



Wrestlers celebrate season /Page 17

The Wakulla Sun



Weather forecast from Wakulla High School

Thursday Friday Saturday



Hi: 71° Lo: 43° 5%
Sunrise 7:42 AM
Sunset 7:48 PM

Hi: 76° Lo: 53° 9%
Sunrise 7:41 AM
Sunset 7:49 PM

Hi: 78° Lo: 58° 9%
Sunrise 7:40 AM
Sunset 7:49 PM



\$1
One Section

"It's a New Day" *Locally Owned & Operated* Our 5th Year 12th Issue
Thursday, March 19, 2026

Contract revoked at COAST

The Wakulla County School Board votes to end the charter school's contract, recommends it become a private school

By WILLIAM SNOWDEN
Editor

The Wakulla County School Board voted to deny renewal of COAST Charter School's contract.

School board members voted unanimously on Monday, March 9, to accept the recommendation of Superintendent of Schools Rick Myhre to reject the school's "proposed charter renewal contract" as insufficient and non-compliant with requirements of current state law.

Frankie Harvey, prin-

icipal at COAST, directed the Sun's questions to attorney Thomas Sternberg with Tripp Scott law firm, who declined to comment.

It's not clear what the charter school intends to do in response: appeal the school board decision, reorganize as a private school or something else.

In a letter to the COAST Board of Directors, Myhre suggested they pursue becoming a private school – noting that private schools are exempt from many state requirements, but would



Superintendent of Schools
Rick Myhre

still be eligible for state scholarship funding.

Materials from the district indicate district staff trying to prod the charter school along

with its application – including an email from district staffer Amanda Hofheinz to COAST staff from September noting the charter school's renewal application needed to be submitted by Feb. 1; minutes from a December COAST board meeting in which the chair indicates she's working on the application but fears staff has a "laissez faire attitude" about it; a letter from Myhre (undated, but it appears to be in January) to the school board and COAST board that notes he will recom-

mend the school board vote at their Jan. 20th meeting to not renew the current COAST charter as it doesn't meet the requirements of law.

The charter school submitted a new application on Jan. 27, but district staff found it was not responsive to changes in state law – and therefore incomplete.

The COAST board can file an appeal within 14 days that would go to an administrative law judge to review.

In a memo to the COAST board dated March 3, Myhre outlined

reasons why the school should look at becoming private rather than a public charter school, with lower-risk compliance model while still eligible to draw public education funding.

Myhre noted that private schools are eligible for scholarship funding for students, while charter schools are public schools under the law.

It was also noted that private schools don't face the same state requirements as public schools – such as academic accountability

Turn to Page 5

'THE BAY WAS OUR PLAYGROUND'



Honoring the Women of Panacea on Monday at Posey's, Linda Durant Thompson, Kathryn Sanders Beaty, Becky Sanders Finch, Mec Martin, Vivian Taylor Johnson, and Harvey Stokley reading from his mother Laverne McMillian Stokley's writings on the life and times of Panacea. Stories of "The bay was our

playground,' sunset was time to go home for supper, begging mama to stay home from church Sunday night to watch Elvis on the Ed Sullivan Show, and swimming in Otter Lake (not recommended today) – the stories could have gone on all night but ended around eight. (Photo by Gerald Brown)

Two men plea to carjacking charges, get 10 years in prison

By WILLIAM SNOWDEN
Editor

Co-defendants Dustin Cmehil and Eldon Hicks III separately entered no contest pleas to a laundry list of criminal charges, including burglary of a conveyance with person assaulted, and attempted carjacking, and were both sentenced to 10 years in state prison.

Wakulla Circuit Judge Layne Smith presided over the negotiated pleas, which were heard on Thursday, March 12. The two had been set for trial this week.

The charge of burglary of a conveyance with person assaulted is a first degree felony punishable by life in prison.

While the plea for Cmehil (pronounced SMAY-hill) with his defense attorney Shelly Thomas went without delay, Hicks initially turned down the plea and told his attorney, Armando Garcia, he wanted to go to trial – over Garcia's strong advice that he reconsider.

Hicks told the court that he didn't "want to live this lifestyle anymore" and worried that the 10-year sentence wouldn't allow him into the Department of Corrections' re-entry program.

Judge Smith expressed great concern at the decision, noting that Hicks would only be 35 upon his release from prison and could still have a life. But if the trial didn't go his way, he could end up spending the rest of his natural days in prison.

Chief Wakulla Prosecutor Andrew Deneen reiterated that point to Hicks, saying the 10 years in prison was a break. "You've been in and out of custody since you were 16," Deneen said, adding Hicks didn't get a good upbringing.

Still, Deneen said, "The moment you reached your head into that car, you committed a punishable-by-life offense."

But Hicks was adamant he wanted a trial. After a break, Deneen returned to court with recordings of Hicks making jailhouse calls to friends. Hearing one of the recordings, Hicks changed his mind and agreed to the plea deal.

Hicks and Cmehil were charged in August 2024 after the two surrounded a Toyota Tundra truck that Hicks was convinced had been stolen from him. A man and woman were inside the vehicle as Hicks pounded on the driver's side window with a metal bar and Cmehil jumped on the hood and kicked in the windshield. When deputies rolled up on the disturbance, Cmehil reportedly told them, It's private property, just



Dustin Cmehil



Eldon Hicks III

Jail gets body scanner

From WCSO

Wakulla County Sheriff Jared Miller recently directed the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office to purchase and implement advanced body scanning technology at the Wakulla County Detention Facility. The new system has now been fully installed and is operational.

Ensuring public safety includes maintaining a secure, accountable, and safe detention facility.

Continued investment in modern detention technology helps reduce contraband, improve staff safety, and strengthen oversight within the facility. Proactive measures such as these allow detention staff to identify risks before they become problems.

The detention facility is now equipped with the Tek84 Intercept X-ray body scanning system, a state-of-the-art security tool designed to detect weapons, drugs, cell phones, and other contraband concealed under clothing or within body cavities in a matter of seconds.



The Intercept X-ray scanner at the Wakulla County Jail.

The system utilizes ultra-low-dose X-ray technology to create clear images while meeting strict federal safety standards for radiation exposure.

Intercept body scanners are used in correctional facilities across the United States and internationally, helping agencies prevent the in-

troduction of dangerous or illegal items into secure environments and improving overall facility safety.

The system was purchased at a cost of approximately \$250,000. Importantly, no Wakulla County taxpayer funds were used for the purchase. The scanner was

funded through the Florida Inmate Welfare Fund, which is designated for programs and initiatives that enhance the safety, welfare, and operations of correctional facilities.

Sheriff Miller emphasized that the addition of the body scanner represents a proactive investment in the safety of both detention staff and inmates.

"Preventing contraband from entering our detention facility is critical to maintaining a safe environment for our detention deputies, inmates, and everyone who works inside the facility," said Sheriff Miller. "This technology allows our staff to quickly and effectively detect concealed items and strengthens our ability to operate a secure facility while protecting the citizens of Wakulla County."

The Wakulla County Sheriff's Office remains committed to strengthening detention operations through responsible investments in technology, training, and proactive security measures that enhance safety and accountability.

Turn to Page 5

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Student of the Week

Sam Donaway – 12th grader, Wakulla Institute

Principal: Susan (Vicki) Tillman

Achievements/Reason for Nomination: Sam is always smiling and happy. He voluntarily turns in three songs each week for the "Tune Tuesday" for the school. Sam loves music and is an aspiring DJ.



STUDENT OF THE WEEK FEATURES A DIFFERENT SCHOOL EACH WEEK.

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Wakulla Wonderful was held on Saturday



A view of the crowd at the event, which was held at the extension office this year.



Alicia Rock, Forgotten Coast Farms, with a rabbit.

By **LINDA ANN McDONALD**
Correspondent

Highlighting community pride and history, Wakulla County 4-H and local partners hosted Wakulla Wonderful to celebrate the county's 183rd birthday on Saturday, March 14th at the Wakulla UF/IFAS extension office. Wakulla County was officially created on March 11, 1843.

The annual community festival celebrates the founding, history and local heritage of Wakulla County with unique shopping, food and educational experiences – such as tours of the historic Courthouse, the Historical Society Museum (formerly the jail), as well as an illustrated 40-foot History Walk timeline.

Wakulla County's Planning and Zoning Office provided interactive educational talks such as "Know your floodplain" and "Build your own community." County Planner Ashley Rowland-Yost said, "This is an opportunity to design your own community, view flood zones and other high-risk areas. Folks will get to see all the different hazards in the county. Overall, this is great education on the topography of Wakulla County."

Wakulla County Historical Society volunteers Debbie Jay and Rita Sparkman said: "We love this event, we want people to know that the old jail and museum

is behind the courthouse, and we have archives of historical records that the public has access to for free. We are present to assist with research, and we offer genealogy as well. If you are interested in family history and Wakulla history, we are happy to help."

Brent Thurmond of the Wakulla County Historical Center and lecturer of the history education experience said, "I feel like a kid – it's so exciting to talk about Wakulla history. Because we just completed our March Second-Tuesday History Talk on the Apalachee Indians in relation to Wakulla County timeline, I am excited to share this information with the public now. You can study history for decades and always learn new things and relearn things you forgot!"

During the educational lecture, Thurmond said, "There was evidence of people 10,000 -12,000 years ago in Wakulla Springs. The word Wakulla is from the Apalachee language, and the English translation of the word Wakulla is what they called the river and the springs." Another piece of interesting information shared by Thurmond was, "There was a petition to create the county's name to be Apalachee, and they scratched it out and named it our county Wakulla."

Also available for knowledge digestion

was an illustrated 40-foot History Walk timeline titled, "Our Wakulla" which dates from the year 1500 to current. Chris Russell, who attended the lecture commented, "This was outstanding and it's great to learn about Wakulla's history, especially about the Apalachee side of it."

Visitors from Manatee County, Kristi Dole and Linda Dole, traveled to Wakulla to visit family Shelia and Stanley Slayton of Wakulla and to attend the event. They said, "It's very peaceful here and loaded with history, it's always great to go to a celebration."

Rachel Pienta, 4-H Director said, "This is the 7th year hosting this event and we are looking forward to moving back to the courthouse area to bring the event back to the historical center that is rich with local history."



Brent Thurmond of the Wakulla County Historical Society gives a talk on the county's history to Chris and Valerie Russell.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RACHEL PIENTA

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.



More Public Notices appear on Pages 13 and 14

TAX IMPACT OF VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD

Wakulla County Tax Year 2025

Rule 12D-16.002 Florida Administrative Code

Members of the Board

Honorable	Quincee Messersmith	Board of County Commissioners, District No.	4
Honorable	Valerie Russell	Board of County Commissioners, District No.	3
Honorable	Edward Hand	School Board, District No.	1
Citizen Member	June Davis	Business owner within the school district	
Citizen Member	Walter Gray	Homestead property owner	

The Value Adjustment Board (VAB) meets each year to hear petitions and make decisions relating to property tax assessments, exemptions, classifications, and tax deferrals.

Summary of Year's Actions

Type of Property	Number of Parcels					Reduction in		Shift in Taxes
	Exemptions		Assessments*		Both	County Taxable Value		
	Granted	Requested	Reduced	Requested		Withdrawn or settled	Due to Board Actions	Due to Board Actions
Residential				5	5	\$ 0	\$ 0.00	
Commercial				1	1	\$ 0	\$ 0.00	
Industrial and miscellaneous						\$ 0	\$ 0.00	
Agricultural or classified use						\$ 0	\$ 0.00	
High-water recharge						\$ 0	\$ 0.00	
Historic commercial or nonprofit						\$ 0	\$ 0.00	
Business machinery and equipment						\$ 0	\$ 0.00	
Vacant lots and acreage						\$ 0	\$ 0.00	
TOTALS						\$ 0	\$ 0.00	

All values should be county taxable values. School and other taxing authority values may differ. *Include transfer of assessment difference (portability) requests.

If you have a question about these actions, contact the Chair or the Clerk of the Value Adjustment Board.

Chair's name	Quincee Messersmith	Phone	850-508-7774	ext.
Clerk's name	Kelly Sessor	Phone	850-926-0344	ext.



Weston, Cari, and Laila Brown at the event/

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.”

Historical Society has held some fascinating programs this year



By **WILLIAM SNOWDEN**
Editor

The Wakulla County Historical Society is a treasure.

And its monthly history programs on the second Tuesday of the month is not to be missed.

So far the programs have included Robert

Seidler on the history of Sopchoppy held at the Sopchoppy Gym. Seidler went back 10,000 years in the area’s history and started from there.

In February, for Black History Month, Robert Manning and Bossie Hawkins presented a program on some lesser known individuals who made lasting contributions to the community. (I’ll be there for any event at which Robert Manning is speaking – he’s slyly funny and always entertaining.)

For March’s program, Nelson Martin spoke on the region’s Apalachee Indians and it was absolutely fascinating.

While I’d always heard that the Apalachee had left the area with the

Spanish and gone to St. Augustine and Cuba and been absorbed into communities there, Martin talked about a small band of Apalachee, maybe 800, who headed west to Alabama and then Louisiana.

The now-Chief of the band didn’t know until the 1990s what type of Indian her family was until her grandmother finally told her they were Apalachee.

Martin said the Apalachee were a fearsome group, whose territory stretched from the Gulf Coast to the Georgia line and from the Ochlockonee River to the Aucilla, with villages at Lake Jackson and Miccuosukee. He noted the band is trying to



Nelson Martin shares some items at a history program on the Apalachee Indians.

piece back together their Apalachee language with the help of a professor at FSU.

If you’re interested in

local history, you owe it to yourself to attend some of these programs – typically held at the library on the second

Tuesday of the month.

William Snowden is editor of The Wakulla Sun.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Unnamed is uncool

Editor, The Sun:

Bill, it is unfortunate that you were dragged into this letter of opinion entitled “Disappointed with tone of last week’s letter” by the questionable virtue of not naming the writer. We citizens of the USA are all aware of our 1st Amendment rights, except for obviously the unknown penman,

which exist primarily for disagreeable subjects (e.g., Democrats) and the right to say or publish them. Advocating for censorship is an entirely anti-American position and further reduced in merit by being anonymous. The most cogent point of the entire scribe is your ‘Editor’s Note’ where you have to offer an explanation for this intrepid bard.

The March 5th letter reflects what many U.S. Citizens understand to be true whether it’s ‘tongue in cheek’ or not and certainly deserves publication especially since the letter was attested to by the writer.

It seems as though this March 5th letter has been scrubbed from the Wakulla Sun E-Editions. I am assuming this is due to possible threats from this same group who, as history has shown, resort to violence at the slightest provocation. I for one, would like to encourage you to maintain your policy of not publishing anonymous letters. They really have no value or merit.

Tim Caldwell
Name NOT withheld by request
Panacea

Editor’s Note: The letter was not “scrubbed.” After receiving Tim Caldwell’s letter, I went on our website and started looking for the March 5th letter that had drawn concern and couldn’t find it – and our March 5th e-edition hadn’t yet been posted.

Our production manager/Information Technology guy, Eric Stanton, told me that formerly our Letters to the Editor weren’t being archived. He has since remedied the problem.

In fact, Eric added a link that takes you to the original Letter – something he has been doing to cross-reference many ongoing news stories.

Something on your mind?

Email Letters to the Editor to editor@thewakullasun.com; or mail it The Wakulla Sun, 12 Arran Road, Crawfordville FL 32327; or drop it by the office on the courthouse square.

On the Horizon

Calendar of events for the week of March 19

Thursday, March 19

- “The Half-Life of Marie Curie,” a play by Lauren Gunderson, directed by Alison Quinn, will be performed at 8 p.m. at Palaver Tree Theater, 59 Shadeville Road. Thursday is pay-what-you-can night.
- Because of spring break, the Rotary Club of Wakulla meets at the Wakulla County Public Library at 8:30 a.m. rather than TSC Wakulla.
- Coastal Optimist Club meets at noon at Myra Jean’s on the first and third Thursdays.
- 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.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m. every Thursday at 54 Ochlockonee St.

- “The Half-Life of Marie Curie,” will be performed at 8 p.m. at Palaver Tree Theater, 59 Shadeville Road. Tickets are \$15.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and 8 p.m. every Friday at 54 Ochlockonee St.

Saturday, March 21

- Lions Club St. Patrick’s Day Festival kicks off with a parade at 10 a.m. followed by entertainment and vendors in Hudson Park.
- Woodville Founders Day Festival will be held at the J. Lewis Hall Recreation Park, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be historical demonstrations, performers, music, food and vendors.
- Panacea Beer and Oyster Festival will be held at Woolley Park in Panacea.
- “The Half-Life of Marie Curie,” will be per-

formed at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. at Palaver Tree Theater, 59 Shadeville Road. Tickets are \$15.

Sunday, March 22

- Wakulla Giving Hands holds a food giveaway every Sunday from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at the facility across from Medart Elementary on Highway 98.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets every Sunday at 6:30 p.m. at 54 Ochlockonee St.

Monday, March 23

- Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6 p.m. for women and 8 p.m. for men every Monday at 54 Ochlockonee St.
- Gentle Yoga and Stretching Class with Margaret every Monday at 11 a.m. First Baptist Church CLC Building in Crawfordville.

Bring a mat.

- Line Dancing Class is held at Wakulla Dance Academy every Monday from 7 to 9 p.m. \$5 per person. Wear dance shoes or tennis shoes.

Tuesday, March 24

- Sopchoppy community dinner is held every week at the Towles House at 6:30 p.m.
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at 54 Ochlockonee St.

Wednesday, March 25

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

Friday, March 20

“It’s A New Day!”

The Wakulla Sun






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William Snowden
Editor & Publisher
The Wakulla Sun

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Polled at Wakulla Wonderful on Saturday:

– Compiled by Lynda Kinsey

What do you think is wonderful about Wakulla?



SARAH ROGERS
Stay-at-home mom

“There is a lot of stuff you can do outdoors with a family. It’s still very green and natural with all the nature.”



SUSAN VICKERS
Planning & Zoning

“I like having all of the water, all the rivers. I love to fish. Wakulla is the best for outdoor activities and you don’t even have to leave Wakulla to go camping.”



BRUCE ASHLEY
Retired/Parttime farmer

“The people! I like the whole environment of our county and the great attitude of the Wakulla people.”



BRANDON GEIGER
Wakulla County

“The people, the nature, the forests and the rivers are all great resources that we have.”



SUZANNE ROBERTS
Suzanne’s Down to Earth Plants

“The schools. I was a lunchroom manager for 22 years. The teachers were all great and I loved feeding all the great kids.”

Wakulla Crossroads

By **VERNA BROCK**

What a great day we had last Saturday at Wakulla Wonderful. The weather was perfect, and everyone was enjoying a lovely spring day outside. I took advantage of the food trucks there, and had a delicious Pad Thai lunch from Zip Zap.

Next weekend (Saturday, March 21) is the Woodville Founders Day Festival at the J. Lewis Hall Recreation Park, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be historical demonstrations, performers, music, food and vendors galore. It is free and open to the public and great fun for the entire family. There are many activities across our area, all month long, but you should be sure to include Woodville on your to-do list!

Lately I’ve been thinking a lot about the power of forgiveness and grace,

and my pastor even preached a sermon on the subject recently. Part of following Jesus is taking seriously His commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. That includes forgiving those who hurt us. I mean, “The Lord’s Prayer” explicitly asks that our trespasses (sins) be forgiven as we forgive those who trespass (sin) against us! It seems clear we must extend forgiveness to others if we expect to be forgiven.

Basically, we’re called to extend grace to everyone. But forgiveness is usually a process. The little things are a piece of cake! It’s the worst offenses that are the hardest to relinquish, at least for me. One thing I have noticed is that it’s much easier to forgive someone if they apologize first. It’s funny how that works, but it seems true. It’s always easier to let go, and let God, when I get an apology!

Too often, when wrongs arise between two people, apologies are never exchanged. Accusations and acrimony, yes. But acceptance of responsibility? No. Even so, we are reminded that we need to forgive those who wrong us, just as we need to be forgiven. Whether others acknowledge their actions or not, we can apologize and seek forgiveness. We have a role to play in reconciliation, even if another party can’t (or won’t) reciprocate.

Another observation I’ve had is that anger and grudges only hurt those clinging to them. They can eat you alive, while the object of your anger remains blithely unaware of the impact they have had.

Often, the perpetrator is utterly clueless about the havoc they have wrought, while holding onto anger and grudges only injures those who refuse to let go.

How do we manage then? Grudges can be stubborn things, and wounds still ache. But to find real peace, we must practice what we want for our-

selves... forgiveness. I struggle with my human nature, my anger and judgment.

Asking God to help me forgive and love others through His grace when I just can’t by myself, expands my ability to be grace-full. It may take me a while to get where I’m going, but He keeps me moving in the right direction.

Finally, I have found forgiving someone is a reward in itself. I receive peace and grace for myself if I can move forward, and leave the past behind. In hindsight, I often wonder why it was so difficult, and took so long. How much better to look to the future, rather than stew over former grievances!

During this season of Lent, reflection and prayer, I hope we can all surrender the burdens of hurt, anger and resentment in exchange for a future of peace and joy. God’s grace is available to all of us if we accept it and practice His grace with those around us.

Historical Society receives award

Special to The Sun

The Wakulla County Historical Society was recently awarded the Golden D2 Award by the Florida Public Archaeology Network for its work in documenting and preserving cemeteries in Wakulla County.

This work began with the ambitious publication of the Cemetery Census in 2001, which has been updated several times since by the historical society, and is available for sale in the society’s museum gift shop.

Commitment to the preservation and protection of cemeteries has long been a hallmark of the historical society and has been continued by subsequent members and volunteers who locate, document, and care for the 142 cemeteries in Wakulla County.

An important task in the documentation is submitting information to the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, which maintains a



Historical Society President Andrea Carter with Joyce Jefferson and Lindeara Jefferson, both members and active cemetery preservation advocates, and FPAN representative Barbara Clark.

Master Site File to ensure continuity of the historical record.

Three years ago, the WCHS was awarded a grant by the state to restore Richardson Cemetery, one of the county’s oldest, located at the northeast corner of Spring Creek Hwy and U.S. 98.

Debra Jay, Cemetery committee chairman, spearheaded efforts to locate unmarked graves, clean grave-stones, reset fallen headstones, and add an entrance to the cemetery from the highway.

Remaining tasks include adding a parking area and fencing the

perimeter of the cemetery.

Anyone in the community interested in helping the historical society with this important work is encouraged to contact them at (850) 926-1110 or mailbox@wakullahistory.org

COAST

From Front Page

and school grades, public enrollment and preference rules, and prohibition on charging tuition or mandatory fees.

Additionally, public charter schools must also meet state rules on threat assessment teams, emergency drills, Guardian and safe school officer compliance.

“While certain safety provisions now apply more broadly, the scope, reporting obligations, and monitoring authority are substantially greater for charter schools than for private schools, which remain governed primarily by statute-specific requirements tied to scholarship participation,” Myhre wrote.

Carjacking

From Front Page

let us fight.

In addition to burglary of a conveyance with person assaulted and attempted carjacking, the two also faced charges of aggravated battery on a pregnant victim (the woman inside the car was 8 months pregnant), two counts of false imprisonment, and a count of criminal mischief.

While in jail, in July 2025, Cmehill sucker-punched another inmate while the inmate was making a phone call, busting his mouth open and requiring stitches. For the charge of battery on an inmate, Cmehill was given 5 years in prison to be served concurrently – at the same time – as the other prison sentence.

While Hicks was in jail, he was charged with possession of contraband when he was caught in December 2024 with a small amount of marijuana in the waistband of his jail uniform. That charge was dropped as part of the plea deal.

FOLLOW THE SUN. Your local source for news.

Outdoors

outdoor sports

HOME ON THE RANGE

Range rules... and then some more



By MARJ LAW

Sadie sits with her grandfather, at the picnic table on the other side of the parking lot from the shooting area at the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office pistol range.

"If I learn all the rules stated in that big sign, is that all I need to know about gun safety at a range?" Sadie looks a little worried.

"Well, Sadie. Those rules are sure a good place to start. Let's talk about them. Remember when we checked in that a deputy was at the front desk?"

Sadie nods. "Well, supporting Rule #1 is that there's always a deputy in the office. He can explain the rules if you don't understand them, and he can help if you have a problem with your gun. He's always there when the range is open."

"That's good to know," says Sadie. "What's this next rule about 'handling of firearms' when a person is downrange?"

"This rule has a lot to it, Sadie. First, we're going to talk about 'hot' and 'cold.'"

"Well, Grampa, I know

when it's hot or cold out, but I'm guessing that's not what you mean."

"True, Sadie. See that faint red line on the concrete floor of the pistol range?"

Sadie looks and nods. "When the range is called 'cold,' you must stand only on the side of the red line closest to the parking lot. When the range is 'hot,' you step over that red line and you can load and shoot your gun."

"Does someone actually say 'hot' or 'cold?'"

"Yes, Sadie."

"Who gets to say it?"

"Anyone and everyone. The point is, everyone has to agree. For instance, one person might stand on the parking lot side of the line and ask loudly: 'Can we go cold?'"

"Other people will hear and stop what they are doing. Then they step behind the line too, nod, and call 'cold!' in agreement. As soon as everyone on the pistol range is behind the line, then that means you can go downrange and put up a new target or inspect your existing one."

"So, if I were at the range and yelled 'cold,' then people would get behind the line? Just because I yelled cold?"

"Yes. They would." "Even if I were the one asking?" Sadie is acutely aware that she's a girl, she's new to the range and she's 24.

"Even you," replies her grandfather. "The same is true if you'd call 'hot.'"

When you call 'hot,' that means that you can load and fire your gun. First, someone calls 'hot,' and

RANGE RULES

The following rules have been established in an effort to insure safe use of this facility, these rules apply to everyone using this range. The designated Range Safety Officer is in charge of the shooting taking place under his/her supervision and their directions will be followed by everyone on the shooting line. Do not anticipate an order, wait until it is given.

- 1. No one is allowed to shoot on this range unless there is another adult present on the facility.**
- 2. No handling of firearms when someone is down range.**
- 3. No loaded firearms allowed to enter this range. Prior to entering this range clear all weapons in a safe manner and remove the magazine (if applicable). Load weapons only at your shooting position when the line is hot and you are ready to shoot.**
- 4. Eye and hearing protection is required for everyone on the shooting line while firearms are being shot.**
- 5. Shoot only the type of weapon and/or ammunition designated for this range, unless specifically approved in advanced by a WCSO Training Officer.**
- 6. No alcoholic beverages allowed on this range! No eating, drinking or use of tobacco products on the line or under the shooting shed. Poisoning by lead can occur through handling firearms and ammunition. Always wash your hands after shooting and before eating, drinking, or using tobacco products and prior to leaving the range.**
- 7. Shoot only at the appropriate targets for the type of training being done. No glass, cans or other type trash targets allowed. Use target backers and do not attach targets to the 2x4 frame.**

EMERGENCY RESPONSE: A fully stocked trauma kit is located in the cabinet, in the target shed

For emergencies that require professional medical assistance or transport to a medical facility, call 911 immediately!

Sheriff Jared Miller's Range Rules

someone else might call 'hot' too. The point is, everyone agrees the range is now 'hot.'"

"Do they always agree?" wonders Sadie.

"They do at the WCSO range. That's the explanation of Rule #2. Now, another rule to remember is Rule #3. You bring your gun in a sack. You don't take it out of its sack until the range is called 'hot.' When the range is hot, you can bring the sack to the shooting bench. You can take it out of the sack at this time and you can load it with ammunition from a different sack or box. Always remember to carry it to the shooting bench in a sack. If not, you have what they call a 'naked' gun' which isn't allowed at the range."

"Ha! No naked gun!" This hits Sadie as amusing. "So, why do you call that counter a 'shooting bench?'"

"You got me there, Sadie. They call it a shooting bench. I have no idea why."

"Rule #4 says to wear eye and hearing protection. You always want to wear these when the range is 'hot.' Loud noises can destroy your ability to hear, especially over time. Ear muffs could save your

hearing later in life."

"I see that Rule #7 says only shoot at the appropriate targets. Why not cans, bottles or whatever?"

"Flying debris like glass can be dangerous. And the WCSO asks that you don't place your target on the 2x4 frame. Shooting at those frames destroys them quickly and maintenance gets expensive."

"OK. I think I get the rules that are posted at the range. That's not too many."

"We still have to add more, Sadie. For instance, there are rules called the Big Four. It doesn't matter where you are, the Big Four hold true everywhere; not just at a firing range."

"The Big Four?"

"1. Always treat your firearm as if it is loaded.

2. Always point your firearm down range and in a safe direction.

3. Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.

4. Always be aware of your target and what is beyond it."

Sadie is perplexed. "I'd always know if my gun was loaded," she maintains.

"Well, Sadie. What if you hadn't shot your gun

in 8 months? Do you remember everything you did 8 months ago?"

"OK. I get it. And what's this 'safe direction' bit?"

"If, for instance, you were showing me a new gun, you'd need to keep the muzzle in a safe direction. Not at a person or at anything you'd want to destroy. My grandfather told me that even when you know your gun is empty, you never ever point it at a person. In fact, when I was a kid, he wouldn't even let me point my index finger and pretend to shoot."

"You covered Rules 1 and 2, now what about keeping my finger off the trigger? What's the big deal?"

"If your finger was on the trigger, and a car behind you backfired and startled you, you might inadvertently pull the trigger."

"You're right, Grampa. I probably would. Now for Rule #4. Why worry about what is 'beyond your target?'"

Grampa thinks for a moment. "Let's take a fairly recent example. Remember that man who shot a person at the mall and who planned to kill others? He'd taken a hostage!

"Then a young man who was a crack shot fired at the shooter from a long distance. But, you see, it wasn't important just to neutralize the threat of him shooting others, it was important to be aware of who was behind that shooter and hostage so that others wouldn't be harmed, as well! You have to know your target and you have to know what is behind your target too!"

"OK, Grampa. I get the Big 4. But there sure are a lot of rules," Sadie grumbles.

"Well, Sadie, there are even more guidelines. Like no booze at the range."

"Oh Grampa. You know I don't drink at all."

"And no food at the range. You could get lead poisoning."

"I wouldn't eat there, either."

"And finally, Sadie, you should button up your shirt. A hot casing could fly your way and slip down your open shirt and get caught in your... your..."

Sally looks down.

"I get it, Grampa." Sally buttons up her shirt.

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



FLAME STREAKED BOX CRAB
(*Calappa flammea*)

A bright 4" carapace identifies this burrowing crab. It draws water through its gills and is often seen spouting it out of its head like a fountain. A fierce predator, it uses scissor-like claws like a can opener. It has a tooth on the right claw and can't open left handed snails. It prefers sandy bottom warm areas at mouths of estuaries and salt marches from the Bahamas to the coasts of Gulf of Mexico. It counts on its bright color for camouflage as it is a favored food of finfish.

Eukarya, Animalia, Arthropoda, Malacostraca, Decapoda, Calappidae



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WEEKLY WILDLIFE PHOTO



Photographer Neil Hostnick shared this photo of an anole lizard and called it Looking for Spring.

Neil Hostnick

Water Ways

a peek into life on and under the water

Local writers share their experiences

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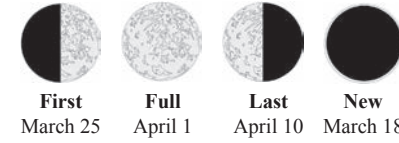


Gulf Coast Weekly Almanac

March 19 - March 25



Tide charts by
tides4fishing.com



Best fishing days this month
Best fishing day(s) is in the center of date ranges.
March 15 - 21, 25, 29 - April 4

Thursday 19	
Sun rise/set	Moon rise/set
7:42 AM	7:53 AM
7:48 PM	---
Moon Illumination 0%	
Friday 20	
Sun rise/set	Moon rise/set
7:41 AM	8:26 AM
7:48 PM	8:43 PM
Moon Illumination 3%	
Saturday 21	
Sun rise/set	Moon rise/set
7:39 AM	9:01 AM
7:49 PM	9:50 PM
Moon Illumination 9%	
Sunday 22	
Sun rise/set	Moon rise/set
7:38 AM	9:42 AM
7:50 PM	11:00 PM
Moon Illumination 17%	
Monday 23	
Sun rise/set	Moon rise/set
7:37 AM	10:30 AM
7:50 PM	12:11 AM
Moon Illumination 26%	
Tuesday 24	
Sun rise/set	Moon rise/set
7:36 AM	11:26 AM
7:51 PM	1:21 AM
Moon Illumination 37%	
Wednesday 25	
Sun rise/set	Moon rise/set
7:34 AM	12:28 PM
7:51 PM	2:27 AM
Moon Illumination 48%	

For tides at the following points add to Dog Island Listings:
 Carrabelle High Tide 28 Min. Low Tide 25 Min.
 Apalachicola 1 Hr., 53 Min. 2 Hrs., 38 Min.
 Cat Point 1 Hr., 13 Min. 2 Hrs., 31 Min.
 Lower Anchorage 1 Hr., 36 Min. 2 Hrs., 3 Min.
 West Pass 1 Hr., 26 Min. 2 Hrs., 39 Min.

St. Marks River Entrance

Th	3:10 am ▲ 3.6 ft	9:10 am ▼ 0.0 ft	3:11 pm ▲ 3.6 ft	9:35 pm ▼ -0.5 ft
Fr	3:52 am ▲ 3.5 ft	9:37 am ▼ 0.8 ft	3:33 pm ▲ 3.8 ft	10:13 pm ▼ -0.8 ft
Sa	4:37 am ▲ 3.4 ft	10:05 am ▼ 0.6 ft	3:57 pm ▲ 3.9 ft	10:54 pm ▼ -0.9 ft
Su	5:24 am ▲ 3.1 ft	10:34 am ▼ 1.0 ft	4:25 pm ▲ 4.0 ft	11:41 pm ▼ -0.8 ft
Mo	6:19 am ▲ 2.7 ft	11:04 am ▼ 1.3 ft	4:56 pm ▲ 3.9 ft	
Tu	12:38 am ▼ -0.6 ft	7:29 am ▲ 2.4 ft	11:37 am ▼ 1.1 ft	5:33 pm ▲ 3.7 ft
We	1:53 am ▼ -0.3 ft	9:13 am ▲ 2.2 ft	12:21 pm ▼ 1.9 ft	6:22 pm ▲ 3.4 ft

City of St. Marks

Th	3:46 am ▲ 3.3 ft	10:14 am ▼ 0.0 ft	3:47 pm ▲ 3.4 ft	10:39 pm ▼ -0.4 ft
Fr	4:28 am ▲ 3.3 ft	10:41 am ▼ 0.3 ft	4:09 pm ▲ 3.5 ft	11:17 pm ▼ -0.7 ft
Sa	5:13 am ▲ 3.1 ft	11:09 am ▼ 0.6 ft	4:33 pm ▲ 3.6 ft	11:58 pm ▼ -0.8 ft
Su	6:00 am ▲ 2.9 ft	11:38 am ▼ 0.9 ft	5:01 pm ▲ 3.7 ft	
Mo	12:45 am ▼ -0.7 ft	6:55 am ▲ 2.5 ft	12:08 pm ▼ 1.2 ft	5:32 pm ▲ 3.6 ft
Tu	1:42 am ▼ -0.5 ft	8:05 am ▲ 2.2 ft	12:41 pm ▼ 1.5 ft	6:09 pm ▲ 3.4 ft
We	2:57 am ▼ -0.3 ft	9:49 am ▲ 2.0 ft	1:25 pm ▼ 1.7 ft	6:58 pm ▲ 3.1 ft

Shell Point, Spring Creek

Th	3:31 am ▲ 3.3 ft	9:38 am ▼ 0.1 ft	3:36 pm ▲ 3.6 ft	9:58 pm ▼ -0.4 ft
Fr	4:14 am ▲ 3.6 ft	10:06 am ▼ 0.4 ft	4:00 pm ▲ 3.7 ft	10:38 pm ▼ -0.7 ft
Sa	5:00 am ▲ 3.5 ft	10:34 am ▼ 0.7 ft	4:25 pm ▲ 3.8 ft	11:20 pm ▼ -0.8 ft
Su	5:48 am ▲ 3.3 ft	11:03 am ▼ 1.1 ft	4:52 pm ▲ 3.9 ft	
Mo	12:08 am ▼ -0.8 ft	6:42 am ▲ 2.9 ft	11:34 am ▼ 1.4 ft	5:23 pm ▲ 3.8 ft
Tu	1:05 am ▼ -0.6 ft	7:49 am ▲ 2.6 ft	12:07 pm ▼ 1.7 ft	5:59 pm ▲ 3.7 ft
We	2:18 am ▼ -0.3 ft	9:26 am ▲ 2.3 ft	12:51 pm ▼ 2.0 ft	6:45 pm ▲ 3.3 ft

Alligator Point, Ochlockonee Bay

Th	3:02 am ▲ 2.7 ft	9:21 am ▼ 0.0 ft	3:03 pm ▲ 2.7 ft	9:46 pm ▼ -0.4 ft
Fr	3:44 am ▲ 2.7 ft	9:48 am ▼ 0.2 ft	3:25 pm ▲ 2.8 ft	10:24 pm ▼ -0.5 ft
Sa	4:29 am ▲ 2.5 ft	10:16 am ▼ 0.5 ft	3:49 pm ▲ 2.9 ft	11:05 pm ▼ -0.6 ft
Su	5:16 am ▲ 2.3 ft	10:45 am ▼ 0.7 ft	4:17 pm ▲ 3.0 ft	11:52 pm ▼ -0.6 ft
Mo	6:11 am ▲ 2.0 ft	11:15 am ▼ 0.9 ft	4:48 pm ▲ 2.9 ft	
Tu	12:49 am ▼ -0.4 ft	7:21 am ▲ 1.8 ft	11:48 am ▼ 1.2 ft	5:25 pm ▲ 2.8 ft
We	2:04 am ▼ -0.2 ft	9:05 am ▲ 1.6 ft	12:32 pm ▼ 1.4 ft	6:14 pm ▲ 2.5 ft

St. Teresa, Turkey Pt.

Th	3:08 am ▲ 2.7 ft	9:15 am ▼ 0.2 ft	3:10 pm ▲ 2.6 ft	9:32 pm ▼ -0.3 ft
Fr	3:55 am ▲ 2.7 ft	9:45 am ▼ 0.5 ft	3:33 pm ▲ 2.8 ft	10:12 pm ▼ -0.6 ft
Sa	4:45 am ▲ 2.6 ft	10:14 am ▼ 0.8 ft	4:00 pm ▲ 2.9 ft	10:55 pm ▼ -0.8 ft
Su	5:39 am ▲ 2.4 ft	10:43 am ▼ 1.1 ft	4:30 pm ▲ 3.0 ft	11:44 pm ▼ -0.8 ft
Mo	6:39 am ▲ 2.2 ft	11:08 am ▼ 1.4 ft	5:03 pm ▲ 3.0 ft	
Tu	12:41 am ▼ -0.7 ft	7:57 am ▲ 1.9 ft	11:27 am ▼ 1.6 ft	5:41 pm ▲ 2.9 ft
We	1:54 am ▼ -0.5 ft	9:29 am ▲ 1.7 ft		

Dog Island West End

Th	3:32 am ▲ 2.4 ft	9:38 am ▼ 0.3 ft	3:31 pm ▲ 2.2 ft	9:52 pm ▼ -0.3 ft
Fr	4:24 am ▲ 2.3 ft	10:07 am ▼ 0.6 ft	3:55 pm ▲ 2.4 ft	10:35 pm ▼ -0.5 ft
Sa	5:18 am ▲ 2.2 ft	10:36 am ▼ 0.9 ft	4:22 pm ▲ 2.5 ft	11:23 pm ▼ -0.6 ft
Su	6:13 am ▲ 2.1 ft	11:05 am ▼ 1.2 ft	4:51 pm ▲ 2.5 ft	
Mo	12:15 am ▼ -0.7 ft	7:13 am ▲ 1.8 ft	11:28 am ▼ 1.5 ft	5:24 pm ▲ 2.5 ft
Tu	1:11 am ▼ -0.6 ft	8:00 pm ▲ 1.8 ft		
We	2:20 am ▼ -0.4 ft	9:26 am ▲ 1.6 ft		

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

The Old Pro: Cold weather will drive seatrout and reds into creeks



By AL HARTMAN

It's been in the 80's and we are having three days at 32. We will lose some plants I'm sure and it is going to have some effect the fish too. Right now we are killing Trout and Redfish with almost anything you offer.

Top water hoppers have been really hot. Large crab pieces are a favorite with the reds along with live minnows or shrimp. Trout like live shrimp a bunch also. But if you can't get them top water lures will put them in your boat. If it gets cold go up river and find deep holes with cut bait, shrimp and plastic worms on a jig. Some days Reds and Trout will grab a bucktail jig. So take several rods set up with different offerings and try them until you find out what they prefer. What you do is drift with one, then go back and try another. If none do well

look for a different hole. A lot of creek entrances can produce good results too. Seatrout are open year round. You can keep 5 that are between 15-19 inches. You can keep one oversize Trout in the five fish limit. Redfish are open year round also. You can only keep one per person and 4 per vessel. Keeper size is 18-27 inches no over size allowed. Sheepshead are plentiful right now also. Fun to catch and very good eating. You are allowed 8 per person yearly. But 50 per vessel March through April. Minimum size is 12 inches. Well, get out there and wet some lines. Happy Fishing!

Underwater Wakulla

By Gregg Stanton

The lightless environment. June 7, 2012

I recently looked up Wikipedia for a list of diving hazards and precautions when preparing a lesson on Zero Visibility Diving. The list is impressive, considering that the human terrestrial condition taken underwater is complicated by constraints resulting from the density of the water (800 times that of air). We are predominantly a visual animal on land. Visual distortions of light's refraction, reflection and absorption, when available and when light is absent, limit our productivity underwater. Use of remote sensing technology, such as photography, videography, magnetometry and the wide range of sonar (side scan, beacon, Didson, and fathom) assist when light is limited. Under these conditions, why dive? Most people agree, there is little reason to get wet if you cannot enjoy the experience. But we forget that while recreational diving is the most common form of scuba diving, most of these dives include good visibility (even at night) as a prerequisite. There are those, however, who dive our river bottom in search of fossil. The river current can erode the floor and banks, creating near zero visibility and continuously expose paleontology remains which are often found by touch. Shipwreck and cave diving can also be visually challenged by high sediments often kicked up by the divers themselves. In all of these cases, underwater lamps are of little help as the sediments reflect or absorb the light around the bulb, producing little effect. I found this to be true when my father asked me to retrieve his anchor in a reservoir one day. What could be easier? He had tied the anchor line to a tree so all I needed to do was follow it down. Visibility midway dropped to zero within a few feet of the surface. And I was soon following the line through submerged entangling tree limbs for another 30 feet. I found the anchor, had to cut it loose and spent the rest of an hour extricating myself out. Afterward, I advised my father to next time purchase a new anchor. Professional diving obligates diving beyond enjoyment. These are people who search for items in a lightless environment. Divers in the Apalachicola River mine for lost harvested wood, now preserved in the mud after inundation for centuries. We have lined our Dive Center with such wood creating a rustic motif. Underwater archaeologists have perfected zero visibility techniques to study historic shipwrecks such as the Maple Leaf. Once the ship is located, usually by remote sensing technology, special cameras embedded in clear water bags are lowered over structures to document details otherwise not visible. On a student project of ours conducted in Mobile Bay, Ala., we dragged a magnetometer behind our boat, which identified anomalies, or magnetic ticks on a paper plotter. Then, we sent a dive team down on every anomaly. The most successful team was the one with an artist. He would feel the anomaly at depth and return to draw it out on paper on the surface. Some were refrigerators or anchors or cars dumped as artificial reefs, while others were small and medium vessels buried in the sediment with portions protruding up through the mud. The data retrieved was better than a photograph! We soon assigned an artist to every dive team. Police dive teams are routinely asked to search for missing people and items such as cars, guns and safes, dropped into watery graves less likely to be visited by the recreational minded divers. Hazards abound in zero visibility, from unseen entanglements, to chemical and biological contaminants. Only the best trained should go searching for lost items in such conditions. Once found, underwater crime scene investigation protocols must be followed or the quality of the evidence can be compromised. Fingerprints, for example, can be pulled from submerged items, providing the items are handled properly. Once removed from the water, items must be properly preserved or they will rapidly deteriorate. Editor's Note: This is a repeat of a column from 2012.

Thursday, March 26, 2026

A JOY-FILLED EASTER

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Event takes place from 6pm-8pm

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Speaking your mind – at what cost?

By **SHERYL H. BOLDT**

Several years ago, Brianna, a Facebook friend, reminded us that when we become wiser with our words, life becomes better. Sometimes, the wisest words are the ones we choose not to say.

Are you known for

speaking your mind? If done well, the ability to express your opinion with courage – and respect – can bring about positive change in your community, your culture and even your home.

But what happens when our words create disharmony instead of harmony?

Every day, I'm aware that two conflicting natures war within me. One pulls me away from God, toward selfishness, impatience and pride. The other draws me toward Him – to love, humility and obedience.

Colossians 4:6 (ESV) says, "Let your speech

always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person."

Christians are called to be salt. But if we're not careful, our anger can drown out our message.

How many times have our words created tension in our relationships? How often have we been so focused on making our point that we failed to notice the hurt we left behind – the chill in the room or the way our words landed like a sledgehammer?

Sometimes the fallout is so painful that others don't want to be around

us. Sometimes we don't even want to be around ourselves. In the process, we may damage our witness in ways that can't be restored.

And the damage doesn't stop there. Gossip, careless criticism and spreading rumors can effectively damage others' reputations. How we manage our communications can open or close doors in our ministry and job opportunities.

Isn't it true that the often-delayed consequences of our actions can postpone our repentance? What if each time we gave in to our sinful

nature, we experienced an immediate consequence (like an instant breakup or shame at being exposed)? I suspect we'd repent much sooner and save ourselves and others a lot of pain.

On the other hand, imagine if we truly submitted our words to the Holy Spirit. Consider what it would be like to express ourselves out of a deep awareness of who we are in Christ instead of being driven by raw emotion.

How can we live out Colossians 4:6? Maybe the best way is to pray before we speak.

Our identity as a fol-

lower of Christ should show up in every conversation we have. This doesn't mean we'll never sin, but our attitude toward sinful speech should change. We'd no longer excuse it or accept it as being okay.

Instead, we'll aim to speak words that are gracious and seasoned with salt, aligning with God's heart and purposes.

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.

Waiting for the rain

By **CHERYL CRUCE**

It was called the Sand Pond, a little place in the woods just south of town. During dry seasons there was not a drop of water – only a wide stretch of white sand. We often took the children there for afternoon picnics, spreading a blanket beneath the trees while they played for hours in the sand. Then, almost like magic, the rains would

come, and before long the same place would fill with cool, clear water. It was still the Sand Pond – the very same place – just living through different seasons.

So many times in life I have found myself in different seasons as well – seasons of drought and seasons of plenty. Scripture often calls those dry seasons the wilderness. They are the moments when our strength feels thin and hope seems to fade. Yet the Bible shows us that the wilderness is often where God meets His people.

Scripture gives us a beautiful example of this in the life of the prophet Elijah. Not long after a great victory on Mount Carmel, Elijah found himself fleeing into the

wilderness. Exhausted and discouraged, he prayed that he had reached the end of his strength. God did not meet Elijah with judgment, but with care. As Elijah rested, an angel came with food and water – urging him to rise and eat, because the journey ahead was too much for him alone. After Elijah had regained his strength, God led him forward once again. Sometimes the most spiritual thing God does for us is simply restore our strength for the journey.

Even Jesus experienced the wilderness. Before His ministry began, Jesus spent forty days in a lonely place of testing. In this difficult season, far from the

crowds and the work ahead, God remained close. Scripture tells us that Jesus was sustained in the wilderness and strengthened for the calling ahead. When Jesus left that lonely place, He did not leave weakened or defeated. He stepped forward ready for the ministry God had placed before Him. The wilderness had not taken anything from Jesus. Instead, it had prepared Him.

In much the same way, God does not bring us to the wilderness to condemn us. He brings us there to restore us. Psalm 23 reminds us that the Lord is a shepherd who restores the soul. He does not simply patch us up. He restores us and gently mends

what has grown weary within us, renewing the strength we need for the journey ahead.

What we often see as empty places in our own lives are not empty at all. Sometimes they are the very places where God restores our strength, deepens our faith, and quietly prepares us for the next part of the journey, even when we cannot yet see what lies ahead.

Looking back now, I realize the lesson of the Sand Pond. Even when the water had disappeared and the ground looked dry and empty, it was still a good place to be. Children still laughed, the breeze still moved through the trees, and the sun still warmed the earth. The

place had not lost its beauty; it was simply living through a different season. Our lives can be like that as well. Even when the waters seem low and the wilderness feels long, God is still present – quietly restoring our strength and preparing us for whatever comes next. Sometimes we are simply waiting for the rain. And even in that waiting, God is already at work within us.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

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

OUT TO PASTOR

Just another pain in the neck

By **JAMES SNYDER**

For some reason, the other week I thought of my maternal grandfather, after whom I was named.

He had a farm up in the hills of Pennsylvania, and when I would visit, my cousins and I would get together and make fun of old grandpa. I didn't understand at the time, but I'm beginning to understand now.

Grandpa had more pain in every part of his body than anybody I knew. Every time he got up to walk, his knees would creak. He had pain in his hips, in his back, and every part of his body had some pain. He limped as he walked.

My cousins and I thought it was hilarious because we didn't know about this thing called pain. For the most part, we thought he was acting and trying to make us laugh.

If that was his objective, he was very successful. We were very careful to laugh only behind his back out of due respect. After all, he was our grandfather.

Now that he's gone and it's been over 50 years since he died, I can't help but think of his pain and how he handled it day after day. Thinking back, I should've paid attention to how he handled that pain, but at the time, I could not associate his pain with me.

I did not know very much about pain. I didn't have too much pain as a young person. I had what was called a "boo-boo", which was hardly a pain. And I must say, a lot of my "boo-boos" were manufactured. The reason was that the medicine for a "boo-boo" was ice cream. The serious "boo-boos" required chocolate ice cream.

Whenever I was hungry for ice cream, I would make up some "boo-boo," and my mother always gave me the medicine. That's why I always thought grandpa was manufacturing his pain. My only problem was that I never could figure out what his medicine was for that pain.

It wasn't until recently that I began to appreciate grandpa's pain. It started a few years ago when I had a heart attack. That was just the beginning.

I'm at the point now that when I wake up in the morning, I make a bet on which pain will be first that day. My body must've been listening to me because whatever

er pain I chose, it was always something other than that.

Actually, I'm the kind of person who does not like to acknowledge my pain. Yes, as a young person, recognizing my "boo-boo" was different. That always involved ice cream. But now, when I have pain, I need to take a pill.

Every pain in my body needs a different pill, or so my doctor says. And, as you know, doctors are always right. Just ask The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

A few years back, I was hit with shingles on my right side. Fortunately, I saw my doctor within 24 hours and modified the results accordingly. To this day, I have pain in my right hip and my knee.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage told me that I need to use a cane, because a cane will make me able.

I thought about it and realized what Cain had done to Abel. I may have pain, but I'm not stupid.

When she says that, I smile at her and say, "That's OK my dear. I got

it all under control." She looks at me and laughs, and I would rather deal with her laugh than with the pain I have.

The other week, I was in the waiting room, and as I was there, I looked around. It must've been my imagination, but I seemed to be the youngest person in that room.

Half a dozen of the people there were using walking canes. Most of them were hobbling to see the doctor. I've never seen such a crowd of older people.

Then it hit me like a pie in the face. Looking at all of these old people in that room with all kinds of pain, I realized that I fit in perfectly. That really startled me at the time.

Instead of seeing a medical doctor, I need to see a psychologist.

I was thinking, as I looked around at the people there, is there a time when this pain ends? How long do I have to put up with pain?

As I was thinking about this I remembered a verse in the Bible that addresses this.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

As painful as my sufferings are, they are only temporary. One moment in heaven and I won't remember any of my pain. As I trust Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour

my destiny is assured.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, email jamessnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamessnyderministries.com.



Sopchoppy United Methodist Church

Pastor Cheryl Mixon-Cruce 850-962-2511

Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Worship 11 a.m.
Bible Study Wed. 6 p.m.



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Deacon David Harris • E-Mail: dcdoc@comcast.net
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Monday, Thursday and Friday 8:30 am
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Rosary: Mon., Thurs. and Fri. - after 8:30 Mass
Wednesday 6:30 pm
Sunday 9:45 am
First Saturday: Mass at 9:00 am
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Obituaries

DEATH NOTICES

- **Mary Alaska Brown**, 91, of Spring Creek, died March 15, 2026.
- **David Deater**, 81, of Crawfordville, died February 22, 2026.
- **Steven Farner**, 80, of Rockville, Indiana, died March 7, 2026.
- **Raymond Houston**, 76, of Crawfordville, died March 10, 2026.
- **Mary Ellen McKenzie Kratofil**, 68, of Tallahassee, died March 8, 2026.

- **Dollie Mason**, 76, of Crawfordville, died March 11, 2026.
 - **Madge Matheson**, 95, of Crawfordville, died March 13, 2026.
 - **Richard Lenell Sanders Sr.**, 74, of Crawfordville, died March 9, 2026.
 - **Alice Crosby Thompson**, 89, of Sopchoppy, died March 16, 2026
- Family Funeral Home at Harvey-Young Chapel, 850-926-5919, www.familyfhc.com.

Sheriff's Report

This report is for activity March 6 to 13. There were 1,284 total calls for service during the week.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

• A traffic stop was conducted for tag attached not assigned. Further investigation revealed the driver had multiple suspensions and was deemed a habitual offender. The subject advised the car was his mom's and he did not know it had the wrong tag. He was placed under arrest and transported to the jail.

• Deputy Austin Rivers responded to Walmart in reference to Loss Prevention stating that a subject passed all points of sale without paying for \$68 worth of items. After viewing video footage, probable cause existed to charge for the theft, but has no this subject with petit

theft. The subject was issued a Notice to Appear and a Trespass Warning and left the scene without any further incident.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7

• Deputy Zachary Godwin conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle for an expired registration. Contact was made with the occupants of the vehicle and probable cause was developed to search the vehicle. During a probable cause search of the vehicle, a small amount of marijuana was found and seized for destruction.

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

• A citizen reported the theft of jewelry from her home. She believes personnel with a cleaning company out of Tallahassee is responsible for the theft, but has no proof. She is unsure at

this time if she wants to press charges.

• Deputy Zachary Godwin and Deputy Aimee Hoagland responded to the 200 block of Hilliardville Road in reference to citizens reporting that two unknown vehicles were on the property without permission. The reporting person stated he captured the vehicles and suspects on his game camera that was then stolen by the suspects. Through investigative measures, two possible suspects were identified in this case as well as the suspect vehicles that were used to commit the theft.

MONDAY, MARCH 9

• A citizen came into the Sheriff's Office lobby to report a stolen vehicle. Contact was made with the victim, who advised he let his nephew borrow a vehicle two weeks ago and he has yet to return it. Further investigation revealed he

has reached out to the subject via phone on numerous occasions with no response. Based on this a warrant request will be sought after.

• Lt. Michael Alexander conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle in the 800 block of Spring Creek Highway for unlawful speed. Contact was made with the driver who advised she was traveling from Marietta to Shell Point and was tired. Upon further investigation, she admitted to consuming a beer earlier in the evening. Due to the statement and the slurring of her words, a DUI investigation was conducted. She refused to submit to field sobriety tests, however, her breath test indicated she was over the legal limit upon her arrival at the Wakulla County Jail. She was subsequently charged with DUI.

TUESDAY, MARCH 10

• Deputy Jonathan

Kilbourn responded to Walmart in reference to a theft. A male and female were observed passing the final point of sale with \$110.44 of unpaid merchandise.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

• A subject was observed operating a vehicle who is known by deputies not to have a valid license which was confirmed by dispatch. The driver was taken into custody and transported to the jail.

• Deputy Ian Kilbourn responded to the 1600 block of Coastal Highway in reference to a subject vandalizing the residence owned by the reporting party. Due to conflicting statements, probable cause could not be established for an arrest.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

• A citizen in the 300 block of Otter Creek

Road called in reference to a found property complaint. Contact was made with the reporting person, who discovered a wallet in the roadway of Highway 319. The owner of the property appears to reside in Leon County. The property was impounded for safekeeping.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13

• Contact was made with Walmart Asset Protection, who advised they observed a white female failing to scan multiple items at the self-checkout area. The suspect was observed placing multiple unscanned items inside her grocery bags via surveillance video. She was subsequently placed under arrest and transported to the Wakulla County Jail.

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

Screening of film focusing on menopause set for March 26

Special to The Sun

Radiant Image Health will host a free community screening of the documentary *The M Factor: Before the Pause* on Thursday, March 26 at 6 p.m. at the Wakulla County Public Library.

The film highlights the impact of perimenopause and menopause on women's health and aims to bring awareness to a stage of life that affects every woman but is often misunderstood or overlooked in traditional healthcare settings. Many women experience symptoms such as fatigue, sleep disturbances, weight gain, brain fog, anxiety, and hormonal changes during this time but may struggle to find clear answers or support.

The event is designed to provide education, conversation, and connection for women in the community who want to better understand what is happening in their bodies during this phase of life.

Following the screening, attendees will have the opportunity to participate in an open discussion and connect with several local women-owned wellness businesses that support women's health and wellbeing.

The event is hosted by Jessi Oxendine, FNP-C, owner and founder of Radiant Image Health in Crawfordville. Radiant Image Health focuses on a comprehensive and integrative approach to care, combining the best of conventional and functional medicine to help women better understand and optimize their health.

"At Radiant Image, we take the time to look deeper at what is happening in the body," Oxendine said. "Our goal is to provide women with answers and a personalized plan for their health rather than simply managing symptoms. We go way beyond just a prescription."

Oxendine hopes

THE [M] FACTOR 2
BEFORE THE PAUSE
PERIMENOPAUSE

Jessica Oxendine
ARNP, FNP-C
Owner, Radiant Image Health,
Hormone Expert

THURSDAY, MARCH 26
6:00PM Screening & Conversation
Wakulla Co. Library | CRAWFORDVILLE, FL
A FILM BY WOMEN IN THE ROOM PRODUCTIONS AND TAKE FLIGHT PRODUCTIONS

the event will encourage open conversations about women's hormonal health and help attendees feel more informed, supported, and empowered.

"This film brings attention to a topic that many women experience but rarely talk about," she said. "My hope is that it helps women realize they are not alone and that there are resources and

support available right here in our community."

The event is free and open to the public, though attendees are encouraged to register in advance to help organizers plan seating.

For more information or to reserve a seat, visit Radiant Image Health online or follow Radiant Image Health on social media.

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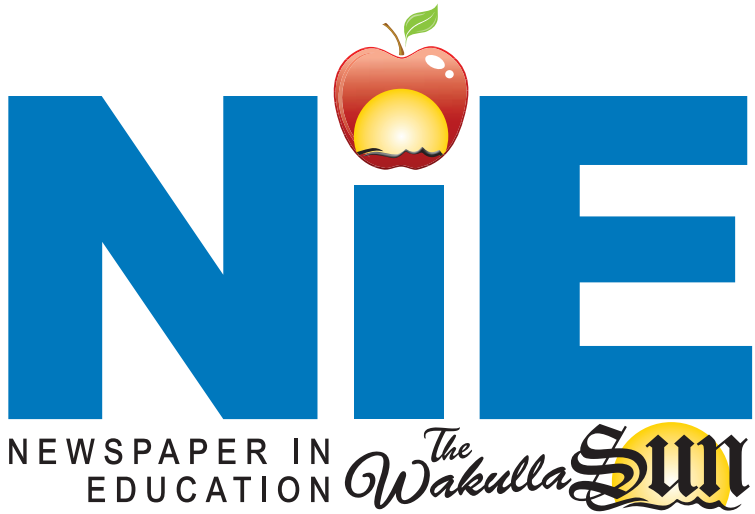
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USE THE NEWS

1. THE ACADEMY AWARD GOES TO...

At the 98th Academy Awards, the movie “One Battle After Another” won best picture, and its director, Paul Thomas Anderson, finally earned his first Oscar after many years of making admired films. Michael B. Jordan won best actor for playing twin brothers in “Sinners,” while Jessie Buckley won best actress for “Hamnet.” Another big moment came when Autumn Durald Arkapaw became the first woman ever to win the Oscar for cinematography. The ceremony celebrated movies, music, and creativity, while also honoring people in Hollywood who had died. It was a night filled with cheering, emotional speeches, and important firsts. Imagine you are a kid reporter covering the Academy Awards for a school news show. In 4 to 6 sentences, describe which award win or historic moment you would choose as the biggest news of the night and explain why it stands out to you. Be sure to include at least two details from the story, such as who won, what movie they were honored for, or why the moment was important. Then add 1 to 2 more sentences describing one award you would invent for movies, such as funniest scene, best animal character, or most exciting ending, and explain what kind of film should win it.

2. THE HIDDEN MUSIC OF EVERYDAY LIFE

There is a kind of music called “sync music” that many people hear every day without even noticing it. It plays in television shows, commercials, YouTube videos, social media clips, and even podcasts because it is made to match video and help set a mood. Some of this music is simple background sound, but other sync songs are created by talented composers and singers who work quickly to fit a scene just right. This kind of music has become a huge part of the music business, helping many artists earn a living. Even though people may not know the song names, they are hearing sync

music almost everywhere. Imagine a silent video clip of your choice, such as a baking video, a soccer highlight, a pet video, or a scene from a reality show. Write a short soundtrack plan explaining what kind of music should play in the beginning, middle, and end of the clip. Describe how the music would change the mood from one part to another and explain why those sound choices would help the viewer understand what is happening.

3. DOGS HELP WRITERS DREAM BIG

Many famous authors say dogs help them write by keeping them company, making them laugh, and sometimes even inspiring new ideas.

Writers like Alice Hoffman, Isabel Allende, Roxane Gay, Amy Tan, and Paul Yoon shared stories about the dogs who sit beside them while they work, follow them around the house, or even seem to listen when they talk through their ideas. Some dogs are calm and cuddly, while others are silly, demanding, or full of energy. The writers said their dogs help them feel less lonely and more connected to the world. For some of them, their pets have even helped shape the stories and characters they create. Write a short journal entry from the point of view of a dog who lives with an author. Describe what the dog sees each day while the writer works, what the dog thinks the human is

doing, and how the dog “helps” with the job. Try to make the journal entry sound playful and full of personality.

4. ICELAND’S MAN WHO FIGHTS LAVA

In Iceland, a firefighter named Helgi Hjorleifsson has helped lead an unusual effort to protect people and important places from flowing lava. When eruptions began near the town of Grindavik, workers built giant barriers and sprayed water on the lava to cool it and slow it down. Some people thought the plan sounded impossible, but it helped protect a power plant, the Blue Lagoon, and many houses. Helgi’s work is dangerous and tiring, but he says it is important to keep trying, even when a problem seems too big. Now, with another erup-

School distribution sponsored by



tion possibly coming, he is preparing to do it all again. Draw and label a simple safety diagram or map showing how people tried to protect the town from lava. Include the volcano, the flowing lava, the barriers, the hoses or pumps, and the places they were trying to save. Then write a short explanation telling how each part of the plan worked and why cooling lava was such a difficult job.

5. BUMBLEBEE QUEENS CAN SURVIVE UNDERWATER

Scientists have discovered that queen bumblebees can survive underwater for as long as a week while they are in diapause, a hibernation-like resting state during the cold months. This is important because the underground plac-

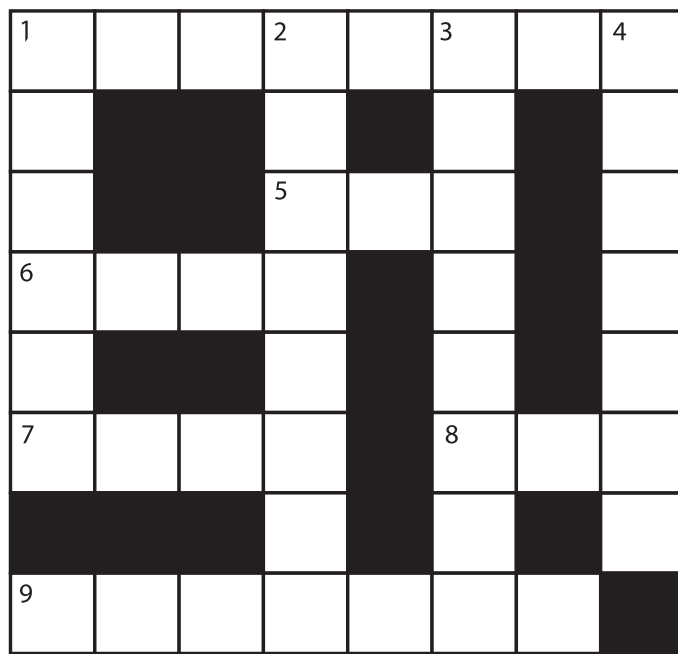
es where they spend winter can fill with water from rain or melting snow. Researchers found that even underwater, the bees still use oxygen and release carbon dioxide, which means they are somehow able to breathe while submerged. Their bodies slow down so much during diapause that they need very little energy to stay alive. This surprising discovery may help scientists learn more about how bees survive winter and how many bee species may share this special ability. Pretend you are making a “Did You Know?” science card for a classroom display about this discovery. Write a short paragraph explaining the most surprising fact you learned about the queen bumblebees and why it matters.



The collapsible version of this device was made popular by Parisian merchant Jean Marius in the early 18th century.

Answer: Umbrella

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- Rainy day tool
- Incorporated
- Widely admired
- A sea eagle
- Opposite of stand
- State of atmosphere

DOWN

- Positive notion
- Most rain
- Sport with netted stick
- Means or skill

Answers:
Across
1. Umbrella 5. Inc. 6. Icon 7. Erne 8. Sit
9. Weather
Down
1. Upside 2. Rainiest 3. Lacrosse 4. Ability

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1861: The Kingdom of Italy is proclaimed.

1958: The United States launches the first solar-powered satellite.

1966: Off the coast of Spain in the Mediterranean, a submarine finds a missing American hydrogen bomb.

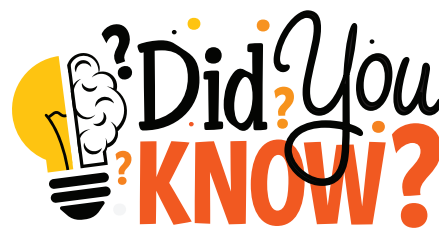
NEW WORD

RUNNER

part of an umbrella that slides up and down



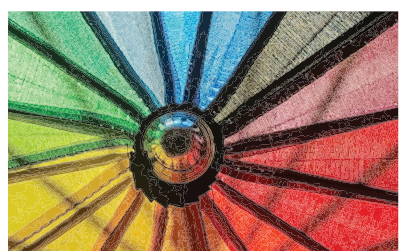
- English:** Rain
- Spanish:** Lluvia
- Italian:** Pioggia
- French:** Pluie
- German:** Regen



A vented canopy on an umbrella is an extra layer that allows air to pass through. This helps to prevent the wind from carrying larger umbrellas away.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Umbrella

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NOTICE OF FICTITIOUS NAME

FICTITIOUS NAME

Notice under Fictitious Name Law, pursuant to Section 856.09, Florida Statutes. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, Jeffrey & Brooke Young, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of **YOUNG'S TIMELESS TRAVELS**

Located at 438 Hickorywood Drive, Crawfordville, FL 32327
In the County of Wakulla
Intends to register the said name with the Division of Corporation of the Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida.

Published on March 19, 2026

FICTITIOUS NAME

Notice under Fictitious Name Law, pursuant to Section 856.09, Florida Statutes. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, Kirsten Bates, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of **THE DOGGO COMPANY & MORE!**

Located at 9 WF Magers Rd Crawfordville, FL 32327
In the County of Wakulla
Intends to register the said name with the Division of Corporation of the Department of State, Tallahassee, Florida.

Published on March 19, 2026

NOTICE OF SALE

0319-0326 TWS NOS
NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE:

Notice is hereby given that on Wednesday, April 1st, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. the following vessel may be sold at public sale at 85 Harbour Point Drive, Crawfordville, Florida 32327 for the amount owed on the vessel to satisfy the lien for storage charges and any administrative fees allowed pursuant to Florida Statute 713.585.

Sailboat 33' Morgan. Vin# MRY02358M79H-333

The name, address and telephone number and public sale location of the marina claiming the lien for unpaid charges is Shell Point Harbor Marina 85 Harbour Point Drive, Crawfordville Florida 32327, 850-544-5658. The customer or person claiming an interest, or a lien may redeem the vessel by satisfying the amount due in cash on or before the sale date and time. The customer or person claiming an interest or lien on a vessel may file a demand for hearing with the Clerk of Court in Wakulla County where the vessel is held to determine whether the vessel has been wrongfully taken or withheld from him or her. At any time before the date of sale, a customer or person of record claiming a lien on the vessel may post a cash payment or Surety bond in the amount stated on the invoice with the Clerk of Circuit Court where the disputed transaction occurred.

March 19, 26, 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

0312-0319 TWS NTC STEVEN KEITH WILSON

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR WAKULLA COUNTY, FLORIDA
PROBATE DIVISION

FILE NO. 2026 CP 16

IN RE: ESTATE OF STEVEN KEITH WILSON, Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The administration of the estate of Steven Keith Wilson, deceased, whose date of death was November 9, 2025, is pending in the Circuit Court for Wakulla County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 3056 Crawfordville Hwy., Crawfordville, FL 32327. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

The personal representative has no duty to discover whether any property held at the time of the decedent's death by the decedent or the decedent's surviving spouse is property to which the Florida Uniform Disposition of Community Property Rights at Death Act as described in ss. 732.216-732.228, applies, or may apply, unless a written demand is made by a creditor as specified under s. 732.2211, Florida Statutes.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIOD SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is March 12, 2026.

Attorney for Personal Representative:
s/Kandace E. Rudd
E-Mail Addresses:
Kandace@mclawgroup.com
danielle@mclawgroup.com
Florida Bar No. 1003917
Waldoch & McConaughay, P.A.
1632 Metropolitan Circle
Tallahassee, FL 32308
Telephone: 850-385-1246

Personal Representative:
Stephanie Lynn Wilson
175 Tarpine Drive
Panacea, FL 32346

March 12, 19, 2026



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WELCOME

NOTICE OF ACTION

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR WAKULLA COUNTY, FLORIDA

SOUTHERN ACRES HOLDINGS LLC, Case No.: 25000174CAAXMX
PLAINTIFF,
V.
BERNADETTE M. ARNOLD AND SHARON MCCLENDON,
DEFENDANTS.

NOTICE OF ACTION

To: BERNADETTE M. ARNOLD, and all others claiming by, through and under BERNADETTE M. ARNOLD and SHARON MCCLENDON, and all others claiming by, through and under SHARON MCCLENDON

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to quiet the title on the following real property in Wakulla County, Florida:

Commence at a point marking the Southeast corner of the Northeast Quarter of Lot 59 of the Hartsfield survey of Lands in Wakulla County, Florida, also being the Southwest corner of the Northwest Quarter of Lot 54 of the Hartsfield survey of Lands in Wakulla County, Florida, thence run North 16 degrees 59 minutes 01 seconds West 347.28 feet to an iron pipe lying on the East boundary of said Lot 59 (as monumented), said point marking the POINT OF BEGINNING. From said POINT OF BEGINNING run North 17 degrees 10 minutes 19 seconds West along said East boundary (as monumented) 1,068.51 feet to an iron pipe, lying on the Southerly right of way boundary of Shadeville Road/ State Road No. 61; thence leaving said East boundary run South 69 degrees 59 minutes 46 seconds West along said Southerly right of way boundary 431.30 feet to an iron pipe; thence leaving said Southerly right of way boundary run South 04 degrees 13 minutes 33 seconds West 1,125.98 feet to an iron pipe; thence run North 72 degrees 44 minutes 56 seconds East 841.58 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING.

The above said parcel being those same lands as described in Official Records Book 162, Page 760 of the Public Records of Wakulla County, Florida.

a/k/a Shadeville Rd, Crawfordville, FL 32327/Parcel ID: 00-00-059-000-10044-000

has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on J.D. Manzo, of Manzo & Associates, P.A., Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is 4767 New Broad Street, Orlando, FL 32814, telephone number (407) 514-2692, on or before **April 18, 2026**, and file the original with the Clerk of this Court either before service on Plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint or petition.

DATED this 9th day of March, 2026.

{{County Court Seal}}
Greg James
As Clerk of the Court
Wakulla County, Florida
By: /s/ Rachel Howard
As Deputy Clerk


March 19, 26, April 2, 9, 2026

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR WAKULLA COUNTY, FLORIDA

PAFFORD PROPERTIES & CONSTRUCTION, LLC, A FLORIDA LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY, PLAINTIFF,
V.
HELEN L. HOWARD, IF ALIVE, AND IF DECEASED, UNKNOWN POUSES, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, CREDITORS, ASSIGNS, AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING BY THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST HER, DEFENDANTS.

NOTICE OF ACTION

To: HELEN L. HOWARD; if alive, and if deceased, unknown spouses, heirs, devisees, grantees, creditors, assigns, and all other parties claiming by through, under or against her.

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that a Complaint for Quiet Title on the following property in Wakulla County, Florida:

LOT FOURTEEN (14), BLOCK "M", MAGNOLIA GARDENS, AS PER PLAT OF SAID SUBDIVISION RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 1, PAGE 37, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF WAKULLA COUNTY, FLORIDA.

Wakulla County Parcel ID No. 00-00-078-013-11217-000
Address: Melody Lane, Crawfordville, FL

has been filed against you and others, and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on **ANDREW J. POWER, ESQUIRE, SMITH, THOMPSON, SHAW, COLÓN & POWER, P.A.**, Plaintiff's attorneys, 3520 Thomasville Road, Fourth Floor, Tallahassee, Florida 32309-3469, no more than thirty (30) days from the first publication date of this Notice of Action, and file the original with the Clerk of this Court either before service on Plaintiff's attorneys or immediately thereafter; otherwise, a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint or petition.

WITNESS my hand and seal of said court at Crawfordville, Florida 24th day of February, 2026.

{{County Court Seal}}
Greg James
As Clerk of the Court
Wakulla County, Florida
By: /s/ Ethan Brown
As Deputy Clerk


March 5, 12, 19, 26, 2026

STATE WIDE CLASSIFIEDS

Home Improvement/Service

PROTECT YOUR HOME from pests safely and affordably. Roaches, Bed Bugs, Rodent, Termite, Spiders and other pests. Locally owned and affordable. Call for a quote or inspection today 1-833-542-1732 Have zip code of property ready when calling!

BATH & SHOWER UPDATES in as little as ONE DAY! Affordable prices - No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & Military Discounts available. Call: 1-833-754-2465

Medical

STOP OVERPAYING FOR HEALTH INSURANCE! Reduce premiums and out-of-pocket costs while getting the coverage you need! Call now for a competitive free quote. 1-877-351-3442. Plus... Income based government subsidies are available for those that qualify!

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CASH PAID FOR HIGH-END MEN'S SPORT WATCHES. Rolex, Breitling, Omega, Patek Philippe, Heuer, Daytona, GMT, Submariner and Speedmaster. These brands only! Call for a quote: 1-833-641-0211

Miscellaneous

Donate your vehicle to help find missing children and prevent abduction. Fast free pickup, running or not, 24 hr response. No emission test required, maximum tax deduction. Support Find the Children, call: 1-833-546-7050.

Medical

ATTENTION OXYGEN THERAPY USERS! Discover Oxygen Therapy That Moves with You with Inogen Portable Oxygen Concentrators. FREE information kit. Call 1-833-661-3729

We Buy Houses for Cash AS-IS! No repairs. No fuss. Any condition. Easy process. Call, get cash offer and get paid. Call today for your fair cash offer: 1-321-603-3026

Attention: VIAGRA and CIALIS USERS! A cheaper alternative to high drugstore prices! 50 Pill Special - Only \$99! 100% guaranteed. CALL NOW: 1-877-349-1243



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



**More Public Notices
appear on Pages 3 and 14**



WAKULLA COUNTY/CITY OF ST. MARKS COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM PROGRESS REPORT March 11, 2026



On October 29, 1999, the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners adopted the Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) as the County's Community Rating System (CRS) Floodplain Management Plan. Once every five years, the LMS must be evaluated to assess what should be revised in the plan to ensure that it is up to date and compliant with federal and state requirements. This plan has been updated as required over the years by the LMS Steering Committee (a volunteer workgroup). The current LMS was adopted by the City of St. Marks Council on March 11, 2021, and approved by the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners on April 5, 2021. The revised LMS was reviewed and approved by state and federal agencies on May 4, 2021, which places its expiration in 2026. The LMS Working Group has been working on an updated LMS that is currently under review with FDEM.

The LMS contains a list of projects that can be utilized to assist Wakulla County (County) and the City of St. Marks (City) in reducing their risk and vulnerability to known hazards. This list is routinely updated by the LMS Working Group, and the current version of this list contains 79 projects. Nine projects were completed and six projects were removed if they were not viable or feasible from the 2025 project list.

The first two projects seek to improve stormwater drainage in Panacea through a drainage study and associated drainage improvements. The County has conducted an elevation survey of local roads on the east side of Panacea from Bottoms Road to Levy Bay Road to facilitate these projects. Both components of this project have been included in the Adopted Infrastructure Plan.

The replacement and elevation of the Sopchoppy River Bridge on Highway 375, Smith Creek Road, is the next priority item. Funding is being sought to replace and elevate this critical infrastructure. The fourth-ranked project is for stormwater mitigation in the Wakulla Gardens subdivision. To date, a stormwater study for the Wakulla Gardens subdivision has been completed, and construction plans for six flood basins in the subdivision are also complete. Stormwater improvements are currently being made in this subdivision in conjunction with central sewer expansions and road improvements.

The next several projects pertain to sewer infrastructure. Project five seeks to upgrade and expand the entire county-wide sewer system and better protect it from flood-induced impacts.

Several septic-to-sewer projects have been completed over the past year and additional phases of septic-to-sewer projects are slated to be designed, engineered, and constructed over the next five years. Projects six through sixteen on the LMS Projects List involve the raising and waterproofing of electrical panels located in the Special Flood Hazard Areas to prevent stormwater intrusion. These improvements are proposed at the following sewer lift stations: Number 1 – 7, 10, 11, 28, and 30. Two lift stations were improved in the past year. Thus far, funding has been secured from Florida Commerce, Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP) Resilient Florida Program, and FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program for improvements to each of these lift stations. Currently, #2, #7, #28 and #30 are under construction and #1, #3, #4, #5, and #10 are under design.

The 17th and 18th ranked endeavors pertain to the City of St. Marks and are awaiting funding. These projects include sewer expansions and the removal of septic tanks from the surge area within the City of St. Marks and a stormwater mitigation project that focuses on the conveyance of flood water through the City. While the City has completed some drainage improvements along Fire Escape Road, funding is required to support further drainage improvement efforts within the City limits. In the interim, the County is performing the required ditch maintenance for conveyance.

The next several projects cover a variety of topics. Project number 19 is the Florida Division of Forestry's fire prevention public awareness campaign. This is an ongoing project that has included activities, such as seminars on fire prevention. An upgrade of the road construction standards in flood-prone areas is the next ranked project, and County staff will pursue this regulation change as time permits. Item number 21 pertains to a natural hazard ongoing public outreach campaign. Wakulla County has placed updated flood zone maps and flood informational material on its website as part of this project. In addition, educational information related to hurricane preparedness, flood insurance, and permitting within the Special Flood Hazard Area is included in the local newspaper each year. Wakulla County and the City of St. Marks have also adopted a Program for Public Information (PPI) that details the outreach projects that are done annually.

Projects ranked 22 and 23 on the LMS list affect the Sopchoppy area. Project 22 proposes the replacement and elevation of the Sopchoppy River Bridge on County Road 22, Rose Street. Funding for this item is required to move this project forward. Stormwater mitigation in Sopchoppy includes a study, land acquisition, and construction of detention ponds is ranked as project 23. The City of Sopchoppy continues to seek funding from the Community Development Block Grant Mitigation Program (CDBG-MIT) to complete Phase Three of its planned stormwater improvements.

The next few items on the list cover various topics. The first of these implements is the Florida Forestry Service's fuel reduction plan to better protect residents from wildfires. Progress towards this goal has been made through prescribed burning during the last year. The next item on the list is the replacement of overhead power lines with underground cables in the City of St. Marks. This relocation project includes

work that so far has been completed on Waterfront Street, Riverside Drive, and a portion of Port Leon Drive, extending north to City Hall. Funding is required for the next phase which will extend north to the town center. Item numbers 26 and 27 are for beach renourishment along the Mashas Sands shoreline. This will address several coastal erosion problems in the area and has been included in the Adopted Infrastructure Plan. Funding is needed to update the feasibility study for this project. The retrofitting of homes was ranked as project number 28, and this can improve a structure's resistance to the effects of natural hazards. Through programs such as the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) funding, qualifying residential property owners can better prepare their homes for natural events. Additional funding is anticipated for the SHIP program, and citizens are encouraged to inquire about their eligibility.

Flooding and evacuation-related activities make up the next few projects. The four-laning of Crawfordville Highway, which is a critical evacuation route, was included as the next priority. County staff has worked with the Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) on this project and four-laning is complete in the northern portion of the County. The acquisition of severe repetitive loss properties for the purpose of creating open space is the next project. As severe repetitive loss property owners become interested and funding is available, these projects will be pursued. An ongoing education campaign targeted towards the owners of properties within repetitive loss areas, which are areas where property owners have made multiple flood insurance claims, is the next item included on the list. Each year County staff sends informational materials covering several flood-related topics and property protection measures to these owners.

The list of undertakings continues with projects for the hardening of government facilities, electrical lines, and roadways. The next project proposes installing a generator at the Wakulla County Court House. The pursuit of funding for the Wakulla County Court House generator project is ongoing. Project number 33 includes the installation of wiring for generators in new government buildings. This activity shall occur during the construction of new facilities as warranted.

Retrofitting overhead electrical lines with underground lines in areas with heavy tree canopies throughout the County makes up the next item. Project 35 proposes to elevate Mashas Sands Road and Project number 36 in this group is for a road elevation study. This would include a County-wide study to assess which roadways have the greatest need and would be the most feasible to elevate above potential floodwaters. Funding is required to pursue these endeavors.

Project number 37 on the list seeks to replace septic tanks on Live Oak Island with central sewer. Next, the Working Group has included a project to harden existing shelters to increase sheltering capacity and make modifications as needed to accommodate special needs sheltering. Funding is needed to proceed with these projects. The County has been awarded funding through CDBG-MIT to develop a comprehensive Shelter Plan which seeks to assess existing shelters and identify suitable facilities that meet American Red Cross Hurricane Evacuation Selection Standards.

The following set of projects relates to Talquin Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s infrastructure improvements. The first of these projects is to pursue the installation of a generator at the Songbird well water site to continue to serve 2,600 residents after a storm event. Talquin has indicated that they intended to apply for grant funding to complete this project. The next is to convert 5,573 overhead electrical service wires to underground service. The final project in this group is to install anchors at 115 transformer pads in the coastal areas of Shell Point, Live Oak Island, Oyster Bay, and Spring Creek to prevent storm surges from moving the transformers off the pads. Funding is needed to proceed with these two projects.

Conducting needed repairs to the existing bridge located over the Sopchoppy River on Highway 375 makes up Project 42. The County is currently seeking funding to support this project. Performing prescribed burning at County facilities, including Mashas Sands and the Wakulla Equestrian Center, to reduce hurricane impacts are included as projects numbered 43 and 44, respectively. The Mashas Sand Land Management Plan has been updated and includes provisions for prescribed burning. Funding is being sought for burning to be completed in the future.

Project number 45 aims to construct a new combined Emergency Operations Center (EOC)/E911 Communication Center to serve as the Primary Public Safety Answering Point. The County was approved in 2022 for appropriation funding through the Dunn Community Projects to support the project and additional federal funding in 2023. Construction is underway, and this project is anticipated to be complete this year.

Additional public safety infrastructure projects are listed as projects numbered 46 through 48, with land acquisition and/or construction of three new Fire Rescue Stations located in Shell Point, the City of St. Marks, and at the intersection of Lonnie Raker Road and Bloxham Cutoff. These new stations will maximize coverage areas and reduce response times for public safety and emergency response throughout Wakulla County. The County has acquired all three sites. Funding for the construction of new Fire Rescue Station No. 5 was obtained through legislative appropriations, and design is complete with construction expected to begin soon.

Project 49 is for the design, construction, and replacement bridge for Otter Creek Rise along Surf Road. Currently this structure is considered critical as it is significant to public

safety, evacuation, and flood mitigation efforts. This project is also included within the County's Adopted Infrastructure Plan and Capital Improvements Element. Funding has been secured through FDOT to support this project. Preliminary engineering and design are currently underway.

Projects 50 through 52 relate to various sewer improvements including, a new master lift stations at Wakulla Middle School and Medart Recreation Park, sewer collection system infrastructure, and septic-to-sewer projects in the Wildwood subdivision, as well as at the Medart Recreation Park. Construction is currently underway and nearly complete for Wakulla Middle School Master Lift Station and Wildwood septic-to-sewer project.

The projects listed as 53 through 56 are Talquin Electric Cooperative, Inc., additional infrastructure improvement projects. These projects are all awaiting funding. Project 53 is for installation of backfeeds for two circuits at the Wakulla substation providing reliability to a major grocery store, Wakulla County Sheriff's Office, and Senior Center. The next project is to replace underground facilities to the Shell Point community. Project 55 is to improve reliability between circuits in a loop feed by installing downline protection devices. The project listed as 56 is for additional Land Mobile Radio coverage to improve communication throughout Talquin's coverage area to allow for more efficient response to service requests and outages.

Project 57 is an ongoing project through several county departments to analyze existing transportation corridors, identify potential improvements and possible alternative access to improve evacuation routes.

Constructing a new Fire Rescue Training Facility with a logistical staging area is Project 58. This project has been broken into multiple phases with the first phase of design complete, and the second phase of design is underway.

Project 59 is to expand the gymnasium at the Wakulla County Community Center to add bathroom facilities and electrical improvements so the site will serve as a Regional Host Disaster Recovery Center. Legislative funding was awarded to the County in fiscal year 2024, and the project is under design. Construction is anticipated to be completed in 2026.

The next two projects are for additional Fire Stations, one in Panacea and the other at Smith Creek, to maximize coverage areas and reduce response time. Funding is required to complete these projects.

Wastewater Improvements to the Panacea Shores Subdivision is Project 62 to mitigate against stormwater impacts. Funding has been requested to Rebuild Florida Storms Infrastructure and Repair Program. Project 63 is to construct a new master lift station to relieve the overburdened Hickory Lift Station. The contract has been awarded and construction is underway.

Project 64 is to install a generator and update bathrooms to the Wakulla County Senior Center to create a comfort center for post disaster events. The Wakulla County Senior Center is seeking funding to complete these tasks.

Updating St. Marks Wastewater Treatment Plant by installing a generator and transfer switch with a hurricane/flood-proof enclosure is Project 65, added by the City of St. Marks. The City of St. Marks is working to identify funding mechanisms for conducting these improvements.

The next project is at the Sheriff's Work Camp to install a generator, to provide laundry, showers and sleeping areas for first responders. A funding source for this project is still being determined.

Project 67 is to replace the piping and pumps at Lift Station #35 on Hickory Ave. Funding is required to complete this upgrade.

Removal of non-conforming structure in a high hazard flood zone at the Big Bend Maritime Center is Project 69. Funding is required to remove the structure, but landscaping at this location is near completion.

Projects 70-76 are to install permanent generators at major intersections throughout the County. To date two permanent generators have been installed. One at the intersection at Spring Creek Hwy and MLK Blvd and one at Spring Creek Highway and Shadeville Road. A funding source is required to install these seven generators to complete these projects.

To repair/replace the Tide Creek Bridge is identified as Project 77, as this is a critical evacuation route for Mash Island and funding is still being sought for this project.

The final two projects relate to public safety. Project 78 is to acquire land and construct new Fire Rescue Station north of Wakulla Station to maximize coverage areas and response time to east central Wakulla. And Project 79 is to acquire land and construct new Fire Rescue Station in Medart to maximize coverage areas and response time to Medart area. A funding source is required to complete these projects.

This Progress Report was prepared by Ashley Rowland-Yost of the Wakulla County Planning and Community Development Department. It will be made available to the governing boards through a memorandum and through a news release to the local press, "The Wakulla Sun", for publication. Its availability to the public will be posted on the Board of County Commissioners' Public Notice board and County website, www.mywakulla.com. Copies of this Report and related documents may be obtained from the Planning and Community Development Department, which is located at 3093 Crawfordville Highway.

For more information, please contact Ashley Rowland-Yost, CRS Coordinator for Wakulla County and City of St. Marks, at (850) 926-3695 or ayost@mywakulla.com.

Optimist essay winners announced

Special to The Sun

Wakulla High School and Riversprings Middle School recently participated in the essay contest sponsored by the Coastal Optimist Club.

The theme for this year's contest was "How My Acts of Service Help Me Understand What My Community Means to Me." Students were given the opportunity to write an essay of 700 to 800 words for cash prizes.

Winning first place was Tristen Hubbell, a sophomore at Wakulla High. Tristen received \$100 cash for the wonderful job she did focusing on theme with a very well-written, insightful paper.

The second place prize was awarded to WHS sophomore Ashlyn Haynes. Ashlyn, who wrote about how community means not only being involved with people but also growing as a person, received \$75 cash for her essay.

Third place went to Scarlette Brown, a ju-



WHS Principal Michele Falk, contest chair Nancy Floyd Richardson and Jo Ann Daniels congratulate the WHS first, second and third place winners, Tristen Hubbell, Ashlyn Haynes and Scarlette Brown.



Riversprings Principal Josh Sandgren, Assistant Principal Bethany Pafford, teacher James Daniels and Coastal Optimist President Jo Ann Daniels congratulate winners Hudson Folsom, Kerrigan Jamison and Hunter Antrobus.

nior at WHS, who received \$50. Scarlette's essay was well-constructed with a wide range of community involvement from soccer refereeing and physical therapy clinics to mission trips and forming close connections.

Receiving fourth place was Hudson Fol-

som from Riversprings Middle School. To him, community means meeting, helping, and feeding people as well as developing a strong sense of belonging. Hudson was awarded \$25.

Two other students from Riversprings Middle won Honor-

able Mention Awards. Kerrigan Jamison and Hunter Antrobus received \$20 each. Kerrigan did a great job of relating to the theme through her service to senior citizens, filling gift boxes and participating in food drives. Hunter's paper emphasized that good feelings and uplifted spirits are a big part of what community means. All three of the RES students are in the 8th grade.

The awards were given out by Jo Ann Daniels, President of the Coastal Optimist Club. The club has been promoting student success through poster, essay and oratorical contests as well as scholarships since 1971.

The club motto is "Friend of Youth" and they are part of Optimist International, one of the world's largest service clubs. The themes for both the essay and oratorical contests are available on-line at optimistinternational.org by November of each year.

City has deal with Rick Ott

By LINDA ANN McDONALD
Correspondent

The Sopchoppy City Commission voted last week to move forward with Rick Ott Performance and Production (ROPP) to upgrade the historic Sopchoppy Theater from an occasional performance venue to a regional arts venue, conference center, and community gathering space.

The city commission met on Monday, March 9. Ott, owner of Sopchoppy's From the Heart Studio, will be activating the venue year-round to create a unique conference and event destination to support local artists, strengthen the community while preserving and celebrating the building's history.

Through utilization of the theater, ROPP will provide venue rental, ticketed events, vendor partnerships, educational programming, and festivals.

Also, by combining professional production capabilities with strong relationships in the regional arts and events community, ROPP will expand the theater's use beyond occasional performances into a year-round destination for concerts, theater, conferences, and community events.

Mina Sutton of Wakulla Community Theater said WCT can schedule their events with ROPP and will continually provide Wakulla with entertainment.

In another matter, organizers of Sopchoppy's annual Fourth of July have changed the start time of the morning parade. By moving things to the cooler part of the day, festival-goers can enjoy the festivities without the midday heat. The parade kicks off at 4 p.m. and the Myron B. Hodge City Park opens with fireworks beginning at dark.



More Public Notices appear on Pages 3 and 13

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.

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF WAKULLA COUNTY, FLORIDA NOTICE OF INTENT TO CHANGE

RULE CHAPTER AND TITLE: School Board Policy 2.25 School Board Adopted Plans (Code of Student Conduct & Attendance Policies)

PURPOSE AND EFFECT: To reflect procedural clarity and legislative alignment.

LEGAL AUTHORITY: 1001.41, 1001.42, Florida Statutes

LAWS IMPLEMENTED: 1001.41, 1001.43 Florida Statutes

ECONOMIC IMPACT: None

REVISION ORIGINATED BY: Coleman Wells, Director of Safety & Student Conduct

REVISION APPROVED BY: Richard Myhre, Superintendent of Schools

IF REQUESTED WITHIN TWENTY-ONE (28) DAYS OF THIS NOTICE, A HEARING WILL BE HELD -

TIME: 5:45 p.m.

PLACE: Administrative Offices, Wakulla County School Board 69 Arran Road, Crawfordville, Florida 32327

DATE: April 20, 2026

A COPY OF THE PROPOSED REVISION MAY BE OBTAINED AT COST FROM:
Wakulla County School Board, Post Office Box 100, 69 Arran Road, Crawfordville, Florida 32326-0100

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT March 19, 2026

WAKULLA'S FLOODPLAIN

Flooding can threaten at any time of the year from various sources. Wakulla County and the City of St. Marks regulate construction and development in the floodplain to ensure that buildings will be protected from flood damage. All developments in the floodplain, not just construction of buildings, need permits. Filling and similar work are prohibited in certain areas, so check with the Planning and Community Development Department before you begin a project to build, fill or otherwise. Should unauthorized development in the floodplain be witnessed by a citizen, they can report it to the County's Code Enforcement at (850) 926-3695. One thing Code Enforcement always needs assistance with is litter. Remember that dumping litter is prohibited in or on any freshwater lake, river, stream and tidal or coastal water of the County. It is vital to keep trash out of our floodplain!

It is also important to know that houses in the floodplain that are substantially damaged by events such as fire or flood must be repaired to new construction standards. This includes elevating the structure to or above the base flood elevation when it is repaired. Damage is considered to be substantial when the cost of reconstruction equals or exceeds 50% of the building's market value. When damage of this type occurs to a structure and repairs are necessary, visit the Planning and Community Development Department for a Development Permit Application to begin your permitting process. A recorded warranty deed and site plan, showing the improvements/repairs to the property, will be required to complete this Application. Once the Development Permit Application is obtained it should be submitted to the Building Department for permitting. Depending upon the types of work performed additional materials will be requested from the Building Department and/or other Departments to complete the permitting for the structure. Applicable fees are due for Development Permit Applications and Building Department permits, unless otherwise waived by the Commissioners for widespread storm damage. Even when flood damage is not substantial, consider constructing all of your improvements so they are elevated above the flood level.

An important protection measure in regard to flooding is flood insurance. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods, so obtaining a flood insurance policy can help you should you experience a flood. Since Wakulla County and the City of St. Marks participate in the National Flood Insurance Program, you can purchase a separate flood insurance policy in these areas. This insurance is backed by the Federal government and is available to properties that have been previously flooded. Don't wait for the next flood to buy insurance protection. In most cases, there is a 30-day waiting period before National Flood Insurance Program coverage takes effect. Also, consider obtaining contents coverage if it is not already included in your current insurance policy. Contact your insurance agent for more information on rates and coverage.

When the County experiences a flood remember to turn around, don't drown!

For further information on these topics contact the Planning and Community Development Department at (850) 926-3695. March 19, 2026

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT

WAKULLA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) 2026-05

CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING AND INSPECTION SERVICES FOR DR. MLK JR. MEMORIAL ROAD MULTIPURPOSE PATH

PROPOSAL ADVERTISE DATE: MARCH 19, 2026

PROPOSAL RELEASE DATE: MARCH 19, 2026

RESPONSE DUE DATE AND TIME: APRIL 17, 2026 @ 3:00 PM EST

Sealed proposals will be received at the office of the Board of County Commissioners, 3093 Crawfordville Highway, Crawfordville, FL 32327; until **3:00 P.M.**, Local Time, on **APRIL 17, 2026** at which time the proposals will be opened and read aloud. Proposals received after said time will be returned unopened.

The principal feature of this procurement by the County is known as: **Construction Engineering and Inspection Services for Dr. MLK Jr. Memorial Road Multipurpose Path.**

The specifications of this procurement are stated in the **RFQ 2026-05.**

This RFQ and any addenda issued will be posted to the County's website at www.mywakulla.com or can be obtained by contacting the County Procurement Office at 850-926-0919 or bnowak@mywakulla.com.

A person or affiliate who has been placed on the convicted Respondent list following a conviction for a public entity crime may not submit a bid on a contract to provide any goods or services to a public entity, may not submit a bid on a contract with a public entity for the construction or repair of a public building or public work, may not submit bids on leases of real property to a public entity, may not be awarded or perform work as a contractor, supplier, subcontractor, or consultant under a contract with any public entity, and may not transact business with any public entity in excess of the threshold amount provided in Section 287.017, Florida Statutes, for CATEGORY TWO (\$35,000) for a period of 36 months from the date of being placed on the convicted Respondent list.

The Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to waive informalities in any bid; reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part; re-bid a project, in whole or in part; and to accept a proposal that in its judgment is the lowest and best bid of a responsible bidder. In accepting a bid, Wakulla County may award a contract based only on the base bid, the base bid plus all alternates, or the base bid plus any alternates which Wakulla County selects with all decisions being made based upon what Wakulla County believes to be the best interests of its ratepayers, in the reasonable exercise of its discretion. Wakulla County further reserves the right to increase or decrease quantities as may be required to meet the needs of Wakulla County, at the unit price which was bid. Wakulla County does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, marital status and disability/handicapped status in employment or provision of service.

Wakulla County is an Equal Opportunity Employer
MBE/WBE businesses are encouraged to participate
Wakulla County strictly enforces open and fair competition

ADA – Special Accommodations: Any person requiring accommodations by the County due to a disability should call the Procurement Office at 850-926-0919 at least five (5) days prior to any pre-response conference, response opening, or meeting. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the County Procurement Office by the Florida Relay Service, which can be reached at 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

March 19, 2026

Weekly Roundup: Oops, we did it again

By **JIM TURNER**
News Service of Florida

TALLAHASSEE – For a second consecutive year, state legislators will need extra time to complete the budget and some other key issues.

Lawmakers concluded the regular session Friday at 3:15 p.m. after approving final handful of bills that will eventually go to Gov. Ron DeSantis.

They'll pause for a few weeks before returning in mid-April. But they reached this point as if sleepwalking under the specter of extended time since DeSantis announced an April special session on congressional redistricting days before the regular session began in January.

House Minority Leader Pentrice Driskell joked about the inevitable when opening a conference call with reporters on Monday.

"It's week nine. Folks we did it. We made it to the half-way point," Driskell said. "That's what it feels like anyway."

LET IT LINGER

Days after House Speaker Daniel Perez publicly acknowledged that legislators wouldn't complete the budget on time, Perez and Senate President Ben Albritton both went to their respective podiums on Thursday to explain the process for the weeks ahead that will include returning to Tallahassee in mid-April.

"I respect the priorities of each party, because we all have a role to play in a balanced budget that keeps Florida strong, safe and free," said Albritton, R-Wauchula. "I look forward (to) continued productive discussions on joint allocations in the coming weeks, and to resuming our work on the budget in the near future."

Perez, R-Miami, echoed those remarks.

"In the weeks ahead, we will continue working with our Senate counterparts to ensure we return in the proper posture to complete our constitutional responsibility of passing a state budget," Perez said.

The move means whatever didn't pass Friday is dead.

Nearly 2,000 bills and resolutions were filed for the regular session, including the budget, implementing and conforming bills. A little over 10 percent found support from the Senate and House.

Still, unlike in 2025, when a standoff over tax cuts led to the extended session, there isn't a single policy dispute that's created the deadlock.

The \$1.4 billion gap between the House and Senate's preferred budgets isn't that large considering the \$115 billion current spending plan, but each chamber has refused to budge on priority bills for the other chamber. And they haven't been able to reach accord on how much to divide among the different sections that need funding, from health care and education to transportation and economic development.

"There's a subtext of animosity and mistrust among what (former Governor) Lawton Chiles called the three legs of the stool --- the Senate President, the House Speaker and the Governor. And I think that's in our way," Sen. Don Gaetz, R-Niceville, a former Senate President who has served in the Senate for more than a decade.

DeSantis, who like Albritton hasn't been on the closest of terms with Perez, criticized the "personal agenda" of legislators left unnamed for the budget talks requiring extra time.

MAINTAINING PRIORITIES

The Republican-controlled Legislature was still able to come together this week on some key issues for the party.

The House voted 80-25 on Thursday on a measure (HB 1471) which backs up DeSantis' executive order from December that named two Islamic groups as terrorist organizations.

The Senate approved the bill on a 25-11 vote last week, after adding a provision outlining rules for expelling students at state universities who "promote" support for such groups.

"The only people surrendering their children to terrorism are the people who are going to vote 'no' on this bill," Rep. Hillary Cassel, R-Dania Beach, the sponsor of the measure, declared on the floor before the vote.

Democrats who voted against it said it would violate the First Amendment rights of groups and have a chilling effect on speech on campuses.

The same day, both chambers voted along party lines on a measure that requires voters to prove their citizenship at the ballot box, but not until 2027.

"What is our tolerance for fraud and lack of integrity?" said Sen. Erin Grall, R-Vero Beach, sponsor of the Senate version of the bill. "And yes, we have safe elections in Florida but they don't stay safe and secure if we don't pay attention to the large gaps that exist where we can address additional fraud."

Late efforts to allow government-issued student IDs to be included as acceptable photo identification at polling locations failed.

The proposal was among several amendments House Democrats unsuccessfully put forward on the election's package.

Orlando Democratic Rep. Anna Eskamani questioned the removal of student IDs from the list of acceptable photo identification to vote.

"I assume the reason why you're doing that is that you prefer some types of voters over other types of voters," Eskamani said.

NO 'PIGGYBACK' RIDE

Faced with projected shortfalls in the next few years, lawmakers decided not to link or "piggyback" the state's tax code to the federal government this year.

Changes made to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act passed by Congress last year and signed by President Donald Trump would have led to an up to \$3.5 billion cut to state coffers, benefitting mostly large businesses.

State economists have projected a surplus for the coming fiscal year, but if current spending trends aren't curtailed, shortfalls rise to nearly \$7 billion in two years.

STORY OF THE WEEK: The 2026 regular legislative session ends without lawmakers completing the budget for the next fiscal year.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK: "It's the same people coming back to the same place with the same grudges trying to do the same thing in the same way. So surprise, surprise it doesn't seem to work," Niceville Republican Sen. Don Gaetz, a former Senate President, assessing the current state of play between the House and Senate leadership.



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Join us as we honor our incredible volunteers for their time, dedication, and passion for serving youth and our community. Enjoy a relaxing brunch, special awards, and a fun silent auction as we say thank you to those who make a difference every day. All proceeds will support Wakulla County Coalition for Youth as we continue fostering a safe, supportive environment where young people can learn, grow, and truly thrive.

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WRESTLING

Wakulla wrestling celebrates season

By **WALT JACOBS**
Correspondent

The Wakulla wrestling team and their families gathered last Thursday night at Wakulla High School to celebrate a spectacular season. At the beginning of the year, expectations were high for an experienced, senior-laden team and fans were excited for what looked to be a promising season ahead. The team went 28-1 in dual meets this season and advanced to the semifinals of the FHSAA State Dual Tournament.

As a team in the IBT postseason tournaments, Wakulla placed 3rd at Districts, 2nd at Regionals, and 8th at the State Tournament.

Individually, Wakulla had four district champions at the District 2 tournament: William Harvey, Brady Jackson, Troy Thaxton, and Blake Barodte.

At Regionals, Wakulla had two region champs in William Harvey and Brady Jackson.

Wakulla had 7 wrestlers qualify for the State Wrestling Tournament in total: William Harvey, Patrick Cooksey, Brady Jackson, Aaron Robinson, Clayton Manzi, and Blake Barodte.

When all the dust was settled, 5 War Eagle wrestlers had reached the podium in their respective weight classes.

• William Harvey, who was 64-4 on the season, was a runner-up in the 126 pound class.

• Brady Jackson



PHOTO OF THE WEEK
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Coach with seniors: Clayton Manzi, Blake Barodte, Aaron Robinson, Coach Nate Litowsky, Gavin Mitchell, Troy Thaxton, William Harvey, and Brady Jackson.

was 65-9 on the year and placed 6th at 138 pounds. Jackson also set single-season records for technical falls (38) and take-downs (239). The senior finished his career with 185 total wins.

• Aaron Robinson (52-10) placed 5th at 144 lbs. Robinson led the team for the third consecutive year in pins with 41 on the season and finished his career with 156 wins.

• Troy Thaxton (52-12) placed 7th at 150 pounds and finished his career with 144 wins.

• At 215 pounds, Blake Barodte (45-17) finished in 8th place and ended his career with 121 total wins.

Coach Nate Litowsky honored 4 wrestlers with awards for their outstanding performances throughout the year. For the wrestler who showed the greatest growth over

the course of the season, Gavin Mitchell was given the Most Improved Wrestler award.

Aaron Robinson was given the Heart of the Eagle, which is given to the wrestler who best represents the spirit and standards of the program.

The Iron Talon, which is given to the wrestler who displays true toughness, was awarded to Brady Jackson.

William Harvey was given the MVP award, which is awarded to the wrestler whose presence in the lineup makes the greatest impact on the team.

At the conclusion of the banquet, Harvey spoke to and about his teammates saying, "They have shaped who I am today. I am very grateful and honored to have been able to know them for the last two years." He added, "I wouldn't be where I am today with-

out each and every one of them." Harvey continued, "Everyone's story is different and beautiful in its own way, so it's important that y'all stop and smell the roses and enjoy it for what it is. It's yours, and that's what makes it special."

Cervantes once said, "The journey is better than the inn." Often we take trips to our favorite destinations and usually there are few, if any, surprises. In life and in sports it is not always as predictable. The journey is fraught with ups, downs, twists, turns, and pitfalls along the way. These young wrestlers have spent much of their lives trying to achieve goals that may not have been completely realized, but the lessons learned, the bonds that were forged, and the memories that they have made will last a lifetime.

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WRESTLERS of the WEEK



Aaron Robinson with Heart of the Eagle award.



Brady Jackson with the Iron Talon award.



Gavin Mitchell with the Most Improved award.



William Harvey with MVP award.

PHOTOS BY WALT JACOBS



Patrick Cooksey being named Team Captain.

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Crawfordville man faces federal charge of enticing minor

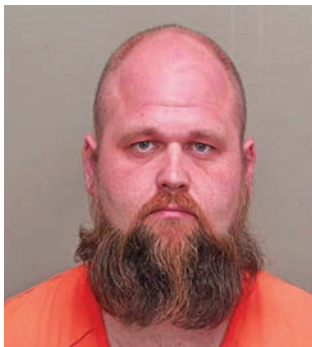
U.S. Attorney's Office

Anthony Wayne Lanier Jr., 33, of Crawfordville, was indicted by a federal grand jury charging him with one count of attempted enticement of a minor and one count of attempted transmission of obscene material. John P. Heekin, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, announced the charges today.

Lanier appeared for

his arraignment in federal court before U.S. Magistrate Judge Martin A. Fitzpatrick in Tallahassee. A jury trial is scheduled for May 4 before District Judge Robert L. Hinkle.

If convicted, Lanier faces a mandatory minimum of 10 years' imprisonment, and up to life imprisonment, on the attempted enticement count, and up to 10 years imprisonment on the attempted transmission of obscene ma-



Anthony Wayne Lanier Jr.

terial count.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs

Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, the Tallahassee Police Department and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Assistant U.S. Attorney Meredith L. Steer is prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an allegation by a grand jury that a defendant has committed a violation of federal criminal law and is not evidence of guilt. All defendants are presumed innocent and entitled

to a fair trial, during which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice and led by the U.S. Attorney's Offices and the Criminal Divi-

sions Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), it marshals federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims.

For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.



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