Perry News-Herald

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Lakey lawsuit settled for $55,000



Former County Administrator Ted Lakey shakes former Commissioner Malcolm Page's hand as he leaves his final county meeting.

The Taylor County Commission has settled a lawsuit filed by former Taylor County Administrator Ted Lakey over his 2018 firing for $55,000.

The county will only have to pay $5,000 of that amount to cover the deductible on its liability insurance policy.

Citing job performance issues and a lack of community involvement, the county commission voted 4-0 to terminate Lakey's contract at a Nov. 14, 2018, special meeting, less than two years after he was hired on Jan. 30, 2017.

Lakey filed suit against the board in late 2019, alleging the county violated his employment contract and due process by not providing him with a hearing prior to his termination, as well as three other claims.

A mediation hearing was held earlier this month in the case between the county, Lakey and the insurance carrier, which approved the settlement. County Attorney Conrad Bishop and Commissioner Michael Newman represented the county during the mediation hearing, which was held virtually due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The commission held a special meeting Tuesday, March 23, during which County Attorney Conrad Bishop outlined the settlement agreement.

"Taylor County was sued on five or six different counts in the complaint filed by Mr. Lakey," Bishop said. "This settled all of them, and it is a complete release of all those claims. One of the things most folks need to remember is, if he was successful in some of them, he may have been entitled to attorneys' fees. And, if he got attorneys' fees, they would have been astronomical. Also, you need to remember, your deductible is $5,000."

Under the agreement, Lakey will receive $55,000 and no attorneys' fees, according to Bishop.

"That's all he's going to get in the way of monetary," he said. "The insurance company is going to pay it. I questioned that, and they assured us that they would pay that.

"[Lakey] was also suing to get his job back," Bishop said. "He will not knowingly apply or knowingly agree to

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Courts back in session

Taylor County held its first jury trial in more than a year this week, although the proceedings had a slightly different look than before the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak began.

The misdemeanor driving under the influence (DUI) case, which stemmed from a traffic stop last June, ended soon after the state rested its case when the judge accepted a plea change submitted by the defendant after he reached an agreement with the state attorney's office.

Some 90 prospective jurors received summons earlier this month from Clerk of Court Gary Knowles, instructing them to arrive at the Taylor County Courthouse on the morning of Friday, March 19, and remain parked in their cars until called.

Ultimately, 25 individuals were brought to the third-floor courtroom for jury selection, where they were positioned throughout the jury box and other public seating areas to maintain social distancing. Everyone was also required to wear masks.

County Judge Bill Blue thanked the jurors for their service, noting that this was the first jury trial held in either county or circuit court in Taylor County since before the COVID-19 outbreak.

Soon after the proceedings began, three of the 25 prospective jurors were dismissed due to established exemptions.

For the rest, the defense attorney and state attorney conducted

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What happens after you flush?

City has state-of-the-art $13 million sewer plant



Caruso uses an 18-foot transparent tube referred to as a "sludge judge" to monitor the amount of solid waste settling on the bottom of a clarifier basin.

The City of Perry's new state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant is now up and running, replacing the original 70-year-old plant with a larger, more advanced and efficient facility.

Construction of the new $13-million treatment plant was completed in early 2020, approximately two years after construction began adjacent to the original treatment plant located at the end of Goff Street off US 98.

The new plant boasts newer technology, including aeration and oxidation processes that remove harmful chemicals from the waste.

"The new plant was set up from the start to be a nutrient removal facility," Wastewater Superintendent Stephen Caruso said, explaining that the previous plant was unable to remove nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus.

According to Caruso, the facility's new nutrient-removal process not only meets, but exceeds, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and federal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) permit criteria, putting out effluent water that is "crystal clear and clean."

From the time a city utility customer flushes a toilet or pulls the drain plug of a sink, the wastewater is pushed through underground pipes before being received at the primary treatment station, where rotary screenings remove all of the plastic from the waste.

"That process removes mostly inorganics," Caruso said, adding with a laugh, "You would be surprised what people flush down their toilets – children and their toys."

The rotary screenings consists of a 24-foot tall headworks, as well as a grit removal system, that filters out masses – such as trash

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Siegmeister law license suspended



Jeff Siegmeister

The Florida Bar has suspended former Third Judicial Circuit State Attorney Jeff Siegmeister's license to practice law for an indefinite period, even as he continues to be held in custody in Arizona awaiting his transfer to Florida to face multiple federal felony charges.

At the same time, his former wife, Jamie Dykes, remains in talks with the U.S. Attorney's Office regarding her claim to their 70-acre farm in Live Oak, which the government is seeking to seize as part of a fraud case brought against Siegmeister.

The same parcel of land is also connected with the felony case brought against Siegmeister by the U.S. District Court.

Last Friday, the Florida Supreme Court upheld a petition filed by The Florida Bar seeking to hold Siegmeister in contempt for failing to respond to to an official Bar inquiry.

In the order, the court states that Siegemister "is suspended from the practice of law effective 30 days from the date of this order so that the respondent can close out his practice

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Want a street light?

The Perry City Council has asked staff to develop an official street light policy following a request from property owners on Shady Oaks Lane.

Councilman Ward Ketring brought the request to the council at the city's March 23 meeting, prompting a discussion that led to the council asking staff to bring back a draft policy on how and when the city will have street lights installed along roads located within the city limits.

City Finance Director Penny Staffney, filling in for City Manager Taylor Brown, who missed the meeting due to illness, stated that the city is spending more than

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COVID vaccine age drops again

Taylor County residents age 40 and over are eligible to receive the coronavirus vaccine through the local health department beginning Monday, March 29, with vaccinations opening up to all residents age 18 or older the following Monday, April 5.

Gov. Ron DeSantis announced the age extension on March 25, making the vaccine widely available to adults of all ages nearly one month earlier than previously expected.

On March 22, DeSantis made vaccines available to those 50 and older, dropping the age requirements down from 60 due to a "relatively modest" demand.

He anticipated coronavirus vaccines being available

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One section 132nd Year, No. 13

Weather

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
79° / 67°	83° / 65°	81° / 65°

100% of the plant's final effluent is re-used

FLUSH
Continued from page 1

and sand – from the waste.

After traveling through the rotary screenings, the wastewater is pumped to the aeration and oxidation "ditch," which features 18-foot high walls and "bugs" – lots and lots of microscopic bugs.



Shown is a tumbler in the rotary screening process that filters out masses -- such as trash and sand -- from the waste.

These microorganisms, or microbes, are among the world's smallest creatures and play an important part in the secondary treatment process of wastewater by "eating" (or consuming) organic matter and filtering impurities from the water.

"It is a biological process. In the aeration and oxidation ditch, we just provide the bugs – or micro-organisms -- with oxygen," Caruso said.

This aeration process uses rotors with small fingers to throw the water into the air, forcing oxygen into the water.

"When we do this, we are aerating the zone, and it creates an atmosphere for the bugs to break down the ammonia in the waste to nitrogen," Caruso said.

In the oxidation zone of this process, the nitrogen is broken down into nitrite (NO2) and nitrate (NO3).

"The bugs see that 'O' as oxygen, and they strip it off before it is released into the atmosphere, so our effluent water is free of nitrites and nitrates.

The bugs continue the process of breaking down the chemicals and the organics from the waste as the water moves through the facility.

After the water filters through the aeration and oxidation process, it is sent to one of three of the facility's clarifiers, which act as settling basins.

As the mixed liquids and suspended solids sit in the clarifier, any remaining masses settle to the bottom. Periodically, employees need to know how much "sludge" has settled to the bottom of the clarifier basin.

"We use this tool – a 'sludge judge' to monitor the amount of sludge settling on the bottom of the basin," Caruso said, as he drew water into a 18-foot transparent tube.

"You can see how the water is clear at the top, and on the very bottom, you have a mass of bugs and sludge. We draw the sludge out and send it back upstairs, so the bugs can continue working, while the clear water runs off into the trough to go to the chlorine contact basins," Caruso said.

Sludge that has been through the aeration and oxidation ditch, as well as the clarifier basin, multiple times is eventually sent to the digesters, which serve to remove the water from the remaining waste mass.

"The sludge in the digester is five times thicker than what is in the aeration and oxidation ditch. We want to remove the water, so we do not have to haul water out to the sludge farm," Caruso explained.

The digesters have mixers, which are used to separate the water from the sludge.



The final effluent (shown above) is 100 percent re-used, with the clean wastewater being pumped to spray fields, where it is sprayed on grass fields, or sent to the Georgia-Pacific mill to be used in the mill's cooling towers.

"We will turn the mixers off, allow it to settle, and pump off the water that is on top. As it gets thicker, we take a truck out to load up the sludge," Caruso explained.

After the water is removed, the sludge goes to a drying bed before being loaded onto the truck again and taken to the residuals handling facility – affectionately known as "the sludge farm."

"We have a pretty interesting truck. It will inject the sludge into the ground, cover it back up and then grass will grow. The residuals basically serve as a human waste-based fertilizer. The grass pulls out other nutrients -- like phosphorus -- something that we do not remove," Caruso explained.

Meanwhile, the clear wastewater that runs into the trough of the clarifier basins is sent to the chlorine contact basin, where it is disinfected with sodium hypochlorite – high test bleach – that acts as a disinfectant agent.

The chlorine contact basin is baffled to allow the wastewater a minimum of 15 minutes of contact time as the bleach circulates through the water.

The final effluent is 100 percent re-used, with the clean wastewater being pumped to spray fields, where it is sprayed on grass fields, or sent to the Georgia-Pacific Foley Cellulose mill to be used in the mill's cooling towers.

The new wastewater treatment facility also features an onsite laboratory where the wastewater is monitored throughout the continuous treatment process.

The facility operates on 16-hour shifts, 365 days per year and treats 1.25 million gallons of wastewater each day, nearly half of which flows from the city's utility customers. The remainder is trucked to the facility from septic tanks or RV wastewater holding tanks located throughout the county.

The new facility was funded through a combination of loans and grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and DEP.

The funding included $6.1 million in grants, as well as a $2.9 million, 38-year USDA loan at a 2.75 percent annual percentage rate (APR) and a $4.4 million, 30-year interest-free loan from DEP.

The loan will be repaid using the City of Perry's portion of revenues from the local one-cent sales tax.

According to City Manager Taylor Brown, "These major infrastructure projects are building the city's capacity for expansion."

"These are not particularly glamorous projects, but they are super necessary. The benefits down the road will come when the tax base increases, and that's when you can build the fun things -- recreation and parks -- amenities the community would like to see in the future," Brown said.

Correction:



MoonPie Princess Contestant #5 Carolyn Grace Flaherty is the daughter of Britany Flaherty and Chris Floyd, and Tyler and Ashley Price.

Siegmeister was arrested in Arizona for bribery, extortion

SIEGMEISTER
Continued from page 1

and protect the interests of his existing clients. (Siegmeister) shall remain suspended until he has fully responded in writing to the official Bar inquiry, and until further order of this court."

Regarding the Live Oak farm, Dykes has filed claim of ownership interest in the property, asserting that, "Pursuant to a marital settlement agreement filed on May 26, 2020, in the circuit court in the Third Judicial Circuit in and for Suwannee County, Ms. Dykes agreed to transfer Defendant Real Property to her former husband, Jeffrey A. Siegmeister, upon his request.

"Ms. Dykes subsequently discovered that her husband committed fraud in the dissolution proceedings and he has since breached the terms of the marriage settlement agreement. As a result of her former husband's failure to abide by the terms of the marital settlement agreement, Ms. Dykes did not execute a Quit-Claim Deed and is in the process of seeking to set aside the Final Judgment and incorporated marital settlement agreement as a result of her former husband's fraud and breach of his obligations. Ms. Dykes remains a record title owner of the Defendant Real Property," Dykes' claim of ownership states.

"In addition, Jeffrey Siegmeister abandoned the home, allowed it to fall into a state of disrepair and failed to make mortgage, insurance and tax payments. As a result of Jeffrey Siegmeister's failure to meet his obligations with regard to both Ms. Dykes and the Defendant Real Property, Ms. Dykes has moved back into the home and asserts her homestead rights, reinstated the homeowners insurance policy, paid to have the home made habitable and sent payment to the mortgagees," Dykes claims.

In the latest filing in the case on Monday, Dykes was granted a third extension to respond to the forfeiture complaint, as she "remains in continued discussions with the U.S. regarding possible resolution of her claim to the property."

Siegmeister was arrested in Doulan Springs, Ariz., on Feb. 26 -- just two days after a federal grand jury handed down indictments against him and another attorney, M. Michael O'Steen, for bribery and extortion. Siegmeister was also charged with wire fraud and tax fraud.

He served as State Attorney for the Third Judicial Circuit – which includes Taylor County – from 2013-19 before abruptly resigning prior to the end of his term. At the time, he cited his pending divorce as the trigger for his resignation.

He also faces forfeiture proceedings for allegedly swindling nearly $1 million from from a dead man's estate.







City charged $131 per year per light

City spends over $200,000 per year on street lights

STREET LIGHT
Continued from page 1

$17,000 per month on street light fees city-wide.

"We have a street with some houses being developed on it making this request, and (City Public Works Director) Chester (McAfee) has a cost estimate," Staffney said, adding, "Once they (street lights) are in, it is pretty much a forever kind of thing."

Staffney relayed that Brown suggested the city develop an official policy detailing how requests for street lights would be handled, as well as using Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) guidelines to help determine how far apart the lights should be placed.

"Chester has looked at the street and says it could use five lights if we go with the recommended 300 feet spacing," Staffney said.

Ketring explained that Shady Oaks Lane was previously known as Landry Road and runs from a neighborhood street near Plantation Road and dead-ends into Landry Road, which connects to Old Dixie Highway, adding, "it used to be a two-rut dirt road to nowhere with nothing on it."

"It got paved and developed all down one side, and now the second side is developing," Ketring said.

"So, Duke Energy puts the lights up and then we are responsible for the costs?" Mayor Alan Hall asked.

"Yes, and they charge us $131.00 per year per light," McAfee replied. "This will be an additional $663 per year for these lights."

"Basically, the city is paying $250,000 per year for street lights right now," Staffney told the council.

"I believe the council put a moratorium on new street lights for a while due to the costs," McAfee said.

Staffney suggested the city consider placing three street lights on Shady Oak Lane for now – one at each end and one in the middle – and possibly add two others later.

"Taylor asked, and I would suggest, that we establish an official policy at the next meeting," Staffney said, adding that individual homeowners can contact Duke Energy directly and get their own security lights "like I do at my house."

When Hall asked for the council's direction, Ketring made a motion to install the five lights.

However, the motion was never seconded and did not move to a vote, as Curtis suggested city staff develop a policy first.

"We are talking about affecting an entire street full of people, and if you were doing speed bumps, stop signs or speed limit changes, we would typically give notice and allow them all a chance to provide input at a meeting first," Curtis said. "Some people out there may like dark shady oaks. So before voting to go spend a bunch of money, you may want to make it part of your policy to provide notice to affected landowners and hold a public meeting."

Ketring stated that he had received two requests for street lights from landowners who have built, or are building, houses along the road.

"It may be unanimous, but there could also be just those two, while others who live along the road may say they liked it as it is now," Curtis said.

"So they can do shady stuff on Shady Oaks," Hall joked.

Perry Police Department Chief Jamie Cruse cautioned the council to develop a policy with some mechanism in place to prevent the city from "blowing its budget" if numerous residents request street lights.

"Maybe I am just ignorant, but I thought we provided street lights if you lived within the city," Councilwoman Shirlie Hampton said.

"We pay for them, but I think it is a good policy to ask all the residents first," Hall replied.

When asked by Ketring, McAfee said the city would send a survey to all residents of Shady Oak Lane asking them to mail back their preference to City Hall.

Curtis suggested the survey be in the policy, as well as a minimum distance street lights are generally located from each other, or wording that allows city staff to investigate and recommend how many lights are justified depending on "curves in the road, where stop signs are, driveways, etc."

"It is a long, straight road," Ketring commented.

"We are talking about all roads and having a uniform policy in the future," Curtis replied.

"I thought we already had a policy," Hampton stated.

Staffney explained that the city's policy "was not written down anywhere," adding that Curtis has been helping "get us on track," by compiling and writing down policies as they are pulled from the city's minutes.

"About two years ago you tasked me with going through all existing policy resolutions buried in the minutes and putting them all in one uniform policy resolution," Curtis said. "Not ordinances, just policies. So, if you can give me bullet points of what you and staff want, I can drop it into that template and bring it back to the council."

"I think we went by a 300-foot distance recommended by FDOT, but to cover ourselves we need a policy," Hall said.

"The last rash of these (street lights) was before any of you all were here," Staffney said.

"I would like to hear from others on this street to see if they want it (lights)," Hall said.

"Let us do a policy first, and then we can do a census of that street if that is in the policy," Staffney suggested.

On a motion by Councilwoman Venita Woodfaulk and second by Ketring, the council voted 4-0 in favor or staff developing a street light request policy and bringing back a proposed draft at the next meeting.

Knowles: Jury process 'worked really well to keep people safe'

COURTS
Continued from page 1

jury selection (known as voir dire), eventually reducing the number to eight. Those selected jurors were asked to return to the courthouse on Tuesday, March 23, for the trial.

The trial was held in the second-floor courtroom, again with social distancing maintained.

Prior to COVID-19, if attorneys and the judge needed to speak outside the juror's presence, jurors would be sent to the jury room and then recalled.

However, since social distancing would not be possible in the jury room, any time the attorneys needed to speak privately with the judge during the trial, they would instead leave the room and enter the judge's chambers to discuss the issue at hand under the new post-COVID procedures.

The state presented its case Tuesday morning, before the proceedings paused for lunch. After the break, the attorneys and Judge Blue held several conferences in the judge's chambers, eventually joined by Knowles.

Afterwards, Judge Blue returned to his seat and announced to the jury that the case had been resolved, and their service was no longer needed.

He again thanked the jurors for their service, noting that their presence was the reason the trial had been resolved.

According to Clerk of Court Gary Knowles, the in-person jury trial was successful.

"We were able to get all 25 prospective jurors in the courtroom and keep social distancing. I thought the process worked really well to keep people safe and provide an opportunity for a jury trial," Knowles said.

Demographic summary	First dose	Series complete	Total people vaccinated
Age group	1,407	2,488	3,895
16-24 years	30	15	45
25-34 years	39	48	87
35-44 years	66	48	114
45-54 years	133	100	233
55-64 years	446	287	733
65-74 years	405	1,125	1,530
75-84 years	218	677	895
85+ years	70	188	258
Race	1,407	2,488	3,895
White	970	1,850	2,820
Black	209	234	443
American Indian/Alaskan	12	22	34
Other	58	169	227
Unknown	158	213	371
Other race includes Asian, native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or other.			
Ethnicity	1,407	2,488	3,895
Hispanic	24	27	51
Non-Hispanic	798	1,365	2,163
Unknown	585	1,096	1,681
Gender	1,407	2,488	3,895
Female	772	1,377	2,149
Male	635	1,111	1,746
Unknown	0	0	0

According to the Florida Department of Health, 3,895 people in Taylor County has received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine through Wednesday, March 24.

Want the vaccine? Call DOH: 584-5087

VACCINE
Continued from page 1

to all Floridians by May 1.

The first vaccination clinic available to those 40 and older will be Friday, April 2, at Forest Capital Hall. To make a vaccination appointment with DOH-Taylor, call (850) 584-5087.

Vaccines are also available by appointment only at the local CVS, located at 105 W. Hampton Springs Avenue, as well as Winn Dixie, located at 2057 S. Byron Butler Parkway, both in Perry.

Attorney: 'We're governed by the insurance company'

LAKEY
Continued from page 1

to apply for employment with the board. Should he apply, we would be free to not consider his application.

"Mr. Lakey would be permitted to submit a letter of resignation," Bishop added.

Under the agreement, Lakey agrees to withdraw all claims against the county in the Circuit Court of Taylor County, as well as an ongoing case before the Florida Commission on Human Relations.

"I don't know if you remember or not, but he filed a complaint citing gender discrimination, and also this lawsuit had gender discrimination in it," Bishop said.

After outlining the rest of the agreement, Bishop said, "Understand, we're governed by the insurance company."

Commissioner Jim Moody made a motion to approve the settlement agreement. Newman seconded, and the measure passed 4-0. Commissioner Jamie English was not present at the meeting.









Religion

WORKDAY AT THE CHURCH

Calvary Baptist

Calvary Baptist Church will hold a work day this Saturday, March 27, starting at 8 a.m.

Members are asked to bring appropriate tools needed to complete the following tasks:

- Remove shrubs/bushes along the side of the building on playground.
- Check and replace light bulbs in all rooms.
- Put together children's department things that are in the hall outside of the Awana store.
- Tighten and caulk men's handicap sink in sanctuary.
- Install an outlet receptacle for the baptistry television.
- Fix accordion partition in fellowship hall.
- Pressure wash where needed.
- Fix the gutter on the south side of sanctuary.
- Install new sign lights.

First Baptist

First Baptist Church will hold a church work day Saturday, March 27, from 9 a.m. to noon.

The main tasks will include spreading mulch and pressure washing the campus. Six pressure washing machines are needed.



Food distribution April 1

Second Harvest will hold a drive-thru food distribution at Loughridge Park on Thursday, April 1, starting at 10 a.m. Distribution will be held on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Obituary

Margaret Louise McLeod Garrett

Memorial services for Margaret McLeod Garrett will be held Saturday, March 27, at Burns Funeral Home Chapel, beginning at noon.

Margaret went home to her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Feb. 23, 2021, at the age of 95, in Arlington, Texas.

Margaret was born on July 8, 1925, in Greenville and moved to Perry soon thereafter.

She loved and was active in the youth group at First Baptist Church in Perry.

Margaret was preceded in death by: her husband of 33 years, Tom; parents, Andrew A. and Ira Barker McLeod; sisters, Myrtis Mohawk (Hiawatha), Frances Chapman (Bill), Mildred "Dickie" Byrd (Tack), and Ava McGee (Bob); brother, Andrew L. "Buck" McLeod (Loretta); and nephews, Joe and Mike Murphy.

Margaret is survived by: a daughter, Carole Garrett Dodd (Royce); granddaughters, Shelley Ford (Michael) and Sommer Clayman (Jeremy); and great-grandchildren, Meg and Kate Clayman, and Daniel and Caleb Ford; along with numerous nieces and nephews.



Margaret Louise McLeod Garrett

Card of thanks



Jeffery Garner

Garner

The family of Jeffery Garner would like to express sincere gratitude for the many kind acts shown during his demise, including prayers, words of condolences, food, beverages, cards, flowers and more.

He will be missed not only by his blood family, but he will also be missed by many of you and his extended family. Godspeed.

The family of Jeffery Garner

Boyd New Life Methodist Church
Sharing the Gospel
Morning Worship
Sunday, 9:30 a.m.
Bible Study
Wednesday, 4 p.m.
We are Open. Everyone is Welcome!
Wallace Holmes, Pastor
Located on Boyd Rd. off 221 N

ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Our Doors Are OPEN
Sunday 11 a.m. Service Only
6050 Puckett Road
(Intersection of Puckett and Golf Course Roads)
Pastor Cody McNeese
Live stream available via YouTube and facebook

Local churches are invited to share information about upcoming Easter services by e-mailing newsdesk@perrynewspapers.com



Tidbits

By Sarah Hall

Submit to God's will

Follow His example of humility

The season leading up to Easter, called Lent, is considered by many one of the holiest times on the Christian calendar.

It's traditionally been a time of denying self and fixing our eyes on Jesus in anticipation of Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

This Lenten season, let me encourage you with the truth found in 1 Peter 5:6, which says...

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exhalt you."

The miracle of Christ's life, death and resurrection is that while He was still fully God, He was also fully human just like you and me.

So as we look ahead to the celebration of His death and resurrection, my prayer is that each of us would follow his example of humility today.

Submit yourself to God's will and purpose for your life. Put others first. And live each day in full anticipation of the glory you'll receive in eternity.

The hares & the frogs

The hares were so persecuted by the other beasts, they did not know where to go.

As soon as they saw a single animal approach them, off they used to run.

One day they saw a troop of wild horses stampeding about, and in quite a panic, all the hares scuttled off to a lake nearby, determined to drown themselves rather than live in such a continued state of fear.

But, just as soon as they got near the bank of the lake, a troop of frogs, frightened in their turn by the approach of the hares, scuttled off and jumped into the water.

"Truly," said one of the hares, "things are not so bad as they seem."

There is always, always someone worse off than yourself.

Wise words

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: my God, my strength, in whom I will trust." (Psalm 18:2)

I'm going to LEARN how to love everybody.

God ALWAYS keeps his promises.

Jesus in my soul

Oh, it was Jesus – yes, it was Jesus.

It was Jesus in my soul.

For I have touched the hem of His garment; and his Blood has made me whole.

Birthday shout-outs

Happy belated birthday wishes to Roderick Morgan Sr., March 18.

In bereavement

The families of the late Jonathan McKnight are in our thoughts and prayers.

Prayer focus

Please keep these friends in your prayers: Leslie Davis, Willie Mae Gadsden (Tampa), Mary Alice Williams, Shawanda Massey, Ron King, Rhaji Porter, Annie Jones and Paula Graham (first lady of Antioch M.B. Church, the Rev. Tony O. Graham, pastor).

We salute Women's History Month

This week, we salute retired teacher Irene Richardson Fews:

I worked for the Taylor County School District for 33 years. Eight of those years were at Jerkins High and 25 were at Taylor County High School. I missed less than 30 days of work during my tenure.



Woman's History Month Salute: Irene Richardson Fews

I taught business education, ninth grade English and one semester of ninth grade science.

Teaching science was a challenge for me. Therefore, we did a lot of reading and answered the questions at the end of each chapter. I was afraid of most of the animals, and I didn't want the students to know about my fear.

They were curious and wanted to know when were they going to dissect some of the animals. I knew they would have a science teacher the following semester, and I told them that next semester they would be able to dissect. They appeared to be satisfied.

After retiring in 1995, I decided to plant a garden. For a couple of years, I was able to gather a small portion of what I planted. Birds and other animals ate most of it. I gave up planting a garden.

There was a program at Jerkins Community Center designed for young people who did not complete high school and I was asked to tutor them in basic math. I continued tutoring until the program ended.

When I didn't have anything to do, I decided to get my exercise by walking daily, or as often as I could. That was one of the best decisions I ever made. I have been walking about 20 years, and I really enjoy it.

I am a member of Triumph the Church and Kingdom of God in Christ, where I serve as secretary. There are also times when I do custodial work and whatever is needed to be done.

Each year I attend a national convention in a different city, and sometimes a different state. Because of the coronavirus, the meetings have been canceled.

I am also a member of the Noon Day Prayer Band. We meet daily at a different church at 12 noon. This has also been postponed because of the virus.

I am a member of the Taylor Retired Educators Association, Florida Retired Educators Association and National Retired Educators Association.

I am a member of the local and national AARP.

In 2015, I was inducted into the Taylor County Educators' Hall of Fame.

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!
-Luke 19:38
Make Church Going a Habit
AW-SHARE'S Total Floor Restoration
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Dunwoody continues to make a splash

Barbados' top junior breaststroke swimmer Nkosi Dunwoody has made a big splash, as he recently accepted a four-year scholarship to the University of Indianapolis, in Indianapolis, Indiana, where he will compete on the Greyhounds swim team.

Dunwoody is the son of Wayne Dunwoody of Perry and Adua Kinch of Barbados and the grandson of Mr & Mrs. Henry & Delores Jay (of Perry) and Mr. William Mauesby (Atlanta, Ga.) as well as Mr. and Mrs. Jeffery and Ethnie Kinch (Barbados).



Nkosi Dunwoody recently accepted a four-year scholarship to the University of Indianapolis, where he will compete on the swim team.

As a member of the Barbados Alpha Swim Club, Dunwoody is one of the leading male swimmers on the island and has successfully represented Barbados at local, regional and international swimming meets.

The 18-year-old St. Michael School star competitor will leave the island in August to pursue a major in entrepreneurship after winning 17 CARIFTA (Caribbean Free Trade Association) aquatic championship medals, including 11 gold.

Last year, at the Barbados Aquatic Sports Association's Short Course National Swimming Championships, Dunwoody won the 15-17 year-old Boys' 50-meter breaststroke in 30.74 seconds.

His first overseas competition was at the age of eight at the 2011 Goodwill Games in Trinidad and Tobago. He later made his first appearance at CARIFTA Swimming Games in 2014 in Aruba, where he won a bronze medal in the 200M breaststroke.

The following year Nkosi dominated the boys' 11-12 age group at the 2015 CARIFTA games in the Cayman Islands with a haul of seven gold medals and one silver. He also set a new CARIFTA record, a national age group record and won his age group championships in a performance that earned him the coveted "Landon Von Kanel" trophy.

In 2016, at the Caribbean Islands Swimming Championships (CISC) in the Bahamas, Dunwoody broke the 13-14 National Age Group Record in the 50M breast stroke and returned to the CARIFTA Games in 2017 to break the national age group record again while capturing five gold medals.

That year he also won two gold medals and five silver medals at the CCCAN Championships and broke an 18-year-old national age group record by two seconds.

In 2018 he competed at the Union American De Natacion (UNAN) games in Coral Springs, Florida, where his team placed third with a new national record in the 15-17 200 meter medley relay.

At age 15, Dunwoody was the youngest member of the Barbados team at the 2018 Central American and Caribbean Games in Barranquilla, Columbia, where the team made it to the 'A' relay finals. He also had a 'B' final performance in his individual event.

Dunwoody also represented the island at the 2018 FINA World Championship.

As a result of his strong academic performance and his outstanding swimming record, Nkosi received academic offers from the University of Nottingham, the University of Plymouth and the University of Stirling, but he accepted the offer from the University of Indianapolis, where he will be pursuing Entrepreneurial Studies and compete on the university's swim team.

"It is such a pleasurable achievement to receive a scholarship to study and continue my swimming career at such an outstanding school. This means quite a bit to me to see that all of the early mornings of training before school, and then proceeding to gym right after school and then going to swim again right after gym have paid off," Dunwoody said during a telephone interview with the Barbados Nation's Saturday Sun.

"It's also only the beginning of a new journey and I'm very thankful for the opportunity," Dunwoody said.

"When I arrive at the university, I will be training and competing on the same team as some of the most outstanding swimmers in the Caribbean and Central American region, including the CARIFTA and CCCAN (Central American and Caribbean Swimming Federation) gold medallists and record-holders.

"My main focus is to compete for the UIndy swim and dive team to my fullest potential and improve my swimming career. I would also like to continue my interest in entrepreneurial studies."

Dunwoody said he was extremely grateful to his large support team for helping him on the path to success.

"I would like to thank Alpha Sharks Swim Club, my colleagues, my coaches, my friends and my family for supporting me through this entire journey, as they never turned their back on me, they never gave up on me and never stopped showing their unwavering support," Dunwoody stated.

"It was very difficult, but where there's a will, there's a way. I got a lot stronger throughout this second lockdown, and I am thrilled to be back in the pool. I would like to say thank you to every single person and a special thank you to the ones who never gave up on me," he said.

Dunwoody said his goal in the future is to qualify for the Olympic Games.

"I don't want to specify which Olympic Games I would like to attend, but I hope it will be in the near future. I would consider it a mission accomplished. I'm not fully content with all of my accomplishments. I am still working for more success, whether it be qualification times or records.

"I am confident with my university of choice and their exceptional swim team and performance in the NCAA. I would tell anyone to just never give up, keep working hard and prohibit negative thoughts from terminating your dreams," he said.

Lady Bulldogs fall to Lafayette, 4-3

The Taylor County High School (TCHS) Lady Bulldogs' softball team fell to Lafayette County in a 4-3 nail-biter this past Tuesday, after the teams were tied 2-2 heading into the final inning.

Lafayette scored two runs in the top of the first inning to claim an early lead, while Taylor County managed to score once in the bottom of the inning to trail 2-1.

Both teams held the other scoreless until the sixth inning, when the Lady Bulldogs scored a run to tie the game up at 2-2 headed into the seventh and final inning.

Lafayette came out firing and scored two runs in the top of the last inning, which was just enough to edge out Taylor County, who managed to push one run across in the bottom half of the 7th inning.

Adrianna Carter and Hannah Shiver both had impressive outings on the mound, as Shiver racked up four strikeouts during her four innings of pitching, while Carter recorded a strikeout and only allowed four hits in her three innings on the hill.

The Lady Bulldogs were limited to only four hits in the game, which were picked up by: Brianna Reams, Rebecca Shoaff, Macy Dean and Shiver.

Reams and Dean knocked in one run each, while Shoaff led the Lady Bulldogs in runs scored with two.

Reams scored Taylor's third run in the narrow loss against a talented Lafayette County squad that is now 8-3 on the season.

TCHS had a 7-4 record headed into their game yesterday (Thursday) against Wakulla Christian Academy, but results were not available as of press time.

Taylor County will host Florida High tonight (Friday) beginning at 6 p.m.

Florida High was slated to play Lincoln last night (Thursday), but results were not available as of press time.

Prior to their game against Lincoln, Florida High had a record of 8-2 and was riding a six-game winning streak, while outscoring opponents 89-31.

FEED TIMES

	Minor	Major	Minor	Major
26	5:38 AM	10:46 AM	5:00 PM	----
27	6:16 AM	11:12 PM	6:06 PM	11:38 AM
28	6:53 AM	12:03 AM	7:14 PM	12:29 PM
29	7:28 AM	12:55 AM	8:22 PM	1:21 PM
30	8:06 AM	1:48 AM	9:31 PM	2:15 PM
31	8:46 AM	2:42 AM	10:42 PM	3:10 PM
1	9:31 AM	3:39 AM	----	4:08 PM
2	11:52 PM	4:38 AM	10:21 AM	5:08 PM

TIDE TABLES

F 26	High	12:34 AM	3.1	Tu30	High	3:44 AM	3.6
26	Low	7:53 AM	-0.3	30	Low	10:00 AM	0.4
26	High	1:50 PM	3.3	30	High	3:27 PM	3.8
26	Low	8:00 PM	0.6	30	Low	10:42 PM	-0.7
Sa27	High	1:24 AM	3.4	W 31	High	4:32 AM	3.4
27	Low	8:27 AM	-0.3	31	Low	10:29 AM	0.7
27	High	2:15 PM	3.4	31	High	3:52 PM	3.8
27	Low	8:39 PM	0.2	31	Low	11:27 PM	-0.7
Su28	High	2:11 AM	3.6	Th 1	High	5:23 AM	3.0
28	Low	8:59 AM	-0.2	1	Low	10:57 AM	1.0
28	High	2:39 PM	3.6	1	High	4:19 PM	3.8
28	Low	9:19 PM	-0.2	F 2	Low	12:19 AM	-0.6
M 29	High	2:57 AM	3.7	2	High	6:22 AM	2.6
29	Low	9:30 AM	0.1	2	Low	11:26 AM	1.3
29	High	3:03 PM	3.7	2	High	4:49 PM	3.6
29	Low	9:59 PM	-0.5				

Keaton Beach Fishing Report

Trout should be on fire with warming weather

By PAT MCGRIFF
onemorecast@gtcom.net

Trout are in recovery mode, as evidenced by my trips Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

We started by catching bait Sunday in miserable weather and the Gulf water temps hovering around 58-59 degrees.

Monday morning saw 59-degree water temps again, and the bite was slow (at least for keepers) as my charter — a father and daughter team from Indiana -- managed six keeper trout with 20-plus shorts.

We caught our fish on live pinfish under Back Bay Thunders in 3.5 – 4.5 feet of water. Try as I might, we couldn't catch a fish in less than 3.5 feet of water.

On Tuesday, I had Don Garner and his son-in-law Justin (oops, I forgot his last name) originally from Paducah, Kentucky and now residing in Tennessee. We caught our limit of 10 trout, with Don releasing #10 (a 24-inch sow) as we had a 22.5-inch trout in the box already.

We caught two of our keepers on plugs, two on Assassin Stinky Pink 5-inch shads and the balance on live pinfish under Back Bays from 3.5 – 4.5 feet of water. The water temperature made it up to 65 late in the day.

Wednesday, I had my pal Bert Deener of Waycross, Ga. out and we fished artificials only to land 37 trout (Bert counts every fish) with 17 shorts and 20 keepers.

We caught three on plugs and the balance on Assassin's — most on Stinky Pink, but quite a few nice ones on Panhandle Moon and Butt Naked color patterns.

Try as I did, we couldn't catch a fish in under 4.0 feet of water and none in over 5.0 feet. We also caught three reds measuring up to 29 inches, keeping only one (a 24-inch redfish), which ate an Intruder Hex Spoon by Precision Tackle.

We also caught one of the keeper reds on Bert's redfish spinnerbait. Bert makes a variety of freshwater and saltwater fishing lures. Check him out at Bert's Jigs and Things on Facebook.

The Gulf water temperature was 69 degrees late Wednesday afternoon, so this weekend should be "off the chain" as the kids say……or as I say "GREAT!"

Bulldogs are now 5-6 after loss to Madison

The Taylor County High School (TCHS) Bulldogs' baseball team fell to the visiting Madison County Cowboys this past Tuesday by a final score of 8-2.

The loss was Taylor's sixth of the season, as the Bulldogs fell to 5-6 overall.

Taylor County racked up six hits against Madison, led by Garrett Mullins with two.

Tucker Wiles, Andrew Weatherly, Ajari Harris and Rhett Borklund recorded one hit each.

Wiles and Weatherly scored the Bulldogs' two runs against Madison County.

The Bulldogs are slated to host Liberty County tonight (Friday) beginning at 6 p.m.

Liberty County defeated the Bulldogs prior to spring break, 10-2.

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Construction begins!

New marina 'well underway'

By DEBRA BUTLER

Construction of the new Steinhatchee Marina at Deadman Bay is well underway.

According to Jody Griffis, the building could possibly be completed by August 2021.

Difficulty in obtaining construction materials during the pandemic has bumped the original projected completion date by a couple of months.

Adjustments have been made to the planned square footage, which means three

➟ Please see page 11



Construction of the new Steinhatchee Marina at Deadman's Bay is expected to be complete by August 2021.

Tide Swamp Unit selected for FWC WildQuest event

Steinhatchee's Tide Swamp Unit will serve as the Big Bend Wildlife Management Area (WMA) for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) first Florida WildQuest event.

From May 1 to May 9, FWC is hosting the first Florida WildQuest, a unique scavenger hunt experience on wildlife management areas throughout the state. Florida residents and visitors are encouraged to grab their mobile device and join a wild adventure with missions designed to help people discover some of Florida's best spots to see wildlife and enjoy the outdoors.

WildQuest players of all ages will have opportunities to learn about and explore the FWC's lead WMAs during the event. Participants who register and earn at least 2,000 points on one of the scavenger hunts can enter a drawing for wilderness-inspired prizes including a pair of binoculars and a field guide set! Players can go on the "Master WildQuest" or "WildQuest Jr." at any lead WMA or visit one of the featured areas that will have area specific quests:

- Big Bend Wildlife Management Area, Tide Swamp Unit in Steinhatchee.
- Fred C. Babcock/ Cecil M. Webb Wildlife Management Area in Punta Gorda.
- Chinsegut Wildlife and Environmental Area in Brooksville.

Guana River Wildlife Management Area in Ponte Vedra Beach.

- W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area in West Palm Beach.
- Kirk Edwards Wildlife and Environmental Area in Tallahassee.
- Tosohatchee Wildlife Management Area in Christmas.

To join a scavenger hunt, players will need a mobile device and the free GooseChase app. For more information and instructions visit FloridaNatureTrackers.com.

Florida WildQuest is designed to be a safe, socially distanced outdoor event for individuals and small groups.

When interacting with staff and other visitors, masks should be worn if social distancing guidelines (six feet) cannot be met.

Florida has one of the nation's largest systems of state-managed wildlife lands.

The WMA system includes more than six million acres managed primarily for wildlife conservation and nature-based public use.

The areas featured in Florida WildQuest are FWC lead areas, which are primarily managed by the FWC.

Other WMAs, called cooperative areas, are primarily managed by partner agencies or organizations. The FWC maintains, enhances and restores native natural habitats for the benefit of plant and animal populations as well as for the people of Florida. The public can use the WMA system for a variety of recreation opportunities including hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities.

To learn more about Florida's WMA system, visit MyFWC.com/WMAs.

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Whether helping food bank distributions or mass vaccination clinics, CERT members are also ready to answer the call. Volunteers shown here include: (left to right) Tonya (Lesa) Griffin, Emergency Management Assistant Director J.W. Louk, Susie Jolley, Pat Straub and Cissy Jacobs.

Join CERT today! New classes start April 6

Classes for new recruits for Taylor County's Community Response Team (CERT) will begin Tuesday, April 6, from 6-8 p.m. at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located next to the Taylor County Jail.

"CERT is a ready group of organized and trained volunteers. When disaster strikes, CERT volunteers spring into action: they take care of themselves, their family, check on neighbors, suppress small fires, conduct light search and rescue, radio communications and provide emergency medical aid and psychological comfort to their neighbors," Director Kristy Anderson said.

During the four-week training period that begins in April, participants will receive instruction, practice and learn how to work as a team in their neighborhoods in the event of an emergency.

"No prior experience or training is necessary, and there is no fee for the program," Anderson said.

Classes will be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6-8 p.m.

"There will be a disaster drill at the end of the class to test your skills," Anderson said.

To register, please call the Taylor County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management at (850) 838-3575.



Want to join Taylor County's CERT? New classes begin April 6.

Adventures start HERE!

Day camp registration begins Thursday

Parents are reminded that online registration for upcoming 4-H summer day camps opens next week, on Thursday, April 1, at 9 a.m.

"Day camps provide your child with the chance to develop character, valuable life skills, make new friends and discover new interests," 4-H Extension Agent II Abbey Tharpe said.

Registration for summer day camps will be online only through Eventbrite (http://www.eventbrite.com/o/taylor-county-4-h-9856037675).

"Assistance will be available for registration at our office," Tharpe said.

"Day camps will be highlighted with various educational and recreational activities, and most day-long camps will feature daily field trips and swimming. Participating children should bring their lunch each day during camp, preferably in a small cooler," she said.

Registration will be held on a first-come, first-serve basis, and must be paid in full at the time of registration.

Participating youth must be five years old by Sept. 1, 2020, to be eligible for Cloverbud Camps.

Drop off and pick up for all camps will be held at the Taylor County Extension Office located at Forest Capital Hall (unless otherwise noted).

For more information, call (850) 838-3508.

DAY CAMPS 4-H...The Power of YOUth

ARTFUL Antics
June 7-10 • 9:30AM-3PM
Ages 7+ • Limit 20 • Cost: $35
*Drop off/pick-up for all dates: Taylor County High School (teacher parking lot)
This fun camp explores colors and design, as well as learning basic drawing, painting and pottery skills. Will be held at the Taylor County High School art room.
**Mask are required to be worn by all participants.*

Cloverbud Adventures Day Camp
June 7-10 • 9:30AM-4:30PM
Ages 5-7 • Limit 20 • Cost: $45
This camp will feature science, environmental education, nature, marine science and more! This camp will feature daily swimming and water activities.
**Mask are required to be worn by all participants, excluding swimming activities.*

Camp Cherry Lake Summer Day Camp Adventures
June 14-17 • 9:30AM-4:30PM
Ages 8-13 • Limit 25 • Cost $50
This camp will feature daily field trips to 4-H Camp Cherry Lake. This camp will feature science, and nature through fun and engaging outdoor experiences, hands-on activities, and swimming at Camp Cherry Lake
**Mask are required to be worn by all participants excluding swimming activities.*

Cloverbuds Go Exploring
June 21-24 • 9:30AM-4:30PM
Ages 5-7 • Limit 25 • Cost: $50
This camp will feature science, environmental education, animals, nature, and more! This camp will feature swimming and water activities each day.
**Mask are required to be worn by all participants excluding water activities.*

Let's Go...Lego Camp
July 5-8 • 9:30AM-11AM
Ages 8-13 • Limit 25 • Cost: $35
During this camp youth will discover the fun of building with Lego's.
**Mask are required to be worn by all participants.*

Culinary Camp: Where Food Meets Fun
JULY 12-15 • 9:30AM-12PM
Ages 8-13 • Limit 20 • Cost: $30
Let your child explore their culinary side and join us for a real culinary adventure! This camp is designed to spark interest in healthy fresh foods and lets your camper explore their culinary side. Campers will get to experience new tastes and learn to prepare a variety of recipes while having lots of fun!
**Mask are required to be worn by all participants.*

Spa and Relaxation
July 19 -22 • 9:30AM-12:00PM
Ages 8-13 • Limit 20 • Cost: $35
Forget about camping in the woods! Come relax and create your own spa creations while also getting to experience a few spa luxuries during this exciting camp!
**Mask are required to be worn by all participants.*

Water Adventures
July 26-29 • 9:30am-4:30pm
Ages 7-12 • Cost: $50
Limit 20 + $30 for Wild Adventures pass
This camp will feature marine science, environmental education, nature and more. This camp is for youth who want to learn about aquatic plants, animals, their environment and fishing. Daily field trips will be featured during this camp.
**Mask are required to be worn by all participants, excluding swimming activities.*



Drop off and Pick up for all camps will be at the UF/IFAS Extension Taylor County office, unless otherwise noted.

DAR Daughters of the American Revolution®

Hodges awarded 'Good Citizen Scholarship'

The Fort San Luis Chapter of National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) recognized award winners from around the area, including one Taylor County student, at its virtual chapter meeting held in February.

Taylor County High School student Dakota Hodges tied for second place for the "Good Citizen Scholarship" award. Delaynee Cobb from Liberty County High School also received the award, and first-place winner was Spencer Gibbs from Maclay School.

The Good Citizenship Scholarship Award recognizes and rewards individuals "who possess the good citizenship qualities of dependability, service, leadership and patriotism in their homes, schools and communities."

"We couldn't be more proud of this year's winners of our DAR Awards," said Lindy Forehand Vickers, Regent of the Fort San Luis Chapter. "These remarkable people have worked hard to make a difference, and through their efforts, energy and compassion have made the community better for us all."

The DAR Historic Preservation Medal was presented to Lonnie Bain Mann of Tallahassee.

The Preservation Medal is the most prestigious preservation award DAR presents to individuals, with fewer than 30 awarded nationwide annually.

Mann was recognized for more than 20 years as an outstanding volunteer working in historic preservation and protecting Florida's archaeological resources.

He is a respected member of the historic preservation and archaeology community in the Florida Panhandle/Big Bend region, as well as at the state level.

He has participated in extensive archaeological field work and public education.

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Women in Taylor History

Colson was state's oldest resident in 1985

In addition to holding the distinction of being one of Taylor County's longest-living citizens, Mary Jane Colson was also recognized as Florida's oldest resident when she died at the age of 113 in 1985.



Mary Jane Colson, whose mother was a slave and whose father lived to be 109, died on Sept. 22, 1985, at the age of 113.

Born in Perry on Nov. 25, 1871, Mary was raised on a farm.

She and one of her brothers, Wallace Thomas, sharecropped, and she plowed for several years.

She also rived boards to make shingles and made fences out of pine and cypress blocks, while also attending school.

She came from a family of eight, and was the oldest and only surviving child.

Her mother lived to be 96 years old, her father died at 109, and her uncle lived to be 100.

After she, her mother and brother left the farm, Mary began doing laundry work for a living and saved money to buy the house where she and one of her daughters, Bernetha (B.D.) Williams lived.

She was married to the late Rev. J.D. Taylor, and the couple had one son, the late Mashack M. Taylor.

Later, she married the late P.H. (Peter) Colson and they had five children.

In her early 20s, she joined Springhill Missionary Baptist Church, where she remained a member for more than 90 years.

After surviving three strokes, Mary took to her easy chair.

Family and friends gathered on Thanksgiving every year to say a special prayer "thanking the Lord for being good to her and asking him to continue watching over her and giving me the strength I need to do my job taking care of here," her daughter, B.D., said.

Mary's recipe for longevity: "Get your rest," she said, "Serve the Lord. Work hard. And take good care of yourself."

Mary died on Sept. 22, 1985.

A glance at the past

THE 80s

PERRY NEWS-HERALD
March 28, 1986

HAPPY EASTER

Taylor County was in full bloom on March 28, 1986, with dogwood blossoms, symbolizing springtime and the underlying Easter themes of rebirth and resurrection.

JAILHOUSE PREACHER IS 'LADY OF THE YEAR'

Jail missionary ***Annie Howell*** was named "Lady of the Year of 1986" by the Mu Omega Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi at a tea held in late March 1986 at the Perry Woman's Club.

"Miss Annie Howell is an outstanding lady, who on a full-time basis conducts the jail ministry at the Taylor County Jail, jails of surrounding counties, and Mayo Correctional Institution," said ***Chapter President Cheryl Gregory***, who presented the plaque to Howell.

"Miss Annie is kind, generous and dedicated," said Gregory, "as she goes about seeing to the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of the prisoners, who she refers to as 'her boys.' Without hesitation, Miss Annie always puts the needs of her boys and their families before herself."

SHE'S A WINNER!

Natassia Thomas, the granddaughter of ***Charles Thomas***, was the youth grand prize winner at Buckeye's annual credit union meeting. She won a Commodore 64 computer.

The adult grand prize winner was ***Becky Houck***.

The 30th annual meeting of the Buckeye Employment Federal Credit Union was held March 18, 1986, at the Taylor County High School auditorium with 640 members in attendance.



Natassia Thomas

BASEBALL TEAM GRABS SECOND STRAIGHT WIN

The Taylor County High School baseball team grabbed its second straight win in late March 1986, shutting out Jefferson County 3-0.

For the second straight game, the 3-9 Bulldogs got a strong pitching performance, this time from ***David Upshaw***, who allowed only two hits through five innings.

In the seventh inning, Jefferson managed to load the bases, but Bulldog third baseman ***Darrin Simmons*** thwarted the situation when he made a diving stab of a Tiger line drive.

STUDENTS JUMP THREE HOURS

On March 26 and 27, 1986, Gladys Morse Elementary School was involved in the March of Dimes "Jump Rope for Heart."

The students collected money and pledged to jump rope for a certain period of time in return for a donation to the March of Dimes.

True to their pledge, the children jumped rope for three hours on March 26, 1986, and again on March 27, 1986.

When the jumping was over, participating students were served refreshments provided by Hardee's Restaurant and Tom's Foods.

Editor's Note: "Floridiana: Stories from Florida's Remarkable Past" is an ongoing series of articles that uses the extensive collections of the State Archives and State Library of Florida to illustrate the rich and varied history of our state.

Florida's 'strawberry schools'

Remember those late spring days back in grade school when all you could think about was the approach of summer vacation?

Depending on your age and your preferences, you might have spent the time swimming, taking family trips, or earning a little spending money at a summer job – anything but sitting still in a classroom.

There was a time, however, when some Florida students took their vacation much earlier in the year, from January through March.

A number of counties in Central and South Florida mandated this to accommodate the harvest schedules for winter fruits and vegetables, which provided a living for small family farms.

Strawberries were the main Florida crop requiring this arrangement. As a result, schools that operated on the modified April to December calendar were called "strawberry schools."

Strawberries have been cultivated in Florida since the late 1800s. They have been grown in nearly every county in the state at one time or another, but large-scale sustained strawberry farming has mainly been centered in Hillsborough, Polk, Hardee, Bradford, Union and Orange counties.

These days, commercial strawberry farming is largely confined to large-scale operations with hundreds of acres under cultivation. Up until about the 1950s, however, family farms dominated the industry.

In some places, strawberry farming came to define whole communities.

➟ Please see page 11



Strawberries have been cultivated in Florida since the late 1800s.

Perry News-Herald
March 26-27, 2021

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The Perry News-Herald welcomes Letters to the Editor reflecting responsible opinions and views on the news. Please submit letters by Monday at 5 p.m. The Taco Times reserves the right to refuse publication of letters which are libelous or irresponsible. Name may be withheld if circumstances so require, but all letters submitted should be signed by the writer and accompanied by a phone number for verification.

We look forward to hearing from you! Our address is Perry Newspapers, Inc., P.O. Box 888, Perry, Florida 32348. e-mail: newsdesk@perrynewspapers.com

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Remember when...

Grocery shopping in Bean's Yard



By Anthony White

Bean's Yard.

The other day, my shopping cart was still empty after I spent a half-hour roaming the aisles of a local grocery store trying to figure out what I wanted for dinner.

A friend, who was also shopping for dinner, stopped me and asked, "Can't figure out what you want?"

"No," I responded. "I'm tired of the same old same old, and I want something different."

"I know what you mean," the friend replied as she walked away.

Trying to figure out what's for dinner wasn't always this hard, especially when I was growing up in my grandparents' house.

My grandfather didn't care much for grocery stores.

He would drive my grandmother or my mother to the grocery store, but I can only remember a couple of times that he got out of the car and went inside.

And then, he found a chair or bench in the front of the store and took a seat while my grandmother shopped.

The reason my grandfather didn't care for grocery stores is because he didn't really need them.

He had his own grocery store – Bean's Yard.

My grandfather's name was Willie White, but everyone called him Bean.

While my grandmother loved shopping for dinner at Winn-Dixie and Piggly Wiggly, my grandfather preferred gathering dinner from his garden, chicken coop, pig pen or rabbit cages.

If he didn't gather dinner from our yard, he brought it home from his trips to the woods to grunt earthworms, which he sold as fish bait.

My grandmother wasn't always happy with my grandfather's dinner choices.

"I'm tired, and I know these children are tired of eating all this wild food – coons, squirrels, deer and fish" my grandmother would tell him. "They want chicken and pork chops."

"Then hold on," he'd respond. "I ain't got time to butcher a pig, but I can wring one or two chicken necks for you."

"I don't want a yard chicken," my grandmother would respond. "I'm talking about chicken from Winn-Dixie or Piggly Wiggly!"

"Chicken is chicken," my grandfather shot back. "What difference does it make?"

"It makes a lot of difference," my grandmother answered. "The store's chicken is processed and packaged."

"Give me a plastic bag to put these chickens in after I finish plucking the feathers and cleaning them, and you'll have processed chickens."

My grandmother wasn't amused.

When it came to gathering vegetables from the garden for dinner, she wasn't so hard on my grandfather.

If she had a taste for cabbage, he would pluck a cabbage or two from his garden. If green beans were on the dinner menu, he gave me and my two brothers each a row to pick. Whatever vegetable was on my grandmother's menu -- okra, collard greens, mustard greens -- all we had to do was walk out to my grandfather's garden and pick it.

I don't think I'm going to find what my taste buds were craving the other day, yesterday or today until someone can give me the directions back to Bean's Yard.



Micro-Theater Festival will stream online free

Tallahassee Hispanic Theater will host its third Micro-Theater Festival virtually on Sunday, featuring three short plays written by Hispanic authors and which have been performed around the world.

"Due to current health concerns, this year's festival will be online, so people around the country can watch the festival," organizers said.

The performances will be available at www.tallahasseehispanictheater.org) as well as on Facebook at Tallahassee Hispanic Theater.

"All of the performances will be free to access online, but we encourage you to make a donation to the company at tallahasseehispanictheater.org," organizers said. "As usual, we are excited to bring the vibrant Hispanic theater to our community."

These are the plays that will be featured in this year's festival:

"**Mosquita Muerta**" ("The Dead Mosquito") was written by Victoria Collado, a young Cuban-American artist who lives in Miami. This play was presented in Spanish as part of Microteatro Miami early last year. "Mosquita Muerta" is a physical comedy that tells the story of Jacqueline de France, a woman whose dreams of becoming a famous ballerina were cut short by a pesky mosquito. She now dedicates her life to killing all the mosquitos in the world. The play is directed by Mattie Ward and performed by Robin Jackson.

"**The Union of Maite and Jose, Inc.**" was written by Almudena Vazquez, a Spanish playwright, screenwriter and director. This play was previously presented as part of the Spanish Microtheater Festival "Teatro por Dinero." In this comedy, Maite and Jose, a broke couple with no money to pay their mortgage, come up with the perfect plan to end their financial distress: a wedding! This play is directed by Leanne Hanson and performed by Mike Herrin and Tiffany Underwood. This is the first time the play will be performed in English with a translation by Alejandra Gutierrez.

"**The Russian Plan**" by Aurora Mateo will be the final play in this year's festival. Mateo combines her playwriting with her career as an international lawyer. Her play "The Russian Plan" is a about a couple looking for a solution to straighten out their problematic teenage son. Maybe the answer is the Russian plan. The play is directed by Kevin Carr and performed by Alejandra Gutierrez and Kevin Carr. The translation is by Iride Lamartina-Lens.

All of these plays will be filmed at the Monticello Opera House.

"Don't miss these funny and entertaining performances and support theater in these times of crisis," organizers said.

Symphony Orchestra to host online concert

The Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra (TSO) will host an online concert featuring pianist Jon Kimura Parker beginning this Saturday, March 27.

The concert, which will serve as TSO's season finale, will be available beginning at 7:30 p.m., and those who purchase a ticket will be able to view the concert through April 3.

The program will include selections from Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro", "Piano Concerto No. 21" and "Symphony No. 35," as well as Shostakovich's "Piano Concerto No. 1" and more.

Household tickets are $25. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.tallahasseesymphony.org.


Jon Kimura Parker

Parker is known for his charisma, infectious enthusiasm and dynamic performances. A veteran of the international concert stage, he has performed regularly in the Berlin Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, London's South Bank, the Sydney Opera House and the Beijing Concert Hall.

He was recently named creative partner for the Minnesota Orchestra's Summer at Orchestra Hall. He also serves as the artistic director for the Honens International Piano Competition and artistic advisor for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival.

A collaborator in a wide variety of styles, Parker has performed with Doc Severinsen, Audra McDonald, Bobby McFerrin, Pablo Ziegler and Sanjaya Malakar.

As a founding member of Off the Score, he also performed with Stewart Copeland -- the legendary drummer of The Police -- for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival's 20th anniversary season.

Let us know about your event!

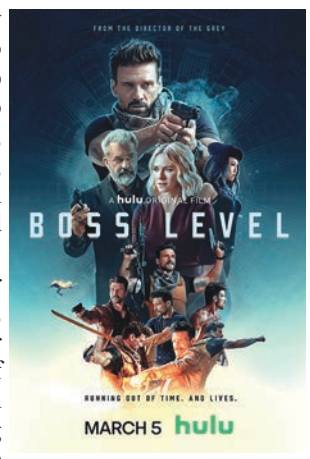
If you have an event you would like included in our entertainment calendar of events, please call us at 850-584-5513 or e-mail mark@perrynewspapers.com.



'Boss Level' is completely absurd, while also absolutely entertaining

Last week, I talked quite a bit about the eight Academy Award Best Picture nominees. Although I haven't seen any of them yet, I'm sure they are filled with artistic filmmaking, meaningful stories and memorable characters.

"Boss Level" is not one of those movies. It is a ridiculous, borderline silly action flick about a man who wakes up every day to a group of oddball assassins trying to kill him. However, for him, every day is the same day, and every day ends with him dying, only to wake up and start over again.



Yes, this is another "Groundhog Day" movie, although it's of a particular vein similar to "Edge of Tomorrow," in which somebody keeps repeating the same day and uses the repetition to figure out the day's patterns in order to not die (or at least not die as fast).

In that, "Boss Level" is very much like a video game, where your character keeps getting killed, so you load up your save point and try again. An early clue at how on the nose this movie is going to be, our main character, Roy Pulver (Frank Grillo, "Captain America: Winter Soldier") mentions this exact comparison in the first few minutes during his narration.

And, speaking of narration, if you don't like narration, stay far, far away from this one. I'm pretty sure Roy says more in his narration than he does out loud.

Directed by Joe Carnahan ("The A-Team," "The Grey"), this movie knows exactly what it is, and it really leans into that absurdity. And, it's exactly because of its self-awareness that so many things that would be flaws in other movies actually make this more enjoyable. To be sure, they're still flaws, but it's part of the charm.

Also helping matters is a better-than-the-movie-deserves cast, which includes Noami Watts, Mel Gibson, Michelle Yeoh and Ken Jeong -- not to mention a cameo from Rob Gronkowski.

Yes, the story is threadbare. Yes, the characters are paper-thin (although Roy's relationship with his son is heartwarming and gives the film just enough of an emotional hook that we care if he succeeds or not in the end). Yes, the special effects are mediocre. And yes, the dialogue is incredible corny, topped by the scene in which the sword-wielding assassin announces that "stuff" is about to get "steel."

But, you know what else is true about this movie? It's a lot of fun. At just 90 or so minutes, "Boss Level" doesn't overstay its welcome and delivers the kind of absurd escapism that I'm craving these days.

The film is rated TV-MA for violence and language.

THIS WEEKEND IN THEATERS, ON STREAMING AND VOD







By MARK VIOLA

In Theaters

"**Nobody**" is an action comedy starring Bob Odenkirk ("Better Call Saul") as Hutch Mansell, a mild-mannered man who appears to be a pushover to everybody around him, including his family. However, he finally snaps one night and attacks a group of men harassing a young woman, opening a door to a past he had tried very hard to put behind him, one filled with violence and old debts. The film is directed by Ilya Naishuller ("Hardcore Henry") with a script by Derek Kolstad ("John Wick"). The "John Wick" movies are some of my favorite action films, and "Hardcore Henry" was one of the most visually unique films of the past decade, so this one has a lot of potential.

The film is rated R for strong violence and bloody images, language throughout and brief drug use.

Netflix

"**Bad Trip**" is a mix of scripted buddy comedy road movie and a real hidden-camera prank show following outrageous misadventures of two buds stuck in a rut who embark on a cross-country road trip to New York City. The storyline sets up the shocking real pranks. The movie stars Eric André and is directed by Kitao Sakurai, who directed "The Eric André Show." The cast also includes Lil Rel Howery ("Tag") and Tiffany Haddish ("Like a Boss").

The movie is rated R for crude sexual content, pervasive language, some graphic nudity and drug use.

"**Caught by a Wave**" ("Sulla Stessa Onda") is an Italian romance film following a summer adventure under the Sicilian sun that soon becomes a painful love story.

The film is not yet rated.

"**Seaspiracy**" is a documentary that follows a filmmaker setting out to document the harm that humans do to marine life, and in the process uncovers alarming global corruption.

The documentary is not yet rated.

"**A Week Away**" is a musical about troubled teen Will Hawkins (Kevin Quinn, "Bunk'd"), who has a run-in with the law. Given the choice between juvenile detention and a Christian summer camp, he chooses the latter. At first a fish out of water, Will begins to learn a week away can really change things, especially when he falls for camp regular Avery (Bailee Madison, "Just Go With It").

The film is not yet rated.

Video on Demand

Academy Award Best Picture nominee "**The Father**" is a drama about an aging man (Anthony Hopkins, "Silence of the Lambs") who refuses all assistance from his daughter (Olivia Colman, "The Favourite") as he begins losing his faculties. The film picked up six nominations, including Best Picture, Best Actor (Hopkins), Best Supporting Actress (Colman) and Best Adapted Screenplay. The movie, which debuted at the AMC 20 in Tallahassee last weekend, is now available on video on demand (VOD).

The film is rated PG-13 for some strong language, and thematic material.

"**The Seventh Day**" is a horror film that follows a renowned exorcist who teams up with a rookie priest for his first day of training. As they plunge into their work, the lines between good and evil blur, and their own demons emerge. The movie is written and directed by Justin P. Lange ("The Dark") and features a cast that includes Guy Pearce ("Memento"), Keith David ("21 Bridges"), Steven Lang ("Avatar") and Vadhir Derbez ("How To Be a Latin Lover").

The movie is rated R for violent content, disturbing images and some language.

"**The Vault**" is a crime thriller about Thom (Freddie Highmore, "Bates Motel"), a genius engineering graduate interested in the Bank of Spain's safe. More specifically, how to break in and steal a legendary lost treasure said to be held within it. He develops a plan, but they will only have 105 minutes to get it done while the guards are distracted by the 2010 Football World Cup final match. The movie is directed by Jaume Balagueró ("[REC]"), and the cast also includes Famke Janssen ("X-Men"), Liam Cunningham ("Game of Thrones") and Sam Riley ("Maleficent").

The movie is rated R for language.



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YARD SALE Saturday, March 27, from 8 to 12 noon. 2168 West Reddick Drive. Women's and infant clothing, baby items, houseware.

YARD SALE Saturday, March 27, from 8 to 2 p.m. 2920 Slaughter Road in Perry. Books of all genres, clothing of all sizes, shoes, furniture and more.

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3/31

GREEN'S OUTDOORS AND MORE is now accepting applications for a cashier/clerk (must be able to lift 50 lbs.) and parts counter help. Apply in person at 1969 Old Foley Road. Call 371-5395 for more information.

TAYLOR COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS Job Vacancy Announcement. The job description and our 2-step application process can be found on our website at www.taylorcountygov.com or in the lobby of the County Annex. Applicants must apply through Career Source. Taylor County is an EEO employer. **Engineer** - full-time. **Park attendant** - seasonal, part-time. **4-H camp staff** - seasonal. **Animal control officer** - full-time. **Roll-off Site Attendant** - call-in. **Mosquito Control Driver-** on call. **Concessions Worker** - seasonal. **Boat Ramp Attendant** - seasonal.

RECEPTIONIST
The Taylor Senior Citizens Center Inc. has a Receptionist position available. Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with paid holidays off. Must be able to multi-task, have a great personality and work well with others. Must be able to work a multiline phone system, computer skills that include Excel, Word and Power Point, Filing and organization skills also required. Receptionist will work closely with the Administrator Assistant, Fiscal officer and Lead case manager and will report to the Executive Director.
Drop off a resume at:
Taylor Senior Citizens Center Inc
800 W Ash St, Perry Fl. 32348
850-584-4924
TSCC

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• Full-time salesperson
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• Applying expert knowledge of forces and their impact on various structures,
• Solid working knowledge in the strength of different materials (e.g. concrete, steel, or wood) and understanding of how their inclusion may necessitate a change of structural design,
• Analyzing suitable configurations of the basic structural components of a building or other structure,
• In-process inspections, as well as providing guidance/feedback to contractors. Educational Requirements are:: Bachelor's Degree in Engineering.
Qualified applications can apply online at www.bigtopshelters.com/careers, or in person at Big Top Manufacturing, Inc. 3255 N US 19, Perry, Florida (by appointment only). EEO/AA/m/f/vets/disabled.
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• Heavy lifting is required on a regular basis (50 lbs),
• Must possess a valid driver's license.
Qualified applications can apply online at www.bigtopshelters.com/careers, or in person at Big Top Manufacturing, Inc. 3255 N US 19, Perry, Florida (by appointment only). EEO/AA/m/f/vets/disabled.

THE HEALTHY START COALITION of Jefferson, Madison and Taylor counties is seeking a Program Supervisor. Position requires supervisory experience, knowledge of parenting education, child development and maternal & child health, experience working with infants, young children, or pregnant women, ability to work independently among a diverse population, general computer proficiency, excellent written and oral communication skills, strong interpersonal skills, knowledge of community resources, ability to elicit information and maintain confidentiality, strong organizational skills, home visitation experience. Requires reliable transportation, valid driver's license, good driving record and automobile insurance. Bachelor's degree with knowledge of community relations, public health issues, maternal and child health, social services or related field required. Must reside in Jefferson, Madison or Taylor Counties. Submit resume to dhagan@healthystartjmt.org by COB 3/22/2021. 3/19
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FULL-TIME LINEMAN TRAINEE
Tri-County Electric Cooperative has an opening for a full-time lineman trainee in our Madison office. This position requires working outside in adverse weather conditions and frequently working overtime; however, it is a rewarding position with good growth opportunities and does not require any previous line experience. On the job training will be provided. The co-op is looking for a candidate with a high school diploma or equivalent and solid work history that enjoys working in a team environment. The candidate must also have a Class A, Commercial Driver's License, or be able to obtain one within six months of employment. The Cooperative offers a competitive salary, starting at $18 an hour for this position, and benefits. Tri-County is an EOE and DFWP. Please send resume and completed Tri-County Employment Application Form, which is available at any TCEC office or online at www.tcec.com, before March 26, 2021 to: Andrew Pinkard, Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Inc., 2862 West US 90, Madison, FL 32340
850-973-8022 3/26

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JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN
Tri-County Electric Cooperative is accepting applications for a Full Time Journeyman Lineman. The candidate is required to have a minimum of five years' experience in power line construction and maintenance, and must have successful completion of power line apprenticeship and Journeyman Certification. Thorough knowledge of RUS Construction specifications, National Electric Safety Code and the National Electric Code, and OSHA rules and regulations are required. The candidate must also have a Class A Commercial Driver's License. The co-op is looking for a candidate with a solid work history that enjoys working in a team environment.
The Cooperative offers competitive salary and benefits.
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Please send resume and completed Tri-County Employment Application Form, which is available at any TCEC office or online at www.tcec.com, before April 9, 2021 to:
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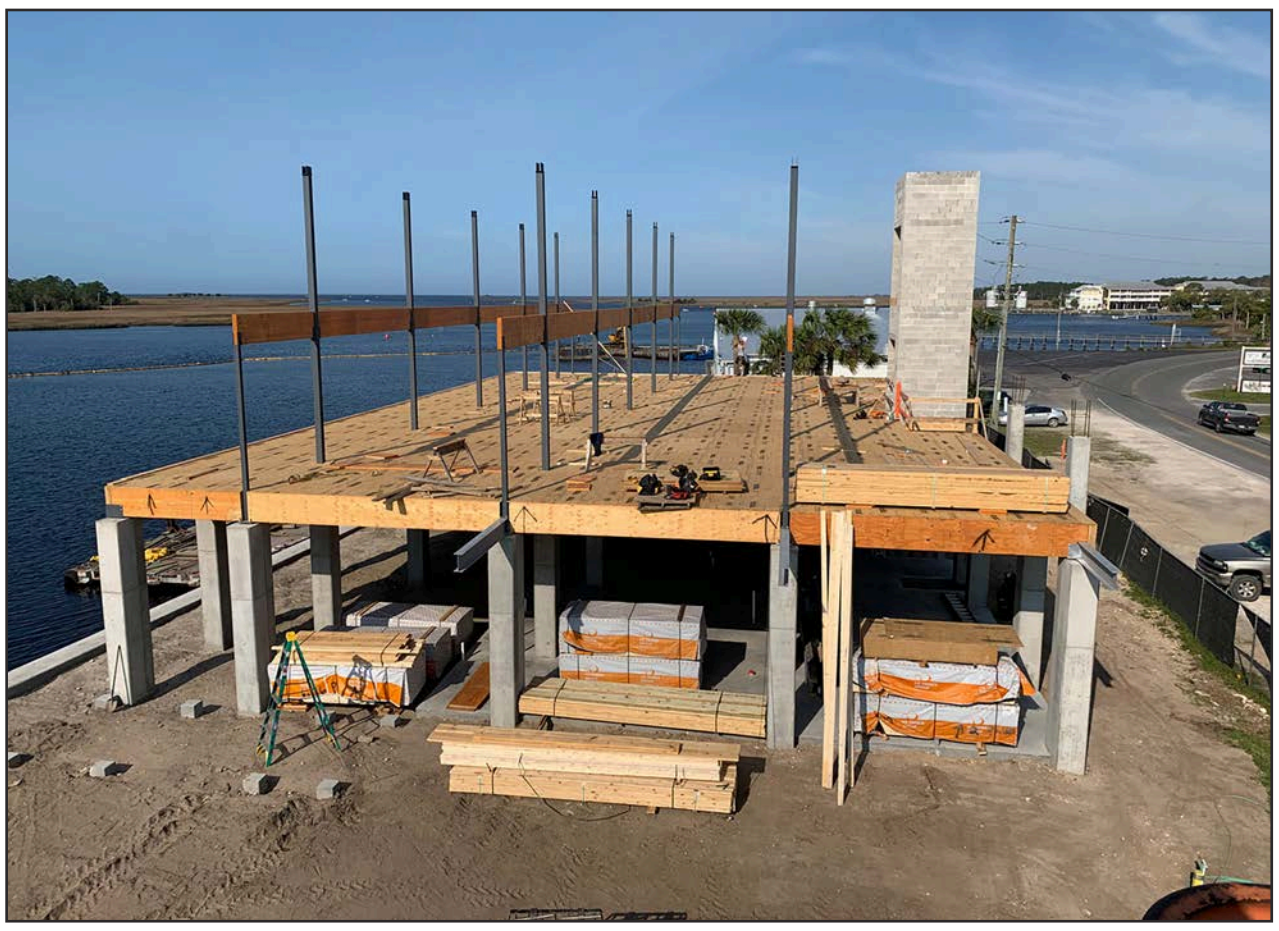
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR TAYLOR COUNTY, FLORIDA
Case No.: 2020-457DR
CANDICE WALKER, Petitioner, and MICHAEL WALKER, Respondent
NOTICE OF ACTION FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE
TO: Michael Walker
2289 Green Farm Road (Carrie Albritton residence) Perry, Florida 32347
YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action has been filed against you and that you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on Angela M. Ball, whose address is 615 N. Jefferson Street, Perry, Florida 32347 on or before April 3, 2021 and file the original with the clerk of this Court at Taylor County Courthouse, 108 N. Jefferson Street, Perry, Florida, before service on Petitioner or immediately thereafter.
If you fail to do so, a default may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the petition. The action is asking the court to decide: Petition for Dissolution of Marriage (with minor children) including Parenting Plan and Temporary Relief Issues Copies of all court documents in this case, including orders, are available at the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office. You may review these documents upon request. You must keep the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office notified of your current address. (You may file Designation of Current Mailing and E-Mail Address, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.915.) Future papers in this lawsuit will be mailed or e-mailed to the addresses on record at the clerk's office.
WARNING: Rule 12.285, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, requires certain automatic disclosure of documents and information. Failure to comply can result in sanctions, including dismissal or striking of pleadings.
Dated: Feb. 18, 2021
Gary Knowles
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
By:Marti Lee, Deputy Clerk

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Marina will be 20,000 sq. feet, have private balconies



Jody Griffis, one of the partners developing the new Steinhatchee Marina, says the building will boast 20,000 square feet, private balconies, an outdoor entertaining area and off-site parking.

MARINA
Continued from page 6

expanded condominium units with private balconies instead of the original four.

Each floor of the marina building will contain approximately 6,600 square foot with just below 20,000 square foot total space under roof.

The property directly across the street, currently being used to hold discarded fill from the dredging operation, will eventually provide for off-site parking and additional dry-stack storage.

Griffis and his partners have most recently been working on the bar design for the downstairs outdoor entertainment area as well as steadily locking in vendors for the future retail space.

Fishing tourney hosts 60 anglers

More than 60 anglers weathered the winds and fished in the Sea Hag Marina's 19th annual Steinhatchee Community Center Fishing Tournament held Saturday, March 20.

The first place redfish worth $1,000 was won by Caleb Holden, who reeled in a 7.62lb redfish.

Mikey Hancin, age 14, took home second place redfish, worth $400, with a 6.93lb redfish.

The first place trout, worth $1,000, went to Steve Bond with a 5.59lb trout.

Adrian Rust took home second place trout for $400, who reeled in a 4.19lb trout.

The first place flounder, worth $250, went to Brayden Trice, age 5, and his 1.49lb flounder.

The award for most spots on a redfish, worth $250, went to Dane Cothron at 10 spots.

Prizes were donated by nearly 30 Steinhatchee businesses.

"The event raised more than $4,000, which will be put toward improvements and opportunities for the town. Thank you for helping us support Steinhatchee!" Sea Hag Marina said.







The annual Steinhatchee Community Center Fishing Tournament is hosted each year by Sea Hag Marina, with the proceeds going back to the community. (Left) The first place redfish worth $1,000 was won by Caleb Holden, who reeled in a 7.62lb redfish. (Center) The first place flounder, worth $250, went to Brayden Trice, age 5, and his 1.49lb flounder. (Right) Mikey Hancin, age 14, took home second place redfish, worth $400, with a 6.93lb redfish.

Strawberries re-arranged school year

STRAWBERRY
Continued from page 8

Plant City, for example, has long been known as the "Winter Strawberry Capital of the World," and strawberries have been a key theme in the town's self-promotion.

Florida strawberries generally become ready to harvest between late December and March, right in the middle of the traditional spring session of the public schools.

Farm families depending on the strawberry harvest for their livelihood often enlisted their children's help tending and picking the berries.

Gathering the fruit was only one part of the process; one woman remembered children being responsible for watering the rows of tender plants by hand and covering them with Spanish moss when the weather turned cold.

Strawberry farmers valued the labor their children provided at harvest time, but they also recognized the importance of their education. Some communities decided to have the best of both worlds by rearranging the school year.

This was no new invention; the very idea of summer vacation was originally devised to allow farm children to help their families during the busy summer months.

What Central Florida needed was a "strawberry school" that would allow the students' off-time to coincide with the strawberry harvest January through March.

And that is exactly what happened in many cases. In earlier years, counties would adjust the school year as needed for their particular harvest season.

Once state education authorities began regulating the length and structure of the school calendar, local districts had to request permission to operate on a special schedule.

Frequently, only some of the schools in a district would operate on the "summer" or "strawberry" system, while the rest of the county would use the more familiar "winter" system.

In at least one case in Polk County, a school remained opened year-round and parents had the opportunity to choose which months their children would attend classes.

A similar system was attempted for a few years in the early 1940s in Wimauma in Hillsborough County

The system had its problems, as veteran strawberry scholars have explained when asked about their experiences.

Former Hillsborough County teacher Myrtis Hawthorne once told Tampa Tribune writer Leland Hawes that she remembered the gnats being so bad in her classroom that she often put a small dab of kerosene on her students' faces to keep them away.

The strawberry school system was a boon for farmers, but several factors combined to bring it to an end in the years following World War II.

Migrant workers had become a crucial part of the agricultural labor force during the wartime emergency, and in the postwar years they preferred to be able to move northward in the summer months as crops became ready for harvest.

The educational quality of strawberry schools also came into question during this period.

In 1946, Tampa Tribune reporter J.A. "Jock" Murray began writing a series of articles criticizing the system as exploitative and academically deficient. Murray's efforts helped pave the way for Florida's landmark Minimum Foundation education law of 1947, but the school term remained a local option issue.

The tide was turning, however, and in 1956 the Hillsborough County School Board abolished the strawberry school calendar for all of its schools. The remaining strawberry schools in surrounding counties followed suit soon afterward.

Strawberry farming is still a major winter industry in Central Florida, but these days children spend much more time eating the berries than picking them.

Plant City still holds an annual Strawberry Festival that brings in thousands of visitors.



Extension Office predicts seagrass will recover

The Taylor County Extension Office reports it has received several phone calls from boaters concerned about changes on the local grass flats, where large sandy areas are present where healthy seagrass beds were present before.

Also, boaters report an abundance of sea urchins present in the same areas.

In consultation with numerous specialists from the Big Bend Seagrass Aquatic Preserve (BBSGAP), University of Florida and Nature Coast Biological Station (NCBS), biologists agree a series of events might have produced the recent loss of seagrass, including:

Days with long negative tides that exposed large areas of seagrass that dried out under the air and sun.

Extreme cold weather during last months that also affected seagrass leaves.

Environmental conditions that promoted a population explosion of sea urchins, which graze (feed) on seagrass leaves to the point where leaf coverage might be completely gone.

"Despite this situation, there is good news," the Extension Office shared on Facebook.

"Dr. Savanna Barry states, 'Overall, turtle grass is extremely resilient and can survive 100% defoliation as long as conditions go back to being good soon after the event that caused them to drop leaves (low salinity, desiccation, grazing)'," the Extension Office shared.

However, two total defoliations (from desiccation and again from urchins) could be a bad combo especially for grass that is near the northern extent of its range in winter.

Barry shared that if there are still live rhizomes below the surface, there is a good chance that they can recover even from two defoliation events.

According to the Extension Office, these type of events have been recorded for the area in the past, and scientists have seen the seagrass recover from it.

Scientists and agencies are aware of the situation and will keep an eye on this to follow up in the seagrass recovery.

"How fast will it recover? We don't know as it depends on numerous environmental variables, but we are lucky to be in a pristine and well-preserved area," the Extension Office said.

"We will post more information about this situation. Thank you to all those boaters, visitors and local captains who reported this issue," the Extension Office concluded.

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