 pm ▼ 1.0 ft
Tu	1:06 am ▲ 2.4 ft	8:48 am ▼ -0.8 ft	3:04 pm ▲ 2.2 ft	8:22 pm ▼ 0.9 ft
We	1:47 am ▲ 2.6 ft	9:23 am ▼ -0.8 ft	3:37 pm ▲ 2.3 ft	9:03 pm ▼ 0.8 ft

St. Teresa, Turkey Pt.

Th	5:22 am ▼ -0.3 ft	12:25 pm ▲ 1.7 ft	4:54 pm ▼ 1.3 ft	10:18 pm ▲ 2.2 ft
Fr	6:02 am ▼ -0.5 ft	1:08 pm ▲ 1.8 ft	5:37 pm ▼ 1.3 ft	10:57 pm ▲ 2.2 ft
Sa	6:38 am ▼ -0.7 ft	1:45 pm ▲ 1.9 ft	6:13 pm ▼ 1.3 ft	11:35 pm ▲ 2.3 ft
Su	7:14 am ▼ -0.8 ft	2:21 pm ▲ 1.9 ft	6:46 pm ▼ 1.3 ft	
Mo	12:13 am ▲ 2.4 ft	7:51 am ▼ -1.0 ft	2:57 pm ▲ 1.9 ft	7:21 pm ▼ 1.3 ft
Tu	12:53 am ▲ 2.5 ft	8:30 am ▼ -1.0 ft	3:34 pm ▲ 1.9 ft	8:01 pm ▼ 1.3 ft
We	1:38 am ▲ 2.6 ft	9:10 am ▼ -1.1 ft	4:09 pm ▲ 2.0 ft	8:46 pm ▼ 1.2 ft

Dog Island West End

Th	5:40 am ▼ -0.3 ft	1:40 pm ▲ 1.4 ft	4:32 pm ▼ 1.4 ft	10:09 pm ▲ 1.9 ft
Fr	6:23 am ▼ -0.5 ft	2:18 pm ▲ 1.6 ft	5:54 pm ▼ 1.4 ft	10:48 pm ▲ 2.0 ft
Sa	7:01 am ▼ -0.8 ft	2:52 pm ▲ 1.7 ft	6:43 pm ▼ 1.4 ft	11:33 pm ▲ 2.1 ft
Su	7:36 am ▼ -1.0 ft	3:24 pm ▲ 1.7 ft	7:16 pm ▼ 1.4 ft	
Mo	12:21 am ▲ 2.2 ft	8:11 am ▼ -1.1 ft	3:56 pm ▲ 1.8 ft	7:47 pm ▼ 1.4 ft
Tu	1:08 am ▲ 2.3 ft	8:48 am ▼ -1.2 ft	4:27 pm ▲ 1.8 ft	8:19 pm ▼ 1.3 ft
We	1:53 am ▲ 2.3 ft	9:27 am ▼ -1.1 ft	4:52 pm ▲ 1.8 ft	9:03 pm ▼ 1.2 ft

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

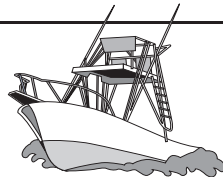


Coast Guard Auxiliaries at the Forgotten Coast Freedom Festival in Apalachicola on Saturday, engaging with visitors, left, and enjoying the festival, right.



Coast Guard Auxiliary Reports

By Carolyn Brown Treadon



Thank you to Linda Olson for the article and images!

On Thursday, Dec. 19, Linda and Wade Olson delivered items collected by Flotilla 12 for the Veteran's Village in Tallahassee. This is the 3rd year that the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 12 has collected items to donate. The flotilla adopted the veterans living in the Village the first year by putting together a number of gift bags containing hand-crafted items, sundries, snacks and other items donated by the members of the flotilla.

Last year the flotilla elected to do the drive again but time was too short to hand make enough items and a call went out to the crafters of Madison County. They responded heroically, packing a Chevrolet Equinox to the gills and taking the

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

opportunity to thank our Veterans.

This year many of those who donated last year wanted to again show their support for our heroes. Donations were accepted at the Cherry Lake Utilities Office in Madison and included new and gently used clothing, shoes, coats, handbags, blankets and linens, along with the handcrafted hats, and scarves and the always needed sundries and snacks. These wonder-

ful "Elves" filled two SUVs this year.

Mr. Burke of Veterans Village welcomed the donations on behalf of the 48 Men and four Women Veterans currently living in the village.

The members of Flotilla 12 want to wish every one a joyous holiday season surrounded by those you love.

As Sherrie says, safe boating is no accident!

For more information about our safe boating

classes or to learn 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

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.

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 Gregg Stanton

To dive in our caves requires special training. December 23, 2010

I finished training Jani and Toni from Finland yesterday after eight very long days that included 15 hours of lecture, 15 hours of shop time and 1,000 minutes underwater practicing skills and problem solving.

They are tired now, but learned their lessons well. Both will soon receive a Close Circuit Re-breather Cave certification from the International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers (IANTD).

Lectures included how our caves are formed, how to protect them, the purpose of community support (such as joining the National Association for Cave Divers and the National Speleological Society) and land owner relations (no sneak diving!).

These caves are fragile, beautiful and precious to all of us.

Lectures covered the technology of diving of course, and the physiology of swimming underwater. Because our caves are often full of silt, the floor has a lot of soft mud.

You cannot walk on them. Cave divers must learn to swim in a new way so as not to disturb the bottom or they will quickly lose their ability to see in the cave.

Skills include managing their breathing gasses and decompression, knowing where they are in the cave at all times, knowing their way out, maintaining trim & buoyancy, carefully using lights, and self and buddy rescue techniques.

At the end of my class I inform each (on different dives) that their primary life support has failed when they are the furthest from the surface.

To pass the class is to get out on their own. Every diver at some point owes their life to their buddy.

To complete my final practical, they must cooperate, sharing backup breathing gasses, knowledge of their location in the cave, light, swimming and communication skills all performed calmly, or be rescued by me and fail the exercise.

Yes, I do require they pass a written exam, practical skills and meet national standards for cave diving.

What I have described seems like touchier, but people do enjoy the adventure that cave diving provides.

To cave dive safely requires a dedication to details not required in many other recreational activities.

If you make a mistake at tennis or soccer, you just try again.

In cave diving, mistakes can be devastating, bringing new meaning to the cliché that the Devil is in the Details.

Editor's Note: This was the sixth Underwater Wakulla column written by Gregg Stanton back in 2010.

FOLLOW THE SUN.

Your local source for news.

Joy in the new year – in the midst of sorrow



By **SHERYL H. BOLDT**

Has the loss of someone dear to you left a perpetual hole in your heart? Have the consequences of your poor choices convinced you that you're a hopeless loser?

If so, I have an encouraging verse to share with you: "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is [his] faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23 ESV). If your grief or destructive choices make it hard for you to believe this verse, ask yourself: When my child is devastated by a tremendous loss, do I grow weary and close my eyes to their pain? When they disobey me, do I throw up my hands and walk away?

Of course not. Neither does our heavenly Father distance Himself from we need Him.

If I didn't have the assurance of God's grace if my husband or child were to die, I'd unravel. And if I feared God would withdraw even a fraction of His love when I disobey Him, I'd be emotionally destroyed.

I need to know, without a doubt, that God will always be there to fill every hole in my heart. That when I make a mess of my life, He will mercifully show me His plan – and

assure me that He can and will still use me.

You, too, need to know that God's love is unwavering. You, too, need to know God's mercies will never end and will greet us every morning, day after day, after (sometimes) painful and disappointing day.

Some of you have been devastated by such grief and disappointment that I can only begin to imagine your pain, especially if you're feeling distant from God. You long to experience the "Emmanuel, God with us"

you heard about this past Christmas.

Would you, one more time, in the midst of your sorrow, ask God to reveal Himself to you?

I want you to experience the same love and mercy as He has shown many of us. When life is too much to bear . . . God's grace, power and mercy are real. Allow Him to prove it to you.

This is what the Gospel message is all about.

If this is your first (or your fifty-first) new year without a loved one, I pray you'll be comforted by the only Love that

will never cease. If you wish you could join others in saying "Happy New Year!" and mean it, but you can't because you dread another "loser" year, I hope you'll find consolation in remembering that God's mercy will never come to an end . . . even for you.

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.

The day after



By **CHERYL CRUCE**

Christmas is climatic! The anticipation begins the day after Thanksgiving with Black Friday specials and television commercials that tug at the heartstrings. Homes are decorated with bright lights and yard ornaments.

Children give Santa Claus a wish list while parents capture the moment with a photo. The expectations of Christ-

mas begin.

So many traditions during this time of year revolve around gift-giving and family-gathering activities. There are the usual Christmas Caroling and hot Apple Cider evenings as the scent of freshly baked cookies lingers in the kitchen. The traditional giving of gifts remains. However, some exchanges are enhanced with the "White Elephant" games.

In my youth, it became a tradition to stand around the burn pit with Dad as he sifted through the colored paper, looking for one missing piece of a gift lost during the excitement of Christmas morning. As a mom, I have tried different remedies to overcome this tradition. I have given

my children the responsibility of their own trash bags. Fail! The bags were too soon forgotten. One Christmas, I tried to give out one gift at a time. Fail! The anticipation of my little ones overruled this idea as they began reaching underneath the tree, bypassing my approach.

The missing piece tradition seems to be unchanged. As a Grandmother, I know that sometime during the moments or days that follow Christmas morning, I will receive a phone call or a text telling me of a small piece of something missing from a gift. All too often, I am caught in the search and find tradition, looking through the endless mounds of paper and

boxes for some valued treasure.

Regardless of our traditions, December 26 can be an emotional drop from the climatic Christmas morning. A person can feel lost when the excitement of previous days dies down. Suddenly, the lights lose their shine, the decorations become clutter, and the yard ornaments lay on the cold ground waiting to be returned to their boxes in a closet. The day after, we open our eyes to the demands of work, worry, and concern for loved ones.

Nevertheless, even if the tree looks empty, our hearts can still be filled with the joy of the previous days. The true spirit of Christmas is not our name on a gift but

our name on a page in the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 21:27), for we are more than a tradition. We are God's valued treasure, the apple of His eye (Psalm 17:8). He gave us the gift of His Son, Jesus, so that we could know the true joy of Christmas.

There will always be a "day after" in life, yet we become more than conquerors because of His love for us. Scripture teaches that nothing can separate us from His love, not angels nor demons, not life nor death, not our today nor our tomorrow. The hope we found in Him on Christmas morning remains our hope the day after. (Romans 8:37-39).

Whatever the missing piece is in your life,

trust it to the One who loves you. Allow the Lord to sift through the debris and restore what was lost to you. There is a reason to continue the celebration. We are engraved on the palm of our Father's hand and continually before Him (Isaiah 49:16). The spirit of Christmas does not have to end when our hope and joy remain in Him.

Romans 15:13 ~ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you may abound in hope.

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

OUT TO PASTOR

The worst Christmas I can remember



By **JAMES SNYDER**

After our Christmas holiday, I was sitting in my easy chair drinking coffee and reflecting on all the Christmases I had as a child. Those were fun times. I got to see relatives I haven't seen the rest of the year.

It was then I remembered something—the worst Christmas I ever had. I had forgotten about this, but all of a sudden, it came to mind.

When I was young, before I became a teenager, my parents would take me and my siblings downtown to meet Santa Claus. We would sit on his lap, take a candy cane from him, and tell

him what we wanted for Christmas.

When we were done, he would say, "Ho, ho, ho," give us a Merry Christmas look, then send us back to our parents.

I vividly remember the first time I told him that I would love to have a pony for Christmas. He agreed to bring me a pony, and then he did his "ho, ho, ho" routine.

When I got up that Christmas, I noticed no pony under the Christmas tree. As I thought more about it, I realized that nothing was under the Christmas tree that I had asked Santa for. I couldn't understand it. My parents told me Santa would bring me the Christmas presents I asked for. Of course, I believed them.

Several Christmases passed, and the same thing happened or didn't happen. And I was just a little bit confused about this guy called Santa Claus. Why wasn't he good to his word?

I remember the year I turned 13. I was now a teenager, and so I had graduated to that smart level of being a teenager.

At school, we were having some kind of Christmas party, and they were talking about Santa Claus coming down the chimney to put presents under the Christmas tree and in the stockings hung by the fireplace. I didn't think too much of it at the time.

That Christmas Eve, as we were getting our Christmas tree all "holidayed" up, I felt that something was missing with our Christmas decorations. Then, it hit me rather strongly.

"Dad," I cried in alarm. He looked at me and said, "What's wrong son?"

I looked at him angrily and asked, "Dad, where is the chimney?"

With a curious look, he responded, "What are

you talking about?"

"It's beginning to make sense," I seriously said to my father. "I now know what's wrong with our Christmas. I now know why I haven't got my pony."

My dad had no idea what I was talking about and asked me to explain.

"This week in school they were telling us all about Christmas and Santa Claus and Rudolph the red nose reindeer. One of the things they told us was that Santa Claus comes down the chimney to bring his gifts."

I paused for a moment and then continued, "So, that's why I've not got my pony for Christmas. Dad, where is our chimney?"

My dad was momentarily confused and had no idea how to respond to what I was saying.

"Well, son," my father said, "we don't have a chimney. We don't even

have a fireplace so we don't need one."

"How then is Santa going to get me my Christmas presents under our Christmas tree I asked for while sitting on his lap?"

Thinking back over that now, I couldn't help but laugh. My father had a hard time explaining to me why we didn't need a chimney for Christmas time. Every year, just before Christmas, I ask, "Dad, will we have a chimney this year?"

After a while, he got tired of hearing me ask that question and refused to come up with any more excuses.

I was confused about Santa Claus and Christmas, not knowing what to believe. It took me some time to sort out the Christmas holiday.

As I reflected on this,

I thought that many things in life need sorting out. We believe something and then find out it wasn't the truth.

Jesus addressed this in John 8:31-33, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The truth about Jesus and His birth sets us free, and that truth can only be found in the Word of God.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamesnsnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamesnsnyderministries.com.

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Obituaries



Walter Steven Brown

Feb. 12, 1938 – Dec. 13, 2024

North Florida has lost a beloved philanthropist and businessman. Walter Steven Brown, 86, of Panacea, passed away Friday, Dec. 13, 2024, after a lengthy and valiant battle with Parkinson's Disease.

Steve is survived by his wife of 38 years, Kathie Ann Marston Brown, Panacea; two daughters, Stephanie Brown Miller (Beau), Atlanta, and Cindy Leigh Merritt, Birmingham, Ala.; son, William Steven Brown, Atlanta; mother-in-law Audrey Marie Marston, Panacea; sisters-in-law Kimberley Marston, Bowley's Quarter, Md. and Gail Marston Cather (Skip), Essex, Md.; former wife, Marsha Dimsdale Brown, Atlanta; grandsons Dr. Eugene Perry Cox III and Chad Steven Cox, Birmingham; and Preston Howell Miller, Colson Samuel Miller, and Holden O'Neill Miller, Atlanta; granddaughters Dr. Kimberly Ann Cox, Keri Cox McIntire, Brandy Brown Ramsey, and Jennifer Leigh Abbott, all of Birmingham; 14 great-grandchildren; three great-great grandchildren; and a devoted friend and caregiver, Bundy Rozier, Sopchoppy.

Steve was predeceased by his parents Ethel Whitley Brown and William Sam-

uel Brown, Birmingham; daughter, Bevely Brown Cox, Birmingham; brother, Joe David Brown, Birmingham; and former wife, Toby Tidwell Brown, Birmingham.

Born in Birmingham on Feb. 12, 1938, Steve's parents soon discovered their young son's affinity as an entrepreneur when, at the tender age of 5, he began selling turtles to his fellow kindergartners! By 11, he had started his first serious business venture selling rides on his pet donkey to other friends and students; however, ever diligent, his parents saw that the boarding, feed, and vet bills were paid out of his burgeoning profits!

As an adult, Steve had three passions, other than his wife, Kathie. They were an advocacy for senior citizens, their issues and concerns; the responsible management and protection of all animals, both domestic and wild; and the use of training and education to enhance the probability of both employers and employees successfully achieving their common goals.

Steve and Kathie have been devoted "parents" for many years to a menagerie of dogs, cats, and birds. They have both spent their lives being animal lovers and community advocates. Years ago, Steve, along with former Wakulla Sheriff David Harvey and local Realtor Ray Boles, recognized a growing problem in the county with stray, abused, and abandoned animals. Together they were instrumental in establishing Wakulla County's first Animal Shelter. By utilizing prisoner labor to defray many of the building costs, they were able to

secure the necessary funding and resources to provide a permanent and safe haven for Wakulla's most vulnerable animals.

Steve's business creed was "Believe!" He said "Belief is success. One, in yourself, your abilities, and caliber as a person; two, a belief in your product; and three, belief in your company or institution." He believed that by providing managers and employees with training utilizing cutting edge technology (video), this would equate directly to their future successes in the workplace. To this end, in June 1970, Steve founded the Fortune Group International, an Atlanta-based company that provided multi-media training systems to many of the world's most outstanding organizations including Eastman Kodak, GTE, Castrol Oil, and Cincinnati Bell. By the mid-1980s, the Fortune Group had expanded its sales outside of the country to include New Zealand, Australia, and Canada. Today the company's services are being offered on three continents. While traveling the world for Fortune Group, Steve stayed on the move surpassing the Million Mile Club by racking up over 4 million air miles. Whether business-related or pleasure, Steve and Kathie were fortunate to have visited 16 countries during their time together.

During his professional career, Steve received many accolades. As an acclaimed and highly sought after trainer and speaker, Steve was an active member of the National Speakers Association and was honored with the group's CPAE Award, its highest form

of recognition. A gifted business writer, Steve authored "13 Fatal Errors Managers Make... And How You Can Avoid Them," a book that has been translated into more than a dozen languages. Through the years, he developed numerous training systems espousing leadership, management, sales, and communication techniques, all designed to ensure the user's optimum success in the corporate environment. In the '80s, Steve was especially proud of his role in co-designing "Parent to Parent," or PRIDE (Parent Resource Information for Drug Education). Once made aware of the program, First Lady Nancy Reagan adopted it as a component of her "Just Say No To Drugs" initiative. Through her efforts she secured funding which provided "Parent to Parent" as an educational resource tool for schools nationwide.

As a community leader and advocate, Steve took over a popular but struggling Panacea Blue Crab Festival pouring his energy and exceptional organizational and managerial skills into reviving a cultural event that today is thriving. Attended by thousands, the festival he loved enhances community prosperity by showcasing Panacea's unique beauty and abundant natural resources and provides a marketplace for local and area businesses, vendors, and artisans. He also served as Chairman of Panacea Waterfronts Inc.

Steve and Kathie together made Senior Citizen Advocacy a part of their daily lives by giving of their time and generosity to support the Wakulla Senior Center, Crawfordville.

They have been active, onsite partners, involved in every aspect of its operations until Steve's health began to decline. Even then, their support continued and has never wavered.

While an Atlanta resident, Steve was able to purchase and co-own a popular Quail Hunting Preserve, "Covey Rise," located in Madison, Ga. This retreat became the setting for many memorable occasions. Whether hosting and entertaining business clients, family or friends, Covey Rise was the site for hunting parties, clay bird shooting contests, and many special holiday weekends. Later, as a lover of the sport and a proponent for responsible game management, Steve was a founding member of the Wakulla County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited.

A staunch supporter of Florida State University and the "Ultimate 'Nole Fan," Steve made Florida State an integral part of his life as a resident of the Big Bend. In 2009, Steve was elected Chairman of the Board of Directors of FSU Seminole Boosters Inc., the fundraising arm of Florida State athletics. During his tenure as Chairman, he and Kathie enjoyed all of the Booster-related activities – hosting dinners with student athletes and attending as many sporting events as possible. On "Home Game Day," the Browns traveled to Tallahassee with friends on the "Game Bus" – a rehabbed Garnet and Gold school bus complete with a Designated Driver and outfitted to meet every Tailgater's desires. They partied with the best, ate fabulous food, visited with other Nole fans and after the game, the celebration would

continue into the early morning hours as they waited for the traffic to ease around Doak Campbell Stadium, prior to starting their trek back to Panacea and Ochlockonee Bay – and until it was time to do it again!

An avid golfer, Steve was a fierce competitor who also used his love of the game for the betterment of others. After the passing of Wakulla resident Houston Taff, a former FSU baseball star, Steve started the first "Houston Taff Memorial Golf Tournament," an event held locally and organized to raise funds to create a FSU scholarship for a deserving Wakulla student in Taff's honor. He loved Board Games, was a very skilled and competitive Rummikube player, and was always ready to sit for a game – especially since he won a lot!

There are no words to definitively assess the impact that Steve has had on his family, friends, co-workers, peers. Even living with a progressive, debilitating disease, Steve lived his life with courage and promise, always filled with hope for the future. A private family memorial was held at the Brown Residence, on Saturday, Dec. 21. A Celebration of Steve's life is being planned for Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2025, with details to follow.

Anyone wishing to honor Steve with a Memorial donation may make checks payable as follows: Florida State Athletics, c/o FSU Seminole Boosters Inc., P.O. Box 1353, Tallahassee, FL 32302 or Phone: 850-644-3484.

Neptune Society of Florida has been assisting the family with their arrangements.

DEATH NOTICES

• **Joanne W. Dodson**, 91, of Crawfordville, died December 19, 2024.

• **Mason Lee McKenzie**, 27, of Crawfordville, died December 16, 2024.

• **Pamela Ann Rose**, 57, of Crawfordville, died

December 8, 2024.

Family Funeral Home at Harvey Young Chapel. 850-926-5919 Familyfhc.com.

Weekly Roundup: Sunset for Dreamers?

By **JIM SAUNDERS**
News Service of Florida

TALLAHASSEE – As President-elect Donald Trump prepares to return to the White House, one of the most closely watched issues will be his vow to crack down on undocumented immigrants.

And in Florida, it looks like a debate is re-emerging about whether undocumented immigrant students should be able to receive in-state tuition rates at universities and colleges.

Senate President Ben Albritton, R-Wauchula, this week suggested phasing out a decade-old law that allows some undocumented immigrant students, known as "dreamers," to get the tuition benefit.

Albritton addressed the issue after Sen. Randy Fine, R-Brevard County, filed a bill (SB 90) that would repeal the law. Albritton suggested a gradual approach that would take into account students who already receive the benefit or who are making plans to attend colleges or universities at the cheaper in-state rates.

While he did not propose a timeline for phasing out the law, Albritton suggested putting a "sunset" on it — a legislative term that usually involves setting a future date to end a law or program.

"If you're not going to have access to it at some point, whatever that number of months or years may be ... you won't plan on it," Albritton told reporters. "If you and your family have built the idea of going to college around this, and you built your budget around it, a sunset would make sense to me."

Lawmakers and then-Gov. Rick Scott in 2014 approved the law, which allows undocumented immigrant students to avoid higher out-of-state tuition rates if they meet certain criteria. The students need to have attended a secondary school in Florida for three consecutive years immediately before graduating from high school and must apply to a college or university within two years of graduation.

Fine, who is running in a special election for a congressional seat, filed

his repeal bill Dec. 6, contending Florida is offering a "better deal" to undocumented immigrants than to students from other parts of the U.S.

But issues related to dreamers have long been politically sensitive, as they involve children who are brought to the U.S. and then successfully make their way through Florida's education system. The 2014 law was a priority of then-House Speaker Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, and was sponsored by then-Rep. Jeanette Nunez, a Miami Republican who is now lieutenant governor.

TOUTING TRUMP

No teeth-gnashing about losing to a Democrat. No allegations of election wrongdoing.

When Florida's 30 Republican presidential electors gathered Tuesday, all was copacetic. They could cast their votes for Trump safe in the knowledge that he will be inaugurated on Jan. 20.

"There was a lot of frustration four years ago when we were not on

the side of victory," Republican Party of Florida Chairman Evan Power said. "A lot of frustration with the election and the process. Now, people are just relieved that the four-year nightmare of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris is over. And we're going to put the president (Trump) back in office."

Florida's electors also cast ballots for Trump in 2020, but he lost the national count to Biden. The Florida electors gathered Tuesday on the same day that electors held similar meetings across the country to give Trump and Vice President-elect JD Vance more than the 270 electoral votes they needed to defeat Harris, the vice president who became this year's Democratic presidential candidate.

Trump won Florida's 30 electoral votes by beating Harris by more than 13 percentage points in the state.

BIG AND GETTING BIGGER

Growing faster than almost any other state, Florida's estimated population topped 23.3 mil-

lion people this year, according to data released Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The Census Bureau estimated that Florida had 23,372,215 people as of July 1, up from 22,904,868 a year earlier. Florida's increase of 467,347 people was second only to Texas, which gained 562,941.

Also, Florida's 2 percent growth rate trailed only the District of Columbia, which had a 2.2 percent rate, according to the Census Bureau. Texas and Utah each had 1.8 percent growth rates.

Florida's growth reflected two key issues in the Census Bureau data: international migration and population increases in the South.

"The largest contributing component to this

growth was international migration, which added 1.1 million people," the Census Bureau said. "Domestic migration netted another 411,004 residents. The South was the only region with positive net domestic migration, where the number of people entering the region exceeded those leaving. Natural increase also contributed 218,567 to the growing region."

QUOTE OF THE WEEK: "The Constitution does not mandate comfortable prisons." — Attorneys for state corrections officials in a motion to dismiss a lawsuit alleging Florida has violated inmates' rights because of hot conditions at Dade Correctional Institution.

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UNDER THE WEATHER WORD SEARCH

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

WORDS

- ARTHRITIS
- BACTERIA
- COMMON COLD
- COVID
- DISEASE
- E-COLI
- FUNGAL
- HEPATITIS
- HOOKWORMS
- ILLNESS
- INFECTIOUS
- INFLUENZA
- MIGRAINE
- PAIN
- PARASITE
- PERTUSSIS
- SALMONELLA
- STOMACH BUG
- STREP THROAT
- THRUSH
- TOXOPLASMOSIS
- TRANSMISSIBLE
- TUBERCULOSIS
- VIRUS

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

CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

1. Miller beer variety
4. Member of people inhabiting Bering Sea islands
9. Stomach
14. Investment vehicle
15. Fictional soccer coach Ted
16. Irregular in botanical parlance
17. Cease standing
18. "American Horror Story" actress
20. Grow milk teeth
22. Plant parts
23. Snow house
24. Most contemptuous
28. Note to repay
29. Old English
30. Wings
31. Financial institutions
33. Parks and Lopez are two
37. Mr. T's "The A-Team" character
38. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
39. Give off
41. Semitic alphabet letter
42. Farm state
43. Actress Sarandon
44. Back parts

46. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
49. Touchdown
50. One point north of due east
51. Refurbishes
55. Silver and Dogg are two
58. Former Tigers catcher Alex
59. Type of envelope
60. Seriously considered
64. Unhappy
65. Past (archaic)
66. Asian wild dog
67. Old English letter
68. Young domestic sheep
69. Football players need to gain them
70. Witness

CLUES DOWN

1. Dormant Peruvian volcano
2. Norwegian composer
3. Indicates location
4. Pubs
5. Unable to walk easily
6. Electronic warfare-support measures
7. World leader
8. Midsection
9. Jewish calendar month

10. Urological condition
11. A small quantity of anything
12. Mountain Time
13. Affirmative
19. Word element meaning ear
21. Carried away
24. Short-billed rails
25. Newborn child
26. Sword
27. Groups of people
31. Prickly, scrambling shrubs
32. Become less intense
34. Polishes
35. Indicates position
36. Songs sung to one's beloved
40. The 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
41. Insects
45. Israeli politician
47. Pre-digital
48. Roaming
52. Ambience
53. Brew
54. Late
56. Make ecstatically happy
57. Semitic alphabet letter
59. Blend
60. Dash
61. Self
62. Exclamation of satisfaction
63. Hill or rocky peak

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42				43						44	45			
46		47	48				49			50				
51				52	53	54				55			56	57
		58								59				
60	61						62	63						64
65					66								67	
68					69								70	

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to cold and flu.

V S E I R S U

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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

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

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!
Here's How It Works: Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

GUESS WHO?

I am a comedic actor born in Canada on December 17, 1946. In high school I used humorous campaign posters to win the student council race. I've worked alongside fellow Canadians and am known for my thick eyebrows and glasses. My most iconic role was as an awkward dad in a movie about teenagers and virginity.

Answer: Viruses
 Answer: Eugene Levy

O	I	Z	N	S	I	S	O	S	L	O	C	R	E	R	E	F	G	M
S	C	O	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C	X	H	H	A	V	A	Z	L	I	O	M	P	G	N	S	X	H	L
T	I	C	I	D	B	H	C	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
O	M	A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C	C	M	K	H	V	A	L	O	S	T	L	R	A	V	A	X	X	A
C	H	X	H	O	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
H	H	X	H	O	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
L	O	I	O	V	S	N	S	Z	X	X	R	I	I	C	L	Z	H	T
V	A	H	B	O	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
O	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N	S	S	V	L	F	H	P	T	D	Z	D	C	R	N	G	E	T	L
C	S	S	V	L	F	H	P	T	D	Z	D	C	R	N	G	E	T	L
A	S	S	V	L	F	H	P	T	D	Z	D	C	R	N	G	E	T	L
F	S	P	H	C	H	I	M	H	A	V	A	Z	L	I	O	M	P	G

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WRESTLING

Wakulla defeats Godby

By **WALT JACOBS**
Correspondent

In consecutive weeks, the War Eagles have faced an opponent from their district. This time around, the Godby Cougars came to town for a midweek dual meet on Dec. 18th.

Coach Nate Litowsky's War Eagles have been red hot lately, going 11-1 in dual meets so far this season. It became apparent pretty early that Godby's fledgling program was out of its depth against the War Eagles. The hopelessly undermanned Cougars surrendered 30 points through forfeits, consequently creating a deficit that would make it difficult for them to overcome.

Godby Coach Jake Buckallew's young team had mounds of moxie, but were overmatched in every aspect by Wakulla's more skilled and seasoned team.

Caleb Thompson got the War Eagles off to a good start with a first period pin over Godby's Davon Dorsey. Subsequently, Wakulla picked up pins from Nate Jacobs, Aaron Robinson, Gavin Mitchell, Wyatt Brown, Blake Barodte, Mason Blair, and Brayden Hodges. At 175 pounds, Cole Manning won by technical fall. The final score for the contest was Wakulla 83, Godby 0.

132 Caleb Thomp-



Kendal Haynie pinning Hannah Lindsey of Vancleave.

son (Wakulla) won by fall over Davon Dorsey (Godby)

138 Colt Sanders (Wakulla) won by forfeit over unknown (Godby)

144 Troy Thaxton (Wakulla) won by forfeit over unknown (Godby)

150 Nate Jacobs (Wakulla) won by fall over Chris Woodard (Godby)

157 Aaron Robinson (Wakulla) won by fall over Raven Warren (Godby)

165 Gavin Mitchell (Wakulla) won by fall over Isaiah McMillan (Godby)

175 Cole Manning (Wakulla) won by technical fall over Hosea Rolle (Godby)

190 Wyatt Brown (Wakulla) won by fall

over Troy Coleman (Godby)

215 Blake Barodte (Wakulla) won by fall over Jadin Rolle (Godby)

285 Mason Blair (Wakulla) won by fall over Gedalyah Fletcher (Godby)

106 Brayden Hodges (Wakulla) won by fall over Steven Brinson (Godby)

113 Kyle Manzi (Wakulla) won by forfeit over unknown (Godby)

120 Matthew Thaxton (Wakulla) won by forfeit over unknown (Godby)

126 William Harvey (Wakulla) won by forfeit over unknown (Godby)

2024 KNOCKOUT CHRISTMAS CLASSIC

On Dec. 19th, the Wakulla boys and girls wrestling teams traveled to Kissimmee to compete in the Knockout Christmas Classic. Teams from all over the south and from as far as Oklahoma and Virginia were present for the prestigious and highly competitive tournament. There were 638 participants in the boys tournament and 301 girls competed in the girls tournament. State

and Nationally ranked wrestlers with state and national championships attached to their resumes were in attendance and in abundance.

The two-day event is held annually at the Silver Spurs arena in Kissimmee which is the same venue where the FHSAA State Championships are held. For those unaccustomed to it, the bright lights, the grand stage and the fierce competition can be overwhelming.

The boys knew going into the tournament that it would be difficult, but some things have to be experienced and this tournament was no different. As far as wins go, 7 of the 11 Wakulla wrestlers who competed came away with wins. Aaron Robinson and William Harvey went 3-2 in their respective matches on the weekend. Worthy of note, Nate Jacobs, in his sole win of the tournament, majored 8th ranked Titus deYoung from Merritt Island.

When asked how was the tournament beneficial in accomplishing the team's long term goals? Coach Nate Li-

towsky replied, "It gave us the opportunity to compete against some of the best wrestlers around. To raise the bar for our team, we have to expose ourselves to this level of competition and see firsthand what it takes to succeed at the highest level. It's not just about the wins and losses – it's about learning, growing, and understanding that to be the best, we have to consistently wrestle at this caliber."

On the girls side, Kendal Haynie put on another dynamic display of wrestling. She began by pinning Buchholz's Cassidy Kephart in 2:23.

In the quarterfinals, Kendal registered a 44 second pin over Hannah Lindsay of Vancleave High School. In the semifinals, Kendal faced Flagler Palm Coast's top-ranked Mariah Mills for the third time this year. The match ended mid-way through the final period with a technical fall in favor of Mills. Although Kendal came up short, her performance in this match would have to be seen to be fully appreciated.

Kendal's athleticism, her relentless determination, and unyielding fighting spirit were something to behold. In the consolation semifinals, Kendal faced 5th ranked Natalia Choquegonza from Ponte Vedra. Haynie led 6-2, but after a reversal

by Choquegonza with 10 seconds left in the second period, Kendal's lead was cut to 2. Haynie added 4 more nearfall points midway through the third and a penalty point to bring the final score to 11-4.

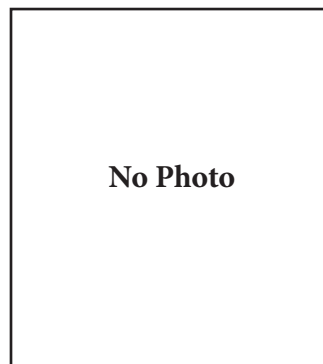
In the consolation finals, Kendal faced No. 2 ranked Keana Bush. Haynie scored the first takedown in the match with just 7 seconds left in the first period. Midway through the second period Haynie extended her lead with 4 nearfall points making the score 7-0. Bush responded with a 2 point reversal with 30 seconds remaining in the second. Haynie had a commanding 7-2 lead going into the 3rd, however, Bush chose to begin from neutral and made things interesting when she secured a takedown with a 1:22 remaining in the match making the score 7-5 at this juncture. With only 4 seconds remaining Kendal scored a reversal of her own to extend her lead and bring the final score to 9-5 and claim 3rd place in the tournament.

Next the War Eagles will host the FHSAA District Duals at Wakulla High School on Monday, Dec. 30th. Wakulla, Suwannee, Florida High, Godby, Liberty County, and Marianna will compete to see who advances to the next round of the Dual State Championship.

WRESTLER of the WEEK



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WRESTLER of the WEEK



LI WONG

The wrestler of the week isn't just about winning big tournaments or beating ranked opponents. It's about embodying the heart of a War Eagle. This week Li Wong showed exactly that. Despite a language barrier with his coaches and being new to wrestling, Li fought through a 7-0 deficit, wrestled three periods, and came back to pin his opponent. That kind of heart, determination, and refusal to give up is what this award is about. Well done Li.

-Coach Nate Litowsky



William Harvey's hand raised in victory.

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-Coach Nate Litowsky



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