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Ethel Skipper

Pastor, matriarch, and newspaper's Buckhorn community correspondent

By **LINDA ANN McDONALD**
 Correspondent

"They called me Mother Skipper," says Ethel Skipper when she reminisced about the several generations of children in her Buckhorn community.

Skipper has made such an impact in her community of Buckhorn where she was born and raised, she is often cited as Buckhorn's matriarch. Impacting lives positively is Ethel's practice.

Impacting lives does not stop at the Buckhorn boundaries in Sopchoppy, Ethel Skipper actively impacts lives by pastoring at her church and also impacts the readers of her Buckhorn Community News column in The Wakulla Sun newspaper for over 40 years and still going.



Ethel Skipper

Turn to Page 7

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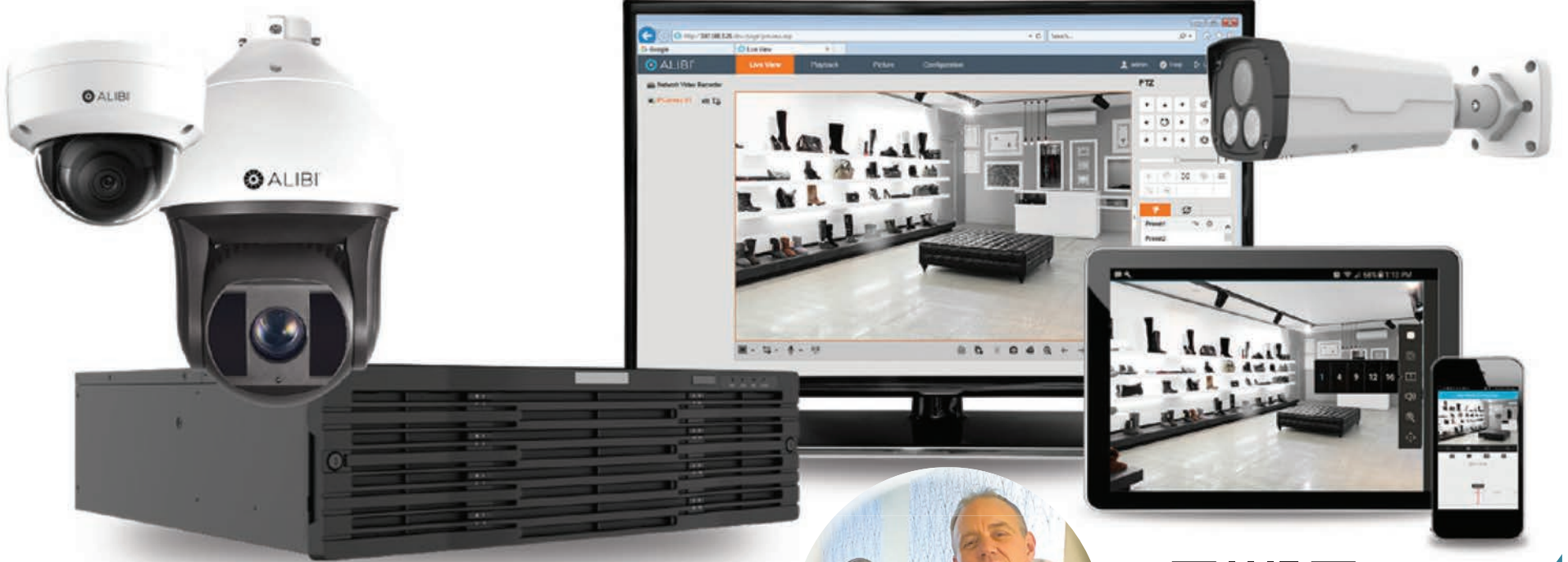
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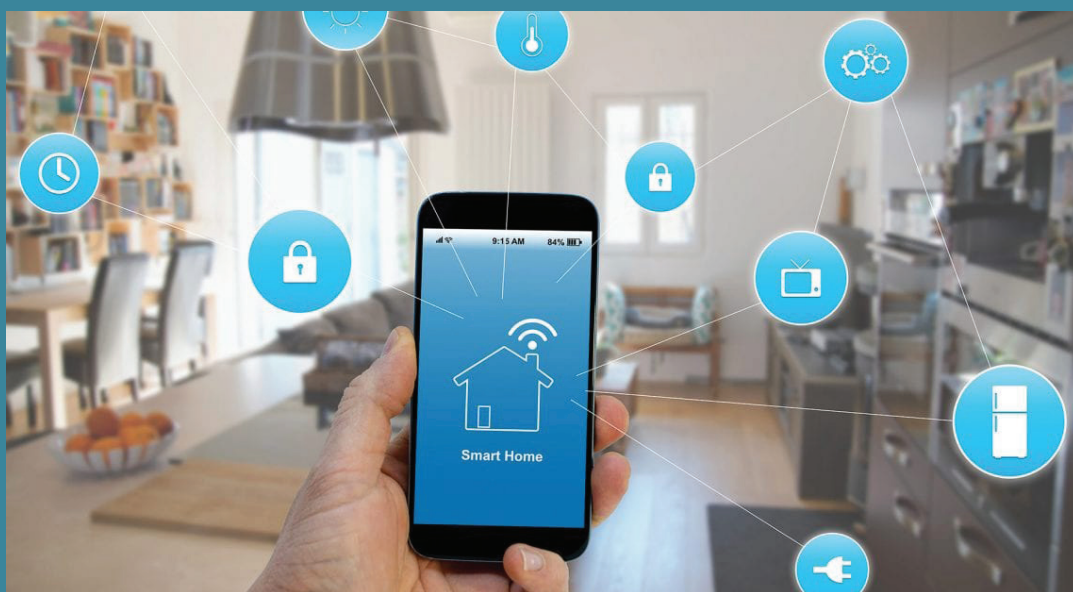
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The Old Pro: Lousy weather



By **AL HARTMAN**
The Old Pro

The turkey season ended April 21. I thought last year was bad. This season hasn't been much better.

I've talked to a lot of hunters and most are saying it has been sparse this year. Our turkey population has been troubled by predators and development issues.

I understand controlled burning is necessary for our forest health, but burning during turkey egg laying time isn't good for the turkey population increase.

The fishing should be in full swing, but the weather has been working against us. Heavy rain and

windy conditions have made for some rough times on the water.

I've seen two days in the last two weeks that amounted to seven to eight inches. The wind has been blowing heavy almost every day for a month.

If you have a bigger boat it is not too bad, but most of us with boats less than 25 feet have rough a ride in choppy waters.

The seatrout and redfish should be working the flats and shallow waters gobbling minnows and small crabs, but getting to catch them hasn't been ideal to

say the least.

Grouper, seabass and other reef fish are going to be moving to deeper waters as the water temperatures will be rising and they prefer cooler waters.

But right now it is not perfect conditions for smaller boats.

And don't forget to wear a life vest and to hook up your motor shut off line when navigating all the time no matter the weather conditions.

Well happy fishing when you can get out!

Al Hartman can be contacted at redmanldpg@aol.com.



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Good mental health is part of good overall wellness. People experiencing mental illness need support, not isolation.

May is for Mental Health Awareness



By **SAMANTHA KENNEDY**
 Extension Director

In an era where mental health is increasingly acknowledged as a critical aspect of overall well-being, access to resources during times of crisis can be the difference between despair and hope. Whether grappling with anxiety, depression, or any other mental health challenge, individuals need support systems tailored to their needs. Recognizing this, a variety of resources has emerged, providing vital assistance and guidance to those in distress.

At the forefront of mental health crisis intervention are hotlines and helplines, offering immediate support to individuals in distress. Organizations like the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provide confidential counseling and intervention services 24/7, ensuring that help is always within reach. These services offer a lifeline for individuals facing overwhelming emotional turmoil, connecting them with trained pro-

professionals who can provide empathy, guidance, and resources for further assistance. To reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, call or text 988.

The digital age has also brought forth a wealth of online communities and support groups where individuals can find solace and solidarity in shared experiences. A variety of online forums, platforms, and social media groups offer spaces for individuals to seek advice, share coping strategies, and connect with others who understand their struggles. These communities foster a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation, reminding individuals that they are not alone in their journey toward mental wellness. Reputable support groups can be found through organizations such as the Anxiety & Depression Association of America (ADAA), the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the Mental Health America (MHA).

With the rise of digital technology, therapeutic apps and online counseling services have become increasingly popular avenues for mental health support. A variety of different apps offer convenient access to licensed therapists, counseling sessions, coping tools, and mindfulness exercises from the comfort of

one's home. These platforms prioritize accessibility and affordability, breaking down barriers to mental health care and reaching individuals who may otherwise struggle to access traditional therapy. Not all "wellness" apps are created equal. Performing due diligence and getting recommendations from trusted medical professionals before using an app is highly encouraged.

Within communities, local crisis intervention centers play a pivotal role in providing immediate support and resources to individuals in distress. These centers offer a range of services, including crisis counseling, psychiatric evaluations, and referrals to additional mental health resources. Staffed by trained professionals, crisis intervention centers serve as safe havens for individuals experiencing acute mental health crises, offering compassionate care and practical solutions to alleviate distress. Some local crisis intervention centers include The Apalachee Center and NAMI.

Empowering individuals to take control of their mental health, educational resources and self-help tools offer valuable insights and strategies for coping with crisis situations. Books,

articles, podcasts, and online courses provide information on understanding mental health disorders, developing resilience, and practicing self-care techniques. Additionally, crisis intervention toolkits and safety plans equip individuals with practical steps to manage crisis situations and seek appropriate support when needed.

In the face of a mental health crisis, access to timely and effective resources is very important. Whether through hotlines, online communities, local centers, or educational materials, individuals grappling with mental health challenges can find the support they need to navigate through turbulent times. By embracing these resources and reaching out for help, individuals can embark on a journey toward healing, resilience, and renewed hope. As society continues to prioritize mental health awareness and support, these resources serve as beacons of light, guiding individuals through the darkest of moments toward brighter tomorrows.

For more information about mental health support resources, please call Samantha Kennedy at (850) 926-3931.



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Senior Center's food distribution efforts draw attention

By CHRIS RUSSELL

Hello Wakulla Neighbors:

Spring has sprung and the wildflowers in Wakulla County are in full bloom.

Just like our favorite pollinators, the Wakulla Senior Center Team has been busy as a bee ensuring that our local seniors have an outstanding facility whereby they can stay active, keep their mental acuity in top-notch shape, spend time interacting with other seniors, and enjoy a great hot-meal during the week.

Like many rewarding professions, the Senior Center staff didn't seek their jobs for the money, rather for the love of their community and especially those senior citizens that call Wakulla County home.

During the first three months of the year, the Senior Center Team

provided close to 3,000 hot meals to our local seniors at the center and over 800 additional meals to home-bound seniors via the Meals on Wheels Program.

Additionally, during this timeframe, the Senior Center was able to partner with Wakulla Giving Hands to incorporate a weekly food distribution whereby seniors get fruits, vegetables, meats, canned goods, and goodies. The success of this partnership caught the eyes of the Governor's Office and First Lady Casey DeSantis recently participated in one of the food-sharing events held at the Senior Center.

Kudos to Wakulla Giving Hands for your willingness to partner with the Senior Center to help ensure our seniors are adequately nourished!

While the Senior Center offers multiple



First Lady Casey DeSantis at the senior center with Wakulla Giving Hands in April.

activities and services to our local seniors, one of the primary focuses of the Center is to ensure that our seniors have at least one hot meal available to them Monday through Friday.

Naturally, this undertaking is quite ex-

pensive and is the reason the Senior Center initiated the Adopt-A-Senior Lunch Program where donors can sponsor the lunch costs for a senior.

These sponsorships range from weekly to monthly sponsorships, as well as one-time do-

nations.

Additionally, proceeds from the annual Christmas in July go to support the Senior Center lunch programs.

And....speaking of Christmas in July, the Senior Center will hold its 27th Annual Christ-

mas in July on July 26th at the Wakulla Springs Lodge. This year the team will be incorporating a Murder Mystery into the event which will be produced by a professional theatrical company.

Corporate and Table Sponsorships for Christmas in July are currently available. If you'd like more information on the Christmas in July event or the Senior Center's Adopt A Senior Lunch Program, please contact the team at (850) 926-7145.

I hope you have a spectacular May and to all of the Mothers, Grandmothers, and Women who have taken on the role of being a Mother to a child that they did not birth, have a wonderful Mother's Day!

Chris Russell is a Board Member of Wakulla Senior Center Council.

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Perseverance in real life



By GREG GAST

What is perseverance anyway?

It is a light lit by determination. It creates depth and resilience in a person. It is what one does continually despite

failures, difficulties, or opposition. It is an essential part of everyday life whether it is overcoming personal setbacks, mastering a skill, or pursuing a dream. Its result is progress and resilience in life.

So how do you cultivate perseverance? How do you stay the course when things are falling apart?

Sometimes that is just what you have to do.

Remember that even though you cannot always stay

hopeful under duress there are ways to stay motivated.

1. Set clear goals: By defining your path and then breaking it down into smaller steps inch by inch, day by day, till you are successfully there.

2. Embrace the challenge: When hurdles show up face them do not shy away. Face them head-on, no matter what happens. This is where perseverance grows.

3. Learn from fail-

ure: This is the purpose of failure and suffering. To learn from it is not defeat. Wisdom is gained. Failures carve resilience into your soul.

4. Stay positive: Perseverance thrives where hope is transcendent. Cultivate optimism. It's not the end of the world, til the end of the world,

5. Seek support: Lean on friends, family, or a mentor. With their encouragement it will nurture your spirit and

help keep it calm under fire.

6. Practice patience: It's a process with a beginning, middle and end. Trust the process, don't rush to any conclusions to fast.

7. Celebrate your progress: Each step you take no matter how slight is a win. Acknowledge each and every one. It will fuel and sustain your efforts to fight on.

Remember perseverance is a flame lit by determination.

It is essential in our everyday lives.

Let me know what you think...

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

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Three colorful snakes – which is which?



By **ERIK LOVSTRAND**

Many lifelong Wakulla County residents may have never seen ANY of our three species of snakes that sport red, black and yellow (or whitish) bands of color.

All three are primarily nocturnal, fossorial (burrowers), and spend a good bit of their time hiding under forest debris or inside rotting stumps and logs. Two of the three are non-venomous, while the third has a very potent venom. However, to be envenomated by an Eastern coral snake (*Micrurus fulvius*), someone would prob-

ably be attempting to catch or kill the animal, getting their bare hands in close proximity to the snake, while demonstrating bad intentions from the snake's point of view.

According to the American College of Emergency Physicians toxicology information, coral snakes account for only 0.3 to 0.6% of snakebites annually in the United States. The first documented death from an Eastern coral snake bite in over 40 years happened in 2006 in Lee County, Florida.

As reported in the journal *Toxicon* (Vol. 43, Issue 6), a 38-year-old male, drinking with some friends in a wooded area tried to cut and stab a coral snake with a broken beer bottle and was bitten at least once, possibly more times. He did not seek medical help (Nuff said). I have only seen one



This beautiful Scarlet Kingsnake is one of our three red-black-yellow banded snakes in the region.

coral snake in Wakulla County so far and it was in the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. It had been run over and was dead on Purify Bay Road.

The other two local species with similar markings to the Eastern coral snake are the scarlet kingsnake (*Lampropeltis elapsoides*) and the scarlet snake (*Cemophora coccinea*). All three

of our tri-colored snakes will consume other snakes and lizards and likely frogs but the scarlet snake feeds primarily on eggs of other reptiles.

Now, for a discussion regarding some key identification features. Do not depend on the popular rhyme: "Red touch yellow, kill a fellow/Red touch black, friend to Jack," because it is easy to

mix this up and say it backwards – i.e. Red touch black, kill Jack/Red touch yellow, friend to fellow. If you have not yet learned the individual traits that separate all U.S. coral snake species from the non-venomous mimics, think about a traffic light. A yellow light means caution, next comes a red light which means STOP. When you see

yellow bands next to red bands, it is a coral snake (in the U.S., but not necessarily true in other countries).

The two mimics we have here will always have yellow bands bordered by black bands.

Another key feature for the Eastern coral snake is the black nose. Both of our mimics have red noses.

To separate the two mimics, scarlet kingsnake bands go all the way around the body but the scarlet snake's bands are broken by a white belly. Be sure to think about the traffic light before you try to turn one of these snakes over to check for a white belly though.

Erik Lovstrand is a UF/IFAS regional Sea Grant agent in Wakulla, Franklin and Gulf counties.

Ethel Skipper

From Front Page

Ethel Skipper is best known for her role as Pastor at the Skipper Temple Church in Buckhorn off Surf Road.

"The Lord led my husband and I back to Sopchoppy after being a previous member of the Church of Christ in Carrabelle, I have been Head Pastor at Skipper Temple Church since 2007, 17 years now."

Ethel has been married to her husband Willie for 71 years; they were married when she was 17 years old. Willie Skipper is now 96 years old. "He still helps me wash dishes and he does not miss a Sunday School class at church, he still reads the lessons," Ethel shares.

Ethel also worked for Angelo's Seafood restaurant when she was 17.

"I washed dishes, cooked, fixed salads, you name it," she says. "I worked for George Petrandis, I called him 'Greek.'"

Angelo's is renowned for sharing the family's tradition of Greek cuisine and serving unforgettable traditional Greek salads and seafood with a Greek flair.

"I graduated from Shadeville High School but went to Buckhorn first. They say they have no records for

the schools back then, I hope they find them soon," she says. "I have a report card to show I went there."

Impacting the children of Buckhorn is what Ethel Skipper is known for. Getting through to the children was carried out by either discipline or a Sunday School lesson.

"I was the neighborhood mother at the church," she says. "There were a lot of children, there were some I had to spend extra time with, some that would act out just to get attention, I could identify who needed what and with a little extra love or candy, I was able to reach them."

"As for discipline," she says, "I could usually get through by the way I looked at the children or by the way I talked, but sometimes it took more. I remember the kids, I remember Spencer Fleming as a child, he wouldn't sit down, I would yell, 'Y'all sit down!' and then I had to give him a spank or two or three. Nowadays, you can't do that, and that is what is wrong with the kids today."

"I have so many of the kids in my life, I get calls to be their godparent all the time because godparenting gives me the opportunity to show how you should train

the children up," she says.

"When I taught Sunday School they would see a lot of me, and I feel special that I could touch young people's lives. At home is the place where the discipline needs to happen, it is up to us older generation to put it on the parents to DO IT NOW, while they are young, and they may not get it right away, but at home is where this needs to happen."

"You got to introduce them to the Lord, you have to make sure you instill that in them, at 2 years old they can recognize the Lord," she says, adding with a laugh: "I feel really special because the kids I disciplined, they still call me every holiday even after they are all grown up."

Since at least 1978, Ethel has been writing the column on Buckhorn Community News.

"Writing the Buckhorn Community News for the local newspaper is what keeps my brain active and exercised, ya know, and keeps the dementia away," she says with a smile. "My favorite part of writing is when I feel like I can say something, someone will read it and it inspires me in hopes I can impact someone positively, I also like to throw a Bible verse in the newspaper articles every now and then, I like the verse about

'Love one another as I have loved you.' Jesus brings you joy when you live for the Lord," she says. "I get more enjoyment out of meditating on how I can help someone or encourage someone and I hope to do that in my newspaper articles."

"Writing the Buckhorn Community News is about what I enjoy doing. I love to get my word out to the community; it is very interesting. After over 40 years of writing, from reading the articles, you would know what was going on in the community, be it birthdays, new births,

sometimes I had I had to stop myself because folks did not want me to tell their age.

"The articles talked about people's out of town traveling, but I had to wait until they got back from traveling to write because no one would want to let others know they were out of town and not home so no one would take their mail. I also knew not to spell people's names wrong. I always let people approach me with their 'news' so I avoided putting their 'news' in the news until they approached me.

"I heard from the

community that there is only one person to write for Buckhorn and that's Ethel Skipper!"

"There was a time when I almost gave the writing up, I told Mr. (William) Snowden, the editor, I can't type, but Mr. Snowden was appreciative and said, if you write it, I'll type it, just call me and let me know."

She finished by saying: "How you make someone feel, it is precious, it never goes away, and it could be either good or bad, I strive to make people feel good."

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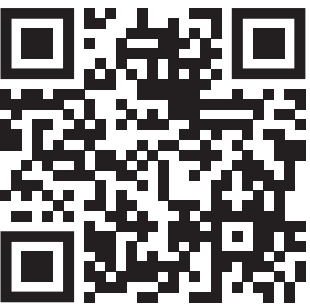
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On the Horizon

The calendar of events for May

Wednesday, May 1

- Muffins with Moms Prenatal Support Group meets at 9 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 10 a.m. at the Wakulla County Health Department. Contact Liz Neighbors at 850-888-6078 or elizabeth.neighbors@flhealth.gov for more information.
- A line dance class is held at 1 p.m. at the Wakulla Senior Center every Wednesday.
- Wakulla County Coalition for Youth meets at 12:30 p.m. at the health department.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and 6:30 p.m. every Wednesday at 54 Ochlockonee St.
- Gentle Yoga and Stetching Class, every Wednesday, 11 a.m. Wakulla Community Center. Bring a mat. Come early to sign in. Chair Yoga participants welcome. \$2 per class.

Thursday, May 2

- Wakulla High School Presents Anything Goes at 6:30 p.m. at Wakulla High.
- 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.
- The Rotary Club of Wakulla County meets at the TCC Wakulla Center at 8:30 a.m. every Thursday.
- Yin Yoga at 9:30 a.m. and 6

p.m. with Zoe every Thursday. Classes are \$12, at New Posh on 3079 Crawfordville Hwy. RSVP to newposh3079@gmail.com or text/call at (850) 528-5838.

- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m. every Thursday at 54 Ochlockonee St.
- The fifth Windows 10 training class will be held at the Wakulla County Public Library from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

Friday, May 3

- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and 8 p.m. every Friday at 54 Ochlockonees St.
- Wakulla High School Presents Anything Goes at 6:30 p.m. at Wakulla High.

Saturday, May 4

- Night of Joy, a Prom event for the special needs community of Wakulla, will be held at The Lodge at Wakulla Springs from 5 to 8 p.m.
- Wakulla High School Presents Anything Goes at 6:30 p.m. at Wakulla High.
- A bike helmet fitting and giveaway hosted by the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners will be held at Hudson Park.
- Star Wars Day in the Library will be held at the Wakulla

County Public Library will be held from 2 to 4 p.m.

- Kids Fishing Rodeo will be held in Woolley Park in Panacea from 12 noon to 3 p.m.
- Classic Customs 3rd Annual Car Show will be held at 56 Jer-Be-Lou Blvd. in Panacea starting at 10 a.m.
- A Community Shred event will be held at the Wakulla Community Center from 8 a.m. to 12 noon.
- The Panacea Community Garden Farmer's Market will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 noon in Panacea.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m. every Saturday at 54 Ochlockonee St.
- The Wakulla Caregiver Support Group will meet at the Wakulla County Public Library at 10 a.m. every Saturday.

Sunday, May 5

- CINCO DE MAYO (or, as it's celebrated locally, "Sink-hole de Mayo")
- Wakulla High School Presents Anything Goes at 2:30 p.m. at Wakulla High.

Monday, May 6

- The Wakulla County Commission meets at 5 p.m. in the commission chambers.
- The Wakulla Respite Program is available for anyone with memory impairment at

no cost from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Lake Ellen Baptist Church every Monday.

- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. every Monday at the American Legion, 54 Ochlockonee St.
- Restorative yoga at 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. with Zoe, every Monday at New Posh, 3079 Crawfordville Hwy. RSVP to newposh3079@gmail.com or text/call at (850) 528-5838.
- Gentle Yoga and Stetching Class, every Monday, 11 a.m. Wakulla Community Center. Bring a mat. Come early to sign in. Chair Yoga participants welcome. \$2 per class.

Tuesday, May 7

- 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 the American Legion, 54 Ochlockonee St.
- Flow Yoga at 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. with Nellie, every Tuesday at New Posh, 3079 Crawfordville Hwy. RSVP to newposh3079@gmail.com or text/call at (850) 528-5838.

Thursday, May 9

- St. Marks City Commission meets at the St. Marks City Hall at 6 p.m.
- The Wakulla County Cancer Support Group meets in

the Education Center of the Crawfordville United Methodist Church at 7 p.m. This group meeting is for men and women, regardless of the type of cancer. Spouses, caregivers, and friends are welcome. For more information, call 850-926-6050.

- The first "Get to know your iPhone" tech class will be held at the Wakulla County Public Library from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

Saturday, May 11

- Florida Wild Mammal Association is holding their Meet the Critters event in Hudson Park from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- The Sopchoppy Community Market will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Sopchoppy Depot Park

Sunday, May 12

- MOTHER'S DAY

Monday, May 13

- The Sopchoppy City Commission meets at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.
- Crawfordville Woman's Club monthly meeting is the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at 64 Ochlockonee St., in Crawfordville. Call (850)566-5727 for more information.
- The Wakulla County School

Board meets in the school administration building at 5:45 p.m.

- The American Legion Post 114 will be meeting at the Wakulla County Public Library at 6:30 p.m.

Friday, May 17

- Wakulla High School Graduation at Wakulla High at 8 p.m.
- Artulla, a weekend art event benefiting the Friends of Wakulla Springs, starts at the Lodge at Wakulla Springs. Further details and RSVP at thelodgetatwakullasprings.com.

Monday, May 20

- The Wakulla County Commission meets at 5 p.m. in the commission chambers.

Saturday, May 25

- St. Marks hosts a community market every fourth Saturday of the month at 815 Leon Port Drive from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.
- The Sopchoppy Opry will perform at 7 p.m. at the old Sopchoppy High School auditorium at 164 Yellow Jacket Avenue.

Monday, May 27

- MEMORIAL DAY.

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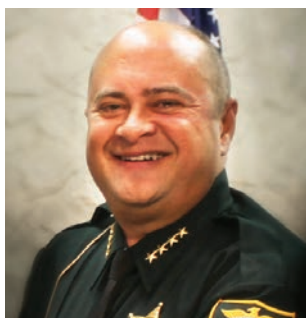


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Sheriff's office is holding a golf tournament in June



By **JARED MILLER**
Wakulla Sheriff

When I took office in 2017, I aimed to make one of the focal points of my administration our wonderful community and ways that the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office can improve it.

As part of that goal the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office tries to be as active a community partner as possible

to Wakulla's many civic, student, and charity groups throughout the year.

One of the main needs of these groups is financial support, which WCSO can provide with the proceeds from our charity golf tournament.

I'd like to take some time this month to talk about the annual Wakulla County Sheriff's Office Golf Tournament and the programs that this event is used to support.

WCSO's charity golf tournament has been an annual occurrence for over 15 years.

This year's event will be held on June 28th 2024 and will be held at the Southwood Golf Club.

(Next year we are looking forward to being able to hold the tournament once again in Wakulla County at the county golf course, Wakulla Sands.)

We are one of the few tournaments around that offer two flights of prizes for players, so even if you are not in the top three finishers your team still could walk away with some amazing prizes.

Aside from a great day of golf and the

opportunity to win awesome prizes, we also offer a variety of raffles the day of the tournament as well that players can participate in.

However, it should be mentioned that the amount of fun and entertainment that players have on the day of the tournament pales in comparison with the amount of good the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office is able to do with the proceeds raised because of it.

The money raised from our golf tournament is used to help fund events like Project Graduation for Wakulla

County's graduating seniors and the annual Christmas in the Park celebration.

Anytime we get a request to sponsor a youth sports team, send a kid to summer camp, or assist with great organizations such as the Senior Center or Special Olympics, all of those funds come from the proceeds from this golf tournament.

In doing so we are able to support and give back to Wakulla County and not use general funds or taxpayer money for community outreach.

If you as an individual or as a local

business would like to help support our charity golf tournament and help support WCSO in our effort to support our community please reach out to Capt. Jeff Yarbrough at jyarbrough@wcso.org for more information.

As always, if there is anything I or anyone in my administration can do to help or assist you please don't hesitate to call 850-745-7100, or call 911 for emergencies.

Jared Miller is sheriff of Wakulla County.

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Greetings from your Wakulla County Property Appraiser team.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change from 2020 to 2023
Parcel Count	25,327	25,548	25,841	26,281	+954
Homesteads Totals	8,972	9,297	9,596	9,970	+998
AG Classifications	2,726	2,531	2,240	2,303	-423
TPP Accounts	778	774	788	1259	+481
Deeds Processed	3,036	4,087	3,463	3,072	+
Avg selling price of a new 1,700 sf home	\$253,100	\$265,900 +5% From 2020	\$317,000 +16% from 2021	\$339,700 +7% from 2022	\$86,600 +34% from 2020

- According to the Building Department, in 2023 we added 455 new site-built homes.
- A homestead exemption filed for a home bought in 2020 saves you \$950 in 2024

If you think you may be eligible for a homestead or any other exemption, please call us.

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A Free Press Your Key To Freedom

The St. Marks River towns

By Elizabeth F. Smith, published in the Magnolia Monthly in 1964

Chapter Five

The town of Port Leon at the mouth of the St. Marks River, on the east bank of the stream and the terminus of the St. Marks Railroad, had a life of less than 12 years.

In 1843 it was completely destroyed by hurricane. An account taken from the Port Leon Gazette of September 15, 1843, is given below:

Our city is in ruins. We have been visited by one of the most horrible storms that has ever before devolved us to chronicle. On Wednesday, September 13, about 11 a.m., the wind commenced blowing fresh from the southwest, bringing up a high tide but nothing alarming. At 5 p.m. the wind lulled and the tide fell, the weather still continuing lowering. At 11 at night the wind freshened and the tide commenced flowing and by 12 o'clock it blew a perfect hurricane, and the whole town was inundated. The gale continued with redoubled violence until 2 o'clock, the water making a perfect breach ten feet deep over our town. The wind suddenly lulled for a few minutes, then came from the south with redoubled violence and blew till daylight. Every warehouse in the town was laid flat with the ground except one, Mssrs. Hamlin and Snell's, and part of that also fell. Nearly every dwelling was thrown from its foundation and many of them crushed to atoms. The loss of property is immense. Every inhabitant participated in the loss more or less. None have escaped, many with only the clothes they stand in. St. Mark's suffered in like proportion to ourselves, but our losses are nothing compared with those at the lighthouse. Every building but the lighthouse is gone, and dreadful relate, fourteen lives were lost. Some of them were our most valued citizens. We cannot attempt to estimate the loss of each individual at this time but shall reserve it until our feelings will better enable

us to investigate it. Below we give a list of those drowned, as far as heard from.

At Port Leon: A crazy negro boy belonging to Tallahassee.

At the lighthouse: Capt. M. C. Robertson, his wife and three children and a child of Dr. Tradewell's; Mr. J. Wood, a portrait painter from Tallahassee. A child of R. V. Buffin's and five negroes.

Those saved at the lighthouse: Capt. Hungerford, his wife and two children, Dr. Tradewell's youngest child, Mssrs. Oglesbee, Blethen and Kennedy, pilots and five negroes.

Our citizens are out now looking for any that may have escaped, and to bring the bodies of those that may be found. Such a total destruction of property has never occurred in our place. Our loss is estimated at \$250,000.

In addition to the above, we have learned that the family of Mr. Edward Walker, living on Shell Point, his wife, children, and five or six negroes, all perished. Mr. Walker himself escaped by clinging to the branches of a tree till the waters subsided.

As the reader will note, the Commercial Gazette estimated the loss of property from the Port Leon hurricane at a quarter of a million dollars. The Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser of Sept. 30, 1843, said of the



The old government dock at Port Leon.

disaster: "We are sorry to learn that the first accounts of the disaster of those places (Port Leon and St. Marks) are more than realized. Recent information from Port Leon says that all the houses except three were destroyed. It is generally thought by those interested that it will not be rebuilt. St. Marks did not suffer so much. Some of the buildings were swept away and all the wharves demolished. The amount of property destroyed is large, yet we think it is overestimated by some, who have placed it as high as \$250,00 or \$300,000. We should think that a much less amount would fully cover the loss."

The Gazette articles sees to substantiate statements herein made that Port Leon's population never ex-

ceeded 200. Complete destruction of nearly all dwellings and practically all business houses including stocks of goods, in a town of say, 1,000 people, would have run nearer a million dollars than to merely one-fourth that amount. Remember the Apalachicola newspaper thought the loss much less than a quarter of a million.

But whatever Port Leon may have lacked in size, it certainly had one firm which did not lack in courage and aggressiveness. This firm, Hamlin and Snell, only five days after the hurricane, sent an advertisement too the Florida Sentinel of Tallahassee, in which it was stated that it had repaired its Magnolia warehouse and was prepared to receive cotton either at Magnolia

or Rock Haven, at the choice of the owner, for the purpose of placing it on vessels at once for shipment. The notice said:

STORAGE AT MAGNOLIA AND ROCK HAVEN

The recent calamity having destroyed our wharf and warehouses at Port Leon, we have repaired our warehouses at Magnolia for the reception of merchandise, and are putting up temporary shed for cotton. We are now prepared to receive cotton and merchandise, taking from the vessel with boats and delivering either at Magnolia or Rock Haven, at the option of the owner, receiving cotton at either place, and delivering it on shipboard at once for shipment. Our charges will be as

moderate as possible having reference to the labor and expense bestowed.

We solicit patronage – the recent calamity being to us ruinous. We hope our friends will indulge us, lend a helping hand, and only appreciate our attempt to serve them.

Hamlin and Snell, Port Leon
September 18, 1843

The trader of Port Leon bounced back in a hurry, but the town did not. It was never rebuilt. Within a week after the disastrous winds a meeting of the town's leading citizens met to discuss what to do with their future.

At that meeting a committee was formed to choose a site and acquire the necessary land and take subscriptions for the enterprise. Those on the committee were Peter H. Swain, James Ormond, Nathaniel Hamlin, W. H. Ware, William H. Brodie, N. W. Walker, Abijah Hall, Amos M. Alexander, William H. Walker, George G. Holt, and F. B. Whiting.

The Tallahassee Railroad Company was invited to extend its road to whatever location the committee should select.

Five days later the committee reported to a meeting held in the Port Leon City Hotel that it had selected a place two miles below

Turn to Page 14



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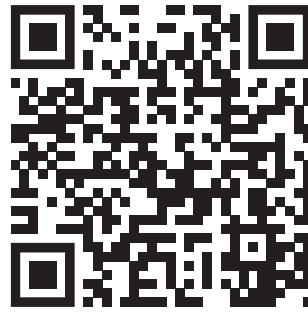
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William Snowden
Editor & Publisher
The Wakulla Sun

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

The St. Marks River towns
From Page 12

Magnolia as the most eligible site, enumeration its advantages as follows: "This situation (with one exception) is probably the only place free from inundation, with the advantage of high land on either bank. It is a pine ridge gently rising from the water with little or no swampy margin and of sufficient extent for the purpose.

"It has the appearance of a healthy situation from the fact of there being no cause of disease near, such as swamps and ponds. Its facilities for commerce are equal to any other point. The same draught of water that comes to Port Leon and St. Marks can go there. And the fact of its being a mile or two further up the river can be no object when the safety, for which we are looking, is taken into consideration. It is the most central and convenient to every section of the country, and lastly, that most important item which none below can acquire, is the confidence of the planters and others doing business with us, of its entire safety from the sea.

"Another point," continued the report, "has been suggested to your committee, as one which would probably answer the purpose and be more convenient. This point is now and will probably be the future termination of the Tallahassee Railroad. However desirable it might be to cooperate with that company, this committee would not for a moment entertain a comparison between the two places. They know it to be above all action by the sea, a pleasant and dry situation for the residence of our families, the other as much exposed, the ground damper and not so pleasant a location as the one we were driven from."

It is apparent that the former Magnolias would never settle at St. Marks.

There may have been another reason, one not given by the committee, for the choice of a site. It was immediately adjoining land already owned by the Hamlins, who were probably the most influential people in Port Leon and who had been the leaders in Magnolia. A location so close would be certain to increase the value of the lands they owned, in case the new settlement became a city or even a great trading point, and there were probably none who did not expect it to be both.

Whatever their motive, these Floridians were men of action. The National Intelligencer, Washington, D.C., carried in its October 14, 1843, issue the following item:

"A new town. The former inhabitants of Port Leon, in Florida (one of the towns which was almost destroyed by a hurricane on the 13th of September) have selected a new site for a town two or three miles higher up the St. Marks River, which is to be called Newport. It is now being laid off in lots and seven warehouses will soon be completed for the reception of goods."

The Wakulla County Historical Society Museum is in the Old Jail at 24 High Drive in Crawfordville. We are open to the public on Thursdays and Fridays, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Visit us online at WakullaHistory.org. The museum houses a complete, indexed collection of the Magnolia Monthly magazines for review in our reading room, and several partial sets available for purchase.



How will the economy react to AI?



By **BRIAN ENGLISH**

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are already invading every aspect of our lives. Debates are ongoing about how it will infiltrate individual industries. Governments are working to understand AI and determine how to regulate something that affects much more than the digital space. Its potential uses are being realized everywhere, from musicians turning 50-year-old demo recordings into fully realized hit singles to firms analyzing data to increase productivity, maximize security, and even develop new medicines. The potential for AI is a fast-moving beast, with new

tools emerging so quickly that they sometimes make existing ones obsolete just months after they become available.

It has certainly made many people nervous. An online educator surveyed 800 executives about their futures with AI. Almost half of the respondents believed that many of the job skills vital to the employees of various industries, including C-suite executives, may be irrelevant in just two years.^{1,2}

This is some scary talk, to be certain. However, it is important to note that such change is inevitable. Just as the telephone put the telegraph out to pasture and the commercialization of the Internet changed how every company does business, AI will change things. However, not all aspects of the change will be bad or negative.

For those in the workforce, AI represents this generation's pivot point. Just as prior generations got used to offices centered around emails and messaging tools, so will this generation of workers get used to the many AI tools that will help them work better and more efficiently. Jobs at all levels will change to incorporate emerging innovations. Executives will have access to resources that simplify their tasks and expand their abilities.

AI promises to help make a massive leap forward in terms of what people can accomplish, and its tools can help people do tasks more precisely and at previously impossible speeds. This sort of innovation always has growing pains. However, in the long run, it represents incredible potential for the economy to grow in new directions, uplifting the industries that every

company changes and opening avenues that never existed before.

Although AI challenges the economy, investors have faced this challenge during every innovative period. As your trained financial professional, I will consider big and small changes, and I look forward to hearing any questions you may have about the future of AI.

1. Forbes.com, October 14, 2023
2. edX AI Survey, 2023

Brian can be reached at (850) 926-7487.

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tobe7encouraged faith column Seeing beyond my nose...

Greetings Wakulla citizens! Thank you for your time! This week I have noticed people that crossed paths with me. Some I know, others I do not. The ones I know shared pretty heavy stuff with me. The ones I do not know, it was the way they looked that got my attention.

The premise of this column is "Intercessory Prayer." It is not by "chance" the people that cross paths with us. If I, myself, are able along with willing to see beyond my own nose, I will see what God is showing me. You see, as I encountered these people, my "flesh" had an opinion of their actions (the ones I know and shared with me) and my "flesh" had an opinion of how they looked (the ones I did not know). You see, if I would have allowed my "flesh" this liberty, I would be in disobedience because I would be judging these people! Like I never did this?! Holy Spirit immediately checked me and convicted my heart! I continually have to hold my thoughts captive and KICK THEM OUT! "2 Corinthians 10: 5 *We are destroying arguments and all arrogance raised against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.*" In this way God is able to use me and YOU to glorify His Kingdom and bring people to Christ.

Prayer is and should be our first action to help people instead of being critical and judgmental. 1 Timothy 2:1-6 **First of all, then, I urge that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made in behalf of all people, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.** To intercede for people simply means to plead on another's behalf, to act as mediator in a dispute, to pass between; to intervene.

This is what Jesus does for us, Believers, every single day He wills us! **Romans 8: 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, but rather, was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.**

Let us remember what Scripture says concerning the lost, **Luke 10:2 And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.** Let us pray together Luke 10:2 over the lost, that God sends the right people across their paths and that they have eyes to see and ears to hear Gods direction for their lives.

We hope this message blesses you!,
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If you do not know Jesus and want to, say this out loud... **Romans 10: 13 for "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." "Jesus, I am a sinner I know, I repent and turn away from all that I did as a sinner, I renounce their hold on me. I believe in faith God sent You to become my sin, on the Cross, to cleanse me from them and now make me new. I believe You died and rose on the 3rd day so that I may live and become Your Righteousness. I now give you my life and live for You! By God's Grace I am now Born Again. WOOO-HHHOOOO!!** Welcome to the family! Your life just got EXCITING!!! The next step is to be water baptized (1 Peter 3:21, 1 Corinthians 6:11) so that our old self will be buried. It is important now to get involved in a Spirit filled full Gospel church and dive in and learn all about who you now are becoming. Congratulations my friend!

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SOMETHINGS

There is Something about a good attitude, it's contagious and courageous!
It's aroma fills the room

Some things we must remove, "the old man" from our dead life before,

Some things new we must put on "the new man"
Ephesians four and twenty-four

Some things need to be put to death!
The risk of sin, and future regrets,
The whole lump comes, from just a little leaven, Galatians five and nine; and
Ephesians four and twenty-seven

Everyday is an opportunity, A gift from God
To do some good, to shine God's light

To take Somethings wrong, and make Somethings right
To let Somethings go, and Somethings to fight
Somethings to draw near, Somethings to push far
To lower expectations, or to push the bar!

Finding time for those in need, is picking weeds and planting seeds

Tomorrow may be to late, should you run after, or should you wait?

Is it better to be early, or just a little late.
Will tomorrow come? Truly only God can know,
Seek His kingdom first, and let His wisdom flow

The Author of all things
Holds the Somethings, the broken things
The bruised reed He will not break (Isaiah 42:3)

Behold The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save (Isaiah 59:1) Tony Duncan
-All Glory Given to Jesus

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- Who needs to enroll in Medicare and when?
- The two ways to have Medicare— and how to choose?
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- How to start planning for future healthcare costs?

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- When do I have to enroll in Medicare?
- How does Medicare work with the insurance I've already got?
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**Tuesday,
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6PM – 7PM

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