



BCHS' Melody Coggin touted for support of female athletics

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Cats vs. Stanton for district crown after 4-3 victory over Kenny

See page 10

THE BAKER COUNTY PRESS

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APRIL 24, 2014 THURSDAY

Two deputies jump in court clerk race Field numbers four so far

Four candidates are in the race so far to replace Clerk of Courts Al Fraser, who announced two weeks ago he's leaving office after 20 years and mid-way through his current term.

The list is expected to expand before the May 19 deadline to qualify by petition to be on the November ballot. The recently-increased annual salary of \$99,222 is likely to guarantee a crowded field.

Among the candidates so far are two long-time deputy clerks already on Mr. Fraser's 11-person staff.

The first to pick up papers at the election supervisor's office was Stacie Harvey of Macclenny, a 19-year veteran deputy and the first replacement hired by Mr. Fraser shortly after he was elected.

The mother of three, including 2-year-old twins, has been assigned to varied departments including child support, criminal traffic and a dozen years on both criminal felony and misdemeanors. She currently is deputy for family law, probate and guardianship.

The other deputy,

Julie Combs of Sanderson, initially indicated she would not be a candidate but changed her mind.

The former county commissioner (2000-2008) has been in a deputy job 11 years in two stages and is currently assigned to official records. She has mainly worked in the county and circuit civil departments.

Ms. Combs is married with three grown children.

Sally Register of Macclenny is the third hopeful and a political newcomer. Her experience spans 36 years in the customer service departments of the former Citizens Bank and Mercantile Bank, and she is currently employed at TD Bank in Macclenny.

Ms. Register, who also has bachelor's degree in education, worked for one decade between bank positions for NEFCOM, the local phone company. She has two grown sons, and she and her husband have 14 grandchildren between them.

Joey Johnson is the fourth candidate to pick up qualifying papers, but did not respond this week to an



Stacie Harvey



Julie Combs



Sally Register

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'Midpoint Parkway' design plan signed

MIKE ANDERSON
PRESS STAFF

A much-anticipated western loop for truckers to travel from US 90 just east of Macclenny directly to CR 228 at Interstate 10, instead of driving through narrow downtown streets, could be under construction by this time in 2016.

The engineering and design work is expected to begin within about four months and be completed by the end of 2015 on what has been labeled the "Midpoint Parkway" in a joint agreement between Baker

County and the Florida Department of Transportation.

County commissioners on April 15 authorized the execution of an agreement with DOT for a \$650,000 grant to fund the project's engineering and design.

The grant deal was sealed a couple of months ago by the project's insertion as a "regionally significant project" in the Northeast Florida Transportation Planning Organization encompassing Jacksonville and surrounding counties, including Baker.

The truck bypass route, a two-lane corridor, will extend from near the Walmart Distribution Center on US 90 to the intersection at Barber Road in front of Walmart SuperCenter on CR 228 and I-10.

Macclenny and county officials have been pushing for the bypass for years to reduce the

See page 4

Suspect begs cop to place him in jail

See page 5



PHOTO BY KERI JARVIS

Lady Wildcats are 'four-peat' district champs

(Back row, l-r) Ashley Houston, Vanessa Roberts, Kylie Holton, Kylee Canaday, Hayleigh Mulkey, Genie Taylor, Mackenzie Wingard, Delicia Washington, Callie Paine, Payton Parker, Franklin Griffiths, John Holton, (front) Branda Jarvis, Jennifer Hodges, Ashton Alford, Macy Jackson, Corley Sweat, Madison Kennedy, Brandie Callway and Kellie Lawler. See page 11 for full coverage.

Tenacity is paying off for beekeeper

Parlayed his passion for insects into an enterprise

JON SHUMAKE
PRESS FEATURES
jonshu@live.com

Growing up, Baxter resident John David Peterson was always fascinated with insects. Now, at 22, he's turned that lifelong passion into a career as a beekeeper with the World Honey Market.

Mr. Peterson became interested in bees at a young age after seeing an episode of "The Magic School Bus" that focused on the insect. He was drawn to bees because they are the only insect that produces something edible and he re-watched the episode countless times.

"I annoyed the heck out of my parents for a VHS so I could record it," Mr. Peterson said. "I annoyed them again by watching it over and over again. I was enthralled by it."

The interest continued into middle school when he and his younger brother sold candy at school to earn money to buy bee hives. They eventually saved up enough and Mr. Peterson was allowed to take a half-day off school in eighth grade to purchase the first four hives for \$125 each.

Although only one of the four initial hives survived the first year, he wasn't discouraged. Instead, he used it as a learning experience as he continued to grow as a beekeeper.



PHOTOS BY JON SHUMAKE

World Honey Market produced 29,000 pounds of honey in 2013.

"I was tenacious about it," Mr. Peterson said. "I didn't want it to whip me. It's a difficult endeavor. I got an education in agriculture from the school of hard knocks."

The foundation for his current business was laid during high school when he was a member of the Future Farmers of America. With the encouragement of his agriculture teacher Greg Johnson, Mr. Peterson won the FFA State Proficiency Award for Agro Entrepreneurship in 2010. He competed against other students who specialized in cows, chickens and hogs with only one other entrant working with bees.

"Being No. 1 in the state is

pretty big," Mr. Peterson said. "It got me a lot of recognition." He won more than \$500 with the FFA award, which he was determined to apply to his business.

Mr. Peterson conducted a series of trades and transactions, including trading a motorcycle for a piece of property in Waycross, Ga., to get the money to start World Honey Market.

Now, his business has grown and he produced more than 29,000 pounds of honey in 2013 and he plans to produce even more this year. His honey can be found in Smart Market and Hagan Ace Hardware in Macclenny and all Ace Hard-

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bakercountypress.com

ONLINE POLL RESULTS
Who are you most likely to support in the District 4 county commission race?
70% Adam Giddens
20% James Bennett
10% Undecided

Visit our website and vote each week in our online poll.

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The Baker County Press Weather April 24, 2014

Seven Day Forecast

Thursday
Mostly Sunny
High: 83 Low: 62

Friday
Mostly Sunny
High: 86 Low: 62

Saturday
Mostly Sunny
High: 85 Low: 61

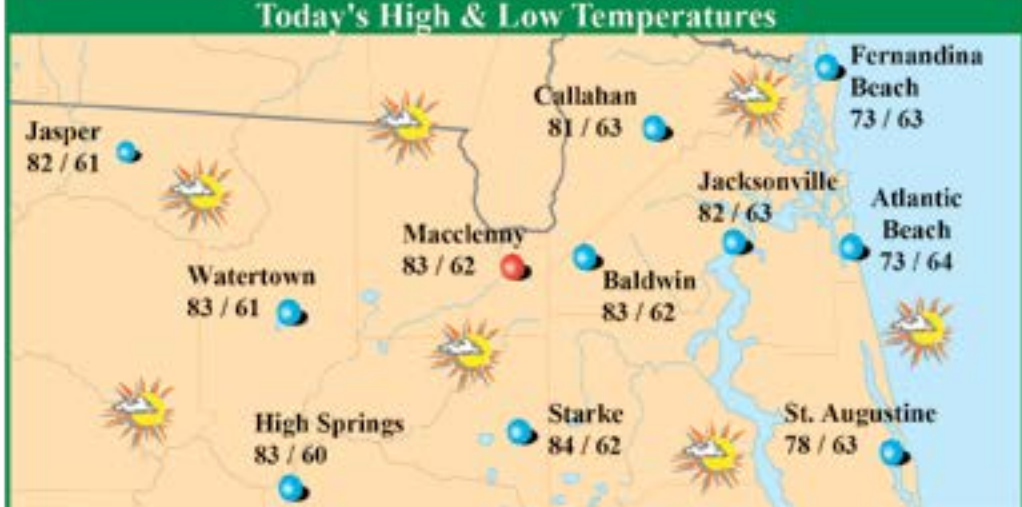
Sunday
Mostly Sunny
High: 86 Low: 63

Monday
Mostly Sunny
High: 86 Low: 64

Tuesday
Mostly Sunny
High: 88 Low: 69

Wednesday
Sunny
High: 89 Low: 67

Today's High & Low Temperatures



Last Week's Local Almanac

Day	High	Low	Normals	Precip
Mon, 4/14	86	59	81/55	0.00"
Tue, 4/15	79	50	81/55	1.01"
Wed, 4/16	61	43	81/55	0.01"
Thu, 4/17	68	54	81/56	0.00"
Fri, 4/18	73	63	81/56	0.38"
Sat, 4/19	73	59	81/56	0.04"
Sun, 4/20	63	54	82/56	0.01"

Data as reported from Cecil Field Airport

Sun/Moon Chart This Week

Day	Sunrise	Sunset	Moon
Thursday	6:50 a.m.	8:02 p.m.	Full 5/14
Friday	6:49 a.m.	8:02 p.m.	
Saturday	6:48 a.m.	8:03 p.m.	
Sunday	6:47 a.m.	8:04 p.m.	
Monday	6:47 a.m.	8:04 p.m.	Last 5/21
Tuesday	6:46 a.m.	8:05 p.m.	
Wednesday	6:45 a.m.	8:06 p.m.	

St. Mary's River Levels

Location	Now	Change
Moniac, GA	13.95 ft.	-0.18 ft.
Macclenny	15.05 ft.	+1.00 ft.

Hunting/Fishing Times

Day	Peak Times	
	AM	PM
Thu	7:50-9:50	8:20-10:20
Fri	8:42-10:42	9:12-11:12
Sat	9:32-11:32	10:02-12:02
Sun	10:23-12:23	10:53-12:53
Mon	11:14-1:14	11:44-1:44
Tue	12:36-2:36	12:06-2:06
Wed	1:27-3:27	12:57-2:57

Weather History

April 24, 1899 - Two women and one boy lived to tell the story of being picked up by a tornado and carried more than one-fourth of a mile before being gently set down again. The boy and one of the ladies said they had the pleasure of flying alongside a horse.

www.WhatsOurWeather.com

Young beekeeper: insect passion turned into business

From page 1
ware stores in Jacksonville. World Honey Market honey can also be bought in several Ace Hardware locations in central Florida and along the state's east and west coasts.

Mr. Peterson also rents his bees out across the country to help other crops with pollination. He sends the colonies out on a semi-regular schedule, including Lake Wales in the early part of the year and Wisconsin in the early summer.

He also recently sent his bees to California for the first time. He said it was a good learning experience for him and it was a good trip for the bees since there wasn't much blooming locally.

But as happy as he was to extend his business to California, he said he still prefers the scenery of Florida.

"The coolest thing I do is the Central Florida groves," Mr. Peterson said. He takes his colonies to Iron Mountain, the high point in Florida, where he said it looks like he's in Italy when he looks over the groves

from the high vantage point.

Although it is spreading his business nationally, he said renting his bees out is one of the most stressful parts of his job.

"It's always a risk," Mr. Peterson said. "There's so much that can happen on the trips that it'll put some gray hairs on your head real quick. You have to maintain the attitude that anything that can happen is going to happen and you have to keep plugging along."

To keep up with his growth in business, the young beekeeper spends several hours a day at one of his bee yards going through the colonies, where he is stung upwards of 50 times. He said he is currently working on collecting the honey to bottle it to sell.

Mr. Peterson said the toughest part of beekeeping, whether it's as a hobby or commercially, is keeping the insects alive.

"People don't realize the amount of labor that goes into

each bottle of honey," he said. "This is intense work. Usually, 30 percent of your colonies in a well-managed environment will die off. You can lose up to 80 percent in a blink of an eye if the colonies are poorly managed."

Another unforeseen issue Mr. Peterson has faced has been the name World Honey Market. The original plan was to collect the best honey from around the world. The idea didn't manifest, but the name

still stuck.

Mr. Peterson said the name could be hindering his business because people may not think they are getting local honey when they see it in a store. As a result, he is considering changing the name to the Baker Bee Co. within the next year.

A name change isn't the only major change that Mr. Peterson could be facing in the next 12 months. His honey will also be available at Ace Hardware stores all through Florida and

there is also a possibility it will be sold at Publix supermarkets.

With all his success thus far in beekeeping, Mr. Peterson remains optimistic for what his future holds in the field.

"You have to be tenacious about accomplishing your goals," he said. "You have to network yourself and meet other people in your area. It will just keep building from there. It's definitely a snowball effect."

Deputies jump into clerk race

From page 1
interview request.

All three female candidates are running as Democrats; Mr. Johnson is a Republican.

Two other potential clerk candidates have visited the elections office recently — Alex Robinson, former longtime county commissioner and Jeffrey Cox, the chief financial officer of the non-profit Baker Correctional Development Corporation that owns the county jail.

The sole candidate not previously announced for an upcoming Baker County School Board election is Paul Scammacca of Glen St. Mary, who several years back indicated an interest in running for school superintendent but never did so.

He is an in-school suspension teacher at John E. Ford Elementary School in Jacksonville and a 20-year veteran teacher. The father of four has a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Florida and a master's degree in public administration from UNF.

He was raised in Gainesville and taught at Macclenny Elementary for two years before transferring to Duval County. He is the second challenger for the District 4 seat occupied by Artie Burnett, the first being Jody Anderson of Glen.

Incumbent Dean Griffis qualified by petition for another term in District 2, and the vacant District 3 post is sought so far by former school superintendent Paula Barton, Deanna Rewis-McDuffie and Clayton Rhoden.

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99¢ lb.

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2/\$4⁰⁰

1 LB. CLAMSHELL STRAWBERRIES

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99¢

USDA Inspected Fresh Chicken Thighs or

DRUMSTICKS

\$1¹⁹ lb.

12 oz. Pkg. Hickory Springs

SLICED BACON

2/\$5⁰⁰

3 lb. Pkg. Sugardale

HOT DOGS

\$3⁹⁹

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters are welcome, but must contain the signature of the writer, a telephone number and city of residence. Letters must be concise and reflect opinions and statements on issues of current interest to the general public. The newspaper reserves the right to reject any material which in the newspaper's judgement does not meet standards of publication.

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Headed toward 'Land of Free, Home of the Stoned'?

I think I see where this is headed.

This week we learn the U.S. Department of Justice — that bastion of selective enforcement under Eric Holder — is signaling it wants to clear the federal prison system of "non-violent" drug offenders (never mind that most have pleaded down from serious crimes). Kinda like it's clearing the penal system of ICE inmates who have committed crimes.

Among the many rewards of twice electing Barack Obama president is the easing of society's strictures against the use of drugs like marijuana. The president himself has made no secret he toked his way through late adolescence, and he believes pot is no more harmful than alcohol.

Beside the point, since medical experts contend that both are dangerous to one's physical well-being. And then there's the risk that both can accelerate a person's yen to dip into stronger stuff.

Last weekend in Colorado, where recreational use of marijuana is now legal, tens of thousands showed up for a massive celebration in Denver that, if the photographic images are accurate, appeared to be little more than gyrating throngs of the "zoned out." Technically one is not supposed to puff away in public but there were only 47 people cited for doing so.

One suspects the theme of that event and hundred others like it celebrating the "4/20 pot holiday" was as much to flaunt the new-found "freedom" in public as it was to recognize the laws are changing.

By the way, two of the acts entertaining the crowd were "Slightly Stoopid" and Snoop Dog. Can you say "apropos?"

As someone who, ahem, partook of the weed occasionally during his young and foolish post-adolescence, observing what is surely a trend toward relaxing criminal penalties on drug use begs this question.

Is this really a good time in our quest to preserve a functioning republic to introduce yet more substances with the potential to turn us into zombies?

What most of us recognize as dysfunctional leadership at the highest level, encompassing all major political parties, is ultimately a consequence of the fact that half (or more) of voting age people in the United States do not participate in the political process. Not everyone needs to run for office or get involved in grass-roots politics, but would it be too much to ask that all of us *vote*?

The trend is disturbing, as

are its repercussions.

So let's just say all 50 states legalize pot, and the result is one-fifth of our citizens drift aimlessly in a cloud of marijuana smoke. Another

20 percent or so are so fond of booze (and the increasing ease with which one can live on the government dole) that they are incapable of worthwhile contribution to the commonwealth.

See where this is going? Every obligation removed

from what is required of the citizenry in a functioning representative republic (most vital the ability to critically analyze who is really looking out for the good of the nation) weakens that republic.

Personal responsibility for one's actions is one of those

obligations, as is caring for those who depend on us, and doing so with a clear head. That, it seems, is the reason the "pot revolution" should bother us.

We don't need more inducements to make us, well, more "stoopid."

IMPRESSIONS

Jim McGauley



The 'pinky promise' gives it true gravity

"I want a clean fight," the referee told the boxers. "No head butting; no hitting below the belt. When the bell to end the round rings, I want both of you to go straight to your corners. Is that understood?"

The boxers nod. "All right. Then let's pinky promise and have a good fight."

The boxers link pinky fingers, then go to their corners and the bell rings for the fight to begin.

There are many forms of bonded commitment. Shaking hands, signing treaties, the giving and exchanging of rings. But in the South there is one more binding than all others.

The pinky promise. When you are a kid, it is the ultimate sign of intent. Promising is important — a binding contract, but pinky promising is even more important. For a

kid to break the "pinky promise," means being branded a liar and a cheat and being made an outcast.

I remember the outrage on one of my children's faces when they came home from school to tell about an incident at recess during which one of their friends broke this bond.

"But ... he pinky promised." They were scandalized that

someone would break a pinky promise. The mere thought that something like that could happen shook the very foundations of their world.

The next day, retribution came down upon the offender's head as no one would choose him at recess. Nobody wanted a pinky promise breaker on their team. There is guilt by association. No one wants to be painted with that brush.

So many important issues could be solved by that simple act of linking the two little fingers. It demonstrates the inherent vulnerability of separate parties linked together and made stronger by that small act. It is far more effective than the handshake.

When you learn to pinky

promise, it sticks with you. I remember watching rehearsals for *The Old Time Gospel Jubilee* over the summer. My wife and Kristie Shook played sisters who didn't get along, but at one point they agree to a truce for the duration of the radio show that takes place during the play. They seal the deal with a pinky promise.

I had to smile since I hadn't directed that. In fact, I probably wouldn't have thought of something that perfect. They came to it as something natural that sisters would do to seal the pact.

Don't you wish that everyone would recognize the importance of the pinky promise? It would be a much better world.

Example: "The world was horrified yesterday when the forces of Nazi Germany poured across the border with Poland in a pre-dawn invasion on a massive scale," the scratchy old radio broadcast intoned. "It is clear by this act of aggression that Hitler's earlier promises to respect Polish sovereignty were only words. Speaking from the steps of Number 10 Downing Street, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was clearly shaken by the day's events."

"We certainly did not see this as a possibility. Chancellor

Hitler assured us in the strongest terms that he had no intention of military action against Poland. You all remember the film footage of myself and the Chancellor pinky promising on the steps of the Reichstag in Berlin last month."

"Mr. Prime Minister, what will this mean?"

"Chancellor Hitler broke a pinky promise he made not only to us but to the world. This means war!"

I can totally see it. It is clear that not everyone accepts the solemnity of the pinky promise. Earlier this week, Secretary of State John Kerry attempted to get Russian President Vladimir Putin to agree to a pinky promise regarding peace with Ukraine.

"What is this 'Pinky Promise?'" railed Putin. "Is he calling me a Communist — implying that I am 'pinko'? I refuse to agree to the authority of the pinky promise. The Russian people will not pinky promise with the USA."

A shame isn't it? Imagine President Obama and Speaker of the House John Boehner giving the pinky promise about working together to pass legislation. It would be a sign of hope that the country would be ready to move forward.

The simple, but powerful, pinky promise.

MY SIDE OF THE MATTER

ROBERT GERARD

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No big smiles or other joyful expressions by 6 months.
No babbling by 12 months.
No words by 18 months.

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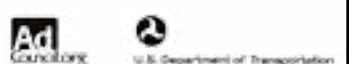
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8 oz. pilsner lager
8 oz. stout lager
1 frosty mug
1 icy road
1 pick-up truck
1 10-hour day
1 tired worker
A few rounds with the guys.

Mix ingredients.
Add 1 totalled vehicle.

Never underestimate 'just a few.'
Buzzed driving is drunk driving.



Arrests for pot in small sale bags

Police arrested two Macclenny men in separate cases the past week for felony possession of marijuana with intent to sell. Both cases resulted from traffic stops in the downtown area.

The first took place the afternoon of April 15 when Deputy Robert Simpkins recognized Carlton Pender, 21, at the wheel of a 2009 Saturn that pulled out from the parking lot of Moody's Chevron just before 5 pm.

The officer said he detected an odor of marijuana emanating from the vehicle's interior and during a routine search found 13 small baggies of pot in the center console.

He also charged Mr. Pender with driving with four suspensions and never obtaining a license.

Passenger Favion Allen, 22, of Macclenny denied knowledge of the baggies and was warned for having an open container of alcohol in the car.

In the second case, Deputy Trey McCullough arrested Dennis Desue Jr., 25, shortly after midnight on April 19 for having a baggie of marijuana along with five smaller baggies commonly used for re-sale in the glove box of a 1997 Buick he was riding in when it ran the stop sign at MLK Dr.

and US 90.

The officer said he followed the Buick into the parking lot of CVS about 12:30 am and it appeared Mr. Desue was attempting to stow something before he heard the door of the glove box close as he approached the vehicle.

During an ensuing search, the deputy found more empty small baggies in the console.

Driver Dorian Surrency-Frazier, 20, of Macclenny was ticketed for having no driver's license.

• Deputy Simpkins arrested James Newmans Jr., 38, of Glen St. Mary for felony possession of a Hydrocodone pill, misdemeanor possession of marijuana and driving on a license with 11 suspensions the evening of April 19.

The officer stopped a 1995 Ford Ranger driven by the suspect north of the CRs 125 and 127 intersection at Cuyler because of a faulty tag light. During a consent search, he found the pill in a bottle stashed in the driver side door, and a baggie of pot in the purse of passenger Samantha Layfield, 34.

Also in the purse were more pills for which Mr. Newmans had a prescription.

Deputy Simpkins said Ms. Layfield became irate when he was in the process of

arresting Mr. Newmans, and he had to warn her to calm herself or face arrest.

• James Tyler Fletcher, 30, of Macclenny was arrested for misdemeanor possession of a baggie of marijuana and rolling papers found in the 1997 Cadillac he was driving when spotted by two sheriff's investigators on Odis Yarbrough Rd. the afternoon of April 16.

Investigator Michael Hauge said he stopped the vehicle because Mr. Fletcher was not wearing a seat belt, and while being pursued he turned into a private driveway, explaining he was checking up on his children.

An occupant of the residence drove up shortly after and said she was not acquainted with the suspect, who consented to a vehicle search. Mr. Fletcher's two children, who were with him in the Cadillac, were released to a grandmother.

Deputy McCullough filed a criminal complaint against Logan Russell, 23, of Macclenny after finding two altered straws with cocaine residue in the 1999 Chevrolet he was driving the evening of April 18 when stopped on US 90 and Cow Pen Rd. for having a tail light out.

The complaint is for felony possession of paraphernalia.

Daughter suspected in bogus check case wanted for petty theft

A Macclenny woman who along with her boyfriend is suspected of stealing and cashing a check belonging to her father was arrested when a county deputy learned she was wanted in Columbia County for petty theft.

Deputy Michael Clark said he was called to the residence of Christopher Theus on North 6th St. on April 16 after he learned a check was cashed for \$500 on his account at Jacksonville Federal Credit Union.

Mr. Theus named his daughter Elizabeth Stallings, 18, and her boyfriend Michael Williams, 20, of Lake City as likely suspects. The two denied involvement when questioned, and during the process Deputy Clark learned of the warrant.

In other thefts and vandalism, Bradley Flick, 23, of Macclenny was charged with attempting to steal coins from a washing machine at the Travelodge motel on South 6th St. the evening of April 19.

The motel desk clerk called police after she confronted a male in the laundry about 8:30 as he attempted to pry open the box, and Deputy Michael Antonini said a surveillance camera caught the image of the clerk confronting a male.

The next day, motel owner Jayesh Patel summoned Deputy Jeremiah Johnson when he viewed the video and recognized Mr. Flick, as did the deputy who then questioned the suspect, who lives across Estates St. from the motel.

Deputy Johnson's report indicates the suspect admitted only to doing his laundry that evening. He was arrested for criminal mischief and damage to the machine was placed at \$250.

• There are no suspects in the theft of a game hen and eggs from the front porch at a Baxter residence the afternoon of April 18.

Donna Crawford told Deputy Johnson she saw a black two-door sports car backing from her driveway about 3:30 pm, and said the bird and eggs were removed from a cardboard box. She added that she'd seen the vehicle in the neighborhood on CR 127 before.

• Deputy Earl Lord reported a cell phone valued at \$748 was taken from a student at Baker County High School during a 25-minute time period the morning of April 17.

The student, a 15-year-old female from Glen St. Mary, was asleep at her desk in the Alternative School at the time.

He wanted to go to jail, and he did

A Sanderson man who repeatedly pleaded that he be taken to jail for trying to start a fight at a downtown convenience store was arrested the afternoon of April 15 for disturbing the peace.

Caleb Southard, 22, allegedly tried to punch a patron at the Kangaroo Store on US 90 across from the courthouse about 2:30 pm, said Deputy Christopher Clutter. The officer quoted the suspect as saying he had "no money, no place to live" and that he wanted to go to jail "to see family in the jail before they went away to prison."

He said he'd do whatever he had to, to make that happen, according to the deputy.

Court records indicate Mr. Southard has pending felony charges for possession of cocaine and prescription drugs, and he's been convicted of grand theft and multiple misdemeanors.

In other recent arrests,

Shane Sandoval, 27, was taken into custody outside his residence on 8th St. and charged with disorderly intoxication and breach of the peace following an altercation with his live-in girlfriend.

Deputy Michael Clark responded to a disturbance call at the couple's residence on 8th St. the morning of April 17 after Mr. Sandoval allegedly broke out the rear window of a 1996 Acura belonging to Amberay Reed, 25.

She declined to prosecute if the boyfriend agreed to leave, and Deputy Clark said Mr. Sandoval shortly after became unruly and refused to calm himself during an argument with his girlfriend over a suitcase.

• Bryan Harrington, 33, of Macclenny was booked at county jail the evening of April 16 for violation of probation after he caused a disturbance on the property of Richard Smith on CR 23C.

Deputy Chris Walker located the intoxicated Mr. Harrington in a vacant trailer shortly after 8 pm and noted he had been out of jail only three days after being placed on probation for disorderly intoxication.

He has a history of alcohol-related offenses.

• Deputy Chris Walker said he was aware of Jason Byrd's license status when he stopped him driving a 2002 Chevrolet on US 90 in east Glen St. Mary shortly before midnight on April 17.

Mr. Byrd, 35, of Glen had five prior suspensions for failure to make court appearances, and has a lengthy history of arrests, including one last month on the same offense.

• A criminal complaint was filed April 15 naming Tia Grissett, 21, of Macclenny for carrying a concealed pair of brass knuckles.

Deputy Trey McCullough noted that the accused and

Tara Washington, 41, of Macclenny have been engaged in a long-running feud, and the latter called police when she alleged Ms. Grissett brandished the weapon at the BP station downtown about 6 pm.

A store clerk backed Ms. Washington's version of events as well.

• Deputy Robert Simpkins arrested Benjamin Ciafardoni, 26, at a residence on Ivy St. in Macclenny in the early morning hours of April 19. He was wanted in Seminole County for violating probation on a charge of giving false ownership information to a pawn shop.

• Melvin Norman, 46, of Glen St. Mary was already in county jail on April 14 when served with an out-of-county warrant for delinquent child support.

• Frank Levi Pipkins, 34, of Glen was arrested April 17 on a bond surrender for petty theft.

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Drunk boyfriends among domestic violence arrests

Sheriff's deputies made a number of arrests for domestic battery the past week, three of them involving intoxicated live-in boyfriends and one husband.

Amanda Shanahan, 27, told Deputy Koty Crews her husband Joshua Shanahan, 26, had been drinking heavily the evening of April 15 when they began arguing early the next morning while sitting on a porch of their residence off Richardson Rd. south of Sanderson.

Initially he began striking himself about the head, then the wife said he turned on her, grabbing her by the hair and throwing her onto nearby concrete before striking her about the head.

Deputy Crews noted scratches, swelling and redness, along with clumps of hair on her clothing.

• Deputy Tony Norman arrested Casey Freeman, 22, when he returned to his residence on River Hills Rd. north of Macclenny the evening of April 13.

His live-in girlfriend, 17, called the sheriff's department earlier after he chased her into several rooms, dragged her by the hair and repeatedly pummeled her with his fists. The deputy noted abrasions and bruising about her neck, in addition to a clump of hair in the bathroom where Mr. Freeman kicked down the locked door.

The girlfriend said he was drunk and became enraged that she wanted to return to their residence earlier that evening after visiting relatives.

The Department of Children and Families was notified because the couple's infant son was present during the incident.

• Elliott Haire, 29, of Sanderson was arrested for domestic battery following an interview with Deputy Chad Montean at county jail the evening of April 15.

His fiancée Katie Baldwin, 21, called police earlier after locking herself in a bathroom, accusing Mr. Haire of attacking her and throwing her onto a couch at their residence on Shumate Lane during an argument that centered around him packing belongings to leave.

The officer noted swelling on Ms. Baldwin's hand where the accused allegedly attempted to remove her engagement ring.

• Denny Bowers, 39, was arrested in the early morning hours of April 20 for battery on live-in girlfriend Bethany Bates, 33, at their residence on North 5th St. in Macclenny.

Deputy Michael Antonini said Ms. Bates was in an hysterical state when he arrived at the address about 2:45 am, and said her boyfriend came home drunk and accusing her of cheating on him.

He allegedly pulled her out of her bed by the shirt and grabbed her by the arms. The deputy also viewed what he described as obscene text messages sent by Mr. Bowers before he came home.

• The same deputy arrested William Privett Jr., 21, the evening of April 19 for striking his father William Privett Sr., 45, while the latter attempted to intervene during an argument between the accused and his 17-year-old sister.

The incident took place at their home on Blair St. in Macclenny about 6:45 pm. The deputy noted a laceration above the father's left eye.

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PHOTO BY JUD JOHNSON

Trilby Crews (left) presents Melody Coggin with an award.



PHOTOS BY JUD JOHNSON

We're always looking for news-from you

If you got news, especially good news, we want to hear about it.

The Press monitors official records and regularly scheduled events, but we rely on you, the reader, to inform us about what's happening in your neighborhood, whether it's central Macclenny near us, or in some of the far-flung reaches of Baker County. When Baker County residents are making waves around the country or the globe, we'd like to shine a light on them, too.

That mission trip that was especially challenging, traveling sports teams, the tales of good deeds that should not go unnoticed, we want to know all about them.

You can reach us several ways: by calling Managing Editor Joel Addington at (407) 617-4783 or sending him an e-mail at reporter@baker-countypress.com. You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter. During normal business hours, you can reach us at (904) 259-2400.

Woman's club fashion show ...

The GFWC Woman's Club of Macclenny held its annual fashion show and fundraiser the morning of April 12, showing off outfits from area retailers and honoring BCHS athletic director Melody Coggin for her support of women in sports. "We acknowledge women in our community that have, through their work or volunteer services, advanced, enabled or enriched the lives of other women and our community," said the club's Trilby Crews, who chaired the event. The fashion show benefitted the club's scholarships and other programs. Pictured above from left are Blayne Fraser, Lani Foster and Cheyenne Ball.



PHOTO BY JUD JOHNSON

Caitlyn Crawford sings "Somewhere Over the Rainbow."

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Stole 'wifi' routers with a fake receipt

Police have few initial clues as to the identity of a shoplifter who made off with four wifi routers from the Macclenny Walmart the evening of April 19.

A store security worker told Deputy Michael Antonini that the suspect exited a white Honda van in the parking lot about 6 pm, entered the store and purchased four of the units using a credit card. All the while, surveillance tape shows the van circling in the parking lot.

The suspect, described as having Middle Eastern features, exited the store and returned to the van, only to re-enter the store and take identical routers from the inventory and exit through the garden center where he was stopped by an employee, who then assumed the receipt was valid for the second set.

The routers have a retail value of \$630.

Walmart is attempting to learn the suspect's identity via the credit card he used in the initial purchase.

In a second case at Walmart, Deputy Justin Yingling arrested Nicole Dotson, 30, of Jack-

sonville after a store security worker observed her taking several food items valued at \$6 and concealing them in an oversized coat.

The incident occurred the late afternoon of April 16, and Ms. Dotson told the deputy she had been released from jail and had no money. Court records show she was in jail on a child support violation.

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OBITUARIES

CHURCH AND OBITUARY NOTICE INFORMATION

Obituaries must be submitted in a timely fashion and have a local connection. Pictures are printed with obituaries free of charge. The newspaper reserves the right to publish photos based on quality. It is requested that all news items be typed or emailed to insure accuracy in print.

CONTACT US

By phone at 904.259.2400 or by fax at 904.259.6502. You can stop by our office located at 104 S. Fifth Street, Macclenny, FL or mail your submission to PO Box 598, Macclenny, FL 32063 Online at www.bakercountypress.com or email editor@bakercountypress.com

Robert Griffis, 23, corrections officer

Robert Rollin Griffis Jr. (RJ), 23, died on April 14, 2014 surrounded by his loving family. RJ was born February 10, 1991 in Jacksonville to Robert Griffis Sr. and Barbara "Barbie" Griffis. He resided in Lawtey for most of his life before moving to Baker County two years ago.

RJ was a graduate of Middleburg High School and attended the police academy in St. Augustine. He was a corrections officer at Columbia Correctional in Lake City for the past two years. Prior to that, RJ worked with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. In his spare time he enjoyed fishing, four-wheeling, watching Georgia Bulldog games, plus spending time with his family and friends.

Mr. Griffis is survived by his parents; brothers Clint Austin Griffis and Steven Norman; fiancé Amber Cernik; grandparents Richard (Linda) Norman, Kay (Linda) Sands, Homer (Billie) Griffis; numerous aunts, uncles, extended family members and friends.

The funeral service was held on Saturday, April 19 at 11 am at Highland First Baptist Church in Lawtey with Daniel Padgett officiating. Interment followed at the church cemetery. V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services of Macclenny was in charge of arrangements.



Robert Griffis Jr.

Memorial Friday for Ms. Von-Wryeza

Brenda Lynn Von-Wryeza, 61, of Jacksonville died on Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at her home following an extended illness. She was born in Buffalo, New York and moved to Jacksonville from Holland, New York in 1989. Mrs. Von-Wryeza was a Christian and loved her family. She also enjoyed cooking and dancing. She was a cosmetologist and worked at several local hair studios during her career.

She is survived by her husband, Michael J. Von-Wryeza of Jacksonville; sons Scott Von-Wryeza of Ohio and Larry Von-Wryeza (Julio) of Jacksonville; daughters Terrijean M. (Marcus) Hodges of Macclenny and Melissa (Jeff) Strano of Springfield, Virginia; brother Bruce (Kathy) Mohny of Holland, New York; sisters Cheryl (Randy) George of East Aurora, New York, Sandie (Ed) Hill of Delevin, New York and Michelle Miller of Buffalo; sister-in-law Jewel Bartkowski of Buffalo; grandchildren Kelsea and Mitchel Crain of Macclenny, Aubrey and Madison Strano of Springfield, Virginia.

A memorial service will be conducted on Friday, April 25 at 6 pm at the chapel of Guerry Funeral Home in Macclenny.



Brenda Von-Wryeza

DINKINS NEW CONGREGATIONAL METHODIST CHURCH
CR 127 N. of Sanderson

Sunday School 10:00 am
Sunday Morning Service 11:00 am
Sunday Night Service 6:00 pm
Wed. Night Service 7:30 pm

Pastor Allen Crews
Assistant Pastor Timothy Alford

Community Full Gospel Church
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Sunday Evening 6:00 pm
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Pastor Tommy Richardson || 904-275-2949

First United Methodist Church

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Funeral on Friday for Mr. Hooper, 57

Timothy James Hooper, 57, of Macclenny died Sunday, April 20, 2014 at UF Health Jacksonville following a long illness. Mr. Hooper resided in Macclenny since moving from Jacksonville Beach over 20 years ago. He was an employee of Mercedes Benz of North America where he worked for 32 years. He was a Catholic and enjoyed working on his land and home. He also enjoyed camping, the beach and spending time with his family and grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by parents Raymond and Mary Louise Hooper. Mr. Hooper is survived by his wife Mary Catherine (Cathy) Hooper of Macclenny; daughters Emily (Travis) Keeling of Callahan and Jesse Bales of Macclenny; son John Wesley Bales of Tallahassee; brother Michael (Terri) Hooper of Jacksonville; grandchildren Braze and Stella Keeling of Callahan and Shaylee Swearingen of Macclenny.

The funeral Mass will be held at 1 pm on Friday, April 25 at St. Catherine's Catholic Church in Orange Park with Father Ignatius Plathanam officiating. Visitation with the family will be at the church one hour prior to the service. Guerry Funeral Home of Macclenny is in charge of arrangements.



Timothy Hooper

Family grateful

Many thanks to the family and friends of Roger G. Alexander for their support during our recent and unexpected loss. We would like to thank all the people who came to the services and brought flowers, food and were there for comfort and support. Thanks also to Forbes Funeral Home for handling the services, video and music for us. Thanks to all of you and God bless each and every one of you.

With our love,
His entire family



In loving memory of
our brother
Dale E. Young
4/22/1953-11/25/2013
**Happy Birthday
Big Brother!**

LOVE AND MISS YOU!
MARK, RICKY, LORI AND ROB



In loving memory of
our son
Dale E. Young
4/22/1953-11/25/2013
Happy Birthday Son

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Sunday
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Evening Services 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday
Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Mary Pyle of Maxville dies at age 91

Mary E. Pyle, 91, of Maxville died on Tuesday, April 15, 2014. Originally from New Jersey, Ms. Pyle was a twelve-year local resident. She had a heart for the community, volunteering with the Auxiliary Fire Department, Girl Scouts and various other community activities. She enjoyed traveling, hiking, camping, fishing and dancing, and loved spending time with family and friends.

Ms. Pyle is survived by daughters Patricia Bates of Maxville and Lois Staines of Pine Hill, NJ; brother Kenneth (Mary) Cook of Edgewater, FL; sister Ruth Worrell; six grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

She was preceded in death by daughter Janice Frederico, brother Edward Cook and sister Edna Doughty.

A celebration of her life will be held privately at a later date. Forbes Funeral Home of Macclenny was in charge of arrangements.

Sanderson Congregational Holiness Church
CR 127 N., Sanderson, FL

Sunday School 10:00 am
Morning Worship 11:00 am
Sunday Evening Worship 6:00 pm
Wed. Evening Prayer Serv. 7:30 pm

Pastor: Oral E. Lyons

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Sunday:
Sunday School 9:45 am
Morning Worship 10:30 am
Kids Church 10:30 am

Tuesday:
Senior Adult Service 10:00 am
1st & 3rd Tuesday each month

Wednesday:
Family Dinner 6:00 pm
Harbor LIFE 7:00 pm
(Youth Group/Kids Clubs/Bible Study)

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For more information or to find out how to contact us, visit our website at www.christianfellowshiptemple.com

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CFT SERVICE TIMES:

Wednesday, April 23rd
6:00-6:45 Family Dinner
7:00 Adult Worship Services
7:00 Youth Worship Services

Sunday, April 27th
10:00 Sunday School (All Ages)
11:00 Morning Worship Service
11:00 Children's Church
6:00 Evening Worship Service

connect.
grow.
serve.



In loving memory of Annie Lou Mills
1912-1984

It's been 30 years since God called you home to be with Him, for we know you are in a better place. Although you are sadly missed each and every day, we will always remember your smiling face and the loving arms you held us with. The glow of your smile is what keeps us going. There's a lot of things we take for granted, but the memories of the wisdom you shared help to soothe the pain of losing you. "Ain't God good; He loaned you to us and there's no one who can take your place in our lives." All these years after, your memories, you are still more precious than gold. We'll always love you and we are so very grateful for being a part of you and the legacy you left with us was, "Trust no man, only God!"

LOVE YOU ALWAYS AND FOREVER,
YOUR CHILDREN—
CAROLYN (ERNEST) ROBINSON,
SHARON MAXWELL,
GRACE AND JULIUS MILLS,
GRANDCHILDREN AND A HOST
OF GREAT-GRANDS AND
GREAT-GREAT GRANDS



In loving memory of Deborah Lynn Griffis
8/28/1980-5/1/2001

Each time we see the sun go down, it seems the end of day, and yet we know the sun is rising somewhere far away. And when we lose someone we love, we learn to trust somehow that a new life, in a brighter place, is just beginning now. A place of grace and peace and joy beyond all time and sorrow, where loving hearts who part today will meet again tomorrow.

WE LOVE YOU ALWAYS,
MOM, DAD, JOEY, MEREDITH,
HUNTER, GRANNY GRIFFIS AND
AUNT DIANE

Thanks so much

We would like to take a moment to thank Macclenny Nursing and Rehab Center and Community Hospice for giving our family peace of mind during our time of need. Both are super groups of caring, understanding and professional people. They were super with our mother and family. Again, thank you all for everything you do.

The Virginia Williams family

Family grateful

The family of Mike Rogers would like to thank everyone for the prayers, love, visits to the hospital and our homes. We truly appreciate each and every act of kindness and the support that has been given to us over the past month. Thank you for all the delicious food, beautiful flowers, financial contributions and the time spent helping us in and around our homes. Thank you to Pastor Mark Woods, Pastor Jim Cox, Sharon Robst, Chad Gullage, Rhonda Kerce, Anthony Williams, our family at Taylor Church, BCSO, and Archer Funeral Home for the beautiful service. Special thanks to David Rowell, Lynn Nettles, Jackson Hospital, Jackson County Fire and Rescue, Joe and the CICU staff and doctors at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital for the excellent care and love you gave Mike.

Tina, Phillip, Maisie, Shelli, Ray and Deloris

SCV chapter Memorial Day

The Baker County chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans will observe Confederate Memorial Day at Cedar Creek Cemetery north of Sanderson on Sunday, April 27 at 3 pm. All families and the general public are invited. The ceremony will include a roll call and 21-gun salute. The cemetery is located on CR 124. For more information, contact Larry Rosenblatt at 993-5019.

Moose benefit

The Macclenny Moose Lodge is hosting a benefit this Saturday, April 26 for five-month-old Amarely Garcia-Diaz, a cancer patient since she was 11 weeks old. According to organizer Annette Barton, Amarely requires doctor visits 2-3 times weekly plus chemotherapy and blood transfusions. Proceeds from the event are pledged for expenses beyond insurance.

Raffle donations, including baked goods, are sought as well as cash donations. Grilled chicken dinners will be on sale.

For details, telephone Ms. Barton at 626-3173.

Family grateful

The family of Mertie Mae "Granny" Loadholtz Hicks would like to express its heartfelt appreciation for all the love and support during the loss of our mother. Thanks for the flowers, food, visits, phone calls and most of all the prayers. Thanks to Wells Nursing Home and Ed Fraser Memorial Hospital, and to everyone who cared for her in a professional and loving way. Thanks to the Christian Fellowship Temple, Bros. David and Timmy Thomas, the Baker County sheriff's department, V. Todd Ferreira and his staff for all their services.

The family of
Granny Loadholtz

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PHOTO BY MICHELE HODGES

Heritage Park hosts COA Easter egg hunt

Heritage Park in Macclenny hosted an Easter egg hunt for seniors with the Council on Aging April 17. Pictured above (from left) are Norma Bracero and Tiffany Shrull.

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Firewise efforts pay off for Taylor area; on exclusive listing

JOEL ADDINGTON
MANAGING EDITOR
reporter@bakercountypress.com

Baker County, and specifically the community of Taylor, was added this year to a national network of Fire Adapted Communities for its work in recent years to prevent wildfires before they happen.

Baker County is one of only three locations in the Southeastern U.S. to be named to the so-called FAC Learning Network, which counts most of its members in the southwestern and northwestern reaches of the country.

The network's goal is to "encourage the development and sharing of best practices and innovations in order to accelerate the adoption of fire adapted community concepts nationwide," according to the network's website, facnetwork.org. It's an effort managed by the Watershed Research and Training Center in Hayfork, CA and The Nature Conservancy based in Arlington, VA.

"The community of Taylor has been a Firewise Community for many years and has had several wildfires threaten the community," explained Ronda Sutphen, wildfire prevention coordinator for the Florida Forest Service, who submitted Baker County for inclusion in the network.

"The end goal of a Firewise Community is to become fire adapted; which is working toward the goal of having the community be able to withstand a wildfire without the intervention of fire fighters," she said. "The success of Taylor as a Firewise Community and the overwhelming support of people who live there prompted us to apply to become a Fire Adapted Community hub. Baker County has always been proactive in wildfire prevention and mitigation and it made sense to include Baker County in the FAC process."

Taylor, with about 400 homes and 1000 residents, is surrounded by more than 700,000 acres of state and national forest lands. It has narrow dirt roads and a limited water supply. Such characteristics make it especially vulnerable to the threats associated with wildfires, namely the loss of life and property.

The Florida Forest Service reports that during the last decade four major wildfires have burned thousands of acres in the area, though no structures were lost.

It was back in 2006 that officials with the county, state and federal fire agencies began their quest to make Taylor a Firewise Community. The first step was forming a wildfire protection plan that identified ways to reduce the potential damage that could be caused by such blazes.

The plan's strategies included prescribed burning to eliminate wildfire fuels, clearing brush and other fuels near homes and other structures with an annual Firewise clean-up day, firefighter training, community education and building an 11-mile, 30-foot-wide fire line encircling the community. The latter was completed in 2007, just in the nick of time.

Soon after, Taylor was tested by the largest wildfire to erupt in the southeastern U.S., the 116,000-acre Bugaboo Wildfire that ignited in the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

Some 200 homes were evacuated in Taylor due to the fire, but the freshly cut fire lines allowed firefighters to back burn quickly with little preparation needed, saving valuable time.

The following year Taylor was recognized as a Firewise Community in November, 2008.

"The fire calmed down when it ran into the area that had been previously burned, allowing firefighters to control the fire. If not for prescribed burning and mitigation lines, the fire would have burned through the community of Taylor," said Ms. Sutphen.

Since 2008, the Florida Forest Service reports, community residents and fire agency representatives have logged nearly 3000 hours of wildfire protection activities worth an estimated \$75,000.

"Baker County is made up of a close-knit group of people who work very well together," said Ms. Sutphen. "The variety of partnerships and multiple agencies supporting the process is not a common occurrence. Other hubs in the FAC network will see how this unique partnership works together toward a common goal."

Baker County, meanwhile, will have the opportunity to learn from the 17 other communities in the network, most of them from wildfire ravaged states out West.

"Wildfire is often seen as a western problem when in fact there are just as many wildfires and homes lost in the South," Ms. Sutphen said. "Fires in the South are normally not as big as fires in the West but the urban interface issue, where wildlands and homes intermix, is a much bigger problem."

School activities

April 23, 2014

- Baker County High
BsBall District Tournament
FCAT Reading 9th
- Baker County Middle
FCAT Reading 7th Grade
FCAT Science 8th Grade
Keller Intermediate FCAT
Macclenny Elementary FCAT
Westside Elementary FCAT

April 24, 2014

- Baker County High
BsBall District Tournament
Drama production aud. 7:30 PM
- Baker County Middle
FCAT Reading 7th Grade
Keller Intermediate FCAT
Macclenny Elementary FCAT
Westside Elementary FCAT

April 25, 2014

- Baker County High
BsBall District Tournament
State Weightlifting
Drama production aud. 7:30 PM
- Baker County Middle
FCAT Reading 7th Grade
Keller Intermediate FCAT
Macclenny Elementary FCAT
Westside Elementary FCAT

April 26, 2014

- Baker County High
Drama production aud. 7:30 PM

April 27, 2014

- Baker County High
Drama production aud. 2:00 PM

April 28, 2014

- Baker County High
U.S.History EOC
- Baker County Middle
FCAT Reading 8th Grade
Keller Intermediate FCAT

April 29, 2014

- Baker County Middle
FCAT Reading 8th Grade
Keller Intermediate FCAT
Westside Elementary
Just Say No Club 8:00 AM

April 30, 2014

- Baker County Middle
FCAT Math 6th Grade
Keller Intermediate FCAT

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Purchase this photo at www.bakercountypress.com Photo by Jud Johnson
Dylan Rowe chases down the runner for the out in last week's contest against Mandarin.

Cats sting Crusaders 4-3

JON SHUMAKE
SPORTS EDITOR
jonshu@live.com

The Wildcats strung together a two-out sixth-inning rally to pull out an exciting 4-3 come-from-behind victory over the rival Bishop Kenny Crusaders on April 22 to advance to Thursday's District 3-5A championship game.

Mikal Flores blasted the go-ahead two-RBI double to deep left centerfield to score Tyler Wendel and Jared Crews. Wendel reached base earlier in the inning on a two-out single and Crews was hit by a pitch to advance Wendel to second.

"There is no other guy we wanted up in that situation," coach Fred Matricardi said of Flores. "I had no doubt he would get a hit."

The Crusaders wouldn't go down quietly in the final inning, though. Winning pitcher Garrett Yarborough allowed a leadoff single and the runner advanced to second with a sacrifice bunt during the next at bat.

Jordan Kennedy then took the mound with one out and a runner in scoring position. The pressure didn't seem to faze him as he struck out the first batter he faced and sealed the team's spot in the district championship game by forcing a ground ball for the final out.

The dramatic comeback was a result of a slow start defensively by the Wildcats. The team had three errors in the first five innings and most of Bishop Kenny's runs were a direct result of Baker County's miscues.

The Crusaders took an early 1-0 lead after a wild pitch from starting pitcher Jared Crews in the first inning.

Bishop Kenny added two more runs in the third inning and took a 3-0 lead after Baker County's right fielder dropped a routine fly ball.

Even with the deficit, coach Matricardi said he knew his team had the heart to keep competing.

"We've been doing it all year," he said. "I knew they would fight back. Even if they didn't win, they would've fought back and made it a close game. They did a great job."

Dylan Rowe connected with a two-run double in the bottom of the fifth inning to get runs on the board, the Cats were hitting well all game. Crews led the team with three hits, including a first-inning double.

The big fifth inning set the team up for the opportunity to come back during the sixth inning, coach Matricardi said.

Although it took until the fifth inning to get runs on the board, the Cats were hitting well all game. Crews led the team with three hits, including a first-inning double.

With the win, the boys also guaranteed themselves a playoff berth for the second year in a row. Last year, the team was the district runner-up and lost



Purchase this photo at www.bakercountypress.com Photo by Jud Johnson
Andrew Dehart slides over the bat and into home on senior night.



Purchase this photo at www.bakercountypress.com Photo by Jud Johnson
No. 6 Zach Rafuse slides under the tag to get the run in the 6-4 win.

in the opening round of the playoffs to the eventual state champions Ponte Vedra.

They are hoping for a different result this year, which starts with winning the district title on April 24 against Stanton.

"We had to go on the road last year," coach Matricardi said. "We want to host it this year and play in front of our fans and on our field. It's conducive to how we play the game."

Advance to state finals on May 3rd

JON SHUMAKE
SPORTS EDITOR
jonshu@live.com

Both Rashood Hadley and Abigail Rice qualified for the Class 2A state meet with second place-performances at the Region 1-2A at Bolles on April 17.

Hadley, a senior, advanced to state with a pair of second-place finishes in the discus and shot put at regionals. His throw of 53-07 in the shot put was less than two feet behind the first-place finisher. He also earned a spot at state in the discus with a throw of 171-06.50.

Rice narrowly edged out the third-place finisher with a throw of 111-04 in the discus to finish in second. Coach Charles Ruise said he is proud of the success the sophomore has already had in her career, and it can lead to bigger things in the future.

"She shows great promise," he said. "Starting out and already making those kinds of strides means a lot. If she sticks with it, the skies the limit for her."

Although only two athletes advanced, the coach said the regional meet could be used as a building block for next year's team.

"All our competitors did a good job," coach Ruise said. "It's a good learning experience for the group. Being in that environment gives next year's team something to look forward to."

Hadley and Rice will compete at the state meet at the University of North Florida on May 3.

In addition, Firehouse Subs is hosting a fundraiser for the track team on Saturday, April 26 from noon to 3 pm in which 10 percent of all proceeds will be donated to the team for new uniforms and an end-of-year banquet.

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Dozen lifters are qualified for state finals this Friday

JON SHUMAKE
SPORTS EDITOR
jonshu@live.com

The 12 Wildcat weightlifters who qualified for the state meet is the most the team has sent since the 2011 state championship team, and the lifters are expecting to replicate that team's success in Kissimmee on April 25.

Four-year state qualifier Dalton Dyal is the only lifter remaining from the championship team and his experience has put him in a leadership position during his senior year. His three previous years of competing at the state meet has been beneficial to the rest of the team and they come to him for advice.

"It's a lot on your shoulders," he said about taking over a leadership role on the squad. "They know I love it. I get at least one question from them everyday."

The main difference between this year and other years for Dyal is that he has a chance to finish in first in the 154-pound weight class. His 580 total from earlier in the season broke the school record for his weight class and he plans on shattering that mark with at least a 605 total, which would earn him a state crown.

Dyal isn't the only lifter who has experience at the biggest meet of the year: Valdez Jackson is hoping to finish in first in the 199-pound weight class after a sixth-place finish last year. He is feeling more ready to compete this year than he did a year ago.

"I'm a lot more prepared physically and mentally," he said. "I know what I got to do and I know what I got ahead of me. I have to go out and do what I have to do."

Brandon Harvey also has experience in state meets with an appearance in last year's weightlifting meet and two in wrestling. He currently sits second among the qualifiers in the 129-pound class and is just five pounds behind the top lifter. He said he is feeling strong about where he is among the competitors in his class and expects to compete for the top spot in the state.

Jacob Stalvey made it to state last year through the pool process, where the top nine lifters who finished second or lower in each weight class in the eight Class 1A sectional meets are chosen for state, but he guaranteed himself a spot at state this year with a first-place finish at the sectional meet on April 12.

By doing so, he has been able to focus more on the meet and trying to improve an extra 15 pounds to put him in contention for first in the state in the 169-pound weight class, he said.

The Wildcats also have a number of lifters who are competing for a chance to finish in the top six to place at state. Brody Crews, Caleb Carter, Blayne Merchant, Hunter Chambers, Thomas McElfresh, Cody Miller, Kyler McCray and Eli Lee all have a good opportunity to place at the state meet. Each of them are working on their techniques to improve their totals as much as possible before April 25. By doing so, they are not only helping their own chances of placing well, but also the team's chance of winning state.

"Everybody wants to win individually, but it's something special when you have the brotherhood of the team," Chambers said. "We're all getting better for the benefit of the team."

The boys have grown together as a tight-knit unit in recent weeks after the tragic death of former Wildcat weightlifter Ray Adam Mangiafico, who was a member of the 2011 championship team. Dyal said he sees a lot of similarities between this year's squad and the one that one state three years ago.

"It's the same to me," he said. "We were all close and did everything together, and this year is the same. We're all family."

The boys are expecting to bring home another championship this year; not as individuals, but as a team.

"This is the greatest team I have ever been a part of," McElfresh said. "We are all close and are like brothers. I have faith we can win state."

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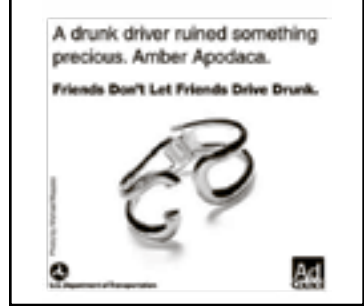
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PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT DAVIS
(Back l-r) Coach Jeff Holman, Mackenzie Carter, Catlin Harvin, Nani Dale, Morgan Smith, Alyssa Rich, head coach Robert Davis, (front l-r) Mckenzie Hickman, Shelby Spratlin, Danae Miller, Karli Johnson, Kim Thrower and Leah Kerce. Not pictured: Larry and Camryn Payne and Kat Rhoden.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT DAVIS
(Back l-r) Coach Robert Davis, Bill McDaniel, Clint Cooper, Larry Payne, (middle l-r) KK Watts, Emma Cooper, Abby Courson, Madison McDaniel, Bobby Rich, Launa Parker, Kara Davis, (front l-r) Kalin Davis, Tristen Long, Lainna Burnett, Brooklyn Kennedy, Zoie Hatch and Dani Rios.

Both Baker Blast teams win Georgia tournaments

JON SHUMAKE
SPORTS EDITOR
jonshu@live.com

The Baker Blast 10 and under and 14 and under travel softball teams came out on top of tournaments held in Georgia in recent weeks.

The 10 and under Blast team held off a bases loaded jam in the final inning to win 5-4 in the championship game of the United States Fastpitch Association Showdown in Title Town tournament in Valdosta over the weekend of April 12.

Coach Robert Davis said in an email that outstanding pitching performances from Zoie Hatch and Brooklyn Kennedy and great catching by Bobby Joe Rich and Brooklyn Kennedy helped catapult the team to victory.

"On the field and at bat this group of girls showed a

lot of heart and grit," he said. "What else can a coach ask for?"

The girls earned their way to the championship after going 3-2 during the seeding stage. The team defeated the Diamond Crushers 14-7 in Game 4 to advance to the championship game.

The title win came a week after coach Davis' 14 and under travel ball team won first place in the USFA Can It Be? A Five Game Guarantee tournament in Bainbridge with an 8-7 win over the Southern Storm.

The Blast erased a three-run deficit to tie the game at 5-all to send the championship game into extra innings. The Storm jumped back out to a two-run lead in the top of the next inning, but the Blast were once again able to tie the score up with two outs and loaded the bases.

First-year travel ball player Shelby Spratlin slapped

a base hit over the head of the third baseman to drive the winning run across the plate.

The Blast qualified for the championship game after going 3-1 through the seeding games. They defeated the South Georgia Knockouts 7-6, Next Level 14-2 and the Storm 10-1 before falling to the Panhandle Heat Gold 13-2.

Coach Davis said the team was led at the plate by Alyssa Rich, Nani Dale and Mackenzie Carter throughout the five-game tournament. McKenzie Hickman and Morgan Smith set the team up for victory from the mound and Danae Miller caught all five games and coach Davis said she "gave her all when it counted most."

The coach said he is proud of the way his entire team played throughout the tournament en route to finishing in first.

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