



“BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE; BE NOT AFRAID, NEITHER BE DISMAYED: FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD IS WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO.” - JOSHUA 1:9

## Hilliard’s New Mayor, John Beasley, Takes the Gavel

Dawn S. West

The Hilliard Town Council met Thursday night for their first meeting of 2023. “I just want to say it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as mayor of the Town of Hilliard,” said Mayor Floyd Vanzant.

Following those comments, Hilliard Town Clerk Lisa Purvis swore in the newly elected mayor, John Beasley. John took the oath of office with his wife Donna by his side. Purvis also swore two new councilmen into office: Dallis Hunter with his son Issac by his side; and Joe Michaels with his wife Rhonda by his side.

As soon as name plates were changed and correct sitting positions assigned, the council continued with appointing the Council President and Council Pro Tem. Councilman Jared Wollitz nominated Councilman Kenny Sims as the new Council President; and Councilman Lee Pickett as Council Pro Tem for the 2023 Calendar Year. The council approved the nominations for both positions.

Next was to appoint department Commissioners. The designations were as follows: Council President and Street Commissioner Kenny Sims; Council Pro Tem and Water & Sewer Commission Lee Pickett; Councilman and Fire Commissioner Jared Wollitz; Councilman and Air Park Commissioner Dallis Hunter; and Councilman and Parks & Recreation



Mayor John Beasley with his wife Donna

Commissioner Joe Michaels.

The next order of business was the approval of the Town Holidays for the Town of Hilliard for 2023. The calendar was approved by the council.

Resolution 2023-02 was also approved which concerned the Martin Luther King, Jr. Walk that will be held Monday, January 16. “The Martin Luther King, Jr. walk and celebration will be held Monday, January 16 beginning at 9 a.m.,” said Hilliard resident Bernita Dinwiddie. “We will leave from the former Town Hall at 9 a.m. and walk to Oxford Street, down Oxford to Hisbon Baptist Church where the service will be held. Everyone is invited to attend!”

The next agenda item included an approval of a Minor Subdivision Application from Taylor Built Homes. “Mr. Taylor, on behalf of Taylor Built Homes, Inc., has applied for a lot reconfiguration/lot split to create two lots from one lot. The development will only add one more lot, and therefore is not subject to all the State requirements for a subdivision. The Town needs to review the lot reconfiguration to assure the lots created meet the requirements of the Land Development Code,” said Land Use Administrator Lee Anne Wollitz. “The Planning & Zoning Board recommended approval to the Town Council. Mr. Taylor also agreed to comply with the three additional

conditions from the P/Z Board.”

The following agenda item was also approved which concerned a Minor Subdivision Application from Cynthia Hicks. Ms. Cynthia Hicks has applied for a lot reconfiguration/lot split to create two lots from one lot. The development will only add one more lot, and therefore is not subject to all the State requirements for a subdivision. The Town needs to review the lot reconfiguration to assure the lots created meet the requirements of the Land Development Code,” said Land Use Administrator Lee Anne Wollitz. “The Planning & Zoning Board recommended approval to the Town Council. Ms. Hicks also agreed to comply with the two additional conditions from the P/Z Board.”

The council approved a pay increase for Town employee Cory Hobbs following his recent promotion to Assistant Public Works Director.

In other business, the council approved four different payables for ongoing projects throughout the town. They are: Aqua-Aerobic Systems, Inc. \$11,508.23 for Turnkey Replacement of Cloth and Actuator Replacement for one disk filter; Hobbs Tractor Service, Inc. for tractor rental for Town Hall Park Phase I, FRDAP Project, \$4,000; MAE Contracting, LLC, payable for 24 x 48 x 16 Pole Barn (Pavilion), Town Hall Park Phase I, \$44,010; and MAE Contracting, LLC, 20 x 20 x 10 Pole Barn (Pavilion), Oxford Street Park, Phase IV, FRDAP Project, \$7,750.

In public comments, Donna Beasley approached to podium. “I want to congratulate Mayor John Beasley, my husband, for your many accomplishments and good luck in this new journey. I also want to thank all of his family that came to be a part of this special evening,” said Donna. “I have provided a few snacks following the meeting.”

The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, January 19 at 7 p.m.



Councilman Dallis Hunter



Councilman Joe Michaels

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# Rayonier Awards Grants to Nonprofit Organizations in Nassau County

Rayonier is pleased to announce that \$138,000 has been awarded to 47 local nonprofit organizations across Nassau County. Recipients of the grants were recognized at a special awards breakfast held at the FSCJ Betty P. Cook Nassau Center. The recipients will use the funds to address a range of community needs, including civic, cultural, educational, environmental, natural resources, and health and human services programs. "These organizations are instrumental in improving the health and well-being of Nassau County families and residents," said Mark Hebert, vice president of Eastern Forest Resources for Rayonier. "We have been embedded in this community for more than 85 years and are proud to support and recognize the tireless efforts of this year's recipients."

Present at the awards breakfast were Commissioner Jeff Gray (Chairman, District 3), Commissioner Klynt Farmer (Vice-Chairman, District 5), Commissioner A.M. "Hupp" Huppman (District 2), Commissioner Alyson McCullough (District 4), and Ocean, Highway and Port Authority Commissioner Mike Cole (District 5). Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. Kathy K. Burns and board member Gail Cook (District 2) from the Nassau County School District, Nassau County Economic Development Board Executive Director Sherri Mitchell, and Nassau County Sheriff Bill Leeper. "I love seeing the County's corporate residents, neighbors and officials supporting the important work that our non-profit community does for Nassau County," said Commissioner Klynt Farmer. "It's truly a testament to why people aspire to raise a family here. Our community is made up of some of the most loving, caring and charitable people in the state of Florida and I'm proud to call Nassau my home."

Through its community fund, Rayonier provided grants to the following organizations and projects in Nassau County in 2022: Amelia Island Book Festival; Amelia Island Museum of History; American Business Women's Association; American Heart Association; American Red Cross of NE Florida; Arts Alive Nassau, Inc.; Baptist Health Foundation; Barnabas Center Inc.; Big Brothers Big Sisters NEFL; Blue Fire Theatre; Boys & Girls Clubs of Nassau County; Boys Scouts of America, North Florida Council; Community Hospice & Palliative Care; Elm Street Sportsman Association; Family Support Services of North Florida; Fernandina Beach High School Foundation; Ferst Readers of Nassau County; First Coast Healing Hands, Inc.; Florida Forestry Foundation; Folds of Honor Amelia Island; Institute for Enterprise Inc.; Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens; Keep Nassau Beautiful; Les DeMerle; Amelia Island Jazz Festival; Nassau County 4H Association; Nassau County Council on Aging, Inc.; Nassau County Sheriff's Office Charities; Nassau Education Foundation; Nassau Habitat for Humanity, Inc.; Nassau Humane Society; Nassau Racial Equality Coalition; Northeast Florida Fair Association; School Board of Nassau County: All Pro Dads; Starting Point Behavioral Healthcare; St. Marys Riverkeeper; Take Stock in Children of Nassau County; The Arc Nassau; The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society; The Salvation Army - Hope House; The U.S. Constitution Scholarship Foundation; Traders Hill Farm; Trinity Love Hoblit Foundation; University of Florida / IFAS Extension; Veterans Council of Nassau County; West Nassau Historical Society; Westside Optimist Club; and YMCA of Florida's First Coast.

# 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.

## In Response

Dear Editor,

I read with interest to the letter written by B.R. McConnell in the January 5th edition. The title is The Great College Rip-Off. I am coming at this from a different perspective as I took many on-line classes and "day tripped" my way through school. My parents could not afford to send me to a 4-year university, when I graduated from high school. They would have but still had young children. So, I went to school and worked my way through. Today, school loans are easy to get but the average undergrad debt is now \$32,000. Commuting to class at the excellent universities that are available locally is a very smart option for many. Many universities do require incoming freshman to live on campus because studies have shown a higher retention rate, but there are many activities that commuters can be involved with.

I played intermural tennis and joined clubs. Greek life is available. I know of people who commute to Gainesville two days a week and carry a full class load so they can continue working a full-time job. As far as financially successful parents sending children directly to universities, you still pay a lot of money. Count on \$20,000 a year at a state school unless you have the pre-paid that includes housing.

Many parents want to send their children to these schools, but circumstances may prevent it. Plus, your child may not be mature enough to handle the freedom. Commuting locally to JU, UNF, EWC or Florida State College at Jacksonville are good options for a student to mature and get ready for a big university.

As far as on-line classes, these are a far cry from the correspondence classes from years ago. With technologies like ZOOM, TEAMS and other platforms, people who may be mobility limited, live in other cities, medical issues and more are able to get an education that was no available before. My niece went through cancer treatments but was able to continue her education on-line. My son received his Master's in Engineering Management from Duke University. He lives in Hartford, CT. His cohorts were from around the county with some in the armed forces stationed in other countries. They used ZOOM, study groups and met on campus once a semester. The rest was done on-line. This was not an accreditation that was one step above a high school diploma. As far as the rich get richer, no one in this country is powerless. You must work for it.

Denise Cox

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Dawn West ..... Publisher  
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Preheat oven to 350°. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Cook elbow macaroni, stirring occasionally, about 8 minutes. Drain. Cook and stir ground beef in a skillet over medium heat until meat is crumbly and browned; drain excess grease. Mix cooked ground beef, macaroni, pizza sauce, tomato sauce, and mushrooms in a bowl. Layer half the macaroni mixture into a 9x12-inch baking dish; top with 1/2 the mozzarella cheese. Layer remaining macaroni mixture over the top; sprinkle remaining mozzarella cheese over macaroni mixture. Cover dish with aluminum foil. Bake until cheese has melted and casserole is bubbling, about 35 minutes.

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## Local Teacher Receives Award

On December 2, Gov. DeSantis announced four recipients of the state Excellence in Education Award. Jan Van Delinder, a teacher from Yulee High School, received one of the awards, a check for \$2,500, and a set of books for her classroom. The selected teachers were nominated by students, teachers, principals or parents.



Madison Moore, a former student, nominated Mrs. Van Delinder. Miss Moore is now a teacher herself at Hilliard Middle School. In her nomination, Miss Moore stated, "It's unquestionable: I would not be where I am today without Mrs. Van Delinder's guidance, knowledge and caring spirit. Under her leadership, other students have also successfully competed in speech competitions. In addition to debate, she teaches a dual enrollment

course, Introduction to Education, in which she instructs and encourages students considering a career in education. Now in her 49th year in education, her career points to one conclusion: She is dedicated to serving others with her skills."

The contest was in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month and was open to any full-time educator who works in an elementary, middle, or high school in Florida (including public, charter, private, homeschool and virtual schools). Nominations could be submitted by the principal, teacher, parent/guardian or student. Mrs. Van Delinder is an excellent, dedicated educator who works tirelessly to ensure the success of students. We are grateful to have her as a Nassau County Teacher.

## Callahan Town News

Dawn S. West

The Callahan Town Council met last Tuesday night, due to the Monday holiday, for their first meeting of 2023. The first order of business was the Public Hearing and Second Reading on Ordinance 2022-006 which concerned the approval of Rezoning for property at 45005 Nassau Street.

The council also approved Resolution 2023-R01, which concerned the road closure for a short period of time on Monday, January 16 for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day walk.

The council discussed and approved the 2023 Calendar for the Town of

Callahan employees.

In closing comments, Councilwoman Janet Shaw advised the council that the Depot Park building is unfinished inside. "Mike Williams (Town Manager) and I both looked at the building and it looks like the cost to finish it is around \$5,000.00," said Shaw. "I will provide estimates as soon as I get them."

"We're hoping we can finish it a little less than that," added Williams.

The next meeting of the council will be Tuesday, January 17 at 7 p.m., due to the Monday holiday.

## JUST MY OPINION

Roger R. West

I received this awhile back from a good friend and after paying close attention while watching what little TV I watch, this rang truth. Pay attention while watching TV commercials and you can follow the stereotyping and sublingual messages being pounded into the minds of people.

A recent poll was conducted by a national polling outfit. Names don't matter. They are all the same. This one was "YouGov." Results to these questions asked of average people on the street follow:

What percentage of the country is black? Response 41%...Actual 12%. If you watch TV commercials you would think 90%.

What percentage of marriages are mixed race? Response 50%...Actual 1%. Once again if you watch TV commercials you would guess 90% again.

What percentage is "Latino?" Response 39%...Actual number is 17%.

How many families make over \$500,000 a year? Response 26%... Actual figure 1%. We think a quarter of the country is rich.

What percent of Americans are vegetarians? Response 30%...Actual 5%.

What percent of Americans live in NY City? Response 30%...Actual 3%.

What percentages of Americans are 'transgender'? Response 22%...Actual number 1%.

What percentage of your fellow citizens are Gay? Result? 30%...Actual

3%.

So why do people have such inaccurate thoughts on these counts? THE MEDIA! The media run race, gender and wealth stories constantly. Result? You are being brainwashed by the national left with the media. Hitler's propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels would be proud if he had half the success.

Disney just went full-on "gender." They will no longer welcome guests with the traditional "Welcome ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls" Why? Because 1% of the population dictates to the other 99% (that would be the vast majority) and corporate America falls for it.

Regardless of what you think, less than 20% of Americans use "Twitter" yet Twitter controls 80% of public opinion. Why? Mainstream media! Next time you are thinking Americans have changed and not in a good way, remember, it's fake. It's all a lie. Most people think just like you do but the media has brainwashed Americans with constant broadcasting of "LIES."

Another thing I observed is the dumbing down of white males. The masculine white male in commercials is almost non-existent, the majority are sissy type characters. This type of soft brainwashing has affected our country in a devastating way. You will also find this same type brainwashing involving politics and it will become very prominent in the coming year.

As always...that's just my opinion!

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# In Our Time of Need

Pastor Walter Cooper, He Changed My Mind Ministries, Callahan



In life there are times when we need someone to help us. We don't wake up in the morning planning on calling 911 emergency services. But just in case we need them, they are there to help us. If we find ourselves calling them, the first comment is how can I help you, what is your emergency? It may be something as simple as running out of gas or on behalf of a family member who is critically ill. It doesn't matter, if the need is great or small, when we call, 911 services are there to assist us in our time of need.

There comes a time in life, when we need someone to give us a personal helping hand. A mother was out shopping one-day, carrying her young baby in one arm and a bag of supplies for her baby in the other. When arriving to the car, she finds herself not being able to open the door. With great patience she contemplated what to do. Will she place the bags down on the ground and open the car door or place the baby down in the carrier? Suddenly, out of nowhere a young man approaches her to open the door. This allowed the young mother and her baby to enter the car safely. With a big smile, she thanked him for helping her in her time of need.

The Bible declares that God is our present help in the time of need. He's the one we should run to whether it's day or night and ask for help. He's always available whether we're in trouble or not. Hebrews 4:15-16 states, "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

We are all faced with similar problems or struggles that requires us seeking some kind of help. The word of God gives us a clear point of who we should run to when we need help and that is God. He knows just what we're going through. He knows how hard the struggle may be, and he knows our feelings because he was tempted like we are and yet remain faithful without sin.

Hebrews chapter 16 starts off by declaring the direction we should run and that's to God's throne, his dwelling place. We can boldly go to God with confidence that He will accept us and will not turn us away. One thing to remember is, there's grace, love, and mercy at His throne, to carry us through our time of need. He's there to help us through, even with tears in our eyes and heaviness of heart, we can go to God and he will comfort us in our time of need.

God is our high priest and He knows just where we are in life, he even knows the needs that we have before we know. We should continue to pray while we walk by faith, trust in Him and wait patiently on Him. Philippians 4:19 states, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

If you find yourself standing at the door or even dialing 911, you have a need, remember God knows your needs and will send someone to help you. In life there will be some doors we can't open ourselves, but God will be there to assist us. Even when you need to call 911 services, don't forget to call on Jesus, in that time of need. He promised us that mercy and grace will be there for us, we just need to turn to him in our time of need. Grace and peace from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

# HEALTHY LIVING:

## REFLECTING ON THE YEAR!

As you reflect on the past year, I have 3 very important questions for you to ask yourself: What do I have to maximize? What do I have to minimize? What do I need to prioritize in order to achieve my health or lifestyle goals?

Things to maximize may include lifestyle choices: food, exercise, spiritual connection, daily intentions, time management, etc. Things to minimize may include: processed foods, stress, too many commitments (remember when you say yes to something you say NO to something else), inflammation, negative emotions, etc. Things to prioritize may include: sleep, time management, routines (we are creatures of habit), selfcare, self-awareness, mental health, etc.

Instead of creating a new year's resolution, think on these questions.

Listed above are just suggestions and what needs to be minimized, maximized and prioritized can be very different for you. Only you know where change is needed. This month, be honest with yourself, write it down and hold yourself accountable.

By evaluating your current habits, you can make conscious changes for the upcoming year. Let this be the year of self-discovery, self-love and self-care. Reach out if support is needed.

Keydella Fuller is a nurse practitioner and the health consultant at Fuller Health & Wellness, a functional medicine based virtual practice and is currently accepting clients. To discuss your goals and challenges, call 904-479-4696.



## CALLAHAN LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

**1/17 Writing Club Meeting:** Word Weavers of Callahan begin meeting weekly starting Tuesday, January 17 at 6:15 p.m. at the Callahan Library. We will have a welcome, writing exercise or game and then we will share something that we've written. Shared works read aloud should be 1500 words or fewer. All writers are welcome!

**1/18 Book Club Meeting:** Join us for some books and conversation Wednesday, January 18 at 10:30 a.m.! The Callahan Book Club will meet to discuss the selected genre for this month, "Historical Fiction/Nonfiction." Coffee and tea will be available! Newcomers are welcome!

Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations in order to participate in this program should contact (904) 530-6500 or the Florida Relay Service at (800) 955-8770(v) or (800) 955-8771(TDD) at least 72 hours in advance to request such accommodations.

## CHURCH NEWS

Lannie Road Baptist Church will hold a Gospel Sing with Phillips & Banks and The Gospel Sounds Friday, Jan. 13 at 7:30 p.m. with refreshments following the sing. The church is located at 5998 Lannie Rd., Jacksonville, 904-924-8240.

Hilliard First Assembly of God Community Fish Fry will be held Friday, January 13 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. for \$5 per dinner. Fish, grits, cole slaw, baked beans, bread & tea. Located on U.S. 1, 1/4 of a mile south of the caution light at Eastwood Road in Hilliard.

## Gateway to Life Ministries

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## Brooks Welcomes New Manager

Your local Brooks Rehabilitation Outpatient Therapy Clinic in Callahan is pleased to welcome new Center Manager, Stephen Ferry, PT, DPT. Originally from Jacksonville, Ferry has returned to the area from Fort Worth, TX, where he and his family have spent the last 10 years. Ferry graduated from Episcopal High School of Jacksonville in 2005 and then attended Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, TX where he was also a member of the swim team and an Academic All-American. He is a graduate of the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences with a Doctorate of Physical Therapy. He specializes in orthopedic injuries, sports injuries, oncology rehabilitation, vestibular and manual therapy. Ferry will lead the team of three full-time therapists and one part-time PTA in Callahan on Green Avenue to serve all the therapy needs of this wonderful and growing community. Our clinicians are expertly



trained and utilize the latest research-based therapy to assist Callahan and the surrounding community to reach their goals and bounce back faster after injuries and ailments. Listed are a few of the many conditions they can treat right here in Callahan at Brooks Rehabilitation: Orthopedic injuries or surgery recovery; Sports injuries, Balance, Falls, Dizziness/Vertigo, Concussion; Back/Neck Pain or surgery recovery; Joint pain; and Muscle Strains.

Did you know you can be seen by a physical therapist without a referral? Direct Access is a law in Florida that allows you to see a physical therapist for up to 30 days without first getting a referral from your physician. This allows you to begin physical therapy (PT) sooner, which can speed up your recovery and decrease your spending on healthcare costs. For more information, please visit [brooksrehab.org](http://brooksrehab.org) or call us at (904) 879-1223.

## Living Financially Free

### Kicking "Murphy" to The Curb

Yvette Outler

According to Dave Ramsey, "50 percent of Americans have less than one month of their income saved for a rainy day." (Emergency) The thing about emergencies is that they happen. They always happen at the wrong time. They are unbiased and show up in every home, every so often. Some call it "Murphy's Law." For instance, while traveling back from North Carolina, we had a flat tire. The emergency didn't care that we were hours away from home. The emergency didn't care that it was cold. The emergency didn't care that it was on a very busy interstate and the sun was about to go down. It just happened, as emergencies do. The tire had to be replaced. (Sad face!) The cost difference between having it replaced instead of repaired was about \$230.00. (Very, sad face!)

A typical emergency fund has \$1,000.00 in it so that you can grab the funds when your emergency happens to avoid going into debt over the emergency. It's the first baby step in Dave Ramsey's plan of getting out of debt. We were able to kick "Murphy to the curb," because we had a planned emergency fund to cover the cost of the unexpected new tire. When you can be pro-active with your emergency debt it puts you in a way better place emotionally, then having to be reactive with trying to figure out how you are going to pay for said emergency.

Practical ways to save for your emergency fund:



**1. Save \$2,023.00 in 2023:** There are 52 weeks in a year. For 51 weeks put aside \$39.00 in a savings account, and for the 52nd week of the year put aside \$34.00 in the account to allow you to finish out this year with an incredible amount of \$2,023.00. Keep a reminder on your phone so you'll remember to "save."

**2. Forgo date night every other week.** A typical meal out for two is conservatively \$30.00 on the low end, but probably closer to \$60.00 for an average meal with appetizer and drinks before tax. You'll save \$120.00 every month. At the end of 2023 you will have saved \$1,440.00.

**3. Side hustle:** Get a part time job for a short season (3 to 6 months) and throw the earnings into your emergency savings account. This will reposition your debt reduction success!

*Yvette Outler is a Dave Ramsey's Solution Master Financial Coach. If you are in over your head in debt and need hope and help, contact her at [Fiscallyfree7@gmail.com](mailto:Fiscallyfree7@gmail.com).*

## NARFE First Coast Chapter 2273 Meeting Tuesday

The First Coast Chapter 2273 of NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employees Assn.) will meet Tuesday, January 17 at 11:30 a.m. at The Pig Barbeque, 450102 SR 200 in Callahan. We will discuss the potential impact of the new Congress and NARFE national officers on federal employment. All active and retired federal and postal employees, and their families are welcome to attend. Attendees start arriving after 11 a.m. and have lunch on their own. The formal program will start around noon. Chapter 2273 has regular luncheon meetings the third Tuesday of the month, except Dec. For additional information and non-members, contact Greg D'Alessio at 904-347-3338 (C) or [gregdale713@gmail.com](mailto:gregdale713@gmail.com).



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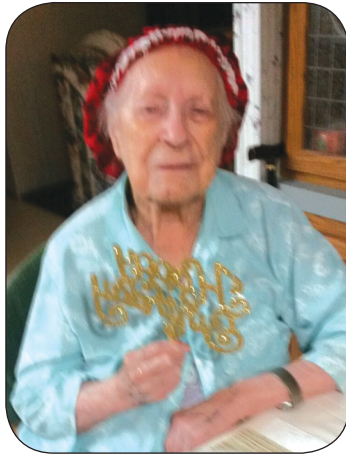
Applications are Available as Follows:  
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Monday-Friday 9-11:45 a.m. and 1:30-4:45 p.m. (4:30 p.m. on April 7)  
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# New Beginnings and Milestones

## Nan Mae Higginbotham Celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday

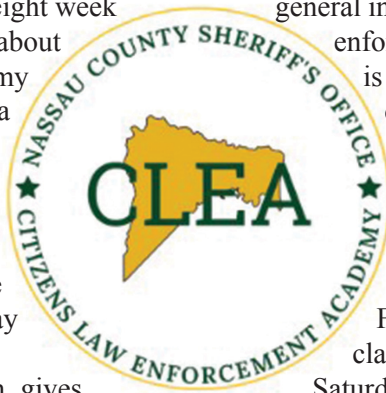
Happy 100th birthday to Ms. Nan Mae Higginbotham of Callahan! You are a blessing to us!  
Love you,  
Family and friends



## NCSO Citizens Academy Class

The Nassau County Sheriff's Citizens Academy is now taking applications for county residents who would like to attend an eight week class to learn more about NCSO. The Academy will provide attendees a transparent look at what the Nassau County Sheriff's Office does in detail by explaining our procedures and why the agency functions the way it does.

This FREE program gives adults 18 and older a behind the scenes look at Sheriff's Office operations through hands-on participation and expert speakers. It's conducted in a classroom setting, as well as "in-the-field" utilizing instructors from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines. The Citizen's Academy is designed to provide members of the community



with the opportunity to gain specific knowledge about the workings of the Nassau County Sheriff's Office and a general insight into the field of law enforcement. The program is informational only and does not train or promote citizens to act in a law enforcement capacity. The Academy is eight weeks, every Thursday night beginning February 2nd. One of the classes will be held on a Saturday morning for residents to see firsthand what we do, including time at the gun range.

Interested residents should contact Nicole Maddox at ni1468@nassauso.com or 904-548-4020. The application is posted on the NCSO website at: www.nassauso.com, under the programs tab, click Citizens Academy.

## A Tribute to Mr. Ray Seeley

Dawn S. West

I have only been a resident of Hilliard for 21 years however I felt like I had known Mr. Seeley all my life. He was one of the kindest people I have ever known. It seems from the first time we met, we hit it off. I've had the honor and pleasure to interview Mr. Seeley on a few occasions. I believe the first time when Hilliard Middle-Senior High School named his 'spot' in the gym, Ray's Roost, as it was a place he had to climb a ladder to announce the basketball games. He did that for years and had a true love for doing it. If he told me once, he told me a thousand times, "I'd do anything for these kids."

Another time, we did a story on his trip to Delaware, Ohio to see the Little Brown Jug harness race (horse). The trip was one he looked forward to every year. Your tickets must be bought in advance and he was always ready to start preparing. He had sat in the same seat by the same group of people for over 45 years. For years, he drove himself up there, stayed at the same hotel on the way and ate at pretty much the same places. Once he was there, which was about a week, he loved it. He visited and laughed with friends and, of course, totally enjoyed the race. He never met a stranger, which made the trip event better. A few times he took family along for the ride but for the most part he went by himself. And yes, he invited Roger and I to go along with him each year.

I believe it was last year that his son Eric went along on the trip. He was so thrilled and from the sounds of it, they had an amazing time. They were able to go to New York and visit some distant family members and also make a trip to his family home, now known as Thirty Mile Point Lighthouse. It's quite interesting to look it up and read the history. Of course, I got the history first hand from Mr. Seeley. He was so proud of his family and his history. On my last visit to see him, he shared a beautifully



designed scrapbook with photos of his trip with his daughter Karen and granddaughter Candace to the lighthouse. It was absolutely beautiful and more special to share it with him. He loved his late wife and cared for her in their home until her passing in 2020.

Mr. Seeley was a bright light in my world. Numerous times, he would call our house and ask me if I was watching Channel 7 PBS as they were showing good ole country music. We saw him several times in Five.5 eating. One time Roger quietly paid for his dinner. Well, low and behold, the next time we saw him there, he paid for ours! We just laughed at the sneaky, fun person he was. His voice is one I will never forget, as when my phone rings at home at night, I think of him. He actually called my mother on her birthday and sang to her. He had a beautiful voice and loved to sing.

Hilliard was a brighter place to have such a loving thoughtful person to be here. My life is one of many lives he has touched throughout his lifetime. I am so thankful that God allowed our paths to cross and we became such wonderful friends. My prayers to his precious family.

Visit us anytime at: [www.mywestsidejournal.com](http://www.mywestsidejournal.com)

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# Celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 16



This coming Monday, we as a country, will celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This national holiday is always on the third Monday of January as set by the Uniform Monday Holiday Act. MLK's actual birthday is January 15. If MLK were alive today, he would be the age of 94, however his life ended tragically at the age of 39. MLK was known as an American activist that made a huge impact through his messages to all Americans. His message always resounded with love and equality for all. He was pegged as a racist by many, but the truth of MLK was just the opposite. He held great passion for all people and "dreamed" of a world of true equality.

The theme for this year's holiday

as chosen by the San Antonio Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission is "Together We Can Be THE Dream." Over 220 submissions were received this year and Shaunda Hopkins Lohse's entry was selected as the theme. Shaunda stated, "The great Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream and it is time we work together to be 'The Dream.' His dream begins with wanting the nation to hold up to its creed, injustice and oppression to be transformed into an oasis."

The building blocks of MLK are simple. He desired human equality, profoundly expressed principles of nonviolence, understanding and acceptance of racial harmony along with respect and goodwill for all people.

His most famous speech, "I Have

A Dream" is a lesson in which we as a nation has never completely grasped but we still cling to the message as a ray of hope. In his short time here on earth, he made many powerful speeches that have not been brought to attention, however they should be. In one of those speeches his common sense rings loud and clear. He knew not everyone could be the famous athlete or actor or any high profile life figure. He stated, "If you are a star or a broom sweeper matters not. If you are a broom sweeper, then be the best broom sweeper. Be proud of your accomplishments and love your fellow man."

There are so many lessons to learn from his intelligent and common sense messages. We as a nation should all read

his words and strive to live by them.

Following are the local celebrations that will be held in Hilliard and Callahan next Monday, January 16:

**HILLIARD:** The Martin Luther King, Jr. Walk will begin at the fire station on CR 108 at 9 a.m. The group will turn left on Oxford Street and walk to Hisbon Baptist Church for the Celebration Service.

**CALLAHAN:** The Patricia V. Williams Chapter of the Concerned Citizens of Nassau County will hold a Community Church Service at Greater Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church at 10 a.m.; the Walk will begin at 12:10 p.m. to Ewing Park in Callahan from 1-4 p.m.

## The Benefits of Local Greenhouse Farming

Katie Connors

Locally grown and operated – Traders Hill Farm is an agribusiness that grows fresh food with enclosed aquaponics systems. Farming Evolved™ is their trademark. This is seen through their growing process. Their scientific approach to growing reduces environmental waste and keeps their food free of herbicides and pesticides. "We are more sustainable than a traditional farmer. Growing in a greenhouse – that is our pest management," said Sales Navigator Sydney Anno.

Their home-grown lettuce is harvested with care in Hilliard, Florida. Farm2Fork Connection is another priority for this business. Traders Hill Farm works with neighboring farms in order to provide a variety of fresh products to their customers. Produce that would typically travel hundreds to thousands of miles to get to your local grocery store is picked to plate at Traders Hill Farm in only 24 to 48 hours. Their commitment to the health



Sydney Anno and Katie Connors

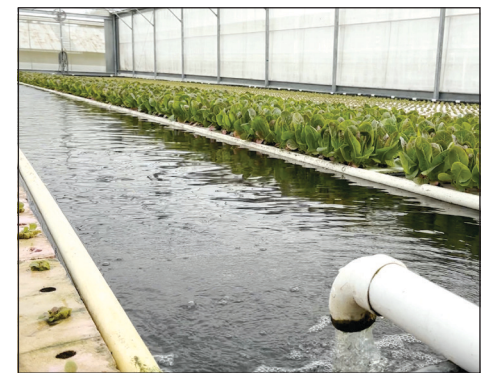
and safety of their product makes them the only aquaponics farm in the United States to achieve SQF Level 3 certification. "It's not just a job for us; it's a lifestyle," said Anno.

This agribusiness works to help its community live its best and healthiest life by providing safe, local foods. Their most popular lettuce is sold at Nassau Health Foods in Fernandina Beach. Traders Hill Farm is also partnered with Nassau County nonprofit Barnabas Center for regular food distribution and givebacks. "We have a current program

that we are doing called Gather and Give," said Anno. "So, with every Fresh Veggie Boxx that is bought with the Barnabas code, we give 5 dollars back to the nonprofit. We currently have 58 customers that are a part of that."

Traders Hill Farm's Fresh Veggie Boxx is a collection of locally grown, in-season vegetables, and their Wellness Salad Boxx has everything you need to create delicious and bountiful salads for you and your family. Lettuce lovers have green romaine, butterhead and mixed green boxes to choose from. Vegetable add-ons are also available for anyone looking for something specific to their purchase.

Orders are customizable, and these fresh vegetables are delivered straight



to your home or to your business. Anno said, "If we wouldn't eat it, we aren't going to send it out the door." This farm is not open to public tours due to the risk of contamination. However, for those looking to start 2023 on a healthier note, you can place your orders online at [www.tradershill.com](http://www.tradershill.com).



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### REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Northeast Florida Community Action Agency, a non-profit Florida corporation is soliciting proposals for an **Energy Auditor/Pre-Inspector** for Weatherization Assistance Program. Bids are due no later than February 3, 2023. A bid package may be obtained on the Agency's website <https://nfcaa.org/> under "News and Press" or by email request to [kmarino@nfcaa.org](mailto:kmarino@nfcaa.org).

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 Northeast Florida Community Action Agency, a non-profit Florida corporation is soliciting proposals for a **General Contractor** for Weatherization Assistance Program. Bids are due no later than February 3, 2023. A bid package may be obtained on the Agency's website <https://nfcaa.org/> under "News and Press" or by email request to [kmarino@nfcaa.org](mailto:kmarino@nfcaa.org).

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# Is it Chaos, or Representation?

Douglas C. Pearson, Sr.

The media was mesmerized by the perceived repeated voting to determine a Speaker of The House during the first week of this new session. Terms such as "Lack of Organization" and "Chaos", among others, surfaced to describe the failure of leadership to coalesce the proper structure. The new Speaker would be unable to put together any coalition that might govern and provide proper oversight of our now runaway Executive Branch.

The longer it went, the more graphic the details of complete ineptitude came forth from the media. For that fact, all media, liberal and conservative ventured forth into the likelihood of a perceived failure of governance over the next two years. I then began thinking about what was said, by a Congressman, concerning the fact that this is a Constitutional Republic. When properly run, it is a complex and long drawn out process that requires give and take, negotiation and compromise. Messy? Yes! Effective and a living will of the people? You bet!

It was in 1774 that the first Continental Congress was established. It was made up of delegates from the 13 Colonies and it took nearly two years just to determine whether or not the Colonies would continue trade with England. With a minimum of 2, and a maximum of 7 delegates, each colony only had 1 vote to determine issues. Can you imagine the arguments for all to agree to a single vote of "no" or "yes"? Not to mention the fact that it took Georgia over a year just to decide whether or not to participate.

It was during the second Continental Congress, which began in 1775 (well after the Revolutionary War had begun) that the Declaration of Independence was agreed upon and signed in July of 1776.

Primarily authored by one person (Thomas Jefferson) it was modified, adjusted, reworded and debated for nearly a year and a half before being ratified by the Colonies, soon to be States. Then it took another five years to finish up work on the Article of Confederation in 1781, which was eventually replaced by the original version of The United States Constitution in 1789. Nearly 15 years just to establish this experimental Constitutional Republic, The United State of America!

So, in retrospect, four days of negotiation of rules and procedures, to sway enough folks to vote for a Speaker, really affirmed that it was actually on a fast track. Especially when considering we were replacing a Political machine that had been determining all things by no less than a handful of people. The Kremlin was alive and well in Washington!

To put all this into its proper view, recall that a 6,000 page health care bill, which took control of over 25% of the GDP, had to be passed "before we can find out what's in it!" Then, there was the most recent Omnibus Bill of 4,000 pages, committing 1.7 Trillion Dollars in spending, that was not introduced until 2 days before a vote was required. No amendments were allowed and any discussion, or inclusion, from the opposite side of the aisle, was not even permitted. Again, no time to even read the bill, let alone to debate, modify or appropriately make adjustments either.

I would much rather have numerous votes and debates take place and have a result of knowing what was happening, than to turn this whole country over to a socialistic state that will have power over any and all dissenters at someone's whim. Rock on Kevin, and thanks for helping us to return to some form of sanity and hopefully, fiscal responsibility.

## POLICE REPORTS

*Names, Addresses and all information appearing in the Police Reports are taken from the Sheriff's Department files and do not necessarily indicate guilt, only that arrests were made or charges were filed.*

### Tuesday, January 3

Taylor Ralph Gaisser, 31, Hilliard: Possession of Drug Paraphernalia; Possession of Methamphetamine; Possession of Schedule 1-5 Substance

### Wednesday, January 4

James Harvey Smith, III, 68, Callahan: Trespass After Warning; Possession of Marijuana less than 20 grams; Disorderly Intoxication

### Saturday, January 7

Calvin Bentley Scheider, 31, Hilliard: Resist without Violence; Writ of Attachment Child Support

### Sunday, January 8

David Russell Mann, 43, Bryceville: Possession of Drug Paraphernalia; Possession of Methamphetamine

### Monday, January 9

Mark Allen Windham, 42, Callahan: Driving an Unregistered Motor Vehicle; Felony Driving while License Suspended with Knowledge

## 4-H'er of the Month Lilly Peeples



Lilly has been a part of 4-H since her first year in the Youth Emergency Team back in 2017. Every year since, she has returned as a major help to peer-educate the subsequent cadres and help our EOC periodically. This past year she has tremendously upped her participation and leadership within other 4-H programs. She has attended state and regional programs, served as a camp counselor, joined the Teen Leadership Council as the official Historian, has participated in District Council and is currently pursuing state-level leadership through the Executive Board and other state committees.

For January, we would like to highlight Lily as the "4-H'er of the Month" because her enthusiasm and willingness in providing leadership to her club and community. When planning events, such as the Holiday Celebration, Lily eagerly volunteers in helping plan and prepare for events that truly goes above and beyond. Outside of 4-H, Lilly is dedicated to her color guard and dance teams, other youth leadership programs and community service. Great job, Lily!

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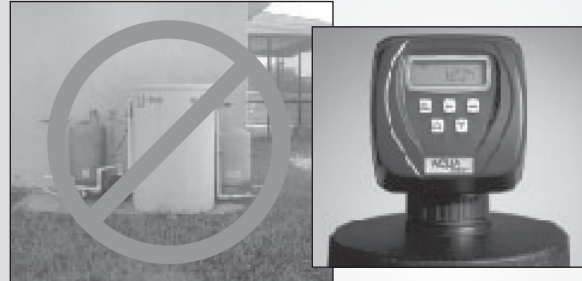
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**ARTHUR DAVIS, SR.**



Arthur Davis, Sr., 76, passed away December 30, 2022. He was born July 16, 1946.

A celebration of life service will be held Sunday, January 15 from 3-6 p.m. at The Barn at Cottonwood Ranch, 452039 Old Dixie Highway, Callahan.

# OBITUARIES

on November 3, 2022 by renewing their wedding vows, officiated by Ronnie's Uncle Willard, who officiated their wedding in 1972, at the church where their wedding was held, Live Oak Baptist in Callahan. He dearly loved his children and grandchildren and being called Papa. Though he hasn't been able to go for a few years, Ronnie loved to fish. He could sit there and catch nothing all day and would be just as happy as if he had caught a mess load of fish.

Ronnie was preceded in death by his father; mother; stepfather; sister Susan Mercer; son-in-law Waco Renshaw; grandparents Tracy and Edith Hoewischer, Artemus and Lillie Gordon and Homer and Nettie Mercer.

Ronnie is survived by his wife, Lynn Gordon; son Ronald (Pamela) Gordon, II; daughter Wendy Renshaw; grandchildren Zachary and Zoe Gordon; brother Shelton (Jeanette) Mercer; sisters Kathy Mercer Watts, Carolyn Mercer Townsend and Carol Gordon Cook; brother-in-law Wayne (Sharon) Lewis; sister-in-law Pam Johnson; and numerous nephews and nieces.

A memorial service for Ronnie will be held Saturday, January 21 at 1 p.m. at Live Oak Baptist Church with Pastor Sonny Foraker officiating.

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

**GEORGE LAVERNE JONES**



George Laverne Jones, 66, of Callahan, book of life closed on January 1, 2023. He was born February 13, 1956. He was a graduate of West Nassau High School.

The family will receive friends Friday, January 13 from 5 – 7 p.m. at Bethel AME Church, 45133 Page Street, Callahan. The celebration of life service will be held Saturday, January 14 at 11 a.m. at True Believers Church of God by Faith, 45083 White Road, Callahan. Interment will follow at Callahan Community Cemetery in Callahan.

military, Carroll worked for GE Aviation as a Technician. Carroll loved working at GE Aviation, he considered everyone he worked with like family. In the early 1980's, Carroll met his best friend and forever companion, Julie Marie Hughes and they were happily married. Carroll was a devoted husband, father, brother, grandfather and friend. He enjoyed fishing, working on older cars, swimming in the pool and spending time at the river and beach. Carroll was an avid sports fan, he enjoyed cheering on the Georgia Bulldogs, Jacksonville Jaguars and San Francisco 49ers. Carroll loved sharing jokes and stories with his family and friends and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Carroll was preceded in death by his parents George and Annie Rozier; brothers Calvin Rozier and Larry Rozier; and sisters Vera Martin and Faye Stuart.

Carroll is survived by his loving wife of 41 years, Julie Marie Rozier of Bryceville; sons Chris Hughes of Baldwin, Derek (Dana) Rozier and Kenneth Rozier Gill, all of Bryceville; brother Alvin Rozier of Macclenny; sister Thelma Holt of Middleburg; four grandchildren Bryce, Cameron, Aiden and Delaney; along with numerous extended family members and friends.

A celebration service will be held in the near future.

Arrangements by Ferreira Funeral Services, Macclenny.

Please leave special memories and messages for the family at: www.ferreirafuneralservices.com.

**RONALD "RONNIE" GORDON**



Ronald "Ronnie" Gordon went home to be with Jesus Christ his Lord and Savior on Saturday, January 7, 2023. He was born on July 5, 1946 in Dinsmore, to Thurman Gordon and Gloria Hoewischer Mercer. He was raised by his mother and stepfather Jessie Mercer.

Ronnie attended Paxon High School and later received his GED. In his early 40's, Ronnie earned his EMT, paramedic and firefighter certifications, making him the oldest person at that time to attend the Jacksonville Fire Academy. He worked at Nassau County Fire/Rescue and Century Ambulance. Ronnie served as Fire Chief for the Callahan Volunteer Fire Department before taking the position with Nassau County Fire/Rescue. He retired as a paramedic at the age of 62 after having a stroke.

Ronnie was married to the love of his life, Lynn Lewis Gordon, and they just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary


**CARROLL WILLIAM ROZIER**



Carroll William Rozier, 66, of Bryceville, passed away on January 3, 2023 at his residence. He was born May 7, 1956 in Screven, Georgia

to the late George Washington Rozier and Annie Marie Wilson. Carroll was raised in Georgia and relocated to Bryceville in 1991. Following high school, Carroll proudly served his country in the United States Navy as an Airplane Mechanic for 24 dedicated years. Following his honorable discharge from the


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*In Loving Memory of*  
**Joanna Cribb & Kyle Cribb**  
 January 9, 2022 September 13, 2018

We miss you both so very much. Some days are so hard but we know that we have to keep going. You are forever and always in our hearts. My tears fall in an instant...that's love overflowing.

Mama Pat and Family



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# OBITUARIES

## JAMES M. THOMAS



Mr. James "Jim" M. Thomas, 101, of Fernandina Beach, passed away Saturday, January 7, 2023 at his home. He was born in Yulee and was a son of the late David M. and Chal Treatie May Thomas. His father passed away when he was 15 years old. He attended school in Yulee and would eventually earn his GED after joining the U. S. Marine Corps. Mr. Thomas joined the U. S. Marine Corps when he was 17 years old before the beginning of World War II. He served in China as part of a regiment assigned to protect American interests and citizens from the Japanese prior to World War II. He served during World War II and the Korean Conflict. Mr. Thomas was honorably discharged at the rank of Tech Sergeant with over 14 years of service.

Mr. Thomas returned home to Nassau County and quickly became an integral part of the community. Through the years he served Nassau County in a variety of ways. He worked for the School Board as Maintenance Supervisor, and the Nassau County Sheriff's Office as a Juvenile Officer. He also worked for Rayonier for a short period of time and owned and operated Thomas Plumbing Company. Mr. Thomas also served his community in public offices including the Nassau County Commission and the Nassau County School Board. Until his retirement at age 85, he owned and operated Thomas Building and Maintenance Company, a general contracting firm.

He was a member of several organizations including the Marine Corps League. Mr. Thomas was a former member of United Methodist Church of Callahan and taught Sunday school there. He became a member of First Presbyterian Church of Fernandina Beach. He as an active member of First Presbyterian as long as his health allowed. He taught Sunday school there and was an Elder and Deacon.

In addition to his parents; and all of his siblings; Mr. Thomas was predeceased by his wife of 65 years, Ann Thomas; son Phillip Terry Thomas; and son-in-law Fred Armstrong.

He leaves behind his three daughters Linda Armstrong, Brenda (James) Wall and Beth (Larry) McDonald all of Fernandina Beach; as well as a daughter-in-law Alicia Thomas of Glen St. Mary; 17 grandchildren; 39 great-grandchildren; 18 great-great-grandchildren; and a large extended family.

The family will receive friends Wednesday, January 11 at Oxley-Heard Funeral Directors from 5 - 7 p.m. The funeral service will be held Thursday, January 12 at First Presbyterian Church of Fernandina Beach at 11 a.m. He will be laid to rest, with military honors, next to his wife at Bosque Bello Cemetery.

Rather than flowers, the family asks donations be made, in his memory, to First Presbyterian Church of Fernandina Beach.

Arrangements by Oxley-Heard Funeral Home, Fernandina Beach.

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

## Students Collecting Items

Joel Pace Piano music students Taylor, Rayna and Dixie, all of Callahan, performed and brought joy to the several residents of Jax Nursing and Rehab recently. The students are collecting puzzle books, decks of cards, pens, note pads and non-slip socks for the residents. Items may be dropped off at: Joel Pace, 14244 Pace Road, Jacksonville, 32218.



## NCSB Reaches Tentative Agreement

Kathy K. Burns, Superintendent of Schools

Over the past few months, the negotiating teams for the Nassau County School District and the Nassau Teachers' Association have been in negotiations. On Wednesday, December 21, the Nassau County School Board and Nassau Teachers' Association reached a tentative settlement agreement.

The agreement, if ratified by union members and approved by the School Board, would result in a 6% salary increase for all instructional

personnel. The compensation package also includes increases in supplements for coaching, club sponsors, advanced degrees, and a variety of other positions. A new supplement would be created for teachers serving in certain high-need special education classes.

We appreciate the opportunity to collaboratively bargain. We believe this agreement will lead to better recruiting and retention opportunities in the days ahead. We will continue to work together for the success of students and the improvement of our schools.

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Son, 23 years have gone by but your memory still thrives in our hearts. Your son, Tison, will be a father this year, which only makes us miss you even more.

I love you,  
Mama

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## NCSO Launches Autism Awareness Program



The Nassau County Sheriff's Office has just launched a new Autism Decal Program. Sheriff Bill Leeper said, "The decals are a way to let first responders better assist those with autism. When a deputy pulls over a vehicle and/or has to respond to a residence and they see the sticker either on the back window of the vehicle or near the front door of the home. This will alert law enforcement that there is potentially an occupant with autism inside."

NCSO deputies have received specialized training related to the unique characteristics, behaviors and needs of people with autism, who sometimes have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction or may wander off.

With this knowledge, deputies will be better able to communicate and interact with our citizens and calm them in stressful situations.



These decals are free to community members who have someone in their family with autism. The Nassau County Sheriff's Office also offers scent kits, which can help bloodhounds track down an autistic person who may go missing. It stores the person's scent so they can quickly be found.

"As sheriff, I am excited about this decal program and I am proud of the continued efforts of the men and women of the Nassau County Sheriff's Office to meet the needs of our entire community," added Sheriff Bill Leeper.

For more information, call NCSO at 904-548-4020.

## Remember to Pray for Our Troops

The Westside Journal would like to pay tribute to all the brave servicemen and women. Please take time to remember each of these service members in your daily prayers.

Gabriel Albert (Hawaii), Jacob Ash-Medina (Japan), Jewel Rene Barron (Virginia), Timothy Beasley (Cuba), Cody Beaver (Virginia), Jessica Bell (Hawaii), Chad E. Black (South Carolina), Kevin & Brooke Blanton (Georgia), Sgt. Caleb Bohannon (Oklahoma), Israel Marcos Bonilla (Missouri), Derek Borden, Benjamin Black (Iraq), Seth Blackman (North Carolina), Hunter Brannon (Africa), Conrad Brauwn (Afghanistan), Ryan Brooks (Connecticut), John Brookshire (North Carolina), Aaron Brown (Japan), Branden Brown (USS Nimitz), Anthony Broekema (Virginia), Ethan Bulford, (Virginia), SSGT Thomas W. Burnette (North Carolina), Ahmad Butler (Japan), Brayden Lamar Carroll (North Carolina), Allen L. Carter (Alaska), Samuel S. Clemons (Virginia), John Coltrane (NAS Jax), Scott Cooper, Dustin Corum (South Korea), Trevor Corum (Nebraska), Charlie I. D. Cox (South Korea), Quinn Coxwell (Georgia), Gavin Crews (Germany), Tison J. Crews (Korea), Charles 'CJ' Cribbs, III (Washington, DC), Dennis L. 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It is our honor to recognize our local Armed Service members. We would like to update our 'Pray for our Troops' list, adding those who have recently joined our Armed Services or removing those who no longer serve. Please read over the list. If you need to make a correction, addition or deletion, just give us a call, 879-4180. You may also email changes to news@westsidejournal.net.

God Bless our Troops!