

# WESTSIDE JOURNAL



VOLUME XXI ISSUE 19

HOMETOWN PEOPLE...HOMETOWN NEWS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2024

"AND SHE BROUGHT FORTH HER FIRSTBORN SON, AND WRAPPED HIM IN SWADDLING CLOTHS, AND LAID HIM IN A MANGER, BECAUSE THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR THEM IN THE INN." - LUKE 2:7

## Successful Shop with a Cop!

Last Thursday, the Nassau County Sheriff's Office kicked off Shop with a Cop, and WOW—what an incredible start! Thanks to the generosity of our community and the dedication of the NCSO deputies, 150 kids had the opportunity to shop for gifts, enjoy some holiday cheer, and create unforgettable memories. Seeing the smiles on their faces reminded everyone of the true spirit of the season—giving, caring, and connecting with those around us.

The Nassau County Sheriff's Office couldn't do this without their community partners and generous donations to our NCSO Charities throughout the year! Merry Christmas to all!



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## A Word From the Publisher

I know after last week's front page, I'm sure everyone is a little apprehensive of what I may write now! Last week was tough and now I can just get back to sharing. I, for one, am not a fan of the cold however, I was glad that it got chilly so I could wear the few Christmas shirts I have. Of course, most are long sleeves as it's supposed to be cold at Christmas...ok most places!

Last week, I shared briefly about how the Westside Journal was created. It was from the vision of the late Mark Thompson. Last Monday, I received a phone call of his passing. Mark had been dealing with cancer, completed a bone marrow transplant and recovered well. About a month ago, he was cleared to travel back to Callahan and visit Florida Sun Printing, the Westside Journal office and a few others. It was from complications that he passed away last Monday.

My story with Mark was actually lifelong! We all grew up in Callahan. His dad, Jim Thompson, owned Florida Sun Printing (FSP). FSP was one of those places that many high school students began their work careers, as my brothers Dub and Mark did. My brother Mark, was close friends with the Thompson brothers, Mark and David, through their school years and following. I've shared that my first job, other than babysitting, was a dental assistant for Dr. P.W. Shaffer. Dr. Shaffer's best friend in the world was Jim Thompson. Isn't it amazing how God places people in our lives from long ago? Little did I know years later, I would be working for Mark Thompson, a dear friend.

Mark caught wind that I was looking for a job and called me. He asked me to come and talk with him about being a salesperson at FSP. What...I asked. You can go out and ask people to bring their printing needs to FSP! Still, I was cautious. I didn't know anything about printing much less to sell it to someone. With Mark's confident spirit, he said, "You used to sell dental work to people

and encourage them to get a crown or whatever!" I quickly responded, "That was different!" Long story short, I took the job, and with his encouragement and direction, did okay.

A few years later, is when he presented his vision of starting a newspaper to me. Again, he had it all planned out. FSP can print and design it; Carrie, who was in journalism in college at the time, can write; and you can sell advertising! Just like that. He had a plan and masterfully put it into action. We had all the pieces, now let's make it work. And it did and it has. About a year into it, Mark asked if Roger and I wanted to purchase the paper and we said yes.

Little did I know what this 'little paper' as many call it, would do. What an impact someone's vision has turned out to be. Several times, through the years, I continued to call Mark and ask his opinion for this or that when I struggled. He always seemed to have a suggestion of things to try. He was not only a dear friend but a mentor for direction with our paper. I'm thankful for the guidance, even though sometimes he was pretty frank with things, but that was Mark. That was one thing about him that you didn't have to wonder about... you always knew where he stood on issues. His work ethics were amazing and he always ran a tight ship. He took my outgoing, crazy, young nephew Brent, and molded him into a business owner, who now is the owner of Florida Sun Printing. It wasn't an easy job, but Mark never gave up on him, as he never gave up on me.

I'm so thankful that Mark Thompson took a chance on me. I do miss his humor and uncanny way of trying to make a difficult issue okay. He was an amazing friend, boss and business owner.

Each time we would talk he would always say, "You're doing a great job with the paper."

*Dawn S. West*

## Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor may be emailed to [news@westsidejournal.net](mailto:news@westsidejournal.net) but must include a complete name. Letters should be no longer than 300 words.

### The Loss of a Good Friend!

Dear Editor,

We have friends we depend on, for sharing and helping us to get from day to day. The Westside Journal (Dawn and Roger West) is one that we have always looked forward to on a weekly basis. They have always been there to "Tell It Like It Is," and reassure us that the sun will rise again tomorrow.

On December 5, 2024, they have announced that The Westside Journal will cease to exist after December 19. I feel like we are losing a voice that we can trust. This is an establishment that has endeavored to be there when we needed it most. An institute that puts forth the "Truth." An organization that has put community ahead of self, as they have taken care of all our interests.

It would be very easy to produce several paragraphs to promote the fantastic work that has been done over the past 21 years. But I will refrain from noting the obvious that the entire Nassau County populace already knows. Instead, I will note that we are forever thankful for this institution, as we look forward to something that might fill its' void. As I have told Roger, in times past, I'm not ready to "solo" yet! But we will move forward and continue to be honest about the environment that continues to impact us all. We'll just have to search for another venue to continue the truth of the atmosphere.

The Westside Journal has our undying admiration and appreciation for helping all of us to enjoy the blessings of our communities, and the common sense observations that are the very spirit of the future of our great nation. Thanks, for all you have done and may your "retirement" be filled with the love of family and friends, as you pursue those rewards that you have so richly earned and deserve.

Douglas C. Pearson, Sr.

### Family!

Dear Editor,

I'm writing this letter to say goodbye to our friends at the Westside Journal. It's like saying goodbye to family. I have looked forward to the 'Journal' showing up in my mailbox on every Thursday for years now. I try to make it last for at least two days, if it doesn't, I read it twice. I'm sure Dawn and Roger and all the folks that know me know that I don't like change, but I guess this change is what's right for them. Y'all have become family to so many in this area. We will miss y'all, but we wish only good for all of you.

I'm sure God has a plan for you as you make the change as well. I don't get to Callahan very much anymore, but I did like stopping by the paper from time to time just to say hello. ALL of y'all will be missed, not just because of the 'Journal,' but because ALL of you are our family. Have a Very Merry Christmas and a grand start on your new life in 2025! God Bless!

Buddy Miller

### Callahan Pride

Dear Editor,

For a community that is as outdoors oriented as Callahan is, I am shocked and disappointed by the amount of trash that some rude and disrespectful people throw out of their vehicles and onto our roads. We have a beautiful community that some residents believe is their personal trash can. Is it really that difficult to put the trash in the garbage where it belongs? Do these people have so little respect for the rest of us, and themselves, that they need to lash out at the community by their disgusting habit? Do they really do this without a second thought. If you are one of these people you should be ashamed.

Geoff Poulin

### In Response

Dear Editor,

It appears that the "Just My Opinion" column has a bit of hypocrisy in last week's hit piece about the MAGA 2024 cake. Anyone remember the Masterpiece Cake Shop Supreme Court Case? Well, the same rule applies here. It may not be based on religion, but businesses have a right to refuse service to ANYONE, including "Lisa." So, if they deem the message on the cake bad for business due to political reasons, I'll tell you the same thing you and other people told the couple that Masterpiece Cake Shop turned away: "go somewhere else and quit crying about it."

Sarah Hart

### Joe Biden's Parting Gifts

Dear Editor,

When Joe Biden moves out of the White House, the Republicans should gather on the west lawn and throw kisses. In the last several weeks, he took two major actions out of anger, arrogance and desire for vengeance that back fired to damage his, as well as, the Democrat's reputations. When Biden gave the go-ahead for Wilenski to fire long range missiles at Russia to make it more difficult for Trump to end the war, Putin upped the ante and it came back at him for escalating the war.

Having denied for one year that he would not intervene, Biden took the law into his own hands and issued a sweeping pardon to his son, Hunter "bad boy" Biden. He said it was as "a father" which no one believes. His action made him out to be a liar and he dealt a damaging blow to his party who is campaigning to bolster their believability.

The moral to the stories: When you act on anger and revenge, you can never get a positive outcome. Too bad "Old Joe" hadn't learned that one.

Joe, the Republican Party thanks you.


B. R. McConnell

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David  
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*  
*Luke 2:11*

*Christmas Blessings from our family to yours*

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**WESTSIDE JOURNAL STAFF**

Dawn West ..... Publisher  
Roger West ..... Owner/Reporter  
Jessie Pickett ..... Graphic Designer

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2. You will be assigned a resident and their 'wishes'.
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*Dayspring Village is a state licensed limited mental health assisted living facility that is focused on serving the needs of adults with schizophrenia. If you would like to learn more or we can be of any assistance, please contact Douglas D. Adkins, Administrator at 904-583-0134-cell or [doug@dayspring.health](mailto:doug@dayspring.health) - Please consider becoming a volunteer this Christmas season, the gift you make in the life of others will truly change lives around you.*

**God Bless and Merry Christmas!  
Call today! 904-874-5261**

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# Hilliard Town News

Dawn S. West

The Hilliard Town Council met Thursday night for their first meeting of December. The first order of business was the approval of Resolution 2024-21, which related to the State Revolving Fund Loan Program; making findings; authorizing the load application, authorizing the load agreement; establishing pledged revenues; designating authorized representatives; and providing assurances, conflicts, severability and an effective date. The council also approved the signing of the Engineering Services Agreement for the Planning Phase of the Sewer System Rehabilitation Project in the amount of \$120,000.

The next six agenda items were from the Parks & Recreation Department Director Gabe Whittenburg. The first item was a Capital Budget Expenditure for the Recreation Gym Maintenance in the amount of \$36,750.00. "The town gym is in dire need of being resided. I have received 3 bids," said Whittenburg. "Two are well over budget. I recommend Island Hopper Home Repair, LLC at a cost of \$36,750 for the entire job." The council approved the recommendation.

The next item concerned another Capital Budget Expenditure for the Buchanan Park Playground Mulch replacement. "Buchanan Park is in need of refreshed and replacement mulch. We are able to piggyback off of a St. Johns County Commissioner's bid with this price of \$14,073.20 from First Coast Mulch," added Whittenburg. "There will also be a part 2 of additional capital

items at this location (fencing and draining) at a later time." The council approved the recommendation.

The third item concerned a Capital Budget Expenditure for the Fitness Center Equipment in the amount of \$5,999.00. "Select Strength Depot is a local company, which I have visited, that I recommend purchasing the equipment from. This is a BodyKore Universal Trainer," said Whittenburg. "This company will also install the equipment on site." The council approved the purchase.

The next three items concerned current Parks & Recreation employees and status changes. The council approved for David Pender's transition from Introductory/Probationary to Regular Part-Time. "David is a good Ambassador for the town and has been a great help for me," said Whittenburg.

The council approved Hanna Knoll's transition from Temporary status to Regular Part-Time; and also approved Laila Spatcher's transition from Temporary status to Regular Part-Time.

The council approved a payable to Mittaurer & Associates for Project Name: 8" Parallel Water Main Extension to FAA Facility in the amount of \$28,892.

The council also approved a payable to Suez Annual Payment number 4 of 5, for Project Name; Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) in the amount of \$109,553.00.

The next meeting of the council will be Thursday, December 19 at 7 p.m.

# JUST MY OPINION

Roger R. West

We still have 32 days of the disastrous Democrat/Biden reign. These will be very concerning days as we all know that Biden is not in a coherent mind set and is not the person running the country. Yet, he still holds the power to bring about undue consequences to our country. Just last week, he committed \$1 billion to a country in Africa that we have never had any diplomatic ties with. All the while we have American taxpaying citizens in North Carolina that are suffering in such traumatic fashion. Where are the loving, compassionate democrats when our own citizens are in such peril. There are thousands of our own that have experienced devastation worse than people in Ukraine and Angola, and our wonderful, loving democrats offered them \$750 if they apply on-line and are accepted. Many of these people don't even have a home let alone a computer to apply for FEMA's \$750! Disgusting beyond words!

Ole' Joe lied once again, to no one's surprise when he pardoned his son Hunter in grand fashion. This was the pardon of all pardons. Hunter has been granted a blanket pardon that applies to any offenses against the U.S. that he "has committed or may have committed" from January 1, 2014 to December 1, 2024. There is now talk leaking from White House staff that blanket pre-emptive pardons may be in the works to protect persons whom they think Trump will seek retribution for their actions. Names that have surfaced thus far are: Dr. Anthony Death Fauci, Senator-elect Adam Schiff, Rep. Nancy

Pelosi and Elizabeth Cheney. There are a few that want to pardon all illegal aliens! Some Democrats are pushing against the blanket pardons due to it makes the perception of guilt without any due process to prove it. President Trump's senior advisor and personal lawyer Alina Habba predicts Biden will begin to handout pardons like they're tic-tacs. She suggests Biden will pardon himself, along with his entire family and anyone else who have had their hand in the cookie jar. Time will tell, but to me that is a total abuse of the pardon system.

Have you noticed a sigh of relief across the nation since November 5th? Big things are already taking place and Donald Trump hasn't even entered the White House. Leaders from all across the world are contacting him with some wanting to end the conflicts that are raging.

At the reopening of the Notre Dame Cathedral, world leaders lined up just to shake his hand. What a stark difference when compared to our current president. Things are improving so fast that even the woke are noticing it. There are negotiations currently being held to change the name of Washington's NFL team back to the "Redskins!"

Just one more "Just My Opinion" left to write after this one. It has been so rewarding to me to have a platform to express my opinions. Not everyone agreed with me, but that's what makes the world go round.

That's why I've always called it... Just My Opinion, and it is!

## SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE: CALL 988

### In the Kitchen... Honey Mustard Pork Chops

1/4 cup honey  
2 tablespoons prepared yellow mustard  
1 tablespoon butter

1 1/2 pounds center-cut boneless pork chops - 1/2-inch thick  
garlic powder, or to taste

Mix honey and mustard together in a small bowl. Heat butter in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add pork chops and sprinkle with 1/2 of the garlic powder; cook until browned, about 3 minutes. Turn chops over, sprinkle with remaining garlic powder and cook for 3 more minutes. Brush honey-mustard sauce over chops, turn them over, and cook for 5 minutes; turn chops onto the other side and brush with honey-mustard sauce. Cook until chops are no longer pink inside and an instant-read meat thermometer inserted into the thickest part of a chop reads 145°, about 5 more minutes.

## Lunch with Santa

**Saturday, December 14**  
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.



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# Life Without the Journal

*Pastor Walter Cooper, He Changed My Mind Ministries, Callahan*



I had a lot of mixed emotions when I heard the news about the Westside Journal closing its doors. It has certainly been a beacon in our community for a long time, serving as a refuge for so many people and giving us a place of fellowship and laughter with lots of love that Dawn has shown us over the years. I can count the times when people would stop by to say hello, even if they weren't going there for business reasons. Life is going to be very different without the 'Journal' anymore.

I remember the first time I stopped by and spoke with Dawn, inquiring about running an ad for my recycling business. Never in my mind did I think it would end up in a lasting friendship between Dawn and me. I just planned to inquire about prices, run an ad, and see where it goes. But much to my surprise, God had something else in plan from the first day I stopped in. I'm always excited when I see Dawn in the office or the community. There's always something to discuss between her and me, and we can always agree that... God is good all the time.

I've been running ads for my business and ministry; I've been there to the end. Some of you have been there since Dawn opened her doors. I don't have that testimony. This has turned into more than just the next business opportunity. It has given me a different perspective and a deep respect for Dawn and how she runs her business. She doesn't need to value business on the bottom line and how much money she can make. She sees the big picture, and everyone who walks through her door shows how she presents herself in our community. I want to call her an outreach minister because she's so much for many people.

Dawn advises so many people in different ways; she always greets them with a loving smile and compassion to hear them out. She hears from God to make sure when she speaks, she's given advice and wisdom from God. We're going to miss the 'Journal' truly.

Still, suppose you are one of those who have experienced changes in your life. In that case, we truly understand where she is and that God is leading her in a different direction at this time. We are going to accept what God is doing, even when we don't understand it and embrace the times that we've had together stopping in and saying hello. We all have a job that we can do for the kingdom of God.

The 'Journal' was Dawn's ministry. It was a place where Dawn could be herself and say what God put on her heart to share with His people. For Dawn, it was more than taking our money and running columns or printing the news! I am sure that God has something planned for our community moving forward. We'll have to believe it by faith, and God will never leave or forsake us with the change we face today without the 'Journal.'

As a pastor, I never thought about expressing myself through writing articles in

# Five Generations

Congratulations and thank you for sharing your five generations picture! Shown (l to r) are: Kory Wall, mother; Marci Scott, great-grandmother; holding baby Julia; Julia Stearn, great-great-grandmother; and Haley Wall, grandmother.



# Johnston Signature Furnishings Now Open in Callahan

Owners and employees of Johnston Signature Furnishings (formerly Badcock), are proud to announce they are now open for business. The store continues to be family owned and operated. Their hours are: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. and closed on Sundays.



There are finance options available and they also will offer a cash discount.

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Johnston Signature Furnishings is located at 542057 US Highway 1 (old Badcock building), Callahan. They can be reached at 904-320-5947.

a newspaper, but when Dawn asked me to begin writing, I was thrilled and afraid at the same time. But that's what ministers do, they bring the best out of every one of us. God leads them in so many ways to encourage us to step out, moving from our comfort zone to try different things in order to experience new beginnings.

Life without the 'Journal' will be missed and different. No more phone calls from Dawn each month reminding me that it's time again to run my ad. In the next couple of weeks, let's stop by to say goodbye to Dawn and Jessie, as the doors of this chapter in their lives close. Both of them will be embracing new beginnings. So, I salute my friend Dawn West for being the woman of God that she is. Wherever you go and whatever you do, I'm confident that God will be there.

Grace And Peace from Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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# The Gift of Giving

Dawn S. West

This story is about the true story of Christmas...giving unselfishly. Dana Yoachum has been so generous for quite some time, using her time and talents to sew for others. Dana has made numerous 'blanket buddies' which are crocheted blankets with a stuffed animal attached to them. The stuffed animal always matches the colors in the blanket. It's such a special gift for our mothers at The Nest Women's Center. Dana drops the completed blankets off to us at the Westside Journal office and Rhonda, from The Nest, picks them up and delivers them.

Dana came up with an idea to also give blankets to some of our senior citizens that are currently in the Life Care Center of Hilliard. Last Wednesday, Dana and three friends, that are also crocheting blankets, met and delivered 44 blankets to individual residents at Life Care. Probably a month ago, we placed a need for yarn and you our readers provided. Many thanks to those that donated lots of yarn, has



Shown are Dana Yoachum, Divina Goins, Marilyn Samuelson and Angela Mayberry.

allowed these women to continue their effort. Last Wednesday was the first delivery and they plan to do one more before Christmas.

Thank you, ladies, for your beautiful gift of blankets! I'm sure they are appreciated!

## EVENTS AROUND TOWN

The Sons of Confederate Veterans will meet Monday, December 16 at 7 p.m. at the Pig Barbeque Restaurant in Callahan. If you are a descendant of a Confederate soldier or interested in the history during 1861-1865, you are invited to attend.

Parents of Addicted Loved Ones (PAL) meets every Wednesday at 6 p.m. at the Hilliard Library. PAL provides hope through education and support to parents of addicted loved ones. Visit: [www.palgroup.org](http://www.palgroup.org) to learn more. Free educational support group for parents and families.

Come and enjoy Christmas Carol Singing Saturday, December 14 at 5:30 pm at the Hilliard Town Hall Park, corner of CR108 and Oxford Street.

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# New Beginnings and Milestones



## Julia Allyson Lee

Ben and Kory Lee, of Hoboken, Georgia, are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Julia Allyson Lee. Julia, named after her great-great-grandmother, was born October 10, 2024 at Southeast Georgia Health in Brunswick, Georgia. She weighed 8 pounds 11 ounces and measured 22 inches.

Maternal grandparents are Haley and Kevin Wall of Firestone, Colorado.

Paternal grandparents are Norman and Cassie Lee of Hoboken, Georgia; and Tammy Lee of Orange Park.

Proud great-grandparents are Marci and David Scott of Amelia Island; and Brenda and James Wall of Fernandina Beach.

Proud great-great-grandparents are Jim and Julia Stearn of Kingsland, Georgia; and Walter and Belva Lou Lee of Hoboken, Georgia.

## Ellie Nicole Fouraker

Thomas and Amanda Fouraker, of Bryceville, are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Ellie Nicole Fouraker. Ellie was born November 21, 2024 at 7:13 a.m. at Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville. She weighed 7 pounds 11 ounces and measured 20 inches.

Paternal grandparents are Earl and Lou Ellen Fouraker of Bryceville.

Maternal grandparents are Alan and Rose Abbott of Sardis, Ohio.

Proud great-grandmothers are Stella Thornton of Bryceville; and Kathleen Sweetman of Largo, Florida.

Ellie was welcomed home by her siblings Emma, Thomas Jr. and Nora.



## Mr. and Mrs. Tyler Bentley



Tyler Bentley and Brook Brandt were united in marriage October 12 at 5 p.m. at Plantation Oaks Farm in Callahan.

The bride is the daughter of Michael and Angie Brandt of Callahan. She is employed with Callahan Hagan Ace Hardware. The groom is the son of Jimmy and Shelley Bentley of Callahan. He is employed with Specified Sales Associates.

Serving as bridesmaid was Ryane Allen and groomsman was Tucker Bentley.

Following a honeymoon trip to the Eastern Caribbean, the couple is residing in Callahan.

## Pierce Competes in World Duck Calling Championship

Tucker Pierce, 16, of Callahan, competed in the 2024 World Duck Calling Championship in Stuttgart, Arkansas, over the Thanksgiving weekend. This was the 89th year of the contest. Tucker's goal was to place in the top 5 in his Intermediate Class. He finished in 6th Place. Tucker's proud parents are Pastor Adam and Jodie Pierce. Congratulations, Tucker!



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## CIS Spelling Bee Winners

Callahan Intermediate School hosted their Annual 5th Grade Spelling Bee Friday, December 6. Congratulations to Abigail Chambers for winning First Place; and Caleb Smith as Runner-up. All students in 5th Grade competed in classroom spelling bees during November and the winner, as well as, the runner up from each class participated in the school bee. Abigail will represent CIS in the district spelling bee in January. Congratulations to all the participants!



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**Monday, December 16 • 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.**

**Callahan First Baptist Church**

45090 Green Ave. • Callahan

**Thursday, December 19 • 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.**

**Gray Gables Baptist Church**

54031 Church Rd. • Callahan

**Monday, December 23 • 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

## Quilt Winner Ticket Drawn

*Dawn S. West*

The Country Star Quilt Guild held their December meeting Monday night in The Anchor Church's fellowship hall. The Guild provided fried chicken, while members brought covered dishes to go with it. Following a wonderful dinner together it came the time to draw the winning ticket from the Guild Fundraiser Quilt. Beginning in September the ticket sales began through Monday, December 9. The quilt spent several days displayed at the Westside Journal office; the Northeast Florida Fair; and to a few meetings. The Guild collected close to \$2,000 on this fundraiser. The winner of the quilt was Connie Carman of Hilliard!

The Guild is instrumental in making blankets and quilts for The Nest Women's Center; pillowcases for Wolfson Children's Hospital in Jacksonville so young patients have a happy pillowcase at the hospital; a Memorial Quilt for the Veterans Hospital in Lake City; and this year Quilts of



Valor for 14 Veterans.

These ladies love to get together and sew and visit! They are an amazing group. Each month they hold a monthly meeting to discuss upcoming events, functions and what organization they



might be sewing for and when the deadline is. They try to have to Sit & Sew events the second and fourth Fridays of each month at the Callahan Lions Club at 9 a.m. Anyone is welcomed to attend and join this wonderful group and learn how to quilt and sew and join in the fun! The group is so large, we decided to take two photographs so that we could see everyone. Visit their website: [www.countrystarquilters.org](http://www.countrystarquilters.org).



*We wish you a Merry Christmas!*

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**THE TOWN OF HILLIARD** is seeking a highly motivated, qualified individual to serve as an Administrative Assistant to perform specialized administrative work under the general direction of the Town Clerk. Qualified applicant will assist with professional and administrative work such as: customer service, cash collections, utility system, proofreading and editing, having effective oral and written communication skills, ability to complete assignments within stringent deadlines, excellent follow-up skills, ability to be sensitive to political issues, responding to citizen inquiries regarding official actions; knowledge of Public Information and Records Laws, and have the ability to take on additional municipal duties as required. High School Diploma or equivalent required, associate degree in business preferred and at least two years' experience in the public sector or equivalent work experience required. Individuals must be proficient in Microsoft Word & Excel computer programs and have knowledge of Florida Statutes. This is a non-exempt (hourly) full-time position. The Town offers extensive benefits programs. Salary is Grade 3: ranging from \$16.23 - \$24.36. The Town of Hilliard is an Equal Opportunity Employer and a Drug Free Workplace. Post-offer physical required. Applications and a complete position description may be picked up at Town Hall located at 15859 West County Road 108, Hilliard, Florida from 9am until 5pm Monday through Friday, or printed from the Town's website www.townofhilliard.com. Applications with resumes will be accepted until the position is filled. 121224

**OKEFENOKE RURAL ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION** is now accepting applications for a Mechanic for the Nahunta Office. Interested candidates can visit: www.oremc.com/employment to view the full job description, and Application for Employment. Applications will be accepted via email at jobs@oremc.com or at one of our office locations. Application deadline is 5 p.m. on December 17, 2024. OREMC reserves the right to cancel all bids for employment. Okefenoke REMC is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Drug Free Workplace. 121224

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## Nassau Council of Arts and Culture Awarded Grant

The Nassau Council of Arts and Culture is honored to announce that it has been awarded a \$10,000 Emerging Opportunities Grant from The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. This grant represents a significant investment in the future of arts and culture in Nassau County, particularly in the growing mid-county and western rural communities. The grant will provide critical funding to support capacity building, program development, and organizational growth for the Nassau Council of Arts and Culture as it transitions into a nonprofit entity.



Additionally, the grant includes a full organizational assessment by the Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida to ensure the council's long-term success. The initiative reflects Nassau County's dedication to fostering vibrant communities through arts and culture, with a special emphasis on engaging younger generations. By expanding its reach beyond the traditional focus on the island communities, the Nassau Council of Arts and Culture aims to foster deeper engagement across the entire county. Amy Palmer, Program Director at The Community Foundation, emphasized the importance of this investment, stating, "Because of the significant impact Nassau Council of Arts and Culture will have on Nassau

County as its officially designated local arts agency, we are pleased to award this Emerging Opportunities Grant. These grants support timely projects and organizations that address pressing community needs, leverage other funding opportunities, and promote collaboration."

Emerging Opportunities Grants are part of The Community Foundation's strategic efforts to respond to unmet community needs and advance innovative, collaborative solutions. This funding will enable the Nassau Council of Arts and Culture to strengthen its role as a vital advocate and champion for arts and culture throughout Nassau County. Richard Restiano, President of the Nassau Council of Arts and Culture, expressed gratitude for the award saying, "This grant is a transformative step forward for our organization and the communities we serve. By extending our mission into the mid-county growth areas and rural western regions, we are excited to build lasting connections that celebrate and elevate the arts for everyone in Nassau County."

For more information about the Nassau Council of Arts and Culture and its initiatives, please contact Richard Restiano, President at 815-579-1677 or email: [president@ncacfl.org](mailto:president@ncacfl.org).

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**JEROME ARNOLD, JR.**



Jerome Arnold, Jr., of Hilliard, passed from this life December 6, 2024, in the Warner Center for Caring in Fernandina Beach, surrendering in his 5-year fight against bladder cancer. He was the only son of six children born to Jerome and Ellen Geneva (Barber) Arnold. He was born December 1, 1941, in the home of his grandmother, Mary Jane (Justice) Barber in Manor, Ware County, Georgia. The Arnold family's residence was in Fernandina Beach when, at the time of his birth, his mother traveled to her parental home where he was born. Jerome attended school in Fernandina and continued living there until moving to Hilliard in 1981.

He retired from the Nassau County School Board maintenance department and remained close friends with many of his co-workers. He was an avid fan of racing and of Dale Earnhardt with an extensive collection of race car memorabilia. Following retirement, he spent time traveling, fishing, having daily breakfast with the guys at the local Hardee's and continued development of his talent for "horse trading". Along with his parents; he was preceded in death by his son Jerome Arnold, III; grandson Shaun McClung; sister Gwanis Freeman Johns; and the mother of his children Carolyn (Weaver) Arnold.

He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Nella J "Butch" Arnold; daughters Vicky L. Rushing of Fernandina Beach and Carol D. Arnold of Waycross; son Grady D. Arnold of Hilliard; sisters Imogene Smith and Janice Stokes, of Fernandina Beach, Geraldine "Jerri" Miles and Wanda Arnold of Hilliard; stepsons Leland and Dean Higginbotham of Hilliard and Garland Higginbotham; four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren; along with numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and other relatives.

The family will receive friends, Wednesday, December 11 a.m. at Hilliard First Assembly of God prior to the funeral service at 11 a.m.

Visit us anytime at:

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# OBITUARIES

A family graveside memorial service will be held later at Bosque Bello Cemetery Fernandina Beach.

Oxley Heard Funeral Directors, Fernandina Beach is in charge of arrangements.

Please share your memories and condolences at [www.oxleyheard.com](http://www.oxleyheard.com).

**SONIA CREWS BASS**



Sonia Jean Crews Bass, of Hilliard, passed away December 4, 2024, in her home, following a quick and dirty battle with cancer. She was born May 12, 1946 in Hilliard. She was one of four children born to Frank and Jennie Smith Crews. She enjoyed working crosswords, the Bee Gees, Johnny Cash and spending time at home with her husband. Sonia put Christ on in baptism and was a faithful follower until the end.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and brothers Frank and Harry Crews. She was a devoted wife for the past 11 years, to Robert, a beloved mother to her sons, a steadfast friend to her stepdaughters, and forever remembered by her grandchildren and great-grandchildren as a doting grandma. She leaves a gaping hole in the lives of her family. Sonia will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Sonia is survived by her husband Robert Bass; sons Jack (Maria) Greggo and David Greggo; daughters Donna (Mike) Simpkins, Dawn Poole and Kelly Bartchlett; sisters Bonnie (Winston) Drury and Erma Sue Crews; 13 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; as well as extended family members and friends.

A wake will be held Saturday, December 14 from 2-4 p.m. at the family home in Hilliard.

**BERT GEIGER, JR.**



Bert Geiger, Jr., 89, of Hilliard, passed away Thursday, December 5, 2024, at his residence. He was born October 25, 1935 in Nassau County, Florida to the late Bert Geiger, Sr. and Rosa Bell Mizell Geiger. Bert worked in the insurance industry for 30 years. He won many awards while working. After retiring from the insurance business, he joined his wife and sons in their family bicycle business, A & B Bike Shop, for 16 years. He loved his family. He was very steadfast in his faith. His proudest moment in life was getting his family to go to church. In his spare time, he enjoyed working on sugar cane and bowling.

In addition to his parents; he was preceded in death by two children, Michael Ira Geiger and Christopher Dell Geiger; a granddaughter Whitney Morgan Geiger; and siblings Betty Lucille Geiger, Troy Cecil Geiger and John Wesley Geiger.

He is survived by his loving wife of 67 years, Annette V. Geiger; a son Bert (Lindsey) Geiger, III; daughter-in-law Charmion Geiger; five grandchildren Justin Geiger, Ashley Geiger-Burns, Christopher Geiger, Ryan Geiger and Kayley Geiger-Compton; and 15-great-grandchildren.

The family will receive friends Friday, December 13 at 11 a.m. at Buford Grove Baptist Church, Hilliard, prior to the funeral service held at 12 p.m. with Bro. Mike Pruitt officiating. Burial will follow at Sardis Cemetery.

Condolences may be expressed at: [www.shepardrobersonfh.com](http://www.shepardrobersonfh.com).

Arrangements by Shepard-Roberson Funeral Home, Folkston.

*Thought of the Week...*

Faith ends where worry begins and worry ends where faith begins.

**BARBARA DIANE GRAY**



Barbara Diane Gray, 77, of Hilliard, passed away peacefully November 26, 2024. She was born November 25, 1947 in Jacksonville, to the late Emmett Carmichael and Margaret Milligan Carmichael. Barbara was proud to be a resident of Hilliard and called it home. Barbara loved and raised her two children, Jason and Angela, and taught them everything they needed to know. Her family was her world and she showed unconditional affection to them always. Barbara enjoyed watching movies and spending time with her family, especially her grandchildren. She was an amazing mother, sister and grandmother, that will be dearly missed. Barbara was preceded in death by her parents; and sisters Linda Strickland and Sue Carmichael.

Barbara leaves behind her loving children Jason (Shelly) Gray and Angela (Paul) Jusselin; grandchildren Riley Gray, Noah Gray, Ashleigh Jusselin, Catherine Jusselin and Hannah Jusselin.

Arrangements by Nassau Funeral Home, Callahan, 904-879-1770.

Visit [www.nassaufh.com](http://www.nassaufh.com) to sign the family's guest book.

**JUDY CREW JORDAN**



Judy Ann Crews Jordan, 71, of Douglas, Georgia, passed away Monday, December 2, 2024. She was born December 29, 1952, in Folkston, Georgia, to the late Alvin Crews and Annie Lois Wilson Crews. Judy's favorite pastime was working with her flowers and plants, and fishing. She loved her children, grandchildren, and her beloved dog, Annabelle. In addition to her parents; she is preceded in death by a daughter Kimberly Ann Harris; granddaughter Miracle Harris; and five siblings Aubrey Crews, Patsy Crews, Jerry Crews, Ricky Crews and Michael Crews.

She is survived by her son David (Alysha) Harris; six grandchildren Christin Heavener, Zachary Harris, Javiun Harris,

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Dawson Harris, Cheyanne Hutcheson and Bradley Harris; two great-grandchildren Jessalynn Conner and Jamitri Jordan; and sisters Jackie (Ken) Matthews and Lisa Best.

The family received friends Friday, December 6 at Shepard-Roberson Funeral Home. The funeral service was held Saturday, December 7 also at the funeral home, with Pastor Dwight Allen officiating. Burial followed in Pigeon Creek Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Zach Harris, Dawson Harris, Willie Manbeck, Cory Roddenberry and Allen Burch.

Condolences may be expressed at [www.shepardrobersonfh.com](http://www.shepardrobersonfh.com).

Arrangements by Shepard-Roberson Funeral Home, Folkston.

**JANICE CARROLL PERKINS**



Janice Carroll Perkins, 74, of Hilliard, passed away peacefully December 5, 2024. She was born March 6, 1950 in Lyons, Georgia to the late Otis and Iris Carroll. Janice was the epitome of what it means to be a mother and what a true matriarch is. She would put her own needs to the side and do what was necessary to make sure her children had what they needed. Janice knew that the sacrifices she made would be worth it for a better future for her family. Between all the hard work, perseverance, and sheer willpower, Janice earned an entry level position working at the Internal Revenue Service. Although her position began at entry level, she made such an impact on those around and above her that she ended up earning promotions and working there for almost 30 years.

Janice worked a lot to provide for her children but also took time to have fun and create a balanced life. She would take her kids camping when they were younger and passed that tradition down to her daughter,

Rhonda. Janice was an avid seamstress and enjoyed sewing with a passion. She had an entire room dedicated to sewing and let her artistic side shine by making clothing for family members for holidays or special occasions. Janice stood up for what she believed in and never wavered or let people walk over her. She was an ideal role model for her children and grandchildren. Janice enjoyed spending time with her family more than anything in the world. She was a loving mother, sister, grandmother and great-grandmother, that will be dearly missed. Janice was preceded in death by her parents; husband Gary Perkins; and siblings Billy Carroll and Nancy Ednie.

Janice is survived by her daughter Rhonda (Eugene) Evans; son Kevin (Kerry) Greenwell; an extra special cousin who is more like a sister Gale (Larry) Fitzpatrick; grandchildren Jonathan Greenwell, Shelby Waldron, Michael Greenwell, Blaine Evans and Crystal Raulerson; great-grandchildren Aden Evans, River Greenwell, Harrison Meide, Harper Meide and Waylon Evans.

Pallbearers will be Eugene Evans, Blaine Evans, Jonathan Greenwell, Michael Greenwell, John Fitzpatrick and Andrew Fitzpatrick.

Honorary pallbearers will be Dr. John Vu with MD Anderson Cancer Center and Dr. Orlando Florete with ORLES Pain Management. The family would like to express their appreciation for all the years of dedication.

A graveside celebration of life service will be held Thursday, December 12 at 1 p.m. at Moseley Cemetery in Uvalda, Georgia, with Pastor Charles Newsome officiating.

Arrangements by Nassau Funeral Home, Callahan, 904-879-1770.

Visit [www.nassaufh.com](http://www.nassaufh.com) to sign the family's guest book.

# OBITUARIES

**JAMES MARK THOMPSON**



James Mark Thompson, 70, of Leesville, South Carolina, passed away December 2, 2024. He was born in Albertville, Alabama, to Jim and Edna Thompson. Mark was a devoted husband to Anna Kay Thompson for 27 years.

Mark was a 1973 graduate of West Nassau High School. Mark will be remembered for his honesty and ethics, his personal and business life resilience, and the wonderful sense of humor he shared with all who knew him. His memory will continue to live on in the hearts of those who loved him dearly. Mark's career in the printing industry spanned much of his life, beginning at a young age when he worked at his family's business, Florida Sun Printing. This early exposure set the foundation for a successful career in the field. Over the years, Mark transitioned into ownership and leadership, successfully running Florida Sun Printing in Callahan, for over 20 years, leaving an indelible mark on the local community.

In addition to his work with Florida Sun Printing, Mark's career also included the founding and establishment of the Westside Journal, a notable publication in Callahan. His journey in the printing and media world took him to various positions across the country and worldwide, where he contributed to different organizations' growth and success. These included stints at

the Sand Mountain Reporter in Albertville, Alabama, Carolina Printing in Cayce, South Carolina, and Harris Corporation in Warren, Ohio, where he installed printing presses worldwide.

Mark's passion for the printing industry and his commitment to his work, shaped the businesses and communities he was a part of, leaving a lasting legacy in every place he worked.

Mark loved to fish and use his tractor to keep his home neat and attractive. He was an avid Alabama Crimson Tide Fan and loved to travel around the United States and Europe. As a St. Peter Lutheran Church member in Chapin, South Carolina, he enjoyed participating in church ministries in South America.

He is survived by his wife, Kay Thompson; siblings Rebecca (Robert) Tedeschi, and David (Mary Kate) Thompson, all of Callahan; nephews Jimmy (Joanna) Thompson, Richard (Larysa) Tedeschi and Russell (Kassie) Tedeschi; nieces Jessica (Joel) Harvin and Rosalie (Samuel) Howarth; and five great-nephews and three great-nieces.

A memorial service will be held Friday, December 13 at 11 a.m. at St. Peter Lutheran Church, 900 Dreher Island Road, Chapin, SC.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations made to: St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (<https://www.stjude.org/donate/>); American Cancer Society (<https://donate.cancer.org/>); or Samaritan's Purse (<https://www.samaritanaspurse.org/our-ministry/donate-online/>).

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